

Preconditions on Rename Refactorings

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I. INTRODUCTION

REFACTORING is a controlled technique for improving the design of an existing code base. Its essence is applying a series of small behavior-preserving transformations, each of which “too small to be worth doing”. However the cumulative effect of each of these transformations is quite significant. By doing them in small steps we reduce the risk of introducing errors. We also avoid having the system broken while carrying out the restructuring - which allows us to gradually refactor a system over an extended period of time. [1]

In simple words, refactoring is a behavior preserving code transformation technique, for example- rename, move, extract etc. Refactoring rely on two important factors - precondition checks and code changes. In this paper, we brief about the rename refactoring and explain the preconditions for each type of rename refactorings.

II. RENAME REFACTORINGS

Rename Refactoring changes the name of identifiers in a program without changing the program’s behavior. There are five types of Rename Refactoring in Java:

- 1) Rename Class Declarations
- 2) Rename Method Declarations
- 3) Rename Field Variables
- 4) Rename Local Variables
- 5) Rename Package Declarations

III. PRECONDITIONS OF RENAME CLASS REFACTORING

Rename Class Refactoring (RcR) changes the name of the class and all references to that class to the new name without changing its behavior. There are certain preconditions required for RcR.

- 1) The target class cannot be duplicate with any existing class within same package after rename.
- 2) The target class cannot be duplicate with any imported class from different package after rename.
- 3) The target class file name cannot be duplicate with any existing java file name within same package after rename.

A. The target class cannot be duplicate with any existing class within same package after rename.

When we rename a class with any existing class name, the Java compiler produces error message about duplicate class name. The classes will be conflicted if we run RcR on the target class using the name of an existing class in the same

package. So, we can not have duplicate class names in the same package.

For example, if we run RcR on the class name from A to B as in Fig. 1, then the compiler produces an error message: “duplicate class: p.B”.

<pre>package p; class A{ } class B{ } class C{ }</pre>	<pre>package p; class B{ } class B{ } class C{ }</pre>
(a) Before	(b) After

Fig. 1. Example of RcR from A to B

Furthermore, the same situation occurs in nested classes. The examples below show that for RcR we can not use the same name either as inner or as outer class for nested classes like Fig. 2.

```
package p;

public class A{

    class M{
    }

    class N{
    }
}
```

Fig. 2. Nested Class before RcR

Example 1: In order to apply RcR for inner class, we should pre-check that we do not use the same name as any of other inner class name. As shown in Fig. 3, when we run RcR on the inner class from M to N, the Java compiler produces an error “class A.N is already defined in class A”.

Example 2: In order to apply RcR for outer class, we should pre-check that we do not use the same name as any of the inner class name and vice-versa. As shown in Fig. 4, when we use same name for outer class and inner class, the Java compiler produces an error “class M is already defined in package p” for Fig. 4(a) and “class A is already defined in package p” for Fig. 4(b).

Therefore, checking whether a class with the same name already exists in a package should be the first precondition for RcR.

```

package p;

public class A{

    class N{
    }

    class N{
    }
}

```

Fig. 3. Example 1 for Nested Class after RcR from M to N

```

package p;

public class M{

    class M{
    }

    class N{
    }
}

```

(a) After RcR on Outer Class A to M

```

package p;

public class A{

    class A{
    }

    class N{
    }
}

```

(b) After RcR on Inner Class M to A

Fig. 4. Example 2 of Nested Class after RcR

B. The target class cannot be duplicate with any imported class from different package after rename.

If a class is imported from different package, we have to pre-check that the new name of the target class is not duplicate with the imported class after rename refactoring.

In Fig. 5(a), we see that class B is not duplicate with class A and we can apply RcR on class B to any other name except 'A' as mentioned in section III-A. However, in Fig. 5(b), when we apply RcR from B to C, Java compiler produces an error "*C is already defined in this compilation unit*". This is because the compiler cannot distinguish between the *imported class C* of package 'p' and the *existing class C* of package 'q'.

```

package q;
import p.C;

class A{
}

class B{
}

```

(a) Before

```

package q;
import p.C;

class A{
}

class C{
}

```

(b) After

Fig. 5. RcR from B to C

This precondition also holds good for renaming a child class. Suppose a Java file has a class and its children classes as shown in Fig. 6. We see that if parent class A imports a class C from package 'p' and if we apply RcR on the child class from B to C or D to C, Java compiler produces an error "*C is already defined in this compilation unit*". This precondition is applicable for all ancestor class and we have to trace back and check if any of the parent class is importing a class with same name before renaming the child class within the same java file.

```

//A.java

package q;
import p.C;

public class A{
}

class B extends A{
}

class D extends B{
}

```

(a) Before

```

//A.java

package q;
import p.C;

public class A{
}

class C extends A{
}

class D extends B{
}

```

(b) After

Fig. 6. RcR for child class B to C

If a parent class imports a class from different package and if the child class is defined in a separate java file, then in that case we can apply RcR on child class to the imported class name.

Therefore, it is essential to pre-check that the target class should not have duplicate name with any of imported class after RcR.

C. The target class file name cannot be duplicate with any existing java file name within same package after rename.

If classes are defined in separate java files, we have to pre-check that the new name of the target class declared in its class file name is not duplicate with any existing Java file name within the same package.

```

//A.java

public class A{
}

class B{
}

//C.java
//empty file

```

(a) Before

```

//C.java

public class C{
}

class B{
}

//C.java
//empty file

```

(b) After

Fig. 7. RcR from A to C if A is declared in file A.java

For example, from Fig. 7, when we apply RcR from A to C where C.java is an empty file, the Java compiler produces an error "*Compilation unit 'C.java' already exists*". This is because after RcR the Java file also gets renamed from *A.java* to *C.java* and therefore creates a conflict for duplicate file name as *C.java* already exists in the same package.

However, we can apply RcR from B to C as class B is not declared within its class file name.

IV. PRECONDITIONS OF RENAME METHOD REFACTORING

Rename Method Refactoring (RmR) changes the name of the method and all references to that method to the new name without changing its functionality in the program.

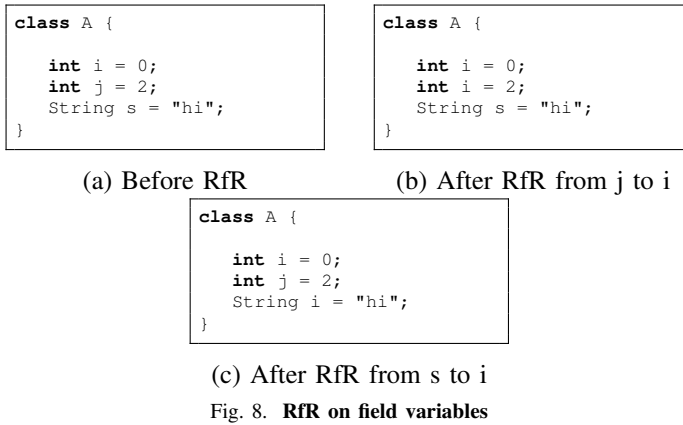
V. PRECONDITIONS OF RENAME FIELD REFACTORING

Rename Field Refactoring (RfR) changes the declaration and references to the field variables to the new name without changing its behavior. Fields are the variables of a class i.e. instance variables and static variables. There are certain preconditions required for RfR.

- 1) The target name of field variable cannot be duplicate with any existing field within same class after rename.
- 2) The target name of field variable cannot be duplicate with any local variable within same method after rename.
- 3) The duplicate field variable in a child class cannot reduce visibility.

A. The target name of field cannot be duplicate with any existing field within same class after rename.

In order to apply RfR we have to pre-check that the new name of the field is not duplicate with any existing field name of any data type within same class. As shown in Fig. 8(b), when we apply RfR from 'j' to 'i', Java compiler produces an error "variable i is already defined in class A". This is because of the conflict for duplicate names for field variables. As shown in Fig. 8(c), when we apply RfR from 's' to 'i', Java compiler produces an error "variable i is already defined in class A".



B. The target name of field cannot be duplicate with any local variable within same method after rename.

In order to apply RfR we have to pre-check that the new name of field is not duplicate with any local variable name, if field is being used in the same block as local variable.

As shown in Fig. 9(a), the output is '0'. However, after we apply RfR from 'x' to 'y' as shown in Fig. 9(b), the output is '5'. Although the compiler have not produced any error but the behavior of code has changed since the output after RfR has changed. This is because if a field variable and a local variable have the same name, then the local variable will be accessed. This process effectively shadows the field variable and therefore known as *Variable Shadowing*. Therefore, it is essential to pre-check that the new name of field is not duplicate with any existing local variable if both are used in same block.

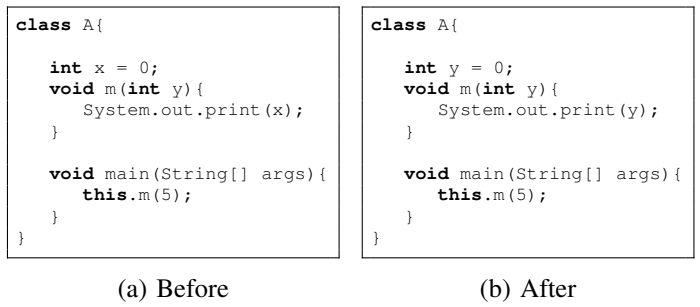


Fig. 9. RfR from x to y

The same concept is applied to class hierarchies. A field variable declared within a parent class will be shadowed by any variable with the same name in a child class. As shown in Fig. 10(a), the output is '0'. However, after we apply RfR on field variable of a child class from j to i as shown in Fig. 10(b), the output is '1'. This Variable Shadowing has changed the original behavior of the program after RfR.

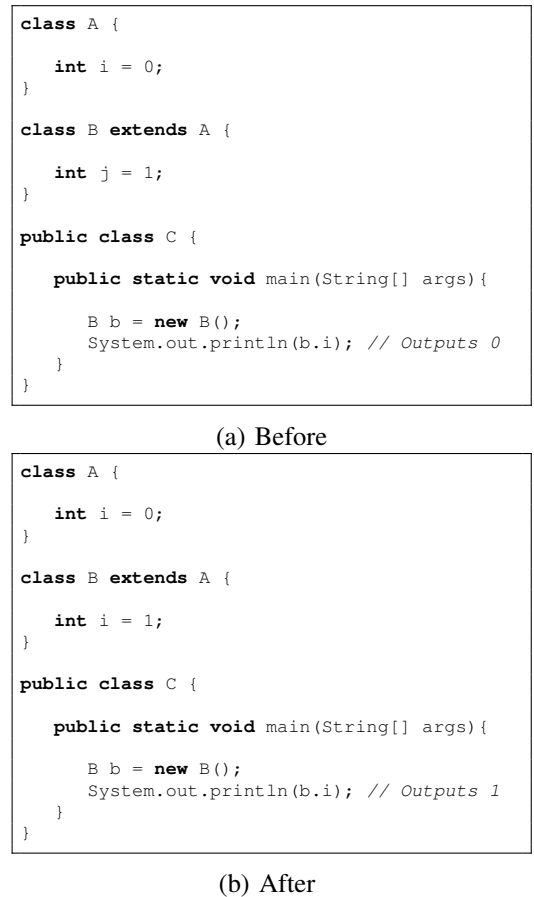


Fig. 10. RfR on child class field variable j to i

Therefore, it is essential to pre-check that the duplicate field variables in parent and child class does not result in variable shadowing.

C. The duplicate field variable in a child class cannot reduce visibility.

The child class variables are able to reduce the visibility of the parent class variables. The use of access modifiers helps with visible duplicate field variables, however there is a proper hierarchy for access modifiers to be followed for duplicate variables.

public > protected > package-public > private

```
class A {
    public int i = 0;
}

class B extends A {
    private int j = 1;
}

public class C {
    public static void main(String[] args){
        B b = new B();
        System.out.print(b.i); // Outputs 0
    }
}
```

(a) Before RcR on child class field j

```
class A {
    public int i = 0;
}

class B extends A {
    private int i = 1;
}

public class C {
    public static void main(String[] args){
        B b = new B();
        System.out.print(b.i); // Outputs 1
    }
}
```

(b) After RcR on child class field j to i

Fig. 11. Visibility reduction not allowed

As shown in Fig. 11(a), the two field variables 'i' and 'j' are completely distinct and have completely separate visibilities in different classes. However, on applying RfR on child class variable from 'j' to 'i' as shown in Fig. 11(b), its public visibility gets reduced to private thereby changes the desired output from '0' to '1'.

Therefore, it is essential to pre-check that the new name of the field variable does not result in visibility reduction.

VI. PRECONDITIONS OF RENAME LOCAL VARIABLE REFACTORING

A variable defined within a block or method or constructor is called local variable. The scope of the local variables exists only within the block in which the variable is declared and destroyed after exiting from the block or when the call returns from the function.

Rename Local Variable Refactoring (RfR) changes the name of the local variable and all references to that variable to the

new name without changing its behavior. There are certain preconditions required for RfR.

- 1) The renamed local variable cannot be duplicate with any of the existing local variable in a method or block or constructor.
- 2) The renamed local variable must not result in variable shadowing.

A. The renamed local variable cannot be duplicate with any of the existing local variable in a method or block or constructor.

From Fig. 12, we see two examples of duplicate local variable. In Example 1 when we apply RfR for local variable 'x' to 'num', the java compiler produces the error as "variable num is already defined in method m1(int)". Similarly we cannot run RfR on 'y' to 'num' or 'x' to 'y' as shown in example 2. Renaming local variables to existing local variable in a method creates a conflict of duplicity in local variable.

Therefore, it is essential to pre-check that the target name of local variable should not have duplicate name with any of the existing local variable in a method or block or constructor after RfR.

```
public class A {
    void m1(int num) {
        int x = 1; // rename to num
        int y = 2;
    }
}
```

(a) Example 1

```
public class B {
    void m1(int num) {
        int x = 1; // rename to y
        int y = 2;
    }
}
```

(b) Example 2

Fig. 12. Duplicate local variables

B. The renamed local variable must not result in variable shadowing.

Shadowing refers to the concept of using two variables with the same name within scopes that overlap. When we do that, the variable with the higher-level scope is hidden because the variable with lower-level scope overrides it. This results in the higher-level variable being "shadowed".

Suppose a local variable has the same name as one of the field variable(instance variable), the local variable shadows the field variable inside the method block. For Example, from Fig. 13, the class B has field variable 'name' and a method (display()). In the method there is local variable same as the field variable 'name'. When we access the variable in the method, the local variable value will be printed shadowing the field variable.

Similarly variable shadowing occurs when the same variables are defined in parent and child classes. For Example,

```

public class B {
    String name = "John";

    public void display() {
        String name = "Bob";
        System.out.println(name); // outputs Bob
    }

    public static void main(String args[]) {

        B b = new B();
        b.display();
    }
}

```

Fig. 13. Ex 1 : Variable Shadowing

from Fig. 14, the field variable in parent class B and child class C, local variable in method ‘m1’ of class B has the same variable name as ‘age’. When we try to access the variable ‘age’ in methods through Class B and C, the respective local variable will be printed shadowing the field variable of its parent class.

```

public class B {
    int age = 1;

    public void m1() {
        int age = 2;
        System.out.println("age:_" + age);
    }
}

class C extends B {
    int age = 3;
}

public class Main {
    public static void main(String args[]) {

        B b = new B();
        b.m1(); // outputs 2
        C c = new C();
        c.m1(); // outputs 2
    }
}

```

Fig. 14. Ex 2 : Variable Shadowing

```

package p;

```

```

class A{
}

class B{
}

```

(a) package p

```

package q;

```

```

class M{
}

class N{
}

```

(b) package q

Fig. 15. Example of RpR

Therefore, it is essential to pre-check that local variable must not result in variable shadowing after RIR.

VII. PRECONDITIONS OF RENAME PACKAGE REFACTORING

For Rename Package Refactoring (RpR), we can not use duplicate package name within the same source folder. However, we can run RpR with same package name from different Java folders.

For example, we assume that there are two packages in one source folder like Fig. 15, we can not run RpR on package p to q since package q is already exist in the same source folder.

REFERENCES

- [1] M. Fowler, *Refactoring: Improving the Design of Existing Code*. Addison-Wesley, 2019.