

# How Far Can We Go Beyond Linear Cryptanalysis?

T. Baignères   P. Junod   S. Vaudenay



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# Outline

- 1 Introduction
- 2 Optimal distinguisher between two random sources
  - General case
  - One source following a uniform distribution
  - Source of random bit strings
  - Statistical distinguishers
- 3 Optimal distinguisher between two random oracles
  - Beyond linear probabilities and linear expressions
  - Beyond the piling-up lemma
  - From distinguishers to key-recovery attacks
- 4 Conclusion

# Introduction

## Original Motivation

To give a **generalization of linear cryptanalysis**.

## Result

The paper turns out to propose a very general **statistical framework** which can be used to construct and study **optimal distinguishers**, and to generalize the **fundamental concepts behind linear cryptanalysis**.

## Previous Work

The original **linear cryptanalysis** was proposed by Matsui at EUROCRYPT'93. Since then, several generalizations have been proposed.

- Kaliski and Robshaw used **multiple linear approximations**,
- Vaudenay proposed the  **$\chi^2$  attack**, where a cipher can simply be considered as a black box,
- Harpes, Kramer, and Massey replaced linear expressions with **I/O sums**,
- Harpes and Massey considered **partition pairs** of the input and output spaces of the cipher,
- More recently, Junod and Vaudenay considered linear cryptanalysis in a purely **statistical framework**.

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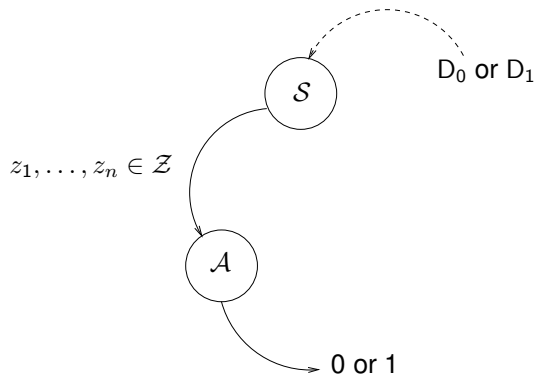
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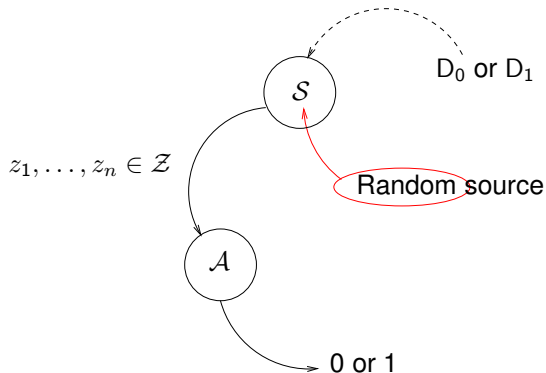
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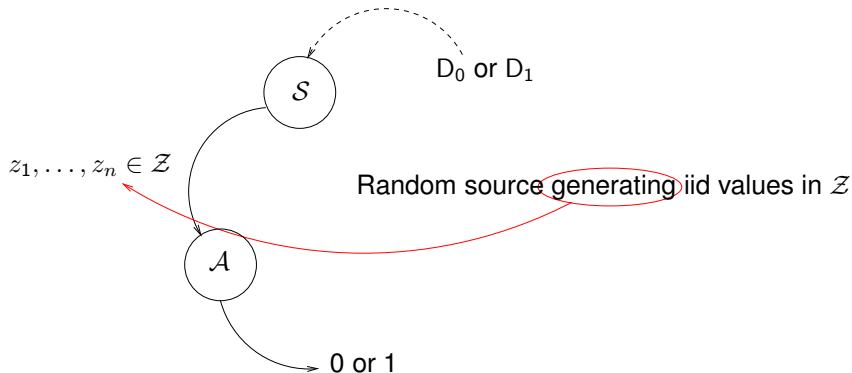
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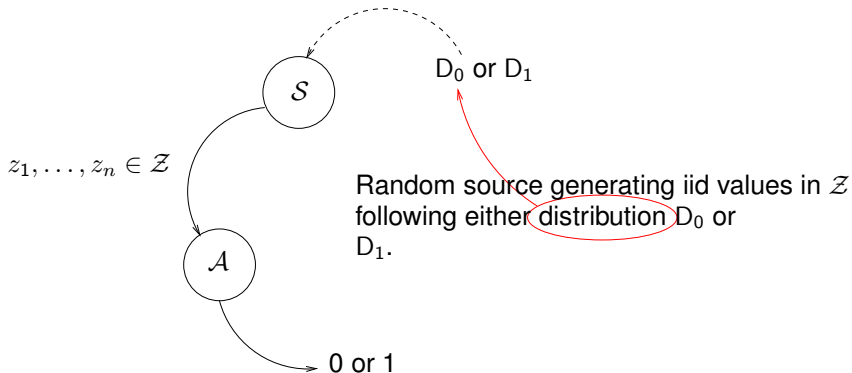


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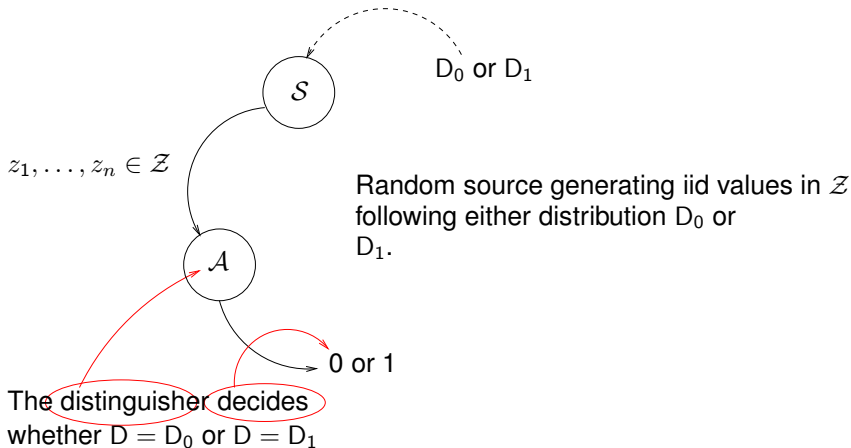




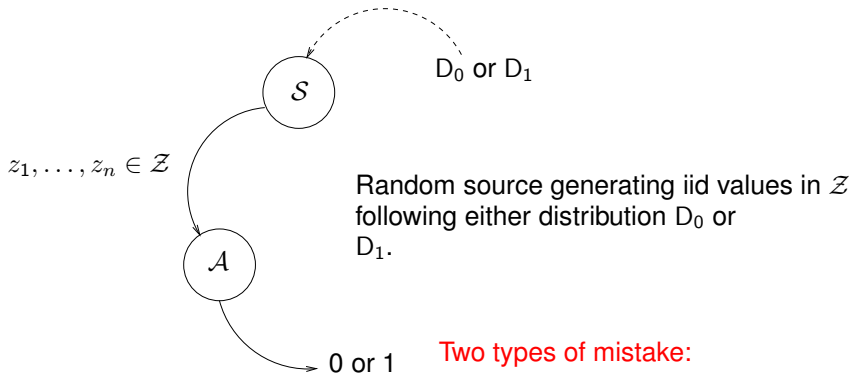
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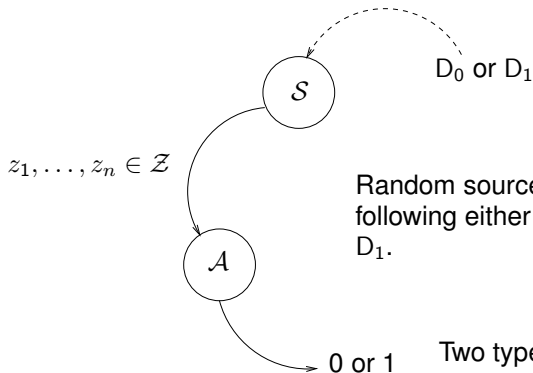


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The distinguisher decides whether  $D = D_0$  or  $D = D_1$

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Random source generating iid values in  $\mathcal{Z}$  following either distribution  $D_0$  or  $D_1$ .

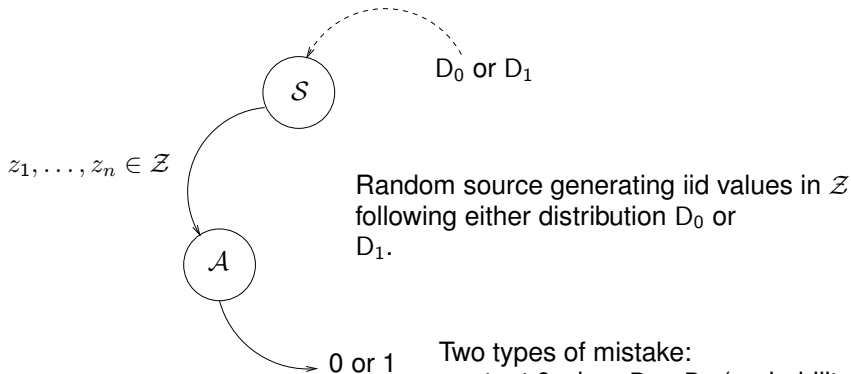
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Two types of mistake:

- output 0 when  $D = D_1$  (probability  $\alpha$ )
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Optimal distinguisher  $\Leftrightarrow P_e = \frac{1}{2}(\alpha + \beta)$  minimum

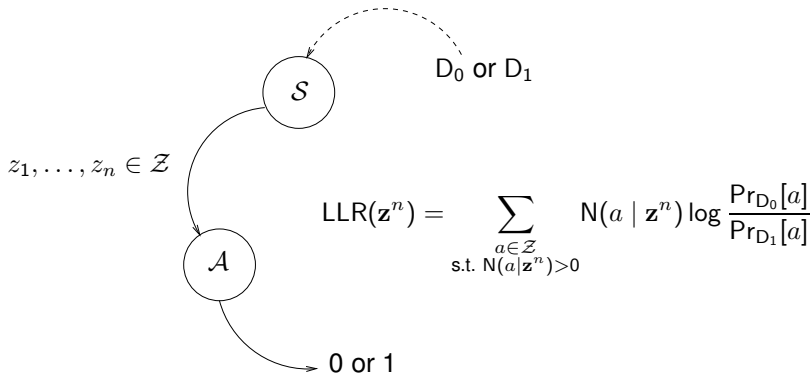


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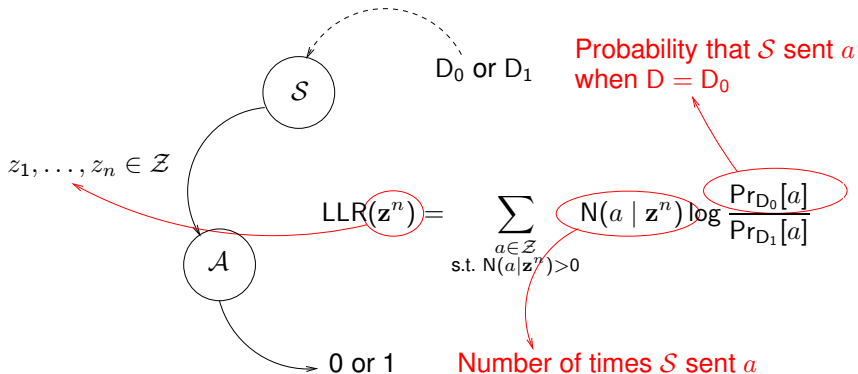
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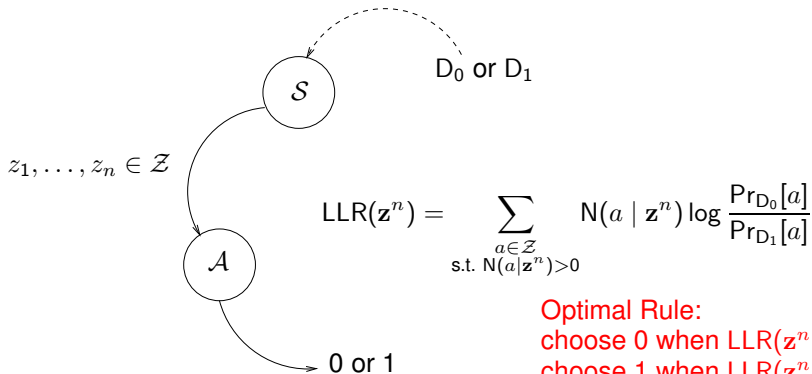
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**Optimal Rule:**  
 choose 0 when  $\text{LLR}(\mathbf{z}^n) \geq 0$   
 choose 1 when  $\text{LLR}(\mathbf{z}^n) < 0$

This minimizes  $P_e \Rightarrow$  optimal distinguisher  
 (aka Neyman-Pearson lemma)



## General case (3)

For a given  $P_e$ , how many queries does the distinguisher need?

### Theorem

Considering that

- $Z_1, \dots, Z_n$  are iid, following distribution  $D \in \{D_0, D_1\}$ ,
- $D_0$  is close to  $D_1$ , i.e.,  $\Pr_{D_0}[z] - \Pr_{D_1}[z] = \epsilon_z \ll 1$ ,

$$n = \frac{d}{\sum_{z \in \mathcal{Z}} \frac{\epsilon_z^2}{p_z}} \quad \text{with} \quad P_e \approx 1 - \Phi\left(\frac{\sqrt{d}}{2}\right)$$

$$\Phi(t) = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi}} \int_{-\infty}^t e^{-\frac{1}{2}u^2} du$$

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# One source following a uniform distribution

## Squared Euclidean Imbalance (SEI)

If  $D_1$  is the uniform distribution (i.e.,  $\Pr_{D_1}[z] = p_z = \frac{1}{|\mathcal{Z}|}$ ), we define the **Squared Euclidean Imbalance (SEI)**:

$$\Delta(D_0) = |\mathcal{Z}| \sum_{z \in \mathcal{Z}} \epsilon_z^2 .$$

## Corollary

$$n = \frac{d}{\Delta(D_0)} \quad \text{with} \quad P_e \approx 1 - \Phi\left(\frac{\sqrt{d}}{2}\right) .$$

⇒ The complexity of distinguishing  $D_0$  from  $D_1$  can be measured by means of the SEI.

## Link to $\chi^2$ attacks

In a  $\chi^2$  cryptanalysis, the adversary does not need to know  $D_1$ , i.e., **what exactly happens in the inner transformations of the cipher** (which can therefore be considered as a *black box*).

- Complexity of a  $\chi^2$  attack  $\rightarrow O(1/\Delta(D_0))$
- Not worse (up to a constant term) than an optimal distinguisher.

When one does not know precisely what happens in the attacked cipher, the best **practical alternative** to an optimal distinguisher seems to be the  $\chi^2$  attack.

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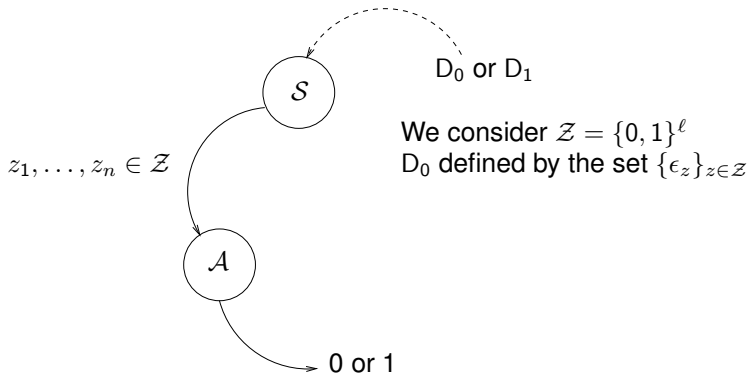
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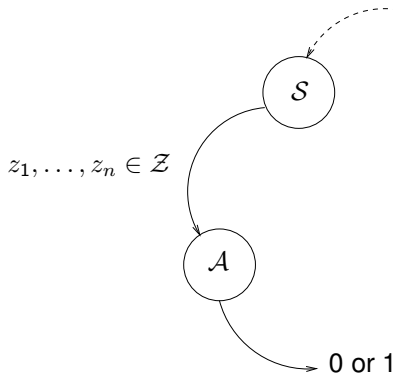
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# Source of random bit strings (1)



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We consider  $\mathcal{Z} = \{0, 1\}^\ell$   
 $D_0$  defined by the set  $\{\epsilon_z\}_{z \in \mathcal{Z}}$

Fourier transform of  $D_0$   
 at point  $u \in \mathcal{Z}$  :

$$\hat{\epsilon}_u = \sum_{z \in \mathcal{Z}} (-1)^{u \cdot z} \epsilon_z$$

## Source of random bit strings (2)

Properties of the SEI (using the Fourier transform):

- $\Delta(D_0) = \sum_{u \in \mathcal{Z}} \hat{\epsilon}_u^2$
- When  $B$  is a random bit, recall the linear probability is  $LP(B) = (2 \Pr [B = 0] - 1)^2$ . Then,

- $\Delta(D_0) = \sum_{w \in \mathcal{Z} \setminus \{0\}} LP(w \cdot Z)$

- with  $LP_{\max}^Z = \max_{w \in \mathcal{Z} \setminus \{0\}} LP(w \cdot Z)$ ,

$$\Delta(D_0) \leq (2^l - 1) LP_{\max}^Z.$$

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# Statistical distinguishers

We know how to distinguish distributions in  $\{0, 1\}^\ell$  of *small cardinality* (i.e.,  $\ell$  is small).

What if the source generates variables in  $\{0, 1\}^L$  where  $L$  is *large*?

Solution:

- *reduce the sample space* by means of a projection:

$$h : \{0, 1\}^L \longrightarrow \mathcal{Z} .$$

- $Z = h(S) \in \mathcal{Z}$  follows either  $D_0$  or  $D_1$ .

But how should we choose the projection  $h$ ?! (This may be where cryptanalysis becomes an art !)

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# First example of a statistical distinguisher

For some non-zero  $a \in \{0, 1\}^L$

$$\begin{array}{rcl}
 h : \{0, 1\}^L & \longrightarrow & \mathcal{Z} = \{0, 1\} \\
 S & \longmapsto & h(S) = a \cdot S .
 \end{array}$$

This is a **linear distinguisher**.

We note that  $\Delta(h(S)) = \text{LP}(a \cdot S) \leq \text{LP}_{\max}^S$ .

Modern ciphers have a bounded  $\text{LP}_{\max}^S$   
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where  $h$  is **GF(2)-linear** and  $\ell \neq 1$  is small.

### Theorem

$$\Delta(h(S)) \leq (2^\ell - 1) \text{LP}_{\max}^S .$$

Ciphers protected against linear cryptanalysis (bounded  $\text{LP}_{\max}^S$ )  
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Is it possible to find a distinguisher

- with a high advantage,
- even though the value of  $LP_{\max}^S$  is small?

Practical examples exist. For example

- Jakobsen and Knudsen's interpolation attack (where quadratic functions are used),
- Courtois' bi-linear cryptanalysis.

In the paper we provide an example of a source

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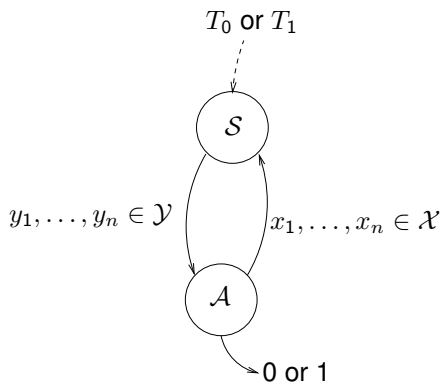
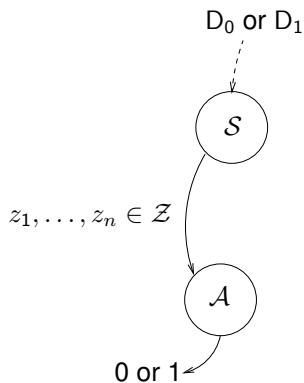
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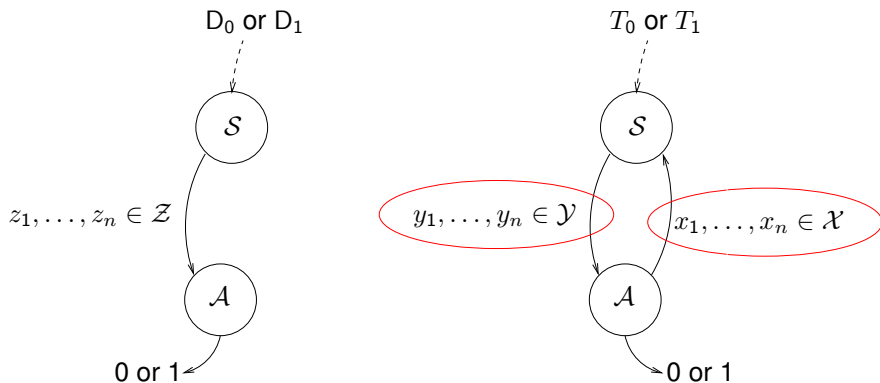
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- 2 Optimal distinguisher between two random sources
  - General case
  - One source following a uniform distribution
  - Source of random bit strings
  - Statistical distinguishers
- 3 **Optimal distinguisher between two random oracles**
  - **Beyond linear probabilities and linear expressions**
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  - From distinguishers to key-recovery attacks
- 4 Conclusion

# Beyond linear probabilities and linear expressions (1)



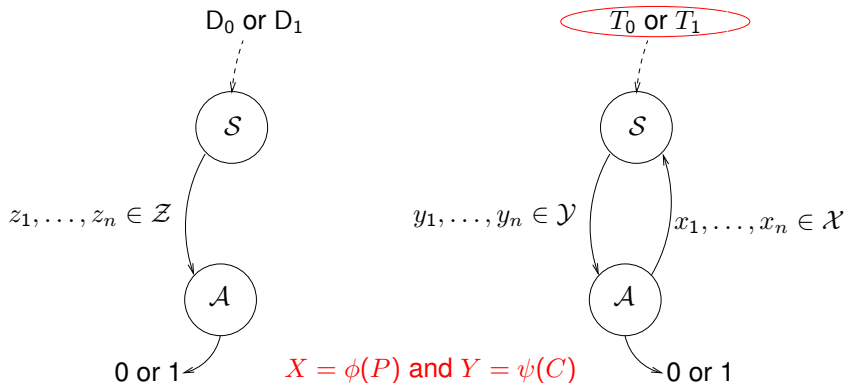
We know how to distinguish random sources.  
 → what about random oracles?

# Beyond linear probabilities and linear expressions (1)



$Z \in \mathcal{Z}$  becomes a couple of random variables  $(X, Y) \in \mathcal{X} \times \mathcal{Y}$ .

# Beyond linear probabilities and linear expressions (1)



known plaintext attack  $\rightarrow P \sim$  uniform distrib.  $\rightarrow X \sim$  uniform distrib.

Distribution of  $Y$  defined by a transition matrix:

$$[T]_{x,y} = \Pr[Y = y \mid X = x]$$



# Beyond linear probabilities and linear expressions (2)

## Transition Matrix

$$[T]_{x,y} = \Pr [Y = y \mid X = x] .$$

When  $T = T_1$ ,  $Y$  is uniformly distributed.

## Bias Matrix

$$B = T_0 - T_1 .$$

## Link between bias matrix and SEI

$$\Delta(D_0) = \frac{|\mathcal{Y}|}{|\mathcal{X}|} \| B \|_2^2 .$$

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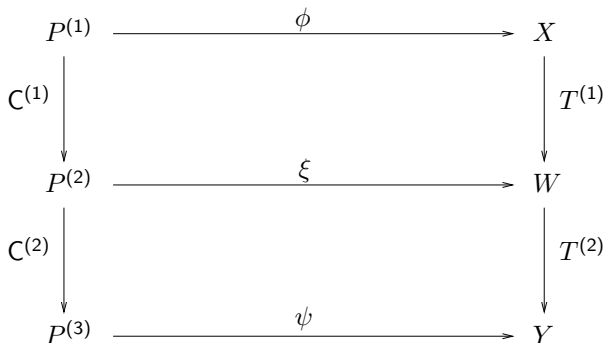
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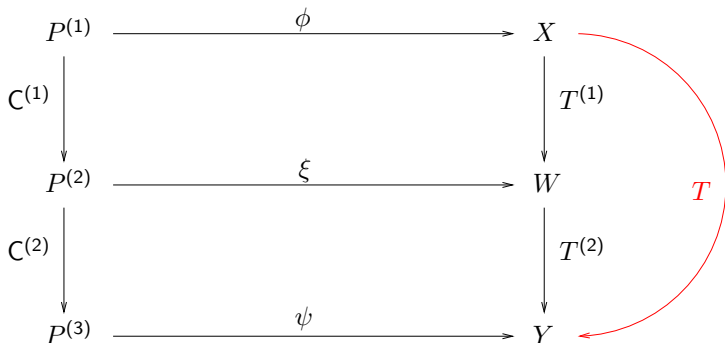
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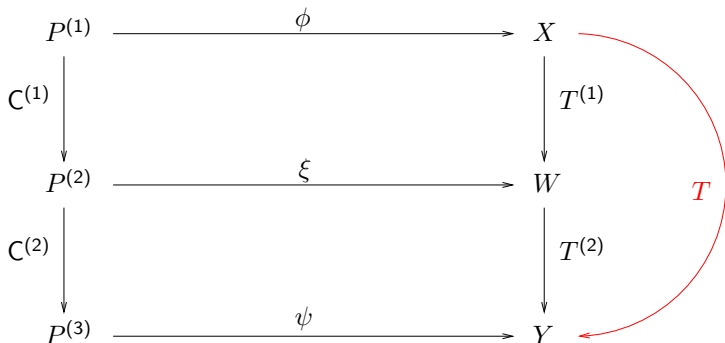
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$$T = T^{(1)} \times T^{(2)} \rightsquigarrow B = B^{(1)} \times B^{(2)} \rightsquigarrow \| B \|_2 \leq \| B^{(1)} \|_2 \times \| B^{(2)} \|_2$$

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The framework can be adapted to **key recovery**.

In the paper we show how to build an optimal key ranking procedure that recovers a  $k$  bits key provided that the number of samples  $n$  is s.t.

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