Inductive and Coinductive Reasoning with Isabelle/HOL – Introduction

Andrei Popescu

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VeTSS Summer School 2023, held at the University of Surrey

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Motivation

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Why do we care?

Obviously mathematicians want definitions that are rigorous, correct, meaningful and readable.

Definitional mechanisms are central to proof assistants.

Good definitions are the key to productive proof developments.

Proof assistants

ACL2 Agda Coq HOL4 HOL Light HOL-ω

Isabelle Lean Mizar Nuprl Matita PVS

Software systems that “assist” at

- formalizing mathematics
- verifying software and hardware systems

Prominent examples:

- formally proved Kepler’s conjecture, Four Color theorem, Gödel’s Incompleteness theorems, Odd Order theorem
- verified OS kernel (seL4), C compiler (CompCert), ML compiler (CakeML), web browser (Quark)

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- at the desired level of abstraction
  E.g., if we want unordered trees, the proof assistant should not force us to encode them as ordered trees.

What do we want from definitions/specifications

After defining a concept, we should have at our disposal rules for reasoning about this concept.

E.g., it wouldn't helpful being able to define

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(which involves a fancy combination of recursion and corecursion), but not getting suitable rules for reasoning about f.

Proof assistants strive to achieve definition and proof expressiveness and automation, so that their users are productive.

But the users should not be so "productive" that they prove False. :-)

Important to keep definitions consistent, i.e., forbid the writing of inconsistent definitions.

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But the users should not be so "productive" that they prove False. :-)

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E.g., is the above scheme for combining recursion with corecursion sound? How can we be sure?

What do we want from definitions/specifications

If a proof assistant based on a total-function logic allows a definition like

"Define $f : \mathbb{N} \to \mathbb{N}$ by $f\ x = 1 + f\ x$"

... then False is immediately derivable, so everything becomes provable.

Proof assistants try to prevent such situations via

1. syntactic checks, e.g., force definitions to be "guarded" or "positive"
    - error-prone (trivial bugs can introduce inconsistencies)

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1. syntactic checks, e.g., force definitions to be "guarded" or "positive"
   - error-prone (trivial bugs can introduce inconsistencies)
   - too rigid (can reject many obviously valid definitions)
2. semantic reductions: make sense of the recursive and inductive definitions in terms of more basic (non-recursive) primitives.
   A non-recursive definition, no matter how complex, is obviously consistent!

In practice, each proof assistant provides a combination of these two, in various proportions.

Overview

In this tutorial...

I'll teach a foundation of (co)induction and (co)recursion following the semantic approach

- favored by HOL-based proof assistants such as HOL4, HOL Light and Isabelle/HOL
- developed substantially in Isabelle/HOL in recent years

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The foundation itself is independent from proof assistant technology, <u>and I'll present it independently</u>.

Some Conventions and Notations

Given two sets A and B, $A \to B$ denotes the set of functions from A to B. So that, for example, $f : A \to B$ is the same as $f \in A \to B$.

For multiple-argument functions, we prefer the curried forms, e.g., $f : A \to B \to \text{Bool}$, to the uncurried forms, e.g., $f : A \times B \to \text{Bool}$.

We'll sometimes use lambda notation. E.g., a numeric function in $\mathbb{N} \to \mathbb{N}$ that adds 5 can be written as $\lambda x.\, x + 5$.

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We write $\lambda a, b \ldots$ for $\lambda a.\, \lambda b \ldots$. E.g., the function in $\mathbb{N} \to \mathbb{N} \to \mathbb{N}$ that adds two numbers can be written as $\lambda x, y.\, x + y$.

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Predicates

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We identify such properties with functions to Bool.
E.g., given $P : A \to \text{Bool}$ and $a \in A$, we say "$P\ a$ holds", or simply "$P\ a$",
to mean that $P\ a = \top$.

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And similarly for multiple-argument predicates, a.k.a. relations.
E.g., given $P : A \to B \to C \to$ Bool, $a \in A$, $b \in B$ and $c \in C$, we say "$P\ a\ b\ c$ holds", or simply "$P\ a\ b\ c$", to mean that $P\ a\ b\ c = \top$.