
Problem 1.51. Let x and y be strings and let L be any language. We say that x and y are **distinguishable by** L if some string z exists whereby exactly one of the strings xz and yz is a member of L; otherwise, for every string z, we have $xz \in L$ whenever $yz \in L$ and we say that x and y are **indistinguishable by** L. If x and y are indistinguishable by L, we write $x \equiv_L y$. Show that $\equiv_L$ is an equivalence relation.

Proof. To show that $\equiv_L$ is an equivalence relation, first give formal definition of $\equiv_L$[1], and then show that $\equiv_L$ is:

1. Reflexive
2. Symmetric
3. Tranisitive

Definition 1. Let x and y be strings and let L be any language. Then $x \equiv_L y$ is defined as

$$(x \equiv_L y) \equiv (\forall z \mid : xz \in L \equiv yz \in L).$$

Part 1. Reflexivity: $x \equiv_L y$

Part 2. Symmetry: $x \equiv_L y \Rightarrow y \equiv_L x$

Part 3. Transitivity: $x \equiv_L y \wedge y \equiv_L w \Rightarrow x \equiv_L w$

□

[1]The formal method used in this proof is presented in the book **A Logical Approach to Discrete Math** by David Gries and Fred B. Schneider. I recommend the course **Math 220: Formal Methods, Pepperdine University** to any who wishes to learn more about this method. Course link is https://cslab.pepperdine.edu/warford/math220/.