Regular Expressions

Reading: Chapter 3

Regular Expressions vs. Finite Automata

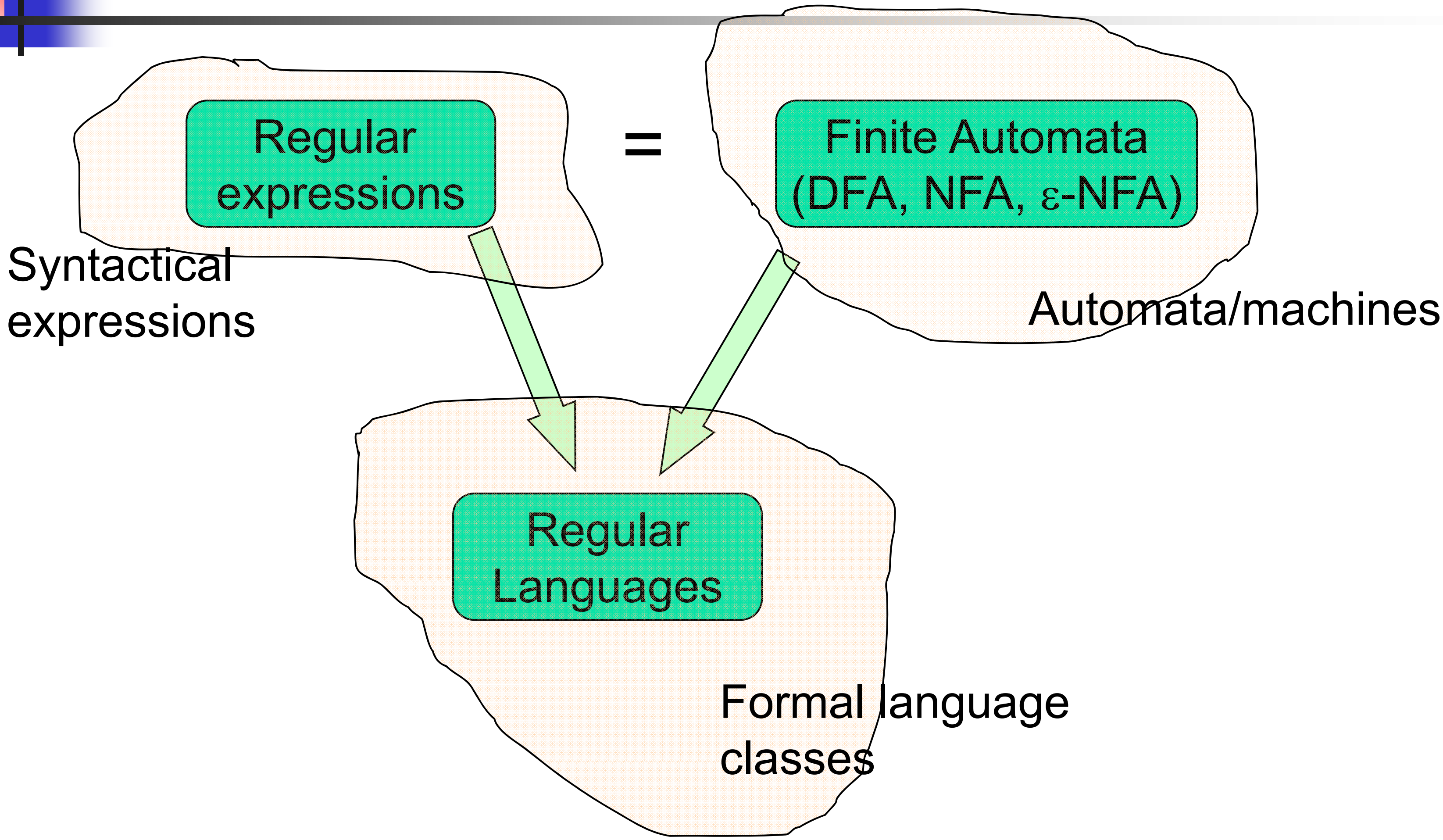
- Offers a declarative way to express the pattern of any string we want to accept
  - E.g., 01*+ 10*

- Automata => more machine-like

  < input: string , output: [accept/reject] >
- Regular expressions => more program syntax-like

- Unix environments heavily use regular expressions
  - E.g., bash shell, grep, vi & other editors, sed
- Perl scripting – good for string processing
- Lexical analyzers such as Lex or Flex

Regular Expressions



Language Operators

- Union of two languages:
  - **L U M** = all strings that are either in L or M
  - Note: A union of two languages produces a third language
- Concatenation of two languages:
  - **L . M** = all strings that are of the form *xy* s.t., $x \in L$ and $y \in M$
  - The *dot* operator is usually omitted
    - i.e., **LM** is same as L.M

"i" here refers to how many strings to concatenate from the parent language L to produce strings in the language L^i

Kleene Closure (the * operator)

- Kleene Closure of a given language L:
  - $L^0 = \{\varepsilon\}$
  - $L^1 = \{w \mid \text{for some } w \in L\}$
  - $L^2 = \{ w_1w_2 \mid w_1 \in L, w_2 \in L \text{ (duplicates allowed)}\}$
  - $L^i = \{ w_1w_2\ldots w_i \mid \text{all } w\text{'s chosen are} \in L \text{ (duplicates allowed)}\}$
  - (Note: the choice of each w_i is independent)
  - $L^* = \bigcup_{i \geq 0} L^i$ (arbitrary number of concatenations)

Example:

- Let L = { 1, 00}
  - $L^0 = \{\varepsilon\}$
  - $L^1 = \{1,00\}$
  - $L^2 = \{11,100,001,0000\}$
  - $L^3 = \{111,1100,1001,10000,000000,00001,00100,0011\}$
  - $L^* = L^0 \cup L^1 \cup L^2 \cup \ldots$

Kleene Closure (special notes)

- L^* is an infinite set iff $|L| \geq 1$ and $L \neq \{\varepsilon\}$ **Why?**
- If $L=\{\varepsilon\}$, then $L^* = \{\varepsilon\}$ **Why?**
- If $L = \Phi$, then $L^* = \{\varepsilon\}$ **Why?**

Σ^* denotes the set of all words over an alphabet Σ

- Therefore, an abbreviated way of saying there is an arbitrary language L over an alphabet Σ is:
  - $L \subseteq \Sigma^*$

Building Regular Expressions

- Let E be a regular expression and the language represented by E is L(E)
- Then:
  - (E) = E
  - L(E + F) = L(E) U L(F)
  - L(E F) = L(E) L(F)
  - L(E*) = (L(E))*

Example: how to use these regular expression properties and language operators?

- *L = { w | w is a binary string which does not contain two consecutive 0s or two consecutive 1s anywhere)*
  - E.g., w = 01010101 is in L, while w = 10010 is not in L
- Goal: Build a regular expression for L
- Four cases for w:
  - Case A: w starts with 0 and |w| is even
  - Case B: w starts with 1 and |w| is even
  - Case C: w starts with 0 and |w| is odd
  - Case D: w starts with 1 and |w| is odd
- Regular expression for the four cases:
  - Case A: (01)*
  - Case B: (10)*
  - Case C: 0(10)*
  - Case D: 1(01)*
- Since L is the union of all 4 cases:
  - Reg Exp for L = (01)* + (10)* + 0(10)* + 1(01)*
- If we introduce ε then the regular expression can be simplified to:
  - Reg Exp for L = (ε +1)(01)*(ε +0)

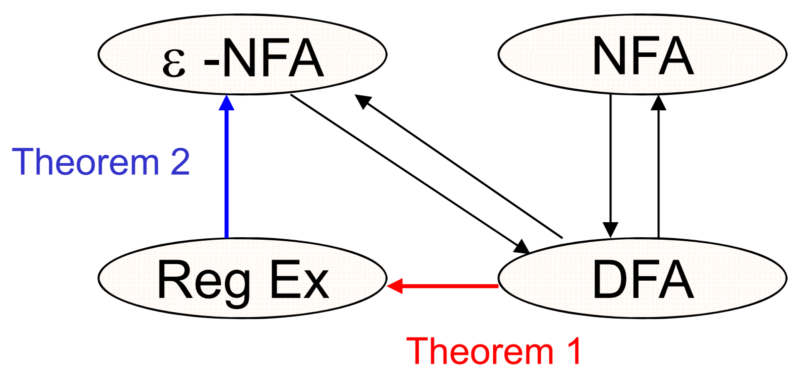
Precedence of Operators

- Highest to lowest
  - * operator (star)
  - .   (concatenation)
  - + operator
- Example:
  - $01^* + 1 \quad = \quad (0 . ((1)^*)) + 1$

Finite Automata (FA) & Regular Expressions (Reg Ex)

- To show that they are interchangeable, consider the following theorems:
  - *Theorem 1:* *For every DFA A there exists a regular expression R such that L(R)=L(A)*
  - *Theorem 2:* *For every regular expression R there exists an ε -NFA E such that L(E)=L(R)*

Proofs in the book

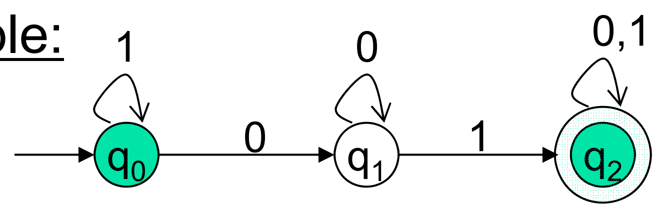


Kleene Theorem

DFA to RE construction

Informally, trace all distinct paths (traversing cycles only once)
from the start state to *each of the* final states
and enumerate all the expressions along the way

<u>Example:</u>



$$\underbrace{(1^*)}_{1^*}\ \underbrace{0\quad(0^*)}_{00^*}\ \underbrace{1}_{1}\ \underbrace{(0+1)^*}_{(0+1)^*}$$

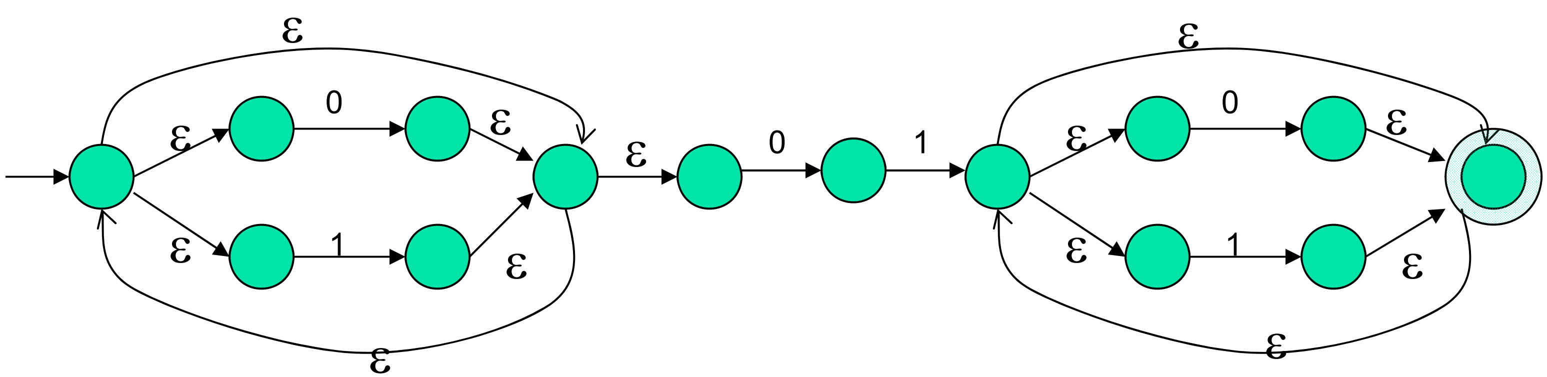
$$1^*00^*1(0+1)^*$$

Q) What is the language?

RE to ε-NFA construction

<u>Example:</u> (0+1)*01(0+1)*

(0+1)* 01 (0+1)*



Algebraic Laws of Regular Expressions

- <u>Commutative:</u>
  - $E+F = F+E$
- <u>Associative:</u>
  - $(E+F)+G = E+(F+G)$
  - $(EF)G = E(FG)$
- <u>Identity:</u>
  - $E+\Phi = E$
  - $\varepsilon E = E \varepsilon = E$
- <u>Annihilator:</u>
  - $\Phi E = E\Phi = \Phi$

Algebraic Laws…

- Distributive:
  - $E(F+G) = EF + EG$
  - $(F+G)E = FE+GE$
- Idempotent: $E + E = E$
- Involving Kleene closures:
  - $(E^*)^* = E^*$
  - $\Phi^* = \varepsilon$
  - $\varepsilon^* = \varepsilon$
  - $E^+ = EE^*$
  - $E? = \varepsilon + E$

True or False?

Let R and S be two regular expressions. Then:

1. $((R^*)^*)^* = R^*$?
2. $(R+S)^* = R^* + S^*$?
3. $(RS + R)^* RS = (RR^*S)^*$?

Summary

- Regular expressions
- Equivalence to finite automata
- DFA to regular expression conversion
- Regular expression to ε-NFA conversion
- Algebraic laws of regular expressions
- Unix regular expressions and Lexical Analyzer