syn.1 Substitution

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Definition syn.1 (Substitution in a term)**.** We define $s[t/x]$, the result of *substituting* t for every occurrence of x in s, recursively:

1. $s \equiv c$: $s[t/x]$ is just s.
2. $s \equiv y$: $s[t/x]$ is also just s, provided y is a variable and $y \not\equiv x$.
3. $s \equiv x$: $s[t/x]$ is t.
4. $s \equiv f(t_1, \dots, t_n)$: $s[t/x]$ is $f(t_1[t/x], \dots, t_n[t/x])$.

Definition syn.2. A term t is *free for* x in φ if none of the free occurrences of x in φ occur in the scope of a quantifier that binds a variable in t.

Example syn.3.

1. v_8 is free for v_1 in $\exists v_3 A^2_4(v_3, v_1)$
2. $f^2_1(v_1, v_2)$ is *not* free for v_o in $\forall v_2 A^2_4(v_0, v_2)$

Definition syn.4 (Substitution in a formula)**.** If φ is a formula, x is a variable, and t is a term free for x in φ, then $\varphi[t/x]$ is the result of substituting t for all free occurrences of x in φ.

1. $\varphi \equiv \bot$: $\varphi[t/x]$ is $\bot$.
2. $\varphi \equiv \top$: $\varphi[t/x]$ is $\top$.
3. $\varphi \equiv P(t_1, \dots, t_n)$: $\varphi[t/x]$ is $P(t_1[t/x], \dots, t_n[t/x])$.
4. $\varphi \equiv t_1 = t_2$: $\varphi[t/x]$ is $t_1[t/x] = t_2[t/x]$.
5. $\varphi \equiv \neg\psi$: $\varphi[t/x]$ is $\neg\psi[t/x]$.
6. $\varphi \equiv (\psi \land \chi)$: $\varphi[t/x]$ is $(\psi[t/x] \land \chi[t/x])$.
7. $\varphi \equiv (\psi \lor \chi)$: $\varphi[t/x]$ is $(\psi[t/x] \lor \chi[t/x])$.
8. $\varphi \equiv (\psi \to \chi)$: $\varphi[t/x]$ is $(\psi[t/x] \to \chi[t/x])$.
9. $\varphi \equiv (\psi \leftrightarrow \chi)$: $\varphi[t/x]$ is $(\psi[t/x] \leftrightarrow \chi[t/x])$.
10. $\varphi \equiv \forall y\, \psi$: $\varphi[t/x]$ is $\forall y\, \psi[t/x]$, provided y is a variable other than x; otherwise $\varphi[t/x]$ is just φ.
11. $\varphi \equiv \exists y\, \psi$: $\varphi[t/x]$ is $\exists y\, \psi[t/x]$, provided y is a variable other than x; otherwise $\varphi[t/x]$ is just φ.

explanation

Note that substitution may be vacuous: If x does not occur in φ at all, then $\varphi[t/x]$ is just φ.

The restriction that t must be free for x in φ is necessary to exclude cases like the following. If $\varphi \equiv \exists y\, x < y$ and $t \equiv y$, then $\varphi[t/x]$ would be $\exists y\, y < y$. In this case the free variable y is "captured" by the quantifier $\exists y$ upon substitution, and that is undesirable. For instance, we would like it to be the case that whenever $\forall x\, \psi$ holds, so does $\psi[t/x]$. But consider $\forall x\, \exists y\, x < y$ (here ψ is $\exists y\, x < y$). It is sentence that is true about, e.g., the natural numbers: for every number x there is a number y greater than it. If we allowed y as a possible substitution for x, we would end up with $\psi[y/x] \equiv \exists y\, y < y$, which is false. We prevent this by requiring that none of the free variables in t would end up being bound by a quantifier in φ.

We often use the following convention to avoid cumbersume notation: If φ is a formula with a free variable x, we write $\varphi(x)$ to indicate this. When it is clear which φ and x we have in mind, and t is a term (assumed to be free for x in $\varphi(x)$), then we write $\varphi(t)$ as short for $\varphi(x)[t/x]$.

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Bibliography