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Proving and Disproving Termination of Higher-Order Functions

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Abstract. The dependency pair technique is a powerful modular method for automated termination proofs of term rewrite systems (TRSs). We present two important extensions of this technique: First, we show how to prove termination of *higher-order* functions using dependency pairs. To this end, the dependency pair technique is extended to handle (untyped) applicative TRSs. Second, we introduce a method to prove *non-termination* with dependency pairs, while up to now dependency pairs were only used to verify termination. Our results lead to a framework for combining termination and non-termination techniques for first- and higher-order functions in a very flexible way. We implemented and evaluated our results in the automated termination prover AProVE.

1 Introduction

One of the most powerful techniques to prove termination or innermost termination of TRSs automatically is the *dependency pair approach* [4, 12, 13]. In [16], we recently showed that dependency pairs can be used as a general framework to combine arbitrary techniques for termination analysis in a modular way. The general idea of this framework is to solve termination problems by repeatedly decomposing them into sub-problems. We call this new concept the “dependency pair *framework*” (“DP framework”) to distinguish it from the old “dependency pair *approach*”. In particular, this framework also facilitates the development of new methods for termination analysis. After recapitulating the basics of the DP framework in Sect. 2, we present two new significant improvements: in Sect. 3 we extend the framework in order to handle *higher-order* functions and in Sect. 4 we show how to use the DP framework to prove *non-termination*. Sect. 5 summarizes our results and describes their empirical evaluation with the system AProVE.

2 The Dependency Pair Framework

We refer to [6] for the basics of rewriting and to [4, 13, 16] for motivations and details on dependency pairs. We only regard finite signatures and TRSs and $\mathcal{T}(\mathcal{F}, \mathcal{V})$ denotes the set of terms over the signature \mathcal{F} and the infinite set of variables $\mathcal{V} = \{x, y, z, \dots, \alpha, \beta, \dots\}$. \mathcal{R} is a *TRS over \mathcal{F}* if $l, r \in \mathcal{T}(\mathcal{F}, \mathcal{V})$ for all rules $l \rightarrow r \in \mathcal{R}$.

Our approach is restricted to untyped higher-order functions which do not use λ -abstraction. To represent higher-order functions, we use the well-known approach to encode them in curried form as *applicative* first-order TRSs (cf. e.g., [21]). A signature \mathcal{F} is called *applicative* if it only contains nullary function symbols and a binary symbol $'$ for function application. Moreover, any TRS \mathcal{R} over \mathcal{F} is called *applicative*. So for example, instead of a term $\text{map}(\alpha, x)$ we

write $'(\text{map}, \alpha), x)$. To ease readability, we use $'$ as an infix-symbol and to avoid unnecessary parentheses, we let $'$ associate to the left. Then this term can be written as $\text{map}' \alpha' x$. In this way, one can easily encode typical higher-order functional programs as first-order TRSs, provided that these programs do not use λ -abstractions.

Example 1 *The function map is used to apply a function to all elements in a list. Instead of the higher-order rules $\text{map}(\alpha, \text{nil}) \rightarrow \text{nil}$ and $\text{map}(\alpha, \text{cons}(x, xs)) \rightarrow \text{cons}(\alpha(x), \text{map}(\alpha, xs))$, we encode it by the following first-order TRS.*

$$\text{map}' \alpha' \text{nil} \rightarrow \text{nil} \quad (1)$$

$$\text{map}' \alpha' (\text{cons}' x' xs) \rightarrow \text{cons}' (\alpha' x)' (\text{map}' \alpha' xs) \quad (2)$$

A TRS is terminating if all reductions are finite, i.e., if all functions encoded in the TRS terminate. So intuitively, the TRS $\{(1), (2)\}$ is terminating iff the function map terminates whenever its arguments are terminating terms.

For a TRS \mathcal{R} over \mathcal{F} , the *defined symbols* are $\mathcal{D} = \{\text{root}(l) \mid l \rightarrow r \in \mathcal{R}\}$ and the *constructors* are $\mathcal{C} = \mathcal{F} \setminus \mathcal{D}$. For every $f \in \mathcal{F}$ let f^\sharp be a fresh *tuple symbol* with the same arity as f , where we often write F for f^\sharp . The set of tuple symbols is denoted by \mathcal{F}^\sharp . If $t = g(t_1, \dots, t_m)$ with $g \in \mathcal{D}$, we let t^\sharp denote $g^\sharp(t_1, \dots, t_m)$.

Definition 2 (Dependency Pair) *The set of dependency pairs for a TRS \mathcal{R} is $DP(\mathcal{R}) = \{l^\sharp \rightarrow t^\sharp \mid l \rightarrow r \in \mathcal{R}, t \text{ is a subterm of } r, \text{root}(t) \in \mathcal{D}\}$.*

Example 3 *In the TRS of Ex. 1, the only defined symbol is $'$ and map , cons , and nil are constructors. Let AP denote the tuple symbol for $'$. Then we have the following dependency pairs where s is the term $\text{AP}(\text{map}' \alpha, \text{cons}' x' xs)$.*

$$s \rightarrow \text{AP}(\text{cons}' (\alpha' x), \text{map}' \alpha' xs) \quad (3) \qquad s \rightarrow \text{AP}(\text{map}' \alpha, xs) \quad (6)$$

$$s \rightarrow \text{AP}(\text{cons}, \alpha' x) \quad (4) \qquad s \rightarrow \text{AP}(\text{map}, \alpha) \quad (7)$$

$$s \rightarrow \text{AP}(\alpha, x) \quad (5)$$

For termination, we try to prove that there are no infinite *chains* of dependency pairs. Intuitively, a dependency pair corresponds to a function call and a chain represents a possible sequence of calls that can occur during a reduction. We always assume that different occurrences of dependency pairs are variable disjoint and consider substitutions whose domains may be infinite. In the following definition, \mathcal{P} is usually a set of dependency pairs.

Definition 4 (Chain) *Let \mathcal{P}, \mathcal{R} be TRSs. A (possibly infinite) sequence of pairs $s_1 \rightarrow t_1, s_2 \rightarrow t_2, \dots$ from \mathcal{P} is a $(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{R})$ -chain iff there is a substitution σ with $t_i \sigma \rightarrow_{\mathcal{R}}^* s_{i+1} \sigma$ for all i . It is an innermost $(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{R})$ -chain iff $t_i \sigma \xrightarrow{\mathcal{R}}^* s_{i+1} \sigma$ and $s_i \sigma$ is in normal form w.r.t. \mathcal{R} for all i . Here, “ $\xrightarrow{\mathcal{R}}$ ” denotes innermost reductions.*

Example 5 *The sequence “(6), (6)” is a chain. The reason is that an instance of the right-hand side $\text{AP}(\text{map}' \alpha_1, xs_1)$ of (6) can reduce to an instance of its left-hand side $\text{AP}(\text{map}' \alpha_2, \text{cons}' x_2' xs_2)$.*

Theorem 6 (Termination Criterion [4]) *A TRS \mathcal{R} is (innermost) terminating iff there is no infinite (innermost) $(DP(\mathcal{R}), \mathcal{R})$ -chain.*

The idea of the DP framework is to treat a set of dependency pairs \mathcal{P} together with the TRS \mathcal{R} and to prove absence of infinite $(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{R})$ -chains instead of examining $\rightarrow_{\mathcal{R}}$. The advantages of this framework were illustrated in [16].

Formally, a *dependency pair problem* (“DP problem”)¹ consists of two TRSs \mathcal{P} and \mathcal{R} (where initially, $\mathcal{P} = DP(\mathcal{R})$) and a flag $e \in \{\mathbf{t}, \mathbf{i}\}$ which stands for “**t**ermination” or “**i**nnermost termination”. Instead of “ $(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{R})$ -chains” we also speak of “ $(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{R}, \mathbf{t})$ -chains” and instead of “innermost $(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{R})$ -chains” we speak of “ $(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{R}, \mathbf{i})$ -chains”. Our goal is to show that there is no infinite $(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{R}, e)$ -chain. In this case, we call the problem *finite* and it is *infinite* iff it is not finite or if \mathcal{R} is not terminating (if $e = \mathbf{t}$) resp. not innermost terminating (if $e = \mathbf{i}$). Thus, there can be DP problems which are both finite and infinite, but this does not cause any difficulties, cf. [16]. If one detects an infinite problem during a termination proof, one can always abort the proof, since termination has been disproved (if all proof steps were “complete”, i.e., if they preserved the termination behavior).

A DP problem $(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{R}, e)$ is *applicative* iff \mathcal{R} is a TRS over an applicative signature \mathcal{F} , and for all $s \rightarrow t \in \mathcal{P}$, we have $t \notin \mathcal{V}$, $\{\text{root}(s), \text{root}(t)\} \subseteq \mathcal{F}^\sharp$, and all function symbols below the root of s or t are from \mathcal{F} . We also say that such a problem is an applicative DP problem *over* \mathcal{F} .

Termination techniques should now operate on DP problems instead of TRSs. We refer to such techniques as *dependency pair processors* (“DP processors”). Formally, a DP processor is a function *Proc* which takes a DP problem as input and returns a new set of DP problems which then have to be solved instead. Alternatively, it can also return “no”. A DP processor *Proc* is *sound* if for all DP problems d , d is finite whenever *Proc*(d) is not “no” and all DP problems in *Proc*(d) are finite. *Proc* is *complete* if for all DP problems d , d is infinite whenever *Proc*(d) is “no” or when *Proc*(d) contains an infinite DP problem.

Soundness of a DP processor *Proc* is required to prove termination (in particular, to conclude that d is finite if *Proc*(d) = \emptyset). Completeness is needed to prove non-termination (in particular, to conclude that d is infinite if *Proc*(d) = no).

So termination proofs in the DP framework start with the initial DP problem $(DP(\mathcal{R}), \mathcal{R}, e)$, where e depends on whether one wants to prove termination or innermost termination. Then this problem is transformed repeatedly by sound DP processors. If the final processors return empty sets of DP problems, then termination is proved. If one of the processors returns “no” and all processors used before were complete, then one has disproved termination of the TRS \mathcal{R} .

Example 7 *If d_0 is the initial DP problem $(DP(\mathcal{R}), \mathcal{R}, e)$ and there are sound processors $Proc_0, Proc_1, Proc_2$ with $Proc_0(d_0) = \{d_1, d_2\}$, $Proc_1(d_1) = \emptyset$, and $Proc_2(d_2) = \emptyset$, then one can conclude termination. But if $Proc_1(d_1) = \text{no}$, and both $Proc_0$ and $Proc_1$ are complete, then one can conclude non-termination.*

3 DP Processors for Higher-Order Functions

Since we represent higher-order functions by first-order applicative TRSs, all existing techniques and DP processors for first-order TRSs can also be used for higher-order functions. However, most termination techniques rely on the outermost function symbol when comparing terms. This is also true for dependency

¹ To ease readability we use a simpler definition of *DP problems* than [16], since this simple definition suffices for the new results of this paper.

pairs and standard reduction orders. Therefore, they usually fail for applicative TRSs since here, all terms except variables and constants have the same root symbol $'$. For example, a direct termination proof of Ex. 1 is impossible with standard reduction orders and difficult² with dependency pairs.

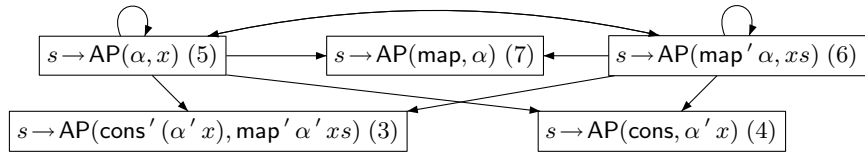
Therefore, in Sect. 3.1 and Sect. 3.2 we improve the most important processors of the DP framework in order to be successful on applicative TRSs. Moreover, we introduce a new processor in Sect. 3.3 which removes the symbol $'$ and transforms applicative TRSs and DP problems into ordinary (functional) form again. Sect. 5 shows that these contributions indeed yield a powerful termination technique for higher-order functions. Sect. 3.4 is a comparison with related work.

3.1 A DP Processor Based on the Dependency Graph

The *dependency graph* determines which pairs can follow each other in chains.

Definition 8 (Dependency Graph) *Let $(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{R}, e)$ be a DP problem. The nodes of the $(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{R}, e)$ -dependency graph are the pairs of \mathcal{P} and there is an arc from $s \rightarrow t$ to $u \rightarrow v$ iff $s \rightarrow t, u \rightarrow v$ is an $(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{R}, e)$ -chain.*

Example 9 *For Ex. 1, we obtain the following $(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{R}, e)$ -dependency graph for both $e = \mathbf{t}$ and $e = \mathbf{i}$. The reason is that the right-hand sides of (3), (4), and (7) have $\mathbf{cons}'(\alpha'x)$, \mathbf{cons} , or \mathbf{map} as their first arguments. No instance of these terms reduces to an instance of $\mathbf{map}'\alpha$ (which is the first argument of s).*



A set \mathcal{P}' of dependency pairs is a *cycle* iff for all $s \rightarrow t$ and $u \rightarrow v$ in \mathcal{P}' , there is a path from $s \rightarrow t$ to $u \rightarrow v$ traversing only pairs of \mathcal{P}' . A cycle \mathcal{P}' is a *strongly connected component* (“SCC”) if \mathcal{P}' is not a proper subset of any other cycle. As absence of infinite chains can be proved separately for every SCC, one can modularize termination proofs by decomposing a DP problem into several sub-problems.

Theorem 10 (Dependency Graph Processor [16]) *For any DP problem $(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{R}, e)$, let Proc return $\{(\mathcal{P}_1, \mathcal{R}, e), \dots, (\mathcal{P}_n, \mathcal{R}, e)\}$, where $\mathcal{P}_1, \dots, \mathcal{P}_n$ are the SCCs of the $(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{R}, e)$ -dependency graph. Then Proc is sound and complete.*

For Ex. 1, we start with the initial DP problem $(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{R}, e)$, where $\mathcal{P} = \{(3), \dots, (7)\}$. The only SCC of the dependency graph is $\{(5), (6)\}$. So the above processor transforms $(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{R}, e)$ into $(\{(5), (6)\}, \mathcal{R}, e)$, i.e., (3), (4), and (7) are deleted.

Unfortunately, the dependency graph is not computable. Therefore, for automation one constructs an *estimated* graph containing at least all arcs of the real graph. The existing estimations that are used for automation [4, 17] assume that all subterms with defined root could possibly be evaluated. Therefore, they use a function CAP, where $\text{CAP}(t)$ results from replacing all subterms of t with

² It needs complex DP processors or base orders (e.g., non-linear polynomial orders).

defined root symbol by different fresh variables. To estimate whether $s \rightarrow t$ and $u \rightarrow v$ form a chain, one checks whether $\text{CAP}(t)$ unifies with u (after renaming their variables). Moreover, if one regards termination instead of innermost termination, one first has to linearize $\text{CAP}(t)$, i.e., multiple occurrences of the same variable in $\text{CAP}(t)$ are renamed apart. Further refinements of this estimation can be found in [17]; however, they rely on the same function CAP.

These estimations are not suitable for applicative TRSs. The problem is that there, *all* subterms except variables and constants have the defined root symbol $'$ and are thus replaced by variables when estimating the arcs of the dependency graph. So for Ex. 1, the estimations assume that (3) could be followed by any dependency pair in chains. The reason is that the right-hand side of (3) is $\text{AP}(\text{cons}'(\alpha'x), \text{map}'\alpha'xs)$ and CAP replaces both arguments of AP by fresh variables, since their root symbol $'$ is defined. The resulting term $\text{AP}(y, z)$ unifies with the left-hand side of every dependency pair. Therefore, the estimated dependency graph contains additional arcs from (3) to every dependency pair.

The problem is that these estimations do not check whether subterms with defined root can really be reduced further when being instantiated. For example, the first argument $\text{cons}'(\alpha'x)$ of (3)'s right-hand side can never become a redex for any instantiation. The reason is that all left-hand sides of the TRS have the form $\text{map}'t_1't_2$. Thus, one should not replace $\text{cons}'(\alpha'x)$ by a fresh variable.

Therefore, we now refine CAP's definition. If a subterm can clearly never become a redex, then it is not replaced by a variable anymore. Here, ICAP is used for innermost termination proofs and TCAP differs from ICAP by renaming multiple occurrences of variables, which is required when proving full termination.

Definition 11 (ICAP, TCAP) *Let \mathcal{R} be a TRS over \mathcal{F} , let $f \in \mathcal{F} \cup \mathcal{F}^\sharp$. We define ICAP as follows:*

- (i) $\text{ICAP}(x) = x$ for all $x \in \mathcal{V}$
- (ii) $\text{ICAP}(f(t_1, \dots, t_n)) = f(\text{ICAP}(t_1), \dots, \text{ICAP}(t_n))$ iff $f(\text{ICAP}(t_1), \dots, \text{ICAP}(t_n))$ does not unify with any left-hand side of a rule from \mathcal{R}
- (iii) $\text{ICAP}(f(t_1, \dots, t_n))$ is a fresh variable, otherwise

We define TCAP like ICAP but in (i), $\text{TCAP}(x)$ is a different fresh variable for every occurrence of x . Moreover in (ii), we use $\text{TCAP}(t_i)$ instead of $\text{ICAP}(t_i)$:

- (i) $\text{TCAP}(x)$ is a different fresh variable for every occurrence of $x \in \mathcal{V}$
- (ii) $\text{TCAP}(f(t_1, \dots, t_n)) = f(\text{TCAP}(t_1), \dots, \text{TCAP}(t_n))$ iff $f(\text{TCAP}(t_1), \dots, \text{TCAP}(t_n))$ does not unify with any left-hand side of a rule from \mathcal{R}
- (iii) $\text{TCAP}(f(t_1, \dots, t_n))$ is a fresh variable, otherwise.

Now one can detect that (3) should not be connected to any pair in the dependency graph, since $\text{ICAP}(\text{AP}(\text{cons}'(\alpha'x), \text{map}'\alpha'xs)) = \text{AP}(\text{cons}'y, z)$ does not unify with left-hand sides of dependency pairs. Similar remarks hold for TCAP. This leads to the following improved estimation.³

Definition 12 (Improved Estimated Dependency Graph) *In the estimated $(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{R}, \mathbf{t})$ -dependency graph there is an arc from $s \rightarrow t$ to $u \rightarrow v$ iff $\text{TCAP}(t)$*

³ Moreover, TCAP and ICAP can also be combined with further refinements to approximate dependency graphs [4, 17].

and u are unifiable. In the estimated $(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{R}, \mathbf{i})$ -dependency graph there is an arc from $s \rightarrow t$ to $u \rightarrow v$ iff $\text{ICAP}(t)$ and u are unifiable by an mgu μ (after renaming their variables) such that $s\mu$ and $u\mu$ are in normal form w.r.t. \mathcal{R} .

Now the estimated graph is identical to the real dependency graph in Ex. 9, both in the termination and innermost termination case.

Theorem 13 (Soundness of the Improved Estimation) *The dependency graph is a subgraph of the estimated dependency graph.*

Proof. We first regard the termination case $e = \mathbf{t}$. Here we have to show that if $s \rightarrow t, u \rightarrow v$ is a $(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{R}, \mathbf{t})$ -chain, then $\text{TCAP}(t)$ and u unify. To this end, we prove the following claim for all terms t and u and all substitutions σ :

$$\text{TCAP}(t)\sigma \rightarrow_{\mathcal{R}}^* u \text{ implies that } u = \text{TCAP}(t)\delta \text{ for some substitution } \delta \quad (8)$$

The claim (8) immediately implies the theorem in the termination case. The reason is that obviously $t = \text{TCAP}(t)\sigma'$ for a suitable substitution σ' . Hence, if $s \rightarrow t, u \rightarrow v$ is a $(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{R}, \mathbf{t})$ -chain (i.e., if $t\sigma \rightarrow_{\mathcal{R}}^* u\sigma$ for some σ), then we have $t\sigma = \text{TCAP}(t)\sigma'\sigma$ and hence $u\sigma = \text{TCAP}(t)\delta$ for some substitution δ by (8). Hence, since $\text{TCAP}(t)$ and u are variable disjoint, they are unifiable.

To prove (8), it suffices to regard the case $\text{TCAP}(t)\sigma \rightarrow_{\mathcal{R}} u$, since then (8) follows by induction on the length of the reduction. We use induction on t . If $\text{TCAP}(t) \in \mathcal{V}$, the claim (8) is trivial. Otherwise, $t = f(t_1, \dots, t_n)$ and $\text{TCAP}(t) = f(\text{TCAP}(t_1), \dots, \text{TCAP}(t_n))$, where $\text{TCAP}(t)$ does not unify with any left-hand side of \mathcal{R} . Thus, there is an $1 \leq i \leq n$ with $\text{TCAP}(t_i)\sigma \rightarrow_{\mathcal{R}}^* u_i$ and $u = f(\text{TCAP}(t_1)\sigma, \dots, u_i, \dots, \text{TCAP}(t_n)\sigma)$. By the induction hypothesis we obtain $u_i = \text{TCAP}(t_i)\delta$ for some δ . As the variables of all $\text{TCAP}(t_j)$ are disjoint, we can extend δ to operate like σ on the variables of $\text{TCAP}(t_j)$ for $j \neq i$. Then we have $u = f(\text{TCAP}(t_1)\delta, \dots, \text{TCAP}(t_i)\delta, \dots, \text{TCAP}(t_n)\delta) = \text{TCAP}(t)\delta$, as desired.

For innermost termination, we prove the following for all terms s, t, u with $\mathcal{V}(t) \subseteq \mathcal{V}(s)$ and all substitutions σ where $\sigma(x)$ is in normal form for $x \in \mathcal{V}(s)$:

$$\text{If } \text{ICAP}(t)\sigma \rightarrow_{\mathcal{R}}^* u \text{ then } u = \text{ICAP}(t)\delta \text{ for a } \delta \text{ with } \delta(x) = \sigma(x) \text{ for } x \in \mathcal{V}(s) \quad (9)$$

The claim (9) immediately implies the theorem in the innermost termination case. Note that $t = \text{ICAP}(t)\sigma'$ for a σ' where $\sigma'(x) = x$ for all $x \in \mathcal{V}(s)$. Hence, if $s \rightarrow t, u \rightarrow v$ is a $(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{R}, \mathbf{i})$ -chain (i.e., if $t\sigma \xrightarrow{\mathbf{i}}_{\mathcal{R}}^* u\sigma$ for some σ where both $s\sigma$ and $u\sigma$ are in normal form), then $t\sigma = \text{ICAP}(t)\sigma'\sigma$ and hence $u\sigma = \text{ICAP}(t)\delta$ for some δ with $\delta(x) = \sigma(x)$ for all $x \in \mathcal{V}(s)$ by (9). Hence, since $\text{ICAP}(t)$ and u are variable disjoint and since $s\delta = s\sigma$ and $u\sigma$ are in normal form, $\text{ICAP}(t)$ and u are unifiable by a substitution that instantiates both s and u to normal forms.

To prove (9) it again suffices to regard $\text{ICAP}(t)\sigma \rightarrow_{\mathcal{R}} u$. We use induction on t . Note that $t \notin \mathcal{V}$, since otherwise σ would instantiate t by a term which is not in normal form. So if $\text{ICAP}(t) \in \mathcal{V}$ then $\text{ICAP}(t)$ is a fresh variable and (9) is trivial. Otherwise, $t = f(t_1, \dots, t_n)$ and $\text{ICAP}(t) = f(\text{ICAP}(t_1), \dots, \text{ICAP}(t_n))$. As in the termination case, we obtain $u = f(\text{ICAP}(t_1)\sigma, \dots, u_i, \dots, \text{ICAP}(t_n)\sigma)$, and $u_i = \text{ICAP}(t_i)\delta$ for some δ where $\delta(x) = \sigma(x)$ for all $x \in \mathcal{V}(s)$. Apart from the variables of s , the terms $\text{ICAP}(t_j)$ with $j \neq i$ only contain fresh variables not occurring in $\text{ICAP}(t_i)$. Thus, we can extend δ to operate like σ on these variables. Then we have $u = f(\text{ICAP}(t_1)\delta, \dots, \text{ICAP}(t_i)\delta, \dots, \text{ICAP}(t_n)\delta) = \text{ICAP}(t)\delta$, as desired. \square

3.2 DP Processors Based on Orders and on Usable Rules

Classical techniques for automated termination proofs try to find a *reduction order* \succ such that $l \succ r$ holds for all rules $l \rightarrow r$. In practice, most orders are *simplification orders* [10]. However, termination of many important TRSs cannot be proved with such orders directly. Therefore, the following processor allows us to use such orders in the DP framework instead. It generates constraints which should be satisfied by a *reduction pair* [22] (\succsim, \succ) where \succsim is reflexive, transitive, monotonic, and stable and \succ is a stable well-founded order compatible with \succsim (i.e., $\succsim \circ \succ \subseteq \succ$ and $\succ \circ \succsim \subseteq \succ$). Now one can use existing techniques to search for suitable relations \succsim and \succ , and in this way, classical simplification orders can prove termination of TRSs where they would have failed otherwise.

For a DP problem $(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{R}, e)$, the constraints require that at least one rule in \mathcal{P} is strictly decreasing (w.r.t. \succ) and all remaining rules in \mathcal{P} and \mathcal{R} are weakly decreasing (w.r.t. \succsim). Requiring $l \succsim r$ for $l \rightarrow r \in \mathcal{R}$ ensures that in chains $s_1 \rightarrow t_1, s_2 \rightarrow t_2, \dots$ with $t_i \sigma \rightarrow_{\mathcal{R}}^* s_{i+1} \sigma$, we have $t_i \sigma \succsim s_{i+1} \sigma$. Hence, if a reduction pair satisfies these constraints, then the strictly decreasing pairs of \mathcal{P} cannot occur infinitely often in chains. Thus, the following processor deletes these pairs from \mathcal{P} . For any TRS \mathcal{P} and any relation \succ , let $\mathcal{P}_{\succ} = \{s \rightarrow t \in \mathcal{P} \mid s \succ t\}$.

Theorem 14 (Reduction Pair Processor [16]) *Let (\succsim, \succ) be a reduction pair. Then the following DP processor Proc is sound and complete. For a DP problem $(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{R}, e)$, Proc returns*

- $\{(\mathcal{P} \setminus \mathcal{P}_{\succ}, \mathcal{R}, e)\}$, if $\mathcal{P}_{\succ} \cup \mathcal{P}_{\succsim} = \mathcal{P}$ and $\mathcal{R}_{\succsim} = \mathcal{R}$
- $\{(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{R}, e)\}$, otherwise

DP problems $(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{R}, \mathbf{i})$ for *innermost* termination can be simplified by replacing the second component \mathcal{R} by those rules from \mathcal{R} that are *usable* for \mathcal{P} (i.e., by the *usable rules* of \mathcal{P}). Then by Thm. 14, a weak decrease $l \succsim r$ is not required for all rules but only for the usable rules. As defined in [4], the *usable rules* of a term t contain all f-rules for all function symbols f occurring in t . Moreover, if f 's rules are usable and there is a rule $f(\dots) \rightarrow r$ in \mathcal{R} whose right-hand side r contains a symbol g , then g is usable, too. The *usable rules* of a TRS \mathcal{P} are defined as the usable rules of its right-hand sides.

For instance, after applying the dependency graph processor to Ex. 1, we have the remaining dependency pairs (5) and (6) with the right-hand sides $\text{AP}(\alpha, x)$ and $\text{AP}(\text{map}'\alpha, xs)$. While $\text{AP}(\alpha, x)$ has no usable rules, $\text{AP}(\text{map}'\alpha, xs)$ contains the defined function symbol $'$ and therefore, all $'$ -rules are usable.

This indicates that the definition of usable rules has to be improved to handle applicative TRSs successfully. Otherwise, whenever $'$ occurs in the right-hand side of a dependency pair, then *all* rules (except rules of the form $f \rightarrow \dots$) would be usable. The problem is that the current definition of “usable rules” assumes that all $'$ -rules can be applied to any subterm with the root symbol $'$.

Thus, we refine the definition of usable rules. Now a subterm starting with $'$ only influences the computation of the usable rules if this subterm can potentially start new reductions. To detect this, we again use the function ICAP from Def. 11. For example, $\text{map}'\alpha$ can never be reduced if α is instantiated by a normal form,

since $\text{map}'\alpha$ does not unify with the left-hand side of any rule. Therefore, the right-hand side $\text{AP}(\text{map}'\alpha, xs)$ of (6) should not have any usable rules.⁴

Definition 15 (Improved Usable Rules) *For a DP problem $(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{R}, \mathbf{i})$, we define the usable rules $\mathcal{U}(\mathcal{P}) = \bigcup_{s \rightarrow t \in \mathcal{P}} \mathcal{U}(t)$. Here $\mathcal{U}(t) \subseteq \mathcal{R}$ is the smallest set with:*

- *If $t = f(t_1, \dots, t_n)$, $f \in \mathcal{F} \cup \mathcal{F}^\sharp$, and $f(\text{ICAP}(t_1), \dots, \text{ICAP}(t_n))$ unifies with a left-hand side l of a rule $l \rightarrow r \in \mathcal{R}$, then $l \rightarrow r \in \mathcal{U}(t)$.*
- *If $l \rightarrow r \in \mathcal{U}(t)$, then $\mathcal{U}(r) \subseteq \mathcal{U}(t)$.*
- *If t' is a subterm of t , then $\mathcal{U}(t') \subseteq \mathcal{U}(t)$.*

Theorem 16 (Usable Rule Processor) *For a DP problem $(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{R}, e)$, let Proc return $\{(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{U}(\mathcal{P}), \mathbf{i})\}$ if $e = \mathbf{i}$ and $\{(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{R}, e)\}$ otherwise. Then Proc is sound.⁵*

Proof. Let $s_1 \rightarrow t_1, s_2 \rightarrow t_2, \dots$ be an infinite $(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{R}, \mathbf{i})$ -chain, i.e., $t_i \sigma \xrightarrow{\mathcal{R}}^* s_{i+1} \sigma$ and $s_i \sigma$ is in normal form for some σ . We show that the innermost reduction from $t_i \sigma$ to $s_{i+1} \sigma$ only uses rules from $\mathcal{U}(\mathcal{P})$. It suffices to prove the following for all normal substitutions σ (i.e., $\sigma(x)$ is in normal form for all $x \in \mathcal{V}$), since it implies the above claim by induction on the length of the reduction:

$t\sigma \xrightarrow{\{l \rightarrow r\}} s$ with $l \rightarrow r \in \mathcal{R}$ implies that $l \rightarrow r \in \mathcal{U}(t)$ and that there is some term u and a normal substitution δ with $\delta(x) = \sigma(x)$ for $x \in \mathcal{V}(l)$, such that $s = u\delta$, $\mathcal{U}(t) \supseteq \mathcal{U}(u)$, and $\text{ICAP}(u) = \text{ICAP}(t)\rho$ for a substitution ρ whose domain only contains fresh variables introduced in $\text{ICAP}(t)$

We use induction on t . As σ is normal, we have $t \notin \mathcal{V}$. So $t = f(t_1, \dots, t_n)$. If $t\sigma = f(t_1\sigma, \dots, t_n\sigma) = l\tau \xrightarrow{\mathcal{R}} r\tau = s$, then obviously, $f(\text{ICAP}(t_1), \dots, \text{ICAP}(t_n))$ unifies with l . Thus, $l \rightarrow r \in \mathcal{U}(t)$ and by Def. 15 we have $\mathcal{U}(r) \subseteq \mathcal{U}(t)$. Moreover, any term is an instance of $\text{ICAP}(t)$, since $\text{ICAP}(t)$ is a fresh variable. As τ is normal, we can choose $u = r$, $\rho = [\text{ICAP}(t) / \text{ICAP}(u)]$, $\delta(x) = \tau(x)$ for $x \in \mathcal{V}(l)$, and $\delta(x) = \sigma(x)$ otherwise.

In the remaining case, we have $t\sigma \xrightarrow{\mathcal{R}} f(t_1\sigma, \dots, s_i, \dots, t_n\sigma) = s$ where $t_i\sigma \xrightarrow{\mathcal{R}} s_i$. By the induction hypothesis, the rule used for the reduction was from $\mathcal{U}(t_i)$ and thus, it is also contained in $\mathcal{U}(t)$ by Def. 15. By induction, there exist u_i , δ , and ρ such that $s_i = u_i\delta$, $\mathcal{U}(t_i) \supseteq \mathcal{U}(u_i)$, and $\text{ICAP}(u_i) = \text{ICAP}(t_i)\rho$. Thus, $s = f(t_1\sigma, \dots, u_i\delta, \dots, t_n\sigma) = f(t_1, \dots, u_i, \dots, t_n)\delta$, since w.l.o.g. l is variable disjoint from t , and we define $u = f(t_1, \dots, u_i, \dots, t_n)$. Now if $\text{ICAP}(t)$ is a fresh variable, then obviously $\text{ICAP}(u)$ is an instance of $\text{ICAP}(t)$ (i.e., $\rho = [\text{ICAP}(t) / \text{ICAP}(u)]$). Otherwise $\text{ICAP}(t) = f(\text{ICAP}(t_1), \dots, \text{ICAP}(t_i), \dots, \text{ICAP}(t_n))$ and for the term $u' = f(\text{ICAP}(t_1), \dots, \text{ICAP}(u_i), \dots, \text{ICAP}(t_n))$ we have $u' = \text{ICAP}(t)\rho$ by the induction hypothesis and since ρ only instantiates the fresh variables in $\text{ICAP}(t_i)$. Since $\text{ICAP}(t)$ does not unify with any left-hand side of a rule from \mathcal{R} , this also holds for u' and thus, $\text{ICAP}(u) = u' = \text{ICAP}(t)\rho$. Together with the fact that $\mathcal{U}(t_i) \supseteq \mathcal{U}(u_i)$, this also implies that $\mathcal{U}(t) \supseteq \mathcal{U}(u)$. \square

⁴ Our new definition of usable rules can also be combined with other techniques to reduce the set of usable rules [14] and it can also be applied for dependency graph estimations or other DP processors that rely on usable rules [16, 17].

⁵ Incompleteness is only due to our simplified definition of “DP problems”. With the full definition of “DP problems” from [16], the processor is complete [16, Thm. 27].

Example 17 In Ex. 1, now the dependency pairs in the remaining DP problem $(\{(5), (6)\}, \mathcal{R}, \mathbf{i})$ have no usable rules. Thus, Thm. 16 transforms this DP problem into $(\{(5), (6)\}, \emptyset, \mathbf{i})$. Then with the processor of Thm. 14 we try to find a reduction pair such that (5) and (6) are decreasing. Any simplification order \succ (even the embedding order) makes both pairs strictly decreasing: $s \succ \text{AP}(\alpha, x)$ and $s \succ \text{AP}(\text{map}'\alpha, xs)$ for $s = \text{AP}(\text{map}'\alpha, \text{cons}'x'xs)$. Thus, both dependency pairs are removed and the resulting DP problem $(\emptyset, \mathcal{R}, \mathbf{i})$ is transformed into the empty set by the dependency graph processor of Thm. 10. So innermost termination of `map` can now easily be proved automatically. Note that this TRS is non-overlapping and thus, it belongs to a well-known class where innermost termination implies termination. Hence, we also proved termination of `map`.

In [29], we showed that under certain conditions, the usable rules of [4] can also be used to prove full instead of just innermost termination (for arbitrary TRSs). Then, even for termination, it is enough to require $l \succsim r$ just for the usable rules in Thm. 14. This result also holds for the new improved usable rules of Def. 15, provided that one uses TCAP instead of ICAP in their definition.

3.3 A DP Processor to Transform Applicative to Functional Form

Some applicative DP problems can be transformed (back) to ordinary functional form. In particular, this holds for problems resulting from first-order functions (encoded by currying). This transformation is advantageous: e.g., the processor in Thm. 14 is significantly more powerful for DP problems in functional form, since standard reduction orders focus on the root symbol when comparing terms.

Example 18 We extend the `map`-TRS by the following rules for `minus` and `div`. Note that a direct termination proof with simplification orders is impossible.

$$\begin{array}{ll} \text{minus}'x'0 \rightarrow x & (10) \quad \text{div}'0'(s'y) \rightarrow 0 & (12) \\ \text{minus}'(s'x)'(s'y) \rightarrow \text{minus}'x'y & (11) \quad \text{div}'(s'x)'(s'y) \rightarrow s'(\text{div}'(\text{minus}'x'y)'(s'y)) & (13) \end{array}$$

While `map` is really a higher-order function, `minus` and `div` correspond to first-order functions. It again suffices to verify innermost termination, since this TRS \mathcal{R} is non-overlapping. The improved estimated dependency graph has three SCCs corresponding to `map`, `minus`, and `div`. Thus, by the dependency graph and the usable rule processors (Thm. 10 and 16), the initial DP problem $(DP(\mathcal{R}), \mathcal{R}, \mathbf{i})$ is transformed into three new problems. The first problem $(\{(5), (6)\}, \emptyset, \mathbf{i})$ for `map` can be solved as before. The DP problems for `minus` and `div` are:

$$\begin{array}{ll} (\{\text{AP}(\text{minus}'(s'x), s'y) \rightarrow \text{AP}(\text{minus}'x, y)\}, \emptyset, \mathbf{i}) & (14) \\ (\{\text{AP}(\text{div}'(s'x), s'y) \rightarrow \text{AP}(\text{div}'(\text{minus}'x'y), s'y)\}, \{(10), (11)\}, \mathbf{i}) & (15) \end{array}$$

Since (14) and (15) do not contain `map` anymore, one would like to change them back to conventional functional form. Then they could be replaced by the following DP problems. Here, every (new) function symbol is labelled by its arity.

$$\begin{array}{ll} (\{\text{MINUS}^2(s^1(x), s^1(y)) \rightarrow \text{MINUS}^2(x, y)\}, \emptyset, \mathbf{i}) & (16) \\ (\{\text{DIV}^2(s^1(x), s^1(y)) \rightarrow \text{DIV}^2(\text{minus}^2(x, y), s^1(y))\}, \\ \{\text{minus}^2(x, 0^0) \rightarrow x, \text{minus}^2(s^1(x), s^1(y)) \rightarrow \text{minus}^2(x, y)\}, \mathbf{i}) & (17) \end{array}$$

These DP problems are easy to solve: for example, the constraints of the reduction pair processor (Thm. 14) are satisfied by the polynomial order which maps $s^1(x)$ to $x + 1$, $\text{minus}^2(x, y)$ to x , and every other symbol to the sum of its arguments. Thus, termination could immediately be proved automatically.

Now we characterize those applicative TRSs which correspond to first-order functions and can be translated into functional form. In these TRSs, for any function symbol f there is a number n (called its *arity*) such that f only occurs in terms of the form $f' t_1' \dots' t_n$. So there are no applications with too few or too many arguments. Moreover, there are no terms $x' t$ where the first argument of $'$ is a variable. Def. 19 extends this idea from TRSs to DP problems.

Definition 19 (Arity and Proper Terms) *Let $(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{R}, e)$ be an applicative DP problem over \mathcal{F} . For each $f \in \mathcal{F} \setminus \{'\}$ let $\text{arity}(f) = \max\{n \mid f' t_1' \dots' t_n \text{ or } (f' t_1' \dots' t_n)^\sharp \text{ occurs in } \mathcal{P} \cup \mathcal{R}\}$. A term t is proper iff $t \in \mathcal{V}$ or $t = f' t_1' \dots' t_n$ or $t = (f' t_1' \dots' t_n)^\sharp$ where in the last two cases, $\text{arity}(f) = n$ and all t_i are proper. Moreover, $(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{R}, e)$ is proper iff all terms in $\mathcal{P} \cup \mathcal{R}$ are proper.*

The DP problems (14) and (15) for `minus` and `div` are proper. Here, `minus` and `div` have arity 2, `s` has arity 1, and `0` has arity 0. But the problem $(\{(5), (6)\}, \emptyset, \mathbf{i})$ for `map` is not proper as (5) contains the subterm $\text{AP}(\alpha, x)$ with $\alpha \in \mathcal{V}$.

The following transformation translates proper terms from applicative to functional form. To this end, $f' t_1' \dots' t_n$ is replaced by $f^n(\dots)$, where n is f 's arity (as defined in Def. 19) and f^n is a new n -ary function symbol. In this way, (14) and (15) were transformed into (16) and (17) in Ex. 18.

Definition 20 (A Transformation) *A maps every proper term from $\mathcal{T}(\mathcal{F} \cup \mathcal{F}^\sharp, \mathcal{V})$ to a term from $\mathcal{T}(\{f^n, F^n \mid f \in \mathcal{F} \setminus \{'\}, \text{arity}(f) = n\}, \mathcal{V})$:*

- $\mathcal{A}(x) = x$ for all $x \in \mathcal{V}$
- $\mathcal{A}(f' t_1' \dots' t_n) = f^n(\mathcal{A}(t_1), \dots, \mathcal{A}(t_n))$ for all $f \in \mathcal{F} \setminus \{'\}$
- $\mathcal{A}((f' t_1' \dots' t_n)^\sharp) = F^n(\mathcal{A}(t_1), \dots, \mathcal{A}(t_n))$ for all $f \in \mathcal{F} \setminus \{'\}$

For any TRS \mathcal{R} with proper terms, let $\mathcal{A}(\mathcal{R}) = \{\mathcal{A}(l) \rightarrow \mathcal{A}(r) \mid l \rightarrow r \in \mathcal{R}\}$.

In the following, we say that a substitution σ is *proper* if $\sigma(x)$ is proper for all $x \in \mathcal{V}$ and for a proper substitution σ we define $\mathcal{A}(\sigma)$ as the substitution with $\mathcal{A}(\sigma)(x) = \mathcal{A}(\sigma(x))$. Moreover, let $\mathcal{T}_{\text{proper}}$ be the set of proper terms from $\mathcal{T}(\mathcal{F} \cup \mathcal{F}^\sharp, \mathcal{V})$ and let $\mathcal{T}_{\text{func}} = \mathcal{T}(\{f^n, F^n \mid f \in \mathcal{F} \setminus \{'\}, \text{arity}(f) = n\}, \mathcal{V})$.

Lemma 21 (Properties of \mathcal{A}) *Let $(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{R}, e)$ be a proper DP problem and let \mathcal{A}^{-1} be the inverse mapping to \mathcal{A} . For all t, s from $\mathcal{T}_{\text{proper}}$, all u, v from $\mathcal{T}_{\text{func}}$, all substitutions $\sigma : \mathcal{V} \rightarrow \mathcal{T}_{\text{proper}}$, and all substitutions $\delta : \mathcal{V} \rightarrow \mathcal{T}_{\text{func}}$, we have*

- (a) $\mathcal{A}(t\sigma) = \mathcal{A}(t)\mathcal{A}(\sigma)$ and $\mathcal{A}^{-1}(p\delta) = \mathcal{A}^{-1}(p)\mathcal{A}^{-1}(\delta)$
- (b) $t \rightarrow_{\mathcal{R}}^m s$ implies $\mathcal{A}(t) \rightarrow_{\mathcal{A}(\mathcal{R})}^m \mathcal{A}(s)$, and $u \rightarrow_{\mathcal{A}(\mathcal{R})}^m v$ implies $\mathcal{A}^{-1}(u) \rightarrow_{\mathcal{R}}^m \mathcal{A}^{-1}(v)$
- (c) $t \dot{\rightarrow}_{\mathcal{R}}^m s$ implies $\mathcal{A}(t) \dot{\rightarrow}_{\mathcal{A}(\mathcal{R})}^m \mathcal{A}(s)$, and $u \dot{\rightarrow}_{\mathcal{A}(\mathcal{R})}^m v$ implies $\mathcal{A}^{-1}(u) \dot{\rightarrow}_{\mathcal{R}}^m \mathcal{A}^{-1}(v)$

Proof. The claim in (a) is proved by straightforward structural inductions. For (b), one easily shows that $t \rightarrow_{\mathcal{R}} s$ iff $\mathcal{A}(t) \rightarrow_{\mathcal{A}(\mathcal{R})} \mathcal{A}(s)$ by structural induction on t . Then the claim for $m > 1$ follows by induction. The proof of (c) is as for (b) since t is normal iff $\mathcal{A}(t)$ is normal for any $t \in \mathcal{T}_{\text{proper}}$ by (b). \square

We want to define a DP processor which replaces proper DP problems $(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{R}, e)$ by $(\mathcal{A}(\mathcal{P}), \mathcal{A}(\mathcal{R}), e)$. For its soundness, we have to show that every $(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{R}, e)$ -chain results in an $(\mathcal{A}(\mathcal{P}), \mathcal{A}(\mathcal{R}), e)$ -chain, i.e., that $t_i\sigma \rightarrow_{\mathcal{R}}^* s_{i+1}\sigma$ implies $\mathcal{A}(t_i)\sigma' \rightarrow_{\mathcal{A}(\mathcal{R})}^* \mathcal{A}(s_{i+1})\sigma'$ for some substitution σ' . The problem is that although all terms in \mathcal{P} and \mathcal{R} are proper, the substitution σ may introduce non-proper terms.

Therefore, we now show that every $(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{R}, e)$ -chain which uses a substitution σ can also be obtained by using a substitution $\mathcal{Z}(\sigma)$ with *proper* terms. Here, \mathcal{Z} transforms arbitrary terms t, s into proper ones such that $t \rightarrow_{\mathcal{R}}^* s$ implies $\mathcal{Z}(t) \rightarrow_{\mathcal{R}}^* \mathcal{Z}(s)$. \mathcal{Z} replaces terms where a variable is on the first argument of $'$ or AP or where a function symbol f has too few arguments by a fresh variable \perp . If f is applied to more arguments than its arity n , the first n arguments are modified by applying them to the arguments on positions $n+1, n+2, \dots$. Afterwards, the arguments on the positions $n+1, n+2, \dots$ are deleted.

As an example, regard the non-proper term $t = \text{minus}'s'0'x$ where the symbol minus with arity 2 is applied to 3 arguments. \mathcal{Z} removes the argument x and modifies the arguments s and 0 by applying them to x . So t is replaced by $\text{minus}'(s'x)'(0'x)$. Now \mathcal{Z} is called recursively on the subterms and therefore, the argument x of the symbol 0 with arity 0 is removed. Hence, $\mathcal{Z}(t) = \text{minus}'(s'x)'0$. Note that for the original non-proper term t , we have $t \rightarrow_{\mathcal{R}} s'x$ by the collapsing minus -rule (10). Similarly, we now also have $\mathcal{Z}(t) \rightarrow_{\mathcal{R}} \mathcal{Z}(s'x) = s'x$. In the following, let ${}^?_i$ denote function symbols from $\{', \text{AP}\}$ where we now use infix notation for both $'$ and AP to ease readability.

Definition 22 (\mathcal{Z} Transformation) \mathcal{Z} is the following transformation from terms of $\mathcal{T}(\mathcal{F} \cup \mathcal{F}^\#, \mathcal{V})$ to $\mathcal{T}(\mathcal{F} \cup \mathcal{F}^\#, \mathcal{V} \cup \{\perp\})$, where \perp is a fresh variable. Here, $x \in \mathcal{V}$ and $f \in \{f, F\}$ for some $f \in \mathcal{F} \setminus \{'\}$ with $\text{arity}(f) = n$.

- $\mathcal{Z}(x) = x$
- $\mathcal{Z}(f {}^?_1 t_1 {}^?_2 t_2 \dots {}^?_k t_k) =$
 $f' \mathcal{Z}(t_1 {}^?_{n+1} t_{n+1} {}^?_{n+2} t_{n+2} \dots {}^?_k t_k)' \dots ' \mathcal{Z}(t_n {}^?_{n+1} t_{n+1} {}^?_{n+2} t_{n+2} \dots {}^?_k t_k),$
 if $k \geq n$ and either ${}^?_n = '$ or both $n = 0$ and $f \in \mathcal{F}$
- $\mathcal{Z}(f {}^?_1 t_1 {}^?_2 t_2 \dots {}^?_k t_k) =$
 $(f' \mathcal{Z}(t_1 {}^?_{n+1} t_{n+1} {}^?_{n+2} t_{n+2} \dots {}^?_k t_k)' \dots ' \mathcal{Z}(t_n {}^?_{n+1} t_{n+1} {}^?_{n+2} t_{n+2} \dots {}^?_k t_k))^\#,$
 if $k \geq n$ and either ${}^?_n = \text{AP}$ or both $n = 0$ and $f \in \mathcal{F}^\#$
- $\mathcal{Z}(t) = \perp$, for all other $t \in \mathcal{T}(\mathcal{F} \cup \mathcal{F}^\#, \mathcal{V})$

Moreover, for any substitution σ , $\mathcal{Z}(\sigma)$ is the substitution with $\mathcal{Z}(\sigma)(x) = \mathcal{Z}(\sigma(x))$.

Lemma 23 (Properties of \mathcal{Z}) Let $(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{R}, e)$ be a proper DP problem over \mathcal{F} , let t and s be from $\mathcal{T}(\mathcal{F} \cup \mathcal{F}^\#, \mathcal{V})$, and let $\sigma : \mathcal{V} \rightarrow \mathcal{T}(\mathcal{F} \cup \mathcal{F}^\#, \mathcal{V})$.

- (a) $\mathcal{Z}(t)$ is proper
- (b) If t is proper then $\mathcal{Z}(t\sigma) = t\mathcal{Z}(\sigma)$
- (c) $t \rightarrow_{\mathcal{R}}^* s$ implies $\mathcal{Z}(t) \rightarrow_{\mathcal{R}}^* \mathcal{Z}(s)$

Proof. The claims (a) and (b) are easily obtained by structural induction on t . For (c), it suffices to show that $t \rightarrow_{\mathcal{R}} s$ implies $\mathcal{Z}(t) \rightarrow_{\mathcal{R}}^* \mathcal{Z}(s)$. We use induction on t with the embedding order as induction relation. Obviously, $t \notin \mathcal{V}$. First let $t = f {}^?_1 t_1 {}^?_2 t_2 \dots {}^?_k t_k$, where $\text{arity}(f) = n$ and $k \geq n$. We only regard

the case where either $?^n = '$ or both $n = 0$ and $f \in \mathcal{F}$, since the other case is analogous. First assume that s is obtained by reducing $t_i \rightarrow_{\mathcal{R}} s_i$. If $i \leq n$, then $\mathcal{Z}(t_i ?^{n+1} t_{n+1} ?^{n+2} \dots ?^k t_k) \rightarrow_{\mathcal{R}}^* \mathcal{Z}(s_i ?^{n+1} t_{n+1} ?^{n+2} \dots ?^k t_k)$ by the induction hypothesis. Hence, $\mathcal{Z}(t) \rightarrow_{\mathcal{R}}^* \mathcal{Z}(s)$ by the definition of \mathcal{Z} . If $i > n$, then $\mathcal{Z}(t_j ?^{n+1} t_{n+1} ?^{n+2} \dots ?^i t_i ?^{i+1} \dots ?^k t_k) \rightarrow^* \mathcal{Z}(t_j ?^{n+1} t_{n+1} ?^{n+2} \dots ?^i s_i ?^{i+1} \dots ?^k t_k)$ for all $1 \leq j \leq n$ by the induction hypothesis. By the definition of \mathcal{Z} we again get $\mathcal{Z}(t) \rightarrow_{\mathcal{R}}^* \mathcal{Z}(s)$. Otherwise, $t = l\sigma ?^{n+1} t_{n+1} ?^{n+2} \dots ?^k t_k \rightarrow r\sigma ?^{n+1} t_{n+1} ?^{n+2} \dots ?^k t_k = s$. Let $\bar{\sigma}$ be the substitution with $\bar{\sigma}(x) = \sigma(x) ?^{n+1} t_{n+1} ?^{n+2} \dots ?^k t_k$. Then $\mathcal{Z}(q\sigma ?^{n+1} t_{n+1} ?^{n+2} \dots ?^k t_k) = q\mathcal{Z}(\bar{\sigma})$ can easily be shown by structural induction for any proper term q . Hence, $l = f' l_1' \dots ' l_n$ and

$$\begin{aligned} \mathcal{Z}(t) &= f' \mathcal{Z}(l_1 \sigma ?^{n+1} t_{n+1} ?^{n+2} \dots ?^k t_k)' \dots ' \mathcal{Z}(l_n \sigma ?^{n+1} t_{n+1} ?^{n+2} \dots ?^k t_k) \\ &= f' l_1 \mathcal{Z}(\bar{\sigma})' \dots ' l_n \mathcal{Z}(\bar{\sigma}) \\ &= l \mathcal{Z}(\bar{\sigma}) \\ &\rightarrow_{\mathcal{R}} r \mathcal{Z}(\bar{\sigma}) \\ &= \mathcal{Z}(r \sigma ?^{n+1} t_{n+1} ?^{n+2} \dots ?^k t_k) \\ &= \mathcal{Z}(s). \end{aligned}$$

Otherwise, we have $t = x ?^1 t_1 ?^2 \dots ?^k t_k$ or $t = f ?^1 t_1 ?^2 \dots ?^k t_k$ where $k < \text{arity}(f)$. Here, s is obtained by reducing $t_i \rightarrow_{\mathcal{R}} s_i$ for some i , since $(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{R}, e)$ is proper. Thus, $\mathcal{Z}(t) = \perp = \mathcal{Z}(s)$. \square

However, the transformation \mathcal{Z} cannot be used in the innermost case, since $t \xrightarrow{\mathcal{R}} s$ does not imply $\mathcal{Z}(t) \xrightarrow{\mathcal{R}}^* \mathcal{Z}(s)$. To see this, regard the TRS with the rules $f'(g'x'y'z) \rightarrow z$ and $g'x'x'y \rightarrow 0$. We obtain $t \xrightarrow{\mathcal{R}} 0$ for the non-proper term $t = f'(g'(0'x)(0'y)'0)$, whereas $\mathcal{Z}(t) = f'(g'0'0'0)$ only reduces innermost to $f'0$. So the problem is that \mathcal{Z} can make different subterms equal by eliminating “superfluous” arguments.

Therefore, we now introduce an alternative transformation \mathcal{I} from arbitrary to proper terms which simply replaces non-proper subterms t by a fresh variable \perp_t . So in the above example, we have $\mathcal{I}(t) = f'(g'\perp_{0'x}'\perp_{0'y}'0)$. Since $\perp_{0'x} \neq \perp_{0'y}$, we now obtain $\mathcal{I}(t) \xrightarrow{\mathcal{R}} \mathcal{I}(0) = 0$, as desired. Now $t \xrightarrow{\mathcal{R}} s$ indeed implies $\mathcal{I}(t) \xrightarrow{\mathcal{R}}^* \mathcal{I}(s)$, provided that t has the form $q\sigma$ for a proper term q and a *normal* substitution σ , i.e., $\sigma(x)$ is in normal form w.r.t. \mathcal{R} for all $x \in \mathcal{V}$.⁶

Definition 24 (\mathcal{I} Transformation) \mathcal{I} is the transformation from $\mathcal{T}(\mathcal{F} \cup \mathcal{F}^\sharp, \mathcal{V})$ to $\mathcal{T}(\mathcal{F} \cup \mathcal{F}^\sharp, \mathcal{V} \cup \mathcal{V}')$, where $\mathcal{V}' = \{\perp_t \mid t \in \mathcal{T}(\mathcal{F} \cup \mathcal{F}^\sharp, \mathcal{V})\}$ are fresh variables.

- $\mathcal{I}(x) = x$ for all $x \in \mathcal{V}$
- $\mathcal{I}(f' t_1' \dots ' t_n) = f' \mathcal{I}(t_1)' \dots ' \mathcal{I}(t_n)$ for all $f \in \mathcal{F}$ where $\text{arity}(f) = n$
- $\mathcal{I}((f' t_1' \dots ' t_n)^\sharp) = (f' \mathcal{I}(t_1)' \dots ' \mathcal{I}(t_n))^\sharp$ for all $f \in \mathcal{F}$ where $\text{arity}(f) = n$
- $\mathcal{I}(t) = \perp_t$, for all other $t \in \mathcal{T}(\mathcal{F} \cup \mathcal{F}^\sharp, \mathcal{V})$

Moreover, for any substitution σ , $\mathcal{I}(\sigma)$ is the substitution with $\mathcal{I}(\sigma)(x) = \mathcal{I}(\sigma(x))$.

Lemma 25 (Properties of \mathcal{I}) Let $(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{R}, e)$ be a proper DP problem over \mathcal{F} , let t and s be from $\mathcal{T}(\mathcal{F} \cup \mathcal{F}^\sharp, \mathcal{V})$ and let $\sigma : \mathcal{V} \rightarrow \mathcal{T}(\mathcal{F} \cup \mathcal{F}^\sharp, \mathcal{V})$.

⁶ This does not hold for arbitrary terms t as can be seen from $t = \text{minus}'s'0'x$. While $t \xrightarrow{\mathcal{R}} s'x$ using the rule (10), the term $\mathcal{I}(t) = \perp_{\text{minus}'s'0'x}$ is a normal form. Thus, the transformation \mathcal{I} cannot be used in the termination case where we have to consider arbitrary (possibly non-normal) substitutions σ . So we really need two different transformations \mathcal{Z} and \mathcal{I} for termination and innermost termination, respectively.

- (a) $\mathcal{I}(t)$ is proper
- (b) If t is proper then $\mathcal{I}(t\sigma) = t\mathcal{I}(\sigma)$
- (c) If t is in normal form then $\mathcal{I}(t)$ is in normal form w.r.t. \mathcal{R}
- (d) If σ is normal and t is proper then $t\sigma \xrightarrow{\mathcal{R}}^m s$ implies $\mathcal{I}(t\sigma) \xrightarrow{\mathcal{R}}^m \mathcal{I}(s)$

Proof. Again, the claims (a) and (b) can be proved by straightforward structural induction on t . We prove (c) by induction on t . If $\mathcal{I}(t)$ is a variable then the claim is trivial. Otherwise, let $t = f' t_1' \dots' t_n$ (the case $t = (f' t_1' \dots' t_n)^\sharp$ is analogous). We say that a term is *normal* if it is in normal form w.r.t. \mathcal{R} . Hence, all t_i are normal and by induction all $\mathcal{I}(t_i)$ are normal, too. Thus, $\mathcal{I}(t) = f' \mathcal{I}(t_1)' \dots' \mathcal{I}(t_n)$ can only be reduced at the root, i.e., $\mathcal{I}(t) = l\delta$ for some $l \rightarrow r \in \mathcal{R}$. By induction on l , we now show that all $\delta(x)$ are proper and that $t = l\mathcal{I}^{-1}(\delta)$. (\mathcal{I} is injective and it is surjective on the proper terms of $\mathcal{T}(\mathcal{F} \cup \mathcal{F}^\sharp, \mathcal{V} \cup \mathcal{V}')$.) This contradicts the prerequisite that t is normal.

If $l = x$ then $\delta(x) = \mathcal{I}(t)$ is proper by (a) and $t = \mathcal{I}^{-1}(\mathcal{I}(t)) = \mathcal{I}^{-1}(\delta(x)) = l\mathcal{I}^{-1}(\delta)$. If $l = f' l_1' \dots' l_n$ we have $\mathcal{I}(t) = f' l_1 \delta' \dots' l_n \delta$. Thus, t must be of the form $f' t_1' \dots' t_n$ and $\mathcal{I}(t_i) = l_i \delta$. By the induction hypothesis, all $\delta(x)$ are proper and $t_i = l_i \mathcal{I}^{-1}(\delta)$ which implies $t = f' t_1' \dots' t_n = f' l_1 \mathcal{I}^{-1}(\delta)' \dots' l_n \mathcal{I}^{-1}(\delta) = (f' l_1' \dots' l_n) \mathcal{I}^{-1}(\delta) = l\mathcal{I}^{-1}(\delta)$.

For (d), we prove that $t\sigma \xrightarrow{\mathcal{R}} s$ implies both $\mathcal{I}(t\sigma) \xrightarrow{\mathcal{R}} \mathcal{I}(s)$ and $s = u\delta$ for a proper term u and a normal substitution δ . Then (d) follows by induction.

As σ is normal, t is no variable. We only regard the case $t = f' t_1' \dots' t_n$ since the case $t = (f' t_1' \dots' t_n)^\sharp$ is analogous. If s is obtained by reducing $t_i\sigma \xrightarrow{\mathcal{R}} s_i$ then by the induction hypothesis we conclude $\mathcal{I}(t_i\sigma) \xrightarrow{\mathcal{R}} \mathcal{I}(s_i)$ and $s_i = u_i\delta$ for some normal substitution δ and proper term u_i . We may assume that u_i is variable disjoint from t_j for all $j \neq i$. Then we can extend δ to behave like σ on the variables of t_j for all $j \neq i$. Hence, for $u = f' t_1' \dots' u_i' \dots' t_n$ we obtain $u\delta = s$. Moreover,

$$\begin{aligned}
\mathcal{I}(t\sigma) &= f' \mathcal{I}(t_1\sigma)' \dots' \mathcal{I}(t_i\sigma)' \dots' \mathcal{I}(t_n\sigma) \\
&\xrightarrow{\mathcal{R}} f' \mathcal{I}(t_1\sigma)' \dots' \mathcal{I}(u_i\delta)' \dots' \mathcal{I}(t_n\sigma) \\
&= f' \mathcal{I}(t_1\delta)' \dots' \mathcal{I}(u_i\delta)' \dots' \mathcal{I}(t_n\delta) \\
&= \mathcal{I}(f' t_1\delta' \dots' u_i\delta' \dots' t_n\delta) \\
&= \mathcal{I}(u\delta) \\
&= \mathcal{I}(s).
\end{aligned}$$

Otherwise, the reduction is on the root position, i.e., $t\sigma = l\tau \xrightarrow{\mathcal{R}} r\tau = s$ where $l = f' l_1' \dots' l_n$. We choose $u = r$ and $\delta = \tau$ to obtain $s = u\delta$. Then $\mathcal{I}(t\sigma) = \mathcal{I}(l\tau) = l\mathcal{I}(\tau) \xrightarrow{\mathcal{R}} r\mathcal{I}(\tau) = \mathcal{I}(r\tau) = \mathcal{I}(s)$ by (b). This is indeed an innermost step since all $l_i\tau$ are normal and by (c) all $\mathcal{I}(l_i\tau)$ are normal, too. \square

Now we can formulate the desired processor which transforms proper applicative DP problems into functional form.

Theorem 26 (DP Processor for Transformation in Functional Form)

For any DP problem $(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{R}, e)$, let *Proc* return $\{(\mathcal{A}(\mathcal{P}), \mathcal{A}(\mathcal{R}), e)\}$ if $(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{R}, e)$ is proper and $\{(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{R}, e)\}$ otherwise. Then *Proc* is sound and complete.

Proof. We first prove soundness in the termination case $e = \mathbf{t}$. To this end, we show that every infinite $(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{R}, e)$ -chain $s_1 \rightarrow t_1, s_2 \rightarrow t_2, \dots$ corresponds to an infinite $(\mathcal{A}(\mathcal{P}), \mathcal{A}(\mathcal{R}), e)$ -chain. There is some σ with $t_i\sigma \xrightarrow{\mathcal{R}}^* s_{i+1}\sigma$ for all i . Hence,

$t_i \mathcal{Z}(\sigma) = \mathcal{Z}(t_i \sigma) \rightarrow_{\mathcal{R}}^* \mathcal{Z}(s_{i+1} \sigma) = s_{i+1} \mathcal{Z}(\sigma)$ by Lemma 23 (b) and (c), where t_i , s_{i+1} , and $\mathcal{Z}(\sigma)$ are proper by Lemma 23 (a). Thus, using Lemma 21 (a) and (b) we obtain $\mathcal{A}(t_i) \mathcal{A}(\mathcal{Z}(\sigma)) = \mathcal{A}(t_i \mathcal{Z}(\sigma)) \rightarrow_{\mathcal{A}(\mathcal{R})}^* \mathcal{A}(s_{i+1} \mathcal{Z}(\sigma)) = \mathcal{A}(s_{i+1}) \mathcal{A}(\mathcal{Z}(\sigma))$. Hence, $\mathcal{A}(s_1) \rightarrow \mathcal{A}(t_1)$, $\mathcal{A}(s_2) \rightarrow \mathcal{A}(t_2)$, \dots is an $(\mathcal{A}(\mathcal{P}), \mathcal{A}(\mathcal{R}), \mathbf{t})$ chain.

For soundness in the innermost case we know that all $s_i \sigma$ are normal and that $t_i \sigma \xrightarrow{\mathcal{R}}^* s_{i+1} \sigma$. Hence, $t_i \mathcal{I}(\sigma) = \mathcal{I}(t_i \sigma) \xrightarrow{\mathcal{R}}^* \mathcal{I}(s_{i+1} \sigma) = s_{i+1} \mathcal{I}(\sigma)$ by Lemma 25 (b) and (d), where t_i , s_{i+1} , and $\mathcal{I}(\sigma)$ are proper by Lemma 25 (a). As in the termination case one can prove that $\mathcal{A}(s_1) \rightarrow \mathcal{A}(t_1)$, $\mathcal{A}(s_2) \rightarrow \mathcal{A}(t_2)$, \dots is an $(\mathcal{A}(\mathcal{P}), \mathcal{A}(\mathcal{R}), \mathbf{i})$ -chain by using the substitution $\mathcal{A}(\mathcal{I}(\sigma))$ (since $\mathcal{A}(s_i) \mathcal{A}(\mathcal{I}(\sigma))$ is normal by Lemma 25 (c) and Lemma 21 (b)).

For completeness let $(\mathcal{A}(\mathcal{P}), \mathcal{A}(\mathcal{R}), e)$ be infinite. Thus, $\mathcal{A}(\mathcal{R})$ is not (innermost) terminating or there is an infinite $(\mathcal{A}(\mathcal{P}), \mathcal{A}(\mathcal{R}), e)$ -chain. In the former case we obtain that \mathcal{R} is not (innermost) terminating either by Lemma 21 (b) and (c). Otherwise, let $\mathcal{A}(s_1) \rightarrow \mathcal{A}(t_1)$, $\mathcal{A}(s_2) \rightarrow \mathcal{A}(t_2)$, \dots be an infinite $(\mathcal{A}(\mathcal{P}), \mathcal{A}(\mathcal{R}), e)$ -chain. If $e = \mathbf{t}$ then there is some substitution δ such that $\mathcal{A}(t_i) \delta \rightarrow_{\mathcal{A}(\mathcal{R})}^* \mathcal{A}(s_{i+1}) \delta$. By Lemma 21 (a) and (b) we obtain $t_i \mathcal{A}^{-1}(\delta) = \mathcal{A}^{-1}(\mathcal{A}(t_i) \delta) \rightarrow_{\mathcal{R}}^* \mathcal{A}^{-1}(\mathcal{A}(s_{i+1}) \delta) = s_{i+1} \mathcal{A}^{-1}(\delta)$ which shows that there is an infinite $(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{R}, \mathbf{t})$ -chain. Otherwise, if $e = \mathbf{i}$ we know that $\mathcal{A}(t_i) \delta \xrightarrow{\mathcal{A}(\mathcal{R})}^* \mathcal{A}(s_{i+1}) \delta$ and all $\mathcal{A}(s_i) \delta$ are in normal form w.r.t. $\mathcal{A}(\mathcal{R})$. By Lemma 21 (a) and (c) we obtain $t_i \mathcal{A}^{-1}(\delta) \xrightarrow{\mathcal{R}}^* s_{i+1} \mathcal{A}^{-1}(\delta)$ as in the termination case. Moreover, $s_i \mathcal{A}^{-1}(\delta)$ is in normal form w.r.t. \mathcal{R} , because otherwise $\mathcal{A}(s_i \mathcal{A}^{-1}(\delta)) = \mathcal{A}(s_i) \delta$ would be reducible w.r.t. $\mathcal{A}(\mathcal{R})$ by Lemma 21 (b). Thus, there is an infinite $(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{R}, \mathbf{i})$ -chain. \square

With the new processor of Thm. 26 and our new improved estimation of dependency graphs (Def. 12), it does not matter anymore for the termination proof whether first-order functions are represented in applicative or in ordinary functional form. The reason is that if they are represented by applicative rules, then all dependency pairs with non-proper right-hand sides are not in SCCs of the improved estimated dependency graph. Hence, after applying the dependency graph processor of Thm. 10, all remaining DP problems are proper and can be transformed into functional form by Thm. 26.

As an alternative to the processor of Thm. 26, one can also couple the transformation \mathcal{A} with the reduction pair processor from Thm. 14. Then a DP problem $(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{R}, e)$ is transformed into $\{(\mathcal{P} \setminus \{s \rightarrow t \mid \mathcal{A}(s) \succ \mathcal{A}(t)\}, \mathcal{R}, e)\}$ if $(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{R}, e)$ is proper, if $\mathcal{A}(\mathcal{P})_{\succ} \cup \mathcal{A}(\mathcal{P})_{\succeq} = \mathcal{A}(\mathcal{P})$, and if $\mathcal{A}(\mathcal{R})_{\succeq} = \mathcal{A}(\mathcal{R})$ holds for some reduction pair (\succeq, \succ) . An advantage of this alternative processor is that it can be combined with our results from [29] on applying usable rules for termination instead of innermost termination proofs, cf. Sect. 3.2.

3.4 Comparison with Related Work

Most approaches for higher-order functions in term rewriting use *higher-order TRSs*. However, the main automated termination techniques for such TRSs are *simplification orders* (e.g., [19]) which fail on functions like `div` in Ex. 18.

Exceptions are the *monotonic higher-order semantic path order* [8] and the existing variants of dependency pairs for higher-order TRSs. However, these variants require considerable restrictions (e.g., on the TRSs [28] or on the orders that may be used [3, 23, 27].) So in contrast to our results, they are less powerful than the original dependency pair technique when applied to first-order functions.

Termination techniques for higher-order TRSs often handle a richer language than our results. But an efficient automation of these approaches is usually not straightforward (there are hardly any implementations of these techniques available). In contrast, only minor modifications are needed to integrate our results into termination provers for ordinary first-order TRSs that use dependency pairs.

Other approaches represent higher-order functions by first-order TRSs [1, 2, 18, 24, 30], similar to us. However, they mostly use *monomorphic* types without type variables (this restriction is also imposed in some approaches for higher-order TRSs [8]). Then terms like “`map' minus' xs`” and “`map'(minus' x)' xs`” cannot both be well typed, but one needs different `map`-symbols for arguments of different types. In contrast, our approach uses untyped term rewriting. Hence, it can be applied for termination analysis of polymorphic or untyped functional languages. Moreover, [24] and [30] only consider extensions of the lexicographic path order, whereas we can also handle non-simply terminating TRSs like Ex. 18.

4 A DP Processor for Proving Non-Termination

Almost all techniques for automated termination analysis try to *prove termination* and there are hardly any methods to *prove non-termination*. But detecting non-termination automatically would be very helpful when debugging programs.

We show that the DP framework is particularly suitable for combining both termination and *non-termination* analysis. We introduce a DP processor which tries to detect infinite DP problems in order to answer “no”. The processor also handles higher-order functions if they are represented by first-order TRSs. Then, if all previous processors were complete, we can conclude non-termination of the original TRS. An important advantage of the DP framework is that it can couple the search for a proof and a disproof of termination: Processors which try to prove termination are also helpful for the non-termination proof because they transform the initial DP problem into sub-problems, where most of them can easily be proved finite. So they detect those sub-problems which could cause non-termination. Therefore, the non-termination processors should only operate on these sub-problems and thus, they only have to regard a subset of the rules when searching for non-termination. On the other hand, processors that try to disprove termination are also helpful for the termination proof, even if some of the previous processors were incomplete. The reason is that there are many indeterminisms in a termination proof attempt, since usually many DP processors can be applied to a DP problem (possibly in several different ways). Thus, if one can find out that a DP problem is infinite, one knows that one has reached a “dead end” and should backtrack.

To prove non-termination within the DP framework, in Sect. 4.1 we introduce *looping* DP problems and in Sect. 4.2 we show how to detect such DP problems automatically. Finally, Sect. 4.3 is a comparison with related work.

4.1 A DP Processor Based on Looping DP Problems

An obvious approach to find infinite reductions is to search for a term s which evaluates to a term $C[s\mu]$ containing an instance of s . A TRS with such reductions is called *looping*. Clearly, a naive search for looping terms is very costly.

In contrast to “looping TRSs”, when adapting the concept of *loopingness* to DP problems, we only have to consider terms s occurring in dependency pairs and we do not have to regard any contexts C . The reason is that such contexts are already removed by the construction of dependency pairs. In Thm. 29, we will show that in this way one can indeed detect all looping TRSs.

Definition 27 (Looping DP Problems) *A DP problem $(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{R}, \mathbf{t})$ is looping iff there is a $(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{R})$ -chain $s_1 \rightarrow t_1, s_2 \rightarrow t_2, \dots$ with $t_i \sigma \rightarrow_{\mathcal{R}}^* s_{i+1} \sigma$ for all i such that $s_1 \sigma$ matches $s_k \sigma$ for some $k > 1$ (i.e., $s_1 \sigma \mu = s_k \sigma$ for a substitution μ).*

To prove that loopingness of TRSs corresponds to loopingness of DP problems, we first need the following auxiliary lemma about the form of looping reductions. Let \supseteq denote the subterm relation and \triangleright is the proper subterm relation. Any reduction of the form $s = s_0 \supseteq t_0 \rightarrow_{\mathcal{R}} s_1 \supseteq t_1 \rightarrow_{\mathcal{R}} \dots \rightarrow_{\mathcal{R}} s_{m-1} \supseteq t_{m-1} \rightarrow_{\mathcal{R}} s_m \supseteq t_m = s\mu$ with $m > 0$ is called a *cyclic reduction of \mathcal{R} of length m* . Obviously, any looping TRS has such a cyclic reduction, since loopingness implies that there is a term s and a substitution μ with $s \rightarrow_{\mathcal{R}}^+ C[s\mu] \supseteq s\mu$. In the following, $\rightarrow_{\mathcal{R}, \varepsilon}$ denotes \mathcal{R} -reductions at the root position and $\rightarrow_{\mathcal{R}, > \varepsilon}$ denotes \mathcal{R} -reductions below the root.

Lemma 28 (Form of Looping Reductions) *Let \mathcal{R} be a looping TRS and let m be the length of the shortest cyclic reduction of \mathcal{R} . Then there is some term s and some substitution μ such that $s ((\rightarrow_{\mathcal{R}, \varepsilon} \circ \supseteq) \cup \rightarrow_{\mathcal{R}, > \varepsilon})^m s\mu$, i.e., steps with \triangleright can only take place after \mathcal{R} -reductions at the root. Moreover, the reduction contains at least one root reduction step (i.e., one step with $\rightarrow_{\mathcal{R}, \varepsilon}$) and every term in the reduction has a defined root.*

Proof. Let s be a minimal term (w.r.t. \triangleright) that has a cyclic reduction of length m . We show that in the cyclic reduction of s we can always exchange the sequence $\rightarrow_{\mathcal{R}, > \varepsilon} \circ \triangleright_d$ by $\triangleright_d \circ \rightarrow_{\mathcal{R}}$, where \triangleright_d is the *direct* subterm relation. This proves that we have $s \supseteq s' ((\rightarrow_{\mathcal{R}, \varepsilon} \circ \supseteq) \cup \rightarrow_{\mathcal{R}, > \varepsilon})^m s\mu$ for some term s' . So let $u \rightarrow_{\mathcal{R}, > \varepsilon} v \triangleright_d w$ be a reduction occurring in the cyclic reduction of s . Then we have $u = f(u_1, \dots, u_n)$, $v = f(v_1, \dots, v_n)$, $w = v_j$, $u_i \rightarrow_{\mathcal{R}} v_i$, and $u_k = v_k$ for all $k \neq i$. If $j = i$, then $u \triangleright_d u_i \rightarrow_{\mathcal{R}} v_i = v_j = w$. Otherwise, $u \triangleright_d u_j = v_j = w$ which is a contradiction to the minimality of m .

Now note that $s = s'$. The reason is that $s \triangleright s'$ would imply that there is a cyclic reduction $s' ((\rightarrow_{\mathcal{R}, \varepsilon} \circ \supseteq) \cup \rightarrow_{\mathcal{R}, > \varepsilon})^m s\mu \triangleright s'\mu$ of length m for the term s' . This is a contradiction to the minimality of s . Hence, we indeed obtain $s ((\rightarrow_{\mathcal{R}, \varepsilon} \circ \supseteq) \cup \rightarrow_{\mathcal{R}, > \varepsilon})^m s\mu$.

Next we show that there must be at least one reduction step at the root. Otherwise, we would obtain $s \rightarrow_{\mathcal{R}, > \varepsilon}^m s\mu$. Hence, $s = f(s_1, \dots, s_n) \rightarrow_{\mathcal{R}, > \varepsilon}^m f(s_1\mu, \dots, s_n\mu)$. For all i , we have $s_i \rightarrow_{\mathcal{R}, > \varepsilon}^{m_i} s_i\mu$ for some m_i with $m_1 + \dots + m_n = m$. Since $m > 0$, there must be at least one $m_i > 0$ which shows that $s_i \rightarrow_{\mathcal{R}, > \varepsilon}^{m_i} s_i\mu$ is a cyclic reduction with a length of at most m . Note that $m_i = m$ because of minimality of m . But since $s \triangleright s_i$, this is a contradiction to the minimality of s .

Finally, we show that all terms in the reduction have a defined root symbol. First note that the root of s must be defined, since s starts a reduction w.r.t. $((\rightarrow_{\mathcal{R}, \varepsilon} \circ \supseteq) \cup \rightarrow_{\mathcal{R}, > \varepsilon})^*$ that contains a root step with $\rightarrow_{\mathcal{R}, \varepsilon}$. Moreover, for any term s' with $s' ((\rightarrow_{\mathcal{R}, \varepsilon} \circ \supseteq) \cup \rightarrow_{\mathcal{R}, > \varepsilon})^* s\mu$, the root of s' must also be defined.

The reason is that otherwise, s' can only be reduced by $\rightarrow_{\mathcal{R}, > \varepsilon}$ -steps, but then one cannot obtain the term $s\mu$ which has a defined root. \square

Now we can show the desired result that looping TRSs correspond to looping DP problems.

Theorem 29 (Loopingness of TRSs and DP problems) *A TRS \mathcal{R} is looping iff the DP problem $(DP(\mathcal{R}), \mathcal{R}, \mathbf{t})$ is looping.*

Proof. We first prove that loopingness of $(DP(\mathcal{R}), \mathcal{R}, \mathbf{t})$ implies that \mathcal{R} is looping. Let $s_1 \rightarrow t_1, s_2 \rightarrow t_2, \dots$ be a looping $(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{R})$ -chain, i.e., $t_i \sigma \rightarrow_{\mathcal{R}}^* s_{i+1} \sigma$ for all i and $s_1 \sigma \mu = s_k \sigma$ for some $k > 1$. For any term t whose root symbol is a tuple symbol, let t^b denote the term which results from replacing the tuple symbol by the corresponding defined symbol (i.e., $F(t_1, \dots, t_n)^b = f(t_1, \dots, t_n)$). As \mathcal{R} does not contain tuple symbols and as all s_i and t_i have a tuple symbol on the root position, we obtain $t_i^b \sigma \rightarrow_{\mathcal{R}}^* s_{i+1}^b \sigma$ for all i . Moreover, for each dependency pair $s_i \rightarrow t_i$, there is a rule $s_i^b \rightarrow C_i[t_i^b] \in \mathcal{R}$. Hence, $s_1^b \sigma \rightarrow_{\mathcal{R}} C_1 \sigma[t_1^b \sigma] \rightarrow_{\mathcal{R}}^* C_1 \sigma[s_2^b \sigma] \rightarrow_{\mathcal{R}} C_1 \sigma[C_2 \sigma[t_2^b \sigma]] \rightarrow_{\mathcal{R}}^* \dots \rightarrow_{\mathcal{R}} C_1 \sigma[\dots C_{k-1} \sigma[t_{k-1}^b \sigma] \dots] \rightarrow_{\mathcal{R}}^* C_1 \sigma[\dots C_{k-1} \sigma[s_k^b \sigma] \dots] = C_1 \sigma[\dots C_{k-1} \sigma[s_1^b \sigma \mu] \dots]$. Hence, \mathcal{R} is looping.

For the other direction, let \mathcal{R} be looping. By Lemma 28 there is a term s such that $s = s_0 ((\rightarrow_{\mathcal{R}, \varepsilon} \circ \triangleright) \cup \rightarrow_{\mathcal{R}, > \varepsilon}) s_1 ((\rightarrow_{\mathcal{R}, \varepsilon} \circ \triangleright) \cup \rightarrow_{\mathcal{R}, > \varepsilon}) \dots ((\rightarrow_{\mathcal{R}, \varepsilon} \circ \triangleright) \cup \rightarrow_{\mathcal{R}, > \varepsilon}) s_m = s\mu$ where m is the length of the shortest cyclic reduction. Here, all s_i have a defined root and we have used at least one $(\rightarrow_{\mathcal{R}, \varepsilon} \circ \triangleright)$ -step. Obviously, whenever we have $s_i \rightarrow_{\mathcal{R}, > \varepsilon} s_{i+1}$, then we also obtain $s_i^\# \rightarrow_{\mathcal{R}} s_{i+1}^\#$. Next we show that $s_i (\rightarrow_{\mathcal{R}, \varepsilon} \circ \triangleright) s_{i+1}$ implies $s_i^\# = u\sigma$ and $s_{i+1}^\# = v\sigma$ for some dependency pair $u \rightarrow v \in DP(\mathcal{R})$. Thus, let $s_i = l\sigma \rightarrow_{\mathcal{R}} r\sigma \triangleright_p s_{i+1}$ for some rule $l \rightarrow r \in \mathcal{R}$ and some position p in $r\sigma$. First note that due to the minimality of m , the term s_{i+1} cannot be entirely in σ , i.e., p is a position of r and $r|_p$ is not a variable. The reason is that otherwise, we would have $s_i \triangleright s_{i+1}$ and thus, we could obtain a cyclic reduction of shorter length. Thus, $s_{i+1} = r|_p \sigma$ where $r|_p \notin \mathcal{V}$. As the root of s_{i+1} is defined, $r|_p$ has a defined root as well and hence, $l^\# \rightarrow r|_p^\# \in DP(\mathcal{R})$. Thus, $s_i^\# = l^\# \sigma$ and $s_{i+1}^\# = r|_p^\# \sigma$.

So if $s = s_0 \rightarrow_{\mathcal{R}, > \varepsilon}^* s_{i_1} (\rightarrow_{\mathcal{R}, \varepsilon} \circ \triangleright) s_{i_1+1} \rightarrow_{\mathcal{R}, > \varepsilon}^* s_{i_2} (\rightarrow_{\mathcal{R}, \varepsilon} \circ \triangleright) \dots \rightarrow_{\mathcal{R}, > \varepsilon}^* s_{i_k} (\rightarrow_{\mathcal{R}, \varepsilon} \circ \triangleright) s_{i_k+1} \rightarrow_{\mathcal{R}, > \varepsilon}^* s_{i_k+1} = s_m = s\mu = s_0\mu$, then by the above results we know that $s^\# = s_0^\# \rightarrow_{\mathcal{R}}^* s_{i_1}^\# = u_1\sigma \rightarrow_{DP(\mathcal{R})} v_1\sigma = s_{i_1+1}^\# \rightarrow_{\mathcal{R}}^* s_{i_2}^\# = u_2\sigma \rightarrow_{DP(\mathcal{R})} \dots \rightarrow_{\mathcal{R}}^* s_{i_k}^\# = u_k\sigma \rightarrow_{DP(\mathcal{R})} v_k\sigma = s_{i_k+1}^\# \rightarrow_{\mathcal{R}}^* s_{i_k+1}^\# = s^\# \mu = s_0^\# \mu \rightarrow_{\mathcal{R}}^* s_{i_1}^\# \mu = u_1\sigma \mu$ for some dependency pairs $u_i \rightarrow v_i \in DP(\mathcal{R})$. As there was at least one root step in the original reduction, we know that $k \geq 1$. Thus, the $(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{R})$ -chain $u_1 \rightarrow v_1, \dots, u_k \rightarrow v_k, u_1 \rightarrow v_1$ shows that $(DP(\mathcal{R}), \mathcal{R}, \mathbf{t})$ is looping. \square

Example 30 *Consider Toyama's example $\mathcal{R} = \{f(0, 1, x) \rightarrow f(x, x, x), g(y, z) \rightarrow y, g(y, z) \rightarrow z\}$ and $\mathcal{P} = DP(\mathcal{R}) = \{F(0, 1, x) \rightarrow F(x, x, x)\}$. We have the $(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{R})$ -chain $F(0, 1, x_1) \rightarrow F(x_1, x_1, x_1), F(0, 1, x_2) \rightarrow F(x_2, x_2, x_2)$, since $F(x_1, x_1, x_1)\sigma \rightarrow_{\mathcal{R}}^* F(0, 1, x_2)\sigma$ for $\sigma(x_1) = \sigma(x_2) = g(0, 1)$. As the term $F(0, 1, x_1)\sigma$ matches $F(0, 1, x_2)\sigma$ (they are even identical), the DP problem $(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{R}, \mathbf{t})$ is looping.*

Our goal is to detect looping DP problems. In the termination case, every looping DP problem is infinite and hence, if all preceding DP processors were

complete, then termination is disproved. However, the definition of “looping” from Def. 27 cannot be used for innermost termination: in Ex. 30, $(DP(\mathcal{R}), \mathcal{R}, \mathbf{t})$ is looping, but $(DP(\mathcal{R}), \mathcal{R}, \mathbf{i})$ is finite and \mathcal{R} is innermost terminating.⁷

Nevertheless, for *non-overlapping* DP problems, $(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{R}, \mathbf{i})$ is infinite whenever $(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{R}, \mathbf{t})$ is infinite. So here loopingness of $(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{R}, \mathbf{t})$ indeed implies that $(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{R}, \mathbf{i})$ is infinite. We call $(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{R}, e)$ *non-overlapping* if \mathcal{R} is non-overlapping and no left-hand side of \mathcal{R} unifies with a non-variable subterm of a left-hand side of \mathcal{P} .

Lemma 31 (Looping and Infinite DP Problems)

- (a) *If $(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{R}, \mathbf{t})$ is looping, then $(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{R}, \mathbf{t})$ is infinite.*
- (b) *If $(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{R}, \mathbf{t})$ is infinite and non-overlapping, then $(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{R}, \mathbf{i})$ is infinite.*

Proof. For (a), let $s_1 \rightarrow t_1, \dots, s_k \rightarrow t_k$ be a chain where $t_i\sigma \rightarrow_{\mathcal{R}}^* s_{i+1}\sigma$ for all i and $s_1\sigma\mu = s_k\sigma$. Hence, $s_1 \rightarrow t_1, \dots, s_{k-1} \rightarrow t_{k-1}, s_1 \rightarrow t_1, \dots, s_{k-1} \rightarrow t_{k-1}, \dots$ is an infinite $(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{R})$ -chain. To see this, one can use a substitution which behaves like σ on the variables of the first $k-1$ dependency pairs, like $\sigma\mu$ on the variables of the next $k-1$ pairs, like $\sigma\mu^2$ on the next $k-1$ pairs, etc. Then obviously, the instantiated right-hand side of each pair in the chain reduces to the instantiated left-hand side of the next pair.

For (b), let $(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{R}, \mathbf{t})$ be infinite. If \mathcal{R} is not terminating then \mathcal{R} is also not innermost terminating since \mathcal{R} is non-overlapping, and thus, $(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{R}, \mathbf{i})$ is infinite. Otherwise, there is some infinite $(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{R})$ -chain $s_1 \rightarrow t_1, s_2 \rightarrow t_2 \dots$ with $t_i\sigma \rightarrow_{\mathcal{R}}^* s_{i+1}\sigma$. The chain is *minimal* (i.e., all $t_i\sigma$ are terminating), since \mathcal{R} is terminating. Hence, by [16, Thm. 32] there is also an infinite innermost $(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{R})$ -chain. Thus, $(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{R}, \mathbf{i})$ is infinite. □

Now we can define the DP processor for proving non-termination.

Theorem 32 (Non-Termination Processor) *The following DP processor Proc is sound and complete. For a DP problem $(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{R}, e)$, Proc returns*

- “no”, if $(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{R}, \mathbf{t})$ is looping and $(e = \mathbf{t}$ or $(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{R}, e)$ is non-overlapping)
- $\{(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{R}, e)\}$, otherwise

Proof. The theorem is an immediate consequence of Lemma 31. □

4.2 Detecting Looping DP Problems

Our criteria to detect looping DP problems automatically use *narrowing*.

Definition 33 (Narrowing) *Let \mathcal{R} be a TRS which may also have rules $l \rightarrow r$ where $\mathcal{V}(r) \not\subseteq \mathcal{V}(l)$ or $l \in \mathcal{V}$. A term t narrows to s , denoted $t \rightsquigarrow_{\mathcal{R}, \delta, p} s$, iff there is a substitution δ , a (variable-renamed) rule $l \rightarrow r \in \mathcal{R}$ and a non-variable position p of t such that $\delta = \text{mgu}(t|_p, l)$ and $s = t[r]_p\delta$. Let $\rightsquigarrow_{\mathcal{R}, \delta}$ be the relation which*

⁷ One can adapt “loopingness” to the innermost case: $(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{R}, \mathbf{i})$ is *looping* iff there is an *innermost* $(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{R})$ -chain $s_1 \rightarrow t_1, s_2 \rightarrow t_2, \dots$ such that $t_i\sigma\mu^n \xrightarrow{\mathcal{R}}^* s_{i+1}\sigma\mu^n$, $s_1\sigma\mu = s_k\sigma$, and $s_i\sigma\mu^n$ is in normal form for all i and all $n \geq 0$. Then loopingness implies that the DP problem is infinite, but since one has to examine *infinitely* many instantiations $s_i\sigma\mu^n$ and $t_i\sigma\mu^n$, in general loopingness is hard to check. Nevertheless, for special TRSs (e.g., overlay systems), one can also formulate sufficient conditions for loopingness in the innermost case which are amenable to automation.

permits narrowing steps on all positions p . Let $\rightsquigarrow_{(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{R}), \delta}$ denote $\rightsquigarrow_{\mathcal{P}, \delta, \varepsilon} \cup \rightsquigarrow_{\mathcal{R}, \delta}$, where ε is the root position. Moreover, let $\rightsquigarrow_{(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{R}), \delta}^*$ be the smallest relation which contains $\rightsquigarrow_{(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{R}), \delta_1} \circ \dots \circ \rightsquigarrow_{(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{R}), \delta_n}$ for all $n \geq 0$ and all substitutions where $\delta = \delta_1 \dots \delta_n$.

Example 34 Let $\mathcal{R} = \{f(x, y, z) \rightarrow g(x, y, z), g(s(x), y, z) \rightarrow f(z, s(y), z)\}$ and let $\mathcal{P} = DP(\mathcal{R}) = \{F(x, y, z) \rightarrow G(x, y, z), G(s(x), y, z) \rightarrow F(z, s(y), z)\}$. The term $G(x, y, z)$ can only be narrowed by the rule $G(s(x'), y', z') \rightarrow F(z', s(y'), z')$ on the root position and hence, we obtain $G(x, y, z) \rightsquigarrow_{\mathcal{P}, [x/s(x'), y'/y, z'/z], \varepsilon} F(z, s(y), z)$.

To find loops, we narrow the right-hand side t of a dependency pair $s \rightarrow t$ until one reaches a term s' such that $s\delta$ semi-unifies with s' (i.e., $s\delta\mu_1\mu_2 = s'\mu_1$ for some substitutions μ_1 and μ_2). Here, δ is the substitution used for narrowing. Then we indeed have a loop as in Def. 27 by defining $\sigma = \delta\mu_1$ and $\mu = \mu_2$. Semi-unification encompasses both matching and unification and algorithms for semi-unification can for example be found in [20, 25].

Theorem 35 (Loop Detection by Forward Narrowing) Let $(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{R}, e)$ be a DP problem. If there is an $s \rightarrow t \in \mathcal{P}$ such that $t \rightsquigarrow_{(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{R}), \delta}^* s'$ and $s\delta$ semi-unifies with s' , then $(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{R}, \mathbf{t})$ is looping.

Proof. We have $s\delta\mu_1\mu_2 = s'\mu_1$ for some substitutions μ_1 and μ_2 . Let $\sigma = \delta\mu_1$. We know that $s\sigma \rightarrow_{\mathcal{P}} t\sigma = t\delta\mu_1 \rightarrow_{\mathcal{P} \cup \mathcal{R}}^* s'\mu_1 = s\sigma\mu_2$ where \mathcal{P} -rules are only used on the root position. Thus, $(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{R}, \mathbf{t})$ is looping. \square

Example 36 We continue with Ex. 34. We had $G(x, y, z) \rightsquigarrow_{(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{R}), \delta} F(z, s(y), z)$ where $\delta = [x/s(x'), y'/y, z'/z]$. Applying δ to the left-hand side $s = F(x, y, z)$ of the first dependency pair yields $F(s(x'), y, z)$. Now $F(s(x'), y, z)$ semi-unifies with $F(z, s(y), z)$, since $F(s(x'), y, z)\mu_1\mu_2 = F(z, s(y), z)\mu_1$ for the substitutions $\mu_1 = [z/s(x')]$ and $\mu_2 = [y/s(y)]$. (However, the first term does not match or unify with the second.) Thus, $(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{R}, \mathbf{t})$ is looping and \mathcal{R} does not terminate.

However, while the DP problem of Toyama's example (Ex. 30) is looping, this is not detected by Thm. 35. The reason is that the right-hand side $F(x, x, x)$ of the only dependency pair cannot be narrowed. Therefore, we now introduce a variant of the above criterion which narrows with the reversed TRSs \mathcal{P}^{-1} and \mathcal{R}^{-1} .

Theorem 37 (Loop Detection by Backward Narrowing) Let $(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{R}, e)$ be a DP problem. If there is an $s \rightarrow t \in \mathcal{P}$ such that $s \rightsquigarrow_{(\mathcal{P}^{-1}, \mathcal{R}^{-1}), \delta}^* t'$ and t' semi-unifies with $t\delta$, then $(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{R}, \mathbf{t})$ is looping.

Proof. We have $t'\mu_1\mu_2 = t\delta\mu_1$ for some substitutions μ_1 and μ_2 . Let $\sigma = \delta\mu_1$. From $s \rightsquigarrow_{(\mathcal{P}^{-1}, \mathcal{R}^{-1}), \delta}^* t'$ we obtain $s\delta \rightarrow_{\mathcal{P}^{-1} \cup \mathcal{R}^{-1}}^* t'$ where all \mathcal{P}^{-1} -rules are only used on the root position. Thus, $t' \rightarrow_{\mathcal{P} \cup \mathcal{R}}^* s\delta$ which implies $s\sigma \rightarrow_{\mathcal{P}} t\sigma = t\delta\mu_1 = t'\mu_1\mu_2 \rightarrow_{\mathcal{P} \cup \mathcal{R}}^* s\delta\mu_1\mu_2 = s\sigma\mu_2$ where \mathcal{P} -rules are only used on the root position. This shows that $(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{R}, \mathbf{t})$ is looping. \square

Example 38 To detect that Toyama's example (Ex. 30) is looping, we start with the left-hand side $s = F(0, 1, x)$ and narrow 0 to $g(0, z)$ using $y \rightarrow g(y, z) \in \mathcal{R}^{-1}$.

Then we narrow 1 to $\mathbf{g}(y', 1)$ by $z' \rightarrow \mathbf{g}(y', z')$. Therefore we obtain $F(0, 1, x) \rightsquigarrow_{(\mathcal{P}^{-1}, \mathcal{R}^{-1}), [y/0, z'/1]}^* F(\mathbf{g}(0, z), \mathbf{g}(y, 1), x)$. Now $t' = F(\mathbf{g}(0, z), \mathbf{g}(y, 1), x)$ (semi-)unifies with the corresponding right-hand side $t = F(x, x, x)$ using $\mu_1 = [x/\mathbf{g}(0, 1), y/0, z/1]$. Thus, $(DP(\mathcal{R}), \mathcal{R}, \mathbf{t})$ is looping and the TRS is not terminating.

However, there are also TRSs where backward narrowing fails and forward narrowing succeeds.

Example 39 Let $\mathcal{R} = \{f(x, x) \rightarrow f(0, 1), 0 \rightarrow \mathbf{a}, 1 \rightarrow \mathbf{a}\}$ and $\mathcal{P} = DP(\mathcal{R}) = \{F(x, x) \rightarrow F(0, 1)\}$. For $\sigma(x) = \mathbf{a}$ we have an infinite $(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{R})$ -chain. But the left-hand side $F(x, x)$ of \mathcal{P} 's only pair cannot be narrowed backwards and thus, Thm. 37 fails.

On the other hand, the right-hand side $F(0, 1)$ can be narrowed to $F(\mathbf{a}, \mathbf{a})$. This term obviously unifies with the left-hand side $F(x, x)$ by $\mu_1 = [x/\mathbf{a}]$. Thus, with forward narrowing (Thm. 35) we can detect that this DP problem is looping and that the TRS is not terminating.

Note that Ex. 30 where forward narrowing fails is not right-linear and that Ex. 39 where backward narrowing fails is not left-linear.⁸ Therefore, we implemented the non-termination processor of Thm. 32 with the following heuristic in our system AProVE [15]:

- If $\mathcal{P} \cup \mathcal{R}$ is right- and not left-linear, then use forward narrowing (Thm. 35).
- Otherwise, we use backward narrowing (Thm. 37). If $\mathcal{P} \cup \mathcal{R}$ is not left-linear, then moreover we also permit narrowing steps in variables (i.e., $t|_p \in \mathcal{V}$ is permitted in Def. 33). The reason is that then there are looping DP problems which otherwise cannot be detected by forward or backward narrowing.⁹
- Moreover, to obtain a finite search space, we use an upper bound on the number of times that a rule from $\mathcal{P} \cup \mathcal{R}$ can be used for narrowing.

4.3 Comparison with Related Work

We use narrowing to identify looping DP problems. This is related to the concept of *forward closures* of a TRS \mathcal{R} [10]. However, our approach differs from forward closures by starting from the rules of another TRS \mathcal{P} and by also allowing narrowings with \mathcal{P} 's rules on root level. (The reason is that we prove non-termination within the DP framework.) Moreover, we also regard backward narrowing.

There are only few papers on automatically proving *non-termination* of TRSs. An early work is [26] which detects TRSs that are not *simply* terminating (but

⁸ In fact, we conjecture that all looping DP problems can be detected by forward narrowing if $\mathcal{P} \cup \mathcal{R}$ is right-linear and by backward narrowing if $\mathcal{P} \cup \mathcal{R}$ is left-linear.

⁹ An example is the well-known TRS of Drosten [11] (cf. also [5, Ex. 4.13]). Nevertheless, then there are also looping DP problems which cannot even be found when narrowing into variables. An example is $(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{R}, \mathbf{t})$ where $\mathcal{P} = \{F(x, x, y) \rightarrow F(\mathbf{c}(\mathbf{g}(y, y)), \mathbf{c}(\mathbf{h}(y, y)), y)\}$ and $\mathcal{R} = \{\mathbf{g}(\mathbf{c}(0), \mathbf{c}(1)) \rightarrow \mathbf{b}, \mathbf{h}(\mathbf{c}(0), \mathbf{c}(1)) \rightarrow \mathbf{b}, \mathbf{a} \rightarrow 0, \mathbf{a} \rightarrow 1\}$. We have an infinite chain since $F(\mathbf{c}(\mathbf{b}), \mathbf{c}(\mathbf{b}), \mathbf{c}(\mathbf{a})) \rightarrow_{\mathcal{P}} F(\mathbf{c}(\mathbf{g}(\mathbf{c}(\mathbf{a}), \mathbf{c}(\mathbf{a}))), \mathbf{c}(\mathbf{h}(\mathbf{c}(\mathbf{a}), \mathbf{c}(\mathbf{a}))), \mathbf{c}(\mathbf{a})) \rightarrow_{\mathcal{R}}^* F(\mathbf{c}(\mathbf{g}(\mathbf{c}(0), \mathbf{c}(1))), \mathbf{c}(\mathbf{h}(\mathbf{c}(0), \mathbf{c}(1))), \mathbf{c}(\mathbf{a})) \rightarrow_{\mathcal{R}}^* F(\mathbf{c}(\mathbf{b}), \mathbf{c}(\mathbf{b}), \mathbf{c}(\mathbf{a})) \rightarrow_{\mathcal{P}} \dots$. However, an infinite chain can only be obtained if one instantiates y by $\mathbf{c}(\mathbf{a})$. But this instantiation cannot be found by narrowing, not even when narrowing into variables (since no left-hand side of a rule starts with \mathbf{c}).

they may still terminate). Recently, [31, 33] presented methods for proving non-termination of *string rewrite systems* (i.e., TRSs where all function symbols have arity 1). Similar to our approach, [31] uses (forward) narrowing and [33] uses ancestor graphs which correspond to (backward) narrowing. However, our approach differs substantially from [31, 33]: our technique works within the DP framework, whereas [31, 33] operate on the whole set of rules. Therefore, we can benefit from all previous DP processors which decompose the initial DP problem into smaller sub-problems and identify those parts which could cause non-termination. Moreover, we regard full term rewriting instead of string rewriting. Therefore, we use semi-unification to detect loops, whereas for string rewriting, matching is sufficient. Finally, we also presented a condition to disprove *innermost* termination, whereas [31, 33] only try to disprove full termination.

5 Experiments and Conclusion

The DP framework is a general concept for combining termination techniques in a modular way. We presented two important improvements: First, we extended the framework in order to handle higher-order functions, represented as applicative first-order TRSs. To this end, we developed three new contributions: a refined approximation of dependency graphs, an improved definition of usable rules, and a new processor to transform applicative DP problems into functional form. The advantages of our approach, also compared to related work, are the following: it is simple and very easy to integrate into any termination prover based on dependency pairs (e.g., AProVE [15], CiME [9], TTT [18]). Moreover, it encompasses the original DP framework, e.g., it is at least as successful on ordinary first-order functions as the original dependency pair technique. Finally, our approach treats untyped higher-order functions, i.e., it can be used for termination analysis of polymorphic and untyped functional languages.

As a second extension within the DP framework, we introduced a new processor for disproving termination automatically (an important problem which had hardly been tackled up to now). A major advantage of our approach is that it combines techniques for proving and for disproving termination in the DP framework, which is beneficial for both termination and non-termination analysis.

We implemented all these contributions in the newest version of our termination prover AProVE [15]. Due to the results of this paper, AProVE 1.2 was the most powerful tool for both termination and non-termination proofs of TRSs at the *Annual International Competition of Termination Tools 2005* [32]. In the following table, we compare AProVE 1.2 with its predecessor AProVE 1.1d- γ , which was the winning tool for TRSs at the competition in 2004. While AProVE 1.1d- γ already contained our results on non-termination analysis, the contributions on handling applicative TRSs from Sect. 3 were missing. For the experiments, we used the same setting as in the competition with a timeout of 60 seconds for each example (where however most proofs take less than two seconds).

	<i>higher-order</i> (61 TRSs)		<i>non-term</i> (90 TRSs)		<i>TPDB</i> (838 TRSs)	
	t	n	t	n	t	n
AProVE 1.2	43	8	25	61	639	95
AProVE 1.1d- γ	13	7	24	60	486	92

Here, “*higher-order*” is a collection of untyped versions of typical higher-order functions from [2, 3, 7, 23, 24, 30] and “*non-term*” contains particularly many non-terminating examples. “*TPDB*” is the *Termination Problem Data Base* used in the annual termination competition [32]. It consists of 838 (innermost) termination problems for TRSs from different sources. In the tables, **t** and **n** are the numbers of TRSs where termination resp. non-termination could be proved.

AProVE 1.2 solves the vast majority of the examples in the “*higher-order*”- and the “*non-term*”-collection. This shows that our results for higher-order functions and non-termination are indeed successful in practice. In contrast, the first column demonstrates that previous techniques for automated termination proofs often fail on applicative TRSs representing higher-order functions. Finally, the last two columns show that our contributions also increase power substantially on ordinary non-applicative TRSs (which constitute most of the TPDB). For further details on our experiments and to download AProVE, the reader is referred to <http://www-i2.informatik.rwth-aachen.de/AProVE/1.2/>.

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