

Referee Report

“Krylov Complexity from Loschmidt Amplitude”

arXiv:2607.10921

Recommendation: Reject in the present form, with encouragement to resubmit after a comprehensive reconstruction.

Summary and overall assessment

The manuscript develops several connections among Krylov complexity, Loschmidt amplitudes, orthogonal-polynomial kernels, and quantum information geometry. Starting from the Lanczos representation of a Hamiltonian as a Jacobi matrix M , it introduces the number operator $\hat{n}$ and the Hermitian operator $B = i[\hat{n}, M]$. The angular conjugation

$$M(\phi) = e^{i\phi\hat{n}} M e^{-i\phi\hat{n}}$$

then turns the characteristic function of the Krylov probability distribution into a Loschmidt amplitude. Equation (24) is the cleanest result of the paper: derivatives with respect to ϕ generate all moments of $\hat{n}$ in the evolved state. The manuscript next deforms the Lanczos seed by Euclidean evolution, relates the resulting family of Jacobi matrices to a Toda flow, and seeks a second Loschmidt representation for $\partial_t \langle \hat{n}(t) \rangle$. This representation motivates a finite-rank truncation controlled by differences of consecutive Lanczos coefficients.

The second half of the paper pursues two complementary directions. First, it studies the energy-basis kernel of $e^{i\phi\hat{n}}$, uses a Hilbert–Schmidt estimate for $\mathcal{F} = i[B, M]$, and proposes an asymptotic characteristic function for the constant- b_n problem. Second, it equips the two-parameter family $e^{i\phi\hat{n}} e^{-iMt} |0\rangle$ with the Fubini–Study metric. Robertson–Schrödinger uncertainty gives a volume bound on Krylov complexity. For even spectral measures, the paper further relates the survival amplitude to the Krylov variance and proposes empirical relations between that variance and the inverse participation ratio. The appendices collect Poisson-kernel formulae, Szegő asymptotics, closed $SU(2)$, $SL(2, \mathbb{R})$ and Heisenberg examples, numerical models, and a Dyck-path expansion.

The general program is interesting. In particular, the angular Loschmidt identity provides a useful organizing language; a correctly formulated finite-rank approximation could have practical value; and the uncertainty interpretation of the geometric volume inequality is conceptually appealing. The paper also makes a serious attempt to connect exact algebraic examples, bounded-support orthogonal-polynomial asymptotics, DSSYK numerics, and a nonintegrable spin chain.

However, the manuscript is not technically reliable in its present form. Several central displayed equations fail elementary consistency checks. Most importantly, the Euclidean/Toda flow has the wrong sign, the stated time-derivative Loschmidt formula consequently has the wrong sign, the proposed RMT characteristic function is neither normalized nor a characteristic function, and the printed quantum-geometric cross component is not the covariance obtained from the stated family of states. The purported rigorous survival-amplitude bound is also inverted outside its monotonicity domain, while the $t^{3/2}$ conclusion from the Hilbert–Schmidt estimate requires a stronger decay hypothesis than the paper states. These are accompanied by incompatible Fourier and Lanczos normalizations and by concrete errors in several appendices. Because these problems affect each of the paper’s principal claimed advances, I do not think that a conventional revision confined to clarification or presentation would be sufficient.

Correctness, novelty, and significance

There is a sound core around which a substantially revised paper could be built. Equation (24) follows exactly from unitary conjugation and correctly identifies $G(t, \phi)$ with the characteristic function $\sum_n |\varphi_n(t)|^2 e^{in\phi}$. Equations (28)–(29), defining the first two time derivatives through B and $\mathcal{F}$, are also consistent with the Jacobi-matrix algebra. Once the metric is written with the correct connected covariance, Robertson–Schrödinger uncertainty does imply the determinant inequality underlying equations (52)–(54). Finally, the leading moments in equation (44) agree with the ballistic distribution obtained directly from the exact Bessel wavefunctions in equation (D5), although the manuscript’s stated derivation through equation (A19) does not establish them.

The novelty must be presented more sharply. The manuscript itself notes that Krylov generating functions and orthogonal-polynomial methods are established, that the closed-algebra information geometries were studied by Caputa, Magan, and Patramanis, that speed limits involving Krylov variance were derived by Hörnedal and collaborators, and that the Euclidean deformation of Lanczos data is governed by the Toda flow studied by Dymarsky and Gorsky. The identity (24) is exact and useful, but it is also an immediate characteristic-function identity after conjugating M by $e^{i\phi\hat{n}}$. The genuinely new claims appear to be the general Loschmidt interpretation outside closed algebras, the τ -amplitude representation and its truncation, the autocorrelation-dependent Hilbert–Schmidt bound, and the proposed variance–IPR phenomenology. Those contributions could be of interest to the Krylov-complexity and quantum-dynamics communities, but they need correct statements, proofs with explicit hypotheses, and reproducible tests before their significance can be assessed.

At present the physical implications are also less developed than the formal ones. Both perturbations are generally highly nonlocal in the original Hilbert-space tensor structure. The paper acknowledges this, but statements about measurability, chaos classification, and experimentally accessible finite-rank perturbations remain prospective. A revised version should distinguish an exact reformulation from a physical diagnostic, and should demonstrate at least one nontrivial model in which the required perturbation has a controlled physical realization or yields information not already available from the survival amplitude and Lanczos coefficients.

Major comments

1. The sign of the Euclidean/Toda flow and of the central τ -Loschmidt identity is inconsistent.

The definitions in equations (30), (32a), and (32b) fix the sign without ambiguity. With

$$M(\tau) = \mathcal{O}(\tau)\Lambda\mathcal{O}(\tau)^T, \quad B(\tau) = i\mathcal{O}'(\tau)\mathcal{O}(\tau)^T,$$

one has $\mathcal{O}' = -iB\mathcal{O}$ and therefore

$$M'(\tau) = -i[B(\tau), M(\tau)] = -\mathcal{F}(\tau), \quad \mathcal{F} = i[B, M].$$

Equation (31) instead states $M' = +i[B, M] = +\mathcal{F}$. This is not a harmless convention change because equation (34) retains the deformation $e^{-\tau H}$ and hence fixes the same negative flow. The Heisenberg example gives an immediate check: for $M = \alpha(a + a^\dagger)$, multiplying the Gaussian spectral measure by $e^{-2\tau E}$ shifts its mean to $a_n(\tau) = -2\alpha^2\tau$, whereas the last sentence of Appendix C.3 states the opposite sign.

Consequently, if

$$A(\tau, t) = \langle 0 | e^{iM(0)t} e^{-iM(\tau)t} | 0 \rangle,$$

then $\partial_\tau A|_0 = i\partial_t \langle \hat{n}(t) \rangle$ with the definitions printed in the paper, so the correct relation is

$$\partial_t \langle \hat{n}(t) \rangle = -i\partial_\tau A(\tau, t)|_{\tau=0},$$

not the $+i$ relation in equation (37). In the same Heisenberg example $A = e^{i(2\alpha^2)\tau t}$ and the sign can be checked in one line. Equation (36), the prose following equation (37), and the linearization of $M(\tau)$ are mutually inconsistent as written. Equation (38) additionally requires a complex conjugate on the τ_0 wavefunction (and the corrected overall sign): an overlap of two evolutions is a sum of $\varphi_n^{\tau_0}(t)^* \partial_\tau \varphi_n^\tau(t)$, not the expression printed there.

This issue affects the principal new construction in Section III and the interpretation of Figure 2. The author should choose one convention for the seed deformation, derive the Toda equation from it, propagate the convention through equations (31)–(41), and repeat every numerical check involving a finite τ . The corrected identity should be verified explicitly in the Heisenberg and $SL(2, \mathbb{R})$ orbits before being used in a general argument.

The finite-rank formula also needs correction independently of the sign: equation (40) omits the factor of t from $e^{-iH(\tau, n_*)t}$. Moreover, equation (41) controls the derivative at $\tau = 0$; using a finite value such as $\tau = 10^{-6}$ introduces a separate $O(\tau^2)$ remainder that is not bounded in the manuscript. For a positive diagonal tail the integration of (41) gives an absolute complexity error bounded by $\mathcal{R}(n_*)t^2/2$, and the precise cutoff convention at n_* should be fixed.

2. The proposed spectral characteristic function does not satisfy its defining identities.

Equation (A19) is presented as the asymptotic $G(t, \phi)$ for $b_n = 1/2$, with the normalized semicircle measure of equation (B6). Yet at $\phi = 0$ it gives

$$G(t, 0) = \frac{2}{\pi} \int_{-1}^1 \Phi(E) dE = \frac{2}{\pi},$$

rather than the exact identity $G(t, 0) = 1$. More seriously, its term linear in ϕ is real and has no factor of t . A characteristic function must obey

$$\partial_\phi G(t, 0) = i\langle \hat{n}(t) \rangle,$$

which is purely imaginary and grows linearly at late time in this model. Equation (A19) also depends on ϕ at $t = 0$, whereas $G(0, \phi) = 1$ exactly because the initial state is $|0\rangle$. Thus equation (A19) cannot be the object defined in equation (24b), even as a late-time approximation that preserves the normalization and Hermiticity constraints.

The leading moments in equation (44) are plausible and in fact follow from the exact Bessel expression (D5), but they do not follow from equation (A19) as printed. The derivation in Appendix A must be redone. At minimum, the author should check $G(t, 0) = 1$, $G(0, \phi) = 1$, $G(t, -\phi) = G(t, \phi)^*$, the first two ϕ derivatives, and comparison with the exact Bessel series before using an approximate kernel. Figure 3(a) should state precisely which formula was evaluated; if the code used a different expression from (A19), the displayed equation and all ensuing conclusions must be reconciled with it.

There are related structural errors earlier in the paper. The interaction-picture expression (25) should contain the perturbation $M(\phi) - M(0)$ inside the integral; the printed expression does not reduce to the identity at $\phi = 0$. In equation (50), the angular argument of the kernel should be $\phi_2 - \phi_1$ for the stated overlap, not $\phi_1 + \phi_2$; with the normalized convention for Φ , the displayed double Fourier transform also requires $1/(2\pi)^2$, not $1/(2\pi)$. Equation (35) places the time factor incorrectly in the exponent. Finally, substituting the constant- b phase into equation (B4) gives the opposite sign for the kernel in equation (B7); this sign should be checked against the positive rank-one $\tilde{\mathcal{F}}$ before it is used. These identities should be derived once, with a consistent energy-basis normalization, rather than repaired independently.

3. The quantum geometric tensor in equation (51) is not obtained from the stated family of states.

For

$$|\Psi(t, \phi)\rangle = e^{i\phi\hat{n}} e^{-iMt} |0\rangle,$$

a direct evaluation at any ϕ gives

$$\begin{aligned} g_{tt} &= \text{Var}(M) = b_0^2, \\ g_{\phi\phi} &= \text{Var}_t(\hat{n}), \\ g_{t\phi} &= -\left[\frac{1}{2} \langle \{M, \hat{n}\} \rangle_t - a_0 \langle \hat{n} \rangle_t \right], \\ F_{t\phi} &= -\langle B \rangle_t \end{aligned}$$

with the paper's convention $B = i[\hat{n}, M]$ and $F_{\mu\nu} = 2 \text{Im } \mathcal{Q}_{\mu\nu}$. Reversing the order of the coordinate indices reverses the last sign, but it does not alter the metric. The cross component printed in equation (51) contains an extra factor b_0 , omits the connected subtraction by $a_0 \langle \hat{n} \rangle$, and has the opposite sign. It is dimensionally inconsistent as well: $g_{t\phi}$ has one power of energy, not two. Equation (55) inherits the same problems.

The covariance that appears in equation (52) is much closer to the correct one, so the determinant/uncertainty argument can likely be retained after equation (51) is fixed. However, the explicit $SU(2)$ and $SL(2, \mathbb{R})$ cross terms in Appendix C have the corresponding sign problem, and the coordinate transformation in equation (56) must be checked against the corrected sign. The determinant expressions may survive because the cross term is squared, but they should not simply be assumed. Equation (C23) also misses a square on the hyperbolic sine in its final expression, despite equating that expression to one quarter of the squared complexity rate.

The geometric section is one of the strongest conceptual parts of the paper; it therefore needs a clean derivation of every component from the quantum geometric tensor, followed by explicit checks in a two-level $SU(2)$ example and the Heisenberg limit. The discussion of Berry curvature should consistently distinguish $F_{t\phi}$ from $F_{\phi t}$.

4. Equation (59) is not a globally valid rigorous bound.

For an even spectral measure ($a_n = 0$), the constant- t path indeed gives

$$\arccos |C(2t)| \leq \pi \Delta n(t).$$

However, inversion through the cosine is monotone only while $0 \leq \pi\Delta n \leq \pi/2$. The valid consequence is therefore

$$|C(2t)| \geq \cos(\pi\Delta n(t)) \quad \text{for } \Delta n(t) \leq \frac{1}{2},$$

and only the trivial bound $|C(2t)| \geq 0$ follows once $\Delta n \geq 1/2$. The first inequality in equation (59), asserted without this restriction, becomes spuriously strong whenever the cosine turns positive again; for example, it would demand $|C| \geq 1$ at integer even values of Δn . Calling it conservative for $\Delta n = O(1)$ does not cure the inversion error.

Equations (60)–(61) and the resulting variance–IPR estimates (63)–(64) are explicitly heuristic, and the author is commendably candid that counterexamples exist. Nevertheless, they occupy a substantial part of the conclusions and are repeatedly described as bounds. A revised manuscript should separate the rigorous piecewise statement from a conjecture, give a precise smearing prescription (window, normalization, and domain), and report systematic failure measures rather than selected plots. The sign in the smeared exponential written in the caption of Figure 4(a) is positive, contrary to equation (61), and must also be corrected. Since (63) and (64) are lower bounds on the IPR, their labels and prose should not call them “upper bounds.”

There is also an internal contradiction in the discussion following equation (64). It states that $\Delta n(t) \text{IPR}_t \rightarrow 0$ for $h < 1/4$ while equation (64) gives a strictly positive asymptotic lower scale for that product. The negative-binomial form of the $SL(2, \mathbb{R})$ distribution instead indicates different power-law behavior and should be analyzed separately on the two sides of $h = 1/4$. Near-saturation of a second-cumulant estimate, by itself, also does not establish suppression of all higher cumulants.

5. The Hilbert–Schmidt estimate needs a correct norm and stronger asymptotic hypotheses.

The manuscript defines the Frobenius norm as $\|\mathcal{F}\| = \text{tr}(\mathcal{F}^\dagger \mathcal{F})$, omitting the square root, but equations (45)–(47) use the standard Cauchy–Schwarz norm

$$\|\mathcal{F}\|_F = \sqrt{\text{tr}(\mathcal{F}^\dagger \mathcal{F})}.$$

All constants and parameter dependences must therefore be recomputed. For the DSSYK sequence in equation (D4), for example, $\mathcal{F}_{nn} = \mathbf{q}^n/2$, so

$$\|\mathcal{F}\|_F = \frac{1}{2\sqrt{1 - \mathbf{q}^2}},$$

not a quantity proportional to $(1 - \mathbf{q}^2)^{-1}$ under the displayed definitions. This matters parametrically as $\mathbf{q} \rightarrow 1^-$ and may affect Figure 3(b).

Equation (47) itself appears salvageable in finite dimension after this correction. Its claimed universal $t^{3/2}$ consequence is not. The double integral grows as t^3 only if $|C(u)|^2$ is integrable, or under a comparably explicit finite-correlation-time assumption. The condition $C(t) \rightarrow 0$ alone is insufficient: a power-law tail $C(t) \sim t^{-\alpha}$ with $\alpha \leq 1/2$ gives a different scaling. Replacing C by a delta function is not a derivation because the integrand contains $|C|^2$ and a squared delta distribution is undefined. The author should formulate a theorem separately for finite matrices and for an infinite Jacobi operator, state the domain and Hilbert–Schmidt assumptions, and derive the large- t corollaries for integrable and nonintegrable correlation tails.

6. Bounded spectral support does not by itself imply the recurrence and trace properties used in Sections III and Appendix B.

The paper repeatedly states that bounded support forces the Lanczos coefficients to approach constants and that $\mathcal{F}$ then has a well-defined trace and Frobenius norm. Bounded support gives bounded recurrence coefficients, but convergence to a single constant requires additional regularity and a one-interval support; multi-interval or sufficiently irregular measures can have nonconvergent or asymptotically periodic Jacobi data. Even convergence of a_n and b_n does not make the successive differences absolutely summable, so trace-class properties do not follow automatically. Finite discrete spectra require a separate treatment from an infinite continuous Szegő measure.

Appendix B does introduce a regularity condition, but the hypothesis and its consequences need to be stated accurately and then carried back into the main text. The condition as printed is asymmetric between the two endpoints, while the subsequent formula assumes an interval weight in the standard Szegő class. The author should specify whether the support is exactly one interval, whether the density is positive almost everywhere, which logarithmic integrability condition is imposed, and what error estimate is actually available. Claims of universality for “any bounded Φ ” and of a well-defined trace should be replaced by statements matched to these hypotheses.

For the tridiagonal operator at hand, a useful explicit Hilbert–Schmidt condition is

$$\sum_{n \geq 0} \left[4(b_n^2 - b_{n-1}^2)^2 + 2b_n^2(a_{n+1} - a_n)^2 \right] < \infty.$$

Appendix A.3 likewise yields the strict condition $\chi < 1/2$ for its singular-kernel ansatz. The endpoint $\chi = 1/2$ is logarithmically non-square-integrable, so $t^{3/2}$ is not attained within the stated Hilbert–Schmidt class without a cutoff or logarithmic qualification.

7. Several foundational conventions and appendix formulae require a line-by-line consistency audit.

These are not merely typographical because they feed the central derivations:

- With $C(t) = \langle 0 | e^{-iMt} | 0 \rangle$ and $\int \Phi(E) dE = 1$, equation (3) needs the inverse-Fourier factor $1/(2\pi)$, and equation (14) should read $\mu_k = i^k C^{(k)}(0)$. The current conventions cannot simultaneously satisfy equations (3), (13), and (14).
- For the monic recurrence (9), equation (11) should state $b_n^2 = \langle \psi_{n+1} | \psi_{n+1} \rangle / \langle \psi_n | \psi_n \rangle$. The displayed equation defines b_n as that ratio and is incompatible with the normalized recurrence (10).
- Equation (D3) defines $q = e^{+2p^2/\mathbf{N}} > 1$, while the text, the bounded q -Hermite measure, and equation (D4) require $0 < q < 1$; the standard chord parameter has the negative exponent. The DSSYK conventions and every numerical label should be checked.
- Equation (C8) has $b_0 \tilde{\delta} / \tilde{\alpha}$ multiplying $|1\rangle$, whereas equation (C4) gives $b_0 \tilde{\gamma} / \tilde{\alpha}$. Equation (C10) should retain the initial $\hat{n}$ and contain $(\tilde{\gamma}M + \tilde{\delta})t^2/2$, not the expression printed. The gamma-distribution measure in equation (C25) requires a normalization proportional to $(2/\gamma)^{2h}$, not $(2/\gamma)^h$.
- Equations (E2)–(E3) do not define a Dyck path of length $2k$: they list only $2k$ heights for $2k$ steps, use i inside a product indexed by j , and assign b_1 rather than b_0 to the first $0 \rightarrow 1$ step. The combinatorial expansion therefore cannot be used as written and should be reconstructed from heights $h_0, \dots, h_{2k}$.

A revised paper should include a compact table of conventions for Fourier transforms, spectral measures, Jacobi coefficients, and energy-basis kernels, followed by exact checks in a two- or three-dimensional Jacobi matrix. This would prevent normalization and sign choices from drifting between the main text and appendices.

8. The numerical evidence is not sufficiently reproducible to support the broad empirical claims.

Figures 2–6 are useful illustrations, but the manuscript gives too little information to assess them quantitatively. For Figure 2, the precise finite- τ estimator, sign convention, chain cutoff, time integrator, and treatment of the tail should be stated. For the RMT comparison, the exact expression against which equation (A19) was tested must be identified. For DSSYK, the normalization of q , $\|\mathcal{F}\|$, and the spectral function should be given. For the Ising-chain plots, the manuscript should state boundary conditions, Hilbert–Schmidt/operator normalization, symmetry-sector treatment, Lanczos termination tolerance, time step, and whether the quoted Krylov dimension is exact or numerical.

The randomly perturbed $SL(2, \mathbb{R})$ example in Figure 5 requires the distribution (not only its mean), sample count, random seed or ensemble uncertainty, and an explanation of how positivity and self-adjointness are maintained. Claims such as “holds quite generally” or “nearly saturated” should be replaced by a defined error metric over stated time windows and parameter ranges. Providing the short scripts or data needed to reproduce the figures would substantially strengthen the paper.

9. The revised manuscript should distinguish reformulations, theorems, conjectures, and physical diagnostics.

At present these categories are blended. Equation (24) is an exact algebraic identity. The finite-rank estimate can become a theorem under monotonicity and tail assumptions. Equation (47) can be a theorem with a correctly defined Hilbert–Schmidt norm. By contrast, equations (60)–(64) are empirical conjectures, and the identification of λ_K with a chaos exponent is a physical possibility that depends on model-specific operator locality and an independent scrambling diagnostic. The RMT kernel approximation lies between these categories and needs a controlled asymptotic statement.

The angular deformation is exactly isospectral, since $M(\phi)$ is unitarily conjugate to M . The introduction’s statement that ϕ measures how the spectrum of the deformed Hamiltonian spreads is therefore incorrect; what changes is the eigenbasis relative to the Krylov seed (and the operator’s decomposition in a fixed basis), not the spectrum. This distinction is important when comparing the construction with a conventional Loschmidt

perturbation and when arguing that it diagnoses chaos.

The literature discussion should be reorganized around this distinction. The author should explain precisely what is added beyond prior characteristic-function approaches, the closed-algebra geometry of Caputa and collaborators, the Krylov speed limit, and Toda evolution of recurrence coefficients. A useful revised introduction would list the new propositions with their hypotheses and then identify the models in which each proposition supplies genuinely new information. Without this separation, the manuscript overstates “completely general” conclusions that in fact use even measures, one-interval Szegő regularity, compact or Hilbert–Schmidt $\mathcal{F}$, factorization of a singular kernel, or an empirical Gaussian approximation.

Minor comments

1. The definition of λ_K in equation (1) should specify the large- t limit and the order of limits relative to the infinitesimal deformation. As written it is not a complete definition of an exponent.
2. The map from the Wightman correlator to the doubled state in equations (7)–(8) should include, or explicitly assume, normalization of the operator insertion so that the seed has unit norm.
3. Section III.A contains a red editorial note to the author. It should be removed along with other draft remnants before resubmission.
4. In Appendix C.1, $|j, -j\rangle$ is the lowest-weight state in the displayed convention, not the highest-weight state. The wavefunction in equation (C17) also lacks the phase $(-i)^n$ for evolution with $\alpha(J_+ + J_-)$; an analogous phase is missing from the Heisenberg wavefunctions in Appendix C.3. Probabilities are unaffected, but amplitudes and overlap identities are not.
5. The $SL(2, \mathbb{R})$ commutator in equation (C19) is malformed. The two relations $[L_0, L_{\pm 1}] = \mp L_{\pm 1}$ should be stated separately and checked against the raising/lowering convention used for (C20).
6. Equation (A15) is preceded by a Gaussian density whose prefactor is written as $1/\sqrt{2\pi\alpha}$ although its exponent contains α^2 ; the normalized prefactor is $1/(\sqrt{2\pi}\alpha)$ for positive α .
7. Figure captions should state the plotted combinations exactly. Besides the sign error in Figure 4(a), the caption of Figure 3(b) should specify whether the dashed curve uses the Frobenius norm or its square.
8. There are numerous smaller errors (“Lanzcos,” “tridigonal,” duplicated words, a corrupted dash, and missing punctuation between equations). The manuscript would benefit from a complete proofread after the mathematical revision, rather than piecemeal correction now.

Recommendation

The paper contains an interesting organizing idea and several potentially useful results, but the central τ identity, the spectral-propagator formula, the quantum metric, and one of the advertised rigorous bounds are incorrect as printed. The density of independent normalization, sign, and indexing errors in the appendices makes it difficult to determine which numerical and asymptotic conclusions were obtained from the displayed formulae. For these reasons I cannot recommend publication in the present form.

I would nevertheless encourage a new submission after a comprehensive reconstruction. Such a version should begin from fixed conventions; prove the exact ϕ and τ identities in finite dimension; state the finite-rank and Hilbert–Schmidt results as propositions with explicit hypotheses; recompute the geometry; replace the RMT kernel formula; and rerun the numerical comparisons with reproducible details. If those steps confirm the intended conclusions, the resulting synthesis could be valuable to the community.