

Studies in Computational Intelligence, Volume 306

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Tru Hoang Cao

Conceptual Graphs and Fuzzy Logic

A Fusion for Representing and Reasoning with
Linguistic Information

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For my family

Preface

Form without content is empty. Content without form is so indeterminate that it cannot be grasped as an object of knowledge.

JOHN HIBBEN, *Hegel's Logic: An Essay in Interpretation*

The research for my Master's thesis and that for my PhD were related to the two separate theories that I later on recognized to have the common target of representing and reasoning with linguistic information. They are conceptual graphs invented by John Sowa and fuzzy logic founded by Lofti Zadeh. These two theories are both very important if we are to design computer systems that can capture and reason with linguistic information as humans can.

The capacity for humans to communicate using language allows us to give, receive, and understand information expressed within a rich and flexible representational framework. Moreover, we can reason based on natural language expressions, and make decisions based on the information they convey, though this information usually involves imprecise terms and uncertain facts. Anyhow, for a computer with the conventional processing paradigm to process linguistic information, a formalism is required.

Such a formal language needs to have both a "body" that could smoothly match with the syntax of natural language expressions, and a "soul" that could deal with the semantics of imprecise and uncertain linguistic information. At this crossroad, conceptual graphs provide a syntactic structure for a smooth mapping to and from natural language, while fuzzy logic provides a semantic processor for approximate reasoning with words having vague meanings.

This volume is the combined result of my research for the past few years, which has focused on the combination of conceptual graphs and fuzzy logic for various knowledge and information processing tasks that involves natural language. First, it is about fuzzy conceptual graphs and their logic programming foundations, as a graph-based order-sorted fuzzy set logic programming language for automated reasoning with fuzzy object attributes and types. Second, it extends conceptual graphs with general quantifiers and develops direct reasoning operations on these extended conceptual graphs, which could be mapped to and from generally quantified natural language statements. Third, it defines similarity and subsumption measures between object types, names, and attributes and uses them for approximate retrieval of knowledge represented in graphs. Finally, it proposes a robust ontology-based method for understanding natural language queries using nested conceptual graphs.

Engaged in this interdisciplinary research, I have had opportunities to participate in both the research communities of conceptual graphs and fuzzy logic, and met with the colleagues and students whom I would like to thank for their contribution to this book in one way or another over the years:

- Vilas Wuwongse and Peter Creasy, my Master's and PhD advisors, for their guidance at the beginning of my research.
- James Baldwin, Trevor Martin, and Jonathan Rossiter for the valuable period of the Fril++ project in which I applied the developed order-sorted fuzzy set logic programming theory.
- Lofti Zadeh and Masoud Nikravesh for hosting my research visit at BISC when I first came up with the idea of using fuzzy conceptual graphs for the Semantic Web.
- Bikash Ghosh, Hung Wing, Robert Colomb, John Sowa, Michel Chein, Marie-Laure Mugnier, Eric Salvat, Gerard Ellis, Guy Mineau, Rudolf Wille, Jonathan Lawry, and Elie Sanchez for their fruitful discussions on the topics covered in this volume.
- My students who have directly worked with me on projects relating to the recent development and applications of fuzzy conceptual graphs.

In particular in writing this book, I am sincerely grateful to Hung Nguyen and Janusz Kacprzyk for their kind support and encouragement. I would also like to thank Thomas Ditzinger, Heather King and the Springer production team for their dedication and professional expertise in the publishing process.

May 2010

Cao Hoàng Tru

Contents

1	Introduction.....	1
1.1	Motivation and Outline.....	1
1.2	Symbol and Abbreviation Conventions.....	4
2	Fuzzy Conceptual Graphs.....	5
2.1	Overview	5
2.2	Conceptual Graphs.....	6
2.3	Functional Relation Types and Conjunctive Types	11
2.4	Extended Conceptual Graphs.....	14
2.5	Fuzzy Sets and Fuzzy Logics.....	18
2.6	Fuzzy Types.....	26
2.7	Fuzzy Conceptual Graphs	36
2.8	Summary.....	44
3	Annotated Fuzzy Logic Programming.....	47
3.1	Overview	47
3.2	AFLP Syntax	49
3.3	AFLP Model-Theoretic Semantics	52
3.4	AFLP Fixpoint Semantics.....	56
3.5	AFLP Reductants and Constraints	59
3.6	AFLP Procedural Semantics.....	63
3.7	Order-Sorted AFLPs.....	66
3.8	Generalized and Specialized AFLPs.....	71
3.9	Summary.....	78
4	Fuzzy Conceptual Graph Programming.....	79
4.1	Overview	79
4.2	FCGP Syntax	80
4.3	FCGP Model-Theoretic Semantics	84
4.4	FCGP Fixpoint Semantics	88
4.5	General Issues of CG Unification and Resolution	91
4.6	FCG Unification and FCGP Reductants	96
4.7	FCGP Procedural Semantics.....	99
4.8	Summary.....	103

5	Modelling and Computing with Generally Quantified Statements.....	105
5.1	Overview	105
5.2	Fuzzy Arithmetic	107
5.3	Fuzzy Conditional Probability	111
5.4	Universally Quantified Conceptual Graphs	112
5.5	Generally Quantified Conceptual Graphs	117
5.6	Computing with Linguistic Quantifiers	120
5.7	Summary.....	124
6	Approximate Knowledge Retrieval.....	127
6.1	Overview	127
6.2	Matching Measures for Entity Types, Names, and Attributes	128
6.3	Storing and Querying Knowledge Graphs	134
6.4	Approximate Knowledge Graph Matching.....	138
6.5	Knowledge Management in VN-KIM	141
6.6	Summary.....	144
7	Natural Language Query Understanding.....	145
7.1	Overview	145
7.2	Ontology-Based Information Retrieval.....	146
7.3	Nested Query Conceptual Graphs.....	151
7.4	Ontology-Based Query Understanding.....	154
7.5	Evaluation Experiments.....	161
7.6	VN-KIM Search.....	163
7.7	Summary.....	166
	Appendices	167
A.1	Proofs for Chapter 2.....	167
A.2	Proofs for Chapter 3.....	174
A.3	Proofs for Chapter 4.....	181
A.4	Proofs for Chapter 5.....	185
	References	193