CMSC 330: Organization of Programming Languages

Functional Programming with OCaml

Reminders

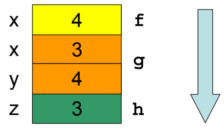
- Homework 2 will be posted soon

Review

- Recursion is how all looping is done
- OCaml can easily pass and return functions

The Call Stack in C/Java/etc.

```
void f(void) {
  int x;
  x = g(3);
}
int g(int x) {
  int y;
  y = h(x);
  return y;
}
int h (int z) {
  return z + 1;
}
int main(){
  f();
  return 0;
}
```



Nested Functions

- In OCaml, you can define functions anywhere
  - Even inside of other functions

```
let sum l =
  fold ((fun (a, x) -> a + x), 0, l)
```

```
let pick_one n =
  if n > 0 then (fun x -> x + 1)
  else (fun x -> x - 1)
(pick_one -5) 6   (* returns 5 *)
```

Nested Functions (cont'd)

- You can also use let to define functions inside of other functions

```
let sum l =
  let add (a, x) = a + x in
  fold (add, 0, l)
```

```
let pick_one n =
  let add_one x = x + 1 in
  let sub_one x = x - 1 in
  if n > 0 then add_one else sub_one
```

How About This?

takes a number n and list l and
adds n to every element in l

```
let addN (n, l) =
  let add x = n + x in
  map (add, l)
```

Accessing variable
from outer scope

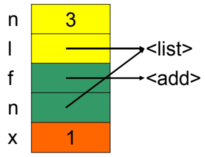
- (Equivalent to...)

```
let addN (n, l) =
  map ((fun x -> n + x), l)
```

Consider the Call Stack Again

```
let map (f, n) = match n with
   [] -> []
 | (h::t) -> (f h)::(map (f, t))
let addN (n, l) =
  let add x = n + x in
  map (add, l)

addN (3, [1; 2; 3])
```



- Uh oh...how does add know the value of n?
  - The **wrong** answer for OCaml: it reads it off the stack
    - The language could do this, but can be confusing (see above)
  - OCaml uses *static scoping* like C, C++, Java, and Ruby

Static Scoping

- In *static* or *lexical scoping*, (nonlocal) names refer to their nearest binding in the program text
  - Going from inner to outer scope
  - C example:

Refers to the `x` at file scope – that's the nearest `x` going from inner scope to outer scope in the source code

```
int x;
void f() { x = 3; }
void g() { char *x = "hello"; f(); }
```

  - In our example, add accesses addN's n

Returned Functions

- As we saw, in OCaml a function can return another function as a result
  - So consider the following example

```
let addN n = (fun x -> x + n)
(addN 3) 4  (* returns 7 *)
```

  - When the anonymous function is called, n isn't even on the stack any more!
    - We need some way to keep n around after addN returns

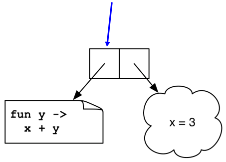
Environments and Closures

- An *environment* is a mapping from variable names to values
  - Just like a stack frame
- A *closure* is a pair (f, e) consisting of function code f and an environment e
- When you invoke a closure, f is evaluated using e to look up variable bindings

Example

```
let add x = (fun y -> x + y)
```

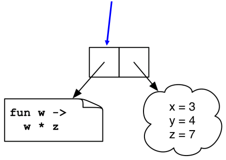
```
(add 3) 4    → <closure> 4    → 3 + 4    → 7
```



Another Example

```
let mult_sum (x, y) =
  let z = x + y in
    fun w -> w * z
```

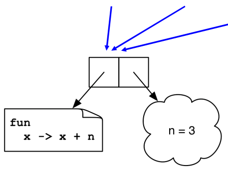
`(mult_sum (3, 4)) 5   → <closure> 5   → 5 * 7   → 35`



Yet Another Example

```
let twice (n, y) =
  let f x = x + n in
    f (f y)
```

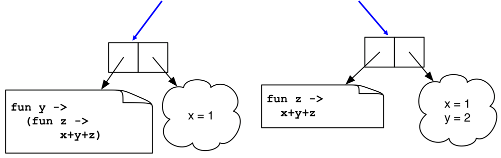
`twice (3, 4) → <closure> (<closure> 4) → <closure> 7 → 10`



Still Another Example

```
let add x = (fun y -> (fun z -> x + y + z))
```

`(((add 1) 2) 3)  → ((<closure> 2) 3)  → (<closure> 3) → 1+2+3`



Currying

- We just saw another way for a function to take multiple arguments
  - The function consumes one argument at a time, creating closures until all the arguments are available
- This is called *currying* the function
  - Named after the logician Haskell B. Curry
  - But Schönfinkel and Frege discovered it
    - So it should probably be called Schönfinkelizing or Fregging

Curried Functions in OCaml

- OCaml has a really simple syntax for currying

```
let add x y = x + y
```

  - This is identical to all of the following:

```
let add = (fun x -> (fun y -> x + y))
let add = (fun x y -> x + y)
let add x = (fun y -> x+y)
```

- Thus:
  - `add` has type `int -> (int -> int)`
  - `add 3` has type `int -> int`
    - The return of add x evaluated with x = 3
    - `add 3` is a function that adds 3 to its argument
  - `(add 3) 4 = 7`
- This works for any number of arguments

Curried Functions in OCaml (cont'd)

- Because currying is so common, OCaml uses the following conventions:
  - `->` associates to the right
    - Thus `int -> int -> int` is the same as
    - `int -> (int -> int)`
  - function application associates to the left
    - Thus `add 3 4` is the same as
    - `(add 3) 4`

Another Example of Currying

- A curried add function with three arguments:

```
let add_th x y z = x + y + z
```

  – The same as

```
let add_th x = (fun y -> (fun z -> x+y+z))
```

- Then...
  - `add_th` has type `int -> (int -> (int -> int))`
  - `add_th 4` has type `int -> (int -> int)`
  - `add_th 4 5` has type `int -> int`
  - `add_th 4 5 6` is `15`

Currying and the map Function

```
let rec map f l = match l with
   [] -> []
 | (h::t) -> (f h)::(map f t)
```

- Examples

```
let negate x = -x
map negate [1; 2; 3]   (* returns [-1; -2; -3 ] *)
let negate_list = map negate
negate_list [-1; -2; -3]
let sum_pairs_list = map (fun (a, b) -> a + b)
sum_pairs_list [(1, 2); (3, 4)]   (* [3; 7] *)
```

- What's the type of this form of `map`?

```
map : ('a -> 'b) -> 'a list -> 'b list
```

Currying and the fold Function

```
let rec fold f a l = match l with
   [] -> a
 | (h::t) -> fold f (f a h) t
```

```
let add x y = x + y
fold add 0 [1; 2; 3]
let sum = fold add 0
sum [1; 2; 3]
let next n _ = n + 1
let length = fold next 0   (* warning:  not polymorphic *)
length [4; 5; 6; 7]
```

- What's the type of this form of `fold`?

```
fold : ('a -> 'b -> 'a) -> 'a -> 'b list -> 'a
```

Another Convention

- Since functions are curried, function can often be used instead of match
  - function declares an anonymous function of one argument
  - Instead of

```
let rec sum l = match l with
   [] -> 0
 | (h::t) -> h + (sum t)
```

  - It could be written

```
let rec sum = function
   [] -> 0
 | (h::t) -> h + (sum t)
```

Another Convention (cont'd)

Instead of

```
let rec map f l = match l with
   [] -> []
 | (h::t) -> (f h)::(map f t)
```

It could be written

```
let rec map f = function
   [] -> []
 | (h::t) -> (f h)::(map f t)
```

Currying is Standard in OCaml

- Pretty much all functions are curried
  - Like the standard library map, fold, etc.
- OCaml plays a lot of tricks to avoid creating closures and to avoid allocating on the heap
  - It's unnecessary much of the time, since functions are usually called with all arguments

Higher-Order Functions in C

- C has function pointers but no closures
  - (gcc has closures)

```
typedef int (*int_func)(int);

void app(int_func f, int *a, int n) {
  int i;
  for (i = 0; i < n; i++)
    a[i] = f(a[i]);
}

int add_one(int x) { return x + 1; }

int main() {
  int a[] = {1, 2, 3, 4};
  app(add_one, a, 4);
}
```

Higher-Order Functions in Ruby

- Use yield within a method to call a code block argument

```
def my_collect(a)
  b = Array.new(a.length)
  i = 0
  while i < a.length
    b[i] = yield(a[i])
    i = i + 1
  end
  return b
end

b = my_collect([1, 2, 3, 4, 5]) { |x| -x }
```

Higher-Order Functions in Java/C++

- An object in Java or C++ is kind of like a closure
  - it's some data (like an environment)
  - along with some methods (i.e., function code)

- So objects can be used to simulate closures

- When we get to Java in the course, we'll study how to implement some functional patterns in OO languages