

FRENET TYPE FORMULAE FOR 2, 3-PLANES IN MINKOWSKI SPACE \mathbb{L}^6

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ABSTRACT. We prove the Frenet type formulae for smooth one-parameter family of 2-planes or 3-planes in the Lorentz-Minkowski space \mathbb{L}^6 . We consider two cases separately: the planes are spacelike or the planes are timelike.

1. Introduction

The 6-dimensional Lorentz-Minkowski space \mathbb{L}^6 is \mathbb{R}^6 endowed with the Lorentzian metric

$$g(u, v) = \sum_{i=1}^5 u_i v_i - u_6 v_6, \\ u = (u_1, \dots, u_6), v = (v_1, \dots, v_6).$$

A vector $u \in \mathbb{L}^6$ is spacelike if $g(u, u) > 0$, timelike if $g(u, u) < 0$ and null or lightlike if $g(u, u) = 0$ [3]. For a smooth one-parameter family of 2 or 3-planes P_t in \mathbb{L}^6 , we prove Frenet type formulae for a basis of \mathbb{L}^6 which includes the basis of P_t . We consider three cases separately: I) P_t is spacelike, that is, $g|_{P_t}$ is positive definite, II) P_t is timelike, that is, $g|_{P_t}$ is nondegenerate but not positive definite and III) P_t is null, that is, $g|_{P_t}$ is degenerate.

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The Frenet formulae for a smooth regular curve in the 3-dimensional Euclidean space \mathbb{E}^3 says that

$$\begin{pmatrix} T \\ N \\ B \end{pmatrix}' = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & \kappa & 0 \\ -\kappa & 0 & \tau \\ 0 & -\tau & 0 \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} T \\ N \\ B \end{pmatrix},$$

where $'$ denotes the differentiation with respect to the arclength, and T, N and B are the frenet frames, and κ is the curvature and τ is the torsion of the curve. We can use the Frenet formula in the study of ruled surfaces in \mathbb{E}^3 : If we consider T as the direction vector of the lines in the ruled surface, then the Frenet formulae gives a description of the behavior of the lines.

Generalizing the Frenet formulae, Frank and Giering studied the behavior of smooth one-parameter family of k -planes in the Euclidean space \mathbb{E}^n to classify $(k + 1)$ -dimensional minimal submanifolds in \mathbb{E}^n foliated by k -planes with $k < n - 1$ [1]: Let P_t be a smooth one-parameter family of k -planes with orthonormal basis $\{f_1(t), f_2(t), \dots, f_k(t)\}$ for $k < n - 1$ and $t \in I$. The subspace

$$A(t) = Span\{f_1(t), \dots, f_k(t), f_1'(t), \dots, f_k'(t)\}$$

is called the asymptotic bundle. Then $\dim A(t) = k + m$ with $0 \leq m \leq k$. Frank and Giering showed that there exists an orthonormal basis of \mathbb{R}^n

$$\{e_1(t), \dots, e_k(t), e_{k+1}(t), \dots, e_{k+m}(t), e_{k+m+1}(t), \dots, e_n(t)\}$$

on some subinterval $J \subset I$, for which $Span\{e_1(t), \dots, e_k(t)\} = Span\{f_1(t), \dots, f_k(t)\}$, $A(t) = Span\{e_1(t), \dots, e_k(t), e_{k+1}(t), \dots, e_{k+m}(t)\}$ and the following equations hold (see Satz 5 in [1], [2]):

$$\begin{aligned} e_i' &= \alpha_i^j e_j + \kappa^i e_{k+i} \\ e_{m+\rho}' &= \alpha_{m+\rho}^l e_l \\ e_{k+i}' &= -\kappa^i e_i + \tau_i^l e_{k+l} + \omega^i e_{k+m+1} + \gamma_i^\lambda e_{k+m+\lambda} \\ e_{k+m+1}' &= -\omega^l e_{k+l} - \beta^\lambda e_{k+m+\lambda} \\ e_{k+m+\xi}' &= -\gamma_l^\xi e_{k+l} + \beta^\xi e_{k+m+1} + \beta_\xi^\lambda e_{k+m+\lambda}, \end{aligned}$$

where

$$\begin{aligned} \alpha_j^h &= -\alpha_j^h, \tau_i^l = -\tau_l^i, \beta_\xi^\lambda = -\beta_\lambda^\xi \\ i, l &= 1, 2, \dots, m \\ j, h &= 1, 2, \dots, k \\ \lambda, \xi &= 2, \dots, n - k - m \\ \rho &= 1, 2, \dots, k - m. \end{aligned}$$

In the case of lines in \mathbb{R}^3 , the equation is

$$\begin{pmatrix} e_1 \\ e_2 \\ e_3 \end{pmatrix}' = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & \kappa^1 & 0 \\ -\kappa^1 & 0 & \omega^1 \\ 0 & -\omega^1 & 0 \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} e_1 \\ e_2 \\ e_3 \end{pmatrix}.$$

We obtain analogous formulae for 2-planes or 3-planes in \mathbb{L}^6 . The results in this paper can be easily generalized and used in the study of ruled k -dimensional minimal submanifolds in \mathbb{L}^n for $k < n - 1$ and ruled minimal submanifolds in the n -dimensional hyperbolic space \mathbb{H}^n .

2. The behavior of 2-planes in \mathbb{L}^6

In [4], the author gave a detailed proof of the Frenet type formulae for smooth one-parameter family of 2-planes in \mathbb{R}^4 . We first consider smooth one-parameter family of spacelike 2-planes in \mathbb{L}^4 . The case of \mathbb{L}^6 is a straightforward generalization (cf. Remark 1).

THEOREM 1. *Let $\{P_t\}$ be a smooth one-parameter family of spacelike non-parallel planes in \mathbb{L}^4 passing through the origin. Locally, there is a one-parameter family of orthonormal frame $\{e_1(t), e_2(t), \dots, e_4(t)\}$ of \mathbb{L}^4 such that $e_1(t)$ and $e_2(t)$ span P_t and one of the following holds with $' = \frac{d}{dt}$.*

I) $A(t)$ is spacelike or timelike with $A(t) = \text{Span}\{e_1(t), e_2(t), e_3(t)\}$, and the following equations hold:

$$e_1' = \alpha e_2 + \kappa e_3, \quad e_2' = -\alpha e_1, \quad e_3' = -\kappa e_1 + \eta e_4, \quad e_4' = -\eta e_3,$$

for smooth α and κ , or

II) $\dim A(t) = 4$ and

$$e_1' = \alpha e_2 + \kappa e_3, \quad e_2' = -\alpha e_1 + \tau e_4, \quad e_3' = -\kappa e_1 + \eta e_4, \quad e_4' = -\tau e_2 - \eta e_3,$$

for smooth α, κ, τ and η .

The proof is similar to that of Theorem A in [4]. The case of 2-planes in \mathbb{L}^6 is a straightforward generalization.

Proof. Let $\{f_1(t), f_2(t)\}$ be an orthonormal basis of $\{P_t\}$ smooth in t . For $f(t) = \sum_{i=1,2} \gamma_i(t) f_i(t)$ with $\gamma_1(t)$ and $\gamma_2(t)$ smooth and $\gamma_1(t)^2 +$

$\gamma_2(t)^2 = 1$, let

$$(1) \quad \overset{\circ}{f}(t) = f'(t) - \sum_{i=1,2} g(f'(t), f_i(t)) f_i(t)$$

the projection of $f'(t)$ onto P_t^\perp . Note that P_t^\perp is timelike. Omitting t for simplicity, we have

$$\overset{\circ}{f}_1 = f'_1 - g(f'_1, f_2) f_2, \quad \overset{\circ}{f}_2 = f'_2 - g(f'_2, f_1) f_1.$$

Hence

$$\overset{\circ}{f} = f' - \sum_{i=1,2} g(f', f_i) f_i = \sum_{i=1,2} \gamma_i \left(f'_i - \sum_{j=1,2} g(f'_i, f_j) f_j \right) = \sum_{i=1,2} \gamma_i \overset{\circ}{f}_i.$$

Therefore

$$g\left(\overset{\circ}{f}, \overset{\circ}{f}\right) = \sum_{i,j=1,2} \gamma_i \gamma_j g\left(\overset{\circ}{f}_i, \overset{\circ}{f}_j\right).$$

Note that, for fixed t , $g\left(\overset{\circ}{f}, \overset{\circ}{f}\right)$ is a quadratic form in γ_1 and γ_2 . We have three possibilities for all $t \in I$ (if necessary, we replace I with a suitable subinterval): i) $A(t)$ is spacelike and $\dim A(t) = 3$, or ii) $A(t)$ is timelike and $\dim A(t) = 3$, or iii) $\dim A(t) = 4$.

If i) holds, then $g\left(\overset{\circ}{f}, \overset{\circ}{f}\right) \geq 0$. For a fixed $t_0 \in I$, we may assume that $g\left(\overset{\circ}{f}(t_0), \overset{\circ}{f}(t_0)\right)$ attains maximum at $(\gamma_1(t_0), \gamma_2(t_0)) = (1, 0)$. Then $g\left(\overset{\circ}{f}_2(t_0), \overset{\circ}{f}_2(t_0)\right) = 0$. Hence $\overset{\circ}{f}_2(t_0) = f'_2(t_0) - g(f'_2(t_0), f_1(t_0)) f_1(t_0) = 0$.

To find $e_1(t)$ and $e_2(t)$, first let $e_1(t)$ be the unit vector maximizing $g\left(\overset{\circ}{f}(t), \overset{\circ}{f}(t)\right)$ for each $t \in I$. Then $e_1(t)$ is smooth in t and $g\left(\overset{\circ}{e}_1(t), \overset{\circ}{e}_1(t)\right) > 0$. Choose e_2 in such a way that $\{e_1(t), e_2(t)\}$ is an orthonormal basis of P_t smooth in t . Then e_2 is the unit vector minimizing $g\left(\overset{\circ}{f}(t), \overset{\circ}{f}(t)\right)$, whose value is 0. Define e_3 by

$$g\left(\overset{\circ}{e}_1, \overset{\circ}{e}_1\right)^{\frac{1}{2}} e_3 := \overset{\circ}{e}_1 = e'_1 - g(e'_1, e_2) e_2.$$

Then an orthonormal basis $\{e_1, e_2, e_3, e_4\}$ of \mathbb{L}^4 , smooth in t , satisfies

$$(2) \quad \begin{aligned} e'_1 &= g(e'_1, e_2) e_2 + g\left(\overset{\circ}{e}_1, \overset{\circ}{e}_1\right)^{\frac{1}{2}} e_3, \\ e'_2 &= g(e'_2, e_1) e_1 = -g(e'_1, e_2) e_1, \\ e'_3 &= g(e'_3, e_4) e_4 - g\left(\overset{\circ}{e}_1, \overset{\circ}{e}_1\right)^{\frac{1}{2}} e_1, \\ e'_4 &= -g(e'_3, e_4) e_3. \end{aligned}$$

If ii) holds, then $g\left(\overset{\circ}{f}, \overset{\circ}{f}\right) \leq 0$. For each $t \in I$, let e_1 be the unit vector minimizing $g\left(\overset{\circ}{f}, \overset{\circ}{f}\right)$, and let $\{e_1, e_2\}$ be an orthonormal basis of P_t smooth in t . Then $g\left(\overset{\circ}{e}_1, \overset{\circ}{e}_1\right) < 0$ and $g\left(\overset{\circ}{e}_2, \overset{\circ}{e}_2\right) = 0$. Define e_3 by

$$\left(-g\left(\overset{\circ}{e}_1, \overset{\circ}{e}_1\right)\right)^{\frac{1}{2}} e_3 := \overset{\circ}{e}_1 = e'_1 - g(e'_1, e_2) e_2.$$

Choose e_4 so that $\{e_1, e_2, e_3, e_4\}$ is an orthonormal basis of \mathbb{L}^4 smooth in t . Then e_1, e_2, e_3 and e_4 satisfies (2). This completes the proof of I).

If iii) holds, then $g\left(\overset{\circ}{f}, \overset{\circ}{f}\right)$ has positive maximum and negative minimum for each fixed t . Let e_1 be the unit vector maximizing $g\left(\overset{\circ}{f}, \overset{\circ}{f}\right)$, and let e_2 be the unit vector minimizing $g\left(\overset{\circ}{f}, \overset{\circ}{f}\right)$ for each t . Since $g\left(\overset{\circ}{f}, \overset{\circ}{f}\right)$ is a quadratic form in γ_1 and γ_2 , we have $g\left(\overset{\circ}{e}_1, \overset{\circ}{e}_2\right) = 0$. Let e_3 and e_4 be defined by

$$\begin{aligned} g\left(\overset{\circ}{e}_1, \overset{\circ}{e}_1\right)^{\frac{1}{2}} e_3 &:= \overset{\circ}{e}_1 = e'_1 - g(e'_1, e_2) e_2 \\ \left(-g\left(\overset{\circ}{e}_2, \overset{\circ}{e}_2\right)\right)^{\frac{1}{2}} e_4 &:= \overset{\circ}{e}_2 = e'_2 - g(e'_2, e_1) e_1. \end{aligned}$$

Then the orthonormal basis $\{e_1, e_2, e_3, e_4\}$ of \mathbb{L}^4 satisfies

$$\begin{aligned} e'_1 &= g(e'_1, e_2) e_2 + g\left(\overset{\circ}{e}_1, \overset{\circ}{e}_1\right)^{\frac{1}{2}} e_3, \\ e'_2 &= -g(e'_1, e_2) e_1 + \left(-g\left(\overset{\circ}{e}_2, \overset{\circ}{e}_2\right)\right)^{\frac{1}{2}} e_4, \\ e'_3 &= -g\left(\overset{\circ}{e}_1, \overset{\circ}{e}_1\right)^{\frac{1}{2}} e_1 + g(e'_3, e_4) e_4, \\ e'_4 &= -\left(-g\left(\overset{\circ}{e}_2, \overset{\circ}{e}_2\right)\right)^{\frac{1}{2}} e_2 - g(e'_3, e_4) e_3. \end{aligned}$$

This completes the proof. □

REMARK 1. The generalization of the above theorem to \mathbb{L}^6 is straightforward. For example, in the case of spacelike 2-planes in \mathbb{L}^6 , first we define f for a given orthonormal basis $\{f_1, f_2\}$ of P_t as above. If $\dim A = 4$ and A is spacelike, then we find e_1, e_2, e_3 and e_4 as above, and choose e_5 and e_6 so that $\{e_1, \dots, e_6\}$ is a smooth orthonormal basis of \mathbb{L}^6 . Then we have

$$\begin{aligned} e'_1 &= g(e'_1, e_2) e_2 + g\left(\overset{\circ}{e}_1, \overset{\circ}{e}_1\right)^{\frac{1}{2}} e_3, \\ e'_2 &= -g(e'_1, e_2) e_1 + g\left(\overset{\circ}{e}_2, \overset{\circ}{e}_2\right)^{\frac{1}{2}} e_4. \end{aligned}$$

Moreover,

$$\begin{aligned} e'_3 &= -g\left(\overset{\circ}{e}_1, \overset{\circ}{e}_1\right)^{\frac{1}{2}} e_1 + g(e'_3, e_4) e_4 + g(e'_3, e_5) e_5 + g(e'_3, e_6) e_6, \\ e'_4 &= -g\left(\overset{\circ}{e}_2, \overset{\circ}{e}_2\right)^{\frac{1}{2}} e_2 + g(e'_4, e_3) e_3 + g(e'_4, e_5) e_5 + g(e'_4, e_6) e_6, \\ e'_5 &= g(e'_5, e_3) e_3 + g(e'_5, e_4) e_4 + g(e'_5, e_6) e_6, \\ e'_6 &= g(e'_6, e_3) e_3 + g(e'_6, e_4) e_4 + g(e'_6, e_5) e_5. \end{aligned}$$

The remaining cases can be dealt with similarly. The case that P_t are timelike is similar, and we consider the proof only in \mathbb{L}^4 .

THEOREM 2. *Let $\{P_t\}$ be a smooth one-parameter family of timelike non-parallel planes in \mathbb{L}^4 passing through the origin. There is a one-parameter family of orthonormal frame $\{e_1(t), e_2(t), e_3(t), e_4(t)\}$ of \mathbb{L}^4 such that $e_1(t)$ and $e_2(t)$ span P_t and the following equations hold:*

$$e'_1 = \alpha e_2 + \kappa e_3, \quad e'_2 = -\alpha e_1 + \tau e_4, \quad e'_3 = -\kappa e_1 + \eta e_4, \quad e'_4 = -\tau e_3 + \eta e_3,$$

for smooth α, κ, τ and η . Furthermore, if $\dim A(t) = 3$ then $\tau = 0$.

Proof. Let $\{f_1, f_2\}$ be a smooth one-parameter family of orthonormal basis of P_t . Let $f = \sum_{i=1,2} \gamma_i f_i$ for smooth γ_1 and γ_2 satisfying $\gamma_1^2 + \gamma_2^2 = 1$. Then $g\left(\overset{\circ}{f}, \overset{\circ}{f}\right) \geq 0$. Let e_1 be the unit vector maximizing $g\left(\overset{\circ}{f}, \overset{\circ}{f}\right)$, and let e_2 be unit vector minimizing $g\left(\overset{\circ}{f}, \overset{\circ}{f}\right)$. Then $\{e_1, e_2\}$ spans P_t .

If $\dim A(t) = 3$, then $g\left(\overset{\circ}{e}_2, \overset{\circ}{e}_2\right) = 0$. Define e_3 by

$$g\left(\overset{\circ}{e}_1, \overset{\circ}{e}_1\right)^{\frac{1}{2}} e_3 := \overset{\circ}{e}_1 = e'_1 - g(e'_1, e_2) e_2,$$

and let e_4 be a smooth unit vector field perpendicular to e_1, e_2 and e_3 .

If $\dim A(t) = 4$, then $g\left(\overset{\circ}{e}_2, \overset{\circ}{e}_2\right) \neq 0$. Define e_3 and e_4 by

$$\begin{aligned} g\left(\overset{\circ}{e}_1, \overset{\circ}{e}_1\right)^{\frac{1}{2}} e_3 &:= \overset{\circ}{e}_1 = e'_1 - g(e'_1, e_2) e_2 \\ g\left(\overset{\circ}{e}_2, \overset{\circ}{e}_2\right)^{\frac{1}{2}} e_4 &:= \overset{\circ}{e}_2 = e'_2 - g(e'_2, e_1) e_1. \end{aligned}$$

Then we have

$$\begin{aligned} e'_1 &= g(e'_1, e_2) e_2 + g\left(\overset{\circ}{e}_1, \overset{\circ}{e}_1\right)^{\frac{1}{2}} e_3, \\ e'_2 &= -g(e'_1, e_2) e_1 + g\left(\overset{\circ}{e}_2, \overset{\circ}{e}_2\right)^{\frac{1}{2}} e_4, \\ e'_3 &= -g\left(\overset{\circ}{e}_1, \overset{\circ}{e}_1\right)^{\frac{1}{2}} e_1 + g(e'_3, e_4) e_4, \\ e'_4 &= -g\left(\overset{\circ}{e}_2, \overset{\circ}{e}_2\right)^{\frac{1}{2}} e_2 - g(e'_3, e_4) e_3. \end{aligned}$$

This completes the proof. □

3. The behavior of 3-planes in \mathbb{L}^6

We state the result in full generality, that is, $\dim A = 6$. If $\dim A = 4$, then $\kappa_2 = 0$ and $\kappa_3 = 0$, and if $\dim A = 5$, then $\kappa_3 = 0$ in the following theorem.

THEOREM 3. *Let $\{P_t\}$ be a smooth one-parameter family of spacelike or timelike non-parallel 3-planes in \mathbb{L}^6 passing through the origin. There is a one-parameter family of orthonormal frame $\{e_1(t), \dots, e_6(t)\}$ of \mathbb{L}^6 such that $e_1(t), e_2(t)$ and e_3 span P_t and the following equations hold:*

$$\begin{aligned} e'_1 &= \alpha_1^2 e_2 + \alpha_1^3 e_3 + \kappa_1 e_4, & e'_2 &= -\alpha_1^2 e_1 + \alpha_2^3 e_3 + \kappa_2 e_5, \\ e'_3 &= -\alpha_1^3 e_1 - \alpha_2^3 e_2 + \kappa_3 e_6, & e'_4 &= -\kappa_1 e_1 + \eta_4^5 e_5 + \eta_4^6 e_6, \\ e'_5 &= -\kappa_2 e_2 - \eta_4^5 e_4 + \eta_5^6 e_6, & e'_6 &= -\kappa_3 e_3 - \eta_4^6 e_4 - \eta_5^6 e_5, \end{aligned}$$

where α_i^j, κ_i and η_{3+i}^{3+j} , for $i, j = 1, 2, 3$, are smooth.

The proof is a straightforward generalization of the proof of Theorem 1.

Proof. We give the proof only for the case that P_t is spacelike. The proof for the case that P_t is timelike is similar. Let $\{f_1(t), f_2, f_3(t)\}$ be an orthonormal basis of P_t smooth in $t \in I$. Let $f = \sum_{i=1}^3 \gamma_i f_i$ for smooth γ_i satisfying $\gamma_1^2 + \gamma_2^2 + \gamma_3^2 = 1$. Let

$$\overset{\circ}{f} = f' - \sum_{i=1}^3 g(f', f_i) f_i = \sum_{i=1}^3 \gamma_i \overset{\circ}{f}_i.$$

Then

$$g\left(\overset{\circ}{f}, \overset{\circ}{f}\right) = \sum_{i,j=1}^3 \gamma_i \gamma_j g\left(\overset{\circ}{f}_i, \overset{\circ}{f}_j\right)$$

is a quadratic form in $\gamma_i, i = 1, 2, 3$. Since $(\gamma_1, \gamma_2, \gamma_3) \in \mathbb{S}^2, g\left(\overset{\circ}{f}, \overset{\circ}{f}\right)$ attains positive maximum and negative minimum for each fixed t . Let e_1 and e_3 be the unit vector maximizing and minimizing $g\left(\overset{\circ}{f}, \overset{\circ}{f}\right)$ respectively. Let e_2 be the remaining eigenvector of the symmetric matrix $g\left(\overset{\circ}{f}_i, \overset{\circ}{f}_j\right)_{ij}$, for $i, j = 1, 2, 3$. Since P_t^\perp is timelike, $g\left(\overset{\circ}{e}_3, \overset{\circ}{e}_3\right) < 0$ and

$g(\overset{\circ}{e}_2, \overset{\circ}{e}_2) > 0$. Define e_4, e_5 and e_6 by

$$g(\overset{\circ}{e}_1, \overset{\circ}{e}_1)^{\frac{1}{2}} e_4 := \overset{\circ}{e}_1 = e'_1 - g(e'_1, e_2) e_2 - g(e'_1, e_3) e_3$$

$$g(\overset{\circ}{e}_2, \overset{\circ}{e}_2)^{\frac{1}{2}} e_5 := \overset{\circ}{e}_2 = e'_2 - g(e'_2, e_1) e_1 - g(e'_2, e_3) e_3$$

$$\left(-g(\overset{\circ}{e}_3, \overset{\circ}{e}_3)\right)^{\frac{1}{2}} e_6 := \overset{\circ}{e}_3 = e'_3 - g(e'_3, e_1) e_1 - g(e'_3, e_2) e_2.$$

Then $\{e_1, \dots, e_6\}$ is the desired orthonormal basis of \mathbb{L}^6 . \square

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