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Strategy-Based Rewrite Semantics for Membrane Systems Preserves Maximal Concurrency of Evolution Rule Actions

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**Abstract**

We use a modal logic in order to show that the strategy-based rewrite semantics for membrane systems fully preserves the maximal concurrency of evolution rules actions, whereas the maximal concurrency of communication actions and structural actions is partially preserved. Consequently, the strategy-based rewrite semantics describes more faithfully the behavior of the membrane systems than the rewrite logic- based semantics. It is known that the rewrite logic-based semantics implements the maximal concurrency of the evolution rules in membrane systems only by interleaving concurrency. The concurrency degrees of the communication and structural actions are the same for the two rewrite-based semantics.

*Keywords:* Rewrite Strategies, Strategy Controller, Membrane System, Modal logic, True Concurrency, Rewrite Logic.

# Introduction

Membrane computing [[18](#_bookmark37)] deals with distributed and parallel computing models inspired from the structure and the functioning of living cells, as well as from the way the cells are organized. Such a model processes multisets of symbol-objects in a localized manner. The locality of processing refers to the fact that the evolution rules and evolving objects are encapsulated into compartments delimited by mem- branes. An essential role is also played by the communication among compartments and, possibly, with the environment.

There are several approaches [[3](#_bookmark22),[1](#_bookmark20)] which describe a rewrite semantics based on rewriting logic (RWL) [[15](#_bookmark34),[16](#_bookmark35)]. Even if the use of RWL framework seems to be a natural choice for specifying and analyzing membrane systems, the locality of evo- lution rules and the higher degree of the concurrency given by the maximal parallel

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rewriting (used in defining the behavior of these systems) is quite challenging. An alternative approach based on rewrite strategies and strategy controllers is given in [[4](#_bookmark23)]. The main idea is to separate the implementation of the control mechanisms of regions from the effective application of the evolution rules.

In [[13](#_bookmark32)] we show that RWL-based semantics can describe the maximal parallel rewriting of the membrane systems only by interleaving semantics. In this paper we show that the strategy-based rewrite semantics defined in [[4](#_bookmark23)] preserves the maximal concurrency expressed by the maximal parallel application of the evolution rules. The concurrency degree of the communications and structural actions is the same in the RWL-based semantics and strategy-based rewrite semantics. Since the two for- malisms, membrane systems and strategy-based rewriting logic, are quite different, we use a simple modal logic as a common language for comparing the concurrency degrees of the two formalisms.

The paper is structured as follows. Section [2](#_bookmark1) briefly presents the membrane systems and rewriting logic. In Section [3](#_bookmark5) a Hennessy-Milner-like modal logic for membrane systems is introduced. Section [4](#_bookmark9) briefly recalls from [[4](#_bookmark23)] the strategy- based rewrite semantics for membrane systems. It further includes an algorithm computing strategies for communications and dissolvings with the highest concur- rency degree. Section [5](#_bookmark15) includes the main results of the paper. The concurrency degree of an evolution step of a membrane system is compared with that of its implementation as a strategic rewrite using the modal logic introduced in Section

[3](#_bookmark5). The paper ends with some concluding remarks.

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# Preliminaries

* 1. *Membrane systems*

In this paper we consider a particular case of membrane systems, namely that known as *transition P systems* [[18](#_bookmark37)]. Informally, a transition P system consists of: an alphabet of objects (usually a finite non-empty alphabet of symbols identifying the real objects), the membrane (region) structure (it can be represented in many ways, but the most used one is by a string of labeled matching parentheses), the multisets of objects present in each membrane of the system (represented in the most compact way by strings of symbol-objects), the sets of evolution rules as- sociated with each region, as well as the indication about the way the output is defined (see, e.g., Figure [1](#_bookmark2)). A membrane structure is a hierarchically arranged set of membranes, contained in a distinguished external membrane called the *skin* membrane. Several membranes can be placed inside a membrane; a membrane is called *elementary* if it has no other membrane inside it. Each membrane determines a compartment, also called region, the space delimited from above by it and from below by the membranes placed directly inside, if any exists. Clearly, the correspon-

*,*

*r*11 : *c →* (*a, here*)(*b, out*) *r*12 : *b →* (*c, here*)

*r*21 : *a →* (*b, here*)(*c, inM*1 )

*r*22 : *b →* (*a, here*)

*bbc*

*M*

1

*abb*

*J M*2 *J*

Fig. 1. A P system with two membranes

dence membrane-region is one-to-one, that is why we sometimes use interchangeably these terms. The hierarchical structure of membranes is a rooted tree symbolically represented as a string of labeled matching parentheses. The evolution rules have the form *r* : *u → v* or *r* : *u → vδ*, with *u* a non-empty multiset over *O*, *v* a mul- tiset over *O × Tar* , where *Tar* = *{here, out}∪ {inj | 1 ≤ j ≤ m}*, and *δ* a special object called *dissolving action*. The elements of *Tar* are called *target indications* and have the following meaning: an object having associated the indication *here* remains in the same region, one having associated the indication *inj* goes immedi- ately into the directly lower membrane *j*, and *out* indicates that the object has to exit the membrane, thus becoming an element of the region surrounding it. Note that the set *Tar* is depending on the number of the membranes in the system. A pair (*a, tar* ) *∈ O × Tar* is often called *message*. A rule *r* : *u → v* can be cooperative (with *u* arbitrary), non-cooperative (with *u ∈ O \ C*), or catalytic (of the form *ca →* (*c, here*)*v* or *ca →* (*c, here*)*vδ*, with *a ∈ O \ C*, *c ∈ C*, and *v* a multiset over (*O \ C*) *× Tar* ); note that the catalysts never evolve and never change the region, they only help the other objects to evolve.

In this paper we associate a distinguished name *Mj* to each membrane *j* and the name *Mj* and the index *j* are used interchangeably.

Formally, a *transition P system* (of degree m) is a construct of the form Π = (*O, C, μ, w*1*, w*2*,..., wm, R*1*, R*2*,..., Rm, i*0), where:

1. *O* is the (finite and non-empty) alphabet of *objects*,
2. *C ⊆ O* is the set of *catalysts*,
3. *μ* is a *membrane structure*, consisting of *m* membranes, labeled with 1*,* 2*,..., m*; one says that the membrane structure, and hence the system, is of *degree m*,
4. *w*1*, w*2*,..., wm* are multisets over *O* representing the multisets of objects present in the regions 1*,* 2*,...,m* of the membrane structure (*contents* ),
5. *R*1*, R*2*,..., Rm* are finite sets of *evolution rules* associated with the regions 1*,* 2*,...,m* of the membrane structure,
6. *i*0 is either one of the labels 1*,* 2*,..., m*, and then the respective region is the *output region* of the system, or it is 0, and then the result of a computation is collected in the environment of the system.

A *conﬁguration* (*μ, w*1*,..., wm*) consists of the membrane structure *μ* of degree *m* and the multisets *wi* of objects/messages from its compartments. During the evolution of the system, both the multisets of objects/messages and the membrane

*,*

*r*11 : *c →* (*a, here*)(*b, out*) *r*12 : *b →* (*c, here*)

mpr

*bbc*

*M*

1

*r*21 : *a →* (*b, here*)(*c, inM*1 )

*r*22 : *b →* (*a, here*)

mpr

*abb*

*J M*2 *J*

Fig. 2. A P system with control mechanisms

structure can change. For instance, the configuration of the system represented in Figure [1](#_bookmark2) is ([[]1]2*, bbc, aab*). We represent the multisets as (commutative) strings.

The contents of the membranes evolve by means of evolution rules. In each time unit a transformation of a configuration of the system, called *evolution step*, takes place by applying the rules in each region, in a *non-deterministic and maximally parallel manner*. An evolution step in a given region (membrane) consists in 1) *ﬁnding a maximal applicable multiset of evolution rules*, removing from the region all objects specified in the left hand sides of the chosen rules (with the multiplicities as indicated by the rules and by the number of times each rule is used), producing the messages from the right hand sides of rules, and then 2) *distributing the objects from these messages* as indicated by their target component. If at least one of the rules introduces the dissolving action *δ*, then 3) *the membrane is dissolved*, and its content becomes part of the immediately upper membrane, provided that this membrane was not dissolved at the same time, a case where we stop in the first upper membrane which was not dissolved (at least the skin remains intact). The rules of the dissolved membranes are lost.

There are many extensions of transitional P systems, among which we mention here the use of priority relation over the evolution rules, the use of promoters and inhibitors, the non-deterministic choice of the *in* target. The reader is invited to see

[[18](#_bookmark37)] for a detailed presentation. We associate to each membrane a *control mechanism* specifying its particular way to evolve (see, e.g., Figure [2](#_bookmark3)). Different membranes of a system may have different control mechanisms. For the sake of presentation, in this paper we consider only the mechanism *mpr* given by the maximal parallel rewriting, where a maximal applicable multiset of evolution rules is used at each evolution step. The approach can be applied for other mechanisms, as well.

We briefly recall some notations regarding the formal operational semantics of membrane systems:

* + - *semantics of the control mechanisms*: *w →M w'* whenever *w'* is obtained from *w* by applying the evolution rules of *M* according to the control mechanism of *M* . For instance, since the control of *M*1 is maximal parallel rewriting (mpr), we have *bbc →M*1 (*c, here*)(*c, here*)(*a, here*)(*b, out* ), applying in parallel twice *r*12 and once *r*11. Note that *w* is a multiset of objects and *w'* is a mixed multiset of objects and messages.
    - *semantics of the evolution rules actions*: (*μ, w*1*,..., wm*) *→evrl* (*μ, w' ,..., w'* )

whenever for each *i*, either *wi* is irreducible and *w'*

*i*

1

= *wi* or *wi →Mi*

*m*

*w'*. We

*i*

assume that at least one *wi* is reducible. For instance,

([[]1]2*, bc, ab*) *→evrl* ([[]1]2*,* (*c, here*)(*a, here*)(*b, out* )*,* (*b, here*)(*c, in*1)(*a, here*)).

* + - * *semantics of the communication actions*: (*μ, w*1*,..., wm*) *→comm* (*μ, w' ,..., w'* )

1 *m*

whenever there is at least one *i* such that *wi* is a multiset over *O×Tar* (a message),

and for all *j*, *w'* is obtained by distributing the objects from all *wi* according to

*j*

their targets. For instance,

([[]1]2*,* (*c, here*)(*a, here*)(*b, out* )*,* (*b, here*)(*c, in*1)(*a, here*)) *→comm* ([[]1]2*, cac, bba*).

* + - * *semantics of the dissolving actions*: (*μ, w*1*,..., wm*) *→diss* (*μ', w' ,..., w'* ) when-

1 *n*

ever there is at least one *i* such that *δ ∈ wi*, and *μ'* and (*w'* )*j* are obtained by dissolving all membranes *i* with *δ ∈ wi*. For instance, ([[]*M*1 ]*M*2 *, abδ, ccd*) *→diss* ([]*M*2 *, ccdab*).

*j*

We often use *w* for *w*1*,..., wm*, *w'* for *w' ,..., w'* and so on. An *evolution step*

1 *m*

of a system is either of the form (*μ, w*) *→evrl* (*μ, w'*), where *w'* has no messages or *δ* (no communications and no dissolvings, e.g., only evolution rules removing objects are applicable), or (*μ, w*) *→evrl* (*μ, w'*) *→comm* (*μ, w''*), where *w''* has no *δ* (no dissolvings), or (*μ, w*) *→evrl* (*μ, w'*) *→diss* (*μ, w''*), where *w''* has no messages (no communications, e.g, only rules of the form *u → δ* are applicable), or (*μ, w*) *→evrl* (*μ, w'*) *→comm* (*μ, w''*) *→diss* (*μ, w'''*).

* 1. *Rewriting Logic (RWL)*

We assume that the reader is familiar with the basic definitions and notations for many-sorted equational logic [[9](#_bookmark24)], term rewriting [[5](#_bookmark25),[6](#_bookmark26)], membership equational logic (MEL) [[17](#_bookmark36),[7](#_bookmark27)], and rewriting logic [[8](#_bookmark28),[15](#_bookmark34),[16](#_bookmark35)].

Here we consider only *(unconditional) MEL-based rewrite theories R* = (Σ*, E, R*), where

* + - (Σ*, E*) is a MEL theory consisting of a MEL signature Σ and a set *E* of MEL axioms (membership axioms and equations), and
    - *R* is a set of (universally quantified) labeled (unconditional) rewrite rules having the form (*∀X*)*r* : *u → v*, with *u, v ∈* TΣ(*X*)*s* (= the set of terms of sort *s* and with variables in *X*) for some sort *s* and *V ar*(*v*) *⊆ V ar*(*u*) *⊆ X*.

The rewriting logic of a MEL-based rewrite theory *R* consists of

* + - sentences given by *rewrite sequents*, which are pairs of the form (*∀X*)*t → t'*, with

*t, t' ∈* TΣ(*X*)*s* for some sort *s*, and

* + - an *entailment relation R ▶* (*∀X*)*t → t'* defined by a set of inference rules (see, e.g., [[8](#_bookmark28),[15](#_bookmark34)] for details).

A *one-step concurrent rewrite* is a sequent (*∀X*)*t → t'* which can be obtained by a derivation (deduction) which does not use the sequential composition deduction rule. In other words, *t'* can be obtained from *t* by applying in parallel a multiset of rewrite rules.

We give as examples the rewrite theories describing the control-free membranes (no restrictions regarding the application of the evolution rules are considered).

The Rewrite Theory Associated to an Elementary Membrane. The static descrip-

tion of the membranes is represented by the MEL theory (Σ*m, Em*), where Σ*m* includes the sorts *Object*, *Soup*, *Tar*, and *HotSoup* with *Object < Soup < HotSoup*, (*w, tar* ) : *HotSoup* if *w* : *Soup* and *tar* : *Tar* , *ε* : *→ HotSoup*, the concatena- tion : *HotSoup HotSoup −→ HotSoup*. The sort *Tar* includes the constants *here* and *out*. The operation *in* will be defined later. *Em* includes axioms ex- pressing the associativity and commutativity of with *ε* the identity element, and an axiom which allows to merge two messages with the same target into a sin- gle message: (*w*1*, tar* )(*w*2*, tar* ) = (*w*1*w*2*, tar* ). The sort *Soup* is for the multisets of objects and the sort *HotSoup* for the mixed multisets of objects an messages. The idea is as follows: a soup is heated (transformed into a hot soup) applying the evolution rules, then a hot soup is cooled (transformed back into a soup) dis- tributing the objects from messages according to their targets. The complete de- scription of a control-free membrane *M* is represented by the MEL rewrite theory *M* = (Σ*m ∪ O, Em, R*), where *O* the set of object constants, and *R* includes the rewrite rules corresponding to the evolution rules. For the case of *M*1 in Figure [1](#_bookmark2), *O* includes the constants *a, b, c* and *R*1 includes the rules *r*11 and *r*12. Using the inference rules for RWL, we may deduce, e.g., that the one-step evolution of *M*1 *bbc →M*1 (*c, here*)(*c, here*)(*a, here*)(*b, out* ) can be described by an one-step concur-

rent rewrite:

(*∀∅*)*b →* (*c, here*) (*∀∅*)*b →* (*c, here*)

*bb →* (*c, here*)(*c, here*)= (*cc, here*) (*∀∅*)*c →* (*a, here*)(*b, out* )

*bbc →* (*cc, here*)(*a, here*)(*b, out* )= (*cca, here*)(*b, out* )

Note that the above rewrite theory describes *M*1 as an independent elementary membrane. We show below that the description of the behavior of *M*1 by the rewrite theory corresponding to the whole system is more complicated.

The Rewrite Theory Associated to a Membrane System. The static description of membrane systems is represented by the MEL theory (Σ*p, Ep*) consisting of (Σ*m, Em*) together with:

* + - a sort *MembraneName* together with a constant *M* : *MembraneName*, for each membrane name *M* , and an operation *in* : *MembraneName → Tar* ,
    - a sort *Membrane* for states of both simple and composite membranes,
    - a sort *MembraneBag* for multisets of membranes, together with its constructors: the subsort relation *Membrane < MembraneBag*, the constant *NULL* denoting the empty multiset, and the union of multisets

*,* : *MembraneBag MembraneBag −→ MembraneBag* [assoc comm id: *NULL*]

* + - the constructors for *Membrane*: *⟨ | ⟩* : *MembraneName HotSoup −→ Membrane* and *⟨ | { }⟩* : *MembraneName HotSoup MembraneBag −→ Membrane*, together with the axiom *⟨M|w {NULL}⟩* = *⟨M|w⟩*.

A control-free membrane system Π (neither control mechanisms nor the membership of evolution rules to membranes is assumed) is described by the rewrite theory *R*Π = (Σ*p ∪ O, Ep, R*), where *R* includes the rewrite rules coming from all the

component membranes together with the cooperation (interaction) rules (if any):

*in*(*M, M* ): *⟨ M | w*1(*w*2*, inM'* ) *{⟨ M | w { X } ⟩,Y }⟩ →*

*' ' '*

*⟨ M | w*1 *{⟨ M' | w'w*2 *{ X } ⟩,Y }⟩*

*out* (*M',M* ): *⟨ M | w {⟨ M' | w'* (*w' , out* ) *{ X } ⟩,Y }⟩ →*

1 2

*⟨ M | ww' {⟨ M' | w' { X } ⟩,Y }⟩*

2 1

*diss*(*M'*): *⟨ M | w {⟨ M' | w'δ { X } ⟩,Y } ⟩→⟨ M | ww' { X, Y }⟩*

The first rule describes the transmission of a message from a parent membrane *M* to a child membrane *M'*, the second one the transmission of a message from a child membrane *M'* to the parent membrane *M* , and the third one the dissolving of the membrane *M'* (this is triggered by the presence of the object *δ* in the current content of *M'*).

The rewrite theory *R*Π does not include information about the locality of the rewrite rules. For instance, if Π is the system described in Figure [1](#_bookmark2), then logic defined by *R*Π allows to apply *r*12 for both the content of *M*1 and the content of *M*2. There are different ways for describing the locality of the evolution rules w.r.t. their membership to regions: considering an operation *rules*(*M* ) - returning the rules of the membrane *M* [[3](#_bookmark22),[4](#_bookmark23)], encoding the set of rules in the description of each membrane [[1](#_bookmark20),[13](#_bookmark32)] and so on. In either of these cases the rewriting logic fails to describe an one- step evolution of a membrane by an one-step concurrent rewrite. For instance, if we encode the rules of *M*1 by *r*11 : *⟨ M*1 *| cW ⟩ → ⟨ M*1 *|* (*a, here*)*,* (*b, out* ) *W ⟩* and *r*12 : *⟨ M*1 *| bW ⟩→ ⟨ M*1 *|* (*c, here*) *W ⟩*, then these two rules cannot be concurrently applied because they overlap.

# A Modal Logic for Membrane Systems

In this section we define a Hennessy-Milner-like logic [[11](#_bookmark30)] able to express the con- currency degree (and the behavior) of a membrane system. We have seen that an evolution step consists of up to three transitions, where each transition accomplishes a specific task. Therefore we distinguish three kinds of actions in this logic:

1. *rule actions* corresponding to evolution rules of a membrane. Such an action is denoted by the label of the involved rule. We assume that the rules have distinguished labels such that there is no ambiguity regarding the rule or the membrane the rule belongs to.
2. *communication actions* which describe how two parent-child membranes com- municate. Here we consider two kinds of communications: *in*(*M, M'*) - the membrane *M* sends a message to membrane *M'* (*M'* is a child of *M* ); and *out* (*M',M* ) - the membrane *M'* sends a message to the surrounding mem- brane *M* .
3. *dissolving actions diss*(*M'*), meaning that the membrane *M'* is dissolved and its contents is sent to surrounding membrane; the evolution rules of *M'* are lost. In general, we may consider a more general kind, namely *structural actions* meaning all actions aimed to modify the structure of the system.

We associate a modal language *L*Π to a membrane system Π as follows:

1. *true* is a formula in *L*Π;
2. if *ϕ* is a formula in *L*Π and *L* a multiset of rule actions, then *⟨L⟩ϕ* is a formula in *L*Π;
3. if *ϕ* is a formula in *L*Π and *C* a set of communication actions, then *⟨C⟩ϕ* is a formula in *L*Π;
4. if *ϕ* is a formula in *L*Π and *D* a set of dissolving actions, then *⟨D⟩ϕ* is a formula in *L*Π;
5. if *ϕ*1 and *ϕ*2 are formulas in *L*Π, then so are *¬ϕ*1 and *ϕ*1 *∧ ϕ*2.

Intuitively, if *A* is a multiset of actions of the same kind, then a configuration (*μ, w*) satisfies the formula *⟨A⟩ϕ* iff there exists a transition (*μ, w*) *→tr* (*μ', w'*) such that (*μ', w'*) is obtained by applying in parallel the actions *A* and (*μ', w'*) satisfies *ϕ*, where *tr ∈ {evrl, comm, diss}* corresponds to the kind of the actions *A*.

The other propositional connectors are added to *L*Π in the usual way; e.g., *false* is the notation for *¬true*. The modal operator [*A*]*ϕ* is defined as *¬⟨A⟩¬ϕ*, where *A* denotes a set of actions of the same type.

In the following Π is a system with the membranes *M*1*,..., Mm*, *μ* and *μ'*

range over the structure of Π, *wi, w'* range over the contents of the membrane

*i*

*Mi*, *w* = (*w*1*,..., wm*), *w'* = (*w' ,..., w' '* ), *L* ranges over the nonempty multisets

1 *m*

of rewrite actions, *C* over the nonempty sets of communication actions, and *D* over the nonempty sets of dissolving actions. The semantics of the modal formulas is as follows:

1. Π*,* (*μ, w*) *|*= *true* for each (*μ, w*).
2. Π*,* (*μ, w*) *|*= *ϕ*1 *∧ ϕ*2 if and only if Π*,* (*μ, w*) *|*= *ϕ*1 and Π*,* (*μ, w*) *|*= *ϕ*2.
3. Π*,* (*μ, w*) *|*= *¬ϕ* iff Π*,* (*μ, w*) *|*= *ϕ*.
4. Π*,* (*μ, w*) *|*= *⟨L⟩ϕ* iff there is a transition (*μ, w*) *→evrl* (*μ, w'*) such that
   * if *wi →M*

*w'* using the multiset of rules *Li*,1 *≤ i ≤ n*, then *L* = *∪n*

*Li*, and

*i i i*=1

* + Π*,* (*μ, w' ,..., w'* ) *|*= *ϕ*.

1 *m*

In other words, *L* is the multiset of all rules involved in the evolution of all membranes; the multiplicity of a rule in *L* is equal to the number of times the rule was used in the evolution of its membrane.

1. Π*,* (*μ, w*) *|*= *⟨C⟩ϕ* iff there is a transition (*μ, w*) *→comm* (*μ, w'*) such that
   * *in*(*Mi, Mj*) *∈ C* iff *Mj* is a child of *Mi* and there is (*ui, inMj* ) *∈ wi* (there are objects in the current content *wi* of *Mi* to be sent to the child *Mj*),
   * *out* (*Mj, Mi*) *∈ C* iff *Mj* is a child of *Mi* and there is (*uj, out* ) *∈ wj* (there are objects in the current content *wj* of *Mj* to be sent to the parent *Mi*).
2. Π*,* (*μ, w*) *|*= *⟨D⟩ϕ* iff there is a transition (*μ, w*) *→diss* (*μ, w'*) such that
   * *diss*(*Mj*) *∈ D* iff *wj* = *vjδ*.

We often write *M, w |*= *ϕ* for Π*,* ([]*M , w*) *|*= *ϕ*, i.e., Π consists of only the elementary membrane *M* . It is easy to see that if Π*,* (*μ, w*) *|*= *⟨L⟩ϕ*, then *L* can be written as a disjoint union *L*1 *... Lm* such that (*∀i*)*Li /*= *∅* implies *Mi, wi |*=

*⟨Li⟩true*.

For instance, if Π12 is the membrane system represented in Figure [1](#_bookmark2), then

*M*1*, bbc |*= *⟨r*11*r*12*r*12*⟩true* [[*iv*](#_bookmark6)]

*M*2*, abb |*= *⟨r*21*r*22*r*22*⟩true* [[*iv*](#_bookmark6)]

Π12*,* ([2[1]1]2*, bbc, abb*) *|*= *⟨r*11*r*12*r*12*r*21*r*22*r*22*⟩true* [[*iv*](#_bookmark6)] Π12*,* ([2[1]1]2*,* (*c, here*) *...* (*b, out* )*,* (*c, here*)(*c, in*1) *...* (*a, here*)) *|*=

*⟨in*(*M*2*, M*1) *out*(*M*1*, M*2)*⟩true* [[*v*](#_bookmark7)]

Π12*,* ([2[1]1]2*, bbc*1*, abb*2) *|*= *⟨r*11*r*12*r*12*r*21*r*22*r*22*⟩⟨in*(*M*2*, M*1) *out*(*M*1*, M*2)*⟩true* [[*iv*](#_bookmark6)]

We have Π*,* (*μ, w*) *|*= [*A*]*ϕ* if for all transitions (*μ, w*) *→tr* (*μ', w'*) such that (*μ', w'*) is obtained by applying in parallel the actions *A* and *tr ∈ {evrl, comm, diss}* corresponds to the kind of the actions *A*, Π*,* (*μ', w'*) *|*= *ϕ*. Since all evolution rules of *M*1 are non-cooperative, we have *M*1*, bbc |*= *⟨r*11*r*12*r*12*⟩true* iff *M*1*, bbc |*= [*r*11*r*12*r*12]*true*, i.e., just one transition is possible from *bbc*. If, e.g., we add to *M*1 the cooperative evolution rule *r*13 : *bc →* (*b, here*)(*c, out* ), then we also have *M*1*, bbc |*= *⟨r*12*r*13*⟩true*. The all transitions possible from *bbc* now are characterized by *M*1*, bbc |*= *⟨r*11*r*12*r*12*⟩true ∧ ⟨r*12*r*13*⟩true* and *M*1*, bbc |*= [*L*]*false* if *L /*= *r*11*r*12*r*12 and *L /*= *r*12*r*13. By *M*1*, bbc |*= [*L*]*false* we express that there is no any transition

such that *bbc →M*1

*w'* applying the evolution rules *L'*.

The definition of *L*Π allows legal formulas as *⟨L⟩⟨D⟩⟨C⟩true*, which are non- satisfiable, i.e., there is no membrane systems satisfying such a formula. The def- inition of *L*Π can be strengthened in order to remove such constructions, but we preferred to let it as simple as possible.

Using the modal language *L*Π with the satisfaction relation previously defined, we are able to express the behavior of the system Π. An evolution step (*μ, w*) *⇒* (*μ', w'*) of a membrane system Π is described as follows:

1. no dissolvings, no communications: ((*μ, w*) *⇒* (*μ', w'*) iff (*μ, w*) *→evrl* (*μ, w'*)); in that case there is a nonempty multiset *L* of rewrite actions such that Π*,* (*μ, w*) *|*= *⟨L⟩true* and for each nonempty set *C* of communications and nonempty set *D* of dissolvings, Π*,* (*μ, w'*) *|*= [*C*]*false* and Π*,* (*μ, w'*) *|*= [*D*]*false*;
2. no dissolvings: ((*μ, w*) *⇒* (*μ', w'*) iff (*μ, w*) *→evrl* (*μ, w'*) *→comm* (*μ, w''*)); in that case there are a nonempty multiset *L* of rule actions and a nonempty set *C* of communications such that Π*,* (*μ, w*) *|*= *⟨L⟩⟨C⟩true* and for each nonempty set *D* of dissolvings, Π*,* (*μ, w'*) *|*= [*D*]*false*;
3. no communications: ((*μ, w*) *⇒* (*μ', w'*) iff (*μ, w*) *→evrl* (*μ, w'*) *→comm* (*μ', w'*)); in that case there are a multiset *L* of rule actions and a nonempty set *D* of dissolvings such that Π*,* (*μ, w*) *|*= *⟨L⟩⟨D⟩true* and for each nonempty set *C* of communications, Π*,* (*μ, w'*) *|*= [*C*]*false*;
4. otherwise ((*μ, w*) *⇒* (*μ', w'*) iff (*μ, w*) *→evrl* (*μ, w'*) *→comm* (*μ, w''*) *→diss* (*μ', w'''*)); in that case there are a nonempty multiset *L* of rule actions, a nonempty set *C* of communications and a non-empty set *D* of dissolvings such that Π*,* (*μ, w*) *|*= *⟨L⟩⟨C⟩⟨D⟩true*.

The following result exhibits that the behavior of the membrane systems with the mpr control mechanism exposes a maximal concurrency degree.

**Proposition 3.1** *Let L be a nonempty multiset of rule actions, C a nonempty set*

*of communication actions, and D a nonempty set of dissolving actions.*

1. *If* Π*,* (*μ, w*) *|*= *⟨L⟩true, then* (*∀L' /*= *∅*)Π*,* (*μ, w*) *|*= *⟨L⟩*[*L'*]*false.*
2. *If* Π*,* (*μ, w*) *|*= *⟨C⟩true, then* (*∀C' /*= *∅*)Π*,* (*μ, w*) *|*= *⟨C⟩*[*C'*]*false.*
3. *If* Π*,* (*μ, w*) *|*= *⟨D⟩true, then* (*∀D' /*= *∅*)Π*,* (*μ, w*) *|*= *⟨D⟩*[*D'*]*false.*

The proof of Proposition [3.1](#_bookmark8) follows direct from the definitions of *→evrl* , *→comm* , and *→diss* , respectively. For the case of the rule actions, does also mater the fact that the evolution rules consume objects and produce messages, so a new rule can be applied only after the objects are distributed according to their targets from messages, i.e., after the occurrences of the communication actions.

Since the implementation of this semantics is difficult in practice, we may derive from it other equivalent semantics but with different concurrency degrees:

1. *true concurrency semantics |*=*tc*:
   1. if Π*,* (*μ, w*) *|*= *⟨A⟩ϕ*, then Π*,* (*μ, w*) *|*=*tc ⟨A⟩ϕ*;
   2. if Π*,* (*μ, w*) *|*=*tc ⟨A⟩ϕ* and *A*1 *An* is a partition of *A*, then Π*,* (*μ, w*) *|*=*tc*

*⟨A*1*⟩* *⟨An⟩ϕ*;

1. *interleaving semantics |*=*int* :
   1. if Π*,* (*μ, w*) *|*= *⟨A⟩ϕ* and *A* = *a*1 *... an*, then Π*,* (*μ, w*) *|*=*int ⟨a*1*⟩* *⟨an⟩ϕ*

(recall that *a*1 *an* is a (multi)set, so the actions *ai* can be written in any

order),

where *A* ranges over multiset of rule actions, sets of communication actions, and sets of dissolving actions. Obviously, *|*=*tc* and *|*=*int* requires appropriate definitions for

*→evrl* , *→comm* , and *→diss* , respectively. The above modal formula-based definitions for concurrency degrees are inspired from [[12](#_bookmark31)].

However, the modal language was designated as minimal with respect to the concurrency of the membrane systems. Besides the concurrency degree, there is other information which can be of interest regarding the current state: the structure of the system (relationships between regions), explicit description of the membership of a content to its own region, relationships between the objects of a content and so on.

# Strategy-based Rewrite Logic for Membrane Systems

In this section we recall from [[4](#_bookmark23)] the definition for the strategy-based rewrite logic for membrane systems. We further present here an algorithm for maximal parallel communication step. The correctness of this algorithm is based on Ko¨nig Theorem for the edge coloring of bipartite graphs. In [[4](#_bookmark23)] only an interleaving semantics is considered for communications and dissolvings.

Strategy-based rewrite logic for membrane systems was defined in [[4](#_bookmark23)] and spec- ifies a membrane system Π by a triple *SR*Π = (*R*Π*,* STRATΠ*,* SCTRLΠ), where *R*Π = (Σ*, E, R*) is a rewrite theory that specifies the control-free system Π and defined as in Section [2.2](#_bookmark4), STRATΠ specifies a strategy language for Π, and SCTRLΠ defines the strategy controllers for Π. A strategy controller is intended to equation- ally define the control mechanisms of Π. The rewrite strategies are used to guide

the rewriting according to the operational semantics of Π. The semantics of *SR*Π is given by a MEL theory *Proof* (Π), which includes the semantics of the strategies and the strategy controllers. We briefly describe here the last three theories.

The Equational Theory STRATΠ. We consider a minimal strategy language able to express the computations of a membrane system.

STRATΠ defines the syntax for strategies and consisting of:

* a sort *RuleLabel* for representing rules, together with a membership axiom

*r* : *RuleLabel* , for each rule *r* : *u → v* in *R*,

* a sort *Strategy* for strategies, and the subsort relation *RuleLabel < Strategy*,
* the strategy constructors for identity, failure, non-deterministic choice, and se- quential composition respectively:

*id fail* : *−→ Strategy*

+ : *Strategy Strategy −→ Strategy* [assoc comm]

; : *Strategy Strategy −→ Strategy* [assoc id : *id*]

* a congruence strategy operator for each of the constructors of *Soup*, *Membrane*

and *MembraneBag*:

: *Strategy Strategy −→ Strategy* [assoc comm]

*⟨ | ⟩* : *MembraneName Strategy → Strategy*

*⟨ | { }⟩* : *MembraneName Strategy Strategy −→ Strategy*

*,* : *Strategy Strategy −→ Strategy* [assoc comm]

The strategy language defined by the above theory was designed having in mind mainly the control of the evolution rules. This language can be enriched with new constructs needed for defining other control mechanisms over evolution rules [[2](#_bookmark21)] or to add certain control over the interaction rules. In Section [5](#_bookmark15) we sketch out an extension for the case of cooperation rules.

The Equational Theory SCTRLΠ. SCTRLΠ is the MEL theory consisting of:

* a sort *StrategyController* - for *strategy controllers*, together with the constants *mpr . . .* – corresponding to the control mechanisms, *evrl* – corresponding to evolution rules actions, *comm* – corresponding to communication actions, and *diss* – corresponding to dissolving actions,
* an operation *getCtrl* : *MembraneName −→ StrategyController* which returns the constant corresponding to the control mechanism of the membrane.

The equational theory *Proof* (Π). The proof-theoretical semantics of the specification (*R*Π*,* STRATΠ*,* SCTRLΠ) is given by a MEL-theory *Proof* (Π) which includes the semantics for strategies and the semantics for strategy controllers.

The semantics of strategies can be defined in different ways. In this paper, in order to keep the presentation as simple as possible, we consider the set-theoretical semantics [[14](#_bookmark33)] defined by the following additional operations:

[[ @ ]] : *Strategy State −→ Set{States}*

[[ @ ]] : *Strategy Set{States} −→ Set{States}*

together with the following equations:

[[*id* @*t*]] = *{t}*

[[*fail* @*t*]] = *∅*

[[*r*@*t*]] = *{t' | t* rewritten directly modulo *Ep* to *t'* using the rule *r* at top*}* [[*s*1 + *s*2@*t*]] = **[***s*1@*t*]] *∪* [[*s*2@*t*]]

[[*s*1; *s*2@*t*]] = **[***s*2@[[*s*1@*t*]]]]

[[*s*1*s*2@*w*1*w*2]] = *{w' w' | w' ∈* [[*si*@*wi*]]*,i* = 1*,* 2*}*

1 2 *i*

[[*⟨M | s⟩*@*⟨M | w⟩*]] = *{⟨M | w'⟩| w' ∈* [[*s*@*w*]]*}*

[[*s*1*, s*2@*t*1*, t*2]] = *{t' , t' | t' ∈* [[*si*@*ti*]]*,i* = 1*,* 2*}*

1 2 *i*

[[*⟨M | s*1*{s*2*}⟩*@*⟨M | w{t}⟩*]] = *{⟨M | w'{t'}⟩ | w' ∈* [[*s*1@*w*]]*, t' ∈* [[*s*2@*t*]]*}*

[[*s*@*∅*]] = *∅*

[[*s*@(*T ∪ {t}*)]] = **[***s*@*T* ]] *∪* [[*s*@*t*]]

where *State* is a supersort of *HotSoup*, *Membrane* and *MembraneBag*, *wi, w'* are

*i*

variables of sort *Soup*, *t, t', ti, t'* are variables of sort *State*, *T* a variable of sort

*i*

*Set{States}*, and *s, s**i* are variables of sort *Strategy*.

However, we assume that the operational semantics for strategies is able to implement a strategy as a concurrent (parallel) rewriting whenever it is possible (e.g., see Corollary [4.5](#_bookmark14)).

**Definition 4.1** We say that two strategy terms *s*1 and *s*2 are equivalent in *Proof* (Π), written *s*1 *≡ s*2, if and only if *Proof* (Π) *▶* [[*s*1@*t*]] = **[***s*2@*t* **]** for all state terms *t*.

**Proposition 4.2** *[*[*4*](#_bookmark23)*] The following equivalences are true in Proof* (Π)*:*

*s* + *s ≡ s id id ≡ id*

*s*; *fail ≡ fail*; *s ≡ fail s* + *fail ≡ s*

*⟨M | s* + *s'⟩≡ ⟨M | s⟩* + *⟨M | s'⟩ sfail ≡ fail s ≡ fail*

*⟨M | s*1 + *s' {s*2*}⟩≡ ⟨M | s*1*{s*2*}⟩* + *⟨M | s' {s*2*}⟩ s*1 (*s*2 + *s'* ) *≡ s*1 *s*2 + *s*1 *s'*

1 1 2 2

*⟨M | s*1*{s*2 + *s' }⟩≡ ⟨M | s*1*{s*2*}⟩* + *⟨M | s*1*{s' }⟩ s*1*,* (*s*2 + *s'* ) *≡ s*1*, s*2 + *s*1*, s'*

2 2 2 2

The semantics of the strategy controllers is given by means of two operations:

*getStrat* : *StrategyController State −→ Strategy*.

*getStrat* : *MembraneName StrategyController State −→ Strategy*

If for a given state *t* there are possible more than one evolution steps, then *getStrat* (*ctrl, t* ) returns a sum of strategies expressing this nondeterminism. Therefore the strategy returned by *getStrat* is unique up to *≡*.

The semantics of the strategy controller *evrl* is given by

*getStrat* (*evrl, ⟨ M | w ⟩*)= *⟨ M | getStrat* (*M , getCtrl* (*M* )*, w* ) *⟩*

*getStrat* (*evrl, ⟨ M | w { t1 ,..., tn } ⟩*)=

*⟨ M | getStrat* (*M , getCtrl* (*M* )*, w* ) *{ getStrat* (*evrl, t1* )*,..., getStrat* (*evrl, tn* ) *}⟩*

The first equation defines *getStrat* for the elementary membranes and the second one for the case when the membrane *M* includes other membranes.

The strategy controllers *comm* and *diss* used in the implementation presented in [[4](#_bookmark23)] have an interleaving semantics. In order to capture the maximal concurrency degree for the communication (resp. dissolving) rewrite rules, we have to add to the strategy language a new operator

*⟨ ... ⟩* : *Strategy ... Strategy −→ Strategy*

with the intuitive semantics that **[***⟨s*1*,..., sn⟩*@*t* **]** is the set of terms which can be obtained from *t* by applying in parallel the strategies *s*1*,..., sn* at non-overlapping positions in *t*.

Let *t* be a term encoding a configuration (*μ, w*) and let *k* be the maximum degree of *μ* (viewed as a tree). The tree *μ* is a bipartite graph and therefore it can be edge colored with *k* colors (by Ko¨nig Theorem, see, e.g., [[10](#_bookmark29)]) and this is the minimum of colors which can be used for a edge coloring. For each color *cl*, we consider two strategies *sl* = *⟨...r .. .⟩* and *sl* = *⟨... r .. .⟩* such that:

1. if *r* is *in*(*Mi, Mj*) then *r* is *out* (*Mj, Mi*) and vice-versa;
2. *r* occurs in *sl* iff *r* occurs in *sl*;
3. *in*(*Mi, Mj*) occurs in *sl* or in *sl* iff there is an edge (*i, j*) colored with *cl*.

It is obvious that *sl* and *sl* have the same number of rule labels occurrences and the two strategies send the messages between the same set of membrane pairs but in opposite directions: if one sends messages from *Mi* to *Mj*, the other one sends from *Mj* to *Mi*. The rules specified by *sl*, respectively *sl*, can be applied concurrently, due to the edge coloring properties. Therefore a strategy implementing *comm* with a maximum concurrency degree is *s*1; *s*1; *...* ; *sk*; *sk*.

Then an algorithm computing *getStrat* (*comm, t* )= *s*1; *s*1; *...* ; *sk*; *sk* is an equa- tional description of the edge coloring algorithm applied on the particular case of trees and where the colors are expressed as strategies.

In order to understand better this algorithm, we consider a simple example. Let Π be a membrane system with the tree structure *μ* = [[[ ]1]2[[ ]3]4]5. An edge coloring for *μ* is given by two colors: *{*(2*,* 1)*,* (5*,* 4)*}* and *{*(5*,* 2)*,* (4*,* 3)*}*. A configuration for Π is of the form *t* = *⟨ M*5 *| w*5 *{⟨ M*2 *| w*2 *{⟨ M*1 *| w*1 *⟩} ⟩, ⟨ M*4 *| w*4 *{⟨ M*3 *| w*3 *⟩}⟩} ⟩*. A possible strategy returned by *getStrat* (*comm, t* ) is *s*1; *s*1; *s*2; *s*2, where:

*s*1 = *⟨in*(*M*2*, M*1) *in*(*M*5*, M*4)*⟩ s*1 = *⟨out*(*M*1*, M*2) *out*(*M*4*, M*5) *s*2 = *⟨in*(*M*5*, M*2) *out*(*M*3*, M*4)*⟩ s*2 = *⟨out*(*M*2*, M*5) *in*(*M*4*, M*3)*⟩*

The following result summarizes the above discussion:

**Proposition 4.3** *Let* Π *be a membrane system, t a term encoding a conﬁguration* (*μ, w*)*, k the maximum concurrency degree of μ. If Proof* (Π) *▶ getStrat* (*comm, t*)= *s, then s* = *s*1; *...* ; *s*2*k and for each i, if t' ∈* [[*si*@*t*]]*, then t' can be obtained from t*

*by a concurrent one-step rewriting.*

The algorithm for *getStrat* (*diss, t* ) is similar.

Regarding the control mechanisms of an elementary membrane, in this paper we are interested in the strategy controller *mpr*. The semantics of *mpr*, *getStrat* (*M , mpr, w* ) with *w* : *Soup*, is given by the means of two auxiliary operations

*mpr* : *RuleSet —→ StrategyController*

*mpr* : *RuleSet Soup RuleSet Strategy —→ StrategyController*

together with the following equations:

*getStrat* (*M , mpr, w* )= *getStrat* (*mpr* (*getRules*(*M* ))*, w* ) *getStrat* (*mpr* (*RS* )*, w* )= *getStrat* (*mpr* (*RS, w, none, fail* )*, w* ) *getStrat* (*M , mpr* ((*RS, r* )*, w, RS′, S* )*, w* )=

(*r getStrat* (*M , mpr* ((*RS, r* )*, w′, none, id* ))) + *getStrat* (*mpr* ((*RS, r* )*, w,* (*RS′, r* )*, fail* )*, w* )

if *lhs*(*r* )*w′* := *w Λ notIn*(*r, RS′*)

*getStrat* (*M , mpr* (*RS, w, RS′, S* )*, w* )= *S* [owise]*.*

The attribute [owise] used in the last equation means that this equation is condi- tional, where the condition accumulates the cases when none of the similar equations can be applied.

The third argument of the quaternary operation *mpr* represents the set of rules already used for the construction of a strategy applicable to *w*; such iterative ap- plication allows to equally consider each of the rules given in the first argument for computing a strategy. As soon as a rule is tested as applicable and is used in a concatenation for building a strategy, then the fourth argument of *mpr* becomes *id* to mark the success. When the second and the third equations can no longer be applied, the fourth one is applied: if last argument of *mpr* is *fail*, this means no rule was applicable, and the strategy computed is *fail* by Proposition [4.2](#_bookmark10); otherwise, the strategy *id* is concatenated to the multiset of rules already found as applicable.

An evolution step in strategy-based rewrite semantics is defined as follows:

* *t ⇒evrl t*1 iff *Уroof* (Π) *▶ t*1 *∈* [[*getStrat* (*evrl, t*)@*t*]],
* *t*1 *⇒comm t*2 iff *Уroof* (Π) *▶ t*2 *∈* [[*getStrat* (*comm, t*1)@*t*1 **]**, and
* *t*2 *⇒diss t*3 iff *Уroof* (Π) *▶ t*3 *∈* [[*getStrat* (*diss, t*2)@*t*]].

The following result is a direct consequence of the definition of *getStrat* (*M, ctrl, w*) and of Proposition [4.2](#_bookmark10).

**Proposition 4.4** *[*[*4*](#_bookmark23)*] Let M be a membrane. If w is a term of sort Soup and Уroof* (Π) *▶ getStrat* (*M, mpr, w*) = *s with s /*= *fail, then s is equivalent to a sum of strategy terms si of the form ri*1 *... rin id, where ri*1 *... rin is a multiset of rule labels. Moreover,* [[*si*@*w*]] */*= *∅.*

**Corollary 4.5** *If Уroof* (Π) *▶ getStrat* (*M, mpr, w*) = *s with s /*= *fail and w' ∈*

[[*s*@*w*]]*, then w' can be obtained from w by a concurrent one-step rewriting.*

The above corollary is essential for the main result proved in the next section.

# Concurrency in Strategy-based Rewrite Semantics

This section includes the main results of the paper. We use the operational corre- spondence between a membrane system and its strategy-based rewrite semantics [[4](#_bookmark23)] to show how the modal formulas can be used for expressing the concurrency degree for computations in the strategy-based rewrite semantics. Then we compare this concurrency degree with that of the original membrane system.

Throughout of this section we consider a membrane system Π, its representation *SR*Π = (*R*Π*,* STRATΠ*,* SCTRLΠ) as strategy-based rewrite theory, and *Уroof* (Π) the theory giving semantics to *SR*Π.

The static relationship between Π and *SR*Π is given by a function *ψ* defined as follows:

1. if *w* is a multiset of objects, then *ψ*(*w*) is the corresponding ground term of sort *Soup*, denoted also by *w* (recall that each object of Π is defined as a constant of sort *Soup* in (Σ*p, Ep*));
2. if *M* is an elementary membrane with content *w*, then *ψ*(*M* )= *⟨M | w⟩*;
3. if *M* is a compound membrane with content *w* and the children *M*1*,..., Mn*, then *ψ*(*M* )= *⟨M | w {ψ*(*M*1)*,..., ψ*(*Mn*)*}⟩*;
4. *ψ*(*μ, w*) = *ψ*(*M* ), where *M* is the skin of Π (the relationship between *w* and

*ψ*(*M* ) is implicitly given here by means of *μ*).

The operational semantics correspondence is given by

(*μ, w*) *→ctrl* (*μ', w'*) iff *ψ*(*μ, w*) *⇒ctrl ψ*(*μ', w'*)

iff *Уroof* (Π) *▶ ψ*(*μ', w'*) *∈* [[*getStrat*(*ctrl , ψ*(*μ, w*))@*ψ*(*μ, w*)]]

where *ctrl ∈ {evrl, comm, diss}*. See [[4](#_bookmark23)] for more details.

The parallelism of the strategy in the strategy-based semantics is supplied by the congruence operators corresponding to concatenation (union) of multisets of soups and membranes, respectively. In order to express this parallelism, we associate a modal formula *ψ'*(*s*) to a strategy term *s* as follows:

1. *ψ'*(*id* )= *true*, *ψ'*(*fail* )= *false*;
2. *ψ'*(*r*)= *⟨r⟩true* if *r* is the label of a evolution/comunication/structural rewrite rule;
3. *ψ'*(*s*1 + *s*2)= *ψ'*(*s*1) *Λ ψ'*(*s*2);
4. *ψ'*(*s*1; *s*2)= *⟨A*1*⟩ϕ*2 if *ψ'*(*s*1)= *⟨A*1*⟩true* and *ψ'*(*s*2)= *ϕ*2;
5. *ψ'*(*s*1*s*2)= *⟨A*1 *A*2*⟩*(*ϕ*1 *Λ ϕ*2) if *ψ'*(*si*)= *⟨Ai⟩ϕi* for *i* = 1*,* 2;
6. *ψ'*(*⟨M | s⟩*)= *ψ'*(*s*);
7. *ψ'*(*⟨M | s*1 *{s*2*}⟩*)= *⟨A*1 *A*2*⟩*(*ϕ*1 *Λ ϕ*2) if *ψ'*(*si*)= *⟨Ai⟩ϕi* for *i* = 1*,* 2;
8. *ψ'*(*s*1*, s*2)= *⟨A*1 *A*2*⟩*(*ϕ*1 *Λ ϕ*2) if *ψ'*(*si*)= *⟨Ai⟩ϕi* for *i* = 1*,* 2.

We recall that the rule labels are unique and *SR*Π stores the membership of rules to membranes, so we can recover the information lost by putting all the rule actions from different nesting levels in the same multiset. The function *ψ'* is partial; for instance, *ψ'*(*s*1; *s*2) is not defined for all *s*1. Moreover, in order to have defined formulas like *ψ'*(*s id* ) we assume that *ϕ ≡ ⟨∅⟩ϕ*.

* 1. *Concurrency of Evolution Rules Actions*

We have all the elements to compare the concurrency degrees of a membrane system Π and its strategy-based rewrite specification (*R*Π*,* STRATΠ*,* SCTRLΠ).

**Lemma 5.1** *Let M be an elementary membrane and w its content. If Уroof* (Π) *▶ getStrat* (*evrl, ⟨M |w⟩*)= *s, then ψ'*(*s*) *is well-deﬁned and has the form ⟨L*1*⟩true Λ... Λ ⟨Lk⟩true.*

The proof of the above result follows directly from Proposition [4.4](#_bookmark13).

**Lemma 5.2** *Let M be an elementary membrane and w its content. M, w |*=

*⟨L⟩true if and only if Уroof* (Π) *▶ getStrat* (*evrl, ⟨ M | w ⟩*) = *s and there is ϕ*

*such that ψ'*(*s*)= *ϕ Λ ⟨L⟩true.*

**Proof.** We assume that *L* = *{r*1*,..., rn}*. If *M, w |*= *⟨L⟩true*, then *s* = *s'* + *r*1 *... rnid* from the definition of *getStrat*. The converse implication follows by ap- plying Proposition [4.4](#_bookmark13) and Lemma [5.1](#_bookmark16).

Now we are able to prove the first main result of this paper:

**Theorem 5.3** *Let L be a nonempty multiset of evolution rules actions.*

1. *If* Π*,* (*μ, w*) *|*= *⟨L⟩true then there are the strategy terms s, s' such that ψ'*(*s'*) =

*⟨L⟩true and Уroof* (Π) *▶ getStrat* (*evrl, ψ*(*μ, w*)) = *s* + *s'.*

1. *Conversely, if Уroof* (Π) *▶ getStrat* (*evrl, ψ*(*μ, w*)) = *s then ψ'*(*s*) *is well-deﬁned and* Π*,* (*μ, w*) *|*= *ψ'*(*s*)*.*

**Proof.** If *Уroof* (Π) *▶ getStrat* (*evrl, ψ*(*μ, w*)) = *s*, then *s* is a sum of strategies by Proposition [4.2](#_bookmark10) and each member of the sum defines a transition. The conclusions of the theorem follows by the operational semantics correspondence and Lemma

[5.2](#_bookmark17).

It is worth noting that if *Уroof* (Π) *▶ getStrat* (*ψ*(Π*, w*)) = *s* and *si* is a sum member of *s*, then *si* can be implemented by a concurrent one-step *R*Π-rewriting (see Corollary [4.5](#_bookmark14)). Therefore Theorem [5.3](#_bookmark18) says that *the maximal concurrency of the rewrite actions is preserved by the strategy-based rewrite semantics*.

* 1. *Concurrency Of Communication Actions*

Let us consider first a parent-child pair (*M, M'*) of membranes such that there are messages in *M* to be sent to *M'* and, conversely, there are messages in *M'* to be sent to *M* . In other words, the communication between them is described by the modal formula *⟨in*(*M, M'*) *out* (*M',M* )*⟩true*. The communication between *M* and *M'* can be implemented by interleaving the *in* and *out* rules: *s* = *in*(*M, M'*); *out* (*M',M* ) or *s'* = *out* (*M',M* ); *in*(*M, M'*). We have *ψ'*(*s*)= *⟨in*(*M, M'*)*⟩⟨out* (*M',M* )*⟩true*.

This can be extended to the general case. We have seen that the algorithm presented on page [13](#_bookmark11) computes strategies which apply the communication rules in an concurrent way and as much as it is possible. In fact, by Proposition [4.3](#_bookmark12), we have that the *maximum concurrency degree of the communication which can be*

*described in the rewrite semantics is that given by rewriting logic*. This is because the communication rewrite rules are global and not local as it is the case of evolution rules.

We conclude now the second main result, namely that *the true concurrency of the communication actions is partially preserved by the strategy-based rewrite semantics, i.e., it is described by a combination of true concurrency and interleaving concurrency*. This is formalized by the following result:

**Theorem 5.4** *Let* Π *be a membrane system and* (*μ, w*) *a conﬁguration of* Π *such that* Π*,* (*μ, w*) *|*= *⟨C⟩true, where C is a nonempty set of communication actions. Let s be the strategy such that Уroof* (Π) *▶ getStrat* (*comm, ψ*(*μ, w*)) = *s. Then there is a partition C*1 *... Cn of C such that ψ'*(*s*)= *⟨C*1*⟩ ... ⟨Cn⟩true.*

Since Π*,* (*μ, w*) *|*= *⟨C⟩true*, it follows that Π has at least two membranes. The proof of Theorem [5.4](#_bookmark19) is a direct consequence of the algorithm presented on page [13](#_bookmark11). It is worth noting that if *C* says that there are parent-child membranes which do not communicate or communicate in only one direction, *in* or *out*, then *n* given by Theorem [5.4](#_bookmark19) could be less than 2*k*, where *k* is the maximum degree of *μ*. If we add to *R*Π the following rule, which simultaneously exchanges the messages between two membranes:

*' ' ' '*

*in-out*(*M, M* ): *⟨ M | w*1(*w*2*, inM'* ) *{⟨ M | w*1*,* (*w*2*, out* ) *{ X } ⟩,Y }⟩ →*

*⟨ M | w*1*w' {⟨ M' | w'w*2 *{ X } ⟩,Y }⟩*

2

and *ψ'*(*in-out*(*M, M'*)) = *⟨in*(*M, M'*) *out* (*M',M* )*⟩*, then we get *n ≤ k*.

* 1. *Concurrency of Structural Actions*

If the structural actions include only dissolvings, then we get a similar conclusion as the one for the communication actions. However, since the structural actions change the structure of the system, the maximal concurrency of structural actions cannot always be described by interleaving concurrency in the strategy-based rewrite semantics. For the case of dissolvings, because we consider only actions with one parameter, the label of the dissolving membrane, the interleaving is preserved. For instance, the double-dissolving in the configuration ([1[2[3]3]2]1*, w*1*, w*2*δ, w*3*δ*) could be described by one of the following two strategies:

*s* = *diss*(*M*2); *diss*(*M*3) or *s'* = *diss*(*M*3); *diss*(*M*2).

Obviously *ψ'*(*s* + *s'*) expresses the interleaving of the two dissolvings. This does not remain true if the dissolving actions are of the form *diss*(*M, M'*).

**Theorem 5.5** *Let* Π *be a membrane system and* (*μ, w*) *a conﬁguration of* Π *such that* Π*,* (*μ, w*) *|*= *⟨D⟩true, where D is a nonempty set of dissolving actions. Let s be the strategy such that Уroof* (Π) *▶ getStrat* (*diss, ψ*(*μ, w*)) = *s. Then there is a partition D*1 *... Dn of D such that ψ'*(*s*)= *⟨D*1*⟩ ... ⟨Dn⟩true.*

# 6 Conclusion

In this paper we give a partial answer to the question if it is possible to define a rewrite semantics for the membrane systems. It was recently shown [[13](#_bookmark32)] that rewriting logic-based semantics cannot preserve the maximal concurrency of the rewrite actions. The main reason is the locality of the evolution rules w.r.t. their membership to the regions. The rewrite rules encoding the evolution rules belonging to a region must share this locality and hence they cannot be applied concurrently.

In this paper we show that the strategy-based rewrite semantics introduced in [[4](#_bookmark23)] preserves the maximal concurrency of the rewrite actions. In the strategy- based rewrite semantics the control mechanisms of the membranes are modeled by strategy controllers. A strategy controller analyzes the current state and computes a strategy term describing all possible transitions from the current state. The strategy term corresponding to a membrane can be computed in such a way it preserves the concurrency degree given by the control mechanism. The semantics of the strategy controllers is equationally defined and therefore it does not affect the behavior described by the strategy-based theory.

Regarding the concurrency of the cooperation (communication and structural) actions, the two rewrite semantics are equivalent. Since the rewrite rules governing these actions are global, the concurrency given by the rewriting logic is the maximum we can obtain.

In a recent paper, S¸erb˘anu¸ta˘ et al. [[20](#_bookmark39)] investigate the same problem of the faithful implementation of the membranes but using the framework K [[19](#_bookmark38)]. Their result is based on the following two facts:

1. a special encoding of the P systems by tagging the rewrite rules and the objects with the path in the structure-tree from the root to the membrane *M* , and
2. the rewriting rules in K can be applied concurrently even when they overlap, assuming that they do not change the overlapped portion of the term (may overlap on “read only” parts).

In this paper we consider the particular case of transition P systems [[18](#_bookmark37)]. There is a large variety of P systems. We think that the strategy-based rewrite semantics can faithfully describe almost all mechanisms used for controlling the evolution rules. It remains to investigate what happens with the concurrency degree of the cooperation actions for different more general structures, e.g., tissue-like structures or neural-like structures.

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