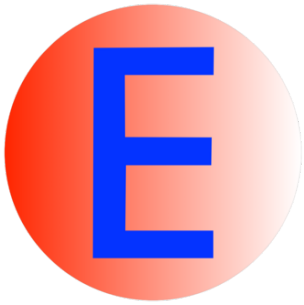


E 3.5

User Manual

–preliminary version–

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Abstract

E is an equational theorem prover for full first-order logic and monomorphic higher-order logic, based on superposition and rewriting. In this perpetually preliminary manual we first give a short introduction and basic usage information for new users, and then cover calculus and proof procedure. The manual also covers proof search control and related options, followed by input and output formats. Finally, it describes some additional tools that are part of the E distribution.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

This is a short and currently quite sketchy documentation of the equational theorem prover E. E is an purely equational theorem prover for full first-order logic with equality, and, as of E 3.0, for monomorphic higher-order logic. It is primarily based on paramodulation and rewriting. This means that E reads a set of formulas and/or clauses and saturates it by systematically applying a number of inference rules until either all possible (non-redundant) inferences have been performed or until the empty clause has been derived, i.e. the clause set has been found to be unsatisfiable and thus the conjecture has been proved.

Even after 20 years, E is still a moving target. However, most recent releases have been quite stable, and the prover is being used productively by several independent groups of people. This manual should enable you to experiment with the prover and to use some of its more advanced features. Be aware that it often lags behind the implementation. The ultimate reference is the source code. Also, the help page (produced `eprover -h` and equivalent to the UNIX man page delivered with the prover) is always an up-to-date documentation of the available command line options

The manual assumes a working knowledge of refutational theorem proving, which can be gained from e.g. [CL73]. The calculus is (mostly) a specialisation of superposition as described by Bachmair and Ganzinger [BG94].

The primary description of E has been published as [Sch02b], while the most recent published descriptions are [Sch13] (including the extension to many-sorted logic) and [SCV19] (including optional extension to LFHO and integration of PicoSAT). A more extensive description of the LFHO extension can be found in [VBCS19, VBCS21]. Extensions to full higher order logic are covered in [VBS23]. Most papers on E and much more information is available at or a few hops away from the E home page, `https://www.eprover.org`.

Some other provers have influenced the design of E and may be referenced in the course of this manual. These include SETHEO [MIL+97], Otter [McC94, MW97], SPASS [WGR96, WAB+99], DISCOUNT [DKS97], Waldmeister [HBF96, HJL99] and Vampire [RV02, RV01, KV13].

Chapter 2

Getting Started

Installation of E should be straightforward, but requires a standard UNIX/Linux build environment, including `/bin/sh`, `gcc` (or an equivalent compiler), and `make`. The file `README` (or, somewhat nicer, `README.md`) in the main directory of the distribution contains the necessary information. After configuring and building the system, you will find the stand-alone executable `E/PROVER/eprover`, or `E/PROVER/eprover-ho` if you configured the system with support for higher-order logic.

`--satauto`	Choose literal selection strategy, clause evaluation heuristic, term ordering and other search parameters automagically, based on problem features.
`--auto`	As `--satauto`, but add heuristic specification pruning using one of several instantiation of the SInE algorithm [HV11] for large specifications. This makes the prover potentially incomplete.
`--auto-schedule[=k]`	As `--auto`, but try not one, but several different strategies. If the optional argument is given, E will uses up to that number of cores to run the schedule in parallel.
`--memory-limit=xx`	Tell the prover how much memory (measured in MB) to use at most. In automatic mode E will optimize its behaviour for this amount (3 2 MB will work, 256 MB is reasonable, 1024 MB is what I use. *More is better*[1], but if you go over your physical memory, you will probably experience *very* heavy swapping.) Due to limitations of `rlim_t`, values over 2047 may not work on all platforms. If you have ab up-to-date machine and plan on running the prover for a few minutes at most, this has become a lot less critical than in the past.

Table 2.1: Suggested options for *automatic mode*

[1] Emphasis added for E 0.7 and up, which globally cache rewrite steps.

E is controlled by a very wide range of parameters. However, if you do not want to bother with the details, you can leave configuration for a problem to the prover. To use this feature, use the command line options from Table 2.1.

Example: If you happen to have a workstation with 64 MB RAM[2], the following command is reasonable:

```
eprover --auto --memory-limit=48 PUZ031-1+rm_eq_rstfp.lop
```

[2]Yes, this is outdated. If it still applies to you, get a new computer! It will still work ok, though.

Chapter 3

Calculus and Proof Procedure

E is a purely equational theorem prover, based on ordered paramodulation and rewriting. As such, it implements an instance of the superposition calculus described in [BG94]. We have added some stronger contraction rules and a more general approach to literal selection, and have also extended the calculus to simple, monomorphic many-sorted logic (in the sense of the TPTP-3 TFF format [SSCB12]).

The core proof procedure is a variant of the *given-clause* algorithm. However, before proof search in clause normal form (CNF) begins, various transformations can be applied to the input problem. In particular, E processes not only clausal problems, but can read full first order format, including a rich set of formula roles, logical operators and quantifiers. This format is reduced to clause normal form in a way that the CNF is unsatisfiable if and only if the original problem is provable (if an explicit *conjecture* is given) or itself unsatisfiable.

3.1 Calculus

We assume a finite set $S = \{S_i\}$ of *sorts* (or atomic types), with each sort interpreted by a non-empty domain disjoint from the domains of all other sorts. With each sort S_i we associate an enumerable set of variables V_{S_i}, with $V_S \cap V_T = \emptyset$ if $S \neq T$ (i.e. each variable has a unique sort). We assume at least two sorts, `$i` (individuals) and `$o` (truth values).

A *type* is a non-empty tuple $(S_1, \ldots, S_n, T)$ with $T \in S$ and $S_i \in S$ for all S_i. We usually write a type as $(S_1, \ldots, S_n) \to T$. The S_i are called *argument sorts* and T is called the *resulting sort*.

A signature F is a finite set of function symbols with associated types. We write $f : (S_1, \ldots, S_n) \to T$ to indicate that f is of type $(S_1, \ldots, S_n) \to T$.

$Term(F, V)$ denotes the set of (sorted first order) *terms* over F and V, defined as follows: $x \in V_{S_i}$ is a term of sort S_i. If $f : (S_1, \ldots, S_n) \to T$ is

a function symbol in F and $t_1, \ldots t_n$ are terms of sorts $S_1, \ldots S_n$, respectively, then $f(s_1, \ldots, s_n)$ is a term of sort T. We require that the $S_i \neq \$o$, and call function symbols with resulting type $\$o$ *predicate symbols*.

We write $t|_p$ to denote the subterm of t at a position p and write $t[p \leftarrow t']$ to denote t with $t|_p$ replaced by t'. An equation $s \simeq t$ is an (implicitly symmetrical) pair of terms (of the same sort). A positive literal is an equation $s \simeq t$, a negative literal is a negated equation $s \not\simeq t$. We write $s \dot{\simeq} t$ to denote an arbitrary literal.[1] Literals can be represented as multi-sets of multi-sets of terms, with $s \simeq t$ represented as $\{\{s\}, \{t\}\}$ and $s \not\simeq t$ represented as $\{\{s, t\}\}$. A *ground reduction ordering* $>$ is a Noetherian partial ordering that is stable w.r.t. the term structure and substitutions and total on ground terms. $>$ can be extended to an ordering $>_L$ on literals by comparing the multi-set representation of literals with $\gg\gg$ (the multi-set-multi-set extension of $>$).

Clauses are multi-sets of literals. They are usually represented as disjunctions of literals, $s_1 \dot{\simeq} t_1 \vee s_2 \dot{\simeq} t_2 \ldots \vee s_n \dot{\simeq} t_n$. We write $\mathit{Clauses}(F, P, V)$ to denote the set of all clauses with function symbols F, predicate symbols P and variables V. If $\mathcal{C}$ is a clause, we denote the (multi-)set of positive literals in $\mathcal{C}$ by $\mathcal{C}^+$ and the (multi-)set of negative literals in $\mathcal{C}$ by $\mathcal{C}^-$ We extend $>_L$ to clauses by defining $>_C = >_L >_L$, i.e. we compare clauses as multi-sets of literals.

We write $s[t \leftarrow t']$ to denote the term s in which every occurrence of the subterm t has been replaced by t'. We extend this notion to literals and clauses (i.e. $C[t \leftarrow t']$ is the clause C in which all occurrences of t have been replaced by t').

A *substitution* is a function $\sigma : V \rightarrow \mathit{Term}(F, V)$ with the properties that $|\{x \in V \mid \sigma(x) \neq x\}| \in \mathbb{N}$ (i.e. only finitely many variables are substituted) and that x and $\sigma(x)$ are terms of the same sort for all $x \in V$. Substitutions are extended to literals and clauses in the obvious way. A *most general unifier* of two terms s and t is a substitution σ with $\sigma(s) = \sigma(t)$ and with the property that no other unifier is more general than σ. If the *mgu* of two terms exists, it is unique up to variable renaming, so we usually speak of *the* most general unifier of two terms and denote it by $\mathit{mgu}(s, t)$.

In the following, most inferences between clauses are performed at particular literals of the clauses. Inference literals can be determined the term ordering, or, sometimes, by *selection*. The introduction of an extended notion of *literal selection* has improved the performance of E significantly. The necessary concepts are explained in the following.

Definition 3.1.1 (Selection functions)
$\mathit{sel} : \mathit{Clauses}(F, P, V) \rightarrow \mathit{Clauses}(F, P, V)$ is a *selection function*, if it has the following properties for all clauses $\mathcal{C}$:

[1] Non-equational literals are encoded as equations or disequations $P(t_1, \ldots, t_n) \dot{\simeq} \top$, where the resulting sort of P and $\top$ is $\$o$.

In other words, we treat predicate symbols as special function symbols that can only occur at the top-most positions and demand that atoms (terms formed with a top predicate symbol) cannot be unified with a first-order variable, i.e. we treat normal terms and predicate terms as disjoint sorts. We sometimes write the literal $P(t_1, \ldots, t_n) \simeq \top$ as $P(t_1, \ldots, t_n)$ and $P(t_1, \ldots, t_n) \not\simeq \top$ as $\neg P(t_1, \ldots, t_n)$ for simplicity.

- $sel(\mathcal{C}) \subseteq \mathcal{C}$.
- If $sel(\mathcal{C}) \cap \mathcal{C}^- = \emptyset$, then $sel(\mathcal{C}) = \emptyset$.

We say that a literal $\mathcal{L}$ is *selected* (with respect to a given selection function) in a clause $\mathcal{C}$ if $\mathcal{L} \in sel(\mathcal{C})$. ◀

We will use two kinds of restrictions on deducing new clauses: One induced by ordering constraints and the other by selection functions. We combine these in the notion of *eligible literals*.

Definition 3.1.2 (Eligible literals)
Let $\mathcal{C} = \mathcal{L} \vee \mathcal{R}$ be a clause, let σ be a substitution and let *sel* be a selection function.

- We say $\sigma(\mathcal{L})$ is *eligible for resolution* if either
  - $sel(\mathcal{C}) = \emptyset$ and $\sigma(\mathcal{L})$ is $>_L$-maximal in $\sigma(\mathcal{C})$ or
  - $sel(\mathcal{C}) \neq \emptyset$ and $\sigma(\mathcal{L})$ is $>_L$-maximal in $\sigma(sel(\mathcal{C}) \cap \mathcal{C}^-)$ or
  - $sel(\mathcal{C}) \neq \emptyset$ and $\sigma(\mathcal{L})$ is $>_L$-maximal in $\sigma(sel(\mathcal{C}) \cap \mathcal{C}^+)$.
- $\sigma(\mathcal{L})$ is *eligible for paramodulation* if $\mathcal{L}$ is positive, $sel(\mathcal{C}) = \emptyset$ and $\sigma(\mathcal{L})$ is strictly $>_L$-maximal in $\sigma(\mathcal{C})$.

◀

The calculus is represented in the form of inference rules. For convenience, we distinguish two types of inference rules. For *generating* inference rules, written with a single line separating preconditions and results, the result is added to the set of all clauses. For *contracting* inference rules, written with a double line, the result clauses are substituted for the clauses in the precondition. In the following, u, v, s and t are terms, σ is a substitution and R, S and T are (partial) clauses. p is a position in a term and λ is the empty or top-position. $D \subseteq F$ is a set of unused constant predicate symbols. Different clauses are assumed to not share any common variables.

Definition 3.1.3 (The inference system SP)
Let $>$ be a total simplification ordering (extended to orderings $>_L$ and $>_C$ on literals and clauses), let *sel* be a selection function, and let D be a set of fresh propositional constants. The inference system **SP** consists of the following inference rules:

- *Equality Resolution*:

$$\text{(ER)}\ \frac{u \not\simeq v \vee R}{\sigma(R)}$$

if $\sigma = mgu(u, v)$ and $\sigma(u \not\simeq v)$ is eligible for resolution.

- *Superposition into negative literals*:

$$\text{(SN)}\quad \frac{s \simeq t \vee S \quad u \not\simeq v \vee R}{\sigma(u[p \leftarrow t] \not\simeq v \vee S \vee R)}$$

if $\sigma = mgu(u|_p, s)$, $\sigma(s) \not\preceq \sigma(t)$, $\sigma(u) \not\preceq \sigma(v)$, $\sigma(s \simeq t)$ is eligible for paramodulation, $\sigma(u \not\simeq v)$ is eligible for resolution, and $u|_p \notin V$.

- *Superposition into positive literals*:

$$\text{(SP)}\quad \frac{s \simeq t \vee S \quad u \simeq v \vee R}{\sigma(u[p \leftarrow t] \simeq v \vee S \vee R)}$$

if $\sigma = mgu(u|_p, s)$, $\sigma(s) \not\preceq \sigma(t)$, $\sigma(u) \not\preceq \sigma(v)$, $\sigma(s \simeq t)$ is eligible for paramodulation, $\sigma(u \simeq v)$ is eligible for resolution, and $u|_p \notin V$.

- *Simultaneous superposition into negative literals*

$$\text{(SSN)}\quad \frac{s \simeq t \vee S \quad u \not\simeq v \vee R}{\sigma(S \vee (u \not\simeq v \vee R)[u|_p \leftarrow t])}$$

if $\sigma = mgu(u|_p, s)$, $\sigma(s) \not\preceq \sigma(t)$, $\sigma(u) \not\preceq \sigma(v)$, $\sigma(s \simeq t)$ is eligible for paramodulation, $\sigma(u \not\simeq v)$ is eligible for resolution, and $u|_p \notin V$.

This inference rule is an alternative to (SN). Note that the difference is that *every* occurrence of the subterm unified with the right-hand side of the rewriting clause is replaced by the (instance of) the left hand side in the (instance of) the clause that is rewritten. This single rule usually performs better than a sequence of conventional superpositions in practice.

- *Simultaneous superposition into positive literals*

$$\text{(SSP)}\quad \frac{s \simeq t \vee S \quad u \simeq v \vee R}{\sigma(S \vee (u \simeq v \vee R)[u|_p \leftarrow t])}$$

if $\sigma = mgu(u|_p, s)$, $\sigma(s) \not\preceq \sigma(t)$, $\sigma(u) \not\preceq \sigma(v)$, $\sigma(s \simeq t)$ is eligible for paramodulation, $\sigma(u \not\simeq v)$ is eligible for resolution, and $u|_p \notin V$.

This inference rule is an alternative to (SP) that performs better in practice. See the note on the previous rule.

- *Equality factoring*:

$$\text{(EF)}\quad \frac{s \simeq t \vee u \simeq v \vee R}{\sigma(t \not\simeq v \vee u \simeq v \vee R)}$$

if $\sigma = mgu(s, u)$, $\sigma(t) \not\succeq \sigma(s)$ and $\sigma(s \simeq t)$ eligible for paramodulation.

- *Rewriting of negative literals*:

$$\text{(RN)}\ \frac{s \simeq t \quad u \not\simeq v \vee R}{s \simeq t \quad u[p \leftarrow \sigma(t)] \not\simeq v \vee R} \qquad \text{if } u|_p = \sigma(s) \text{ and } \sigma(s) > \sigma(t).$$

- *Rewriting of positive literals*[2]:

$$\text{(RP)}\ \frac{s \simeq t \quad u \simeq v \vee R}{s \simeq t \quad u[p \leftarrow \sigma(t)] \simeq v \vee R} \qquad \text{if } u|_p = \sigma(s),\ \sigma(s) > \sigma(t), \text{ and if } u \simeq v \text{ is not eligible for paramodulation or } v > u \text{ or } p \neq \lambda.$$

- *Clause subsumption*:

$$\text{(CS)}\ \frac{C \quad \sigma(C \vee R)}{C} \qquad \text{where } C \text{ and } R \text{ are arbitrary (partial) clauses and } \sigma \text{ is a substitution.}$$

- *Equality subsumption*:

$$\text{(ES)}\ \frac{s \simeq t \quad u[p \leftarrow \sigma(s)] \simeq u[p \leftarrow \sigma(t)] \vee R}{s \simeq t}$$

- *Positive simplify-reflect*[3]:

$$\text{(PS)}\ \frac{s \simeq t \quad u[p \leftarrow \sigma(s)] \not\simeq u[p \leftarrow \sigma(t)] \vee R}{s \simeq t \quad R}$$

- *Negative simplify-reflect*

$$\text{(NS)}\ \frac{s \not\simeq t \quad \sigma(s) \simeq \sigma(t) \vee R}{s \not\simeq t \quad R}$$

[2]A stronger version of (RP) is proven to maintain completeness for Unit and Horn problems and is generally believed to maintain completeness for the general case as well [Bac98]. However, the proof of completeness for the general case seems to be rather involved, as it requires a very different clause ordering than the one introduced [BG94], and we are not aware of any existing proof in the literature. The variant rule allows rewriting of maximal terms of maximal literals under certain circumstances:

$$\text{(RP')}\ \frac{s \simeq t \quad u \simeq v \vee R}{s \simeq t \quad u[p \leftarrow \sigma(t)] \simeq v \vee R} \qquad \text{if } u|_p = \sigma(s),\ \sigma(s) > \sigma(t) \text{ and if } u \simeq v \text{ is not eligible for paramdulation or } u \not> v \text{ or } p \neq \lambda \text{ or } \sigma \text{ is not a variable renaming.}$$

This stronger rule is implemented successfully by both E and SPASS [Wei99].

[3]In practice, this rule is only applied if $\sigma(s)$ and $\sigma(t)$ are $>$-incomparable – in all other cases this rule is subsumed by (RN) and the deletion of resolved literals (DR).

- *Tautology deletion*:

  (TD) $\dfrac{C}{}$ — if C is a tautology[4]

- *Deletion of duplicate literals*:

  (DD) $\dfrac{s \simeq t \vee s \simeq t \vee R}{s \simeq t \vee R}$

- *Deletion of resolved literals*:

  (DR) $\dfrac{s \not\simeq s \vee R}{R}$

- *Destructive equality resolution*:

  (DE) $\dfrac{x \not\simeq y \vee R}{\sigma(R)}$ — if $x, y \in V, \sigma = mgu(x, y)$

- *Contextual literal cutting*:

  (CLC) $\dfrac{\sigma(C \vee R \vee s \dot{\simeq} t) \qquad C \vee \overline{s \dot{\simeq} t}}{\sigma(C \vee R) \qquad\qquad C \vee \overline{s \dot{\simeq} t}}$ — where $\overline{s \dot{\simeq} t}$ is the negation of $s \dot{\simeq} t$ and σ is a substitution

  This rule is also known as *subsumption resolution* or *clausal simplification.*

- *Condensing*:

  (CON) $\dfrac{l_1 \vee l_2 \vee R}{\sigma(l_1 \vee R)}$ — if $\sigma(l_1) = \sigma(l_2)$ and $\sigma(l_1 \vee R)$ subsumes $l_1 \vee l_2 \vee R$

- *Introduce definition*[5]

  (ID) $\dfrac{R \vee S}{d \vee R \quad \neg d \vee S}$ — if R and S do not share any variables, $d \in D$ has not been used in a previous definition and R does not contain any symbol from D

[4] Current versions of E detect tautologies by checking if the ground-completed negative literals imply at least one of the positive literals, as suggested in [NN93].

[5] This rule is always exhaustively applied to any clause, leaving n split-off clauses and one final link clause of all negative propositions.

- *Apply definition*

$$\text{(AD)}\ \frac{\sigma(d \vee R) \quad R \vee S}{\sigma(d \vee R) \quad \neg d \vee S}$$

if σ is a variable renaming, R and S do not share any variables, $d \in D$ and R does not contain any symbol from D

We write $\mathbf{SP}(N)$ to denote the set of all clauses that can be generated with one generating inference from **SP** on a set of clauses N, $\mathcal{D}_{SP}$ to denote the set of all **SP**-derivations, and $\mathcal{D}_{\overline{SP}}$ to denote the set of all finite **SP**-derivations.

◀

As **SP** only removes clauses that are *composite* with respect to the remaining set of clauses, the calculus is complete. For the case of unit clauses, it degenerates into *unfailing* completion [BDP89] as implemented in DISCOUNT. E can also simulate the positive unit strategy for Horn clauses described in [Der91] using appropriate selection functions.

Contrary to e.g. SPASS, E does not implement special rules for non-equational literals or sort theories. Non-equational literals are encoded as equations and dealt with accordingly.

3.2 Preprocessing

Axiom Filtering

Real-life axiom sets have grown steadily over the last years. One increasing application for deduction is e.g. the answering of questions based on large common-sense ontologies. Such specifications can contain from several thousand to several million input axioms, only a small part of which are necessary for any given query.

To avoid swamping the inference engine with most likely irrelevant facts, E implements two different filtering mechanisms. Both start with the conjecture, select facts that are likely connected to the conjecture, and then recursively apply this process again.

- Classical *relevancy pruning* starts with the function and predicate symbols in the goal. Every axiom that shares such a symbol is considered relevant. Symbols in relevant axioms become relevant themselves. The process is then repeated for a selected number of iterations. The option `--rel-pruning-level` determines how many iterations are performed. Relevance pruning is complete in the non-equational case if allowed to reach a fixed point. It only provides a relatively coarse measure, however.

- More fine-grained control is offered by the SInE method [HV11]. SInE does not consider *all* symbols in already selected clauses and formulas to be relevant, but defines a *D-relation* that determines which symbols to consider relevant. E implements a frequency-based D-relation: in every

clause or formula, the least frequently occurring symbols are considered relevant.

SInE in E is controlled via the option `--sine`. It takes as its argument either the name of a predefined SInE filter specification, or a newly defined strategy. The default is equivalent to `--sine=Auto` and will automatically determine if axiom filtering should be applied, and if yes, which filter should be applied. Filter selection is based on a number of features of the problem specification, and on performance of different filters on the TPTP problem library.

A SInE-Filter for E is specified as follows:

```
<sine-filter> ::= GSinE(<g-measure>,
                        hypos|nohypos,
                        <benvolvence>,
                        <generosity>,
                        <rec-depth>,
                        <set-size>,
                        <set-fraction> [,
                        addnosymb|ignorenosymb])
```

- `<g-measure>` is the generality measure. Currently, `CountFormulas` and `CountTerms` are supported. The first considers a symbol more general than another if it occurse in more formulas. The second counts the number of subterms which contain the symbol as the top symbol.
- `hypos` or `nohypos` determines if clauses and formulas of type `hypothesis` are used as additional seeds for the analysis.
- `<benevolence>` is a floating point value that determines how much more general a function symbol in a clause or formula is allowed to be relative to the least general one to be still considered for the D-relation.
- `<generosity>` is an integer count and determines how many symbols are maximally considered for the D-relation of each clause or formula.
- `<rec-depth>` determines the maximal number of iterations of the selection algorithm.
- `<set-size>` gives an absolute upper bound for the number of clauses and formulas selected.
- `set-fraction` gives a relative size (which fraction of clauses/formulas) will be at most selected
- Finally, the optional last argument determines if clauses or formulas which do not contain any function- or predicate symbols pass the filter. This is a rare occurence, so the effect is minor in either case.

Clausification

E converts problems in full FOF into clause normal form using a slightly simplified version of the algorithm described by Nonnengart and Weidenbach [NW01]. E's algorithm has the following modifications:

- E supports the full set of first-order connectives defined in the TPTP-3 language.
- E is more eager about introducing definitions to keep the CNF from exponential explosion. E will introduce a definition for a sub-formula, if it can determine that it will be duplicated more than a given number of times in the naive output. The limit can be set with the option `--definitional-cnf`. E will reuse definitions generated for one input formula for syntactically identical formulae in other formulas with the same specification.
- E supports mini-scoping, but not the more advanced forms of Skolemization.

It is possible to use E as a clausifier only. When given the `--cnf` option, E will just perform clausification and print the resulting clause set.

Equational Definition unfolding

Equational definitions are unit clauses of the form $f(X_1, \ldots, X_n) = t$, where f does not occur in t, and all variables in t are also in f. In this case, we can completely replace all occurrences of f by the properly instantiated t. This reduces the size of the search space, but can increase the size of the input specification. In particular in the case of nested occurrences of f, this increase can be significant.

E controls equational definition unfolding with the following options:

`--eq-unfold-limit=<arg>` limits unfolding (and removing) of equational definitions to those where the expanded definition is at most the given limit bigger (in terms of standard term weight) than the defined term.

`--eq-unfold-maxclauses=<arg>` inhibits unfolding of equational definitions if the problem has more than the stated limit of clauses.

`--no-eq-unfolding` disables equational definition unfolding completely.

Presaturation Interreduction

If the option `--presat-simplify` is set, E will perform an inital interreduction of the clause set. It will exhaustively apply simplifying inferences by running its main proof procedure while disabling generating inferences.

Some problems can be solved purely by simplification, without the need for deducing new clauses via the expensive application of the generating inference rules, in particularly paramodulation/superposition. Moreover, exhaustive application of simplifying inferences can reduce redundancy in the specification

and allows all input clauses to be evaluated under the same initial conditions. On the down side, a complete interreduction of the input problem can take significant time, especially for large specifications.

3.3 Proof Procedure

Fig. 3.1 shows a (slightly simplified) pseudocode sketch of the quite straightforward proof procedure of E. The set of all clauses is split into two sets, a set `P` of *processed* clauses and a set `U` of *unprocessed* clauses. Initially, all input clauses are in in `U`, and `P` is empty. In its normal mode of operation, at each iteration of the look the algorithm selects a new clause (sometimes called the *given clause*) from `U`, simplifies it w.r.t. to `P`, then uses it to back-simplify the clauses in `P` in turn. It then performs equality factoring, equality resolution and superposition between the selected clause and the set of processed clauses. The generated clauses are simplified and added to the set of unprocessed clauses. The process stops when the empty clause is derived or no further inferences are possible.

The proof search is controlled by three major parameters: The term ordering (described in section 4.2), the literal selection function, and the order in which the `select` operation selects the next *given clause* to process.

E implements two different classes of term orderings, lexicographic term orderings and Knuth-Bendix orderings. A given ordering is determined by instantiating one of the classes with a variety of parameters (described in section 4.2).

Literal selection currently is done according to one of more than 50 predefined functions. Section 4.3 describes this feature.

Clause selection is determined by a heuristic evaluation function, which conceptually sets up a set of priority queues and a weighted round robin scheme that determines from which queue the next clause is to be picked. The order within each queue is determined by a priority function (which partitions the set of unprocessed clauses into one or more subsets) and a heuristic evaluation function, which assigns a numerical rating to each clause. Section 4.1 describes the user interface to this mechanism.

3.3.1 Propositional Reasoning

As of E 2.1, and with a more refined implementation in E 2.2, the prover supports efficient propositional reasoning by integrating PicoSAT [Bie08]. The prover periodically grounds all clauses in the proof state and encodes the set of ground clauses for the propositional solver. If the propositional solver finds a proof for unsatisfiability of the ground problem, Herbrand's theorem allow us to lift this to the first-order level. In the implementation, the prover extract the unsatisfiable core of the grounded clause set, retrieves the corresponding first-order clauses, and adds an suitable pseudo-inference to the first-order proof objects. A more detailed description is available in [Sch18].

See section 4.4 for options controlling this feature.

```
# Input:  Axioms in U, P is empty
while U ≠ ∅ begin
    # First check for propositional unsat (Section 3.3.1)
    if prop_trigger(U,P)
        if prop_unsat_check(U,P)
            SUCCESS, Proof found
    c := select(U)
    U := U \ {c}
    # Apply (RN), (RP), (NS), (PS), (CLC), (DR), (DD), (DE)
    simplify(c,P)
    # Apply (CS), (ES), (TD)
    if c is trivial or subsumed by P then
        # Delete/ignore c
    else if c is the empty clause then
        # Success:  Proof found
        stop
    else
        T := ∅ # Temporary clause set
        foreach p ∈ P do
            if p can be simplified with c
                P := P \ {p}
                U := U \ {d|d  is direct descendant of  p}
                T := T ∪ {p}
            done
        end
        P := P ∪ {c}
        T := T ∪ e-resolvents(c) # (ER)
        T := T ∪ e-factors(c) # (EF)
        T := T ∪ paramodulants(c,P) # (SN), (SP)
        T' := {}
        foreach p ∈ T do
            # Apply efficiently implemented subset of (RN),
            # (RP), (NS), (PS), (CLC), (DR), (DD), (DE)
            p := cheap_simplify(p, P)
            # Apply (TD) or efficient approximation of it
            if p is trivial
                # Delete/ignore p
            else
                T' := T' ∪ cheap_simplify(p, P)
            fi
        end
        U := U ∪ T'
    fi
end
# Failure:  Initial U is satisfiable, P describes model
```

Figure 3.1: Main proof procedure of E

Chapter 4

Controlling the Proof Search

This section describes some of the different options available to control the search of the main proof procedure. The three most important choice points in the proof search are the choice of *term ordering*, the selection of the *given clause* for any iteration of the main loop, and the (optional) selection of inference literals. In addition to these major choice points, there are a large number of additional selections of lesser, but not insigificant importance.

4.1 Search Control Heuristics

Search control heuristics define the order in which the prover considers newly generated clauses. A heuristic is defined by a set of *clause evaluation functions* and a selection scheme which defines how many clauses are selected according to each evaluation function. A clause evaluation function consists of a *priority function* and an instance of a generic *weight function*.

Priority functions

Priority functions define a partition on the set of clauses. A single clause evaluation consists of a priority (which is the first selection criteria) and an evaluation. Priorities are usually *not* suitable to encode heuristic control knowledge, but rather are used to express certain elements of a search strategy, or to restrict the effect of heuristic evaluation functions to certain classes of clauses. It is quite trivial to add a new priority function to E, so at any time there probably exist a few not yet documented here.

Syntactically, a large subset of currently available priority functions is described by the following rule:

```
<prio-fun> ::= PreferGroundGoals ||
```

```
PreferUnitGroundGoals ||
PreferGround ||
PreferNonGround ||
PreferProcessed ||
PreferNew ||
PreferGoals ||
PreferNonGoals ||
PreferUnits ||
PreferNonUnits ||
PreferHorn ||
PreferNonHorn ||
ConstPrio ||
ByLiteralNumber ||
ByDerivationDepth ||
ByDerivationSize ||
ByNegLitDist ||
ByGoalDifficulty ||
SimulateSOS||
PreferHorn||
PreferNonHorn||
PreferUnitAndNonEq||
DeferNonUnitMaxEq||
ByCreationDate||
PreferWatchlist||
DeferWatchlist
```

The priority functions are interpreted as follows:

`PreferGroundGoals:` Always prefer ground goals (all negative clauses without variables), do not differentiate between all other clauses.

`PreferUnitGroundGoals:` Prefer unit ground goals.

`PreferGround:` Prefer clauses without variables.

`PreferNonGround:` Prefer clauses with variables.

`PreferProcessed:` Prefer clauses that have already been processed once and have been eliminated from the set of processed clauses due to interreduction (forward contraction).

`PreferNew:` Prefer new clauses, i.e. clauses that are processed for the first time.

`PreferGoals:` Prefer goals (all negative clauses).

`PreferNonGoals:` Prefer non goals, i.e. facts with at least one positive literal.

`PreferUnits:` Prefer unit clauses (clauses with one literal).

`PreferNonUnits:` Prefer non-unit clauses.

`PreferHorn`: Prefer Horn clauses (clauses with no more than one positive literals).

`PreferNonHorn`: Prefer non-Horn clauses.

`ConstPrio`: Assign the same priority to all clauses.

`ByLiteralNumber`: Give a priority according to the number of literals, i.e. always prefer a clause with fewer literals to one with more literals.

`ByDerivationDepth`: Prefer clauses which have a short derivation depth, i.e. give a priority based on the length of the longest path from the clause to an axiom in the derivation tree. Counts generating inferences only.

`ByDerivationSize`: Prefer clauses which have been derived with a small number of (generating) inferences.

`ByNegLitDist`: Prefer goals to non-goals. Among goals, prefer goals with fewer literals and goals with ground literals (more exactly: the priority is increased by 1 for a ground literal and by 3 for a non-ground literal. Clauses with lower values are selected before clauses with higher values).

`ByGoalDifficulty`: Prefer goals to non-goals. Select goals based on a simple estimate of their difficulty: First unit ground goals, then unit goals, then ground goals, then other goals.

`SimulateSOS`: Use the priority system to simulate Set-Of-Support. This prefers all initial clauses and all Set-Of-Support clauses. Some non-SOS-clauses will be generated, but not selected for processing. This is neither well tested nor a particularly good fit with E's calculus, but can be used as one among many heuristics. If you try a pure SOS strategy, you also should set `--restrict-literal-comparisons` and run the prover without literal selection enabled.

`PreferHorn`: Prefer Horn clauses (note: includes units).

`PreferNonHorn`: Prefer non-Horn clauses.

`PreferUnitAndNonEq`: Prefer all unit clauses and all clauses without equational literal. This was an attempt to model some restricted calculi used e.g. in Gandalf [Tam97], but did not quite work out.

`DeferNonUnitMaxEq`: Prefer everything except for non-unit clauses with a maximal equational literal ("Don't paramodulate if it is to expensive"). See above, same result.

`ByCreationDate`: Return the creation date of the clause as priority. This imposes a FIFO equivalence class on clauses. Clauses generated from the same given clause are grouped together (and can be ordered with any evaluation function among each other).

`PreferWatchlist` Prefer clauses on the watchlist (see 4.5).

`DeferWatchlist` Defer clauses on the watchlist (see above).

Please note that careless use of certain priority functions can make the prover incomplete for the general case.

Generic Weight Functions

Generic weight functions are templates for functions taking a clause and returning a weight (i.e. an estimate of the usefulness) for it, where a lower weight means that the corresponding clause should be processed before a clause with a higher weight. A generic weight function is combined with a priority function and instantiated with a set of parameters to yield a clause evaluation function.

You can specify an instantiated generic weight function as described in this rule[1]:

```
<weight-fun> ::= Clauseweight '(' <prio-fun> ', <int>, <int>,
                                  <float> ')'                    ||
                 Refinedweight '(' <prio-fun> ', <int>, <int>,
                                   <float>, <float>, <float> ')' ||
                 Orientweight '(' <prio-fun>, <int>, <int>,
                                  <float>, <float>, <float> ')'  ||
                 Simweight '(' <prio-fun>, <float>, <float>,
                               <float>, <float> ')'              ||
                 FIFOWeight '(' <prio-fun> ')'                   ||
                 LIFOWeight '(' <prio-fun> ')'                   ||
                 FunWeight '(' <prio-fun> ', <int>, <int>,
                               <float>, <float>, <float>
                               (, <fun> : <posint> )* ')'        ||
                 SymOffsetWeight '(' <prio-fun> ', <int>, <int>,
                                     <float>, <float>, <float>
                                    (, <fun> : <int> )* ')'
```

`Clauseweight(prio, fweight, vweight, pos_mult)`: This is the basic symbol counting heuristic. Variables are counted with weight `vweight`, function symbols with weight `fweight`. The weight of positive literals is multiplied by `pos_mult` before being added into the final weight.

`Refinedweight(prio, fweight, vweight, term_pen, lit_pen, pos_mult)`: This weight function is very similar to the first one. It differs only in that it takes the effect of the term ordering into account. In particular, the weight of a term that is maximal in its literal is multiplied by `term_pen`, and the weight of maximal literals is multiplied by `lit_pen`.

`Orientweight(prio, fweight, vweight, term_pen, lit_pen, pos_mult)`: This weight function is a slight variation of `Refinedweight()`. In this case,

[1] Note that there now are many additional generic weight functions not yet documented.

the weight of *both* terms of an unorientable literal is multiplied by a penalty `term_pen`.

`Simweight(prio, equal_weight, vv_clash, vt_clash, tt_clash)`: This weight function is intended to return a low weight for literals in which the two terms are very similar. It does not currently work very well even for unit clauses – RTFS (in `<che_simweight.c>`) to find out more.

`FIFOWeight(prio)`: This weight function assigns weights that increase in a strictly monotonic manner, i.e. it realizes a *first-in/first-out* strategy if used all by itself. This is the most obviously fair strategy.

`LIFOWeight(prio)`: This weight function assigns weights that decrease in a strictly monotonic manner, i.e. it realizes a *last-in/first-out* strategy if used all by itself (which, of course, would be unfair and result in an extremely incomplete prover).

`FunWeight(prio, fweight, vweight, term_pen, lit_pen, pos_mult, fun:fweight ...)`: This evaluation function is a variant of `Refinedweight`. The first 6 parameter are identical in meaning. The function takes an arbitrary number of extra parameters of the form `fun:fweight`, where `fun` is any valid function symbol, and `fweight` is a non-negative integer. The extra weight assignments will overwrite the default weight for the listed function symbol.

`SymOffsetWeight(prio, fweight, vweight, term_pen, lit_pen, pos_mult, fun:fweight ...)`: This evaluation function is similar to `FunWeight`. The first 6 parameter are identical in meaning. The extra arguments allow both positive and negative values, and are used as once-off weight modifiers added to the weight of all clauses that contain the defined symbol.

Example: (see next section for more context)

```
eprover -D "myfunw =
   FunWeight(ConstPrio,2,1,1,1,1,f:2,g:5,j:3,a:0,b:0)" ...
```

Clause Evaluation Functions

A clause evaluation function is constructed by instantiating a generic weight function. It can either be specified directly, or specified and immediately given a name for later reference :

```
<eval-fun>          ::= <ident>          ||
                        <weight-fun>     ||
                        <eval-fun-def>
<eval-fun-def>      ::= <ident> = <weight-fun>
<eval-fun-def-list> ::= <eval-fun-def>*
```

Of course a single identifier is only a valid evaluation function if it has been previously defined in a `<eval-fun-def>`. It is possible to define the value of an identifier more than once, in which case later definitions take precedence to former ones.

Clause evaluation functions can be be defined on the command line with the `-D` (`--define-weight-function`) option, followed by a `<eval-fun-def-list>`.

Example:

```
eprover -D"ex1=Clauseweight(ConstPrio,2,1,1) \
           ex2=FIFOWeight(PreferGoals)" ...
```

sets up the prover to know about two evaluation function `ex1` and `ex2` (which supposedly will be used later on the command line to define one or more heuristics). The double quotes are necessary because the brackets and the commas are special characters for most shells

There are a variety of clause evaluation functions predefined in the variable `DefaultWeightFunctions`, which can be found in `che_proofcontrol.c`. See also sections 4.5 and 4.6, which cover some of the more complex weight functions of E.

Heuristics

A heuristic defines how many selections are to be made according to one of several clause evaluation functions. Syntactically,

```
<heu-element>   ::= <int> '*' <eval-fun>||
                    <int> '.' <eval-fun>
<heuristic>     ::= '(' <heu-element> (,<heu-element>)* ')' ||
                    <ident>
<heuristic-def> ::= <ident> = <heuristic> ||
                    <heuristic>
```

As above, a single identifier is only a valid heuristic if it has been defined in `<heuristic-def>` previously (although a number of such named heuristics are predefined by the prover). A `<heuristic-def>` which degenerates to a simple heuristic defines a heuristic with name `Default` (which the prover will automatically choose if no other heuristic is selected with `-x` (`--expert-heuristic`). E allows both the multiplication operator (`*`) and a simple full stop to specify the weight given to a single evaluation function.[2]

Example: To continue the above example,

[2] `*` is the original syntax, but is hard to escape in some shells, especially if parameter are handed through several shell scripts.

```
eprover -D"ex1=Clauseweight(ConstPrio,2,1,1) \
           ex2=FIFOWeight(PreferGoals)"
        -H"new=(3*ex1,1*ex2)" \
        -x new LUSK3.lop
```

will run the prover on a problem file named LUSK3.lop with a heuristic that chooses 3 out of every 4 clauses according to a simple symbol counting heuristic and the last clause first among goals and then among other clauses, selecting by order of creation in each of these two classes.

4.2 Term Orderings

E currently supports two families of orderings: The *Knuth-Bendix-Ordering* (KBO), which is used by default, and the *Lexicographical Path Ordering* (LPO). The KBO is weight-based and uses a precedence on function symbols to break ties. Consequently, to specify a concrete KBO, we need a weight function that assigns a weight to all function symbols, and a precedence on those symbols.

The LPO is based on a lexicographic comparison of symbols and subterms, and is fully specified by giving just a precedence.

Currently it is possible to explicitly specify an arbitrary (including incomplete or empty) precedence, or to use one of several precedence generating schemes. Similarly, there is a number of predefined weight functions and the ability to assign arbitrary weights to function and predicate symbols.

The simplest way to get a reasonable term ordering is to specify *automatic* ordering selection using the `-tAuto` option.
Options controlling the choice of term ordering:

`-term-ordering=<arg>`
`-t<arg>` Select a term ordering class (or automatic selection). Supported arguments are at least `LPO`, `LPO4` (for a much faster new implementation of LPO), `KBO`, and `Auto`. If `Auto` is selected, all aspects of the term ordering are fixed, and additional options about the ordering will be (or at least should be) silently ignored.

`--order-precedence-generation=<arg>`
`-G <arg>` Select a precedence generation scheme (see below).

`--order-weight-generation=<arg>`
`-w <arg>` Select a symbol weight function (see below).

`--order-constant-weight=<arg>`
`-c <arg>` Modify any symbol weight function by assigning a special weight to constant function symbols.

`--precedence[=<arg>]`

Describe a (partial) precedence for the term ordering. The argument is a comma-separated list of precedence chains, where a precedence chain is a list of function symbols (which all have to appear in the proof problem), connected by `>`, `<`, or `=` (to denote equivalent symbols). If this option is used in connection with `--order-precedence-generation`, the partial ordering will be completed using the selected method, otherwise the prover runs with a non-ground-total ordering. The option without the optional argument is equivalent to `--precedence=` (the empty precedence). There is a drawback to using `--precedence`: Normally, total precedences are represented by mapping symbols to a totally ordered set (small integers) which can be compared using standard machine instructions. The used data structure is linear in the number n of function symbols. However, if `--precedence` is used, the prover allocates (and completes) a $n \times n$ lookup table to efficiently represent an arbitrary partial ordering. If n is very big, this matrix takes up significant space, and takes a long time to compute in the first place. This is unlikely to be a problem unless there are at least hundreds of symbols.

`--order-weights=<arg>`

Give explicit weights to function symbols. The argument syntax is a comma-separated list of items of the form `f:w`, where `f` is a symbol from the specification, and `w` is a non-negative integer. Note that at best very simple checks are performed, so you can specify weights that do not obey the KBO weight constraints. Behaviour in this case is undefined. If all your weights are positive, this is unlikely to happen.

Since KBO needs a total weight function, E always uses a weight generation scheme in addition to the user-defined options. You may want to use `-wconstant` for predictable behaviour.

`--lpo-recursion-limit[=<arg>]`
Limits the recursion depth of LPO comparison. This is useful in rare cases where very large term comparisons can lead to stack overflow issues. It does not change completeness, but may lead to unnecessary inferences in rare cases (Note: By default, recursion depth is limited to 1000. To get effectively unlimited recursion depth, use this option with an outrageously large argument. Don't forget to increase process stack size with `limit/ulimit` from your favourite shell).

4.2.1 Precedence Generation Schemes

Precedence generation schemes are based on syntactic features of the symbol and the input clause set, like symbol arity or number of occurrences in the formula. At least the following options are supported as argument to `--order-precedence-generation`:

`unary_first`: Sort symbols by arity, with the exception that unary symbols come first. Frequency is used as a tie breaker (rarer symbols are greater).

`unary_freq`: Sort symbols by frequency (rarer symbols are bigger), with the exception that unary symbols come first. Yes, this should better be named `unary_invfreq` for consistency, but is not...

`arity`: Sort symbols by arity (symbols with higher arity are larger).

`invarity`: Sort symbols by arity (symbols with higher arity are smaller).

`const_max`: Sort symbols by arity (symbols with higher arity are larger), but make constants the largest symbols. This is allegedly used by SPASS [Wei01] in some configurations.

`const_min`: Sort symbols by arity (symbols with higher arity are smaller), but make constants the smallest symbols. Provided for reasons of symmetry.

`freq`: Sort symbols by frequency (frequently occurring symbols are larger). Arity is used as a tie breaker.

`invfreq`: Sort symbols by frequency (frequently occurring symbols are smaller). In our experience, this is one of the best general-purpose precedence generation schemes.

`invfreqconstmin`: Same as `invfreq`, but make constants always smaller than everything else.

`invfreqhack`: As `invfreqconstmin`, but unary symbols with maximal frequency become largest.

4.2.2 Weight Generation Schemes

Weight generation schemes are based on syntactic features of the symbol and the input clause set, or on the predefined *precedence*. The following options are available for `--order-weight-generation`.

`firstmaximal0`: Give the same arbitrary (positive) weight to all function symbols except to the first maximal one encountered (order is arbitrary), which is given weight 0.

`arity`: Weight of a function symbol $f|_n$ is $n+1$, i.e. its arity plus one.

`aritymax0`: As `arity`, except that the first maximal symbol is given weight 0.

`modarity`: Weight of a function symbol $f|_n$ is $n+c$, where c is a positive constant (`W_TO_BASEWEIGHT`, which has been 4 since the dawn of time).

`modaritymax0`: As `modarity`, except that the first maximal symbol is given weight 0.

`aritysquared`: Weight of a symbol $f|_n$ is n^2+1.

`aritysquaredmax0`: As `aritysquared`, except that the first maximal symbol is given weight 0.

`invarity`: Let m be the largest arity of any symbol in the signature. Weight of a symbol $f|_n$ is $m-n+1$.

`invaritymax0`: As `invarity`, except that the first maximal symbol is given weight 0.

`invaritysquared`: Let m be the largest arity of any symbol in the signature. Weight of a symbol $f|_n$ is m^2-n^2+1.

`invaritysquaredmax0`: As `invaritysquared`, except that the first maximal symbol is given weight 0.

`precedence`: Let $<$ be the (pre-determined) precedence on function symbols F in the problem. Then the weight of f is given by $|\{g|g < f\}|+1$ (the number of symbols smaller than f in the precedence increased by one).

`invprecedence`: Let $<$ be the (pre-determined) precedence on function symbols F in the problem. Then the weight of f is given by $|g|f < g|+1$ (the number of symbols larger than f in the precedence increased by one).

`freqcount`: Make the weight of a symbol the number of occurrences of that symbol in the (potentially preprocessed) input problem.

`invfreqcount`: Let m be the number of occurrences of the most frequent symbol in the input problem. The weight of f is m minus he number of occurrences of f in the input problem.

`freqrank`: Sort all function symbols by frequency of occurrence (which induces a total quasi-ordering). The weight of a symbol is the rank of it's equivalence class, with less frequent symbols getting lower weights.

`invfreqrank`: Sort all function symbols by frequency of occurrence (which induces a total quasi-ordering). The weight of a symbol is the rank of its equivalence class, with less frequent symbols getting higher weights.

`freqranksquare`: As `freqrank`, but weight is the square of the rank.

`invfreqranksquare`: As `invfreqrank`, but weight is the square of the rank.

`invmodfreqrank`: Sort all function symbols by frequency of occurrence (which induces a total quasi-ordering). The weight of an equivalence class is the sum of the cardinality of all smaller classes (+1). The weight of a symbol is the weight of its equivalence classes. Less frequent symbols get higher weights.

`invmodfreqrankmax0`: As `invmodfreqrank`, except that the first maximal symbol is given weight 0.

`constant`: Give the same arbitrary positive weight to all function symbols.

4.2.3 Literal Comparison

By default, literals are compared as multisets of terms, as described in [BG94]. However, E also supports other ways to identify maximal literals, both weaker and potentially stronger.

The option `--restrict-literal-comparisons` makes all literals incomparable, i.e. all literals are potential inference literals (unless literal selection is activated - see 4.3. This will e.g. make the set-of-support strategy complete for the non-equational case. It may also make some proofs easier to find. On average, however, this can be expected to decrease performance.

The option `--literal-comparison=<arg>` allow the user to select alternative literal comparison schemes. In particular, literals will be first compared by predicate symbol, and only then by full terms. This is a poor man's version of transfinite KBO [LW07, KMV11], applied to literals only, but also extended to LPO. The argument can currently be:

`None`: This is equivalent to the older option `--restrict-literal-comparisons` described above.

`Normal`: This is the default, with literals being compared as multi-sets of the two terms of the (in E always) equational literal.

`TFOEqMax`: This compares literals by predicate symbol first, and only in the case of a tie by the multiset comparison of the two terms. In E, literals are always encoded as equational, but non-equational literals are marked accordingly. For `TFOEqMax`, equational literals are always larger than non-equational literals.

`TFOEqMin`: See the previous option. The only difference is that equational literals are always smaller than non-equational literals.

4.3 Literal Selection Strategies

The superposition calculus allows the *selection* of arbitrary negative literals in a clause and only requires generating inferences to be performed on these literals. E supports this feature and implements it via manipulations of the literal ordering. Additionally, E implements strategies that allow inferences into maximal positive literals and selected negative literals. A selection strategy is selected with the option `--literal-selection-strategy`. Currently, at least the following strategies are implemented:

`NoSelection`: Perform ordinary superposition without selection.

`NoGeneration`: Do not perform any generating inferences. This strategy is not complete, but applying it to a formula generates a normal form that does not contain any tautologies or redundant clauses.

`SelectNegativeLiterals`: Select all negative literals. For Horn clauses, this implements the maximal literal positive unit strategy [Der91] previously realized separately in E.

`SelectPureVarNegLiterals`: Select the first negative literal of the form $X \simeq Y$.

`SelectLargestNegLit`: Select the largest negative literal (by symbol counting, function symbols count as 2, variables as 1).

`SelectSmallestNegLit`: As above, but select the smallest literal.

`SelectDiffNegLit`: Select the negative literal in which both terms have the largest size difference.

`SelectGroundNegLit`: Select the first negative ground literal for which the size difference between both terms is maximal.

`SelectOptimalLit`: If there is a ground negative literal, select as in the case of `SelectGroundNegLit`, otherwise as in `SelectDiffNegLit`.

Each of the strategies that do actually select negative literals has a corresponding counterpart starting with `P` that additionally allows paramodulation into maximal positive literals[3].

Example: Some problems become a lot simpler with the correct strategy. Try e.g.

[3]Except for `SelectOptimalLit`, where the resulting strategy, `PSelectOptimalLit` will allow paramodulation into positive literals only if no ground literal has been selected.

```
eprover --literal-selection-strategy=NoSelection \
          GRP001-1+rm_eq_rstfp.lop
eprover --literal-selection-strategy=SelectLargestNegLit \
          GRP001-1+rm_eq_rstfp.lop
```

You will find the file `GRP001-1+rm_eq_rstfp.lop` in the `E/PROVER` directory.

As we aim at replacing the vast number of individual literal selection functions with a more abstract mechanism, we refrain from describing all of the currently implemented functions in detail. If you need information about the set of implemented functions, run `eprover -W none`. The individual functions are implemented and somewhat described in `E/HEURISTICS/che_litselection.h`.

4.4 Controling Propositional Reasoning

E now integrates the CDCL SAT solver (see section 3.3.1. Support for SAT checking is, so far, only marginally integrated into the automatic mode, but can be controlled by the user via the following command line options.

`--satcheck-proc-interval[=<arg>]`
: Enable periodic SAT checking at the given interval of main loop non-trivial processed clauses.

`--satcheck-gen-interval[=<arg>]`
: Enable periodic SAT checking whenever the total proof state size increases by the given limit.

`--satcheck-ttinsert-interval[=<arg>]`
: Enable periodic SAT checking whenever the number of term tops insertions matches the given limit (which grows exponentially).

`--satcheck[=<arg>]`
: Set the grounding strategy for periodic SAT checking. Note that to enable SAT checking, it is also necessary to set the interval with one of the previous two options.

`--satcheck-decision-limit[=<arg>]`
: Set the number of decisions allowed for each run of the SAT solver. If the option is not given, the built-in value is 10000. Use -1 to allow unlimited decision.

`--satcheck-normalize-const`
: Use the current normal form (as recorded in the termbank rewrite cache) of the selected constant as the term for the grounding substitution.

`--satcheck-normalize-unproc`
: Enable re-simplification (heuristic re-revaluation) of unprocessed clauses before grounding for SAT checking.

4.5 The Watchlist Feature

Since public release 0.81, E supports a *watchlist*. A watchlist is a user-defined set of clauses. Whenever the prover encounters[4] a clause that subsumes one or more clauses from the watchlist, those clauses are removed from it. The saturation process terminates if the watchlist is empty (or, of course, if a saturated state or the empty clause have been reached).

There are two uses for a watchlist: To guide the proof search (using a heuristic that prefers clauses on the watchlist), or to find purely constructive proofs for clauses on the watchlist.

If you want to guide the proof search, place clauses you believe to be important lemmata onto the watchlist. Also include the empty clause to make sure that the prover will not terminate prematurely. You can then use a clause selection heuristic that will give special consideration to clauses on the watchlist. This is currently supported via the *priority functions* `PreferWatchlist` and `DeferWatchlist`. A clause evaluation function using `PreferWatchlist` will always select clauses which subsume watchlist clauses first. Similarly, using `DeferWatchlist` can be used to put the processing of watchlist clauses off.

There is a predefined clause selection heuristic `UseWatchlist` (select it with `-xUseWatchlist`) that will make sure that watchlist clauses are selected relatively early. It is a strong general purpose heuristic, and will maintain completeness of the prover. This should allow easy access to the watchlist feature even if you don't yet feel comfortable with specifying your own heuristics.

To generate constructive proofs of clauses, just place them on the watch list and select output level 4 or greater (see section 6.3). Steps affecting the watch list will be marked in the PCL2 output file. If you use the *eproof* script for proof output or run *epclextract* on your own, subproofs for watchlist steps will be automatically extracted.

Note that this forward reasoning is not complete, i.e. the prover may never generate a given watchlist clause, even if it would be trivial to prove it via refutation.

Options controlling the use of the watch list:

`--watchlist=<arg>`	Select a file containing the watch list clauses. Syntax should be the same syntax as your proof problem (E-LOP, TPTP-1/2 or TPTP-3/TSTP). Just write down a list of clauses and/or formulas.
`--no-watchlist-simplification`	By default, watch list clauses are simplified with respect to the current set `P`. Use this option to disable the feature.

[4] Clauses are checked against the watchlist after normalization, both when they are inserted into `U` or if they are selected for processing.

4.6 Learning Clause Evaluation Functions

E can use a knowledge base generated by analyzing many successful proof attempts to guide its search, i.e. it can *learn* what kinds of clauses are likely to be useful for a proof and which ones are likely superfluous. The details of the learning mechanism can be found in [Sch00, Sch01]. Essentially, an inference protocol is analyzed, useful and useless clauses are identified and generalized into *clause patterns*, and the resulting information is stored in a knowledge base. Later, new clauses that match a pattern are evaluated accordingly.

Creating Knowledge Bases

An E knowledge base is a directory containing a number of files, storing both the knowledge and configuration information. Knowledge bases are generated with the tool `ekb_create`. If no argument is given, `ekb_create` will create a knowledge base called `E_KNOWLEDGE` in the current directory.

You can run `ekb_create -h` for more information about the configuration. However, the defaults are usually quite sufficient.

Populating Knowledge Bases

The knowledge base contains information gained from clausal PCL2 protocols of E. In a first step, information from the protocol is abstracted into a more compact form. A number of clauses is selected as training examples, and annotations about their role are computed. The result is a list of annotated clauses and a list of the axioms (initial clauses) of the problem. This step can be performed using the program `direct_examples`[5].

In a second step, the collected information is integrated into the knowledge base. For this purpose, the program `ekb_insert` can be used. However, it is probably more convenient to use the single program `ekb_ginsert`, which directly extracts all pertinent information from a PCL2 protocol and inserts it into a designated knowledge base.

The program `ekb_delete` will delete an example from a knowledge base. This process is not particularly efficient, as the whole knowledge base is first parsed.

Using Learned Knowledge

The knowledge in a knowledge base can be utilized by the two clause evaluation functions `TSMWeight()` and `TSMRWeight()`. Both compute a modification weight based on the learned knowledge, and apply it to a conventional symbol-counting base weight (similar to `Clauseweight()` for `TSMWeight()` and `Refinedweight()` for `TSMWeight()`. An example command line is:

```
eprover -x'(1*TSMWeight(ConstPrio, 1, 1, 2, flat, E_KNOWLEDGE,
100000,1.0,1.0,Flat,IndexIdentity,100000,-20,20,-2,-1,0,2))'
```

[5]The name is an historical accident and has no significance anymore

There are also two fully predefined learning clause selection heuristics. Select them with `-xUseTSM1` (for some influence of the learned knowledge) or `-xUseTSM2` (for a lot of influence of the learned knowledge).

4.7 Other Options

TBC - run `eprover --help` for a short overview.

Chapter 5

Input Language

E supports three different input formats and two different output formats. If no particular format is explicitly requested, E will determine the input format based on the first tokens of the input file and also select a matching output format.

5.1 LOP

E originally used E-LOP, a dialect of the LOP language designed for SETHEO. At the moment, your best bet is to retrieve the LOP description from the E web site [Sch22] and/or check out the examples available from it. LOP is very close to Prolog, and E can usually read many fully declarative Prolog files if they do not use arithmetic or rely on predefined symbols. Plain SETHEO files usually also work very well. There are a couple of minor differences, however:

- `equal()` is an interpreted symbol for E. It normally does not carry any meaning for SETHEO (unless equality axioms are added).
- SETHEO allows the same identifier to be used as a constant, a non-constant function symbol and a predicate symbol. E encodes all of these as ordinary function symbols, and hence will complain if a symbol is used inconsistently.
- E allows the use of `=` as an infix symbol for equality. `a=b` is equivalent to `equal(a,b)` for E.
- E does not support constraints or SETHEO built-in symbols. This should not usually affect pure theorem proving tasks.
- E normally treats procedural clauses exactly as it treats declarative clauses. Query clauses (clauses with an empty head and starting with `?-`, e.g. `?-~p(X), q(X).` can optionally be used to define the a set of *goal clauses*

(by default, all negative clauses are considered to be goals). At the moment, this information is only used for the initial set of support (with `--sos-uses-input-types`). Note that you can still specify arbitrary clauses as query clauses, since LOP supports negated literals.

5.2 TPTP-2 and TPTP-3 Formats

The TPTP [Sut09] is a library of problems for automated theorem prover. Problems in the TPTP are written in TPTP syntax. There are two major versions of the TPTP syntax, both of which are supported by E.

Version 2[1] of the TPTP syntax was used up for TPTP releases previous to TPTP 3.0.0. The current version 3 of the TPTP syntax, described in [SSCG06], covers both input problems and both proof and model output using one consistent formalism. It has been used as the native format for TPTP releases since TPTP 3.0.0.

Parsing in TPTP format version 2 is enabled by the options `--tptp-in`, `tptp2-in`, `--tptp-format` and `--tptp2-format`. The last two options also select TPTP 2 format for the output of normal clauses during and after saturation. Proof output will be in PCL2 format, however.

TPTP syntax version 3 [SSCG06, SSCB12] is the currently recommended format. It is supported by many provers, it is more consistent than the old TPTP language, and it adds a number of useful features. E supports TPTP-3 syntax with the options `--tstp-in` , `tptp3-in`, `--tstp-format` and `--tptp3-format`. The last two options will also enable TPTP-3 format for proof output. Note that many of E's support tools still require PCL2 format. Various tools for processing TPTP-3 proof format are available via the TPTP web-site, `http://www.tptp.org`.

In either TPTP format, clauses and formulas with TPTP type `conjecture`, `negated_conjecture`, or `question` (the last two in TPTP-3 only) are considered goal clauses for the `--sos-uses-input-types` option.

5.3 Higher-order extension

As part of the Matryoshka project (`http://matryoshka.gforge.inria.fr/`) E has been extended to optionally support lambda-free higher-order logic (LFHOL) and full monomorphic higher-order logic. The option can be enabled at compile time by passing `--enable-ho` to the `configure` script.

In this section we give a very short introduction to (LF)HOL syntax and semantics. Detailed description (which includes semantics) can be found in a paper by Bentkamp, Blanchette, Cruanes, and Waldmann [BBCW18], available at `http://matryoshka.gforge.inria.fr/pubs/lfhosup_report.pdf`. The implementation is described in [VBCS19, VBCS18].

[1] Version 1 allowed the specification of problems in clause normal form only. Version 2 is a conservative extension of version 1 and adds support for full first order formulas.

LFHOL extends FOL by allowing partial appliciation of function symbols as well as application of variables to other terms. Unlike other HOLs, there is no comprehension principle, and boolean formulae can only appear as atoms (not as arguments to other symbols). Quantification over booleans is not allowed. LFHOL is simply typed – each type is either atomic or a function type.

For E 2.3 and up, LFHOL formulas are expressed using a subset of TPTP THF syntax. From E 3.0, the prover supports full (monomorphic) higher-order logic. More precisely, E can parse and process a subset of THF syntax that is monomorphic, without the constants `!!` and `??`, and without anything else that will give you an error message. ;-)

As an example, LFHOL is expressive enough to reason about higher-order combinators such as map (pointwise application of a function to a list) or power (iterative application of a function).

The example problem `list.p` in the directory `EXAMPLE_PROBLEMS/LFHOL` shows how LFHOL features can be used to succintly express problems that have more verbose encodings in FOL.

To get a feeling for what is provable in LFHOL, consider the following example:

$$\exists h.\, \forall x\, y.\, h\, x\, y = \mathsf{f}\, y\, x$$

In most HOLs, this formula is provable, and the witness is the function $\lambda x\, y.\, \mathsf{f}\, y\, x$. In LFHOL, the function cannot be synthesized, so the proof can only be concluded if such a function is explicitly described in the axiomatization. This proof problem is also provdied in `EXAMPLE_PROBLEMS/LFHOL`, both with and without the axiom providing the permuting function.

Chapter 6

Output...or how to interpret what you see

E has several different output levels, controlled by the option `-l` or `--output-level`. Level 0 prints nearly no output except for the result. Level 1 is intended to give humans a somewhat readable impression of what is going on inside the inference engine. Levels 3 to 6 output increasingly more information about the inside processes in PCL2 format. At level 4 and above, a (large) superset of the proof inferences is printed. You can use the `epclextract` utility in `E/PROVER/` to extract a simple proof object.

In Level 0 and 1, everything E prints is either a clause that is implied by the original axioms, or a comment (or, very often, both).

6.1 The Bare Essentials

In silent mode (`--output-level=0`, `-s` or `--silent`), E will not print any output during saturation. It will print a one-line comment documenting the state of the proof search after termination. The following possibilities exist:

- The prover found a proof. This is denoted by the output string

  ```
  # Proof found!
  ```

- The problem does not have a proof, i.e. the specification is satisfiable (and E can detect this):

  ```
  # No proof found!
  ```

  Ensuring the completeness of a prover is much harder than ensuring correctness. Moreover, proofs can easily be checked by analyzing the output of the prover, while such a check for the absence of proofs is rarely possible.

I do believe that the current version of E is both correct and complete[1] but my belief in the former is stronger than my belief in the latter. . . ...

- A (hard) resource limit was hit. For memory this can be either due to a per process limit (set with `limit` or the prover option `--memory-limit`), or due to running out of virtual memory. For CPU time, this case is triggered if the per process CPU time limit is reached and signalled to the prover via a `SIGXCPU` signal. This limit can be set with `limit` or, more reliable, with the option `--cpu-limit`. The output string is one of the following two, depending on the exact reason for termination:

  ```
  # Failure: Resource limit exceeded (memory)
  # Failure: Resource limit exceeded (time)
  ```

- A user-defined limit was reached during saturation, and the saturation process was stopped gracefully. Limits include number of processed clauses, number of total clauses, and CPU time (as set with `--soft-cpu-limit`). The output string is

  ```
  # Failure: User resource limit exceeded!
  ```

  . . . and the user is expected to know which limit he selected.

- By default, E is *complete*, i.e. it will only terminate if either the empty clause is found or all clauses have been processed (in which case the processed clause set is satisfiable). However, if the option `--delete-bad-limit` is given or if automatic mode in connection with a memory limit is used, E will periodically delete clauses it deems unlikely to be processed to avoid running out of memory. In this case, completeness cannot be ensured any more. This effect manifests itself extremely rarely. If it does, E will print the following string:

  ```
  # Failure: Out of unprocessed clauses!
  ```

  This is roughly equivalent to Otter's `SOS empty` message.

- Finally, it is possible to chose restricted calculi when starting E. This is useful if E is used as a normalization tool or as a preprocessor or lemma generator. In this case, E will print a corresponding message:

  ```
  # Clause set closed under restricted calculus!
  ```

[1] Unless the prover runs out of memory (see below), the user selects an unfair strategy (in which case the prover may never terminate), or some strange and unexpected things happen.

6.2 Observing Saturation

If you run E without selecting an output level (or by setting it explicitly to 1), E will print each non-tautological, non-subsumed clause it processes as a comment. It will also print a hash ('`#`') for each clause it tries to process but can prove to be superfluous.

This mode gives some indication of progress, and as the output is fairly restricted, does not slow the prover down too much.

For any output level greater than 0, E will also print statistical information about the proof search and final clause sets. The data should be fairly self-explaining.

6.3 Inference Protocols

THIS FEATURE IS DEPREACIATED. SEE NEXT SECTION. At output levels greater that 1, E prints certain inferences in PCL2 format[2] or TPTP-3 output format. At level 2, it only prints generating inferences. At level 4, it prints all generating and modifying inferences, and at level 6 it also prints PCL/TPTP-3 steps that don't correspond to inferences, but give some insight into the internal operation of the inference engine. This protocol is fairly readable and, from level 4 on can be used to check the proof with the utility `checkproof` provided with the distribution.

Note that this feature has been replaced by the dynamic construction of proof objects, and is no longer actively maintained. As a result, strange things may happen, and newer inferences may not be supported at all. It's not (yet) been removed because some people still find it useful for debugging.

6.4 Proofs Objects

E 1.9 and later can internally record all necessary information for proof output. It makes use of the DISCOUNT loop property that only processed clauses (usually a small subset of all clauses in the search state) can ever participate in generating inferences or be used to simplify other clauses. For each clause, the system stores its origin (usually a generating inference and the parents), and a history of simplifications (inference rule and side premises). Only if a processed clause can be backward-simplified by a new clause, the original is archived and replaced by a simplified copy in the search state (which points to the original as its parent).

When the empty clause has been derived and hence a proof concluded, the proof tree is extracted by tracing the dependencies. Steps are topologically sorted, ensuring that all dependencies of a step are listed before it. The linearised proof can then be printed, either in TPTP-3 syntax, or in PCL2 syntax. The syntax is identical to the detailed proof output described in the previous

[2] PCL2 is a proof output designed as a successor to PCL [DS94a, DS94b, DS96].

Specification

```
fof(greeks, axiom, (philosopher(socrates)|philosopher(plato))).
fof(scot, axiom, (philosopher(hume))).
fof(phils_wise, axiom, (![X]:(philosopher(X) => wise(X)))).
fof(is_there_wisdom, question, (?[X]:wise(X))).
```

Answers (`eprover -s --answers`)

```
# SZS status Theorem
# SZS answers Tuple [[hume]|_]
# SZS answers Tuple [([socrates]|[plato])|_]
# Proof found!
```

Figure 6.1: Answer generation

section, and proof objects can typically be processed with the same tools as full inference protocols.

Proof-object generation and output are activated by `--proof-object`. The optional argument selects the level of detail. Level 1 (used if no argument is given) gives a compact proof object that lists each inference rule with its premises. At level 3, the clause after each simplification step (rewriting, unfolding, simplify-reflect, condensation, normalization, destructive equality resolution and clause splitting) is printed as well, so that every step is a separate inference. These additional clauses take no part in the proof search. Level 0 suppresses the proof object.

6.5 Answers

E supports the proposed TPTP standard for answers [SSSU]. An *answer* is an instantiation for an existential conjecture (or *query*) that makes the conjecture true. In practice, E will supply bindings for the outermost existentially quantified variables in a TPTP formula with type `question`.

The implementation is straightforward. The query is extended by adding the atomic formula `~$answer(new_fun(<varlist>))`, where `<varlist>` is the list of outermost existentially quantified variables. This atom is carried through clausification and ends up as a positive literal in the CNF. The literal ordering is automatically chosen so that the answer literal never participates in inferences. Semantically, the `$answer` predicate always evaluates to false. It is only evaluated in clauses where all literals are answer literals. Answers are extracted and printed in tuple form at the time of the evaluation. Figure 6.1 shows an example.

The system correctly handles disjunctive answers (at least one of `socrates` or `plato` is a philosopher and hence wise, but the theory does not allow us to decide who is). While the example has been kept intentionally simple, the system also supports complex terms and variables as parts of answers, in that case representing the set of all instances.

The `--answers=<x>` option controls the number of answers generated. By default, the prover terminates after the first successful proof, and thus only provides one answer. Using the option without an argument will make the prover search for `LONG_MAX` answers, i.e. a practically unlimited number. Using a positive integer argument limits the number of answers to the limit given.

The option `--conjectures-are-questions` will make the prover treat any formula of type `conjecture` as a question, not just formulas with explicit type `question`.

6.6 Requesting Specific Output

There are two additional kinds of information E can provide beyond the normal output during proof search: Statistical information and final clause sets (with additional information).

First, E can give you some technical information about the conditions it runs under.

The option `--print-pid` will make E print its process id as a comment, in the format `# Pid:  XXX`, where `XXX` is an integer number. This is useful if you want to send signals to the prover (in particular, if you want to terminate the prover) to control it from the outside.

The option `-R` (`--resources-info`) will make E print a summary of used system resources after graceful termination:

```
# User time                : 0.010 s
# System time              : 0.020 s
# Total time               : 0.030 s
# Maximum resident set size: 0 pages
```

Most operating systems do not provide a valid value for the resident set size and other memory-related resources, so you should probably not depend on the last value to carry any meaningful information. The time information is required by most standards and should be useful for all tested operating systems.

E can be used not only as a prover, but as a normalizer for formulae or as a lemma generator. In these cases, you will not only want to know if E found a proof, but also need some or all of the derived clauses, possibly with statistical information for filtering. This is supported with the `--print-saturated` and `--print-sat-info` options for E.

The option `--print-saturated` takes as its argument a string of letters, each of which represents a part of the total set of clauses E knows about. The following table contains the meaning of the individual letters:

`e` Processed positive unit clauses (*Equations*).

`i` Processed negative unit clauses (*Inequations*).

`g` Processed non-unit clauses (except for the empty clause, which, if present, is printed separately). The above three sets are interreduced and all selected inferences between them have been computed.

`E` Unprocessed positive unit clauses.

`I` Unprocessed negative unit clauses.

`G` Unprocessed non-unit clause (this set may contain the empty clause in very rare cases).

`a` Print equality axioms (if equality is present in the problem). This letter prints axioms for reflexivity, symmetry, and transitivity, and a set of substitutivity axioms, one for each argument position of every function symbol and predicate symbol.

`A` As `a`, but print a single substitutivity axiom covering all positions for each symbol.

The short form, `-S`, is equivalent to `--print-saturated=eigEIG`. If the option `--print-sat-info` is set, then each of the clauses is followed by a comment of the form `# info(id, pd, pl, sc, cd, nl, no, nv)`. The following table explains the meaning of these values:

`id` Clause ident (probably only useful internally)

`pd` Depth of the derivation graph for this clause

`pl` Number of nodes in the derivation grap

`sc` Symbol count (function symbols and variables)

`cd` Depth of the deepest term in the clause

`nl` Number of literals in the clause

`no` Number of variable occurences

`nv` Number of different variables

Chapter 7

Additional utilities

The E distribution contains a number of programs beyond the main prover. The following sections contains a short description of the programs that are reasonably stable. All of the utilities support the option `--help` to print a description of the operation and all supported options.

7.1 Common options

All major programs in the E distribution share some common options. Some more options are shared to the degree that they are applicable. The most important of these shared options are listed in Table 7.1.

7.2 Grounding: `eground`

The Bernays-Schönfinkel class is a decidable fragment of first-order logic. Problems from this class can be clausified into clause normal form without non-constant function symbols. This clausal class is *effectively propositional* (EPR), since the Herbrand universe is finite. The program `eground` takes a problem from the Bernays-Schönfinkel class, or an EPR clause normal form problem, and tries to convert it into an equisatisfiable propositional problem. It does so by clausification and instantiation of the the clausal problem. The resulting propositional problem can than be handed to a propositional reasoner (e.g. Chaff [MMZ+01] or MiniSAT [ES03]). One pre-packaged system build on this principles is GrAnDe [SS02].

`Eground` uses a number of techniques to reduce the number of instances generated. The technical background is described in [Sch02a]. The program can generate output in LOP, TPTP-2 and TPTP-3 format, but also directly in the DIMACS format used by many propositional reasoners.

A typical command line for starting `eground` is:

```
eground --tptp3-in --dimacs  --split-tries=1
```

`-h`
`--help`
: Print the help page for the program. This usually includes documentation for all options supported by the program.

`-V`
`--version`
: Print the version number of the program. If you encounter bugs, please check if updating to the latest version solves your problem. Also, always include the output of this with all bug reports.

`-v`
`--verbose[=level]`
: Make the program more verbose. Verbose output is written to `stterr`, not the standard output, and will cover technical aspects. Most programs support verbosity levels 0 (the default), 1, and 2, with `-v` selecting level 1.

`-s`
`--silent`
: Reduce output of the tool to a minimal.

`-o<outfile>`
`--output-file=<outfile>`
: By default, most of the programs in the E distribution provide output to `stdout`, i.e. usually to the controlling terminal. This option allows the user to specify an output file.

`--tptp2-in`
`--tptp2-out`
`--tptp2-format`
`--tptp3-in`
`--tptp3-out`
`--tptp3-format`
: Select TPTP formats for input and/or output. If you do not start with an existing corpus, the recommended format is TPTP-3 syntax.

Figure 7.1: Common program options

```
--constraints <infile> -o <outfile>
```

7.3 Rewriting: `enormalizer`

The program `enormalizer` uses E's shared terms, cached rewriting, and indexing to implement an efficient normalizer. It reads a set of rewrite rules and computes the normal forms of a set of terms, clauses and formulas with respect to that set of rewrite rules.

The rule set can be specified as a set of positive unit clauses and/or formulas that clausify into unit clauses. Literals are taken as rewrite rules with the orientation they are specified in the input. In particular, no term ordering is applied, and neither termination nor confluence are ensured or verified. The rewrite rules are applied exhaustively, but in an unspecified order. Subterms are normalized in strict leftmost/innermost manner. In particular, all subterms are normalized before a superterm is rewritten.

Supported formats are LOP, TPTP-2 and TPTP-3.

A typical command line for starting `enormalizer` is:

```
enormalizer --tptp3-in <rulefile> -t<termfile>
```

7.4 Multiple queries: `e_ltb_runner`

E is designed to handle individual proof problems, one at a time. The prover has mechanism to handle even large specifications. However, in cases where multiple queries or conjectures are posed against a large background theory, even the parsing of the background theory may take up significant time. `E_ltb_runner` has been developed to efficiently handle this situation. It can read the background theory once, and then run E with additional axioms and different conjectures against this background theory without re-parsing of the full theory.

The program was originally designed for running sets of queries against *large theories* in *batch mode*, but now also supports interactive queries. However, `e_ltb_runner` is in a more prototypical state than most of the E distribution. In particular, any syntax error in the input will cause the whole program to terminate.

By default, `e_ltb_runner` will process a batch specification file (see 7.4.2), which contains a specification of the background theory, some options, and (optionally) a number of individual job requests. If used with the option `--interactive`, it will enter interactive mode (7.4.3) after all batch jobs have been processed.

For every job, the program will use several different goal-directed pruning strategies to extract likely useful axioms from the background theory. For each of the pruned axiomatizations, `e_ltb_runner` will run E in automatic mode. If one of the strategies succeeds, all running strategies will be terminated and the result returned.

The program will run up to 8 strategies in parallel. Thus, it is best used on a multi-core machine with sufficient amounts of memory.

7.4.1 Usage

`E_ltb_runner` relies on TPTP-3 include file syntax and semantics, and hence will only (and implicitly) work with the TPTP-3 syntax. The main program runs several instances of `eprover` as sub-processes. Unless that executable is in the search path, the full path should be given as as the optional second argument to the program.

A typical command line for starting `e_ltb_runner` is:

```
e_ltb_runner <batchspec> [--output-dir=<dir>] [path_to_eprover]
```

For interactive use, add the option `--interactive`, for multi-format support (see below) add `--variant27`.

7.4.2 Batch specification file

The batch specification file format is defined for the *CADE ATP System Competition* LTB division, and is typically updated every year. E tracks this development. The E 1.9 distribution implements support for the LTB format used in CASC-24/CASC-25 and documented at `http://www.cs.miami.edu/~tptp/CASC/24/Design.html#Problems`, subsection *Batch Specification Files*. It tries to maintain backwards-compatibility to for the LTB format used in CASC-J6 and documented at `http://www.cs.miami.edu/~tptp/CASC/J6/Design.html#Problems`. Later versions support later formats. In particular, E 2.4 adds support for the multi-format competition used in CASC-27 and described at `http://www.tptp.org/CASC/27/Design.html` with the option `--variants27`.

A batch specification file consists of a number of defined comments, interleaved with parameter settings and `include` statements for the axiom files of the background theory. This is followed by an optional list of job specifiers, where each job specifier consists of a pair of file names, with the first specified file containing the conjecture and possible additional hypotheses, while the second file name describes where the output of the proof attempt should be stored.

Figure 7.2 shows an example of an LTB batch specification file. `E_ltb_runner` ignores all comment lines in the batch specification file. The non-comment-lines are described below.

- `division.category` *`division_mnemonic.category_mnemonic`*

  This line is expected and parsed, but has no effect.

- `execution.order` *`ordered|unordered`*

  This line specifies if batch problems must be processed in order or can be reordered. `E_ltb_runner` parses the line, but always tries to solve the problems in the order provided.

```
% SZS start BatchConfiguration
division.category LTB.SMO
execution.order ordered
output.required Assurance
output.desired Proof Answer
limit.time.problem.wc 60
% SZS end BatchConfiguration
% SZS start BatchIncludes
include('Axioms/CSR003+2.ax').
include('Axioms/CSR003+5.ax').
% SZS end BatchIncludes
% SZS start BatchProblems
/Users/schulz/EPROVER/TPTP_5.4.0_FLAT/CSR083+3.p /Users/schulz/tmp/CSR083+3
/Users/schulz/EPROVER/TPTP_5.4.0_FLAT/CSR075+3.p /Users/schulz/tmp/CSR075+3
/Users/schulz/EPROVER/TPTP_5.4.0_FLAT/CSR082+3.p /Users/schulz/tmp/CSR082+3
/Users/schulz/EPROVER/TPTP_5.4.0_FLAT/CSR086+3.p /Users/schulz/tmp/CSR086+3
/Users/schulz/EPROVER/TPTP_5.4.0_FLAT/CSR091+3.p /Users/schulz/tmp/CSR091+3
/Users/schulz/EPROVER/TPTP_5.4.0_FLAT/CSR092+3.p /Users/schulz/tmp/CSR092+3
% SZS end BatchProblems
```

Figure 7.2: Example LTB batch specification file

- `output.required` *space_separated_list*

  This specifies what output is required from the system. Available values are

  - `Assurance`: A plain statement about existence of proof or counter-model is sufficient.
  - `Proof`: An explicit proof will be provided.
  - `ListOfFOF`: An (implicitly small) subset of axioms sufficient for a proof should be provided. `E_ltb_runner` fulfills this by giving a full proof as for the previous option.
  - `Model`: If the problem is disproved, `e_ltb_runner` will provide a saturated clause set as evidence.
  - `Answer`: If conjectures contain existentially quantified variables, a suitable instantiation will be given.

- `output.desired` *space_separated_list*

  This specifies what output is required from the system. Available values are as for the previous option. `E_ltb_runner` treats this exactly as the required output.

- `limit.time.problem.wc` *limit_in_seconds* The wall clock time limit allowed per problem. If this is zero, no per-problem limit exists.

- The specification of the background theory, in the form of a list of TPTP `include` statement. Note that the file names will be interpreted as always: An absolute file name is an absolute file name. A relative file name is

relative to the current working directory, or, of the file is not found, relative to the value of the `TPTP` environment variable (if set).

- The list of individual batch jobs, in the form of pairs of absolute problem file names, with the first giving the problem specification, the second the location for the result for the problem. In the setup for interactive queries, this will typically be empty.

7.4.3 Interactive queries

If `e_ltb_runner` is called with the option `--interactive`, it will not terminate after processing the batch jobs, but will wait for user requests entered via standard input, i.e. usually via the terminal. All requests need to be terminated with `go.` on a line of its own. The following three user requests are supported:

- `help`: Prints a short help text.
- `quit`: Terminates the program in a controlled manner.
- The last option specifies a theorem proving job. It optionally starts with a job name specifier of the form `job <ident>.` and then specified a problem in TPTP-3 CNF/FOF syntax (optionally using include statements). After the concluding `go.`, the specification will be parsed, combined with the background theory, and passed to the proving engine.

Figure 7.3 shows an slightly shortened example of an interactive session with `e_ltb_runner`.

7.5 Specification pruning: `e_axfilter`

One of the problems of automated deduction is the handling of large specifications that contain a lot of axioms that are not relevant for the conjectures at hand. The irrelevant facts contribute to the size and growths of the search space, and hence make proof search much more difficult.

E provides a mechanism to apply (pruning) filters to specifications. The aim of these filters is to select subsets of the clauses and formulas in the problem set that are likely sufficient for proving a conjecture, but which are much smaller than the full axiomatization.

This functionality is also available as the stand-alone tool `e_axfilter`. This tool accepts a specification and a list of named filters, and generates one output file for each filter, containing the parts of the specification that result from applying the corresponding filter to the original specification.

A typical command line for running `e_axfilter` is:

```
e_axfilter --tptp3-format --filter=<filterfile> <infile>
```

```
> e_ltb_runner ../etc/LTBSampleInputI.txt --interactive
# Parsing Axioms/CSR003+2.ax
# Parsing Axioms/CSR003+5.ax

# == WCT:    1s, Solved:    0/   0    ==
# Enter job, 'help' or 'quit', followed by 'go.' on a line of its own:
help
go.
# Enter a job, 'help' or 'quit'. Finish any action with 'go.' on a line
# of its own. A job consists of an optional job name specifier of the
# form 'job <ident>.', followed by a specification of a first-order
# problem in TPTP-3 syntax (including any combination of 'cnf', 'fof' and
# 'include' statements. The system then tries to solve the specified
# problem (including the constant background theory) and prints the
# results of this attempt.
# Enter job, 'help' or 'quit', followed by 'go.' on a line of its own:
job test_job.
include('CSR083+3.p').
go.

# Processing started for test_job
# Filtering for Threshold(10000) (606)
# Filtering for GSinE(CountFormulas, hypos, 6.000000, ...
# Filtering for GSinE(CountFormulas, hypos, 1.200000, ...
[...]
# Filtering for GSinE(CountFormulas, nohypos, 6.000000, ...
# No proof found by Threshold(10000)
# SZS status Theorem for test_job
# Solution found by GSinE(CountFormulas, nohypos, 1.200000, ...
# Pid: 69178
# Preprocessing time       : 0.012 s
# SZS status Theorem
# SZS answers Tuple [[s__Human]|_]

# Proof found!

# ------------------------------------------------
# User time                : 0.009 s
# System time              : 0.005 s
# Total time               : 0.013 s
# Maximum resident set size: 2457600 pages
# Proof reconstruction starting
# SZS output start CNFRefutation.
[...]
# SZS output end CNFRefutation
# Proof reconstruction done

# Processing finished for test_job

# Enter job, 'help' or 'quit', followed by 'go.' on a line of its own:
```

Figure 7.3: Example of an interactive`e_ltb_runner` session (slightly shortened)

The output files are named by taking the input file (without the suffix), appending the filter name, and the suffix `.p`.

If no filter definition is given, the program uses the built-in default, which consists of a set of reasonably orthogonal filters.

7.5.1 Filter algorithms

E currently implements two types of filters. The major filter type is a configurable variant of Kryštoff Hoder's SInE algorithm [HV11] for pruning large specification. The basic idea of this filter is to rate function- and predicate symbols by their rarity - the less often a symbol occurs in the specification, the more important any given formula or clause that handles the symbol is for the definition of that symbol. The algorithm starts by computing the *D-relation* between clauses/formulas and symbols. A clause/formula is in the *D-relation* with the rarest symbols that occur in it. The exact details of "rarest" are configurable in a number of ways - see below.

The selection algorithm starts with the conjectures (all clauses/formulas of TPTP type `conjecture`, and marks all symbols in them as active. It then proceeds to add all clauses/formulas that are in the D-relation with an active symbol. All other symbols in those new clauses are made active as well, and the process repeats until a fix point is reached or one of several other termination conditions is reached.

The second kind of filter is a simple threshold filter. It will pass all clauses and formulas of a specification that are below a certain threshold size, and no clauses or formulas that are above this threshold. The main purpose of this filter is to allow small specifications to pass through the filter mechanism unchanged. This is in particular useful for an ensemble approach, where the problem is tackled using a variety of filters. Such an approach is implemented by `e_ltb_runner`.

7.5.2 Filter specification

The specification of a single filter follows the syntax show in Figure 7.4. For all optional names and values, reasonable defaults are provided automatically.

The parameters have the following type and meaning:

- The first parameter defines how function and predicate symbols are counted to determine relative rarity. For `CountFormulas`, the measure is the number of formulas or clauses in which the symbol occurs. For `CountTerms`, the total number of occurrences is used, with multiple occurrences in a formula being counted multiple times.

- The second parameter determines if only formulas and clauses of the type `conjecture` and `negated_conjecture` are used as the initial seed for the SInE algorithm, or if clauses and formulas of type `hypothesis` are automatically added to the core for the first iteration.

```
<axfilterdef> ::= [<name> '=' ] <sine-filter> | <threshold-filter>

<sine-filter> ::=      GSinE '(' CountTerms|CountFormulas ','
                                 [hypos|nohypos] ','
                                 [<benvolvence>]  ','
                                 [<generosity>]   ','
                                 [<rec-depth>]    ','
                                 [<set-size>]     ','
                                 [<set-fraction>]
                                 [ ',' addnosymb|ignorenosymb] ')'
<threshold-filter> ::= Theshold '(' <threshold> ')'
```

Figure 7.4: Specification filter specification syntax

- The `benevolence` determines the threshold used for determining the rarest symbols in a clause or formula. It is a floating point value. All symbols with a frequency count less than the benevolence value times the count of the least frequent symbol in a clause are considered for the D-relation.
- The `generosity` also determines how many symbols are used for the D-relation. It defines an upper bound on the number of symbols used.
- The `rec-depth` determines how many levels of clause/formula selection are performed before the selection is stopped.
- The `set-size` adds another early termination criterion. It stops the algorithm as soon as this number of axioms have been selected.
- The `set-fraction` has the same purpose, but specifies the limit as a fraction of the cardinality of the input set.
- Finally, the optional last argument determines if clauses or formulas which do not contain any function- or predicate symbols pass the filter. E does not consider equality as a (normal) symbol, so clauses or formulas that only contain variables will never be selected by the standard SInE algorithm. This parameter adds them explicitly. This is a rare occurence, so the effect is minor in either case.

Appendix A

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Appendix B

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