The MeTTa calculus

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Abstract. We describe a core calculus that captures the operational semantics of the language MeTTa.

1 Introduction and motivation

In [1] we described a register machine based operational semantics for MeTTa. While this has some utility for proving the correctness of compilers, it is not conducive for reasoning about types and other more abstract aspects of MeTTa-based computation. Here we present a calculus, together with a efficient implementation and prove the correctness of the implementation.

Additionally, we use the OSLF algorithm developed by Meredith, Stay, and Williams to calculate a spatial-behavioral type system for MeTTa. Further, we adapt a well known procedure for proving the termination of rewrites to provide a token-based security model for the calculus and implementation. Beyond that we derive versions of fuzzy, stochastic, and quantum execution modes, automatically.

In general, presenting MeTTa as a graph structured lambda theory, otherwise known as an operational semantics not only has the benefit that implementation follows the correct-by-construction methodology, but may be used to automatically derive and extend MeTTa with much needed features for programming real applications in a distributed and decentralized setting.

2 A symmetric reflective higher order concurrent calculus with backchaining

PROCESS
$$P, Q ::= 0 \mid \mathsf{for}(t \leftarrow x) P \mid x?P \mid *x \mid P|Q$$

NAME
$$x, y ::= @P$$

TERM
$$t, u ::= atom \mid (t^*)$$

TERM
$$atom ::= x \mid \mathsf{Bool} \mid \mathsf{String} \mid \mathsf{Int} \mid P$$

$$\text{EQUIV}\quad P|\mathsf{0} \equiv P \quad P|Q \equiv Q|P \quad P|(Q|R) \equiv (P|Q)\mathsf{R}$$

$$\text{ALPHA}\quad \frac{\mathsf{occurs}(t, y)}{\mathsf{for}(t\text{<->}x)P \equiv \mathsf{for}(t\{z/y\}\text{<->}x)(P\{z/y\})\ \mathsf{if} z \notin \mathsf{FN}(P)}$$

$$\text{COMM}\quad \frac{\sigma = \mathsf{unify}(t, u)}{\mathsf{for}(t\text{<->}x)P \mid \mathsf{for}(u\text{<->}x)Q \to P\dot{\sigma}|Q\dot{\sigma}}$$

$$\text{PAR}\quad \frac{P \to P'}{P|Q \to P'|Q} \qquad \text{EQUIV}\quad \frac{P \equiv P' \qquad P' \to Q' \qquad Q' \equiv Q}{P \to Q}$$

$$\text{REFL}\quad \frac{P \to P'}{x?P \to x!(P')}$$

where $\dot{\sigma}$ denotes the substitution that replaces all variable to process bindings with variable to name bindings. Thus, $\{P/x\} = \{@P/x\}$.

2.1 Intuitive mapping to MeTTa

MeTTa language	MeTTa calculus
(addAtom *space term*)	for(*term* <-> *space*)0
(remAtom *space term*)	for(*term* <-> *space*)0
(? *space term*)	for(*term* <-> *space*)0

The key insight is the same one that Google and other Web2.0 companies made decades ago: $folders = tagging$. In other words, rather than actually building a container data structure constituting a "space" (as in AtomSpace), we merely tag atoms with the space(s) they occupy. This shift in perspective allows us to use the same construct (a kind of tagging) for adding atoms to a space; removing atoms from a space; and, querying for atoms in a space that match a given pattern.

Likewise a rewrite rule is a continuation $t\text{<->}\{\ P\ \}$. When it is tagged with a space, say x, i.e. $\mathsf{for}(t\text{<->}x)P$, may be thought of as added to the space.

Under this view, a space is equated with all the atoms (and rules) that have been tagged as in the space. That is, we may define a function $\mathsf{space} : @\mathsf{Proc} \to \mathsf{Proc}$ by $\mathsf{space}(x) = \Pi_i\ \mathsf{for}(t_i\text{<->}x)P_i$.

3 Some useful features

3.1 Replication and freshness

$$\begin{array}{l}\text{PROCESS}\\ P,Q ::= \ldots \mid\ !P \mid\ \mathsf{new}\ x\ \mathsf{in}\ \{\ P\ \}\end{array}$$

In the core calculus, when two terms rendezvous at a space $(\mathsf{for}(t\leftrightarrow x)P \mid \mathsf{for}(u\leftrightarrow x)Q)$ they are *consumed* and replaced by their continuations $(P\dot{\sigma}|Q\dot{\sigma})$. It is frequently useful in programming applications to leave one or the other in place. Thus, when $!\mathsf{for}(t\leftrightarrow x)P$ rendezvous with $\mathsf{for}(u\leftrightarrow x)Q$ it reduces to $!\mathsf{for}(t\leftrightarrow x)P|P\dot{\sigma}|Q\dot{\sigma}$.

Likewise, in programming applications it is often useful to guarantee that computations rendezvous in a private space. The state denoted by $\mathsf{new}\ x\ \mathsf{in}\ \{\ P\ \}$ guarantees that x is private in the scope P. Therefore, $\mathsf{new}\ x\ \mathsf{in}\ \{\ \mathsf{for}(t\leftrightarrow x)P \mid \mathsf{for}(u\leftrightarrow x)Q\}$ guarantees that the rendezvous happens in a private space.

3.2 Fork-join concurrency

This next bit of syntactic sugar illustrates the value of the for-comprehension. Specifically, it facilitates the introduction of fork-join concurrency, which is predominant in human decision-making processes. The following syntax should be read as an expansion of the core calculus, *replacing* the much simpler for-comprehension with a more articulated one.

$$\begin{array}{l}\text{PROCESS}\\ P,Q ::= \ldots \mid\ \mathsf{for}([\mathsf{Join}])P\end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{l}\text{JOINS}\\ [\mathsf{Join}] ::= \mathsf{Join} \mid\ \mathsf{Join};[\mathsf{Join}]\end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{l}\text{JOIN}\\ \mathsf{Join} ::= [\mathsf{Query}]\end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{l}\text{QUERIES}\\ [\mathsf{Query}] ::= \mathsf{Query} \mid\ \mathsf{Query}\&[\mathsf{Query}]\end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{l}\text{QUERY}\\ \mathsf{Query} ::= t \leftrightarrow x\end{array}$$

In case the BNF is a little opaque, here is the template.

```
for (
  y11 <-> x11 & ... & ym1 <-> xm1 ; // received in any order,
     ... ; // but all received before the next row
  y1n <-> x1n & ... & ymn <-> xmn
){ P }
```

4 From calculus to efficient implementation

TBD

5 Tokenized security

$$\text{SECURITY-TOKENS} \quad T ::= () \mid s \mid T : T \qquad\qquad \text{SECURED-PROCESSES} \quad S ::= \{P\}_s \mid T \mid S|S$$

$$\text{MULTI-PARTY-SIGS} \quad s ::= () \mid \mathsf{hash}(<signature>) \mid s\&s$$

where $\{P\}_s$ is a process signed by a digital signature.

$$\text{COMM-COSIGNED-PAR-EXTERNAL-SEQUENTIAL} \quad \frac{\sigma = \mathsf{unify}(t, u)}{\{\mathsf{for}(t\text{<->}x)P\}_{s_1} \mid \{\mathsf{for}(u\text{<->}x)P\}_{s_2} \mid s_1\&s_2 : T \to \{P\dot{\sigma}|Q\dot{\sigma}\}_{s_1\&s_2} \mid T}$$

$$\text{COMM-COSIGNED-PAR-EXTERNAL-CONCURRENT} \quad \frac{\sigma = \mathsf{unify}(t, u)}{\{\mathsf{for}(t\text{<->}x)P\}_{s_1} \mid \{\mathsf{for}(u\text{<->}x)P\}_{s_2} \mid s_1 : T_1 \mid s_2 : T_1 \to \{P\dot{\sigma}|Q\dot{\sigma}\}_{s_1\&s_2} \mid T_1 \mid T_2}$$

$$\text{COMM-SIGNED} \quad \frac{P \to P'}{\{P\}_s \mid s : T \to \{P'\}_s \mid T}$$

$$\text{COMM-COSIGNED-PAR-INTERNAL} \quad \frac{P \to P'}{\{P\}_{s_1\&s_2} \mid s_1 : T_1 \mid s_2 : T_2 \to \{P'\}_s \mid T_1 \mid T_2}$$

6 Spatial-behavioral types

TBD

7 Stochastic and quantum execution

7.1 Stochastic execution

TBD

7.2 Quantum execution

TBD

8 Conclusions and future research

TBD

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References

1. Adam Vandervorst Lucius Gregory Meredith, Ben Goertzel. Meta-metta: An operational semantics for metta, 2023.