

Description Logic: A Formal Foundation for Languages and Tools

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Contents

- Description Logic Basics
 - Syntax and semantics
- Description Logics and Ontology Languages
 - OWL ontology language
 - Ontology -v- Database
- Description Logic Reasoning
 - Reasoning services
 - Reasoning techniques
- Recent and Future work



DL Basics





What Are Description Logics?





What Are Description Logics?

- Decidable fragments of First Order Logic

Thank you for listening

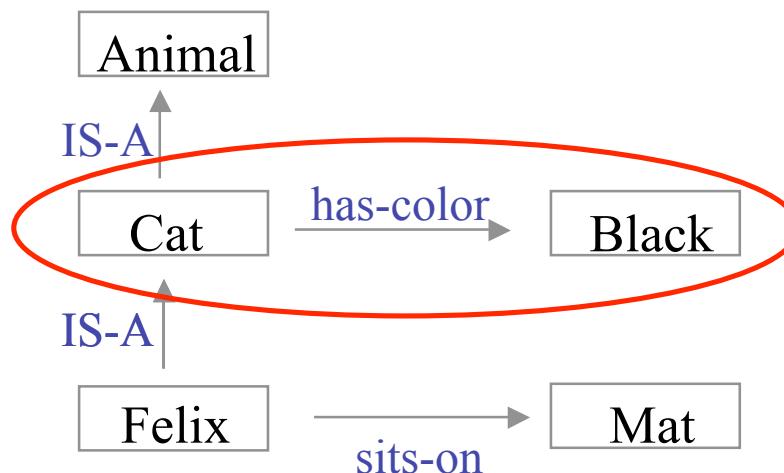
Any questions?





What Are Description Logics?

- A family of logic based Knowledge Representation formalisms
 - Originally descended from [semantic networks](#) and [KL-ONE](#)
 - Describe domain in terms of [concepts](#) (aka classes), [roles](#) (aka properties, relationships) and [individuals](#)



[Quillian, 1967]



What Are Description Logics?

- Modern DLs (after Baader et al) distinguished by:
 - Fully fledged logics with **formal semantics**
 - Decidable fragments of FOL (often contained in C_2)
 - Closely related to Propositional Modal & Dynamic Logics
 - Closely related to Guarded Fragment
 - Provision of **inference services**
 - Practical decision procedures (algorithms) for key problems (satisfiability, subsumption, etc)
 - Implemented **systems** (highly optimised)





and now:

A Word from our Sponsors





Crash Course in (simplified) FOL

- Syntax
 - Non-logical symbols (signature)
 - Constants: Felix, MyMat
 - Predicates(arity): Animal(1), Cat(1), has-color(2), sits-on(2)
 - Logical symbols:
 - Variables: x, y
 - Operators: \wedge , \vee , \rightarrow , \neg , ...
 - Quantifiers: \exists , \forall
 - Equality: =
 - Formulas:
 - Cat(Felix), Mat(MyMat), sits-on(Felix, MyMat)
 - Cat(x), Cat(x) \vee Human(x), $\exists y.$ Mat(y) \wedge sits-on(x, y)
 - $\forall x.$ Cat(x) \rightarrow Animal(x), $\forall x.$ Cat(x) \rightarrow ($\exists y.$ Mat(y) \wedge sits-on(x, y))





Crash Course in (simplified) FOL

- Semantics

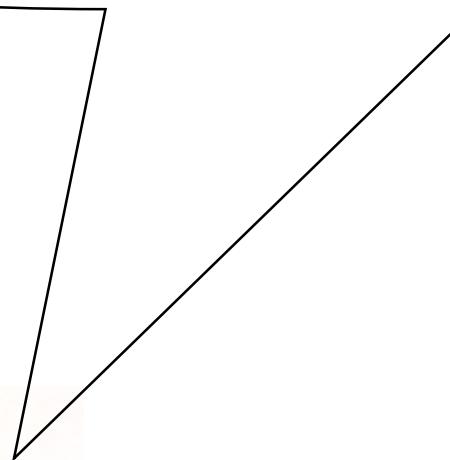




Crash Course in (simplified) FOL

- Semantics

Why should I care about semantics? -- In fact I heard that a little goes a long way!





Crash Course in (simplified) FOL

- Semantics

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Well, from a philosophical POV, we need to specify the relationship between statements in the logic and the existential phenomena they describe.





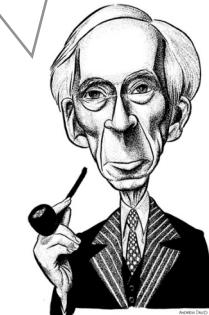
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That's OK, but I don't get paid for philosophy.





Crash Course in (simplified) FOL

- Semantics

Why should I care about semantics? -- In fact I heard that a little goes a long way!

Well, from a philosophical POV, we need to specify the relationship between statements in the logic and the existential phenomena they describe.

That's OK, but I don't get paid for philosophy.



From a practical POV, we need to define relationships (like entailment) between logical statements -- without such a definition we can't spec software such as a reasoner.

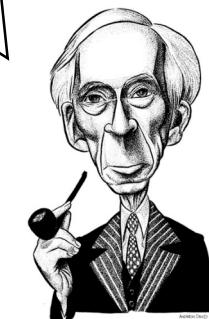




Crash Course in (simplified) FOL

- Semantics

In FOL we define the semantics in terms of models (a model theory). A model is supposed to be an analogue of (part of) the world being modeled. FOL uses a very simple kind of model, in which “objects” in the world (not necessarily physical objects) are modeled as elements of a set, and relationships between objects are modeled as sets of tuples.





Crash Course in (simplified) FOL

- Semantics

In FOL we define the semantics in terms of models (a model theory). A model is supposed to be an analogue of (part of) the world being modeled. FOL uses a very simple kind of model, in which “objects” in the world (not necessarily physical objects) are modeled as elements of a set, and relationships between objects are modeled as sets of tuples.

Note that this is exactly the same kind of model as used in a database: objects in the world are modeled as values (elements) and relationships as tables (sets of tuples).





Crash Course in (simplified) FOL

- Semantics
 - Model: a pair $\langle D, \cdot^I \rangle$ with D a non-empty set and \cdot^I an interpretation
 - C^I is an element of D for C a constant
 - v^I is an element of D for v a variable
 - P^I is a subset of D^n for P a predicate of arity n
 - E.g., $D = \{a, b, c, d, e, f\}$, and

$\text{Felix}^I = a$

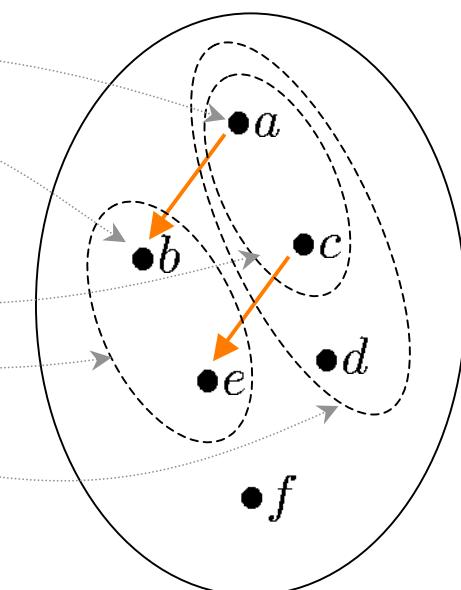
$\text{MyMat}^I = b$

$\text{Cat}^I = \{a, c\}$

$\text{Mat}^I = \{b, e\}$

$\text{Animal}^I = \{a, c, d\}$

$\text{sits-on}^I = \{\langle a, b \rangle, \langle c, e \rangle\}$





Crash Course in (simplified) FOL

- Semantics
 - Evaluation: truth value in a given model $M = \langle D, \cdot^I \rangle$
 - $P(t_1, \dots, t_n)$ is *true* iff $\langle t_1^I, \dots, t_n^I \rangle \in P^I$
 - $A \wedge B$ is *true* iff A is *true* and B is *true*
 - $\neg A$ is *true* iff A is not *true*
 - E.g.,

Cat(Felix)	true
Cat(MyMat)	false
$\neg \text{Mat}(\text{Felix})$	true
sits-on(Felix, MyMat)	true
Mat(Felix) \vee Cat(Felix)	true

$D = \{a, b, c, d, e, f\}$
$\text{Felix}^I = a$
$\text{MyMat}^I = b$
$\text{Cat}^I = \{a, c\}$
$\text{Mat}^I = \{b, e\}$
$\text{Animal}^I = \{a, c, d\}$
$\text{sits-on}^I = \{\langle a, b \rangle, \langle c, e \rangle\}$



Crash Course in (simplified) FOL

- Semantics
 - Evaluation: truth value in a given model $M = \langle D, \cdot^I \rangle$
 - $\exists x.A$ is *true* iff exists $\cdot^{I'}$ s.t. \cdot^I and $\cdot^{I'}$ differ only w.r.t. x , and A is *true* w.r.t. $\langle D, \cdot^{I'} \rangle$
 - $\forall x.A$ is *true* iff for all $\cdot^{I'}$ s.t. \cdot^I and $\cdot^{I'}$ differ only w.r.t. x , A is *true* w.r.t. $\langle D, \cdot^{I'} \rangle$

E.g.,

$\exists x.\text{Cat}(x)$

true

$\forall x.\text{Cat}(x)$

false

$\exists x.\text{Cat}(x) \wedge \text{Mat}(x)$

false

$\forall x.\text{Cat}(x) \rightarrow \text{Animal}(x)$

true

$\forall x.\text{Cat}(x) \rightarrow (\exists y.\text{Mat}(y) \wedge \text{sits-on}(x, y))$ true

$$D = \{a, b, c, d, e, f\}$$

$$\text{Felix}^I = a$$

$$\text{MyMat}^I = b$$

$$\text{Cat}^I = \{a, c\}$$

$$\text{Mat}^I = \{b, e\}$$

$$\text{Animal}^I = \{a, c, d\}$$

$$\text{sits-on}^I = \{\langle a, b \rangle, \langle c, e \rangle\}$$



Crash Course in (simplified) FOL

- Semantics
 - Given a model M and a formula F , M is a model of F (written $M \models F$) iff F evaluates to true in M
 - A formula F is **satisfiable** iff there exists a model M s.t. $M \models F$
 - A formula F **entails** another formula G (written $F \models G$) iff every model of F is also a model of G (i.e., $M \models F$ implies $M \models G$)

E.g.,

$$M \models \exists x. \text{Cat}(x)$$

$$M \not\models \forall x. \text{Cat}(x)$$

$$M \not\models \exists x. \text{Cat}(x) \wedge \text{Mat}(x)$$

$$M \models \forall x. \text{Cat}(x) \rightarrow \text{Animal}(x)$$

$$M \models \forall x. \text{Cat}(x) \rightarrow (\exists y. \text{Mat}(y) \wedge \text{sits-on}(x, y))$$

$$D = \{a, b, c, d, e, f\}$$

$$\text{Felix}^I = a$$

$$\text{MyMat}^I = b$$

$$\text{Cat}^I = \{a, c\}$$

$$\text{Mat}^I = \{b, e\}$$

$$\text{Animal}^I = \{a, c, d\}$$

$$\text{sits-on}^I = \{\langle a, b \rangle, \langle c, e \rangle\}$$



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E.g.,

- ✓ $\text{Cat}(\text{Felix}) \models \exists x.\text{Cat}(x)$ ($\text{Cat}(\text{Felix}) \wedge \neg \exists x.\text{Cat}(x)$ is not satisfiable)
- ✓ $(\forall x.\text{Cat}(x) \rightarrow \text{Animal}(x)) \wedge \text{Cat}(\text{Felix}) \models \text{Animal}(\text{Felix})$
- ✓ $(\forall x.\text{Cat}(x) \rightarrow \text{Animal}(x)) \wedge \neg \text{Animal}(\text{Felix}) \models \neg \text{Cat}(\text{Felix})$
- ✗ $\text{Cat}(\text{Felix}) \models \forall x.\text{Cat}(x)$
- ✗ $\text{sits-on}(\text{Felix}, \text{Mat1}) \wedge \text{sits-on}(\text{Tiddles}, \text{Mat2}) \models \neg \text{sits-on}(\text{Felix}, \text{Mat2})$
- ✗ $\text{sits-on}(\text{Felix}, \text{Mat1}) \wedge \text{sits-on}(\text{Tiddles}, \text{Mat1}) \models \exists^{\geq 2} x.\text{sits-on}(x, \text{Mat1})$





Decidable Fragments

- FOL (satisfiability) well known to be undecidable
 - A sound, complete and terminating algorithm is impossible
- Interesting decidable fragments include, e.g.,
 - C2: FOL with 2 variables and Counting quantifiers ($\exists^{\geq n}$, $\exists^{\leq n}$)
 - Counting quantifiers abbreviate pairwise (in-) equalities, e.g.:
 $\exists^{\geq 3}x.\text{Cat}(x)$ equivalent to
 $\exists x, y, z.\text{Cat}(x) \wedge \text{Cat}(y) \wedge \text{Cat}(z) \wedge x \neq y \wedge x \neq z \wedge y \neq z$
 - $\exists^{\leq 2}x.\text{Cat}(x)$ equivalent to
 $\forall x, y, z.\text{Cat}(x) \wedge \text{Cat}(y) \wedge \text{Cat}(z) \rightarrow x = y \vee x = z \vee y = z$
 - Propositional modal and description logics
 - Guarded fragment





Back to our Scheduled Program





DL Syntax

- **Signature**
 - **Concept** (aka class) names, e.g., Cat, Animal, Doctor
 - Equivalent to FOL unary predicates
 - **Role** (aka property) names, e.g., sits-on, hasParent, loves
 - Equivalent to FOL binary predicates
 - **Individual** names, e.g., Felix, John, Mary, Boston, Italy
 - Equivalent to FOL constants





DL Syntax

- Operators
 - Many kinds available, e.g.,
 - Standard FOL Boolean operators (\sqcap , \sqcup , \neg)
 - Restricted form of quantifiers (\exists , \forall)
 - Counting (\geq , \leq , $=$)
 - ...





DL Syntax

- Concept **expressions**, e.g.,
 - Doctor \sqcup Lawyer
 - Rich \sqcap Happy
 - Cat \sqcap \exists sits-on.Mat
- Equivalent to FOL formulae with one free variable
 - $\text{Doctor}(x) \vee \text{Lawyer}(x)$
 - $\text{Rich}(x) \wedge \text{Happy}(x)$
 - $\exists y.(\text{Cat}(x) \wedge \text{sits-on}(x, y))$





DL Syntax

- Special concepts
 - T (aka top, Thing, most general concept)
 - \perp (aka bottom, Nothing, inconsistent concept)

used as abbreviations for

- $(A \sqcup \neg A)$ for any concept A
- $(A \sqcap \neg A)$ for any concept A





DL Syntax

- Role **expressions**, e.g.,
 - loves^-
 - $\text{hasParent} \circ \text{hasBrother}$
- Equivalent to FOL formulae with two free variables
 - $\text{loves}(y, x)$
 - $\exists z.(\text{hasParent}(x, z) \wedge \text{hasBrother}(z, y))$





DL Syntax

- “Schema” **Axioms**, e.g.,
 - Rich $\sqsubseteq \neg$ Poor (concept inclusion)
 - Cat $\sqcap \exists$ sits-on.Mat \sqsubseteq Happy (concept inclusion)
 - BlackCat \equiv Cat $\sqcap \exists$ hasColour.Black (concept equivalence)
 - sits-on \sqsubseteq touches (role inclusion)
 - Trans(part-of) (transitivity)
- Equivalent to (particular form of) FOL sentence, e.g.,
 - $\forall x.(Rich(x) \rightarrow \neg Poor(x))$
 - $\forall x.(Cat(x) \wedge \exists y.(sits-on(x,y) \wedge Mat(y)) \rightarrow Happy(x))$
 - $\forall x.(BlackCat(x) \leftrightarrow (Cat(x) \wedge \exists y.(hasColour(x,y) \wedge Black(y))))$
 - $\forall x,y.(sits-on(x,y) \rightarrow touches(x,y))$
 - $\forall x,y,z.((sits-on(x,y) \wedge sits-on(y,z)) \rightarrow sits-on(x,z))$





DL Syntax

- “Data” **Axioms** (aka Assertions or Facts), e.g.,
 - BlackCat(Felix) (concept assertion)
 - Mat(Mat1) (concept assertion)
 - Sits-on(Felix,Mat1) (role assertion)
- Directly equivalent to FOL “ground facts”
 - Formulae with no variables





DL Syntax

- A set of axioms is called a **TBox**, e.g.:

```
{Doctor ⊑ Person,  
Parent ≡ Person ⊓ ∃hasChild.Person  
HappyParent ≡ Parent ⊓ ∀hasChild.
```

- A set of facts is called an **ABox**:

```
{HappyParent(John),  
hasChild(John,Mary)}
```

Note

Facts sometimes written
John:HappyParent,
John hasChild Mary,
 $\langle John, Mary \rangle$:hasChild

- A **Knowledge Base (KB)** is just a TBox plus an Abox
 - Often written $\mathcal{K} = \langle \mathcal{T}, \mathcal{A} \rangle$



The DL Family

- Many different DLs, often with “strange” names
 - E.g., \mathcal{EL} , \mathcal{ALC} , \mathcal{SHIQ}
- Particular DL defined by:
 - Concept operators (\sqcap , \sqcup , \neg , \exists , \forall , etc.)
 - Role operators (\cdot , \circ , etc.)
 - Concept axioms (\sqsubseteq , \equiv , etc.)
 - Role axioms (\sqsubseteq , Trans, etc.)





The DL Family

- E.g., \mathcal{EL} is a well known “sub-Boolean” DL
 - Concept operators: \sqcap , \neg , \exists
 - No role operators (only atomic roles)
 - Concept axioms: \sqsubseteq , \equiv
 - No role axioms
- E.g.:
$$\text{Parent} \equiv \text{Person} \sqcap \exists \text{hasChild}.\text{Person}$$





The DL Family

- ALC is the smallest propositionally closed DL
 - Concept operators: \sqcap , \sqcup , \neg , \exists , \forall
 - No role operators (only atomic roles)
 - Concept axioms: \sqsubseteq , \equiv
 - No role axioms
- E.g.:

ProudParent \equiv Person \sqcap $\forall \text{hasChild}.\text{Doctor} \sqcup \exists \text{hasChild}.\text{Doctor}$



The DL Family

- \mathcal{S} used for \mathcal{ALC} extended with (role) transitivity axioms
- Additional letters indicate various extensions, e.g.:
 - \mathcal{H} for role hierarchy (e.g., $\text{hasDaughter} \sqsubseteq \text{hasChild}$)
 - \mathcal{R} for role box (e.g., $\text{hasParent} \circ \text{hasBrother} \sqsubseteq \text{hasUncle}$)
 - \mathcal{O} for nominals/singleton classes (e.g., $\{\text{Italy}\}$)
 - \mathcal{I} for inverse roles (e.g., $\text{isChildOf} \equiv \text{hasChild}^{-}$)
 - \mathcal{N} for number restrictions (e.g., $\geq 2\text{hasChild}$, $\leq 3\text{hasChild}$)
 - \mathcal{Q} for qualified number restrictions (e.g., $\geq 2\text{hasChild}.\text{Doctor}$)
 - \mathcal{F} for functional number restrictions (e.g., $\leq 1\text{hasMother}$)
- E.g., $\text{SHIQ} = \mathcal{S} + \text{role hierarchy} + \text{inverse roles} + \text{QNRs}$



The DL Family

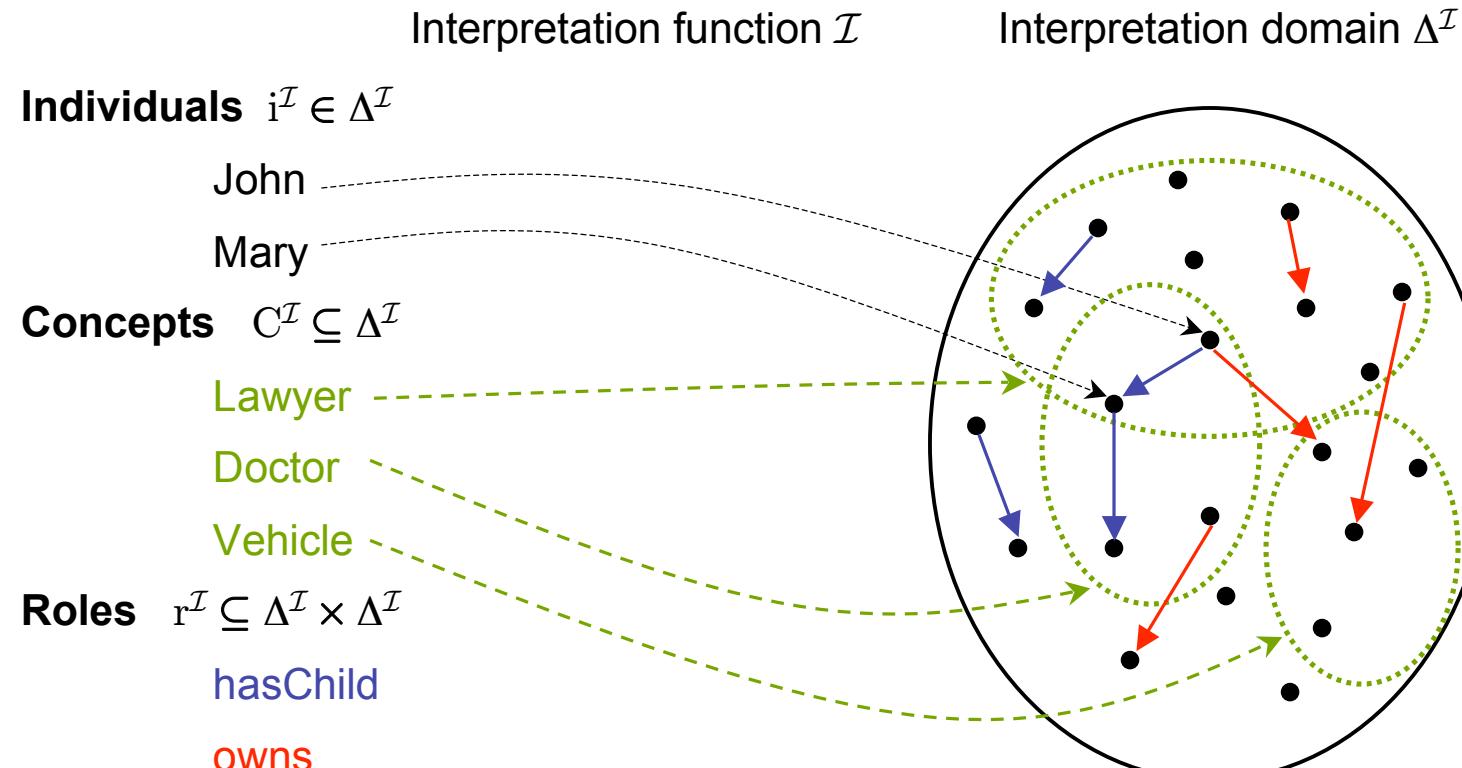
- Numerous other extensions have been investigated
 - Concrete domains (numbers, strings, etc)
 - DL-safe rules (Datalog-like rules)
 - Fixpoints
 - Role value maps
 - Additional role constructors (\cap , \cup , \neg , \circ , id , ...)
 - Nary (i.e., predicates with arity >2)
 - Temporal
 - Fuzzy
 - Probabilistic
 - Non-monotonic
 - Higher-order
 - ...





DL Semantics

Via translation to FOL, or directly using FO model theory:





DL Semantics

- Interpretation function extends to **concept expressions** in the obvious(ish) way, e.g.:

$$(C \sqcap D)^{\mathcal{I}} = C^{\mathcal{I}} \cap D^{\mathcal{I}}$$

$$(C \sqcup D)^{\mathcal{I}} = C^{\mathcal{I}} \cup D^{\mathcal{I}}$$

$$(\neg C)^{\mathcal{I}} = \Delta^{\mathcal{I}} \setminus C^{\mathcal{I}}$$

$$\{x\}^{\mathcal{I}} = \{x^{\mathcal{I}}\}$$

$$(\exists R.C)^{\mathcal{I}} = \{x \mid \exists y. \langle x, y \rangle \in R^{\mathcal{I}} \wedge y \in C^{\mathcal{I}}\}$$

$$(\forall R.C)^{\mathcal{I}} = \{x \mid \forall y. (x, y) \in R^{\mathcal{I}} \Rightarrow y \in C^{\mathcal{I}}\}$$

$$(\leq n R)^{\mathcal{I}} = \{x \mid \#\{y \mid \langle x, y \rangle \in R^{\mathcal{I}}\} \leq n\}$$

$$(\geq n R)^{\mathcal{I}} = \{x \mid \#\{y \mid \langle x, y \rangle \in R^{\mathcal{I}}\} \geq n\}$$





DL Semantics

- Given a model $M = \langle D, \cdot^I \rangle$
 - $M \models C \sqsubseteq D$ iff $C^I \subseteq D^I$
 - $M \models C \equiv D$ iff $C^I = D^I$
 - $M \models C(a)$ iff $a^I \in C^I$
 - $M \models R(a, b)$ iff $\langle a^I, b^I \rangle \in R^I$
 - $M \models \langle \mathcal{T}, \mathcal{A} \rangle$ iff for every axiom $ax \in \mathcal{T} \cup \mathcal{A}$, $M \models ax$





DL Semantics

- Satisfiability and entailment
 - A KB \mathcal{K} is satisfiable iff there exists a model M s.t. $M \models \mathcal{K}$
 - A concept C is satisfiable w.r.t. a KB \mathcal{K} iff there exists a model $M = \langle D, \cdot^I \rangle$ s.t. $M \models \mathcal{K}$ and $C^I \neq \emptyset$
 - A KB \mathcal{K} entails an axiom ax (written $\mathcal{K} \models ax$) iff for every model M of \mathcal{K} , $M \models ax$ (i.e., $M \models \mathcal{K}$ implies $M \models ax$)





DL Semantics

E.g.,

$$\begin{aligned}\mathcal{T} = & \{\text{Doctor} \sqsubseteq \text{Person}, \text{Parent} \equiv \text{Person} \sqcap \exists \text{hasChild}.\text{Person}, \\ & \quad \text{HappyParent} \equiv \text{Parent} \sqcap \forall \text{hasChild}.(\text{Doctor} \sqcup \exists \text{hasChild}.\text{Doctor})\} \\ \mathcal{A} = & \{\text{John:HappyParent}, \text{John hasChild Mary}, \text{John hasChild Sally}, \\ & \quad \text{Mary:}\neg\text{Doctor}, \text{Mary hasChild Peter}, \text{Mary:(}\leq 1 \text{ hasChild)}\end{aligned}$$

- ✓ - $\mathcal{K} \models \text{John:Person}$?
- ✓ - $\mathcal{K} \models \text{Peter:Doctor}$?
- ✓ - $\mathcal{K} \models \text{Mary:HappyParent}$?
 - What if we add “Mary hasChild Jane” ?
 $\mathcal{K} \models \text{Peter} = \text{Jane}$
 - What if we add “HappyPerson \equiv Person \sqcap $\exists \text{hasChild}.\text{Doctor}$ ” ?
 $\mathcal{K} \models \text{HappyPerson} \sqsubseteq \text{Parent}$



DL and FOL

- Most DLs are subsets of C2
 - But reduction to C2 may be (highly) non-trivial
 - $\text{Trans}(R)$ naively reduces to $\forall x, y, z. R(x, y) \wedge R(y, z) \rightarrow R(x, z)$
- Why use DL instead of C2?
 - Syntax is succinct and convenient for KR applications
 - Syntactic conformance guarantees being inside C2
 - Even if reduction to C2 is non-obvious
 - Different combinations of constructors can be selected
 - To guarantee decidability
 - To reduce complexity
 - DL research has mapped out the decidability/complexity landscape in great detail
 - See Evgeny Zolin's DL Complexity Analyzer
<http://www.cs.man.ac.uk/~ezolin/dl/>





Complexity of reasoning in Description Logics

Note: the information here is (always) incomplete and [updated](#) often

Base description logic: Attributive Language with Complements

$\mathcal{ALC} ::= \perp \mid A \mid \neg C \mid C \wedge D \mid C \vee D \mid \exists R.C \mid \forall R.C$

Concept constructors:

- \mathcal{F} - functionality²: $(\leq 1R)$
- \mathcal{N} - (unqualified) number restrictions: $(\geq nR), (\leq nR)$
- \mathcal{Q} - qualified number restrictions: $(\geq nR.C), (\leq nR.C)$
- \mathcal{O} - nominals: $\{a\}$ or $\{a_1, \dots, a_n\}$ ("one-of" constructor)

- μ - least fixpoint operator: $\mu X.C$
- $R \subseteq S$ - role-value-maps
- $f = g$ - agreement of functional role chains ("same-as")

Role constructors:

- I - role inverses: R^{-}

 - \cap - role intersection³: $R \cap S$
 - \cup - role union: $R \cup S$
 - \neg - role complement:
 - \circ - role chain (composition): $R \circ S$
 - $*$ - reflexive-transitive closure⁴: R^*
 - id - concept identity: $id(C)$
- Forbid complex roles⁵ in number restrictions⁶

[trans](#) [reg](#)

TBox is internalized in extensions of \mathcal{ALCIO} , see [76, Lemma 4.12], [54, p.3]

- Empty TBox
- Acyclic TBox ($A \equiv C$, A is a concept name; no cycles)
- General TBox ($C \sqsubseteq D$ for arbitrary concepts C and D)

Role axioms (RBox):

- S - Role transitivity: $\text{Trans}(R)$
- H - Role hierarchy: $R \sqsubseteq S$
- R - Complex role inclusions: $R \sqsubseteq S, R \sqsubseteq T$
- s - some additional features

[OWL-Lite](#)
[OWL-DL](#)
[OWL 1.1](#)

[Reset](#)

You have selected the Description Logic: [SHIQ](#)

Complexity of reasoning problems⁷

Reasoning problem	Complexity ⁸	Comments and references
Concept satisfiability	NExpTime-complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hardness of even \mathcal{ALCFIO} is proved in [76, Corollary 4.13]. In that paper, the result is formulated for \mathcal{ALCQIO}, but only number restrictions of the form $(\leq 1R)$ are used in the proof. • A different proof of the NExpTime-hardness for \mathcal{ALCFIO} is given in [54] (even with 1 nominal, and role inverses not used in number restrictions). • Upper bound for \mathcal{SHIQ} is proved in [77, Corollary 6.31] with numbers coded in unary (for binary coding, the upper bound remains an open problem for all logics in between \mathcal{ALCNO} and \mathcal{SHIQ}). • Important: in number restrictions, only simple roles (i.e. which are neither transitive nor have a transitive subroles) are allowed; otherwise we gain undecidability even in \mathcal{SH}; see [46]. • Remark: recently [47] it was observed that, in many cases, one can use transitive roles in number restrictions – and still have a decidable logic! So the above notion of a simple role could be substantially extended.
ABox consistency	NExpTime-complete	By reduction to concept satisfiability problem in presence of nominals shown in [69, Theorem 3.7].





Complexity Measures

- **Taxonomic complexity**
Measured w.r.t. total size of “schema” axioms
- **Data complexity**
Measured w.r.t. total size of “data” facts
- **Query complexity**
Measured w.r.t. size of query
- **Combined complexity**
Measured w.r.t. total size of KB (plus query if appropriate)

