

# Finite Characterisations of Modal Formulas

Balder ten Cate and Raoul Koudijs


ILLC Amsterdam

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# Motivation

We will investigate **learnability**<sup>1</sup> for fragments of classical modal logic, motivated by applications in description logics and database theory.

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In the literature, learnability has been studied for (unions of) conjunctive queries (ten Cate & Dalmau, 2021), XML twig-queries (Staworko & Wieczorek, 2012), LTL (Wolter, Zakharyashev et al., 2022).

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## Definition (Finite Characterisations)

A **finite characterisation** of a formula  $\varphi \in \mathcal{L}$  w.r.t  $\mathcal{L}$  is a pair of *finite* sets of *finite* pointed models  $(E^+, E^-)$  such that:

- (i)  $\varphi$  fits  $(E^+, E^-)$  i.e.  $E, e \models \varphi$  and  $E', e' \not\models \varphi$  for all  $(E, e) \in E^+$  and  $(E', e') \in E^-$
- (ii)  $\varphi$  is the only formula from  $\mathcal{L}$  up to equivalence which fits  $(E^+, E^-)$ . That is, if  $\psi \in \mathcal{L}$  fits  $(E^+, E^-)$  then  $\varphi \equiv \psi$ .

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It suffices to give one counterexample, say  $\Diamond p$ . Suppose that it has a finite characterisation  $(E^+, E^-)$ , and let  $n$  be strictly greater than the maximum height of models in  $E^+ \cup E^-$ , where the height is defined as the length of the longest directed path.

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$$E, e \models \Box^{n+1} \perp \wedge \Diamond^n \top \quad \text{iff} \quad \text{height}(E, e) = n$$

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Hence  $\varphi := \Diamond p \vee (\Box^{n+1} \perp \wedge \Diamond^n \top)$  fits  $E^-$  by choice of  $n$  and thus fits  $(E^+, E^-)$  by properties of  $\vee$ .

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Actually, **no** formula is characterisable w.r.t. the full language.

# Two Questions

A normal modal logic  $L$  is finitely characterisable if every modal formula has a fin. characterisation consisting only of models based on  $L$ -frames. Then the previous theorem says that  $K$  is not finitely characterisable.

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This can be seen as a starting observations that motivates two questions:

- 1 Which normal modal logics are finitely characterisable?
- 2 Which fragments of the modal language are finitely characterisable?  
(no restriction on the frame class)

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( $\rightarrow$ ) If  $L$  is fin. char. then  $\perp$  has a fin. char.  $(E^+, E^-)$  based on  $L$ -frames. Note that  $E^+$  is empty so every sat. formula must be satisfied at some  $(E, e) \in E^-$ . If there would be infinitely many pairwise  $L$ -inequivalent formulas then cofinitely many of them  $\varphi_0, \varphi_1, \dots$  would have to be true on the same subset of  $E^-$ , and hence  $(\varphi_i \wedge \neg \varphi_j) \vee (\neg \varphi_i \wedge \neg \varphi_j)$  would be unsatisfiable by properties of  $E^-$ , contradicting the fact that  $\varphi_i \not\equiv_L \varphi_j$ .  $\square$

## Definition (Modal Fragments)

For a set of connectives  $C \subseteq \{\Box, \Diamond, \wedge, \vee, \top, \perp\}$ , let  $\mathcal{L}_C$  be the set of modal formulas built from literals in  $\text{Pr}$  using only connectives from  $C$ . Further, let  $\mathcal{L}^+, \mathcal{L}^-$  denote the set of positive, resp. negative  $\mathcal{L}$ -formulas.

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Since the height formulas  $\Box^{n+1}\perp \wedge \Diamond^n\top$  are expressible in  $\mathcal{L}_{\Box, \Diamond, \wedge, \vee, \top, \perp}^+$ , it follows that this fragment is not characterisable.<sup>2</sup> However, recent results on unions of conjunctive queries imply that  $\mathcal{L}_{\Diamond, \wedge, \vee}^+$  is characterisable.

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Our main result is that  $\mathcal{L}_{\Box, \Diamond, \wedge, \vee}^+$  is finitely characterisable, and this is essentially the largest characterisable (and thus learnable) fragment.

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# The Positive and Monotone Modal Fragments

Kurtonina and de Rijke have semantically characterised  $\mathcal{L}_{\Box, \Diamond, \wedge, \vee, \top, \perp}^+$  as being preserved under (directed) *simulations*, a weakening of bisimulations where the atomic clause becomes directed.



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We define a further weakening that semantically characterises  $\mathcal{L}_{\Box, \Diamond, \wedge, \vee}^+$ . Let  $\circlearrowleft_{\emptyset}$  denote the loop-model with empty valuation, and dually  $\circlearrowleft_{Pr}$  is the loop-model with full valuation. Observe:

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$$\circlearrowleft_{\emptyset} \not\models \text{all } \varphi \in \mathcal{L}_{\Box, \Diamond, \wedge, \vee}^+, \quad \circlearrowleft_{Pr} \models \text{all } \varphi \in \mathcal{L}_{\Box, \Diamond, \wedge, \vee}^+$$

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It follows that all  $\mathcal{L}_{\Box, \Diamond, \wedge, \vee}^+$ -formulas are satisfiable, and none are valid.

## Definition (Weak Simulations)

A **weak simulation** between two pointed models  $(M, s), (M', s')$  is a relation  $Z \subseteq M \times M'$  such that for all  $(t, t') \in Z$ :

(atom)  $M, t \models p$  implies  $M', t' \models p$

(forth') If  $Rtu$ , either  $M, u \xleftrightarrow{\quad} \circ_{\emptyset}$  or  $\exists u'$  s.t.  $Rt'u'$  and  $(u, u') \in Z$

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## Theorem (van Benthem Characterisation)

$\mathcal{L}_{\Box, \Diamond, \wedge, \vee}^+$  is the weak simulation-preserved fragment of FO.

# Generalised Splittings

The class of pointed Kripke models with weak simulations as morphisms forms a category  $wSim$  (not a lattice). There is a tight correspondence between fin, char. w.r.t.  $\mathcal{L}_{\Box, \Diamond, \wedge, \vee}^+$  and 'generalised splittings' of  $wSim$ .

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## Definition (Generalised Splitting $\rightarrow$ not dualities!)

A **generalised splitting** of a category  $\mathbb{C}$  is a pair  $(\mathcal{F}, \mathcal{D})$  of finite sets of objects in  $\mathbb{C}$  such that for every object  $E$ , either:

- ①  $\exists F \in \mathcal{F}$  such that  $F \rightarrow E$  or
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where the ‘or’ is exclusive. In other words, the upset  $\bigcup_{F \in \mathcal{F}} (F \rightarrow)$  and downset  $\bigcap_{D \in \mathcal{D}} (\rightarrow D)$  partitions or ‘splits’  $\mathbb{C}$  in two.

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## Theorem

If  $\varphi \in \mathcal{L}_{\Box, \Diamond, \wedge, \vee}^+$  fits a gen. splitting  $(\mathcal{F}, \mathcal{D})$  of  $wSim$  then  $(\mathcal{F}^+, \mathcal{D}^-)$  is a finite characterisation of  $\varphi$  w.r.t.  $\mathcal{L}_{\Box, \Diamond, \wedge, \vee}^+$ .



# The main result

So the proof of our main result boils down to providing a construction for computing, for each  $\varphi \in \mathcal{L}_{\Box, \Diamond, \wedge, \vee}^+$ , a gen. splitting in  $wSim$  that  $\varphi$  fits.

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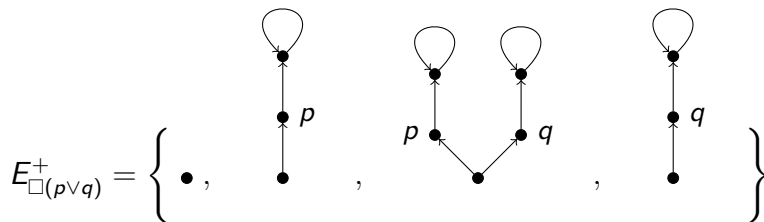
$$\mathbb{E}_p := \left( \left\{ \begin{array}{c} \text{loop} \\ \uparrow \\ p \bullet \end{array} \right\}, \left\{ \begin{array}{c} \text{Pr} \bullet \\ \uparrow \\ \text{Pr} - \{p\} \bullet \end{array} \right\} \right)$$

# Examples

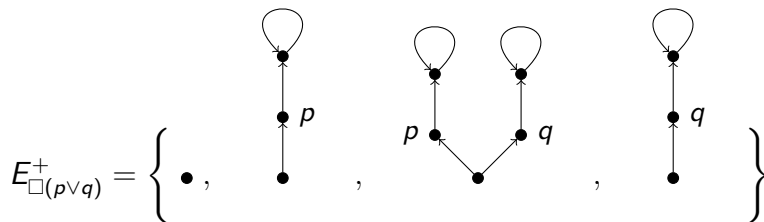
$$\mathbb{E}_{\Diamond p} := \left( \left\{ \begin{array}{c} \text{loop} \\ \uparrow \\ p \\ \swarrow \quad \searrow \\ \bullet \end{array} \right\}, \left\{ \begin{array}{c} \text{loop} \\ \uparrow \\ \text{Pr} \\ \uparrow \\ \text{Pr} - \{p\} \\ \uparrow \\ \text{Pr} \end{array}, \begin{array}{c} \text{Pr} \\ \bullet \end{array} \right\} \right)$$

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- $wSim$  is not a lattice but does it have *multi*-products and -coproducts given some kind of bisimulations products?

# Conclusion and Directions

The take-away message is (i) almost any kind of negation makes learning impossible and that (ii) we can go beyond purely existential formulas.

## Corollaries:

- By flipping the positive and negative examples, if  $\mathcal{L}$  is characterisable so is  $\{\neg\varphi \mid \varphi \in \mathcal{L}\}$
- Our results extend to some uniform fragments, where variables can either occur only positively or only negatively.
- Poly-modal generalisations straightforwardly follow ‘pointwise’.

## Open Questions:

- Our learning algorithm is non-elementary, with a matching non-elementary lower bound. If we lose  $\forall$ , does the fragment  $\mathcal{L}_{\Box, \Diamond, \wedge}^+$  become polynomially learnable?
- $wSim$  is not a lattice but does it have *multi*-products and -coproducts given some kind of bisimulations products?
- Characterising modal formulas under the intuitionistic semantics?



Thanks for your attention!