

Thm A language is regular iff an NFA accepts it.

Pf We need to show two things.

Note: often, one direction is much easier than the other!

- 1) $\forall A$ regular \exists NFA N such that $L(N) = A$
- 2) \forall NFA N , $L(N)$ is regular.

For (1), A regular $\Rightarrow \exists$ DFA D such that $L(D) = A$.
 But all DFAs are NFAs, so D is an NFA with $L(D) = A$, and we're done.

For (2), let $N = (Q, \Sigma, \delta, q_0, F)$ be an NFA. It suffices to construct a DFA D such that $L(D) = L(N)$. (ie D simulates N).

Let $D = (Q', \Sigma, \delta', q'_0, F')$ be a DFA such that

- $Q' = \mathcal{P}(Q)$
- $q'_0 = R(\{q_0\})$
- $F' = \{q' \in Q' \mid \exists q \in F: q \in q'\}$
- $\delta'(q', a) = R(\bigcup_{p \in q'} \delta(p, a))$,

We'll keep track of all possible states we could be in.
 When N starts, it can only be in its start state.
 This is the set of subsets of Q containing a state in F .

Recall that δ produces a set of possible states.

where $R(S)$ is the set of all states reachable from states in S via no input. R (for reachable) incorporates ϵ transitions.

Briefly we explicitly show $L(D) = L(N)$ via a lemma.

Def We define iterated transition function $\delta^*: Q \times \Sigma^* \rightarrow Q$ to be for $w \in \Sigma^*$ and $a \in \Sigma$
 $\delta^*(q, \epsilon) = q$ $\delta^*(q, wa) = \delta(\delta^*(q, w), a)$.

δ is the ordinary transition function

Similarly for $\delta^*: \mathcal{P}(Q) \times \Sigma^* \rightarrow \mathcal{P}(Q)$,
 $\delta^*(q, \epsilon) = R(q)$ $\delta^*(q, wa) = R(\bigcup_{p \in \delta^*(q, w)} \delta(p, a))$

where R is as defined above.

Lemma For any input $w \in \Sigma^*$, $\delta^*(q_0, w) = \delta'^*(q_0', w)$.

First notice that if this lemma is true, then the set of all possible states N could be in after processing w is exactly the single state D is in. This would imply $\forall q \in F$,

$q \in \delta^*(q_0, w)$ iff $q \in \delta'^*(q_0', w)$, hence N accepts w iff D accepts w , thus $L(N) = L(D)$.

It only remains to prove the lemma.

Pf This is clearly true by inspection/construction/definition. \square

\square

Cor For every NFA N , there is a DFA D such that $L(N) = L(D)$.

As an aside, notice that we can remove the non from nondeterministic via an exponential increase in memory. This will be important later.