Compiling the Splb language

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Contents

1	The Splb language	1
	1.1 Language overview	1
	1.2 Safety	
	1.3 Formal specification	2
2	Notation and conventions	2
3	Semantics	3
	3.1 Valid programs	3
	3.2 Dynamic exceptions	3
	3.3 Variable lifetime and lexical scoping	3
	3.4 Typing system	4
4	SSM compilation	7
	4.1 Compilation schemes	8
	4.2 Calling convention	12
	4.3 Heap / by-reference data types	12
5	LLVM IR compilation	13
\mathbf{A}	Code	13

1 The Splb language

1.1 Language overview

The Splb language is a simple, C-like, imperative language. It's primary feature is a Hindley-Milner typing system, allowing for the type-safe definition of mutually recursive and polymorphic functions. It also features block-level lexical scoping, has integer and Boolean primitive types, and composed tuple and list types by reference.

1.2 Safety

Splb is a mostly statically type-safe language. The only runtime exceptions that can occur are the use of uninitialized variables and the access or storage of head/tail segments of empty lists.

1.3 Formal specification

The following ENBF-inspired grammar specifies syntactically valid Splb programs. Splb syntax is written in bold monotype, and regular expressions are used for convenience.

```
& ::= ! | -
            Unary operator
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       boolean not, resp. integer negation
                                                                                                     ⊗ ::= + | - | * | / | %
             Binary operator
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     arithmetic operations
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             boolean/integer equality
                                                                                                                         == | !=
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 integer comparing
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               boolean\ operations
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       list construction
                                                                                                      n ::= [0-9]^+
            Integer
                                                                                                       b := \mathtt{true} \mid \mathtt{false}
            Boolean
                                                                                              x, y ::= [a-z][a-z0-9']^*
            Identifier
                                                                                                      	au ::= x \mid \mathtt{unit} \mid \mathtt{bool} \mid \mathtt{int} \mid \llbracket \ 	au \ \rrbracket \mid (\ 	au \ 	au \ 
            Type
                                                                                                     \sigma ::= \tau \mid \mathbf{forall} \ x ( \mid x )^* \cdot \sigma
            Polymorphic type
                                                                                                    F ::= \tau x ((\tau x (, \tau x)^*)?) B
             Function declaration
Formal grammar
                                                                                                       \ell := b \mid n \mid [] \mid ()
            Literal
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  [] is the empty list, () is unit
                                                                                                     E ::= a \mid f \mid \ell \mid E \otimes E \mid \& E
           Expression
                                                                                                                   \mid (E, E)
                                                                                                                    ( E)
                                                                                                                    \mid let x := E in E
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     included for Hindley-Milner typing
                                                                                                      f ::= x ((E (, E)^*)?)
            Function call
                                                                                                       d ::= hd \mid tl \mid fst \mid snd
            Field
                                                                                                      a ::= x [. d]^*
            Access
                                                                                                     B ::= \{ (\tau x;)^* S^* \}
            Block
                                                                                                      S ::= skip;
            Statement
                                                                                                                            if ( E ) B (else B)?
                                                                                                                            while ( E ) B
                                                                                                                            a := E;
                                                                                                                            return E?;
                                                                                                                            В
                                                                                                      P ::= F^*
            Program
```

2 Notation and conventions

Although the above specified grammar of Splb is its concrete grammar, we will use it throughout this paper as its abstract syntax tree as well, to facilitate reading, taking into account the following points:

• We omit a few right-hand side clauses from the abstract syntax tree, by performing the

rewriting rules listed below, where x_{fresh} stands for some freshly chosen identifier.

$$\begin{array}{c} \textbf{(}E\textbf{)} \longmapsto E \\ \\ \textbf{if (}E\textbf{)} \textbf{ then } B \longmapsto \textbf{if (}E\textbf{)} \textbf{ then } B \textbf{ else { skip; }} \\ \\ \textbf{return; } \longmapsto \textbf{return ();} \\ \\ \tau \ x \textbf{ ()} \ B \longmapsto \tau \ x \textbf{ (unit } x_{\text{fresh}}\textbf{)} \ B \end{array}$$

• When accounting for some piece of abstract syntax containing a sequence of similar segments, we sometimes tacitly omit separating or intermediate syntax, as in the following examples:

- Field access dot notation is left associative, e.g. $x \cdot d_1 \cdot d_2 \cdot d_3$ stands for $(((x \cdot d_1) \cdot d_2) \cdot d_3)$.
- Usual binding powers apply to binary and unary operations in expressions.

3 Semantics

3.1 Valid programs

Valid programs are those that:

- are syntactically valid as by the above stated grammar;
- contain a function main of type unit -> int (a criterion that is included in the type system);
- are found valid by the Splb typing system.

3.2 Dynamic exceptions

Note that above stated criteria do not guarantee dynamic safety. The two dynamic exceptions that can occur are as follows, and will be caught at runtime by jumping to respective exception labels.

- Use of uninitialized variables. Program will then jump to the _EXCEPTION_UninitiatedVar label and halt.
- Access or storage of hd or tl segments of empty lists. Program will then jump to the _EXCEPTION_EmptyList label and halt.

Moreover, heap storage is as of yet not garbage collected, so it can happen that the heap overflows. What happens then is left unspecified.

3.3 Variable lifetime and lexical scoping

Variables live in blocks and let-expressions, and their lifetime ends when the block/let computations end. As a corollary, variables never outlive a function computation.

Splb features lexical scoping through variables introduced in blocks and let expressions. Function shadowing, as well as variable shadowing, is allowed. Variables are declared at the beginning of

each block to avoid further complications. (It is not neccessary to make decisions as to what some variable x might refer to, if that variable were to be declared later on in the same block, as such declarations are not permitted.)

3.4 Typing system

Splb features a Hindley-Milner polymorphic type system. The possible function types are those admitted by the grammar as a (*Polynorphic type*) of the form $\sigma = \mathbf{forall} \dots \tau_1 \rightarrow \tau_2$. These are not included in the concrete grammar of Splb, instead they are implicitly generalized as in, for example, Haskell. This means that a function x, concretely defined as

$$\tau_{n+1}$$
 x $(\tau_1 \ x_1, \ldots \tau_n \ x_n)$ B

is implicitly regarded as having the $\lambda 2$ type signature

$$x:$$
 forall $y_1 \dots y_k$. $\tau_1 \rightarrow \dots \rightarrow \tau_n \rightarrow \tau_{n+1}$

where

$$\bigcup_{j=1}^{n+1} \operatorname{fv}(\tau_j) = \{y_1 \dots y_k\}.$$

For the rest of this section, Γ will serve as an environment of the form $x_1 : \sigma_1, \dots x_n : \sigma_n$, including local variables, let-introduced variables, user-defined functions and the following language builtin functions and operators:

```
is Empty: for all x. [x] \rightarrow bool
  print: forall x. x -> unit
      !:bool -> bool
      -: int -> int
      +: int -> int -> int
                                           -: int -> int -> int
      *:int -> int -> int
                                           /:int -> int -> int
      %:int -> int -> int
     ==:int -> int -> bool
                                           !=: int -> int -> bool
     <=:int -> int -> bool
                                          >=: int -> int -> bool
      <:int -> int -> bool
                                           >: int -> int -> bool
     &&:bool -> bool -> bool
     ||: bool -> bool -> bool
      :: forall x. x -> [x] -> [x]
```

3.4.1 Expressions

The binary relation (\sqsubseteq) on polymorphic types expresses when one type is more general than another, e.g. $\sigma' \sqsubseteq \sigma$ states that σ' is more general than σ .

(int)
$$\overline{\Gamma \vdash n : \mathbf{int}}$$
 (bool) $\overline{\Gamma \vdash b : \mathbf{bool}}$

(unit)
$$\frac{}{\Gamma \vdash () : unit}$$
 (emptylist) $\frac{}{\Gamma \vdash [] : [\tau]}$

$$(\mathrm{hd}) \ \ \frac{\Gamma \vdash a : \llbracket \tau \rrbracket}{\Gamma \vdash a \cdot \mathsf{hd} : \tau} \qquad (\mathrm{tl}) \ \ \frac{\Gamma \vdash a : \llbracket \tau \rrbracket}{\Gamma \vdash a \cdot \mathsf{tl} : \llbracket \tau \rrbracket}$$

(fst)
$$\frac{\Gamma \vdash a : (\tau_1, \tau_2)}{\Gamma \vdash a \cdot \mathbf{fst} : \tau_1}$$
 (snd)
$$\frac{\Gamma \vdash a : (\tau_1, \tau_2)}{\Gamma \vdash a \cdot \mathbf{snd} : \tau_2}$$

$$(\text{var}) \ \ \frac{\Gamma \vdash \& : \tau_1 \to \tau_2 \qquad \Gamma \vdash E : \tau_1}{\Gamma, x : \tau \vdash x : \tau} \qquad (\text{unop}) \ \ \frac{\Gamma \vdash \& : \tau_1 \to \tau_2 \qquad \Gamma \vdash E : \tau_1}{\Gamma \vdash \& E : \tau_2}$$

$$(\text{binop}) \ \frac{\Gamma \vdash \otimes : \tau_1 \to \tau_2 \to \tau_3 \qquad \Gamma \vdash E_1 : \tau_1 \qquad \Gamma \vdash E_2 : \tau_2}{\Gamma \vdash E_1 \otimes E_2 : \tau_3}$$

$$(\text{funcall}) \ \frac{\Gamma \vdash x : \tau_1 \to \cdots \to \tau_n \to \tau_{\text{res}} \qquad \forall_{i=1...n} : \ \Gamma \vdash E_i : \tau_i}{\Gamma \vdash x \, (E_1 \dots E_n) : \tau_{\text{res}}}$$

(tuple)
$$\frac{\Gamma \vdash E_1 : \tau_1 \qquad \Gamma \vdash E_2 : \tau_2}{\Gamma \vdash (E_1, E_2) : (\tau_1, \tau_2)} \qquad \text{(let)} \quad \frac{\Gamma \vdash E_1 : \tau_1 \qquad \Gamma, x : \tau_1 \vdash E_2 : \tau_2}{\Gamma \vdash \{\mathbf{let} \ x \ \mathbf{:=} \ E_1 \ \mathbf{in} \ E_2\} : \tau_2}$$

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \text{(instantiate)} & \frac{\Gamma \vdash E : \sigma' & \sigma' \sqsubseteq \sigma}{\Gamma \vdash E : \sigma} & \text{(generalize)} & \frac{\Gamma \vdash E : \sigma & x \not\in \text{fv}(\Gamma)}{\Gamma \vdash E : \textbf{forall } x \boldsymbol{.} & \sigma} \end{array}$$

3.4.2 Statements and blocks

Typing of statements (and blocks) proceeds with two types of judgements.

- The first, $\Gamma \vdash \text{block/stmt} \{\Box\} \text{ OK}[\tau]$, tells us that, given environment Γ , the block/statement \Box returns a result of type τ (if at all). These inferences are listed below.
- The second, $\Gamma \vdash$ block/stmt $\{\Box\}$ ret , tells us that block/statement \Box will definitively return.

$$(blockstmt) \quad \frac{\Gamma \vdash block \; \{B\} \; OK[\tau]}{\Gamma \vdash stmt \; \{B\} \; OK[\tau]} \qquad (while) \quad \frac{\Gamma \vdash E : \textbf{bool} \qquad \Gamma \vdash block \; \{B\} \; OK[\tau]}{\Gamma \vdash stmt \; \{\textbf{while} \; \textbf{\textit{(E)}} \; B\} \; OK[\tau]}$$

$$(\text{skip}) \ \ \frac{\Gamma \vdash E : \tau}{\Gamma \vdash \text{stmt } \{ \text{\textbf{skip}} \} \ \text{OK}[\tau]} \qquad (\text{return}) \ \ \frac{\Gamma \vdash E : \tau}{\Gamma \vdash \text{stmt } \{ \text{\textbf{return}} \ E \} \ \text{OK}[\tau]}$$

(if)
$$\frac{\Gamma \vdash E : \mathtt{bool} \qquad \Gamma \vdash \mathtt{block} \ \{B_1\} \ \mathrm{OK}[\tau] \qquad \Gamma \vdash \mathtt{block} \ \{B_2\} \ \mathrm{OK}[\tau]}{\Gamma \vdash \mathtt{stmt} \ \{\mathtt{if} \ (E) \ B_1 \ \mathtt{else} \ B_2\} \ \mathrm{OK}[\tau]}$$

$$(\text{assign}) \ \ \frac{\Gamma \vdash a : \tau' \qquad \Gamma \vdash E : \tau'}{\Gamma \vdash \text{stmt} \ \{a \ \textbf{:=} \ E\} \ \text{OK}[\tau]} \qquad (\text{funcall}) \ \ \frac{\Gamma \vdash f : \tau'}{\Gamma \vdash \text{stmt} \ \{f\} \ \text{OK}[\tau]}$$

(block)
$$\frac{\forall i \in \{1 \dots n\} : \ \Gamma, x_1 : \tau_1, \dots x_k : \tau_k \vdash \text{stmt } \{S_i\} \ \text{OK}[\tau]}{\Gamma \vdash \text{block } \{\{\tau_1 \ x_1 \dots \tau_k \ x_k ; \ S_1 \dots S_n\}\} \ \text{OK}[\tau]}$$

$$\frac{ \vdash \text{block } \{B_1\} \text{ ret}}{\vdash \text{stmt } \{\text{if } \textit{(E)} \ B_1 \text{ else } B_2\} \text{ ret}} \qquad \frac{\vdash \text{block } \{B_2\} \text{ ret}}{\vdash \text{stmt } \{\text{if } \textit{(E)} \ B_1 \text{ else } B_2\} \text{ ret}}$$

$$\frac{\exists j \in \{1 \dots n\} : \Gamma' \vdash \text{stmt} \{S_i\} \text{ ret}}{\vdash \text{block} \{\{\dots; S_1 \dots S_n\}\} \text{ ret}}$$

3.4.3 Wrapping up

Concluding, we type check function declarations and the whole program using the judgements $\overline{\Gamma \vdash \text{fundecl } \{F\} \text{ OK}}$ and $\overline{\vdash \text{program } \{P\} \text{ OK}}$.

4 SSM compilation

In this section I explain how Splb code is translated to SSM assembly. SSM (Simple Stack Machine) is a stack machine emulator developed for educational purposes. It is described at http://www.staff.science.uu.nl/~dijks106/SSM/.

Program/fundecl/funcall

4.1 Compilation schemes

numLocals_{block} $(V_1 \dots V_k \ S_1 \dots S_n) = k + \sum_{i=1}^n \text{numLocals}_{\text{stmt}}(S_i)$

(Function call)

$$[\![\mathbf{skip};]\!]_{\mathrm{stmt}}^{\Gamma} = \mathsf{ajs} \ \mathsf{0}$$
 (skip)

$$[\![B]\!]_{\mathrm{stmt}}^{\Gamma} = [\![B]\!]_{\mathrm{block}}^{\Gamma}$$
 (blockstmt)

$$\llbracket \mathbf{return} \ E ; \rrbracket_{\mathrm{stmt}}^{\Gamma} = \begin{bmatrix} \llbracket E \rrbracket_{\mathrm{expr}}^{\Gamma} \\ \mathbf{str} \ \mathsf{RR} \\ \mathsf{unlink} \\ \mathsf{ret} \end{bmatrix}$$
 (return)

$$[\![f]\!]_{\text{stmt}}^{\Gamma} = [\![f]\!]_{\text{funcall}}^{\Gamma}$$
 (funcall)

$$\begin{bmatrix} a.d := E; \end{bmatrix}_{\text{stmt}}^{\Gamma} = \begin{bmatrix} E \end{bmatrix}_{\text{expr}}^{\Gamma} \\
\begin{bmatrix} a \end{bmatrix}_{\text{expr}}^{\Gamma} \\
\begin{bmatrix} d \end{bmatrix}_{\text{fieldstorage}}^{\Gamma}$$
(assign₂)

$$\llbracket E \rrbracket_{\text{expr}}^{\Gamma}$$

$$\text{brf } \underline{else}$$

$$\llbracket B_1 \rrbracket_{\text{block}}^{\Gamma}$$

$$\llbracket \text{if } (E) \ B_1 \ \text{else} \ B_2 \rrbracket_{\text{stmt}}^{\Gamma} = \begin{bmatrix} B_1 \rrbracket_{\text{block}}^{\Gamma} \\ \text{bra } \underline{end} \\ \underline{else} \colon \text{ ajs } 0 \\ \underline{\llbracket B_2 \rrbracket_{\text{block}}^{\Gamma}} \\ \underline{end} \colon \text{ ajs } 0 \\ \end{bmatrix}$$
(if)

$$[n]_{\text{expr}}^{\Gamma} = 1 dc \ n$$
 (int)

$$\llbracket \textbf{true} \rrbracket_{\mathrm{expr}}^{\Gamma} = \ \texttt{ldc} \ \ \texttt{0xfffffff} \tag{true}$$

$$[\![\mathtt{false}]\!]_{\mathrm{expr}}^{\Gamma} = 1 \mathtt{dc} \ 0$$
 (false)

$$[\![()]\!]_{\mathrm{expr}}^{\Gamma} = 1 dc 0$$
 (unit)

$$[[l]]_{\text{expr}}^{\Gamma} = 1$$
dc 0 (emptylist)

$$\llbracket \&E \rrbracket_{\text{expr}}^{\Gamma} = \llbracket E \rrbracket_{\text{expr}}^{\Gamma} \tag{unop}$$

$$\mathbb{E}_{1} \otimes E_{2} \mathbb{I}_{\text{expr}}^{\Gamma} = \mathbb{E}_{1} \mathbb{I}_{\text{expr}}^{\Gamma} \\
\mathbb{E}_{2} \mathbb{I}_{\text{expr}}^{\Gamma} \\
\mathbb{E}_{2} \mathbb{I}_{\text{binop}}^{\Gamma}$$
(binop)

$$\llbracket f \rrbracket_{\text{expr}}^{\Gamma} = \llbracket f \rrbracket_{\text{funcall}}^{\Gamma} \tag{funcall}$$

$$\begin{bmatrix} a \cdot d \end{bmatrix}_{\text{expr}}^{\Gamma} = \begin{bmatrix} a \end{bmatrix}_{\text{expr}}^{\Gamma}
 \begin{bmatrix} d \end{bmatrix}_{\text{fieldaccess}}^{\Gamma}$$

$$\llbracket E_1
Vert_{ ext{expr}}^{\Gamma}
Vert_{ ext{ex$$

$$[\![\mathbf{fst}]\!]_{\text{fieldstorage}} = \begin{array}{c} \text{sta 0} \\ \text{lds 2} \end{array}$$
 (fst)

$$[\![\mathbf{snd}]\!]_{\text{fieldstorage}} = \begin{array}{c} \mathtt{sta} \ 1 \\ \mathtt{lds} \ 2 \end{array} \tag{snd}$$

$$[\![\mathbf{t1}]\!]_{\text{fieldstorage}} = \begin{array}{l} \text{eq} \\ \text{brt } \underline{\quad} \text{EXCEPTION_EmptyList} \\ \text{sta } 1 \text{ // then store } tl \\ \\ \text{lds } 2 \end{array}$$
 (tl)

$$[\![\mathbf{fst}]\!]_{\mathrm{fieldaccess}} = \mathsf{ldh} \ \mathsf{0} \tag{fst}$$

$$[\![\mathbf{snd}]\!]_{\mathrm{fieldaccess}} = 1 dh 1$$
 (snd)

```
\llbracket \mathbf{!} \rrbracket_{\mathrm{unop}} = \mathsf{not}
                                                                                                                                                                                                                        \llbracket 	extsf{-} 
bracket_{\mathrm{unop}} = \mathsf{neg}
                                                                               \llbracket \textbf{+} \rrbracket_{\mathrm{binop}} = \text{ add }
                                                                                                                                                                                                                       \llbracket 	extsf{-} 
bracket_{	ext{binop}} = 	ext{sub}
                                                                               \llbracket \star \rrbracket_{\mathrm{binop}} = \mathsf{mul}
                                                                                                                                                                                                                       \llbracket / \rrbracket_{\mathrm{binop}} = \mathtt{div}
                                                                               [\![ * ]\!]_{\mathrm{binop}} = \mathsf{mod}

    Operations

                                                                           \llbracket = = \rrbracket_{\mathrm{binop}} = eq
                                                                                                                                                                                                                   \llbracket ! = 
rbracket_{
m binop} = ne
                                                                                                                                                                                                                   \llbracket <= 
rbracket_{
m binop} = ge
                                                                          \llbracket > = \rrbracket_{\mathrm{binop}} = \mathsf{ge}
                                                                               \llbracket 	extsf{>} \rrbracket_{\mathrm{binop}} = \mathsf{gt}
                                                                                                                                                                                                                      \llbracket \mathsf{<} \rrbracket_{\mathrm{binop}} = \mathsf{le}
                                                                          \llbracket \mathbf{\&\&} 
bracket_{\mathrm{binop}} = \mathsf{and}
                                                                                                                                                                                                                   [\![ ]\![ ]\!]_{\mathrm{binop}} = \mathsf{or}
                                                                                                                    ajs -1
                                                                                                                    sth
                                                                               \llbracket : 
rbracket_{
m binop} = 
m ajs 1
                                                                                                                    ajs -1
```

4.2 Calling convention

To call a function i, first we put its arguments on the stack, then we branch to \underline{i} , and when the function returns (via unlink and ret) we retrieve the return value from RR and put it on the place where the first argument was originally put. This subsequently becomes the new stack pointer.

4.3 Heap / by-reference data types

Lists and tuples are treated by reference. References point to a stack location, or are '0' in case of an empty list.

We implement lists as linked lists, where each node consists of two adjacent heap cells, the first containing the value of the node, the second being the address of the next node (or '0' for the empty list / final node). Tuples are also simply two adjacent heap cells. References to lists and tuples always point to the first of the two cells.

There is currently no garbage management, however runtime exceptions are generated when an emptylist segment is accesses or written to.

5 LLVM IR compilation

A Code

dependence etc