

PROOF THAT THE DETERMINANT IS MULTIPLICATIVE

PATRICK STEVENS

<https://www.patrickstevens.co.uk/misc/MultiplicativeDetProof/MultiplicativeDetProof.pdf>

This is a very concrete proof of the multiplicity of the determinant. It contains no cleverness at all, and is simply manipulation of expressions.

Definition The *determinant* of a matrix A is given by

$$\sum_{\sigma \in S_n} \epsilon(\sigma) \prod_{i=1}^n A_{i,\sigma(i)}$$

where S_n is the symmetric group on n elements, and ϵ is the signature of that element.

Lemma 0.1. Let $\rho \in S_n$, and let A be a matrix. Then

$$\sum_{\sigma \in S_n} \epsilon(\sigma) \prod_{i=1}^n A_{\rho(i)\sigma(i)} = \epsilon(\rho) \det(A)$$

Proof.

$$\begin{aligned} \epsilon(\rho) \det(A) &= \epsilon(\rho) \sum_{\sigma \in S_n} \epsilon(\sigma) \prod_{i=1}^n A_{i,\sigma(i)} \\ &= \sum_{\sigma \in S_n} \epsilon(\sigma\rho) \prod_{i=1}^n A_{i,\sigma(i)} \\ &= \sum_{\sigma \in S_n} \epsilon(\sigma\rho) \prod_{i=1}^n A_{\rho(i),\sigma(\rho(i))} \\ &= \sum_{\tau \in S_n} \epsilon(\tau) \prod_{i=1}^n A_{\rho(i),\tau(i)} \\ &= \sum_{\tau \in S_n} \epsilon(\sigma) \prod_{i=1}^n A_{\rho(i),\sigma(i)} \end{aligned}$$

□

Theorem 0.2.

$$\det(AB) = \det(A) \det(B)$$

Date: 17th April 2014.

Proof. We use summation convention throughout.

$$\begin{aligned}
\det(AB) &= \sum_{\sigma \in S_n} \epsilon(\sigma) \prod_{i=1}^n (AB)_{i, \sigma(i)} \\
&= \sum_{\sigma \in S_n} \epsilon(\sigma) A_{1, k_1} B_{k_1, \sigma(1)} A_{2, k_2} B_{k_2, \sigma(2)} \cdots A_{n, k_n} B_{k_n, \sigma(n)} \\
&= \sum_{\sigma \in S_n} \epsilon(\sigma) A_{1, k_1} A_{2, k_2} \cdots A_{n, k_n} B_{k_1, \sigma(1)} \cdots B_{k_n, \sigma(n)}
\end{aligned}$$

But the k_1, \dots, k_n only ever contribute when they are a permutation of $1, \dots, n$, because (assuming wlog $k_1 = k_2$) for each σ^+ there exists σ^- such that $\sigma^+(1) = \sigma^-(2), \sigma^-(1) = \sigma^+(2), \sigma^-(k) = \sigma^+(k)$ for other k . Then we have

$$A_{1, k_1} B_{k_1, \sigma^+(1)} A_{2, k_1} B_{k_1, \sigma^+(2)} \text{ terms} = A_{1, k_1} B_{k_1, \sigma^-(1)} A_{2, k_1} B_{k_1, \sigma^-(2)} \text{ terms}$$

and because ϵ negates the sign, we have that these two terms cancel.

Hence the sum over k_i is in fact a sum over all ρ such that $\rho(i) = k_i$ for all i : Then

$$\det(AB) = \sum_{\rho \in S_n} \sum_{\sigma \in S_n} \epsilon(\sigma) A_{1, \rho(1)} A_{2, \rho(2)} \cdots A_{n, \rho(n)} B_{\rho(1), \sigma(1)} \cdots B_{\rho(n), \sigma(n)}$$

Applying the lemma gives

$$\begin{aligned}
\det(AB) &= \det(B) \sum_{\rho \in S_n} \epsilon(\rho) A_{1, \rho(1)} A_{2, \rho(2)} \cdots A_{n, \rho(n)} \\
&= \det(B) \det(A)
\end{aligned}$$

□