CS 512, Spring 2017, Handout 29

First-Order Resolution

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REVIEW and PRELIMINARIES

- This handout continues Handout 11, which introduced resolution for propositional logic.
- This handout also depends on Handout 27, which is a presentation of unification, limited to the kind we use in **first-order resolution**.

REVIEW and PRELIMINARIES

- First-order resolution starts from a Skolemized sentence whose matrix is in CNF.
- So, let φ be such a Skolemized first-order sentence:

  $$\varphi \triangleq \forall x_1 \cdots \forall x_k (C_1 \wedge C_2 \wedge \cdots C_n)$$

  where each C_i is a disjunction of literals (atomic and negated atomic WFF's).
- Standard practice is to write each **disjunct** (or **clause**) C_i as a set of literals, *i.e.*, if $C_i \triangleq (L_1 \vee L_2 \vee \cdots L_p)$, we may write instead $C_i' \triangleq \{L_1, L_2, \ldots, L_p\}$.
- The **clausal form** of φ is the set of clauses $\{C_1', C_2', \ldots, C_n'\}$ where C_i' is the set representation of C_i.

  The clausal form of φ is therefore a set of sets of literals.[1]

[1] As written, each C_i' may be a multiset, not a set, because some literals in C_i may be duplicates. One simplifying advantage of the set representation is to disallow duplicated literals as well as duplicated clauses. C_i' and $\{C_1', C_2', \ldots, C_n'\}$ have to be adjusted accordingly (left to you).

REVIEW and PRELIMINARIES

- We can assume that each of the clauses in $\{C_1, C_2, \ldots, C_n\}$, or in its set representation $\{C'_1, C'_2, \ldots, C'_n\}$, is universally quantified over all its variables – because "$\forall$" distributes over "$\wedge$".
- Because each clause is implicitly universally closed, we can assume that for all distinct clauses C_i and C_j, it holds that $\mathsf{FV}(C_i) \cap \mathsf{FV}(C_j) = \varnothing$ (why?).

  This is useful when we unify one literal C_i and one literal in C_j.

FIRST-ORDER RESOLUTION

- We need two rules for carrying out first-order resolution, both using unification: one for **resolution** proper and one for what is called **factoring**.
- The ***resolution rule*** has two clauses, D_1 and D_2, as ***antecedents*** with:
  - $P(\vec{s}) \triangleq P(s_1, \ldots, s_k) \in D_1$ and $\neg P(\vec{t}) \triangleq \neg P(t_1, \ldots, t_k) \in D_2$, *i.e.*, clauses D_1 and D_2 contain conflicting literals $P(\vec{s})$ and $\neg P(\vec{t})$, modulo a unification of $\vec{s}$ and $\vec{t}$, where P is a k-ary predicate symbol,
  - we may assume $\mathsf{FV}(\vec{s}) \cap \mathsf{FV}(\vec{t}) = \varnothing$ for a simpler unification,
  - a most general unifier of $P(\vec{s})$ and $P(\vec{t})$ exists, $\sigma \triangleq \mathsf{MGU}\big(P(\vec{s}), P(\vec{t})\big)$,

  and one conclusion (or ***resolvent*** clause) D:

  - $D \triangleq \Big(\sigma\,(D_1) - \Big\{\sigma\,\big(P(\vec{s})\big)\Big\}\Big) \cup \Big(\sigma\,(D_2) - \Big\{\sigma\,\big(\neg P(\vec{t})\big)\Big\}\Big)$
- More succintly, the resolution rule is written:

$$\frac{D_1 \qquad\qquad D_2}{\Big(\sigma\,(D_1) - \Big\{\sigma\,\big(P(\vec{s})\big)\Big\}\Big) \cup \Big(\sigma\,(D_2) - \Big\{\sigma\,\big(\neg P(\vec{t})\big)\Big\}\Big)}$$

where $P(\vec{s}) \in D_1$ and $\neg P(\vec{t}) \in D_2$ and $\sigma \triangleq \mathsf{MGU}\big(P(\vec{s}), P(\vec{t})\big)$

FIRST-ORDER RESOLUTION

- The ***factoring rule*** has one clause, D_1, as an ***antecedent*** with:
  - $P(\vec{s}) \triangleq P(s_1,\ldots,s_k) \in D_1$ and $P(\vec{t}) \triangleq P(t_1,\ldots,t_k) \in D_1$, *i.e.*, clause D_1 contains two non-conflicting literals $P(\vec{s})$ and $P(\vec{t})$, modulo a unification of $\vec{s}$ and $\vec{t}$, where P is a k-ary predicate symbol,
  - a most general unifier of $P(\vec{s})$ and $P(\vec{t})$ exists, $\sigma \triangleq \text{MGU}\big(P(\vec{s}), P(\vec{t})\big)$,

  and one conclusion (or ***resolvent*** clause) D:
  - $D \triangleq \sigma(D_1)$

  With D_1 in set representation, $\sigma\big(P(\vec{s})\big)$ and $\sigma\big(P(\vec{t})\big)$ are the same literal in $\sigma(D_1)$.
- More succintly, the factoring rule is written:[2]

$$\frac{D_1}{\sigma(D_1)}$$

where $P(\vec{s}) \in D_1$ and $P(\vec{t}) \in D_1$ and $\sigma \triangleq \text{MGU}\big(P(\vec{s}), P(\vec{t})\big)$

[2] There is no need for a factoring rule in *propositional resolution*. Do you see why?

Theorem

Let $\Psi_0 = \{C_1, C_2, \ldots, C_n\}$ be the clausal form of a Skolemized first-order sentence φ. We then have that:

1. *Applying the* **resolution rule** *and* **factoring rule** *repeatedly in any order, we obtain a sequence of clausal forms that is bound to terminate:*

   $$\Psi_0 \quad \Psi_1 \quad \Psi_2 \quad \cdots \quad \Psi_p \qquad \text{for some } p \geqslant 1$$

2. *If $\bot \in \Psi_p$ then φ is unsatisfiable (soundness).*
3. *If φ is unsatisfiable then $\bot \in \Psi_p$ (completeness).*