Optimal Robust Detection for Gumbel-Max Watermarks Under Modification

Xiang Li

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Oct. 9, 2024

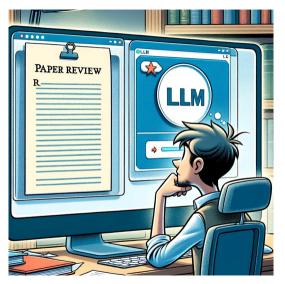
Do you trust the students?

Did the student complete the homework independently, or did an LLM assist?

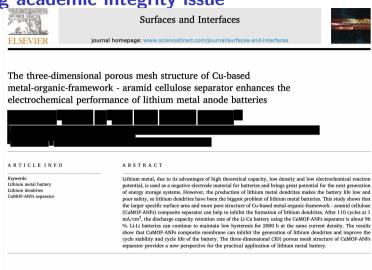


Peer review or LLM-assisted review?

- Liang et al. [2024]: 6.5% to 16.9% of some ML conference reviews substantially modified by LLMs.
- Is the review genuinely authored by the reviewer or significantly contributed by an LLM?



An emerging academic integrity issue



1. Introduction

Certainly, here is a possible introduction for your topic Lithiummetal batteries are promising candidates for high-energy-density rechargeable batteries due to their low electrode potentials and high chemical stability of the separator is equally important as it ensures that the separator remains intact and does not react or degrade in the presence of the electrolyte or other battery components. A chemically stable separator helps to prevent the formation of reactive species that can further promote dendrite growth. Researchers are actively exploring

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- Preventing fraud and deception
- Preserving the quality of data for training future AI models

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- These methods are inaccurate, unreliable [Weber-Wulff et al., 2023], and often biased [Krishna et al., 2024, Sadasivan et al., 2023, Liang et al., 2023]
- Worse, as AI models evolve, LLM-generated text increasingly resembles human-written text!

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Watermarking embeds subtle statistical signals into LLM-generated text [Kirchenbauer et al., 2023a]

- Signal: Dependence between observed text and certain hidden information for generating text.
- ► These signal patterns are unlikely to appear in human-written text.
- ► Watermarking enables provable detection of LLM-generated text.

A (very) active research area with practical importance

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- Biden AI executive order.
- OpenAI, Google, Meta, and other tech giants have pledged to watermark AI content.

Statistical challenges/opportunities in watermark research

Control/estimation of errors

- False positive rate/Type I error: Mistakenly detecting human-written text as LLM-generated.
- False negative rate/Type II error: Incorrectly classifying LLM-generated text as human-written.

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Evaluation of watermarks

- Comparing efficiency of different watermarking schemes.
- ② Finding more or (most) powerful detection rules.
- 3 Robust watermark detection.

Our previous work

On Goal ① and ② https://arxiv.org/pdf/2404.01245

What we did previously

- A framework unifying different watermarks.
- Efficiency notions.
- Optimal sum-based rules.

A Statistical Framework of Watermarks for Large Language Models: Pivot, Detection Efficiency and Optimal Rules

Xiang Li [*]	$\operatorname{Feng} \operatorname{Ruan}^{\dagger}$	Huiyuan Wang \ddagger	Qi Long [§]	Weijie J. Su [¶]
		March 28, 2024		

Abstract

Since ChatGPT was introduced in November 2022, embedding (nearly) unnoticeable statistical signals into text generated by large language models (LLMs), also known as watermarking, has been used as a principled approach to provable detection of LLM-generated text from its human-written counterpart. In this paper, we introduce a general and flexible framework for reasoning about the statistical efficiency of watermarks and designing powerful detection rules. Inspired by the hypothesis testing formulation of watermark detection, our framework starts by selecting a pivotal statistic of the text and a secret key—provided by the LLM to the verifier—to control the false positive rate (the error of mistakenly detecting human-written text as LLM-generated). Next, this framework allows one to evaluate the power of watermark detection rules by obtaining a closed-form expression of the asymptotic false negative rate (the error of incorrectly classifying LLM-generated text as human-written). Our framework further reduces the problem of determining the optimal detection rule to solving a minimax optimization program. We apply this framework to two representative watermarks—one of which has been internally implemented at OpenAI—and obtain several findings that can be instrumental in guiding the practice of implementing watermarks. In particular, we derive optimal detection rules for these watermarks under our framework. These theoretically derived detection rules are demonstrated to be competitive and sometimes enjoy a higher power than existing detection approaches through numerical experiments.

This talk (On Goal ③, coming soon)

Optimal Robust Detection for Gumbel-max Watermarks Under Modification

Xiang Li* Feng Ruan[†] Huiyuan Wang[‡] Qi Long[§] Weijie J. Su[¶]

October 8, 2024

Abstract

This paper examines how to robustly detect statistical language watermarks when users corrupt text generated by large language models (LLMs). We develop a statistical framework for robust watermark detection by modeling the corresponding hypothesis testing problem as a mixture detection problem. We propose using a family of goodness-of-fit (GoF) tests for this purpose, showing that they achieve optimal robustness in two ways: they not only reach the optimal detection boundary when the watermark signal diminishes, but also attain the highest detection efficiency rate in cases of constant modification. In contrast, existing sum-based detection methods for Gumbel-max watermarks fail to achieve these two optimalities without additional problem-specific information. Simulations validate our theoretical guarantees, and real-data experiments demonstrate that our method achieves superior or comparable performance in maintaining watermark detectability, especially in low-temperature settings.

Outline

Preliminaries on Gumbel-max watermarks

Robust detection under modification

Robust detection method

Theoretical investigation

Summary

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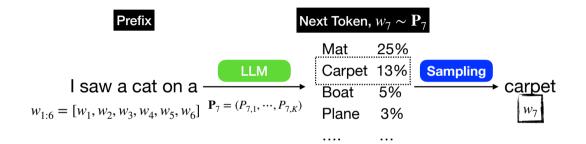
Autoregressive generation

- LLMs are probabilistic machines.
- Let \mathcal{W} be the vocabulary and w a token therein.
- An LLM *M* generates each token sequentially by sampling from a probability distribution conditioned on previous tokens:

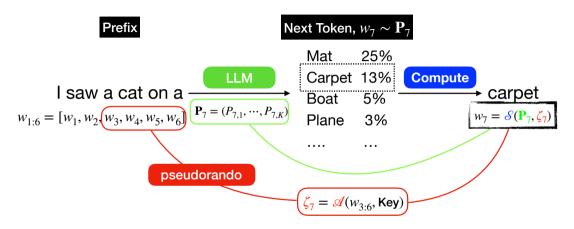
 $w_t \sim \boldsymbol{P}_t$ where $\boldsymbol{P}_t = \mathcal{M}(w_{1:(t-1)})$ is a distribution on \mathcal{W} .

The categorical distribution P_t is referred to next-token prediction (NTP) distribution.

Autoregressive generation: An illustration



Watermarked generation



Given a text w_{1:n} = (w₁,..., w_n), the detector recovers ζ_{1:n} = (ζ₁,..., ζ_n) using the knowledge of A and Key.

• Watermark signal is the dependence of each w_t on ζ_t .

• Let $\mathcal{W} = \{0, 1\}, \mathbf{P}_t = (P_{t,0}, P_{t,1}), \zeta_t$ be iid copies of $\mathcal{U}(0, 1)$ • Decoder

$$w_t = \mathcal{S}(\boldsymbol{P}_t, \zeta_t) = egin{cases} 0 & ext{if } \zeta_t \leq P_{t,0} \ 1 & ext{otherwise} \end{cases}$$

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$$\mathbb{P}_{\zeta}(\mathcal{S}(\boldsymbol{P},\zeta)=w)=P_{w}$$

for w = 0, 1.

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Embedded signal

- If ζ_t is large, w_t is more likely to be 1 instead of 0.
- Statistic for detection:

$$\sum_{t=1}^{n} (2w_t - 1)(2\zeta_t - 1).$$

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Statistically, a watermark = a sampling method from a multinomial distribution P.

Our focus: Gumbel-max watermark

Definition (Unbiased)

We say the decoder S is unbiased if for any P and $w \in W$,

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Gumbel-max trick [Gumbel, 1948]

Let $\Xi = [0,1]^K$ and $\zeta = (U_1, U_2, \dots, U_K) \in \Xi$ with U_k 's i.i.d. copies of $\mathcal{U}(0,1)$. The Gumbel-max trick asserts that

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Gumbel-max watermark [Aaronson, 2023]

$$\mathcal{S}^{\mathrm{gum}}(\boldsymbol{P},\zeta) = \arg \max_{w \in \mathcal{W}} \left\{ \frac{1}{P_w} \cdot \log U_w \right\} \text{ where } \zeta = (U_1, \dots, U_{|\mathcal{W}|}).$$

Detection framework from [Li et al., 2024]

Find a pivotal statistic $Y_t = Y(w_t, \zeta_t)$ such that

• Under H_0 , $w_t \perp \zeta_t$ so that $Y_t \sim \mu_0$ regardless of $P_{human,t}$.

▶ Under H_1 , $w_t = S(\zeta_t, P_t)$ so that $Y_t \sim Y(S(\zeta_t, P_t), \zeta_t)$. Hence, $Y_t | P_t \sim \mu_{1, P_t}$.

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Previous formulation in [Li et al., 2024]						
$H_0: Y_t \stackrel{i.i.d.}{\sim} \mu_0 \ \forall t \in [n]$	versus	$H_1: Y_t \boldsymbol{P}_t \sim \mu_{1, \boldsymbol{P}_t} \ \forall t \in [n].$				

• A score function $h : \mathbb{R} \to \mathbb{R}$ introduces a detection rule $T_h = \sum_{t=1}^n h(Y_t)$ which reject H_0 if T_h is larger than a threshold.

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Limitation

Each token in the text $w_{1:n}$ are all human-written or LLM-generated.

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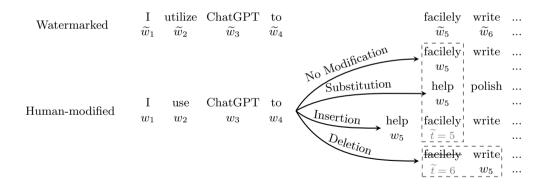
Summary

A statistical model for user modification

A student might modify the text generated from an LLM, either due to personalization or to try to escape from detection.

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The formal procedure

1: Input: The watermarked text $\widetilde{w}_{1:n_0}$ generated by $\widetilde{w}_t = S(\widetilde{P}_t, \widetilde{\xi}_t)$ and $\widetilde{P}_t = \mathcal{M}(\widetilde{w}_{1:(t-1)})$.

- 2: Initialize: $w_{1:0} = \emptyset$, $t = t_0 = 1$, and π is the distribution that makes S unbiased.
- 3: while the modification is not complete do one of the feasible operators:
- 4: Try to determine w_t by inspecting the referenced token \widetilde{w}_{t_0} .
- 5: **if** the user approves \widetilde{w}_{t_0} **then**
- 6: No modification: Set $w_t = \widetilde{w}_{t_0}$ and update $(t, t_0) \leftarrow (t + 1, t_0 + 1)$.
- 7: **else if** the user prefers to generate w_t themselves **then**
- 8: Generate a new token: $w_t = \mathcal{S}(\mathbf{P}_t^{h}, \xi_t^{h})$ where $\mathbf{P}_t^{h} = \mathcal{H}(w_{1:(t-1)})$ and $\xi_t^{h} \stackrel{\text{i.i.d.}}{\sim} \pi$.
- 9: **Substitution**: Update $(t, t_0) \leftarrow (t + 1, t_0 + 1)$.
- 10: **Insertion**: Update $(t, t_0) \leftarrow (t + 1, t_0)$.
- 11: else if the user searches for a better alternative in the watermarked text then
- 12: **Deletion**: Update $(t, t_0) \leftarrow (t, t_0 + 1)$. Note that w_t remains undetermined at this stage.
- 13: end if
- 14: end while
- 15: **Return:** The modified text $w_{1:t}$.

How token modification changes the distribution of Y_t ?

A key fact

• $\zeta_t = \mathcal{A}(w_{t-m:t-1}, \text{Key})$ uses previous *m* tokens and $Y_t = Y(\mathbf{w}_t, \zeta_t)$ uses the nearest m + 1 tokens.

► If consecutive m (or m + 1) tokens remain unchanged, the value of ζ_t (or Y_t) is preserved.

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Consider the watermarked text $\widetilde{w}_{1:n_0}$. Suppose for some t and \widetilde{t} , Case A If w_t is watermarked and ζ_t are preserved, i.e., $w_{(t-m):t} = \widetilde{w}_{(\widetilde{t}-m):\widetilde{t}'}$

$$Y_t = Y(w_t, \xi_t) = Y(\widetilde{w}_{\widetilde{t}}, \widetilde{\xi}_{\widetilde{t}}) = \widetilde{Y}_{\widetilde{t}} \implies Y_t \mid \widetilde{\boldsymbol{P}}_{\widetilde{t}} \sim \mu_{1, \widetilde{\boldsymbol{P}}_{\widetilde{t}}}.$$

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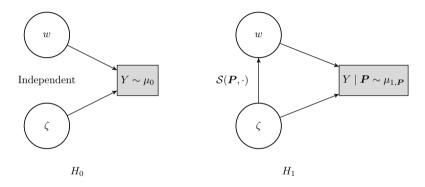
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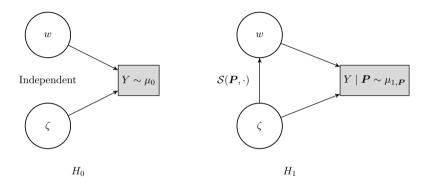
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Case B If w_t is human-written, no matter whether ζ_t is preserved, $w_t \perp \zeta_t$. **Case C** If w_t is watermarked but ζ_t is changed, $w_t \perp \zeta_t$.

How token modification changes the distribution of Y_t ? We always have $w_t \perp \zeta_t$ or $Y_t \mid P_t \sim \mu_{1,P_t}$ for some P_t .



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Hypothesis testing under mixtures

 $H_0: Y_t \sim \mu_0 \ \forall t \in [n] \quad \text{versus} \quad H_1^{\text{mix}}: Y_t | (\boldsymbol{P}_t, \eta_t) \sim (1 - \eta_t) \mu_0 + \eta_t \mu_{1, \boldsymbol{P}_t} \ \forall t \in [n].$

where $\eta_t \in \{0, 1\}$ is a binary random process due to user modifications.

Examples of the binary process η_t

- \tilde{t} = the longest scanned length in $\tilde{w}_{1:n_0}$ before w_t is finalized.
- ► $X_t := \mathbf{1}_{w_t = \widetilde{w_t}}$ indicate whether the user changed the latest watermarked token $\widetilde{w_t}$ when determining w_t .
- Following the above procedure, one can show that

$$\eta_t = \mathbf{1}_{w_{(t-m):t} = \widetilde{w}_{(\widetilde{t}-m):\widetilde{t}}} = \prod_{j=(t-m)}^t X_j.$$

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Two types of modifications

- ► I.i.d.: $X_i \stackrel{i.i.d.}{\sim} \operatorname{Ber}(a)$, $\mathbb{P}(\eta_t = 1) = (1 a)^{m+1}$.
- Markov stationary: $\mathbb{P}(\eta_t = 1) = \mathbb{E}\eta_t = \mathbb{E}\prod_{i=1}^{m+1} X_i$.

Leave room for further modeling.

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where $\eta_t \in \{0,1\}$ is a binary random process due to user modifications.

- ▶ Difficulties: We know nothing about η_t or P_t .
- Hope: We know everything about the null H_0 .
- Focus to determine whether the observed Y_1, \ldots, Y_n follows μ_0 .

Goodness-of-fit (GoF) test [Jager and Wellner, 2007]

▶ The empirical CDF of p-values: $\mathbb{F}_n(r) = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{t=1}^n \mathbf{1}_{p_t \leq r}$ where $p_t = 1 - Y_t$.

Introduce a scalar convex function indexed by s:

$$\phi_s(x) = \begin{cases} x \log x - x + 1, & \text{if } s = 1, \\ \frac{1 - s + sx - x^s}{s(1 - s)}, & \text{if } s \neq 0, 1, \\ -\log x + x - 1, & \text{if } s = 0. \end{cases}$$

▶ The ϕ_s -divergence between Ber(u) and Ber(v) is

$$K_{s}(u,v) = v\phi_{s}\left(\frac{u}{v}\right) + (1-v)\phi_{s}\left(\frac{1-u}{1-v}\right).$$

▶ For $s \in [-1,2]$, we reject H_0 if $nS_n^+(s) = \sup_{r \in (0,1)} nK_s(\mathbb{F}_n(r), r)\mathbf{1}_{\mathbb{F}_n(r)>r}$ is larger than a given critical value.

Formal detection procedure

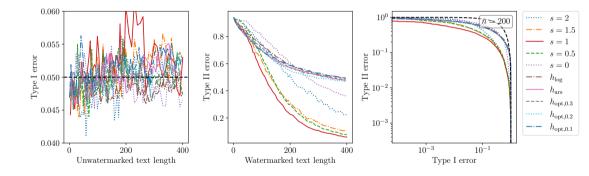
- 1: Input: Modified text $w_{1:n}$, hash function \mathcal{A} , secret key Key, pivot statistic function Y.
- 2: For t = 1, 2, ..., n, compute pseudorandom $\xi_t = \mathcal{A}(w_{(t-m):(t-1)}, \text{Key})$.
- 3: For t = 1, 2, ..., n, compute the pivot statistic $Y_t = Y(w_t, \xi_t)$.
- 4: For $t = 1, 2, \ldots, n$, calculate the p-value as $\mathsf{p}_t = 1 Y_t$.
- 5: Sort the p-values: $p_{(1)} < p_{(2)} < \ldots < p_{(n)}$ and set $p_{(n+1)} = 1$.
- 6: Compute the test statistic by

$$S_n^+(s) = \sup_t \mathcal{K}_s(t/n, \mathsf{p}_{(t)}) \mathbf{1}_{t/n \ge \mathsf{p}_{(t)}}$$

7: **Claim:** Text $w_{1:n}$ is modified by LLM if $nS_n^+(s)$ is too large; otherwise, it is human-written.

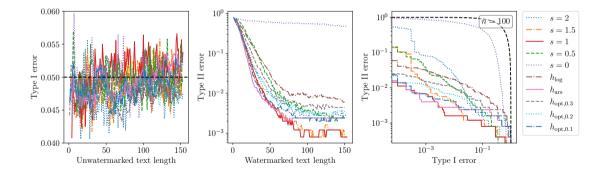
Performance on real-dataset

OPT-1.3B [Zhang et al., 2022], newslike C4-dataset [Raffel et al., 2020].
0.1 (low) temperature.

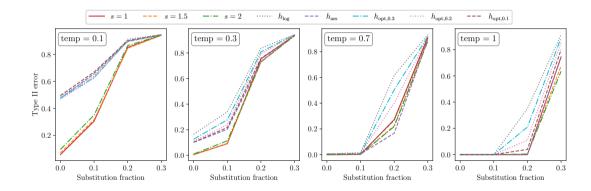


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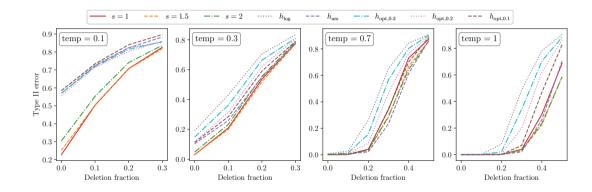
OPT-1.3B [Zhang et al., 2022], newslike C4-dataset [Raffel et al., 2020].
0.7 (high) temperature.



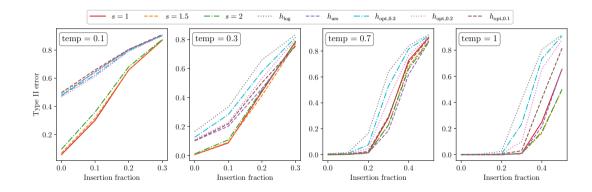
Under controllable random substitution



Under controllable random deletion



Under controllable random insertion

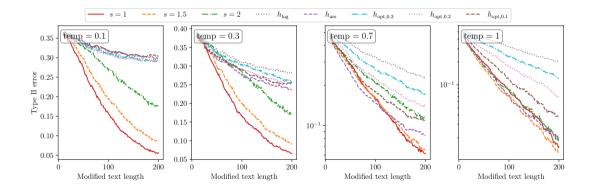


Under controllable random modifications

Task	Modification	s=1	s = 1.5	<i>s</i> = 2	$h_{ m log}$	$h_{ m ars}$	$h_{ m opt,0.3}$	$h_{ m opt,0.2}$	$h_{ m opt,0.1}$
Poem Recitation	Substitution	30.6	31.96	31.23	24.62	26.59	26.39	26.86	23.72
	Insertion	33.14	35.22	35.92	26.28	27.71	27.57	27.98	23.51
	Deletion	46.14	47.93	49.42	39.24	29.08	40.89	42.69	22.36
Poem Generation	Substitution	40.08	41.98	42.58	29.51	41.19	32.44	33.9	35.74
	Insertion	44.51	46.95	48.7	30.7	45.44	33.19	35.52	39.68
	Deletion	45.5	47.76	48.66	32.02	47.36	34.85	37.47	39.95

Table: The modification tolerance limits (%) for detection methods on the OPT-1.3B model.

Under non-controllable round-trip translation attack



Why the GoF test performs so well?

A question

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We focus on the Gumbel-max watermark. Similar analysis could be paralleled to other watermarks.

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High-level answers

The GoF test achieves optimal robustness in two senses:

- 1. Optimal detection boundary in a decaying watermark-signal case.
- 2. Optimal detection efficiency rate in a constant corruption case.
- **!!!** The GoF test doesn't require any prior knowledge.

Outline

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Summary

Hypothesis testing under mixtures

$$H_0: Y_t \sim \mu_0 \ \forall t \in [n] \quad \text{versus} \quad H_1^{\text{mix}}: Y_t | (\boldsymbol{P}_t, \eta_t) \sim (1 - \eta_t) \mu_0 + \eta_t \mu_{1, \boldsymbol{P}_t} \ \forall t \in [n].$$

A difficulty case

We consider an extreme case where

•
$$\mathbb{E}\eta_t = \varepsilon_n$$
 for all $t \in [n]$ with $\varepsilon_n \asymp n^{-p}$ and $p \in (0, 1]$.

▶
$$1 - \max_{w \in \mathcal{W}} P_{t,w} = \Delta_n$$
 for all $t \in [n]$ with $\Delta_n \asymp n^{-q}$ and $q \in (0,1)$.

Motivated by sparse detection problem [Donoho and Jin, 2004, 2015].

► If $\mathbb{E}\eta_t = 0$ or $1 - \max_{w \in \mathcal{W}} P_{t,w} = 0$, $(1 - \eta_t)\mu_0 + \eta_t \mu_{1,P_t} = \mu_0$, i.e., H_0 merges with H_1^{mix} .

Theorem

- If q + 2p > 1, H₀ and H₁^m merge asymptotically. For any test, the sum of Type I and Type II error probabilities is 1 as n → ∞.
- If q + 2p < 1, H₀ and H₁^m separate asymptotically. Furthermore, for the likelihood-ratio test that rejects H₀ if the log-likelihood ratio is positive, the sum of Type I and Type II error probabilities tends to 0 as n → ∞.

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- If q + 2p < 1, H₀ and H₁^m separate asymptotically. Furthermore, for the likelihood-ratio test that rejects H₀ if the log-likelihood ratio is positive, the sum of Type I and Type II error probabilities tends to 0 as n → ∞.
- \implies Robust detection is impossible for small watermark signal, i.e., q + 2p > 1.
- \implies With sufficient watermark signal, detection is possible with the likelihood-ratio test an optimal rule, i.e., q + 2p < 1.
 - **!!!** The likelihood-ratio test is impractical as it needs to know P_t 's and ε_n .

Optimal detection boundary

Target

An ideal optimal detection method should work as long as q + 2p < 1 and don't requires the knowledge of P_t 's and ε_n .

Optimal detection boundary

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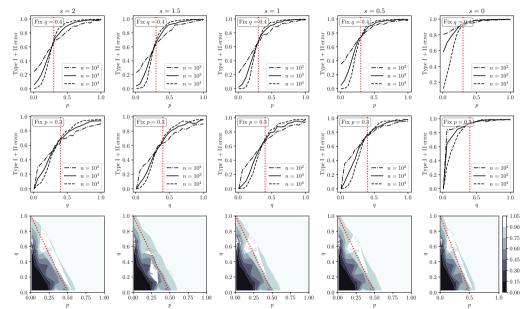
The GoF test achieves this optimal detection boundary.

Theorem (Adaptive optimality)

If the critical value $\approx \log \log n$, the Type I and II errors of the GoF test $\rightarrow 0$ if $n \rightarrow \infty$ as long as q + 2p < 1 and $s \in [-1, 2]$.

Optimal adaptivity without any prior knowledge.

Empirical detection boundaries v.s. theoretical q + 2p = 1



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Failure of all sum-based tests

• Consider the sum-based test in the form that rejects H_0 if

$$\sum_{t=1}^{n} h(Y_t) \geq n \cdot \mathbb{E}_0 h(Y) + \Theta(1) \cdot n^{\frac{1}{2}} \cdot \operatorname{poly}(\log n).$$

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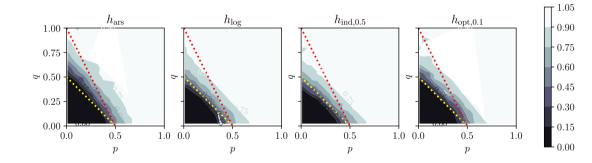
The detection boundary for sum-based tests is q + p = 1/2 for all non-decreasing, $(\Delta_n, \varepsilon_n)$ -free, and continuous h.

Corollary

The detection boundary for the existing score function $h \in \{h_{ars}, h_{log}, h_{ind}, h_{gum,\Delta}^{\star}\}$ with both $\delta, \Delta_0 \in (0, 1)$ is q + p = 1/2.

Sum-based tests fail to achieve adaptivity.

Failure of sum-based tests



What about constant corruption?

- The optimal detection boundary cares about the diminishing region where the watermark signal decays with the text length n.
- Practical settings meet with the constant corruption case, i.e., $\varepsilon_n \equiv \varepsilon$.
- The problem is detectable because p = q = 0 (within q + 2p < 1).

What about constant corruption?

- The optimal detection boundary cares about the diminishing region where the watermark signal decays with the text length n.
- Practical settings meet with the constant corruption case, i.e., $\varepsilon_n \equiv \varepsilon$.
- The problem is detectable because p = q = 0 (within q + 2p < 1).
- Use *P*-efficiency: the rate of exponential decrease in Type II errors for a fixed significance level *α* and the worst-case alternative within a belief set *P*.

Definition (*P*-efficiency [Li et al., 2024])

Let $\gamma_{n,\alpha}$ satisfy $\mathbb{P}_0(S_n \ge \gamma_{n,\alpha}) = \alpha$ for $n \ge 1$. For a given belief set \mathcal{P} , we define the following limit (if exists) as the \mathcal{P} -efficiency of S_n and denote it by $R_{\mathcal{P}}(S_n)$:

$$\lim_{n\to\infty}\sup_{\boldsymbol{P}_t\in\mathcal{P},\forall t\in[n]}\frac{1}{n}\log\mathbb{P}_1(S_n\leq\gamma_{n,\alpha})=-R_{\mathcal{P}}(S_n).$$

What about constant corruption?

Theorem (Optimal \mathcal{P}_{Δ} -efficiency)

Let $s \in (0,1)$, $\varepsilon_n \equiv \varepsilon \in (0,1]$ and $\Delta_n \equiv \Delta \in (0,1)$.

 $R_{\mathcal{P}_{\Delta}}(ext{any detection rule}) \leq D_{\mathrm{KL}}(\mu_0, (1-\varepsilon)\mu_0 + \varepsilon\mu_{1, \boldsymbol{P}_{\Delta}^{\star}}) \leq R_{\mathcal{P}_{\Delta}}(ext{GoF})$

where ${m P}^{\star}_{\Delta}$ is the least-favorable NTP distribution defined by

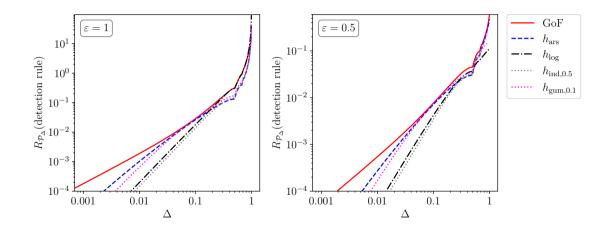
$$\boldsymbol{P}^{\star}_{\Delta} = \left(\underbrace{1-\Delta,\ldots,1-\Delta}_{\lfloor \frac{1}{1-\Delta} \rfloor \text{ times}}, 1-(1-\Delta)\cdot \left\lfloor \frac{1}{1-\Delta} \right\rfloor, 0,\ldots \right).$$

Upper and lower bounds.

• When $\varepsilon = 1$, this rate is obtained by the sum-based test defined by $h^{\star}_{\text{gum},\Delta}$.

Optimal efficiency without any prior knowledge.

Theoretical \mathcal{P}_{Δ} -efficiency comparison



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- Model the robust watermark detection problem as mixture detection problem.
- GoF tests achieve the optimal detection boundary and the optimal P_Δ-efficiency without any prior knowledge.
- GoF tests outperform other detection methods in low-temperature cases and perform comparably in high-temperature cases.

Future directions

- Other optimal detection rule?
- Optimal for other watermarks?
- Estimate the non-null fraction ε.

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