PARSING TREE ADJOINING GRAMMARS USING EVOLUTIONARY ALGORITHMS

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Abstract: We use evolutionary algorithms to speed up a rather complex process, the tree adjoining grammars parsing. This improvement is due to a linear matching function which compares the fitness of different individuals. Internally, derived trees are processed as tree-to-string representations. Moreover, we present some practical results and a post running analysis that may encourage the use of evolutionary techniques in mildly context sensitive language parsing, for example.

1 INTRODUCTION

Evolutionary algorithms (EAs) were introduced in (Holland, 1962; Schwefel, 1965; Fogel, 1962), and several were gradually developed during the past four decades: evolutionary strategies (Rechenberg, 1973), genetic algorithms (Holland, 1975) and evolutionary programming (Fogel et al., 1966). Although they are different approaches and independently studied, all are inspired by the same principles and share common components such as a searching space of individuals, a coding scheme representing solutions for a given problem, a fitness function or operators to produce offspring. Roughly speaking, EAs try to stochastically solve searching problems by mimic of natural principles of selecting and surviving the fittest individual from a population. Real-world applications of EAs deal with maximizing or minimizing objective functions such as resource location or allocation optimization.

Due to the lack of theoretical proofs, many formal methods tried to model their behavior. For example, EAs are simulated with the use of eco-grammar systems in (Dediu and Grando, 2005). Networks of evolutionary processors (NEPs) are another computational model having biological inspiration, and together with the above mentioned is closely related to grammar systems (Castellanos et al., 2001). Although NEPs are computationally complete (Csuhaj-Varjú et al., 2005), it is rather difficult for them to simulate EAs due to the difficulties given by the generation of the initial population with random individuals and the implementation of a general fitness function evaluation.

Recently, EAs have been also used for automatic program generation such as LISP and the method of genetic programming was established (Koza, 1992). In (Ryan et al., 1998) even a more complex approach which uses the parse trees of context-free grammars and called grammatical evolution was proposed to automatically evolve computer programs in arbitrary languages.

Following this lead, we extended the applicability of the parallel and cooperative searching processes of EAs to tree adjoining grammars parsing. We proposed a new algorithm, called EATAGP, and we could evolve derived trees using a tree-to-string representation (see Section 4.1). Implementing a linear matching function to compare the yield of a derived tree with a given input we obtained several encouraging results during the running tests (see Section 4.2 and Tables 2 and 1). For a better understanding of the algorithm, a running example is given in Section 4.3.

Due to the high complexity of some classical parsing algorithms, long sentences analysis could represent a very difficult task for a computer program. We concluded that evolutionary algorithms used for parsing process long sentences due to their reduced com-
computational complexity. In one of our examples, we could implement a linear complexity fitness function. Comparing with the $O(n^k)$ that is the complexity of the classical parsing algorithm for TAGs, we could increase the limit of the parsed words per sentence.

In the end of the paper we present a post running analysis (Table 2) that allowed us to propose several research directions in order to extend the actual known computational mechanisms in the mildly context sensitive class of languages.

2 PRELIMINARIES

In this paper we follow standard definitions and notions in formal language theory. A wealth of further information about this area can be found in (Hopcroft and Ullman, 1990), and details about trees in (Gécseg and Steinby, 1997). An alphabet is a finite nonempty set of symbols. A string is any sequence of symbols from an alphabet $X$. The set of all strings over $X$ is denoted by $X^*$. An alphabet is a finite nonempty alphabet and $X^*$ is called languages. Moreover, $|X|$ denotes the cardinality of the finite set $X$, i.e., its number of elements, and $\mathbb{N}$ the set of nonnegative integers.

Now let us recall briefly the two core notions of the present contribution: tree adjoining grammars (TAGs) and evolutionary algorithms (EAs).

A TAG is a quintuple

$$T = (X, N, I, A, S)$$

where:

- $X$ is a finite alphabet of terminals,
- $N$ is a finite alphabet of nonterminals,
- $I$ is a finite set of finite trees called initial trees, each of them having
  - all interior nodes labeled by nonterminals, and
  - all leaf nodes labeled by terminals, or by nonterminals marked for substitution with $\downarrow$,
- $A$ is a finite set of finite trees called auxiliary trees, each of them having
  - all interior nodes labeled by nonterminals, and
  - all leaf nodes labeled by terminals, or by nonterminals marked for substitution with $\downarrow$ except for one node, called foot node, annotated by “$\dagger$”; the label of the foot node must be identical to the label of the root node, and
- $S \in N$ is a distinguished nonterminal called start symbol.

A tree constructed from two other trees by using the two operations permitted in a TAG, substitution and adjoining, is called derived tree. Roughly speaking, a $\text{adjunction}$ builds a new tree from an auxiliary tree and an initial, auxiliary or derived tree. On the other hand, a $\text{substitution}$ replaces the node marked with $\downarrow$ by the tree to be substituted (only trees derived from the initial trees can be substituted for it). For restrictions imposed on operations, examples and details, the reader is referred to (Joshi and Schabes, 1997).

The tree set of a TAG contains all the trees that can be derived from an $S$-rooted initial tree and in which no node marked for substitution exists on the frontier. The language generated by a TAG consists of the yields of all trees in the tree set.

The other central notion, the $EA$, is defined as a 7-tuple

$$EA = (I, f, \Omega, \mu, \lambda, s, \text{StopCondition})$$

where:

- $I$ is the set of the searching space instances called individuals,
- $f : I \rightarrow F$ is a fitness function associated to individuals, with $F$ a finite ordered set of values,
- $\Omega$ is a set of genetic operators (e.g., substitution, mutation) which applied to the individuals of one generation, called parents, produce new individuals called offspring,
- $\mu$ is the number of parents,
- $\lambda$ is the number of offspring inside the population,
- $s : P^\mu \times I^\lambda \rightarrow P^\mu$ is the selection operator which changes the number of individuals from parents and offspring producing the next generation of parents (there are variants of EAs where after one generation the parents are not needed anymore, and in this case $s$ selects only from the offspring, i.e., $s : P^\lambda \rightarrow P^\mu$), and
- $\text{StopCondition} : F^\mu \times N \rightarrow \{\text{True, False}\}$ is the stop criteria which may be interpreted as “Stop when a good enough value was reached by an individual fitness function”, “Stop after a certain number of generations” or “Stop after a maximum time available for computations”.

Note that sometimes associated with individuals we can keep useful information for genetic operators. It is usual to associate to each individual its fitness value, using the notation $(i_q(u), \Phi(u))$, where $i_q(u)$ denotes the vectorial representation of the chromosome of the $q\text{th}$ individual in the generation $u$ and $\Phi(u)$ corresponds to the fitness value associated to that individual. Hence, we may consider

$$I = \{ (i_q(u), \Phi(u)) | q, u \in \mathbb{N}, 1 \leq q \leq \mu + \lambda \}.$$  

A good overview on EAs is (Bäck, 1996).
In Figure 1 we present a general description of an EA, where $\text{gen}$ is a numerical variable that indicates the current number of generation, $P(\text{gen})$ represents the set of $\mu$ individuals that are potential parents in generation $\text{gen}$ and $P'(\text{gen})$ is the set of new $\lambda$ offspring that we get by the application of genetic operators to individuals in $P(\text{gen})$. Depending on the coding chosen for the EA each gene belongs to a certain data type. Let $L = (C_1, C_2, \ldots, C_n)$ be the list of the sets of genes values, where $n \in \mathbb{N}$ is the number of genes of the chromosomes. Without loss of generality, we consider each $C_i$, $1 \leq j \leq n$, a finite and discrete set of values of a given type, such that all values of genes in the position $i$ of a chromosome of an individual are of type $C_i$. Also note that in the Step 2 of the EA, $(n, \mu, L)$ initializes with random values the chromosomes and is defined on $\mathbb{N} \times \mathbb{N} \times C_1 \times C_2 \times \ldots \times C_n$ with values on $P'$.

3 APPLYING EVOLUTIONARY ALGORITHMS TO PARSE CONTEXT-FREE GRAMMARS

Context-free grammars (CFGs) are a well-know class of language generative devices extensively used for describing syntax of programming languages and some significant number of structures of natural language sentences. For rigorous definitions and details, the reader is referred to (Hopcroft and Ullman, 1990). The tree structure of a string, called derivation tree, shows how that string can be obtained by applying the rules of the grammar. Note that a string can have multiple derivation trees associated. Parsing represents the process of analyzing a string and constructing its derivation tree. A parser is an algorithm that takes as input a string and either accepts or rejects it (depending on whether it belongs or not to the language generated by the grammar), and in the case it is accepted, also outputs its derivation trees. More about parsers can be found in (Sippu and Soisalon-Soininen, 1988).

Due to the importance and applications of the parsing algorithms, many efficient parsing techniques were developed over the years. Yet there are several computational models for which parsing is performed in $O(n^3)$ for CFGs (Hopcroft and Ullman, 1990) or even $O(n^4)$ for more powerful generating devices (Josh and Schabes, 1997). For some long sentences (e.g., more than 15 words), the computation time is rather large for practical approaches. In this context, alternative parsing techniques appeared in an attempt to reduce the complexity of the parsers, sometime even with the price of inexactness (Schmid, 1997).

Grammatical Evolution (GE) is a new approach proposed in (Ryan et al., 1998), which uses the derivation trees generated by CFGs and the searching capabilities of EAs (especially genetic algorithms) to automatically evolve computer programs written in arbitrary high-level programming languages. Such a technique orders the productions for every nonterminal of the CFG, and then uses the gene values to decide which production to choose when it is necessary to expand a given nonterminal. Recall that the genetic coding (i.e., the sequence of chosen genes) is a string of bytes.

Let us briefly describe the pioneering method of (Ryan et al., 1998). Roughly speaking, EA finds a function of one independent variable and one dependent variable in symbolic form that fits a given sample of 20 data points $(x_i, y_i)$. The quadratic polynomial function $f(x) = x^4 + x^3 + x^2 + x$ with values from the interval $[-1, 1]$ was used with this purpose.

The considered CFG was:

1) $(\text{expr}) ::= (\text{expr}) \cdot (\text{op}) \cdot (\text{expr})$

2) $(\text{op}) ::= + \cdot | - | \cdot |

3) $(\text{pre} - \text{op}) ::= \sin \cdot \cos \cdot | \tan \cdot | \log$

4) $(\text{var}) ::= X$

The algorithm constructs a symbolic expression using a given sentential form. First, it starts with the starting symbol $(\text{expr})$, and it expands the leftmost symbol considering the gene value modulo the number of choices (this way, the invalid gene value problem is solved). After that, the next leftmost symbol is processed, and the next gene is used. If there is only one choice, then the symbol is expanded without considering the gene value. This procedure continues until all the nonterminals in the sentential form were expanded. If the string of genes is exhausted before the nonterminals in the sentential form, then the string of genes is used once again from the beginning as if it were a circular string, so the problem of not having enough genes is removed.

The fitness function evaluation promotes a multi-critical optimization, that is, maximizes the number of fitting points and minimizes the error using the formula

$$\sum_{i=1}^{20} |f(x_i) - y_i|.$$  \hspace{1cm} (3)

We can observe that GE cannot really evolve programs, only functions specified by samples.
The structure of an Evolutionary Algorithm is:

1. \( \text{gen} := 0; \)
2. Initialization process \((n, \mu, L);\)
3. Evaluate \(P(0) := \{ (\overrightarrow{t}_1(0), \Phi(\overrightarrow{t}_1(0))), \ldots, (\overrightarrow{t}_\mu(0), \Phi(\overrightarrow{t}_\mu(0))) \};\)
4. \( \text{do while not(StopCondition(\Phi(\overrightarrow{t}_1(\text{gen})), \ldots, \Phi(\overrightarrow{t}_\mu(\text{gen})), \text{gen}))} \)
5. Apply genetic operators;
6. Evaluate \((P(\text{gen})) \rightarrow P'(\text{gen}) = \{ (\overrightarrow{t}_1'(\text{gen}), \Phi(\overrightarrow{t}_1'(\text{gen}))), \ldots, (\overrightarrow{t}_\lambda'(\text{gen}), \Phi(\overrightarrow{t}_\lambda'(\text{gen}))) \};\)
7. Select the next generation \(P(\text{gen} + 1) := s(P(\text{gen}), P'(\text{gen}));\)
8. \( \text{gen} := \text{gen} + 1; \)
9. \( \text{end do;} \)

Figure 1: The description of an evolutionary algorithm.

4 EVOLUTIONARY ALGORITHMS FOR TREE ADJOINING GRAMMARS PARSING

Even if the usefulness of CFGs in representing the syntax of natural languages is well established, there are still several important linguistics aspects that cannot be represented by this class of grammars. For example, the languages multiple agreement \(\{a^n b^n c^n \mid n \geq 1\} \times \{a^n b^n c^n \mid n \geq 1\} \times \{a^n b^n c^n \mid n \geq 1\} \subset \{a, b, c\}^* \) cannot be generated by any CFG. Thus, a more powerful class of grammars, called tree adjoining grammars (TAGs), was introduced (Joshi et al., 1975), yielding interesting mathematical and computational results over the past decades.

In this section we show how to apply a similar technique with the one described in Section 3 to a TAG in order to construct a derivation tree of a given input string: progressively, we build at each step a derived tree until we get a tree with the yield matching the given input string. This parsing algorithm for TAGs that uses EAs will be called \(\text{EATAG}_p\) in the following. After presenting it, we point out some complexity issues and show some tests performed.

Let us assume that for the rest of the paper the TAG \(T = (\Sigma, N, I, A, S)\) and the input string \(is\) are given.

4.1 The Algorithm \(\text{EATAG}_p\)

First we should mention that we adapted the tree-to-string notation to simplify the internal representation of the trees. We use curly brackets to specify the constraints, rectangular brackets to specify the children of a node labeled by a nonterminal and a blank separator after terminals. For nonterminals we have the convention: they start with an uppercase letter followed by other characters, then the specification of the constraints, and finally a “{” which marks the end of their representation. Inside a balanced pair (“[”, “]”) we have all the children of that nonterminal. A foot node of an auxiliary tree has no children therefore there is no need for the pair (“[”, “]”); instead, we have only the foot marker “*”. An example is shown in the beginning of Section 4.3 (see Figure 2 also).

The final goal of the algorithm is to find a derived tree that has the root labeled with \(S\) and whose yield matches the given input string \(is\). To this end, we start from an arbitrary \(S\)-rooted tree, and we may apply substitutions and adjoinings to construct the target derived tree. The searching process is exponential since at every step several possible options to chose from exist. From the beginning we may pick from several \(S\)-rooted trees, then in the derived tree we may choose from several nodes where to apply the next derivation, and once we do this, we may have several possible trees to substitute in or to adjoin at that particular node.

EAs’s individuals are viable solutions for the problem of the representation of a derived tree in a TAG using a fixed number of genes, and they proved to speed up this searching process. For the moment, let us briefly explain how the algorithm works and which are the issues that appear.

There are \(|I|\) initial trees and \(|I_s|\) initial \(S\)-rooted trees. We order all the trees in the sets \(I\) and \(A\), respectively, and all the nodes in every such tree according to the node position in the tree-to-string representation. For example, if \(|I| = k\), then we will identify the trees in \(I\) by the numbers 1, 2, …, \(k\). Thus, the pairs \((\text{TreeNodeNumber}, \text{NodeNumber})\) completely characterize all the nodes in all the given trees of the TAG. We start to construct a derived tree, and in this pro-
gressive build derived tree we carry on the nodes’ attributes such as substitution or adjoining constraints (NA stands for non-adjoining).

We use the first gene modulo \(|I_0|\) to select the starting tree from the initial \(S\)-rooted tree, which will transform into the desired derived tree after the following algorithm.

1. We repeat the algorithm’s steps until the length of the yield of the derived tree will be greater or equal than the length of the input string (stopping condition). If this is not the case yet, and if we have obligatory adjoining constraints, we should satisfy them first.

2. Then we count how many nonterminals which do not have the NA constraint are in the derived tree. Let \(n_{\text{max}}\) be this number. We use the next gene modulo \(n_{\text{max}}\) to select the next node, and there we will apply a proper derivation. If somehow we finish the genes, we start to use the string of genes from the beginning.

3. Next, we proceed depending on the type of the selected node:

   (a) If the selected node is a substitution one, then we count the trees that could be substituted in our node, and let \(n_{\text{max}}\) be this number. We use the next gene modulo \(n_{\text{max}}\) to select the next substitution tree, and after that we perform the substitution. Then, we go to Step 1.

   (b) If the selected node is an adjoining node, then we count the trees that could be adjoined at our node, and let \(n_{\text{max}}\) be this number. We use the next gene modulo \(n_{\text{max}}\) to select the next adjoining tree, and after that we do the adjoining.

   Then, we go to Step 1.

Note that we can optimize the usage of genes, and whenever we have a single option (node or tree) for the next operation, we can perform the operation without consuming the gene.

Now let us present the pseudocode for the informal description of the genetic decoding (a running example can be found in Section 4.3). We mention that in the line 17 of the algorithm, the “+” operator represents the usual concatenation for strings. We describe only the adjoin part, the substitution being similar (\(ng\) denotes the number of genes).

1. \(i=0\) % counter for genes index
2. \(\text{evolvedTree=initialTrees[gene[i] mod } |I_0|\)
3. \(\text{do while len( }\text{evolvedTree} < \text{len}(is)\)
4. \(i=(i+1) \mod ng\)
5. \(n_{\text{max}}=|\text{internalNodes}|-|\text{internalNodes}\)
6. \(\text{adjNode=nonTerCandidates[gene[i] mod } n_{\text{max}}\)
7. \(i=(i+1) \mod ng\)
8. \(\text{adjSet=adjNode.Label-type}\)
9. \(n_{\text{max}}=|\text{adjSet}|\)
10. \(i=(i+1) \mod ng\)
11. \(\text{insertedTree=adjSet[gene[i] mod } n_{\text{max}}]\)
12. \(t_j=\text{evolvedTree.substring(0, } p_j\)
13. \(t_j=\text{insertedTree.split(”**”)[0]}\)
14. \(t_j=\text{evolvedTree.substring(p}_j+1, p_j)\)
15. \(t_j=\text{insertedTree.split(”**”)[1]}\)
16. \(t_j=\text{evolvedTree.substring(p}_j+1, p_j)\)
17. \(\text{evolvedTree=t}_1+t_j+t_1+t_4+t_5\)
18. \(\text{enddo}\)

4.2 Fitness Function and Complexity

Fitness function assigns values to individuals developed by the EA, and that is why it is the most important factor that directs the searching process. Therefore, a fitness function that says “yes” or “no” to the individuals of an EA is completely useless for the searching process since the EA cannot know if a new individual is a little bit better or worse than another one.

In our algorithm we have to encourage two aspects: the matching of characters in the input string and in the yield of the derived tree, and the equal length of the two strings.

We can use several types of fitness function. For example, the values associated to individuals are triples of integers \((k_1, k_2, k_3)\), where \(k_1\) represents the maximum length of a sequence of matched characters, \(k_2\) is the number of matches, and \(k_3\) gets negative values for yields longer than the input string. When we make the comparisons between different individuals during the selection process, we consider the first criterion the most important, then the second and then the third.

Let \(M\) be the number of generations after which we stop the evolution of the TAG. In our practical implementation the crossover, mutation and selection operators have the time complexity lower than the fitness function evaluation complexity. Under these circumstances, our algorithm \(EATAG_p\) has the time complexity \(O(M \cdot (\mu + \lambda) \cdot Time(f))\), where \(\mu\) and \(\lambda\) are as specified in the definition of an EA, and \(Time(f)\) is the time complexity of the fitness function. During our tests we started with \(O(n^3)\) time complexity for the fitness function, then we reduced it to \(O(n^2)\), but the best results were obtained with a linear fitness function.

4.3 Running Examples

For tests we used the TAG \(T = (\{a\}, \{S\}, \{\alpha_1 : S\{NA\}[a S[a]], \alpha_2 : S\{NA\}[b S[b]]\}, \{\beta_1 : S\{NA\}[a S\{NA\} * a]], \beta_2 : S\{NA\}[b S\{NA\} * b]]\}, S)\) which generates the copy language \(\{ww|w \in \{a,b\}^*\}\) (see Figure 2).
Table 1: Results of tests of \textit{EATAG}p.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GEN</th>
<th>Max</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>GEN</th>
<th>Max</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Min</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6.27</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6.33</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7.13</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6.93</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7.40</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8.20</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7.87</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8.73</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8.67</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9.07</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11.20</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9.20</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11.20</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9.53</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>16</td>
<td>11.20</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9.73</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>16</td>
<td>12.80</td>
<td>9</td>
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<td>11.80</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15.47</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>11.93</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Table 2: Comparative tests for classical TAG parsing and \textit{EATAG}p parsing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>First example len(input)=16</th>
<th>Second example len(input)=20</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Computations</td>
<td>Computations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>classical</td>
<td>827,787</td>
<td>2,153,088</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>\textit{EATAG}p</td>
<td>268,886.3</td>
<td>661,745.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ \alpha_1 : S^{NA} \]
\[ \alpha_2 : S^{NA} \]
\[ \beta_1 : S^{NA} \]
\[ \beta_2 : S^{NA} \]

\begin{align*}
\alpha_1 : S^{NA} & \quad \alpha_2 : S^{NA} \\
\beta_1 : S^{NA} & \quad \beta_2 : S^{NA} \\
\end{align*}

Figure 2: The TAG \( T \) generating the copy language.

To explain better the decoding algorithm, we illustrate it on an specific example. For the grammar mentioned above and for the input string \( is = "aaaabbbbaabbbabb" \), \( len(is) = 20 \), and the number of initial 5-rooted trees is 2. Moreover, we have the following randomly generated sequence of genes: 113, 110, 248, 173, 119,…. According to the decoding algorithm’s line 2, \( gene[0] = 113 \), and the \( evolvedTree \) is \( "S\{NA\}[b S\{NA\}[a S\{NA\}[b a]]" \). Since the length of the yield of the \( evolvedTree \) is less than 20, the algorithm continues with the while loop (code line 3). Next, \( n_{max} \) is 1, and here due to the optimization of genes’ usage we do not increment the genes’ counter as described in code line 4. The \texttt{adjNode} position is 8 (strings’ index starts from 0), \texttt{adjNode.Label} is \( S \), \( n_{max} \) is 2, \( gene[1]=248 \), and the \texttt{insertedTree} is \( "S\{NA\}[a S\{NA\}[a S\{NA\}[a]]" \). Moreover, we have \( p_1 = 8 \), \( p_2 = 13 \), \( t_1 = "S\{NA\}[b a]" \), \( t_2 = "S\{NA\}[a S\{NA\}]" \), \( t_3 = "[b \_]" \), \( t_4 = "[a \_]" \), \( t_5 = "[a \_]" \), and hence we get the \texttt{evolvedTree} \( "S\{NA\}[b S\{NA\}[a S\{NA\}[b a]]" \). The evolution cycle continues generating more \texttt{evolvedTree} values until we stop because the length of the yield of the last derived evolved tree (“baabbbbaabaabbbbaaaa”) was 20.

Now that we explained how our algorithm works, we turn our attention to the study of the behavior of \textit{EATAG}p (in terms of computations) for two input strings, and then we present a comparison of the obtained results with the ones from the classical parsing algorithm for TAGs (Joshi and Schabes, 1997, p.102). The tests were done for the input strings “aaaabbbbaabbbabb” and “aaaabbbbaabbbabbabba” having the lengths 16 and 24, respectively.

We used an EA with 15 individuals as the population size, each having 20 genes with values between 0 and 255 (one byte). We considered the linear fitness function as the maximum length of matching characters between the input string and the yield of the derived tree.

Table 1 summarizes the results of the runs, where \texttt{GEN} is the number of the generation, \( is \) represents the input string, and Max, Average and Min, respectively, are the best, the average and the worst, respectively, fitness function’s values of individuals during one generation.

Let us now compare \textit{EATAG}p and the classical TAG parsing. It is well known that theoretically, the classical algorithm for parsing TAGs has the worst case complexity \( O(n^6) \). For many examples it does...
not reach the worst case, and we believe that the comparison of the results of the two parsing algorithms for an average behavior will be more appropriate. On the other hand, even if the EA uses a linear fitness function, the number of generations multiplied with the number of individuals in the population could lead to a significant volume of computations while solving the parsing problem.

To make those comparisons, we used a rather empirical method to measure the number of computations. In every cycle we incremented a global variable called $computations$. We estimated the number of computations for both algorithms using the same input string. One may argue that other comparing methods could be considered (e.g., measuring the necessary time until finding the solution) but since we made the implementations in two different programming environments (VBA and Java), the running time would have been influenced by other aspects, not only by the complexity of the algorithms. By taking again the two input samples “aaaabbbbaaaabbbaa” and “aaaaabbbbaaaabbbaabb” having the length 16 and 20, respectively, we needed for the classical TAG parsing algorithm only one run to determine the number of computations for each input example, while for $EATAG_F$ we obtained the average result after ten tests. All the results are synthesized in Table 2.

5 CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE WORK

We proposed an evolutionary algorithm for tree adjoining grammars’ parsing called $EATAG_F$. After some preliminary tests, we observed that the classical tree adjoining grammar parsing algorithm needs approximatively three times more computations than our algorithm to solve the same problem. Maybe it is worthy to do more tests and further investigate under what circumstances it performs better. If a conjecture can be outlined or what improvements can be added. We believe that our algorithm can be a turning point in developing new models for knowledge base representation systems or automatic text summarization, for example.

As a drawback, for some examples $EATAG_F$ will not be able to say that there is no solution. We could have some doubts that we did not let the algorithm to run enough generations, but in any case, we could run tests for other examples, and we could approximate the requested number of generations required to find a solution for certain lengths of the input strings. This will be done in the future.

Another intriguing aspect of $EATAG_F$ is that if the grammar is ambiguous, we could find different parsings for different individuals in the population during one run for the same input string.

To conclude, we believe that our research could be a starting point for developing new and more efficient TAG parsing algorithms.

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