The Design and Implementation of Data-Centric Sychronization for Structured Parallel Program

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Abstract

This document describes the design and implementation details of supporting data-centric sychronization for the X10 programming language. It includes: (1) a detailed description of the current design and implementation, and (2) tricks, tips and commons pitfalls in modifying the X10 compiler infrastracture for future extensions.

1 Current Status

As of Sep 2011, the implementation fully supports the initial design as described in Section 2. However, the current implementation *only* supports Java backend. It has been tested on 6 small examples from the X10 release package plus 1 medium-size subject called *fmm* from the anuchem application (http://cs.anu.edu.au/ Josh.Mil-thorpe/anuchem.html).

The source code and tested programs can be found at the following svn repository: http://x10.svn.sourceforge.net/viewvc/x10/branches/atomic-sets/.

The following sections will illustrate the implemented data-centric sychronization features (Section 2), all major implementation details (Section 3), and a few summarized tricks, tips and common pitfalls in modifying the compiler for future extensions (Section 4).

2 Data-centric Sychronization for X10

This sections gives a high-level overview of what has been implemented. Most of the content is summarized from emails between Mandana Vaziri and Sai Zhang.

2.1 Programming model

The programming model consists of declaring a collection of data as being part of a data group, and indicating the transactional boundaries for that data group (or unit of work, atomic section). A unit of work is such that the elements of the data group

to which it belongs are manipulated atomically. The units of work provide mutual exclusion for accesses to elements of the data group.

Each instance of a class has a single implicit data group labeled this, and all fields of a class belong to this data group. A data group may contain only data that is located in the same X10 place.

Units of work are indicated using the construct $\mathtt{atomic}(var_1, \ldots, var_n)$ { ... }, which means that the object referenced by var_i is manipulated atomically, if var_i is an object reference, and that var_i is accessed atomically if var_i is of primitive type. More formally, if var_i refers to an object, $\mathtt{atomic}(var_i)$ { ... } declares a unit of work for the data group of the object referenced by var_i . In this case, var_i may be a field, a formal parameter, or a local variable. If var_i is a primitive type, $\mathsf{atomic}(var_i)$ { ... } declares a unit of work for an implicitly locally defined data group that only contains var_i . In this case, var_i can only be a local variable or a primitive formal parameter.

So far atomic sections look very much like Java's synchronized block. What differentiate them is that multiple objects may share the same data group. This is indicated using the linked keyword on a field, formal parameter, or local variable. This keyword means that the referenced object has the same data group as the data group of 'this'. It is not allowed to label variables of primitive type with the keyword linked.

2.2 High-level implementation

We add to each class, an additional field that holds the lock for the data groups of instances of that class. Each class is equipped with a getter method for the lock.

Constructors are modified to take an additional lock. When the linked keyword is used for a constructor call, the lock for this is passed to the newly created object.

The construct $atomic(var_1, \ldots, var_n) \ \{ \ldots \}$ grabs the lock for every var_i by calling the getter method for its lock, if var_i is a reference type. If var_i is a primitive value, a local lock is declared after the declaration of the local variable var_i and this lock is grabbed.

3 Implementation Details

This sections describes the most important implementation details. Section 3.1 gives an overview of the X10 compiler workflow and which parts have been modified to implement data-centric synchronization. Section 3.2 shows how is the new syntax added to the existing compiler framework (lexer and parser parts). Section 3.3 illustrates how to perform type checking in the presence of the data-centric features, and Section 3.4 presents how the X10 compiler performs code generation. Changes to the runtime library are described in Section 3.5, and limitations and possible improvement space is summarized in Section 3.6.

3.1 Code structure and Compiler workflow

All code changes reside in two sub-projects x10.compiler and x10.runtime. The project x10.compiler also contains a modified version of polyglot, which is under the package polyglot.

In $\times 10.$ compiler, code for adding new syntax is in the $\times 10.$ parser package. Code for type-checking is in the $\times 10.$ ast and polygloat.ast packages. More specifically, class $\times 10.$ visit.X10AtomicityChecker is the entry class for type-checking, and class $\times 10.$ visit.X10LockMapAtomicityTranslator performs code generation. All changes to the runtime library are in the package $\times 10.$ util.concurrent.

Configuration option: the only new configuration option is DATA_CENTRIC (with default value true) in class x10.Configuration. Setting this value to false will turn off the data-centric sychronization features. Note: when compiling the x10 runtime lib using command ant dist, this flag must be turned off; since the current data-centric implementation lacks the lack of C++ backend support.

Here is the general work flow of compiling an X10 program:

- 1. Parse the X10 program text into AST tokens. The parser is automatically generated based on the grammar files located in package x10.parser. When a rule defined in the x10.g grammar file is matched, the parser will invoke corresponding action method in class x10.parser.X10SemanticRules to create AST nodes. At this stage, almost AST nodes do not contain any type information. The parser merely uses a polyglot.parse.ParsedName object to represent each type node.
- 2. Translate a ParsedName object into a TypeNode. This step is done by the ParsedName.toType method. This method creates a AmbTypeNode node for each ParsedName object to represent a type node. However, the created AmbTypeNode still needs to be dis-ambiguated before type-checking.
- 3. Dis-ambiguate each AmbTypeNode node. This step is performed by the class x10.visit.X10TypeChecker. Method X10TypeChecker.leaveCall first calls disambiguate (tc) before performing type-checking. The disambiguate method is overriden in every ambiguous type node to resolve ambiguity and infer types. Thus, if a new AST node type is added, be aware of overriding the disambiguate method.
- 4. After disambuigiating each AST node, the following compiler workflow is essentially applying a set of passes to the AST tree. Each pass is implemented as a visitor. All visitor classes are under packages x10.visit and polyglot.visit. A visitor can manipulate each AST node, delete, or add needed information to it. The visiting order of each visitor is defined in class x10.ExtensionInfo (and x10c.ExtensionInfo and x10cpp.ExtensionInfo for Java and C++ specific passes). A good example to refer is the goals (Job) method.
- 5. After type-checking, many optimization and code generation tasks in X10 is implemented as a X10-to-X10 source-code-level transformation. A good example is the x10.visit.Lowerer class. When implementing new features, normally you only need to define a similar visitor (as the Lowerer class) to perform X10-to-X10 source transformation instead of modifying the backend translation from X10 to Java (C++).

6. The last step is generating native code (Java bytecode and C++ binary code) from the X10 AST. Normally, you do not need to touch this phase.

3.2 Adding new syntax

The syntax changes to the X10 language are:

- Add a new keyword linked as a type modifier.
- Add a new rule for type identifier: Type = linked Type. This permits programmers to link the atomic set of a variable to the current this atomic set by declaring: var a:linked A = new linked A().
- Add a new rule for atomic section: atomic(identifier_list) statement. The identifier_list is for programmers to specify which atomic sets need to be protected. For example, atomic (var1, this, formal1) { ... } indicates that atomic sets to which var1, this, and formal1 belongs are updated atomically in the atomic section.

Here are the detailed steps in implementing the above syntax changes:

Adding the linked keyword

- 1. Go to X10KWLexer.gi file, and modify two places. First, add linked as keyword by adding a new entry under the *%Export* declaration. Then, add a new entry for the linked modifier by adding a new entry to the *%Rules* declaration.
- 2. Go to polyglot.types.Flags class. Add a new static field declaration like public static final Flags LINKED = createFlag("linked", null). Then, add three corresponding methods: Flags linked(), Flags clearLinked(), and boolean isLinked.
- 3. Go to class x10.parser.X10SemanticRules.FlagModifier. Add a new field declaration: public static int LINKED = 19, and change the field NUM_FLAGS correspondingly. Change the FlagModifier.flags() method by adding an extraif condition like if(flag == LINKED) return Flags.LINKED. Add a new entry in method FlagModifier.name like if(flag = LINKED) return "linked". Finally, add a new rule for the modifier linked in the X10SemanticRules class:

```
void rule_Modifier13() {
setResult( new FlagModifier(pos(), FlagModifier.LINKED));
}
```

4. Depending on how the new keyword should be used, you may also need to modify a few declarations in classes FlagModifier and TypeSystemLc. For the linked case, the new keyword can only be used to decorate a type, thus a new entry in the typeModifiers declaration is added.

Adding new grammar rules

1. Go to x10.parser.x10.g file. Add corresponding productions as well as their action methods in class X10SemanticRules.

- 2. For the linked keyword, first add a production rule under the *Modifier* :: = declaration, then add a production rule under the *TypeName* ::= declaration. For each added production rule, corresponding action method must be added in class X10SemanticRules.
- 3. For the new atomic section syntax, one additional rule needs to be added to the AtomicStatement declaration. Similarly, corresponding action method should be added in class X10SemanticRules.

3.2.1 Building the new parser

You need to first download the lpg.generator. The easiest way is to download it from its CVS repository (*lpg.cvs.sf.net* with *anonymous* user, and repository path: /cvs-root/lpg). Be aware of choosing the a correct version for your environment. In my environment, I chose two projects lpg.generator and lpg.generator.linux_x86_64. The first project must be used by any version, and the second project is platform-specific.

Run the *grammar* task in the x10.compiler/build.xml configuration file, and remember to refresh the whole project.

3.2.2 Define new AST nodes and propagate type information

Using data-centric synchronization features, two variable can be declared as:

```
var a1:A = new A();
var a2: linked A = new linked A();
```

The above variable a1 and a2 technically have different types. a1 is a raw A object, and a2 is a linked A object. Thus, the compiler must keep this *linked* information through the whole compiling process, propagating from the initial parsing phase to the type-checking phase to the code generation phase.

To achieve the above goal, the following changes are made (**Note**: the following changes can work, but may not be the optimal way for implementation):

- 1. Add a FlagsNode flags field to the TypeNode_c class. This field indicates whether a type node is linked to other's atomic set. The value of flags is null by default, and is set to linked if the current object is *linked* to somewhere else. **Note:** the copy method must be overriden or modified, to make sure this new flags field will also be copied.
- 2. Add a FlagsNode flags field to the ParsedName class to represent whether the type object is linked or not. The flags field can only be null (the default value) or linked.
- 3. Change the ParsedName.toType method. It checks, if the flags field is linked, the compiler needs to create a different AST node of type X10AmbTypeNodeLinked_c for it.
- 4. The newly added X10AmbTypeNodeLinked_c type represent a linked ambiguious AST node. Its flags field is set to linked inside method ParsedName.toType.
- 5. When dis-ambiguating a type node, the linked flags must be preserved and propagated correctly from the X10AmbTypeNodeLinked_c node. The code for

preserving the linked flag is in X10AmbTypeNodeLinked_c.disambiguate, and X10Disamb_c.disambiguateNoPrefix methods. The most important notice here is: when setting a type node as linked, that type node must be copied and then re-set the field value on the copied node (see the code in X10Disamb_c.disambiguateNoPrefix as an example). This is because *all* variables with the same type are sharing the *same* type node object; thus, a linked node must have a different object (with the same type value but an additional linked field).

6. Finally, the AbstractNodeFactory_c, NodeFactory, and X10NodeFactory_c should also be modified by adding additional factory methods to create the new X10AmbTypeNodeLinked_c nodes.

3.3 Performing type checking

The visitor X10AtomicityChecker performs type-checking for the new grammar rules. As indicated in its leaveCall(Node, Node, NodeVisitor) method, the type-checking is essentially invoking the <code>checkAtomicity</code> and <code>checkLinkProperty</code> methods on each AST node as the visitor traverses the whole tree.

Two methods checkAtomicity and checkLinkProperty are added to a few related places, namely, classes Nodelc, JLlc, and NodeOps. The default behavior of these two methods are doing nothing. So, if needed, an AST node can override these two methods to check certain properties.

In general, <code>checkAtomicity</code> fetches the <code>linked</code> flags from the <code>TypeNode</code> (that is associated with some AST nodes that are translated from <code>X10AmbTypeNodeLinked_c</code>), and add atomic context to its type. The atomic context here represents the atomic set to which the declared var is linked to. To keep the atomic context information, I added a field <code>Type atomicContext</code> to class <code>X10ParsedClassType_c</code> to record the linked object type. This field is set inside the <code>checkAtomicity</code> method (for a few special cases, it is set inside the <code>typeCheck</code> method). After fetching the <code>atomicContext</code>, the visitor checks the linked property against the typing rules. (Note that, for most cases, <code>checkAtomicity</code> and <code>checkLinkProperty</code> can be merged into one method).

During type-checking, we not only need to check the type compatibility as the normal X10 type-checking does, but also need to check the consistency of the atomicContext field to see whether a variable is always linked to the same atomic set.

I next use a few examples to show how the type checking is performed:

1. checking assignment

```
class C {
  public def foo() {
    var a1:A = new A();
    var a2: linked A = new linked A();
    a2 = a1; //type check this assignment
  }
}
```

The type of al is A, with atomicContext = null

The type of a2 is A, with atomicContext = C, indicating variable a2's atomic set is linked to C.this.atomic set.

Thus, when checking the assignment a2 = a1, the type checker will issue an error, saying that a2 is linked to somewhere else, and can not be assigned to a raw object a1 which is not linked to any other atomic set.

2. checking field access.

Consider the following example (just for illustration purpose. we may make field as strongly private later):

```
class C {
  var f: linked C = new linked C();
}
class B {
  public def foo() {
    var c1: linked C = new linked C();
    c1.f = new C(); //type check this assignment
  }
}
```

The type of f field is: C with atomicContext = C

The type of c1 is: C with atomicContext = B

The type of new linked C() inside method foo() is: C with atomicContext = B

The tricky part is that expression cl.f has type: C but with atomicContext = B, since as indicated by the typing rule the accessed field's atomicContext equals the receiver's atomicContext if both are linked.

Thus, this assignment type checks.

3.4 Code generation

The code generation is a source-code-level X10-to-X10 code translation process. All relevant code is in class X10LockMapAtomicityTranslator.

The major code transformation consists of the following phases:

- 1. Class-level transformation:
 - Let each compiled class (interface) implement (inherit) x10.util.concurrent.Atomic.
 - Associate each class with a lock by inserting a unique lock id field. The
 lock id can be used to find the corresponding lock in a global lock map.
 Then, add corresponding getter method for the lock field.
 - For each constructor, create a new constructor by adding an additional lock field formal parameter, then add the new constructor to the class declaration.

Here is one transformation example:

```
public class A {
    this() {...}
    this(v:Int) {}
}

public class A implements Atomic {
    var lockid:Int = -1;
    public def OrderedLock getOrderedLock() { return OrderedLock.getLock(lockid);}
    static var static.lockid:Int = OrderedLock.createNewLockID();
    public static def OrderedLock getStaticOrderedLock() { return static.lockid;}
    this() {...}
    this(lock:OrderedLock) {... this.lockid = lock.getIndex();}
    this(v:Int) {...}
    this(v:Int, lock:OrderedLock) {... this.lockid = lock.getIndex();}
}
```

2. Method-level transformation

- Add additional local locks for parameters which are not associated with a lock (e.g., lib code, and primitive types)
- Transform atomic method to acquire locks

Here is an example:

```
public def foo(b:Array[Int]) {
    finish {
        async {atomic(b) {...update b... }}
        async {atomic(b) {...update b... }}
}

public def foo(b:Array[Int]) {
    var lockid.for.b:Int = OrderedLock.createNewLockID();
    finish {
        async {atomic(b) {...update b... }}
        async {atomic(b) {...update b... }}
}
```

Here is an example for atomic method (**note:** atomic method is the syntactic sugar of atomic (this), and an atomic method will also protect the atomic sets of its formal parameters):

```
public atomic def foo(a:A) {
    ...//do something
}

public atomic def foo(a:A) {
    try{
        OrderedLock.acquireLocks(this.getOrderedLock(), a.getOrderedLock());
        ...//do something
} finally {
        OrderedLock.releaseLocks(this.getOrderedLock(), a.getOrderedLock());
    }
}
```

3. Block-level transformation

This phase primarily declares locks to protect local variables that are accessed inside an atomic section. Here is an example (in which the local value must be protected):

```
public def count() {
    var value:Int = 0;
    finish for (var i:Int = 0; i < 100; i++) async { atomic(value) value ++; }
}

public def count() {
    var value:Int = 0;
    var local.lockid.for.value = OrderedLock.createNewLockID();
    finish for (var i:Int = 0; i < 100; i++) async { atomic(value) value ++; }
}</pre>
```

4. Atomic-section-level transformation

This phase primarily grabs suitable locks for each atomic section. Here is an example which covers almost all locking cases:

```
public def foo(a:Array[Int], c:C) {
    var value:Int = 0;
    finish for (var i:Int = 0; i < 100; i++) async { atomic(value, a, c, this) { ... do something} }</pre>
       \Downarrow
public def foo(a:Array[Int], c:C) {
    var local_lockid_for_a = OrderedLock.createNewLockID();
    var value:Int = 0;
    var local_lockid_for_value = OrderedLock.createNewLockID();
    finish for (var i:Int = 0; i < 100; i++) async {</pre>
             OrderedLock.acquireLocks( local_lockid_for_value, local_lockid_for_a,
                c.getOrderedLock(), this.getOrderedLock());
              ...do something
        } finally {
              OrderedLock.releaseLocks(local_lockid_for_value,
                                                                local_lockid_for_a,
                c.getOrderedLock(), this.getOrderedLock());
   }
}
```

5. Other transformations.

In particular, do **remember** you must manually update the captured environment vars of async, at, ateach, and athome code block after performing transformation. Please see the X10LockMapAtomicityTranslator.visitAsync_c as an example.

3.5 Runtime library

Two classes are added to the x10.runtime project:

- 1. x10.util.concurrent.Atomic. An interface that every compiled class (interface) will implement (inherit) for data-centric sychronization.
- 2. x10.util.concurrent.OrderedLock. A class wrapping a lock field and a unique lock id identifier. This class contains all lock operations used in the compiler, such as createNewLock, acquireLocks, and releaseLocks. It also maintains a global lock map.

3.5.1 Utility methods

A few useful utility classes I added:

- 1. x10.util.X10TypeUtils contains a few utility methods for processing type information.
- 2. Two visitor classes: x10.visit.AtomicLocalAndFieldAccessVisitor and x10.visit.X10AtomicLockLocalCollector are used to fetch referred variables inside the atomic sections. Please see the code documentation for more details.
 - 3. A few common error messages are organized in the Errors class.

3.6 Limitations and possible solutions

The section summarizes some known limitations in the current design and implementation:

- 1. The global lock map in class x10.util.concurrent.OrderedLock may lead to potential memory leak. This lock map maps an Integer lock id to an OrderedLock object. When the object associated with a lock id has been recycled, this corresponding map entry should be deleted. Furthermore, if the program is running on multiple places, there will be one copy of lock map per place. Thus, the lock map will no longer be a globally one. This will lead to problems like lock id conflicts, and how to deal with a sychronized object passed from one place to anther (which lock should be used to protect it?).
 - Here are a few possible solutions. First, replace the global lock map with a <code>WeakHashMap</code>. This <code>WeakHashMap</code> maps each object to its associated lock object, so that when the (Java) object has been recycled, the corresponding entry will be automatically deleted. Second, override the <code>finalize</code> method in class <code>x10.lang.Object</code> to manually delete the corresponding entry in the lock map. The above two solutions can only be applied to Java backend, and there is still no clear solution for the C++ backend. Third, improve the lock id allocation mechanism to avoid conflict id from different places. A possible way is to combine the <code>place_id</code> with a <code>place-unique</code> integer as the lock id to ensure its global uniqueness. Another way is to use a separate service (running in a separate place) to allocate locks upon the request.
- 2. Arrays are not well supported in the current implementation. For example, you can not declare an array like: var linkedArray: Array[linked C] = new Array[linked C](). Implementing this support requires to change a few

- places. First, change class AmbMacroTypeNode_c to capture the linked modifier on the parameterized type. Second, change the disambiguate method in class AmbMacroTypeNode_c to propagate the linked information to each type node. Third, implement the checkAtomicity and checkLinkProperty methods in all array-related AST node classes like polyglot.ast.ArrayAccess_c and polyglot.ast.ArrayInit_c for type-checking.
- 3. The current design treats linked as a type modifier. This may unnessarily complicate the implementation (as seen above, multiple code places need to be changed to gurantee the *linked* information is correctly propagated). A more natural solution can be integrating the linked keyword seamlessly into the *constraint types* in X10. In that way, a linked var can be declared as: var c:C{linked} = new C{linked}(). Doing so can leverage the existing powerful constraint solver in X10 for type checking.
- 4. A few code issues (pure engineering improvement):
 - There are fairly code repetition in the X10LockMapAtomicityTranslator class. It is possible (but not easy) to reduce the code clones.
 - There are some classes and methods annotated with @Deprecade in the code base. Such classes and methods are not used in the current implementation, and thus can be safely removed (in certain cases, you may need to resolve all compilation errors; but that is straightford such as removing all references). The reason I still kept them is those code can be used as in experiments for comparison purpose. For example, the deprecaded class X10MixedAtomicityTranslaotr implements a different way of code generation. It infers all accessed variables inside each atomic section.
 - When visitor X10LockMapAtomicityTranslator adds new code (i.e., field declarations, constructors, field access) to the existing class declaration, it needs to make sure different instances of the same variable should share the same def object. However, this is not fully preserved in the current implementation (see Section 4). For example, as the visitor visits a New_c statement, it needs to add an additional lock argument value to it. However, at this point, the new constructor with the additional lock formal parameter has not been inserted to the class declaration yet. Therefore, the visitNew_c method need to create another ConstructorDef object. This created ConstructorDef object is different from the def object used for the new constructor (which is created when the visitor leaves the class declaration). This issue can lead to a few problems. Particularly, in the ClosureRemover and X10InnerClassRemover classes, when the constructor def is updated, the def referred by the New_c statement will not be updated correspondingly. I temporarily work around that problem by manually updating each constructor def.
 - A static option compile can be removed in class Configuration. This option should be set to true when compiling all x10 runtime library. As I found during my (incomplete) testing, this compile can be superseded by the DATA_CENTRIC option (set DATA_CENTRIC to false is sufficient for compiling x10 runtime lib). I leave it in the code base in case I missed some corner cases that need to manually set this flag.

4 Tricks, tips and pitfalls

I finally summarize a few useful tricks, tips and common pitfalls.

- 1. How to test your code. According to the standard user manual on the X10 website, you can run ant dist to build the whole compiler, use x10c to compile the code, and use x10 to run the code. The command ant dist will compile all compiler code as well as the runtime lib, and cost over 4 minutes. Normally, you do not need to run this command everytime after making some changes only to the x10.compiler project. Instead, running ant compiler-jar is much more faster (completed in 5 seconds). If you are using eclipse, a more convenient way to test the compiler is to run the code directly inside eclipse as follows: (1) select an X10 class file on the explorer view, and (2) click the run \rightarrow x10c launch option. The embedded x10c will automatically compile the *selected* X10 file. The output Java file is located in the out folder.
- 2. **How to debug your code.** Debugging X10 code is not an easy task. Here are a few tips:
 - Use the generated Java file. Each Java file contains line numbers in the original X10 code for the transformed Java code. Those line numbers are very useful to trace back to the original X10 file for fault localization.
 - Pretty-print an AST Node. There are two useful methods: Node.prettyPrint(System.out), and PrettyPrinter.printAST. The first method prints an AST node in a text form (what you see in a code file), while the second one prints an AST node in a tree structure (you can see each Node types from the result).
- 3. Add a compiler configuration option. It is very easy: just add two static field declarations to file x10.Configuration class. The first one declares the option name, such as public boolean OPTIMIZE = false, and the second one is a String type that must end with a fixed suffix _desc as an explanation message, like private static final String OPTIMIZE_desc = "Generate optimized code";
- 4. **Be aware of the visitor order.** Normally, all visitors override the leaveCall method to manipulate the AST. You can treat this method to visit a given AST in a bottom-up manner. Roughly speaking, for the code snippet below, it will visit code places in the order of *A*, *B*, *C*, *D*, *E*, and *F*.

5. **Examples for reference.** People who are new to x10.compiler often need to find existing code examples for reference when hacking the compiler infrastructure. Here are a few good places:

- x10.visit.Lowerer contains many examples for $X10 \rightarrow X10$ code transformation.
- x10.visit.X10InnerClassRemover contains a few more advanced transformation code.
- \bullet x10.ast.X10MethodDecl_c.typeCheck gives a quick idea on how type-checking is performed in X10.
- x10.visit.X10TypeChecker gives a quick idea on how to write a visit to manipulate the AST.
- 6. **What I have changed.** In case I missed some important changes I made, please search "data-centric" in the whole eclipse project. Normally, places that I editted are associated with comments with the above keyword.

5 Acknowlegement

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