

TDDD14 / TDDD85 – Lecture 11

Closure Properties and Pumping Lemma

August Ernstsson, 2026 (based on lecture notes by Jonas Wallgren)

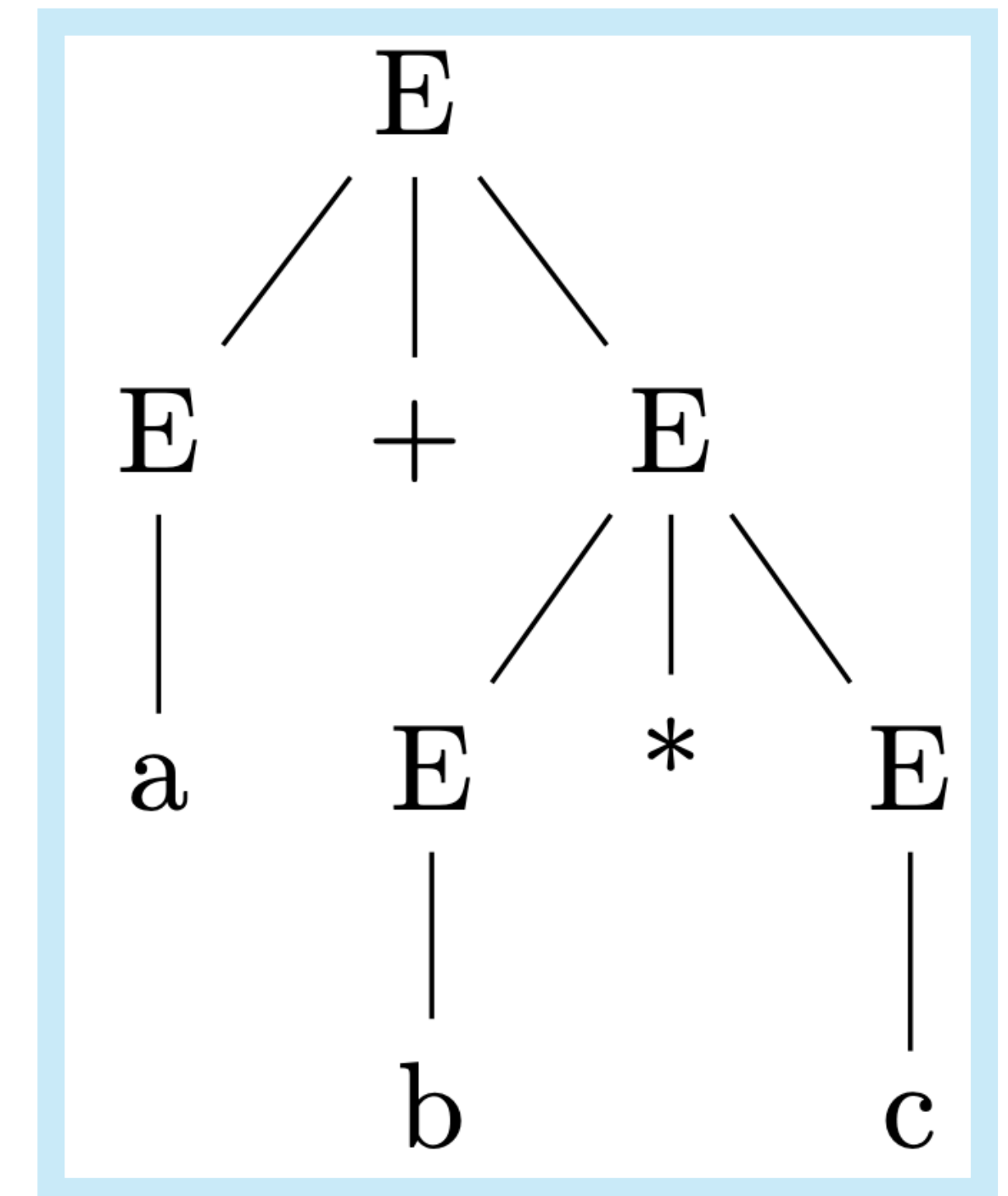
From previous lectures

Derivation trees

- A *derivation tree* is a tree such that:
 - The *root* of a derivation tree is S .
 - Each *leaf* of a derivation tree $\in \Sigma$.
 - Each *inner node* of a derivation tree $\in N$.
 - **If** the node A has the children p, q, r, \dots
 - **then** there is a rule $A \rightarrow pqr\dots \in P$

Derivation trees

- Example grammar: $E \rightarrow E^*E \mid E+E \mid a \mid b \mid c$
- Example derivation:
 - $E \Rightarrow E+E \Rightarrow E+E^*E \Rightarrow E+E^*c \Rightarrow E+b^*c \Rightarrow a+b^*c$
- Derivation (parse) tree:



Chomsky normal form

- A grammar is in Chomsky normal form
 - if all rules have the form $A \rightarrow a$ or $A \rightarrow BC$.

- Example: **Grammar G_6**

- $S \rightarrow aSb \mid ab \mid pTq \mid pq$
- $T \rightarrow pTq \mid pq$

- **Grammar G_7**

- $S \rightarrow ASB \mid AB \mid PTQ \mid PQ$
- $T \rightarrow PTQ \mid PQ$
- $A \rightarrow a$
- $B \rightarrow b$
- $P \rightarrow p$
- $Q \rightarrow q$

- **Grammar G_8**

- $S \rightarrow AE \mid AB \mid PF \mid PQ$
- $T \rightarrow PF \mid PQ$
- $E \rightarrow SB$
- $F \rightarrow TQ$
- $A \rightarrow a$
- $B \rightarrow b$
- $P \rightarrow p$
- $Q \rightarrow q$

Let's start!

Today's topic

- In lecture 4, some *closure properties* for regular languages were presented.
- In lecture 6, the *pumping lemma* for regular languages was discussed.
- **In this lecture:** corresponding features for *context-free languages*.
 1. Some closure properties,
 2. The pumping lemma,
 3. Some more closure properties
(that need the pumping lemma for their proofs).

Some closure properties

- The set of context-free languages are closed under
 - **Theorem 1:** Union
 - **Theorem 2:** Concatenation
 - **Theorem 3:** Star operation
- Proofs: Coming up.
 - Denote languages L_1 and L_2
 - With the grammars $G_1 = \langle N_1, \Sigma_1, P_1, S_1 \rangle$ and $G_2 = \langle N_2, \Sigma_2, P_2, S_2 \rangle$.
 - $L_1 = L(G_1)$ and $L_2 = L(G_2)$

Closure under union

- **Theorem 1.** CFLs are closed under union.
- **Proof.** Construct a new grammar:
 - $G_3 = \langle N_1 \cup N_2 \cup \{ S_3 \}, \quad \Sigma_1 \cup \Sigma_2, \quad P_1 \cup P_2 \cup \{ S_3 \rightarrow S_1 \mid S_2 \}, \quad S_3 \rangle$.
 - (If N_1 and N_2 are not disjoint sets, rename the nonterminals in N_2)
 - Starting from S_3 , all derivations starting with **either** S_1 or S_2 can be done.
 - \Rightarrow All strings in $L(G_1)$ **and** $L(G_2)$ can be derived
 - $\Rightarrow L(G_3) = L(G_1) \cup L(G_2)$

Closure under concatenation

- **Theorem 2.** CFLs are closed under concatenation.
- **Proof.** Construct a new grammar:
 - $G_4 = \langle N_1 \cup N_2 \cup \{ S_4 \}, \quad \Sigma_1 \cup \Sigma_2, \quad P_1 \cup P_2 \cup \{ S_4 \rightarrow S_1 S_2 \}, \quad S_4 \rangle.$
 - (If N_1 and N_2 are not disjoint sets, rename the nonterminals in N_2)
 - Now, starting from S_4 , all derivations consist of:
 - one part derived from S_1 in $L(G_1)$,
 - **followed by** one part derived from S_2 in $L(G_2)$
 - $\Rightarrow L(G_4) = L(G_1)L(G_2).$

Closure under *

- **Theorem 3.** CFLs are closed under the star operation.
- **Proof.** Construct a new grammar:
 - $G_5 = \langle N_1 \cup \{ S_5 \}, \Sigma_1, P_1 \cup \{ S_5 \rightarrow S_1 S_5 \mid \varepsilon \}, S_5 \rangle$.
 - Starting from S_5 :
 - **either** ε can be derived,
 - **or** one string of $L(G_1)$,
 - **followed** once again by what can be derived from S_5 .
 - $\Rightarrow L(G_5) = L(G_1)^*$

Pumping lemma for CFLs – Motivation and proof sketch

- On the board.
- See lecture notes and course book for similar figures to what was shown during the lecture.

- **Reminders:**
- A grammar is in Chomsky normal form (CNF)
 - if all rules have the form $A \rightarrow a$ or $A \rightarrow BC$.

Pumping lemma for CFLs – Direct form

- From the ideas in the figures, this form of the pumping lemma can be stated
 - L is CF $\rightarrow \exists k > 0$:
 - $\forall z \in L : |z| \geq k \wedge$
 - $\exists u, v, w, x, y \in \Sigma^* : z = uvwxy \wedge vx \neq \varepsilon \wedge |vwx| \leq k \wedge$
 - $\forall i \geq 0 : uv^iwx^iy \in L$
1. If L is context-free then there is some constant k (pumping length) such that
 2. if a string z in L is of enough length, then
 3. it can be split into $uvwxy$ —so that vx isn't empty and vwx isn't too long—so that
 4. the vx parts can be repeated arbitrarily number of times and the string still is in L .

Pumping lemma for CFLs - Contrapositive form

- Like for regular pumping, instead of using the lemma on the form “**if A, then B**” we will use the contrapositive form “**if not B, then not A**”.
 - $(\forall k > 0 :$
 - $\exists z \in L : |z| \geq k \wedge$
 - $\forall u, v, w, x, y \in \Sigma^* : z = uvwxy \wedge vx \neq \varepsilon \wedge |vwx| \leq k \rightarrow$
 - $\exists i \geq 0 : uv^iwx^iy \notin L) \rightarrow L$ is not CF
1. For all constants **k** (pumping lengths)
 2. there is a string **z** of enough length, and
 3. for all ways to split **z** into **uvwxy**—such that **vx** isn't empty and **vwx** isn't too long—
 4. you can pump the **vx** parts to get the string outside of the language.

Example 1

- *Prove that $L_6 = \{ a^n b^n c^n \mid n \geq 0 \}$ is not context-free.*
- For the pumping length \mathbf{k} , let $\mathbf{z} = a^k b^k c^k$.
- Now, since \mathbf{vwx} cannot contain more than \mathbf{k} symbols, \mathbf{vx} cannot contain both $a:s$, $b:s$, and $c:s$.
- They have the same number of occurrences in \mathbf{z} , but not all of them will change when pumping so the pumped string will be out of L_6 .
- E.g. if $\mathbf{u} = a^p$, $\mathbf{v} = a^q$, $\mathbf{w} = a^r$, $\mathbf{x} = a^s$, $\mathbf{y} = a^{k-p-q-r-s} b^k c^k$,
 - then pumping to $\mathbf{uv^2wx^2y}$ will give the string $a^{k+q+s} b^k c^k$.
- So L_6 is not context-free.

Example 2

- Prove that the language $L_7 = \{ a^m b^n a^m b^n \mid m, n \geq 0 \}$ is not context-free.
- For the pumping length k , let $z = a^k b^k a^k b^k$.
- We call each of a^k and b^k a *block*.
 - If v or x contains both "a" and "b": pumping up uv^2wx^2y will in v^2 or x^2 result in a mixture of two symbols, and z will break the original $a^*b^*a^*b^*$ pattern in L_7 .
 - If v and x are in the same block: pumping up uv^2wx^2y will make that block longer than the other block with the same symbol.
 - If v and x are in neighbouring blocks, then there will be different numbers of a:s and b:s in the blocks. E.g. if $u = a^p$, $v = a^q$, $w = a^{k-p-q}b^r$, $x = b^s$, $y = b^{k-r-s}a^k b^k$, then $uv^2wx^2y = a^{k+q}b^{k+s}a^k b^k$.
- So, for every possible split of z , it is pumpable out of L_7 . L_7 is not context-free.

More closure properties

- The set of context-free languages are
 - **Theorem 1:** not closed under intersection
 - **Theorem 2:** are closed under intersection with regular languages
 - **Theorem 3:** are not closed under complement
- Proofs: Coming up.
 - In this section we will introduce a number of languages (L_8, L_9, \dots), their
 - grammars (G_8, G_9, \dots), and a number of automata (M_{10}, M_{11}, \dots)

Theorem 4: Not closed under intersection

- **Theorem 4.** CFLs are not closed under intersection.
- **Proof:** By counterexample.
 - Let $L_8 = \{ a^m b^m c^n \mid m, n \geq 0 \}$ and $L_9 = \{ a^m b^n c^n \mid m, n \geq 0 \}$.
 - Both languages are context-free.
They can be defined with the following grammars:

$G_8: S \rightarrow AC$	$A \rightarrow aAb \mid \varepsilon$	$C \rightarrow cC \mid \varepsilon$
$G_9: S \rightarrow AC$	$A \rightarrow aA \mid \varepsilon$	$C \rightarrow bCc \mid \varepsilon$
 - $L_8 \cap L_9 = \{ a^n b^n c^n \mid n \geq 0 \}$
- Since L_8 and L_9 are context-free, and the result was proven not context-free in **Example 1**, context-free languages are not closed under intersection.

Theorem 5: Closure under intersection with regular languages

- **Theorem 5.** CFLs are closed under intersection with regular languages.
- **Proof.** Let CFL L_{10} be accepted by a PDA M_{10} and regular L_{11} by a DFA M_{11} .
- Let M_{12} be a PDA, where each state is a **pair** of a state in M_{10} and a state in M_{11} .
- The transitions in M_{12} follow simultaneously the transitions in M_{10} and M_{11} .
- A string is accepted in M_{12} if it is accepted in **both** M_{10} and M_{11} .
- The stack is handled as in M_{10}
 - Since M_{11} doesn't use the stack, the M_{10} stack handling won't be disturbed.

Theorem 6: Not closed under complement

- **Theorem 6.** CFLs are not closed under complement.
- **Proof.** $L_{13} \cap L_{14} = \sim (\sim L_{13} \cup \sim L_{14})$ (by De Morgan's Law)
- If CFLs were closed under complement:
 - then the union of two CFLs would have been constructed,
 - which would be context-free, according to **Theorem 1**;
 - and then the complement of that result should have been context-free.
- But the result is the intersection, that does not preserve context-freeness according to **Theorem 4**.

Example 3

- $L_{15} = \{ ww \mid w \in \{a, b\}^* \}$ is not context-free.
 - L_{15} contains strings consisting of two equal parts,
 - e.g. aabaaab, ababaababa, and bbbbabbbba.
- **Proof:**
- Some of the strings in L_{15} are the same as some strings of the form $a^*b^*a^*b^*$.
- $L_{15} \cap a^*b^*a^*b^* = L_7$, with $L_7 = \{ a^m b^n a^m b^n \mid m, n \geq 0 \}$.
- Since CFLs are closed under intersection with regular languages, L_7 would be context-free if L_{15} were context-free.

Coming up soon ...

- Next week:
 - **Monday:** LL(1) and LR(0) parsing
 - **Wednesday:** LR(1) parsing
- Then Victor is back for two lectures (14 and 15).
- I will return for the final lecture (16).

Thanks for today!