

Pacific Journal of Mathematics

A NOTE ON MULTIPLE EXPONENTIAL SUMS

L. CARLITZ

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Put

$$S(c) = \sum_{x,y=1}^{p-1} e(x + y + cx'y'),$$

Where $e(x) = e^{2\pi i x/p}$ and $xx' \equiv yy' \equiv 1 \pmod{p}$, Mordell has conjectured that $S(c) = O(p)$. The writer shows first, by an elementary argument that $S(c) = O(p^{3/2})$. Next he proves, using a theorem of Lang and Weil that $S(c) = O(p^{11/8})$. Finally he proves that $S(c) = O(p^{5/4})$; the proof makes use of the estimate

$$\sum_{x=0}^{p-1} \phi(f(x)) = O(p^{1/2}),$$

where $\phi(a)$ is the Legendre symbol and $f(x)$ is a polynomial of the fourth degree.

If we put

$$K(a, b) = \sum_{x=1}^{p-1} e(ax + bx'),$$

where $ab \not\equiv 0 \pmod{p}$, it is known that

$$(2) \quad |K(a, b)| \leq 2p^{1/2}.$$

For proof of (2) see [1], [4].

Since

$$\begin{aligned} S &= \sum_{x=1}^{p-1} e(ax) \sum_{y=1}^{p-1} e(by + cx'y') \\ &= \sum_{x=1}^{p-1} e(ax) K(b, cx'), \end{aligned}$$

it follows that

$$|S| \leq \sum_{x=1}^{p-1} |K(b, cx')| \leq 2(p-1)p^{1/2}$$

by (2). Thus, assuming (2), we get

$$(3) \quad S = O(p^{3/2}).$$

However it is not difficult to prove (3) directly without making use of (2). Put

Received July 28, 1964, and in revised form September 23, 1964, Supported in part by NSF Grant GP-1593.

$$(4) \quad S(c) = \sum_{x,y=1}^{p-1} e(x + y + cx'y').$$

There is evidently no loss in generality in taking $a = b = 1$. Then we have

$$\begin{aligned} \sum_{c=0}^{p-1} |S(c)|^2 &= \sum_{c=0}^{p-1} \sum_{x,y=1}^{p-1} \sum_{u,v=1}^{p-1} e\{x + y - uv + c(x'y' - u'v')\} \\ &= p \sum_{xy \equiv uv \pmod{p}} e(x + y - u - v). \end{aligned}$$

But

$$\begin{aligned} \sum_{xy \equiv uv \pmod{p}} e(x + y - u - v) &= \sum_{x,y,u=1}^{p-1} e(x + y - u - xyu') \\ &= \sum_{y,u=1}^{p-1} e(y - u) \sum_{x=1}^{p-1} e\{x(1 - yu')\} \\ &= - \sum_{y,u=1}^{p-1} e(y - u) + \sum_{y,u=1}^{p-1} e(y - u) \sum_{x=0}^{p-1} e\{x(1 - yu')\} \\ &= -1 + p \sum_{y=1}^{p-1} 1 = p^2 - p - 1, \end{aligned}$$

so that

$$(5) \quad \sum_{c=0}^{p-1} |S(c)|^2 = p^3 - p^2 - p.$$

It follows at once from (5) that

$$(6) \quad |S(c)| < p^{3/2},$$

so that we have proved (3).

2. Generalizing (4) we define

$$(7) \quad S_n(c) = \sum_{x_1, \dots, x_n=1}^{p-1} e(x_1 + \dots + x_n + cx'_1 \dots x'_n).$$

We shall show that

$$(8) \quad S_n(c) = O(p^{1/2(n+1)}).$$

Exactly as above we have

$$(9) \quad \sum_c |S_n(c)|^2 = p \sum_{x_1, \dots, x_n} \sum_{y_1, \dots, y_n} e(x_1 + \dots + x_n - y_1 - \dots - y_n),$$

where the summation is over all x_j, y_j such that

$$x_1 x_2 \dots x_n \equiv y_1 y_2 \dots y_n, \quad x_j \not\equiv 0, \quad y_j \not\equiv 0 \pmod{p}.$$

Let T_n denote the sum on the right of (9). Then we have

$$\begin{aligned} T_n &= \sum e(x_1 + \dots + x_n - y_1 - \dots - y_{n-1} - x_1 \dots x_n y'_1 \dots y'_{n-1}) \\ &= \sum_{\substack{x_1, \dots, x_{n-1} \\ y_1, \dots, y_{n-1}}} e(x_1 + \dots + x_{n-1} - y_1 - \dots - y_{n-1}) \\ &\quad \cdot \sum_x e[(1 - x_1 \dots x_{n-1} y'_1 \dots y'_{n-1})x] . \end{aligned}$$

The inner sum is equal to

$$\begin{cases} p - 1 & (x_1 \dots x_{n-1} \equiv y_1 \dots y_{n-1}) \\ - 1 & (x_1 \dots x_{n-1} \not\equiv y_1 \dots y_{n-1}) , \end{cases}$$

so that

$$T_n = pT_{n-1} - \sum_{\substack{x_1, \dots, x_{n-1} \\ y_1, \dots, y_{n-1}}} e(x_1 + \dots + x_{n-1} - y_1 - \dots - y_{n-1}) .$$

Hence

$$(10) \quad T_n = pT_{n-1} - 1 .$$

Now

$$T_1 = \sum_{x=y} e(x - y) = p - 1 , \quad T_2 = p(p - 1) - 1 = p^2 - p - 1$$

and generally

$$(11) \quad T_n = p^n - p^{n-1} - \dots - 1 .$$

Thus (9) becomes

$$(12) \quad \sum_c |S_n(c)|^2 = p^{n+1} - p^n - \dots - p$$

and (8) follows at once.

It follows from (12) that

$$S_n(c) = o(p^{n/2})$$

cannot hold for all c .

3. Returning to (4) we shall now show that

$$(13) \quad S(e) = O(p^{11/8}) .$$

It is convenient to put

$$S(a, b, c) = \sum_{x,y} e(ax + by + cx'y') .$$

Then

$$(14) \quad \sum_{a=1}^{p-1} \sum_{b=0}^{p-1} \sum_{c=0}^{p-1} |S(a, b, c)|^4 = p^3 N,$$

where N denotes the number of solutions of the system

$$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} x_1 + x_2 \equiv x_3 + x_4 \\ y_1 + y_2 \equiv y_3 + y_4 \\ x'_1 y'_1 + x'_2 y'_2 \equiv x'_3 y'_3 + x'_4 y'_4 \\ x_1 x_2 x_3 x_4 y_1 y_2 y_3 y_4 \not\equiv 0. \end{array} \right.$$

Eliminating x_4, y_4 it follows that N is the number of solutions of

$$(15) \quad \begin{aligned} &(x_1 y_1 + x_2 y_2) x_3 y_3 (x_1 + x_2 - x_3)(y_1 + y_2 - y_3) \\ &\equiv x_1 y_1 x_2 y_2 [(x_1 + x_2 - x_3)(y_1 + y_2 - y_3) + x_3 y_3] \end{aligned}$$

such that

$$(16) \quad x_1 x_2 x_3 y_1 y_2 y_3 (x_1 + x_2 - x_3)(y_1 + y_2 - y_3) \not\equiv 0.$$

Now by a theorem of Lang and Weil [2] we have

$$N = p^5 + O(p^{5-1/2}),$$

so that (14) becomes

$$(17) \quad \sum_{a=0}^{p-1} \sum_{b=0}^{p-1} \sum_{c=0}^{p-1} |S(a, b, c)|^4 = p^8 + O(p^{15/2}).$$

On the other hand

$$\begin{aligned} &\sum_{a=0}^{p-1} \sum_{b=0}^{p-1} \sum_{c=0}^{p-1} |S(a, b, c)|^4 = |S(0, 0, 0)|^4 + 3 \sum_{a=1}^{p-1} \sum_{b=1}^{p-1} |S(a, b, 0)|^4 \\ &\quad + 3 \sum_{a=1}^{p-1} |S(a, 0, 0)|^4 + \sum_{a=1}^{p-1} \sum_{b=1}^{p-1} \sum_{c=1}^{p-1} |S(a, b, c)|^4 \\ &= (p-1)^8 + (p-1)^2 + 3(p-1)^5 + (p-1)^2 \sum_{c=1}^{p-1} |S(c)|^4, \end{aligned}$$

so that (17) reduces to

$$(18) \quad \sum_{c=1}^{p-1} |S(c)|^4 = O(p^{11/2}).$$

Clearly (18) implies (13).

4. If an exact formula for

$$\sum_{c=0}^{p-1} |S(c)|^4$$

were available we should presumably be able to prove

$$(19) \quad S(c) = O(p^{5/4}) .$$

In this connection it may be of interest to remark that the sum

$$(20) \quad \sum_{c=0}^{p-1} S^3(c)$$

can be evaluated. Indeed if we put

$$S(a, b, c) = \sum_{x,y} e(ax + by + cx' y') ,$$

then

$$(21) \quad \sum_{a=0}^{p-1} \sum_{b=0}^{p-1} \sum_{c=0}^{p-1} (S(a, b, c))^3 = p^3 N ,$$

where N denotes the number of solutions of the system

$$(22) \quad \begin{cases} x_1 + x_2 + x_3 \equiv 0 \\ y_1 + y_2 + y_3 \equiv 0 \\ x_1' y_1' + x_2' y_2' + x_3' y_3' \equiv 0 \\ x_1 x_2 x_3 y_1 y_2 y_3 \not\equiv 0 . \end{cases}$$

Eliminating x_3, y_3 , we find that (22) reduces to

$$(23) \quad x_1(x_1 + x_2)y_1^2 + (x_1^2 + 3x_1x_2 + x_2^2)y_1y_2 + x_2(x_1 + x_2)y_2^2 \equiv 0$$

together with

$$(24) \quad x_1x_2y_1y_2(x_1 + x_2)(y_1 + y_2) \not\equiv 0 .$$

We may replace (23) by

$$(25) \quad [(x_1 + x_2)y_1 + x_2y_2][x_1y_1 + (x_1 + x_2)y_2] = 0 .$$

If $x_1x_2(x_1 + x_2)y_1 \not\equiv 0$, it is clear from (25) that $y_2 \not\equiv 0$ and $y_1 - y_2 \not\equiv 0$. The two factors in (25) may vanish simultaneously. This will happen when

$$(26) \quad x_1^2 + x_1x_2 + x_2^2 \equiv 0 ,$$

that is when -3 is a quadratic residue of p ; moreover if x_1, x_2 satisfy (26) with $x_1x_2 \not\equiv 0$ then $x_1 + x_2 \not\equiv 0$. Thus the number of solutions of (26) is equal to

$$\left\{ 1 + \left(\frac{-3}{p} \right) \right\} \frac{p-1}{2} .$$

If -3 is a nonresidue we find that

$$(27) \quad N = 2(p-1)^2(p-2),$$

while, if -3 is a residue,

$$(28) \quad N = 2(p-1)^2(p-2) - (p-1)^2.$$

For $p = 3$ we have

$$(29) \quad N = 4,$$

for it is evident from (22) that $x_1 \equiv x_2 \equiv x_3$, $y_1 \equiv y_2 \equiv y_3$.

Combining (27) and (28) we have

$$(30) \quad N = 2(p-1)^2(p-2) - \left\{1 + \left(\frac{-3}{p}\right)\right\} \frac{(p-1)^2}{2} \quad (p > 3).$$

On the other hand, since

$$\begin{aligned} S(0, 0, 0) &= (p-1)^2 S(a, 0, 0) = -(p-1) & (a \not\equiv 0), \\ S(a, b, 0) &= 1 & (ab \not\equiv 0), \end{aligned}$$

we have

$$\begin{aligned} \sum_{a=0}^{p-1} \sum_{b=0}^{p-1} \sum_{c=0}^{p-1} (S(a, b, c))^3 &= (p-1)^6 - 3(p-1)^4 + 3(p-1)^2 \\ &+ \sum_{a=1}^{p-1} \sum_{b=1}^{p-1} \sum_{c=1}^{p-1} (S(a, b, c))^3 \\ &= (p-1)^6 - 3(p-1)^4 + 3(p-1)^2 + (p-1)^2 \sum_{c=1}^{p-1} (S(c))^3. \end{aligned}$$

Therefore, using (21) and (30), we get

$$(31) \quad \begin{aligned} \sum_{c=1}^{p-1} (S(c))^3 &= 2p^3(p-2) - (p-1)^4 \\ &+ 3(p-1)^2 - 3 - \frac{1}{2} \left\{1 + \left(\frac{-3}{p}\right)\right\}. \end{aligned}$$

5. We shall now show that

$$(32) \quad S(c) = O(p^{5/4}).$$

With the notation of § 3 we have, as above,

$$(33) \quad \sum_{a=0}^{p-1} \sum_{b=0}^{p-1} \sum_{c=0}^{p-1} |S(a, b, c)|^4 = p^3 N,$$

where N is the number of solutions of the system

$$(34) \quad \begin{cases} (x_1 + x_2)x_3x_4 \equiv x_1x_2(x_3 + x_4) \\ (y_1 + y_2)y_3y_4 \equiv y_1y_2(y_3 + y_4) \\ x_1y_1 + x_2y_2 \equiv x_3y_3 + x_4y_4 \\ x_1x_2x_3x_4y_1y_2y_3y_4 \not\equiv 0 . \end{cases}$$

Note that we have replaced each x_j, y_j by its reciprocal (mod p).

If we put

$$x_3 = x_1u_1, \quad x_4 = x_2u_2, \quad y_3 = y_1v_1, \quad y_4 = y_2v_2,$$

(34) becomes

$$(35) \quad \begin{cases} (x_1 + x_2)u_1u_2 \equiv x_1u_1 + x_2u_2 \\ (y_1 + y_2)v_1v_2 \equiv y_1v_1 + y_2v_2 \\ x_1y_1 + x_2y_2 \equiv x_1y_1u_1v_1 + x_2y_2u_2v_2 \\ x_1x_2y_1y_2u_1u_2v_1v_2 \not\equiv 0 . \end{cases}$$

Now put $x_2 = x_1x, y_2 = y_1y$ and (35) reduces to

$$(36) \quad \begin{cases} (1 + x)u_1u_2 \equiv u_1 + xu_2 \\ (1 + y)v_1v_2 \equiv v_1 + yv_2 \\ 1 + xy \equiv u_1v_1 + xyu_2v_2 \\ xyx_1y_1u_1v_1u_2v_2 \not\equiv 0 . \end{cases}$$

Finally, eliminating x, y we get the single equation

$$(37) \quad \frac{(1 - u_1)(1 - v_1)(1 - u_1v_1)}{u_1v_1} + \frac{(1 - u_2)(1 - v_2)(1 - u_2v_2)}{u_2v_2} \equiv 0$$

subject to

$$(38) \quad x_1y_1u_1v_1u_2v_2 \not\equiv 0 .$$

It should be noted that for fixed u_1, v_1, u_2, v_2 satisfying (37), x, y are uniquely determined by (36) unless $u_1 \equiv u_2 \equiv v_1 \equiv v_2 \equiv 1$; also we find that the forbidden cases $xy \equiv 0$ or xy "infinite" contribute $O(p^2)$.

Let $N'(k)$ denote the number of solutions $u, v \not\equiv 0$ of

$$(39) \quad (1 - u)(1 - v)(1 - uv) \equiv kuv$$

and let $N(k)$ denote the total number of solutions of (39), so that

$$N(k) = N'(k) + O(1) .$$

Then clearly the number of nonzero solutions of (37) is equal to

$$(40) \quad \sum_{k=0}^{p-1} N(k)N(-k) + O(p^2) .$$

Let $\psi(a)$ denote the Legendre symbol (a/p) . Then for fixed u and k , the number of solutions of (39) is equal to

$$1 + \psi\{(1 + ku - u^2)^2 - 4u(1 - u)\},$$

so that

$$N(k) = p + \sum_{u=0}^{p-1} \psi(f(k, u)),$$

where

$$(41) \quad f(k, u) = (1 + ku - u^2)^2 - 4u(1 - u)^2.$$

Thus (40) becomes

$$(42) \quad p^3 + 2p \sum_{k=0}^{p-1} \sum_{u=0}^{p-1} \psi(f(k, u)) \\ + \sum_{k=0}^{p-1} \sum_{u=0}^{p-1} \sum_{v=0}^{p-1} \psi(f(k, u))\psi(f(-k, v)) + O(p^2).$$

Since $f(k, u)$ is a quadratic in k we have

$$\sum_{k=0}^{p-1} \psi(f(k, u)) = -1$$

unless $u(1 - u) \equiv 0$. It follows that

$$(43) \quad \sum_{k=0}^{p-1} \sum_{u=0}^{p-1} \psi(f(k, u)) = O(p^2).$$

Consider next the sum

$$\sum_{u=0}^{p-1} \psi(f(k, u)).$$

It is easily seen from (41) that for fixed k , $f(k, u)$ is the square of a polynomial in u only when $k \equiv 0$. We therefore have the estimate

$$(44) \quad \sum_{u=0}^{p-1} \psi(f(k, u)) = O(p^{1/2}),$$

so that

$$(45) \quad \sum_{k=0}^{p-1} \sum_{u=0}^{p-1} \sum_{v=0}^{p-1} \psi(f(k, u))\psi(f(-k, v)) = O(p^2).$$

Substituting from (43) and (45) in (42) we see that the number of nonzero solutions (37) is

$$p^3 + O(p^2).$$

Therefore N , the number of solutions of (34) is

$$p^5 + O(p^4)$$

and (33) becomes

$$\sum_{a=0}^{p-1} \sum_{b=0}^{p-1} \sum_{c=0}^{p-1} |S(a, b, c)|^4 = p^8 + O(p^7);$$

since $S(0, 0, 0) = p^2$,

$$S(a, b, c) = S(1, 1, abc) \quad (abc \not\equiv 0)$$

and there are $(p-1)^2$ terms $S(a, b, c)$ in the sum that give the same $S(1, 1, c)$, (32) now follows immediately.

Note that, except for (44), the proof is elementary.

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50 reprints per author of each article are furnished free of charge; additional copies may be obtained at cost in multiples of 50.

The *Pacific Journal of Mathematics* is published quarterly, in March, June, September, and December. Effective with Volume 13 the price per volume (4 numbers) is \$18.00; single issues, \$5.00. Special price for current issues to individual faculty members of supporting institutions and to individual members of the American Mathematical Society: \$8.00 per volume; single issues \$2.50. Back numbers are available.

Subscriptions, orders for back numbers, and changes of address should be sent to Pacific Journal of Mathematics, 103 Highland Boulevard, Berkeley 8, California.

Printed at Kokusai Bunken Insatsusha (International Academic Printing Co., Ltd.), No. 6, 2-chome, Fujimi-cho, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo, Japan.

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* Basil Gordon, Acting Managing Editor until February 1, 1966.

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