

Addressing some Issues of Data Sparsity towards Improving English-Manipuri SMT using Morphological Information

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Abstract

The performance of an SMT system heavily depends on the availability of large parallel corpora. Unavailability of these resources in the required amount for many language pair is a challenging issue. The required size of the resource involving morphologically rich and highly agglutinative language is essentially much more for the SMT systems. This paper investigates on some of the issues on enriching the resource for this kind of languages. Handling of inflectional and derivational morphemes of the morphologically rich target language plays important role in the enrichment process. Mapping from the source to the target side is carried out for the English-Manipuri SMT task using factored model. The SMT system developed shows improvement in the performance both in terms of the automatic scoring and subjective evaluation over the baseline system.

1 Introduction

Since the dawn of SMT system in the early 90s with the seminal work at IBM (Brown et al., 1992; Brown et al., 1993), there has been growth in the number of the SMT system for several language pairs. Performant SMT systems for the major languages are available. In the same time, such development is limited for less privileged and resource poor languages. Developing English-Manipuri SMT systems is one of such examples. Manipuri is a morphologically rich and highly agglutinative in nature. New words are easily coined by combination of various morphemes. Verb morphology is more complex and productive

than noun morphology. In Manipuri, adjective and adverbs come from verbal root through derivational morphology. Aspectual marker goes with the derived forms. This language contains abundant reduplicated multiword expressions (RMWE). Language resource for this language pair is not available in the required measure.

2 Related Work

Several SMT systems between English and morphologically rich languages are reported. (Ofizer and El-Kahlout, 2007) investigated different representational granularities for sublexical representation in statistical machine translation work from English to Turkish by exploring different representational units in English to Turkish SMT. (Yeniterzi and Ofizer, 2010) further reported syntax-to-morphology mapping in factored phrase-based Statistical Machine Translation (Koehn and Hoang, 2007) from English to Turkish relying on syntactic analysis on the source side (English) and then encodes a wide variety of local and non-local syntactic structures as complex structural tags which appear as additional factors in the training data. On the target side (Turkish), they only perform morphological analysis and disambiguation but treat the complete complex morphological tag as a factor, instead of separating morphemes. Some of the SMT systems between English and morphologically rich languages which used morphemes to address the data sparsity are discussed below.

English-to-Czech phrase-based machine translation experiment (Bojar, 2007) with additional annotation of input and output tokens

(multiple factors) used to explicitly model morphology by setting up various multiple factors and the amount of information in the morphological tags resulted in significant translation quality increase. Further, two contributions using factored phrase based model and a probabilistic tree transfer mode at deep syntactic layer are made by (Bojar and Hajič, 2008) of English-to-Czech SMT system. (Toutanova et al., 2007) reported the improvement of an SMT by applying word form prediction models from a stem using extensive morphological and syntactic information from source and target languages. (Gandhe et al., 2011) proposed a solution to augment the phrase table with all possible forms of a verb for improving the overall accuracy of the English–Hindi MT system by using simple stemmer and easily available monolingual data to generate new phrase table entries that cover the different variations seen for a verb. (Habash, 2008) presented four techniques for online handling of Out-of-Vocabulary words in Arabic-English Phrase based Statistical Machine Translation by using spelling expansion, morphological expansion, dictionary term expansion and proper name transliteration to reuse or extend a phrase table.

3 Enriching the Language Resource

SMT systems demand a large parallel corpus as training data. One of the approaches to develop SMT systems for less privileged and resource poor language is to enrich the resource through morphological processing by learning the general rules of morphology. This helps to increase the training data size and increase the coverage of the occurrence of the different words. The representation of words, i.e. the spelling has the most important role to play. Including different forms of a word in the training data makes a sense to improve the translation quality. While exploring the different representational units from English-to-Manipuri, there is lack of information at the source side for derivation and inflection of the target words. The verb morphology is more complex and productive. Focusing on the verb, the derivational morphology is more productive than the inflectional. Separating lemma, inflections and derivational morphemes allows the system to learn more about the different possible word formations.

Thus, considering all the possible morpheme combination helps to enrich the language in order to cover more vocabulary.

3.1 Examples of Word Level Alignment between English and Manipuri

Consider the following example of English to Manipuri translation depicting the word level alignment by figure 1, stems and separated affixes by Figure 2 and phrasal level alignment by figure 3. From the example we can see that for each Manipuri word, there is a corresponding chunk of English (i.e., a group of words). This prompts us to correlate a group of English words with the help of a chunker and a Manipuri word.

But the question is to sort out how many possible morphemes are there to represent a word. Consider the following Manipuri sentence showing the possible translations due to non-standardized spelling.

English:

They came.

Manipuri Translation: (different possible orthographic and phonographic variations)

মখোয় লাক্‌ম্মী । (*makhoy lak-lammee*)
 মখোয় লাক্‌অম্মী । (*makhoy lak-ammee*)
 মখোয় লাক্‌মগ্‌ । (*makhoy lak-lam-ee*)
 মখোয় লাক্‌মই । (*makhoy lak-lam-i*)
 মখোই লাক্‌মই । (*makhoi lak-lam-i*)

Enrichment of the language resource is carried out for this languages category using morphemes with various orthographic variations. Inclusion of these various orthographic variations is absolutely necessary. However, the problem crops up how much of the training data is really increased in terms of size and improved in terms of alignment quality? When they are not handled in one of these steps these words become out-of-vocabulary (OOV) words. So, spelling expansion of these words in order to extend the phrase table becomes essential. This helps in the orthographic normalization and minimizing the data sparsity. The spelling expansion and morphological expansion are definitely helping minimizing data sparsity.

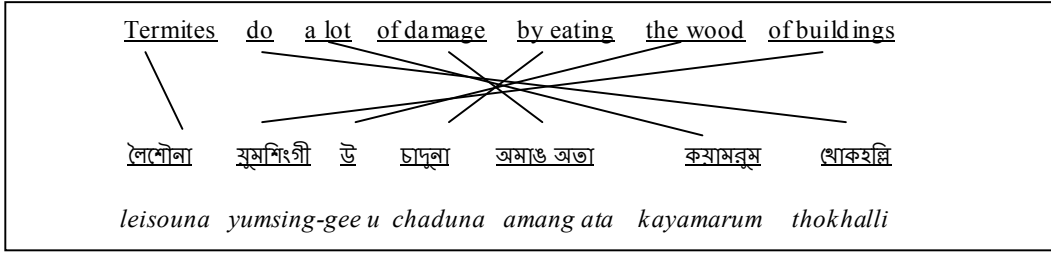


Figure 1: Word and Chunk level alignment between English and Manipuri

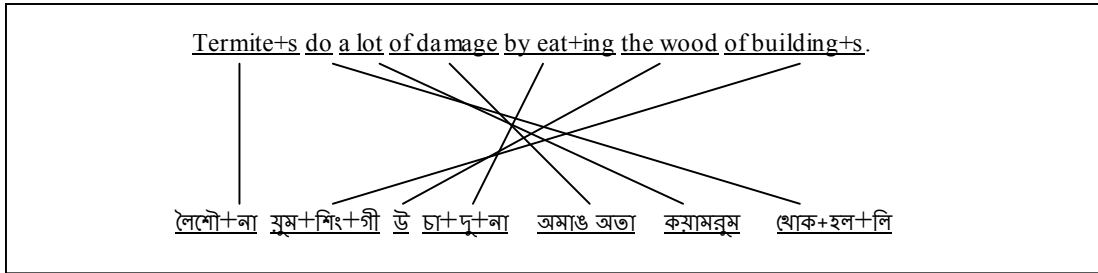


Figure 2: Stems and Morphemes separated between English and Manipuri alignment

(NP (NNS Termites))	→	লৈশৌ+না
(VP (VBP do))	→	থোকহল+লি
(NP (DT a) (NN lot))	→	কয়ামরুম
(PP (IN of))		
(NP (NN damage))	→	অমাঙ অতা
(PP (IN by))		
(VP (VBG eating))	→	চা+দু+না
(NP (DT the) (NN wood))	→	উ
(PP (IN of))		
(NP (NNS buildings))	→	য়ুম+শিং+গী

Figure 3: Phrasal Level Alignment between English and Manipuri

4 Key Aspects of Manipuri Morphology

In this agglutinative language the numbers of verbal suffixes are more than that of the nominal suffixes (Singh, 2000). New words are easily formed in Manipuri using morphological rules. There are 8 inflectional (INFL) suffixes and 23 enclitics (ENC). There are 5 derivational prefixes out of which 2 are category changing and 3 are non-category changing. There are 31 non-category changing derivational suffixes and 2 category changing suffixes. The non-category changing derivational suffixes may be divided

into first level derivatives (1st LD) of 8 suffixes, second level derivatives (2nd LD) of 16 suffixes and third level derivatives (3rd LD) of 7 suffixes. Enclitics in Manipuri fall in six categories: determiners, case markers, the copula, mood markers, inclusive/exclusive and pragmatic peak markers and attitude markers. The categories are determined on the basis of position in the word (category 1 occurs before category 2, category 2 occurs before category 3 and so on). Manipuri morphological processing works are reported by (Singh and Bandyopadhyay, 2006) and (Singh and Bandyopadhyay, 2008).

4.1 Verb morphology

Three derivational categories may optionally precede the final inflectional suffix. The 1st LD suffixes signal adverbial meanings, the 2nd LD suffixes indicate evidentiality, the deitic reference of a verb, or the number of persons performing the action and the 3rd LD suffixes signal aspect and mood. Verb roots may also be used to form verbal nouns, adjectives and adverbs. Verbal nouns are formed through the suffixation of the nominalizer ঞ -pə to the verb root. The following is the list of word structure rules for verbs (Shobhana, 1997)

- a. Verb → STEM INFL
- b. STEM → Stem (3rd LD)
- c. Stem → Stem (2nd LD)
- d. Stem → Root (1st LD)
- e. ROOT → root (root)
- f. 3rd LD → (mood1)(mood2)(aspect)
- g. 2nd LD → (2nd LD1),(2nd LD2),(2nd LD3)..
- h. 1st LD → 1st LD

Derivational Prefixation	Root	1 st LD	2 nd LD	3 rd LD	Inflection
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Figure 4: General form of Verb Morphology

There are 3 categories (mood1, mood2, and aspect) belonging to the third level derivational (3rd LD) markers. The general form of verb morphology is shown in figure 4.

The sub-categorization frames of affixes will restrict that only nominal affixes occur with a noun and verbal affixes occur with a verb root. The derivational suffix order of the word চেকখাইরকনি (It'll get cracked) is given below:-

চেক	খাই.	রক	ক	নি
<i>cek</i>	<i>-khay</i>	<i>-rak</i>	<i>-kə</i>	<i>-ni</i>
<i>crack</i>	<i>-totally affect</i>	<i>-distal</i>	<i>-potential</i>	<i>-copula</i>
	(1 st LD)	(2 nd LD)	(3 rd LD)	

The রক *-rak* has allomorph লক-*lak*. রক *-rak* occurs after vowels while লক-*lak* occurs after consonants,

চারকএ *-ca-rək-ey* (ate there and came here)

চাঙ্গকএ *-cam-lək-ey* (washed there and came here)

The formation of verb can be of the form

Verb stem + aspect/mood → verb

থক *-thək* (drink) + ল *-le-* → থকলে *-thək-le* (has drunk)

The verbal noun is formed with the rule as given as

Verb Stem + Nominalizer → Verbal noun

থোং *-thong* (cook)+ বা *-ba* → থোংবা *-thongba* (to cook)

4.2 Noun Morphology

The following is the list of word structure rules for nouns (Shobhana, 1997)

N → Stem INFL (ENC)

Stem → stem (2nd LD)

Stem → ROOT(1st LD)

ROOT → (prefix) root (root)

Figure 5 shows the general form of noun morphology in Manipuri. Examples of some singular/plural noun forms are listed in Figure 6.

Prono minal prefix	Root	gen der	num ber	Quanti fier	Case
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Figure 5: General form of Noun Morphology

Singular Form	Plural Form
উচেক <i>-Uchek</i> (bird)	উচেকশিং <i>-Ucheksing</i> (birds)
ম <i>-Ma</i> (He/She)	মথোয় <i>-Makhoy</i> (they)
মী <i>-Mi</i> (man)	মীয়াম <i>-Mi-yaam</i> (men)

Figure 6: Singular/Plural forms

Although case markers are functionally inflectional, they exhibit the clitic like characteristic of docking at the edge of a phrase. The word structure of rules of verbs and nouns are identical except for the category of the word level node, the possible terminal elements of the derivational and inflectional categories and the lack of the third level nominal derivation. Two examples to demonstrate the noun morphology are given below:-

মচানুপীশিংনা (mə-ca-nu-pi-sij-nə) 'by his/her daughters'

মচানুপাশিংনা (mə-ca-nu-pa-sij-nə) 'by his/her sons'

The ম -*mə* 'his/her' is the pronominal suffix and চা -*ca* 'child' is the noun root. The নু -*nu* 'human' is suffixed by পী -*pi* to indicate a female human and পা -*pa* to indicate a male human. শিং -*sij* or খোই -*khoy* or যাম -*yaam* can be used to indicate plurality. -*sij* cannot be used with pronouns or proper nouns and -*khoy* cannot be used with nonhuman nouns. না -*nə* meaning 'by the' is the instrumental case marker.

4.3 Adjectives and Adverbs

In Manipuri, adjective and adverbs come from verbal root (in the example: ফ (ph)) through derivational morphology. Aspectual marker goes with the derived forms. Some of the examples are given as:

a)

The player is good

শান্নরোয়দু ফে
shannaroydu phe

b)

The player is still good

শান্নরোয়দু হৌজিকসু ফরি
shannaroydu houjiksu phari

c)

The player is always good

শান্নরোয়দু অদুম ফে
shannaroydu adum phe

d)

The player was good

শান্নরোয়দু ফরক্ষী
shannaroydu pharami

5 Experiments

Indian languages are morphologically rich and have relatively free-word order where the grammatical role of content words is largely determined by their case markers and not just by their positions in the sentence. SMT systems between English and morphologically rich and

highly agglutinative languages suffer badly if adequate training and language resource is not available and the accountability of individual morpheme is not considered. Machine Translation systems of Manipuri (the first Tibeto-Burman language for which MT system is developed) and English are reported by (Singh and Bandyopadhyay, 2010b) on developing the first Manipuri to English example based machine translation system followed by (Singh and Bandyopadhyay, 2010c) on development of English-Manipuri SMT system using morpho-syntactic and semantic information where the target case markers are generated based on the suffixes and semantic relations of the source sentence. Further (Singh and Bandyopadhyay, 2011a) reported on the development of bidirectional SMT system for English-Manipuri language pair using dependency relations, morphological information and parts of speech tags and (Singh and Bandyopadhyay, 2011b) continued reporting on the integration of reduplicated multiword expression and named entities into the English-Manipuri SMT system. In the present work, detailed morphological information such as the inflection and derivational morphemes are integrated into the system. In an effort to optimize, the training data, we experimented on the variation in the performance while making choice of sentence length for training. Being a highly agglutinative language, the translation performance is largely affected for longer training. The English-Manipuri parallel corpus on news domain developed by (Singh and Bandyopadhyay, 2010a) is used in the experiment. Two different models are developed as shown in figure 7; (i) inflectional model and (ii) inflectional + derivational model. The inflectional model uses lemma and suffix factors on the source side, lemma and suffix on the target side for lemma to lemma and suffix to suffix translations with generation step of lemma plus suffix to surface form. For the second model, two important treatments of the noun (Thoudam, 1982) and verb morphology for mapping with the corresponding source side is carried out considering the stem, derivational morphology and inflectional morphology of the target side. The reason why Manipuri inflectional morphology is to be treated as separate factor is

that – it is comparatively easier to map to English dependency relations and suffix information (Singh and Bandyopadhyay, 2010c) to address the crux of the fluency. The BLEU score of this SMT system on the same corpus statistics as given in table 1 is 16.873 as reported earlier. Again, considering all Manipuri derivational morphology as one factor mapped to the complete phrase of the corresponding English phrases helps to cover overall meaning. This exercise reduces the overall burden to deal with individual morphemes with its discontinuous representation of English counterpart. We augment the training phrase table with 5000 manually prepared variants of verbs and nouns phrases for improving the overall accuracy of the SMT system. Manipuri uses Bengali script to represent the text. The wide variations of tone are not captured during

the textual representation. Lexical ambiguity is very common in this language. This has resulted towards the requirement of a word sense disambiguation module. As part of this ongoing experiment, an additional lexicon of 11000 entries between English and Manipuri is employed to handle bits of sense disambiguation with the help of a word-based language model. The English sentences are processed with morpha (Minnen, 2003) and Stanford Parser (de Marneffe and Manning, 2008) is used for parsing. All words in Manipuri are bound except noun. We process the Manipuri corpus by segmenting into three parts, viz, (a) lemma (b) derivational morphemes and (c) inflections. The Manipuri stemmer (Singh and Bandyopadhyay, 2008) is used to separate the stem, derivational morpheme and inflections.

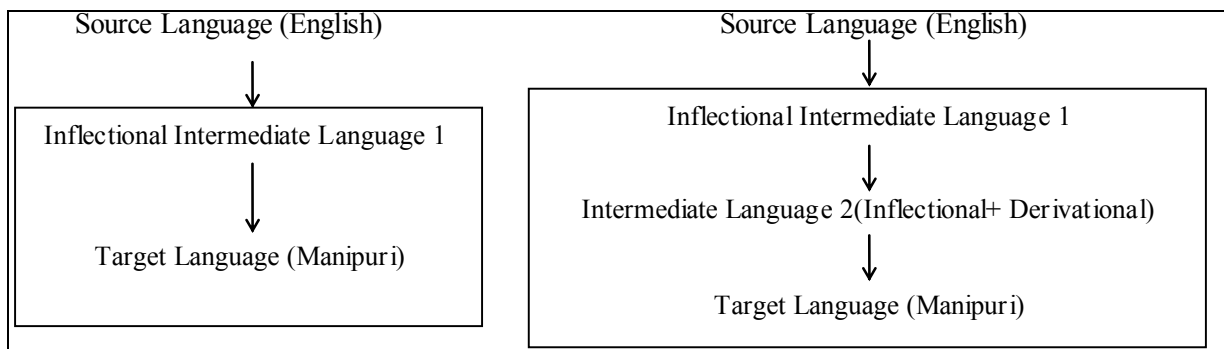


Figure 7: Two different models of English-Manipuri translation

For word-based language modeling, 200,000 Manipuri news sentences are used. The approach is to take account of the various function words by grouping after syntactic analysis of the source side sentences using Stanford Parser (de Marneffe and Manning, 2008) and map to the corresponding target side of Manipuri after morphological analysis. The baseline system is based on the surface word forms using the Moses (Koehn et al., 2007) default setting. A factored translation model can embed multiples of monolingual MT systems inside of it. So, the addition of ‘derivational morphology’ has similar effect that one additional intermediate language includes the factored form. Consider the sentence ‘I should have done it’ meaning ‘ঐ মদু ভৌরমগদবনি’, (ei madu touramgadabane) the

phrase ‘should have done’ meaning ভৌরমগদবনি consist of the inflections as well as derivational morphemes. The meaning of ‘should have’ is the derivational morpheme i.e., রমগদব and নি is the copula. The inflectional model gives the output as ‘ঐ মদু ভৌনি’ meaning ‘I’ll do it’. But, considering the inflectional + derivational model, the output is adequately addressed by the induction of the syntactic information from the source side. The mapping from the auxiliary verbs to the derivational morphemes can help to improve as an important factor.

The various models developed are evaluated using BLEU (Papineni et al., 2002) and (NIST Doddington, 2002) automatic scoring techniques. SRILM is used for language modeling (Stolcke, 2002).

1	<p>English: The number of teachers required is 58 for arts subjects and 32 for science subjects.</p> <p>Reference: অরাংপা ওজা মশিং আটস সবজেকনা ৫৮ অমসুং সাইন্স সবজেকনা ৩২ নি</p> <p>Baseline: অরাংপা ওজা মশিং থাকি সাইন্সকি ৩২ আটসতা ৫৮</p> <p>Inflectional: অরাংপা ওজা মশিং থাকি সাইন্সকি ৩২ আটসতা ৫৮ নি</p> <p>Derivational+ Inflectional: সবজেকশিং অরাংপা ওজা মশিং আটসনা ৫৮ অমসুং সাইন্সনা ৩২ নি</p>	Most of the meaning is conveyed by all the models.
2	<p>English: The branches of the tree spread out in all directions.</p> <p>Reference: উগী মশা ময়ামদূনা মায়কৈ খুদীংদা লোঙথোকই</p> <p>Baseline: হৌবা উ খন্দোকপা মায়কৈ</p> <p>Inflectional: উগী মশা লোঙথোকই</p> <p>Derivational + Inflectional: উগী মশাশিং মায়কৈ লোঙথোকই</p>	Poor meaning is conveyed by all the models.
3	<p>English: Termites do a lot of damage by eating the wood of buildings.</p> <p>Reference: লৈশৌনা সুমগী উ চাখোকুনা অমাঙঅতা কয়ামবুম থোকহল্লি</p> <p>Baseline: লৈশৌনা জৌবসি য়ালা মাঙহনবা মীওইশিংনা ময়ুমদগী উ</p> <p>Inflectional: লৈশৌনা মাঙহনবা মীওইশিংনা ময়ুম উ</p> <p>Derivational + Inflectional: লৈশৌনা সুমগী উ চাখোকুনা অমাঙবা থোকহল্লি</p>	No meaning is conveyed by all the models except the output of Derivational + Inflectional model.
4	<p>English: Contract works should be given only to those who would be able to carry out the work with sincerity and dedication.</p> <p>Reference: খবক নিংখিনা ভৌগদবা মীদা ঠিকা পীগদবনি</p> <p>Baseline: কন্ট্রেক্ট বার্ক পীগদবনি গুসিগী খুলাই অসিদা carrying হায়বসি শেংনা খবক গ্রুপশিংনা</p> <p>Inflectional: কন্ট্রেক্ট বার্ক শেংনা খবক পীগদবনি</p> <p>Derivational + Inflectional: কন্ট্রেক্ট বার্ক খবক গ্রুপশিংনা হায়বসি পীগদবনি</p>	Poor meaning is conveyed by all the models.
5	<p>English: The election office has reportedly intimidated the IFCD for taking up necessary measures.</p> <p>Reference: ইলেক্সন ডিপার্টমেন্টকি মায়কৈদগী আইএফসিডিদা দরকার লৈবা খবক পায়খল্লাবা থঙহনথ্রে</p> <p>Baseline: ইলেক্সন ডিপার্টমেন্টকি মায়কৈদগী আইএফসিডিদা দরকার লৈবা খবক পায়খল্লাবা থঙহনথ্রে</p> <p>Inflectional: ইলেক্সন ডিপার্টমেন্টকি মায়কৈদগী আইএফসিডিদা দরকার লৈবা খবক পায়খল্লাবা থঙহনথ্রে</p> <p>Derivational + inflectional: ইলেক্সন ডিপার্টমেন্টকি মায়কৈদগী আইএফসিডিদা দরকার লৈবা খবক পায়খল্লাবা থঙহনথ্রে</p>	Full meaning is conveyed by all the models.

Figure 8: Output of various models

	Number of sentences	Number of words
Training	10350	296728
Development	600	16520
Test	500	15204

Table 1: Corpus Statistics

	BLEU	NIST
Baseline	13.045	4.25
Inflectional	15.237	4.79
Derivational+ Inflectional	15.824	4.85

Table 2: Automatic Evaluation Scores

Table 1 show the corpus statistics and table 2 shows the automatic evaluation scores. The incorporation of derivational morphemes improves the BLEU and NIST scores by capturing a larger coverage of word forms.

6 Conclusion and Future Direction

With the present work, we have identified a novel approach to integrate finer linguistic details into the translation model by taking into account of the syntactic information from the source side and derivational and inflectional morphemes from the target side. Though English-Manipuri parallel corpora is limited in size, the performance of the SMT system is improved by taking into account of the above mentioned morphemes and thus helping to address the data sparsity problem for developing SMT systems between English and highly agglutinative and morphologically rich language like Manipuri. Our stress is mainly on the noun and verb morphology. Figure 8 shows the variations in the output of different models based on subjective evaluation. The automatic evaluation metrics shows the improvement of the scores for translation models catering more linguistic morphemes than the baseline models. The scalability of the present task is to develop SMT system between English and morphologically rich languages but with limited parallel corpora.

Acknowledgments

I, sincerely, thank Dr. Zia Saquib, Executive Director, CDAC (Mumbai), Prof. Sivaji Bandyopadhyay, Jadavpur University, Kolkata and the two anonymous reviewers for their support and valuable comments.

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