TDDD55 Compilers and interpreters
TDDB44 Compiler Construction

Finite Automata

Extra slide material for interested students. Not included in the regular course.

Peter Fritzson, Christoph Kessler,
IDA, Linköpings universitet, 2011.

Why automata models?

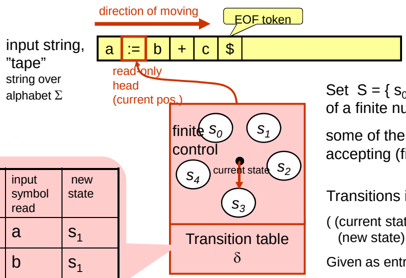
- **Automaton**: Strongly limited computation model compared to ordinary computer programs

A weak model (with many limitations) ...

- allows to do static analysis
  - e.g. on termination (decidable for finite automata)
  - which is not generally possible with a general computation model
- is easy to implement in a general-purpose programming model
  - e.g. scanner generation/coding, parser generation/coding
  - source code generation from UML statecharts
- Generally, we are interested in the *weakest* machine model (automaton model) that is still able to recognize a class of languages.

Finite Automaton / Finite State Machine

- Given by quintuple (Σ, S, s_0 in S, subset F of S, δ)



current state	input symbol read	new state
s_0	a	s_1
s_1	b	s_1
...	...	...

Set S = { s_0, s_1, ..., s_k } of a finite number of states

some of them may be accepting (final) states (F)

Transitions in δ are tuples

((current state, input symbol), (new state))

Given as entries in transition table

or as edges in a transition diagram (directed graph)

Computation of a Finite Automaton

- **Initial configuration**:
  - current state := start state s0
  - read head points to first symbol of the input string
- **1 computation step:**
  - read next input symbol, *t*
  - look up δ for entry (current state, *t*, new state) to determine new state
  - current state := new state
  - move read head forward to next symbol on tape
  - if all symbols consumed and new state is a final state: accept and halt
  - otherwise repeat

NFA and DFA

NFA (Nondeterministic Finite Automaton)

- "empty moves" (reading ε) with state change are possible, i.e. entries (s_i, ε, s_j) may exist in δ
- ambiguous state transitions are possible, i.e. entries (s_i, t, s_j) and (s_i, t, s_l) may exist in δ

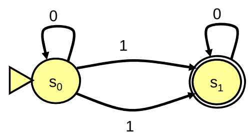
NFA **accepts** input string if there *exists* a computation (i.e., a sequence of state transitions) that leads to "accept and halt"

DFA (Deterministic Finite Automaton)

- No ε-transitions, no ambiguous transitions (δ is a function)
- Special case of a NFA

DFA Example

- DFA with
  Alphabet Σ = { 0, 1 }
  State set S = { s_0, s_1 }
  initial state: s_0
  F = { s_1 }
  δ = { (s_0, 0, s_0),
  (s_0, 1, s_1),
  (s_1, 0, s_1),
  (s_1, 1, s_0) }



- recognizes (accepts) strings containing an odd number of 1s

Computation for input string 10110:

s_0 read 1
s_1 read 0
s_1 read 1
s_0 read 1
s_1 read 0
s_1 accept

From regular expression to code

4 Steps:

- For each regular expression r there exists a NFA that accepts L_r [Thompson 1968 - see whiteboard]
- For each NFA there exists a DFA accepting the same language
- For each DFA there exists a minimal DFA (min. #states) that accepts the same language
- From a DFA, equivalent source code can be generated. [→Lecture on Scanners]

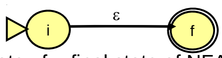
Theorem: For each regular expression r there exists an NFA that accepts L_r [Thompson 1968]

Proof: By induction,
following the inductive construction of regular expressions

Divide-and-conquer strategy to construct NFA(r):

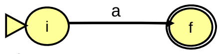
0. if r is trivial (base case): construct NFA(r) directly, else:
1. decompose r into its constituent subexpressions r_1, r_2...
2. recursively construct NFA(r_1), NFA(r_2), ...
3. compose these to NFA(r) according to decomposition of r

2 base cases:



Case 1: $r = \varepsilon$: NFA(r) =
with i = new start state, f = final state of NFA(r)
NFA(r) recognizes L(ε) = { ε }.

Case 2: r = a for a in Σ: NFA(r) =



recognizes L(a) = { a }.

(cont.)

4 recursive decomposition cases:

Case 3: $r = r_1 \mid r_2$: By Ind.-hyp. exist NFA(r_1), NFA(r_2)

NFA(r) =

recognizes $L(r_1 \mid r_2) = L(r_1) \cup L(r_2)$

Case 4: $r = r_1 . r_2$: By Ind.-hyp. exist NFA(r_1), NFA(r_2)

NFA(r) =

recognizes $L(r_1 . r_2) = L(r_1) . L(r_2)$

(cont.)

Case 5: $r = r_1{}^*$: By ind.-hyp. exists NFA(r_1)

NFA(r) =

recognizes $L(r_1{}^*) = (L(r_1))^*$.
(similarly for $r = r_1{}^+$)

Case 6: Parentheses: $r = (r_1)$

NFA(r) =

(no modifications).

The theorem follows by induction. □