

Lecture Notes on Quantification

15-317: Constructive Logic
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1 Introduction

In this lecture, we introduce universal and existential quantification, making the transition from purely propositional logic to first-order intuitionistic logic. As usual, we follow the method of using introduction and elimination rules to explain the meaning of the connectives. An important aspect of the treatment of quantifiers is that it should be completely independent of the domain of quantification. We want to capture what is true of all quantifiers, rather than those applying to natural numbers or integers or rationals or lists or other type of data. We will therefore quantify over objects of an unspecified (arbitrary) type τ . Whatever we obtain, will of course also hold for specific domain (for example, $\tau = \text{nat}$). The basic judgment connecting objects t to types τ is $t : \tau$. We will refer to this judgment here, but not define any specific instances until later in the course when discussing data types. What emerges as a important judgmental principle is that of a parametric judgment and the associated substitution principle for objects.

2 Universal Quantification

First is universal quantification, written as $\forall x:\tau. A(x)$ and pronounced “for all x of type τ , $A(x)$ ”. Here x is a bound variable and can therefore be

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renamed so that $\forall x:\tau. A(x)$ and $\forall y:\tau. A(y)$ are equivalent. When we write $A(x)$ we mean an arbitrary proposition which may depend on x .

For the introduction rule we require that $A(a)$ be true for an arbitrary object a of type τ . In other words, the premise contains a *parametric judgment*, explained in more detail below.

$$\frac{\overline{a : \tau} \quad \vdots \quad A(a) \text{ true}}{\forall x:\tau. A(x) \text{ true}} \forall I^a$$

It is important that a be a *new* parameter, not used outside of its scope, which is the derivation between the new hypothesis $a : \tau$ and the conclusion $A(a) \text{ true}$. In particular, it may not occur in $\forall x:\tau. A(x)$. The rule makes sense: A proof that $A(x)$ holds for all x of type τ considers any arbitrary a of type τ and shows that $A(a) \text{ true}$. But it is important that a was indeed arbitrary and not constrained by anything other than its type τ . Indeed, if a were not a new parameter but would already occur in the rest of the proof, we would incorrectly assume other properties of a . Observe that the parameter a is of a different kind than the label for the assumption a in the implication introduction rule $\supset I$, because a is a parameter for objects of type τ while u is a label of a proposition, and in fact the rules use different judgments. As a notational reminder for this difference, we not only use different names but also do not attach the parameter a to the rule bar.

If we think of this rule as the defining property of universal quantification, then a verification of $\forall x:\tau. A(x)$ describes a construction by which an arbitrary $a : \tau$ can be transformed into a proof of $A(a) \text{ true}$. The corresponding elimination rule $\forall E$, thus, accepts some term $t : \tau$ and concludes that $A(t) \text{ true}$:

$$\frac{\forall x:\tau. A(x) \text{ true} \quad t : \tau}{A(t) \text{ true}} \forall E$$

We must verify that $t : \tau$ so that $A(t)$ is a well-formed proposition. The elimination rule makes sense: if $A(x)$ is true for all x of type τ , and if t is a particular term of type τ , then $A(t)$ is true as well for this particular t of type τ .

Parametric Substitution Principle. The local reduction uses the following *substitution principle for parametric judgments*:

$$\text{If } \begin{array}{c} a : \tau \\ \mathcal{D} \end{array} \text{ and } \begin{array}{c} \mathcal{E} \\ t : \tau \end{array} \text{ then } \begin{array}{c} \mathcal{E} \\ \frac{t : \tau}{[t/a]\mathcal{D}} \\ J(t) \end{array}$$

That is, if \mathcal{D} is a deduction deducing judgment $J(a)$ from the judgment $a : \tau$ about parameter a , and if \mathcal{E} is a deduction that the specific term t is of type τ , then we can substitute the term t for parameter a throughout the derivation \mathcal{D} to obtain the derivation on the right that no longer depends on parameter a and uses the deduction \mathcal{E} to show that t has the appropriate type. The right hand side is constructed by systematically substituting t for a in \mathcal{D} and the judgments occurring in it. As usual, this substitution must be *capture avoiding* to be meaningful. In particular, a should not be replaced by t in a context in which some part of t is bound in some scope, but such context should instead be renamed as needed. It is the substitution into the judgments themselves which distinguishes substitution for parameters from substitution for hypotheses. The substitution into the judgments is necessary here since the propositions in the judgments in \mathcal{D} may still mention parameter a , which all need to be substituted to become t instead.

Local Soundness. The local reduction showing local soundness of universal quantification then exploits this substitution principle.

$$\frac{\frac{\frac{\overline{a : \tau}}{\mathcal{D}}}{A(a) \text{ true}} \forall I^a \quad \frac{\mathcal{E}}{t : \tau}}{\forall x : \tau. A(x) \text{ true}} \quad \forall E \quad \Longrightarrow_R \quad \frac{\mathcal{E}}{t : \tau} \quad [t/a]\mathcal{D}}{A(t) \text{ true}} \forall E$$

Local Completeness. The local expansion showing local completeness of universal quantification introduces a fresh parameter $a : \tau$ which we can use to eliminate the universal quantifier.

$$\forall x : \tau. A(x) \text{ true} \quad \Longrightarrow_E \quad \frac{\frac{\mathcal{D}}{\forall x : \tau. A(x) \text{ true}} \quad \overline{a : \tau}}{A(a) \text{ true}} \forall E \quad \forall I^a$$

prove $\exists x:\tau. A(x)$ with one witness t and then eliminate the quantifier using another object t' about which we have no reason to believe it would satisfy $A(t')$ true.

The best we can do is to assume that $A(a)$ is true for some new parameter a that, because it is new, we do not know anything about. The scope of this assumption is limited to the proof of some conclusion C true which does not mention a (since a must be new).

$$\frac{\frac{\frac{}{a:\tau} \quad \frac{}{A(a) \text{ true}}^u}{\vdots} \quad \frac{}{C \text{ true}}}{\exists x:\tau. A(x) \text{ true}} \quad C \text{ true}}{C \text{ true}} \exists E^{a,u}$$

Here, the scope of the hypotheses a and u is the deduction on the right, indicated by the vertical dots. In particular, C may *not* depend on a since a would otherwise unsoundly escape its scope.

Local Soundness. We make crucial use of this requirement of rule $\exists E^{a,u}$ that C cannot depend on a in the local reduction for local soundness to see that C is unaffected when substituting t for a in the proof.

$$\frac{\frac{\frac{\mathcal{D}}{t:\tau} \quad \frac{\mathcal{E}}{A(t) \text{ true}}}{\exists x:\tau. A(x) \text{ true}} \exists I \quad \frac{\frac{}{a:\tau} \quad \frac{}{A(a) \text{ true}}^u}{\mathcal{F}} \quad C \text{ true}}{C \text{ true}} \exists E^{a,u}}{\quad} \implies_R \frac{\frac{\mathcal{D}}{t:\tau} \quad \frac{\mathcal{E}}{A(t) \text{ true}}^u}{[t/a]\mathcal{F}} \quad C \text{ true}}$$

The reduction requires two substitutions, one parametric substitution for a parameter a and one ordinary substitution for a hypothesis u .

Local Completeness. Observe the similarity of $\exists E^{a,u}$ to $\vee E^{u,v}$ for disjunctions. Indeed, the local expansion showing local completeness is patterned after the disjunction, which also—somewhat surprisingly—uses the elimination rule below the introduction rule.

$$\frac{\mathcal{D}}{\exists x:\tau. A(x) \text{ true}} \implies_E \frac{\frac{\mathcal{D}}{\exists x:\tau. A(x) \text{ true}} \quad \frac{\frac{}{a:\tau} \quad \frac{}{A(a) \text{ true}}^u}{\exists x:\tau. A(x) \text{ true}} \exists I}{\exists x:\tau. A(x) \text{ true}} \exists E^{a,u}}$$

4 Example

As an example of quantifiers we show the equivalence of $\forall x:\tau. (A(x) \supset C)$ and $(\exists x:\tau. A(x)) \supset C$, where C does not depend on x . Generally, in our propositions, any possible dependence on a bound variable is indicated by writing a general *predicate* $A(x_1, \dots, x_n)$ to indicate that the proposition $A(x_1, \dots, x_n)$ may depend on the variables x_1, \dots, x_n . We do not make explicit when such propositions are well-formed, although appropriate rules for explicit A could be given.

When looking at a proof, the static representation on the page is an inadequate image for the dynamics of proof construction. As we did earlier, we give examples where we show the various stages of proof construction.

$$\begin{array}{c} \vdots \\ ((\exists x:\tau. A(x)) \supset C) \supset \forall x:\tau. (A(x) \supset C) \text{ true} \end{array}$$

The first three steps can be taken without hesitation, because we can always apply implication and universal introduction from the bottom up without possibly missing a proof.

$$\begin{array}{c} \frac{}{(\exists x:\tau. A(x)) \supset C \text{ true}} \text{ }^u \quad \frac{}{a:\tau} \quad \frac{}{A(a) \text{ true}} \text{ }^w \\ \vdots \\ \frac{\frac{C \text{ true}}{A(a) \supset C \text{ true}} \supset I^w}{\forall x:\tau. A(x) \supset C \text{ true}} \forall I^a \\ \frac{}{((\exists x:\tau. A(x)) \supset C) \supset \forall x:\tau. (A(x) \supset C) \text{ true}} \supset I^u \end{array}$$

At this point the conclusion is atomic, so we must apply an elimination to an assumption if we follow the strategy of *introductions bottom-up* and *eliminations top-down*. The only possibility is implication elimination, since $a:\tau$ and $A(a) \text{ true}$ are atomic. This gives us a new subgoal.

$$\begin{array}{c} \frac{}{a:\tau} \quad \frac{}{A(a) \text{ true}} \text{ }^w \\ \vdots \\ \frac{\frac{}{(\exists x:\tau. A(x)) \supset C \text{ true}} \text{ }^u \quad \exists x:\tau. A(x)}{} \supset E \\ \frac{\frac{C \text{ true}}{A(a) \supset C \text{ true}} \supset I^w}{\forall x:\tau. A(x) \supset C \text{ true}} \forall I^a \\ \frac{}{((\exists x:\tau. A(x)) \supset C) \supset \forall x:\tau. (A(x) \supset C) \text{ true}} \supset I^u \end{array}$$

We do not assign a direction to the judgment for typing objects, $t : \tau$. For unspecified types τ , they have no introduction or elimination rules anyhow, so that a distinction between verifications and uses is superfluous.

Verifications for the existential elimination are patterned after the disjunction: we translate a usable $\exists x:\tau. A(x)$ into a usable $A(a)$ with a limited scope, both in the verification of some C that the conclusion was already interested in verifying.

$$\frac{t : \tau \quad A(t) \uparrow}{\exists x:\tau. A(x) \uparrow} \exists I \quad \frac{\frac{\frac{\frac{\frac{}{a : \tau}}{A(a) \downarrow} u}{\vdots} C \uparrow}{\exists E^{a,u}}}{\exists x:\tau. A(x) \downarrow} C \uparrow}{\exists E^{a,u}}$$

As before, the fact that every true proposition has a verification is a kind of global version of the local soundness and completeness properties. If we take this for granted (since we do not prove it until later), then we can use this to demonstrate that certain propositions are *not* true, parametrically.

For example, we show that $(\exists x:\tau. A(x)) \supset (\forall x:\tau. A(x))$ is *not* true in general. After the first two steps of constructing a verification, we arrive at

$$\frac{\frac{\frac{\frac{\frac{\frac{}{\exists x:\tau. A(x) \downarrow} u}{\vdots} A(a) \uparrow}{\forall x:\tau. A(x) \uparrow} \forall I^a}{(\exists x:\tau. A(x)) \supset (\forall x:\tau. A(x)) \uparrow} \supset I^u}{\exists x:\tau. A(x) \downarrow} a : \tau}{\supset I^u}}$$

At this point we can only apply existential elimination, which leads to

$$\frac{\frac{\frac{\frac{\frac{\frac{\frac{}{b : \tau}}{A(b) \downarrow} v}{\vdots} A(a) \uparrow}{\exists E^{b,v}}}{\forall x:\tau. A(x) \downarrow} u}{\forall x:\tau. A(x) \uparrow} \forall I^a}{(\exists x:\tau. A(x)) \supset (\forall x:\tau. A(x)) \uparrow} \supset I^u}}$$

We cannot close the gap, because a and b are different parameters. We can only apply existential elimination to assumption u again. But this only creates $c : \tau$ and $A(c) \downarrow$ for some new c , so have made no progress. No matter

how often we apply existential elimination, since the parameter introduced must be new, we can never prove $A(a)$.

Observe that this proof of nonprovability critically leveraged verifications and uses, because only then do we even have a finite search space of proofs to exhaust. General natural deduction proof attempts for $(\exists x:\tau. A(x)) \supset (\forall x:\tau. A(x))$ could have been arbitrarily big.

6 Proof Terms

Going back to our very first lecture, we think of an intuitionistic proof of $\forall x:\tau. \exists y:\sigma. A(x, y)$ as exhibiting a *function* that, for every $x:\tau$ constructs a witness $y:\sigma$ and a proof that $A(x, y)$ is true.

So the proof term for a universal quantifier should be a function and for an existential quantifier a pair consisting of a witness and a proof that the witness is correct.

We do not invent a new notation here, but reuse the notation for functions and applications.

$$\frac{\begin{array}{c} \overline{a : \tau} \\ \vdots \\ M : A(a) \end{array}}{(\text{fn } a \Rightarrow M) : \forall x:\tau. A(x)} \forall I^a \qquad \frac{M : \forall x:\tau. A(x) \quad t : \tau}{M t : A(t)} \forall E$$

Note that the proof term M can of course depend on a , but, as usual, we explicitly mark dependency only in propositions. The local reduction and expansions straightforwardly adapt the previous rules for functions.

$$\begin{aligned} (\text{fn } a \Rightarrow M) t &\Longrightarrow_R [t/a]M \\ M : \forall x:\tau. A(x) &\Longrightarrow_E (\text{fn } a \Rightarrow M a) \quad \text{for } a \text{ not in } M \end{aligned}$$

You should be able to correlate these reductions with the local reductions and expansions on harmony proofs given earlier in this lecture.

For existential introduction the proof term is a pair, but the existential elimination is an interesting case because it does not just extract the first and second component of this pair. Instead, we have a new form that simultaneously names both components of the pair, following the shape of the elimination rule.

$$\frac{t : \tau \quad M : A(t)}{(t, M) : \exists x : \tau. A(x)} \exists I \qquad \frac{\overline{a : \tau} \quad \overline{u : A(a)} \quad u \quad \vdots \quad M : \exists x : \tau. A(x) \quad N : C}{(\text{let } (a, u) = M \text{ in } N) : C} \exists E^{a,u}$$

The local reduction decomposes the pair as expected. The local expansion decomposes a given proof term justifying $\exists x : \tau. A(x)$, decomposes it and then puts it back together.

$$\begin{aligned} \text{let } (a, u) = (t, M) \text{ in } N &\Longrightarrow_R [M/u][t/a]N \\ M : \exists x : \tau. A(x) &\Longrightarrow_E \text{let } (a, u) = M \text{ in } (a, u) \end{aligned}$$

7 Rule Summary

$$\frac{\overline{a : \tau} \quad \vdots \quad A(a) \text{ true}}{\forall x : \tau. A(x) \text{ true}} \forall I^a \qquad \frac{\forall x : \tau. A(x) \text{ true} \quad t : \tau}{A(t) \text{ true}} \forall E$$

$$\frac{t : \tau \quad A(t) \text{ true}}{\exists x : \tau. A(x) \text{ true}} \exists I \qquad \frac{\overline{a : \tau} \quad \overline{A(a) \text{ true}} \quad u \quad \vdots \quad \exists x : \tau. A(x) \text{ true} \quad C \text{ true}}{C \text{ true}} \exists E^{a,u}$$