On the Independence Number of Random Trees via Tricolourations

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Abstract
We are interested in the independence number of large random simply generated trees and related parameters, such as their matching number or the kernel dimension of their adjacency matrix. We express these quantities using a canonical tricolouration, which is a way to colour the vertices of a tree with three colours. As an application we obtain limit theorems in $L^p$ for the renormalised independence number in large simply generated trees (including large size-conditioned Bienaymé-Galton-Watson trees).

2012 ACM Subject Classification Mathematics of computing → Random graphs

Keywords and phrases Independence number, simply generated tree, Galton-Watson tree, tricolouration

Digital Object Identifier 10.4230/LIPIcs.AofA.2022.2

Acknowledgements I am grateful to Igor Kortchemski for his careful reading of the manuscript and for telling me Frederic Chapoton’s suggestion to consider canonical tricolourations of random trees. I am also grateful to the anonymous referees and their useful remarks.

1 Introduction

A subset $S$ of vertices of a finite graph $G$ is called an independent set if there is no pair of connected vertices in $S$. The independence number of $G$, denoted by $I(G)$, is the biggest cardinal of an independent set of $G$. The independence number is a well studied quantity in computational complexity theory. It is known that computing the independence number is NP-hard in general (see e.g. [10, Sec. 3.1.3]). A lot of work has been carried out to describe algorithms computing the independence number in general graphs [19, 22] and in special classes of graphs where the computational time can be decreased (e.g. cubic graphs [21], claw-free graphs [17], $P_3$-free graphs [15]). The independence number has also received interest in combinatorics and in probability. Upper bounds have been found using probabilistic methods for cubic graphs [3]. Asymptotics have been found in certain classes of random trees (e.g. conditioned Bienaymé-Galton-Watson trees [8], simply generated trees [2], random recursive trees and binary search trees [9], and a wider class of random trees constructed from a Crump–Mode–Jagers branching process [12]). Finally we mention three articles giving applications of the independence number in scheduling theory [13], coding theory [4] and collusion detection in voting pools [1].

The goal of this article is to study the independence number of large simply generated trees, generalising some results of [7] and [2]. Simply generated trees are a wide class of random plane trees (i.e. rooted and ordered trees) introduced in [16] and encompass Bienaymé-Galton-Watson trees (BGW trees for short) conditioned to have a fixed number of vertices. Informally, a BGW tree with offspring distribution $\mu$ is a plane tree where vertices have an i.i.d. number of children with law $\mu$. Various natural models of random trees are obtained with appropriate choices of the offspring distribution: e.g., uniform plane trees, uniform plane d-ary trees and uniform Cayley trees (see [11, Sec. 10]). In order to study the independence number, we will use a particular tricolouration of trees introduced in [23] and
later studied in [6], [7] and [5]. This colouring is based on the notion of covering. A covering of a finite tree \( T \) is a subset of vertices \( S \) of \( T \) such that every edge of \( T \) is adjacent to a vertex of \( S \). A smallest covering of \( T \) is a covering with minimal cardinality. In general, a tree has more than one smallest covering. For every vertex \( v \) of \( T \) we colour \( v \) in the following way:

- If \( v \) belongs to every smallest covering, we colour \( v \) in green.
- If \( v \) belongs to no smallest covering, we colour it in red.
- If \( v \) belongs to some smallest coverings but not all, we colour it in orange.

For a tree \( T \), denote by \( n_g(T) \), \( n_o(T) \) and \( n_r(T) \), respectively, the number of green, orange and red vertices in \( T \). It has been noticed in [7] that the size of a smallest covering of a tree \( T \) is equal to \( n_g(T) + n_o(T)/2 \). Since the complementary of a smallest covering is an independent set of maximal size, the independence number of \( T \) is \( n_r(T) + n_o(T)/2 \). Actually, other statistics of the tree \( T \) can be expressed as a linear combination of \( n_g(T) \), \( n_o(T) \) and \( n_r(T) \). For instance the matching number \( M(T) \) (i.e. the maximum size of a partial vertex matching) is equal to the size of a smallest covering which is \( n_g(T) + n_o(T)/2 \). The nullity \( N(T) \) (i.e. the kernel dimension of the adjacency matrix) is \( n_r(T) - n_g(T) \). The edge cover number and the clique cover number also coincide with the independence number on trees (see [9]). Our main result (Theorem 4) concerns simply generated trees, but, to keep this introduction short, let us state here a particular case for critical BGW trees.

\textbf{Theorem 1.} Let \( T_n \) be a Bienaymé-Galton-Watson tree with reproduction law \( \mu \), conditioned on having \( n \) vertices. Denote by \( G(t) := \sum_{k=0}^{\infty} \mu_k t^k \) the generating function of \( \mu \) and let \( q \) be the unique solution of \( G(1-q) = q \) in \([0, 1]\). Suppose that \( \mu \) has mean 1, then, the following convergences hold in \( L^p \) for every \( p > 0 \):
Explicit computations of the expected number of green, orange and red vertices have been carried out in the case of a uniform Cayley tree with fixed size in [7] using generating functions. This confirms the convergence, in mean value, of Theorem 1. Indeed, it is well known that a BGW tree with Poisson distribution of parameter 1 conditioned to have \( n \) vertices has the same law as a uniform Cayley tree with \( n \) vertices. To our knowledge, there is no estimates or asymptotics, other than [7], for the expected number of green, orange and red vertices in simply generated trees. As we said before, different quantities such as the independence number \( I(T_n) \), the matching number \( M(T_n) \) and the nullity \( N(T_n) \) of a tree \( T \) can be expressed in terms of \( n_g(T), n_o(T) \) and \( n_r(T) \), so Theorem 1 yields limit theorems for these in the case of critical BGW trees.

\[ \frac{n_g(T_n)}{n} \xrightarrow{n \to \infty} \frac{1 - q + (1 - 2q)G'(1 - q)}{1 + G'(1 - q)}, \quad \frac{n_o(T_n)}{n} \xrightarrow{n \to \infty} \frac{2qG'(1 - q)}{1 + G'(1 - q)}, \quad \frac{n_r(T_n)}{n} \xrightarrow{n \to \infty} \frac{q}{1 + G'(1 - q)}. \]

With the same hypothesis, the authors of [8] show the convergence of \( I(T_n)/n \) in probability towards \( q \). Moreover, in [2] the convergence of the first and second moment of \( I(T_n)/n \) is studied. More precisely, it is shown that \( \mathbb{E}[I(T_n)] = nq + O(1) \) and \( V(I(T_n)) = \nu n + O(1) \) for some constant \( \nu \). Therefore, the convergence of the independence number, in the settings of Corollary 2 is not new, but Corollary 5 generalises this convergence for simply generated trees that are not equivalent to conditioned critical BGW trees. The main tool to prove Theorem 4 is the use of limit theorems for uniformly pointed simply generated trees found in [20] (see Section 4). In the first section we introduce simply generated trees. In the next section we state our main result in its most general form. To prove our main result, we first explain the limit theorems of [20] in the third section. The next two sections give properties of the tricolouration and describe how to colour the limiting trees. Finally, in the last section we prove Theorem 4.

## 2 Simply generated trees

Let \( w := (w_i)_{i \geq 0} \) be a sequence of nonnegative weights. A simply generated tree having \( n \) vertices with weight sequence \( w \) is a random plane tree \( T_n \) such that for every finite plane tree \( T \),

\[ \mathbb{P}(T_n = T) = \frac{1}{Z_n} \left( \prod_{v \in T} w_{k_v} \right) \mathbb{I}_{|T| = n} \]

where \( k_v \) is the outdegree of the vertex \( v \) in \( T \), \( |T| \) is the number of vertices in \( T \) and \( Z_n \) is the normalising constant defined by

\[ Z_n := \sum_{|T| = n} \prod_{v \in T} w_{k_v}. \]
Notice that, when the weight sequence \( w \) is actually a probability sequence (i.e. the sum of the weights is equal to 1) then we recover the class of BGW trees. For \( T_n \) to be well defined, one needs \( Z_n \) to be nonzero. First of all, suppose that \( w_0 > 0 \) and \( w_k > 0 \) for some \( k \geq 1 \) otherwise \( Z_n = 0 \) for all \( n \geq 1 \). Let \( \text{span}(w) := \gcd\{i \geq 0 \mid w_i > 0\} \) (since \( w_k > 0 \) this quantity is well defined). The following result, found for instance in [11, Cor. 15.6], characterises the \( n \)'s such that \( Z_n > 0 \):

**Lemma 3** (Janson 2012). If \( Z_n > 0 \) then \( n \equiv 1 \mod \text{span}(w) \). Conversely, there exists \( n_0 \) such that for all \( n \geq n_0 \) satisfying \( n \equiv 1 \mod \text{span}(w) \), \( Z_n > 0 \).

Throughout this document and in Theorem 4, we suppose that \( w_0 > 0 \), \( w_k > 0 \) for some \( k \geq 1 \) and that all the \( n \)'s appearing satisfy \( n \geq n_0 \) and \( n \equiv 1 \mod \text{span}(w) \).

Let \( \rho \in [0, +\infty] \) be the radius of convergence of the generating series

\[
\phi(x) := \sum_{i \geq 0} w_i x^i.
\]

It is shown in [11, Lemma 3.1] that, if \( \rho > 0 \), then the function defined by

\[
\psi(x) := \frac{x \phi'(x)}{\phi(x)}
\]

is increasing on \([0, \rho)\) and we can define \( \nu := \lim_{x \to \rho^-} \psi(x) \in (0, +\infty] \). We distinguish three different regimes:

- **Regime 1** when \( \rho > 0 \) and \( \nu \geq 1 \). In this case there is a unique \( \tau \in [0, \rho] \) such that \( \tau < +\infty \) and \( \psi(\tau) = 1 \).
- **Regime 2** when \( \rho > 0 \) and \( 0 < \nu < 1 \). In this case \( \rho < +\infty \) and we set \( \tau := \rho \).
- **Regime 3** when \( \rho = 0 \).

In regime 1 and 2 we can define a probability function given by

\[
\pi_k := \frac{\tau^k w_k}{\phi(\tau)}. \quad (1)
\]

The associated mean and generating function are respectively given by

\[
m := \min(1, \nu) \quad \text{and} \quad G(x) := \frac{\phi(\tau x)}{\phi(x)}. \quad (2)
\]

An important result of [11] is that, \( T_n \), in regime 1 or 2, has the same law as a BGW tree with reproduction law \( \pi \) conditioned to have \( n \) vertices. In regime 3, \( T_n \) is not distributed like a conditioned BGW tree. Note that a critical or super-critical BGW tree or a BGW tree with a reproduction law with infinite mean, conditioned to have \( n \) vertices, always lays in regime 1. Moreover for a critical BGW tree with reproduction law \( \mu \), the probability \( \pi \) is the same as \( \mu \). A sub-critical BGW tree, conditioned to have \( n \) vertices, is either in regime 1 or in regime 2. We define **complete condensation** to be the condition:

\[
\Delta(T_n) = (1 - m)n + n \mathcal{E}_n \quad (3)
\]

where \( \Delta(T_n) \) is the maximum degree of a vertex of \( T_n \) and \( \mathcal{E}_n \) is a random variable converging in probability towards 0. For instance, complete condensation happens in regime 2 when there exists \( \theta > 1 \) and a slowly varying function \( \ell \) such that \( \pi_k = \ell(k) k^{-(1+\theta)} \) (see [14]). Complete condensation also happens in regime 3 for the weight sequence \( w_k = k!^\alpha \) for \( \alpha > 0 \) (see [11, Ex. 19.36]).
3 Main results

In this section we state our main results. We keep all the notations and assumptions of Section 2.

**Theorem 4.** Let $T_n$ be a simply generated tree with $n$ vertices according to the weight sequence $w = (w_i)_{i \geq 0}$. Recall that, in regime 1 and 2, $G$ denotes the generating function of $\pi$ defined in (1). Let $q$ be the unique solution of $q = G(1-q)$ in $[0,1]$.

1. In regime 1 and in regime 2 with complete condensation (meaning that (3) is satisfied), the following convergences hold in $L^p$ for every $p > 0$:

$$\frac{n_o(T_n)}{n} \xrightarrow{n \to \infty} \frac{1 - q + (1 - 2q)G'(1-q)}{1 + G'(1-q)}, \quad \frac{n_r(T_n)}{n} \xrightarrow{n \to \infty} \frac{2qG'(1-q)}{1 + G'(1-q)},$$

2. In regime 3 with complete condensation, the following convergences hold in $L^p$ for every $p > 0$:

$$\frac{n_o(T_n)}{n} \xrightarrow{n \to \infty} 0, \quad \frac{n_r(T_n)}{n} \xrightarrow{n \to \infty} 0, \quad \frac{n_r(T_n)}{n} \xrightarrow{n \to \infty} 1.$$

**Corollary 5.** We keep the same notation and hypothesis as in Theorem 4. Recall that $I(T_n)$, $M(T_n)$ and $N(T_n)$ are, respectively, the independence number, the matching number and the nullity of $T_n$.

1. In regime 1 and in regime 2 with complete condensation, the following convergences hold in $L^p$ for every $p > 0$:

$$\frac{I(T_n)}{n} \xrightarrow{n \to \infty} q, \quad \frac{M(T_n)}{n} \xrightarrow{n \to \infty} 1 - q, \quad \frac{N(T_n)}{n} \xrightarrow{n \to \infty} 2q - 1.$$

2. In regime 3 with complete condensation, the following convergences hold in $L^p$ for every $p > 0$:

$$\frac{I(T_n)}{n} \xrightarrow{n \to \infty} 1, \quad \frac{M(T_n)}{n} \xrightarrow{n \to \infty} 0, \quad \frac{N(T_n)}{n} \xrightarrow{n \to \infty} 1.$$

4 Limit theorems for uniformly pointed simply generated trees

In this section we explain the results proved in [20] which will be our basic tool to prove Theorem 4. All the proofs and details of this section can be found in the above mentioned article. As said in the introduction, these results are limit theorems for uniformly pointed simply generated trees. A pointed tree is simply a couple $(T,v)$ with a plane tree (i.e. rooted and ordered tree) $T$ and a distinguished vertex $v$ of $T$. A uniformly pointed simply generated tree is a couple $(T_n,v_n)$ where $T_n$ is a simply generated tree with $n$ vertices and $v_n$ is a distinguished vertex chosen uniformly at random among the $n$ vertices of $T_n$. Basically, in regime 1 and in regime 2 and 3 with complete condensation, the local tree structure around $v_n$ converges towards an infinite random tree which depends only on the regime. To formally define the notion of convergence used here, one needs to consider $T_n$ to be a subtree of a big ambient tree denoted by $\mathcal{U}_\infty$. Every plane tree (e.g. $T_n$) is considered, by definition, to be rooted, however we will encounter some infinite trees without any root which is unusual in the classic framework of plane trees. Let

$$\mathcal{V}_\infty := \{\emptyset\} \cup \bigcup_{n \geq 1} (\mathbb{N}^*)^n$$
be the set of words (empty word included) formed in the alphabet $\mathbb{N}^* = \{1, 2, 3, \ldots \}$. Usually, plane trees are defined as subtrees of the so-called Ulam-Harris tree, denoted here by $\mathcal{U}_\infty$, which is the tree with vertex set $\mathcal{V}_\infty$ and edge set $\{(a_1 \ldots a_{n-1}; a_1 \ldots a_n) \mid \forall a_i, a_j \in \mathbb{N}^*\}$. With this definition, all the plane trees have a root which is a common ancestor to every vertex of the tree (it is the vertex designated by the empty word $\emptyset$). However, in regime 1, the root of $T_n$ is, in a local point of view, at infinite distance from the distinguished vertex $v_n$. It suggests that the local limit of $T_n$ around $v_n$ has an infinite spine of ancestors and therefore, has no root. This is why we need a more general framework than the usual one for plane trees. Here we explain informally the construction of $\mathcal{U}_\infty$. Let $u_0, u_1, \ldots$ be vertices, in the plane, lined up to form an infinite connected spine. Each vertex $u_i$ with $i > 0$ gets an infinite countable number of children on the left and on the right of its child $u_{i-1}$. Then, all the leaves of the current tree ($u_0$ included) give birth to the Ulam-Harris tree $\mathcal{U}_\infty$. The tree we obtain from this construction is denoted by $\mathcal{U}_\infty^*$ and its set of vertices is denoted by $\mathcal{V}_\infty^*$ (see Figure 2). To formally define this tree one could start by creating the vertex set $\mathcal{V}_\infty^*$ as a subset of $\mathbb{N} \times \mathbb{Z} \times \mathcal{V}_\infty$ and then describing the edge set. However we think that the above informal construction is enough for our purpose. As we said, we want to represent $T_n$ as a subtree of $\mathcal{U}_\infty^*$. First we make clear what we call a subtree of $\mathcal{U}_\infty$ and $\mathcal{U}_\infty^*$. Denote by $\mathcal{E}_\infty$ the edge set of $\mathcal{U}_\infty$ and $\mathcal{E}_\infty^*$ the edge set of $\mathcal{U}_\infty^*$.

**Definition 6.** A subtree $t$ of $\mathcal{U}_\infty$ is a tree with vertex set included in $\mathcal{V}_\infty$ and edge set included in $\mathcal{E}_\infty$, such that the vertex $\emptyset$ belongs to $t$ and such that there are no holes in $t$, meaning that: if $v = (a_1 \ldots a_n)$ is a vertex of $t$ with $a_n > 0$ then $(a_1 \ldots a_n - 1)$ is also a vertex of $t$. Similarly a subtree $t$ of $\mathcal{U}_\infty^*$ is a tree with vertex set included in $\mathcal{V}_\infty^*$ and edge set included in $\mathcal{E}_\infty^*$, such that the vertex $u_0$ belongs to $t$ and such that there are no holes in $t$ (see Figure 5). A subtree of $\mathcal{U}_\infty^*$ is rooted if the set $\{k \geq 0 \mid u_k \in t\}$ is finite. In this case the vertex $u_k$ with maximal $k$ in $t$ is called the root of $t$.

The representation of $T_n$ as a subtree of $\mathcal{U}_\infty^*$ will obviously depend on the distinguished vertex $v_n$ since we want to look at the local structure around this vertex. More precisely, let $T$ be a plane tree and $v$ be a vertex of $T$. We identify the distinguished vertex $v$ with the element $u_0$ and the root of $T$ is identified with the element $u_h$ where $h$ is the graph distance between the root and $v$ in $T$ (it is the height of $v$). All the other vertices of $T$ are identified such that the plane order is preserved (See Figure 3). We denote by $(T, v)$ the subtree of $\mathcal{U}_\infty^*$ obtained this way. We can now formally define the notion of convergence we use.
condensation (meaning that (3) is satisfied). Then the convergence holds in distribution for the topology induced by the convergence of Definition 7. On the right, the representation of $T$ as a subtree of $U$.

**Definition 7.** Let $t_n$ and $t$ be subtrees of $U^*$ for all $n$. We say that $(t_n)$ converges towards $t$ and write $t_n \rightarrow t$ if for all $v \in V^*$,

\[ \lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} \mathbb{I}_{v \in t_n} = \mathbb{I}_{v \in t}. \]

This notion of convergence induces a topology that is metrizable and compact over the set of subtrees of $U^*$. Before stating the limit theorems, one needs to define the limiting trees $T_1^*$, $T_2^*$ and $T_3^*$ (seen as subtrees of $U^*$) that correspond, respectively, to regime 1, 2 and 3.

Let $T$ be a BGW tree with reproduction law $\pi$, given by (1), in regime 1 or 2. Let $\hat{\pi}$ be the probability measure on $\mathbb{N} \cup \{\infty\}$ given by

\[ \hat{\pi}_k = k\pi_k \quad \forall k \in \mathbb{N} \quad \text{and} \quad \hat{\pi}_\infty = 1 - m \]

where $m := \min(1, \nu)$ is the mean of $\pi$.

First we define $T_1^*$ in regime 1. Notice that in this case $\hat{\pi}_\infty = 0$. We attach to $u_0$ an independent copy of $T$. For $k \geq 1$, $u_k$ receives offspring according to an independent copy of $\hat{\pi}$. Then $u_{k-1}$ is identified with a child of $u_k$ chosen uniformly at random. Finally, we attach an independent copy of $T$ to all the children of $u_k$, except $u_{k-1}$ (see Figure 4).

Now we define $T_2^*$ in regime 2. In this case $\hat{\pi}_\infty > 0$. We attach to $u_0$ an independent copy of $T$. For $k \geq 1$, $u_k$ receives offspring according to an independent copy of $\hat{\pi}$. Notice that almost surely, there exist $1 \leq i < j$ two integers such that $u_1, \ldots, u_{i-1}, u_{i+1}, \ldots, u_{j-1}$ have a finite number of children and $u_i$ and $u_j$ have an infinite number of children. For every $k \in \{1, \ldots, i - 1, i + 1, \ldots, j - 1\}$, $u_{k-1}$ is identified with a child of $u_k$ chosen uniformly at random, while $u_i$ gets infinitely many children on the left and the right of its child $u_{i-1}$. Finally, for all $k \geq 1$, we attach an independent copy of $T$ to all the children of $u_k$, except $u_{k-1}$. The tree $T_2^*$ is the tree obtained by keeping all the descendants of $u_{j-1}$ (see Figure 4).

Finally, $T_3^*$ is simply composed of the vertex $u_1$ having infinitely many children on the left and on the right of $u_0$, all of them, including $u_0$, being leaves (see Figure 4).

**Theorem 8 (Stufler 2018).** Let $(T_n, v_n)$ be a uniformly pointed simply generated tree with $n$ vertices. Suppose that we are in regime $i = 1$ or in regime $i \in \{2, 3\}$ with complete condensation (meaning that (3) is satisfied). Then the convergence

\[ (T_n, v_n) \overset{(d)}{\overset{n \rightarrow \infty}{\longrightarrow}} T_i^* \]

holds in distribution for the topology induced by the convergence of Definition 7.
5 Properties of the tricolouration

In this section, we look at some general properties of the tricolouration defined in the introduction that will be essential to prove our main result. Let \( T_1, \ldots, T_n \) be \( n \) rooted finite trees. We define \( T_1 \ast \cdots \ast T_n \) the rooted tree obtained by creating an edge between each root of \( T_1, \ldots, T_n \) and a new vertex which will be the root of \( T_1 \ast \cdots \ast T_n \). In particular the number of vertices \( \#V(T_1 \ast \cdots \ast T_n) \) equals \( 1 + \#V(T_1) + \cdots + \#V(T_n) \). And the number of edges \( \#E(T_1 \ast \cdots \ast T_n) \) equals \( n + \#E(T_1) + \cdots + \#E(T_n) \). We say that a rooted tree has colour \( c \) if the root has colour \( c \).

\[\text{Lemma 9.} \quad \text{Let } T_1, \ldots, T_n \text{ be } n \text{ rooted finite trees. Set } T := T_1 \ast \cdots \ast T_n, \text{ then}\]

1. \( T \) is red if \( T_1, \ldots, T_n \) are all non-red.
2. \( T \) is orange if exactly one tree among \( T_1, \ldots, T_n \) is red.
3. \( T \) is green if two or more trees among \( T_1, \ldots, T_n \) are red.

\[\text{Proof.} \quad \text{Denote by } C(T) \text{ the size of a smallest covering of } T. \text{ Notice that } C(T) \text{ is equal to } C(T_1) + \cdots + C(T_n) + \Delta \text{ with } \Delta \in \{0, 1\}. \text{ More precisely, } C(T) = C(T_1) + \cdots + C(T_n) \text{ if and only if all the } T_i\text{'s are non-red.}\]

1. Suppose that \( T_1, \ldots, T_n \) are all non-red. We can take a smallest covering for each \( T_i \) such that the root of \( T_i \) is included in the covering. Then the union of these coverings gives a smallest covering of \( T \). Moreover we can see that all the smallest coverings of \( T \) are obtained this way. Thus \( T \) is red.
2. Suppose than \( T_1 \) is red and \( T_2, \ldots, T_n \) are all non-red. We can take a smallest covering for each \( T_i \) in addition to the root of \( T \). This gives a smallest covering of \( T \), so \( T \) is either green or orange. We can also take a smallest covering for each \( T_i, i > 1 \), such that the root of \( T_i \) is included in the covering, a smallest covering of \( T_1 \) and the root of \( T_1 \). This also gives a smallest covering of \( T \). Thus \( T \) is orange.
3. Suppose that \( T_1 \) and \( T_2 \) are red. As for the previous case, we can take a smallest covering for each \( T_i \) in addition to the root of \( T \). This gives a smallest covering for \( T \). But, as opposed to the previous case, all the smallest coverings of \( T \) are obtained this way. Thus \( T \) is green. \]

If \( T_1, T_2 \) are finite trees and \( v_1, v_2 \) are vertices of, respectively, \( T_1 \) and \( T_2 \), then we denote by \( (T_1, v_1) \ast (T_2, v_2) \) the tree obtained from \( T_1 \) and \( T_2 \) by drawing an edge between \( v_1 \) and \( v_2 \).
**Lemma 10.** With the same notation as above, set $T := (T_1, v_1) \ast (T_2, v_2)$. If $v_1$ is green in the tricolouration of $T_1$ then, the colour of every vertex $v$ in the tricolouration of $T$ is just the same as its colour in the tricolouration of $T_1$ (if $v$ is a vertex of $T_1$) or $T_2$ (if $v$ is a vertex of $T_2$). In other words, the tricoloured tree $T$ is simply obtained by drawing an edge between $v_1$ and $v_2$ and keeping the colours of $T_1$ and $T_2$.

**Proof.** Notice that, since $v_1$ is green in the tricolouration of $T_1$, a smallest covering of $T_1$ combined with a smallest covering of $T_2$ gives a smallest covering of $T$. Conversely a smallest covering of $T$ is necessarily obtained by combining a smallest covering of $T_1$ and $T_2$. ▽

## 6 Tricolouration of the infinite limiting trees

In this section, we extend the definition of the tricolouration given in the introduction to the random infinite limiting trees $T_1^*$, $T_2^*$ and $T_3^*$ defined in Section 4. The initial definition applies only to finite trees since a covering of smallest size only makes sense in this context. Even though it seems not obvious to find a satisfactory definition of “smallest covering” for an infinite tree, it is still possible to describe a canonical way to tricolour the trees $T_1^*$, $T_2^*$ and $T_3^*$ using the properties found in Section 5.

Let $t$ be a subtree of $U_{0i}^*$ (finite or not) such that for every $k \geq 0$ and for every child $v$ of $u_k$, distinct from $u_{k-1}$, $v$ has a finite number of descendants. In other words, for all $k \geq 0$, all the children of $u_k$, distinct from $u_{k-1}$, are roots of finite trees. Since those trees are finite, it makes sense to consider their tricolouration. A *good* vertex of $t$ is a vertex $u_k$ with $k \geq 0$ such that, at least two of its children, distinct from $u_{k-1}$, are red in the tricolouration of the finite subtree they produce. If $t$ is finite, then, from Lemma 9, a good vertex is a green vertex for the tricolouration of $t$. Notice that $T_1^*$, $T_2^*$ and $T_3^*$ satisfy the same hypothesis as $t$ almost surely.

- We begin with the definition of the tricolouration of $T_1^*$. Almost surely, there exists an increasing sequence $(k_i)_i$ such that for all $i$, $u_{k_i}$ is good. For all $i$, all the vertices below $u_{k_i}$ (including $u_{k_i}$) get the same colour in $T_1^*$ as their colour in the tricolouration of the subtree rooted at $u_{k_i}$ (which is a finite tree). Notice that, from Lemma 9, $u_{k_i}$ gets the colour green. Lemma 10 ensures that this way of colouring is consistent when taking larger $i$.

- For $T_2^*$ we colour the unique vertex with infinite degree in green. Then, by cutting this vertex from $T_2^*$ we obtain a (infinite) forest of finite trees which gets their induced tricolouration. Notice that, almost surely, the vertex with infinite degree is good.

- Lastly, all the leaves of $T_2^*$ are coloured in red and the root $u_0$ is coloured in green.

We finish this section with the following lemma which explicitly gives the colour distribution of the vertex $u_0$ in $T_1^*$. This lemma will be useful when proving Theorem 4.

**Lemma 11.** Let $p_i(c)$ be the probability that $u_0$ has colour $c$ in $T_1^*$. 

1. In regime 1 and $i = 2$ with complete condensation we have

\[
p_i(\text{green}) = \frac{1 - q + (1 - 2q)G'(1 - q)}{1 + G'(1 - q)}, \quad p_i(\text{orange}) = \frac{2q G'(1 - q)}{1 + G'(1 - q)}, \quad p_i(\text{red}) = \frac{q}{1 + G'(1 - q)}.
\]

2. In regime 3 with complete condensation we have that $p_3(\text{red}) = 1$. 


Proof. The case of regime 3 is obvious, let us focus on regime 1 and 2. Let $T$ be a BGW tree with reproduction law $\pi$. Denote by $q$ the probability that the root of $T$ is red. From Lemma 9 we deduce that

$$q = \sum_{k \geq 0} \pi_k (1 - q)^k = G(1 - q).$$

Let $\tilde{T}$ be the tree obtained from $T^*_i$ by cutting the edge between $u_0$ and $u_1$ and keeping the component containing $u_1$. Let $\tilde{q}$ be the probability that $u_1$ is red in $\tilde{T}$. Then, from Lemma 9 again,

$$\tilde{q} = \sum_{k \geq 1} k\pi_k (1 - q)^{k-1}(1 - \tilde{q}) = (1 - \tilde{q})G'(1 - q).$$

Finally,

$$p_i(\text{red}) = \sum_{k \geq 0} \pi_k (1 - q)^k (1 - \tilde{q}) = \frac{q}{1 + G'(1 - q)},$$

And

$$p_i(\text{orange}) = \sum_{k \geq 0} \pi_k (1 - q)^k \tilde{q} + \sum_{k \geq 1} k\pi_k (1 - q)^{k-1} q(1 - \tilde{q}) = \frac{2qG'(1 - q)}{1 + G'(1 - q)}.$$ 

Finally we deduce the value $p_i(\text{green})$ by the law of total probability.

7 Proof of Theorem 4

All this section is devoted to the proof of Theorem 4. We keep all the notation of Theorem 4 and suppose that we are in regime $i = 1$ or in regime $i \in \{2, 3\}$ with complete condensation. Let $c$ be a colour in $\{\text{red, green, orange}\}$. Recall that $p_i(c)$ is the probability that the vertex $u_0$ has colour $c$ in the tree $T^*_i$ in regime $i$. The idea is to prove the convergence of the first two moments of $n_c(T_n)/n$, namely

$$\frac{1}{n} \mathbb{E} [n_c(T_n)] \xrightarrow{n \rightarrow \infty} p_i(c) \quad \text{and} \quad \frac{1}{n^2} \mathbb{E} [n_c(T_n)^2] \xrightarrow{n \rightarrow \infty} p_i(c)^2.$$ 

Then, using Lemma 12, we will conclude that $n_c(T_n)/n$ converges in $L^p$ towards $p_i(c)$ for all $p > 0$. Actually, the convergence of the second moment won’t be required in regime 3. Recall that the explicit computation of $p_i(c)$ can be found in Lemma 11.

Lemma 12. Let $(X_n)$ be a sequence of random variables with values in $[0, 1]$, and $\alpha \in [0, 1]$. Suppose that one of the following condition is satisfied.

1. The convergences $\mathbb{E} [X_n] \rightarrow \alpha$ and $\mathbb{E} [X_n^2] \rightarrow \alpha^2$ hold when $n \rightarrow \infty$.
2. The convergence $\mathbb{E} [X_n] \rightarrow \alpha$ holds when $n \rightarrow \infty$ and $\alpha = 1$.

Then for all $p > 0$, $(X_n)$ converges towards $\alpha$ in $L^p$.

Proof of Lemma 12. First, we show that $(X_n)$ converges towards $\alpha$ in probability. Let $\varepsilon > 0$. In the first case we use Markov’s inequality which gives

$$\mathbb{P} (|X_n - \alpha| \geq \varepsilon) \leq \frac{\mathbb{E} [ (X_n - \alpha)^2 ]}{\varepsilon^2} \xrightarrow{n \rightarrow \infty} 0.$$ 

In the second case we notice that

$$\mathbb{E} [X_n] \leq (1 - \varepsilon) \mathbb{P} (X_n \leq 1 - \varepsilon) + \mathbb{P} (X_n > 1 - \varepsilon) = 1 - \varepsilon \mathbb{P} (X_n \leq 1 - \varepsilon).$$
Consequently \( \lim_{n \to \infty} \mathbb{P} (X_n \leq 1 - \varepsilon) = 0 \) and the convergence in probability is shown in both cases. Second, let \( \ell \) be an accumulation point of the sequence \( (\mathbb{E} [|X_n - \alpha|])_n \) and \( (u_k)_k \) be an extraction such that the convergence to \( \ell \) occurs. From \( (X_{n_k})_k \) we can extract a subsequence that converges almost surely to \( \alpha \). From the dominated convergence theorem we deduce that \( \ell = 0 \).

Let \( v_n, v'_n \) be vertices chosen independently and uniformly in \( T_n \). Notice that

\[
\frac{1}{n} \mathbb{E} \left[ n_c(T_n) \right] = \mathbb{P} (v_n \text{ has colour } c \text{ in } T_n) \quad \text{and}
\]

\[
\frac{1}{n^2} \mathbb{E} \left[ n_c(T_n)^2 \right] = \mathbb{P} (v_n \text{ and } v'_n \text{ have colour } c \text{ in } T_n).
\]

**Convergence of the first moment**

First we prove the convergence of the first moment. Recall the notation of Section 6 when defining the tricolouration of the infinite trees \( T^*_1, T^*_2 \) and \( T^*_3 \). Denote by \( k \geq 0 \) the first positive integer such that \( u_k \) is good \((k = 1 \text{ almost surely in regime } 3)\). Let \( \tau^*_k \) be the subtree of \( U^*_\infty \) obtained from \( T^*_k \) by cutting the edge between \( u_k \) and \( u_{k+1} \) and keeping the component containing \( u_0 \) \((\tau^*_3 = T^*_3 \text{ in regime } 3)\). Note that, by construction, the tricolouration of \( \tau^*_k \) is the restriction of its tricolouration in \( T^*_k \) and that \( u_k \) is green. The following definition introduces a useful order relation between trees.

**Definition 13.** Let \( T \) and \( t \) be subtrees of \( U^*_\infty \) such that \( t \) is rooted at \( u_j \) for some \( j \geq 0 \). Suppose that \( u_j \) is also a vertex of \( T \) and denote by \( E_j \) the set of edges of \( T \) adjacent to \( u_j \). We write \( t \preceq T \) if there exists a subset \( e_j \subset E_j \) such that \( t \) is the tree obtained from \( T \) by cutting all the edges from \( e_j \) and keeping the component containing \( u_j \) (see Figure 5).

Let \( F \) be the set of rooted subtrees \( t \) of \( U^*_\infty \) such that the root \( u_j \in t \) is the only good vertex of \( t \). For \( t \in F \) such that the root \( u_j \) of \( t \) has finite degree, denote by \( v_r(t) \) (resp. \( v_l(t) \)) the leftmost (resp. rightmost) child of the root \( u_j \) of \( t \). Let \( F_0 \) be the set of elements \( t \in F \) such that: the root \( u_j \) of \( t \) has finite degree ; \( u_j \) has exactly two red neighbors distinct from \( u_{j-1} \); and \((v_l(t) = u_{j-1} \text{ or } u_{j+1}(t) \text{ is red}) \) and \((v_r(t) = u_{j-1} \text{ or } v_r(t) \text{ is red}) \). Notice that if \( t_1 \) and \( t_2 \) are distinct elements of \( F_0 \), then we can’t have \( t_1 \preceq t_2 \) nor \( t_2 \preceq t_1 \). Moreover for every \( t_1 \in F \) there exists a unique \( t_2 \in F_0 \) such that \( t_2 \preceq t_1 \). In other words \( F_0 \) is the set of equivalence classes for the equivalence relation \( t_1 \sim t_2 \) if \( t_1 \preceq t_2 \) or \( t_2 \preceq t_1 \). Notice that almost surely \( \tau^*_k \in F_0 \).
Fix $\varepsilon > 0$. Let $\mathcal{T}$ be a finite subset of $\mathcal{F}_0$ such that the event $\{\mathcal{T} \preceq \tau^*_c\} := \{\exists t \in \mathcal{T}, t \preceq \tau^*_c\}$

happens with probability at least $1 - \varepsilon$. Let $\mathcal{T}(c)$ be the set of trees $t \in \mathcal{T}$ such that $u_0$ has colour $c$ in $t$. Remember that we see $(T_n, v_n)$ as a subtree of $U_n^\omega$. For all $t \in \mathcal{T}$, define the event $A_n(t) := \{t \preceq (T_n, v_n)\}$. Using Theorem 8, we have that for all $t \in \mathcal{T}$

$$P(A_n(t)) \xrightarrow{n \to \infty} P(t \preceq \tau^*_c). \quad (4)$$

The properties of $\tau^*_c$ and $t \in \mathcal{T}$ imply that $t \preceq \tau^*_c$ if and only if $t \preceq \tau^*_c$. Thus

$$P(t \preceq \tau^*_c) = P(t \preceq \tau^*_c).$$

Denote by $E_n$ the event $\bigcup_{t \in \mathcal{T}} A_n(t)$. Notice that the event $E_n \cap \{v_n \text{ has colour } c \in T_n\}$ is equal to the event $\bigcup_{t \in \mathcal{T}(c)} A_n(t)$. It is a consequence of Lemma 9 and 10. Notice also that for $t_1, t_2$ distinct trees of $\mathcal{T}$, $A_n(t_1)$ and $A_n(t_2)$ are disjoint for all $n$. Consequently,

$$P(\{v_n \text{ has colour } c \in T_n\} \cap E_n) = \sum_{t \in \mathcal{T}(c)} P(A_n(t)) \xrightarrow{n \to \infty} P(\mathcal{T}(c) \preceq \tau^*_c).$$

Since $u_0$ has colour $c$ in $\tau^*_c$ if and only if $u_0$ has colour $c$ in $T^*_c$,

$$P(\mathcal{T}(c) \preceq \tau^*_c) = P(u_0 \text{ has colour } c \in T^*_c \text{ and } \mathcal{T} \preceq \tau^*_c) \in [p_1(c) - \varepsilon, p_1(c) + \varepsilon].$$

Finally, using Theorem 8 again, one has

$$P(E_n) \xrightarrow{n \to \infty} P(\mathcal{T} \preceq \tau^*_c) \geq 1 - \varepsilon.$$

The convergence $E_n \xrightarrow{n \to \infty} p_1(c)$ readily follows.

**Convergence of the second moment in regime 1 and 2**

The next step is to show convergence for the second moment in regime $i = 1$ or $i = 2$ with complete condensation. Let $c'$ be another colour in $\{\text{red}, \text{green}, \text{orange}\}$. We will actually show that

$$\frac{1}{n^2} E[n\mathcal{c}(T_n) n\mathcal{c}(T_n) \mid n\mathcal{c}(T_n) \mid \xrightarrow{n \to \infty} p_1(c) p_1(c').$$

We keep the notation of the previous part which shows the convergence of the first moment. For all $t \in \mathcal{T}$, let $A'_n(t) := \{t \preceq (T_n, v'_n)\}$ and $E'_n := \bigcup_{t \in \mathcal{T}} A'_n(t)$. We have,

$$P(\{v_n \text{ has colour } c \in T_n\} \cap E_n \cap E'_n) = \sum_{t \in \mathcal{T}(c)} \sum_{t' \in \mathcal{T}(c')} P(A_n(t) \cap A'_n(t')) \quad (5).$$

Fix $t, t' \in \mathcal{T}$. Recall that the trees $t, t'$ and $T_n$ are rooted plane trees, thus we can consider their so-called Łukasiewicz walk. More precisely, let $T$ be a rooted plane tree with $n$ vertices and $w$ be a vertex of $T$. Denote by $\ell(w, T)$ the rank of $w$ in $T$ for the lexicographic order. Equivalently, $w$ is the $\ell(w, T)$-th vertex of $T$ explored by the depth first search starting from the root of $T$. Let $w_1, \ldots, w_n$ be the vertices of $T$ ordered according to the lexicographic order (so $\ell(w_i, T) = i$ for all $i$). The Łukasiewicz walk associated with $T$ is the sequence $(s_k)_{1 \leq k \leq n}$ such that $s_0 = 0$ and $s_k - s_{k-1} + 1$ is the out-degree of $w_k$ for all $k \in \{1, \ldots, n\}$. An important property of the Łukasiewicz walk is that it uniquely encodes its tree, meaning that the tree $T$ can be retrieved from $(s_k)_{1 \leq k \leq n}$. Let $(S_k^{(n)})_{0 \leq k \leq n}$ be the Łukasiewicz walk associated with the tree $T_n$. Let $X_1, \ldots, X_n$ be i.i.d random variables such that $P(X_1 = m) = \pi_{m+1}$ for all integer $m \geq -1$ and set $S_k := \sum_{i=1}^k X_i$ for all $k \geq 0$. It is well known that, the random
Applying the reverse Vervaat transform, we can change the initial excursion type conditioning asymptotically independent and the conditioning fades for large values of \( t \). Let \((s_k)_{0 \leq k \leq n} \) and \((s'_k)_{0 \leq k \leq |t|}\) be, respectively, the Lükasiewicz walks associated with \( t \) and \( t' \). Namely denote by \( x_k := s_{k+1} - s_k \) and \( x'_k := s'_{k+1} - s'_k \) the associated steps. Write \( k_0 := \ell(u_0,t) \), \( k'_0 := \ell(u_0,t') \), \( i_n := \ell(v_n,T_n) \) and \( i'_n := \ell(v'_n,T_n) \). The indices \( i_n \) and \( i'_n \) are independent random elements of \{1, \ldots, n\} with uniform distribution. The event \( A_n(t) \) happens if and only if the Lükasiewicz walk \((S^{(n)}_k)_{0 \leq k \leq n}\) coincides with \((s_k)_{0 \leq k \leq m}\), up to a vertical shifting, on the interval \([i_n - k_0, i_n + m - k_0]\). The same goes for \( A'_n(t') \). More precisely

\[
A_n(t) \cap A'_n(t') = \{ X^{(n)}_{i_n - k_0} = x_i \ \forall i \in [1,m] \text{ and } X^{(n)}_{i_n + k'_0} = x'_i \ \forall i \in [1,m'] \text{ \} }.
\]

Applying the reverse Vervaat transform, we can change the initial excursion type conditioning into a bridge type conditioning (see e.g. [18, Sec. 6.1]). Namely

\[
\Pr(A_n(t) \cap A'_n(t')) = \Pr(X_{i_n - k_0} = x_i \ \forall i \in [1,m] \text{ and } X_{i_n + k'_0} = x'_i \ \forall i \in [1,m'] \mid X_n = -1).
\]

Denote by \( D_n \) the event \([i_n - k_0 + 1, i_n - k_0 + m] \cap [i'_n - k'_0 + 1, i'_n - k'_0 + m'] = \emptyset \). This event has a probability tending to 1 and one can see that

\[
\Pr(A_n(t) \cap A'_n(t') \cap D_n) = \Pr(X_i = x_i \ \forall i \in [1,m] \text{ and } X_{i+m} = x'_i \ \forall i \in [1,m'] \mid X_n = -1) \Pr(D_n).
\]

According to [11, Thm. 11.7] the steps \( X_1, \ldots, X_{m+m'} \) conditioned on \( \{X_n = -1\} \) are asymptotically independent and the conditioning fades for large values of \( n \), consequently

\[
\lim_{n \to \infty} \Pr(A_n(t) \cap A'_n(t')) = \Pr(X_i = x_i \ \forall i \in [1,m]) \Pr(X_i = x'_i \ \forall i \in [1,m']) = \lim_{n \to \infty} \Pr(A_n(t)) \Pr(A'_n(t')).
\]

Finally, using (4) and (5), we have that

\[\lim_{n \to \infty} \Pr(\{v_n \text{ has colour } c \text{ in } T_n \} \cap E_n \cap E'_n) = \Pr(T(c) \preceq \tau^*_c) \Pr(T(c) \preceq \tau^*_c).\]

and the result follows.

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