

Function Types Can be Polytypes

Recall that `'a`, `'b`, ... represent type variables. That is, any valid type may be substituted for them when checking type correctness.

ML said the type of `append` is

```
val append = fn :  
  'a list * 'a list -> 'a list
```

Why does `'a` appear in three places?

We can define `eitherNull`, a predicate that determines whether either of two lists is null as

```
fun eitherNull(L1,L2) =  
  null(L1) orelse null(L2);  
val eitherNull =  
  fn : 'a list * 'b list -> bool
```

Why are both `'a` and `'b` used in `eitherNull`'s type?

Currying

ML chooses the most general (least-restrictive) type possible for user-defined functions.

Functions are first-class objects, as in Scheme.

The function definition

```
fun f x y = expression;
```

defines a function `f` (of `x`) that returns a function (of `y`).

Reducing multiple argument functions to a sequence of one argument functions is called *currying* (after Haskell Curry, a mathematician who popularized the approach).

Thus

```
fun f x y = x :: [y];  
val f = fn : 'a -> 'a -> 'a list
```

says that `f` takes a parameter `x`, of type `'a`, and returns a function (of `y`, whose type is `'a`) that returns a list of `'a`.

Contrast this with the more conventional

```
fun g(x,y) = x :: [y];  
val g = fn : 'a * 'a -> 'a list
```

Here `g` takes a pair of arguments (each of type `'a`) and returns a value of type `'a list`.

The advantage of currying is that we can bind one argument and leave the remaining argument(s) free.

For example

```
f(1);
```

is a legal call. It returns a function of type

```
fn : int -> int list
```

The function returned is equivalent to

```
fun h b = 1 :: [b];  
val h = fn : int -> int list
```

Map Revisited

ML supports the `map` function, which can be defined as

```
fun map(f,[]) = []
  | map(f,x::y) =
    (f x) :: map(f,y);
val map =
  fn : ('a -> 'b) * 'a list -> 'b list
```

This type says that `map` takes a pair of arguments. One is a function from type `'a` to type `'b`. The second argument is a list of type `'a`. The result is a list of type `'b`.

In curried form `map` is defined as

```
fun map f [] = []
  | map f (x::y) =
    (f x) :: map f y;
val map =
  fn : ('a -> 'b) ->
    'a list -> 'b list
```

This type says that `map` takes one argument that is a function from type `'a` to type `'b`. It returns a function that takes an argument that is a list of type `'a` and returns a list of type `'b`.

The advantage of the curried form of `map` is that we can now use `map` to create “specialized” functions in which the function that is mapped is fixed.

For example,

```
val neg = map not;
val neg =
  fn : bool list -> bool list
neg [true,false,true];
val it = [false,true,false] :
  bool list
```

Power Sets Revisited

Let's compute power sets in ML.

We want a function `pow` that takes a list of values, viewed as a set, and which returns a list of lists. Each sublist will be one of the possible subsets of the original argument.

For example,

```
pow [1,2] = [[1,2],[1],[2],[]]
```

We first define a version of `cons` in curried form:

```
fun cons h t = h::t;
val cons = fn :
  'a -> 'a list -> 'a list
```

Now we define `pow`. We define the powerset of the empty list, `[]`, to be `[[]]`. That is, the power set of the empty set is set that contains only the empty set.

For a non-empty list, consisting of `h::t`, we compute the power set of `t`, which we call `pset`. Then the power set for `h::t` is just `h` distributed through `pset` appended to `pset`.

We distribute `h` through `pset` very elegantly: we just map the function `(cons h)` to `pset`. `(cons h)` adds `h` to the head of any list it is given. Thus mapping `(cons h)` to `pset` adds `h` to *all* lists in `pset`.

The complete definition is simply

```
fun pow [] = [[]]
| pow (h::t) =
  let
    val pset = pow t
  in
    (map (cons h) pset) @ pset
  end;
val pow =
  fn : 'a list -> 'a list list
```

Let's trace the computation of
`pow [1,2]`.

Here `h = 1` and `t = [2]`. We need to
compute `pow [2]`.

Now `h = 2` and `t = []`.

We know `pow [] = [[]]`,

so `pow [2] =`

```
(map (cons 2) [[]])@[] =
([ [2] ])@[] = [ [2], [] ]
```

Therefore `pow [1,2] =`

```
(map (cons 1) ([ [2], [] ]))
@[] =
[[ [1,2], [1] ] ]@[] =
[[ [1,2], [1], [2], [] ] ]
```

Composing Functions

We can define a composition function
that composes two functions into
one:

```
fun comp (f,g)(x) = f(g(x));
val comp = fn :
('a -> 'b) * ('c -> 'a) ->
  'c -> 'b
```

In curried form we have

```
fun comp f g x = f(g(x));
val comp = fn :
('a -> 'b) ->
('c -> 'a) -> 'c -> 'b
```

For example,

```
fun sqr x:int = x*x;
val sqr = fn : int -> int
comp sqr sqr;
val it = fn : int -> int
```

```
comp sqr sqr 3;
```

```
val it = 81 : int
```

In SMP `o` (lower-case O) is the infix
composition operator.

Hence

```
sqr o sqr ≡ comp sqr sqr
```

Lambda Terms

ML needs a notation to write down unnamed (anonymous) functions, similar to the lambda expressions Scheme uses.

That notation is

```
fn arg => body;
```

For example,

```
val sqr = fn x:int => x*x;
```

```
val sqr = fn : int -> int
```

In fact the notation used to define functions,

```
fun name arg = body;
```

is actually just an abbreviation for the more verbose

```
val name = fn arg => body;
```

An anonymous function can be used wherever a function value is needed.

For example,

```
map (fn x => [x]) [1,2,3];
```

```
val it =
```

```
[[1],[2],[3]] : int list list
```

We can use patterns too:

```
(fn [] => []
```

```
  |(h::t) => h::h::t);
```

```
val it = fn : 'a list -> 'a list
```

(What does this function do?)

Polymorphism vs. Overloading

ML supports polymorphism.

A function may accept a polytype (a set of types) rather than a single fixed type.

In all cases, the same function definition is used. Details of the supplied type are irrelevant and may be ignored.

For example,

```
fun id x = x;
```

```
val id = fn : 'a -> 'a
```

```
fun toList x = [x];
```

```
val toList = fn : 'a -> 'a list
```

Overloading, as in C++ and Java, allows alternative definitions of the same method or operator, with selection based on type.

Thus in Java + may represent integer addition, floating point addition or string concatenation, even though these are really rather different operations.

In ML +, -, * and = are overloaded.

When = is used (to test equality), ML deduces that an *equality type* is required. (Most, but not all, types can be compared for equality).

When ML decides an equality type is needed, it uses a type variable that begins with two tics rather than one.

```
fun eq(x,y) = (x=y);
```

```
val eq = fn : 'a * 'a -> bool
```

Defining New Types in ML

We can create new names for existing types (type abbreviations) using

```
type id = def;
```

For example,

```
type triple = int*real*string;
type triple = int * real * string
type rec1 =
  {a:int,b:real,c:string};
type rec1 =
  {a:int, b:real, c:string}
type 'a triple3 = 'a*'a*'a;
type 'a triple3 = 'a * 'a * 'a
type intTriple = int triple3;
type intTriple = int triple3
```

These type definitions are essentially macro-like name substitutions.

The Datatype Mechanism

New types are defined using the **datatype** mechanism, which specifies new data *value constructors*.

For example,

```
datatype color =
  red|blue|green;
datatype color =
  blue | green | red
```

Pattern matching works on user-defined types using their constructors:

```
fun translate red = "rot"
  | translate blue = "blau"
  | translate green = "gruen";
val translate =
  fn : color -> string
```

```
fun jumble red = blue
  | jumble blue = green
  | jumble green = red;
val jumble = fn : color -> color
translate (jumble green);
val it = "rot" : string
```

SML Examples

Source code for most of the SML examples presented here may be found in

`~cs538-1/public/sml/class.sml`

Parameterized Constructors

The constructors used to define data types may be parameterized:

```
datatype money =
  none
  | coin of int
  | bill of int
  | iou of real * string;
datatype money =
  bill of int | coin of int
  | iou of real * string | none
```

Now expressions like `coin(25)` or `bill(5)` or `iou(10.25,"Andy")` represent valid values of type **money**.

We can also define values and functions of type `money`:

```
val dime = coin(10);
val dime = coin 10 : money
val deadbeat =
  iou(25.00,"Homer Simpson");
val deadbeat =
  iou (25.0,"Homer Simpson") :
  money
fun amount(none) = 0.0
|  amount(coin(cents)) =
  real(cents)/100.0
|  amount(bill(dollars)) =
  real(dollars)
|  amount(iou(amt,_)) =
  0.5*amt;
val amount = fn : money -> real
```