

Stability and Generalization Capability of Subgraph Reasoning Models for Inductive Knowledge Graph Completion

Minsung Hwang, Jaejun Lee, and Joyce Jiyoung Whang*

School of Computing, KAIST

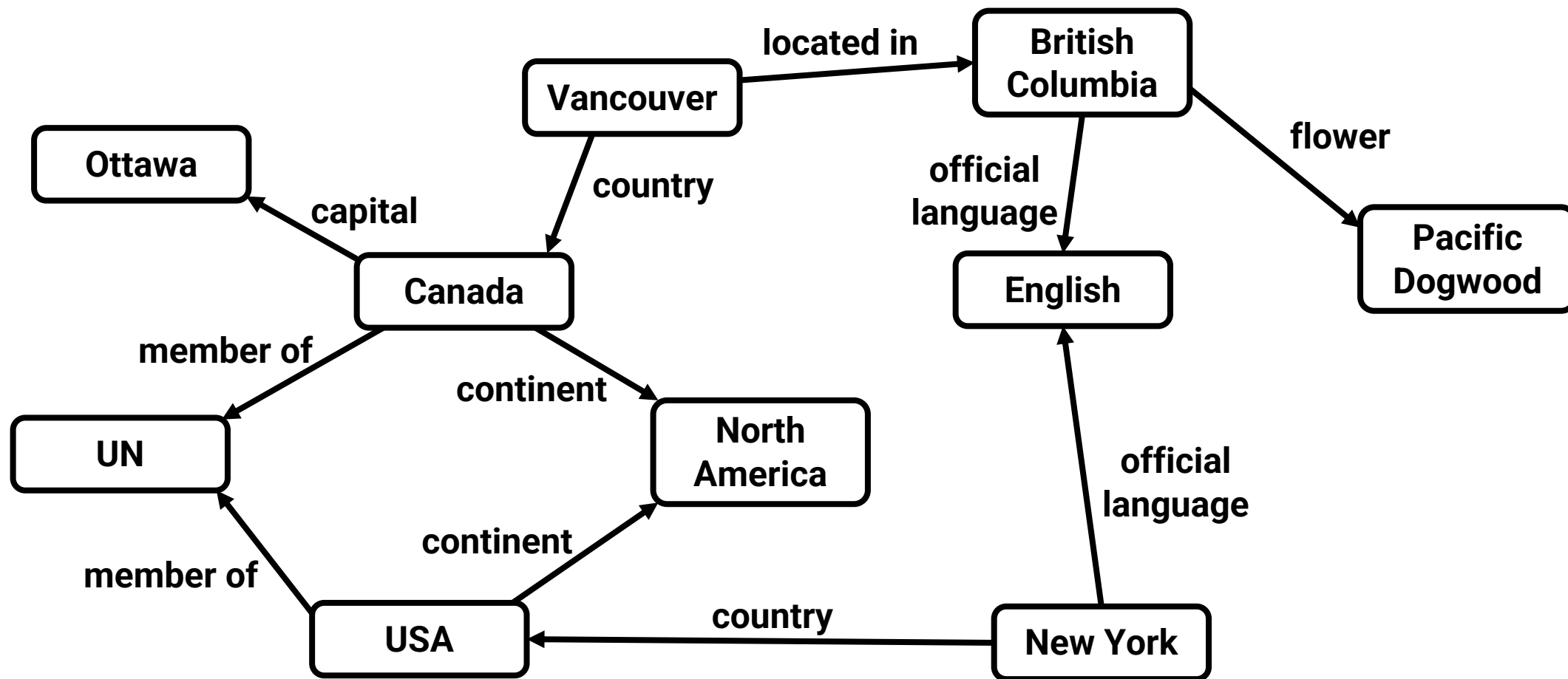
* Corresponding Author

The 42nd International Conference on Machine Learning
(ICML 2025)



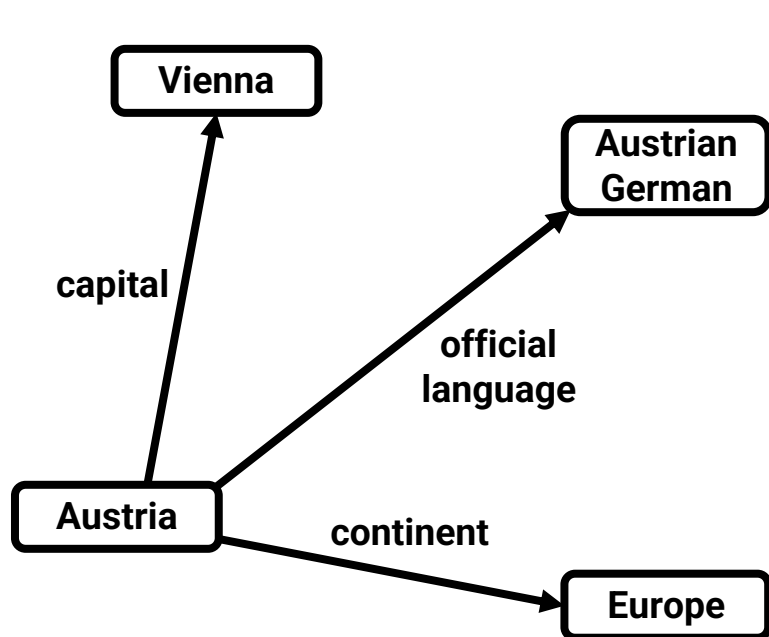
01 Knowledge Graph (KG)

- Represent **real-world knowledge** by modeling **relationships between entities**

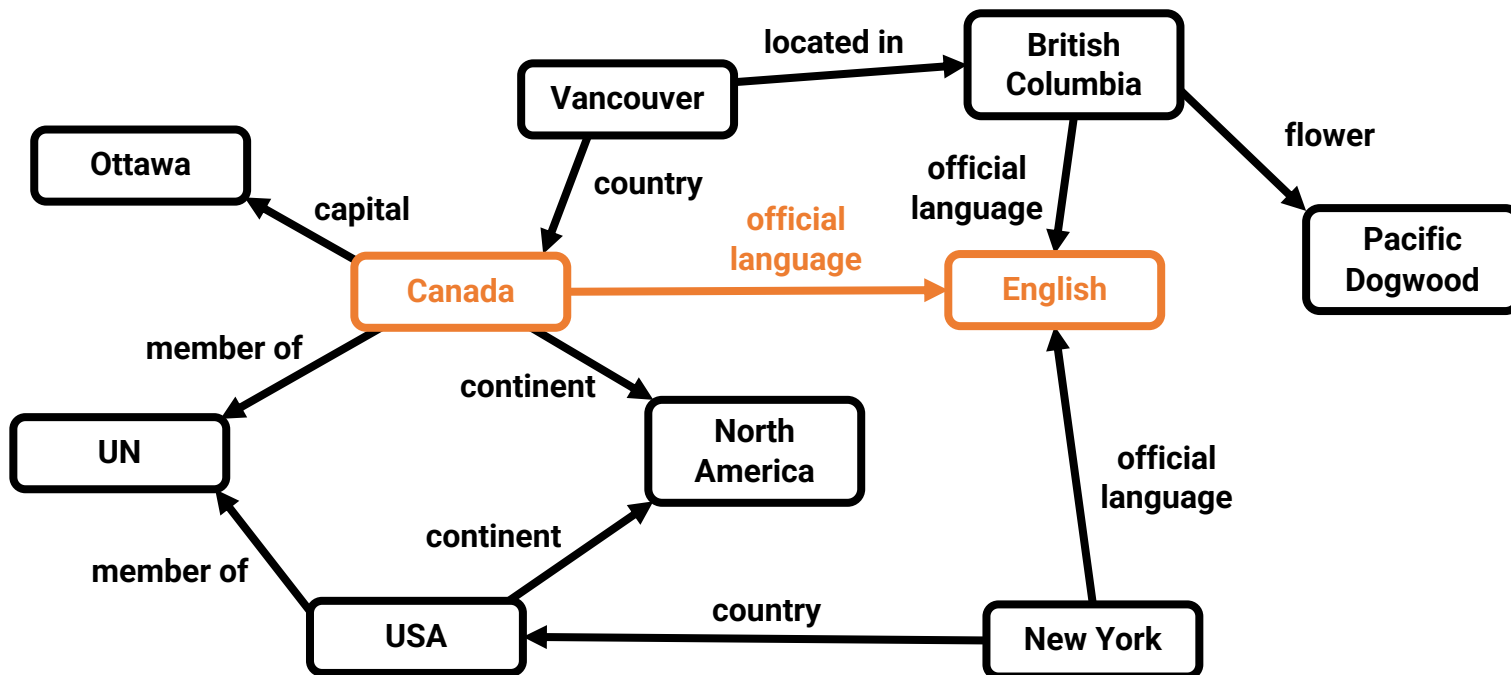


01 Inductive Knowledge Graph Completion (KGC)

- **Predict missing triplets** with knowledge graphs
- KG that appears during **inference** differs from the one used for **training**



Training

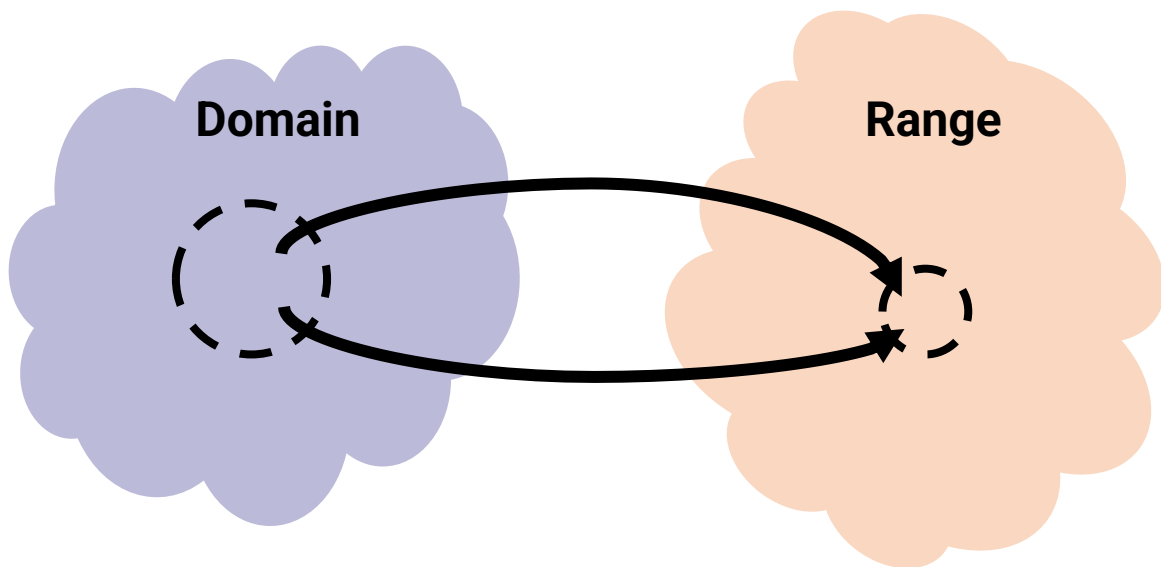


Inference

01 Theoretical Properties

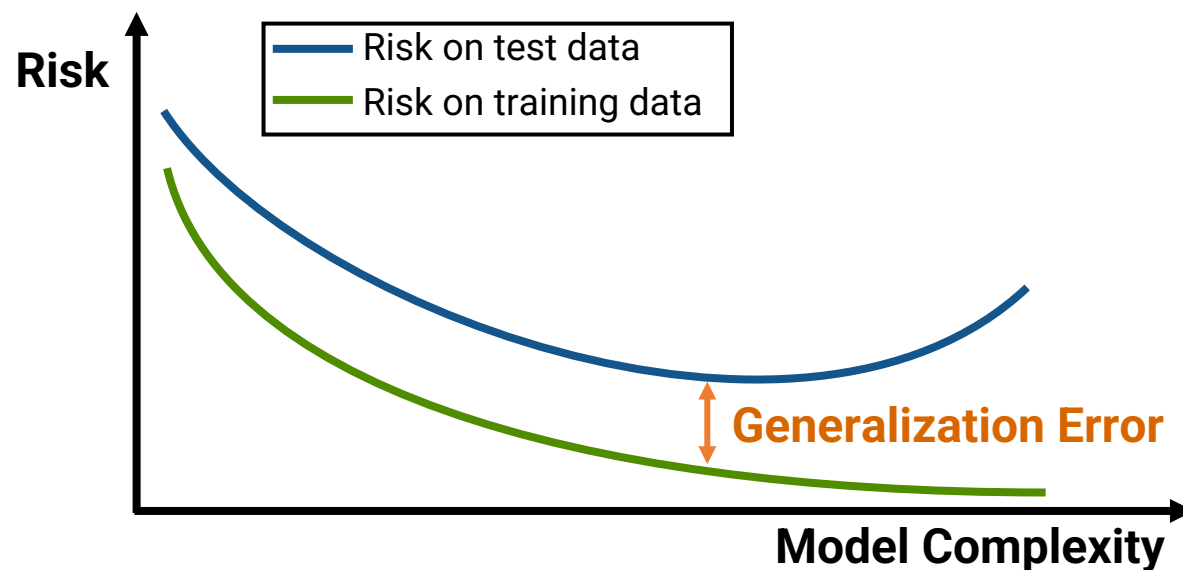
Stability

- **Consistency** of the model's output
- Measured by **Lipschitz constant**



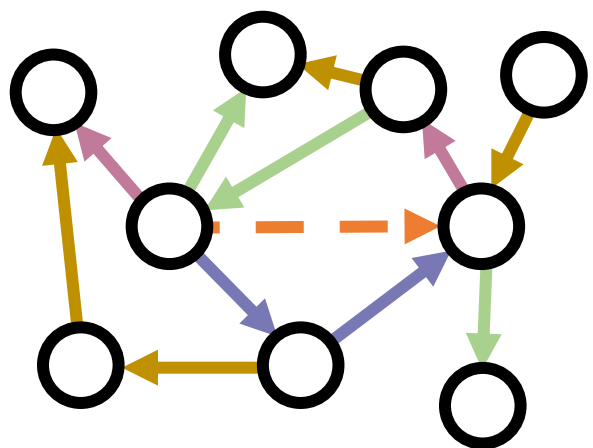
Generalization Capability

- Performance **discrepancy** between **training** and **test** data
- Measured by **generalization bound**



02 General Framework for Subgraph Reasoning Model

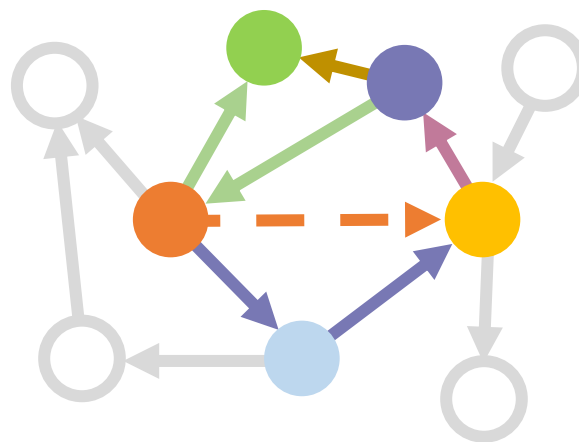
- Determine the validity of a triplet **using the subgraph** extracted around the triplet
 - **Extract a subgraph** associated with a target triplet
 - **Relabel the entities** within the subgraph
 - **Compute a score** of the subgraph through message-passing



Original Knowledge Graph
 $G = (\mathcal{V}, \mathcal{R}, \mathcal{F} \cup \mathcal{T})$



Subgraph
Extractor



Subgraph
 $S = (\mathcal{V}_S, \mathcal{E}_S, \mathcal{R}, \text{INIT}_S, (h, q, t))$



Subgraph
Message Passing
Neural Network

Final score
 $f_w(S)$

02 Subgraph Message Passing Neural Network (SMPNN)

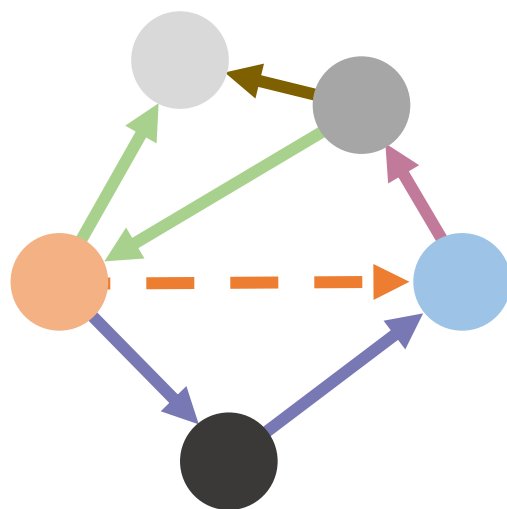
- Compute a score of the subgraph through **message-passing**

$$\mathbf{x}_S^{(0)}(v) = \text{INIT}_S$$

$$\mathcal{M}_S^{(l)}(v) = \{\{\text{MSG}^{(l)}(\mathbf{x}_S^{(l-1)}(u), \mathbf{x}_S^{(l-1)}(v), r, q) \mid (r, u) \in \mathcal{N}_S(v)\}\}$$

$$\mathbf{x}_S^{(l)}(v) = \text{UPD}^{(l)}\left(\mathbf{x}_S^{(\theta(l))}(v), \text{AGG}^{(l)}\left(\mathcal{M}_S^{(l)}(v)\right)\right)$$

$$f_w(S) = \text{RD}\left(\mathbf{x}_S^{(L)}(h), \mathbf{x}_S^{(L)}(t), \text{GRD}\left(\{\{\mathbf{x}_S^{(L)}(u) \mid u \in \mathcal{V}_S\}\}, q\right)\right)$$



**Subgraph
Message Passing
Neural Network**

Final score
 $f_w(S)$

02 Subgraph Message Passing Neural Network (SMPNN)

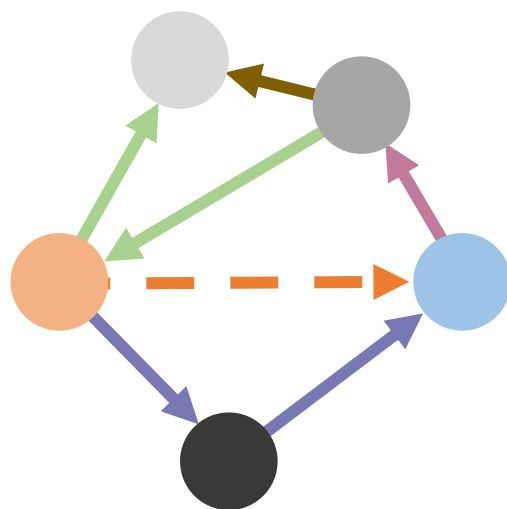
- **Initialize embedding vectors** using embedding vectors from INIT_S

$$\mathbf{x}_S^{(0)}(v) = \text{INIT}_S$$

$$\mathcal{M}_S^{(l)}(v) = \{\{\text{MSG}^{(l)}(\mathbf{x}_S^{(l-1)}(u), \mathbf{x}_S^{(l-1)}(v), r, q) \mid (r, u) \in \mathcal{N}_S(v)\}\}$$

$$\mathbf{x}_S^{(l)}(v) = \text{UPD}^{(l)}\left(\mathbf{x}_S^{(\theta(l))}(v), \text{AGG}^{(l)}\left(\mathcal{M}_S^{(l)}(v)\right)\right)$$

$$f_w(S) = \text{RD}\left(\mathbf{x}_S^{(L)}(h), \mathbf{x}_S^{(L)}(t), \text{GRD}\left(\{\{\mathbf{x}_S^{(L)}(u) \mid u \in \mathcal{V}_S\}\}, q\right)\right)$$



**Subgraph
Message Passing
Neural Network**

Final score
 $f_w(S)$

02 Subgraph Message Passing Neural Network (SMPNN)

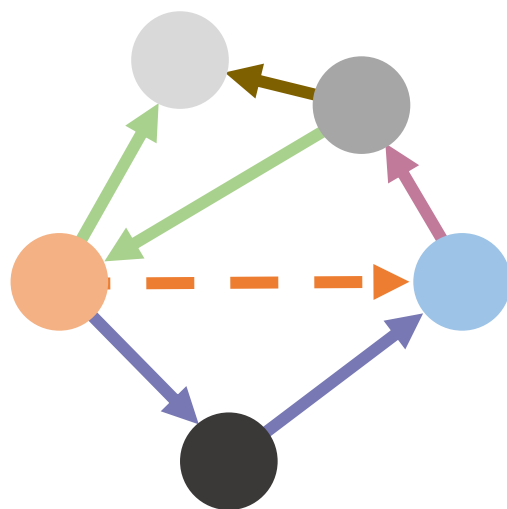
- **Compute messages** of all neighbors for each node

$$\mathbf{x}_S^{(0)}(v) = \text{INIT}_S$$

$$\mathcal{M}_S^{(l)}(v) = \{ \{ \text{MSG}^{(l)}(\mathbf{x}_S^{(l-1)}(u), \mathbf{x}_S^{(l-1)}(v), r, q) \mid (r, u) \in \mathcal{N}_S(v) \} \}$$

$$\mathbf{x}_S^{(l)}(v) = \text{UPD}^{(l)}\left(\mathbf{x}_S^{(\theta(l))}(v), \text{AGG}^{(l)}(\mathcal{M}_S^{(l)}(v))\right)$$

$$f_w(S) = \text{RD}\left(\mathbf{x}_S^{(L)}(h), \mathbf{x}_S^{(L)}(t), \text{GRD}\left(\{ \{ \mathbf{x}_S^{(L)}(u) \mid u \in \mathcal{V}_S \} \}, q\right)\right)$$



**Subgraph
Message Passing
Neural Network**

Final score
 $f_w(S)$

02 Subgraph Message Passing Neural Network (SMPNN)

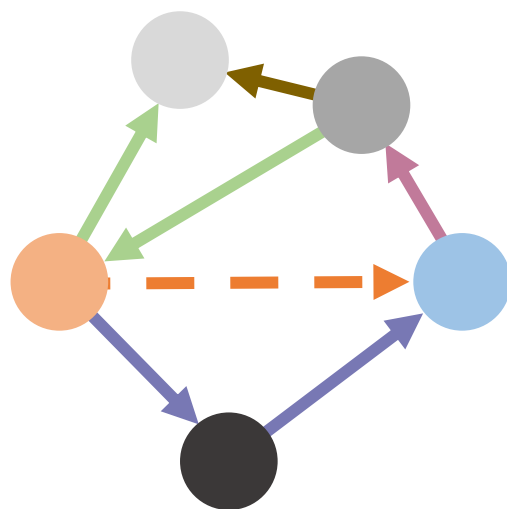
- Update embedding vectors by **aggregating messages** of neighbors

$$\mathbf{x}_S^{(0)}(v) = \text{INIT}_S$$

$$\mathcal{M}_S^{(l)}(v) = \{\{\text{MSG}^{(l)}(\mathbf{x}_S^{(l-1)}(u), \mathbf{x}_S^{(l-1)}(v), r, q) \mid (r, u) \in \mathcal{N}_S(v)\}\}$$

$$\mathbf{x}_S^{(l)}(v) = \text{UPD}^{(l)}\left(\mathbf{x}_S^{(\theta(l))}(v), \text{AGG}^{(l)}\left(\mathcal{M}_S^{(l)}(v)\right)\right)$$

$$f_w(S) = \text{RD}\left(\mathbf{x}_S^{(L)}(h), \mathbf{x}_S^{(L)}(t), \text{GRD}\left(\{\{\mathbf{x}_S^{(L)}(u) \mid u \in \mathcal{V}_S\}\}, q\right)\right)$$



Subgraph
Message Passing
Neural Network

Final score
 $f_w(S)$

02 Subgraph Message Passing Neural Network (SMPNN)

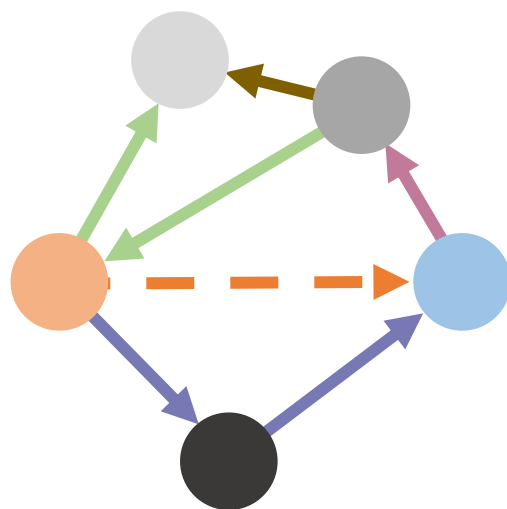
- **Update embedding vectors** by aggregating messages of neighbors

$$\mathbf{x}_S^{(0)}(v) = \text{INIT}_S$$

$$\mathcal{M}_S^{(l)}(v) = \{\{\text{MSG}^{(l)}(\mathbf{x}_S^{(l-1)}(u), \mathbf{x}_S^{(l-1)}(v), r, q) \mid (r, u) \in \mathcal{N}_S(v)\}\}$$

$$\mathbf{x}_S^{(l)}(v) = \text{UPD}^{(l)}\left(\mathbf{x}_S^{(\theta(l))}(v), \text{AGG}^{(l)}\left(\mathcal{M}_S^{(l)}(v)\right)\right)$$

$$f_w(S) = \text{RD}\left(\mathbf{x}_S^{(L)}(h), \mathbf{x}_S^{(L)}(t), \text{GRD}\left(\{\{\mathbf{x}_S^{(L)}(u) \mid u \in \mathcal{V}_S\}\}, q\right)\right)$$



**Subgraph
Message Passing
Neural Network**

Final score
 $f_w(S)$

02 Subgraph Message Passing Neural Network (SMPNN)

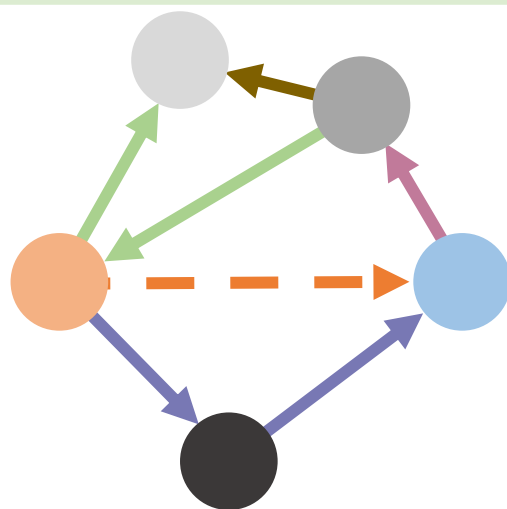
- Compute the final score using **readout and global-readout functions**

$$\mathbf{x}_S^{(0)}(v) = \text{INIT}_S$$

$$\mathcal{M}_S^{(l)}(v) = \{ \{ \text{MSG}^{(l)}(\mathbf{x}_S^{(l-1)}(u), \mathbf{x}_S^{(l-1)}(v), r, q) \mid (r, u) \in \mathcal{N}_S(v) \} \}$$

$$\mathbf{x}_S^{(l)}(v) = \text{UPD}^{(l)}\left(\mathbf{x}_S^{(\theta(l))}(v), \text{AGG}^{(l)}\left(\mathcal{M}_S^{(l)}(v)\right)\right)$$

$$f_w(S) = \text{RD}\left(\mathbf{x}_S^{(L)}(h), \mathbf{x}_S^{(L)}(t), \text{GRD}\left(\{ \{ \mathbf{x}_S^{(L)}(u) \mid u \in \mathcal{V}_S \} \}, q\right)\right)$$

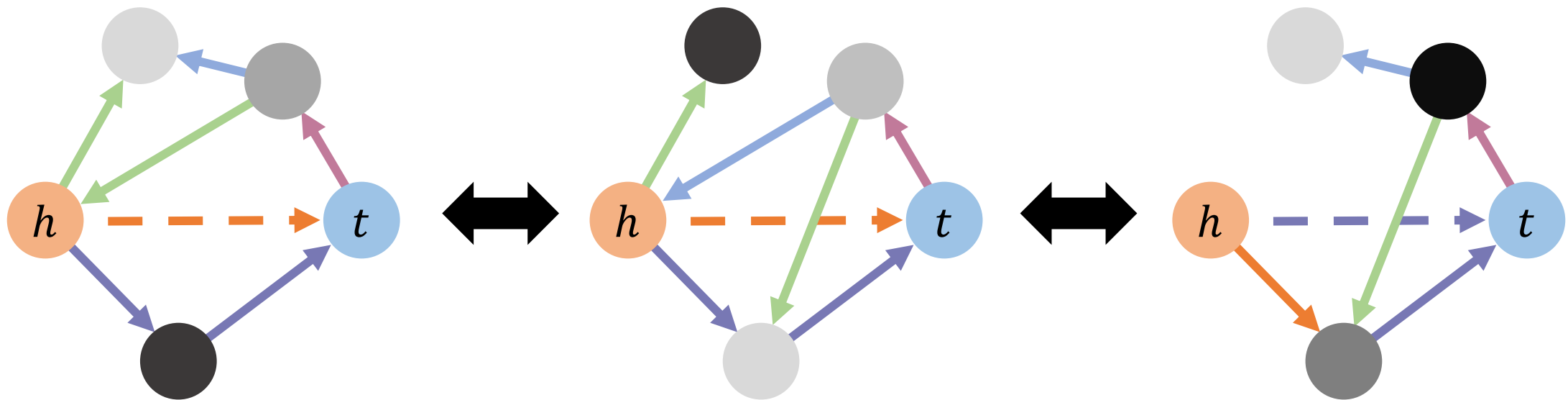


**Subgraph
Message Passing
Neural Network**

Final score
 $f_w(S)$

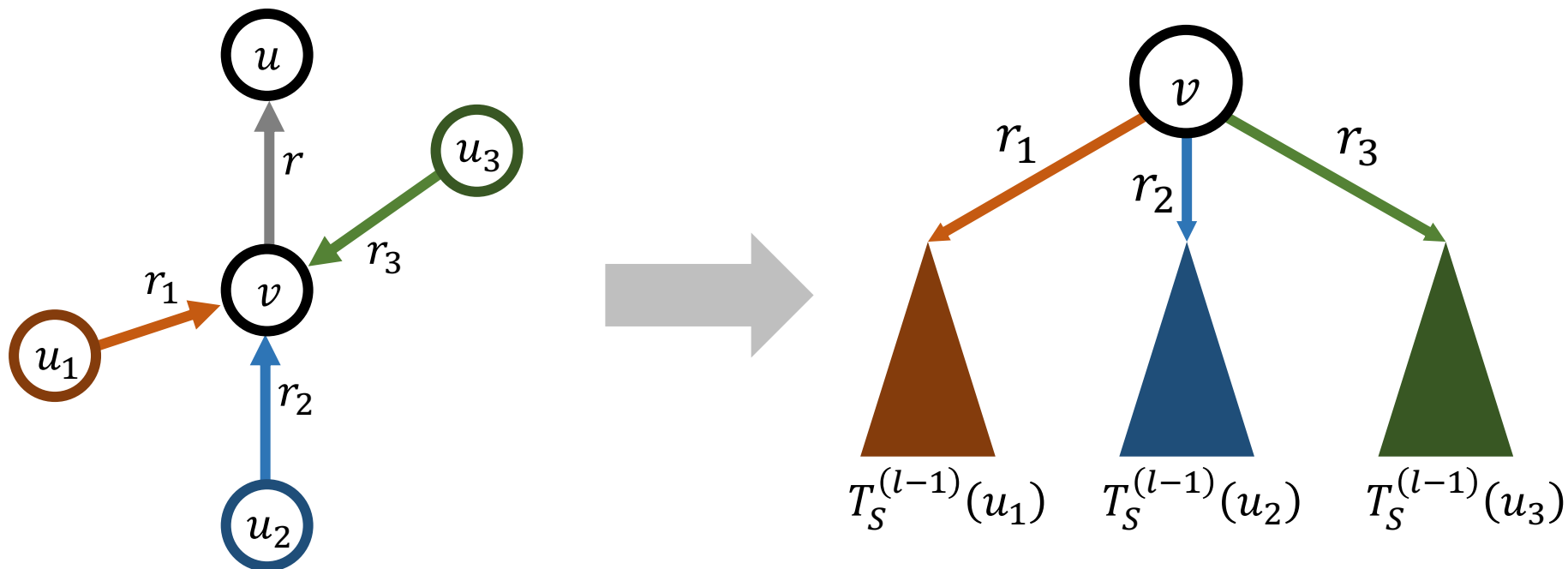
03 Relational Tree Mover's Distance (RTMD)

- Metric to **quantify differences** between subgraphs
 - RTMD reflects the **message-passing mechanism** of SMPNNs.



03 Relational Computation Tree

- Modeling how **SMPNNs process the subgraph structures**
 - Constructed by **recursively adding** neighboring **relations and entities** to leaf nodes



Relational Tree Distance (RTD)

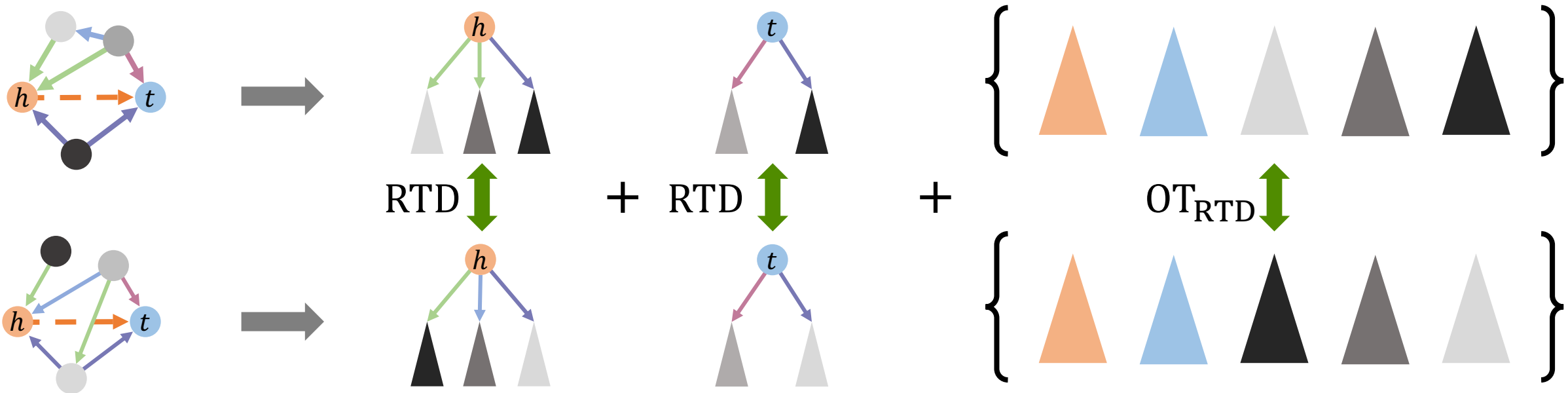
- **Difference** between the **relational computation trees**
 - (1) The difference between the **initial embedding vectors** of their **root entities**
 - (2) The difference between the **sets of their subtree**
 - (3) Whether their **query relations** differ

RTD

$$\begin{aligned}
 &= \|\text{INIT}(\odot_{v_1}) - \text{INIT}(\odot_{v_2})\|_2 \\
 &+ \frac{1}{|\mathcal{R}|^2} (\mathbf{1}[\downarrow_{\text{orange}} \neq \downarrow_{\text{yellow}}] + \mathbf{1}[\downarrow_{\text{yellow}} \neq \downarrow_{\text{blue}}]) \\
 &+ w(l) \text{OT}_{\text{RTD}} \left(\left\{ \begin{array}{c} \downarrow_{\text{orange}} \\ \downarrow_{\text{blue}} \\ \downarrow_{\text{green}} \end{array} \right\}, \left\{ \begin{array}{c} \downarrow_{\text{green}} \\ \downarrow_{\text{orange}} \\ \downarrow_{\text{yellow}} \end{array} \right\} \right)
 \end{aligned}$$

03 Relational Tree Mover's Distance (RTMD)

- **RTMD** between two subgraphs
 - (1) The RTD between **the head entities** of the query triplet
 - (2) The RTD between **the tail entities** of the query triplet
 - (3) The difference between **the sets of relational computation trees**



03 Stability of SMPNNs

- Define **stability** C_f as the reciprocal of the **Lipchitz constant** η w.r.t **RTMD**
- Bounded by the **Lipschitz constants of each function** of the SMPNNs.

Theorem 4.5 Given $G_{\text{tr}} = (\mathcal{V}_{\text{tr}}, \mathcal{R}, \mathcal{F}_{\text{tr}} \cup \mathcal{T}_{\text{tr}})$, $G_{\text{inf}} = (\mathcal{V}_{\text{inf}}, \mathcal{R}, \mathcal{F}_{\text{inf}} \cup \mathcal{T}_{\text{inf}})$, and an SMPNN f_w with L layers, if the message, aggregation, update, global-readout, and readout function of f_w are Lipschitz continuous, then f_w is Lipschitz continuous with the **Lipschitz constant** η_f and the following holds:

$$\eta_f \leq \begin{cases} \prod_{l=1}^{L+1} \eta^{(l)} & \theta(k) = k - 1 \\ (L + 1) \prod_{l=1}^{L+1} \eta^{(l)} & \theta(k) = 0 \end{cases}$$

$$\eta^{(l)} = \max \left(A_{\text{upd}}^{(l)} + d_{\max} B_{\text{upd}}^{(l)} A_{\text{agg}}^{(l)} B_{\text{msg}}^{(l)}, B_{\text{upd}}^{(l)} A_{\text{agg}}^{(l)} A_{\text{msg}}^{(l)}, |\mathcal{R}|^2 B_{\text{upd}}^{(l)} A_{\text{agg}}^{(l)} C_{\text{msg}}^{(l)}, |\mathcal{R}|^2 B_{\text{upd}}^{(l)} A_{\text{agg}}^{(l)} D_{\text{msg}}^{(l)}, 1 \right)$$

$$\eta^{(L+1)} = \max \left(A_{\text{rd}}, B_{\text{rd}}, C_{\text{rd}} A_{\text{grd}}, \frac{|\mathcal{R}|^2 D_{\text{rd}}}{2 + \max(|\mathcal{V}_{\text{tr}}|, |\mathcal{V}_{\text{inf}}|)} \right)$$

where $1 \leq l \leq L$, and **A, B, C, D** are the **Lipschitz constants of the corresponding function**.

04 Risk of Subgraph Reasoning Model

- γ -margin risk

- Increases when a score for a positive triplet is less than or equal to γ
- Increases when a score for a negative triplet is greater than or equal to $-\gamma$

Empirical γ -margin risk

$$\hat{\mathcal{L}}_G(f_{\mathbf{w}}, \gamma) = \frac{1}{|\mathcal{T}|} \sum_{(h,r,t) \in \mathcal{T}} \mathbf{1} \left[y_{\text{hrt}} \cdot f_{\mathbf{w}} \left(g(G, (h, r, t)) \right) \leq \gamma \right]$$

Expected γ -margin risk

$$\mathcal{L}_G(f_{\mathbf{w}}, \gamma) = \mathbb{E}_{y_{\text{hrt}} \sim \mathbb{P}(Y|g(G, (h, r, t)))} [\hat{\mathcal{L}}_G(f_{\mathbf{w}}, \gamma)]$$

- Expected Risk Discrepancy

- Each risk is **measured on different KGs** in the **inductive setting**

Expected Risk Discrepancy

$$D(\mathcal{P}, \lambda, \gamma) = \ln \left(\mathbb{E}_{\mathbf{w} \sim \mathcal{P}} \left[\exp \left(\lambda \left(\mathcal{L}_{G_{\text{tr}}} \left(f_{\mathbf{w}}, \frac{\gamma}{2} \right) - \mathcal{L}_{G_{\text{inf}}} (f_{\mathbf{w}}, \gamma) \right) \right) \right] \right)$$

04 Generalization Bound of Subgraph Reasoning Models

- Using the **PAC-Bayesian approach**, compute the **generalization bound** of subgraph reasoning models
 - Key terms: **KL divergence** / **Expected risk discrepancy**
- **Expected Risk Discrepancy**
 - Each risk is **measured on different KGs** in the **inductive setting**

Theorem 5.3 Given G_{tr} , G_{inf} , and a subgraph reasoning model with a subgraph extractor g and an SMPNN f_w , for any prior distribution $\mathcal{P}$ and posterior distribution $\mathcal{Q}$ on the parameter space of f_w constructed by adding random noise $\tilde{w}$ to w such that $\mathbb{P}\left(\max\left(\max_{e \in \mathcal{T}_{\text{tr}}} |f_{\tilde{w}}(g(G_{\text{tr}}, e)) - f_w(g(G_{\text{tr}}, e))|, \max_{e \in \mathcal{T}_{\text{inf}}} |f_{\tilde{w}}(g(G_{\text{inf}}, e)) - f_w(g(G_{\text{inf}}, e))|\right)\right) \leq \gamma$, and $\gamma, \lambda > 0$, the following holds with probability at least $1 - \delta$

$$\mathcal{L}_{G_{\text{inf}}}(f_w, 0) \leq \hat{\mathcal{L}}_{G_{\text{tr}}}(f_w, \gamma) + \frac{1}{\lambda} \left(2\text{KL}(\mathcal{Q}|\mathcal{P}) + \ln \frac{4}{\delta} + \frac{\lambda^2}{4|\mathcal{T}_{\text{tr}}|} + D\left(\mathcal{P}, \lambda, \frac{\gamma}{2}\right) \right)$$

where $D\left(\mathcal{P}, \lambda, \frac{\gamma}{2}\right)$ is the expected risk discrepancy between G_{tr} and G_{inf} , and $\text{KL}(\mathcal{Q}|\mathcal{P})$ is a KL divergence of $\mathcal{Q}$ from $\mathcal{P}$.

04 Upper Bound of Expected Risk Discrepancy

- To focus on the discrepancy between two KGs, derive **the upper bound of the expected risk discrepancy**
- $OT_{RTMD}(\psi(\mathcal{T}_{inf}, \mathcal{T}_{tr}))$: **Optimal transport distance** between the sets of subgraphs
- C_f : **Stability**(=inverse of Lipschitz constant) of the subgraph reasoning model
 - Stability C_f is **inversely proportional** to the upper bound of the expected risk discrepancy

Theorem 5.5 Given G_{tr}, G_{inf} , and a subgraph reasoning model with a subgraph extractor g and an SMPNN f_w with stability C_f , for any prior distribution $\mathcal{P}$ and posterior distribution $\mathcal{Q}$ on the parameter space of f_w , and $\lambda > 0$, the following holds:

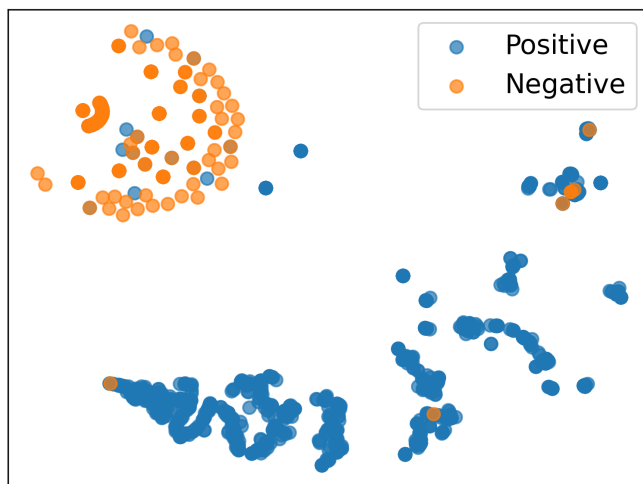
$$D(\mathcal{P}, \lambda, \gamma) \leq \lambda \left(\max \left(0, \frac{|\mathcal{T}_{tr}|}{|\mathcal{T}_{inf}|} - 1 \right) + \frac{2OT_{RTMD}(\psi(\mathcal{T}_{inf}, \mathcal{T}_{tr}))}{\gamma C_f \max(|\mathcal{T}_{inf}|, |\mathcal{T}_{tr}|)} \right)$$

05 Experiments

- **Empirically validate** our theoretical findings
 - Demonstrate that **RTMD is a valid metric** for quantifying differences between subgraphs
 - Demonstrate that **SMPNNs are Lipschitz continuous w.r.t. RTMD**
 - Show that a **more stable model** tends to exhibit **better generalization capability**
- **Datasets**
 - Benchmark datasets for **inductive KGC** provided in GraIL (ICML 2020)
 - **v3 of WN18RR / v1 of FB15K-237 / v2 of NELL-995**
 - Extract 2-hop subgraphs for each dataset

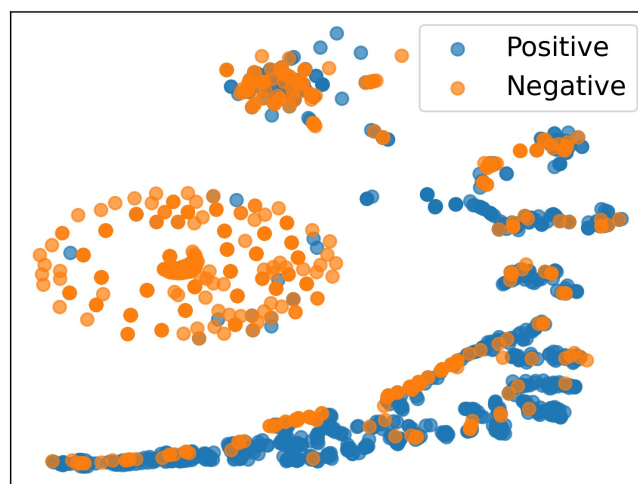
05 Label Classification using RTMD

- Demonstrate that **RTMD is a valid metric** for quantifying differences between subgraphs
 - **tSNE visualization**: Distance between points is proportional to the RTMD.



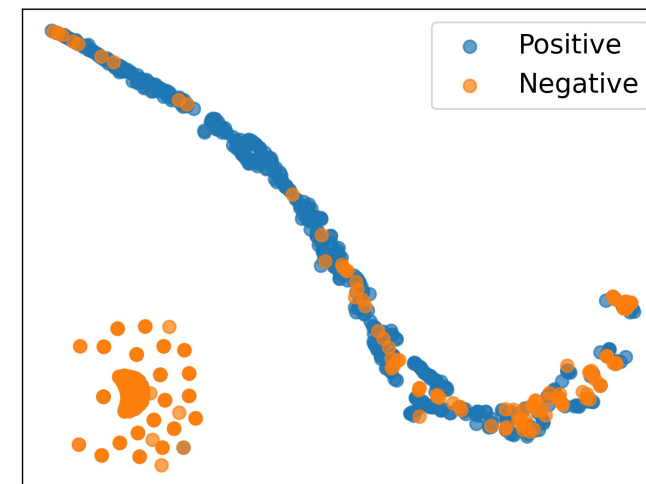
WNv3

Classification accuracy: 0.8205



FBv1

Classification accuracy: 0.7739

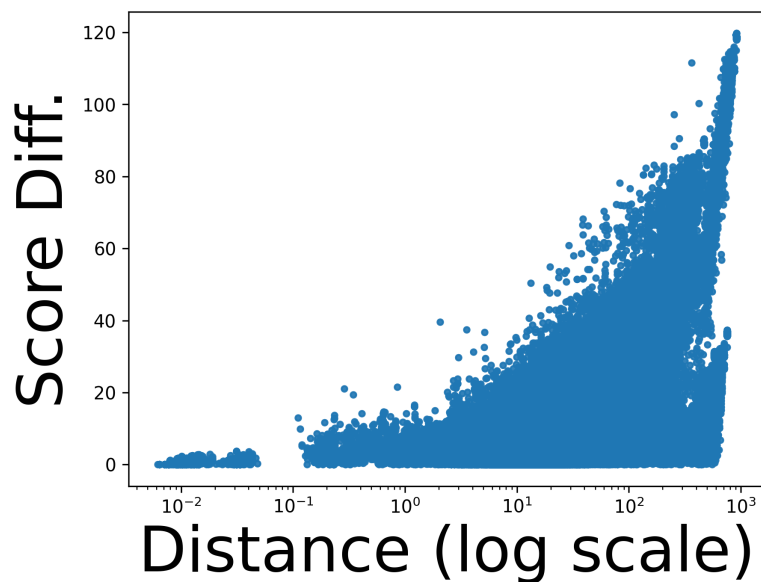


NLv2

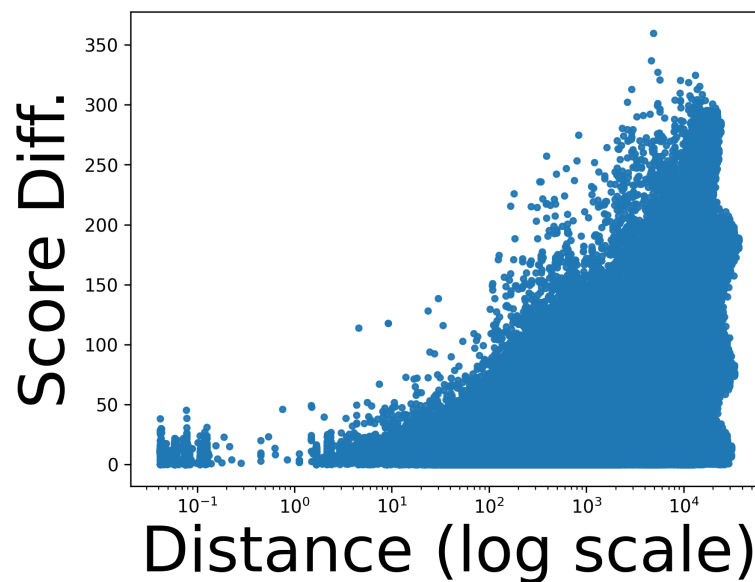
Classification accuracy: 0.8654

05 Comparing RTMD with Scores

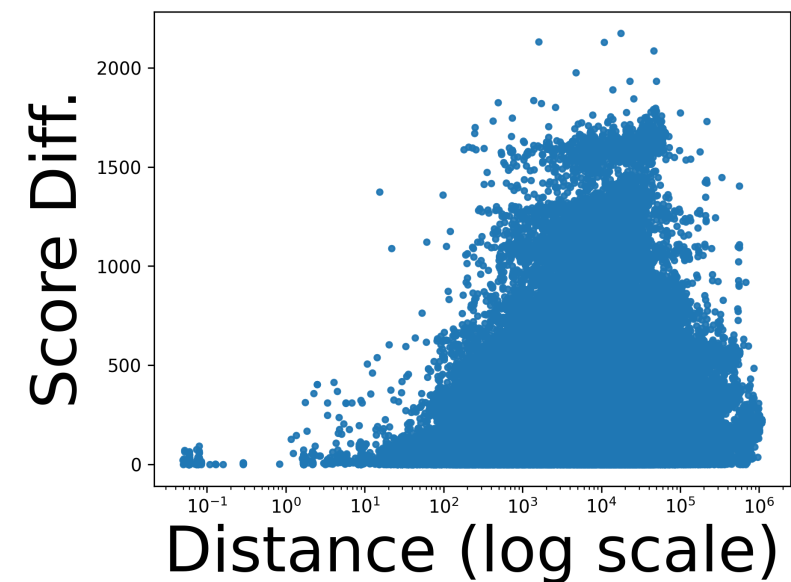
- Demonstrate that **SMPNNs are Lipschitz continuous w.r.t. RTMD**
 - Compare the **score difference** and the **RTMD** between subgraphs
 - Scores are computed by GraIL (ICML 2020)



WNv3



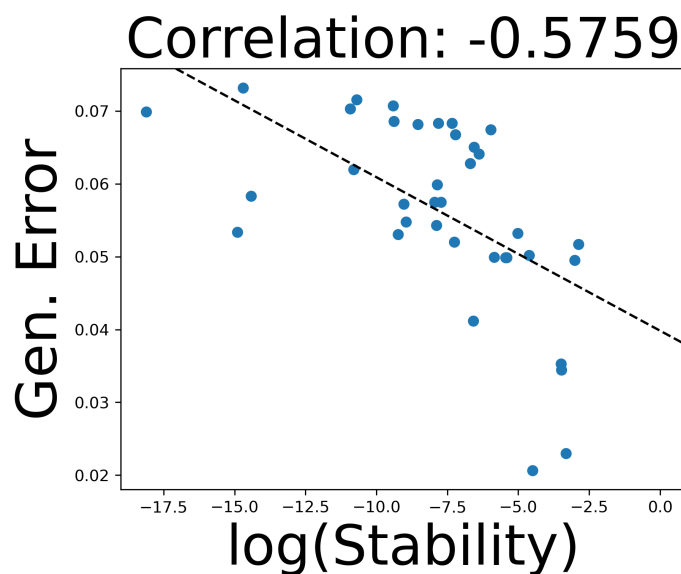
FBv1



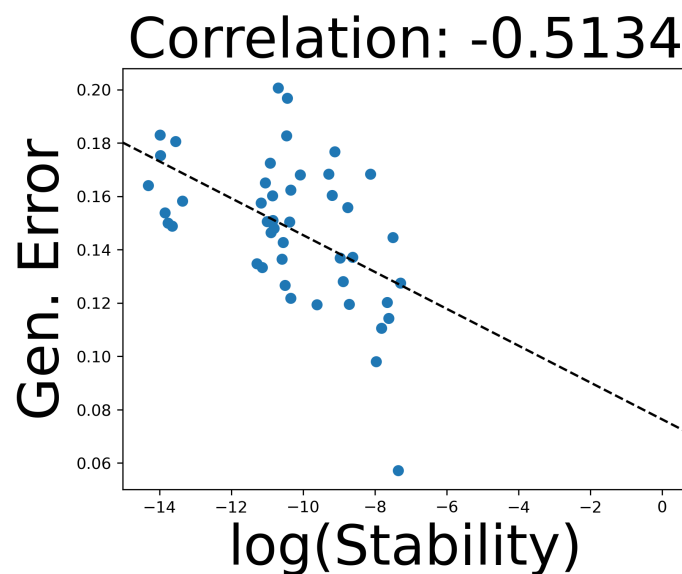
NLv2

05 Comparing Stability with Generalization Errors

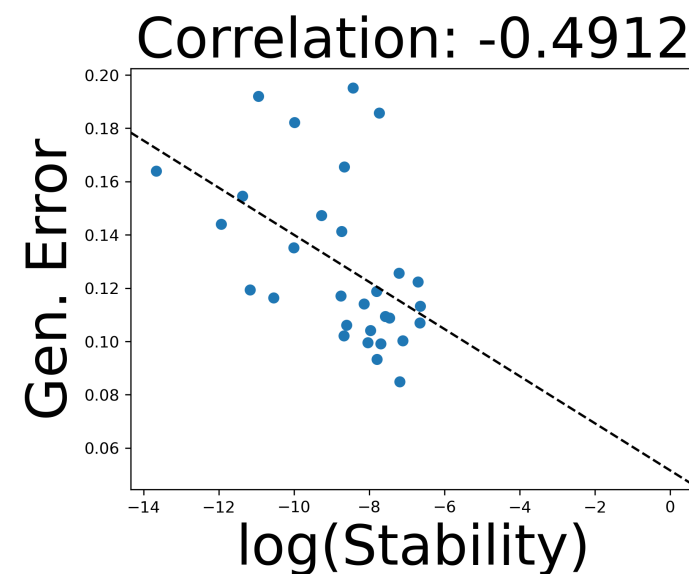
- Show that a **more stable model** tends to exhibit **better generalization capability**
 - Design **48 different subgraph reasoning models** by permuting the functions of SMPNNs
 - Compute the **empirical Lipschitz constant** of each model



WNv3
p-value: 0.00019



FBv1
p-value: 0.00031



NLv2
p-value: 0.00584

06 Conclusion

- Design a **general framework** for subgraph reasoning models
 - **Derive their stability** w.r.t the perturbations of the subgraph structures
- Introduce the **RTMD**, designed for subgraph reasoning models
 - **Use RTMD to compute the stability** of subgraph reasoning models
- **Theoretically analyze** the subgraph reasoning models for inductive KGC
 - Discuss the **impact of the stability** on their **generalization capability**
- **Empirically validate** that our theoretical findings hold on real-world KGs
 - Compare the **stability** and **generalization error** of the subgraph reasoning models

Thank You!



BDILab

You can find us at:

{hminsung, jjlee98, jjwhang}@kaist.ac.kr

<https://bdi-lab.kaist.ac.kr>

