A Theory of Type Qualifiers Jeffrey S. Foster, Manuel Fähndrich, Alexander Aiken PLDI 1999

Paper presentation by Georg Schmid and Samuel Grütter

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Overview

- ► Many languages support a range of *type qualifiers* they enable a simple, yet useful form of subtyping.
 - ► E.g. const on references, nonzero on integers.
- Authors present a framework for adding type qualifiers to λ -calculi.
- In particular, they show how to
 - extend the typing rules, and
 - support type inference –
 - even in the polymorphic case.

Motivation

 Use-case: Analyze C sources and infer additional const qualifiers

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- ► This rectifies one particular peculiarity of C's type system:

```
int *id1(int *x) { return x; }
const int *id2(const int *x) { return x; }
```

 \rightarrow Inference of const qualifiers removes need for multiple versions of same procedure

Definition 1 A type qualifier q is positive (negative) if $\tau \leq q \tau \ (q \tau \leq \tau)$ for any type τ .

▶ E.g. const is a positive qualifier, while nonzero is negative.

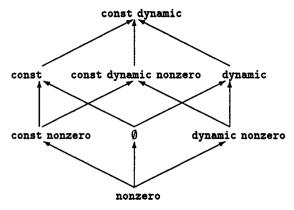
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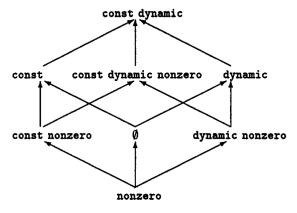
Definition 2 (Qualifier lattice) Each positive qualifier q defines a two-point lattice $L_q = \bot_q \sqsubseteq q$. Each negative qualifier q defines a two-point lattice $L_q = q \sqsubseteq \top_q$. The qualifier lattice L is defined by $L = L_{q_1} \times \cdots \times L_{q_n}$. We write \bot and \top for the bottom and top elements of L.

⇒ Question: What is a two-point lattice?

► Let's look at the lattice of positive qualifiers const, dynamic and (negative) nonzero:

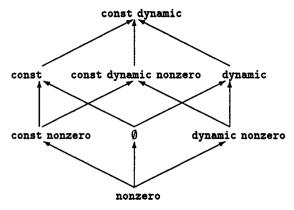


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 - Rather, think of const as readonly.
 Alternatively, consider the qualifier writable τ ≤ τ which is dual notation for const.
- ⇒ Intuition: We *lose capabilities* as we move up the lattice.

▶ With each qualifier q_i we associate a qualifier lattice element $\neg q_i$, where

```
\neg q_i := (\top_1, \dots, \top_{i-1}, \bot_i, \top_{i+1}, \dots, \top_n) \text{ when } q_i \text{ is positive,}\neg q_i := (\bot_1, \dots, \bot_{i-1}, \top_i, \bot_{i+1}, \dots, \bot_n) \text{ when } q_i \text{ is negative.}
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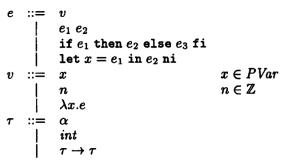
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► Question: What is ¬nonzero? Answer: (⊥_{const}, ⊥_{dynamic}, ⊤_{nonzero}) = "∅"

Preliminaries Source language

Framework extends a given source language, e.g.

Expressions of λ -calculus with if and let:



Qualified types

Pairing ordinary types with elements of the qualifier lattice yields *qualified types* for our sample language:

$$\rho ::= Q \tau
\tau ::= \alpha \mid int \mid (\rho_1 \to \rho_2)
Q ::= \kappa \mid l$$

where κ is a type qualifier variable and I is an element of qualifier lattice L.

Along with a pair of subtyping rules that naturally connects the type system to our qualifier lattice:

$$\frac{\vdash Q_1 \sqsubseteq Q_2}{\vdash Q_1 \text{ int } \preceq Q_2 \text{ int}} \qquad (SubInt)$$

$$\frac{\vdash Q_1 \sqsubseteq Q_2 \vdash \rho_2 \preceq \rho_1 \vdash \rho_1' \preceq \rho_2'}{\vdash Q_1 (\rho_1 \to \rho_1') \preceq Q_2 (\rho_2 \to \rho_2')} \qquad (SubFun)$$

Qualifier annotations and assertions

- ▶ When inferring types, we need to decide on a type qualifier for the outermost type constructor.
 - Qualifier annotations are added as a syntactic helper
 - Additionally, dual notion of qualifier assertions
- ► This requires extensions of both syntax and typing rules:

$$e ::= \cdots \qquad \frac{A \vdash e : Q \tau \vdash Q \sqsubseteq l}{A \vdash e | l : Q \tau} \qquad \text{(Assert)}$$

$$\begin{vmatrix} e|_{l} \\ l e \end{vmatrix} \qquad \frac{A \vdash e : Q \tau \vdash Q \sqsubseteq l}{A \vdash l e : l \tau} \qquad \text{(Annot)}$$

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- ▶ Both enforce e's top-level qualifier Q to be upper-bounded by I, i.e. $Q \sqsubseteq I$
 - Question: What's the difference between the two?

Qualified type systems

$$A \vdash e : \tau \Rightarrow A \vdash e : \rho$$

Extending the source language's type checking system with qualified types leads to a *qualified type system*.

Qualified type systems Typing rules of sample language (1)

$$\frac{A \vdash e : \rho \vdash \rho \preceq \rho'}{A \vdash e : \rho'} \qquad (Sub)$$

$$\frac{A \vdash e : Q \tau \vdash Q \sqsubseteq l}{A \vdash e \mid_{l} : Q \tau} \qquad (Assert)$$

$$\frac{A \vdash e : Q \tau \vdash Q \sqsubseteq l}{A \vdash l e : l \tau} \qquad (Annot)$$

$$\overline{A \vdash n : \bot int} \qquad (Int)$$

$$\overline{A \vdash x : A(x)} \qquad (Var)$$

Qualified type systems Typing rules of sample language (2)

$$\frac{A[x \mapsto \rho_x] \vdash e : \rho}{A \vdash \lambda x. e : \bot (\rho_x \to \rho)} \qquad \text{(Lam)}$$

$$\frac{A \vdash e_1 : Q (\rho_2 \to \rho) \quad A \vdash e_2 : \rho_2}{A \vdash e_1 e_2 : \rho} \qquad \text{(App)}$$

$$\frac{A \vdash e_1 : Q \text{ int } \quad A \vdash e_2 : \rho \quad A \vdash e_2 : \rho}{A \vdash \text{if } e_1 \text{ then } e_2 \text{ else } e_3 \text{ fi} : \rho} \qquad \text{(If)}$$

$$\frac{A \vdash e_1 : \rho_1 \quad A[x \mapsto \rho_1] \vdash e_2 : \rho_2}{A \vdash \text{let } x = e_1 \text{ in } e_2 \text{ ni} : \rho_2} \qquad \text{(Let)}$$

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 - ▶ $\bot(\cdot)$: $Typ \to QTyp$ introduces \bot qualifiers in types Example $\bot((int \to int)) = \overline{\bot(\bot int \to \bot int)}$
 - $strip(\cdot): Expr \rightarrow Expr$ eliminates annotations & assertions
 - ▶ $\bot(\cdot)$: $Expr \to Expr$ introduces \bot qualifier annotations everywhere

Observation 1 Let \vdash_S be the judgment relation of the type system of the simply-typed lambda calculus, and let \vdash be the judgment relation of the type system given in Figure 4. Then

- If $\emptyset \vdash_S e : \tau$, then $\emptyset \vdash \bot(e) : \bot(\tau)$.
- If $\emptyset \vdash e' : \rho$, then $\emptyset \vdash_S strip(e') : strip(\rho)$.

Qualified type systems Correspondence (ctd.)

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- ▶ Question: Could we use ⊤ instead? Any other qualifier?

Qualifier semantics

- Restrictions on usage of qualifiers can be expressed
 - a) using qualifier assertions (\rightarrow program transformation), or
 - b) by modifying typing rules.
- Arbitrary modifications may render the type system unsound!

Qualifier semantics const example

▶ Let's encode the semantics of a const qualifier!

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- Only makes sense in presence of references:

```
e ::= \cdots \mid \mathbf{ref} \ e \mid !e \mid e_1 := e_2
v ::= \cdots \mid ()
\tau ::= \cdots \mid ref(\rho) \mid unit
```

Qualifier semantics const example (2)

▶ We first introduce a subtyping rule for ref:

$$\frac{\vdash Q_1 \sqsubseteq Q_2 \qquad \vdash \tau_1 \preceq \tau_2}{\vdash Q_1 \ ref(\tau_1) \preceq Q_2 \ ref(\tau_2)}$$

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Unsound in the presence of subtyping!

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1 let x = ref(nonzero 37) in
2 let y = x in
3    y := 0;
4    (!x)|_nonzero
5    ni    ni
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⇒ Note that lines 3 and 4 type check, e.g.

```
#3: A[x, y \mapsto \bot \text{ ref nonzero int}] \vdash y : \neg \text{nonzero int} (by (Sub))
#4: A[x, y \mapsto \bot \text{ ref nonzero int}] \vdash !x : \text{nonzero int} (unchanged)
```

Qualifier semantics const example (3)

Requiring refs' argument type to be invariant fixes our problem.

$$\frac{\vdash Q_1 \sqsubseteq Q_2 \qquad \vdash \rho_1 = \rho_2}{\vdash Q_1 \ ref(\rho_1) \preceq Q_2 \ ref(\rho_2)}$$
 (SubRef)

Qualifier semantics const example (4)

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- As mentioned before, there are two ways to encode such restrictions:
 - a) Program transformation: Replace every assignment $e_1 := e_2$ by $e_1 \mid_{\neg const} := e_2$.

Qualifier semantics const example (4)

- How do we enforce the semantics of const?
- As mentioned before, there are two ways to encode such restrictions:
 - a) Program transformation: Replace every assignment $e_1 := e_2$ by $e_1 \mid_{\neg const} := e_2$.
 - b) Modify the relevant typing rule(s):

$$\frac{A \vdash e_1 : Q \ ref(\rho_2) \quad A \vdash e_2 : \rho_2}{A \vdash e_1 := e_2 : \bot \ unit}$$

$$\frac{A \vdash e_1 : \neg const \ ref(\rho_2) \quad A \vdash e_2 : \rho_2}{A \vdash e_1 := e_2 : \bot \ unit}$$
(Assign')

Type Inference and Qualifier Polymorphism

Outline

- Forget about qualifiers
 Study type inference on simply typed lambda calculus
- 2. Add qualifiers
- 3. Add polymorphism

Step 1: Forget about qualifiers

The problem

Say we want to typecheck $\lambda x. <$ some expression >.

Use

$$\frac{A[x \to \tau_1] \vdash e : \tau_2}{A \vdash \lambda x.e : \tau_1 \to \tau_2}$$
 (Lam)

but what τ_1 should we put into A?

Solutions

- ► Require users to **explicitly state argument type** $\lambda(x:\tau_1).e$ instead of $\lambda x.e$
- ► Local type inference using expected types (e.g. Scala) List(1, 2, 3).map(x => x+1)

```
▶ Global type inference (e.g. ML)
let f = \lambda x. x + 1 in
...
myList.map(f)
...
otherList.map(f)
```

⇒ Study Constraint-Based Typing

Constraint-Based Typing

Approach:

- 1. Typecheck using the inference rules Whenever we don't know what type to choose, pick a fresh type variable α and record the constraints it has to satisfy.
- 2. Unify the constraints

Constraints = set of equality constraints:

$$C ::= \{\tau_1 = \tau_2\} \mid C_1 \cup C_2$$

New typing judgement:

$$A \vdash e : \tau; C$$

"In environment A, e has type au for all solutions of constraints C."

Constraint-Based Typing Rules

$$\overline{A \vdash n : int; \emptyset}$$
 (Int)
$$\overline{A \vdash x : A(x); \emptyset}$$
 (Var)
$$\frac{\alpha \text{ fresh } A[x \to \alpha] \vdash e : \tau_2; C}{A \vdash \lambda x.e : \alpha \to \tau_2; C}$$
 (Lam)
$$\frac{\alpha \text{ fresh } A \vdash e_1 : \tau_1; C_1 \quad A \vdash e_2 : \tau_2; C_2}{A \vdash e_1 e_2 : \alpha; C_1 \cup C_2 \cup \{\tau_1 = (\tau_2 \to \alpha)\}}$$
 (App)
$$\frac{A \vdash e_1 : \tau_1; C_1 \quad A \vdash e_2 : \tau_2; C_2 \quad A \vdash e_3 : \tau_3; C_3}{A \vdash \text{ if } e_1 \text{ then } e_2 \text{ else } e_3 \text{ fi} : \tau_2; C_1 \cup C_2 \cup C_3 \cup \{\tau_1 = int\} \cup \{\tau_2 = \tau_3\}}$$
 (If)
$$\frac{A \vdash e_1 : \tau_1; C_1 \quad A[x \to \tau_1] \vdash e_2 : \tau_2; C_2}{A \vdash \text{ let } x = e_1 \text{ in } e_2 \text{ ni} : \tau_2; C_1 \cup C_2}$$
 (Let)

Unification

▶ A solution to a set of constraints C is a substitution

$$S: TVar \rightarrow Typ$$

mapping type variables to types containing no type variables, such that all equalities in SC hold.

 \Rightarrow Goal of unification: Given C, find S.

Unification Algorithm

```
\begin{array}{l} \operatorname{def \ unify}(\mathcal{C}) = \mathcal{C} \ \operatorname{match} \ \{ \\ \operatorname{case} \ \emptyset \Rightarrow \operatorname{identity} \ / / \operatorname{empty \ substitution} \\ \operatorname{case} \ c_1 \cup \mathcal{C}_{\operatorname{rest}} \Rightarrow c_1 \ \operatorname{match} \ \{ \\ \operatorname{case} \ ((\tau_1 \to \tau_2) = (\tau_3 \to \tau_4)) \Rightarrow \operatorname{unify}(\mathcal{C}_{\operatorname{rest}} \cup \{\tau_1 = \tau_3\} \cup \{\tau_2 = \tau_4\}) \\ \operatorname{case} \ (\tau = \tau) \Rightarrow \operatorname{unify}(\mathcal{C}_{\operatorname{rest}}) \\ \operatorname{case} \ (\tau = \alpha) \ \operatorname{if} \ \alpha \notin \operatorname{FV}(\tau) \Rightarrow \operatorname{unify}([\alpha \to \tau] \mathcal{C}_{\operatorname{rest}}) \circ [\alpha \to \tau] \\ \operatorname{case} \ (\alpha = \tau) \ \operatorname{if} \ \alpha \notin \operatorname{FV}(\tau) \Rightarrow \operatorname{unify}([\alpha \to \tau] \mathcal{C}_{\operatorname{rest}}) \circ [\alpha \to \tau] \\ \operatorname{case} \ \_ \Rightarrow \operatorname{fail} \\ \} \\ \} \end{array}
```

Step 2: Add qualifiers

Without qualifiers	With qualifiers
$A \vdash e : au; C$	$A \vdash e : \rho; C$
$\begin{array}{cccc} \tau & ::= & \alpha \\ & & int \\ & & \tau \to \tau \end{array}$	$egin{array}{lll} ho & ::= & Q \ au & ::= & lpha \ \ int \ \ (ho_1 ightarrow ho_2) \ Q & ::= & \kappa \ \ l \ \end{array}$
$C ::= \{\tau_1 = \tau_2\} \mid C_1 \cup C_2$	$C ::= \{\rho_1 \preceq \rho_2\} \mid \{Q_1 \sqsubseteq Q_2\} \mid C_1 \cup C_2$

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Q: Why is there no $\rho_1 = \rho_2$ in the grammar for C?

A: Because we can just use $\{\rho_1 \leq \rho_2\} \cup \{\rho_2 \leq \rho_1\}$ instead.

Constraint-Based Typing Rules With Qualifiers

Question

In an if-expression, what if the then-branch has type const int and the else-branch has type int: Can we still typecheck the expression?

▶ (If) rule from previous slide:

$$\frac{\kappa \text{ fresh } A \vdash e_1 : \rho_1; C_1 \quad A \vdash e_2 : \rho_2; C_2 \quad A \vdash e_3 : \rho_3; C_3}{A \vdash \text{ if } e_1 \text{ then } e_2 \text{ else } e_3 \text{ fi} : \rho_2;}{C_1 \cup C_2 \cup C_3 \cup \{\rho_1 = \kappa \text{ int}\} \cup \{\rho_2 = \rho_3\}}$$

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A better version:

$$\frac{\alpha, \kappa, \kappa' \text{ fresh} \quad A \vdash e_1 : \rho_1; C_1 \quad A \vdash e_2 : \rho_2; C_2 \quad A \vdash e_3 : \rho_3; C_3}{A \vdash \text{ if } e_1 \text{ then } e_2 \text{ else } e_3 \text{ fi} : \kappa'\alpha;}$$
$$C_1 \cup C_2 \cup C_3 \cup \{\rho_1 = \kappa \text{ int}\} \cup \{\rho_2 \preceq \kappa'\alpha\} \cup \{\rho_3 \preceq \kappa'\alpha\}$$

Unification Algorithm

Reminder:

$$C ::= \{ \rho_1 \preceq \rho_2 \} \mid \{ Q_1 \sqsubseteq Q_2 \} \mid C_1 \cup C_2$$

- ▶ First phase: Repeat
 - $\begin{array}{l} \blacktriangleright \ \{(Q_1\tau_1 \to Q_2\tau_2) \preceq (Q_3\tau_3 \to Q_4\tau_4)\} \cup C_{rest} \\ \Rightarrow C_{rest} \cup \{Q_3\tau_3 \preceq Q_1\tau_1\} \cup \{Q_2\tau_2 \preceq Q_4\tau_4\}) \end{array}$

until only lattice constraints are left.

Second phase:

All constraints now are of the form $\kappa \sqsubseteq L$, $L \sqsubseteq \kappa$, or $L_1 \sqsubseteq L_2$. Solve in linear time as described in [HR97].

Step 3: Add Polymorphism

Note: The goal is to be polymorphic in qualifiers, not in types.

Without polymorphism	With polymorphism
A contains (x, ρ) tuples	A contains (x, σ) tuples
$A \vdash e : \rho; C$	$A \vdash e : \rho; C$
$ \rho ::= Q \tau \tau ::= \alpha \mid int \mid (\rho_1 \to \rho_2) Q ::= \kappa \mid l $	$ \sigma ::= \forall \vec{\kappa}. \rho \backslash C \rho ::= Q \tau \tau ::= \alpha int \rho_1 \to \rho_2 Q ::= \kappa l $

 σ : Type scheme carrying constraints

Back to C: Example

```
const int * max const(const int * p1, const int * p2) {
   if (*p1 < *p2) {
    return p2;
   } else {
     return p1;
int * max nonconst(int * p1, int * p2) { EXACTLY THE SAME BODY }
int main() {
   int v1 = 8;
   int v2 = 5:
   const int * p1 const = &v1;
   const int * p2 const = &v2;
   int bigger = *(max const(p1 const, p2 const));
   printf("%d\n", bigger);
   int * p1 nonconst = \&v1;
   int * p2 nonconst = &v2;
   int * p bigger = max nonconst(p1 nonconst, p2 nonconst);
   (*p bigger)--;
```

Qualifier Polymorphism

```
In C:
const int * max const(const int * p1, const int * p2)
int * max nonconst(int * p1, int * p2)
Translated to the language of the paper:
max const : (const ref(\perp int)) \rightarrow (const ref(\perp int)) \rightarrow (const ref(\perp int))
max nonconst : (\perp ref(\perp int)) \rightarrow (\perp ref(\perp int)) \rightarrow (\perp ref(\perp int))
Now with qualifier polymorphism:
max: \forall \kappa.(\kappa ref(\perp int)) \rightarrow (\kappa ref(\perp int)) \rightarrow (\kappa ref(\perp int)) \setminus \emptyset
```

Soundness

Soundness = "Nothing can go wrong during evaluation"

⇒ Need to define evaluation rules

Evaluation rules

Figure 5: Operational Semantics

Soundness

 $\mathsf{TAPL: "Soundness} = \mathsf{Progress} + \mathsf{Preservation"}$

Question: Where are these proofs in the paper?

Soundness

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Answer:

Progress:

Next we observe that *stuck* expressions (expressions that are not values but for which no reduction applies [WF94]) do not typecheck, which is trivial to prove.

Preservation:

Theorem 1 (Subject Reduction) If $A \vdash \langle s, e \rangle : \rho; C$ and $\langle s, e \rangle \rightarrow \langle s', e' \rangle$, then there exists an A' such that $A'|_{dom(A)} = A$ and $A' \vdash \langle s', e' \rangle : \rho; C'$ where $C' \subseteq C$.

Lemma 1 If $A \vdash e : \rho; C$ and S is a substitution such that SC is satisfiable, then $SA \vdash e : S\rho; SC$.

▶ Question: What's the type of *S*?

Question: Why is S not applied to e?

Question: Don't we need another substitution lemma?

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Question: What's the type of S? Answer: TVar → Typ

Question: Why is S not applied to e? Answer: Because e cannot contain type variables.

▶ Question: Don't we need another substitution lemma? Answer: Yes, we also need a substitution lemma on the term level, to prove that if we step from $(\lambda x.e_1)v$ to $e_1[x \to v]$, the type is preserved.

Soundness

Corollary 1 (Soundness) If $\emptyset \vdash e : \rho; C$, then either e is a value or e diverges.

Question: What does that mean? Isn't $(\lambda x.x)1$ a counterexample?

Benchmarks: Const Inference

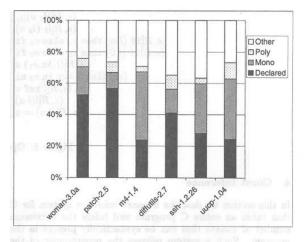


Figure 6: Number of inferred consts for benchmarks

Question: What's the meaning of Other/Poly/Mono/Declared?

Discussion

Question: What's the goal of qualifier inference?

Discussion

Question: What's the goal of qualifier inference?

- Rewrite C source automatically?
- More efficient program execution?
- Make C qualifier-polymorphic?

Thank you ☺