CS 314: Principles of Programming Languages

Lets, Tuples, Records

Let Expressions

- Enable binding variables in other expressions
  - These are different from the `let` *definitions* we've been using at the top-level
- They are expressions, so they have a value

- Syntax
  - `let x = e1 in e2`
  - ***x*** is a *bound variable*
  - ***e1*** is the *binding expression*
  - ***e2*** is the *body expression*

Let Expressions

- Syntax
  - **`let`** ***x*** **`=`** ***e1*** **`in`** ***e2***

- Evaluation
  - Evaluate ***e1*** to ***v1***
  - Substitute ***v1*** for ***x*** in ***e2*** yielding new expression ***e2'***
  - Evaluate ***e2'*** to ***v2***
  - Result of evaluation is ***v2***

Example

```
let x = 3+4 in 3*x
➢let x = 7 in 3*x
➢3*7
➢21
```

Let Expressions

- Syntax
  - `let` ***x*** `=` ***e1*** `in` ***e2***

- Type checking
  - If ***e1*** : ***t1*** and ***e2*** : ***t*** (assuming ***x*** : ***t1***)
  - Then `let` ***x*** `=` ***e1*** `in` ***e2*** : ***t***

- Example: `let x = 3+27 in x*3`
  - `3+27 : int`
  - `x*3 : int` (assuming `x:int`)
  - so `let x = 3+27 in x*3 : int`

Let Definitions vs. Let Expressions

- At the top-level, we write
  - `let x = e;;` (* no `in e2` part *)
  - This is called a let *definition*, not a let *expression*
    - Because it doesn't, itself, evaluate to anything

- Omitting in means "from now on":

```
# let pi = 3.14;;
```

(* pi is now *bound* in the rest of the top-level scope *)

Top-level expressions

- We can write any expression at top-level, too
  - ***e*;;**
  - This says to evaluate ***e*** and then ignore the result
    - Equivalent to **let _ = *e*;;**
    - Useful when ***e*** has a side effect, such as reading/writing a file, printing to the screen, etc.

```
let x = 37;;
let y = x + 5;;
print_int y;;
print_string "\n";;
```

- When run, outputs **42** to the screen

Let Expressions: Scope

- In **let** ***x*** **=** ***e1*** **in** ***e2***, variable ***x*** is *not* visible outside of ***e2***

```
let pi = 3.14 in pi *. 3.0 *. 3.0;;
print_float pi;;
```

error: **pi** not bound

bind **pi** (only) in body of **let** (which is **pi *. 3.0 *. 3.0**)

Binding in other languages

- Compare to similar usage in Java/C

```
let pi = 3.14 in
  pi *. 3.0 *. 3.0;;
pi;; (* pi unbound! *)
```

```
{
  float pi = 3.14;

  pi * 3.0 * 3.0;
}
pi; /* pi unbound! */
```

Examples – Scope of Let bindings

- x;;
  - (* Unbound value x *)
- let x = 1 in x + 1;;
  - (* 2 *)
- let x = x in x + 1;;
  - (* Unbound value x *)

Examples – Scope of Let bindings

- let x = 1 in (x + 1 + x) ;;
  - (* 3 *)
- (let x = 1 in x + 1) ;; x;;
  - (* Unbound value x *)
- let x = 4 in(let x = x + 1 in x);;
  - (* 5 *)

Second binding of x *shadows* the first

Shadowing Names

- Shadowing is rebinding a name in an inner scope to have a different meaning
  - May or may not be allowed by the language

C

```c
int i;

void f(float i) {
   {
      char *i = NULL;
      ...
   }
}
```

Java

```java
void h(int i) {
   {
      float i; // not allowed
      ...
   }
}
```

OCaml

```ocaml
let x = 3;;
let g x = x + 3;;
```

Shadowing, by the Semantics

- Evaluation of `let` ***x*** `=` ***e1*** `in` ***e2***:
  - Evaluate ***e1*** to ***v1*** then **substitute** ***v1*** **for** ***x*** **in** ***e2*** yielding new expression ***e2'*** …
- What if ***e2*** is also a `let` for ***x*** ?
  - Substitution will **stop** at the ***e2*** of a shadowing ***x***

Example

```
let x = 3+4 in let x = 3*x in x+1
➢let x = 7 in let x = 3*x in x+1
➢let x = 3*7 in x+1
➢let x = 21 in x+1
➢21+1
➢22
```

Not substituted, since it is shadowed by the inner let

Let Expressions in Functions

- You can use let inside of functions for local vars

```
let area r =
  let pi = 3.14 in
  pi *. r *. r
```

  – And you can use many lets in sequence

```
let area d =
  let pi = 3.14 in
  let r = d /. 2.0 in
  pi *. r *. r
```

- This is good style: more readable with lets than without

```
let area_bad d =
  3.14 *. (d /. 2.0) *. (d /. 2.0)
```

Shadowing (of Locals) Discouraged

- You can use shadowing to simulate mutation (variable update)

```
let rec f x n =
  if x = 0 then 1
  else
    let x = x - 1 in (* shadowed *)
    n * (f x n)
```

- But avoiding shadowing can be clearer, so we recommend not using it
  – With no shadowing, if you see a variable x, you know it hasn't been "changed," no matter where it appears
  – if you want to "update" n, use a new name n1, n', etc.

Nested Let Expressions

- Uses of let can be nested in OCaml
  - Nested bound variables (**pi** and **r**) invisible outside
- Similar scoping possibilities C and Java

```
let res =
  (let area =
    (let pi = 3.14 in
    let r = 3.0 in
    pi *. r *. r) in
  area /. 2.0);;
```

```
float res;
{ float area;
  { float pi = 3.14
    float r = 3.0;
    area = pi * r * r;
  }
  res = area / 2.0;
}
```

Nested Let Style: Generally Avoid

- Oftentimes a nested binding can be rewritten in a more linear style
  - Easier to understand
- Can go too far: namespace pollution
  - Avoiding adding unnecessary variable bindings to top-level

```
let res =
   (let area =
      (let pi = 3.14 in
     let r = 3.0 in
     pi *. r *. r) in
   area /. 2.0);;
```

```
let res =
   let pi = 3.14 in
   let r = 3.0 in
   let area = pi *. r *. r in
   area /. 2.0;;
```

```
let pi = 3.14;;
let r = 3.0;;
let area = pi *. r *. r;;
let res = area /. 2.0;;
```

Quiz 1

Which of these is **not** an expression that evaluates to 3?

A. `let x=3`
B. `let x=2 in x+1`
C. `let x=3 in x`
D. `3`

Quiz 1

Which of these is **not** an expression that evaluates to 3?

A. `let x=3` ---> not an expression

B. `let x=2 in x+1`

C. `let x=3 in x`

D. `3`

Quiz 2: What does this evaluate to?

```
let x = 2 in
x = 3
```

A. 3
B. 2
C. true
D. false

Quiz 2: What does this evaluate to?

```
let x = 2 in
x = 3
```

A. 3
B. 2
C. true
D. false

Quiz 3: What does this evaluate to?

```
let x = 3 in
let y = x+2 in
let x = 8 in
x+y
```

A. 13
B. 8
C. 11
D. 18

Quiz 3: What does this evaluate to?

```
let x = 3 in
let y = x+2 in
let x = 8 in
x+y
```

A. 13
B. 8
C. 11
D. 18

`let` Specializes `match`

More general form of let allows patterns:

- **`let`** ***p*** **`=`** ***e1*** **`in`** ***e2***
  - where ***p*** is a pattern. If ***e1*** fails to match that pattern then an exception is thrown

This pattern form of **`let`** is equivalent to

- **`match`** ***e1*** **`with`** ***p*** **`->`** ***e2***

Examples

- `let [x] = [1] in 1::x  (* evaluates to [1;1] *)`
- `let h::_ = [1;2;3] in h (* evaluates to 1 *)`
- `let () = print_int 5 in 3 (* evaluates to 3 *)`

Tuples

- Constructed using `(e1, …, en)`
- Deconstructed using pattern matching
  - Patterns involve parens and commas, e.g., `(p1, p2, …)`
- Tuples are similar to C structs
  - But without field labels
  - Allocated on the heap
- Tuples can be heterogenous
  - Unlike lists, which must be homogenous
  - `(1, ["string1";"string2"])` is a valid tuple

Tuple Types

- Tuple types use * to separate components
  - Type joins types of its components
- Examples
  - (1, 2) : int * int
  - (1, "string", 3.5) : int * string * float
  - (1, ["a"; "b"], 'c') : int * string list * char
  - [(1,2)] : (int * int) list
  - [(1, 2); (3, 4)] : (int * int) list
  - [(1,2); (1,2,3)] : *error*

Because the first list element has type int * int, but the second has type int * int * int – list elements must all be of the same type

Pattern Matching Tuples

```
# let plusThree t =
  match t with
   (x, y, z) -> x + y + z;;
plusThree : int*int*int -> int = <fun>

# let plusThree' (x, y, z) = x + y + z;;
plusThree' : int*int*int -> int = <fun>

# let addOne (x, y, z) = (x+1, y+1, z+1);;
addOne : int*int*int -> int*int*int = <fun>

# plusThree (addOne (3, 4, 5));;
- : int = 15
```

Remember, **semicolon** for lists, **comma** for tuples

- `[1, 2] = [(1, 2)]` *which is a list of size one*
- `[1; 2]` *a list of size two*

Tuples Are A Fixed Size

- This OCaml definition
  - ```
    # let foo x = match x with
      | (a, b) -> a + b
      | (a, b, c) -> a + b + c;;
    ```
- Would yield this error message
  - This pattern matches values of type 'a * 'b * 'c but is here used to match values of type 'd * 'e
- Tuples of different size have different types
    ```

Records

- Records: identify elements by name
  - Elements of a tuple are identified by position

- Define a record type before defining record values

```
type date = { month: string; day: int; year: int }
```

- Construct a record
  - `{ f1=e1; …; fn=en }` : evaluates ***e1*** to ***en***, assigns results to the given fields
    - Fields do not have to be written in order

```
# let today = { day=4; year=2021; month="f"^"eb" };;
today : date = { day=4; year=2021; month="feb" };;
```

Destructing Records

```
type date = { month: string; day: int; year: int }
let today = { day=4; year=2021; month="feb" };;
```

- Access by field name or pattern matching

```
print_string today.month;; (* prints feb *)
(* patterns *)
let { month=_; day=d } = today in
let { year } = today in
let _ = print_int d in    (* prints 4 *)
print_int year;;          (* prints 2021 *)
```

- Notes:
  - In record patterns, you can skip or reorder fields
  - You can use the field name as the bound variable

Quiz 4: What does this evaluate to?

```
let get (a,b) = a+b in
get 1 2
```

A. 3
B. 2
C. 1
D. type error

Quiz 4: What does this evaluate to?

```
let get (a,b) = a+b in
get 1 2
```

A. 3
B. 2
C. 1
D. type error – **`get`** takes one argument (a pair)

Quiz 5: What does this evaluate to?

```
let get x y =
  match x with
    (a,b) -> a+y
in
get (1,2) 1
```

A. 3
B. type error
C. 2
D. 1

Quiz 5: What does this evaluate to?

```
let get x y =
  match x with
    (a,b) -> a+y
in
get (1,2) 1
```

A. 3
B. type error
C. 2
D. 1

Quiz 6: What is the type of **`shift`**?

```
type point = {x:int; y:int}

let shift p =
  match p with
   { x=px; y=py } -> [px;py]
```

A. **`point -> int list`**

B. **`int list -> int list`**

C. **`point -> point`**

D. **`point -> bool list`**

Quiz 6: What is the type of `shift`?

```
type point = {x:int; y:int}

let shift p =
  match p with
  { x=px; y=py } -> [px;py]
```

A. `point -> int list`

B. `int list -> int list`

C. `point -> point`

D. `point -> bool list`