Programming Languages

ML

CSCI-GA.2110-001

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ML overview

- originally developed for use in writing theorem provers
- functional: functions are first-class values
- garbage collection
- strict evaluation (applicative order)
- strong and static typing; powerful type system
  - parametric polymorphism
  - structural equivalence
  - all with type inference!
- advanced module system
- exceptions
- miscellaneous features:
  - datatypes (merge of enumerated literals and variant records)
  - pattern matching
  - `ref` type constructor (like "const pointers" (not "pointers to const"))

A sample SML/NJ interactive session

```
- val k = 5;                          user input
val k = 5 : int                       system response
- k * k * k;
val it = 125 : int                    ‘it’– last computation
- [1, 2, 3];
val it = [1,2,3] : int list
- ["hello", "world"];
val it = ["hello","world"] : string list
- 1 :: [ 2, 3 ];
val it = [1,2,3] : int list
- [ 1, "hello"];
error
```

Operations on lists

```
- null [1, 2];
val it = false : bool
- null [ ];
val it = true : bool
- hd [1, 2, 3];
val it = 1 : int
- tl [1, 2, 3];
val it = [ 2, 3 ] : int list
- [ ];
val it = [ ] : 'a list
```

this list is polymorphic

Simple functions

A function *declaration*:

```
- fun abs x = if x >= 0.0 then x else -x
val abs = fn : real -> real
```

A function *expression*:

```
- fn x => if x >= 0.0 then x else -x
val it = fn : real -> real
```

Functions, II

```
- fun length xs =
    if null xs
    then 0
    else 1 + length (tl xs);
```

val length = fn : 'a list -> int

`'a` denotes a type variable; `length` can be applied to lists of *any* element type

The same function, written in pattern-matching style:

```
-  fun length []       = 0
     | length (x::xs) = 1 + length xs
```

val length = fn : 'a list -> int

Type inference and polymorphism

Advantages of type inference and polymorphism:

- frees you from having to write types.
  A type can be more complex than the expression whose type it is, e.g., `flip`
- with type inference, you get polymorphism for free:
  - no need to specify that a function is polymorphic
  - no need to "instantiate" a polymorphic function when it is applied

Multiple arguments?

- All functions in ML take exactly one argument
- If a function needs multiple arguments, we can

1. pass a tuple:
   ```
   - (53, "hello");  (* a tuple *)
   val it = (53, "hello") : int * string
   ```
   We can also use tuples to return multiple results.
2. use currying (named after Haskell Curry, a logician)

The tuple solution

Another function; takes two lists and returns their concatenation

```
- fun append1 ([ ],    ys) = ys
    | append1 (x::xs, ys) = x :: append1 (xs, ys);
val append1 = fn: 'a list * 'a list -> 'a list

- append1 ([1,2,3], [8,9]);
val it = [1,2,3,8,9] : int list
```

Currying

The same function, written in curried style:

```
- fun append2 [ ]      ys = ys
    | append2 (x::xs) ys = x :: (append2 xs ys);
val append2 = fn: 'a list -> 'a list -> 'a list
```

Note: $\alpha \to \beta \to \delta$ means $\alpha \to (\beta \to \delta)$.

```
- append2 [1,2,3] [8,9];
val it = [1,2,3,8,9] : int list

- val app123 = append2 [1,2,3];
val app123 = fn : int list -> int list

- app123 [8,9];
val it = [1,2,3,8,9] : int list
```

More partial application

But what if we want to provide the other argument instead, i.e., append `[8,9]` to its argument?

- here is one way: (the Ada/C/C++/Java way)

```
fun appTo89 xs = append2 xs [8,9]
```

- here is another: (using a higher-order function)

```
val appTo89 = flip append2 [8,9]
```

`flip` is a function which takes a curried function `f` and returns a function that works like `f` but takes its arguments in the reverse order.
In other words, it "flips" `f`'s two arguments.
We define it on the next slide...

Type inference example

```
fun flip f y x = f x y
```

The type of `flip` is $(\alpha \to \beta \to \gamma) \to \beta \to \alpha \to \gamma$. Why?

- Consider (`f x`). `f` is a function; its parameter must have the same type as `x`.

  `f` : $A \to B$ `x` : A `(f x)` : B

- Now consider (`f x y`). Because function application is left-associative, `f x y` $\equiv$ `(f x) y`. Therefore, `(f x)` must be a function, and its parameter must have the same type as `y`:

  `(f x)` : $C \to D$ `y` : C `(f x y)` : D

- Note that B must be the same as $C \to D$. We say that B must *unify* with $C \to D$.
- The return type of `flip` is whatever the type of `f x y` is. After renaming the types, we have the type given at the top.

Type rules

The type system is defined in terms of inference rules. For example, here is the rule for variables:

$$\frac{(x : \tau) \in E}{E \vdash x : \tau}$$

and the one for function calls:

$$\frac{E \vdash e_1 : \tau' \to \tau \quad E \vdash e_2 : \tau'}{E \vdash e_1\ e_2 : \tau}$$

and here is the rule for `if` expressions:

$$\frac{E \vdash e : \texttt{bool} \quad E \vdash e_1 : \tau \quad E \vdash e_2 : \tau}{E \vdash \texttt{if}\ e\ \texttt{then}\ e_1\ \texttt{else}\ e_2 : \tau}$$

Passing functions

```
- fun exists pred [ ]      = false
    | exists pred (x::xs) = pred x orelse
                            exists pred xs;
val exists = fn : ('a -> bool) -> 'a list -> bool
```

- `pred` is a predicate : a function that returns a boolean
- `exists` checks whether `pred` returns true for any member of the list

```
- exists (fn i => i = 1) [2, 3, 4];
val it = false : bool
```

Applying functionals

```
- exists (fn i => i = 1) [2, 3, 4];
val it = false : bool
```

Now partially apply `exists`:

```
- val hasOne = exists (fn i => i = 1);
val hasOne = fn : int list -> bool
- hasOne [3,2,1];
val it = true : bool
```

Functionals 2

```
fun all pred [ ]      = true
  | all pred (x::xs) = pred x andalso all pred xs

fun filter pred [ ]      = [ ]
  | filter pred (x::xs) = if pred x
                            then x :: filter pred xs
                            else filter pred xs
```

$$\texttt{all} : (\alpha \to \texttt{bool}) \to \alpha\,\texttt{list} \to \texttt{bool}$$

$$\texttt{filter} : (\alpha \to \texttt{bool}) \to \alpha\,\texttt{list} \to \alpha\,\texttt{list}$$

Block structure and nesting

`let` provides local scope:

```
(* standard Newton-Raphson *)
fun findroot (a, x, acc) =
    let val nextx = (a / x + x) / 2.0
        (* nextx is the next approximation *)
    in
        if abs (x - nextx) < acc * x
        then nextx
        else findroot (a, nextx, acc)
    end
```

A classic in functional form: mergesort

```
fun mrgSort op< []       = []
  | mrgSort op< [x]      = [x]
  | mrgSort op< (a::bs) =
    let fun partition (left, right, []) =
            (left, right)  (* done partitioning *)
          | partition (left, right, x::xs) =
            (* put x to left or right *)
            if x < a
            then partition (x::left, right, xs)
            else partition (left, x::right, xs)
        val (left, right) = partition ([], [a], bs)
    in
        mrgSort op< left @ mrgSort op< right
    end
```

$$\texttt{mrgSort} : (\alpha * \alpha \to \texttt{bool}) \to \alpha\,\texttt{list} \to \alpha\,\texttt{list}$$

Another variant of mergesort

```
fun mrgSort op< []       = []
  | mrgSort op< [x]      = [x]
  | mrgSort op< (a::bs) =
    let fun deposit (x, (left, right)) =
            if x < a
            then (x::left, right)
            else (left, x::right)
        val (left, right) = foldr deposit ([], [a]) bs
    in
        mrgSort op< left @ mrgSort op< right
    end
```

$$\mathtt{mrgSort} : (\alpha * \alpha \to \mathtt{bool}) \to \alpha\,\mathtt{list} \to \alpha\,\mathtt{list}$$

The type system

- primitive types: `bool`, `int`, `char`, `real`, `string`, `unit`
- constructors: `list`, array, product (tuple), function, record
- "datatypes": a way to make new types
- structural equivalence (except for datatypes)
  - as opposed to name equivalence in e.g., Ada
- an expression has a corresponding type expression
- the interpreter builds the type expression for each input
- type checking requires that type of functions' parameters match the type of their arguments, and that the type of the context matches the the type of the function's result

ML records

Records in ML obey structural equivalence (unlike records in many other languages).

A type declaration: *only needed if you want to refer to this type by name*

```
type vec = { x : real , y : real }
```

A variable declaration:

```
val v = { x = 2.3 , y = 4.1 }
```

Field selection:

```
#x v
```

Pattern matching in a function:

```
fun dist {x,y} =
    sqrt (pow (x, 2.0) + pow (y, 2.0))
```

Tuples

Tuples are actually records.

```
("I", "Love", "Programming", "Languages")
```

is actually. . .

```
{1="I", 2="Love", 3="Programming", 4="Languages"}
```

Expression `#2` extracts the second element of the tuple. Or, `"Love"` above.

Datatypes

A `datatype` declaration:

- defines a new type *that is not equivalent to any other type* (name equivalence)
- introduces *data constructors*
  - *data constructors* can be used in patterns
  - they are also values themselves

Datatype example

```
datatype tree = Leaf of int
              | Node of tree * tree
```

`tree` is a *type constructor*.

`Leaf` and `Node` are *data constructors*:

- `Leaf : int` → `tree`
- `Node : tree * tree` → `tree`

We can define functions by pattern matching:

```
fun sum (Leaf t)         = t
  | sum (Node (t1, t2)) = sum t1 + sum t2
```

Parameterized datatypes

```
fun flatten (Leaf t)         = [t]
  | flatten (Node (t1, t2)) =
    flatten t1 @ flatten t2
```

$$\texttt{flatten} : \texttt{tree} \rightarrow \texttt{int list}$$

```
datatype 'a gentree =
    Leaf of 'a
  | Node of 'a gentree * 'a gentree

val names = Node (Leaf "this", Leaf "that")
```

$$\texttt{names} : \texttt{string gentree}$$

The rules of pattern matching

Pattern elements:

- integer literals: `4`, `19`
- character literals: `#'a'`
- string literals: `"hello"`
- data constructors: `Node (···)`
  - depending on type, may have arguments, which would also be patterns
- variables: `x`, `ys`
- wildcard: `_`

Convention is to capitalize data constructors and structure names. Also, start variables and type constructors with lower-case.

More rules of pattern matching

Special forms:

- `()`, `{}` – the unit value
- `[]` – empty list
- `[p1, p2, ···, pn]`
  means `(p1 :: (p2 :: ··· (pn :: [])···))`
- `(p1, p2, ···, pn)` – a tuple
- `{field1, field2, ··· fieldn}` – a record
- `{field1, field2, ··· fieldn, ...}`
  – a partially specified record using a *wildcard*.
- `v as p`
  – `v` is a name for the entire pattern `p`
  Example: `M as x::xs` binds `M` to the pattern `x::xs`.

Common idiom: option

`option` is a built-in datatype:

```
datatype 'a option = NONE | SOME of 'a
```

Defining a simple lookup function:

```
fun lookup eq key []                = NONE
  | lookup eq key ((k,v)::kvs) =
    if eq (key, k)
    then SOME v
    else lookup eq key kvs
```

Is the type of `lookup`:

$$(\alpha * \alpha \to \texttt{bool}) \to \alpha \to (\alpha * \beta)\,\texttt{list} \to \beta\,\texttt{option}?$$

No! It's slightly more general:

$$(\alpha_1 * \alpha_2 \to \texttt{bool}) \to \alpha_1 \to (\alpha_2 * \beta)\,\texttt{list} \to \beta\,\texttt{option}$$

Another lookup function

We don't need to pass two arguments when one will do:

```
fun lookup _        []              = NONE
  | lookup checkKey ((k,v)::kvs) =
    if checkKey k
    then SOME v
    else lookup checkKey kvs
```

The type of this lookup:

$$(\alpha \to \texttt{bool}) \to (\alpha * \beta)\,\texttt{list} \to \beta\,\texttt{option}$$

Useful library functions

- $\texttt{map} : (\alpha \to \beta) \to \alpha\,\texttt{list} \to \beta\,\texttt{list}$

```
map (fn i => i + 1) [7, 15, 3]
⟹ [8, 16, 4]
```

- $\texttt{foldl} : (\alpha * \beta \to \beta) \to \beta \to \alpha\,\texttt{list} \to \beta$

```
foldl (fn (a,b) => "(" ^ a ^ "+" ^ b ^ ")")
      "0"  ["1", "2", "3"]
⟹ "(3+(2+(1+0)))"
```

- $\texttt{foldr} : (\alpha * \beta \to \beta) \to \beta \to \alpha\,\texttt{list} \to \beta$

```
foldr (fn (a,b) => "(" ^ a ^ "+" ^ b ^ ")")
      "0"  ["1", "2", "3"]
⟹ "(1+(2+(3+0)))"
```

- $\texttt{filter} : (\alpha \to \texttt{bool}) \to \alpha\,\texttt{list} \to \alpha\,\texttt{list}$

Overloading

Ad hoc overloading interferes with type inference:

```
fun plus x y = x + y
```

Operator '+' is overloaded, but types cannot be resolved from context (defaults to int).

We can use explicit typing to select interpretation:

```
fun mix1 (x, y, z) = x * y + z : real
fun mix2 (x: real, y, z) = x * y + z
```

Parametric polymorphism vs. generics

- a function whose type expression has type variables applies to an infinite set of types
- equality of type expressions means structural not name equivalence
- all applications of a polymorphic function use the same body: no need to instantiate

```
let val ints = [1, 2, 3];
    val strs = ["this", "that"];
in
    len ints +  (* int    list -> int *)
    len strs    (* string list -> int *)
end;
```

ML signature

An ML *signature* specifies an interface for a module.

```
signature STACKS =
sig
    type stack
    exception Underflow
    val empty : stack
    val push : char * stack -> stack
    val pop  : stack -> char * stack
    val isEmpty : stack -> bool
end
```

ML structure

```
structure Stacks : STACKS =
struct
    type stack = char list
    exception Underflow
    val empty = [ ]
    val push = op::
    fun pop (c::cs) = (c, cs)
      | pop []      = raise Underflow
    fun isEmpty [] = true
      | isEmpty _  = false
end
```