

λ -Calculus

General Recursion and Polymorphism

陳亮廷 Chen, Liang-Ting

Formosan Summer School on Logic, Language, and Computation (FLOLAC)
2022

Institute of Information Science, Academia Sinica

PCF— System of Recursive Functions

PCF: λ_{\rightarrow} with naturals and general recursion

Definition 1 (Terms)

Additional term formation rules are added to λ_{\rightarrow} as follows.

$$\begin{array}{c} \frac{}{\text{zero} : \text{Term}_{\text{PCF}}} \qquad \frac{M : \text{Term}_{\text{PCF}}}{\text{suc } M : \text{Term}_{\text{PCF}}} \\[10pt] \frac{L : \text{Term}_{\text{PCF}} \quad M : \text{Term}_{\text{PCF}} \quad N : \text{Term}_{\text{PCF}} \quad x \in V}{\text{ifz}(M; x. N) L} \\[10pt] \frac{M : \text{Term}_{\text{PCF}} \quad x \in V}{\text{fix } x. M : \text{Term}_{\text{PCF}}} \end{array}$$

Definition 2

Additional term typing rules are added to λ_{\rightarrow} as follows.

$$\frac{}{\Gamma \vdash \mathbf{zero} : \mathbb{N}} \qquad \frac{\Gamma \vdash M : \mathbb{N}}{\Gamma \vdash \mathbf{suc} \, M : \mathbb{N}}$$
$$\frac{\Gamma \vdash L : \mathbb{N} \quad \Gamma \vdash M : \tau \quad \Gamma, x : \mathbb{N} \vdash N : \tau}{\Gamma \vdash \mathbf{ifz}(M; x. N) \, L : \tau}$$
$$\frac{\Gamma, x : \tau \vdash M : \tau}{\Gamma \vdash \mathbf{fix} \, x. M : \tau}$$

- Substitution for **PCF** is defined similarly.
- Substitution respects typing judgements, i.e. $\Gamma \vdash N : \tau$ and $\Gamma, x : \tau \vdash M : \sigma$, then $\Gamma \vdash M[N/x] : \sigma$.

β -conversion for PCF is extended with three rules

$$\begin{aligned}\mathbf{fix}\,x.M &\longrightarrow_{\beta} M[\mathbf{fix}\,x.M/x] \\ \mathbf{ifz}(M;x.N)\,\mathbf{zero} &\longrightarrow_{\beta} M \\ \mathbf{ifz}(M;x.N)\,(\mathbf{suc}M) &\longrightarrow_{\beta} N[M/x]\end{aligned}$$

Similarly, a β -reduction $\longrightarrow_{\beta 1}$ extends \longrightarrow_{β} to all parts of a term and $\longrightarrow_{\beta*}$ indicates finitely many β -reductions.

Theorem 3

PCF enjoys type safety.

Example

A term which never terminates can be defined easily.

$$\begin{aligned} & \text{fix } x.x && \longrightarrow_{\beta_1} x[\text{fix } x.x/x] \\ \equiv & \text{fix } x.x && \longrightarrow_{\beta_1} x[\text{fix } x.x/x] \\ \equiv & \text{fix } x.x && \longrightarrow_{\beta_1} x[\text{fix } x.x/x] \\ \equiv & \dots \end{aligned}$$

Example: Predecessor and negation

$\text{pred} := \lambda n : \mathbb{N}. \text{ifz}(\text{zero}; x.x) n$ $: \mathbb{N} \rightarrow \mathbb{N}$

$\text{not} := \lambda n : \mathbb{N}. \text{ifz}(\text{suc zero}; x.\text{zero}) n$ $: \mathbb{N} \rightarrow \mathbb{N}$

Exercise

Evaluate the following terms to their normal forms.

1. pred zero
2. $\text{pred (suc suc suc zero)}$
3. $\text{not (suc suc zero)}$

F — Polymorphic Typed λ -Calculus

Polymorphic types

Given type variables \mathbb{V} , $\tau : \mathbf{Type}$ is defined by defined by

$$\frac{t \in \mathbb{V}}{t : \mathbf{Type}} \text{ (tvar)}$$

$$\frac{\sigma : \mathbf{Type} \quad \tau : \mathbf{Type}}{\sigma \rightarrow \tau : \mathbf{Type}} \text{ (fun)}$$

$$\frac{\sigma : \mathbf{Type} \quad t \in \mathbb{V}}{\forall t. \sigma : \mathbf{Type}} \text{ (poly)}$$

where t may or may not appear in σ .

The polymorphic type $\forall t. \sigma$ provides a generic type for every instance $\sigma[\tau/t]$ whenever t is instantiated by an actual type τ .

Examples

- $\text{id} : \forall t. t \rightarrow t$
- $\text{proj}_1 : \forall t. \forall u. t \rightarrow u \rightarrow t$
- $\text{proj}_2 : \forall t. \forall u. t \rightarrow u \rightarrow u$
- $\text{length} : \forall t. \text{list } t \rightarrow \text{nat}$
- $\text{singleton} : \forall t. t \rightarrow \text{list}(t)$

Free and bound variables, again

Definition 4

The *free variable* $\mathbf{FV}(\tau)$ of τ is defined inductively by

$$\mathbf{FV}(t) = t$$

$$\mathbf{FV}(\sigma \rightarrow \tau) = \mathbf{FV}(\sigma) \cup \mathbf{FV}(\tau)$$

$$\mathbf{FV}(\forall t. \sigma) = \mathbf{FV}(\sigma) - \{t\}$$

For convenience, the function extends to contexts:

$$\mathbf{FV}(\Gamma) = \{ t \in \mathbb{V} \mid \exists (x : \sigma) \in \Gamma \wedge t \in \mathbf{FV}(\sigma) \}.$$

1. $\mathbf{FV}(t_1) = \{t_1\}$.
2. $\mathbf{FV}(\forall t. (t \rightarrow t) \rightarrow t \rightarrow t) = \emptyset$.
3. $\mathbf{FV}(x : t_1, y : t_2, z : \forall t. t) = \{t_1, t_2\}$.

Capture-avoiding substitution for type

Definition 5

The (*capture-avoidance*) *substitution* of a type ρ for the free occurrence of a type variable t is defined by

$$\begin{aligned} t[\rho/t] &= \rho \\ u[\rho/t] &= u && \text{if } u \neq t \\ (\sigma \rightarrow \tau)[\rho/t] &= \sigma[\rho/t] \rightarrow \tau[\rho/t] \\ (\forall t.\sigma)[\rho/t] &= \forall t.\sigma \\ (\forall u.\sigma)[\rho/t] &= \forall u.\sigma[\rho/t] && \text{if } u \neq t, u \notin \mathbf{FV}(\rho) \end{aligned}$$

Recall that $u \notin \mathbf{FV}(\rho)$ means that u is *fresh* for ρ .

Definition 6

On top of λ_{\rightarrow} , \mathbf{F} has additional term formation rules as follows.

$$\frac{M : \mathbf{Term}_F \quad t : \mathbb{V}}{\Lambda t. M : \mathbf{Term}_F} \text{ (gen)}$$

$$\frac{M : \mathbf{Term}_F \quad \tau : \mathbf{Type}}{M \tau : \mathbf{Term}_F} \text{ (inst)}$$

1. $\Lambda t. M$ for type abstraction, or *generalisation*.
2. $M \tau$ for type application, or *instantiation*.

Example

Suppose $\text{length} : \forall t. \text{list } t \rightarrow \text{nat}$.

Then,

1. length nat
2. length bool
3. $\text{length (nat} \rightarrow \text{nat)}$

are instances of length with types

1. $\text{list nat} \rightarrow \text{nat}$
2. $\text{list bool} \rightarrow \text{nat}$
3. $\text{list (nat} \rightarrow \text{nat)} \rightarrow \text{nat}$

System F: Typing judgement

A *type context* is a sequence of type variable

$$t_1, t_2, \dots, t_n$$

F has two kinds of typing judgements.

- $\Delta \vdash \tau$ for τ for a valid type under the type context Δ
- $\Delta; \Gamma \vdash M : \tau$ for a well-typed term under the context Γ and the type context Δ .

For example,

$$t \vdash t \rightarrow t$$

is a judgement that $t \rightarrow$ is a valid type under the type context, t .

System F: Type formation

The justification of $\Delta \vdash \tau$ is constructed inductively by following rules.

$$\frac{t \text{ occurs in } \Delta}{\Delta \vdash t}$$

$$\frac{\Delta, t \vdash \tau}{\Delta \vdash \forall t. \tau}$$

$$\frac{\Delta \vdash \tau_1 \quad \Delta \vdash \tau_2}{\Delta \vdash \tau_1 \rightarrow \tau_2}$$

Exercise

Derive the judgement

$$t : \tau \vdash t \rightarrow t$$

System F: Typing rules

The justification of $\Delta; \Gamma \vdash M : \sigma$ is defined inductively by following rules.

$$\frac{x : \sigma \in \Gamma}{\Delta; \Gamma \vdash x : \sigma}$$

$$\frac{\Delta, t; \Gamma \vdash M : \sigma}{\Delta; \Gamma \vdash \Lambda t. M : \forall t. \sigma} \text{ (\forall-intro)}$$

$$\frac{\Delta; \Gamma \vdash M : \sigma \rightarrow \tau \quad \Delta; \Gamma \vdash N : \sigma}{\Delta; \Gamma \vdash M N : \tau}$$

$$\frac{\Delta \vdash \sigma \quad \Delta; \Gamma, x : \sigma \vdash M : \tau}{\Delta; \Gamma \vdash \lambda x : \sigma. M : \sigma \rightarrow \tau}$$

$$\frac{\Delta; \Gamma \vdash M : \forall t. \sigma \quad \Delta \vdash \tau}{\Delta; \Gamma \vdash M \tau : \sigma[\tau/t]} \text{ (\forall-elim)}$$

For convenience, $\vdash M : \tau$ stands for $.; \cdot \vdash M : \tau$.

Typing derivation

The typing judgement $\vdash \Lambda t. \Lambda u. \lambda(x : t)(y : u). x : \forall t. t \rightarrow u \rightarrow t$ is derivable from the following derivation:

$$\frac{\frac{\frac{t, u \vdash t}{t, u; \cdot \vdash \lambda(x : t)(y : u). x : t \rightarrow u \rightarrow t}}{t; \cdot \vdash \Lambda u. \lambda(x : t)(y : u). x : \forall u. t \rightarrow u \rightarrow t}}{\vdash \Lambda t. \Lambda u. \lambda(x : t)(y : u). x : \forall t. \forall u. t \rightarrow u \rightarrow t}$$

Exercise

Derive the following judgements:

1. $\vdash \Lambda t. \lambda(x : t). x : \forall t. t \rightarrow t$
2. $\sigma; a : \sigma \vdash (\Lambda t. \lambda(x : t)(y : t). x) \sigma a : \sigma \rightarrow \sigma$
3. $\vdash \Lambda t. \lambda(f : t \rightarrow t)(x : t). f (f x) : \forall t. (t \rightarrow t) \rightarrow t \rightarrow t$

Hint. **F** is syntax-directed, so the type inversion holds.

System F: β -reduction

The β -conversion has two rules

$$(\lambda(x : \tau). M) N \longrightarrow_{\beta} M[x/N] \quad \text{and} \quad (\Lambda t. M) \tau \longrightarrow_{\beta} M[\tau/t]$$

For example,

$$(\Lambda t. \lambda x : t. x) \tau a \longrightarrow_{\beta} (\lambda x : t. x)[\tau/t] a \equiv (\lambda x : \tau. x) a \longrightarrow_{\beta} x[a/x] \equiv a$$

Similarly, β -conversion extends to subterms of a given term, introducing symbols $\longrightarrow_{\beta 1}$ and $\longrightarrow_{\beta*}$ in the same way.

Self application

Self-application is not typable in simply typed λ -calculus.

$$\lambda(x : t). x \ x$$

However, self-application is possible in System F.

$$\lambda(x : \forall t. t \rightarrow t). x \ (\forall t. t \rightarrow t) \ x$$

Exercise

Instantiate the first t with the type $\forall t. t \rightarrow t$.

Sum type

Definition 7

The *sum type* is defined by

$$\sigma + \tau := \forall t. (\sigma \rightarrow t) \rightarrow (\tau \rightarrow t) \rightarrow t$$

It has two injection functions: the first injection is defined by

$$\begin{aligned}\mathbf{left}_{\sigma+\tau} &:= \lambda(x : \sigma). \Lambda t. \lambda(f : \sigma \rightarrow t)(g : \tau \rightarrow t). f\ x \\ \mathbf{right}_{\sigma+\tau} &:= \lambda(y : \tau). \Lambda t. \lambda(f : \sigma \rightarrow t)(g : \tau \rightarrow t). g\ y\end{aligned}$$

Exercise

Define

$$\mathbf{either} : \forall u. (\sigma \rightarrow u) \rightarrow (\tau \rightarrow u) \rightarrow \sigma + \tau \rightarrow u$$

Product type

Definition 8 (Product Type)

The product type is defined by

$$\sigma \times \tau := \forall t. (\sigma \rightarrow \tau \rightarrow t) \rightarrow t$$

The pairing function is defined by

$$\langle _, _ \rangle := \lambda(x : \sigma)(y : \tau). \Lambda t. \lambda(f : \sigma \rightarrow \tau \rightarrow t). f \ x \ y$$

Exercise

Define projections

$$\mathbf{proj}_1 : \sigma \times \tau \rightarrow \sigma \quad \text{and} \quad \mathbf{proj}_2 : \sigma \times \tau \rightarrow \tau$$

Natural numbers i

The type of Church numerals is defined by

$$\mathbf{nat} := \forall t. (t \rightarrow t) \rightarrow t \rightarrow t$$

Church numerals

$$\mathbf{c}_n : \mathbf{nat}$$

$$\mathbf{c}_n := \Lambda t. \lambda(f : t \rightarrow t) (x : t). f^n x$$

Successor

$$\mathbf{suc} : \mathbf{nat} \rightarrow \mathbf{nat}$$

$$\mathbf{suc} := \lambda(n : \mathbf{nat}). \Lambda t. \lambda(f : t \rightarrow t) (x : t). f (n \ t \ f \ x)$$

Natural numbers ii

Addition

$\text{add} : \text{nat} \rightarrow \text{nat} \rightarrow \text{nat}$

$\text{add} := \lambda(n : \text{nat})(m : \text{nat}) \quad \Lambda t. \lambda(f : t \rightarrow t)(x : t). \\ (m \ t \ f) \ (n \ t \ f \ x)$

Multiplication

$\text{mul} : \text{nat} \rightarrow \text{nat} \rightarrow \text{nat}$

$\text{mul} := ?$

Conditional

$\text{ifz} : \forall t. \text{nat} \rightarrow t \rightarrow t \rightarrow t$

$\text{ifz} := ?$

Natural numbers iii

System F allows us to define *iterator* like **fold** in Haskell.

$$\mathbf{fold}_{\mathbf{nat}} : \forall t. (t \rightarrow t) \rightarrow t \rightarrow \mathbf{nat} \rightarrow t$$
$$\mathbf{fold}_{\mathbf{nat}} := \Lambda t. \lambda(f : t \rightarrow t)(e_0 : t)(n : \mathbf{nat}). n \ t \ f \ e_0$$

Exercise

Define **add** and **mul** using $\mathbf{fold}_{\mathbf{nat}}$ and justify your answer.

1. $\mathbf{add}' := ? : \mathbf{nat} \rightarrow \mathbf{nat} \rightarrow \mathbf{nat}$
2. $\mathbf{mul}' := ? : \mathbf{nat} \rightarrow \mathbf{nat} \rightarrow \mathbf{nat}$

Definition 9

For any type σ , the type of lists over σ is

$$\mathbf{list} \sigma := \forall t. t \rightarrow (\sigma \rightarrow t \rightarrow t) \rightarrow t$$

with “list constructors”:

$$\mathbf{nil}_\sigma := \Lambda t. \lambda(h : t)(f : \sigma \rightarrow t \rightarrow t). h$$

and

$$\mathbf{cons}_\sigma := \lambda(x : \sigma)(xs : \mathbf{list} \sigma). \Lambda t. \lambda(h : t)(f : \sigma \rightarrow t \rightarrow t). f x (xs t h f)$$

of type $\sigma \rightarrow \mathbf{list} \sigma \rightarrow \mathbf{list} \sigma$.

Definition 10

The *erasing map* is a function defined by

$$|x| = x$$

$$|\lambda(x : \tau). M| = \lambda x. |M|$$

$$|M N| = (|M| |N|)$$

$$|\Lambda t. M| = |M|$$

$$|M \tau| = |M|$$

Proposition 11

Within System F , if $\vdash M : \sigma$ and $|M| \longrightarrow_{\beta_1} N'$, then there exists a well-typed term N with $\vdash N : \sigma$ and $|N| = N'$.

Type safety and normalisation

Theorem 12 (Type safety)

Suppose $\vdash M : \sigma$. Then,

- 1. $M \longrightarrow_{\beta_1} N$ implies $\vdash N : \sigma$;*
- 2. M is in normal form or there exists N such that $M \longrightarrow_{\beta_1} N$*

Type safety is proved by induction on the derivation of $\vdash M : \sigma$.

Theorem 13 (Normalisation properties)

F enjoys the weak and strong normalisation properties.

Proved by Girard's *reducibility candidates*.

What functions can you write for the following type?

$$\forall t. t \rightarrow t$$

Since t is arbitrary, we cannot inspect the content of t . What we can do with t is simply return it.

Theorem 14

Every term M of type $\forall t. t \rightarrow t$ is observationally equivalent¹ to $\Lambda t. \lambda x : t. x$.

¹The notion of observational equivalence is beyond the scope of this lecture.

Parametricity: Theorems for free²

Assume F extended with the list type `list` τ for τ and the type \mathbb{N} of naturals, denoted $F_{\text{list}, \mathbb{N}}$.

Then `head` \circ `map` $f = f \circ$ `head` for any $f : \tau \rightarrow \sigma$ where `head` : $\forall t. \text{list } t \rightarrow t$ can be proved by just reading the type of `head` and `tail`!

Theorem 15

For any type σ in F (with lists) and $\cdot \vdash M : \sigma$, then

$$M \sim M : \mathcal{R}_{\sigma, \sigma}$$

²Philip Wadler. 1989. Theorems for free! In *Proceedings of the fourth international conference on Functional programming languages and computer architecture (FPCA '89)*. ACM, New York, NY, USA, 347–359.

Undecidability of type inference

Theorem 16 (Wells, 1999)

It is undecidable whether, given a closed term M of the untyped lambda-calculus, there is a well-typed term M' in System F such that $|M'| = M$.

Two ways to retain decidable type inference:

1. Limit the expressiveness so that type inference remains decidable. For example, *Hindley-Milner type system* adapted by Haskell 98, Standard ML, etc. supports only a limited form of polymorphism but type inference is decidable.
2. Adopt *partial* type inference so that type annotations are needed for, e.g. top-level definitions and local definitions.

Check out *bidirectional type inference*.

Nameless Representation

Capture-avoiding but ill-defined substitution

The definition of capture-avoiding substitution is not well-defined.
Recall that

$$x[L/x] = L$$

$$y[L/x] = y \quad \text{if } x \neq y$$

$$(MN)[L/x] = M[L/x] N[L/x]$$

$$(\lambda x. M)[L/x] = \lambda x. M$$

$$(\lambda y. M)[L/x] = \lambda y. M[L/x] \quad \text{if } x \neq y \text{ and } y \notin \mathbf{FV}(L)$$

The function $_ [L/x]: \mathbf{Term}_V \rightarrow \mathbf{Term}_V$ is not total, so it is **not** an instance of *structural recursion* (i.e. **fold**). In what sense, is the above well-defined?

1. Use *nominal technique* and the notion of α -structure recursion/induction. It requires some elements of group theory.
2. Use *nameless* representation.

Well-Scoped de Bruijn index representation i

An index i starting from 0 is used as a variable to represent the i -th enclosing λ (binder) ‘from the inside out’. For example, a term with named variables

$$\lambda a. \lambda b. (\lambda c. c) (\lambda c. a b)$$

becomes

$$\lambda \lambda (\lambda 0) (\lambda 2 1)$$

Hint. It may be easier to think of a term in its tree representation.

Well-Scoped de Bruijn index representation ii

Definition 17 (de Bruijn representation with a local scope)

The term formation $\boxed{t \text{ Term}_n}$ is defined inductively for $n \in \mathbb{N}$ by

$$\frac{0 \leq i < n}{i \text{ Term}_n}$$

$$\frac{t \text{ Term}_{n+1}}{\lambda t \text{ Term}_n}$$

$$\frac{t \text{ Term}_n \quad u \text{ Term}_n}{t u \text{ Term}_n}$$

$\boxed{t \text{ Term}_n}$ means t has at most n many free variables.

Exercise

Translate the following terms to its de Bruijn index representation.

1. $\lambda x. x$
2. $\lambda s. \lambda z. s\ z$
3. $\lambda a. \lambda b. a\ (\lambda c. a\ b)$
4. $(\lambda x. x)\ (\lambda y. y)$
5. $\lambda x. y$
6. $x\ y\ z$

Substitution, revisited

How to reformulate β -reduction for terms in de Bruijn representation? Consider

$$(\lambda \lambda (\lambda 0) (\lambda 2 1)) t \longrightarrow_{\beta} (\lambda (\lambda 0) (\lambda 2 1)) [t/0]$$

The de Bruijn index increments under a binder so $[t/i]$ should be $[t'/i + 1]$ where t' is the result of incrementing every index in t , e.g.,

$$\begin{aligned} (\lambda (\lambda 0) (\lambda 2 1)) [t/0] &= \lambda (\lambda 0)[t'/1] \quad (\lambda 2 1)[t'/1] \\ &= \lambda (\lambda 0[t''/2]) \quad (\lambda (2 1)[t''/2]) \\ &= \lambda (\lambda 0) \quad (\lambda 2[t''/2] 1[t''/2]) \\ &= \lambda (\lambda 0) \quad (\lambda t'' 1) \end{aligned}$$

Simultaneous variable renaming

Definition 18

A (variable) renaming is a function ρ between \mathbb{Z}_n and \mathbb{Z}_m .

Every renaming $\rho: \mathbb{Z}_n \rightarrow \mathbb{Z}_m$ extends to an action on terms:

$$\begin{aligned}\langle \rho \rangle i &= \rho(i) \\ \langle \rho \rangle (t \ u) &= \langle \rho \rangle t \ \langle \rho \rangle u \\ \langle \rho \rangle \lambda t &= \lambda \langle \rho' \rangle t\end{aligned}$$

where $\rho': \mathbb{Z}_{n+1} \rightarrow \mathbb{Z}_{m+1}$ is defined as

$$\begin{aligned}\rho'(0) &= 0 \\ \rho'(i) &= 1 + \rho(i) && \text{if } i \neq 0\end{aligned}$$

to avoid changing bound variables.

In particular, $wk: \mathbf{Term}_n \rightarrow \mathbf{Term}_{n+1}$ derived by $i \mapsto i + 1 \in \mathbb{Z}_{n+1}$ increments every index of a free variable by 1.

Simultaneous substitution

Definition 19

A (*simultaneous*) *substitution* is a function σ from \mathbb{Z}_n to \mathbf{Term}_m .

Every substitution extends to an action terms:

$$\begin{aligned}\langle \sigma \rangle i &= \sigma(i) \\ \langle \sigma \rangle (t \ u) &= \langle \sigma \rangle t \ \langle \sigma \rangle u \\ \langle \sigma \rangle \lambda t &= \lambda \langle \sigma' \rangle t\end{aligned}$$

where $\sigma': \mathbb{Z}_{n+1} \rightarrow \mathbf{Term}_{m+1}$ is defined as

$$\begin{aligned}\sigma'(0) &= 0 \\ \sigma'(i) &= wk(\sigma(i)) && \text{if } i \neq 0\end{aligned}$$

Single substitution

Definition 20

A *single substitution* for t is a simultaneous substitution given by

$$\sigma(i) = \begin{cases} t & i = 0 \\ i & \text{otherwise.} \end{cases}$$

Exercise

1. Adopt α -equivalence to the de Bruijn representation.
2. Adopt β -equivalence to the de Bruijn representation.
3. Apply the new definition of substitution to compute **not True**.
4. Adopt the definitions of renaming and substitution to the de Bruijn level representation. N.B. we may also count the i -th enclosing binder ‘from the outside in’ using the same definition, called *the de Bruijn level*.

Homework

1. (2.5%) Extend **PCF** with the type \mathbb{B} of boolean values with $\mathbf{ifz}(M; N) \mathbf{true} =_{\beta} M$ and $\mathbf{ifz}(M; N) \mathbf{false} =_{\beta} N$ including term formation rules, typing rules, and dynamics for \mathbb{B} . and $\mathbf{pred}(\mathbf{suc} \ n) = n$.
2. (2.5%) Define $\mathbf{length}_{\sigma} : \mathbf{list} \ \sigma \rightarrow \mathbf{nat}$ calculating the length of a list in System F.