6 ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES BESIDES EXPLICIT INDUCTION

6.1 Proof Planning

Suggestions on how to overcome an envisioned dead end in automated theorem proving were summarized in the end of the 1980s under the keyword *proof planning*. Besides its human-science aspects,[173] the main idea[174] of proof planning is to extend a theorem-proving system — on top of the *low-level search space* of the logic calculus of a proof checker — with a *higher-level search space*, which is typically smaller or better organized w.r.t. searching, more abstract, and more human-oriented.

The most extensive and sophisticated subject of proof planning is not especially related to induction, but addresses automated theorem proving in general. We cannot cover it here and have to refer the reader to the article by Alan Bundy and Jörg Siekmann in this volume.

6.2 Rippling

Rippling is a technique for augmenting rewrite rules with information that helps to find a way to rewrite one expression (*goal*) into another (*target*), more precisely to reduce the difference between the goal and the target by rewriting the goal. We had to mention rippling already in § 5.6 several times, but this huge and well-documented area of research cannot be covered here, and we have to refer the reader to the monograph [Bundy *et al.*, 2005].[175] Let us explain here, however, why rippling can be most helpful in the automation of simple inductive proofs.

Roughly speaking, the remarkable success in proving *simple* theorems by induction automatically, can be explained as follows: If we look upon the task of proving a theorem as reducing it to a tautology, then we have more heuristic guidance when we know that we probably have to do it by mathematical induction: Tautologies can have arbitrary subformulas, but the induction hypothesis we are going to apply can restrict the search space tremendously.

In a cartoon of Alan Bundy's, the original theorem is pictured as a zigzagged mountainscape and the reduced theorem after the unfolding of recursive operators according to recursion analysis (goal) is pictured as the reflection of the mountainscape on the surface of a lake with ripples. To apply the induction hypothesis (target), instead of the uninformed search for an arbitrary tautology, we have to *get rid of the ripples* to be able to apply an instance of the theorem as induction hypothesis to the mountainscape mirrored by the calmed surface of the lake.

Until today, rippling was applied to the automation of induction only within the paradigm of explicit induction, whereas it is clearly not limited to this paradigm, and we expect it to be more useful in areas of automated theorem proving with bigger search spaces and, in particular, in *descente infinie*.

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[173] Cf. [Bundy, 1989].

[174] Cf. [Bundy, 1988], [Dennis *et al.*, 2005].

6.3 Implicit Induction

The alternative approaches to mechanize mathematical induction *not* subsumed by explicit induction, however, are united under the name "implicit induction".

Triggered by the success of Boyer and Moore [1979], work on these alternative approaches started already in the year 1980 in purely equational theories.[176] A sequence of papers on technical improvements[177] was topped by [Bachmair, 1988], which gave rise to a hope to develop the method into practical usefulness, although it was still restricted to purely equational theories. Inspired by this paper, in the late 1980s and the first half of the 1990s several researchers tried to understand more clearly what implicit induction means from a theoretical point of view and whether it could be useful in practice.[178]

While it is generally accepted that [Bachmair, 1988] is about implicit induction and [Boyer and Moore, 1979] is about explicit induction, there are the following three different viewpoints on what the essential aspect of implicit induction actually is.

Proof by Consistency:[179] Systems for proof by consistency run some Knuth–Bendix[180] or superposition[181] completion procedure which produces a huge number of irrelevant inferences under which the ones relevant for establishing the induction steps can hardly be made explicit. A proof attempt is successful when the prover has drawn all necessary inferences and stops without having detected any inconsistency.

Proof by consistency has shown to perform far worse than any other known form of mechanizing mathematical induction; mainly because it requires the generation of far too many superfluous inferences, and because its runs are typically infinite, and its admissibility conditions are too restrictive for most applications. Roughly speaking, the conceptual flaw in proof by consistency is that, instead of finding a sufficient set of reasonable inferences, the research follows the idea of ruling out as many irrelevant inferences as possible.

Implicit Induction Ordering: In the early implicit-induction systems,[182] induction proceeds over a syntactical term ordering, which typically cannot be made explicit in the sense that there would be some predicate term in the

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[175] Historically important are also the following publications on rippling: [Hutter, 1990], [Bundy *et al.*, 1991], [Basin and Walsh, 1996].

[176] Cf. [Goguen, 1980], [Huet and Hullot, 1980], [Lankford, 1980], [Musser, 1980].

[177] Cf. [Göbel, 1985], [Jouannaud and Kounalis, 1986], [Fribourg, 1986], [Küchlin, 1989].

[178] Cf. e.g. [Zhang *et al.*, 1988], [Kapur and Zhang, 1989], [Bevers and Lewi, 1990], [Reddy, 1990], [Gramlich and Lindner, 1991], [Ganzinger and Stuber, 1992], [Bouhoula and Rusinowitch, 1995], [Padawitz, 1996].

[179] The name "proof by consistency" was coined in the title of [Kapur and Musser, 1987], which is the later published forerunner of its outstanding improved version [Kapur and Musser, 1986].

[180] See UNICOM [Gramlich and Lindner, 1991] for such a system, following [Bachmair, 1988] with several improvements. See [Knuth and Bendix, 1970] for the Knuth–Bendix completion procedure.

[181] See [Ganzinger and Stuber, 1992] for such a system.

[182] See [Gramlich and Lindner, 1991] and [Ganzinger and Stuber, 1992] for such systems.

logical syntax that denotes this ordering in the intended models of the specification. The semantical orderings of explicit induction, however, cannot depend on the precise syntactical term structure of a weight w, but only on the value of w under an evaluation in the intended models.

The price one has to pay for the possibility to have induction orderings that can also depend on the precise syntactical structure of terms is surprisingly high for powerful inference systems.[183]

The early implicit-induction systems needed such sophisticated term orderings,[184] because they started from the induction conclusion and every inference step reduced the formulas w.r.t. the induction ordering again and again, but an application of an induction hypothesis was admissible to greater formulas only. This deterioration of the ordering information with every inference step was overcome by the introduction of explicit weight terms in [Wirth and Becker, 1995], which obviate the former need for syntactical term orderings as induction orderings.

Descente Infinie ("Lazy Induction"): Contrary to explicit induction, where induction is introduced into an otherwise merely deductive inference system only by the explicit application of induction axioms in the induction rule, the cyclic arguments and their well-foundedness in implicit induction need not be confined to single inference steps.[185] The induction rule of explicit induction generates all induction hypotheses in a single inference step. To the contrary, in implicit induction, the inference system "knows" what an induction hypothesis is, i.e. it includes inference rules that provide or apply induction hypotheses, given that certain ordering conditions resulting from these applications can be met by an induction ordering. Because this aspect of implicit induction can facilitate the human-oriented induction method described in § 3.6, the name *descente infinie* was coined for it (cf. § 3.7). Researchers introduced to this aspect by [Protzen, 1994] (entitled "Lazy Generation of Induction Hypotheses") sometimes speak of "lazy induction" instead of *descente infinie*.

The entire handbook article [Comon, 2001] (with corrections in [Wirth, 2005a]) is dedicated to the two aspects of *proof by consistency* and *implicit induction orderings*. Today, however, the interest in these two aspects tends to be historical or theoretical, especially because these aspects can hardly be combined with explicit induction.

To the contrary, *descente infinie* synergetically combines with explicit induction, as witnessed by the QuodLibet system, which we will discuss in § 6.4.

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[183] Cf. [Wirth, 1997].

[184] Cf. e.g. [Bachmair, 1988], [Steinbach, 1988; 1995], [Geser, 1996].

[185] For this reason, the funny name "inductionless induction" was originally coined for implicit induction in the titles of [Lankford, 1980; 1981] as a short form for "induction without induction rule". See also the title of [Goguen, 1980] for a similar phrase.

6.4 QuodLibet

In the last years of the Collaborative Research Center SFB 314 "Artificial Intelligence" (cf. § 5.6), after extensive experiments with several inductive theorem proving systems, such as Nqthm (cf. § 5.4), Inka (cf. § 5.6), Rrl (cf. § 5.6), and the implicit induction system Unicom [Gramlich and Lindner, 1991], Claus-Peter Wirth (*1963) and Ulrich Kühler (*1964) came to the conclusion that — in spite of the excellent interaction concept of Unicom[186] — *descente infinie* was actually the only aspect of implicit induction that deserved further investigation. Moreover, the coding of recursive functions in unconditional equations in Unicom turned out to be inadequate for inductive theorem proving in practice, where positive/negative-conditional equations were in demand for specification, as well as clausal logic for theorem proving [Kühler, 1991, pp. 134, 138].

Therefore, a new system had to be created, which was given the name QuodLibet (Latin for "as you like it"), because it should enable its users to avoid over-specification by admitting partial function specifications, and to execute proofs whose crucial proof steps mirror exactly the intended ones.

A concept for partial function specification instead of the totality requirement of explicit induction was easily obtained by elaborating the first part of [Wirth, 1991] into the framework for positive/negative-conditional rewrite systems of [Wirth and Gramlich, 1994a]. After inventing constructor variables in [Wirth *et al.*, 1993], the monotonicity of validity w.r.t. consistent extension of the partial specifications was easily achieved [Wirth and Gramlich, 1994b], so that the induction proofs did not have to be re-done after such an extension of a partially defined function.

Although the confluence criterion defining admissibility of function definitions in QuodLibet and guaranteeing (object-level) consistency (cf. § 4.1) of QuodLibet's functional specifications was completely presented in an appropriate form not before [Wirth, 2009], the essential admissibility requirements were already clear in 1996.[187]

The weak admissibility conditions of QuodLibet — mutually recursive functions, possibly partially defined because of missing cases or non-termination — are of practical relevance in applications. For instance, Bernd Löchner (*1967) (a user, not a developer of QuodLibet) concludes in [Löchner, 2006, p. 76]:

> "The translation of the different specifications into the input language of the inductive theorem prover QuodLibet [Avenhaus *et al.*, 2003] was straightforward. We later realized that this is difficult or impossible with several other inductive provers as these have problems with mutual recursive functions and partiality" . . .

[186] For the assessment of Unicom's interaction concept see [Kühler, 1991, p. 134ff.].

[187] See [Kühler and Wirth, 1996] for the first publication of the object-level consistency of the specifications that are admissible and supported with strong induction heuristics in QuodLibet. In [Kühler and Wirth, 1996], a huge proof from the original 1995 edition of [Wirth, 2005b] guaranteed the consistency; moreover, the most relevant of the seven inductive validities of [Wirth and Gramlich, 1994b] is chosen (no longer the initial or free models typical for implicit induction).

Based on the *descente infinie* inference system for clausal first-order logic of [Wirth and Kühler, 1995],[188] the system development of QuodLibet in Common Lisp (cf. § 5.5), mostly by Kühler and Tobias Schmidt-Samoa (*1973), lasted from 1995 to 2006. The system was described and demonstrated at the 19th Int. Conf. on Automated Deduction (CADE), Miami Beach (FL), 2003 [Avenhaus *et al.*, 2003]. The extension of the *descente infinie* inference systems of QuodLibet to the full [modal] higher-order logic of [Wirth, 2004; 2013] has not been implemented yet.

To the best of our knowledge, QuodLibet is the first theorem prover whose proof state is an and-or-tree (of clauses); actually, a forest of such trees, so that in a mutual induction proof each conjecture providing induction hypotheses has its own tree [Kühler, 2000]. An extension of the recursion analysis of [Boyer and Moore, 1979] for constructor-style specifications (cf. § 4.4) was developed by writing and testing tactics in QuodLibet's Pascal-like[189] meta-language Qml [Kühler, 2000]. To achieve an acceptable run-time performance (but not competitive with ACL2, of course), Qml tactics are compiled before execution.

In principle, termination proofs are not required, simply because termination is not an admissibility restriction in QuodLibet. Instead, definition-time recursion analysis uses induction lemmas (cf. § 5.3.7) to prove lemmas on function domains by induction.[190] At proof time, recursion analysis is used by the standard tactic only to determine the induction variables from the induction templates: As seen in Example 3 (as compared to Examples 12 and 23), subsumption and merging of schemes are not required in *descente infinie*.[191]

An enormous speed-up of QuodLibet and an extension of its automatically provable theorems was achieved by Schmidt-Samoa during his PhD work with the system in 2004–2006. He developed a marking concept for the tagging of rewrite lemmas (cf. § 5.3.1), where the elements of a clause can be marked as Forbidden, Mandatory, Obligatory, and Generous, to control the recursive relief of

[188] Later improvements of this inference system are found in [Wirth, 1997], [Kühler, 2000], and [Schmidt-Samoa, 2006b].

[189] See [Wirth, 1971] for the programming language Pascal. The critical decision for an imperative instead of a functional tactics language turned out to be most appropriate during the ten years of using Qml.

[190] While domain lemmas for totally defined functions use to be found without interaction and total functions do not provide relevant overhead in QuodLibet, the user often has to help in case of partial function definitions by providing *domain lemmas* such as Def $\mathsf{delfirst}(x, l)$, $\mathsf{mbp}(x, l) \neq \mathsf{true}$, for $\mathsf{delfirst}$ defined via ($\mathsf{delfirst}1$–2) of § 3.5.

[191] Although it is not a must and not part of the standard tactic, induction hypotheses may be generated eagerly in QuodLibet to enhance generalization as in Example 5, in which case subsumption and merging of induction schemes as described in § 5.3.8 are required. Moreover, the concept of flawed induction schemes of QuodLibet (taken over from Thm as well, cf. § 5.3.8) depends on the mergeability of schemes. Furthermore, QuodLibet actually applies some merging techniques to plan case analyses optimized for induction [Kühler, 2000, § 8.3.3]. The question why QuodLibet adopts the great ideas of recursion analysis from Thm, but does not follow them precisely, has two answers: First, it was necessary to extend the heuristics of Thm to deal with constructor-style definitions. The second answer was already given in § 5.3.9: Testing is the only judge on heuristics.

conditions in contextual rewriting [Schmidt-Samoa, 2006b; 2006c]. Moreover, a very simple, but most effective reuse mechanism analyzes during a proof attempt whether it actually establishes a proof of some sub-clause, and uses this knowledge to crop conjunctive branches that do not contribute to the actual goal [Schmidt-Samoa, 2006b]. Finally, an even closer integration of linear logic (cf. Note 165) with excellent results [Schmidt-Samoa, 2006a; 2006b] questioned one of the basic principles of QuodLibet, namely the idea that the prover does not try to be clever, but stops early if there is no progress visible, and presents the human user the proof state in a nice graphical tree representation: The expanded highly-optimized formulation of arithmetic by means of special functions for the decidable fragment results in clauses that do not easily admit human inspection anymore. We did not find means to overcome this, because we did not find a way to fold theses clauses to achieve a human-oriented higher level of abstraction.

All in all, QuodLibet has proved that *descente infinie* ("lazy induction") goes well together with explicit induction and that we have reason to hope that eager induction-hypotheses generation can be overcome for theorems with difficult induction proofs, sacrificing neither efficiency nor the usefulness of the excellent heuristic knowledge developed in explicit induction. Why *descente infinie* and human-orientedness should remain on the agenda for induction in mathematics assistance systems is explained in the manifesto [Wirth, 2012c].

7 LESSONS LEARNED

What lessons can we draw from the history of the automation of induction?

Do not be too inclined to follow the current fads. Choose a hard problem, give thought to the "right" foundations, and then pursue its solution with patience and perseverance.

Another piece of oft-repeated advice to the young researcher: start simply. From the standpoint of formalizing microprocessors, investing in a theorem prover supporting only `NIL` and `CONS` is clearly inadequate. From the standpoint of understanding induction and simplification, however, it presents virtually all the problems, and its successors then gradually refined and elaborated the techniques. The four key provers discussed here — the Pure LISP Theorem Prover, Thm, Nqthm, and ACL2 — are clearly "of a kind". The lessons learned from one tool directly informed the design of the next.

If you are interested in building an inductive theorem prover, do not make the mistake of focusing merely on an induction principle and the heuristics for controlling it. A successful inductive theorem prover must be able to simplify and generalize. Ideally, it must be able to invent new concepts to express inductively provably theorems.

If theorems and proofs are simple and obvious for humans, a good automatic theorem prover ought not to struggle with them. If it takes a lot of time and machinery to prove obvious theorems, then truly interesting theorems are out of reach.

Do not be too eager to add features that break old ones. Instead, truly explore the extent to which new problems can be formalized within the existing framework so as to exploit the power of the existing system. Had Boyer and Moore adopted higher-order logic initially or attempted to solve the problem solely by exhaustive searching in a general purpose logic calculus, the discovery of many powerful techniques would have been delayed.

We strongly recommend collecting all your successful proofs into a regression suite and re-running your improved provers on this suite regularly. It is remarkably easy to "improve" a theorem prover such that it discovers a new proof at the cost of failing to re-discover old ones. The ACL2 regression suite contains over 90,000 `DEFTHM` commands, i.e. conjectures to be proved. It is an invaluable resource to Kaufmann and Moore when they explore new heuristics.

Finally, Boyer and Moore did not give names to their provers before ACL2, and so they became most commonly known under the name *the Boyer–Moore theorem prover*. So here is some advice to young researchers who want to become well-known: Build a good system, but do not give it a name, so that people have to attach your name to it!

8 CONCLUSION

> "One of the reasons our theorem prover is successful is that we trick the user into telling us the proof. And the best example of that, that I know, is: If you want to prove that there exists a prime factorization — that is to say a list of primes whose product is any given number — then the way you state it is: You define a function that takes a natural number and delivers a list of primes, and then you prove that it does that. And, of course, the definition of that function is everybody else's proof. The absence of quantifiers and the focus on constructive, you know, recursive definitions forces people to do the work. And so then, when the theorem prover proves it, they say 'Oh what wonderful theorem prover!', without even realizing they sweated bullets to express the theorem in that impoverished logic."

said Moore, and Boyer agreed laughingly.[192]

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[192] [Wirth, 2012d].

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