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Akra–Bazzi method

In computer science, the **Akra–Bazzi method**, or **Akra–Bazzi theorem**, is used to analyze the asymptotic behavior of the mathematical recurrences that appear in the analysis of divide and conquer algorithms where the sub-problems have substantially different sizes. It is a generalization of the master theorem for divide-and-conquer recurrences, which assumes that the sub-problems have equal size. It is named after mathematicians Mohamad Akra and Louay Bazzi.[1]

Contents

Formulation

The Akra–Bazzi method applies to recurrence formulas of the form[1]

$$T(x) = g(x) + \sum_{i=1}^{k} a_i T(b_i x + h_i(x)) \qquad \text{for } x \geq x_0.$$

The conditions for usage are:

- sufficient base cases are provided
- a_i and b_i are constants for all i
- $a_i > 0$ for all i
- $0 < b_i < 1$ for all i
- $|g(x)| \in O(x^c)$, where *c* is a constant and *O* notates Big O notation
- $|h_i(x)| \in O\left(\frac{x}{(\log x)^2}\right)$ for all i
- x_0 is a constant

The asymptotic behavior of $T(x)$ is found by determining the value of p for which $\sum_{i=1}^{k} a_i b_i^p = 1$ and plugging that value into the equation[2]

$$T(x) \in \Theta\left(x^p\left(1 + \int_1^x \frac{g(u)}{u^{p+1}} du\right)\right)$$

(see Θ). Intuitively, $h_i(x)$ represents a small perturbation in the index of T. By noting that $\lfloor b_i x \rfloor = b_i x + (\lfloor b_i x \rfloor - b_i x)$ and that the absolute value of $\lfloor b_i x \rfloor - b_i x$ is always between 0 and 1, $h_i(x)$ can be used to ignore the floor function in the index. Similarly, one can also ignore the ceiling function. For example, $T(n) = n + T\left(\frac{1}{2}n\right)$ and $T(n) = n + T\left(\left\lfloor \frac{1}{2}n \right\rfloor\right)$ will, as per the Akra–Bazzi theorem, have the same asymptotic behavior.

Example

Suppose $T(n)$ is defined as 1 for integers $0 \le n \le 3$ and $n^2 + \frac{7}{4}T\left(\left\lfloor \frac{1}{2}n \right\rfloor\right) + T\left(\left\lceil \frac{3}{4}n \right\rceil\right)$ for integers $n > 3$. In applying the Akra–Bazzi method, the first step is to find the value of p for which $\frac{7}{4}\left(\frac{1}{2}\right)^p + \left(\frac{3}{4}\right)^p = 1$. In this example, $p = 2$. Then, using the formula, the asymptotic behavior can be determined as follows:[3]

$$\begin{aligned} T(x) &\in \Theta\left(x^p\left(1 + \int_1^x \frac{g(u)}{u^{p+1}}\,du\right)\right) \\ &= \Theta\left(x^2\left(1 + \int_1^x \frac{u^2}{u^3}\,du\right)\right) \\ &= \Theta(x^2(1 + \ln x)) \\ &= \Theta(x^2 \log x). \end{aligned}$$

Significance

The Akra–Bazzi method is more useful than most other techniques for determining asymptotic behavior because it covers such a wide variety of cases. Its primary application is the approximation of the running time of many divide-and-conquer algorithms. For example, in the merge sort, the number of comparisons required in the worst case, which is roughly proportional to its runtime, is given recursively as $T(1) = 0$ and

$$T(n) = T\left(\left\lfloor \frac{1}{2}n \right\rfloor\right) + T\left(\left\lceil \frac{1}{2}n \right\rceil\right) + n - 1$$

for integers $n > 0$, and can thus be computed using the Akra–Bazzi method to be $\Theta(n \log n)$.

See also

- Master theorem (analysis of algorithms)
- Asymptotic complexity

References

1. Akra, Mohamad; Bazzi, Louay (May 1998). "On the solution of linear recurrence equations". *Computational Optimization and Applications*. **10** (2): 195–210. doi:10.1023/A:1018373005182 (https://doi.org/10.1023%2FA%3A1018373005182).
2. "Proof and application on few examples" (https://people.mpi-inf.mpg.de/~mehlhorn/DatAlg2008/NewMasterTheorem.pdf) (PDF).

3. Cormen, Thomas; Leiserson, Charles; Rivest, Ronald; Stein, Clifford (2009). *Introduction to Algorithms*. MIT Press. ISBN 978-0262033848.

External links

- O Método de Akra-Bazzi na Resolução de Equações de Recorrência (https://www.blogcyberini.com/2017/07/metodo-de-akra-bazzi.html) (in Portuguese)

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