

# Compiler Technology of Programming Languages

## Chapter 4

# Formal Grammars and Parsing

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# Formal Grammars and Parsing

## Contents:

- Context-Free Grammars:  
    Concepts and Notation
- Properties of CFG
- Parsers and Recognizers
- Grammar Analysis Algorithms

# Introduction

- Why using CFG
  - CFG gives a precise syntactic specification of a programming language.
  - Enabling automatic translator generator
  - Language extension becomes easier
- The role of the parser
  - Taking tokens from scanner, parsing, reporting syntax errors
  - Not just parsing, in a *syntax-directed* translator, the parser also conducts type checking, semantic analysis and IR generation.

# Example of CFG

- A C– program is made out of functions,
- a function out of declarations and blocks,
- a block out of statements,
- a statement out of expressions, ... etc

`<program> → <global_decl_list>`

`<global_decl_list> → <global_decl_list><global_decl> | λ`

`<global_decl> → <decl_list> <function_decl>`

`<function_decl> → <type> id ( <param_list> ) { <block> }`

`<block> → <decl_list> <statement_list> | λ`

`<decl_list> → <decl_list> <decl> | <decl> | λ`

`<decl> → <type_decl> | <var_decl>`

`<type> → void | int | float`

`<statement_list> → ....`

`<statement> → { <block> }`

pay attention to

**Repetitions and Recursions !!**

# Example of Statements

## ■ Selection statements

**if** ( <expression> ) <statement>

**if** ( <expression> ) <statement> **else** <statement>

## ■ Iteration statements

**while** ( <expression> ) <statement>

**for** ( <expression>; <expression>; <expression> )  
<statement>

## ■ Other C statements

**do** <statement> **while** ( <expression> ) ;

**switch** ( <expression> ) <statement>

labeled statements, jump statement, ... etc.

# CFG

- A context-free grammar  $G = (V_t, V_n, S, P)$ 
  - $V_t$ : A finite **terminal** vocabulary
    - The token set produced by scanner
  - $V_n$ : A finite set of **nonterminal** vocabulary
    - Intermediate symbols
  - $S$ : A start symbol,  $S \in V_n$  that starts all derivations
    - Also called goal symbol
  - $P$ : a finite set of productions (rewriting rules) of the form  $A \rightarrow X_1 X_2 \dots X_m$ 
    - $A \in V_n$ ,  $X_i \in V_n \cup V_t$ ,  $1 \leq i \leq m$
    - $A \rightarrow \lambda$  is a valid production

How is CFG  
different from  
RE/DFA ?

# CFG

## ■ Other notation

- Vocabulary  $V$  of  $G$ ,
  - $V = V_n \cup V_t$
- $L(G)$ , the set of string  $s$  derivable from  $S$ 
  - Context-free language of grammar  $G$
- Notational conventions
  - $a, b, c, \dots$  denote symbols in  $V_t$
  - $A, B, C, \dots$  denote symbols in  $V_n$   
*(or some names enclosed in <>)*
  - $U, V, W, \dots$  denote symbols in  $V$
  - $\alpha, \beta, \gamma, \dots$  denote strings in  $V^*$
  - $u, v, w, \dots$  denote strings in  $V_t^*$

# CFG

- Derivation
  - One step derivation
    - If  $A \rightarrow \gamma$ , then  $\alpha A \beta \Rightarrow \alpha \gamma \beta$
  - One or more steps derivation  $\Rightarrow^+$
  - Zero or more steps derivation  $\Rightarrow^*$
- If  $S \Rightarrow^* \beta$ , then  $\beta$  is said to be sentential form of the CFG
  - SF(G) is the set of sentential forms of grammar G
- The language  $L(G)$  generated by G is the set of terminal strings  $w$  such that  $S \Rightarrow^+ w$ . The string  $w$  is called a sentence of G.

$$L(G) = \{w \in V_t^* \mid S \Rightarrow^+ w\}$$

# CFG

## Left-most derivation

denoted by  $\Rightarrow_{\text{lm}}$ ,  $\Rightarrow^+$ ,  $\Rightarrow^*$

example of leftmost derivation of  $b(c+c)$

$$G_0 \left\{ \begin{array}{l} E \rightarrow \text{Prefix}(E) \\ E \rightarrow c \text{ Tail} \\ \text{Prefix} \rightarrow b \\ \text{Prefix} \rightarrow \lambda \\ \text{Tail} \rightarrow +E \\ \text{Tail} \rightarrow \lambda \end{array} \right. \quad \begin{array}{l} E \Rightarrow_{\text{lm}} \text{Prefix}(E) \\ \Rightarrow_{\text{lm}} b(E) \\ \Rightarrow_{\text{lm}} b(\text{c Tail}) \\ \Rightarrow_{\text{lm}} b(\text{c+E}) \\ \Rightarrow_{\text{lm}} b(\text{c+c Tail}) \\ \Rightarrow_{\text{lm}} b(\text{c+c}) \end{array}$$

- Top-down parsing is to come up with a *leftmost* derivation.

# CFG

## Right-most derivation

denoted by  $\Rightarrow_{rm}$ ,  $\Rightarrow^+$ ,  $\Rightarrow^*$

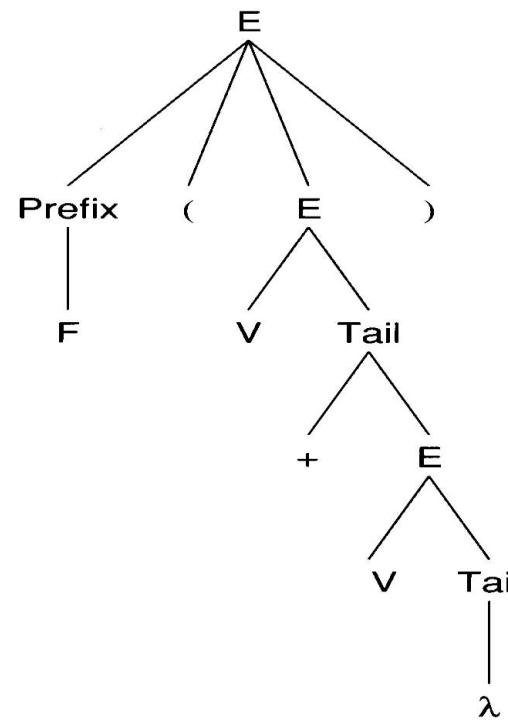
example of rightmost derivation of  $b(c+c)$

$$G_0 \left\{ \begin{array}{l} E \rightarrow \text{Prefix}(E) \\ E \rightarrow c \text{ Tail} \\ \text{Prefix} \rightarrow b \\ \text{Prefix} \rightarrow \lambda \\ \text{Tail} \rightarrow +E \\ \text{Tail} \rightarrow \lambda \end{array} \right. \quad \begin{array}{l} E \Rightarrow_{rm} \text{Prefix}(E) \\ \Rightarrow_{rm} \text{Prefix}(c \text{ Tail}) \\ \Rightarrow_{rm} \text{Prefix}(c+E) \\ \Rightarrow_{rm} \text{Prefix}(c+c \text{ Tail}) \\ \Rightarrow_{rm} \text{Prefix}(c+c) \\ \Rightarrow_{rm} b(c+c) \end{array}$$

- Bottom-up parsing is to *discover* a *rightmost* derivation, it reverses the derivation.

# Parse Tree and Derivation

A Parse tree can be viewed as a graphical representation for a derivation that ignore replacement order.



**Figure 4.1** The Parse Tree Corresponding to  $F(V+V)$

# Phrases and Handles

- **phrase**

a sequence of symbols descended from a single nonterminal in the parse tree

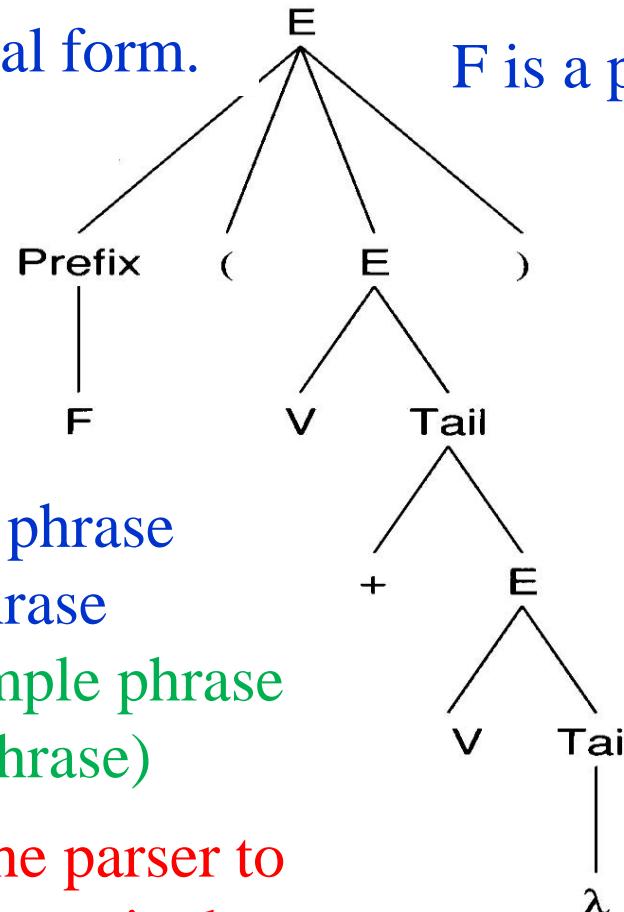
– A **simple** or **prime** phrase is a phrase that contains no smaller phrase.

- The **handle** of a sentential form is the left-most simple phrase

# Phrases and Handles

$F(E)$  is a sentential form.

$F$  is a phrase, also a handle



$V$  Tail is a simple phrase

$+ E$  is a simple phrase

$V+E$  is NOT a simple phrase

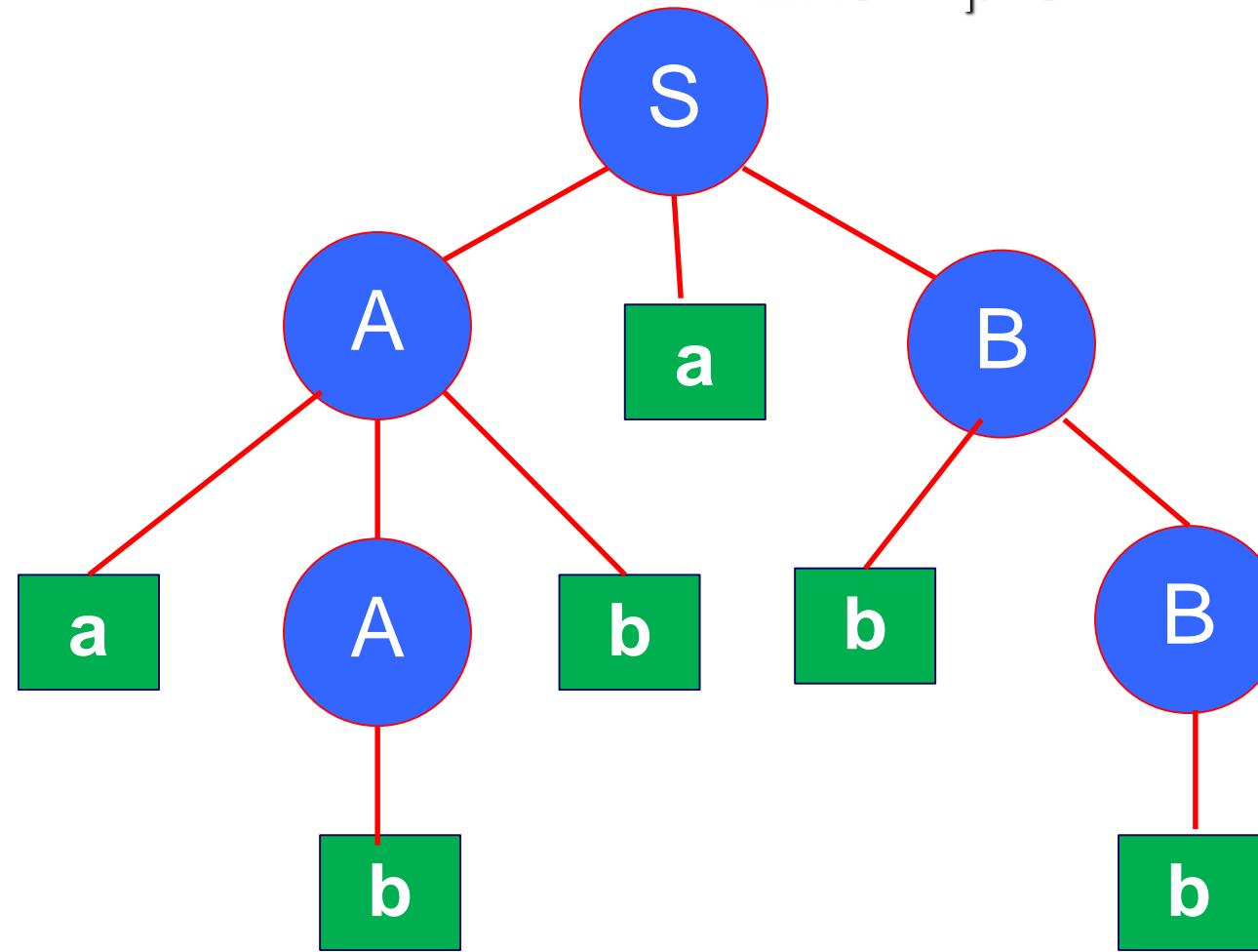
( $+E$  is a smaller phrase)

A handle allows the parser to  
reduce it to a non-terminal

Figure 4.1 The Parse Tree Corresponding to  $F(V+V)$

# Phrases and Handles

## Example



abbabb

*a sentence*

aAbabB

*a sentential form*

aAb

*a handle*

bB

*a simple phrase*

abb

*a phrase of A*

$E \rightarrow \text{Prefix}(E)$ $E \rightarrow c \text{ Tail}$ $\text{Prefix} \rightarrow b$ $\text{Prefix} \rightarrow \lambda$ $\text{Tail} \rightarrow +E$ $\text{Tail} \rightarrow \lambda$	$E \Rightarrow_{\text{rm}} \text{Prefix}(E)$ $\Rightarrow_{\text{rm}} \text{Prefix}(c \text{ Tail})$ $\Rightarrow_{\text{rm}} \text{Prefix}(c+E)$ $\Rightarrow_{\text{rm}} \text{Prefix}(c+c \text{ Tail})$ $\Rightarrow_{\text{rm}} \text{Prefix}(c+c)$ $\Rightarrow_{\text{rm}} b(c+c)$
-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

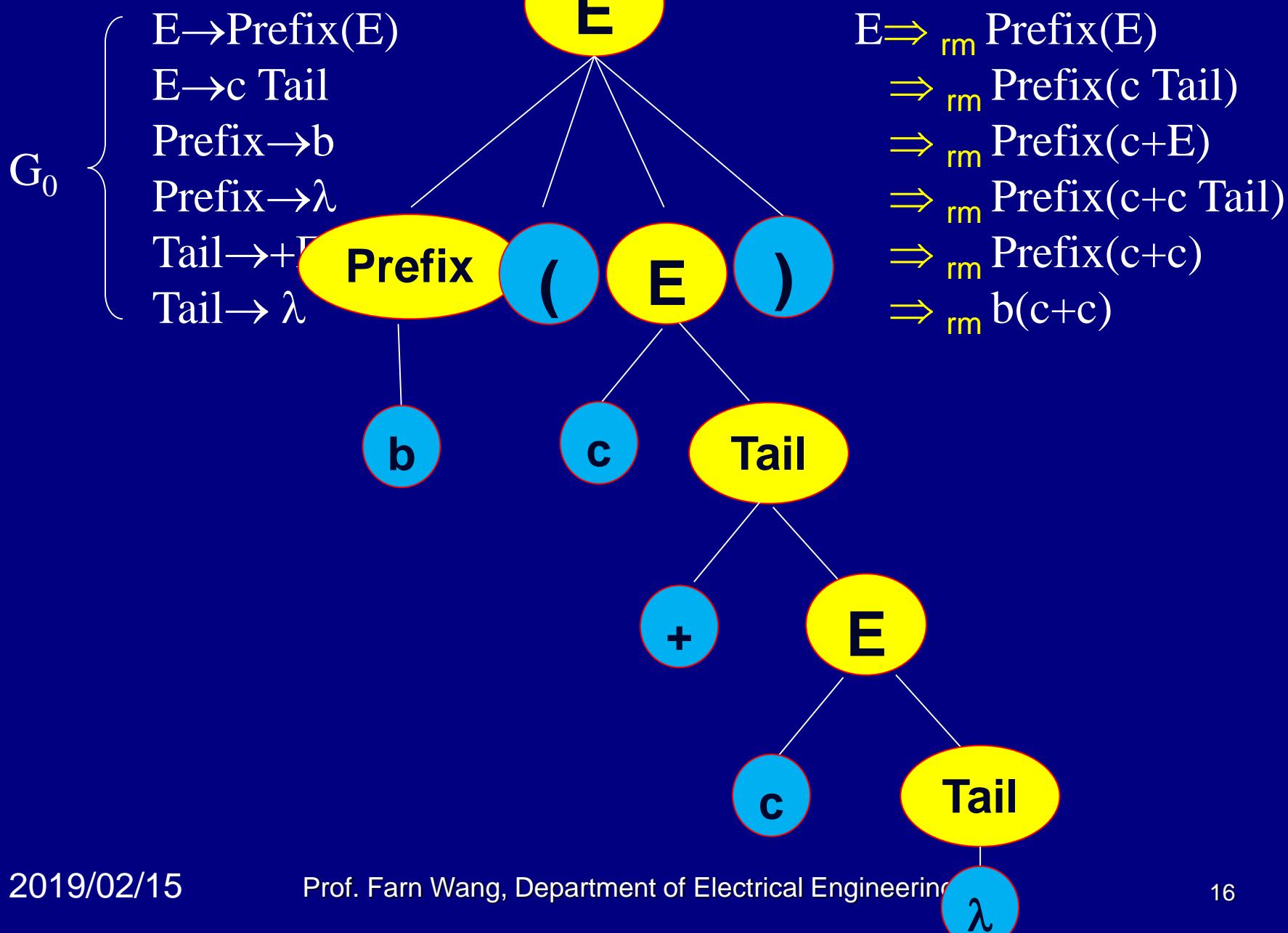
$E \Rightarrow \text{Prefix}(E) \Rightarrow \text{Prefix}(c \text{ Tail}) \Rightarrow \text{Prefix}(c+E) \Rightarrow \text{Prefix}(c+c \text{ Tail})$   
 $\Rightarrow \text{Prefix}(c+c) \Rightarrow b(c+c)$

rightmost  
derivation

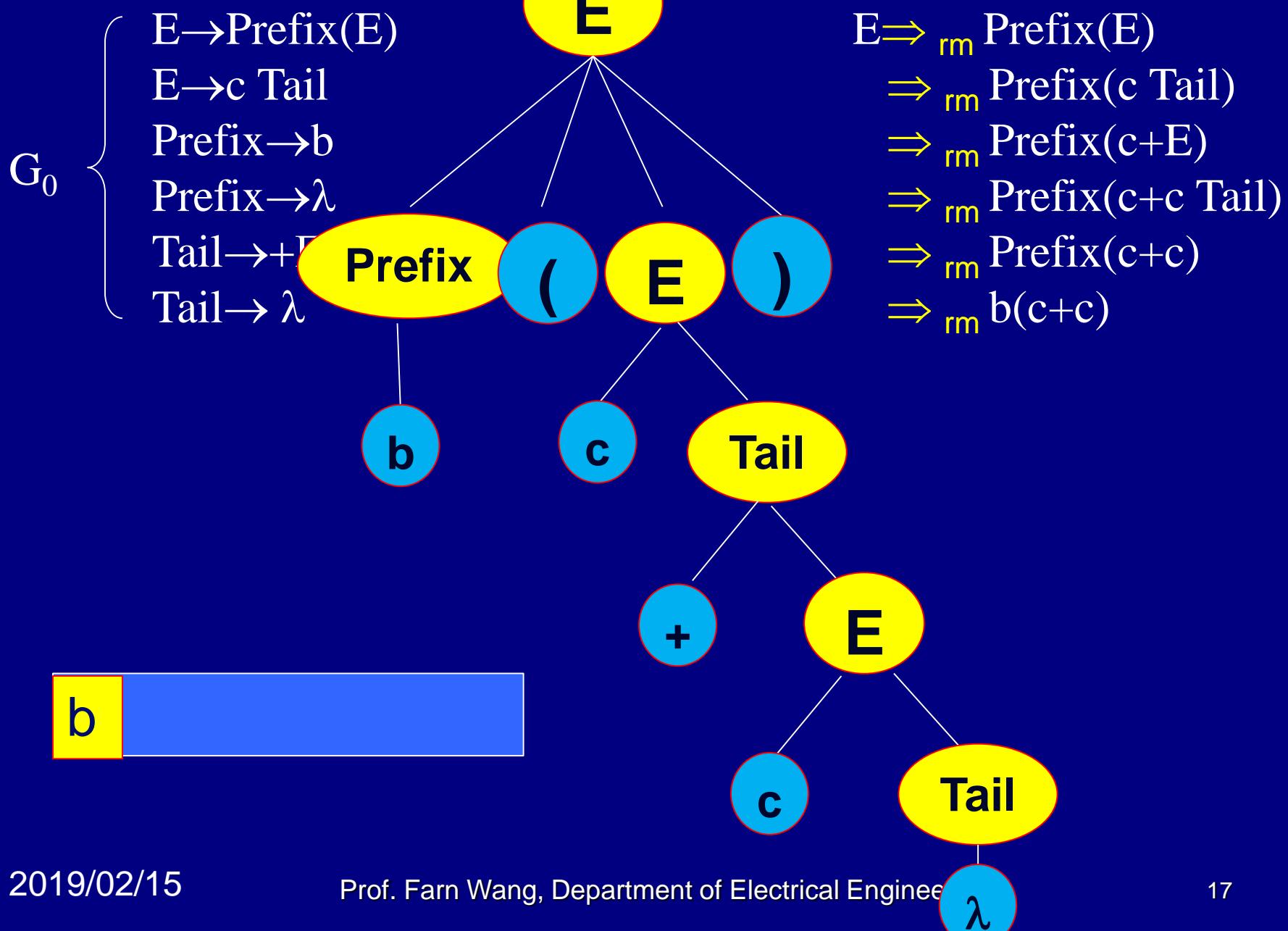
$E \Leftarrow \text{Prefix}(E) \Leftarrow \text{Prefix}(c \text{ Tail}) \Leftarrow \text{Prefix}(c+E) \Leftarrow \text{Prefix}(c+c \text{ Tail})$   
 $\Leftarrow \text{Prefix}(c+c) \Leftarrow b(c+c)$

bottom-up  
parsing

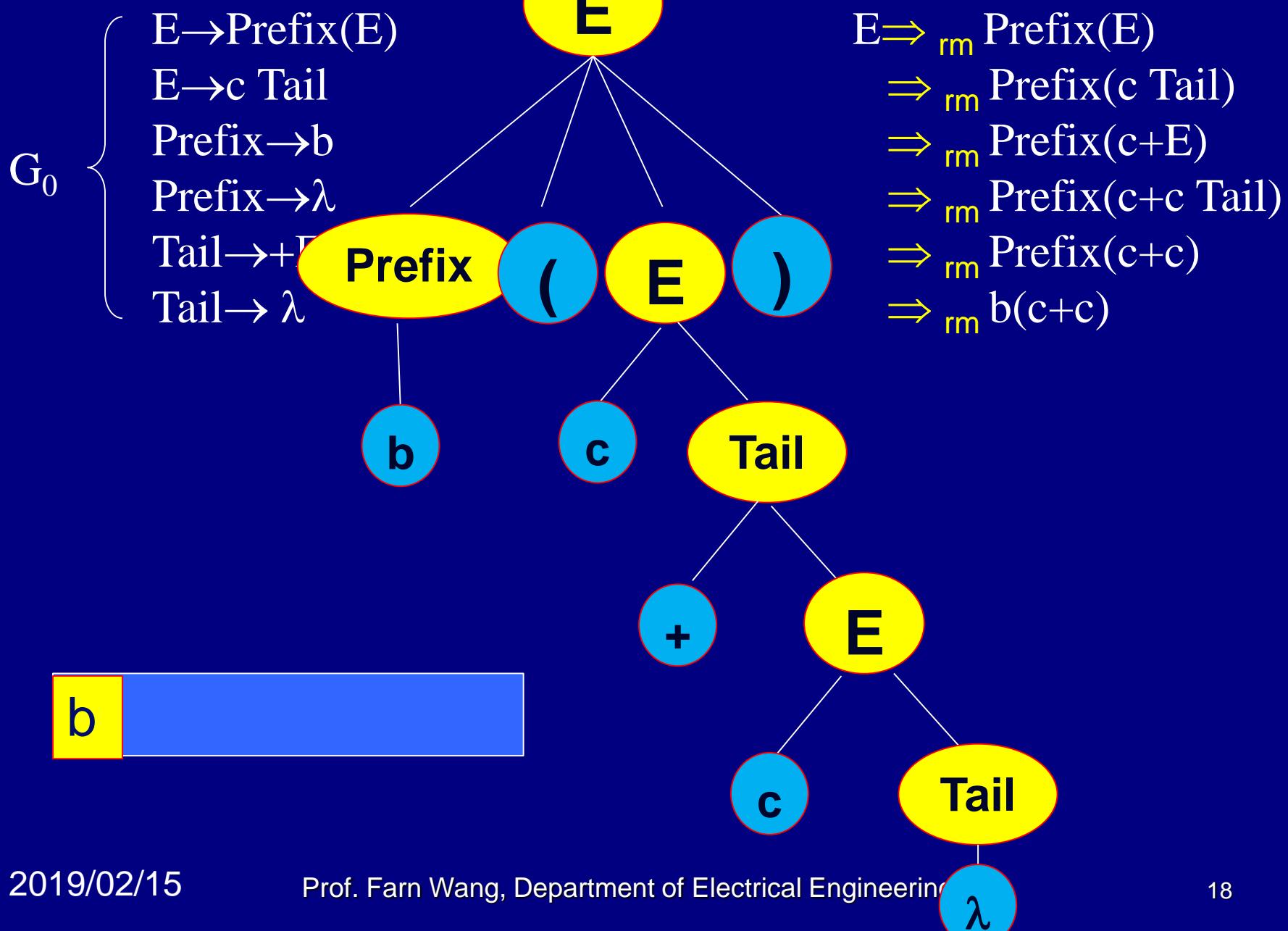
# Rightmost Derivation



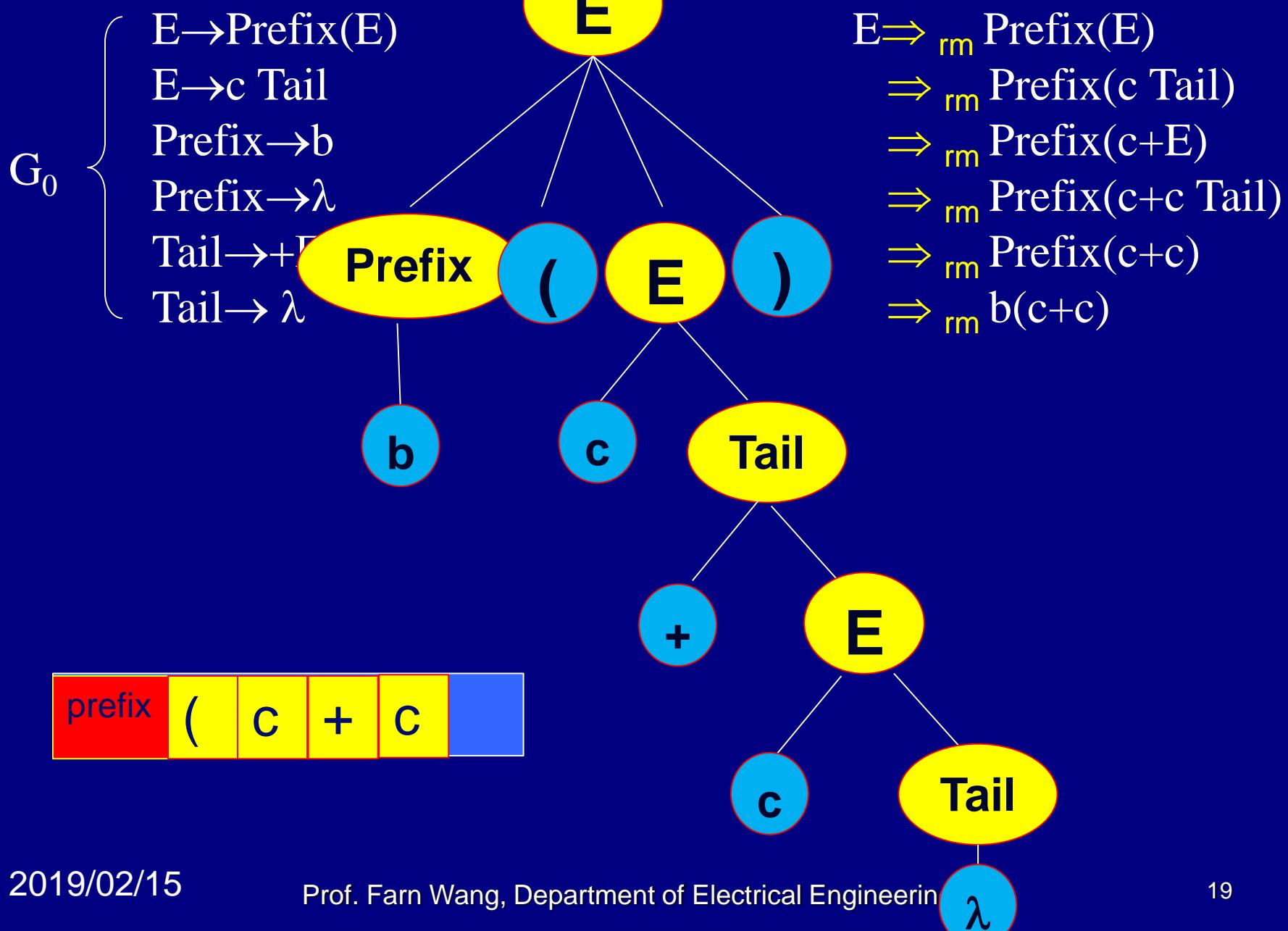
# Bottom-up Parsing (1/13)



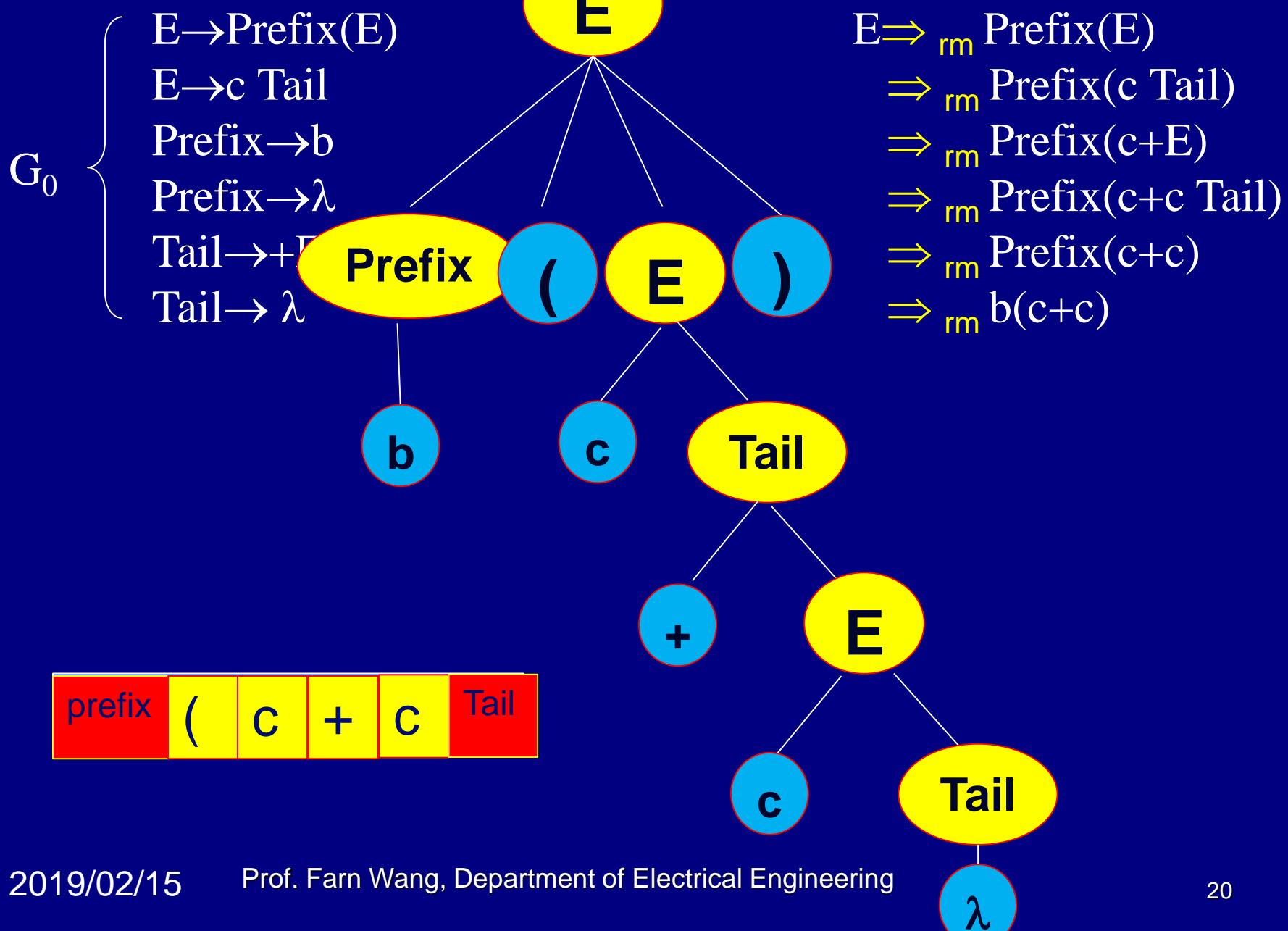
# Bottom-up Parsing (2/13)



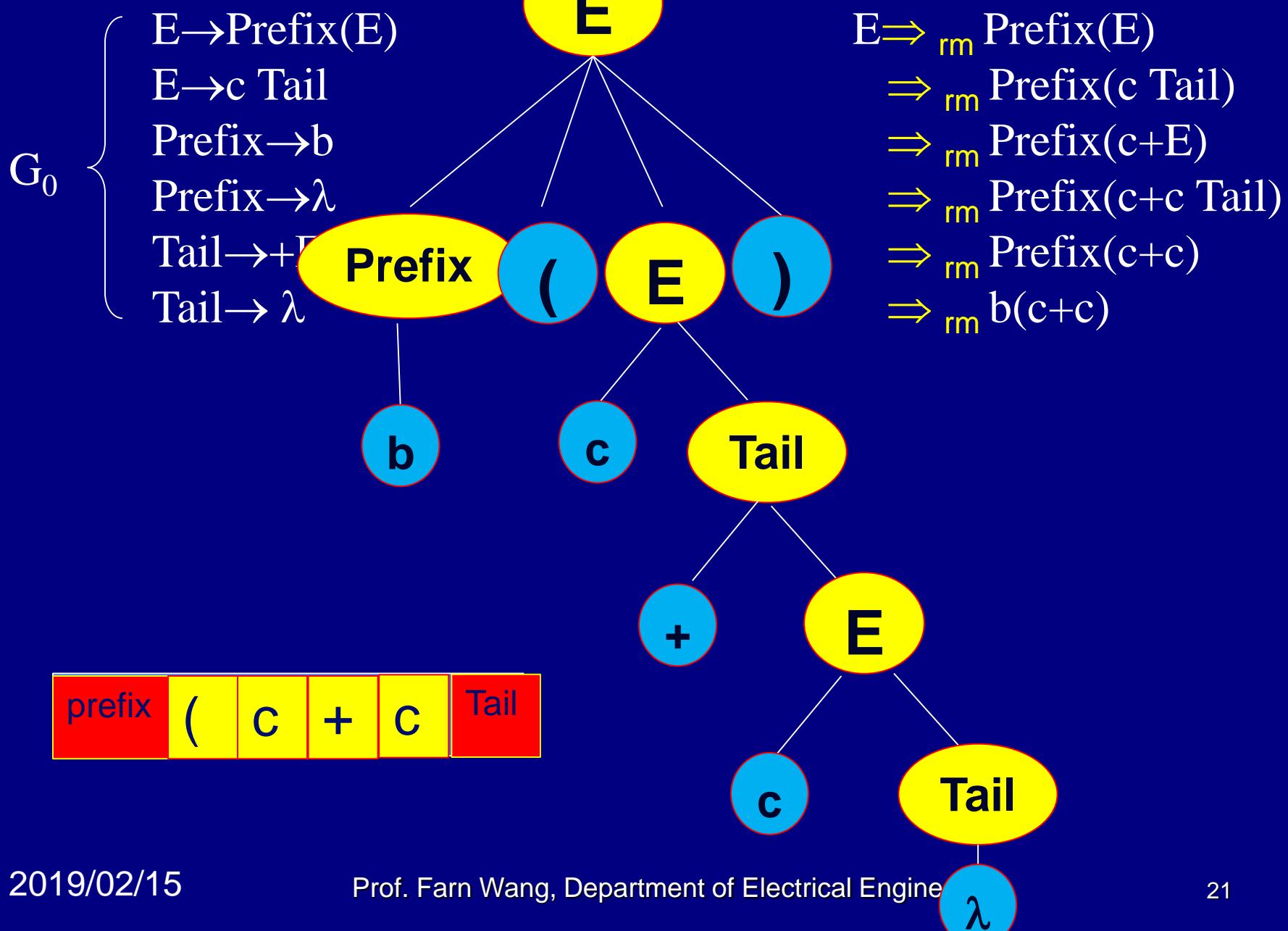
# Bottom-up Parsing (3/13)



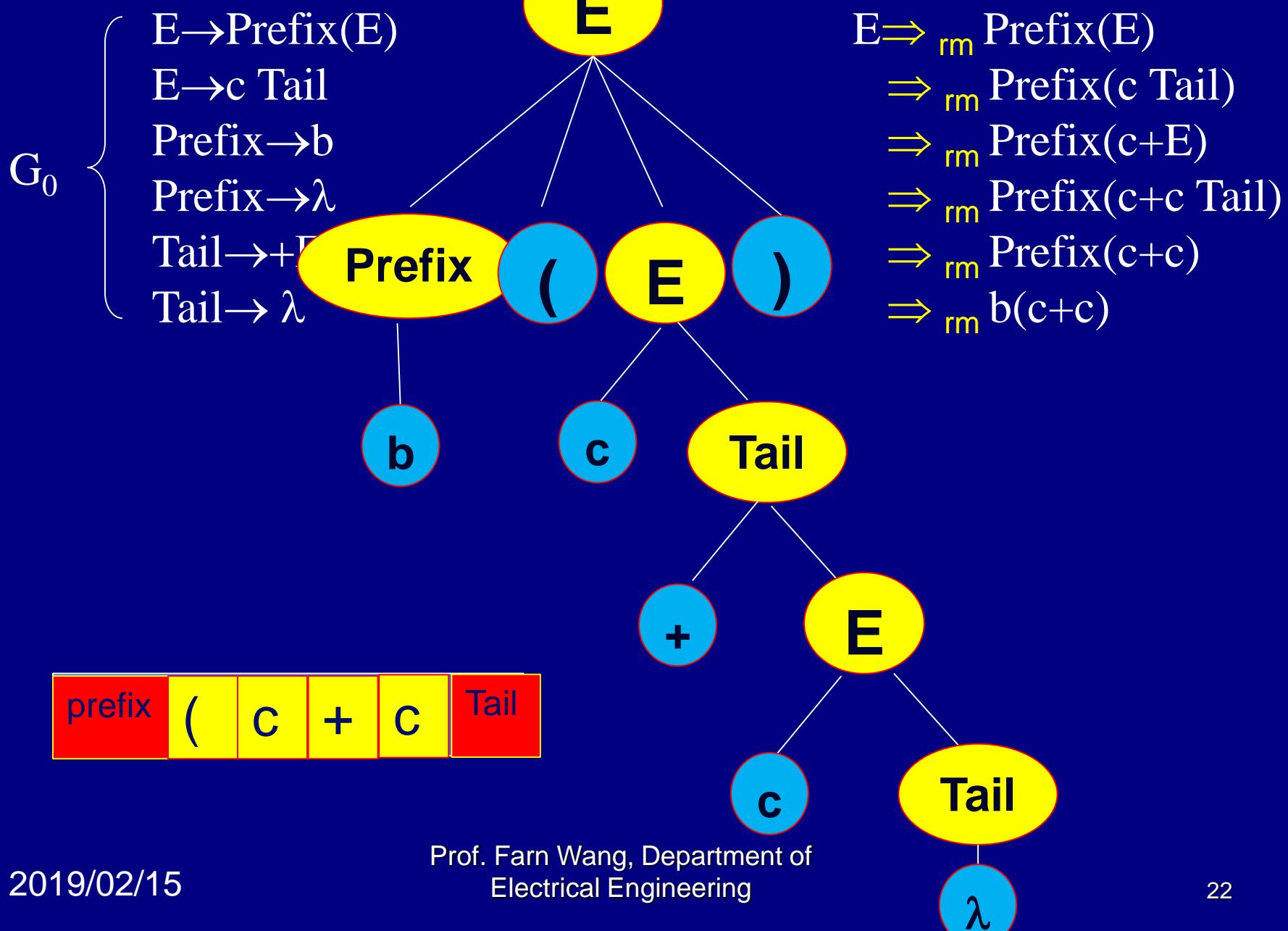
# Bottom-up Parsing (4/13)



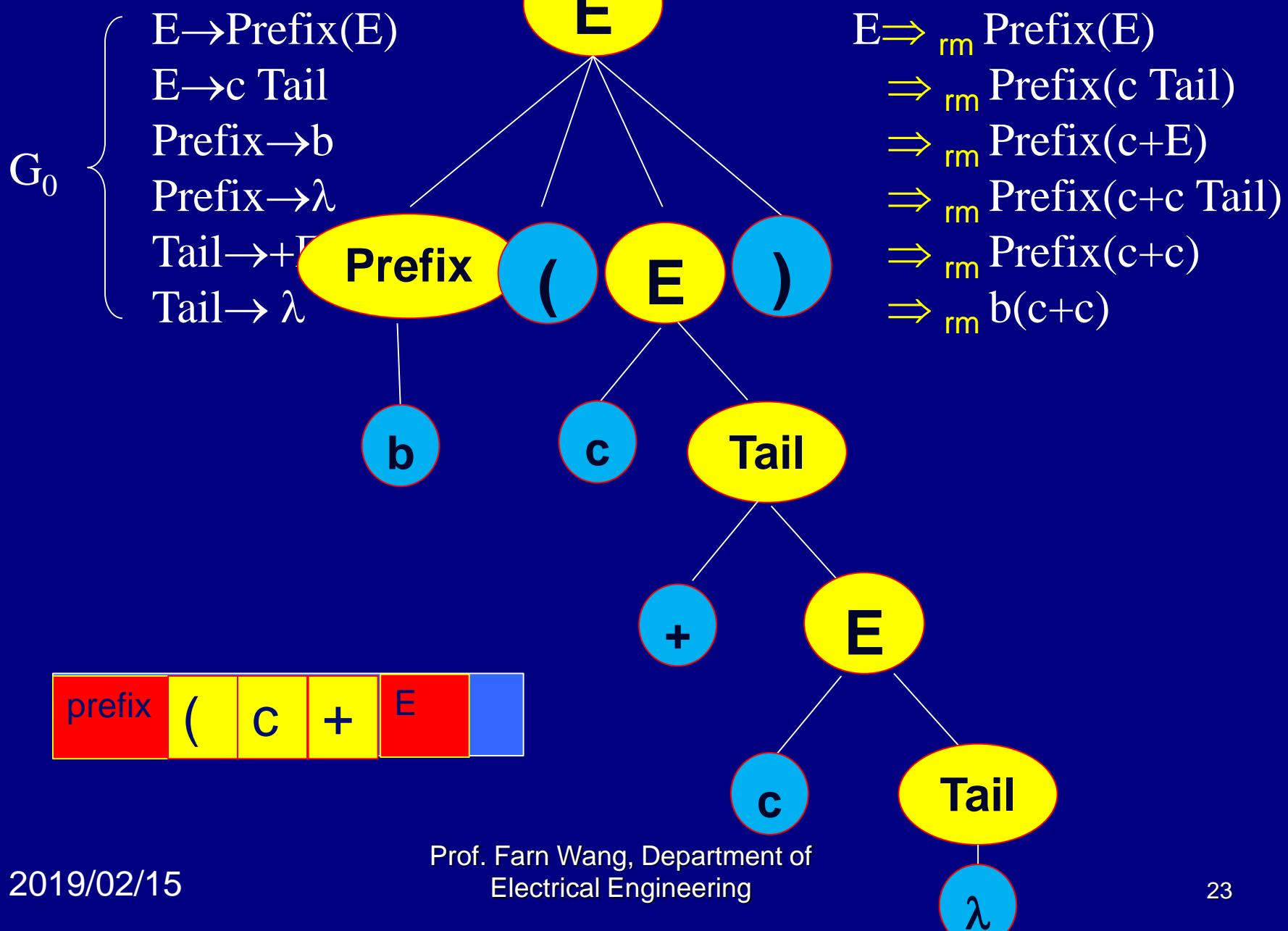
# Bottom-up Parsing (5/13)



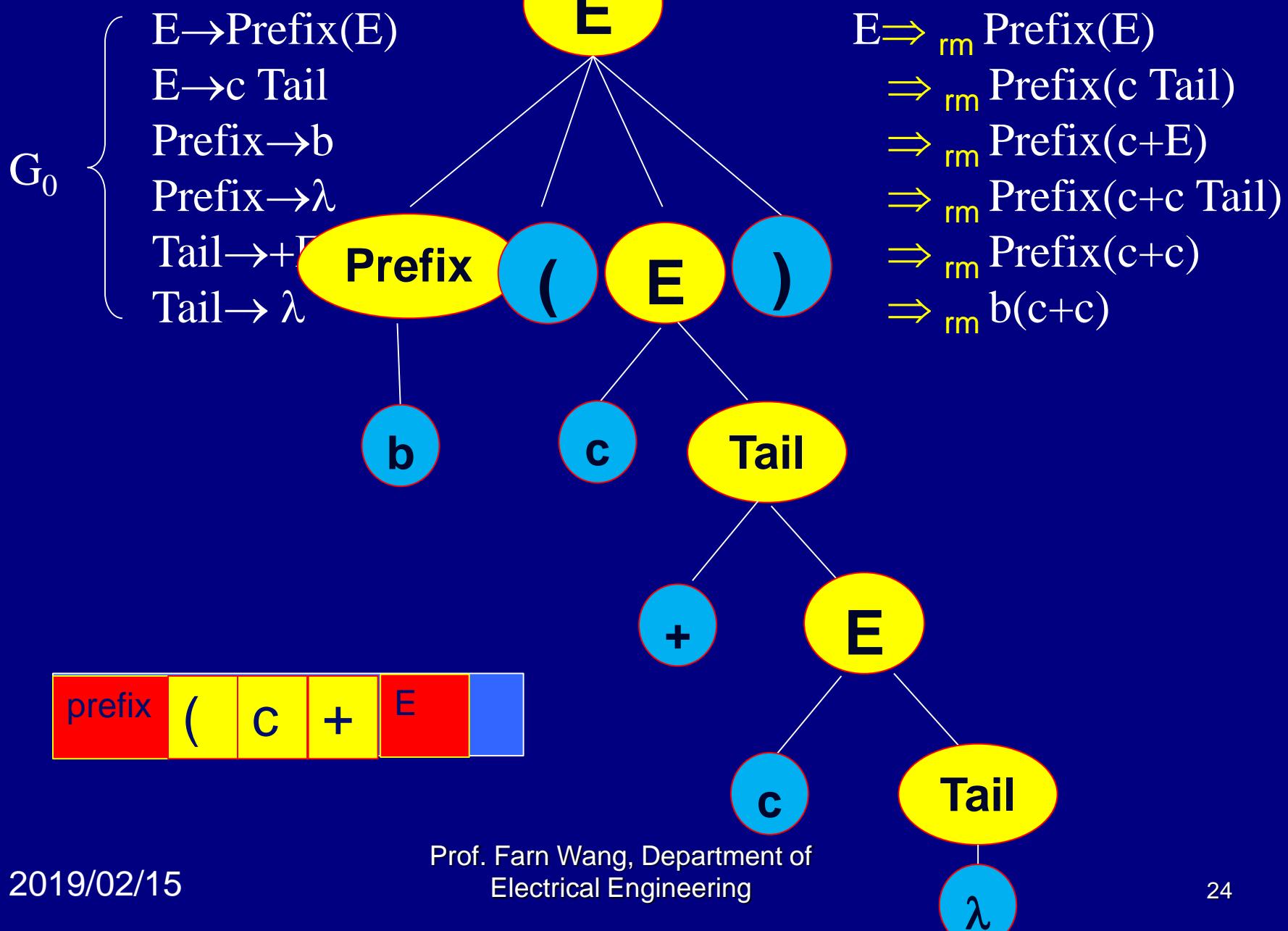
# Bottom-up Parsing (6/13)



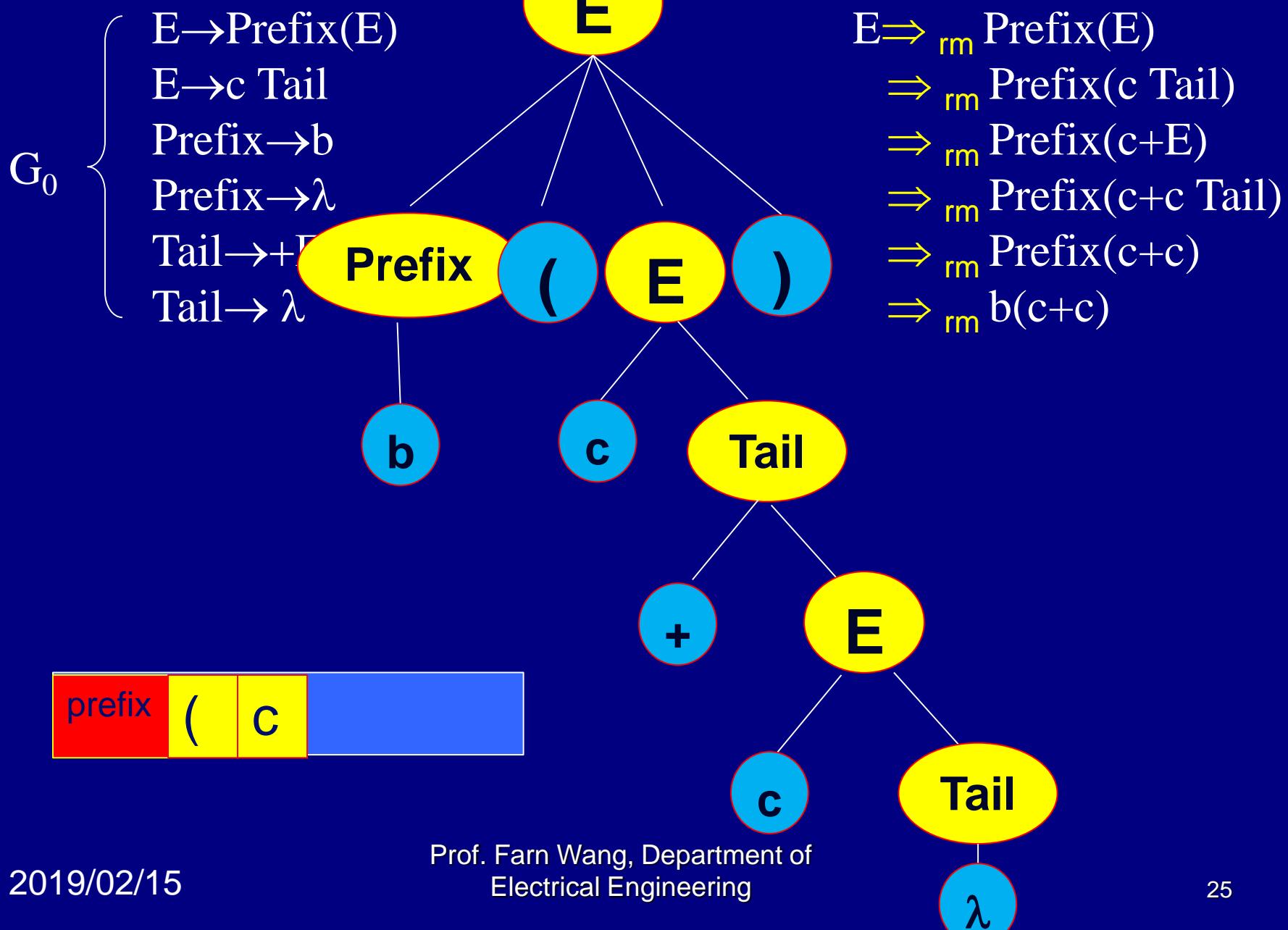
# Bottom-up Parsing (7/13)



# Bottom-up Parsing (8/13)

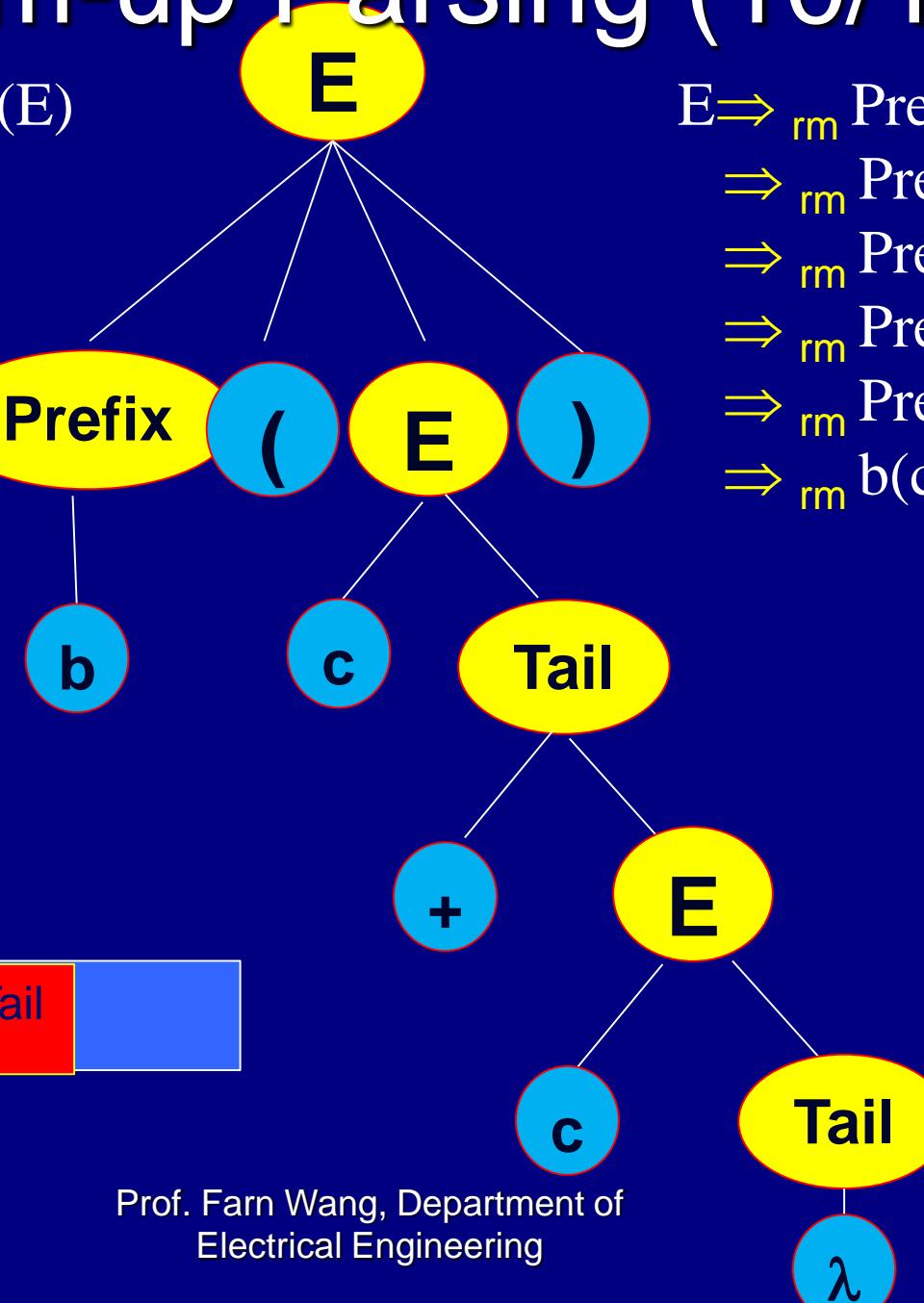


# Bottom-up Parsing (9/13)



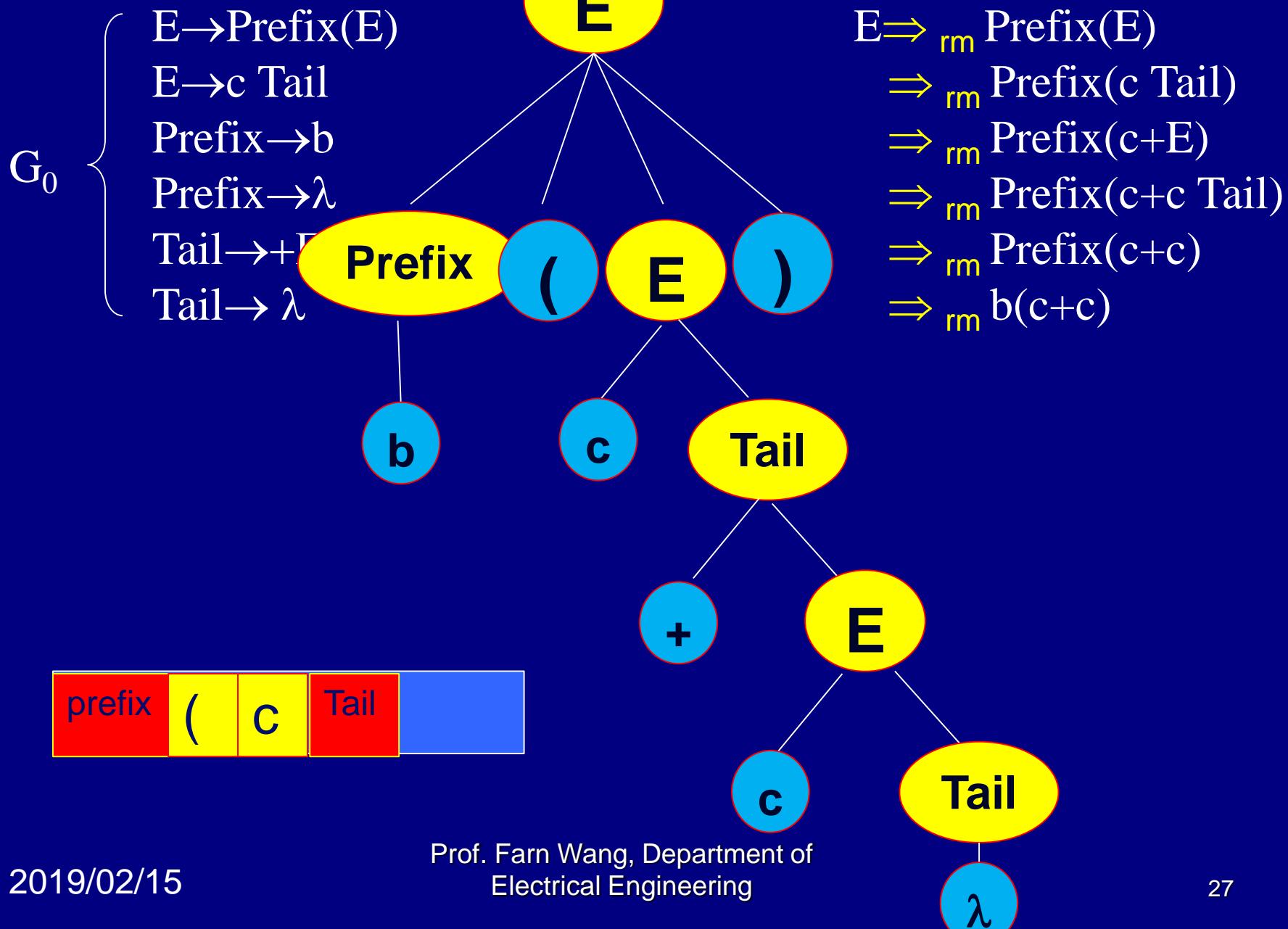
# Bottom-up Parsing (10/13)

$G_0 \left\{ \begin{array}{l} E \rightarrow \text{Prefix}(E) \\ E \rightarrow c \text{ Tail} \\ \text{Prefix} \rightarrow b \\ \text{Prefix} \rightarrow \lambda \\ \text{Tail} \rightarrow +E \\ \text{Tail} \rightarrow \lambda \end{array} \right.$

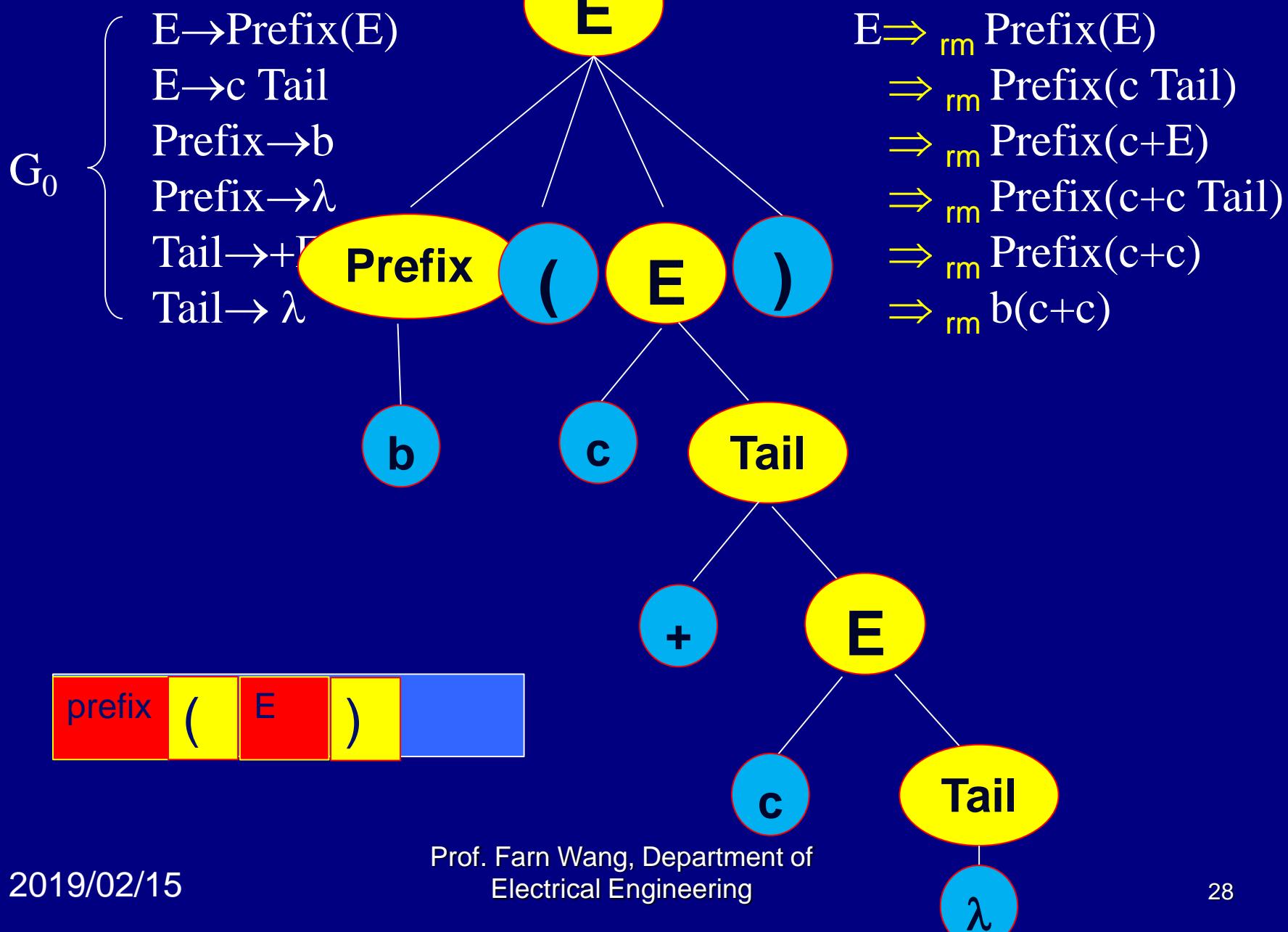


$E \Rightarrow_{rm} \text{Prefix}(E)$   
 $\Rightarrow_{rm} \text{Prefix}(c \text{ Tail})$   
 $\Rightarrow_{rm} \text{Prefix}(c+E)$   
 $\Rightarrow_{rm} \text{Prefix}(c+c \text{ Tail})$   
 $\Rightarrow_{rm} \text{Prefix}(c+c)$   
 $\Rightarrow_{rm} b(c+c)$

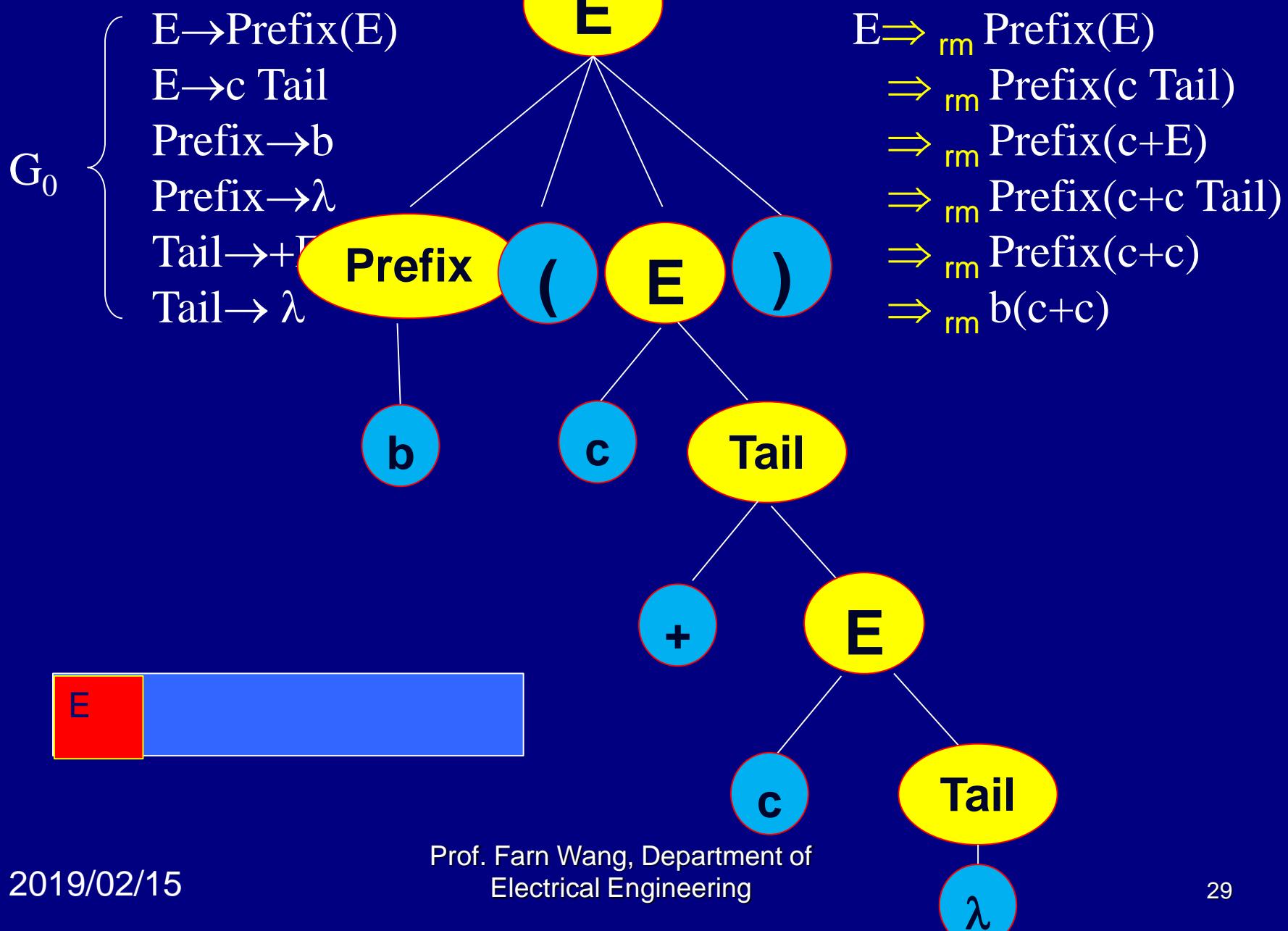
# Bottom-up Parsing (11/13)



# Bottom-up Parsing (12/13)



# Bottom-up Parsing (13/13)



# Properties of CFG

## ■ Useless nonterminals

- $S \rightarrow A \mid B$
- $A \rightarrow a$
- $B \rightarrow Bb$                                   <derives no terminal string>
- $C \rightarrow c$                                   <unreachable>

## ■ Reduced Grammar

- A grammar is reduced after all useless non-terminals are removed

## ■ Ambiguity

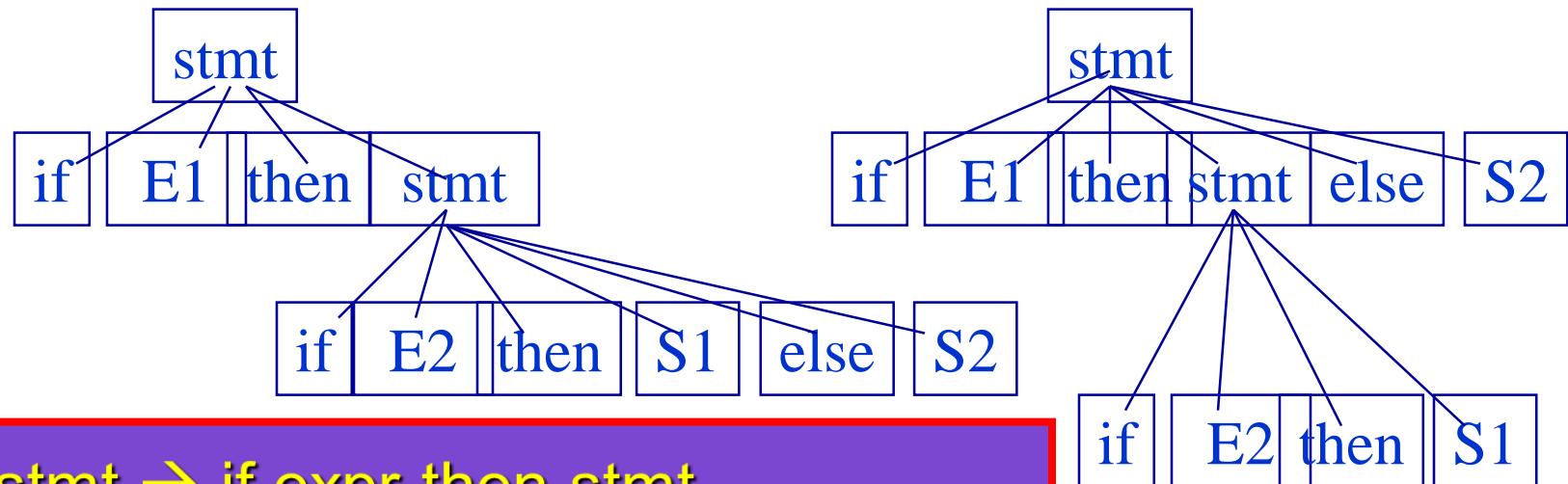
# Ambiguity

- A grammar is *ambiguous* if it produces more than one parse tree for some sentences
- example 1:  $A+B+C$  ( is it  $(A+B)+C$  or  $A+(B+C)$  )
  - Improper production:  $\text{expr} \rightarrow \text{expr} + \text{expr} \mid \text{id}$
- example 2:  $A+B^*C$  ( is it  $(A+B)^*C$  or  $A+(B^*C)$  )
  - Improper production:  $\text{expr} \rightarrow \text{expr} + \text{expr} \mid \text{expr} * \text{expr}$
- example 3: **if E1 then if E2 then S1 else S2**  
(which **then** does the **else** match with)
  - Improper production:
    - $\text{stmt} \rightarrow \text{if expr then stmt}$
    - |   $\text{if expr then stmt else stmt}$

# Ambiguity

if E1 then if E2 then S1 else S2

Two parse trees of example 3



■  $\text{stmt} \rightarrow \text{if expr then stmt}$   
|  $\text{if expr then stmt else stmt}$

# Dangling Else Example

```
if ((k >=0) && (k < Table_SIZE))
    if (table[k] >=0)
        printf("Entry %d is %d\n", k, table[k]);
    else printf("Error: index %d out of range \n"), k);
```

In ANSI C, an **else** is always assumed to belong to the *innermost if* statement possible.

```
if ((k >=0) && (k < Table_SIZE)) {
    if (table[k] >=0)
        printf("Entry %d is %d\n", k, table[k]); }
else printf("Error: index %d out of range \n"), k);
```

# Eliminating Ambiguity

## ■ Operator Associativity

–  $\text{expr} \rightarrow \text{expr} + \text{term} \mid \text{term}$

A+B+C

## ■ Operator Precedence

–  $\text{expr} \rightarrow \text{expr} + \text{term} \mid \text{term}$

term  $\rightarrow \text{term} * \text{factor} \mid \text{factor}$

## ■ Dangling Else

– In YACC, shift is favored over reduction to enforce the dangling “else” to associate with the innermost if.

# Eliminating Ambiguity

## ■ Operator Associativity

–  $\text{expr} \rightarrow \text{expr} + \text{term} \mid \text{term}$

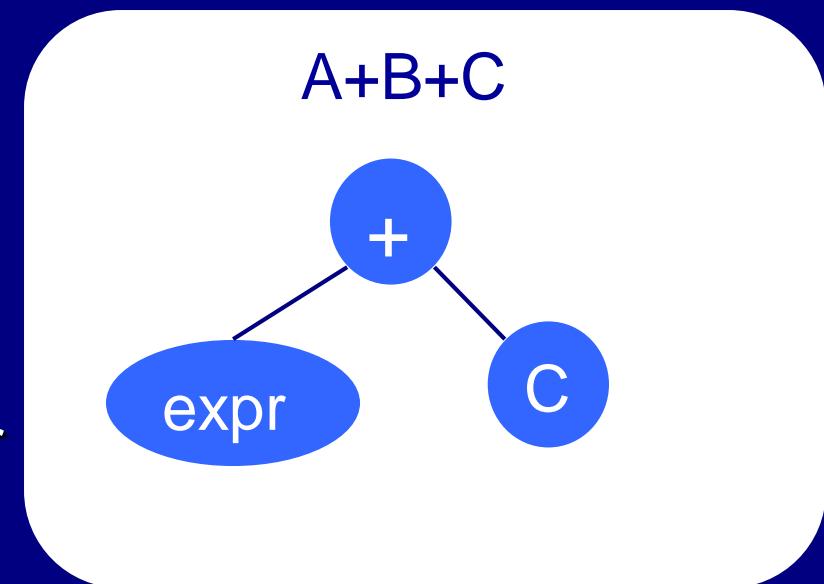
## ■ Operator Precedence

–  $\text{expr} \rightarrow \text{expr} + \text{term} \mid \text{term}$

$\text{term} \rightarrow \text{term} * \text{factor} \mid \text{factor}$

## ■ Dangling Else

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# Eliminating Ambiguity

## ■ Operator Associativity

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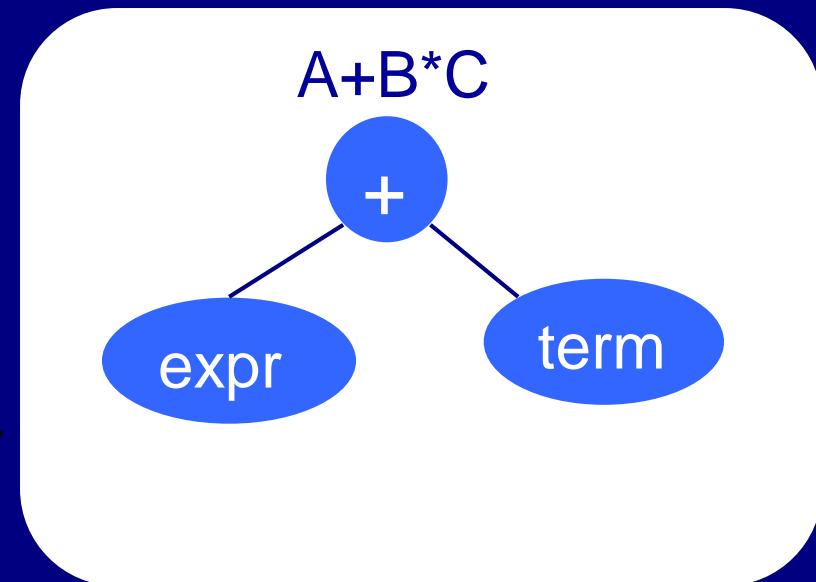
## ■ Operator Precedence

–  $\text{expr} \rightarrow \text{expr} + \text{term} \mid \text{term}$

$\text{term} \rightarrow \text{term} * \text{factor} \mid \text{factor}$

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– In YACC, shift is favored over reduction to enforce the dangling “else” to associate with the innermost if.



# Eliminating Ambiguity

## ■ Operator Associativity

–  $\text{expr} \rightarrow \text{expr} + \text{term} \mid \text{term}$

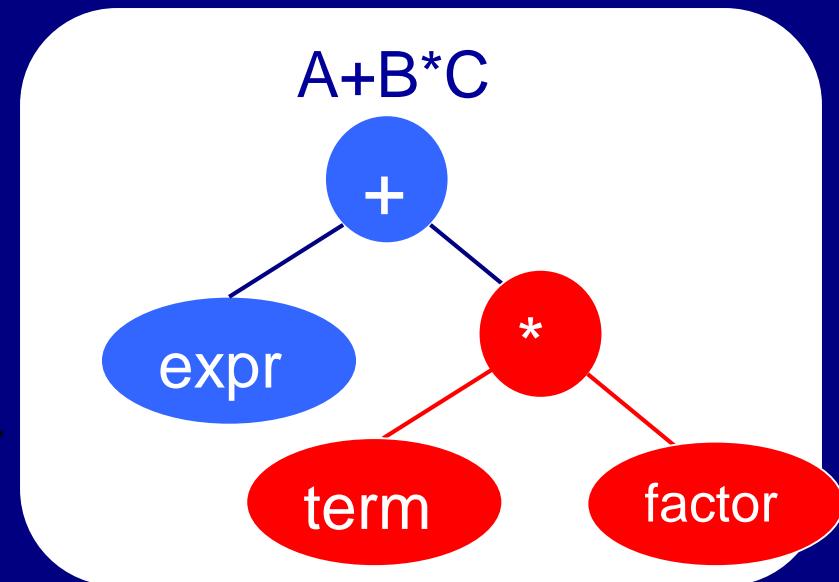
## ■ Operator Precedence

–  $\text{expr} \rightarrow \text{expr} + \text{term} \mid \text{term}$

$\text{term} \rightarrow \text{term} * \text{factor} \mid \text{factor}$

## ■ Dangling Else

– In YACC, shift is favored over reduction to enforce the dangling “else” to associate with the innermost if.



# Left Factoring

Consider the following grammar

$$A \rightarrow \alpha\beta_1 \mid \alpha\beta_2$$

It is not easy to determine whether to expand  
A to  $\alpha\beta_1$  or  $\alpha\beta_2$

A transformation called left factoring can be applied. It becomes:

$$A \rightarrow \alpha A'$$

$$A' \rightarrow \beta_1 \mid \beta_2$$

# Exercise

$\text{stmt} \rightarrow \text{if expr then stmt}$   
|  $\text{if expr then stmt else stmt}$

For the following grammar form:

$A \rightarrow \alpha\beta_1 \mid \alpha\beta_2$

What is  $\alpha$ ?  $\beta_1$ ?  $\beta_2$ ?

$\alpha$ : if expr then stmt  
 $\beta_1$ :  $\lambda$   
 $\beta_2$ : else stmt

# Exercise

$\text{stmt} \rightarrow \text{if expr then stmt}$   
|  $\text{if expr then stmt else stmt}$

For the following grammar form:

$A \rightarrow \alpha\beta_1 \mid \alpha\beta_2$

What is  $\alpha$ ?  $\beta_1$ ?  $\beta_2$ ?

$\text{stmt} \rightarrow \text{if expr then stmt } S'$

$S' \rightarrow \lambda \mid \text{else stmt}$

$\alpha: \text{if expr then stmt}$

$\beta_1: \lambda$

$\beta_2: \text{else stmt}$

# Exercise

$\text{stmt} \rightarrow \text{if expr then stmt}$   
|  $\text{if expr then stmt else stmt}$

For the following grammar form:

$A \rightarrow \alpha\beta_1 \mid \alpha\beta_2$

What is  $\alpha$ ?  $\beta_1$ ?  $\beta_2$ ?

$\alpha$ : if expr then stmt  
 $\beta_1$ :  $\lambda$

*Just one example --  
in this case, left factoring does not solve the problem  
you may try the new grammar on the example stmt in slide 30.*

# Parsers and Recognizers

## ■ Recognizer

- An algorithm that does boolean-valued test
  - “Is this input syntactically valid according to  $G$ ?”
  - “Is this input in  $L(G)$ ?”

## ■ Parser

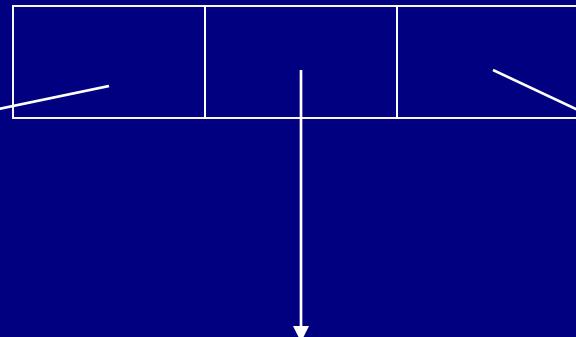
- Answers more general questions
  - Is this input valid?
  - And, if it is, what is its structure (parse tree)?

## ■ Two general approaches to parsing

- Top-down and Bottom-up

# Naming of parsing techniques

The way to parse  
token sequence  
(e.g. from Left to R)



L: Leftmost  
R: Rightmost

Number of  
Lookahead  
tokens

- Top-down
  - LL(1)
- Bottom-up
  - LR(1)

# Parsing

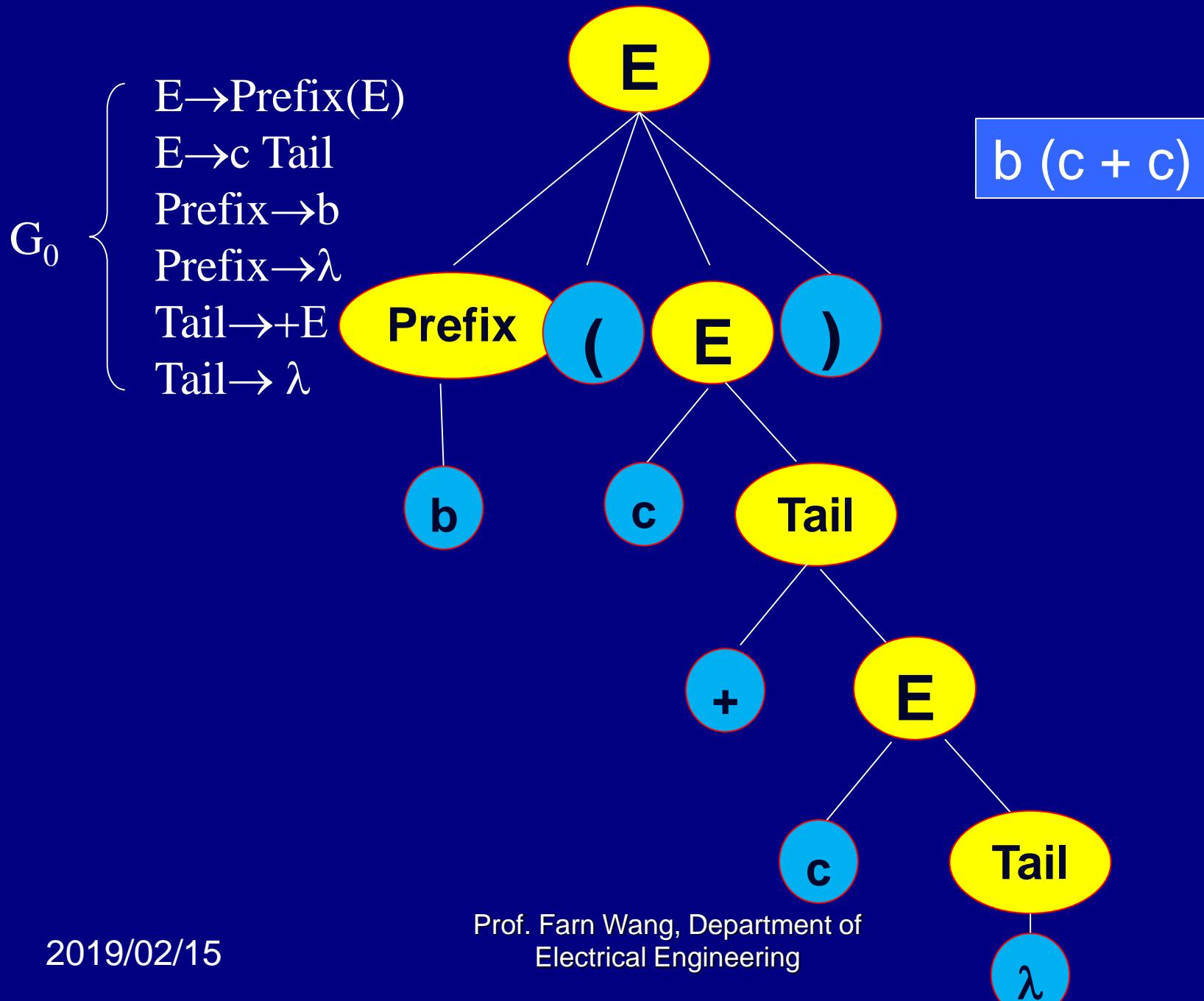
CFG

$$G_0 \left\{ \begin{array}{l} E \rightarrow \text{Prefix}(E) \\ E \rightarrow c \text{ Tail} \\ \text{Prefix} \rightarrow b \\ \text{Prefix} \rightarrow \lambda \\ \text{Tail} \rightarrow +E \\ \text{Tail} \rightarrow \lambda \end{array} \right.$$

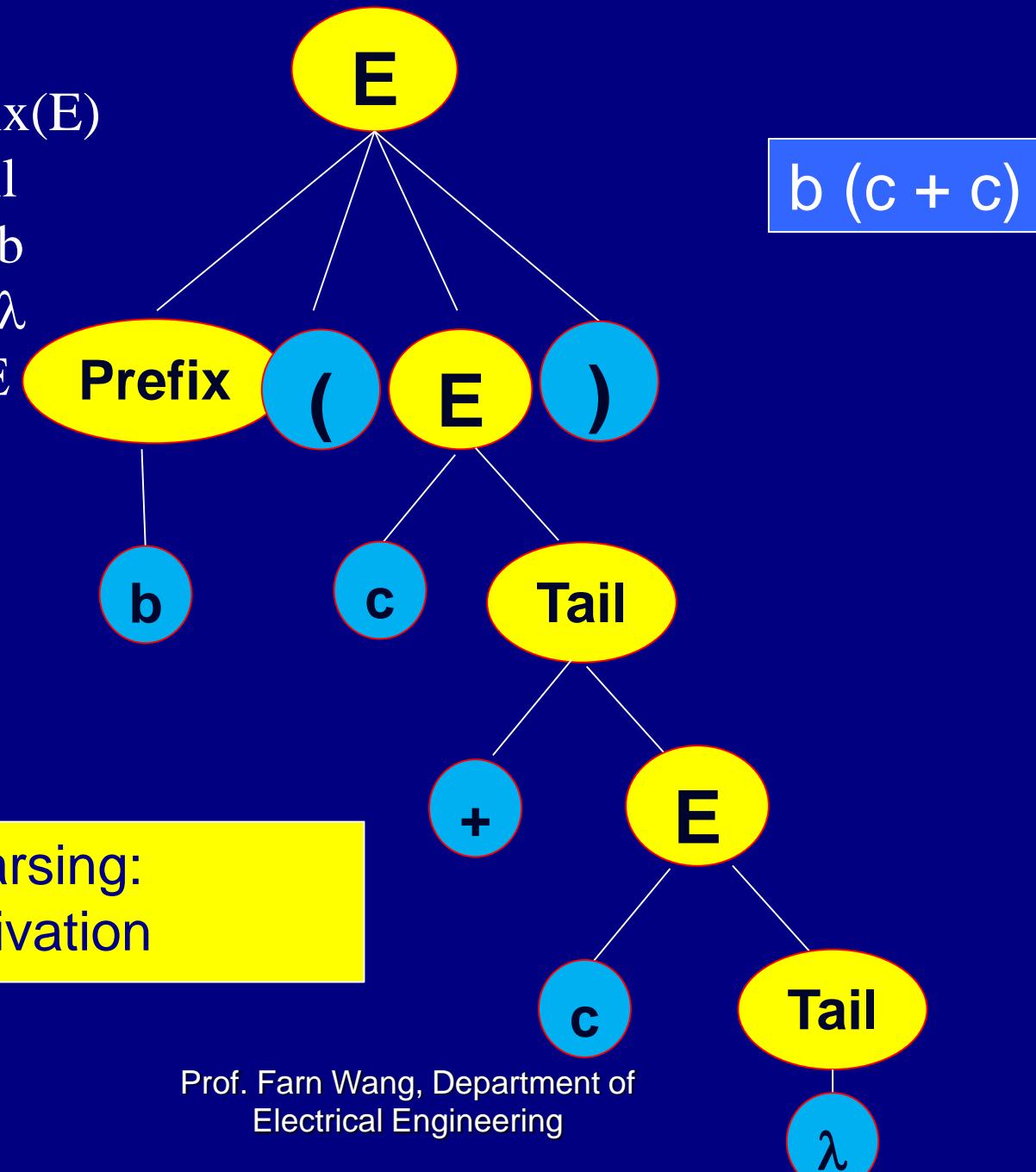
Input  
program

b (c + c)

Is the input program valid  
for the given CFG?

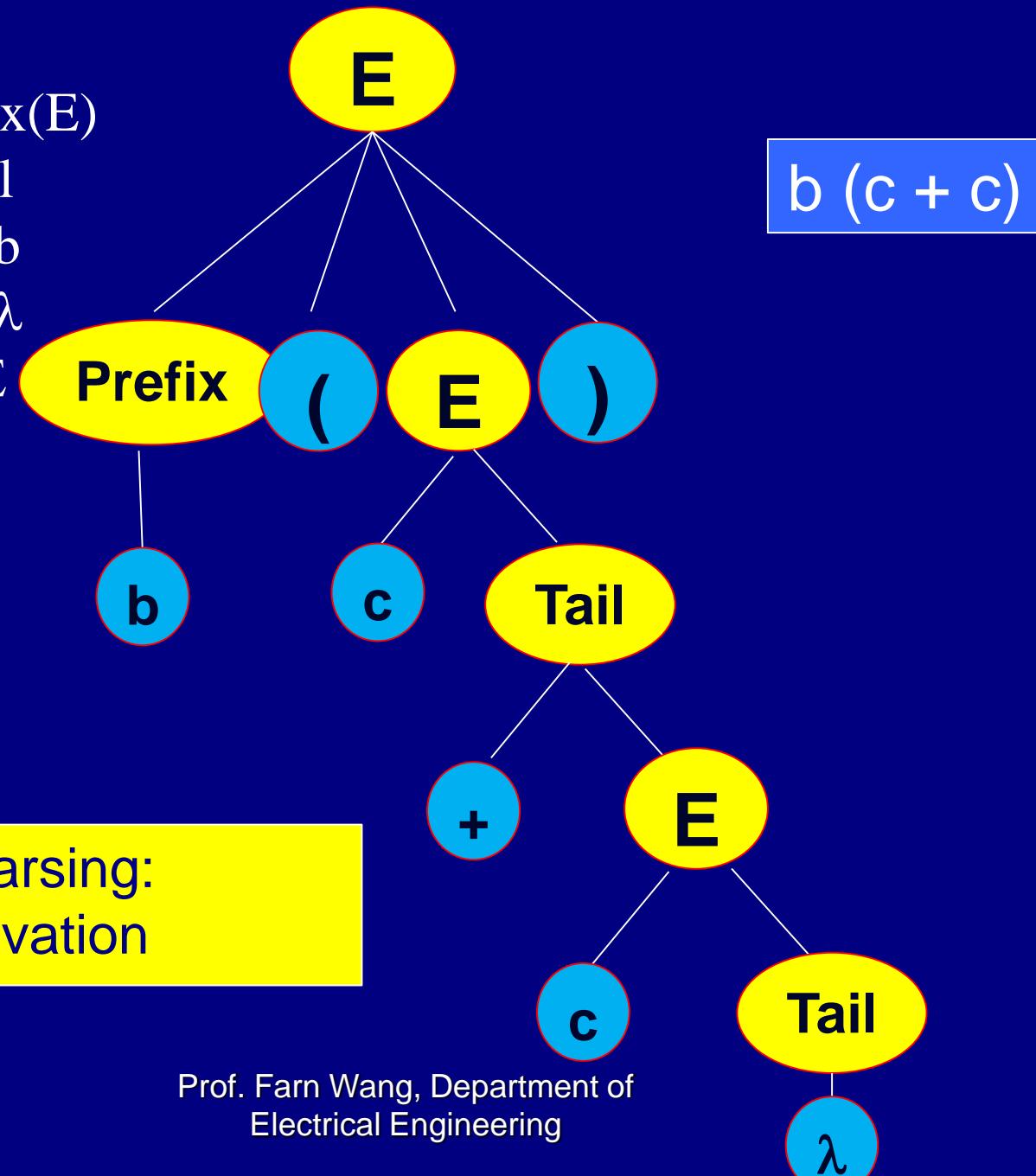


$G_0 \left\{ \begin{array}{l} E \rightarrow \text{Prefix}(E) \\ E \rightarrow c \text{ Tail} \\ \text{Prefix} \rightarrow b \\ \text{Prefix} \rightarrow \lambda \\ \text{Tail} \rightarrow +E \\ \text{Tail} \rightarrow \lambda \end{array} \right.$



Top-Down Parsing:  
Leftmost Derivation

$G_0 \left\{ \begin{array}{l} E \rightarrow \text{Prefix}(E) \\ E \rightarrow c \text{ Tail} \\ \text{Prefix} \rightarrow b \\ \text{Prefix} \rightarrow \lambda \\ \text{Tail} \rightarrow +E \\ \text{Tail} \rightarrow \lambda \end{array} \right.$



Bottom-Up Parsing:  
Leftmost Derivation

# Grammar Analysis Algorithms

## ■ Goal of this section:

- Discuss a number of important analysis algorithms for Grammars

## ■ What non-terminals can derive $\lambda$ (*called nullable symbols*)?

$$A \Rightarrow BCD \Rightarrow BC \Rightarrow B \Rightarrow \lambda$$

- An iterative marking algorithm

- Marking non-terminals that derive  $\lambda$  in one step, then marking non-terminals requires a parse tree of height 2, continue with increasing heights until no change.

# What non-terminals can derive $\lambda$ ?



# What non-terminals can derive $\lambda$ ?

	count	Worklist:	count	Worklist:
$A \rightarrow BCD$	1	C	0	
$B \rightarrow BX$	1		1	
$B \rightarrow \lambda$				
$C \rightarrow EFG$	3		3	
$C \rightarrow BDD$	0			
$D \rightarrow E$	1		1	
$D \rightarrow \lambda$				

The diagram shows a worklist-based algorithm for finding non-terminals that derive the empty string ( $\lambda$ ). It consists of two columns of grammar rules and two yellow boxes at the top right. The first column lists rules with their counts: A → BCD (1), B → BX (1), B →  $\lambda$  (0), C → EFG (3), C → BDD (0), D → E (1), and D →  $\lambda$  (0). The second column shows the worklist and its count: initially, the worklist contains C (count 1). An arrow points from the count of rule C → EFG (3) to the C in the worklist, indicating that rule C → EFG is processed. After processing, the worklist contains A (count 1).

# Definition of Follow and FIRST

## ■ Follow(A)

- Follow(A) is the set of terminals that may follow A in some sentential form. It provides the lookaheads that might signal the recognition of a production with A as the left hand side
- $\text{Follow}(A)=\{a \in V_t | S \Rightarrow^* \dots Aa \dots\}$

## ■ First( $\alpha$ )

- The set of all the terminal symbols that can begin a sentential form derivable from  $\alpha$
- If  $\alpha$  is the right-hand side of a production, then  $\text{First}(\alpha)$  contains terminal symbols that begin strings derivable from  $\alpha$
- $\text{First}(\alpha)=\{a \in V_t | \alpha \Rightarrow^* a\beta\} \cup \{\lambda | \alpha \Rightarrow^* \lambda\}$

# Definition of Follow and FIRST

## Follow(A)

- Follow(A) is the set of terminals that may follow A in some sentential form. It provides the lookaheads that might signal the recognition of a production with A as the left hand side
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- $\text{First}(\alpha) = \{a \in V_t \mid \alpha \Rightarrow^* a\beta\} \cup \{\lambda \mid \alpha \Rightarrow^* \lambda\}$

Example:

$$\begin{array}{ll} A \rightarrow b & X \rightarrow WAa \\ B \rightarrow b & Y \rightarrow WBc \\ \dots\dots\dots ba\dots\dots\dots & \end{array}$$

Should **b** be reduced to A or B?

# Computing Follow and FIRST

## ■ FIRST(Z)

- If Z is a terminal, then  $\text{FIRST}(Z) = \{Z\}$
- If Z is a non-terminal, and  $Z \rightarrow Y_1Y_2\dots Y_k$  for some  $k \geq 1$ , then place a in  $\text{FIRST}(Z)$  if for some  $i$ , a is in  $\text{FIRST}(Y_i)$ , and  $\lambda$  is in all of  $\text{FIRST}(Y_1), \dots, \text{FIRST}(Y_{i-1})$ .
- If  $Z \rightarrow \lambda$  is a production, then add  $\lambda$  to  $\text{FIRST}(Z)$

## ■ FOLLOW(A)

- Place  $\$$  in  $\text{FOLLOW}(S)$
- If there is a production  $B \rightarrow \alpha A \beta$ , then everything in  $\text{FIRST}(\beta)$  except  $\lambda$ , is in  $\text{FOLLOW}(A)$
- If there is a production  $B \rightarrow \alpha A$ , or a production  $B \rightarrow \alpha A \beta$ , where  $\text{FIRST}(\beta)$  contains  $\lambda$ , then everything in  $\text{FOLLOW}(B)$  is in  $\text{FOLLOW}(A)$ .

When computing  $\text{First}(A)$ , be careful of  
left recursion !  
or any indirect recursion caused cycles !

# Example 1

$S \rightarrow aSe$

$\text{First}(S) = \{ ? \}$

$S \rightarrow B$

$\text{First}(B) = \{ ? \}$

$B \rightarrow bBe$

$\text{First}(C) = \{ ? \}$

$B \rightarrow C$

$\text{Follow}(S) = \{ ? \}$

$C \rightarrow cCe$

$\text{Follow}(B) = \{ ? \}$

$C \rightarrow d$

$\text{Follow}(C) = \{ ? \}$

# Example 1

$S \rightarrow aSe$

$S \rightarrow B$

$B \rightarrow bBe$

$B \rightarrow C$

$C \rightarrow cCe$

$C \rightarrow d$

$\text{First}(S) = \{a, b, c, d\}$

$\text{First}(B) = \{b, c, d\}$

$\text{First}(C) = \{c, d\}$

$\text{Follow}(S) = \{e, \$\}$

$\text{Follow}(B) = \{e, \$\}$

$\text{Follow}(C) = \{e, \$\}$

# Example 2

$S \rightarrow ABC$

$A \rightarrow a$

$A \rightarrow \lambda$

$B \rightarrow b$

$B \rightarrow \lambda$

$\text{First}(S) = \{ ? \}$

$\text{First}(A) = \{ ? \}$

$\text{First}(B) = \{ ? \}$

$\text{Follow}(S) = \{ ? \}$

$\text{Follow}(A) = \{ ? \}$

$\text{Follow}(B) = \{ ? \}$

# Example 2

$S \rightarrow ABC$

$A \rightarrow a$

$A \rightarrow \lambda$

$B \rightarrow b$

$B \rightarrow \lambda$

$\text{First}(S) = \{a, b, c\}$

$\text{First}(A) = \{a, \lambda\}$

$\text{First}(B) = \{b, \lambda\}$

$\text{Follow}(S) = \{\$\}$

$\text{Follow}(A) = \{b, c\}$

$\text{Follow}(B) = \{c\}$