Simulating Induction-Recursion for Partial Algorithms

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Abstract
We describe a generic method to implement and extract partial recursive algorithms in Coq in a purely constructive way, using L. Paulson’s if-then-else normalization as a running example.

Implementing complicated recursive schemes in a Type Theory such as Coq is a challenging task. A landmark result is the Bove&Capretta approach [BC05] based on accessibility predicates, and in case of nested recursion, simultaneous Inductive-Recursive (IR) definitions of the domain/function [Dyb00]. Limitations to this approach are discussed in e.g. [Set06, BKS16]. We claim that the use of (1) IR, which is still absent from Coq, and (2) an informative predicate (of sort Set or Type) for the domain, preventing its erasing at extraction time, can be circumvented through a suitable bar inductive predicate.

The recursive definition of Fig. 1 can be extracted as is from the Coq term that implements mm.

We start with the inductive definition of the graph G : Ω → Ω → Prop of mm (Fig. 2) and we show its functionality.¹ Then we define the domain/termination predicate D : Ω → Prop as a bar inductive predicate with the three rules of Fig. 3.
ing \texttt{g\_nm\_fun}, we get proof-irrelevance of \texttt{nm}.\footnote{\texttt{i.e. nm\_prr}: \(\forall e D_1, D_2, \texttt{nm} e D_1 = \texttt{nm} e D_2\).}

\begin{aligned}
\textbf{Inductive} \Omega : \texttt{Set} := & \alpha : \Omega \mid \omega : \Omega \rightarrow \Omega \rightarrow \Omega \\
\textbf{Inductive} D : \Omega \rightarrow \texttt{Prop} := \\
| \_ d \texttt{\_nm\_0} & : D \alpha \\
| d \texttt{\_nm\_1 y c} & : D \rightarrow D y \rightarrow D (\omega a y c) \\
| d \texttt{\_nm\_2 a b c y z D_0 D_1} & : D (\omega a (\texttt{nm} (\omega a b y z) D_0)) \\
& \quad \rightarrow D (\omega a b c y z D_1)) \\
\textbf{with Fixpoint} \texttt{nm} e (D_1 : \Omega e) : \Omega := & \texttt{match} D_1 \texttt{with} \\
| d \texttt{\_nm\_0} e & \rightarrow \alpha \\
| d \texttt{\_nm\_1 y z D_0 D_1} e & \rightarrow \omega \alpha (\texttt{nm} y D_1) (\texttt{nm} z D_0) \\
| d \texttt{\_nm\_2 a b c y z D_0 D_1} e & \rightarrow \texttt{nm} (\omega a (\texttt{nm} (\omega a b y z) D_0)) \\
& \quad \rightarrow \texttt{(nm} (\omega a c y z) D_1)) D_0.
\end{aligned}

Figure 4: IR spec. of \(D : \Omega \rightarrow \texttt{Prop}\) and \texttt{nm} : \(\forall e \Omega \rightarrow \Omega\).

We show a dependent induction principle for \(\mathcal{D}\) (see Fig. 5). The term \texttt{d\_nm\_rect} states that any dependent property \(P : \forall e \mathcal{D} \rightarrow \texttt{Type}\) contains \(\mathcal{D}\) as soon as it is closed under the simulated constructors \texttt{d\_nm\_0[12]} of \(\mathcal{D}\). The assumption \(\forall e D_1 D_2, P e D_1 \rightarrow P e D_2\) restricts the principle to proof-irrelevant properties about the dependent pair \((e, D_e)\). This is exactly what we need to establish properties of \(\texttt{nm}\). Then we can show partial correctness and termination as in [Gie97] – in this example, \(\texttt{nm}\) happens to always terminate on a normal form of its input. In a more relational approach, these properties can alternatively be proved using \texttt{nm\_spec} and induction on \(\mathcal{G} x \texttt{nm}\).

\begin{aligned}
\textbf{Theorem} \texttt{d\_nm\_rect} (P : \forall e \mathcal{D} \rightarrow \texttt{Type}) : \\
(\forall e D_1 D_2, P e D_1 \rightarrow P e D_2) \rightarrow (P \_d \texttt{\_nm\_0}) \\
\rightarrow (\forall y z D_1 D_2, P y D_1 \rightarrow P y D_2) \rightarrow \texttt{nm} (\omega a b y z) D_0) \\
\rightarrow (\forall a b c y z D_0 D_1 D_2, P a b c y z D_0 D_1) \\
\rightarrow (\texttt{nm} (\omega a c y z) D_1)) D_0.
\end{aligned}

Figure 5: Dependent induction principle for \(\mathcal{D} : \Omega \rightarrow \texttt{Prop}\).

Though our approach is inspired by IR definitions, in contrast with previous work, e.g. [Bov09], the corresponding principles are established independently of any consideration on the semantics or termination of the target function (\texttt{nm}), i.e. without proving any properties of \(\mathcal{D}/\texttt{nm}\) a priori. This postpones the study of termination after both \(\mathcal{D}\) and \texttt{nm} are defined together with constructors and elimination scheme, fixpoint equations and proof-irrelevance. Moreover, our domain/termination predicate \(\mathcal{D}\) is non-informative, i.e. it does not carry any computational content. Thus the code obtained by extraction is exactly as intended.

Our Coq code is available under a Free Software license [LWM18]. We have successfully implemented other algorithms using the same technique: F91, unification, depth first search as in [Kra10], quicksort, iterations until 0, partial list map as in [BKS16], Huet&Hullot’s list reversal [Gie97], etc. The method is not constrained by nested/mutual induction, partiality or dependent types. On the other hand, spotting recursive sub-calls implies the explicit knowledge of all the algorithms that make such calls, a limitation that typically applies to higher order recursive schemes such as e.g. substitutions under binders. Besides growing our bestiary of examples, we aim at formally defining a class of schemes for which our method is applicable, and more practically propose some automation like what is done in Equations [Soz10].

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
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