2760. Longest Even Odd Subarray With Threshold

Easy Array Sliding Window

Leetcode Link

Problem Description

The problem presents an integer array `nums` and an integer `threshold`. The task is to determine the length of the longest subarray starting at index `l` and ending at index `r`, where `0 <= l <= r < nums.length`. The subarray should satisfy these conditions:

1. The first element of the subarray, `nums[l]`, must be even (`nums[l] % 2 == 0`).
2. Adjacent elements in the subarray must have different parity—that is, one is even and the other is odd. For any two consecutive elements `nums[i]` and `nums[i + 1]` within the subarray, their mod 2 results must be different (`nums[i] % 2 != nums[i + 1] % 2`).
3. Every element within the subarray must be less than or equal to the `threshold` (`nums[i] <= threshold`).

The goal is to return the length of such the longest subarray meeting these criteria.

Intuition

To find the longest subarray that satisfies the problem conditions, we can iterate through the array. For each potential starting index `l` of a subarray, we check whether the starting element is even and less than or equal to the threshold. If it is, we try to extend the subarray by moving the right index `r` as far as possible while maintaining the alternating even-odd sequence and ensuring all elements are within the threshold.

The process is as follows:

1. We iterate over each index `l` in the array `nums` as a potential start of the subarray.
2. If `nums[l]` is even and less than or equal to the threshold, we have a potential subarray starting at `l`. We initialize `r` as `l + 1` because a subarray must be non-empty.
3. We now extend the subarray by incrementing `r` as long as `nums[r]` alternates in parity with `nums[r-1]` and `nums[r]` is less than or equal to the threshold.
4. Once we can no longer extend `r` because the next element violates one of our conditions, we calculate the current subarray length as `r - l`. We track the maximum length found throughout this process with the variable `ans`.
5. Continue the same process for each index `l` in the array and return `ans`, which will hold the maximum length of the longest subarray that meets all the criteria.

By following this approach, we can ensure that we check all possible subarrays that start with an even number and have alternating parities until we either reach the end of the array or encounter elements that do not fulfill the conditions.

Solution Approach

The implementation uses a straightforward approach, which essentially follows the sliding window pattern. Sliding window is a common pattern used in array/string problems where a subarray or substring is processed, and then the window either expands or contracts to satisfy certain conditions.

Here's a step-by-step breakdown of the algorithm based on the given solution approach:

1. Initialize a variable `ans` to store the maximum length found for any subarray that satisfies the problem conditions. Also, determine the length `n` of the input array `nums`.

2. Start the first for-loop to iterate over the array using the index `l`, which represents the potential start of the subarray.

3. Inside this loop, first check whether the element at index `l` is both even (`nums[l] % 2 == 0`) and less than or equal to the given `threshold`. Only if these conditions are met, the element at `l` can be the starting element of a subarray.

4. If the starting element is suitable, initialize the end pointer `r` for the subarray to `l + 1`. This is where the window starts to slide.

5. Use a while loop to try expanding this window. The loop will continue as long as `r` is less than `n`, the array length, ensuring array bounds are not exceeded.

6. In each iteration of the while loop, check two conditions: whether the parity at `nums[r]` is different from `nums[r - 1]` (`nums[r] % 2 != nums[r - 1] % 2`) and if `nums[r]` is less than or equal to `threshold`. This ensures the subarray keeps alternating between even and odd numbers with values within the threshold.

7. As long as these conditions are satisfied, increment `r` to include the next element in the subarray. If either condition fails, the while loop breaks, and the current window cannot be expanded further.

8. Once the while loop ends, calculate the length of the current subarray by `r - l` and update `ans` with the maximum of its current value and this newly found length.

9. After processing the potential starting index `l`, the for loop moves to the next possible start index and repeats the steps until the whole array is scanned.

10. At the end of the for loop, `ans` contains the length of the longest subarray satisfying the given conditions, and it's returned as the final answer.

The solution does not use any additional data structures, and its space complexity is O(1), which represents constant space aside from the input array. The time complexity is O(n^2) in the worst case, where `n` is the number of elements in `nums`, because for each element in `nums` as a starting point, we might need to check up to `n` elements to find the end of the subarray.

Example Walkthrough

Let's walk through an example to illustrate the solution approach.

Consider an array `nums = [2, 3, 4, 6, 7]` and a `threshold = 5`.

Following the steps outlined in the solution approach:

1. Initialize `ans` to `0`. The length of the array `n` is `5`.
2. Start iterating over the array with index `l` ranging from `0` to `n-1`.
3. At `l = 0`, we find `nums[0] = 2`, which is even and less than the threshold, so this can be the start of a subarray.
4. Initiate `r` to `l+1`, which is `1`.
5. We enter the while loop to expand the window starting at `l = 0`:
   - `r = 1`: `nums[1] = 3` which is different in parity from `nums[0]` and is also below the threshold. Increment `r` to `2`.
   - `r = 2`: `nums[2] = 4`, which fails the alternating parity condition. Break the while loop.
6. Calculate the current subarray length: `r - l = 2 - 0 = 2`. Update `ans` to `max(ans, 2) = 2`.
7. Increment `l` to `1` and repeat the steps:
   - `nums[1] = 3` is odd, so we skip this as it can't be the start of a subarray.
8. Increment `l` to `2`. No suitable subarray starting from here since `nums[2] = 4` does not meet the parity alternation condition with any element afterward, and it's above the threshold.
9. Move on to `l = 3`. Again, `nums[3] = 6` is above the threshold, so we skip this index.
10. Lastly, `l = 4`. Since `nums[4] = 7` is not even, we skip this index.

After iterating through all elements, the maximum subarray length that satisfies the conditions is stored in `ans`, which is `2` in this example. So the function returns `2`.

This illustrates the entire process of checking each potential starting index and trying to expand the window to find the longest subarray that satisfies the given criteria.

Python Solution

```python
from typing import List

class Solution:
    def longest_alternating_subarray(self, nums: List[int], threshold: int) -> int:
        """
        Finds the length of the longest subarray where adjacent elements have different parity
        and each element does not exceed the given threshold.

        :param nums: List of integers to find the longest alternating subarray from.
        :param threshold: An integer representing the maximum allowed value for array elements.
        :return: The length of the longest alternating subarray.
        """

        # Initialize the maximum length of the alternating subarray.
        max_length = 0
        # Get the number of elements in the nums list.
        num_elements = len(nums)

        # Iterate through the list to find all starting points of potential alternating subarrays.
        for left in range(num_elements):
            # Check if the current element satisfies the parity and threshold condition.
            if nums[left] % 2 == 0 and nums[left] <= threshold:
                # Initialize the right pointer which will try to extend the subarray to the right.
                right = left + 1
                # Extend the subarray while the elements alternate in parity and are within the threshold.
                while (right < num_elements and
                       nums[right] % 2 != nums[right - 1] % 2 and
                       nums[right] <= threshold):
                    right += 1
                # Update the maximum length if a longer subarray is found.
                max_length = max(max_length, right - left)

        # Return the maximum length of the subarray found.
        return max_length
```

Java Solution

```java
class Solution {
    // Method to find the length of the longest alternating subarray
    // given that each element should not exceed a certain threshold.
    public int longestAlternatingSubarray(int[] nums, int threshold) {
        int maxLen = 0; // Initialize maximum length of alternating subarray
        int n = nums.length; // Store the length of the input array

        // Loop through each element in the array as the starting point
        for (int left = 0; left < n; ++left) {
            // Check if current starting element is even and lower than or equal to threshold
            if (nums[left] % 2 == 0 && nums[left] <= threshold) {
                int right = left + 1; // Initialize the pointer for the end of subarray

                // Extend the subarray towards the right as long as:
                // 1. The current element alternates in parity with previous (even/odd)
                // 2. The current element is below or equal to the threshold
                while (right < n && nums[right] % 2 != nums[right - 1] % 2 && nums[right] <= threshold) {
                    ++right; // Move to the next element
                }

                // Update the maximum length if a longer alternating subarray is found
                maxLen = Math.max(maxLen, right - left);
            }
        }
        // Return the length of the longest alternating subarray found
        return maxLen;
    }
}
```

C++ Solution

```cpp
#include <vector>
#include <algorithm> // For using the max() function

class Solution {
public:
    // Function to find the length of the longest subarray with alternating even and odd numbers
    // not exceeding a given threshold
    int longestAlternatingSubarray(vector<int>& nums, int threshold) {
        int longestLength = 0; // This will hold the maximum length found
        int size = nums.size(); // Store the size of nums to avoid multiple size() calls

        // Iterate over each element in the nums array
        for (int left = 0; left < size; ++left) {
            // Check if the current element is even and within the threshold
            if (nums[left] % 2 == 0 && nums[left] <= threshold) {
                int right = left + 1; // Start a pointer to expand the subarray to the right

                // Continue while right pointer is within array bounds and
                // the subarray satisfies the conditions (alternating and within the threshold)
                while (right < size && nums[right] % 2 != nums[right - 1] % 2 && nums[right] <= threshold) {
                    ++right; // Move the right pointer to the next element
                }

                longestLength = max(longestLength, right - left); // Update the maximum length found
            }
        }
        // Return the length of the longest alternating subarray found
        return longestLength;
    }
};
```

Typescript Solution

```typescript
function longestAlternatingSubarray(nums: number[], threshold: number): number {
    // 'n' is the length of the input array 'nums'
    const n = nums.length;
    let maxLength = 0; // Stores the maximum length of the alternating subarray

    // Iterate over the array starting from each index 'left'
    for (let left = 0; left < n; ++left) {
        // Check if the current element is even and lesser than or equal to the threshold
        if (nums[left] % 2 === 0 && nums[left] <= threshold) {
            let right = left + 1; // Start from the next element

            // Proceed to the right in the array while alternating between odd and even
            // and ensuring the values are below or equal to the threshold
            while (right < n && nums[right] % 2 !== nums[right - 1] % 2 && nums[right] <= threshold) {
                ++right; // Move to the next element
            }

            // Calculate the length of the current alternating subarray and update the max length
            maxLength = Math.max(maxLength, right - left);
        }
    }

    // Return the length of the longest alternating subarray found
    return maxLength;
}
```

Time and Space Complexity

Time Complexity

The time complexity of the given code can be analyzed by considering that there are two nested loops: an outer loop that runs from `l` from `0` to `n - 1`, and an inner while loop that potentially runs from `l + 1` to `n` in the worst case when all the elements conform to the specified condition (alternating even and odd values under the threshold).

In the worst-case scenario, the inner loop can iterate `n` times for the first run, then `n-1` times, `n-2` times, and so forth until 1 time. This forms an arithmetic progression that sums up to `(n + (n + 1)) / 2` iterations in total.

Hence, the worst-case time complexity of the function is `O(n^2)`.

Space Complexity

The space complexity of the given code is constant, `O(1)`, as it only uses a fixed number of variables (`ans`, `n`, `l`, `r`) and does not allocate any additional space that grows with the input size.