Chapter 6

Decidable Logics

This chapter is about decidable logics. There are many decidable fragments of first-order logic, some of them are discussed in Chapter 3 and Chapter 5. Here I discuss logics that are typically not representable in first-order logic, e.g., linear integer arithmetic, Section 6.2, or logics where specialized decision procedures exist, beyond the general procedures discussed in previous chapters, e.g., equational reasoning on ground terms by congruence closure, Section 6.1, that can also be solved by Knuth-Bendix completion, Chapter 4.

6.1 Congruence Closure

In general, satisfiability of first-order formulas with respect to equality is undecidable. Even the word problem for conjunctions of equations is undecidable. However, I will show that satisfiability is decidable for *ground* first-order formulas.

It suffices to consider conjunctions of literals. Arbitrary ground formulas can be converted into DNF, potentially at the price of an exponential blow up. A formula in DNF is satisfiable if and only if one of its conjunctions is satisfiable. So it is sufficient to consider a conjunction of ground literals, e.g., a conjunction of ground equations.

Note that the problem can be written in several ways. An equational clause

$$\forall \vec{x}\,(t_1 \approx s_1 \vee \ldots \vee t_n \approx s_n \vee l_1 \not\approx r_1 \vee \ldots \vee l_k \not\approx r_k)$$

is valid iff

$$\exists \vec{x}\,(t_1 \not\approx s_1 \wedge \ldots \wedge t_n \not\approx s_n \wedge l_1 \approx r_1 \wedge \ldots \wedge l_k \approx r_k)$$

is unsatisfiable iff the Skolemized (ground!) formula

$$(t_1 \not\approx s_1 \wedge \ldots \wedge t_n \not\approx s_n \wedge l_1 \approx r_1 \wedge \ldots \wedge l_k \approx r_k)\{\vec{x} \mapsto \vec{c}\}$$

is unsatisfiable iff the formula

$$(t_1 \approx s_1 \vee \ldots \vee t_n \approx s_n \vee l_1 \not\approx r_1 \vee \ldots \vee l_k \not\approx r_k)\{\vec{x} \mapsto \vec{c}\}$$

is valid.

Please note validity of these transformations do depends on the shape of the (starting) formula. Validity is no preserved in case of a quantifier alternation or an existentially quantified formula, in general, or the eventual formula must not be ground. There is no way to transform a first-order (equational) formula into a ground formula preserving validity, in general.

The theory is also known as *EUF* (equality with uninterpreted function symbols) and one of the standard theories considered in *SMT* (Satisfiability Modulo Theories). The decision procedure discussed here is based on congruence closure.

The goal of the procedure is to check (un-)satisfiability of a ground conjunction

$$s_1 \not\approx t_1 \wedge \ldots \wedge s_k \not\approx t_k \wedge l_1 \approx r_1 \wedge \ldots \wedge l_n \approx r_n$$

The main idea is to transform the equations $E = \{l_1 \approx r_1, \ldots, l_n \approx r_n\}$ into an equivalent convergent TRS R and check whether $s_i{\downarrow_R} = t_i{\downarrow_R}$. If $s_i{\downarrow_R} = t_i{\downarrow_R}$ for some i then because $s_i{\downarrow_R} = t_i{\downarrow_R}$ iff $s_i \leftrightarrow_E^* t_i$ iff $E \models s_i \approx t_i$ (see Chapter 4) the overall conjunction is unsatisfiable. If $s_i{\downarrow_R} = t_i{\downarrow_R}$ for no i, i.e., $s_i{\downarrow_R} \neq t_i{\downarrow_R}$ for all i then $\mathcal{I}_E$ is a model of both the equations $l_i \approx r_i$, and the inequations $s_j \not\approx t_j$. Hence the overall conjunction is satisfiable.

Knuth-Bendix completion, Chapter 4, can be used to convert E into an equivalent convergent TRS R. If done properly, Knuth-Bendix completion always terminates for ground inputs. However, for the ground case, the procedure can be further optimized.

The first step is to introduce additional "names", i.e, extra constants for all non-constant subterms. This implements implicitly sharing among subterms.

Let $E = l_1 \approx r_1 \wedge \ldots \wedge l_n \approx r_n$.

Flattening $E[f(t_1, \ldots, t_n)]_{p_1,\ldots,p_k} \Rightarrow_{\mathrm{CCF}} E[c/p_1, \ldots, p_k] \wedge f(t_1, \ldots, t_n) \approx c$ provided all t_i are constants, the p_j are all positions in E of $f(t_1, \ldots, t_n)$, $|p_k| > 2$ for some k, or, $p_k = m.2$ and $E|_{m.1}$ is not a constant for some m, and c is fresh

Here I consider E to be a conjunction of equations in order for the positions to make sense. Note that after applying flattening to some term $f(t_1, \ldots, t_n)$ it cannot be applied a second time, because the position p pointing to $f(t_1, \ldots, t_n)$ in $E[c/p_1, \ldots, p_k] \wedge f(t_1, \ldots, t_n) \approx c$ has size 2, i.e., $|p| = 2$.

For example, the system $E = [g(a, h(h(b))) \approx h(a)]$ is eventually replaced by $E = [h(b) \approx c_3 \wedge h(c_3) \approx c_4 \wedge h(a) \approx c_d \wedge g(a, c_4) \approx c_5]$.

As a result: only two kinds of equations left. Term equations: $f(c_{i_1}, \ldots, c_{i_n}) \approx c_{i_0}$ and constant equations: $c_i \approx c_j$. This can be further explored in an implementation by specific data structures. In particular, a union-find data structure

efficiently represents the equivalence classes encoded by the constant equations (rules).

The congruence closure algorithm is presented as a set of abstract rewrite rules operating on a pair of equations E and a set of rules R, $(E; R)$, similar to Knuth-Bendix completion, Section 4.4.

$(E_0; R_0) \Rightarrow_{\mathrm{CC}} (E_1; R_1) \Rightarrow_{\mathrm{CC}} (E_2; R_2) \Rightarrow_{\mathrm{CC}} \ldots$

At the beginning, $E = E_0$ is a set of constant equations and $R = R_0$ is the set of term equations oriented from left-to-right. At termination, E is empty and R contains the result. By exhaustive application of Flattening any conjunction of equations can be transformed into this form, preserving satisfiability. Recall that the atom $s \stackrel{\cdot}{\approx} t$ denotes either $s \approx t$ or $t \approx s$.

Simplify $(E \uplus \{c \stackrel{\cdot}{\approx} c'\}; R \uplus \{c \to c''\}) \Rightarrow_{\mathrm{CC}} (E \cup \{c'' \stackrel{\cdot}{\approx} c'\}; R \cup \{c \to c''\})$

Delete $(E \uplus \{c \approx c\}; R) \Rightarrow_{\mathrm{CC}} (E; R)$

Orient $(E \uplus \{c \stackrel{\cdot}{\approx} c'\}; R) \Rightarrow_{\mathrm{CC}} (E; R \cup \{c \to c'\})$
if $c \succ c'$

Deduce $(E; R \uplus \{t \to c,\, t \to c'\}) \Rightarrow_{\mathrm{CC}} (E \cup \{c \approx c'\}; R \cup \{t \to c\})$

Collapse $(E; R \uplus \{t[c]_p \to c',\, c \to c''\}) \Rightarrow_{\mathrm{CC}} (E; R \cup \{t[c'']_p \to c',\, c \to c''\})$
$p \neq \epsilon$

For rule Deduce, t is either a term of the form $f(c_1, \ldots, c_n)$ or a constant c_i. For rule Collapse, t is always of the form $f(c_1, \ldots, c_n)$ For ground rewrite rules, critical pair computation does not involve substitution. Therefore, every critical pair computation can be replaced by a simplification, either using Deduce or Collapse.

The inference rules are usually applied according to the following strategy: Simplify, Delete and Orient are preferred over Deduce and Collapse. Then if Collapse becomes applicable, it is exhaustively applied followed by an application of Deduce.

Instead of fixing the ordering $\succ$ in advance, it is preferable to define it on the fly during the algorithm: if an equation $c \approx c'$ between two constants is oriented, a good heuristic is to make that constant symbol larger that occurs less often in R, hence producing afterwards fewer Collapse steps.

The average runtime of the algorithm is $O(m \log m)$, where m is the number of edges in the graph representation of the initial constant and term equations.

The inference rules are sound in the usual sense. The conclusions are entailed by the premises, so every model of the premises is a model of the conclusions.

For the initial flattening rule , however, only a weaker result holds. The models of the original equations have to be extended by interpretations for the freshly introduced constants to obtain models of the flattened equations. The result is a new algebra with the same universe as the old one, with the same interpretations for old functions and predicate symbols, but with appropriately chosen interpretations for the new constants.

Consequently, the relations $\approx_E$ and $\approx_R$ for the original E and the final R are not the same. On the other hand, the model extension preserves the universe and the interpretations for old symbols. Therefore, if s and t are terms over the old symbols, we have $s \approx_E t$ iff $s \approx_R t$. This is sufficient for our purposes: The terms s_i and t_i that we want to normalize using R do not contain new symbols.

6.1.1 History

Congruence closure algorithms have been published, among others, by Shostak (1978). by Nelson and Oppen (1980), and by Downey, Sethi and Tarjan (1980).

Kapur (1997) showed that Shostak's algorithm can be described as a completion procedure.

Bachmair and Tiwari (2000) did this also for the Nelson/Oppen and the Downey/Sethi/Tarjan algorithm.

The algorithm presented here is the Downey/Sethi/Tarjan algorithm in the presentation of Bachmair and Tiwari.

6.2 Linear Arithmetic

There are several ways of introducing linear arithmatic and in particular its syntax. I start with a syntax that already contains $-$, $\leq$, $<$, $\geq$, $\not\approx$ and $\mathbb{Q}$. All these functions and relations are indeed expressible by first-order forumulas over 0, 1, $\approx$, and $>$. For the semantics there are two approaches. Either providing axioms, i.e., closed formulas, for the above symbols and then considering all algebras satisfying the axioms, or fixing one particular algebra or a class of algebras. For this chapter I start with a rich syntax and a semantics based on a fixed algebra.

Definition 6.2.1 (LA Syntax)**.** The syntax of LA is

$$\Sigma_{\mathrm{LA}} = (\{\mathrm{LA}\}, \{0, 1, +, -\} \cup \mathbb{Q}, \{\leq, <, \not\approx, >, \geq\})$$

where $-$ is unitary and all other symbols have the usual arities.

Terms and formulas over Σ_{LA} are built in the classical free first-order way, see Section 3.1. All first-order notions, i.e., terms, atoms, equations, literals, clauses, etc. carry over to LA formulas. The atoms and terms built over the LA signature are written in their standard infix notation, i.e., I write $3 + 5$ instead of $+(3, 5)$. Note that the signature does not contain multiplication. A term $3x$ is just an abbreviation for a term $x + x + x$.

For the semantics I start with considering as the domain the rationals, $\mathbb{Q}$. As long as coefficients are from the integers, with respect to the satisfiability, validity of a formula the rationals cannot be distinguished from the reals. Restricting the domain from the rationals to the integers, however, results in a difference in satisfiability, validity of a formula, in general. In this case the signature is restricted to integer constants as well.

Definition 6.2.2 (Linear Rational Arithmetic Standard Semantics)**.** The Σ_{LA} algebra $\mathcal{A}_{\text{LRA}}$ is defined by $\text{LA}^{\mathcal{A}_{\text{LRA}}} = \mathbb{Q}$ and all other signature symbols are assigned the standard interpretations over the rationals.

Due to the expressive LA language there is no need for negative literals, because $(\neg <)^{\mathcal{A}_{\text{LRA}}} = (\geq)^{\mathcal{A}_{\text{LRA}}}$, $(\neg >)^{\mathcal{A}_{\text{LRA}}} = (\leq)^{\mathcal{A}_{\text{LRA}}}$, and $(\neg \approx)^{\mathcal{A}_{\text{LRA}}} = (\not\approx)^{\mathcal{A}_{\text{LRA}}}$.

Note the difference between the above standard semantics over Σ_{LA} and the free first-order semantics over Σ_{LA}, Definition 3.2.1. The equation $3 + 4 \approx 5$ has a model in the free first-order semantics, hence it is satisfiable, whereas in the standard model of linear rational arithmetic, Definition 6.2.2, the equation $3 + 4 \approx 5$ is false. In addition, with respect to the standard LRA semantics the definitions of validity, satisfiability coincide with truth and the definition of unsatisfiability coincides with falsehood. This is the result of a single algebra semantics.

6.2.1 Fourier-Motzkin Quantifier Elimination

It is decidable whether a first-order formula over Σ_{LA} is true or false in the standard LRA semantics. This was first discovered in 1826 by J. Fourier and re-discovered by T. Motzkin in 1936 and is called FM for short. Note that validity of a Σ_{LA} formula with respect to the standard semantics is undecidable, Exercise **??**.

Similar to Congruence Closure, Section 6.1, the starting point of the procedure is a conjunction of atoms without atoms of the form $\not\approx$. These will eventually be replaced by a disjunction, i.e., an atom $t \not\approx s$ is replaced by $t < s \vee t > s$.

Every atom over the variables $x, y_1, \ldots, y_n$ can be converted into an equivalent atom $x \circ t[\vec{y}]$ or $0 \circ t[\vec{y}]$, where $\circ \in \{<, >, \leq, \geq, \approx, \not\approx\}$ and $t[\vec{y}]$ has the form $\sum_i q_i \cdot y_i + q_0$ where $q_i \in \mathbb{Q}$. In other words, a variable x can be either isolated on one side of the atom or eliminated completely. This is the starting point of the FM calculus deciding a conjunction of LA atoms without $\not\approx$ modulo the isolation of variables and the reduction of ground formulas to $\top$, $\bot$.

The calculus operates on a set of atoms N. The normal forms are conjunctions of atoms $s \circ t$ where s, t do not contain any variables. These can be obviously eventually reduced to $\top$ or $\bot$. The FM calculus consists of two rules:

Substitute $N \uplus \{x \approx t\} \;\Rightarrow_{\text{FM}}\; N\{x \mapsto t\}$
provided x does not occur in t

Eliminate $N \uplus \bigcup_i \{x \circ_i^1 t_i\} \uplus \bigcup_j \{x \circ_j^2 s_j\} \;\Rightarrow_{\text{FM}}\; N \cup \bigcup_{i,j} \{t_i \circ_{i.j} s_j\}$

provided x does not occur in N nor in the t_i, s_j, $\circ_i^1 \in \{<, \leq\}$, $\circ_j^2 \in \{>, \geq\}$, and $\circ_{i,j} = >$ if $\circ_i^1 = <$ or $\circ_j^2 = >$, and $\circ_{i,j} = \geq$ otherwise

If all variablies in N are implicitely existentially quantified, i.e., N stands for $\exists \vec{x}.N$, then the above two rules constitute a sound and complete decision procedure for conjunctions of LA atoms without $\not\approx$.

Lemma 6.2.3 (FM Termination on a Conjunction of Atoms)**.** FM terminates on a conjunction of atoms.

Proof. Any rule applications strictly reduces the number of variables. □

Lemma 6.2.4 (FM Soundness and Completeness on a Conjunction of Atoms)**.** $N \Rightarrow_{\text{FM}}^* \top$ iff $\mathcal{A}_{\text{LRA}} \models \exists \vec{x}.N$. $N \Rightarrow_{\text{FM}}^* \bot$ iff $\mathcal{A}_{\text{LRA}} \not\models \exists \vec{x}.N$.

Proof. $\Rightarrow$: Assume that $\mathcal{A}_{\text{LRA}}(\beta) \models N$ for some β. Proof by case analysis on the two rules. For rule Substitute obviously $\mathcal{A}_{\text{LRA}}(\beta)(x) = \mathcal{A}_{\text{LRA}}(\beta)(t)$ hence $\mathcal{A}_{\text{LRA}}(\beta) \models N\{x \mapsto t\}$. For rule Eliminate obviously $\mathcal{A}_{\text{LRA}}(\beta)(x) \circ_i^1 \mathcal{A}_{\text{LRA}}(\beta)(t_i)$ and $\mathcal{A}_{\text{LRA}}(\beta)(x) \circ_j^2 \mathcal{A}_{\text{LRA}}(\beta)(s_j)$. A case anlysis on $\circ_i^1$, $\circ_j^2$ yields $\mathcal{A}_{\text{LRA}}(\beta) \models t_i \circ_{i.j} s_j$ for all i, j.

$\Leftarrow$: Again by a case analysis on the rules. For rule Substitute if $\mathcal{A}_{\text{LRA}}(\beta) \models N\{x \mapsto t\}$ then $\mathcal{A}_{\text{LRA}}(\beta[x \mapsto \mathcal{A}_{\text{LRA}}(\beta)(t)]) \models N \uplus \{x \approx t\}$. For rule Eliminate if $\mathcal{A}_{\text{LRA}}(\beta) \models N \cup \bigcup_{i,j}\{t_i \circ_{i.j} s_j\}$ then $\mathcal{A}_{\text{LRA}}(\beta[x \mapsto \frac{1}{2}(\min(\cup_i\{t_i\}) + \max(\cup_j\{s_j\}))] \models N \uplus \bigcup_i\{x \circ_i^1 t_i\} \uplus \bigcup_j\{x \circ_j^2 s_j\}$. □

The FM calculus on conjunctions of atoms can be extended to arbitrary closed LRA first-order formulas ϕ. I always assume that different quantifier occurrences in ϕ bind different variables. This can always be obtained by renaming one variable. The first step is to eliminate $\top$, $\bot$ from ϕ and to transform ϕ in negation normal form, see Section 3.9. The resulting formula only contains the operators $\forall$, $\exists$, $\wedge$, $\vee$, $\neg$, where all negation symbols occur in front of atoms. Then the following rule can be used to remove the negation symbols as well:

ElimNeg $\quad \chi[\neg\, s \circ^1 t]_p \;\Rightarrow_{\text{FM}}\; \chi[s \circ^2 t]_p$

where the pairs $(\circ_1, \circ_2)$ are given by pairs $(<, \geq), (\leq, >), (\approx, \not\approx)$ and their symmetric variants

The above two FM rules on conjunctions cannot cope with atoms $s \not\approx t$, so they are eliminated as well:

Elim$\not\approx$ $\quad \chi[s \not\approx t]_p \;\Rightarrow_{\text{FM}}\; \chi[s < t \vee s > t]_p$

The next step is to compute a *Prenex Normal Form*, a formula $\{\exists, \forall\}x_1 \ldots \{\exists, \forall\}x_n.\phi$ where ϕ does not contain any quantifiers. This can be done by simply applying the mini-scoping rules, see Section 3.9, in the opposite direction:

Prenex1 $\chi[(\forall x.\psi_1) \circ \psi_2]_p \Rightarrow_{\mathrm{FM}} \chi[\forall x.(\psi_1 \circ \psi_2)]_p$
provided $\circ \in \{\wedge, \vee\}$, $x \notin \mathrm{fvars}(\psi_2)$

Prenex2 $\chi[(\exists x.\psi_1) \circ \psi_2]_p \Rightarrow_{\mathrm{FM}} \chi[\exists x.(\psi_1 \circ \psi_2)]_p$
provided $\circ \in \{\wedge, \vee\}$, $x \notin \mathrm{fvars}(\psi_2)$

Prenex3 $\chi[(\forall x.\psi_1) \wedge (\forall y.\psi_2)]_p \Rightarrow_{\mathrm{FM}} \chi[\forall x.(\psi_1 \wedge \psi_2\{y \mapsto x\})]_p$

Prenex4 $\chi[(\exists x.\psi_1) \vee (\exists y.\psi_2)]_p \Rightarrow_{\mathrm{FM}} \chi[\exists x.(\psi_1 \vee \psi_2\{y \mapsto x\})]_p$

where Prenex3 and Prenex4 are preferred over Prenex1 and Prenex2. Finally, for the resulting formula $\{\exists, \forall\}x_1 \ldots \{\exists, \forall\}x_n.\phi$ in prenex normal form the FM algorithm computes a DNF of ϕ by exhaustively applying the rule PushConj, Section 2.5.2. The result is a formula $\{\exists, \forall\}x_1 \ldots \{\exists, \forall\}x_n.\phi$ where ϕ is a DNF of atoms without containing an atom of the form $s \not\approx t$. All the above formulas transformations are equivalence preserving. Therefore, to each conjunct of ϕ the above two FM rules decide the conjunct, if all variables are existentially quantified. This is the final obstacle in order to obtain the FM decision procedure for arbitrary formulas.

It is solved by considering the quantifiers iteratively in an innermost way. For the formula $\{\exists, \forall\}x_1 \ldots \{\exists, \forall\}x_n.\phi$ always the innermost quantifier $\{\exists, \forall\}x_n$ is considered. If it is an existential quantifier, $\exists x_n$, then the FM rules Substitute, Eliminate are applied to the variable x_n for each conjunct C_i of $\phi = C_1 \vee \ldots \vee C_n$. The result is a formula $\{\exists, \forall\}x_1 \ldots \{\exists, \forall\}x_{n-1}.(C'_1 \vee \ldots \vee C'_n)$ which is again in prenex DNF. Furthermore, by Lemma 6.2.4 it is equivalent to $\{\exists, \forall\}x_1 \ldots \{\exists, \forall\}x_n.\phi$. If the innermost quantifier is a universal quantifier $\forall x_n$, then the formula is replaced by $\{\exists, \forall\}x_1 \ldots \{\exists, \forall\}x_{n-1}\neg\exists x_n.\neg\phi$ and the above steps for negation normal form and DNF are repeated for $\neg\phi$ resulting in an equivalent formula $\{\exists, \forall\}x_1 \ldots \{\exists, \forall\}x_{n-1}\neg\exists x_n.\phi'$ where ϕ' is in DNF and does not contain negation symbols nor atoms $s \not\approx t$. Then the FM rules Substitute, Eliminate are applied to the variable x_n for each conjunct C_i of $\phi' = C_1 \vee \ldots \vee C_n$. The result is an equivalent formula $\{\exists, \forall\}x_1 \ldots \{\exists, \forall\}x_{n-1}.\neg(C'_1 \vee \ldots \vee C'_n)$. Finally, the above steps for negation normal form and DNF are repeated for $\neg(C'_1 \vee \ldots \vee C'_n)$ resulting in an equivalent formula $\{\exists, \forall\}x_1 \ldots \{\exists, \forall\}x_{n-1}.\phi''$ where ϕ' is in DNF and does not contain negation symbols nor atoms $s \not\approx t$. This completes for FM decision procedure for LRA formulas.

Every LRA formula can by reduced to $\top$ or $\bot$ via the FM decision procedure. Therefore LRA is called a *complete* theory, i.e., every closed formula over the signature of LRA is either true or false.

LA formulas over the rationals and over the reals are indistinguishable by first-order formulas over the signature of LRA. These properties do not hold for extended signatures, e.g., then additional free symbols are introduced. Furthermore, FM is no decision procedures over the integers, even if the LA syntax is restricted to integer constants.

The complexity of the FM calculus depends mostly on the quantifier alternations in $\{\exists, \forall\}x_1 \ldots \{\exists, \forall\}x_n.\phi$. In case an existential quantifier $\exists$ is eliminated, the formula size grows worst-case quadratically, therefore $O(n^2)$ runtime. For m quantifiers $\exists \ldots \exists$: a naive implementation needs worst-case $O(n^{2^m})$ runtime. It is not known whether an optimized implementation with simply exponential runtime is possible. If there are m quantifier alternations $\exists\forall\exists\forall \ldots \exists\forall$, a CNF to DNF conversion is required after each step. Each conversion has a worst-case exponential run time, see Section 2.5. Therefore, the overall procedure has a worst-case non-elementary runtime.

There are meanwhile more efficient decision procedures for the theory LRA known, e.g., see Section 6.2.3. There are problems occuring in practice where the elimination of a variable via FM results in an only linear increase in size. In such cases FM is still valuable. Many state-of-the-art LRA procedures actually calculute the size of the formula after eliminating a variable via FM and redundancy elimination and decide on this basis whether FM is applied or not.

6.2.2 Simplex

The Simplex algorithm is the prime algorithm for solving optimization problems over linear inequations [45]. For automated reasoning optimization at the level of conjunctions of inequations is not in focus. Rather, solvability of a set of linear inequations as a subproblem of some theory combination is the typical application. In this context the simplex algorithm is useful as well, due to its incremental nature. If an inequation A is added to a set N of inequations where the simplex algorithm has already found a solution for N, the algorithm needs not to start from scratch. Instead it continues with the solution found for N. In practice, it turns out that then typically only few steps are needed to derive a solution for $N \cup \{A\}$ if it exists.

The simplex algorithm introduced in this section is a simplified version of the classical dual simplex used for solving optimization problems.

First, I show the case for non-strict inequations. Starting point is a set N (conjunction) of (non-strict) inequations of the form $(\sum_{x_j \in X} a_{i,j}x_j) \circ_i c_i$ where $\circ_i \in \{\geq, \leq\}$ for all i. The variables occurring in N are assumed to be totally ordered by some ordering $\prec$. The ordering $\prec$ will eventualy guarantee termination of the simplex algorithm, see Definition 6.2.5 and Theorem 6.2.6 below. I assume the x_j to be all different, without loss of generality $x_j \prec x_{j+1}$, and I assume that all coefficients are normalized by the gcd of the $a_{i,j}$ for all j: if the gcd is different from 1 for one inequation, it is used for division of all coefficients of the inequation.

The goal is to decide whether there exists an assignment β from the x_j into $\mathbb{Q}$ such that $\text{LRA}(\beta) \models \bigwedge_i[(\sum_{x_j \in X} a_{i,j}x_j) \circ_i c_i]$, or equivalently, $\text{LRA}(\beta) \models N$. So the x_j are free variables, i.e., placeholders for concrete values, i.e., existentially quantified.