12: Q78 – Q80 Recursion in Scala Q&As explained with diagrams

Posted on October 7, 2016 by Arulkumaran Kumaraswamipillai

Q. Do functional languages handle recursion better than non-functional ones?

A. Yes because they have to. A **pure function** is a function with no side effects and no state. Not having side effects means you can't have loop counters as loop counters as they mutate state, hence it will have a side effect. Recursion is not only a good natural match for pure functional programming, but also having no side effects makes recursion more efficient as compiler level optimizations like what order the functions run in, etc can be carried out .

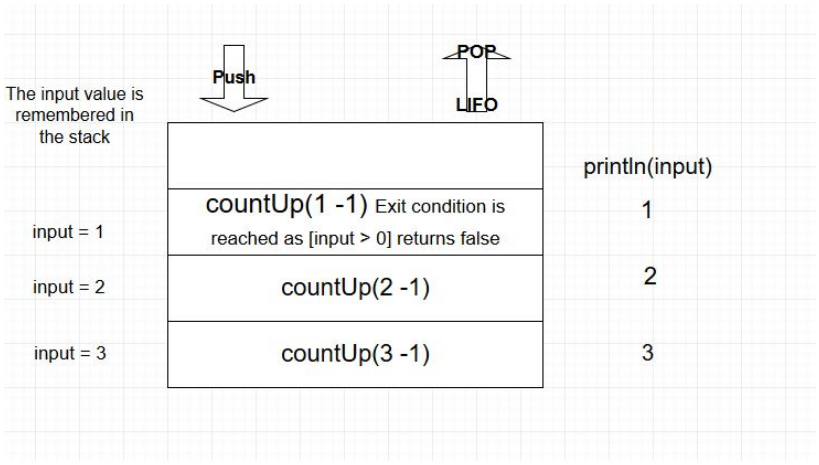
Q78. What will be the output of the following code? Can you explain why you got this output?

```
1
2  object Counting extends App {
3
4    def countUp(input: Int): Unit = {
5      if(input > 0){
6        countUp(input - 1)
7        println(input)
8      }
9    }
10
11   countUp(3)
12
13 }
14
```

A78. The output is:

```
1
2 1
3 2
4 3
5
```

The above code makes recursive calls. The recursive call “countUp(input-1)” is made before the “println(input)”. The recursive calls are remembered and gets put into a stack, which is a LIFO (Last In First Out) data structure.



Scala recursion – counting up

Q79. Can you write code to insert sort a list of nubers say 5, 4, 3 in ascending order using recursion?

A79.

```
```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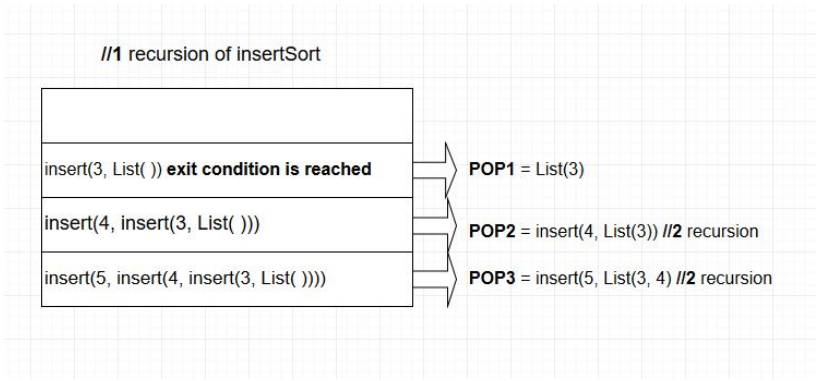
```
1
2  object Sorting extends App{
3
4    def insertSort(xs: List[Int]) : List[Int] = {
5        xs match {
6          case List() => List[Int]()
7          case y :: ys => insert(y, insertSort(ys))
8        }
9    }
10
11   def insert(x: Int, xs: List[Int]): List[Int] =
12     xs match {
13       case List() => List(x)
14       case y :: ys => if (x <= y) x :: xs // pre
15                       else y :: insert(x, ys)  /
16     }
17   }
18
19   val inputList = List(5, 4, 3)
20   val result = insertSort(inputList)
21   println(result)
22 }
23
24
```

Output:

```
1
2 List(3, 4, 5)
3
```

//1 recursion is evaluated as

```
1
2 insert(5, insert(4, insert(3, List())))
3
```



Scala Insert Sort

POP2 is insert(4, List(3))

Recursion 1:

```
1
2 x = 4, xs= List(3)
3 y = 3, ys= List()
4
```

x <= y is **false**, hence executes "y :: insert(x, ys) which is "3 :: insert(4, List())"

Recursion 2:

```
1
2 x = 4, xs = List()
3
```

Hence exit condition is reached, and returns List(x) which is List(4). So "3 :: List(4)" is an output of **List(3, 4)**.

POP3 is insert(5, List(3, 4))

Recursion 1:

```
1
2 x = 5, xs = List(3, 4) //Note that in POP2 4 and
3 y = 3, ys = List(4)
4
```

x <= y is **false**, hence executes "y :: insert(x, ys) which is "**3 ::** insert(5, List(4))"

Recursion 2:

```
1
2 x = 5, xs = List(4)
3 y = 4, ys = List()
4
```

x <= y is **false**, hence executes "y :: insert(x, ys) which is "**4 ::** insert(5, List())"

Recursion 3:

```
1
2 x = 5 and y = List() // exit condition is reached
3
```

Now the final result will be from the

recursion 1 => 3 :: insert(5, List(4))

recursion 2 => 3 :: 4 :: insert(5, List())

recursion 3 => 3 :: 4 :: List(5)

Which gives a final sorted result of **List(3, 4, 5)**

Q80. Can you write code to merge sort a list of nubers say 5, 3, 4 in ascending and descending order using recursion?

A80.

```
1
2  object Sorting extends App{
3
4    //outer function
5    def mergeSort[T](isTrue: (T, T) => Boolean)(xs
6
7       //inner function
8       def merge(xs: List[T], ys: List[T]): List[T
9         (xs, ys) match  {
10          case (Nil, _) => ys
11          case (_, Nil) => xs
12          case (x :: xs1, y :: ys1) => if (isTrue
13                                       else y :: m
14        }
15      }// end of inner function
16
17
18      val n = xs.length / 2
19      if (n == 0) xs
20      else {
21        val split = xs.splitAt(n);
22        merge(mergeSort(isTrue)(split._1), mergeS
23      }
24   } // end of outer function
25
26   val inputList = List(5, 3, 4)
27
28   //curried functions
29   val sortAsc = mergeSort ((x: Int, y: Int) => x
30   val sortDesc = mergeSort ((x: Int, y: Int) =>
31
32   val resultAsc = sortAsc(inputList);
33   val resultDesc = sortDesc(inputList);
34
35   println(resultAsc)
36   println(resultDesc)
37 }
```

```
38
```

Output:

```
1
2 List(3, 4, 5)
3 List(5, 4, 3)
4
```

//1 recursion is evaluated as

```
1
2 merge(merge(isTrue)(5), merge(merge(isTrue)(3), m
3
```

1) merge(isTrue)(3) => returns **List(3)**

2) merge(isTrue)(4) => returns **List(4)**

3) merge(List(3), List(4)) => x = 3, y = 4, xs = List(), ys = List(). returns **List(3, 4)** after 2 iterations

4) merge(List(5), List(3, 4)) => after 3 iterations returns **List(3, 4, 5)**

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