Macros in Elixir

by Mieszko Wawrzyniak

What are macros?

The elixir macros are used to generate code during compilation

Abstract Syntax Tree

```elixir
quote do: foo(arg1, arg2)
{:foo, [], [
  {:arg1, [], Elixir},
  {:arg2, [], Elixir}
  ]
}
```

```elixir
quote do: %{a: 1, b: 2}
{:%{}, [], [a: 1, b: 2]}
```

```elixir
quote do: Enum.to_list(%{a: 1, b: 2})
{
  {
    :.,
    [],
    [
      {:__aliases__, [alias: false], [:Enum]},
      :to_list
    ]
  },
  [],
  [{:%{}, [], [a: 1, b: 2]}]
}
```

Our first macro

```
quote do: %{a: 1, b: 2}
{:%{}, [], [a: 1, b: 2]}
```

```
defmodule First do
  defmacro to_map(keyword) do
    {:%{}, [], keyword}
  end
end
```

```
iex(1)> require First
First
iex(2)> [a: 1, b: 2] \
...(2)>   |> First.to_map() \
...(2)>   |> Macro.to_string() \
...(2)>   |> IO.puts()
%{a: 1, b: 2}
```

Macros can generate macros

```elixir
defmodule Assertion.Generator do
  defmacro defassert(operator, err) do
    quote do
      defmacro assert({unquote(operator), _, [lhs, rhs]} = expr) do
        err = unquote(Macro.escape(err))

        quote do
          unquote(expr) ||
            unquote(err).(unquote(lhs), unquote(rhs))
            |> IO.puts()
        end
      end
    end
  end
end
```

```elixir
defmodule Assertion do
  import Assertion.Generator

  defassert(:==, &"#{&1} is not equal to #{&2}")
  defassert(:≠, &"#{&1} is equal to #{&2}")
  defassert(:⩽, &"#{&1} is greater then #{&2}")
end
```

```elixir
defmodule Second do
  import Assertion

  def main do
    assert 2 + 2 == 4
    assert 2 + 2 == 5
    assert 2 + 2 ≠ 5
    assert 2 + 2 ≠ 4
    assert 2 + 2 ⩽ 4
    assert 2 + 3 ⩽ 3
  end
end
```

```
iex(1)> Second.main
4 is not equal to 5
4 is equal to 4
5 is greater then 3
```

But not always everything will work as expected

```
iex(1)> "a" <> b <> "c" = "some string"
** (ArgumentError) the left argument of <> operator inside a match should be
always a literal binary as its size can't be verified, got: b
    (elixir) lib/kernel.ex:1759: Kernel.invalid_concat_left_argument_error/1
    (elixir) lib/kernel.ex:1731: Kernel.wrap_concatenation/3
    (elixir) lib/kernel.ex:1710: Kernel.extract_concatenations/2
    (elixir) lib/kernel.ex:1710: Kernel.extract_concatenations/2
    (elixir) expanding macro: Kernel.<>/2
    iex:1: (file)
```

```elixir
defmodule Fail do
  defmacro matcher(args) do
    head =
      Enum.reduce(args, nil, fn
        text, nil when is_binary(text) -> text
        param, nil -> {param, [], Elixir}
        text, acc when is_binary(text) -> quote do: unquote(acc) <> unquote(text)
        param, acc -> quote do: unquote(acc) <> unquote({param, [], Elixir})
      end)

    quote do
      def match(unquote(head)), do: :ok
    end
  end
end
```

```elixir
defmodule Third do
  import Fail

  matcher(["a", :b, "c"])
end
```

```elixir
def(match(("a" <> b) <> "c")) do
  :ok
end
```

Domain Specific Language

```elixir
defmodule MyAppWeb.Router do
  use Phoenix.Router

  pipeline :browser do
    plug :accepts, ["html"]
  end

  scope "/" do
    pipe_through :browser
    # browser related routes and resources
  end
end
```

```elixir
defmodule DcmWeb.Eipa.Dictionary.ConnectorInterface do
  use Absinthe.Schema.Notation

  object :eipa_dictionary_connector_interface do
    field :id, non_null(:id)
    field :name, non_null(:string)
    field :description, non_null(:string)
  end
end
```

```elixir
from(s in Suite,
      join: r in Reservation,
      on: s.id == r.suite_id,
      where: r.public_token == ^public_token,
      preload: [
        :address,
        :photos
      ]
    )
```

Have Fun 🎉

Code samples at Github

https://github.com/kaaboaye/elixir-wroclaw-macro

Mieszko Wawrzyniak
mieszkowaw@gmail.com
wawrzyniak.dev