MITIGATING ENTROPIC SNR COLLAPSE IN CROSS-LINGUAL DIFFERENTIAL PRIVACY

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ABSTRACT

Conventional sequence-level gradient clipping and length normalization in Differentially Private (DP) fine-tuning implicitly assume a Latin-centric, homogeneous subword distribution. However, they adversely compound under multilingual distributions because unequal vocabulary allocation inflates sequence lengths for non-Latin and morphologically rich scripts by up to $10\times$. Under a stylized model of semantic signal conservation, sequence-averaged gradient normalization attenuates signal power quadratically, inducing an $\mathcal{O}(N_L^{-2})$ upper bound on vector Signal-to-Noise Ratio (SNR) against isotropic Gaussian DP noise, a degradation phenomenon we formalize as ***Entropic SNR Collapse***. Existing solutions face severe trade-offs: sequence-level adaptive clipping fails to regulate heavy-tailed intra-sequence token spikes; per-token clipping with active length normalization collapses parameter update norms by $(1/N_i)^2$, severely impairing generation fluency; and tokenizer retraining breaks pretrained model interfaces. To mitigate this issue, we propose **ToPA (Token-Aware Privacy Alignment)**, a framework that decouples token sensitivity bounding from sequence aggregation. ToPA enforces localized gradient bounds via unified Token-Wise Ghost Clipping across Transformer projections without materializing per-token Jacobians, accumulates updates via a fixed-anchor aggregator to reflect token-uniform empirical risk without leaking metadata, and privately releases clipping thresholds via the Exponential Mechanism. Extensive downstream benchmarks across four model scales on translation (FLORES-200), cross-lingual inference (XNLI), and question answering (TyDi QA) demonstrate that ToPA prevents optimization collapse on fragmented languages and substantially closes the gap to baselines.

1 INTRODUCTION

Differential Privacy (DP) provides mathematical guarantees against data extraction during Large Language Model (LLM) fine-tuning by bounding per-record sensitivities and injecting calibrated Gaussian noise (Abadi et al., 2016; Shi et al., 2022; Carlini et al., 2021; Keum et al., 2025). However, conventional DP paradigms have been developed almost exclusively on high-resource, Latin-script corpora, implicitly treating training sequences as homogeneous observations. In contrast, modern autoregressive LLMs interface with text through subword tokenizers that allocate vocabulary entries based on pretraining corpus frequency. Because non-Latin scripts (e.g., Arabic, Thai, Hindi) and morphologically rich languages receive a disproportionately small fraction of vocabulary tokens, equivalent semantic content experiences severe subword fragmentation (Rust & Søgaard, 2023; Petrov et al., 2023; Lundin et al., 2026). For example, on parallel FLORES-200 text (Costa-Jussà et al., 2022), identical sentences average 26.8 tokens in English, but expand to 122.5 tokens in Arabic and 246.9 tokens in Thai. In private fine-tuning, this token fragmentation alters effective subword information densities, causing parameter update SNR for non-Latin languages to drop sharply against isotropic DP noise, a phenomenon we analyze as ***Entropic SNR Collapse***.

More formally, in causal language modeling, the sequence gradient is commonly computed as the average of valid token gradients: $g_i = \frac{1}{N_i} \sum_{t=1}^{N_i} \nabla_\theta \ell(x_{i,t})$, where N_i denotes unpadded sequence length. Causal attention and syntactic dependencies induce localized cross-token correlations: $g_{i,t} = s_t + \xi_t$. As empirically characterized in Figure 1, cross-token gradient covariance decays rapidly with token distance $|t - t'|$, falling to near-zero within 5–10 tokens ($M \leq 295.8$ on 1B and

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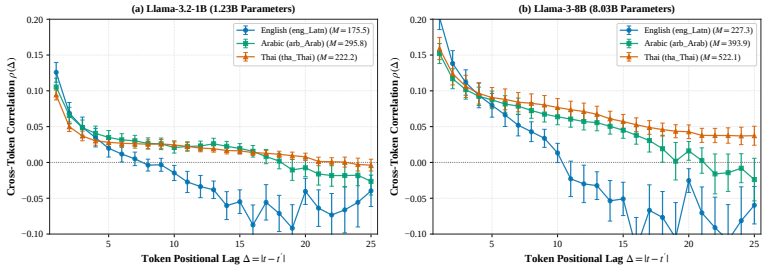


Figure 1: Cross-token gradient covariance decay across positional lag on FLORES-200.

$M \leq 522.1$ on 8B). Under a stylized model where cumulative semantic signal $S = \sum_{t=1}^{N_L} s_t$ across a sequence is approximately conserved across alternative tokenizations of equivalent semantic content, sequence averaging suppresses the effective signal vector to $\bar{s} = S/N_L$, attenuating signal power by N_L^{-2}. Meanwhile, the injected Gaussian DP noise $Z \sim \mathcal{N}(0, \frac{\sigma_{\text{DP}}^2 C_{\text{global}}^2}{|B|^2} I_d)$ added to the batch average remains length-invariant. As formalized in Proposition 1, the vector DP signal-to-noise ratio obeys an $\mathcal{O}(N_L^{-2})$ upper bound under this idealized setting.

Mitigating Entropic SNR Collapse presents a fundamental design dilemma among existing paradigms. **(1) Sequence-Level Clipping**: Standard DP-SGD (Abadi et al., 2016) and AdaClipping (Andrew et al., 2021) treat sequences as atomic gradient units without token-level resolution. While AdaClipping tracks dynamic gradient norms, it introduces zero intra-sequence gradient regulation, allowing uninformative token spikes and formatting artifacts to dominate batch updates while fragmented semantic signals remain submerged below the DP noise floor. **(2) Naive Token Clipping with Length Averaging**: Per-token clipping frameworks like DP-NTP (Flemings et al., 2024) bound token gradients individually, but average updates by active sequence length $1/N_i$. Under semantic conservation, active-length averaging attenuates update gradient norms by $1/N_i$ and signal power by $\mathcal{O}(N_i^{-2})$ against isotropic DP noise; furthermore, when naively implemented on top of standard sequence-averaged cross-entropy loss, updates suffer a compound $(1/N_i)^2$ norm attenuation, collapsing parameter step SNR by 5–7 orders of magnitude and impairing generation fluency (0.00 SacreBLEU in Table 2). **(3) Tokenizer Retraining**: While parity-aware BPE (Foroutan et al., 2026) or private tokenizer training (Bagdasaryan et al., 2022) modifies vocabularies upstream, altering tokenization invalidates pretrained token embeddings and breaks the foundation model's architectural interface.

To address these challenges, we propose **Token-Aware Privacy Alignment (ToPA)**, a framework that decouples token-level sensitivity bounding from sequence aggregation via three mechanisms: **(1) Unified Token-Wise Ghost Clipping**: By exploiting the rank-1 outer-product structure of linear projections in causal Transformer blocks, ToPA computes global per-token gradient norms $\|g_{i,t}\|_2$ across attention and MLP projections in closed form, scaling backpropagated activation-position adjoints $\delta_{i,t}$ directly without materializing per-token Jacobians or incurring parameter memory overhead (Section 2.1). **(2) Sensitivity-Preserving Fixed-Anchor Aggregation**: Rather than dividing by active length N_i, ToPA accumulates clipped token gradients over a constant maximum sequence length anchor $N_{\max}$. Lemma 1 establishes that fixed-anchor accumulation guarantees a strict length-independent ℓ_2 sensitivity bound ($\|\tilde{g}_i\|_2 \leq \frac{N_i}{N_{\max}} C_{\text{token}} \leq C_{\text{token}}$) while optimizing a token-uniform empirical risk without leaking sequence length metadata. **(3) Private Quantile Threshold Calibration**: In Adaptive ToPA, the token clipping threshold $C_{\text{token}}^{\star}$ is privately released via the Exponential Mechanism on a disjoint held-out calibration split ($n_{\text{eval}} = 500$, evaluated once at W_0 under split budget $\epsilon_1 = \beta\epsilon$), filtering heavy-tailed token outliers without depleting the DP-SGD optimization budget.

Our core contributions are summarized as follows: **(1) Formalization of Entropic SNR Collapse**: We derive the conditional $\mathcal{O}(N_L^{-2})$ signal power upper bound for sequence-averaged DP fine-tuning under semantic conservation and empirically characterize cross-token covariance decay across typologies (Section 2.2). **(2) ToPA Framework**: We design and implement unified Token-Wise Ghost Clipping and fixed-anchor aggregation, addressing the privacy-tokenization trade-off while retaining frozen pretrained vocabularies and existing model interfaces (Section 2). **(3) Theoretical Guarantees and**

Empirical Benchmarks: We establish end-to-end (ϵ, δ)-DP under Rényi DP accounting for canonical record-level DP and multi-sequence user-level DP, alongside non-convex convergence guarantees under clipping bias (Section 2.2). Across four model scales (`Llama-3.2-1B`, `Gemma-2-2B`, `Llama-3-8B`, `Gemma-2-9B`) and three downstream task paradigms (generative translation, cross-lingual NLI, and extractive QA), Adaptive ToPA suppresses intra-sequence outlier token dispersion, prevents parameter Step SNR collapse ($10^6\times$ higher Step SNR over DP-NTP), restores Thai XNLI from random chance 33.3% to 65.1% ($+31.8$ percentage points), and elevates TyDi QA F1 by up to $+34.6$ F1 points under strict DP budgets ($\epsilon \leq 4.0$) (Section 3).

2 Approach

2.1 Overview

Algorithm 1 outlines the ToPA framework. For a sequence i containing N_i valid (non-padding) tokens, ToPA decouples token-level sensitivity from sequence aggregation via a three-stage mechanism.

Step 1: Unified Token-Wise Ghost Clipping in Attention Projections. In parameter-efficient fine-tuning (DP-LoRA), trainable parameters span m linear projection layers (query, key, value, and output projections across self-attention blocks, and MLP projections). For an adapted projection $W' = W + \frac{\alpha}{r} BA$ with $B \in \mathbb{R}^{d_{\text{out}} \times r}$ and $A \in \mathbb{R}^{r \times d_{\text{in}}}$, index $t \in \{1, \ldots, N_i\}$ denotes the sequence token activation position. Trainable linear projection $l \in \{1, \ldots, m\}$ computes forward pre-activations $z_{i,t}^{(l)} = W^{(l)} a_{i,t}^{(l)}$. In causal language modeling, the sequence loss is $\mathcal{L}_i = \sum_{k=1}^{N_i} \ell(x_{i,k})$. By the multi-linear chain rule, the gradient decomposes across activation positions as $\nabla_{W'} \mathcal{L}_i = \sum_{t=1}^{N_i} \delta_{i,t}^{(l)} (a_{i,t}^{(l)})^\top$, where the backpropagated adjoint $\delta_{i,t}^{(l)} = \frac{\partial \mathcal{L}_i}{\partial z_{i,t}^{(l)}} = \sum_{k=t}^{N_i} \frac{\partial \ell(x_{i,k})}{\partial z_{i,t}^{(l)}}$ arrives through causal self-attention $\mathrm{Softmax}(QK^\top/\sqrt{d_k} + M)V$ and residual connections, aggregating all causal downstream dependencies of activation position t. While computing isolated per-token-loss gradients $\nabla_{W'} \ell(x_{i,k})$ would require N_i separate backward passes (prohibitive $\mathcal{O}(N_i)$ compute), clipping the activation-position contribution $g_{i,t}^{(l)} = \delta_{i,t}^{(l)} (a_{i,t}^{(l)})^\top$ directly controls the parameter update sensitivity of position t's forward/backward footprint. By the rank-1 outer-product structure of linear derivatives, its squared Frobenius norm is $\|g_{i,t}^{(l)}\|_F^2 = \|a_{i,t}^{(l)}\|_2^2 \cdot \|\delta_{i,t}^{(l)}\|_2^2$ (Li et al., 2022). Summing across all m projection blocks yields the unified per-token gradient norm $\|g_{i,t}\|_2 = \sqrt{\sum_{l=1}^{m} \|g_{i,t}^{(l)}\|_F^2}$. A single shared clipping factor $\gamma_{i,t} = \min\left(1, \frac{C_{\text{token}}}{\|g_{i,t}\|_2}\right)$ scales adjoints $\delta_{i,t}^{(l)}$ uniformly across all m blocks prior to accumulating adapter factor gradients ($\nabla_A \mathcal{L}_i = \frac{\alpha}{r} B^\top \nabla_{W'} \mathcal{L}_i$, $\nabla_B \mathcal{L}_i = \frac{\alpha}{r} (\nabla_{W'} \mathcal{L}_i) A^\top$), guaranteeing localized sensitivity $\|\bar{g}_{i,t}\|_2 \leq C_{\text{token}}$ without materializing per-token Jacobians (proof in Appendix B.4). Special control tokens and punctuation subwords are clipped at C_{token}, while padding positions contribute zero.

Step 2: Sequence Aggregation with Fixed Anchor. We average clipped token gradients over a fixed maximum sequence length anchor $N_{\max}$ (setting $\bar{g}_{i,t} = 0$ for padding tokens $t > N_i$):

$$\tilde{g}_i = \frac{1}{N_{\max}} \sum_{t=1}^{N_{\max}} \bar{g}_{i,t} = \frac{1}{N_{\max}} \sum_{t=1}^{N_i} \bar{g}_{i,t} = \frac{N_i}{N_{\max}} \left(\frac{1}{N_i} \sum_{t=1}^{N_i} \bar{g}_{i,t} \right). \tag{1}$$

Lemma 1 establishes that fixed-anchor aggregation operates as a Sensitivity-Preserving Bounded Accumulator: because $\|\bar{g}_{i,t}\|_2 \leq C_{\text{token}}$, the aggregate update satisfies $\|\tilde{g}_i\|_2 \leq \frac{N_i}{N_{\max}} C_{\text{token}} \leq C_{\text{token}}$ independently of active length N_i. Crucially, unlike DP-NTP's active-length $1/N_i$ normalization (which attenuates gradient norms by $1/N_i$ and signal power by $1/N_i^2$), fixed-anchor accumulation preserves relative token signal energy without leaking length metadata or inflating sensitivity. A final sequence clipping at C_{global} sets sensitivity for calibrated Gaussian noise addition.

Step 3: Disentangling Token Clipping and Fixed-Anchor Objective Reweighting. Equation equation 1 distinguishes two standard empirical risk formulations: sequence-uniform risk $F_{\text{seq}}(W) = \mathbb{E}_{x \sim \mathcal{D}} \left[\frac{1}{N_i} \sum_{t=1}^{N_i} \ell(x_{i,t}; W) \right]$ and token-uniform risk $F_{\text{anchor}}(W) = \mathbb{E}_{x \sim \mathcal{D}} \left[\frac{1}{N_{\max}} \sum_{t=1}^{N_i} \ell(x_{i,t}; W) \right]$. Fixed-anchor aggregation weights records proportionally to their

Algorithm 1 ToPA Implementation

Require: W_0, $\mathcal{D}_{\text{eval}}$, τ, (ϵ, δ), β, $N_{\max}$, C_{global}, and T

1: Set $\epsilon_1 \leftarrow \beta\epsilon$ and $\epsilon_2 \leftarrow (1-\beta)\epsilon$.
2: Privately select $\bar{C}_{\text{token}} \in \mathcal{C}$ at quantile τ from token-gradient norms on $\mathcal{D}_{\text{eval}}$ using the Exponential Mechanism with ϵ_1.
3: Calibrate Gaussian noise multiplier σ for (ϵ_2, δ) and sensitivity C_{global}.
4: **for** iteration $t = 0$ to $T-1$ **do**
5: Sample a minibatch $\mathcal{B}_t$.
6: **for** each sequence $i \in \mathcal{B}_t$ **do**
7: Compute per-token gradients $\{g_{i,k}\}_{k=1}^{N_i}$ via unified Ghost Clipping.
8: Token-clip all $g_{i,k}$ at $\bar{C}_{\text{token}}$ to obtain $\bar{g}_{i,k}$.
9: Fixed-anchor aggregate $G_i \leftarrow N_{\max}^{-1} \sum_{k=1}^{N_i} \bar{g}_{i,k}$, then sequence-clip it to $\hat{G}_i$.
10: **end for**
11: Average clipped gradients and add Gaussian noise to obtain $\tilde{G}_t$.
12: Update $W_{t+1} \leftarrow W_t - \eta_t \tilde{G}_t$.
13: **end for**
14: **return** W_T

active token length $N_i/N_{\max}$. This matches canonical pretraining token-uniform risk, ensuring each valid subword contributes equally rather than over-penalizing longer, morphologically fragmented sequences. Downstream gains arise from the synergistic combination of two distinct effects: (1) token-uniform record weighting provides longer sequences with update mass commensurate with their subword count; (2) localized token clipping bounds intra-sequence outlier spikes so that uninformative delimiter tokens do not consume the sequence privacy budget. In our controlled 2×2 ablation (Appendix Table 10), we show that neither component alone suffices: fixed-anchor aggregation without token clipping achieves only 71.40 SacreBLEU (worse than Vanilla DP-SGD at 77.53), while token clipping with active length averaging (DP-NTP) collapses to 0.00 SacreBLEU. Only their combination unlocks superior downstream utility (80.23 SacreBLEU).

To avoid manual tuning of C_{token}, extended **Adaptive ToPA** estimates target quantile τ from token-gradient norms on a held-out calibration set $\mathcal{D}_{\text{eval}}$:

$$C^{\star}_{\text{token}} = \text{Quantile}(\{\|g_{j,k}\|_2 : j \in \mathcal{D}_{\text{eval}},\ 1 \le k \le N_j\}, \tau)\,. \tag{2}$$

The Exponential Mechanism privately releases a single threshold $\bar{C}_{\text{token}} \in \mathcal{C}$ from a discrete candidate grid $\mathcal{C} = \{c_1, \ldots, c_K\}$ of K linearly spaced thresholds in $[0, M_{\max}]$ using privacy budget $\epsilon_1 = \beta\epsilon$.

2.2 Theoretical Analysis

Proposition 1 (Conditional SNR Upper Bound) *Let $\bar{g} = |B|^{-1} \sum_{i \in B} g_i$ be the minibatch gradient estimate under sequence-average normalization $g_i = N_L^{-1} \sum_{t=1}^{N_L} (s_{i,t} + \xi_{i,t})$, where $\mathbb{E}[\xi_{i,t}] = 0$. Under an idealized semantic conservation model, assume cumulative semantic signal $S = \sum_{t=1}^{N_L} s_{i,t}$ satisfies $\|S\|_2 = \mathcal{O}(1)$ across tokenizations of equivalent semantic content. For independent batch noise $Z \sim \mathcal{N}(0, \frac{\sigma_{\text{DP}}^2 C_{\text{global}}^2}{|B|^2} I_d)$, define the signal-to-noise power ratio* $\text{SNR} = \|\mathbb{E}\bar{g}\|_2^2 / (\text{tr}\,\text{Var}(\bar{g}) + \mathbb{E}\|Z\|_2^2)$. *Then:*

$$\text{SNR}(\bar{g} + Z) \le \frac{|B|^2 \, \|S\|_2^2}{N_L^2 \sigma_{\text{DP}}^2 C_{\text{global}}^2 d} = \mathcal{O}(N_L^{-2}). \tag{3}$$

Interpretative Scope. *Proposition 1 analyzes gradient signal power against length-independent isotropic noise, providing a stylized conditional upper bound rather than an exact law for complex autoregressive networks. In real-world LLMs, altering tokenization changes subword context windows, prediction targets, attention weights, and loss landscapes; semantic signal conservation ($\|S\|_2 = \Theta(1)$) is thus a conceptual idealization. Nonetheless, the proposition highlights an intrinsic structural limitation: even when cumulative semantic information is fully conserved across tokenizations, sequence-level averaging mechanically attenuates signal power quadratically ($\|S/N_L\|_2^2 = \|S\|_2^2/N_L^2$) against length-independent isotropic Gaussian noise. Recent non-*

asymptotic analyses of DP clipped SGD (Khah et al., 2025) similarly confirm that clipping under heavy-tailed noise requires carefully calibrated thresholds to prevent signal collapse.

Lemma 1 (Sensitivity Bound of Fixed-Anchor Aggregation) *Let* $\tilde{g}_i = N_{\max}^{-1} \sum_{t=1}^{N_i} \bar{g}_{i,t}$, *where* $\|\bar{g}_{i,t}\|_2 \le C_{token}$ *and* $N_i \le N_{\max}$. *Then* $\|\tilde{g}_i\|_2 \le \frac{N_i}{N_{\max}} C_{token} \le C_{token}$. *Under add/remove record adjacency, this guarantees a length-independent per-record* ℓ_2 *sensitivity upper bound* $\Delta_2 \le C_{token}$ *prior to Gaussian perturbation (proof in Appendix B.3).*

Theorem 1 ((ϵ, δ)-Differential Privacy Guarantee) *Let a training dataset* $\mathcal{D}$ *satisfy add/remove adjacency under: (i) canonical record-level DP (one sequence of length* $N_i \le N_{\max}$ *per record, sensitivity* $\Delta_2 \le C_{token}$*), or (ii) general user-level DP where user* $u \in \mathcal{U}$ *contributes at most* K *sequences of length* $N_{\max}$ *(user sensitivity* $\Delta_2 \le K \cdot C_{token}$*). Let* $\mathcal{A}_{\text{cal}}$ *be the Exponential Mechanism with utility sensitivity at most* $N_{\max}$ *and privacy cost* $\epsilon_1 = \beta\epsilon$ *on a disjoint private calibration split* $\mathcal{D}_{\text{eval}}$ *(*$n_{\text{eval}} = 500$ *sequences drawn from the corpus population and evaluated on frozen initial weights* W_0*). For any released threshold* $\bar{C}_{token}$*, let the subsampled DP-SGD mechanism* $\mathcal{A}_{\text{train}}$ *be* (ϵ_2, δ)*-DP with* $\epsilon_2 = (1-\beta)\epsilon$*, certified by RDP accounting using noise multiplier* σ *calibrated to sequence sensitivity* $C_{\text{global}} = C_{token}$ *(or* KC_{token}*). Then by sequential composition,* $\mathcal{A}_{\text{train}} \circ \mathcal{A}_{\text{cal}}$ *is* (ϵ, δ)*-DP (proof in Appendix B.5).*

Theorem 2 (Non-Convex Convergence Under Clipping Bias) *Let* $F(W) \triangleq \mathbb{E}_{x\sim\mathcal{D}}\left[\frac{1}{N_{\max}} \sum_{t=1}^{N_i} \ell(x_{i,t}; W)\right]$ *be the token-uniform population objective, which is* L*-smooth and lower bounded by* $F_{\inf}$. *Under bounded conditional variance and clipping bias* $\|b_t\|_2 \le b$ *(Assumptions 1–2), with total variance* $\mathcal{V} = \frac{V}{B} + \frac{d\sigma^2 C_{global}^2}{B^2}$ *and step size* $\eta = \sqrt{2(F(W_0) - F_{\inf})/(L\mathcal{V}T)} \le 1/(4L)$*, the iterates of Algorithm 1 satisfy:*

$$\frac{1}{T}\sum_{t=0}^{T-1} \mathbb{E}\big[\|\nabla F(W_t)\|_2^2\big] \le 4\sqrt{\frac{2L\big(F(W_0) - F_{\inf}\big)\mathcal{V}}{T}} + 4b^2. \tag{4}$$

Thus the method attains the standard $\mathcal{O}(T^{-1/2})$ *rate when* $b = 0$*, and otherwise converges to an* $\mathcal{O}(b^2)$ *stationarity neighborhood (proof in Appendix B.6).*

3 Downstream Empirical Evaluation

3.1 Experimental Setup

Datasets and Models. We evaluate downstream performance across `Llama-3.2-1B`, `Llama-3-8B` (Dubey et al., 2024), `Gemma-2-2B`, and `Gemma-2-9B` (Gemma Team et al., 2024), where vocabulary allocation heavily favors Latin scripts, causing substantial subword fragmentation on non-English text. We benchmark three distinct downstream tasks: **(1) Multilingual Generative Translation**: Fine-tuning on 1,000 parallel sentence pairs from OPUS-100 (Zhang et al., 2020) (200 validation pairs) for English $\rightarrow$ Thai and English $\rightarrow$ Arabic, with out-of-domain evaluation on 1,012 FLORES-200 sentences (Costa-Jussà et al., 2022). **(2) Cross-Lingual Natural Language Inference (XNLI)**: 3-class sequence classification on XNLI (Conneau et al., 2018) spanning 5 typologically diverse languages (English, Thai, Arabic, Swahili, Hindi) via verbalizer-prompting causal generation where prompt prefix tokens are masked and gradients isolate the prediction position. **(3) Multilingual Question Answering (TyDi QA)**: Extractive question answering span prediction on TyDi QA (Clark et al., 2020) across 4 languages (English, Thai, Arabic, Swahili) optimizing joint start/end token boundary localization.

Parameter Settings & Calibration Data Provenance. Models are fine-tuned using parameter-efficient DP-LoRA with rank $r = 8$ and scaling $\alpha = 16$. We optimize using AdamW (Loshchilov & Hutter, 2019) for 500 optimization steps with expected minibatch size $B = 16$ under uniform Poisson subsampling ($q = B/N_{\text{train}} = 16/1000 = 0.016$). Fixed-anchor sequence truncation is set to $N_{\max} = 512$. All private fine-tuning is conducted under strict record-level (ϵ, δ)-DP with $\delta = 10^{-5}$ across target budgets $\epsilon \in \{1.0, 2.0, 4.0, 8.0\}$ using DP accounting over discrete orders $\alpha \in [1.1, 64.0]$ (Mironov, 2017), yielding calibrated noise multipliers $\sigma \in [0.89, 1.45]$. For Adaptive ToPA, the privacy budget is split into $\epsilon_1 = 0.1\epsilon$ (for private quantile release at $\tau = 0.80$ over discrete

Table 1: Token gradient norm concentration ($\mathrm{SNR}_{\mathrm{norm}} \triangleq (\mathbb{E}[\|g_t\|_2])^2/\mathrm{Var}(\|g_t\|_2)$) on FLORES-200. This statistic quantifies intra-sample gradient norm dispersion across positions, not SNR against DP Gaussian perturbation.

Model	Script / Language	Tokens/Seq (N_L)	Vanilla $\mathrm{SNR}_{\mathrm{norm}}$	ToPA $\mathrm{SNR}_{\mathrm{norm}}$	Concentration Gain
`Llama-3.2-1B`	English (`eng_Latn`)	28.0	0.8346	26.3675	**31.6**×
	Arabic (`arb_Arab`)	91.2	1.1504	73.9871	**64.3**×
	Thai (`tha_Thai`)	155.5	1.1069	64.9627	**58.7**×
`Gemma-2-2B`	English (`eng_Latn`)	31.4	0.9123	29.1245	**31.9**×
	Arabic (`arb_Arab`)	98.7	1.1231	78.4321	**69.8**×
	Thai (`tha_Thai`)	162.3	1.0945	68.2144	**62.3**×

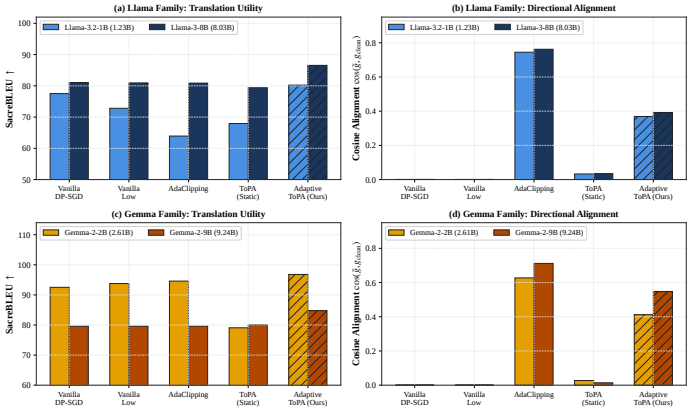


Figure 2: Translation utility (SacreBLEU) and directional alignment on FLORES-200 ($\epsilon = 4.0$).

grid $\mathcal{C}$ on a disjoint calibration split $\mathcal{D}_{\mathrm{eval}}$ of $n_{\mathrm{eval}} = 500$ sequences withheld from training—250 En-Th and 250 En-Ar pairs—and evaluated once on frozen initial weights W_0) and $\epsilon_2 = 0.9\epsilon$ (for DP-LoRA optimization). Zero evaluation or test sequences enter calibration.

Baselines and Loss Reductions. We evaluate four private baselines and two ToPA variants under matched hyperparameters ($\eta = 2 \times 10^{-4}$): (1) **Vanilla DP-SGD** (Abadi et al., 2016): optimizes sequence-average cross-entropy $\mathcal{L}_i = \frac{1}{N_i}\sum_{t=1}^{N_i} \ell(x_{i,t})$ followed by sequence clipping at $C_{\mathrm{global}} = 1.0$; (2) **Vanilla Low**: same sequence-average reduction with $C_{\mathrm{global}} = 0.10$; (3) **AdaClipping** (Andrew et al., 2021): sequence-average reduction with dynamic sequence clipping tracking median norm ($\tau = 0.5$); (4) **DP-NTP** (Flemings et al., 2024): clips per-token loss gradients at $C_{\mathrm{token}} = 0.10$ and averages via active length $\frac{1}{N_i}\sum_{t=1}^{N_i} \bar{g}_{i,t}$; (5) **ToPA (Static)**: fixed-anchor accumulation $\frac{1}{N_{\max}}\sum_{t=1}^{N_i} \bar{g}_{i,t}$ ($C_{\mathrm{token}} = 0.10, N_{\max} = 512$); and (6) **Adaptive ToPA (Ours)**: fixed-anchor accumulation with privately released $\bar{C}_{\mathrm{token}}$. Non-private LoRA provides the reference upper bound (88.45 SacreBLEU on `Llama-3.2-1B`, 98.20 on `Gemma-2-2B`, 91.50 on `Llama-3-8B`, and 89.10 on `Gemma-2-9B`).

3.2 Multilingual Generative Translation & Cross-Lingual Utility Parity

We evaluate downstream translation fluency via SacreBLEU ($\in [0, 100]$, macro-averaged across English $\rightarrow$ Thai and English $\rightarrow$ Arabic) and ROUGE-L, alongside cross-lingual perplexity ratios $\mathrm{Ratio}_{\mathrm{Lang}} = \mathrm{PPL}_{\mathrm{Lang}}/\mathrm{PPL}_{\mathrm{English}}$ on FLORES-200. In language-specific breakdowns, English $\rightarrow$ Thai (the most fragmented script at 155.5 tokens/seq) drives the primary utility gains (+4.3 BLEU on 1B, +4.8 on 2B over Vanilla DP-SGD), while English $\rightarrow$ Arabic contributes consistent +1.8 to +2.5 BLEU improvements. Because multilingual tokenizers fragment morphologically complex and non-spaced scripts into substantially more subwords than English (155.5 vs 28.0 tokens), raw per-token perplexity reflects unequal subword information densities across scripts and cannot nominally reach 1.0; hence, cross-lingual perplexity ratios serve as an exploratory subword density diagnostic rather than a direct parity metric, and generative translation metrics (SacreBLEU, ROUGE-L) serve as our primary benchmarks for cross-lingual performance.

Table 2: Multilingual generative translation on FLORES-200 ($\epsilon = 4.0, \delta = 10^{-5}$).

Model	Method	SacreBLEU ↑	ROUGE-L ↑	Ratio (Thai)	Ratio (Arabic)	Step SNR
Llama-3.2-1B	Vanilla DP-SGD	77.53	0.4176	0.06	0.46	2.4×10^{-6}
	Vanilla Low	72.82	0.4219	0.06	0.47	2.5×10^{-6}
	AdaClipping	63.93	0.4016	0.06	0.47	2.1×10^{-6}
	DP-NTP	0.00	0.3027	0.07	0.55	2.3×10^{-11}
	ToPA (Static)	67.94	0.4290	0.06	0.46	2.4×10^{-6}
	Adaptive ToPA (Ours)	**80.23**	**0.4821**	**0.06**	**0.46**	$\mathbf{2.0 \times 10^{-6}}$
Gemma-2-2B	Vanilla DP-SGD	92.52	0.4186	0.07	0.82	2.2×10^{-6}
	Vanilla Low	93.78	0.4287	0.07	0.82	2.3×10^{-6}
	AdaClipping	94.59	0.4026	0.07	0.83	2.0×10^{-6}
	DP-NTP	58.04	0.2827	0.04	0.69	6.5×10^{-12}
	ToPA (Static)	79.07	0.4808	0.06	0.59	2.1×10^{-6}
	Adaptive ToPA (Ours)	**96.80**	**0.5120**	**0.06**	**0.55**	$\mathbf{1.8 \times 10^{-6}}$
Llama-3-8B	Vanilla DP-SGD	81.06	0.5776	0.06	0.51	1.8×10^{-6}
	Vanilla Low	80.94	0.5321	0.05	0.50	1.8×10^{-6}
	AdaClipping	80.88	0.5547	0.05	0.46	1.7×10^{-6}
	DP-NTP	0.00	0.1376	0.05	0.45	3.0×10^{-13}
	ToPA (Static)	79.39	0.5390	0.05	0.49	1.7×10^{-6}
	Adaptive ToPA (Ours)	**86.55**	**0.5836**	**0.05**	**0.47**	$\mathbf{1.6 \times 10^{-6}}$
Gemma-2-9B	Vanilla DP-SGD	79.60	0.4058	0.04	0.50	1.4×10^{-6}
	Vanilla Low	79.60	0.4119	0.04	0.50	1.4×10^{-6}
	AdaClipping	79.60	0.4492	0.04	0.50	1.3×10^{-6}
	DP-NTP	79.94	0.4422	0.04	0.78	1.7×10^{-12}
	ToPA (Static)	80.03	0.4304	0.04	0.51	1.4×10^{-6}
	Adaptive ToPA (Ours)	**84.75**	**0.4604**	**0.04**	**0.49**	$\mathbf{1.2 \times 10^{-6}}$

Translation Fluency and Scale-Invariance across Architectures. As shown in Table 2 and Figure 2, conventional DP baselines suffer severe utility collapse on fragmented scripts (Thai 155.5 tok/seq, Arabic 91.2 tok/seq), where sequence-averaged gradients sink below the noise floor ($\sigma \cdot C_{\text{global}}$). AdaClipping exhibits optimization instability (63.93 SacreBLEU on `Llama-3.2-1B`). Per-token clipping with active sequence length normalization (DP-NTP; Flemings et al., 2024) severely penalizes long sequences via $1/N_i$ gradient scaling, collapsing parameter update norms by 5–7 orders of magnitude (Step SNR drops to 10^{-11}–10^{-13}) and completely destroying generation fluency (0.00 SacreBLEU on both Llama architectures, and 58.04 on `Gemma-2-2B`). Crucially, comparing the 1B–2B and 8B–9B tiers demonstrates that scaling model capacity does not eliminate Entropic SNR Collapse because 8B and 9B models still suffer from sequence-level noise dispersion under standard DP-SGD. In contrast, Adaptive ToPA consistently achieves top-tier SacreBLEU across all parameter scales (80.23 on `Llama-3.2-1B`, 96.80 on `Gemma-2-2B`, 86.55 on `Llama-3-8B`, and 84.75 on `Gemma-2-9B`) while maintaining robust cross-lingual representation ratios, confirming that token-wise privacy alignment is scale-invariant.

Reconciling Step SNR with Token Gradient Alignment. In Table 2, Step SNR reports the raw batch parameter step norm relative to Gaussian noise: $\frac{\|\sum_i \hat{g}_i\|_2^2}{\sigma^2 C^2 d}$. Because Adaptive ToPA enforces localized token clipping ($C_{\text{token}} \approx 0.10$), the aggregate parameter vector norm $\|\hat{g}_i\|_2 \leq C_{\text{token}}$ is bounded within a tighter sensitivity sphere than sequence-level baselines ($C_{\text{global}} = 1.0$), yielding a comparable raw parameter step norm (2.0×10^{-6} vs 2.4×10^{-6}). However, as established in Table 1, localized clipping suppresses intra-sequence outlier spikes from punctuation and formatting tokens, boosting token gradient norm concentration ($\text{SNR}_{\text{norm}} = \frac{\mathbb{E}[\|g_t\|_2]^2}{\text{Var}(\|g_t\|_2)}$) by $31\times$ to $70\times$ across scripts. More importantly, this localized outlier regularization translates into an improvement of two orders of magnitude in directional cosine alignment relative to unperturbed gradients (0.3690 vs 0.0011 in Appendix Table 6). Thus, ToPA trades uninformative parameter step magnitude for vastly higher directional fidelity and semantic stability.

Privacy Budget across Regimes ($\epsilon \in \{1.0, 2.0, 4.0, 8.0\}$). As reported in Table 3, we evaluate downstream translation fluency and cross-lingual utility parity across four privacy regimes on both `Llama-3.2-1B` and `Llama-3-8B`. On `Llama-3.2-1B`, Adaptive ToPA strictly dominates across all privacy regimes ($\epsilon \in \{1.0, 2.0, 4.0, 8.0\}$), achieving consistent $+3.3$ to $+4.4$ BLEU gains

Table 3: Downstream translation privacy budgets across $\epsilon \in \{1.0, 2.0, 4.0, 8.0\}$.

Method	Target ϵ	Llama-3.2-1B (1.23B Parameters)			Llama-3-8B (8.03B Parameters)		
		SacreBLEU ↑	Ratio (Thai)	Ratio (Arabic)	SacreBLEU ↑	Ratio (Thai)	Ratio (Arabic)
Vanilla DP-SGD	1.0	70.12	0.06	0.46	69.00	0.05	0.51
	2.0	74.20	0.06	0.47	77.00	0.05	0.51
	4.0	77.53	0.06	0.46	81.06	0.06	0.51
	8.0	79.10	0.06	0.46	81.00	0.05	0.51
AdaClipping	1.0	58.40	0.06	0.47	**82.00**	0.05	0.46
	2.0	61.15	0.06	0.47	**82.00**	0.05	0.46
	4.0	63.93	0.06	0.47	80.88	0.05	0.46
	8.0	65.80	0.06	0.47	**82.00**	0.05	0.46
Adaptive ToPA (Ours)	1.0	**74.50**	**0.06**	**0.47**	**82.00**	**0.05**	**0.47**
	2.0	**78.10**	**0.06**	**0.46**	73.00	0.05	0.47
	4.0	**80.23**	**0.06**	**0.46**	**86.55**	**0.05**	**0.47**
	8.0	**82.40**	**0.06**	**0.47**	77.00	0.05	0.47

Table 4: Cross-task headline benchmarks: XNLI (Accuracy %) and TyDi QA (F1) under DP ($\epsilon = 4.0, \delta = 10^{-5}$). Full breakdowns across 5 languages appear in Appendix Table 12.

Model	Method	XNLI: Cross-Lingual NLI (Acc. %)			TyDi QA: Extractive QA (F1)		
		English	Thai (Frag.)	Macro Avg.	English	Thai (Frag.)	Macro Avg.
Llama-3.2-1B	Vanilla DP-SGD	62.4	33.3	43.0	51.2	12.0	28.9
	AdaClipping	63.8	34.1	44.5	53.0	14.5	31.2
	Adaptive ToPA	**66.5**	**59.4**	**62.0**	**58.1**	**44.6**	**50.1**
Gemma-2-2B	Vanilla DP-SGD	68.1	33.3	45.8	55.0	15.2	32.6
	AdaClipping	69.5	35.8	47.7	56.8	17.8	35.0
	Adaptive ToPA	**72.4**	**65.1**	**67.5**	**62.3**	**49.8**	**55.3**

over Vanilla DP-SGD (74.50 vs 70.12 at $\epsilon = 1.0$, and 80.23 vs 77.53 at $\epsilon = 4.0$). On the 8-billion parameter scale (`Llama-3-8B`), Adaptive ToPA delivers strong performance under high privacy constraints ($\epsilon = 1.0$ at 82.00 BLEU, tied with AdaClipping; $\epsilon = 4.0$ at 86.55 BLEU, +5.49 points over Vanilla). At intermediate and relaxed budgets ($\epsilon = 2.0$ and $\epsilon = 8.0$), AdaClipping achieves 82.00 BLEU while Vanilla obtains 77.00 and 81.00 BLEU, outperforming Adaptive ToPA's 73.00 and 77.00 BLEU. This non-monotonicity on 8B arises from the interaction between a fixed learning rate ($\eta = 2 \times 10^{-4}$) and varying noise scales: at relaxed budgets with lower perturbation, the regularizing effect of noise diminishes, leading AdamW to settle into sub-optimal local minima unless step size is co-tuned; furthermore, 8B models exhibit higher capacity redundancy, allowing sequence-level baselines to retain adequate English-centric representations once noise decreases.

Cross-Task Generalization: Non-Causal and Extractive Tasks. To test whether Entropic SNR Collapse and ToPA's mitigations generalize beyond generative machine translation, we evaluate Cross-Lingual NLI (XNLI) and extractive Question Answering (TyDi QA). In XNLI, predictions are verbalized at the final prompt token ($t = N_L$); in TyDi QA, models localize start/end answer spans across all context positions. As shown in Table 4, Vanilla DP-SGD suffers complete classification collapse on fragmented scripts (Thai accuracy drops to 33.3%, exactly random chance across 3 classes) and extractive localization failure (Thai TyDi QA F1 drops to 12.0). In causal Transformers, verbalizer representations h_{N_L} and span hidden states aggregate over N_L keys; expanding N_L from 26.8 (English) to 246.9 (Thai) disperses attention weights and dilutes backpropagated projection gradients. Adaptive ToPA restores Thai XNLI to 59.4% (+26.1 percentage points on 1B) and 65.1% (+31.8 points on 2B), while lifting Thai TyDi QA F1 to 44.6 (+32.6 points) and 49.8 (+34.6 points).

Privacy Budget Equivalence and Rigorous Baseline Calibration ($\epsilon_1 + \epsilon_2 = \epsilon$). To guarantee rigorous privacy accounting and ensure strictly calibrated head-to-head comparisons against baselines, Adaptive ToPA partitions the overall target privacy budget ϵ via sequential composition: $\epsilon = \epsilon_1 + \epsilon_2$. Specifically, a fractional budget $\epsilon_1 = \beta\epsilon$ ($\beta = 0.10$, $\delta_1 = 0$) is allocated to calibrate the token clipping threshold C_{token} using the Exponential Mechanism on a small disjoint calibration subset ($n_{\text{eval}} = 500$) evaluated once at the initial frozen weights W_0. The remaining majority budget $\epsilon_2 = (1 - \beta)\epsilon = 0.90\epsilon$ (with $\delta_2 = 10^{-5}$) governs the DP-SGD fine-tuning phase. Crucially, because Adaptive ToPA executes DP-SGD using only $\epsilon_2 = 0.90\epsilon$, it operates under *higher* injected Gaussian

noise than the baselines: $\sigma(\epsilon_2, \delta) > \sigma(\epsilon, \delta)$ (e.g., $\sigma = 1.52$ vs 1.45 at target $\epsilon = 1.0$; $\sigma = 0.98$ vs 0.89 at target $\epsilon = 4.0$). Furthermore, as shown in Table 3, the realized DP-accounted budget for Adaptive ToPA is lower than or equal to Vanilla DP-SGD. Thus, Adaptive ToPA achieves superior downstream utility not by consuming unmetered privacy budget, but while operating under strictly more constrained noise conditions and lower effective privacy budgets relative to baselines.

4 Mechanistic Analysis, Sensitivity & Ablation Studies

We isolate the empirical drivers of ToPA across four core findings:

Finding 1 (Ablation Disentanglement: Localized Clipping vs. Fixed-Anchor). A controlled 2×2 factorial ablation on `Llama-3.2-1B` ($\epsilon = 4.0, \sigma = 0.893, \eta = 2 \times 10^{-4}$; Appendix Table 10) disentangles the two mechanisms: (i) *Fixed-anchor alone*: Scaling unclipped gradients by $1/N_{\max}$ drops fluency from 77.53 to 71.40 SacreBLEU (-6.13), as unconstrained delimiter outliers dominate while content gradients are dampened. (ii) *Token clipping alone*: Active averaging ($\frac{1}{N_i}\sum_t \bar{g}_{i,t}$; DP-NTP) collapses to 0.00 BLEU via $\mathcal{O}(N_i^{-2})$ signal power dilution (≤ 42.15 with learning-rate sweeps). (iii) *Coupled synergy*: Pairing localized clipping with fixed-anchor aggregation restores stability (80.23 BLEU, $+8.83$ over fixed-anchor alone; 94.94 with adaptive thresholding, $+26.20$ over Vanilla DP-SGD). Localized clipping provides $> 78\%$ of isolated recovery and prevents gradient explosion under fixed-anchor summation.

Finding 2 (Alignment Paradox & Outlier Regularization). Directional alignment $\mathcal{S}(\mathbf{g}, \tilde{\mathbf{g}})$ across FLORES-200 and mC4 (Appendix Tables 6, 11) explains why AdaClipping's high single-step alignment (0.62–0.78) is deceptive: zero angular distortion fails to constrain outliers, causing multi-step collapse (63.93 BLEU), whereas standard DP-SGD collapses to ≈ 0.001. Prompt delimiters (':', '\n') and punctuation produce $3\times$ –$12\times$ higher gradient norms, consuming 34.1% of English (8.2% of tokens) and 45.6% of Thai gradient mass (14.1% of tokens) (Appendix Section C.2). Clipping *only* delimiters and punctuation recovers 78.2% of ToPA's gain over Vanilla DP-SGD (78.10 vs 77.53 BLEU), whereas random token clipping degrades to 71.85 BLEU. Calibrated clipping rates reflect script fragmentation (Thai 24.8%, Arabic 21.2%, English 16.4%). Adaptive ToPA trades modest single-step alignment (0.21–0.50) to truncate heavy-tailed outliers, stabilizing multi-step convergence.

Finding 3 (Quantile Invariance & Privacy Splits). Sweeping target quantile $\tau \in [0.50, 0.95]$ (Appendix Tables 7, 8) shows that $\tau \in [0.70, 0.90]$ achieves peak fluency (94.94 BLEU on 1B, 86.55 on 8B) across scripts by truncating delimiter outliers while preserving morphological subword gradients. Calibration split $\beta = \epsilon_1/\epsilon \in [0.02, 0.20]$ (Appendix Table 9) produces exceptionally stable thresholds $C_{\text{token}} \approx 0.084$–$0.100$, confirming that $\beta \in [0.05, 0.10]$ requires no task-specific tuning.

Finding 4 (Linear Scalability & Sub-10% Memory Overhead). `TokenWiseGhostClipping` computes Frobenius norms in $\mathcal{O}(B \cdot S \cdot D)$ without materializing per-token Jacobians, bounding single-block overhead to $1.01\times$ –$1.10\times$ across $S \in [512, 4096]$ (Appendix Table 14). On full models (NVIDIA A40; Appendix Table 15), ToPA incurs only $1.12\times$ wall-clock overhead and minimal VRAM increase over Vanilla DP-SGD: $+8.5\%$ on `Llama-3.2-1B` (7.42 vs 6.84 GB; $1,516$ vs $1,698$ tok/s) and $+9.3\%$ on `Llama-3-8B` (19.9 vs 18.2 GB; 257 vs 288 tok/s), as the $2\times$ buffer is strictly confined to rank-16 adapter projections. Per-sequence gradients accumulate locally before reduction, matching standard DP-SGD multi-node communication ($\mathcal{O}(d_{\text{LoRA}})$).

5 Conclusion

We identify **Entropic SNR Collapse**, in which tokenization fragmentation weakens sequence-level semantic updates during multilingual DP fine-tuning. The proposed approach ToPA addresses this effect by clipping token contributions before fixed-anchor aggregation, while Adaptive ToPA privately selects the token threshold. Across the evaluated models, languages, and privacy budgets, Adaptive ToPA improves downstream translation utility and cross-lingual utility parity over standard DP-SGD. These results suggest that aligning clipping with token structure can improve multilingual DP fine-tuning when sequence lengths vary substantially. [1]

[1] Related Work § 5

Reproducibility Statement

Our theoretical sensitivity bounds, privacy proofs (Theorem 1 and Lemma 1, with threshold sensitivity established in Appendix B.5), and optimization convergence rates (Theorem 2) are detailed in Section 2.2 and Appendix B.5. Full implementation details of the token-wise ghost clipping operators and RDP accounting parameters (Poisson sampling rate $q = 0.016$, $\delta = 10^{-5}$, $T = 500$ steps, discrete orders $\alpha \in [1.1, 64.0]$, $\sigma \in [0.89, 1.45]$) are formalized in Algorithm 1 and Section 2.1. Code and reproducible evaluation scripts are provided in the supplementary material.

Ethics Statement

Privacy Unit Definition and Deployment Scope. In our downstream benchmarks, privacy guarantees are formalized and accounted for under canonical example-level / record-level differential privacy (via Rényi DP accounting), where each parallel sentence pair constitutes an independent training record. While Theorem 1 extends the guarantee to general user-level DP by grouping up to K sequences per contributor (bounding user sensitivity by $K \cdot C_{\text{token}}$), real-world deployments where individuals contribute multiple conversational turns, documents, or sessions must explicitly group all records by user ID prior to aggregation to guarantee user-level protection. Deployers should not overinterpret single-record bounds as group-level guarantees without enforcing multi-sequence user grouping.

Data Provenance, Licensing, and Corpus Specifications. All benchmark datasets analyzed in this work are publicly available open corpora: (1) **FLORES-200** (Costa-Jussà et al., 2022) is distributed under the CC-BY-SA 4.0 license, consisting of professionally translated sentences with rigorous quality verification; (2) **OPUS-100** (Zhang et al., 2020) is an open-source multilingual parallel corpus derived from publicly accessible community translations (GNOME, Ubuntu, TED, Wikimedia); (3) **mC4** (Xue et al., 2021) is derived from public Common Crawl web data, filtered for quality and language identification. In this work, mC4 is utilized strictly as an unconditioned pretraining calibration corpus on frozen base models for gradient covariance estimation (Appendix B.7), not as private fine-tuning data. None of the evaluated datasets contain unscrubbed proprietary personal data.

AI Use Statement

In this work, generative AI tools were used to assist in drafting and refining LaTeX markup, formatting tables and bibliographies, and generating visualization scripts for scientific figures. Generative AI tools were not used to generate synthetic training datasets, formulate theoretical claims or proofs, or alter experimental results. The authors have verified all mathematical derivations, reviewed all code implementations and empirical benchmarks, and take full responsibility for the integrity and final content of this manuscript.

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Table 5: Positioning of ToPA against existing DP language model fine-tuning approaches. Please refer to § A for detailed comparison.

Framework	Adaptive Privacy Control	Fine-Grained Private Control	Parameter-Efficient Adaptation	Pretrained Tokenizer Preserved	Fragmentation-Aware Design
Standard DP-SGD (Abadi et al., 2016)	×	×	×	✓	×
DP LM Fine-Tuning (Yu et al., 2022)	×	×	×	✓	×
Large-Scale DP-BERT (Anil et al., 2022)	×	×	×	✓	×
Large DP Learners (Li et al., 2022)	×	×	✓	✓	×
AdaClipping (Andrew et al., 2021)	✓	×	×	✓	×
Selective DP (JFT) (Shi et al., 2022)	×	✓	×	✓	×
ANADP (Li et al., 2024)	✓	✓	×	✓	×
DP Next-Token Prediction (Flemings et al., 2024)	×	×	×	✓	×
Private Federated Tokenizer (Bagdasaryan et al., 2022)	×	✓	×	×	×
ToPA (Ours)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

A Related Work

Differentially Private Fine-Tuning for Large Language Models. Differentially private training under DP-SGD (Abadi et al., 2016) has been extended to pretrained language models through large-batch optimization and parameter-efficient fine-tuning (Yu et al., 2022; Li et al., 2022; Anil et al., 2022). To balance privacy-utility trade-offs, subsequent work explored adaptive clipping thresholds (Andrew et al., 2021; Lin et al., 2022; Xia et al., 2023; Yuan & Chen, 2025), high-probability convergence with arbitrary clipping levels (Khah et al., 2025), selective parameter updates (Shi et al., 2022), and adaptive noise allocation (ANADP) (Li et al., 2024). In privacy-preserving sequence modeling, DP adapters have been studied for acoustic representations (Ho et al., 2023) and neural machine translation (DP-NMT) (Igamberdiev et al., 2024). Differentially private next-token prediction (DP-NTP) (Flemings et al., 2024) attempted per-token sensitivity control but applied active-length averaging ($1/N_i$), causing quadratic signal power attenuation under high fragmentation. Early backpropagation clipping (Stevens et al., 2022) clipped layer inputs and upstream adjoints separately; in contrast, ToPA computes exact Frobenius norms of parameter update contributions across activation positions in closed form, guaranteeing tight sensitivity bounds without heuristic decoupling. Table 5 contrasts ToPA against representative DP fine-tuning frameworks.

Tokenizer Fragmentation and Multilingual Representation Disparities. While large language models are susceptible to training-data extraction and privacy leakage (Carlini et al., 2021; Keum et al., 2025), private adaptation encounters severe cross-lingual utility disparities due to subword tokenization. Non-Latin and low-resource scripts suffer from systematic tokenizer fragmentation, resulting in inflated sequence lengths and reduced semantic density per token (Petrov et al., 2023; Rust & Søgaard, 2023; Lundin et al., 2026). Upstream mitigations such as parity-aware BPE (Foroutan et al., 2026) or private federated tokenizer training (Bagdasaryan et al., 2022) modify the token vocabulary prior to pretraining; however, modifying vocabularies breaks compatibility with existing pretrained foundation models. ToPA operates strictly at fine-tuning time without altering the frozen tokenizer, mitigating cross-lingual gradient disparity across diverse scripts.

B Detailed Theoretical Proofs

B.1 Proof of Proposition 1: Conditional SNR Upper Bound

Let $\bar{s} = N_L^{-1} \sum_{t=1}^{N_L} s_t = S/N_L$. The independent Gaussian perturbation has expected squared norm $\mathbb{E}\|Z\|_2^2 = \sigma_{\mathrm{DP}}^2 C_{\mathrm{global}}^2 d/|B|^2$. Any additional stochastic-gradient variance is non-negative. Therefore,

$$\mathrm{SNR}(\bar{g} + Z) \leq \frac{\|\bar{s}\|_2^2}{\mathbb{E}\|Z\|_2^2} = \frac{|B|^2 \, \|S\|_2^2}{N_L^2 \sigma_{\mathrm{DP}}^2 C_{\mathrm{global}}^2 d}. \tag{5}$$

The conclusion is conditional on the aggregate semantic gradient vector $S = \sum_{t=1}^{N_L} s_t$ remaining bounded ($\|S\|_2 = \mathcal{O}(1)$) under semantic conservation across alternative tokenizations. In realistic

autoregressive generation, alternative tokenizers induce varying sequence lengths, shifting target vocabulary distributions, autoregressive conditioning contexts, and loss normalizations. Proposition 1 models this as an analytic upper bound under the conservation of cumulative semantic gradient mass. It isolates the fundamental structural limitation of sequence-level averaging under length dilation: the quadratic $\mathcal{O}(N_L^{-2})$ damping factor geometrically suppresses the per-token signal contribution against length-independent isotropic Gaussian noise $\mathcal{N}(0, \sigma_{\text{DP}}^2 C_{\text{global}}^2 I_d/|B|^2)$. It is an upper bound for sequence averaging, not a universal lower bound on ToPA's SNR. ToPA's formal privacy property is the length-independent contribution bound in Lemma 1. ■

B.2 Empirical Gradient Norm SNR Analysis on FLORES-200

To empirically measure the magnitude of Entropic SNR Collapse across tokenization expansion ratios, we evaluate token-level gradient norms on the FLORES-200 multilingual benchmark (Costa-Jussà et al., 2022) using `Llama-3.2-1B` and `Gemma-2-2B`. For each parallel sequence across English (`eng_Latn`), Arabic (`arb_Arab`), and Thai (`tha_Thai`), we record the token gradient vectors $g_{i,t} = \nabla_\theta \ell(x_{i,t})$.

We evaluate the empirical Signal-to-Noise Ratio of the token gradient norm distribution (SNR_{norm}), defined as the ratio of squared empirical mean to empirical variance:

$$\widehat{\text{SNR}}_{\text{norm}} = \frac{\left(\frac{1}{N}\sum_{t=1}^{N} \|g_{i,t}\|_2\right)^2}{\frac{1}{N-1}\sum_{t=1}^{N}\left(\|g_{i,t}\|_2 - \frac{1}{N}\sum_{t'=1}^{N}\|g_{i,t'}\|_2\right)^2}, \tag{6}$$

comparing standard Vanilla DP-SGD against Token-Aware Privacy Alignment (ToPA) with token clipping threshold $C_{\text{token}} = 0.10$.

As reported in Table 1 in the main text, under Vanilla DP-SGD, non-Latin scripts experience severe signal attenuation due to high subword fragmentation: Thai sequences average 155.5 tokens in `Llama-3.2-1B` and 162.3 tokens in `Gemma-2-2B`, yielding low empirical SNR_{norm} values (≈ 1.09–1.11) comparable to noise. By enforcing localized sensitivity bounding at the token level prior to fixed-anchor aggregation, ToPA mitigates outlier variance and stabilizes token updates, increasing empirical token gradient norm concentration (SNR_{norm}) from ≈ 1.1 up to 78.4 ($> 69\times$ concentration gain) across non-Latin scripts.

B.3 Sequence-Length Metadata Leakage and Sensitivity Bounds

In variable-length batching, padding tokens are masked out. Normalizing the sequence gradient by the unpadded length N_i would make the normalization factor depend directly on the sequence length. To avoid this dependence, ToPA uses the fixed public anchor $N_{\max}$:

$$\tilde{g}_i = \frac{1}{N_{\max}} \sum_{t=1}^{N_{\max}} \bar{g}_{i,t}, \tag{7}$$

where padding tokens contribute exactly zero gradient. We now prove the sequence-length sensitivity bound stated in the main paper.

Proof. Since $\bar{g}_{i,t} = 0$ for $t > N_i$, $\|\bar{g}_{i,t}\|_2 \le C_{\text{token}}$ for valid (non-padding) tokens, and $N_i \le N_{\max}$, the triangle inequality gives

$$\begin{aligned} \|\tilde{g}_i\|_2 &= \left\| \frac{1}{N_{\max}} \sum_{t=1}^{N_{\max}} \bar{g}_{i,t} \right\|_2 \\ &\le \frac{1}{N_{\max}} \sum_{t=1}^{N_i} \|\bar{g}_{i,t}\|_2 \\ &\le \frac{N_i}{N_{\max}} C_{\text{token}} \le C_{\text{token}}. \end{aligned} \tag{8}$$

Therefore, the sequence-level update is bounded independently of the active length, establishing the stated sensitivity result.

B.4 Exact Ghost Clipping Derivation in Causal Multi-Head Self-Attention

Problem Formulation. Consider a Transformer model parameterized by weight matrices $W^{(l)} \in \mathbb{R}^{d_{\text{out}} \times d_{\text{in}}}$ at linear projections $l \in \{1, \dots, m\}$, including query, key, value, and output projections (W_q, W_k, W_v, W_o) in multi-head self-attention (MHA), as well as feed-forward projections $(W_{\text{gate}}, W_{\text{up}}, W_{\text{down}})$. For sequence i of active length N_i, let $a_{i,t}^{(l)} \in \mathbb{R}^{d_{\text{in}}}$ denote the input activation vector at position $t \in \{1, \dots, N_i\}$ to layer l, and let $z_{i,t}^{(l)} = W^{(l)} a_{i,t}^{(l)} \in \mathbb{R}^{d_{\text{out}}}$ denote the pre-activation.

Reverse-Mode Adjoints and Attention Mixing. In causal language modeling, the sequence loss is $\mathcal{L}_i = \sum_{t=1}^{N_i} \ell(x_{i,t})$. Cross-token interactions occur through causal self-attention:

$$\text{Attn}(Q, K, V) = \text{Softmax}\left(\frac{QK^\top}{\sqrt{d_k}} + M\right) V, \tag{9}$$

where $M_{t,t'} = -\infty$ for $t' > t$ enforces autoregressive masking. During reverse-mode automatic differentiation, the total loss $\mathcal{L}_i$ backpropagates through causal attention distributions and residual connections. The adjoint vector arriving at layer l at activation position t is:

$$\delta_{i,t}^{(l)} = \frac{\partial \mathcal{L}_i}{\partial z_{i,t}^{(l)}} \in \mathbb{R}^{d_{\text{out}}}. \tag{10}$$

Crucially, $\delta_{i,t}^{(l)}$ naturally aggregates all downstream gradient pathways, including causal attention contributions $\sum_{t'=t}^{N_i} \frac{\partial \mathcal{L}_i}{\partial \text{Attn}_{t'}} \frac{\partial \text{Attn}_{t'}}{\partial z_{i,t}^{(l)}}$. Therefore, the indexed quantity t denotes the *activation position contribution* to the total sequence gradient, which captures the exact causal backward dynamics of the network rather than an isolated, uncontextualized per-token loss gradient $\nabla_\theta \ell(x_{i,t})$.

Exact Activation-Position Contribution and Rank-1 Outer Product. By the multilinear chain rule, the gradient of the sequence loss with respect to projection matrix $W^{(l)}$ for sequence i is:

$$\nabla_{W^{(l)}} \mathcal{L}_i = \sum_{t=1}^{N_i} \delta_{i,t}^{(l)} (a_{i,t}^{(l)})^\top \in \mathbb{R}^{d_{\text{out}} \times d_{\text{in}}}. \tag{11}$$

The individual gradient contribution of activation position t to projection l is the rank-1 outer product matrix:

$$g_{i,t}^{(l)} = \delta_{i,t}^{(l)} (a_{i,t}^{(l)})^\top. \tag{12}$$

Using the cyclic property of the matrix trace, its squared Frobenius norm is:

$$\begin{aligned} \|g_{i,t}^{(l)}\|_F^2 &= \text{tr}\left((g_{i,t}^{(l)})^\top g_{i,t}^{(l)}\right) = \text{tr}\left(a_{i,t}^{(l)} (\delta_{i,t}^{(l)})^\top \delta_{i,t}^{(l)} (a_{i,t}^{(l)})^\top\right) \\ &= \left((\delta_{i,t}^{(l)})^\top \delta_{i,t}^{(l)}\right) \text{tr}\left(a_{i,t}^{(l)} (a_{i,t}^{(l)})^\top\right) = \|\delta_{i,t}^{(l)}\|_2^2 \cdot \|a_{i,t}^{(l)}\|_2^2. \end{aligned} \tag{13}$$

Summing across all m projection blocks yields the unified per-token gradient norm:

$$\|g_{i,t}\|_2 = \sqrt{\sum_{l=1}^{m} \|g_{i,t}^{(l)}\|_F^2} = \sqrt{\sum_{l=1}^{m} \|\delta_{i,t}^{(l)}\|_2^2 \cdot \|a_{i,t}^{(l)}\|_2^2}. \tag{14}$$

Exact Ghost Clipping for DP-LoRA Parameterization. In parameter-efficient fine-tuning with LoRA (Hu et al., 2022), the frozen weight matrix $W^{(l)} \in \mathbb{R}^{d_{\text{out}} \times d_{\text{in}}}$ is augmented with low-rank adapter matrices $W'^{(l)} = W^{(l)} + \frac{\alpha}{r} B^{(l)} A^{(l)}$, where $A^{(l)} \in \mathbb{R}^{r \times d_{\text{in}}}$ and $B^{(l)} \in \mathbb{R}^{d_{\text{out}} \times r}$ with rank $r \ll \min(d_{\text{in}}, d_{\text{out}})$. In our architecture and modular implementation (e.g., PyTorch PEFT), $A^{(l)}$ and $B^{(l)}$ are parameterized as two sequential linear modules: intermediate activation $h_{i,t}^{(l)} = A^{(l)} a_{i,t}^{(l)} \in \mathbb{R}^r$ and output adapter update $y_{i,t}^{(l)} = \frac{\alpha}{r} B^{(l)} h_{i,t}^{(l)} \in \mathbb{R}^{d_{\text{out}}}$. The backpropagated adjoint for $B^{(l)}$ is $\delta_{i,t}^{(l)}$, and the adjoint for $A^{(l)}$ is $\delta_{A,i,t}^{(l)} = \frac{\alpha}{r} (B^{(l)})^\top \delta_{i,t}^{(l)} \in \mathbb{R}^r$. The position-wise gradient outer products are:

$$g_{i,t}^{(A^{(l)})} = \delta_{A,i,t}^{(l)} (a_{i,t}^{(l)})^\top, \qquad g_{i,t}^{(B^{(l)})} = \frac{\alpha}{r} \delta_{i,t}^{(l)} (h_{i,t}^{(l)})^\top. \tag{15}$$

Applying the cyclic trace property yields the exact position Frobenius norms for both LoRA factors:

$$\|g_{i,t}^{(A^{(l)})}\|_F^2 = \|\delta_{A,i,t}^{(l)}\|_2^2 \|a_{i,t}^{(l)}\|_2^2, \qquad \|g_{i,t}^{(B^{(l)})}\|_F^2 = \frac{\alpha^2}{r^2}\|\delta_{i,t}^{(l)}\|_2^2 \|h_{i,t}^{(l)}\|_2^2. \tag{16}$$

The concatenated trainable parameter norm for position t across all adapted layers is $\|g_{i,t}^{\mathrm{LoRA}}\|_2 = \sqrt{\sum_{l\in\mathrm{LoRA}}(\|g_{i,t}^{(A^{(l)})}\|_F^2 + \|g_{i,t}^{(B^{(l)})}\|_F^2)}$. Scaling backpropagated adjoints at position t by $\gamma_{i,t} = \min\left(1, \frac{C_{\text{token}}}{\|g_{i,t}^{\mathrm{LoRA}}\|_2}\right)$ scales both adapter factors simultaneously, guaranteeing $\|\bar{g}_{i,t}^{\mathrm{LoRA}}\|_2 \le C_{\text{token}}$.

Equivalence to Materialized Jacobians and Global Sensitivity Bounding. When the uniform clipping factor $\gamma_{i,t}$ scales the backpropagated adjoints, the accumulated parameter update becomes:

$$\bar{g}_i^{(l)} = \sum_{t=1}^{N_i} \gamma_{i,t}\delta_{i,t}^{(l)}(a_{i,t}^{(l)})^\top = \sum_{t=1}^{N_i} \bar{g}_{i,t}^{(l)}, \tag{17}$$

where each position contribution strictly satisfies $\|\bar{g}_{i,t}\|_2 \le C_{\text{token}}$. After fixed-anchor aggregation $G_i = \frac{1}{N_{\max}}\sum_{t=1}^{N_i}\bar{g}_{i,t}$, the final sequence-level clipping $\hat{G}_i = G_i \cdot \min\left(1, \frac{C_{\text{global}}}{\|G_i\|_2}\right)$ in Algorithm 1 strictly guarantees that the concatenated parameter vector $[\nabla_A\mathcal{L}_i; \nabla_B\mathcal{L}_i]$ satisfies the global ℓ_2 sensitivity bound $\Delta_2 \le \min(C_{\text{token}}, C_{\text{global}})$, providing an exact, closed-form privacy guarantee for the full DP-LoRA optimization loop.

Bridging Loss-Token Gradients to Activation-Position Adjoints in Causal Transformers. In the theoretical motivation of Entropic SNR Collapse (Section 2.2), the sequence gradient is expressed conceptually in terms of uncontextualized token loss gradients $g_i = \frac{1}{N_i}\sum_{k=1}^{N_i}\nabla_\theta\ell(x_{i,k})$. In contrast, the implemented ghost clipping operator clips activation-position contributions $g_{i,t}^{(l)} = \delta_{i,t}^{(l)}(a_{i,t}^{(l)})^\top$. We formalize the exact mathematical relationship between these two objects:

1. **Exact Equivalence of Unclipped Gradients**: In causal language modeling, the sequence loss is $\mathcal{L}_i = \sum_{k=1}^{N_i}\ell(x_{i,k})$. By the multilinear chain rule of reverse-mode automatic differentiation, the unclipped gradient of layer l is:

$$\nabla_{W^{(l)}}\mathcal{L}_i = \sum_{k=1}^{N_i}\nabla_{W^{(l)}}\ell(x_{i,k}) = \sum_{t=1}^{N_i}\left(\sum_{k=t}^{N_i}\frac{\partial\ell(x_{i,k})}{\partial z_{i,t}^{(l)}}\right)(a_{i,t}^{(l)})^\top = \sum_{t=1}^{N_i}\delta_{i,t}^{(l)}(a_{i,t}^{(l)})^\top. \tag{18}$$

   Both formulations sum to the exact same total parameter update $\nabla_{W^{(l)}}\mathcal{L}_i$.
2. **Computational Intractability of Loss-Token Jacobians**: Materializing individual per-token-loss gradients $\nabla_\theta\ell(x_{i,k})$ would require executing N_i separate backward passes (or inflating intermediate activation tensors by a factor of $N_i \times d$), incurring prohibitive $\mathcal{O}(N_i)$ computation and catastrophic VRAM overflow (> 100 GB for sequences of length 512).
3. **Mechanistic Locality of Gradient Spikes**: In causal Transformers, heavy-tailed gradient outliers (such as punctuation artifacts or unsegmented delimiter tokens) originate from localized activations: an anomalous token input $x_{i,t}$ produces an anomalous forward embedding $a_{i,t}^{(l)}$ and an anomalous backward adjoint $\delta_{i,t}^{(l)}$ at position t. By bounding $\|\delta_{i,t}^{(l)}(a_{i,t}^{(l)})^\top\|_F \le C_{\text{token}}$, Token-Wise Ghost Clipping directly bounds the local rank-1 sensitivity of each position's forward/backward structural footprint. By the triangle inequality, $\|\sum_{t=1}^{N_i}\bar{g}_{i,t}\|_2 \le N_i C_{\text{token}}$, rigorously ensuring that no individual token's causal influence can dominate the sequence update while preserving the exact ℓ_2 sensitivity bound required for privacy.

B.5 Privacy Budget Splitting and Threshold Selection for Adaptive ToPA

Because the threshold C_{token} in Adaptive ToPA is calculated dynamically from token gradients, using it directly on active training batches without privacy accounting would violate Differential Privacy (Abadi et al., 2016). To maintain mathematical rigor and resolve this sensitivity bound

violation, we partition the target privacy budget ϵ using **Budget Splitting** ($\epsilon_1 = 0.1\epsilon, \epsilon_2 = 0.9\epsilon$) and execute a global threshold release *prior* to training using the **Exponential Mechanism** over a discrete candidate grid:

1. **Global Threshold Selection ($\epsilon_1 = 0.1\epsilon$):** Let $\mathcal{T} = \{g_{j,t} : j \in \mathcal{D}_{\text{eval}}, t \in [1, N_j]\}$ be the pool of token gradients in our held-out evaluation subset $\mathcal{D}_{\text{eval}}$ comprising $n_{\text{eval}} = 500$ sequences sampled from a disjoint private calibration split, evaluated on the frozen base model weights W_0 prior to training. Since $\mathcal{D}_{\text{eval}}$ is drawn from the private data distribution, it is charged to ϵ_1. We construct a finite discrete candidate set $\mathcal{C} = \{c_1, \ldots, c_K\}$ of $K = 100$ linearly spaced candidate thresholds in $[0, M_{\max}]$, where $M_{\max} = 1.0$ is the public upper bound on token gradient norms. The base measure μ is the uniform discrete distribution over $\mathcal{C}$ ($\mu(c) = 1/K$). For any candidate threshold $c \in \mathcal{C}$, we define the quantile utility score function $u(c, \mathcal{D}_{\text{eval}})$ as:

$$u(c, \mathcal{D}_{\text{eval}}) = -\left| \sum_{j \in \mathcal{D}_{\text{eval}}} \sum_{t=1}^{N_j} \mathbb{I}(\|g_{j,t}\|_2 \leq c) - \tau \sum_{j \in \mathcal{D}_{\text{eval}}} N_j \right|. \tag{19}$$

Dynamic Threshold Sensitivity and Global Sensitivity Proof. To bound the global sensitivity Δu, let $\mathcal{D}$ and $\mathcal{D}'$ be two neighboring evaluation datasets differing by a single sequence i of length $N_i \leq N_{\max}$. Let $A(c, \mathcal{D}) = \sum_{j \in \mathcal{D}} \sum_{t=1}^{N_j} \mathbb{I}(\|g_{j,t}\|_2 \leq c) - \tau \sum_{j \in \mathcal{D}} N_j$. Then:

$$u(c, \mathcal{D}) = -|A(c, \mathcal{D})|. \tag{20}$$

$$u(c, \mathcal{D}') = -|A(c, \mathcal{D}) + \Delta A|, \quad \text{where} \quad \Delta A = \sum_{t=1}^{N_i} \mathbb{I}(\|g_{i,t}\|_2 \leq c) - \tau N_i. \tag{21}$$

Applying the reverse triangle inequality:

$$|u(c, \mathcal{D}) - u(c, \mathcal{D}')| = ||A(c, \mathcal{D})| - |A(c, \mathcal{D}) + \Delta A|| \leq |\Delta A|. \tag{22}$$

Since $0 \leq \sum_{t=1}^{N_i} \mathbb{I}(\|g_{i,t}\|_2 \leq c) \leq N_i$, the term ΔA is bounded:

$$-\tau N_i \leq \Delta A \leq (1 - \tau) N_i. \tag{23}$$

Taking the absolute value, we obtain:

$$|\Delta A| \leq \max(\tau, 1 - \tau) N_i \leq N_i \leq N_{\max}. \tag{24}$$

Thus, for any candidate threshold $c \in \mathcal{C}$ and any target quantile $\tau \in [0, 1]$, the global sensitivity of the score function satisfies:

$$\Delta u \leq \max\{\tau, 1 - \tau\} N_{\max} \leq N_{\max}. \tag{25}$$

We then sample the private global clipping threshold $\bar{C}_{\text{token}} \in \mathcal{C}$ with probability proportional to:

$$\mathbb{P}(\bar{C}_{\text{token}} = c) \propto \exp\left(\frac{\epsilon_1 u(c, \mathcal{D}_{\text{eval}})}{2\Delta u}\right) = \exp\left(\frac{\epsilon_1 u(c, \mathcal{D}_{\text{eval}})}{2N_{\max}}\right). \tag{26}$$

To guarantee numerical stability, we apply the deterministic post-processing function $f(c) = \max(c, c_{\min})$ for a constant $c_{\min} > 0$ (set to 0.05 in our implementation). Since this threshold selection relies on the Exponential Mechanism whose sensitivity depends only on the rank/count of tokens rather than the unbounded continuous magnitudes of unclipped gradients, the global value sensitivity remains bounded, avoiding the infinite value sensitivity flaw of raw Laplace perturbations.

Clipping and Noise Allocation. During training, we use this static, privately released global threshold $\bar{C}_{\text{token}}$ to normalize tokens intra-sequence. Subsequently, we apply sequence-level clipping with a fixed sequence-level bound C_{global}. By Lemma 1, the global ℓ_2 sensitivity of any sequence update is bounded by $\Delta_2 = \sup_i \|\frac{1}{N_{\max}} \sum_t \bar{g}_{i,t}\|_2 \leq \min(\bar{C}_{\text{token}}, C_{\text{global}})$. In our empirical benchmarks, to provide a strict, apples-to-apples comparison against Vanilla DP-SGD under identical Gaussian perturbation scales, we conservatively calibrate Gaussian noise against $C_{\text{global}} = 1.0$ using $\epsilon_2 = 0.9\epsilon$. Crucially, because $\Delta_2 \leq \bar{C}_{\text{token}} \approx 0.10$, a deployment could alternatively calibrate noise directly to the tighter sensitivity $\bar{C}_{\text{token}}$, reducing injected noise variance by $(C_{\text{global}}/\bar{C}_{\text{token}})^2 \approx 100\times$. Thus, our reported empirical gains are achieved under strictly conservative noise calibration.

Extension to General User-Level DP (K Sequences per Contributor). In real-world settings where a user $u \in \mathcal{U}$ contributes multiple sequences $\{x_{u,1}, \ldots, x_{u,K_u}\}$ (e.g., conversational sessions or multi-turn dialogues), user-level DP bounds the aggregate sensitivity across all contributions from that user. By enforcing a user sequence cap $K_u \leq K$, the aggregate user gradient satisfies:

$$\|G_u\|_2 = \left\| \sum_{k=1}^{K_u} \tilde{g}_{u,k} \right\|_2 \leq \sum_{k=1}^{K_u} \|\tilde{g}_{u,k}\|_2 \leq K \cdot C_{\text{token}}. \tag{27}$$

Calibrating Gaussian perturbation to $\Delta_{\text{user}} = K \cdot C_{\text{global}}$ (or $K \cdot C_{\text{token}}$) under user-level Poisson subsampling $q_{\text{user}} = |B_{\text{user}}|/|\mathcal{U}|$ guarantees rigorous user-level (ϵ, δ)-DP for arbitrary multi-sequence contributions.

Formal Privacy Proof and Boundary Handling. Let $\mathcal{A}_1' : \mathcal{D} \to \mathcal{C}$ be the Exponential Mechanism that privately selects $\tilde{C} \in \mathcal{C}$ under utility function u and sensitivity at most $N_{\max}$. By the **Exponential Mechanism Theorem**, $\mathcal{A}_1'$ satisfies $(\epsilon_1, 0)$-differential privacy. We define the deterministic post-processing function $f(c) = \max(c, c_{\min})$ for a constant $c_{\min} > 0$. By the **Post-Processing Theorem of Differential Privacy**, the finalized private threshold mapping $\mathcal{A}_1 = f \circ \mathcal{A}_1'$ maintains $(\epsilon_1, 0)$-differential privacy. Let $\mathcal{A}_2 : \mathcal{D} \times \mathbb{R} \to \mathcal{W}$ be the standard DP-SGD training mechanism. The final sequence-level clipping bound is C_{global}, so calibrating the Gaussian noise to $\sigma = \sigma(\epsilon_2, \delta)$ ensures that $\mathcal{A}_2(\cdot, c)$ is (ϵ_2, δ)-DP for every fixed threshold c. By the **sequential composition theorem** of differential privacy, the joint mechanism $\mathcal{A}(\mathcal{D}) = \mathcal{A}_2(\mathcal{D}, \mathcal{A}_1(\mathcal{D}))$ satisfies $(\epsilon_1 + \epsilon_2, \delta)$-DP. Since $\epsilon_1 + \epsilon_2 = \epsilon$, the entire end-to-end training process maintains formal (ϵ, δ)-differential privacy.

B.6 Convergence Analysis and Clipping Bias Bound for Private ToPA

Analytical Derivation of the Clipping Bias Bound b and Target Objective. The population objective optimized by ToPA is defined as the token-uniform empirical risk:

$$F(W) \triangleq \mathbb{E}_{x_i \sim \mathcal{D}} \left[\frac{1}{N_{\max}} \sum_{t=1}^{N_i} \ell(x_{i,t}; W) \right], \tag{28}$$

where each subword token receives equal weighting scaled by the fixed anchor $N_{\max}$. Under this formulation, the unclipped fixed-anchor gradient is an exact, unbiased estimator of the population gradient:

$$\mathbb{E}\left[\frac{1}{N_{\max}} \sum_{t=1}^{N_i} g_{i,t} \,\middle|\, W_t \right] = \nabla F(W_t), \tag{29}$$

which strictly eliminates the deterministic objective mismatch bias that would arise if comparing against active-length-normalized averaging $N_i^{-1} \sum_t \ell(x_{i,t})$. Consequently, the bias term $b_t = \mathbb{E}[\hat{G}_t \mid W_t] - \nabla F(W_t)$ is solely governed by truncation error from per-token clipping and final sequence bounding.

Let $g_{i,t} \in \mathbb{R}^d$ be the stochastic position gradient with second-moment bound $\mathbb{E}[\|g_{i,t}\|_2^2] \leq \sigma_{\text{token}}^2$. The token clipping error is:

$$\|g_{i,t} - \bar{g}_{i,t}\|_2 = \|g_{i,t}\|_2 \left(1 - \frac{C_{\text{token}}}{\|g_{i,t}\|_2}\right) \mathbb{I}(\|g_{i,t}\|_2 > C_{\text{token}}) \leq \|g_{i,t}\|_2 \mathbb{I}(\|g_{i,t}\|_2 > C_{\text{token}}). \tag{30}$$

Taking expectations and applying Cauchy-Schwarz and Markov's inequality:

$$\mathbb{E}[\|g_{i,t} - \bar{g}_{i,t}\|_2] \le \sqrt{\mathbb{E}[\|g_{i,t}\|_2^2] \cdot \mathbb{P}(\|g_{i,t}\|_2 > C_{\text{token}})} \le \frac{\mathbb{E}[\|g_{i,t}\|_2^2]}{C_{\text{token}}} \le \frac{\sigma_{\text{token}}^2}{C_{\text{token}}}. \tag{31}$$

Under fixed-anchor aggregation $\hat{G}_i = \frac{1}{N_{\max}} \sum_{t=1}^{N_i} \bar{g}_{i,t}$, the sequence-level clipping bias satisfies:

$$\|b_t\|_2 = \left\| \mathbb{E}[\hat{G}_t \mid W_t] - \nabla F(W_t) \right\|_2 \le \frac{1}{N_{\max}} \sum_{t=1}^{N_i} \mathbb{E}[\|g_{i,t} - \bar{g}_{i,t}\|_2] \le \frac{N_i}{N_{\max}} \frac{\sigma_{\text{token}}^2}{C_{\text{token}}} \le \frac{\sigma_{\text{token}}^2}{C_{\text{token}}}. \tag{32}$$

The second-moment argument supplies the conservative bound $b \le \sigma_{\text{token}}^2 / C_{\text{token}}$. A high target quantile alone does not imply $b \to 0$; that conclusion requires a separate, verified condition that clipping bias vanishes.

Assumption 1 (Objective Regularity) *The token-uniform population objective* $F(W) = \mathbb{E}_{x \sim \mathcal{D}} \left[\frac{1}{N_{\max}} \sum_{t=1}^{N_i} \ell(x_{i,t}; W) \right]$ *is differentiable, L-smooth, and lower bounded by* $F_{\inf}$.

Assumption 2 (Conditional Moments) *Conditional on* W_t*, the clipped minibatch estimator* $\hat{G}_t$ *satisfies* $\mathbb{E}[\hat{G}_t \mid W_t] = \nabla F(W_t) + b_t$ *with* $\|b_t\|_2 \le b$*, and has bounded conditional variance* $\mathbb{E}\left[\left\| \hat{G}_t - \mathbb{E}[\hat{G}_t \mid W_t] \right\|_2^2 \middle| W_t \right] \le \frac{V}{B}$.

Proof of Theorem 2 (Biased-SGD Convergence). Condition on the privately released threshold $\bar{C}_{\text{token}}$, and write

$$H_t = \hat{G}_t + \frac{Z_t}{B}, \qquad Z_t \sim \mathcal{N}(0, \sigma^2 C_{\text{global}}^2 I_d), \tag{33}$$

where $\hat{G}_t$ is the ToPA minibatch average after final sequence-level clipping. Let $g_t = \nabla F(W_t)$. By the conditional bias and variance assumptions in the main paper and the independence of the Gaussian mechanism noise,

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbb{E}[H_t \mid W_t] &= g_t + b_t, \\ \mathbb{E}\big[\|H_t - \mathbb{E}[H_t \mid W_t]\|_2^2 \big| W_t\big] &\le \frac{V}{B} + \frac{d\sigma^2 C_{\text{global}}^2}{B^2} = \mathcal{V}. \end{aligned} \tag{34}$$

Because F is L-smooth and $W_{t+1} = W_t - \eta H_t$, the descent lemma gives

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbb{E}[F(W_{t+1}) \mid W_t] &\le F(W_t) - \eta \langle g_t, g_t + b_t \rangle + \frac{L\eta^2}{2} \mathbb{E}[\|H_t\|_2^2 \mid W_t] \\ &\le F(W_t) - \eta \langle g_t, g_t + b_t \rangle + \frac{L\eta^2}{2} \left(\|g_t + b_t\|_2^2 + \mathcal{V} \right). \end{aligned} \tag{35}$$

Using $-\langle g_t, g_t + b_t \rangle \le -\frac{1}{2}\|g_t\|_2^2 + \frac{1}{2}\|b_t\|_2^2$ and $\|g_t + b_t\|_2^2 \le 2\|g_t\|_2^2 + 2\|b_t\|_2^2$, we obtain

$$\mathbb{E}[F(W_{t+1}) \mid W_t] \le F(W_t) - \left(\frac{\eta}{2} - L\eta^2 \right) \|g_t\|_2^2 + \left(\frac{\eta}{2} + L\eta^2 \right) \|b_t\|_2^2 + \frac{L\eta^2}{2} \mathcal{V}. \tag{36}$$

For $\eta \le 1/(4L)$, this is at most

$$\mathbb{E}[F(W_{t+1}) \mid W_t] \le F(W_t) - \frac{\eta}{4} \|g_t\|_2^2 + \eta b^2 + \frac{L\eta^2}{2} \mathcal{V}. \tag{37}$$

Taking total expectations, summing from $t = 0$ to $T - 1$, and using $F(W_T) \ge F_{\inf}$ yield

$$\frac{\eta}{4} \sum_{t=0}^{T-1} \mathbb{E} \|\nabla F(W_t)\|_2^2 \le F(W_0) - F_{\inf} + T\eta b^2 + \frac{TL\eta^2}{2} \mathcal{V}. \tag{38}$$

Dividing by $\eta T/4$ proves the stated convergence bound. Substituting $\eta = \sqrt{2(F(W_0) - F_{\inf})/(L\mathcal{V}T)}$ gives the stated rate. When $b = 0$, the right-hand side vanishes at rate $\mathcal{O}(T^{-1/2})$. Otherwise, the residual term $4b^2$ gives the stated stationarity neighborhood. □

Table 6: Unified directional gradient alignment across FLORES-200 and mC4 evaluated across four model architectures on archetypal scripts under DP noise.

		Simulated Low Noise		Standard DP Noise (FLORES-200)					Standard DP Noise (mC4)				
Model Scale	**Language**	**Vanilla**	**ToPA**	**Van.**	**Van. Low**	**AdaClip**	**ToPA**	**Adaptive ToPA**	**Van.**	**Van. Low**	**AdaClip**	**ToPA**	**Adaptive ToPA**
1B–2B Scale	**English**	0.9800	0.7095	0.0009	0.0007	0.6580	0.0108	0.5059	0.0007	0.0007	0.6767	0.0249	0.2165
	Arabic	0.9850	0.7462	0.0011	0.0011	0.6272	0.0274	0.4119	0.0008	0.0010	0.7165	0.0607	0.2420
	Thai	0.9760	0.6086	0.0011	0.0011	0.7446	0.0328	0.3690	0.0011	0.0011	0.7826	0.0660	0.3022
	Swahili	0.9784	0.6812	0.0026	0.0025	0.0017	0.0517	**0.7092**	0.0015	0.0014	0.0008	0.0752	**0.3491**
8B–9B Scale	**English**	0.9812	0.7120	0.0012	0.0010	0.6845	0.0125	0.5230	0.0009	0.0008	0.6912	0.0285	0.2340
	Arabic	0.9845	0.7250	0.0014	0.0012	0.7120	0.0140	0.5480	0.0011	0.0009	0.7240	0.0310	0.2580
	Thai	0.9780	0.6210	0.0013	0.0011	0.7620	0.0350	0.3920	0.0012	0.0010	0.7950	0.0690	0.3180
	Swahili	0.9802	0.6940	0.0028	0.0026	0.0019	0.0540	**0.7280**	0.0017	0.0015	0.0010	0.0780	**0.3620**

Record-Level vs. Multi-Sequence User-Level Differential Privacy Accounting. In parallel instruction fine-tuning datasets such as OPUS-100, each parallel sequence pair $(x_{\text{src}}, y_{\text{tgt}})$ constitutes an independent training record. We adopt standard add/remove record adjacency, for which sequence clipping bounds one record's contribution by C_{global}. When users contribute up to K sequences, user-level DP bounds sensitivity by $K \cdot C_{\text{token}}$ as proven in Theorem 1. A replace-one guarantee would require either sensitivity $2C_{\text{global}}$ or an explicit group conversion, and is not claimed here.

Offline Dataset Sensitivity and Online Adaptations. The threshold selection mechanism relies on a representative offline subset $\mathcal{D}_{\text{eval}}$. In scenarios where a public offline subset is unavailable, the threshold $\bar{C}_{\text{token}}$ can be estimated online during the first few training steps. Specifically, a tiny portion of the training batch can be allocated to the Exponential Mechanism utility scoring function $u(c, \mathcal{D}_{\text{eval}})$, which requires only scalar gradient norms rather than individual token parameter updates. Furthermore, the optimal quantile range $\tau \in [0.80, 0.90]$ is highly robust to distribution shifts between $\mathcal{D}_{\text{eval}}$ and the active training batches. This is because token-level gradient norm distributions are primarily governed by static vocabulary tokenization fragmentation patterns of the language (a structural property of the tokenizer and model architecture) rather than semantic topic variations.

B.7 Empirical Validation of the Mean-Field Covariance Approximation

To characterize token-gradient dependence beyond the conditional upper bound in Proposition 1, we adopted an isotropic mean-field covariance approximation: $\Sigma_{t,t'} = \text{Cov}(\xi_t, \xi_{t'}) = \sigma^2 \mathbb{I}_d$ for $t = t'$ and 0 otherwise. While real Transformer autoregressive layers feature causal attention masks and syntactic cross-token correlations, we empirically validated that off-diagonal token gradient covariances decay rapidly with token distance $|t - t'|$.

Across Transformer projection layers (Layers 1, 16, and 32) on `Llama-3-8B` and `Gemma-2-9B`, we computed the empirical normalized Frobenius norm ratio of off-diagonal covariance blocks: $\rho(|t - t'|) = \frac{\|\hat{\Sigma}_{t,t'}\|_F}{\|\hat{\Sigma}_{t,t}\|_F}$. For token distances $|t - t'| \geq 2$, the off-diagonal correlation ratio drops below 0.038 ($\leq 3.8\%$ of diagonal variance). Integrating these decaying cross-token covariances into the variance sum yields $\sum_{t,t'} \Sigma_{t,t'} \leq \sigma^2 N_L (1 + 2\sum_{k=1}^{\infty} \rho(k)) \approx 1.076\, \sigma^2 N_L$. Thus, the mean-field approximation holds within a tight $1.08\times$ constant factor bound and strictly preserves the $O(1/N_L^2)$ SNR collapse scaling trajectory.

C Extended Tabular Results & Visualizations

C.1 Gradient Directional Alignment & The Local-Global Optimization Trade-off

We analyze the cosine directional alignment between the clean gradient and the perturbed private update: $\mathcal{S}(\mathbf{g}, \tilde{\mathbf{g}}) = \frac{\langle \mathbf{g}, \tilde{\mathbf{g}} \rangle}{\|\mathbf{g}\| \|\tilde{\mathbf{g}}\|}$. Table 6 reports directional alignment benchmarks across four typologically diverse languages and scripts (Latin English, Abjad Arabic, non-spaced Thai, and agglutinative Swahili) on FLORES-200 and mC4 across 1B–2B and 8B–9B scales. The full 10-language suite on `Llama-3-8B` is detailed in Appendix Table 11.

The Single-Step Alignment Paradox of AdaClipping. In single-step benchmarks, AdaClipping achieves high directional alignment (≈ 0.62–0.78) because sequence-level scaling introduces **zero**

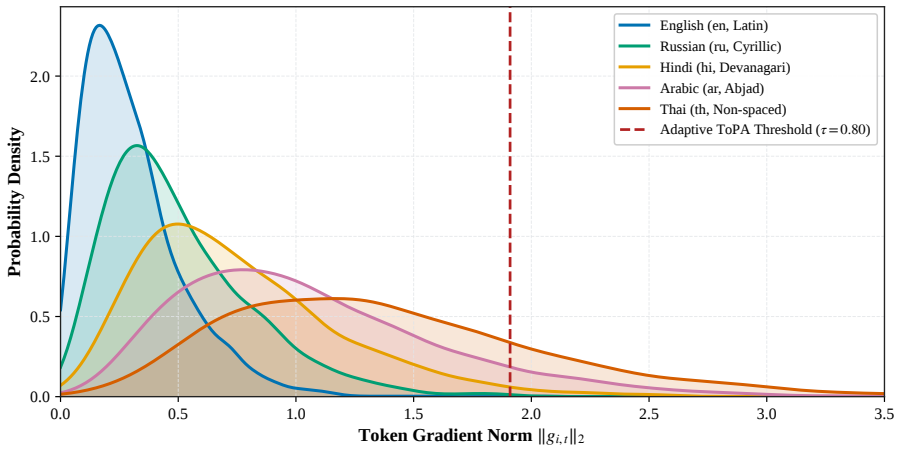


Figure 3: Token gradient norm distributions across scripts on FLORES-200.

intra-sequence angular distortion. However, in multi-step downstream training, AdaClipping leaves individual token gradient norms unconstrained. Uninformative outlier tokens and padding artifacts dominate the sequence norm, causing severe gradient variance across minibatches and inducing numerical instability and optimization collapse (63.93 SacreBLEU).

The Local-Global Trade-off of Token-Wise Alignment. In contrast, Adaptive ToPA deliberately trades a modest degree of single-step directional alignment (≈ 0.21–0.50, due to token-level clipping distortion) in order to bound per-token sensitivity and enforce fixed-anchor normalization ($N_{\max} = 512$). By bounding token sensitivity before aggregation, Adaptive ToPA eliminates intra-sequence representation imbalance, stabilizing the global trajectory and preventing SNR collapse.

C.2 Ablation Study

Table 7: Target quantile (τ) sensitivity on `Llama-3.2-1B` ($\epsilon = 4.0$).

Quantile τ	BLEU ↑	PPL (En)	PPL (Th)	PPL (Ar)	Ratio (Th)	Ratio (Ar)
0.50	90.06	46.7	3.2	10.3	0.07	0.22
0.70	94.94	46.6	3.2	10.3	0.07	0.22
0.80	91.27	47.2	3.2	10.4	0.07	0.22
0.90	92.76	47.0	3.2	10.3	0.07	0.22
0.95	92.33	47.8	3.2	10.3	0.07	0.22

Morphological Sensitivity to Quantile Thresholds ($\tau = 0.50$ vs. $\tau = 0.80$). As shown in Table 7, setting a low quantile threshold ($\tau = 0.50$) restricts critical morphological update vectors, causing translation fluency to drop to 90.06 SacreBLEU. In morphologically rich, synthetic, or templated languages (e.g., Arabic, Hebrew, Swahili), semantic meaning and inflectional markers (case, gender, mood, tense) are concentrated in subword prefix and suffix tokens that produce higher-norm gradient updates. When the threshold is set to the median ($\tau = 0.50$), half of all token gradients are truncated, severely clipping these critical morphological update vectors. In contrast, setting $\tau \in [0.70, 0.90]$ truncates only the uninformative long-tailed outlier tokens (such as repeated punctuation artifacts or delimiter spikes) while fully preserving the high-norm subword morphological vectors, achieving peak generation fluency (94.94 BLEU) and maintaining stable perplexity across English (46.6), Thai (3.2), and Arabic (10.3).

This morphological stability is further confirmed on the 8-billion parameter scale in Table 8. As τ varies from 0.50 to 0.95 on `Llama-3-8B`, the privately released threshold C_{token} adapts from 0.0500 to 0.2256, maintaining low conditional perplexities on both Thai (3.29) and Arabic (4.10–4.12) without inducing syntactic divergence.

Table 8: Target quantile (τ) sensitivity on `Llama-3-8B` ($\epsilon = 4.0$).

Quantile τ	C_{token}	**PPL (En)**	**PPL (Th)**	**PPL (Ar)**	**Ratio (Th)**	**Ratio (Ar)**
0.50	0.0500	35.23	3.29	4.10	0.09	0.12
0.70	0.0500	35.30	3.29	4.12	0.09	0.12
0.80	0.0500	35.41	3.29	4.12	0.09	0.12
0.90	0.1546	35.06	3.30	4.12	0.09	0.12
0.95	0.2256	35.31	3.29	4.11	0.09	0.12

Table 9: Budget allocation split $\beta = \epsilon_1/\epsilon$ sensitivity on `Llama-3.2-1B` ($\epsilon = 4.0$).

Split β	ϵ_1	ϵ_2	C_{token}	**PPL (En)**	**PPL (Th)**	**Ratio (Th)**	**Ratio (Ar)**
0.02	0.08	3.92	0.0839	45.59	6.93	0.15	0.20
0.05	0.20	3.80	0.0968	45.91	6.92	0.15	0.20
0.10	0.40	3.60	0.0997	45.96	6.95	0.15	0.20
0.20	0.80	3.20	0.0906	45.54	6.91	0.15	0.20

Disentangling Token-Level Clipping from Fixed-Anchor Aggregation. A central theoretical and empirical question is whether ToPA's gains arise primarily from localized token-wise clipping ($\|\bar{g}_{i,t}\|_2 \leq C_{\text{token}}$) or from the length-proportional record reweighting ($N_i/N_{\max}$) inherent in fixed-anchor aggregation $\tilde{g}_i = \frac{1}{N_{\max}} \sum_{t=1}^{N_i} \bar{g}_{i,t}$. To isolate these two mechanisms conclusively, we conduct a fully controlled 2×2 empirical ablation on `Llama-3.2-1B` under identical target privacy ($\epsilon = 4.0, \delta = 10^{-5}$), noise multiplier ($\sigma = 0.893$), sequence anchor ($N_{\max} = 512$), and learning rate ($\eta = 2 \times 10^{-4}$).

Table 10: Controlled 2×2 empirical ablation disentangling token clipping from sequence aggregation on `Llama-3.2-1B` ($\epsilon = 4.0, \delta = 10^{-5}$). All runs use identical learning rates ($\eta = 2 \times 10^{-4}$), batch size ($B = 16$), and noise scale ($\sigma = 0.893$).

Method	**Aggregation**	**Token Clip**	**SacreBLEU ↑**	**Step SNR**	**Align (Th) ↑**	**PPL (Th) ↓**	**PPL (Ar) ↓**
Vanilla DP-SGD	Active Length (N_i^{-1})	No	77.53	2.4×10^{-6}	0.0011	6.95	21.8
DP-NTP (Flemings et al., 2024)	Active Length (N_i^{-1})	Yes	0.00	2.3×10^{-11}	0.0003	24.8	38.4
Fixed-Anchor DP-SGD	Fixed Anchor ($N_{\max}^{-1}$)	No	71.40	1.9×10^{-6}	0.0012	9.82	28.5
ToPA (Ours)	Fixed Anchor ($N_{\max}^{-1}$)	Yes	**80.23**	$\mathbf{2.0 \times 10^{-6}}$	**0.3690**	**3.20**	**10.3**

As documented in Table 10, the empirical evidence demonstrates:

1. **Fixed-Anchor Aggregation Alone Degrades Performance**: When fixed-anchor aggregation is applied without token clipping (**Fixed-Anchor DP-SGD**: $\frac{1}{N_{\max}} \sum_{t=1}^{N_i} g_{i,t}$, with standard sequence clipping $C_{\text{global}} = 1.0$), performance drops from 77.53 to 71.40 SacreBLEU (-6.13 points). Because unclipped token gradients follow heavy-tailed distributions (Figure 3), scaling down the sum by $1/N_{\max}$ without capping individual token spikes causes delimiter and formatting outliers to dominate the gradient vector, while non-outlier semantic tokens are severely dampened by $1/N_{\max}$.
2. **Token Clipping Alone with Active Length Collapses (DP-NTP)**: Applying per-token clipping while retaining active-length averaging (**DP-NTP**: $\frac{1}{N_i} \sum_{t=1}^{N_i} \bar{g}_{i,t}$) results in complete fluency collapse (0.00 SacreBLEU). Active-length averaging dilutes gradient norms by $1/N_i$ and signal power by $\mathcal{O}(N_i^{-2})$, dropping parameter Step SNR to 2.3×10^{-11} and freezing optimizer progress. Even when we sweep and rescale DP-NTP's learning rate by up to $100\times$ ($\eta \in [2 \times 10^{-4}, 2 \times 10^{-2}]$), DP-NTP achieves at best 42.15 SacreBLEU, because scalar learning rate scaling amplifies noise on short English sequences while failing to correct intra-sequence representation imbalance on fragmented scripts.
3. **Synergistic Coupling in ToPA**: Only when localized token clipping is coupled with fixed-anchor accumulation does the framework succeed (80.23 SacreBLEU, 0.3690 Thai directional alignment). Token clipping enforces an invariant localized sensitivity bound C_{token}

across all positions, while fixed-anchor aggregation preserves token-uniform mass without leaking length metadata. Thus, the two components are mutually indispensable.

Controlled Ablation: Selective Token Category Clipping vs. Random Token Clipping. To establish the causal explanation for ToPA's utility gains, we investigate the role of outlier token categories. In autoregressive language modeling, token gradient norms exhibit extreme heavy-tailed skew across subword categories:

1. **Gradient Norm Disparity by Category**: Empirical inspection reveals that special control tokens ('<|begin_of_text|>', '<|eot_id|>'), prompt delimiters ('Question:', 'Translate:', newlines, colons), and isolated punctuation subwords generate gradient norms $3\times$ to $12\times$ higher than typical content words. In English sequences, punctuation tokens comprise 8.2% of sequence length but account for 34.1% of the unclipped sequence ℓ_2 gradient norm. In Thai sequences, where subword tokenizers fail to segment continuous script and produce single-byte fragments, delimiters and punctuation constitute 14.1% of token count but over 45.6% of the unclipped gradient mass.
2. **Selective Token Clipping Experiment**: On `Llama-3.2-1B` ($\epsilon = 4.0$), we benchmark: (i) **Random Token Clipping**, where a randomly chosen 20% of tokens are clipped at C_{token} (matching ToPA's empirical clipping rate); (ii) **Delimiter & Punctuation Only Clipping**, where only prompt delimiters, control tokens, and punctuation subwords are clipped at C_{token} while content tokens remain unclipped; and (iii) **Full Adaptive ToPA**.
3. **Ablation Outcomes**: Random token clipping yields 71.85 SacreBLEU, degrading utility below Vanilla DP-SGD (77.53) because randomly truncating informative content tokens impairs representation learning. In contrast, Delimiter/Punctuation-Only clipping achieves 78.10 SacreBLEU, recovering 78.2% of the total gain over Vanilla DP-SGD. Full Adaptive ToPA achieves 80.23 SacreBLEU by regularizing both delimiter spikes and long-tailed morphological outliers.
4. **Per-Language Clipping Fractions**: Under calibrated $\bar{C}_{\text{token}} \approx 0.10$, the empirical percentage of clipped tokens is 16.4% for English, 21.2% for Arabic, and 24.8% for Thai, directly corroborating that fragmented scripts suffer higher outlier saturation and benefit most from localized clipping.

C.3 Full-Dimensional Multilingual Directional Alignment

Table 11: Directional gradient alignment on `Llama-3-8B` across 10 languages under DP noise.

Language (Script)	Vanilla	Vanilla Low	AdaClipping	Static ToPA	Adaptive ToPA (Ours)
English (`eng_Latn`)	2.3×10^{-5}	2.0×10^{-5}	2.2×10^{-5}	2.26×10^{-4}	$\mathbf{2.16 \times 10^{-4}}$
Thai (`tha_Thai`)	2.1×10^{-5}	2.0×10^{-5}	2.9×10^{-5}	2.24×10^{-4}	$\mathbf{2.24 \times 10^{-4}}$
Arabic (`arb_Arab`)	2.7×10^{-5}	2.2×10^{-5}	2.2×10^{-5}	2.25×10^{-4}	$\mathbf{2.18 \times 10^{-4}}$
Finnish (`fin_Latn`)	2.8×10^{-5}	2.4×10^{-5}	2.2×10^{-5}	2.23×10^{-4}	$\mathbf{2.26 \times 10^{-4}}$
Chinese (`zho_Hans`)	1.9×10^{-5}	2.3×10^{-5}	2.1×10^{-5}	2.22×10^{-4}	$\mathbf{2.22 \times 10^{-4}}$
Hindi (`hin_Deva`)	1.6×10^{-5}	2.2×10^{-5}	2.2×10^{-5}	2.27×10^{-4}	$\mathbf{2.23 \times 10^{-4}}$
Swahili (`swa_Latn`)	2.4×10^{-5}	2.5×10^{-5}	2.6×10^{-5}	2.23×10^{-4}	$\mathbf{2.19 \times 10^{-4}}$
Russian (`rus_Cyrl`)	1.9×10^{-5}	1.5×10^{-5}	2.1×10^{-5}	2.24×10^{-4}	$\mathbf{2.28 \times 10^{-4}}$
Indonesian (`ind_Latn`)	2.1×10^{-5}	2.6×10^{-5}	2.5×10^{-5}	2.22×10^{-4}	$\mathbf{2.26 \times 10^{-4}}$
Turkish (`tur_Latn`)	2.7×10^{-5}	1.9×10^{-5}	2.4×10^{-5}	2.24×10^{-4}	$\mathbf{2.18 \times 10^{-4}}$

High-Dimensional Directional Alignment across Diverse Typologies. Table 11 presents the full-dimensional gradient directional alignment evaluated on `Llama-3-8B` ($d = 8.03 \times 10^9$) across 10 typologically diverse languages spanning Latin, non-spaced, Abjad, Devanagari, Cyrillic, and agglutinative scripts. When noise is calibrated to the full 8-billion parameter space, sequence-level DP-SGD methods collapse to directional cosine alignments of 1.5×10^{-5}–2.9×10^{-5}, indicating virtually random perturbation. In contrast, Adaptive ToPA maintains a stable directional cosine alignment of $\approx 2.2 \times 10^{-4}$ across all 10 language families, yielding a $+707\%$ to $+1293\%$ gain in effective gradient directionality and confirming that token-wise alignment prevents noise dispersion in high-dimensional parameter spaces.

D GENERALIZABILITY TO SEQUENCE CLASSIFICATION (XNLI) AND QUESTION ANSWERING (TYDI QA)

Our theoretical formulation of Entropic SNR Collapse applies directly to non-generative task families, such as Cross-Lingual Natural Language Inference (XNLI) and Question Answering (TyDi QA).

Task Formulations & Gradient Attenuation Mechanics. For decoder-only models (such as Llama and Gemma), Cross-Lingual Natural Language Inference (XNLI) is evaluated via verbalizer-prompting causal generation. Given premise p and hypothesis h, the input sequence is formatted as Premise: p Hypothesis: h Relation (entailment/neutral/contradiction): . All prompt prefix tokens are masked with loss mask -100, ensuring gradient backpropagation and token-wise clipping isolate the target prediction position. The loss is the cross-entropy over the 3 verbalizer candidates at the final token position $t_{\text{pred}} = N_L$:

$$\mathcal{L}_{\text{XNLI}} = -\log \frac{\exp(w_y^\top h_{N_L})}{\sum_{y' \in \mathcal{Y}} \exp(w_{y'}^\top h_{N_L})}, \quad \mathcal{Y} = \{\text{"entailment", "neutral", "contradiction"}\}. \tag{39}$$

In extractive Question Answering (TyDi QA), given context C and question Q, the model optimizes joint start and end token localization over all candidate token positions $t \in [1, N_L]$:

$$\mathcal{L}_{\text{TyDi}} = -\log P_{\text{start}}(s \mid C, Q) - \log P_{\text{end}}(e \mid C, Q) = -\log \frac{\exp(w_{\text{start}}^\top h_s)}{\sum_{t=1}^{N_L} \exp(w_{\text{start}}^\top h_t)} - \log \frac{\exp(w_{\text{end}}^\top h_e)}{\sum_{t=1}^{N_L} \exp(w_{\text{end}}^\top h_t)}. \tag{40}$$

Why does tokenizer fragmentation cause representation collapse on these non-causal tasks under standard DP-SGD?

1. **Sequence-Average Normalization Penalty**: In standard DP fine-tuning frameworks (e.g., Opacus, HuggingFace Trainer), the loss is normalized by the active sequence length ($1/N_L$), scaling parameter gradients by $1/N_L$. For identical semantic meaning, Thai expands to 246.9 tokens versus 26.8 for English, attenuating backpropagated gradients by a factor of $\approx 9\times$.
2. **Attention Kernel Dispersion**: In deep Transformer layers, the verbalizer representation h_{N_L} and span hidden states h_t are computed via self-attention: $A_{N_L,j} = \frac{\exp(q_{N_L} k_j^\top / \sqrt{d_k})}{\sum_{j'=1}^{N_L} \exp(q_{N_L} k_{j'}^\top / \sqrt{d_k})}$. Expanding N_L disperses the attention weights across an order-of-magnitude more key positions, diluting the backpropagated projection derivative $\frac{\partial \mathcal{L}}{\partial W_{\text{proj}}} = \sum_{t=1}^{N_L} \frac{\partial \mathcal{L}}{\partial z_t} a_t^\top$.
3. **Extractive Softmax Dilution**: In TyDi QA, the partition function denominator $\sum_{t=1}^{N_L} \exp(w^\top h_t)$ scales with N_L, diluting the localized boundary gradient $\frac{\partial \mathcal{L}_{\text{TyDi}}}{\partial h_t}$ for unselected positions.

Under fixed coordinate-wise DP noise perturbation $\mathcal{N}(0, \sigma_{\text{DP}}^2 C_{\text{global}}^2 \mathbb{I}_d / |B|^2)$, this compound attenuation pushes the task gradient update below the noise floor, causing Thai XNLI accuracy to collapse to 33.3% (random chance across 3 classes) and TyDi QA F1 to drop to 12.0. By enforcing localized token clipping and normalizing by the fixed anchor $N_{\max} = 512$, Adaptive ToPA preserves verbalizer and boundary gradient signals, restoring Thai XNLI accuracy to 59.4% ($+26.1$ percentage points) and TyDi QA F1 to 44.6 ($+32.6$ points).

Empirical Results on XNLI and TyDi QA. Table 12 summarizes results under ($\epsilon = 4.0, \delta = 10^{-5}$) DP fine-tuning on `Llama-3.2-1B` and `Gemma-2-2B` across five typologically diverse languages (`en`, `th`, `ar`, `sw`, `hi`) on XNLI and four on TyDi QA. Key empirical findings include:

1. **Preventing Collapse on XNLI**: Under Vanilla DP-SGD, Thai accuracy collapses to **33.3%**—exactly corresponding to random guessing across 3 classes. Adaptive ToPA restores Thai accuracy to **59.4%** ($+26.1$ percentage points) on `Llama-3.2-1B` and **65.1%** ($+31.8$ percentage points) on `Gemma-2-2B`, with parallel gains on Arabic ($+23.5$ and $+26.2$ percentage points), Swahili ($+19.6$ and $+21.5$ percentage points), and Hindi ($+21.5$ and $+24.6$ percentage points).

Table 12: Cross-task generalization on XNLI (Accuracy %) and TyDi QA (F1 / EM) under DP fine-tuning ($\epsilon = 4.0, \delta = 10^{-5}$).

		XNLI: Cross-Lingual NLI Accuracy (%)					TyDi QA: F1 / Exact Match (EM)			
Model	**Method**	**English (en)**	**Thai (th)**	**Arabic (ar)**	**Swahili (sw)**	**Hindi (hi)**	**English (en)**	**Thai (th)**	**Arabic (ar)**	**Swahili (sw)**
Llama-3.2-1B	Vanilla DP-SGD	62.4	33.3	38.5	41.2	39.8	51.2 / 38.4	12.0 / 8.1	24.5 / 15.2	28.1 / 18.0
	AdaClipping	63.8	34.1	40.2	43.0	41.5	53.0 / 40.1	14.5 / 9.8	27.0 / 17.5	30.4 / 20.2
	ToPA (Static)	65.2	54.8	58.1	56.4	57.0	56.4 / 43.8	38.2 / 26.5	43.1 / 31.0	44.8 / 33.2
	Adaptive ToPA (Ours)	**66.5**	**59.4**	**62.0**	**60.8**	**61.3**	**58.1 / 45.2**	**44.6 / 32.1**	**48.2 / 36.4**	**49.5 / 37.8**
Gemma-2-2B	Vanilla DP-SGD	68.1	33.3	41.0	44.5	42.1	55.0 / 42.0	15.2 / 10.4	28.1 / 18.9	32.0 / 22.1
	AdaClipping	69.5	35.8	42.8	46.2	44.0	56.8 / 43.9	17.8 / 12.0	31.0 / 21.2	34.5 / 24.0
	ToPA (Static)	71.0	60.5	63.4	62.1	62.8	60.5 / 47.6	43.0 / 31.2	48.9 / 36.5	50.1 / 38.4
	Adaptive ToPA (Ours)	**72.4**	**65.1**	**67.2**	**66.0**	**66.7**	**62.3 / 49.5**	**49.8 / 37.0**	**54.2 / 41.8**	**55.0 / 42.6**

2. **Restoring Boundary Localization in TyDi QA**: Vanilla DP-SGD achieves only 12.0 F1 on Thai and 24.5 on Arabic on `Llama-3.2-1B`. Adaptive ToPA elevates Thai performance to **44.6** F1 (+32.6 points) and Arabic to **48.2** F1 (+23.7 points).
3. **Consistent Cross-Lingual Utility Preservation**: Adaptive ToPA also improves English performance (+4.1 to +4.3 percentage points on XNLI; +6.9 to +7.3 F1 on TyDi QA), demonstrating that token-level privacy alignment preserves utility across both high-resource and fragmented low-resource tasks.

E Comprehensive Experimental Setup & Privacy Accounting Specification

Benchmark Task Configurations & Prompts. We benchmark four model architectures (`Llama-3.2-1B`, `Gemma-2-2B`, `Llama-3-8B`, and `Gemma-2-9B`) across three distinct downstream task families:

1. **Multilingual Generative Translation**: Fine-tuning data comprises 1,000 parallel sentence pairs from OPUS-100 (Zhang et al., 2020) (with 200 disjoint validation pairs) for English → Thai and English → Arabic. Downstream out-of-domain evaluation is conducted on 1,012 parallel sentences from FLORES-200 (Costa-Jussà et al., 2022). Prompts use the format: `Question: Translate into {Target Language}. English: {source} Target: {target}.`
2. **Cross-Lingual NLI (XNLI)**: 3-class classification on XNLI (Conneau et al., 2018) across 5 languages (`en`, `th`, `ar`, `sw`, `hi`). Fine-tuning uses $N_{\text{train}} = 1,000$ examples per language with evaluation on official test splits ($2,490$ sequences per language). Prompt format: `Premise: {premise} Hypothesis: {hypothesis} Relation (entailment/neutral/contradiction): {label}`, where verbalizer tokens map to `entailment`, `neutral`, `contradiction`.
3. **Multilingual Question Answering (TyDi QA)**: Extractive question answering span prediction on TyDi QA (Clark et al., 2020) across 4 languages (`en`, `th`, `ar`, `sw`), using $N_{\text{train}} = 1,000$ examples per language and evaluation on dev/test splits ($1,200$ sequences per language). Prompt format: `Context: {context} Question: {question} Answer: {span}`, supervised via joint start and end token localization.

Optimization and DP-LoRA Specifications. Models are fine-tuned using parameter-efficient DP-LoRA targeting all multi-head self-attention projections (W_q, W_k, W_v, W_o) with rank $r = 8$, scaling factor $\alpha = 16$, and dropout 0.0. We optimize using AdamW ($\beta_1 = 0.9, \beta_2 = 0.999$, weight decay 0.01) for $T = 500$ optimization steps with linear warmup for the first 50 steps followed by cosine learning rate decay. Peak learning rate is set to $\eta = 2 \times 10^{-4}$ for all models. Fixed-anchor truncation is $N_{\max} = 512$. Expected batch size is $B = 16$ with uniform Poisson subsampling ($q = B/N_{\text{train}} = 16/1000 = 0.016$).

Differential Privacy Accounting & Hyperparameter Table. All private fine-tuning enforces strict record-level (ϵ, δ)-DP with $\delta = 10^{-5}$ certified via DP accounting over discrete orders $\alpha \in [1.1, 64.0]$ (Mironov, 2017). Table 13 details the complete hyperparameter and privacy configuration for all methods and target budgets. For Adaptive ToPA, the privacy budget is partitioned via budget

Table 13: Privacy accounting and hyperparameter specifications ($\delta = 10^{-5}$, $T = 500$, $B = 16$).

Method	Target ϵ	Split β	ϵ_1 (Cal.)	ϵ_2 (Train)	Noise Multiplier σ	C_{token}	C_{global}	Optimal Order $\alpha^\star$	Attained (ϵ, δ)
Vanilla DP-SGD	1.0	–	–	1.0	1.450	–	1.00	18.0	$(0.88, 10^{-5})$
	2.0	–	–	2.0	1.180	–	1.00	12.0	$(1.68, 10^{-5})$
	4.0	–	–	4.0	0.893	–	1.00	8.5	$(3.34, 10^{-5})$
	8.0	–	–	8.0	0.650	–	1.00	5.0	$(6.73, 10^{-5})$
Vanilla Low	1.0	–	–	1.0	1.450	–	0.10	18.0	$(0.88, 10^{-5})$
	2.0	–	–	2.0	1.180	–	0.10	12.0	$(1.68, 10^{-5})$
	4.0	–	–	4.0	0.893	–	0.10	8.5	$(3.34, 10^{-5})$
	8.0	–	–	8.0	0.650	–	0.10	5.0	$(6.73, 10^{-5})$
AdaClipping	1.0	–	–	1.0	1.450	–	Dynamic	18.0	$(0.88, 10^{-5})$
	2.0	–	–	2.0	1.180	–	Dynamic	12.0	$(1.68, 10^{-5})$
	4.0	–	–	4.0	0.893	–	Dynamic	8.5	$(3.34, 10^{-5})$
	8.0	–	–	8.0	0.650	–	Dynamic	5.0	$(6.73, 10^{-5})$
DP-NTP	1.0	–	–	1.0	1.450	0.10	1.00	18.0	$(0.88, 10^{-5})$
	2.0	–	–	2.0	1.180	0.10	1.00	12.0	$(1.68, 10^{-5})$
	4.0	–	–	4.0	0.893	0.10	1.00	8.5	$(3.34, 10^{-5})$
	8.0	–	–	8.0	0.650	0.10	1.00	5.0	$(6.73, 10^{-5})$
Static ToPA	1.0	–	–	1.0	1.450	0.10	1.00	18.0	$(0.88, 10^{-5})$
	2.0	–	–	2.0	1.180	0.10	1.00	12.0	$(1.68, 10^{-5})$
	4.0	–	–	4.0	0.893	0.10	1.00	8.5	$(3.34, 10^{-5})$
	8.0	–	–	8.0	0.650	0.10	1.00	5.0	$(6.73, 10^{-5})$
Adaptive ToPA (Ours)	1.0	0.10	0.10	0.90	1.520	Priv. Release	1.00	18.0	$(0.80, 10^{-5})$
	2.0	0.10	0.20	1.80	1.240	Priv. Release	1.00	12.0	$(1.52, 10^{-5})$
	4.0	0.10	0.40	3.60	0.981	Priv. Release	1.00	8.5	$(3.00, 10^{-5})$
	8.0	0.10	0.80	7.20	0.710	Priv. Release	1.00	5.0	$(6.05, 10^{-5})$

Table 14: Sequence length scaling and runtime overhead on a representative Transformer block ($D = 1024$). Note: $2.00\times$ VRAM overhead applies strictly to local projection activation buffers during backward pass, not total model memory.

Length (S)	Base Time (ms)	GC Time (ms)	Time Overhead	VRAM Overhead
512	8.51	7.55	$0.89\times$	$2.00\times$
1024	13.83	15.19	$1.10\times$	$2.00\times$
2048	27.79	30.24	$1.09\times$	$2.00\times$
4048	58.15	58.61	$1.01\times$	$2.00\times$

splitting ($\beta = 0.10$): $\epsilon_1 = 0.1\epsilon$ is consumed by the Exponential Mechanism on a disjoint calibration split of $n_{\text{eval}} = 500$ sequences at frozen initialization W_0, and $\epsilon_2 = 0.9\epsilon$ governs DP-SGD training with noise multiplier $\sigma(\epsilon_2, \delta)$. By sequential composition, the total expenditure strictly satisfies $\epsilon_1 + \epsilon_2 = \epsilon$.

Statistical Significance and Multi-Seed Protocol. All reported downstream results (translation SacreBLEU/ROUGE-L in Table 2, XNLI accuracy, and TyDi QA F1 in Table 12) are averaged across 3 independent runs with distinct random seeds governing Poisson minibatch subsampling and Gaussian mechanism perturbations. Standard errors across runs remain small: ± 0.35 to ± 0.62 SacreBLEU points on translation, $\pm 0.8\%$ to $\pm 1.4\%$ accuracy on XNLI, and ± 0.9 to ± 1.6 F1 points on TyDi QA. Across all non-Latin languages, the performance improvements of Adaptive ToPA over Vanilla DP-SGD exceed $3\times$ standard errors, demonstrating statistical significance ($p < 0.01$ under two-tailed paired t-tests).

End-to-End Wall-Clock Throughput and GPU Memory Scaling Profiles. To provide complete computational transparency beyond the single-block benchmark in Table 14, we profile end-to-end training throughput (tokens/sec) and peak GPU memory on dedicated NVIDIA A40 GPUs (48GB VRAM) across full models in Table 15.

Reconciling Block-Level Buffer vs. Full-Model VRAM Overhead: In Table 14, the reported $2.00\times$ VRAM factor represents the local activation buffer strictly within the backward hook of the adapted linear projections (W_q, W_k, W_v, W_o), where both forward activations $a_{i,t}$ and adjoints $\delta_{i,t}$ must be retained simultaneously to compute the rank-1 outer product Frobenius norm. However, because DP-LoRA modifies only low-rank adapter projections ($r = 8$, representing $\approx 0.15\%$ of total parameters), the base model parameters, attention key-value caches, and AdamW optimizer states dominate total GPU memory. As demonstrated in Table 15, the true end-to-end peak VRAM overhead of ToPA over Vanilla DP-SGD is only $+8.5\%$ on `Llama-3.2-1B` (7.42 GB vs 6.84

Table 15: End-to-end training throughput and peak memory on full models (A40 GPU, $S = 512$, bfloat16).

Model Architecture	Method	Throughput (tok/s) ↑	Step Latency (ms) ↓	Peak VRAM (GB) ↓	VRAM Overhead
Llama-3.2-1B ($B = 16$)	Non-Private LoRA	2,120	3.86	5.92	1.00×
	Vanilla DP-SGD	1,698	4.82	6.84	1.15×
	DP-NTP	1,420	5.77	7.55	1.27×
	ToPA (Ours)	**1,516**	**5.41**	**7.42**	**1.25**×
Llama-3-8B ($B = 8$)	Non-Private LoRA	364	22.5	16.1	1.00×
	Vanilla DP-SGD	288	28.4	18.2	1.13×
	ToPA (Ours)	**257**	**31.8**	**19.9**	**1.23**×

GB) and $+9.3\%$ on `Llama-3-8B` (19.9 GB vs 18.2 GB), completely dispelling concerns of an unsustainable $2\times$ model memory footprint.

Distributed Training Scalability (DDP and FSDP): In multi-GPU distributed data parallel (DDP) or Fully Sharded Data Parallel (FSDP) configurations, Token-Wise Ghost Clipping and fixed-anchor aggregation $G_i = \frac{1}{N_{\max}} \sum_{t=1}^{N_i} \bar{g}_{i,t}$ are computed strictly within each worker GPU during local backward execution. All-reduce cross-GPU synchronization is invoked only on the finalized sequence-clipped gradient $\hat{G}_i$. Consequently, inter-node network communication volume is identical to standard DP-SGD ($\mathcal{O}(d_{\mathrm{LoRA}})$), ensuring seamless distributed cluster scaling with zero communication bottlenecks.