

CIS 770: Formal Language Theory

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Non-Context Free Languages

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Answer

L is not context-free, because

- Recognizing if $w \in L$ requires remembering the number of as seen, bs seen and cs seen
- We can remember one of them on the stack (say as), and compare them to another (say bs) by popping, but not to both bs and cs

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Are there languages that are not context-free? What about $L = \{a^n b^n c^n \mid n \geq 0\}$?

Answer

L is not context-free, because

- Recognizing if $w \in L$ requires remembering the number of a s seen, b s seen and c s seen
- We can remember one of them on the stack (say a s), and compare them to another (say b s) by popping, but not to both b s and c s

The precise way to capture this intuition is through the pumping lemma

Pumping Lemma for CFLs

Informal Statement

For all sufficiently long strings z in a context free language L , it is possible to find **two** substrings, not too far apart, that can be **simultaneously** pumped to obtain more words in L .

Pumping Lemma for CFLs

Formal Statement

Lemma

If L is a CFL, then $\exists p$ (pumping length) such that $\forall z \in L$, if $|z| \geq p$ then $\exists u, v, w, x, y$ such that $z = uvwxy$

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- ① $|vwx| \leq p$
- ② $|vx| > 0$
- ③ $\forall i \geq 0. uv^iwx^iy \in L$

Two Pumping Lemmas side-by-side

Context-Free Languages

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Regular Languages

If L is a regular language, then $\exists p$ (pumping length) such that $\forall z \in L$, if $|z| \geq p$ then $\exists u, v, w$ such that $z = uvw$

- ① $|uv| \leq p$
- ② $|v| > 0$
- ③ $\forall i \geq 0. uv^iw \in L$

Pumping Lemma for CFLs

Game View

Game between **Defender**, who claims L satisfies the pumping condition, and **Challenger**, who claims L does not.

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Pick $z \in L$ s.t. $|z| \geq p$

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Divide z into u, v, w, x, y

s.t. $|vwx| \leq p$, and $|vx| > 0$

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Pumping Lemma: If L is CFL, then there is always a winning strategy for the defender (i.e., challenger will get stuck).

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Pumping Lemma: If L is CFL, then there is always a winning strategy for the defender (i.e., challenger will get stuck).

Pumping Lemma (in contrapositive): If there is a winning strategy for the challenger, then L is not CFL.

Consequences of Pumping Lemma

- If L is context-free then L satisfies the pumping lemma.

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- If L is context-free then L satisfies the pumping lemma.
- If L satisfies the pumping lemma that **does not** mean L is context-free
- If L does not satisfy the pumping lemma (i.e., challenger can win the game, *no matter* what the defender does) then L is not context-free.

Example I

Proposition

$L_{anbncn} = \{a^n b^n c^n \mid n \geq 0\}$ is not a CFL.

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- Consider $z = a^p b^p c^p \in L_{anbncn}$.
- Since $|z| > p$, there are u, v, w, x, y such that $z = uvwxy$, $|vwx| \leq p$, $|vx| > 0$ and $uv^i wx^i y \in L$ for all $i \geq 0$.

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- Since $|vwx| \leq p$, vwx cannot contain all three of the symbols a, b, c , because there are p b s. So vwx either does not have any a s or does not have any b s or does not have any c s.



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- Since $|vwx| \leq p$, vwx cannot contain all three of the symbols a, b, c , because there are p b s. So vwx either does not have any a s or does not have any b s or does not have any c s. Suppose, (wlog) vwx does not have any a s.



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- Since $|vwx| \leq p$, vwx cannot contain all three of the symbols a, b, c , because there are p b s. So vwx either does not have any a s or does not have any b s or does not have any c s. Suppose, (wlog) vwx does not have any a s. Then $uv^0 wx^0 y = uwy$ contains more a s than either b s or c s. Hence $uwy \notin L$. □

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- Since $|vwx| \leq p$, v, x cannot contain both as and cs , nor can it contain both bs and ds . Further $|vx| > 0$. Now $uv^0 wx^0 y = uwy \notin L$, because it either contains fewer as than cs , or fewer cs than as , or fewer bs than ds , or fewer ds than bs . □

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Example III

Wrong Proof

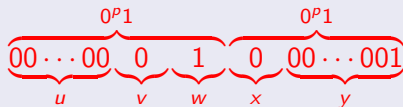
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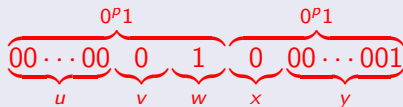
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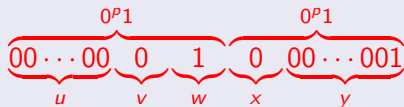
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- So is E CFL? No!



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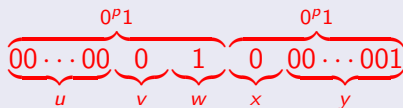
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Suppose E is context-free. Let p be the pumping length.

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- So is E CFL? No! Does E satisfy the pumping lemma?



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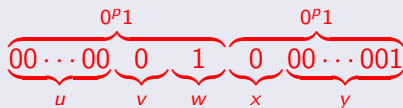
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- Since $|z| > p$, there are u, v, w, x, y such that $z = uvwxy$, $|vwx| \leq p$, $|vx| > 0$ and $uv^iwx^iy \in L$ for all $i \geq 0$.

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- vwx must straddle the midpoint of z .

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- vwx must straddle the midpoint of z .
 - Suppose vwx is only in the first half. Then $uv^0 wx^0 y$ is of the form $0^i 1^j 0^p 1^p$, where $0 \leq i, j \leq p$ and either i or j is strictly less than p .

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 - Suppose vwx is only in the first half. Then $uv^0 wx^0 y$ is of the form $0^i 1^j 0^p 1^p$, where $0 \leq i, j \leq p$ and either i or j is strictly less than p .
 - The argument is similar if vwx is only in the second half. $\dots \rightarrow$

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Proof (contd).

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- Suppose vwx straddles the middle.

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- Suppose vwx straddles the middle. Then uv^0wx^0y must be of the form $0^p1^i0^j1^p$, where either i or j is not p .

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Proof (contd).

- Suppose vwx straddles the middle. Then uv^0wx^0y must be of the form $0^p1^i0^j1^p$, where either i or j is not p . Thus, $uv^0wx^0y \notin E$. □

Proof of Pumping Lemma

Recall ...

Lemma

If L is a CFL, then $\exists p$ (pumping length) such that $\forall z \in L$, if $|z| \geq p$ then $\exists u, v, w, x, y$ such that $z = uvwxy$

- ① $|vwx| \leq p$
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- ③ $\forall i \geq 0. uv^iwx^iy \in L$

Chomsky Normal Form

CNF

Productions are of the form $A \rightarrow BC$ or $A \rightarrow a$

Reduction to Normal Form

For every grammar G such that $\epsilon \notin L(G)$, there is an equivalent grammar G' in CNF such that $L(G) = L(G')$.

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Unit Productions and ϵ -productions

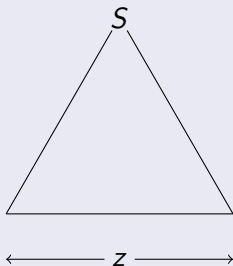
- Unit Productions: Rules of the form $A \rightarrow B$
- ϵ Productions: Rules of the form $A \rightarrow \epsilon$

Proof Idea

Let G be a CFG in **Chomsky Normal Form** such that $L(G) = L$.
Let z be a “very long” string in L (“very long” made precise later).

Proof Idea

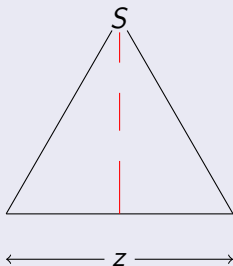
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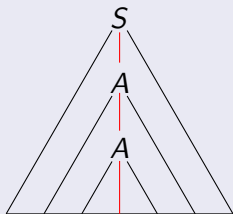


Parse Tree for z

- Since $z \in L$ there is a parse tree for z
- Since z is very long, the parse tree (which is a binary tree) must be “very tall”

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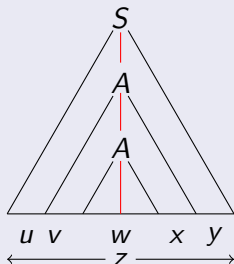


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- Since z is very long, the parse tree (which is a binary tree) must be “very tall”
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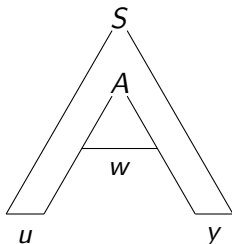
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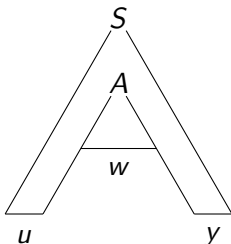
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- Since z is very long, the parse tree (which is a binary tree) must be “very tall”
- The longest path in the tree, by pigeon hole principle, must have some variable (say) A repeat. Let u, v, w, x, y be as shown.

Pumping down

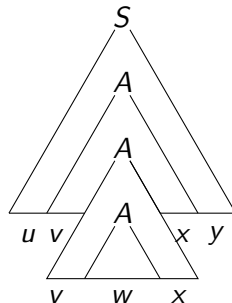


Pumping zero times

Pumping down and up

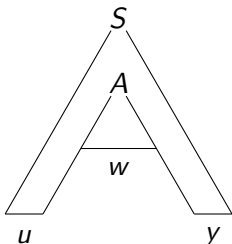


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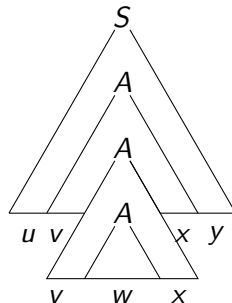


Pumping two times

Pumping down and up



Pumping zero times



Pumping two times

- Thus, uv^iwx^iy has a parse tree, for any i .

Proof of Pumping Lemma

Existence of tall parse trees

Proof.

Let G be a grammar in **Chomsky Normal Form** with k variables such that $L(G) = L$. Take $p = 2^k$. Consider $z \in L$ such that $|z| \geq p = 2^k$.

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 - Parse trees of G are binary trees
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 - $|z|$ = Number of leaves in parse tree of $z = 2^k \leq 2^{h-1}$. Thus, $h \geq k + 1$→

Proof of Pumping Lemma

Repeated Variables

Proof (contd).

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Proof (contd).

- A parse tree for z has a path of length $k + 1$

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Proof (contd).

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Proof of Pumping Lemma

Repeated Variables

Proof (contd).

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- A path of length $k + 1$ has $k + 2$ vertices, out of which the last one is leaf that is labelled by a terminal; thus, there are at least $k + 1$ internal vertices on path.

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- Thus, there must be two vertices n_1 and n_2 on this path such that n_1 and n_2 have the same label (say A) and n_1 is an ancestor of n_2 .

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- Let the yield of tree rooted at n_2 be w , and yield of n_1 be vwx .

Proof of Pumping Lemma

Repeated Variables

Proof (contd).

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- A path of length $k + 1$ has $k + 2$ vertices, out of which the last one is leaf that is labelled by a terminal; thus, there are at least $k + 1$ internal vertices on path.
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- Let the yield of tree rooted at n_2 be w , and yield of n_1 be vw . Yield of the root = z is say $uvwxy$→

Proof of Pumping Lemma

Properties of u, v, w, x, y

Proof (contd).

Proof of Pumping Lemma

Properties of u, v, w, x, y

Proof (contd).

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Proof (contd).

- Height of n_1 can be assumed to be at most $k + 1$; thus, the yield of n_1 (vwx) is at most $2^k = p$.

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Proof (contd).

- Height of n_1 can be assumed to be at most $k + 1$; thus, the yield of n_1 (vwx) is at most $2^k = p$.
- $n_1 \neq n_2$.

Proof of Pumping Lemma

Properties of u, v, w, x, y

Proof (contd).

- Height of n_1 can be assumed to be at most $k + 1$; thus, the yield of n_1 ($vw x$) is at most $2^k = p$.
- $n_1 \neq n_2$. Since the grammar has no ϵ -productions and no unit-productions, $vw x \neq w$. i.e., $|vx| > 0$.

...→

Proof of Pumping Lemma

Pumping the strings

Proof (contd).

Based on the parse tree for z , and definitions of u, v, w, x, y , we have

Proof of Pumping Lemma

Pumping the strings

Proof (contd).

Based on the parse tree for z , and definitions of u, v, w, x, y , we have

- There is a parse tree with yield uAy and root S , obtained by not expanding n_1 . Thus, $S \xRightarrow{*} uAy$.

Proof of Pumping Lemma

Pumping the strings

Proof (contd).

Based on the parse tree for z , and definitions of u, v, w, x, y , we have

- There is a parse tree with yield uAy and root S , obtained by not expanding n_1 . Thus, $S \xRightarrow{*} uAy$.
- There is a parse tree with yield vAx and root A , obtained from n_1 and not expanding n_2 . Thus, $A \xRightarrow{*} vAx$.

Proof of Pumping Lemma

Pumping the strings

Proof (contd).

Based on the parse tree for z , and definitions of u, v, w, x, y , we have

- There is a parse tree with yield uAy and root S , obtained by not expanding n_1 . Thus, $S \xRightarrow{*} uAy$.
- There is a parse tree with yield vAx and root A , obtained from n_1 and not expanding n_2 . Thus, $A \xRightarrow{*} vAx$.
- There is a parse tree with yield w and root A ; this is the tree rooted at n_2 . Thus, $A \xRightarrow{*} w$.

Proof of Pumping Lemma

Pumping the strings

Proof (contd).

Based on the parse tree for z , and definitions of u, v, w, x, y , we have

- There is a parse tree with yield uAy and root S , obtained by not expanding n_1 . Thus, $S \xRightarrow{*} uAy$.
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- There is a parse tree with yield w and root A ; this is the tree rooted at n_2 . Thus, $A \xRightarrow{*} w$.

Putting it together, we have

$$S \xRightarrow{*} uAy \xRightarrow{*} uvAxy \xRightarrow{*} uvvAxxxy \xRightarrow{*} \dots \xRightarrow{*} uv^iAx^i y \xRightarrow{*} uv^iwx^i y \quad \square$$