

# SHANGHAI JIAO TONG UNIVERSITY

# PROGRAMMING LANGUAGES (CS383) COURSE PROJECT REPORT

# An Interpreter for SimPL

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# Contents

| 1 | Overview                |                |   |    |
|---|-------------------------|----------------|---|----|
|   | 1.1                     | Introd         | duction                                 | 2  |
|   | 1.2                     | Achie          | vements                                 | 2  |
|   | 1.3                     | Repor          | rt Organization                         | 2  |
| 2 | Implementation Approach |                |   |    |
|   | 2.1                     |                | ract Syntax Tree (AST)                  | 3  |
|   | 2.2                     |                | Methods                                 | 4  |
| 3 | Typing                  |                |   |    |
|   | 3.1                     | Introd         | duction                                 | 4  |
|   | 3.2                     | Imple          | ementation                              | 4  |
|   |                         | 3.2.1          | Classes for Type Scheme                 | 4  |
|   |                         | 3.2.2          | Type-checking Entrance                  | 5  |
|   |                         | 3.2.3          | Solving Constraints                     | 7  |
|   |                         | 3.2.4          | Type-Checking Result                    | 9  |
|   |                         | 3.2.5          | Selected Implementations of typecheck() | 9  |
| 4 | Evaluation              |                |   |    |
|   | 4.1                     | Introduction   |   |    |
|   | 4.2                     | Implementation |   |    |
|   |                         | 4.2.1          | Classes for Values                      | 12 |
|   |                         | 4.2.2          | Evaluation Entrance                     | 13 |
|   |                         | 4.2.3          | Environment Env                         | 14 |
|   |                         | 4.2.4          | Memory Reference Ref                    | 15 |
|   |                         | 4.2.5          | Selected Implementations of eval()      | 16 |
| 5 | Bonus                   |                |   |    |
|   | 5.1 Garbage Collection  |                |   | 17 |
|   |                         | 5.1.1          | Implementation                          | 17 |
|   |                         | 5.1.2          | Testcase                                | 19 |
|   | 5.2                     | Polym          | norphic types                           | 19 |
|   |                         |                |   |    |
|   | 5.3                     | Lazy 1         | Evaluation                              | 20 |

#### 1 Overview

#### 1.1 Introduction

This is a report for the course project of *Programming Languages (CS383)*.

As specified, the target of this project is to implement an interpreter for SIMPL, a simplified variant of the programming language ML. A well-designed skeleton on Java is provided along with the detailed specifications of SIMPL.

Basic requirements, as illustrated in Fig. 1 mainly include the implementation of the typing and evaluation system. Additional requirements include the implementation of garbage collection, polymorphic types, lazy evaluation, etc.

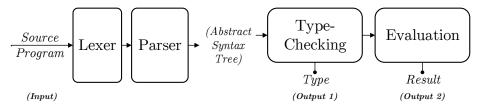


Figure 1: Flowchart illustrating the basic processes of a SIMPL interpreter

#### 1.2 Achievements

I have met the basic requirements for a SIMPL interpreter, which performs correctly on all test programs provided in the skeleton package.

I have also implemented a *Mark-and-Sweep* garbage collector, polymorphic types, and the evaluation strategy of *Call-by-Need* (lazy evaluation).

The implementation of the SIMPL interpreter is a challenging task, especially the part regarding the typing system. Thanks to the project, I have gained a deeper understanding on concepts of programming languages, more specifically, type inference,  $\lambda$  calculus, references, garbage collection, evaluation strategies and so on.

## 1.3 Report Organization

The rest of the report is organized as follows. The implementation approach is presented in Section 2.1. The implementation of the typing system and the evaluation system are elaborated respectively in Section 3 and Section 4. The additional parts (bonuses) are discussed in Section 5.

# 2 Implementation Approach

Lexical analysis and syntactical analysis (Lexer and Parser - as illustrated in Fig. 1) have already been implemented in the project skeleton utilizing JFlex and JavaCUP.

Method parser() serves as the entrance of lexical and syntactical analysis. Failure in these processes will report Syntax Error.

In this section, I will first present a brief introduction to the implicit implementation approach in the provided skeleton.

## 2.1 Abstract Syntax Tree (AST)

After the lexical and syntactical analysis, an *Abstract Syntax Tree* (AST) is generated for the lexically and syntactically correct source program with the root node Expr.

Expr is maintained as an abstract class, the class diagram of which is illustrated in Fig. 2. All the different expressions are extended from this class. Binary and unary operations are packaged respectively in BinaryExpr and UnaryExpr respectively.

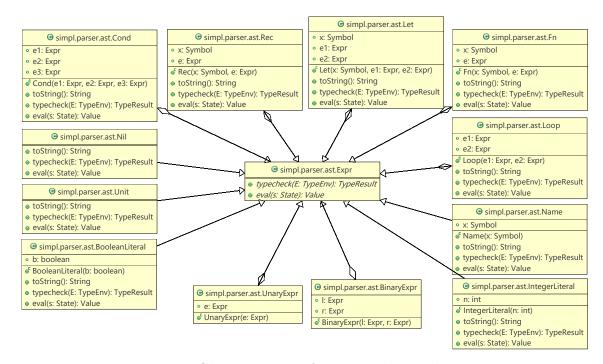


Figure 2: Java Class Diagram of Expr in the implementation

Binary operation expressions include ArithExpr, Cons, Pair, AndAlso, OrElse, Seq, App and RelExpr.

Unary operation expressions include Group, Not, Ref, Deref and Neg.

#### 2.2 Java Methods

In the classes corresponding to AST "nodes", method typecheck() and eval() serves receptively as the interfaces for type checking and evaluation, which are the main challenges in the basic implementation.

# 3 Typing

#### 3.1 Introduction

The type checking system is mainly relying on Type Inference. The main purpose is to type-check the nested expressions and generate the type of the untyped source program if possible.

From a general perspective, the main steps include adding the typing scheme, generate constraints, solving or simplifying constraints and applying the solution.

More specifically, first, walk over the program keep track of the type equations t1 = t2 that must hold in order to type check the expressions according to the normal typing rules and introduce new type variables for unknown types whenever necessary. Then, the set of constraints are solved utilizing the unification algorithm (involving substitution and composition). And the principal solutions are applied to the nested expressions.

# 3.2 Implementation

#### 3.2.1 Classes for Type Scheme

The Java class diagram of the type scheme is illustrated in Fig. 3. Extended from the abstract class Type, there are known types BoolType, ArrowType, PairType, ListType, RefType, UnitType, IntType, and type variables TypeVar.

The following methods are overridden from the abstract class:

- 1. isEqualityType() returns a boolean value.
- 2. replace() replaces a TypeVar to a known Type and returns the known type.
- 3. contains() returns a boolean value.
- 4. unify() returns a substitution given a known type.

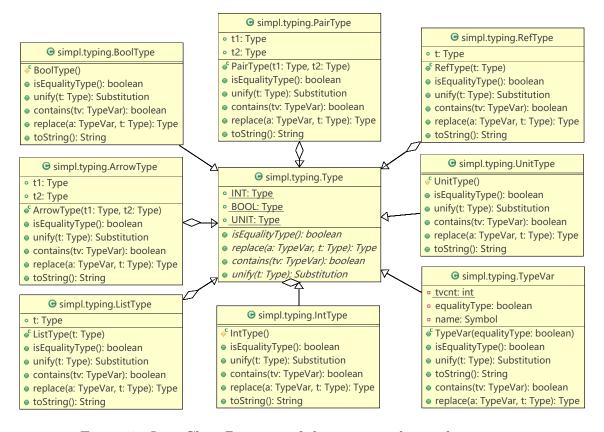


Figure 3: Java Class Diagram of the types in the implementation

#### 3.2.2 Type-checking Entrance

Type-checking begins with the Expr node with the default type environment, involving two classes TypeEnv and DefaultTypeEnv, the java class diagram of which is illustrated in Fig. 4.

The TypeEnv is an abstract class. The class DefaultTypeEnv extends TypeEnv containing the initialized type environment with predefined names fst(), snd(), hd(), tl(), iszero(), pred() and succ(), as specified in the Specification document.

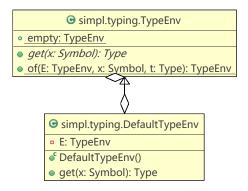


Figure 4: Java Class Diagram of the Environment types in the implementation

The constructor of DefaultTypeEnv is shown as below.

```
public DefaultTypeEnv() {
      TypeVar tv1 = new TypeVar(false);
2
      TypeVar tv2 = new TypeVar(false);
3
      E = TypeEnv.of(
               TypeEnv. of (
                   TypeEnv. of (
6
                       TypeEnv. of (
                            TypeEnv. of (
                                TypeEnv. of (
9
                                    TypeEnv. of (TypeEnv. empty, Symbol. symbol
                                        ("fst"), new ArrowType(new PairType
                                        (tv1, tv2), tv1)),
                                Symbol.symbol("snd"), new ArrowType(new
11
                                    PairType(tv1, tv2), tv2)),
                            Symbol.symbol("hd"), new ArrowType(new ListType
12
                               (tv1), tv1)),
                       Symbol.symbol("tl"), new ArrowType(new ListType(tv1
13
                           ), new ListType(tv1))),
                   Symbol.symbol("iszero"), new ArrowType(new IntType(),
14
                      new BoolType())),
               Symbol.symbol("pred"), new ArrowType(new IntType(), new
15
                  IntType())),
          Symbol.symbol("succ"), new ArrowType(new IntType(),new IntType
16
              ())
      );
17
```

The constraints are generated automatically under the recursive type-checking process with the help of the AST nodes.

#### 3.2.3 Solving Constraints

A substitution implemented in class substitution() is a method / function from type variables TypeVar to type schemes Type. The corresponding Java class diagram is in Fig. 5.

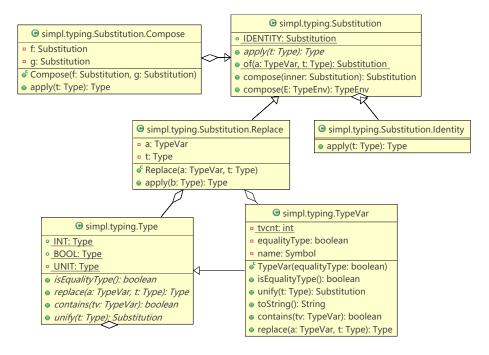


Figure 5: Java Class Diagram of Substitution in the implementation of typing system

The composition of two substitutions is specified in subclass Compose. The order of composed substitutions is illustrated as

$$(U \circ S)(a) = U(S(a)),$$

where the substitution S is first applied and then comes the substitution U.

Unification systematically simplifies a set of constraints, yielding a substitution to get the principal solution. In this project, unification is implemented in method unify() for every type class mentioned in Section 3.2.1.

For unknown types, the key method is unify() in class TypeVar, the implementation of which is as follows:

```
public Substitution unify(Type t) throws TypeCircularityError {
   if (t.contains(this)) {
      if (t instanceof TypeVar && ((TypeVar)t).name.equals(this.name)
      )
```

```
// a = a;
return Substitution.IDENTITY;
else
// Circularity (EG: a = b->a);
throw new TypeCircularityError();
}
return Substitution.of(this,t);
```

For BoolType, IntType and UnitType, the implementation of the method unify() is as follows:

```
public Substitution unify(Type t) throws TypeError {
   if(t instanceof TypeVar) {
      return t.unify(this);
   }
   if(t instanceof BoolType) {
      return Substitution.IDENTITY;
   }
   throw new TypeMismatchError();
}
```

Similar to ArrowType, the implementation of unify() in PairType is as follows:

```
public Substitution unify(Type t) throws TypeError {
    if (t instanceof TypeVar) {
        return t.unify(this);
    }
    if (t instanceof ArrowType) {
        Substitution s1 = ((ArrowType)t).t2.unify(this.t2);
        Substitution s2 = s1.apply(((ArrowType)t).t1).unify(s1.apply(this.t1));
        return s2.compose(s1);
    }
    throw new TypeMismatchError();
}
```

Similar to ListType, the implementation of unify() in RefType is as follows:

```
public Substitution unify(Type t) throws TypeError {
    if(t instanceof TypeVar){
        return t.unify(this);
    }
    if(t instanceof RefType){
        return this.t.unify(((RefType)t).t);
    }
    throw new TypeMismatchError();
}
```

#### 3.2.4 Type-Checking Result

If the solving process failed, Type Error is reported, where there are two specific kinds of type errors, as illustrated in Fig. 6.

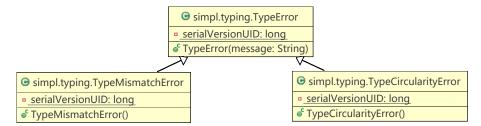


Figure 6: Java Class Diagram of the type errors in the implementation

If there is no type error, the solving process terminated properly in a known type class instance. System.out.println() will automatically call the corresponding overridden toString() method and print the type.

#### 3.2.5 Selected Implementations of typecheck()

The naming policy on temporal variables in typecheck() is to compose the lower-case initial letters of the words. For instance, ltr indicates the left type result and rt indicates the right type.

The implementation of typecheck() in ArithExpr:

```
public TypeResult typecheck(TypeEnv E) throws TypeError {
      // Get the left type result ltr and the right type result rtr
2
      TypeResult ltr = l.typecheck(E);
      TypeResult rtr = r.typecheck(E);
       / Compose and add the substitution to TypeEnv
      Substitution substitution = rtr.s.compose(ltr.s);
       / Generate the corresponding type
      Type lt = substitution.apply(ltr.t);
      Type rt = substitution.apply(rtr.t);
9
      // Unify lt and rt with Type.INT
10
      substitution = rt.unify(Type.INT).compose(lt.unify(Type.INT)).
11
         compose (substitution);
      // return the type result
12
      return TypeResult.of(substitution, Type.INT);
13
```

• First, the left type and the right type in the current type environment are checked. If correct, the type results will be saved in ltr and rtr respectively.

- The substitution is composed and added to TypeEnv E in the specified order. substitution gets the returned composed substitutions.
- Since ArithExpr applies to two int type, we then get the corresponding Type instance lt and rt and unify lt and rt with Type. Int in the previous order.
- Finally, TypeResult is returned with the new substitutions and Type. Int.

The implementation of typecheck() in TypeVar:

```
public Substitution unify(Type t) throws TypeCircularityError {
   if (t.contains(this)) {
      if (t instanceof TypeVar && ((TypeVar)t).name.equals(this.name)
      )
      return Substitution.IDENTITY; // a = a;
   else
      throw new TypeCircularityError(); // Circularity (EG: a = b)
      ->a);
}
return Substitution.of(this,t);
}
```

The circularity error during the typing process is detected here, when a constraint like a = b->a occurs. While a = a is the most intuitively case. The implementation of this part has cost me a lot of time.

Several other typical implementations of typecheck() are listed below:

The implementation of typecheck() in Cond:

```
public TypeResult typecheck(TypeEnv E) throws TypeError {
                 COOT
2
      TypeResult tr1 = e1.typecheck(E);
      TypeResult tr2 = e2.typecheck(E);
      TypeResult tr3 = e3.typecheck(E);
      Substitution substitution = tr3.s.compose(tr2.s).compose(tr1.s);
      Type t1 = substitution.apply(tr1.t);
      Type t2 = substitution.apply(tr2.t);
8
9
      Type t3 = substitution.apply(tr3.t);
      substitution = t1.unify(Type.BOOL).compose(substitution);
10
      t2 = substitution.apply(t2);
11
      t3 = substitution.apply(t3);
12
      TypeVar rt = new TypeVar(false);
13
      substitution = t2.unify(rt).compose(substitution);
14
      t3 = substitution.apply(t3);
15
      substitution = t3.unify(rt).compose(substitution);
16
      return TypeResult.of(substitution, substitution.apply(rt));
17
18 }
```

#### The implementation of typecheck() in EqExpr:

```
public TypeResult typecheck(TypeEnv E) throws TypeError {
      TypeResult ltr = l.typecheck(E);
2
      TypeResult rtr = r.typecheck(E);
3
      Substitution substitution = rtr.s.compose(ltr.s);
      Type lt = substitution.apply(ltr.t);
      Type rt = substitution.apply(rtr.t);
6
      if(lt instanceof ListType || rt instanceof ListType){
8
          Type tv = new TypeVar(false);
9
          substitution = lt.unify(new ListType(tv)).compose(substitution)
10
          tv = substitution.apply(tv);
11
          substitution = rt.unify(new ListType(tv)).compose(substitution)
12
      }else if(lt instanceof PairType || rt instanceof PairType){
13
          Type ltv = new TypeVar(false);
14
          Type rtv = new TypeVar(false);
15
          substitution = lt.unify(new PairType(ltv,rtv)).compose(
16
              substitution);
          ltv = substitution.apply(ltv);
17
          rtv = substitution.apply(rtv);
          substitution = rt.unify(new PairType(ltv,rtv)).compose(
19
              substitution);
      }else if(lt instanceof RefType || rt instanceof RefType){
20
          Type tv = new TypeVar(false);
21
          substitution = lt.unify(new RefType(tv)).compose(substitution);
22
          tv = substitution.apply(tv);
23
          substitution = rt.unify(new RefType(tv)).compose(substitution);
24
25
      else if(lt instanceof TypeVar && rt instanceof TypeVar){
26
          Type tv = new TypeVar(false);
27
          substitution = lt.unify(tv).compose(substitution);
28
          tv = substitution.apply(tv);
29
          substitution = rt.unify(tv).compose(substitution);
30
      } else if(lt.equals(Type.INT) || rt.equals(Type.INT)){
31
          substitution = rt.unify(Type.INT).compose(lt.unify(Type.INT)).
32
              compose (substitution);
      } else if (lt.equals(Type.BOOL) || rt.equals(Type.BOOL)) {
33
          substitution = rt.unify(Type.BOOL).compose(lt.unify(Type.BOOL))
34
              .compose(substitution);
35
      return TypeResult.of(substitution, Type.BOOL);
36
37 }
```

## 4 Evaluation

#### 4.1 Introduction

Intuitively, SIMPL programs are nested expressions. After the type-checking process, the evaluation system deals with the nested expressions recursively.

If evaluation failed, (e.g. divided by 0), Runtime Error is reported. Otherwise, the final value instance is returned.

Given the possible nested expressions, a call stack need to be maintained for set of bindings (environment Env) in form of state for Ref cells.

#### 4.2 Implementation

#### 4.2.1 Classes for Values

The Java class diagram of the Values is illustrated in Fig. 7. Extended from the abstract class Value, there are known types BoolValue, FunValue, ConsValue, PairValue, RefValue, UnitValue, IntValue, NilValue, and RecValue.

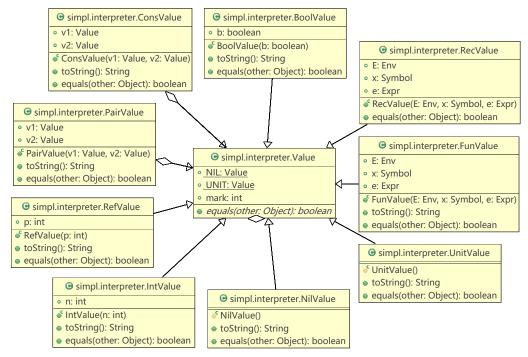


Figure 7: Java Class Diagram of the Values in the implementation

The method equals() that returns a boolean value is overridden from the abstract class, which is intuitively simple to implement.

#### 4.2.2 Evaluation Entrance

Evaluation begins with the Expr node with the initial state, involving two classes InitialState and State. The related java class diagram is illustrated in Fig. 8.

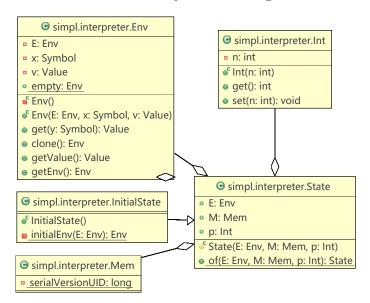


Figure 8: Java Class Diagram of the states in the implementation

The initialization of InitialState is shown as below.

```
private static Env initialEnv(Env E) {
2
      return
          new Env(
3
              new Env(
                   new Env(
5
                       new Env(
6
                           new Env(
                                new Env(
                                    new Env(E, Symbol.symbol("fst"), new
                                        fst()), Symbol.symbol("snd"), new
                                        snd()).
                                Symbol.symbol("hd"), new hd()),
10
                            Symbol.symbol("tl"), new tl()),
11
                       Symbol.symbol("iszero"), new iszero()),
12
                   Symbol.symbol("pred"), new pred()),
13
               Symbol.symbol("succ"), new succ());
14
15
```

The constructor of the predefined names are called during the initialization.

Take hd as an example, the constructor is implemented as follows, with the evaluation rules specified in the Specification document.

```
public hd() {
      super(Env.empty, Symbol.symbol("hd arg"), new Expr() {
           @Override
          public TypeResult typecheck(TypeEnv E) throws TypeError {
               return TypeResult.of(new TypeVar(true));
           @Override
          public Value eval(State s) throws RuntimeError {
               Value v = s.E.get(Symbol.symbol("hd arg"));
               if (v == Value.NIL) {
10
                   // hd(nil) = error
11
                   throw new RuntimeError("ERROR: hd(nil)");
12
               }else
13
               // \text{ hd}(\cos, v1, v2) = v1;
14
               return ((ConsValue)v).v1;
15
16
      });
17
18
```

#### 4.2.3 Environment Env

An environment is a set of bindings containing (variable, value) mappings. Class Env is nested for implementing nested function calls. During evaluation process, each time a symbol comes, we will check whether it is already in the current Env. If not, we will create a new Env instance of the current Env to add the bindings.

Take a function with multiple parameters as an example. The implementation of eval() in App are as follows:

```
public Value eval(State s) throws RuntimeError {
    // E-App
    FunValue fv = (FunValue)l.eval(s);
    Value v = r.eval(s);
    return fv.e.eval(State.of(new Env(fv.E, fv.x, v),s.M,s.p));
}
```

After the evaluation, a new state is provided with a new Env where all "x" is binding to v. With the help of Env, when the evaluation of the first parameter is finished, the second parameters are then to be added to the Env, which is, to be evaluated.

This is exactly the *Call-by-Need* evaluation strategy (Lazy Evaluation), which will be discussed further in Section 5.3

The implementation of Env class is as follows:

```
public Value get(Symbol y) {
    if (y.toString().equals(x.toString()))
        return v;
    else
        return E.get(y);
}
```

#### 4.2.4 Memory Reference Ref

Ref is the only instruction related to memory (heap) assignments. During the evaluation process, each time Ref comes, the Value is put into the heap and a corresponding pointer is returned.

The pointer p and the memory Mem along with the corrent Env are maintained by class State. A call stack can be implemented just by creating new states with modified member variable p.

The evaluation method eval() of Ref is implemented as follows:

```
public Value eval(State s) throws RuntimeError {
      // E-Ref
      // Obtain the current p
      Int p = new Int(s.p.get());
      // Increase the block index by 1
      s.p.set(s.p.get()+1);
      // Evaluate the Value under the new s
      Value v = e.eval(s);
      // Put the Value into the corresponding block
      s.M. put (p. get (), v);
10
      // Return the new RefValue / pointer
11
      return new RefValue(p.get());
12
13
```

- First, obtain the current p and increase the block index by 1.
- Evaluate the Value and put it into the corresponding block.
- Finally, the new RefValue / pointer is returned.

#### 4.2.5 Selected Implementations of eval()

The naming policy on temporal variables in eval() is to compose the lower-case initial letters. For instance, lv indicates the left value.

Similar to other arithmetic expressions, the implementation of eval() in Add:

```
public Value eval(State s) throws RuntimeError {
    // E-Add
    IntValue v1 = (IntValue)1.eval(s);
    IntValue v2 = (IntValue)r.eval(s);
    return new IntValue(v1.n + v2.n);
}
```

Several other typical implementations of eval() are listed below:

The codes of eval() in Assign are as follows:

```
public Value eval(State s) throws RuntimeError {
    // E-Assign
    // Evaluate the left value and right value
    RefValue lv = (RefValue)l.eval(s);
    Value rv = r.eval(s);
    // Put the value into corresponding block
    s.M.put(lv.p, rv);
    return Value.UNIT;
}
```

The codes of eval() in Eq are as follows:

```
public Value eval(State s) throws RuntimeError {
    // E-Eq1 & E-Eq2
    Value lv = l.eval(s);
    Value rv = r.eval(s);
    return lv.equals(rv) ? new BoolValue(true) : new BoolValue(false);
}
```

The codes of eval() in Not are as follows:

```
public Value eval(State s) throws RuntimeError {
    // E-Not1 & E-Not2
    BoolValue v = (BoolValue)e.eval(s);
    return new BoolValue(!(v.b));
}
```

#### 5 Bonus

### 5.1 Garbage Collection

In modern Program Languages Garbage Collection is a vital task.

A garbage is a block of heap memory that cannot be accessed by the program. There are two types of garbages: *orphans* and *widows*.

Although SIMPL is simple, there exists the possibility for *orphans* to be created, due to assignments and memory references.

I have implemented a *Mark and Sweep* garbage collector in the project. Basically, the garbage collector is triggered when the heap is full. All the referenced cells are marked and the unmarked *orphans* are swept.

#### 5.1.1 Implementation

Given that garbage can only be created during the evaluation of Ref. The implementation of Mark and Sweep garbage collector is illustrated as follows:

```
public Value eval(State s) throws RuntimeError {
       Int p = new Int(s.p.get());
                      = GC: Mark and Sweep =
       int HEAPSIZE = 1; // heap size
5
       if(p.get() > HEAPSIZE)
6
7
           // Mark
           Env env = s.E;
           while (env != Env.empty)
10
11
               Value val = env.getValue();
12
               while (val instance of RefValue && val.mark == 0)
13
14
                    val.mark = 1;
15
                    val = s.M. get(((RefValue)val).p);
16
17
               val.mark = 1;
18
               env = env.getEnv();
19
20
           System.out.println("—— Before: ——");
21
           for (int i = 0; i < p.get(); i++)
22
23
               System.out.println(s.M.get(i));
24
```

```
25
           // Sweep
26
           for (int i = 0; i < p.get(); i++)
27
28
                if (s.M. get(i) != null && s.M. get(i). mark == 0)
30
                    s.M. put(i, null); // Utilizing the nature of Java
31
                       HashMap
                    System.out.println("collect" + i);
32
33
34
           System.out.println("--- After: ---");
35
           for (int i = 0; i < p.get(); i++)
36
37
                System.out.println(s.M.get(i));
38
39
           System.out.println("GC completed");
40
41
                              = END =
42
       s.p.set(s.p.get()+1);
43
       Value v = e.eval(s);
44
       s.M. put (p. get (), v);
45
       return new RefValue(p.get());
46
47
```

A member variable indicating the reference status is added into Value:

```
public int mark = 0;
```

Two relevant member methods are added into Env:

```
public Value getValue()
{
    return v;
}

public Env getEnv()
{
    return E;
}
```

The memory is implemented by a Java HashMap in the provided skeleton. During the sweep operations, we only need to put null into the corresponding garbage cell.

In my implementation, I restricted the heap size to be 2, which is an extreme condition only for illustration on the following testcase.

#### 5.1.2 Testcase

Take a sample Simple program as the example, where I have met great obstacles to find it:

```
let f = fn x => ref 1 in
let y = ref 2 in
!(f 1) + !y + !(f 1)
end
end
end
```

Analyzing the above test SIMPL program, during the evaluation of two let expression, value 1 and value 2 are put into the heap before the evaluation of its right expression.

While during the evaluation of its right expression !(f 1) + !y + !(f 1), orphans are generated right before the evaluation of the second !(f 1) in Call-by-Need evaluation strategy.

Set the heap size to be 2 to trigger the Mark and Sweep garbage collector. Then the output of the sample program will be as follows:

```
int
--- Before: ---
2
1
collect0
collect1
--- After: ---
null
null
GC completed
4
```

# 5.2 Polymorphic types

The implementation of polymorphic types has been accomplished, given the type system implements Type Inference.

When an unknown type comes, it is represented with Type.IDENTIFY and a name tv + tvcount. tvcount will increase every time an unknown type is encountered, as is illustrated in the implementation code for TypeVar below.

```
public TypeVar(boolean equalityType) {
    this.equalityType = equalityType;
    name = Symbol.symbol("tv" + ++tvcnt);
}
```

Take the following SIMPL source program as the example:

```
(* using polymorphic types *)
rec map =>
fn f => fn l =>
if l=nil
then nil
else (f (hd l))::(map f (tl l))
```

The type-checking result is

```
((tv33 \rightarrow tv34) \rightarrow (tv33 list \rightarrow tv34 list)).
```

#### 5.3 Lazy Evaluation

In Lazy Evaluation strategy, an expression will never be evaluated until its value is needed, which is also called *Call-by-Need* evaluation strategy.

The implementation of Lazy Evaluation is tightly related to the implementation of Env, regarding nested functions, as is elaborated in Section 4.2.3.

As is specified in the evaluation rules, a *Short-Circuit-Evaluation* like policy is applied to AndAlso and OrElse.

The codes of eval() in AndAlso are as follows:

```
public Value eval(State s) throws RuntimeError {
    BoolValue lv = (BoolValue)l.eval(s);
    if (!lv.b)
    // E-AndAlso2
        return new BoolValue(false);
    else {
        BoolValue rv = (BoolValue)r.eval(s);
        // E-AndAlso1
        return new BoolValue(rv.b);
    }
}
```

If the left value lv is false, the right value rv will not be evaluated.

The codes of eval() in OrElse are as follows:

```
public Value eval(State s) throws RuntimeError {
    BoolValue lv = (BoolValue)l.eval(s);
    if (lv.b == true)
        // E-OrElse1
    return new BoolValue(true);
    else {
        // E-OrElse2
        BoolValue rv = (BoolValue)r.eval(s);
        return new BoolValue(rv.b);
    }
}
```

# 6 Acknowledgment

Despite the well-designed skeleton, the project is still really challenging. Due to my poor performance in the killing final exam, I devoted heart and soul to this project.

During the project, I reviewed the course slides and reference books and gained a deeper understanding of concepts related to *Programming Languages*. Thanks for my classmates for discussing confusing concepts.

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