

# Failure of Cut-Elimination in Cyclic Proofs of Separation Logic

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This paper studies the role of the cut rule in cyclic proof systems for separation logic. A cyclic proof system is a sequent-calculus style proof system for proving properties involving inductively defined predicates. Recently, there has been much interest in using cyclic proofs for proving properties described in separation logic with inductively defined predicates. In particular, for program verification, several theorem provers based on mechanical proof search procedures in cyclic proof systems for separation logic have been proposed. This paper shows that the cut-elimination property fails in cyclic proof systems for separation logic in several settings. We present two systems, one for sequents with single-antecedent and single-conclusion, and another for sequents with single-antecedent and multiple-conclusions. To show the cut-elimination failure, we present concrete and reasonably simple counter-example sequents which the systems can prove with cuts but not without cuts. This result suggests that the cut rule is important for a practical application of cyclic proofs to separation logic, since a naïve proof search procedure, which tries to find a cut-free proof, gives a limit to what one would be able to prove.

## 1 Introduction

*Separation logic* [15] is a popular program logic for reasoning about programs that use pointer data structures. In separation logic, reasoning about recursive data structures is made possible by augmenting the logic with *inductively defined predicates*. For example, a predicate which says that a pointer points to a list may be written as follows:

$$\mathbf{ls}(x, y) := x \mapsto y \mid x \mapsto z * \mathbf{ls}(z, y).$$

Here,  $x \mapsto y$  means that the memory cell at address  $x$  contains the value  $y$ , and  $A * B$  is a *separating conjunction* which says that the memory is a union of two memory regions  $h_A$  and  $h_B$  with disjoint domains such that  $h_A$  satisfies  $A$  and  $h_B$  satisfies  $B$ .

Therefore,  $\mathbf{ls}(x, y)$  says that  $x$  points to a singly-linked list that ends in  $y$ . (We refer to Section 2 for the formal definition for our fragment of separation logic.)

In the verification approach for heap-manipulating programs based on Hoare-style logic, showing validity of entailments  $A \models B$  between formulas in separation logic is necessary for the *rule of consequence*:

$$\frac{\{A_1\}P\{B_1\}}{\{A_2\}P\{B_2\}} A_2 \models A_1 \text{ and } B_1 \models B_2,$$

where  $P$  is a program to be verified, and  $\{A\}P\{B\}$  is a Hoare-triple with a pre-condition  $A$  and a post-condition  $B$ . For this purpose, several proof systems that employ sequents of the form  $A \vdash B$  and automatic theorem provers based on proof-search algorithms in that systems have been proposed [1][2][8]–[10][13][17][18].

In a sequent-calculus style proof system, it is customary to handle inductively defined predicates like  $\mathbf{ls}(x, y)$  by adding a set of rules that introduce them

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to left and right sides of sequents. For  $\mathbf{ls}(x, y)$ , the right introduction rules are:

$$\frac{A \vdash x \mapsto y}{A \vdash \mathbf{ls}(x, y)} \quad \frac{A \vdash x \mapsto z * \mathbf{ls}(z, y)}{A \vdash \mathbf{ls}(x, y)},$$

and the left introduction rule is:

$$\frac{\text{(base case) (ind case) } A * C[x, y] \vdash B}{A * \mathbf{ls}(x, y) \vdash B} \text{ (Ind)},$$

where (base case) and (ind case) stand for  $A * x \mapsto y \vdash C[x, y]$  and  $A * x \mapsto z * C[z, y] \vdash C[x, y]$  with fresh variable  $z$ , respectively.  $C[x, y]$  is a formula that may have free variables  $x$  and  $y$ . The premise (base case) is the base case of the induction, that is, it says that  $C$  holds in the base case. The premise (ind case) encodes the inductive case with the *induction hypothesis*  $C$ , that is, it roughly says that if  $C$  holds for the smaller list from  $z$  to  $y$  then it also holds for the larger list from  $x$  to  $y$ . The rule is an obstacle to a mechanical proof search because one needs to guess an appropriate  $C$ .

A *cyclic proof system* [5]–[7] offers an alternative approach to doing proofs about inductively defined predicates in a sequent calculus. In this approach, the left introduction rule of an inductively defined predicate is replaced by a rule that directly encodes the inductive definition. For instance, the left introduction rule of  $\mathbf{ls}(x, y)$  is given as

$$\frac{A * x \mapsto y \vdash B \quad A * x \mapsto z * \mathbf{ls}(z, y) \vdash B}{A * \mathbf{ls}(x, y) \vdash B} \text{ (UL)}.$$

A proof search in a cyclic proof system starts from the root goal sequent, mechanically building the proof tree upwards by applying an applicable rule at each node. The search may stop by reaching a sequent (called a *bud*) that it has seen before (called a *companion*), thereby forming a “cyclic” proof that has an edge from a leaf bud node to an internal companion node. To ensure correctness, a certain condition, called *global trace condition*, is imposed on the cyclic structure (cf. Section 3 for details).

Importantly, in the absence of the cut rule, the possible children of a node can be syntactically determined from the (finitely many) rules applicable at the node, which substantially expedites the mechanical proof search.<sup>†1</sup> The property has been

used to a great advantage by researchers of cyclic proofs, and they have proposed automatic theorem provers based on cyclic proofs [8][9]. Furthermore, as we discuss below, some automatic induction-based provers for separation logic [10][13][17][18] can also be seen as cyclic proof systems with restricted forms of cuts.

Meanwhile, cyclic proof systems are being intensively studied in the theoretical computer science community (for various logics, such as separation logic, first-order logic, and linear logic) [3]–[5][7]–[9][14][16]. The research has led to some remarkable results, such as showing that the cyclic proof system (with cuts) is strictly more powerful than the standard inductive first-order logic sequent calculus (i.e., that with a rule analogous to the (Ind) rule above) [3][7]. However, some fundamental proof-theoretic properties, such as cut-elimination and completeness, still remain open.

As the main contribution of this paper, we show that *cut-elimination fails in cyclic proof systems for separation logic*. As remarked above, the result is not only of theoretical interest since the presence of the cut rule substantially affects a mechanical proof search process. We prove the result for two cyclic proof systems for separation logic:  $\text{CSL}_0\text{ID}\omega$  which deduces sequents with single conclusions, and  $\text{CSL}_0^M\text{ID}\omega$  which deduces sequents with multiple conclusions. We show the cut-elimination failure by presenting concrete counter-example sequents which the systems can prove with cuts but not without cuts. The counter-examples are fairly simple formulas about singly-linked lists. They contain three kinds of semantically equivalent predicates  $\mathbf{ls}(x, y)$ ,  $\mathbf{lsX}(x, y)$  and  $\mathbf{sl}(x, y)$  each describing a singly-linked list from  $x$  to  $y$ . The predicate  $\mathbf{ls}(x, y)$  is the usual list definition shown above, whereas  $\mathbf{lsX}(x, y)$  defines a list to be either a list of an odd length or a list of an even length where odd and even length lists are defined inductively in a manner analogous to  $\mathbf{ls}(x, y)$ . The predicate  $\mathbf{sl}(x, y)$  is a “backward” definition of a list whereby a list is constructed by adding an element to the tail rather than to the head. We show that the sequent  $\mathbf{ls}(x, y) \vdash \mathbf{lsX}(x, y)$  is a counter-example to cut-elimination for  $\text{CSL}_0\text{ID}\omega$ , and the sequent  $\mathbf{ls}(x, y) \vdash \mathbf{sl}(x, y)$  is that for  $\text{CSL}_0^M\text{ID}\omega$ . Thus, a practical implication of our results is that (some form of) a cut rule is necessary for designing useful

<sup>†1</sup> Technically, this is only true if structural rules such as weakening, contraction, and substitution are made implicit.

theorem provers based on cyclic proofs, at least for separation logic.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows. We discuss related work next. Section 2 introduces  $\text{SL}_0$ , a simple fragment of separation logic used in the rest of the paper. Section 3 presents  $\text{CSL}_0\text{ID}\omega$  and shows our first main result which says that cut-elimination fails for  $\text{CSL}_0\text{ID}\omega$ .  $\text{CSL}_0\text{ID}\omega$  is closely related to the system proposed by Brotherston et al. [8], and the section also shows that cut-elimination fails in their system as well. In Section 3, we present  $\text{CSL}_0^M\text{ID}\omega$ , and show that the counter-example for  $\text{CSL}_0\text{ID}\omega$  (i.e.  $\text{ls}(x, y) \vdash \text{lsX}(x, y)$ ) is cut-free provable in  $\text{CSL}_0^M\text{ID}\omega$ . Then, we show that  $\text{CSL}_0^M\text{ID}\omega$  still fails to satisfy cut-elimination by presenting the cut-free unprovability of the counter-example  $\text{ls}(x, y) \vdash \text{sl}(x, y)$ . Section 5 concludes the paper with a discussion on future work.

**Related Work:** As remarked above, there has been much work on meta-theoretic properties of cyclic proof systems for various logics [3]–[5][7]–[9][11][12][14][16]. Among them, some papers discuss the cut-elimination property for cyclic proof systems. The paper [12] considers a cyclic proof system for  $\mu\text{MALL}$  (linear logic with least and greatest fixed-point operators), and discusses non-preservation of the cyclic structure by the ordinary cut-elimination procedure. It discusses the behavior of cut-elimination procedure, but our paper considers admissibility of the cut rule. The paper [11] proposes a sequent-style system for Kleene algebra, and shows the cut rule is not admissible in the system.

In the context of (semi-)automated deduction, several cyclic-proof-based theorem provers for separation logic have been proposed [8][10][13][17][18]. Some of them allow restricted forms of cut. For instance, SLEEK [13] allows cuts, but only against user-provided lemmas. The theorem provers proposed in [10][17][18] synthesize induction hypotheses during the proof search by following a certain set of rules. They can be seen as a kind of a cyclic proof system in which the cuts are restricted to be only against the synthesized induction hypotheses. None of these papers investigate the effect of having or not having the cut rule nor clarify whether their restricted forms of cuts are enough or not enough for theorem proving purpose.

## 2 Simple separation logic $\text{SL}_0$

This section defines a simple fragment of separation logic ( $\text{SL}_0$ ), which has the minimum necessary connectives  $\mapsto$  and  $*$  to define our counter-examples.

### 2.1 Syntax of $\text{SL}_0$

We assume a finite set  $\{P_1, \dots, P_K\}$  of *inductive predicates*. Each inductive predicate  $P$  has its arity  $\text{ar}(P)$ . *Terms* of  $\text{SL}_0$  (denoted by  $t, u, \dots$ ) consist of variables  $(x, y, z, \dots)$  and **nil**. We sometimes write  $x \in \vec{x}$  if  $x$  appears in  $\vec{x}$ .

*Formulas* (denoted by  $A, B, C, \dots$ ) of  $\text{SL}_0$  are defined as follows.

$$A ::= t \mapsto u \mid P(\vec{t}) \mid A * A,$$

where the length of  $\vec{t}$  is  $\text{ar}(P)$ . We sometimes write  $A(\vec{x})$  to denote variables occurring in  $A$  explicitly. We implicitly suppose associativity and commutativity of the separating conjunction  $*$ , that is,  $A * B = B * A$  and  $(A * B) * C = A * (B * C)$ .

The set of free variables in  $A$  is written as  $\text{FV}(A)$ . The union of  $\text{FV}(A_1), \dots, \text{FV}(A_n)$  is written as  $\text{FV}(A_1, \dots, A_n)$ .

A substitution (denoted by  $\theta$ ) has the form  $x_1 := t_1, \dots, x_k := t_k$ , where  $x_i$  and  $x_j$  are different variables if  $i \neq j$ . The formula obtained by replacing each  $x_i$  by  $t_i$  ( $i = 1, \dots, k$ ) in  $A$  is written by  $A[x_1 := t_1, \dots, x_k := t_k]$ .

Each inductive predicate  $P$  has its own definition, which is given as follows:

$$P(\vec{x}) := A_1 \mid \dots \mid A_s$$

Each  $A_i$  is called a definition clause of  $P$ . Intuitively, this means that  $P(\vec{x})$  is defined by the disjunction of  $A_1, \dots, A_s$ . We note that variables of  $A_j$  not appearing in  $\vec{x}$  are implicitly existentially quantified. Namely,  $P(\vec{x})$  is defined by  $\exists \vec{y}_1 A_1(\vec{x}, \vec{y}_1) \vee \dots \vee \exists \vec{y}_s A_s(\vec{x}, \vec{y}_s)$ .

In this paper we will consider several kinds of list predicates **ls**, **sl**, **lsO**, **lsE** and **lsX** given below.

**Definition 1.** The definitions of **ls**, **sl**, **lsO**, **lsE**, and **lsX** are given as follows.

$$\begin{aligned} \text{ls}(x, y) &::= x \mapsto y \mid x \mapsto z * \text{ls}(z, y) \\ \text{sl}(x, y) &::= x \mapsto y \mid \text{sl}(x, z) * z \mapsto y \\ \text{lsO}(x, y) &::= x \mapsto y \mid x \mapsto z * \text{lsE}(z, y) \\ \text{lsE}(x, y) &::= x \mapsto z * \text{lsO}(z, y) \\ \text{lsX}(x, y) &::= \text{lsO}(x, y) \mid \text{lsE}(x, y) \end{aligned}$$

Both **ls**( $x, y$ ) and **sl**( $x, y$ ) mean singly-linked list

segments of positive lengths from  $x$  to  $y$ . The former and the latter predicates represent list segments constructed by adding cells repeatedly to the head position and the tail position, respectively.  $\mathbf{lsO}(x, y)$  and  $\mathbf{lsE}(x, y)$  mean list segments with odd and positive even lengths, respectively. They are defined by a mutual induction.  $\mathbf{lsX}(x, y)$  means list segments with odd or positive even length, that is, list segments of positive length. The formulas  $\mathbf{ls}(x, y)$ ,  $\mathbf{sl}(x, y)$ , and  $\mathbf{lsX}(x, y)$  are semantically equivalent (see Lemma 2).

## 2.2 Semantics of $\mathbf{SL}_0$

Let  $N$  be the set of natural numbers. A *store* (denoted by  $s$ ) is a function from variables to  $N$ . It is extended to a function on terms by  $s(\mathbf{nil}) = 0$ . We define update  $s[x_1 := a_1, \dots, x_n := a_n]$  of  $s$  by the store  $s'$  such that  $s'(x_i) = a_i$  and  $s'(y) = s(y)$  if  $y \notin \{x_1, \dots, x_n\}$ . It is sometimes abbreviated by  $s[\vec{x} := \vec{a}]$ . A *heap* (denoted by  $h$ ) is a finite partial function from  $N \setminus \{0\}$  to  $N$ . The domain of  $h$  is written by  $\text{dom}(h)$ . We write  $h_1 + h_2$  for disjoint union of  $h_1$  and  $h_2$ , namely, it is defined when  $\text{dom}(h_1)$  and  $\text{dom}(h_2)$  are disjoint, and  $(h_1 + h_2)(a) = h_i(a)$  if  $a \in \text{dom}(h_i)$  for  $i = 1, 2$ . We sometimes write  $[a_1 \mapsto b_1, \dots, a_m \mapsto b_m]$  for the heap  $h$  defined by  $\text{dom}(h) = \{a_1, \dots, a_m\}$  and  $h(a_j) = b_j$  ( $1 \leq j \leq m$ ).

A pair  $(s, h)$  is called a *heap model*.

**Definition 2** (Interpretation of formulas). The interpretation of a formula  $A$  in  $(s, h)$  (denoted by  $s, h \models A$ ) is inductively defined as follows.

- $s, h \models t \mapsto u$   
 $\stackrel{\text{def}}{\iff} h = [s(t) \mapsto s(u)]$ ,
- $s, h \models P^{(0)}(\vec{t})$   
 $\stackrel{\text{def}}{\iff}$  never,
- $s, h \models P^{(m+1)}(\vec{t})$   
 $\stackrel{\text{def}}{\iff} s[\vec{y} := \vec{b}], h \models A[\overrightarrow{P^{(m)}}/\overrightarrow{P}](\vec{t}, \vec{y})$   
 for some  $\vec{b}$  and definition clause  $A$  of  $P$ ,
- $s, h \models P(\vec{t})$   
 $\stackrel{\text{def}}{\iff} s, h \models P^{(m)}(\vec{t})$  for some  $m$ ,
- $s, h \models A_1 * A_2$   
 $\stackrel{\text{def}}{\iff} s, h_1 \models A_1$  and  $s, h_2 \models A_2$

for some  $h_1$  and  $h_2$  such that  $h = h_1 + h_2$ , where  $P^{(m)}$  is an auxiliary notation for defining  $s, h \models P(\vec{t})$  and  $A[\overrightarrow{P^{(m)}}/\overrightarrow{P}]$  is the formula obtained by replacing each  $P_i$  by  $P_i^{(m)}$ .

Intuitively  $P^{(m)}$  corresponds the  $m$ -time un-

folding of  $P$ , that is,  $P^{(0)}(\vec{x})$  means  $\perp$  and  $P^{(m+1)}(\vec{x})$  means  $\bigvee_{i=1}^s \exists \vec{y}_i A_i[\overrightarrow{P^{(m)}}/\overrightarrow{P}](\vec{x}, \vec{y}_i)$ , where  $A_1, \dots, A_s$  are the definition clauses of  $P$ .

The following lemma explains how the above definition for inductive predicates works. This result will be used in the proof of Theorem 2 and Lemma 5.

**Lemma 1.** Let  $h_n$  be  $[a_0 \mapsto a_1, a_1 \mapsto a_2, \dots, a_{n-1} \mapsto a_n]$  for  $n \geq 1$ . That is,  $h_n$  forms a singly-linked list of length  $n$ . Take a store  $s$  that satisfies  $s(x) = a_0$  and  $s(y) = a_n$ . Then we have  $s, h_n \models \mathbf{ls}^{(n)}(x, y)$  by induction on  $n$ . Hence  $s, h_n \models \mathbf{ls}(x, y)$  holds for any  $n \geq 1$ . We can also show  $s, h_n \models \mathbf{sl}(x, y)$  and  $s, h_n \models \mathbf{lsX}(x, y)$ .

We say  $A$  and  $B$  are *logically equivalent* if for any heap model  $(s, h)$ ,  $s, h \models A$  and  $s, h \models B$  are equivalent. Then we have the following claim.

**Lemma 2.**  $\mathbf{ls}(x, y)$ ,  $\mathbf{sl}(x, y)$ , and  $\mathbf{lsX}(x, y)$  are *logically equivalent*.

## 3 Cyclic proof system $\mathbf{CSL}_0\mathbf{ID}\omega$

This subsection defines a cyclic proof system  $\mathbf{CSL}_0\mathbf{ID}\omega$  for  $\mathbf{SL}_0$ , which handles single-conclusion sequents defined as follows.

**Definition 3** (Single-conclusion sequents of  $\mathbf{SL}_0$ ). A *sequent* of  $\mathbf{SL}_0$  has the form  $A \vdash B$ . The formula on the left-hand side and the right-hand side of a sequent are called its *antecedent* and *succedent* (or *conclusion*), respectively. A sequent  $A \vdash B$  is called *valid* if, for any heap model  $(s, h)$ ,  $s, h \models A$  implies  $s, h \models B$ .

The following subsections give several inference rules of the form  $\frac{S_1 \cdots S_n}{S}$  with sequents  $S, S_1, \dots, S_n$ . For each inference rule, sequents above the horizontal line are called its *premises*, and a sequent below the line is called its *conclusion*.

In order to avoid confusion, we will use the word “conclusion” only for inference rules, and the words “single-conclusion” and “multiple-conclusion” (they are used for sequents) are never shortened into the word “conclusion”.

### 3.1 The proof system $\mathbf{CSL}_0\mathbf{ID}\omega$

The derivation rules of  $\mathbf{CSL}_0\mathbf{ID}\omega$  consist of the basic rules and the unfolding rules. The basic rules are the following three rules:

$$\frac{}{A \vdash A} \text{ (Id)} \quad \frac{A \vdash C \quad C \vdash B}{A \vdash B} \text{ (Cut)} \quad \frac{A_1 \vdash B_1 \quad A_2 \vdash B_2}{A_1 * A_2 \vdash B_1 * B_2} (*)$$

The rule (Id) is the identity rule, the rule (Cut) is the cut-rule in the sequent calculus. The rule (\*) combines two premises into one with the separating conjunction  $*$ , that is, it says if  $A_1$  implies  $B_1$  and  $A_2$  implies  $B_2$ , then  $B_1 * B_2$  is obtained from  $A_1 * A_2$ , since  $A_1$  and  $A_2$  independently implies  $B_1$  and  $B_2$ , respectively.

The unfolding rules consist of (UL) and (UR). In the following, we assume  $P(\vec{x}) := A_1 \mid \dots \mid A_s$  is the definition of  $P$ .

$$\frac{B \vdash A_j(\vec{t}, \vec{u})}{B \vdash P(\vec{t})} \text{ (UR)} \quad \frac{B * A_1(\vec{t}, \vec{z}_1) \vdash C \quad \dots \quad B * A_s(\vec{t}, \vec{z}_s) \vdash C}{B * P(\vec{t}) \vdash C} \text{ (UL)}$$

where  $\vec{z}_1, \dots, \vec{z}_s$  are fresh.

**Example 1.** The unfolding rules for **ls**, **sl**, **lsO**, **lsE** and **lsX** are as follows.

(1) Rules for **ls**:

$$\frac{B \vdash t \mapsto u}{B \vdash \mathbf{ls}(t, u)} \text{ (UR)} \quad \frac{B \vdash t \mapsto t_1 * \mathbf{ls}(t_1, u)}{B \vdash \mathbf{ls}(t, u)} \text{ (UR)} \quad \frac{B * t \mapsto u \vdash C \quad B * t \mapsto z * \mathbf{ls}(z, u) \vdash C}{B * \mathbf{ls}(t, u) \vdash C} \text{ (UL)}$$

(2) Rules for **sl**:

$$\frac{B \vdash t \mapsto u}{B \vdash \mathbf{sl}(t, u)} \text{ (UR)} \quad \frac{B \vdash \mathbf{sl}(t, u_1) * u_1 \mapsto u}{B \vdash \mathbf{sl}(t, u)} \text{ (UR)} \quad \frac{B * t \mapsto u \vdash C \quad B * \mathbf{sl}(t, z) * z \mapsto u \vdash C}{B * \mathbf{sl}(t, u) \vdash C} \text{ (UL)}$$

(3) Rules for **lsO**:

$$\frac{B \vdash t \mapsto u}{B \vdash \mathbf{lsO}(t, u)} \text{ (UR)} \quad \frac{B \vdash t \mapsto t_1 * \mathbf{lsE}(t_1, u)}{B \vdash \mathbf{lsO}(t, u)} \text{ (UR)} \quad \frac{B * t \mapsto u \vdash C \quad B * t \mapsto z * \mathbf{lsE}(z, u) \vdash C}{B * \mathbf{lsO}(t, u) \vdash C} \text{ (UL)}$$

(4) Rules for **lsE**:

$$\frac{B \vdash t \mapsto t_1 * \mathbf{lsO}(t_1, u)}{B \vdash \mathbf{lsE}(t, u)} \text{ (UR)}$$

$$\frac{B * t \mapsto z * \mathbf{lsO}(z, u) \vdash C}{B * \mathbf{lsE}(t, u) \vdash C} \text{ (UL)}$$

(5) Rules for **lsX**:

$$\frac{B \vdash \mathbf{lsO}(t, u)}{B \vdash \mathbf{lsX}(t, u)} \text{ (UR)} \quad \frac{B \vdash \mathbf{lsE}(t, u)}{B \vdash \mathbf{lsX}(t, u)} \text{ (UR)} \quad \frac{B * \mathbf{lsO}(t, u) \vdash C \quad B * \mathbf{lsE}(t, u) \vdash C}{B * \mathbf{lsX}(t, u) \vdash C} \text{ (UL)}$$

We define a *cyclic proof* of  $\text{CSL}_0\text{ID}\omega$  in a similar way to [6][7].

**Definition 4** (Derivation tree). A *derivation tree* (denoted by  $\mathcal{D}$ ) of a sequent  $e$  is a finite tree structure whose nodes are labeled by sequents of  $\text{SL}_0$ , the label of the root node is  $e$ , and a node labeled with  $e'$  has children labeled with  $e'_1, \dots, e'_k$  when there is an instance  $\frac{e'_1 \dots e'_k}{e'}$  of an inference rule of  $\text{CSL}_0\text{ID}\omega$ . A leaf node which is the conclusion of the rule (Id) is called *closed*. An open (not closed) leaf is called a *bud*. A *companion* for a bud  $e_b$  is an occurrence of a sequent  $e_c$  in  $\mathcal{D}$  of which  $e_b$  is a substitution instance, namely,  $e_b = e_c[\theta]$  for some  $\theta$ .

In a derivation tree, if  $e$  appears as a conclusion of a rule instance and  $e'$  is a premise of the rule,  $e'$  is called a *premise* of  $e$ . In this case,  $e$  is called a *parent* of  $e'$ . Similarly we also use the usual terminology of the tree structure such as child and descendant.

**Definition 5** (Pre-proof). A pre-proof of  $e$  is given by  $(\mathcal{D}, \mathcal{R})$ , where  $\mathcal{D}$  is a derivation tree of  $e$  and  $\mathcal{R}$  is a function assigning a companion to every bud of  $\mathcal{D}$ . A *proof-graph*  $\mathcal{G}(\mathcal{P})$  of a pre-proof  $\mathcal{P} = (\mathcal{D}, \mathcal{R})$  is a graph structure  $\mathcal{D}$  with additional edges from buds to their companions assigned by  $\mathcal{R}$ . A *path* in  $\mathcal{P}$  is a path in  $\mathcal{G}(\mathcal{P})$ .

**Definition 6** (Trace). Let  $(e_i)_{i \in \omega}$  be an infinite path in  $\mathcal{P}$ . A *trace* following  $(e_i)_{i \in \omega}$  is a sequence of  $(C_i)_{i \in \omega}$  such that each  $C_i$  is a subformula occurrence of the form  $P(\vec{t})$  in the antecedent of  $e_i$ , and satisfies the following conditions:

(a) if  $e_i$  is the conclusion of (UL) in  $\mathcal{D}$ , then either  $C_i = C_{i+1}$  or  $C_i$  is unfolded in the rule instance and  $C_{i+1}$  appears as a subformula of the unfolding result. In the latter case,  $i$  is called a *progressing point* of the trace;

(b) if  $e_i$  is the conclusion of a rule other than (UL),

$$\begin{array}{c}
\frac{x \mapsto z * \mathbf{lsO}(z, y) \vdash x \mapsto z * \mathbf{lsO}(z, y)}{x \mapsto z * \mathbf{lsO}(z, y) \vdash \mathbf{lsE}(x, y)} \text{ (UR)} \quad \frac{x \mapsto z * \mathbf{lsE}(z, y) \vdash x \mapsto z * \mathbf{lsE}(z, y)}{x \mapsto z * \mathbf{lsE}(z, y) \vdash \mathbf{lsO}(x, y)} \text{ (UR)} \\
\frac{x \mapsto z * \mathbf{lsO}(z, y) \vdash \mathbf{lsE}(x, y)}{x \mapsto z * \mathbf{lsO}(z, y) \vdash \mathbf{lsX}(x, y)} \text{ (UR)} \quad \frac{x \mapsto z * \mathbf{lsE}(z, y) \vdash \mathbf{lsO}(x, y)}{x \mapsto z * \mathbf{lsE}(z, y) \vdash \mathbf{lsX}(x, y)} \text{ (UR)} \\
\frac{x \mapsto z * \mathbf{lsO}(z, y) \vdash \mathbf{lsX}(x, y)}{x \mapsto z * \mathbf{lsX}(z, y) \vdash \mathbf{lsX}(x, y)} \\
\frac{x \mapsto y \vdash x \mapsto y}{x \mapsto y \vdash \mathbf{lsO}(x, y)} \text{ (UR)} \quad \frac{x \mapsto z \vdash x \mapsto z \quad (\dagger) \quad \mathbf{ls}(z, y) \vdash \mathbf{lsX}(z, y)}{x \mapsto z * \mathbf{ls}(z, y) \vdash x \mapsto z * \mathbf{lsX}(z, y)} \text{ (*)} \quad (1) \\
\frac{x \mapsto y \vdash \mathbf{lsO}(x, y)}{x \mapsto y \vdash \mathbf{lsX}(x, y)} \text{ (UR)} \quad \frac{x \mapsto z * \mathbf{ls}(z, y) \vdash x \mapsto z * \mathbf{lsX}(z, y)}{x \mapsto z * \mathbf{ls}(z, y) \vdash \mathbf{lsX}(x, y)} \text{ (UL)} \quad \frac{x \mapsto z * \mathbf{lsX}(z, y) \vdash \mathbf{lsX}(x, y)}{x \mapsto z * \mathbf{ls}(z, y) \vdash \mathbf{lsX}(x, y)} \text{ (Cut)} \\
\frac{}{(\dagger) \quad \mathbf{ls}(x, y) \vdash \mathbf{lsX}(x, y)}
\end{array}$$

Fig. 1 Cyclic proof of  $\mathbf{ls}(x, y) \vdash \mathbf{lsX}(x, y)$  (for Proposition 1)

then  $C_{i+1}$  is the corresponding subformula occurrence in  $e_{i+1}$ , which satisfies  $C_{i+1} = C_i$ ;

(c) if  $e_i$  is a bud and  $e_{i+1}[\theta] = e_i$  for some substitution  $\theta$ , then  $C_{i+1}$  is the corresponding subformula occurrence in  $e_{i+1}$ , which satisfies  $C_{i+1}[\theta] = C_i$ .

**Definition 7** (Cyclic proof). Let  $\mathcal{P}$  be a pre-proof of  $e$ .  $\mathcal{P}$  is called a *cyclic proof* of  $e$  if it satisfies the *global trace condition*: for any infinite path  $(e_i)_{i \in \omega}$  in  $\mathcal{P}$ , there exists a trace  $(C_i)_{i \in \omega}$  following the path that has infinitely many progressing points.

The global trace condition is a sufficient condition for soundness, that is, we have the following theorem. This theorem is shown by the similar way to [6]–[8].

**Theorem 1** (Soundness of  $\text{CSL}_0\text{ID}\omega$ ). *If  $A \vdash B$  has a cyclic proof  $\mathcal{P}$  of  $\text{CSL}_0\text{ID}\omega$ , then all sequents in  $\mathcal{P}$  are valid. In particular,  $A \vdash B$  is valid.*

In the following subsection we will prove that  $\mathbf{ls}(x, y) \vdash \mathbf{lsX}(x, y)$  is a counter-example for the cut-elimination property of  $\text{CSL}_0\text{ID}\omega$ . We first show that this example has a cyclic proof with (Cut).

**Proposition 1.** (1)  $x \mapsto z * \mathbf{lsX}(z, y) \vdash \mathbf{lsX}(x, y)$  is cut-free provable in  $\text{CSL}_0\text{ID}\omega$ .

(2)  $\mathbf{ls}(x, y) \vdash \mathbf{lsX}(x, y)$  is provable in  $\text{CSL}_0\text{ID}\omega$  with (Cut).

*Proof.* (1) is shown by the upper proof of Fig 1. The lower one is a pre-proof by putting the upper proof at the node labeled by (1) and by connecting the bud  $\mathbf{ls}(z, y) \vdash \mathbf{lsX}(z, y)$  marked by  $(\dagger)$  to the entailment with the same mark at the root position. The pre-proof is a cyclic proof that shows (2), since the only infinite path which is created from the bud-companion has an infinitely progressing trace (the sequence of the underlined predicates).  $\square$

### 3.2 Counter-example for cut-elimination of $\text{CSL}_0\text{ID}\omega$

We define  $\#_{\mapsto} A$  by the number of  $\mapsto$  in  $A$ . We also define  $\#_{\mapsto}(A \vdash B)$  by  $\#_{\mapsto} A$ .

Next theorem is our first main result, namely, the cut-elimination property fails in  $\text{CSL}_0\text{ID}\omega$ .

**Theorem 2.** *The sequent  $\mathbf{ls}(x, y) \vdash \mathbf{lsX}(x, y)$  is not cut-free provable in  $\text{CSL}_0\text{ID}\omega$ .*

*Proof.* Suppose that  $\mathbf{ls}(x, y) \vdash \mathbf{lsX}(x, y)$  has a cut-free cyclic proof  $(\mathcal{D}, \mathcal{R})$ . We will show contradiction.

We construct a finite path  $\mathbf{e} = (e_0, e_1, \dots, e_m)$  of  $\mathcal{D}$  such that each  $e_j$  has the form (up to permutation of  $*$ )

$$z_0 \mapsto z_1 * \dots * z_{k_j-1} \mapsto z_{k_j} * \mathbf{ls}(z_{k_j}, w) \vdash \mathbf{lsX}(z_0, w)$$

for some  $k_j$  and pairwise distinct variables  $z_0, \dots, z_{k_j}, w$ . Let  $e_0$  be  $\mathbf{ls}(x, y) \vdash \mathbf{lsX}(x, y)$  at the root position. Assume that  $e_0, \dots, e_j$  are already defined. If  $e_j$  is the conclusion of a (UL), then define  $e_{j+1}$  by the unique premise of the rule instance that contains the  $\mathbf{ls}$ -predicate in the antecedent. We note that  $e_{j+1}$  has the required form and  $\#_{\mapsto} e_j < \#_{\mapsto} e_{j+1}$ . Otherwise finish constructing the path  $\mathbf{e}$ .

**Claim 1.** For any sequent  $e$  in  $\mathcal{D}$ , if the antecedent of  $e$  contains the  $\mathbf{ls}$ -predicate, then  $e \in \mathbf{e}$  or  $e$  is a descendant of  $e_m$ .

This claim is shown by induction on the height  $ht(e)$ , namely the length of the path from the root node to  $e$ , of  $e$  in  $\mathcal{D}$ . If  $ht(e) = 0$ , then  $e = e_0 \in \mathbf{e}$ . We show the case  $ht(e) > 0$ . Assume  $e \notin \mathbf{e}$ . We show that  $e$  is a descendant of  $e_m$ . In this case,  $e$  is a premise of an instance of a rule  $(r)$ , which is not (Cut). Let  $e'$  be the parent of  $e$ , that is the conclusion of the rule instance. Then the antecedent of  $e'$  contains the  $\mathbf{ls}$ -predicate. Hence  $e' \in \mathbf{e}$  or  $e'$  is a descendant of  $e_m$  by the induction hypothesis. If

the latter case holds, we have the expected result. Otherwise,  $e'$  must be  $e_m$  since  $e$  contains  $\mathbf{ls}$ ,  $e' \in e$  and  $e \notin e'$ . Thus  $e$  is a descendant of  $e_m$ . Hence we have Claim 1.

**Claim 2.**  $e_m$  is not a bud.

We show this claim. Assume that  $e_m$  is a bud. Then the antecedent of the companion  $e$  contains the  $\mathbf{ls}$ -predicate. By Claim 1, we have  $e \in e$  since  $e_m$  is a bud. Hence there is an infinite path  $e, \dots, e_m, e, \dots$  of the cyclic proof  $(\mathcal{D}, \mathcal{R})$ . By the global trace condition, there is a trace following the path with infinitely many progressing points. This means  $\# \mapsto e < \# \mapsto e_m \leq \# \mapsto e$ . Hence we have contradiction. Thus we obtain Claim 2.

By Claim 2,  $e_m$  is a conclusion of an instance of a rule  $(r)$ . Then  $(r)$  must be (UR) by case analysis of the inference rules. Let  $\tilde{e}$  be the unique child of  $e_m$  in  $\mathcal{D}$ . The form of  $\tilde{e}$  is either

- (a)  $z_0 \mapsto z_1 * \dots * z_{k_m-1} \mapsto z_{k_m} * \mathbf{ls}(z_{k_m}, w) \vdash \mathbf{lsO}(z_0, w)$ , or
- (b)  $z_0 \mapsto z_1 * \dots * z_{k_m-1} \mapsto z_{k_m} * \mathbf{ls}(z_{k_m}, w) \vdash \mathbf{lsE}(z_0, w)$ .

Consider the case (a). Take a store  $s_1$  such that  $s_1(z_i) = i + 1$  and  $s_1(w) = 2 * k_m + 1$ . Define  $h_1$  by  $\text{dom}(h_1) = \{1, 2, \dots, 2 * k_m\}$  and  $h_1(i) = i + 1$ . Then  $s_1, h_1 \models z_0 \mapsto z_1 * \dots * z_{k_m-1} \mapsto z_{k_m} * \mathbf{ls}(z_{k_m}, w)$  and  $s_1, h_1 \not\models \mathbf{lsO}(z_0, w)$ . Hence (a) is invalid. We can also show that (b) is invalid by taking  $s_2$  such that  $s_2(z_i) = i + 1$  and  $s_2(w) = 2 * k_m + 2$ , and defining  $h_2$  by  $\text{dom}(h_2) = \{1, 2, \dots, 2 * k_m + 1\}$  and  $h_2(i) = i + 1$ . Therefore  $\tilde{e}$  is invalid. This contradicts the soundness theorem. Hence we conclude that  $\mathbf{ls}(x, y) \vdash \mathbf{lsX}(x, y)$  is not cut-free provable.  $\square$

By combining proposition 1 and theorem 2, we can obtain our first main result.

**Corollary 1.** *The cyclic proof system  $CSL_0ID\omega$  does not enjoy the cut-elimination property.*

We note that our  $CSL_0ID\omega$  is designed as simple as possible in order to clarify the essence of our discussion. The above corollary can be extended easily to cyclic proof systems (of single-conclusion sequents) that are extensions of  $CSL_0ID\omega$  with other connectives whose inference rules guarantee the subformula property.

### 3.3 Failure of Cut-elimination in Brotherston's CADE2011-system

In this subsection we aim to demonstrate that our proof technique in the previous subsection also works for Brotherston's CADE2011 paper [8]. The readers may hope to extend our result in the previous subsection to Brotherston's system as mentioned after Corollary 1. However we cannot do it, since Brotherston's system contains the empty predicate  $\mathbf{emp}$ , which is the unit of  $*$ . It requires the inference rules that do not guarantee the subformula property (see the rules (EmpL') and (EmpR') below). While the essence of the proof technique remains the same, a small modification is necessary to handle these inference rules.

We first extend  $SL_0$  by adding  $\mathbf{emp}$ , that is, the formulas of the extended system  $SL'_0$  are given as follows:

$$A ::= t \mapsto t \mid A * A \mid P(\vec{t}) \mid \mathbf{emp}$$

The interpretation of the empty predicate is given as follows:

$$s, h \models \mathbf{emp} \stackrel{\text{def}}{\iff} \text{dom}(h) = \emptyset$$

Then we extend  $CSL_0ID\omega$  by adding the following derivation rules:

$$\frac{A \vdash B}{A \vdash B * \mathbf{emp}} \text{ (EmpR)} \quad \frac{A \vdash B}{\mathbf{emp} * A \vdash B} \text{ (EmpL)}$$

$$\frac{A \vdash B * \mathbf{emp}}{A \vdash B} \text{ (EmpR')} \quad \frac{\mathbf{emp} * A \vdash B}{A \vdash B} \text{ (EmpL')}$$

$$\frac{}{x \mapsto u * x \mapsto u' * A \vdash B} \text{ (Unsat}\mapsto\text{)}$$

We call this extended system  $CSL'_0ID\omega$ .

The definitions of pre-proofs, traces, and cyclic proofs of  $CSL'_0ID\omega$  are given in the similar way to those of  $CSL_0ID\omega$ . The soundness theorem for this extended system also holds.

Then we can show the similar claim to Theorem 2.

**Proposition 2.** *The sequent  $\mathbf{ls}(x, y) \vdash \mathbf{lsX}(x, y)$  is not cut-free provable in  $CSL'_0ID\omega$ .*

*Proof (sketch).* Suppose that  $\mathbf{ls}(x, y) \vdash \mathbf{lsX}(x, y)$  has a cut-free cyclic proof  $(\mathcal{D}, \mathcal{R})$ . We construct a finite path  $\mathbf{e} = (e_0, e_1, \dots, e_m)$  of  $\mathcal{D}$  such that each  $e_j$  has the form  $\mathbf{*}_{i=0}^{k_j-1} z_i \mapsto z_{i+1} * \mathbf{ls}(z_{k_j}, w) * \overrightarrow{\mathbf{emp}} \vdash \mathbf{lsX}(z_0, w) * \overrightarrow{\mathbf{emp}}$  for some  $k_j$  and pairwise distinct variables  $z_0, \dots, z_{k_j}, w$ , and  $e_0$  is  $\mathbf{ls}(x, y) \vdash \mathbf{lsX}(x, y)$  at the root position. If  $e_j$  is the conclusion of a (UL), de-

fine  $e_{j+1}$  by the unique premise of  $e_j$  which contains **ls**. If  $e_j$  is the conclusion of **EmpL**, **EmpR**, **EmpL'**, or **EmpR'**, define  $e_{j+1}$  by the unique premise. We claim that  $\# \mapsto e_j \leq \# \mapsto e_{j+1}$  for any  $j < m$ , and, in particular,  $\# \mapsto e_j < \# \mapsto e_{j+1}$  if  $e_j$  is the conclusion of a rule instance of (UL). Then we have the same claims as Claim 1 and Claim 2 of Theorem 2. We also have the following claim:

**Claim 3**  $e_m$  is not the conclusion of a rule instance of (Unsat $\mapsto$ ).

This claim is obtained by investigating that the antecedents of **e** are satisfiable. Hence  $e_m$  cannot be the conclusion of (Unsat $\mapsto$ ).

By using Claim 1, Claim 2, and Claim 3, we can show the expected result in a similar way to the proof of Theorem 2.  $\square$

We introduce an extended system  $\text{CSL}_B\text{ID}\omega$ , which is a variant of Brotherston's system [8]. The difference between these two systems is not essential: terms of the system in [8] are only variables. The formulas of  $\text{CSL}_B\text{ID}\omega$  are given as follows:

$$A ::= t \mapsto t \mid A * A \mid P(\vec{t}) \mid \mathbf{emp} \\ \mid t = t \mid t \neq t \mid t \xrightarrow{2} (t, t) \mid \top \mid \perp \mid A \vee A$$

The derivation rules of  $\text{CSL}_B\text{ID}\omega$  are those of  $\text{CSL}'_0\text{ID}\omega$  with the following rules:

$$\frac{}{\perp * A \vdash B} (\perp) \quad \frac{}{A \vdash \top} (\top) \quad \frac{}{A \vdash t = t} (=R) \\ \frac{}{t = u * t \neq u * A \vdash B} (\text{Unsat}=\) \\ \frac{}{t \xrightarrow{2} (u_1, u_2) * t \xrightarrow{2} (u'_1, u'_2) * A \vdash B} (\text{Unsat}\xrightarrow{2}) \\ \frac{A_1 * B \vdash C \quad A_2 * B \vdash C}{(A_1 \vee A_2) * B \vdash C} (\vee L) \\ \frac{A \vdash B_i * C}{A \vdash (B_1 \vee B_2) * C} (\vee R) \quad (i = 1, 2)$$

The following lemma shows that the above additional inference rules cannot be applied in proof-search procedures of  $\mathbf{ls}(x, y) \vdash \mathbf{lsX}(x, y)$ .

**Lemma 3.** *Let  $A$  and  $B$  be formulas of  $\text{CSL}_B\text{ID}\omega$  whose connectives and predicates are **emp**,  $*$ ,  $\mapsto$ , **ls**, **lsX**, **lsE**, and **lsO**. Assume  $A \vdash B$  has a cut-free derivation tree of  $\text{CSL}_B\text{ID}\omega$ . Then all inference rules used in the derivation tree are those of  $\text{CSL}'_0\text{ID}\omega$ .*

This lemma can be shown by induction on the derivation tree.

As the result of this subsection, we can show the failure of cut-elimination in  $\text{CSL}_B\text{ID}\omega$ .

**Theorem 3** (Failure of cut-elimination in  $\text{CSL}_B\text{ID}\omega$ ).  *$\text{CSL}_B\text{ID}\omega$  does not enjoy the cut-elimination property.*

*Proof.* Note that  $\mathbf{ls}(x, y) \vdash \mathbf{lsX}(x, y)$  can be shown in  $\text{CSL}_B\text{ID}\omega$  with (Cut), since  $\text{CSL}_B\text{ID}\omega$  is an extension of  $\text{CSL}_0\text{ID}\omega$ . Then we show  $\mathbf{ls}(x, y) \vdash \mathbf{lsX}(x, y)$  is not cut-free provable in  $\text{CSL}_B\text{ID}\omega$ . Assume that it has a cut-free cyclic proof of  $\text{CSL}_B\text{ID}\omega$ . Then the cyclic proof is also a proof of  $\text{CSL}'_0\text{ID}\omega$  since all inference rules are those of  $\text{CSL}'_0\text{ID}\omega$  by the previous lemma. Hence we have contradiction by proposition 2.  $\square$

**Remark 1.** In [8], an automated prover for sequents (that do not contain **nil**) in  $\text{CSL}_B\text{ID}\omega$ , which is based on a proof-search procedure in  $\text{CSL}_B\text{ID}\omega$ , is proposed. Although the system contains (Cut), the tool uses the rule for managing basic properties about  $*$ , such as associativity, commutativity, and unit of  $*$ . Hence the prover cannot find non-trivial cut-formulas (e.g. the cut-formula  $x \mapsto z * \mathbf{lsX}(z, y)$  used in the proof of Proposition 1) during its proof-search procedure.

Recall that each sequent considered in this section has a single-conclusion. It is the reason why  $\mathbf{ls}(x, y) \vdash \mathbf{lsX}(x, y)$  works as a counter-example for the cut-elimination, that is, we are forced to choose either  $\mathbf{lsO}(x, y)$  or  $\mathbf{lsE}(x, y)$  in unfolding  $\mathbf{lsX}(x, y)$  on the right-hand side of a sequent. This situation can be avoided if we consider sequents with multiple-conclusions.

#### 4 Cyclic proof system $\text{CSL}_0^M\text{ID}\omega$ for multiple-conclusion $\text{SL}_0$

This section presents the second cyclic proof system  $\text{CSL}_0^M\text{ID}\omega$  for sequents with multiple-conclusions defined below.

Let  $\Delta$  be a multiset of formulas. We sometimes write  $B_1, B_2, \dots, B_n$  instead of  $\{B_1, B_2, \dots, B_n\}$ . We also write  $\Delta, B$  for  $\Delta \cup \{B\}$ . We define  $\Delta * \Delta'$  by  $\{B * B' \mid B \in \Delta \text{ and } B' \in \Delta'\}$ . We also define  $s, h \models \bigvee \Delta$  by  $\exists B \in \Delta (s, h \models B)$ .

**Definition 8** (Multiple-conclusion sequents of



$SL_0$ ). The *multiple-conclusion sequents* of  $SL_0$  have the form  $A \vdash \Delta$ . A sequent  $A \vdash \Delta$  is valid if, for any  $(s, h)$ ,  $s, h \models A$  implies  $s, h \models \bigvee \Delta$ .

#### 4.1 Cyclic proof system $CSL_0^M ID\omega$ for multiple-conclusion sequents

The derivation rules of  $CSL_0^M ID\omega$  consists of the basic rules and the unfolding rules. The basic rules of  $CSL_0^M ID\omega$  are given as follows.

$$\frac{}{A \vdash A} \text{ (Id)} \quad \frac{A \vdash \Delta_1, C \quad C \vdash \Delta_2}{A \vdash \Delta_1, \Delta_2} \text{ (Cut)}$$

$$\frac{A_1 \vdash \Delta_1 \quad A_2 \vdash \Delta_2}{A_1 * A_2 \vdash \Delta_1 * \Delta_2} (*)$$

$$\frac{A \vdash \Delta}{A \vdash \Delta, B} \text{ (Wk)} \quad \frac{A \vdash \Delta, B, B}{A \vdash \Delta, B} \text{ (Ctr)}$$

The unfolding rules (UL) and (UR) of  $CSL_0^M ID\omega$  are straightforward extension of those of  $CSL_0 ID\omega$ . We assume that  $P(\vec{x}) := A_1 | \dots | A_s$  is the definition of  $P$ .

$$\frac{B \vdash \Delta, C * A_j(\vec{t}, \vec{u})}{B \vdash \Delta, C * P(\vec{t})} \text{ (UR)}$$

$$\frac{B * A_1(\vec{t}, \vec{z}_1) \vdash \Delta \quad \dots \quad B * A_s(\vec{t}, \vec{z}_s) \vdash \Delta}{B * P(\vec{t}) \vdash \Delta} \text{ (UL)}$$

where  $\vec{z}_1, \dots, \vec{z}_s$  are fresh.

The pre-proofs, traces, and cyclic proofs of  $CSL_0^M ID\omega$  are defined similarly to those of  $CSL_0 ID\omega$ .

**Remark 2.** The main difference between  $CSL_0 ID\omega$  and  $CSL_0^M ID\omega$  is the structural rules, namely the contraction rule (Ctr) and the weakening rule (Wk). These rules allow to change whole proof structure and strengthen the provability of the proof system. As we will see in the next proposition, the previous counter-example does not work in the current system. Hence we need a new counter-example and a new proof technique that can capture the changed proof structure.

The soundness theorem of  $CSL_0^M ID\omega$  is also shown in a similar way to that of  $CSL_0 ID\omega$ :

**Theorem 4** (Soundness of  $CSL_0^M ID\omega$ ). *If  $A \vdash \Delta$  has a cyclic proof  $\mathcal{P}$  of  $CSL_0^M ID\omega$ , then all sequents in  $\mathcal{P}$  are valid. In particular,  $A \vdash \Delta$  is valid.*

The previous example  $\mathbf{ls}(x, y) \vdash \mathbf{lsX}(x, y)$  is cut-free provable in the current system.

**Proposition 3.**  $\mathbf{ls}(x, y) \vdash \mathbf{lsX}(x, y)$  is cut-free provable in  $CSL_0^M ID\omega$ .

*Proof.* The proof figure given in Fig 2 is a cut-free pre-proof of  $\mathbf{ls}(x, y) \vdash \mathbf{lsX}(x, y)$  in  $CSL_0^M ID\omega$ . Note that the two entailments marked by  $(\dagger)$  are in a bud-companion relation. The only infinite path in this pre-proof contains an infinitely progressing trace (the sequence of the underlined predicates). Hence this pre-proof is a cyclic proof, since it satisfies the global trace condition.  $\square$

This proposition shows that  $\mathbf{ls}(x, y) \vdash \mathbf{lsX}(x, y)$  does not work as a counter-example for the cut-elimination property of  $CSL_0^M ID\omega$ . However we still have another counter-example  $\mathbf{ls}(x, y) \vdash \mathbf{sl}(x, y)$ . We first show that this sequent is provable in  $CSL_0^M ID\omega$ .

**Proposition 4.** (1)  $x \mapsto z * \mathbf{sl}(z, y) \vdash \mathbf{sl}(x, y)$  is (cut-free) provable in  $CSL_0^M ID\omega$ .

(2)  $\mathbf{ls}(x, y) \vdash \mathbf{sl}(x, y)$  is provable in  $CSL_0^M ID\omega$  with (Cut).

*Proof.* The proof figures in Fig 3 show both (1) and (2). The first claim is obtained by the upper pre-proof, which is a cyclic proof since it satisfies the global trace condition. The lower figure becomes a pre-proof by putting the upper one at the position marked by (1). We can easily check the pre-proof satisfies the global trace condition. Hence (2) is shown, since  $\mathbf{ls}(x, y) \vdash \mathbf{sl}(x, y)$  has a cyclic proof with (Cut).  $\square$

#### 4.2 Counter-example for cut-elimination of $CSL_0^M ID\omega$

This subsection shows that the cut-elimination property fails in  $CSL_0^M ID\omega$ . The main result of this section is the following theorem.

**Theorem 5.** *The sequent  $\mathbf{ls}(x, y) \vdash \mathbf{sl}(x, y)$  is not cut-free provable in  $CSL_0^M ID\omega$ .*

**Remark 3.** In the proof of Theorem 2, a contradiction appears at the point when (UR) is applied to the unique succedent. In the current case, however, this idea does not work, since, at the point that (UR) is used, a formula before (UR) may remain in the succedent part because of contraction.

Our basic idea for proving Theorem 5 is as follows: focusing on the path of a cyclic proof that contains both  $\mathbf{ls}$  in the antecedent part and  $\mathbf{sl}$  in the succedent part; and analyzing the form of sequents on the path. To do this, we prepare some notions and show their properties.

In the following we write  $*_{i=0}^n A_i$  for  $A_0 * \dots * A_n$ .

$$\begin{array}{c}
\frac{\frac{x \mapsto y \vdash x \mapsto y}{x \mapsto y \vdash \mathbf{lsO}(x, y)} \text{ (UR)}}{x \mapsto y \vdash \mathbf{lsO}(x, y), \mathbf{lsE}(x, y)} \text{ (Wk)} \quad \frac{\frac{x \mapsto z \vdash x \mapsto z \quad (\dagger) \mathbf{ls}(z, y) \vdash \mathbf{lsE}(z, y), \mathbf{lsO}(z, y)}{x \mapsto z * \mathbf{ls}(z, y) \vdash x \mapsto z * \mathbf{lsE}(z, y), x \mapsto z * \mathbf{lsO}(z, y)} (*)}{x \mapsto z * \mathbf{ls}(z, y) \vdash \mathbf{lsO}(x, y), \mathbf{lsE}(x, y)} \text{ (UR} \times 2) \\
\frac{(\dagger) \mathbf{ls}(x, y) \vdash \mathbf{lsO}(x, y), \mathbf{lsE}(x, y)}{\mathbf{ls}(x, y) \vdash \mathbf{lsX}(x, y), \mathbf{lsX}(x, y)} \text{ (UR} \times 2) \\
\frac{\mathbf{ls}(x, y) \vdash \mathbf{lsX}(x, y), \mathbf{lsX}(x, y)}{\mathbf{ls}(x, y) \vdash \mathbf{lsX}(x, y)} \text{ (Ctr)}
\end{array}$$

Fig. 2 Cut-free cyclic proof of  $\mathbf{ls}(x, y) \vdash \mathbf{lsX}(x, y)$  (for Proposition 3)

$$\begin{array}{c}
\frac{\frac{x \mapsto z * z \mapsto y \vdash x \mapsto z * z \mapsto y}{x \mapsto z * z \mapsto y \vdash \mathbf{sl}(x, z) * z \mapsto y} \text{ (UR)}}{x \mapsto z * z \mapsto y \vdash \mathbf{sl}(x, y)} \text{ (UR)} \quad \frac{(\dagger) x \mapsto z * \mathbf{sl}(z, w) \vdash \mathbf{sl}(x, w) \quad \frac{w \mapsto y \vdash w \mapsto y}{x \mapsto z * \mathbf{sl}(z, w) * w \mapsto y \vdash \mathbf{sl}(x, w) * w \mapsto y} (*)}{x \mapsto z * \mathbf{sl}(z, w) * w \mapsto y \vdash \mathbf{sl}(x, y)} \text{ (UR)} \\
\frac{(\dagger) x \mapsto z * \mathbf{sl}(z, y) \vdash \mathbf{sl}(x, y)}{(\dagger) x \mapsto z * \mathbf{sl}(z, y) \vdash \mathbf{sl}(x, y)} \text{ (UL)} \\
\frac{\frac{x \mapsto y \vdash x \mapsto y}{x \mapsto y \vdash \mathbf{sl}(x, y)} \text{ (UR)} \quad \frac{\frac{x \mapsto z \vdash x \mapsto z \quad (\dagger) \mathbf{ls}(z, y) \vdash \mathbf{sl}(z, y)}{x \mapsto z * \mathbf{ls}(z, y) \vdash x \mapsto z * \mathbf{sl}(z, y)} (*) \quad (1)}{x \mapsto z * \mathbf{ls}(z, y) \vdash \mathbf{sl}(x, y)} \text{ (Cut)}}{(\dagger) \mathbf{ls}(x, y) \vdash \mathbf{sl}(x, y)} \text{ (UL)}
\end{array}$$

Fig. 3 Cyclic proof of  $\mathbf{ls}(x, y) \vdash \mathbf{sl}(x, y)$  (for Proposition 4)

**Definition 9** (Ls-form). An  $\text{SL}_0$  formula is called a *connected Ls-form* from  $x$  to  $y$ , if it has the form  $*_{i=0}^{n-1} z_i \mapsto z_{i+1} * \mathbf{ls}(z_n, y)$ ,  $z_0$  is  $x$ , and  $\vec{z}, y$  are pairwise distinct variables. A formula is called an *Ls-form* from  $x$  to  $y$ , if it is obtained by removing some points-to predicates from a connected Ls-form.

We sometimes omit “from  $x$  to  $y$ ” if it is apparent from the context.

**Definition 10** (Sl-form). A formula is called a *connected Sl-form* from  $x$  to  $y$ , if it has the form  $\mathbf{sl}(x, z_n) * *_{i=0}^{n-1} z_{i+1} \mapsto z_i$  with  $z_0 = y$ . A formula is called an *Sl-form* from  $x$  to  $y$ , if it is obtained by removing some points-to predicates from a connected Sl-form. A formula is called a *semi Sl-form*, if it is an Sl-form or contains only  $\mapsto$ .

A finite multiset  $\Delta$  of formulas is called a *semi Sl-form*, if all elements of  $\Delta$  are semi Sl-form.

The following lemma is easily shown from the definition.

**Lemma 4.** *If  $A$  is an Ls-form from  $x$  to  $y$ , then  $A$  is satisfiable.*

**Lemma 5.** *Assume that  $A$  is an Ls-form from  $x$  to  $y$ ,  $\Delta$  is a semi Sl-form from  $x$  to  $y$ , and  $A \vdash \Delta$  is valid. Then we have the following claims.*

(1)  *$A$  is a connected Ls-form.*

(2)  *$\mathbf{sl}(x, y)$  is in  $\Delta$ .*

*Proof.* Suppose the assumption. Since  $A$  is an Ls-form from  $x$  to  $y$ , there is a connected Ls-form  $*_{i=0}^{n-1} z_i \mapsto z_{i+1} * \mathbf{ls}(z_n, y)$ , where  $z_0 = x$  and  $\vec{z}, y$  are pairwise distinct. Then  $A$  can be written as  $*_{i \in I} z_i \mapsto z_{i+1} * \mathbf{ls}(z_n, y)$ , where  $I \subseteq \{0, \dots, n-1\}$ . Let  $k = |\text{FV}(A, \Delta)|$ . Define  $s$  and  $h$  by:

$$s(z_i) = i + 1 \text{ for } i \in \{0, 1, \dots, n\},$$

$$s(y) = n + k + 2, \text{ and}$$

$$s(w) = 0 \text{ if } w \notin \vec{z}, y.$$

$$\text{dom}(h) = \{i + 1 \mid i \in I\} \cup \{n + 1, \dots, n + k + 1\},$$

$$\text{and } h(m) = m + 1 \text{ for } m \in \text{dom}(h).$$

Then  $|\text{dom}(h)| = |I| + k + 1$  and  $n + k + 2 \notin \text{dom}(h)$ . We also have  $s, h \models A$ . Hence  $s, h \models B$  for some  $B \in \Delta$  since  $A \vdash \Delta$  is valid by the assumption.

We will now show that  $B$  is an Sl-form. Suppose that  $B$  is not an Sl-form. By the assumption,  $B$  has the form  $*_{j \in J} x_j \mapsto x'_j$  and  $s, h \models B$ . Then we obtain contradiction, since  $|\text{dom}(h)| = |J| \leq |\text{FV}(\Delta)| \leq k < |\text{dom}(h)|$ . Therefore  $B$  is an Sl-form.

(1) Suppose that  $A$  is not a connected Ls-form. Then the set  $\{0, 1, \dots, n-1\} \setminus I$  is not empty. Take the smallest element  $i_0$  of this set. We will show

contradiction by the case analysis of  $i_0$ .

We show the case  $i_0 = 0$ . This case means  $x = z_0 \notin \text{FV}(A)$  since  $A$  does not contain  $z_0 \mapsto z_1$ . Then  $1 = s(z_0) \notin \text{dom}(h)$ . Recall the above  $B$ . It satisfies  $s, h \models B$  and contains  $\text{sl}(x, z')$  since  $B$  is an SI-form. Then we have  $1 = s(x) \in \text{dom}(h)$ . Hence we have contradiction.

We show the case  $i_0 > 0$ . This case we have  $s, h \models \star_{j=0}^{i_0-1} z_j \mapsto z_{j+1} * \star_{j \in I'} z_j \mapsto z_{j+1} * \text{ls}(z_n, y)$ , where  $I' = I \setminus \{0, \dots, i_0 - 1\}$  and  $i_0 \notin I'$ . Hence we have  $i_0 + k + 1 \leq |\text{dom}(h)|$ , since  $\{1, \dots, i_0\} \cup \{n + 1, \dots, n + k + 1\} \subseteq \text{dom}(h)$ . Now the SI-form  $B$  has the form  $\text{sl}(x, z'_m) * \star_{j \in J} z'_j \mapsto z'_j$ . Thus there exist  $h_1$  and  $h_2$  such that  $h = h_1 + h_2$ ,  $s, h_1 \models \text{sl}(x, z'_m)$  and  $s, h_2 \models \star_{j \in J} z'_j \mapsto z'_j$ . By the definition of  $h$  and  $i_0$ , we have  $\text{dom}(h_1) \subseteq \{1, \dots, i_0\}$ . Hence we have  $|\text{dom}(h_1)| \leq i_0$ . We also have  $|\text{dom}(h_2)| \leq |\text{FV}(\Delta)| \leq k$ . Therefore we obtain  $i_0 + k + 1 \leq |\text{dom}(h)| = |\text{dom}(h_1)| + |\text{dom}(h_2)| \leq i_0 + k$ . Contradiction.

Finally we conclude that  $A$  is a connected Ls-form. Hence (1) is shown.

(2) Since  $A$  is a connected Ls-form by (1), we have  $I = \{0, \dots, n - 1\}$ . Hence we also have  $\text{dom}(h) = \{1, \dots, n + k + 1\}$ . Recall that  $s, h \models B$  and  $B$  is an SI-form. We show  $B$  is  $\text{sl}(x, y)$  by contradiction. Then  $B$  has the form  $\text{sl}(x, z'_m) * \star_{j \in J} z'_j \mapsto z'_j$  with  $J \neq \emptyset$ . Thus there exist  $h_1$  and  $h_2$  such that  $h = h_1 + h_2$ ,  $s, h_1 \models \text{sl}(x, z'_m)$  and  $s, h_2 \models \star_{j \in J} z'_j \mapsto z'_j$ . Note that  $\text{dom}(h_1) = \{1, \dots, s(z'_m) - 1\}$  and  $\text{dom}(h_2) = \{s(z'_m), \dots, n + k + 1\}$ . Moreover  $s(z'_m) < n + k + 2 = s(y)$  since  $J$  is not empty. Hence  $z'_m \in \vec{z}$  by the definition of  $s$  and  $z'_m \neq y$ . We have  $|\text{dom}(h_1)| = s(z'_m) - 1 \leq n$  and  $|\text{dom}(h_2)| \leq |\text{FV}(\Delta)| \leq k$ . From this, we obtain  $n + k + 1 = |\text{dom}(h)| = |\text{dom}(h_1)| + |\text{dom}(h_2)| \leq n + k$ . This is a contradiction. Therefore  $\text{sl}(x, y) = B \in \Delta$ .  $\square$

**Definition 11** (L-form). A sequent  $A \vdash \Delta$  is called an *L-form from  $x$  to  $y$*  if  $A$  is an Ls-form from  $x$  to  $y$  and  $\Delta$  is a semi SI-form from  $x$  to  $y$ .

We define  $\sharp_{\mapsto}(e)$  for a sequent  $e$  of  $\text{CSL}_0^M \text{ID}\omega$  in the similar way to one of  $\text{CSL}_0 \text{ID}\omega$ .

**Lemma 6.** *Let  $\mathcal{P}$  be a cut-free cyclic proof in  $\text{CSL}_0^M \text{ID}\omega$ . Assume that an L-form  $e$  from  $x$  to  $y$  appears in  $\mathcal{P}$  as the consequence of an inference rule (r). Then there is a unique premise  $e'$  of the rule such that  $e'$  is an L-form. Moreover,*

$\sharp_{\mapsto}(e) < \sharp_{\mapsto}(e')$  if (r) is (UL), and  $\sharp_{\mapsto}(e) = \sharp_{\mapsto}(e')$  otherwise.

*Proof.* This lemma is shown by case analysis of the rule. Let  $A$  and  $\Delta$  be the antecedent and the succedent of  $e$ , respectively.

The rule (Id) is not the case since, by the definition of L-form,  $A$  contains the **ls**-predicate, and  $\Delta$  does not contain the **ls**-predicate.

The rule (Cut) is not the case since  $\mathcal{P}$  is cut-free.

The cases of (Wk) and (Ctr) are immediately shown.

The case of (UR). By the premise  $e$  has the form  $A \vdash \Delta_1, B * \text{sl}(x, z)$ , and  $B * \text{sl}(x, z)$  is an SI-form. The unique premise  $e'$  of  $e$  is either  $A \vdash \Delta_1, B * x \mapsto w * w \mapsto z$  or  $A \vdash \Delta_1, B * \text{sl}(x, w) * w \mapsto z$ . In each case,  $e'$  is an L-form, since both  $B * x \mapsto w * w \mapsto z$  and  $B * \text{sl}(x, z)$  are semi SI-forms. We also have  $\sharp_{\mapsto}(e) = \sharp_{\mapsto}(e')$ .

The case of (UL). By the premise  $e$  has the form  $A_1 * \text{ls}(z, y) \vdash \Delta$ , and  $A_1 * \text{ls}(z, y)$  is an Ls-form. Thus  $e$  has a unique premise whose antecedent contains the **ls**-predicate. Let  $e'$  be the premise. Then  $e'$  has the form  $A_1 * z \mapsto z' * \text{ls}(z', y) \vdash \Delta$ , where  $z'$  is a fresh variable. We note that  $A_1 * z \mapsto z' * \text{ls}(z', y)$  is an Ls-form since  $A_1 * \text{ls}(z, y)$  is an Ls-form and  $z'$  is fresh. Therefore  $e'$  is an L-form. We also have  $\sharp_{\mapsto}(e) < \sharp_{\mapsto}(e')$ .

The case of (\*). Recall that  $e$  contains only one **ls**-predicate. Hence there is a unique premise of  $e$  that contains the **ls**-predicate. Let  $e'$  be the premise. Let  $A'$  and  $\Delta'$  be the antecedent and succedent of  $e'$ . Then  $A'$  is an Ls-form. Since  $\Delta$  is a semi SI-form,  $\Delta'$  is also a semi SI-form. Therefore  $e'$  is an L-form. Note that all  $\mapsto$  of  $A$  must be contained in  $A'$ . Otherwise  $A'$  is not a connected Ls-form. This contradicts Lemma 5. Hence we have  $\sharp_{\mapsto}(e) = \sharp_{\mapsto}(e')$ .  $\square$

**Lemma 7.** *Suppose that there is a cut-free cyclic proof  $\mathcal{P}$  of  $\text{ls}(x, y) \vdash \text{sl}(x, y)$  in  $\text{CSL}_0^M \text{ID}\omega$ . Then its graph  $\mathcal{G}(\mathcal{P})$  contains an infinite path  $(e_i)_{i \in \omega}$  such that (a)  $e_0$  is  $\text{ls}(x, y) \vdash \text{sl}(x, y)$ , and (b) each  $e_i$  is an L-form.*

*Proof.* Let  $\mathcal{D}$  be the underlying derivation tree of  $\mathcal{P}$ . We inductively define a finite path  $e_0, e_1, \dots, e_n$  of  $\mathcal{D}$ . Let  $e_0$  be  $\text{ls}(x, y) \vdash \text{sl}(x, y)$  at the root position of  $\mathcal{D}$ . Suppose that  $e_0, \dots, e_k$  are already defined. If  $e_k$  is a bud, then finish making the

$$\begin{array}{c}
(e_{q-1}) : *_{i=0}^{q-2} x_i \mapsto x_{i+1} * \underline{\mathbf{ls}(x_{q-1}, y)} \vdash \mathbf{sl}(x, y) \\
\vdots \\
(e_{m+1}) : *_{i=0}^{m-1} x_i \mapsto x_{i+1} * x_m \mapsto x_{m+1} * \underline{\mathbf{ls}(x_{m+1}, y)} \vdash \mathbf{sl}(x, y) \\
\hline
(e_m) : *_{i=0}^{m-1} x_i \mapsto x_{i+1} * \underline{\mathbf{ls}(x_m, y)} \vdash \mathbf{sl}(x, y) \quad (\text{UL}) \\
\vdots \\
(e_p) = (e_q) : *_{i=0}^{p-1} x_i \mapsto x_{i+1} * \underline{\mathbf{ls}(x_p, y)} \vdash \mathbf{sl}(x, y) \\
\vdots \\
(e_1) : x_0 \mapsto x_1 * \underline{\mathbf{ls}(x_1, y)} \vdash \mathbf{sl}(x, y) \\
\hline
(e_0) : \underline{\mathbf{ls}(x, y)} \vdash \mathbf{sl}(x, y) \quad (\text{UL})
\end{array}$$

In the above proof figure,  $x = x_0$  and each  $e_i$  is the name of the corresponding sequent, the sequence  $(e_i)_{i \in \omega}$  is a path, the sequence of the underlined list predicates forms an infinite progress trace that follows the path, and  $e_q$  is the companion of the bud  $e_{q-1}$ .

Fig. 4 Proof of Theorem 5

path with  $n = k$ . Otherwise there exists a unique premise  $e'$  of  $e_k$  by Lemma 6 such that  $e'$  is an L-form. Then we define  $e_{k+1}$  by  $e'$ . Note that this construction successfully terminates, since any L-form cannot be the conclusion of (Id) and the number of sequents in  $\mathcal{D}$  is finite.

We claim that all L-forms of  $\mathcal{D}$  are on the path, since the premise  $e''$  of  $e_k$  ( $k < n$ ) other than  $e_{k+1}$  does not contain the  $\mathbf{ls}$ -predicate and all sequents of the subtree of  $\mathcal{D}$  starting from  $e''$  do not contain the  $\mathbf{ls}$ -predicate. Hence the companion of the bud  $e_n$  appears in the path  $(e_i)_{i \leq n}$ .

Finally we obtain the required infinite path  $(e_i)_{i \in \omega}$  of  $\mathcal{G}(\mathcal{P})$  by defining  $e_{n+1} = e_p$ , where  $e_p$  is the companion of  $e_n$ .  $\square$

Finally we show Theorem 5. The proof is done by combining Lemmas 6 and 7. The proof figure given in Fig 4 explains the situation of the following proof.

*Proof of Theorem 5.* Suppose that there is a cut-free cyclic proof  $\mathcal{P}$  of  $\mathbf{ls}(x, y) \vdash \mathbf{sl}(x, y)$  in  $\text{CSL}_0^M \text{ID}\omega$ . We will show a contradiction. By Lemma 7, there is an infinite path  $(e_i)_{i \in \omega}$  of  $\mathcal{G}(\mathcal{P})$  such that  $e_0$  is  $\mathbf{ls}(x, y) \vdash \mathbf{sl}(x, y)$  and each  $e_i$  is an L-form. By the global trace condition, there exist  $m \in \omega$  and an infinite progressing trace  $(\tau_i)_{i \geq m}$  that follows the infinite path  $(e_i)_{i \geq m}$ . By the construction of the path, the bud appears infinitely many times in the path. Let  $e_p$  and  $e_q$  be the first and the second occurrences of the bud in the path. Then there is at least one progressing point be-

tween  $\tau_p$  and  $\tau_q$ . Hence, we have contradiction since  $\sharp_{\mapsto}(e_p) < \sharp_{\mapsto}(e_q) = \sharp_{\mapsto}(e_p)$  by Lemma 6. Therefore there is no cut-free cyclic proof of  $\mathbf{ls}(x, y) \vdash \mathbf{sl}(x, y)$  in  $\text{CSL}_0^M \text{ID}\omega$ .  $\square$

By combining Proposition 4 and Theorem 5, we can obtain our second main result.

**Corollary 2.** *The cyclic proof system  $\text{CSL}_0^M \text{ID}\omega$  does not enjoy the cut-elimination property.*

## 5 Conclusion and future work

In this paper, we have proved that cut-elimination fails in cyclic proof systems for separation logic. We have shown the failure by presenting counter-example sequents that can be proven with cuts but not without cuts. The counter-example sequents are reasonably simple formulas about singly-linked lists, therefore leading one to believe that some form of cuts is necessary for practical uses of cyclic proofs in separation logic. Because it is non-trivial to infer arbitrary cut formulas in general, we envisage automatic provers to include restricted forms of cuts that are suitable for practical proof searches. For instance, the induction hypothesis synthesis pattern employed in Chu et al. [10] may be a reasonable approach to this.

As future work, we plan to investigate the power of various strategies used in cyclic-proof-based provers that can be characterized as restricted forms of cuts. For instance, the approach by Chu et al. [10] can be seen as a cyclic proof system with cuts restricted to only those against buds. An open

question that seems worth investigating is whether all sequents provable in cyclic proof systems are provable with cuts only against buds.

As another line of future work, we would like to investigate whether the cut-elimination property can be recovered by restricting the usage of inductive definitions. Recall that our counterexamples contain multiple inductive definitions of the same singly-linked list data structure. Perhaps cut-elimination can be recovered if such a situation is avoided.

Finally, we would like to investigate whether cut-elimination fails or not in cyclic proof systems for logics different from separation logic, such as first-order logic and bunched implication logic [6][7]. An important difference between the cyclic proof systems for separation logic in this paper and those in [6][7] is the existence of contraction and weakening on antecedents, which precludes a direct application of the proof technique of this paper.

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