

Yacc / Bison

Parser generator using Scala-Bison

What is a parser generator

Is a program that takes a grammar and generates a code that can be used to parse the grammar

Why are parser generators used?

Because they generate a state machine and number of the states is not $O(n)$ hence maintaining that code would be near impossible. Solution is to use parser generator make you concentrate on the grammar instead of its implementation.

Bison vs. Yacc

- Yacc and Bison are closely compatible
- Bison is a part of the GNU project. And yacc is used as a utility on Berkeley Software Distribution (BSD). Though it's compatible with yacc, but Lex and Yacc are a thing of the past. Flex and bison are widely used today.

Yacc structure (*.y)

- Directives: the first section is where we define tokens, associativity, order of operation and etc
- Rules: in this section we define BNF grammar and it's respective parse yield
- Code: in this section we can share some utility functions or global variable with grammar rule handler code

Notations

- `$$` : this pseudo-variable stands for the semantic value for the grouping that the rule is going to construct
- `$1` , `$2` and etc: semantic values of the components of the rule are referred to as `$1`, `$2`, and so on
- `|` : means alternative structure of non-terminal

Example yacc file

```
%{
#include <stdio.h>
#define YYSTYPE char const *
int yylex (void);
void yyerror (char const *);
%}

%token TYPENAME ID

%right '='
%left '+'

%glr-parser

%%

prog:
    %empty
    | prog stmt    { printf ("\n"); }
    ;

stmt:
    expr ';' %dprec 1
    | decl    %dprec 2
    ;

expr:
    ID { printf ("%s ", $$); }
    | TYPENAME '(' expr ')'
        { printf ("%s <cast> ", $1); }
    | expr '+' expr    { printf (" + "); }
    | expr '=' expr    { printf (" = "); }
    ;

decl:
    TYPENAME declarator ';'
        { printf ("%s <declare> ", $1); }
    | TYPENAME declarator '=' expr ';'
        { printf ("%s <init-declare> ", $1); }
    ;

declarator:
    ID { printf ("%s\\n ", $1); }
    | '(' declarator ')'
    ;
```

Lab assignment

Parse XML

```
<foo />
<foo>&lt;</foo>
<foo><bar />&gt;</foo>
< foo />
&amp;
</ foo >
<foo> <bar /> </foo>
<foo a='b' c="d" e="f" />
<foo a = "'b" =&lt;&lt;" c = "d" />
<!-- ignored --> <foo /> <!-- also ignored -->
<!-- so lonely & <><-><> nobody listens to me -->
<![CDATA[this is so <neat /> I'm not even a <tag />! <![CDATA[ no nesting]]>
    not trimmed
"not a string, &amp; just some text"
<bar string="oh yeah here's a quote ' and an entity &quot;" />
<if> 5>7 <!-- > is allowed loose -->
<then> <do action="something"/> </then>
<else> <do action="something else"/>
</if>
```