Class 13: Name, Scope, Lifetime

SI 413 - Programming Languages and Implementation

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1. Generate parse tree for the program

\[
\begin{align*}
x & := 5 \times 3 + 4; \\
x & > 10 & \& & x/2 < 10;
\end{align*}
\]

2. Write the AST for that program.

3. Decorate the AST with the type of each node.
Naming Issues: Example 1

We need to know what thing a \textit{name} refers to in our programs.

Consider, in Perl:

\begin{verbatim}
$x=1;
sub foo() { $x = 5; }
sub bar() { local $x = 2; foo(); print $x,"\n"; }
bar();
\end{verbatim}

What gets printed for $x$?
Naming Issues: Example 2

We need to know what thing a name refers to in our programs.

Consider, in Scheme:

```scheme
(define x 1)
(let ((x 2))
  (display (eval 'x)))
```

What gets printed for x?
Naming Issues: Example 3

We need to know what thing a *name* refers to in our programs.

Consider, in C++:

```cpp
char* foo() {
    char s[20];
    cin >> s;
    return s;
}

int bar(char* x) { cout << x << endl; }

int main() { bar(foo()); }
```

What gets printed for `x`?
Basic terminology

- **Name**: A reference to something in our program
- **Binding**: An attachment of a *value* to a *name*
- **Scope**: The part of code where a *binding* is active
- **Referencing Environment**: The set of bindings around an expression
- **Allocation**: Setting aside space for an object
- **Lifetime**: The time when an object is in memory
Key Question

At a given point in the execution of our program, what thing does a name refer to?

- We need to know this as *programmers*.
- We really need to know this as *compiler developers*.
Static Allocation

The storage for some objects can be fixed at compile-time. Then our program can access them really quickly!

Examples:

- Global variables
- Literals (e.g. "a string")
- *Everything* in Fortran 77?
Stack Allocation

The run-time stack is usually used for function calls. Includes local variables, arguments, and returned values.

Example: What does the stack look like for this C program?

```c
int g(int x) { return x*x; }

int f(int y) {
    int x = 3 + g(y);
    return x;
}

int main() {
    int n = 5;
    f(n);
}
```
Heap Allocation

The heap refers to a pile of memory that can be taken as needed. It is typically used for *run-time memory allocation*.

This is the *slowest* kind of allocation because it happens at run-time. More common in dynamic languages.

Compilers/interpreters providing *garbage collection* make life easier with lots of heap-allocated storage. Otherwise the segfault monsters will come...
Single Global Scope

Why not just have every instance of a name bind to the same object? This will make the compiler-writer’s job easy!
Why not just have every instance of a name bind to the same object? This will make the compiler-writer’s job easy!

- Programmers like to re-use common variable names.
- Code will be very very not-modular.
- Recursion becomes impossible! (Why?)
Dynamic vs. Lexical Scope

Perl's local variables have *dynamic scope*. The binding is determined by the most recent declaration *at run time*.
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Perl's local variables have *dynamic scope*. The binding is determined by the most recent declaration *at run time*.

Most other languages (and my variables in Perl) have *lexical scope*. The binding is determined *statically* (at compile time) as the closest *lexically* nested scope where that name is declared.

(Note: this is actually the hardest to implement!)
Dynamic vs. Lexical Example

```c
int x = 10;

int foo(int y) {
    x = y + 5;
    printf(x);
}

int main() {
    int x = 8;
    int x = 8;  // Shadowing the global x
    foo(9);
    printf(x);
}
```

How does the behavior differ between a dynamic or lexically scoped language?
Class outcomes

You should know:

- The meaning of terms like *binding* and *scope*
- The trade-offs involved in storage allocation
- The trade-offs involved in scoping rules

You should be able to:

- Show how variables are allocated in C++, Java, and Scheme.
- Draw out activation records on a run-time stack.
- Determine the run-time bindings in a program using static, dynamic, and lexical scoping.