

Assignment #1

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1 Briefly explain the difference between

1.1 A compiler and an interpreter

Compilers are different from interpreters or they would not be separate things. In general terms a compiler takes something and turns it into something else. An interpreter does the same thing but not as efficiently. The compiler we use to compile C++ will read through our code and reduce it to assembly instructions for the machine we are on. While doing this it will evaluate some parts of the code and place things in an “optimal” ordering. An interpreter does not look at the code until execution, meaning it has no room to perform optimizations. Another difference is that interpreters are able to take code on the fly, whereas a compiled language must have everything at compile time.

1.2 A statically typed language and a dynamically typed language

Statically typed languages strictly enforce *type*, whereas dynamically typed languages determine which *type* to use. There are two primary benefits to statically typed languages:

- type-safe – You must declare the type and it will be enforced
- speed – Knowing the type ahead of time means it doesn’t have to figure it out on the fly

A dynamically typed language is able to determine the type on the fly which reduces development time but can also be confusing. In Python, for example, a function with a variable named “flow”. A user may not initially know if flow is a string such as ‘*fast*’, ‘*normal*’ or ‘*slow*’, or a float such as a flow rate. This confusion can make maintenance more difficult. It can also hamper someone trying to learn the codebase. There are pros and cons of both that need to be taken into consideration when choosing a language.

1.3 A just-in-time compiler and an interpreter

A just-in-time (JIT) compiler compiles as you send it commands, meaning at runtime. A JIT, such as what Java uses, will take the code and compile it to bytecode. An interpreter executes instructions. A JIT will have marginally better performance compared to an interpreter.

1.4 Top-down parsing and bottom-up parsing

Top-down (TD) and bottom-up (BU) parsing refers to the methods of constructing a parse tree. As can be assumed, they each begin at their respective “ends” of a tree. TD parsers can be attacked with a predictive $LL(k)$ method where LL means it descends the left nodes and has a look-ahead of k . BU parsing involves constructing a parse tree from a given input by starting at the bottom, ascending towards the root. BU parsing can use a shift-reduce method where the input string is reduced by shifting out the left-most element of the input to be evaluated. A tool for both Top-Down and Bottom-Up parsers is the **FIRST** and **FOLLOW** method.

- 2 Let L be the language $\{abxba \mid x \text{ is any string of } a\text{'s, } b\text{'s, and } c\text{'s not containing the substring } ba\}$

- 3 Let L be the set of all strings of a's and b's with the same number of a's as b's

4 Interactive desk calculator for prefix expressions

- 4.1 Using Lex and Yacc or their equivalents, implement an interpreter that evaluates newline-terminated input lines of prefix arithmetic expressions. The expressions may contain integers and operators for addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, and negation. The answers are to be integers. Show the Lex-Yacc code for your calculator
- 4.2 Show the output generated by your calculator for
1. $+ 1 - 23$ output1
 2. $+ 1 - 2$ output2

5 A Turing machine is an abstract computer that can do any computation that a real computer can do. Because the Turing machine is an abstract machine, it does not have the physical properties that a real machine has. For example, its tapes are infinite (or at least unbounded for purposes of any particular calculation) in length. Another important characteristic is that it lacks a clock that is tied to time in the real world.

5.1 Explain how a Turing machine can detect the fact that two mouse clicks occur close together in real-world time even though it has no clock.

While the proposed machine does not have a clock, it will do computations, and computations are discretizations. A Turing machine can have an integer symbol that counts the number of times it's able to add one to the symbol between key presses, resetting the symbol after checking for a double click. If the symbol is under a predefined threshold it would be considered a double-click. In order to qualify as a Turing Machine actions must be finite, **discrete**, and distinguishable; memory is infinite, and it can run until after the universe dies. So you can have arbitrarily "long" periods of time between clicks.