CMSC 330: Organization of Programming Languages

OCaml Expressions and Functions

Lecture Presentation Style

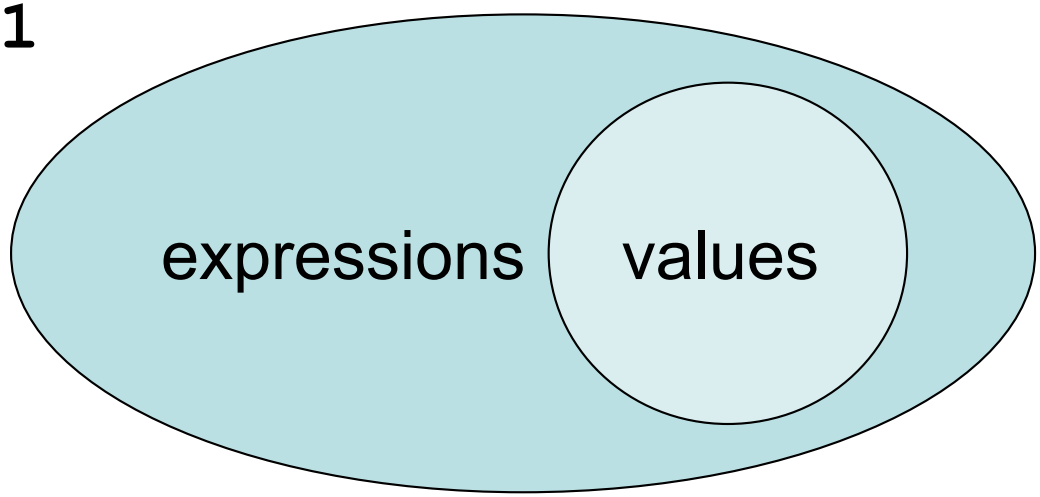
- Our focus: semantics and idioms for OCaml
  - *Semantics* is what the language does
  - *Idioms* are ways to use the language well
- We will also cover some useful libraries
- Syntax is what you type, not what you mean
  - In one lang: Different syntax for similar concepts
  - Across langs: Same syntax for different concepts
  - Syntax can be a source of fierce disagreement among language designers!

Expressions

- Expressions are our primary building block
  - Akin to *statements* in imperative languages
- Every kind of expression has
  - Syntax
    - We use metavariable *e* to designate an arbitrary expression
  - Semantics
    - Type checking rules (static semantics): produce a type or fail with an error message
    - Evaluation rules (dynamic semantics): produce a value
      - (or an exception or infinite loop)
      - Used *only* on expressions that type-check

Values

- A value is an expression that is final
  - Evaluating an expression means running it until it becomes a value
  - We use metavariable *v* to designate an arbitrary value
- **`34`** is a value, **`true`** is a value
- **`34+17`** is an *expression*, but *not* a value
  - It *evaluates* to **`51`**



Types

- Types classify expressions
  - Characterize the set of possible values an expression could evaluate to
  - We use metavariable ***t*** to designate an arbitrary type
    - Examples include **`int`**, **`bool`**, **`string`**, and more.
- Expression ***e*** has type ***t*** if ***e*** will (always) evaluate to a value of type ***t***
  - { …, **`-1`**, **`0`**, **`1`**, … } are values of type **`int`**
  - **`34+17`** is an expression of type **`int`**, since it evaluates to **`51`**, which has type **`int`**
  - Write ***e : t*** to say ***e*** has type ***t***

If Expressions

- Syntax
  - **`if`** ***e1*** **`then`** ***e2*** **`else`** ***e3***
- Evaluation
  - If ***e1*** evaluates to **`true`**, and if ***e2*** evaluates to ***v***, then **`if`** ***e1*** **`then`** ***e2*** **`else`** ***e3*** evaluates to ***v***
  - If ***e1*** evaluates to **`false`**, and if ***e3*** evaluates to ***v***, then **`if`** ***e1*** **`then`** ***e2*** **`else`** ***e3*** evaluates to ***v***
- Type checking
  - If ***e1*** has type **`bool`** and ***e2*** has type ***t*** and ***e3*** has type ***t*** then **`if`** ***e1*** **`then`** ***e2*** **`else`** ***e3*** has type ***t***

If Expressions

- Syntax
  - **`if e1 then e2 else e3`**
- Evaluation
  - If ***`e1`*** evaluates to **`true`**, and if ***`e2`*** evaluates to ***`v`***, then **`if e1 then e2 else e3`** evaluates to ***`v`***
  - If ***`e1`*** evaluates to **`false`**, and if ***`e3`*** evaluates to ***`v`***, then **`if e1 then e2 else e3`** evaluates to ***`v`***
- Type checking
  - If ***`e1`*** : **`bool`** and ***`e2`*** : ***`t`*** and ***`e3`*** : ***`t`*** then **`if e1 then e2 else e3`** : ***`t`***

If Expressions

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  - **`if e1 then e2 else e3`**
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  - If ***`e1`*** evaluates to **`true`**, and if ***`e2`*** evaluates to ***`v`***, then **`if e1 then e2 else e3`** evaluates to ***`v`***
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- Type checking
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If Expressions: Examples

```
# if 7 > 42 then "hello" else “goodbye";;
- : string = "goodbye"
# if true then 3 else 4;;
- : int = 3
# if false then 3 else 3.0;;
This expression has type float but is
  here used with type int
```

Quiz 1

To what value does this expression evaluate?

```
if 22=0 then 1 else 2
```

A. 0

B. 1

C. 2

D. none of the above

Quiz 1

To what value does this expression evaluate?

```
if 22=0 then 1 else 2
```

A. 0

B. 1

C. 2

D. none of the above

Quiz 2

To what value does this expression evaluate?

```
if 22=0 then "bear" else 2
```

A. 0

B. 1

C. 2

D. none of the above

Quiz 2

To what value does this expression evaluate?

```
if 22=0 then "bear" else 2
```

A. 0

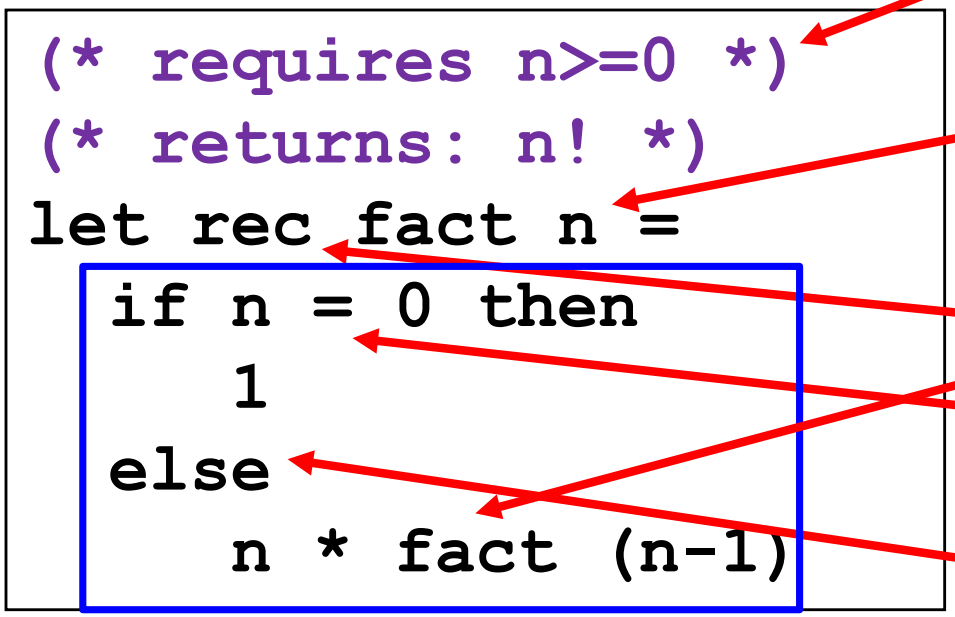
B. 1

C. 2

D. none of the above: doesn't type check so never gets a chance to be evaluated

Function Definitions

- OCaml functions are like mathematical functions
  - Compute a result from provided arguments



Use (* *) for comments
(may nest)

Parameter
(type inferred)

`rec` needed for recursion

Structural equality

Line breaks, spacing ignored
(like C, C++, Java, not like Ruby)

Function Types

- In OCaml, **`->`** is the function type constructor
  - Type ***`t1 -> t`*** is a function with argument or *domain* type ***`t1`*** and return or *range* type ***`t`***
  - Type ***`t1 -> t2 -> t`*** is a function that takes *two* inputs, of types ***`t1`*** and ***`t2`***, and returns a value of type ***`t`***. Etc.
- Examples
  - `let next x = x + 1 (* type int -> int *)`
  - `let fn x = (int_of_float x) * 3`
    `(* type float -> int *)`
  - `fact (* type int -> int *)`

Type Checking Functions

- Syntax **`let rec f x1 … xn = e`**
- Type checking
  - Conclude that ***`f`*** **`:`** ***`t1`*** **`->`** **`…`** **`->`** ***`tn`*** **`->`** ***`u`*** if ***`e`*** **`:`** ***`u`*** under the following assumptions:
    - ***`x1`*** **`:`** ***`t1`***, **`…`**, ***`xn`*** **`:`** ***`tn`*** (arguments with their types)
    - ***`f`*** **`:`** ***`t1`*** **`->`** **`…`** **`->`** ***`tn`*** **`->`** ***`u`*** (for recursion)
- Example
  - Given **`n : int`**, **`fact : int -> int`**
  - Does **`if n = 0 then 1 … : int`** ?
    - It does!
  - Conclude **`fact : int -> int`**

```
let rec fact n =
  if n = 0 then
     1
  else
     n * fact (n-1)
```

Calling Functions

- Syntax ***f e1*** … ***en***
  - Parentheses not required around argument(s)
  - No commas; use spaces instead
- Type checking
  - If ***f*** : ***t1*** -> … -> ***tn*** -> ***u*** and ***e1*** : ***t1***, … , ***en*** : ***tn*** then ***f e1*** … ***en*** : ***u***
- Example:
  - `fact 1 : int`
  - since `fact : int -> int` and `1 : int`
- Function call *aka* function application

Calling Functions

- Syntax ***f e1 … en***
- Evaluation
  - Evaluate arguments ***e1 … en*** to values ***v1 … vn***
    - Order is actually right to left, not left to right
    - But this doesn't matter if ***e1 … en*** don't have side effects
  - Find the definition of ***f***
    - **`let rec f x1 … xn = e`**
  - Substitute ***vi*** for ***xi*** in ***e***, yielding new expression ***e'***
  - Evaluate ***e'*** to value ***v***, which is the final result

Calling Functions

```
let rec fact n =
  if n = 0 then
     1
  else
     n * fact (n-1)
```

Example evaluation

- fact 2
  - if 2=0 then 1 else 2*fact(2-1)
  - 2 * fact 1
  - 2 * (if 1=0 then 1 else 1*fact(1-1))
  - 2 * 1 * fact 0
  - 2 * 1 * (if 0=0 then 1 else 0*fact(0-1))
  - 2 * 1 * 1
  - 2

Type Annotations

- The syntax `(e : t)` asserts that "`e` has type `t`"
  - This can be added anywhere you like

```
let (x : int) = 3
let z = (x : int) + 5
```

- Define functions' parameter and return types

```
let fn (x:int):float =
        (float_of_int x) *. 3.14
```

  - Note special position for return type
  - Thus `let g x:int =` ... means `g` returns `int`
    - *Not* that x has type int
- Checked by compiler: Very useful for debugging

Quiz 3: What is the value of `foo 4 2`

```
let rec foo n m =
  if n >= 9 || n<0 then
    m
  else
    n + m + 1
```

- Type Error
- 2
- 8
- 7

Quiz 3: What is the value of `foo 4 2`

```
let rec foo n m =
  if n >= 9 || n<0 then
    m
  else
    n + m + 1
```

- Type Error
- 2
- 8
- **7**

Quiz 4: What is the value of `bar 4`

```
let rec bar(n:int):int =
  if n = 0 || n = 1 then 1
  else
    bar (n-1) + bar (n-2)
```

- Syntax Error
- 4
- 5
- 8

Quiz 4: What is the value of `bar 4`

```
let rec bar(n:int):int =
  if n = 0 || n = 1 then 1
  else
    bar (n-1) + bar (n-2)
```

- Syntax Error
- 4
- **5**
- 8