Exploring Languages with Interpreters and Functional Programming Chapter 19

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Browser Advisory: The HTML version of this textbook requires a browser that supports the display of MathML. A good choice as of October 2020 is a recent version of Firefox from Mozilla.

19 Systematic Generalization

19.1 Chapter Introduction

This chapter is incomplete!

TODO: Write missing sections

- Cleanup function generalization description
- Add eager evaluated version of merge4b, perhaps rename coseq
- Complete sequential file update example
- Update code and include link Conseq.hs

19.2 SCV Analysis

In a previous chapter, we examined *families* of related functions to define generic, higher-order functions to capture the computational pattern for each family. In this chapter, we approach *function generalization* more systematically.

The systematic function generalization approach begins with a prototype member of the potential family. As in similar techniques for building object-oriented software frameworks, we apply *Scope-Commonality-Variability (SCV) analysis* [Coplien 1998] to the potential family represented by this prototype and produce four outputs.

- 1. *scope*: the boundaries of the family. That is, we identify what we should address and what we can ignore, what is in the family and what is not.
- 2. *terminology*: the definitions of the specialized terms, or concepts, relevant to the family.
- 3. *commonalities*: the aspects of the family that do not change from one member to another. We seek to reuses these among family members. We sometimes call these the *frozen spots*.
- 4. *variabilities*: the aspects of the family that may vary from one member to another. We sometimes call these the *hot spots*.

In SCV analysis, we must seek to identify all the implicit assumptions about elements in the family. These implicit assumptions need to be made explicit in family's design and implementation.

19.3 Function Generalization

Once we have the above, we incrementally transform the prototype function for each of the hot spots.

A generalizing transformation may replace specific values or data types at a hot spot by parameters. We may make a type more abstract, perhaps making it polymorphic. Or we may break a type into several types if it plays potentially different roles. Similarly, a generalizing transformation may replace fixed, specialized operations at a hot spot by abstract operations. We may make an abstract operation a higher-order parameter of the generalized function.

19.4 Developing a Cosequential Processing Family

19.4.1 Scope

Cosequential processing concerns the coordinated processing of two ordered sequences to produce some result, often a third ordered sequence. Key requirements include:

- Both input sequences must be ordered according to the same total ordering.
- The processing should be incremental, where only a few elements of each sequence (perhaps just one) are examined at a time.

This important family includes the ascending merge needed in merge sort, set and bag operations, and sequential file update applications.

Consider a function **merge0** that takes two ascending sequences of integers and merges them together to form a third ascending sequence.

The merge0 function must satisfy a number of properties:

- Precondition: The two input lists must be in ascending order.
- *Postcondition*: The output list must also be in ascending order. The number of times an element appears in the output list is the maximum number of times it appears within one of the two input lists.
- *Termination*: The sum of the lengths of the two input sequences must decrease by at least one for each call of the recursive function.

For the cosequential processing family, let take function **merge0** as the prototype member.

Aside: The merge0 function differs from the merge function we used in merge sort in a previous chapter. For merge sort, the x == y leg would need to remove the head of only one of the input lists, i.e. be defined as either x : merge0 xs' ys or x : merge0 xs ys'.

19.4.2 Frozen spots

Considering the scope and examining the prototype function **merge0**, we identify the following frozen spots for the family of functions:

- 1. The input consists of two sequences ordered by the same total ordering.
- 2. The output consists of a sequence ordered by the same total ordering as the input sequences.
- 3. The processing is incremental. Each step examines the current element from each input sequence and advances at least one of the input sequences for subsequent steps.
- 4. Each step compares the current elements from the input sequences to determine what action to take at that step.

The merge function represents the frozen spots of the family. It gives the common behavior of family members and the relationships among the various elements of the hot spot subsystems.

A *hot spot subsystem* consists of a set of Haskell functions, types, and class definitions that add the desired variability into the merge function.

19.4.3 Hot spots

Again considering the scope and examining the prototype function **merge0**, we can identify the following hot spots:

- 1. Variability in the total ordering used for the input and output sequences, i.e. of the comparison operators and input sequence type.
- 2. The ability to have more complex data entities in the input and output sequences, i.e. variability in "record" format.
- 3. The ability to vary the input and output sequence structures independently of each other.
- 4. Variability in the transformations applied to the data as it passes into the output.
- 5. Variability in the sources of the input sequences and destination of the output sequence.

We need to be careful to avoid enumerating hot spots that are unlikely to be needed in an application.

Now let's analyze each hot spot, design a hot spot subsystem, and carry out the appropriate transformations to generalize the Haskell program.

19.4.4 Hot spot #1: Variability in total ordering

In the function merge0, the input and output sequences are restricted to elements of type Int and the comparison operations, hence, to the integer comparisons.

The responsibility associated with hot spot #1 is to enable the base type of the sequences to be any type upon which an appropriate ordering is defined. In this transformation, we still consider all three sequences as containing simple values of the same type.

We can generalize the function to take and return sequences of any ordered type by making the type of the list polymorphic. Using a type variable **a**, we can redefine the type signature to be **[a]**.

However, we need to constrain type **a** to be a type for which an appropriate total ordering is defined. We do this by requiring that the type be restricted to those in the predefined Haskell type class **Ord**. This class consists of the group of types for which all six relational operators are defined.

The function resulting from generalization step is merge1.

This function represents the frozen spots of the cosequential processing framework. The implementation of class **Ord** used in a program is hot spot #1. To satisfy the requirement represented by frozen spot #1, we require that the two lists xs and ys be in ascending order.

Note that, if we restrict merge1 polymorphic type a to Int, then:

merge1 xs ys == merge0 xs ys

That is, the generic function merge1 can be *specialized* to be equivalent to merge0.

19.4.5 Hot spot #2: Variability in record format

The merge1 function works with sequences of any type that have appropriate comparison operators defined. This allows the elements to be of some built-in type such as Int or String or some user-defined type that has been declared as an instance of the Ord class. Thus each individual data item is of a single type.

In general, however, applications in this family will need to work with data elements that have more complex structures. We refer to these more complex structures as *records* in the general sense, not just the Haskell data structure by that name.

The responsibility associated with hot spot #2 is to enable the elements of the sequences to be values with more complex structures, i.e. records. Each record is composed of one or more fields of which some subset defines the key. The value of the key provides the information for ordering the records within that sequence.

In this transformation, we still consider all three sequences as containing simple values of the same type. We abstract the key as a function on the record type that returns a value of some **Ord** type to enable the needed comparisons. We transform the merge1 function by adding key as a higher-order parameter.

The function resulting from this generalization is merge2.

The higher-order parameter key represents hot spot #2 in the generalized function design.

Hot spot #1 is the implementation of Haskell class **Ord** for values of type **b**.

To satisfy the requirement represented by frozen spot #1, the sequence of keys corresponding to each input sequence, i.e. map key xs and map key ys, must be in ascending order.

Also note that

merge2 id xs ys == merge1 xs ys

where id is the identity function. Thus merge1 is a specialization of merge2.

19.4.6 Hot spot #3: Independent variability of sequences

In merge2, the records are of the same type in all three sequences. The key extraction function is also the same for all sequences.

Some cosequential processing applications, however, require that the record structure vary among the sequences. For example, the sequential file update application usually involves a master file and a transaction file as the inputs and a new master file as the output. The master records and transaction records usually carry different information.

The responsibility associated with hot spot #3 is to enable the three sequences to be varied independently. That is, the records in one sequence may differ in

structure from the records in the others.

This requires separate key extraction functions for the two input sequences. These must, however, still return key values from the same total ordering. Because the data types for the two input sequences may differ and both may differ from the output data type, we must introduce record transformation functions that convert the input data types to the output types.

The function resulting from the transformation is merge3.

Higher-order parameters kx and ky are the *key* extraction functions for the first and second inputs, respectively. Similarly, tx and ty are the corresponding functions to *transform* those inputs to the output.

Hot spot #3 consists of these four functions. In some sense, this transformation subsumes hot spot #2.

To avoid repetition of the many unchanging arguments in the recursive calls, the definition of merge3 uses an auxiliary function definition mg.

The nonrecursive legs use the higher-order library function map. To satisfy the requirement represented by frozen spot #1, the sequence of keys corresponding to each input sequence, i.e. map kx xs and map ky ys, must be in ascending order.

If xs and ys are of the same type, then it is true that:

merge3 key key id id xs ys == merge2 key xs ys

Thus merge2 is a specialization of merge3.

19.4.7 Hot spot #4: Variability in sequence transformations

Function merge3 enabled simple one-to-one, record-by-record transformations of the input sequences to create the output sequence. Such simple transformations are not sufficient for practical situations.

For example, in the sequential file update application, each key may be associated with no more than one record in the master file. However, there may be any number of update transactions that must be performed against a master record before the new master record can be output. Thus, there needs to be some local state maintained throughout the processing of all the transaction records associated with one master record.

Before we address the issue of this variation directly, let us generalize the merge function to make the state that currently exists (i.e. the evolving output list) explicit in the parameter list.

To do this, we replace the backward linear recursive merge3 function by its *tail* recursive generalization. That is, we add an accumulating parameter ss that is used to collects the output during the recursive calls and then to generate the final output when the end of an input sequence is reached.

The initial value of this argument is normally a nil list, but it does enable some other initial value to be prepended to the output list. This transformation is shown as function merge4a below.

Note that the following holds:

merge4a kx ky tx ty ss xs ys == ss ++ merge3 kx ky tx ty xs ys

Thus function merge3 is a specialization of merge4a.

Unfortunately, building up the state ss requires a relatively expensive appending to the end of a list (e.g. ss ++ [tx x] in the third leg).

Now consider hot spot #4 more explicitly. The responsibility associated with the hot spot is to enable the use of more general transformations on the input sequences to produce the output sequence.

To accomplish this, we introduce an explicit *state* to record the relevant aspects of the computation to some position in the two input sequences. Each call of the merge function can examine the current values from the input sequences and update the value of the state appropriately for the next call.

In some sense, the merge function "folds" together the values from the two input sequences to compute the state. At the end of both input sequences, the merge function then transforms the state into the output sequence. To accomplish this, we can generalize merge4a. We generalize the accumulating parameter ss in merge4a to be a parameter s that represents the state. We also replace the two simple record-to-record transformation functions tx and ty by more flexible transformation functions tl, te, and tg, that update the state in the three guards of the recursive leg and functions tty and ttx that update the state when the first and second input sequences, respectively, become empty.

For the "equals" guard, the amount that the input sequences are advanced also becomes dependent upon the state of the computation. This is abstracted as functions **nex** on the first input sequence and **ney** on the second. To satisfy the requirement represented by frozen spot #3, the pair of functions **nex** and **ney** must make the following progress requirement true for each call of **mg**:

```
if (kx x == ky y) then
    (length (nex s xs) < length xs) ||
    (length (ney s ys) < length ys)
else True</pre>
```

That is, the client of the framework must ensure that at least one of the input sequences will be advanced by at least one element. We also introduce the new function **res** to take the final state of the computation and return the output sequence.

The above transformation results in function merge4b.

```
merge4b :: Ord d => (a -> d) -> (b -> d) -> -- kx, ky
                       (e \rightarrow a \rightarrow b \rightarrow e) \rightarrow -- tl
                       (e \rightarrow a \rightarrow b \rightarrow e) \rightarrow -- te
                       (e \rightarrow a \rightarrow b \rightarrow e) \rightarrow -- tq
                       (e -> [a] -> [a]) ->
                                                   -- nex
                       (e -> [b] -> [b]) ->
                                                   -- ney
                       (e -> a -> e) ->
                                                   --ttx
                       (e -> b -> e) ->
                                                   --tty
                       (e -> [c]) -> e ->
                                                   -- res, s
                       [a] -> [b] -> [c]
                                                   -- xs, ys
merge4b kx ky tl te tg nex ney ttx tty res s xs ys
    = mg s xs ys
    where
                           = res (foldl tty s ys)
         mg s [] ys
                           = res (foldl ttx s xs)
         mg s xs []
         mg s xs@(x:xs') ys@(y:ys')
              | kx x < ky y = mg (tl s x y) xs' ys
              | kx x == ky y = mg (te s x y) (nex s xs) (ney s ys)
              | kx x > ky y = mg (tg s x y) xs ys
```

The function uses the Prelude function foldl in the first two legs. This function continues the computation beginning with the state computed by the recursive leg and processes the remainder of the nonempty input sequence by "folding" the remaining elements as defined in the functions ttx and tty.

As was the case for merge3, frozen spot #1 requires that map kx xs and map ky ys be in ascending order for calls to merge4b.

Hot spot #4 consists of the eight functions tl, te, tg, ttx, tty, nex, ney, and res. The following property also holds:

```
merge4b kx ky
    (\s x y \rightarrow ss ++ [tx x]) -- tl
    (\ss x y -> ss ++ [tx x]) -- te
    (\s x y \rightarrow ss ++ [ty y]) -- tg
    (\ss xs -> tail xs)
                             -- nex
    (\ss ys -> tail ys)
                               -- nev
    (\ss x -> ss ++ [x])
                               --ttx
    (\ss y -> ss ++ [y])
                               --tty
                               -- res, ss, xs, ys
    id ss xs ys
== merge4a kx ky tx ty ss xs ys
== ss ++ merge3 kx ky tx ty xs ys
```

That is, we can define the general transformation functions so that they have the same effect as the record-to-record transformations of merge4a. The statement of this property uses the anonymous functions (lambda expression) feature of Haskell.

Thus function merge3 is a specialization of merge4a, which in turn is a specialization of function merge4b.

A problem with the above "implementation" of merge3 is that the merge4b parameters t1, te, tg, ttx, and tty all involve an expensive operation to append to the end of the list ss.

An alternative would be to build the state sequence in reverse order and then reverse the result as shown below.

```
merge4b kx ky
    (\s x y \rightarrow reverse (tx x) ++ ss) -- tl
    (\ss x y \rightarrow reverse (tx x) ++ ss) -- tl
    (\s x y \rightarrow reverse (ty y) ++ ss) -- tq
    (\ss xs -> tail xs)
                                           -- nex
    (\ss ys -> tail ys)
                                           -- ney
    (\s x \rightarrow x : ss)
                                           --ttx
    (\ss y -> y : ss)
                                           --tty
                                           -- res, ss, xs, ys
    reverse ss xs ys
== merge4a kx ky tx ty ss xs ys
== ss ++ merge3 kx ky tx ty xs ys
```

TODO: Possibly include a version with selective eager evaluation (similar to below) and rename coseq.

merge4c :: Ord d => $(a \rightarrow d) \rightarrow (b \rightarrow d) \rightarrow -- kx$, ky (e -> a -> b -> e) -> -- tl

```
(e \rightarrow a \rightarrow b \rightarrow e) \rightarrow
                                                    -- te
                                                    --tq
                        (e \rightarrow a \rightarrow b \rightarrow e) \rightarrow
                        (e -> [a] -> [a]) ->
                                                    -- nex
                        (e -> [b] -> [b]) ->
                                                    -- ney
                        (e -> a -> e) ->
                                                    --ttx
                        (e \rightarrow b \rightarrow e) \rightarrow
                                                    --tty
                        (e -> [c]) -> e ->
                                                    -- res, s
                        [a] -> [b] -> [c]
                                                    -- xs, ys
merge4b kx ky tl te tg nex ney ttx tty res s xs ys
         = mg s xs ys
    where
                             = res (foldl tty s ys)
         mg s [] ys
         mg s xs []
                             = res (foldl ttx s xs)
         mg s xs@(x:xs') ys@(y:ys')
              | kx x < ky y = (mg \$! (tl s x y)) xs' ys
              | kx x == ky y = (mg \$! (te s x y)) ((nex \$! s) xs)
                                                         ((ney $! s) ys)
              | kx x > ky y = (mg $! (tg s x y)) xs ys'
```

19.4.8 Hot spot #5 :Variability of sequence source/destination

Hot spot #5 concerns the ability to take the input sequences from many possible sources and to direct the output to many possible destinations.

In the Haskell merge functions, these sequences are represented as the pervasive polymorphic list data type. The redirection is simply a matter of writing appropriate functions to produce the input lists and to consume its output list. No changes are needed to the merge4b function itself.

Of course, for any expressions (e.g. function calls) ex and ey that generate the input sequence arguments xs and ys of merge4b, it must be the case that sequences map kx ex and map ky ey are ascending.

19.4.9 Bag and set operation implementations

TODO: Possibly reexpress some of the lambdas above with standard combinators.

Mathematically, a *bag* (also called a *multiset*) is an unordered collection of elements in which each element may occur one or more times. We can model a bag as a total function (called the *multiplicity function*) over the domain of elements to the natural numbers where the numbers 0 and above denote the number of occurrences of the element in the bag.

A set is thus a bag for which there is no more than one occurrence of any element.

If we restrict the elements to a Haskell data type that is an instance of class **Ord**, we can represent a bag by an ascending list of values and a set by an increasing list of values. With this representation, we can implement the bag an set operations as special cases of cosequential processing.

The *intersection* of two bags consists of only the elements that occur in both bags such that the number of occurrences is the minimum number for the two input bags. We can express the bag intersection of two ascending lists in terms of merge4b as follows.

```
bagIntersect xs ys =
   merge4b id id
      (\s x y -> s)
      (\s x y -> x:s)
      (\s x y -> x:s)
      (\s xs -> tail xs)
      (\s ys -> tail ys)
      (\s y -> s)
      (\s y -> s)
      (\s y -> s)
      (\s y -> s)
      (\s y -> s)
```

This function only adds an element to the output when it occurs in both input lists.

If we require the two input lists to be increasing, the above also implements set intersection.

The *sum* of two bags consists of the elements that occur in either bag such that the number of occurrences is the total number for both bags. We can express the bag sum of two ascending lists in terms of merge4b as follows.

```
bagSum xs ys =
   merge4b id id
        (\s x y -> x:s)
        (\s x y -> x:y:s)
        (\s x y -> y:s)
        (\s xs -> tail xs)
        (\s ys -> tail ys)
        (\s y -> x:s)
        (\s y -> y:s)
        reverse [] xs ys
```

The *union* of two bags consists of the elements that occur in either bag such that the number of occurrences is the minimum number in the two input lists. The prototype function merge0 implements this operation on ascending lists.

The *subtraction* of bag B from bag A, denoted A - B, consists of only the elements that occur in both bags such that the number of occurrences is the number of occurrences in A minus those in B.

Questions:

- How can we represent set union in terms of merge4b?
- How can we represent a merge function that can be used in the merge sort of two lists (whose elements are from an instance of class **Ord**)?

- How can we implement a bag union function bagUnion in terms of merge4b?
- How can we implement a bag subtraction function bagSub xs ys in terms of merge4b?
- If the elements of the input lists are not instances of class Ord, how can we implement bag union? bag intersection?

19.4.10 Sequential file update algorithm

TODO: Describe this!?

```
-- Simple Master-Transaction Update
-- Master increasing list [(Account, Amount)]
-- with Account < maxAccount
-- Transaction ascending list [(Account, Amount)]
   with Account < maxAccount
-- Result is new Master increasing list [(Account, Amount)]
-- with Account < maxAccount
type Account = Int
type Amount = Integer
seqUpdate :: [(Account, Amount)] -> [(Account, Amount)]
             -> [(Account,Amount)]
seqUpdate = merge4c fst
                               fst
                    masterlt mastereq mastergt
                    masternext transnext
                    notrans
                              nomaster
                    getResult initState
initState = ([],[])
maxAccount = maxBound :: Account
masterlt (out,[])
                    m t = (m:out,[])
    -- no transactions for this master
masterlt (out,[cur]) m t = (cur:out,[])
    -- processed all transactions for this master
mastereq (out,[])
                         (ma,mb) (_,tc)
    = (out, [(ma,mb+tc)]) -- first transaction
mastereq (out,[(sa,sb)]) (_,_)
                               (_,tc)
    = (out, [(sa,sb+tc)]) -- subsequent transaction
mastergt (_,_) m t
    = error ("Transactions not ascending at " ++ show t)
```

```
masternext (_,_) ms = ms -- do not advance master on eq
transnext (_,_) ts = let ys = tail ts
                      in if null ys then [(maxAccount,0)] else ys
                      -- advance transaction on eq
                      -- force master with final (maxAccount,0)
notrans (out,[])
                    m = (m:out, [])
notrans (out,[cur]) m = (m:cur:out,[])
nomaster ([],[]) t -- only for empty master list
    = error ("Unmatched transaction " ++ show t)
nomaster (out,[]) (maxInt, ) -- transaction list ended
    = (out,[])
nomaster
                  t.
    = error ("Unmatched transaction " ++ show t)
getResult (nms,[]) = reverse nms
```

19.4.11 Recap

This case study illustrates the function generalization method. It begins with a simple Haskell program to merge two ascending lists of integers into third ascending list of integers. This program is generalized in a step by step fashion to produce a new program that is capable of carrying out any operation from the family of cosequential processing programs.

Although some members of the cosequential processing family can be rather complicated, the family has the characteristic that the primary driver for the algorithm can be concisely stated as a simple loop (i.e. recursive function).

19.5 What Next?

TODO

19.6 Exercises

TODO

19.7 Acknowledgements

In Summer 2016, I adapted and revised the discussion of function generalization from my and Pallavi Tadepalli's paper "Using Function Generalization to Design a Cosequential Processing Framework" [Cunningham 2006a] to form partial Chapter 6, Developing Functional Programs, in the 2017 version of this textbook. (Paper [Cunningham 2006b] present similar work by me, Yi Liu, and Pallavi Tadepalli.)

In Summer 2018, I repurposed the partial Developing Functional Programs chapter and made it Chapter 19, Systematic Generalization, in the 2018 version of the textbook, now titled *Exploring Languages with Interpreters and Functional Programming*.

I maintain this chapter as text in Pandoc's dialect of Markdown using embedded LaTeX markup for the mathematical formulas and then translate the document to HTML, PDF, and other forms as needed.

19.8 References

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19.9 Terms and Concepts

TODO