CS 320: Principles of Programming Languages

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Week 8b: Imperative Constructs

Referential transparency

So far we've been working only with expressions, which evaluate to a value.

All closed expressions in this language are referentially transparent:

If expression e evaluates to value v, then we can replace any occurrence of e with v without changing the meaning of the program.

Side effects

A *side effect* is anything that might happen during execution outside of expressions evaluating to values.

- Setting the value of a *mutable* variable (one whose value can change over time)
- Printing to some output stream (console, file, network bridge, ...)
- Reading from some external resource (console, file, network bridge, ...)
- _

These can all be thought of as depending on some kind of state:

- Setting the value of a mutable variable changes the state of the program environment
- Printing to an output stream changes the state of the stream
- Reading from an external resource depends on the state of the resource

Side effects

Side effects break referential transparency!

```
int x = 0;
int f() { return x++; }
```

The first time we call f(), it returns 0,

but we **can't** replace every call to f () with 0 without changing the meaning of a program!

```
void main() { print(f()); print(f()); } // prints "01"
```

is not the same program as

```
void main() { print(0); print(0); } // prints "00"
```

Statements

In an imperative language, there are *statements* (or *commands*), which *execute* to cause *side effects*.

Some common kinds of statements:

Modeling commands

Modeling commands

How can we add commands to our language?

A couple approaches (not the only ones!):

- Model the whole language using a state machine
 - Most commonly a stack machine or a register machine
 - A program is a sequence of statements
 - Expression evaluation is described as a series of commands (as in assembly)

```
x + y + z
= mov x %eax; mov y %ebx; add %eax %ebx; mov z %eax; add %eax %ebx
(returning the result in %ebx)
```

- Model commands as expressions
 - Add expression forms for commands
 - Modify evaluation semantics to account for side effects
 - Sometimes called expression-oriented programming

Commands as expressions

In the expression-oriented approach, we add a new expression form to represent mutable assignments.

```
e ::= ... | x = e
```

How do we give semantics to this assignment construct?

Evaluating commands

What value should a command evaluate to?

$$\begin{array}{ccccc}
1 & + & 2 & \Rightarrow * & 3 \\
(\lambda x. & x & + & 1) & 2 & \Rightarrow * & 3 \\
(x & = & 3) & \Rightarrow * & ???
\end{array}$$

One approach: have every command evaluate to some (sort of arbitrary) value that's already in our language.

$$(x = 3) \Rightarrow * 3$$

This is the approach C/C++ take for assignments: an assignment evaluates to the value that was being assigned.

Evaluating statements

What value should a command evaluate to?

Another approach: C/C++/Java have a void type.

$$(x = 3) : void$$

But what does a value of type void look like?

The unit type

In formal type theory, we call this the *unit* type: a type with exactly one value.

unit can be thought of as a zero-element struct.

Since unit contains no information, it can represent the absence of a return value.

This captures the **return value** of a command, but we still need a way to describe the **execution** of commands in terms of side effects.

Mutability semantics

We need a way to represent a change in the **value environment** during reductions.

E-Assign
$$???$$

$$<\rho, (x = e) > \psi ???$$

Mutability semantics

We need a way to represent a change in the **value environment** during reductions.

One solution: reduce an expression in an environment to a value and also a **new environment**

This isn't quite right, though: what if the evaluation of e produces side effects?

$$x = (y = y + 1)$$

This might happen if a function mutates state or prints to output before returning a value.

Mutability semantics

We need a way to represent a change in the **value environment** during reductions.

One solution: reduce an expression in an environment to a value and also a **new environment**.

In order to account for potential side effects in e, we have to update the environment **after** evaluating e, not the environment **before** evaluating e.

Sequencing

Variable assignments aren't very interesting without a way to sequence commands.

$$\texttt{e} ::= \dots \ | \ \mathbf{e_1} \ ; \ \mathbf{e_2}$$

The **value** of a sequence is the value of the **last** expression of the sequence.

(1 ; 2)
$$\Rightarrow$$
* 2
(true ; 2) \Rightarrow * 2

T-Seq

$$\Gamma \vdash e_2 : t$$

$$\Gamma \vdash (e_1 ; e_2) : t$$

Sequencing semantics

When reducing a sequence of expressions, we reduce them left to right, **propagating** the environment changes from earlier expressions to later expressions.

$$E-Seq \begin{tabular}{ll} & \mbox{if e_1 evaluates to v_1 under ρ} \\ & \mbox{and u pdates the environment to ρ} \end{tabular} & \mbox{and e_2 evaluates to v_2 under ρ} \\ & \mbox{and u pdates the environment to ρ} \end{tabular} \\ & \mbox{$<\rho$, e_1> ψ < ρ', v_2>} \\ & \mbox{$<\rho$, $(e_1\ ;\ e_2)$> ψ < ρ'', v_2>} \\ & \mbox{$then$ ($e_3\ ;\ e_2)$ evaluates to v_2 under ρ} \\ & \mbox{and updates the environment to ρ} \end{tabular}$$

Imperative programs

Now we have the basic tools to write (very simple) imperative programs.

```
plusOne = \lambda(x: num). x = x + 1; x
plusOne 1 \Rightarrow* 2
plusOne 2 \Rightarrow* 3
```

Imperative semantics example

Imperative syntax

We can define a more traditional C-style imperative syntax as syntactic sugar:

```
num plusOne(num x) { x = x + 1; return x } plusOne = \lambda(x: num) \cdot x = x + 1; x
```

(Note that we haven't implemented early returns or recursion yet, though.)

When a function's return type is unit, we can leave out the return and insert return unit during syntax analysis.

```
unit f(x: num) \{ x = x + 1 \}
unit f(x: num) \{ x = x + 1; return unit \}
f = \lambda(x: num) \cdot x = x + 1; unit
```

Imperative syntax

An if statement where the branches have type unit can omit an else branch.

if
$$x > 5$$
 then $x = x + 1$
if $x > 5$ then $x = x + 1$ else unit

When a function takes no arguments, we model it as taking a single unit argument.

unit incX() {
$$x = x + 1$$
; }
incX = λu , $x = x + 1$

Explicit vs. implicit typing

The lambda syntax we've been using is partially *implicitly* typed: we don't have to specify the argument and return types of a function explicitly. (This means the typechecker is doing some amount of type **inference**.)

```
plusOne = \lambda x. x = x + 1; x
```

In contrast, the imperative syntax is *explicitly* typed: every variable's type and function's return type must be annotated in the syntax of the program.

```
num plusOne(num x) { x = x + 1; return x }
```

Since return type inference is decidable in this language, this is just a design decision.

- Implicit typing is less work for the programmer and less distracting syntax
- Explicit typing prevents errors where type inference infers a type the programmer didn't intend

Environment updates

How exactly should we update the environment?

```
(x * 1, y * 2) [a * 0] =
  err? (since there's no binding to update for a)
  (a * 0, x * 1, y * 2)? (declare a new binding for a)

(x * 1, y * 2) [y * 0] =
  (x * 1, y * 0)? (update the existing binding for y)
  (y * 0, x * 1, y * 2)? (declare a new binding for y, shadowing the old binding)
```

(Remember that $\rho(x)$ returns the **leftmost** binding for x in ρ .)

And when should we **remove** values from the environment?

```
Pvthon:
                              C (with GCC extensions):
if name == " main ": void main() {
 def f(x): # new binding x_2 int y = 5; // new binding y_1
     x = 4 \# update x
                            void f(int x) { // new binding x_2
     y = 5 \# new binding y_2
                               x = 6; // update x,
     y = 6 \# update y_2
                                y = 7; // update y_2
     z = 7 \# \text{ new binding } z_1
     z = 8 # update z
                                  int z = 8; // new binding z,
  x = 9 \# update x
                              x = 9; // update x,
  y = 10 # update y,
                               z = 10; // error
  z = 11 \# new binding z
```

Scope and lifetime

Scope

The scope of a variable is the part of the program where references to the variable are valid.

Different languages have different *scoping rules*, which specify where variables are in scope within different language constructs.

There are two broad categories, but a lot of variation within these categories.

- Static (or lexical) scoping resolves variable references based on the position of each reference in the AST of the program
 - Almost all modern languages
- Dynamic scoping resolves variable references based on the runtime environment at each reference to a variable during execution
 - bash, PowerShell, Emacs Lisp, ..
 - Occasionally opt-in for individual variables (Perl, Common Lisp, Haskell (GHC), ...)
 - Sometimes used in the implementation of exception handling (Java, Python, ...)

Scoping rules

For our little imperative lambda language, we'll use a simplified version of the **static** scoping rules from C.

Our language will have a special form for declaring local variables:

```
e ::= ... \mid \mathbf{var} \ \mathbf{x} : \mathbf{t} = \mathbf{e} \mid \mathbf{x} = \mathbf{e}

plusOne = \lambda \mathbf{x}. var y : num = 1; x + y
```

With C-style local variable declarations in the imperative syntax:

```
num plusOne(num x) { num y = 1; return x + y }
```

Scoping rules

Taking inspiration from C:

- Each function body is a block; the function's arguments are in scope within the body
- Each branch of an if/then/else construct is a block
- A local variable's scope is from its declaration to the end of the block it's declared in

Lifetime

The *lifetime* of a value is the period of execution during which it's guaranteed to be in memory.

There are many approaches to lifetime management. Among the most common:

- A variable with a static (or lexical) lifetime is in memory until the end of the scope it was declared in
- A variable with a manually managed lifetime is in scope until a special free function is called on it to explicitly free up the memory
- A garbage-collected variable is in scope until there are no live references to it left in the runtime environment

Procedural evaluation

Procedural evaluation

A simple set of rules for implementing function calls under static scope/lifetime rules can be implemented with an *activation stack*.

This is a common procedure to execute and compile procedural programs.

- When a function is *invoked* (called/applied),
 - An activation record (or stack frame) is pushed onto a global stack
 - Bindings for the function arguments are added to the environment in the function's activation record
- When a variable is declared within the function, it gets added to the environment in the function's activation record
- When a function returns, its activation record is popped off the stack

The activation record has space for the function's arguments and local variables, along with a return address and sometimes other information.

Procedural evaluation

Other blocks, like if branches and while loop bodies, are handled similarly.

- When a variable is declared within the block, it gets added to the environment
- When execution leaves the block, all variables added in the block are removed from the environment

The address of a lexically-scoped variable can be computed in constant time,

so getting the value of a lexically-scoped variable reference takes the same amount of time regardless of how far down the activation stack it is.

Procedural evaluation example

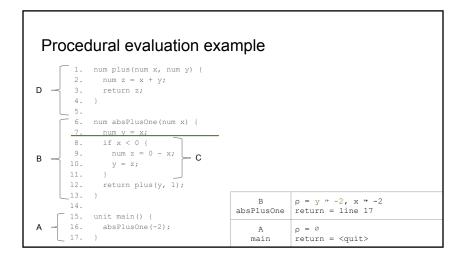
```
1. num plus(num x, num y) {
2. num z = x + y;
3. return z;
4. }
5.
6. num absPlusOne(num x) {
7. num y = x;
8. if x < 0 {
9. num z = 0 - x;
10. y = z;
11. }
12. return plus(y, 1);
13. }
14.

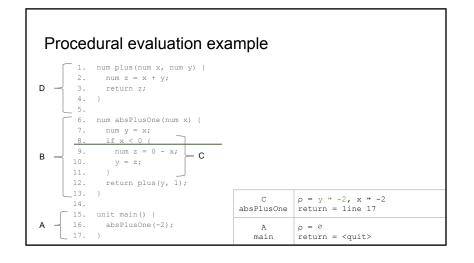
A 

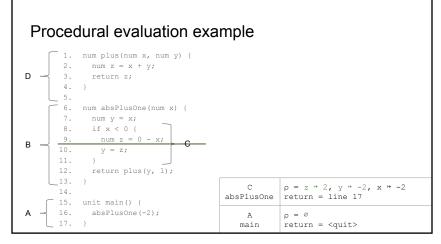
15. unit main() {
16. absPlusOne(-2);
17. }
```

A $\rho = \emptyset$ main return = <quit>

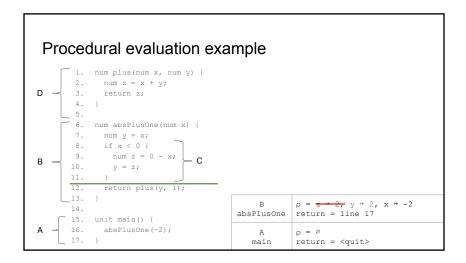
Procedural evaluation example 1. num plus(num x, num y) { 2. num z = x + y; $D \rightarrow 3$. return z; 4. } 6. num absPlusOne(num x) { 7. num y = x; 8. if x < 0 { 9. num z = 0 - x; $B \rightarrow 10.$ y = z;12. return plus(y, 1); _13. } B $\rho = x \rightarrow -2$ absPlusOne return = line 17 15. unit main() { A | 16. absPlusOne(-2); ρ = Ø return = <quit> main

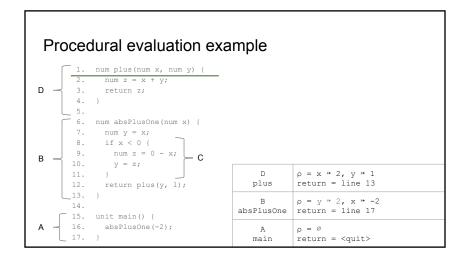


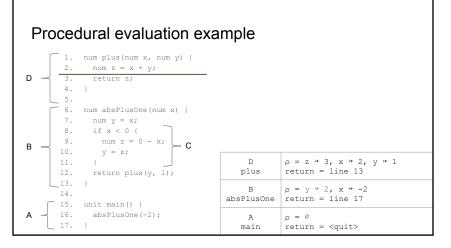




Procedural evaluation example 1. num plus(num x, num y) { 2. num z = x + y; $D \rightarrow 3$. return z; 4. } 6. num absPlusOne(num x) { 7. num y = x;8. if x < 0 { 11. } 12. return plus(y, 1); 13. } $\rho = z \Rightarrow 2, y \Rightarrow 2, x \Rightarrow -2$ 14. absPlusOne return = line 17 15. unit main() { A | 16. absPlusOne(-2); ρ = Ø return = <quit> main







Procedural evaluation example

```
D 1. num plus(num x, num y) {
2. num z = x + y;
3. return z;
4. }
5.
6. num absPlusOne(num x) {
7. num y = x;
8. if x < 0 {
9. num z = 0 - x;
10. y = z;
11. }
12. return plus(y, 1);
13. }
14.
A 15. unit main() {
16. absPlusOne(-2);
```

```
B \rho = y * 2, x * -2 return = line 16

A \rho = \emptyset return = <quit>
```

Procedural evaluation example

Static and dynamic links

Scopes in a program can be syntactically *enclosed by* (or *nested in*) other scopes.

In programs with nested scopes, non-local variables are accessed through *links* between activation records.

- The *dynamic* link points to the next activation record on the stack
- The *static* link points to the nearest activation record for the enclosing static scope of the current (topmost) activation record

Enclosing scopes

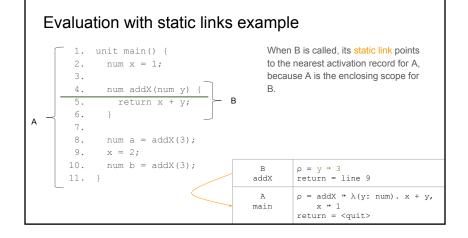
```
1. unit main() {
2. num x = 1;
3.
4. num addX(num y) {
5. return x + y;
6. }
7.
8. num a = addX(3);
9. x = 2;
10. num b = addX(3);
11. }
```

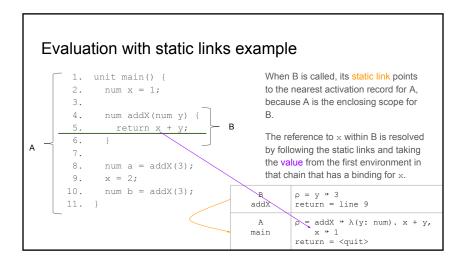
In this program, A is the (*static*) enclosing scope of B, because the **definition** of B is within A.

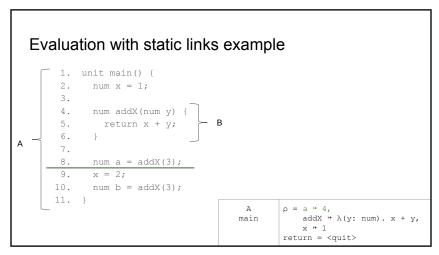
Evaluation with static links example

Evaluation with static links example 1. unit main() { 2. num x = 1; 3. 4. num addX(num y) { 5. return x + y; 6. } 7. 8. num a = addX(3); 9. x = 2; 10. num b = addX(3); 11. } A ρ = addX ** λ(y: num). x + y, main x ** 1

return = <quit>







```
Evaluation with static links example
     1. unit main() {
         num x = 1;
         num addX(num y) {
         return x + y;
      6.
     7.
         num a = addX(3);
         x = 2;
    10.
           num b = addX(3);
    11. }
                                               o = a \rightarrow 4
                                       main
                                                  addX \Rightarrow \lambda(y: num) \cdot x + y,
                                                  x → 2
                                               return = <quit>
```

```
Evaluation with static links example
     1. unit main() {
      2. num x = 1;
     4. num addX(num y) {
            return x + y;
     8. num a = addX(3);
     9. x = 2;
                                                 \rho = v \rightarrow 3
    10.
          num b = addX(3);
                                        addX
                                                 return = line 11
     11. }
                                         Α
                                                 o = a \rightarrow 4
                                        main
                                                    addX \Rightarrow \lambda(y: num). x + y,
                                                    x → 2
                                                 return = <quit>
```

Evaluation with static links example

```
When B is called, its static link points to
 1. unit main() {
                                              the nearest activation record for A,
      num x = 1;
                                              because A is the enclosing scope for B.
     num addX(num y) {
                                              The reference to \boldsymbol{x} resolves to the
                                              current value of x in the enclosing
                                              scope, so it's different now than last
                                              time.
 8. num a = addX(3);
9. x = 2;
                                                     \rho = v \rightarrow 3
     num b = addX(3);
10.
                                           addX
                                                     return = line 11
11. }
                                             Α
                                                     \rho = a \rightarrow 4
                                                          addX \rightarrow \lambda(y: num). x + y,
                                           main
                                                          x → 2
                                                     return = <quit>
```

Evaluation with static links example

Calling conventions

A calling convention specifies how arguments are passed in to functions.

- A call-by-value argument gets copied into an activation record when it's created
 - Modifications to function arguments are "undone" when the function returns
 - Copying involves some runtime work
 - Default in most languages
- A call-by-reference argument is a reference to the argument's original **location**
 - Modifications to function arguments are kept when the function returns
 - Avoids the work of copying
 - Sometimes harder to reason about (especially in concurrent programs)
 - Optional in some languages (C#, Ada)
 - Can be partially simulated with pointers (C, C++) and objects (Java, Python)

Call-by-value

In call-by-value execution of this main function, the value assigned to y is 1, because the change to the value of x in f is not visible in the calling block.

```
unit f(num x) { x = x + 1; }
unit main() {
  num x = 1;
  f(x);
  num y = x;
}
```

Call-by-reference

In call-by-reference execution of this main function, the value assigned to y is 2, because the change to x in f affects the variable that was passed in from the calling block as the x argument.

```
unit f(num x) { x = x + 1; }
unit main() {
  num x = 1;
  f(x);
  num y = x;
}
```

Procedural typechecking

Procedural typechecking

Evaluation with activation records suggests a procedure for **typechecking** procedural programs.

The typechecker moves through the code top to bottom, line by line, keeping track of a typing context.

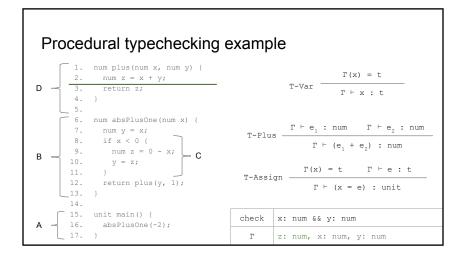
- At every line, it typechecks the expression on that line
- When it enters a function, it adds the function's arguments to the context
- When it encounters a local variable declaration, it adds the variable to the context
- When it leaves a block, it removes the variables declared in that block from the context
- When it leaves a block, it removes the variables declared in that block from the context
- When it encounters a return statement, it checks the value's type against the return type
 When it leaves a function,
 - it removes the function's arguments and local variables from the context,
 - and adds the function itself to the context

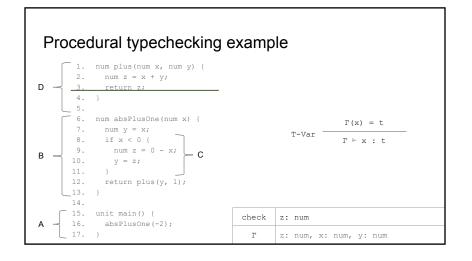
Procedural typechecking example

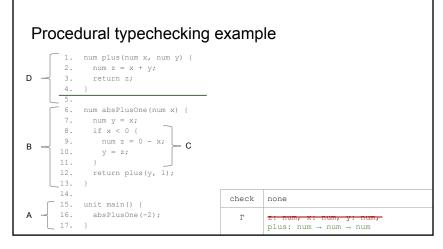
```
1. num plus(num x, num y) {
2. num z = x + y;
3. return z;
4. }
5.
6. num absPlusOne(num x) {
7. num y = x;
8. if x < 0 {
9. num z = 0 - x;
10. y = z;
11. }
12. return plus(y, 1);
13. }
14.

A {
15. unit main() {
16. absPlusOne(-2);
17. }
```

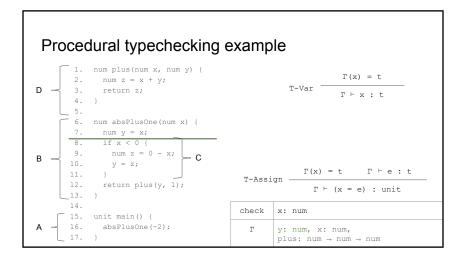
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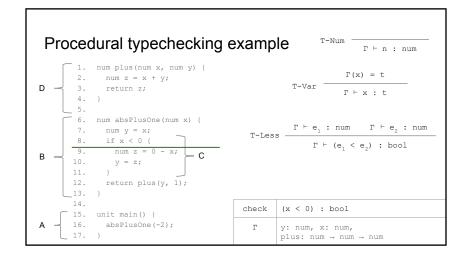


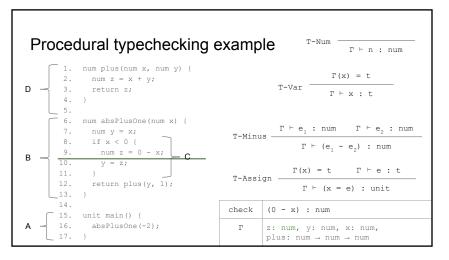




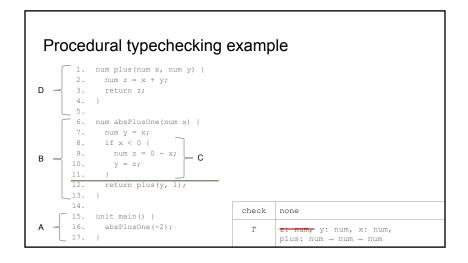
Procedural typechecking example 1. num plus(num x, num y) { 2. num z = x + y; $D \rightarrow 3$. return z; 4. } 6. num absPlusOne(num x) { 7. num y = x;8. if x < 0 { $B \dashv_{10.}$ y = z;12. return plus(y, 1); 13. } none 15. unit main() { 16. absPlusOne(-2); plus: num → num → num

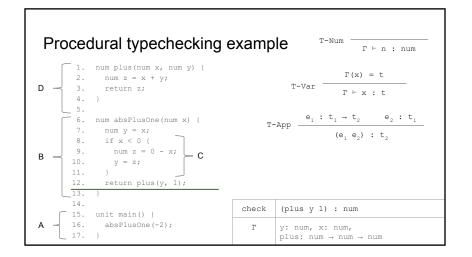


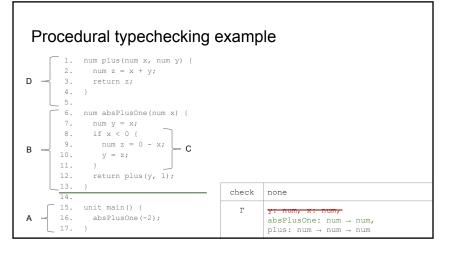




Procedural typechecking example 1. num plus(num x, num y) { $\Gamma(x) = t$ 2. num z = x + y; $D \rightarrow 3$. return z; г⊢х: t 4. } 6. num absPlusOne(num x) { 7. num y = x;8. if x < 0 { 9. num z = 0 - x; $\Gamma(x) = t$ $\Gamma \vdash e : t$ T-Assign -12. return plus(y, 1); $\Gamma \vdash (x = e) : unit$ _13. } 14. 15. unit main() { 16. absPlusOne(-2); z: num, y: num, x: num, plus: num → num → num







Procedural typechecking example

```
D = 1. num plus(num x, num y) {
2. num z = x + y;
3. return z;
4. }
5.
6. num absPlusOne(num x) {
7. num y = x;
8. if x < 0 {
9. num z = 0 - x;
10. y = z;
11. }
12. return plus(y, 1);
13. }
14.

A = 15. unit main() {
16. absPlusOne(-2);
17. }
```

```
Check none

r absPlusOne : num → num,
plus: num → num → num
```

Procedural typechecking example

```
1. num plus(num x, num y) {
        2. num z = x + y;
D \rightarrow 3. return z;
                                                T-App \frac{e_1 : t_1 \rightarrow t_2 \qquad e_2 : t_1}{(e_1 e_2) : t_2}
       6. num absPlusOne(num x) {
       7. num y = x;
       8. if x < 0 {
      9. num z = 0 - x; \subset C
B \rightarrow 10. y = z;
       12. return plus(y, 1);
     13. }
                                                   absPlusOne(-2) is well-typed
     15. unit main() {
       16. absPlusOne(-2);
                                                   absPlusOne : num → num,
                                                   plus: num → num → num
```

Procedural typechecking example

Summary

- Imperative programs are characterized by commands with side effects
 - A referentially transparent expression has no side effects
- We can model imperative and procedural languages:
 - As extensions of functional languages
 - As state machines
- Scoping rules and lifetime rules define where variables are valid in a program and when they're "cleaned up" at runtime
 - Different languages have different scoping and lifetime rules
 - Different variables within the same language may have different scoping and lifetime rules
- Calling conventions define how arguments are passed in to a function
 - Different arguments in the same language may have different calling conventions
 - Language constructs can simulate calling conventions that aren't supported natively