

Chapter udf

The Interpolation Theorem

int.1 Introduction

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sec The interpolation theorem is the following result: Suppose $\models \varphi \rightarrow \psi$. Then there is a **sentence** χ such that $\models \varphi \rightarrow \chi$ and $\models \chi \rightarrow \psi$. Moreover, every **constant symbol**, **function symbol**, and **predicate symbol** (other than $=$) in χ occurs both in φ and ψ . The **sentence** χ is called an *interpolant* of φ and ψ .

The interpolation theorem is interesting in its own right, but its main importance lies in the fact that it can be used to prove results about definability in a theory, and the conditions under which combining two consistent theories results in a consistent theory. The first result is known as the Beth definability theorem; the second, Robinson's joint consistency theorem.

int.2 Separation of Sentences

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sec A bit of groundwork is needed before we can proceed with the proof of the interpolation theorem. An interpolant for φ and ψ is a **sentence** χ such that $\varphi \models \chi$ and $\chi \models \psi$. By contraposition, the latter is true iff $\neg\psi \models \neg\chi$. A **sentence** χ with this property is said to *separate* φ and $\neg\psi$. So finding an interpolant for φ and ψ amounts to finding a **sentence** that separates φ and $\neg\psi$. As so often, it will be useful to consider a generalization: a sentence that separates two *sets* of **sentences**.

Definition int.1. A sentence χ *separates* sets of sentences Γ and Δ if and only if $\Gamma \models \chi$ and $\Delta \models \neg\chi$. If no such **sentence** exists, then Γ and Δ are *inseparable*.

The inclusion relations between the classes of models of Γ , Δ and χ are represented below:

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lem:sep1 **Lemma int.2.** Suppose \mathcal{L}_0 is the language containing every **constant symbol**, **function symbol** and **predicate symbol** (other than $=$) that occurs in both Γ and Δ , and let \mathcal{L}'_0 be obtained by the addition of infinitely many new **constant symbols** c_n for $n \geq 0$. Then if Γ and Δ are inseparable in \mathcal{L}_0 , they are also inseparable in \mathcal{L}'_0 .

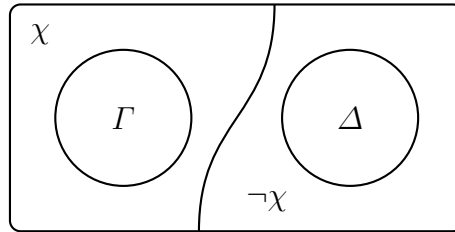


Figure int.1: χ separates Γ and Δ

Proof. We proceed indirectly: suppose by way of contradiction that Γ and Δ are separated in \mathcal{L}'_0 . Then $\Gamma \models \chi[c/x]$ and $\Delta \models \neg\chi[c/x]$ for some $\chi \in \mathcal{L}_0$ (where c is a new **constant symbol**—the case where χ contains more than one such new **constant symbol** is similar). By compactness, there are *finite* subsets Γ_0 of Γ and Δ_0 of Δ such that $\Gamma_0 \models \chi[c/x]$ and $\Delta_0 \models \neg\chi[c/x]$. Let γ be the conjunction of all **formulas** in Γ_0 and δ the conjunction of all **formulas** in Δ_0 . Then

$$\gamma \models \chi[c/x], \quad \delta \models \neg\chi[c/x].$$

From the former, by Generalization, we have $\gamma \models \forall x \chi$, and from the latter by contraposition, $\chi[c/x] \models \neg\delta$, whence also $\forall x \chi \models \neg\delta$. Contraposition again gives $\delta \models \neg\forall x \chi$. By monotony,

$$\Gamma \models \forall x \chi, \quad \Delta \models \neg\forall x \chi,$$

so that $\forall x \chi$ separates Γ and Δ in \mathcal{L}_0 . □

Lemma int.3. *Suppose that $\Gamma \cup \{\exists x \sigma\}$ and Δ are inseparable, and c is a new **constant symbol** not in Γ , Δ , or σ . Then $\Gamma \cup \{\exists x \sigma, \sigma[c/x]\}$ and Δ are also inseparable.* mod:int:sep:
lem:sep2

Proof. Suppose for contradiction that χ separates $\Gamma \cup \{\exists x \sigma, \sigma[c/x]\}$ and Δ , while at the same time $\Gamma \cup \{\exists x \sigma\}$ and Δ are inseparable. We distinguish two cases:

1. c does not occur in χ : in this case $\Gamma \cup \{\exists x \sigma, \neg\chi\}$ is satisfiable (otherwise χ separates $\Gamma \cup \{\exists x \sigma\}$ and Δ). It remains so if $\sigma[c/x]$ is added, so χ does not separate $\Gamma \cup \{\exists x \sigma, \sigma[c/x]\}$ and Δ after all.
2. c does occur in χ so that χ has the form $\chi[c/x]$. Then we have that

$$\Gamma \cup \{\exists x \sigma, \sigma[c/x]\} \models \chi[c/x],$$

whence $\Gamma, \exists x \sigma \models \forall x (\sigma \rightarrow \chi)$ by the Deduction Theorem and Generalization, and finally $\Gamma \cup \{\exists x \sigma\} \models \exists x \chi$. On the other hand, $\Delta \models \neg\chi[c/x]$ and hence by Generalization $\Delta \models \neg\exists x \chi$. So $\Gamma \cup \{\exists x \sigma\}$ and Δ are separable, a contradiction. □

int.3 Craig's Interpolation Theorem

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thm:interpol

Theorem int.4 (Craig's Interpolation Theorem). *If $\models \varphi \rightarrow \psi$, then there is a sentence χ such that $\models \varphi \rightarrow \chi$ and $\models \chi \rightarrow \psi$, and every constant symbol, function symbol, and predicate symbol (other than $=$) in χ occurs both in φ and ψ . The sentence χ is called an interpolant of φ and ψ .*

Proof. Suppose \mathcal{L}_1 is the language of φ and \mathcal{L}_2 is the language of ψ . Let $\mathcal{L}_0 = \mathcal{L}_1 \cap \mathcal{L}_2$. For each $i \in \{0, 1, 2\}$, let \mathcal{L}'_i be obtained from \mathcal{L}_i by adding the infinitely many new constant symbols c_0, c_1, c_2, \dots .

If φ is unsatisfiable, $\exists x x \neq x$ is an interpolant. If $\neg\psi$ is unsatisfiable (and hence ψ is valid), $\exists x x = x$ is an interpolant. So we may assume also that both φ and $\neg\psi$ are satisfiable.

In order to prove the contrapositive of the Interpolation Theorem, assume that there is no interpolant for φ and ψ . In other words, assume that $\{\varphi\}$ and $\{\neg\psi\}$ are inseparable in \mathcal{L}_0 .

Our goal is to extend the pair $(\{\varphi\}, \{\neg\psi\})$ to a maximally inseparable pair (Γ^*, Δ^*) . Let $\varphi_0, \varphi_1, \varphi_2, \dots$ enumerate the sentences of \mathcal{L}_1 , and $\psi_0, \psi_1, \psi_2, \dots$ enumerate the sentences of \mathcal{L}_2 . We define two increasing sequences of sets of sentences (Γ_n, Δ_n) , for $n \geq 0$, as follows. Put $\Gamma_0 = \{\varphi\}$ and $\Delta_0 = \{\neg\psi\}$. Assuming (Γ_n, Δ_n) are already defined, define Γ_{n+1} and Δ_{n+1} by:

1. If $\Gamma_n \cup \{\varphi_n\}$ and Δ_n are inseparable in \mathcal{L}'_0 , put φ_n in Γ_{n+1} . Moreover, if φ_n is an existential formula $\exists x \sigma$ then pick a new constant symbol c not occurring in $\Gamma_n, \Delta_n, \varphi_n$ or ψ_n , and put $\sigma[c/x]$ in Γ_{n+1} .
2. If Γ_{n+1} and $\Delta_n \cup \{\psi_n\}$ are inseparable in \mathcal{L}'_0 , put ψ_n in Δ_{n+1} . Moreover, if ψ_n is an existential formula $\exists x \sigma$, then pick a new constant symbol c not occurring in $\Gamma_{n+1}, \Delta_n, \varphi_n$ or ψ_n , and put $\sigma[c/x]$ in Δ_{n+1} .

Finally, define:

$$\Gamma^* = \bigcup_{n \geq 0} \Gamma_n, \quad \Delta^* = \bigcup_{n \geq 0} \Delta_n.$$

By simultaneous induction on n we can now prove:

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part-a

1. Γ_n and Δ_n are inseparable in \mathcal{L}'_0 ;

mod:int:prf:
part-b

2. Γ_{n+1} and Δ_n are inseparable in \mathcal{L}'_0 .

The basis for (1) is given by Lemma int.2. For part (2), we need to distinguish three cases:

1. If $\Gamma_0 \cup \{\varphi_0\}$ and Δ_0 are separable, then $\Gamma_1 = \Gamma_0$ and (2) is just (1);
2. If $\Gamma_1 = \Gamma_0 \cup \{\varphi_0\}$, then Γ_1 and Δ_0 are inseparable by construction.

3. It remains to consider the case where φ_0 is existential, so that $\Gamma_1 = \Gamma_0 \cup \{\exists x \sigma, \sigma[c/x]\}$. By construction, $\Gamma_0 \cup \{\exists x \sigma\}$ and Δ_0 are inseparable, so that by [Lemma int.3](#) also $\Gamma_0 \cup \{\exists x \sigma, \sigma[c/x]\}$ and Δ_0 are inseparable.

This completes the basis of the induction for (1) and (2) above. Now for the inductive step. For (1), if $\Delta_{n+1} = \Delta_n \cup \{\psi_n\}$ then Γ_{n+1} and Δ_{n+1} are inseparable by construction (even when ψ_n is existential, by [Lemma int.3](#)); if $\Delta_{n+1} = \Delta_n$ (because Γ_{n+1} and $\Delta_n \cup \{\psi_n\}$ are separable), then we use the induction hypothesis on (2). For the inductive step for (2), if $\Gamma_{n+2} = \Gamma_{n+1} \cup \{\varphi_{n+1}\}$ then Γ_{n+2} and Δ_{n+1} are inseparable by construction (even when φ_{n+1} is existential, by [Lemma int.3](#)); and if $\Gamma_{n+2} = \Gamma_{n+1}$ then we use the inductive case for (1) just proved. This concludes the induction on (1) and (2).

It follows that Γ^* and Δ^* are inseparable; if not, by compactness, there is $n \geq 0$ that separates Γ_n and Δ_n , against (1). In particular, Γ^* and Δ^* are consistent: for if the former or the latter is inconsistent, then they are separated by $\exists x x \neq x$ or $\forall x x = x$, respectively.

We now show that Γ^* is maximally consistent in \mathcal{L}'_1 and likewise Δ^* in \mathcal{L}'_2 . For the former, suppose that $\varphi_n \notin \Gamma^*$ and $\neg\varphi_n \notin \Gamma^*$, for some $n \geq 0$. If $\varphi_n \notin \Gamma^*$ then $\Gamma_n \cup \{\varphi_n\}$ is separable from Δ_n , and so there is $\chi \in \mathcal{L}'_0$ such that both:

$$\Gamma^* \models \varphi_n \rightarrow \chi, \quad \Delta^* \models \neg\chi.$$

Likewise, if $\neg\varphi_n \notin \Gamma^*$, there is $\chi' \in \mathcal{L}'_0$ such that both:

$$\Gamma^* \models \neg\varphi_n \rightarrow \chi', \quad \Delta^* \models \neg\chi'.$$

By propositional logic, $\Gamma^* \models \chi \vee \chi'$ and $\Delta^* \models \neg(\chi \vee \chi')$, so $\chi \vee \chi'$ separates Γ^* and Δ^* . A similar argument establishes that Δ^* is maximal.

Finally, we show that $\Gamma^* \cap \Delta^*$ is maximally consistent in \mathcal{L}'_0 . It is obviously consistent, since it is the intersection of consistent sets. To show maximality, let $\sigma \in \mathcal{L}'_0$. Now, Γ^* is maximal in $\mathcal{L}'_1 \supseteq \mathcal{L}'_0$, and similarly Δ^* is maximal in $\mathcal{L}'_2 \supseteq \mathcal{L}'_0$. It follows that either $\sigma \in \Gamma^*$ or $\neg\sigma \in \Gamma^*$, and either $\sigma \in \Delta^*$ or $\neg\sigma \in \Delta^*$. If $\sigma \in \Gamma^*$ and $\neg\sigma \in \Delta^*$ then σ would separate Γ^* and Δ^* ; and if $\neg\sigma \in \Gamma^*$ and $\sigma \in \Delta^*$ then Γ^* and Δ^* would be separated by $\neg\sigma$. Hence, either $\sigma \in \Gamma^* \cap \Delta^*$ or $\neg\sigma \in \Gamma^* \cap \Delta^*$, and $\Gamma^* \cap \Delta^*$ is maximal.

Since Γ^* is maximally consistent, it has a model \mathfrak{M}'_1 whose [domain](#) $|\mathfrak{M}'_1|$ comprises all and only the elements $c^{\mathfrak{M}'_1}$ interpreting the [constant symbols](#)—just like in the proof of the completeness theorem (??). Similarly, Δ^* has a model \mathfrak{M}'_2 whose [domain](#) $|\mathfrak{M}'_2|$ is given by the interpretations $c^{\mathfrak{M}'_2}$ of the [constant symbols](#).

Let \mathfrak{M}_1 be obtained from \mathfrak{M}'_1 by dropping interpretations for [constant symbols](#), [function symbols](#), and [predicate symbols](#) in $\mathcal{L}'_1 \setminus \mathcal{L}'_0$, and similarly for \mathfrak{M}_2 . Then the map $h: M_1 \rightarrow M_2$ defined by $h(c^{\mathfrak{M}'_1}) = c^{\mathfrak{M}'_2}$ is an isomorphism in \mathcal{L}'_0 , because $\Gamma^* \cap \Delta^*$ is maximally consistent in \mathcal{L}'_0 , as shown. This follows because any \mathcal{L}'_0 -[sentence](#) either belongs to both Γ^* and Δ^* , or to neither: so

$c^{\mathfrak{M}'_1} \in P^{\mathfrak{M}'_1}$ if and only if $P(c) \in \Gamma^*$ if and only if $P(c) \in \Delta^*$ if and only if $c^{\mathfrak{M}'_2} \in P^{\mathfrak{M}'_2}$. The other conditions satisfied by isomorphisms can be established similarly.

Let us now define a model \mathfrak{M} for the language $\mathcal{L}_1 \cup \mathcal{L}_2$ as follows:

1. The domain $|\mathfrak{M}|$ is just $|\mathfrak{M}'_2|$, i.e., the set of all elements $c^{\mathfrak{M}'_2}$;
2. If a predicate symbol P is in $\mathcal{L}_2 \setminus \mathcal{L}_1$ then $P^{\mathfrak{M}} = P^{\mathfrak{M}'_2}$;
3. If a predicate P is in $\mathcal{L}_1 \setminus \mathcal{L}_2$ then $P^{\mathfrak{M}} = h(P^{\mathfrak{M}'_2})$, i.e., $\langle c_1^{\mathfrak{M}'_2}, \dots, c_n^{\mathfrak{M}'_2} \rangle \in P^{\mathfrak{M}}$ if and only if $\langle c_1^{\mathfrak{M}'_1}, \dots, c_n^{\mathfrak{M}'_1} \rangle \in P^{\mathfrak{M}'_1}$.
4. If a predicate symbol P is in \mathcal{L}_0 then $P^{\mathfrak{M}} = P^{\mathfrak{M}'_2} = h(P^{\mathfrak{M}'_1})$.
5. Function symbols of $\mathcal{L}_1 \cup \mathcal{L}_2$, including constant symbols, are handled similarly.

Finally, one shows by induction on formulas that \mathfrak{M} agrees with \mathfrak{M}'_1 on all formulas of \mathcal{L}'_1 and with \mathfrak{M}'_2 on all formulas of \mathcal{L}'_2 . In particular, $\mathfrak{M} \models \Gamma^* \cup \Delta^*$, whence $\mathfrak{M} \models \varphi$ and $\mathfrak{M} \models \neg\psi$, and $\not\models \varphi \rightarrow \psi$. This concludes the proof of Craig's Interpolation Theorem. \square

int.4 The Definability Theorem

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sec

One important application of the interpolation theorem is Beth's definability theorem. To define an n -place relation R we can give a formula χ with n free variables which does not involve R . This would be an *explicit* definition of R in terms of χ . We can then say also that a theory $\Sigma(P)$ in a language containing the n -place predicate symbol P explicitly defines P if it contains (or at least entails) a formalized explicit definition, i.e.,

$$\Sigma(P) \models \forall x_1 \dots \forall x_n (P(x_1, \dots, x_n) \leftrightarrow \chi(x_1, \dots, x_n)).$$

But an explicit definition is only one way of defining—in the sense of determining completely—a relation. A theory may also be such that the interpretation of P is fixed by the interpretation of the rest of the language in any model. The definability theorem states that whenever a theory fixes the interpretation of P in this way—whenever it *implicitly defines* P —then it also explicitly defines it.

Definition int.5. Suppose \mathcal{L} is a language not containing the predicate symbol P . A set $\Sigma(P)$ of sentences of $\mathcal{L} \cup \{P\}$ *explicitly defines* P if and only if there is a formula $\chi(x_1, \dots, x_n)$ of \mathcal{L} such that

$$\Sigma(P) \models \forall x_1 \dots \forall x_n (P(x_1, \dots, x_n) \leftrightarrow \chi(x_1, \dots, x_n)).$$

Definition int.6. Suppose \mathcal{L} is a language not containing the predicate symbols P and P' . A set $\Sigma(P)$ of sentences of $\mathcal{L} \cup \{P\}$ *implicitly defines* P if and only if

$$\Sigma(P) \cup \Sigma(P') \models \forall x_1 \dots \forall x_n (P(x_1, \dots, x_n) \leftrightarrow P'(x_1, \dots, x_n)),$$

where $\Sigma(P')$ is the result of uniformly replacing P with P' in $\Sigma(P)$.

In other words, for any model \mathfrak{M} and $R, R' \subseteq |\mathfrak{M}|^n$, if both $(\mathfrak{M}, R) \models \Sigma(P)$ and $(\mathfrak{M}, R') \models \Sigma(P')$, then $R = R'$; where (\mathfrak{M}, R) is the **structure** \mathfrak{M}' for the expansion of \mathcal{L} to $\mathcal{L} \cup \{P\}$ such that $P^{\mathfrak{M}'} = R$, and similarly for (\mathfrak{M}, R') .

Theorem int.7 (Beth Definability Theorem). *A set $\Sigma(P)$ of $\mathcal{L} \cup \{P\}$ -formulas implicitly defines P if and only if $\Sigma(P)$ explicitly defines P .*

Proof. If $\Sigma(P)$ explicitly defines P then both

$$\begin{aligned} \Sigma(P) \models & \quad \forall x_1 \dots \forall x_n [(P(x_1, \dots, x_n) \leftrightarrow \chi(x_1, \dots, x_n))] \\ \Sigma(P') \models & \quad \forall x_1 \dots \forall x_n [(P'(x_1, \dots, x_n) \leftrightarrow \chi(x_1, \dots, x_n))] \end{aligned}$$

and the conclusion follows. For the converse: assume that $\Sigma(P)$ implicitly defines P . First, we add **constant symbols** c_1, \dots, c_n to \mathcal{L} . Then

$$\Sigma(P) \cup \Sigma(P') \models P(c_1, \dots, c_n) \rightarrow P'(c_1, \dots, c_n).$$

By compactness, there are finite sets $\Delta_0 \subseteq \Sigma(P)$ and $\Delta_1 \subseteq \Sigma(P')$ such that

$$\Delta_0 \cup \Delta_1 \models P(c_1, \dots, c_n) \rightarrow P'(c_1, \dots, c_n).$$

Let $\theta(P)$ be the conjunction of all **sentences** $\varphi(P)$ such that either $\varphi(P) \in \Delta_0$ or $\varphi(P') \in \Delta_1$ and let $\theta(P')$ be the conjunction of all **sentences** $\varphi(P')$ such that either $\varphi(P) \in \Delta_0$ or $\varphi(P') \in \Delta_1$. Then $\theta(P) \wedge \theta(P') \models P(c_1, \dots, c_n) \rightarrow P'(c_1, \dots, c_n)$. We can re-arrange this so that each **predicate symbol** occurs on one side of \models :

$$\theta(P) \wedge P(c_1, \dots, c_n) \models \theta(P') \rightarrow P'(c_1, \dots, c_n).$$

By Craig's Interpolation Theorem there is a **sentence** $\chi(c_1, \dots, c_n)$ not containing P or P' such that:

$$\theta(P) \wedge P(c_1, \dots, c_n) \models \chi(c_1, \dots, c_n); \quad \chi(c_1, \dots, c_n) \models \theta(P') \rightarrow P'(c_1, \dots, c_n).$$

From the former of these two entailments we have: $\theta(P) \models P(c_1, \dots, c_n) \rightarrow \chi(c_1, \dots, c_n)$. And from the latter, since an $\mathcal{L} \cup \{P\}$ -model $(\mathfrak{M}, R) \models \varphi(P)$ if and only if the corresponding $\mathcal{L} \cup \{P'\}$ -model $(\mathfrak{M}, R) \models \varphi(P')$, we have $\chi(c_1, \dots, c_n) \models \theta(P) \rightarrow P(c_1, \dots, c_n)$, from which:

$$\theta(P) \models \chi(c_1, \dots, c_n) \rightarrow P(c_1, \dots, c_n).$$

Putting the two together, $\theta(P) \models P(c_1, \dots, c_n) \leftrightarrow \chi(c_1, \dots, c_n)$, and by monotony and generalization also

$$\Sigma(P) \models \forall x_1 \dots \forall x_n (P(x_1, \dots, x_n) \leftrightarrow \chi(x_1, \dots, x_n)). \quad \square$$

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Bibliography