Limited Automata and Context-Free Languages

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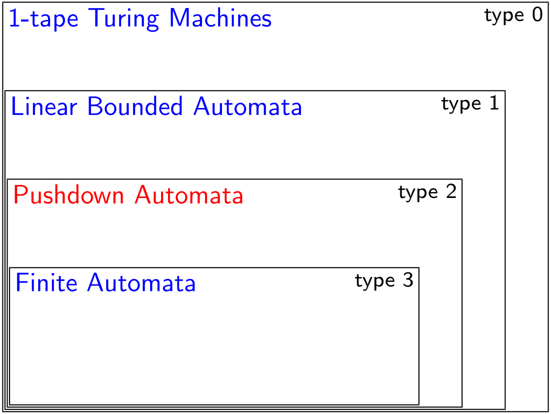
The Chomsky Hierarchy



Limited Automata [Hibbard'67]

One-tape Turing machines with restricted rewritings

Definition

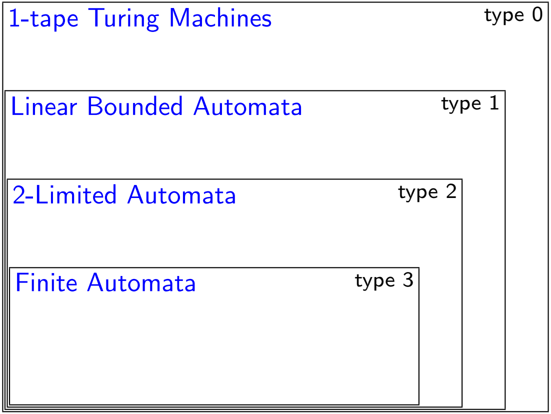
Fixed an integer $d \geq 1$, a *d-limited automaton* is

- a one-tape Turing machine
- which is allowed to rewrite the content of each tape cell *only in the first d visits*

Computational power

- For each $d \geq 2$, d-limited automata characterize context-free languages [Hibbard'67]
- 1-limited automata characterize regular languages [Wagner&Wechsung'86]

The Chomsky Hierarchy



Our Contributions

- 2-Limited Automata $\equiv$ Pushdown Automata:
  descriptional complexity point of view

2-LAs $\rightarrow$ PDAs

Exponential gap

PDAs $\rightarrow$ 2-LAs

Polynomial upper bound

- Determinism vs Nondeterminism

Deterministic Context-Free Languages $\equiv$ *Deterministic 2-LAs*

Example: Balanced Parentheses

$\triangleright$	(	)	(	(	(	)	)	)	$\triangleleft$

(i) Move to the right to search a closed parenthesis

(ii) Rewrite it by $\#$

(iii) Move to the left to search an open parenthesis

(iv) Rewrite it by $\#$

(v) Repeat from the beginning

Special cases:

(i') If in (i) the right end of the tape is reached then scan all the tape and *accept* iff all tape cells contain $\#$

(iii') If in (iii) the left end of the tape is reached then *reject*

Each cell is rewritten only in the first 2 visits!

Simulation of 2-Limited Automata by Pushdown Automata

Problem

How much it costs, in the description size, the simulation of 2-LAs *by* PDAs*?*

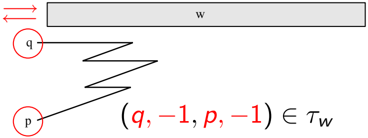
This work

Exponential cost!

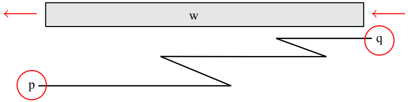
Transition Tables of 2-LAs

- Fixed a 2-limited automaton
- *Transition table* τ_w $\qquad$ w is a "frozen" string

$$\tau_w \subseteq Q \times \{-1,+1\} \times Q \times \{-1,+1\}$$



$(q, -1, p, -1) \in \tau_w$



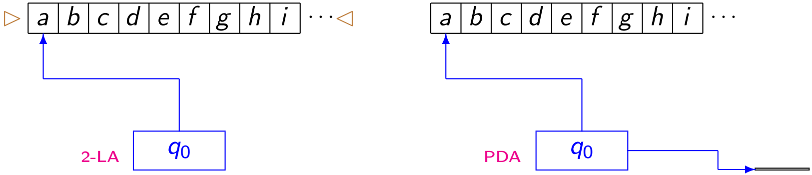
$(q, +1, p, -1) \in \tau_w$

$(q, d', p, d'') \in \tau_w$ iff M on a tape segment containing w has a computation path:

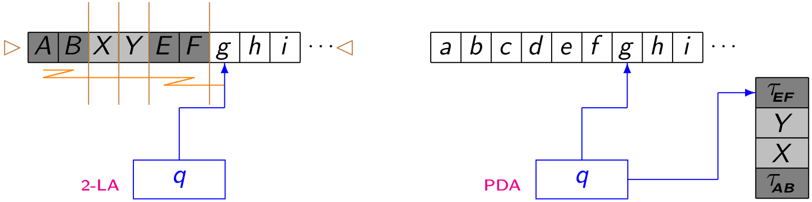
- entering the segment in q from d'
- exiting the segment in p from d''
- left $= -1$, right $= +1$

Simulation of 2-LAs by PDAs

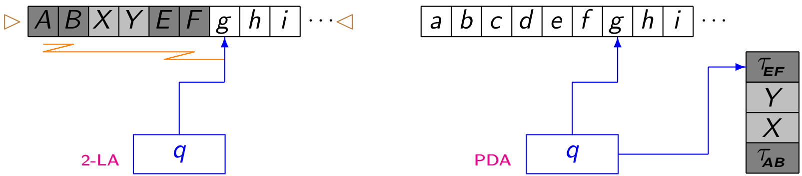
Initial configuration



After some steps...



Simulation of 2-LAs by PDAs



$\delta(q, g) \ni (p, Z, +1)$

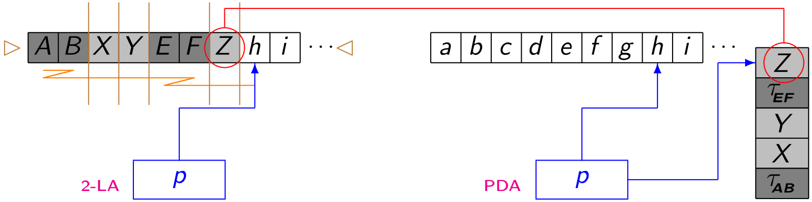
move to the right

$\Downarrow$

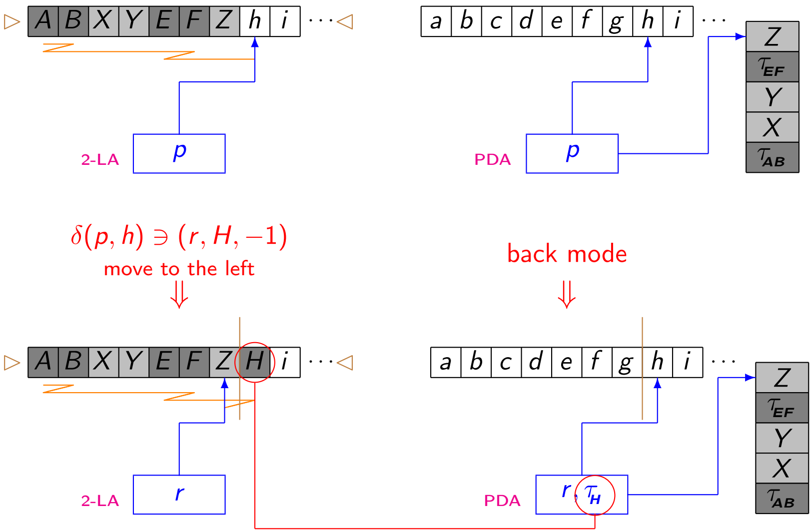
normal mode

push and direct simulation

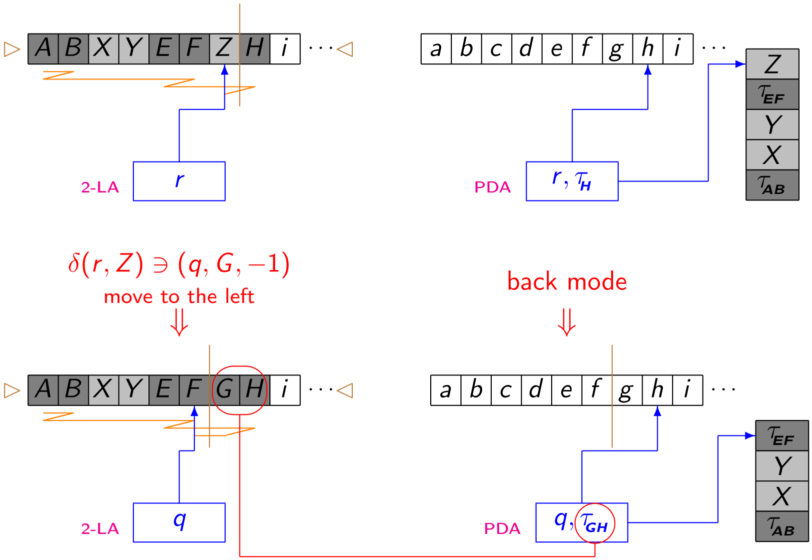
$\Downarrow$



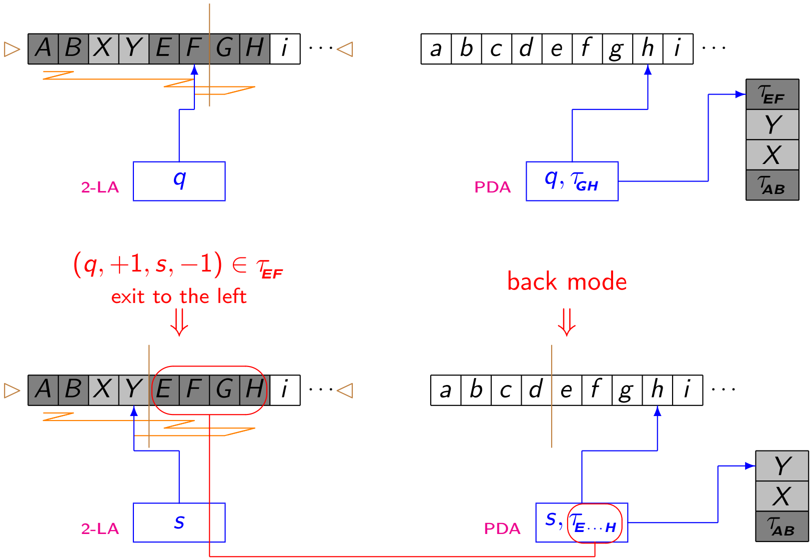
Simulation of 2-LAs by PDAs



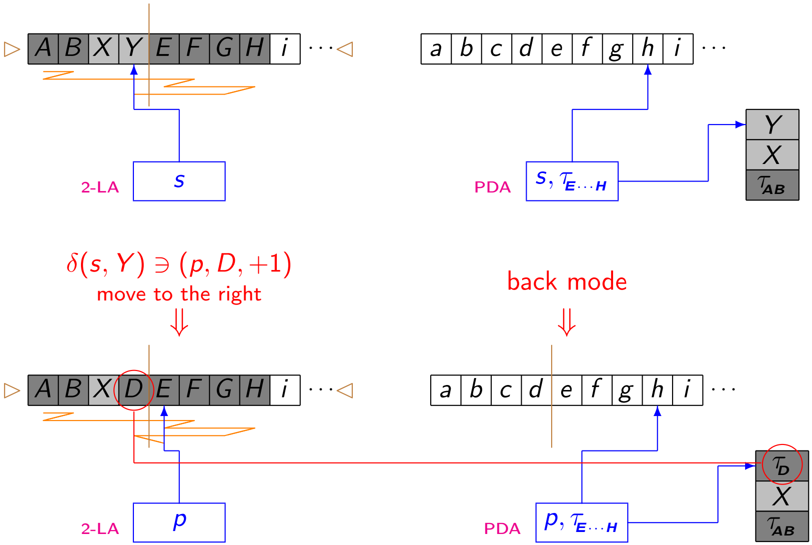
Simulation of 2-LAs by PDAs



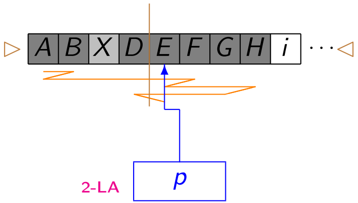
Simulation of 2-LAs by PDAs

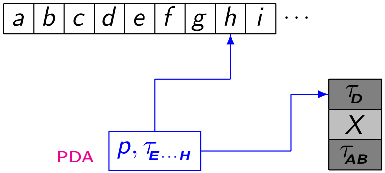


Simulation of 2-LAs by PDAs



Simulation of 2-LAs by PDAs





$(p, -1, r, +1) \in \mathcal{T}_{E\cdots H}$

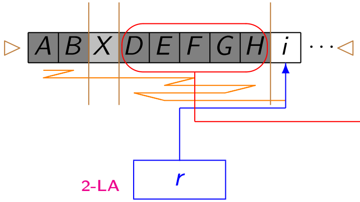
exit to the right

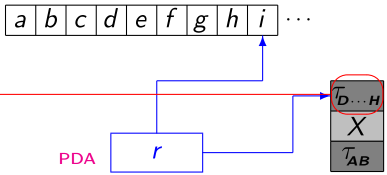
$\Downarrow$

resume normal mode

move to the right

$\Downarrow$





Cost of the simulation

- In the resulting PDA transition tables are used for
  - states
  - pushdown alphabet
- *Exponential upper bound* for the size of the resulting PDA
- Optimal

Determinism vs nondeterminism

- Determinism is preserved by the simulation
  provided that the input of the PDA *is right end-marked*
- *Double exponential* size for the simulation of D2-LAs by DPDAs
- Conjecture: this cost cannot be reduced

Simulation of Pushdown Automata by 2-Limited Automata

PDAs $\rightarrow$ 2-LAs

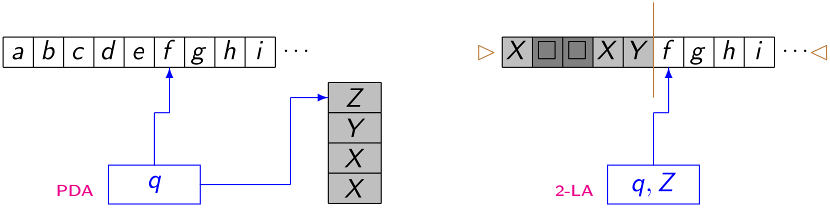
Polynomial cost!

DPDAs $\rightarrow$ D2-LAs

Polynomial cost!

(in the description size)

Simulation of PDAs by 2-LAs



Normal form for (D)PDAs:

- at each step, the stack height increases at most by 1
- ϵ-moves cannot push on the stack

Each (D)PDA can be simulated by an equivalent (D)2-LA of polynomial size

Determinism vs Nondeterminism in Limited Automata

Corollary of the simulations

Deterministic 2-LAs $\equiv$ Deterministic Context-Free Languages

On the other hand, the language

$$L = \{a^n b^n c \mid n \geq 0\} \cup \{a^n b^{2n} d \mid n \geq 0\}$$

is accepted by a *deterministic* 3-LA, but it is not a DCFL

Infinite hierarchy [Hibbard'67]

> *For each $d \geq 2$ there is a language which is accepted by a deterministic d-limited automaton and that cannot be accepted by any deterministic $(d-1)$-limited automaton*

Futher Investigations

- Descriptional complexity aspects for $d > 2$

  We conjecture that for $d > 2$ the size gap from d-limited automata to PDAs remains exponential

- Descriptional complexity aspects in the unary case
  - Unary context-free language are regular [Ginbsurg&Rice'62]
  - Ex: $L_n = (a^{2^n})^*$

	size
2-LA	$O(n)$
DPDA	$O(n)$
minimal DFA	2^n
minimal 2NFA	2^n

Thank you for your attention!