Eluder Dimension and the Sample Complexity of Optimistic Exploration

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RL Theory

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- A set of actions \mathscr{A} .
- A set of real-valued functions $\mathscr{F} = \{f_{\rho} : \mathscr{A} \mapsto \mathbb{R} | \rho \in \Theta\}.$
- At each time t, the agent is presented with a subset $\mathscr{A}_t \subset \mathscr{A}$.
- The agent selects an action $A_t \in \mathscr{A}_t$, and then recieve a reward R_t .
- H_t is the history $(\mathscr{A}_1, A_1, R_1, \cdots, \mathscr{A}_{t-1}, R_{t-1}, \mathscr{A}_t)$.
- The agent employs a policy $\pi = {\pi_t | t \in \mathbb{N}}, \pi_t(H_t)$ is a distribution over \mathscr{A} with support \mathscr{A}_t .
- We assume that $\mathbb{E}[R_t|H_T, \theta, A_t] = f_{\theta}(A_t)$.

• The T-proi
od regret of a policy π is defined by

Regret
$$(T, \pi, \theta)$$
 $\sum_{t=1}^{T} \mathbb{E}[\max_{a \in \mathscr{A}_t} f_{\theta}(a) - f_{\theta}(A_t)|\theta].$

• The T-period Bayesian regret is defined by $\mathbb{E}[\operatorname{Regret}(T, \pi, \theta)]$, where the expectation is taken with respect to the prior distribution over θ . Hence,

BayesRegret
$$(T, \pi) = \sum_{t=1}^{T} \mathbb{E}[\max_{a \in \mathscr{A}_t} f_{\theta}(a) - f_{\theta}(A_t)].$$

Given a sample $\mathcal{D}_n = \{(x_1, y_1), \dots, (x_n, y_n)\}$, and define $S = \{x_1, \dots, x_n\}$. Consider the set $\mathcal{H}_S = \mathcal{H}_{x_1,\dots,x_n} = \{(h(x_1),\dots, h(x_n) : h \in \mathcal{H}\}.$

Definition (Growth Function). The growth function is the maximum number of ways into which n points can be classified by the function class:

$$G_{\mathcal{H}}(n) = \sup_{x_1, \dots, x_n} |\mathcal{H}_S|.$$

Definition (VC Dimension). The VC dimension of a class \mathcal{H} is the largest $n = d_{VC}(\mathcal{H})$ such that

$$G_{\mathcal{H}}(n) = 2^n.$$

In other words, VC dimension of a function class \mathcal{H} is the cardinality of the largest set that it can shatters.

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- A finite binary-valued function class $\mathscr{F} = \{ f_{\rho} : \mathscr{A} \mapsto \{0, 1\} | \rho \in \{1, \dots, n\} \}.$
- A finite action set $\mathscr{A} = \{1, \ldots, n\}.$
- Let $f_{\rho}(a) = \mathbf{1}(\rho = a)$.
- In time step t, $R_t = f_{\rho}(A_t)$.
- If ρ is uniformly distributed over $\{1, \ldots, n\}$, it's easyy to see that the Bayesian regret grows linearly with n.

We fomulate this problem as a supervised learning problem:

- At each time step, an action A_t is sampled uniformly from \mathscr{A} and the reward $f_{\theta}(A_t)$ is observed.
- For large n, the time it takes to effectively learn to predict $f_{\theta}(A_t)$.

DEFINITION 2. An action $a \in \mathcal{A}$ is ϵ -dependent on actions $\{a_1, \ldots, a_n\} \subseteq \mathcal{A}$ with respect to \mathcal{F} if any pair of functions $f, \tilde{f} \in \mathcal{F}$, satisfying $\sqrt{\sum_{i=1}^n (f(a_i) - \tilde{f}(a_i))^2} \le \epsilon$ also satisfies $f(a) - \tilde{f}(a) \le \epsilon$. Further, a is ϵ -independent of $\{a_1, \ldots, a_n\}$ with respect to \mathcal{F} if a is not ϵ -dependent on $\{a_1, \ldots, a_n\}$.

DEFINITION 3. The ϵ -eluder dimension dim_E(\mathcal{F}, ϵ) is the length d of the longest sequence of elements in \mathcal{A} such that, for some $\epsilon' \ge \epsilon$, every element is ϵ' -independent of its predecessors.

DEFINITION 4. An action *a* is *VC-independent* of $\tilde{A} \subseteq A$ if for any $f, \tilde{f} \in \mathcal{F}$, there exists some $\tilde{f} \in \mathcal{F}$, which agrees with f on a and with \tilde{f} on \tilde{A} ; that is, $\tilde{f}(a) = f(a)$ and $\tilde{f}(\tilde{a}) = \tilde{f}(\tilde{a})$ for all $\tilde{a} \in \tilde{A}$. Otherwise, a is *VC-dependent* on \tilde{A} .

DEFINITION 5. The VC dimension of a class of binary-valued functions with domain \mathscr{A} is the largest cardinality of a set $\tilde{\mathscr{A}} \subseteq \mathscr{A}$ such that every $a \in \tilde{\mathscr{A}}$ is VC-independent of $\tilde{\mathscr{A}} \setminus \{a\}$.

- Finite action spaces. For all $\epsilon > 0$, the ϵ -eluder dimension of \mathscr{A} is bounded by $|\mathscr{A}|$.
- Euclid space. The dimension of Euclid space for linear functions is 0-elider dimension of this space.

- Reward functions are parameterized by a vector $\theta \in \Theta \subset \mathbb{R}^d$.
- Feature mapping $\phi : \mathscr{A} \mapsto \mathbb{R}^d$ such that $f_{\theta}(a) = \langle \phi(a), \theta \rangle$.
- An ellipsoidal confidence set $\Theta_t = \{\rho \in \mathbb{R}^d : ||\rho \hat{\theta}_t||_{V_t} \le \sqrt{\beta_t}\},\$ where $V_t := \sum_{k=1}^t \phi(A_t)\phi(A_t)^T + \lambda I$ for some $\lambda \in \mathbb{R}$ captures the amount of exploration carried put in each direction up to time t.

Algorithm 2 (Linear-Gaussian UCB)

1. Update Statistics:

$$\mu_t \leftarrow \mathbb{E}[\theta \mid H_t] \\ \Sigma_t \leftarrow \mathbb{E}[(\theta - \mu_t)(\theta - \mu_t)^\top \mid H_t]$$

2. Select Action:

$$\bar{A}_t \in \operatorname*{arg\,max}_{a \in \mathcal{A}} \{ \langle \phi(a), \mu_t \rangle + \beta \log(t) \| \phi(a) \|_{\Sigma_t} \}$$

3. Increment t and Go to Step 1.

Theorem

Assume there exist constants γ and S such that for all $a \in \mathscr{A}$ and $\rho \in \Theta$, $||\rho||_2 \leq S$ and $||\phi(a)||_2 \leq \gamma$. Then $\dim_E(\mathscr{F}, \epsilon) \leq 3d(e/(e-1))\log\{3+3((2S)/\epsilon)^2\}+1.$

Define

$$\omega_k := \sup \left\{ (f_{\rho_1} - f_{\rho_2})(a_k) : \sqrt{\sum_{i=1}^{k-1} (f_{\rho_1} - f_{\rho_2})^2(a_i)} \le \epsilon' \rho_1, \rho_2 \in \Theta \right\}.$$

Then the ϵ -eluder dimension is the longest sequence such that $\omega_k > \epsilon'$.

- Let $\phi_k = \phi(a_k)$,
- $\rho = \rho_1 \rho_2$,
- and $\Phi_k = \sum_{i=1}^{k-1} \phi_i \phi_i^T$.
- In this case, $\sum_{i=1}^{k-1} (f_{\rho_1} f_{\rho_2})^2(a_i) = \rho^T \Phi_k \rho$,
- and by the triangle inequality $||\rho||_2 \leq 2S$.

Step 1. If $\omega_k \ge \epsilon'$, then $\phi_k^T V_k^{-1} \phi_k \ge \frac{1}{2}$, where $V_k := \Phi_k + \lambda I$ and $\lambda = (\epsilon'/(2S))^2$.

Proof.

$$\omega_k \le \max\{\rho^T \phi_k : \rho^T \Phi_k \rho \le (\epsilon')^2, \rho^T I \rho \le (2S)^2\}$$

$$\le \max\{\rho^T \phi_k : \rho^T V_k \rho \le 2(\epsilon')^2\}$$

$$= \sqrt{2(\epsilon')^2} ||\phi_k||_{V_k^{-1}}$$

Step 2. If $\omega_i \geq \epsilon'$, for each i < k, then $\det V_k \geq \lambda^d (\frac{3}{2})^{k-1}$ and $\det V_k \leq ((\gamma^2(k-1))/d + \lambda)^d$.

Proof.

PROOF. Since $V_k = V_{k-1} + \phi_k \phi_k^T$, using the matrix determinant lemma,

$$\det V_k = \det V_{k-1}(1 + \phi_t^T V_k^{-1} \phi_t) \ge \det V_{k-1}\left(\frac{3}{2}\right) \ge \cdots \ge \det[\lambda I]\left(\frac{3}{2}\right)^{k-1} = \lambda^d \left(\frac{3}{2}\right)^{k-1}.$$

Recall that det V_k is the product of the eigenvalues of V_k , whereas trace $[V_k]$ is the sum. As noted in Dani et al. [16], det V_k is maximized when all eigenvalues are equal. This implies det $V_k \leq ((\operatorname{trace}[V_k])/d)^d \leq ((\gamma^2(t-1))/d + \lambda)^d$. \Box

Step 3. Complete proof.

Proof.

Step 2 shows that $(\frac{3}{2})^{(k-1)d} \leq \alpha_0[(k-1)/d] + 1$, where $\alpha_0 = \gamma^2/\lambda = (2S\gamma/\epsilon')^2$. Let $B(x, \alpha) = \max\{B : (1+x)^B \leq \alpha B + 1\}$, then the number of times $\omega_k > \epsilon'$ can occur is bounded by $dB(1/2, \alpha_0) + 1$.

We now derive an explicit bound on $B(x, \alpha)$ for any $x \le 1$. Note that any $B \ge 1$ must satisfy the inequality $\ln\{1+x\}B \le \ln\{1+\alpha\} + \ln B$. Since $\ln\{1+x\} \ge x/(1+x)$, using the transformation of variables y = B[x/(1+x)] gives

$$y \le \ln\{1+\alpha\} + \ln\frac{1+x}{x} + \ln y \le \ln\{1+\alpha\} + \ln\frac{1+x}{x} + \frac{y}{e} \implies y \le \frac{e}{e-1}\left(\ln\{1+\alpha\} + \ln\frac{1+x}{x}\right).$$

This implies $B(x, \alpha) \le ((1+x)/x)(e/(e-1))(\ln\{1+\alpha\} + \ln((1+x)/x)))$. The claim follows by plugging in $\alpha = \alpha_0$ and x = 1/2. \Box

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Algorithm 3 (Independent posterior sampling)

1. Sample Model:

 $\hat{\theta}_t \sim N(\mu_{t-1}, \Sigma_{t-1})$

2. Select Action:

 $A_t \in \arg\max_{a \in \mathcal{A}} \hat{\theta}_t(a)$

3. Update Statistics: For each *a*,

$$\mu_{ta} \leftarrow \mathbb{E}[\theta_a \mid H_t] \\ \Sigma_{taa} \leftarrow \mathbb{E}[(\theta_a - \mu_{ta})^2 \mid H_t]$$

4. Increment t and Go to Step 1.

Algorithm 4 (Linear posterior sampling)

1. Sample Model:

 $\hat{\theta}_t \sim N(\mu_{t-1}, \Sigma_{t-1})$

- 2. Select Action:
 - $A_t \in \arg\max_{a \in \mathcal{A}} \langle \phi(a), \hat{\theta}_t \rangle$
- 3. Update Statistics:

$$\mu_{t} \leftarrow \mathbb{E}[\theta \mid H_{t}]$$

$$\Sigma_{t} \leftarrow \mathbb{E}[(\theta - \mu_{t})(\theta - \mu_{t})^{\top} \mid H_{t}]$$

4. Increment t and Go to Step 1.

Consider a UCB algorithm with a UCB sequence $U = \{U_t | t \in \mathbb{N}\}$. Let $\overline{A}_t \in \arg \max_{a \in \mathscr{A}_t} U_t(a)$ and $A^* \in \arg \max_{a \in \mathscr{A}_t} f_{\theta}(a)$. We have the following regret decomposition:

$$f_{\theta}(A_t^*) - f_{\theta}(\bar{A}_t) = f_{\theta}(A_t^*) - U_t(\bar{A}_t) + U_t(\bar{A}_t) - f_{\theta}(\bar{A}_t) \\ \leq [f_{\theta}(A_t^*) - U_t(A_t^*)] + [U_t(\bar{A}_t) - f_{\theta}(\bar{A}_t)]$$

Bayesian regret:

BayesRegret
$$(T, \pi^U) \leq \mathbb{E} \sum_{t=1}^T [U_t(\bar{A}_t) - f_\theta(\bar{A}_t)] + \mathbb{E} \sum_{t=1}^T [f_\theta(A_t^*) - U_t(A_t^*)]$$

PROPOSITION 1. For any UCB sequence $\{U_t \mid t \in \mathbb{N}\},\$

BayesRegret
$$(T, \pi^{PS}) = \mathbb{E} \sum_{t=1}^{T} [U_t(A_t) - f_{\theta}(A_t)] + \mathbb{E} \sum_{t=1}^{T} [f_{\theta}(A_t^*) - U_t(A_t^*)]$$

for all $T \in \mathbb{N}$.

PROOF. Note that, conditioned on H_i , the optimal action A_i^* and the action A_i selected by posterior sampling are identically distributed, and U_i is deterministic. Hence $\mathbb{E}[U_t(A_i^*) | H_i] = \mathbb{E}[U_t(A_i) | H_i]$. Therefore

$$\begin{split} \mathbb{E}[f_{\theta}(A_{t}^{*}) - f_{\theta}(A_{t})] &= \mathbb{E}[\mathbb{E}[f_{\theta}(A_{t}^{*}) - f_{\theta}(A_{t}) \mid H_{t}]] \\ &= \mathbb{E}[\mathbb{E}[U_{t}(A_{t}) - U_{t}(A_{t}^{*}) + f_{\theta}(A_{t}^{*}) - f_{\theta}(A_{t}) \mid H_{t}]] \\ &= \mathbb{E}[\mathbb{E}[U_{t}(A_{t}) - f_{\theta}(A_{t}) \mid H_{t}] + \mathbb{E}[f_{\theta}(A_{t}^{*}) - U_{t}(A_{t}^{*}) \mid H_{t}]] \\ &= \mathbb{E}[U_{t}(A_{t}) - f_{\theta}(A_{t})] + \mathbb{E}[f_{\theta}(A_{t}^{*}) - U_{t}(A_{t}^{*})]. \end{split}$$

Summing over t gives the result. \Box

- Assumption 1. For all $f \in \mathscr{F}$ and $a \in \mathscr{A}$, $f(a) \in [0, C]$.
- Assumption 2. For all $t \in \mathbb{N}$, $R_t f\theta(A_t)$ conditioned on (H_t, θ, A_t) is σ -sub-Gaussian.

Let
$$L_{2,t}(f) = \sum_{1}^{t-1} (f(A_t) - R_t)^2$$
, and $\hat{f}_t^{LS} \in \arg\min_{f \in \mathscr{F}} L_{2,t}(f)$.
Lemma 3. For any $\delta > 0$ and $f: \mathscr{A} \mapsto \mathbb{R}$, with probability at least $1 - \delta$,
 $L_{2,t}(f) \ge L_{2,t}(f_{\theta}) + \frac{1}{2} \|f - f_{\theta}\|_{2,E_t}^2 - 4\sigma^2 \log(1/\delta)$

simultaneously for all $t \in \mathbb{N}$.

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$$\beta_t^*(\mathcal{F}, \delta, \alpha) := 8\sigma^2 \log(N(\mathcal{F}, \alpha, \|\cdot\|_{\infty})/\delta) + 2\alpha t(8C + \sqrt{8\sigma^2 \ln(4t^2/\delta)}).$$
PROPOSITION 6. For all $\delta > 0$ and $\alpha > 0$, if
$$\mathcal{F}_t = \{f \in \mathcal{F} \colon \|f - \hat{f}_t^{LS}\|_{2, E_t} \le \sqrt{\beta_t^*(\mathcal{F}, \delta, \alpha)}\}$$
or all $t \in \mathbb{N}$ then

for all $t \in \mathbb{N}$, then

$$\mathbb{P}\left(f_{\theta} \in \bigcap_{t=1}^{\infty} \mathcal{F}_{t}\right) \geq 1 - 2\delta.$$

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DEFINITION 1. The Kolmogorov dimension of a function class \mathcal{F} is given by

$$\dim_{K}(\mathcal{F}) = \limsup_{\alpha \downarrow 0} \frac{\log N(\mathcal{F}, \alpha, \|\cdot\|_{\infty})}{\log(1/\alpha)}$$

In particular, we have the following result.

PROPOSITION 7. For any fixed class of functions \mathcal{F} ,

$$\beta_t^*(\mathcal{F}, 1/t^2, 1/t^2) = 16(1 + o(1) + \dim_K(\mathcal{F}))\log t.$$

LEMMA 4. For all $T \in \mathbb{N}$, if $\inf_{\rho \in \mathbb{F}_{\tau}} f_{\rho}(a) \leq f_{\theta}(a) \leq \sup_{\rho \in \mathbb{F}_{\tau}} f_{\rho}(a)$ for all $\tau \in \mathbb{N}$ and $a \in \mathcal{A}$ with probability at least 1 - 1/T, then

BayesRegret
$$(T, \pi^{PS}) \leq C + \mathbb{E} \sum_{t=1}^{T} w_{\mathcal{F}_t}(A_t).$$

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PROPOSITION 8. If $(\beta_t \ge 0 \mid t \in \mathbb{N})$ is a nondecreasing sequence and $\mathcal{F}_t := \{f \in \mathcal{F} : \|f - \hat{f}_t^{LS}\|_{2, E_t} \le \sqrt{\beta_t}\}$, then $\sum_{t=1}^T \mathbf{1}(w_{\mathcal{F}_t}(A_t) > \epsilon) \le \left(\frac{4\beta_T}{\epsilon^2} + 1\right) \dim_E(\mathcal{F}, \epsilon)$

for all $T \in \mathbb{N}$ and $\epsilon > 0$.

LEMMA 5. If $(\beta_t \ge 0 \mid t \in \mathbb{N})$ is a nondecreasing sequence and $\mathcal{F}_t := \{f \in \mathcal{F} : \|f - \hat{f}_t^{LS}\|_{2, E_t} \le \sqrt{\beta_t}\}$, then

$$\sum_{t=1}^{T} w_{\mathcal{F}_t}(A_t) \le 1 + \dim_E(\mathcal{F}, T^{-1})C + 4\sqrt{\dim_E(\mathcal{F}, T^{-1})\beta_T T}$$

for all $T \in \mathbb{N}$.

PROPOSITION 10. For any fixed class of functions \mathcal{F} ,

 $\operatorname{BayesRegret}(T, \pi^{PS}) \le 1 + [\operatorname{dim}_{E}(\mathcal{F}, T^{-1}) + 1]C + 16\sigma \sqrt{\operatorname{dim}_{E}(\mathcal{F}, T^{-1})(1 + o(1) + \operatorname{dim}_{K}(\mathcal{F}))\log(T)T}]$

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PROPOSITION 8. If $(\beta_t \ge 0 \mid t \in \mathbb{N})$ is a nondecreasing sequence and $\mathcal{F}_t := \{f \in \mathcal{F} : \|f - \hat{f}_t^{LS}\|_{2,E_t} \le \sqrt{\beta_t}\}$, then

$$\sum_{t=1}^{T} \mathbf{1}(w_{\mathcal{F}_t}(A_t) > \boldsymbol{\epsilon}) \leq \left(\frac{4\beta_T}{\boldsymbol{\epsilon}^2} + 1\right) \dim_E(\mathcal{F}, \boldsymbol{\epsilon})$$

for all $T \in \mathbb{N}$ and $\epsilon > 0$.

Step 1: If $\omega_t(A_t) > \epsilon$, then A_t is ϵ -dependent on fewer than $4\beta_T/\epsilon^2$ disjooint subsequences of (A_1, \ldots, A_{t-1}) for T > t.

Step 2: For any action sequence (a_1, \ldots, a_{τ}) , there is some element a_j that is ϵ -dependent on at least $\tau/d - 1$ disjoint subsequences, where $d := \dim_E(\mathscr{F}, \epsilon)$.

Step 3: Consider taking (a_1, \ldots, a_{τ}) to be the subsequence of (A_1, \ldots, A_T) , in which the elements satisfies $\omega_t(A_t) > \epsilon$.

$$\Rightarrow \tau/d - 1 \le 4\beta_T/\epsilon^2.$$

LEMMA 5. If $(\beta_t \ge 0 \mid t \in \mathbb{N})$ is a nondecreasing sequence and $\mathcal{F}_t := \{f \in \mathcal{F} : \|f - \hat{f}_t^{LS}\|_{2, E_t} \le \sqrt{\beta_t}\}$, then τ

$$\sum_{t=1} w_{\mathcal{F}_t}(A_t) \le 1 + \dim_E(\mathcal{F}, T^{-1})C + 4\sqrt{\dim_E(\mathcal{F}, T^{-1})\beta_T T}$$

for all $T \in \mathbb{N}$.

Step 1:

PROOF. To reduce notation, write $d = \dim_E(\mathcal{F}, T^{-1})$ and $w_i = w_i(A_i)$. Reorder the sequence $(w_1, \ldots, w_T) \rightarrow (w_{i_1}, \ldots, w_{i_T})$, where $w_{i_1} \ge w_{i_2} \ge \cdots \ge w_{i_T}$. We have

$$\sum_{i=1}^{T} w_{\mathcal{F}_i}(A_i) = \sum_{i=1}^{T} w_{i_i} = \sum_{i=1}^{T} w_{i_i} \mathbf{1}\{w_{i_i} \le T^{-1}\} + \sum_{i=1}^{T} w_{i_i} \mathbf{1}\{w_{i_i} > T^{-1}\} \le 1 + \sum_{i=1}^{T} w_{i_i} \mathbf{1}\{w_{i_i} \ge T^{-1}\}.$$

Step 2:

•
$$d = \dim_E(\mathscr{F}, T^{-1}) \ge \dim_E(\mathscr{F}, \epsilon)$$
, for all $\epsilon > T^{-1}$.
• $\sum_{t=1}^T \mathbf{1}(\omega_t > \epsilon) < ((4\beta_T)/\epsilon^2 + 1)d$.
• $\omega_t > \epsilon \Rightarrow \sum_{k=1}^T \mathbf{1}(\omega_k > \epsilon) \ge t$.
• $\epsilon < \sqrt{(4\beta_T d)/(t - d)}$.
• $w_t \le \min\{C, \sqrt{(4\beta_T d)/(t - d)}\}$.

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Step 3:

$$\sum_{t=1}^{T} w_{i_t} \mathbf{1}\{w_{i_t} > T^{-1}\} \le dC + \sum_{t=d+1}^{T} \sqrt{\frac{4d\beta_T}{t-d}} \le dC + 2\sqrt{d\beta_T} \int_{t=0}^{T} \frac{1}{\sqrt{t}} dt = dC + 4\sqrt{d\beta_T T}.$$

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Thanks!

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