

This proof was inspired by [Grebinski and Kucherov (optimally...additive model)].
 This holds for $k \geq n$.

Claim:

$$\sum_{i=0}^{\frac{x}{2}} \Pr[\text{Eq}(q, v_1) = i \wedge \text{Eq}(q, v_2) = i] \leq \left(1 - \frac{1}{k}\right)^x$$

Case 1: $x \leq k - 3$. We know

$$\begin{aligned} \Pr[\text{Eq}(q, v_1) = i \wedge \text{Eq}(q, v_2) = i] &= \Pr[\text{Eq}(q, v_2) = i] \cdot \Pr[\text{Eq}(q, v_1) = i | \text{Eq}(q, v_2) = i] \\ &= \binom{x}{i} \left(\frac{1}{k}\right)^i \left(\frac{k-1}{k}\right)^{x-i} \cdot \binom{x-i}{i} \left(\frac{1}{k-1}\right)^i \left(\frac{k-2}{k-1}\right)^{x-2i} \\ &= \frac{x!}{(k-2)^{2i} (i!)^2 (x-2i)!} \left(\frac{k-2}{k}\right)^x \\ &\leq \frac{x^{2i}}{(k-2)^{2i} (i!)} \left(\frac{k-2}{k}\right)^x. \end{aligned}$$

Now we have

$$\begin{aligned} \sum_{i=0}^{\frac{x}{2}} \Pr[\text{Eq}(q, v_1) = i \wedge \text{Eq}(q, v_2) = i] \left(\frac{k}{k-1}\right)^x &\leq \sum_{i=0}^{\frac{x}{2}} \frac{x^{2i}}{(k-2)^{2i} (i!)} \left(\frac{k-2}{k}\right)^x \left(\frac{k}{k-1}\right)^x \\ &= \sum_{i=0}^{\frac{x}{2}} \frac{x^{2i}}{(k-2)^{2i} (i!)} \left(1 - \frac{1}{k-1}\right)^x \\ &< \left(1 - \frac{1}{k-1}\right)^x \sum_{i=0}^{\infty} \left(\frac{x^2}{(k-2)^2}\right)^i \frac{1}{i!} \\ &< e^{-\frac{x}{k-1}} \cdot e^{\frac{x^2}{(k-2)^2}} \\ &< 1 \quad \text{for } x \leq (k-3). \end{aligned}$$

Multiplying both sides of this inequality by $(1 - 1/k)^x$ results in the claim.

Case 2: $k - 2 \leq x \leq k$

$$\sum_{i=0}^{\lfloor x/2 \rfloor} \binom{x}{i} \binom{x-i}{i} (n-2)^{-2i} = \sum_{i=0}^{\lfloor x/2 \rfloor} \frac{x(x-1)\cdots(x-2i+1)}{(n-2)^{2i} i!^2}$$

For $x = n - 2, n - 1$, or n :

For $i \geq 3$, $x(x-1)\cdots(x-2i+1) \leq n(n-1)\cdots(n-2i+1) \leq (n-2)^{2i}$. Thus,

$$\begin{aligned} \sum_{i=3}^{\lfloor x/2 \rfloor} \binom{x}{i} \binom{x-i}{i} (n-2)^{-2i} &\leq \sum_{i=3}^{\lfloor x/2 \rfloor} \frac{1}{(i!)^2} \\ &\leq \sum_{i=3}^{\infty} \frac{1}{(i!)^2} \\ &< .0296 \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \sum_{i=0}^2 \binom{x}{i} \binom{x-i}{i} (n-2)^{-2i} &= 1 + \frac{x(x-1)}{(n-2)^2} + \frac{x(x-1)(x-2)(x-3)}{4(n-2)^4} \\ &\leq 1 + \frac{n(n-1)}{(n-2)^2} + \frac{n(n-1)(n-2)(n-3)}{4(n-2)^4} \\ &< 2.5536 \text{ for } n \geq 14 \end{aligned}$$

Thus putting the two together gives

$$\begin{aligned} \sum_{i=0}^{\lfloor x/2 \rfloor} \binom{x}{i} \binom{x-i}{i} (n-2)^{-2i} &\leq 2.5832 \\ &< \left(1 + \frac{1}{n-2}\right)^{n-2} \text{ for } n \geq 14 \\ &\leq \left(1 + \frac{1}{n-2}\right)^x \end{aligned}$$

So the sum of the probability that two vectors have the same response on all s questions is:

$$\sum_{x=1}^n (\# \text{ of reduced pairs that disagree in } x \text{ spots}) (\text{Probability this pair is in the same bucket})$$

$$\begin{aligned} &= \sum_{x=1}^n \binom{n}{x} n^x (n-1)^x \left(1 - \frac{1}{k}\right)^{s \cdot x} \\ &\leq \sum_{x=1}^n n^{3x} \left(1 - \frac{1}{k}\right)^{s \cdot x} \\ &= \sum_{x=1}^n n^{3x} \left(1 - \frac{1}{k}\right)^{(4k \log n)x} \\ &< \sum_{x=1}^n n^{3x} \left(\frac{1}{e}\right)^{(4 \log n)x} \\ &= \sum_{x=1}^n n^{3x} \left(\frac{1}{n}\right)^{4 \cdot x} \\ &\leq \sum_{x=1}^n \frac{1}{n} \\ &\leq 1 \end{aligned}$$