SHARPER ABC-BASED BOUNDS FOR CONGRUENT POLYNOMIALS

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Abstract. Agrawal, Kayal, and Saxena recently introduced a new method of proving that an integer is prime. The speed of the Agrawal-Kayal-Saxena method depends on proven lower bounds for the size of the multiplicative semigroup generated by several polynomials modulo another polynomial h. Voloch pointed out an application of the Stothers-Mason ABC theorem in this context: under mild assumptions, distinct polynomials A, B, C of degree at most $1.2 \deg h - 0.2 \deg \operatorname{rad} ABC$ cannot all be congruent modulo h. This paper presents two improvements in the combinatorial part of Voloch's argument. The first improvement moves the degree bound up to $2 \deg h - \deg \operatorname{rad} ABC$. The second improvement generalizes to $m \geq 3$ polynomials $A_1, \dots, A_m$ of degree at most $((3m-5)/(3m-7)) \deg h - (6/(3m-7)m) \deg \operatorname{rad} A_1 \cdots A_m$.

Theorem 1. *Let k be a field. Let h be a positive-degree element of the polynomial ring $k[x]$. Assume that $1, 2, 3, \dots, 3 \deg h - 2$ are invertible in k. Let A, B, C be distinct nonzero elements of $k[x]$. If $\gcd\{A, B, C\} = 1$ and $A \equiv B \equiv C \pmod h$ then $\max\{\deg A, \deg B, \deg C\} > 2 \deg h - \deg \operatorname{rad} ABC$.*

As usual, $\operatorname{rad} X$ means the largest monic squarefree divisor of X, i.e., the product of the monic irreducibles dividing X. For example, say $h = x^{10} - 1$, $A = x^{20}$, $B = x^{10}$, and $C = 1$; then $\operatorname{rad} ABC = \operatorname{rad} x^{30} = x$, so $2 \deg h - \deg \operatorname{rad} ABC = 19$.

When $\deg \operatorname{rad} ABC < \deg h$, this theorem is an improvement over the bound $\max\{\deg A, \deg B, \deg C\} > 1.2 \deg h - 0.2 \deg \operatorname{rad} ABC$ proved by Voloch in [2], and an improvement over the obvious bound $\max\{\deg A, \deg B, \deg C\} \geq \deg h$.

See Theorem 3 for a generalization to $m \geq 3$ polynomials $A_1, A_2, \dots, A_m$. In the number-field case, analogous bounds follow from the ABC conjecture.

Proof. Assume without loss of generality that $\deg A = \max\{\deg A, \deg B, \deg C\}$. The nonzero polynomial $A - B$ is a multiple of h, so $\deg A \geq \deg(A - B) \geq \deg h > 0$; thus $\deg \operatorname{rad} ABC > 0$.

If $\deg A \geq 2 \deg h$ then $\deg A > 2 \deg h - \deg \operatorname{rad} ABC$; done.

Define $U = (B - C)/h$, $V = (C - A)/h$, and $W = (A - B)/h$. Then $U \neq 0$; $V \neq 0$; $W \neq 0$; U, V, W each have degree at most $\deg A - \deg h$; and $UA + VB + WC = 0$. Define $D = \gcd\{UA, VB, WC\}$.

If $\deg D = \deg UA$ then UA divides VB, WC; so A divides VWA, VWB, VWC; so A divides $\gcd\{VWA, VWB, VWC\} = VW$; but $VW \neq 0$, so $\deg A \leq \deg VW \leq 2(\deg A - \deg h)$; so $\deg A \geq 2 \deg h$; done.

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Assume from now on that $\deg D < \deg UA$ and that $\deg A \le 2\deg h - 1$. Then $\deg(UA/D)$ is between 1 and $2\deg A - \deg h \le 3\deg h - 2$; so the derivative of UA/D is nonzero. Also $UA/D + VB/D + WC/D = 0$, and $\gcd\{UA/D, VB/D, WC/D\} = 1$. By Theorem 4 below, $\deg(UA/D) < \deg\operatorname{rad}((UA/D)(VB/D)(WC/D))$.

The proof follows Voloch up to this point. Voloch next observes that D divides $\gcd\{UVWA, UVWB, UVWC\} = UVW\gcd\{A, B, C\} = UVW$. I claim that more is true: $D\operatorname{rad}((UA/D)(VB/D)(WC/D))$ divides $UVW\operatorname{rad} ABC$.

(In other words: If $d = \min\{u + a, v + b, w + c\}$ and $\min\{a, b, c\} = 0$ then $d + [u + v + w + a + b + c > 3d] \le u + v + w + [a + b + c > 0]$. Proof: Without loss of generality assume $a = 0$. Then $d \le u \le u + v + w$. If $d < u + v + w$ then $d + [\cdots] \le d + 1 \le u + v + w \le u + v + w + [\cdots]$ as claimed. If $a + b + c > 0$ then $d + [\cdots] \le u + v + w + 1 = u + v + w + [\cdots]$ as claimed. Otherwise $u + v + w + a + b + c = d \le 3d$ so $d + [u + v + w + a + b + c > 3d] = d \le u + v + w \le u + v + w + [\cdots]$ as claimed.)

Thus $\deg UA < \deg(D\operatorname{rad}((UA/D)(VB/D)(WC/D))) \le \deg(UVW\operatorname{rad} ABC)$. Hence $\deg A < \deg(VW\operatorname{rad} ABC) \le 2(\deg A - \deg h) + \deg\operatorname{rad} ABC$; i.e., $\deg A > 2\deg h - \deg\operatorname{rad} ABC$ as claimed. □

Theorem 2. *Let k be a field. Let h be a positive-degree element of the polynomial ring $k[x]$. Assume that $1, 2, 3, \ldots, 3\deg h - 2$ are invertible in k. Let A, B, C be distinct nonzero elements of $k[x]$. If $\gcd\{A, B, C\}$ is coprime to h and $A \equiv B \equiv C \pmod h$ then*

$$\begin{aligned}&\max\{\deg A, \deg B, \deg C\}\\ &\quad > 2\deg h - \deg\operatorname{rad} A - \deg\operatorname{rad} B - \deg\operatorname{rad} C\\ &\qquad + \deg\operatorname{rad}\gcd\{A, B\} + \deg\operatorname{rad}\gcd\{A, C\} + \deg\operatorname{rad}\gcd\{B, C\}.\end{aligned}$$

Proof. Write $G = \gcd\{A, B, C\}$. Then G is coprime to h, so $A/G \equiv B/G \equiv C/G \pmod h$. By Theorem 1,

$$\max\left\{\deg\frac{A}{G}, \deg\frac{B}{G}, \deg\frac{C}{G}\right\} > 2\deg h - \deg\operatorname{rad}\frac{ABC}{GGG} \ge 2\deg h - \deg\operatorname{rad} ABC,$$

so $\max\{\deg A, \deg B, \deg C\} \ge 2\deg h + \deg G - \deg\operatorname{rad} ABC$. But $\deg G \ge \deg\operatorname{rad} G = \deg\operatorname{rad} ABC - \deg\operatorname{rad} A - \deg\operatorname{rad} B - \deg\operatorname{rad} C + \deg\operatorname{rad}\gcd\{A, B\} + \deg\operatorname{rad}\gcd\{A, C\} + \deg\operatorname{rad}\gcd\{B, C\}$ by inclusion-exclusion. □

Theorem 3. *Let k be a field. Let h be a positive-degree element of the polynomial ring $k[x]$. Assume that $1, 2, 3, \ldots, 3\deg h - 2$ are invertible in k. Let S be a finite subset of $k[x] - \{0\}$, with $\#S \ge 3$. If each element of S is coprime to h, and all the elements of S are congruent modulo h, then*

$$\max\{\deg A : A \in S\} > \frac{3\#S - 5}{3\#S - 7}\deg h - \frac{6}{(3\#S - 7)\#S}\deg\operatorname{rad}\prod_{A\in S} A.$$

For example, $\max\{\deg A : A \in S\} > 1.4\deg h - 0.3\deg\operatorname{rad}\prod_{A\in S} A$ if $\#S = 4$, and $\max\{\deg A : A \in S\} > 1.25\deg h - 0.15\deg\operatorname{rad}\prod_{A\in S} A$ if $\#S = 5$.

Proof. Define $d = \max\{\deg A : A \in S\}$ and $e = \deg\operatorname{rad}\prod_{A\in S} A$. By Theorem 2,

$$\begin{aligned}d &> 2\deg h - \deg\operatorname{rad} A - \deg\operatorname{rad} B - \deg\operatorname{rad} C\\ &\quad + \deg\operatorname{rad}\gcd\{A, B\} + \deg\operatorname{rad}\gcd\{A, C\} + \deg\operatorname{rad}\gcd\{B, C\}\end{aligned}$$

for any distinct $A, B, C \in S$. Average this inequality over all choices of A, B, C to see that $d > 2\deg h - 3\operatorname{avg}_A \deg\operatorname{rad} A + 3\operatorname{avg}_{A\neq B}\deg\operatorname{rad}\gcd\{A,B\}$. On the other hand, $e \geq \#S\operatorname{avg}_A\deg\operatorname{rad} A - \binom{\#S}{2}\operatorname{avg}_{A\neq B}\deg\operatorname{rad}\gcd\{A,B\}$ by inclusion-exclusion, so

$$d + \frac{3}{\#S}e > 2\deg h - \frac{3\#S - 9}{2}\operatorname{avg}_{A\neq B}\deg\operatorname{rad}\gcd\{A,B\}.$$

Note that $3\#S - 9 \geq 0$ since $\#S \geq 3$.

One can bound each term $\deg\operatorname{rad}\gcd\{A,B\}$ by the simple observation that $A/\gcd\{A,B\}$ and $B/\gcd\{A,B\}$ are distinct congruent polynomials of degree at most $d - \deg\gcd\{A,B\}$; thus $d - \deg\gcd\{A,B\} \geq \deg h$, so $\deg\operatorname{rad}\gcd\{A,B\} \leq d - \deg h$. Hence

$$d + \frac{3}{\#S}e > 2\deg h - \frac{3\#S-9}{2}(d - \deg h);$$

i.e., $d > ((3\#S-5)/(3\#S-7))\deg h - (6/(3\#S-7)\#S)e$. □

Theorem 4. *Let k be a field. Let A, B, C be nonzero elements of the polynomial ring $k[x]$ with $A + B + C = 0$ and $\gcd\{A,B,C\} = 1$. If $\deg A \geq \deg\operatorname{rad} ABC$ then $A' = 0$.*

In fact, $A' = B' = C' = 0$. As usual, X' means the derivative of X; the relevance of derivatives is that $X/\operatorname{rad} X$ divides X'.

Theorem 4 is a typical statement of the Stothers-Mason ABC theorem, included in this paper for completeness. The following proof is due to Noah Snyder; see [1].

Proof. Note that $\gcd\{A,B\} = \gcd\{A,B,-(A+B)\} = \gcd\{A,B,C\} = 1$. By the same argument, $\gcd\{A,C\} = 1$ and $\gcd\{B,C\} = 1$.

$C/\operatorname{rad} C$ divides both C and C', so it divides $C'B - CB'$. Similarly, $B/\operatorname{rad} B$ divides $C'B - CB'$. Furthermore, $C' = -(A'+B')$, so $C'B - CB' = -(A'+B')B + (A+B)B' = AB' - A'B$; thus $A/\operatorname{rad} A$ divides $C'B - CB'$.

The ratios $A/\operatorname{rad} A, B/\operatorname{rad} B, C/\operatorname{rad} C$ are pairwise coprime, so their product $ABC/\operatorname{rad} ABC$ divides $C'B - CB'$. But by hypothesis $\deg(ABC/\operatorname{rad} ABC) = \deg ABC - \deg\operatorname{rad} ABC \geq \deg BC > \deg(C'B - CB')$; so $C'B - CB' = 0$; so $AB' - A'B = 0$; so A divides $A'B$; but A and B are coprime, so A divides A'; but $\deg A > \deg A'$, so $A' = 0$. □

References

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[2] José Felipe Voloch, *On some subgroups of the multiplicative group of finite rings* (2002). Available from `http://www.ma.utexas.edu/users/voloch/preprint.html`.

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