

COMP4418: Knowledge Representation and Reasoning

Introduction to Prolog

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Reference: Ivan Bratko, Prolog Programming for Artificial Intelligence, Addison-Wesley, 2001. Chapters 1 and 2.

Prolog

- Prolog — Programming in Logic
- Invented early 70s by Alain Colmerauer et *al.*, University of Marseille
- Declarative language
 - ▶ Specify goal and interpreter/compiler will work out how to achieve it
 - ▶ Traditional (imperative) languages require you to specify how to solve problem
- Prolog program specifies:
 - ▶ facts about objects and their relationships
 - ▶ rules about objects and their relationships

Starting Prolog

```
$ prolog
iProlog (8 April 2001)
: ^D
$

$ prolog courses.pl
iProlog (8 April 2001)
: lectures(maurice, comp4418)?
** yes
: ^D
$
```

Relations

- Prolog programs specify relationships among objects and properties of objects
- When we say, “John owns the book”, we are declaring the ownership relation between two objects: John and the book
- When we ask, “Does John own the book?”, we are querying the relationship
- Relationships can also be rules such as:
*Two people are sisters if
both are female
they have the same parents*
- This is a rule that allows us to find out about a relationship even if the relationship isn't explicitly declared

Programming in Prolog

- Declare facts describing explicit relationships between objects and properties of objects
- Define rules describing implicit relationships between objects or implicit object properties
- Ask questions about relationships between objects and object properties

Representing Regulations

The rules for entry into a professional computer science society are set out below:

An applicant to the society is acceptable if he or she has been nominated by two established members of the society and is eligible under the terms below:

- the applicant graduated with a university degree
- the applicant has two years of professional experience
- the applicant pays a joining fee of \$200.

An established member is one who has been a member for at least two years.

Facts

- Properties of objects; relationships between objects
- Example
 - ▶ “Maurice lectures in course COMP4418”
 - ▶ Prolog: `lectures(maurice, comp4418)`
- Notice
 - ▶ Names of properties/relationships begin with lower-case character
 - ▶ Name of relationship appears as first term, objects appear as arguments
 - ▶ Fact terminated by ‘.’
 - ▶ Objects (atoms) also begin with lower-case characters
- `lectures(maurice, 4418)` also called a predicate

Facts

Let us return to the regulations example:

```
experience(fred, 3).  
fee_paid(fred).  
graduated(fred, unsw).  
university(unsw).  
nominated_by(fred, jim).  
nominated_by(fred, mary).  
joined(jim, 1998).  
joined(mary, 1997).  
current_year(2001).
```


Prolog Database

A collection of facts about a hypothetical computer science department:

```
% lectures(X, Y): person X lectures in course Y
lectures(tony, comp1001).
lectures(andrew, comp2041).
lectures(john, comp2041).
lectures(gernot, comp3231).
lectures(arun, comp4141).
lectures(sowmya, comp4411).
lectures(claude, comp4411).
lectures(maurice, comp4418).
lectures(adnan, comp4418).
lectures(adnan, comp9518).
lectures(wayne, comp4418).
lectures(arthur, comp9020).
```

```
% studies(X, Y): person X studies course Y
studies(mary, comp1001).
studies(jim, comp1001).
studies(jane, comp4411).
studies(jane, comp4418).
studies(jack, comp9518).
studies(jack, comp9020).
```

```
% year(X, Y): person X is in year Y
year(mary, 1).
year(jim, 1).
year(jane, 4).
year(jack, 4).
```

Together, these facts form Prolog's database.

Queries

- Once we have a database of facts (and, soon, rules) we need to be able to ask questions of the information that is stored
- `lectures(maurice, comp4418)?`
- Notice:
 - ▶ Query is terminated by a question mark ‘?’
 - ▶ To determine answer (yes or no), Prolog consults database checking whether this is a known fact
 - ▶ For example, `lectures(bob, comp4418)?`
`**no`
 - ▶ If answer is yes, query succeeded; otherwise, if answer is no, query failed

Variables

- Suppose we want to ask, “What subject does John teach?”
- This could be phrased as:
Is there a subject, X , that John teaches?
- The variable X stands for an object that the questioner does not yet know about
- To answer the question, Prolog has to find the value of X , if it exists
- As long as we do not know the value of the variable, it is said to be unbound
- When a value is found, the variable is bound to that value

Variables

- A variable must begin with a capital letter or ‘_’
- To ask Prolog to find the subject that John teaches, type:
: lectures(john, Subject)?

Subject = comp2041

- To ask which subjects that Adnan teaches, ask:
: lectures(adnan, X)?

X = comp4418

X = comp9518

Prolog can find all possible ways to satisfy a query

Conjunction in Queries

- How do we ask, “Does Arthur teach Jack?”
- This can be answered by finding out whether Arthur lectures in a subject that Jack studies:
`lectures(arthur, Subject), studies(jack, Subject)?`
- i.e., Arthur lectures in subject, Subject, and Jack studies subject, Subject.
- Subject is a variable
- The question consists of two goals
- To find the answer, Prolog must find a single value for Subject that satisfies both goals

Conjunctions

- Who does Adnan teach:

 - : lectures(adnan, Subject), studies(Student, Subject)?

 - Subject = comp4418

 - Student = jane

 - Subject = comp9518

 - Student = jack

- Prolog solves problems by proceedings left to right and then backtracking

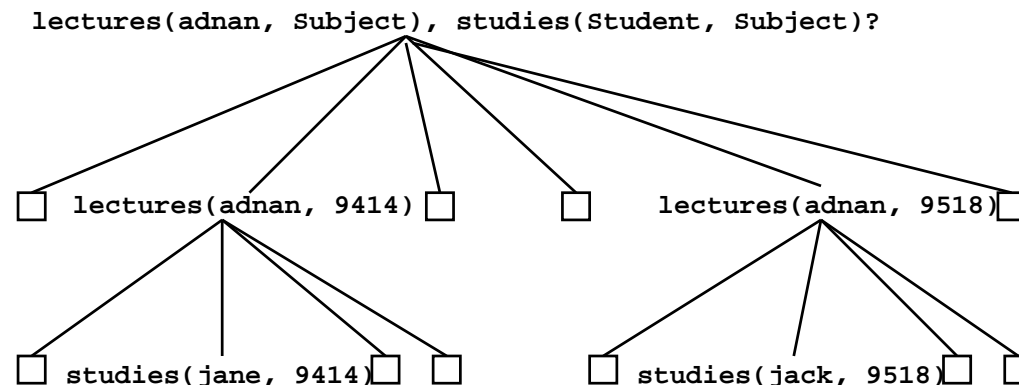
- Given the initial query, Prolog tries to solve
lectures(adnan, Subject)

- There are twelve lectures clauses but only two have adnan as first argument

- Prolog chooses the first clause containing a reference to adan i.e.,
lectures(adnan, 4418)

Proof Tree

- With Subject = 4418, it then tries to satisfy the next goal, viz `studies(Student, 4418)`
- After the solution is found, Prolog retraces its steps and looks for alternative solutions
- It may now go down the branch containing `lectures(adnan, 9518)` and try `studies(Student, 9518)`



Rules

- The previous question can be restated as a general rule:

One person, Teacher teaches another person, Student **if**
Teacher lectures subject, Subject **and**
Student studies Subject

- In Prolog this is written as the:

```
teaches(Teacher, Student) :- % This is a clause  
    lectures(Teacher, Subject),  
    studies(Student, Subject).
```

```
teaches(adnan, Student)?
```

- Facts are unit clauses and rules are non-unit clauses

Rules

```
acceptable(Applicant) :-  
    nominated(Applicant),  
    eligible(Applicant).
```

```
nominated(Applicant) :-  
    nominated_by(Applicant, Member1),  
    nominated_by(Applicant, Member2),  
    Member1 \= Member2,  
    current_year(ThisYear),  
    joined(Member1, Year1), ThisYear >= Year1 + 2,  
    joined(Member2, Year2), ThisYear >= Year2 + 2,.
```

```
eligible(Applicant) :-  
    graduated(Applicant, University), university(University),  
    experience(Applicant, Experience), Experience >= 2,  
    fee_paid(Applicant).
```

Clause Syntax

- ‘:-’ means “if” or “is implied by”. Also called “neck”
- The left hand side of the neck is the head
- The right hand side is called the body
- The comma, ‘,’ separating the goals stands for and

```
more_advanced(Student1, Student2) :-  
    year(Student1, Year1),  
    year(Student2, Year2),  
    Year1 > Year2.
```

- Note the use of the predefined predicate ‘>’

```
more_advanced(jane, mary)?  
more_advanced(jack, X)?
```

Structures

- Functional terms can be used to construct complex data structures
- E.g., to say that John owns the book *Foundation*, this may be expressed as:

```
owns(john, 'Foundation').
```
- Often objects have a number of attributes
- A book may have a title and an author:

```
owns(john, book('Foundation', asimov)).
```
- To be more accurate we should give the author's family and given names:

```
owns(john, book('Foundation', author(asimov, isaac))).
```

Asking Questions with Structures

■ How do we ask:

“What books does John own that were written by someone called “Asimov”?”

```
: owns(john, book(Title, author(asimov, GivenName)))?
```

```
Title = Foundation
```

```
GivenName = isaac
```

```
: owns(john, Book)?
```

```
Book = book(Foundation, author(asimov, isaac))
```

```
: owns(john, book(Title, Author))?
```

```
Title = Foundation
```

```
Author = author(asimov, isaac)
```

Databases

- A database of books in a library contains facts of the form:
 - ▶ `book(CatNo, Title, author(Family, Given)).`
 - ▶ `member(MemNo, name(Family, Given), Address).`
 - ▶ `loan(CatNo, MemNo, Borrowed, Due).`
- A member of the library may borrow a book
- A “loan” records:
 - ▶ the catalogue number of the book
 - ▶ the number of the member
 - ▶ the borrow date
 - ▶ the due date

Database Structures

- Dates are stored as structures:

`date(Year, Month, Day).`

- E.g., `date(2001, 9, 8)` represents 8 September 2001

- Names and addresses are all stored as character strings

- Which books has a member borrowed?

```
has_borrowed(MemFamily, Title, CatNo) :-  
    memb(MemNo, name(MemFamily, _), _),  
    loan(CatNo, MemNo, _, _),  
    book(CatNo, Title, _).
```

- Which books are overdue?

Overdue Books

```
later(date(Y, M, D1), date(Y, M, D2)) :- D1 > D2.  
later(date(Y, M1, _), date(Y, M2, _)) :- M1 > M2.  
later(date(Y1, _, _), date(Y2, _, _)) :- Y1 > Y2.
```

```
later(date(2001, 12, 3), date(1999, 8, 3))?
```

```
overdue(Today, Title, CatNo, MemFamily) :-  
    loan(CatNo, MemNo, _, DueDate),  
    later(Today, DueDate),  
    book(CatNo, Title, _),  
    memb(MemNo, name(MemFamily, _), _).
```


Due Date

```
due_date(date(Y, M1, D), date(Y, M2, D)) :-
```

```
    M1 < 12,
```

```
    M2 is M1 + 1.
```

```
due_date(date(Y1, 12, D), date(Y2, 1, D)) :-
```

```
    Y2 is Y1 + 1.
```

- `is` accepts two arguments
- The right hand argument must be an evaluable arithmetic expression
- The term is evaluated and unified with the left hand argument
- It is not an assignment statement
- Variables cannot be reassigned values
- Arguments of comparison operators can also be arithmetic expressions