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# Formal Languages, Grammars, and Parsing

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CHAPTER 2 OF PROGRAMMING LANGUAGES PRAGMATICS

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# Outline

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- **Languages and Grammars**
- Regular Languages (Scanning)
- Context Free Languages (Parsing)
  - Derivation/Parse Trees
  - Ambiguity
- LL and LR Grammars
- Recursive Descent Parsing

# Languages

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- Syntax vs Semantics
  - Syntax - form, internal structure
  - Semantics - meaning
- Language Generation vs Language Recognition
  - Regular expressions and grammars
  - Scanner and parsers

# Formal Languages

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- Basis for the design and implementation of programming languages
- Alphabet: finite set  $\Sigma$  of symbols
- String: finite sequence of symbols
  - $\epsilon$  : the empty string, a sequence of length 0
  - $\Sigma^*$  : the set of all strings over  $\Sigma$ , including  $\epsilon$
  - $\Sigma^+$  : the set of all non-empty strings over  $\Sigma$
- Language: a set of strings  $L \subseteq \Sigma^*$ 
  - For example in Java,  $\Sigma$  is Unicode, a program is a string, and  $L$  is defined by a grammar in the language specification

# Formal Grammars

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- A grammar  $G = (N, \Sigma, P, S)$  is a 4-tuple with
  - Finite set of non-terminal symbols  $N$
  - Finite set of terminal symbols/an alphabet  $\Sigma$
  - Finite set of productions  $P$
  - The starting non-terminal symbol  $S \in N$
- The grammar describes a language  $L \subseteq \Sigma^*$ 
  - Sometimes say that a grammar *generates* a language
- Productions are “rules” of the form  $x \rightarrow y$ 
  - $x$  is a non-empty sequence of terminals and non-terminals
  - $y$  is a sequence of terminals and non-terminals

# Example: A grammar for non-negative integers

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- $N = \{ I, D \}$
- $\Sigma = \{ 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 \}$
- $S = I$
- $P = \{ I \rightarrow D, I \rightarrow DI, \\ D \rightarrow 0, D \rightarrow 1, D \rightarrow 2, D \rightarrow 3, D \rightarrow 4, \\ D \rightarrow 5, D \rightarrow 6, D \rightarrow 7, D \rightarrow 8, D \rightarrow 9 \}$
- Writing out the grammar seems pretty tedious, right?

# Grammar notation in practice

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- This is how the same grammar would typically be presented:

- $I \rightarrow D \mid DI$

$$D \rightarrow 0 \mid 1 \mid 2 \mid \dots \mid 9$$

- Here  $I$  has two production alternatives,  $D$  has 10
- We can infer the rest of the grammar from this
  - Our terminals/alphabet are 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9
  - Our non-terminals are  $I$  and  $D$
  - Our starting non-terminal is  $I$

# Grammar for non-negative integers

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- We generate the strings in the language from the starting non-terminal by applying the production rules
  - Match the left-hand side of a rule to a substring and replacing with the right-hand side

- Example:

- Grammar:

$$\begin{aligned} I &\rightarrow D \mid DI \\ D &\rightarrow 0 \mid 1 \mid 2 \mid \dots \mid 9 \end{aligned}$$

- $I \Rightarrow DI$

$$\begin{aligned} DI &\Rightarrow DDI \\ DDI &\Rightarrow D6I \\ D6I &\Rightarrow D6D \\ D6D &\Rightarrow 36D \\ 36D &\Rightarrow 361 \end{aligned}$$

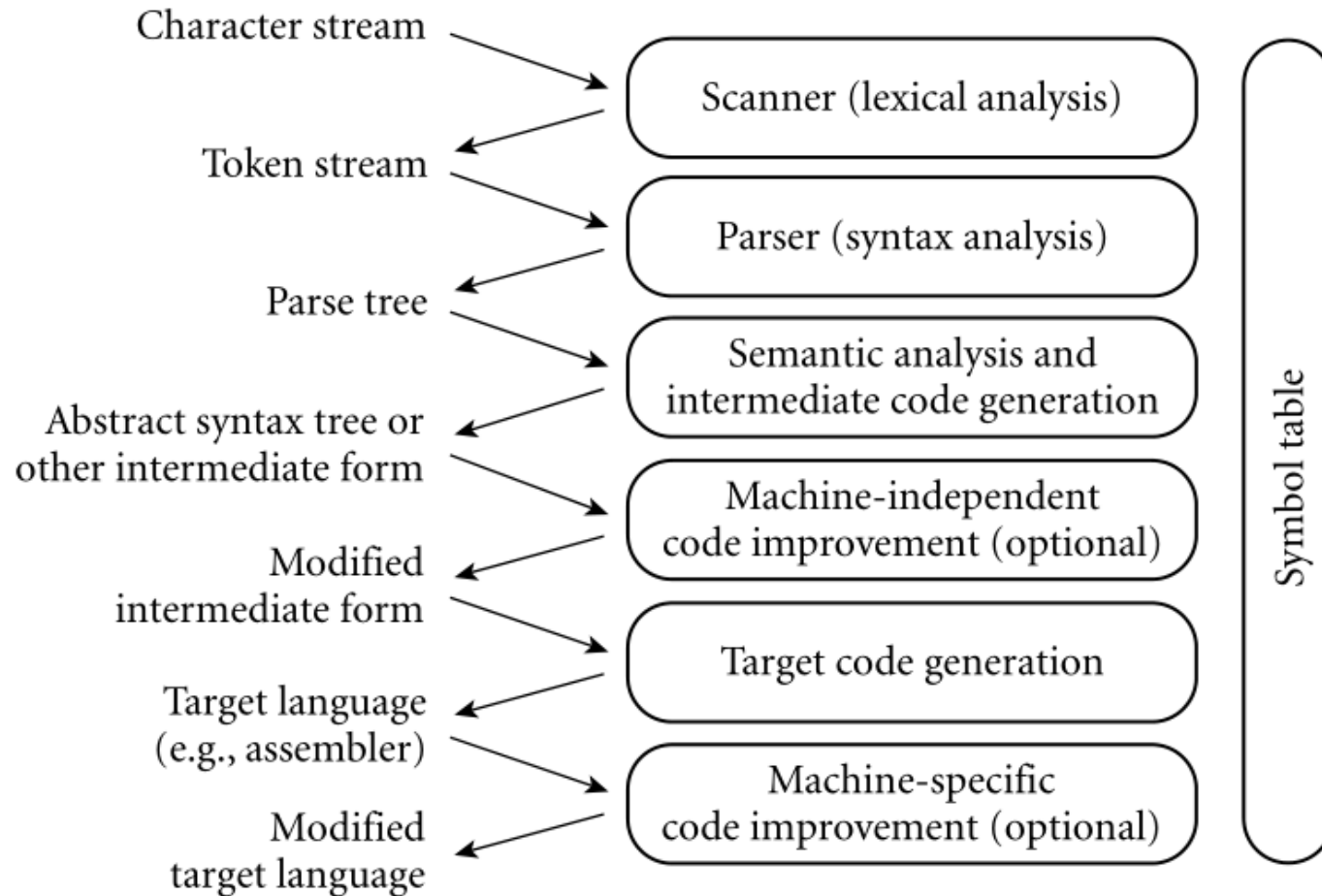


# Languages and Grammars

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- String derivation (let  $w_i$  be a string)
  - $w_1 \Rightarrow w_2 \Rightarrow \dots \Rightarrow w_n$  is a **derivation sequence**
  - We can indicate that there is a derivation sequence from  $w_1$  to  $w_n$  by writing  $w_1 \Rightarrow^* w_n$
  - If we want to be clear that  $n > 1$  we can write  $w_1 \Rightarrow^+ w_n$
- We want to talk about the **language generated by grammar  $G$** 
  - $L(G) = \{ w \in \Sigma^* \mid S \Rightarrow^+ w \}$
- Fundamental theoretical characterization of languages: Chomsky Hierarchy
  - Regular languages  $\subset$  Context-free languages  $\subset$  Context-sensitive languages  $\subset$  Unrestricted languages
- Our interest as computer scientists:
  - Regular languages for lexical analysis
  - Context free languages for syntax analysis

# Recall the overview of compilation



# Regular languages in compilers & interpreters

stream of  
**characters**

w,h,i,l,e,(,a,1,5,>,b,b,),d,o,...

**Scanner** (uses a regular grammar to perform lexical analysis)

stream of  
**tokens**

**keyword**[while], **leftparen**, **id**[a15], **op**[>],  
**id**[bb], **rightparen**, **keyword**[do], ...

**Parser** (uses a context-free grammar to perform syntax analysis)

**parse  
tree**

each token is a leaf in the parse tree

... more compiler/interpreter components

# Outline

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- Languages and Grammars
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# Regular languages

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- Regular languages – languages that can be recognized by a read-only Turing machine
- Operations on languages that preserve regularity
  - Union:  $L \cup M$  = all strings in  $L$  or  $M$
  - Concatenation:  $LM$  = all strings  $ab$  where  $a \in L$  and  $b \in M$
  - Closure and positive closure: Let  $L^0 = \{ \epsilon \}$  and  $L^i = L^{i-1}L$ 
    - Closure:  $L^* = L^0 \cup L^1 \cup L^2 \cup \dots$
    - Positive Closure:  $L^+ = L^1 \cup L^2 \cup \dots$
- Regular expressions: notation to express languages constructed with the help of these operations
  - Example:  $(0|1|2|3|4|5|6|7|8|9)^+$

# Regular languages

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- Given some alphabet, a regular expression is
  - The empty string  $\epsilon$
  - Any symbol from the alphabet
  - If  $r$  and  $s$  are regular expressions, then so are  $r|s$ ,  $rs$ ,  $r^*$ ,  $r^+$ ,  $r?$ , and  $(r)$ 
    - $r|s$  – accepts strings accepted by  $r$  or accepted by  $s$  (set union)
    - $rs$  – accepts strings that are the concatenation of a string accepted by  $r$  and a string accepted by  $s$  (set concatenation)
    - $r^*$  - accepts  $\epsilon$  or more strings accepted by  $r$ , all concatenated together (set closure)
    - $r^+$  - accepts 1 or more strings accepted by  $r$ , all concatenated together (positive closure)
    - $r?$  – accepts  $\epsilon$  or 1 string accepted by  $r$
  - $^*/+/?$  have higher precedence than concatenation, and concatenation has higher precedence than  $|$
  - All operations are left associative

# Regular expressions

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- Each regular expression  $r$  defines a language  $L(r)$ 
  - $L(\epsilon) = \{ \epsilon \}$
  - $L(a) = \{ a \}$  for alphabet symbol  $a$
  - $L(r|s) = L(r) \cup L(s)$  for regular expressions  $r, s$
  - $L(rs) = L(r)L(s)$
  - $L(r^*) = (L(r))^*$
  - $L(r^+) = (L(r))^+$
  - $L(r?) = \{ \epsilon \} \cup L(r)$
  - $L((r)) = L(r)$
- Example: What is the language defined by this regular expression?  
 $0(x|X)(0|1|2|3|4|5|6|7|8|9|a|b|c|d|e|f|A|B|C|D|E|F)^+$

# Regular expression exercises

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- $L(\text{gray} \mid \text{grey}) = ?$
- $L(\text{gr}(\text{a} \mid \text{e})\text{y}) = ?$
- $L(\text{colou?r}) = ?$
- $L(\text{go}^*\text{gle}) = ?$
  
- Try these on your own (answers on the next slide)



# Regular expression exercises

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- $L(\text{gray}|\text{grey}) = \{\text{gray}, \text{grey}\}$
- $L(\text{gr}(\text{a}|\text{e})\text{y}) = \{\text{gray}, \text{grey}\}$
- $L(\text{colou?r}) = \{\text{color}, \text{colour}\}$
- $L(\text{go}^*\text{gle}) = \{\text{ggle}, \text{gogle}, \text{google}, \text{gooogle}, \text{gooogle}, \dots\}$

# Regular expression exercises

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- Which of the following languages over the alphabet  $\{0, 1\}$  is described by the regular expression  
 $(0+1)^*0(0+1)^*0(0+1)^*$ 
  - Set of all strings containing 00
  - Set of all strings containing at most two 0's
  - Set of all strings containing at least two 0's
  - Set of all strings that begin and end with either 0 or 1
  - None of these
- Try this out, answer on next slide.
  - I suggest trying to come up with strings that will eliminate answers, i.e. if you find a string that contains 00 but is not accepted by the regular expression that would eliminate the first option

# Regular expression exercises

---

- Which of the following languages over the alphabet  $\{0, 1\}$  is described by the regular expression  $(0+1)^*0(0+1)^*0(0+1)^*$ 
  - Set of all strings containing 00
    - 001 is in this set, not accepted by the RE
  - Set of all strings containing at most two 0's
    - 001 is in this set, not accepted by the RE
  - Set of all strings containing at least two 0's
    - 001 is in this set, not accepted by the RE
  - Set of all strings that begin and end with either 0 or 1
    - 0 is in this set, not accepted by the RE
  - **None of these**

# Regular languages

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- Let  $G$  be a grammar
- We say  $G$  is a regular grammar if
  - Either all productions are of the form  $A \rightarrow wB$  and  $A \rightarrow w$ , where
    - $A, B$  are non-terminals in  $G$
    - $w$  is a sequence of terminals or the empty string
  - Or all productions are of the form  $A \rightarrow Bw$  and  $A \rightarrow w$ , where
    - $A, B$  are non-terminals in  $G$
    - $w$  is a sequence of terminals or the empty string
- In addition, in the first case we say  $G$  is **right-regular**, and in the second case we say  $G$  is **left-regular**
- If a language is generated by a regular grammar, then we say the language is regular

# Regular grammars

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- Example:  $L = \{ a^n b \mid n > 0 \}$  is a regular language

- Grammar to prove this:  $S \rightarrow Ab$

$$A \rightarrow Aa \mid a$$

this is a left-regular grammar

- What about our grammar from before for non-negative integers?

$$I \rightarrow D \mid DI$$

$$D \rightarrow 0 \mid 1 \mid 2 \mid \dots \mid 9$$

# Regular grammars

---

- $I \rightarrow D \mid DI$

$$D \rightarrow 0 \mid 1 \mid 2 \mid \dots \mid 9$$

- Can we modify this grammar so it is regular? And while we are at it, can we eliminate the leading 0's the grammar currently allows?
  - I.e. 509 is allowed, but 059 is not

# Regular Languages

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- Equivalent formalisms for regular languages
  - Regular expressions
  - Regular grammars
  - Nondeterministic finite automata
  - Deterministic finite automata
  - Additional details: Sections 2.2, 2.4 (or Wikipedia)
- Our interest?
  - Regular languages are the foundation for the lexical analysis done by a scanner
  - Your first project will be to implement a scanner

# Regular languages in compilers & interpreters

stream of  
**characters**

w,h,i,l,e,(,a,1,5,>,b,b,),d,o,...

**Scanner** (uses a regular grammar to perform lexical analysis)

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**Parser** (uses a context-free grammar to perform syntax analysis)

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each token is a leaf in the parse tree

... more compiler/interpreter components



# Outline of a simple scanner

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- The parser asks the scanner for the next token
- The scanner reads the next character  $x$  from the character stream
- If  $x$  is a special character like  $;$ ,  $!$ ,  $+$ ,  $-$ ,  $*$ ,  $($ ,  $)$  the scanner returns the corresponding token
- If  $x$  is  $=$ , peek at the next character  $y$ 
  - If  $y$  is not  $=$ , return the token for  $=$  (assignment)
  - If  $y$  is  $=$ , read the character and return the token for  $==$  (equality)
- If  $x$  is  $<$ , peek at the next character  $y$ 
  - If  $y$  is not  $=$ , return the token for  $<$  (strictly less than)
  - If  $y$  is  $=$ , read the character and return the token for  $<=$  (less than or equal to)

# Outline of a simple scanner

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- Some tokens have additional information attached
- When parsing we will want the type and the specific value (i.e. identifier token and identifier string, or constant token and constant value)
- If x is a letter, keep reading characters and stop before the first non-letter or non-digit character (assuming our language requires identifiers to start with a letter and then have only letters or digits)
  - If the string is a keyword, return the token for that keyword
  - If the string is not a keyword, return the id token with the string
- If x is a digit, keep reading characters and stop before the first non-digit character
  - Return the token const with the numeric value

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# Context-free languages

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- They subsume regular languages
  - Every regular language is CF
  - Not every CF language is regular
    - Is  $L = \{ a^n b^n \mid n > 0 \}$  regular?
- CF languages are generated by a context-free grammar (CFG)
  - Each production must be of the form  $A \rightarrow w$ , where
    - $A$  is a nonterminal
    - $w$  is a sequence of terminals **and non-terminals**

# CFG notation

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- For CFGs, we traditionally use Backus-Naur form (BNF)
  - John Backus and Peter Naur, for Algol-58 and Algol 60
- $::=$  is read as “defined as”
- $< >$  encloses a nonterminal name
- Example, a grammar fragment:

$$\begin{aligned} E &\rightarrow T \mid E + T \\ T &\rightarrow i \mid c \mid (E) \end{aligned}$$

- Becomes:
  - $\langle \text{expr} \rangle ::= \langle \text{term} \rangle \mid \langle \text{expr} \rangle + \langle \text{term} \rangle$
  - $\langle \text{term} \rangle ::= \text{id} \mid \text{const} \mid (\langle \text{expr} \rangle)$

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# Derivation sequence for a string

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- Describes a particular way to derive a string based on a CFG
  - A **derivation** is a sequence of replacement operations that show how to derive a string from the starting symbol
  - A **sentential form** is each string of symbols in the derivation
  - The **yield** of the derivation is the string of terminals at the end of the derivation

# Example of a derivation sequence

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$\langle \text{expr} \rangle ::= \langle \text{term} \rangle \mid \langle \text{expr} \rangle + \langle \text{term} \rangle$

$\langle \text{term} \rangle ::= \text{id} \mid (\langle \text{expr} \rangle)$

Derivation sequence for  $(x+y)+z$

$\begin{aligned} \langle \text{expr} \rangle &\Rightarrow \langle \text{expr} \rangle + \langle \text{term} \rangle \Rightarrow \langle \text{expr} \rangle + z \Rightarrow \langle \text{term} \rangle + z \Rightarrow (\langle \text{expr} \rangle) + z \\ &\Rightarrow (\langle \text{expr} \rangle + \langle \text{term} \rangle) + z \Rightarrow (\langle \text{expr} \rangle + y) + z \Rightarrow (\langle \text{term} \rangle + y) + z \\ &\Rightarrow (x + y) + z \end{aligned}$



# Derivation tree for a string

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- Also called a parse tree or a concrete syntax tree
  - **Leaf nodes**: terminals
  - **Inner nodes**: non-terminals
  - **Root**: starting non-terminal of the grammar
- Describes a particular way to derive a string based on a CFG
  - Leaf nodes read from left to right are the string
  - To get this string: depth first traversal of the tree, always visiting the leftmost unexplored branch

# Example of a derivation tree

---

$\langle \text{expr} \rangle ::= \langle \text{term} \rangle \mid \langle \text{expr} \rangle + \langle \text{term} \rangle$

$\langle \text{term} \rangle ::= \text{id} \mid (\langle \text{expr} \rangle)$

Parse tree for  $(x+y)+z$

# Equivalent derivation sequences

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Two derivation sequences are equivalent if they have the same parse tree

One derivation:

$$\begin{aligned} \langle \text{expr} \rangle &\Rightarrow \langle \text{expr} \rangle + \langle \text{term} \rangle \Rightarrow \langle \text{expr} \rangle + z \Rightarrow \langle \text{term} \rangle + z \Rightarrow (\langle \text{expr} \rangle) + z \Rightarrow \\ &(\langle \text{expr} \rangle + \langle \text{term} \rangle) + z \Rightarrow (\langle \text{expr} \rangle + y) + z \Rightarrow (\langle \text{term} \rangle + y) + z \\ &\Rightarrow (x + y) + z \end{aligned}$$

Another derivation:

$$\begin{aligned} \langle \text{expr} \rangle &\Rightarrow \langle \text{expr} \rangle + \langle \text{term} \rangle \Rightarrow \langle \text{term} \rangle + \langle \text{term} \rangle \Rightarrow (\langle \text{expr} \rangle) + \langle \text{term} \rangle \Rightarrow \\ &(\langle \text{expr} \rangle + \langle \text{term} \rangle) + \langle \text{term} \rangle \Rightarrow (\langle \text{term} \rangle + \langle \text{term} \rangle) + \langle \text{term} \rangle \Rightarrow \\ &(x + \langle \text{term} \rangle) + \langle \text{term} \rangle \Rightarrow (x + y) + \langle \text{term} \rangle \Rightarrow (x + y) + z \end{aligned}$$

And there are many more

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# Ambiguous grammars

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- A grammar is **ambiguous**  $\Leftrightarrow$  There is some string with multiple (different) parse trees
- An **ambiguous grammar** gives more freedom to the compiler writer
  - For example, ambiguity can allow optimizations for better performance
  - This also creates difficulty, how to choose between alternatives
- For real work programming languages, we **typically** have non-ambiguous grammar
  - We need a deterministic specification for the parser so the user knows what their code will do
- We can remove ambiguity by adding more non-terminals

# Eliminating ambiguity

---

- Consider this grammar:  
 $\langle \text{expr} \rangle ::= \langle \text{expr} \rangle + \langle \text{expr} \rangle \mid \langle \text{expr} \rangle * \langle \text{expr} \rangle \mid \text{id} \mid ( \langle \text{expr} \rangle )$
- How many parse trees are there for the string “a + b \* c”?

# Eliminating ambiguity

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- How many parse trees are there for the string “a + b \* c”?
  - One is equivalent to  $(a + b) * c$
  - The other is equivalent to  $a + (b * c)$
- Operator precedence:
  - When several operators are without parentheses, which is an operand of what?
  - Is  $a+b$  and operand of  $*$ , or is  $b*c$  and operand of  $+$ ?
- Operator associativity:
  - For multiple operators with the same precedence, are they evaluated left-to-right or right-to-left?
  - Is  $a-b-c$  equivalent to  $(a-b)-c$  or  $a-(b-c)$ ?

# Eliminating ambiguity

---

- In most languages,  $*$  has higher precedence than  $+$ , and both are left-associative
- Exercise: Change  
 $\langle \text{expr} \rangle ::= \langle \text{expr} \rangle + \langle \text{expr} \rangle \mid \langle \text{expr} \rangle * \langle \text{expr} \rangle \mid \text{id} \mid ( \langle \text{expr} \rangle )$   
So that
  - It is unambiguous
  - It has the correct precedence
  - It has the correct associativity



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So that
  - It is unambiguous
  - It has the correct precedence
  - It has the correct associativity
- Solution: add new non-terminals  
 $\langle \text{expr} \rangle ::= \langle \text{expr} \rangle + \langle \text{term} \rangle \mid \langle \text{term} \rangle$   
 $\langle \text{term} \rangle ::= \langle \text{term} \rangle * \langle \text{factor} \rangle \mid \langle \text{factor} \rangle$   
 $\langle \text{factor} \rangle ::= \text{id} \mid ( \langle \text{expr} \rangle )$

# Classic ambiguity problem: The “dangling-else”

---

- Is this a reasonable grammar for including if/then and if/then/else statements in our language?
- $\langle \text{stmt} \rangle ::= \text{if } \langle \text{expr} \rangle \text{ then } \langle \text{stmt} \rangle$   
                                  |  $\text{if } \langle \text{expr} \rangle \text{ then } \langle \text{stmt} \rangle \text{ else } \langle \text{stmt} \rangle$
- if a then if b then c=1 else c=2

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- if a then if b then c=1 else c=2
  - Two possible parse trees
- Traditional solution: match the else with the last unmatched then
  - This is an example of a disambiguation rule, something external to the grammar

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- if a then if b then c=1 else c=2
  - Two possible parse trees, very different meanings
- Traditional solution: match the else with the last unmatched then
  - This is an example of a disambiguation rule, something external to the grammar

# Classic ambiguity problem: The “dangling-else”

---

- Is this version non-ambiguous?
- $\langle \text{stmt} \rangle ::= \langle \text{matched} \rangle$   
                                   $| \langle \text{unmatched} \rangle$   
    $\langle \text{matched} \rangle ::= \langle \text{non-if-stmt} \rangle$   
                                   $| \text{if } \langle \text{expr} \rangle \text{ then } \langle \text{matched} \rangle \text{ else } \langle \text{matched} \rangle$   
    $\langle \text{unmatched} \rangle ::= \text{if } \langle \text{expr} \rangle \text{ then } \langle \text{stmt} \rangle$   
                                   $| \text{if } \langle \text{expr} \rangle \text{ then } \langle \text{matched} \rangle \text{ else } \langle \text{unmatched} \rangle$
- Is this version easy to understand?

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# Parsing

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- A CFG is a CF language generator; a **parser** is a language recognizer
- For CFLs, it is proven that we can create a parser that runs in time  $O(n^3)$ , where  $n$  is the length of the program
- For CFLs that admit an unambiguous grammar,  $O(n^2)$ 
  - An example of a language with no unambiguous grammar is
$$\{ a^n b^m c^m d^n : n, m > 0 \} \cup \{ a^n b^n c^m d^m : n, m > 0 \}$$
- For CFLs that admit an LL or LR grammar,  $O(n)$ 
  - LL/LR grammars are unambiguous grammars



# LL and LR grammars

Class	Direction of scanning	Derivation discovered	Parse tree construction	Algorithm
LL	Left-to-right	Leftmost	Top-down	Predictive/ Recursive descent
LR	Left-to-right	Rightmost	Bottom-up	Shift-reduce

# LL/Top-down example

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- $\langle \text{id\_list} \rangle ::= \langle \text{id} \rangle \langle \text{id\_list\_tail} \rangle$   
     $\langle \text{id\_list\_tail} \rangle ::= , \langle \text{id} \rangle \langle \text{id\_list\_tail} \rangle \mid ;$   
     $\langle \text{id} \rangle ::= A \mid B \mid C$
- Parse the string “A, B, C;”

# LR/Bottom-up example

---

- $\langle \text{id\_list} \rangle ::= \langle \text{id\_list\_prefix} \rangle ;$   
     $\langle \text{id\_list\_prefix} \rangle ::= \langle \text{id\_list\_prefix} \rangle, \langle \text{id} \rangle \mid \langle \text{id} \rangle$   
     $\langle \text{id} \rangle ::= A \mid B \mid C$
- Parse the string “A, B, C;”

# LL/LR grammars

---

- LL/LR grammars are further classified based on how much *look ahead* is needed for parsing
  - LL(k)/LR(k) indicates a look ahead of at most k tokens is needed to parse
- Working with LL(1) would be particularly nice, but it is difficult to write LL(1) grammars for our languages
  - Common difficulties:
    - Left recursion:  $\langle \text{sub} \rangle ::= \langle \text{sub} \rangle - \langle \text{id} \rangle$
    - Common prefixes:  $\langle \text{stmt} \rangle ::= \langle \text{matched} \rangle \mid \langle \text{unmatched} \rangle$
- We can get close to LL(1)
  - Handle left-associativity as a special case instead of through left-recursion
  - Use disambiguation rules, or change the language to avoid common prefixes

# Outline

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- Languages and Grammars
- Regular Languages (Scanning)
- Context Free Languages (Parsing)
  - Derivation/Parse Trees
  - Ambiguity
- LL and LR Grammars
- **Recursive Descent Parsing**

# The Core grammar

---

$\langle \text{prog} \rangle ::= \text{program } \langle \text{decl-seq} \rangle \text{ begin } \langle \text{stmt-seq} \rangle \text{ end}$

$\langle \text{decl-seq} \rangle ::= \langle \text{decl} \rangle \mid \langle \text{decl} \rangle \langle \text{decl-seq} \rangle$

$\langle \text{stmt-seq} \rangle ::= \langle \text{stmt} \rangle \mid \langle \text{stmt} \rangle \langle \text{stmt-seq} \rangle$

$\langle \text{decl} \rangle ::= \text{int } \langle \text{id-list} \rangle ;$

$\langle \text{id-list} \rangle ::= \text{id} \mid \text{id} , \langle \text{id-list} \rangle$

$\langle \text{stmt} \rangle ::= \langle \text{assign} \rangle \mid \langle \text{if} \rangle \mid \langle \text{loop} \rangle \mid \langle \text{in} \rangle \mid \langle \text{out} \rangle \mid \langle \text{decl} \rangle$

$\langle \text{assign} \rangle ::= \text{id} = \langle \text{expr} \rangle ;$

$\langle \text{in} \rangle ::= \text{input } \langle \text{id} \rangle ;$

$\langle \text{out} \rangle ::= \text{output } \langle \text{expr} \rangle ;$

$\langle \text{if} \rangle ::= \text{if } \langle \text{cond} \rangle \text{ then } \langle \text{stmt-seq} \rangle \text{ endif ;}$

$\mid \text{if } \langle \text{cond} \rangle \text{ then } \langle \text{stmt-seq} \rangle \text{ else } \langle \text{stmt-seq} \rangle \text{ endif ;}$

$\langle \text{loop} \rangle ::= \text{while } \langle \text{cond} \rangle \text{ begin } \langle \text{stmt-seq} \rangle \text{ endwhile ;}$

$\langle \text{cond} \rangle ::= \langle \text{cmpr} \rangle \mid ! ( \langle \text{cond} \rangle )$

$\mid \langle \text{cmpr} \rangle \text{ or } \langle \text{cond} \rangle$

$\langle \text{cmpr} \rangle ::= \langle \text{expr} \rangle == \langle \text{expr} \rangle \mid \langle \text{expr} \rangle < \langle \text{expr} \rangle$

$\mid \langle \text{expr} \rangle <= \langle \text{expr} \rangle$

$\langle \text{expr} \rangle ::= \langle \text{term} \rangle \mid \langle \text{term} \rangle + \langle \text{expr} \rangle \mid \langle \text{term} \rangle - \langle \text{expr} \rangle$

$\langle \text{term} \rangle ::= \langle \text{factor} \rangle \mid \langle \text{factor} \rangle * \langle \text{term} \rangle$

$\langle \text{factor} \rangle ::= \text{const} \mid \text{id} \mid ( \langle \text{expr} \rangle )$

# Parser vs scanner projects

---

- id and const are terminal symbols for the grammar of the Core language
  - In the scanner they were non-terminals
- Consider  $9-5+5$  in the Core grammar
  - What is the parse tree? Is this a problem?
  - If we wanted to fix this, how could we?

# Recursive descent

---

- Several uses
  - Parsing technique
    - Call the scanner to obtain tokens, build the parse tree from the root down
  - Traversal of a given parse tree
    - Parse tree represents a program, traverse it to
      - Print the program (check we have the correct parse tree)
      - Code generation
      - Interpret the program
- Basic idea: Use a separate procedure for each non-terminal of the grammar
  - The body of the procedure “applies” some production for that non-terminal
  - Start by calling the procedure for the starting non-terminal



# Example: Simple expressions

---

`<expr> ::= <term> | <term> + <expr>`

`<term> ::= id | const | (<expr>)`

```
procedure Expr() {  
    Term();  
    if (currentToken() == PLUS) {  
        nextToken(); //consume the plus  
        Expr();  
    }  
}
```

Ignore error checking for now...

# Example: Simple expressions

---

$\langle \text{expr} \rangle ::= \langle \text{term} \rangle \mid \langle \text{term} \rangle + \langle \text{expr} \rangle$

$\langle \text{term} \rangle ::= \text{id} \mid \text{const} \mid (\langle \text{expr} \rangle)$

```
procedure Term() {  
    if (currentToken() == ID) nextToken();  
    else if (currentToken() == CONST) nextToken();  
    else if (currentToken == LPAREN) {  
        nextToken(); // consume left parenthesis  
        Expr();  
        nextToken(); // consume right parenthesis  
    }  
}
```

# Error checking

---

- What checks of `currentToken()` do we need to make in `Term()`?
  - For example, how to catch malformed strings like “+a” and “(a+b”
- Unexpected leftover tokens: add “metatokens” to facilitate communication between scanner and parser
  - Parser should check for EOS token

# Which alternative to use?

---

- The key issue for recursive descent parsing, how to pick which production alternative from the grammar to follow?
  - Predictive parsing: predict correctly (without backtracking) what we need to do, by looking ahead a few tokens
  - Ideally, look at just one token (the current one)
- For each production alternative, find the FIRST set: what is the set of all terminals that can be at the very beginning of strings derived from that alternative?
- If the FIRST sets are all disjoint, we can decide exactly which alternative we should use

# FIRST set

---

$\langle \text{decl-seq} \rangle ::= \langle \text{decl} \rangle \mid \langle \text{decl} \rangle \langle \text{decl-seq} \rangle$

$\langle \text{decl} \rangle ::= \text{int } \langle \text{id-list} \rangle ;$

- FIRST set for the  $\langle \text{decl-seq} \rangle$  alternatives:  $\{ \text{INT} \}$  and  $\{ \text{INT} \}$ 
  - Not disjoint!
- Make them disjoint by introducing a helper non-terminal  $\langle \text{decl-rest} \rangle$ 
  - $\langle \text{decl-seq} \rangle ::= \langle \text{decl} \rangle \langle \text{decl-rest} \rangle$
  - $\langle \text{decl-rest} \rangle ::= \langle \text{decl-seq} \rangle \mid \epsilon$
  - $\langle \text{decl} \rangle ::= \text{int } \langle \text{id-list} \rangle ;$
- FIRST sets for alternatives of  $\langle \text{decl-rest} \rangle$ 
  - $\{ \text{INT} \}$  for  $\langle \text{decl-seq} \rangle$
  - $\{ \text{BEGIN} \}$  for  $\epsilon$ , because  $\langle \text{prog} \rangle ::= \text{program } \langle \text{decl-seq} \rangle \text{ begin } \dots$

# Parser code

---

```
procedure DeclSeq() {  
    ...  
    Decl();  
    DeclRest();  
    ...}  
procedure DeclRest() {  
    ...  
    if (currentToken() == BEGIN) return;  
    if (currentToken() == INT) { ... DeclSeq(); ... }  
}
```

# Parser code simplified

---

You may have realized that was unnecessary, can do this instead:

```
procedure DeclSeq() {  
    ...  
    Decl();  
    ...  
    if (currentToken() == BEGIN) return;  
    if (currentToken() == INT) {  
        ...  
        DeclSeq();  
    }  
}
```

# Practice with FIRST sets

---

For each of these, find the FIRST set for all production alternatives

- $\langle \text{id-list} \rangle ::= \text{id} \mid \text{id}, \langle \text{id-list} \rangle$
- $\langle \text{stmt} \rangle ::= \langle \text{assign} \rangle \mid \langle \text{if} \rangle \mid \langle \text{loop} \rangle \mid \langle \text{in} \rangle \mid \langle \text{out} \rangle \mid \langle \text{decl} \rangle$
- $\langle \text{stmt-seq} \rangle ::= \langle \text{stmt} \rangle \mid \langle \text{stmt} \rangle \langle \text{stmt-seq} \rangle$
- $\langle \text{cond} \rangle ::= \langle \text{cmpr} \rangle \mid !(\langle \text{cond} \rangle) \mid \langle \text{cmpr} \rangle \text{ or } \langle \text{cond} \rangle$   
 $\langle \text{cmpr} \rangle ::= \langle \text{expr} \rangle == \langle \text{expr} \rangle \mid \langle \text{expr} \rangle < \langle \text{expr} \rangle \mid \langle \text{expr} \rangle <= \langle \text{expr} \rangle$
- $\langle \text{expr} \rangle ::= \langle \text{term} \rangle \mid \langle \text{term} \rangle + \langle \text{expr} \rangle \mid \langle \text{term} \rangle - \langle \text{expr} \rangle$   
 $\langle \text{term} \rangle ::= \langle \text{factor} \rangle \mid \langle \text{factor} \rangle * \langle \text{term} \rangle$   
 $\langle \text{factor} \rangle ::= \text{const} \mid \text{id} \mid (\langle \text{expr} \rangle)$



# The Core grammar

---

$\langle \text{prog} \rangle ::= \text{program } \langle \text{decl-seq} \rangle \text{ begin } \langle \text{stmt-seq} \rangle \text{ end}$

$\langle \text{decl-seq} \rangle ::= \langle \text{decl} \rangle \mid \langle \text{decl} \rangle \langle \text{decl-seq} \rangle$

$\langle \text{stmt-seq} \rangle ::= \langle \text{stmt} \rangle \mid \langle \text{stmt} \rangle \langle \text{stmt-seq} \rangle$

$\langle \text{decl} \rangle ::= \text{int } \langle \text{id-list} \rangle ;$

$\langle \text{id-list} \rangle ::= \text{id} \mid \text{id} , \langle \text{id-list} \rangle$

$\langle \text{stmt} \rangle ::= \langle \text{assign} \rangle \mid \langle \text{if} \rangle \mid \langle \text{loop} \rangle \mid \langle \text{in} \rangle \mid \langle \text{out} \rangle \mid \langle \text{decl} \rangle$

$\langle \text{assign} \rangle ::= \text{id} = \langle \text{expr} \rangle ;$

$\langle \text{in} \rangle ::= \text{input } \langle \text{id} \rangle ;$

$\langle \text{out} \rangle ::= \text{output } \langle \text{expr} \rangle ;$

$\langle \text{if} \rangle ::= \text{if } \langle \text{cond} \rangle \text{ then } \langle \text{stmt-seq} \rangle \text{ endif ;}$

$\mid \text{if } \langle \text{cond} \rangle \text{ then } \langle \text{stmt-seq} \rangle \text{ else } \langle \text{stmt-seq} \rangle \text{ endif ;}$

$\langle \text{loop} \rangle ::= \text{while } \langle \text{cond} \rangle \text{ begin } \langle \text{stmt-seq} \rangle \text{ endwhile ;}$

$\langle \text{cond} \rangle ::= \langle \text{cmpr} \rangle \mid ! ( \langle \text{cond} \rangle )$

$\mid \langle \text{cmpr} \rangle \text{ or } \langle \text{cond} \rangle$

$\langle \text{cmpr} \rangle ::= \langle \text{expr} \rangle == \langle \text{expr} \rangle \mid \langle \text{expr} \rangle < \langle \text{expr} \rangle$

$\mid \langle \text{expr} \rangle <= \langle \text{expr} \rangle$

$\langle \text{expr} \rangle ::= \langle \text{term} \rangle \mid \langle \text{term} \rangle + \langle \text{expr} \rangle \mid \langle \text{term} \rangle - \langle \text{expr} \rangle$

$\langle \text{term} \rangle ::= \langle \text{factor} \rangle \mid \langle \text{factor} \rangle * \langle \text{term} \rangle$

$\langle \text{factor} \rangle ::= \text{const} \mid \text{id} \mid ( \langle \text{expr} \rangle )$

# Practice with FIRST sets answers

---

For each of these, find the FIRST set for all production alternatives

- $\langle \text{id-list} \rangle ::= \text{id} \mid \text{id}, \langle \text{id-list} \rangle$ 
  - $\{\text{id}\}$  and  $\{\text{id}\}$
- $\langle \text{stmt} \rangle ::= \langle \text{assign} \rangle \mid \langle \text{if} \rangle \mid \langle \text{loop} \rangle \mid \langle \text{in} \rangle \mid \langle \text{out} \rangle \mid \langle \text{decl} \rangle$ 
  - $\{\text{id}\}, \{\text{IF}\}, \{\text{WHILE}\}, \{\text{INPUT}\}, \{\text{OUTPUT}\}, \{\text{INT}\}$
- $\langle \text{stmt-seq} \rangle ::= \langle \text{stmt} \rangle \mid \langle \text{stmt} \rangle \langle \text{stmt-seq} \rangle$ 
  - $\{\text{id}, \text{if}, \text{while}, \text{input}, \text{output}, \text{int}\}$  and  $\{\text{id}, \text{if}, \text{while}, \text{input}, \text{output}, \text{int}\}$
- $\langle \text{cond} \rangle ::= \langle \text{cmpr} \rangle \mid \neg \langle \text{cond} \rangle \mid \langle \text{cmpr} \rangle \text{ or } \langle \text{cond} \rangle$   
 $\langle \text{cmpr} \rangle ::= \langle \text{expr} \rangle == \langle \text{expr} \rangle \mid \langle \text{expr} \rangle < \langle \text{expr} \rangle \mid \langle \text{expr} \rangle \leq \langle \text{expr} \rangle$ 
  - For  $\langle \text{cond} \rangle$ :  $\{\text{const}, \text{id}, \text{LPAREN}\}, \{\text{NEGATION}\}, \{\text{const}, \text{id}, \text{LPAREN}\}$
  - For  $\langle \text{cmpr} \rangle$ :  $\{\text{const}, \text{id}, \text{LPAREN}\}, \{\text{const}, \text{id}, \text{LPAREN}\}, \{\text{const}, \text{id}, \text{LPAREN}\}$
- $\langle \text{expr} \rangle ::= \langle \text{term} \rangle \mid \langle \text{term} \rangle + \langle \text{expr} \rangle \mid \langle \text{term} \rangle - \langle \text{expr} \rangle$   
 $\langle \text{term} \rangle ::= \langle \text{factor} \rangle \mid \langle \text{factor} \rangle * \langle \text{term} \rangle$   
 $\langle \text{factor} \rangle ::= \text{const} \mid \text{id} \mid (\langle \text{expr} \rangle)$ 
  - For  $\langle \text{expr} \rangle$ :  $\{\text{const}, \text{id}, \text{LPAREN}\}, \{\text{const}, \text{id}, \text{LPAREN}\}, \{\text{const}, \text{id}, \text{LPAREN}\}$
  - For  $\langle \text{term} \rangle$ :  $\{\text{const}, \text{id}, \text{LPAREN}\}, \{\text{const}, \text{id}, \text{LPAREN}\}$
  - For  $\langle \text{factor} \rangle$ :  $\{\text{const}\}, \{\text{id}\}, \{\text{LPAREN}\}$

# More general parsing

---

- We have
$$\langle \text{expr} \rangle ::= \langle \text{term} \rangle \mid \langle \text{term} \rangle + \langle \text{expr} \rangle \mid \langle \text{term} \rangle - \langle \text{expr} \rangle$$
- Why not instead use
$$\langle \text{expr} \rangle ::= \langle \text{term} \rangle \mid \langle \text{expr} \rangle + \langle \text{term} \rangle \mid \langle \text{expr} \rangle - \langle \text{term} \rangle$$
- Left recursive grammars are not suitable for predictive, recursive descent parsing
- What is used in real parsers?
  - Traditionally, bottom-up parsing with LR(k) grammars?
  - Several modern compilers with recursive descent parsing