# Lecture 1: Basic Inequalities

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#### 1 Measure Concentraion

• Remark The topic of measure concentration is the study of random fluctuations of functions of independent random variables. Concentration inequalities quantify such statements, typically by bounding the probability that such a function differs from its expected value (or from its median) by more than a certain amount. That is, for small  $\epsilon, \delta > 0$ 

$$\mathbb{P}\left\{ \left| Z - \mathbb{E}\left[ Z \right] \right| > \epsilon \right\} \le \delta$$

where  $Z = f(X_1, ..., X_n)$  is a random variable that smoothly depends on a set of independent random variables  $X_1, ..., X_n$ .

The main principle, as summarized by Talagrand (1995), is that "a random variable that smoothly depends on the influence of many independent random variables satisfies Chernoff type bounds."

• Remark The concentration-of-measure phenomenon has spread out to an impressively wide range of illustrations and applications, and became a central tool and viewpoint in the quantitative analysis of a number of asymptotic properties in numerous topics of interest including geometric analysis, probability theory, statistical mechanics, mathematical statistics and learning theory, random matrix theory or quantum information theory, stochastic dynamics, randomized algorithms, complexity, and so on. [Boucheron et al., 2013]

#### 2 Basic Inequality

#### 2.1 Basic Quantities associated with Random Variables

- Assume a probability space  $(\Omega, \mathscr{F}, \mathbb{P})$  and a random variable  $X : \Omega \to \mathbb{R}$  is a real-valued measurable function on  $\Omega$ .
- $\bullet$  For a random variable X, the **expectation** and **variance** are denoted as

$$\mathbb{E}[X] = \int X d\mathbb{P}$$

$$Var(X) = \mathbb{E}\left[ (X - \mathbb{E}[X])^2 \right]$$

• The moment generating function of X and its logarithm are denoted as

$$\begin{split} M_X(\lambda) &:= \mathbb{E}\left[e^{\lambda X}\right] \\ \psi_X(\lambda) &:= \log \mathbb{E}\left[e^{\lambda X}\right] \end{split}$$

- For p > 0, the p-th moment of X is defined as  $\mathbb{E}[X^p]$ , and the p-th absolute moment is  $\mathbb{E}[|X|^p]$ .
- The  $L^p$  norm of X is

$$\|X\|_{L^p}:=\mathbb{E}\left[|X|^p\right]^{1/p}$$

where  $1 \leq p < \infty$ . Note that the  $L^p$  space is a Banach space, which is defined as

$$L^{p}(\Omega, \mathbb{P}) := \{X : ||X||_{L^{p}} < \infty\}.$$

• The essential supremum of |X| is the  $L^{\infty}$  norm of X

$$||X||_{L^{\infty}} := \operatorname{ess sup} |X|$$

Similarly,  $L^{\infty}$  is a Banach space as well

$$L^{\infty}(\Omega, \mathbb{P}) := \{X : ||X||_{L^{\infty}} < \infty\}.$$

• For  $p=2, L^2$  space is a *Hilbert space* with inner product between random variables  $X,Y\in L^2(\Omega,\mathbb{P})$ 

$$\langle X , Y \rangle_{L^2} := \mathbb{E} [XY] = \int XY d\mathbb{P}$$

The  $standard\ deviation$  is

$$\sigma(X) = (Var(X))^{1/2} = ||X - \mathbb{E}[X]||_{L^2}.$$

The *covariance* is defined as

$$\begin{split} cov(X,Y) &:= \langle X - \mathbb{E}\left[X\right]\,,\, Y - \mathbb{E}\left[Y\right] \rangle \\ &= \mathbb{E}\left[\left(X - \mathbb{E}\left[X\right]\right)\left(Y - \mathbb{E}\left[Y\right]\right)\right] \end{split}$$

When we consider random variables as vectors in the Hilbert space  $L^2$ , the identity above gives a **geometric interpretation** of the notion of covariance. The more the vectors  $X - \mathbb{E}[X]$  and  $Y - \mathbb{E}[Y]$  are aligned with each other, the bigger their inner product and covariance are.

• The *cumulative distribution function (CDF)* is defined as

$$F_X(t) := \mathbb{P}[X < t], \quad t \in \mathbb{R}.$$

The following result is important

Lemma 2.1 (Integral Identity). [Vershynin, 2018] Let X be a non-negative random variable. Then

$$\mathbb{E}[X] = \int_0^\infty \mathbb{P}[X > t] dt. \tag{1}$$

The two sides of this identity are either finite or infinite simultaneously.

#### 2.2 Some Classical Inequalities

Proposition 2.2 (Jensen's inequality) [Vershynin, 2018]
 Let (Ω, F, P) be a probability space. Let f: Ω → R be a P-measurable function and φ: R → R be convex function. Then

$$\varphi\left(\mathbb{E}\left[X\right]\right) := \varphi\left(\int X d\mathbb{P}\right) \le \int \varphi \circ X d\mathbb{P} := \mathbb{E}\left[\varphi\left(X\right)\right]. \tag{2}$$

• Remark As a simple consequence of Jensen's inequality,  $||X||_{L^p}$  is an *increasing function* in p, that is

$$||X||_{L^p} \le ||X||_{L^q} \quad \text{for any } 1 \le p \le q \le \infty \tag{3}$$

This inequality follows since  $\varphi(x) = x^{q/p}$  is a convex function if  $q/p \ge 1$ .

• Proposition 2.3 (Minkowski's inequality) [Vershynin, 2018] For any  $p \in [1, \infty]$ ,  $X, Y \in L^p(\Omega, \mathbb{P})$ ,

$$||X + Y||_{L^p} \le ||X||_{L^p} + ||Y||_{L^p}, \tag{4}$$

which implies that  $\|\cdot\|_{L^p}$  is a norm.

• Proposition 2.4 (Cauchy-Schwarz inequality) [Vershynin, 2018] For any random variables  $X, Y \in L^2(\Omega, \mathbb{P})$ , the following inequality is satisfied:

$$|\langle X, Y \rangle_{L^2}| := |\mathbb{E}[XY]| \le ||X||_{L^2} ||Y||_{L^2}.$$
 (5)

This inequalities can be extended to *conjugate spaces*  $L^p$  and  $L^q$ 

Proposition 2.5 (Hölder's inequality) [Vershynin, 2018]

For  $p, q \in (1, \infty)$ , 1/p + 1/q = 1, then the random variables  $X \in L^p(\Omega, \mathbb{P})$ ,  $Y \in L^q(\Omega, \mathbb{P})$  satisfy

$$|\langle X, Y \rangle_{L^2}| := |\mathbb{E}[XY]| \le ||X||_{L^p} ||Y||_{L^q}.$$
 (6)

• A classical result is Markov inequality:

**Proposition 2.6** (Markov's Inequality). [Vershynin, 2018] For any non-negative random variable X and t > 0, we have

$$\mathbb{P}\left\{X \ge t\right\} \le \frac{\mathbb{E}\left[X\right]}{t} \tag{7}$$

**Proof:** Fix t > 0. We can represent any real number x via the identity

$$x = x\mathbb{1}\left\{x \geq t\right\} + x\mathbb{1}\left\{x < t\right\}$$

Substitute the random variable X for x and take expectation of both sides. This gives

$$\begin{split} \mathbb{E}\left[X\right] &= \mathbb{E}\left[X\mathbbm{1}\left\{X \geq t\right\}\right] + \mathbb{E}\left[X\mathbbm{1}\left\{X < t\right\}\right] \\ &\geq \mathbb{E}\left[t\,\,\mathbbm{1}\left\{X \geq t\right\}\right] + 0 \\ &= t\,\mathbb{P}\left\{X \geq t\right\} \end{split}$$

Dividing both sides by t, we complete the proof.

• A well-known consequence of *Markov's inequality* is the following *Chebyshev's inequality*. It offers a better, quadratic dependence on t, and instead of the plain tails, it quantifies the concentration of X about its mean.

Proposition 2.7 (Chebyshev's Inequality). [Vershynin, 2018]

Let X be a random variable with mean  $\mu$  and variance  $\sigma^2$ . Then, for any t>0, we have

$$\mathbb{P}\left\{|X - \mu| \ge t\right\} \le \frac{\sigma^2}{t^2}.\tag{8}$$

• Remark If  $\phi$  denotes a nondecreasing and nonnegative function defined on a (possibly infinite) interval  $I \subset \mathbb{R}$ , and if X denotes a random variable taking values in I, then Markov's inequality implies that for every  $t \in I$  with  $\phi(t) > 0$ ,

$$\mathbb{P}\left\{X \ge t\right\} \le \mathbb{P}\left\{\phi(X) \ge \phi(t)\right\} \le \frac{\mathbb{E}\left[\phi(X)\right]}{\phi(t)} \tag{9}$$

#### 2.3 Limit Theorems

• Theorem 2.8 (Central Limit Theorem, Linderberg-Levy) [Vershynin, 2018] Let  $X_1, \ldots, X_n$  be independent identically distributed random variables with mean  $\mathbb{E}[X_i] = 0$  and variance  $Var(X_i) = 1$ . Then

$$\frac{1}{\sqrt{n}} \sum_{i=1}^{n} X_i \stackrel{d}{\to} N(0,1)$$

$$i.e. \lim_{n \to \infty} \sup_{t \in \mathbb{R}} \left| \mathbb{P} \left\{ \frac{1}{\sqrt{n}} \sum_{i=1}^{n} X_i \le t \right\} - \Phi(t) \right| = 0$$

$$(10)$$

where  $\Phi(t) = \int_{-\infty}^{t} \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi}} e^{-u^2/2} du = \mathbb{P}\left\{g \leq t\right\}$  for some Gaussian variable g.

• Theorem 2.9 (Central Limit Theorem, Nonasymptotic, Berry-Esseen) [Vershynin, 2018]

Let  $X_1, ..., X_n$  be independent identically distributed random variables with mean  $\mathbb{E}[X_i] = 0$ , variance  $Var(X_i) = \sigma^2$  and  $\rho := \mathbb{E}[|X_i|^3] < \infty$ . Then with some constant C > 0,

$$\sup_{t \in \mathbb{R}} \left| \mathbb{P} \left\{ \frac{1}{\sigma \sqrt{n}} \sum_{i=1}^{n} X_i \le t \right\} - \Phi(t) \right| \le \frac{C}{\sigma^3 \sqrt{n}} \rho \tag{11}$$

where  $\Phi(t) = \int_{-\infty}^{t} \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi}} e^{-u^2/2} du = \mathbb{P} \{g \leq t\}$  for some Gaussian variable g.

• Remark The Berry-Esseen version of central limit theorem is **non-asymptotic** and it has a bound

$$\mathbb{P}\left\{\frac{1}{\sqrt{n}}\sum_{i=1}^{n}X_{i} \leq t\right\} \leq \mathbb{P}\left\{g \leq t\right\} + \frac{C}{\sqrt{n}}\rho = \int_{-\infty}^{t} \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi}}e^{-u^{2}/2}du + \frac{C}{\sqrt{n}}\rho$$

This bound is **sharp**, i.e. the equality is attained when  $X_i \sim \text{Bernoulli}(1/2)$ .

• Theorem 2.10 (Poisson Limit Theorem). [Vershynin, 2018] Let  $X_{N,i}$ ,  $1 \le i \le N$ , be independent random variables  $X_{N,i} \sim Ber(p_{N,i})$ , and let  $S_N = \sum_{i=1}^N X_{N,i}$ . Assume that, as  $N \to \infty$ 

$$\max_{i \le N} p_{N,i} \to 0 \quad and \quad \mathbb{E}[S_N] = \sum_{i=1}^N p_{N,i} \to \lambda < \infty,$$

Then, as  $N \to \infty$ ,

$$S_N = \sum_{i=1}^N X_{N,i} \stackrel{d}{\to} Pois(\lambda)$$

#### 3 Sum of Independent Random Variables

• The simplest and most thoroughly studied example is the sum of independent real-valued random variables. The key to the study of this case is summarized by the trivial but fundamental additive formulas

$$\operatorname{Var}\left(\sum_{i=1}^{n} X_{i}\right) = \sum_{i=1}^{n} \operatorname{Var}\left(X_{i}\right)$$

and

$$\psi_{\sum_{i=1}^{n} X_i}(\lambda) = \sum_{i=1}^{n} \psi_{X_i}(\lambda)$$

where  $\psi_X(\lambda) := \log \mathbb{E}\left[e^{\lambda X}\right]$  is the logarithm of moment generating function of X.

• **Remark** The consequence of Chebyshevs inequality on the sum of *n* independent random variables is

$$\mathbb{P}\left\{\frac{1}{n}\left|\sum_{i=1}^{n}\left(X_{i} - \mathbb{E}\left[X_{i}\right]\right)\right| \geq t\right\} \leq \frac{\sigma^{2}}{n t^{2}}$$

where  $\sigma^2 := n^{-1} \sum_{i=1}^n \text{Var}(X_i)$ .

• Remark Choose  $\phi(x) = e^{\lambda x}$ , we can apply the Markov's inequality to obtain

$$\mathbb{P}\left\{X \ge t\right\} \le \frac{\mathbb{E}\left[e^{\lambda X}\right]}{e^{\lambda t}} := \frac{M_X(\lambda)}{e^{\lambda t}}.\tag{12}$$

If  $Z := X_1 + \ldots + X_n$  as the sum of n independent random variables, then

$$\mathbb{P}\left\{Z - \mathbb{E}\left[Z\right] \ge t\right\} \le \frac{\mathbb{E}\left[e^{\lambda(Z - \mathbb{E}[Z])}\right]}{e^{\lambda t}} = e^{-\lambda t} \prod_{i=1}^{n} M_{(X_i - \mathbb{E}[X_i])}(\lambda)$$

Note that by union bound

$$\mathbb{P}\left\{\left|Z-\mathbb{E}\left[Z\right]\right| \geq t\right\} \leq \mathbb{P}\left\{Z-\mathbb{E}\left[Z\right] \geq t\right\} + \mathbb{P}\left\{\mathbb{E}\left[Z\right] - Z \geq t\right\}$$

• Exercise 3.1 Prove the following inequalities appearing in the text [Boucheron et al., 2013]:

$$-\log(1-u) - u \le \frac{u^2}{2(1-u)}, \quad \text{for } u \in (0,1), \tag{13}$$

$$h(u) = (1+u)\log(1+u) - u \le \frac{u^2}{2(1+u/3)}, \quad \text{for } u > 0,$$
(14)

$$h_1(u) = 1 + u - \sqrt{1 + 2u} \ge \frac{u^2}{2(1+u)}, \quad \text{for } u > 0.$$
 (15)

#### 3.1 The Cramér-Chernoff Method

• Remark In this section we describe and formalize the Cramér-Chernoff bounding method. This method determines the best possible bound for a **tail probability** that one can possibly obtain using Markov's inequality with an exponential function  $\phi(t) = e^{\lambda t}$ .

Recall that for a real-valued random variable X, any  $\lambda \geq 0$ , the following inequality holds

$$\mathbb{P}\left\{X \geq t\right\} \leq e^{-\lambda t} \mathbb{E}\left[e^{\lambda X}\right] = \exp\left(-\lambda t + \psi_X(\lambda)\right)$$

where  $\psi_X(\lambda) := \log \mathbb{E}\left[e^{\lambda X}\right]$ . One can choose optimal  $\lambda^*$  that **minimizes** the upper bound above. Since  $\psi_X(\lambda)$  is a **convex function**, we can define its **Legendre transform** 

$$\psi_X^*(t) := \sup_{\lambda \in \mathbb{R}} \left\{ \lambda t - \psi_X(\lambda) \right\}.$$

The expression of the right-hand side is known as the <u>Fenchel-Legendre dual function</u> (or the **convex conjugate**) of  $\psi_X$ . The Legendre transform of log-moment generating function is also its convex conjugate.

• Proposition 3.2 (Chernoff's inequality) [Boucheron et al., 2013] Let X be a real-valued random variable. For  $\lambda \geq 0$ ,  $\psi_X(\lambda)$  is the the logarithm of moment generating function of X and  $\psi_X^*(t)$  is its Legendre (Cramér) transform. Then

$$\mathbb{P}\left\{X \ge t\right\} \le \exp\left(-\psi_X^*(t)\right). \tag{16}$$

• Remark The *Legendre transform* is also called *the Cramér transform* [Boucheron et al., 2013].

Since  $\psi_X(0) = 0$ , its Legendre transform  $\psi_X^*(t)$  is nonnegative.

• Definition (The Rate Function)

<u>The rate function</u> is defined as the Legendre transformation of the logarithm of the  $moment\ generating\ function$  of a random variable. That is,

$$\psi_X^*(t) := \sup_{\lambda \in \mathbb{R}} \left\{ \lambda t - \psi_X(\lambda) \right\}, \tag{17}$$

where  $\psi_X(\lambda) := \log \mathbb{E}\left[e^{\lambda X}\right]$ . Thus, by *Chernoff's inequality*, we can bound the tail probabilities of random variables via its rate function.

• Remark The optimal  $\lambda^* := \lambda_t$  that attains the maximum on the right hand side for

$$\psi_X^*(t) = \sup_{\lambda \in \mathbb{R}} \{ \lambda t - \psi_X(\lambda) \}$$

can be found by differentiating  $\lambda t - \psi_X(\lambda)$  with respect to  $\lambda$ . That is,

$$\psi_X^*(t) = \lambda_t t - \psi_X(\lambda_t)$$

where  $\lambda_t$  is such that  $\psi_X'(\lambda_t) = t$ . The strict convexity of  $\psi_X$  implies that  $\psi_X'$  has an *increasing inverse*  $(\psi_X')^{-1}$  on the interval  $\psi_X(I) := (0, B)$  and therefore, for any  $t \in (0, B)$ ,

$$\lambda_t = \left(\psi_X'\right)^{-1}(t).$$

#### • Remark (Sums of independent random variables)

The reason why Chernoff's inequality became popular is that it is very simple to use when applied to a sum of independent random variables. As an illustration, assume that  $Z := X_1 + \ldots + X_n$  where  $X_1, \ldots, X_n$  are *independent* and *identically distributed* real-valued random variables. Denote the logarithm of the moment-generating function of the  $X_i$  by  $\psi_X(\lambda) = \log \mathbb{E}\left[e^{\lambda X_i}\right]$ , and the corresponding Legendre transform by  $\psi_X^*(t)$ . Then, by independence, for all  $\lambda$  for which  $\psi_X(\lambda) < \infty$ ,

$$\psi_Z(\lambda) = \log \mathbb{E}\left[e^{\lambda \sum_{i=1}^n X_i}\right] = \log \prod_{i=1}^n \mathbb{E}\left[e^{\lambda X_i}\right] = n \,\psi_X(\lambda)$$

and consequently,

$$\psi_Z^*(t) = n \, \psi_X^* \left(\frac{t}{n}\right).$$

Thus the Chernoff's inequality states that

$$\mathbb{P}\left\{Z \ge t\right\} \le \exp\left(-\psi_Z^*(t)\right) = \exp\left(-n\,\psi_X^*\left(\frac{t}{n}\right)\right).$$

#### $\bullet$ Example (Normal Distribution)

Let X be a centered normal random variable with variance  $\sigma^2$ . Then

$$\psi_X(\lambda) = \frac{\lambda^2 \sigma^2}{2}, \quad \lambda_t = \frac{t}{\sigma^2}$$

and, therefore for every t > 0,

$$\psi_X^*(t) = \frac{t^2}{2\sigma^2}.$$

Hence, Chernoff's inequality implies, for all t > 0,

$$\mathbb{P}\left\{X \ge t\right\} \le \exp\left(-\frac{t^2}{2\sigma^2}\right).$$

Chernoff's inequality appears to be quite sharp in this case. In fact, one can show that it cannot be improved uniformly by more than a factor of 1/2.

#### • Example (Poisson Distribution)

Let X be a **Poisson random variable** with parameter  $\nu$ , that is,  $\mathbb{P}\{X=k\} = \frac{1}{k!}e^{\nu}\nu^k$  for all  $k=0,1,2,\ldots$  Let  $Z=X-\nu$  be the corresponding centered variable. Then by direct calculation,

$$\psi_Z(\lambda) = \nu \left( e^{\lambda} - \lambda - 1 \right), \quad \lambda_t = \log \left( 1 + \frac{t}{\nu} \right)$$

Therefore the Legendre transform equals, for every t > 0,

$$\psi_Z^*(t) = \nu h\left(\frac{t}{\nu}\right).$$

where the function h is defined, for all  $x \ge -1$ , by  $h(x) = (1+x)\log(1+x) - x$ . Similarly, for every  $t \le \nu$ ,

$$\psi_{-Z}^*(t) = \nu h \left(-\frac{t}{\nu}\right).$$

#### • Example (Bernoulli Distribution)

Let X be a **Bernoulli random variable** with probability of success p, that is,  $\mathbb{P}\{X = 1\} = 1 - \mathbb{P}\{X = 0\} = p$ . Let Z = X - p be the corresponding centered variable. If 0 < t < 1 - p, we have

$$\psi_Z(\lambda) = \log\left(pe^{\lambda} + 1 - p\right) - p\lambda, \quad \lambda_t = \log\frac{(1-p)(p+t)}{p(1-p-t)}$$

and therefore, for every  $t \in (0, 1 - p)$ ,

$$\psi_Z^*(t) = (1 - p - t) \log \frac{1 - p - t}{1 - p} + (p + t) \log \frac{p + t}{p}.$$

Equivalently, setting a = t + p for every  $a \in (p, 1)$ ,

$$\psi_Z^*(t) = h_p(a) = (1-a)\log\frac{1-a}{1-p} + a\log\frac{a}{p}.$$

We note here that  $h_p(a)$  is just the **Kullback-Leibler divergence**  $\mathbb{KL}(\mathbb{P}_a \parallel \mathbb{P}_p)$  between a Bernoulli distribution  $\mathbb{P}_a$  of parameter a and a Bernoulli distribution  $\mathbb{P}_p$  of parameter p.

$$\mathbb{P}\left\{X \ge t\right\} \le \exp\left(-\mathbb{KL}\left(\mathbb{P}_{p+t} \parallel \mathbb{P}_{p}\right)\right)$$

#### 3.2 Sub-Gaussian Random Variables

#### • Definition (Sub-Gaussian Random Variable)

A centered random variable X is said to be sub-Gaussian with variance factor  $\nu$  if

$$\psi_X(\lambda) \le \frac{\lambda^2 \nu}{2}, \quad \text{for every } \lambda \in \mathbb{R}.$$
 (18)

We denote the collection of such random variables by  $\mathcal{G}(\nu)$ .

• **Remark** Note that this definition does not require the variance of X to be equal to  $\nu$ , just that it is bounded by  $\nu$ .

The above definition says that a centered random variable X belongs to  $\mathcal{G}(\nu)$  if the moment-generating function of X is **dominated by** the moment-generating function of a **center** normal random variable Y.

- Remark This notion is also convenient because it is naturally stable under convolution in the sense that if  $X_1, \ldots, X_n$  are independent such that for every  $i, X_i \in \mathcal{G}(\nu_i)$ , then  $\sum_{i=1}^n X_i \in \mathcal{G}(\sum_{i=1}^n \nu_i)$ .
- Remark (Characterization)

Next we connect the notion of a sub-Gaussian random variable with some other standard ways of defining sub-Gaussian distributions.

First observe that Chernoff's inequality implies that the tail probabilities of a sub-Gaussian random variable are dominated by the corresponding Gaussian tail probabilities. More precisely, if X belongs to  $\mathcal{G}(\nu)$ , then for every t > 0,

$$\mathbb{P}\left\{X > t\right\} \vee \mathbb{P}\left\{-X > t\right\} \le \exp\left(-\frac{t^2}{2\nu}\right)$$

where  $a \lor b$  denotes the maximum of a and b.

• Proposition 3.3 (Characterization of Sub-Gaussian Random Variables) [Boucheron et al., 2013]

Let X be a random variable with  $\mathbb{E}[X] = 0$ . If for some  $\nu > 0$ 

$$\mathbb{P}\left\{X > t\right\} \vee \mathbb{P}\left\{-X > t\right\} \le \exp\left(-\frac{t^2}{2\nu}\right), \quad \text{for all } t > 0$$
 (19)

then for every integer  $q \geq 1$ ,

$$\mathbb{E}\left[X^{2q}\right] \le 2q!(2\nu)^q \le q!(4\nu)^q. \tag{20}$$

Conversely, if for some positive constant C

$$\mathbb{E}\left[X^{2q}\right] \le q!C^q,$$

then  $X \in \mathcal{G}(4C)$  (and therefore (20) holds with  $\nu = 4C$ ).

• Proposition 3.4 (Sub-Gaussian properties). [Vershynin, 2018]

Let X be a random variable. Then the following properties are **equivalent**; the parameters  $K_i > 0$  appearing in these properties differ from each other by at most an absolute constant factor.

1. The tails of X satisfy

$$\mathbb{P}\{|X| \ge t\} \le 2\exp\left(-t^2/K_1^2\right) \quad \text{for all } t \ge 0.$$

2. The moments of X satisfy

$$||X||_{L^p} = (\mathbb{E}[|X|^p])^{1/p} \le K_2 \sqrt{p}$$
 for all  $p \ge 1$ .

3. The moment-generating function (MGF) of  $X^2$  satisfies

$$\mathbb{E}\left[\exp(\lambda^2 X^2)\right] \le \exp(K_3^2 \lambda^2) \quad \text{for all } \lambda \text{ such that } |\lambda| \le \frac{1}{K_3}$$

4. The MGF of  $X^2$  is **bounded** at some point, namely

$$\mathbb{E}\left[\exp(X^2/K_4^2)\right] \le 2.$$

Moreover, if  $\mathbb{E}[X] = 0$  then properties (1)-(4) are also **equivalent** to the following one.

5. The MGF of X satisfies

$$\mathbb{E}\left[\exp(\lambda X)\right] \le \exp(K_5^2 \, \lambda^2) \quad \text{ for all } \lambda \in \mathbb{R}.$$

 $\bullet \ {\bf Remark} \ ({\it Equivalent Definitions for Sub-gaussian Random \ Variables}). \\$ 

A random variable X that satisfies one of the equivalent properties (1)-(4) in Proposition above is called a *sub-gaussian random variable*.

Note that if  $\mathbb{E}\left[X^{2q}\right] \leq q!C^q$  for every integer q, then setting  $\alpha = 1/(2C)$ 

$$\mathbb{E}\left[\exp(\alpha X^2)\right] = \sum_{q=0}^{\infty} \frac{\alpha^q \mathbb{E}\left[X^{2q}\right]}{q!} \le \sum_{q=0}^{\infty} 2^{-q} = 2$$

Conversely, if

$$\mathbb{E}\left[\exp(\alpha X^2)\right] = \sum_{q=0}^{\infty} \frac{\alpha^q \mathbb{E}\left[X^{2q}\right]}{q!} \le 2$$

then  $\sum_{q=1}^{\infty} \frac{\alpha^q \mathbb{E}[X^{2q}]}{q!} \leq 1$ , which implies that  $\mathbb{E}[X^{2q}] \leq q! \alpha^{-q}$  for every integer q.

• Definition (Sub-Gaussian Norm)

The <u>sub-gaussian norm</u> of X, denoted  $||X||_{\psi_2}$ , is defined to be the **smallest**  $K_4$  that satisfies

$$\mathbb{E}\left[\exp(X^2/K_4^2)\right] \le 2.$$

In other words, we define

$$||X||_{\psi_2} = \inf\{t > 0 : \mathbb{E}\left[\exp(X^2/t^2)\right] \le 2\}.$$
 (21)

ullet Remark (Sub-Gaussian Properties in Sub-Gaussian Norm)

We can restate the properties of sub-gaussian random variables in terms of sub-gaussian norm:

$$\begin{split} \mathbb{P}\left\{|X| \geq t\right\} \leq 2 \exp\left(-ct^2/\left\|X\right\|_{\psi_2}^2\right) &\quad \text{for all } t \geq 0;\\ \|X\|_{L^p} \leq C \left\|X\right\|_{\psi_2} \sqrt{p} &\quad \text{for all } p \geq 1;\\ \mathbb{E}\left[\exp(X^2/\left\|X\right\|_{\psi_2}^2)\right] \leq 2;\\ \text{if } \mathbb{E}\left[X\right] = 0, &\quad \text{then } \mathbb{E}\left[\exp(\lambda X)\right] \leq \exp(C\lambda^2 \left\|X\right\|_{\psi_2}^2) &\quad \text{for all } \lambda \in \mathbb{R}. \end{split}$$

- Example Here are some classical examples of sub-gaussian distributions.
  - 1. (*Gaussian*): As we already noted,  $X \sim N(0,1)$  is a sub-gaussian random variable with  $\|X\|_{\psi_2} \leq C$ , where C is an absolute constant. More generally, if  $X \sim N(0,\sigma^2)$  then X is sub-gaussian with

$$||X||_{\psi_2} \le C\sigma \tag{22}$$

2. (**Bernoulli**): Let X be a random variable with **symmetric Bernoulli distribution**. Since |X| = 1, it follows that X is a sub-gaussian random variable with

$$||X||_{\psi_2} \le \frac{1}{\sqrt{\log 2}} \tag{23}$$

3. (Bounded): More generally, any bounded random variable X is sub-gaussian with

$$||X||_{\psi_2} \le C \, ||X||_{\infty} \tag{24}$$

where  $C = 1/\sqrt{\log 2}$ .

• Example The *Poisson*, *exponential*, *Pareto* and *Cauchy* distributions are *not sub-gaussian*.

#### 3.3 Sub-Exponential Random Variables

#### ullet Definition (Sub-Exponential Random Variables)

A nonnegative random variable X has a sub-exponential distribution if there exists a constant a > 0 such that

$$\mathbb{E}\left[e^{\lambda X}\right] \leq \frac{1}{1 - \lambda/a} \quad \text{for every } \lambda \text{ such that } 0 < \lambda < a$$

#### • Remark (*Heavy Tail Distributions*)

The class of *sub-gaussian distributions* is natural and quite large. Nevertheless, it leaves out some important distributions *whose tails are heavier than gaussian*.

Consider a standard normal random vector  $g = (g_1, \ldots, g_n)$  in  $\mathbb{R}_n$ , whose coordinates  $g_i$  are independent N(0,1) random variables. It is useful in many applications to have a **concentration inequality** for **the Euclidean norm** of g, which is

$$||g||_2 := \left(\sum_{i=1}^n g_i^2\right)^{1/2}.$$

Here we find ourselves in a strange situation. On the one hand,  $||g||_2$  is a sum of independent random variables  $g_i^2$ , so we should expect some concentration to hold. On the other hand, although  $g_i$  are sub-gaussian random variables,  $g_i^2$  are not. Indeed, recalling the behavior of Gaussian tails we have

$$\mathbb{P}\left\{g_i^2 > t\right\} = \mathbb{P}\left\{|g_i| > \sqrt{t}\right\} \sim \exp\left(-(\sqrt{t})^2/2\right) = \exp\left(-t^2/2\right)$$

The tails of  $g_i^2$  are like for the exponential distribution, and are *strictly heavier than* sub-gaussian.

#### • Proposition 3.5 (Sub-Exponential properties). [Vershynin, 2018]

Let X be a random variable. Then the following properties are **equivalent**; the parameters  $K_i > 0$  appearing in these properties differ from each other by at most an absolute constant factor.

1. The tails of X satisfy

$$\mathbb{P}\left\{|X| \ge t\right\} \le 2\exp\left(-t/K_1\right) \quad \text{for all } t \ge 0.$$

2. The moments of X satisfy

$$||X||_{L^p} = (\mathbb{E}[|X|^p])^{1/p} \le K_2 p$$
 for all  $p \ge 1$ .

3. The moment-generating function (MGF) of |X| satisfies

$$\mathbb{E}\left[\exp(\lambda |X|)\right] \leq \exp(K_3 \lambda) \quad \text{for all } \lambda \text{ such that } 0 \leq \lambda \leq \frac{1}{K_3}$$

4. The MGF of |X| is **bounded** at some point, namely

$$\mathbb{E}\left[\exp(|X|/K_4)\right] \leq 2.$$

Moreover, if  $\mathbb{E}[X] = 0$  then properties (1)-(4) are also **equivalent** to the following one.

5. The MGF of X satisfies

$$\mathbb{E}\left[\exp(\lambda X)\right] \le \exp(K_5^2 \lambda^2) \quad \text{for all } \lambda \text{ such that } |\lambda| \le \frac{1}{K_5}.$$

- Remark (*Equivalent Definitions for Sub-gaussian Random Variables*). A random variable X that satisfies one of the equivalent properties (1)-(4) in Proposition above is called a *sub-exponential random variable*.
- Definition (Sub-Exponential Norm)
  The <u>sub-exponential norm</u> of X, denoted  $||X||_{\psi_1}$ , is defined to be the smallest  $K_4$  that satisfies

$$\mathbb{E}\left[\exp(|X|/K_4)\right] \le 2.$$

In other words, we define

$$||X||_{\psi_1} = \inf\{t > 0 : \mathbb{E}\left[\exp(|X|/t)\right] \le 2\}.$$
 (25)

- Remark Sub-gaussian and sub-exponential distributions are closely related.
  - 1. First, any sub-gaussian distribution is clearly sub-exponential.
  - 2. Second, the square of a sub-gaussian random variable is sub-exponential:

Lemma 3.6 (Sub-exponential is Sub-gaussian Squared). [Vershynin, 2018] A random variable X is sub-gaussian if and only if  $X^2$  is sub-exponential. Moreover,

$$||X^2||_{\psi_1} = ||X||_{\psi_2}^2$$

More generally, the product of two sub-gaussian random variables is sub-exponential:

Lemma 3.7 (Product of Sub-Gaussians is Sub-Exponential). [Vershynin, 2018] Let X and Y be sub-gaussian random variables. Then XY is sub-exponential. Moreover,

$$||XY||_{\psi_1} \le ||X||_{\psi_2} \, ||Y||_{\psi_2} \, .$$

• Proposition 3.8 (Characterization of Sub-Exponential Random Variables) [Boucheron et al., 2013]

Let X be a nonnegative random variable. If X is sub-exponential distributed with parameter a > 0 then for every integer  $q \ge 1$ ,

$$\mathbb{E}\left[X^q\right] \le 2^{q+1} \frac{q!}{a^q}.\tag{26}$$

**Conversely**, if there exists a constant a > 0 in order that for every positive integer q,

$$\mathbb{E}\left[X^q\right] \le \frac{q!}{a^q},$$

then X is sub-exponential. More precisely, for any  $0 < \lambda < a$ ,

$$\mathbb{E}\left[e^{\lambda X}\right] \le \frac{1}{1 - \lambda/a}.$$

- Example Here are some classical examples of sub-exponential distributions.
  - 1. (*Exponential*): Recall that X has *exponential distribution* with rate a > 0, denoted  $X \sim Exp(a)$ , if X is a non-negative random variable with tails

$$\mathbb{P}\left\{X \ge t\right\} \le \exp\left(-at\right), \quad \forall t \ge 0$$

Then

$$||X||_{\psi_1} \le \frac{C}{a} \tag{27}$$

#### 3.4 Sub-Gamma Random Variables

• Remark For exponential distribution  $X \sim \exp(a)$  with rate a (inverse of scale parameter), the p.d.f. and moment generating function

$$f_X(x) = ae^{-ax}, \quad x > 0$$
$$M_X(\lambda) = \frac{1}{1 - \lambda/a}, \quad 0 < \lambda < a$$

For Gamma distribution  $X \sim \Gamma(a, 1/b)$  with shape parameter a and scale parameter b, the p.d.f. and the moment generating function

$$f_X(x) = \frac{1}{\Gamma(a) b^a} x^{a-1} e^{-x/b}, \quad x > 0$$
$$M_X(\lambda) = \left(\frac{1}{1 - b\lambda}\right)^a, \quad 0 < \lambda < 1/b$$

Also  $\mathbb{E}[X] = ab$  and  $Var(X) = ab^2$ .

 $\bullet \ \ {\bf Definition} \ \ ({\it Sub-Gamma \ Random \ Variables})$ 

A real-valued centered random variable X is said to be  $\underline{sub\text{-}gamma\ on\ the\ right\ tail}$  with  $variance\ factor\ \nu\ and\ scale\ parameter\ c$  if

$$\psi_X(\lambda) \le \frac{\lambda^2 \nu}{2(1-c\lambda)}$$
 for every  $\lambda$  such that  $0 < \lambda < 1/c$ 

We denote the collection of such random variables by  $\Gamma_{+}(\nu, c)$ .

Similarly, a real-valued centered random variable X is said to be <u>sub-gamma</u> on the <u>left tail</u> with variance factor  $\nu$  and scale parameter c if -X is <u>sub-gamma</u> on the <u>right tail</u> with variance factor  $\nu$  and tail parameter c. We denote the collection of such random variables by  $\Gamma_{-}(\nu,c)$ .

Finally, X is simply said to be <u>sub-gamma</u> with variance factor  $\nu$  and scale parameter c if X is sub-gamma both on the right and left tails with the same variance factor  $\nu$  and scale parameter c. The collection of such random variables is denoted by  $\Gamma(\nu, c)$ .

Observe that  $\Gamma(\nu, 0) = \mathcal{G}(\nu)$ .

• Remark To derive the definition fo sub-gamma distribution, we see that the variance factor  $\nu := ab^2$  and c := b. Also  $\mathbb{E}[X] = ab$ . The logarithmic moment generating function of Gamma distribution  $\Gamma(a, 1/b) = \Gamma(\nu/c^2, 1/c)$  is

$$\psi_{X-\mathbb{E}[X]}(\lambda) = a \log \left(\frac{1}{1-b\lambda}\right) - \lambda ab \leq \frac{\lambda^2 b^2 a}{2(1-b\lambda)} \equiv \frac{\lambda^2 \nu}{2(1-c\lambda)}$$

The last inequality is due to

$$\log\left(\frac{1}{1-u}\right) - u \le \frac{u^2}{2(1-u)}$$

- Remark Note that the sum of n i.i.d. random variables with exponential distribution  $\exp(1/b)$  have the Gamma distribution  $\Gamma(n, 1/b)$ . So **the sub-gamma distributed** random variable follows **the sub-exponential distribution** as well (with shape parameter = 1).
- $\bullet \ \ \mathbf{Remark} \ \ (\textbf{\it Characterization})$

Similarly to the *sub-Gaussian property*, the *sub-gamma property* can be characterized in terms of *tail or moment conditions*. We start by computing *the Fenchel-Legendre dual function* of

$$\psi(\lambda) = \frac{\lambda^2 \nu}{2(1 - c\lambda)}.$$

Setting

$$h_1(u) = 1 + u - \sqrt{1 + 2u}$$
 for  $u > 0$ ,

it follows by elementary calculation that for every t > 0,

$$\psi^*(t) = \sup_{\lambda \in (0, 1/c)} \left\{ t\lambda - \frac{\lambda^2 \nu}{2(1 - c\lambda)} \right\} = \frac{\nu}{c^2} h_1 \left( \frac{c t}{\nu} \right).$$

Since  $h_1$  is an increasing function from  $(0, \infty)$  onto  $(0, \infty)$  with *inverse function* 

$$h^{-1}(u) = u + \sqrt{2u} \text{ for } u > 0,$$

we finally get

$$\psi^{*-1}(u) = \sqrt{2\nu u} + cu.$$

Hence, Chernoff's inequality implies that whenever X is a sub-gamma random variable on the right tail with variance factor  $\nu$  and scale parameter c, for every t > 0, we have

$$\mathbb{P}\left\{X > t\right\} \le \exp\left(\frac{\nu}{c^2} h_1\left(\frac{ct}{\nu}\right)\right),\tag{28}$$

or equivalently, for every t > 0,

$$\mathbb{P}\left\{X > \sqrt{2\nu t} + ct\right\} \le e^{-t}.\tag{29}$$

Therefore, if X belongs to  $\Gamma(\nu, c)$ , then for every t > 0,

$$\mathbb{P}\left\{X > \sqrt{2\nu t} + ct\right\} \vee \mathbb{P}\left\{-X > \sqrt{2\nu t} + ct\right\} \le e^{-t}.$$

#### 3.5 Orlicz Spaces

• **Definition** (*Orlicz Spaces*) [Vershynin, 2018]

A function :  $\psi : [0, \infty) \to [0, \infty)$  is called <u>an Orlicz function</u> if  $\psi$  is **convex**, **increasing**, and satisfies:

$$\psi(0) = 0, \quad \psi(x) \to \infty, \text{ as } x \to \infty.$$

For a given Orlicz function  $\psi$ , the Orlicz norm of a random variable X is defined as

$$||X||_{\psi} := \inf \{t > 0 : \mathbb{E} \left[ \psi \left( |X|/t \right) \right] \le 1 \}.$$

The Orlicz space  $L_{\psi} = L_{\psi}(\Omega, \mathscr{F}, \mathbb{P})$  consists of all random variables X on the probability space  $(\Omega, \mathscr{F}, \mathbb{P})$  with finite Orlicz norm, i.e.

$$L_{\psi} := \left\{ X : \|X\|_{\psi} < \infty \right\}.$$

- Example The Orlicz Spaces generalizes the  $L^p$  space for random variables:
  - 1.  $L^p$  space: Consider the function

$$\psi(x) = x^p$$

which is obviously an Orlicz function for  $p \geq 1$ . The resulting Orlicz space  $L_{\psi}$  is the classical space  $L^{p}$ .

2.  $L_{\psi}$  space: Consider the function

$$\psi_2(x) = e^{x^2} - 1,$$

which is obviously an Orlicz function. The resulting Orlicz norm is exactly the subgaussian norm  $\|\cdot\|_{\psi_2}$  that we defined. The corresponding Orlicz space  $L_{\psi_2}$  consists of all sub-gaussian random variables.

• Remark We can easily locate  $L_{\psi_2}$  in the hierarchy of the classical  $L^p$  spaces:

$$L^{\infty} \subset L_{\psi_2} \subset L^p$$
 for every  $p \in [1, \infty)$ .

Thus the space of sub-gaussian random variables  $L_{\psi_2}$  is smaller than all of  $L^p$  spaces, but it is still larger than the space of bounded random variables  $L^{\infty}$ .

#### 3.6 A Maximal Inequality

- The purpose of this section is to show how information about the Legendre transform of random variables in a finite collection can be used to bound the expected maximum of these random variables.
- Remark (Mean of Maximum of Finite Sub-Gaussian Random Variables) Let  $X_1, \ldots, X_n$  be real-valued random variables where a  $\nu > 0$  exists such that for every  $i = 1, \ldots, n$ , the logarithm of the moment-generating function of  $X_i$  satisfies

$$\psi_{X_i}(\lambda) \le \frac{\lambda^2 \nu}{2}$$
, for all  $\lambda > 0$ .

Then, by Jensen's inequality,

$$\exp\left(\lambda \mathbb{E}\left[\max_{i=1,\dots,n} X_i\right]\right) \leq \mathbb{E}\left[\exp\left(\lambda \max_{i=1,\dots,n} X_i\right)\right]$$

$$= \mathbb{E}\left[\max_{i=1,\dots,n} \exp\left(\lambda X_i\right)\right]$$

$$\leq \sum_{i=1}^n \mathbb{E}\left[\exp\left(\lambda X_i\right)\right]$$

$$\leq n \exp\left(\frac{\lambda^2 \nu}{2}\right)$$

Taking logarithms on both sides, we have

$$\mathbb{E}\left[\max_{i=1,\dots,n} X_i\right] \le \frac{\log n}{\lambda} + \frac{\lambda \nu}{2}$$

The upper bound is minimized for  $\lambda^* = \sqrt{2 \log n/\nu}$ , which yields

$$\mathbb{E}\left[\max_{i=1,\dots,n} X_i\right] \le \sqrt{2\nu \log n} \tag{30}$$

This simple bound is asymptotically sharp if the  $X_i$  are i.i.d. normal random variables

• Lemma 3.9 (Generalized Inverse of Legendre Transform) [Boucheron et al., 2013] Let  $\phi$  be a convex and continuously differentiable function defined on the interval [0,b)where  $0 < b \le \infty$ . Assume that  $\phi(0) = \phi'(0) = 0$  and set, for every  $t \ge 0$ , the Legendre transform

$$\phi^*(t) = \sup_{\lambda \in (0,b)} \left\{ \lambda \, t - \phi(\lambda) \right\}.$$

Then  $\phi^*$  is a nonnegative convex and nondecreasing function on  $[0, \infty)$ . Moreover, for every  $y \ge 0$ , the set  $\{t \ge 0 : \phi^*(t) > y\}$  is non-empty and the generalized inverse of  $\phi^*$ , defined by

$$\phi^{*-1}(y) = \inf\{t \ge 0 : \phi^*(t) > y\},$$
(31)

can also be written as

$$\phi^{*-1}(y) = \inf_{\lambda \in (0,b)} \left[ \frac{y + \phi(\lambda)}{\lambda} \right].$$

• The next result offers a convenient bound for the expected value of the maximum of finitely many exponentially integrable random variables. This type of bound has been used in so-called *chaining arguments* for bounding suprema of Gaussian or empirical processes.

Proposition 3.10 (Mean of Maximum of Finite Random Variables with Convex Bounds on Log-MGF) [Boucheron et al., 2013]

Let  $X_1, ..., X_n$  be real-valued random variables such that for every  $\lambda \in (0, b)$  and i = 1, ..., n, the logarithm of the moment-generating function of  $X_i$  satisfies

$$\psi_{X_i}(\lambda) \le \phi(\lambda) \tag{32}$$

where  $\phi$  is a **convex** and **continuously differentiable** function on [0,b) with  $0 < b \le \infty$  such that  $\phi(0) = \phi'(0) = 0$ . Then

$$\mathbb{E}\left[\max_{i=1,\dots,n} X_i\right] \le \phi^{*-1}(\log n). \tag{33}$$

In particular, if the  $X_i$  are sub-Gaussian with variance factor  $\nu$ , that is,  $\psi_{X_i}(\lambda) \leq \lambda^2 \nu/2$  for every  $\lambda \in (0, \infty)$ , then

$$\mathbb{E}\left[\max_{i=1,\dots,n} X_i\right] \le \sqrt{2\nu \log n}.$$

**Proof:** By Jensen's inequality,

$$\exp\left(\lambda \mathbb{E}\left[\max_{i=1,\dots,n} X_i\right]\right) \leq \mathbb{E}\left[\exp\left(\lambda \max_{i=1,\dots,n} X_i\right)\right] = \mathbb{E}\left[\max_{i=1,\dots,n} \exp\left(\lambda X_i\right)\right]$$

for any  $\lambda \in (0, b)$ . Thus, recalling that  $\psi_{X_i}(\lambda) = \log \mathbb{E} \left[ \exp(\lambda X_i) \right]$ ,

$$\exp\left(\lambda \mathbb{E}\left[\max_{i=1,\dots,n} X_i\right]\right) \leq \sum_{i=1}^n \mathbb{E}\left[\exp\left(\lambda X_i\right)\right] \leq n \exp\left(\phi(\lambda)\right).$$

Therefore, for any  $\lambda \in (0, b)$ ,

$$\lambda \mathbb{E}\left[\max_{i=1,\dots,n} X_i\right] - \phi(\lambda) \le \log n,$$

which means that

$$\mathbb{E}\left[\max_{i=1,\dots,n} X_i\right] \le \inf_{\lambda \in (0,b)} \left\{ \frac{\log n + \phi(\lambda)}{\lambda} \right\}$$

and the results follows from the equivalent definition of generalized inverse of  $\phi$ .

• Corollary 3.11 (Mean of Maximum of Finite Sub-Gamma Random Variables) Let  $X_1, \ldots, X_n$  be real-valued random variables belonging to  $\Gamma_+(\nu, c)$ . Then

$$\mathbb{E}\left[\max_{i=1,\dots,n} X_i\right] \le \sqrt{2\nu \log n} + c \log n. \tag{34}$$

#### 3.7 Hoeffding's Inequality

• Remark (Bounded Variables)
Bounded variables are an important class of sub

Bounded variables are an important class of *sub-Gaussian random variables*. The *sub-Gaussian property* of *bounded random variables* is established by the following lemma:

• Lemma 3.12 (Hoeffding's Lemma) [Boucheron et al., 2013] Let X be a random variable with  $\mathbb{E}[X] = 0$ , taking values in a bounded interval [a, b] and let  $\psi_X(\lambda) := \log \mathbb{E}[e^{\lambda X}]$ . Then

$$\psi_X''(\lambda) \le \frac{(b-a)^2}{4}$$

and  $X \in \mathcal{G}((b-a)^2/4)$ .

**Proof:** Observe first that

$$\left|X - \frac{b+a}{2}\right| \le \frac{b-a}{2}$$

and therefore

$$\operatorname{Var}(X) = \operatorname{Var}\left(X - \frac{(b+a)}{2}\right) \le \frac{(b-a)^2}{4}.$$

Now, let  $\mathbb{P}$  denote the distribution of X and let  $\mathbb{P}_{\lambda}$  be the probability distribution with density

$$x \mapsto e^{-\psi_X(\lambda)} e^{\lambda x}$$

with respect to  $\mathbb{P}$ . Since  $\mathbb{P}_{\lambda}$  is concentrated on [a,b], the variance of a random variable Z with distribution  $\mathbb{P}_{\lambda}$  is bounded by  $(b-a)^2/4$ . Hence, by an elementary computation,

$$\psi_X''(\lambda) = e^{-\psi_X(\lambda)} \mathbb{E}\left[X^2 e^{\lambda X}\right] - e^{-2\psi_X(\lambda)} \left(\mathbb{E}\left[X e^{\lambda X}\right]\right)^2$$
$$= \operatorname{Var}(Z) \le \frac{(b-a)^2}{4}.$$

The sub-Gaussian property follows by noting that  $\psi_X(0) = \psi_X'(0) = 0$ , and by Taylor's theorem that implies that, for some  $\theta \in [0, \lambda]$ ,

$$\psi_X(\lambda) = \psi_X(0) + \lambda \, \psi_X'(0) + \frac{\lambda^2}{2} \psi_X''(\theta) \le \frac{\lambda^2 (b-a)^2}{8}.$$

Proposition 3.13 (Hoeffding's inequality) [Boucheron et al., 2013]
 Let X<sub>1</sub>,..., X<sub>n</sub> be independent random variables such that X<sub>i</sub> takes its values in [a<sub>i</sub>, b<sub>i</sub>] almost surely for all i ≤ n. Let

$$S = \sum_{i=1}^{n} (X_i - \mathbb{E}[X_i]).$$

Then for every t > 0,

$$\mathbb{P}\left\{S \ge t\right\} \le \exp\left(-\frac{2t^2}{\sum_{i=1}^n (b_i - a_i)^2}\right). \tag{35}$$

• Remark (Hoeffding's inequality for Scaled Radmatcher Random Variables)
Let us consider the random variables

$$X_i = \epsilon_i \alpha_i, \quad i = 1, \dots, n$$

where  $\epsilon_1, \ldots, \epsilon_n$  are independent Rademacher random variables (i.e. symmetric Bernoulli random variables with  $\mathbb{P}\{\epsilon_i = 1\} = \mathbb{P}\{\epsilon_i = -1\} = 1/2$ ) and  $\alpha_1, \ldots, \alpha_n$  are real numbers. We get

$$\mathbb{P}\left\{S \ge t\right\} \le \exp\left(-\frac{t^2}{2\sum_{i=1}^n \alpha_i^2}\right).$$

• Remark (Hoeffding's inequality as Concentration version of the Central Limit Theorem) [Vershynin, 2018]

We can view Hoeffding's inequality as a <u>concentration version</u> of the central limit theorem. Indeed, the most we may expect from a concentration inequality is that the tail of  $\sum_i \epsilon_i \alpha_i$  behaves similarly to the tail of the normal distribution.

With the normalization  $\|\alpha\|_2 = 1$ , Hoeffdings inequality provides the tail  $e^{-t^2/2}$ , which is exactly the same as the bound for the standard normal tail. This is good news. We have been able to obtain the same exponentially light tails for sums as for the normal distribution, even though the difference of these two distributions is not exponentially small.

- Remark (Non-asymptotic Results). [Vershynin, 2018]
  It should be stressed that unlike the classical limit theorems of Probability Theory, Hoeffding's inequality is non-asymptotic in that it holds for all fixed N as opposed to N → ∞. The larger N, the stronger inequality becomes. As we will see later, the non-asymptotic nature of concentration inequalities like Hoeffding makes them attractive in application in data sciences, where N often corresponds to sample size.
- Proposition 3.14 (General Hoeffding's inequality) [Vershynin, 2018] Let  $X_1, \ldots, X_n$  be independent sub-gaussian random variables. Let

$$S = \sum_{i=1}^{n} (X_i - \mathbb{E}[X_i]).$$

Then for every t > 0,

$$\mathbb{P}\left\{S \ge t\right\} \le \exp\left(-\frac{ct^2}{\sum_{i=1}^n \|X_i\|_{\psi_2}}\right). \tag{36}$$

Proposition 3.15 (General Hoeffding's inequality, Linear Form) [Vershynin, 2018] Let  $X_1, \ldots, X_n$  be independent, mean zero, sub-gaussian random variables, and  $a = (a_1, \ldots, a_n) \in \mathbb{R}^n$ . Then for every t > 0,

$$\mathbb{P}\left\{\sum_{i=1}^{n} a_i X_i \ge t\right\} \le \exp\left(-\frac{c t^2}{K^2 \|a\|_2^2}\right). \tag{37}$$

where  $K = \max_i ||X_i||_{\psi_2}$ .

• Proposition 3.16 (Khintchine's inequality,  $L^p$  norm,  $p \ge 2$ ). [Vershynin, 2018] Let  $X_1, \ldots, X_n$  be independent sub-gaussian random variables with zero means and unit variances, and let  $a = (a_1, \ldots, a_n) \in \mathbb{R}^n$ . Then for every  $p \in [2, \infty)$ , we have

$$\left(\sum_{i=1}^{n} a_i^2\right)^{1/2} \le \left\|\sum_{i=1}^{n} a_i X_i\right\|_{L^p} \le C K \sqrt{p} \left(\sum_{i=1}^{n} a_i^2\right)^{1/2} \tag{38}$$

where  $K = \max_i ||X_i||_{\psi_2}$  and C is an absolute constant.

Proposition 3.17 (Khintchine's inequality,  $L^1$  norm). [Vershynin, 2018] Let  $X_1, \ldots, X_n$  be independent sub-gaussian random variables with zero means and unit **variances**, and let  $a = (a_1, \ldots, a_n) \in \mathbb{R}^n$ . Then

$$c(K) \left( \sum_{i=1}^{n} a_i^2 \right)^{1/2} \le \left\| \sum_{i=1}^{n} a_i X_i \right\|_{L^1} \le \left( \sum_{i=1}^{n} a_i^2 \right)^{1/2}$$
 (39)

where  $K = \max_{i} ||X_{i}||_{\psi_{2}}$  and c(K) > 0 is a quantity which may depend only on K.

#### 3.8 Bennett's Inequality

• Remark Our starting point is the fact that the logarithmic moment-generating function of an independent sum equals the sum of the logarithmic moment-generating functions of the centered summands, that is,

$$\psi_S(\lambda) = \sum_{i=1}^n \left( \log \mathbb{E} \left[ e^{\lambda X_i} \right] - \lambda \mathbb{E} \left[ X_i \right] \right).$$

Using  $\log u \le u - 1$  for u > 0,

$$\psi_S(\lambda) \le \sum_{i=1}^n \mathbb{E}\left[e^{\lambda X_i} - \lambda X_i - 1\right]. \tag{40}$$

Both Bennett's and Bernstein's inequalities may be derived from this bound, under different integrability conditions for the  $X_i$ .

• Proposition 3.18 (Bennett's Inequality) [Boucheron et al., 2013] Let  $X_1, \ldots, X_n$  be independent random variables with finite variance such that  $X_i \leq b$  for some b > 0 almost surely for all  $i \leq n$ . Let

$$S = \sum_{i=1}^{n} (X_i - \mathbb{E}[X_i])$$

and  $\nu = \sum_{i=1}^n \mathbb{E}\left[X_i^2\right]$ . If we write  $\phi(u) = e^u - u - 1$  for  $u \in \mathbb{R}$ , then, for all  $\lambda > 0$ ,

$$\log \mathbb{E}\left[e^{\lambda S}\right] \le n \log\left(1 + \frac{\nu}{nb^2}\phi(b\lambda)\right) \le \frac{\nu}{b^2}\phi(b\lambda),$$

and for any t > 0,

$$\mathbb{P}\left\{S \ge t\right\} \le \exp\left(-\frac{\nu}{b^2}h\left(\frac{b\,t}{\nu}\right)\right) \tag{41}$$

where  $h(u) = (1+u)\log(1+u) - u$  for u > 0.

- Remark This bound can be analyzed in two different regimes:
  - 1. In the small deviation regime, where  $u := bt/\nu \ll 1$ , we have asymptotically  $h(u) \approx u^2$  and Bennett's inequality gives approximately the Gaussian tail bound  $\approx \exp(-t^2/\nu)$ .
  - 2. In the large deviations regime, say where  $u := bt/\nu \ge 2$ , we have  $h(u) \ge \frac{1}{2}u \log u$ , and Bennett's inequality gives a **Poisson-like tail**  $(\nu/bt)^{t/2b}$ .

#### 3.9 Bernstein's Inequality

• Definition (Bernstein's Condition)

Given a random variable X with mean  $\mu = \mathbb{E}[X]$  we say that <u>Bernstein's condition</u> with parameter  $\nu$ , c holds if the variance  $\operatorname{Var}(X) = \mathbb{E}[X^2] - \mu^2 \leq \nu$ , and

$$\sum_{i=1}^{n} \mathbb{E}\left[ (X - \mu)_{+}^{q} \right] \leq \frac{q!}{2} \nu c^{q-2}, \quad \text{ for all integers } q \geq 2,$$

where  $(x)_{+} = \max\{x, 0\}.$ 

• Proposition 3.19 (Bernstein's Condition ⇒ Sub-Gamma Distribution). [Boucheron et al., 2013]

Let  $X_1, \ldots, X_n$  be independent real-valued random variables. Assume that there exist positive numbers  $\nu$  and c such that  $\sum_{i=1}^n \mathbb{E}\left[X_i^2\right] \leq \nu$  and

$$\sum_{i=1}^{n} \mathbb{E}\left[ (X_i)_+^q \right] \le \frac{q!}{2} \nu c^{q-2}, \quad \text{for all integers } q \ge 3,$$

where  $(x)_{+} = \max\{x, 0\}$ . If  $S = \sum_{i=1}^{n} (X_i - \mathbb{E}[X_i])$ , then for all  $\lambda \in (0, 1/c)$  and t > 0

$$\psi_S(\lambda) \le \frac{\lambda^2 \nu}{2(1 - c\lambda)}$$

and

$$\psi_S^*(t) \ge \frac{\nu}{c^2} h_1\left(\frac{ct}{\nu}\right),$$

where  $h_1(u) = 1 + u - \sqrt{1 + 2u}$  for u > 0. In particular, for all t > 0,

$$\mathbb{P}\left\{S \ge \sqrt{2\nu t} + ct\right\} \le e^{-t}.\tag{42}$$

Remark Note that

$$h_1(u) = 1 + u - \sqrt{1 + 2u} = \frac{1}{2} (\sqrt{1 + 2u} - 1)^2;$$
  
 $h_1^{-1}(s) = \frac{1}{2} (\sqrt{2s} + 1)^2 - 1 = s + \sqrt{2s}$ 

• Corollary 3.20 (Bernstein's Inequality, Sub-Gamma Distribution). [Boucheron et al., 2013]

Let  $X_1, \ldots, X_n$  be independent real-valued random variables satisfying the conditions above and let  $S = \sum_{i=1}^{n} (X_i - \mathbb{E}[X_i])$ . Then for all t > 0,

$$\mathbb{P}\left\{S \ge t\right\} \le \exp\left(-\frac{t^2}{2(\nu + ct)}\right). \tag{43}$$

• **Remark** For bounded random variables  $X_i \leq b$  almost surely for all  $i \leq n$ , then the conditions of above corollary hold with

$$\nu = \sum_{i=1}^{n} \mathbb{E}\left[X_i^2\right], \quad c = b/3.$$

• We are ready to state and prove a concentration inequality for sums of independent subexponential random variables.

Proposition 3.21 (Bernstein's Inequality). [Vershynin, 2018]

Let  $X_1, \ldots, X_n$  be independent, mean zero, sub-exponential random variables. Then, for every  $t \geq 0$ , we have

$$\mathbb{P}\left\{ \left| \sum_{i=1}^{n} X_{i} \right| \ge t \right\} \le 2 \exp\left[ -c \min\left\{ \frac{t^{2}}{\sum_{i=1}^{n} \|X_{i}\|_{\psi_{2}}^{2}}, \frac{t}{\max_{i} \|X_{i}\|_{\psi_{1}}} \right\} \right]$$
(44)

where c > 0 is an absolute constant.

• Proposition 3.22 (Bernstein's Inequality, Linear Combination Form). [Vershynin, 2018]

Let  $X_1, ..., X_n$  be independent, mean zero, sub-exponential random variables, and  $a = (a_1, ..., a_n) \in \mathbb{R}^n$ . Then, for every  $t \ge 0$ , we have

$$\mathbb{P}\left\{\left|\sum_{i=1}^{n} a_i X_i\right| \ge t\right\} \le 2 \exp\left[-c \min\left\{\frac{t^2}{K^2 \|a\|_2^2}, \frac{t}{K \|a\|_\infty}\right\}\right] \tag{45}$$

where c > 0 is an absolute constant and  $K = \max_i ||X_i||_{\psi_i}$ 

• Corollary 3.23 (Bernstein's Inequality, Average Form). [Vershynin, 2018] Let  $X_1, \ldots, X_n$  be independent, mean zero, sub-exponential random variables. Then, for every  $t \geq 0$ , we have

$$\mathbb{P}\left\{ \left| \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^{n} X_i \right| \ge t \right\} \le 2 \exp\left[ -c \min\left\{ \frac{t^2}{K^2}, \frac{t}{K} \right\} n \right] \tag{46}$$

where  $K = \max_i ||X_i||_{\psi_1}$ .

• Remark This bound can be analyzed in two different regimes:

$$\mathbb{P}\left\{ \left| \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^{n} X_i \right| \ge t \right\} \le \left\{ \begin{array}{ll} 2 \exp\left(-ct^2\right) & t \le C\sqrt{n} \\ 2 \exp\left(-t\sqrt{n}\right) & t \ge C\sqrt{n} \end{array} \right.$$

- 1. In the small deviation regime, where  $t \leq C\sqrt{n}$ , we have a sub-gaussian tail bound as if the sum had a normal distribution with constant variance. Note that this domain widens as n increases and the central limit theorem becomes more powerful.
- 2. In the large deviations regime, say where  $t \geq C\sqrt{n}$ , the sum has a heavier, sub-exponential tail bound, which can be due to the contribution of a single term  $X_i$ .
- Proposition 3.24 (Bernstein's Inequality for Bounded Distributions). [Vershynin, 2018]

Let  $X_1, \ldots, X_n$  be **independent**, **mean zero** random variables, such that  $|X_i| \leq b$  all i. Then, for every  $t \geq 0$ , we have

$$\mathbb{P}\left\{ \left| \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^{n} X_i \right| \ge t \right\} \le 2 \exp\left(-\frac{t^2}{2(\nu + bt/3)}\right). \tag{47}$$

Here  $\nu = \sum_{i=1}^{n} \mathbb{E}\left[X_{i}^{2}\right]$  is the variance of the sum.

#### 3.10 The Johnson-Lindenstrauss Lemma

#### • Remark (Overview of The Johnson-Lindenstrauss Lemma)

The celebrated **Johnson-Lindenstrauss lemma** states roughly that, given an arbitrary set of n points in a (high-dimensional) Euclidean space, there exists a **linear embedding** of these points in a d-dimensional Euclidean space such that **all pairwise distances are preserved** within a factor of  $1 \pm \epsilon$  if d is proportional to  $(\log n)/\epsilon^2$ . It is remarkable that this result does not involve the dimension of the space to which the n points belong. In fact, the dimension of this space may even be infinite.

#### • Definition $(\epsilon$ -Isometry)

Consider an arbitrary set  $A \subset \mathbb{R}^D$  or  $A \subset \mathcal{H}$  for separable Hilbert space  $\mathcal{H}$ . Given  $\epsilon \in (0,1)$ , a map  $f: \mathbb{R}^D \to \mathbb{R}^d$  is called an  $\epsilon$ -isometry on A if for every pair  $a, a' \in A$ , we have

$$(1 - \epsilon) \|a - a'\|_{2}^{2} \le \|f(a) - f(a')\|_{2}^{2} \le (1 + \epsilon) \|a - a'\|_{2}^{2}.$$

#### • Remark (Problem Statement)

A natural question is to find the smallest possible value of d for which a linear  $\epsilon$ -isometry exists on A. The Johnson-Lindenstrauss lemma, stated and proved below, ensures that when A is a **finite** set with cardinality n, a linear  $\epsilon$ -isometry exists whenever  $d \geq \kappa \epsilon^{-2} \log(n)$ , where  $\kappa$  is an absolute constant.

#### • Remark (Gaussian Random Projection)

The basic idea is to construct a **random projection**  $W : \mathbb{R}^D \to \mathbb{R}^d$  (i.e. a linear mapping) that is an exact **isometry** "in expectation," that is, for every  $\alpha \in \mathbb{R}^D$ ,

$$\mathbb{E}\left[\left\|W(\alpha)\right\|_{2}^{2}\right] = \mathbb{E}\left[\left\|\alpha\right\|_{2}^{2}\right].$$

In other words, denoting by  $L^{2,d}$  the space of square-integrable  $\mathbb{R}^d$ -valued random vectors, W is an **isometry** from  $\mathbb{R}^D$  into  $L^{2,d}$ .

To construct W, let  $X_{i,j}$ ,  $i=1,\ldots,d,$   $j=1,\ldots,D$  be independent and identically distributed real-valued random variables such that  $\mathbb{E}\left[X_{i,j}\right]=0$  and  $\operatorname{Var}(X_{i,j})=1$ . For every  $\alpha=(\alpha_1,\ldots,\alpha_D)\in\mathbb{R}^D$  and  $i\in\{1,\ldots,d\}$ , define

$$W_i(\alpha) := \sum_{j=1}^{D} \alpha_j X_{i,j}$$

 $W_i(\alpha)/\sqrt{d}$  is the *i*-th component of the random vector  $W(\alpha)$ , that is, W is defined by

$$W(\alpha) := \left(\frac{1}{\sqrt{d}} \sum_{j=1}^{D} \alpha_j X_{i,j}\right)_{i=1}^d$$
  
$$\Rightarrow W(\alpha) := \frac{1}{\sqrt{d}} X \alpha^T.$$

Observe that by independence of the  $X_{i,j}$ , for every  $i = 1, \ldots, d$ ,

$$\mathbb{E}\left[W_i(\alpha)^2\right] = \mathbb{E}\left[\left(\sum_{j=1}^D \alpha_j X_{i,j}\right)^2\right] = \sum_{j=1}^D \alpha_i^2 \mathbb{E}\left[X_{i,j}^2\right] = \mathbb{E}\left[\|\alpha\|_2^2\right].$$

Therefore, for every  $\alpha \in \mathbb{R}^D$ ,

$$\mathbb{E}\left[\|W(\alpha)\|_{2}^{2}\right] = \frac{1}{d} \sum_{i=1}^{d} \mathbb{E}\left[W_{i}(\alpha)^{2}\right] = \mathbb{E}\left[\|\alpha\|_{2}^{2}\right].$$

and indeed, W is an isometry from  $\mathbb{R}^D$  into  $L^{2,d}$ .

• Theorem 3.25 (The Johnson-Lindenstrauss Lemma) [Boucheron et al., 2013] Let A be a finite subset of  $\mathbb{R}^D$  with cardinality n. Assume that for some  $\nu \geq 1$ ,  $X_{i,j} \in \mathcal{G}(\nu)$ and let  $\epsilon, \delta \in (0,1)$ . If

$$d \ge 100 \frac{\nu^2 \log \left(\frac{n}{\sqrt{\delta}}\right)}{\epsilon^2},$$

then with probability at least  $1-\delta$ , W is an  $\epsilon$ -isometry on A. That is, for every pair  $a, a' \in A$ , with probability  $1-\delta$  we have

$$(1 - \epsilon) \|a - a'\|_{2}^{2} \le \left\| \frac{1}{\sqrt{d}} X a^{T} - \frac{1}{\sqrt{d}} X (a')^{T} \right\|_{2}^{2} \le (1 + \epsilon) \|a - a'\|_{2}^{2}.$$

**Proof:** Denote by S the unit sphere of  $\mathbb{R}^D$  and let T be the subset of S defined by

$$T := \left\{ \frac{a - a'}{\|a - a'\|_2} : a, a' \in A, a \neq a' \right\}$$

Then T has cardinality  $N \leq n(n-1)/2$ . We need to show that, under the stated condition for d,

$$\sup_{\alpha \in T} \left| \|W(\alpha)\|^2 - 1 \right| \le \epsilon.$$

First note that for all  $\alpha \in \mathbb{S}$  and  $i \leq d$ , using the fact that the  $X_{i,j}$  are sub-Gaussian,

$$\mathbb{E}\left[\exp\left(\lambda W_{i}(\alpha)\right)\right] = \mathbb{E}\left[\exp\left(\lambda \sum_{j=1}^{D} \alpha_{j} X_{i,j}\right)\right]$$

$$= \prod_{j=1}^{D} \mathbb{E}\left[\exp\left(\lambda \alpha_{j} X_{i,j}\right)\right]$$

$$\leq \mathbb{E}\left[\exp\left(\frac{\nu \lambda^{2} \sum_{j=1}^{D} \alpha_{j}^{2}}{2}\right)\right]$$

$$= \mathbb{E}\left[\exp\left(\frac{\nu \lambda^{2}}{2}\right)\right], \quad (\text{since } \alpha \in \mathbb{S}, \|\alpha\|^{2} = 1)$$

and therefore  $W_i(\alpha) \in \mathcal{G}(\nu)$ . Thus, by moment characterization of sub-Gaussian random variable, for every integer  $q \geq 2$ ,

$$\mathbb{E}\left[W_i(\alpha)^{2q}\right] \le \frac{q!}{2} \times 4(2\nu)^q \le \frac{1}{2}q!(4\nu)^q.$$

Hence, since for each  $\alpha$  the random variables  $W_i(\alpha)$ ,  $i=1,\ldots,d$  are independent, we may use Bernstein's inequality for  $\sum_{i=1}^d W_i(\alpha)^2$  with  $d(4\nu) \to \nu$  and  $d\nu \to c$  to obtain, for every  $\alpha \in T$  and t>0,

$$\mathbb{P}\left\{ \left| \sum_{i=1}^{d} \left( W_i(\alpha)^2 - 1 \right) \right| \ge 4\nu\sqrt{2dt} + d\nu t \right\} \le 2e^{-t}$$

This implies, by the union bound,

$$\mathbb{P}\left\{\sup_{\alpha\in T}\left|\sum_{i=1}^{d}\left(W_{i}(\alpha)^{2}-1\right)\right|\geq 4\nu\left(\sqrt{2dt}+dt\right)\right\}\leq 2Ne^{-t}\leq n^{2}e^{-t}$$

Setting  $t = \log(n^2/\delta) = 2\log(n/\sqrt{\delta})$ ,

$$4\nu \left(\sqrt{2dt} + dt\right) = 8\nu \left(\sqrt{d\log\left(n/\sqrt{\delta}\right)} + d\log\left(n/\sqrt{\delta}\right)\right) \ge 8\nu \sqrt{d\log\left(n/\sqrt{\delta}\right)}$$

we have

$$\mathbb{P}\left\{\sup_{\alpha\in T}\left|\sum_{i=1}^{d}\left(W_{i}(\alpha)^{2}-1\right)\right|\geq 8\nu\sqrt{d\log\left(n/\sqrt{\delta}\right)}\right\}\leq \delta$$

or, equivalently,

$$\mathbb{P}\left\{\sup_{\alpha \in T} \left| \|W(\alpha)\|^2 - 1 \right| \ge \sqrt{\frac{8\nu \log\left(n/\sqrt{\delta}\right)}{d}} + \frac{8\nu \log\left(n/\sqrt{\delta}\right)}{d} \right\} \le \delta$$

Finally, we see that  $d \ge 100 \frac{\nu^2 \log\left(\frac{n}{\sqrt{\delta}}\right)}{\epsilon^2}$  implies that

$$\sqrt{\frac{8\nu\log\left(n/\sqrt{\delta}\right)}{d} + \frac{8\nu\log\left(n/\sqrt{\delta}\right)}{d}} \le \frac{4\epsilon}{5} + \frac{2\epsilon^2}{25\nu} \le \epsilon$$

and therefore, with probability at least  $1 - \delta$ :

$$\sup_{\alpha \in T} \left| \|W(\alpha)\|^2 - 1 \right| \le \epsilon \quad \blacksquare$$

### References

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