# Differentiation in RNA sequence Design Kiyoshi Asai

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2009



Acknowledgement

JBIC / AIST / NEDO / MHIR



Organizational meeting





Cooking in a hotel



Some formula produced



Excellent Jamón and wine found

2024

Fresh seafood in supermercado!!



Upgraded cooking in an apartment

#### I love dynamic programming (on RNA)

Scarna Murlet McCaskill-MEA MXSCARNA Rfold CentroidFold CentoridHomfold CentroidAlign CentroidAlign Rchange CapR

heuristic DP	Stru
Sankoff	Stru
averaged BPP	Con
heuristic DP	Stru
banded SCFG	Exa
γ-centroid (MEA)	2D s
γ-centroid (MEA)	2D s
γ-centroid (MEA)	Stru
γ-centroid (MEA)	Con
banded SCFG	Effe
banded SCFG	2D s
	heuristic DP Sankoff averaged BPP heuristic DP banded SCFG γ-centroid (MEA) γ-centroid (MEA) γ-centroid (MEA) banded SCFG

ctural alignment ctural alignment nmon 2D structure ctural alignment ct local BPP structure prediction structure prediction using homologs ctural alignment nmon 2D structure ects of mutation on 2D structural profile

## mRNA design

#### CDSfold (2015) the most stable 2D structure

Dynamic Programming



Terai G, Kamegai S., and Asai K, Bioinformatics 32(6), 826-834 (2015)

#### COSMO (2020) multi-criteria codon optimization



#### Genetic algorithm for multiple copies of same gene

Goro Terai, Satoshi Kamegai, Akito Taneda, Kiyoshi Asai, Evolutionary design of multiple genes encoding the same protein. Bioinformatics 33(11) 1613-1620

# Not only DP I also loved stochastic LANGUAGE models



### mRNA design using deep generative models (including LLMs)



Pre-training by public database (biological information archive) Generative & predictive models

Design 1<sup>st</sup> stage mRNA of the **target protein** using *in silico* design cycle

Using the result of Build & Test Fine-tuning of the models on the target protein



### Language models for mRNA design



## I also love marginal probabilities



Adachi H et al., *Biochimie*, 93(7):1081-8(2011).



CentroidFold

Maximizes marginalized accuracy measures (MEA)

In CentroidFold, any energy model that can produce BPPs is applicable

Hamada M et al. *Bioinformatics* 25(4)4, 465-473 (2009).



#### **Distribution on Hamming distance**



Mori, R., *BMC Genomics* **15** (Suppl 10), S6 (2014). Takizawa, H, *BMC Bioinformatics* **21**, 210 (2020).

## The idea born at Benasque 2018



#### Marginalize RNA activity (e.e interaction)

**QRNAstruct**: a method for extracting secondary structural features of RNA via regression with biological activity

$$g(x) = E_{\sigma}[f(x,\sigma)] = \sum_{\sigma} p(\sigma|x)f(x,\sigma)$$

$$probability of 2D \text{ structure } \sigma$$



Terai G, Asai K, Nucleic Acids Res. .50:13 e73 (2022).

## Marginalized activity by thermodynamic fluctuation

Benasque 2018 model  $g(x) = E_{\sigma}[f(x,\sigma)] = \sum_{\sigma} p(\sigma|x)f(x,\sigma)$   $x : \text{sequence, } \sigma : \text{structure}$   $f(x,\sigma) : \text{activity function of } x \text{ and } \sigma$  (depends to the sequence and the structure)

#### Linear model for activity function $f(x, \sigma)$

 $f(x,\sigma) = w^{T} \cdot \phi(x,\sigma)$ w: weights vector for features  $\phi(x,\sigma)$ : feature vector  $g(x) = E_{\sigma}[w^{T} \cdot \phi(x,\sigma)]$   $= w^{T} \cdot E_{\sigma}[\phi(x,\sigma)] = w^{T} \cdot \phi_{M}(x)$   $\phi_{M}(x) = E_{\sigma}[\phi(x,\sigma)]$ : marginalized feature ||Feature vector of marginalized kernel

HMM: Tsuda K, Kin T, Asai, K, *Bioinformatics* 18 Suppl 1:S268-75 (2002) RNA-SCFG: Kin T, Tsuda K, Asai K, *Genome Informatics* 13, 112-122 (2002)  $\begin{aligned} &\text{Marginalized Kernel of HMM} \\ &\log p(x,h|A,E) = \sum_{i=1}^{m} \sum_{j=1}^{m} N_{i,j}^{a}(h) \log a_{i,i} + \sum_{i=1}^{m} \sum_{d=1}^{D} N_{i,d}^{e}(x,h) \log e_{i,d} \\ & \varphi(x,h) = \{N^{a}, N^{e}\} \\ &\text{Marginalized Kernel of SCFG} \end{aligned}$ 

Marginalized Kernel of 2D structure distribution

$$P(\sigma|x) = \frac{1}{Z(x)} exp[-E(x,\sigma)/RT]$$
$$\log P(\sigma|x) = \sum_{\xi \in \{\text{types of loops}\}} N_{\xi}(x,\sigma)E(L_{\xi}^{type}) - \log Z(x)$$
$$\mathbb{E}[N_{\xi}] = \frac{1}{\partial E(L_{\xi}^{type})} \partial \log Z(x)$$

## Marginalized activity by thermodynamic fluctuation



## A prediction system with parameters











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r+1



#### Fixing parameters already optimized









## Upstream NN includes information covariation?



Figure 3: An overview of our method to train a generative model that produces probabilistic sequences that minimize a continuous loss function based on the partition function. We overparameterize the optimization problem by training a generative network to produce a sequence distribution that minimize the objective function. Once trained, discrete sequences can be sampled from the predicted sequence distribution.

Ryan Krueger and Max Ward Scalable Differentiable Folding for mRNA Design https://www.biorxiv.org/content/10.1101/2024.05.29.594436v1.full.pdf



#### Iterations of Neural Network and HMM



Neural Network



Total probability of the sequence *x* calculated by forward algorithm

$$\begin{aligned} a_{j}^{r} &= \sum_{i} w_{ji}^{r} z_{i}^{r-1} \\ \text{Same shape of formula,} \\ \text{substituting } h(x) = x \\ z_{j}^{r} &= h(a_{j}^{r}) \end{aligned} \qquad \begin{aligned} \text{Same shape of formula,} \\ \text{substituting } h(x) = x \\ f_{j}^{t} &= \sum_{i} f_{i}^{t-1} w_{ji}^{t} \\ f_{j}^{t} &= \sum_{i} f_{i}^{t-1} w_{ji}^{t} \\ w_{ji}^{t} &\equiv a_{ij} e_{j}(x_{t}) \end{aligned} \qquad \begin{aligned} \text{Initialization:} \\ f_{0}^{0} &= 1, \quad f_{j}^{0} &= 0 (j \neq 0) \\ \text{Iteration:} \\ f_{j}^{t+1} &= \sum_{i} f_{i}^{t} a_{ij} e_{j}(x_{t+1}) \\ \\ w_{ji}^{t} &\equiv a_{ij} e_{j}(x_{t}) \end{aligned} \qquad \end{aligned}$$

### Iterations of neural network and HMM

$$p(y) = \exp\left\{\sum_{i} \theta_{i} y_{i} - \psi(\theta)\right\}$$
Canonical form of  
exponential family  
$$p(\pi|x) = \exp\left\{\sum_{ijt} n_{ij}^{t} \log w_{ji}^{t} - \log p(x)\right\}$$
HMM posterior probability  
(conditional probability)

$$n_{ij}^{t} = \begin{cases} 1 \text{ if } \pi_{t-1} = i \text{ and } \pi_{t} = j \\ 0 \text{ otherwise} \end{cases}$$

Using this general property of exponential family,

$$\begin{split} \frac{\partial \psi(\theta)}{\partial \theta_i} &= E[y_i] \\ E[n_{ij}^t] &= \frac{\partial \log p(x)}{\partial \log w_{ji}^t} \\ &= \frac{\partial \log p(x)}{\partial p(x)} \frac{\partial w_{ji}^t}{\partial \log w_{ji}^t} \frac{\partial p(x)}{\partial w_{ji}^t} \\ &= \frac{1}{p(x)} w_{ij}^t \frac{\partial p(x)}{\partial f_j^t} \frac{\partial f_j^t}{\partial w_{ji}^t} \\ &= \frac{1}{p(x)} w_{ij}^t \delta_j^t f_i^t \end{split}$$

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$$a \qquad g$$

$$\widehat{f} e_{\pi_i}(a) \qquad \widehat{f} e_{\pi_j}(b)$$

$$\overline{\pi_i} \qquad \overline{a_{ij}} \qquad \overline{\pi_j}$$

$$HMM$$

$$f_j^{t+1} = \sum_i f_i^t a_{ij} e_j(x_{t+1})$$

$$f_j^t = \sum_i f_i^{t-1} w_{ji}^t \qquad w_{ji}^t \equiv a_{ij} e_j(x_t)$$

$$\delta_j^t \equiv \frac{\partial p(x)}{\partial f_j^t} = \sum_k \frac{\partial p(x)}{\partial f_k^{t+1}} \frac{\partial f_k^{t+1}}{\partial f_j^r} = \sum_k \delta_k^{t+1} w_{kj}^{t+1}$$

Backward algorithm of HMM is a backpropagation of forward algorithm Jason Eisner. Inside-Outside and Forward-Backward Algorithms Are Just Backprop (tutorial paper). In Proceedings of the Workshop on Structured Prediction for NLP, pages 1–17

## EM algorithm

Optimize parameter  $\theta$  of joint probability  $p(x, \pi)$ of observable x and unobservable  $\pi$ 

E step:  $p(\pi|x, \hat{\theta}^{(t)})$  is calculated M step  $\hat{\theta}^{(t+1)} = \operatorname{argmax}_{\theta} Q(\theta|\hat{\theta}^{(t)})$  is calculated

 $Q(\theta|\hat{\theta}^{(t)}) \equiv E_{\pi|x,\hat{\theta}^{(t)}} \left[\log p(\pi, x|\theta)\right]$ 



$$p(\pi|x) = \exp\left\{\sum_{ijt} n_{ij}^t \log w_{ji}^t - \log p(x)\right\}$$
$$E[n_{ij}^t] = \frac{1}{p(x)} w_{ij}^t \delta_j^t f_i^t$$

How about gradient descent?

$$\frac{\partial p(x)}{\partial w_{ji}^t} = \frac{\partial p(x)}{\partial f_j^t} \frac{\partial f_j^t}{\partial w_{ji}^t} = \delta_k^j f_i^t$$

No, but you can backpropagate at least.

## Combining generative model to NN

#### RaptGen for RNA aptamer



Connecting the output of NN to parameters of HMM you can further backpropagate on NN.



Iwano, N., Adachi, T., Aoki, K. *et al.* Generative aptamer discovery using RaptGen. *Nat Comput Sci* **2**, 378–386 (2022).

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#### RfamGen



Sumi, S., Hamada, M. & Saito, H. Deep generative design of RNA family sequences. Nat Methods 21, 435–443 (2024)

## Inverse Folding, BPP as the target

- 2D structure as the target Derivative of max operation is necessary (both in MFE and MEA).
   Sum of the probabilities of similar structures are ignored.
- 2. BPP as the target

**McCaskill algorithm is naturally differentiable**(by the loss or parameters)

However, differentiation of McCaskill by the sequence, is not easy



## Design of RNA with modified bases

- Modified RNA may have preferrable features.
- Design of RNA sequence with modified bases
  - 2D structure control in design requires de novo prediction although there are methods for 2D prediction using SHAPE data.
  - Determination of energy parameters of modified bases is desired.
- For determination of RNA energy parameters including modified bases
  - Energy parameters of Inosine and m6A have been determined by combination of absorbance measure measurement of small number of pairs of complementary sequences and molecular dynamics (MD) calculation

#### Free-Energy Calculation of Ribonucleic Inosines and Its Application to Nearest-Neighbor Parameters



Sakuraba S et al., J. Chem. Theory Comput. 2020, 16, 9, 5923–5935. DOI: (10.1021/acs.jctc.0c00270)

## Design of RNA with modified bases

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  - Gradient decent by differentiation of BPPs by energy parameters

## Chemical probing data and base-pairs

High reactivities correspond to fee bases well, but low reactivities do not necessarily mean base-paired. Pseudo-free energy fits well to this observation.

 $\Delta G_{\rm total} = \Delta G_{\rm thermodynamic} + \Delta G_{\rm SHAPE}$ 



Reactivity vs annotation

Reactivity vs BPP

## Upstream NN includes information covariation?



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## Concluding Remarks

- Derivative by parameters may give a gradient descent optimization
  - Energy parameters of modified bases may be determined using SHAPE data.
  - Derivative by inputs may solve the input design problem.
- In RNA sequence design, optimizing discrete sequences require tricks.
  - VAE, LLM, sequence profile, HMM/SCFG(CM)
  - Differentiable partition function is a great help for further research.
- Modeling position dependency in probability distribution is one of the problems to be solved in applications of differential partition function.
- Theoretical note
  - Forward-backward/Inside-outside correspond to backpropagation in NN.
  - Attention in Transformer is not ad-hoc innovation, but related to SVM.

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