Advanced Compiler Design HW4 LLVM Pass

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Algorithm Design

The implemented dead code analysis pass focuses on identifying instructions that are trivially dead. Trivially dead instructions are those that produce results which are neither used nor have observable side effects. The analysis leverages LLVM built-in library functions within the Transforms/Utils directory to classify instructions as trivially dead, or potentially dead. The optimization strategy involve scanning the LLVM Intermediate Representation, identifying such instructions, and marking them for further analysis or elimination.

Removing dead code can improve execution efficiency by reducing unnecessary instructions that consume CPU cycles and memory bandwidth. The theoretical improvements include:

- Reduction in instruction count.
- Smaller binary sizes, better cache utilization.
- Enhanced clarity of generated IR for further optimization passes.

One significant challenge was handling the erasure of instructions using the eraseFromParent method. Simply removing an instruction can lead to undefined behavior if its uses are not properly replaced. To mitigate this, we initially replaced deleted values with UndefValue. However, this approach introduced runtime errors when the resulting program attempted to execute operations involving these undefined values.

Code examples illustrating the transformation:

Before analysis:

```
%result = add i32 %1, %2
call void @some_function()
ret i32 %result
```

If %result is unused, the pass marks add instruction as dead.
After analysis (assuming %result is dead):

```
call void @some_function()
ret i32 0
```

Implementation Details

The pass is implemented as an LLVM FunctionPass, iterating over all instructions within a function to classify them as trivially dead. And the classification utilizes llvm::wouldInstructionBeTriviallyDead, a utility function that checks if an instruction has no side effects and its results are unused.

Key data structures and algorithms used:

- **Instruction Iteration:** Iterates through each instruction in a function to analyze its usage.
- **Dead Code Tracking:** Maintains a list of instructions classified as dead for batch processing.
- **Utility Functions:**
  Utilizes llvm::wouldInstructionBeTriviallyDead for efficient classification.

The pass integrates with the LLVM pass pipeline through the PassManager. Its placed after basic block simplifications and before other higher-level optimizations to maximize its effectiveness.

Handling of edge cases and special conditions:

- **Undefined Behavior:** Replaced uses of deleted instructions with valid placeholders to avoid runtime errors.
- **Complex Dependencies:** Ensured that instructions with side effects (e.g., calls, stores) are excluded from being marked as dead.
- **Non-trivial Conditions:** Leveraged subroutines to analyze unused execution paths for potentially dead instructions.

Experimental Evaluation

Two test cases and benchmarks:

- A modified power function (inspired by an examples repository) was used as a benchmark. The function was stripped of external dependencies to focus on intrinsic operations.
- Additional small hand-written C programs were compiled to LLVM IR to test specific patterns, such as redundant computations and unused values.

Then is Performance measurements and analysis:

The dead code analysis identified 36 instructions as trivially dead in the power function benchmark. Execution output was verified to remain consistent with and without the pass, ensuring correctness.

Comparison with unoptimized code, The IR generated after the pass was cleaner and contained fewer instructions. The absence of dead code in the optimized IR reduced instruction decoding and execution overhead. Quantitative analysis was limited to instruction count reduction due to time constraints. Future work could include runtime profiling to measure performance gains in real-world scenarios.

CORRECTNESS PROOF

Formal or informal proof of correctness:

- **Invariant Preservation:** Instructions marked as dead are those verified to have no uses and no side effects, ensuring correctness.
- **Edge Case Analysis:** Special handling for edge cases such as instructions with side effects ensures no unintended modifications.

Finally, lead to our testing methodology and results:
Output correctness was verified by running benchmarks and comparing outputs before and after the pass. The use of llvm::wouldInstructionBeTriviallyDead ensures a consistent and reliable classification of instructions.

So the example results: A sample power function benchmark showed identical results pre- and post-pass. The optimized IR eliminated redundant computations, reducing the instruction count by 30%.

We can get the conclusion that the dead code analysis pass effectively identifies and classifies unused instructions, leveraging LLVM's utility libraries for efficient implementation. While current testing is limited to synthetic benchmarks, approach demonstrates potential for significant performance improvements in larger, more complex applications.

REFERENCES

- **LLVM User Guide:** https://llvm.org/docs/UserGuides.html
- **LLVM Legacy Pass Manager Manual:** https://llvm.org/docs/WritingAnLLVMPass.html
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