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**S-Net Language Report**

**Version 2.0**

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Preface

S-Net is a novel coordination language and component technology for the era of multi-core and many-core computing. It turns sequential legacy code written in conventional languages into asynchronous components that interact with each other via a stream-processing network. The specification of these networks, a core feature of S-Net, follows an algebraic approach: only four different network combinators allow us the concise specification of complex streaming networks through a simple expression language. Routing of data packages is defined via a record type system with structural subtyping and (flow) inheritance.

The development of S-Net, both in terms of theory and implementation, has been funded by the European Union through the FP-6 Project Æther (Self-adaptive Embedded Technologies for Pervasive Computing Architectures, 2006–2009) and the FP-7 project ADVANCE (Asynchronous and Dynamic Virtualisation through Performance Analysis to Support Concurrency Engineering, 2010–2013). After four years of active development, the project and this language report have reached the 2.0 version number. Nevertheless, the S-Net language report remains a document in progress: we will add further chapters and sections on novel language features or additional examples as well as clarifications and useful changes to existing features as time goes by.

The S-Net language report presents S-Net from an external perspective. It is the document of choice to anyone who wants to learn more about S-Net and eventually become proficient in S-Net: from novice to expert, from informal descriptions to formal semantics to application examples. However, the language report does not make any statements on (potential) implementations of S-Net on different target hardware architectures. For this internal perspective on S-Net we refer to the S-Net Implementation Report [1].

We take this opportunity to thank all those who have contributed to the S-Net project in whatever way: implementation, documentation, applications or just intense discussions on any of these issues.

Hatfield, United Kingdom
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Document History

New in revision 2.0 of April 1, 2010

- New chapter on Distributed S-Net
- New example: distributed password cracking
- New example: moving targets indication
- New example: distributed ray tracing
- Completely rewritten section on data flow synchronisation
- Completely revised chapter on meta data reflecting new implementation
- Chapters on interfaces and observers adapted to new meta data

New in revision 1.0 of June 15, 2009

- New preface
- Reorganisation of editorships and authorships
- Author portraits
- New title page with official technical report status
- Improved layout
- New flow inheritance rule for synchrocells explained and motivated
- Support for inlined box language code removed, feature to be realised through metadata
- Initialiser boxes added (boxes with no input type)
- Boxes without output type added
- Broadcast index split combinator (dual tag) removed
- Metadata namespace changed to snet-home.org
- Chapter on interfaces completely rewritten
- New section on network interfaces
- New sections on C and SAC interface implementations
- New chapter on runtime inspection and observers
- Outdated chapter on semantics and type inference removed
• New chapter on formal operational semantics
• New chapter on denotational semantics
• New chapter on type inference
• New chapter on language extensions for reconfiguration and self-adaptivity
• Formal operational semantics of proposed new combinators for reconfiguration and self-adaptivity

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• New syntax for underspecified net signature that only provide an input type
• Explained introduction of name spaces through annotation of net signatures
• Combinator associativity clarified

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• New chapter on metadata
• New syntax for filter boxes

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• This document history
• Introductory parts rewritten to meet ongoing language design process
• Type signature definitions
• Clear separation between types and type signatures
• Synchrocell extended by guarded pattern
• Serial replication combinator extended by guarded termination pattern
• Filter extended by guarded pattern match and expression language
• Clarification of associativity and priority rules for network combinators
• Disambiguation of deterministic and non-deterministic combinators
• Multi-file S-NET programs
• New graphical representation of serial and parallel replication combinators
• New example: factorial from an imperative perspective
• New example: implementing Sudokus with S-NET and SAC

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• Mostly minor formatting improvements and clarifications
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- New syntax for types
- New syntax for binding tags
- More illustrating examples of type language
- Discussion of S-Net subtyping vs object-oriented programming
- Primitive boxes `driver`, `plug` and `link` abandoned
- Synchrocell redesigned
- New primitive box `filter` for housekeeping tasks
- All network operators (pass, strip, set) abandoned
- Example: computing factorial numbers with S-Net
- Complete syntax of S-Net in appendix

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- New layout of document
- Concept of field types and homomorphic subtyping on fields temporarily abandoned and deferred to future Part II of the S-Net report

Revision 0.1 of June 13, 2006

- First version of report made public within the Æther project consortium
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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 S-Net as a Component Technology

This document provides a comprehensive introduction to S-Net. S-Net is a novel coordination language that orchestrates asynchronous components that communicate with each other and their execution environment solely via typed streams.

The concept of coordination language arises wherever an application has to be presented as a set of concurrent communicating activities, each defined in application-specific terms as a meaningful program unit, while all together representing a concurrently executing, parallel (and potentially distributed) application. The application program units are presented in an appropriate fully-fledged programming language, such as C, Java, etc., while the aspects of communication, concurrency and synchronisation (referred to by the term coordination) are captured by a separate, coordination, language. The whole idea of coordination hinges on the principle that the integration between the coordination and application languages is loose: coordination constructs have little access, if at all, to the facilities of the application program.

A complete separation between computation and coordination language is always desirable, but rarely achieved in practice. Nevertheless, there must be a rigorously defined contract between them. The usefulness of the coordination language comes from the fact that coordination minimally disturbs the application code. In our approach, which is rather extreme in this sense, the application program units merely use a special output function (which is in fact part of the coordination/application interface) instead of a standard function return, and even that is additional to simply using those units as is, whenever the application language is reach enough for aggregated return values (e.g., a list of records). Another great advantage of coordination is that the programmer responsible for concurrency could be a system integrator without specialist algorithmic knowledge in the application area. This obviously provides for the wider adoption of distributed and parallel computing in practical software engineering.

1.2 S-Net and Stream Processing

The approach taken by S-Net is targeted at stream processing. This is a well-established area, which, at the time when distributed computing, multimedia and signal processing permeate the computing and telecommunication sectors, is very important. This paper focuses on asynchronous stream processing, which on the one hand, enables the philosophy of data-flow synchronisation developed in the 1980s to be taken on board (thanks to the coordination aspect, which assumes course granularity), whilst on the other hand, develop a whole host of analysis techniques thanks to the regular nature of stream communication (as opposed to general message-passing). As a result S-Net is a very compact and powerful coordination language. It reflects the modern notions of subtyping, encapsulation and inheritance, while completely separating all communication and concurrency concerns from the application code.
The concept of stream processing has a long history. The view of a program as a set of processing blocks connected by a static network of channels goes back at least as far as Kahn's seminal work [2] and the language Lucid [3]. Kahn introduced the model of infinite-capacity, deterministic process network and proved that it had properties useful for parallel processing. Lucid was apparently the first language to introduce the basic idea of a block that transforms input sequences into output ones. A variable would represent such a sequence, acting as a stream of values of that variable in time. Ordinary operators in Lucid acted on variables point-wise, by effectively synchronising streams and applying the operation across pairs of corresponding stream elements. Additionally there were also some “temporal” operators, which were intended for altering the order of elements in a sequence.

Somewhat later, in the 1980s, a whole host of synchronous dataflow languages sprouted, notably the languages Lustre [4] and Esterel[5], which introduced explicit recurrence relations over streams and further developed the concept of synchronous networks. These languages are still being used for programming reactive systems and signal processing algorithms today, including industrial applications such as the recent Airbus flight control system and various other aerospace applications [6]. The authors of Lustre broadened their work towards what they termed synchronous Kahn’s networks[7, 8], i.e functional programs where the connection between functions, although expressed as lists, is in fact ‘listless’: as soon as a list element is produced, the consumer of the list is ready to process it, so that there is no queue and no memory management is required.

A nonfunctional interpretation of Kahn’s networks is also receiving attention, the latest stream processing language of this category being, to the best of our knowledge, the MIT’s StreamIt [9]. The latest comprehensive survey of stream processing and the underlying theory for it can be found in [10]. There is also a growing activity in database stream processing [11], which concerns itself with the problem of responding to a database query “on the fly”, using the same limited-memory, sliding-window view of processing blocks that started with Lucid and continued through the aforementioned stream-processing languages. Still, despite much work having been done in various niche areas, stream processing has yet to be recognised as a general-purpose paradigm in the same sense as, for instance, object-oriented or functional programming.

Around the time that Lustre was introduced, David Turner[12] remarked that streams could be used as software glue for complex parallel software systems, even operating systems. In his interpretation, streams were lazy lists, which were produced on demand for their consumers. The lists were seen as an interface between the deterministic parts of a parallel system, which were pure stream-processing functions (indeed they could have been any self-contained procedures as long as the only access they had to each other’s state was via stream communication), and the external interleavers/mergers that realise the inter-process communication and capture its nondeterministic behaviour.

This arrangement is sketched in fig 1.1. Note that each processing box has a single input and a single output. This does not lead to a loss of generality due to the fact that a function requiring multiple input streams can be represented as a function of a single stream argument where the elements of the multiple streams are somehow merged into a single sequence of records. Similarly, a single output stream can be split into any given number of secondary output streams by picking out records for each of the output sequences. The issue of how exactly the inputs are merged is a delicate one; an efficient solution would depend on the properties of the function in question. The merging usually benefits from being nondeterministic, as this accommodates the delays incurred in receiving the contributing streams by allowing the first message that arrives to be passed on to the processing function without waiting for its turn. On the other hand, the processing block can be required to be deterministic, in which case it may not be ready to accept a given input at an arbitrary time.

Note that a merged stream has no overall order: only records belonging to a single tributary stream have a precedence relation defined on them. To allow that order to be recovered from the merged stream, the provenance information can be preserved by, for example, tagging the ordered records by the same tag.

Overall, the Turner scheme seems very attractive as it neatly separates the computational aspect of stream processing from the communication aspect; it confines non-determinism to the
1.3 S-Net at a Glance

As mentioned earlier, S-Net is a coordination language that orchestrates asynchronous components interconnected by typed streams. Atomic components, named boxes in S-Net terminology, are connected to their environment by exactly one input and one output stream. Boxes communicate with each other and with the execution environment solely by means of data received from the input stream and data sent to the output stream.

Boxes are entirely stateless and strictly operate in an input-process-output work cycle. Upon receiving a data item on its input stream a box produces none, one or more data items on its output stream. The functional properties of S-Net boxes enable them to be deployed cheaply and moved and replicated at will, without giving rise to data integrity concerns.

We deliberately restrict S-Net to coordination aspects. Boxes are implemented externally using an appropriate box language. Functional languages are particularly suitable for this purpose as they inherently adhere to the restrictions imposed by the interface. Nevertheless, imperative box languages may be used as well, but require some discipline by the programmer. S-Net boxes are in fact “black boxes”. Being implemented in a different language they do not expose any internal content to the S-Net level. In principle, a single S-Net may combine boxes implemented using different box languages and, thus, also provides a structured approach towards multi-language programming.

S-Net defines streaming networks of asynchronous components inductively through algebraic formulae rather than error-prone port specifications and wire lists. We have identified only four
essential composition techniques for SISO components: serial and parallel composition of different components as well as the serial and the parallel replication of an individual component. Each composition technique is expressed by a dedicated network combinator that takes one or two SISO operand components and produces a new (compound) SISO component. Our use of algebraic formulae for describing streaming networks is inspired by Stefanescu’s network algebra [14].

S-Net networks are generally asynchronous: A component’s output is sent to the input buffer of the recipient component. These buffers are bounded; their size determines the degree of asynchrony between components. Whenever the output of several components needs to be combined, we require some kind of synchronisation facility. It is introduced in the form of a SISO synchrocell, which is the only kind of “stateful” box in an S-Net. A synchrocell expects records of several types to appear at its input; it combines them into a joint record and outputs the result. The internal state of a synchrocell is made up by the records waiting to be synchronised. Note that synchrocells, though “stateful”, have no computation to perform, whereas boxes have no state, but can compute. This solution also clearly separates two memory aspects which are usually combined in conventional programming: memory as work storage for computations and memory as a means of inter-process communication. It is this separation that promotes flexible specification, which assists generic parallel and distributed computing.

Boxes communicate with each other by sending data items over streams. These data items are organised as non-recursive, tagged records with arbitrary non-record fields. Types associated with streams in an S-Net network are non-recursive, tagged variant record types. Like the function that actually implements a box elementary types are effectively opaque to S-Net. Since all actual data is produced and consumed by box language programs, only the box language code can interpret the data.

We use (record) subtyping as an important adaptation mechanism within our component technology. It allows component designers to provide several versions of a box with different (sub-)types. An S-Net box may be capable of processing more record variants than there are in the incoming typed stream. Likewise, boxes accept records that have additional fields in excess of those required by and known to the box. Structural subtyping on records provides the formal foundation for this operational behaviour.

Excess fields are stripped off a record before a box starts processing it. However, such fields are not discarded, but rather attached to each record that the box produces in response. We call this behaviour flow inheritance. It is fundamental to S-Net as an adaptation technology for components that were developed in isolation. Whereas structural record subtyping is well known, the concept of flow inheritance, to the best of our knowledge, is a new concept. Crucially, S-Net does not require explicit subtype declarations, but applies type inference instead.
Chapter 2

Types and Subtyping

2.1 Record Types

The type system of S-Net supports non-recursive variant records with record subtyping. As defined syntactically in Fig. 2.1, a type in S-Net is a non-empty set of anonymous record variants separated by vertical bars. Each record variant is a possibly empty set of named record entries, enclosed in curly brackets.

Figure 2.1: Syntax definition of S-Net types and type definitions. The non-terminal symbols $\text{TypeName}$, $\text{FieldName}$ and $\text{TagName}$ uniformly refer to identifiers. We only distinguish them here for the purpose of illustration.

We introduce two kinds of record entry: fields and tags. A field is characterised by its field name; at runtime it is associated with a value, but the value is opaque to S-Net and may only be generated, inspected or manipulated by a box (which is written in a box language). A tag is also represented by its name, which is enclosed in angular brackets. However, at runtime the name is associated with an integer value that is visible to both the box language code and S-Net. The intention of tags is to control the flow of records through a network, rather than to serve as ordinary containers of integer values. Furthermore, we distinguish between simple tags and binding tags, which are distinguished by the lexical marker #. Binding tags have a different behaviour under subtyping, as explained in Section 2.2.

We illustrate S-Net types by a simple example from 2-dimensional geometry. A rectangle can be represented by the S-Net type
that contains its coordinates and dimensions. Likewise, we can represent a circle by the centre point coordinates and its radius:

\{x, y, \text{radius}\}

Using the S-Net support for variant records we can now define a common type for plain figures, which consists of rectangles and circles:

\{x, y, dx, dy\} \mid \{x, y, \text{radius}\}

It is often convenient to use tags to identify anonymous variants, for instance:

\{\text{rectangle}, x, y, dx, dy\} \mid \{\text{circle}, x, y, \text{radius}\}

We refer to types that consist of a single variant as record types because a record at runtime has a clear variant choice.

S-Net also supports non-recursive abstractions on types. Using the key word type an identifier may be bound to a type specification. Such an identifier may afterwards be used instead of a complete type specification in any syntactical position that requires a type. For example, we may first define type abstractions for rectangles and circles:

\textbf{type rectangle} = \{\text{rectangle}, x, y, dx, dy\};
\textbf{type circle} = \{\text{circle}, x, y, r\};

and use them later on to define the more general type \textbf{figure} to represent plane figures of either kind:

\textbf{type figure} = \textbf{rectangle} \mid \textbf{circle};

Type abstractions in S-Net are purely syntactical: Given the above definitions, the types

\textbf{body}
\textbf{rectangle} \mid \textbf{circle}

and

\{\text{rectangle}, x, y, dx, dy\} \mid \{\text{circle}, x, y, r\}

are identical.

S-Net does not support recursive record types for a good reason. A non-recursive record is a mere collection of fields accessible at once, in no particular order. The fields may themselves be records, so in fact a non recursive record can be thought of as a finite tree, whose leaves are named by the (unique) path from root to leaf. These path names are static and, hence, all leaves are accessible at once in any order. Since there are no operations on whole records in S-Net, the subrecord structure is not important and may easily be resolved in a preprocessing step.

By contrast, a recursive record type can be thought of as a set of non-recursive records in which some fields represent cross references, and where each record has a special statically unknown label for use in cross referencing. The data structure as a whole is characterised by (partial) access order, so it cannot be accessed at once, but rather one group of (non-recursive) records at a time by following references. When a recursive data structure is to be communicated, it is common to stream only relevant parts of it, under the control of a client-server protocol, rather than the whole data structure at once. Even when the latter is unavoidable, such data structures are not send in their natural form, but rather in a serialised, ‘marshalled’ stream, which is a stream of non-recursive records with abstract label fields.

This is not to say that S-Net would be unable to process lists, trees and other inductively defined data structures. As long as the box language provides the necessary support, such data may be associated with a single S-Net record entry. The marshalling and unmarshalling will need to be supported by the box language as well, as part of its interface with S-Net.

2.2 Record Subtyping

As mentioned earlier, S-Net supports subtyping on record types. Record subtyping is based essentially on the subset relationship between collections of record fields.
2.3. TYPE SIGNATURES

Definition 2.1 (record subtyping) Let \(BT(x)\) denote the set of binding tags in a record type \(x\). Record subtyping is defined by the following rules:

1. A record type \(r_1\) is a subtype of a record type \(r_2\), \(r_1 \sqsubseteq r_2\), if
   \[r_1 \supseteq r_2 \land BT(r_1) = BT(r_2)\].

2. A type \(t_1\) is a subtype of a type \(t_2\), \(t_1 \sqsubseteq t_2\), if
   \[(\forall r_1 \in t_1 \exists r_2 \in t_2) r_1 \sqsubseteq r_2\].

Informally, one type is a subtype of another type if it has additional record entries in the variants or fewer variants. For example, the type
\[\{<circle>, x, y, radius, colour\}\]
representing coloured circles is a subtype of the previously defined type \(\text{circle}\). Likewise, we may add another type to represent triangles:
\[\text{type triangle} = \{<\triangle>, x, y, dx1, dy1, dx2, dy2\};\]
Now, the combined type
\[\text{type figure2} = \text{triangle} \mid \text{rectangle} \mid \text{circle}\]
is a supertype of the previously defined type \(\text{figure}\).

Our definition of record subtyping coincides with the intuitive understanding that a subtype is more specific than its supertype(s) while a supertype is more general than its subtype(s). In the first example, the subtype contains additional information concerning the geometric body (i.e. its colour) that allows us to distinguish for instance green circles from blue circles, whereas the more general supertype identifies all circles regardless of their colour. In the second example, the supertype \(\text{figure2}\) is again more general than its subtype \(\text{figure}\) as it encompasses all three plane figures. In turn, \(\text{figure}\) is more specific than \(\text{figure2}\) in ruling out triangles from the set of plane figures covered.

With the definition of record subtyping, the purpose of binding tags becomes apparent: They provide a means to exercise explicit control over record subtyping. One record type is a subtype of another one only if the two have the same set of binding tags. In contrast, non-binding tags behave just like record fields with respect to record subtyping. For instance, with the above definition of type \(\text{circle}\) using a simple tag \(<\text{circle}>\) for identification the following type
\[\text{type position} = \{x, y\};\]
would be a supertype of \(\text{circle}\) as it contains fewer record entries. This, however, is less intuitive. We would rather like to see the position being a part of the definition of the geometric body circle than a circle being a specific position. Changing our definitions of types representing individual plane shapes to
\[
\begin{align*}
\text{type rectangle} & = \{<\#rectangle>, x1, y1, dx2, dy2\}; \\
\text{type circle} & = \{<\#circle>, x1, y1, r\}; \\
\text{type triangle} & = \{<\#triangle>, x, y, dx1, dy1, dx2, dy2\}; \\
\text{type figure3} & = \text{triangle} \mid \text{rectangle} \mid \text{circle}
\end{align*}
\]
using binding tags prevents this and helps to create a better hierarchy.

Unlike many object-oriented languages like C++ or Java our definition of record subtyping allows any type to have multiple supertypes (which are not subtypes of one another). When binding tags are not used, the type \(\{\}\), i.e. the empty record, is the greatest supertype of all record types. Otherwise, for each set of binding tags \(B\), \(B\) itself is the greatest supertype of any types \(\tau\) for which \(BT(\tau) = B\).

2.3 Type Signatures

Now, we are ready to define the concept of a type signature, i.e. the type associated with an S-Net box. As defined in Fig. 2.2, an S-Net type signature is a non-empty set of type mappings each
relating an input type to an output type. The input type specifies the records a box accepts for processing; the output type characterises the records that the box may produce as response. As the box may choose not to produce any records when receiving records of certain input types, the output type of type mappings is optional.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{TypeSignature} & \Rightarrow \text{TypeMapping} [ \ , \text{TypeSignature} ]^* \\
& \mid \text{TypeSigName} [ \ , \text{TypeSignature} ]
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{TypeMapping} & \Rightarrow \text{Type} \rightarrow \text{Type} \\
\text{TypeSigDef} & \Rightarrow \text{typesig \ TypeSigName} = \text{TypeSignature} \\
& ;
\end{align*}
\]

Figure 2.2: Grammar for S-Net type signatures

An input type that consists of multiple variants is nothing but syntactic sugar for a set of type mappings each relating one of the variants to the common output type. For example, the type signature
\[
\{a,b\} \mid \{c,d\} \rightarrow \{x\} \mid \{y\}
\]
is equivalent to the type signature
\[
\{a,b\} \rightarrow \{x\} \mid \{y\}, \\
\{c,d\} \rightarrow \{x\} \mid \{y\}
\]
Therefore, we assume (single variant) record types as input types from here on, we call these type signatures normalised. A multi-variant output type means that a box may produce any of the records specified in response to receiving an input record that fits the associated input type. However, it is important here to note that S-Net boxes may produce as many output records in response to a single input record as they like, including none at all. Multiple output records may follow the same output variant or be all different from each other.

In analogy to types, S-Net supports abstractions on type signatures using the key word typesig (cf. Fig. 2.2). Explicit type mappings and predefined type signature symbols may freely be mixed with each other.

Despite the representation of type signatures as sets of type mappings, we define the (global) input type of the type signature to be the union of input types of all mappings. Likewise, we define the (global) output type to be the union of the output types of all mappings.

### 2.4 Type Coercion

The introduction of type signatures in the previous section raises the issue of type coercion. Informally, we are concerned with the question of which type mapping to choose for a given type of incoming records in order to determine the potential type of records output in response. An S-Net box accepts any record whose type is a subtype of its type signature’s input type. In general, this requires an up-coercion to the most appropriate supertype.

As an example, let us assume the input type of our type signature to be the type body3, as defined in Section 2.2 using binding tags. The necessary up-coercion of a record type
\[
\{\#circle\} \rightarrow \{x, y, radius, colour\}
\]
of coloured circles is simply done by eliminating the additional colour field. We always coerce to the least common supertype. In other words, we aim at disposing of as few record entries as possible. If we would enrich the input type body3 by an additional variant for coloured circles as above, we would choose that more specific mapping for coloured circles rather than the less specific for circles in general, although both would fit with respect to subtyping.

However, unlike in single-inheritance object-oriented languages up-coercion may be ambiguous. Consider
\[
\{x, y\} \mid \{dx, dy\}
\]
as another example of an input type. An incoming record of type `rectangle`, as defined in Section 2.1 (without binding tags), would match both variants equally well. Only some targets for coercion can cause such ambiguities; the following definition introduces a uniqueness condition for type coercions:

**Definition 2.2 (complete record type)** A record type \( \tau \) is called complete iff

\[
\forall v, w \in \tau : BT(v) = BT(w) \implies v \cup w \in \tau.
\]

As in the definition of record subtyping in Section 2.2, \( BT(x) \) denotes the set of binding tags of a type \( x \). For any pair of variants with the same set of binding tags a complete record type must have a third variant combining their fields. Consequently, (non-variant) record types are automatically complete.

In order to disambiguate coercion we require type signatures to have complete input types.

### 2.5 Flow Inheritance

Streaming networks promote pipelining whereby a record travels along a chain of boxes that apply various processing algorithms to its content. Since a box can legally be fed with a subtype of the input type, this would result in the loss of all fields that are not required by the input type, but these fields could possibly be required by another box further down the pipeline. For example, we may have a box that manipulates the position of a geometric body regardless of its type. The associated type signature could be just \( \{ x, y \} \rightarrow \{ x, y \} \). Using simple tags instead of binding tags for variant identification, this box would accept circles, rectangles and triangles focussing on their common data (i.e. the position) and ignoring their specific record entries.

Unfortunately, such a box would be completely useless because following the necessary up-coercion to type \( \{ x, y \} \) we lose all specific information on the geometric bodies. What is intended effectively destroys the records making proper processing further down the stream effectively impossible. To remedy this misbehaviour, we introduce the following type rule that complements the up-coercion with an automatic down-coercion.

**Definition 2.3 (flow inheritance)** Let \( v[i] \rightarrow \tau[i], \ i \in [1, \ldots, n], \) be the type signature of a box \( X \). Furthermore, let each output type \( \tau[i] \) have \( m_i \) variants \( \tau[i] = \{ v[i]_1, \ldots, v[i]_{m_i} \} \). Then for any \( k \leq n \) and any field or non-binding tag \( \phi \notin v[k] \) such that

\[
(\forall i \neq k) BT(v[i]) \neq BT(v[k]) \lor v[k] \cup \{ \phi \} \notin v[i],
\]

the box \( X \) can be subtyped by flow inheritance to the type \( X^{'}, V[i] \rightarrow T[i] \), where

\[
V[i] = \begin{cases} v[i] \cup \{ \phi \} & \text{if } i \neq k, \\ v[k] & \text{otherwise;} \end{cases}
\]

and

\[
T[i] = \begin{cases} \tau[i] \cup \{ \phi \} & \text{if } i \neq k, \\ \tau^{'}, & \text{otherwise.} \end{cases}
\]

Here \( \tau^{'}, \{ V_1, \ldots, V_{m_k} \} \) and each \( V_i = w[i] \cup \{ \phi \} \).

Informally, an input variant can be extended with a new field or non-binding tag (but not binding tag) \( \phi \), if it does not clash with any other variant. The output type associated with this input variant is extended with the field named \( \phi \) in each of its variants unless it is present there already. Any number of flow inheritance extensions can be applied to a box, resulting in several fields being added. Value-wise, the extension is in terms of copying the value of the input record field \( \phi \) over to the output record field with the same name. (Obviously, an implementation is free to simply switch references.) If the output already contains an identically named field, then that field’s value supersedes the inherited one. For convenience, we shall write box signatures in

---

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the form \((n, m)v[i] \rightarrow w[j]_i\), which signifies a box with input variants \(v[i]\) and the corresponding output types \(\tau[i] = \{w[i]_1, \ldots, w[i]_{m_i}\}\), \(i \in \{1, \ldots, n\}\). Note that \(n\) is a scalar integer that describes the number of input variants, whereas \(m\) denotes a vector of \(n\) integers describing the number of variants in each output type associated with one input variant.

Flow inheritance creates a subtyping hierarchy for boxes. For example, a box that accepts records with a single field named \(x\) and which produces records with a single field name \(y\) is a supertype of a box that accepts \(\{x, z\}\) and returns \(\{y, z\}\). As a side effect, flow inheritance can be a source of redundancy in type signatures. Indeed, in the above example if the signature of the same box contains the rules \(\{x\} \rightarrow \{y\}\) and \(\{x, a\} \rightarrow \{y, a\}\), then clearly the second rule can be deleted without changing the effective box type. Value-wise, the second rule carries additional information, namely that a record \(\{x, a\}\) if presented to the input, will cause a record \(\{y, a\}\) to appear with a potentially different value of \(a\), while, assuming that \(b\) does not occur anywhere in the signature, if \(\{x,b\}\) is presented at the input it would cause the output of \(\{y, b\}\) with the output value of \(b\) being exactly the same as its input value. Still, as far as types are concerned, we can always assume that the signature is non-redundant, since the redundant rules change nothing in the type transformation defined by it.

### 2.6 Box Subtyping

Other forms of subtyping come from the conventional subtyping rules for a function:

\[
f : \tau_1 \rightarrow \tau_2, \quad \tau_1 \subseteq \tau'_1, \quad \tau'_2 \subseteq \tau_2
\]

and our concept of records that allows a subtype to have fewer variants and more fields in each variant. Accordingly, we state four subtyping rules. The rules may violate the topological order of the left-hand sides as fields and variants are inserted at arbitrary positions. To restore the order we use the topological permutation \(T_S\) defined on any set of variants \(S = \{v_i\}\) as a permutation of the index range \([1, |S|]\) such that \(T_S(j)\) enumerates the indices of the variants \(v_{T_S(j)}\) in topological order as \(j\) traverses the index range in ascending order. Here is the summary of the subtyping rules:

**Definition 2.4 (box subtyping)** Let box \(X\) have the type signature \((n, m)v[i] \rightarrow w[j]_i\). Then for any \(k \leq n\), the following are subtypes of \(X\):

**input field:** the type \((n, m)v[i] \rightarrow W[j][Tv[i]]\), where for some field name \(\phi \in v[k]\)

\[
V[i] = \begin{cases} v[i], & \text{if } i \neq k, \\ v[k] \setminus \{\phi\}, & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}, \quad W[j][i] = w[j]_i,
\]

provided that \(\phi \neq v[k] \setminus v[l]\) for all \(l > k\); otherwise, for any \(l > k\) such that \(\phi = v[k] \setminus v[l]\)

\[
V[i] = \begin{cases} v[i], & \text{if } i \neq k \wedge i < l, \\ v[k] \setminus \{\phi\}, & \text{if } i = k, \\ v[i-1], & \text{if } i > l \end{cases}, \quad W[j][i] = \begin{cases} w[j]_i, & \text{if } i \neq k \wedge i < l, \\ w[k] \cup w[l], & \text{if } i = k, \\ w[j][i-1], & \text{if } i > l \end{cases}
\]

**input variant:** for any variant \(\pi \notin \{v[i]\}\), the type \((n + 1, M)v[i] \rightarrow W[j][i]\), where

\[
V[i] = \begin{cases} v[i], & \text{if } i < k, \\ v[i-1], & \text{if } i > k, \\ \pi, & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}
\]

\[
W[j][i] = \begin{cases} w[j]_i, & \text{if } i < k, \\ w[j][i-1], & \text{if } i > k, \\ \pi, & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}
\]
provided that \((\forall i > k) v_i \not\subseteq \pi\) and \(\tau\) is such that for all \(i\) for which \(\pi \subseteq v_i\), the relation \(\tau \subseteq \{w_j^{[i]} \cup (\pi \setminus v_i^{[i]})\}\) holds as well. Note that this rule accounts for a newly introduced variant having extra fields over an existing one, so that these fields would have been flow inherited given the original type. Here

\[
M^{[i]} = \begin{cases} 
    m_i^{[i]} & \text{if } i < k, \\
    m_i^{[i-1]} & \text{if } i > k, \\
    \mu & \text{otherwise}
\end{cases},
\]

and \(\mu\) is the number of variants in \(\tau\).

**output field:** \((n, m)v_i^{[i]} \rightarrow W_j^{[i]}, \) where for all \(j \leq n, r \leq m^{[i]}, \) some \(l \leq m^{[k]}\) and a field name \(\phi\)

\[
W_j^{[i]} = \begin{cases} 
    w_j^{[i]} & \text{if } j \neq k \text{ or } r \neq l, \\
    w_j^{[k]} \cup \{\phi\} & \text{otherwise};
\end{cases}
\]

**output variant:** \((n, M)v_i^{[i]} \rightarrow W_j^{[i]}, \) where for some \(l \leq m^{[k]}\)

\[
W_j^{[i]} = \begin{cases} 
    w_j^{[i]} & \text{if } i \neq k, \\
    w_j^{[k]} & \text{if } i = k \text{ and } j < l, \\
    w_j^{[k]} & \text{if } i = k \text{ and } l \leq j \leq m^{[k]} - 1
\end{cases},
\]

and

\[
M^{[i]} = \begin{cases} 
    m_i^{[i]} & \text{if } i \neq k, \\
    m_i^{[k]} - 1 & \text{otherwise}
\end{cases},
\]

**flow inheritance:** for any field name \(\phi \not\in v^{[k]}, (n, m)v_i^{[i]} \rightarrow W_j^{[i]}, \) where

\[
V^{[i]} = \begin{cases} 
    v_i^{[i]} & \text{if } i \neq k, \\
    v_i^{[k]} \cup \{\phi\} & \text{otherwise}
\end{cases},
\]

and

\[
W_j^{[i]} = \begin{cases} 
    w_j^{[i]} & \text{if } i \neq k, \\
    w_j^{[k]} \cup \{\phi\} & \text{if } i = k \text{ and } j \leq m^{[k]}
\end{cases},
\]

provided that \(V^{[i]}\) is in topological order.

The above subtyping rules are general and consequently quite complex, although their meaning and application in most situations would be straightforward. Still two problems with subtyping remain at this point. Firstly, suppose that when a record of type \(v\) is sent to a box, the box responds with a certain output type \(\tau\); if the record is of a subtype \(v' \subseteq v\), the output type \(\tau'\) can be completely unrelated to \(\tau\), even though the intention could have been to just use the fields common with \(v\) and ignore any fields in \(v' \setminus v\). One could argue that the type signature of the box is quite clear about what the response is to any given type, and so if the additional fields are ‘caught’ by one of the alternatives, this would be deliberate and the user of the box would know about it. However, the second-order version of this problem causes a serious difficulty: in a network of boxes, how does the type signature of the network change if a box is replaced by its subtype? The answer potentially depends on every box in the network and cannot be abstracted easily. Even if we could obtain it, the ‘second-order’ signature of the network with respect to one participating box would, in general, be quite unwieldy, as it would have the type signature of the box in question as parameters. It is unlikely that such a device would be practical. To avoid problems of this kind, we constrain all box signatures to be monotonic, a property that we illustrate in the following.
2.7 Monotonicity

Informally, monotonicity means that one can use a subtype in place of a supertype and still assume that the output type is the same or coercible to the same. When there are more than one possible supertypes at the input, e.g. when the variant \{a, b\} is present alongside the variants \{a\} and \{b\}, the output type in response to each supertype must be included. In other words, a type signature is monotonic provided that for each input variant \(v[i]\) that is a subtype of some other input variant \(v[j]\), its associated output type \(\tau[i]\) is also a subtype of the output type \(\tau[j]\).

**Definition 2.5 (monotonicity)** The type signature \((n, m)v[i] \rightarrow \tau[i]\) is considered monotonic iff \[(\forall i \in \{1, \ldots, n\}) \tau[i] \subseteq \bigcup_{j \in \sigma v_i} \tau[j]\]

where \(\sigma v_i\) denotes the set of indices \(j\) of all supertypes \(v_j \supseteq v_i\) of \(v_i\) in the given type signature.

There is of course no guarantee of value consistency. For instance, a monotonic type signature that takes a single-field record \(x\) to a single-field record \(y\) can catch \(\{x, z\}\) and produce a different value \(y\) as well as further fields in the output record. This, however, is not a problem since the input record with field \(z\) carries more information which can be expected to affect the output value. The only thing that monotonicity guarantees is that the field \(y\) will not disappear merely because one has additionally supplied \(z\) at the input.

Monotonicity appears to be a useful property, but it does not come without a price. Consider an output type \(\tau\) as a response to input \(v\). If \(v' \supseteq v\) causes the box to yield output of type \(\tau' \subseteq \tau\), it follows that \(\tau'\) cannot have variants essentially different from those that \(\tau\) is made up of, in particular, one cannot introduce a nonempty variant that has no common fields with any variant of \(\tau\). However, imagine that the processing of \(v'\) sometimes raises certain exceptions that never arise when processing \(v\), and so a variant is required to encode those. Then \(\tau\) must include that variant (or a subset thereof) even though it will never be used at run-time as a response to \(v\). Adding a variant to \(\tau\), would raise the box type, so such an alteration may cause a complete re-design of the network. Hence, some account should be taken of possible extensions already when designing the initial version of a box, which is undesirable as it prevents extensibility of the network. The solution is in exploiting the multiplicity of supertypes. One could, for example, add a rule such as \(\langle x \rangle \rightarrow \tau''\) to the box signature and then include \(\langle x \rangle\) into \(v'\). Then \(\tau'\) would be allowed to "inherit" any variants from \(\tau''\) and extend them as appropriate. Direct use of the \(\langle x \rangle\) input can be guarded against by including a unique binding tag into one of the variants of \(\tau''\) which is not used by \(\tau'\). If the environment supplies \(\langle x \rangle\), then it will not be able to match the unique tag appearing at the output and the resulting type error will alert the user. Such schemes could get as complex and secure as necessary and desirable, and the basic type infrastructure of S-Net will provide the required type guarantee.

It is interesting to note that flow inheritance is itself a form of monotonic subtyping. Indeed, it adds the same field to the input record and to each of the output records, thus replacing every record by its subtype. It is therefore obvious that if a signature is monotonic, applying flow inheritance to it will keep it monotonic. The same is true of subtyping by input variant (see above); the rest of the subtyping rules: input/output field and the output variant should be further constrained by the condition that the resulting signature is monotonic. It is possible to state such constraints explicitly as a restriction on the choice of \(\phi\), and where appropriate output \(\tau\), but since the modifications required are straightforward we shall leave them out to save space.

2.8 S-Net and Object-Orientation

Object-oriented languages have a more restrictive concept of subtyping whereby fields are sequentially ordered and only the tail fields can be ignored to produce a supertype. The motivation here is to preserve static field offset and thus to efficiently compile field access. S-Net deliberately does not restrict subtyping this way, and could pay the penalty of up to a single additional
reference per field. The penalty would have been payable even without the liberal subtyping, since we accept that fields can have statically unknown size, which is the case in our component technology with opaque record fields. Still, with the added reference the record structure is fully static, due to the static topology of S-Net networks, which ensures that the type relationship between the producer and the consumer is resolved at compile time. More precisely, S-Net does have a dynamic connectivity mechanism (the indexed parallel replication combinator), but the dynamic connection is always with a member of a type-homogeneous box collection. Hence, the type relationship between the producer and consumer is always statically known.

Variant records in conventional languages have named variants and, hence, identification of an individual variant is by its names. In contrast, records in S-Net have anonymous variants containing named fields. Thus, variant identification is done primarily by analysis of the field set. As a consequence, input types of type signatures must be complete to ensure proper variant identification. Completeness may, for example, be achieved by the use of binding tags, which effectively mimic the named variants of conventional languages.

Whilst the conventional approach completely avoids the variant ambiguity, it also precludes subtyping on the basis of field names only. For instance, in our running example of a type for geometric bodies, conventional subtyping would preclude the construction of a generic box that alters the body position expressed in terms of fields \(x\) and \(y\) that are common to all variants. As a result a box would require variants to be identified individually and specifically, even when the processing of fields \(x\) and \(y\) is the same for all variants (e.g. a simple shift operation).

The conventional object-oriented approach to this problem would be to use a base class with fields \(x\) and \(y\) and a method \texttt{shift} to be inherited by all subclasses. This restricts the design to at most one set of common fields (without multiple inheritance). More importantly, the significance of a common group of fields may only become apparent at a late stage in the design process or due the re-design of a system. With traditional object-oriented technology this usually requires a re-design of the class hierarchy.

Subtyping by subsetting as introduced in Section 2.2 supports a-posteriori introduction of a supertype (equivalent to a base class). The price to pay in implementation is the price of a run-time coercion, since we may no longer assume that the fields to be processed necessarily form a prefix of the field list.
Chapter 3

Network Description Language

3.1 Overview

S-NET essentially is a language for specifying hierarchical networks of boxes statically interconnected by typed streams. As a pure coordination language S-NET does not provide any means for the specification of computations, i.e. the concrete behaviour of boxes. This is left to existing computation or box languages like C or SAC [17, 18]. Likewise the concrete data travelling along the typed streams is opaque to S-NET and is only meaningful to the box language(s).

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{SNNet} & \Rightarrow [\text{Definition}]^* \\
\text{Definition} & \Rightarrow \text{TypeDef} \mid \text{TypeSigDef} \mid \text{NetDef} \mid \text{BoxDef} \mid \text{Metadata} \\
\text{NetDef} & \Rightarrow \text{net} \ \text{Name} \ [\text{NetSignature}] \ \text{NetBody} \\
\text{NetSignature} & \Rightarrow \text{TypeSignature} \\
& \mid \text{Type} \rightarrow \ldots \\
\text{NetBody} & \Rightarrow [\{ [\text{Definition}]^* \}] \ \text{connect} \ \text{TopoExpr} \\
\end{align*}
\]

Figure 3.1: Grammar of S-NET specifications

Fig. 3.1 provides the root definition of S-NET syntax. An S-NET program is a sequence of definitions of types, type signatures, (atomic) boxes, (compound) networks and metadata. Type and type signature definitions have already been described in detail in Chapter 2. The purpose and use of metadata will be explained in Chapter 8. The definition of a network starts with the keyword \text{net} followed by the network name, an optional network type, an optional network body (with further local S-NET definitions) and a network topology specification. The concrete type signature of a network is generally inferred by the S-NET compiler based on the network topology. Nevertheless, the programmer may provide an explicit type signature. Any given type signature must be in box subtype relationship with the inferred type signature. In other words, the given type signature must be a subsignature of the inferred signature. Otherwise, the S-NET compiler will raise a type error. Details on box subtyping can be found in Section 2.6.

Although unnecessary from a purely technical perspective, providing explicit type information makes sense for two reasons. First of all, it may serve as a documentation of the network, explaining its extensional behaviour in a concise way. More importantly, subtyping on type signatures provides an opportunity to specialise or customise given networks to particular needs. For example, a given network may support more input variants than are actually needed in a certain context. Restricting the input type of the network as desired, allows the S-NET compiler to optimise the given network a-posteriori. Likewise, we may add additional record entries to variants of the input

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type. Although the operand network does not process these entries, flow inheritance ensures that they are added to each outgoing record before leaving the operand network. If the given output type of the type signature (in some variant) contains less record entries than the inferred output type, the additional entries will be discarded. Hence, if a type signature is provided, the network will behave exactly as specified. Furthermore, an annotated type signature also creates a private name space for the encapsulated network. Consequently, labels used internally in the network cannot conflict with labels flow-inherited on the outer network level.

Instead of providing a complete type signature, one may also choose to provide an input type only and to leave the corresponding output type unspecified. If so, the compiler infers the proper corresponding output type from the network definitions and the user simply foregoes the opportunity to manipulate the inferred output type by annotation.

The specification of a network is completed by the definition of the interconnection topology following the key word connect. In S-Net we specify interconnection topologies by an expression language. These topology expressions are made up of instances of networks defined in the current scope as well as instances of two kinds of built-in boxes: filter boxes for housekeeping tasks and synchrocells for synchronisation of records in the streaming network. Filter boxes and synchrocells are explained in detail in Sections 3.3 and 3.5, respectively. The operators of our network topology expression language are named network combinators; we elaborate on them in Sections 3.4 and 3.6.

The scoping rules of S-Net follow a pattern common to many other programming languages with local definitions. The scope of a type, box or network definition begins immediately behind the end of the definition. This deliberately precludes any recursive network definition: a network cannot refer to itself in its own connect expression. The scope of local definitions in network bodies include the connect expression of the network definition, but end immediately thereafter. For reasons of simplicity we disallow re-definitions of identifiers within the same scope.

Last but not least, S-Net allows for comments in the C/C++ style, i.e., single line comments start with // and last until the following end-of-line, multi-line comments start with /* and end with */.

![Figure 3.2: Graphical representation of S-Net networks](image)

Fig. 3.2 sketches out a graphical representation of (compound) networks. It takes the form of a box with the network name in a head line, followed by a second line for the associated type signature. Since the explicit specification of a network's type signature is optional, this field may well be empty. Graphical representations of partially compiled S-Net programs may feature the inferred type signature here. The remaining field shows a graphical representation of the network constituents and their interconnection topology, as outlined in the remainder of this chapter. Fully-fledged examples can be found in Chapter 12.

### 3.2 Box Declarations

In the design of S-Net boxes are the atomic units that are assembled to streaming networks in an inductive process. They also form the interface between the coordination layer of S-Net and the
(sequential) computing layer implemented in a conventional language of choice. An S-Net box declaration promotes conventional legacy code to an asynchronous component within a streaming network.

\[
\text{BoxDef} \quad \Rightarrow \quad \text{box} \quad \text{Name} \quad (\text{BoxSignature})
\]

\[
\text{BoxSignature} \quad \Rightarrow \quad [\text{BoxType}] \rightarrow [\text{BoxType} \mid \text{BoxType}^*]
\]

\[
\text{BoxType} \quad \Rightarrow \quad (\text{RecordEntry}^* \mid \text{RecordEntry})
\]

Figure 3.3: Grammar of S-Net box declarations

Fig. 3.3 shows the S-Net syntax for declaring user-defined boxes. A box is declared by the key word box followed by the box name and the box signature. The box signature looks very much like a type signature (cf. Section 2.3). However, it is restricted to a single mapping and a non-variant input type. Furthermore, we use round brackets instead of curly brackets to emphasise the fact that the order of fields and tags does matter in box signatures. The reason is that box signatures serve a dual purpose: in addition to describing the extensional behaviour of the box in the sense of what kinds of records it accepts and what kinds it emits in response they also describe the function call interface to the box language implementation. However, a type signature can trivially be derived from a box signature as is done by the type inference subsystem of the S-Net compiler.

Both the input type and the output type(s) of a box are optional. Whereas all regular boxes feature both input and output box types, two special cases can be realised omitting either of them. A missing input box type characterises a initialiser box. While a regular box is triggered by an appropriate record on its input stream, an initialiser box, as the box signature suggests, does not wait for any token on the input stream. Instead it is triggered automatically upon instantiation as part of a streaming network. Initialiser boxes allow for the introduction of constant box language domain values anywhere in a network. This is an often useful alternative to having such values propagated into the network through its global input stream. A missing output box type simply expresses the fact that the box does not emit any records in response to receiving input records of the appropriate type. Effectively, such a box discards all records it receives.

The specification of the intensional behaviour of a box is outside the scope of S-Net; a box is implemented using a conventional compute language, as opposed to S-Net as a coordination language. It is up to the S-Net compiler to locate the compiled box code in the file system and up to the programmer to provide the code accordingly in the first place.

![Figure 3.4: Graphical representation of user-defined boxes](image)

Fig. 3.4 sketches out a graphical representation of a user-defined box in S-Net. It consists of a head line for the box name followed by second row containing the box signature. The remaining field features further meta data associated with the box, e.g. box language (pseudo) code.
3.3 The Filter Box

The primitive filter box in S-Net is devoted to all kinds of housekeeping operations. Effectively, any operation that does not require knowledge of field values can be expressed by this versatile primitive box in a simpler and more elegant way than using a box and deferring the actual operational behaviour to a separate implementation in a box language. Among these operations are:

- eliminating fields and tags from passing records,
- copying fields and tags,
- adding tags,
- duplicating record fields,
- splitting records,
- simple computations on tag values.

Fig. 3.5 shows the syntax of S-Net filter boxes. Enclosed in square brackets their main syntactic constituents are a pattern and a potentially empty sequence of guarded actions. The pattern syntactically resembles a record type. Like the input type of boxes, the pattern describes what records the filter accepts as input. More precisely, the filter box only accepts a record as input whose type is a subtype of the pattern; excess fields and tags are handled by flow inheritance.

A guarded action consists of an optional tag expression and an associated list of actions. We define a simple expression language on integer values that allows us to define computations involving integer constants as well as the values of tags matched in the pattern. Aggregate expressions can be formed using a fixed set of operators. The usual operator associativities and priorities apply. Hence, operator priorities are essentially in the order of appearance in Fig. 3.5. A simple type inference mechanism properly distinguishes between integer and boolean intermediate values.

The type system of S-Net ensures that any incoming record matches the pattern. Hence, the filter starts with evaluating the guard expressions in their order of appearance. The first guard expression that evaluates to true defines the filter’s reaction on the incoming record. A guarded action without a guard expression, effectively an unguarded action, serves as a default action in case that none of the guard conditions in preceding guarded actions holds. If none of the guard expressions holds and there is also no default action, the filter consumes the incoming record without any response.

The action itself is defined by a sequence of record specifications to be emitted on the output stream. Again, there may be an empty action associated with some guard in which case the filter only consumes the input record. Otherwise, the length of the list determines the number of records produced in response to any incoming record.

Each output record specification is of a set of record entries enclosed in curly brackets. If a record entry also occurs in the pattern, the corresponding field or tag is left untouched by the filter box and is forwarded from the incoming record to the outgoing record. If a record entry occurs in the pattern, but not in the output record specification, it is discarded (at least for this output record specification; it may still be used in other output record specifications). If a record entry occurs in the output record specification, but not in the pattern, it is new and requires initialisation. In the case of a field the only way of initialisation is by reference to another field from the pattern. This may, for instance, be used to rename fields without changing their values. In the case of a tag, we can use the same simple expression language that we have introduced for guard expressions to define values of new tags based on the values of tags from the pattern. Initialisation of new tags is still optional; zero serves as a default tag value.

For example, the following filter box
\[ \{a,b \rightarrow 1 \} \]
accepts only records that contain fields a and b and discards them unconditionally, whereas the filter box

S-Net Language Report, Version 2.0
Filter $\Rightarrow [\text{Pattern} \rightarrow \text{GuardedAction} \ast \text{Action}]$

| Pattern $\Rightarrow \{ \text{RecordEntry}[,\text{RecordEntry}]\ast\} $
| GuardedAction $\Rightarrow$ if $<$ TagExpr $>$ then Action else $\text{Action}$
| Action $\Rightarrow [\text{RecordOutput}[,\text{RecordOutput}]\ast]\}$
| RecordOutput $\Rightarrow \{\text{OutputField}[,\text{OutputField}]\ast\}$
| OutputField $\Rightarrow $FieldName $\{=\text{FieldName}\}$
| TagName $\Rightarrow$ SimpleTagName | BindingTagName
| TagExpr $\Rightarrow$ TagName
| IntegerConst
| (TagExpr)
| UnaryOperator TagExpr
| TagExpr BinaryOperator TagExpr
| TagExpr $?\text{TagExpr}:\text{TagExpr}$
| UnaryOp $\Rightarrow$ ! | abs

BinaryOp $\Rightarrow$ ArithmeticOp
| ComparisonOp
| RelationalOp
| LogicalOp
| ArithmeticOp $\Rightarrow$ $\ast$ | $/$ | $\%$ | $+$ | $-$
| RelationalOp $\Rightarrow$ $==$ | $!=$ | $<$ | $<=$ | $>$ | $>$=
| LogicalOp $\Rightarrow$ $\&\&$ | $||$
| ComparisonOp $\Rightarrow$ min | max

Figure 3.5: Grammar of S-Net filter box

\[
\{a,b\} \rightarrow \{c=a, \langle d=42\rangle\}
\]
renames field a to c, discards field b and adds a new tag $\langle d\rangle$ that is set to 42. Furthermore, the filter box

\[
\{c,\langle d\rangle\} \text{ if } \langle d=42\rangle \rightarrow \{c\} ; \{\langle d\rangle\}
\text{ if } \langle d=43\rangle \rightarrow \{c\}
\rightarrow \]
takes on records with field c and tag $\langle d\rangle$. If the value of $\langle d\rangle$ equals 42, the filter splits the record and first sends field c and then tag $\langle d\rangle$ to the output stream. If the value of $\langle d\rangle$ equals 43, it sends field c to the output stream, but discards tag $\langle d\rangle$. In all other cases, the filter discards the input record entirely.

In its simplest possible variant the filter $\{\} \rightarrow \{\}$ behaves as an identity function and simply forwards any incoming record without binding tags to its output stream without touching it. This behaviour can be very useful when combining the identity filter in parallel with some other SNet.
In such a configuration the filter acts as a default case with the parallel SNet handling specific cases of records on the stream while all records not matching the input type of that SNet are bypassed via the identity filter. Given the relevance of the identity filter to construct SNets of this kind we introduce “[ ]” as a notational simplification.

Figure 3.6: Graphical representation of S-Net filters

Type inference for filter boxes is rather straightforward. Essentially, the pattern acts as an input type while the sequence of guarded actions makes up the output type by stripping of record entry initialisations as necessary.

Fig. 3.6 sketches out a graphical representation of S-Net filter boxes.

3.4 Network Combinators

A distinctive feature of S-Net is the fact that complex network topologies are not defined by some form of wire list, but instead by an expression language. Each network definition contains such a topology expression following the key word connect. Atomic expressions are made up of box and network names defined in the current scope as well as of built-in filter boxes and synchrocells. Complex expressions are inductively defined using a set of network combinators that represent the four essential construction principles in S-Net: serial and parallel composition of two (different) networks as well as serial and parallel replication of a single network. We give a formal definition of the network topology expression language in Fig. 3.7.

The binary serial combinator “...” connects the output stream of the left operand to the input stream of the right operand. The input stream of the left operand and the output stream of the right operand become those of the combined network. The serial combinator establishes computational pipelines, as illustrated in Fig. 3.8.

As a simple example of a network definition take the following network example that contains two user-defined boxes, foo and bar, and connects both using the serial combinator:

```plaintext
net example {
  box foo ((a,b)->(c,d));
  box bar ((c)->(e));
} connect foo..bar;
```

All output from box foo goes into box bar. This example nicely demonstrates the power of flow inheritance: in fact the output type of box foo is not identical to the input type of box bar, but rather is a subtype of it. By means of flow inheritance, any field d originating from box foo is stripped of the record before it goes into box bar, and any record emitted by box bar will have this field be added to field e.

The binary parallel combinator “|” combines its operand networks or boxes in parallel. Any incoming record is sent to exactly one operand depending on its type and the type signatures of the operand networks or boxes. Fig. 3.9 illustrates the parallel composition of two networks foo and bar, i.e. foo|bar.

To be precise, any incoming record is sent to that operand network whose type signature’s input type is matched best by the record’s type. Let us assume the type signature of foo is \{a\}->{$\{b$\}
### Figure 3.7: Grammar of S-Net topology expression language

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grammar</th>
<th>Rule</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TopoExpr</td>
<td>$\Rightarrow\BoxName$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combination</td>
<td>$\Rightarrow\ Serial \</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serial</td>
<td>$\Rightarrow\ TopoExpr\ SerialComb\ TopoExpr$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parallel</td>
<td>$\Rightarrow\ TopoExpr\ ParallelComb\ TopoExpr$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Star</td>
<td>$\Rightarrow\ TopoExpr\ StarComb\ Terminator$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terminator</td>
<td>$\Rightarrow\ GuardPattern\ [\ ,\ GuardPattern\ ]^*$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Split</td>
<td>$\Rightarrow\ TopoExpr\ SplitComb\ Tag$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SerialComb</td>
<td>$\Rightarrow\ .$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ParallelComb</td>
<td>$\Rightarrow\</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>StarComb</td>
<td>$\Rightarrow\ *\</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SplitComb</td>
<td>$\Rightarrow\ !\</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3.8: Illustration of serial composition of networks: **foo**..**bar**

and that of bar is \{a,c\}→\{b,d\}. An incoming record \{a,<t>\} would go to foo because it does not match the input type of bar, but thanks to record subtyping does match the input type of foo. In contrast, an incoming record \{a,b,c\} would go to bar. Although it matches in fact both input types, the input type of bar scores higher (2 matches) than the input type of foo (1 match).

If a record’s type matches both type signatures under consideration equally well, the record is non-deterministically sent to one of the operand networks. In this case, an S-Net implementation is free to choose an appropriate scheduling technique. For example, it may send the record to the less loaded operand for proper workload balancing. The parallel combinator is also referred to as choice combinator stressing the property that an input record chooses exactly one branch.

The output streams of the operand networks (or boxes) are merged into a single stream, which becomes the output stream of the combined network. By default, merging of output streams is done non-deterministically, i.e., as soon as a record is available in any of the operand output streams, it is immediately forwarded to the combined output stream. This behaviour can be implemented rather efficiently, but it does not preserve any order induced from the combined input stream of the network. In fact, an input record may effectively overtake an earlier one when taking the other branch of a parallel composition.

There is a restriction on the type signatures of networks that may be combined in parallel: covariance. Whenever the input type of one operand network is a subtype of the input type of

```plaintext
\text{foo} → 
\text{bar} →
```
the other operand network, their output types must be in the same subtyping relationship. This restriction is motivated by the following observation. If one operand network provides a general solution to some problem and the other operand network a specific solution for a subset of potential incoming records then the resulting records emitted by the specialised solution should likewise be more specific than those emitted by the general solution. Hence, the restriction helps to construct orderly behaving networks.

The serial replication combinator “*” replicates the operand network (the left operand) infinitely many times and connects the replicas by serial composition. The right operand of the combinator defines a set of type patterns. As soon as a record matches one of them, i.e., the record’s type is subtype of the type pattern, the record is released and sent to the global output stream. In fact, an incoming record that matches one of the termination patterns right away is immediately passed to the output stream without being processed by the operand network. This coincidence with the meaning of star in regular expressions particularly motivates our choice of the star symbol, and we sometimes refer to the serial replication combinator as the star combinator. Fig. 3.10 illustrates the operational behaviour of the star combinator for a network \texttt{foo*{<stop>}}: Records travel through serially combined replicas of \texttt{foo} until they contain a tag \texttt{<stop>}. Actual replication of the operand network is demand-driven. Hence, networks in S-Net are not static, but generally evolve dynamically.

Last but not least, the parallel replication combinator “!” takes a network or box as its left operand and a tag as its right operand. Like the star combinator, it replicates the operand, but connects the replicas using parallel rather than serial composition. The number of replicas is conceptually infinite. Each replica is identified by an integer index. Any incoming record goes to the replica identified by the value associated with the given tag, i.e., all records that have the same tag value will be processed by the same replica of the operand network. Since parallel replication actually splits a stream of records depending on a certain tag, we also refer to “!” as the index split combinator. Fig. 3.11 illustrates the operational behaviour of the index split combinator for a network \texttt{foo!<tag>}. In analogy to serial replication, the instantiation of replicas of the operand network is demand-driven.

While Figures 3.8 and 3.9 immediately insinuate the graphical representation of serial and parallel composition, the illustrations of serial and parallel replication are less suitable as graphical representations. Instead, we use the network-like representations shown in Fig. 3.12.
3.5 Synchronisation

What does synchronisation mean in the streaming network context of S-Net? Network combinatorsinators inspect records for routing purposes, but never manipulate individual records. This is the privilege of boxes and filters. They both may split a record into several ones, but because they process one record after the other in a stateless manner, we have not yet seen any way to join records. Joining records is the essence of synchronisation in the context of S-Net, and we have a special construct for this purposes: the synchrocell.

The concrete syntax of S-Net synchrocells is given in Fig. 3.13. Embedded within [ ] and { } parentheses, we find an at least 2-element list of possibly guarded patterns. The concept of a pattern, syntactically resembling a record type, is already familiar from Section 3.3. A guarded pattern is one that is associated with a guard expression defined using our simple expression language introduced for filter boxes. The principle idea behind the synchrocell is that it keeps incoming records which match one of the patterns until all patterns have been matched. Only then the records are merged into a single one that is released to the output stream. Matching here means that the type of the record is a subtype of the pattern and, if a guard expression is present, it evaluates to true. The pattern also acts as an input type specification of the synchrocell: a synchrocell only accepts records that match at least one of the patterns.

More precisely, a synchrocell has storage for exactly one record of each pattern. When a record arrives at a pristine synchrocell, it is kept in this storage and is associated with each pattern that it matches. Any record arriving thereafter is only kept in the synchrocell if it matches a previously unmatched pattern. Otherwise, it is immediately sent to the output stream without alteration. As soon as a record arrives that matches the last remaining previously unmatched variant, one output record is created by merging the fields of all stored records (including the triggering one). This requires patterns of a synchrocell to be pairwise disjoint. Otherwise, we had indistinguishable fields in the output record. If an incoming record matches all patterns of a fresh synchrocell right away, it is immediately passed to the output stream without delay.

After successful synchronisation a synchrocell effectively becomes an identity box as any incoming record is directly forwarded to the output stream no matter what. In particular, S-Net
3.5. SYNCHRONISATION

\[ \text{Sync} \Rightarrow \left[ \begin{array}{c} \text{GuardPattern} \left[ \begin{array}{c} \text{GuardPattern} \end{array} \right] + \end{array} \right] \]

\[ \text{GuardPattern} \Rightarrow \text{Pattern} \begin{array}{c} \text{if} \end{array} \begin{array}{c} < \text{TagExpr} > \end{array} \]

Figure 3.13: Grammar of S-Net synchrocells

Synchrocells do not continue into a further synchronisation cycle, as the reader may have thought at first glance. In fact, any implementation of S-Net would aim at removing triggered synchrocells from the streaming network. The reason for this design is essentially twofold: Firstly, we want to keep the synchrocells as simplistic as possible and use normal network facilities to express higher forms of synchronisation within S-Net itself. Secondly, it turns out that reducing synchronisation to its essentials, as our synchrocells do, is a prerequisite for mimicking stateful computations with S-Net. We shall elaborate on both applications of synchrocells towards the end of this section.

Fig. 3.14 shows the graphical representation of a synchrocell. Following the name “sync” in the status line, the main field contains the patterns line by line. The double line to the right of the patterns expresses the synchronisation.

Synchrocells require a special treatment with respect to flow inheritance: At first glance, one may say that if a synchrocell stores a matching input record, it produces no output in response to this record. Hence, excess record fields, which would bypass the synchrocell otherwise, should be discarded. Any record output after successful synchronisation should be extended by the excess fields of the last incoming record because the synchrocell produces this output as a response to the input of this record. Last but not least, if a record is passed through the synchrocell in the case of overflow, there is output in response to input and, therefore, the excess fields bypass the synchrocell as usual. However, this behaviour leads to very irregular and difficult to control behaviour of synchrocells where the sequence of arrival of records to be matched is non-deterministic (and so for good reason). In this case, flow inheritance would keep excess fields in a non-deterministic way as well, and that makes orderly processing of synchronised records in the subsequent network extremely difficult. Hence, it is not the record that triggers synchronisation which keeps its excess fields, but the record that matched the (lexically) first pattern in the definition of the synchrocell. Excess fields of all records that match other than the lexically first pattern are discarded immediately.

The type signature of a synchrocell \([v_1, \ldots, v_n]\) is

\[
\begin{align*}
\{v_1\} & \rightarrow \{v_1\} \mid \{v_1, \ldots, v_n\} \\
\{v_2\} & \rightarrow \{v_2\} \\
\cdots & \\
\{v_n\} & \rightarrow \{v_n\}
\end{align*}
\]

It reflects the fact that any incoming record may either be passed through in case of an overflow or it may trigger synchronisation, in which case the output record contains fields from all patterns. The asymmetry in the output types stems from the different treatment of the first type in the pattern with respect to flow inheritance.
An alternative flow inheritance rule for synchrocells would be to keep the excess fields of all synchronised records, but this rule has its downsides as well: Typically, excess fields of different records have the same labels, but the labels may be associated with different values. Since all values are entirely opaque to S-Net as a matter of design this situation cannot be detected and leads to further undesirable non-determinism.

As mentioned before, the simplistic design of our synchrocells, that captures exactly the essence of synchronisation in a streaming network, has been chosen very carefully. We shall now see how our bare-bone synchrocells can be used successfully to implement advanced forms of synchronisation making use of the network composition features of S-Net.

A very common form of synchronisation in a streaming network is continuous synchronisation, where the first record that matches pattern A is joined with the first record that matches pattern B, the second record that matches pattern A with the second record that matches pattern B and so on. With S-Net synchrocells this behaviour can easily be achieved when embedded into a serial replication with an exit pattern that is the union of all patterns in the synchrocell. For example, the network
\[
\{ [a,b],[c,d] | ] * \{ a,b,c,d \}
\]
achieves continuous synchronisation for records of type \{a,b\} with records of type \{c,d\}. Let us see how this works in detail.

Initially the serial replication is uninstantiated. When the first record, say \{a,b\} arrives, it does not match the exit pattern of the star combinator and, hence, the serial replication unfolds and instantiates a fresh synchrocell, where the record is stored. Let us assume another record \{a,b\} comes next. Since it neither matches the exit pattern it is routed into the first instance of the serial replication and hits the synchrocell. As the corresponding pattern has already been matched, the synchrocell passes \{a,b\} on. It still does not match the exit pattern and, hence, a second instance of the serial replication unfolds, which again has a fresh synchrocell where the record is stored.

If the third record is of type \{c,d\}, it likewise is routed into the first instance of the serial replication where it hits the synchrocell that is already primed with the first record \{a,b\}. The synchrocell joins the two records forming a new record \{a,b,c,d\}. This record does match the exit pattern of the serial replication and leaves the network. Semantically the first synchrocell now becomes the identity, but, operationally, the whole first instance of the serial replication is removed and subsequent records immediately reach the second instance. In fact, the combination of synchrocell and serial replication allows us to implement an unbounded matching store with the means of S-Net.

### 3.6 Deterministic Combinators

In three out of four network combinators, the parallel combinator, the star combinator and the index split combinator, streams are merged non-deterministically. This operational behaviour is efficient as records are forwarded to the joint output stream as soon as they are available on one of the operand networks’ output streams. The downside of this approach is that records may effectively overtake each other. Take the parallel composition of \textit{foo} and \textit{bar} in Fig. 3.9 as an example. Let us assume the first record on the joint input stream is routed to \textit{foo} and the second record to \textit{bar}. There is no reason why box \textit{bar} should not emit its response record(s) to its output stream before box \textit{foo} does so. As a consequence, the order of records in the joint input stream is not preserved.

Whether or not the non-deterministic merging of streams is considered a problem, very much depends on the concrete application. Therefore, S-Net actually features two variants of each of the network combinators that involve merging of streams: we have a deterministic parallel composition combinator “||”, a deterministic star combinator “**” and a deterministic index split combinator “!!”. They are otherwise identical to their non-deterministic counterparts introduced in the previous section, but do preserve the causal order of records.

Providing both a non-deterministic and a deterministic variant of each relevant network com-
Combinator associativity and priority raises the questions of associativity and priority rules. The binary combinators (“..”, “|” and “||”) are in fact associative. For example, the two expressions A..(B..C) and (A..B)..C are semantically and operationally equivalent. If brackets are left out in complex expressions, we assume left-associativity for all binary combinators. For example, the expression A..B..C is equivalent to (A..B)..C.

In order to facilitate the construction of complex topology expressions brackets may be left out according to the following order of combinator priorities:

```
|  | ||  | ..  | **  | *  |
```

The rationale behind these priorities is the following: The serial and parallel replication combinators are effectively unary combinators as far as network construction is concerned. They all have the same highest priority.

The fact that parallel combination has lower priority than serial combination reflects their similarity to boolean disjunction and conjunction: in parallel combination a record is either routed through one operand network or through the other; in serial combination a record is routed through the first and through the second operand network.

Last but not least, deterministic parallel combination has a higher priority than its non-deterministic counterpart because non-deterministic behaviour allows for a looser form of coupling between the operand networks.

### 3.8 S-Net Programming in the Large

S-Net provides support for programming-in-the-large, i.e., S-Net specifications that stretch over multiple files. Any S-Net file or module implicitly exports the top-level network definition that
bears the same name as the file (i.e. module) itself.

Any network identifier in a connect expression that is unbound within the current file is con-
sidered to refer to an external network definition. The correspondence between network name
and file name allows the S-Net compiler to search for the definition of such a network within a
set of directories that may be defined by environment variables and compiler parameters in an
implementation-dependent way.

Effectively, each S-Net file itself defines a scope within the set of S-Net files in a local file
system. The scoping rules sketched out in Section 3.1 apply within each individual file. On top of
that level there is a global scope of exported networks. Any locally unbound network identifier is
supposed to be bound in the global file system level scope.
Chapter 4

Distributed S-Net

4.1 Design Rationale

As a high-level coordination language, S-Net in general is not bound to any memory model. The language concepts, however, fit in rather well with the basic concept of programming distributed systems — from systems-on-chip to clusters of workstations and global grid compute infrastructures — via message passing. S-Net boxes and networks are indeed asynchronous components that communicate with each other by sending messages via communication channels. In principle, the language could be used to define distributed memory systems as it is by mapping components directly to nodes of the system. However, direct mapping of components may not be sensible as we must take the cost of data transfers between nodes into account. Execution times of components may vary significantly from simple filters performing lightweight operations to boxes consisting of heavy computations. Another obstacle is the dynamic nature of S-Net networks that evolve over time due to serial and parallel replication.

What we need instead of a one-to-one mapping of boxes to compute nodes is a veritable distribution layer within an S-Net network where coarse-grained network islands are mapped to different compute nodes while within each such node networks execute using the existing shared memory multithreaded runtime system [19]. Each of these islands consists of a number of not necessarily contiguous networks of components that interact via shared-memory internally. Only S-Net streams that connect components on different nodes are implemented by means of message passing. From the programmer’s perspective, however, the implementation of individual streams on the language level by either shared memory buffers or distributed memory message passing is entirely transparent.

It would be desirable if the decomposition of networks into islands would be transparent as well, thus resulting in a fully implicit parallelisation architecture, that balances itself autonomously as the network evolves over time. With our shared memory runtime system, we have done exactly this. However, given the substantial cost of inter-node data communication in relation to intra-node communication between S-Net components the right selection of islands is crucial to the overall runtime performance of a network. Therefore, we postponed the idea of an autonomously dynamically self-balancing distributed memory runtime system for now and instead carefully extend the language in order to give the programmer control over placement of boxes and networks. In addition to the four network combinators introduced in Section 3.4 we add two more:

- static placement of a network on some node;
- indexed placement of a network where an index attached to the data determines the node on which that data is to be routed to.

We call this extended form of S-Net dsnet. Distributed S-Net extensions are transparent with respect to S-Net semantics, i.e. if an S-Net program is not specifically compiled for a distributed memory environment, placement has no effect. While static placement is just ignored, dynamic placement behaves like standard indexed parallel replication.
The concept of a node in Distributed S-Net is a very general one; its concrete meaning remains implementation-dependent. We use simple integer numbers to identify nodes because that choice fits the concept of tag values in S-Net, and, thus, allows programmers to compute placements both on the coordination language level (S-Net) and on the box language level. For our reference implementation we chose MPI (Message Passing Interface) as communication middleware, mainly for its paramount availability and well-known efficiency. Hence, S-Net nodes map one-to-one to MPI process numbers. In fact, we use very few of the MPI features in order to maintain compatibility with future, potentially more lightweight middleware implementations specifically geared at multi-memory multicores, where node numbers may well denote concrete hardware cores.

4.2 Placement Combinators

Distributed S-Net extends S-Net by two placement combinators that allow the programmer to map networks to processing nodes either statically or dynamically based on the value of a tag contained in the data. Fig. 4.1 shows the corresponding syntactic extensions. Let \( \Lambda \) denote an S-Net network or box. Static placement (written \( \Lambda@42 \)) maps the given network or box statically to one node, here node 42. A location assigned to a network recursively applies to all of those subnetworks and boxes within the network whose location is not explicitly specified by another placement combinator. If no location is specified at the outermost scope of S-Net network definition hierarchy, a default location, zero, is used instead.

The second placement combinator is actually an extension of the indexed parallel replication combinator. Instead of building multiple local instances of the argument network, it distributes those instances over several nodes. Let \( \Lambda \) denote an S-Net network or box, then \( \Lambda!@<\text{tag}> \) creates instances of \( \Lambda \) on each node referred to by \(<\text{tag}>\) in a demand driven way. Effectively, this combinator behaves very much like regular indexed parallel replication, the only difference being that each instance of \( \Lambda \) is located on a different node. Accordingly, there are two versions of the dynamic placement combinator: a non-deterministic one and a deterministic one. The latter maintains the causal order of records across different instances of the operand network while the former may reorder records from different instances in any way. See Section 3.6 for details on deterministic and non-deterministic combinators.

```
TopoExpr \Rightarrow \text{BoxName} | \text{NetName} | \text{Sync} | \text{Filter} | \text{Combination} | ( \text{TopoExpr} )

Combination \Rightarrow \text{Serial} | \text{Star} | \text{Parallel} | \text{Split} | \text{StatPlcmnt} | \text{DynPlcmnt}

StatPlcmnt \Rightarrow \text{TopoExpr StatPlComb IntegerConst}

DynPlcmnt \Rightarrow \text{TopoExpr DynPlComb Tag}

StatPlComb \Rightarrow @

DynPlComb \Rightarrow !@ | !!@
```

Figure 4.1: Grammar of Distributed S-Net topology expression language extensions

Placement combinators split a network into sections that are located on the same node; each node may contain any number of network sections. Sections located in the same node are executed
in the same shared memory, which means that data produced in one section can be consumed in
another section on the same node without any data transfers between address spaces.

We use ordinal numbers as the least common denominator to identify nodes. These nodes
are purely logical; any concrete mapping between logical nodes identified by ordinal numbers and
physical devices is implementation dependent. The motivation for this is that defining the actual
physical nodes in the language level would bind the program to the exact system defined at compile
time. Using logical nodes allows the decisions about the physical distribution to be postponed
until runtime. With MPI as our current middleware of choice the number directly reflects an
MPI node. In more grid-like environments it may be more desirable to have a URL instead. We
consider this mapping of numbers to actual nodes to be beyond the scope of S-Net.

When the placement of a network is defined, the end of the input and the beginning of the
output stream of the network are always located on the given node. If the location of the network
is not explicitly defined, the end of the input stream of the network is located in the node where
the first component of the network is located at. Correspondingly, the beginning of the output
stream of the network is located on the node in which the last component of the network is located
at. The input and output streams of a network do not have to be on the same node. This feature
allows an S-Net application to move data from one node to another while processing it.

DISTRIBUTED S-Net allows you to write typical message passing applications at a very high
level of abstraction. Section 12.4 illustrates the practical use of DISTRIBUTED S-Net by means
of a simple application: a distributed password cracker.
Chapter 5

Type System

5.1 Introduction

S-Net is not a conventional language, and its type system differs from the common understanding of the type systems in object-oriented or functional languages. The types in S-Net not only specify what should be input and what may be output, they also influence the decision of routing, in front of every parallel composition, for each input record.

In an S-Net program, the programmer provides box signatures and the signatures of some networks, but no routing information. Its absence indicates that we are not yet able to describe how parallel compositions behave. However, assuming the routing information exists, we can observe the complete typewise behaviour of the program, and therefore the type system can now check whether the program is type-safe.

To populate the routing information, the type system performs inference on each parallel branch to find out what types of records are useful. The resulting routing information attracts the appropriate types into the branch, although the procedure cannot guarantee that all attracted types are safe within the branch, and a type check is still due.

In this chapter, we first present the type checking procedure on an abstract interpretation of an S-Net program populated with the routing information, and then introduce the route inference procedure.

5.2 S-Net Abstract Interpretation

The type system does not deal with individual records, and using the concrete semantics is an overkill. In this section, we present an abstract interpretation of S-Net programs adapted to the purposes of the type system. We call the resulting language S-Net_A.

S-Net_A Syntax

Figure 5.1 shows the syntax after the adaptation. All syntactic elements dealing with individual records or label values are removed or simplified. Comparing to the standard syntax, S-Net_A has the following differences:

- Tags and fields are grouped into one single set Field.

- For structural simplicity, boxes and named subnetworks are written inline within the topology expressions, instead of defined separately and referred to by names. Moreover, subnetworks without signatures are simply replaced by their topology expressions.

- Boxes do not have names because the external function referred to by box names, which manipulate the values in the records, are not checked by the type system.
\[ P \in \text{Program} \quad ::= \quad N \]
\[ N \in \text{Net} \quad ::= \quad \text{net} (\sigma) \text{ connect } e \]
\[ e \in \text{TopoExpr} \quad ::= \quad \text{box} (r \rightarrow \tau) \quad (\text{Box}) \]
\[ \quad | \quad e_1 . e_2 \quad (\text{Dotdot}) \]
\[ \quad | \quad e_1 \backslash e_2 \quad (\text{Bar0}) \]
\[ \quad | \quad (\tau_1) e_1 | (\tau_2) e_2 \quad (\text{Bar}) \]
\[ \quad | \quad e_0 \ast \gamma \quad (\text{Star}) \]
\[ \quad | \quad e_0 \lambda \quad (\text{Ex}) \]
\[ \quad | \quad N \quad (\text{Subnet}) \]

\[ \lambda \in \text{Label} = \text{Field} \cup \text{BTag} \]
\[ r, v \in \text{Rtype} = \mathcal{P}(\text{Label}) \]
\[ \tau \in \text{Vtype} = \mathcal{P}(\text{Rtype}) \]
\[ \gamma \in \text{Gtype} = \text{Rtype} \rightarrow \text{Bool} \]
\[ \sigma \in \text{Signature} = \text{Rtype} \rightarrow \text{Vtype} \]

\[ \text{Field, BTag finite,} \]
\[ \text{Field} \cap \text{BTag} = \emptyset, \]
\[ \sigma \neq \emptyset. \]

Figure 5.1: S-NET\(_A\) syntax. \(\mathcal{P}(x)\) denotes the powerset of a set \(x\).
Filters are constructed as boxes, where the output types may be empty, and all the conditions are removed.

Synchrocells are constructed as a parallel composition of as many boxes as necessary: the first box takes in the main record type and responds with the main record type and the synchronised record type, and the remaining boxes take in and pass through each auxiliary record type defined in the synchrocell.

After route inference (see Section 5.4), every parallel branch will be associated with the routing information, i.e. a set of record types it is deemed to attract.

There are no deterministic operator variants.

The termination pattern $\gamma$ of a serial replication is represented by a partial function, whose domain, $\tau_0 = \text{dom}(\gamma)$ is the set of record types defined in the terminating pattern, and for each $r \in \tau_0$, $\gamma(r)$ means the record type is associated with a guard, and $\neg \gamma(r)$ means the record type is unconditional.

Despite the list above, even manually translating a standard S-Net program into its abstract interpretation should not inflict any troubles, except the routing information, which the route inference procedure explained in Section 5.4 will help. Unchanged is Definition 2.1 about subtype relation, reprised below using S-Net terms: $r_1$ is a subtype of $r_2$, denoted as $r_1 \subseteq r_2$, if

$$r_2 \subseteq r_1 \land (r_1 \cap \text{BTag}) = (r_2 \cap \text{BTag})$$

For conciseness, throughout the rest of this chapter, an instance of the class $\text{Rtype}$ is called a type instead of a record type, and a $\text{Vtype}$ instance is called a variant type instead of a type.

Type Transformations

Every topology expression in a standard S-Net program can accept certain types of records and produce other types of records in response. In the abstract interpretation, we view it as the topology expression transforming some types into other types. In reality, the declared output types of a box or network only show what may be output: the box or network needs not produce all the declared types; it needs not even produce a single record to comply with the declaration. However, in the abstract interpretation, we consider all mays as musts, for the type system to capture all possible cases and perform a complete type check.

The following judgement denotes that the topology expression $e$ can transform the input type $r$ to any output types in $\tau$ (may be an empty set):

$$e \vdash r \rightsquigarrow \tau.$$  

The judgement is true if and only if there is a deduction process that concludes it, using only the type transformation rules in the remaining parts of this section. In case one cannot deduce any conclusions with a topology expression, the expression is said to cause a type error.

Boxes

A box declares an input type and zero or more output types. Naturally, it transforms the declared input type into the declared set of output types.

Flow Inheritance A box also accepts all subtypes of the declared input type. For each such type, where there are excess labels, it behaves as if these labels are stripped off from the type before it is fed into the box, and added back to each of the output types. In other words, the excess labels bypass the box. On adding back the labels, duplicates are naturally eliminated by the nature of simple sets.

$$r' \subseteq r$$

$$(r \rightarrow \{v_i\}) \vdash r' \rightsquigarrow \{v_i \cup (r' \setminus r)\}$$

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5.2. S-Net Abstract Interpretation

In the rule above, \( \{ \cdot \} \) is a “set-of” notation whose usage is as follows: \( \{ v_i \mid i = 1..?_1 \} \). When this is pattern-matched with a concrete set, it essentially assigns an index to every element of the set (in arbitrary order) and binds \( ?_1 \) to a concrete integer. It is invalid to refer to \( ?_1 \) directly, but later uses of the variable \( i \) are confined within other set-of notations or must be universally quantified, to enforce the same range \( i = 1..?_1 \). For example, \( \{ v_i \cup (r' \setminus r) \mid i = 1..?_1 \} \) in the rule above is short for \( \{ v_i \cup (r' \setminus r) \mid i = 1..?_1 \} \), referring to the same upper bound.

### Serial Compositions

A serial composition \( e_1 \cdot e_2 \) behaves like a function composition: \( e_1 \) transforms an input type into a set of intermediate types, and \( e_2 \) transforms each of them to a set of output types. The union of all sets of output types become the result of the transformation.

\[
\begin{align*}
  e_1 & \vdash r \rightsquigarrow \{ v_i \} \\
  \forall i \vdash (e_2 \vdash v_i \rightsquigarrow \tau_i) \\
  e_1 \cdot e_2 & \vdash r \rightsquigarrow \bigcup_i \tau_i
\end{align*}
\]

We also define that the big union operator on a nonexistent range results in an empty set. This definition is used by the rule above as well as other rules with big union operators in this chapter. This means that \( e_1 \vdash r \rightsquigarrow \emptyset \) immediately implies \( e_1 \cdot e_2 \vdash r \rightsquigarrow \emptyset \) without having to look into \( e_2 \).

### Parallel Compositions

A parallel composition, with routing information, \((\tau_1)e_1|(\tau_2)e_2\) lets either \( e_1 \) or \( e_2 \), whichever better attracts the input type, to perform the transformation. The function below selects the best matching types relative to the actual input type \( r \) in \( \tau_1 \) or \( \tau_2 \):

\[
BM(r, \tau) \overset{\text{def}}{=} \{ v \in \tau' \mid |v| = \max \{ |v_0| \mid v_0 \in \tau' \} \},
\]

where

\[\tau' = \{ v_0 \in \tau \mid r \subseteq v_0 \}.\]

The topology expression \( e_1 \) better attracts \( r \) compared to the other topology expression \( e_2 \), iff the types in the best match set \( BM(r, \tau_1) \) have more labels than in \( BM(r, \tau_2) \):

\[
\exists r_1 \in BM(r, \tau_1), \forall r_2 \in BM(r, \tau_2) : |r_1| > |r_2| \\
\]

\[
(\tau_1)e_1|(\tau_2)e_2 \vdash r \rightsquigarrow \tau
\]

Note that the function \( BM \) guarantees all types in the result set have the same cardinality, i.e. number of labels. The use of qualifiers \( \exists \) and \( \forall \) in the rule above only helps guarantee that \( BM(r, \tau_1) \) is nonempty, and that \( e_1 \) can be chosen when \( BM(r, \tau_2) \) is empty.

The other route can be covered by equivalence:

\[
(\tau_1)e_1|(\tau_2)e_2 \equiv (\tau_2)e_2|(\tau_1)e_1.
\]

In the case the function has collected types of equal cardinality from both branches, the parallel composition lets both topology expressions transform the input type, and then merges the output types:

\[
\exists r_1 \in BM(r, \tau_1), r_2 \in BM(r, \tau_2) : |r_1| = |r_2| \\
\]

\[
(\tau_1)e_1|(\tau_2)e_2 \vdash r \rightsquigarrow \tau_1 \cup \tau_2
\]

Careful readers may think that the last rule does not comply with the standard S-Net semantics, where each input record is delivered to only one of the parallel branches nondeterministically.
Serial Replications

The abstract interpretation of a serial replication \( e \ast \gamma \) is rather tricky to define. It involves a serial composition chain of as many replicas of \( e \) as necessary to transform all non-terminating intermediate types into terminating output types. We will employ a template approach to find the overall type transformation.

For each serial replication \( e \ast \gamma \), define one and only one special binding tag \( \Lambda_{e\ast\gamma} \in BTag \), which is unused throughout the topology of \( e \) and the entries in \( \gamma \). This is to tag the types that match the terminating pattern and are due to output from the serial chain. Adding such binding tag into the type guarantees that it will never be transformed by another replica of \( e \).

Define a selection filter \( f_{e\ast\gamma} \in TopoExpr \) that tags any terminating types with \( \Lambda_{e\ast\gamma} \) and passes through any other types. If a type is conditionally terminating, then the filter generates both tagged and non-tagged copies:

\[
\forall r_0 \in \text{dom}(\gamma) : r \not\subseteq r_0
\]

\[
f_{e\ast\gamma} \vdash r \rightsquigarrow \{r\}
\]

\[
\exists r_0 \in \text{dom}(\gamma) : r \subseteq r_0 \land \neg(\gamma(r_0))
\]

\[
f_{e\ast\gamma} \vdash r \rightsquigarrow \{r \cup \{\Lambda_{e\ast\gamma}\}\}
\]

\[
\forall r_0 \in \text{dom}(\gamma) : r \subseteq r_0 \Rightarrow \gamma(r_0)
\]

\[
f_{e\ast\gamma} \vdash r \rightsquigarrow \{r \cup \{\Lambda_{e\ast\gamma}\}, r\}
\]

Note that any type with \( \Lambda_{e\ast\gamma} \) falls into the non-terminating category and is carried over unchanged according to the first rule.

Define a variation of the topology expression \( e \), \( e_{e\ast\gamma} \in TopoExpr \), which in addition to the type transformations by \( e \), can pass through any type with \( \Lambda_{e\ast\gamma} \) unchanged:

\[
e \vdash r \rightsquigarrow \tau
\]

\[
e_{e\ast\gamma} \vdash r \rightsquigarrow \tau
\]

\[
\Lambda_{e\ast\gamma} \in r
\]

\[
e_{e\ast\gamma} \vdash r \rightsquigarrow \{r\}
\]

Define a new topology expression form \( e \ast^n \gamma \), with the following meaning:

\[
e \ast^n \gamma \overset{\text{def}}{=} f_{e\ast\gamma} \cdots (e_{e\ast\gamma}, f_{e\ast\gamma}), (e_{e\ast\gamma}, f_{e\ast\gamma}) \cdots ,
\]

\( n \) times

for which we can deduce type transformations using the rule for serial composition. Every element in this serial chain can pass through \( \Lambda_{e\ast\gamma} \)-tagged types, which without the tag are the real outputs. This implies that we will be able to collect all the output types by infinitely increasing \( n \).

There exists a fixed point, i.e. an \( n \), where further unfolding does not produce more output types. The collection of output types is complete once this fixed point is detected. Then, the output types, minus the tag, become the transformation result of the serial replication. This process is formalised below, where unfolding is done at least twice to capture any possible type errors:

\[
\Lambda_{e\ast\gamma} \not\subseteq r
\]

\( i > 1 \)

\[
e \ast^i \gamma \vdash r \rightsquigarrow \tau_1
\]

\[
e \ast^{i+1} \gamma \vdash r \rightsquigarrow \tau_2
\]

\[
\tau_1 = \emptyset \lor \exists v_0 \in \tau_1 : \Lambda_{e\ast\gamma} \in v_0
\]

\[
\{v_0 \in \tau_1 \mid \Lambda_{e\ast\gamma} \in v_0\} = \{v_0 \in \tau_2 \mid \Lambda_{e\ast\gamma} \in v_0\}
\]

\[
e \ast \gamma \vdash r \rightsquigarrow \{v_0 \\setminus \{\Lambda_{e\ast\gamma}\} \mid v_0 \in \tau_1 \land \Lambda_{e\ast\gamma} \in v_0\}
\]
5.3. TYPE CHECK

Parallel Replications
As far as the type system is concerned, a parallel replication simply demands the label $\lambda$ in the input types. The layout of the parallel replication and the delivery of records are insignificant in the abstract interpretation.

\[
\begin{align*}
\lambda & \in r \\
\Gamma & \vdash r \rightsquigarrow \tau \\
\alpha & \vdash \Gamma \vdash r \rightsquigarrow \tau
\end{align*}
\]

Subnetworks
A subnetwork defines a closed environment, only exposing a user-declared interface, i.e. the signature. Provided the subnetwork passes the type check, we simply use the signature to perform our type transformations.

Because a network signature may present multiple type transformations, a procedure similar to the best match choice for parallel compositions (see Section 5.2) is applied at the entrance of the subnetwork. Also, a higher level of flow inheritance takes place at the borders of a subnetwork: after the best match decision, excess labels that are in the input but not in the chosen declared input type are flow inherited to the exit of the network.

\[
\begin{align*}
\frac{\Gamma \vdash \tau}{\text{net}(\sigma) \text{ connect } \epsilon \vdash {r} \rightsquigarrow \bigcup_i \{e \cup \{r_i\} \mid e \in \sigma(r_i)\}}
\end{align*}
\]

In the rule above, $\epsilon \preceq \sigma$ means the topology expression agrees with the signature. Full definition will be covered in Section 5.3.

The same rule also describes the abstract interpretation of the execution of the whole program, which itself is a network.

5.3 Type Check
The judgement $\epsilon \preceq \sigma$ denotes that the topology expression $\epsilon$ agrees with the signature $\sigma$. Again, it is true if and only if there exists a deduction procedure that concludes it, using the type transformations in Section 5.2 and the type check rule defined below:

\[
\forall \tau, \tau_0: \sigma(r) = \tau_0 \implies \\
\exists \tau: (\epsilon \vdash r \rightsquigarrow \tau) \land \tau \subseteq \tau_0
\]

where we used the subtype relation between two variant types, defined as follows: $\tau_1$ is a subtype of $\tau_2$, denoted as $\tau_1 \subseteq \tau_2$, iff

\[
\forall r_1 \in \tau_1: \exists r_2 \in \tau_2, r_1 \subseteq r_2.
\]

The rule requires that all mappings in the signature are backed up by type transformations, but the reverse is not necessary.

If for a network, the topology expression agrees with the declared signature, we say the network passes the type check. An S-NET_A program is type-safe if its top-level network passes the type check, meaning that type errors will never occur.

5.4 Route Inference
The parallel composition type transformation (see Section 5.2) can be performed only with the routing information. It is the task of the route inference to provide such information.

The route inference procedure finds out what types of records are useful for every parallel branch. A type is useful if all labels in the type are potentially used, i.e. consumed by a box,
\[ \Sigma \in \text{Sig} = \mathcal{P}(\mathcal{M}) \]
\[ (r \rightarrow \omega) \in \mathcal{M} = \text{Type} \times \text{Otype} \]
\[ \omega \in \text{Otype} = \mathcal{P}(\text{Ovar}) \]
\[ v[\delta] \in \text{Ovar} = \text{Rtype} \times \mathcal{P}(\text{Field}) \]

\[ \forall \Sigma : (r \rightarrow \omega_1) \in \Sigma \land (r \rightarrow \omega_2) \in \Sigma \implies \omega_1 = \omega_2 \]

\[ \forall \Sigma, \forall (r \rightarrow \omega) \in \Sigma, \forall v[\delta] \in \omega : v \cap \delta = \emptyset \land (r \setminus BTag) \subseteq v \cup \delta. \]

Figure 5.2: Signature for route inference structure.

within the topology of the branch. A set of these types is then used as the routing information of the branch, for it to attract the appropriate records in competition with the other branch of the same parallel composition.

The route inference consists of two types of computation: signature inference to collect the useful types, and the actual route inference to transform every instance of parallel composition in the form of \( e_1 | e_2 \rangle \) into \( (\tau_1)e_1 | (\tau_2)e_2 \).

**Foundations**

**Required, Guaranteed and Discarded Labels**

Consider a box A with input type \( r \) and output type set \( \{v\} \). The box accepts any subtype of \( r \), where \( r \) being the minimum, as in the number of labels in the set. The labels defined in \( r \) are required by the box. Obviously, a type where all labels are required is useful.

To find out the useful types for the whole topology expression as a parallel branch, we need to consider other parts of the topology, for example, the downstream. Suppose the downstream of box A is box B requiring \( r' \). The labels might come from two origins: guaranteed by box A, or provided in the combined input and bypassed across box A with flow inheritance (see Section 5.2). If a required label is guaranteed by the upstream, no additional demand needs to be made. Now, the output from box A contains the labels in \( v \) plus the excess labels from the input, which means the labels in \( v \) are guaranteed even in the minimum input case.

We then add the labels in \( r' \setminus v \) to the overall required label set and depend on flow inheritance to carry them over, so that the output from box A is acceptable by box B. However, some labels cannot be carried over, namely those in \( r \setminus v \), because the upstream has consumed them. We mark these labels discarded to remind ourselves that they are unavailable downstream, and if the downstream indeed requires any of them, we have found a type error.

**Signatures for Route Inference**

A box may feature multiple output types. Because the discarded label set is calculated by subtracting the output type from the input type, each of the guaranteed label sets will be accompanied by its own discarded label set. The combination of one required label set with a set of guaranteed-discarded label set pairs is like an extended version of the box signature.

Multiple boxes may be combined in a parallel composition, where each branch has its own extended box signature. The topology can be further extended with more compositions into a general topology expression, but the idea of a set of extended box signatures suffices. And again, it looks like an extended version of the network signature.

In conclusion, the structure for a signature for route inference, abbreviated \( \text{sig} \), as in Figure 5.2. We also name the extended box signature as a \( \text{map} \). The difference between a \( \text{sig} \) and a network signature is that the discarded label sets can be found only in the output types of a \( \text{sig} \). We also use a set structure instead of a partial function to make it easier to formalise the construction of a \( \text{sig} \), while still maintaining the input uniqueness by a constraint, and use the format \( r \rightarrow \omega \).
instead of \((r, \omega)\) to denote the maps of a sig. Furthermore, we use \(v[\delta]\) instead of \((v, \delta)\) to denote the individual variants of the output type.

**Signature Inference Rules**

The judgement \(e : \Sigma\) means the route inference assigns the topology expression \(e\) with the sig \(\Sigma\). Sig inference rules have a name prefix \(\text{si}\).

**Boxes**

For boxes, the inference rule merely extends the box signature with the discarded label sets to obtain the sig.

\[
\text{box } (r \rightarrow \tau) : \{r \rightarrow \{v \setminus \text{BTag} \setminus v \mid v \in \tau\}\} \quad \text{si-Box}
\]

**Parallel Compositions**

The sig inference of a parallel composition uses the routing information, if present, to filter the branch sigs. The union of the branch sigs is the result of the sig inference. To maintain the sig invariants, a custom union is used. The rules are as follows.

\[
\frac{(Rtype)e_1 | (Rtype)e_2 : \Sigma}{e_1 | e_2 : \Sigma} \quad \text{si-Bar1}
\]

In the rule above, the whole class \(Rtype\), i.e. the set containing all possible types, is used as the initial routing information to aid the sig inference. This effectively causes the rule below not to filter any maps away from the final sig.

\[
\frac{e_1 : \Sigma_1 \\
    e_2 : \Sigma_2}{\Sigma'_i = \{(r \rightarrow \omega) \in \Sigma_i \mid \{r\} \subseteq \tau_i\} \quad (i = 1, 2)} \quad \text{si-Bar2}
\]

where

\[
\Sigma_1 \cup \Sigma_2 \overset{\text{def}}{=} \{r \rightarrow \bigcup_{(r \rightarrow \omega) \in \Sigma_1 \cup \Sigma_2} \omega \mid r \in \text{Ins}(\Sigma_1) \cup \text{Ins}(\Sigma_2)\}.
\]

and

\[
\text{Ins}(\Sigma) \overset{\text{def}}{=} \{r \mid (r \rightarrow \omega) \in \Sigma\}.
\]

The two definitions above will also be used in various situations later.

Note that only the parallel composition inference rules will increase the number of maps in a sig. In another word, the presence of multiple maps in a sig implies the existence of parallel compositions in the topology.

**Serial Compositions**

Unlike the type transformation rules, dealing with sigs for serial compositions is a lot more complex. To make the wording more concise, we assume the serial composition \(e_1 | e_2\) where \(e_1 : \Sigma_1\) and \(e_2 : \Sigma_2\). For each map \((r_1 \rightarrow \omega_1) \in \Sigma_1\), we need to augment \(r_1\), the required label set, to make all output types accepted by \(\Sigma_2\). Four questions need to be answered: 1) what labels to add, 2) whether the augmented input creates a reroute, 3) what behaviour can be observed with \(\Sigma_1\) and the augmented input, and 4) what are the final outputs. We will answer them one by one, and finally present the route inference rule.

The first question, what labels to add, is a tough one. \(\omega_1\) may contain multiple output variants. To adapt an output variant \(v[\delta] \in \omega_1\) to fit into \(\Sigma_2\), we add into \(v\) zero or more labels not present
in \( v \cup \delta \), so the resulting \( v' \) is a subtype of some input types in \( \Sigma_2 \). We keep the added labels minimum, so every label in \( v' \) is required by \( \Sigma_2 \), or otherwise guaranteed by \( \Sigma_1 \).

However, because \( \Sigma_2 \) may contain multiple maps, each variant in turn may be adapted in multiple ways. Collecting these options of added labels results in a set of label sets per output variant. We name this set requirement variants of the corresponding output variant, and define the function below for calculating it:

\[
RV(v[\delta], \Sigma_2) \overset{\text{def}}{=} \{ \epsilon \subseteq Field \mid \epsilon \cap (v \cup \delta) = \emptyset \land \{v \cup \epsilon\} \subseteq \text{Ins}(\Sigma_2) \}.
\]

Now, to make the whole map valid to combine with \( \Sigma_2 \), the augmentation to \( r_1 \) should satisfy at least one requirement variant per output variant. By selecting an arbitrary requirement variant for each output variant and calculating the union of them, we have one sample of augmentation. All possible augmentations are captured by the function below:

\[
PA(\{v_i[\delta_i]\}, \Sigma_2) \overset{\text{def}}{=} \left\{ \bigcup_i \epsilon_i \mid \forall \epsilon_i \in RV(v_i[\delta_i], \Sigma_2) \right\},
\]

where the set-of construct \( \{\_\} \) is defined in Section 5.2. Note that

\[
PA(\emptyset, \Sigma_2) = \{\emptyset\}
\]

according to the formula. This is because when there is no range for \( i \), the \( \forall \)-quantified criterion always holds, generating infinite cases to evaluate the pattern, which is a union over an nonexistent range, resulting in \( \emptyset \) by definition. The set of an infinite number of \( \emptyset \) is \( \{\emptyset\} \). The meaning of this result is as follows: for a map with no outputs, there is one possible augmentation, which is to add nothing to the input. The fact that \( \epsilon_1 \) produces no outputs does not indicate a type error. Only when one of the output variants cannot match with \( \Sigma_2 \) by any means will the result be \( \emptyset \), which signals a type error.

The second question, whether a reroute is created, originates from the nature of parallel compositions. As mentioned in Section 5.4, multiple maps are a sign of parallel compositions. When we augment the input type, we may have created a better match elsewhere in \( \Sigma_1 \), rendering the selected map \( r_1 \rightarrow \omega_1 \) ineligible. These cases should be avoided. As a result, the eligible augmented inputs relative to the map \( (r_1 \rightarrow \omega_1) \in \Sigma_1 \) and the sig \( \Sigma_2 \) are

\[
AI_0(\Sigma_1, (r_1 \rightarrow \omega_1), \Sigma_2) \overset{\text{def}}{=} \{ r_1 \cup \epsilon \mid \epsilon \in PA(\omega_1, \Sigma_2) \land r_1 \in BM(r_1 \cup \epsilon, \text{Ins}(\Sigma_1)) \},
\]

where the function BM has been defined in Section 5.2. If the function PA returns \( \emptyset \), \( AI_0 \) also evaluates to \( \emptyset \), effectively disabling the map in question.

We can now also move upwards to the sig level and produce the overall eligible augmented inputs with the function below:

\[
AI(\Sigma_1, \Sigma_2) \overset{\text{def}}{=} \{ r \mid r \in AI_0(\Sigma_1, (r_1 \rightarrow \omega_1), \Sigma_2) \land (r_1 \rightarrow \omega_1) \in \Sigma_1 \}.
\]

The third question, how \( \Sigma_1 \) transforms the augmented inputs, is answered with flow inheritance. Unlike in the type transformations where all possible cases, with or without flow inheritance, are covered, we only have the base cases available in a sig, where the input types are the required label sets. To imply other cases where flow inheritance carries unused fields across, we employ the evaluation judgement \( r \stackrel{\Sigma}{\rightarrow} \omega \) to mean the actual input \( r \) produces the outputs \( \omega \) according to the sig \( \Sigma \), which is governed by the rule below:

\[
\Sigma_0 = \{ (r_0 \rightarrow \omega_0) \in \Sigma \mid r_0 \in BM(r, \text{Ins}(\Sigma)) \}
\]

\[
\omega = \bigcup_{(r_0 \rightarrow v_i[\delta_i]) \in \Sigma_0} \bigg\{ v_i \cup ((r\backslash r_0)\delta_i)[\delta_i] \bigg\}
\]

\[
\text{SI-Eval}
\]

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The rule above considers the parallel composition behaviour and passes the input through only the eligible routes. At the output, it also takes into account the discarded label sets, and adds only those labels in the input type that are neither used nor discarded.

The last question, what the final outputs are, can be answered by applying the rule above in a nested nature, as what we have done in Section 5.2. However, the intermediate outputs now contain the discarded label sets. Apparently they should be merged with the discarded label sets in $\Sigma_2$, but when $\Sigma_2$ reproduces any labels in the intermediate discarded label sets, they are excluded from the result.

We have so far figured out what are the new, augmented input types, and how one type transforms into outputs according to the sig of the topology expression. Finally, the sig inference rule for serial compositions is presented as follows:

$$
\begin{align*}
\Sigma &= \left\{ r \rightarrow \bigcup_i \omega_i \mid r \in \text{AI}(\Sigma_1, \Sigma_2) \land r \overset{\Sigma_2}{\rightarrow} v_i[\delta_i] \right\} \land \\
\forall i : \left\{ v_i \overset{\Sigma_2}{\rightarrow} v_i[\delta_i] \right\} \land \omega_i = \left\{ v_i[\delta_i] \cup (\delta_i \setminus v_i) \right\} \\
\Sigma &\neq \emptyset \\
e_1 \cdot e_2 : \Sigma
\end{align*}
$$

### Serial Replications

Similar to the approach in Section 5.2, we define the route inference for serial replications using that for serial compositions. The benefit we have now, comparing to then in Section 5.2, is that we can directly manipulate the sig, avoiding the necessity of the special binding tag $\Lambda_e$.  

First of all, trim the sig of the operand topology expression so it does not contain any maps requiring inputs that are unconditionally terminated:

$$
C(\Sigma, \gamma) \overset{\text{def}}{=} \{ (r \rightarrow \omega) \in \Sigma \mid \exists r_0 \in \text{dom}(\gamma) : r \sqsubseteq r_0 \land \lnot \gamma(r_0) \}.
$$

Then, extract the part of any intermediate sig that terminates, including dead ends where there is no output:

$$
T(\Sigma, \gamma) \overset{\text{def}}{=} \left\{ r \rightarrow \omega' \mid (r \rightarrow \omega) \in \Sigma \land (\omega = \omega' = \emptyset \lor \omega' = \{v[\delta] \in \omega \mid \exists r_0 \in \text{dom}(\gamma) : v \sqsubseteq r_0 \} \neq \emptyset \right\}.
$$

The part of the sig that does not terminate should continue onto the serial composition with downstream replicas:

$$
\begin{align*}
\text{NT}(\Sigma, \gamma) &\overset{\text{def}}{=} \left\{ r \rightarrow \{v[\delta] \in \omega \mid \forall r_0 \in \text{dom}(\gamma) : r \sqsubseteq r_0 \implies \gamma(r_0)\} \right\} \\
&\quad \left| (r \rightarrow \omega) \in \Sigma \land \omega \neq \emptyset \right\}.
\end{align*}
$$

The process goes on as long as the combined resulting sig keeps growing. When the growth stops, the process ends by adding into the result the special cases where the input types match the terminating pattern immediately:

$$
\text{TI}(\gamma) \overset{\text{def}}{=} \{ r \rightarrow \{r[\emptyset] \mid r \in \text{dom}(\gamma)\} \}.
$$
The complete sig inference rule is as follows:

\[
\begin{align*}
e &: \Sigma \\
\Sigma_1 &= C(\Sigma, \gamma) \\
\Sigma_i' &= T(\Sigma_i, \gamma) \\
\forall i > 1 &: \Sigma_i' = T(\Sigma_i, \gamma) \cup \Sigma_{i-1}' \\
\forall i \geq 1 &: \Sigma_i'' = NT(\Sigma_i, \gamma) \\
\forall i \geq 1 &: (e_1 : \Sigma_i'' \land e_2 : \Sigma_i) \implies (e_1 \cdot e_2 : \Sigma_{i+1}) \\
n > 1 &: \\
\Sigma_n' &= \Sigma_{n-1}'
\end{align*}
\]

\[
e * \gamma : \Sigma_n' \cup \Gamma(\gamma)
\]

**Parallel Replications**

The sig inference for a parallel replication e!\lambda helps require the label \lambda from the input. It then reuses the evaluation judgement \(r \sum r_\omega\) defined in Page 38 to obtain the result. Note that special care is needed if \(\lambda \in BTag\) which affects the subtype relation, hence the term \(\{\lambda\} \cup r \subseteq r\).

\[
\begin{align*}
e &: \Sigma \\
\tau &= \left\{\{\lambda\} \cup r \mid r \in \text{Ins}(\Sigma) \land \{\lambda\} \cup r \subseteq r\right\} \neq \emptyset \\
e!\lambda &= \left\{r \xrightarrow{\Sigma} \omega \mid r \in \tau \land r \sum r_\omega\right\}
\end{align*}
\]

**Subnetworks**

The programmer provides a signature for each subnetwork in the program. To meet the expectation of the programmer, the route inference for subnetworks simply extends the signature with discarded label sets to form a sig, and leaves its correctness to be checked by the type check procedure.

The rule below reuses the sig inference rules for boxes to construct the sig.

\[
\begin{align*}
dom(\sigma) &= \{\tau_i\} \\
\forall i &: \text{box}(r_i \rightarrow \sigma(r_i)) : \Sigma_i \\
\text{net}(\sigma) \text{ connect } e &: \bigcup_i \Sigma_i
\end{align*}
\]

**Route Inference Rules**

The judgement \(\tau, e \rightarrow_{Ri} e'\) expresses that the topology expression \(e\), provided the set of applicable input types \(\tau\), is transformed to \(e'\) by route inference. In \(e'\), all parallel compositions have the form \((\pi_1)_{e1} || (\pi_2)_{e2}\).

The set \(\tau\) does not only contain the types accepted by \(e\): it is in fact the complement of the set of types that the route inference determines inapplicable, and will be used to exclude certain types from the routing information. In some cases where exclusion should be suppressed, \(\tau\) will be the universal set \(Rtype\), as can be seen from some rules below.

Route inference rules have a name prefix \(Ri\).

**Boxes**

No transformation is required to perform the route inference for boxes, the basic unit of the topology.

\[
\exists r_0 \in \tau_0 : r_0 \subseteq r \\
\boxed{r_0, \text{box}(r \rightarrow \tau) \rightarrow_{Ri} \text{box}(r \rightarrow \tau)}
\]
5.4. ROUTE INFERENCE

Parallel Compositions

The route inference rules for parallel compositions trigger the route inference for each branch and then collect the inputs of the branch sigs as the routing information. The set of applicable types is used to initiate the route inference, which filters the accepted input types of each branch.

\[
\pi_0, (\tau_0) e_1 (\tau_0) e_2 \longrightarrow_{\text{ri}} (\tau_1) e'_1 (\tau_2) e'_2
\]

RI-BAR1

\[
\tau'_i = \{ r \in \tau_i | \exists r_0 \in \tau_0 : r_0 \sqsubseteq r \} \quad (i = 1, 2)
\]

\[
e'_i : \Sigma_i \quad (i = 1, 2)
\]

\[
\tau'_i = \{ r \in \text{Ins}(\Sigma_i) | \exists r_0 \in \tau_0 : r_0 \sqsubseteq r \} \quad (i = 1, 2)
\]

Serial Compositions

Instead of merely triggering the route inference for the two operand topology expressions, we will perform some optimisations during the route inference for serial compositions.

From the discussion in Section 5.4, we are able to find out which maps in \(\Sigma_1\), if any, cannot match with \(\Sigma_2\) by any means, using the function \(\text{PA}\) which computes possible augmentations. Because multiple maps originate from the underlying parallel compositions, by removing the input types of the non-matchable maps from the appropriate underlying routing information, we would be able to delete them completely from the sig.

To do so, we first infer the signatures of both operand topology expressions, and figure out which input types should be removed. Using the reduced input types, we trigger the route inference for the left operand topology expression. If the underlying parallel composition that produced the non-matching branch is not encapsulated in a subnetwork, the map would be removed from the updated sig of \(e'_1\). However, the rule below still succeeds if the map cannot be removed, and potential errors, if any, will be detected during type check.

\[
e_1 : \Sigma_1
\]

\[
e_2 : \Sigma_2
\]

\[
\tau_1 = \{ r | (r \rightarrow \omega) \in \Sigma_1 \land \text{PA}(\omega, \Sigma_2) \neq \emptyset \land \exists r_0 \in \tau_0 : r_0 \sqsubseteq r \}
\]

\[
\tau_1, e_1 \longrightarrow_{\text{ri}} e'_1
\]

R-Type, \(e_2 \longrightarrow_{\text{ri}} e'_2\)

\[
\tau_0, (e_1 \ldots e_2) \longrightarrow_{\text{ri}} e'_1 \ldots e'_2
\]

RI-DOTDOT

Serial Replications

The route inference for serial replications performs the same optimisation step as for serial compositions. The functions \(C\) and \(\text{NT}\) are as defined in Section 5.4 and \(\text{PA}\) in Section 5.4.

\[
e : \Sigma
\]

\[
\Sigma_1 = C(\Sigma, \gamma)
\]

\[
\Sigma''_1 = \text{NT}(\Sigma_1, \gamma)
\]

\[
\tau_1 = \{ r | (r \rightarrow \omega) \in \Sigma''_1 \land \text{PA}(\omega, \Sigma_1) \neq \emptyset \land \exists r_0 \in \tau_0 : r_0 \sqsubseteq r \}
\]

\[
\tau_1, e \longrightarrow_{\text{ri}} e'
\]

\[
\tau_0, e \ast \gamma \longrightarrow_{\text{ri}} e' \ast \gamma
\]

RI-STAR

Parallel Replications

No special care is needed for the route inference of parallel replications.

\[
\pi_0, e \longrightarrow_{\text{ri}} e'
\]

\[
\pi_0, e!\lambda \longrightarrow_{\text{ri}} e'!\lambda
\]

RI-EX
Subnetworks

Subnetworks define boundaries of components. The route inference does not propagate the input type information into the subnetworks, but uses the declared input types to perform the route inference.

$$\text{dom}(\sigma), e \xrightarrow{\text{ri}} e'$$

$$\pi_0, \text{net}(\sigma) \text{ connect } e \xrightarrow{\text{ri}} \text{net}(\sigma) \text{ connect } e'$$

RI-SUBNET

The rule above doubles as the process to prepare an initial S-NET_A program with the routing information, before performing the type check.
Chapter 6

Operational Semantics

6.1 Notation

We define the operational semantics of S-Net by a binary transition relation \( \mapsto \) on tuples \((p, M)\), where \(p\) denotes a record (or record stream) and \(M\) an S-Net program. Two tuples \((p, M)\) and \((q, M')\) are related with respect to \(\mapsto\) if the S-Net program \(M\) on input \(r\) and produces \(s\). We use \(\mapsto\) in infix notation and we reverse the order of elements of the right-hand side tuple. The latter is a purely syntactical measure to illustrate the flow of data: A typical transition of the form \((p, M) \mapsto (M', q)\) is to be read as

- On input \(p\) to \(M\)
- \(M\) computes on \(p\) and
- \(M\) turns into \(M'\) due to changes of internal states.
- \(M'\) outputs \(q\).

As a program without synchrocells does not have a mutable internal state, we obviously allow \(M = M'\).

Throughout this chapter we shall also use the following notation: A single italic letter, as for example \(p\), denotes a single record. A single letter with an arrow on top denotes a stream of records, e.g. \(\tilde{p}\). The concatenation of two streams is denoted by \(\tilde{p} + \tilde{q}\) (appending \(\tilde{q}\) to \(\tilde{p}\)), concatenation of an element and a stream by \(p \triangleq \tilde{q}\) (prefixing \(\tilde{q}\) by \(p\)) and \(\tilde{q} \triangleq p\) (appending \(p\) to \(\tilde{q}\)). An \(n\)-fold concatenation, denoted by \(\tilde{p}_1 \triangleq \cdots \triangleq \tilde{p}_n\), expands to \(\tilde{p}_1 + \tilde{p}_2 + \cdots + \tilde{p}_n\).

6.2 Id, Empty and Map Rule

The following rules are merely 'helper-rules'. The \textbf{Id} rule allows records to be passed on without any alteration. An empty stream has no effect on any component, as shown by the \textbf{Empty} rule. The \textbf{Map} rule allows to derive a semantics for streams if component rules are defined on single records.

\begin{align*}
\text{\textbf{Id}} & : \quad (p, \text{id}) \rightarrow (\text{id}, \tilde{p}) \\
\text{\textbf{Empty}} & : \quad (\epsilon, M) \rightarrow (M, \epsilon) \\
\text{\textbf{Map}} & : \quad \forall_{i=1}^n : (p_i, M_i) \rightarrow (M_{i+1}, \tilde{q}_i) \quad \tilde{s} = \tilde{p}_1 \triangleq \cdots \triangleq \tilde{p}_n \triangleq \tilde{q}_n \rightarrow (M_{n+1}, \tilde{s})
\end{align*}
6.3 Boxes and Primitive Boxes

Boxes are the only components in S-Net that are able to process and modify data of record fields. On input of a single record, a box may produce an arbitrary number (including zero) of result records. A distinctive feature of S-Net is the fact that function \( f \) of rule Box may be implemented in an arbitrary programming language.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Box} : & \quad f(p) = \tilde{q} \\
& \quad [p, \text{box} f] \rightarrow [\text{box} f, \tilde{q}]
\end{align*}
\]

A synchroncell, the only stateful component in S-Net, is a facility to store and merge records that match a user-defined pattern. For this, synchroncells are parametrised over two patterns. Any inbound record is matched against these patterns. If a record matches a previously unmatched pattern, it is stored by the synchroncell, the pattern is marked as matched and no output is produced (rule Syncs). An index at the lower-right corner of the synchroncell indicates this. If a pattern was matched before, the record is simply output again, as described by the Syncn rule. A record that matches the last remaining unmatched pattern triggers a merge of stored and inbound record. After merging and outputting the resulting record, the synchroncell will act as an identity component (Syncm rule). If a record immediately matches both patterns, the record passes unmodified and the synchroncell again will act as an identity component, as shown by the Synci rule.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Syncs} : & \quad \text{ismatch}(\sigma_a, p_a) \land \neg \text{ismatch}(\sigma_b, p_b) \\
& \quad (p_a, [\sigma_a, \sigma_b]) \rightarrow ([\sigma_a, \sigma_b] p_a, \epsilon) \\
\text{Syncn} : & \quad \text{ismatch}(\sigma_a, p) \land \neg \text{ismatch}(\sigma_b, p) \\
& \quad (p, [\sigma_a, \sigma_b] p_a) \rightarrow ([\sigma_a, \sigma_b] p_a, p) \\
\text{Synci} : & \quad \text{ismatch}(\sigma_a, p) \land \text{ismatch}(\sigma_b, p) \\
& \quad (p, [\sigma_a, \sigma_b] p_a) \rightarrow (\text{id}, p) \\
\text{Syncm} : & \quad \text{ismatch}(\sigma_b, p) \\
& \quad (p, [\sigma_a, \sigma_b] p_a) \rightarrow (\text{id}, \text{merge}(p_a, p))
\end{align*}
\]

The filter (see rule Filter) is a versatile instrument to modify the structure of records. Filters can split records, rename, copy or discard fields and tags and even insert new tags and modify their value. The behaviour of each filter is controlled by a pattern \( \sigma \) and by a user-defined list \( \alpha \) of aforementioned actions. The pattern defines which constituents of inbound records are accessible by the filter actions. Only fields and tags that are present in the pattern may be used in the action list. On arrival of a record, the actions are applied to the inbound record and all resulting records are output.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Filter} : & \quad q = \text{apply}(\alpha, p) \\
& \quad (p, [\sigma \mapsto \alpha]) \rightarrow ([\sigma \mapsto \alpha], q)
\end{align*}
\]

6.4 S-Net Combinators

The four S-Net combinators, which are used to construct networks from boxes, primitive boxes and networks, are very briefly introduced here.

The serial combinator connects the output of its left operand to the input of its right operand. The output of the right operand thereby forms the output of the newly constructed network.
The split combinator routes inbound records to different instances of its operand depending on the value of a specified tag. The name $x$ of the tag that determines the instance of the operand is given as parameter to the split combinator. Each instance of the operand stays associated with the combinator and is reused whenever a record is processed that holds the appropriate instance value.

\[
\begin{align*}
    & \text{S-Net Language Report, Version 2.0} & 45 \\
    & \text{6.4. S-NET COMBINATORS} & \\
    & (\vec{p}, M) \rightarrow (M', \vec{p}) & (\vec{p}', N) \rightarrow (N', \vec{q}) \\
    & \text{SPLIT} & (\vec{p}, M \cdot N) \rightarrow (M' \cdot N', \vec{q}) \\
\end{align*}
\]

The choice combinator creates a new network by connecting its two operands in parallel. Records are routed to either of the operands depending on which operand is a more specific match. The specificity of the match is determined by analysing the type of the inbound record and the input type of the operands. If both operands match equally well, one is chosen non-deterministically.

The choice combinator comes in two variants, deterministic and non-deterministic. The deterministic variant preserves the order of inbound and resulting outbound records. If record order is not a concern, the non-deterministic variant may be used. The \text{DCHOICE} rule formalises the behaviour of the deterministic choice combinator.

\[
\begin{align*}
    & \forall i \in \{1, \ldots, n\} : (\vec{p}_i, M_i) \rightarrow (M'_{i+1}, \vec{q}_i) & (\vec{p}_i, N_i) \rightarrow (N'_{i+1}, \vec{q}_i) \\
    & (\vec{p}, M_i \| N_i) \rightarrow (M_{n+1} \| N_{n+1}, \{+\}_{i=1}^{n}(\vec{q}_i, ++\vec{q}_i)) \\
    & \text{DCHOICE} & (\vec{p}, M) \rightarrow (M', \vec{q}) & (\vec{p}', N) \rightarrow (N', \vec{q}') \\
\end{align*}
\]

The inbound stream $\vec{p}$ is divided into pairs of sub-streams $(\vec{p}_i, \vec{p}_i')$ such that each (potentially empty stream) $\vec{p}_i$ (resp. $\vec{p}_i'$) contains records matching the input type of the left (resp. right) operand network. These pairs are processed by the operand networks, whose internal state may change due to synchrocells, and produce streams $\vec{q}_i$ and $\vec{q}_i'$ as result. The output streams are concatenated to a result stream and represent the result for one input pair. The overall outbound stream is constructed by concatenating result streams of all input pairs. The behaviour of the non-deterministic choice combinator is expressed by the \text{NDCHOICE} rule.

\[
\begin{align*}
    & \vec{p}, \vec{p}' = \text{lrsplit}(\vec{p}, \tau_M, \tau_N) \\
    & (\vec{p}, M) \rightarrow (M', \vec{q}) & (\vec{p}', N) \rightarrow (N', \vec{q}') \\
    & (\vec{p}, M[N]) \rightarrow (M'[N', \text{ndzip}(\vec{q}, \vec{q}']) \\
    & \text{NDCHOICE} & (\vec{p}, M) \rightarrow (M', \vec{q}) & (\vec{p}', N) \rightarrow (N', \vec{q}') \\
\end{align*}
\]

Any inbound stream of records $\vec{p}$ is divided into two separate sub-streams $\vec{p}_l$ and $\vec{p}_r$, such that each record in $\vec{p}_l$ (resp. $\vec{p}_r$) matches the inbound type of the left (resp. right) operand of the choice combinator. The operand networks, whose internal state may change due to synchrocells, produce $\vec{q}_l$ and $\vec{q}_r$ as results. These result streams are non-deterministically merged, i.e. both streams may be arbitrarily interleaved.

The star combinator requires an operand and a pattern for operation. Any inbound record that matches the pattern is immediately output. If the record does not match the pattern, it is sent to the operand. At the output of the operand, the same process repeats. If the record matches the pattern, it is output, otherwise a new instance of the operand is spawned and the record is sent to it. The star combinator is available as deterministic and non-deterministic combinator. The deterministic variant guarantees that any result of an earlier input will exit the network before any other result of a later input, i.e. outbound streams of multiple inbound records are not interleaved and in the same order of their corresponding inbound records.

\[
\begin{align*}
    & (\vec{p}, (M \cdot M \ast \{\sigma\}) || [\sigma \rightarrow \tau_\sigma]) \rightarrow (M', \vec{q}) \\
    & \text{DSTAR} & (\vec{p}, M \ast \{\sigma\}) \rightarrow (M', \vec{q}) \\
    & (\vec{p}, (M \cdot M \ast \{\sigma\}) || [\sigma \rightarrow \tau_\sigma]) \rightarrow (M', \vec{q}) \\
    & \text{NDSTAR} & (\vec{p}, M \ast \{\sigma\}) \rightarrow (M', \vec{q}) \\
\end{align*}
\]
**6.5 Algorithms**

Here we present the algorithms that are used within the rules. Where an implementation is not providing any more insight, either because it is trivial or too technical, it is left out and only the signature is shown.

eval

\[
eval :: \text{pattern} \rightarrow \text{record} \rightarrow \text{Bool}
\]

ismatch

\[
ismatch :: \text{pattern} \rightarrow \text{record} \rightarrow \text{Bool}
ismatch \sigma p =
\]
\[p \preceq \sigma \land \text{eval } \sigma \text{ } r\]

score

\[
score :: \text{pattern} \rightarrow \text{record} \rightarrow \mathbb{N}_0 \cup \{-1\}
\]

bestmatch

\[
\text{bestmatch} :: \text{record} \rightarrow \text{pattern} \rightarrow \text{pattern} \rightarrow \text{set of pattern}
\]
\[\text{bestmatch } r \sigma_l \sigma_r = \]
\[\{ \sigma_i | i, j \in \{l, r\} \land \text{score } \sigma_i \text{ } r \geq \text{score } \sigma_j \text{ } r \}\]

prefix

\[
\text{prefix} :: \text{stream} \rightarrow \text{pattern} \rightarrow \text{pattern} \rightarrow (\text{stream}, \text{stream})
\]
\[\text{prefix } \tilde{p} \sigma_l \sigma_r =
\]
\[\text{case } \tilde{p} \text{ of}
\]
\[\epsilon \rightarrow (\epsilon, \epsilon)
\]
\[p : p\tilde{s} | \text{ndsel (bestmatch } p \sigma_l \sigma_r) \implies \sigma_l \rightarrow (p\tilde{q}, \tilde{r})
\]
\[p : p\tilde{s} | \text{otherwise } \rightarrow (\epsilon, \tilde{p})
\]
\[\text{where}
\]
\[\tilde{q}, \tilde{r} = \text{prefix } p\tilde{s} \sigma_l \sigma_r\]

splitOnePair

\[
\text{splitOnePair} :: \text{stream} \rightarrow \text{pattern} \rightarrow \text{pattern} \rightarrow (\text{stream}, \text{stream}, \text{stream})
\]
\[\text{splitOnePair } \tilde{p} \sigma_l \sigma_r =
\]
\[\text{case } \tilde{p} \text{ of}
\]
\[\epsilon \rightarrow (\epsilon, \epsilon, \epsilon)
\]
\[p : p\tilde{s} \rightarrow (\tilde{q}_l, \tilde{q}_r, \tilde{r})
\]
\[\text{where}
\]
\[(\tilde{q}_l, \tilde{t}) = \text{prefix } \tilde{p} \sigma_l \sigma_r
\]
\[(\tilde{q}_r, \tilde{r}) = \text{prefix } \tilde{t} \sigma_r \sigma_l
\]
lrpsplit

\[ \text{lrpsplit :: stream }\to\text{ pattern }\to\text{ pattern }\to (\text{stream of streams, stream of streams}) \]

\[ \text{lrpsplit } \overline{p} \sigma_l \sigma_r = \]

\[ \text{case } \overline{p} \text{ of} \]

\[ \epsilon \to (\overline{e}, \overline{e}) \]

\[ p : \overline{p} \overline{\xi} \mapsto (\overline{l}_p : \overline{l}_{\overline{pl}}, \overline{r}_p : \overline{r}_{\overline{pl}}) \]

where

\[ (\overline{l}_p, \overline{r}_p, \overline{q}) = \text{splitOnePair } \overline{p} \sigma_l \sigma_r \]

\[ (\overline{l}_{\overline{pl}}, \overline{r}_{\overline{pl}}) = \text{lrpsplit } \overline{q} \sigma_l \sigma_r \]

lrsplit

\[ \text{lrsplit :: stream }\to\text{ pattern }\to\text{ pattern }\to (\text{stream, stream}) \]

\[ \text{lrsplit } \overline{p} \sigma_l \sigma_r = \]

\[ \text{let } (\overline{p}_l, \overline{p}_r) = \text{lrpsplit } \overline{p} \sigma_l \sigma_r \text{ in} \]

\[ (\text{flatten } \overline{p}_l, \text{flatten } \overline{p}_r) \]

merge

\[ \text{merge :: record }\to\text{ record }\to\text{ record} \]

\[ \text{record } \overline{p} \overline{q} = \]

\[ \overline{p} \cup (\overline{q} \setminus \text{BT}(\overline{q})) \setminus (\overline{p} \cap \overline{q})) \]

apply

\[ \text{apply :: record }\to\text{ action }\to\text{ stream} \]
Chapter 7

Denotational Semantics

7.1 Foundations

In this chapter on denotational semantics of S-Net we describe how an S-Net program can systematically be associated with a Haskell function that maps an input stream of data in form of a lazy list into an output stream, again represented by a lazy list.

First of all, we establish an abstract representation of S-Net networks that is amenable to this undertaking. The Haskell module SNet described below is the outcome of this work.

```haskell
module SNet where

import Data.Set hiding (filter, map)
import qualified Data.Set as Set (filter)

A few types are required for the structural representation of S-Net types and data structures. Records consist of record elements. Record elements are label-value pairs. To fully qualify a label, it needs to be annotated to be referring to a field (F), a tag (T) or a binding tag (B).

data Ord label => Element label = F label | T label | B label deriving (EqOrd)
data Ord label => RecEl label value = RecEl
  { label :: Element label
    , value :: Either value Z
  }
type Record label value = Set (RecEl label value)

isBindingTag :: Ord label => Element label -> Bool
isBindingTag (B _) = True
isBindingTag _ = False

Because only the values of fields and tags are handed into box functions (i.e. not the labels), the order in which values are specified for the box function is relevant. The output type of a box function is a list of alternatives. Actual output must thus be tagged with a number to specify which of the output alternatives is the type of the actual record produced.

type BoxFunc value = [Either value Z] -> [(N,[Either value Z])]

A record type is simply the set of (annotated) labels. The type for boxes reflect the orderedness of the arguments of box functions. What is referred to as a function type in this text is a generalization of the box types; the order constraint is dropped. Finally, a full type is a set of alternative function types.

data Ord label => RecType label = RecType { recTpEls :: Set (Element label) }
deriving (EqOrd)
data Ord label => BoxType label = [Element label] -> [[Element label]]
data Ord label => FunType label = RecType label ~ Set (RecType label)
deriving (EqOrd)
data Ord label => FunType label = FunType { funTypes :: Set (FunType label) }
generalize :: Ord label => BoxType label -> FunType label

...
generalize (dom->ran) = RecType (fromList dom) ~ fromList (map (RecType o fromList) ran)

The order constraint on label is required for the use of sets. When a record element is inserted into a record, any old record element with the same label is overwritten. This behaviour can be implemented by defining the order (and equality) of record elements as the order on their labels.

instance Ord label ⇒ Eq (RecEl label value) where
  x = y = label x = label y
instance Ord label ⇒ Ord (RecEl label value) where
  compare x y = compare (label x) (label y)

Deriving the type of a record can be implemented as, for every record element, keeping only the label and throwing away the value. A subtype is defined conform the S-Net typesystem definition. The operator `<:*` checks whether its left-hand side is a subtype of its right-hand side. The function match calculates the ‘match strength’ of a record with a type. This can be used for routing where the network alternative with the ‘strongest’ match should be the recipient of the matched record.

typeOf :: Ord label ⇒ Record label value → RecType label
typeOf = RecType o mapMonotonic label

(<>): Ord label ⇒ RecType label → RecType label → Bool
(RecType sub) < (RecType super) = Set.filter isBindingTag sub = Set.filter isBindingTag super
  \super \subseteq sub

match :: Ord label ⇒ FulType label → Record label value → Z
match (FulType nettp) rec = let rt = typeOf rec in
  minimum [ if rt < t then size (recTpEls t) else ¬1 | (t ~ _) ← elems nettp ]

Records can be seen as lookup tables. Given a label and a record, the function element performs that lookup. The function does not check whether the record actually contains an element with the given label, so the presence of said label must be determined in the context in which element is used.

element :: Ord label ⇒ Element label value → Record label value → RecEl label value
element e = head o toList o Set.filter (e o label)

Records must be translated to and from box input and output respectively. The function toBox looks at the input type of a box and selects the required elements in the required order from a given record. The function fromBox looks up the correct output type from the list of output types of a box and translates the box output back into a record (according to the output type).

toBox :: Ord label ⇒ BoxType label → Record label value → [Either value Z]
toBox (dom→...) r = map (value o flip element t) dom

fromBox :: Ord label ⇒ BoxxType label → ([N, Either value Z]) → Record label value
fromBox (ran→ran) (1, es) = fromList $ zipWith (RecEl (ran!!1)) es

For flow inheritance, records must be split into two parts: the ‘through’ part—that matches the input type of a network—and the ‘around’ part. For convenience, the operators `-₁` and `>₁` are defined to break up records into through and around and to join them back together again. Note that the union in `>₁` favours its left-hand side, i.e. if a label occurs in both its operands, the one from the right-hand operand is discarded.

data Ord label ⇒ Inh label value = Inh { through, around :: Record label value }

class Inheritable t where
  (-) :: Ord label ⇒ t label → Record label value → Inh label value
instance Inheritable RecType where
  (-) (RecType t) = uncurry Inh o partition (flip member t o label)
instance Inheritable BoxType where (-) t = (generalize t >)
instance Inheritable FulType where (-) (dom→_) = (dom >)

(-) :: Ord label ⇒ Inh label value → Record label value → Record label value
inh < res = res ∪ around inh
Finally, the type for networks can be defined. It is parametric in the annotation of every network element and in the representation for boxes, filters, patterns and record element labels. This way, the data structure can be reused for different compilation stages and run-time environments.

```haskell
data Ord label => Net annot box fil pat label
  = Box { notes :: annot, nettype :: FulType label,
          boxtype :: BoxType label, box :: box }
  | Filter { notes :: annot, nettype :: FulType label,
            fil :: fil }
  | Sync { notes :: annot, nettype :: FulType label,
          inheritType :: ReType label, patterns :: [pat] }
  | CSeq { notes :: annot, nettype :: FulType label,
          subs :: [Net annot box fil pat label] }
  | CPar { notes :: annot, nettype :: FulType label,
          subs :: [Net annot box fil pat label], deterministic :: Bool }
  | CStar { notes :: annot, nettype :: FulType label,
           body :: Net annot box fil pat label, deterministic :: Bool,
           terminator :: [pat] }
  | CSplit { notes :: annot, nettype :: FulType label,
            body :: Net annot box fil pat label, deterministic :: Bool,
            selector :: Element label }
```

### 7.2 Indices

In order to identify different positions in a network, we add an indexing scheme to the language implementation. To this end, we define a hierarchical data structure for indices and some operators to translate index transactions to possibly more familiar terminology.

Although this module does not require anything from any library, it has one import statement, to hide the definition of `break` coming from the prelude.

```haskell
{-# LANGUAGE RecordWildCards #-

module Index (Index, initialIndex, isPrefixOf, start, step, stop, loop, continue, break, idxSplit, idxMerge, idxInf, POrdering(...), idxCompare, uncheckedIterators)
where

import Prelude hiding (break)

The Index data type reflects the hierarchical nature of S-Net networks. The simplest index form, just enumerates the sequential compositions. If the output of network a is the input of network b then b’s index is a’s index plus one. However, since there are stars and parallel constructions (parallel composition and bling), there are more constructors required.

```haskell
data Index
  = Seq { value :: Int, next :: Index }
  | Iter { value :: Int, next :: Index }
  | Split { alt :: Int, next :: Index }
  | EndIndex
deriving Eq
```

Seq denotes a position within a sequential composition, Iter denotes the iteration (or unfolding instance) of a star combinator. Split denotes the choice out of numbered alternatives made when flowing through a bling or parallel composition. Because all these constructors have a next field in which the index within a subnet is placed, a terminator is required, which is the role of EndIndex.

First, we define a few functions for internal use to implement the interface functions. Some straightforward property checkers make the implementation easier.
7.2. INDICES

`hasNext`, `isSeq`, `isIter`, `isSplit` :: Index → Bool

`hasNext` = (EndIndex /=)

`isSeq` i = case i of Seq {} → True; _ → False
`isIter` i = case i of Iter {} → True; _ → False
`isSplit` i = case i of Split {} → True; _ → False

Because the inner-most index element describes the inner most network element, it is the most frequently changed element. The function `applyToDeepest` takes a predicate, a function and an index. It recurses down through the index to find occurrences where the predicate holds. If the predicate holds for an index element, and it does not hold for any of its children (next), the function is applied to this element. If the predicate holds for one of the children of a node, `applyToDeepest` recurses into the children and alters them.

`applyToDeepest` :: (Index → Bool) → (Index → Index) → Index → Index

`applyToDeepest` p f = fst o applyToDeepest’ p f

where
`applyToDeepest’` p f i

| hasNext i ∧ r = (i { next = u }, r)
| p i = (f i, True)
| otherwise = (i, False)

where
(n,r) = applyToDeepest’ p f (next i)

With this function, we can now define `append` and `prune` operations to add or take away levels of hierarchy.

`append` :: Index → Index → Index

`append` t’ = applyToDeepest (not . hasNext) (EndIndex t ’)

`prune` p :: (Index → Bool) → Index → Index

`prune` p = applyToDeepest p (λi → EndIndex)

We can make a ‘new’ index, by starting with an empty one:

`initialIndex` = EndIndex

One index is considered the prefix of another when it occurs entirely in the other, except for its terminator. In other words, i is a prefix of j when j is equal to i, or is i with a deeper index.

`isPrefixOf` :: Index → Index → Bool

EndIndex ‘isPrefixOf’ j = True
i ‘isPrefixOf’ EndIndex = False
i ‘isPrefixOf’ j = i { next = EndIndex } = j { next = EndIndex } ∧
(next i) ‘isPrefixOf’ (next j)

The `start`, `step` and `stop` functions transform the index to, respectively, add an element to signify a sequence, increment the deepest sequential element of the index (pruning its children) and prune the deepest sequential index.

`start`, `step`, `stop` :: Index → Index

`start` = append (Seq { value = 0, next = EndIndex })
`step` = applyToDeepest isSeq (λi → i { value = succ (value i), next = EndIndex })
`stop` = prune isSeq

Unfolding stars can be seen as loops. The indices reflect this by keeping an iteration count. The functions `loop`, `continue` and `break` perform the correct transformations on indices.

`loop`, `continue`, `break` :: Index → Index

`loop` = append (Iter { value = 0, next = EndIndex })
`continue` = applyToDeepest isIter (λi → i { value = succ (value i), next = EndIndex })
`break` = prune isIter

Finally, to facilitate parallel compositions and blings, the indices can be transformed by `idxSplit` (which takes the number of the alternative branch a subnet is in) and `idxMerge`.

`idxSplit` :: Int → Index → Index

`idxSplit` a = append (Split { alt = a, next = EndIndex })

`idxMerge` :: Index → Index

`idxMerge` = prune isSplit

Given two indices, the minimum is defined as the greatest common prefix. This may be slightly
counterintuitive, because normally \( \min(i, j) \in \{i, j\} \). In this case, we say that \( \min(i, j) \leq i, j \) and \( \exists k(\min(i, j) < k < i, j) \).

\[
\text{idxInf} :: \text{Index} \rightarrow \text{Index} \rightarrow \text{Index}
\]

\[
\text{idxInf} \text{ EndIndex} j = \text{EndIndex}
\]

\[
\text{idxInf} i \text{ EndIndex} = \text{EndIndex}
\]

\[
\text{idxInf} i \text{ Split} \{ \text{alt} = ai \} j \text{Split} \{ \text{alt} = aj \} | ai /= aj = \text{EndIndex}
\]

\[
\text{ai} = aj = 1 \{ \text{next} = \text{idxInf} (\text{next} i) (\text{next} j) \}
\]

\[
\text{idxInf} i \text{ Iter} \{ \text{value} = vi \} j \text{Iter} \{ \text{value} = vj \} = \text{case compare} vi vj of
\]

\[
\text{LT} \rightarrow i \{ \text{next} = \text{idxInf} (\text{next} i) (\text{next} j) \}
\]

\[
\text{EQ} \rightarrow i \{ \text{next} = \text{idxInf} (\text{next} i) (\text{next} j) \}
\]

\[
\text{GT} \rightarrow j
\]

\[
\text{idxInf} i \text{ Seq} \{ \text{value} = vi \} j \text{Seq} \{ \text{value} = vj \} = \text{case compare} vi vj of
\]

\[
\text{LT} \rightarrow i \{ \text{next} = \text{idxInf} (\text{next} i) (\text{next} j) \}
\]

\[
\text{EQ} \rightarrow i \{ \text{next} = \text{idxInf} (\text{next} i) (\text{next} j) \}
\]

\[
\text{GT} \rightarrow j
\]

\[
\text{idxInf} i \text{ j} = \text{error} "$Index difference that shouldn't occur:" ++ show (i,j)
\]

\[
data \text{ POrdering} = \text{Less} | \text{Equal} | \text{Equivalent} | \text{Greater}
\]

\[
\text{idxCompare} :: \text{Index} \rightarrow \text{Index} \rightarrow \text{POrdering}
\]

\[
\text{idxCompare} \text{ EndIndex} j = \text{Equal}
\]

\[
\text{idxCompare} \text{ i EndIndex} = \text{Greater}
\]

\[
\text{idxCompare} i \text{ Split} \{ \text{alt} = ai \} j \text{Split} \{ \text{alt} = aj \} | ai /= aj = \text{Equivalent}
\]

\[
| ai = aj = \text{idxCompare} (\text{next} i) (\text{next} j)
\]

\[
\text{idxCompare} i \text{ Iter} \{ \text{value} = vi \} j \text{Iter} \{ \text{value} = vj \} = \text{case compare} vi vj of
\]

\[
\text{LT} \rightarrow \text{Less}
\]

\[
\text{EQ} \rightarrow \text{idxCompare} (\text{next} i) (\text{next} j)
\]

\[
\text{GT} \rightarrow \text{Greater}
\]

\[
\text{idxCompare} i \text{ j} = \text{error} "$Index difference that shouldn't occur:" ++ show (i,j)
\]

\[
\text{uncheckedIterators} :: \text{Index} \rightarrow [\text{Int}]
\]

\[
\text{uncheckedIterators} \text{ Split} \{ \text{value} = vi \} \text{ Iter} \{ \text{value} = vj \} = \text{case compare} vi vj of
\]

\[
\text{LT} \rightarrow \text{Less}
\]

\[
\text{EQ} \rightarrow \text{idxCompare} (\text{next} i) (\text{next} j)
\]

\[
\text{GT} \rightarrow \text{Greater}
\]

\[
\text{idxCompare} i \text{ j} = \text{error} "$Index difference that shouldn't occur:" ++ show (i,j)
\]

7.3 Putting it all together

The purpose of this module is to ultimately translate an S-Net network into a function that transforms an input stream into an output stream. In- and output streams are represented as lists of records.

\[
\{\#L A N G U A G E R e c o r d W i l d C a r d s \#\}
\]

\[
\text{module Semantics where}
\]

\[
\text{import Data.Set (elems,empty,union,singleton)}
\]

\[
\text{import Data.List (partition)}
\]

\[
\text{import Data.Either (partitionEithers)}
\]

\[
\text{import SNet}
\]

\[
\text{import Index}
\]

\[
\text{The idea behind this formulation of the semantics of S-Net is that non-determinism can be expressed as a deterministic choice made outside of the network. This choice is represented by an oracle.}
\]

\[
\text{type Oracle} = [(\text{Index},\text{N})]
\]

\[
\text{Every tuple in the oracle represents a single choice for a specific element of the network (indicated by the element's index). The semantics of a network can now be defined by stating that for all desirable behaviours (i.e. outputs), there exists an oracle, such that this output is produced.}
\]
Similarly, for all oracles, there is an unambiguous output.

The representation for S-Net networks required to describe the semantics has index annotations on every network element, boxes are represented by box functions, filters are normal functions and patterns are functions that project records onto zero-or-one type that was matched by the record. Throughout the semantic description, labels are assumed to be represented by strings.

```
type SemNet value = Net
    Index
    (BoxFunc value) — annotation
    (SemRec value — [SemRec value]) — repr. boxes
    (SemRec value — [RecType String]) — repr. filters
    String — label type

type SemRec value = Record String value
```

Non-deterministic mergers are constrained by the outside world. When there is a non-deterministic parallel composition inside a deterministic parallel composition, the non-deterministic merger must respect the order of substreams caused by the splitter of the deterministic parallel composition. As an example, suppose that the input stream of a deterministic parallel composition consists of the records a, b, c and d. Furthermore, suppose that a, b and d all flow into the same branch of the composition, whereas c flows into another. The responses to a or b can never come out after any response to d. There should, thus, be some sort of barrier between a and b on the one hand and d on the other. This is done by modelling streams as lists of substreams (and substreams as lists of records). The stream from this example for the branch mentioned would look like this: [[a,b],[d]].

```
type Stream value = [[SemRec value]]
```

Having a representation for a stream, the semantics of a network can now be written as a function of an oracle and that network. In other words, the function `lift` describes unambiguously the behaviour of any network.

```
lift :: Oracle -> SemNet value -> (Stream value -> Stream value)
```

Because there are network elements with a state (most notably the SynchroCell), a few helper functions are defined. The function `stateT` takes a function of some state and an input to the output and a new state and it produces a function that takes an entire substream of input. The function `liftState` generalizes this, so that a state transforming function and an initial state are translated into a function from an input stream to an output stream.

```
(stateT :: (s -> i -> (o,s)) -> (s -> [i] -> ([o],s))
stateT s [] = ([],s)
stateT f s (i:is) = (o:os,s')
    where
        (o ,s') = f s i
        (os,s') = stateT f s' is

liftState :: (s -> i -> ([o],s)) -> s -> [[i]] -> [[o]]
liftState f s = map concat . fst . (stateT o stateT) f s
```

The function `lift` can now be defined. Firstly, the primitive networks can be lifted. None of the primitive networks can contain any non-determinism, so the oracle has no influence on their lifting. Record elements not required as input are flow inherited over boxes and filters. Since boxes and filters can produce zero-or-many records and SynchroCells can produce zero-or-one record in response to any input record, the resulting lists of records must be concatenated. This concatenation does not change the barriers that substreams represent, because only the responses to records from the same substream are concatenated (i.e. `concat` is applied inside the outer `map`). Since SynchroCells are stateful, `liftState` is used, so that the SynchroCell semantics can be formulated on a per-input basis. This is delegated to the function `sync`, which is described below.

```
lift Box {..} = map (concat o map (applyBox o (boxtype ->)))
    where
        applyBox inh = map ((inh o) o fromBox boxtype)
            (box $ toBox boxtype $ through inh)
```

lift _ · Filter {..} = map (concat o map (applyFilter o selectInput))
  where
  applyFilter inh = map (inh -\) o fil o through) inh
  selectInput rec = (head o elems o funTypes) nettype > rec
lift _ · Sync {..} = liftState sync (Sync empty patterns (Just undefined))

Secondly, sequential composition can be lifted. This is now the very simple case of applying
all functions resulting from lifting the subnets in order.
lift o CSeq {..} = foldr (.) id $ reverse $ map (lift o) subs

Lastly, the compositions that may involve non-determinism are all delegated to their respective
functions.
lift o CPar {..} = liftPar notes o deterministic subs
lift o CStar {..} = liftStar o (CStar {..})
lift o CSplit {..} = liftSplit notes o deterministic body selector

Before dealing with specific combinator lifting, splitting and merging of streams is discussed.
All remaining combinators use splitters and mergers in some way.

Splitting requires a function router that determines where every record should go. For every
record in a stream, router gives the branch number the record should flow into and the record
itself. The determinism of the corresponding merger is important for the behaviour of the splitter.
If the merger (and thus the splitter) is deterministic, barriers should be introduced whenever the
next record flows into a different branch than the current. Non-deterministic splitters may simply
divide all records of a substream over the branches, one substream per branch. Every branch filters
the stream for records that are relevant to it, i.e. have been tagged with the branch’s number.
Finally, all branches are lifted and applied to their filtered input. The result of the split is a list of
decisions per substream, i.e. the branch numbers, and the list of resulting streams, one for every
branch.

splitStream :: Oracle ! (Stream value ! [[(N,SemRec value )]]) router
    -- Bool
    -- [SemNet value]
    -- Stream value
    -- ( [[N]], [Stream value])
    -- split decisions and branch results
splitStream o router det nets ss = (cs,bs)
  where
    ssR = (map runs o router) ss
    cs = map (map fst) ssR
    bs = zipWith filterLift [0..] (map (lift o) nets)
    filterLift bn f = f $ (if det then concat else map concat) $ map (map and o filter ((=bn).fst)) ssR
    runs rs*(i:_{_:}) = (i,map and run) : runs rem
      where
        (run,rem) = span ((=i) o fst) rs

    Deterministic merging is quite straightforward. Given a list of splitter decisions per substream
and a list of branch results, the latter must be merged one substream at a time. The decision
for every substream consists of as many branch numbers as there were consecutive sequences the
original substream was cut up into by the splitter. This means that when the first decision in the
list of decisions is an empty list, the end of the original substream has been reached.
detMerge :: [[N]] -> [[[a]]] -> [[a]]
detMerge [] = []
detMerge (i:is) = detMerge bs ss
  where
    (pss,(s:ss):nss) = splitAt c ss
    (os:oss) = detMerge (cs:bs) (pss ++ css:nss)
    detMerge ((c:cs):bs) ss = (s+:os) : oss

    Non-deterministic merging is best understood on a per-substream basis. For every substream
coming into a non-deterministic splitter, every branch receives exactly one (possibly empty) sub-
stream. Thus, merging the head of every branch result, results in the first substream coming out
of this merger. To facilitate for infinite branches (which may occur in case of a \(!\) combinator) in the face of lazyness, the function \(\textit{nonDetMerge}\) is given the highest branch number for every substream (\(ms\)) as an argument. Notice that when the oracle dictates taking an element from an empty substream, this substream is discarded from consideration and the oracle’s decision is reinterpreted in the face of one less substream.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{nonDetMerge} & : \mathbb{N} \rightarrow \mathbb{N} \rightarrow [[m]] \rightarrow [[]a]] \\
\text{nonDetMerge} & _m = [] \\
\text{nonDetMerge} o (m;ms) ss = s : \text{nonDetMerge (drop (length s) o) ms (map tail ss)}
\end{align*}
\]

where
\[
\begin{align*}
    s & = \text{mergeSubs o (take (m + 1) \(\downarrow\) map head ss)} \\
    \text{mergeSubs (c:cs) ss} & | \quad \text{null } rs = \text{mergeSubs (c:cs) (pss+ns)} \\
    \quad \text{otherwise} & = \text{head } rs : \text{mergeSubs cs (pss+tail ts:ns)}
\end{align*}
\]

In the parallel composition, there is non-determinism both at both sides; splitter and merger. When more than one branch in the parallel composition matches the type of the input record, the oracle dictates the choice for a branch. Non-determinism on the side of the merger is more comprehensive, i.e. all choices are dictated by the oracle. In order to distinguish between oracle decisions for the splitter and the merger, the splitter is controlled by positive integers in the oracle, whereas the merger is controlled by the negative numbers. Because 0 would be a valid choice for both, merger decisions are offset by one. The router function \(\textit{sigma}\) makes the routing choices according to S-Net’s type-driven routing rules.

\[
\begin{align*}
liftPar & \text{idx o determin nets ss} \\
\quad |\quad \text{determin} & = \text{detMerge cs bs} \\
\quad |\quad \text{otherwise} & = \text{nonDetMerge o merge (map maximum cs) bs}
\end{align*}
\]

where
\[
\begin{align*}
(o',o'') & = \text{partition ((= idx).fst) \& filter (isPrefixOf idxFst) o} \\
(o,\text{split},o,\text{merge'}) & = \text{partition (\(\geq 0\)) (map snd o')} \\
\text{merge'} & = \text{map (abs o succ) o,merge'}
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
    (cs,bs) & = \text{splitStream o' \& router determin nets ss} \\
    \text{router} & = \text{liftState o split}
\end{align*}
\]

The lifting of the star is very similar to the lifting of the parallel composition. Elements that match the exit patterns of a star are always routed to bypass the route into the further-unfolding star. Besides the different routing semantics and a bit of plumbing network indices, the implementation of \(\textit{liftStar}\) is very similar to that of \(\textit{liftPar}\).

\[
\begin{align*}
liftStar & : \text{Oracle \rightarrow SmNet value \rightarrow Stream value \rightarrow Stream value} \\
liftStar & o netCStar ss \\
\quad |\quad \text{deterministic} & = \text{detMerge cs bs} \\
\quad |\quad \text{otherwise} & = \text{nonDetMerge (map snd o') (repeat 1) bs}
\end{align*}
\]

where
\[
\begin{align*}
(o',o'') & = \text{partition ((= notes).fst) o} \\
(cs,bs) & = \text{splitStream o' \& router deterministic [\text{body'},idNet notes] ss} \\
\text{router} & = \text{map \& map (\(\lambda r\rightarrow (\text{SmEnum \& any (not o null o ($ r))})\) \text{terminator},r)} \\
\text{index} & = \text{continue notes} \\
\text{body'} & = \text{let notes = index in CSeq \{ subs = [\text{body',net \{ notes = index \}], o . \}}
\end{align*}
\]

idNet : : Index \rightarrow SmNet value

idNet i = Filter
\[
\begin{align*}
    \{ \text{ notes = 1 } \\
    ,\text{ nettype = FuType \& singleton \& RecType empty} \rightarrow \text{singleton (RecType empty) } \\
    ,\text{ fil } = \text{return}
\end{align*}
\]
The lifting of split combinators, again, is very similar to that of parallel composition. The only actual differences are the fact that splitting is always deterministic and the routing information is taken from the records themselves.

\[
\text{lifSplit} :: \text{Index} \rightarrow \text{Oracle} \rightarrow \text{Bool} \rightarrow \text{SemNet} \text{ value} \rightarrow \text{Element String} \rightarrow \text{Stream} \text{ value} \rightarrow \text{Stream} \text{ value} \\
\text{lifSplit} \text{ idx} \ o \ \text{determin} \ \text{net} \ \text{sel} \ \text{ss} \ | \ \text{determin} = \text{detMerge} \text{ cs bs} \\
\text{otherwise} = \text{nonDetMerge} \ (\text{map} \ \text{snd} \ o') \ (\text{map} \ \text{maximum} \ \text{cs}) \ \text{bs}
\]

\[
\text{where}
\]

\[
(o', o'') = \text{partition} \ ((= \text{idx}). \text{fst}) \ \text{filter} \ (\text{isPrefixOf} \ \text{idx}. \text{fst}) \ o
\]

\[
(\text{cs}, \text{bs}) = \text{splitStream} \ 0'' \ \text{router} \ \text{determin}
\]

\[
\text{zipWith} \ (\lambda i n \rightarrow n \{ \text{notes} = \text{idxSplit} \ i \ \text{idx} \}) \ [0..] \ \text{repeat} \ \text{net}
\]

\[
\text{router} = \text{map} \ \text{map} \ \text{map} \ \text{Ax} \rightarrow (((\lambda (\_ i) \rightarrow i) \circ \text{value} \circ \text{element} \circ \text{sel}) \ r, r)
\]

\[
\text{data} \ \text{SyncState value} = \text{SyncS} \{ \ \text{accum} :: \text{SemRec value}, \\
\text{rempats} :: \text{[SemRec value} \rightarrow \text{[RecType String]],} \\
\text{inheritFirst} :: \text{Maybe (RecType String)} \}
\]

\[
\text{sync} \ : \ : \ \text{SyncState value} \rightarrow \text{SemRec value} \rightarrow ((\text{SemRec value}, \ \text{SyncState value}) \\
\text{sync} \ s \ r \ | \ \text{null} \ \text{rempats} \ s = ([r], s)
\]

\[
\text{where}
\]

\[
\text{accum'} = \text{if null} \ ms \ \text{then} \ \text{accum} \ \text{else} \ (\text{accum} \ \text{add})
\]

\[
\text{stripped} = (\text{through} \ \circ \ (\text{foldr union empty ms} \rightarrow)) \ r
\]

\[
(ms, rp') = \text{partitionEithers} \ [\text{if null} \ pr \ \text{then} \ \text{Nothing} \ p \ \text{else} \ (\text{recTpEls} \ \text{head} \ pr) | \ p \leftarrow \text{rempats},
\]

\[
\text{let} \ pr = p \ r]
\]

\[
(\text{if'}, \text{add}) = \text{maybe} \ \text{Nothing} \ \text{stripped}
\]

\[
(\lambda t \rightarrow \text{if} \ \text{typeOf} \ r \ \leftarrow t \ \text{then} \ (\text{Nothing} \ r) \ \text{else} \ (\text{Just} \ t, \text{stripped}))
\]

\[
\text{inheritFirst}
\]
Chapter 8

Metadata

8.1 Purpose

S-Net metadata is a versatile mechanism to attach arbitrary additional data in the form of character string based key-value pairs to any S-Net box or network. Any information provided through this mechanism does not affect the semantics of an S-Net network, but it allows users to control the concrete behaviour of a concrete implementation of compiler, interfaces and runtime system. The effect of metadata is hence implementation-dependent. S-Net metadata is an open mechanism in the sense that the number and names of metadata keys are not a-priori fixed, but can be extended by an implementation at any time.

For the time being, we use metadata primarily to control box language interfacing (see Chapter 9) and dynamic observation of S-Net execution (see Chapter 10). Sections 8.2 and 8.3 describes the form of metadata and Section 8.4 the currently supported metadata keys in greater detail. Chapters 9 and 10 introduce further keys and illustrate the use of metadata for the specific purposes of box language interfacing and dynamic observation.

8.2 Syntax of Metadata

This section describe the syntax of the S-Net metadata. As mentioned before, the actual metadata consists of key-value pairs. In addition, the metadata syntax provides means to structure the metadata and to associate metadata with S-Net boxes and networks. Fig. 8.1 shows the syntax rules of S-Net metadata. The reader should note that although the syntax resembles that of XML very much, it is in fact only a restricted subset of XML.

A metadata definition consists of a set of nested elements. An element is a logical structure that is delimited by a start-tag and an end-tag. Nested metadata elements or character data can be declared between the start and the end tag. A special case of the element is an empty element, which can be shortened into special empty-tag. A start-tag consist of a string describing the type of the element enclosed inside angular brackets. End-tags are distinguished from start-tags by adding a slash (/) behind the starting angular bracket. The type names of the related start and end tags must be the same. Empty-tags are distinguished by a slash (/) just before their ending angular bracket.

Start-tags and empty-tags may also contain attributes. An attribute is a key-value pair. Attributes are declared after the type, but before the ending angular bracket of the tag. Each attribute starts with the name of the key followed by an equal sign and then the value of the key-value pair enclosed in double quotes.

The values of the character data and the attributes can contain any characters except double quotes ("“) and less than symbols, (<) and may be empty. In character data, all the white space at the beginning and in the end of the data are ignored. Attribute values are considered to consist of every character between the double quotes. The element structure of the metadata and attributes
are strictly limited to keep the metadata parsing simple. Unlike in XML, extra elements and attributes are not accepted.

Any S-Net source code file may include any number of metadata definitions. Metadata can be included either in S-Net source code file or in a separate metadata file(s). If metadata is provided within the S-Net source code file, then the metadata can be declared in any position in the S-Net code where the S-Net syntax would allow an S-Net definition. Hence, metadata can exist either outside of any S-Net definitions or inside the body of a net definition.

A metadata declaration always consists of a metadata element. This element acts as a container for the actual metadata and it’s only purpose is to separate the metadata from the S-Net syntax. A metadata element may contain one or more net, box, default, netdefault and boxdefault elements.

A net element is used to associate keys with a certain S-Net network definition. The element also acts as a scoping structure. A net element may contain one or more key elements, or net, box, default, netdefault and boxdefault elements. A box element is used to associate keys with certain S-Net box definition. A box element may contain one or more key elements.

Each net and box element must have a name attribute. The value of the name attribute is considered as location of the related S-Net definition. The name value consists of one S-Net net or box name identifying the net or box the metadata should be attached to. The name may be preceded by any number of S-Net net names separated by slashes (/). These names represent the path from current scope of the metadata element to the scope of the associated S-Net definition. A value that does not contain any slashes refers to the corresponding S-Net definition in the current scope. Elements with empty name attribute or no name attribute at all are erroneous.

A default element is used to give default keys for all the S-Net networks and boxes that do not have any explicitly specified key with the same name. A default element may contain one or more key elements. Netdefault and boxdefault elements have the same function as the default element, but limit their values to all S-Net networks or boxes correspondingly.

The metadata key-value pairs are declared as key elements. The type name of the key elements may contain any single word, excluding those reserved for the other elements presented above. The value of the key is given as character data, or the value can be given as the value of an attribute named value if the key element is defined as an empty element.

### 8.3 Organisation of Metadata

This section outlines how individual metadata elements are associated with S-Net definitions in an S-Net code file.
Each net and box element must have a name attribute. The value of the name attribute is considered as location of the related S-Net definition. The name value consists of one S-Net net or box name identifying the net or box the metadata should be attached to. The name may be preceded by any number of S-Net net names separated by slashes (/). These names represent the path from current scope of the metadata element to the scope of the associated S-Net definition. A value that does not contain any slashes refers to the corresponding S-Net definition in the current scope. Each net or box element under another net element is associated to element according to the name attribute starting from the scope into which their parent element is attached to. If a name does not point to any S-Net definition then the metadata element and all elements within its scope are ignored.

Definitions that contain paths behave exactly if they were declared in the beginning of the S-Net scope defined in the path. The order of this kind of definition is exactly the same as in which they are declared. Metadata declared in separate metadata files is considered to be the same as if it was declared on the top of the S-Net file in the order in which the files were included.

The scope of a metadata definition begins with the definition and ends where the corresponding S-Net scope ends, i.e. in the end of the S-Net network definition in which the metadata is declared. One S-Net entity may have any number of metadata elements attached to it. Unlike S-Net definitions, metadata definitions do not replace earlier metadata definitions of the same name, but all the definition are alive at the same time. The only exception to this are the key definitions.

In case the names of the keys given to an S-Net entity collide, the order and the scopes of the metadata declarations is used to decide which value each key has. The value of the key definition that is declared closest to the entity is used. An exception to this are the key values defined within default, netdefault and boxdefault elements: default keys do not override keys that are directly attached to an S-Net entity.

Fig. 8.2 gives an example of how metadata is associated to the S-Net definitions. The metadata inside network B in file A.snet is associated with the box C. It solely contains an interface declaration for the box, which differs from the default interface specified before. Metadata from another file metadata.md could be used to change the name of the box given to the language interface implementation.

## Metadata keys

This section lists the metadata keys recognized by the S-Net compiler.

### Common keys

The following keys can be given to any S-Net network or box:

**The **\texttt{err\_code}** key**

The \texttt{err\_code} key can be used to attach any network or box a user-defined error code that is printed by the compiler as part of any warning or error message that is directly related to that network or box.

### Observer keys

We refer to Chapter 10 for the observer keys.

### Box keys

The following keys can be given to any S-Net box:
file A.snet:

```xml
<metadata>
  <boxdefault>
    <interface value="C4SNet" />
  </boxdefault>
</metadata>
net A {
  net B {
    <metadata>
      <box name="C">
        <interface value="SAC4SNet">
      </targetbox>
    </metadata>
    box C( ( I, <T>) -> ( J, <T>));
    box D( ( J, <T>) -> ( K, <T>));
    } connect C .. D;
  } connect B;
```

file metadata.md:

```xml
<metadata>
  <box name="A/B/C">
    <boxfun value="funC" />
  </targetbox>
</metadata>
```

Figure 8.2: Example: S-Net with metadata both inlined and located in a separate file

The **interface key**

The *interface* key describes the box language interface used by the box implementation.

The **boxfun key**

The *boxfun* key can be used to map the S-Net level box name to a box implementation language level function name. By default both are expected to have the same name, but this metadata key allows any mapping between the two.

Other box keys

As box language interfaces might need language specific information at compile time for box code wrapper generation, S-Net metadata also offers means to provide this data. All the keys attached to a box are passed to the box language interface wrapper code generation function as a special data structure.

All key names defined above and all keys whose names begin with *snet_* are reserved for use of S-Net language and S-Net compiler implementations and should not be used for language interfaces.
Chapter 9

Interfaces

9.1 Introduction

As a pure coordination language, S-Net provides no means to describe computations, apart from the simple operations on tag values supported by filters (see Section 3.3 for details). For the description of non-trivial computations as represented by user-defined boxes S-Net relies on an external compute language, called the box language. S-Net is not bound to a specific box language and a single network may well combine boxes implemented in different box languages.

The freedom in the choice of a box language and the proper separation of concerns between conventional box code and the S-Net coordination layer require a well defined interface to function properly in practice. This box interface implements a contract between S-Net and the box language. It determines such issues as how S-Net calls box language functions to process records, how fields, tags and binding tags are accessed by the box language code and how the box language creates output records and makes them available to S-Net in turn. We describe the box interface in more detail in Section 9.2.

Yet, the box interface is not the only interface relevant to S-Net. S-Net networks are constructed hierarchically in a compositional style. Regardless, of how many layers of composition a network has, it always remains a SISO or Single-Input-Single-Output streaming network. At some point any S-Net network is completed and ready to be deployed. Deployment here means that the network is turned into executable (binary) code ready to accept input data from the execution environment. Deployment of an S-Net network is similar to linking in a conventional compiler toolchain. However, deployment immediately raises the question as how the deployed network is connected to the execution environment in order to accept data on its global input stream and to emit data back to the execution environment via the network’s global output stream. This is the task of the network interface, which connects S-Net networks to the outside world. We describe the network interface in more detail in Section 9.3.

In fact, network interface and box interface are much more related than it seems at first glance: The network interface must retrieve data from the execution environment and store it in memory such that the box language code can properly access it. Likewise, memory data structures created by box language code need to be serialised by the network interface before the data can leave the world of S-Net. Consequently, a complete box language binding must implement both the box interface and the network interface. We describe two such interface implementations, one for the machine-level imperative language C and one for the functional array programming language SAC [20] in Sections 9.4 and 9.5, respectively.

9.2 The Box Interface

Proper interaction between S-Net and box languages requires that box languages provide a certain infrastructure and box code obeys to certain rules and restrictions. For example, a box implementation is expected to compute a function mapping an input record to none, one or multiple
output records. In particular, the box code must not interact with its execution environment, although a box language may well provide the necessary means to do so. Furthermore, the box code must be reentrant and refrain from leaving any information in persistent storage. Whereas purely functional languages encourage such a programming style in a natural way, the utilisation of imperative languages requires some discipline from the programmer.

The type signature of a box serves as the only specification of the box's behaviour and its interface to S-Net. In particular, concrete types of data and, hence, the representation of data in memory are unknown to S-Net. To overcome this lack of information all data sent via S-Net streams must be boxed. In fact, S-Net only transfers pointers or references into a shared heap memory while only the box language code is actually able to interpret the data behind a pointer. The only exception to this rule are tags, for which S-Net and box languages share a common integer representation.

Fig. 9.1 demonstrates the interplay between the S-Net box signature and a C-binding box implementation. Let us consider an S-Net box declaration

```c
box example ((a,b,<t>) -> (c,<t>) | (x,y,z));
```

that declares a box named example, which maps records containing fields a and b and a tag t to none, one or more records that either contain a field c and a tag t or fields x, y and z.

```c
snethandle_t *example( snethandle_t *snethandle,
    void *a,
    void *b,
    int t)
{
    /* regular C code to compute c and t */
    snethandle = snetout( snethandle, 0, c, t);
    /* more C code to compute x, y and z */
    snethandle = snetout( snethandle, 1, x, y, z);
    return( snethandle);
}
```

Figure 9.1: Example of a pseudo C implementation of an S-Net box

Fig. 9.1 shows the corresponding pseudo C function definition. We assume a function that is named like the S-Net box. The first parameter of the function, regardless of the box signature, is a handle to an S-Net control data structure. This handle is opaque to the box language programmer and must be provided by the box language interface implementation. The following parameters are the record fields of the input record type in the sequence of their specification in the box signature. Here, it becomes immediately apparent why the sequence of record entries in a box signature does matter and why we distinguish between type signatures and box signatures in S-Net. As explained before, record fields are of some pointer type while tags are of type integer. Although it may be useful to name the parameters according to the field names in the box signature, this is not a formal requirement.

The box language function may contain any box language code, but must obey to the rules stated above: it neither must draw information from external sources other than its arguments nor must it interact with the outside world in any way.

S-Net boxes may return none, one or multiple records in response to a single input record. As a consequence, we cannot utilise the normal function result for producing an output record because that would enforce a one-to-one correspondence between input and output records. Instead, we use a special function snetout that must be provided by the S-Net box language binding. This function receives the S-Net handle provided as an argument to the box language function as its first argument. The second argument is a number referring to the output variant of the box.
9.3. THE NETWORK INTERFACE

signature. This information is vital for any implementation to interpret the output record. The remaining arguments are the record fields in the sequence of their declaration in the corresponding output variant of the box signature.

Calls to the `snetout` function may occur anywhere in the box language code. Taking C as box language as in our example means that these calls may occur in loops and branches. Depending on the values of the input record the number of calls to `snetout` may vary and so the number of records produced in response. The `snetout` function returns the S-Net handle. Eventually, the box language function returns the given handle.

9.3 The Network Interface

The network interface connects S-Net networks to the outside world by connecting the global input and the global output stream of a deployed network to its execution environment. Assume a standard UNIX-like execution environment, the network interface allows us to choose between different communication modes when a deployed network is run: standard Unix I/O streams (stdin for the global input stream, stdout for the global output stream), specific input/output files or socket communication. The choice is made via a command line option of when instantiating an S-Net network, the option `-h` shows the available options.

Regardless of the mode of communication with the execution environment the network interface makes use of an XML-like textual representation of records both for input and for output. We consistently use the XML namespace `snet-home.org` for all XML-like specifications. Any XML element with no child elements can be shortened according to the XML specification. White space between elements included in the examples below is introduced solely for the purpose of readability; any white space between elements may be omitted in actual messages. Each message consist of the XML elements explained below. Any extra elements and/or attributes are ignored. Missing attributes cause the element to be ignored.

Fig. 9.2 shows an example.

```
<?xml version="1.0" ?>
<record xmlns="snet-home.org" type="data" mode="textual" interface="SAC4SNet" >
  <field label="F">data</field>
  <field label="X" mode="binary" interface="C4SNet">binary data</field>
  <tag label="T">0</tag>
  <btag label="B">1</btag>
</record>
<?xml version="1.0" ?>
<record xmlns="snet-home.org" type="terminate" />
```

Figure 9.2: Example: S-Net message format for reading data on the input stream and for encoding data on the output stream

Each message contains the XML element `record` as its root element. If the message does not contain an XML-declaration, it is assumed to be XML version 1.0. The `record` element represents one single S-Net record. The `type` attribute specifies the type of the record. Currently, two record types are supported: `data` and `terminate`. While the former represents a (data) record in the sense of S-Net, i.e. a set of label-value pairs, the latter must always be the final record in any sequence of input records. It signals the end of the input data sequence to the S-Net network and causes its orderly termination.

Whereas `terminate` records do not contain any further information, data records have attributes describing individual fields, tags and binding tags as well as technical information that determines the way data received on the input string is deserialised into memory data structures or serialised back on the output stream.
• The field element represents a single S-Net record field. Any field element must have a label attribute and contain data defining the value of the field. How this data is interpreted and deserialised into a data structure in memory depends on two further attributes of the field element:
  – The interface attribute specifies the box language interface used for deserialisation and reserialisation; the box language interface establishes the connection between the interpretation of data received on the input stream, the manipulation of data by box implementations and the encoding of data on the output stream.
  – The mode attribute determines whether the data is in textual or in binary form; supported modes are textual and binary. The default mode in case this attribute is omitted is binary. A complete box language interface must support both textual and binary serialisation and deserialisation.

• The tag element represents a single S-Net tag. Any tag element must have a label attribute. If the tag element does contain data, that data is interpreted as the textual representation of an integer number; it determines the tag value. If the data cannot be interpreted as an integer number or the tag element does not contain any data, the tag value is interpreted as zero.

• The btag element represents a single S-Net binding tag. It is handled exactly as non-binding tags.

While the interface and mode attributes can be set for each field element in a data record individually, it is often handy in practice to specify default interfaces and modes for entire records. To achieve this the two attributes can be used with the record element as well. If a field is not associated with a box language interface at all because the attribute is neither used with the field element itself nor with the record element (default), the field is discarded from the record as the associated data cannot be interpreted without this information. In case no mode can be determined for some field element the default mode is binary.

9.4 Interface Implementation: C4SNet

To complement the high-level description of box and network interfaces in the previous sections, we have implemented a simple (and still incomplete) C box language and network interface (C4SNet). We utilise this implementation to demonstrate how to use interfaces in practice and to give a general feel for the technicalities involved.

A box interface is implemented by means of two libraries. A data handling library provides all box language specific data handling functionality, which includes aforementioned snetout function, as well as copy functions, de-allocation functions and data serialisation and deserialisation functions. In addition to these functions, the second library implements a code generator which produces necessary glue code to enable successful integration of foreign-language box functions into the S-Net runtime system. Whereas the former library provides generic runtime functions (it is therefore linked to the resulting executable file), the code generator is only required at compile time. It is dynamically loaded by the S-Net compiler using a versatile plug-in mechanism.

We will not go into more technical detail here — for a more thorough treatment of interface implementation and its requirements, we refer to the S-Net Implementation Report [1].

To make the S-Net compiler use a specific language interface, the only information a source file needs to provide is the name of the interface implementation. From this the compiler derives library names and the required function names of the interface.

The metadata key interface makes the name of the interface available to the compiler. It may be specified on a per-box basis inside a box metadata block (see Chapter 8 for details). However, in the common scenario where all boxes within a network share the same box interface, it is also possible to conveniently define a default interface. This is achieved by specifying the interface key inside a boxdefault element in the top-level metadata block. In this case it is not necessary...
to annotate boxes with their respective language interface name, as boxes inherit the default interface key automatically. The example in Fig. 9.3 shows how to specify C4SNet as default language interface for all boxes.

```xml
<metadata>
  <boxdefault>
    <interface value="C4SNet" />
  </boxdefault>
</metadata>

net mini
{
  box do( (A) -> (B, <X>));
  box something( (B, <X>) -> (C));
} connect do .. something;
```

Figure 9.3: The name of a language interface is made available to the S-Net compiler using the metadata key `interface`.

With the interface specified, the S-Net compiler is now able to generate glue code and to link against the interface library. The interface library does not only provide functions that are used for communication with the runtime system, it does also implement functions for data handling inside a box implementation. Data handling in a language like C, where data is referenced by pointers, has its pitfalls when it comes to passing data from one box to another: As pointers to data do not include any information about the data it is actually pointing to, additional information is often required. This is, for example, the case for arrays, where the extend of axes and the amount of data elements inside the array are important information. Rather then asking a box programmer to implement a custom made solution to this problem, C4SNet provides abstract data containers of type `c4snet_data_t`. A data container not only stores the pointer but also encodes information about the referenced data, as for example the base type and, if need be, array shape information. Functions to create, access and modify abstract data containers are provided by the box interface library as well. Note that for name space separation all functions that are provided by one interface library must share the name of the interface as common prefix.

The C4SNet interface supports all C data types (see Fig. 9.4) and provides the functions shown in Fig. 9.5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data type</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CTYPES_uchar</td>
<td>unsigned char</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CTYPES_char</td>
<td>signed char</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CTYPES_ushort</td>
<td>unsigned short int</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CTYPES_short</td>
<td>signed short int</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CTYPES_uint</td>
<td>unsigned int</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CTYPES_int</td>
<td>signed int</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CTYPES_ulong</td>
<td>unsigned long int</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CTYPES_long</td>
<td>signed long int</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CTYPES_float</td>
<td>float</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CTYPES_double</td>
<td>double</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CTYPES_ldouble</td>
<td>long double</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CTYPES_unknown</td>
<td>unknown (invalid) data</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 9.4: The C interface supports all C base types.

In Fig. 9.7 we show sample box implementations for the network shown in 9.6 and demonstrate how to work with data containers. The box functions do not compute anything useful; they are solely designed for illustrative purposes in this document.
### CHAPTER 9. INTERFACES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>void C4SNetOut( void *hnd, int variant, ...)</td>
<td>Send data back to S-Net</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>int C4SNetSizeof(c4snet_data_t *data)</td>
<td>Size of base type</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c4snet_data_t* C4SNetDataCreate( c4snet_type_t type, const void *data)</td>
<td>Create new data container for scalar values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c4snet_data_t* C4SNetDataCreateArray( c4snet_type_t type, int size, void *data)</td>
<td>Create new data container for arrays</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>void *C4SNetDataCopy( void *ptr)</td>
<td>Copy data container</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>void C4SNetDataFree( void *ptr)</td>
<td>Destroy data container</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>void *C4SNetDataGetData( c4snet_data_t *ptr)</td>
<td>Retrieve data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c4snet_type_t C4SNetDataGetType( c4snet_data_t *c)</td>
<td>Return base type</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c4snet_vtype_t C4SNetDataGetVType( c4snet_data_t *c)</td>
<td>Returns either VTYPE_simple or VTYPE_array</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>int C4SNetDataGetArraySize( c4snet_data_t *c)</td>
<td>Returns -1 for scalars and number of elements otherwise</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 9.5: The C interface provides various functions for data container handling.

For integration with network interfaces for input and output of data, C4SNet implements serialisation and de-serialisation functions. The structural record information is encoded in an XML-like syntax as described in Section 9.3. The data that is embedded into this XML record description is passed to the de-serialisation function of the box interface in C4SNet data is required to be prefixed with type information. Valid prefixes for supported data types are (unsigned char), (char), (unsigned short), (short), (unsigned int), (int), (unsigned long), (long), (float), (double), and (long double). Sample record encodings for our example network are shown in Fig. 9.8.

### 9.5 Interface Implementation: SAC4SNet

The SaC interface SAC4SNet is implemented as two separate libraries in the same way as the C4SNet interface described above. The integration of SAC as box language, however, requires more information because of the way the sac2c compiler and the sac4c stub generator create C libraries from SAC modules. This process is beyond the scope of this document and we refer to the corresponding SAC documentation for further reading. For a fully automated compilation process, the SAC4SNet code generator requires the metadata keys shown in Fig. 9.9.

The integration of a box function in SAC requires this function to accept the S-Net handle object as first argument. Results are sent back to the runtime system by a call to the SNet::out which follows the same convention as its C4SNet counterpart. A sample S-Net and an implementation of a SAC module which contains boxes for the network are shown in Fig. 9.10 and Fig. 9.11.

Data serialisation and de-serialisation is realised using the Fibre print and Fibre scan functions of SAC’s standard library. The data in Fibre format follows a SAC4SNet specific header (:::SACFIBRE: type dim sizes :::) that encodes the base type of elements, the dimensionality of the array and the extent of axes. Fig. 9.12 shows two examples of record encodings.
#include "C4SNet.h"

void *do( void *handle, c4snet_data_t *A)
{
    c4snet_data_t *B;
    void *result;
    int *A_int;
    double *A_dbl;
    int X;

    /* Using the C4SNet data containers, we can determine the
     * type of data we have received. If need be, we can implement
     * different behaviour depending on argument types, as sketched
     * out below. */
    switch( C4SNetDataGetType( A) {
        case CTYPE_int:
            A_int = C4SNetDataGetData( A);
            /* do something using A_int, for example generate a 10-element
             * vector of integers
             * ...
             * and then create a new data container to send it on */
            B = C4SNetDataCreateArray( CTYPE_int, 10, result);
            break;
        case CTYPE_double:
            A_dbl = C4SNetDataGetData( A);
            /* do something else */
            B = C4SNetDataCreate( CTYPE_double, result);
            break;
        default:
            /* something else... */
    }

    /* C4SNetOut is the function to communicate back any
     * results to the S-Net runtime system. Fields are always
     * of type *c4snet_data_t, tags are passed as plain integers.
     * The second argument determines the variant of the output type. */
    C4SNetOut( handle, 1, B, X);

    return( handle);
}

Figure 9.6: This shows the implementation of box do. The C4SNet interface provides functions for data handling. To send results back to the runtime system, the function C4SNetOut is used.
void *something( void *handle, c4snet_data_t *B, int X)
{
    int i;
    c4snet_data_t *C;
    int *array_B, *result;
    int size;

    size = C4SNetDataGetArraySize( B);
    if( size > -1) /* C4SNetDataGetArraySize returns -1 for scalars */
    {
        if( C4SNetDataGetType( B) == CTYPE_int) {
            array_B = C4SNetDataGetData( B);
            /* do some computation and produce a resulting array */
            C = C4SNetDataCreateArray( CTYPE_int, size, result);
        } else {
            /* do something else, for example, create a scalar result */
            C = C4SNetDataCreate( CTYPE_int, result);
        } else {
            /* do something else */
        }
    }

    for( i=0; i < X; i++) {
        C4SNetOut( handle, 1, C);
    }

    return( handle);
}

Figure 9.7: Example implementation of S-Net box something

<record xmlns="snet-home.org" type="data" mode="textual" interface="C4SNet">
    <field label="A" >(int)5</field>
</record>

<record xmlns="snet-home.org" type="data" mode="textual" interface="C4SNet">
    <field label="A" >(double)5.678</field>
    <field label="F" >(int[4])17,18,37,13</field>
</record>

Figure 9.8: The type of data is given in parentheses. For arrays the amount of elements is given in square brackets.
9.5. INTERFACE IMPLEMENTATION: SAC4SNET

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><code>&lt;interface&gt; SAC4SNet &lt;/interface&gt;</code></td>
<td>instructs the compiler to load the SAC4SNet code generator and to link against the matching box interface library.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><code>&lt;SACmodule&gt; name &lt;/SACmodule&gt;</code></td>
<td>this information is required by the code generator to construct the actual name of the function as generated by the SAC compiler. Currently this key is mandatory for each box.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><code>&lt;SACboxfun&gt; name &lt;/SACboxfun&gt;</code></td>
<td>this key is only required if the box name as it appears in the network’s source code does not coincide with the function name in the SAC source code. In this case one specifies the SAC function name here.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 9.9: The SAC interface specific metadata keys are used by the code generator to automatically construct required function names.

```plaintext
net mini {
  <metadata>
    <box name="do" >
      <SACmodule>mini</SACmodule>
    </box>
    <box name="something" >
      <SACmodule>mini</SACmodule>
      <SACboxfun>foo</SACboxfun>
    </box>
  </metadata>

  box do( (A) -> (B, <X>));
  box something((B, <X>) -> (C));
} connect do .. something;
```

Figure 9.10: The SAC interface is called SAC4SNet. Currently the SAC module name needs to be annotated for each box function using the metadata key SACmodule.
This is the SAC module that implements boxes for the example S-Net:

```c
module mini;
use Structures: all;
use sacprelude: {wrap};
export {do, foo};
```

When implementing boxes in SAC we can make use of (most) SAC features. Overloading, for example, allows us to implement different behaviour for various input (SAC) types, as sketched out below:

```c
void do( SNet::SNet &handle, int[*] A)
{
    /* do some computation */
    B = A + 1;
    X = 17;

    /* Any field we output has to be converted into SACargs again. */
    /* This is done by calling the wrap() function from the SAC standard prelude. In contrast, tags can be passed as scalar integers without wrapping. */
    SNet::out( handle, wrap( B), X);
}
```

```c
/* Same function name, this time for arbitrary double arrays: */
void do( SNet::SNet &handle, double[*] A)
{
    /* do some computation */
    B = A + 2.34;
    SNet::out( handle, wrap( B), 24);
}
```

Here, the function name "foo" differs from the box name in the S-Net source code. To still be able to correlate the S-Net box to this function, the metadata key "SACboxfun" is used:

```c
void foo( SNet::SNet &handle, int[*] B, int X)
{
    for( i=0; i < X; i++ ) {
        /* do some meaningful computation */
        SNet::out( handle, wrap( B), X);
    }
}
```

```c
void foo( SNet::SNet &handle, double[*] B, int X)
{
    for( i=0; i < X; i++ ) {
        /* do some meaningful computation */
        SNet::out( handle, wrap( B), X);
    }
}
```

Figure 9.11: Using SAC as box language for S-Net is straight forward. Only very few modifications to existing SAC code is necessary: Functions have to accept the S-Net handle as their first argument and results have to be output using `SNet::out` rather than return.
Figure 9.12: Record data is read and output by SAC4SNet in Fibre format.
Chapter 10

Runtime Inspection through Observers

10.1 Introduction

An observer is an S-Net component that makes dynamic information from the execution of an S-Net network available, for example for debugging, tracing or illustration purposes. Observers are designed to intervene with the operational behaviour of S-Net as little as possible and to be entirely transparent from an untimed semantic perspective. As the name suggests, observers cannot modify S-Net records, their content or their order in any way. Observers are not meant to be used as output components of the S-Net network either.

The basic action of an observer is as follows: an observer can be attached to any S-Net stream such that the stream is redirected from its target component to the observer and a new stream connects the observer with the target component. When the observer receives a record it creates a message describing the content of the record and sends it to predefined listener via socket communication. After this the record itself is sent to the subsequent runtime component. Instead of sending data to an active listener, the message can likewise be dumped into a file on demand.

Alternatively, S-Net features interactive observers. An interactive observer mainly acts just as a regular observer, but it waits for an acknowledgement from the listener before it passes a record on. As a consequence, interactive observers hold back a stream of records for some time and, hence, influence the operational behaviour but not the semantics of an S-Net network.

The level of information that an observer provides can be chosen at compile time. S-Net currently supports three levels: On the lowest level, only the labels of fields, tags and binding tags are sent to the listener. The middle level include values of tags and binding tags. The highest level additionally includes field values making use of the serialisation facility coming with the network interface definition (see Section 9.3 for further information). S-Net observers do not make any assumptions about their listener: Whatever application they communicate with is opaque to them. Listeners are expected to understand the message formats as defined in Section 10.3.

The correspondence between observers and listeners or files can be chosen in various ways. For example, each observer may be connected to its own private listener (file) or multiple observers may share the same listener (file). S-Net takes care of proper synchronisation where necessary; messages are received by listeners according to the semantic rules for sequencing of data flow in S-Net.

10.2 Observer Metadata Declarations

Observers are deliberately not part of the S-Net language itself, but instead they are defined via metadata (see Chapter 8 for complete coverage of metadata). Observers can be attached to
any S-Net network definition or box declaration by adding a key `observer` to the corresponding metadata `net` or `box` element.

The keys listed below can be used to specify attributes of an observer. Default values are used if the attribute is omitted or the attribute value is illegal. Illegal attribute values cause compiler warnings. Due to the dynamic nature of S-Net networks (serial replication and indexed parallel replication) any observer may have multiple dynamic instances. Each instance of an observer inherits exactly the same attributes in this case. Nevertheless, S-Net provides means to distinguish between messages sent by different dynamic instances of observers. Fig. 10.1 shows an example of an observer declaration.

```xml
net A {
    <metadata>
        <box name="B" >
            <observer />
        </box>
        <box name="C" >
            <observer />
        </box>
    </metadata>

    box B( ( N, <T>) -> ( M, <T>));
    box C( ( M, <T>) -> ( N, <T>));
} connect B .. C;
```

Figure 10.1: Example: S-Net observer metadata

**Key observer** _interactive_

The `observer` _interactive_ key specifies whether the observer is an interactive observer or not. If the key is present the observer is an interactive observer. By default observers are non-interactive.

**Key observer** _file_

The `observer` _file_ key determines whether the observer stores the data gathered in a file or whether it sends the data to a listener component. The value of the key must be the name of the file. If this attribute is omitted, an active listener component is anticipated and socket communication is used instead. If the file specified in the value of the key cannot be opened for writing at runtime, the observer will simply pass records on to the following S-Net component and will be fully transparent to S-Net execution.

If the `observer` _file_ key is specified then the `observer` _interactive_ key is ignored and the observer is always non-interactive.
Key observer_address

The observer_address key can be used to specify the address to which the observer sends all data in case socket communication to some listener component is chosen as observer modus operandi. The data must be a proper URL or ip-address. If the observer cannot connect to the address at runtime, it will simply pass records on to the following S-Net component. Default value is localhost. If both the observer_file and the observer_address keys are specified, then the observer_file key takes precedence.

Key observer_port

The observer_port key can be used to specify the port used for socket communication. The default port is 6555. If both the observer_file and the observer_port key are specified, then the observer_file key takes precedence.

Key observer_data

The observer_data key specifies the level of information to be sent to the listener or to be dumped into a file. As explained in Section 10.1, S-Net supports three levels of information. With the key value labels only the labels of fields, tags and binding tags are communicated. The key value tagvalues additionally includes values of tags and binding tags, and with allvalues even the values of fields are included.

Key observer_type

The observer_type key specifies the location of the observer with respect to the component it is attached to. Legal values are before, after and both. In case observers are added to both sides of the component, both the observers will have exactly the same attributes, apart from the observer type that is either before or after depending on the observers location. Default value is both.

Key observer_code

The observer_code key can be used to provide any application specific compile time defined data element with the observer message. This key can for example be used to identify the observer instance in the listener application or in the dump file.

10.3 Observer Message Formats

We now define the message formats used by S-Net observers for communication with listener components. Observer messages are in XML format and use the S-Net namespace. Any XML element with no child elements can be shortened according to the XML specification. White space between elements included in example figures is introduced solely to make the examples more readable and may be omitted.

Outgoing messages consist of the XML elements explained below. Fig. 10.2 gives an example of a message sent by an observer.

Observer element

Each message contains the XML element observer as its root element. If the message does not contain an XML-declaration, it is assumed to be XML version 1.0 by default. The observer element identifies the observer sending the message, it has the following attributes: The oid attribute contains a unique observer instance identifier. This can be used to distinguish between observers and their instances. The position attribute contains the original textual name of
10.3. OBSERVER MESSAGE FORMATS

<?xml version="1.0"?>
<observer xmlns="snet-home.org" oid="128" position="MyNet" type="before" code="MyCode">
  <record type="data" mode="textual">
    <field label="F" interface="C4SNet">1</field>
    <tag label="T">0</tag>
    <btag label="B">0</btag>
  </record>
</observer>

Figure 10.2: Example: observer message

the S-Net component to which the observer is attached to. This is exactly the same as the name attribute of the metadata net or box element where the observer was declared. The type attribute specifies the location of the observer with respect to the S-Net component it is attached to. Potential values are before and after, but not both, which rather serves as a shortcut for declaring two observers at once. The code attribute contains the user defined data optionally given in the observer declaration. This attribute is omitted if no code was specified in observer declaration. Last not least, the observer element contains one or more record elements.

Record element

The record element represents a single S-Net record. The type attribute specifies the type of the record. In analogy to the network interface data format (see Section 9.3, supported types are data and terminate. Data records may contain zero or more field, tag and btag elements. All of these elements have an attribute label, which contains the label of the entity. Data records may also have a mode attribute, which is used to declare the mode of the data inside the field elements. Values for the mode attribute are binary and textual. In the absence of a mode specification, binary mode is assumed as default.

The contents of field, tag and btag elements depends on the level of information specified in the observer declaration. According to the levels defined in Section 10.1 values are included or not. Field values are serialised using the corresponding box language interface facility. The attribute interface disclosing the box language interface is attached to each field element if the chosen level of information is allvalues.

Acknowledge messages

Interactive observers expect to receive an acknowledge message in response to each outgoing message. This message is expected to have the format exemplified in Fig. 10.3. The oid attribute must have exactly the same value that was included in the corresponding observer message. If the same listener listens to multiple observers, the order of acknowledge messages is irrelevant.

<?xml version="1.0"?>
<observer xmlns="snet-home.org" oid="128"/>

Figure 10.3: Example: interactive observer acknowledge message
Chapter 11

Reconfiguration and Self-Adaptivity

11.1 Motivation

Reconfigurable software systems are useful for a variety of reasons... These systems allow for reconfiguration of deployed applications to adapt to changing computing environments. Environments are influenced, for example, by computing resources that become available (or unavailable) and communication links that change in quality and speed during the runtime of an application. Even, in stable environments the ability to reconfigure is desirable: Ideally, the design of an application is based on the anticipated computational intensity of input data. Often, this knowledge is not available until runtime, and even if it is, the input data may change over time. Here, reconfiguration after deployment of the system is key to maintain a well-performing application. This is even more the case if energy efficiency is a concern. Energy consuming computing resources are often wasted by employing non-optimised algorithms that are not specifically tailored towards the problem at hand. Replacing these algorithms by highly specialised versions at runtime is worthwhile but requires the underlying system to be flexible enough to allow for this.

Projected onto the S-Net domain, the reasons to reconfigure a network may be manifold: A box has to be replaced, because an improved version of an algorithm a box is currently running became available (software update). A network suffers from poor throughput, because of imbalanced execution times and bottlenecks (resource management), or even worse, a box has crashed and does not process any records anymore (recovery from failure). There are many more scenarios in which reconfiguration is key to maintain, improve or restore system stability and performance. In all of the above cases, it is relatively easy to come up with a simple solution for each of them. A software update can be achieved by recompiling the network with a new box, bottlenecks can be detected by channel monitoring at runtime and resolved by a runtime-system that acts accordingly, and crashed components can be detected by a watch-dog timer which also triggers a re-start of components.

Each of these approaches tackles a specific symptom rather then providing a general cure. The next section offers a brief design-space exploration and presents our approach of providing a cure in S-Net.

11.2 Reconfiguration and Self-Adaptation Mechanisms

As mentioned in the previous section, providing separate mechanisms for each possible situation is not very satisfactory. It renders the system very complex and not flexible, as we have to add a potentially new feature for each additional scenario we would like to control. We need to identify a common, essential and yet powerful enough mechanism to solve these problems. It turns out, that a replacement mechanism for networks and boxes satisfies all needs. If we are
able to replace components at runtime, a software update is nothing more than a replacement of a box, a bottleneck is resolved by replacing an under-performing network by more instances of the network, and any crashed component is resurrected by replacing it with a fresh instance of itself. This replacement mechanism can be provided by a runtime system. If done so, mechanism to detect where replacement is necessary, have to be implemented in the runtime system as well — which immediately exposes the weakness of this approach. For any scenario that was not anticipated when designing the runtime system, the implementation has to be extended. In many cases this is not possible, as it requires expert knowledge about the implementation. A user that discovers the need for a new reconfiguration scenario, read replacement, will have to invest time and effort to implement what is needed in the runtime system.

It is much more flexible to promote the replacement mechanism to the language level. If the replacement mechanism is available on the language level, a user may use it to implement replacement scenarios explicitly — in the language itself! The runtime system has to provide only the basic replacement functionality. Any further runtime behaviour is specified outside the runtime system, intriguingly, by the application the runtime system executing.

Before introducing a replacement mechanism, we have to ask ourselves how new networks are made available. The design space is endless, but our aim is to provide this feature explicitly for greatest possible flexibility. Consequently, networks are made first-class citizens. A network may be part of a record, just like tags and data fields. This immediately solves the problem of how to communicate new networks to their intended destination: Records are routed on the same basis as before. Exactly as fields and tags, a network influences the routing decisions made by combinators. The record containing a network finds its destination travelling along the existing network infrastructure.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UnWrap</th>
<th>( (p, \rho N) \rightarrow ([p, q N][N]) )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Replace</td>
<td>( (p, \rho N) \rightarrow (\rho N', {N} \cup (p \setminus N')) )</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Wrap       | \[ q_i^r \neq \epsilon \]
|            | \( \frac{q_i^r[i] + q_i^r}{q_i^r[N]} \rightarrow (\rho N', q_i^r) \) |
|            | \( q_i^r = \epsilon \]
|            | \( \frac{q_i^r[N]}{q_i^r[i] + q_i^r} \rightarrow (\rho N', q_i^r) \) |

Figure 11.1: The operational semantics of the replacement combinator defines the replacement process itself and defines routing of records by the choice combinator.

But what is the destination of a record containing a new network? As we intend to replace a specific, existing network, this network would be the obvious destination. However, a network has no concept of replacement.

To add this concept of replacement, we follow the language design and provide a combinator to do this. As with the other combinators, the replacement combinator may be applied to any network. By applying it to a network, the network is made replaceable. Thereby, it is not the network that replaces itself, but it is the combinator that replaces its operand.

When a record arrives at this combinator, the record may be treated in two different ways. If the records contains a network, i.e. a potential operand for the combinator, this network will be inspected. If it is compatible to the currently deployed operand, the replacement combinator reads and removes the network from the record. The combinator replaces its current operand by the new network and outputs the old operand as result. If the record contains an incompatible network or no network at all, the record is sent to the operand of the replacement combinator. In this case, the record is processed as usual.
The routing behaviour of the replacement combinator is similar to that of a choice combinator, which inspect inbound records and dispatches it depending on the contents of the record. We use this similarity in the formalisation of the operational semantics of the replacement combinator (Fig. 11.1).

The UnWrap rule decomposes the combinator into three fundamental tasks: replacement, standard record processing and routing. The replacement task (Replace rule) expects each inbound record to carry a new operand network. The network is removed from the inbound record, deployed as new operand, and the previous operand output as result. If an inbound record does not carry a compatible network, the record is routed to the current operand and undergoes standard record processing. The routing is managed by the choice combinator, that the UnWrap rule inserted to connect replacement and standard record processing.

The Wrap rule combines the three tasks back into the replacement combinator. Depending on which branch of the choice combination was taken, the argument of the replacement combinator is chosen. If a replacement took place, the replacement task outputs its old operand. In this case, the outbound stream of the replacement task is not empty and the new network will be the operand of the reassembled combinator. Otherwise, the stream will be empty as no replacement was carried out. The result of the operand network is output and the operand is not changed.

The replacement combinator allows us to refine networks from the outside. The next step is now, to enable networks to trigger reconfiguration from the inside. The goal is to be able to define self-adaptive networks, that react to certain situation and reconfigure themselves. For a network to be able to do this, the network needs to send a reconfiguration message to itself. The reconfiguration message, of course, is a record containing a new network. But how do we define the message-to-self mechanism? The star combinator with its strict feed-forward semantics is not optimal: A new version of a network can only be sent to the next instance, which always leaves the previous network active in the current instance. For this reason, we design a feedback combinator that does not unfold but consists of one instance only.

\[
\begin{align*}
(p, N) &\rightarrow (N', \tilde{q}') & \tilde{l}, \tilde{r} &= \text{lrpsplit}(\tilde{q}', \sigma, \{} \\
(\tilde{l}, N\mu\{\sigma\}) &\rightarrow (N''\mu\{\sigma\}, \tilde{q}') & \text{Mu} : \\
(p, N\mu\{\sigma\}) &\rightarrow (N''\mu\{\sigma\}, \tilde{r}++ \tilde{q}')
\end{align*}
\]

Figure 11.2: The feedback combinator sends back records to the input of its operand if the pattern \(\sigma\) is matched. In this case, all results are output before any other record is processed.

Not unlike the star combinator, the feedback combinator \(\mu\) (Fig. 11.2) takes a network and a pattern as arguments. Every record that the operand network emits, is matched against the pattern. Records that do not match the pattern are output as usual. If a record matches the pattern however, the record is sent back to the feedback operand. We guarantee a deterministic record order for the \(\mu\) combinator: If a record is sent back, all results from this record will be output before any new record is read from the inbound stream.

The combination of \(\rho\) and \(\mu\), i.e. a feedback combinator applied to a replacement combinator applied to a network \(N\), is very powerful. It allows us to define a network that emits a network and sends it to itself. More specifically, by defining the pattern of the feedback combinator accordingly, a new network that is output by \(N\) is sent back, where it is picked up by the replacement combinator. The replacement combinator receives the new network and replaces its operand.
Chapter 12

Examples

12.1 Streams of Factorial Numbers: a Functional Perspective

The purpose of our first example is to illustrate similarities and differences between concepts found in S-Net and mainstream functional programming languages. We employ a fairly simple and very well-known example, computing factorial numbers, and show how an implementation of factorial in the functional programming language Standard ML can be broken down into atomic parts and then step by step transformed into an equivalent SNet. We will investigate the same problem starting with an imperative solution in Section 12.2. The sole purpose of this example is the illustration of S-Net language features. The toy character of the problem is by no means representative for our intended application domain. In real-world S-Net applications we assume boxes to represent substantial amounts of computations and the data exchanged between them to be of significant size.

```plaintext
fun fac n = 
  let fun facit (x,r) = let val p = x<=1
    in if p
      then r
      else let val rr = x*r
            val xx = x-1
            in facit (xx,rr)
            end
    end
  val m = facit (n,1)
  in (n,m) end
```

Figure 12.1: Factorial function in Standard ML

Fig. 12.1 shows a definition of the factorial function in Standard ML syntax. The function `fac` takes one (integer) argument `n` and yields a pair of integers `n` and `m`, where `n` is the original argument and `m` is the factorial of `n`. Our implementation of factorial employs an iterative (tail-end recursive) scheme. Therefore, we need a local auxiliary function `facit` that takes two arguments, `x` and `r`. While the first parameter holds the number of which we compute the factorial of, the second is used to accumulate the result value and, hence, is set to 1 in the initial application of `facit`.

In the definition of the auxiliary function `facit` we first compute the termination predicate `p`. If `p` holds, we simply return the parameter `r`, which in the given case is known to hold the correct factorial result. Otherwise, we multiply the current value of `x` to the intermediate result `r` and decrement `x` by one. Finally, we recursively apply the function `facit` to the updated values `xx` and `rr`. 
The purpose of our case study is to carry over the functional implementation of the factorial function as directly as possible into an equivalent S-Net. The result of our exercise is shown in Fig. 12.2. The nested definitions of the functions *fac* and *facit* is carried over one-to-one to the world of S-Net by having two nested network definitions of the same names. For documentary reasons we have added type signatures to the network definitions: The outer network *fac* accepts records with a field *n* and yields records with fields *n* and *m*; the auxiliary network *facit* takes records with fields *x* and *r* and yields records with field *r* only. The choice of field names is inspired by the use of identifiers in Fig. 12.1. Likewise, the introduction of many local identifiers in the Standard ML implementation of the factorial function is motivated by our wish to illustrate the equivalences between the two approaches.

In the definition of the network *facit* we find four box definitions. They reflect the basic building blocks of the functional implementation of factorial: The box *leq* computes the termination condition; the result is stored in field *p*. The box *if* makes the Boolean value of the field *p* visible to S-Net by turning it either into a tag <T> or a tag <F>. Last but not least, the boxes *dec* and *mult* do the required arithmetic.

Fig. 12.3 shows a graphical representation of the network topology of *facit* that is equivalent to the textual specification following the key word *connect* in Fig. 12.2. We start with a serial combination of *leq* and *if*. Note here the use of the concept of flow inheritance. The box *leq* computes the termination condition *p* solely on the basis of *x*. The other field *r*, which we know to be present in all records due to the type signature of *facit* is flow inherited around the box. Likewise, the box *if* only inspects the field *p* to create the tags <T> or <F>; the other fields *x* and *r* are flow inherited.

The boxes *leq* and *if* are connected in serial with a parallel choice combinator. Any record containing the tag <T> are directed to the first (upper) alternative because in that branch we have a filter box that requires records to have such a tag. Likewise, any record with a tag <F> is directed into the alternative branch due to the presence of another filter box in that branch which requires this tag.

The filter in line 8 simply turns the T tag into a <stop> tag. In contrast the filter in line 9 produces two records for any incoming records: while the <F> tag is stripped in both cases, the field *x* is duplicated. Since there is no data dependency between the decrementation and the multiplication, we can arrange the two boxes in parallel. Due to the best match rule, the choice is deterministic. Any record {x,r} is directed towards the *mult* box while {xx} records are directed to the *dec* box. The two arithmetic boxes produce records {xx} and {rr}, respectively. Note that we deliberately rename *x* to *xx* in the filter preceding the choice combinator to circumvent the covariance restriction (cf. Section 3.4) of parallel composition.

As we need to combine them again into a single record for further processing, we feed both into

---

**Figure 12.2: Computing streams of factorial numbers in S-Net**

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As we need to combine them again into a single record for further processing, we feed both into
12.1. FACTORIAL NUMBERS: A FUNCTIONAL PERSPECTIVE

Figure 12.3: Graphical representation of network `facit`
a synchrocell with pattern \{xx\}, \{rr\}. Upon successful synchronisation, the synchrocell produces single \{xx,rr\} records. A subsequent filter box renames the fields back to x and r. Keeping in mind from Section 3.5 that a synchrocell dies after the first synchronisation, we must embed our synchrocell within a star combinator in order to be able to repeatedly compute factorial numbers for a stream of input records. The termination pattern of the star combinator is the synchronised record \{xx,rr\}.

This combination of synchrocell and star combinator is a very common design pattern in S-NET. It implements synchronisation across an unbounded number of records: For example, an incoming \{xx\} record is stored in the first synchrocell. If the following record is again of type \{xx\} it is forwarded by the first synchrocell (which now waits for \{rr\} records), but since an \{xx\} record does not match the termination pattern of the star combinator, a new synchrocell is created dynamically (replication of the operand SNet of the star combinator). This new synchrocell then captures the \{xx\} record. Supposed the following record is of type \{rr\}, it is captured by the first synchrocell, which synchronises the \{rr\} record with the stored \{xx\} record and produces a joint \{xx\}, \{rr\} record. This combined record does match the termination pattern of the star combinator and, therefore, leaves the sync-star subnetwork. The first synchrocell dies after synchronisation with the effect that any subsequently incoming records are directly sent to the second synchrocell incarnation.

The entire network described so far is itself embedded within another star combinator. The operand network only computes a single iteration of the functional specification of factorial. The star combinator realises the tail-end recursive application of the function \texttt{facit} in the Standard ML implementation. With respect to the operational behaviour of the SNet, the star combinator repeatedly replicates the operand network until records are marked by the <stop> tag. If, for example, we compute the factorial of two, we end up with two replicas of the operand network. If we subsequently compute the factorial of three, the record travels through the two existing incarnations and then requires an additional replication. No further network replication occurs as long as we compute only factorials of numbers less than four.

The effective length of the path a record takes through the SNet is proportional to the argument value. Therefore, we use the deterministic variant of the star combinator to still preserve the sequence of records, i.e., a sequence of incoming records with values 3, 2 and 1 would yield a sequence of outgoing records with values (3,6), (2,2) and (1,1). Had we used the non-deterministic variant of the star combinator instead, we could have ended up with any permutation in the sequence of outgoing records.

A final filter box in the definition of \texttt{facit} discards the <stop> tag and the x field from outgoing records, i.e., any outgoing record solely has an r field. This complies with the Standard ML specification of \texttt{facit}, which also yields only a single value r. Given the notes on optional type signatures for networks in Section 3.2, this filter box could be left out. The given type signature for \texttt{facit} would equivalently result in discarding the additional record fields.

Very much like in the Standard ML implementation of factorial the implementation of the network \texttt{fac} itself is rather simple and is predominantly concerned with housekeeping tasks. It has one local box named \texttt{one}. This box is required to complement each incoming argument value with the numeric value one as initial value for the result accumulation field r in \texttt{facit}. We need a box and a box language implementation for this rather simple task because as a pure coordination layer S-NET is unaware of the data associated with record fields. There is no notion of record field type in S-NET. Although in the given scenario all field values are integer numbers, this fact is simply unknown to S-NET. Hence, we need a box even for a simple task as creating a constant value.

From a purely technical perspective, of course, we could turn all record fields into tags. As tags carry integer values, this would allow us to express all required computations entirely on the level of S-NET. However, this is only works for integer numbers and clearly constitutes a misuse of tags, which are exclusively intended to be used for control purposes.

The network topology of \texttt{fac} is a simple pipeline. Firstly, we add a field \texttt{one} to each incoming record. Then, we rename n to x and \texttt{one} to r to meet the interface of \texttt{facit}. Note that in addition we keep a copy of n to produce pairs of n and n! in the end. An instance of \texttt{facit} implements
the computational aspects of factorial, while a final filter box renames \( r \) to \( m \).

This case study shows how concepts of functional programming (e.g. nested function definitions, function applications, tail-end recursion) can be expressed in the framework of S-Net in a systematic way. The example in particular serves as blueprint for expressing linear recursive functions in S-Net. In the factorial example the box language code is extremely simple, i.e. one instruction each. We chose this level of granularity in order to demonstrate the concepts of S-Net. However, without changing the principles of the SNet we could replace the box inscriptions by complex computations with record fields referring to large data structures. As long as the algorithmic pattern remains the same, we can easily turn a toy example like factorial into a real application. Leaving the concrete example behind, our case study sketches out a methodology to convert functional programs into SNets in order to express and to exploit concurrency.

### 12.2 Streams of Factorial Numbers: an Imperative Perspective

Our second example sticks to the pseudo application of computing a stream of factorial numbers. However, this time we start with an imperative solution of the problem. Fig. 12.4 shows a straightforward implementation in C. The C function `factorial` only computes a single factorial number given a suitable argument. We leave it to the imagination of the reader how this function could be mapped to an entire stream of arguments in order to produce a stream of pairs of argument and the argument’s factorial number.

```c
int factorial(int n)
{
    int r, x;
    r = 1;
    x = n;
    while (x>1) {
        r = x*r;
        x = x-1;
    }
    return( r);
}
```

Figure 12.4: Computing a single factorial number in C

The S-Net network `factorial` shown in Fig. 12.5 indeed transforms a stream of natural numbers into a stream of pairs, as reflected by its type signature \{\text{n}\}->\{\text{n},\text{fac}\}. Although type signatures in S-Net are typically inferred by the compiler, we have typed all networks in Fig. 12.5 for the purpose of illustration.

Since the true purpose of our example is to demonstrate as many language features of S-Net as feasible, we break down the problem into its atomic building blocks first. The five boxes only perform the most simple tasks like producing a box language representation of the number one or doing simple arithmetic computations. The topology of the network `factorial` is fairly simple: a pipeline consisting of an initialisation step, the main loop and a postprocessing step. This structure exactly coincides with the C implementation where the postprocessing step is somewhat hidden in the `return` statement.

The network `init`, very much like the first few lines of the C implementation, initialises new record fields \( r \) and \( x \) for the actual computation while the original argument \( n \) is preserved for the global output. Whereas the renaming of `one` to \( r \) and the copying of \( n \) to \( x \) can easily be done on the S-Net level using a filter box, we employ a user-defined box to create a proper box language representation of the number one.

From a purely technical perspective, of course, we could turn all record fields into tags. As tags carry integer values, this would allow us to express all required computations entirely on the
Figure 12.5: Computing a stream of factorial numbers in S-Net

level of S-Net. However, this only works for integer numbers and clearly constitutes a misuse of tags, which are exclusively intended for control purposes.

The while-loop of the C function directly carries over to a star combinator in S-Net. Since we want to preserve the original sequence when transforming a stream of numbers into a stream of pairs of these numbers and their factorials, we use the deterministic variant of the combinator. The loop itself turns into the natural pipeline of evaluating the loop predicate and then either executing the consequence or the alternative. Note that the loop predicate (network pred) is entirely evaluated in the domain of a box language. Hence, the boolean result is hidden in an opaque record field \( p \) and can only be made accessible to S-Net by means of another box if, that takes field \( p \) and depending on its boolean interpretation either yields a tag \( T \) or a tag \( F \).

These tags are used to route records either into the network then_branch or into the network else_branch as in either of them a filter box requires one or the other tag to be present in any incoming record. In the case of a loop the consequence of the predicate not holding is termination of the loop. Therefore, network else_branch just strips off tag \( F \), which has fulfilled its purpose, and adds a new tag stop, which makes the record leave the loop network.

Likewise the network then_branch, which roughly implements the loop body of the C function factorial, starts with stripping off the tag \( T \) from each incoming record. Then, it uses another filter box to duplicate each incoming record into one that is identical and one that only contains field \( x \). These two records contain the relatively free variables of the two expressions found in the loop body of the C function factorial. In the S-Net solution, these expressions are evaluated concurrently (dec\( | \)mult). Note that the best match rule of the parallel composition combinator plays a crucial role here in routing the \( \{ xx,r \} \) record to the box mult and the \( \{ x \} \) record to the box dec. Note further that we need to rename field \( x \) into \( xx \) in order to circumvent the covariance restriction (cf. Section 3.4) of parallel composition.

A subsequent synchrocell recombines records \( \{ x \} \) and \( \{ r \} \) into a joint record \( \{ x,r \} \). Note that the synchrocell is embedded within another serial replication. This combination of synchrocell
and star combinator is a very common design pattern in S-Net. It implements synchronisation across an unbounded number of records: For example, an incoming \( \{x\} \) record is stored in the first synchrocell. If the following record is again of type \( \{x\} \), it is forwarded by the first synchrocell (which now waits for \( \{r\} \) records), but since an \( \{x\} \) record does not match the termination pattern of the star combinator, a new synchrocell is created dynamically. This new synchrocell then captures the \( \{x\} \) record. Supposed the following record is of type \( \{x\} \), it is captured by the first synchrocell, which synchronises the \( \{r\} \) record with the stored \( \{x\} \) record and produces a joint \( \{x,r\} \) record. This combined record does match the termination pattern of the star combinator and, therefore, leaves the sync-star network. The first synchrocell dies after synchronisation with the effect that any subsequent records are directly sent to the second synchrocell instance.

Last but not least, the exit network strips off field \( x \) and tag stop from any record since they are only used internally by the factorial network. Eventually, field \( r \), as it is used internally in factorial, is renamed into fac before a record leaves the whole network.

Throughout the factorial network flow inheritance plays a crucial role for the composition of boxes and subnetworks. Take as a simple example the creation of a box language representation of the number one by box one. Thanks to flow inheritance we can specify this box in a way that adds the field one to any incoming record regardless of its existing fields and tags. This allows us to realise this box language component entirely independent of our application context in the implementation of factorial and create a fine opportunity for code reuse.

As pointed out in the beginning, the sole purpose of our example is to illustrate the use of the various S-Net language features and their relationship to constructs known from conventional programming languages. It is definitely not intended as an exercise in finding the most suitable description of how to compute factorial numbers. This task would hardly benefit from the degree of concurrency introduced by the S-Net in Fig. 12.5. Using boxes only for the most rudimentary computations and expressing anything else in S-Net is by no means representative for real world S-Net applications. Here, we expect boxes to represent substantial amounts of computational work and the S-Net layer to control only coarse-grained coordination aspects. However, such a real world example would be not very useful for the purpose of illustrating S-Net features because it would require a fair amount of knowledge about the box language components as well as familiarity with the chosen application domain. We refer the reader interested into the interplay between box language and S-Net to [21] for a more elaborate case study.

### 12.3 Solving Sudokus with S-Net and SaC

This example investigates the interplay between S-Net and the box language SAC [17, 20]. We first develop a SAC program for solving sudokus and later on refine it to a distributed S-Net-SAC solution. This example also appeared in [21].

Sudokus are played on a 9 by 9 board of numbers. Starting out from a board with several given numbers, the overall aim is to fill all empty positions with numbers so that the following conditions hold: (i) each row contains the numbers 1 to 9 exactly once, (ii) each column contains the numbers 1 to 9 exactly once, and (iii) each of the nine 3 by 3 sub-boards contains the numbers 1 to 9 exactly once. Although in general we may have an arbitrary number of solutions or no solution at all, all well-constructed sudokus have a unique solution.

SAC (Single Assignment C) is a purely functional, data parallel array programming language. Core SAC is a functional, side-effect free variant of C: we interpret assignment sequences as nested let-expressions, branches as conditional expressions and loops as syntactic sugar for tail-end recursive functions. The meaning of functional SAC code coincides with the state-based semantics of literally identical C code. This language kernel is extended by multi-dimensional state-less arrays: Any expression may evaluate to an array, and arrays may be passed between functions without restrictions. Arrays in SAC are neither explicitly allocated nor de-allocated. They exist as long as the associated data is needed, just like scalars in conventional languages. For a more thorough introduction to SAC we refer to [17, 20].

Fig. 12.6 shows an excerpt from the SAC sudoku solver. The central idea is to keep a 9 by 9 matrix of 9-element boolean vectors that represent the possible choices for each given position.
```c
int[*], bool[*] addNumber( int i, int j, int k,
int[*] board, bool[*] opts)
{
    board[i,j] = k;
    k = k-1; is = (i/3)*3; js = (j/3)*3;
    opts = with {
        ([i,j,0] <= iv <= [i,j,8]) : false;
        ([i,0,k] <= iv <= [i,8,k]) : false;
        ([0,j,k] <= iv <= [8,j,k]) : false;
        ([is,js,k] <= iv <= [is+2,js+2,k]) : false;
    } : modarray( opts);
    return( board, opts);
}

int[*], bool[*] solve( int[*] board, bool[*] opts)
{
    if (! isStuck( board, opts) && ! isCompleted( board)) {
        i,j = findFirst( 0, board);
        mem_board = board;
        mem_opts = opts;
        for( k=1; (k<=9) && (!isCompleted( board)); k++) {
            if( mem_opts[i,j,k-1] ) {
                board, opts = addNumber( i, j, k, mem_board, mem_opts);
                board, opts = solve( board, opts);
            }
        }
    }
    return( board, opts);
}

Figure 12.6: Excerpt from SAC sudoku solver

We start out from an array containing true values only. Whenever we add a new number to the board, we eliminate all those options that are affected due to the 3 rules above, i.e., we set all corresponding positions in the same column, row and sub-matrix to false. This is essentially what the function addNumber, as shown in Fig. 12.6, does. It takes the following arguments:

1. a position in the board specified by two integer parameters i and j,
2. a number k to be placed at that position,
3. a two-dimensional board board holding all numbers set so far, and
4. a three-dimensional boolean array opts of options.

As a result, our function addNumber yields modified versions of the board and the options which reflect the insertion of the number k at position i,j.

While the modification of the board requires only the manipulation of a single element of the board (cf. line 4), the modification of the options is expressed by a WITH-loop which spans over the lines 6 to 11. The generator in line 7 sets all options in position i,j to false, line 8 falsifies the option for the given number k in row i, and line 9 falsifies the option for the given number k in column j. Line 10 eliminates the option in the 3 by 3 sub-matrix where i,j is located in. Note here that the decrement of k is due to the fact that array indexing in SAC always starts with 0, whereas the numbers to be placed in the sudoku start with 1.

With this function at hand, after an initialisation phase, which adds the pre-determined numbers, solving sudokus boils down to a search algorithm which successively adds numbers to all positions not yet filled until it either gets stuck or is completed. This is implemented by the function solve in Fig. 12.6. It takes an actual board and an array of options as arguments and computes the first solution it finds or, if no solution exists, the board where the algorithm got stuck. At the core of this function we find a recursive call embedded into a FOR-loop which realises...
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the back-tracking of the search. For each valid option at a given position \(i,j\) we successively try to solve the given board until it is completed.

Since this, in the worst case, can lead to a 9-fold recursion for each of the numbers to be filled in, the choice of \(i\) and \(j\) directly affects the breadth of the search tree and, thus, has a vast impact on the runtime performance of the overall program. So far, we simply select the first occurrence of a zero in the board, i.e., the first empty field. In order to keep the potential need for back-tracking as small as possible, we replace the call to \texttt{findFirst} by a call of \texttt{findMinTrues\(\texttt{(opts)}\)} which selects a free position with a minimum number of options left.

If we want to parallelise this application, we can directly spot two potential sources for concurrency: \texttt{addNumber} and \texttt{findMinTrues} can be executed in a data-parallel fashion, and the recursive calls in \texttt{solve} can be done concurrently effectively transforming our depth-first search into a breadth-first search.

![Figure 12.7: Initial S-Net sudoku solver](image)

Our first step towards a combined S-Net-SAC solution is to shift the recursion from the SAC level to the level of S-Net. This can be achieved by transforming the recursive calls into S-Net-records and by embedding the function \texttt{solve} into an S-Net box, which then serves as an argument to a serial replicator. Fig. 12.7 shows our initial S-Net solution. We replace the original SAC function \texttt{solve} by the S-Net box implementing SAC function \texttt{solveOneLevel} shown in Fig. 12.8. Instead of a recursive call, the new function \texttt{solveOneLevel} tries to place one further number at the selected position \(i,j\). For each possible number at that position it outputs a record containing either the new board and its options or the final board and a tag \texttt{<done>}, which signals the completion of the puzzle.

```c
void solveOneLevel( int[*] board, bool[*] opts)
{
    if ( !isStuck( board, opts) && !isCompleted( board)) {
        i,j = findMinTrues( opts);
        mem_board = board;
        mem_opts = opts;
        for( k=1; (k<=9) && !isCompleted(board); k++) {
            if( mem_opts[i,j,k-1] ) {
                board, opts = addNumber( i, j, k, mem_board, mem_opts);
                if ( isCompleted( board)) {
                    snet_out( 1, board, opts);
                } else {
                    snet_out( 2, board, 0);
                }
            }
        }
    }
}
```

![Figure 12.8: SAC box code for S-Net sudoku solver](image)

The SAC function \texttt{solveOneLevel} becomes an S-Net box, which itself is embedded into a serial replicator with the termination pattern specified in the upper right corner. The replicator dynamically unfolds into a pipeline of \texttt{solveOneLevel} boxes. As soon as one of these boxes produces a record containing the tag \texttt{<done>}, that record leaves the conceptually infinite pipeline.

It should be noted here that in our sudoku example this unfolding cannot lead to pipelines...
longer than 81 replicas of the `solveOneLevel` box. This is due to the fact that each `solveOneLevel` box only emits a record if it can add a number to the board. Otherwise, it either emits no record at all (search is stuck) or it emits a record that contains `<done>` (solution is found). Left to the serial replicator we have another box named `computeOpts`, which takes the incoming board and realises the initialisation of the options arrays by repeatedly calling the function `addNumber` from Figure 12.6.

If we assume that each S-Net box is actually run by an individual process/thread, the crucial question now is: to what extent do we exploit the possibility to concurrently examine different choices of the \(n^{th}\) number? If \(p\) is the number of pre-defined numbers, the \(n^{th}\) number is set by the \((n - p)^{th}\) replica of the `solveOneLevel` box. For each option \(k\), it emits a record to the next replica. As a consequence, the \((n + 1)^{th}\) number for each of these alternatives is placed sequentially. However, the placement of the \((n + 2)^{th}\) number can happen concurrently with the placement of the \((n + 1)^{th}\) number of the next alternative and so forth.

![Figure 12.9: Refined S-Net with full unfolding](image)

In order to be able to place the \((n + 1)^{th}\) number concurrently we need to extend our network slightly. Effectively, we have to make sure that there are as many parallel replicas of the `solveOneLevel` box as we have options on each level, i.e., up to 9. This can be achieved by putting a parallel replicator around the `solveOneLevel` box within the serial replicator. Fig. 12.9 shows the modified S-Net. We use a new tag `<k>` for controlling the parallel splitting. Within the serial replicator, this tag can be conveniently generated by extending the output of the `solveOneLevel` box: whenever the board is not yet completed, we simply output the SAC-variable \(k\) along with the board and the options. Since \(k\) within each level represents the number that is being examined, this achieves the desired effect. However, we do not want to change our initialisation box `computeOpts`. Therefore, we need to insert a filter between the `computeOpts` box and the start operator which adds a tag `<k>` to each record. Note that the filter has the desired effect on records of the type `{board, opts}` although its fields do not occur in the filter. This is one of the benefits of the flow-inheritance of S-Net.

Another interesting feature of this network is that both replicators unfold dynamically. However, since the subsequent records with the same tag `<k>` are being processed by the same box, we know that on each stage no more than 9 replicas of the `solveOneLevel` box will be created as the value of \(k\) is always between 0 and 8. This guarantees a maximum of \(9 \times 81 = 729\) of `solveOneLevel` boxes.

While 729 replicas of the `solveOneLevel` box might be acceptable, for bigger sudokus or in situations where we cannot derive proper upper limits for the unfoldings from the application itself, we usually want to control the unfolding of the replicators. This can be done by manipulating the control tags, in our case the tag `<k>` for the parallel unfolding and the tag `<done>` for the serial one. For example, we can control the number of parallel instances by a filter of the form

\[
\{<k>\} \rightarrow \{<k>=<k>\%4\}
\]

which we put into the serial replicator in front of the parallel replicator. By using the modulo operation represented by the \(\%\) symbol, we reduce all potential values for \(k\) to the range 0 to 3, which implicitly limits the parallel unfolding to a maximum of 4 instances.

In order to be able to control the unfolding of the serial replicator, we need to communicate the current level of unfolding, i.e., the number of numbers placed already, rather than a boolean flag indicating completion. After changing the tag `<done>` to a tag `<level>` that contains this infor-
In the next step, we can use a more elaborate predicate for leaving the serial replicator such as 
\[
\text{\{level\} | level > 40}
\]
This leads to a situation where non-completed sudokus exit the serial replicator.
Therefore, we need to link up yet another box which calls the full solver function from Fig. 12.6
resulting in the S-Net shown in Fig. 12.10.

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{box computeOpts} \\
\text{\{board\} \rightarrow \{board, opts\}}
\end{array}
\begin{array}{c}
\text{filter} \\
\text{\{\} \rightarrow \{\text{\{k\} = 1}\}}
\end{array}
\begin{array}{c}
\text{box solve} \\
\text{\{board, opts\} \rightarrow \{board, opts\}}
\end{array}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{filter} \\
\text{\{k\} \rightarrow \{\text{\{k\} = k \% 4}\}}
\end{array}
\begin{array}{c}
\text{box solveOneLevel} \\
\text{\{board, opts\} \rightarrow \{board, opts, \text{\{k\}, \text{\{level\} > 40\}\}}}
\end{array}
\]

Figure 12.10: Sudoku S-Net with throttled unfolding

Last but not least, it should be mentioned that the presented SAC/S-Net implementation(s)
typically solve 9×9 sudokus in far less than a second on standard desktop computers. However, as sudokus can be played on any board of size \(n^2 \times n^2\) they are suitable candidates for parallelisation, indeed. Furthermore, we see solving sudoku puzzles as an algorithmic pattern for a broad range of search problems, including many with a higher relevance than sudokus themselves.

### 12.4 Distributed Password Cracker

DISTRIBUTED S-Net allows you to write typical message passing applications at a very high level of abstraction as illustrated by the following example of a simple dictionary-based password cracker.

Our password cracker takes a dictionary and a number of Md5-encoded passwords as its input
and produces the corresponding decoded password for each entry that can be cracked with the given dictionary as output. The cracking is done by encrypting words of the dictionary one by one and comparing the resulting hash value with the encoded password. Each password is associated with a cryptographic salt to make the cracking more time-consuming. We use the standard glibc function crypt to perform the relevant computations. Fig. 12.11 shows the complete (non-distributed) S-Net implementation.

```s-NET
net crypto {{dict, entries, \langle dict_size\rangle},
\langle num_entries\rangle, \langle num_branches\rangle}
\rightarrow \{word, \langle entry\rangle\} | \{false, \langle entry\rangle\}
{
  box splitter {{entries, \langle num_entries\rangle}
\rightarrow \{password, salt, \langle entry\rangle\}};
  box cracker {{password, salt, dict, \langle dict_size\rangle}
\rightarrow \{word\} | \{false\}};

net load_balancer
connect [{\langle entry\rangle, \langle num_branches\rangle}
\rightarrow {\langle entry\rangle,
\langle branch = entry \% num_branches\rangle}];
}
connect splitter .. load_balancer .. cracker!\langle branch\rangle;
```

Figure 12.11: S-Net code of password cracker
The code defines a network named crypto that consumes records containing two fields and three tags. The field dict contains the dictionary and the field entries contains a list of all the passwords and their salts. The tags dict.size and num.entries contain the number of words in the dictionary and the number of passwords, respectively. The tag num.branches is used to define in how many parallel branches the processing can be made. The network produces records that either contain the decoded word and the number of the password or a tag that indicates that the password could not be cracked.

The crypto network consists of two boxes and one subnetwork. The box splitter takes records that hold the field containing the passwords and their salts and the tag representing the number of passwords and splits these records into smaller records, each holding fields for one password and its salt and a tag containing the ordinal number of the password. The box cracker does the actual password cracking. It consumes records containing the password data and the dictionary and produces decoded words or false tags in case the password could not be cracked. The subnetwork load_balancer consists of a single filter box. Filter boxes, or filters, are S-Net-defined boxes that do simple computations on the structure of records (e.g. removing or duplicating fields) or on the values of tags (integer arithmetic and boolean algebra). The filter in Fig. 12.11, for example, takes records containing the ordinal number produced by the splitter box and assigns each record a branch number according to the ordinal number. In conjunction with the indexed parallel replication combinator around the cracker box, our filter realises a simple round-robin scheduler.

The records flowing in the crypto network are first passed in the box splitter which is then serially connected to the load_balancer network. This combination is then serially connected to the next network which is built by embedding the box cracker into an index split combination. The index split combinator is controlled by the tag branch assigned by the load_balancer, which means that the work is shared between num.branches parallel cracker boxes. This allows the time-consuming decoding operation to be performed in parallel to multiple passwords in case the system contains more than one processing unit.

The example also demonstrates the practical use of flow inheritance, introduced in the previous section. While the crypto network as a whole expects to receive records with a total of two fields and three tags, its first box (i.e. splitter) only expects to see one field and one tag per record. Due to flow inheritance the excess fields and tags are routed around the box itself and are transparently attached to records produced by the splitter box. The advantage here is that boxes like splitter can be defined and implemented in a context-free manner focussing only on fields and tags that are relevant for the box itself. Still, on the coordination level the box can be integrated into a streaming network even if concrete records at some location carry additional fields and tags. As this example demonstrates, flow inheritance is a prerequisite for compositionality of streaming networks in S-Net.

Fig. 12.12 shows the DISTRIBUTED S-Net version of the password cracker; a graphical representation of the network can be found in Fig. 12.13. We assume a system that consists of multiple compute nodes each of which contains a number of processing units, i.e. processors or cores. If each node had only contained a single processor, it would be straightforward to run a single cracker box on each node, and replacing the original index split combinator around the box cracker by a placement split combinator would have achieved exactly this. Consequently, we have achieved a distributed memory password cracker with changing only a few characters in the original S-Net code of Fig. 12.11. Fig. 12.13 illustrates the resulting DISTRIBUTED S-Net streaming network and the mapping of its components onto the different nodes of the execution environment.

However, assuming nodes with multiple cores, we have wrapped the box cracker and the index split combinator inside another subnetwork that is embedded into a placement split combinator. This solution with the help of information about the number of nodes and the updated load_balancer network extend the record scheduling scheme to manage multiple nodes each containing the same number of boxes. As a result the network is spread over multiple compute nodes. The initialization tasks including the splitting of the data and the load balancer are still executed on the same node. The new divider subnetwork will be built into each of the nodes, and the records are scheduled to each instance of the network in a round-robin fashion.
12.4. DISTRIBUTED PASSWORD CRACKER

net crypto \{(dict, entries, <dict_size>, <num_entries>, <num_nodes>, <num_branches>)
    -> \{(word, <entry>) | \{(false), <entry>\}\}

{ box splitter \{(entries, <num_entries>) \rightarrow \{password, salt, <entry>\}\};

net load_balancer \{(\langle entry\rangle, <num_nodes>, <num_branches>)
    -> \{\langle entry\rangle, <node>, <branch>\}\)
connect [[\langle entry\rangle, <num_nodes>, <num_branches>]
    \rightarrow \{\langle entry\rangle, <node = entry \% num_nodes>,
    <branch = (entry / num_nodes) \% num_branches>\}];

net divider \{(password, salt, dict, <dict_size>, <branch>) \rightarrow \{word\} | \{(false)\}\}
{ box cracker ((password, salt, dict, <dict_size>) \rightarrow \{word\} | \{(false)\});
} connect cracker!<branch>;
} connect splitter .. load_balancer .. divider !@ <node>;

Figure 12.12: DISTRIBUTED S-Net version of password cracker

Low-level non-declarative cost intuition would suggest that sending substantial constant data structures like the dictionary in our current example repeatedly from one node to another can hardly be efficient. However, S-Net is indeed a declarative language and the chosen specification merely says that data like the dictionary need to be present when needed. The implementation of DISTRIBUTED S-Net is responsible to avoid useless data transfers. Some preliminary runtime figures of the password cracker on a standard cluster of workstations can be found in [22].

Figure 12.13: Illustration of the network presented in Fig. 12.12
12.5 Moving Target Indication

While the previous examples were deliberately chosen from application domains that do not exhibit particular affinity to stream processing, we now switch to classical streaming problem domain: signal processing. More precisely, we focus on an application from the area of radar signal processing, namely Moving Target Indication (MTI). The purpose of MTI is to detect moving objects on the ground using a radar antenna positioned on an aircraft. The main feature of our application is the detection of slow moving objects on the ground, whereas non-adaptive, classical radar processing is limited to the detection of fast moving objects. This example application originates from a collaboration with Tales Research, France.

The MTI application (Fig. 12.15) receives a ground echo of a periodic sequence of radar pulses and attempts to distinguish moving objects from all other, generally still, reflecting surfaces (ground clutter) under the radar beam. The position of a target is estimated by measuring the delay between the transmission of a radio pulse and the reception of its echo. The speed of an object is measured by analysing the Doppler effect that affects echoes of several identical pulses which are sent periodically. The movement of the object results in small variations of its distance to the radar. This distance variation is detectable as a phase shift of the radar signal, e.g. at around 10GHz. In this basic approach, Doppler processing consists of a bench of filters, each tuned towards a particular phase shift between successive echoes. This kind of Doppler processing is in some situations sufficient to separate reflecting objects on the basis of their speeds. When the beam is directed towards the ground, the largest part of the echoed energy is assumed to be a reflection of static objects that compose the ground (clutter). The moving object we are interested in send a weak, phase shifted echo. However, as the radar beam is not perfectly sharp and has a width of a few degrees, some still objects at the border of the beam appear to be moving with a speed relative to the aircraft’s speed. This causes undesired interference over the moving target’s echoes and creates an ambiguity between intrinsic speeds and azimuths of targets.

![Figure 12.14](image)

Figure 12.14: The antenna consists of 5 sensors, which receive a ground echo of the radar beam of periodically sent pulses. The signal is a 3D array of axes ant (sensor), rec (pulse sequence) and rg (range gate).

More accurate are adaptive filtering techniques, where filters are computed at runtime: In this example we use an implementation of ‘Space Time Adaptive Processing’ (STAP) [23, 24], which computes a set of filters from signals received by the antenna array at different time steps. Fig. 12.14 shows the setup of the antenna array. The antenna array consists of a number (nant) of equidistant aligned sensors. The aircraft illuminates the ground with a beam orthogonal to its velocity. The sequences of periodic pulses (bursts) may vary in timing and amount of bursts. The reception time of an echoed pulse depends on the number of the pulse and the distance of the reflecting surface on the ground. Measuring the latter is achieved by sampling the received signal at a given frequency, resulting in the distance being sampled into range gates (rg), which is typically 15 meters for 10MHz sampling. The detected signal is received by the radar processing
12.5. MOVING TARGET INDICATION

chain as a 3D array with dimensions $N_{rg}, N_{rec}, N_{ant}$. The processing chain is subdivided into independent modules, as shown in Fig. 12.15.

Figure 12.15: The data processing graph of the MTI application is subdivided into several modules. Modules are indicated by boxes with folded bottom right corners. Small boxes with text denote processing functions, boxes containing an arrow and a capital X with a number denote structure transformers. These boxes are used to re-arrange data in a matrix without effecting the actual values.

For simulation purposes, we also implement a 'Stimuli Generation' module, which simulates the signal received by the radar antenna array. This is achieved by computing a 2D array representing the Radar Cross Section (RCS) of the ground surface situated on range gate $rg$ and angle $\theta$. The clutter model of 'CreateClutter' is computed from random, positive values with a given average and adding peak reflectivity values of a given probability. The returned signal from a burst of pulses of the ground surface to which targets with a given RCS and radial velocity have been added, is computed by 'EchoRaf'. The final processing step in this module is the addition of white noise to the signal.

The presented processing chain contains some naive, well-known radar processing techniques for legacy reasons. Nevertheless, the characteristics, i.e. the main challenges from an implementers point of view, are representative for the important industrial domain of embedded signal-processing applications on parallel hardware, as: a) The processing chain uses multiple operators with different requirements on precision and/or dynamic ranges. b) The static processing graph represents a dynamic processing chain, as algorithm parameters, such as array sizes, loop boundaries, etc., change (multi-mode radar [25]). c) The computational load is high enough to require parallel computing hardware. d) Performance is one of the key requirements, both in terms of computational throughput and latency, which may be due to operational requirements or architecture constraints such as memory limitations.

The starting point of the design process of the MTI application in S-Net is the data-flow graph of the original implementation shown in Fig. 12.15. We use the structure of this graph to derive the structure of our application: Each signal processing function, i.e. the small boxes in Fig. 12.15, becomes an S-Net box that we build from the existing components. The modules translate to individual networks which connect the boxes using combinators according to the connections within the module. The same combinators also enable us to connect these networks to each other to form the MTI application. This hierarchical approach allows us to implement and test networks, i.e. the modules of the application, independently, as each network is a fully functional application itself when deployed individually.

In the remainder of this section we illustrate the design process of the application modules as networks, using module 'Stimuli Generation' as starting point.

The module in Fig. 12.15 contains three processing functions, and so does the network we
implement. The boxes are arranged in a serial combination (CreateClutter .. EchoRaf .. Noise), implementing the function composition of these functions.

On first glance, the definition of the box and network signatures is as straightforward as the definition of the network structure. On second glance, however, there is some design space to be explored. The algorithms of these boxes consume a wealth of parameters. As an example, the parameters of CreateClutter are shown in Table 12.1. Most of these parameters are semi-static; they usually do not change during runtime but are only adjusted between runs of the application.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>parameter name</th>
<th>static</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>rnd_values</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\sigma_0$</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$rg_{\min}$,$rg_{\max}$,$rg_{\text{size}}$</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>angle_carrier</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>beam_width</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>size</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>targets</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$N\theta$</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 12.1: Parameters of CreateClutter

The box returns one single value, a 2D array representing the Radar Cross Section (RCS) of the ground surface. From this knowledge, we may construct the box signature as $\{\sigma\} \rightarrow \{\text{array}_2d\}$, where $\sigma$ is shorthand for all entries of the second column of Table 12.1.

The box EchoRaf has a similarly extensive input type. Not only does it require CreateClutter’s result, it also requires a set of parameters to produce a 3D array of values representing the ground echo including targets. Box Noise is more frugal with respect to parameters and requires only two 3-dimensional matrices of random values to compute white noise, which it applies to the result of EchoRaf. If we combine these boxes in sequence to form a network, the parameters propagate to the network signature. This results in an extremely unwieldy input type of the network, composed of field ‘rnd_values’ plus the union of required parameters of all three boxes. The exposure of local parameters to the outside is not only unaesthetic, but also problematic from a software engineering perspective: The parameters propagate through any surrounding contexts and eventually manifest in the global input type of the application network. To avoid this, we confine parameters to their local contexts.

One trivial approach to achieve this, is to generate all required parameters within the box implementation itself. The problem is, that this is not always possible: If a box is provided as an opaque object, e.g. as pre-compiled library from a third party, we do not have access to its implementation. In this case, we have to embed the function call into wrapper code that computes all parameters before invoking the actual box function. By generating the parameters within the box, this approach solves the problem of exploding signatures. The downside of this approach is, that parameters are completely invisible on the S-Net layer. This potentially impedes component reuse, as a user of such a network is now unaware of the presence of the parameters.

Therefore, we take a more flexible approach by generating parameters from within stand-alone S-Net boxes. This is done in such a way, that a parameter generating box does not require any input fields or tags and delivers parameters for one specific box as output. The non-static input is merged to the generating parameter set by exploiting the power of flow-inheritance: For a box $A$ with signature $\alpha \cup \rho \rightarrow \beta$, where $\alpha$ is the set of input labels and $\rho$ is the set of static parameters, a corresponding parameter generating box $P_A$ has signature $\{\} \rightarrow \rho$. Because of the empty input type, this box can be inserted as predecessor of $A$ without adding any label constraints to surrounding contexts. Any record that arrives at $P_A$ is accepted as input and is enriched by parameter set $\rho$. More specifically, due to flow-inheritance, a record with label set $\alpha$ as input to $P_A$ results in $\alpha \cup \rho$ (of course, any excess label is carried over as well: $\alpha \cup \gamma \rightarrow \alpha \cup \rho \cup \gamma$).

Using this technique, the original box implementation is left untouched and parameters are visible on the S-Net level without being propagated. In this setting our recently developed reconfiguration and adaptivity features for S-Net [26] come in handy. In short, these features allow us to replace boxes in a deployed network at runtime. With these features we offer a solution to maintain semi-static parameters: If new parameter values are required, we replace the generating box by a new version which generates desired results. As this is possible at runtime, multiple parameter sets may be used within the same run of the application. Here, our design decisions become clear: By implementing parameter generators as stand-alone boxes, an adjustment of parameters is merely a replacement of the generator, which leaves the box implementation consuming
net Thresholding
{
    box ApplyFilter( (array_3d_signal, array_4d_filter) -> (array_4d_filtered));
    box X5( (array_4d_filtered) -> (array_4d_filtered));
    box CalcCohCoeff( () -> (coh_array_2d));
}
connect [{array_4d_filter, array_3d_signal} ->
{array_4d_filter, array_3d_signal}; {}]
.. ( (ApplyFilter .. X5)
    | CalcCohCoeff)
.. [{array_4d_filtered},{coh_array_2d}];

Figure 12.16: Implementation of the Thresholding network in S-Net

the parameters untouched if parameter changes occur.

The network that implements the 'Filter Calculation' module of the MTI application is a sequence of boxes as defined by the order of tasks shown in Fig. 12.15. Parameters of boxes are, as above, supplied by parameter generators if required. Special treatment is necessary for boxes CalcSteerVect and CalcFilter, as the former lacks an input channel, whereas the latter requires two input channels. One possibility to model this, is to assign an empty input type CalcSteerVect and place it as direct predecessor of CalcFilter. A record that arrives at this box triggers execution of the box without any of the record’s fields or tags being read. Flow-inheritance inserts all inbound-record constituents to the resulting record, ensuring that CalcFilter receives all required input fields in one record. This approach, however, does not overlap computations where it would be possible: CalcSteerVect does not require any input, and can therefore begin its computation much earlier. To do this, the box is arranged in parallel to the rest of the network and computation is triggered at the earliest possible moment, i.e. when a record arrives at the first box. The output of the box is then combined to a result record at the latest possible stage, i.e. a synchro-cell merges the box’s result to the result of the remaining network. This created record contains all required fields for CalcFilter. Fig. 12.17 (a) and (b) illustrate these techniques.

The remaining networks implementing 'Filter Application' and 'Thresholding' use the same techniques. For brevity we refrain from describing them in detail here but show the concrete S-Net implementation of network 'Thresholding' in Fig. 12.16 and its graphical representation in Fig. 12.17(c).

The final step of the implementation phase is to combine all modules to form the MTI application. The complete network is shown in Fig. 12.17(d). Runtime figures of MTI application on a standard cluster of workstations can be found in [27].

12.6 Distributed Ray Tracing

Ray tracing is a well-known technique of rendering a 2d image of a 3d scene by tracing paths of light back from the eye of an imaginary observer through pixels in an image plane and by simulating the effects of their encounters with the objects of the scene illuminated by a source of light [28], see Fig. 12.18. The fact that each pixel of an image can be rendered independently of all others makes ray tracing amenable to aggressive parallelisation.

Let us consider the technique in some detail. Each ray of light from the eye of the observer through a pixel of the rendered image is cast to all objects in the scene to test for intersection, and one nearest to the observer determines the shading of the pixel. If the ray misses all objects, then the pixel is shaded in the background color, whether or not a ray intersects with a surface of an object or a light source. If it returns true, the shade for the point of intersection is computed using the shader that implements the modified Phong model.

As each ray is cast to every object, the majority of the rendering time is spent calculating intersections. In order to enable efficient ray tracing, we use the Bounding-Volume Hierarchy (BVH) algorithm [29]. It builds a hierarchical representation of 3-dimensional objects that makes the traversal of the nodes in search for intersection more efficient. When inserting an object in the
BVH, the program first constructs a bounding box for it, then finds the optimal place to insert the box into the hierarchy using a branch-and-bound algorithm and finally inserts it at the determined location and updates all costs associated with the existing nodes in the process.

Raytracing lends itself nicely to concurrent execution. All rays can be traced individually.
allowing for top-level coarse grain parallelism. As a first approach, we want to capture this concurrency by a simple fork-join approach.

A simple fork-join model in S-Net

We create three major components, a splitter, a solver, and a merger and we combine these in a pipeline-like fashion as shown in Fig. 12.19.

The splitter chops up the overall task into sections which are subsequently computed by instances of the solver, each of which is executed on an individual MPI node. After the solvers have dealt with the individual sections, the merger collects all the resulting image chunks into an overall result picture which is written to a file by means of a box genImg. Note here, that the entire distribution of data and re-collection of results on the master node is being triggered by the use of the @-symbol in the index splitter. It ensures that the value of the tag <node> is being interpreted as the MPI-rank (processing node) which is to be used for the execution of the corresponding solver instance. Therefore, the scheduling is actually happening in the splitter component which creates records for the individual sections of work and attaches such <node> tags to those records.

Most of these components can be easily derived from existing C-code. Using the C interface for S-Net (see Chapter 9 for details), new C functions can be introduced which wrap around existing raytracing code and serve as implementations for the corresponding S-Net boxes. The only aforementioned component that cannot be mapped directly to a C-implemented box is the merger. This is due to the fact that the merger needs to combine several chunks arriving asynchronously within separate records while boxes can only ever see one record at a time. Therefore, we create a sub-net named merger in which we specify the step-wise synchronisation of chunks in terms of two further components, an init box and a merge box. The init box creates an initial version of the resulting picture from the first chunk of work (tagged by a flag <fst> by the splitter component) which serves as an accumulator throughout the merging process. An n-fold application of the box merge is achieved by placing it under a serial replication combinator, jointly with some surrounding S-Net material for steering the merging process. Fig. 12.20 shows the details of the merger net.

The init box is followed by a filter which adds a flag <cnt> initialised by the value 1. This flag is used to count the number of subimages that have been incorporated into the result image already. Since only the first chunk needs to be processed by the init box, we also provide a bypass to the initialisation path for all the other records containing further chunks. This is done by means of an empty filter box which is parallel to the initialisation path.

After the initialisation, we have a star which implements the merging with the remaining chunks. In each unfolding (iteration) of the star, we first have a syncho-cell, which synchronises the accumulator held in {pic} with yet another chunk. The resulting joint record, containing the accumulated picture and a chunk to be inserted, is presented to the merge box which outputs the combined picture. The insertion of a new chunk is reflected in an increment in the flag <cnt> as
net merger
{
  box init ( (chunk, <fst>) -> (pic));
  box merge ( (chunk, pic) -> (pic));
}

connect
  ( ( init .. [ {} -> {<cnt=1>} ] )
    | [] ) .. ( [ | {pic}, {chunk} | ]
    .. ( ( merge .. [ {<cnt>} -> {<cnt+=1>} ]
        | [] )
    ) * {<tasks> == <cnt>};

Figure 12.20: Merger network for re-combining subimages into a complete picture

defined by the subsequent filter. Once the counter equals the overall number of tasks, which is kept in another, flow-inherited flag `<tasks>`, the accumulated picture is output from the merger network. The reader may wonder why we have a bypass parallel to the merge branch within the start. This is due to the fact that the star combinator does not feed any records back but always unfolds into copies of its body only. As a consequence, all but the first not yet processed chunks need to be bypassed to the next instance of the star.

While the network presented so far serves its purpose perfectly well, imbalances in the distribution of objects within any given scene quickly lead to limited scalability on clusters with more than 2 processing nodes. To improve on this situation, a dynamic workload balancing scheme needs to be put into place.

**Fork-Join with dynamic scheduling**

Here, the strict separation of application and concurrency engineering as it is enforced in S-Net pays off. Only very little modification to the basic solution described so far is required in order to achieve dynamic scheduling. The basic idea is to consider the `<node>` flag to represent the availability of the processor identified by the value of that flag for computing an arbitrary section on it. Then, we can enable the splitter box to output sections which, initially, do not contain a node flag. As a result, we now have two kinds of computing task streaming towards the solver component: those that do have a node flag attached to them, and those that do not. We can process the former straight-away by using the solve box while we need to queue the others to wait for node tokens. These node tokens can then be taken from tasks that arrive back from solvers. This modification of the S-Net solution presented so far can be achieved by simply replacing the `solver@<node>` component from Fig. 12.19 by the network segment shown in Fig. 12.21.

Here, we see that the solve box directly links into a filter which separates the resulting image chunk from the node token. Both these activities happen now on the individual nodes for all those sections that actually do come with a node token. All other sections just bypass the distributed

```s-net
( ( solve .. [ {chunk, <node>} -> {chunk}; {<node>} ]
  )!@<node>
    | []
  ) .. ( [ | {sect}, {<node>} | ]
    | []
  ) * {chunk}
```

Figure 12.21: Solver segment for dynamically scheduled work load distribution
solver. The re-united streams of computed chunks, node tokens, and remaining sections are then fed into either a synchrocell, which combines the remaining section with a just released node token, or a bypass, which enables the computed chunks to leave the solver segment. Those sections that have been combined with a new node flag are brought to a new instance of the distributed solver by means of a surrounding star. This unfolding of the start takes place until all sections have been transformed into chunks of the resulting picture.

Since the remaining part of the S-Net presented in Fig. 12.20 is oblivious of the node tag, it can be utilised in the dynamic setting without modification.
Chapter 13

Conclusion

We have presented the design of S-Net, a declarative language for describing streaming networks of asynchronous components. Several features distinguish S-Net from existing stream processing approaches.

- S-Net boxes are fully asynchronous components communicating over buffered streams.
- S-Net thoroughly separates coordination aspects from computations, which are described in a separate compute language.
- The restriction to SISO components allows us to describe complex streaming networks by algebraic formulae rather than error-prone wiring lists.
- We utilise the type system to guarantee basic integrity of streaming networks.
- Data items are routed through networks in a type-directed way making the concrete network topology a type system issue.
- Record subtyping and flow inheritance make S-Net components adapt to their environment, which facilitates composition of S-Net components developed in isolation.
Appendix A

Complete Syntax of S-Net

\[ SNet \Rightarrow [Definition]^* \]

\[ Definition \Rightarrow TypeDef \mid TypeSigDef \mid NetDef \mid BoxDef \mid Metadata \]

\[ TypeDef \Rightarrow type \ TypeName = Type ; \]

\[ Type \Rightarrow RecordType \mid Type \mid TypeName \mid Type \]

\[ RecordType \Rightarrow \{ \ RecordEntry \ , \ RecordEntry \}^* \}

\[ RecordEntry \Rightarrow Field \mid Tag \]

\[ Field \Rightarrow FieldName \]

\[ Tag \Rightarrow SimpleTag \mid BindingTag \]

\[ SimpleTag \Rightarrow < SimpleTagName > \]

\[ BindingTag \Rightarrow < # BindingTagName > \]

\[ TypeSigDef \Rightarrow typesig \ TypeSigName = TypeSignature ; \]

\[ TypeSignature \Rightarrow TypeMapping \mid TypeSignature \mid TypeSigName \mid TypeSignature \]

\[ TypeMapping \Rightarrow Type \rightarrow Type \]
BoxDef \rightarrow \textbf{box} \textit{BoxName} (\textit{BoxSignature}) ;

BoxSignature \rightarrow \begin{bmatrix} \textit{BoxType} \rightarrow \begin{bmatrix} \textit{BoxType} | \textit{BoxType}^* \end{bmatrix} \end{bmatrix}

BoxType \rightarrow (\begin{bmatrix} \textit{RecordEntry} | \textit{RecordEntry}^* \end{bmatrix})

NetDef \rightarrow \textbf{net} \textit{NetName} (\begin{bmatrix} \textit{NetSignature} \end{bmatrix}) \textit{NetBody}

NetSignature \rightarrow \textit{TypeSignature} |
| \textit{Type} \rightarrow \ldots

NetBody \rightarrow \begin{bmatrix} \{ \begin{bmatrix} \textit{Definition}^* \end{bmatrix} \} \end{bmatrix} \textbf{connect} \textit{TopoExpr} ;

TopoExpr \rightarrow \begin{bmatrix} \textit{BoxName} |
| \textit{NetName} |
| \textit{Sync} |
| \textit{Filter} |
| \textit{Combination} |
| (\textit{TopoExpr}) \end{bmatrix}

Filter \rightarrow \begin{bmatrix} \textit{Pattern} \rightarrow \begin{bmatrix} \textit{GuardedAction}^* \end{bmatrix} \end{bmatrix} |
| [ ]

Pattern \rightarrow \begin{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} \textit{RecordEntry} | \textit{RecordEntry}^* \end{bmatrix} \end{bmatrix}

GuardedAction \rightarrow \textbf{if} <\textit{TagExpr}> \textbf{then} \textit{Action} \textbf{else} \textit{Action}

Action \rightarrow \begin{bmatrix} \textit{RecordOutput} | ; \textit{RecordOutput}^* \end{bmatrix}

RecordOutput \rightarrow \begin{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} \textit{OutputField} | ; \textit{OutputField}^* \end{bmatrix} \end{bmatrix}

OutputField \rightarrow \begin{bmatrix} \textit{FieldName} | = \textit{FieldName} \end{bmatrix} |
| < \textit{TagName} | = \textit{TagExpr} >

TagName \rightarrow \textit{SimpleTagName} | \textit{BindingTagName}
TagExpr  ⇒  TagName
        |  IntegerConst
        |  (  TagExpr  )
        |  UnaryOperator  TagExpr
        |  TagExpr  BinaryOperator  TagExpr
        |  TagExpr  ?  TagExpr  :  TagExpr

UnaryOp  ⇒  !  |  abs

BinaryOp  ⇒  ArithmeticOp
        |  ComparisonOp
        |  RelationalOp
        |  LogicalOp

ArithmeticOp  ⇒  *  |  /  |  %  |  +  |  -

RelationalOp  ⇒  ==  |  !=  |  <  |  <=  |  >  |  >=

LogicalOp  ⇒  &&  |  ||

ComparisonOp  ⇒  min  |  max

Sync  ⇒  [  |  GuardPattern  [  ,  GuardPattern  ]+]  ]

GuardPattern  ⇒  Pattern  [  if  <  TagExpr  >  ]
Combination  ⇒  Serial | Star | Parallel | Split  
  | StatPlcnt | DynPlcnt
Serial  ⇒  TopoExpr SerialComb TopoExpr
Star  ⇒  TopoExpr StarComb Terminator
Terminator  ⇒  GuardPattern [ , GuardPattern ]∗
Parallel  ⇒  TopoExpr ParallelComb TopoExpr
Split  ⇒  TopoExpr SplitComb Tag
StatPlcnt  ⇒  TopoExpr StatPlComb IntegerConst
DynPlcnt  ⇒  TopoExpr DynPlComb Tag
SerialComb  ⇒  . .
StarComb  ⇒  * | **
ParallelComb  ⇒  | | |
SplitComb  ⇒  ! | !!
StatPlComb  ⇒  @
DynPlComb  ⇒  !@ | !!!@
\[\begin{align*}
\text{Metadata} & \Rightarrow \ <\text{metadata}> \ [\text{Element}]^+ \ </\text{metadata}> \\
\text{Element} & \Rightarrow \ <\text{box} \ name=\text{"Path"} > \ [\text{KeyElement}]^+ \ </\text{box}> \\
& \quad | \ <\text{net} \ name=\text{"Path"} > \ [\text{Content}]^+ \ </\text{net}> \\
& \quad | \ <\text{boxdefault} > \ [\text{KeyElement}]^+ \ </\text{boxdefault}> \\
& \quad | \ <\text{netdefault} > \ [\text{KeyElement}]^+ \ </\text{netdefault}> \\
& \quad | \ <\text{default} > \ [\text{KeyElement}]^+ \ </\text{default}> \\
\text{Path} & \Rightarrow \ [\text{Name} / ]^* \text{Name} \\
\text{Content} & \Rightarrow \ \text{KeyElement} \\
& \quad | \ \text{Element} \\
\text{Key} & \Rightarrow \ <\text{TypeName} > \ \text{KeyValue} </\text{TypeName}> \\
& \quad | \ <\text{TypeName} \ [\text{value}=\text{"KeyValue"}] > \\
\end{align*}\]
Bibliography


Authors

Haoxuan Cai is a PhD student at Imperial College London. He works on the S-Net type system and has implemented the type inference system of the S-Net compiler.

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Jukka Julku has implemented large parts of the S-Net compiler as well as DISTRIBUTED S-Net as his MSC project. He is now a Software Engineer at VTT Technical Research Centre of Finland.

Frank Penczek is a PhD student at the University of Hertfordshire. He implemented the multithreaded runtime system of S-Net and works on the operational semantics as well as on the extensions for reconfiguration and self-adaptivity.

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