

Adaptive Bayesian Intelligence (AGI meets ABI)

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The Bayes-Duality Project

Toward AI that learns adaptively, robustly, and continuously, like humans



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Received total funding of JPY 220M + EUR 500K through the CREST-ANR grant! Thanks to the funding agencies!

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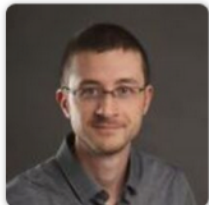
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AI that can learn like us

Quickly adapt & continue to acquire new skills

Human Learning at
the age of 6 months.



Converged at the
age of 12 months



Transfer
skills
at the age
of 14
months



Teacher- Student Learning?



Current state of Machine Learning



Retraining from Scratch

Even when changes are tiny.
It is costly, undemocratic and
unsustainable.

Adaptive Intelligence

How do brains adapt quickly?
What do they optimize and how?

1. Sternberg. A theory of adaptive intelligence and its relation to general intelligence. *Journal of Intelligence* (2019)
2. Sternberg. *Adaptive intelligence*. New York: Cambridge University Press (2021)
3. Sternberg. What is intelligence really? the futile search for a holy grail. *Learning & Individual Differences* (2024)

Adaptive Bayesian Intelligence

- Adaptive Intelligence = Bayesian Computation
- Part 1: **Bayesian Learning Rule** [1]
 - (Emti) Foundational way to derive learning-algorithms
 - (Thomas and Nico) Application to DL: IVON [2]
- Part 2: **Posterior Correction** [3]
 - (Emti) Foundational way to derive adaptation-algorithms
 - (Emti) Application to continual learning [4-5], model merging [6]
 - (Siddharth and Thomas) Federated Learning
- More application to DL:
 - (Kenichi, Keigo) Low-Precision training, (Cong-Bai) IVON-LoRA

1. Khan and Rue, The Bayesian Learning Rule, JMLR (2023)

2. Shen et al. Variational Learning is Effective for Large Deep Networks, ICML (2024)

3. Khan. Knowledge Adaptation as Posterior Correction, arXiv (2025)

4. Khan and Swaroop. Knowledge-Adaptation Priors, NeurIPS (2021).

5. Pan et al. Continual Deep Learning by Functional Regularisation of Memorable Past, NeurIPS, 2020

6. Daheim et al. Model merging by uncertainty-based gradient matching, ICLR (2024).

“The fact that many different approaches point to the same actual algorithm is a major strength of Bayesianity”

—E. T. Jaynes, discussion of [1]



Optimization

Gradient Descent
Newton's Method
Multimodal Optimization

Deep-Learning

SGD, RMSprop and Adam
Sharpness-Aware Minimization
Dropout, STE, Label Smoothing
Shampoo....

Bayesian Learning Rule [1]

Approximate Inference

Conjugate Bayes
Laplace's Method
Expectation Maximization
Stochastic Variational Inference
Variational Message Passing

Global-Optimization

Exponential-Weight Aggregation
Natural Evolution Strategy
Gaussian Homotopy
Smoothed Optimization
Weight-perturbed Optimization
Stochastic Search (annealing)
Stochastic Relaxation

Variational Formulation of Bayes' Rule

$$\text{Bayes' Rule: } p_t(\theta) \propto p_0(\theta) \prod_{j=1}^t \text{lik}_j(\theta)$$

Variational Inference to find an approximation $q_t(\theta)$

$$\begin{aligned} q_t &= \arg \min_{q \in \mathcal{Q}} \sum_{j=1}^t \mathbb{E}_q[\underbrace{-\log \text{lik}_j}_{= \ell_j}] + KL(q \parallel \underbrace{p_0}_{\propto e^{-\ell_0}}) \\ &= \arg \min_{q \in \mathcal{Q}} \sum_{j=0}^t \mathbb{E}_q[\ell_j] - \mathcal{H}(q) \end{aligned}$$

We will use this variational formulation to discover the inherent Bayesian nature of (non-Bayesian) algorithms.

Exponential Family

Natural
parameters

Sufficient
Statistics

Expectation
parameters

$$q(\theta) \propto \exp \left[\lambda^\top T(\theta) \right]$$

$$\mu := \mathbb{E}_q[T(\theta)]$$

$$\begin{aligned} \mathcal{N}(\theta|m, S^{-1}) &\propto \exp \left[-\frac{1}{2}(\theta - m)^\top S(\theta - m) \right] \\ &\propto \exp \left[(Sm)^\top \theta + \text{Tr} \left(-\frac{S}{2} \theta \theta^\top \right) \right] \end{aligned}$$

Gaussian distribution

$$q(\theta) := \mathcal{N}(\theta|m, S^{-1})$$

Natural parameters

$$\lambda := \{Sm, -S/2\}$$

Expectation parameters

$$\mu := \{\mathbb{E}_q(\theta), \mathbb{E}_q(\theta \theta^\top)\}$$

Bayesian Learning Rule (BLR) [1]

Deep Learning to find θ

$$\min_{\theta} \bar{\ell}(\theta) = \sum_{j=0}^t \ell_j(\theta)$$

SGD or Adam

$$\theta \leftarrow \theta - \rho P^{-1} \nabla \bar{\ell}(\theta)$$

Gradient

Variational Learning to find $q_{\lambda}(\theta)$

$$\min_{q_{\lambda} \in \mathcal{Q}} \mathcal{L}(q_{\lambda}) = \sum_{j=1}^t \mathbb{E}_{q_{\lambda}}[\ell_j] + KL(q_{\lambda} \| p_0)$$

$\propto e^{-\ell_0}$

Bayesian Learning Rule

$$\lambda \leftarrow \lambda - \rho F(q_{\lambda})^{-1} \nabla \mathcal{L}(q_{\lambda})$$

Natural Gradient

$$\lambda \leftarrow \lambda - \rho \nabla_{\mu} \mathcal{L}(\lambda)$$

Algorithms (such as SGD/Adam) are special cases of BLR obtained by choosing specific exp-family q_{λ} with natural parameter λ and expectation parameter μ .

Deriving Gradient Descent from BLR

Derived by choosing **Gaussian with fixed covariance**

Gaussian distribution $q(\theta) := \mathcal{N}(m, 1)$

Natural parameters $\lambda := m$

Expectation parameters $\mu := \mathbb{E}_q[\theta] = m$

Entropy $\mathcal{H}(q) := \log(2\pi)/2$

$$\text{BLR: } \lambda \leftarrow \lambda - \rho \nabla_{\mu} \left(\mathbb{E}_q[\bar{\ell}] - \mathcal{H}(q) \right)$$

$$m \leftarrow m - \rho \nabla_m \mathbb{E}_q[\bar{\ell}]$$

$$m \leftarrow m - \rho \mathbb{E}_q[\nabla_{\theta} \bar{\ell}]$$

Bonnet's theorem

$$m \leftarrow m - \rho \nabla \bar{\ell}(m)$$

First-order delta method

$$\text{GD: } \theta \leftarrow \theta - \rho \nabla \bar{\ell}(\theta)$$

Bayesian learning rule:

Learning Algorithm	Posterior Approx.	Natural-Gradient Approx.	Sec.
Optimization Algorithms			
Gradient Descent	Gaussian (fixed cov.)	Delta method	1.3
Newton's method	Gaussian	——“——	1.3
Multimodal optimization _(New)	Mixture of Gaussians	——“——	3.2
Deep-Learning Algorithms			
Stochastic Gradient Descent	Gaussian (fixed cov.)	Delta method, stochastic approx.	4.1
RMSprop/Adam	Gaussian (diagonal cov.)	Delta method, stochastic approx., Hessian approx., square-root scaling, slow-moving scale vectors	4.2
Dropout	Mixture of Gaussians	Delta method, stochastic approx., responsibility approx.	4.3
STE	Bernoulli	Delta method, stochastic approx.	4.5
Online Gauss-Newton _(New) (OGN)	Gaussian (diagonal cov.)	Gauss-Newton Hessian approx. in Adam & no square-root scaling	4.4
Variational OGN _(New)	——“——	Remove delta method from OGN	4.4
BayesBiNN _(New)	Bernoulli	Remove delta method from STE	4.5
Approximate Bayesian Inference Algorithms			
Conjugate Bayes	Exp-family	Set learning rate $\rho_t = 1$	5.1
Laplace's method	Gaussian	Delta method	4.4
Expectation-Maximization	Exp-Family + Gaussian	Delta method for the parameters	5.2
Stochastic VI (SVI)	Exp-family (mean-field)	Stochastic approx., local $\rho_t = 1$	5.3
VMP	——“——	$\rho_t = 1$ for all nodes	5.3
Non-Conjugate VMP	——“——	——“——	5.3
Non-Conjugate VI _(New)	Mixture of Exp-family	None	5.4

Taylor vs Bayes

Why do we recover optimization algorithm from BLR?

$$\text{GD: } \theta \leftarrow \theta - \rho \nabla_{\theta} \bar{\ell}(\theta_{old})$$

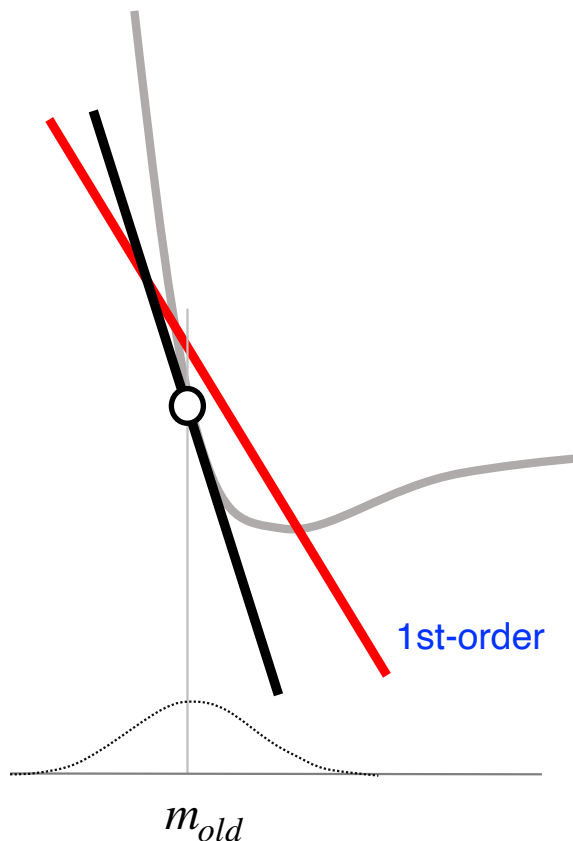
$$\text{Taylor's surrogate: } \sum_i \theta^{\top} \nabla \ell_i(\theta_{old})$$

BLR with isotropic Gaussian

$$m \leftarrow m - \rho \mathbb{E}_{q_{old}}[\nabla \bar{\ell}(\theta)]$$

$$\text{Bayes's surrogate: } \sum_i \theta^{\top} \mathbb{E}_{q_{old}}[\nabla \ell_i]$$

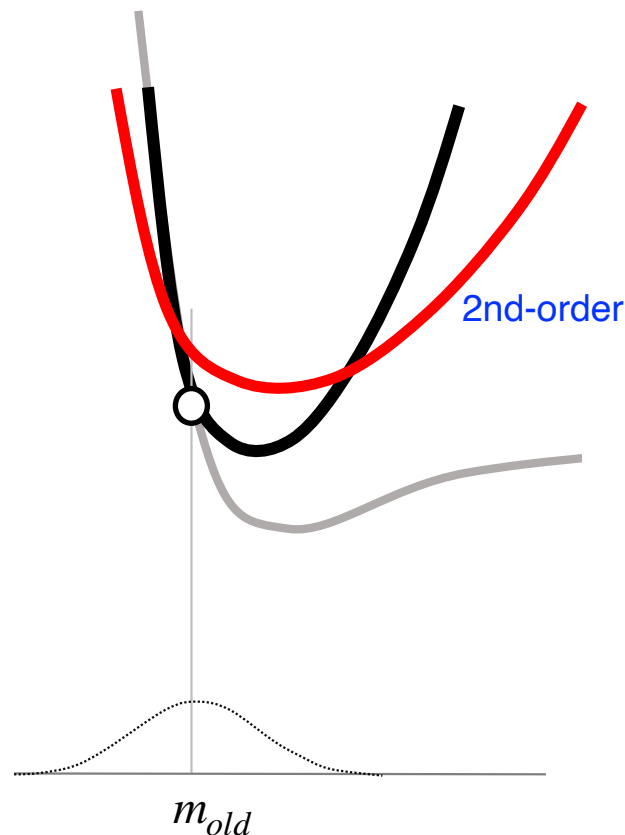
BLR generalizes Taylor!



Bayes Generalizes Taylor

BLR with full
cov Gaussian:

$$\sum_i \theta^\top \mathbb{E}_{q_{old}} [\nabla \ell_i] + \frac{1}{2} (\theta - m_{old})^\top \mathbb{E}_{q_{old}} [\nabla^2 \ell_i] (\theta - m_{old})$$



BLR with exponential-family:

$$q_{old} \propto \exp(T(\theta)^\top \lambda_{old})$$

$$= \exp\left(- \sum_{i=0}^t \underbrace{T(\theta)^\top \nabla_{\mu} \mathbb{E}_{q_{old}} [\ell_i]}_{\text{Site } \hat{\ell}_{i|old}(\theta)} \right)$$

Sites are important for adaptation!

Dual-Representation of the BLR

$$q_t \propto \exp(T(\theta)^\top \lambda_t) = \exp\left(- \sum_{i=0}^t \underbrace{T(\theta)^\top \nabla_{\mu} \mathbb{E}_{q_t}[\ell_i]}_{\text{Site } \hat{\ell}_{i|t}(\theta)}\right)$$

$$\underbrace{q_t}_{\text{Posterior}} \propto \prod_{i=0}^t \underbrace{\exp(-\hat{\ell}_{i|t})}_{\text{Sites}} \iff \underbrace{\lambda_t}_{\text{Natural parameters}} = \sum_{i=0}^t \underbrace{\nabla_{\mu} \mathbb{E}_{q_t}[\ell_i]}_{\text{Natural gradients}}$$

Natural Gradients are additive (representation theorem). Largest ones are the most influential.

1. Khan et al. Fast Dual Variational Inference for Non-Conjugate Latent Gaussian Models. ICML (2013)
2. Khan and Nielsen. Fast yet Simple Natural-Gradient Descent for Variational Inference ... ISITA (2018)
3. Khan et al. Approximate Inference Turns Deep Networks into Gaussian Processes. NeurIPS (2019)
4. Adam et al. Dual Parameterization of Sparse Variational Gaussian Processes. NeurIPS (2021)
5. Chang et al. Memory-Based Dual Gaussian Processes for Sequential Learning. ICML (2023)
6. Moellenhoff et al. Federated ADMM from Bayesian Duality. arXiv (2025)

Continual Learning

Elastic Weight Consolidation
Variational Continual Learning
Memory Replay Methods
Functional Regularization

Model Merging

Task Arithmetic
Fisher/Hessian-Based Merging
Ensembles Methods

Posterior Correction [1]

Unlearning and Influence

Student-Teacher Learning

Knowledge Distillation
Learning with Privileged information
Incremental SVMs

Federated Learning

FedAvg, FedDyn
Alternating Direction Method
of Multipliers (ADMM)
Alternating Minimization
Algorithm (AMA)
Partition Variational Inference

Adaptive Intelligence

How do brains adapt quickly?
What do they optimize and how?

1. Sternberg. A theory of adaptive intelligence and its relation to general intelligence. *Journal of Intelligence* (2019)
2. Sternberg. *Adaptive intelligence*. New York: Cambridge University Press (2021)
3. Sternberg. What is intelligence really? the futile search for a holy grail. *Learning & Individual Differences* (2024)

Variational Formulation of Online Bayesian Inference

Bayes' Rule:
$$p_{t+1}(\theta) \propto p_0(\theta) \prod_{j=1}^{t+1} e^{-\ell_j(\theta)} \propto p_t(\theta) e^{-\ell_{t+1}(\theta)}$$

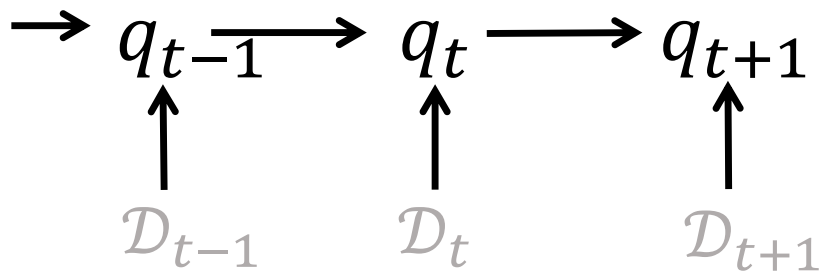
Variational formulation:

Batch:
$$q_{t+1} = \arg \min_q \sum_{j=1}^{t+1} \mathbb{E}_q[\ell_j] + KL(q||p_0)$$

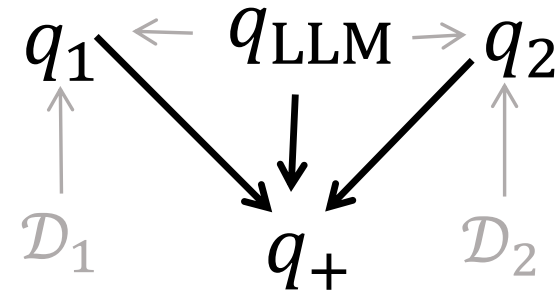
Online [1]:
$$\hat{q}_{t+1} = \arg \min_q \mathbb{E}_q[\ell_{t+1}] + KL(q||q_t)$$

How inaccurate is \hat{q}_{t+1} ? Can we correct it to exactly recover q_{t+1} ? This is the goal of posterior correction.

Continual Learning

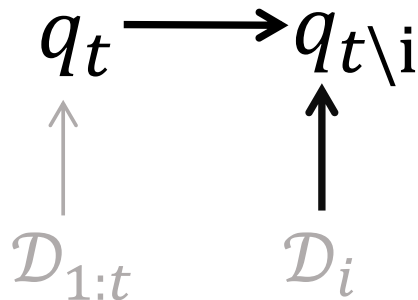


Model Merging

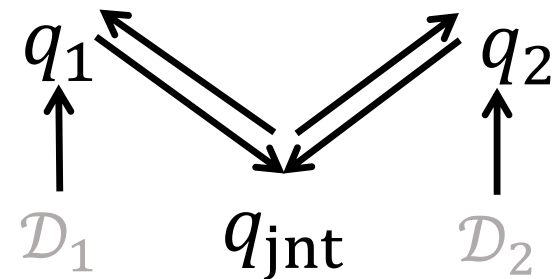


Posterior Correction [1]

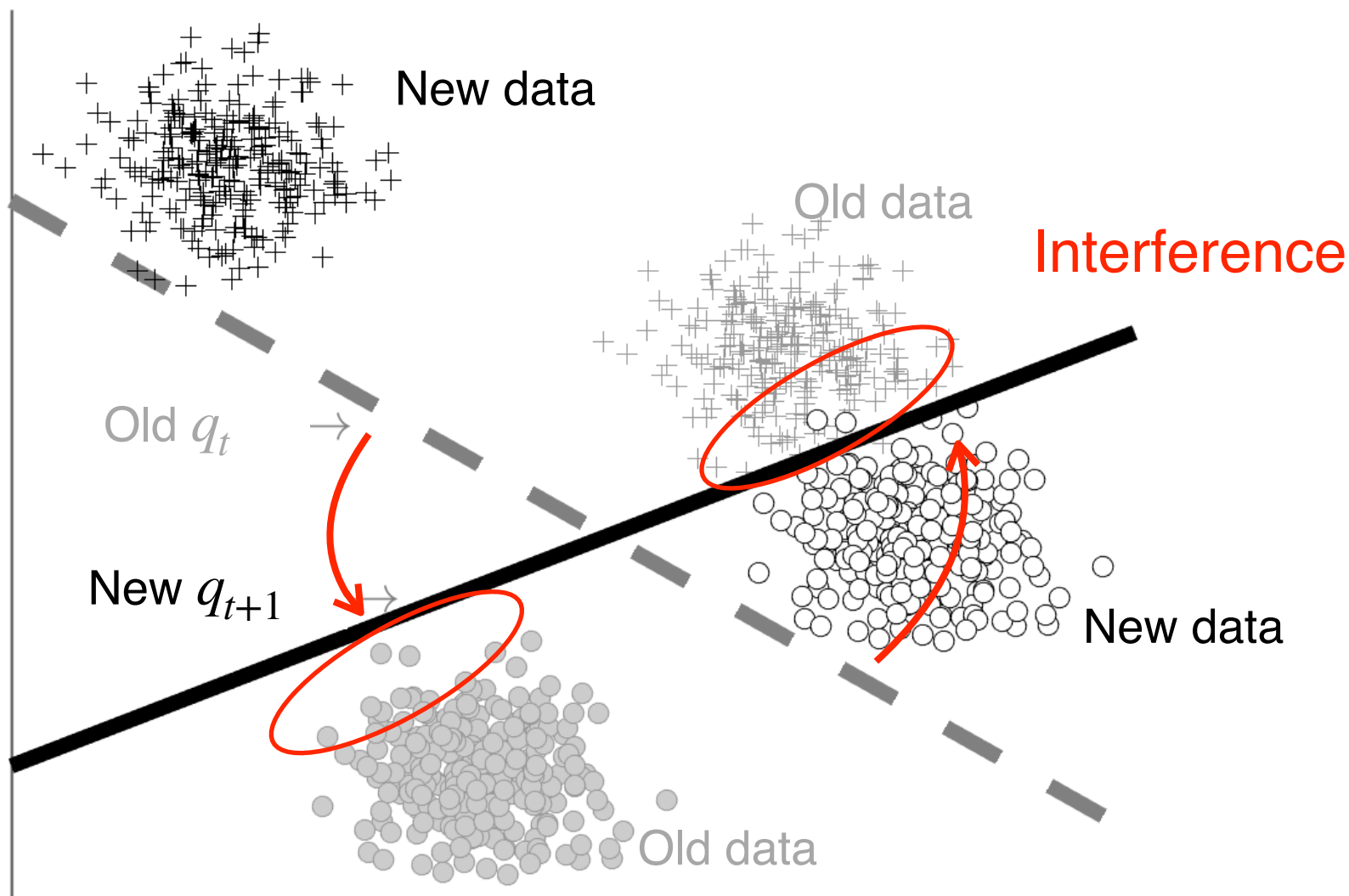
Unlearning and Influence



Federated Learning



Correct the Past due to the Interference Created by the Future



Posterior Correction

We will use the site functions to correct the posterior!

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{Batch: } q_{t+1} &= \arg \min_q \sum_{j=1}^{t+1} \mathbb{E}_q[\ell_j] + KL(q \| p_0) \\
 &= \arg \min_q \mathbb{E}_q[\ell_{t+1}] + KL(q \| q_t) + \underbrace{\sum_{j=0}^t \mathbb{E}_q[\ell_j - \hat{\ell}_{j|t}]}_{\text{Correction}}
 \end{aligned}$$

$\frac{q_t}{\prod_{i=0}^t \exp(-\hat{\ell}_{j|t})}$

$$\text{Online: } \hat{q}_{t+1} = \arg \min_q \mathbb{E}_q[\ell_{t+1}] + KL(q \| \mathbf{q}_t)$$

Very simple proof (3 lines). Exact recovery in general!

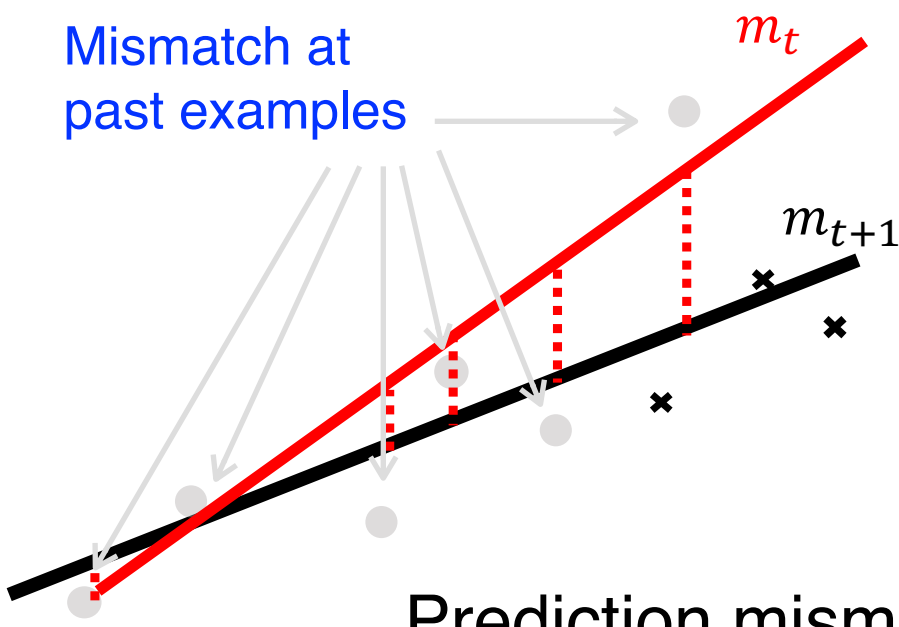
Correction as Prediction Mismatch

Linear regression with isotropic Gaussian posterior

$$m_{t+1} = \arg \min_m \mathbb{E}_q \left[\frac{1}{2} (y_{t+1} - x_{t+1}^\top \theta)^2 \right] + KL [\mathcal{N}(m, I) \| \mathcal{N}(m_t, I)]$$

$$+ \sum_{j=1}^t \frac{1}{2} (x_j^\top m_t - x_j^\top m)^2 + \dots$$

Mismatch at
past examples



Error due to mean-field is
fixed by the correction!

$$\frac{1}{2} (m - m_t)^\top \left(\sum_{j=1}^t x_j x_j^\top \right) (m - m_t)$$

Prediction mismatch is simpler to implement!

Knowledge-Adaptation Prior

Posterior correction with isotropic Gaussian reduces to “prediction or gradient mismatch” (K-priors) [1]

$$m_{t+1} = \arg \min_m \ell_{t+1} + \frac{\rho}{2} \|m - m_t\|^2 + \sum_{j=1}^t \ell_j \left(\hat{y}_j(m_t), \hat{y}_j(m) \right)$$

Many adaptation methods (assuming linearity) reduce this mismatch [2-8] & Posterior Correction generalizes it!

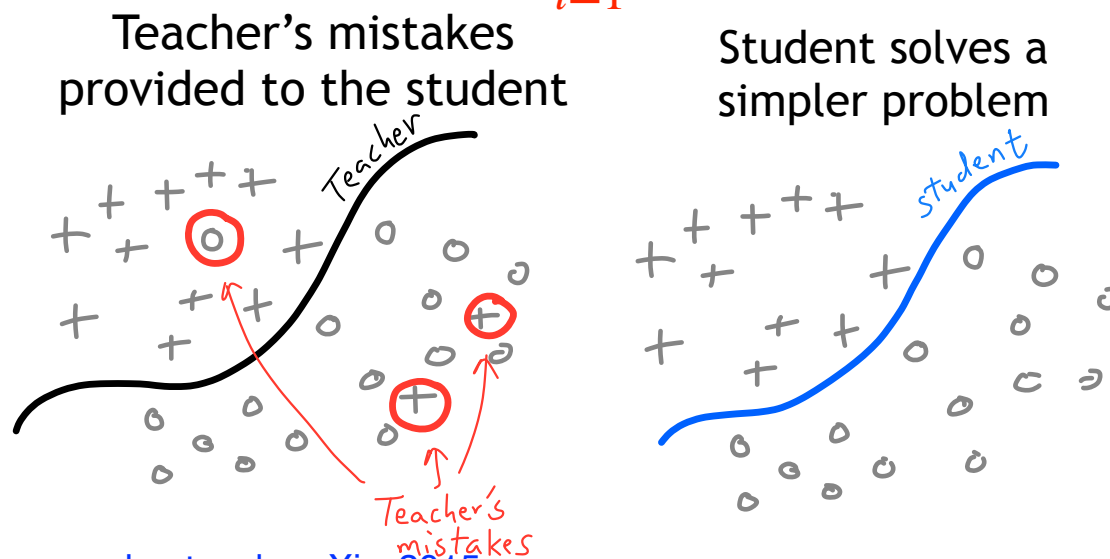
1. Khan and Swaroop. Knowledge-Adaptation Priors, NeurIPS (2021).
2. Kirkpatrick et al. Overcoming catastrophic forgetting in neural networks. PNAS, 2017.
3. Benjamin et al. Measuring and regularizing networks in function space. ICLR 2019.
4. Buzzega et al. Dark experience for general continual learning: a strong, simple baseline. NeurIPS 2020.
5. Cauwenberghs and Poggio. Incremental and decremental SVM learning. NeurIPS, 2001.
6. Vapnik and Izmailov. Learning using privileged information: similarity control and JMLR, 2015.
7. Lopez-Paz and Ranzato. Gradient episodic memory for continual learning, NIPS'17
8. Csató and Oppel. Sparse on-line Gaussian processes. Neural computation, 2002.

Generalization to Non-Linear Cases

Requires an additional effort to “avoid past mistakes”

$$m_{t+1} = \arg \min_m \ell_{t+1} + \frac{\rho}{2} \|m - m_t\|^2 + \sum_{j=1}^t \ell_j \left(\hat{y}_j(m_t), \hat{y}_j(m) \right) + \sum_{i=1}^t r_{i|t} \left[f_i(m) - f_i^{\text{lin}}(m) \right]$$

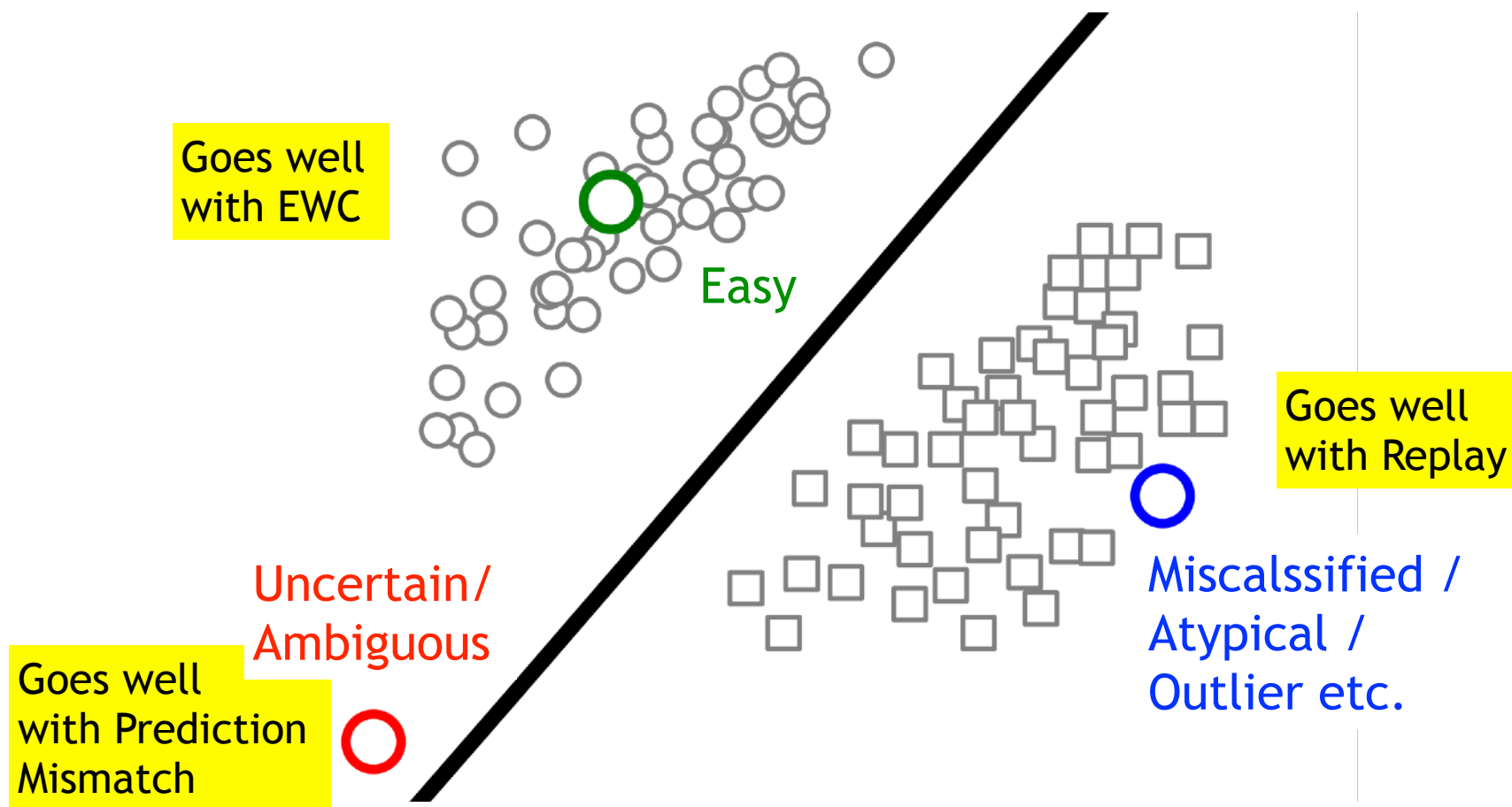
Similar to
student-teacher
learning [1,2]



1. Hinton et al. Distilling the knowledge in a neural network, arXiv, 2015.
2. Vapnik and Izmailov. Learning using privileged information: similarity control and JMLR, 2015.

Three types of Examples

Very similar to Support Vectors!

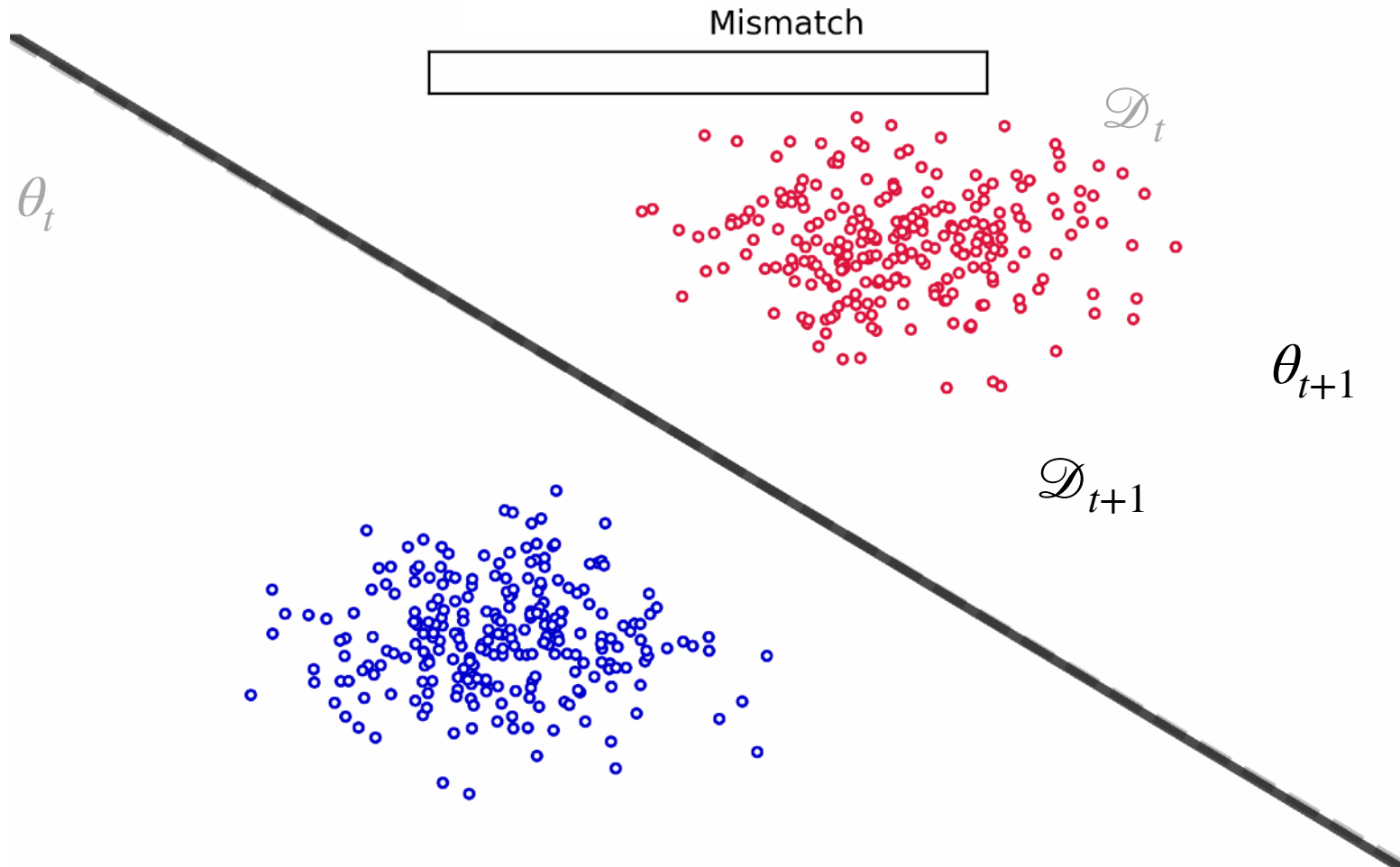


How to Solve Adaptation!

- Three kinds of regularizations required for three different kinds of examples
 1. Weight regularization for examples where both feature and predictions do not change
 2. Prediction matching handles examples where features are static but predictions need adjustments
 3. Memory replay handles examples with large prediction errors and dynamic features
- Any adaptive learning require a balance these three
- Memory requirements increase as we move from 1 to 3.
- These sets characterize the difficulty of adaptations.

From Quick to Slow Adaptation

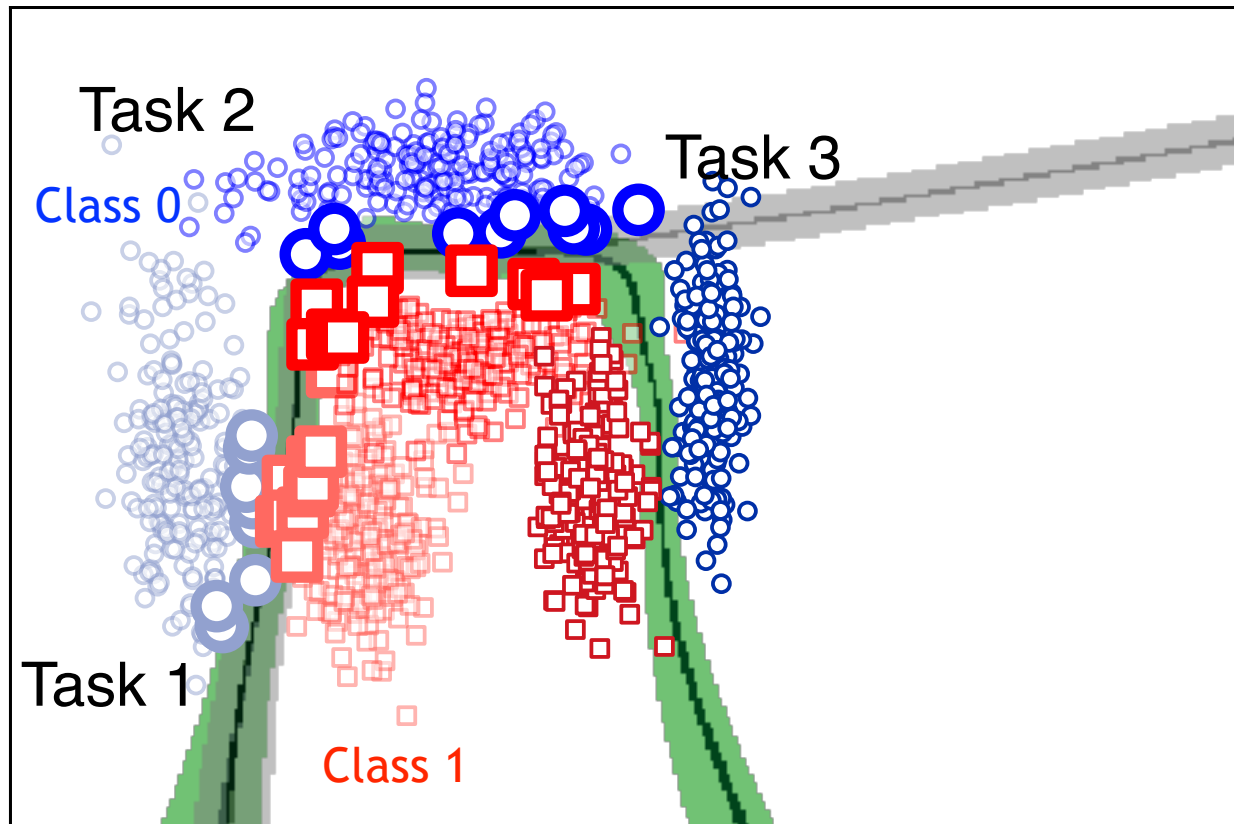
Correction as Information Gain



Quick Adaptation with Compact Memory

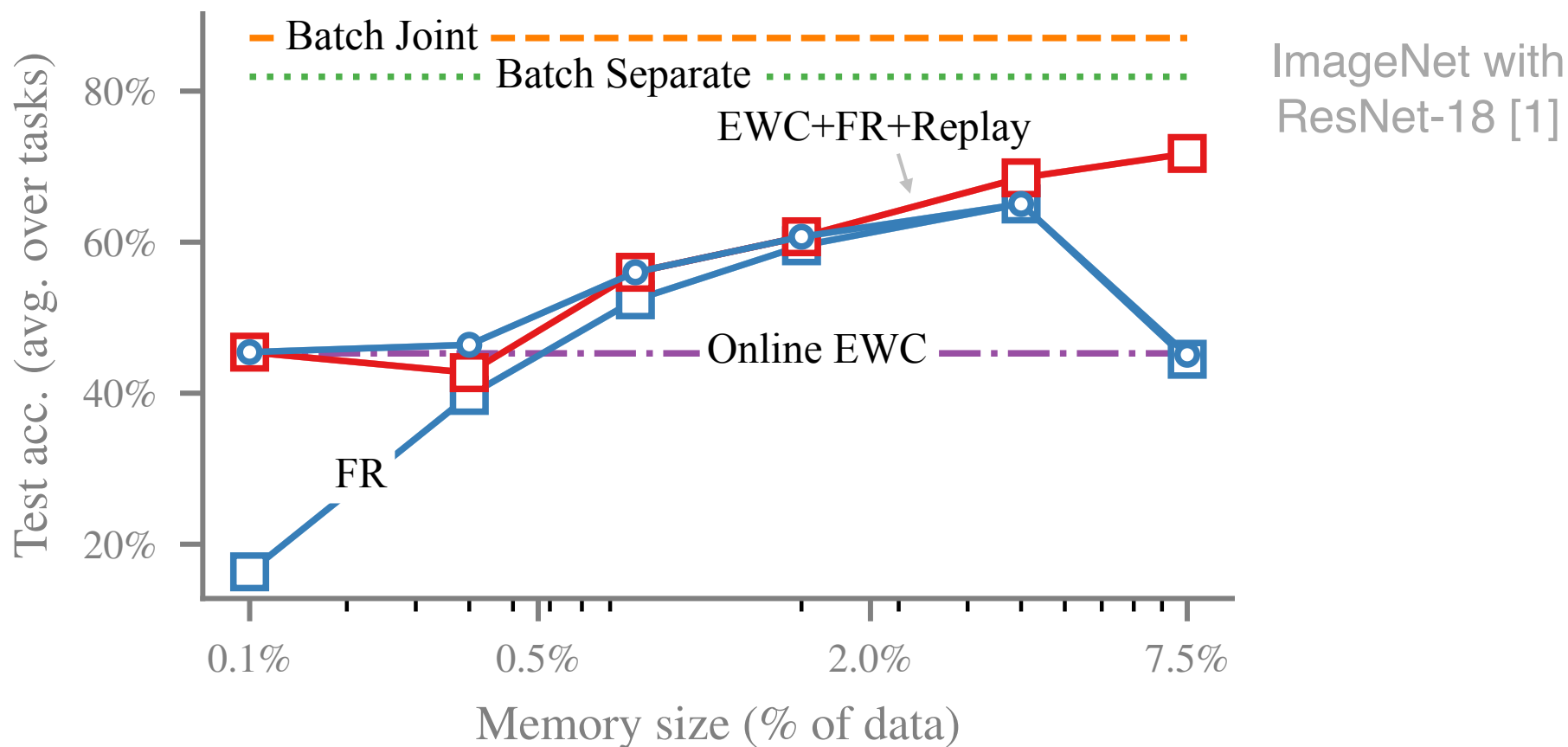
Choose memories where interference is more likely.

Small correction \implies Small memory \implies Quick adaptation

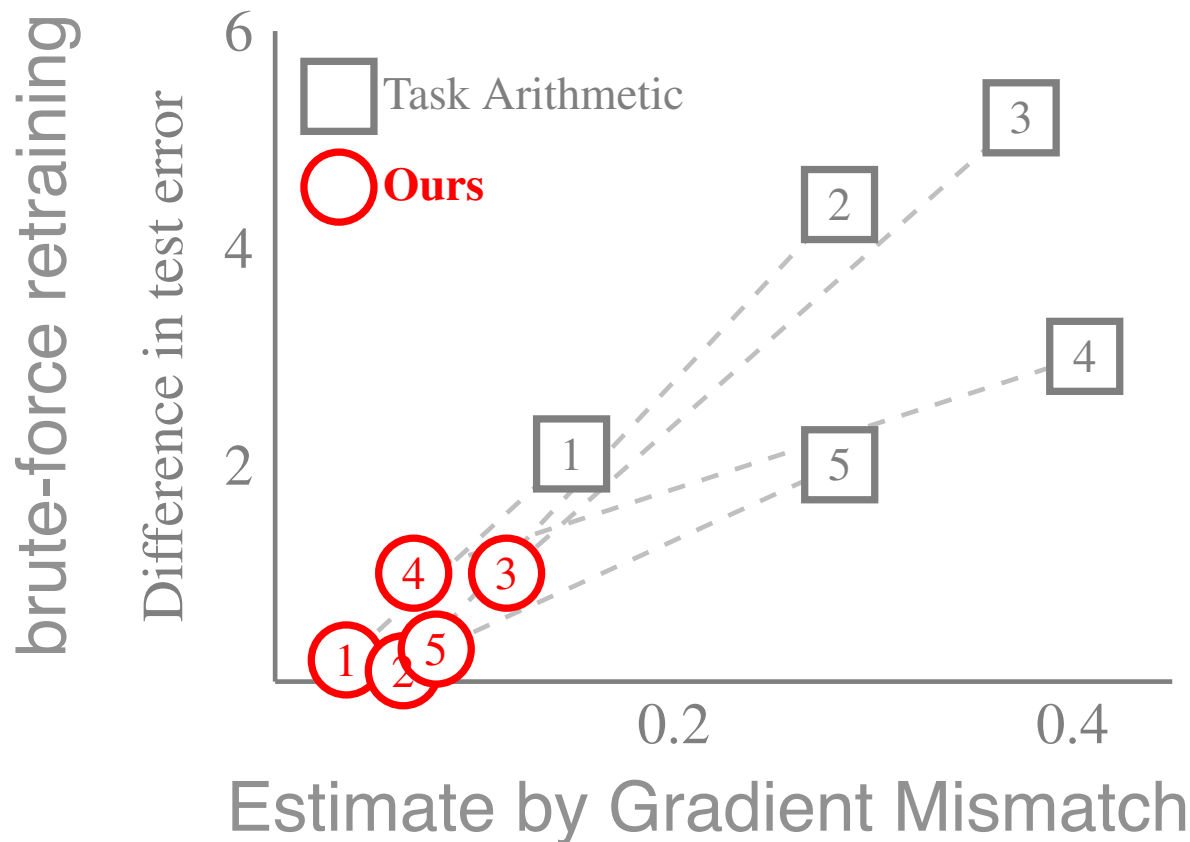


Combine Methods to Reduce Correction

Get 78% accuracy with 7.5% (random) memory



Reducing Correction Improves Performance in LLM fine-tuning

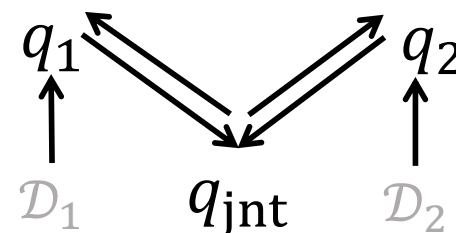


RoBERTa
on IMDB

Summary of Federated Learning, Model Merging, and Memories etc.

Recover q_{jnt} from q_1 and q_2

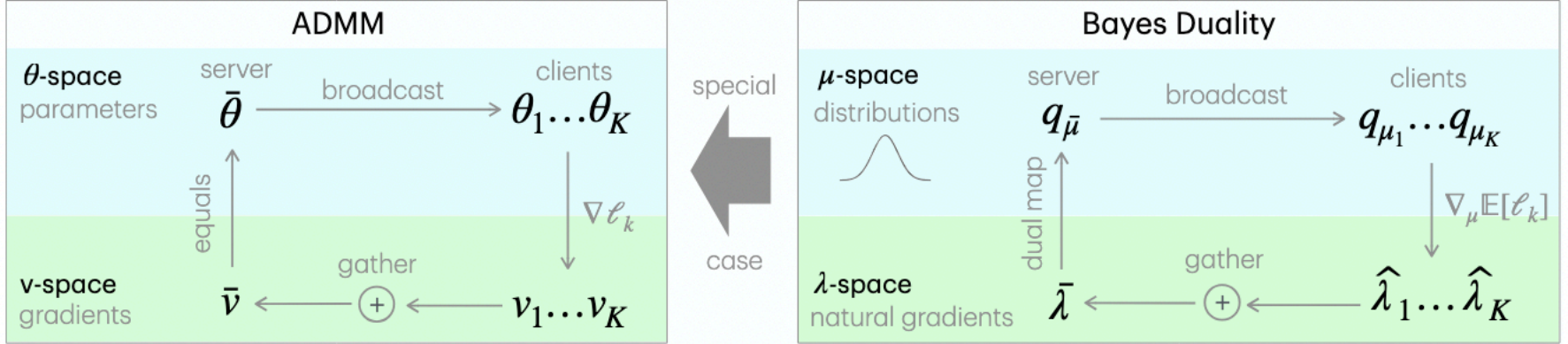
$$q_{jnt} = \arg \min_q KL(q \| q_1 q_2) + \sum_{j=1}^2 \mathbb{E}_q[\ell_j - \hat{\ell}_{j|j}]$$



By choosing different q , we get different strategies (better q gives better merging) [1,2]. Same is true for federated learning [3,4]. All of them will benefit from compact memories designed to reduce corrections [5].

1. Daheim et al. Model merging by uncertainty-based gradient matching, ICLR (2024).
2. Monzon et al. How to Weight Multitask Finetuning? Fast Previews via Bayesian Model-Merging, 2024
3. Swaroop, Khan, Doshi, Connecting Federated ADMM to Bayes, ICLR 2025
4. Moellenhoff et al. Federated ADMM from Bayes Duality, arXiv, 2025
5. Nickl, Xu, Tailor, Moellenhoff, Khan, The memory-perturbation equation, NeurIPS (2023)

ADMM as a special case of Bayes (Dual)



Algorithm 1 BayesADMM (Fig. 2b) for Gaussians with diagonal covariance. Additional steps when compared to FederatedADMM are highlighted in red. Implementation details are in App. D.

Hyperparameters: Prior precision $\delta > 0$, step-sizes $\rho > 0$ and $\gamma > 0$.

Initialize: $\mathbf{v}_k \leftarrow 0$, $\mathbf{u}_k \leftarrow 0$, $\bar{\mathbf{m}} \leftarrow 0$, $\bar{\mathbf{s}} \leftarrow \delta$, $\alpha \leftarrow 1/(1 + \rho K)$.

- 1: **while** not converged **do**
- 2: Broadcast $\bar{\mathbf{m}}$ and $\bar{\mathbf{s}}$ to all clients.
- 3: **for** each client $1, \dots, K$ in parallel **do**
- 4: Local training on $\ell_k(\boldsymbol{\theta}) + \boldsymbol{\theta}^\top \mathbf{v}_k - \frac{1}{2} \boldsymbol{\theta}^\top (\mathbf{u}_k \boldsymbol{\theta}) + \frac{\rho}{2} \|\boldsymbol{\theta} - \bar{\mathbf{m}}\|_{\bar{\mathbf{s}}}^2$ ▷ Using IVON [53]
- 5: $\mathbf{v}_k \leftarrow \mathbf{v}_k + \gamma (\mathbf{s}_k \mathbf{m}_k - \bar{\mathbf{s}} \bar{\mathbf{m}})$
- 6: $\mathbf{u}_k \leftarrow \mathbf{u}_k + \gamma (\mathbf{s}_k - \bar{\mathbf{s}})$ ▷ An additional dual variable.
- 7: **end for**
- 8: Gather \mathbf{m}_k , \mathbf{v}_k and \mathbf{s}_k , \mathbf{u}_k from all clients.
- 9: $\bar{\mathbf{m}} \leftarrow (1 - \alpha) \text{Mean}(\mathbf{s}_{1:K} \mathbf{m}_{1:K}) + \alpha \text{Sum}(\mathbf{v}_{1:K})$
- 10: $\bar{\mathbf{s}} \leftarrow (1 - \alpha) \text{Mean}(\mathbf{s}_{1:K}) + \alpha [\delta \mathbf{1} + \text{Sum}(\mathbf{u}_{1:K})]$ ▷ Two additional steps for precision $\bar{\mathbf{s}}$
- 11: $\bar{\mathbf{m}} \leftarrow \bar{\mathbf{m}} / \bar{\mathbf{s}}$
- 12: **end while**

Adaptive Bayesian Intelligence

- Adaptive Intelligence = Bayesian Computation
- Part 1: **Bayesian Learning Rule** [1]
 - Foundational way to derive learning-algorithms
 - Application to Deep Learning [2]
- Part 2: **Posterior Correction** [3]
 - Foundational way to derive adaptation-algorithms
 - Application to continual learning [4-5]
 - But also for LLM merging, Federated Learning etc.
- Adaptive Bayesian Intelligence: A roadmap.

1. Khan and Rue, The Bayesian Learning Rule, JMLR (2023)

2. Shen et al. Variational Learning is Effective for Large Deep Networks, ICML (2024)

3. Khan. Knowledge Adaptation as Posterior Correction, arXiv (2025)

4. Khan and Swaroop. Knowledge-Adaptation Priors, NeurIPS (2021).

5. Pan et al. Continual Deep Learning by Functional Regularisation of Memorable Past, NeurIPS, 2020

Questions for the future

- What should the algorithm remember?
- And what new experiences should it seek?
- Memory should be chosen to minimize the corrections that may arise in the future.
- New experiences should be chosen to enable easy-enough corrections (not too daunting for the learner)
- Future is unknown but the algorithm has the freedom to explore by “fixing the past & choosing the future”

Fixing
Choosing

~~CELEBRATING~~ THE PAST,
~~SHAPING~~ THE FUTURE