Five different things

1. **Syntax**: How do you write language constructs?
2. **Semantics**: What do programs mean? (Evaluation rules)
3. **Idioms**: What are typical patterns for using language features to express your computation?
4. **Libraries**: What facilities does the language (or a well-known project) provide “standard”? (E.g., file access, data structures)
5. **Tools**: What do language implementations provide to make your job easier? (E.g., REPL, debugger, code formatter, …)

- Not actually part of the language

These are 5 separate issues
- In practice, all are essential for good programmers
- Many people confuse them, but shouldn’t

Our Focus

This course focuses on semantics and idioms

- Syntax is usually uninteresting
  - A fact to learn, like “The American Civil War ended in 1865”
  - People obsess over subjective preferences

- Libraries and tools crucial, but often learn new ones “on the job”
  - We are learning semantics and how to use that knowledge to understand all software and employ appropriate idioms
  - By avoiding most libraries/tools, our languages may look “silly” but so would any language used this way

How to build bigger types

- Already know:
  - Have various base types like `int`, `bool`, `unit`, `char`
  - Ways to build (nested) compound types: tuples, lists, options

- Today: more ways to build compound types

- First: 3 most important type building blocks in any language
  - “Each of”: A `t` value contains values of each of `t1 t2 ... tn`
  - “One of”: A `t` value contains values of one of `t1 t2 ... tn`
  - “Self reference”: A `t` value can refer to other `t` values

Remarkable: A lot of data can be described with just these building blocks

Note: These are not the common names for these concepts

Examples

- Tuples build each-of types
  - `int * bool` contains an `int` and a `bool`

- Options build one-of types
  - `int option` contains an `int` or it contains no data

- Lists use all three building blocks
  - `int list` contains an `int` and another `int list` or it contains no data

- And of course we can nest compound types
  - `((int * int) option) * (int list list) option`

Rest of this Lecture

- Another way to build each-of types in ML
  - Records: have named fields
  - Connection to tuples and idea of syntactic sugar

- A way to build and use our own one-of types in ML
  - For example, a type that contains an `int` or a `string`
  - Will lead to pattern-matching, one of ML’s coolest and strangest-to-Java-programmers features

- Later in course: How OOP does one-of types
  - Key contrast with procedural and functional programming
Records

Record values have fields (any name) holding values
\{f_1 = v_1, \ldots, f_n = v_n\}

Record types have fields (and name) holding types
\{f_1 : t_1, \ldots, f_n : t_n\}

The order of fields in a record value or type never matters
– REPL alphabetizes fields just for consistency

Building records:
\{f_1 = e_1, \ldots, f_n = e_n\}

Accessing components:
#myfieldname e

(Evaluation rules and type-checking as expected)

Example

{\text{name} = "Amelia", \text{id} = 41123 - 12}

Evaluates to
{\text{id} = 41111, \text{name} = "Amelia"}

And has type
\{\text{id} : \text{int}, \text{name} : \text{string}\}

If some expression such as a variable $x$ has this type, then get fields with:
#\text{id} x #\text{name} x

Note we did not have to declare any record types
– The same program could also make a
\{\text{id}=true, \text{ego}=false\} of type \{\text{id}=\text{bool}, \text{ego}=\text{bool}\}

By name vs. by position

• Little difference between \(\{4,7,9\}\) and \{f=4, g=7, h=9\}
  – Tuples a little shorter
  – Records a little easier to remember “what is where”
  – Generally a matter of taste, but for many (6? 8? 12?) fields, a record is usually a better choice

• A common decision for a construct’s syntax is whether to refer to things by position (as in tuples) or by some (field) name (as with records)
  – A common hybrid is like with Java method arguments (and ML functions as used so far):
    • Caller uses position
    • Callee uses variables
  – Could totally do it differently; some languages have

The truth about tuples

Previous lecture gave tuples syntax, type-checking rules, and evaluation rules

But we could have done this instead:
– Tuple syntax is just a different way to write certain records
  – \(\{e_1, \ldots, e_n\}\) is another way of writing \(\{1=e_1, \ldots, n=e_n\}\)
  – \(t_1 \times \ldots \times t_n\) is another way of writing \(\{1:t_1, \ldots, n:t_n\}\)
  – In other words, records with field names 1, 2, ...

In fact, this is how ML actually defines tuples
– Other than special syntax in programs and printing, they don’t exist
– You really can write \(\{1=4, 2=7, 3=9\}\), but it’s bad style

Datatype bindings

A “strange” (?) and totally awesome (!) way to make one-of types:
– A datatype binding

\[
\text{datatype mytype} = \text{TwoInts of int} * \text{int} \\
| \text{Str of string} \\
| \text{Pizza}
\]

• Adds a new type \text{mytype} to the environment
• Adds constructors to the environment: \text{TwoInts, Str, and Pizza}
• A constructor is (among other things), a function that makes values of the new type (or is a value of the new type):
  – \text{TwoInts} : int * int -> mytype
  – \text{Str} : string -> mytype
  – \text{Pizza} : mytype

Syntactic sugar

“Tuples are just syntactic sugar for records with fields named 1, 2, … n”

• Syntactic: Can describe the semantics entirely by the corresponding record syntax
• Sugar: They make the language sweeter 😊

Will see many more examples of syntactic sugar
– They simplify understanding the language
– They simplify implementing the language
Why? Because there are fewer semantics to worry about even though we have the syntactic convenience of tuples

Another example we saw: \text{andalso} and \text{orelse} vs. \text{if} then \text{else}
The values we make

• Any value of type `mytype` is made from one of the constructors
  • The value contains:
    − A “tag” for “which constructor” (e.g., `TwoInts`)
    − The corresponding data (e.g., `(7, 9)`)
  • Examples:
    − `TwoInts(3+4,5+4)` evaluates to `TwoInts(7,9)`
    − `Str(if true then "hi" else "bye")` evaluates to `Str("hi")`
    − `Pizza` is a value

Using them

So we know how to build datatype values; need to access them

There are two aspects to accessing a datatype value
  1. Check what variant it is (what constructor made it)
  2. Extract the data (if that variant has any)

Notice how our other one-of types used functions for this:
  • `null` and `isSome` check variants
  • `hd`, `tl`, and `valOf` extract data (raise exception on wrong variant)

ML could have done the same for datatype bindings
  − For example, functions like “isStr” and “getStrData”
  − Instead it did something better

Case

ML combines the two aspects of accessing a one-of value with a case expression and pattern-matching
  − Pattern-matching much more general/powerful (lecture 5)

Example:

```ml
fun f x = (* f has type mytype -> int *)
    case x of
      Pizza => 3
    | TwoInts(i1,i2) => i1+i2
    | Str s => String.size s
```

Patterns

In general the syntax is:

```ml
    case e0 of
      p1 => e1
    | p2 => e2
    …
    | pn => en
```

Why this way is better

0. You can use pattern-matching to write your own testing and data-extractions functions if you must
  − But do not do that on your homework

1. You cannot forget a case (inexhaustive pattern-match warning)
2. You cannot duplicate a case (a type-checking error)
3. You will not forget to test the variant correctly and get an exception (like `hd []`)
4. Pattern-matching can be generalized and made more powerful, leading to elegant and concise code