04 - Testing and Manipulating Grammars

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Outline

Sample Grammar G

For this discussion, we will be using the following grammar (found on page 39 of your textbook):

$$
\begin{aligned}
&S \rightarrow E \\
&E \rightarrow T \mid E + T \\
&T \rightarrow F \mid T * F \\
&F \rightarrow U \mid (E) \\
&U \rightarrow 0 \mid 1 \mid 2 \mid 3 \mid 4 \mid 5 \mid 6 \mid 7 \mid 8 \mid 9
\end{aligned}
$$

General Top Down Parsing

1. Look at the next symbol of input. This is the **target** symbol.
2. Expand the next non-terminal in the sentence.
3. If the target symbol does not match, backtrack and select a different non-terminal.
4. Keep repeating the process until there are either no non-terminal candidates or until there are no non-terminals left in the sentence.

The Backtracking Problem

- Even with the best of luck, a backtracking parser would be exponential in runtime!
- A left-recursive grammar could lead to an infinite number of candidates.
- Recall that the sample grammar in the textbook has the rule $E \rightarrow E + T$
- Consider the following expansion for the grammar from the textbook:

$$
\begin{array}{ll}
E + T & 1 + 2 * 3 \\
E + T + T & 1 + 2 * 3 \\
E + T + T + T & 1 + 2 * 3 \\
E + T + T + T + T & 1 + 2 * 3 \\
\ldots &
\end{array}
$$

Ordering Recursion

- Left recursion causes problems in candidate expansions.
- Perhaps we could organize a grammar to mitigate the expansion problem.
- If we move left recursive choices to the end, maybe this would fix it!
- What if we took the grammar G and imposed the order $\langle T, F, U \rangle$ on expansions?

$$
\begin{array}{ll}
T & 1 + 2 * 3 \\
F & 1 + 2 * 3 \\
U & 1 + 2 * 3 \\
1 & 1 + 2 * 3 \\
\lambda & +2 * 3 \\
\text{Mismatch! Backtrack!} &
\end{array}
$$

Ordering Recursion (Continued)

$T * F$	$1 + 2 * 3$
$F * F$	$1 + 2 * 3$
$U * F$	$1 + 2 * 3$
$1 * F$	$1 + 2 * 3$
Mismatch! Backtrack!	
$T * F * F$	$1 + 2 * 3$
$\ldots$	
And there's the loop again...	

Deterministic Parsing

- Backtracking is parsing by “brute force”.
- Backtracking essentially explores every possible production, searching for a match.
- Generally, we want parse times to be proportional to the size of the input, not exponential.
- Undoing parsing is difficult!
- We need some way to determine what production we must have based on the symbols being examined.

$\mathrm{LL}(k)$ Grammars

- Instead of guessing and checking, we maintain a buffer of terminals.
- If a grammar is decidable using k terminals, we call this a k-lookahead grammar.
- We can further classify the grammar by its scanning order and which production it expands first.
- An $\mathrm{LL}(k)$ grammar is a grammar that is scanned from left to right and expands the left most derivation.
- $\mathrm{RL}(k)$ scans input from right to left, expanding left-most derivations.
- $\mathrm{LR}(k)$ scans from left to right, expanding left-most derivations.
- All of the above have a look-ahead buffer of k terminals.
- We are really interested in $\mathrm{LL}(1)$ grammars.

Defining $\mathrm{LL}(1)$ Grammars

- Suppose we have a target expansion $A \rightarrow \alpha_1|\alpha_2|\ldots|\alpha_n$
- We must be able to select α_i by looking at the next symbol.
- For each production, we must have a disjoin **director set** $D(A \rightarrow \alpha_i)$.
- For lookup buffer s, $A \rightarrow \alpha_i$ iff $s \in D(A \rightarrow \alpha_i)$.
- We can also have a set of symbols which immediately identify as an error if they are encountered.

Calculating Director Sets

- If $\alpha_i \overset{*}{\Rightarrow} t\gamma$ for some terminal t
- Then $t \in D(A \to \alpha_i)$
- Because $A \overset{+}{\Rightarrow} t\gamma$ is a valid derivation.
- Let $<<$ be an operator over $(N \cup T)$ such that $\beta << \alpha \iff \exists \alpha \to \beta$
- The reflexive transitive closure $<<^*$ is therefore the “Can Start” relation
- The **start set** is $\mathrm{START}(\alpha) = \beta : \beta <<^* \alpha$
- Considering $\alpha_i = \beta_1\beta_2 \ldots \beta_r$ then $t \in \mathrm{START}(\beta_i) \implies t \in D(A \to \alpha_i)$

Start Sets of G

$$\begin{aligned}
\mathrm{START}(U) &= \{U, 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9\} \\
\mathrm{START}(F) &= \{\{F, (\} \cup \mathrm{START}(U)\} \\
\mathrm{START}(T) &= \{\{T\} \cup \mathrm{START}(F)\} \\
\mathrm{START}(E) &= \{\{E\} \cup \mathrm{START}(T)\} \\
\mathrm{START}(S) &= \{\{S\} \cup \mathrm{START}(E)\}
\end{aligned}$$

- Is G an $\mathrm{LL}(1)$ grammar?
- NO! In fact, no grammar containing left-recursive rules is $\mathrm{LL}(1)$!
- $D(A \to A\gamma) \subseteq \mathrm{START}(A)$