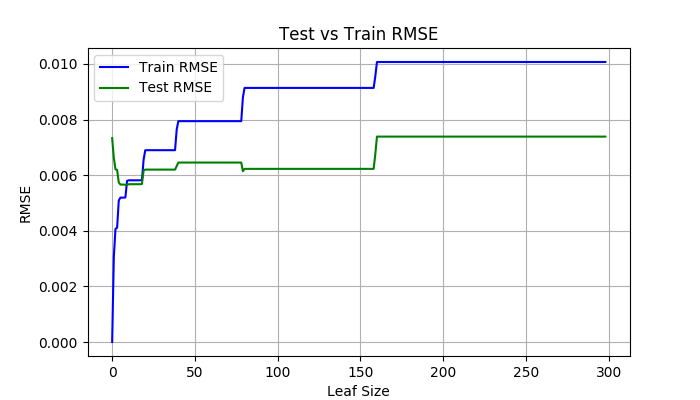
Vincent La (Georgia Tech ID: vla6) Assess Learners Report

Overfitting can occur with respect to size of the leaf. The reason for this is that if you have a small leaf size you are training your data such that the model is more prone to capturing noise in the training data. However, if you have a large leaf size, then you are aggregating more of the outcome variable in a leaf, so you will be capturing less noise. Inherently, there is a bias-variance tradeoff. If you have a large leaf size, then you have less variance but more bias. For example, in the extreme if your leaf size is the size of the entire training set, then you’ll always just predict the average of the training set. However, if you use a leaf size of one, which is the smallest leaf size, you will have low bias but very high variance.

**Table 1: Train vs Test RMSE (60/40 Train/Test Split) Data: Istanbul.csv**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| leaf\_size | test\_corr | test\_rmse | train\_corr | train\_rmse |
| 1 | 0.691174 | 0.007332 | 1 | 0 |
| 2 | 0.73771 | 0.006629 | 0.96582 | 0.003051 |
| 3 | 0.755732 | 0.00621 | 0.938435 | 0.004066 |
| 4 | 0.75707 | 0.00619 | 0.937029 | 0.004111 |
| 5 | 0.76725 | 0.005735 | 0.901767 | 0.005087 |
| 6 | 0.772267 | 0.005662 | 0.897443 | 0.005192 |
| 7 | 0.772267 | 0.005662 | 0.897443 | 0.005192 |
| 8 | 0.772267 | 0.005662 | 0.897443 | 0.005192 |
| 9 | 0.773108 | 0.00565 | 0.897204 | 0.005198 |
| 10 | 0.768863 | 0.005646 | 0.87039 | 0.005795 |
| 11 | 0.765677 | 0.005675 | 0.869437 | 0.005815 |
| 21 | 0.704048 | 0.0062 | 0.810256 | 0.006898 |
| 40 | 0.680159 | 0.006327 | 0.76027 | 0.007646 |
| 41 | 0.657005 | 0.006453 | 0.738011 | 0.007942 |
| 80 | 0.680125 | 0.006139 | 0.664161 | 0.008799 |
| 81 | 0.6651 | 0.006226 | 0.630305 | 0.009138 |
| 159 | 0.6651 | 0.006226 | 0.630305 | 0.009138 |
| 160 | 0.610406 | 0.006753 | 0.583917 | 0.009555 |
| 161 | 0.499099 | 0.007386 | 0.517763 | 0.01007 |
| 299 | 0.499099 | 0.007386 | 0.517763 | 0.01007 |

We can illustrate in the table above. In the table above, we show results (RMSE) as a function of leaf size, given a 60/40 train/test split. As you can see above with a leaf size of 1, the Train RMSE is equal to 0 and the correlation between the predicted Y and the actual Y values is equal to 1. This makes sense since if leaf size is 1 you will completely and perfectly fit your training data, at risk of overfitting. In this case, given the table above, we can see that overfitting occurs for leaf sizes 1 – 5. The test RMSE is minimized with leaf size of 6. After that, the test RMSE increases. This is because at this point there is an inflection in the bias-variance tradeoff. That is, at very low values of leaf size, the variance is very high, but if we increase the leaf size too much then the bias term becomes very high. We can also see this in the graph below.



Yes, bagging can reduce overfitting with respect to leaf\_size. This is because bagging takes the average of many different learners that are trained over datasets that are sampled with replacement of the original data set. By taking the average of many different learners, this helps reduce the variance associated with training with lower leaf\_size. We can do this by choosing a few different bag sizes: 15 and 200. We then create the same plots of train and test RMSE but with those different bag sizes.

As you can see in the figure below, we see that with no bagging, the test RMSE remains relatively high. With a few number of bags (bags = 15), we see that the test RMSE goes down a bit. We see that with a large number of bags (bags = 200), the test RMSE is actually substantially lower than without bagging and when the number of bags = 15).



* Quantitatively compare "classic" decision trees (DTLearner) versus random trees (RTLearner). In which ways is one method better than the other?

Again, this comes down to a bias-variance tradeoff. With random trees, the learner behaves exactly like the decision tree learner except that instead of picking the feature that has the highest correlation with the Y variable, it picks a feature randomly. This means that bias will be higher but variance will be much lower, so RT Learner will more likely not overfit. This also is the basis for the Random Forest model. In fact, when RTLearner is used in conjunction with bagging, this is actually essentially the Random Forest model.

When only fitting one tree, for example when only using 1 bag, it’s plausible that a Decision Tree Learner performs better than a Random Tree Learner. This is because the bias associated with a Random Tree Learner can be higher since it’s choosing a random feature to split whereas Decision Tree Learner is choosing a feature with highest correlation. However, Random Tree Learner is probably better when used with bagging. This is because while bagging can reduce variance with the Decision Tree Learner as well, since in Decision Tree Learner you are always picking the feature with the highest variance, each tree will be very highly correlated with each other. Thus, averaging the result of lots of correlated trees actually may not reduce the variance by that much. On the other hand, with Random Tree Learner because you are choosing a different feature each time randomly, the trees will not be as correlated with each other so by bagging you are actually reducing variance.