Session Type Systems Compared:
The Case of Deadlock Freedom

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About this work...

• Based on a recent paper published at J. Log. Algebraic Methods Program. (JLAMP) 2022.

• It investigates the **deadlock freedom** (DF) property in the context of message-passing concurrent processes.

• It provides a comparative study and expressiveness result of different type systems guaranteeing deadlock freedom.
The Curry-Howard Correspondence

Deep correspondence between **types** and **logic**: *foundation of functional programming.*

- types $\approx$ propositions
- programs $\approx$ proofs
- evaluation $\approx$ proof normalisation (cut elimination)

**Example:**
a function of type $A \rightarrow B$ *corresponds* to a *proof* of $A$ implies $B$; computationally, it constructs a proof of $B$ (the result) from a proof of $A$ (the parameter).
The Curry-Howard Correspondence

Intuitionistic Natural Deduction ≈ Simply Typed Lambda Calculus
Quantification over Propositions ≈ Polymorphism
Modal Logic ≈ Monads (state, exceptions)

??? ≈ Concurrent Computation
In 1987, Girard speculated that linear logic could form the basis of a Curry-Howard correspondence for concurrent computation.

“The new connectives of linear logic have obvious meanings in terms of parallel computation. [...] Linear logic is the first attempt to solve the problem of parallelism at the logical level, i.e., by making the success of the communication process only dependent of the fact that the programs can be viewed as proofs of something, and are therefore sound.”

-- Girard 1987
Connections between linear logic and the pi-calculus were developed [Abramsky 1990, 1994; Bellin & Scott 1994], but did not become foundation of concurrent programming.

Samson Abramsky  
Gianluigi Bellin  
Phil Scott
Session Types

- **Session types** were introduced by Honda et al. [1993, 1994, 1998] as type-theoretic specifications of communication protocols.

  \[ ?A . B \quad receive \text{ a message of type } A, \text{ then } continue \text{ protocol } B. \]
  \[ !A . B \quad send \text{ a message of type } A, \text{ then } continue \text{ protocol } B. \]

- **Duality**: \( A \) and \( A^\perp \) are complementary views of a protocol.

- During the subsequent years, session types have developed into a large and active research area.
Session Types and Linear Logic


Proof normalisation (cut elimination) corresponds to communication.

Luís Caires  Frank Pfenning  Phil Wadler
Session Types and Linear Logic

- session types $\approx$ propositions
- pi-calculus processes $\approx$ proofs
- communication $\approx$ proof normalisation
  (cut elimination)

- $?A . B$ corresponds to $A \otimes B$
- $!A . B$ corresponds to $A \otimes B$
- Branch $\&\{i : A_i\}_{i \in I}$ and
- Select $\oplus\{i : A_i\}_{i \in I}$ are the same both in session types and linear logic
Pi calculus and session types

- The **pi-calculus** is a model of communication and concurrency, based on the notion of *processes*, which communicate over *channels*.

- Several type systems exist for the pi-calculus, most notably using
  - Linear channel types
  - Session types
  - Standard channel types

- Several type systems guarantee DF.

- The goal is to investigate and compare type systems for DF.

- We use (the CH correspondence with) **session types** as the *yardstick* for our comparison.
Pi-calculus by example: (no) deadlocks

A deadlock arises from cyclic dependency between communication operations, when two processes share at least two channels.

\[(\nu x_1 y_1)(\nu x_2 y_2)[x_1(z).x_2(w).0 \mid y_1[42].y_2[true].0]\]  OK

\[(\nu x_1 y_1)(\nu x_2 y_2)[x_1(z).x_2(w).0 \mid y_2[true].y_1[42].0]\]  STUCK
The linear logic type system guarantees deadlock freedom because *two processes can only be connected by a single channel.*

The linear logic type system **rejects** both the processes in the previous slide because *they are connected by two channels.*

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\Gamma \\
\hline
x \\
\hline
y \\
\hline
\Delta
\end{array}
\]

\[
\frac{P \vdash \Gamma, x : A \quad Q \vdash \Delta, y : A^\perp}{(\nu x^A y)(P \mid Q) \vdash \Gamma, \Delta}
\]
DF: Priority-based approach


- Priorities $o, o', \ldots$ are natural numbers used to annotate types.

- Priority-based type systems type more processes than linear logic, because they allow processes to share more than a single channel.

- Priorities must obey the following laws:
  (i) An action (input/output) of priority $o$ must be prefixed only by actions of priorities strictly smaller than $o$.
  (ii) Communication requires equal priorities of dual actions.
This work

We formally compare $\mathcal{L}$ and $\mathcal{K}$, two classes of DF (session) typed processes.

- $\mathcal{L} =$ session processes that are well typed under the Curry-Howard correspondence with Linear Logic.

- $\mathcal{K} =$ standard session processes that satisfy DF and use a priority-based type system à la Kobayashi.
This work

We develop two technical results.

• Separation: to separate $\mathcal{L}$ and $\mathcal{K}$, we define $\mu\mathcal{K}$---a subclass of $\mathcal{K}$ whose definition internalizes the key aspects of CH correspondence with ST. Note: $\mu\mathcal{K}$ adopts a cut rule.

• Unification: to unify $\mathcal{L}$ and $\mathcal{K}$, we define two translations of processes in $\mathcal{K}$ into $\mathcal{L}$, by making the process in $\mathcal{K}$ ‘more parallel’.
$[\cdot]_\ell$: Sessions to Linear Logic
(processes and contexts)

$\Gamma \vdash_{st} P$ [12]

$[\cdot]_\ell$: Sessions to Linear $\pi$
(processes and contexts)

$[P]_\ell \vdash_{LL} [\Gamma]_\ell$

DF: Theorem A.1

$\mathcal{L}$

$\mathcal{K}$

$[\Gamma]_\mu \vdash_{\prec} [P]_\mu$

DF: Corollary A.1

Definition A.1: Translation ($\cdot$)
Figure explained

- This typing judgment determines the class of processes typed by standard session types.
Figure explained

- We let $\text{live}(P)$ be a predicate stating that process $P$ has a pending input/output action to take.

**Theorem A.1** (Deadlock Freedom). *If $P \vdash_{\text{LL}} \text{and live}(P)$ then $P \rightarrow Q$, for some $Q$.***
Figure explained


**Corollary A.1.** Let $\vdash_{\text{ST}} P$ be a session process. If $\vdash \llbracket P \rrbracket_{\mu}$ is deadlock-free then $P$ is deadlock-free.
Figure explained

- Separation: **Theorem A.2.** \( \mathcal{L} = \mu \mathcal{K} \).
- Unification: **Definition A.1** (Translation into \( \mathcal{L} \)).

- The translation is *type preserving* and *operationally correspondent*. 
\([\cdot]_\ell: \text{Sessions to Linear Logic (processes and contexts)}\)

\[\Gamma \vdash_{\text{ST}} P \text{[12]}\]

\(\mathcal{L}\)

\([P]_\ell \vdash_{\text{LL}} [\Gamma]_\ell\)

DF: Theorem A.1

Thm. A.2

\(\mathcal{K}\)

\([\Gamma]^f_\mu \vdash_{\prec} [P]^f_\mu\)

\(\mu\mathcal{K}\)

\([\Gamma]^f_\mu \vdash_{\prec} [P]^f_\mu\)

DF: Corollary A.1

Definition A.1: Translation (\([\cdot]\))
Thank you!