LARS: A Logic-Based Framework for Analyzing Reasoning over Streams∗

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Abstract
The recent rise of smart applications has drawn interest to logical reasoning over data streams. Different query languages and stream processing/reasoning engines were proposed. However, due to a lack of theoretical foundations, the expressivity and semantics of these diverse approaches were only informally discussed. Towards clear specifications and means for analytic study, a formal framework is needed to characterize their semantics in precise terms. We present LARS, a Logic-based framework for Analyzing Reasoning over Streams, i.e., a rule-based formalism with a novel window operator providing a flexible mechanism to represent views on streaming data. We establish complexity results for central reasoning tasks and show how the prominent Continuous Query Language (CQL) can be captured. Moreover, the relation between LARS and ETALIS, a system for complex event processing is discussed. We thus demonstrate the capability of LARS to serve as the desired formal foundation for expressing and analyzing different semantic approaches to stream processing/reasoning and engines.

Introduction
The emergence of sensors, networks, and mobile devices has generated a trend towards pushing rather than pulling of data in information processing. In stream processing (Babu and Widom 2001), studied by the database community, input tuples dynamically arrive at systems in form of possibly infinite streams. To deal with unboundedness of data, the systems typically apply window operators to obtain snapshots of recent data. The user runs continuous queries on the latter that are triggered either periodically or by events, e.g., by the arrival of new input. A prominent stream processing language is the Continuous Query Language (CQL) (Arasu, Babu, and Widom 2006), which has an SQL-like syntax and a clear operational semantics.

Recently, the rise of smart applications such as smart cities, smart home, smart grid, etc., has raised interest in the topic of stream reasoning (Della Valle et al. 2009), i.e., logical reasoning on streaming data. Consider the following example.

Example 1 To monitor a city’s public transportation, the city traffic center has a static background data set for the assignment of trams to lines of the form $\text{line} (\text{Id}, L)$, where $\text{Id}$ is the tram and $L$ the line identifier. The planned travelling time (duration $Z$) between stops $X$ and $Y$ with line $L$ is stored by rows $\text{plan} (L, X, Y, Z)$. Facts of the form $\text{old} (\text{Id})$ classify old trams which are inconvenient for travelling with baby strollers. Moreover, sensor data $\text{trans}(\text{Id}, X)$ and $\text{jam}(X)$ report the appearance of tram $\text{Id}$ and traffic jams at stop $X$, respectively. Based on this, reports on the traffic status and suggested updates for travel routes shall be provided in real time.

Consider Bob travelling with his baby on line $\ell_3$ (Fig. 1a), He is currently at Haydn Street ($h$) and wants to go to Strauß Avenue ($s$), so he has different options to change trams at Mozart Circus ($m$). Thus, he wants to know (i) the expected arrival time of the next tram that (ii) is convenient for the stroller. Fig. 1b depicts arrival times, e.g., $\text{trans}(\ell_3, b)$ at $t = 36$ represents that tram $\ell_3$ arrived at stop Beethoven Square at minute 36. Furthermore, consider the following background data tables, which specify the planned travel time between stops ($\text{plan}$), the association between lines and their trams ($\text{line}$) and which trams are old and thus not suitable for strollers ($\text{old}$).

\[
\text{plan} = \{(\ell_1, b, m, 8), (\ell_2, g, m, 7), (\ell_3, h, m, 3), \ldots\}
\]
\[
\text{line} = \{(a_1, \ell_1), (a_2, \ell_2), (a_3, \ell_3), \ldots\}
\]
\[
\text{old} = \{(a_1), \ldots\}
\]

Based on this input stream and the static background data, we expect the following reports (i) and (ii):

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(i) Tram \( a_3 \) is expected to arrive at \( m \) at minute 44, and \( a_3 \) should arrive at \( m \) one minute earlier, i.e., at minute 43.

(ii) Switching from line \( \ell_3 \) to \( \ell_3 \) at \( m \) satisfies the short waiting time requirement. However, since tram \( a_1 \) is old, it is not a good connection with the stroller.

Different research communities have contributed to various aspects of this topic, leaving several challenges to overcome. First, these predominantly practical approaches often define semantics only informally, which makes them hard to predict and hard to compare. Second, advanced reasoning features are missing, e.g., nonmonotonicity, nondeterminism or model generation. According techniques have been studied almost exclusively on static data.

**Contributions.** We present LARS, a Logic-based framework for Analyzing Reasoning over Streams, providing (i) a rule-based formalism with (ii) different means to refer to or abstract from time, including (iii) a novel window operator, i.e., a flexible mechanism to change the view on streaming data. To date, no stream reasoning language with these features exists. Moreover, LARS features a model-based semantics, and it offers besides monotonic also nonmonotonic semantics, which makes them hard to present.

The presented framework yields (a) a common ground to express various semantic concepts of different stream processing/reasoning formalisms and engines, which (b) can now be formally characterized in a common language, and thus (c) be compared analytically.

**Streams**

**Streaming Data.** We use mutually disjoint sets of predicates \( \mathcal{P} \) and constants \( C \). The set \( \mathcal{A} \) of atoms is defined as \( \{ p(c_1, \ldots, c_n) \mid p \in \mathcal{P}, \ c_1, \ldots, c_n \in C \} \). If \( i, j \in \mathbb{N} \), we call the set \( [i, j] = \{ k \in \mathbb{N} \mid i \leq k \leq j \} \) an interval. We divide \( \mathcal{P} \) into two disjoint subsets, namely the extensional predicates \( \mathcal{P}_e \) and the intensional predicates \( \mathcal{P}_f \). The former is used for input streams and background data, while the latter serves for intermediate and output streams. Additionally, we assume basic arithmetical operations \( (+, -, \times, \div) \) and comparisons \( (=, \neq, <, =, \geq) \) are predefined by designated predicates \( \mathcal{B} \subseteq \mathcal{P}_f \), and used also in infix notation.

We now present the central notion of streams.

**Definition 1 (Stream)** Let \( T \) be an interval and \( \nu : \mathbb{N} \to 2^A \) an evaluation function such that \( \nu(t) = \emptyset \) for all \( t \in \mathbb{N} \setminus T \). Then, the pair \( S = (T, \nu) \) is called a stream. \( T \) is the timeline of \( S \), and the elements of \( T \) are time points.

Consider two streams \( S = (T, \nu) \) and \( S' = (T', \nu') \). We say \( S' \) is a substream of \( S \) if \( S' \subseteq S \) and \( S' \neq S \). Moreover, we define the size \# of \( S \) by \( \Sigma_{t \in T} \max(|\nu(t)|, 1) \). The restriction \( S|_{T'} \) of \( S \) to \( T' \subseteq T \) is the stream \( (T', \nu|_{T'}) \), where \( \nu|_{T'} \) restricts the domain of \( \nu \) to \( T' \), i.e., \( \nu|_{T'}(t) = \nu(t) \) for all \( t \in T' \), else \( \nu|_{T'}(t) = \emptyset \). A data stream contains only atoms with extensional predicates.

**Example 2 (cont’d)** Consider again the scenario of Example 1. We can model the input as the data stream \( D = (T, \nu) \) with a timeline \( T = [0, 50] \) and the evaluation \( \nu(30) = \{ \{ \text{tram}(a_1, b_1) \}, \{ \text{tram}(a_3, h) \} \} \) and \( \nu(40) = \{ \} \) for all \( t \in T \setminus \{36, 40\} \). We will also represent the evaluation function \( \nu \) by according mappings, i.e., by \( \{36 \mapsto \{ \{ \text{tram}(a_1, b_1) \} \}, 40 \mapsto \{ \{ \text{tram}(a_3, h) \} \} \} \).

**Windows.** An essential aspect of stream reasoning is to restrict data to so-called windows, i.e., recent substreams to limit the amount of data and forget outdated information.

**Definition 2 (Window function)** A window function \( \nu_w \) of type \( \nu \) takes as input a stream \( S = (T, \nu) \), a time point \( t \in T \), called the reference time point, and a vector of window parameters \( \mathbf{x} \) for type \( \nu \) and returns a substream \( S' \) of \( S \) of.

The most common types of windows in practice are time-, tuple-, and partition-based windows. We associate them with three window functions \( \nu_w, \nu_{\mathbf{x}}, \) and \( \nu_{\mathbf{u}} \), respectively. Traditionally (Arasu et al., 2006), these window functions take a fixed size ranging back in time from a reference time point \( t \); we generalize this by allowing to look back and forth from \( t \). Intuitively, these functions work as follows.

- **Time-based:** \( \nu_{\mathbf{x}} = (t, u, d) \), where \( t, u \in \mathbb{N} \cup \{ \infty \} \) and \( d \in \mathbb{N} \). The function \( \nu_w(S, t, x) \) returns the substream of \( S \) that contains all tuples of the last \( t \) time units and the next \( u \) units relative to a pivot time point \( t' \) derived from \( t \) and the step size \( d \) (Fig. 2). We use \( t = \infty \) (resp. \( u = \infty \)) to take all previous (resp. later) tuples.

- **Tuple-based:** \( \nu_{\mathbf{x}} = (t, u) \), where \( t, u \in \mathbb{N} \). The function \( \nu_{\mathbf{x}}(S, t, x) \) returns the substream of \( S \) with the shortest interval \( [t, t_u] \subseteq T \) as timeline, where \( t_r \leq t \leq t_u \) such that \( t_r \) tuples are in \([t_r, t]\) and \( u \) tuples are in \([t + 1, t_u]\). Exactly \( t \), resp. \( u \) tuples are returned. In case of multiple options due to multiple tuples at time points \( t_u \), resp. \( t_r \), only tuples from there are removed at random.

- **Partition-based:** \( \nu_{\mathbf{x}} = (i, d) \), where \( i, d \in \mathbb{N} \). The function \( \nu_{\mathbf{x}}(S, t, x) \) selects a substream of \( S \) with the shortest interval \( [t_i, t_h] \subseteq T \) as timeline, where \( t_r \leq t \leq t_u \) such that \( t_r \) tuples are in \([t_r, t]\) and \( u \) tuples are in \([t + 1, t_u]\). Exactly \( i \), resp. \( d \) tuples are returned. In case of multiple options due to multiple tuples at time points \( t_i \), resp. \( t_h \), only tuples from there are removed at random.
Definition 3 (Time-based window func.) Let $S = (T, v)$ be a stream, $T = [t_{\min}, t_{\max}]$ and $t \in T$, $x = (\ell, u, d)$ where $\ell, u \in \mathbb{N} \cup \{\infty\}$ and $d \in \mathbb{N}$ such that $d \leq \ell + u$. The time-based window function with range $(\ell, u)$ and step size $d$ of $S$ at time $t$ is defined by $w_r(S, t, x) = (T', v|_{T'})$, where $T' = [t_0, t_u]$, $t_0 = \max\{t_{\min}, t' - \ell\}$ with $t' = \lfloor t/d \rfloor \cdot d$, and $t_u = \min\{t + u, t_{\max}\}$.

The following example demonstrates the use of time-based windows.

Example 3 (cont’d) On the data stream $D$ of Example 2, consider a monitoring use case where we want to know only the tram appearances reported within the last 4 minutes. To this end, we can use a time-based window function $w_r(D, t, (4, 0, 1))$ with a step size of 1. Applying it on $D$ at $t = 42$ gives $w_r(D, 42, (4, 0, 1)) = \{[38, 42), v'\}$, where $v' = \{40 \rightarrow \{\text{tram}(a_3, h)\}\}$.

The LARS Framework

We now define LARS, a logic-based framework for analyzing reasoning over streams. We present a logic with different means for time reference and time abstraction. On top of that, we will further introduce a rule language with a model-based, nonmonotonic semantics.

To account for the aspect of streaming, window operators of form $\square_{t, ch}^x$ are central to our approach. While a window function returns a stream $S'$ based on an input stream $S$ and a time point $t$, a window operator takes two streams as input. This allows us to distinguish between a fixed input stream $S^*$ and the currently considered window $S$. Therefore, prior to the application of a window function, a stream choice $ch$ selects a stream $S'$ based on two streams. We use two straightforward stream choices $ch_1(S^*, S) = S^*$ and $ch_2(S^*, S) = S$.

Definition 4 (Window operator) Let $w_i$ be a window function of type $i$, $ch$ a stream choice function, and $x$ a vector of window parameters for type $i$. Then, $\square_{t, ch}^x$ denotes a window operator.

We also omit $ch_2$ and simply write $\square_x$ for $\square_{t, ch_1}^x$. Furthermore, we use special syntax for typical parameters $x$ for tuple- and time-based windows with step size $d = 1$ and write only $\ell$ for $x$, if $u = 0$, and $t + u$, if $\ell = 0$. For instance,

$$\square_{t, ch_2} = \square_{t, ch_2}^{0,1} \quad \square_{t, ch_2}^{5} = \square_{t, ch_2}^{0,5,1} \quad \square_{t, ch_2}^{\ell} = \square_{t, ch_2}^{1,0}$$

Here, all operators extract tuples from the second stream. The symbol $\square_\ell$ abbreviates the time-based window operator that takes all tuples of the last 4 time points, while $\square_\ell^5$ takes all tuples of the next 5 time points. Moreover, $\square_{t, ch}^{\ell}$ takes the latest tuple which arrived until the reference time point.

Syntax. In addition to window operators, we use further means to refer to or abstract from time. Similarly as in modal logic, we use operators $\Box$ and $\Diamond$ to represent a that a tuple (atom) or formula holds at all times respectively some time in a window. Moreover, an $\exists t$ operator $\exists t$ is used to refer to specific time points.

Definition 5 (Formulas) Let $a \in A$ be an atom and $t \in \mathbb{N}$. The set $\mathcal{F}$ of formulas is defined by the following grammar:

$$\alpha ::= a \mid \neg \alpha \mid \alpha \land \alpha \mid \alpha \lor \alpha \mid \alpha \rightarrow \beta \mid \Box \alpha \mid \Diamond \alpha \mid \square_{t, ch}^x \alpha$$

Intuitively, given a stream $S^*$ and a considered window $S$ (which initially is $S^*$), a formula $\alpha$ will be evaluated based on a reference time point $t$ within $S$. An application of a window operator $\square_{t, ch}$ creates a new window $S'$ that depends on $S^*$ and $S$ as specified by the stream choice. Within the current window $S$, $\Diamond \alpha$ (resp. $\Box \alpha$) holds, if $\alpha$ holds at some time point (resp. at all time points) in $S$. Relative to $t$, the formula $\alpha$ holds if $\alpha$ is true at $t$, and $\Box \alpha$ holds if $t'$ is in the timeline of $S$ and $\alpha$ is true at $t'$.

Semantics. In addition to streams, we consider background knowledge in form of a static data set, i.e., a set $B \subseteq A$ of atoms which does not change over time. From a semantic perspective, the difference to streams is that static data is always available, regardless of window applications.

Definition 6 (Structure) Let $S = (T, v)$ be a stream, $W$ be a set of window functions and $B \subseteq A$ a set of facts. Then, we call $M = (T, v, W, B)$ a structure, $S$ the interpretation stream and $B$ the data set or background data of $M$.

We now define when a formula holds in a structure.

Definition 7 (Entailment) Let $M = (T^*, v^*, W, B)$ be a structure, $S^* = (T^*, v^*)$ and let $S = (T, v)$ be a substream of $S^*$. Moreover, let $t \in T$. The entailment relation $\models$ between $(M, S, t)$ and formulas is defined as follows. Let $a \in A$ be an atom, and let $\alpha, \beta \in \mathcal{F}$ be formulas. Then, $M, S, t \models a$ if $\alpha \in v(t)$ or $a = B$.

$M, S, t \models \neg \alpha$ if $M, S, t \not\models \alpha$

$M, S, t \models \alpha \land \beta$ if $M, S, t \models \alpha$ and $M, S, t \models \beta$

$M, S, t \models \alpha \lor \beta$ if $M, S, t \models \alpha$ or $M, S, t \models \beta$

$M, S, t \models \alpha \rightarrow \beta$ if $M, S, t \models \neg \alpha$ or $M, S, t \models \beta$

$M, S, t \models \Box \alpha$ if $M, S, t \models \alpha$ for some $t' \in T$.

$M, S, t \models \Diamond \alpha$ if $M, S, t' \models \alpha$ for all $t' \in T$.

$M, S, t \models \square_{t, \chi}^x \alpha$ if $M, S, t \models \alpha$ and $t' \in T$.

$M, S, t \models \square_{t, ch}^x \alpha$ if $M, S', t \models \alpha$, where $S' = w_i(ch(S^*, S), t, x)$.

If $M, S, t \models \alpha$ holds, we say that $(M, S, t)$ entails $\alpha$. Moreover, $M$ satisfies $\alpha$ at time $t$, if $(M, S^*, t)$ entails $\alpha$. In this case we write $M, t \models \alpha$ and call $M$ a model of $\alpha$ at time $t$.

Satisfaction and the notion of a model are extended to sets of formulas as usual.

Example 4 (cont’d) Let $D = (T, v)$ be the data stream of Ex. 3 and $S^* = (T^*, v^*) \supseteq D$ be a stream such that $T^* = T$ and

$$v^* = \{36 \rightarrow \{\text{tram}(a_1, b)\}, 40 \rightarrow \{\text{tram}(a_3, h)\}, 43 \rightarrow \{\text{exp}(a_3, m)\}, 44 \rightarrow \{\text{exp}(a_1, m)\}\}.$$
Let $M = (T^*, v^*, W, B)$, where $W = \{w_2\}$, and $B$ is the set of facts from the data tables in Example 1. Then it holds that $M, S^*, 42 \models \exists^+ \diamond \exp(a_3, m)$: The window operator $\exists^+_1$ selects $S' = (T', v')$, with timeline $T' = [42, 47]$ and $v' = \{43 \rightarrow \exp(a_3, m), 44 \rightarrow \exp(a_1, m)\}$, i.e., there is some $t' \in T'$ ($t' = 43$) s.t. $M, S', t' \models \exp(a_3, m)$.

**Programs.** Now we define a rule language for stream reasoning with semantics similar to Answer Set Programming.

**Definition 8 (Rule, Program)** A program $P$ is a set of rules, i.e., expressions of the form

$$\alpha \leftarrow \beta_1, \ldots, \beta_j, \neg \beta_{j+1}, \ldots, \neg \beta_n,$$

where $\beta_1, \ldots, \beta_n \in \mathcal{F}$ are formulas and $\alpha$ contains only intensional predicates.

Suppose we want to evaluate a program $P$ on a data stream $D$. Let $I = (T, v)$ be a stream such that $D \subseteq I$. If at every time point in $T$, all atoms that occur in $I$ but not in $D$ have intensional predicates, then we call $I$ an interpretation stream for $D$ and a structure $M = (T, v, W, B)$ an interpretation (for $D$). Let for any rule $r$ of form (1), be $\beta(r) = \beta_1 \land \ldots \land \beta_j \land \neg \beta_{j+1} \land \ldots \land \neg \beta_n$. We then say that $M$ is a model of $P$ (for $D$ at time point), denoted $M, t \models P$, if $M, t \models \beta(r)$ for all rules $r \in P$. We call $M$ a minimal model, if no model $M' = (T', v', W, B)$ of $P$ (for $D$ at time $t$) exists such that $(T', v') \subset (T, v)$. The reduc of a program $P$ w.r.t. $M$ at time $t$ is defined by $P^{M,t} = \{r \in P \mid M, t \models \beta(r)\}$, i.e., the subset of rules whose bodies are satisfied.

**Definition 9 (Answer Stream)** Let $M = (T, v, W, B)$ be a structure, where $I = (T, v)$ is an interpretation stream for a data stream $D$, let $P$ be a program and $t \in T$. Then, $I$ is called an answer stream of $P$ for $D$ at time $t$ (relative to $W$ and $B$) iff $M$ is a minimal model of the reduc $P^{M,t}$.

For ASP fragments of LARS, answer streams correspond to answer sets as defined by the FLP-reduct (Faber et al., 2004), which we formulated for LARS programs above. More precisely, consider an interpretation stream $I = (\{t\}, v')$ for a data stream $D = (\{t\}, v)$ and let $P$ be a program where in each rule of form (1) all body formulas $\beta_i$ are atoms and the head $\alpha$ is a disjunction of atoms with intensional predicates. Then, $I$ is an answer stream of $P$ at $t$ relative to some $W$ and $B$ iff $v'(t)$ is an answer set of $P \cup \{v(t) \cup B\}$.

Towards more conciseness, we consider schematic programs with variables of two sorts, namely constant variables and time variables. The semantics of these nonground programs is given by the answer streams of according groundings, obtained by replacing variables with constants from $C$, respectively time points from $T$, in all possible ways.

**Example 5 (cont’d)** The requests (i) and (ii) from Example 1 can be formulated by rules (2) and (3), respectively.

\[ \alpha \leftarrow \beta_1, \ldots, \beta_j, \neg \beta_{j+1}, \ldots, \neg \beta_n, \quad (1) \]

where $\beta_1, \ldots, \beta_n \in \mathcal{F}$ are formulas and $\alpha$ contains only intensional predicates.

Rule (2) encodes when a tram is expected at later stops. For the partition-based window operator $\exists^+ \diamond$, we use $\text{idx}(at) = i$ for an atom $at$ of form $\text{tram}(a_i, X)$ and $\text{idx}(at) = 0$ else. By the tuple-based windows of sizes $n(i) = (1, 0)$ for $i > 0$ and $n(0) = (0, 0)$ applied on the $i + 1$ obtained substreams, we thus get for each tram $a_i$, only its most recent appearance at some stop $X$. Usually, the expected arrival time on the next stop can be computed by the travelling duration according to the table plan. For the case of traffic jams within the last 20 minutes, we block such conclusions by means of default negation.

Next, rule (3) builds on the expected arrival times of rule (2) to identify good connections where the targeted tram is not old and the expected waiting time is at most 5 minutes. It uses a time-based window that looks 5 minutes ahead from the time when $\exp(Id_1, X)$ is concluded and checks the existence (operator $\odot$) of an expected (different) tram $Id_2$.

We observe that the interpretation stream of the structure $M$ of Example 4 is an answer stream of $P$ for $D$ at time $t$. Note that $\text{gc}(a_3, a_1, m)$ is not derived. Tram $a_1$ appears one minute after $a_3$ at Mozart Circus, but it is old.

The next example demonstrates another advantage of our rule-based approach, namely the possibility to obtain different models for nondeterministic choices.

**Example 6 (cont’d)** Consider an extended scenario where a tram with identifier $a_2$ of line $\ell_2$ is reported at Gilda Lane ($g$) at time point 38. This updates the data stream $D = (T, v)$ in Example 2 to $D' = (T, v')$, where $v' = v \cup \{38 \rightarrow \{\text{tram}(a_2, g)\}\}$. By the entries $\text{line}(a_2, \ell_2)$ and $\text{plan}(\ell_2, g, m, 7)$ in $B$, rule (2) derives that tram $a_2$ is expected to arrive at Mozart Circus at $t = 45$. Furthermore, we now assume that tram $a_1$ is not old, i.e., $\text{old}(a_1) \notin B$. This gives Bob three good connections at stop $m$, when leaving tram $a_3$ at minute 43:

\[ G = \{\text{gc}(a_3, a_1, m), \text{gc}(a_1, a_2, m), \text{gc}(a_3, a_2, m)\} \]

Bob is not interested in the connection from $a_1$ to $a_2$, since he is currently travelling with $a_3$. His smart phone streams an according tuple $\text{on}(a_3)$ at query time. This leaves him two options: He can either change to line $\ell_1$ (and take tram $a_1$ after 1 minute at time point 44), or to line $\ell_2$ (and take tram $a_2$ after 2 minutes at 45). The following two rules formalize the possibility to either change trams or skip a good connection:

\[ \text{change}(Id_1, Id_2, X) \leftarrow \text{on}(Id_1), \text{gc}(Id_1, Id_2, X), \]

\[ \neg \text{skip}(Id_1, Id_2, X). \quad (4) \]

\[ \text{skip}(Id_1, Id_2, X) \leftarrow \text{gc}(Id_1, Id_2, X), \text{change}(Id_1, Id_3, X), \]

\[ Id_2 \neq Id_3. \quad (5) \]

Consider the program $P$ consisting of the rules (2)-(5). Moreover, let $D'' = (T, v'')$ be the data stream obtained from $D'$ by adding $\{42 \rightarrow \{\text{on}(a_3)\}\}$ to the evaluation and let $I_0 = (T, v_0), I_1 = (T, v_1)$ and $I_2 = (T, v_2)$ be the following interpretation streams for $D''$: We take

\[ v_0 = v \cup \{42 \rightarrow G, 43 \rightarrow \{\exp(a_3, m)\}\}, \]

and for $i \in \{1, 2\}$, let $v_i = v_0 \cup \{42 \rightarrow \text{choice}_i\}$, where

\[ \text{choice}_1 = \{\text{change}(a_3, a_1, m), \text{skip}(a_3, a_2, m)\}, \]

\[ \text{choice}_2 = \{\text{change}(a_3, a_2, m), \text{skip}(a_3, a_1, m)\}. \]
Table 1: Reasoning in ground LARS (completeness results)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasoning Task</th>
<th>Complexity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model Checking (MC)</td>
<td>( \text{PSPACE}/P )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfiability (SAT)</td>
<td>( \text{PSPACE}/\text{co-NP} )</td>
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<tr>
<td>( \text{P}/\text{P} )</td>
<td>( \text{PSPACE}/\Sigma_2^P )</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Table 1 shows the complexity of reasoning in ground LARS, where \( \alpha, P \) are formulas resp. programs with nesting of window operators bounded by a constant. Note that the problems refer to the more general notion of entailment but (hardness) results carry over to satisfaction. The complexity of the general case is based on the following theorem.

**Theorem 1** Given a structure \( M = (T, v, W, B) \), a stream \( S \), a time point \( t \), and an arbitrary ground formula \( \alpha \), deciding \( M, S, t \models \alpha \) is \( \text{PSPACE-complete} \), and \( \text{PSPACE-hardness} \) holds for \( S = (T, v) \).

Intuitively, \( \text{PSPACE} \)-membership can be shown by a depth-first-search evaluation of a formula along its tree representation. At each node of the tree, we need to store the content according to the window operators applied as in the path from the root, which requires only polynomial space.

The \( \text{PSPACE} \)-hardness can be shown by a reduction from evaluating \( \text{QBFs} \) \( \exists x_1 \forall x_2 \ldots Q_n x_n \phi(x) \) to LARS MC. A LARS formula \( \alpha = (\exists^1 \phi \land \exists^2 \psi \ldots \phi(x) \land \Phi) \) on the time line \( T = [0, 1] \) is constructed where \( \exists^i \) effects the possible truth assignments to \( x_i \) at the time points 0 or 1, and \( \phi, \psi \) naturally encode the quantifiers \( \exists \) and \( \forall \).

The next result addresses the complexity of MC for ground LARS programs.

**Theorem 2** MC for LARS programs, i.e., given a structure \( M = (T, v, W, B) \), a data stream \( D \), a program \( P \), and a time point \( t \), decide whether \( I = (T, v) \) is an answer stream of \( P \) for \( D \) at time \( t \), is \( \text{PSPACE-complete} \).

Proof. To decide the problem, we can (a) check that \( I \) is an interpretation stream for \( D \), (b) compute \( P^{M, t} \), and (c) check that \( M \) is a minimal model of \( P^{M, t} \), i.e., that (c.1) \( M, t \models P^{M, t} \) and (c.2) no \( M' = (T', v', W, B) \), with \( (T', v') \subset (T, v) \) exists s.t. \( M', t \models P^{M, t} \). Now,

1. step (a) is trivially polynomial;
2. steps (b) and (c.1) are feasible in polynomial time using a PSPACE oracle; and
3. step (c.2) is feasible in nondeterministic polynomial time using a PSPACE oracle (guess \( (T', v') \) and check \( M', t \models P^{M, t} \)).

Overall, the computation is feasible in NPSpace, thus in PSPACE (as NPSpace = PSPACE).

PSPACE-hardness of the problem is immediate from Theorem 1: let \( P = \{ \alpha \leftarrow \top \} \), where \( \top \) is an arbitrary tautology and exploit \( S = (T, v) \). \( \square \)

Under restrictions, however, MC may be tractable. This holds e.g. for the important case where only time-based windows are allowed. In case of \( \alpha^- \), the evaluation tree for MC has only polynomially many window contents to process, and we can use a standard labeling technique to evaluate formulas bottom up (from subformulas) in polynomial time.

SAT for \( \alpha \) (resp. \( \alpha^- \)) is in PSPACE (resp. NP) as guess and check establishes membership, and hardness is inherited from MC (resp. from propositional SAT). For monotone (e.g., time-based) window functions, the results apply setting \( A' \) to the atoms in \( \alpha \); also for tuple-based and partition-based windows reasonable assumptions (e.g., \( \ell, u \ll \#S \) and idx monotone) yield only polynomially larger \( A' \).
For LARS programs, building the reduct \( P^{\mathcal{M},t} \) is for \( P \) (resp. \( P^t \)) feasible in polynomial space (resp. time); the minimality check is feasible in polynomial space (resp. requires a polynomial guess to refute minimality). A more detailed complexity analysis including schematic programs (with \( A \) possibly infinite) is subject to ongoing work.

Capturing CQL

The Continuous Query Language (CQL) (Arasu, Babu, and Widom 2006) is an SQL based language for maintaining continuous queries over streaming data. It extends SQL with different operators. Two important ones are:

- **Stream-to-relation (S2R)** operators apply window functions to the input stream to create a mapping from execution times to bags of valid tuples (w.r.t. the window) without timestamps. This mapping is called a relation.

- **Relation-to-relation (R2R)** operators can manipulate relations similarly as in relational algebra, respectively SQL.

**Example 8** The request (i) from Example 1 can be represented by the following CQL query.

```sql
SELECT ID, PLAN.Y, T2
FROM TRAM[PARTITION BY ID ROWS 1], LINE, PLAN
WHERE TRAM.ID=LINE.ID AND LINE.L=PLAN.L AND TRAM.ST=PLAN.X AND T2=TRAM.T+PLAN.Z
```

Note that these streams have designated timestamp fields.

To capture CQL queries by LARS formulas, we exploit two well-known translations: from SQL to relational algebra (Dadashzadeh and Semple 1990) and from relational algebra to Datalog (Garcia-Molina, Ullman, and Widom 2009). Let us call the former \( \Delta_p \) and the latter \( \Delta_i \).

The idea is to have a 3-step process, given a CQL query \( q \):

1. apply a translation \( \Delta_{SRC} \) (Table 2) to the input streams (with windows) and tables in the FROM and WHERE clauses of \( q \). Let \( \Delta_{SRC}(q) \) denote the result of applying \( \Delta_{SRC} \) on the input streams of \( q \). Considering the formulas of \( \Delta_{SRC}(s) \) as table names, we get an SQL query;
2. apply \( \Delta_i \) on this query to get a relational algebra expression; and
3. apply \( \Delta_q \) on the expression to get a program.

Considering the translated table names as LARS formulas, we get a LARS program. Formally speaking, the translation of a CQL query \( q \) is \( \Delta(q) = \Delta_i(\Delta_p(\Delta_{SRC}(q))) \), and that of a set of CQL queries is given by \( \Delta(Q) = \bigcup_{q \in Q} \Delta(q) \).

**Example 9** The translation of the CQL query in Ex. 8 is:

\[
q_1(P_1) \leftarrow \tau_1^{\text{idx,n}} \triangleright \text{tram}(Id, ST, T_1), \text{line}(Id, L), \text{plan}(L, X, Y, Z), ST = X, T_2 = T_1 + Z. \\
q_2(P_2) \leftarrow \tau_2^{\text{jam}(ST, T_3), \tau_3^{\text{idx,n}} \triangleright \text{tram}(Id, ST, T_1)}. \\
q_3(P_1, \ldots, P_n) \leftarrow q_1(P_1), q_2(P_2), \ldots, q_n(P_n). \\
q(P) \leftarrow q_1(P_1), \ldots, q_n(P_n), \text{not } q_{12}(P_{12}),
\]

where \( P_1 = Id, ST, X, Y, Z, T_1, T_2; \ P_2 = Id, ST, T_1, T_3; \ P_3 = P_1, T_3; \ P = Id, Y, T_2; \) and \( \text{idx, n} \) are from Ex. 5.

### Table 2: Translation function \( \Delta_{SRC} \)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Input source ( s )</th>
<th>( \Delta_{SRC}(s) )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>( S )</td>
<td>( \tau_1^{\text{t}} \triangleright S )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( S[\text{RANGE L}] )</td>
<td>( \tau_1^{L_0, D} \triangleright S )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( S[\text{RANGE UNBOUNDED}] )</td>
<td>( \triangleright S )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( S[\text{NOW}] )</td>
<td>( \tau_1^{\text{n}} \triangleright S )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( S[\text{ROWS N}] )</td>
<td>( \tau_1^{\text{id}, n} \triangleright S )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( S[\text{PARTITION BY X}_1, \ldots, X_k \text{ ROWS N}] )</td>
<td>( \tau_1^{\text{id}, n} \triangleright S )</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To establish the correspondence between the result of a set \( Q \) of CQL queries and its LARS translation \( \Delta(Q) \), we first formally build a conversion of CQL streams to a LARS input stream. W.l.o.g., assume that \( Q \) is evaluated on a background data table \( B \) and input streams \( S_1, \ldots, S_n \), and that any stream is only used in one place in the FROM clause in a single query (we can always duplicate streams and rename them). These input streams can be represented as the set \( S = \{(S_i(a_{ij}), t_{ij}) | 1 \leq i \leq n, 1 \leq j \leq m_i \} \).

The corresponding representation of the input stream in LARS is defined by \( \forall(S) = (T_3, v_3) \), where for \( 1 \leq i \leq n \), and \( 1 \leq j \leq m_i \):

\[
T_3 = \{t_{\min}, t_{\max}\} \quad t_{\min} = \min\{t_{ij}\} \quad t_{\max} = \max\{t_{ij}\}.
\]

Let \( res(q, t) \) denote the set of all answers to \( q \) and let \( res(Q, t) = \bigcup_{q \in Q} res(q, t) \). The following theorem shows that the translation \( \Delta \) faithfully captures CQL.

**Theorem 3** Let \( Q \) be a set of CQL queries to be evaluated on input streams \( S = S_1, \ldots, S_n \) and a background data table \( B \), \( P = \Delta(Q) \), and \( t \) a time point. Then,

(a) There exists an answer stream \( I = (T, v) \) of \( P \) for \( \forall(S) \) at \( t \), such that \( v(t)|_Q = res(Q, t) \).

(b) If \( I = (T, v) \) is an answer stream of \( P \) for \( \forall(S) \) at \( t \), then \( res(Q, t) = v(t)|_Q \).

Intuitively, (b) establishes the soundness and (a) the completeness of the translation \( \Delta \).

**Proof (Sketch).** Given a set of CQL queries \( Q \) and its translated LARS program \( \Delta(Q) \), we establish the correspondence between their answers by a translation from \( Q \) to a Datalog program \( \Delta_D(Q) \). Briefly, \( \Delta_D(Q) \) is constructed in a similar way as \( \Delta(Q) \), except that the first step translates the input streams (with windows) to plain table names instead of LARS formulas. Formally speaking, this is done by a renaming function \( \text{ren} \) instead of \( \Delta_{SRC} \). Then, we apply \( \Delta_p \) and \( \Delta_i \) to get \( \Delta_D(Q) = \bigcup_{q \in Q} \Delta_i(\Delta_p(\text{ren}(q))) \). Note that both \( \Delta(Q) \) and \( \Delta_D(Q) \) are acyclic programs, thus each of them has a unique minimal model.

By the correctness of \( \Delta_p \) and \( \Delta_i \), the unique answer set of \( \Delta_D(Q) \) and the result set of \( Q \) correspond. Moreover, one can guarantee that \( \Delta(Q) \) and \( \Delta_D(Q) \) are evaluated essentially on the same input (despite slightly different representation) when computing answers for the same reference time.
point. As moreover the programs are structurally the same, they correspond on their unique answer set/answer stream.

The two above observations yield the desired correspondence result between the results of \( Q \) and the answer stream of the respective LARS program \( \Delta(Q) \).

Relation to ETALIS

Related to stream processing is \textit{complex event processing} (CEP), which is concerned with describing and detecting complex events (high-level information) based on atomic events (low-level information) of a stream. Complex events are typically expressed over time intervals. By briefly studying the well-known CEP language ETALIS (Anicic et al. 2010), we will draw a line between stream reasoning and complex event processing by means of our formalization.

In ETALIS, an \textit{event stream} \( \epsilon \) maps atomic events (ground atoms) to time points. Instead of non-negative rational numbers, we use natural numbers, which suffice for practical purposes. Complex events can be constructed by rules on \textit{event patterns}, which are similar to interval relations by Allen (1983). An interpretation \( \mathcal{I} \) maps atoms to sets of pairs \( (t_1, t_2) \in \mathbb{N} \times \mathbb{N} \), which represent intervals \( [t_1, t_2] \).

Intuitively, \( \mathcal{I} \) satisfies a rule \( a \leftarrow pt \), if the atom \( a \) holds at least in the set of intervals where the event pattern \( pt \) holds. For an event stream \( \epsilon \) and a rule base \( \mathcal{R} \), Anicic et al. define ETALIS semantics in terms of minimal models that (i) map each atomic event \( a \) to the interval \( (t, t) \) if \( a \) occurs in \( \epsilon \) at time point \( t \), and (ii) satisfy each rule \( r \in \mathcal{R} \).

Intervals in LARS. Although LARS is based on time points, we can express ETALIS patterns that are based on intervals. Consider a window function \( w_{int} \) that selects the substring of (the greatest timeline within) a given interval \( [t, u] \), and a window operator \( \boxplus [t,u] \) that employs \( w_{int} \) on the input stream. Furthermore, let \( [[t,u]] \) stand for \( \boxplus [0, \infty) \cap \boxplus [t,u] \), i.e., first create a view on the entire input stream, jump to reference time \( u \), then select the substring of the timeline \( [t, u] \) and apply \( \boxplus \). Then, the formula \( [[t, u]]a \) holds if \( a \) holds at every time point in the interval \( [t, u] \), regardless of the query time. Similarly, we can define \( [[t, u]]^* \) such that \( [[t, u]]^*a \) holds if \( [[t, u]]a \) is a maximal interval in which \( a \) always holds.

**Example 10** Consider the events \( x \) and \( y \) which hold in the intervals given by the pairs \( (t_1, t_2) \) and \( (t_3, t_4) \), respectively, where \( t_2 < t_3 \). Then, the ETALIS rule \( z \leftarrow x \ SEQ y \) assigns the pair \( (t_1, t_2) \) to \( z \). It may be modelled in LARS by the rule \( [[t_1, t_2]]z \leftarrow [[t_1, t_2]]^*x, [[t_3, t_4]]^*y, t_2 < t_3 \), i.e., if \( x \) holds in the entire interval \( [t_1, t_2] \) (but not in any larger interval) and \( y \) holds throughout the later interval \( [t_3, t_4] \) (also maximally), than \( z \) must hold throughout \( [t_1, t_2] \).

We call \( \mathcal{I} \) separable, if such overlaps do not occur. If the minimal model of an event stream \( \epsilon \) and a rule base \( \mathcal{R} \) is separable, we also call the pair \( \epsilon, \mathcal{R} \) separable. In this case, the approach of Ex. 10 allows us to capture ETALIS. In our subsequent results we confine to positive rule bases, i.e., without the \textit{NOT} pattern. Our notion of minimality is based on set inclusion, whereas ETALIS defines minimality in terms of a different preference relation that ensures the minimal length and the supportedness of inferred intervals. By this, the minimal model is always unique, while a natural translation of negation in LARS would give multiple models in general. Capturing ETALIS’ minimal model semantics of \textit{NOT} patterns in LARS would require a more involved and less direct translation (which is beyond the scope of this work).

**Theorem 4** Let \( \epsilon \) be an event stream, let \( \mathcal{R} \) be a positive rule base (i.e. without negation) such that \( \epsilon, \mathcal{R} \) is separable, and let \( \mathcal{I} \) be an interpretation for \( \epsilon, \mathcal{R} \). Then one can construct a LARS input stream \( \Delta \), a program \( \Delta^\mathcal{R} \), and an interpretation stream \( \Delta^\mathcal{R} = (T, v) \), such that for each \( t \in T \), \( \mathcal{I} \) is the minimal model for \( \epsilon, \mathcal{R} \) if \( \Delta^\mathcal{R} \) is the answer stream of \( \Delta^\mathcal{R} \) at time \( t \) relative to \( W = \{w_{int}\} \) and \( B = \emptyset \).

Taking LARS and ETALIS as reference languages, separability can thus be regarded as the dividing line between stream reasoning and complex event processing. Under a stream reasoning view on ETALIS, focusing on truth at single time points, we get correspondence.

**Corollary 1** Let \( \epsilon \) be an event stream, \( \mathcal{R} \) be a positive rule base such that the minimal model \( \mathcal{I} \) of \( \epsilon, \mathcal{R} \) is separable and let \( \Delta^\epsilon = (T, v) \), i.e., the answer stream of \( \Delta^\mathcal{R} \). Then, for all atoms \( a \in \mathcal{A} \) and for all \( t \in T \), \( a \in v(t) \) iff there exists an interval \( (t_1, t_2) \in \mathcal{I}(a) \) such that \( t \in [t_1, t_2] \).

In summary, we have shown how LARS operators can be naturally used to reason over time intervals. However, the presented intuitive approach is less expressive than ETALIS, where an atom can be assigned to overlapping intervals. On the other hand, the minimal model of the monotonic ETALIS semantics can be constructed by computing fixed-points for intervals of increasing size. Hence, with an explicit encoding of intervals \( (t_1, t_2) \) into atoms that contain \( t_1 \) and \( t_2 \) as terms, one can mimic the bottom-up evaluation of such models with ASP and thus also with LARS. It is a research topic on its own to find a suitable extension of LARS for nonmonotonic complex event processing that builds upon an evaluation \( v : T \times T \rightarrow 2^A \) mapping intervals to atoms.

Related Work

In the Semantic Web area, the SPARQL language was extended to queries on streams of RDF triples; respective engines such as CQELS (Phuc et al. 2011), C-SPARQL (Barbieri et al. 2010), and SPARQLStream (Cälbimonte, Corcho, and Gray 2010) follow the snapshot semantics approach of CQL. However, they face difficulties with extensions incorporating the Closed World Assumption, nonmonotonicity, or nondeterminism. Such features are important to deal with missing or incomplete data, which can, e.g., temporarily happen due to unstable network connections or hardware failure. In this case, these engines remain idle, while some output based on default reasoning might be useful.
In KR&R, first attempts towards expressive stream reasoning have been recently carried out and reveal many open problems. The plain approach of Do, Loke, and Liu (2011) periodically calls the dlvhex solver (Eiter et al. 2006) without incremental reasoning and thus cannot handle heavy data load. StreamLog (Zaniolo 2012) extends Datalog towards stream reasoning, based on stratification (which guarantees a single model), while OSMS (Ren and Pan 2011) considers streams of ontologies. Both StreamLog and OSMS have no window mechanisms. Time-decaying logic programs (Gebser et al. 2012) aim to implement time-based windows in reactive ASP (Gebser et al. 2008), whose relation to other stream processing/reasoning approaches is unexplored.

Moreover, as observed by Dindar et al. (2013), conceptually identical queries may produce different results on different engines. This may be due to differences (i.e., flaws) in implementations, but might also arise from (correct implementations of) different semantics. Comparisons between different approaches are confined to experimental analysis (Phuoc et al. 2012) or informal examination on specific examples. For the user it is important to know the exact capabilities and semantic behaviors of given approaches for systematic analysis and comparison.

Conclusion

We presented LARS, an expressive rule-based modelling language to formalize and analyze stream reasoning semantics. It provides an idealized model-based, nonmonotonic semantics as timestamps are not dropped but can be abstracted away. LARS allows to distinguish truth of a formula at (i) specific time points, but also (ii) at some resp. every time point in a window; furthermore, it offers general window mechanisms. Time-decaying logic programs (Gebser et al. 2012) aim to implement time-based windows in reactive ASP (Gebser et al. 2008), whose relation to other stream processing/reasoning approaches is unexplored.

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References


