Foundations of Informatics: a Bridging Course

Week 3: Formal Languages and Semantics

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Part III

Processes and Concurrency

Outline

1. Motivation
2. Communicating Automata
3. Petri Nets
4. Outlook

Motivation

- So far: only sequential models of computation
- Now: Consider systems of processes with concurrent behaviour
- Applications:
  - Programming languages with concurrency (e.g., Java's threads)
  - Operating systems
  - Embedded systems with interacting hardware and software components
  - Web services
- Goals:
  - Better understanding of behaviour
  - Formal verification of desirable properties (e.g., absence of deadlocks)
  - Systematic construction of implementations from (abstract) specifications

Outline

Reminder

Product construction for DFA $\mathfrak{A}_1, \mathfrak{A}_2$:

$$\mathfrak{A} := \langle Q_1 \times Q_2, \Sigma, \delta, (q_0^1, q_0^2), F \rangle$$

is defined by

$$\delta((q_1, q_2), a) := (\delta_1(q_1, a), \delta_2(q_1, a)) \text{ for every } a \in \Sigma$$

and

$$F := F_1 \times F_2$$

$\Longrightarrow$ recognizes $L(\mathfrak{A}_1) \cap L(\mathfrak{A}_2)$ (similar construction for $L(\mathfrak{A}_1) \cup L(\mathfrak{A}_2)$)

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Generalization:

- arbitrary number of automata
- NFA rather than DFA
- not every action relevant for every automaton

Definition III.1

Let $\mathfrak{A}_i = \langle Q_i, \Sigma_i, \Delta_i, q_0^i, F_i \rangle$ be NFA for $1 \leq i \leq n$. The synchronized product of $\mathfrak{A}_1, \ldots, \mathfrak{A}_n$ is the NFA

$$\mathfrak{A}_1 \otimes \ldots \otimes \mathfrak{A}_n := \langle Q, \Sigma, \Delta, q_0, F \rangle$$

where

- $Q := Q_1 \times \ldots \times Q_n$
- $\Sigma := \Sigma_1 \cup \ldots \cup \Sigma_n$
- $((q_1, \ldots, q_n), a, (q'_1, \ldots, q'_n)) \in \Delta \iff \begin{cases} (q_i, a, q'_i) \in \Delta_i & \text{if } a \in \Sigma_i \\ q'_i = q_i & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$
- $q_0 := (q_0^1, \ldots, q_0^n)$
- $F := F_1 \times \ldots \times F_n$

Example III.2

Dining Philosophers Problem:

- n philosophers sitting around a table
- a fork between every two of them
- philosophers are thinking, hungry or eating
- need both neighbouring forks to eat
- component automata + product: on the board

Outline

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Definition III.3

A Petri Net is a quadruple

$$N = \langle P, T, F, m_0 \rangle$$

where

- P is a non–empty and finite set of places
- T is a non–empty and finite set of transitions
- $F \subseteq P \times T \cup T \times P$ is a flow relation
- m_0 is the initial marking

A marking of N is a function

$$m : P \to \mathbb{N}$$

which assigns a number of tokens to every place. If $p = \{p_1, \ldots, p_n\}$ we write $m = (m_1, \ldots, m_n)$ where $m_i = m(p_i)$ for every $1 \leq i \leq n$.

Graphical Representation of Petri Nets

- places as ○
- transitions as |
- tokens as •
- flow relation by arrows

Example III.4

Mutual exclusion protocol (on the board)

Semantics of Petri Nets I

Definition III.5

Let $N = \langle P, T, F, m_0 \rangle$ be a Petri Net.

- The preset of $t \in T$ is the set

$$\bullet t := \{p \in P \mid (p,t) \in F\}.$$

- The postset of $t \in T$ is the set

$$t\bullet := \{p \in P \mid (t,p) \in F\}.$$

- Similarly for places and for sets of transitions or places
- $t \in T$ is enabled in m if $m(p) > 0$ for every $p \in \bullet t$

Definition III.6 (continued)

- The firing relation is defined by:

$$m \triangleright_t m' \iff t \text{ enabled in } m, m'(p) = \begin{cases} m(p) - 1 & \text{if } p \in \bullet t \setminus t \bullet \\ m(p) + 1 & \text{if } p \in t \bullet \setminus \bullet t \\ m(p) & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$$

  (we then also write $m \triangleright m'$)
- A marking $m \neq (0, \ldots, 0)$ is called a deadlock if there exists no m' such that $m \triangleright m'$.
- A marking m' is called reachable from m if $m \triangleright^* m'$.
- N is called k–safe if for every marking m reachable from m_0 and every $p \in P$, $m(p) \leq k$.
- N is called unsafe if no such k exists.

Example III.7

(on the board)

1. Firing of a transition
2. A deadlock
3. A 1–safe Petri Net
4. An unsafe Petri Net
5. A more complicated example

The Safeness Problem I

Definition III.8

The safeness problem for Petri Nets is specified as follows.

Input: Petri Net $N = \langle P, T, F, m_0 \rangle$

Question: is N k–safe for some $k \in \mathbb{N}$?

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Applications:

- N safe $\implies$ bounded use of resources (e.g., buffer memory)
- N k–safe $\implies$ N representable by finite automaton (at most $(k+1)^{|P|}$ states reachable)

The Safeness Problem II

Theorem III.9 (Karp, Miller 1968)

The safeness problem for Petri Nets is decidable.

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Proof.

(idea)

- start with m_0
- enumerate all marking reachable from m_0
- if $m_0 \triangleright^* m \triangleright^* m'$ where $m' > m$, then N is unsafe
- only finitely many combinations to consider

□

The Reachability Problem I

Definition III.10

The reachability problem for Petri Nets is specified as follows.

Input: Petri Net $N = \langle P, T, F, m_0 \rangle$, set M of markings

Question: does $m_0 \rhd^* M$ (i.e., $m_0 \rhd^* m$ for some $m \in M$) hold?

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Application:

- $M :=$ set of "bad" states (e.g., deadlock markings)
- N correct $\iff$ M unreachable

Theorem III.11

The reachability problem for Petri Nets is decidable for finite reachability sets M (even for unbounded nets).

Proof.

omitted □

Example III.12

Petri Net representation of Dining Philosophers
($n = 2$; non–atomic picking; on the board)

Outline

Outlook

- Communicating automata with FIFO channels
- Petri Nets with weights and capacities
- Petri Nets as language acceptors
- Matrix representation of Petri Nets
- Message Sequence Charts
- Process algebras