

An Extension of the Classification-Tree Method for Embedded Systems for the Description of Events

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Abstract

Nowadays, model-based test approaches are indispensable for the quality assurance of in-vehicle control software. In practice, the Classification-Tree Method for Embedded Systems (CTM_{EMB}) is used to realize a compact graphical representation of test scenarios. Up to now, the CTM_{EMB} has been used mainly in the area of continuous systems. Though the depiction of events within test scenarios is possible already by using existing means of description, there is still room for improvements. Thus, we will introduce in the following a novel extension of the Classification-Tree Method for Embedded Systems for a compact, natural depiction of event-like behaviour which we will illustrate by means of several examples from the area of in-vehicle control software.

Key words: classification-tree method, CTM_{EMB}, embedded systems, test scenario description, events

1 Introduction

The selection of suitable, i.e. error-sensitive, test scenarios is the most crucial activity for a trustworthy test of in-vehicle software[3]. It finally determines the scope and quality of the test. Moreover, an appropriate description of the test scenarios used is essential for the human tester. Based on the data-oriented partitioning of the input domain of the system under test, the Classification-Tree Method for Embedded Systems CTM_{EMB} [4,5,6] facilitates a systematic design of time-variable test scenarios and their graphical description. CTM_{EMB} provides a compact, problem-oriented graphical representation, which is suitable for a human tester, containing a

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high potential for understandability and reusability. The CTM_{EMB} has recently been successfully employed in different control software development projects[12]. One of the main application areas is the testing of in-vehicle software developed in a model-based way[1,2,15]. Strengths of the CTM_{EMB} approach are the description of time-continuous test patterns. However, parts of modern automotive control systems are event-based. So, events have to be a natural part of test descriptions for mixed discrete-continuous systems.

The current CTM_{EMB} notation is already capable of the description of event-like test scenarios, but the resulting descriptions are unnecessary complex. Therefore, a novel extension of the Classification-Tree Method for Embedded Systems facilitating a compact description of events will be proposed in the remainder of the paper.

Section 2 summarizes main concepts and the notation of the CTM_{EMB} . Section 3 describes the proposed extension for event description. Section 4 illustrates its application by means of three different examples. Section 5 relates to other work and section 6 concludes the paper.

2 The Classification-Tree Method for Embedded Systems

Classification Trees were introduced during the early 90s by Grimm and Grochtmann for the structured representation of test cases [9,10]. The construction of classification trees and their associated combination tables is supported by the Classification-Tree Method (CTM), which is derived from the category-partition method[13]. In its basic form, a classification tree and the accompanying combination table describe abstract high-level test cases in a graphical manner without an explicit notion of time. Initially, the input domain of the system under test (SUT) is partitioned separately under various aspects relevant to the test. This is visually represented by means of a classification tree. Then, the resulting partitions are recombined within the combination table in order to form test cases. Since 1999, the method and notion has been enhanced by Conrad and Fey to accommodate the description of time-dependent test scenarios termed test sequences[4,5,6,7]. These extensions are known as the Classification-Tree Method for Embedded Systems CTM_{EMB} (previously known as CTM/ES).

In CTM_{EMB} , the classification tree is derived directly from the technical interface of the system under test, i.e. each input of the SUT is represented as a *classification* in the tree. Each input domain is partitioned into intervals or single values represented as *classes* below the accompanying classification.

Abstract test sequences can be described by means of the classifications and classes constructed in this manner. These sequences consist of separate *test steps*, whose chronology is shown in the rows of the *combination table* beneath the tree. Each row represents a test step, where each input in the classification tree is restricted to one of its classes via a marking in the combination table. The activation time of each test step is noted in a separate column of the combination table as *Time Tag*.

<i>marking</i>	<i>description</i>	<i>meaning</i>
●	“full circular”	<i>select</i> any value from class range
○	“empty circular”	<i>return to / repeat</i> last value from class (history dependent marking)
■	“quadratic”	<i>fire</i> event

Table 1
Marking types

The input values between synchronization points are calculated by means of interpolation. The interpolation function can be chosen from different function types, e.g., step, ramp and sine functions. An interpolation function is represented in the combination table by a certain line style between two subsequent markings.

Technically, the classifications of the classification tree describe an abstract state space with domain X_i for a classification i (fig 1, left). Each classification represents an input variable of the SUT. The test scenario is described in the time domain by means of synchronization points. If $T = \{t_0, t_1, \dots, t_e\}$ with $t_0 < t_1 < \dots < t_e$ describes the set of synchronization points, then the time intervals $[t_0, t_1], [t_1, t_2], \dots, [t_{e-1}, t_e]$ are called test steps. A class function $\tilde{\pi}_i : T \rightarrow P_i(X_i)$ assigns to each synchronization point a partition (i.e. a class) of X_i . It is described by means of the combination table. A value function $v_i : T \rightarrow X_i$ assigns a value to each synchronization point of a classification i . v_i is called *compatible* if for all times $t \in T$ holds, that $\pi_i(v_i(t)) \in \tilde{\pi}_i$, with the standard projection $\pi_i : X_i \rightarrow P_i(X_i)$. An interpolation function $i_i : T \rightarrow I$ assigns an interpolation rule with $I = \{step, ramp, sine\}$ to an input i for every synchronization point in T . An interpolation rule $i_{i,t_k}(t) : [t_k, t_{k+1}] \rightarrow X_i$ provides the value of an input beginning at synchronization point t_k through the interval $[t_k, t_{k+1}]$. When, e.g., a ramp or a sine is applied as interpolation rule with a compatible value function, the result is a continuous test-data waveform (time series) $\bar{v}_i : \bar{T} \rightarrow X_i$, where $\bar{T} \supset T$ is a strictly ordered set of times according to the classical notion of time (cf. [5]).

3 A Description of the Extensions

In order to describe an input event i with the possible i_1, i_2, \dots, i_k values (or, alternatively, k exclusive events which are related) a classification i is created in the classification tree, containing the classes i_1, i_2, \dots, i_k and $i_{default}$ for the default value, which means ‘event is NOT available’, essentially. The temporal sequence of events as well as the design of time-variable signal forms is described in the combination table beneath the classification tree. For this, an additional *quadratic* marking type is introduced. An overview and short description of the available marking types is displayed in table 1.

If the appearance of an event i_k needs to be described at the point of time t_i in the combination table a corresponding row with the time tag t_i is inserted into the table. This row is marked with the new quadratic marking type underneath the

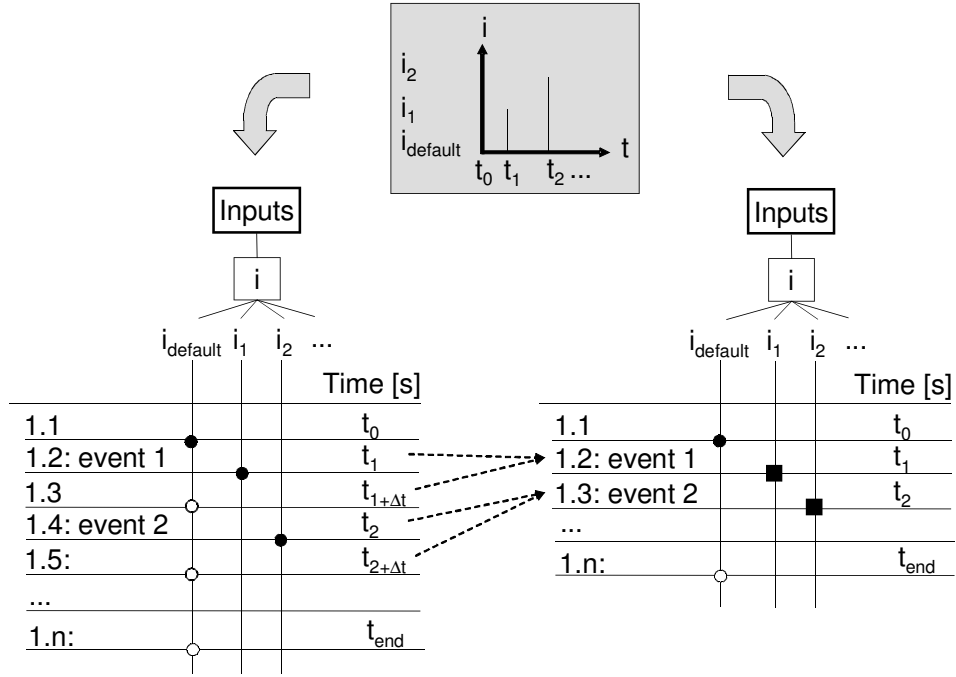


Figure 1. Modeling of Events: previous and proposed notation

class i_k . For the beginning and the end of the test sequence there are usually two more rows needed at the beginning and the end of the combination table, which are marked underneath the default class $i_{default}$ with one of the circular standard markings (fig. 1, right-hand side).

The *full* circular marking means that a specific value is chosen arbitrarily from the associated class, whereas an *empty* circular marking means the same value is to be selected, which was selected the last time the associated class was used. The meaning of the circular standard markings remains unchanged compared to the familiar form of CTM_{EMB} (see [4]).

A marking of a class i_k at the point of time t_i with the quadratic marking type means that at this point in time an event i with property k fires. After the point in time t_i the default value $i_{default}$ is assumed, until another quadratic marking is encountered at some synchronization point t_j .

The proposed extension of the classification-tree method for embedded systems by event markings allows a decidedly more compact description of events or similar issues when compared to already existing methods of description. Up to now, two rows labeled with the time tags t_i and $t_{i+\Delta t}$ were needed to describe an event i_k at the time t_i in the combination table³. The first of the two rows describes the appearance of the new value i_k while the second row describes its retraction in the next possible time step (Fig. 1, left). The introduction of event markings can thus reduce the amount of rows in the combination table by up to 50%. The results are significantly more compact and thus more readable combination tables. Fig. 1 juxtaposes the present (left) and the new, more compact method of description with

³ Δt here denotes the cycle time of the contemplated system.

event markings (right) using a generic example.

The proposed extension proves to be beneficial particularly for simultaneous descriptions of events and time-continuous signal forms within a classification tree. Where an equivalence class of the CTM_{EMB} represents a value or a value interval, an event equivalence class usually represents a specific message or a class of messages to be sent. The underlying test-bench is notified as soon as the message event is triggered.

Based on the notion of test sequence and interpolation rule in CTM_{EMB} [5] we describe an expanded notion which allows the introduction of events at precise moments in time. CTM_{EMB} describes the derivation of continuous test-sequences by means of variables and by test-steps which are connected by interpolation rules. An event-variable is a variable x_i with (finite and enumerable) domain X_i . For an event-variable, we define a modified interpolation rule as follows. Let $\{t_0, t_1\}$ be a set of (two) consecutive synchronization points with $t_0 \leq t_1$ and with associated values $x_0, x_1 \in X$. Δt is called sampling time. Its multiples are $k\Delta t, k \in \mathbb{N}_0$. Then a function $j : X^{(t_0, t_1)} \times k \rightarrow X$ associates a value from X with each discrete point in time $k\Delta t$ within and including the boundaries $\{t_0, t_1\}$. We call j the *discrete interpolation rule*.

One example of a discrete interpolation rule is:

$$j_{\text{impulse}}(k) : \begin{cases} x_0, & k = 0 \\ 0, & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$$

j_{impulse} facilitates the introduction of a cycle-accurate singular impulse into the discretized test data waveform such that the first sample of the synchronization interval at $0 \cdot \Delta t$ is of value x_0 and all following samples are of value 0. This function also provides a discretization rule for signals described by way of Dirac-Distributions as shown in [11] for signal derivations. For message-sending events the discrete interpolation rule is as follows:

$$j_{\text{event}}(k) : \begin{cases} x_0, & k = 0 \\ \text{null}, & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$$

$$x_0 \in X, X = \{(i_{\text{default}} \equiv \text{null}), i_1, i_2, \dots\} \subset (\text{STRING} \cup \text{null})$$

where X is the input domain which encompasses a set of strings and a neutral element *null* which represents the case that no message is queued for the respective input. Note that the application of j_{event} on an input signal must not be mixed with other interpolation rules on the same signal which would cover an input domain other than strings and null.

4 Application Examples

The following subsections explain the event extension of the CTM_{EMB} by means of two examples. The first example is a 4-way cruise control lever and the second

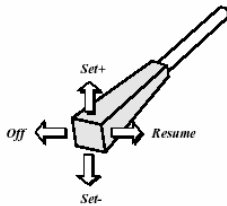


Figure 2. Cruise Control Lever Positions

example explains the temporal modeling of CAN bus messages.

4.1 Event Groups

The modeling of event groups can be explained by considering the modeling of a cruise control lever. Normally the control lever of an adaptive cruise control system is positioned in the middle. Short-term moving (tapping) of the lever in one of the four directions activates one of the functions Accelerate (Set+), Decelerate (Set-), Resume and Off (see Fig 2). Immediately after tapping, the lever automatically returns to the normal position. These events can not occur simultaneously for reasons of design.

Using the above-mentioned expansion of the CTM_{EMB} describing events, the position of the cruise control lever can be described through the classification *LeverPos* (compare Fig. 3). Class 0 corresponds to the default position, classes 1 to 4 to the four events alternatively possible. In such a way, usage scenarios or test patterns for an adaptive cruise control system can compactly be described. Besides containing control lever events, these usage scenarios also include continuous input signal forms for the other input signals such as the two pedal positions ϕ_{Acc} and ϕ_{Brake} .

Fig. 3 depicts such a test pattern for cruise controls which was automatically generated with the aid of the EST (Evolutionary Safety Testing) approach. The depicted test pattern was derived from [14]; the temporal sequence of the control lever event is depicted on the top left.

The combination table would roughly be double its size without the expansions of event depiction. Furthermore, the ramp-shaped input signal segments of v_{tar} would have to be split up in two ramp segments respectively, requiring additional (auxiliary) classes belonging to v_{tar} .

4.2 CAN Messages

The proposed extension is additionally well-suited for the description of bus communications between electronic control units. As an example, the transmission behavior of two control units of a CAN bus (cf. [8]), which can send the CAN messages a, b, c or x and y., is described in Fig. 4. The two control units show independent transmission behavior; therefore each control unit is modeled by an individual event group, a classification, to which the CAN identifiers possible and

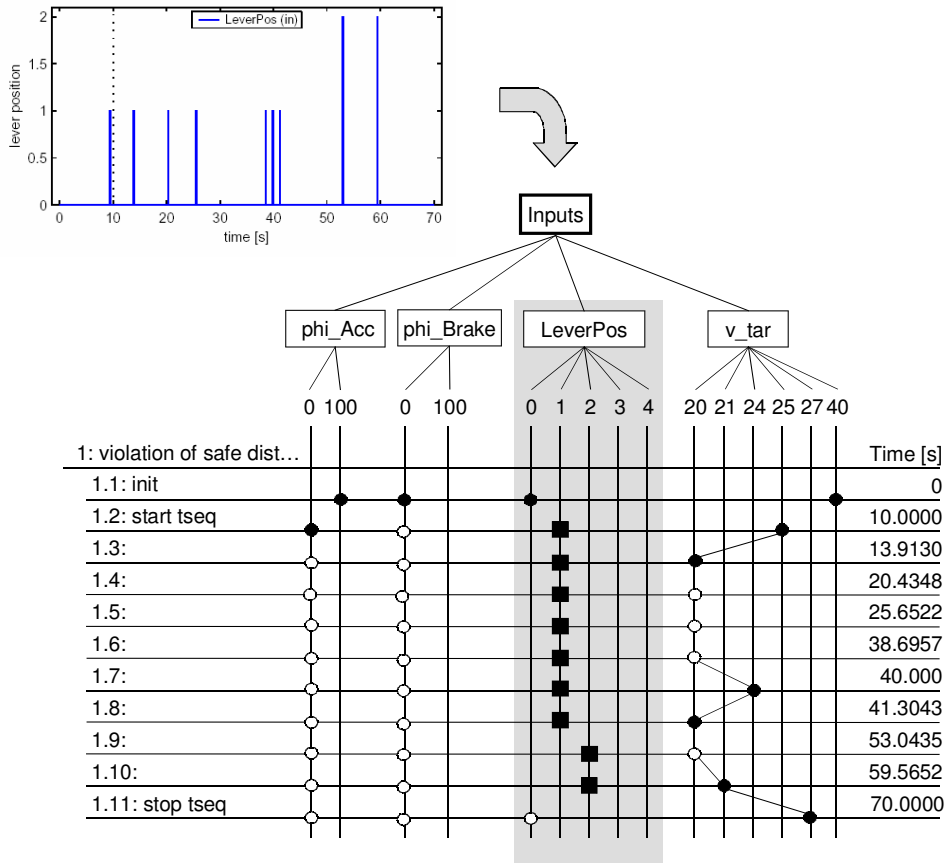


Figure 3. Modeling of a Test Pattern for an Adaptive Cruise Control System with Event Group and Continuous Signal waveforms

‘no msg’ (for the default value) are assigned to as classes.

This way, it is possible to easily depict both the concurrent transmission attempt of the two control units (time tags t_1 and t_4 in Fig. 4) and the exclusive transmission of one control unit (time tags t_2 and t_3 in Fig. 4).

A combination of the above presented description of the transmission behavior of the control units with the mechanisms proposed in the original CTM_{EMB} for the depiction of expected behavior on classification tree level (cf. [5]) allows a test description of complex CAN networks.

5 Related Work

An approach for improving the test coverage of Simulink models by means of the classification-tree method for embedded systems was introduced in [11]. An input is described by the actual signal form as well as by its derivation. The derivation waveform of the signals is described via Dirac impulses, which can be understood as an instantiation of the general approach for the event description presented in this paper.

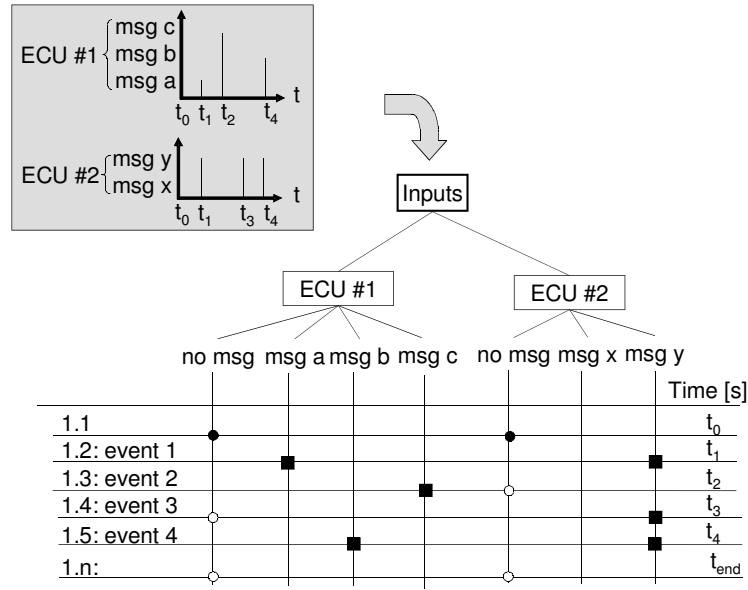


Figure 4. Modeling CAN Bus Signals

6 Summary

This paper presented an extension to the Classification-Tree Method for Embedded Systems (CTM_{EMB}) for the compact description of events within test scenarios for mixed discrete / continuous systems. For the depiction of event-like issues a new square marking type is being used, which corresponds to the additional transition function with event semantics.

The proposed notational extensions of the CTM_{EMB} allow very compact and natural descriptions of events especially within test or usage scenarios where continuous and event-based inputs are to be combined. In comparison with the previously used approaches, the size of the combination tables can be reduced by up to 50%. Thanks to the open structure of the original CTM_{EMB} framework, it is possible to integrate the extensions seamlessly into present syntax and semantics.

The extension of the Classification-Tree Method for Embedded Systems presented in this paper allows access to new fields of application for the compact depiction of test scenarios by means of the CTM_{EMB}. Among them are, for example, event-based body control systems and ECU clusters connected via CAN. The implementation of the introduced extensions for the CTM_{EMB} in the test tools supported is possible in a straightforward manner.

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