
Conceptual Modelling in Description Logic

INFS4206/INFS7206

School of Information Technology and Electrical Engineering

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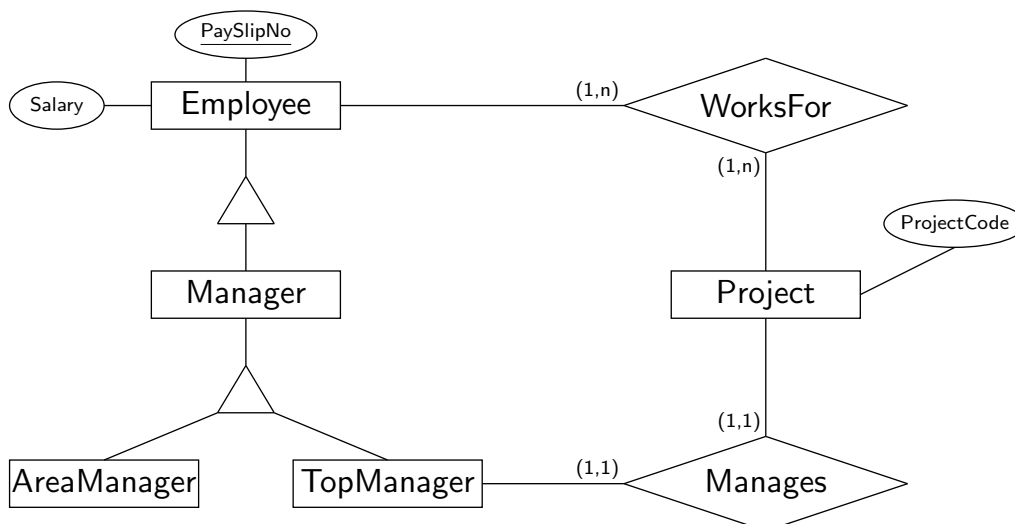
What is an ontology

- ▶ An ontology is a formal conceptualisation of the world.
- ▶ An ontology specifies a set of **constraints**, which declare what should necessarily hold in any possible worlds.
- ▶ any possible world should conform to the constraints expressed in the ontology.
- ▶ Given an ontology, a *legal world description* is a possible world satisfying the constraints.

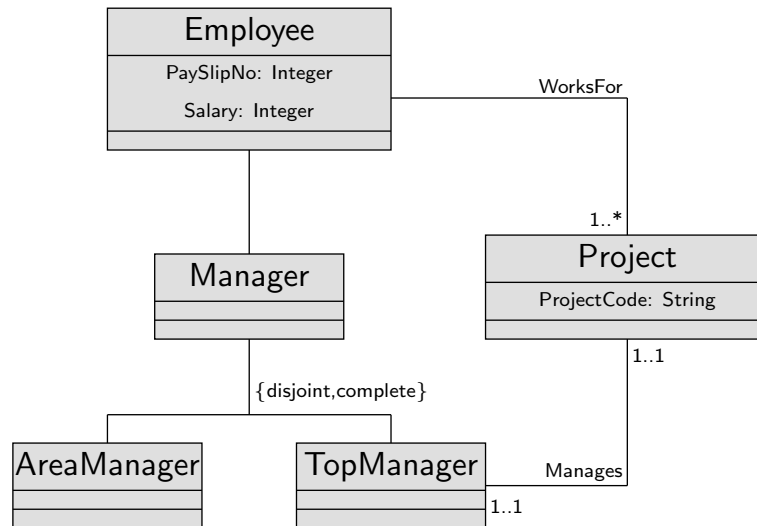
Ontologies languages

- ▶ An ontology language usually introduces **concepts** (classes, entities), **properties** of concepts (slots, attributes, roles), **relationships** between concepts (associations), and additional **concepts**.
- ▶ Ontology languages may be simple (e.g., having only concepts), frame-based (having only concepts and properties), or logic-based (e.g. Ontolingua and OWL).
- ▶ Ontology languages are typically expressed by means of diagrams.
- ▶ The Entity-Relationship conceptual data model and UML Class Diagrams can be considered as ontology languages.

Entity-Relationship Diagram

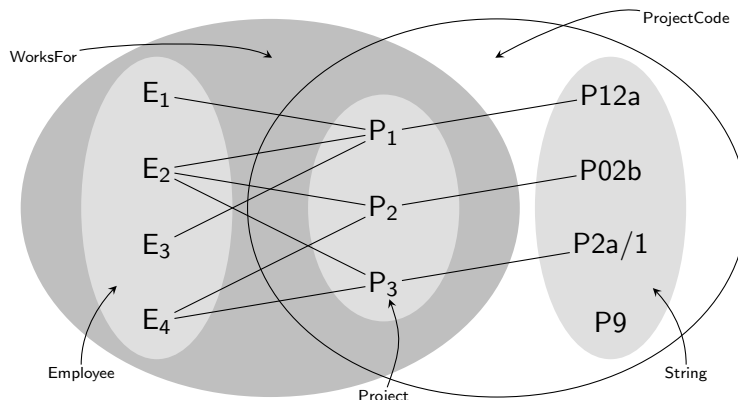


UML Class diagram

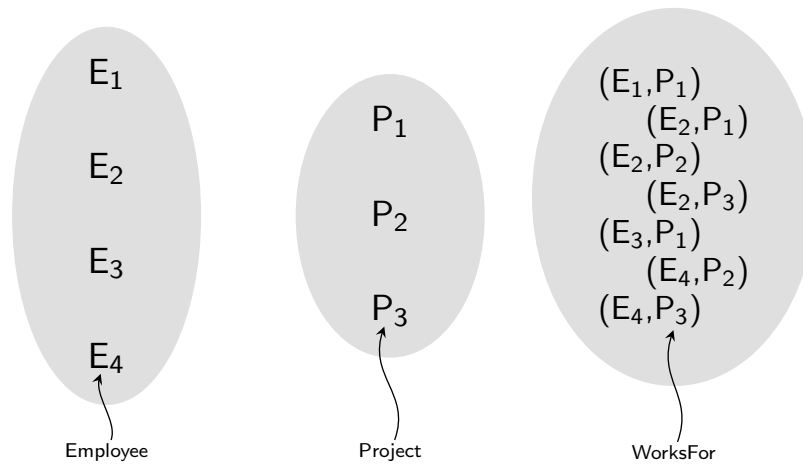


Meaning of basic constructs

- ▶ An entity is a set of instances.
- ▶ An association (n-ary relationship) is a set of pair (n-tuples) of instances.
- ▶ An attribute is a set of pairs of an instance and a domain element.



A world is described by sets of instances

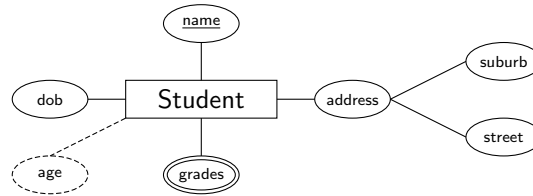


The relational representation

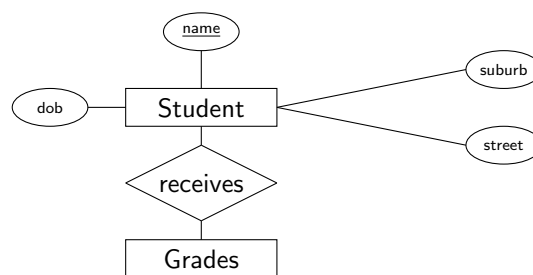
| Employee | | Project | ProjectCode | |
|-------------------|--|------------------|------------------|--------------|
| <i>employeeld</i> | | <i>projectId</i> | <i>projectId</i> | <i>pcode</i> |
| E ₁ | | P ₁ | P ₁ | "P12a" |
| E ₂ | | P ₂ | P ₂ | "P02b" |
| E ₃ | | P ₃ | P ₃ | "P2a/1" |
| E ₄ | | | | |

| WorksFor | |
|------------------|-------------------|
| <i>projectId</i> | <i>employeeld</i> |
| E ₁ | P ₁ |
| E ₂ | P ₁ |
| E ₂ | P ₂ |
| E ₂ | P ₃ |
| E ₃ | P ₁ |
| E ₄ | P ₂ |
| E ₄ | P ₃ |

Meaning of Entities and Attributes



Meaning of Entities and Attributes



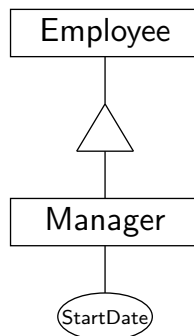
- ▶ An entity is a set of instances.
 - ▶ The key attribute is unique and it is used to identify the distinct instances of the entity
- ▶ An attribute is a set of pairs of an instance and a domain element.
 - ▶ every attribute corresponds to a concept and the association between the attribute and the entity is a role

$Student \sqsubseteq \exists hasStreet.Street \sqcap \exists hasDob.Dob \sqcap \exists hasSuburb.Suburb$

Meaning of ISA

An ISA describes a relationship between two entities/concepts

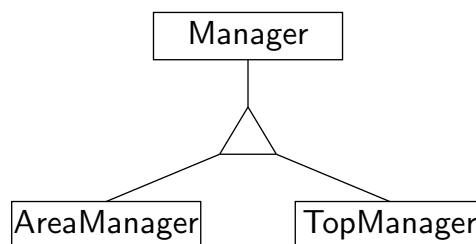
$$\text{Manager} \sqsubseteq \text{Employee}$$



Every attribute of the superclass is also an attribute of the subclass, but not the other way around

$$\text{Manager} \sqsubseteq \text{Employee} \sqcap \exists \text{hasStartDate}.\text{StartDate}$$

Meaning of *disjoint* and *total* constraints



$$\text{ISA: } \text{AreaManager} \sqsubseteq \text{Manager}$$

$$\text{ISA: } \text{TopManager} \sqsubseteq \text{Manager}$$

$$\text{Disjoint: } \text{AreaManager} \sqcap \text{TopManager} \equiv \perp$$

$$\text{Total: } \text{Manager} \sqsubseteq \text{AreaManager} \sqcup \text{TopManager}$$

Meaning of Relationships



An association (n-ary relationship) is a set of pair (n-tuples) of instances.

$$WorksFor^I \subseteq Employee^I \times Project^I$$

Hence a binary relationship corresponds to a role, and we have referential integrity constraints from the relationship and the entities involved in it.

$$Employee \sqsubseteq \forall worksFor. Project$$

$$Project \sqsubseteq \forall workFor^{-}. Employee$$

Meaning of Cardinality Constraints



$$Employee^I \subseteq \{e \mid \min \leq \#(worksFor^I \cap (\{e\} \times \Delta)) \leq \max\}$$

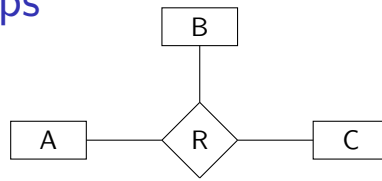
$$Employee^I \subseteq \{e \mid \min \leq \#\{p \mid (e, p) \in workFor^I \wedge p \in Project^I\}\}$$

$$\text{if } \min = 0 \text{ } Employee \sqsubseteq \forall worksFor. Project$$

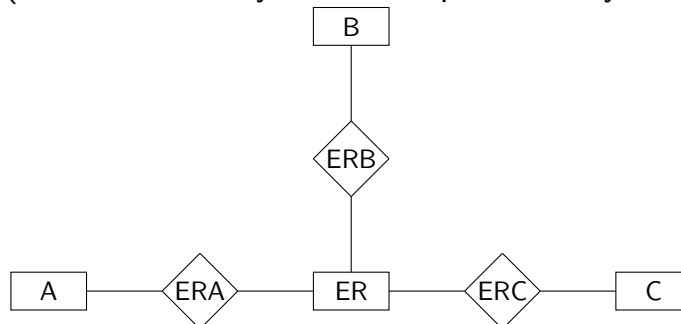
$$\text{if } \min > 0 \text{ } Employee \sqsubseteq \exists^{\min \leq} worksFor. Project$$

$$\text{if } \max = n \text{ } Employee \sqsubseteq \exists^{\max \geq} worksFor. Project$$

n-ary Relationships



Roles are binary relations. Thus we have to **reify** the relationship (i.e., reduce *n*-ary relationships to binary relations)



Reasoning

Given an ontology – seen as a collection of constraints – it is possible that additional constraints can be inferred.

- ▶ An entity is inconsistent if it denotes always the empty set.
- ▶ An entity is a sub-entity of another entity if the former denotes a subset of the set denoted by the latter.
- ▶ Two entities are equivalent if they denote the same set.
- ▶ ...

Building Knowledge Bases

In order to build good KBs some choices must be done during its design. It is important to well understand some subtle distinctions:

- ▶ Primitive vs. Defined.
- ▶ Definitional vs. Incidental.
- ▶ Concept vs. Individual.
- ▶ Concept vs. Role.

When to Use Primitive Concepts?

- ▶ some concepts can not be completely defined (e.g., natural kinds);
- ▶ it can be not convenient/useful to completely define a concept;
- ▶ sooner or later we must end up with something not completely defined (*encyclopedic knowledge* cannot be given).

Thus, primitive concepts must be used when:

- ▶ there is no other way;
- ▶ even if it were defined, no (automatic) classification below it will be never required by the application.

Typically primitive concepts lie in the top region of the taxonomy.

When to use defined concepts?

- ▶ ontological reason: it is easy and natural (in the context of the application) to give a complete definition of the concept;
- ▶ organisation of the antecedents of rules;
- ▶ capturing complete descriptions used by rules for populating primitive concepts.

Definitional vs. Incidental

Are **incidental** all the properties that are contingent features for a concept, and thus must not be part of its definition.

$\forall intelligence.Stupid$

is **incidental** for **Chicken** while

$\forall reproducesWith.Egg$

is **definitional**.

Concept vs. Individual

- ▶ the set of individuals is a countable, discrete set;
- ▶ the concept space is ideally continuous and infinite;
- ▶ each individual has a clear identity: even if two individual have the same properties, they are distinct;
- ▶ if two concepts have equivalent descriptions, they denote the same concept;
- ▶ individual descriptions can be modified;
- ▶ concept descriptions can not be modified;
- ▶ individual update does not (usually) change the concept hierarchy;
- ▶ rules applies only to individuals.

Concept vs. Individual, cont.

Nevertheless, it is not always easy to decide whether an object should be a concept or an individual. The main issue to deal with is the “granularity” level.

Example

Consider the KB describing courses in ITEE: is “Distributed Enterprise Computing (INFS4206)” course a concept or an individual?

A key to solve the problem could be asking the domain/application expert: “how many courses do you have?”, in order to understand the needed granularity.

Concept vs. Role

Is not always easy to decide what must be a concept and what a role.

- ▶ *Person*: it is a concept.
- ▶ *MOTHER*:
 - ▶ consider “Sue is a new mother” and “Sue is the mother of Tom”.
 - ▶ *Mother* as a concept does not exist if we don’t consider the “role she plays” in a parental relation, i.e., if “Sue is a new mother” she must be the *mother* of somebody!

$$Mother \equiv Woman \sqcap \exists mother. Person$$

Concept vs. Role

- ▶ But when the role is not the only important component of the definition, this dual use is not so neat.
- ▶ Another problem is *the reading direction*: in the above example the role could be, *mother* or *child*.
- ▶ A clear convention must be stated, possibly creating long, non ambiguous names for roles, as, e.g.: *hasChild*, *isTheParentOf*

How to design a KB in steps

1. **Enumerate Objects.** As a bare list of elements of the KB; they will become individuals, concepts, or roles.
2. **Distinguish Concepts from Roles.** Make a first decision about what object must be considered a role; remember that some could have a “natural” concept associated. The remaining objects will be concepts (or maybe individuals). Also, try to distinguish roles from attributes.
3. **Develop Concept Taxonomy.** Try to decide a classification of all the concepts, imagining their extensions. This taxonomy will be used as a first reference, and could be revised when a definition will be given. It will be used also to check if a definition meets our expectations (sometimes, interesting, unforeseen (re)classifications are found).

How to design a KB in steps

- 4 **Devise partitions.** Try to make explicit all the disjointness and covering constraints among classes, and reclassify the concepts.
- 5 **Individuals.** Try to list as many as possible generally useful individuals. Some could have been already listed in step 1. Try to describe them (classify).
- 6 **Properties and Parts.** Begin to define the internal structure of concepts (this process will continue in the next steps). For each concept list:
 - ▶ *intrinsic* properties, that are part of the very nature of the concept;
 - ▶ *extrinsic* properties, that are contingent or external properties of the object; they can sometimes change during the time;
 - ▶ *parts*, in the case of structured or collective objects. They can be physical (e.g., “the components of a car”, “the students of a class”, “the members of a group”) or abstract (e.g., “the courses of a meal”, “the lessons of a course”, “the topics of a lesson”).

How to design a KB in steps

- ▶ In some cases some relationships between individuals of classes can be considered too accidental to be listed above.
- ▶ In general, the above distinctions depend on the level of detail adopted.
- ▶ Some of the listed roles will be later considered definitional, and some incidental.
- ▶ After this and the next steps check/revision of the taxonomy could be necessary.

How to design a KB in steps

- 7 **Cardinality Restrictions.** For the relevant roles for each concept.
- 8 **Value Restriction.** As above. Also, chose the right restriction.
- 9 **Propagate Value Restrictions.** If some value restrictions stated in the previous step does not correspond to already existing concepts, they must be defined.
- 10 **Inter-role Relationship.** Even if hardly definable in DL, they can be useful during the populating and debugging phases.
- 11 **Definitional and Incidental.** It is important distinguish between definitional and incidental properties, w.r.t. to the particular application.
- 12 **Primitive and Defined.** As above.