



# MA/CSSE 474 Theory of Computation

Removing Ambiguity  
Chomsky Normal Form  
Pushdown Automata



## Recap: Ambiguity

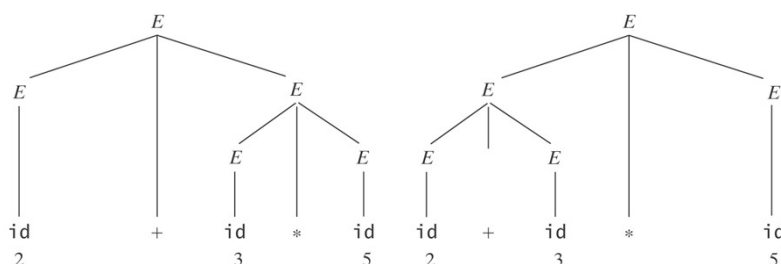
A grammar is **ambiguous** iff there is at least one string in  $L(G)$  for which  $G$  produces more than one parse tree.

For many applications of context-free grammars, this is a problem.

Example: A programming language.

- If there can be two different structures for a string in the language, there can be two different meanings.
- Not good!

## An Arithmetic Expression Grammar

$$\begin{aligned} E &\rightarrow E + E \\ E &\rightarrow E * E \\ E &\rightarrow (E) \\ E &\rightarrow \text{id} \end{aligned}$$


## Inherent Ambiguity

Some CF languages have the property that every grammar for them is ambiguous. We call such languages *inherently ambiguous*.

Example:

$$L = \{a^n b^n c^m : n, m \geq 0\} \cup \{a^n b^m c^m : n, m \geq 0\}.$$

## Inherent Ambiguity

$$L = \{a^n b^n c^m : n, m \geq 0\} \cup \{a^n b^m c^m : n, m \geq 0\}.$$

One grammar for  $L$  has the rules:

$$S \rightarrow S_1 \mid S_2$$

$$\begin{array}{ll} S_1 \rightarrow S_1 c \mid A & /* \text{Generate all strings in } \{a^n b^n c^m\}. \\ A \rightarrow aAb \mid \varepsilon & \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{ll} S_2 \rightarrow aS_2 \mid B & /* \text{Generate all strings in } \{a^n b^m c^m\}. \\ B \rightarrow bBc \mid \varepsilon & \end{array}$$

Consider any string of the form  $a^n b^n c^n$ .

It turns out that  $L$  is inherently ambiguous.

## Inherent Ambiguity

Both of the following problems are undecidable:

- Given a context-free grammar  $G$ , is  $G$  ambiguous?
- Given a context-free language  $L$ , is  $L$  inherently ambiguous?

## But We Can Often Reduce Ambiguity

We can get rid of:

- some  $\epsilon$  rules like  $S \rightarrow \epsilon$ ,
- rules with symmetric right-hand sides, e.g.,

$$S \rightarrow SS$$

$$E \rightarrow E + E$$

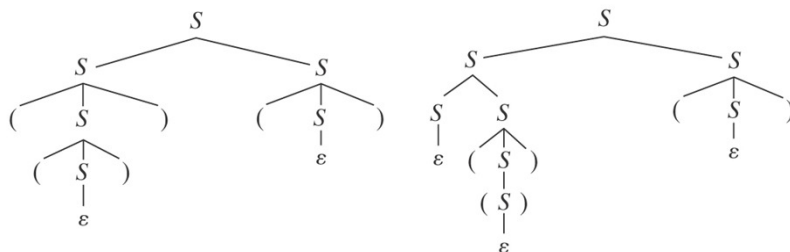
- rule sets that lead to ambiguous attachment of optional postfixes.

## A Highly Ambiguous Grammar

$$S \rightarrow \epsilon$$

$$S \rightarrow SS$$

$$S \rightarrow (S)$$



## Resolving the Ambiguity with a Different Grammar

The biggest problem is the  $\epsilon$  rule.

A different grammar for the language of balanced parentheses:

$$\begin{aligned} S^* &\rightarrow \epsilon \\ S^* &\rightarrow S \\ S &\rightarrow SS \\ S &\rightarrow (S) \\ S &\rightarrow () \end{aligned}$$

We'd like to have an algorithm for removing all  $\epsilon$ -productions...  
... except for the case where  $\epsilon$ - is actually in the language;  
then we introduce a new start symbol and have one  $\epsilon$ -production whose left side is that symbol.

## Nullable Nonterminals

Examples:

$$\begin{aligned} S &\rightarrow aTa \\ T &\rightarrow \epsilon \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} S &\rightarrow aTa \\ T &\rightarrow AB \\ A &\rightarrow \epsilon \\ B &\rightarrow \epsilon \end{aligned}$$

A nonterminal  $X$  is *nullable* iff either:

- (1) there is a rule  $X \rightarrow \epsilon$ , or
- (2) there is a rule  $X \rightarrow PQR\dots$   
and  $P, Q, R, \dots$   
are all nullable.

## Nullable Nonterminals

A nonterminal  $X$  is **nullable** iff either:

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- (2) there is a rule  $X \rightarrow PQR\dots$  and  $P, Q, R, \dots$  are all nullable.

So compute  $N$ , the set of nullable nonterminals, as follows:

1. Set  $N$  to the set of nonterminals that satisfy (1).
2. Repeat until an entire pass is made without adding anything to  $N$ 
  - Evaluate all other nonterminals with respect to (2).
  - If any nonterminal satisfies (2) and is not in  $N$ , insert it.

## A General Technique for Getting Rid of $\varepsilon$ -Rules

Definition: a rule is **modifiable** iff it is of the form:

$$P \rightarrow \alpha Q \beta, \text{ for some nullable } Q.$$

$removeEps(G: c\text{fg}) =$

1. Let  $G' = G$ .
2. Find the set  $N$  of nullable nonterminals in  $G'$ .
3. Repeat until  $G'$  contains no modifiable rules that haven't been processed:
  - Given the rule  $P \rightarrow \alpha Q \beta$ , where  $Q \in N$ ,  
add the rule  $P \rightarrow \alpha \beta$   
if it is not already present and if  $\alpha \beta \neq \varepsilon$  and if  $P \neq \alpha \beta$ .
4. Delete from  $G'$  all rules of the form  $X \rightarrow \varepsilon$ .
5. Return  $G'$ .

$$L(G') = L(G) - \{\varepsilon\}$$

## An Example

$G = \{\{S, T, A, B, C, a, b, c\}, \{a, b, c\}, R, S\}$ ,  
 $R = \{ S \rightarrow aTa$   
 $T \rightarrow ABC$   
 $A \rightarrow aA \mid C$   
 $B \rightarrow Bb \mid C$   
 $C \rightarrow c \mid \varepsilon \}$

*removeEps*( $G$ : cfg) =

1. Let  $G' = G$ .
2. Find the set  $N$  of nullable nonterminals in  $G'$ .
3. Repeat until  $G'$  contains no modifiable rules that haven't been processed:  
 Given the rule  $P \rightarrow \alpha Q \beta$ , where  $Q \in N$ ,  
 add the rule  $P \rightarrow \alpha \beta$   
 if it is not already present and if  $\alpha \beta \neq \varepsilon$   
 and if  $P \neq \alpha \beta$ .
4. Delete from  $G'$  all rules of the form  $X \rightarrow \varepsilon$ .
5. Return  $G'$ .

## What if $\varepsilon \in L$ ?

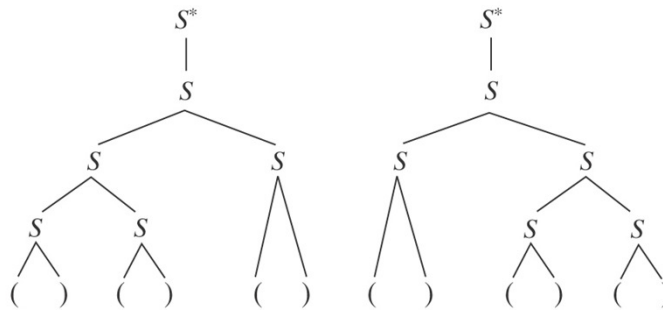
*atmostoneEps*( $G$ : cfg) =

1.  $G' = \text{removeEps}(G)$ .
2. If  $S_G$  is nullable then /\* i. e.,  $\varepsilon \in L(G)$ 
  - 2.1 Create in  $G'$  a new start symbol  $S^*$ .
  - 2.2 Add to  $R_{G'}$  the two rules:  
 $S^* \rightarrow \varepsilon$   
 $S^* \rightarrow S_G$ .
3. Return  $G''$ .

## But There is Still Ambiguity

$S^* \rightarrow \epsilon$   
 $S^* \rightarrow S$   
 $S \rightarrow SS$   
 $S \rightarrow (S)$   
 $S \rightarrow ()$

What about  $()()()$  ?



## Eliminating Symmetric Recursive Rules

$S^* \rightarrow \epsilon$   
 $S^* \rightarrow S$   
 $S \rightarrow SS$   
 $S \rightarrow (S)$   
 $S \rightarrow ()$

Replace  $S \rightarrow SS$  with one of:

$S \rightarrow SS_1$  /\* force branching to the left  
 $S \rightarrow S_1S$  /\* force branching to the right

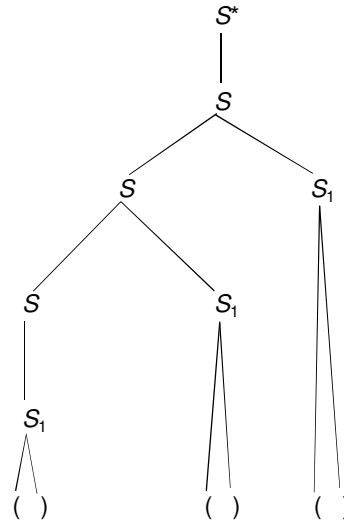
So we get:

$S^* \rightarrow \epsilon$   
 $S^* \rightarrow S$   
 $S \rightarrow SS_1$   
 $S \rightarrow S_1$   
 $S_1 \rightarrow (S)$   
 $S_1 \rightarrow ()$



## Eliminating Symmetric Recursive Rules

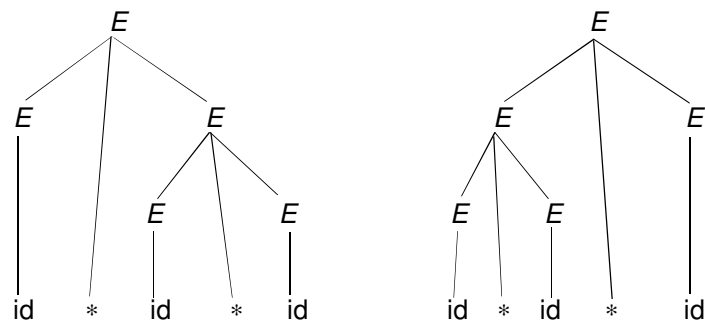
So we get:  
 $S^* \rightarrow \epsilon$   
 $S^* \rightarrow S$   
 $S \rightarrow SS_1$   
 $S \rightarrow S_1$   
 $S_1 \rightarrow (S)$   
 $S_1 \rightarrow ()$



## Arithmetic Expressions

$E \rightarrow E + E$   
 $E \rightarrow E * E$   
 $E \rightarrow (E)$   
 $E \rightarrow id \}$

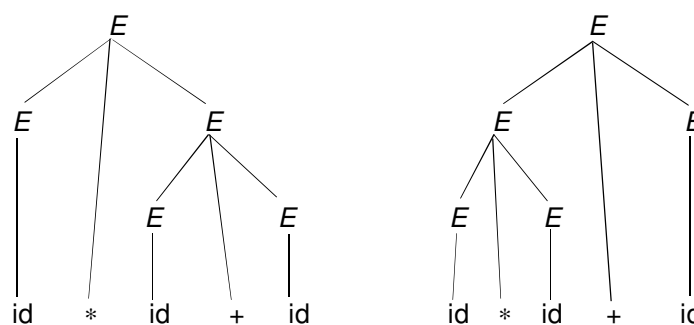
Problem 1: Associativity



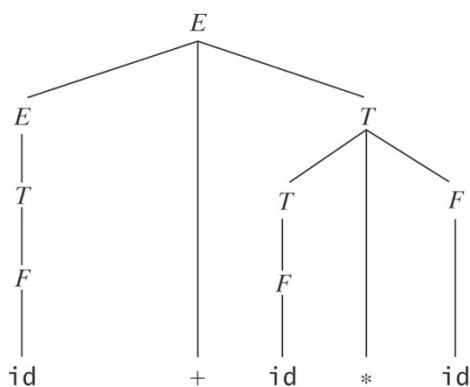
## Arithmetic Expressions

$$\begin{aligned} E &\rightarrow E + E \\ E &\rightarrow E * E \\ E &\rightarrow (E) \\ E &\rightarrow \text{id} \end{aligned} \}$$

Problem 2: Precedence



## Arithmetic Expressions - A Better Way

$$\begin{aligned} E &\rightarrow E + T \\ E &\rightarrow T \\ T &\rightarrow T * F \\ T &\rightarrow F \\ F &\rightarrow (E) \\ F &\rightarrow \text{id} \end{aligned}$$


## Ambiguous Attachment

The dangling else problem:

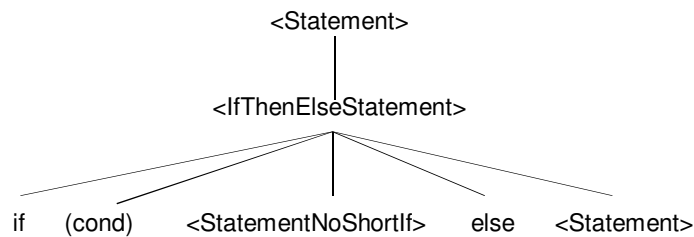
```
<stmt> ::= if <cond> then <stmt>
<stmt> ::= if <cond> then <stmt> else <stmt>
```

Consider:

```
if cond1 then if cond2 then st1 else st2
```

## The Java Fix

```
<Statement> ::= <IfThenStatement> | <IfThenElseStatement> |
               <IfThenElseStatementNoShortIf>
<StatementNoShortIf> ::= <block> |
                        <IfThenElseStatementNoShortIf> | ...
<IfThenStatement> ::= if ( <Expression> ) <Statement>
<IfThenElseStatement> ::= if ( <Expression> )
                          <StatementNoShortIf> else <Statement>
<IfThenElseStatementNoShortIf> ::=
  if ( <Expression> ) <StatementNoShortIf>
  else <StatementNoShortIf>
```



## Going Too Far

$S \rightarrow NP VP$

$NP \rightarrow \text{the Nominal} \mid \text{Nominal} \mid \text{ProperNoun} \mid NP PP$

$\text{Nominal} \rightarrow N \mid \text{Adjs } N$

$N \rightarrow \text{cat} \mid \text{girl} \mid \text{dogs} \mid \text{ball} \mid \text{chocolate} \mid$   
bat

$\text{ProperNoun} \rightarrow \text{Chris} \mid \text{Fluffy}$

$\text{Adjs} \rightarrow \text{Adj Adjs} \mid \text{Adj}$

$\text{Adj} \rightarrow \text{young} \mid \text{older} \mid \text{smart}$

$VP \rightarrow V \mid V NP \mid VP PP$

$V \rightarrow \text{like} \mid \text{likes} \mid \text{thinks} \mid \text{hits}$

$PP \rightarrow \text{Prep } NP$

$\text{Prep} \rightarrow \text{with}$

- Chris likes the girl with the cat.
- Chris shot the bear with a rifle.

## Going Too Far

- Chris likes the girl with the cat.

- Chris shot the bear with a rifle.



- Chris shot the bear with a rifle.

## Comparing Regular and Context-Free Languages

### Regular Languages

- regular exprs.  
or
- regular grammars
- recognize

### Context-Free Languages

- context-free grammars
- parse

## Normal Forms

A normal form  $F$  for a set  $C$  of data objects is a form, i.e., a set of syntactically valid objects, with the following two properties:

- For every element  $c$  of  $C$ , except possibly a finite set of special cases, there exists some element  $f$  of  $F$  such that  $f$  is equivalent to  $c$  with respect to some set of tasks.
- $F$  is simpler than the original form in which the elements of  $C$  are written. By “simpler” we mean that at least some tasks are easier to perform on elements of  $F$  than they would be on elements of  $C$ .

## Normal Forms

If you want to design algorithms, it is often useful to have a limited number of input forms that you have to deal with.

Normal forms are designed to do just that. Various ones have been developed for various purposes.

Examples:

- Disjunctive normal form for database queries so that they can be entered in a query-by-example grid.
- Jordan normal form for a square matrix, in which the matrix is almost diagonal in the sense that its only non-zero entries lie on the diagonal and the superdiagonal.
- Various normal forms for grammars to support specific parsing techniques.

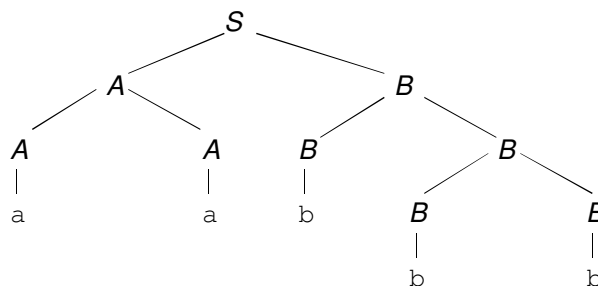
## Normal Forms for Grammars

**Chomsky Normal Form**, in which all rules are of one of the following two forms:

- $X \rightarrow a$ , where  $a \in \Sigma$ , or
- $X \rightarrow BC$ , where  $B$  and  $C$  are elements of  $V - \Sigma$ .

Advantages:

- Parsers can use binary trees.
- Exact length of derivations is known:



## Normal Forms for Grammars

**Greibach Normal Form**, in which all rules are of the following form:

- $X \rightarrow a \beta$ , where  $a \in \Sigma$  and  $\beta \in (V - \Sigma)^*$ .

Advantages:

- Every derivation of a string  $s$  contains  $|s|$  rule applications.
- Greibach normal form grammars can easily be converted to pushdown automata with no  $\epsilon$ -transitions. This is useful because such PDAs are guaranteed to halt.

## Normal Forms Exist

**Theorem:** Given a CFG  $G$ , there exists an equivalent Chomsky normal form grammar  $G_C$  such that:

$$L(G_C) = L(G) - \{\epsilon\}.$$

**Proof:** The proof is by construction.

Details of both are complex but straightforward; I leave them for you to read in the textbook and/or in the next 16 slides.

**Theorem:** Given a CFG  $G$ , there exists an equivalent Greibach normal form grammar  $G_G$  such that:

$$L(G_G) = L(G) - \{\epsilon\}.$$

**Proof:** The proof is also by construction.

## Converting to a Normal Form

1. Apply some transformation to  $G$  to get rid of undesirable property 1. Show that the language generated by  $G$  is unchanged.
2. Apply another transformation to  $G$  to get rid of undesirable property 2. Show that the language generated by  $G$  is unchanged *and* that undesirable property 1 has not been reintroduced.
3. Continue until the grammar is in the desired form.

## Rule Substitution

$$\begin{aligned} X &\rightarrow aYc \\ Y &\rightarrow b \\ Y &\rightarrow ZZ \end{aligned}$$

We can replace the  $X$  rule with the rules:

$$\begin{aligned} X &\rightarrow abc \\ X &\rightarrow aZZc \end{aligned}$$

$$X \Rightarrow aYc \Rightarrow aZZc$$



## Rule Substitution

**Theorem:** Let  $G$  contain the rules:

$$X \rightarrow \alpha Y \beta \quad \text{and} \quad Y \rightarrow \gamma_1 \mid \gamma_2 \mid \dots \mid \gamma_n,$$

Replace  $X \rightarrow \alpha Y \beta$  by:

$$X \rightarrow \alpha \gamma_1 \beta, \quad X \rightarrow \alpha \gamma_2 \beta, \quad \dots, \quad X \rightarrow \alpha \gamma_n \beta.$$

The new grammar  $G'$  will be equivalent to  $G$ .

## Rule Substitution

Replace  $X \rightarrow \alpha Y \beta$  by:

$$X \rightarrow \alpha \gamma_1 \beta, \quad X \rightarrow \alpha \gamma_2 \beta, \quad \dots, \quad X \rightarrow \alpha \gamma_n \beta.$$

**Proof:**

- Every string in  $L(G)$  is also in  $L(G')$ :

If  $X \rightarrow \alpha Y \beta$  is not used, then use same derivation.

If it is used, then one derivation is:

$$S \Rightarrow \dots \Rightarrow \delta X \phi \Rightarrow \delta \alpha Y \beta \phi \Rightarrow \delta \alpha \gamma_k \beta \phi \Rightarrow \dots \Rightarrow w$$

Use this one instead:

$$S \Rightarrow \dots \Rightarrow \delta X \phi \Rightarrow \delta \alpha \gamma_k \beta \phi \Rightarrow \dots \Rightarrow w$$

- Every string in  $L(G')$  is also in  $L(G)$ : Every new rule can be simulated by old rules.

## Conversion to Chomsky Normal Form

1. Remove all  $\epsilon$ -rules, using the algorithm *removeEps*.
2. Remove all unit productions (rules of the form  $A \rightarrow B$ ).
3. Remove all rules whose right hand sides have length greater than 1 and include a terminal:  
(e.g.,  $A \rightarrow aB$  or  $A \rightarrow BaC$ )
4. Remove all rules whose right hand sides have length greater than 2:  
(e.g.,  $A \rightarrow BCDE$ )

## Recap: Removing $\epsilon$ -Productions

Remove all  $\epsilon$  productions:

- (1) If there is a rule  $P \rightarrow \alpha Q\beta$  and  $Q$  is nullable,

Then: Add the rule  $P \rightarrow \alpha\beta$ .

- (2) Delete all rules  $Q \rightarrow \epsilon$ .

## Removing $\varepsilon$ -Productions

Example:

$$\begin{aligned} S &\rightarrow aA \\ A &\rightarrow B \mid CDC \\ B &\rightarrow \varepsilon \\ B &\rightarrow a \\ C &\rightarrow BD \\ D &\rightarrow b \\ D &\rightarrow \varepsilon \end{aligned}$$

## Unit Productions

A **unit production** is a rule whose right-hand side consists of a single nonterminal symbol.

Example:

$$\begin{aligned} S &\rightarrow XY \\ X &\rightarrow A \\ A &\rightarrow B \mid a \\ B &\rightarrow b \\ Y &\rightarrow T \\ T &\rightarrow Y \mid c \end{aligned}$$

## Removing Unit Productions

$removeUnits(G) =$

1. Let  $G' = G$ .
2. Until no unit productions remain in  $G'$  do:
  - 2.1 Choose some unit production  $X \rightarrow Y$ .
  - 2.2 Remove it from  $G'$ .
  - 2.3 Consider only rules that still remain. For every rule  $Y \rightarrow \beta$ , where  $\beta \in V^*$ , do:  
Add to  $G'$  the rule  $X \rightarrow \beta$  unless it is a rule that has already been removed once.
3. Return  $G'$ .

After removing epsilon productions and unit productions, all rules whose right hand sides have length 1 are in Chomsky Normal Form.

## Removing Unit Productions

$removeUnits(G) =$

1. Let  $G' = G$ .
2. Until no unit productions remain in  $G'$  do:
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Add to  $G'$  the rule  $X \rightarrow \beta$  unless it is a rule that has already been removed once.
3. Return  $G'$ .

Example:

$$\begin{array}{l} S \rightarrow XY \\ X \rightarrow A \\ A \rightarrow B \mid a \\ B \rightarrow b \\ Y \rightarrow T \\ T \rightarrow Y \mid c \end{array}$$

## Mixed Rules

*removeMixed(G) =*

1. Let  $G' = G$ .
2. Create a new nonterminal  $T_a$  for each terminal  $a$  in  $\Sigma$ .
3. Modify each rule whose right-hand side has length greater than 1 and that contains a terminal symbol by substituting  $T_a$  for each occurrence of the terminal  $a$ .
4. Add to  $G'$ , for each  $T_a$ , the rule  $T_a \rightarrow a$ .
5. Return  $G'$ .

Example:

$A \rightarrow a$

$A \rightarrow a B$

$A \rightarrow B_a C$

$A \rightarrow B_b C$

## Long Rules

*removeLong(G) =*

1. Let  $G' = G$ .
2. For each rule  $r$  of the form:

$$A \rightarrow N_1 N_2 N_3 N_4 \dots N_n, n > 2$$

create new nonterminals  $M_2, M_3, \dots, M_{n-1}$ .

3. Replace  $r$  with the rule  $A \rightarrow N_1 M_2$ .
4. Add the rules:

$$\begin{aligned} M_2 &\rightarrow N_2 M_3, \\ M_3 &\rightarrow N_3 M_4, \dots \\ M_{n-1} &\rightarrow N_{n-1} N_n. \end{aligned}$$

5. Return  $G'$ .

Example:

$A \rightarrow BCDEF$

## An Example

$$S \rightarrow aACa$$

$$A \rightarrow B \mid a$$

$$B \rightarrow C \mid c$$

$$C \rightarrow cC \mid \epsilon$$

*removeEps* returns:

$$S \rightarrow aACa \mid aAa \mid aCa \mid aa$$

$$A \rightarrow B \mid a$$

$$B \rightarrow C \mid c$$

$$C \rightarrow cC \mid c$$

## An Example

$$S \rightarrow aACa \mid aAa \mid aCa \mid aa$$

$$A \rightarrow B \mid a$$

$$B \rightarrow C \mid c$$

$$C \rightarrow cC \mid c$$

Next we apply *removeUnits*:

Remove  $A \rightarrow B$ . Add  $A \rightarrow C \mid c$ .

Remove  $B \rightarrow C$ . Add  $B \rightarrow cC$  ( $B \rightarrow c$ , already there).

Remove  $A \rightarrow C$ . Add  $A \rightarrow cC$  ( $A \rightarrow c$ , already there).

So *removeUnits* returns:

$$S \rightarrow aACa \mid aAa \mid aCa \mid aa$$

$$A \rightarrow a \mid c \mid cC$$

$$B \rightarrow c \mid cC$$

$$C \rightarrow cC \mid c$$

## An Example

$$S \rightarrow aACa \mid aAa \mid aCa \mid aa$$

$$A \rightarrow a \mid c \mid cC$$

$$B \rightarrow c \mid cC$$

$$C \rightarrow cC \mid c$$

Next we apply *removeMixed*, which returns:

$$S \rightarrow T_aACT_a \mid T_aAT_a \mid T_aCT_a \mid T_aT_a$$

$$A \rightarrow a \mid c \mid T_cC$$

$$B \rightarrow c \mid T_cC$$

$$C \rightarrow T_cC \mid c$$

$$T_a \rightarrow a$$

$$T_c \rightarrow c$$

## An Example

$$S \rightarrow T_aACT_a \mid T_aAT_a \mid T_aCT_a \mid T_aT_a$$

$$A \rightarrow a \mid c \mid T_cC$$

$$B \rightarrow c \mid T_cC$$

$$C \rightarrow T_cC \mid c$$

$$T_a \rightarrow a$$

$$T_c \rightarrow c$$

Finally, we apply *removeLong*, which returns:

$$S \rightarrow T_aS_1 \quad S \rightarrow T_aS_3 \quad S \rightarrow T_aS_4 \quad S \rightarrow T_aT_a$$

$$S_1 \rightarrow AS_2 \quad S_3 \rightarrow AT_a \quad S_4 \rightarrow CT_a$$

$$S_2 \rightarrow CT_a$$

$$A \rightarrow a \mid c \mid T_cC$$

$$B \rightarrow c \mid T_cC$$

$$C \rightarrow T_cC \mid c$$

$$T_a \rightarrow a$$

$$T_c \rightarrow c$$

## The Price of Normal Forms

$$\begin{aligned} E &\rightarrow E + E \\ E &\rightarrow (E) \\ E &\rightarrow \text{id} \end{aligned}$$

Converting to Chomsky normal form:

$$\begin{aligned} E &\rightarrow E E' \\ E' &\rightarrow P E \\ E &\rightarrow L E'' \\ E'' &\rightarrow E R \\ E &\rightarrow \text{id} \\ L &\rightarrow ( \\ R &\rightarrow ) \\ P &\rightarrow + \end{aligned}$$

Conversion doesn't change weak generative capacity but it may change strong generative capacity.

## Pushdown Automata

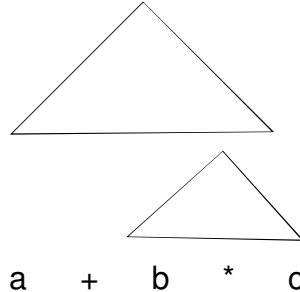


## Recognizing Context-Free Languages

Two notions of recognition:

- (1) Say yes or no, just like with FSMs
- (2) Say yes or no, AND

if yes, describe the structure



## Definition of a Pushdown Automaton

$M = (K, \Sigma, \Gamma, \Delta, s, A)$ , where:

$K$  is a finite set of states

$\Sigma$  is the input alphabet

$\Gamma$  is the stack alphabet

$s \in K$  is the initial state

$A \subseteq K$  is the set of accepting states, and

$\Delta$  is the transition relation. It is a finite subset of

$$\underbrace{(K \times (\Sigma \cup \{\epsilon\}) \times \Gamma^*)}_{\text{state input or } \epsilon \text{ string of symbols to pop from top of stack}} \times \underbrace{(K \times \Gamma^*)}_{\text{state string of symbols to push on top of stack}}$$

state	input or $\epsilon$	string of symbols to pop from top of stack	state	string of symbols to push on top of stack

$\Sigma$  and  $\Gamma$  are not necessarily disjoint

## Definition of a Pushdown Automaton

A **configuration** of  $M$  is an element of  $K \times \Sigma^* \times \Gamma^*$ .

An **initial configuration** of  $M$  is  $(s, w, \varepsilon)$ , where  $w$  is the input string.

## Manipulating the Stack

c
a
b

 will be written as      cab

If  $c_1c_2\dots c_n$  is pushed onto the stack:

$c_1$
$c_2$
$c_n$
c
a
b

$c_1c_2\dots c_ncab$

## Yields

Let  $c$  be any element of  $\Sigma \cup \{\epsilon\}$ ,  
 Let  $\gamma_1, \gamma_2$  and  $\gamma$  be any elements of  $\Gamma^*$ , and  
 Let  $w$  be any element of  $\Sigma^*$ .

Then:

$(q_1, cw, \gamma_1\gamma) \vdash_M (q_2, w, \gamma_2\gamma)$  iff  $((q_1, c, \gamma_1), (q_2, \gamma_2)) \in \Delta$ .

Let  $\vdash_M^*$  be the reflexive, transitive closure of  $\vdash_M$ .

$C_1$  **yields** configuration  $C_2$  iff  $C_1 \vdash_M^* C_2$

## Computations

A **computation** by  $M$  is a finite sequence of configurations  
 $C_0, C_1, \dots, C_n$  for some  $n \geq 0$  such that:

- $C_0$  is an initial configuration,
- $C_n$  is of the form  $(q, \epsilon, \gamma)$ , for some state  $q \in K_M$  and some string  $\gamma$  in  $\Gamma^*$ , and
- $C_0 \vdash_M C_1 \vdash_M C_2 \vdash_M \dots \vdash_M C_n$ .

## Nondeterminism

If  $M$  is in some configuration  $(q_1, s, \gamma)$  it is possible that:

- $\Delta$  contains exactly one transition that matches.
- $\Delta$  contains more than one transition that matches.
- $\Delta$  contains no transition that matches.

## Accepting

A computation  $C$  of  $M$  is an **accepting computation** iff:

- $C = (s, w, \varepsilon) \vdash_M^* (q, \varepsilon, \varepsilon)$ , and
- $q \in A$ .

$M$  **accepts** a string  $w$  iff at least one of its computations accepts.

Other paths may:

- Read all the input and halt in a nonaccepting state,
- Read all the input and halt in an accepting state with the stack not empty,
- Loop forever and never finish reading the input, or
- Reach a dead end where no more input can be read.

The **language accepted by  $M$** , denoted  $L(M)$ , is the set of all strings accepted by  $M$ .

## Rejecting

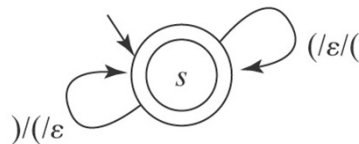
A computation  $C$  of  $M$  is a **rejecting computation** iff:

- $C = (s, w, \varepsilon) \vdash_M^* (q, w', \alpha)$ ,
- $C$  is not an accepting computation, and
- $M$  has no moves that it can make from  $(q, \varepsilon, \alpha)$ .

$M$  **rejects** a string  $w$  iff all of its computations reject.

Note that it is possible that, on input  $w$ ,  $M$  neither accepts nor rejects.

## A PDA for Bal



$M = (K, \Sigma, \Gamma, \Delta, s, A)$ , where:

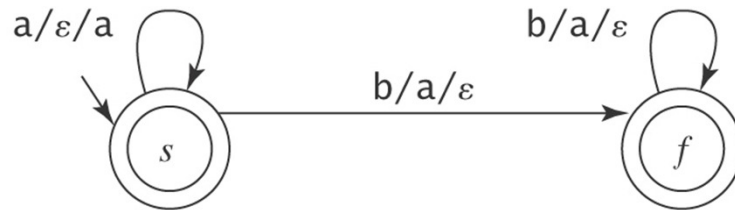
$K = \{s\}$                       the states  
 $\Sigma = \{(\, )\}$                 the input alphabet  
 $\Gamma = \{\}$                         the stack alphabet  
 $A = \{s\}$

$\Delta$  contains:

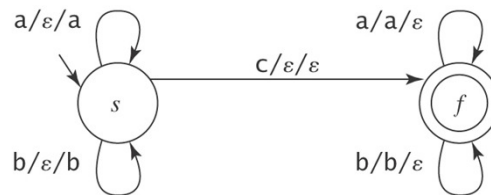
$((s, (\, \varepsilon), (s, ()))$  \*\*  
 $((s, ), (, (s, \varepsilon))$

\*\*Important: This does not mean that the stack is empty

### A PDA for $A^nB^n = \{a^m b^n : n \geq 0\}$



### A PDA for $\{wcw^R : w \in \{a, b\}^*\}$

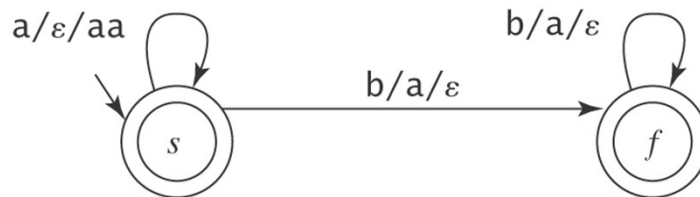


$M = (K, \Sigma, \Gamma, \Delta, s, A)$ , where:

$K = \{s, f\}$  the states  
 $\Sigma = \{a, b, c\}$  the input alphabet  
 $\Gamma = \{a, b\}$  the stack alphabet  
 $A = \{f\}$  the accepting states

$\Delta$  contains:  $((s, a, \epsilon), (s, a))$   
 $((s, b, \epsilon), (s, b))$   
 $((s, c, \epsilon), (f, \epsilon))$   
 $((f, a, a), (f, \epsilon))$   
 $((f, b, b), (f, \epsilon))$

### A PDA for $\{a^m b^{2n} : n \geq 0\}$

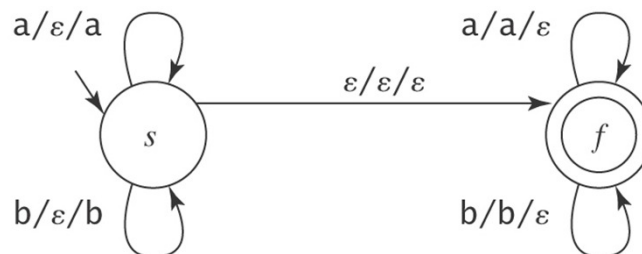



### A PDA for PalEven = $\{ww^R : w \in \{a, b\}^*\}$

$S \rightarrow \epsilon$   
 $S \rightarrow aSa$   
 $S \rightarrow bSb$

This one is  
nondeterministic

A PDA:





**A PDA for  $\{w \in \{a, b\}^* : \#_a(w) = \#_b(w)\}$**