

L26: Kernels + SVMs

Apr 15, 2026

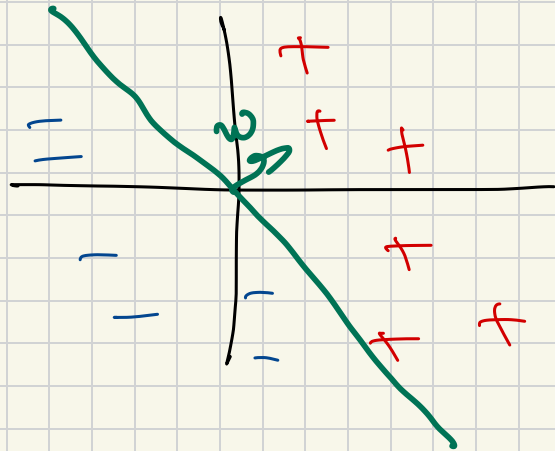
FoDA

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Input $x_i \in \mathbb{R}^d \times \{-1, +1\}$
 (x_i, y_i)

Output $g(x) = \langle w, x \rangle$
predict $\text{sign}(g(x))$



Perceptron

$w = y_i x_i$ for any $(x_i, y_i) \in (X, y)$

Repeat

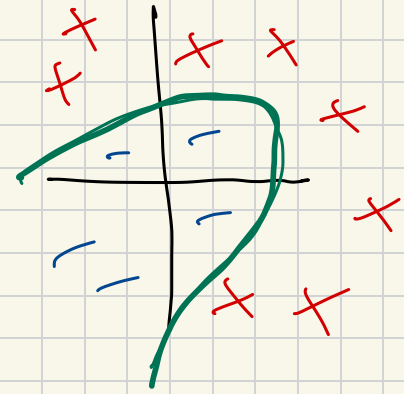
if any (x_i, y_i) so

then update

$w = w + y_i x_i$ ← linear

misclassified

return $w / \|w\|$



or



$$y_i = \begin{cases} +1 & \text{if student gets} \\ -1 & \text{if student gets} \end{cases}$$

B

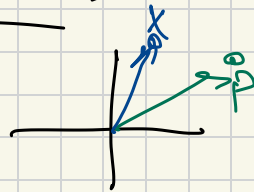
A, C, D, E

Generalized Inner Product \rightarrow Kernels

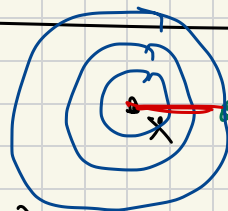
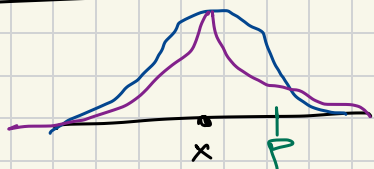
$$p, x \in \mathbb{R}^d$$

linear inner products
dot product

$$\langle p, x \rangle = \sum_{j=1}^d \underbrace{p_j}_{\text{weight}} x_j$$



Kernels



$\|x-p\|$

$$\langle p, x \rangle_G = K(p, x) = \exp\left(-\frac{\|x-p\|^2}{\sigma^2}\right)$$

Gaussian

$$\langle p, x \rangle_L = K(p, x) = \exp(-\frac{\|x-p\|}{\sigma})$$

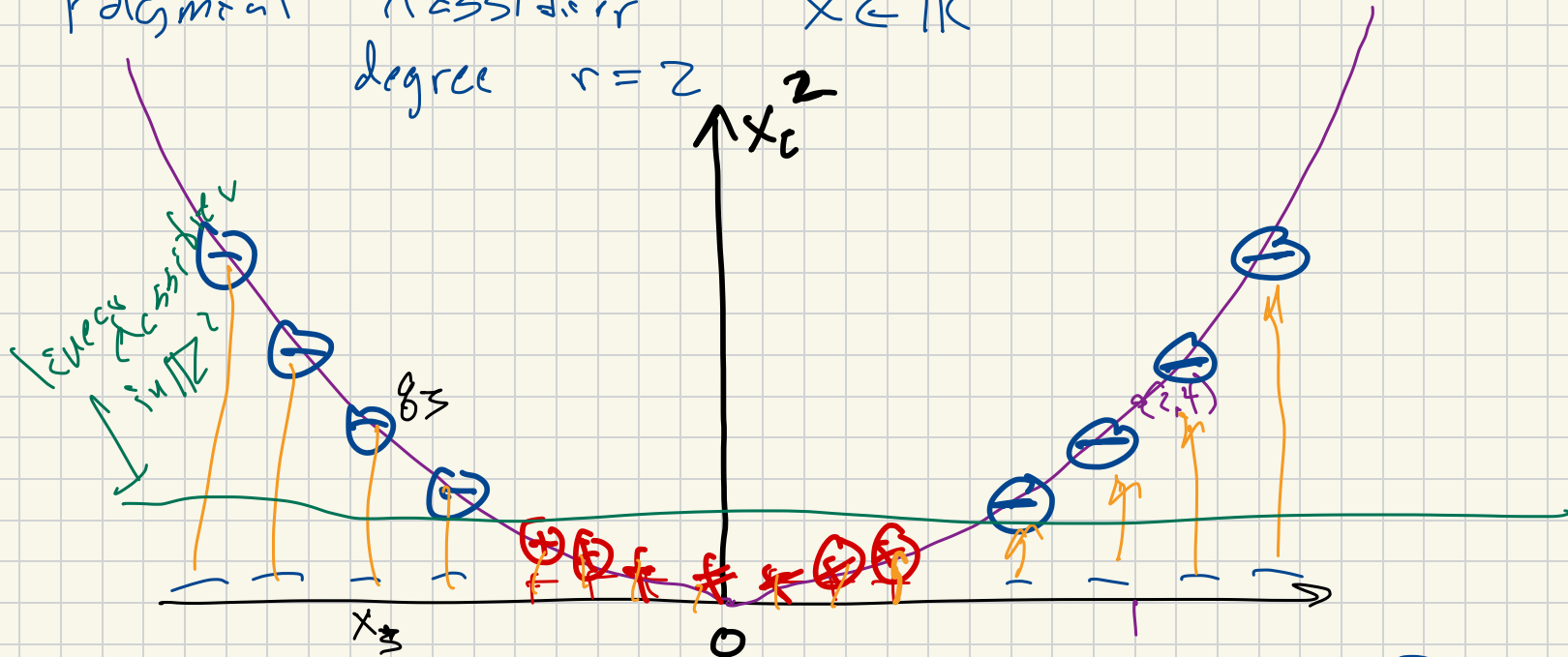
Laplacian

$$\langle p, x \rangle_P = K(p, x) = (\langle p, x \rangle + c)^r$$

polynomial

RBF

Polynomial classifier
 degree $r=2$ $x \in \mathbb{R}$



$x_i \rightarrow g_i = (x_i, x_i^2) \in \mathbb{R}^2$ $x_i \in \mathbb{R}$

Option #1 Polynomial Expansion

linearize polynomial

example $P_i = (P_1, P_2) \in \mathbb{R}^2$ degree 2 expansion

$$g_i = (1, P_1, P_2, P_1^2, P_2^2, P_1 \cdot P_2) \in \mathbb{R}^6$$

new degree $\min(\mathcal{O}(d^r), r^d)$

Can I expand for Gaussian kernel $e^{-\|x-p\|^2}$

↳ infinite # dimensions (if n pts $\rightarrow n$ -dimension)

↳ approx w/ $\frac{1}{\epsilon^2}$ -dim error $\leq \epsilon$

Option #2

Mistake counter \rightarrow

Kernel Perceptron

\rightarrow Kernel SVM

change classifier: Mistake Counter

$$w = w + x_i y_i = \sum_{i=1}^m \alpha_i y_i x_i$$

sparse
mostly 0
except for $\binom{1}{y_i}$ mistakes

$$\alpha = (\alpha_1, \alpha_2, \dots, \alpha_n) \in \mathbb{R}^n$$

mistake counter

$\alpha_i = \#$ times
used mistake
on (x_i, y_i)

Predictor function

$$g(p) = \langle w, p \rangle = \left\langle \sum_{i=1}^m \alpha_i y_i x_i, p \right\rangle$$

$$= \sum_{i=1}^m \alpha_i y_i \langle x_i, p \rangle$$

$$= \sum_{i=1}^m \alpha_i y_i K(x_i, p)$$

(non-linear?)
Kernel

Kernel Perceptron

0. Init: $\alpha = (0, 0, \dots, 0, 0) \in \mathbb{R}^n$

choose some $\alpha_i = 1$ $i = [1, \dots, n]$

if Gaussian kernel
always separable?
↳ always works!

1. repeat

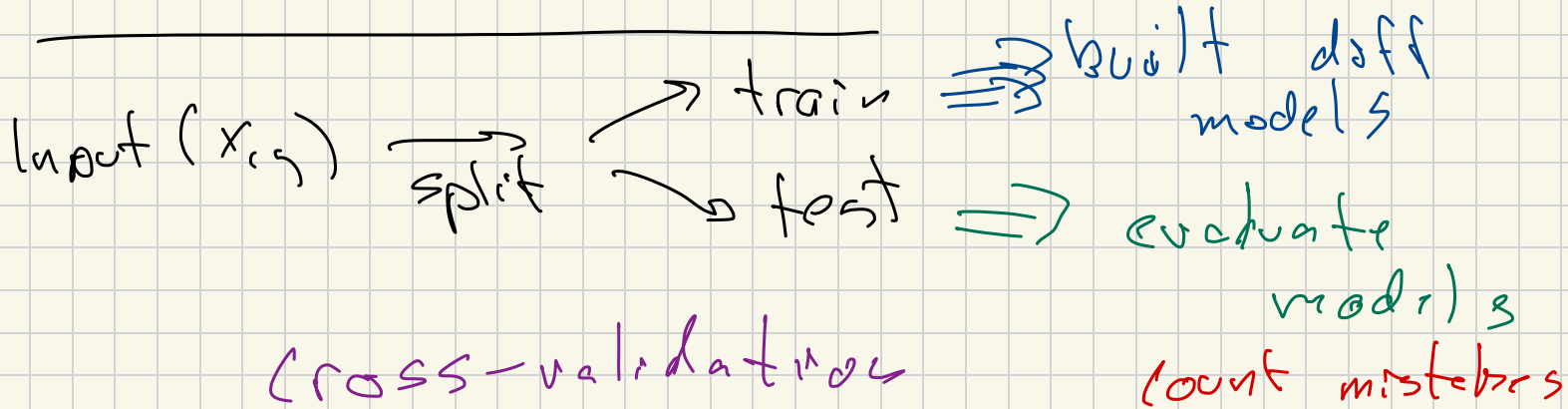
if some $(x, y_i) \in (X, y)$
 $\sum_{j=1}^m \alpha_j y_j \langle x_j, x_i \rangle < 0$

Replace $\rightarrow \langle x_j, x_i \rangle$

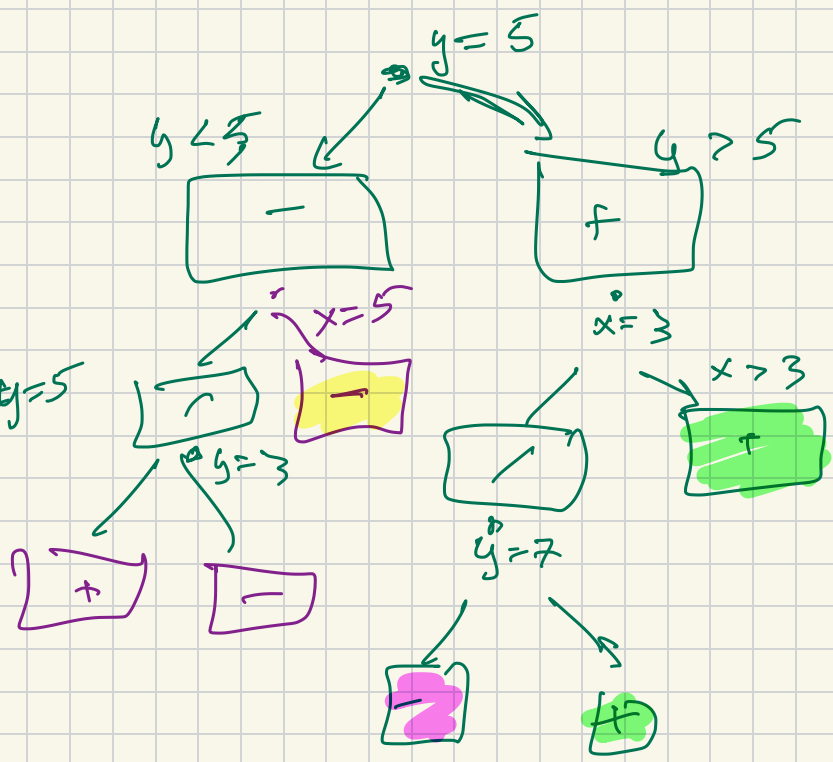
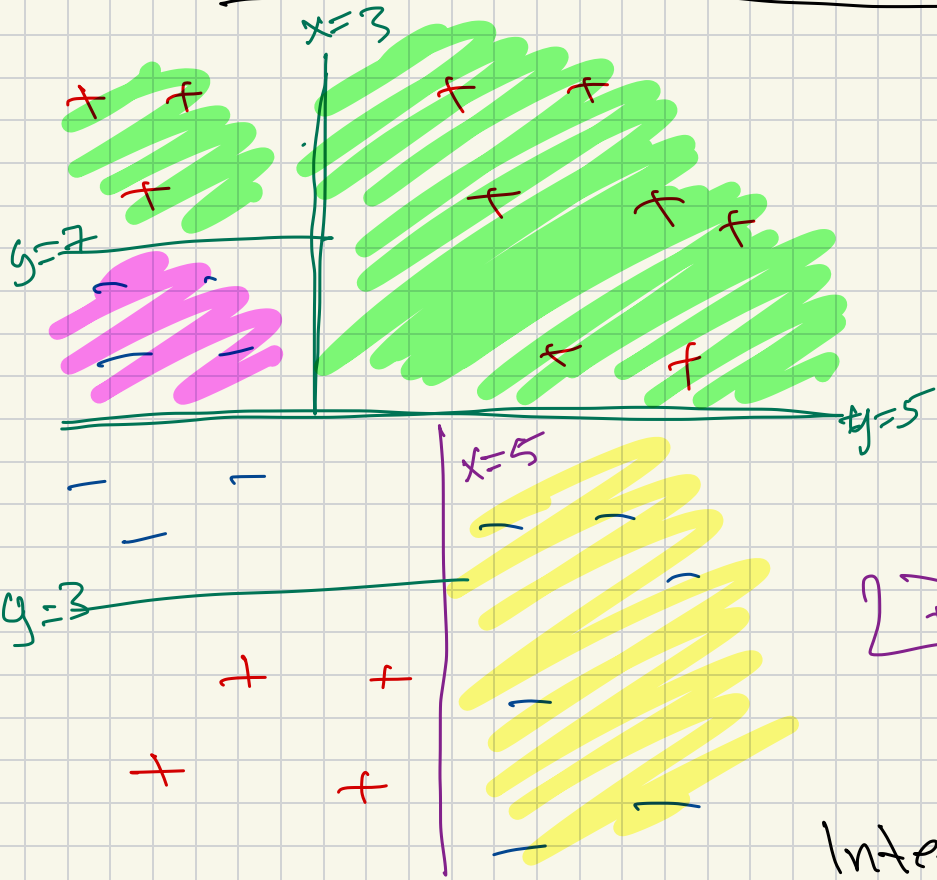
then $\alpha_i = \alpha_i + 1$

2. Return $g(\cdot) = \sum_{j=1}^m \alpha_j y_j \langle x_j, \cdot \rangle$

Which version to use?



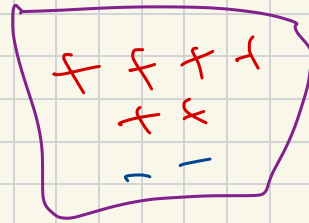
Decision Trees $X \subset \mathbb{R}^{d=2}$



Interpretable?

How to choose split?

- Usually for many ^{all} splits, see which is best.
 $O(nd)$ time.



Gini Impurity Index

$$P_+ = \frac{\# (+ \text{ pts})}{\text{total } \# \text{ pts}} = \text{eg. } \frac{6}{8}$$

$$P_- = \frac{\# (- \text{ pts})}{\text{total pts}} = \frac{2}{8}$$

$$G = P_+(1-P_+) + (P_-(1-P_-))$$

Random Forests \Rightarrow XGBoost

1. For S ($=100$) steps
Subsample data (x^j, y^j) (X, y) ^{75%}

2. For each, build Decision Tree
 T_j on (x^j, y^j)

3. Build linear model

$$g(p) = \sum_{j=1}^S \alpha_j T_j(p)$$