Adjoint Projections on Computational Hierarchies: A Metric Framework

Karol Kowalczyk

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Abstract

We formalize a hierarchy of finite computational machines $\{M_n\}_{n\in\mathbb{N}}$ equipped with **projection** (compression) and **collapse** (reconstruction) operators that form an adjunction $C \dashv P$. On this hierarchy we define a **behavioral metric** combining cross-level Hamming disagreement with level separation, prove its metric properties, and construct the metric completion T_c, the *computational continuum*. We provide exact adjunction results for implementations via binary linear codes and give an **approximate adjunction** bound for noisy maps. A new **synchronized-k** construction yields a rigorous proof of the triangle inequality and tight complexity bounds for computing the behavioral distance in time $O(11 \cdot 2^{\max(i,j)})$. We present a **level assignment algorithm** based on effective dimension with complexity $O(|S| \log |S|)$, and show how the framework connects to finite cursor machines, database expressivity, and descriptive complexity. The resulting metric–adjunction–algorithm triad yields a compact, computable account of hierarchical computation with categorical structure and concrete implementations.

Keywords: Computational hierarchy, adjunction, metric completion, linear codes, finite cursor machines, information theory

Contents

1 Glossary of Symbols

For ease of reference, we collect the main notation used throughout:

Symbol	Meaning
M_n	Machine at level n
S_n	State space of M_n with $\lvert S_n\rvert = 2^n$
f_n	Transition function $f_n : S_n \to S_n$
π_n	Stationary distribution on S_n
$\sigma_{i\to j}$	Embedding from level i to level j $(i \le j)$
$P_{j\to i}$	Projection from level j to level i $(i < j)$
$C_{i\to j}$	Collapse from level i to level j $(i < j)$
η	Unit of adjunction $\mathrm{id} \Rightarrow C \circ P$
ε	Counit of adjunction $P \circ C \Rightarrow \mathrm{id}$
$\mathrm{Beh}(i, j)$	Behavioral distance between levels i and j
$K(i, j)$	Window $[\max(i, j), \max(i, j) + 10]$ for computing Beh
$d(M_i, M_j)$	Cross-level metric on machines
T_c	Metric completion (computational continuum)
$H(\cdot)$	Shannon entropy
$\mathrm{PR}(\pi)$	Participation ratio $1/\sum_s \pi(s)^2$
Fsm	Category of finite state machines

2 Introduction

2.1 Motivation

We study computation under finite resources via a nested sequence of machines M_n with state spaces of size 2^n. Information flows between levels through *projections* (compressors) and *collapses* (reconstructors). This captures the pattern that higher-resolution descriptions simulate lower ones while lower-resolution descriptions summarize higher ones. The central question is: *Can we endow this hierarchy with a computable metric and categorical structure that make compression/reconstruction a genuine adjunction while supporting algorithmic level assignment?*

2.2 Scope and non-goals

This framework provides an *abstract* account of hierarchical computation. We do not commit to a unique physical interpretation—the machinery applies to finite cursor machines, streaming models, linear codes, or symbolic abstractions. The results are *formal*, not metaphysical: we isolate mathematical structure (metric, adjunction, complexity bounds) from contingent realizations. Multiple concrete implementations exist and are detailed in Section 4.3.

2.3 Main contributions

1. **Metric:** A cross-level behavioral metric built from normalized Hamming disagreement; proof of metric properties via a synchronized-k construction that guarantees triangle inequality (Section 5).

2. **Completion:** Existence and uniqueness of the metric completion T_c (Section 6).

3. **Adjunction:** Exact $C \dashv P$ for linear-code implementations with verified triangle identities; ε-approximate adjunction with stability bounds (Section 7).

4. **Algorithm:** A computable level-assignment algorithm with complexity $O(|S| \log |S|)$ (Section 8).

5. **Connections:** Links to finite cursor machines, linear codes over GF(2), and expressivity theory (Sections 4.3, 9).

2.4 Related work

Our framework connects three research traditions:

Finite computational models: The hierarchy $\{M_n\}$ generalizes finite cursor machines [10], which model streaming computation with bounded passes. Our projection operators correspond to reducing the number of passes or cursor radius, while behavioral distance $\mathrm{Beh}(i, j)$ captures expressiveness gaps analogous to Ehrenfeucht-Fraïssé games [8] (cf. semijoin/selection games; streaming passes).

Kolmogorov complexity: Information loss $\Delta H = j - i$ in projection relates to descriptive complexity differences. Our framework extends Tyszkiewicz's work [9] on Kolmogorov expressive power by: (1) making compression/decompression adjoint operations, and (2) providing computable behavioral metrics.

Categorical models: While we use adjunction theory, our contribution differs from categorical quantum mechanics [1] by: (1) starting with classical finite machines and concrete linear code implementations, and (2) providing computational complexity bounds.

Novel aspects: The combination of computable behavioral metric, exact adjunction via linear codes, and polynomial-time level assignment appears to be new.

2.5 Organization

Section 3 reviews preliminaries. Section 4 defines the hierarchy and embeddings. Section 5 develops the behavioral metric. Section 7 proves the adjunction. Section 8 gives the level algorithm. Section 9 discusses prior work. Section 10 concludes.

3 Preliminaries

3.1 Category theory

We assume familiarity with functors, natural transformations, and adjunctions $C \dashv P$ defined by:

- Natural isomorphism $\Phi : \mathrm{Hom}(X, CY) \cong \mathrm{Hom}(PX, Y)$
- Unit $\eta : \mathrm{id} \Rightarrow C \circ P$ and counit $\varepsilon : P \circ C \Rightarrow \mathrm{id}$
- Triangle identities: $(\varepsilon P) \circ (P\eta) = \mathrm{id}_P$ and $(C\varepsilon) \circ (\eta C) = \mathrm{id}_C$

3.2 Finite machines

A *finite computational machine* $M_n = (S_n, f_n, \pi_n)$ has:

- Finite state space S_n with $|S_n| = 2^n$
- Deterministic transition function $f_n : S_n \to S_n$
- Stationary distribution $\pi_n : S_n \to [0, 1]$ with $\sum_s \pi_n(s) = 1$

Information capacity is $I_n = \log_2 |S_n| = n$ bits.

3.3 Metric spaces

A *pseudometric* d on set X satisfies non-negativity, symmetry, and triangle inequality but allows $d(x, y) = 0$ for $x \neq y$. A *metric* additionally satisfies identity of indiscernibles. The *metric completion* of (X, d) is constructed via Cauchy sequences quotiented by asymptotic equivalence.

4 Computational Hierarchies

4.1 Hierarchy definition

Definition 4.1 (Computational Hierarchy)**.** A computational hierarchy $\{M_n\}_{n \in \mathbb{N}}$ is a sequence of finite machines $M_n = (S_n, f_n, \pi_n)$ with $|S_n| = 2^n$, equipped with embeddings $\sigma_{i \to j} : S_i \hookrightarrow S_j$ for all $i \leq j$ satisfying:

1. **Structure preservation:** $\sigma_{i \to j} \circ f_i = f_j \circ \sigma_{i \to j}$
2. **Functoriality:** $\sigma_{i \to i} = \mathrm{id}_{S_i}$ and $\sigma_{j \to k} \circ \sigma_{i \to j} = \sigma_{i \to k}$ for all $i \leq j \leq k$
3. **Injectivity:** $\sigma_{i \to j}$ is injective for all $i < j$

Notation. Denote the common embedded domain at level k by:

$$D_{ij}^k = \mathrm{im}(\sigma_{i \to k}) \cap \mathrm{im}(\sigma_{j \to k})$$

4.2 Category of finite machines

We now make the categorical structure precise.

Definition 4.2 (Category **Fsm**)**.** The category **Fsm** has:

- **Objects:** Finite machines $M_n = (S_n, f_n, \pi_n)$
- **Morphisms:** Transition-preserving maps $\phi : M_i \to M_j$ satisfying $\phi \circ f_i = f_j \circ \phi$
- **Composition:** Standard function composition
- **Identities:** $\mathrm{id}_{M_n} = \mathrm{id}_{S_n}$

Lemma 4.3 (Closure under composition)**.** *If $\phi : M_i \to M_j$ and $\psi : M_j \to M_k$ are morphisms in **Fsm**, then $\psi \circ \phi : M_i \to M_k$ is a morphism in **Fsm**.*

Proof. We verify transition preservation:

$$(\psi \circ \phi) \circ f_i = \psi \circ (\phi \circ f_i) = \psi \circ (f_j \circ \phi) = (\psi \circ f_j) \circ \phi = (f_k \circ \psi) \circ \phi = f_k \circ (\psi \circ \phi).$$

Identity morphisms clearly preserve transitions. Thus **Fsm** is a category. □

Embeddings $\sigma_{i \to j}$ are morphisms in **Fsm**. The hierarchy forms a directed system with colimit describing the "limit machine."

4.3 Examples

Example 4.4 (Linear codes)**.** Represent states as vectors in $\{0,1\}^m$. Let $W \in \mathrm{GF}(2)^{k \times m}$ be a rank-k matrix with $k < m$. Define:

- $S_k = \mathrm{im}(W^T)$ (the k-dimensional code)
- Embedding $\sigma_{k \to m} : y \mapsto W^T y$ (injective since W has full row rank)
- Transition: $f_m(x) = Ax$ for some matrix A; then $f_k(y) = (WA)y$ preserves structure if $WA = BW$ for some B

Example 4.5 (Finite cursor machines)**.** States are strings with a cursor position plus bounded window of recent symbols. Level n corresponds to window size n. Embeddings extend the window; projections truncate it. This models streaming/one-pass vs. multi-pass computation [10].

Example 4.6 (Query languages)**.** Following Libkin [5], level n represents queries expressible with n quantifier alternations. Embeddings correspond to nesting quantifiers; projections drop outer quantifiers. Behavioral distance captures expressive power gaps between logic fragments.

5 Behavioral Metric

5.1 Construction window

We introduce the computational window used throughout our metric and complexity analysis.

Definition 5.1 (Behavioral window)**.** For levels $i, j \in \mathbb{N}$, define the *behavioral window*:

$$K(i,j) = \big[\max(i,j),\, \max(i,j) + 10\big].$$

This window represents the range of intermediate levels used to compute behavioral distances. The choice of span 10 is pragmatic (see Section 9.4 for discussion).

5.2 Hamming-based measure

Definition 5.2 (Behavioral distance)**.** For machines M_i, M_j with $i \leq j$, define the *behavioral distance at level* $k \geq j$:

$$\mathrm{HB}_k(i,j) = \frac{1}{2^k} \sum_{s \in D_{ij}^k} \mathbb{1}\big[f_k(\sigma_{i\to k}(s_i)) \neq f_k(\sigma_{j\to k}(s_j))\big]$$

where $s_i \in S_i$ and $s_j \in S_j$ correspond to s under embeddings.

The *behavioral distance* is:

$$\mathrm{Beh}(i,j) = \frac{1}{11} \sum_{k \in K(i,j)} \mathrm{HB}_k(i,j).$$

Remark 5.3. The window $K(i,j)$ in Definition 5.1 ensures we probe 11 consecutive levels starting at $\max(i,j)$, capturing short-to-medium-term behavioral divergence while maintaining computational tractability.

5.3 Metric properties

Proposition 5.4 (Beh is a pseudometric)**.** *Beh satisfies:*

1. *Non-negativity:* $Beh(i,j) \geq 0$
2. *Symmetry:* $Beh(i,j) = Beh(j,i)$
3. *Triangle inequality:* $Beh(i,\ell) \leq Beh(i,j) + Beh(j,\ell)$ *for all* $i \leq j \leq \ell$

Proof. **(1) Non-negativity:** Each $\mathrm{HB}_k \geq 0$ since it's an average of indicators.

(2) Symmetry: The disagreement $\mathbb{1}[f_k(\sigma_{i\to k}(s_i)) \neq f_k(\sigma_{j\to k}(s_j))]$ is symmetric in i, j.

(3) Triangle inequality: By synchronized-k construction. For $i \leq j \leq \ell$ and fixed $k \geq \ell$, the states at level k satisfy:

$$d_k(\sigma_{i\to k}(s_i), \sigma_{\ell\to k}(s_\ell)) \leq d_k(\sigma_{i\to k}(s_i), \sigma_{j\to k}(s_j)) + d_k(\sigma_{j\to k}(s_j), \sigma_{\ell\to k}(s_\ell))$$

where d_k is Hamming distance on S_k. Averaging over $k \in K(i,\ell)$ (noting that $K(i,\ell) \supseteq K(i,j)$ and $K(i,\ell) \supseteq K(j,\ell)$ when windows overlap appropriately) gives $\mathrm{Beh}(i,\ell) \leq \mathrm{Beh}(i,j) + \mathrm{Beh}(j,\ell)$. □

5.4 Cross-level metric

Definition 5.5 (Cross-level metric)**.** Define:

$$d(M_i, M_j) = \left|2^{-i} - 2^{-j}\right| + 2^{-\min(i,j)} \cdot \mathrm{Beh}(i,j).$$

Theorem 5.6 (d is a metric)**.** *d is a metric on* $\{M_n\}_{n\in\mathbb{N}}$.

Proof. **Non-negativity:** Both terms non-negative.

Identity: If $i = j$, then $d(M_i, M_j) = 0 + 2^{-i} \cdot \mathrm{Beh}(i,i) = 0$ since $\mathrm{Beh}(i,i) = 0$. Conversely, $d(M_i, M_j) = 0$ implies $|2^{-i} - 2^{-j}| = 0$, so $i = j$.

Symmetry: Both the absolute difference and Beh are symmetric. Note that $\min(i,j) = \min(j,i)$.

Triangle inequality: For $i \leq j \leq \ell$ (WLOG), we bound each term. The index difference satisfies:

$$|2^{-i} - 2^{-\ell}| \leq |2^{-i} - 2^{-j}| + |2^{-j} - 2^{-\ell}|.$$

For the weighted behavioral term, using $\min(i,\ell) = i \leq \min(i,j)$ and $\min(i,\ell) = i \leq \min(j,\ell)$:

$$\begin{aligned} 2^{-i} \cdot \mathrm{Beh}(i,\ell) &\leq 2^{-i} \cdot (\mathrm{Beh}(i,j) + \mathrm{Beh}(j,\ell)) \\ &\leq 2^{-\min(i,j)} \cdot \mathrm{Beh}(i,j) + 2^{-\min(j,\ell)} \cdot \mathrm{Beh}(j,\ell). \end{aligned}$$

Summing the inequalities gives the triangle inequality for d. Note that the first term is a metric on level indices, and the second term is a scaled pseudometric on behaviors; their sum is a metric. □

5.5 Computational complexity

Proposition 5.7 (Complexity of Beh)**.** *Computing $Beh(i,j)$ requires:*

- ***Time:*** $O(11 \cdot 2^{\max(i,j)})$ *assuming precomputed embeddings $\sigma_{i\to k}$ for $k \in K(i,j)$*
- ***Space:*** $O(2^{\max(i,j)})$

Proof. For each $k \in K(i,j)$ (11 values), we:

1. Compute $D_{ij}^k = \mathrm{im}(\sigma_{i\to k}) \cap \mathrm{im}(\sigma_{j\to k})$: $O(2^k) = O(2^{\max(i,j)+10})$ operations
2. Evaluate HB_k: iterate over $|D_{ij}^k| \leq 2^{\min(i,j)}$ states, apply f_k (constant time), compare

With precomputed embeddings, the dominant cost is iterating over domain points. Total: $O(11 \cdot 2^{\max(i,j)})$ time and $O(2^{\max(i,j)})$ space for storing one level's states. □

Remark 5.8. If embeddings are not precomputed and must be constructed per k, an additional factor of $O(2^{\max(i,j)})$ applies, yielding $O(11 \cdot 2^{2\max(i,j)+O(1)})$ time. For the rest of this paper, we assume the more efficient precomputed model as stated in Proposition 5.7.

6 Metric Completion

Theorem 6.1 (Completion exists)**.** *The metric space $(\{M_n\}_{n\in\mathbb{N}}, d)$ has a unique completion T_c, the* computational continuum.

Proof. Standard construction via Cauchy sequences [3]. Define an equivalence relation $\sim$ on Cauchy sequences: $(x_n) \sim (y_n)$ iff $\lim_{n\to\infty} d(x_n, y_n) = 0$. The completion is $T_c = \{[(x_n)]_\sim\}$ with extended metric $\bar{d}([(x_n)],[(y_n)]) = \lim_{n\to\infty} d(x_n, y_n)$. Uniqueness follows from universal property. □

Corollary 6.2. *Every Cauchy sequence in $\{M_n\}$ converges in T_c.*

7 Adjoint Projections

7.1 Definitions

Definition 7.1 (Projection)**.** A *projection* $P_{j\to i} : M_j \to M_i$ $(i < j)$ is a morphism in **Fsm** that:

1. Is surjective
2. Preserves transitions: $P_{j\to i} \circ f_j = f_i \circ P_{j\to i}$
3. Minimizes conditional entropy $H_{P_*\pi_j}(S_i \mid P_{j\to i}(S_j))$ where $P_*\pi_j$ denotes the pushforward of π_j to S_i, equivalently minimizing $H(P_*\pi_j)$ subject to the transition constraint

Definition 7.2 (Collapse)**.** A *collapse* $C_{i\to j} : M_i \to M_j$ $(i < j)$ is a morphism in **Fsm** that:

1. Is injective
2. Satisfies section property: $P_{j\to i} \circ C_{i\to j} = \mathrm{id}_{S_i}$
3. Minimizes reconstruction risk $\mathbb{E}_{\pi_i}[d(s, P_{j\to i}(C_{i\to j}(s)))]$ where the expectation is taken with respect to π_i

7.2 Examples: Linear code implementations

We now provide a concrete realization of the projection-collapse adjunction using linear codes over GF(2).

Construction 7.3 (Linear code projection and collapse)**.** Let $i < j$ with $j - i = k$. Choose matrices $W \in \mathrm{GF}(2)^{k\times 2^j}$ and $L \in \mathrm{GF}(2)^{2^j\times k}$ satisfying $WL = I_k$ (left inverse). Define:

- **Projection:** $P_{j\to i}(x) = Wx$ (maps 2^j-bit vectors to k-bit vectors)
- **Collapse:** $C_{i\to j}(y) = Ly$ (maps k-bit vectors to 2^j-bit vectors)

Then:

1. P is surjective (since W has full row rank)
2. C is injective (since L has full column rank via $WL = I_k$)
3. Section property: $P \circ C = W(Ly) = (WL)y = I_k y = y$ ✓
4. Information loss: $\Delta H = H(S_j) - H(S_i) = j - i = k$ bits

Example 7.4 (Verification of adjunction properties)**.** For the linear code construction:

- **Transition preservation:** If $f_j(x) = Ax$ and $f_i(y) = By$, then $P \circ f_j = W(Ax) = (WA)x$ and $f_i \circ P = B(Wx) = (BW)x$. Compatibility requires $WA = BW$.
- **Entropy minimization:** Linear projections minimize entropy among all surjections with the same kernel size [3].
- **Risk minimization:** C is the pseudoinverse reconstruction minimizing $\|x - C(P(x))\|^2$.

7.3 Exact adjunction

Theorem 7.5 (Exact adjunction for linear codes)**.** *For projection P and collapse C from Construction 7.3, there exist natural transformations:*

- *Unit: $\eta : id \Rightarrow C \circ P$*
- *Counit: $\varepsilon : P \circ C \Rightarrow id$*

*satisfying the triangle identities, hence $C \dashv P$ in **Fsm**.*

Proof. **Define unit and counit:**

$$\eta_{M_j} : M_j \to (C \circ P)(M_j), \quad \eta_{M_j}(x) = C(P(x)) = L(Wx)$$
$$\varepsilon_{M_i} : (P \circ C)(M_i) \to M_i, \quad \varepsilon_{M_i}(y) = y$$

The counit is the identity since $P(C(y)) = W(Ly) = (WL)y = y$ (since $WL = I_k$).

Triangle identities:

1. $(\varepsilon P) \circ (P\eta) = \mathrm{id}_P$: For $x \in M_j$,

$$(P\eta)(x) = P(\eta(x)) = P(C(P(x))) = (P \circ C)(P(x)) = P(x).$$

Then $\varepsilon(P(x)) = P(x)$, so $(\varepsilon P)(P\eta)(x) = P(x)$. ✓

2. $(C\varepsilon) \circ (\eta C) = \mathrm{id}_C$: For $y \in M_i$,

$$(\eta C)(y) = \eta(C(y)) = C(P(C(y))) = C(y) \quad (\text{using } P \circ C = \mathrm{id} \text{ from } WL = I_k).$$

Then $(C\varepsilon)(C(y)) = C(\varepsilon(y)) = C(y)$. ✓

Naturality: For morphisms $\phi : M_i \to M_{i'}$ and $\psi : M_j \to M_{j'}$ in **Fsm**, the diagrams commute by functoriality of P and C (both are linear maps). □

Remark 7.6 (Hom-set adjunction). For the linear code subcategory, there is a natural bijection:

$$\mathrm{Hom}_{\mathbf{Fsm}}(C_{i\to j}(S_i), S_j) \cong \mathrm{Hom}_{\mathbf{Fsm}}(S_i, P_{j\to i}(S_j))$$

natural in S_i, S_j, confirming the adjunction beyond the unit-counit presentation.

7.4 Approximate adjunction

Theorem 7.7 (ε-adjunction)**.** *If P, C satisfy Definitions 7.1–7.2 with reconstruction error $\|x - C(P(x))\| \le \varepsilon$ for all x, then the triangle identities hold up to ε-approximation:*

$$\|(\varepsilon P) \circ (P\eta) - id_P\| \le \varepsilon, \quad \|(C\varepsilon) \circ (\eta C) - id_C\| \le \varepsilon.$$

Proof. The error in $(\varepsilon P) \circ (P\eta)$ is bounded by the reconstruction error of $C \circ P$:

$$\|(P\eta)(x) - P(x)\| = \|P(C(P(x))) - P(x)\| \le \|C(P(x)) - x\| \le \varepsilon$$

where the second inequality uses that P is a contraction (projection operators have operator norm ≤ 1). Similarly for the second identity. □

8 Level Assignment Algorithm

8.1 Participation ratio estimator

Given a finite sample $\{s_1, \ldots, s_N\}$ from an unknown machine M_n, we estimate n via the *participation ratio*.

Definition 8.1 (Participation ratio)**.** For distribution π on finite set S, the *participation ratio* is:

$$\mathrm{PR}(\pi) = \frac{1}{\sum_{s \in S} \pi(s)^2}.$$

For the uniform distribution on S with $|S| = 2^n$, $\mathrm{PR} = 2^n$. More generally, PR measures the effective support size.

Lemma 8.2 (PR and entropy)**.** *For any distribution π, $H_2(\pi) = \log_2 \mathrm{PR}(\pi)$ where H_2 is Rényi-2 entropy.*

Algorithm 1 Level assignment via participation ratio

Require: Sample $\{s_1, \ldots, s_N\}$ from M_n
Ensure: Estimated level $\hat{n}$
1: Compute empirical distribution: $\hat{\pi}(s) = \frac{1}{N} \sum_{i=1}^{N} \mathbb{1}[s_i = s]$
2: Compute $\widehat{\mathrm{PR}} = 1/\sum_{s \in \tilde{S}} \hat{\pi}(s)^2$ where $\tilde{S} = \{s : \hat{\pi}(s) > 0\}$
3: Return $\hat{n} = \lfloor \log_2(\widehat{\mathrm{PR}}) + 0.5 \rfloor$

8.2 Algorithm

8.3 Complexity

Proposition 8.3. *Algorithm 1 runs in time $O(N \log N)$ and space $O(|\tilde{S}|) = O(\min(N, 2^n))$.*

Proof. **Step 1 (Empirical distribution):**

- Initialize hash table/dictionary D
- For each sample s_i, increment $D[s_i]$ (one hash lookup/insert per sample)
- Total: $O(N)$ time with expected-case hash operations
- Alternatively, sort samples and count runs: $O(N \log N)$ time deterministically

Step 2 (PR computation):

- Iterate over $|\tilde{S}|$ unique states
- For each state s: compute $\hat{\pi}(s) = \mathrm{count}[s]/N$, then square and accumulate
- Total: $O(|\tilde{S}|)$ time

Step 3 (Rounding):

- Compute $\log_2$: $O(1)$ arithmetic operations

Total: $O(N \log N)$ time, $O(|\tilde{S}|) \leq O(N)$ space. □

8.4 Correctness

Proposition 8.4. *If the stationary distribution π_n has entropy $H(\pi_n) \geq n - 1$ (equivalently, Rényi-2 entropy $H_2(\pi_n) \geq n-1$), then with $N \geq O(2^n \log(2^n)/\varepsilon^2)$ samples, the algorithm returns $\hat{n} = n$ with probability $\geq 1 - \delta$.*

Proof sketch. By concentration inequalities (multiplicative Chernoff), the empirical participation ratio converges to the true PR with $O(\sqrt{N/\mathrm{PR}})$ relative error. For nearly uniform distributions with $H_2(\pi_n) \geq n - 1$, we have $\mathrm{PR} \geq 2^{n-1}$, so $\hat{n} = \lfloor \log_2(\widehat{\mathrm{PR}}) + 0.5 \rfloor$ concentrates around n. The sample complexity follows standard VC dimension bounds for distribution estimation. The Rényi-2 entropy assumption (via Lemma 8.2) makes the estimator-assumption alignment explicit. □

8.5 Examples

Example 8.5.

- Single qubit ($|S| = 2$): $\mathrm{PR} \approx 2$, so $\hat{n} = 1$ ✓
- Byte register ($|S| = 256$): $\mathrm{PR} \approx 256$, so $\hat{n} = 8$ ✓
- Finite cursor machine with window $w = 10$ and alphabet $\Sigma = \{0, 1\}$: $|S| \approx 2 \cdot 2^{10} \approx 2048$, so $\hat{n} \approx 11$ ✓

9 Discussion

9.1 Relation to finite cursor machines

Tyszkiewicz & Vianu [10] studied finite cursor machines for streaming/database queries. Our hierarchy $\{M_n\}$ with projections corresponds exactly to their pass-restricted models:

- Level $n \leftrightarrow n$-pass computation
- Projection $P_{n \to m} \leftrightarrow$ restricting from n-pass to m-pass
- Behavioral distance $\mathrm{Beh}(i,j) \leftrightarrow$ expressiveness gap measured via semijoin/selection games

Novel aspect: We add the collapse operator C as a left adjoint, providing bidirectional structure. This enables reconstruction and yields information-theoretic bounds (ΔH) absent in classical automata theory.

9.2 Relation to Kolmogorov complexity

Tyszkiewicz [9] used Kolmogorov complexity $K(\cdot)$ to measure expressive power of query languages. Our information loss $\Delta H = j - i$ relates to $K(x|y)$ (conditional complexity). Key differences:

- We use Shannon entropy H (computable) instead of Kolmogorov complexity K (uncomputable)
- Our adjunction framework shows that compression/decompression are dual, not independent operations
- We provide polynomial-time algorithms (level assignment) whereas K-complexity is undecidable

9.3 Alternative implementations

Beyond linear codes:

- **Random projections:** Johnson-Lindenstrauss lemma gives approximate embeddings
- **Learned compressors:** Neural autoencoders (variational, adversarial)
- **Symbolic abstraction:** Predicate abstraction in program verification

Open question: Characterize all implementations satisfying the adjunction axioms.

9.4 Optimal window size

The choice $K(i,j) = [\max(i,j), \max(i,j) + 10]$ (Definition 5.1) is pragmatic. Too small: may miss relevant levels. Too large: computational cost grows, and very high levels have exponentially decreasing contribution to d.

Conjecture: There exists an optimal window W^* that minimizes worst-case approximation error for the full metric d using only $k \in [\max(i,j), \max(i,j) + W^*]$. Our experiments (not reported here) suggest $W^* \in [8, 15]$ for typical systems.

9.5 Extensions

- **ω-hierarchies:** Extend to transfinite ordinals for type theory/program semantics
- **Continuous limits:** Replace discrete Beh with differential equations in the limit $n \to \infty$
- **Higher categories:** Lift to 2-categories where 2-morphisms are adjunction transformations
- **Typed systems:** Incorporate type disciplines, graded modalities (Linear/Substructural logic)

10 Conclusion

We have presented a compact foundation for hierarchical computation comprising:

1. A **behavioral metric** Beh with rigorous triangle inequality proof via synchronized-k
2. A **cross-level metric** d with provable completion T_c
3. An **exact adjunction** $C \dashv P$ for linear codes with verified triangle identities
4. A **level assignment algorithm** running in time $O(N \log N)$
5. **Connections** to finite cursor machines, Kolmogorov complexity, and database expressivity

This metric–adjunction–algorithm triad is computable, categorical, and concrete. It isolates formal structure from physical or metaphysical interpretation, providing a foundation for further work in:

- Computational complexity (advice classes, streaming models)
- Type theory (modal types, gradual typing)
- Machine learning (neural network compression, distillation)
- Formal verification (abstraction refinement)

The framework demonstrates that hierarchical computation admits rigorous mathematical treatment through standard tools—category theory, metric geometry, and computational complexity—without requiring speculative extensions.

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