Empirical Performance Investigation of a Büchi Complementation Construction

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Abstract

This will be the abstract.



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Chapter 1

Introduction

At the beginning of the 1960s, a Swiss logician named Julius Richard Büchi at Michigan University was looking for a way to prove the decidability of the satisfiability of monadic second order logic with one successor (S1S). Büchi applied a trick that truly founded a new paradigm in the application of logic to theoretical computer science. He thought of interpretations of a S1S formula as infinitly long words of a formal language and designed a type of finite state automaton that accepts such a word if and only if the interpretation it represents satisfies the formula. After proving that every S1S formula can be translated to such an automaton and vice versa (Büchi's Theorem), the satisfiability problem of an S1S formula could be reduced to testing the non-emptiness of the corresponding automaton.

This special type of finite state automaton was later called Büchi automaton.

1.1 Context of Study

1.1.1 Büchi Automata and Büchi Complementation

Büchi automata are finite state automata that process words of infinite length, so called ω -words. If Σ is the alphabet of a Büchi automaton, then the set of all the possible ω -words that can be generated from this alphabet is denoted by Σ^{ω} . A word $\alpha \in \Sigma^{\omega}$ is accepted by a Büchi automaton if it results in at least one run that contains at least one accepting state infinitely often. A run of a Büchi automaton on a word is a sequence of states. Deterministic Büchi automata have exactly one run for each word in Σ^{ω} , whereas non-deterministic Büchi automata may have multiple runs for each word.

The complement of a Büchi automaton A is another Büchi automaton and is denoted by \overline{A} . Both, A and \overline{A} , share the same alphabet Σ . Regarding any word $\alpha \in \Sigma^{\omega}$, the relation between an automaton and its complement is as follows:

$$\alpha$$
 accepted by $A \iff \alpha$ not accepted by \overline{A}

That is, all the words that are *accepted* by an automaton are *rejected* by its complement, and all the words that are *rejected* by an automaton are *accepted* by its complement. In other words, there is no single word that is either accepted or rejected by *both* of an automaton and its complement.

The complementation of Büchi automata, in particular non-deterministic Büchi automata, is commonly known as "Büchi complementation" or the "Büchi complementation problem". It is a very complex problem because it exhibits a very high state growth, which is sometimes even called state explosion (in the following, we will use the terms state growth, state explosion, and state complexity interchangeably). State growth denotes the relation of the number of states of a complement \overline{A} (output of the complementation construction) to the number of states of the automaton A (input to the complementation construction². Even though the state growth that existing complementation constructions produce for many non-worst-case automata is not nearly as high as the worst case, it may still be very high. This is a serious problem, because Büchi complementation has important practical applications (as we will see next), and it is the reason that the quest for more efficient and more practical Büchi complementation constructions is still an active research topic today.

1.1.2 Language Containment

An important application of Büchi complementation is language containment of ω -regular languages. The ω -regular languages form the class of languages that is equivalent to non-deterministic Büchi automata. The language containment problem consists in determining whether $L_1 \subseteq L_2$, that is, whether a language L_1 is contained in another language L_2 . This is true if every word of L_1 is also in L_2 .

¹The fact that Büchi automata are closed under complementation has been proved by Büchi [4], who, to this end, described the first Büchi complementation construction in history.

²Yan proved in 2007 a lower bound for the worst-case state growth of Büchi complementation of $(0.76n)^n$, where n is the number of states of the initial automaton [55].

The way $L_1 \subseteq L_2$ is commonly resolved is by testing $L_1 \cap \overline{L_2} = \emptyset$. Here, $\overline{L_2}$ denotes the complement language of L_2 . This means, we have to create the intersection language, say $L_{1,\overline{2}}$ of L_1 and the complement of L_2 , and then test whether $L_{1,\overline{2}}$ is empty (that is, contains no words at all). If $L_{1,\overline{2}}$ is empty, then there is no word of L_1 that is not also in L_2 , and $L_1 \subseteq L_2$ is true. If $L_{1,\overline{2}}$ is non-empty, then there is at least one word of L_1 that is not in L_2 , and $L_1 \subseteq L_2$ is false.

With this procedure, we in fact reduce the language containment problem to three operations on languages: complementation, intersection, and emptiness testing. By translating the languages L_1 and L_2 to equivalent automata A_1 and A_2 , and mainpulating the automata instead of the languages, the problem becomes $L(A_1 \cap \overline{A_2}) = \emptyset$. That is, we complement A_2 , create the intersection automaton $A_{1,\overline{2}}$ of A_1 and the complement of A_2 , and test whether the language of $A_{1,\overline{2}}$ is empty, which is done by directly testing the automaton $A_{1,\overline{2}}$ for emptiness.

In this way, we reduce the language containment problem of ω -regular languages to three operations on non-deterministic Büchi automata: complementation, intersection, and emptiness testing. Büchi complementation is thus an integral part of the language containment problem. However, this does not yet answer our initial question of what is a *concrete* and *practical* application of Büchi complementation. To answer this question, we will in the following describe one important application of language containment of ω -regular languages.

1.1.3 Automata-Theoretic Model Checking via Language Containment

How It Works

The language containment approach to automata-theoretic model checking is an approach to automata-theoretic model checking, which is an approach to general model checking, which in turn is an approach to formal verification [?]. Figure 1.1 shows the branch of the family of formal verification techniques that contains the language containment approach to automata-theoretic model checking.

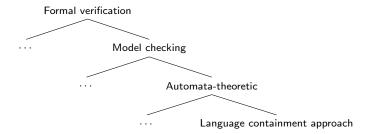


Figure 1.1: Branch of the family of formal verification techniques that contains the language containment approach to automata-theoretic model checking.

Formal verification is the use of mathematical techniques for proving the correctness of a system (software of hardware) with respect to a specified set of properties [?]. A typical example is to verify that a program is deadlock-free. In general, formal verification techniques consist of the following three parts [?]:

- 1. A framework for modelling the system to verify
- 2. A framework for specifying the properties that the system must satisfy
- 3. A verification method for testing whether the system satisfies the properties

For the language containment approach to automata-theoretic model checking, the frameworks for modelling the system to verify and for specifying the properties to be verified are both Büchi automata. The verification method is to test language containment of the languages corresponding to the two Büchi automata. In more detail, the approach works as we explain in the following.

The system s to be verified is modelled as a Büchi automaton, say S. Each word of the language L(S) of S corresponds to a possible computation trace of the system s. A computation trace is an infinite sequence of "combinations of properties" of the system. Such properties can be for example variable values or statuses of individual processes. Each element of a computation trace corresponds to a point in

time during the execution of the system³. The language L(S) represents thus everything that the system can do

A property p to be verified is represented as a non-deterministic Büchi automaton, say P. The words of the language L(P) of P also represent computation traces. In particular, the language L(P) represents all the possible computation traces that do satisfy the property p. If for example p is "deadlock-freeness", then L(P) contains all the possible computation traces of a system like s that are deadlock-free. In other words, the language L(P) represents everything that a system is allowed to do, with respect to a property p.

The verification step then consists in testing $L(S) \subseteq L(P)$, that is, whether everything that the system can do is contained in everything that the system is allowed to do. If this is true, then every possible computation trace of the system satisfies the property p, because it is contained in L(P). If p means deadlock-freeness, then we can conclude that the system is deadlock-free. If the language containment test returns a negative result, then there must be at least one computation trace of the system that does not satisfiy the property p, because it is not in L(P). In that case, this computation trace (however improbable it is), for example, leads to a deadlock, and we have to conclude that the system is not deadlock-free.

This short description points out the application of language containment in formal verification, and, as we know, language containment of ω -regular languages requires Büchi complementation. In the following, we will briefly mention some interesing points about the specific role of Büchi complementation in automata-theoretic model checking.

Importance of Büchi Complementation

As we have seen in the previous section, solving the language containment problem $L(S) \subseteq L(P)$ is done by translating it to the automata-theoretic problem $L(S \cap \overline{P}) = \emptyset$, which in turn is solved by the following three steps:

- 1. Construct the $complement\ \overline{P}$ of the property automaton P
- 2. Construct the intersection automaton, say $A_{S\overline{P}}$, of S and \overline{P}
- 3. Test $A_{S\overline{P}}$ for emptiness

The formal verification problem is thus reduced to three operations on Büchi automata, complementation, intersection, and emptiness testing. Complementation is clearly the problem child of this triple. For intersection and emptiness testing of Büchi automata there exist efficient solutions [?] (cf. [49]). Büchi complementation, however, is so complex that it makes the entire approach impractical [?]. According to [?], there are so far no verification tools that include the complementation of a non-deterministic property automaton, because of the sheer time and computing resources that it entails.

Instead, verification tools apply different ways to circumvent the need for complementing non-deterministic property automata. One of them is to use a deterministic, rather than a non-deterministic, Büchi automaton for representing the property [?][?]. This is because the complementation of deterministic Büchi automata is easy (it can be done in polynomial time and linear space [17]). This has however the disadvantage that the resulting deterministic automaton may be considerably bigger than an equivalent non-deterministic automaton, and that it is generally more complicated and less intuitive to specify a property as a deterministic automaton [?].

Another way to cirvumvent the need for Büchi complementation is to use a slightly different approach to automata-theoretic model checking (in Figure 1.1, a sibling of the language containment approach) [?]. In this approach, the property is not specified as a Büchi automaton, but as a linear temporal logic (LTL) formula φ . The formula φ is then negated $(\neg \varphi)$ and translated to a Büchi automaton $A_{\neg \varphi}$. If A_S is the system automaton, then the verification step is done by testing $L(A_S \cap A_{\neg \varphi}) = \varnothing$. This works because

³The infinity of computation traces suggests that this type of formal verification (and model checking in general) is used for systems that are not expected to terminate and may run indefinitely. This type of systems is called *reactive* systems. They contrast with systems that are expected to terminate and produce a result. For this latter type of systems other formal verification techniques than model checking are used. See for example [?] and [?] for works that cover the formal verification of both types of systems.

 $A_{\neg\varphi}$ is equivalent to $\overline{A_{\varphi}}$, that is, the complement of the automaton representing the property. In this way we push off complementation from Büchi automata to LTL formulas, in which case it is trivial. A verification tool that uses this approach is the SPIN model checker [?]. The disadvantage of this approach is that LTL is less expressive than Büchi automata, and thus allows to express fewer properties. It has even been stated that the set of properties that can be expressed with LTL is unsufficient for industrial applications [?].

Summarising, we can say that automata-theoretic model checking is possible without Büchi complementation. However, the language containment approach with the direct specification of the property as a non-deterministic Büchi automaton has important practical advantages. Thus, finding more efficient ways for the complementation of non-deterministic Büchi automata would be of high practical value [?]. This motivates the fundamental topic of this thesis. In the next sections, we will see how our work specifically contributes to this quest.

1.1.4 Stating the problem, reason the research is worth tackling

Regarding the state complexity of Büchi complementation constructions, only the worst-case state growths have been investigated. However, they are a poor guide to actual performance of constructions [42]. Need for empirical complexity investigations to see the *actual* performance of complementation constructions.

The complementation of non-deterministic Büchi automata is hard. It has been proven to have an exponential lower bound in the number of generated states [cite]. That is, the number of states of the output automaton is, in the worst case, an exponential function of the number of states of the input automaton. However, since the introduction of Büchi automata in the 1960's, significant process in reducing the complexity (in other words, the degree of exponentiality) of the Büchi complementation problem has been made. Some numbers [list complexities of the different constructions].

1.1.5 Aim and Scope

Aim: empirical performance investigation of a specific Büchi complementaiton construction, comparison with other constructions

Scope: two test sets, relatively small automata, no real world or "typical" examples,

1.1.6 Overview

Appendix A

Plugin Installation and Usage

Since between the 2014–08–08 and 2014–11–17 releases of GOAL certain parts of the plugin interfaces have changed, and we adapted our plugin accordingly, the currently maintained version of the plugin works only with GOAL versions 2014-11-17 or newer. It is thus essential for any GOAL user to update to this version in order to use our plugin.

Appendix B

Median Complement Sizes of the GOAL Test Set

Bla bla bla

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Figure B.1: Median complement sizes of the 10,939 effective samples of the internal tests on the GOAL test set. The rows (1.0 to 3.0) are the transition densities, and the columns (0.1 to 1.0) are the acceptance densities.

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1.0	130	117	109	77	69	61	56	40	40	29	1.0	171	174	166	124	118	117	100	67	84	35
1.2	387	456	352	281	155	136	101	105	75	45	1.2	622	833	803	877	529	398	320	372	215	53
1.4	822	683	394	376	230	204	151	120	105	63	1.4	2,086	1,618	1,367	1,676	1,065	967	664	682	494	78
1.6	890	594	458	321	237	178	134	114	113	61	1.6	2,465	2,073	$2{,}182$	1,959	1,518	$1,\!259$	767	545	623	78
1.8	624	507	324	275	196	136	110	92	89	41	1.8	2,310	1,963	1,950	1,988	1,485	1,095	746	418	346	57
2.0	362	286	211	176	117	103	79	64	59	34	2.0	1,318	$1,\!482$	1,393	1,461	981	871	434	338	228	50
2.2	248	222	124	116	82	73	56	52	50	28	2.2	1,068	1,145	1,085	1,067	772	747	263	235	158	40
2.4	147	145	114	87	56	48	43	39	35	19	2.4	689	838	809	751	524	466	240	159	93	30
2.6	115	117	67	61	47	42	32	29	29	15	2.6	469	531	555	565	437	360	169	94	71	23
2.8	95	71	52	45	38	29	27	25	23	13	2.8	369	421	536	405	329	224	130	81	58	21
3.0	59	60	47	35	32	27	22	21	20	10	3.0	244	327	360	322	219	176	85	64	49	16
	(a) Piterman+EQ+RO												(b) Slic	e+P	+RO	+MAl	DJ+E	EG		

Figure B.2: Median complement sizes of the 10,998 effective samples of the external tests without the Rank construction. The rows (1.0 to 3.0) are the transition densities, and the columns (0.1 to 1.0) are the acceptance densities.

Appendix C

Execution Times

Construction	Mean	Min.	P25	Median	P75	Max.	Total	$\approx \text{hours}$
Fribourg	8.5	2.5	3.3	4.9	7.3	586.0	93,351.2	259
Fribourg+R2C	6.6	2.2	2.9	4.2	6.4	219.7	$72,\!545.7$	202
Fribourg+R2C+C	8.5	2.2	2.6	3.5	6.4	582.9	$93,\!396.2$	259
Fribourg+M1	4.9	2.5	3.2	4.1	5.9	55.1	$54,\!061.3$	150
Fribourg+M1+M2	4.6	2.2	2.9	3.8	5.1	38.4	49,848.0	138
Fribourg+M1+R2C	4.4	2.2	2.8	3.6	5.3	42.5	$48,\!572.0$	135
Fribourg+M1+R2C+C	5.6	2.5	3.2	4.0	6.5	147.4	60,918.9	169
Fribourg+R	7.5	2.2	3.0	3.9	6.3	470.5	$82,\!387.3$	229

Table C.1: Execution times in CPU time seconds for the 10,939 effective samples of the GOAL test set.

Construction	Mean	Min.	P25	Median	P75	Max.	Total	$\approx \text{hours}$
Piterman+EQ+RO	3.0	2.2	2.6	2.8	3.0	42.9	21,410.6	59
Slice+P+RO+MADJ+EG	3.7	2.2	2.7	3.2	4.1	36.7	$26,\!398.9$	73
Rank+TR+RO	16.0	2.3	2.8	3.7	9.3	443.3	$115,\!563.9$	321
Fribourg+M1+R2C	4.0	2.2	2.7	3.1	4.4	410.4	28,970.8	80

Table C.2: Execution times in CPU time seconds for the 7,204 effective samples of the GOAL test set.

Construction	Mean	Min.	P25	Median	P75	Max.	Total	$\approx \text{hours}$
Piterman+EQ+RO	3.6	2.2	2.7	2.9	3.4	365.7	39,663.4	110
Slice+P+RO+MADJ+EG	4.3	2.2	2.9	3.7	5.0	42.4	$47,\!418.2$	132
Fribourg+M1+R2C	4.7	2.2	2.8	3.6	5.3	410.4	$52,\!149.0$	145

Table C.3: Execution times in CPU time seconds for the 10,998 effective samples of the GOAL test set without the Rank construction.

Construction	Michel 1	Michel 2	Michel 3	Michel 4	Fitted curve	Std. error
Fribourg	2.3	4.0	88.8	100,976.0	$(1.14n)^n$	0.64%
Fribourg+R2C	2.3	3.4	27.4	27,938.3	$(0.92n)^n$	0.64%
Fribourg+M1	2.2	3.6	17.9	$6,\!508.4$	$(0.72n)^n$	0.63%
Fribourg+M1+M2	2.3	3.5	13.8	2,707.4	$(0.62n)^n$	0.62%
${\rm Fribourg}{+}{\rm M1}{+}{\rm M2}{+}{\rm R2C}$	2.5	3.5	10.8	2,332.6	$(0.61n)^n$	0.62%
Fribourg+R	2.4	3.7	86.0	101,809.6	$(1.14n)^n$	0.64%

Table C.4: Execution times in CPU time seconds for the four Michel automata.

Construction	Michel 1	Michel 2	Michel 3	Michel 4	Fitted curve	Std. error
Piterman+EQ+RO	2.5	3.8	42.6	75,917.4	$(1.08n)^n$	0.64%
Slice+P+RO+MADJ+EG	2.3	3.6	11.4	159.5	$(0.39n)^n$	0.38%
Rank+TR+RO	2.2	3.0	6.4	30.0	$(0.29n)^n$	0.18%
${\rm Fribourg+M1+M2+R2C}$	2.5	3.5	10.8	2,332.6	$(0.61n)^n$	0.62%

Table C.5: Execution times in CPU time seconds for the four Michel automata.

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