Syntax-Directed Translation

- Attach rules or program fragments to productions in a grammar.
- Syntax directed definition (SDD)
  \[ E_1 \rightarrow E_2 + T \quad E_1.code = E_2.code || T.code || '+' \]
- Syntax directed translation Scheme (SDT)
  \[ E \rightarrow E + T \quad \{ \text{print ' + '} \} \quad \text{// semantic action} \]
  \[ F \rightarrow id \quad \{ \text{print id.val} \} \]

SDD and SDT scheme

- SDD: Specifies the values of attributes by associating semantic rules with the productions.
- SDT scheme: embeds program fragments (also called semantic actions) within production bodies.
  - The position of the action defines the order in which the action is executed (in the middle of production or end).
- SDD is easier to read; easy for specification.
- SDT scheme – can be more efficient; easy for implementation.

Example: SDD vs SDT scheme – infix to postfix trans
Syntax directed translation - overview

- Construct a parse tree
- Compute the values of the attributes at the nodes of the tree by visiting the tree

Key: We don’t need to build a parse tree all the time.
- Translation can be done during parsing.
  - class of SDTs called “L-attributed translations”.
  - class of SDTs called “S-attributed translations”.

Syntax directed definition

- SDD is a CFG along with attributes and rules.
- An attribute is associated with grammar symbols (attribute grammar).
- Rules are associated with productions.

Attributes

- Attribute is any quantity associated with a programming construct.
- Example: data types, line numbers, instruction details

Two kinds of attributes: for a non-terminal \( A \), at a parse tree node \( N \)
- A synthesized attribute: defined by a semantic rule associated with the production at \( N \).
  - defined only in terms of attribute values at the children of \( N \) and at \( N \) itself.
- An inherited attribute: defined by a semantic rule associated with the parent production of \( N \).
  - defined only in terms of attribute values at the parent of \( N \) siblings of \( N \) and at \( N \) itself.

Specifying the actions: Attribute grammars

Idea: attribute the syntax tree
- can add attributes (fields) to each node
- specify equations to define values
- can use attributes from parent and children

Example: to ensure that constants are immutable:
- add type and class attributes to expression nodes
- rules for production on \( : = \) that
  1. check that LHS.class is variable
  2. check that LHS.type and RHS.type are consistent or conform
Attribute grammars

To formalize such systems Knuth introduced attribute grammars:
- grammar-based specification of tree attributes
- value assignments associated with productions
- each attribute uniquely, locally defined
- label identical terms uniquely

Can specify context-sensitive actions with attribute grammars

Example

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRODUCTION</th>
<th>SEMANTIC RULES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$D \rightarrow TL$</td>
<td>$L.in := T.type$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$T \rightarrow int$</td>
<td>$T.type := integer$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$T \rightarrow real$</td>
<td>$T.type := real$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$L \rightarrow L_1, id$</td>
<td>$L_1.in := L.in$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$L \rightarrow id$</td>
<td>$addtype(id.entry, L.in)$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Example (continued)

The attributed parse tree for $-101$:

- val and neg are synthesized attributes
- pos is an inherited attribute
Dependences between attributes

- values are computed from constants & other attributes
- synthesized attribute – value computed from children
- inherited attribute – value computed from siblings & parent
- key notion: induced dependency graph

The attribute dependency graph

- nodes represent attributes
- edges represent flow of values
- graph is specific to parse tree
- size is related to parse tree’s size
- can be built alongside parse tree

The dependency graph must be acyclic
Evaluation order:
- topological sort the dependency graph to order attributes
- using this order, evaluate the rules
The order depends on both the grammar and the input string

Example (continued)

The attribute dependency graph:

Example: A topological order

- SIGN.neg
- LIST0.pos
- LIST1.pos
- LIST2.pos
- BIT0.pos
- BIT1.pos
- BIT2.pos
- BIT0.val
- LIST2.val
- BIT1.val
- LIST1.val
- BIT2.val
- LIST0.val
- NUM.val

Evaluating in this order yields NUM.val: -5
Evaluation strategies

- **Parse-tree methods**
  1. build the parse tree
  2. build the dependency graph
  3. topological sort the graph
  4. evaluate it

  *(dynamic)*

  *(cyclic graph fails)*

What if there are cycles?

Avoiding cycles

- Hard to tell, for a given grammar, whether there exists any parse tree whose dependency graphs have cycles.
- Focus on classes of SDD's that guarantee an evaluation order – do not permit dependency graphs with cycles.
  - L-attributed – class of SDTs called "L-attributed translations".
  - S-attributed – class of SDTs called "S-attributed translations".

Top-down (LL) on-the-fly one-pass evaluation

L-attributed grammar:
- Informally – dependency-graph edges may go from left to right, not other way around.
- given production $A \rightarrow X_1X_2\cdots X_n$
  - inherited attributes of $X_j$ depend only on:
    - inherited attributes of $A$
    - arbitrary attributes of $X_1,X_2,\cdots X_{j-1}$
  - synthesized attributes of $A$ depend only on its inherited attributes and arbitrary RHS attributes
  - synthesized attributes of an action depends only on its inherited attributes

i.e., evaluation order:
- $\text{Inh}(A), \text{Inh}(X_1), \text{Syn}(X_1), \ldots, \text{Inh}(X_n), \text{Syn}(X_n), \text{Syn}(A)$

This is precisely the order of evaluation for an LL parser

Bottom-up (LR) on-the-fly one-pass evaluation

S-attributed grammar:
- L-attributed
  - only synthesized attributes for non-terminals
  - actions at far right of a RHS
Can evaluate S-attributed in one bottom-up (LR) pass.
Evaluate S-attributed grammar in bottom-up parsing

- Evaluate it in any bottom-up order of the nodes in the parse tree.
- (One option:) Apply postorder to the root of the parse tree:
  ```c
  void postorder(N) {
    for (each child C of N)
      do
        postorder(C);
      done
    evaluate the attributes associated with N;
  }
  ```
- Post order traversal of the parse tree corresponds to the exact order in which the bottom-up parsing builds the parse tree.
- Thus, we can evaluate S-attributed in one bottom-up (LR) pass.

Inherited Vs Synthesized attributes

- Synthesized attributes are limited
- Inherited attributes (are good): derive values from constants, parents, siblings
  - used to express context (context-sensitive checking)
  - inherited attributes are more “natural”
- We want to use both kinds of attributes
  - can always rewrite L-attributed LL grammars (using markers and copying) to avoid inherited attribute problems with LR
- Self reading (if interested) – Dragon book Section 5.5.4.

LL parsers and actions

- How does an LL parser handle (aka - execute) actions?
- Expand productions before scanning RHS symbols, so:
  - push actions onto parse stack like other grammar symbols
  - pop and perform action when it comes to top of parse stack

LL parsers and actions

```c
push EOF
push Start Symbol
token ← next_token()
repeat
  pop X
  if X is a terminal or EOF then
    if X = token then
      token ← next_token()
    else error()
  else if X is an action
    perform X
  else /* X is a non-terminal */
    if M[Xtoken] = X → Y₁Y₂...Yₖ then
      push Yₖ, Yₖ₋₁,..., Y₁
    else error()
  until X = EOF
```
LR parsers and action symbols

What about LR parsers?
Scan entire RHS before applying production, so:
- cannot perform actions until entire RHS scanned
- can only place actions at very end of RHS of production
- introduce new marker non-terminals and corresponding productions to get around this restriction

\[ A \rightarrow w \text{ action } \beta \]

becomes

\[ A \rightarrow M \beta \]
\[ M \rightarrow w \text{ action } \]

† yacc, bison, CUP do this automatically

Action-controlled semantic stacks

- Approach:
  - stack is managed explicitly by action routines
  - actions take arguments from top of stack
  - actions place results back on stack
- Advantages:
  - actions can directly access entries in stack without popping (efficient)
- Disadvantages:
  - implementation is exposed
  - action routines must include explicit code to manage stack (or use stack abstract data type).

LR parser-controlled semantic stacks

- Idea: let parser manage the semantic stack
- LR parser-controlled semantic stacks:
  - parse stack contains already parsed symbols
  - maintain semantic values in parallel with their symbols
  - add space in parse stack or parallel stack for semantic values
  - every matched grammar symbol has semantic value
  - pop semantic values along with symbols
- ⇒ LR parsers have a very nice fit with semantic processing

LL parser-controlled semantic stacks

- Problems:
  - parse stack contains predicted symbols, not yet matched
  - often need semantic value after its corresponding symbol is popped
- Solution:
  - use separate semantic stack
  - push entries on semantic stack along with their symbols
  - on completion of production, pop its RHS’s semantic values
Attribute Grammars

Advantages
- clean formalism
- automatic generation of evaluator
- high-level specification

Disadvantages
- evaluation strategy determines efficiency
- increased space requirements
- parse tree evaluators need dependency graph
- results distributed over tree
- circularity testing

Intel's 80286 Pascal compiler used an attribute grammar evaluator to perform context-sensitive analysis. Historically, attribute grammar evaluators have been deemed too large and expensive for commercial-quality compilers.