Syntax Analysis

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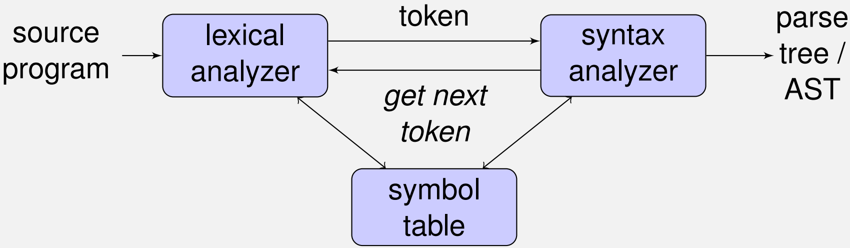
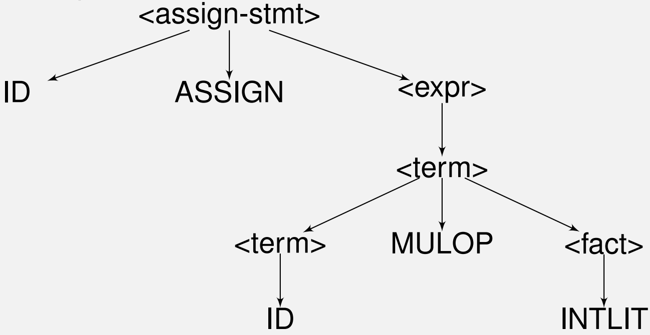
Outline

Roles

- read the sequence of tokens
- produce as output a parse tree or abstract syntax tree (AST)
- give error messages when detecting syntax errors



- Source program: a = b * 4
- Lexer output (parser input): ID ASSIGN ID MULOP INTLIT
- Parser output:



Can we use regular expression to express the following language?

$$L = \{a^n b^n \mid n > 0\}$$

Example

In programming languages, there are some symmetric structure

- (((...))) the number of (must be equal to that of)
- **repeat ... repeat ... until ... until**

More generally, programming languages have many recursive structures

Example

<expr> ::= <expr> + <expr>

<stmt> ::= **if** <expr> **then** <stmt> **else** <stmt>

Regular expressions cannot describe this kind of structure

We need

- A mean to describe this kind of language
- A method to detect if a sequence of tokens is valid or invalid regarding to this kind of language

Context-free grammar

A context-free grammar (CFG) consists of

- A set of terminals T
- A set of non-terminals N
- A start symbol S $\in$ N
- A set of productions P

A production p $\in$ P is in the form: X $\to \alpha$
where X $\in$ N and α is a sequence of symbols in T and/or N

CFG for simple integer expressions consists of:

- Set of terminals (tokens):{ADDOP, MULOP, INTLIT, LB, RB}
- Set of non-terminals:{<exp>}
- Start symbol: <exp>
- Set of productions:

<exp> $\rightarrow$ <exp> ADDOP <exp>
<exp> $\rightarrow$ <exp> MULOP <exp>
<exp> $\rightarrow$ INTLIT
<exp> $\rightarrow$ LB <exp> RB

Example

CFG for simple integer expressions consists of:

- Set of terminals (tokens):{ADDOP, MULOP, INTLIT, LB, RB}
- Set of non-terminals:{<exp>}
- Start symbol: <exp>
- Set of productions:

<exp>	$\rightarrow$	<exp> ADDOP <exp>
	|	<exp> MULOP <exp>
	|	INTLIT
	|	LB <exp> RB

How to know the language which a CFG describe?

Language Generation

1. Start with the string containing only the start symbol
2. Replace any non-terminal symbol X in the string with the right-hand side of some production X $\rightarrow \alpha$
3. Repeat (2) until there are no non-terminals in the string

Example

Grammar

<exp>	$\rightarrow$	<exp> ADDOP <exp>	(1)
	|	<exp> MULOP <exp>	(2)
	|	LB <exp> RB	(3)
	|	INTLIT	(4)

Derivation

<exp>	$\stackrel{(2)}{\Rightarrow}$	<exp> MULOP <exp>
	$\stackrel{(4)}{\Rightarrow}$	INTLIT MULOP <exp>
	$\stackrel{(1)}{\Rightarrow}$	INTLIT MULOP <exp> ADDOP <exp>
	$\stackrel{(4)}{\Rightarrow}$	INTLIT MULOP INTLIT ADDOP <exp>
	$\stackrel{(4)}{\Rightarrow}$	INTLIT MULOP INTLIT ADDOP INTLIT

Context-free language

Let G be a context-free grammar with start symbol S. The language L(G) generated from G is:

$$\{\ a_1 a_2 ... a_n \mid a_i \in T \text{ and } S \stackrel{+}{\Rightarrow} a_1 a_2 ... a_n\}$$

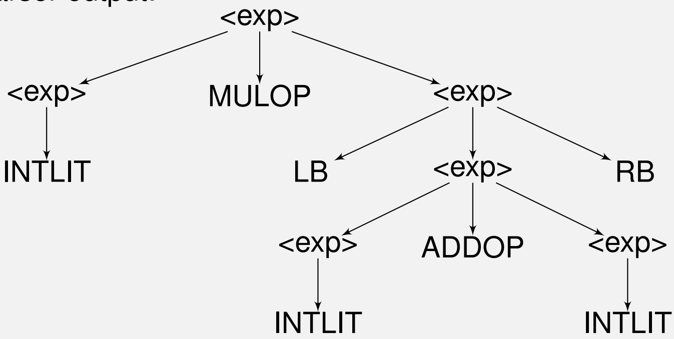
CFG is a good mean to describe PL, but:

- Not only check if a string is valid but also its parse tree
- how to handle gracefully error

Parse Tree

- Start symbol as the parse tree's root
- For a production X $\rightarrow$ $Y_1 Y_2 ... Y_n$, add children $Y_1 Y_2 ... Y_n$ to node X

- Source: 12 * (4 + 5)
- Parser input: INTLIT MULOP LB INTLIT ADDOP INTLIT RB
- Parser output:



Some tricks

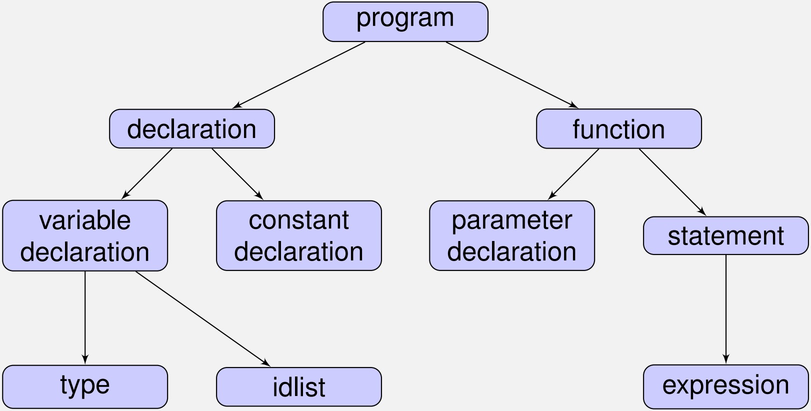
- Based on the language specification
- Try to find out the **hierarchy structure** of a language
- Focus on the **order of syntax units** instead of their meaning or other constraints
- Use **recursion** to describe something occurring **many times**
- Use **recursion** to describe **nested structures**

Based on language specification

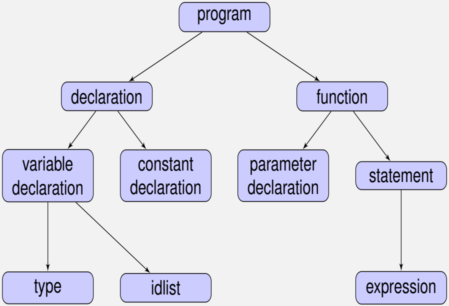
Each language has its own specification which sometimes differs from common sense

- **Smalltalk** has the same precedence for all binary operators
  a + b * c $\equiv$ ((a + b) * c)
- **C** specifies > , < , >= , <= higher priority than ==, != while **Pascal** lets these operators same priority

Hierarchy Structure



Example



$$
\begin{array}{rcl}
\text{program} & \rightarrow & \textbf{...} \\
\text{declaration} & \rightarrow & \textbf{...} \\
\text{variable\_decl} & \rightarrow & \textbf{...} \\
\text{const\_decl} & \rightarrow & \textbf{...} \\
\text{type\_decl} & \rightarrow & \textbf{...} \\
\text{idlist} & \rightarrow & \textbf{...} \\
\text{function} & \rightarrow & \textbf{...} \\
\text{para\_decl} & \rightarrow & \textbf{...} \\
\text{stmt} & \rightarrow & \textbf{...} \\
\text{exp} & \rightarrow & \textbf{...}
\end{array}
$$

Just the order, not other constraints

- CFG just helps to describe the order of tokens
- CFG cannot be used to describe type constraints
- Some other kinds of constraints such as scope, name resolution,... cannot be solved by CFG

2.1 Constant Declaration:

Each constant declaration has the form:
<identifier> = <expression> ;
The *<expression>* will be discussed later in the Expression section. Note that the expression in a constant declaration must be evaluated statically, so it cannot include a variable or a method invocation.
For example:
My1stCons = 1 + 5;
*MyndCons = 2 * My1stCons;*

One vs Many

Some language structures may contain unlimited list of elements:

- A variable declaration may have a list of identifiers
  a, c10, b: integer;
- A function declaration may have a list of parameter
  function foo(**a:integer; b:real**)
- A block may have many statements inside
  begin
  c := 1;
  m := 10;
  end

Write grammar rule for <many>

Use **recursion** to describe <many> based on <one>

<many> $\rightarrow$ <one> [<separator>] <many>
| <non recursive case>

- <separation>: symbol is used to separate elements in a list
  a, c10, d: integer
  function foo(a:integer;b:real)
- <non recursive case>: the minimum number of elements in the list
  - <one> if there is at least one element or there is a <separation> between elements in the list
  - ϵ if the list may be empty and there is no <separation> between elements in the list

For example,

listid $\rightarrow$ ID COMMA listid
| ID

In programming languages, there are many nested structures:

- There may be a function declaration in a function declaration
- A statement may appear inside another statement.
- A block may appear inside another block
- An expression may be an operand of another expression
- ...

Use **recursion** to describe a nested structures, for example

<stmt>	$\rightarrow$	IF <exp> THEN <stmt> ELSE <stmt>
	|	WHILE <exp> DO <stmt>
	|	...

Extended Backus-Naur Form(EBNF)

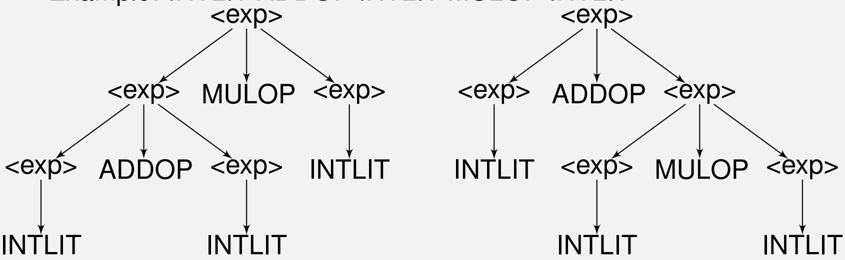
EBNF

- allow to use operators in regular expression in RHS
- higher expressiveness
- often supported by top-down parsing generators

<table>
<tr><th>BNF</th><th>EBNF (RHS)</th><th>ANTLR</th></tr>
<tr><td><exp> → <exp> '+' <term>
| <exp> '-' <term>
| <term></td><td><term> (('+'|'-') <term>)*</td><td>exp:
term (('+'|'-') term)*;</td></tr>
<tr><td><else> → ELSE <stmt>
| ϵ</td><td>(ELSE <stmt>)?</td><td>else:
("else" stmt)?;</td></tr>
<tr><td><idlist> → ID ',' idlist
| ID</td><td>ID (',' ID)*</td><td>idlist:
ID ("," ID)* ;</td></tr>
</table>

- When more than one parse tree can be found for a string of tokens, the grammar is *ambiguous*
- Ambiguity makes the meaning of some programs ill-defined

Example: INTLIT ADDOP INTLIT MULOP INTLIT



ADDOP calculated first

MULOP calculated first

Disambiguous ambiguous grammar

- Rewrite the grammar unambiguously
- In some grammar tools, there are disambiguating declarations

<exp>	→	<exp> ADDOP <exp> | <exp> MULOP <exp>
	|	INTLIT
	|	LB <exp> RB

- The recursive term <exp> appeared in both sides of ADDOP and MULOP is the source of ambiguity.
- Removing one recursive term in right hand side of productions can disambiguous the grammar.

<exp>	→	<exp> ADDOP <term> | <exp> MULOP <term>
	|	<term>
<term>	→	INTLIT
	|	LB <exp> RB

- A binary operator *o* is left-associated (or right-associated) when the left (or right) operator *o* in expression *x o x o x* is calculated first.

For example,
9 - 5 - 2 $\Rightarrow$ 6 $\Rightarrow$ 2

- The operator side where the recursive term appears will determine the association of the operator

For example,

- if ADDOP is left-associated, the grammar should be
  <exp> $\rightarrow$ <exp> ADDOP <term>
- if ADDOP is right-associated, the grammar should be
  <exp> $\rightarrow$ <term> ADDOP <exp>

Operator Precedence

- To priorize opterators, the left hand sides (lhs) of the rules where these operators appear should be different
- if operator o_1 has higher priority than operator o_2, o_1's lhs is generated by o_2's lhs

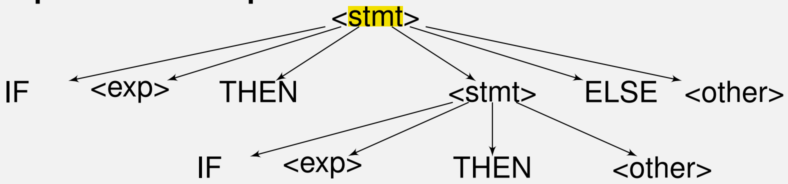
For example,

<exp>	$\rightarrow$	<exp> ADDOP <term>
	|	<term>
<term>	$\rightarrow$	<term> MULOP <factor>
	|	<factor>
<factor>	$\rightarrow$	INTLIT
	|	LB <exp> RB

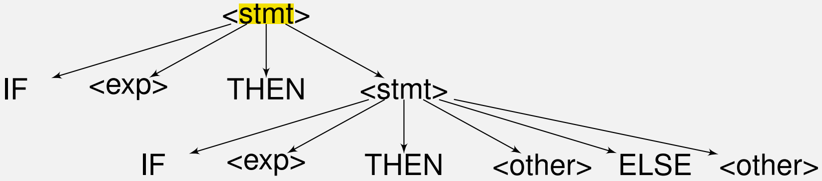
<stmt> $\rightarrow$ IF <exp> THEN <stmt> ELSE <stmt>
| IF <exp> THEN <stmt>
| <other>

Draw parse tree for input

IF <exp> THEN IF <exp> THEN <other> ELSE <other>



or



Natural if-statement grammar

<stmt> $\rightarrow$ IF <exp> THEN <stmt> ELSE <stmt>
| IF <exp> THEN <stmt>
| <other>

Unambiguous if-statement grammar

<stmt> $\rightarrow$ <matchStmt>
| <unmatchStmt>
<matchStmt> $\rightarrow$ IF <exp> THEN <matchStmt> ELSE <matchStmt>
| <other>
<unmatchStmt> $\rightarrow$ IF <exp> THEN <stmt>
| IF <exp> THEN <matchStmt> ELSE <unmatchStmt>

Declarations in grammar tools

- Some grammar tools has declarations to disambiguous grammar
- Write grammar in natural format and use declarations to disambiguous it

For example, ANTLR has

- use option <assoc=left>, <assoc=right> for left- and right-associativity, respectively.
- the order of these declarations makes the order of operator precedence

Example in ANTLR

```
main    :   expr EOL
        ;
expr    :
            LB expr RB
        |   ADDOP expr                       // highest
        |   expr MULOP expr                  //default: left-assoc
        |   expr ADDOP expr
        |   <assoc=right>  expr '=' expr     // lowest, right-assoc
        |   INT
        |   ID
        ;
```

Summary

- Context-free grammar: only one non-terminal symbol on the LHS
- Some issues when writing a CFG
    - ambiguous - dis-ambiguous
    - operator association
    - operator precedence