CMSC 330: Organization of Programming Languages

Closures
(Implementing Higher Order Functions)
Returning Functions as Results

- In OCaml you can **pass functions as arguments**
  - to `map`, `fold`, etc.
- and you can **return functions as results**

```ocaml
# let pick_fn n =
    let plus_three x = x + 3 in
    let plus_four x = x + 4 in
    if n > 0 then plus_three else plus_four

val pick_fn : int -> (int->int) = <fun>
```

- Here, `pick_fn` takes an `int` argument, and returns a function

```ocaml
# let g = pick_fn 2;;
val g : int -> int = <fun>
# g 4;;  (* evaluates to 7 *)
```
Consider a rewriting of the prior code (above)

```
let pick_fn n =
    if n > 0 then (fun x->x+3) else (fun x->x+4)
```

Here’s another version

```
let pick_fn n =
    (fun x -> if n > 0 then x+3 else x+4)
```

... the shorthand for which is just

```
let pick_fn n x =
    if n > 0 then x+3 else x+4
```

I.e., a multi-argument function!

Multi-argument Functions
Currying

We just saw a way for a function to take multiple arguments!

• I.e., no separate concept of multi-argument functions
  – can encode one as a function that takes a single argument and returns a function that takes the rest

This encoding is called currying the function

• Named after the logician Haskell B. Curry
• But Schönfinkel and Frege discovered it
  ➢ So maybe it should be called Schönfinkeling or Fregging
Curried Functions In OCaml

- OCaml syntax defaults to currying. E.g.,

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

  is identical to all of the following:

  ```ocaml
  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`
    - `add 3` is a function that adds 3 to its argument
  - `(add 3) 4 = 7`

- This works for any number of arguments
Syntax Conventions for Currying

Because currying is so common, OCaml uses the following conventions:

- `->` associates from the right
  - Thus `int -> int -> int` is the same as
  - `int -> (int -> int)`

- function application associates from the left
  - Thus `add 3 4` is the same as
  - `(add 3) 4`
Quiz 1: Which f definition is equivalent?

\[
\text{let } f \ a \ b = a \ / \ b;;
\]

A. \text{let } f \ b = \text{fun a } \to a \ / \ b;;
B. \text{let } f = \text{fun a | b } \to a \ / \ b;;
C. \text{let } f \ (a, \ b) = a \ / \ b;;
D. \text{let } f = \text{fun a } \to (\text{fun b } \to a \ / \ b);;
Quiz 1: Which f definition is equivalent?

```ocaml
let f a b = a / b;;
```

A. `let f b = fun a -> a / b;;`
B. `let f = fun a | b -> a / b;;`
C. `let f (a, b) = a / b;;`
D. `let f = fun a -> (fun b -> a / b);;`

Quiz 2: What is enabled by currying?

A. Passing functions as arguments
B. Passing only a portion of the expected arguments
C. Naming arguments
D. Recursive functions
Quiz 2: What is enabled by currying?

A. Passing functions as arguments
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D. Recursive functions
Multiple Arguments, Partial Application

- Another way you could encode support for multiple arguments is using tuples
  - `let f (a,b) = a / b (* int*int -> int *)`
  - `let f a b = a / b (* int-> int-> int *)`

- Is there a benefit to using currying instead?
  - Supports **partial application** – useful when you want to provide some arguments now, the rest later
    - `let add a b = a + b;;`
    - `let addthree = add 3;;`
    - `addthree 4;; (* evaluates to 7 *)`
Currying is Standard In OCaml

- Pretty much all functions are curried
  - Like the standard library `map`, `fold`, etc.
  - See `/usr/local/ocaml/lib/ocaml` on Grace
    - In particular, look at the file `list.ml` for standard list functions
    - Access these functions using `List.<fn name>`
    - E.g., `List.hd`, `List.length`, `List.map`

- OCaml works hard to make currying efficient
  - Because otherwise it would do a lot of useless allocation and destruction of closures
  - What are those, you ask? Let’s see …
How Do We Implement Currying?

• Implementing currying is tricky. Consider:

```ocaml
let addN n l =  
  let add x = n + x in  
  map add l
```

• (Equivalent to...)

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

• When the anonymous function is called by map, \( n \) may not be on the stack any more!
  
  We need some way to keep \( n \) around after \( \text{addN} \) returns
The Call Stack in C/Java/etc.

```c
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;
}
```

```
x  y  z
4  4  3
3  3  
f  g  h
```
Now Consider Returning Functions

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?
  - OCaml does *not* read 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
In static or lexical scoping, (nonlocal) names refer to their nearest binding in the program text

- Going from inner to outer scope
- In our example, add refers to addN’s n
- C example:

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

Refers to the $x$ at file scope – that’s the nearest $x$ going from inner scope to outer scope in the source code
Closures Implement Static Scoping

- 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 – Closure 1

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

(add 3) 4 → <cl> 4 → 3 + 4 → 7

Function → Closure

Environment

Fun y -> x + y  x = 3
Example – Closure 2

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

```
(mult_sum (3, 4)) 5
→ <cl> 5
→ 5 * 7
→ 35
```
Example – Closure 3

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

twice (3, 4) → <cl> (<cl> 4) → <cl> 7 → 10
Example – Closure 4

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

`add( ) took 3 arguments?` The compiler figures this out and avoids making closures

(((add 1) 2) 3) \rightarrow ((<cl> 2) 3) \rightarrow (<cl> 3) \rightarrow 1+2+3
Quiz 3: What is x?

```ocaml
let a = 1;;
let a = 0;;
let b = 10;;
let f () = a + b;;
let b = 5;;
let x = f ();;
```

A. 10
B. 1
C. 15
D. Error - variable name conflicts
**Quiz 3: What is x?**

```
let a = 1;;
let a = 0;;
let b = 10;;
let f () = a + b;;
let b = 5;;
let x = f ();;
```

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A.</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D.</td>
<td>Error - variable name conflicts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Quiz 4: What is z?

```
let f x = fun y -> x - y in
let g = f 2 in
let x = 3 in
let z = g 4 in
z;;
```

A. 7
B. -2
C. -1
D. Type Error – insufficient arguments
Quiz 4: What is \( z \)?

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{let } f \ x & = \text{fun } y \to x - y \text{ in} \\
\text{let } g & = f \ 2 \text{ in} \\
\text{let } x & = 3 \text{ in} \\
\text{let } z & = g \ 4 \text{ in} \\
z & ;;
\end{align*}
\]

A. 7

B. -2

C. -1

D. Type Error – insufficient arguments
Quiz 5: What does this evaluate to?

```
let f x = x+1 in
let g = f in
g (fun i -> i+1) 1
```

A. Type Error  
B. 1  
C. 2  
D. 3
Quiz 5: What does this evaluate to?

```
let f x = x+1 in
let g = f in
(g (fun i -> i+1)) 1
```

A. Type Error – Too many arguments passed to g (application is left associative)

B. 1

C. 2

D. 3
C supports function pointers

```c
typedef int (*int_func)(int);
void app(int_func f, int *a, int n) {
    for (int i = 0; i < n; i++)
        a[i] = f(a[i]);
}
int add_one(int x) { return x + 1; }
int main() {
    int a[] = {5, 6, 7};
    app(add_one, a, 3);
}
```
C does not support closures
- Since no nested functions allowed
- Unbound symbols always in global scope

```c
int y = 1;
void app(int(*f)(int), n) {
    return f(n);
}
int add_y(int x) {
    return x + y;
}
int main() {
    app(add_y, 2);
}
```
Higher-Order Functions in C (cont.)

- Cannot access non-local variables in C
- OCaml code

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

- Equivalent code in C is illegal

```c
int (* add(int x))(int) {  
  return add_y;
}
int add_y(int y) {  
  return x + y;  /* error: x undefined */
}
```
Higher-Order Functions in C (cont.)

- OCaml code
  
  ```ocaml
  let add x y = x + y
  ```

- Works if C supports nested functions
  - Not in ISO C, but in gcc; **but** not allowed to return them
    ```c
    int (* add(int x))(int) {
        int add_y(int y) {
            return x + y;
        }
        return add_y; }
    ```
  - Does not allocate closure, so x popped from stack and add_y will get garbage (potentially) when called
Java 8 Supports Lambda Expressions

- Ocaml’s
  \[
  \text{fun} \ (a, \ b) \to \ a + b
  \]

- Is like the following in Java 8
  \[
  (a, \ b) \to a + b
  \]

- Java 8 supports closures, and variations on this syntax
public class Calculator {
    interface IntegerMath { int operation(int a, int b); }
    public int operateBinary(int a, int b, IntegerMath op) {
        return op.operation(a, b);
    }
    public static void main(String... args) {
        Calculator myApp = new Calculator();
        IntegerMath addition = (a, b) -> a + b;
        IntegerMath subtraction = (a, b) -> a - b;
        System.out.println("40 + 2 = " +
                            myApp.operateBinary(40, 2, addition));
        System.out.println("20 - 10 = " +
                            myApp.operateBinary(20, 10, subtraction));
    }
}