COPYRIGHT NOTICE / THÔNG BÁO BẢN QUYỀN

© 2025 Duc A. Hoang (Hoàng Anh Đức)

COPYRIGHT (English):

BẢN QUYỀN (Tiếng Việt):

VNU-HUS MAT1206E/3508: Introduction to AI

Logic Programming with PROLOG
In-class Discussion

Hoàng Anh Đức

Bộ môn Tin học, Khoa Toán-Cơ-Tin học
Đại học KHTN, ĐHQG Hà Nội
hoanganhduc@hus.edu.vn

Contents

Additional Materials

Basic of PROLOG

Recursive Definitions

Execution Control and Procedural Elements

Lists

Self-modifying Programs

A Planning Example

Constraint Logic Programming

Additional Materials

Logic Programming
with PROLOG

Hoàng Anh Đức

2 Additional Materials

Basic of PROLOG

Recursive Definitions

Execution Control and
Procedural Elements

Lists

Self-modifying
Programs

A Planning Example

Constraint Logic
Programming

References

Learn Prolog Now!

- `https://www.let.rug.nl/bos/lpn/index.php`
- by **Patrick Blackburn**, **Joost Bos**, and **Kristina Striegnitz**.

Basic of PROLOG

Logic Programming
with PROLOG

Hoàng Anh Đức

Additional Materials

3 Basic of PROLOG

Recursive Definitions

Execution Control and
Procedural Elements

Lists

Self-modifying
Programs

A Planning Example

Constraint Logic
Programming

References

- PROLOG = **Pro**gramming in **Log**ic
- PROLOG is used in many projects, primarily in AI and computational linguistics.
- We will now give a short introduction to this language, present the most important concepts, show its strengths, and compare it with other programming languages and theorem provers.
- Those looking for a complete programming course are directed to textbooks such as [Bratko 2011]; [Clocksin and Mellish 2013] and the documentations at `https://www.swi-PROLOG.org/` and `http://www.gPROLOG.org/`.
- PROLOG systems interpret *Warren Abstract Machine code (WAM)*.
- PROLOG source code is compiled into so-called WAM code, which is then interpreted by the WAM.
- **Performance:** up to 10 million logical inferences per second (LIPS) on a 1 Gigahertz PC

Basic of PROLOG

- PROLOG is a *declarative programming language*, i.e., the programmer declares *what* the program should accomplish without specifying *how* to achieve the result.
- PROLOG is based on *Horn clauses*.
- A PROLOG program consists of a *knowledge base* (*database*), which is simply a set of *facts* and *rules* about some problem domain.
  - A *knowledge base KB* of family relationships is coded as a PROLOG program

```
1  child(oscar, karen, frank).
2  child(mary, karen, frank).
3  child(eve, anne, oscar).
4  child(henry, anne, oscar).
5  child(isolde, anne, oscar).
6  child(clyde, mary, oscar).
```

Basic of PROLOG

- The execution of a PROLOG program is initiated by a *query*, which is answered by proving that the query logically follows from the facts and rules in the program.

  - Example query

    ```
    ?- child(eve, anne, oscar).
    ```

  - The query asks whether `eve` is a child of `anne` and `oscar`.
  - The expected answer is `true` (because it is a fact in the knowledge base KB).
  - How does PROLOG find the answer?
    - PROLOG tries to unify the query with the facts in the knowledge base KB.
    - There are six facts in the knowledge base.
    - Unification is attempted between the query and each of the complementary literals in the input data in order of occurrence. (In this example, the query unifies with the third fact.)
    - If one of the alternatives fails, this results in backtracking to the last branching point, and the next alternative is tested.

Basic of PROLOG

Logic Programming
with PROLOG

Hoàng Anh Đức

Additional Materials

6 Basic of PROLOG

Recursive Definitions

Execution Control and
Procedural Elements

Lists

Self-modifying
Programs

A Planning Example

Constraint Logic
Programming

References

Variables

- *Variables* begin with a Capital letter, or "_"
    - For example, `X`, `Tom`, `_result`
- "_" is a nameless (anonymous) variable. We use it when we need to use a variable, but we're not interested in what PROLOG instantiates the variable to
- A variable can have a value

Basic of PROLOG

Logic Programming
with PROLOG

Hoàng Anh Đức

Additional Materials

7 Basic of PROLOG

Recursive Definitions

Execution Control and
Procedural Elements

Lists

Self-modifying
Programs

A Planning Example

Constraint Logic
Programming

References

Atoms

- An *atom* is a constant in terms; it just stands for itself.
- Atoms do not begin with a capital letter
  - For example, `x`, `tom`
- Atomic formulas are called *structures in PROLOG*.
- You can make an atom containing any characters at all by enclosing it in *single quotes*:
  - For example, `'C:\\My Documents\\examples.pl'`
  - If you use double quotes, you will get a list of ASCII values, which is probably not what you want
    - `?- X = "Hello".` results
      `X = [72, 101, 108, 108, 111].`
  - In a quoted atom, a single quote must be doubled or backslashed
    - For example, `'Can''t, or won\'t?'`
  - Backslashes in file names must also be doubled
    - For example, `'C:\\My Documents\\examples.pl'`
    - Better yet, use forward slashes in paths; every OS, including Windows, understands this

Basic of PROLOG

Predicates

- A *predicate* is a definition of a *functor* (predicate symbol), which is *collection of clauses with the same functor and arity (number of arguments)*.
  - `loves(john, mary).`
  - `loves(mary, bill).`
  - `loves(chuck, X) :- female(X), rich(X).`
- These clauses should stay together.
- The scope of a variable (such as `X`) is the single clause in which it occurs.
- A PROLOG program is just a collection of predicates.

Common Problems

- Capitalization is *meaningful*!
- No space is allowed between a functor and its argument list:
  - `man(tom)`, not `man (tom)`.
- Double quotes indicate a list of ASCII character values, *not* a string
- Don't forget the period! (But if you do, you can put it on the next line.)

Basic of PROLOG

Logic Programming
with PROLOG
Hoàng Anh Đức

Additional Materials

9 Basic of PROLOG

Recursive Definitions

Execution Control and
Procedural Elements

Lists

Self-modifying
Programs

A Planning Example

Constraint Logic
Programming

References

Central Ideas of PROLOG

- **SUCCESS (true) / FAILURE (false)**
  - any computation can "succeed" or "fail", and this is used as a 'test' mechanism.
- **UNIFICATION (2-WAY MATCHING)**
  - any two data items can be compared for similarity, and values can be bound to variables in order to allow a match to succeed.
- **SEARCHING**
  - the whole activity of the PROLOG system is to search through various options to find a combination that succeeds.
- **BACKTRACKING**
  - when the system fails during its search, it returns to previous choices to see if making a different choice would allow success.

Basic of PROLOG

Logic Programming
with PROLOG

Hoàng Anh Đức

Additional Materials

10 Basic of PROLOG

Recursive Definitions

Execution Control and
Procedural Elements

Lists

Self-modifying
Programs

A Planning Example

Constraint Logic
Programming

References

Let's try some examples from "Learn Prolog Now!"
(https://www.let.rug.nl/bos/lpn/index.php).

Basic of PROLOG

Exercise 1
Given the following KB

```
1   woman(mia).
2   woman(jody).
3   woman(yolanda).
4   playsAirGuitar(jody).
5   party.
```

What is the expected answer to the following queries? Why?

```
?-  woman(mia).
```

```
?-  playsAirGuitar(mia).
```

```
?-  playsAirGuitar(vincent).
```

```
?-  tatooed(jody).
```

Basic of PROLOG

Exercise 2

Given the following KB

```
1  happy(yolanda).
2  listens2Music(mia).
3  listens2Music(yolanda):- happy(yolanda).
4  playsAirGuitar(mia):- listens2Music(mia).
5  playsAirGuitar(yolanda):- listens2Music(yolanda).
```

What is the expected answer to the following queries? Why?

```
?- playsAirGuitar(mia).
```

```
?- playsAirGuitar(yolanda).
```

Basic of PROLOG

Exercise 3

Given the following KB

```
1  happy(vincent).
2  listens2Music(butch).
3  playsAirGuitar(vincent):- listens2Music(vincent),
4          happy(vincent).
5  playsAirGuitar(butch):- happy(butch).
6  playsAirGuitar(butch):- listens2Music(butch).
```

What is the expected answer to the following queries? Why?

```
?- playsAirGuitar(vincent).
```

```
?- playsAirGuitar(butch).
```

Explain why we can replace the two rules in lines 6–7 by the single rule. (Note: Look up the meaning of the semicolon ; in PROLOG.)

```
playsAirGuitar(butch):- happy(butch);
        listens2Music(butch).
```

Basic of PROLOG

Exercise 4

Given the following KB

```prolog
1  woman(mia).
2  woman(jody).
3  woman(yolanda).
4
5  loves(vincent,mia).
6  loves(marsellus,mia).
7  loves(pumpkin,honey_bunny).
8  loves(honey_bunny,pumpkin).
```

What is the expected answer to the following queries? Why?

```prolog
?-  woman(X).
```

```prolog
?-  loves(marsellus,X),  woman(X).
```

Basic of PROLOG

Exercise 5
Given the following KB

```
1  loves(vincent,mia).
2  loves(marsellus,mia).
3  loves(pumpkin,honey_bunny).
4  loves(honey_bunny,pumpkin).
5
6  jealous(X,Y):- loves(X,Z), loves(Y,Z).
```

What is the expected answer to each of the following queries?
Why?

```
?- jealous(marsellus,W).
```

Recursive Definitions
Introduction

Logic Programming
with PROLOG

Hoàng Anh Đức

Additional Materials

Basic of PROLOG

16 Recursive Definitions

Execution Control and
Procedural Elements

Lists

Self-modifying
Programs

A Planning Example

Constraint Logic
Programming

References

- In PROLOG, we can define predicates recursively.
- A recursive definition requires:
  - At least one *base case* (non-recursive)
  - At least one *recursive case*
- Let's look at a classic example from "Learn PROLOG Now!": Eating and Digestion

Recursive Definitions
Example: Eating

Logic Programming with PROLOG

Hoàng Anh Đức

Additional Materials

Basic of PROLOG

17 Recursive Definitions

Execution Control and Procedural Elements

Lists

Self-modifying Programs

A Planning Example

Constraint Logic Programming

References

Consider the following knowledge base:

```prolog
1  is_digesting(X,Y)  :-  just_ate(X,Y).
2  is_digesting(X,Y)  :-
3          just_ate(X,Z),
4          is_digesting(Z,Y).
5
6  just_ate(mosquito,blood(john)).
7  just_ate(frog,mosquito).
8  just_ate(stork,frog).
```

- The definition of `is_digesting/2` is recursive
- It appears in both head and body of the second rule
- The first rule (base case) provides an "escape" from circularity

Recursive Definitions
Declarative Meaning

Logic Programming
with PROLOG

Hoàng Anh Đức

Additional Materials

Basic of PROLOG

18 Recursive Definitions

Execution Control and
Procedural Elements

Lists

Self-modifying
Programs

A Planning Example

Constraint Logic
Programming

References

- *Declarative meaning*: The logical meaning of the PROLOG knowledge base
- Base clause (non-recursive):
  - "If X has just eaten Y, then X is now digesting Y"
- Recursive clause:
  - "If X has just eaten Z and Z is digesting Y, then X is digesting Y too"
- This captures the intuition of indirect digestion through food chains

Recursive Definitions
Procedural Meaning

Logic Programming
with PROLOG

Hoàng Anh Đức

Additional Materials

Basic of PROLOG

19 Recursive Definitions

Execution Control and
Procedural Elements

Lists

Self-modifying
Programs

A Planning Example

Constraint Logic
Programming

References

- *Procedural meaning*: How PROLOG actually executes the queries
- For a query `is_digesting(X,Y)`, PROLOG:
  - First tries the base rule: "Has X just eaten Y?"
  - If that fails, tries the recursive rule by finding some Z where:
    - X has just eaten Z, AND
    - Z is digesting Y (recursive subgoal)

Recursive Definitions
Example Execution

Logic Programming
with PROLOG
Hoàng Anh Đức

Additional Materials

Basic of PROLOG

20 Recursive Definitions

Execution Control and
Procedural Elements

Lists

Self-modifying
Programs

A Planning Example

Constraint Logic
Programming

References

For the query:

```
?- is_digesting(stork,mosquito).
```

PROLOG's execution:

1. Try base rule with X=stork, Y=mosquito:
   just_ate(stork,mosquito) ⇒ fails
2. Try recursive rule:
   - Find Z where just_ate(stork,Z) ⇒ Z = frog
   - New subgoal: is_digesting(frog,mosquito)
   - Try base rule: just_ate(frog,mosquito) ⇒ succeeds!
3. Query succeeds: Yes, stork is digesting mosquito

Recursive Definitions
The Importance of Base Cases

Logic Programming
with PROLOG

Hoàng Anh Đức

Additional Materials

Basic of PROLOG

21 Recursive Definitions

Execution Control and
Procedural Elements

Lists

Self-modifying
Programs

A Planning Example

Constraint Logic
Programming

References

Warning

Always include a base case in recursive definitions!

Consider this dangerous rule:

```
p :- p.
```

- Declaratively: "If property p holds, then property p holds" (logical)
- Procedurally: Creates an *infinite loop*
  - To prove p, I need to prove p
  - To prove p, I need to prove p
  - ...and so on, forever
- Without a base case, PROLOG won't terminate

Recursive Definitions
Another Example: Family Relationships

Logic Programming with PROLOG

Hoàng Anh Đức

Additional Materials

Basic of PROLOG

22 Recursive Definitions

Execution Control and Procedural Elements

Lists

Self-modifying Programs

A Planning Example

Constraint Logic Programming

References

46

Consider the following knowledge base:

```
1   child(oscar, karen, frank).
2   child(mary, karen, frank).
3   child(eve, anne, oscar).
4   child(henry, anne, oscar).
5   child(isolde, anne, oscar).
6   child(clyde, mary, oscarb).
7
8   child(X,Z,Y) :- child(X,Y,Z).
9
10  descendant(X,Y) :- child(X,Y,Z).
11  descendant(X,Y) :- child(X,U,V), descendant(U,Y).
```

The following query is not answered:

```
?- descendant(clyde,karen).
```

- The clause in line 8, which specifies symmetry of the child predicate, calls itself recursively without the possibility of termination.

Recursive Definitions
Another Example: Family Relationships

This problem can be solved with the following new program.

rel01.pl

```
1   child(oscar, karen, frank).
2   child(mary, karen, frank).
3   child(eve, anne, oscar).
4   child(henry, anne, oscar).
5   child(isolde, anne, oscar).
6   child(clyde, mary, oscarb).
7
8   descendant(X,Y) :- child(X,Y,Z).
9   descendant(X,Y) :- child(X,Z,Y).
10  descendant(X,Y) :- child(X,U,V), descendant(U,Y).
```

```
?- descendant(clyde, karen).
true .

?- child(eve,oscar,anne).
false .
```

But now the query

```
?- child(eve,oscar,anne).
```

is no longer correctly answered because the symmetry of
`child` in the last two variables is no longer given.

Recursive Definitions
Another Example: Family Relationships

Logic Programming
with PROLOG

Hoàng Anh Đức

Additional Materials

Basic of PROLOG

24 Recursive Definitions

Execution Control and
Procedural Elements

Lists

Self-modifying
Programs

A Planning Example

Constraint Logic
Programming

References

A solution to both problems is found in the program.

rel02.pl

```
1   child_fact(oscar, karen, frank).
2   child_fact(mary, karen, frank).
3   child_fact(eve, anne, oscar).
4   child_fact(henry, anne, oscar).
5   child_fact(isolde, anne, oscar).
6   child_fact(clyde, mary, oscarb).
7
8   child(X,Z,Y) :- child_fact(X,Y,Z).
9   child(X,Z,Y) :- child_fact(X,Z,Y).
10
11  descendant(X,Y) :- child(X,Y,Z).
12  descendant(X,Y) :- child(X,U,V), descendant(U,Y).
```

Recursive Definitions
Another Example: Family Relationships

A solution to both problems is found in the program.

_____ rel02.pl _____

```
1   child_fact(oscar, karen, frank).
2   child_fact(mary, karen, frank).
3   child_fact(eve, anne, oscar).
4   child_fact(henry, anne, oscar).
5   child_fact(isolde, anne, oscar).
6   child_fact(clyde, mary, oscarb).
7
8   child(X,Z,Y) :- child_fact(X,Y,Z).
9   child(X,Z,Y) :- child_fact(X,Z,Y).
10
11  descendant(X,Y) :- child(X,Y,Z).
12  descendant(X,Y) :- child(X,U,V), descendant(U,Y).
```

The PROLOG programmer must *pay attention to processing* and *avoid infinite loops*

The program is no longer as elegant and simple as the—logically correct—first variant

Execution Control and Procedural Elements

Logic Programming
with PROLOG

Hoàng Anh Đức

Additional Materials

Basic of PROLOG

Recursive Definitions

25 Execution Control and
Procedural Elements

Lists

Self-modifying
Programs

A Planning Example

Constraint Logic
Programming

References

Note

As we have seen in the previous examples, *it is important to control the execution of PROLOG*.

- *Avoiding unnecessary backtracking* especially can lead to large increases in efficiency. One means to this end is the *cut* operator. *By inserting an exclamation mark into a clause, we can prevent backtracking over this point.*
- Another possibility for execution control is the built-in predicate `fail`, which is never true.

Execution Control and Procedural Elements

Logic Programming
with PROLOG

Hoàng Anh Đức

Additional Materials

Basic of PROLOG

Recursive Definitions

26 Execution Control and
Procedural Elements

Lists

Self-modifying
Programs

A Planning Example

Constraint Logic
Programming

References

Example 1 (Cut operator in PROLOG)

max(X, Y, Max) means "the maximum of two numbers X and Y is *Max*"

```
max.pl
1  max(X,Y,X) :- X >= Y.
2  max(X,Y,Y) :- X < Y.
```

```
maxwCut.pl
1  max(X,Y,X) :- X >= Y, !.
2  max(X,Y,Y).
```

- Without cut.
- In query ?- max(2,3,Z), Z > 10., backtracking is employed because Z = 3 and the second clause is tested for max, which is doomed to failure

- With cut.
- The second clause is only called if it is really necessary, that is, if the first clause fails.
- However, this optimization makes the program harder to understand.

Execution Control and Procedural Elements

Logic Programming
with PROLOG

Hoàng Anh Đức

Additional Materials

Basic of PROLOG

Recursive Definitions

27 Execution Control and
Procedural Elements

Lists

Self-modifying
Programs

A Planning Example

Constraint Logic
Programming

References

Example 2 (Predicate `fail` in PROLOG)

- In the family relationship example we can quite simply print out all children and their parents with the query

```
?- child_fact(X,Y,Z), write(X),
write(' is a child of '), write(Y),
write(' and '), write(Z), write('.'),
nl, fail.
```

- The corresponding output is

```
oscar is a child of karen and frank.
mary is a child of karen and frank.
eve is a child of anne and oscar.
henry is a child of anne and oscar.
isolde is a child of anne and oscar.
clyde is a child of mary and oscarb.
false.
```

where the predicate `nl` causes a line break in the output. What would be the output in the end without use of the `fail` predicate?

Execution Control and Procedural Elements

Logic Programming
with PROLOG

Hoàng Anh Đức

Additional Materials

Basic of PROLOG

Recursive Definitions

28 Execution Control and
Procedural Elements

Lists

Self-modifying
Programs

A Planning Example

Constraint Logic
Programming

References

Example 3 (Negation as Failure)

- In the family relationship example, the query

```
?- child_fact(ulla,X,Y).
```

would result `false.` because there are no facts about `ulla`.

- This answer is *not logically correct*. Specifically, *it is not possible to prove that there is no object with the name* `ulla`. Here the prover E would correctly answer "`No proof found.`"

- Thus if *PROLOG answers* `false.`, this only means that *the query Q cannot be proved*. For this, however, *$\neg Q$ must not necessarily be proved*.

Lists

Logic Programming
with PROLOG

Hoàng Anh Đức

Additional Materials

Basic of PROLOG

Recursive Definitions

Execution Control and
Procedural Elements

29 Lists

Self-modifying
Programs

A Planning Example

Constraint Logic
Programming

References

- A collection of *ordered data*.
- Has zero or more elements enclosed by square brackets and separated by commas (',').

Example	Description
`[A]`	A list with one element
`[]`	An empty list
`[34,tom,[2,3]]`	A list with three elements where the third element is a list of two elements
`[mia, love(honey), mia]`	A list with three elements where the first and last elements are identical

- Like any object, a list can be unified with a variable

```
?- X = [Any, list, 'of elements'].
X = [Any, list, 'of elements'].
```

Lists

Logic Programming
with PROLOG

Hoàng Anh Đức

Additional Materials

Basic of PROLOG

Recursive Definitions

Execution Control and
Procedural Elements

30 Lists

Self-modifying
Programs

A Planning Example

Constraint Logic
Programming

References

- A list can be decomposed into its *head* (first element) and *tail* (remaining elements) using the vertical bar operator ('|').
- For example, the list `[A, B, C]` can be decomposed as follows:

```
?- [Head|Tail] = [A, B, C].
Head = A,
Tail = [B, C].
```

- What are the head and the tail of the list `[dead(z)]`?
- **Note:** The empty list has neither a head nor a tail. That is, the empty list has no internal structure; for PROLOG, `[]` is a special, particularly simple, list.
  - What is the output of the following query?

  ```
  ?- [H|T] = [].
  ```

Lists

Exercise 6

Explain the purpose of each query and give PROLOG's expected answer. For each query below, state (1) what the query asks, (2) the expected result (true/false or variable bindings), and (3) a brief justification.

```
?- [X|Y] = [[], dead(z), [2, [b, c]], [], Z].
```

```
?- [X,Y | W] =
       [[], dead(z), [2, [b, c]], [], Z].
```

```
?- [X1,X2,X3,X4 | Tail] =
       [[], dead(z), [2, [b, c]], [], Z].
```

```
?- [_,X,_,Y|_] =
       [[], dead(z), [2, [b, c]], [], Z].
```

```
?- [_,_,[_|X]|_] =
       [[], dead(z), [2, [b, c]], [], Z].
```

Logic Programming
with PROLOG
Hoàng Anh Đức

Additional Materials

Basic of PROLOG

Recursive Definitions

Execution Control and
Procedural Elements

31 Lists

Self-modifying
Programs

A Planning Example

Constraint Logic
Programming

References

Lists
First recursive list program

Logic Programming
with PROLOG
Hoàng Anh Đức

Additional Materials

Basic of PROLOG

Recursive Definitions

Execution Control and
Procedural Elements

32 Lists

Self-modifying
Programs

A Planning Example

Constraint Logic
Programming

References

It's time to look at an example (from "Learn Prolog Now!") of a recursive PROLOG program for lists: the predicate member/2.

- Goal: given an object X and a list L, decide whether X belongs to L.

- The standard definition (one fact and one recursive rule):

```
1   member(X,[X|T]).
2   member(X,[H|T]) :- member(X,T).
```

- First clause (fact): "X is a member of a list if X is the head of that list." (uses the | operator)
- Second clause (recursive rule): "X is a member of a list if X is a member of the tail of the list."
- Declaratively this is straightforward: the two clauses capture membership directly from the structure of lists.

Lists
Procedural behaviour — examples

Consider how PROLOG answers queries.

- Immediate success:

```
?- member(yolanda,[yolanda,trudy,vincent,jules])
```

PROLOG succeeds immediately by unifying with the first clause.

- Requires recursion/backtracking:

```
?- member(vincent,[yolanda,trudy,vincent,jules])
```

PROLOG tries the first clause (fails), uses the recursive clause repeatedly until the subgoal

```
member(vincent,[vincent,jules])
```

unifies with the first clause and succeeds.

Lists
Failure and termination

Logic Programming
with PROLOG

Hoàng Anh Đức

Additional Materials

Basic of PROLOG

Recursive Definitions

Execution Control and
Procedural Elements

34 Lists

Self-modifying
Programs

A Planning Example

Constraint Logic
Programming

References

■ If the queried element is not in the list, recursion eventually reaches the empty list and cannot proceed:

```
?- member(zed,[yolanda,trudy,vincent,jules]).
```

■ PROLOG will derive successive goals

```
member(zed,[trudy,vincent,jules])
member(zed,[vincent,jules])
member(zed,[jules])
member(zed,[])
```

and at member(zed,[]), neither clause applies (empty list cannot be split), so search stops and the answer is no.

Lists
Enumerating members & a small improvement

Logic Programming
with PROLOG

Hoàng Anh Đức

Additional Materials

Basic of PROLOG

Recursive Definitions

Execution Control and
Procedural Elements

35 Lists

Self-modifying
Programs

A Planning Example

Constraint Logic
Programming

References

- `member/2` can be used with variables to enumerate elements:

```
?- member(X,[yolanda,trudy,vincent,jules]).
X = yolanda ;
X = trudy ;
X = vincent ;
X = jules ;
no
```

- Small stylistic improvement: use anonymous variables for irrelevant parts

```
1  member(X,[X|_]).
2  member(X,[_|T]) :- member(X,T).
```

Semantically identical, but clearer because each clause names only what matters.

Self-modifying Programs

Logic Programming
with PROLOG
Hoàng Anh Đức

Additional Materials

Basic of PROLOG

Recursive Definitions

Execution Control and
Procedural Elements

Lists

36 Self-modifying
Programs

A Planning Example

Constraint Logic
Programming

References

- PROLOG programs are not fully compiled, rather, they are interpreted by the WAM. Therefore *it is possible to modify programs at runtime*. A program can even modify itself.

- With commands such as `assert` and `retract`, facts and rules can be added to the knowledge base or taken out of it.

- Assert predicates
  - `assert(X)`: Adds a new fact or clause to the database. Term is asserted as the last fact or clause with the same key predicate.
  - `asserta(X)`: Same as assert, but adds a clause at the beginning of the database.
  - `assertz(X)`: Exactly same as `assert(X)`.

- Retract predicates
  - `retract(X)`: Removes fact or clause X from the database.
  - `retractall(X)`: Removes all facts or clauses from the database for which the head unifies with X.

Self-modifying Programs

Logic Programming
with PROLOG
Hoàng Anh Đức

Additional Materials

Basic of PROLOG

Recursive Definitions

Execution Control and
Procedural Elements

Lists

37 Self-modifying
Programs

A Planning Example

Constraint Logic
Programming

References

A simple application of `asserta` is the addition of derived facts to the beginning of the knowledge base with the goal of avoiding a repeated, potentially time-expensive derivation.

Example 4 (Family Relationship)

——————————— dynamic_rel.pl ———————————

```
1   child_fact(oscar, karen, frank).
2   child_fact(mary, karen, frank).
3   child_fact(eve, anne, oscar).
4   child_fact(henry, anne, oscar).
5   child_fact(isolde, anne, oscar).
6   child_fact(clyde, mary, oscarb).
7
8   child(X,Z,Y) :- child_fact(X,Y,Z).
9   child(X,Z,Y) :- child_fact(X,Z,Y).
10
11  :- dynamic descendant/2.
12  descendant(X,Y) :- child(X,Y,Z), asserta(descendant(X,Y)).
13  descendant(X,Y) :- child(X,U,V), descendant(U,Y),
14                     asserta(descendant(X,Y)).
```

Self-modifying Programs

```
?- [dynamic_rel].
true.

?- descendant(clyde, karen).
true .

?- listing(descendant).
:- dynamic descendant/2.

descendant(clyde, karen).
descendant(mary, karen).
descendant(X, Y) :-
child(X, Y, Z),
asserta(descendant(X, Y)).
descendant(X, Y) :-
child(X, U, V),
descendant(U, Y),
asserta(descendant(X, Y)).

true.
```

Self-modifying Programs

- By manipulating rules with `assert` and `retract`, even programs that change themselves completely can be written. This idea became known under the term *genetic programming*. It allows the construction of arbitrarily flexible learning programs.

- In practice, however, it turns out that, due to the *huge number of senseless possible changes*, *changing the code by trial and error rarely leads to a performance increase*.

- *Systematic changing of rules*, on the other hand, *makes programming so much more complex* that, so far, such programs that extensively modify their own code have not been successful.

- *Machine learning* has been quite successful. However, only *very limited modifications* of the program code are being conducted here.

A Planning Example

Exercise 7

Understand how to solve this problem using PROLOG.

A farmer wants to bring a cabbage, a goat, and a wolf across a river, but his boat is so small that he can only take them across one at a time. The farmer thought it over and then said to himself: "If I first bring the wolf to the other side, then the goat will eat the cabbage. If I transport the cabbage first, then the goat will be eaten by the wolf. What should I do?"

Constraint Logic Programming

- The *programming of scheduling systems*, in which many (sometimes complex) logical and numerical conditions must be fulfilled, *can be very expensive and difficult with conventional programming languages*.
- This is precisely where *logic could be useful*.
- An approach is to simply *write all logical conditions in PL1 and then enter a query*. *Usually this approach fails miserably*. The reason is *the penguin problem* discussed in "Limitations of Logic". The fact `penguin(tweety)` does ensure that `penguin(tweety)` is true but does not rule out that `raven(tweety)` is also true. To rule this out with additional axioms is very inconvenient.
- *Constraint Logic Programming (CLP)* [Jaffar and Lassez 1987], which allows the *explicit formulation of constraints for variables*, offers an elegant and very efficient mechanism for solving this problem.
    - The *interpreter constantly monitors the execution of the program for adherence to all of its constraints*.
    - The programmer is fully relieved of the task of controlling the constraints, which in many cases can greatly simplify programming.

Constraint Logic Programming

Example 5 (Applying the CLP mechanism of GNU-PROLOG (The finite domain (FD) constraint solver))

The secretary of Albert Einstein High School has to come up with a plan for allocating rooms for final exams. He has the following information: the four teachers Mayer, Hoover, Miller and Smith give tests for the subjects German, English, Math, and Physics in the ascendingly numbered rooms 1, 2, 3 and 4. Every teacher gives a test for exactly one subject in exactly one room. Besides that, he knows the following about the teachers and their subjects.

(1) Mr. Mayer never tests in room 4.
(2) Mr. Miller always tests German.
(3) Mr. Smith and Mr. Miller do not give tests in neighboring rooms.
(4) Mrs. Hoover tests Mathematics.
(5) Physics is always tested in room number 4.
(6) German and English are not tested in room 1.

Who gives a test in which room?

Constraint Logic Programming

Logic Programming
with PROLOG

Hoàng Anh Đức

Additional Materials

Basic of PROLOG

Recursive Definitions

Execution Control and
Procedural Elements

Lists

Self-modifying
Programs

A Planning Example

43 Constraint Logic
Programming

References

raumplan.pl

```
1   %%% Run in GNU-PROLOG
2   start :-
3       fd_domain([Mayer, Hoover, Miller, Smith],1,4),
4       fd_all_different([Mayer, Miller, Hoover, Smith]),
5
6       fd_domain([German, English, Math, Physics],1,4),
7       fd_all_different([German, English, Math, Physics]),
8
9       fd_labeling([Mayer, Hoover, Miller, Smith]),
10
11      Mayer #\=4,                   % Mayer not in room 4
12      Miller #= German,             % Miller tests German
13      dist(Miller, Smith) #>= 2,    % Distance Miller/Smith >= 2
14      Hoover #= Math,               % Hoover tests mathematics
15      Physics #= 4,                 % Physics in room 4
16      German #\= 1,                 % German not in room 1
17      English #\= 1,                % English not in room 1
18      nl,
19      write([Mayer, Hoover, Miller, Smith]), nl,
20      write([German, English, Math, Physics]), nl.
```

Constraint Logic Programming

- GNU-PROLOG built-in predicates:
  - `fd_domain(Vars, Lower, Upper)` constraints each element `X` of `Vars` to take a value in `Lower..Upper`.
  - `fd_all_different(List)` constrains all variables in `List` to take distinct values.
  - `fd_labeling(Vars, Options)` assigns a value to each variable `X` of the list `Vars` according to the list of labeling options given by `Options`. This predicate is re-executable on backtracking. `fd_labeling(Vars)` is equivalent to `fd_labeling(Vars, [])`.
- The variables `Mayer,Hoover,Miller,Smith` as well as `German,English,Math,Physics` can each take on an integer value from 1 to 4 as the room number. (Lines 3–6.)
- A binding `Mayer = 1` and `German = 1` means that Mr. Mayer gives the German test in room 1.
- Lines 4 and 7 ensure that the four particular variables take on different values.
- Line 9 ensures that all variables are assigned a concrete value in the case of a solution. This line is not absolutely necessary here. If there were multiple solutions, however, only intervals would be output.
- In lines 11–17 the constraints are given, and the remaining lines output the room numbers for all teachers and all subjects in a simple format.

Constraint Logic Programming

Logic Programming
with PROLOG

Hoàng Anh Đức

Additional Materials

Basic of PROLOG

Recursive Definitions

Execution Control and
Procedural Elements

Lists

Self-modifying
Programs

A Planning Example

45 Constraint Logic
Programming

References

The program is loaded into GNU-PROLOG with
`['raumplan.pl'].`, and with `start.` we obtain the output

```
[3,1,2,4]
[2,3,1,4]

true ?

yes
```

This output corresponds to the plan

Room num.	1	2	3	4
Teacher	Hoover	Miller	Mayer	Smith
Subject	Math	German	English	Physics

References

Logic Programming
with PROLOG

Hoàng Anh Đức

Additional Materials

Basic of PROLOG

Recursive Definitions

Execution Control and
Procedural Elements

Lists

Self-modifying
Programs

A Planning Example

Constraint Logic
Programming

46 References

Clocksin, William F. and Christopher S. Mellish (2013).
Programming in PROLOG Using the ISO Standard. 3rd.
Springer Science & Business Media. DOI:
10.1007/978-3-642-97005-4.

Bratko, Ivan (2011). *Prolog programming for artificial
intelligence*. 4th. Addison-Wesley.

Jaffar, Joxan and Jean-Louis Lassez (1987). "Constraint
Logic Programming." In: *Proceedings of the 14th ACM
SIGACT-SIGPLAN symposium on Principles of
programming languages*, pp. 111–119. DOI:
https://doi.org/10.1145/41625.41635.