Language Design and Overview of COOL

CS143
Lecture 2

Prof. Aiken
CS 143 Lecture 2

Grade Weights

• Project 50%
  - I, II 10% each
  - III, IV 15% each
• Midterm 15%
• Final 25%
• Written Assignments 10%
  - 2.5% each

Lecture Outline

• Today’s topic: language design
  - Why are there new languages?
  - Good-language criteria
• History of ideas:
  - Abstraction
  - Types
  - Reuse
• Cool
  - The Course Project

Programming Language Economics 101

• Languages are adopted to fill a void
  - Enable a previously difficult/impossible application
  - Orthogonal to language design quality (almost)
• Programmer training is the dominant cost
  - Languages with many users are replaced rarely
  - Popular languages become ossified
  - But easy to start in a new niche . . .

Why So Many Languages?

• Application domains have distinctive and conflicting needs
• Examples:

Topic: Language Design

• No universally accepted metrics for design
• Claim: “A good language is one people use”
Language Evaluation Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Readability</td>
<td>*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Writeability</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reliability</td>
<td>*</td>
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<td>Data types</td>
<td>*</td>
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<td>Abstraction</td>
<td>*</td>
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<td>Type checking</td>
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<td>Exception handling</td>
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History of Ideas: Abstraction

- Abstraction = detached from concrete details
- Abstraction necessary to build software systems
- Modes of abstraction
  - Via languages/compilers:
    - Higher-level code, few machine dependencies
  - Via subroutines
    - Abstract interface to behavior
  - Via modules
    - Export interfaces; hide implementation
  - Via abstract data types
    - Bundle data with its operations

History of Ideas: Types

- Originally, few types
  - FORTRAN: scalars, arrays
  - LISP: no static type distinctions
- Realization: Types help
  - Allow the programmer to express abstraction
  - Allow the compiler to check against many frequent errors
  - Sometimes to the point that programs are guaranteed “safe”
- More recently
  - Lots of interest in types
  - Experiments with various forms of parameterization
  - Best developed in functional programming

History of Ideas: Reuse

- Reuse = exploit common patterns in software systems
  - Goal: mass-produced software components
  - Reuse is difficult
- Two popular approaches
  - Type parameterization (List(int), List(double))
  - Classes and inheritance: C++ derived classes
  - Combined in C++, Java
- Inheritance allows
  - Specialization of existing abstraction
  - Extension, modification, hiding behavior

Trends

- Language design
  - Many new special-purpose languages
  - Popular languages to stay
- Compilers
  - More needed and more complex
  - Driven by increasing gap between
    - new languages
    - new architectures
  - Venerable and healthy area

Why Study Languages and Compilers?

5. Increase capacity of expression
4. Improve understanding of program behavior
3. Increase ability to learn new languages
2. Learn to build a large and reliable system
1. See many basic CS concepts at work
Cool Overview

- Classroom Object Oriented Language
- Designed to
  - Be implementable in a short time
  - Give a taste of implementation of modern
    - Abstraction
    - Static typing
    - Reuse (inheritance)
    - Memory management
    - And more...
- But many things are left out

A Simple Example

class Point {
    x : Int ← 0;
    y : Int ← 0;
};

- Cool programs are sets of class definitions
  - A special class Main with a special method main
  - No separate notion of subroutine
- class = a collection of attributes and methods
- Instances of a class are objects

Cool Objects

class Point {
    x : Int ← 0;
    y : Int; (* use default value *)
};

- The expression "new Point" creates a new object of class Point
- An object can be thought of as a record with a slot for each attribute

Methods

- A class can also define methods for manipulating the attributes

class Point {
    x : Int ← 0;
    y : Int ← 0;
    movePoint(newx : Int, newy : Int): Point {
        x ← newx;
        y ← newy;
        self;
    } -- close block expression
}; -- close method

- Methods can refer to the current object using self

Information Hiding in Cool

- Methods are global
- Attributes are local to a class
  - They can only be accessed by the class’s methods
- Example:
class Point {
    x (): Int { x };
    setx (newx : Int) : Int { x ← newx };
};

Methods

- Each object knows how to access the code of a method
- As if the object contains a slot pointing to the code

- In reality implementations save space by sharing these pointers among instances of the same class
Inheritance

- We can extend points to colored points using subclassing => class hierarchy

```java
class ColorPoint inherits Point {
    color : Int ← 0;
    movePoint(newx : Int, newy : Int): Point {
        color ← 0;
        x ← newx; y ← newy;
        self;
    }
};
```

Cool Types

- Every class is a type
- Base classes:
  - Int for integers
  - Bool for boolean values: true, false
  - String for strings
  - Object root of the class hierarchy
- All variables must be declared
  - compiler infers types for expressions

Cool Type Checking

- x : A;
- x ← new B;
- Is well typed if A is an ancestor of B in the class hierarchy
  - Anywhere an A is expected a B can be used
- Type safety:
  - A well-typed program cannot result in runtime type errors

Method Invocation and Inheritance

- Methods are invoked by dispatch
- Understanding dispatch in the presence of inheritance is a subtle aspect of OO languages
- Example: p : Point;
  - p ← new ColorPoint;
  - p.movePoint(1,2);

Method Invocation

- Example: invoke one-argument method m

```plaintext
1. Eval. e
2. Find class of e
3. Find code of m
4. Eval. argum.
5. Bind self and x
6. Run method
```

Other Expressions

- Expression language
  - every expression has a type and a value
  - Loops: while E loop E pool
  - Conditionals: if E then E else E fi
  - Case statement: case E of x : Type ⇒ E; ... esac
  - Arithmetic, logical operations
  - Assignment: x ← E
  - Primitive I/O: out_string(s), in_string(), ...
- Missing features:
  - arrays, floating point operations, exceptions, ...

**Cool Memory Management**

- Memory is allocated every time `new` is invoked.
- Memory is deallocated automatically when an object is no longer reachable.
- Done by the garbage collector (GC)
  - There is a Cool GC.

**Course Project**

- A complete compiler
  - Cool $\Rightarrow$ MIPS assembly language
  - No optimizations
- Split in 4 programming assignments (PAs)
- There is adequate time to complete assignments
  - But start early and please follow directions
- Individual or team
  - max. 2 students