

# Notes on Raney's Lemmas

Tyler Neylon

251.2015

In a 1960 paper, George Raney proved the first two lemmas below; the lemmas suppose we have a finite sequence of numbers meeting certain constraints, and provide the number of cycle shifts that contain all-positive partial sums (Raney 1960).

These notes expand on the ideas behind these lemmas. The final section of these notes discusses cyclic shifts for finite sequences of independent, uniformly random values; as far as I know, the work in that section is new.

I personally learned of these lemmas in chapter 7 of the book *Concrete Mathematics* (Knuth, Patashnik, and Graham 1998), which explores their applications to generating functions. The presentation of the lemmas here is based on the presentation in *Concrete Mathematics* rather than on Raney's original paper.

## 1 Integer sequences

**Lemma 1** Suppose  $\sum_{i=1}^n x_i = 1$ , where all  $x_i \in \mathbb{Z}$ . Extend the sequence by letting  $x_{n+p} = x_p$  for  $1 \leq p \leq n$ . Then there is a unique  $j$ ,  $1 \leq j \leq n$ , such that

$$\sum_{i=j}^{j+k-1} x_i > 0; \quad 1 \leq k \leq n.$$

---

Intuitively, we can think of such an index  $j$  as a cyclic shift of the sequence that has partial sums that are all positive.

For example, the finite sequence  $\langle x_1, \dots, x_5 \rangle = \langle 3, -2, 4, -1, 1 \rangle$  offers  $j = 5$  as the unique shift providing  $\langle x_5, x_6 = x_1, \dots, x_9 = x_4 \rangle = \langle 1, 3, -2, 4, -5 \rangle$  with partial sums  $\langle 1, 4, 2, 6, 1 \rangle$  that are all positive.

**Definitions** Given a sequence  $\langle x_1, \dots, x_n \rangle$ , it's useful to say that an index  $i \in \{1, \dots, n\}$  is a *positive-sum shift* if and only if the partial sums of

$\langle x_i, \dots, x_n, x_1, \dots, x_{i-1} \rangle$  are all positive. Since these notes focus on finite sequences, we'll implicitly use arbitrary indexes  $x_j, j \in \mathbb{Z}$ , to refer to  $x_k$  with  $k \in \{1, \dots, n\}, k \equiv j \pmod{n}$ .

We'll use the subscript-free letter  $x$  to denote an entire finite sequence  $\langle x_1, \dots, x_n \rangle$ . We'll write  $\sigma(x)$  to indicate the number of indexes of  $x$  that are positive-sum shifts.

We can now concisely state a related result proved by Raney:

**Lemma 2** *Suppose  $\sum_{i=1}^n x_i = \ell$ , where  $x_i \in \mathbb{Z}$  and  $x_i \leq 1$  for all  $i$ . Then  $\sigma(x) = \ell$ ; that is, exactly  $\ell$  indexes in  $\{1, \dots, n\}$  are positive-sum shifts.*

---

For example, let  $\langle x_1, \dots, x_8 \rangle = \langle -2, 1, 1, 0, -1, 1, 1, 1 \rangle$ . Then  $\sum x_i = 2$ , and  $x_2, x_6$  are the only positive-sum shifts:

shift	partial sums
$\langle x_2, \dots \rangle = \langle 1, 1, 0, -1, 1, 1, 1, -2 \rangle$	$\langle 1, 2, 2, 1, 2, 3, 4, 2 \rangle$
$\langle x_6, \dots \rangle = \langle 1, 1, 1, -2, 1, 1, 0, -1 \rangle$	$\langle 1, 2, 3, 1, 2, 3, 3, 2 \rangle$

Note that lemma 2 is not a strict generalization of lemma 1 as it adds the condition  $x_i \leq 1$ . This condition is necessary for lemma 2; without it we may have, for example, the one-element sequence  $x = \langle 2 \rangle$  with sum  $\ell = 2$  and  $\sigma(x) = 1$ .

Rather than proving the above two lemmas directly, we'll jump to the general case of real sequences  $x$  and prove strictly more general bounds on  $\sigma(x)$  in that context.

## 2 Real sequences

In a moment we'll prove a general guarantee that  $\sum x_i > 0 \Rightarrow \sigma(x) \geq 1$ . In the context of a sequence  $x$ , it will be useful to write  $s_i$  to denote the  $i^{\text{th}}$  partial sum of  $x$ ; that is,  $s_0 = 0$ , and

$$s_i = \sum_{j=1}^i x_j, \quad \text{for } i \geq 1.$$

We can define  $s_i$  for  $i > n$  using the implicitly periodic sequence characterized by  $x_{n+i} = x_i$ .

**Property 3** *Suppose  $\sum_{i=1}^n x_i > 0$ , where  $x_i \in \mathbb{R}$ . Let  $s_i$  denote the  $i^{\text{th}}$  partial sum of  $x$ , and let  $j$  be the largest index in  $\{1, \dots, n\}$  with  $s_{j-1} = \min_{0 \leq i < n} s_i$ . Then  $j$  is a positive-sum shift.*

---

**Proof** Let

$$s'_i = \sum_{k=j}^{j+i-1} x_k$$

denote the  $i^{\text{th}}$  partial sum of the shifted sequence  $\langle x_j, \dots, x_{j+n-1} \rangle$ . Then, for  $1 \leq i \leq n$ ,

$$s'_i = s_{j+i-1} - s_{j-1} \begin{cases} > 0 \text{ (by definition of } j) & \text{when } j+i-1 < n \\ = s_n + s_{j+i-1-n} - s_{j-1} \geq s_n > 0 & \text{when } j+i-1 \geq n. \end{cases}$$

□

Now we can assume without loss of generality that any sequence of real numbers  $\langle x_1, \dots, x_n \rangle$  with  $\sum x_i > 0$  is already shifted so that all its partial sums  $s_i > 0$  for  $i > 0$ . This allows us to provide a nice general expression for  $\sigma(x)$ .

**Property 4** *Suppose that  $x$  is a finite real sequence with  $i^{\text{th}}$  partial sum  $s_i$ , and that  $s_i > 0$  for all  $i > 0$ . Then*

$$\sigma(x) = \# \left\{ \min_{j \leq i \leq n} s_i \mid 1 \leq j \leq n \right\}. \quad (1)$$

*More specifically, an index  $j$  with  $1 \leq j \leq n$  is a positive-sum shift iff*

$$s_{j-1} < s_i \quad \forall i : j \leq i \leq n. \quad (2)$$


---

**Proof** We'll start by supposing we have an index  $j$  with  $1 \leq j \leq n$  and  $s_{j-1} < s_i$  for all  $i$  with  $j \leq i \leq n$ ; our goal is to show that such a  $j$  must be a positive-sum shift. Our approach will be similar to the proof of property 3.

Let  $s'_i$  denote the  $i^{\text{th}}$  partial sum of  $\langle x_j, \dots, x_{j+n-1} \rangle$ :

$$s'_i = \sum_{k=j}^{j+i-1} x_k.$$

Then

$$s'_i = s_{j+i-1} - s_{j-1} \begin{cases} > 0 & \text{if } j+i-1 \leq n, \\ = s_{j+i-1-n} + s_n - s_{j-1} > 0 & \text{if } j+i-1 > n; \end{cases}$$

the last inequality follows since  $s_{j+i-1-n} > 0$  and  $s_n > s_{j-1}$ .

On the other hand, if  $s_{j-1} \geq s_i$  for some  $i, j$  with  $1 \leq j \leq i \leq n$ , then  $s'_{i-j+1} = s_i - s_{j-1} \leq 0$ , so that  $j$  isn't a positive-sum shift. This completes the proof of the last part of the property.

Now let's verify that the set  $S = \{\min_{j \leq i \leq n} s_i \mid 1 \leq j \leq n\}$  from (1) has size  $\sigma(x)$ .

Let  $j_1, \dots, j_k$  be all the positive-sum shifts with  $1 < j_i \leq n$ ; note that  $k = \sigma(x) - 1$  since the trivial shift index 1 has been excluded. Let  $T = \{s_{j_1-1}, \dots, s_{j_k-1}, s_n\}$ .

Notice that  $j = n + 1$  trivially meets condition 2; combine this with the first part of the proof to see that all elements of  $T$  meet condition 2. This guarantees that all the elements are unique, so that  $|T| = \sigma(x)$ . This also means that  $T \subset S$ . Finally, observe that, for any  $s_j \in S$ , there's a largest index  $j'$  with  $1 \leq j' \leq n$  and  $s_{j'} = s_j$ ; this index  $j'$  meets condition 2, so that  $S \subset T$ , confirming that  $|S| = |T| = \sigma(x)$ .  $\square$

Property 4 lends itself to a nice visual intuition. Consider the example sequence  $\langle 2, -1, 2, 2, -3, 2, 1, 1, -1, -2 \rangle$  of length  $n = 10$ . Below is the line graph of its partial sums, starting with  $s_0 = 0$ .

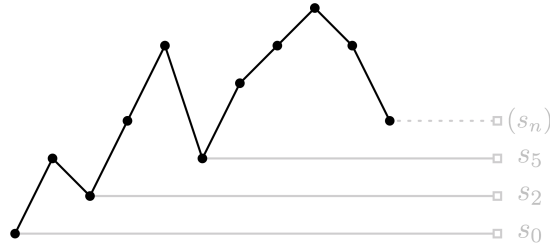


Figure 1: *Line graph of the partial sums  $s_i$  of the example sequence.*

Imagine an observer standing far to the right of the graph and looking directly to the left so they can only see along a perfectly horizontal line of sight. Below  $s_n$ , they can only see the three points  $s_0, s_2$ , and  $s_5$ . These are exactly the partial sums meeting condition (2), so that they correspond directly to all the positive-sum shifts of  $x$ , which have indexes 1, 3, and 6.

This visual intuition — that points visible-from-the-right and below  $s_n$  correspond exactly to the positive-sum shifts — extends to any sequence meeting the suppositions of property 4.

### The Contraction Perspective

Next we'll consider a contraction operation that may shorten a sequence  $x$  while preserving  $\sigma(x)$ .

Call a sequence  $x = \langle x_1, \dots, x_n \rangle$  *sum-positive* iff  $s_i > 0$  when  $i > 0$ . We'll say that a sequence  $x' = \langle x'_1, \dots, x'_{n-1} \rangle$  is a *contraction* of the length- $n$  sum-positive

sequence  $x$  iff there is some index  $j$  so that  $x_{j+1} \leq 0$  and, for  $1 \leq i \leq n-1$ ,

$$x'_i = \begin{cases} x_i & \text{if } i < j, \\ x_i + x_{i+1} & \text{if } i = j, \text{ and} \\ x_{i+1} & \text{if } i > j. \end{cases}$$

**Property 5** *If  $x'$  is a contraction of  $x$ , then  $x'$  is sum-positive and  $\sigma(x') = \sigma(x)$ .*

**Proof** Let  $j$  be the contracted index, so that  $x'_j = x_j + x_{j+1}$  and  $x_{j+1} \leq 0$ .

Let  $s'_i$  denote the  $i^{\text{th}}$  partial sum of  $x'$ . Then

$$s'_i = \begin{cases} s_i & \text{if } 0 \leq i < j \\ s_{i+1} & \text{if } j \leq i \leq n-1. \end{cases}$$

So clearly  $s'_i > 0$  for  $0 < i \leq n-1$ , making  $x'$  sum-positive.

(todo: rest of the proof)

□

### 3 Random sequences

Add more content here.

### References

Knuth, Donald E., Oren Patashnik, and Ronald L. Graham. 1998. *Concrete Mathematics: A Foundation for Computer Science*. addison-wesley.

Raney, George. 1960. “Functional Composition Patterns and Power Series Reversion.” *Transactions of the American Mathematical Society* 94: 441–51.