Programming Languages

Types

CSCI-GA.2110-003
Fall 2011
What is a type?

- An interpretation of numbers
- Consists of a set of values
- The compiler/interpreter defines a mapping of these values onto the underlying hardware.
Static vs Dynamic Type Systems

**Static vs dynamic**

- **Static**
  - Variables have types
  - Compiler ensures that type rules are obeyed at **compile time**

- **Dynamic**
  - Variables do not have types, values do
  - Compiler ensures that type rules are obeyed at **run time**

A language may have a mixture; Java has a mostly static type system with some runtime checks.

**Pros and cons**

- Faster: static
  - Dynamic typing requires run-time checks
- More flexible: dynamic
- Easier to refactor code: static
A strongly typed language does not allow variables to be used in a way inconsistent with their types (no loopholes).

A weakly typed language allows many ways to bypass the type system (e.g., pointer arithmetic).

C is a poster child for the latter. Its motto is: “Trust the programmer”.

```c
const int myConstant = 5;
int* myVariable = (int*)&myConstant;
*myVariable = 6;
```
 Scalar Types Overview

- discrete types
  must have clear successor, predecessor
- floating-point types
  typically 64 bit (double in C); sometimes 32 bit as well (float in C)
- rational types
  used to represent exact fractions (Scheme, Lisp)
- complex
  Fortran, Scheme, Lisp, C99, C++ (in STL)
- integer types
  often several sizes (e.g., 16 bit, 32 bit, 64 bit)
  sometimes have signed and unsigned variants (e.g., C/C++, Ada, C#)
  SML/NJ has a 31-bit integer
- Boolean (named after George Boole: capital 'B')
  Common type; C had no Boolean until C99
- character
  See next slide
- enumeration types
character, string

- some languages have no character data type (e.g., Javascript)
- internationalization support
  - Java: UTF-16
  - C++: 8 or 16 bit characters; semantics implementation dependent

- string mutability
  Most languages allow it, Java does not.

void, unit
Used as return type of procedures;
void: (C, Java) represents the absence of a type
unit: (ML, Haskell) a type with one value: ()
Enumeration types: abstraction at its best

- trivial and compact implementation:
  literals are mapped to successive integers
- very common abstraction: list of names, properties
- expressive of real-world domain, hides machine representation

Examples:

```java
type Suit is (Hearts, Diamonds, Spades, Clubs);
type Direction is (East, West, North, South);
```

Order of list means that `Spades > Hearts`, etc.

Contrast this with C#:

```
“arithmetics on enum numbers may produce results in the underlying representation type that do not correspond to any declared enum member; this is not an error”
```
type Fruit is (Apple, Orange, Grape, Apricot);
type Vendor is (Apple, IBM, HP, Dell);

My_PC : Vendor;
Dessert : Fruit;
...
My_PC := Apple;
Dessert := Apple;
Dessert := My_PC;  -- error

Apple is overloaded. It can be of type Fruit or Vendor.
The new C++ standard defines `enum class` as a strongly typed version of `enum`.

```cpp
enum E { E1, E2, E3 };
```
An underlying numeric representation is assumed: `int i = E2` is legal.

```cpp
enum class E { E1, E2, E3 };
```
No to int conversion exists: `int i = E::E2` is illegal.

Note: `E` has its own scope; `E2` is in the scope of `E`. 
Ada and Pascal allow types to be defined which are subranges of existing discrete types.

```
type Sub is new Positive range 2 .. 5;  -- Ada
V: Sub;

type sub = 2 .. 5;  (* Pascal *)
var v: sub;
```

Assignments to these variables are checked at runtime:

```
V := I + J;  -- runtime error if not in range
```
Composite Types

- arrays
- records
- variants, variant records, unions
- classes
- pointers, references
- function types
- lists
- sets
- maps
Arrays

- **index types**
  most languages restrict to an integral type
  Ada, Pascal, Haskell allow any scalar type

- **index bounds**
  many languages restrict lower bound:
  C, Java: 0, Fortran: 1, Ada, Pascal: no restriction

- **when is length determined**
  Fortran: compile time; most other languages: can choose

- **dimensions**
  some languages have multi-dimensional arrays (Fortran, C)
  many simulate multi-dimensional arrays as arrays of arrays (Java)

- **literals**
  C/C++ has initializers, but not full-fledged literals
  Ada: (23, 76, 14) Scheme: #(23, 76, 14)

- **first-classness**
  C, C++ does not allow arrays to be returned from functions
Does the language support these?

- **array aggregates**
  
  A := (1, 2, 3, 10);  -- positional  
  A := (1, others => 0);  -- for default  
  A := (1..3 => 1, 4 => -999);  -- named

- **record aggregates**
  
  R := (name => "NYU", zipcode => 10012);
Initializers in C++

Similar notion for declarations:

```cpp
int v2[] = {1, 2, 3, 4};  // size from initializer
char v3[2] = {'a', 'z'};  // declared size
int v5[10] = {-1};        // default: other components = 0
struct School r =
    { "NYU", 10012 };     // record initializer
char name[] = "Algol";   // string literals are aggregates
```

C has no array assignments, so initializer is not an expression
(less orthogonal)
Both refer to an object in memory.

- Pointers tend to make this notion more explicit
  - Deferencing
  - Pointer arithmetic (raises issues of allocation, alignment)
  - Low level operations often supported (e.g. `memcpy`)

- References tend to behave more like ordinary variables.
  - Dereferencing still occurs, but is implicit
  - No notion of pointer arithmetic
  - Restrictions on reference variable bindings (C++)
Questions:

- Is it possible to get the address of a variable?
  - Convenient, but aliasing causes optimization difficulties. (the same way that pass by reference does)
  - Unsafe if we can get the address of a stack allocated variable.

- Is pointer arithmetic allowed?
  - Unsafe if unrestricted.
  - In C, no bounds checking:

    // allocate space for 10 ints
    int *p = (int*)malloc(10 * sizeof(int));
    p += 11;
    ... *p ... // out of bounds, but no check
Need notation to distinguish pointer from designated object

- in Ada: `Ptr` vs `Ptr.all`
- in C: `ptr` vs `*ptr`
- in Java: no notion of pointer

For pointers to composite values, dereference can be implicit:

- in Ada: `C1.Value` equivalent to `C1.all.Value`
- in C/C++: `c1.value` and `c1->value` are different
A pointer used for low-level memory manipulation, i.e., a memory address. In C, `void` is requisitioned to indicate this.

Any pointer type can be converted to a `void *`.

```c
int a[10];
void *p = &a[5];
```

A cast is required to convert back:

```c
int   *pi = (int  *)p;  // no checks
double *pd = (double  *)p;
```
In C/C++, the notions:

- an array
- a pointer to the first element of an array

are almost the same.

```c
void f(int *p) { ... }
int a[10];
f(a);  // same as f(&a[0])

int *p = new int[4];
... p[0] ...  // first element
... *p ...  // ditto
... 0[p] ...  // ditto

... p[10] ...  // past the end; undetected error
```
Pointers and safety

Pointers create aliases: accessing the value through one name affects retrieval through the other:

```c
int *p1, *p2;
...
p1 = new int[10];    // allocate
p2 = p1;            // share
delete[] p1;        // discard storage
p2[5] = ...         // error:
                     //  p2 does not denote anything
```
Several possible problems with low-level pointer manipulation:

- dangling references
- memory leaks (forgetting to free memory)
- freeing dynamically allocated memory twice
- freeing memory that was not dynamically allocated
- reading/writing outside object pointed to
- improper use/understanding of pointer arithmetic
- alignment-induced memory fragmentation
Dangling references

If we can point to local storage, we can create a reference to an undefined value:

```c
int *f () { // returns a pointer to an integer
    int local; // variable on stack frame of f
    ...
    return &local; // pointer to local entity
}

int *x = f ();
...
*x = 5; // stack may have been overwritten
```
A record consists of a set of typed fields.

Choices:

- Name or structural equivalence? Most statically typed languages choose name equivalence. ML, Haskell are exceptions.
- Does order of fields matter? Typically, same answer as previous question.
- Any subtyping relationship with other record types? Most statically typed languages say no. Dynamically typed languages implicitly say yes.

This is known as *duck typing*. Example: `someObject.field` will work on any record type having `field`.
A variant record is a record that provides multiple alternative sets of fields, only one of which is valid at any given time.

Also known as a discriminated union.
Variant Records in Ada

Need to treat group of related representations as a single type:

type Figure_Kind is (Circle, Square, Line);
type Figure (Kind: Figure_Kind) is record
  Color: Color_Type;
  Visible: Boolean;
  case Kind is
    when Line  => Length: Integer;
    Orientation: Float;
    Start: Point;
    when Square => Lower_Left, Upper_Right: Point;
    when Circle => Radius: Integer;
    Center: Point;
  end case;
end record;
C1: Figure(Circle); -- discriminant provides constraint
S1: Figure(Square);
...
C1.Radius := 15;
if S1.Lower_Left = C1.Center then ... 

function Area (F: Figure) return Float is 
   -- applies to any figure, i.e., subtype
begin
   case F.Kind is
      when Circle => return Pi * Radius ** 2;
      ... 
   end Area;
L : Figure(Line);
F : Figure;  -- illegal, don’t know which kind
P1 := Point;
...
C := (Circle, Red, False, 10, P1);
   -- record aggregate
... C.Orientation ...
   -- illegal, circles have no orientation
C := L;
   -- illegal, different kinds
C.Kind := Square;
   -- illegal, discriminant is constant

Discriminant is a visible constant component of object.
discriminated types and classes have overlapping functionalities
- discriminated types can be allocated statically
- run-time code uses less indirection
- compiler can enforce consistent use of discriminants
- adding new variants is disruptive; must modify every case statement
- variant programming: one procedure at a time
- class programming: one class at a time
Free unions can be used to bypass the type model:

```c
union value {
    char *s;
    int i;       // s and i allocated at same address
};
```

Keeping track of current type is programmer’s responsibility. Can use an explicit tag:

```c
struct entry {
    int discr;
    union {        // anonymous component, either s or i.
        char *s;   // if discr = 0
        int i;     // if discr = 1, but system won’t check
    };
};
```
In dynamically-typed languages, only values have types, not names.

\[ S = 13.45 \quad \# \text{a floating-point number} \]
\[ \ldots \]
\[ S = [1,2,3,4] \quad \# \text{now it’s a list} \]

Run-time values are described by discriminated unions. Discriminant denotes type of value.

\[ S = X + Y \quad \# \text{arithmetic or concatenation} \]
Some languages look dynamically typed, but aren’t. e.g., in C#:

```csharp
var x = 10;
```

is equivalent to:

```csharp
int x = 10;
```

The type is fixed as `int` in both cases. The former uses type inference.

C++ previously had no corresponding feature. . . until now:

```c++
auto x = 10;
```

Keyword `auto` is the C++ equivalent of `var` in C#.
Lists, sets and maps

- list: ordered collection of elements
- set: collection of elements with fast searching
- map: collection of (key, value) pairs with fast key lookup

Low-level languages typically do not provide these. High-level and scripting languages do, some as part of a library.

- Perl, Python: built-in, lists and arrays merged.
- C, Fortran, Cobol: no
- C++: part of STL: list<T>, set<T>, map<K,V>
- Java: yes, in library
- Setl: built-in
- ML, Haskell: lists built-in, set, map part of library
- Scheme: lists built-in
- Pascal: built-in sets
  but only for discrete types with few elements, e.g., 32
Function types

- not needed unless the language allows functions to be passed as arguments or returned
- variable number of arguments:
  - C/C++: allowed, type system loophole
  - Java: allowed, but no loophole
- optional arguments: normally not part of the type.
- missing arguments in call: in dynamically typed languages, typically OK.
Type equivalence

Name vs structural

- *name equivalence*
  Two types are the same only if they have the same name. (Each type definition introduces a new type.)
  Carried to extreme in Ada:
  “If a type is useful, it deserves to have a name.”

- *structural equivalence*
  Two types are equivalent if they have the same structure.
Name equivalence in Ada:

type t1 is array (1 .. 10) of boolean;
type t2 is array (1 .. 10) of boolean;
v1: t1;
v2: t2;  -- v1, v2 have different types

x1, x2: array (1 .. 10) of boolean;
-- x1 and x2 have different types too!

Structural equivalence in ML:

type t1 = { a: int, b: real };
type t2 = { b: real, a: int };
(* t1 and t2 are equivalent types *)
type student = {
    name: string,
    address: string
}

type school = {
    name: string,
    address: string
}

type age = float;
type weight = float;

With structural equivalence, we can accidentally assign a school to a student, or an age to a weight.
Polymorphisms

- **Subclass polymorphism:**
  - The ability to treat a class as one of its superclasses.
  - The basis of OOP.

- **Subtype polymorphism:**
  - The ability to treat a value of a subtype as a value of a supertype.
  - Related to subclass polymorphism.

- **Parametric polymorphism:**
  - The ability to treat any type uniformly.
  - Found in ML, Haskell, and, in a very different form, in C++ templates and Java generics.

- **Ad hoc polymorphism:**
  - Multiple definitions of a function with the same name, each for a different set of argument types (overloading)
fun length xs = 
  if null xs 
  then 0 
  else 1 + length (tl xs) 

length returns an int, and can take a list of any element type, because we don’t care what the element type is. The type of this function is written ’a list -> int.
Subtyping

- A relation between types; similar to but not the same as subclassing.
- Can be used in two different ways:
  - Subtype polymorphism
  - Coercion

Subtype examples:
- A record type containing fields \( a, b \) and \( c \) can be considered a subtype of one containing only \( a \) and \( c \).
- A variant record type consisting of fields \( a \) or \( c \) can be considered a subtype of one containing \( a \) or \( b \) or \( c \).
- The subrange \( 1..100 \) can be considered a subtype of the subrange \( 1..500 \).
- **subtype polymorphism**: the ability to *treat* a value of a subtype as a value of a supertype.
- **coercion**: the ability to *convert* a value of a subtype to a value of a supertype.
Let’s say type \texttt{s} is a subtype of \texttt{r}.

\begin{verbatim}
var vs: s;
var vr: r;
\end{verbatim}

Subtype polymorphism:

\begin{verbatim}
function [t \leq r] f (x: t): t { return x; }
\end{verbatim}

\begin{verbatim}
f(vr); // returns a value of type r
f(vs); // returns a value of type s
\end{verbatim}

Coercion:

\begin{verbatim}
function f (x: r): r { return x; }
\end{verbatim}

\begin{verbatim}
f(vr); // returns a value of type r
f(vs); // returns a value of type r
\end{verbatim}
Overloading: Multiple definitions for a name, distinguished by their types.

Overload resolution: Process of determining which definition is meant in a given use.

- Usually restricted to functions
- Usually only for static type systems
- Related to coercion. Coercion can be simulated by overloading (but at a high cost). If type \texttt{a} has subtypes \texttt{b} and \texttt{c}, we can define three overloaded functions, one for each type. Simulation not practical for many subtypes or number of arguments.

Overload resolution based on:

- number of arguments (Erlang)
- argument types (C++, Java)
- return type (Ada)
Type checking and inference

- **Type checking:**
  - Variables are declared with their type.
  - Compiler determines if variables are used in accordance with their type declarations.

- **Type inference:** (ML, Haskell)
  - Variables are declared, but not their type.
  - Compiler determines type of a variable from its initialization/usage.

In both cases, type inconsistencies are reported at compile time.

```plaintext
fun f x = 
  if x = 5
     (* There are two type errors here *)
  then hd x
  else tl x
```