

Answering Conjunctive Queries over a Temporally-Ordered Finite Sequence of ABoxes Sharing one TBox

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Abstract. Ontology-based data access (OBDA) assumes that data in a database are mediated with a conceptual layer, available for clients and hiding data storage details. Ontologies are good candidates for such a conceptual layer presentation, whereas databases are good for huge data storage. One of the interesting applications of OBDA is checking a finite set of constraints defined in some language against a temporally-ordered sequence of ABoxes sharing one TBox, where each constraint is considered as a conjunctive query. Presented is one algorithm of conjunctive query answering for such a language, proved are its termination, soundness and completeness.

Keywords. Ontology-based data access, temporal conjunctive query language, description logic knowledge base

Key terms. KnowledgeEvolution, KnowledgeManagementProcess, DecisionSupport

1 Introduction

Ontology-based data access (OBDA) [1] assumes that data in a database are mediated with a conceptual layer, available for clients and hiding data storage details. Ontologies are good candidates for such a conceptual layer presentation, whereas databases are good for huge data storage.

The benefits from combination of databases and knowledge bases are as follows:

- database management is the mature field of research, there is a lot of commercially and freely available DBMSs, showing good-to-excellent performance on large datasets. It is an obvious place to store the assertional part of some knowledge base, i.e. an ABox;
- a TBox often requires a reasoning support to deduce additional assertions, axioms and to check the consistency of a knowledge base.

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At the same time, employing such an approach is rather challenging due to significant differences between relational database systems and ontology languages, based on Description Logics, such as OWL. At first, relational databases adopt a closed-world semantics, i.e. all facts that are not explicitly stated to be true are assumed to be false. In contrast, OWL is based on an open world semantics which does not require one to fix the truth value of every fact and is more similar to an incomplete database. Second, relational databases are unaware of the intensional part of a knowledge base (called a TBox).

Research has been done so far in the OBDA field considers only one ABox stored in a data source, that is an actual set of assertions on individuals and their pairs. However, real applications show that ABox is changing over time. The examples of such dynamic systems can be easily found in practice: environmental conditions, air traffic load, computer system load and performance, health control for the people suffering from serious diseases. Therefore, in some applications of situation awareness [2], there is a need to store an archive of ABoxes, keeping ABoxes actual at different time points. Temporal logics are often used as the means to formulate constraints a dynamic system should obey during its work.

The main results of the paper are:

- for the point-based linear finite time structure elaborated is the language of unions of temporal conjunctive queries, which allows to evaluate atemporal unions of conjunctive queries at different time points;
- proposed is an algorithm of answering a union of temporal conjunctive queries, which harnesses set-theoretic operations on atomic queries answer sets. Proved are its termination, soundness and completeness;

The paper is organized as follows: in the next section a language of unions of temporal conjunctive queries is introduced and the definitions of main reasoning tasks available for such a query language are presented. In the section 3 the algorithm of answering temporal unions of conjunctive queries is presented and illustrated in examples. The section 4 is dedicated to the proofs of logical properties of the algorithm. The section 5 discusses the related work in the field of conjunctive queries answering.

2 Conjunctive Queries: Syntax, Semantics

Assume there is a knowledge base $\mathcal{K} = (\mathcal{A}, \mathcal{T})$, where \mathcal{T} is a set of concept axioms (a TBox), \mathcal{A} is a set of assertional axioms (an ABox). Fix a language of a knowledge base to \mathcal{ALC} [3]. An interpretation of \mathcal{K} , named \mathcal{I} , is a pair $(\cdot^{\mathcal{I}}, \Delta)$, where Δ is a domain of individuals, obeying unique name assumption (UNA) and $\cdot^{\mathcal{I}}$ is an interpretation function, which assigns every concept C a set $C^{\mathcal{I}} \subseteq \Delta$, every atomic role R a binary relation $R^{\mathcal{I}} \subseteq \Delta \times \Delta$, and every individual name a an individual $a^{\mathcal{I}} \in \Delta$. Assertional axioms are $C(a)$ - concept assertion and $R(a, b)$ - role assertion.

Query answering is the extension of a well known task of *instance checking*: given a knowledge base \mathcal{K} and an assertion α . Check whether this assertion is entailed by an ABox of \mathcal{K} .

2.1 Conjunctive Queries Basics

Let $\text{Vars}(Q)$ be a set of all distinguished and non-distinguished variables which appear in a query Q , let $\text{Inds}(Q)$ to denote the set of all individual names which appear in query Q and $\text{Terms}(Q)$ to denote the set of all terms in Q , i.e. $\text{Vars}(Q) \cup \text{Inds}(Q)$. Let us formally define conjunctive queries and Boolean conjunctive queries for a well-elaborated language \mathcal{ALC} [3].

Definition 1 (Conjunctive query, Union of conjunctive queries). *Let $\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{y}, \mathbf{c}$ are respectively tuples of distinguished variables (answer variables), of non-distinguished variables and of individual names, and t, t_1, t_2 are terms in $\text{Terms}(Q)$. A conjunctive query (CQ) is an expression of the form*

$$\text{conj}(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{c}) = \exists \mathbf{y}. q_1 \wedge \dots \wedge q_m,$$

where

$$q_i ::= C(t) \mid r(t_1, t_2)$$

A Boolean conjunctive query is a CQ without answer variables.

A union of conjunctive queries (UCQ) is a disjunction of conjunctive queries (CQs) of the form

$$Q(\mathbf{x}) = \{\mathbf{x} \mid \text{conj}_1(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{c}) \vee \dots \vee \text{conj}_n(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{c})\}$$

Example 1. The example of a query asking about all students that attend some courses and take some exams could be as follows:

$$Q(x) = \{x \mid \exists y. \text{takeCourse}(x, y) \wedge \text{takeExam}(x, y)\}$$

This query can be modified to a Boolean query by substitution of x with an individual name:

$$Q(x) = \{\mid y. \text{takeCourse}(\text{"Eldora"}, y) \wedge \text{takeExam}(\text{"Eldora"}, y)\}$$

We use $|Q|$ to denote the *size* of Q - the number of symbols required to build the query. The *arity* of a query will be the number of answer variables in the query. If all terms in Q are individual names, we say Q is *ground*. We write $Q(\mathbf{c})$ for a query whose answer variables \mathbf{x} are substituted by \mathbf{c} , $Q(\mathbf{x})$ for a conjunctive query and simply Q for a Boolean conjunctive query. Sometimes we write x_1, \dots, x_n instead of \mathbf{x} , and similarly for \mathbf{y} and \mathbf{c} .

Given an \mathcal{ALC} -knowledge base $\mathcal{K} = \langle \mathcal{T}, \mathcal{A} \rangle$, an interpretation \mathcal{I} satisfies a query $Q(\mathbf{x})$ iff the interpretation function can be extended to the variables in $Q(\mathbf{x})$ in such a way that \mathcal{I} satisfies every term in $Q(\mathbf{x})$. A query $Q(\mathbf{x})$ is true w.r.t. \mathcal{K} (written $\mathcal{K} \models Q$) iff every interpretation that satisfies \mathcal{K} also satisfies Q .

Definition 2 (Query answering, query entailment). *Given a query $Q(\mathbf{x})$ with a tuple of answer variables \mathbf{x} , and a knowledge base \mathcal{K} , a tuple of individuals \mathbf{c} with the same arity of \mathbf{x} is an answer for Q in \mathcal{K} if $\mathcal{I} \models Q(\mathbf{c})$ for every model \mathcal{I} in \mathcal{K} .*

Given a Boolean conjunctive query Q , and a KB \mathcal{K} , query entailment is a task to decide whether $\mathcal{K} \models Q$ if $\mathcal{I} \models Q$ for every model \mathcal{I} of \mathcal{K} .

Given a conjunctive query $Q(\mathbf{x})$, a tuple of individuals \mathbf{a} , and a KB \mathcal{K} , query answering is a task to decide whether \mathbf{a} is an answer for $Q(\mathbf{x})$ in \mathcal{K} .

3 Temporal Conjunctive Queries

Let $\mathcal{K} = \langle \mathcal{T}, (\mathcal{A}_i)_{0 \leq i \leq n} \rangle$ be a knowledge base with a sequence of ABoxes sharing one TBox. Let's describe a query language extending the language of conjunctions of positive existential formulae built from query atoms. Having in mind linear temporal logic *LTL* (see e.g. [4]), this language allows for the following temporal operators: \circ (*next*), \circ^- (*previous*), \mathcal{U} (*until*), \mathcal{S} (*since*).

Definition 3. Temporal conjunctive query (TCQ) Ψ is an expression

$$tconj(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{c}) = \exists \mathbf{y}. q_1 \wedge \dots \wedge q_m,$$

where

$$q_i ::= \varphi \mid \Psi$$

$$\varphi ::= C(t) \mid r(t_1, t_2)$$

$$\Psi ::= \varphi \mid \Psi_1 \wedge \Psi_2 \mid \circ^- \Psi \mid \circ \Psi \mid \Psi_1 \mathcal{S} \Psi_2 \mid \Psi_1 \mathcal{U} \Psi_2$$

and C is a concept description, r is a role name, t, t_1, t_2 are terms in $\text{Terms}(Q)$.

Derived temporal modalities like \diamond^- (*sometimes in the past*), \square^- (*always in the past*), \diamond , \square can be defined in a usual way (see, e.g. [4]).

Example 2. A query asking about students who had defended their thesis some time ago and had been ex-matriculated since then is expressed as follows:

$$Q(x) = \{x \mid \exists y. \diamond^- Student(x) \wedge exMatriculated(x) \mathcal{S} hasDefended(x, y)\}$$

The semantics of the TCQ is defined as follows.

Definition 4. A total function $\pi : \text{Terms}(\Psi) \rightarrow \Delta$ is a binding for a query Ψ in an interpretation \mathcal{I} , if $\pi(a) = a$ for all individuals $a \in \text{dom}(\pi)$, and the validity $\mathcal{I}, \pi \models \Phi$ for atemporal CQ φ is defined inductively:

$$\begin{aligned} \mathcal{I}, \pi \models C(t) & \quad \text{iff } \mathcal{I} \models C(\pi(t)) \\ \mathcal{I}, \pi \models r(t_1, t_2) & \quad \text{iff } \mathcal{I} \models r(\pi(t_1), \pi(t_2)) \\ \mathcal{I}, \pi \models \varphi_1 \wedge \varphi_2 & \quad \text{iff } \mathcal{I}, \pi \models \varphi_1 \text{ and } \mathcal{I}, \pi \models \varphi_2 \\ \mathcal{I}, \pi \models \exists y \varphi & \quad \text{iff } \exists e \in \Delta : \pi' = \pi[y/e] \text{ and } \mathcal{I}, \pi' \models \varphi \end{aligned}$$

where the notation $\pi[y/e]$ represents a binding π extended with $\pi(y) = e$ if y is not in the domain of π , otherwise the original value for y is replaced by e .

The validity for a TCQ Ψ and a KB $\mathcal{K} = \langle \mathcal{T}, (\mathcal{A}_i)_{0 \leq i \leq n} \rangle$ is extended as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} \mathcal{K}, i, \pi \models \varphi & \quad \text{iff } \forall \mathcal{I} \models_{\mathcal{T}} \mathcal{A}_i. \mathcal{I}, \pi \models \varphi \\ \mathcal{K}, i, \pi \models \Psi_1 \wedge \Psi_2 & \quad \text{iff } \mathcal{K}, i, \pi \models \Psi_1 \text{ and } \mathcal{K}, i, \pi \models \Psi_2 \\ \mathcal{K}, i, \pi \models \circ \Psi & \quad \text{iff } i < n \text{ and } \mathcal{K}, i+1, \pi \models \Psi \\ \mathcal{K}, i, \pi \models \circ^- \Psi & \quad \text{iff } i > 0 \text{ and } \mathcal{K}, i-1, \pi \models \Psi \\ \mathcal{K}, i, \pi \models \Psi_1 \mathcal{U} \Psi_2 & \quad \text{iff } \exists k, i \leq k \leq n : \mathcal{K}, k, \pi \models \Psi_2 \\ & \quad \text{and } \forall j, i \leq j < k : \mathcal{K}, j, \pi \models \Psi_1 \\ \mathcal{K}, i, \pi \models \Psi_1 \mathcal{S} \Psi_2 & \quad \text{iff } \exists k, 0 \leq k \leq i : \mathcal{K}, k, \pi \models \Psi_2 \\ & \quad \text{and } \forall j, k < j \leq i : \mathcal{K}, j, \pi \models \Psi_1 \end{aligned}$$

For a binding π , if, for every i , $\forall \mathcal{I} \models_{\mathcal{T}} \mathcal{A}_i \mathcal{I} \models \mathcal{K}$, this implies $\mathcal{I} \models \Psi$. If such evaluation exists, we write $\mathcal{K} \models \Psi$ and we say π is a match for Ψ in \mathcal{K} . For a tuple of individuals c_1, \dots, c_n mapped to a tuple of answer variables x_1, \dots, x_n we say c_1, \dots, c_n is a certain answer for Ψ in \mathcal{K} , iff $\mathcal{K} \models \Psi[x_1, \dots, x_n/c_1, \dots, c_n]$. We denote a set of certain answers for Ψ as $Ans(\Psi)$.

Definition 5. A union of temporal conjunctive queries (UTCQ) $Q(\mathbf{x})$ is a disjunction of temporal conjunctive queries (see Definition 3):

$$Q(\mathbf{x}) = \{\mathbf{x} \mid tconj_1(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{c}) \vee \dots \vee tconj_n(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{c})\}$$

4 Answering a Union of Temporal CQs Over a Sequence of ABoxes

4.1 Algorithm Answering a Union of Temporal CQs

The idea of answering a UTCQ against a set of ABoxes is to use temporal operators as the means of detection of time points at which atemporal CQs should be evaluated. Due to the recursive nature of such temporal operators as \mathcal{S} , \mathcal{U} we have to store all the ABoxes and the values of particular CQs depending on the operator. Intuitively, given $\Psi = \bigcirc \phi$ at a time point i , ϕ is evaluated at the time $i + 1$, and so on.

To be able to combine certain answers obtained from different CQs of one TCQ, let's take a closer look at the nature of certain answers.

A certain answer to a CQ ϕ is a binding π of each $x_i \in \mathbf{x}$ (distinguished variables) to some individual name that appeared in the KB \mathcal{K} , such that in all models of \mathcal{K} , $\mathcal{K} \models \phi(\pi(\mathbf{x}))$. There could be more than one certain answer for a CQ ϕ , so further we shall consider a set of certain answers for a query $\phi(\mathbf{x})$. A correspondent set of matches for ϕ actually produces some k -ary relation, where k is the arity of a CQ ϕ .

A certain answer to a UCQ Φ is a combination of answers of CQs in Φ , i.e. $c_1 \cup \dots \cup c_n$ where n is a number of CQs in Φ . For such a combination there are two possible situations: (i) disjuncts ϕ_{j_1}, ϕ_{j_2} in UCQ Φ use pairwise disjoint sets of distinguished variables (i.e. there are no common distinguished variables in two arbitrary disjuncts of Φ); (ii) some disjuncts can share (some) distinguished variables of each other. To deal with sets of certain answers (that are actually relations) we adopt two operators of relational algebra, namely, \times - a cross-product, and \bowtie - a natural join.

Cross-product operator \times [5] is used for the case (i).

Definition 6. Given two bindings $\pi_1 : (x_1, \dots, x_n) \rightarrow \Delta$, $\pi_2 : (y_1, \dots, y_m) \rightarrow \Delta$, their cross-product, $\pi_1 \times \pi_2$ is a binding $\pi : X \rightarrow \Delta$ where x, y are free variables that do not have any variables in common, and $X = (x_1, \dots, x_n, y_1, \dots, y_m)$.

Join operator \bowtie [5] is used for the case (ii) to join two bindings w.r.t. common variables in both bindings are mapped to same constant.

Definition 7. Given two bindings $\pi_1 : (x_1, \dots, x_n, z) \rightarrow \Delta$, $\pi_2 : (y_1, \dots, y_m, z) \rightarrow \Delta$, their join, $\pi_1 \bowtie \pi_2$ is a binding $\pi : X \rightarrow \Delta$ where x, y, z are free variables and $X = (x_1, \dots, x_n, y_1, \dots, y_m, z)$, iff every common variable z must be mapped to same constant $c \in \Delta$.

A correspondent binding for Φ will be: for (i) $\pi = \pi_{\phi_1} \times \dots \times \pi_{\phi_n}$, and for (ii) $\pi = \pi_{\phi_1} \bowtie \dots \bowtie \pi_{\phi_n}$

The following theorems show applications of \times and \bowtie for bindings.

Theorem 1. *Given a formula $\Phi = \phi_1 \wedge \phi_2$, where ϕ_1, ϕ_2 are CQ formulas, a binding $\pi = \pi_1 \bowtie \pi_2$ is a match for Φ iff bindings π_1, π_2 are matches for ϕ_1, ϕ_2 .*

Proof. It is true based on the definition of the join operator. \square

Theorem 2. *Given a formula $\Phi = \phi_1 \vee \phi_2$, where ϕ_1, ϕ_2 are CQ formulas, a binding $\pi = \pi_1 \times \pi_2$ is a match for Φ iff the binding π_1 is a match for ϕ_1 or the binding π_2 is a match for ϕ_2 .*

Proof. The \Rightarrow direction is trivial.

For \Leftarrow direction, assume $\pi_1 : (x_1, \dots, x_n, z) \mapsto \Delta, \pi_2 : (y_1, \dots, y_m, z) \mapsto \Delta$, and they are matches for ϕ_1 and ϕ_2 . From the nature of disjunction, we know that formula Φ is satisfiable if either ϕ_1 or ϕ_2 is satisfiable. That means if there is a match for either ϕ_1 or ϕ_2 . If z appears in both of the CQs, renaming z in one of the CQs does not change the validity. Therefore, we have that $\pi : (x_1, \dots, x_n, z, y_1, \dots, y_m, z') \mapsto \Delta$ which is obtained from $\pi_1 \times \pi_2$ is indeed a match for Φ . \square

Now, consider a structure of a certain answer to a union of temporal CQs (UTCQ). It is a combination of answers to a (set of) TCQ obtained at proper time points, referred by temporal operators used in a UTCQ.

One more thing to be explicitly addressed is that known algorithms for conjunctive query answering, such as [6], [7], are focused on query entailment, that is, a Boolean conjunctive query answering. This means that the task of answering an atemporal CQ requires a preprocessing step, and considers a Boolean conjunctive query answering algorithm as a black box. Namely, at the preprocessing step a *candidate match* (a tuple of variables, substituted via some binding π with a tuple of individuals c) is submitted to a Boolean conjunctive query answering engine, and that engine decides if such a candidate match is a certain answer.

Now, present the algorithm informally.

Eliminate temporal operators in a UTCQ The important step in our algorithm is to get a normal form where the temporal operators are used to decide at which time point should each CQ be evaluated. This is done by iterative application of the expansion rules Table 1. For every \circ and \circ^- operators, we just shift one point forward and backward. By doing these, we obtain a query that is in normal form whose atoms are UCQs, except some recursion atom which is a TCQ.

Replace the boolean operators with relational operators Every conjunction is replaced with join and every disjunction - with cross-product.

Retrieve an answer Use an arbitrary query answering algorithm [6–9] as a black-box approach to compute a set of answers for a given UCQ. If the original UTCQ contains $\mathcal{U}, \mathcal{S}, \square, \square^-, \diamond, \diamond^-$, the normal form of the transformed query might contain a recursion. In such case, if the time point $i < 0$ or $i > n$, then return \emptyset , else evaluate CQs with leading \circ or \circ^- for \mathcal{U}, \mathcal{S} and for derived modalities (if any).

Algorithm 1 Decide Q

Input: $\mathcal{K} = \{\mathcal{T}, (\mathcal{A}_i)_{0 \leq i \leq n}\}$: knowledge base consists of a TBox and a sequence of ABoxes at a time point $i, 0 \leq i \leq n$

Q : a UTCQ

Output: $Ans(Q, i)$ - a set of certain answers to Q at time point i

$Ans(Q, i) = \emptyset$

repeat

$Ans' = Ans(Q, i)$

if $Q = TCQ_1 \vee TCQ_2$ **then**

$Ans(Q, i) = Ans(TCQ_1, i) \times Ans(TCQ_2, i)$

end if

if $Q = TCQ_1 \wedge TCQ_2$ **then**

$Ans(Q, i) = Ans(TCQ_1, i) \bowtie Ans(TCQ_2, i)$

end if

if $Q = \circ^- TCQ$ **then**

if $i=1$ **then**

$Ans(Q, i) = \emptyset$

else

$Ans(Q, i) = Ans(TCQ, i - 1)$

end if

end if

if $Q = \circ TCQ$ **then**

if $i=n$ **then**

$Ans(Q, i) = \emptyset$

else

$Ans(Q, i) = Ans(TCQ, i + 1)$

end if

end if

if $Q = TCQ_1 \cup TCQ_2$ **then**

if $i=n$ **then**

$Ans(Q, i) = Ans(TCQ_2, i)$

else

$Ans(Q, i) = Ans(TCQ_2, i) \times (Ans(TCQ_1, i) \bowtie Ans(Q, i + 1))$

end if

end if

if $Q = TCQ_1 \mathcal{S} TCQ_2$ **then**

if $i=1$ **then**

$Ans(Q, i) = Ans(TCQ_2, i)$

else

$Ans(Q, i) = Ans(TCQ_2, i) \times (Ans(TCQ_1, i) \bowtie Ans(Q, i - 1))$

end if

end if

until $Ans' = Ans(Q, i)$

return $Ans(Q, i)$

Table 1. Equivalence rules of LTL for future operators. Taken from [4]

idempotent rule	$\Box\Psi \equiv \Box\Box\Psi$
	$\Diamond\Psi \equiv \Diamond\Diamond\Psi$
	$\Psi_1 \mathcal{U} (\Psi_1 \mathcal{U} \Psi_2) \equiv \Psi_1 \mathcal{U} \Psi_2$
	$(\Psi_1 \mathcal{U} \Psi_2) \mathcal{U} \Psi_2 \equiv \Psi_1 \mathcal{U} \Psi_2$
commutativity rule	$\Box \circ \Psi \equiv \circ \Box \Psi$
	$\Diamond \circ \Psi \equiv \circ \Diamond \Psi$
	$\circ(\Psi_1 \mathcal{U} \Psi_2) \equiv (\circ\Psi_1 \mathcal{U} \circ\Psi_2)$
distributivity rule	$\Box(\Psi_1 \wedge \Psi_2) \equiv (\Box\Psi_1 \wedge \Box\Psi_2)$
	$\Diamond(\Psi_1 \vee \Psi_2) \equiv (\Diamond\Psi_1 \vee \Diamond\Psi_2)$
	$\circ(\Psi_1 \wedge \Psi_2) \equiv (\circ\Psi_1 \wedge \circ\Psi_2)$
	$\circ(\Psi_1 \vee \Psi_2) \equiv (\circ\Psi_1 \vee \circ\Psi_2)$
	$((\Psi_1 \wedge \Psi_2) \mathcal{U} \Psi_3) \equiv ((\Psi_1 \mathcal{U} \Psi_3) \wedge (\Psi_2 \mathcal{U} \Psi_3))$
	$(\Psi_1 \mathcal{U} (\Psi_2 \vee \Psi_3)) \equiv ((\Psi_1 \mathcal{U} \Psi_2) \vee (\Psi_1 \mathcal{U} \Psi_3))$
temporal recursion rule	$\Box\Psi \equiv \Psi \wedge \Box\Psi$
	$\Diamond\Psi \equiv \Psi \vee \Diamond\Psi$
	$\Psi_1 \mathcal{U} \Psi_2 \equiv \Psi_2 \vee (\Psi_1 \wedge \circ(\Psi_1 \mathcal{U} \Psi_2))$
absorption rule	$\Diamond\Box\Psi \equiv \Box\Psi$
	$\Box\Diamond\Psi \equiv \Diamond\Psi$

In Table 1, presented are some equivalence rules in LTL, used in Algorithm 1.

For the illustration of Algorithm 1 consider some examples, assuming that Algorithm 1 returns a set Ans of answers to Ψ at the time point i .

Example 3. Given a TCQ query $\Psi = \circ^-(\Phi_1 \mathcal{U} \Phi_2)$ at a point i .

$$\begin{aligned}
Ans(\Psi, i) &= Ans(\circ^-(\Phi_1 \mathcal{U} \Phi_2), i) \\
&\quad * \backslash \text{move back one point by } \circ^- \\
&= Ans(\Phi_1 \mathcal{U} \Phi_2, i-1) \\
&\quad * \backslash \text{expansion rule for } \mathcal{U} \\
&= Ans(\Phi_2 \vee (\Phi_1 \wedge \circ\Psi), i-1) \\
&\quad * \backslash \text{transforming } \vee \\
&= Ans(\Phi_2, i-1) \times Ans(\Phi_1 \wedge \circ\Psi, i-1) \\
&\quad * \backslash \text{transforming } \wedge \\
&= Ans(\Phi_2, i-1) \times (Ans(\Phi_1, i-1) \bowtie Ans(\circ\Psi, i-1)) \\
&\quad * \backslash \text{move forward one point by } \circ \\
&= Ans(\Phi_2, i-1) \times (Ans(\Phi_1, i-1) \bowtie Ans(\Psi, i))
\end{aligned}$$

If $i = 0$ in $Ans(\Phi_2, i-1)$ and $Ans(\Phi_1, i-1)$, then the evaluation of Ψ is the empty set.

A more complex example is given below.

Example 4. Given a TCQ query $\Psi = \diamond^-(\Phi_1 \mathcal{U} \Phi_2)$ at a point i .

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{Ans}(\Psi, i) &= \text{Ans}(\diamond^-(\Phi_1 \mathcal{U} \Phi_2), i) \\
 &\quad * \text{expansion rule for } \diamond^- \\
 &= \text{Ans}((\Phi_1 \mathcal{U} \Phi_2) \vee \circ^-\Psi, i) \\
 &\quad * \text{transforming } \vee \\
 &= \text{Ans}(\Phi_1 \mathcal{U} \Phi_2, i) \times \text{Ans}(\circ^-\Psi, i) \\
 &\quad * \text{move back one point by } \circ^- \\
 &= \text{Ans}(\Phi_1 \mathcal{U} \Phi_2, i) \times \text{Ans}(\Psi, i - 1) \\
 &\quad * \text{We substitute } \Phi_1 \mathcal{U} \Phi_2 \text{ with } \Psi' \\
 &\quad \text{Expansion rule for } \mathcal{U} \\
 &= \text{Ans}(\Phi_2 \vee (\Phi_1 \wedge \circ\Psi'), i) \times \text{Ans}(\Psi, i - 1) \\
 &\quad * \text{transforming } \vee \\
 &= \text{Ans}(\Phi_2, i) \times \text{Ans}(\Phi_1 \wedge \circ\Psi', i) \times \text{Ans}(\Psi, i - 1) \\
 &\quad * \text{transforming } \wedge \\
 &= \text{Ans}(\Phi_2, i) \times \\
 &\quad \left(\text{Ans}(\Phi_1, i) \bowtie \text{Ans}(\circ\Psi', i) \right) \times \text{Ans}(\Psi, i - 1) \\
 &\quad * \text{move forward one point by } \circ \\
 &= \text{Ans}(\Phi_2, i) \times \left(\text{Ans}(\Phi_1, i) \bowtie \text{Ans}(\Psi', i + 1) \right) \times \text{Ans}(\Psi, i - 1)
 \end{aligned}$$

If $i = n$ in $\text{Ans}(\Psi', i + 1)$, then $\text{Ans}(\Psi', i + 1)$ is evaluated to the empty set.

There is one thing we have to ensure that in the intersection of two sets of answers for conjunction of CQs a certain answer is obtained, i.e. there is a common answer for both CQs, otherwise an empty set. One way to do this is to retrieve all answers for each CQ and then to intersect them to get some common answers. Another way is first to retrieve an answer of a UCQ and then to decide if this answer is also the answer for the other CQs in the conjunction, otherwise keep retrieving and deciding until there is no more answer obtained. The former way is preferred since it offers more practical solution. It means that we can deal with it using relational algebra operators or database language operators.

4.2 Termination, Soundness, Completeness of the Algorithm

Definition 8. (*UTCQ closure*). Given a temporal union of conjunctive queries Q , its closure set, $Cl(Q)$ is a set of query atoms closed under the following rules

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{if } q \in Q &\quad \text{then } q \in Cl(Q) \\
 \text{if } \circ^-q \in Q &\quad \text{then } q \in Cl(Q) \\
 \text{if } \circ q \in Q &\quad \text{then } q \in Cl(Q) \\
 \text{if } q_1 \wedge q_2 &\quad \text{then } q_1, q_2 \in Cl(Q) \\
 \text{if } q_1 \vee q_2 &\quad \text{then } q_1, q_2 \in Cl(Q) \\
 \text{if } q_1 \mathcal{U} q_2 &\quad \text{then } q_1, q_2, \circ(q_1 \mathcal{U} q_2) \in Cl(Q) \\
 \text{if } q_1 \mathcal{S} q_2 &\quad \text{then } q_1, q_2, \circ^-(q_1 \mathcal{S} q_2) \in Cl(Q)
 \end{aligned}$$

Since a closure set for a UTCQ is finite, Algorithm 1 terminates after a finite number of steps.

Theorem 3. (Local) termination. Given a UTCQ Q and a knowledge base $\mathcal{K} = \{\mathcal{T}, (\mathcal{A}_i)_{0 \leq i \leq n}\}$. Algorithm 1 always terminates.

Proof. We can show the local termination inductively.

Base case. Any query is also contained in the closure set of itself.

Inductive case.

$(C(a), r(a_1, a_2))$ If we have a query Q which is atomic, then the closure set contains $C(a)$ or $r(a_1, a_2)$.

(\circ^-TCQ) For such query $Cl(Q) = \{TCQ, \circ^-TCQ\}$, i.e. evaluated are two elements, and in case of $i = 0$ the value of \circ^-TCQ is known to be \emptyset , so Algorithm 1 stops after two evaluations.

$(TCQ_1 \cup TCQ_2)$ For such query $Cl(Q) = \{TCQ_2, TCQ_1, TCQ_1 \cup TCQ_2, \circ(TCQ_1 \cup TCQ_2)\}$

$(TCQ_1 \mathcal{S} TCQ_2)$ For such query $Cl(Q) = \{TCQ_2, TCQ_1, TCQ_1 \mathcal{S} TCQ_2, \circ(TCQ_1 \mathcal{S} TCQ_2)\}$ \square

Theorem 4. Soundness. If for UTCQ Q its answer set $Ans(Q(x), i)$, obtained with Algorithm 1, is not empty, then Q has at least those certain answers that are in $Ans(Q, i)$.

Proof. We prove by induction. We start with evaluating non-temporal query, i.e. a query containing no temporal operator.

Base case If we have an atomic query in the form of $C(a)$, then using any approach of CQ answering we obtain all the answers for the query Q entailment over $\mathcal{K} = \{\mathcal{T}, (\mathcal{A}_i)_{0 \leq i \leq n}\}$. If $\mathcal{K} \models C(a)$ and $a \in Ans(Q(x), i)$, the function returns a and this value is stored in $Ans(Q(x), i)$. By Definition 4, this result tells us that the individual a is a certain answer to the query $C(x)$ w.r.t. the match $\pi(x) = a$. The same result is obtained if we have atomic query in the form of $r(a, b)$.

Inductive case can be obtained by Definition 4. \square

Theorem 5. Completeness. If a UTCQ Q has a certain answer ans , then Algorithm 1 shows that this answer is in $Ans(Q, i)$.

Proof. By contradiction. Assume that (i) $Q(x)$ has a certain answer ans w.r.t π , (ii) $Ans(Q, i)$ - is a set of certain answers obtained by Algorithm 1, and (iii) $ans \notin Ans(Q, i)$. By (i), we know that $\mathcal{K} \models Q(ans)$ and that for all time points $0 \leq i \leq n$ in all models \mathcal{I} , such that $\mathcal{I} \models \mathcal{K}$, $\mathcal{I} \models Q(ans)$. By (ii), for Algorithm 1 to return $Ans(Q, i)$ such that $ans \notin Ans(Q, i)$ there are several reasons for it.

Q is atomic. If Q is atomic, i.e. in the form $C(x)$ or $r(x, y)$, then we know that $Ans(Q, i)$ does not contain ans . This means that there is a model \mathcal{I} of a knowledge base \mathcal{K} which does not entail $Q(ans)$. But this is a contradiction to our assumption (i).

$(TCQ_1 \wedge TCQ_2)$. If $Ans(Q, i)$ does not contain ans , according to Algorithm 1 it means that $ans \notin Ans(TCQ_1, i) \bowtie Ans(TCQ_2, i)$. This, in turn, leads to the existence of a model \mathcal{I} of a knowledge base \mathcal{K} such that $\mathcal{I} \models TCQ_1(ans)$ and $\mathcal{I} \not\models TCQ_2(ans)$ or vice versa, that contradicts to (i).

$(TCQ_1 \vee TCQ_2)$. If $Ans(Q, i)$ does not contain ans , according to Algorithm 1 it means that $ans \notin Ans(TCQ_1, i) \times Ans(TCQ_2, i)$. This, in turn, leads to the existence of a model \mathcal{I} of a knowledge base \mathcal{K} such that either $\mathcal{I} \not\models TCQ_1(ans)$ or $\mathcal{I} \not\models TCQ_2(ans)$, that contradicts to (i).

(\circ^-TCQ). If $Ans(Q, i)$ does not contain ans , according to Algorithm 1 it means that $ans \notin Ans(Q, i - 1)$. This, in turn, leads to the existence of a model \mathcal{I} of a knowledge base \mathcal{K} such that $\mathcal{I}, i - 1 \not\models Q(ans)$, that contradicts to (i).

($TCQ_1 \cup TCQ_2$). If $Ans(Q, i)$ does not contain ans , according to Algorithm 1 it means that $ans \notin Ans(TCQ_2, i) \times (Ans(TCQ_1, i) \bowtie Ans(Q, i + 1))$. This, in turn, leads to the existence of a model \mathcal{I} of a knowledge base \mathcal{K} such that either $\mathcal{I}, i \not\models TCQ_2(ans)$ or $\mathcal{I}, i \not\models TCQ_1(ans)$ and $\mathcal{I}, i + 1 \not\models Q$, that contradicts to (i).

($TCQ_1 \mathcal{S} TCQ_2$). If $Ans(Q, i)$ does not contain ans , according to Algorithm 1 it means that $ans \notin Ans(TCQ_2, i) \times (Ans(TCQ_1, i) \bowtie Ans(Q, i - 1))$. This, in turn, leads to the existence of a model \mathcal{I} of a knowledge base \mathcal{K} such that either $\mathcal{I}, i \not\models TCQ_2(ans)$ or $\mathcal{I}, i \not\models TCQ_1(ans)$ and $\mathcal{I}, i - 1 \not\models Q$, that contradicts to (i).

The proof for the temporal operator \circ acting in the direction of future can be completed in the same manner. \square

5 Related Work and Conclusions

Transition graphs for a temporal query language answering over a finite set of versions of a database were investigated in [10]. The expressivity of a temporal query language presented is however restricted either to past [11], or to future [10], [12] direction of time. Known are several algorithms for answering unions of conjunctive queries over knowledge bases with static TBox and ABox, for example works of Ortiz [6], Glimm [7], Tessaris [9], Motik [8] should be mentioned. Any of those algorithms could serve as a basis for finding answers to atemporal CQs at particular time points, whereas possible extensions of those algorithms for the application to a sequence of ABoxes is an open question. A language of temporal conjunctive queries with negation, together with the computational and combined computational complexity is introduced in [13]. Summing up, obtaining benefits from keeping a large evolving ABox of a knowledge base in a database and applying TBox of that knowledge base to obtain missing assertional axioms is one of the ways of dealing with complex evolving domains. It is interesting, due to high computational complexity of temporal conjunctive query answering in general, to find a balance between the expressivity of a query language and its practical applicability.

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