Modular abstract syntax trees (MAST): substitution tensors with second-class sorts

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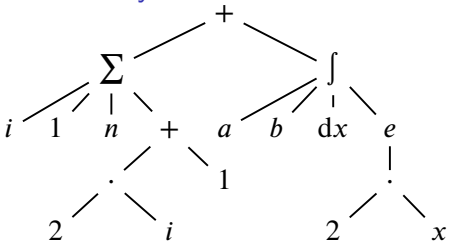
Syntax representation

$$\left(\sum_{i=1}^{n}(2i+1)\right)+\int_{a}^{b}e^{ax}\mathrm{d}x$$

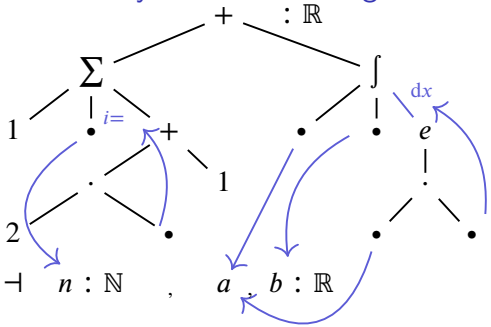
Concrete syntax

"(", "$\sum$", "$_$", "{", "i", "=", "1", "}", "{", "n", "(", "2", "i", "+", "1", ")", "}", …

Abstract syntax



Abstract syntax with binding



Call-by-Value λ-calculus

$$
\begin{array}{lll}
A, B, C ::= & & \text{type} \\
 & \beta & \text{base} \\
\mid & A \to B & \text{function} \\
\mid & (\!| C_i : A_i \,|\, i \in I |\!) & \text{record } (I \text{ finite}) \\
\mid & \{\!| C_i : A_i \,|\, i \in I |\!\} & \text{variant } (I \text{ finite}) \\
\vdots & &
\end{array}
$$

$$
\begin{array}{lll}
V, W ::= & & \text{value} \\
 & x & \text{variable} \\
\mid & \lambda x : A.M & \text{function abst.} \\
\mid & \left(C_i : V_i \,\middle|\, i \in I\right) & \text{record c'tor} \\
\mid & A.C_i\ V & \text{variant c'tor} \\
\vdots & &
\end{array}
$$

$$
\begin{array}{lll}
M, N, K, L ::= & & \text{term} \\
 & \mathbf{val}\, V & \text{value} \\
\mid & \mathbf{let}\, x_1 = M_1; \ldots; x_n = M_n\ \mathbf{in}\ N & \text{sequencing} \\
\mid & M @ N & \text{function application} \\
\mid & \left(C_1 : M_1, \ldots, C_n : M_n\right) & \text{record constructor} \\
\mid & \mathbf{case}\, M\ \mathbf{of}\ \left(C_1 x_1, \ldots, C_n x_n\right) \Rightarrow N & \text{record pattern match} \\
\mid & A.C_i M & \text{variant constructor} \\
\mid & \mathbf{case}\, M\ \mathbf{of}\ \left\{C_i x_i \Rightarrow M_i \,\middle|\, i \in I\right\} N & \text{variant pattern match} \\
\vdots & &
\end{array}
$$

High-level motivation

Initial Algebra Semantics Programme [Goguen and Thatcher'74]

Denotational semantics á la carte [homage to Swierstra'08, Forster and Stark'20]

CBV customisation menu

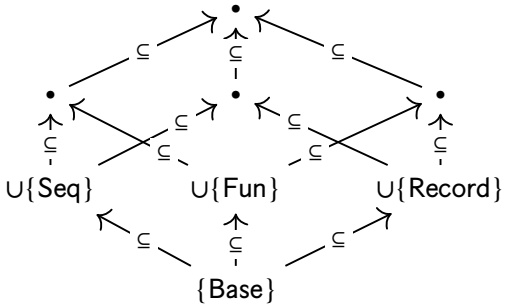
fragment	syntactic constructs	types	semantics
base	returning a value: val		strong monad over a Cartesian category
sequential	sequencing: **let**		
functions	abst., app. $(\lambda x. : A), (@)$	function $(\rightarrow)$	Kleisli exponentials
variants	c'tors, pattern match $A.C_i -$, **case** $-$ **of** $\{C_i x_i \Rightarrow - \mid i \in I\}$	variant $[\![C_i : - \mid i \in I]\!]$	distributive category

⋮

Dream

Iterative semantic development

- Add syntax
- Add semantics

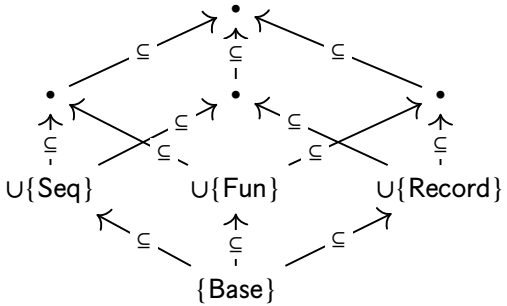


- Profit!

Dream vs. Reality

Iterative semantic development

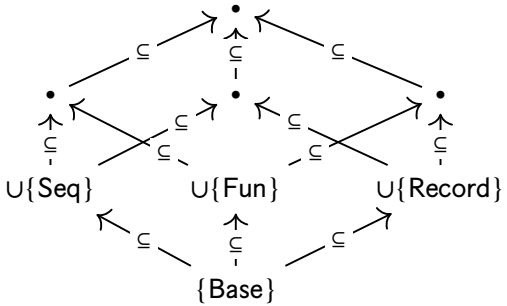
- Add syntax
- Add semantics
- Develop meta-theory:
  - Substitution lemma
  - Compositionality
  - Soundness
  - Adequacy
- Profit!



Dream vs. Bleak Reality

Iterative semantic development

- Add syntax
- Add semantics
- Develop meta-theory:
  - Substitution lemma
    Tedious and boring
  - Compositionality
    Tedious and boring
  - Soundness
  - Adequacy
- Profit!



Meta-theory: the tedious parts

Lemma (substitution)

Syntactic substitution corresponds to semantic composition:

$$[\![M\,[\theta]]\!] = [\![M]\!] \circ [\![\theta]\!]$$

Lemma (compositionality)

Composite semantics is independent of component syntax:

$$[\![C[M]]\!] = \mathrm{plug}([\![C[-]]\!]\,,\,[\![M]\!])$$

Meta-theory: the tedious parts

Lemma (substitution)

Syntactic substitution corresponds to semantic composition:

$$[\![M\,[\theta]]\!] = [\![M]\!] \circ [\![\theta]]\!]$$

Proof.

Presupposes a syntactic substitution lemma. Typically several inductions over all constructs. □

Lemma (compositionality)

Composite semantics is independent of component syntax:

$$[\![C[M]]\!] = \mathrm{plug}([\![C[-]]\!]\,,\,[\![M]\!])$$

Proof.

Tediously define terms with holes, plugging holes syntactically, carefully capturing some variables but not others. Then induction over semantics. □

Dream

It would be nice if tedious bits were…

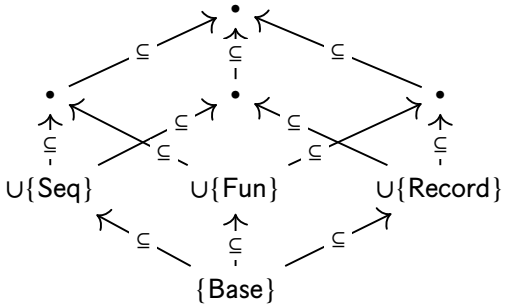
… free

Dream vs. Reality

It would be nice if tedious bits were…

… ~~free~~

… syntactically scaleable: additive syntactic work per new feature



Expression problem [Reynolds'75, Cook'90, Krishnamurthi, Felleisen and Friedman'98, Wadler'98]

Spec [Wadler'98]

Both:

- **Extend** object-language syntax
- **Add** meta-language functions/properties of programs

While:

- Without recompiling previous modules; alternatively
- Retaining and reusing both old and new languages

Some solutions

- Scala Mixings [Zenger'98, Zenger and Odersky'01]
- Visitor Pattern in Pizza, Zodiac [Krishnamurthi, Felleisen and Friedman'98]
- Recursive Generics [Wadler'98]
- Data-types á la carte: coproducts of signature functors [Swierstra'08]

SOAS: Second-Order Abstract Syntax

[Fiore, Plotkin, and Turi '99]

- Initial algebra characterisation for abstract syntax with binding-aware substitution
- Robust to extensions:
  - polymorphism [Fiore and Hamana'13]
  - mechanisation [Crole'11, Allais et al.'18, Fiore and Szamozvancev'22]
  - substructurality [Fiore and Ranchod'25]
- CBN works smoothly. Doesn't cover CBV. Technical reasons later:
  - Substitute **in**: values and terms
  - Substitute for variables: values only

Slogan

for substitution: values are 1^{st}-class but terms are 2^{nd}-class

[cf. Levy's CBPV, '04]

Goal: abstract syntax with heterogeneous sorting

Sorting signature $\mathbf{R}$

- set sort

partitioned into

- bindable/1^{st}-class sorts $s \in \text{Bind}$
- non-bindable/2^{nd}-class sorts

Example (CBV sorting signature)

- sort $:= \{A, \text{comp}\, A | A \in \text{Type}\}$
- Bind $:= \text{Type}_{\text{CBV}}$

Example (CBPV sorting signature)

- Bind $:= \{A | A \text{ value type}\}$
- sort $:= \text{Type}_{\text{CBPV}}$

Core contribution

classical theory (SOAS)	generalise ⇝	this work (MAST)
$\mathbf{PSh}(\mathrm{sort} \times \mathrm{sort}_{\vdash}), \otimes$ monoidal product		$\mathbf{PSh}(\mathrm{sort} \times \mathrm{Bind}_{\vdash}), \otimes$ right-unital associative **skew** monoidal product

Skew monoidal heterogeneous tensor

$(P \otimes Q) \otimes L \cong P \otimes (Q \otimes L)$ (associative)

$P \otimes \mathbb{I} \cong P$ (right-unital)

$\mathbb{I} \otimes Q \xrightarrow{\ell} Q$ (non-invertible!) $(\mathbb{I} \otimes \mathbb{1})_s = \emptyset \ncong \mathbb{1}_s (s \notin \mathrm{Bind})$

Contribution

Modular Abstract Syntax Trees (MAST)

- SOAS $\overset{\text{generalise}}{\rightsquigarrow}$ 2^{nd}-class sorts
  Using **skew** bicategories/monoidal categories, and:
  - Kleisli bicategories [Gambino, Fiore, Hyland, and Winskel'19]
  - Familial theory of SOAS [Fiore and Szamozvancev'25]
- MAST tutorial
- Case-study: CBV semantics á la carte (128 substitution lemmata)

WIP

- Idris 2 implementation of computational fragment [cf. Fiore and Szamozvancev'22]
  Case-study: intrinsically-typed FFI-binding with holes for SMTLIB (29 theories)
- Replace skew monoidal structure and monoids with
  monoidal structure and actions

[cf. Fiore and Turi'01]

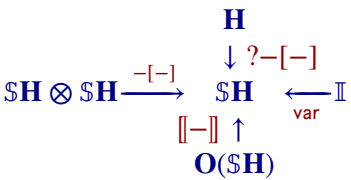
Talk structure

- Contribution
- Substitution monoids
- MAST in detail
- WIP

Capstone: abstract syntax and substitution universality

Thm (representation)

abstract syntax with operators in $\mathbf{O}$ *and holes in* $\mathbf{H}$
amounts to
free substitution $\mathbf{O}$*-monoid over* $\mathbf{H}$*:*



Plugging holes/metavariable substitution

Kleisli extension ($\gg=$) for $\mathbf{O}$-monoid monad.

Capstone: semantics

Key propaganda

compositional, binding-respecting denotational semantics
amounts to
substitution $\mathbf{O}$-monoid:

$$\begin{array}{ccccc} \mathbf{M} \otimes \mathbf{M} & \xrightarrow{-[-]} & \mathbf{M} & \xleftarrow[\text{var}]{} & \mathbb{I} \\ & & [\![-]\!] \uparrow & & \\ & & \mathbf{OM} & & \end{array}$$

The denotational semantics for terms with holes in $\mathbf{H}$ is the unique substitution $\mathbf{O}$-monoid homomorphism over $\mathbf{H}$:

$$\left(\mathbb{S}\mathbf{H}, -[-], \mathsf{var}, [\![-]\!], ?-[\mathsf{id}]\right) \xrightarrow{[\![-]\!]} (\mathbf{M}, -[-], \mathsf{var}, [\![-]\!], \mathsf{menv}) \qquad (\mathbf{H} \xrightarrow{\mathsf{menv}} \mathbf{M})$$

Meta-theory in one line

Lemma (substitution)

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Syntactic substitution corresponds to semantic composition:

substitution monoid homomorphism

$$[\![M\,[\theta]]\!] = [\![-[-]\,[M,\theta]]\!] \overset{\downarrow}{=} -[-]\left[[\![M]\!]\,,[\![\theta]\!]\right] := [\![M]\!] \circ [\![\theta]\!]$$

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Composite semantics is independent of component syntax:

$$[\![C[M]]\!] = \qquad \mathrm{plug}([\![C[-]]\!]\,, [\![M]\!])$$

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Syntactic substitution corresponds to semantic composition:

$$[\![M\,[\theta]]\!] = [\![-[-]\,[M,\theta]]\!] \overset{\text{substitution monoid homomorphism}}{=} -[-]\left[[\![M]\!], [\![\theta]]\!\right] \coloneqq [\![M]\!] \circ [\![\theta]]\!$$

Lemma (compositionality)

Composite semantics is independent of component syntax:

$$[\![C[M]]\!] = [\![(?m\,[M]) \gg\!= (m \mapsto C[-])]\!] = [\![?m\,[M]]\!] \gg\!= (m \mapsto [\![C[-]]\!])$$
$$=: \mathrm{plug}([\![C[-]]\!], [\![M]]\!) \qquad \uparrow \gg\!= \text{ is homomorphic extension}$$

Talk structure

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- WIP

MAST summary: semantic domain for syntax and semantics

MAST provides ($\mathbf{R}$ = (sort, Bind) sorting system)

- Contexts
- Renamings
- $\mathbf{R}$-structures:
- Variables structure:
- substitution tensors: $(P \otimes Q)_s\Gamma \ni [p, \theta]_\Delta$:

$$\mathsf{Bind}_{\vdash} \ni \Gamma ::= [x_1 : s_1, \ldots, x_n : s_n]$$

$$\mathsf{Bind}_{\vdash}(\Gamma, \Delta) \ni \Gamma \vdash \rho : \Delta$$

$$\mathbf{PSh}(\mathsf{sort} \times \mathsf{Bind}_{\vdash}) \ni P : \mathsf{sort} \times \mathsf{Bind}_{\vdash}^{\mathrm{op}} \to \mathbf{Set}$$

$P_s\Gamma \ni p$: sort s element with variables in Γ

$$\mathbf{R\text{-}Struct} \ni \mathbb{I}_s\Gamma := \{x | (x : s) \in \Gamma\}$$

$$\mathbf{R\text{-}Struct} \ni P \otimes Q, P \otimes_{\bullet} \left(\mathsf{var} \overset{\mathbb{I}}{\downarrow}_A\right)$$

P-element: $p \in P_s\Gamma$

Q-closure : $\theta \in \prod_{(y:r)\in\Delta} Q_r\Gamma$

identifying, e.g.:

$$[p[\mathrm{weaken}], \theta]_{\Delta_1 + \Delta_2} = [p, \theta \circ \rho]_{\Delta_1}$$

$$\left[p[x', x'' \mapsto x]_{x\in\Delta}, \theta\right]_\Delta = [p, \theta + \theta]_{\Delta + \Delta}$$

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- Renamings — $\mathsf{Bind}_{\vdash}(\Gamma, \Delta) \ni \Gamma \vdash \rho : \Delta$
- $\mathbf{R}$-structures: $\mathbf{PSh}(\mathsf{sort} \times \mathsf{Bind}_{\vdash}) \ni P : \mathsf{sort} \times \mathsf{Bind}_{\vdash}^{\mathsf{op}} \to \mathbf{Set}$

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Scope-change as tensorial strength

$$\mathsf{str}^{\mathbf{O}} : (\mathbf{O}P) \otimes_{\bullet} \left(\mathsf{var} \overset{\mathbb{I}}{\downarrow}_A\right) \to \mathbf{O}\left(P \otimes_{\bullet} \left(\mathsf{var} \overset{\mathbb{I}}{\downarrow}_A\right)\right)$$

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MAST summary: semantic domain for syntax and semantics

MAST provides ($\mathbf{R} = (\mathsf{sort}, \mathsf{Bind})$ sorting system)

- Contexts — $\mathsf{Bind}_{\vdash} \ni \Gamma ::= [x_1 : s_1, \ldots, x_n : s_n]$
- Renamings — $\mathsf{Bind}_{\vdash}(\Gamma, \Delta) \ni \Gamma \vdash \rho : \Delta$
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  $P_s\Gamma \ni p$: sort s element with variables in Γ
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Substitution monoids

$$\mathbf{M} \otimes \mathbf{M} \xrightarrow{-[-]} \mathbf{M} \xleftarrow{\mathsf{var}} \mathbb{I}$$

What breaks the unitor?

Substitution tensor

$$(P \otimes Q)_s \Gamma \coloneqq \int^{\Delta} P_s \Delta \times \prod_{(y:r) \in \Delta} Q_r \Gamma$$

for $s \notin \mathsf{Bind}$, $Q = \mathbb{1}$, $\mathbb{I}_s \Delta = \emptyset$:

$$(\mathbb{I} \otimes Q)_s \Gamma \coloneqq \int^{\Delta} \overbrace{\emptyset}^{\mathbb{I}_s \Delta} \times \prod_{(y:r) \in \Delta} Q_r \Gamma = \int^{\Delta} \emptyset = \emptyset \neq \mathbb{1} = Q_s \Gamma$$

MAST: semantic domain for syntax

Signature functors

$\mathbf{O}$ ↻ **R-Struct**

Scope-change as tensorial strength

$$\mathsf{str}^{\mathbf{O}} : (\mathbf{O}P) \otimes_{\bullet} \left(\mathsf{var} \overset{\mathbb{I}}{\downarrow}_{A}\right) \to \mathbf{O}\left(P \otimes_{\bullet} \left(\mathsf{var} \overset{\mathbb{I}}{\downarrow}_{A}\right)\right)$$

NB: $(\otimes_{\bullet}) : \mathbf{R\text{-}Struct} \times (\mathbb{I}/\mathbf{R\text{-}Struct}) \to \mathbf{R\text{-}Struct}$

$$P \otimes_{\bullet} \left(\mathsf{var} \overset{\mathbb{I}}{\downarrow}_{A}\right) \coloneqq P \otimes A$$

Example

Sequential fragment signature functor:

$$(\mathsf{Seq}\, X)_{\mathsf{comp}\, B}\Gamma \coloneqq \coprod_{A \in \mathsf{Type}} \left(\begin{array}{l}(\mathbf{let}\ x : A = \_\ \mathbf{in}\ \_) : \\ \left(X_{\mathsf{comp}\, A}\Gamma \times X_{\mathsf{comp}\, B}\,(\Gamma, x : A)\right)\end{array}\right)$$

$$(\mathsf{Seq}\, X)_{A}\Gamma \coloneqq \emptyset$$

$$\mathsf{str}^{\mathsf{Seq}}\left[\mathbf{let}\ x : A = (p \in P_{\mathsf{comp}\, A}\Delta)\ \mathbf{in}\ (q \in P_{\mathsf{comp}\, B}(\Delta, x : A)), \theta\right]_{\Delta}$$
$$\coloneqq \left(\mathbf{let}\ x : A = [p, \theta]_{\Delta}\ \mathbf{in}\ [q, (\theta, x : \mathsf{var}\, x)]_{\Delta, x : A}\right)$$

Takeaway (modularity)

Each syntactic construct defines its own binding, renaming, and substitution structure

Signatrue combinators [cf. SOAS]

- sums & products of signature functors
- scope extension $(\Gamma\triangleright)$
- sort extension $\underset{s}{\looparrowright} : \mathbf{PSh}\,\mathsf{Bind}_{\vdash} \to \mathbf{PSh}\left(\mathsf{sort} \times \mathsf{Bind}_{\vdash}\right)$
- sort application $(@s) : \mathbf{PSh}\left(\mathsf{sort} \times \mathsf{Bind}_{\vdash}\right) \to \mathbf{PSh}\,\mathsf{Bind}_{\vdash}$

Example (Binding signatures [Actzel'78])

$\mathsf{Seq} \cong$

$$\coprod_{A \in \mathsf{Type}} \left((\mathbf{let}\ x : A = \_\ \mathbf{in}\ \_) : \underset{\mathsf{comp}\ B}{\looparrowright} ((@\mathsf{comp}\ A) \times ([x : A]\triangleright)) \right)$$

NB

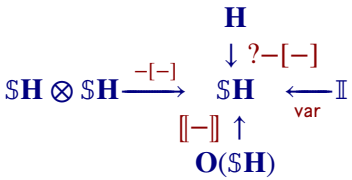
$$(\mathsf{Seq}\ X)_{\mathsf{comp}\ B}\Gamma :=$$
$$\coprod_{A \in \mathsf{Type}} \left((\mathbf{let}\ x : A = \_\ \mathbf{in}\ \_) : \left(X_{\mathsf{comp}\ A}\Gamma \times X_{\mathsf{comp}\ B}\,(\Gamma, x : A)\right) \right)$$
$$(\mathsf{Seq}\ X)_{A}\Gamma := \emptyset$$

Abstract syntax: inductive representation

Every initial algebra:

$$\mathbb{S}^{\mathbf{O}}\mathbf{H} \coloneqq \mu X.(\mathbf{O}X) \amalg \mathbb{I} \amalg \mathbf{H} \otimes X$$

Supports standard definitions:



Independently of concrete representation, e.g.,:

- De-Bruijn
- Nominal
- Locally nameless
- Co-de Bruijn
- Graphical

Example

$\mathbf{M} = \big(\mathcal{C}, \mathrm{T}, \mathrm{return}, \gg\!=, [\![-]\!]\big)$:

- $\mathcal{C}$: Cartesian category with chosen finite products
- $\big(\mathrm{T}, \mathrm{return}, \gg\!=\big)$ strong monad over $\mathcal{C}$
- $[\![-]\!]$: Type $\to \mathcal{C}$ type interpretation

induces:

- A CBV-structure: $\qquad \text{CBV-}\mathbf{Struct} \ni \mathbf{M}_s\Gamma \coloneqq \mathcal{C}([\![\Gamma]\!], [\![s]\!])$
- Standard interpretation of contexts, computations, renaming:

$$\mathcal{C} \ni [\![\Gamma]\!] \coloneqq \prod_{(x:A)\in\Gamma} [\![A]\!] \qquad \mathcal{C} \ni [\![\mathsf{comp}\, A]\!] \coloneqq \mathrm{T}\, [\![A]\!]$$

$$[\![\rho]\!] \;:\; [\![\Gamma]\!] \xrightarrow{\left(\pi_{x[\rho]} : [\![\Gamma]\!] \to [\![A]\!]\right)_{(x:A)\in\Delta}} \prod_{(x:A)\in\Delta} [\![A]\!] = [\![\Delta]\!]$$

Syntactic substitution monoid

$$\mathbb{S}^{\mathbf{O}}\mathbf{H} \otimes \mathbb{S}^{\mathbf{O}}\mathbf{H} \xrightarrow{-[-]} \mathbb{S}^{\mathbf{O}}\mathbf{H} \xleftarrow{\mathsf{var}} \mathbb{I}$$

Monoid axioms amount to syntactic substitution lemma

Example

Semantic substitution monoid: $\mathbf{M} \otimes \mathbf{M} \xrightarrow{-[-]} \mathbf{M} \xleftarrow{\mathsf{var}} \mathbb{I}$

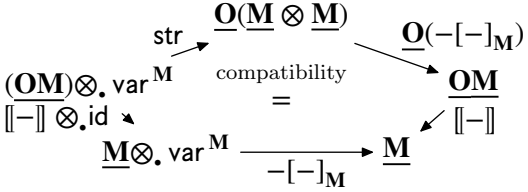
- Substitution via composition:

$$\left([\![\Delta]\!] \xrightarrow{f} [\![s]\!] \right) \left[[\![\Gamma]\!] \xrightarrow{\theta} [\![\Delta]\!] \right] : [\![\Gamma]\!] \xrightarrow{\theta} [\![\Delta]\!] \xrightarrow{f} [\![s]\!]$$

- Variables: $\mathsf{var} : \left((x : A) \in \Gamma \mapsto \left([\![\Gamma]\!] \xrightarrow{\pi_x} [\![A]\!] \right) \right)$
  (1^{st}-class sorts only)

Substitution-compatible algebra

$[\![-]\!] : \mathbf{OM} \to \mathbf{M}$:



Example (Seq-algebra)

$$\left[\!\!\left[\begin{array}{l}\textbf{let } x : A = (\llbracket\Gamma\rrbracket \xrightarrow{f} \mathrm{T}\,\llbracket A\rrbracket)\\ \textbf{in } (\llbracket\Gamma\rrbracket \times \llbracket A\rrbracket \xrightarrow{g} \mathrm{T}\,\llbracket B\rrbracket)\end{array}\right]\!\!\right] :$$

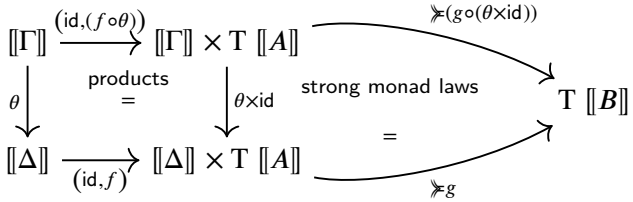
$$\llbracket\Gamma\rrbracket \xrightarrow{(\mathsf{id},f)} \llbracket\Gamma\rrbracket \times \mathrm{T}\,\llbracket A\rrbracket \xrightarrow{\gg g} \mathrm{T}\,\llbracket B\rrbracket$$

Takeaway

Equip each semantic interpretation with its compatibility proof

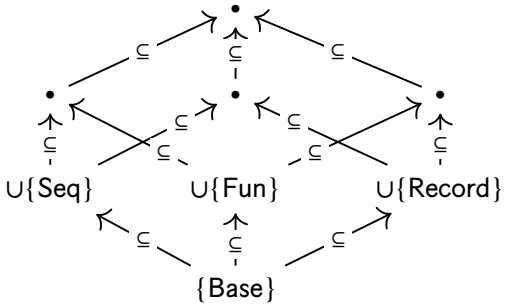
Example (Seq-compatibility)

Compatibility:



Substitution $\mathbf{O}$-monoid

Substitution monoid with compatible $\mathbf{O}$-algebra structure



Want more?

In the paper:

- All the details
- A CBV case-study (128 substitution lemmata)

Talk structure

- Contribution
- Substitution monoids
- MAST in detail
- WIP

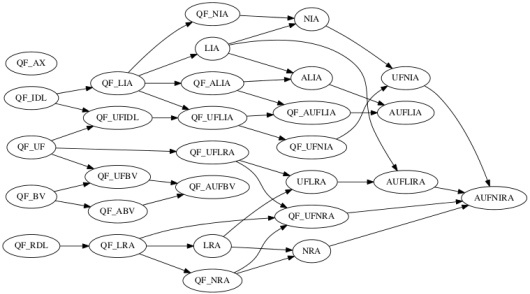
SMTLIB Foreign Function Interface (FFI)

Implementation

Idris 2 [Brady'21] implementation of computational fragment [cf. Fiore and Szamozvancev'22]

SMTLIB query language

- S-expressions
- 29 theories
- multiple syntax extensions



FFI

- Intrinsically-typed well-scoped FFI with holes
- Modular serialisation
- Modular well-scoped parsing [Greg Brown'25]
- Modular type-inference

Non-skew structure with actions

(time permitting on board)

[cf. Fiore and Turi'01]

Contribution

Modular Abstract Syntax Trees (MAST)

- SOAS $\overset{\text{generalise}}{\rightsquigarrow}$ 2^{nd}-class sorts
  Using **skew** bicategories/monoidal categories, and:
  - Kleisli bicategories [Gambino, Fiore, Hyland, and Winskel'19]
  - Familial theory of SOAS [Fiore and Szamozvancev'25]
- MAST tutorial
- Case-study: CBV semantics á la carte (128 substitution lemmata)

WIP

- Idris 2 implementation of computational fragment [cf. Fiore and Szamozvancev'22]
  Case-study: intrinsically-typed FFI-binding with holes for SMTLIB (29 theories)
- Replace skew monoidal structure and monoids with
  monoidal structure and actions

[cf. Fiore and Turi'01]