# COMPILER DESIGN

#### Syntactic analysis: Part I

Parsing, derivations, grammar transformation, predictive parsing, introduction to first and follow sets

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Department of Computer Science and Software Engineering

#### Syntactical analysis

- Syntax analysis involves **parsing** the token sequence to identify the syntactic structure of the program.
- The parser's output is some form of intermediate representation of the program's structure, typically a parse tree, which replaces the linear sequence of tokens with a tree structure built according to the rules of a formal grammar which is used to define the language's syntax.
- This is usually done using a **context-free grammar** which recursively defines components that can make up an valid program and the order in which they must appear.
- The resulting parse tree is then analyzed, augmented, and transformed by later phases in the compiler.
- Parsers are written by hand or generated by parser generators, such as *Yacc*, *Bison*, *ANTLR* or *JavaCC*, among other tools.

#### Syntactic analyzer

#### Roles

- Analyze the structure of the program and its component declarations, definitions, statements and expressions
- Check for (and recover from) syntax errors
- Drive the front-end's execution

#### Syntax analysis: history

- Historically based on formal natural language grammatical analysis (Chomsky, 1950s).
- Use of a *generative grammar*:
  - builds sentences in a series of steps;
  - starts from abstract concepts defined by a set of grammatical rules (often called productions);
  - refines the analysis down to lexical elements.
- Analyzing (parsing) consists in constructing the way in which the sentences can be constructed by the productions.
- Valid sentences can be represented as a *parse tree*.
- Constructs a *proof,* called a *derivation,* that the grammatical rules of the language can generate the sequence of tokens given in input.
- Most of the standard parsing algorithms were invented in the 1960s.
- Donald Knuth is often credited for clearly expressing and popularizing them.



Noam Chomsky



Donald Knuth

#### Example

<sentence> ::= <noun phrase><verb phrase>
<noun phrase> ::= article noun
<verb phrase> ::= verb <noun phrase>



#### Syntax and semantics

- <u>Syntax</u>: defines *how* valid sentences are formed
- <u>Semantics</u>: defines the *meaning* of valid sentences
- Some grammatically correct sentences can have no meaning
  - "The bone walked the dog"
- It is impossible to automatically validate the full meaning of all syntactically valid English sentences
  - Spoken languages may have ambiguous meaning
  - Programming languages must be non-ambiguous
- In programming languages, semantics is about giving a meaning by translating programs into executables

#### Grammars

- A grammar is a quadruple (T,N,S,R)
  - T: a finite set of terminal symbols
  - N: a finite set of non-terminal symbols
  - S: a unique starting symbol ( $S \in N$ )
  - R: a finite set of productions
    - $\alpha \rightarrow \beta \mid (\alpha, \beta \in (T \cup N)^*)$
- Context free grammars have productions of the form:
  - $A \rightarrow \beta \mid (A \in N) \land (\beta \in (T \cup N)^*)$
- $\alpha \mid \alpha \in (T \cup N)^*$  is called a *sentential form*:
  - the dog <verb> the bone
  - gnawed bone <noun> the
- $\alpha \mid \alpha \in (T)^*$  is called a *sentence:* 
  - the dog gnawed the bone
  - gnawed bone the the

#### Backus-Naur Form

- J.W. Backus: main designer of the first FORTRAN compiler
- <u>P. Naur</u>: main designer of the Algol-60 programming language
  - non-terminals are placed in angle brackets
  - the symbol ::= is used instead of an arrow
  - a vertical bar can be used to signify **alternatives**
  - curly braces are used to signify an indefinite number of repetitions
  - square brackets are used to signify optionality
- Widely used to represent programming languages' syntax
- Meta-language



Peter Naur



John Backus

#### BNF: Example

Pascal type declarations

• Grammar in BNF:

<ul> <li>Example</li> </ul>	
-----------------------------	--

<typedecl> <typedeflist> <typedef> <typespec></typespec></typedef></typedeflist></typedecl>	<pre>::= type <typedeflist> ::= <typedef> [ <typedeflist> ] ::= <typeid> = <typespec> ; ::= <typeid></typeid></typespec></typeid></typedeflist></typedef></typedeflist></pre>
	<pre><enumdef> <recdef></recdef></enumdef></pre>
<typeid></typeid>	::= id
<arraydef></arraydef>	<pre>::= [ packed ] array <lbrack> <rangedef> <rbrack> of <typeid></typeid></rbrack></rangedef></lbrack></pre>
<lbrack></lbrack>	::= [
<rbrack></rbrack>	::= ]
<ptrdef></ptrdef>	<pre>::= ^<typeid></typeid></pre>
<rangedef></rangedef>	<pre>::= <number> <number></number></number></pre>
<number></number>	<pre>::= <digit> [ <number> ]</number></digit></pre>
<enumdef></enumdef>	<pre>::= <lparen> <idlist> <rparen></rparen></idlist></lparen></pre>
<lparen></lparen>	::= (
<rparen></rparen>	::= )
<idlist></idlist>	<pre>::= <ident> { , <ident> }</ident></ident></pre>
<recdef></recdef>	<pre>::= record <vardecllist> end ;</vardecllist></pre>
<vardecllist></vardecllist>	<pre>::= <vardecl> [ <vardecllist> ]</vardecllist></vardecl></pre>
<vardecl></vardecl>	<pre>::= <idlist> : <typespec> ;</typespec></idlist></pre>

```
type string20 = packed array[1..20] of char;
type intptr = ^integer;
floatptr = ^real;
type herb = (tarragon, rosemary, thyme, alpert);
tinyint = 1..7;
student = record
name, address : string20;
studentid : array[1..20] of integer;
grade : char;
end;;
```

#### Example

• Grammar for simple arithmetic expressions:

$$G = (T,N,S,R),$$
  

$$T = \{id,+,-,*,/,(,)\},$$
  

$$N = \{E\},$$
  

$$S = E,$$
  

$$R = \{E \rightarrow E + E,$$
  

$$E \rightarrow E - E,$$
  

$$E \rightarrow E * E,$$
  

$$E \rightarrow E * E,$$
  

$$E \rightarrow E / E,$$
  

$$E \rightarrow id\}$$

#### Example

- Parse the sequence: (a+b)/(a-b)
- The lexical analyzer tokenizes the sequence as: (id+id)/(id-id)
- Construct a **parse tree** for the expression:
  - start symbol = root node
    non-terminal = internal node
    terminal = leaf
    production, sentential form = subtree
    sentence = tree

#### Top-down parsing

- Starts at the root (starting symbol)
- Builds the tree downwards from:
  - the sequence of tokens in input (from left to right)
  - the rules in the grammar

#### Example



 $E \rightarrow E + E$  $E \rightarrow E - E$  $E \rightarrow E * E$  $E \rightarrow E / E$  $E \rightarrow (E)$  $E \rightarrow id$ 

.



#### Derivations

- The application of grammar rules towards the recognition of a grammatically valid sequence of terminals can be represented with a *derivation*
- Noted as a series of transformations:
  - $\{\alpha \Longrightarrow \beta \ [\rho] \mid (\alpha, \beta \in (T \cup N)^*) \land (\rho \in R)\}$
  - where production  $\rho$  is used to transform  $\alpha$  into  $\beta.$

#### Derivation example



- In this case, we say that  $E \stackrel{*}{\Rightarrow} (id+id)/(id-id)$
- The *language* generated by the grammar can be defined as:

• 
$$L(G) = \{ \omega \mid S \xrightarrow{*}{G} \omega \land \omega \in (T)^* \}$$

#### Leftmost and rightmost derivation

Leftmost Derivation

Rightmost Derivation

$$E \Rightarrow E / E \qquad [E \rightarrow E / E]$$

$$\Rightarrow E / (E) \qquad [E \rightarrow (E)]$$

$$\Rightarrow E / (E - E) \qquad [E \rightarrow (E)]$$

$$\Rightarrow E / (E - id) \qquad [E \rightarrow id]$$

$$\Rightarrow E / (id - id) \qquad [E \rightarrow id]$$

$$\Rightarrow (E) / (id - id) \qquad [E \rightarrow (E)]$$

$$\Rightarrow (E + E) / (id - id) \qquad [E \rightarrow E + E]$$

$$\Rightarrow (E + id) / (id - id) \qquad [E \rightarrow id]$$

$$\Rightarrow (id + id) / (id - id) \qquad [E \rightarrow id]$$

#### Top-down and bottom-up parsing

- A top-down parser builds a parse tree starting at the root down to the leafs
  - It builds *leftmost* derivations, i.e. a forward derivation proving that a sentence can be generated from the starting symbol by using a sequence of *forward* applications of productions:
     E ⇒ E / E
     [E → E / E]
    - tions: $E \Rightarrow E / E$  $[E \rightarrow E / E]$  $\Rightarrow (E) / E$  $[E \rightarrow (E)]$  $\Rightarrow (E + E) / E$  $[E \rightarrow (E)]$  $\Rightarrow (id + E) / E$  $[E \rightarrow id]$  $\Rightarrow (id + id) / E$  $[E \rightarrow id]$  $\Rightarrow (id + id) / (E)$  $[E \rightarrow (E)]$  $\Rightarrow (id + id) / (E E)$  $[E \rightarrow E E]$  $\Rightarrow (id + id) / (id E)$  $[E \rightarrow id]$  $\Rightarrow (id + id) / (id E)$  $[E \rightarrow id]$
- A **<u>bottom-up</u>** parser builds a parse tree starting from the leafs up to the root

$$\begin{array}{c} \leftarrow (\mathbf{Id} + \mathbf{Id}) / (\mathbf{Id} - \mathbf{Id}) \\ \leftarrow (\mathbf{E} + \mathbf{id}) / (\mathbf{id} - \mathbf{id}) \\ \leftarrow (\mathbf{E} + \mathbf{E}) / (\mathbf{id} - \mathbf{id}) \\ \leftarrow (\mathbf{E} + \mathbf{E}) / (\mathbf{id} - \mathbf{id}) \\ \leftarrow (\mathbf{E} + \mathbf{E}) / (\mathbf{id} - \mathbf{id}) \\ \leftarrow (\mathbf{E} + \mathbf{E}) / (\mathbf{id} - \mathbf{id}) \\ \leftarrow (\mathbf{E} - \mathbf{id}) \\ \leftarrow (\mathbf{E} - \mathbf{id}) \\ \leftarrow (\mathbf{E} - \mathbf{E}) \\ \hline (\mathbf{E} - \mathbf{E} - \mathbf{E} - \mathbf{E}) \\ \hline (\mathbf{E} - \mathbf{E} - \mathbf{E} - \mathbf{E} - \mathbf{E}) \\ \hline (\mathbf{E} - \mathbf{E} \\ \hline (\mathbf{E} - \mathbf{E} \\ \hline (\mathbf{E} - \mathbf{E} - \mathbf{E}$$

## Grammar transformations

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#### Tranforming extended BNF grammar constructs

- Extended BNF includes constructs for optionality and repetition.
- They are very convenient for clarity/conciseness of presentation of the grammar.
- However, they have to be removed, as they are not compatible with standard generative parsing techniques.

#### Transforming optionality and repetition

#### • For **optionality** BNF constructs:

1- Isolate productions of the form:  $A \rightarrow \alpha [X_1...X_n]\beta$  (optionality) 2- Introduce a new non-terminal N 3- Introduce a new rule  $A \rightarrow \alpha \ N \ \beta$ 4- Introduce two rules to generate the optionality of N  $N \rightarrow X_1...X_n$  $N \rightarrow \epsilon$ 

• For **repetition** BNF constructs:



#### Ambiguous grammars

• Which of these trees is the right one for the expression "id + id \* id"?



- According to the grammar, both are right.
- The language defined by this grammar is *ambiguous*.
- That is not acceptable in a compiler.
- Non-determinism needs to be avoided.

#### Removing ambiguities

- Solutions:
  - Incorporate operation precedence in the parser (complicates the compiler, rarely done)
  - Implement backtracking (complicates the compiler, inefficient)
  - Transform the grammar to remove ambiguities



#### Left recursion

- The aim is to design a parser that has no arbitrary choices to make between rules (*predictive parsing*)
- In predictive parsing, the assumption is that the first rule that can apply is applied, as there are never two different applicable rules.
- In this case, productions of the form  $A \rightarrow A\alpha$  will be applied forever



#### Non-immediate left recursion

- Left recursions may seem to be easy to locate.
- However, they may be transitive, or non-immediate.
- Non-immediate left recursions are sets of productions of the form:



#### Transforming left recursion

- This problem afflicts all top-down parsers
- Solution: apply a transformation to the grammar to remove the left recursions

1- Isolate each set of productions of the form:  

$$A \rightarrow A\alpha_{1} | A\alpha_{2} | A\alpha_{3} | \dots \qquad (left-recursive)$$

$$A \rightarrow \beta_{1} | \beta_{2} | \beta_{3} | \dots \qquad (non-left-recursive)$$
2- Introduce a new non-terminal A'  
3- Change all the non-recursive productions on A to:  

$$A \rightarrow \beta_{1}A' | \beta_{2}A' | \beta_{3}A' | \dots$$
4- Remove the left-recursive production on A and substitute:  

$$A' \rightarrow \varepsilon | \alpha_{1}A' | \alpha_{2}A' | \alpha_{3}A' | \dots \qquad (right-recursive)$$

## Example

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## Example

$$E \rightarrow TE'$$

$$E' \rightarrow \varepsilon \mid +TE' \mid -TE'$$

$$T \rightarrow FT'$$

$$T' \rightarrow \varepsilon \mid *FT' \mid /FT'$$

$$F \rightarrow (E) \mid id$$

#### Non-recursive ambiguity

- As the parse is essentially predictive, it cannot be faced with non-deterministic choice as to what rule to apply
- There might be sets of rules of the form: A  $\rightarrow \alpha\beta_1 \mid \alpha\beta_2 \mid \alpha\beta_3 \mid ...$
- This would imply that the parser needs to make a choice between different right hand sides that begin with the same symbol, which is not acceptable
- They can be eliminated using a factorization technique



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#### Backtracking

- It is possible to write a parser that implements an ambiguous grammar.
- In this case, when there is an arbitrary alternative, the parser explores the alternatives one after the other.
- If an alternative does not result in a valid parse tree, the parser backtracks to the last arbitrary alternative and selects another right-hand-side.
- The parse fails only when there are no more alternatives left .
- This is often called a **brute-force method**.

#### Example

# Seeking for : bcde

$$S \implies bAc \qquad [S \rightarrow bAc] \cdot \\ \implies bcAc \qquad [A \rightarrow cA] \\ \implies bcdc \qquad [A \rightarrow d] \\ \implies error$$



$$S \implies bAe \qquad [S \rightarrow bAe] \\ \implies bcAe \qquad [A \rightarrow cA] \\ \implies bcde \qquad [A \rightarrow d] \\ \implies OK$$



#### Backtracking

- Backtracking is tricky and inefficient to implement.
- Generally, code is generated as rules are applied; backtracking involves retraction of the generated code!
- Parsing with backtracking is seldom used.
- The most simple solution is to eliminate the ambiguities from the grammar.
- Some more elaborated solutions have been recently found that optimize backtracking that use a caching technique to reduce the number of generated sub-trees [2,3,4,5].

- <u>**Restriction**</u>: the parser must always be able to determine which of the right-hand sides to follow, only with its knowledge of the next token in input.
- Top-down parsing without backtracking.
- Deterministic parsing.
- The assumption is that no backtracking is possible/necessary.

- <u>Recursive descent predictive parser</u>
  - A function is defined for each non-terminal symbol.
  - Its predictive nature allows it to choose the right right-hand-side.
  - It recognizes terminal symbols and calls other functions to recognize non-terminal symbols in the chosen right hand side.
  - The parse tree is actually constructed by the nesting of function calls.
  - Very easy to implement.
  - Hard-coded: allows to handle unusual situations.
  - Hard to maintain.

#### <u>Table-driven predictive parser</u>

- A *parsing table* tells the parser which right-hand-side to choose.
- The *driver algorithm* is standard to all parsers.
- Only the table changes when the language changes, the algorithm is universal.
- Easy to maintain.
- The parsing table is hard and error-prone to build for most languages.
- Tools can be used to generate the parsing table.
- Will be covered in next lecture.

# First and Follow sets

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#### First and Follow sets

- When parsing using a certain non-terminal symbol, predictive parsers need to know what right-hand-side to choose, knowing only what is the next token in input.
- If all the right hand sides begin with terminal symbols, the choice is straightforward.
- If some right hand sides begin with non-terminals, the parser must know what token can begin any sequence generated by this non-terminal (i.e. the FIRST set of these non-terminals).
- If a FIRST set contains  $\varepsilon$ , it must know what may follow this non-terminal (i.e. the FOLLOW set of this non-terminal) in order to chose an  $\varepsilon$  production.

FIRST(E) = 
$$\{0,1,(\}$$
  
FIRST(E') =  $\{+, \epsilon\}$   
FIRST(T) =  $\{0,1,(\}$   
FIRST(T') =  $\{*, \epsilon\}$   
FIRST(F) =  $\{0,1,(\}$ 

$$E \rightarrow TE'$$

$$E' \rightarrow +TE' \mid \varepsilon$$

$$T \rightarrow FT'$$

$$T' \rightarrow *FT' \mid \varepsilon$$

$$F \rightarrow 0 \mid 1 \mid (E)$$

Example

#### COMP 442/6421 – Compiler Design

#### Example: Recursive descent predictive parser

$E \rightarrow TE'$ $E' \rightarrow +TE'   \epsilon$ $T \rightarrow FT'$ $T' \rightarrow *FT'   \epsilon$ $F \rightarrow 0   1   (E)$
FIRST(E) = {0,1,(}
$FIRST(E') = \{+, \epsilon\}$
$FIRST(T) = \{0, 1, (\}$
$FIRST(T') = \{*, \epsilon\}$
$FIRST(F) = \{0, 1, (\}$
$FOLLOW(E) = \{\$,\}$
$FOLLOW(E') = \{ \$, \} \}$
$FOLLOW(T) = \{+, \$, \}$
$FOLLOW(T') = \{+, \}, \}$
$FOLLOW(F) = \{*, +, \$, \}$

```
error = false
Parse(){
  lookahead = NextToken()
  if (E();match('$')) return true
  else return false}
E(){
  if (lookahead is in [0,1,(]) //FIRST(TE')
    if (T();E'();)
      write(E->TE')
    else error = true
  else error = true
  return !error}
E'(){
  if (lookahead is in [+])
                                     //FIRST[+TE']
    if (match('+');T();E'())
      write(E'->TE')
    else error = true
  else if (lookahead is in [$,)] //FOLLOW[E'] (epsilon)
    write(E'->epsilon)
  else error = true
  return !error}
T(){
  if (lookahead is in [0,1,(]) //FIRST[FT']
    if (F();T'();)
      write(T->FT')
    else error = true
  else error = true
  return !error}
```

#### COMP 442/6421 – Compiler Design

#### Example: Recursive descent predictive parser

$E \rightarrow TE'$ $E' \rightarrow +TE'   \epsilon$ $T \rightarrow FT'$ $T' \rightarrow *FT'   \epsilon$ $F \rightarrow 0   1   (E)$		
$ETP(T(F)) = \{0, 1, \ell\}$		
$FIRST(E) = \{0, 1, (\}$		
$FIRST(E') = \{+, \epsilon\}$		
$FIRST(T) = \{0, 1, (\}$		
FIRST(T') = $\{*, \epsilon\}$		
$FIRST(F) = \{0,1,(\}$		
$FOLLOW(E) = \{\$,\}$		
$FOLLOW(E') = \{\$, \}$		
$FOLLOW(T) = \{+, \$, \}$		
$FOLLOW(T') = \{+, \}, \}$		
$FOLLOW(F) = \{*, +, \$, \}$		

```
T'(){
  if (lookahead is in [*])
                                     //FIRST[*FT']
    if (match('*');F();T'())
      write(T'->*FT')
    else error = true
  else if (lookahead is in [+,),$] //FOLLOW[T'] (epsilon)
   write(T'->epsilon)
  else error = true
  return !error}
F(){
  if (lookahead is in [0])
                                     //FIRST[0]
    match('0');write(F->0)
  else if (lookahead is in [1])
                                     //FIRST[1]
    match('1');write(F->1)
  else if (lookahead is in [(]) //FIRST[(E)]
    if (match('(');E();match(')'))
      write(F->(E));
    else error = true
  else error = true
  return !error}
}
```

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