THE COOPER UNION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE AND ART ALBERT NERKEN SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING

Optimization by memoization of evaluation tasks in the Hazel structured programming environment

by Jonathan Lam

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Professor Fred L. Fontaine, Advisor Professor Robert Marano, Co-advisor

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| This thesis was prepared under the direction of the Candidate's Thesis Advisor and has receive |
|--|
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Barry L. Shoop, Ph.D., P.E. Date

Fred L. Fontaine, Ph.D. Date

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TODO

ABSTRACT

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TABLE OF NOMENCLATURE

| $\overline{\tau}$ | Hazel type |
|-------------------|----------------|
| Γ | Typing context |
| Δ | Hole context |

Table 1: Hazel expression and hole typing

| \overline{d} | Internal expression |
|----------------------|---------------------------------|
| $\lambda x.d$ | Lambda abstraction |
| fix f . d | Fixpoint function |
| σ | Environment |
| x, f | Variable name |
| u | Hole number |
| i | Hole instance or closure number |
| $()_{\sigma}^{u:i}$ | Empty hole expression |
| $(d)^{u:i}_{\sigma}$ | Non-empty hole expression |

Table 2: Hazel internal language

| \overline{d} value | Value |
|---------------------------------|---|
| d final | Final |
| $\sigma \vdash d \Downarrow d'$ | Evaluation |
| $d \uparrow d'$ | Postprocessing |
| $d \uparrow_{\lambda} d'$ | Postprocessing (λ -conversion) |
| $d \uparrow_i (H, d')$ | Postprocessing (hole closure numbering) |

Table 3: Hazel evaluation and postprocessing judgments

| \overline{H} | Hole instance/closure information |
|----------------|--|
| hid | Hole instance/closure id generation function |
| p | Hole instance path |

Table 4: Hazel postprocessing

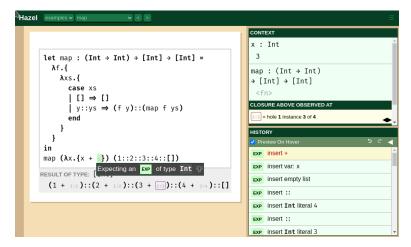


Figure 1: A screenshot of the Hazel live programming environment. Screenshot taken of the dev branch demo¹ on 02/06/2022.

1 Introduction

1.1 Problem statement

1.2 The contribution of this work

1.3 Structural overview

Section 2 provides a background on necessary topics in programming language (PL) theory and programming language implementations, in order to frame understanding for the Hazel live programming environment. Section 3 provides an overview of Hazel, in order to frame the work completed for this thesis project. Sections 4 to 6 describe the primary work completed for this project, as described in Section 1.2. Section 7 comprises an assessment of the work completed in terms of correctness and the theoretical performance. Section 8 is a discussion of future research directions that may be spawned off from this work. Section 9 concludes with a summary of findings and future work. The appendices contain additional information about the Hazel project not directly related to the primary contribution of this project, as well as selected source code snippets.

¹https://hazel.org/build/dev/

2 Background

2.1 Functional programming

- 2.1.1 Recursion and mathematical induction
- 2.1.2 The λ -calculus
- 2.1.3 Purity and statefulness
- 2.1.4 The ML family, Elm, and Hazel

2.2 Implementations for programming languages

In order for a programming language to be practical, it must not only be defined as a set of syntax and semantics, but also have an *implementation* to run programs in the language. Hazel is implemented as an interpreted language, whose runtime is transpiled to Javascript so that it may be run as a client-side web application in the browser.

It is important to note that the definition of a language (its syntax and semantics) are largely orthogonal to its implementation. In other words, a programming language does not dictate whether it requires a compiler or interpreter implementation, and languages sometimes have multiple implementations.

2.2.1 Compiler vs. interpreter implementations

There are two general classes of programming language implementations: *interpreters* and *compilers*. Both types of implementations share the function of taking a program as input, and should be able to produce the same result (assuming an equal and determinstic machine state, equal inputs, correct implementations, and no exceptional behavior due to differences in resource usage).

A compiler is a programming language implementation that converts the program to some low-level representation that is natively executable on the hardware architecture (e.g., x86-64 assembly for most modern personal computers, or the virtualized JVM architecture) before evaluation. This process typically comprises *lexing* (breaking down into atomic tokens) the program text, *parsing*

the lexed tokens into a suitable *intermediate representation* (IR) such as LLVM, performing optimization passes on the intermediate representation, and then generating the target bytecode (such as x86-64 assembly). The bytecode outputted from the compilation process is used for evaluation. Compiled implementations tend to produce better runtime efficiency, since the compilation steps are performed separate of the evaluation, and because there is little to no runtime overhead.

An interpreter is a programming language implementation that does not compile down to native bytecode, and thus requires an interpreter or *runtime*, which performs the evaluation. Interpreters still require lexing and parsing, and may have any number of optimization stages, but do not generate bytecode for the native machine, instead evaluating the program directly.

In certain contexts (especially in the ML spheres), the term *elaboration* is used to the process of transforming the *external language* (a well-formed, textual program) into the *internal language* (IR). The interior language may include additional information not present in the external language, such as types generated by type inference (e.g., in SML/NJ) or bidirectional typing (e.g., in Hazel).

The distinction between compiled and interpreted languages is not a very clear line: some implementations feature just-in-time (JIT) compilation that allow "on-the-fly" compilation (e.g., the JVM or CLR), and some implementations may perform the lexing and parsing separately to generate a non-native bytecode representation to be later evaluated by a runtime. A general characterization of compiled vs. interpreted languages is the amount of runtime overhead required by the implementation.

Hazel is a purely interpreted language implementation, as optimizations for speed are not among its main concerns. However, performance is clearly one of the main concerns of this thesis project, but the gains will be algorithmic and use the nature of Hazel's structural editing and hole calculus to benefit performance, rather than changing the fundamental implementation. There is, however, a separate endeavor to write a compiled interpretation of Hazel², which is outside the scope of this project.

²https://github.com/hazelgrove/hazel/tree/hazelc

2.2.2 The substitution and environment models of evaluation

Evaluation in Hazel was performed using originally using a *substitution model of evaluation*, which is a theoretically simpler model. In this model, variables that are bound by some construct are substituted into the construct's body. For example, the variable(s) bound using a let-expression pattern are substituted in the let-expression's body, and the variable(s) bound during a function application are substituted into the function's body, and then the body is evaluated.

In this formulation, variables are "given meaning" via substitution; once evaluation reaches an expression, all variables in scope (in the typing context) will have been replaced by their value by some containing binding expression. In other words, variables are never evaluated directly; they are substituted by their values when bound, and their values are evaluated. The substitution model is useful for teaching purposes because it is simple and close to its mathematical definition: a variable can be thought of as an equivalent stand-in for its value.

However, for the purpose of computational efficiency, a model in which values are lazily expanded ("looked-up") only when needed is more efficient. This is called the *environment model of evaluation*, and generally is more efficient because the runtime does not need to perform an extra substitution pass over subexpressions; untraversed (unevaluated) branches do not require substituting; and the runtime does not need to carry an expression-level IR of the language. The last point is due to the fact that the substitution model manipulates expressions, while evaluation does not; this means that the latter is more amenable for compilation, and is how compiled languages tend to be implemented: each frame of the theoretical stack frame is a de facto environment frame. While switching from the substitution to environment model is not an improvement in asymptotic efficiency, these effects are useful especially for high-performance and compiled languages.

Note that the substitution model does not imply a lazy (i.e., normal-order, call-by-name, call-by-need) evaluation as in languages such as Haskell or Miranda, in which bound variables are (by default) not evaluated until their value is required. Laziness is conceptually tied to substitution, but the substitution model does not require laziness. Like most programming languages, Hazel only has strict (i.e., applicative-order, call-by-value) evaluation: the expressions bound to variables are

evaluated at the time of binding.

The implementation of evaluation with environments differs from that of evaluation with substitution primarily in that: an evaluation environment is required to look up bound variables as evaluation reaches them; binding constructs extend the evaluation environment rather than performing substitution; and λ abstractions are bound with their evaluation environment at runtime to form (lexical) closures.

2.3 Programming language semantics

- 2.3.1 Notation
- 2.3.2 Static and dynamic semantics
- 2.3.3 Gradual typing

3 An overview of the Hazel programming environment

Hazel is the experimental language that implements the Hazelnut bidirectionally-typed edit static semantics with holes and the Hazelnut Live dynamic semantics, and it is also the name of the reference implementation. It is intended to serve as a proof-of-concept of the semantics with holes that attempt to mitigate the gap problem; however, the implementation is becoming increasingly practical with additional research effort. The reference implementation is an interpreter written in OCaml and transpiled to Javascript using the js_of_ocaml (JSOO) library [2] so that it may be run client-side in the browser. A screenshot of the reference implementation³ is shown in Figure 1. The source code may be found on GitHub⁴.

Hazel's syntax and semantics resembles languages in the ML (Meta Language) family of languages such as OCaml, although Hazel does not support polymorphism at this time. Hazel can be characterized as a purely functional, statically-typed, bidirectionally-typed, strict-order evaluation, structured editor language. Hazel semantically differs most significantly from other ML languages in the last respect due to its theoretic foundations in solving the gap problem.

³https://hazel.org/build/dev/

⁴https://github.com/hazelgrove/hazel

- 3.1 Hazelnut static semantics
- 3.1.1 Expression and type holes
- 3.1.2 Bidirectional typing
- 3.1.3 Example of bidirectional type derivation
- 3.2 Hazelnut Live dynamic semantics
- 3.2.1 Example of elaboration
- 3.2.2 Example of evaluation
- 3.2.3 Example of hole instance numbering
- 3.3 Hazel programming environment
- 3.3.1 Explanation of interface
- 3.3.2 Implications of Hazel

4 Implementing the environment model of evaluation

4.1 Hazel-specific implementation

In the case of Hazel (which does not prioritize speed of evaluation in its implementation, and is not a compiled language), evaluation with (reified) environments offers an additional (performance) benefit over the substitution model: the ability to easily identify (and thus memoize) operations over environments. This is useful for the optimizations described later in this paper.

The implementation of evaluation in Hazel differs from a typical interpreter implementation of evaluation with environments in three regards: we need to account for hole environments; environments are uniquely identified by an identifier for memoization (in turn for optimization); and any closures in the evaluation result should be converted back into plain λ abstractions.

4.1.1 Evaluation rules

Omar et al. [1] describes evaluation with the substitution model using a little-step semantics with an evaluation context \mathcal{E} .

The Hazel implementation follows a big-step model for evaluation, which is simpler, more performant, and does not require the evaluation context. Thus it is more convenient to follow a big-step semantics as shown in Figure 2. An equivalent small-step semantics is described in Appendix A.1 but will not be discussed further.

The evaluation model threads a run-time environment σ^5 throughout the evaluation process. An environment is conceptually a mapping $\sigma: x \mapsto d$, although it will later be augmented to be more amenable to memoization.

Evaluation judgments are shown for a subset of the Hazel language, similar to the internal language described in [1]. The expressions considered include a single base type b, variables x, λ abstractions, function application, and hole expressions. Casts and type ascriptions, which are part of the internal language follow the same rules as described in the Hazelnut paper, and thus are omitted here. Additionally, a rule is included for let bindings, even if not strictly necessary. There

 $^{^5}$ The symbol σ was chosen to represent the environment as it was used to represent hole environments in [1]. The relationship between these two environments will be discussed in Section 4.1.2.

Figure 2: Big-step semantics for the environment model of evaluation

are additional forms in the Hazel external and internal languages that are omitted for brevity and whose rules are trivial: these include binary sum injections and tuples, for which evaluation recurses through subexpressions. case expressions are also omitted: it acts like a sequence of let bindings. This select subset of the Hazel language will be reused throughout this paper for judgment rules; the goal is to provide a practical intuition of the evaluation semantics of Hazel that is close to the implementation, and not to provide a minimal theoretic foundation or the complete set of rules for all Hazel expressions. The latter is deferred to the source code in the reference implementation.

As always, elements of the base type are values and do not further evaluate. Bound variables evaluate to their value in the environment. (Unbound variables are marked as free during elaboration and do not further evaluate.)

 λ -abstractions $\lambda x.d$ are no longer final values; they evaluate further to the function closure $[\sigma]\lambda x.d$, which captures the lexical environment of the λ expression⁶.

A description of recursive λ -abstractions (the fixpoint form) is described in Section 4.1.3.

Function application is broken into two cases: if the expression in function position evaluates to a closure and the argument matches the argument pattern, then the evaluated expression in argument position extends the closure's environment, and that extended environment is used as the lexical environment in which to evaluate the λ expression body. Otherwise, the expression in function position must evaluate to an indeterminate (failed cast) form, in which case evaluation cannot proceed further. The case of failed pattern matches is described in Section 4.1.4.

let bindings extend the current lexical environment with the bound variable. As with λ abstractions, the case in which the pattern match fails is described in Section 4.1.4.

4.1.2 Evaluation of holes

Hole expressions are separated into the empty and non-empty cases due to the lack of empty exprsessions, as in the original Hazelnut and Hazelnut Live descriptions. When evaluation reaches a hole, the hole environment is simply set to be equal to the lexical environment. In this interpretation, free variables do not exist in the hole environment.

⁶This step is conceptually similar to the first step of closure conversion, in which λ -abstractions are converted to functions that take two parameters: the argument and the environment.

Note that the initial hole environment is different than in the substitution model. When evaluating using the substitution model, the initial hole environment generated by elaboration is the identity substitution $id(\Gamma)$, and variable bindings are recursively substituted into the environment's bindings. This is not necessary anymore with the environment model, and the initial environment created by elaboration is not as important. In this interpretation, free variables exist in the hole environment as the identity substitution.

It is convenient to replace the identity substitution with a distinguished empty environment (represented by \emptyset) that indicates that evaluation has not yet reached a hole. This will also be useful for detecting errors with the evaluation boundary discussed in Section 4.3.

- 4.1.3 Evaluation of recursive functions
- 4.1.4 Evaluation of failed pattern matching
- 4.2 The evaluation boundary and post-processing
- 4.3 A strict evaluation boundary
- 4.3.1 Alternative evaluation strategies
- 4.4 Post-processing memoization
- 4.4.1 Modifications to the environment datatype
- 4.4.2 Modifications to the post-processing rules
- 4.5 Purity
- 4.5.1 Tradeoffs in elegance, complexity, runtime overhead
- 4.6 Implementation considerations

Figure 3: Big-step semantics for λ -conversion post-processing

TODO TODO

TODO

Figure 4: Big-step semantics modifications for environment memoization

```
let a = ()^1 in let b = \lambda x. { a + x + ()^2 } in let c = ()^3 in ()^4 + b + 1 + f ()^5
```

Listing 1: A seemingly innocuous Hazel program

```
let a = ()^1 in
let b = ()^2 in
let c = ()^3 in
let d = ()^4 in
let e = ()^5 in
let f = ()^6 in
let g = ()^7 in
...
let x = ()^n in
```

Listing 2: A Hazel program that generates an exponential (2^N) number of total hole instances

5 Memoizing hole instance numbering using environments

5.1 Issues with the current implementation

Consider the program shown in Listing 1.

A performance issue appears with the existing evaluator with the program shown in Listing 2.

5.2 Hole instances and closures

 $H, p \vdash d \uparrow_{i,d} (H', d')$ Hole instance numbering in expression d with hole instance info H

$$\frac{d \text{ value}}{H,p \vdash d \Uparrow_{i,d} (H,d)} \text{ PP}_{i,d}\text{-Value} \qquad \frac{H,p \vdash d \Uparrow_{i,d} (H',d')}{H,p \vdash \lambda x.d \Uparrow_{i,d} (H',d')} \text{ PP}_{i,d}\text{-Var}$$

$$\frac{H,p \vdash d \Uparrow_{i,d} (H',d')}{H,p \vdash \lambda x.d \Uparrow_{i,d} (H',d')} \text{ PP}_{i,d}\text{-Lam}$$

$$\frac{Hp \vdash d_1 \Uparrow_{i,d} (H',d'_1) \qquad H',p \vdash d_2 \Uparrow_{i,d} (H'',d'_2)}{H,p \vdash \lambda d_1 (d_2) \Uparrow_{i,d} (H'',d'_1 (d'_2))} \text{ PP}_{i,d}\text{-Ap}$$

$$\frac{H,p \vdash d_1 \Uparrow_{i,d} (H',d'_1) \qquad H',p \vdash d_2 \Uparrow_{i,d} (H'',d'_2)}{H,p \vdash \lambda d_1 + d_2 \Uparrow_{i,d} (H'',d'_1 + d'_2)} \text{ PP}_{i,d}\text{-Op}$$

$$\frac{\text{hid}(H,u) = i \qquad H' = H, (u,i,.,p)}{H,p \vdash \iint_{\sigma}^u \Uparrow_{i,d} (H', \iint_{\sigma}^{u:i})} \text{ PP}_{i,d}\text{-EHole}$$

$$\frac{\text{hid}(H,u) = i \qquad H' = H, (u,i,.,p) \qquad H',p \vdash d \Uparrow_{i,d} (H'',d')}{H,p \vdash \iint_{\sigma}^u \Uparrow_{i,d} (H'', \iint_{\sigma}^{u:i})} \text{ PP}_{i,d}\text{-NEHole}$$

 $H, p \vdash d \uparrow_{i,\sigma} (H', d')$ Hole instance numbering in hole envs in d with hole instance info H

$$\frac{d \text{ value } d \neq \lambda x.d}{H, p \vdash d \Uparrow_{i,\sigma} (H, d)} \text{ PP}_{i,\sigma}\text{-Value } \frac{H, p \vdash d \Uparrow_{i,\sigma} (H', d')}{H, p \vdash \lambda x.d \Uparrow_{i,\sigma} (H', d')} \text{ PP}_{i,\sigma}\text{-Lam}$$

$$\frac{H, p \vdash d \Uparrow_{i,\sigma} (H', d')}{H, p \vdash \lambda x.d \Uparrow_{i,\sigma} (H', d')} \text{ PP}_{i,\sigma}\text{-Lam}$$

$$\frac{H, p \vdash d_1 \Uparrow_{i,\sigma} (H', d'_1) \qquad H', p \vdash d_2 \Uparrow_{i,\sigma} (H'', d'_2)}{H, p \vdash \lambda d_1 (d_2) \Uparrow_{i,\sigma} (H'', d'_1 (d'_2))} \text{ PP}_{i,\sigma}\text{-Ap}$$

$$\frac{H, p \vdash d_1 \Uparrow_{i,\sigma} (H', d'_1) \qquad H', p \vdash d_2 \Uparrow_{i,\sigma} (H'', d'_2)}{H, p \vdash \lambda d_1 + d_2 \Uparrow_{i,\sigma} (H'', d'_1 + d'_2)} \text{ PP}_{i,\sigma}\text{-Op}$$

$$\frac{H, p \vdash \lambda d_1 + d_2 \Uparrow_{i,\sigma} (H'', \sigma')}{H, p \vdash \lambda d_1 + d_2 \Uparrow_{i,\sigma} (H'', \sigma')} \text{ PP}_{i,\sigma}\text{-EHole}$$

$$\frac{H', p, u, i \vdash \sigma \Uparrow_{i,\sigma} (H'', \sigma'') \qquad H''' = H'', (u, i, \sigma'', p')}{(H, (u, i, -, p')), p \vdash (d)^{u:i}_{\sigma} \Uparrow_{i,\sigma} (H''', (u, i, \sigma'', p')} \text{ PP}_{i,\sigma}\text{-NEHole}$$

$$\frac{H'', p \vdash \sigma' \Uparrow_{i,\sigma} (H'', \sigma'') \qquad H'''' = H''', (u, i, \sigma'', p')}{(H, (u, i, -, p')), p \vdash (d)^{u:i}_{\sigma} \Uparrow_{i,\sigma} (H'''', (u')^{u:i})} \text{ PP}_{i,\sigma}\text{-NEHole}$$

$$H, p, u, i \vdash \sigma \uparrow_{i,d} (H', \sigma')$$
 Hole instance numbering in hole environment σ with HII H

$$\overline{H, p, u, i \vdash \varnothing \Uparrow_{i,d} (H, \varnothing)}$$
 PP_{i,d}-TrivEnv

$$\frac{H, p, u, i \vdash \sigma \Uparrow_{i,d} (H', \sigma') \qquad H', (p, (x, (u, i))) \vdash d \Uparrow_{i,d} (H'', d')}{H, p, u, i \vdash \sigma, x \leftarrow d \Uparrow_{i,d} (H'', (\sigma', x \leftarrow d'))} \text{ PP}_{i,d}\text{-Env}$$

 $H, p, u, i \vdash \sigma \uparrow_{i,\sigma} (H', \sigma')$ Hole instance numbering in hole environment σ with HII H

$$\overline{H,p,u,i \vdash \varnothing \Uparrow_{i,\sigma} (H,\varnothing)}$$
 PP $_{i,\sigma}\text{-TrivEnv}$

$$\frac{H, p, u, i \vdash \sigma \Uparrow_{i,\sigma} (H', \sigma') \qquad H', (p, (x, (u, i))) \vdash d \Uparrow_{i,\sigma} (H'', d')}{H, p, u, i \vdash \sigma, x \leftarrow d \Uparrow_{i,\sigma} (H'', (\sigma', x \leftarrow d'))} \operatorname{PP}_{i,\sigma}\text{-Env}$$

 $d \uparrow_i (H', \sigma')$ Hole instance numbering in expression d and subexpressions

$$\frac{\varnothing,\varnothing \vdash d \uparrow_{i,d} (H,d') \qquad H,\varnothing \vdash d' \uparrow_{i,d} (H',d'')}{d \uparrow_{i} (H',d'')} \operatorname{PP}_{i}\operatorname{-Root}$$

Figure 5: Big-step semantics for the previous hole instance numbering algorithm

TODO TODO

TODO

Figure 6: Big-step semantics for hole closure numbering

 $d \uparrow (H, d') \mid d$ postprocess-evaluates to d' with hole closure info H

$$\frac{d \uparrow_{\lambda} d' \qquad d' \uparrow_{i} (H, d'')}{d \uparrow_{i} (H, d'')} \text{ PP-Result}$$

Figure 7: Big-step semantics for post-processing

- 5.3 Algorithmic concerns and a two-stage approach
- 5.4 Memoization and unification with closure post-processing
- 5.4.1 Modifications to the instance numbering rules
- 5.4.2 Unification with closure post-processing
- 5.4.3 Fast evaluation result structural equality checking
- 5.5 Differences in the hole instance numbering

- 6 Implementation of fill-and-resume
- 6.1 CMTT interpretation of fill-and-resume
- 6.2 Memoization of recent actions
- 6.3 UI changes for notebook-like editing

```
let f: Int \rightarrow Int =
\lambda x \cdot \{
case x \text{ of}
|0 \Rightarrow 0
|1 \Rightarrow 1
|n \Rightarrow f(n-1) + f(n-2)
end
}
in f 25
```

Listing 3: An evaluation-heavy Hazel program with no holes

7 Evaluation of methods

- 8 Future work
- 8.1 Mechanization of metatheorems and rules
- 8.2 FAR for all edits
- 8.3 Stateless and efficient notebook environment

9 Conclusions and recommendations

REFERENCES

- [1] Cyrus Omar, Ian Voysey, Ravi Chugh, and Matthew A. Hammer. Live functional programming with typed holes. *PACMPL*, 3(POPL), 2019.
- [2] Jérôme Vouillon and Vincent Balat. From bytecode to javascript: the js_of_ocaml compiler. Software: Practice and Experience, 44(8):951–972, 2014.

APPENDICES

A Additional semantics formalizations

A.1 A small-step semantics for the environment model of evaluation

Figure 8: Small-step semantics for the environment model of evaluation

- B Additional contributions to Hazel
- **B.1** Additional performance improvements
- B.2 Documentation and learning efforts

C Code correspondence

This section aims to provide extra information about how concepts presented in this paper correspond to constructs in the source code.

D Related concurrent research directions in Hazel

This appendix lists various subdivisions of Hazel that may be affected by the changes described in this paper

- D.1 Hole and hole instance numbering
- D.1.1 Improved hole renumbering
- D.2 Performance enhancements
- D.2.1 Evaluation limits
- D.2.2 Hazel compiler
- D.3 Agda Formalization

E Selected code samples