Polymorphism

Definition
- Feature that allows values of different data types to be handled using a uniform interface

Applicable to
- Functions
  - Same function applied to different data types
  - Example
    ```
    let id = function x -> x
    ```
- Data types
  - Same data type can contain different data types
  - Example
    ```
    type 'a option = None | Some of 'a
    ```

Two Kinds of Polymorphism
- Described by Strachey in 1967
- Ad hoc and Subtype polymorphism
  - Range of types is finite
  - Combinations must be specified in advance
  - Behavior may differ based on type of arguments
- Parametric polymorphism
  - Code written without mention of specific type
  - May be transparently used with arbitrary # of types
  - Behavior is same for different types of arguments

Polymorphism Overview
- Subtype (for OO languages)
  - Sometimes considered ad-hoc
- Ad-hoc
  - Overloading
    - Operator overloading
    - Method name overloading
- Parametric
  - ML types
  - A.k.a. generic programming (for OO languages)
    - Bounded parametric polymorphism combines subtype and parametric polymorphism
### Subtype Polymorphism

- Any context expecting an object of type A can be given an object of type B where B is a subtype of A
  - Example: Function parameter has type A
  - So it may be called with arguments of type B
- Subtyping enabled by inheritance

```java
class A { … }
class B extends A { … } // subclass
static void f(A arg) { … }
A a = new A();
B b = new B();
f(a); f(b); // f accepts arg of type A or B
```

### Subtype Polymorphism

- More generally, B is a subtype of A if it can “do” everything A can
  - Has the “same” fields, methods
- Java interfaces also support subtyping

```java
interface A { … }
class B implements A { … }
class C implements A { … }
static void f(A arg) { … }
B b = new B();
C c = new C();
f(b); f(c); // f accepts arg of type B or C
```

### When can we extend or implement?

- When can A extend B?
  - Complicated!
  - Roughly: When it overrides methods such that the overriding types are subtypes of original
- When can A implement B?
  - When it has methods whose types are the same as those required by the interface

### Overloading

- Multiple copies of function
  - Same function name
  - But different number / type of parameters
- Arguments determine function actually invoked
  - Function is uniquely identified not by function name, but by name + order & number of argument type(s)
    - print(Integer i) → print_Integer(…)
    - print(Float f) → print_Float(…)

```java
static void print(Integer arg) { … }
static void print(Float arg) { … }
print(1); // invokes 1st print
print(3.14); // invokes 2nd print
```
Overloading and Overriding

- Interaction is confusing
  - Common mistake is inadvertently overload when you mean to override

```java
public class Point {
    private int x = 0, y = 0;
    public boolean equals(Point p) { //overloads
        return (p.x == x) && (p.y == y);
    }
    public static void main(String args[]) {
        Point p1 = new Point();
        Point p2 = new Point();
        Object o = p1;
        System.out.println(o.equals(p2)); //prints false
        System.out.println(p1.equals(p2)); //prints true
    }
}
```

Operator Overloading

- Treat operators as functions
  - With special syntax for invocations
  - Behavior different depending on operand type

- Example
  - `+` in Java

```
1 + 2       // integer addition
1.0 + 3.14  // float addition
"Hello" + "world"  // string concatenation
```

Operator Overloading (cont.)

- User-specified operator overloading
  - Supported in languages such as Ruby, C++
  - Makes user data types appear more like native types

- Examples
  - Defining function for `^` operator

```ruby
class MyClass
    def ^ (arg)
        ...
        end
    end
end
```  
```cpp
class MyClass {
    MyS operator^ (MyS arg) {
        ...
    }
}
```

Parametric Polymorphism

- Found in statically typed functional languages
  - OCaml, ML, Haskell
  - Example

```
let hd = function (h:_)-> h  // a list -> 'a
```

- Also used in object oriented programming
  - Known as generic programming
  - Example: Java, C++
An Integer Stack Implementation

```java
class Stack {
    class Entry {
        Integer elt; Entry next;
        Entry(Integer i, Entry n) { elt = i; next = n; }
    }  
    Entry theStack;
    void push(Integer i) {
        theStack = new Entry(i, theStack);
    }
    Integer pop() throws EmptyStackException {
        if (theStack == null)
            throw new EmptyStackException();
        else {
            Integer i = theStack.elt;
            theStack = theStack.next;
            return i;
        }
    }
}
```

Integer Stack Client

```java
Stack is = new Stack();
Integer i;
is.push(new Integer(3));
is.push(new Integer(4));
i = is.pop();
```

If we also want a stack of Floats, do we need to write a Float Stack class?

An Object Stack Implementation

```java
class Stack {
    class Entry {
        Object elt; Entry next;
        Entry(Object i, Entry n) { elt = i; next = n; }
    }  
    Entry theStack;
    void push(Object i) {
        theStack = new Entry(i, theStack);
    }
    Object pop() throws EmptyStackException {
        if (theStack == null)
            throw new EmptyStackException();
        else {
            Object i = theStack.elt;
            theStack = theStack.next;
            return i;
        }
    }
}
```

New Stack Client

```java
Stack is = new Stack();
Integer i;
is.push(new Integer(3));
is.push(new Integer(4));
i = (Integer) is.pop();
```

Object stacks are polymorphic & reusable
  • push() works the same
  • But now pop() returns an Object
    ➢ Have to downcast back to Integer
    • Not checked until run-time
General Problem

When we move from an X container to an Object container
- Methods that take X’ s as input parameters are OK
  - If you’re allowed to pass Object in, you can pass any X in
- Methods that return X’ s as results require downcasts
  - You only get Objects out, which you need to cast down to X

General characteristic of subtype polymorphism

Parametric Polymorphism (for Classes)

- Java 1.5 introduced generics
- We can parameterize the Stack class by its element type

Syntax
- Class declaration: class A<T> { ... }  
  - A is the class name, as before
  - T is a type variable, can be used in body of class (...)  
- Client usage declaration: A<Integer> x;
  - We instantiate A with the Integer type

Parametric Polymorphism for Stack

```java
class Stack<ElementType> {  
  class Entry {  
    ElementType elt; Entry next;  
    Entry(ElementType i, Entry n) { elt = i; next = n; }
  }  
  Entry theStack;  
  void push(ElementType i) {  
    theStack = new Entry(i, theStack);
  }  
  ElementType pop() throws EmptyStackException {  
    if (theStack == null)  
      throw new EmptyStackException();  
    else {  
      ElementType i = theStack.elt;  
      theStack = theStack.next;  
      return i;
    }  
  }
}
```

Stack<Element> Client

```java
Stack<Integer> is = new Stack<Integer>();
Integer i;
is.push(new Integer(3));
is.push(new Integer(4));
i = is.pop();
```

- No downcasts
- Type-checked at compile time
- No need to duplicate Stack code for every usage
  - line i = is.pop(); can stay the same even if the type of is isn’t an integer in every path through the program
### Parametric Polymorphism for Methods

- String is a subtype of Object
- 1. static Object id(Object x) { return x; }
- 2. static Object id(String x) { return x; }
- 3. static String id(Object x) { return x; }
- 4. static String id(String x) { return x; }

- Can’t pass an Object to 2 or 4
- 3 doesn’t type check
- Can pass a String to 1 but you get an Object back

### Parametric Polymorphism, Again

- But id() doesn’t care about the type of x
  - It works for any type
- So parameterize the static method
  ```java
  static <T> T id(T x) { return x; }
  ```
  Integer i = id(new Integer(3));

  - Notice no need to instantiate id; compiler figures out the correct type at usage
  - The formal parameter has type T, the actual parameter has type Integer

### Standard Library, and Java 1.5 (and later)

- Part of Java 1.5 (called “generics”)
  - Comes with replacement for java.util.*
    - class LinkedList<A> { ... }
    - class HashMap<A, B> { ... }
    - interface Collection<A> { ... }
  - Excellent tutorial listed on references page
- But they didn’t change the JVM to add generics
  - How was that done?

### Translation via Erasure

- Replace uses of type variables with Object
  - class A<T> { ...T x;... } becomes
  - class A { ...Object x;... }
- Add downcasts wherever necessary
  - Integer x = A<Integer>.get(); becomes
  - Integer x = (Integer) (A.get());
- So why did we bother with generics if they’re just going to be removed?
  - Because the compiler still did type checking for us
  - We know that those casts will not fail at run time
Limitations of Translation

- Some type information not available at compile-time
  - Recall type variables $T$ are rewritten to Object

- Disallowed, assuming $T$ is type variable
  - new $T()$ would translate to new Object() (error)
  - new $T[n]$ would translate to new Object[n] (warning)
  - Some casts/instanceofs that use $T$
    - Only ones the compiler can figure out are allowed

Using with Legacy Code

- Translation via type erasure
  - class $A <T>$ becomes class $A$

  Thus class $A$ is available as a “raw type”
  - class $A<T> \{ \ldots \}$
  - class $B \{ A x; \} // use $A$ as raw type

- Sometimes useful with legacy code, but...
  - Dangerous feature to use, plus unsafe
  - Relies on implementation of generics, not semantics

Subtyping and Arrays

- Java has one funny subtyping feature
  - If $S$ is a subtype of $T$, then $S[]$ is a subtype of $T[]$

- Let’s write methods that take arbitrary arrays
  
  ```java
  public static void reverseArray(Object [] A) {
    for(int i=0, j=A.length-1; i<j; i++, j--) {
      Object tmp = A[i];
      A[i] = A[j];
      A[j] = tmp;
    }
  }
  ```

Problem with Subtyping Arrays

```java
public class A { \ldots }  
public class B extends A { \ void newMethod(); }  
\ldots

  void foo(void) {
    B[] bs = new B[3];
    A[] as;  
    as = bs;    \// Since B[] subtype of A[]
    as[0] = new A();  \// (1)
    bs[0].newMethod();  \// (2) Fails since not type B
  }
```

- Program compiles without warning
  - Java must generate run-time check at (1) to prevent (2)
  - Type written to array must be subtype of array contents
Subtyping for Generics

- **Is Stack<Integer> a subtype of Stack<Object>?**
  - We could have the same problem as with arrays
  - Thus Java forbids this subtyping

- **Now consider the following method:**

```
int count(Collection<Object> c) {
    int j = 0;
    for (Iterator<Object> i = c.iterator(); i.hasNext(); ) {
        Object e = i.next(); j++;
    }
    return j;
}
```

- Not allowed to call count(x) where x has type Stack<Integer>

Solution I: Use Polymorphic Methods

```
<T> int count(Collection<T> c) {
    int j = 0;
    for (Iterator<T> i = c.iterator(); i.hasNext(); ) {
        T e = i.next(); j++;
    }
    return j;
}
```

- But requires a “dummy” type variable that isn’t really used for anything

Solution II: Wildcards

- **Use ? as the type variable**
  - Collection<?> is “Collection of unknown”

```
int count(Collection<?> c) {
    int j = 0;
    for (Iterator<?> i = c.iterator(); i.hasNext(); ) {
        Object e = i.next(); j++;
    }
    return j;
}
```

- Why is this safe?
  - Using ? is a contract that you’ll never rely on having a particular parameter type
  - All objects subtype of Object, so assignment to e ok

Legal Wildcard Usage

- **Reasonable question:**
  - Stack<Integer> is not a subtype of Stack<Object>
  - Why is Stack<Integer> a subtype of Collection<?>?

- **Answer:**
  - Wildcards permit “reading” but not “writing”
Example: Can Read But Cannot Write c

```java
int count(Collection<?> c) {
    int j = 0;
    for (Iterator<?> i = c.iterator(); i.hasNext(); ) {
        Object e = i.next();
        c.add(e); // fails: Object is not ?
        j++;
    }
    return j;
}
```

For Loops

- Java 1.5 has a more convenient syntax for this standard for loop

```java
int count(Collection<?> c) {
    int j = 0;
    for (Object e : c) {
        j++;
    }
    return j;
}
```

- This loop will get the standard iterate and set e to each element of the list, in order

More on Generic Classes

- Suppose we have classes Circle, Square, and Rectangle, all subtypes of Shape

```java
void drawAll(Collection<? extends Shape> c) {
    for (Shape s : c) {
        s.draw();
    }
}
```

- Can we pass this method a Collection<Square>? No, not a subtype of Collection<Shape>

- How about the following?

```java
void drawAll(Collection<?> c) {
    for (Shape s : c) // not allowed, assumes ? is Shape
        s.draw();
}
```

Bounded Wildcards

- We want drawAll to take a Collection of anything that is a subtype of shape

  - this includes Shape itself

```java
void drawAll(Collection<? extends Shape> c) {
    for (Shape s : c) {
        s.draw();
    }
}
```

- This is a bounded wildcard

  - We can pass Collection<Circle>

  - We can safely treat s as a Shape
Upper Bounded Wild Cards

- `? extends Shape` actually gives an upper bound on the type accepted
- Shape is the upper bound of the wildcard

Bounded Wildcards (cont.)

- Should the following be allowed?
  - No, because `c` might be a `Collection` of something that is not compatible with `Circle`
  - This code is forbidden at compile time

void foo(Collection<? extends Shape> c) {
    c.add(new Circle());
}

Lower Bounded Wildcards

- Dual of the upper bounded wildcards
- `? super Rectangle` denotes a type that is a supertype of Rectangle
  - Type Rectangle is included
- `? super Rectangle` gives a lower bound on the type accepted

Lower Bounded Wildcards (cont.)

- Now the following is allowed
  - Because `c` is a `Collection` of something that is always compatible with `Circle`

void foo(Collection<? super Circle> c) {
    c.add(new Circle());
    c.add(new Rectangle()); // fails
}
Bounded Type Variables

- You can also add bounds to regular type vars

```java
<T extends Shape> T getAndDrawShape(List<T> c) {
    c.get(1).draw();
    return c.get(2);
}
```

- This method can take a List of any subclass of Shape
  - This addresses some of the reason that we decided to introduce wild cards
  - Once again, this only works for methods