

Computing unifiers:

Obviously: if $\vec{y}_1, \dots, \vec{y}_r$ are solutions of $DE(S)$ and a_1, \dots, a_r are natural numbers, then $a_1\vec{y}_1 + \dots + a_r\vec{y}_r$ is also a solution. (In particular, the zero vector is a solution!)

In fact, one can compute a **finite** set of solutions $\vec{y}_1, \dots, \vec{y}_r$, such that **every** solution of $DE(S)$ can be represented as such a linear combination.

Moreover, if we combine these column vectors $\vec{y}_1, \dots, \vec{y}_r$ to an $n \times r$ matrix, this matrix represents a most general unifier of S . (Proof: see Baader/Nipkow.)

From ACU to AC

A complete set of AC-unifiers for elementary AC-unification problems can be computed from a most general ACU-unifier by some postprocessing.

Elementary AC-unification is **finitary** and the elementary unifiability problem is solvable in polynomial time.

But that does not mean that minimal complete sets of AC-unifiers can be computed **efficiently**.

E. Domenjoud has computed the exact size of AC- μ CSUs for unification problems of the following kind:

$$m x_1 + \dots + m x_p \approx n y_1 + \dots + n y_q$$

where $\gcd(m, n) = 1$.

The number of unifiers is

$$(-1)^{p+q} \sum_{i=0}^p \sum_{j=0}^q (-1)^{i+j} \binom{p}{i} \binom{q}{j} 2^{\binom{m+j-1}{m} \binom{n+i-1}{n}}$$

For $p = m = 1$ and $q = n = 4$, that is, for the equation

$$4x \approx y_1 + y_2 + y_3 + y_4$$

this is

$$34\,359\,607\,481.$$

Consequence:

If possible, avoid the **enumeration** of AC- μ CSUs (which may have doubly exponential size).

Rather: only **check AC-unifiability**.

Or: **use ACU instead**.

Unification with Constants

So far:

Elementary unification:
terms over variables and $\{+, 0\}$ or $\{+\}$.

Step 2:

Additional **free constants**.

Step 3:

Additional **arbitrary free function symbols**.
 \leadsto Unification in the union of disjoint equational theories.

Unification with constants:

We can treat constants a_i like variables x_i that *must* be mapped to themselves.

Consequence: The algorithm is similar to the one we have seen before, but we have to deal with homogeneous **and inhomogeneous** linear diophantine equations.

Some complexity bounds change, however:

Unification type:

elementary ACU-unification: unitary;
ACU-unification with constants: finitary.

Checking unifiability:

elementary ACU-unification: trivial;
ACU-unification with constants: NP-complete.

Combining Unification Procedures

The Baader–Schulz combination procedure allows to combine unification procedures for disjoint theories (e. g., ACU and the free theory).

Basic idea (as usual): Use abstraction to convert the combined unification problem into a union of two pure unification problems; solve them individually; combine the results.

Problem 1:

The individual unification procedures might map the same variable to different terms, e. g., $\{x \mapsto y + z\}$ and $\{x \mapsto f(w)\}$.

Solution: Guess for each variable non-deterministically which procedure treats it like a constant.

Problem 2:

Combining the results might produce cycles, e. g., $\{x \mapsto y + z\}$ and $\{y \mapsto f(x)\}$.

Solution: Guess an ordering of the variables non-deterministically; each individual unifier that is computed must respect the ordering.

Note: This is a non-trivial extension that may be impossible for some unification procedures (but it is possible for *regular* equational theories, i. e., theories where for each equation $u \approx v$ the terms u and v contain the same variables).

Literature

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3.10 Integrating Theories II: Calculi

We can replace syntactic unification by E -unification in the superposition calculus.

Moreover, it is usually necessary to choose a term ordering in such a way that all terms in an E -congruence class behave in the same way in comparisons (E -compatible ordering).

However, this is usually not sufficient.

AC and ACU

Example: Let $E = \text{AC}$. The clauses

$$\begin{aligned}a + b &\approx d \\ b + c &\approx e \\ c + d &\not\approx a + e\end{aligned}$$

are contradictory w.r.t. AC, but if $a \succ b \succ c \succ d \succ e$, then the maximal sides of these clauses are not AC-unifiable.

We have to compute inferences if some part of a maximal sum overlaps with a part of another maximal sum (the constant b in the example above).

Technically, we can do this in such a way that we first replace positive literals $s \approx t$ by $s + x \approx t + x$, and then unify maximal sides w.r.t. AC or ACU (Peterson and Stickel 1981, Wertz 1992, Bachmair and Ganzinger 1994).

However, it turns out that even if we integrate AC or ACU in such a way into superposition, the resulting calculus is not particularly efficient – not even for ground formulas.

This is not surprising: The uniform word problem for AC or ACU is EXPSPACE-complete (Cardoza, Lipton, and Meyer 1976, Mayr and Meyer 1982).

Abelian Groups

Working in Abelian groups is easier:

If we integrate also the inverse axiom, it is sufficient to compute inferences if **the maximal** part of a maximal sum overlaps with **the maximal** part of another maximal sum (like in Gaussian elimination).

Intuitively, in Abelian groups we can always isolate the maximal part of a sum on one side of an equation.

What does that mean for the non-ground case?

Example:

$$g(y) + x \not\approx 2z \quad \vee \quad f(x) + z \approx 2y$$

Shielded variables (x, y):

- occur below a free function symbol,
- \rightsquigarrow cannot be mapped to a maximal term,
- \rightsquigarrow are not involved in inferences.

Unshielded variables (z):

- can be instantiated with $m \cdot u + s$, where u is maximal,
- \rightsquigarrow must be considered in inferences,
- \rightsquigarrow variable overlaps (similar to ACU).

Variable overlaps are ugly:

If we want to derive a contradiction from

$$\begin{aligned} 2a &\approx c \\ 2b &\approx d \\ 2x &\not\approx c + d \end{aligned}$$

and $a \succ b \succ c \succ d$, we have to map x to a sum of two variables $x' + x''$, unify x' with a and x'' with b .

Divisible Torsion-free Abelian Groups

Working in divisible torsion-free Abelian groups is still easier:

DTAGs permit variable elimination.

Every clause can be converted into a DTAG-equivalent clause without *unshielded* variables.

Since only overlaps of maximal parts of maximal sums have to be computed, variable overlaps become unnecessary.

Moreover, if abstraction is performed eagerly, terms to be unified do not contain +, so ACU-unification can be replaced by standard unification.

Other Theories

A similar case: Chaining calculus for orderings.

$$\frac{D' \vee t' < t \quad C' \vee s < s'}{(D' \vee C' \vee t' < s')\sigma}$$

where σ is a most general unifier of t and s .

Avoids explicit inferences with transitivity.

Only maximal sides of ordering literals have to be overlapped.

But unshielded variables can be maximal.

In dense linear orderings without endpoints, all unshielded variables can be eliminated.

DTAG-superposition and chaining can be combined to get a calculus for ordered divisible Abelian groups. Again, all unshielded variables can be eliminated.

Conclusion

Integrating theory axioms into superposition can become easier by integrating more axioms:

Easier unification problem ($AC \rightarrow ACU$).

More restrictive inference rules ($ACU \rightarrow AG$).

Fewer (or no) variable overlaps ($AG \rightarrow DTAG$).

Main drawback of all theory integration methods:

For each theory, we have to start from scratch, both for the completeness proof and the implementation.

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