CSE P 501 – Compilers

Static Semantics
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Agenda

- Static semantics
- Types
- Attribute grammars
- Representing types
- Symbol tables
- Note: this covers a superset of what we need for MiniJava
What do we need to know to compile this?

class C {
    int a;
    C(int initial) {
        a = initial;
    }
    void setA(int val) {
        a = val;
    }
}

class Main {
    public static void main(){
        C c = new C(17);
        c.setA(42);
    }
}
Beyond Syntax

- There is a level of correctness that is not captured by a context-free grammar
  - Has a variable been declared?
  - Are types consistent in an expression?
  - In the assignment \( x = y \), is \( y \) assignable to \( x \)?
  - Does a method call have the right number and types of parameters?
  - In a selector \( p.q \), is \( q \) a method or field of class instance \( p \)?
  - Is variable \( x \) guaranteed to be initialized before it is used?
  - Could \( p \) be null when \( p.q \) is executed?
  - Etc. etc. etc.
What else do we need to know to generate code?

- Where are fields allocated in an object?
- How big are objects? (i.e., how much storage needs to be allocated by new)
- Where are local variables stored when a method is called?
- Which methods are associated with an object/class?
  - In particular, how do we figure out which method to call based on the run-time type of an object?
Types

- Classical roles of types in programming languages
  - Run-time safety
  - Compile-time error detection
  - Improved expressiveness (method or operator overloading, for example)
  - Provide information to optimizer
Semantic Analysis

- **Main tasks:**
  - Extract types and other information from the program
  - Check language rules that go beyond the context-free grammar

- **Key data structures: symbol tables**
  - For each identifier in the program, record its attributes (kind, type, etc.)
  - Later: assign storage locations (stack frame offsets) for variables; other annotations
Some Kinds of Semantic Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information</th>
<th>Generated From</th>
<th>Used to process</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Symbol tables</td>
<td>Declarations</td>
<td>Expressions, statements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type information</td>
<td>Declarations, expressions</td>
<td>Operations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant/variable information</td>
<td>Declarations, expressions</td>
<td>Statements, expressions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Register &amp; memory locations</td>
<td>Assigned by compiler</td>
<td>Code generation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Values</td>
<td>Constants</td>
<td>Expressions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Semantic Checks

For each language construct we want to know:

- What semantic rules should be checked: specified by language definition (type compatibility, etc.)
- For an expression, what is its type (used to check whether the expression is legal in the current context)
- For declarations in particular, what information needs to be captured to be used elsewhere
A Sampling of Semantic Checks (0)

- Name: id
  - id has been declared and is in scope
  - Inferred type of id is its declared type
  - Memory location assigned by compiler

- Constant: v
  - Inferred type and value are explicit
A Sampling of Semantic Checks (1)

- Binary operator: \( \text{exp}_1 \text{ op } \text{exp}_2 \)
  - \( \text{exp}_1 \) and \( \text{exp}_2 \) have compatible types
    - Identical, or
    - Well-defined conversion to appropriate types
  - Inferred type is a function of the operator and operands
A Sampling of Semantic Checks (2)

- Assignment: \( \text{exp}_1 = \text{exp}_2 \)
  - \( \text{exp}_1 \) is assignable (not a constant or expression)
  - \( \text{exp}_1 \) and \( \text{exp}_2 \) have compatible types
    - Identical, or
    - \( \text{exp}_2 \) can be converted to \( \text{exp}_1 \) (e.g., char to int), or
    - Type of \( \text{exp}_2 \) is a subclass of type of \( \text{exp}_1 \) (can be decided at compile time)
  - Inferred type is type of \( \text{exp}_1 \)
  - Location where value is stored is assigned by the compiler
A Sampling of Semantic Checks (3)

- Cast: \((\text{exp}_1) \text{ exp}_2\)
  - \(\text{exp}_1\) is a type
  - \(\text{exp}_2\) either
    - Has same type as \(\text{exp}_1\)
    - Can be converted to type \(\text{exp}_1\) (e.g., double to int)
    - Is a superclass of \(\text{exp}_1\) (in general requires a runtime check to verify that \(\text{exp}_2\) has type \(\text{exp}_1\))
  - Inferred type is \(\text{exp}_1\)
A Sampling of Semantic Checks (4)

- Field reference `exp.f`
  - `exp` is a reference type (class instance)
  - The class of `exp` has a field named `f`
  - Inferred type is declared type of `f`
A Sampling of Semantic Checks (5)

- Method call $\text{exp.m(e}_1, \text{e}_2, ..., \text{e}_n)$
  - $\text{exp}$ is a reference type (class instance)
  - The class of $\text{exp}$ has a method named $\text{m}$
  - The method has $n$ parameters
  - Each argument has a type that can be assigned to the associated parameter
  - Inferred type is given by method declaration (or is void)
A Sampling of Semantic Checks (6)

- Return statement: `return exp; return;`
  - The expression can be assigned to a variable with the declared type of the method (if the method is not void)
  - There’s no expression (if the method is void)
Semantic Analysis

- Parser builds abstract syntax tree
- Now need to extract semantic information and check constraints
  - Can sometimes be done during the parse, but often easier to organize as separate phases
    - And some things can’t be done on the fly during the parse, e.g., information about identifiers that are used before they are declared (fields, classes)
- Information stored in *symbol tables*
  - Generated by semantic analysis, used there and later
Attribute Grammars

- A systematic way to think about semantic analysis
- Sometimes used directly, but, even if ad hoc techniques are used, AGs are a useful way to think about the analysis
Attribute Grammars

- Idea: associate *attributes* with each node in the (abstract) syntax tree
- Examples of attributes
  - Type information
  - Storage location
  - Assignable (e.g., expression vs variable – lvalue vs rvalue for C/C++ programmers)
  - Value (for constant expressions)
  - etc. ...
- Notation: X.a if a is an attribute of node X
Attribute Example

- Assume that each node has an attribute .val
- AST and attribution for \((1+2) \times (6 / 2)\)
Inherited and Synthesized Attributes

- Given a production $X ::= Y_1 Y_2 \ldots Y_n$
- A *synthesized* attribute is $X.a$ is a function of some combination of attributes of $Y_i$’s (bottom up)
- An *inherited* attribute $Y_i.b$ is a function of some combination of attributes $X.a$ and other $Y_j.c$ (top down)
Informal Example of Attribute Rules (1)

- Attributes for simple arithmetic language
- Grammar

  program ::= decl stmt
  decl ::= int id;
  stmt ::= exp = exp ;
  exp ::= id | exp + exp | 1
Informal Example of Attribute Rules (2)

- Attributes
  - env (environment, e.g., symbol table); synthesized by decl, inherited by stmt
  - type (expression type); synthesized
  - kind (variable [lvalue] vs value [rvalue]); synthesized
Attributes for Declarations

- decl ::= int id;
  - decl.env = {identifier, int, var}
Attributes for Program

- program ::= decl stmt
  - stmt.env = decl.env
Attributes for Constants

- exp ::= 1
  - exp.kind = val
  - exp.type = int
Attributes for Expressions

- \( \text{exp ::= id} \)
  - \( \text{id.type} = \text{exp.env.lookup(id)} \)
  - \( \text{exp.type} = \text{id.type} \)
  - \( \text{exp.kind} = \text{id.kind} \)
Attributes for Addition

- \( \text{exp} ::= \text{exp}_1 + \text{exp}_2 \)
  - \( \text{exp}_1.\text{env} = \text{exp}.\text{env} \)
  - \( \text{exp}_2.\text{env} = \text{exp}.\text{env} \)
  - error if \( \text{exp}_1.\text{type} \neq \text{exp}_2.\text{type} \)
    - (or error if not combatable if rules are move complex)
  - \( \text{exp}.\text{type} = \text{exp}_1.\text{type} \)
  - \( \text{exp}.\text{kind} = \text{val} \)
Attribute Rules for Assignment

- stmt ::= exp₁ = exp₂;
  - exp₁.env = stmt.env
  - exp₂.env = stmt.env
  - Error if exp₂.type is not assignment compatible with exp₁.type
  - error if exp₁.kind == val (must be var)
Example

- `int x; x = x + 1;`
Extensions

- This can be extended to handle sequences of declarations and statements
  - Sequence of declarations builds up combined environment with information about all declarations
  - Full environment is passed down to statements and expressions
Observations

- These are equational (functional) computations
- This can be automated, provided the attribute equations are non-circular

Problems
- Non-local computation
- Can’t afford to literally pass around copies of large, aggregate structures like environments
In Practice

- Attribute grammars give us a good way of thinking about how to structure semantic checks
- Symbol tables will hold environment information
- Add fields to AST nodes to refer to appropriate attributes (symbol table entries for identifiers, expression types, etc.)
  - Put in appropriate places in inheritance tree – most statements don’t need types, for example
Symbol Tables

- Map identifiers to <type, kind, location, other properties>

Operations
- Lookup(id) => information
- Enter(id, information)
- Open/close scopes
Aside: Implementing Symbol Tables

- Topic in classical compiler course: implementing a hashed symbol table
- These days: use the collection classes that are provided with the standard language libraries (Java, C#, C++, etc.)
- For Java:
  - Map (HashMap) will solve most of the problems
  - List (ArrayList) for ordered lists (parameters, etc.)
Symbol Tables for MiniJava (1)

- Global – Per Program Information
  - Single global table to map class names to per-class symbol tables
    - Created in a pass over class definitions in AST
    - Used in remaining parts of compiler to check field/method names and extract information about them
Symbol Tables for MiniJava (2)

- Global – Per Class Information
  - 1 Symbol table for each class
    - 1 entry for each method/field declared in the class
      - Contents: type information, public/private, parameter types (for methods), storage locations (later), etc.
    - In full Java, multiple symbol tables (or more complex symbol table) per class since methods and fields can have the same names in a class
Symbol Tables for MiniJava (3)

- Global (cont)
  - All global tables persist throughout the compilation
    - And beyond in a real Java or C# compiler...
      - (e.g., symbolic information in Java .class files)
Symbol Tables for MiniJava (4)

- Local symbol table for each method
  - 1 entry for each local variable or parameter
    - Contents: type information, storage locations (later), etc.
  - Needed only while compiling the method; can discard when done
Beyond MiniJava

- What we aren’t dealing with: nested scopes
  - Inner classes
  - Nested scopes in methods – reuse of identifiers in parallel or (if allowed) inner scopes
- Basic idea: new symbol table for inner scopes, linked to surrounding scope’s table
  - Look for identifier in inner scope; if not found look in surrounding scope (recursively)
  - Pop back up on scope exit
Engineering Issues

- In practice, want to retain $O(1)$ lookup
  - Use hash tables with additional information to get the scope nesting right
- In multipass compilers, symbol table information needs to persist after analysis of inner scopes for use on later passes
  - See a compiler textbook for details
Error Recovery

- What to do when an undeclared identifier is encountered?
  - Only complain once (Why?)
  - Can forge a symbol table entry for it once you’ve complained so it will be found in the future
  - Assign the forged entry a type of “unknown”
  - “Unknown” is the type of all malformed expressions and is compatible with all other types to avoid redundant error messages
“Predefined” Things

- Many languages have some “predefined” items
- Include code in the compiler to manually create symbol table entries for these when the compiler starts up
  - Rest of compiler generally doesn’t need to know the difference between “predeclared” items and ones found in the program
Type Systems

- **Base Types**
  - Fundamental, atomic types
  - Typical examples: int, double, char

- **Compound/Constructed Types**
  - Built up from other types (recursively)
  - Constructors include arrays, records/structs/classes, pointers, enumerations, functions, modules, ...
Type Representation

- Create a shallow class hierarchy
  
  abstract class Type { ... }  // or interface
  
  class ClassType extends Type { ... }
  
  class BaseType extends Type { ... }

- Should not need too many of these
Base Types

- For each base type (int, boolean, others in other languages), create a single object to represent it
  - Symbol table entries and AST nodes for expressions refer to these to represent type info
  - Usually create at compiler startup
- Useful to create a “void” type object to tag functions that do not return a value (if you implement these)
- Also useful to create an “unknown” type object for errors
  - (Having “void” and “unknown” type objects reduces the need for special case code for these in various places.)
Compound Types

- Basic idea: represent with an object that refers to component types
  - Limited number of these – correspond directly to type constructors in the language (record/struct, array, function,...)
  - A compound type is a graph
Class Types

- `class Id { fields and methods }

  class ClassType extends Type {
    Type baseClassType; // ref to base class
    Map fields; // type info for fields
    Map methods; // type info for methods
  }

- (Note: may not want to do this literally, depending on how symbol tables for classes are represented. i.e., class symbol tables might be useful as the representation of the class type.)
Array Types

- For Java this is simple: only possibility is number of dimensions and element type

```java
class ArrayType extends Type {
    int nDims;
    Type elementType;
}
```
Array Types for Pascal &c.

- Pascal allows arrays to be indexed by any discrete type
  - array[indexType] of elementType

- Element type can be any other type, including an array
  
  class GeneralArrayType extends Type {
    Type indexType;
    Type elementType;
  }
Methods/Functions

- Type of a method is its result type plus an ordered list of parameter types

  ```java
  class MethodType extends Type {
    Type resultType;       // type or "void"
    List parameterTypes;
  }
  ```
Type Equivalence

- For base types this is simple
  - Types are the same if they are identical
  - Normally there are well defined rules for coercions between arithmetic types
    - Compiler inserts these automatically or when requested by programmer (casts)
Type Equivalence for Compound Types

- Two basic strategies
  - *Structural equivalence*: two types are the same if they are the same kind of type and their component types are equivalent, recursively
  - *Name equivalence*: two types are the same only if they have the same name, even if their structures match

- Different language design philosophies
Type Equivalence and Inheritance

- Suppose we have
  
  ```java
  class Base { ... }
  class Extended extends Base { ... }
  ```

- A variable declared with type `Base` has a *compile-time type* of `Base`.

- During execution, that variable may refer to an object of class `Base` or any of its subclasses like `Extended` (or can be null, which is compatible with all class types).
  - Sometimes called the *runtime type*.
Useful Compiler Functions

- Create a handful of methods to decide different kinds of type compatibility:
  - Types are identical
  - Type t1 is assignment compatible with t2
  - Parameter list is compatible with types of expressions in the call

- Normal modularity reasons: isolates these decisions in one place and hides the actual type representation from the rest of the compiler
Implementing Type Checking for MiniJava

- Create multiple visitors for the AST
- First passe(s): gather information
  - Collect global type information for classes
  - Could do this in one pass, or might want to do one pass to collect class information, then a second one to collect per-class information about fields, methods
- Next set of passes: go through method bodies to check types, other semantic constraints
Coming Attractions

- Need to start thinking about translating to object code (actually x86 assembly language, the default for this project)

Next:
- x86 overview (as a target for simple compilers)
- Runtime representation of classes, objects, data, and method stack frames
- Assembly language code for higher-level language statements