

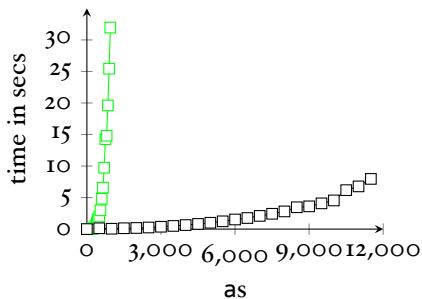
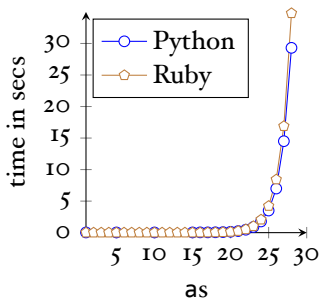
Automata and Formal Languages (2)

Email: christian.urban at kcl.ac.uk

Office: SI.27 (1st floor Strand Building)

Slides: KEATS

An Efficient Regular Expression Matcher



Languages

- A **language** is a set of strings, for example

$$\{\epsilon, \text{hello}, \text{foobar}, a, abc\}$$

- **Concatenation** of strings and languages

$$\text{foo} @ \text{bar} = \text{foobar}$$

$$A @ B \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} \{s_1 @ s_2 \mid s_1 \in A \wedge s_2 \in B\}$$

For example $A = \{\text{foo}, \text{bar}\}$, $B = \{a, b\}$

$$A @ B = \{\text{fooa}, \text{foob}, \text{bara}, \text{barb}\}$$

The Power Operation

- The **Power** of a language:

$$A^0 \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} \{\epsilon\}$$
$$A^{n+1} \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} A @ A^n$$

For example

$$A^4 = A @ A @ A @ A$$
$$A^0 \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} \{\epsilon\}$$

The Star Operation

- The **Star** of a language:

$$A^* \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} \bigcup_{0 \leq n} A^n$$

This expands to

$$A^0 \cup A^1 \cup A^2 \cup A^3 \cup A^4 \cup \dots$$

$$\{\epsilon\} \cup A \cup A @ A \cup A @ A @ A \cup A @ A @ A @ A \cup \dots$$

Semantic Derivative

- The **Semantic Derivative** of a language wrt to a character c :

$$\text{Der } c A \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} \{s \mid c :: s \in A\}$$

For $A = \{foo, bar, frak\}$ then

$$\text{Der } f A = \{oo, rak\}$$

$$\text{Der } b A = \{ar\}$$

$$\text{Der } a A = \emptyset$$

Regular Expressions

Their inductive definition:

$r ::=$	\emptyset	null
	ϵ	empty string / "" / []
	c	character
	$r_1 \cdot r_2$	sequence
	$r_1 + r_2$	alternative / choice
	r^*	star (zero or more)

The Meaning of a Regular Expression

$$L(\emptyset) \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} \emptyset$$

$$L(\epsilon) \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} \{\epsilon\}$$

$$L(c) \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} \{[c]\}$$

$$L(r_1 + r_2) \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} L(r_1) \cup L(r_2)$$

$$L(r_1 \cdot r_2) \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} L(r_1) @ L(r_2)$$

$$L(r^*) \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} (L(r))^*$$

L is a function from
regular expressions to sets
of strings

$$L : \text{Rexp} \Rightarrow \text{Set}[\text{String}]$$

What is $L(a^*)$?

When Are Two Regular Expressions Equivalent?

$$r_1 \equiv r_2 \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} L(r_1) = L(r_2)$$

Concrete Equivalences

$$(a + b) + c \equiv a + (b + c)$$

$$a + a \equiv a$$

$$a + b \equiv b + a$$

$$(a \cdot b) \cdot c \equiv a \cdot (b \cdot c)$$

$$c \cdot (a + b) \equiv (c \cdot a) + (c \cdot b)$$

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$$(a \cdot b) \cdot c \equiv a \cdot (b \cdot c)$$

$$c \cdot (a + b) \equiv (c \cdot a) + (c \cdot b)$$

$$a \cdot a \not\equiv a$$

$$a + (b \cdot c) \not\equiv (a + b) \cdot (a + c)$$

Corner Cases

$$\begin{array}{l} a \cdot \emptyset \not\equiv a \\ a + \epsilon \not\equiv a \\ \epsilon \equiv \emptyset^* \\ \epsilon^* \equiv \epsilon \\ \emptyset^* \not\equiv \emptyset \end{array}$$

Simplification Rules

$$r + \emptyset \equiv r$$

$$\emptyset + r \equiv r$$

$$r \cdot \epsilon \equiv r$$

$$\epsilon \cdot r \equiv r$$

$$r \cdot \emptyset \equiv \emptyset$$

$$\emptyset \cdot r \equiv \emptyset$$

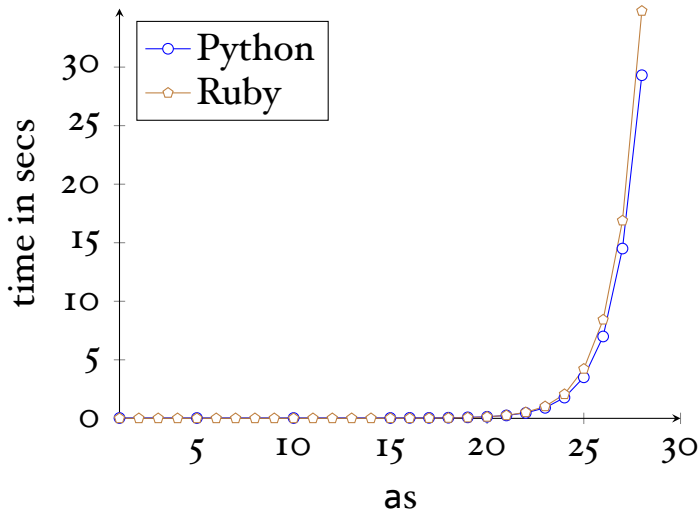
$$r + r \equiv r$$

The Specification for Matching

A regular expression r matches a string s
if and only if

$$s \in L(r)$$

$$(a?\{n\}) \cdot a\{n\}$$



Evil Regular Expressions

- Regular expression Denial of Service (ReDoS)
- Evil regular expressions
 - $(a?\{n\}) \cdot a\{n\}$
 - $(a^+)^+$
 - $([a-z]^+)^*$
 - $(a + a \cdot a)^+$
 - $(a + a?)^+$

A Matching Algorithm

...whether a regular expression can match the empty string:

$$\text{nullable}(\emptyset) \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} \text{false}$$

$$\text{nullable}(\epsilon) \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} \text{true}$$

$$\text{nullable}(c) \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} \text{false}$$

$$\text{nullable}(r_1 + r_2) \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} \text{nullable}(r_1) \vee \text{nullable}(r_2)$$

$$\text{nullable}(r_1 \cdot r_2) \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} \text{nullable}(r_1) \wedge \text{nullable}(r_2)$$

$$\text{nullable}(r^*) \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} \text{true}$$

The Derivative of a Rexp

If r matches the string $c::s$, what is a regular expression that matches just s ?

$der\ c\ r$ gives the answer, Brzozowski 1964

The Derivative of a Rexp

$$\mathit{der} c (\emptyset) \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} \emptyset$$

$$\mathit{der} c (\epsilon) \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} \emptyset$$

$$\mathit{der} c (d) \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} \text{if } c = d \text{ then } \epsilon \text{ else } \emptyset$$

$$\mathit{der} c (r_1 + r_2) \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} \mathit{der} c r_1 + \mathit{der} c r_2$$

$$\mathit{der} c (r_1 \cdot r_2) \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} \text{if } \mathit{nullable}(r_1) \\ \text{then } (\mathit{der} c r_1) \cdot r_2 + \mathit{der} c r_2 \\ \text{else } (\mathit{der} c r_1) \cdot r_2$$

$$\mathit{der} c (r^*) \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} (\mathit{der} c r) \cdot (r^*)$$

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$$\mathit{ders} [] r \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} r$$

$$\mathit{ders} (c :: s) r \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} \mathit{ders} s (\mathit{der} c r)$$

Examples

Given $r \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} ((a \cdot b) + b)^*$ what is

$$\text{der } a \ r = ?$$

$$\text{der } b \ r = ?$$

$$\text{der } c \ r = ?$$

The Algorithm

Input: r_1, abc

Step 1: build derivative of a and r_1 ($r_2 = \text{der } a r_1$)

Step 2: build derivative of b and r_2 ($r_3 = \text{der } b r_2$)

Step 3: build derivative of c and r_3 ($r_4 = \text{der } c r_3$)

Step 4: the string is exhausted; test ($\text{nullable}(r_4)$)
whether r_4 can recognise
the empty string

Output: result of the test
 \Rightarrow *true* or *false*

The Idea of the Algorithm

If we want to recognise the string abc with regular expression r_I then

- $Der a (L(r_I))$

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If we want to recognise the string abc with regular expression r_I then

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- 2 $Der b (Der a (L(r_I)))$

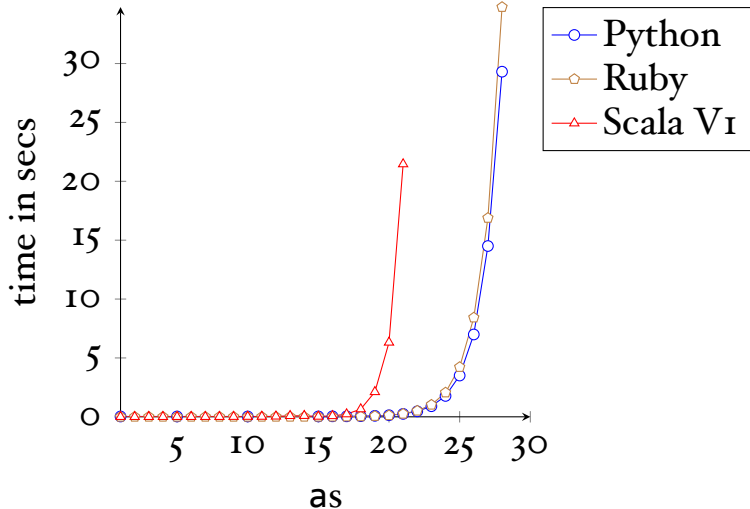
The Idea of the Algorithm

If we want to recognise the string abc with regular expression r_1 then

- 1 $Der a (L(r_1))$
- 2 $Der b (Der a (L(r_1)))$
- 3 $Der c (Der b (Der a (L(r_1))))$
- 4 finally we test whether the empty string is in this set

The matching algorithm works similarly, just over regular expressions instead of sets.

$$(a?\{n\}) \cdot a\{n\}$$



A Problem

We represented the “n-times” $a\{n\}$ as a sequence regular expression:

1: a

2: $a \cdot a$

3: $a \cdot a \cdot a$

...

13: $a \cdot a \cdot a \cdot a \cdot a \cdot a \cdot a \cdot a \cdot a \cdot a \cdot a \cdot a \cdot a$

...

20:

This problem is aggravated with $a?$ being represented as $\epsilon + a$.

Solving the Problem

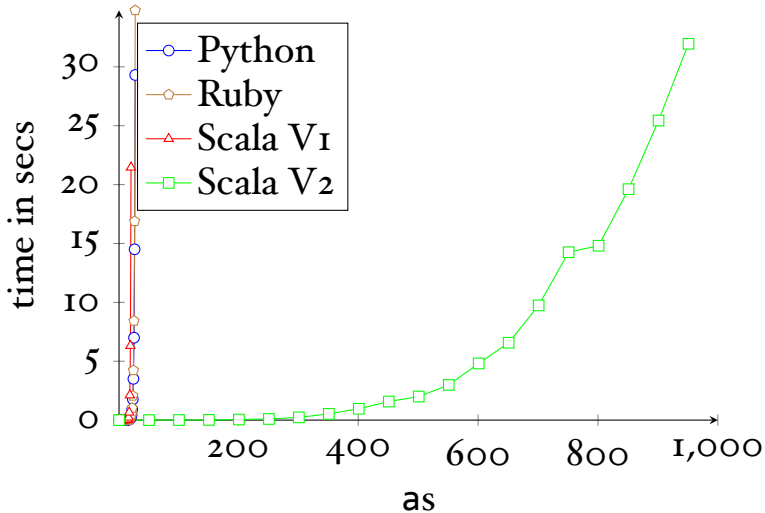
What happens if we extend our regular expressions

$$r ::= \dots$$

		$r\{n\}$
		$r?$

What is their meaning? What are the cases for *nullable* and *der*?

$$(a?\{n\}) \cdot a\{n\}$$



Examples

Recall the example of $r \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} ((a \cdot b) + b)^*$ with

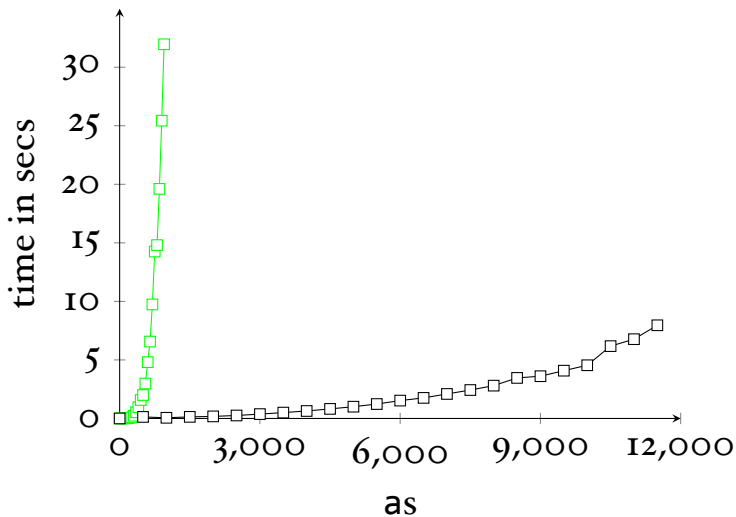
$$\text{der } a r = ((\epsilon \cdot b) + \emptyset) \cdot r$$

$$\text{der } b r = ((\emptyset \cdot b) + \epsilon) \cdot r$$

$$\text{der } c r = ((\emptyset \cdot b) + \emptyset) \cdot r$$

What are these regular expressions equivalent to?

$$(a^{\{n\}}) \cdot a^{\{n\}}$$



Proofs about Rexps

Remember their inductive definition:

$$r ::= \begin{array}{l} \emptyset \\ \epsilon \\ c \\ r_1 \cdot r_2 \\ r_1 + r_2 \\ r^* \end{array}$$

If we want to prove something, say a property $P(r)$, for all regular expressions r then ...

Proofs about Rexp (2)

- P holds for \emptyset , ϵ and c
- P holds for $r_1 + r_2$ under the assumption that P already holds for r_1 and r_2 .
- P holds for $r_1 \cdot r_2$ under the assumption that P already holds for r_1 and r_2 .
- P holds for r^* under the assumption that P already holds for r .

Proofs about Rexp (3)

Assume $P(r)$ is the property:

nullable(r) if and only if $\square \in L(r)$

Proofs about Rexp (4)

$$\text{rev}(\emptyset) \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} \emptyset$$

$$\text{rev}(\epsilon) \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} \epsilon$$

$$\text{rev}(c) \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} c$$

$$\text{rev}(r_1 + r_2) \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} \text{rev}(r_1) + \text{rev}(r_2)$$

$$\text{rev}(r_1 \cdot r_2) \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} \text{rev}(r_2) \cdot \text{rev}(r_1)$$

$$\text{rev}(r^*) \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} \text{rev}(r)^*$$

We can prove

$$L(\text{rev}(r)) = \{s^{-1} \mid s \in L(r)\}$$

by induction on r .

Proofs about Rexp (5)

Let $Der\ c\ A$ be the set defined as

$$Der\ c\ A \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} \{s \mid c :: s \in A\}$$

We can prove

$$L(\text{der}\ c\ r) = Der\ c\ (L(r))$$

by induction on r .

Proofs about Strings

If we want to prove something, say a property $P(s)$, for all strings s then ...

- P holds for the empty string, and
- P holds for the string $c::s$ under the assumption that P already holds for s

Proofs about Strings (2)

We can finally prove

matches(r, s) if and only if $s \in L(r)$