



CSE 311 Lecture 20: Regular Expressions

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Topics

Structural induction

A brief review of [Lecture 19](#).

Using structural induction

Example proofs about recursively defined numbers, strings, and trees.

Regular expressions

Definition, examples, applications.

Structural induction

A brief review of [Lecture 19](#).

Structural induction proof template

① Let $P(x)$ be [*definition of $P(x)$*].

We will show that $P(x)$ is true for every $x \in S$ by structural induction.

② Base cases:

[*Proof of $P(s_0), \dots, P(s_m)$.*]

③ Inductive hypothesis:

Assume that $P(y_0), \dots, P(y_k)$ are true for some arbitrary $y_0, \dots, y_k \in S$.

④ Inductive step:

We want to prove that $P(y)$ is true.

[*Proof of $P(y)$. The proof **must** invoke the structural inductive hypothesis.*]

⑤ The result follows for all $x \in S$ by structural induction.

Recursive definition of S

Basis step:

$s_0 \in S, \dots, s_m \in S$.

Recursive step:

if $y_0, \dots, y_k \in S$, then $y \in S$.

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Basis step:

$s_0 \in S, \dots, s_m \in S$.

Recursive step:

if $y_0, \dots, y_k \in S$, then $y \in S$.

If the **recursive step** of S includes multiple rules for constructing new elements from existing elements, then

③ **assume P** for the existing elements in every rule, and

④ **prove P** for the new element in every rule.

Structural induction works just like ordinary induction

① Let $P(x)$ be [*definition of $P(x)$*].

We will show that $P(x)$ is true for every $x \in \mathbb{N}$ by **structural** induction.

② **Base cases:**

[*Proof of $P(0)$.*]

③ **Inductive hypothesis:**

Assume that $P(n)$ is true for some arbitrary $n \in \mathbb{N}$.

④ **Inductive step:**

We want to prove that $P(n + 1)$ is true.

[*Proof of $P(n + 1)$. The proof **must** invoke the structural inductive hypothesis.*]

⑤ **The result follows for all $x \in \mathbb{N}$ by **structural** induction.**

Recursive definition of \mathbb{N}

Basis step: $0 \in \mathbb{N}$.

Recursive step:

if $n \in \mathbb{N}$, then

$n + 1 \in \mathbb{N}$.

Ordinary induction is just structural induction applied to the recursively defined set of natural numbers!

Understanding structural induction

$$\frac{P(\bullet); \forall L, R \in S. (P(L) \wedge P(R)) \rightarrow P(\text{Tree}(\bullet, L, R))}{\therefore \forall x \in S. P(x)}$$

How do we get $P(\text{Tree}(\bullet, \text{Tree}(\bullet, \bullet, \bullet)))$ from $P(\bullet)$ and $\forall L, R \in S. (P(L) \wedge P(R)) \rightarrow P(\text{Tree}(\bullet, L, R))$?

1. First, we have $\forall L, R \in S. (P(L) \wedge P(R)) \rightarrow P(\text{Tree}(\bullet, L, R))$
2. Next, we have $P(\bullet)$.
3. Intro \wedge on 2 gives us $P(\bullet) \wedge P(\bullet)$.
4. Elim \forall on 1 gives us $(P(\bullet) \wedge P(\bullet)) \rightarrow P(\text{Tree}(\bullet, \bullet, \bullet))$.
5. Modus Ponens on 3 and 4 gives us $P(\text{Tree}(\bullet, \bullet, \bullet))$.
6. Intro \wedge on 2 and 5 gives us $P(\bullet) \wedge P(\text{Tree}(\bullet, \bullet, \bullet))$.
7. Elim \forall on 1 gives us $(P(\bullet) \wedge P(\text{Tree}(\bullet, \bullet, \bullet))) \rightarrow P(\text{Tree}(\bullet, \text{Tree}(\bullet, \bullet, \bullet)))$.
8. Modus Ponens on 6 and 7 gives us $P(\text{Tree}(\bullet, \text{Tree}(\bullet, \bullet, \bullet)))$.

Define S by

Basis: $\bullet \in S$.

Recursive:

if $L, R \in S$, then
 $\text{Tree}(\bullet, L, R) \in S$

$P(\bullet)$

$P(\bullet) \wedge P(\bullet)$

$\Downarrow (P(\bullet) \wedge P(\bullet)) \rightarrow P(\text{Tree}(\bullet, \bullet, \bullet))$

$P(\text{Tree}(\bullet, \bullet, \bullet))$

$P(\bullet) \wedge P(\text{Tree}(\bullet, \bullet, \bullet))$

$\Downarrow (P(\bullet) \wedge P(\text{Tree}(\bullet, \bullet, \bullet))) \rightarrow P(\text{Tree}(\bullet, \text{Tree}(\bullet, \bullet, \bullet)))$

$P(\text{Tree}(\bullet, \text{Tree}(\bullet, \bullet, \bullet)))$

Using structural induction

Example proofs about recursively defined numbers, strings, and trees.

Prove that every $x \in S$ is divisible by 3

Define S by

Basis: $6 \in S, 15 \in S$.

Recursive: if $x, y \in S$, then
 $x + y \in S$.

Prove that every $x \in S$ is divisible by 3

① Let $P(x)$ be $3|x$.

We will show that $P(x)$ is true for every $x \in S$ by structural induction.

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② Base cases ($x = 6, x = 15$):

$3|6$ so $P(6)$ holds, and $3|15$ so $P(15)$ holds.

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③ Inductive hypothesis:

Assume that $P(x), P(y)$ are true for some arbitrary $x, y \in S$.

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④ Inductive step:

We want to prove that $P(x + y)$ is true.

By the inductive hypothesis, $3|x$ and $3|y$, so $x = 3i$ and $y = 3j$ for some $i, j \in \mathbb{Z}$.

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④ Inductive step:

We want to prove that $P(x + y)$ is true.

By the inductive hypothesis, $3|x$ and $3|y$, so $x = 3i$ and $y = 3j$ for some $i, j \in \mathbb{Z}$. Therefore,
 $x + y = 3i + 3j = 3(i + j)$ so $3|(x + y)$.

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 $x + y = 3i + 3j = 3(i + j)$ so $3|(x + y)$. Hence,
 $P(x + y)$ is true.

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$x + y = 3i + 3j = 3(i + j)$ so $3|(x + y)$. Hence, $P(x + y)$ is true.

⑤ The result follows for all $x \in S$ by structural induction.

Define S by

Basis: $6 \in S, 15 \in S$.

Recursive: if $x, y \in S$, then $x + y \in S$.

Prove $\text{len}(x \cdot y) = \text{len}(x) + \text{len}(y)$ for all $x, y \in \Sigma^*$

Define Σ^* by

Basis: $\varepsilon \in \Sigma^*$.

Recursive:

if $w \in \Sigma^*$ and $a \in \Sigma$,
then $wa \in \Sigma^*$

Length

$\text{len}(\varepsilon) = 0$

$\text{len}(wa) = \text{len}(w) + 1$

Concatenation

$x \cdot \varepsilon = x$

$x \cdot (wa) = (x \cdot w)a$

Prove $\text{len}(x \cdot y) = \text{len}(x) + \text{len}(y)$ for all $x, y \in \Sigma^*$

What object (x or y) to do structural induction on?

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① Let $P(y)$ be $\forall x \in \Sigma^*. \text{len}(x \cdot y) = \text{len}(x) + \text{len}(y)$.

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② **Base case ($y = \varepsilon$):**

Let x in Σ^* be arbitrary.

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Let x in Σ^* be arbitrary. Then, $\text{len}(x \cdot \varepsilon) = \text{len}(x) = \text{len}(x) + \text{len}(\varepsilon)$ since $\text{len}(\varepsilon) = 0$. So $P(\varepsilon)$ is true.

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③ **Inductive hypothesis:**

Assume that $P(w)$ is true for some arbitrary $w \in \Sigma^*$.

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$$\begin{aligned} \text{len}(x \cdot wa) &= \text{len}((x \cdot w)a) && \text{by defn of } \cdot \\ &= \text{len}(x \cdot w) + 1 && \text{by defn of len} \\ &= \text{len}(x) + \text{len}(w) + 1 && \text{by IH} \\ &= \text{len}(x) + \text{len}(wa) && \text{by defn of len} \end{aligned}$$

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So $\text{len}(x \cdot wa) = \text{len}(x) + \text{len}(wa)$ for all $x \in \Sigma^*$, and $P(wa)$ is true.

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So $\text{len}(x \cdot wa) = \text{len}(x) + \text{len}(wa)$ for all $x \in \Sigma^*$, and $P(wa)$ is true.

⑤ **The result follows for all $y \in \Sigma^*$ by structural induction.**

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Prove $|t| \leq 2^{\lceil t \rceil + 1} - 1$ for every rooted binary tree t

Define S by

Basis: $\bullet \in S$.

Recursive:

if $L, R \in S$, then

$\text{Tree}(\bullet, L, R) \in S$

Size

$$|\bullet| = 1$$

$$|\text{Tree}(\bullet, L, R)| = 1 + |L| + |R|$$

Height

$$\lceil \bullet \rceil = 0$$

$$\lceil \text{Tree}(\bullet, L, R) \rceil = 1 + \max(\lceil L \rceil, \lceil R \rceil)$$

Prove $|t| \leq 2^{\lceil t \rceil + 1} - 1$ for every rooted binary tree t

① Let $P(t)$ be $|t| \leq 2^{\lceil t \rceil + 1} - 1$.

We will show that $P(t)$ is true for every $t \in S$ by structural induction.

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We will show that $P(t)$ is true for every $t \in S$ by structural induction.

② Base case ($t = \bullet$):

$|\bullet| = 1 = 2^1 - 1 = 2^{0+1} - 1 = 2^{\lceil \bullet \rceil + 1} - 1$ so $P(\bullet)$ is true.

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Prove $|t| \leq 2^{\lceil t \rceil + 1} - 1$ for every rooted binary tree t

① Let $P(t)$ be $|t| \leq 2^{\lceil t \rceil + 1} - 1$.

We will show that $P(t)$ is true for every $t \in S$ by structural induction.

② Base case ($t = \bullet$):

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③ Inductive hypothesis:

Assume that $P(L)$ and $P(R)$ are true for some arbitrary $L, R \in S$.

Define S by

Basis: $\bullet \in S$.

Recursive:

if $L, R \in S$, then

$\text{Tree}(\bullet, L, R) \in S$

Size

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$|\text{Tree}(\bullet, L, R)| =$
 $1 + |L| + |R|$

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⑤ The result follows for all $t \in S$ by structural induction.

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Regular expressions

Definition, examples, applications.

Sets of strings as languages

A language is a sets of strings with specific syntax, e.g.:

Syntactically correct Java/C/C++ programs.

The set Σ^* of all strings over the alphabet Σ .

Palindromes over Σ .

Binary strings with no 1's before 0's.

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Regular expressions let us specify *regular languages*, e.g.:

All binary strings.

The strings {0000, 0010, 1000, 1010}.

All strings that contain the string "CSE311".

Regular expressions over Σ : syntax

Basis step:

\emptyset, ε are regular expressions.

a is a regular expression for any $a \in \Sigma$.

Recursive step:

If A and B are regular expressions, then so are $AB, A \cup B$, and A^* .

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Examples: regular expressions of $\Sigma = \{0, 1\}$

Basis: $\emptyset, \varepsilon, 0, 1$.

Recursive: $01011, 0^*1^*, (0 \cup 1)0(0 \cup 1)0$, etc.

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This just defines a recursive function definition for computing the meaning of a regular expression:

$$\text{language}(\emptyset) = \{\}$$

$$\text{language}(\varepsilon) = \{\varepsilon\}$$

$$\text{language}(AB) = \{a \cdot b \mid a \in \text{language}(A), b \in \text{language}(B)\}$$

$$\text{language}(A \cup B) = \text{language}(A) \cup \text{language}(B)$$

$$\text{language}(A^*) = \{\varepsilon\} \cup \text{language}(A) \cup \text{language}(AA) \cup \dots$$

Examples of regular expressions

001^*

0^*1^*

$(0 \cup 1)0(0 \cup 1)0$

$(0^*1^*)^*$

$(0 \cup 1)^*0110(0 \cup 1)^*$

Examples of regular expressions

001*

Binary strings with “00” followed by any number of 1s.

0*1*

(0 ∪ 1)0(0 ∪ 1)0

(0*1*)*

(0 ∪ 1)*0110(0 ∪ 1)*

Examples of regular expressions

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Binary strings with “00” followed by any number of 1s.

0*1*

Binary strings with any number of 0s followed by any number of 1s.

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All binary strings.

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Examples of regular expressions

001^*

Binary strings with “00” followed by any number of 1s.

0^*1^*

Binary strings with any number of 0s followed by any number of 1s.

$(0 \cup 1)0(0 \cup 1)0$

{0000, 0010, 1000, 1010}

$(0^*1^*)^*$

All binary strings.

$(0 \cup 1)^*0110(0 \cup 1)^*$

Binary strings that contain “0110”.

Regular expressions in practice

Used to define the *tokens* in a programming language.

Legal variable names, keywords, etc.

Used in **grep**, a Unix program that searches for patterns in a set of files.

For example, `grep "311" *.md` searches for the string “311” in all Markdown files in the current directory.

Used in programs to process strings.

These slides are generated with the help of regular expressions :)

Summary

Use structural induction to prove properties of recursive structures.

Follows from ordinary induction but is easier to use.

As powerful as ordinary induction.

To prove $\forall \mathbf{x} \in S. P(\mathbf{x})$ using structural induction:

Show that P holds for the elements in the basis step of S .

Assume P for every existing element of S named in the recursive step.

Prove P for every new element of S created in the recursive step.

A regular expression defines a set of strings over an alphabet Σ .

\emptyset , ε , and $a \in \Sigma$ are regular expressions.

If A and B are regular expressions, then so are (AB) , $(A \cup B)$, A^* .

Many practical applications, from `grep` to everyday programming.