On Distributed Adaptive Optimization with Gradient Compression

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Abstract

This paper presents a new algorithm – COMP-AMS – for tackling single-machine and distributed optimization. Unlike prior works which rely on full gradient communication between the workers and the parameter-server, we design a distributed adaptive optimization method with gradient compression coupled with an error-feedback technique to alleviate the bias introduced by the compression. While the former permits to transmit fewer bits of gradient vectors to the server, we show that using the latter, which correct for the bias, our methods reach a stationary point in $\mathcal{O}(1/\sqrt{T})$ iterations, matching that of state-of-the-art single-machine and distributed methods, without any error-feedback. We illustrate our theoretical results by showing the effectiveness of our method both under the single-machine and distributed settings on various benchmark datasets.

1 Introduction

Deep neural network has achieved the state-of-the-art learning performance on numerous AI applications, e.g., computer vision [25, 28, 51], Natural Language Processing [27, 58, 63], Reinforcement Learning [40, 48] and recommendation systems [17, 53]. With the sheet size of data observations and the increasing complexity of deep neural networks, standard single-machine training procedures encounter at least two major challenges:

- Due to the limited computing power of a single-machine, processing the massive number of data samples takes a long time — training is too slow. Many real-world applications can not even afford spending that much time on training.
- In many practical scenarios, data are typically stored in multiple servers, possibly at different locations, due to the storage constraints (massive user behavior data, Internet images, etc.) or privacy reasons [11]. Hence, transmitting data among servers might be costly.

Distributed learning framework [19] has been a common training strategy to tackle the above two issues. For example, in centralized distributed stochastic gradient descent (SGD) protocol, data are located at n local nodes, at which the gradients of the model are computed in parallel. In each iteration, a central server aggregates the local gradients, updates the global model, and transmits back the updated model to the local nodes for subsequent gradient computation. As we can see, this setting naturally solves aforementioned issues: 1) We use n computing nodes to train the model, so the time per training epoch can be largely reduced; 2) There is no need to transmit the local data to central server. Besides, distributed training also provides stronger error tolerance since the training process could continue even one local machine breaks down. As a result of these advantages, there has been a surge of study and applications on distributed systems [10, 42, 22, 26, 29, 37, 35].

Among many optimization strategies, SGD is still the most popular prototype in distributed training for its simplicity and effectiveness [15, 1, 39]. Yet, when the deep learning model is very large,

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the communication between local nodes and central server could be expensive. Burdensome gradient transmission would slow down the whole training system, or even be impossible because of the limited bandwidth in some applications. Thus, reducing the communication cost in distributed SGD has become an active topic, and an important ingredient of large-scale distributed systems (e.g. [45]). Solutions based on quantization, sparsification and other compression techniques of the local gradients are proposed, e.g., [4, 54, 52, 49, 3, 7, 18, 56, 30]. As one would expect, in most approaches, there exists a trade-off between compression and learning performance. In general, larger bias and variance of the compressed gradients usually bring more significant performance downgrade in terms of convergence [49, 2]. Interestingly, studies (e.g., [33]) show that the technique of *error feedback* can to a large extent remedy the issue of such biased compressors, achieving same convergence rate as full-gradient SGD.

On the other hand, in recent years, adaptive optimization algorithms (e.g. AdaGrad [23], Adam [34] and AMSGrad [44]) have become popular because of their superior empirical performance. These methods use different implicit learning rates for different coordinates that keep changing adaptively throughout the training process, based on the learning trajectory. In many learning problems, adaptive methods have been shown to converge faster than SGD, sometimes with better generalization as well. Despite of the great popularity of adaptive methods, the body of literature that extends them to distributed training is still very limited. In particular, even the simple gradient averaging approach, though appearing standard, has not been considered for adaptive optimization algorithms. Meanwhile, adopting gradient compression in adaptive methods has also been rarely studied in literature. We try to fill this gap in this paper, by studying COMP-AMS, a distributed adaptive optimization framework using the gradient averaging protocol. Gradient compression is incorporated to reduce the communication cost. We provide theoretical analysis and show that our method can achieve satisfactory performance with significantly reduced communication overhead.

1.1 Our Contributions

Specifically, in this contribution, we develop a *simple optimization framework* leveraging the *adaptivity* of AMSGrad, and focus on the computational virtue of *local gradient compression technique*. Our technique is shown to be both theoretically and empirically effective under both *the classical centralized setting* and *the distributed setting*. Our contributions summarize as follows:

- We derive COMP-AMS, a distributed optimization method with gradient compression occurring at the worker level. Our scheme is coupled with an error-feedback technique to reduce the bias implied by the compression step. Both compression and error-feedback computation are performed at the worker level and transferred back to the central server.
- Throughout this paper, we provide single-machine and decentralized views of our method both on the empirical and theoretical levels. We exhibits the advantage of the compression and error-feedback steps within an adaptive optimization trajectory under those two settings. Additionally, two compression schemes are compared in this work, namely **Block-Sign** and **Top-k** operators.
- Under mild assumptions, such as nonconvexity and smoothness, we provide a non-asymptotic convergence rate of COMP-AMS in the general case, *i.e.,* when the number of workers is equal to n and with unspecified values for the hyperparameters. Our theoretical analysis includes the special cases of single-machine setting ($n = 1$) and exhibits a linear speedup (linear in n) of our method under some additional assumptions. From the general case to the sub-cases mentioned above, our method finds an $\epsilon-$stationary point in $\mathcal{O}(1/\sqrt{\epsilon} + d/\epsilon)$ iterations.
- We highlight the effectiveness of our compressed adaptive method through several numerical experiments for single-machine and distributed optimization tasks.

We review Section 2 the contributions to date, related to compression techniques in optimization, such as quantization and sparsification, and to error feedback technique. Then, we develop in Section 3, our communication-efficient method, namely COMP-AMS, using AMSGrad as a prototype optimization algorithm. Theoretical understanding of our method's behaviour with respect to convergence towards a stationary point is developed in Section 4. Numerical results are illustrated in Section 5 to show the effectiveness of the proposed approach.

2 Related Work

2.1 Distributed SGD with Compressed Gradients

Quantization. As we mentioned before, SGD is the most commonly adopted optimization method in distributed training of deep neural nets. To reduce the expensive communication in large-scale distributed systems, extensive works have considered various compression techniques applied to the gradient transaction procedure. The first strategy is quantization. [20] condenses 32-bit floating numbers into 8-bits when representing the gradients. [45, 7, 33, 8] use the extreme 1-bit information (sign) of the gradients, combined with tricks like momentum, majority vote and memory. Other quantization-based methods include QSGD [4, 55, 62] and LPC-SVRG [60], leveraging unbiased stochastic quantization. The saving in communication of quantization methods is moderate: for example, 8-bit quantization reduces the cost to 25% (compared with 32-bit full-precision). Even in the extreme 1-bit case, the largest compression ratio is around $1/32 \approx 3.1\%$.

Sparsification. Gradient sparsification is another popular solution which may provide higher compression rate. Instead of commuting the full gradient, each local worker only passes a few coordinates to the central server and zeros out the others. Thus, we can more freely choose higher compression ratio (e.g., 1%, 0.1%), still achieving impressive performance in many applications [36]. Stochastic sparsification methods, including uniform sampling and magnitude based sampling [52], select coordinates based on some sampling probability yielding unbiased gradient compressors. Deterministic methods are simpler, e.g., Random-k, Top-k [49, 47] (selecting k elements with largest magnitude), Deep Gradient Compression [36], but usually lead to biased gradient estimation. In [30], the central server identifies heavy-hitters from the count-sketch [12] of the local gradients, which can be regarded as a noisy variant of Top-k strategy. More applications and analysis of compressed distributed SGD can be found in [32, 46, 5, 6, 31], among others.

Error Feedback (EF). Biased gradient estimation, which is a consequence of many aforementioned methods (e.g., signSGD, Top-k), undermines the model training, both theoretically and empirically, with slower convergence and worse generalization [2, 9]. The technique of *error feedback* is able to "correct for the bias" and fix the convergence issues. In this procedure, the difference between the true stochastic gradient and the compressed one is accumulated locally, which is then added back to the local gradients in later iterations. [49, 33] prove the $\mathcal{O}(\frac{1}{T})$ and $\mathcal{O}(\frac{1}{\sqrt{T}})$ convergence rate of EF-SGD in strongly convex and non-convex setting respectively, matching the rates of vanilla SGD [43, 24]. More works on the convergence rate of SGD with error feedback include [66, 50], among other related papers.

2.2 Adaptive Optimization

In each SGD update, all the gradient coordinates share the same learning rate. This latter is either constant or decreasing through the iterations. Adaptive optimization methods cast different learning rate on each dimension. For instance, AdaGrad, developed in [23], divides the gradient element-wisely by $\sqrt{\sum_{t=1}^{T} g_t^2} \in \mathbb{R}^d$, where $g_t \in \mathbb{R}^d$ is the gradient vector at time t and d is the model dimensionality. Thus, it intrinsically assigns different learning rates to different coordinates throughout the training – elements with smaller previous gradient magnitude tend to move a larger step via larger learning rate. AdaGrad has been shown to perform well especially under some sparsity structure in the model and data. Other adaptive methods include AdaDelta [61] and Adam [34], which introduce momentum and moving average of second moment estimation into AdaGrad hence leading to better performances. AMSGrad [44] fixes the potential convergence issue of Adam, which will serve as the prototype in this paper. We present the pseudocode in Algorithm 1.

Algorithm 1 AMSGRAD optimization method

Input: parameters β_1, β_2, and η_t.
Initialize: $\theta_1 \in \Theta$ and $v_0 = \epsilon 1 \in \mathbb{R}^d$.
for $t = 1$ to T **do**
  Compute stochastic gradient g_t at θ_t.
  $m_t = \beta_1 m_{t-1} + (1 - \beta_1) g_t$.
  $v_t = \beta_2 v_{t-1} + (1 - \beta_2) g_t^2$.
  $\hat{v}_t = \max(\hat{v}_{t-1}, v_t)$.
  $\theta_{t+1} = \theta_t - \eta_t \frac{\theta_t}{\sqrt{\hat{v}_t}}$.
end for

In general, adaptive optimization methods are easier to tune in practice, and usually exhibit faster convergence than SGD. Thus, they have been widely used in training deep learning models in language and computer vision applications, e.g., [16, 57, 64]. In distributed setting, the work [41] proposes a decentralized system in online optimization. However, communication efficiency is not considered. The recent work [13] is the most relevant to our paper. Yet, their method is based on Adam, and requires every local node to store a local estimation of the moments of the gradient. Thus, one has to keep extra two more tensors of the model size on each local worker, which may be less feasible in terms of memory particularly with large models. We will present more detailed comparison in Section 3.

3 Communication-Efficient Adaptive Optimization

Consider the distributed optimization task where n workers jointly solve a large finite-sum optimization problem written as:

$$\min_{\theta\in\Theta} \frac{1}{n}\sum_{i=1}^{n} f_i(\theta) := \frac{1}{n}\sum_{i=1}^{n} \mathbb{E}_{x\sim\mathcal{X}_i}[F_i(\theta;x)], \tag{1}$$

where the non-convex function f_i represents the average loss (over the local data samples) for worker $i\in[n]$ and θ the global model parameter taking value in Θ, a subset of $\mathbb{R}^d$. $\mathcal{X}_i$ is the data distribution on each local node.

3.1 Gradient Compressors

In this paper, we mainly consider deterministic q-deviate compressors defined as below.

Assumption 1. *The gradient compressor $\mathcal{C}:\mathbb{R}^d\mapsto\mathbb{R}^d$ is q-deviate: for $\forall x\in\mathbb{R}^d$, $\exists\, 0\le q<1$ such that $\|\mathcal{C}(x)-x\|\le q\,\|x\|$.*

Note that, larger q indicates important an compression while smaller q implies better approximation of the true gradient. Hence, $q=0$ implies no compression, *i.e.,* $\mathcal{C}(x)=x$. We give two popular and highly efficient q-deviate compressors that will be compared in this paper.

Definition 1 (Top-k)**.** *For $x\in\mathbb{R}^d$, denote $\mathcal{S}$ as the size-k set of $i\in[d]$ with largest k magnitude $|x_i|$. The **Top-**k compressor is defined as $\mathcal{C}(x)_i=x_i$, if $i\in\mathcal{S}$; $\mathcal{C}(x)_i=0$ otherwise.*

Definition 2 (Block-Sign)**.** *For $x\in\mathbb{R}^d$, define M blocks indexed by $\mathcal{B}_i$, $i=1,...,M$, with $d_i:=|\mathcal{B}_i|$. The **Block-Sign** compressor is defined as $\mathcal{C}(x)=[sign(x_{\mathcal{B}_1})\frac{\|x_{\mathcal{B}_1}\|_1}{d_1},...,sign(x_{\mathcal{B}_M})\frac{\|x_{\mathcal{B}_M}\|_1}{d_M}]$.*

Remark 1. *It is well-known [49, 66] that for **Top-**k, $q^2=1-\frac{k}{d}$; for **Block-Sign**, by Cauchy-Schwartz inequality we have $q^2=1-\min_{i\in[M]}\frac{1}{d_i}$ where M and d_i are defined in Definition 2.*

The intuition behind **Top-**k is that, it has been observed during many deep neural networks training procedure, most gradients are typically very small and can be regarded as redundant—gradients with large magnitude contain most information. The **Block-Sign** compressor is a simple extension of the 1-bit **SIGN** compressor [45, 7], adapted to different gradient magnitude in different blocks, which, for neural nets, are usually set as the distinct network layers. The scaling factor in Definition 2 is to preserve the (possibly very different) gradient magnitude in each layer. In principle, **Top-**k would perform the best when the gradient is sparse, or only has a few very large absolute values, while **Block-Sign** compressor is beneficial when most gradients have similar magnitude within each layer.

3.2 COMP-AMS for Distributed Optimization

We present in Algorithm 2 our proposed communication-efficient distributed adaptive method in this paper, COMP-AMS. This framework can be regarded as an analogue to the standard synchronous distributed SGD protocol: in each iteration, each local worker transmits to the central server the compressed stochastic gradient computed using local data. Then the central server takes the average of local gradients, and performs an AMSGrad update. Despite that this method seems a straightforward extension of distributed SGD with gradient compression, no formal analysis of COMP-AMS has been conducted in prior literature.

In Algorithm 2, line 7-8 depict the error feedback operation at local nodes. $e_{t,i}$ is the accumulated error from gradient compression on the i-th worker up to time $t-1$. This residual is added back to $g_{t,i}$ to get the "correct" gradient. In Section 4 and Section 5, we will show that error feedback, similar to the case of SGD, also brings good convergence behavior under gradient compression in adaptive optimization methods.

Comparison with Quantized Adam [13]. The first difference of COMP-AMS compared with [13] which develops a quantized variant of Adam [34] is that they use Adam as the underlying algorithm. It does not use the variable $\hat{v}$ (line 15 of Algorithm 2) that ensures non-decreasing second moment estimation, which has been shown to be an important factor for the convergence guarantee [44, 14]. Indeed, the convergence rate given by [13] does not match the rate of vanilla AMSGrad (in fact it does not converge to 0) when decreasing learning rate (e.g., $\mathcal{O}(\frac{1}{\sqrt{T}})$) is taken, which could be problematic both intuitively and given the fact that decreasing learning rate is standard in theoretical analysis and practical implementation. In this paper, we will prove the good convergence behavior of COMP-AMS that matches the rate of full-gradient AMSGrad (Section 4).

Another key difference is that, in COMP-AMS, only compressed gradients are transmitted from the workers to the central server. In [13], each worker keeps a local copy of the moment estimates commonly noted m and v, and compresses and transmits the ratio $\frac{m}{v}$ as a whole to the server. Thus, that method is very much like the compressed distributed SGD, with the exception that the ratio $\frac{m}{v}$ plays the role of the gradient vector g communication-wise. Thus, two local moment estimators are additionally required, which have same size as the deep learning model. In our optimization method in Algorithm 2, the moment estimates m and v are kept and updated only at the central server, thus not introducing any extra variables (tensors) on local nodes during training (except for the error accumulator). In other words, COMP-AMS is not only effective in communication reduction, but also efficient in terms of memory (space), which is favorable for the distributed adaptive training of large-scale learners like BERT and CTR prediction models, e.g. [21, 65], to lower the hardware consumption happening in practice.

Algorithm 2 Distributed COMP-AMS with error-feedback

1: **Input**: parameters β_1, β_2, learning rate η_t.
2: Initialize: central server parameter $\theta_1 \in \Theta \subseteq \mathbb{R}^d$; $e_{1,i} = 0$ the error accumulator for each worker; sparsity parameter k; n local workers; $m_0 = 0$, $v_0 = 0$, $\hat{v}_0 = 0$
3: **for** $t = 1$ to T **do**
4:     **parallel for worker** $i \in [n]$ **do**:
5:         Receive model parameter θ_t from central server
6:         Compute stochastic gradient $g_{t,i}$ at θ_t
7:         Compute $\tilde{g}_{t,i} = \mathcal{C}(g_{t,i} + e_{t,i}, k)$
8:         Update the error $e_{t+1,i} = e_{t,i} + g_{t,i} - \tilde{g}_{t,i}$
9:         Send $\tilde{g}_{t,i}$ back to central server
10:     **end parallel**
11:     **Central server do:**
12:     $\bar{g}_t = \frac{1}{n}\sum_{i=1}^{n} \tilde{g}_{t,i}$
13:     $m_t = \beta_1 m_{t-1} + (1-\beta_1)\bar{g}_t$
14:     $v_t = \beta_2 v_{t-1} + (1-\beta_2)\bar{g}_t^2$
15:     $\hat{v}_t = \max(v_t, \hat{v}_{t-1})$
16:     Update the global model $\theta_{t+1} = \theta_t - \eta_t \frac{m_t}{\sqrt{\hat{v}_t + \epsilon}}$
17: **end for**

4 Convergence Analysis

In this section, we provide a finite time convergence result of our method, true for any termination iteration index T. We make the following additional assumptions.

Assumption 2. *(Smoothness) For $\forall i \in [n]$, f_i is L-smooth: $\|\nabla f_i(\theta) - \nabla f_i(\vartheta)\| \leq L \|\theta - \vartheta\|$.*

Assumption 3. *(Unbiased and bounded stochastic gradient) For $\forall t > 0$, $\forall i \in [n]$, the stochastic gradient is unbiased and uniformly bounded: $\mathbb{E}[g_{t,i}] = \nabla f_i(\theta_t)$ and $\|g_{t,i}\| \leq G$.*

Assumption 4. *(Bounded variance) For* $\forall t > 0$, $\forall i \in [n]$*: (i) the* ***local variance*** *of the stochastic gradient is bounded:* $\mathbb{E}[\|g_{t,i} - \nabla f_i(\theta_t)\|^2] < \sigma^2$*; (ii) the* ***global variance*** *is bounded by* $\frac{1}{n}\sum_{i=1}^n \|\nabla f_i(\theta_t) - \nabla f(\theta_t)\|^2 \le \sigma_g^2$.

In Assumption 3, the uniform bound on the stochastic gradient is common in convergence analysis of adaptive methods, e.g., [44, 67, 14]. The global variance bound σ_g^2 characterizes the difference among local objective functions, which, is mainly caused by different local data distribution $\mathcal{X}_i$ in (1). In classical distributed setting where all the workers can access the same dataset and local data are assigned randomly, $\sigma_g^2 \equiv 0$. The scenario where $\mathcal{X}_i$'s are different gives rise to the recently proposed Federated Learning (FL) [38] framework where local data can be non-i.i.d. While typical FL method with periodical model averaging is beyond the scope of this present paper, we consider the global variance in our analysis to shed some light on the impact of non-i.i.d. data distribution in the federated setting for broader interest and future investigation.

Under the mild assumptions stated above, we derive the following general convergence rate of COMP-AMS in the distributed setting.

Theorem 1. *Denote* $C_0 = \sqrt{\frac{4(1+q^2)^3}{(1-q^2)^2}G^2 + \epsilon}$, $C_1 = \frac{\beta_1}{1-\beta_1} + \frac{2q}{1-q^2}$. *Under Assumption 1 to Assumption 4, with* $\eta_t = \eta \le \frac{\epsilon}{3C_0\sqrt{2L\max\{2L, C_2\}}}$*, for any* $T > 0$, COMP-AMS *satisfies*

$$\frac{1}{T}\sum_{t=1}^T \mathbb{E}[\|\nabla f(\theta_t)\|^2] \le 2C_0\Big(\frac{\mathbb{E}[f(\theta_1) - f(\theta^*)]}{T\eta} + \frac{\eta L\sigma^2}{n\epsilon} + \frac{3\eta^2 L C_0 C_1 \sigma^2}{\epsilon^2} + \frac{12\eta^2 q^2 L C_0 \sigma_g^2}{(1-q^2)^2\epsilon^2} + \frac{(1+C_1)G^2 d}{T\sqrt{\epsilon}} + \frac{\eta(1+2C_1)C_1 L G^2 d}{T\epsilon}\Big).$$

The LHS of Theorem 1 is the expected squared norm of the gradient from a uniformly chosen iterate $t \in [T]$, which is a common convergence measure. From Theorem 1, we see that the more compression we apply to the gradient vectors (*i.e.,* larger q), the larger the upper bound of the stationary condition is, *i.e.,* the slower the algorithm converges. This is intuitive as heavier compression loses more gradient information which would slower down the learner to find a good solution.

In the following paragraphs, we provide two interesting extension of our main result Theorem 1. We begin with the single-machine case, when $n = 1$ and then provide a linear speedup of our methods in the general distributed optimization case.

Single machine rate ($n = 1$**).** Note that, COMP-AMS with $n = 1$ naturally reduces to the single machine (sequential) AMSGrad (Algorithm 1) with compressed gradients instead of full-precision ones. The paper [33] shows that for SGD, error feedback fixes the convergence issue of biased compressors in the sense that SGD-EF (with compressed gradients) has the same convergence rate as vanilla SGD using full gradients. For AMSGrad, we have a similar result.

Corollary 1. *Assume* $n = 1$. *Under Assumption 1 to Assumption 4, setting the stepsize as* $\eta = \min\{\frac{\epsilon}{3C_0\sqrt{2L\max\{2L, C_2\}}}, \frac{1}{\sqrt{T}}\}$*, the sequence of iterates* $\{\theta_t\}_{t>0}$ *output from Algorithm 2 satisfies:*

$$\frac{1}{T}\sum_{t=1}^T \mathbb{E}[\|\nabla f(\theta_t)\|^2] \le \mathcal{O}(\frac{1}{\sqrt{T}} + \frac{\sigma^2}{\sqrt{T}} + \frac{d}{T}).$$

Corollary 1 states that with error feedback, single machine AMSGrad with biased compressed gradients can also match the convergence rate $\mathcal{O}(\frac{1}{\sqrt{T}} + \frac{d}{T})$ of standard AMSGrad [67] in non-convex optimization. It also achieves the same rate $\mathcal{O}(\frac{1}{\sqrt{T}})$ of vanilla SGD [33] when T is sufficiently large. In other words, EF also fixes the convergence issue of using compressed gradients in AMSGrad. To the best of our knowledge, this is the first result in literature showing that compressed adaptive methods with EF converges as fast as the standard counterpart. We will validate this benefit of EF in our numerical experiments.

Linear Speedup ($n > 1$**).** In Theorem 1, the convergence rate is derived assuming constant learning rate. By carefully choosing a decreasing learning rate dependent on the number of workers, we have the following result.

Corollary 2. *Under the same setting as Theorem 1, set* $\eta = \min\{\frac{\epsilon}{3C_0\sqrt{2L\max\{2L,C_2\}}}, \frac{\sqrt{n}}{\sqrt{T}}\}$*. Ignoring irrelevant quantities, we have*

$$\frac{1}{T}\sum_{t=1}^{T}\mathbb{E}[\|\nabla f(\theta_t)\|^2] \leq \mathcal{O}(\frac{1}{\sqrt{nT}} + \frac{\sigma^2}{\sqrt{nT}} + \frac{n(\sigma^2+\sigma_g^2)}{T}). \tag{2}$$

In Corollary 2, we see that the global variance σ_g^2 appears in the $\mathcal{O}(\frac{1}{T})$ term, which says that it asymptotically has no impact on the convergence. This matches the result of momentum SGD [59]. When $T \geq \mathcal{O}(n^3)$ is sufficiently large, the third term in (2) vanishes, and the convergence rate becomes $\mathcal{O}(\frac{1}{\sqrt{nT}})$. Therefore, to reach a $\mathcal{O}(\delta)$ stationary point, one worker ($n = 1$) needs $T = \mathcal{O}(\frac{1}{\delta^2})$ iterations, while distributed training with n workers requires only $T = \mathcal{O}(\frac{1}{N\delta^2})$ iterations, which is n times faster than single machine training. That is, COMP-AMS has a linear speedup in terms of the number of the local workers. Such acceleration effect has also been reported for compressed SGD with error feedback [66, 32] and momentum SGD [59]. To our knowledge, this is also the first result showing the linear speedup for distributed adaptive methods under compression.

5 Experiments

In this section, we provide numerical results on several real-world datasets. Our main objective is to validate the theoretical results, and demonstrate that the proposed COMP-AMS can give satisfactory learning performance with significantly reduced communication costs.

5.1 Error Feedback Fixes the Convergence of Compressed AMSGrad

In Corollary 1, we established that for standard single machine AMSGrad under compression, EF helps achieve same convergence rate as the full-gradient AMSGrad. We implement COMP-AMS with a single worker and different gradient compressors, with or without EF, to justify this claim. We train MNIST clssification using a simple Convolutional Neural Network (CNN). The model has two convolutional layers followed by two fully connected layers with ReLu activation. Dropout is applied after the max-pooled convolutional layer with rate 0.5. The training batch size is 200. The parameters in COMP-AMS are set as default $\beta_1 = 0.9$ and $\beta_2 = 0.999$, which is true for all the experiments in this paper. The learning rate is searched over a fine grid and the best result is reported. In Figure 1, the methods are (all performed on single worker):

- TopK-EF-0.01: COMP-AMS (Algorithm 2) and **Top-k** compressor, with sparsity 0.01 (i.e., keeping 1% gradient coordinates with largest magnitude).
- TopK-EF-0.001: COMP-AMS with **Top-k** compressor, with sparsity 0.001.
- BkSign-EF: COMP-AMS with **Block-Sign** compression.
- Methods without "-EF": AMSGrad using corresponding compressors without error feedback (directly trained with compressed gradients).
- MVSS-0.01: AMSGrad with Minimal Variance Stochastic Sparsification (MVSS) [52] at 0.01 sparsity. This method probabilistically chooses gradient coordinates according to their magnitude, and divides each selected coordinate by its sampling probability to generate unbiased output (of the full gradient). Therefore, error feedback is not used for MVSS[1].

[1] We also tested MVSS with error feedback, but the performance is uncompetitive with other methods.

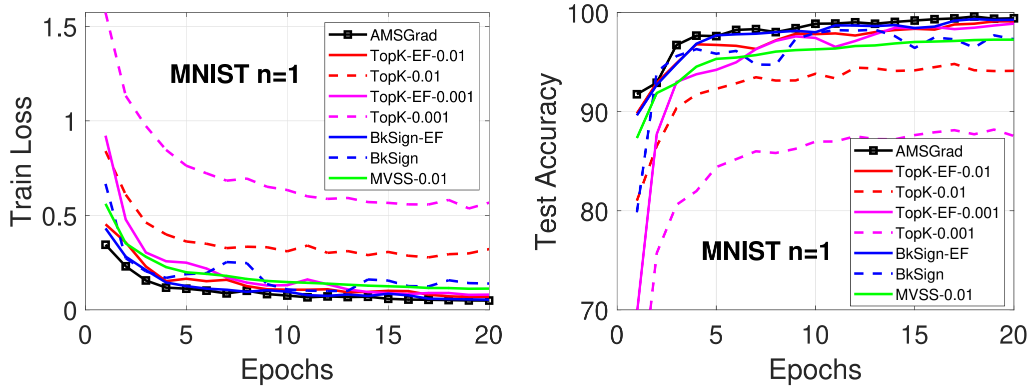

Figure 1: Training loss and test accuracy of COMP-AMS using a single machine.

From the train loss and test accuracy in Figure 1, we observe:

- AMSGrad without EF (dash curves) performs very poorly in terms of both convergence speed (more fluctuations in later epochs) and generalization (much worse test accuracy). With error feedback, the training loss and test accuracy both approach those of full-gradient AMSGrad with faster convergence. The issue of biased compression is fixed.
- **Top-k**-EF-0.01 performs better than **Top-k**-EF-0.001, which justifies the influence of q in Theorem 1 that higher compression ratio would undermine the learning performance.
- MVSS-0.01 is outperformed by the proposed EF-corrected **Block-Sign** and **Top-k** even with 0.001 sparsity. This suggests that using biased compressors with EF in COMP-AMS is more effective than using unbiased stochastic compressors.

5.2 Linear Speedup of COMP-AMS

Corollary 2 reveals the linear speedup of COMP-AMS in distributed training. We validate this claim in Figure 2, where the training loss on MNIST against the number of iterations is provided. Here we use COMP-AMS with **Top-k** and 0.01 sparsity. We test $n = 1, 2, 4, 8$, where the local mini-batch size is 100. As suggested by the theory, we use $10^{-4}\sqrt{n}$ as the learning rate. From Figure 2, we observe that the number of iterations for multiple workers to achieve a certain loss decreases as n increases. For example, to achieve 0.5 loss, we need around $700, 400, 240, 120$ iterations for $n = 1, 2, 4, 8$ respectively, which decreases approximately linearly. This numerically justifies the linear speedup effect ($\mathcal{O}(\frac{1}{\sqrt{nT}})$ convergence rate) of COMP-AMS.

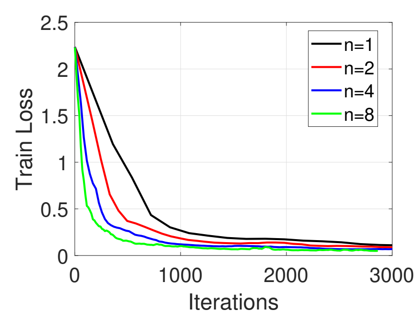

Figure 2: Training loss of COMP-AMS with **Top-k**-0.01 on MNIST.

5.3 General Evaluation and Communication Efficiency

In this section, we present general evaluation on more datasets and compare the communication efficiency. For CIFAR-10 image classification, we train a larger CNN model with 3 convolutional layers (more detailed architecture can be found in the supplement). For IMDB movie review sentiment analysis task, we train a LSTM network with 64 cells, equipped with an embedding layer which embeds top 1000 words in the movie reviews into 32-dimensional vectors.

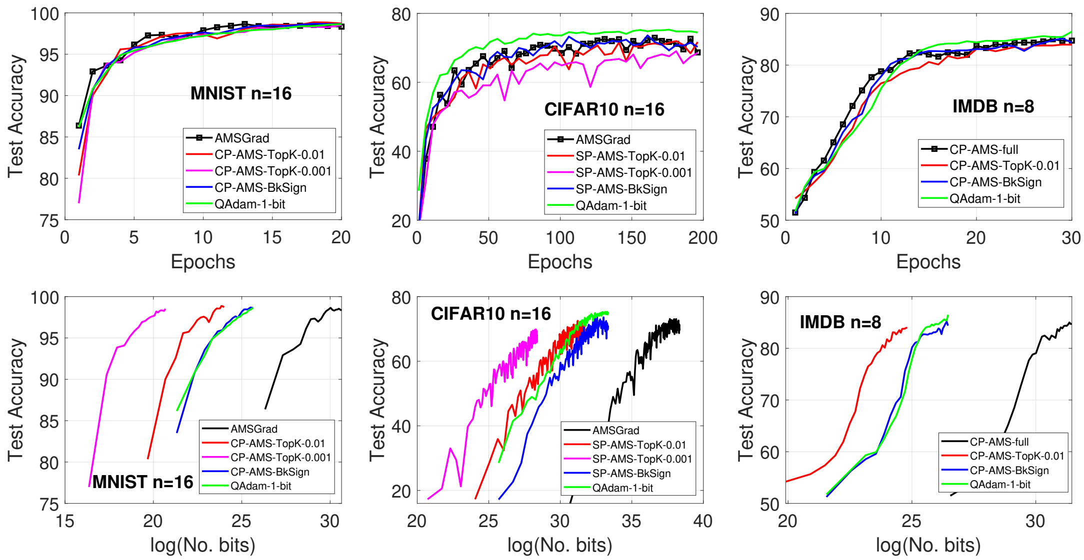

Figure 3: Test accuracy of distributed COMP-AMS. Top row: accuracy vs. epochs. Bottom row: accuracy vs. number of bits transmitted per worker.

6 Conclusion

In this paper, we develop a strategy for deriving communication-efficient and fast optimizations algorithms for distributed and single-machine learning tasks. Specifically, we integrate a compression step of the gradient vectors at the worker level only, via a **Top-k** operation, coupled with an error-feedback technique within a AMSGrad-type of algorithm to alleviate the communication bottleneck of distributed learning among a large number of workers. We derive bounds for the performance, in terms of stationarity, of the proposed algorithm and show that our algorithm convergence rate matches state-of-the-art rates for distributed learning while compressing most of the transmitted information. We also show that a linear speedup in the number of workers is possible in some special cases. We verify our theoretical results via numerical experiments involving benchmark datasets for supervision learning tasks. We show through those runs that our method exhibits similar empirical convergence speed using drastically less computational resources.

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Checklist

1. For all authors...
   (a) Do the main claims made in the abstract and introduction accurately reflect the paper's contributions and scope? [Yes]
   (b) Did you describe the limitations of your work? [Yes] Section 5 on the limitations of using compression techniques
   (c) Did you discuss any potential negative societal impacts of your work? [N/A]
   (d) Have you read the ethics review guidelines and ensured that your paper conforms to them? [Yes]
2. If you are including theoretical results...
   (a) Did you state the full set of assumptions of all theoretical results? [Yes]
   (b) Did you include complete proofs of all theoretical results? [Yes]
3. If you ran experiments...
   (a) Did you include the code, data, and instructions needed to reproduce the main experimental results (either in the supplemental material or as a URL)? [No] We can provide upon request
   (b) Did you specify all the training details (e.g., data splits, hyperparameters, how they were chosen)? [Yes]
   (c) Did you report error bars (e.g., with respect to the random seed after running experiments multiple times)? [No] Yet our results Section 5 are average over several runs.
   (d) Did you include the total amount of compute and the type of resources used (e.g., type of GPUs, internal cluster, or cloud provider)? [No]
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   (a) Did you include the full text of instructions given to participants and screenshots, if applicable? [N/A]
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   (c) Did you include the estimated hourly wage paid to participants and the total amount spent on participant compensation? [N/A]

A Intermediary Lemmas

Lemma 1. *Under Assumption 1 to Assumption 4 we have:*

$$\sum_{t=1}^{T} \mathbb{E}\|\bar{m}'_t\|^2 \leq T\sigma^2 + \sum_{\tau=1}^{t} \mathbb{E}[\|\nabla f(\theta_t)\|^2].$$

Proof. Firstly, the expected squared norm of average stochastic gradient can be bounded by

$$\begin{aligned}
\mathbb{E}[\|\bar{g}_t^2\|] &= \mathbb{E}[\|\frac{1}{n}\sum_{i=1}^{n} g_{t,i} - \nabla f(\theta_t) + \nabla f(\theta_t)\|^2] \\
&= \mathbb{E}[\|\frac{1}{n}\sum_{i=1}^{n}(g_{t,i} - \nabla f_i(\theta_t))\|^2] + \mathbb{E}[\|\nabla f(\theta_t)\|^2] \\
&\leq \sigma^2 + \mathbb{E}[\|\nabla f(\theta_t)\|^2],
\end{aligned}$$

where we use Assumption 4 that $g_{t,i}$ is unbiased and has bounded variance. Let $\bar{g}_{t,i}$ denote the i-th coordinate of $\bar{g}_t$. By the updating rule of COMP-AMS

$$\begin{aligned}
\mathbb{E}[\|\bar{m}'_t\|^2] &= \mathbb{E}[\|(1-\beta_1)\sum_{\tau=1}^{t}\beta_1^{t-\tau}\bar{g}_\tau\|^2] \\
&\leq (1-\beta_1)^2\sum_{i=1}^{d}\mathbb{E}[(\sum_{\tau=1}^{t}\beta_1^{t-\tau}\bar{g}_{\tau,i})^2] \\
&\overset{(a)}{\leq} (1-\beta_1)^2\sum_{i=1}^{d}\mathbb{E}[(\sum_{\tau=1}^{t}\beta_1^{t-\tau})(\sum_{\tau=1}^{t}\beta_1^{t-\tau}\bar{g}_{\tau,i}^2)] \\
&\leq (1-\beta_1)\sum_{\tau=1}^{t}\beta_1^{t-\tau}\mathbb{E}[\|\bar{g}_\tau\|^2] \\
&\leq \sigma^2 + (1-\beta_1)\sum_{\tau=1}^{t}\beta_1^{t-\tau}\mathbb{E}[\|\nabla f(\theta_t)\|^2],
\end{aligned}$$

where (a) is due to Cauchy-Schwartz inequality. Summing over $t = 1, ..., T$, we obtain

$$\sum_{t=1}^{T} \mathbb{E}\|\bar{m}'_t\|^2 \leq T\sigma^2 + \sum_{t=1}^{T} \mathbb{E}[\|\nabla f(\theta_t)\|^2].$$

This completes the proof.

□

Lemma 2. *Under Assumption 4, we have for $\forall t$ and each local worker $\forall i \in [n]$,*

$$\begin{aligned}
&\|e_{t,i}\|^2 \leq \frac{4q^2}{(1-q^2)^2}G^2, \\
&\mathbb{E}[\|e_{t+1,i}\|^2] \leq \frac{4q^2}{(1-q^2)^2}\sigma^2 + \frac{2q^2}{1-q^2}\sum_{\tau=1}^{t}(\frac{1+q^2}{2})^{t-\tau}\mathbb{E}[\|\nabla f_i(\theta_\tau)\|^2].
\end{aligned}$$

Proof. We start by using Assumption 1 and Young's inequality to get

$$\begin{aligned}
\|e_{t+1,i}\|^2 &= \|g_{t,i} + e_{t,i} - \mathcal{C}(g_{t,i} + e_{t,i})\|^2 \\
&\leq q^2\|g_{t,i} + e_{t,i}\|^2 \\
&\leq q^2(1+\rho)\|e_{t,i}\|^2 + q^2(1+\frac{1}{\rho})\|g_{t,i}\|^2 \\
&\leq \frac{1+q^2}{2}\|e_{t,i}\|^2 + \frac{2q^2}{1-q^2}\|g_{t,i}\|^2, \qquad (3)
\end{aligned}$$

by choosing $\rho = \frac{1-q^2}{2q^2}$. Now by recursion and the initialization $e_{1,i} = 0$, we have

$$\begin{aligned}
\mathbb{E}[\|e_{t+1,i}\|^2] &\leq \frac{2q^2}{1-q^2}\sum_{\tau=1}^{t}(\frac{1+q^2}{2})^{t-\tau}\mathbb{E}[\|g_{\tau,i}\|^2] \\
&\leq \frac{4q^2}{(1-q^2)^2}\sigma^2 + \frac{2q^2}{1-q^2}\sum_{\tau=1}^{t}(\frac{1+q^2}{2})^{t-\tau}\mathbb{E}[\|\nabla f_i(\theta_\tau)\|^2],
\end{aligned}$$

which proves the second argument. Meanwhile, the absolute bound $\|e_{t,i}\|^2 \leq \frac{4q^2}{(1-q^2)^2}G^2$ follows directly from (3). □

Lemma 3. *For the moving average error sequence $\mathcal{E}_t$, it holds that*

$$\sum_{t=1}^{T}\mathbb{E}[\|\mathcal{E}_t\|^2] \leq \frac{4Tq^2}{(1-q^2)^2}(\sigma^2+\sigma_g^2) + \frac{4q^2}{(1-q^2)^2}\sum_{t=1}^{T}\mathbb{E}[\|\nabla f(\theta_t)\|^2].$$

Proof. Let $\bar{e}_{t,i}$ be the j-th coordinate of $\bar{e}_t$. Denote $K_{t,i} := \sum_{\tau=1}^{t}(\frac{1+q^2}{2})^{t-\tau}\mathbb{E}[\|\nabla f_i(\theta_\tau)\|^2]$ and $K_{t,i} = 0, \forall i \in [n]$. Using the same technique as in the proof of Lemma 1, we have

$$\begin{aligned}
\mathbb{E}[\|\mathcal{E}_t\|^2] &= \mathbb{E}[\|(1-\beta_1)\sum_{\tau=1}^{t}\beta_1^{t-\tau}\bar{e}_\tau\|^2] \\
&\leq (1-\beta_1)^2\sum_{j=1}^{d}\mathbb{E}[(\sum_{\tau=1}^{t}\beta_1^{t-\tau}\bar{e}_{\tau,j})^2] \\
&\overset{(a)}{\leq} (1-\beta_1)^2\sum_{j=1}^{d}\mathbb{E}[(\sum_{\tau=1}^{t}\beta_1^{t-\tau})(\sum_{\tau=1}^{t}\beta_1^{t-\tau}\bar{e}_{\tau,j}^2)] \\
&\leq (1-\beta_1)\sum_{\tau=1}^{t}\beta_1^{t-\tau}\mathbb{E}[\|\bar{e}_\tau\|^2] \\
&\leq (1-\beta_1)\sum_{\tau=1}^{t}\beta_1^{t-\tau}\mathbb{E}[\frac{1}{n}\sum_{i=1}^{n}\|e_{\tau,i}\|^2] \\
&\overset{(b)}{\leq} \frac{4q^2}{(1-q^2)^2}\sigma^2 + \frac{2q^2(1-\beta_1)}{(1-q^2)}\sum_{\tau=1}^{t}\beta_1^{t-\tau}(\frac{1}{n}\sum_{i=1}^{n}K_{\tau,i}),
\end{aligned}$$

where (a) is due to Cauchy-Schwartz and (b) is a result of Lemma 2. Summing over $t = 1, ..., T$ and using the technique of geometric series summation leads to

$$\begin{aligned}
\sum_{t=1}^{T}\mathbb{E}[\|\mathcal{E}_t\|^2] &= \frac{4Tq^2}{(1-q^2)^2}\sigma^2 + \frac{2q^2(1-\beta_1)}{(1-q^2)}\sum_{t=1}^{T}\sum_{\tau=1}^{t}\beta_1^{t-\tau}(\frac{1}{n}\sum_{i=1}^{n}K_{\tau,i}) \\
&\leq \frac{4Tq^2}{(1-q^2)^2}\sigma^2 + \frac{2q^2}{(1-q^2)}\sum_{t=1}^{T}\sum_{\tau=1}^{t}(\frac{1+q^2}{2})^{t-\tau}\mathbb{E}[\frac{1}{n}\sum_{i=1}^{n}\|\nabla f_i(\theta_\tau)\|^2] \\
&\leq \frac{4Tq^2}{(1-q^2)^2}\sigma^2 + \frac{4q^2}{(1-q^2)^2}\sum_{t=1}^{T}\mathbb{E}[\frac{1}{n}\sum_{i=1}^{n}\|\nabla f_i(\theta_t)\|^2] \\
&\overset{(a)}{\leq} \frac{4Tq^2}{(1-q^2)^2}\sigma^2 + \frac{4q^2}{(1-q^2)^2}\sum_{t=1}^{T}\mathbb{E}[\|\frac{1}{n}\sum_{i=1}^{n}\nabla f_i(\theta_t)\|^2 + \frac{1}{n}\sum_{i=1}^{n}\|\nabla f_i(\theta_t)-\nabla f(\theta_t)\|^2] \\
&\leq \frac{4Tq^2}{(1-q^2)^2}(\sigma^2+\sigma_g^2) + \frac{4q^2}{(1-q^2)^2}\sum_{t=1}^{T}\mathbb{E}[\|\nabla f(\theta_t)\|^2],
\end{aligned}$$

where (a) is derived by the variance decomposition and the last inequality holds due to Assumption 4. The desired result is obtained.

$\square$

Lemma 4. *It holds that* $\forall t \in [T]$, $\forall i \in [d]$, $\hat{v}_{t,i} \leq \frac{4(1+q^2)^3}{(1-q^2)^2} G^2$.

Proof. For any t, by Lemma 2 and Assumption 3 we have

$$\begin{aligned}
\|\tilde{g}_t\|^2 &= \|\mathcal{C}(g_t + e_t)\|^2 \\
&\leq \|\mathcal{C}(g_t + e_t) - (g_t + e_t) + (g_t + e_t)\|^2 \\
&\leq 2(q^2+1)\|g_t + e_t\|^2 \\
&\leq 4(q^2+1)(G^2 + \frac{4q^2}{(1-q^2)^2} G^2) \\
&= \frac{4(1+q^2)^3}{(1-q^2)^2} G^2.
\end{aligned}$$

It's then easy to show by the updating rule of $\hat{v}_t$,

$$\hat{v}_{t,i} = (1-\beta_2) \sum_{\tau=1}^{t} \beta_2^{t-\tau} \tilde{g}_{t,i}^2 \leq \frac{4(1+q^2)^3}{(1-q^2)^2} G^2.$$

$\square$

B Proof of Theorem 1

Theorem. *Denote* $C_0 = \sqrt{\frac{4(1+q^2)^3}{(1-q^2)^2} G^2 + \epsilon}$, $C_1 = \frac{\beta_1}{1-\beta_1} + \frac{2q}{1-q^2}$. *Under Assumption 1 to Assumption 4, with* $\eta_t = \eta \leq \frac{\epsilon}{3C_0\sqrt{2L\max\{2L, C_2\}}}$, *for any* $T > 0$, COMP-AMS *satisfies*

$$\frac{1}{T}\sum_{t=1}^{T} \mathbb{E}[\|\nabla f(\theta_t)\|^2] \leq 2C_0 \Big(\frac{\mathbb{E}[f(\theta_1) - f(\theta^*)]}{T\eta} + \frac{\eta L \sigma^2}{n\epsilon} + \frac{3\eta^2 L C_0 C_1 \sigma^2}{\epsilon^2} + \frac{12\eta^2 q^2 L C_0 \sigma_g^2}{(1-q^2)^2\epsilon^2} + \frac{(1+C_1)G^2 d}{T\sqrt{\epsilon}} + \frac{\eta(1+2C_1)C_1 L G^2 d}{T\epsilon} \Big).$$

Proof. We first clarify some notations. At time t, let the full-precision gradient of the j-th worker be $g_{t,j}$, the error accumulator be $e_{t,j}$, and the compressed gradient be $\tilde{g}_{t,j} = \mathcal{C}(g_{t,j} + e_{t,j})$. Denote $\bar{g}_t = \frac{1}{n}\sum_{j=1}^{N} g_{t,j}$, $\bar{\tilde{g}}_t = \frac{1}{n}\sum_{j=1}^{N} \tilde{g}_{t,j}$ and $\bar{e}_t = \frac{1}{n}\sum_{j=1}^{n} e_{t,j}$. The second moment computed by the compressed gradients is denoted as $v_t = \beta_2 v_{t-1} + (1-\beta_2)\bar{\tilde{g}}_t^2$, and $\hat{v}_t = \max\{\hat{v}_{t-1}, v_t\}$. Also, the first order moving average sequence

$$m_t = \beta_1 m_{t-1} + (1-\beta_1)\bar{\tilde{g}}_t \quad \text{and} \quad m'_t = \beta_1 m'_{t-1} + (1-\beta_1)\bar{g}_t.$$

By construction we have $m'_t = (1-\beta_1)\sum_{i=1}^{k} \beta_1^{t-i} \bar{g}_t$.

Denote the following auxiliary sequences,

$$\begin{aligned}
\mathcal{E}_{t+1} &:= (1-\beta_1)\sum_{\tau=1}^{t+1} \beta_1^{t+1-\tau} \bar{e}_\tau \\
\theta'_{t+1} &:= \theta_{t+1} - \eta \frac{\mathcal{E}_{t+1}}{\sqrt{\hat{v}_t + \epsilon}}.
\end{aligned}$$

Then,

$$
\begin{aligned}
\theta'_{t+1} &= \theta_{t+1} - \eta \frac{\mathcal{E}_{t+1}}{\sqrt{\hat{v}_t + \epsilon}} \\
&= \theta_t - \eta \frac{(1-\beta_1)\sum_{\tau=1}^{t} \beta_1^{t-\tau} \bar{\bar{g}}_\tau + (1-\beta_1)\sum_{\tau=1}^{t+1} \beta_1^{t+1-\tau} \bar{e}_\tau}{\sqrt{\hat{v}_t + \epsilon}} \\
&= \theta_t - \eta \frac{(1-\beta_1)\sum_{\tau=1}^{t} \beta_1^{t-\tau} (\bar{\bar{g}}_\tau + \bar{e}_{\tau+1}) + (1-\beta)\beta_1^t \bar{e}_1}{\sqrt{\hat{v}_t + \epsilon}} \\
&= \theta_t - \eta \frac{(1-\beta_1)\sum_{\tau=1}^{t} \beta_1^{t-\tau} \bar{e}_\tau}{\sqrt{\hat{v}_t + \epsilon}} - \eta \frac{m'_t}{\sqrt{\hat{v}_t + \epsilon}} \\
&= \theta_t - \eta \frac{\mathcal{E}_t}{\sqrt{\hat{v}_{t-1} + \epsilon}} - \eta \frac{m'_t}{\sqrt{\hat{v}_t + \epsilon}} + \eta \Big(\frac{1}{\sqrt{\hat{v}_{t-1} + \epsilon}} - \frac{1}{\sqrt{\hat{v}_t + \epsilon}} \Big) \mathcal{E}_t \\
&\overset{(a)}{=} \theta'_t - \eta \frac{m'_t}{\sqrt{\hat{v}_t + \epsilon}} + \eta \Big(\frac{1}{\sqrt{\hat{v}_{t-1} + \epsilon}} - \frac{1}{\sqrt{\hat{v}_t + \epsilon}} \Big) \mathcal{E}_t \\
&:= \theta'_t - \eta a'_t + \eta D_t \mathcal{E}_t,
\end{aligned}
$$

where (a) uses the fact that for every $j \in [n]$, $\tilde{g}_{t,j} + e_{t+1,j} = g_{t,j} + e_{t,j}$, and $e_{t,1} = 0$ at initialization. Further define the virtual iterates:

$$
x_{t+1} := \theta'_{t+1} - \eta \frac{\beta_1}{1-\beta_1} a'_t = \theta'_{t+1} - \eta \frac{\beta_1}{1-\beta_1} \frac{m'_t}{\sqrt{\hat{v}_t + \epsilon}},
$$

which follows the recurrence:

$$
\begin{aligned}
x_{t+1} &= \theta'_{t+1} - \eta \frac{\beta_1}{1-\beta_1} \frac{m'_t}{\sqrt{\hat{v}_t + \epsilon}} \\
&= \theta'_t - \eta \frac{m'_t}{\sqrt{\hat{v}_t + \epsilon}} - \eta \frac{\beta_1}{1-\beta_1} \frac{m'_t}{\sqrt{\hat{v}_t + \epsilon}} + \eta D_t \mathcal{E}_t \\
&= \theta'_t - \eta \frac{\beta_1 m'_{t-1} + (1-\beta_1)\bar{g}_t + \frac{\beta_1^2}{1-\beta_1} m'_{t-1} + \beta_1 \bar{g}_t}{\sqrt{\hat{v}_t + \epsilon}} + \eta D_t \mathcal{E}_t \\
&= \theta'_t - \eta \frac{\beta_1}{1-\beta_1} \frac{m'_{t-1}}{\sqrt{\hat{v}_t + \epsilon}} - \eta \frac{\bar{g}_t}{\sqrt{\hat{v}_t + \epsilon}} + \eta D_t \mathcal{E}_t \\
&= x_t - \eta \frac{\bar{g}_t}{\sqrt{\hat{v}_t + \epsilon}} + \eta \frac{\beta_1}{1-\beta_1} D_t m'_{t-1} + \eta D_t \mathcal{E}_t.
\end{aligned}
$$

When summing over $t = 1, ..., T$, the difference sequence D_t satisfies the following bounds.

Lemma 5. *Let* $D_t := \frac{1}{\sqrt{\hat{v}_{t-1}+\epsilon}} - \frac{1}{\sqrt{\hat{v}_t+\epsilon}}$ *be defined as above. Then,*

$$
\sum_{t=1}^{T} \|D_t\|_1 \le \frac{d}{\sqrt{\epsilon}}, \quad \sum_{t=1}^{T} \|D_t\|^2 \le \frac{d}{\epsilon}.
$$

Proof. By the updating rule of COMP-AMS, $\hat{v}_{t-1} \le \hat{v}_t$ for $\forall t$. Therefore, by the initialization $\hat{v}_0 = 0$, we have

$$
\begin{aligned}
\sum_{t=1}^{T} \|D_t\|_1 &= \sum_{t=1}^{T} \sum_{i=1}^{d} \Big(\frac{1}{\sqrt{\hat{v}_{t-1,i} + \epsilon}} - \frac{1}{\sqrt{\hat{v}_{t,i} + \epsilon}} \Big) \\
&= \sum_{i=1}^{d} \Big(\frac{1}{\sqrt{\hat{v}_{0,i} + \epsilon}} - \frac{1}{\sqrt{\hat{v}_{T,i} + \epsilon}} \Big) \\
&\le \frac{d}{\sqrt{\epsilon}}.
\end{aligned}
$$

For the sum of squared l_2 norm, note the fact that for $a \geq b > 0$, it holds that

$$(a-b)^2 \leq (a-b)(a+b) = a^2 - b^2.$$

Thus,

$$\begin{aligned}
\sum_{t=1}^{T} \|D_t\|^2 &= \sum_{t=1}^{T}\sum_{i=1}^{d}\Big(\frac{1}{\sqrt{\hat{v}_{t-1,i}+\epsilon}} - \frac{1}{\sqrt{\hat{v}_{t,i}+\epsilon}}\Big)^2 \\
&\leq \sum_{t=1}^{T}\sum_{i=1}^{d}\Big(\frac{1}{\hat{v}_{t-1,i}+\epsilon} - \frac{1}{\hat{v}_{t,i}+\epsilon}\Big) \\
&\leq \frac{d}{\epsilon},
\end{aligned}$$

which gives the desired result. □

By Assumption 2 we have

$$f(x_{t+1}) \leq f(x_t) - \eta\langle \nabla f(x_t), x_{t+1} - x_t\rangle + \frac{L}{2}\|x_{t+1} - x_t\|^2.$$

Taking expectation w.r.t. the randomness at time t, we obtain

$$\begin{aligned}
&\mathbb{E}[f(x_{t+1})] - f(x_t) \\
&\leq -\eta\mathbb{E}[\langle \nabla f(x_t), \frac{\bar{g}_t}{\sqrt{\hat{v}_t+\epsilon}}\rangle] + \eta\mathbb{E}[\langle \nabla f(x_t), \frac{\beta_1}{1-\beta_1}D_t m'_{t-1} + D_t\mathcal{E}_t\rangle] \\
&\qquad\qquad + \frac{\eta^2 L}{2}\mathbb{E}[\|\frac{\bar{g}_t}{\sqrt{\hat{v}_t+\epsilon}} - \frac{\beta_1}{1-\beta_1}D_t m'_{t-1} - D_t\mathcal{E}_t\|^2] \\
&= \underbrace{-\eta\mathbb{E}[\langle \nabla f(\theta_t), \frac{\bar{g}_t}{\sqrt{\hat{v}_t+\epsilon}}\rangle]}_{I} + \underbrace{\eta\mathbb{E}[\langle \nabla f(x_t), \frac{\beta_1}{1-\beta_1}D_t m'_{t-1} + D_t\mathcal{E}_t\rangle]}_{II} \\
&\qquad + \underbrace{\frac{\eta^2 L}{2}\mathbb{E}[\|\frac{\bar{g}_t}{\sqrt{\hat{v}_t+\epsilon}} - \frac{\beta_1}{1-\beta_1}D_t m'_{t-1} - D_t\mathcal{E}_t\|^2]}_{III} + \underbrace{\eta\mathbb{E}[\langle \nabla f(\theta_t) - \nabla f(x_t), \frac{\bar{g}_t}{\sqrt{\hat{v}_t+\epsilon}}\rangle]}_{IV},
\end{aligned} \tag{4}$$

Bounding term I. We have

$$\begin{aligned}
I &= -\eta\mathbb{E}[\langle \nabla f(\theta_t), \frac{\bar{g}_t}{\sqrt{\hat{v}_{t-1}+\epsilon}}] - \eta\mathbb{E}[\langle \nabla f(\theta_t), (\frac{1}{\sqrt{\hat{v}_t+\epsilon}} - \frac{1}{\sqrt{\hat{v}_{t-1}+\epsilon}})\bar{g}_t\rangle] \\
&\leq -\eta\mathbb{E}[\langle \nabla f(\theta_t), \frac{\nabla f(\theta_t)}{\sqrt{\hat{v}_{t-1}+\epsilon}}] + \eta G^2\mathbb{E}[\|D_t\|]. \\
&\leq -\frac{\eta}{\sqrt{\frac{4(1+q^2)^3}{(1-q^2)^2}G^2+\epsilon}}\mathbb{E}[\|\nabla f(\theta_t)\|^2] + \eta G^2\mathbb{E}[\|D_t\|_1],
\end{aligned} \tag{5}$$

where we use Assumption 3, Lemma 4 and the fact that l_2 norm is no larger than l_1 norm.

Bounding term II. It holds that

$$\begin{aligned}
II &\leq \eta(\mathbb{E}[\langle \nabla f(\theta_t), \frac{\beta_1}{1-\beta_1}D_t m'_{t-1} + D_t\mathcal{E}_t\rangle] + \mathbb{E}[\langle \nabla f(x_t) - \nabla f(\theta_t), \frac{\beta_1}{1-\beta_1}D_t m'_{t-1} + D_t\mathcal{E}_t\rangle]) \\
&\leq \eta\mathbb{E}[\|\nabla f(\theta_t)\|\|\frac{\beta_1}{1-\beta_1}D_t m'_{t-1} + D_t\mathcal{E}_t\|] + \eta^2 \, L\mathbb{E}[\|\frac{\frac{\beta_1}{1-\beta_1}m'_{t-1} + \mathcal{E}_t}{\sqrt{\hat{v}_{t-1}+\epsilon}}\|\|\frac{\beta_1}{1-\beta_1}D_t m'_{t-1} + D_t\mathcal{E}_t\|] \\
&\leq \eta C_1 G^2\mathbb{E}[\|D_t\|_1] + \frac{\eta^2 C_1^2 L G^2}{\sqrt{\epsilon}}\mathbb{E}[\|D_t\|_1],
\end{aligned} \tag{6}$$

where $C_1 := \frac{\beta_1}{1-\beta_1} + \frac{2q}{1-q^2}$. The second inequality is because of smoothness of $f(\theta)$, and the last inequality is due to Lemma 2, Assumption 3 and the property of norms.

Bounding term III. This term can be bounded as follows:

$$\begin{aligned}
III &\le \eta^2 L\mathbb{E}[\|\frac{\bar{g}_t}{\sqrt{\hat{v}_t+\epsilon}}\|^2] + \eta^2 L\mathbb{E}[\|\frac{\beta_1}{1-\beta_1}D_t m'_{t-1} - D_t\mathcal{E}_t\|^2]] \\
&\le \frac{\eta^2 L}{\epsilon}\mathbb{E}[\|\frac{1}{n}\sum_{j=1}^{i} g_{t,j} - \nabla f(\theta_t) + \nabla f(\theta_t)\|^2] + \eta^2 L\mathbb{E}[\|D_t(\frac{\beta_1}{1-\beta_1}m'_{t-1} - \mathcal{E}_t)\|^2] \\
&\overset{(a)}{\le} \frac{\eta^2 L}{\epsilon}\mathbb{E}[\|\nabla f(\theta_t)\|^2] + \frac{\eta^2 L\sigma^2}{n\epsilon} + \eta^2 C_1^2 LG^2\mathbb{E}[\|D_t\|^2],
\end{aligned} \tag{7}$$

where (a) follows from $\nabla f(\theta_t) = \frac{1}{n}\sum_{j=1}^{n}\nabla f_j(\theta_t)$ and Assumption 4 that $g_{t,j}$ is unbiased of $\nabla f_j(\theta_t)$ and has bounded variance σ^2.

Bounding term IV. We have

$$\begin{aligned}
IV &= \eta\mathbb{E}[\langle\nabla f(\theta_t) - \nabla f(x_t), \frac{\bar{g}_t}{\sqrt{\hat{v}_{t-1}+\epsilon}}\rangle] + \eta\mathbb{E}[\langle\nabla f(\theta_t) - \nabla f(x_t), (\frac{1}{\sqrt{\hat{v}_t+\epsilon}} - \frac{1}{\sqrt{\hat{v}_{t-1}+\epsilon}})\bar{g}_t\rangle] \\
&\le \eta\mathbb{E}[\langle\nabla f(\theta_t) - \nabla f(x_t), \frac{\nabla f(\theta_t)}{\sqrt{\hat{v}_{t-1}+\epsilon}}\rangle] + \eta^2 L\mathbb{E}[\|\frac{\frac{\beta_1}{1-\beta_1}m'_{t-1} + \mathcal{E}_t}{\sqrt{\hat{v}_{t-1}+\epsilon}}\|\|D_t g_t\|] \\
&\overset{(a)}{\le} \frac{\eta\rho}{2\epsilon}\mathbb{E}[\|\nabla f(\theta_t)\|^2] + \frac{\eta}{2\rho}\mathbb{E}[\|\nabla f(\theta_t) - \nabla f(x_t)\|^2] + \frac{\eta^2 C_1 LG^2}{\sqrt{\epsilon}}\mathbb{E}[\|D_t\|] \\
&\overset{(b)}{\le} \frac{\eta\rho}{2\epsilon}\mathbb{E}[\|\nabla f(\theta_t)\|^2] + \frac{\eta^3 L}{2\rho}\mathbb{E}[\|\frac{\frac{\beta_1}{1-\beta_1}m'_{t-1} + \mathcal{E}_t}{\sqrt{\hat{v}_{t-1}+\epsilon}}\|^2] + \frac{\eta^2 C_1 LG^2}{\sqrt{\epsilon}}\mathbb{E}[\|D_t\|_1],
\end{aligned} \tag{8}$$

where (a) is due to Young's inequality and (b) is based on Assumption 2.

Regarding the second term in (8), by Lemma 3 and Lemma 1, summing over $t = 1, ..., T$ we have

$$\begin{aligned}
&\sum_{t=1}^{T}\frac{\eta^3 L}{2\rho}\mathbb{E}[\|\frac{\frac{\beta_1}{1-\beta_1}m'_{t-1} + \mathcal{E}_t}{\sqrt{\hat{v}_{t-1}+\epsilon}}\|^2] \\
&\le \sum_{t=1}^{T}\frac{\eta^3 L}{2\rho\epsilon}\mathbb{E}[\|\frac{\beta_1}{1-\beta_1}m'_{t-1} + \mathcal{E}_t\|^2] \\
&\le \sum_{t=1}^{T}\frac{\eta^3 L}{\rho\epsilon}\Big[\frac{\beta_1^2}{(1-\beta_1)^2}\mathbb{E}[\|m'_t\|^2] + \mathbb{E}[\|\mathcal{E}_t\|^2]\Big] \\
&\le \frac{T\eta^3\beta_1^2 L\sigma^2}{\rho(1-\beta_1)^2\epsilon} + \frac{\eta^3\beta_1^2 L}{\rho(1-\beta_1)^2\epsilon}\sum_{t=1}^{T}\mathbb{E}[\|\nabla f(\theta_t)\|^2] \\
&\qquad + \frac{4T\eta^3 q^2 L}{\rho(1-q^2)^2\epsilon}(\sigma^2 + \sigma_g^2) + \frac{4\eta^3 q^2 L}{\rho(1-q^2)^2\epsilon}\sum_{t=1}^{T}\mathbb{E}[\|\nabla f(\theta_t)\|^2] \\
&= \frac{T\eta^3 LC_2\sigma^2}{\rho\epsilon} + \frac{4T\eta^3 q^2 L\sigma_g^2}{\rho(1-q^2)^2\epsilon} + \frac{\eta^3 LC_2}{\rho\epsilon}\sum_{t=1}^{T}\mathbb{E}[\|\nabla f(\theta_t)\|^2],
\end{aligned} \tag{9}$$

with $C_2 := \frac{\beta_1^2}{(1-\beta_1)^2} + \frac{4q^2}{(1-q^2)^2}$. Now integrating (5), (6), (7), (8) and (9) into (4), taking the telescoping summation over $t = 1, ..., T$, we obtain

$$\begin{aligned}
&\mathbb{E}[f(x_{T+1}) - f(x_1)] \\
&\le (-\frac{\eta}{C_0} + \frac{\eta^2 L}{\epsilon} + \frac{\eta\rho}{2\epsilon} + \frac{\eta^3 LC_2}{\rho\epsilon})\sum_{t=1}^{T}\mathbb{E}[\|\nabla f(\theta_t)\|^2] + \frac{T\eta^2 L\sigma^2}{n\epsilon} + \frac{T\eta^3 LC_2\sigma^2}{\rho\epsilon} + \frac{4T\eta^3 q^2 L\sigma_g^2}{\rho(1-q^2)^2\epsilon} \\
&\qquad + (\eta(1+C_1)G^2 + \frac{\eta^2(1+C_1)C_1 LG^2}{\sqrt{\epsilon}})\sum_{t=1}^{T}\mathbb{E}[\|D_t\|_1] + \eta^2 C_1^2 LG^2\sum_{t=1}^{T}\mathbb{E}[\|D_t\|^2.
\end{aligned}$$

with $C_0 := \sqrt{\frac{4(1+q^2)^3}{(1-q^2)^2}G^2 + \epsilon}$. Setting $\eta \leq \frac{\epsilon}{3C_0\sqrt{2L\max\{2L, C_2\}}}$ and choosing $\rho = \frac{\epsilon}{3C_0}$, we obtain

$$\begin{aligned}
&\mathbb{E}[f(x_{T+1}) - f(x_1)] \\
&\leq -\frac{\eta}{2C_0}\sum_{t=1}^{T}\mathbb{E}[\|\nabla f(\theta_t)\|^2] + \frac{T\eta^2 L\sigma^2}{n\epsilon} + \frac{3T\eta^3 LC_0C_2\sigma^2}{\epsilon^2} + \frac{12T\eta^3 q^2 LC_0\sigma_g^2}{(1-q^2)^2\epsilon^2} \\
&\qquad + \frac{\eta(1+C_1)G^2 d}{\sqrt{\epsilon}} + \frac{\eta^2(1+2C_1)C_1 LG^2 d}{\epsilon}.
\end{aligned}$$

where the last inequality follows from Lemma 5. Re-arranging terms, we get that

$$\begin{aligned}
\frac{1}{T}\sum_{t=1}^{T}\mathbb{E}[\|\nabla f(\theta_t)\|^2] &\leq 2C_0\Big(\frac{\mathbb{E}[f(x_1) - f(x_{T+1})]}{T\eta} + \frac{\eta L\sigma^2}{n\epsilon} + \frac{3\eta^2 LC_0C_2\sigma^2}{\epsilon^2} \\
&\qquad + \frac{12\eta^2 q^2 LC_0\sigma_g^2}{(1-q^2)^2\epsilon^2} + \frac{(1+C_1)G^2 d}{T\sqrt{\epsilon}} + \frac{\eta(1+2C_1)C_1 LG^2 d}{T\epsilon}\Big) \\
&\leq 2C_0\Big(\frac{\mathbb{E}[f(\theta_1) - f(\theta^*)]}{T\eta} + \frac{\eta L\sigma^2}{n\epsilon} + \frac{3\eta^2 LC_0C_1\sigma^2}{\epsilon^2} \\
&\qquad + \frac{12\eta^2 q^2 LC_0\sigma_g^2}{(1-q^2)^2\epsilon^2} + \frac{(1+C_1)G^2 d}{T\sqrt{\epsilon}} + \frac{\eta(1+2C_1)C_1 LG^2 d}{T\epsilon}\Big),
\end{aligned}$$

where $C_0 = \sqrt{\frac{4(1+q^2)^3}{(1-q^2)^2}G^2 + \epsilon}$, $C_1 = \frac{\beta_1}{1-\beta_1} + \frac{2q}{1-q^2}$. The last inequality is because $\theta_1' = \theta_1$, $\theta^* := \arg\min_\theta f(\theta)$ and the fact that $C_2 \leq C_1$. This completes the proof.

C Additional content

C.1 Extension to the single-machine setting

We first provide in this subsection the formulation of our method in the single-worker setting, see Algorithm 3. Here, the computations, of the stochastic gradient and the various moment estimates, are all performed on a single-machine and the data is stored in this same worker. Then, we establish its convergence rate with similar compression and error-feedback techniques, as seen prior.

Algorithm 3 COMP-AMS with error-feedback for a single-machine

1: **Input**: parameter β_1, β_2, learning rate η_t.
2: Initialize: central server parameter $\theta_1 \in \Theta \subseteq \mathbb{R}^d$; $e_1 = 0$ the error accumulator; sparsity parameter k; $m_0 = 0$, $v_0 = 0$, $\hat{v}_0 = 0$
3: **for** $t = 1$ to T **do**
4: Compute stochastic gradient $g_t := g_{t,i_t}$ at θ_t for randomly sampled index i_t among the available observations indices.
5: Compute $\tilde{g}_t =$ **Top-**$k(g_t + e_t, k)$
6: Update the error $e_{t+1} = e_t + g_t - \tilde{g}_t$
7: $m_t = \beta_1 m_{t-1} + (1-\beta_1)\tilde{g}_t$
8: $v_t = \beta_2 v_{t-1} + (1-\beta_2)\tilde{g}_t^2$
9: $\hat{v}_t = \max(v_t, \hat{v}_{t-1})$
10: Update the global model $\theta_{t+1} = \theta_t - \eta_t \frac{m_t}{\sqrt{\hat{v}_t + \epsilon}}$
11: **end for**

$\square$