Principles of AI Planning
4. PDDL

Schematic operators

- Description of state variables and operators in terms of a given finite set of objects.
- Analogy: propositional logic vs. predicate logic
- Planners take input as schematic operators and translate them into (ground) operators. This is called grounding.

Schematic operators

Schematic operator $\text{drive}_\text{car}_\text{from}_\text{to}(x,y_1,y_2)$:

- $x \in \{\text{car1}, \text{car2}\}$,
- $y_1 \in \{\text{Freiburg}, \text{Strasbourg}\}$,
- $y_2 \in \{\text{Freiburg}, \text{Strasbourg}\}$

$\langle \text{in}(x,y_1), \text{in}(x,y_2) \land \neg \text{in}(x,y_1) \rangle$

corresponds to the operators

$\langle \text{in}(\text{car1}, \text{Freiburg}), \text{in}(\text{car1}, \text{Strasbourg}) \land \neg \text{in}(\text{car1}, \text{Freiburg}) \rangle$,
$\langle \text{in}(\text{car1}, \text{Strasbourg}), \text{in}(\text{car1}, \text{Freiburg}) \land \neg \text{in}(\text{car1}, \text{Strasbourg}) \rangle$,
$\langle \text{in}(\text{car2}, \text{Freiburg}), \text{in}(\text{car2}, \text{Strasbourg}) \land \neg \text{in}(\text{car2}, \text{Freiburg}) \rangle$,
$\langle \text{in}(\text{car2}, \text{Strasbourg}), \text{in}(\text{car2}, \text{Freiburg}) \land \neg \text{in}(\text{car2}, \text{Strasbourg}) \rangle$,

plus four operators that are never applicable (inconsistent change set!) and can be ignored, like

$\langle \text{in}(\text{car1}, \text{Freiburg}), \text{in}(\text{car1}, \text{Freiburg}) \land \neg \text{in}(\text{car1}, \text{Freiburg}) \rangle$. 
Schematic operators: quantification

Existential quantification (for formulae only)
Finite disjunctions $\phi(a_1) \lor \cdots \lor \phi(a_n)$ represented as
$\exists x \in \{a_1, \ldots, a_n\}: \phi(x)$.

Universal quantification (for formulae and effects)
Finite conjunctions $\phi(a_1) \land \cdots \land \phi(a_n)$ represented as
$\forall x \in \{a_1, \ldots, a_n\}: \phi(x)$.

Example
$\exists x \in \{A, B, C\}: \text{in}(x, \text{Freiburg})$ is a short-hand for
$\text{in}(A, \text{Freiburg}) \lor \text{in}(B, \text{Freiburg}) \lor \text{in}(C, \text{Freiburg})$.

PDDL: the Planning Domain Definition Language

- used by almost all implemented systems for deterministic planning
- supports a language comparable to what we have defined above (including schematic operators and quantification)
- syntax inspired by the Lisp programming language: e.g. prefix notation for formulae
  (and (or (on A B) (on A C))
   (or (on B A) (on B C))
   (or (on C A) (on A B)))

PDDL: domain files

A domain file consists of
- (define (domain DOMAINNAME)
  a :requirements definition (use :strips :typing by default)
  definitions of types (each parameter has a type)
  definitions of predicates
  definitions of operators
Example: blocks world (with hand) in PDDL

Note: Unlike in the previous chapter, here we use a variant of the blocks world domain with an explicitly modeled gripper/hand.

(define (domain BLOCKS)
  (:requirements :strips :typing)
  (:types block)
  (:predicates (on ?x - block ?y - block)
    (ontable ?x - block)
    (clear ?x - block)
    (handempty)
    (holding ?x - block)
  )

PDDL: operator definition

(:action OPERATORNAME
  list of parameters: (?x - type1 ?y - type2 ?z - type3)
  precondition: a formula
    <schematic-state-var>
    (and <formula> ... <formula>)
    (or <formula> ... <formula>)
    (not <formula>)
    (forall (?x1 - type1 ... ?xn - typen) <formula>)
    (exists (?x1 - type1 ... ?xn - typen) <formula>)

  effect:
    <schematic-state-var>
    (not <schematic-state-var>)
    (and <effect> ... <effect>)
    (when <formula> <effect>)
    (forall (?x1 - type1 ... ?xn - typen) <effect>)

  :parameters (?x - block ?y - block)
  :precondition (and (holding ?x) (clear ?y))
  :effect (and (not (holding ?x))
    (not (clear ?y))
    (clear ?x)
    (handempty)
    (on ?x ?y)))
PDDL: problem files

A problem file consists of
- (define (problem PROBLEMNAME))
- declaration of which domain is needed for this problem
- definitions of objects belonging to each type
- definition of the initial state (list of state variables initially true)
- definition of goal states (a formula like operator precondition)

Example
The Fast Downward Planner

Fast Downward is the state-of-the-art planner, usable both for research and applications.

Main developers:
- Malte Helmert
- Gabi Röger
- Erez Karpas
- Jendrik Seipp
- Silvan Sievers
- Florian Pommerening

Example
The Fast Downward Planner

Fast Downward is available at http://www.fast-downward.org/

Installation:
Follow instructions at http://www.fast-downward.org/
ObtainingAndRunningFastDownward

Running:
Follow instructions at http://www.fast-downward.org/PlannerUsage
Example run of Fast Downward

```bash
# ./fast-downward.py --plan-file plan.txt \
domain.pddl problem.pddl --search "astar(blind())"
```

```
INFO  Running search.

Solution found!

Plan length: 6 step(s).

Expanded 85 state(s).

Search time: 0s
```

Example plan found by Fast Downward

```bash
# cat plan.txt
(pick-up b)
(stack b a)
(pick-up c)
(stack c b)
(pick-up d)
(stack d c)
; cost = 6 (unit cost)
```

Example: blocks world in PDDL

```pddl
(define (domain BLOCKS)
  (:requirements :strips :typing)
  (:types block)
  (:predicates (on ?x - block ?y - block)
    (ontable ?x - block)
    (clear ?x - block)
    (handempty)
    (holding ?x - block)
  )

(:action pick-up
  :parameters (?x - block)
  :precondition (and (clear ?x) (ontable ?x) (handempty))
  :effect (and (not (ontable ?x))
    (not (clear ?x))
    (not (handempty))
    (holding ?x)))
```
(:action put-down
  :parameters (?x - block)
  :precondition (holding ?x)
  :effect (and (not (holding ?x))
    (clear ?x)
    (handempty)
    (ontable ?x)))

(:action stack
  :parameters (?x - block ?y - block)
  :precondition (and (holding ?x) (clear ?y))
  :effect (and (not (holding ?x))
    (not (clear ?x))
    (clear ?x)
    (handempty)
    (on ?x ?y)))

(:action unstack
  :parameters (?x - block ?y - block)
  :precondition (and (on ?x ?y) (clear ?x)
    (handempty))
  :effect (and (holding ?x)
    (clear ?y)
    (not (clear ?x))
    (not (handempty))
    (not (on ?x ?y))))

(define (problem example)
  (:domain BLOCKS)
  (:objects a b c d - block)
  (:init (clear a) (clear b) (clear c) (clear d)
    (ontable a) (ontable b) (ontable c)
    (ontable d) (handempty))
  (:goal (and (on d c) (on c b) (on b a))))