

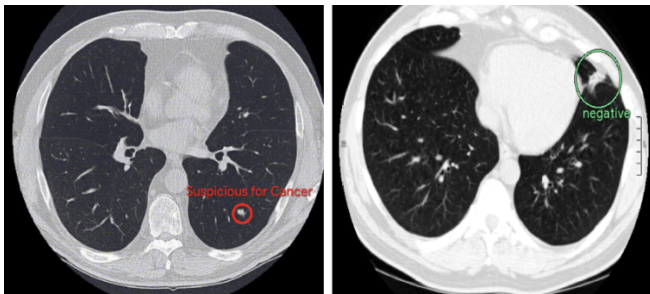
Influence Function and NLP Application

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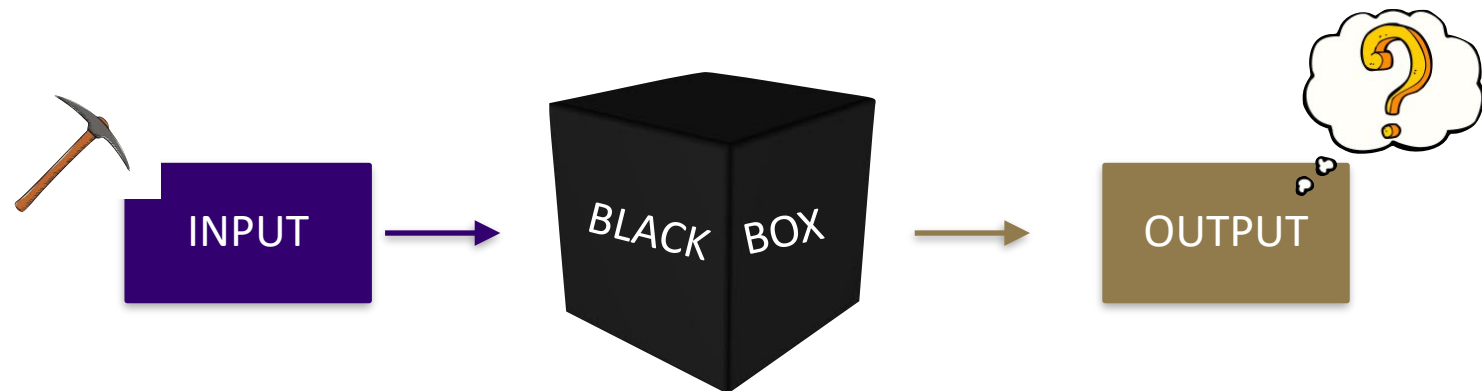
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Motivation

We rely on models for important tasks...



But how do we know we can trust these models?



Influence Diagnostics

UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON

Outline

- **Background: Influential Points**
- Statistical Finite Bound
- Computational Bound
 - *Experiment: Is there always meaning?*
- Most Influential Subset
 - *Experiment: Are all statistics a lie?!*
- NLP Connection
 - *Will there be influence in your future?*

Background: Notation

Setting: Consider $\theta \in \Theta$, constructed from i.i.d sample $z = \{(x_i, y_i)\}_{i=1}^n$

True Parameter

$$\theta_{\star} := \arg \min_{\theta \in \Theta} \mathbb{E}_{Z \sim P}[\ell(Z, \theta)]$$

Estimator

$$\theta_n := \arg \min_{\theta \in \Theta} \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^n \ell(Z_i, \theta)$$

Perturbed Estimator:

$$\theta_{n, \epsilon, z} := \arg \min_{\theta \in \Theta} \left\{ (1-\epsilon) \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^n \ell(Z_i, \theta) + \epsilon \ell(z, \theta) \right\}$$

Empirical Risk

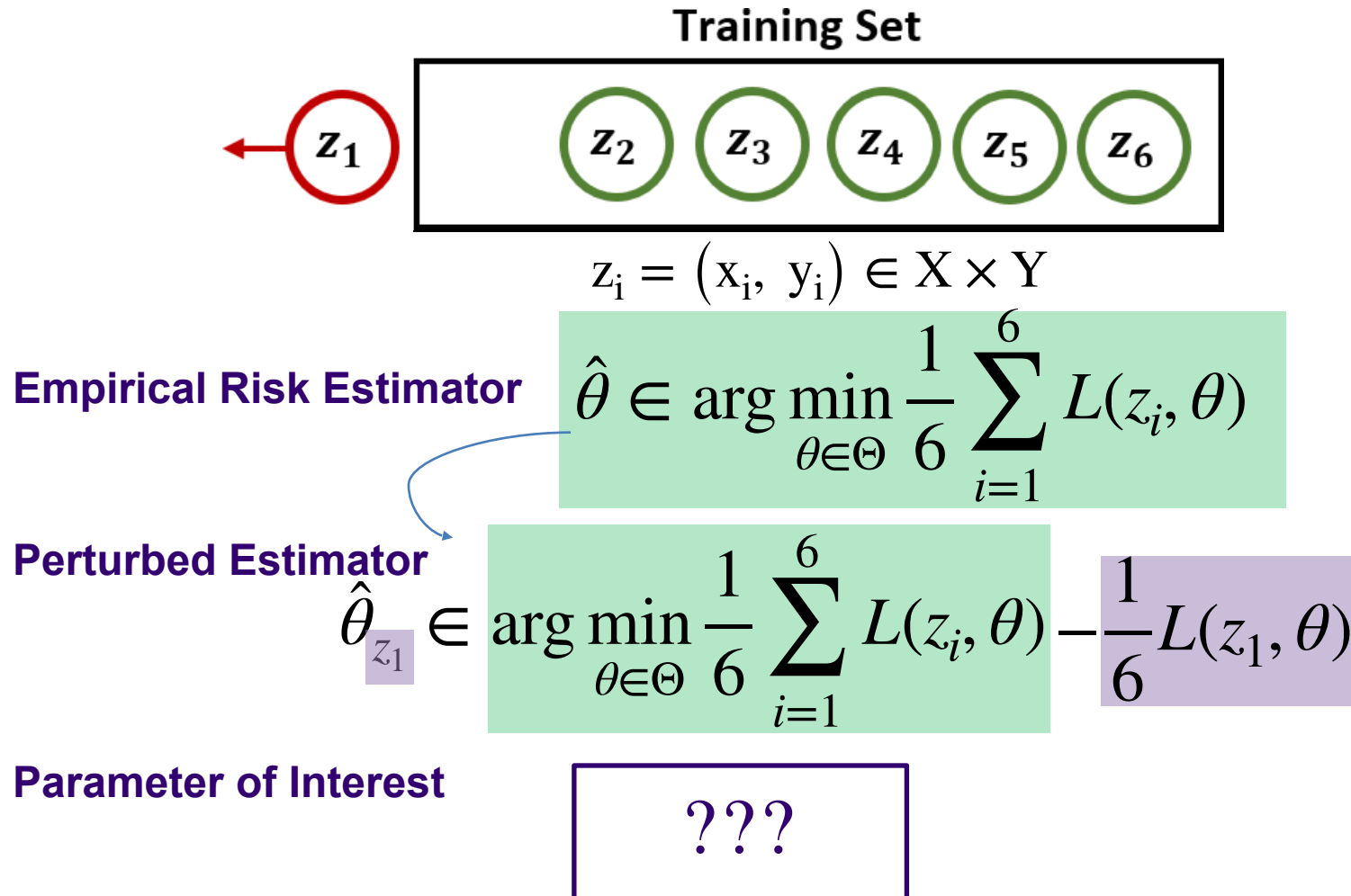
Loss at 1 point

$$\epsilon = \frac{-1}{n} \longrightarrow \text{removing one point}$$

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Background: Influence Function

Consider a prediction problem,



Background: Notation

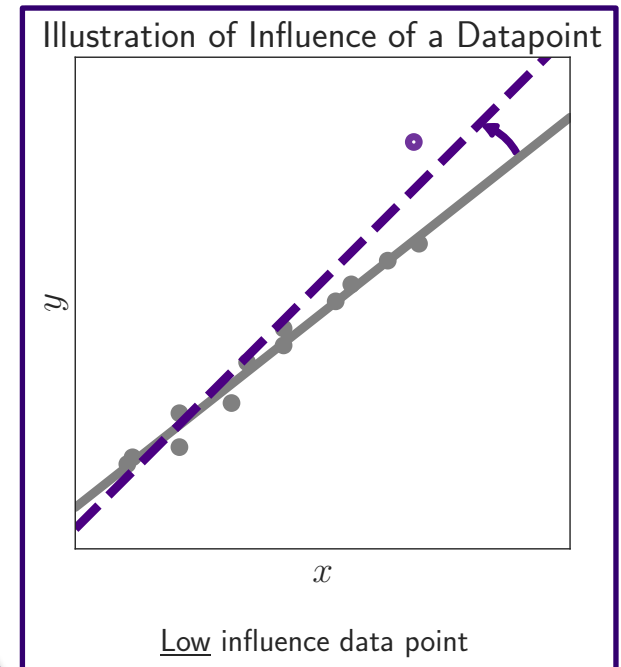
Influence Function: quantify the *influence* of a fixed data point z on an estimator θ_n

$$I_n(z) = \frac{d\theta_{n,\epsilon,z}}{d\epsilon} \approx \frac{\theta_{n,\epsilon,z} - \theta_n}{\epsilon}$$

Cook and Weisberg Formula

$$I_n(z) = -H_n(\theta_n)^{-1} \nabla \ell(z, \theta_n)$$

where $H_n(\theta_n)$ is the empirical Hessian



Closed form solution
—> easier to solve!



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Assumptions: Pseudo Self-Concordance

1. Simple definition if we assume *linear prediction models* (i.e. $\ell(\theta) = \ell(Y, X^T \theta)$).

We consider $\ell(\theta)$ is pseudo self-concordant if

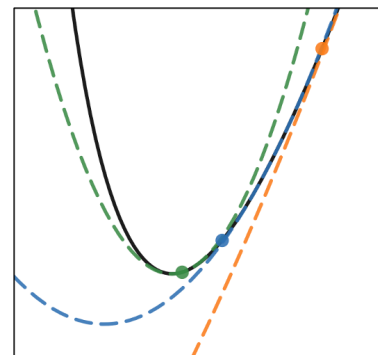
$$|\nabla^3 \ell(z, \theta)| \leq \nabla^2 \ell(z, \theta)$$

Prevents $\nabla^2 \ell(z, \theta)$ from changing too quickly with θ

Consequence: Spectral Approximation of the Hessian

$$\frac{1}{2}H(\theta') \leq H(\theta) \leq 2H(\theta') \text{ for } \theta \text{ close to } \theta'$$

Illustration of Pseudo Self-Concordance



Black curve: population function $f(x)$; colored dot: reference point x_i ; colored dashed curve: quadratic approximation at the corresponding reference point $Q(x; x_i)$.

Assumptions

2. **Normalized gradient** $H(\theta_\star)^{-1/2} \nabla \ell(Z, \theta_\star)$ at $\theta_\star$ is **sub-Gaussian** with parameter K_1

Since $\mathbb{E}[\nabla \ell(Z, \theta_\star)] = 0$, then **Assumption 2** gives
a high prob. bound on $\|\nabla \ell(Z, \theta_\star)\|_{H_\star}^{-1}$

3. There exist $K_2 > 0$ such that the **standardized Hessian** at $\theta_\star$ satisfies a **Bernstein condition** with parameter K_2

Moreover,

$\sigma_H^2 := \|\text{Var}(H(\theta_\star)^{-1/2} \nabla^2 \ell(Z, \theta_\star) H(\theta_\star)^{-1/2})\|_2$ is finite.

Assumption 3 gives spectral concentration

$$(1/2)H(\theta) < H_n(\theta) < 2H(\theta)$$

Generalized Linear Models satisfy these assumptions



Results: Statistical Bound

Theorem 1. Suppose the assumptions¹ hold and

$$n \geq C \left(\frac{p}{\mu_{\star}} \log \frac{1}{\delta} + \log \frac{p}{\delta} \right)$$

where $\mu_{\star} = \lambda_{\min}(H(\theta_{\star}))$.

Then, with probability at least $1 - \delta$, we have $\frac{1}{4}H(\theta_{\star}) \leq H_n(\theta_n) \leq 3H(\theta_{\star})$ and

$$\| \underbrace{I_n(z)}_{\text{wavy line}} - I(z) \|_{H_{\star}}^2 \leq C \frac{p_{\star}^2}{\mu_{\star} n} \text{poly} \log \left(\frac{p}{\delta} \right)$$

- Only logarithmic dependence on p (dim. of param.)
- $p_{\star}$ is the degrees of freedom (model misspecification)
- Rate of $1/n$



Experiment: Simulation

Simulation

$x \sim N(0,1)$

Linear (Ridge) Regression

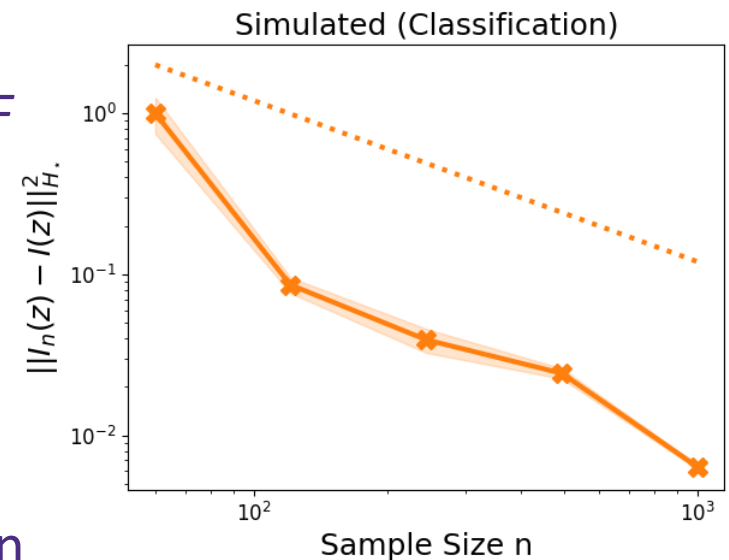
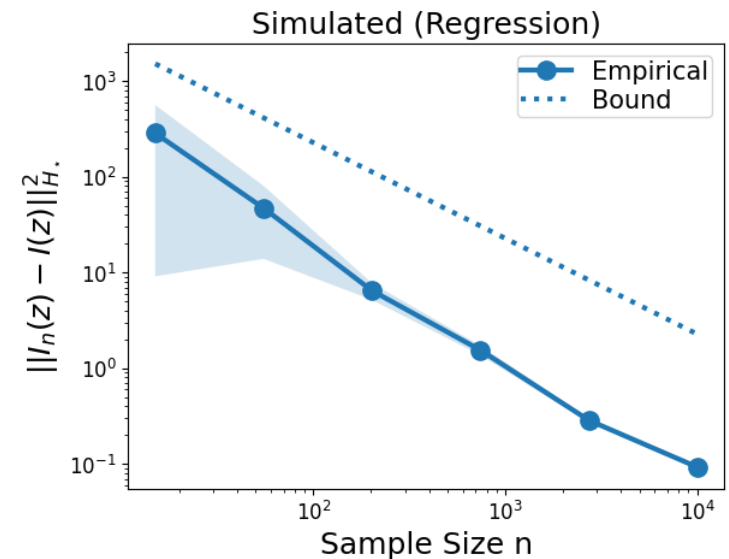
Logistic Regression

X-axis: Training Sample Size

Y-axis: Difference in empirical vs. population IF

Results

- See $1/n$ of our bound observed
- Straight line in log-log scale
- Hard to approximate classification population



Experiment: Real Dataset

Real Dataset

Cash Transfer

- X: Socio-economic covariates
- Y: Total consumption (regression)

Oregon Medicaid

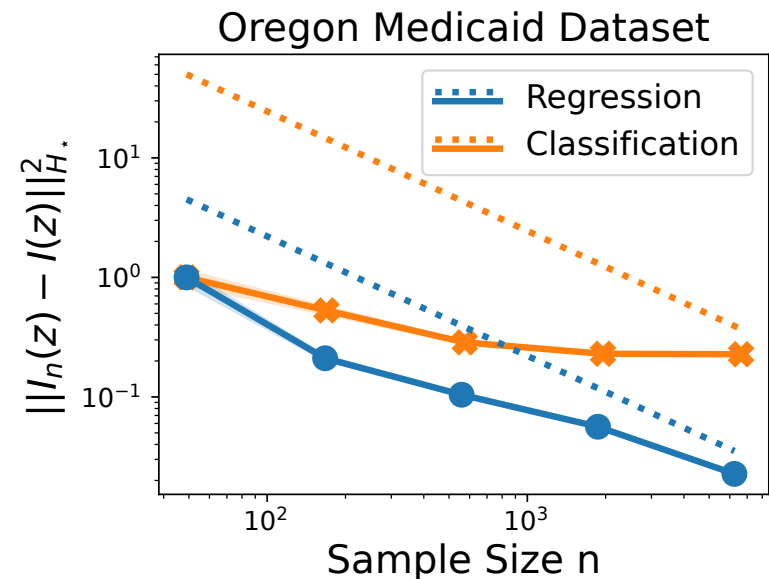
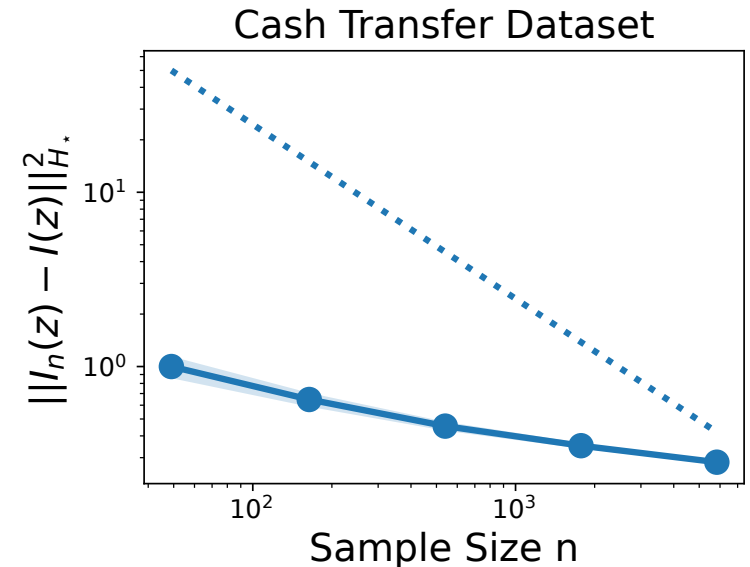
- X: Health-related covariates
 1. Y: Estimate overall health (classification)
 2. Y: Number of good days (regression)

X-axis: Training Sample Size

Y-axis: Difference in empirical vs. population IF

Results

- See $1/n$ of our bound observed
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Computational Challenge

Cook and Weisberg Formula

$$I_n(z) = - H_n(\theta_n)^{-1} \nabla \ell(z, \theta_n)$$

Can't be computed for large values of p

Second derivative ($p \times p$)
 p = dim of parameter

Instead use iterative algorithms to approximately minimize

$$g_n(\mu) := \frac{1}{2} \left\langle \mu, H_n(\theta_n) \mu \right\rangle + \left\langle \nabla \ell(z, \theta_n), \mu \right\rangle$$

Algorithms

- > Conjugate Gradient (CG)
- > Stochastic Gradient Descent (SGD)
- > Stochastic Variance Reduced Gradient (SVRG)
- > Arnoldi – Low Rank



Result: Computational Bound

Proposition 1. Consider the setting of Theorem 1, and let $\mathcal{G}$ denote the event under which its conclusions hold. Let $\hat{I}_n(\theta)$ be an estimate of $I_n(\theta)$ that satisfies

$$\mathbb{E}_{Z_{1:n}} \left[\left\| \hat{I}_n(z) - I_n(z) \right\|_{H_n(\theta_n)}^2 \right] \leq \epsilon.$$

Then

$$\mathbb{E}_{\mathcal{G}} \left[\left\| \hat{I}_n(z) - I(z) \right\|_{H(\theta_*)}^2 \right] \leq 8\epsilon + C \frac{p_{\star}^2}{\mu_{\star} n} \text{poly} \log \frac{p}{\delta}$$

- Using an ϵ -approximate minimizer of the empirical influence approximation
- Translating approx. error in $H_n(\theta_n)$ -norm to the $H_{\star}$ -norm under $\mathcal{G}$ (Theorem 1)
- **Total Error** under $O(\epsilon)$ is $O(n(\epsilon)T(\epsilon))$



Result: Computational Bound

Proposition 1. Consider the setting of Theorem 1, and let $\mathcal{G}$ denote the event under which its conclusions hold. Let $\hat{I}_n(\theta)$ be an estimate of $I_n(\theta)$ that satisfies

$$\mathbb{E}_{Z_{1:n}} \left[\left\| \hat{I}_n(z) - I_n(z) \right\|_{H_n(\theta_n)}^2 \right] \leq \epsilon.$$

Then

$$\mathbb{E}_{\mathcal{G}} \left[\left\| \hat{I}_n(z) - I_n(z) \right\|_{H(\theta_*)}^2 \right] \leq 8\epsilon + C \frac{p_\star^2}{\mu_\star n} \text{poly} \log \frac{p}{\delta}$$

Example: Stochastic Variance Reduction Gradient (SVRG)

- Requires $T_n(\epsilon) = C(n + \kappa_n) \log \left(\frac{\kappa_n \|u_0 - u_\star\|_{H_n(\theta_n)}}{\epsilon} \right)$ iterations to return an ϵ -approximate minimizer.
- Each iteration requires n Hessian-vector products
- To make statistical error to be smaller than ϵ , $n \geq n(\epsilon) = \tilde{O} \left(\frac{p_\star^2}{\mu_\star \epsilon} \right)$ from **Theorem 1**
- Total error under $O(\epsilon)$ is $O(n(\epsilon)T(\epsilon))$ – by Proposition 1

$$\text{Total Error} = \kappa_\star \left(1 + \frac{p_\star}{\epsilon} \right) \log \left(\frac{\kappa_\star \Delta_\star}{\epsilon} \right)$$

$\kappa_\star$ is the condition number

$$\Delta_\star = \|I_n(z)\|_{H(\theta_\star)}^2$$



Result: Global Bounds

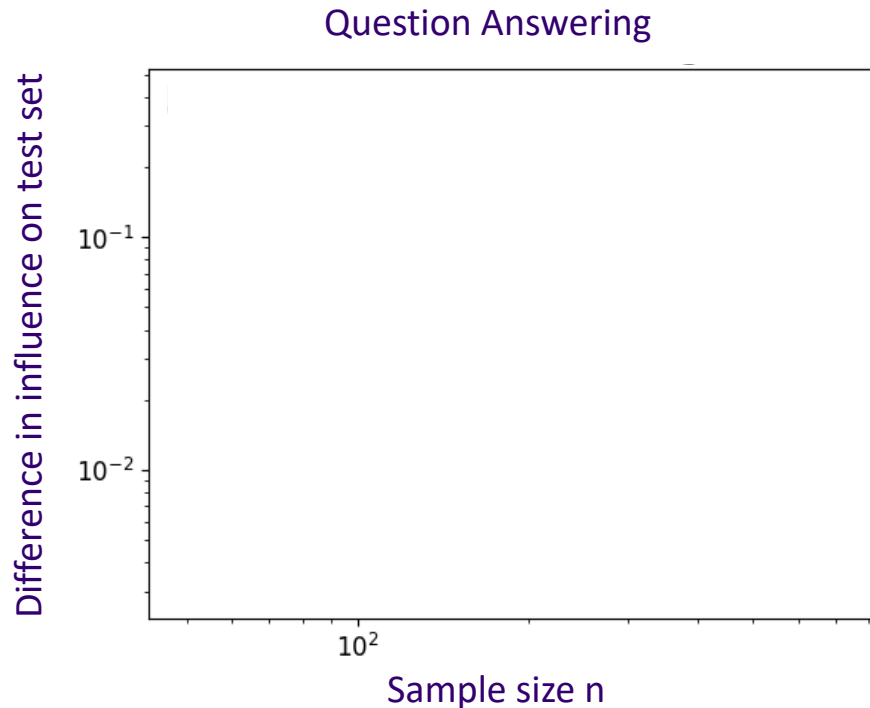
Method	Computational Error	Total Error
Conjugate Gradient	$n\sqrt{\kappa_n}$	$\frac{\kappa_\star^{3/2} p_\star^2}{\epsilon}$
Stochastic Gradient Descent	$\frac{\sigma_n^2}{\epsilon} + \kappa_n$	$\frac{\sigma_\star^2}{\epsilon} + \kappa_\star$
Stochastic Variance Reduction Gradient	$(n + \kappa_n)$	$\kappa_\star \left(1 + \frac{p_\star^2}{\epsilon}\right)$
Accelerated Stochastic Variance Reduction Gradient	$(n + \sqrt{n\kappa_n})$	$\kappa_\star \left(\sqrt{\frac{p_\star^2}{\epsilon}} + \frac{p_\star^2}{\epsilon}\right)$



Experiment: Is there always meaning?

Question Answering

- Input: question
- Response: factual correct answer
 - X= What country did The Laughing Cow originate?
 - Y= France
- zsRE dataset (Levy et. al., 2017)/BART-base model
- Average over 5 data points



Is this surprising?

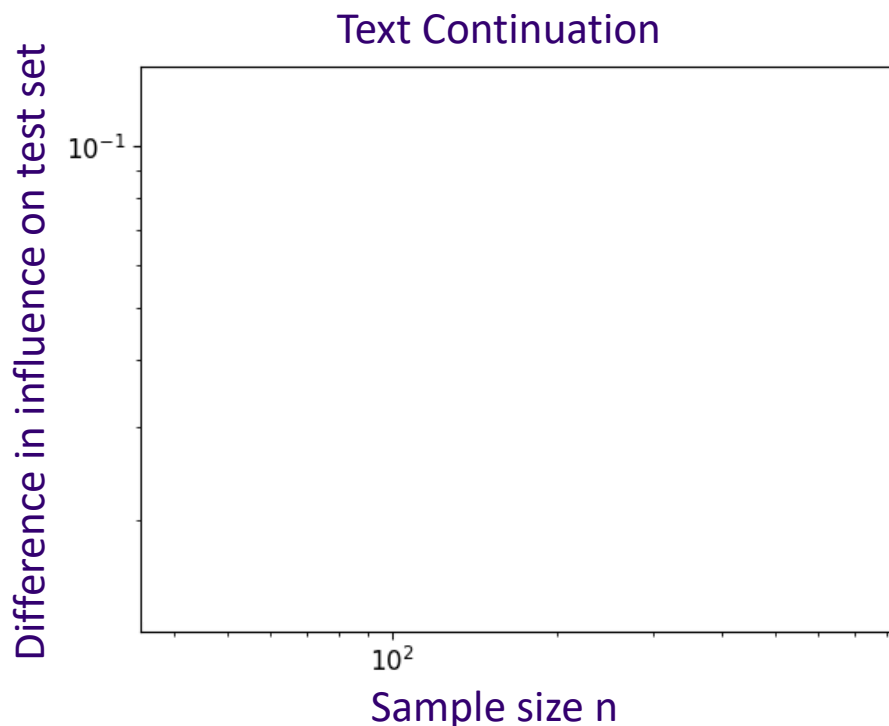
Do you think every sample would have the trend?

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Experiment: Is there always meaning?

Text Continuation

- Input: Start of paragraph
- Response: 10 tokens continuation
 - X = “The interchange is considered by Popular Mechanics to be one of the...”,
 - y = “World’s 18 Strangest Roadways because of its height”
- WikiText (Merity et. al., 2017)/GPT2
- Averaged over 5 data points



Is this surprising?

Why is this graph not decreasing?

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Outline

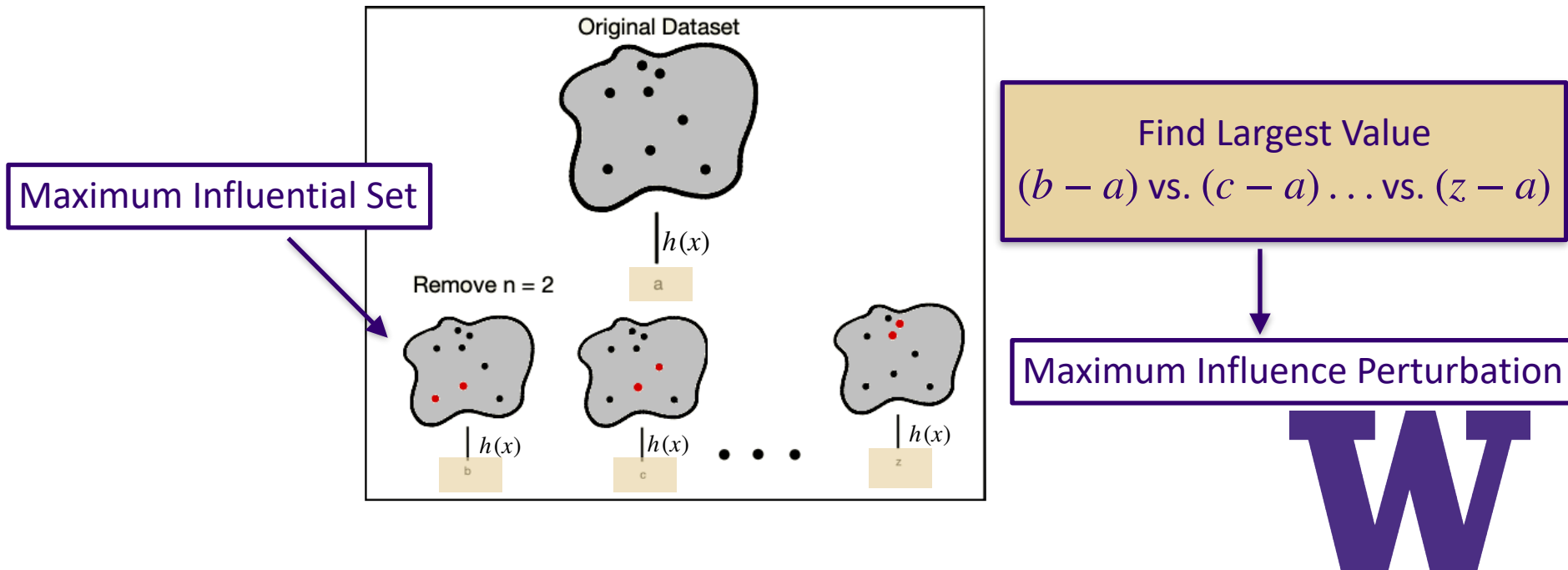
- Background: Influential Points
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 - *Experiment: Are all statistics a lie?!*
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 - *Experiment: Will there be influence in your future?*

MIS: Definition

Most Influential Subset

- Given an $\alpha \in (0,1)$, and a test function $h : \mathbb{R}^p \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$

Most influential set is the subset of data (size at most αn), which *when removed leads to largest increase in the test function*.



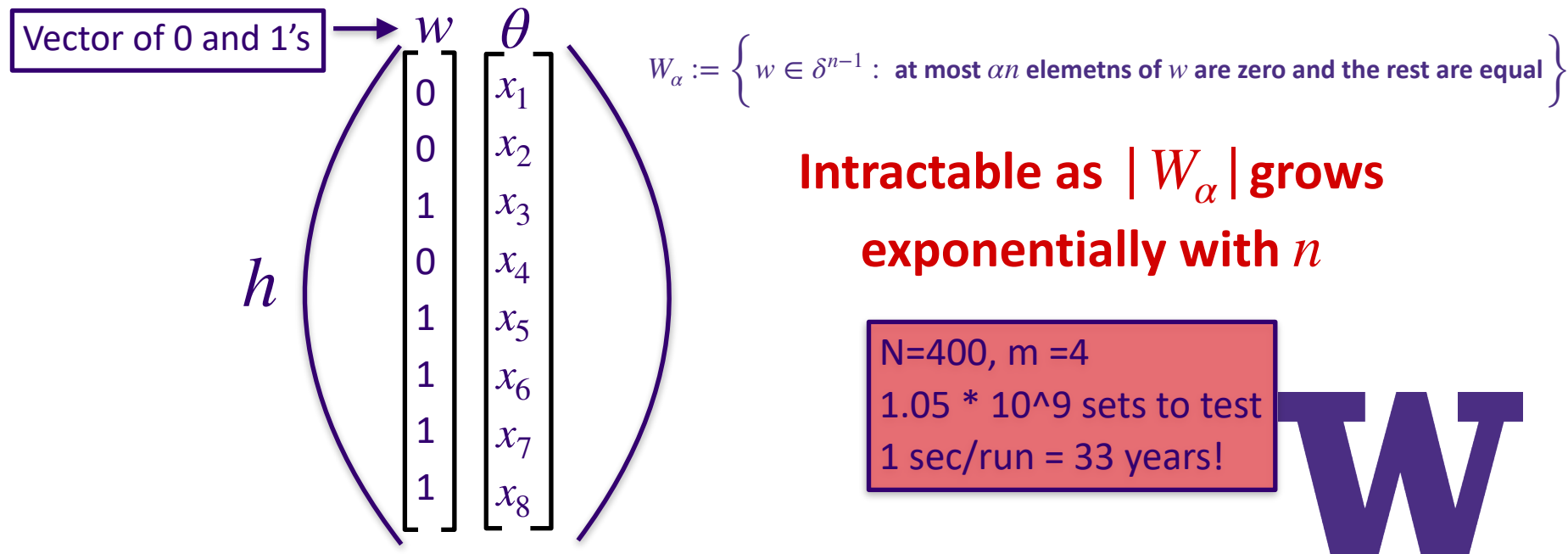
MIS: Definition

Most Influential Subset

- Given n $\alpha \in (0,1)$, and a test function $h : \mathbb{R}^p \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$

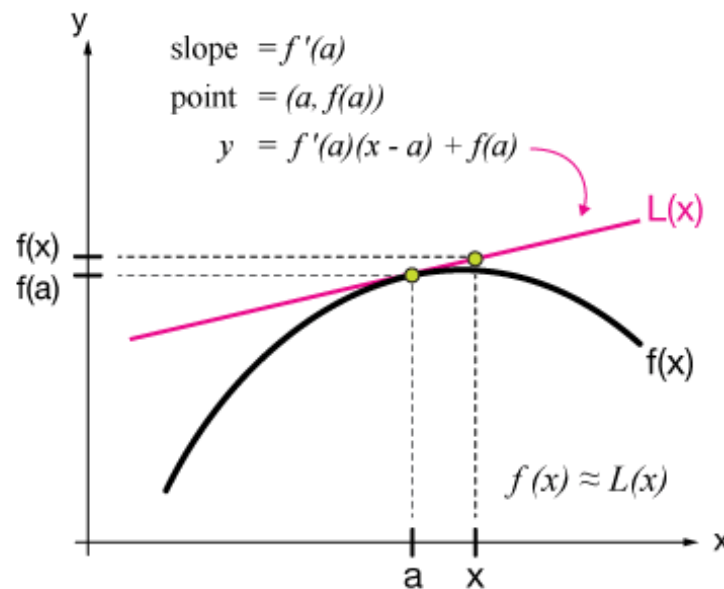
Most influential subset is the subset of data (size at most αn), which *when removed leads to largest increase in the test function*.

Mathematically,



MIS: Definition

First-order Taylor expansion: $f(x) = f(a) + f'(a)(x - a)$



Instead Broderick et al. (2020) use first-order Taylor expansion in $h(\theta_{n,w})$ around $w = \mathbf{1}$

$$h(\theta_{n,w}) \approx h(\theta_n, \frac{1}{n}) + \left\langle \nabla_w h(\theta_n, w) \Big|_{w=\frac{1}{n}}, w - \frac{1}{n} \right\rangle$$

$\mathbf{1}$ is a vector of all 1's

W

MIS: Definition

Instead Broderick et al. (2020) use linear *approximation*

$$h(\theta_{n,w}) \approx h(\theta_n) + \left\langle w - \frac{\mathbf{1}_n}{n}, \nabla_w h(\theta_n, w) \big|_{w=\mathbf{1}_n/n} \right\rangle$$

Which leads to the influence of the most influential subset,

$$I_{\alpha,n}(h) := \max_{w \in W_\alpha} \left\langle w, \nabla_w h(\theta_n, w) \big|_{w=\mathbf{1}_n/n} \right\rangle$$

Which can be simplified using the implicit function theorem and the chain rule to a closed form

$$I_{\alpha,n}(h) := \max_{w \in W_\alpha} \sum_{i=1}^n w_i v_i$$

Greedy algorithm that zeros out the largest αn entries of v_i 's!

Where $v_i = - \left\langle \nabla h(\theta_n), \underbrace{H_n(\theta_n)^{-1} \nabla \ell(Z_i, \theta_n)}_{I_n(Z_i, \theta_n)} \right\rangle$

$I_n(Z_i, \theta_n)$

W

Main Results: Most Influential Subset

Theorem 2. Suppose the added assumptions hold and the sample size n satisfies the condition in Theorem 1.

Then with probability at least $1 - \delta$

$$\frac{(I_{\alpha,n}(h) - I_{\alpha}(h))^2}{(1 - \alpha)^2} \leq \frac{C_{M_1, M_2, M'_1, M'_2} R^2 p_{\star}}{\mu_{\star} n} \log \frac{n \vee p}{\delta}$$

- Only logarithmic dependence on p
- $p_{\star}$ is affine-invariant
- $\frac{1}{n}$ rate



Experiment: Real Dataset

Oregon Medicaid study (Finkestein et al., 2012)

- Lottery from 90,000 people to sign up for Medicaid = randomization into treatment (Medicaid) and control (no Medicaid) groups
- Measured outcomes one year after treatment group received Medicaid ($n \approx 22,000$)

$$y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{LOTTERY} + \beta_2 X_{\text{covariates}}$$

- Test function, $h(x)$: is β_1 significant?

Is this surprising?

Do you think large datasets (like the ones we use in LLM pretraining) are this sensitive to change?

On average the removal of <.05% of the data changes sign of significance!!

Case	Original estimate	Target change	Refit estimate	Observations dropped
p 12m	0.133 (0.026)*	Sign change	-0.006 (0.025)	275 = 1.18%
		Significance change	0.044 (0.026)	162 = 0.69%
		Significant sign change	-0.043 (0.024)	381 = 1.63%
Health not poor 12m	0.099 (0.018)*	Sign change	-0.003 (0.015)	155 = 0.66%
		Significance change	0.027 (0.016)	100 = 0.43%
		Significant sign change	-0.030 (0.015)*	219 = 0.94%
	0.113 (0.023)*	Sign change	-0.006 (0.022)	197 = 0.84%
		Significance change	0.039 (0.022)	106 = 0.45%
		Significant sign change	-0.049 (0.022)*	291 = 1.24%
	0.317 (0.563)*	Sign change	-0.023 (0.535)	73 = 0.33%
		Significance change	1.078 (0.558)	10 = 0.05%
		Significant sign change	-1.009 (0.521)	144 = 0.66%
Not bad days physical 12m	0.585 (0.606)*	Sign change	-0.040 (0.577)	87 = 0.41%
		Significance change	1.131 (0.597)	20 = 0.09%
		Significant sign change	-1.141 (0.566)*	164 = 0.77%
Not bad days mental 12m	2.082 (0.640)*	Sign change	-0.062 (0.607)	123 = 0.57%
		Significance change	1.171 (0.625)	42 = 0.19%
		Significant sign change	-1.201 (0.594)*	212 = 0.98%



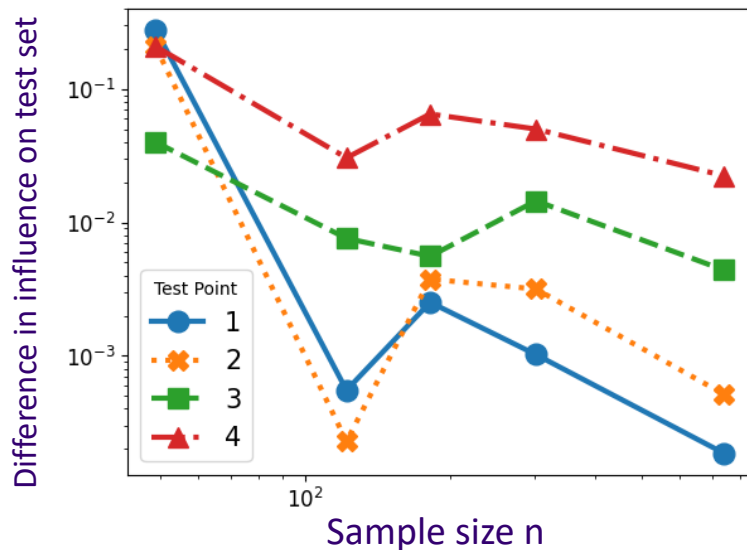
Experiment: Most Influential Subset

MIS (Question Answering)

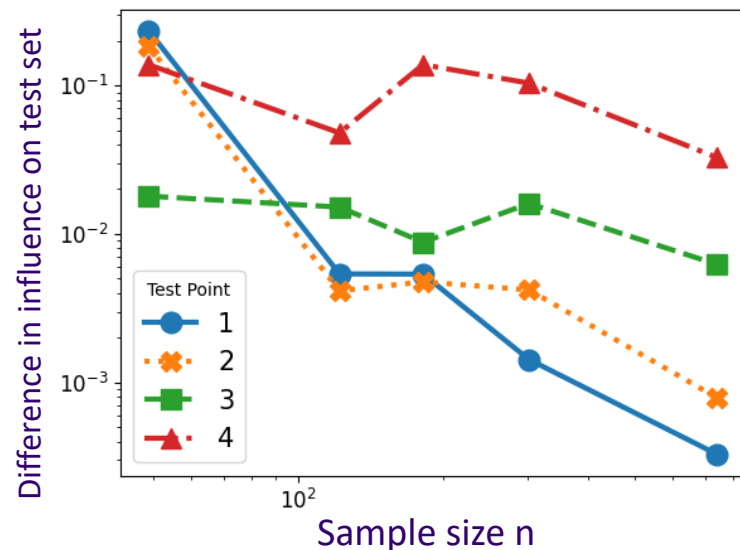
- 4 different test points (questions/answer)
- $\alpha = 0.05, 0.1$ (size of subset)
- Arnoldi method was used to approximate influence

Why is there such variety in slopes?

Alpha = 0.05



Alpha = 0.01



- Downward trend $\rightarrow$ similar to influence of 1 datapoint



Experiment: Most Influential Subset

z_{test}
Q: Where is Venera 9 found?
A: Venus

If the MIS was perfect, how could this be used to help in NLP tasks?

Is there alternative methods to MIS that identify influential sets?

Additional Datapoints from Smaller Train Dataset:

The star Palomar 2 is a part of the constellation named what?

The star NGC 4349-127 is part of what constellation? ...

W

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Related Work in NLP

Influential points

- Leave one out training (data point importance)
- Saliency maps (token importance)
- Self-influence (Bejan et al. , 2023)
- Influence function for NLP.... Still in development

Machine Unlearning

- Quark - reinforcement learning (Lu et al., 2022)
- SISA Training (Kumar et al., 2022)

Explaining Black Box Predictions and Unveiling Data Artifacts through Influence Functions

Xiaochuang Han, Byron C. Wallace, Yulia Tsvetkov

INFLUENCE FUNCTIONS IN DEEP LEARNING ARE FRAGILE

Samyadeep Basu*, Phillip Pope * & Soheil Feizi
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AUG 27 2020

Influence Functions Do Not Seem to
Predict Usefulness in NLP Transfer
Learning

Author(s): [Vid Kocijan](#) and Samuel R. Bowman
Publication date: August 27 2020
Reviewer: Alex Wang
Editor: [Kyunghyun Cho](#)

Conclusion and Future Extensions

Conclusion

- Presented statistical and computational guarantees for influence functions for generalized linear models
- Established the statistical consistency of most influential subsets method (Broderick et al., 2020) together with non-asymptotic bounds
- Illustrated our results on simulated and real datasets

Future Extension

- Non-convex/Non-smooth penalized M-estimation
- Application for toxicity/bias removal in NLP



Thank You!

[Full Paper](#)



References

R. Cook and S. Weisberg. Residuals and influence in regression. New York: Chapman and Hall, New York: Chapman Hall, 1982.

T. Broderick, R. Giordano, and R. Meager. An Automatic Finite-Sample Robustness Metric: When Can Dropping a Little Data Make a Big Difference? arXiv Preprint, 2020

D. M. Ostrovskii and F. Bach. Finite-sample analysis of M-estimators using self-concordance. Electronic Journal of Statistics, 15(1), 2021



Appendix Slides

Algorithms: Conjugate Gradient

Algorithm 1 Conjugate Gradient Method to Compute the Influence Function

Input: vector v , batch Hessian vector product oracle $\text{HVP}_n(u) = H_n(\theta_n)u$, number of iterations T

1: $u_0 = 0, r_0 = -v - \text{HVP}_n(u_0), d_0 = r_0$

2: **for** $t = 0, \dots, T - 1$ **do**

3: $\alpha_t = \frac{d_t^\top r_t}{d_t^\top \text{HVP}_n(d_t)}$

4: $u_{t+1} = u_t + \alpha_t d_t$

5: $r_{t+1} = -v - \text{HVP}_n(u_{t+1})$

6: $\beta_t = \frac{r_{t+1}^\top r_{t+1}}{r_t^\top r_t}$

7: $d_{t+1} = r_{t+1} + \beta_t d_t$

8: **return** u_T

Algorithms: Stochastic Gradient Descent

Algorithm 2 Stochastic Gradient Descent Method to Compute the Influence Function

Input: vector v , Hessian vector product oracle $\text{HVP}(i, u) = \nabla^2 \ell(z_i, \theta_n)u$, number of iterations T , learning rate γ

- 1: $u_0 = 0$
 - 2: **for** $t = 0, \dots, T - 1$ **do**
 - 3: Sample $i_t \sim \text{Unif}([n])$
 - 4: $u_{t+1} = u_t - \gamma(\text{HVP}(i_t, u_t) + v)$
 - 5: **return** u_T
-

Algorithms: Stochastic Variance Reduction Gradient

Algorithm 4 Stochastic Variance Reduced Gradient Method to Compute the Influence Function

Input: vector v , Hessian vector product oracle $\text{HVP}(i, u) = \nabla^2 \ell(z_i, \theta_n)u$, number of epochs S , number of iterations per epoch T , learning rate γ

- 1: $u_T^{(0)} = 0$
 - 2: **for** $s = 1, 2, \dots, S$ **do**
 - 3: $u_0^{(s)} = u_T^{(s-1)}$
 - 4: $\tilde{u}_0^{(s)} = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^n \text{HVP}(u_0^{(s)}) - v$
 - 5: **for** $t = 0, \dots, T - 1$ **do**
 - 6: Sample $i_t \sim \text{Unif}([n])$
 - 7: $u_{t+1}^{(s)} = u_t^{(s)} - \gamma(\text{HVP}(i_t, u_t^{(s)}) - \text{HVP}(i_t, u_0^{(s)}) + \tilde{u}_0^{(s)})$
 - 8: **return** $u_T^{(S)}$
-

Algorithms: Arnoldi

Algorithm 5 Arnoldi Method to Compute the Influence Function (Schioppa et al., 2022)

Input: vector v , test function h , initial guess u_0 , batch Hessian vector product oracle $\text{HVP}_n(u) = H_n(\theta_n)u$, number of top eigenvalues k , number of iterations T

Output: An estimate of $\langle \nabla h(\theta), H_n(\theta_n)^{-1}v \rangle$

1: Obtain $\Lambda, G = \text{ARNOLDI}(u_0, T, k)$

▷ Cache the results for future calls

2: **return** $\langle G\nabla h(\theta), \Lambda^{-1}Gv \rangle$

3: **procedure** $\text{ARNOLDI}(u_0, T, k)$

4: $w_0 = 1 = u_0 / \|u_0\|_2$

5: $A = \mathbf{0}_{T+1 \times T}$

6: **for** $t = 1, \dots, T$ **do**

7: Set $u_t = \text{HVP}_n(w_t) - \sum_{j=1}^t \langle u_t, w_j \rangle w_j$

8: Set $A_{j,t} = \langle u_t, w_j \rangle$ for $j = 1, \dots, t$ and $A_{t+1,t} = \|u_t\|_2$

9: Update $w_{t+1} = u_t / \|u_t\|$

10: Set $\tilde{A} = A[1 : T, :] \in \mathbb{R}^{T \times T}$ (discard the last row)

11: Compute an eigenvalue decomposition $\tilde{A} = \sum_{j=1}^T \lambda_j e_j e_j^\top$ with λ_j 's in descending order

12: Define $G : \mathbb{R}^p \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^k$ as the operator $Gu = (\langle u, W^\top e_1 \rangle, \dots, \langle u, W^\top e_k \rangle)$, where $W = (w_1^\top; \dots; w_T^\top) \in \mathbb{R}^{T \times p}$

13: **return** diagonal matrix $\Lambda = \text{Diag}(\lambda_1, \dots, \lambda_k)$ and the operator G

Computational Results: CG

Proposition 1. Consider the setting of Theorem 1, and let $\mathcal{G}$ denote the event under which its conclusions hold. Let $\hat{I}_n(\theta)$ be an estimate of $I_n(\theta)$ that satisfies $\mathbb{E} \left[\left\| \hat{I}_n(z) - I_n(z) \right\|_{H_n(\theta_n)}^2 \middle| Z_{1:n} \right] \leq \epsilon$.

Then

$$\mathbb{E} \left[\left\| \hat{I}_n(z) - I_n(z) \right\|_{H_\star}^2 \middle| \mathcal{G} \right] \leq 8\epsilon + C \frac{R^2 p_\star^2}{\mu_\star n} \log^3 \left(\frac{p}{\delta} \right)$$

Example: Conjugate Gradient

- Requires $T_n(\epsilon) := \sqrt{k_n} \log(\|I_n(z)\|_{H_n(\theta_n)}^2 / \epsilon)$ iterations to return an ϵ -approximate minimizer.
- Each iteration requires n Hessian-vector products
- To make statistical error to be smaller than ϵ , $n \geq n(\epsilon) = \tilde{O}\left(\frac{R^2 p_\star^2}{\mu_\star \epsilon}\right)$
- Total error under $O(\epsilon)$ is $O(n(\epsilon)T(\epsilon))$ – by Proposition 1



Experiment: Most Influential Subset

MIS Test Questions

1. What position did Víctor Vázquez Solsona play? - ***midfielder***
2. The nationality of Jean-Louis Laya was what? - ***French***
3. Where is Venera 9 found? - ***Venus***
4. Who set the standards for ISO 3166-1 alpha-2? - ***International Organization for Standardization***
5. In which language Nintendo La Rivista Ufficiale monthly football magazine reporting? - ***Italian***



Experiment: Most Influential Subset

1. What position did Víctor Vázquez Solsona play?
Midfielder
2. Was Goldmoon male or female? Female
3. Where is Venera 9 found? Venus
4. In which language Nintendo La Rivista Ufficiale monthly football magazine reporting? Italian

