

# Lecture 2:

## Complexity Theory Through the Lens of Kolmogorov Complexity

Igor Carboni Oliveira

University of Warwick



CIRM - Randomness, Information & Complexity

February/2024

# Plan for the Week

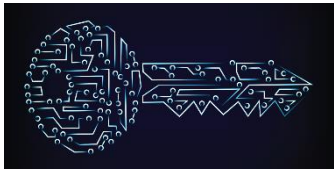
## Lecture 1 (Monday)



Probabilistic Notions of (Time-Bounded) Kolmogorov Complexity

“**Unconditional** results & applications to average-case complexity”

## Lecture 2 (Tuesday)



OWF      P vs NP

Connections to Cryptography and Complexity Theory

“Major questions in complexity are **equivalent** to statements about Kolmogorov Complexity”

## Lecture 3 (Thursday)

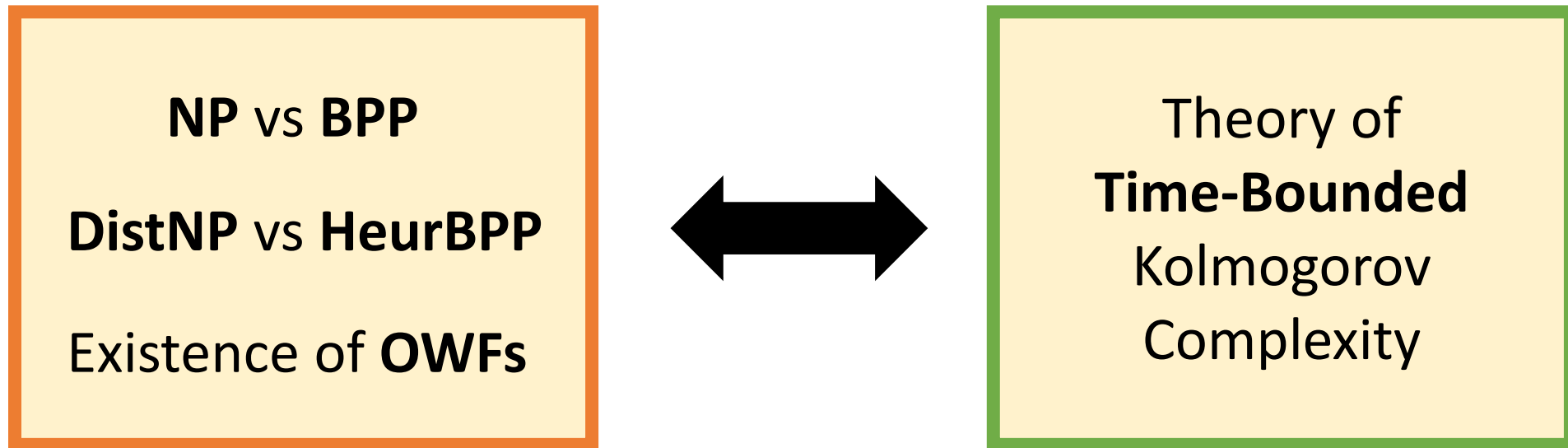
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40
41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50
51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60
61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70
71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80
81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90
91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100

Connections to Algorithms (explicit constructions, generating primes, etc.)

“Existence of large primes with efficient short descriptions”

# What this lecture is about

**Computational Complexity Theory** versus **Kolmogorov Complexity Theory**



Based on joint work with **Shuichi Hirahara**, **Rahul Ilango**, **Zhenjian Lu**, and **Mikito Nanashima**

# Key principles of Kolmogorov complexity

Incompressibility

Symmetry of Information (Sol)

Coding



Language Compression

**Q.** Do these principles survive  
in the **time-bounded** setting?

(even predates the P vs NP problem [Levin'03])

**Results:**

**Equivalences** to main conjectures  
of complexity theory

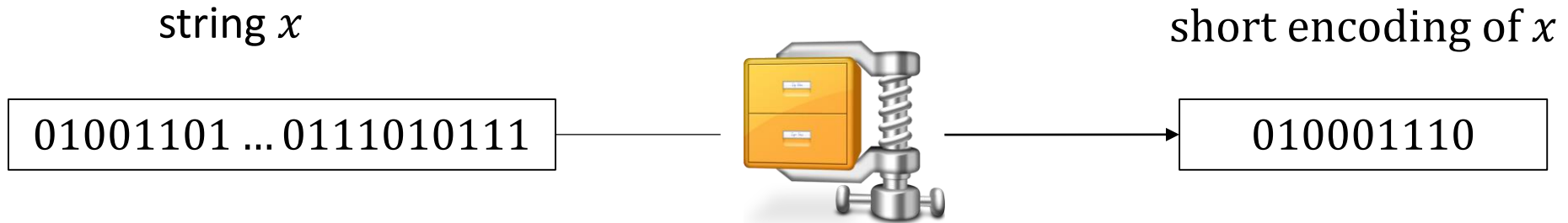
		
$\nexists$ i. o. OWFs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Average-case <b>conditional coding</b></li> <li>• Average-case <b>conditional language compression</b></li> <li>• Average-case <b>Sol</b></li> </ul>	
$NP \subseteq BPP$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Worst-case <b>conditional coding</b></li> <li>• Worst-case <b>conditional language compression</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Worst-case <b>Sol</b> (<math>NP \subseteq AvgBPP</math> suffices)</li> </ul>
$NP \subseteq HeurBPP$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Independent average-case” <b>conditional coding</b></li> <li>• “Independent average-case” <b>conditional language compression</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Independent average-case” <b>Sol</b></li> </ul>

Almost complete picture, but fully understanding the role of **Symmetry of Information** remains a mystery

# Background and Main Result

(Focus on *Symmetry of Information* and **OWFs**)

# Kolmogorov Complexity

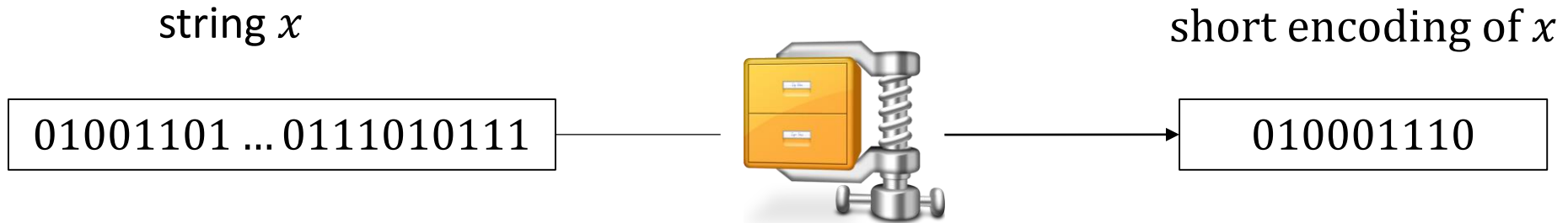


Kolmogorov Complexity:

$$K(x) = \min_M \{|M| : U(M) \text{ outputs } x\}$$

"minimum length of a **program** that recovers  $x$ "

# Kolmogorov Complexity



Conditional Kolmogorov Complexity:

$$K(x | y) = \min_M \{|M| : U(M, y) \text{ outputs } x\}$$

"minimum length of a program that recovers  $x$  given  $y$ "



# Time-Bounded Kolmogorov Complexity

$t$ -time-bounded Kolmogorov complexity:

$$K^t(x) = \min_M \{ |M| : U(M) \text{ outputs } x \text{ within } t(|x|) \text{ steps} \}$$



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$$K(x, y) \lesssim K(x) + K(y | x)$$

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$$K(x) - K(x | y) \approx K(y) - K(y | x)$$

$$H(\mathbf{X}) - H(\mathbf{X} | \mathbf{Y}) = H(\mathbf{Y}) - H(\mathbf{Y} | \mathbf{X})$$

Sol Principle in Shannon's  
Information Theory

# Symmetry of Information

$$K(x, y) \lesssim K(x) + K(y | x)$$

Symmetry of information (Sol) for time-unbounded Kolmogorov complexity:

$$K(x, y) \gtrsim K(x) + K(y | x)$$

Does symmetry of information hold in the **time-bounded** setting, for  $K^t$ ?

$$K^t(x, y) \geq K^{\text{poly}(t)}(x) + K^{\text{poly}(t)}(y | x) - O(\log t(|x| + |y|))$$



# Symmetry of Information and One-Way Functions

**Definition** (One-Way Functions):

An efficiently computable function  $f: \{0,1\}^n \rightarrow \{0,1\}^n$  is a one-way function if for every **probabilistic** polynomial-time algorithm  $A$ ,

$$\Pr_{x \sim \{0,1\}^n} [A(f(x)) \in f^{-1}(f(x))] \leq 1/n^{\omega(1)}$$



# Symmetry of Information and One-Way Functions

## Definition (One-Way Function)

An efficiently computable function  $f$  is a one-way function if for every polynomial  $p$ , there is no algorithm  $A$  such that  $A(f(x)) = x$  for all  $x \in \{0, 1\}^n$  with probability  $\geq 1/p(n)$ .

$x \sim \{0, 1\}^n$

OWFs are both **necessary** and **sufficient** for:

- Private-key encryption [GM84, HILL99]
- Pseudorandom generators [HILL99]
- Authentication schemes [FS90]
- Pseudorandom functions [GGM84]
- Digital signatures [Rompel90]
- Commitment schemes [Naor90]
- Coin-tossing [Blum84]

....



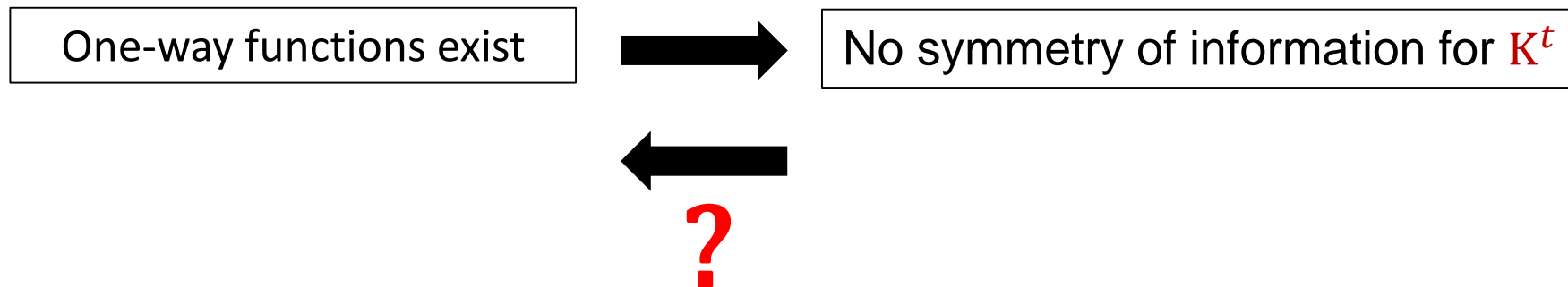
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**Theorem** [Longpré-Watanabe'95]:



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**Two key points:**

- **Average-case** symmetry of information? --- Consider “average” pairs  $(x, y)$
- **Probabilistic** versions of time-bounded Kolmogorov complexity?

# Probabilistic Versions of Kolmogorov Complexity



Randomized  $t$ -time-bounded Kolmogorov complexity:

$$\text{rK}^t(x) = \min_k \left\{ k : \exists t(|x|) \text{ time program } M \in \{0,1\}^k \text{ s. t. } \Pr_{\text{randomness of } M} [M \text{ outputs } x] \geq \frac{2}{3} \right\}$$

There exists a **fixed** small (randomized) program that outputs  $x$  **w.h.p over its internal randomness**

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Probabilistic  $t$ -time-bounded Kolmogorov complexity:

$$pK^t(x) = \min_k \left\{ k : \Pr_{w \in \{0,1\}^{t(|x|)}} [\exists M \in \{0,1\}^k \text{ s. t. } M(w) \text{ outputs } x \text{ within } t(|x|) \text{ steps}] \geq \frac{2}{3} \right\}$$

For **most**  $w$ , there exists a small program, **which can depend on  $w$** , that outputs  $x$  given  $w$

# Symmetry of Information and One-Way Functions

## Theorem:

One-way functions do not exist



“Average-case” Sol for  
 $\text{pK}^{\text{poly}}$  holds

The following are equivalent:

- One-way functions do not exist.
- For every poly-time-samplable distribution  $\{D_n\}$  over  $\{0,1\}^n \times \{0,1\}^n$ , constant  $c \geq 0$ , and sufficiently large  $t \geq \text{poly}(n)$ , there are infinitely many  $n$  such that

$$\Pr_{(x,y) \sim D_n} [\text{pK}^t(x, y) \geq \text{pK}^t(x) + \text{pK}^t(y | x) - \log t(n)] \geq 1 - 1/n^c$$

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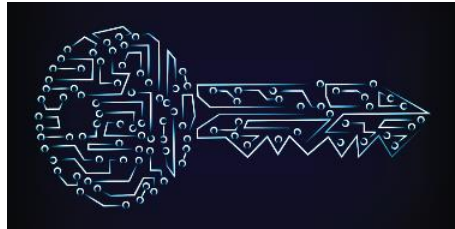
“Average-case” Sol for  
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The following are equivalent:

- **Infinitely-often** one-way functions do not exist.
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$$\Pr_{(x,y) \sim D_n} [\text{pK}^t(x, y) \geq \text{pK}^t(x) + \text{pK}^t(y | x) - \log t(n)] \geq 1 - 1/n^c$$

# Relevance to the foundations of cryptography



## **Failure of symmetry of information**

for a non-negligible fraction of pairs  $(x,y)$  of strings produced by a **samplable distribution** is all we need to construct key cryptographic primitives and protocols



What about  $rK^{\text{poly}}$  ?

# Symmetry of Information and One-Way Functions

## Theorem:

Quasipoly-time secure one-way functions do not exist



“Average-case” Sol for  $rK^{\text{quasipoly}}$  holds

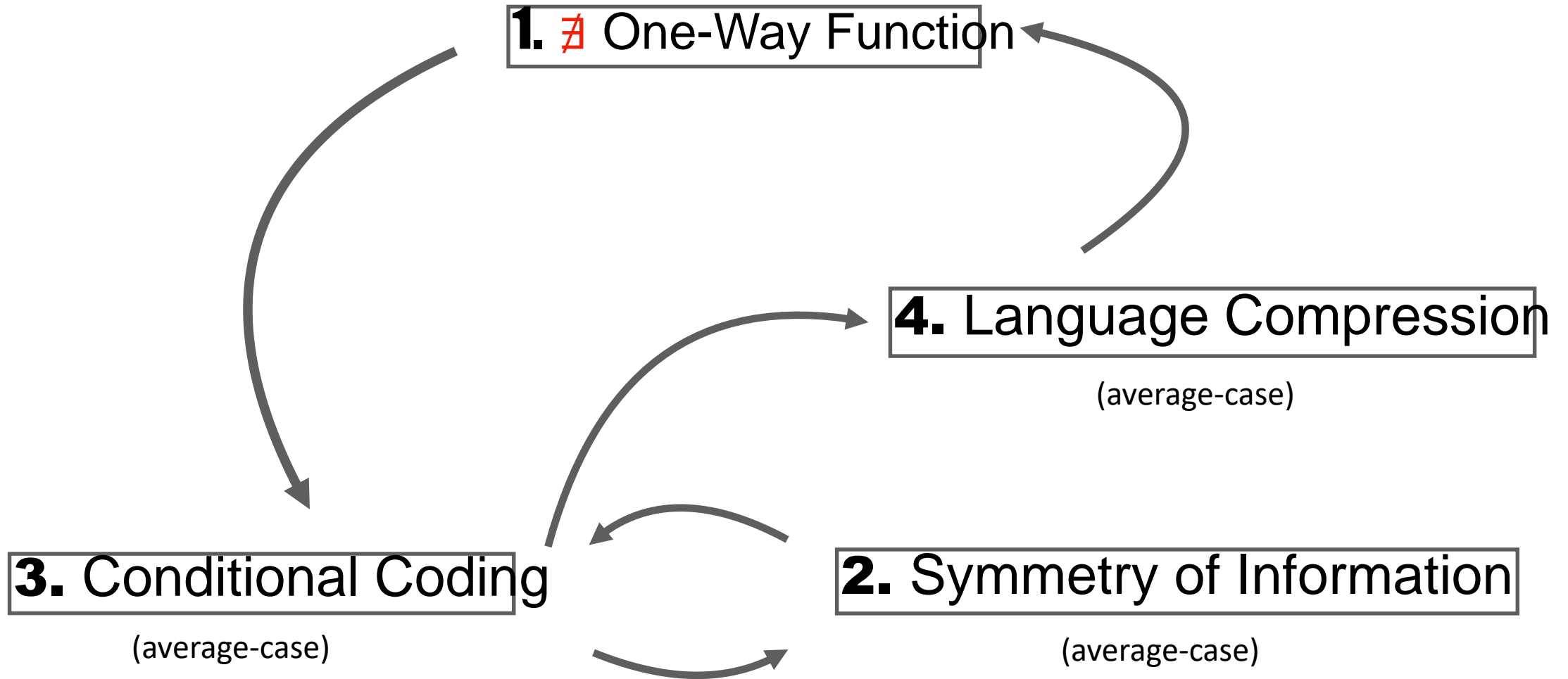
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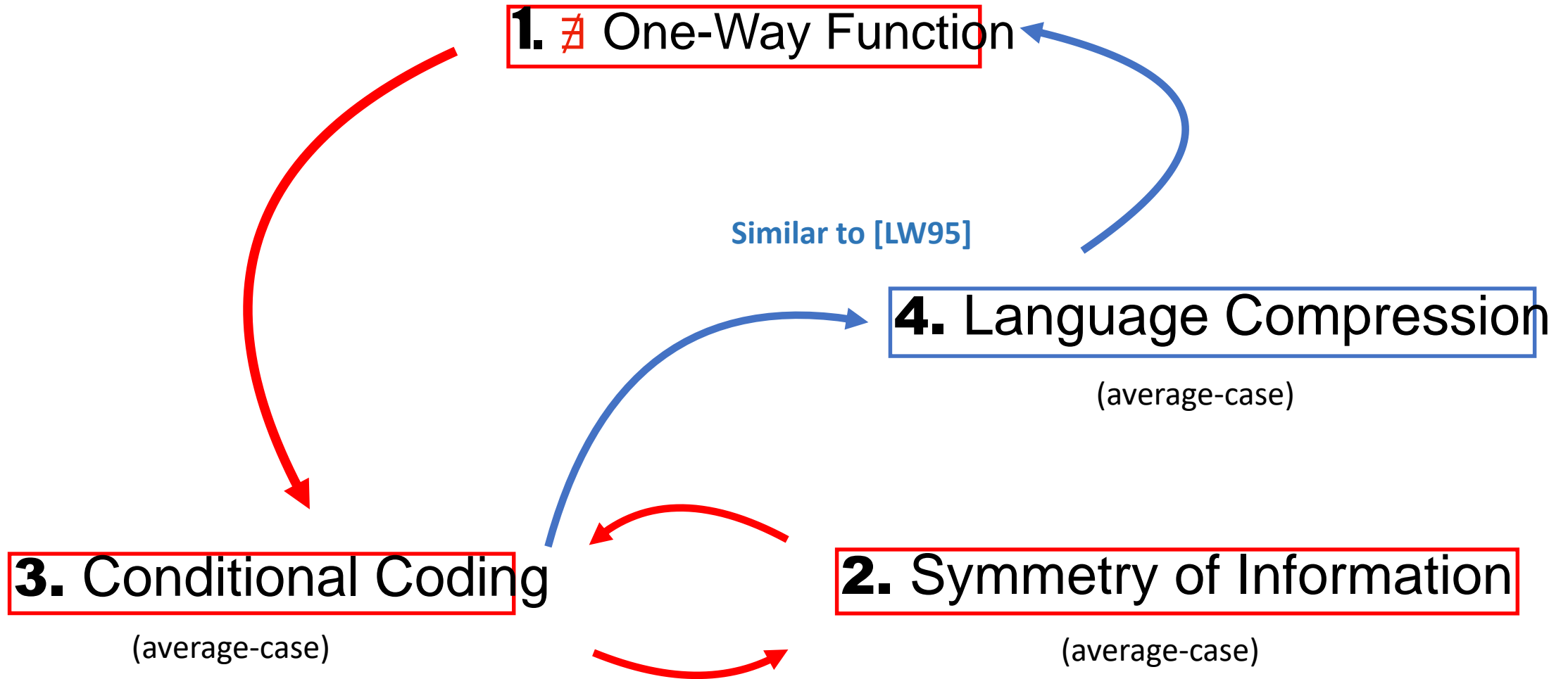
$$\Pr_{(x,y) \sim D_n} [rK^t(x,y) \geq rK^t(x) + rK^t(y|x) - \log t(n)] \geq 1 - 1/\exp(\log^c n)$$

# Techniques ( $pK^{\text{poly}}$ )

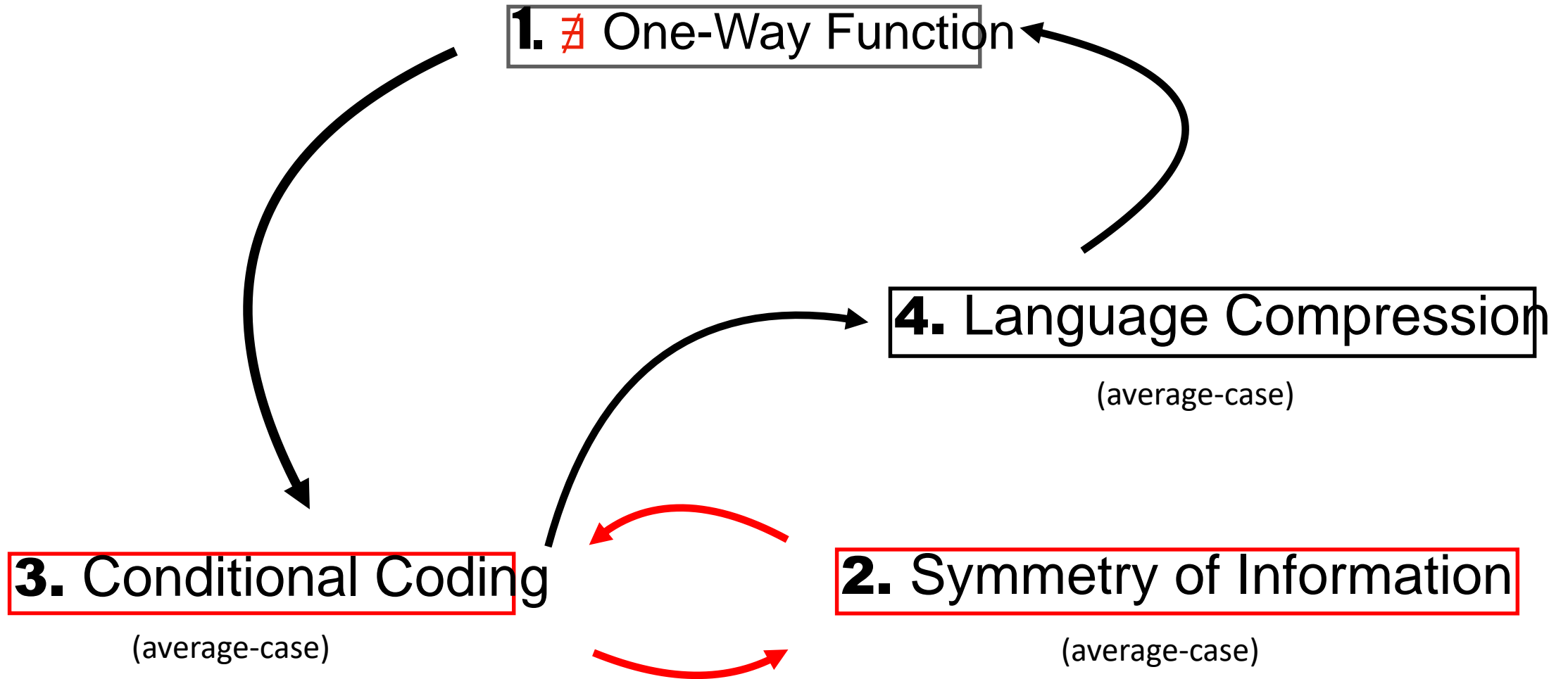
# Map of Proofs for $pK^{\text{poly}}$



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# Coding Theorem

Coding theorem for **time-unbounded** Kolmogorov complexity:

A computable distribution  $D$  that  
samples  $x$  with probability  $D(x)$



$$K(x) \lesssim \log \left( \frac{1}{D(x)} \right)$$

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We don't have a coding theorem for  $K^{\text{poly}}$

An **efficiently samplable** distribution  $D$  that samples  $x$  with probability  $D(x)$



$$K^{\text{poly}}(x) \approx \log\left(\frac{1}{D(x)}\right)$$

# Coding Theorem

**Theorem** [Lu-Oliveira-Zimand'22]:

For every poly-time-samplable distribution  $\{D_n\}$  over  $\{0,1\}^n$ , and every  $x \in \text{support}(D_n)$

$$\text{pK}^{\text{poly}}(x) \leq \log\left(\frac{1}{D_n(x)}\right) + O(\log n)$$

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**Incompressibility (extension of counting argument):**

$$K(x) \gtrsim \log(1/D_n(x)) \text{ w. h. p over } x \sim D_n$$

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**Corollary:**

$$\text{pK}^{\text{poly}}(x) \approx \log(1/D_n(x)) \text{ w. h. p over } x \sim D_n$$

# Conditional Coding

**Definition** (Conditional Coding for pK):

For every poly-time-samplable distribution  $\{D_n\}$  over  $\{0,1\}^n \times \{0,1\}^n$ , and every  $(x, y) \in \text{support}(D_n)$

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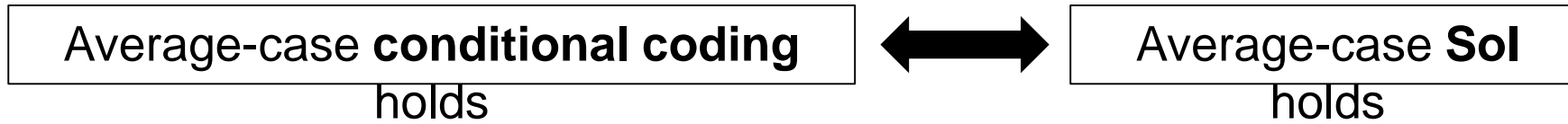
**Definition** (Average-Case Conditional Coding for pK):

For every poly-time-samplable distribution  $\{D_n\}$  over  $\{0,1\}^n \times \{0,1\}^n$ ,

$$\Pr_{(x,y) \sim D_n} \left[ \text{pK}^{\text{poly}}(x | y) \lesssim \log \left( \frac{1}{D_n(x | y)} \right) \right] \geq 1 - \frac{1}{\text{poly}(n)}$$

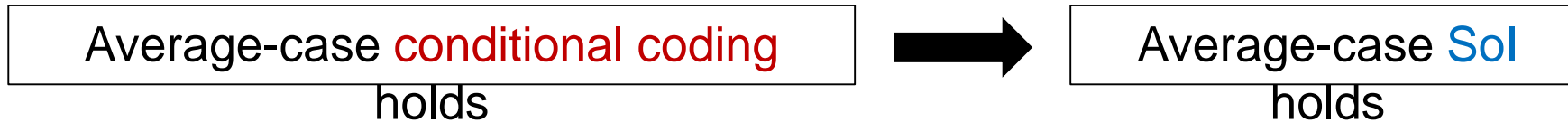
# Conditional Coding and SoI

Lemma:



# Conditional Coding and Sol

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Proof:

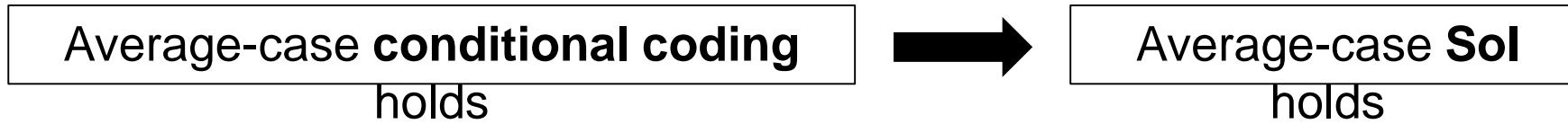
$$\Pr_{(x,y) \sim D_n} \left[ \text{pK}^{\text{poly}}(x | y) \lesssim \log \left( \frac{1}{D(x | y)} \right) \right] \geq 1 - 1/n^{O(1)}$$

$$\Pr_{(x,y) \sim D_n} \left[ \text{pK}^{\text{poly}}(x, y) \gtrsim \text{pK}^{\text{poly}}(y) + \text{pK}^{\text{poly}}(x | y) \right] \geq 1 - 1/n^{O(1)}$$



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Lemma:



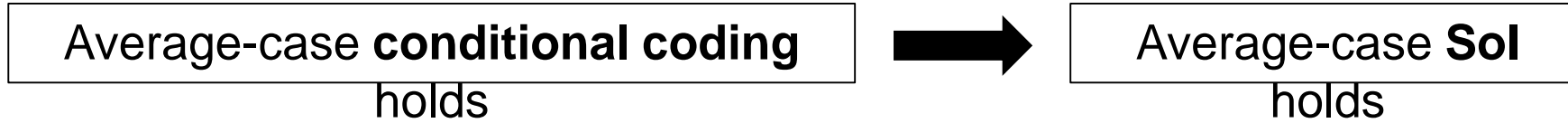
Proof:  $(x, y) \sim D$

$$pK^{\text{poly}}(x | y) \lesssim \log \left( \frac{1}{D(x | y)} \right)$$

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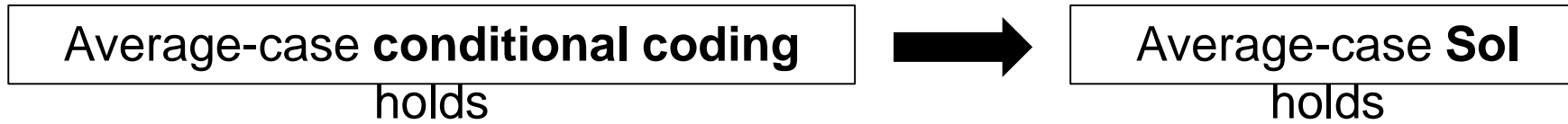
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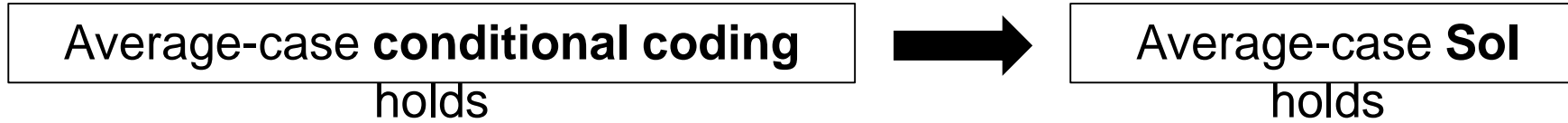
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$$pK^{\text{poly}}(x | y) \lesssim \log \left( \frac{1}{D(x | y)} \right)$$

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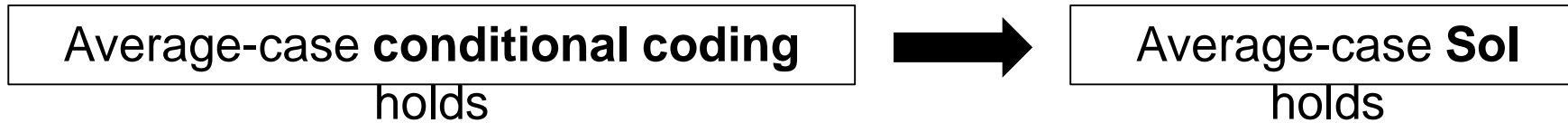
$$pK^{\text{poly}}(x | y) \lesssim \log \left( \frac{D^{(2)}(y)}{D(x, y)} \right)$$

Because  $D(x | y) = \frac{D(x, y)}{D^{(2)}(y)}$ .

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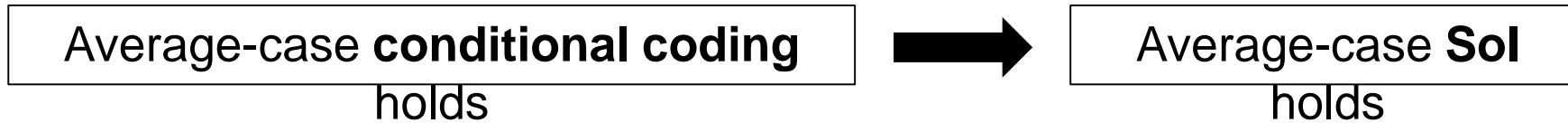
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Because by coding theorem,  $pK^{\text{poly}}(x, y) \approx \log \left( \frac{1}{D(x, y)} \right)$   
and  $pK^{\text{poly}}(y) \approx \log \left( \frac{1}{D^{(2)}(y)} \right)$  for most  $(x, y) \sim D$

# Conditional Coding and Sol

Lemma:

Average-case **conditional coding**  
holds



Average-case **Sol**  
holds

Proof:  $(x, y) \sim D$



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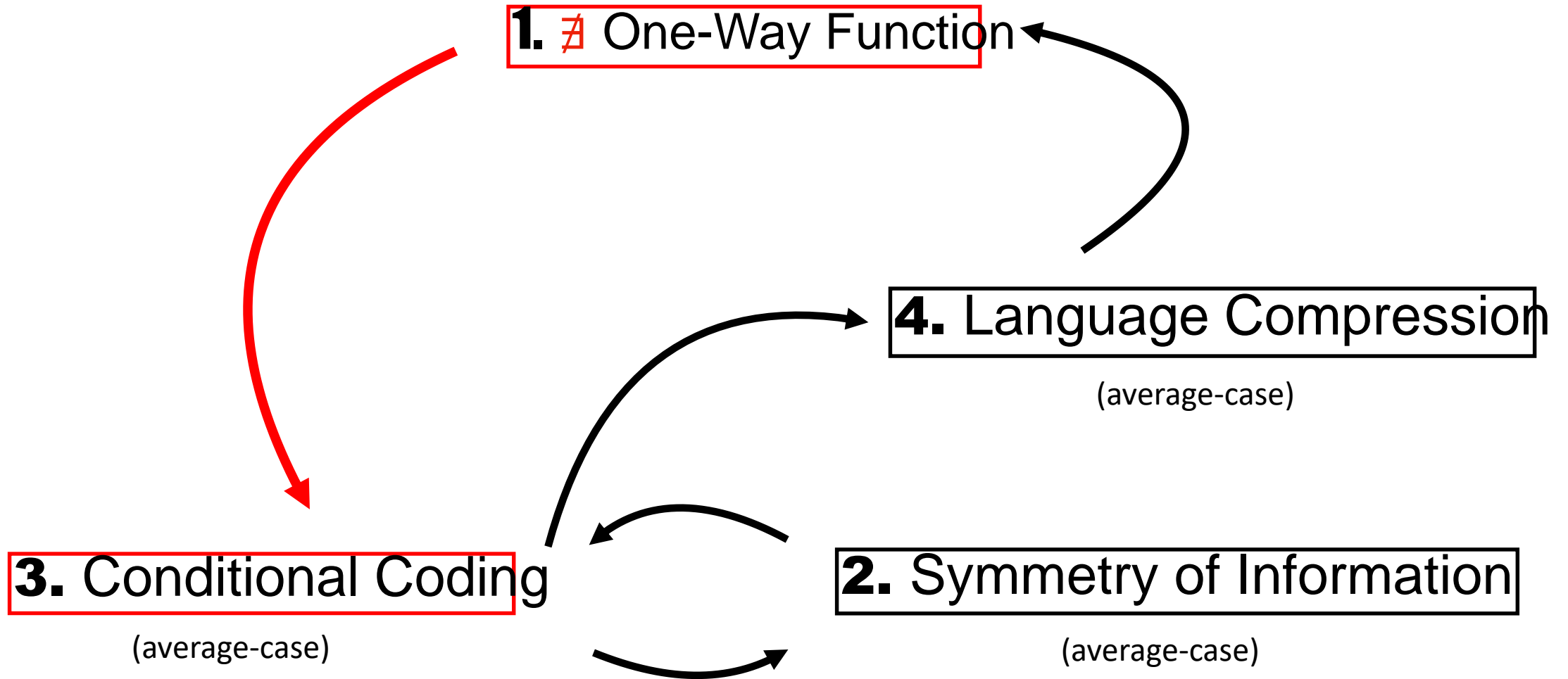
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# Map of Proofs for $pK^{\text{poly}}$





# OWFs and Average-Case Conditional Coding

**Lemma:**

Infinitely-often one-way  
functions do not exist



Average-case conditional coding  
holds

**Proof Sketch:** Assume we can invert OWFs, we want to show w.h.p over  $(x, y) \sim D$

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**Theorem** (Extrapolators) [Impagliazzo-Luby'89, Impagliazzo-Levin'90]:

One-way functions do not exist



**Efficiently** sample  $D(\cdot | y)$  (approximately) for most  $y \sim D^{(2)}$

# OWFs and Average-Case Conditional Coding

Lemma:

Infinitely-often one-way functions do not exist



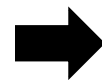
Average-case conditional coding holds

Proof Sketch: Assume we can invert OWFs, we want to show w.h.p over  $(x, y) \sim D$

$$pK^{\text{poly}}(x | y) \lesssim \log \left( \frac{1}{D(x | y)} \right)$$

Theorem (Extrapolators) [Impagliazzo-Luby'89, Impagliazzo-Levin'90]:

One-way functions do not exist



**Efficiently** sample  $D(\cdot | y)$  (approximately) for most  $y \sim D^{(2)}$

Idea:

- Use the efficient **extrapolator** as a proxy for the conditional distribution
- Apply the **original** coding theorem!

# Extrapolation

**Theorem** [Impagliazzo-Luby'89, Impagliazzo-Levin'90]:

One-way functions do not exist



Efficient simulation of  $D(\cdot | y)$  for most  $y$   
 $\sim D^{(2)}$

If infinitely-often OWFs do not exist, then for every poly-time-samplable  $\{D_n\}$  over  $\{0,1\}^n \times \{0,1\}^n$  and  $c > 0$ , there is a poly-time randomized algorithm **EXT**, such that for all  $n$

$$\Pr_{y \sim D_n^{(2)}} \left[ L_1(\mathbf{EXT}(y), D_n(\cdot | y)) \leq \frac{1}{n^c} \right] \geq 1 - \frac{1}{n^c}$$

# OWFs and Average-Case Conditional Coding

## Lemma:

Infinately-often one-way functions do not exist



Average-case conditional coding holds

## Proof Sketch:

- W.h.p over  $y \sim D^{(2)}$ , we have  $L_1(\text{EXT}(y), D_n(\cdot | y))$  is small.
- $\text{EXT}(y)$  runs polynomial-time, so it yields some poly-time-samplable distribution  $D'_y$
- We can show  $L_1(D'_y, D_n(\cdot | y))$  implies  $D'_y(x) \approx D_n(x | y)$  for most  $x \sim D(\cdot | y)$
- By the original coding theorem for  $\text{pK}^{\text{poly}}$ , for most  $(x, y) \sim D$ 
  - $\text{pK}^{\text{poly}}(x | y) \lesssim \log\left(\frac{1}{D'_y(x)}\right) \approx \log\left(\frac{1}{D_n(x | y)}\right)$

# OWFs and Average-Case Conditional Coding

## Lemma:

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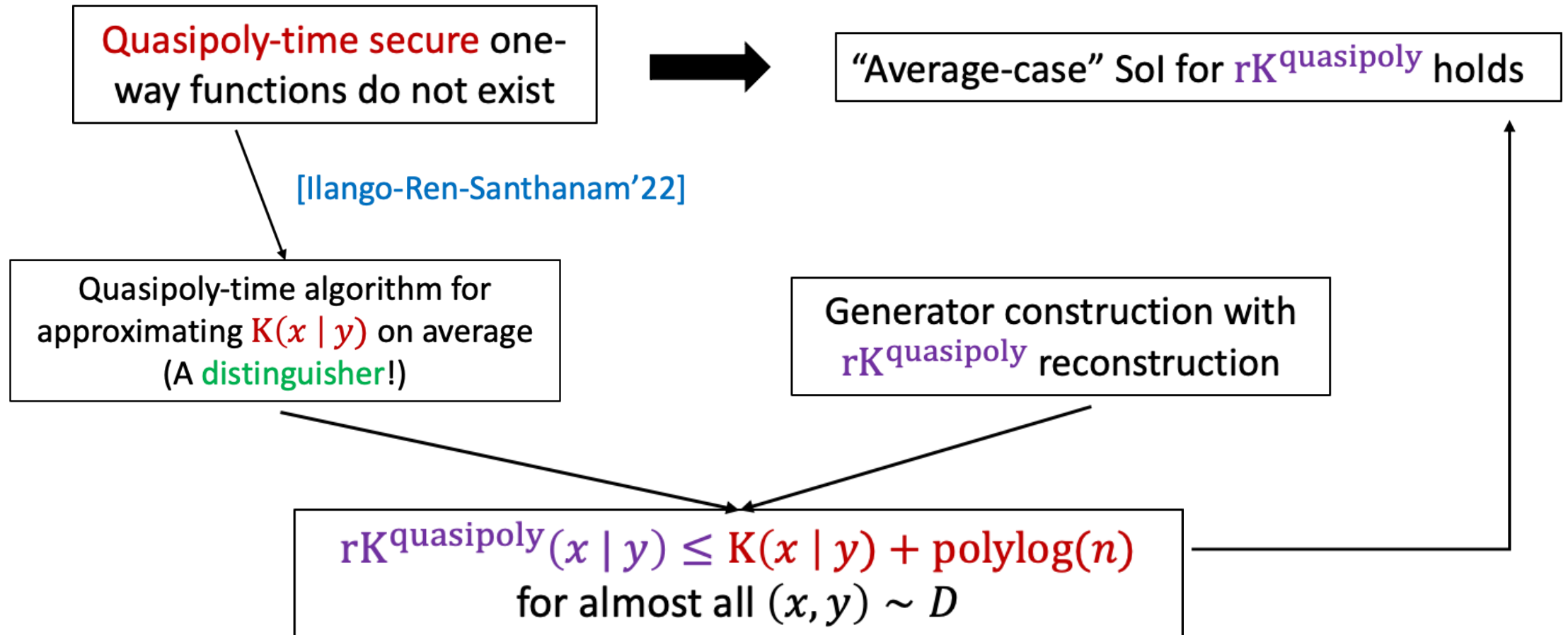


# Techniques ( $rK^{\text{quasipoly}}$ )



**Key Difficulty:** We don't have a coding theorem for  $rK^{\text{poly}}$



# Main Technique for $rK^{\text{quasipoly}}$



(Key Perspective: Meta-Complexity)





# General Theory

		
∄ i. o. OWFs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Average-case <b>conditional coding</b></li><li>• Average-case <b>conditional language compression</b></li><li>• Average-case <b>Sol</b></li></ul>	

		
$\nexists$ i. o. OWFs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Average-case <b>conditional coding</b></li> <li>• Average-case <b>conditional language compression</b></li> <li>• Average-case <b>Sol</b></li> </ul>	
$NP \subseteq BPP$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Worst-case <b>conditional coding</b></li> <li>• Worst-case <b>conditional language compression</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Worst-case <b>Sol</b> (<math>NP \subseteq AvgBPP</math> suffices)</li> </ul>

		
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# Capturing average-case complexity

**Theorem** [This Work]:

DistNP  $\subseteq$  HeurBPP

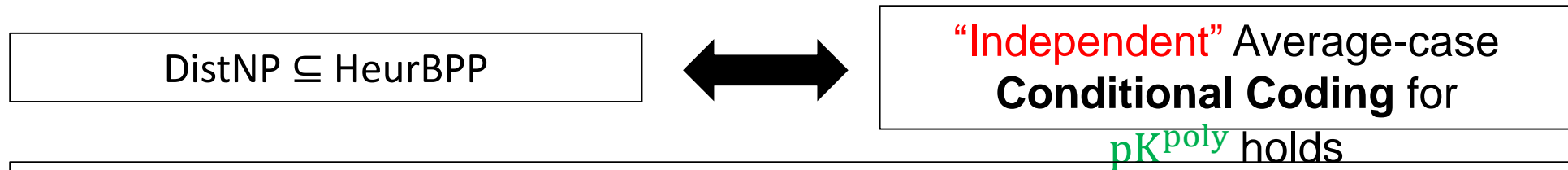


**“Independent”** Average-case  
**Conditional Coding** for  
 $pK^{\text{poly}}$  holds



# Capturing average-case complexity

**Theorem** [This Work]:



The following are equivalent:

- DistNP ⊆ HeurBPP .
- For every poly-time-samplable distributions  $\{D_n\}$  over  $\{0,1\}^n \times \{0,1\}^n$  and  $\{C_n\}$  over  $\{0,1\}^n$ , and for every polynomial  $q$ , there is a polynomial  $p$  such that for all large enough  $n$

$$\Pr_{y \sim C_n, x \sim D_n(\cdot|y)} \left[ pK^{p(n)}(x | y) \leq \log \left( \frac{1}{D_n(x | y)} \right) + \log p(n) \right] \geq 1 - 1/q(n)$$

# Open Problems

	↔	→
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1. Understand the role of **Sol** in complexity theory:

Is there a natural computational assumption equivalent to worst-case **Sol**?

2. Applications of these characterizations?

Main Reference for Lecture 2:

Paper: **“A duality between OWFs and average-case symmetry of information”**  
(2023)

(Joint work with S. Hirahara, R. Ilango, Z. Lu, and M. Nanashima)

Thank you

# Conditional Coding

1. **(Worst-Case Conditional Coding)** There exists a polynomial  $p$  such that for all  $n$ , and  $(x, y) \in \text{Support}(\mathcal{D}_n)$

$$pK^{p(n)}(x | y) \leq \log \frac{1}{\mathcal{D}_n(x | y)} + \log p(n).$$

2. **(Independent Average-Case Conditional Coding)** Let  $\{\mathcal{D}_n\}_{n \in \mathbb{N}}$  and  $\{\mathcal{C}_n\}_{n \in \mathbb{N}}$  be samplable distribution families, where each  $\mathcal{D}_n$  is over  $\{0, 1\}^n \times \{0, 1\}^n$ , and each  $\mathcal{C}_n$  is over the support of the second half of  $\mathcal{D}_n$ . For every polynomial  $q$ , there exists a polynomial  $p$  such that for all  $n$ ,

$$\Pr_{y \sim \mathcal{C}_n, x \sim \mathcal{D}_n(\cdot | y)} \left[ pK^{p(n)}(x | y) \leq \log \frac{1}{\mathcal{D}_n(x | y)} + \log p(n) \right] \geq 1 - \frac{1}{q(n)}.$$

3. **(Average-Case Conditional Coding)** Let  $\{\mathcal{D}_n\}_{n \in \mathbb{N}}$  be samplable distribution family, where each  $\mathcal{D}_n$  is over  $\{0, 1\}^n \times \{0, 1\}^n$ . For every polynomial  $q$ , there exists a polynomial  $p$  such that for all  $n$ ,

$$\Pr_{(x,y) \sim \mathcal{D}_n} \left[ pK^{p(n)}(y | x) \leq \log \frac{1}{\mathcal{D}_n(x | y)} + \log p(n) \right] \geq 1 - \frac{1}{q(n)}.$$

# Language Compression

1. **(Worst-Case Language Compression)** Let  $L \subseteq \{\{0, 1\}^n \times \{0, 1\}^n\}_{n \in \mathbb{N}}$  be a polynomial-time computable set. There exists a polynomial  $p$  such that for all  $n$ , and  $y \in \{0, 1\}^n$ ,

$$x \in L_y \implies \mathbf{pK}^{p(n)}(x | y) \leq \log |L_y| + \log p(n).$$

2. **(Independent Average-Case Language Compression)** Let  $L \subseteq \{\{0, 1\}^n \times \{0, 1\}^n\}_{n \in \mathbb{N}}$  be a recursively enumerable set. Let  $\{\mathcal{D}_n\}_{n \in \mathbb{N}}$  and  $\{\mathcal{C}_n\}_{n \in \mathbb{N}}$  be samplable distribution families, where each  $\mathcal{D}_n$  is over  $\{0, 1\}^n \times \{0, 1\}^n$ , and each  $\mathcal{C}_n$  is over the support of the second half of  $\mathcal{D}_n$ . For every polynomial  $q$ , there exists a polynomial  $p$  such that for all  $n$ ,

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$$\mathbf{Pr}_{(x,y) \sim \mathcal{D}_n} \left[ x \in L_y \implies \mathbf{pK}^{p(n)}(x | y) \leq \log |L_y| + \log p(n) \right] \geq 1 - \frac{1}{q(n)}.$$

# Symmetry of Information

1. **(Worst-Case Symmetry of Information)** There exists a polynomial  $p$  such that for all  $t \geq 2n$  and for all  $n$  and all  $x, y \in \{0, 1\}^n$ ,

$$\mathsf{pK}^t(x, y) \geq \mathsf{pK}^{p(t)}(x | y) + \mathsf{pK}^{p(t)}(y) - \log p(t).$$

2. **(Independent Average-Case Symmetry of Information)** Let  $\{\mathcal{D}_n\}_{n \in \mathbb{N}}$  and  $\{\mathcal{C}_n\}_{n \in \mathbb{N}}$  be samplable distribution families, where each  $\mathcal{D}_n$  is over  $\{0, 1\}^n \times \{0, 1\}^n$ , and each  $\mathcal{C}_n$  is over the support of the second half of  $\mathcal{D}_n$ . For every polynomial  $q$ , there exists a polynomial  $p$  such that for every computable time bound  $t: \mathbb{N} \rightarrow \mathbb{N}$  with  $t(n) \geq p(n)$  and for all  $n$ ,

$$\Pr_{y \sim \mathcal{C}_n, x \sim \mathcal{D}_n(\cdot|y)} \left[ \mathsf{pK}^{t(n)}(x, y) \geq \mathsf{pK}^{t(n)}(x | y) + \mathsf{pK}^{t(n)}(y) - \log t(n) \right] \geq 1 - \frac{1}{q(n)}.$$

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$$\Pr_{(x,y) \sim \mathcal{D}_n} \left[ \mathsf{pK}^{t(n)}(x, y) \geq \mathsf{pK}^{t(n)}(x | y) + \mathsf{pK}^{t(n)}(y) - \log t(n) \right] \geq 1 - \frac{1}{q(n)}.$$