



Functional Programming Languages

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UNSW
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What do they
have in **common**?

Definitions

Unlike imperative languages, **functional** programming languages are not very crisply defined.

Attempt at a Definition

A *functional programming language* is a programming language derived from or inspired by the λ -calculus, or derived from or inspired by another functional programming language.

The result? If it has λ in it, you can call it functional.

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The result? If it has λ in it, you can call it functional.

In this course, we'll consider *purely functional* languages, which have a much better definition.

Why Study FP Languages?

Think of a major innovation in the area of programming languages.

Garbage Collection?

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Purely Functional Programming Languages

The term *purely functional* has a very crisp definition.

Definition

A programming language is *purely functional* if β -reduction (or evaluation in general) is actually a *confluence*.

In other words, functions have to be mathematical functions, and free of *side effects*.

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Definition

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In other words, functions have to be mathematical functions, and free of *side effects*.

Consider what would happen if we allowed effects in a functional language:

```
count = 0;  
f x = {count := count + x; return count};  
m = ( $\lambda y. y + y$ ) (f 3)
```

If we evaluate $f\ 3$ first, we will get $m = 6$, but if we β -reduce m first, we will get $m = 9$. \Rightarrow **not confluent**.

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Something not unlike this will appear in your **Assignment 1**.

Syntax

<i>Integers</i>	n	$::=$	\dots
<i>Identifiers</i>	f, x	$::=$	\dots
<i>Literals</i>	b	$::=$	$\text{True} \mid \text{False}$
<i>Types</i>	τ	$::=$	$\text{Bool} \mid \text{Int} \mid \tau_1 \rightarrow \tau_2$
<i>Infix Operators</i>	\otimes	$::=$	$* \mid + \mid == \mid \dots$
<i>Expressions</i>	e	$::=$	$x \mid n \mid b \mid (e) \mid e_1 \otimes e_2$ $\mid \text{if } e_1 \text{ then } e_2 \text{ else } e_3$

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<i>Expressions</i>	e	$::=$	$x \mid n \mid b \mid (e) \mid e_1 \otimes e_2$ $\mid \text{if } e_1 \text{ then } e_2 \text{ else } e_3$ $\mid e_1 \ e_2$ $\mid \text{recfun } f :: (\tau_1 \rightarrow \tau_2) \ x = e$ $\uparrow \text{ Like } \lambda, \text{ but with recursion.}$

As usual, this is **ambiguous** concrete syntax. But all the precedence and associativity rules apply as in Haskell. We assume a suitable parser.

Examples

Example (Stupid division by 5)

```
recfun divBy5 :: (Int → Int) x =  
  if x < 5  
  then 0  
  else 1 + divBy5 (x - 5)
```

Example (Average Function)

```
recfun average :: (Int → (Int → Int)) x =  
  recfun avX :: (Int → Int) y =  
    (x + y) / 2
```

As in Haskell, $(average\ 15\ 5) = ((average\ 15)\ 5)$.

We don't need no let

This language is so minimal, it doesn't even need **let** expressions.
How can we do without them?

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How can we do without them?

let $x :: \tau_1 = e_1$ **in** $e_2 :: \tau_2 \equiv (\text{recfun } f :: (\tau_1 \rightarrow \tau_2) \ x = e_2) \ e_1$

Abstract Syntax

Moving to **first order** abstract syntax, we get:

Concrete Syntax	Abstract Syntax
n	$(\text{Num } n)$
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n	<code>(Num n)</code>
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if c then t else e	<code>(If c t e)</code>
e_1 e_2	<code>(Apply e_1 e_2)</code>

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What changes when we move to **higher order** abstract syntax?

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recfun $f :: (\tau_1 \rightarrow \tau_2) \ x = e$	$(\text{Recfun } \tau_1 \ \tau_2 \ f \ x \ e)$
x	$(\text{Var } x)$

What changes when we move to **higher order** abstract syntax?

- 1 **Var** terms go away – we use the meta-language's variables.
- 2 $(\text{Recfun } \tau_1 \ \tau_2 \ f \ x \ e)$ now uses meta-language abstraction:
 $(\text{Recfun } \tau_1 \ \tau_2 \ (f. \ x. \ e))$.

Working Statically with HOAS

To Code

We're going to write code for an AST and pretty-printer for MinHS with HOAS.

Seeing as this requires us to **look under abstractions** without evaluating the term, we have to extend the AST with special **"tag"** values.

Static Semantics

To check if a MinHS program is well-formed, we need to check:

- 1 **Scoping** – all variables used must be well defined
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Our judgement is an extension of the scoping rules to include types:

Under this **context** of assumptions

$\Gamma \vdash e : \tau$

The expression is assigned this type

The **context** Γ includes **typing assumptions** for the variables:

$x : \text{Int}, y : \text{Int} \vdash (\text{Plus } x \ y) : \text{Int}$

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Let's implement a *type checker*.

Dynamic Semantics

Structural Operational Semantics (Small-Step)

Initial states:

Dynamic Semantics

Structural Operational Semantics (Small-Step)

Initial states: All well typed expressions.

Final states:

Dynamic Semantics

Structural Operational Semantics (Small-Step)

Initial states: All well typed expressions.

Final states: $(\text{Num } n)$, $(\text{Lit } b)$,

Structural Operational Semantics (Small-Step)

Final states: (Num n), (Lit b), Recfun too!

Evaluation of built-in operations:

$$\frac{e_1 \mapsto e'_1}{(\text{Plus } e_1 \ e_2) \mapsto (\text{Plus } e'_1 \ e_2)}$$

(and so on as per arithmetic expressions)

Specifying If

$$\frac{e_1 \mapsto e'_1}{(\text{If } e_1 \ e_2 \ e_3) \mapsto (\text{If } e'_1 \ e_2 \ e_3)}$$
$$\frac{}{(\text{If } (\text{Lit True}) \ e_2 \ e_3) \mapsto e_2}$$
$$\frac{}{(\text{If } (\text{Lit False}) \ e_2 \ e_3) \mapsto e_3}$$

How about Functions?

Recall that **Recfun** is a **final state** – we don't need to evaluate it unless it's applied to an argument.

Evaluating **function application** requires us to:

- 1 Evaluate the left expression to get a **Recfun**;
- 2 evaluate the right expression to get an argument value; and
- 3 evaluate the function's body, after supplying substitutions for the abstracted variables.

$$\frac{\frac{e_1 \mapsto e'_1}{(\text{Apply } e_1 \ e_2) \mapsto (\text{Apply } e'_1 \ e_2)}}{e_2 \mapsto e'_2} \frac{}{(\text{Apply } (\text{Recfun} \dots) \ e_2) \mapsto (\text{Apply } (\text{Recfun} \dots) \ e'_2)}$$

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$$\frac{}{(\text{Apply } (\text{Recfun } \tau_1 \ \tau_2 \ (f.x. \ e)) \ v) \mapsto e[x := v, f := (\text{Recfun } \tau_1 \ \tau_2 \ (f.x. \ e))]}$$