Algorithms and Decision Procedures for Regular Languages

Chapter 9

Decision Procedures

A **decision procedure** is an algorithm whose result is a Boolean value. It must:

- Halt
- Be correct

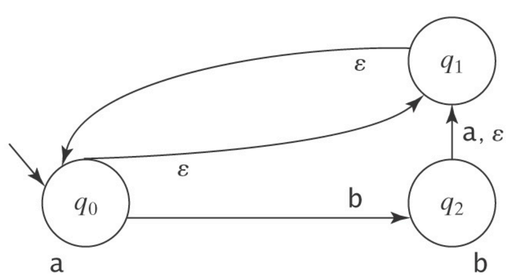
Important decision procedures exist for regular languages:

- Given an FSM *M* and a string *s*, does *M* accept *s*?
- Given a regular expression α and a string *w*, does α generate *w*?

Membership

We can answer the membership question by running an FSM.

But we must be careful:



Membership

decideFSM(*M*: FSM, *w*: string) =
  If *ndfsmsimulate*(*M*, *w*) accepts then return *True*
    else return *False*.

decideregex(α: regular expression, *w*: string) =
  From α, use *regextofsm* to construct an FSM *M* such that $L(\alpha) = L(M)$.
  Return *decideFSM*(*M*, *w*).

Emptiness, Finiteness, Equivalence

- Given an FSM M, is $L(M)$ empty?
- Given an FSM M, is $L(M) = \Sigma_M^*$?
- Given an FSM M, is $L(M)$ finite?
- Given an FSM M, is $L(M)$ infinite?
- Given two FSMs M_1 and M_2, are they equivalent?

Emptiness

- Given an FSM M, is $L(M)$ empty?
- The graph analysis approach:

1. Mark all states that are reachable via some path from the start state of M.
2. If at least one marked state is an accepting state, return *False*. Else return *True*.

- The simulation approach:

1. Let M' = *ndfsmtodfsm*(M).
2. For each string w in Σ^* such that $|w| < |K_M'|$ do:
   Run *decideFSM*(M', w).
3. If M' accepts at least one such string, return *False.* Else return *True*.

Totality

- Given an FSM M, is $L(M) = \Sigma_M^*$?

1. Construct M' to accept $\neg L(M)$.
2. Return *emptyFSM*(M').

Finiteness

- Given an FSM M, is $L(M)$ finite?
- The graph analysis approach:

Finiteness

- Given an FSM M, is $L(M)$ finite?
- The graph analysis approach:

The mere presence of a loop does not guarantee that $L(M)$ is infinite. The loop might be:

- labeled only with ε,
- unreachable from the start state, or
- not on a path to an accepting state.

Finiteness

- Given an FSM M, is $L(M)$ finite?
- The graph analysis approach:

1. M' = *ndfsmtodfsm*(M).
2. M'' = *minDFSM*(M').
3. Mark all states in M'' that are on a path to an accepting state.
4. Considering only marked states, determine whether there are any cycles in M''.
5. If there are cycles, return *True*. Else return *False*.

Finiteness

- Given an FSM M, is $L(M)$ finite?
- The simulation approach:

1. M' = *ndfsmtodfsm*(M).
2. For each string w in Σ^* such that $|K_{M'}| \leq w \leq 2 \cdot |K_{M'}| - 1$ do:
   Run *decideFSM*(M', w).
3. If M' accepts at least one such string, return *False*.
   Else return *True*.

Equivalence

- Given two FSMs M_1 and M_2, are they equivalent? In other words, is $L(M_1) = L(M_2)$?

Two solutions.

Equivalence

- Given two FSMs M_1 and M_2, are they equivalent? In other words, is $L(M_1) = L(M_2)$?

equalFSMs$_1$(M_1: FSM, M_2: FSM) =
1. $M_1' =$ *buildFSMcanonicalform*(M_1).
2. $M_2' =$ *buildFSMcanonicalform*(M_2).
3. If M_1' and M_2' are equal, return *True*, else return *False*.

Equivalence

- Given two FSMs M_1 and M_2, are they equivalent? In other words, is $L(M_1) = L(M_2)$?

Observe that M_1 and M_2 are equivalent iff:

$$(L(M_1) - L(M_2)) \cup (L(M_2) - L(M_1)) = \varnothing.$$

equalFSMs$_2$(M_1: FSM, M_2: FSM) =
1. Construct M_A to accept $L(M_1) - L(M_2)$.
2. Construct M_B to accept $L(M_2) - L(M_1)$.
3. Construct M_C to accept $L(M_A) \cup L(M_B)$.
4. Return *emptyFSM*(M_C).

Minimality

- Given DFSM M, is M minimal?

1. $M' =$ *minDFSM*(M).
2. If $|K_M| = |K_{M'}|$ return *True*; else return *False*.

Answering Specific Questions

Given two regular expressions α_1 and α_2, is:

$$(L(\alpha_1) \cap L(\alpha_2)) - \{\varepsilon\} \neq \varnothing?$$

1. From α_1, construct an FSM M_1 such that $L(\alpha_1) = L(M_1)$.
2. From α_2, construct an FSM M_2 such that $L(\alpha_2) = L(M_2)$.
3. Construct M' such that $L(M') = L(M_1) \cap L(M_2)$.
4. Construct M_ε such that $L(M_\varepsilon) = \{\varepsilon\}$.
5. Construct M'' such that $L(M'') = L(M') - L(M_\varepsilon)$.
6. If $L(M'')$ is empty return *False*; else return *True*.

Answering Specific Questions

Given two regular expressions α_1 and α_2, are there at least 3 strings that are generated by both of them?

Summary of Closure Properties

- Compute functions of languages defined as FSMs:
  - Given FSMs M_1 and M_2, construct a FSM M_3 such that $L(M_3) = L(M_2) \cup L(M_1)$.
  - Given FSMs M_1 and M_2, construct a new FSM M_3 such that $L(M_3) = L(M_2)\, L(M_1)$.
  - Given FSM M, construct an FSM M^* such that $L(M^*) = (L(M))^*$.
  - Given a DFSM M, construct an FSM M^* such that $L(M^*) = \neg L(M)$.
  - Given two FSMs M_1 and M_2, construct an FSM M_3 such that $L(M_3) = L(M_2) \cap L(M_1)$.
  - Given two FSMs M_1 and M_2, construct an FSM M_3 such that $L(M_3) = L(M_2) - L(M_1)$.
  - Given an FSM M, construct an FSM M^* such that $L(M^*) = (L(M))^R$.

Summary of Decision Procedures

- Decision procedures that answer questions about languages defined by FSMs:
  - Given an FSM M and a string s, decide whether s is accepted by M.
  - Given an FSM M, decide whether $L(M)$ is empty.
  - Given an FSM M, decide whether $L(M)$ is finite.
  - Given two FSMs, M_1 and M_2, decide whether $L(M_1) = L(M_2)$.
  - Given an FSM M, is M minimal?