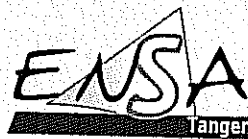
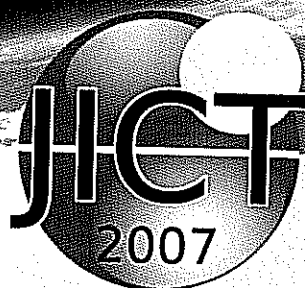


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II International Conference on Science and Technology

- [Welcome to JICT 2007](#)

Welcome

[Preface](#)

[Track Descriptions](#)

[Organization](#)

[Site](#)

Papers

International Conference on Science and Technology, 21-22 March 2007, Malaga (Spain) - 23 March 2007, Tangier (Morocco)

- [Papers](#)

Papers

Track: Biotechnology

[#15 GENTOXICITE ET ANTIGENOTOXICITE DE FOENICULUM VULGARE EVALUEES PAR TEST SMART DE DROSOPHILA MELANOGASTER](#)

Sanae Amkiss, N. Mezzoug, J. Abrini, N. Senhaji, and M. Idaomar

[#24 MONITORIZACIÓN DE GASES TRAZADORES PARA LA OPTIMIZACIÓN DE LA VENTILACIÓN](#)

Enrique Gea, C. Navarro, G. Castillo, and L. E. Vera

[#43 AN INTEGRATIVE EFFORT TO UNDERSTAND THE AMINE SYSTEM RELATIONSHIPS TO THE LIGHT OF SYSTEM BIOLOGY TECHNOLOGIES](#)

R. Montañez, A. Pino-Ángeles, A. A. Moya-García, A. Reyes-Palomares, I. Navas-Delgado, M. M. Rojano, R. Fernández-Santacruz, F. Sánchez-Jiménez, J. F. Aldana-Montes, and M. A. Medina-Torres

[#44 A HUMAN TRANSFECTED CELL MODEL TO STUDY THE EFFECT OF INTRACELLULAR HISTAMINE ON CANCER PROLIFERATION AND INVASIVENESS](#)

Hicham Abrihach, Ignacio Fajardo, Francisca Sánchez-Jiménez, and José Luis Urdiales

[#48 A WEB-SERVER FOR THE IDENTIFICATION OF MICRORNAs AGAINST NUCLEOTIDE SEQUENCES](#)

Antonio Muñoz, James R. Perkins, Antonio J. Pérez, Guillermo Thode, Eduardo R. Bejarano, Oswaldo Trelles, and Enrique Viguera

[#49 REPLICATION SLIPPAGE OF PROCARYOTIC AND VIRAL DNAPOLYMERASES IS DEPENDENT ON THE CONCENTRATION OF MAGNESIUM IONS](#)

M. Castillo-Lizardo, E. Tamayo, S. García-Gómez, I. de la Viuda-Cuesta, and E. Viguera

[#53 ANALYSIS OF THE GENOMIC CONSENSUS SEQUENCE OF ARENAVIRUS DURING LOSS OF INFECTIVITY DUE TO LETHAL MUTAGENESIS](#)

Verónica Martín, Gema Gómez-Mariano, Esteban Domingo, and Ana Grande-Pérez

[#63 AMELIORATION DE LA QUALITE MICROBIOLOGIQUE DES BOYAUX NATURELS PAR DIFFERENTS TYPES DE TRAITEMENTS](#)

Ben Hammou Fathia, SKALI S. N, IDAOMAR M, and ABRINI J

[#71 EFFET DE L'EXTRAIT METHANOLIQUE DE QUATRE PLANTES SUR LE DEVELOPPEMENT POST-EMBRYONNAIRE DU RAVAGEUR DES DENREES ALIMENTAIRES PLODIA INTERPUNCTELLA](#)

BOUAYAD Nouredin and SAYAH Fouad

[#72 EFFETS D'UN ALCALOIDE, L'HARMINE, SUR LE DEVELOPPEMENT D'UN INSECTE RAVAGEUR](#)

[TRIBOLIUM CASTANEUM \(INSECTES. COLEOPTERES\)](#)

AMRI Haitam and SAYAH Fouad

[#74 TOXICITY EFFECTS OF PEGANUM HARMALA SEED EXTRACT ON THE DEVELOPMENT AND THE MIDGUT OF TRIBOLIUM CASTANEUM \(INSECTA\)](#)

JBILOU Rachid, RHARRABE Kacem, and SAYAH Fouad

[#84 IDENTIFICATION ET CARACTERISATION DE CHAMPIGNONS RESISTANTS AUX METAUX LOURDS](#)

Laila Ezzouhri and Khalid Lairini

Track: Telecommunications

[#10 INDEPENDENT COMPONENTS ANALYSIS AS TOOL TO ELIMINATE THE IMPULSIVE NOISE](#)

Salua Nassabay, B. Prieto, I. Keck, C. G. Puntonet, and R. Martin

[#11 MEJORA DEL RENDIMIENTO DEL CONTROL DE CONGESTIÓN UNITASA DE RCCMP PARA ENTORNOS HETEROGENEOS](#)

Jaime Venzala and Marta Solera

[#26 ACTIVE-SET METHODS FOR NUMERICAL OPTIMIZATION: SELECTED APPLICATIONS AND NEEDS](#)

Pablo Guerrero-García and Ángel Santos-Palomo

[#34 UNA TÉCNICA APARAMÉTRICA PARA EL RELLENADO DE HUECOS EN IMÁGENES DE SATÉLITE](#)

Juan Miguel Vargas and José Antonio Hernán

[#38 SISTEMAS DE COLAS CON DEMANDAS REPETIDAS](#)

Ivan Atencia, Inmaculada Fortes, and Sixto Sánchez

[#57 DESIGN OF INTEGRATED-OSCILLATOR ACTIVE MICROSTRIP ANTENNA FOR 2.45GHZ](#)

Harmouzi Mustapha, ESSAAIDI M, SADOUQ Z.A., and IGLESIAS E. R.

[#59 ICA VS WAVELET TRANSFORM AS DE-NOISING TOOL FOR MULTIDIMENSIONAL DATA](#)

chakkor Otman, Aknin Noura, and García Puntonet Carlos

[#77 TRANSLINK SYSTEM](#)

AYASSIN Driss and BEN ABDELLAH A.

[#79 A NOVEL COMPACT UWB PLANAR MONOPOLE ANTENNA FOR UWB COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS](#)

El Mrabet O., Aznabet M., Srfi M. N., Aknin N., and Essaaidi Mohamed

[#85 WIRELESS SENSOR NETWORKS BASED ON REAL TIME MIDDLEWARE](#)

Zouhair A. Sadouq, Manuel I. Capel, and Mohamed Essaaidi

[#90 UTILIZACIÓN DE LAS LÍNEAS DE DISTRIBUCIÓN ELÉCTRICA A BORDO DE LOS BUQUES PARA LA TRANSMISIÓN DE DATOS EN BANDA ANCHA. ESTADO TECNOLÓGICO Y APLICACIÓN AL BUQUE](#)

Carlos Mascareñas, F.J. Abad, M. Bakkali, C. Martín, F. Sánchez, M. Barea, J.M. Valverde, R. Rodríguez, J. Valencia, and J.E. Chober

[#91 UTILIZACIÓN DE LAS LÍNEAS DE DISTRIBUCIÓN ELÉCTRICA A BORDO DE LOS BUQUES PARA LA TRANSMISIÓN DE DATOS EN BANDA ANCHA. INTRODUCCIÓN CONCEPTUAL](#)

Carlos Mascareñas, F.J. Abad, M. Bakkali, C. Martín, F. Sánchez, M. Barea, J.M. Valverde, R. Rodríguez, J. Valencia, and J.E. Chover

[#92 SISTEMAS DE COMUNICACIONES A TRAVÉS DE RED ELÉCTRICA. EFECTOS DEL PLC EN LOS UNIFAMILIARES](#)

Carlos Mascareñas, M. Bakkali, C. Martín, F. SÁnchez, F.J. Abad, M. Barea, J.M Valverde, R Rodríguez and J.E. Chover

[#93 UTILIZACIÓN DE LAS LÍNEAS DE DISTRIBUCIÓN ELÉCTRICA A BORDO DE LOS BUQUES PARA LA TRANSMISIÓN DE DATOS EN BANDA ANCHA. INCONVENIENTES A SUPERAR](#)

Carlos Mascareñas, F.J. Abad, M. Bakkali, C. Martín, F. SÁnchez, M. Barea, J.M. Valverde, R. Rodríguez, J. Valencia, and J.E. Chover

Track: Electronics

[#62 OPTIMISATION D'UNE TECHNIQUE DE COMPRESSION NUMERIQUE D'IMAGE PAR LES DIAGRAMMES DE VORONOI](#)

Safí Katy, SAHEL A., and BADRI A.

[#64 LA CONCEPTION D'UNE INTERFACE PC POUR DES CAPTEURS UNIVERSELS ET UN LOGICIEL DE TEST, DE CONTRÔLE ET DE COMMANDE DES PROCESSUS](#)

Mohammed HARMOUZI and Adil AKDI

[#66 CONTRIBUTION A LA COMMANDE VECTORIELLE A FLUX ROTORIQUE ORIENTE D'UNE MACHINE ASYNCHRONE](#)

BOUDALLAA Abdelhak

[#67 ETAT DE L'ART SUR LES STRATEGIES DE COMMANDE DES FILTRES ACTIFS PARALLELES TRIPHASES](#)

Abaali L'Houssine, Lamchich Moulay Tahar, and Raoufi Mustapha

[#81 FISH FRESHNESS DETERMINATION USING A PORTABLE ELECTRONIC NOSE COUPLED WITH A PROGRAMMABLE MICROCONTROLLER](#)

BOUCHIKHI B., AMARI A., EL BARI N., and TANOUCHE A.

Track: Computer Science

[#3 ANOTHER CO*CRYPTION METHOD](#)

Bruno Martín

[#4 SEMANTIC DATA INTEGRATION, A GENERIC POINT OF VIEW](#)

Ismael Navas-Delgado and José Francisco Aldana-Montes

[#5 COMPARATIVE STUDY OF ENERGY-EFFICIENCY PROTOCOLS FOR WIRELESS SENSORS NETWORKS](#)

Mohammed Yebari, T. Addali, and M. Essaaidi

[#20 EL PROCESADOR GRÁFICO COMO ACELERADOR DE LA TRANSFORMADA HOUGH](#)

Antonio Ruiz and Manuel Ujaldón

[#22 WINESYS: AN INFORMATION SYSTEM FOR WINE ROUTE MANAGEMENT \(WORK IN PROGRESS\)](#)

Carlos Caldeira

[#25 MARCO DE TRABAJO BASADO EN COMPONENTES PARA EL DESARROLLO DE SIMULADORES](#)

Manuel Díaz, José A. Dianas, Daniel Garrido, Enrique Soler, and José M. Troya

[#27 A COORDINATION MODEL FOR WIRELESS SENSOR AND ACTOR NETWORKS](#)

Javier Barbarán, Manuel Díaz, Iñaki Esteve, Daniel Garrido, Luis Llopis, Bartolomé Rubio, and José M. Troya

[#28 ADAPTOR: ADAPTACIÓN DINÁMICA DE COMPONENTES MEDIANTE VECTORES DE SINCRONIZACIÓN Y EXPRESIONES REGULARES](#)

Carlos Canal, Pascal Poizat, and Gwen Salaun

[#32 ESTADO DEL ARTE EN TÉCNICAS DE SELECCIÓN DE COMPONENTES, DESDE UN PUNTO DE VISTA DE INGENIERÍA DE REQUISITOS](#)

Miguel Ángel Martínez, Manuel F. Bertoa, Antonio Vallecillo, and Ambrosio Toval

[#33 POUR UNE COMPOSITION PARAMETRABLE ET AUTOMATIQUE DE SERVICES WEB](#)

Fatima-Zahra Belouadha

[#35 SELECTING INTER-RELATED ONTOLOGIES IN THE SEMANTIC NEIGHBOURHOOD](#)

Ismael Navas-Delgado and José Francisco Aldana-Montes

[#36 ESTIMATION OF THE RATE OF DETECTION OF INFECTED INDIVIDUALS IN AN EPIDEMIOLOGICAL MODEL](#)

Miguel Atencia, Esther García, Hector de Arazoza, and Gonzalo Joya

[#37 DESARROLLO DE APLICACIONES CIENTIFICAS BASADAS EN COMPONENTES SOFTWARE, ESQUELETOS Y ASPECTOS](#)

Manuel Díaz, Sergio Romero, Bartolomé Rubio, Enrique Soler, and José M. Troya

[#39 UN MODELO DE SERVICIOS BASADO EN COMPONENTES PARA REDES PEER-TO-PEER](#)

C. Alcaide, M. Díaz, D. Garrido, L. Llopis, A. Márquez, B. Rubio, and E. Soler

[#40 SPECTRAL COMPRESSION OF 3D TRIANGLE MESHES](#)

Mohamed Ouhsain, Khaled Tarmissi, and A. Ben Hamza

[#41 BUSCADOR DE PÁGINAS WEB ACCESIBLES CON HERRAMIENTAS DISPONIBLES EN INTERNET](#)

Sergio Lujan and Alejandro Agullo

[#45 EXTRACTION DES ONTOLOGIES DE DOMAINES A PARTIR D'UNE ONTOLOGIE GENERALE](#)

Gounbark Lahcen, Chiadmi Dalila, and Benhlima Laila

[#47 TOWARDS E-GOVERNEMENT \(E-GOV\) APPLICATIONS BASED GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS \(GIS\) AND NOMAD GIS](#)

A. Azyat, N. Raissouni, N. Ben Achhab, M. Lahraoua, and A. Chanboun

[#50 A FIRST STEP IN INTRODUCING DATA SEMANTICS IN BIOINFORMATICS WORKFLOWS MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS](#)

Raúl Fernández-Santa-Cruz and José Francisco Aldana-Montes

[#52 UNE PLATE-FORME POUR LA REALISATION ET LE DEPLOIEMENT DES APPLICATIONS COMPLEXES A BASE DE COMPOSANTS LOGICIELS](#)

Aissam Berrahou and Mohsine Eleuldj

[#56 USO DE LAS NUEVAS TECNOLOGÍAS DE INFORMACIÓN Y COMUNICACIÓN EN LA EDUCACIÓN SECUNDARIA CALIFICATIVA EN EL NORTE DE MARRUECOS](#)

Bakkali Imane

[#61 LOGICIEL DE CONTROLE DE L'HUMIDITE ET DE LA TEMPERATURE AU SEIN D'UN LABORATOIRE DRIOUCH](#)

Brahim, ACHETBI Omar, and AIT TALEB Soufiane

[#82 DSDV, AODV AD-HOC WIRELESS NETWORK PROTOCOLS COMPARISON STUDY USING NETWORK SIMULATOR NS-2: APPLICATION TO LST IN-SITU MEASUREMENTS](#)

A. Chanboun, N. Raissouni, N. Ben Achhabab, and M. Lahraoua

[#83 USING ATA-SRS WITH PAL DATA FOR THE STUDY OF NDVI SERIES IN MALAGA REGION \(SOUTHEAST SPAIN\)](#)

N. Ben Achhab, N. Raissouni, A. Azyat, M. Lahraoua, A. Chahboun, M. Britel, and A. Lyhyaoui

[#89 ON-THE-FLY API INFLUENCE ANALYSIS OF SOFTWARE](#)

M^a del Mar Gallardo, Christophe Joubert, Pedro Merino, and David Sanán

Track: Maritime Sciences and Techniques

[#2 PHYSICAL OCEANOGRAPHY OF THE GULF OF CADIZ FROM IN SITU OBSERVATIONS](#)

Francisco Criado-Aldenueva, J. García-LaFuente, and J.M. Vargas

Track: Production

[#73 THE MULTIFUNCTION HINGE](#)

BOUCHRIT Yassine and BENABDELLAH Abdellatif

Track: Science of Materials

[#6 NUMALAB: LABORATORIO INTERDISCIPLINAR DE NANOTECNOLOGÍA](#)

T. Cordero, J. Rodríguez-Mirasol, L. Cotoruelo, J. Bedia, M.D. Marques, J. M. Rosas, R. Ruíz, I.G. Loscertales, J.C. Otero, J.F. Arenas, J. Soto, I. López-Tocón, D. Peláez, M. López-Romero, R. Rico, E. Guillén, J. Hierrezuelo, A. Barrero, J.E. Díaz, M. Lallave, and D. Galán

[#9 CEMENTOS PORTLAND BELÍTICOS ACTIVADOS: UNA PROPUESTA PARA REBAJAR LAS EMISIONES DE CO₂](#)

M.A.G. Aranda, A.G. de la Torre, K. Morsli, A.J.M. Cuberos, G. Álvarez-Pinazo, R. Nuñez de Vera, A. Cabeza, and M. Zahir

[#58 METHODE TLM BIDIMENSIONNELLE \(TLM-2D\) DANS LE DOMAINE TEMPOREL POUR LA MODELISATION DES METAMATERIAUX A INDICE DE REFRACTION NEGATIF](#)

Hamham El Mokhtar, KHALLADI M., and YAICH M. I.

[#60 EFFET DE LA GEOMETRIE DU DEFAUT SUR LA RUPTURE D'UN ACIER DOUX](#)

Akourri Omar, Elayachi Ilham, and Pluvinage Guy

[#69 CARACTERISATION EN MICRO-ONDES DES ALCOOLS INDUSTRIELS : PROPANOL ET GLYCEROL](#)

ECH-CHAOUI Mohammed, Miane J.L., Sakout .A, and Sakout .M

[#70 VOLTAMMETRIC DETECTION OF DIQUAT AT THE CARBON PASTE ELECTRODE CONTAINING A CA₁₀\(PO₄\)₆\(OH\)₂](#)

CHTAINI Abdelilah and EL MHAMMEDI Moulay Abderrahim

[#86 CARDIAC DYNAMICS: MODELING THE BRUGADA SYNDROME](#)

Inmaculada Rodríguez-Cantalapiedra, Angelina Peñaranda, and Blas Echebarría

[#87 MAGNETOELASTIC AND MAGNETOSTATIC INTERACTIONS IN MULTILAYER MICROWIRES](#)

Manuel Vázquez, J. Torrejón and G. Badini

[#88 TURBULENCE STRUCTURE OF THE ATMOSPHERIC BOUNDARY LAYER IN STABLE CONDITIONS](#)

José Manuel Redondo, Inmaculada Rodríguez-Cantalapiedra, O. B. Mahjoub, J. M. Vindel, and C. Yagüe

Track: Chemistry

[#7 EFFET DU NACL SUR L'ASSIMILATION DU CARBONE ET LA REPOSE ANTIOXYDANTE CHEZ LES FEUILLES DU SORGHO](#)

REDOUANE EL OMARI, MOHAMED NHIRI, and ALI NOUTFIA

Track: Environment

[#18 VULNERABILITE, RISQUE ET CONTROLE PROTECTEUR : APPLICATION A LA POLLUTION DES EAUX SOUTERRAINES](#)

MINA AMHARREF, Y. QARAAI, and A. BERNOUSSI

[#51 MISE AU POINT D'UN SYSTEME DE CONTROLE ET DE SUPERVISION DU CLIMAT ET DE LA FERTIRRIGATION GOUTTE-A-GOUTTE SOUS SERRE](#)

A. Lachhab, A. Eddahhak, S. Didi, L. Ezzine, J. R. Salinas, F. García-Lagos, M. Atencia, G. Joya, and B. Bouchikhi

[#54 EVOLUTION SPATIO-TEMPORELLE DU TRAIT DE COTE ET OCCUPATION DU SOL DU LITTORAL MEDITERRANEEN ENTRE MARTIL ET AZLA](#)

BEN HARDOUZE Hafida, ELKHARIM Younes, and EL MOUTCHOU Brahim

[#65 APPLICATION OF MOROCCAN CLAY IN FORM OF HONEYCOMB MONOLITH IN AIR POLLUTION CONTROL](#)

Chafik Tarik, Harti S, Gatica JM, Cifredo G, Zaitan H, Darir A, and Vidal H

[#75 BIOMONITORING OF THE MEDITERRANEAN COASTLINE OF TANGIER BY THE USE OF ENZYMATIC BIOMARKERS](#)

DOUHRI Hikmat and SAYAH Fouad

[#76 IDENTIFICATION EN REGIME DYNAMIQUE DE LA DIFFUSIVITE THERMIQUE DU LIEGE COMPACT ET GRANULAIRE](#)

KELLATI Nor-edine, EL BOUARDI Abdelmajid, AJZOUL Taib, and EZBAKHE Hassan

[#78 BIOTEST MICROBIOLOGIQUE METPLATETM POUR EVALUER LA TOXICITE DUE AUX POLLUANTS METALLIQUES DANS L'ENVIRONNEMENT](#)

El Hamiani Ouafae, El Khalil Hicham, and Boularbah Ali

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On-the-Fly API Influence Analysis of Software[★]

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Abstract

In order to combat the state space explosion resulting from explicit-state model checking of software, we investigate the use of a *parameterised boolean equation system* (PBES) to solve on-the-fly (*i.e.*, with incremental construction of the program state space) influence analysis of program variables *w.r.t.* *Application Programming Interface* (API) calls executed in the program. The static analysis results are then processed to simplify the program state vector by keeping only program variables preserving all reachable API calls. Using the connection of the C compiler C.OPEN to the static analyser ANNOTATOR, we illustrate the benefit of such an analysis by reducing the state space of the Peterson mutual exclusion protocol, in which shared memory accesses are made through an API.

Key words: formal method, static analysis, software model checking, labeled transition system, boolean equation system

1. Introduction

Explicit-state verification of software, and especially distributed software, is prone to the state space explosion problem, due to complex (and infinite) data structures as well as (asynchronous) processes interleaving. Efficient abstraction and reduction techniques have been encountered during the last years, one of them, called *abstract matching* [1], consisting in abstracting the state vector of a program by keeping only relevant information *w.r.t.* to a class of properties to be verified. One implementation of such a technique, called *influence analysis* [2], extracts program variables in each program control point that preserve the reachable code dealing with properties of interest. In this paper, we introduce a new *on-the-fly* (*i.e.*, during the incremental construction of the program state space) influence analysis that enables the reduction of the program state vector while preserving properties depending on program API calls. We first describe the influence analysis (IA) problem in Section 2 and then give an extension to API preservation in Section 3 in terms of flow equations, *value-based alternation-free* MCL formula (L_μ^1), and *parame-*

terised boolean equation system (PBES). Section 4 shows details of implementation and experimentation on a C implementation of the Peterson mutual exclusion protocol. Finally, Section 5 gives some concluding remarks and future work.

2. Influence analysis

The static analysis method called influence analysis extracts the least set of significant variables for each program point *w.r.t.* to properties that have to be preserved in the program. In [2], the flow equation definitions of three influence analyses were given:

- $IA_{reachability}$ preserves information on reachable code. The authors also gave an extended version of this analysis considering global variables;
- $IA_{assertion}$ produces bigger sets of variables, but preserves *safety properties*. It extends $IA_{reachability}$ considering variables contained in assertions; and
- $IA_{formula}$ is the least precise analysis, but in contrast, it preserves *liveness properties*. It is based on considering as influential variables all variables appearing in the temporal formulas to be verified.

In [3], the authors gave a translation of the influence analysis problem in terms of L_μ^1 formulas [4] and in terms of PBES [4]. These formalisms allowed to combine on-the-fly techniques with compact program representation. The program control flow graph (CFG) was first abstracted into a *la-*

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belled transition system (LTS) and then analysed by a general-purpose model checker or by a BES solver. This translation from flow equations to L_μ^1 formulas and PBESs was extended to general purpose data flow analyses (DFAs) in [5].

Here, we follow the approaches of [3] and [2]: we first give a definition of the API *influence analysis* (IA_{API}) in terms of flow equations and then we translate it in terms of value-based L_μ^1 formulas and PBES.

3. Extending influence analysis to APIs

A program variable is influential at a program state *w.r.t.* to APIs, when it satisfies any of the following conditions:

- the variable is used in an API call;
- the variable modifies a variable later used in an API call; or
- the variable modifies a variable used in a boolean expression.

This analysis preserves information on the reachable code and further considers the dependencies between program variables and API calls. For instance, this analysis is useful for verifying properties on the correct use of APIs in a program. The analysis result can further be processed to reduce the reachable program state space by excluding non-influential variables from the state vector.

3.1. Flow equations

IA_{API} is a *backwards must* data flow analysis. The analysis is done in a backwards order, and the data flow confluence operator is set union. Using the notation of [6], the data flow equations used for a given instruction block s in IA_{API} are:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{IA}_{\text{API},\text{in}}[s] &= \\ \text{GEN}[s] \cup (\text{IA}_{\text{API},\text{out}}[s] - \text{KILL}[s] \cup \text{INFL}[s]) \\ \text{IA}_{\text{API},\text{out}}[final] &= \emptyset \\ \text{IA}_{\text{API},\text{out}}[s] &= \bigcup_{api, bool \notin s, p \in succ[s]} \text{IA}_{\text{API},\text{in}}[p] \\ \text{GEN}[y_1, \dots, y_n := bool(x_1, \dots, x_n)] &= \{x_1, \dots, x_n\} \\ \text{GEN}[y_1, \dots, y_n := api(x_1, \dots, x_n)] &= \{x_1, \dots, x_n\} \\ \text{KILL}[(y_1, \dots, y_n) := f(x_1, \dots, x_n)] &= \{y_1, \dots, y_n\} \\ \text{INFL}[(y_1, \dots, y_n) := f(x_1, \dots, x_n)] &= \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} &\text{if } (\{y_1, \dots, y_n\} \cap \text{IA}_{\text{API},\text{out}}[s] \neq \emptyset) \\ &\text{then } \{x_1, \dots, x_n\} \end{aligned}$$

x_1, \dots, x_n and y_1, \dots, y_n are variables in *var* the set of program variables. $\vec{y} := f(\vec{x})$ is a program instruction block, where f is a functional using variables in \vec{x} , and where \vec{y} gets modified by f . *bool* and *api* are similar functionals, but they respectively describe a boolean expression and an instruction call to an API.

We illustrate such analysis on a portion of C code extracted from a Peterson mutual exclusion [7] implementation using a shared memory API (*e.g.*, *sread* call):

```
pid = (pid + 1) % 2;
while (sread(flag1_des) == 1
      && sread(turn_des) == 1)
    printf('Process %d waiting\n', pid);
```

From the above flow equation definition, the IA_{API} returns that variables *flag1_des* and *turn_des* are influential on every program point, whereas variable *pid* is not influential on any point.

The correctness of the IA_{API} follows the same proof scheme as detailed in [2] for influence analyses $\text{IA}_{\text{reachability}}$, $\text{IA}_{\text{assertion}}$ and $\text{IA}_{\text{formula}}$.

3.2. Value-based L_μ^1 formula and PBES

When translating the problem of IA_{API} from flow equations to MCL formulas, we also translate the problem of modeling the program control flow graph from textual specific description to implicit independent formalism such as LTS.

Using previous work on translating influence analysis problems into value-based L_μ^1 formulas and PBESs [3], we can describe the problem of IA_{API} by a least fixed point of a functional over all program states.

Given a CFG described as an LTS $M = \langle S, A, T, s_0 \rangle$, and a variable $v \in \text{var}$, Table 1 gives the encoding in terms of value-based L_μ^1 formula of IA_{API} variable v on all states of M .

In addition to *used*(v, a) and *modified*(v, a) primitives (indicating if a variable v is used (modified) by action a), we introduce *bool*(a) (*api*(a)), which tests if a is a boolean (API) instruction.

In the table, the IA_{API} formula is translated into a PBES with single μ block and parameter v of type *var* defining, for each couple of state and variable

<p>Value-based μ-calculus formula:</p> $\phi = \mu Y (v : var). (\langle a \mid used(v, a) \wedge (bool(a) \vee api(a)) \rangle \text{true} \vee$ $\langle a \mid modified(z, a) \wedge used(v, a) \rangle Y(z) \vee$ $\langle a \mid \neg modified(v, a) \rangle Y(v))$ <p>Parameterised boolean equation system:</p> $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} X_{s,v} \stackrel{\mu}{=} \bigvee (\{ \text{true} \mid s \xrightarrow{a} s' \wedge used(v, a) \wedge (bool(a) \vee api(a)) \} \cup \\ \{ X_{s',z} \mid s \xrightarrow{a} s' \wedge modified(z, a) \wedge used(v, a) \} \cup \\ \{ X_{s',v} \mid s \xrightarrow{a} s' \wedge \neg modified(v, a) \}) \end{array} \right\} \begin{array}{l} s, s' \in S, a \in A, \\ v, z \in var \end{array}$

Table 1. Value-based alternation-free μ -calculus formula and PBES encodings of API influence analysis

$(s, v) \in S \times var$, a variable $X_{s,v}$ which expresses that variable v is influential at state s [3]. Generalising the analysis to all program states is done via algorithm ANALYSE from [5].

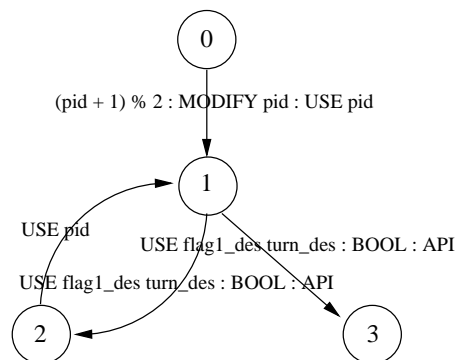
The PBES shown in Table 1 can be solved using an optimised BES resolution algorithm based on depth-first search for disjunctive equation blocks, such as algorithm A4 of [8]. Here, the transformation of PBES into BES is direct, since the parameter v is part of the boolean variable definition. Hence, at most $|var|$ boolean variables will need to be solved for each state of the abstract CFG described as an LTS, before the analysis be terminated.

Using the same C implementation of Peterson mutual exclusion protocol as in Section 3.1, we illustrate on Figure 1 the construction of an IA_{API} BES (lower part of Figure 1) on the program CFG given as an LTS (upper part of Figure 1). This BES intends to answer to the following question: “Does program variable pid influences state 0 of the program CFG?”. Solving the BES returns that variable pid is **false**, hence it does not influence state 0 of the CFG. Further computations on all states of the CFG would finally give us (with algorithm ANALYSE) that variable pid is not influencing any state of the CFG, hence it can be excluded from the program state vector.

4. Implementation and experiments

We implemented the IA_{API} PBES in our modular static analyser, called ANNOTATOR, which is built within CADP [9] upon the primitives of the OPEN/CÆSAR [10] environment for on-the-fly ex-

Program model (CFG)



BES solution

$$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} x_{0,pid} \stackrel{\mu}{=} x_{1,pid} \\ x_{1,pid} \stackrel{\mu}{=} x_{2,pid} \vee x_{3,pid} \\ x_{2,pid} \stackrel{\mu}{=} x_{1,pid} \\ x_{3,pid} \stackrel{\mu}{=} \text{false} \end{array} \right.$$

$$\Rightarrow x_{0,pid} = \text{false}$$

Fig. 1. Subset of the Peterson CFG and BES for the API influence analysis of variable pid on state 0

ploration of LTSS and on-the-fly resolution of BESs. Currently, ANNOTATOR achieves four influence analyses [3] and four classical DFAs [5].

The static analyser ANNOTATOR (see Figure 2) takes as input the LTS associated to the program

abstract CFG provided by C.OPEN and the type of analysis to carry out. It produces as output static analysis results (as XML or textual file) that can be further processed by the C.OPEN compiler to produce, for instance, smaller program state spaces. The original explicit state space of Peterson protocol contained 35 671 states and 57 066 transitions. After analysing the Peterson CFG with ANNOTATOR, our C compiler could reduce the Peterson state space to 25 655 states and 40 493 transitions. Further minimisations gave us a final state space of size 652 states and 1 255 transitions¹.

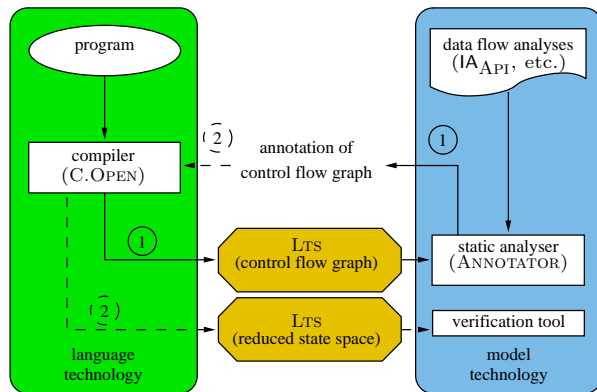


Fig. 2. The on-the-fly software state space construction (C.OPEN) and API influence analysis (ANNOTATOR) tools

ANNOTATOR consists of two parts: a front-end, responsible for encoding the static analysis of LTS as a (parameterised) BES resolution, and a back-end, responsible of (parameterised) BES resolution, playing the role of verification engine. Back-end is obtained by using algorithms of the CÆSAR_SOLVE library [8]. Globally, the approach to on-the-fly static analysis is both to construct on-the-fly the LTS and corresponding (parameterised) BES and to determine the final value of boolean variables of interest. Only the part of both graphs that is necessary to perform the static analysis is explored incrementally.

5. Conclusion and future work

Explicit-state software model checking requires techniques to abstract and reduce a program state space. Here, we presented a new influence analysis that preserves properties on program API calls. We

gave encodings in terms of flow equations, value-based alternation-free MCL formula, and parameterised boolean equation system. Experiments on the Peterson mutual exclusion protocol showed important reduction of the program state space. An interesting line of research would be to combine different static analyses on the compiler side to further reduce the program state space *w.r.t.* specific properties of interest.

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¹ Full implementation, result details and a thorough discussion on the Peterson case-study are available at <http://www.lcc.uma.es/gisum/tools/smc>.