

Closed, palindromic, rich, privileged, trapezoidal, and balanced words in automatic sequences

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Abstract

We prove that the property of being closed (resp., palindromic, rich, privileged trapezoidal, balanced) is expressible in first-order logic for automatic (and some related) sequences. It therefore follows that the characteristic function of those n for which an automatic sequence \mathbf{x} has a closed (resp., palindromic, privileged, rich, trapezoidal, balanced) factor of length n is itself automatic. For privileged words this requires a new characterization of the privileged property. We compute the corresponding characteristic functions for various famous sequences, such as the Thue-Morse sequence, the Rudin-Shapiro sequence, the ordinary paperfolding sequence, the period-doubling sequence, and the Fibonacci sequence. Finally, we also show that the function counting the total number of palindromic factors in the prefix of length n of a k -automatic sequence is not k -synchronized.

Keywords: decision procedure, closed word, palindrome, rich word, privileged word, trapezoidal word, balanced word, Thue-Morse sequence, Rudin-Shapiro sequence, period-doubling sequence, paperfolding sequence, Fibonacci word.

1 Introduction

Recently a wide variety of different kinds of words have been studied in the combinatorics on words literature, including the six flavors of the title: closed, palindromic, rich, privileged, trapezoidal, and balanced words. In this paper we show that, for k -automatic sequences \mathbf{x} (and some analogs, such as the so-called “Fibonacci-automatic” sequences [19]), the property of a factor belonging to each class is expressible in first-order logic; more precisely, in the theory $\text{Th}(\mathbb{N}, +, n \rightarrow \mathbf{x}[n])$. Previously we did this for unbordered factors [22].

As a consequence of our results, and the pioneering work of Büchi [9] and Hodgson [24], we get that (for example) the characteristic sequence of those lengths for which a factor of that length belongs to each class is k -automatic, and the number of such factors of each length forms a k -regular sequence. (For more about the connection to logic, see the excellent survey [5]. For definitions of k -automatic and k -regular, see, for example, [2].)

Using an implementation of a decision procedure for first-order expressible properties, we can give explicit expressions for the lengths of factors in each class for some famous sequences, such as the Thue-Morse sequence, the Rudin-Shapiro sequence, the period-doubling sequence, and the ordinary paperfolding sequence. For some of the properties, these expressions are surprisingly complicated.

2 Notation and definitions

As usual, if $w = xyz$, we say that x is a prefix of w , that z is a suffix of w , and that y is a factor of w . By $|x|_w$ we mean the number of (possibly overlapping) occurrences of w as a factor of x . For example, $|\text{confrontation}|_{\text{on}} = 3$. By x^R we mean the reversal (sometimes called mirror image) of the word x . Thus, for example, $(\text{drawer})^R = \text{reward}$. By Σ_k we mean the alphabet $\{0, 1, \dots, k-1\}$ of cardinality k .

A factor w of x is said to be *right-special* if both wa and wb are factors of x , for two distinct letters a and b .

A word x is a *palindrome* if $x = x^R$. Examples of palindromes in English include **radar** and **redivider**. Droubay, Justin, and Pirillo [18] proved that every word of length n contains at most $n+1$ distinct palindromic factors (including the empty word). A word is called *rich* if it contains exactly this many. For example, the English words **logology** and **Mississippi** are both rich, with **Mississippi** having the following distinct nonempty palindromic factors:

M, i, s, p, ss, pp, sis, issi, ippi, ssiss, ississi.

For more about rich words, see [21, 17, 6, 7].

A nonempty word w is a *border* of a word x if w is both a prefix and a suffix of x . A word x is called *closed* (aka “complete first return”) if it is of length ≤ 1 , or if it has a border w with $|x|_w = 2$. For example, **abracadabra** is closed because of the border **abra**, while **alfalfa** is closed because of the border **alfa**. The latter example shows that, in the definition, the prefix and suffix are allowed to overlap. For more about closed words, see [3].

A word x is called *privileged* if it is of length ≤ 1 , or it has a border w with $|x|_w = 2$ that is itself privileged. Clearly every privileged word is closed, but **mama** is an example of an English word that is closed but not privileged. For more about privileged words, see [26, 28, 29, 20].

A word x is called *trapezoidal* if it has, for each $n \geq 0$, at most $n+1$ distinct factors of length n . Since for $n = 1$ the definition requires at most 2 distinct factors, this means that

every trapezoidal word can be defined over an alphabet of at most 2 letters. An example of a trapezoidal word in English is the word **deeded**. See, for example, [16, 15, 17, 8].

A word x is called *balanced* if, for all factors y, z of the same length of x and all letters a of the alphabet, the inequality $||y|_a - |z|_a| \leq 1$ holds. Otherwise it is *unbalanced*. An example of a balanced word in English is **banana**.

We use the terms “infinite sequence” and “infinite word” as synonyms. In this paper, names of infinite words are given in the **bold** font. All infinite words are indexed starting at position 0. If $\mathbf{x} = x_0x_1x_2 \cdots$ is an infinite word, with each x_i a single letter, then by $\mathbf{x}[i..j]$ for $j \geq i - 1$ we mean the finite word $x_ix_{i+1} \cdots x_j$. By $[i..j]$ we mean the set $\{i, i + 1, \dots, j\}$.

3 Sequences

In this section we define the five sequences we will study. For more information about these sequences, see, for example, [2].

The *Thue-Morse sequence* $\mathbf{t} = t_0t_1t_2 \cdots = 01101001 \cdots$ is defined by the relations $t_0 = 0$, $t_{2n} = t_n$, and $t_{2n+1} = 1 - t_n$ for $n \geq 0$. It is also expressible as the fixed point, starting with 0, of the morphism $\mu : 0 \rightarrow 01, 1 \rightarrow 10$.

The *Rudin-Shapiro sequence* $\mathbf{r} = r_0r_1r_2 \cdots = 00010010 \cdots$ is defined by the relations $r_0 = 0$, $r_3 = 1$, $r_{2n} = r_n$, $r_{4n+1} = r_n$, $r_{8n+7} = r_{2n+1}$, $r_{16n+3} = r_{8n+3}$, $r_{16n+11} = r_{4n+3}$ for $n \geq 0$. It is also expressible as the image, under the coding $\tau : n \rightarrow \lfloor n/2 \rfloor$, of the fixed point, starting with 0, of the morphism $\rho : 0 \rightarrow 01, 1 \rightarrow 02, 2 \rightarrow 31, 3 \rightarrow 32$.

The *ordinary paperfolding sequence* $\mathbf{p} = p_0p_1p_2 \cdots = 00100110 \cdots$ is defined by the relations $p_{2n+1} = p_n$, $p_{4n} = 0$, $p_{4n+2} = 1$ for $n \geq 0$. It is also expressible as the image, under the coding τ above, of the fixed point, starting with 0, of the morphism $\rho : 0 \rightarrow 01, 1 \rightarrow 21, 2 \rightarrow 03, 3 \rightarrow 23$.

The *period-doubling sequence* $\mathbf{d} = d_0d_1d_2 \cdots = 10111010 \cdots$ is defined by the relations $d_{2n} = 1$, $d_{4n+1} = 0$, and $d_{4n+3} = d_n$ for $n \geq 0$. It is also expressible as the fixed point, starting with 1, of the morphism $\delta : 1 \rightarrow 10, 0 \rightarrow 11$.

The *Fibonacci sequence* $\mathbf{f} = f_0f_1f_2 \cdots = 01001010 \cdots$ is the fixed point, starting with 0, of the morphism $\varphi : 0 \rightarrow 01, 1 \rightarrow 0$.

4 Common predicates

Before we see how rich words, privileged words, closed words, etc. can be phrased as first-order predicates, let us define a few basic predicates.

First, we have the two basic predicates $\text{IN}(i, r, s)$, which is true if and only if $i \in [r..s]$:

$$\text{IN}(i, r, s) := (i \geq r) \wedge (i \leq s),$$

and $\text{SUBS}(i, j, m, n)$, which is true if and only if $[i..i + m - 1] \subseteq [j..j + n - 1]$:

$$\text{SUBS}(i, j, m, n) := (j \leq i) \wedge (i + m \leq j + n).$$

Next, we have the predicate

$$\text{FACTOREQ}(i, j, n) := \forall k (k < n) \implies (\mathbf{x}[i+k] = \mathbf{x}[j+k]),$$

which checks whether $\mathbf{x}[i..i+n-1]$ and $\mathbf{x}[j..j+n-1]$ are equal by comparing them at corresponding positions, $\mathbf{x}[i+k]$ and $\mathbf{x}[j+k]$, for $k = 0, \dots, n-1$. By a similar principle, we can compare $\mathbf{x}[i..i+n-1]$ with $\mathbf{x}[j..j+n-1]^R$, but in this paper we only need the special case $i = j$, i.e., palindromes:

$$\text{PAL}(i, n) := \forall k (k < n) \implies (\mathbf{x}[i+k] = \mathbf{x}[i+n-1-k]).$$

From FACTOREQ, we derive other useful predicates. For instance, the predicate

$$\text{OCCURS}(i, j, m, n) := (m \leq n) \wedge (\exists k (k+m \leq n) \wedge \text{FACTOREQ}(i, j+k, m))$$

tests whether $\mathbf{x}[i..i+m-1]$ is a factor of $\mathbf{x}[j..j+n-1]$. We also define

$$\text{BORDER}(i, m, n) := \text{IN}(m, 1, n) \wedge \text{FACTOREQ}(i, i+n-m, m),$$

which is true if and only if $\mathbf{x}[i..i+m-1]$ is a border of $\mathbf{x}[i..i+n-1]$.

In the next five sections, we obtain our results using the implementation of a decision procedure for the corresponding properties, written by Hamoon Mousavi, and called **Walnut**, to prove theorems by machine computation. The software is available for download at

<https://cs.uwaterloo.ca/~shallit/papers.html>.

All of the predicates in this paper can easily be translated into Hamoon Mousavi's **Walnut** program. Files for the examples in this paper are available at the same URL as above, so the reader can easily run and verify the results.

5 Closed words

We can create a predicate $\text{CLOSED}(i, n)$ that asserts that $\mathbf{x}[i..i+n-1]$ is closed as follows:

$$(n \leq 1) \vee (\exists j (j < n) \wedge \text{BORDER}(i, j, n) \wedge \neg \text{OCCURS}(i, i+1, j, n-2))$$

Theorem 1. (a) *There is a closed factor of Thue-Morse of every length.*

(b) *There is a 15-state automaton accepting the base-2 representation of those n for which there is a closed factor of Rudin-Shapiro of length n .*

(c) *There is an 11-state automaton accepting the base-2 representation of those n for which there is a closed factor of the paperfolding sequence of length n . It is depicted in Figure 1.*

(d) *There is a closed factor of the period-doubling sequence of every length.*

(e) *There is a closed factor of the Fibonacci sequence of every length.*

From this, using the technique in [22], we can obtain the following relations:

$$\begin{aligned}
f(8n) &= -2f(2n+1) + f(4n) + 2f(4n+1) \\
f(8n+1) &= -2f(2n+1) + 3f(4n+1) \\
f(8n+3) &= -2f(2n+1) + 2f(4n+1) + f(4n+3) \\
f(8n+4) &= 2f(2n+1) - \frac{5}{2}f(4n+1) + f(4n+2) + \frac{1}{2}f(4n+3) + f(8n+2) \\
f(8n+5) &= 2f(4n+3) \\
f(8n+7) &= -4f(2n+1) + 2f(4n+1) - 2f(4n+3) + 2f(8n+6) \\
f(16n+2) &= -6f(2n+1) + \frac{13}{2}f(4n+1) + \frac{1}{2}f(4n+3) \\
f(16n+6) &= -\frac{1}{2}f(4n+1) + f(4n+2) + \frac{3}{2}f(4n+3) + f(8n+2) \\
f(16n+10) &= 2f(4n+3) + f(8n+6) \\
f(32n+14) &= -2f(2n+1) - \frac{7}{2}f(4n+1) + 3f(4n+2) + \frac{7}{2}f(4n+3) + 3f(8n+2) \\
f(32n+30) &= 24f(2n+1) - 6f(4n+1) + 14f(4n+3) - 4f(8n+2) \\
&\quad -12f(8n+6) + 5f(16n+14).
\end{aligned}$$

From these we can verify the following theorem by a tedious induction on n :

Theorem 2. *Let $n \geq 8$ and let $k \geq -1$ be an integer. Then*

$$f(n) = \begin{cases} 2^{k+4}, & \text{if } 15 \cdot 2^k < n \leq 18 \cdot 2^k; \\ 2n - 20 \cdot 2^k - 2, & \text{if } 18 \cdot 2^k < n \leq 19 \cdot 2^k; \\ 56 \cdot 2^k - 2n + 2, & \text{if } 19 \cdot 2^k < n \leq 20 \cdot 2^k; \\ 4n - 64 \cdot 2^k - 4, & \text{if } 20 \cdot 2^k < n \leq 22 \cdot 2^k; \\ 112 \cdot 2^k - 4n + 4, & \text{if } 22 \cdot 2^k < n \leq 24 \cdot 2^k; \\ 2^{k+4}, & \text{if } 24 \cdot 2^k < n \leq 28 \cdot 2^k; \\ 8n - 208 \cdot 2^k - 8, & \text{if } 28 \cdot 2^k < n \leq 30 \cdot 2^k. \end{cases}$$

6 Palindromic words

Palindromes in words have a long history of being studied; for example, see [1].

It is already known that many aspects of palindromes in k -automatic sequences are expressible in first-order logic; see, for example, [13].

In this section, we turn to a variation on palindromic words, the so-called “maximal palindromes”. For us, a factor x of an infinite word \mathbf{w} is a *maximal palindrome* if x is a palindrome, while no factor of the form axa for a a single letter occurs in \mathbf{w} . This differs slightly from the existing definitions, which deal with the maximality of *occurrences* [25].

The property of being a maximal palindrome is easily expressible in terms of predicates defined above:

$$\text{MAXPAL}(i, n) := \text{PAL}(i, n) \wedge (\forall j ((j \geq 1) \wedge \text{FACTOREQ}(i, j, n)) \implies \mathbf{x}[j-1] \neq \mathbf{x}[j+n])$$

Using this, and our program, we can easily prove the following result:

Theorem 3. (a) *The Thue-Morse sequence contains maximal palindromes of length $3 \cdot 4^n$ for each $n \geq 0$, and no others. These palindromes are of the form $\mu^{2^n}(010)$ and $\mu^{2^n}(101)$ for $n \geq 0$.*

(b) *The Rudin-Shapiro sequence contains exactly 8 maximal palindromes. They are*

0100010, 0001000, 1110111, 1011101, 0010000100, 1101111011,
1110110111, 10000100100001.

(c) *The ordinary paperfolding sequence contains exactly 6 maximal palindromes. They are*

001100, 110011, 011000110, 100111001, 1000110110001, 0111001001110.

(d) *The period-doubling sequence contains maximal palindromes of lengths $3 \cdot 2^n - 1$ for all $n \geq 0$, and no others.*

(e) *The Fibonacci sequence contains no maximal palindromes at all.*

We now turn to a result about counting palindromes in automatic sequences. To state it, we first need to describe representations of integers in base k . By $(n)_k$ we mean the string over the alphabet $\Sigma_k := \{0, 1, \dots, k-1\}$ representing n in base k , and having no leading zeroes. This is generalized to representing r -tuples of integers by changing the alphabet to Σ_k^r , and padding shorter representations on the left, if necessary, with leading zeroes. Thus, for example, $(6, 3)_2 = [1, 0][1, 1][0, 1]$, where the first coordinates spell out 110 (or 6 in base 2), and the second coordinates spell out 011 (or 3 in base 2). By $[w]_k$, for a word w , we mean the value of w when interpreted as an integer in base k .

Next, we need the concept of k -synchronization [12, 10, 11, 23]. We say a function $f(n)$ is k -synchronized if there is a finite automaton accepting the language $\{(n, f(n))_k : n \geq 0\}$.

The following is a useful lemma:

Lemma 4. *If $(f(n))_{n \geq 0}$ is a k -synchronized sequence, and f is unbounded, then there exists a constant $c > 0$ such that $f(n) \geq cn$ infinitely often.*

Proof. Since f is unbounded, there exists $n > 0$ such that $f(n) > k^N$, where N is the number of states in the minimal automaton accepting L^R , where $L = \{(n, f(n))_k : n \geq 0\}$. Apply the pumping lemma to the string $z = (n, f(n))_k^R$. It says that we can write $z = uvw$, where $|uv| \leq n$ and w has nonzero elements in both components. Then, letting $(n_i, f(n_i)) = [(uv^i w)^R]_k$ we see that this subsequence has the desired property. \square

Theorem 5. *The function counting the number of distinct palindromes in the prefix of length n of a k -automatic sequence is not necessarily k -synchronized.*

Proof. Our proof is based on two infinite words, $\mathbf{a} = (a_i)_{i \geq 0}$ and $\mathbf{b} = (b_i)_{i \geq 0}$.

The word \mathbf{a} is defined as follows:

$$a_i = \begin{cases} (k \bmod 2) + 1, & \text{if there exists } k \text{ such that } 4^{k+1} - 4^k \leq i \leq 4^{k+1} + 4^k; \\ 0, & \text{otherwise.} \end{cases}$$

The word \mathbf{b} is defined as follows:

$$b_i = \begin{cases} (k \bmod 2) + 1, & \text{if there exists } k \text{ such that } 4^{k+1} - 4^k < i < 4^{k+1} + 4^k; \\ 0, & \text{otherwise.} \end{cases}$$

We leave the easy proof that \mathbf{a} and \mathbf{b} are 4-automatic to the reader.

We now compare the palindromes in \mathbf{a} to those in \mathbf{b} . From the definition, every palindrome in either sequence is clearly in

$$0^* + 1^* + 2^* + 0^*1^*0^* + 0^*2^*0^*.$$

Since \mathbf{a} has longer blocks of 1's and 2s than \mathbf{b} does, there may be some palindromes of the form 1^i or 2^i that occur in a prefix of \mathbf{a} , but not in the corresponding prefix of \mathbf{b} . Conversely, \mathbf{b} may contain palindromes of the form 0^i that do not occur in the corresponding prefix of \mathbf{a} . The net difference, if any, is at most a constant.

Call an occurrence of a factor in a word *novel* if it is the first occurrence in the word. The palindromes not of the form a^i , where $a \in \{0, 1, 2\}$, are of the form $0^i1^j0^i$ or $0^i2^j0^i$, and must be centered at a position that is a power of 4. It is not hard to see that if $\mathbf{a}[i..i+n-1]$ is a novel palindrome occurrence of this form in \mathbf{a} , then $\mathbf{b}[i..i+n-1]$ is also a novel palindrome occurrence of this form.

On the other hand, for each $k \geq 1$, there are two palindromes that occur in \mathbf{b} but not \mathbf{a} . The first is of the form 01^j0 or 02^j0 , since the corresponding factor of \mathbf{a} is either $1 \cdots 1$ or $2 \cdots 2$, and hence has been previously accounted for (as a palindrome of the form 1^* or 2^*). Second, there is a factor of the form $0^*1^*0^*$ or $0^*2^*0^*$ in \mathbf{b} which appears as $20^*1^*0^*$ or $10^*2^*0^*$ in \mathbf{a} because the neighbouring block of 1's or 2's is slightly wider in \mathbf{a} and therefore slightly closer. We conclude that the length- n prefix of \mathbf{b} has $2 \log_4 n + O(1)$ more palindromes than the length- n prefix of \mathbf{a} .

Now suppose, contrary to what we want to prove, that the number of palindromes in the prefix of length n of a k -automatic sequence is k -synchronized. In particular, the sequence \mathbf{a} (resp., \mathbf{b}) is 4-automatic, so the number of palindromes in $\mathbf{a}[0..n-1]$ (resp., $\mathbf{b}[0..n-1]$) is 4-synchronized. Now, using a result of Carpi and Maggi [12, Prop. 2.1], the number of palindromes in $\mathbf{b}[1..n]$ minus the number of palindromes in $\mathbf{a}[1..n]$ is 4-synchronized. But from above this difference is $2 \log_4 n + O(1)$, which by Lemma 4 cannot be 4-synchronized. This is a contradiction. \square

7 Rich words

As we have seen, a word x is rich if and only if it has $|x| + 1$ distinct palindromic subwords. As stated, it does not seem easy to phrase this in first-order logic. Luckily, there is an

alternative characterization of rich words, which can be found in [18, Prop. 3]: a word w is rich if every prefix p of w has a palindromic suffix s that occurs only once in p . This property can be stated as follows:

$$\text{RICH}(i, n) := \forall m \text{ IN}(m, 1, n) \implies (\exists j \text{ SUBS}(j, i, 1, m) \wedge \text{PAL}(j, i + m - j) \wedge \neg \text{OCCURS}(j, i, i + m - j, m - 1)).$$

Finally, we can express the property that \mathbf{x} has a rich factor of length n as follows:

$$\exists i \text{ RICH}(i, n).$$

Theorem 6. (a) *The Thue-Morse sequence contains exactly 161 distinct rich factors, the longest being of length 16.*

(b) *The Rudin-Shapiro sequence contains exactly 975 distinct rich factors, the longest being of length 30.*

(c) *The ordinary paperfolding sequence contains exactly 494 distinct rich factors, the longest being of length 23.*

(d) *The period-doubling sequence has a rich factor of every length. In fact, every factor of the period-doubling sequence is rich.*

(e) *Every factor of the Fibonacci sequence is rich.*

Of course, (e) was already well known, in much greater generality: Droubay, Justin, and Pirillo [18] proved that every factor of every episturmian word is rich.

8 Privileged words

The recursive definition for privileged words given in Section 2 is not obviously expressible in first-order logic. However, we can prove a new, alternative characterization of these words, as follows:

Let us say a word w has property P if for all n , $1 \leq n \leq |w|$, there exists a word x such that $1 \leq |x| \leq n$, and x occurs exactly once in the first n symbols of w , as a prefix, and x also occurs exactly once in the last n symbols of w , as a suffix.

Lemma 7. *If w is a bordered word with property P , then every border also has property P .*

Proof. Let z be a border of w . Given any $1 \leq n \leq |z|$, property P for w says that there exists a border x of w such that $1 \leq |x| \leq n$, and x occurs exactly once in the first (resp., last) n symbols in w . Then observe that the first (resp., last) n symbols of w are precisely the first (resp., last) n symbols of z . Since x is also a border of z , it follows that z has property P . \square

Theorem 8. *A word w is privileged if and only if it has property P .*

Proof. If w is privileged, then, by definition, there is a sequence of privileged words $w = w_0, w_1, \dots, w_{k-1}, w_k$ such that $|w_k| = 1$ and for all i , w_{i+1} is a prefix and suffix of w_i and occurs nowhere else in w_i . Given an integer n , let x be the largest w_i such that $|w_i| \leq n$. Either $i = 0$ because $n = |w|$ and everything works out, or $|w_{i-1}| > n$. Then w_i is a prefix of w_{i-1} (and therefore a prefix of w), and there is no other occurrence of w_i in w_{i-1} (which includes the first n symbols of w). Similarly, w_i is a suffix of w , but does not occur again in the last n symbols of w .

For the other direction, we assume the word has property P and use induction on the length of w . If $|w| = 1$ then the word is privileged immediately. Otherwise, take $n = |w| - 1$ and find the corresponding x promised by property P . Then x is both a prefix and a suffix of w , so it has property P . It is also shorter than w , so by induction, x is privileged. Then x is a privileged prefix and suffix of w which does not occur anywhere else in w (by property P), so w is privileged. \square

This property can be represented as a predicate in two different ways. First, let us write a predicate that is true if and only if the prefix $\mathbf{x}[i..i + m - 1]$ occurs exactly once in $\mathbf{x}[i..i + n - 1]$:

$$\text{UNIQUEPREF}(i, m, n) := \forall j \text{IN}(j, 1, n - m - 1) \implies \neg \text{FACTOREQ}(i, i + j, m).$$

There is a similar expression for whether the suffix $\mathbf{x}[i + n - m..i + n - 1]$ occurs exactly once in $\mathbf{x}[i..i + n - 1]$:

$$\text{UNIQUESUFF}(i, m, n) := \forall j \text{IN}(j, 1, n - m - 1) \implies \neg \text{FACTOREQ}(i + n - m, i + n - m - j, m).$$

And finally, our first characterization of privileged words is

$$\begin{aligned} \text{PRIV}(i, n) := & (n \leq 1) \vee (\forall m \text{IN}(m, 1, n) \implies \\ & (\exists p \text{IN}(p, 1, m) \wedge \text{BORDER}(i, p, n) \wedge \text{UNIQUEPREF}(i, p, m) \wedge \text{UNIQUESUFF}(i + n - m, p, m))). \end{aligned}$$

Alternatively, we can write

$$\begin{aligned} \text{PRIV}'(i, n) := & (n \leq 1) \vee (\forall m \text{IN}(m, 1, n) \implies \\ & (\exists p \text{IN}(p, 1, m) \wedge \text{BORDER}(i, p, n) \wedge \\ & \neg \text{OCCURS}(i, i + 1, p, m - 1) \wedge \neg \text{OCCURS}(i, i + n - m, p, m - 1))). \end{aligned}$$

Theorem 9. (a) *There is a 46-state automaton accepting the base-2 expansions of those n for which the Thue-Morse sequence has a privileged factor of length n .*

(b) *There is an 84-state automaton accepting the base-2 expansions of those n for which the Rudin-Shapiro sequence has a privileged factor of length n .*

(c) *There is a 47-state automaton accepting the base-2 expansions of those n for which the paperfolding sequence has a privileged factor of length n .*

(d) The set of n for which the period-doubling sequence has a privileged factor of length n is

$$\{0, 2\} \cup \{2n + 1 : n \geq 0\}.$$

There is a 4-state automaton accepting the base-2 expansions of those n for which the period-doubling sequence has a privileged factor of length n . It is illustrated in Figure 2.

(e) There is a 20-state automaton accepting the Fibonacci representations of those pairs (i, n) for which $\mathbf{f}[i..i + n - 1]$ is privileged. It is illustrated in Figure 3. The Fibonacci word has privileged factors of every length. If n is even there is exactly one privileged factor. If n is odd there are exactly two privileged factors.

Remark 10. For (a)–(d) we used PRIV and for (e) we used PRIV'.

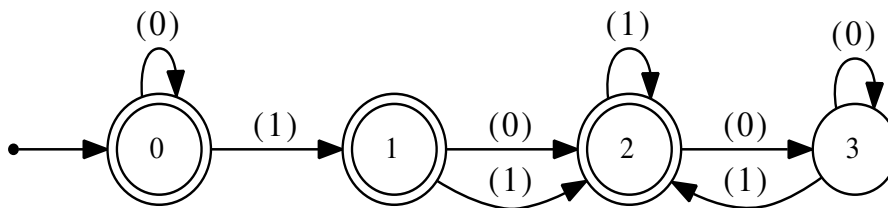


Figure 2: Automaton for lengths of privileged factors of the period-doubling word

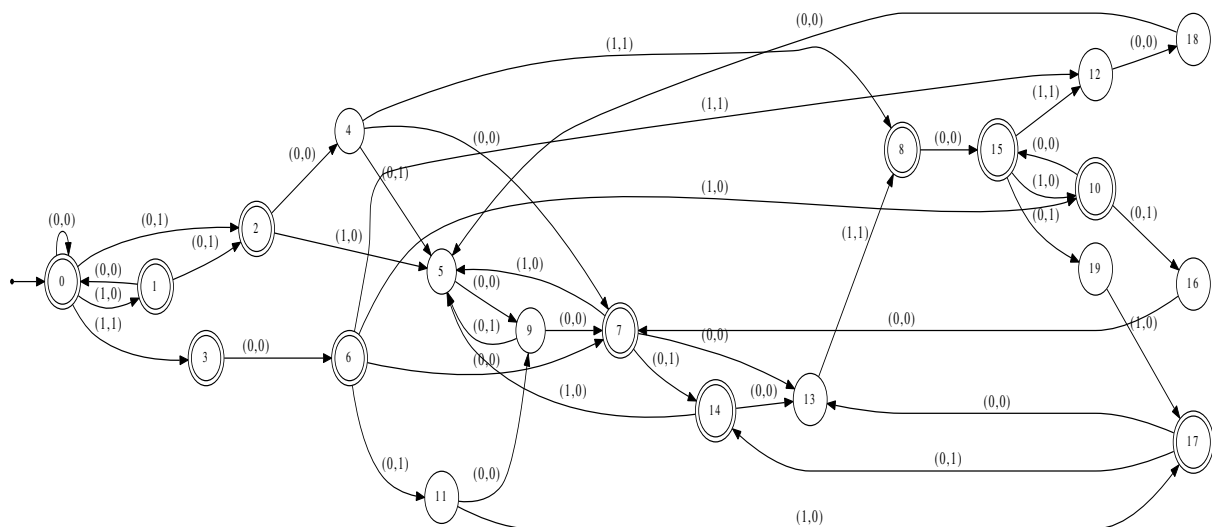


Figure 3: Automaton for privileged factors of the Fibonacci word

We now turn to recovering some of the results of [29] on the number $a(n)$ of privileged factors of the Thue-Morse sequence. Here are the first few values of this sequence

$$v = [1 \ 1 \ 0 \ 0 \ 1 \ 0]$$

$$w = [1 \ 0 \ 1 \ 1 \ 0 \ 0 \ 0 \ 0 \ 1 \ 0 \ 0 \ 0 \ 1 \ 1 \ 0 \ 0 \ 0 \ 1 \ 0 \ 0 \ 0 \ 1 \ 0 \ 0 \ 0 \ 1 \ 0 \ 0 \ 1 \ 1]$$

We can then obtain relations for the sequence $(a(n))_{n \geq 0}$:

$$a(4n + 3) = a(4n + 1)$$

$$a(8n + 1) = a(4n + 1)$$

$$a(8n + 5) = 0$$

$$a(16n + 6) = a(4n + 1) + a(4n + 2) - \frac{1}{2}a(16n + 2) + \frac{1}{2}a(16n + 4)$$

$$a(16n + 8) = 3a(4n + 1) + 3a(4n + 2) - \frac{1}{2}a(16n + 2) - \frac{3}{2}a(16n + 4)$$

$$a(16n + 10) = 3a(4n + 1) + 3a(4n + 2) - \frac{1}{2}a(16n + 2) - \frac{3}{2}a(16n + 4)$$

$$a(16n + 12) = a(4n + 1) + a(4n + 2) - \frac{1}{2}a(16n + 2) + \frac{1}{2}a(16n + 4)$$

$$a(32n) = a(2n + 1) - \frac{1}{2}a(4n + 1) + 3a(8n + 2) - 3a(8n + 4)$$

$$a(32n + 2) = -a(2n + 1) + a(4n + 1) + 3a(8n + 2) - 2a(8n + 4)$$

$$a(32n + 4) = -a(2n + 1) + a(4n + 1) + a(8n + 2)$$

$$a(32n + 14) = -a(2n + 1) + a(8n + 4)$$

$$a(32n + 16) = -a(2n + 1) + a(8n + 4)$$

$$a(32n + 20) = a(32n + 18)$$

$$a(32n + 30) = 2a(2n + 1) + a(8n + 2) - 3a(8n + 4) + 2a(8n + 6) - a(32n + 18)$$

$$a(64n + 18) = a(4n + 1)$$

$$a(64n + 50) = 0$$

We can also do the same thing for the number of privileged palindromes $(b(n))_{n \geq 0}$ in the Thue-Morse sequence. Here are the first few values:

n	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
$b(n)$	1	2	2	2	2	0	4	0	4	0	4	0	4	0	0	0	0

We omit the details and just present the computed relations:

$$\begin{aligned}
b(4n + 3) &= b(4n + 1) \\
b(8n + 1) &= b(4n + 1) \\
b(8n + 4) &= b(8n + 2) \\
b(8n + 5) &= 0 \\
b(16n + 6) &= b(4n + 1) + b(4n + 2) \\
b(16n + 8) &= b(4n + 1) + b(4n + 2) \\
b(16n + 10) &= b(4n + 1) + b(4n + 2) \\
b(16n + 14) &= -b(4n + 1) + b(16n + 2) \\
b(32n) &= b(2n + 1) - \frac{1}{2}b(4n + 1) \\
b(32n + 2) &= -b(2n + 1) + b(4n + 1) + b(8n + 2) \\
b(32n + 16) &= -b(2n + 1) + b(8n + 2) \\
b(64n + 18) &= b(4n + 1) \\
b(64n + 50) &= 0
\end{aligned}$$

9 Trapezoidal words

Trapezoidal words have many different characterizations. The characterization that proves useful to us is the following [8, Prop. 2.8]: a word w is trapezoidal if and only if $|w| = R_w + K_w$. Here R_w is the minimal length ℓ for which w contains no right-special factor of length ℓ , and K_w is the minimal length ℓ for which there is a length- ℓ suffix of w that appears nowhere else in w .

This can be translated into $\text{Th}(\mathbb{N}, +, n \rightarrow \mathbf{x}[n])$ as follows: $\text{RTSP}(j, n, p)$ is true if and only if $\mathbf{x}[j..j + n - 1]$ has a right special factor of length p , and false otherwise:

$$\begin{aligned}
\text{RTSP}(j, n, p) &:= \exists r \exists s (\text{SUBS}(r, j, p + 1, n) \wedge \text{SUBS}(s, j, p + 1, n) \wedge \\
&\quad \text{FACTOREQ}(r, s, p) \wedge \mathbf{x}[s + p] \neq \mathbf{x}[r + p]).
\end{aligned}$$

$\text{MINRT}(j, n, p)$ is true if and only if p is the smallest integer such that $\mathbf{x}[j..j + n - 1]$ has no right special factor of length p :

$$\text{MINRT}(j, n, p) := (\neg \text{RTSP}(j, n, p)) \wedge (\forall c (\neg \text{RTSP}(j, n, c)) \implies (c \geq p)).$$

$\text{UNREPSUF}(j, n, q)$ is true if and only if the suffix of length q of $\mathbf{x}[j..j + n - 1]$ is unrepeated in $\mathbf{x}[j..j + n - 1]$:

$$\text{UNREPSUF}(j, n, q) := \neg \text{OCCURS}(j + n - q, j, q, n - 1).$$

$\text{MINUNREPSUF}(j, n, q)$ is true if and only if q is the length of the shortest unrepeated suffix of $\mathbf{x}[j..j + n - 1]$:

$$\text{MINUNREPSUF}(j, n, q) := \text{UNREPSUF}(j, n, q) \wedge (\forall c \text{ UNREPSUF}(j, n, c) \implies (c \geq q)).$$

$\text{TRAP}(j, n)$ is true if and only if $\mathbf{x}[j..j + n - 1]$ is trapezoidal:

$$\text{TRAP}(j, n) := \exists p \exists q (n = p + q) \wedge \text{MINUNREPSUF}(j, n, p) \wedge \text{MINRT}(j, n, q).$$

Finally, we can determine those n for which \mathbf{x} has a trapezoidal factor of length n as follows:

$$\exists j \text{TRAP}(j, n).$$

Theorem 11. (a) *There are exactly 43 trapezoidal factors of the Thue-Morse sequence. The longest is of length 8.*

(b) *There are exactly 185 trapezoidal factors of the Rudin-Shapiro sequence. The longest is of length 12.*

(c) *There are exactly 57 trapezoidal factors of the ordinary paperfolding sequence. The longest is of length 8.*

(d) *There are exactly 77 trapezoidal factors of the period-doubling sequence. The longest is of length 15.*

(e) *Every factor of the Fibonacci word is trapezoidal.*

For parts (b) and (c) above, we used the least-significant-digit first representation in order to have the computation terminate.

10 Balanced words

Our definition of balanced word above does not obviously lend itself to a definition in first-order arithmetic. However, for binary words, there is an alternative characterization (due to Coven and Hedlund [14]) that we can use: a binary word w is unbalanced if and only if there exists a palindrome v such that both $0v0$ and $1v1$ are factors of w .

Thus we can define $\text{UNBAL}(i, n)$, a predicate which is true if and only if $\mathbf{x}[i..i + n - 1]$ is unbalanced, as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} \exists m (m \geq 2) \wedge (\exists j \exists k (\text{SUBS}(j, i, m, n) \wedge \text{SUBS}(k, i, m, n) \wedge \text{PAL}(j, m) \\ \wedge \text{PAL}(k, m) \wedge \text{FACTOREQ}(j + 1, k + 1, m - 2) \wedge \mathbf{x}[j] \neq \mathbf{x}[k])) \end{aligned}$$

Theorem 12. (a) *The Thue-Morse word has exactly 41 balanced factors. The longest is of length 8. The Thue-Morse word has unbalanced factors of length n exactly when $n \geq 4$.*

(b) *The Rudin-Shapiro word has exactly 157 balanced factors. The longest is of length 12. The Rudin-Shapiro word has unbalanced factors of length n exactly when $n \geq 4$.*

(c) *The ordinary paperfolding word has exactly 51 balanced factors. The longest is of length 8. The ordinary paperfolding word has unbalanced factors of length n exactly when $n \geq 4$.*

- (d) *The period-doubling word has exactly 69 balanced factors. The longest is of length 15. The period-doubling word has unbalanced factors of length n exactly when $n \geq 6$.*
- (e) *All factors of the Fibonacci word are balanced.*

Of course, (e) was already well known, in much greater generality: every factor of every Sturmian word is balanced [27].

11 Consequences

As a consequence we get the following theorem:

Theorem 13. *Suppose \mathbf{x} is a k -automatic sequence. Then*

- (a) *The characteristic sequence of those n for which \mathbf{x} has a closed (resp., palindromic, maximal palindromic, privileged, rich, trapezoidal, balanced) factor of length n is k -automatic.*
- (b) *The sequence counting the number of closed (resp., palindromic, maximal palindromic, privileged, rich, trapezoidal, balanced) factors of length n is k -regular.*
- (c) *It is decidable, given a k -automatic sequence, whether it contains arbitrarily long closed (resp., palindromic, maximal palindromic, privileged, rich, trapezoidal, balanced) factors.*
- (d) *There exists a function $g(k, \ell, n)$ such that if a k -automatic sequence \mathbf{w} taking values over an alphabet of size ℓ , generated by an n -state automaton, has at least one closed (resp., palindromic, maximal palindromic, privileged, rich, trapezoidal, balanced) factor, then it has a factor of length $\leq g(k, \ell, n)$. The function g does not depend on \mathbf{w} .*
- (e) *There exists a function $h(k, \ell, n)$ such that if a k -automatic sequence \mathbf{w} taking values over an alphabet of size ℓ , generated by an n -state automaton, has a closed (resp., palindromic, maximal palindromic, privileged, rich, trapezoidal, balanced) factor of length $\geq h(k, \ell, n)$, then it has arbitrarily large such factors. The function h does not depend on \mathbf{w} .*

Proof. Parts (a) and (c) follow from, for example, [30, Theorem 1]. For part (b) see [13]. Parts (d) and (e) follow from the construction converting the logical predicate for the property to an automaton. \square

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