naive-ebnf: LaTeX Package for EBNF in Plain Text*

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1 Introduction

This package helps render an Extended Backus-Naur Form using plain text notation:

⟨λ-Expr⟩ → ⟨Var⟩
| “λ” ⟨Var⟩ “.” ⟨Expr⟩
| “(” ⟨Expr⟩ ⟨Expr⟩ “)”

```
\documentclass{minimal}
\usepackage{naive-ebnf}
\usepackage{mathtools}
\begin{document}
\begin{ebnf}
<$\lambda$-Expr> := <Var> \\
  || "$\lambda$" <Var> "." <Expr> \\
  || "$\lparen$" <Expr> <Expr> "$\rparen$"
\end{ebnf}
\end{document}
```

`ebnf` The `ebnf` environment *doesn't* add any formatting to the paragraph, but only replaces the plain text symbols, such as “`:=`” and “`<Var>`” with proper LaTeX commands. The following syntax is understood inside the `ebnf` environment:

- `:=` separates the left-hand side from the right-hand side of the production rule;
- `<...>` denotes a non-terminal (variable);
- `"..."` denotes a terminal symbol;
- `(...|...)` denotes a series of options to choose from;
- `[...]` denotes an optional substitution;
- `{...}` denotes a zero or more times repetition;
- `||` denotes an indented vertical bar at the beginning of the string.

Attention: The usage of some symbols is prohibited inside terminals. Instead, the following substitutions are recommended:

- `$\lparen$` and `$\rparen$` instead of “`(`” and “`)`” (from the mathtools package);

*The sources are in GitHub at yegor256/naive-ebnf

- `$\langle$` and `$\rangle$` instead of "<" and ">";
- `$\lbrace$` and `$\rbrace$` instead of "{" and "}" (also `mathtools`);
- `$\lbrack$` and `$\rbrack$` instead of "[" and "]" (also `mathtools`);
- `$\vert$` instead of "|".

`width` There is an optional argument of `ebnf` environment, which sets the width of the left-hand side of each rule (the default width is `6em`):

This EBNF has a larger width of the left hand side than usual:
⟨VeryLongVariable⟩ → ⟨X⟩ | ⟨Y⟩
⟨X⟩ → "X"
⟨Y⟩ → "Y"

```
This EBNF has a larger width of \\
the left hand side than usual: \par
\begin{ebnf}[1.5in]
<VeryLongVariable> := <X> | <Y> \\
<X> := "X" \\
<Y> := "Y"
\end{ebnf}
```

`\terminal` `\nonterminal` Inside the text, terminals and non-terminals may be formatted using two supplementary commands:

The non-terminal ⟨Var⟩ in λ-calculus may be equal to $v_1, v_2, \ldots$. Application starts with "(" and ends with ")".

```
The non-terminal \nonterminal{Var}
in $\lambda$-calculus may be equal
to $v_1, v_2, \dots$. Application
starts with \terminal{(} and ends
with \terminal{)}.
```

It's possible to use them in math-mode too, for example:

If "(" f_1 ⟨λ-Var⟩ ")" is always true, then f_1 is a tautology.

```
If $\terminal{(} f_1
\nonterminal{$\lambda$-Var}
\terminal{)}$ is always true, then
$f_1$ is a tautology.
```

2 Package Options

It's possible to configure the behavior of the package with the help of a few package options:

`bw` By default, some colors are used in the rendered grammar. However, the `bw` package option disables any colors and makes sure the gammar is black-and-white:

```
\usepackage[bw]{naive-ebnf}
```

`trail` The `ebnf` environment is doing pre-processing of the TEX commands provided and then let LATEX render them. It may be useful to see the output generated by the pre-processing. The `trail` option (with a file name) asks the package to save the content of the environment after the pre-processing into the file:

```
\usepackage[trail=log.tex]{naive-ebnf}
```

3 Implementation

First, we process package options:

```
\RequirePackage{pgfopts}
\pgfkeys{
  /ebnf/.cd,
  bw/.store in=\ebnf@bw,
  trail/.store in=\ebnf@trail,
  trail/.default=naive-ebnf.tmp.tex,
  trail
}
\ProcessPgfPackageOptions{/ebnf}
```

Then, we include a few packages, mostly to deal with LaTeX3 expressions:

```
\RequirePackage{expl3}
```

`\ebnf@color` Then, we include xcolor to colorize the output a bit:

```
\makeatletter\ifdefined\ebnf@bw\else
  \RequirePackage{xcolor}
\fi
\newcommand\ebnf@color[2]
  {\ifdefined\ebnf@bw#2\else\textcolor{#1}{#2}\fi}
\makeatother
```

`\terminal` Then, we a command to render a single terminal:

```
\makeatletter
\newcommand\terminal[1]{{%
  \relax\ifmmode\else\ttfamily\fi%
  \ebnf@color{gray}{\relax\ifmmode\textsf{‘‘}\else{\sffamily‘‘}\fi}%
  #1%
  \ebnf@color{gray}{\relax\ifmmode\textsf{’’}\else{\sffamily’’}\fi}}}
\makeatother
```

`\nonterminal` Then, we a command to render a single non-terminal:

```
\makeatletter
\newcommand\nonterminal[1]{%
  \ebnf@color{gray}{\relax\ifmmode\langle\else\(\langle\)\fi}%
  \relax\ifmmode\textsf{#1}\else{\sffamily#1}\fi%
  \ebnf@color{gray}{\relax\ifmmode\rangle\else\(\rangle\)\fi}}
\makeatother
```

Then, we define supplementary commands:

```
\makeatletter
\newcommand\ebnf@optional[1]
  {\ebnf@color{gray}{[}#1\ebnf@color{gray}{]}}
\newcommand\ebnf@repetition[1]
  {\ebnf@color{gray}{\{}#1\ebnf@color{gray}{\}}}
\newcommand\ebnf@grouping[1]
  {\ebnf@color{gray}{(}#1\ebnf@color{gray}{)}}
\ExplSyntaxOn
\newcommand\ebnf@terminal[1]{
  \tl_set:Nn \l_ebnf_tl { }
  \tl_set_rescan:Nno \l_ebnf_tl { } { #1 }
  \terminal{\l_ebnf_tl}
```

```
}
\newcommand\ebnf@nonterminal[1]{
  \tl_set:Nn \l_ebnf_tl { }
  \tl_set_rescan:Nno \l_ebnf_tl { } { #1 }
  \nonterminal{\l_ebnf_tl}
}
\ExplSyntaxOff
\newcommand\ebnf@to
  {\ebnf@color{gray}{\(\to\)}}
\newcommand\ebnf@alternation
  {\ebnf@color{gray}{\(\vert\)}}
\makeatother
```

`ebnf` Then, we define the `ebnf` environment:

```
\ExplSyntaxOn
\cs_generate_variant:Nn \tl_replace_all:Nnn {Nx}
\makeatletter
\NewDocumentEnvironment{ebnf}{O{4em}+b}
  {\tl_set:Nn\l__ebnf_tmp_tl{#2}}
  {%
  \regex_replace_all:nnN { \{(.+?)\} }%
    {\c{ebnf@repetition}{\1}} \l__ebnf_tmp_tl%
  \regex_replace_all:nnN { \((.+?)\) }%
    {\c{ebnf@grouping}{\1}} \l__ebnf_tmp_tl%
  \regex_replace_all:nnN { \[(.+?)\] }%
    {\c{ebnf@optional}{\1}} \l__ebnf_tmp_tl%
  \regex_replace_all:nnN { (<[^>]+?>\ :=) }%
    {\c{makebox}[#1][r]{\1}} \l__ebnf_tmp_tl%
  \regex_replace_all:nnN { <(.+?)> }%
    {\c{ebnf@nonterminal}{\1}} \l__ebnf_tmp_tl%
  \regex_replace_all:nnN { "(.+?)" }%
    {\c{ebnf@terminal}{\1}} \l__ebnf_tmp_tl%
  \regex_replace_all:nnN { \|(\|) }%
    {\c{makebox}[#1][r]{ \1 }} \l__ebnf_tmp_tl%
  \regex_replace_all:nnN { \| }%
    {\c{ebnf@alternation}{}} \l__ebnf_tmp_tl%
  \regex_replace_all:nnN { := }%
    {\c{ebnf@to}{}} \l__ebnf_tmp_tl%
  \tl_put_left:Nn \l__ebnf_tmp_tl {\noindent}
  \tl_put_right:Nn \l__ebnf_tmp_tl {}
  \ifdefined\ebnf@trail%
    \newwrite\ebnf@write%
    \immediate\openout\ebnf@write\ebnf@trail\relax%
    \immediate\write\ebnf@write{\unexpanded\expandafter{\l__ebnf_tmp_tl}}%
    \immediate\closeout\ebnf@write%
    \message{naive-ebnf:\space pre-processed\space TeX
      \space saved\space to\space "\ebnf@trail"^^J}%
  \fi%
  \l__ebnf_tmp_tl}
\makeatother
\ExplSyntaxOff

\endinput
```

Change History

Index

Numbers written in italic refer to the page where the corresponding entry is described; numbers underlined refer to the code line of the definition; numbers in roman refer to the code lines where the entry is used.