

# A typed $\lambda$ -calculus, *TL*

## Principles of Programming Languages

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## 1 Preamble

### 1.1 Notable references

- Benjamin Pierce, “[Types and Programming Languages](#)”
  - Chapter 9, Simply Typed Lambda-Calculus
    - \* Function types, the typing relation
  - Chapter 11, Simple Extensions
    - \* Unit, Tuples, Sums, Variants, Lists.

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## 2 Introduction

In this section we extend our previously considered untyped  $\lambda$ -calculus by defining a typing relation, essentially adding type checking (enforcement).

We then investigate adding some algebraic type formers to the language. This involves the introduction of a rudimentary form of pattern matching.

## 3 Recall: The untyped $\lambda$ -calculus

Recall from section 3 of the notes the syntax of our untyped  $\lambda$ -calculus, *UL*.

$\langle \text{term} \rangle ::= \text{var} \mid \lambda \text{ var} \rightarrow \langle \text{term} \rangle \mid \langle \text{term} \rangle \langle \text{term} \rangle$

Recall that in this pure untyped  $\lambda$ -calculus, everything is a function, and abstractions (terms of the form  $\lambda \mathbf{x} \rightarrow \mathbf{t}$ ) are *values*.

### 3.1 The call-by-value semantics of the untyped $\lambda$ -calculus

The call-by-value semantics we described in section 3 of the notes can be more succinctly described using inference rules.

- In fact, we only need three rules.
- Here the arrow  $\rightarrow$  defines a *reduction* relation, meaning that we may need to perform several  $\rightarrow$  “steps” to fully evaluate a term.
- The (meta)variables  $\mathbf{t}_1, \mathbf{t}_2$ , etc., range over  $\lambda$ -terms, and
- the (meta)variables  $\mathbf{v}_1, \mathbf{v}_2$ , etc., range over  $\lambda$ -terms *which are values*.

$$\frac{t_1 \longrightarrow t_1}{t_1 \ t_2 \longrightarrow t_1 \ t_2} \text{ reduce-app}^l$$

$$\frac{t_2 \longrightarrow t_2}{v_1 \ t_2 \longrightarrow v_1 \ t_2} \text{ reduce-app}^r$$

$$\frac{}{(\lambda \ x \rightarrow t) \ v \longrightarrow t[x = v]} \text{ apply}$$

### 3.2 Only applications reduce

Notice, in the above semantics, that the only rules are for applications; remember that

- variables cannot be reduced, and
- under call-by-value semantics,
  - no evaluations take place inside abstractions, and
  - abstractions are only applied to values.

### 3.3 Explaining the rules

By using our naming conventions, we can see that

- the **reduce-app**<sup>l</sup> rule says that if  $t_1$  is the left side of an application and  $t_1$  reduces to  $t_1$ , then the whole application reduces by replacing  $t_1$  with  $t_1$ ,
- the **reduce-app**<sup>r</sup> rule says that if  $t_1$  is the right side of an application *whose left side is a value*, and  $t_2$  reduces to  $t_2$ , then the whole application reduces by replacing  $t_2$  with  $t_2$ , and
- the **apply** rule says that if the left side of an application is an abstraction, and the right side is a value, then the application reduces to the body of the abstraction with the value substituted for the abstraction's variable.

### 3.4 Reduction as a function

It bears noting that the *reduction relation* here is, by design, *deterministic*; given a  $\lambda$ -term  $t$ , either

- $t$  can be reduced by exactly *one* of the rules above, or
- $t$  cannot be reduced (is irreducible) (by these semantics.)

A deterministic relation can be expressed as a *function*, as the following Scala-like pseudocode shows.

```
def →(t) = t match {
  case t1 t2 if t1 → t1           => t1 t2
  case v1 t2 if isValue(v1) && t2 → t2 => v1 t2
  case (λ x → t) v if isValue(v)       => t[x = v]
}
```

### 3.5 An example of a reduction sequence

$$\begin{aligned}
& ((\lambda x \rightarrow x) (\lambda y \rightarrow y)) ((\lambda z \rightarrow z) (\lambda u \rightarrow u)) \\
\rightarrow & \langle \text{reduce-app}^l \rangle \\
& (\lambda y \rightarrow y) ((\lambda z \rightarrow z) (\lambda u \rightarrow u)) \\
\rightarrow & \langle \text{reduce-app}^r \rangle \\
& (\lambda y \rightarrow y) (\lambda u \rightarrow u) \\
\rightarrow & \langle \text{apply} \rangle \\
& \lambda u \rightarrow u
\end{aligned}$$

The final term does not reduce.

Note that we can end with terms which do not reduce, but which are not values, such as

$$(\lambda x \rightarrow x) y$$

Since free variables are not values (they are not  $\lambda$ -abstractions), this term does not fit any of the reduction rules.

### 3.6 Encodings of booleans, natural numbers and pairs

Recall the  $\lambda$ -encodings discussed in notes section 3, which allow us to represent booleans, natural numbers and pairs in the pure untyped  $\lambda$ -calculus.

$$\begin{aligned}
\text{tru} &= \lambda t \rightarrow \lambda f \rightarrow t \\
\text{fls} &= \lambda t \rightarrow \lambda f \rightarrow f \\
\text{test} &= \lambda l \rightarrow \lambda m \rightarrow \lambda n \rightarrow l m n \\
\text{pair} &= \lambda f \rightarrow \lambda s \rightarrow \lambda b \rightarrow b f s \\
\text{fst} &= \lambda p \rightarrow p \text{tru} \\
\text{snd} &= \lambda p \rightarrow p \text{fls} \\
\text{zero} &= \lambda s \rightarrow \lambda z \rightarrow z \\
\text{scc} &= \lambda n \rightarrow \lambda s \rightarrow \lambda z \rightarrow s (n s z)
\end{aligned}$$

### 3.7 Enriching the (syntax of the) calculus

While  $\lambda$ -encodings of data in the pure untyped  $\lambda$ -calculus, such as those for the booleans, natural numbers and pairs, do allow us to construct programs working on any type data we might like, it is usually more convenient (even in this untyped system) to instead *enrich* the calculus with new primitive terms for the types we want to work with.

We will show here how this can be done for booleans. The enriched calculus's syntax is then

$$\begin{aligned}
\langle \text{term} \rangle ::= & \text{var} \mid \lambda \text{var} \rightarrow \langle \text{term} \rangle \mid \langle \text{term} \rangle \langle \text{term} \rangle \\
& \mid \text{true} \mid \text{false} \\
& \mid \text{if } \langle \text{term} \rangle \text{ then } \langle \text{term} \rangle \text{ else } \langle \text{term} \rangle
\end{aligned}$$

### 3.8 The semantics of the untyped $\lambda$ -calculus with booleans

The untyped  $\lambda$ -calculus extended with booleans semantics has, in addition to the rules  $\text{reduce-app}^l$ ,  $\text{reduce-app}^r$  and  $\text{apply}$ , these rules for the new basic primitive functions.

$$\begin{array}{c}
\frac{t^b \rightarrow t^b}{\text{if } t^b \ t_1 \ t_2 \rightarrow \text{if } t^b \ t_1 \ t_2} \quad \text{reduce-if} \\
\\
\frac{}{\text{if true } t_1 \ t_2 \rightarrow t_1} \quad \text{if-then}
\end{array}$$

---

if-else

if false  $t_1$   $t_2 \rightarrow t_2$

## 4 A first typed $\lambda$ -calculus – the simply typed $\lambda$ -calculus

Starting now, we define the syntax and semantics for several stages of a typed  $\lambda$ -calculus.

- We begin with a “simply-typed”  $\lambda$ -calculus that has only unit and function types, and
- at each stage (in the following sections of these notes), we add new primitive terms, new types and typing rules, and new semantic rules.

These stages roughly correspond to those given in Pierce’s “Types and Programming Languages” throughout chapters

- 9, “Simply Typed Lambda-Calculus”, and
- 11, “Simple Extensions”.

For the sake of page space, each stage will only show the grammar productions and semantic rule which are added, not the whole grammar or semantics.

- Those will be given at the end.

All semantics in this section are call-by-value semantics.

### 4.1 Typing rules

Like semantics, the typing rules of a language are presented here using inference rules.

These inference rules define a typing relation, written  $\_ \vdash \_ : \_$  and read as “entails”.

While the reduction relation,  $\_ \rightarrow \_$ , is a binary relation between terms

- i.e.,  $\_ \rightarrow \_ : \mathbf{term} \times \mathbf{term}$ 
  - (in fact, since it is a single-valued relation,  $\_ \rightarrow \_ : \mathbf{term} \rightarrow \mathbf{term}$ ),

the typing relation is a *ternary* relation between a *typing context*, a term and a type.

- i.e.,  $\_ \vdash \_ : \_ : \mathbf{context} \times \mathbf{term} \times \mathbf{type}$ 
  - (in fact, since it is also a single-valued relation,  $\_ \vdash \_ : \_ : \mathbf{context} \times \mathbf{term} \rightarrow \mathbf{type}$ .)

### 4.2 The typing context

The *typing context* referred to above is a set of variable, type pairs, used to *bind* certain variables to types.

- It can in fact be a sequence or similar datatype; so long as we can add and check bindings.

We will write

- $\emptyset$  for the *empty* typing context,
- $\Gamma, (x : A)$  to *extend* the typing context  $\Gamma$  with the additional type binding of  $x$  to  $A$ , and
- $(x : A) \in \Gamma$  to check if  $x$  is bound to type  $A$  by the typing context  $\Gamma$ .

### 4.3 Example typing contexts

For example,

- $(x : A) \in (\emptyset, (z : C), (y : C), (x : A))$  and
- $(y : C) \in (\emptyset, (z : C), (y : C), (x : A))$  and

but

- $\text{NOT } (x : B) \in (\emptyset, (z : C), (y : C), (x : A))$  and
- $\text{NOT } (y : B) \in (\emptyset, (z : C), (y : C), (x : A))$  and

We generally try avoid having two entries for a variable in the typing context (such as  $\emptyset, (x : A), (x : B)$  or even  $\emptyset, (x : A), (x : A)$ .)

- This will occur in practice if variable names are reused.

In the case that there are two such entries, the later one “shadows” the earlier one.

- So for instance,  $(x : B) \in (\emptyset, (x : A), (x : B))$  and
- $\text{NOT } (x : A) \in (\emptyset, (x : A), (x : B))$ .

### 4.4 The simply-typed $\lambda$ -calculus syntax

Our starting point is the simply-typed  $\lambda$ -calculus, which has only unit and function types.

- For the sake of noting which new terms are values, we add a non-terminal called  $\langle \text{value} \rangle$  to the grammar.

$$\begin{aligned} \langle \text{term} \rangle ::= & \text{var} \\ & | \langle \text{term} \rangle \langle \text{term} \rangle \\ & | \langle \text{value} \rangle \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \langle \text{value} \rangle ::= & \lambda \text{ var} : \langle \text{type} \rangle \rightarrow \langle \text{term} \rangle \\ & | \text{unit} \end{aligned}$$

$$\langle \text{type} \rangle ::= \text{Unit} \mid \langle \text{type} \rangle \rightarrow \langle \text{type} \rangle$$

### 4.5 The simply-typed $\lambda$ -calculus typing

“If a variable  $x$  is assigned type  $A$  by the context, then it has that type.”

$$\frac{(x : A) \in \Gamma}{\Gamma \vdash x : A} \text{ T-Var}$$

Notice that otherwise, variables do not typecheck!

“The abstraction of a variable  $x$  of type  $A$  over a term  $t$  has type  $A \rightarrow B$  if  $t$  has type  $B$  when assuming  $x$  has type  $A$ .”

$$\frac{\Gamma, (x : A) \vdash t : B}{\Gamma \vdash (\lambda x : A \rightarrow t) : A \rightarrow B} \text{ T-Abs}$$

“If  $t_1$  has type  $A \rightarrow B$  and  $t_2$  type  $A$ , then applying  $t_1$  to  $t_2$  has type  $B$ .”

$$\frac{\Gamma \vdash t_1 : A \rightarrow B \quad \Gamma \vdash t_2 : A}{\Gamma \vdash t_1 t_2 : B} \text{ T-App}$$

“unit has type Unit.”

$$\frac{}{\Gamma \vdash \text{unit} : \text{Unit}} \text{ T-Unit}$$

## 4.6 The simply-typed $\lambda$ -calculus semantics

The semantics of the language have not changed, except that the syntax of the  $\lambda$ -abstraction now has the type annotation.

$$\frac{t_1 \longrightarrow t_1}{t_1 \ t_2 \longrightarrow t_1 \ t_2} \text{ reduce-app}^l$$

$$\frac{t_2 \longrightarrow t_2}{v_1 \ t_2 \longrightarrow v_1 \ t_2} \text{ reduce-app}^r$$

$$\frac{}{(\lambda \ x : A \rightarrow t) \ v \longrightarrow t[x = v]} \text{ apply}$$

## 4.7 Exercise: Why do we need a `Unit` type in the simply-typed $\lambda$ -calculus?

Recall that in the untyped  $\lambda$ -calculus, the only values were abstractions; all data was functions.

Why do we add a `Unit` type in the simply-typed  $\lambda$ -calculus? Is it required for some reason?

## 4.8 Exercise: Type some terms

Using the typing rules above, determine the types of the following simply-typed  $\lambda$ -calculus terms. (You should try to give a derivation of the type using the rules.)

1.  $(\lambda \ x : \text{Unit} \rightarrow x)$ .
2.  $(\lambda \ x : \text{Unit} \rightarrow x) \ (\text{unit})$ .
3.  $(\lambda \ x : (\text{Unit} \rightarrow \text{Unit}) \rightarrow \lambda \ y : \text{Unit} \rightarrow x \ y) \ (\lambda \ z : \text{Unit} \rightarrow \text{unit})$ .
4.  $(\lambda \ x : (\text{Unit} \rightarrow \text{Unit}) \rightarrow \lambda \ y : \text{Unit} \rightarrow x \ y) \ (\lambda \ z : \text{Unit} \rightarrow \text{unit}) \ (\text{unit})$ .

For these terms, try to justify which portion(s) of the term causes it not to typecheck.

1.  $x$ .
2.  $(\lambda \ x : \text{Unit} \rightarrow x) \ (\lambda \ x : \text{Unit} \rightarrow x)$ .

# 5 Adding natural numbers and booleans

We begin our extensions to the simply-typed  $\lambda$ -calculus with the natural numbers and booleans, convenient types to have for many simply computing problems.

## 5.1 Syntax for natural numbers and booleans

Recall that these productions are only those being added; the productions from 4.4 are assumed to still be in place.

```
<term> ::= suc <term>
        | pred <term>
        | iszero <term>
        | if <term> then <term> else <term>
```

$$\begin{aligned} \langle \text{value} \rangle ::= & \text{ suc } \langle \text{value} \rangle \\ & | \text{ zero} \\ & | \text{ true} \\ & | \text{ false} \end{aligned}$$

$$\langle \text{type} \rangle ::= \text{ Nat } | \text{ Bool}$$

## 5.2 Notes about the syntax

Note that natural numbers are considered values only if they are a chain of `suc`'s applied to a (natural number) value.

- The “(natural number)” portion of that statement will be enforced by the typing rules.
- For instance, `suc zero` is a value (as is `succ true` according to the syntax, but the typing rules will forbid that.)
- `succ` also appears in a production for  $\langle \text{term} \rangle$  to allow for its use in non-values (such as `succ pred zero`, which should simplify to `zero` under our semantics.)

## 5.3 Typing for natural numbers and booleans

$$\begin{array}{c} \frac{}{\Gamma \vdash \text{ zero} : \text{ nat}} \text{ T-zero} \\[10pt] \frac{\Gamma \vdash t : \text{ nat}}{\Gamma \vdash \text{ suc } t : \text{ nat}} \text{ T-suc} \qquad \frac{\Gamma \vdash t : \text{ nat}}{\Gamma \vdash \text{ pred } t : \text{ nat}} \text{ T-pred} \\[10pt] \frac{}{\Gamma \vdash \text{ true} : \text{ bool}} \text{ T-true} \qquad \frac{}{\Gamma \vdash \text{ false} : \text{ bool}} \text{ T-false} \\[10pt] \frac{\Gamma \vdash t : \text{ nat}}{\Gamma \vdash \text{ iszero } t : \text{ bool}} \text{ T-iszero} \\[10pt] \frac{\Gamma \vdash b : \text{ bool} \quad \Gamma \vdash t_1 : A \quad \Gamma \vdash t_2 : A}{\Gamma \vdash \text{ if } b \text{ then } t_1 \text{ else } t_2 : A} \text{ T-if} \end{array}$$

## 5.4 Semantics of natural numbers and booleans

$$\begin{array}{c} \frac{t \rightarrow t}{\text{ suc } t \rightarrow \text{ suc } t} \text{ reduce-suc} \qquad \frac{t \rightarrow t}{\text{ pred } t \rightarrow \text{ pred } t} \text{ reduce-pred} \\[10pt] \frac{t \rightarrow t}{\text{ iszero } t \rightarrow \text{ iszero } t} \text{ reduce-iszero} \qquad \frac{}{\text{ iszero zero } \rightarrow \text{ true}} \text{ iszero-zero} \end{array}$$

The natural number predecessor of zero is zero. And because of this, a successor can never be zero.

$$\begin{array}{c} \frac{}{\text{ pred zero } \rightarrow \text{ zero}} \text{ pred-zero} \qquad \frac{}{\text{ iszero (suc } t) \rightarrow \text{ false}} \text{ iszero-suc} \\[10pt] \frac{\text{ iszero } t \rightarrow \text{ false}}{\text{ suc (pred } t) \rightarrow t} \text{ suc-pred} \qquad \frac{}{\text{ pred (suc } t) \rightarrow t} \text{ pred-suc} \end{array}$$

$t^b \rightarrow t^b$	
$\text{if } t^b \ t_1 \ t_2 \rightarrow \text{if } t^b \ t_1 \ t_2$	reduce-if
$\text{if true } t_1 \ t_2 \rightarrow t_1$	if-then
$\text{if false } t_1 \ t_2 \rightarrow t_2$	if-else

## 6 Products, records, sums and variants

We now add product and sum types to our language.

- And then later follow up with the slightly more sophisticated *record* and *variant* types, which allow for named fields.

### 6.1 Informal description of products and sums

A product

- is written using braces as  $\{t, t\}$ , and
- we include *projection functions* for accessing either element of a product,
  - written  $t.1$  and  $t.2$  respectively.

A sum

- is written as either
  - `inl t as A` (read “in the left type of A”), or
  - `inr t as A` (read “in the right type of A”), and
    - \* The reason for the ascription “as A” in the above will be discussed when we reach the typing rules.
- we include *case splitting* to check whether the sum has the left or right type,
  - written `case t of inl x1 as A  $\Rightarrow$  t1 | inr x2 as A  $\Rightarrow$  t2.`

### 6.2 Syntax for products and sums

The syntax for products and sums are as described.

```

<term> ::= '{' <term> , <term> '}'
        | <term>.1 | <term>.2
        | inl <term> as <type> | inr <term> as <type>
        | case <term> of inl var  $\Rightarrow$  <term> | inr var  $\Rightarrow$  <term>

```

```

<value> ::= '{' <value> , <value> '}'
         | inl <value> as <type> | inr <value> as <type>

```

```

<type> ::= <type>  $\times$  <type>
        | <type> + <type>

```

Note that, as with `suc` for natural numbers, a product or sum is only a value if its parts are themselves values.



### 6.3 Typing for products

There's not much to note about the type rules for products.

$$\begin{array}{c}
\frac{\Gamma \vdash t_1 : A \quad \Gamma \vdash t_2 : B}{\Gamma \vdash \{t_1, t_2\} : \text{nat}} \text{ T-pair} \\
\\
\frac{\Gamma \vdash t : A \times B}{\Gamma \vdash t.1 : A} \text{ T-proj1} \quad \frac{\Gamma \vdash t : A \times B}{\Gamma \vdash t.2 : B} \text{ T-proj2}
\end{array}$$

### 6.4 Typing for sums

For sums, though, we can observe why it is that we have put a type ascription on uses of `inl` and `inr`.

- In our first typing rule, for `inl` we have no way to determine what the type `B` should be without the ascription.
- Similarly, in the rule for `inr`, we have no way to determine the type `A`.
- Given a term such as `inl zero`, there are in fact infinite possible types; just fill in anything for `B` in `Nat × B`.
  - But `B` might need to be a specific type because of the context that the term appears in.
- We *could* construct a type system that uses the surrounding context of the term to determine the missing type automatically.
  - This is known as *type reconstruction*.
  - But we do not discuss this at the moment.
- An alternative approach is the use of *subtyping*.

$$\begin{array}{c}
\frac{\Gamma \vdash t : A}{\Gamma \vdash (\text{inl } t \text{ as } A + B) : A + B} \text{ T-inl} \\
\\
\frac{\Gamma \vdash t : B}{\Gamma \vdash (\text{inr } t \text{ as } A + B) : A + B} \text{ T-inr} \\
\\
\frac{\Gamma \vdash t_0 : A + B \quad \Gamma, (x_1 : A) \vdash t_1 : C \quad \Gamma, (x_2 : B) \vdash t_2 : C}{\Gamma \vdash (\text{case } t \text{ of inl } x_1 \text{ as } A + B \Rightarrow t_1 \mid \text{inr } x_2 \text{ as } A + B \Rightarrow t_2) : C} \text{ T-case}
\end{array}$$

### 6.5 Semantics of products

$$\begin{array}{c}
\frac{}{\{v_1, v_2\}.1 \rightarrow v_1} \text{ value-proj1} \quad \frac{}{\{v_1, v_2\}.2 \rightarrow v_2} \text{ value-proj2} \\
\\
\frac{t \rightarrow t}{t.1 \rightarrow t.1} \text{ reduce-proj1} \quad \frac{t \rightarrow t}{t.2 \rightarrow t.2} \text{ reduce-proj2} \\
\\
\frac{t_1 \rightarrow t_2}{\{t_1, t_2\} \rightarrow \{t_1, t_2\}} \text{ reduce-pair1} \quad \frac{t_2 \rightarrow t_2}{\{v_1, t_2\} \rightarrow \{v_1, t_2\}} \text{ reduce-pair2}
\end{array}$$

## 6.6 Semantics of sums

<hr/>		case-inl-value
case (inl v) of inl $x_1$ as $A \Rightarrow t_1$   inr $x_2$ as $A \Rightarrow t_2$	$\longrightarrow$	$t_1[x_1 = v]$
<hr/>		case-inl-value
case (inr v) of inl $x_1$ as $A \Rightarrow t_1$   inr $x_2$ as $A \Rightarrow t_2$	$\longrightarrow$	$t_2[x_2 = v]$
<hr/>		
$t \longrightarrow t$	<hr/>	
		case-reduce
case t of inl $x_1$ as $A \Rightarrow t_1$   inr $x_2$ as $A \Rightarrow t_2$	$\longrightarrow$	case t of inl $x_1$ as $A \Rightarrow t_1$   inr $x_2$ as $A \Rightarrow t_2$
<hr/>		
$t \longrightarrow t$	<hr/>	
		reduce-inl
inl t as A	$\longrightarrow$	inl t as A
<hr/>		
$t \longrightarrow t$	<hr/>	
		reduce-inr
inr t as A	$\longrightarrow$	inr t as A