

Design Patterns for LLM-based Neuro-Symbolic Systems

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Abstract. Large Language Models (LLMs) have been a dominating trend in Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the past years. At the same time, neuro-symbolic systems employing LLMs have also received increasing interest due to their advantages over purely statistical generative models: they can make explicit use of expert knowledge and can be understood and inspected by humans thus providing explainability. With an increasing variety of approaches, however, it is currently difficult to compare the different ways in which designing, training, fine-tuning, and applying such approaches takes place. In this work, we use and extend the modular design patterns for hybrid learning and reasoning systems and the Boxology language of van Bekkum et al. for this purpose. These patterns provide a general language to describe, compare, and understand the different architectures and methods used for LLM-based neuro-symbolic systems. The primary goal of this work is to support better understanding of specific classes of such systems, namely LLM-based models that are used in conjunction with knowledge-based (symbolic) systems. In order to demonstrate the usefulness of this approach, we explore existing LLM-based neuro-symbolic architectures and approaches, as well as use cases for these design patterns.

Keywords: design patterns, neuro-symbolic AI, generative models, Large Language Models

1. Introduction

A major driving force for the origin and growth of the field of artificial intelligence (AI) has been the goal of "making computers solve really difficult problems" [57]. Today, many contemporary observers agree that AI has taken a leap in recent years [73] and has now reached a level of capacity and productivity that was unprecedented in previous decades [61]. Since 2010, AI systems have reached a close-human or even superior-to-human level in many computer vision tasks [40]. Since 2020, an increasing number of AI systems have been introduced that are able to successfully complete complex text generation tasks in natural language processing (NLP) [55], such as text summarization, translation, and question answering. More recently, the concept has even been extended to multimodal approaches involving, for example, text input and image output [6, 35, 68, 89, 107]. Many of these systems have demonstrated natural language processing capabilities at a level very close to human capabilities [14].

These developments are largely attributed to advances in deep learning techniques, in particular in the form of generative AI and Large Language Models (LLMs). A wealth of many different LLM models have been and are being developed and published, both open-source and proprietary [10, 20, 42, 56]. The key technology most current LLMs use is the transformer architecture. The original transformer architecture published by [87] proposed

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1 to use two interacting models, an encoder and a decoder. These can be trained end-to-end (such as *flan-T5* [13]). 1
2 Alternatively, architectures have been proposed using only encoder-only (BERT [19]) or decoder-only (GPT [8], 2
3 BLOOMZ [59], PaLM [12]) models. As only a few LLMs based on other architectures have been proposed [4, 65], 3
4 in this paper, we focus on transformer-based LLMs and consider encoder-only, decoder-only, and encoder-decoder 4
5 systems to be possible types of LLMs. 5

6 These different categories of transformers provide different advantages and disadvantages, depending on the intended 6
7 scenario. Encoder-only transformers, such as BERT [19], specialize in contextual encoding, often named 7
8 base models. They use context to encode input sentences and represent them as machine-interpretable representations, 8
9 such as vector representations. Decoder-only systems are complementary to the encoder-only paradigm, but 9
10 structurally different [55]. A decoder-only system decodes the input data directly, without being transformed into a 10
11 higher, more abstract representation to the desired representation (text, images, or otherwise). Examples of this are 11
12 generative models from the GPT family [8]. Decoder-only architectures can be further divided into causal decoder 12
13 architectures and prefix decoder architectures. Causal decoder architectures, such as GPT [8, 67] and BLOOMZ 13
14 [59], use only unidirectional attention to the input sequence by using a specific mask. Prefix decoder architectures, 14
15 such as PaLM [12], use bidirectional attention for tokens in the prefix while maintaining unidirectional attention to 15
16 generate subsequent tokens. 16

17 Despite the many impressive achievements and capabilities of many LLMs, however, a large variety of challenges 17
18 of purely statistical LLM remain [38]. This includes not only substantial costs for training [76] and inference [72], 18
19 but also the infamous phenomenon of hallucination - situations where a trained LLM generates outputs presented as 19
20 plausible or authoritative information that are factually incorrect, nonsensical, or unfaithful to the input or context 20
21 [34]. In general this phenomenon is attributed to a lack of training data for certain outputs, often indicating a lack 21
22 of domain-specific knowledge [113]. While this may in part be corrected by retrieval-augmented generation (RAG) 22
23 [25] and fine-tuning [108], they introduce novel challenges by themselves; fine-tuning, for example, may well raise 23
24 significant additional training costs. Moreover, both hallucinations and lack of domain-specific knowledge are often 24
25 hard to identify or contextualize due to the inherent lack of explainability and interpretability of LLMs [63, 112]. It 25
26 is therefore fair to state that current LLM-based systems and applications lack a sufficient degree of trustworthiness 26
27 [32, 47], rendering them unusable where reliable output is essential (e.g., in scientific discovery [75]). 27

28 In response to these challenges, a variety of novel neuro-symbolic approaches to LLM-based AI systems have 28
29 recently emerged [29, 94]. Due to the quantity and diversity of emerging generative techniques, however, it becomes 29
30 more and more challenging to keep track of the ever-growing variety of models with different LLM architectures 30
31 and capabilities [14]. This becomes even more challenging with the growing diversity in combining LLMs with 31
32 symbolic AI techniques using different strategies on different architectural levels and training stages [2, 18]. A 32
33 practical solution to tackle the issue of analyzing and understanding these approaches in a systematic way is to 33
34 apply a high-level conceptual framework to discuss, compare, configure, and combine different models. Such a 34
35 framework is provided by the Boxology introduced by [86] in 2019. It was extended in 2021 [84] by providing 35
36 a taxonomically organised vocabulary to describe both processes and data structures used in hybrid systems, the 36
37 Boxology represents a flexible and widely applicable framework for representing AI design patterns. 37

38 In this paper, which is an extension of our previous work on LLM-based neuro-symbolic systems [17], we propose 38
39 to use and extend Boxology to gain insight into a variety of LLMs, specifically on LLMs used in a neuro-symbolic 39
40 approach. To this end, this paper provides two contributions: firstly, we propose novel design patterns as an extension 40
41 of the current Boxology to promote transparency and trustworthiness in system design, by providing interpretable, 41
42 high-level component descriptions of LLM-based neuro-symbolic systems. Our modular approach supports new 42
43 architectures and engineering approaches to LLM-based systems. Secondly, we test validity and usefulness of the 43
44 Boxology and our extensions in this field on example architectures and applications, such as ChatGPT, KnowGL, 44
45 GENOME and Logic-LM. 45

46 The remainder of the paper is organised as follows. In the next section, we give a more detailed overview of 46
47 the related work regarding LLMs and LLM-based neuro-symbolic systems and Boxology. In the third section, we 47
48 propose to extend the Boxology by three novel basic patterns in order to be able to handle LLMs, and we explain 48
49 several compositional design patterns in this field. In section 4, we dive into specific applications and tasks in 49
50 which LLMs, specifically in neuro-symbolic systems, are used. We conclude by summarising our key findings and 50
51 outlining future work. 51

2. Related Work

2.1. Neuro-Symbolic Systems and Design Patterns

For a long time, the field of AI developers had been shaped by an opposition between "imitators of the mind" favoring symbolic AI approaches and "imitators of the brain", favoring statistical approaches, such as artificial neural networks [16]. Today, however, combining the complementary strengths and weaknesses of machine learning and knowledge engineering is considered crucial for the creation of reliable, trustworthy and effective AI systems [51]. After a first wave of symbolic approaches and a second wave of statistical approaches, the combination of symbolic and subsymbolic approaches is therefore anticipated as the latest, third wave of AI [26, 85]. Starting in the early 1990s, neuro-symbolic AI has been emerging with a large variety of diverse approaches. This characteristic has been recognized early on with descriptive classification approaches [28, 53] and workshops show-casing and celebrating the diversity of neuro-symbolic systems [81]. A basic yet widely recognized and applicable taxonomy published by McGarry et al in 1999 differentiates three main classes of hybrid neural systems [52]: unified hybrid systems, translational hybrid systems and modular hybrid systems.

Unified and translational hybrid systems as defined by McGarry have been a popular area of study within the neuro-symbolic AI community during the last two decades [5, 106]. At the same time, modular hybrid systems have also gained wider interest due to its relevance for designing modern AI systems under industrial conditions [74]. In general, the design paradigm of modularization is characterized and motivated by the possibility to reuse and/or reorganize modules. Identifying and characterizing design patterns for modular approaches of neuro-symbolic has lead to the development of the so-called Boxology framework described below [84, 86]. This framework has been used and extended in different ways, such as the formalisation of the notions from the Boxology and implementation in the heterogeneous tool set [58], the extension of the Boxology for (teams of) actors [54], the characterization of emerging data-driven knowledge engineering trends [71], and the systematic study of nearly 500 papers published in the past decade in the area of Semantic Web Machine Learning [7]. While the original Boxology framework focused on architectural aspects of hybrid learning and reasoning, it has been pointed out the necessity of including representations of human involvement into such patterns [54, 97]. Despite the usefulness and manifold advantages of the above mentioned traditional taxonomies and studies, however, it must be stated that none of these are able to foresee and fully capture the characteristics of the latest generation of neural systems [17], in particular the broad capabilities and the required extraordinary architectural complexity of LLMs.

A recent approach to describe modular neuro-symbolic AI systems is the ontological visual framework termed EASY-AI, which uses semantically enhanced symbols to represent the components and architectures of the AI system [21]. EASY-AI aims to provide a standardised symbolic language for conveying the structure, purpose, and characteristics of AI systems. The approach presents the logical formalisms underpinning this visual framework, with the objective of enhancing the comprehensibility and understandability of AI system behaviours. Recently, this framework has also been provided with an initial implementation named SNOOP-AI [22]. This framework and implementation could be used in the implementation of the design patterns, as it can provide a formal conceptual foundation for the design patterns that allows formal reasoning over (compositions of) its elements. To the best of our knowledge, specific LLM-based use cases have not been tested using formalisation and implementation yet.

2.2. LLM-based Neuro-Symbolic Systems

While older frameworks for neuro-symbolic AI have not been designed to reflect the latest generation of complex large-scale neural components in the first place, some alternative approaches for combining LLMs and knowledge-based components have been designed from scratch. Colon-Hernández et al were among the first to do so by identifying three different categories of so-called knowledge injections [15]: Approaches to modify the architecture of LLM by adding additional layers that integrate knowledge with contextual representations or by modifying existing layers (termed architectural injections) are distinguished from approaches aiming to modify either the structure of the input or the data selected to be fed into the LLM (referred to as input injection) and approaches to change either the output structure or the losses that were used in the base model in some way to incorporate knowledge (termed output injection). While providing new insights and perspectives for LLM-based neuro-symbolic systems,

however, this injection-oriented approach is centered largely around modifications of LLMs, leaving out the modular perspective of integrating equally relevant neural and symbolic components.

In light of the popularity and success of knowledge graphs (KG) in recent years [33], it not surprising that this symbolic technique is a prime candidate for many researchers thriving the enhance LLMs. To this end, Agrawal et al have suggested to distinguish between LLM-based systems with knowledge-aware inference (KG-augmented retrieval, KG-augmented reasoning, or KG-controlled generation), knowledge-aware training (pre-training or fine-tuning), and knowledge-aware validation [1]. While their taxonomy represents a rather empirical high-level categorization, an alternative approach by Pan et al [63] provided a more differentiated approach where a distinction is made between KG-enhanced LLMs, LLM-augmented KGs and synergised LLMs + KGs. For KG-enhanced LLMs, two primary approaches have been explored: incorporation during the pre-training stage to facilitate knowledge acquisition and utilisation during the inference stage to improve access to domain-specific information. Additionally, KGs have been employed post-hoc to augment the interpretability of LLMs, elucidating both factual content and reasoning processes. In order to augment KGs, LLMs have been employed as text encoders to enrich KG representations and extract relations and entities from the original corpora. Recent studies have focused on designing KG prompts that effectively convert structural KGs into LLM-comprehensible formats, allowing direct application of LLMs to KG-related tasks such as completion and reasoning. Moreover, the authors have proposed considering the effects and concepts of synergised LLM + KG with respect to four layers: 1) Data, 2) Synergised Model, 3) Technique, and 4) Application. We will loosely use the categorisation of this paper in our exploration of different LLM-based neuro-symbolic systems.

3. Extending the Boxology framework with novel elements

We will base our paper on the previous work of van Bekkum and colleagues [84], in which a taxonomically organised vocabulary is provided to describe both processes and data structures used in neuro-symbolic systems. The highest level of this taxonomy contains instances, models, processes, and actors, which may be described as follows:

Instances: The two main classes of instances are data and symbols. *Symbols* are defined as having a designation to an object, class, or relation in the world that can be atomic or complex, and when a new symbol is created from another symbol and a system of operations, it should have a designation. Examples of symbols are labels (short descriptions), relations (connections between data items, such as triples), and traces (records of data and events). *Data* is defined as not symbolic. Examples are numbers, texts, tensors, or streams.

Models: Models are descriptions of entities and their relationships, which can be statistical or semantic. *Statistical* models represent dependencies between statistical variables, such as LLMs or Bayesian Networks. *Semantic* models specify concepts, attributes, and relationships to represent the implicit meaning of symbols, such as ontologies, taxonomies, knowledge graphs, or rule bases.

Processes: Processes are operations on instances and models. Three types of processes are defined: generation, transformation, and inference. *Generation* can be performed using, for example, the training of a model or by knowledge engineering. *Transformation* is the transformation of data, for example, from a knowledge graph to vector space. *Inference* can be inductive or deductive, in which induction generalizes instances and deduction reaches conclusions on specific instances, such as classification.

Actors: Actors can be humans, (software) agents, or robots (physically embedded agents). [54] extended the original paper with a definition of teams of actors in the Boxology.

In addition to vocabulary, visual language is defined in [84], as an extension of [86]. The visual language consists of rectangular boxes (instances), hexagonal boxes (models), ovals (processes) and triangles (actors), and untyped arrows between them. Within the boxes the concept will be noted by each level in the vocabulary using colon-separation from most generic to most-specific, for example a neural network will be model:stat:NN.

3.1. Introducing a new elementary pattern

The classic Boxology framework [84] is based on eight elementary patterns (cf. Figure 1). The elementary patterns 1a-1d are elementary to generate a model in the first, in particular for both statistical as well as semantical models. For instance, Pattern 1a shows how to train a statistical model (such as a neural network) using data (such as text or images). Pattern 1b shows how to create a semantic model (such as a knowledge graph) using symbols (such as triples). The elementary patterns 2a-2d are patterns that describe to use a model. Pattern 2a, for example, shows a statistical model (such as a neural network) being used to deduce symbols, i.e. for a classification task. Pattern 2b depicts the application of a semantic model, for example when using it for reasoning.

When seeking to apply any of the eight elementary patterns of the classic Boxology framework to represent a LLMs, however, it becomes apparent that such generative AI approaches are not adequately represented in these elementary patterns. While the main characteristic of generative AI systems is the ability to output new data for given input data, in the existing elementary patterns only symbols or models can be inferred. Therefore, we propose to extend the eight elementary patterns (Figure 1, 1a-1d and 2a-d) by introducing a new additional elementary pattern 2e (Figure 1). In contrast to the existing elementary patterns, this novel pattern allows to represent LLM-based neuro-symbolical systems since this pattern represents a model that can infer new data from data. This new data can be an image, video, or text, depending on the type of model. For example, with GPT [8], LLaMa [20] and similar generative text models, new text is generated based on given input text.

While we focus on textual models in this paper, it is worth mentioning that the pattern proposed in this section abstracts from the specifics of the type of data. The new elementary pattern 2e is thus transferable to other generative models and data types and applies also for example to image generation models [6, 35, 68, 89, 107], which can generate image data from text data.

3.2. Introducing a new compositional pattern

One of the key characteristics of the Boxology framework is its modularity, allowing the combine and reuse elementary patterns in compositional patterns. Van Bekkum et al describe, for example, the two compositional patterns 3a and 3b depicted in Figure 2 [84]. For the compositional pattern 3a, the two elementary patterns 1a and 2a (Figure 1) are combined. The resulting compositional pattern describes a basic structure for a (statistical) machine learning model depicting the training (creation of the model) and testing or application phase (application of the model on new data). Similarly, the compositional pattern 3b is created from combining two elementary patterns, allowing to depict a basic structure for a semantic model.

When seeking to use any of the two compositional patterns 3a and 3b as a combined representation for training and application of a LLM, however, it becomes apparent that – just as with elementary patterns for LLM-based training and inference – the compositional patterns of the classic Boxology framework are not well-suited for this. Thus, we introduce the new compositional pattern 3c (Figure 2) for the combined training and application of a LLM. This additional patterns is built from a combination of the two elementary patterns 1a and 2e (Figure 1). As for the novel elementary pattern 2e, also this novel compositional is not limited to text-based data only, but maybe applied to any type of data, including image data, audio data, and multimodal data.

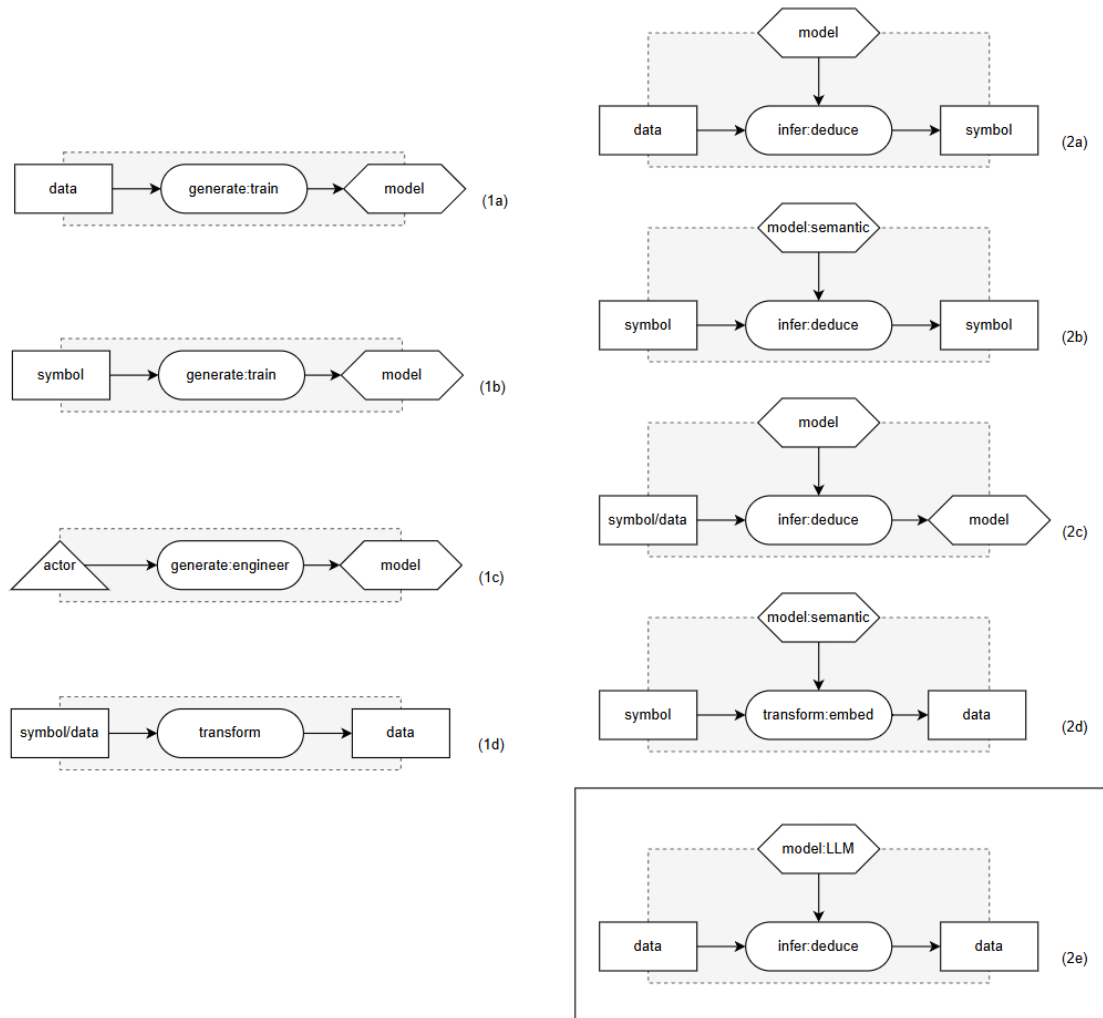


Fig. 1. All elementary design patterns, including novel addition 2e. Patterns 1a to 1c allow for model generation, 1d for transforming data and patterns 2a to 2e allow for model use.

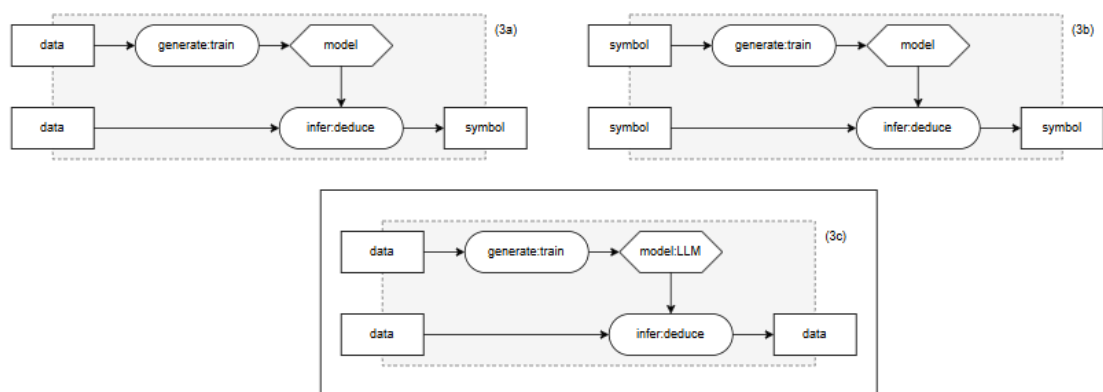


Fig. 2. Compositional design patterns, including novel addition 3c made by combining elementary pattern 1a and 2e. Patterns 3a and 3b visualize the patterns for full learning and prediction tasks from data/symbols.

4. LLM-based Neuro-Symbolic Design Patterns

Although generative LLMs generate text in convincing quality, the precision of their answers is lacking in many documented cases [96]. They lack in regard to facts and reasons, because they fail to understand concepts of truth, causality, time and space, as well as understanding of other physical and social relationships. This is one of the reasons for creating LLM-based neuro-symbolic systems. These systems often either use an LLM followed by a semantic model, or a semantic model followed by an LLM, or a combination of two models in parallel of which the output is fused. In this section, we propose compositional design patterns for these different types of system. We loosely follow the categorisation of [63]. We divide the section into training and application phases, as the patterns for these phases are distinct.

4.1. LLM-based Neuro-Symbolic Design Patterns in Training

Generative Neuro-Symbolic Systems can use semantic models in the training of an LLM or use an LLM to create a semantic model, or can be used in synergy to create a model. In the following subsections, we will describe the different patterns in more detail.

4.1.1. KG-enhanced LLMs

KGs can be used to enhance LLMs in training. For example by influencing the training data. An example of this is shown in the design pattern in Figure 3. Here, a KG is used to infer symbols (pattern 2b). These symbols are then changed into data (pattern 1d) which is then used to train the LLM (pattern 1a). This depiction can be used to represent [44, 69, 77, 99], where a KG is used when masking the data to improve the training of the LLM. For example, in GLM [77] the masking probability higher for concepts which are close together in the KG. On the other hand, SKEP [83] uses a KG to identify high sentiment words and gives them a higher masking probability.

4.1.2. LLM-augmented KGs

LLMs can be used to enhanced KGs because KGs might be incomplete and textual information is not integrated in the embedding itself. It can be represented in Boxology by Figure 4. Similar to the KG-enhanced LLMs in training, new data is inferred by an LLM (pattern 2e). These are then transformed to symbols (1d) and used to create or add on to a KG model (1a).

[60] generates representations on different levels such as sentence and document using LLMs and [31] creates multi-modal embeddings. Models following this structure are often used for tasks such as LLM-augmented KG completion and construction, including Named Entity Recognition, Coreference Resolution, and Relation Extraction. For example, KG-BERT, MLT-KGC, and PKGC use LLMs for the completion of KG [41, 50, 102]. They use the LLM output to predict the relation between new entities and existing ones. [100] uses LLMs to aid in Named Entity Recognition, [9, 37] for Coreference Resolution, and [64, 78] for Relation Extraction.

4.1.3. Synergised LLMs and KGs

One of the ways in which LLMs and KGs are synergised in training is using an LLM for joint text and KG embedding or representation. Figure 5 shows the Boxology representation of these types of systems. The symbolic triples are transformed into text (pattern 1d), which is then combined with other text to integrate both the graph structure and the textual information into the embedding simultaneously and trained to create a model (pattern 1a).

For example, kNN-KGE sees entities as special tokens and incorporates them into sentences as input for the LLM [90]. LMKE has a similar system structure but applies a different learning method to improve the learnt embeddings [92]. LambdaKG improves the representation of the graph structure by including neighbouring entities in the input sentence [98]. KEPLER, JointGT and DRAGON use a unified model for the knowledge embedding and pre-trained language representation [39, 91, 104]. They have pre-training tasks to come to a joint knowledge embedding and language modelling optimisation. ERNIE proposes a dual encoder system, consisting of a textual encoder that is fused with the knowledge graph encoder [110]. BERT-MK has a similar dual encoder, but adds additional information from neighbouring entities to the knowledge graph [27]. Coke-BERT further improves on this idea by adding a module to filter out irrelevant neighbouring entities [79]. JAKET fuses the entity representation in the middle layers of the LLM [105].

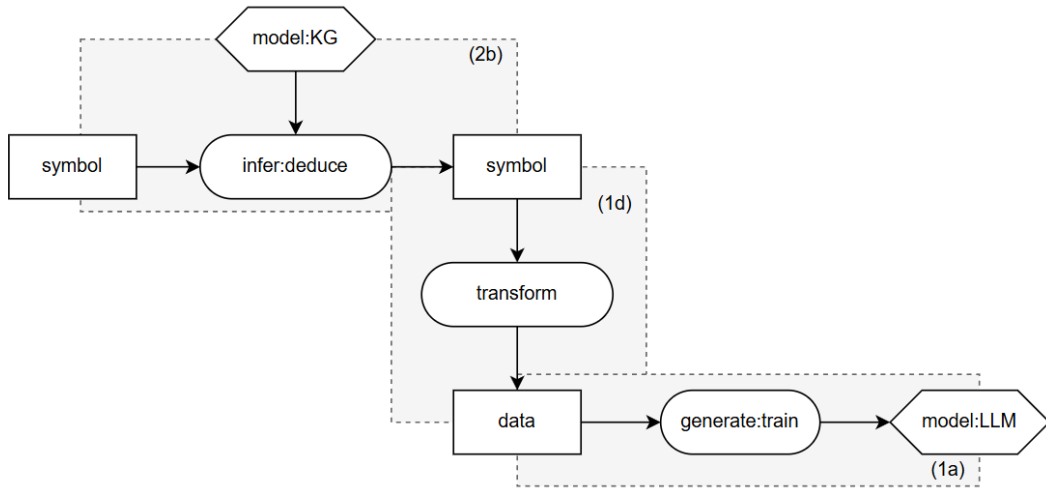


Fig. 3. KG-enhanced LLMs in training.

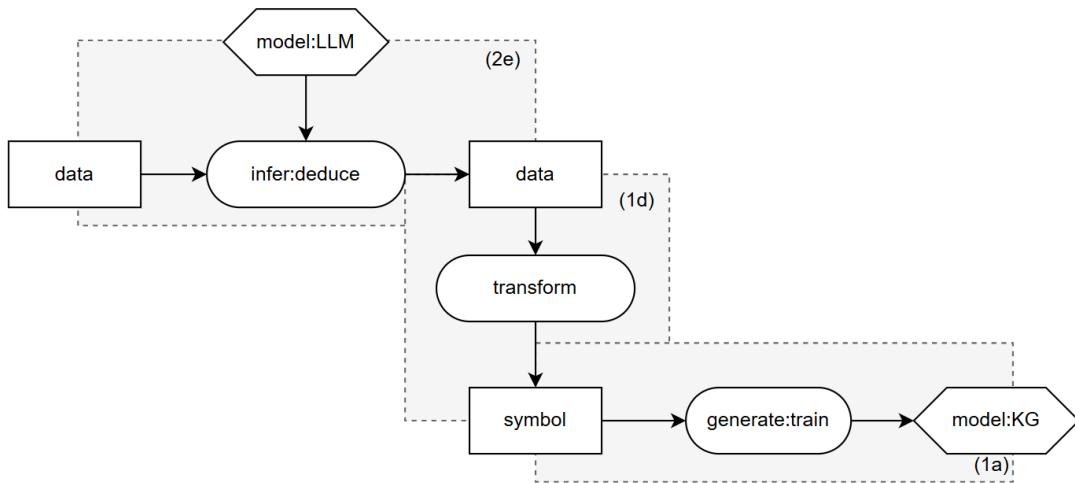


Fig. 4. LLM-augmented KGs in training

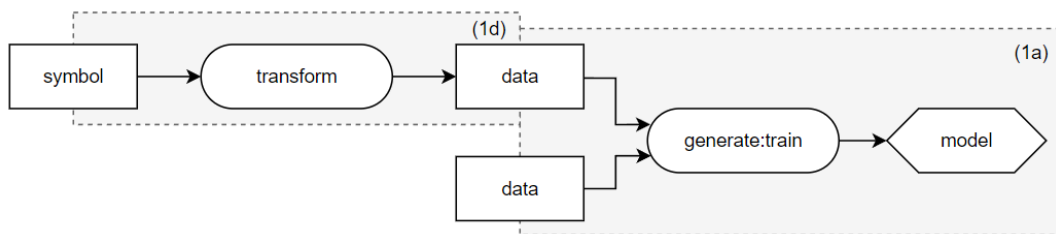


Fig. 5. Synergised LLMs and KGs in training

4.2. LLM-based Neuro-Symbolic Design Patterns in Application

Neuro-Symbolic systems often combine KGs and LLMs in the application phase. In this way, the system is more robust to new situations. Many of the LLM-based neuro-symbolic systems follow one of the pre-defined patterns. This section will highlight three depictions of the LLM-based NeSy systems in application.

4.2.1. KG-enhanced LLMs

KGs can be used to enhance LLMs by utilizing the knowledge in KGs. One way to do this is represented in Figure 6. It shows how a KG is used to infer symbols (pattern 2b). These symbols are then transformed to data (pattern 1d) which is used by the LLM to generate new data (pattern 2e). This can be useful for example so that the input data can be aligned with the knowledge or augmented by adding relevant facts for the LLM to improve the output.

In contrast to KG injection during training (see subsection 4.1.1), the results of pattern 2b and 1d are now input to the infer process instead of the train process. This means that the knowledge is up to date at the time of application, rather than at the time of training, which may happen a long time before.

This pattern describes systems that transform the input data by aligning them with the knowledge of the KG before they are fed into the deduction process with an LLM model. This can be done in a prompt engineering process using KG [45, 49, 88, 95] or retrieval-augmented knowledge methods such as RAG [43]. KagNet first encodes the input KG and then augments it with textual representation [46].

4.2.2. LLM-Augmented KGs

LLMs can be used to augment KGs to improve information deductions. For example, Figure 7 shows how firstly, an LLM is used to infer data (pattern 2e). Then the data is transformed to symbols (pattern 1d) for the KG to reason over (pattern 2b). As with KG-enhanced LLMs for application, the difference between training and application for LLM-augmented KGs is that the first pattern is input to infer process rather than to train process of the KG.

One example is using LLMs for KG embedding. Pretrain-KGE uses an LLM to encode the text of the parts of the triples and uses that encoding as a starting point for the KG encoding [111]. Moreover, in answering questions with LLM-augmented KG, LLMs are used to bridge the gap between natural language questions and the retrieval of KG answers [30, 48]. In addition, LLMs can be used for the generation of text from a knowledge graph, where LLMs are used to generate natural language that describes facts from KGs [23, 80, 93]. MHGRN uses the LLM representation of the text to guide the reasoning process in the KGs [24].

4.2.3. Synergised LLMs and KGs

LLMs and KGs can be combined to work in synergy, also in the application phase. Figure 8 shows how this can be applied, specifically in the case of synergised reasoning. Here, the model is fed both symbols and data, both in the training and in the application phase.

Examples of such methods are JointLK [82] and GreaseLM [109]. They include interactions between the tokens in the textual input and the entities in the graph in the model's layers. QA-GNN [103] represents the LLM information as a special node in the KG for reasoning.

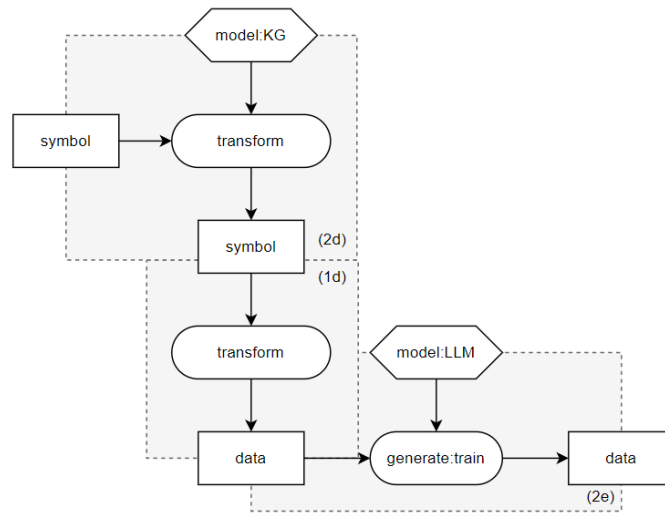


Fig. 6. KG-enhanced LLMs in application

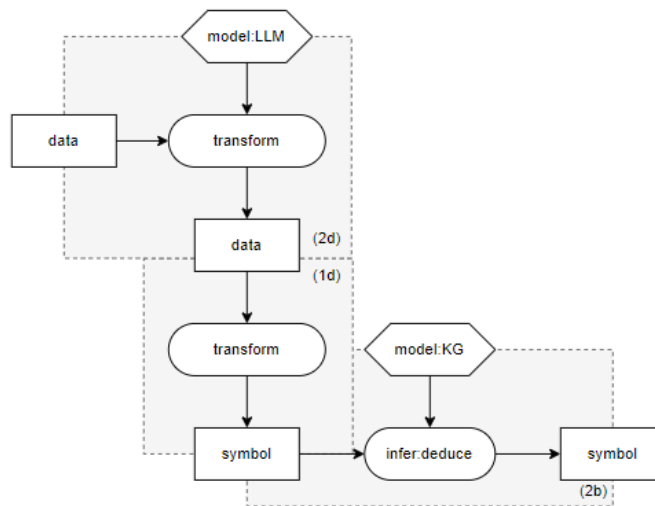


Fig. 7. LLM-augmented KGs in application

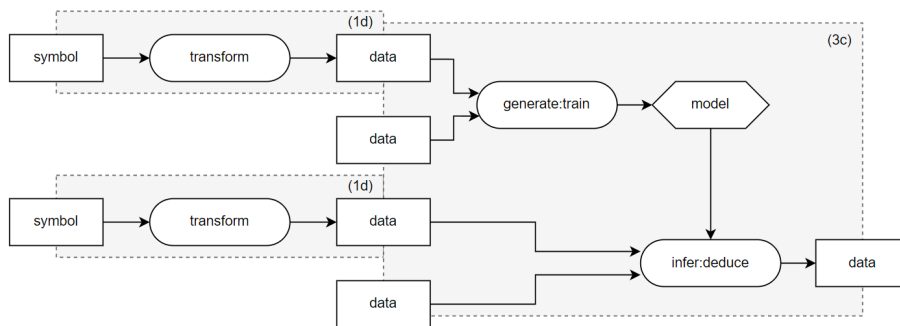


Fig. 8. Synergised LLMs and KGs for reasoning

5. Use Cases

In this section, we describe and explore several papers that propose LLM-based neuro-symbolic system. The selected papers are chosen, as they represent a diverse set of possibilities to use an LLM in a system pipeline (on the input side of the system, somewhere in the inner part, or on the output side) as well as act as a fluent language interface or a formal language interface on the input or output side. We also included ChatGPT, which is the most famous generative AI system, and although mainly data-driven, includes a symbolic component in the reward modeling part of the training phase.

5.1. Retrieval-Augmented Generation (RAG)

Retrieval-Augmented Generation (RAG) is a method that expands an LLM with external knowledge [43]. A RAG system has two main components, a retriever and a generator. Figure 9 shows the Boxology representation of a RAG system, where the retriever is the model in pattern 2b and the generator is the LLM in pattern 2e. Firstly, the retriever selects relevant documents based on the posed question (2a), through classification or with help of a Knowledge Graph. The question and retrieved documents are then presented to an LLM in a prompt (2e). The LLM then generates an answer to the question based on the information in the selected documents. The LLM can then also present the source of the information, making it more trustworthy and reliable.

In KD-CoT, KSL and Think-on-graph facts are retrieved from a KG, together with the reasoning. Then an LLM then generates a natural language answer to present to the user [23, 80, 93].

RAG is a prime example of the KG-enhanced LLM pattern as presented in subsection 4.2.1.

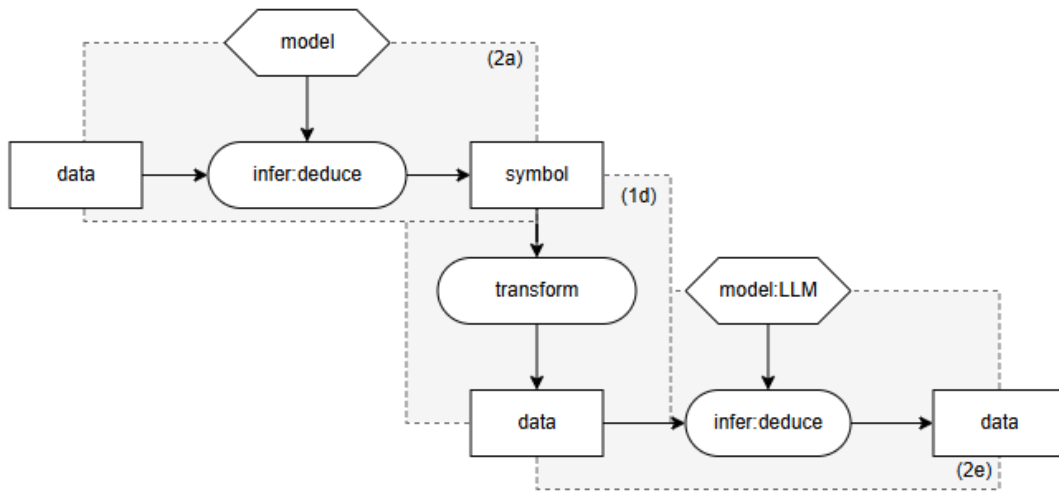


Fig. 9. Use of Retrieval-Augmented Generation

5.2. KnowGL

Figure 10 shows KnowGL Parser [70], a NeSy system combining an LLM module and symbolic methods. The KnowGL Parser can be used to automatically extract knowledge graphs from collections of documents. Pattern 2e represents the BART-large model receiving a sentence and inducing a list ‘subject, relation, object’. In the next step, represented by pattern 2b, a ranked list is created of distinct facts and their scores. In the final step, the generated facts are linked to Wikidata. This is done using a mapping of labels to Wikidata IDs (2b). In the case that the LLM has created a new entity, type, or relation label that are not in Wikidata it returns ‘null’.

This use case displays a variation of the LL-augmented KG in application pattern, in subsection 4.2.2

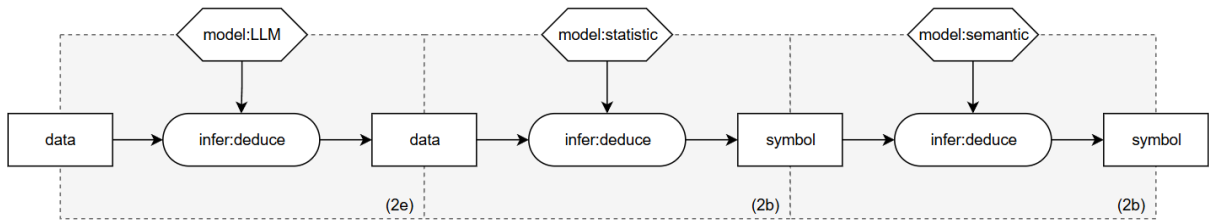


Fig. 10. Boxology representation of KnowGL [70]

5.3. KnowBERT

Although knowledge is mostly injected into statistical generative models during the input or during the output stage, also approaches to inject knowledge inside the model have been proposed. A prominent example is KnowBERT, a modified variant of BERT [66]. It stands out for its fusion of contextual and graph representations, attention-enhanced entity spanned knowledge infusion, and flexibility in injecting multiple Knowledge Graphs at various model levels. By integrating the Knowledge Attention and Recontextualisation (KAR) layers [3], graph entity embeddings are used that are processed through an attention mechanism to enhance entity span embeddings. This happens in later layers of the model to stabilise training but may potentially also be used to inject knowledge at earlier stages [15]. The Boxology pattern for KnowBERT is shown in Figure 11 and is the same as the pattern presented in subsection 4.1.1, KG-enhanced LLMs in training.

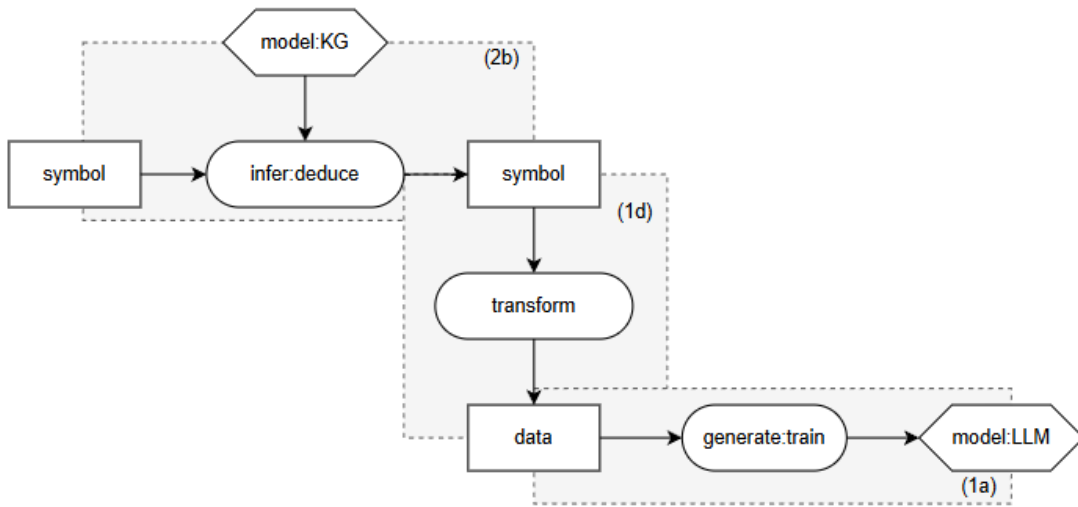


Fig. 11. Boxology representation of KnowBERT [66]

5.4. Mathematical Conjecturing and LLMs

The system proposed by [36] assigns the generative task of discovering mathematical conjectures to an LLM, while the results can be checked later using a symbolic theorem prover or counterexample finder. The LLM is first trained on data from a formal language (3c). The system is then prompted with a formal theory (e.g. a sort function), and has the LLM generate lemmas from the theory as output data. These generated lemmas are transformed from data to symbols (1d) and are subsequently used by a semantic model(s) prover. The pattern is depicted in Figure 12.

The approach taken in [101] is also captured by this representation. The system proposed first uses an LLM component that has been trained on Prolog to generate Prolog code as output (3c). The output is then transformed

to symbols (1d), a symbolic inference engine then produces answers and reasoning traces by executing the code mentioned above (2b).

Both of these examples show a generalisation of the Boxology pattern in subsection 4.2.2, LLM-augmented KGs in application, where the KG is replaced by a different semantic model.

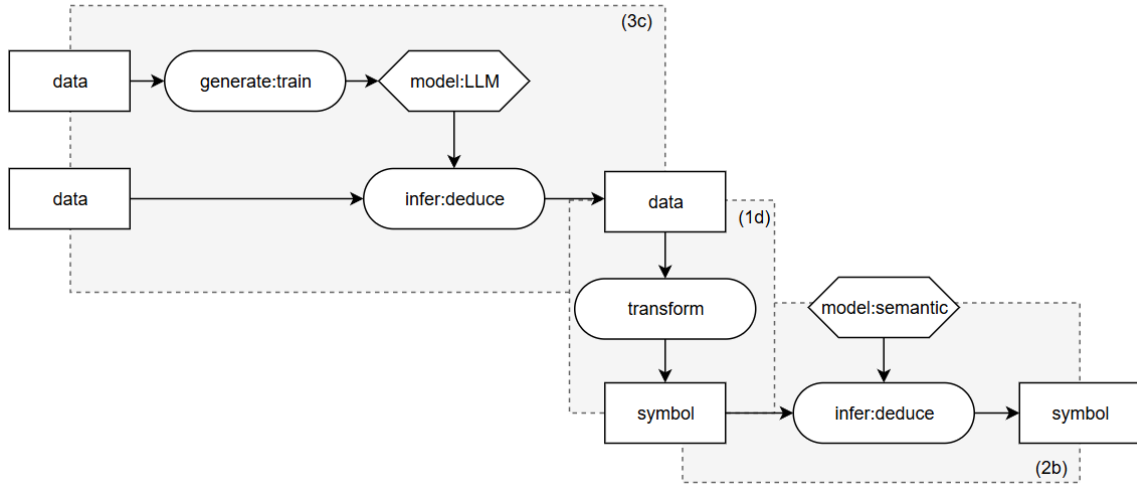


Fig. 12. Boxology representation of using LLMs for discovery of mathematical conjectures [36]

5.5. GENOME

Generative Neuro-Symbolic Visual Reasoning by Growing and Reusing Modules (GENOME) [11] focuses on the task of generative software module learning, based on one pretrained LLM generating signatures (input/output) for these software modules and reasoning steps, then having another pretrained LLM create the software module based on those and have a deductive reasoner evaluate the module on a test case.

The system consists of three stages: module initialisation, module generation, and module execution. The representation for this paper is depicted in Figure 13. First, an LLM assesses a visual-language question and outputs new module signatures and operation steps as a response to the query (3c), if current modules from a library cannot provide an adequate response. In the next step, the LLM generates a module (software code) based on the signature/test case (3c, 2nd component). Finally, the module is executed by passing it a visual query (2a).

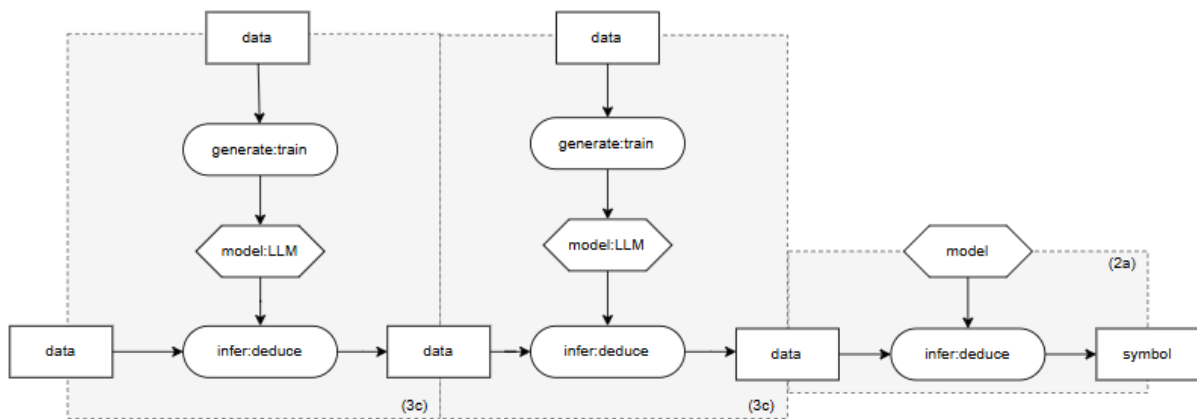


Fig. 13. Boxology representation of GENOME [11]

This use case is an extension of the LLM-augmented KGs in application as described in subsection 4.2.2, deploying two LLMs in sequence.

5.6. Logic-LM

The approach taken by Logic-LM [62] integrates LLMs as a natural language interface with symbolic solvers to improve logical problem-solving. The logical problem can e.g. be stated as logical programming, first-order logic or a constraint satisfaction problem. This paper is depicted in Figure 14: the system utilises LLMs that are trained on the specific logic language (3c) to translate a problem stated in natural language into a symbolic formulation (3c, 1d). In the next step, a symbolic reasoner module performs logical inference on the formulated problem and transforms the symbolic results into data (2b, 1d). Finally, an LLM receives the results as an input prompt and outputs a solution in natural language (3c). The LLM thus functions as a fluent language interface (both on input and output) to a symbolic reasoner component.

This representation is a combination of the patterns presented in LLM-augmented KGs in application, subsection 4.2.2, and KG-enhanced LLMs in application, subsection 4.2.1.

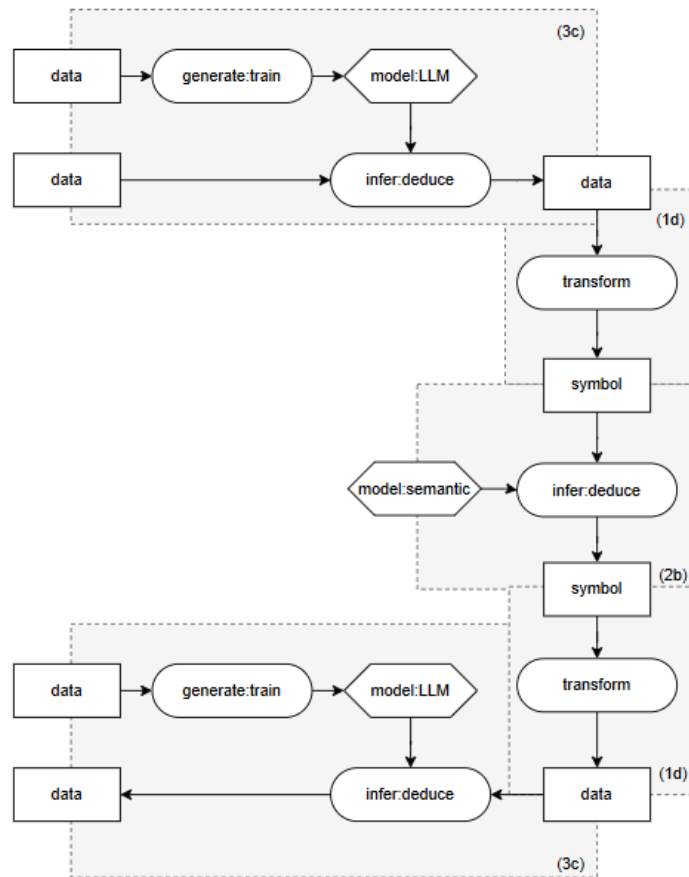


Fig. 14. Boxology representation of Logic-LM [62]

6. Discussion

With this work, we are filling a gap in the classic Boxology framework with respect to the recent rise of generative AI techniques. This paper proposes an extension in terms of concepts and patterns to the set of Boxology elements and patterns as described in [84], specifically for LLMs and LLM-based NeSy systems. In particular, we introduce a novel elementary pattern and a novel compositional pattern to complement the existing Boxology patterns.

The novel patterns proposed in this paper provide a more fine-grained description of the model element, introducing the generative model. Although we apply it exclusively to LLMs, we have argued that its level of abstraction lends itself to representing other types of generative models, such as generative image models. The composite NeSy patterns at the same time provide three principled integrations of LLMs and KGs. We show how the composition of elementary patterns can be used to describe LLMs, and we explore several categories as well as specific approaches in use cases, such as KnowGL, GENOME and Logic-LM.

Whereas our extension demonstrates its applicability in LLM-based scenarios, it raises interesting questions about the nature of other Boxology elements directly related to the new model element. The nature of data versus symbols could be revisited, when we consider the input and output related to generative models. At the same time, we notice that the deductive inference element perhaps generalizes from the finer details of the inferencing capabilities of a generative model to a certain extent. The probabilistic nature of these models may well be captured by a finer distinction in the Boxology inference concept, that can perhaps also cover new classes of inferencing that have so far not been covered.

Finally, the current Boxology language has demonstrated in a practical classroom setting to yield multiple options for describing the same system by different engineers, much like some of the notations of UML have proven to lend itself to different designs of the same system based on different points of view. A more formal description along with guidelines for interpretation and use of the current set of Boxology elements therefor seems warranted in order to reduce some of the ambiguity.

7. Conclusion and Future Work

Despite of many open questions and challenges towards generative AI techniques, LLMs are today widely used in a variety of applications. To this end, combining data-driven approaches with knowledge-based techniques is a promising development to address such challenges. In this paper, we propose new design patterns for modular LLM-based neuro-symbolic systems to be included in the design pattern approach for neuro-symbolic systems as proposed by [84].

In future work, we expect to further extend this work towards adjacent domains, such as generative AI systems in general or multi-modal generative AI systems. In addition, we expect to further extend and deepen the Boxology itself. For example, temporal or recurring/iterative aspects are not yet taken into account and cannot be visualised adequately. Our current investigation has also shown that concept naming and labelling and formalisation of the Boxology needs revisiting. Then there are the do's and don'ts: the extension has raised questions about which pattern combinations are allowed and which are not.

The importance of modeling datasets for LLMs or generative AI in general may be taken into account in future specifications of particular subtypes of Instances and Models in the taxonomy. Additionally, the use of graphical tools for software development is well known from the Unified Modelling Language (UML) and visual programming tools, such as LabView or Scratch. We are mostly concerned with graphical representations of design patterns for system design and documentation, but the promise of templates, low-code, or no-code development, is appealing for the future.

Acknowledgements

We thank the TNO project GRAIL for their financial support and Frank van Harmelen and Annette ten Teije for their feedback. We also thank Daan Di Scala for his contribution to the KnowGL pattern.

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