Session 3: Types and classes II

COMP2221: Functional programming

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Recap

- Idea that variables, *and functions* have *types*
- Saw some basic Haskell types
  - `Bool`
  - `Int`, `Integer`, `Float`
  - `Char`
  - *tuples* `(a, b, c)` and *lists* `[a]`
- Discussed *currying* of functions.

```haskell
-- "uncurried"
add' :: (Int, Int) -> Int
add' (x, y) = x + y

-- "curried"
add'' :: Int -> Int -> Int
add'' x y = x y
```

Currying conventions (reminder)

- (Almost) all functions in Haskell are written in *curried* form

⇒ To avoid messy syntax, this leads to associativity rules for `->` and function application.

`->` associates to the *right*

```
Int -> Int -> Int -> Int
-- Means
Int -> (Int -> (Int -> Int))
```

Function *application* associates to the *left*

```
mult x y z
-- Means
((mult x) y) z
```

Type inference

- Any type declaration you write will be *checked* by the type inference engine. Error if incorrect

```
foo :: Int -> Bool
foo x = x + 3
error:
    - Couldn't match expected type `Bool' with actual type `Int'
    - In the expression: x + 3
      In an equation for `foo': foo x = x + 3
```

Type inference II

Recommendation

Reasoning about types is a core part of understanding (and writing) Haskell code.

$\Rightarrow$ always decorate function definitions with their type.

Syntax conventions

- Function application is *so important* that it is written as quietly as possible: with whitespace
- *All* functions can be called in *prefix* form:
  "`foo a b`", not "`a foo b`"
- ...but, special syntax for binary functions.

Binary functions: infix notation

Infix notation

All binary functions (which have type `a -> b -> c`) can be written as *infix* functions.

Symbol only names

Names consisting *only* of symbols (e.g. `+`, `*`)

```
1 + 2    -- infix notation
(+) 1 2 -- prefix notation
False && True    -- infix notation
(&&) False True -- prefix notation
```

"Normal" names

Names with alpha-numeric characters (e.g. `div`, `mod`)

```
mod 3 2    -- prefix notation
3 `mod` 2 -- infix notation using backticks
```

Summary

- Functions defined by "equations" that match patterns:

```
head' []     = []
head' (x:xs) = x
```

"Where-ever you see `head' []` replace it with `[]`"

referentially transparent.

- No *side effects* ⇒ substitution is always safe/correct.
- Patterns are tried textually in order down the page.
- Guards can be used to constrain when equations can match

```
signum n | n > 0     = 1
         | n == 0    = 0
         | otherwise = -1
```

any expression that evaluates to Bool.

Guard can be any expression that evaluates to a `Bool` value.

Compare

otherwise = True.

$$s(x) = \begin{cases} 1 & x > 0 \\ 0 & x = 0 \\ -1 & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$$

Building block summary

- Prerequisites: none
- Content
  - Defining functions as “equations”
  - Pattern matching in equations
  - Guards and conditional expressions
  - Special syntax for infix notation (binary functions)
- Expected learning outcomes
  - student can *write* functions using conditional expressions and guard expressions
  - student *understands* order in which patterns are tried in matching
- Self-study
  - None

Polymorphism

Polymorphism

- Recall, Haskell is *strictly typed*.
- What does this mean for (say) `length`?

Different types?

```
length [True, False, True] -- :: [Bool] -> Int ?
length [1, 2, 3]           -- :: [Int] -> Int ?
```

These functions must have *different* types, no?

Polymorphism

- Recall, Haskell is *strictly typed*.
- What does this mean for (say) `length`?

Different types?

```
length [True, False, True] -- :: [Bool] -> Int ?
length [1, 2, 3]           -- :: [Int] -> Int ?
```

These functions must have *different* types, no?

Polymorphic types

```
Prelude> :type length
length :: [a] -> Int
```

"`length` eats a list of values of any type `a` and returns an Int"

`a` is called a *type variable*.

This is called *parametric polymorphism*.

Contrast with OO languages: defintions

Definition (Parametric polymorphism)

Write a *single* implementation of a function that applies generically *and identically* to values of any type.

Definition (“ad-hoc” polymorphism)

Write *multiple* implementations of a function, one for each type you wish to support.

Definition (Subtype polymorphism)

Relate datatypes by some “substitutability”. Write a function for a supertype instance. Now all subtypes can use it.

“Duck typing” or “Liskov substitution principle”.

Contrast with OO languages: examples

Subtype polymorphism

```python
class Foo(object):
   def length(self, ...):
     pass
class Bar(Foo):
   pass
a = Foo().length()
# Every Bar is-a Foo, so we can
# call the length method.
b = Bar().length()
```

Ad-hoc polymorphism

```python
class Foo(object):
   pass
class Bar(object):
   pass
def length(obj):
   if isinstance(obj, Foo):
      ...
   elif isinstance(obj, Bar):
      ...
# length knows how to handle things
# of type Foo and type Bar
a = length(Foo())
b = length(Bar())
```

Parametric polymorphism

```haskell
-- length doesn't care what type the entries
-- in the list are
length :: [a] -> Int
length [] = 0
length (_:xs) = 1 + length xs
```

Contrast with OO languages

- Parametric polymorphism also called *generic programming*
- Introduced in ML in 1975.
- Has been adopted by a number of languages, including traditional OO ones.
- For example, Java or C# have “generics” for this purpose

```java
// Implementation of HashSet is generic
// Specialised on instantiation
Set<int> intset = new HashSet<int>();
Set<Object> objset = new HashSet<Object>();
```

- C++ templates also allow for similar style of programming

Constraining polymorphic functions

- Some polymorphic functions only apply to types that satisfy certain constraints
- For example `(+)` works on all types `a`, *as long as* that type is a number type.

Example

```
(+) :: Num a => a -> a -> a
```

"For any type `a` that is an *instance* of the *class* `Num` of numeric types, `(+)` has type `a -> a -> a`"

- This constraint is called a *class constraint*
- An expression or type with one or more such constraints is called *overloaded*.

⇒ `Num a => a -> a -> a` is an *overloaded type* and `(+)` is an *overloaded function*.

Haskell classes

WARNING!

The *words* class and instance are the same as in object-oriented programming languages, but their *meaning* is very different.

Definition (Class)

A collection of *types* that support certain, specified, overloaded operations called *methods*.

Definition (Instance)

A concrete type that belongs to a *class* and provides implementations of the required methods.

Analogous constructs in other languages

- Compare: type “a collection of related values”
- This is *not* like subclassing and inheritance in Java/C++
- If you write flat interfaces with ‘abc.abstractmethod‘ in Python.
- Rust traits give you something close
- Close to a combination of Java *interfaces* and *generics*
- C++ “concepts” (in C++20) are also very similar.

Defining classes I

- Let us say we want to encapsulate some new property of types `Foo`-ness
- We define the interface the type should support

```haskell
class Foo a where
  isfoo :: a -> Bool
```

- Now we say how types implement this

```haskell
instance Foo Int where
  isfoo _ = False

instance Foo Char where
  isfoo c = c `elem` ['a'..'c']
```

- Can add new interfaces to old types, and new types to old interfaces.
- Contrast Java, where if I implement a new interface it is very difficult to make existing classes implement it.

Defining classes II

- Classes (interfaces) can provide default implementation.
- Example, the `Eq` class representing equality requires both `(==)` and `(/=)`.
- Since `a == b` ⇔ `not (a /= b)`, we can provide *default* implementations and only require that an instance implements one.

```haskell
class Eq a where
  (==) :: a -> a -> Bool
  x == y = not (x /= y)
  (/=) :: a -> a -> Bool
  x /= y = not (x == y)

-- instance for MyType only needs to provide one of (==) or (/=).
instance Eq MyType where
  x == y = ...
```

Building block summary

- Prerequisites: none
- Content
    - Looked at Haskell *classes* in the context of overloaded functions
    - Looked at generic programming (*polymorphism*) in Haskell
    - Defined *overloading* in terms of constrained polymorphism
    - Looked at constrained polymorphism and class constraints.
- Expected learning outcomes
    - student *knows* definition of generic programming and overloading as applied in Haskell
    - student can *write* simple polymorphic code in Haskell
    - student *understands* some differences between Haskell-style overloading, and Java-style subclassing
- Self-study
    - (Optional, but interesting). Wadler & Blott, *How to make ad-hoc polymorphism less ad hoc*, POPL (1989). `https://people.csail.mit.edu/dnj/teaching/6898/papers/wadler88.pdf`
    - (Optional, probably the first 45 minutes only?). Simon Peyton-Jones on type classes `https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6COvD8oynmI`.