STRUCTURAL OPERATIONAL SEMANTICS

Grigore Rosu CS422 – Programming Language Semantics

Conventional Semantic Approaches

A language designer should understand the existing design approaches, techniques and tools, to know what is possible and how, or to come up with better ones. This part of the course will cover the two major PL semantic approaches:

- Big-step structural operational semantics (Big-step SOS)
- Small-step structural operational semantics (Small-step SOS)
- Denotational semantics
- Modular structural operational semantics (Modular SOS)
- Reduction semantics with evaluation contexts
- Abstract Machines
- The chemical abstract machine
- Axiomatic semantics

Many other semantic approaches covered in CS522

IMP

A simple imperative language

IMP – A Simple Imperative Language

We will exemplify the conventional semantic approaches by means of IMP, a very simple nonprocedural imperative language, with

- Arithmetic expressions
- Boolean expressions
- Assignment statements
- Conditional statements
- While loop statements
- Blocks

IMP Syntax

Э				
Int	::=	the domain of (unbounded) integer nu	mbers, with usual operations on them	
Bool	::=	the domain of Booleans		
Id	::=	standard identifiers		
AExp	::=	Int		
BExp	 	Id AExp + AExp AExp / AExp Bool AExp <= AExp ! BExp BExp && BExp	Suppose that, for demonstration purposes, we want "+" and "/" to be non-deterministically strict, "<=" to be sequentially strict, and "&&" to be short-circuited	
Block	::=	{}		
		$\{ Stmt \}$		
Stmt	::=	Block		
		Id = AExp;		
		$Stmt \ Stmt$		
		if ($BExp$) $Block$ else $Block$	List of identifiers	
		while (<i>BExp</i>) <i>Block</i>	list of identifiers	
Pgm	::=	$int List{Id}; Stmt$		

IMP State

- Most semantics need some notion of state. A state holds all the semantic ingredients to fully define the meaning of a given program or fragment of program.
- For IMP, a state is a partial finite-domain function from identifiers to integers (i.e., a function defined only on a finite subset of identifiers and undefined on the rest), written using a half-arrow:

$$\sigma: Id \to Int$$

We let State denote the set of such functions, and may write it

$$[Id \rightarrow Int]^{finite}$$

or

 $\operatorname{Map}\left\{ Id \mapsto Int \right\}$

Lookup, Update and Initialization

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Typical state operations are lookup, update and initialization
 Lookup

 (): State × Id → Int

 $\Box \text{ Update} \qquad _[_/_]: State \times Int \times Id \rightarrow State$

Initialization

 $_\mapsto_:\mathbf{List}\{Id\}\times Int \to State$

BIG-STEP SOS

Big-step structural operational semantics

Big-Step Structural Operational Semantics (Big-Step SOS)

- Gilles Kahn (1987), under the name natural semantics. Also known as relational semantics, or evaluation semantics. We can regard a big-step SOS as a recursive interpreter, telling for a fragment of code and state what it evaluates to.
- Configuration: tuple containing code and semantic ingredients **E.g.**, $\langle a_1, \sigma \rangle = \langle a_1 + a_2, \sigma \rangle = \langle i_1 \rangle = \langle i_1 + i_1 i_2 \rangle = \langle \sigma \rangle$ Sequent: Pair of configurations, to be derived or proved $\blacksquare \text{ E.g., } \langle a_1, \sigma \rangle \Downarrow \langle i_1 \rangle \qquad \langle a_1 + a_2, \sigma \rangle \Downarrow \langle i_1 + a_1, i_2 \rangle$ **Rule:** Tells how to derive a sequent from others Read E.g., "evaluates to" $\langle a_1, \sigma \rangle \Downarrow \langle i_1 \rangle \qquad \langle a_2, \sigma \rangle \Downarrow \langle i_2 \rangle$ Premises $\langle a_1 + a_2, \sigma \rangle \Downarrow \langle i_1 + I_{Int} i_2 \rangle$ May omit line Conclusion when no premises

Big-Step SOS of IMP - Arithmetic



apply when a_2 evaluates to 0

Big-Step SOS of IMP - Boolean

$\langle t, \sigma \rangle \Downarrow \langle t \rangle$			
$\frac{\langle a_1, \sigma \rangle \Downarrow \langle i_1 \rangle \langle a_2, \sigma \rangle \Downarrow \langle i_2 \rangle}{\langle a_1 \triangleleft a_2, \sigma \rangle \Downarrow \langle i_1 \triangleleft a_2, \sigma \rangle}$			
$\frac{\langle b,\sigma\rangle \Downarrow \langle \texttt{true} \rangle}{\langle ! b,\sigma \rangle \Downarrow \langle \texttt{false} \rangle}$			
$\frac{\langle b, \sigma \rangle \Downarrow \langle \texttt{false} \rangle}{\langle ! b, \sigma \rangle \Downarrow \langle \texttt{true} \rangle}$			
$\frac{\langle b_1, \sigma \rangle \Downarrow \langle \texttt{false} \rangle}{\langle b_1 \&\& b_2, \sigma \rangle \Downarrow \langle \texttt{false} \rangle}$			
$\frac{\langle b_1, \sigma \rangle \Downarrow \langle \texttt{true} \rangle \langle b_2, \sigma \rangle \Downarrow \langle t \rangle}{\langle b_1 \&\& b_2, \sigma \rangle \Downarrow \langle t \rangle}$			

(BIGSTEP-BOOL)

(BIGSTEP-LEQ)

(BIGSTEP-NOT-TRUE)

(BIGSTEP-NOT-FALSE)

(BIGSTEP-AND-FALSE)

(BIGSTEP-AND-TRUE)

Big-Step SOS of IMP - Statements



Big-Step SOS of IMP - Programs



(BIGSTEP-VAR)

Big-Step Rule Instances

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- Rules are schemas, allowing recursively enumerable many instances; side conditions filter out instances
 - **E.g.**, these are correct instances of the rule for division

$$\frac{\langle x, (x \mapsto 8, y \mapsto 0) \rangle \Downarrow \langle 8 \rangle}{\langle x/2, (x \mapsto 8, y \mapsto 0) \rangle \Downarrow \langle 2 \rangle}$$

$$\frac{\langle x, (x \mapsto 8, y \mapsto 0) \rangle \Downarrow \langle 8 \rangle}{\langle x/2, (x \mapsto 8, y \mapsto 0) \rangle \Downarrow \langle 4 \rangle}$$

The second may look suspicious, but it is not. Normally, one should never be able to apply it, because one cannot prove its hypotheses
However, the following is *not* a correct instance (no matter what ? is):

$$\frac{\langle x, (x \mapsto 8, y \mapsto 0) \rangle \Downarrow \langle 8 \rangle \quad \langle y, (x \mapsto 8, y \mapsto 0) \rangle \Downarrow \langle 0 \rangle}{\langle x/y, (x \mapsto 8, y \mapsto 0) \rangle \Downarrow \langle ? \rangle}$$

Big-Step SOS Derivation

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The following is a valid proof derivation, or proof tree, using the big-step SOS proof system of IMP above. Suppose that x and y are identifiers and $\sigma(x)=8$ and $\sigma(y)=0$.



Big-Step SOS for Type Systems

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- Big-Step SOS is routinely used to define type systems for programming languages
- □ The idea is that a fragment of code c, in a given type environment Γ , can be assigned a certain type τ . We typically write

 $\Gamma \vdash c : \tau$

instead of

 $\langle c, \Gamma \rangle \Downarrow \langle \tau \rangle$

Since all variables in IMP have integer type, Γ can be replaced by a list of untyped variables in our case. In general, however, a type environment Γ contains typed variables, that is, pairs "x : τ".

Typing Arithmetic Expressions

$$\begin{aligned} xl &\vdash i: int \\ xl &\vdash x: int \quad \text{if } x \in xl \\ \\ \underline{xl \vdash a_1: int \quad xl \vdash a_2: int} \\ \overline{xl \vdash a_1 + a_2: int} \\ \\ \underline{xl \vdash a_1: int \quad xl \vdash a_2: int} \\ \overline{xl \vdash a_1 / a_2: int} \\ \\ xl \vdash t: bool \quad \text{if } t \in \{\texttt{true}, \texttt{false}\} \end{aligned}$$

(BigStepTypeSystem-Int)

(BIGSTEPTYPESystem-Lookup)

(BIGSTEPTYPESYSTEM-ADD)

(BIGSTEPTYPESYSTEM-DIV)

(BIGSTEPTYPESYSTEM-BOOL)

Typing Boolean Expressions

$$\frac{xl \vdash a_1 : int \qquad xl \vdash a_2 : int}{xl \vdash a_1 <= a_2 : bool}$$
$$\frac{xl \vdash b : bool}{xl \vdash ! b : bool}$$
$$\frac{xl \vdash b_1 : bool \qquad xl \vdash b_2 : bool}{xl \vdash b_1 \&\& b_2 : bool}$$
$$xl \vdash \{\} : block$$

(BIGSTEPTYPESYSTEM-LEQ)

(BIGSTEPTYPESYSTEM-NOT)

(BIGSTEPTYPESYSTEM-AND)

(BIGSTEPTYPESYSTEM-EMPTY-BLOCK)

Typing Statements



Typing Programs



(BIGSTEPTYPESystem-PGM)

Big-Step SOS Type Derivation

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Like the big-step rules for the concrete semantics of IMP, the ones for its type system are also rule schemas. We next show a proof derivation for the well-typed-ness of an IMP program that adds all the numbers from 1 to 100:

$$\begin{array}{c} tree_2 & tree_3 \\ \hline n, s \vdash (\text{while } (!(n \le 0)) \ \{s = s + n; \ n = n + -1; \}) : stmt \\ \hline n, s \vdash (n = 100; \ s = 0; \ \text{while } (!(n \le 0)) \ \{s = s + n; \ n = n + -1; \}) : stmt \\ \hline (\text{int } n, s; \ n = 100; \ s = 0; \ \text{while } (!(n \le 0)) \ \{s = s + n; \ n = n + -1; \}) : pgm \\ \end{array}$$

Big-Step SOS Type Derivation

$$tree_{1} = \begin{cases} \frac{\overline{n, s \vdash 100: int}}{n, s \vdash (n = 100;): stmt} & \frac{\overline{n, s \vdash 0: int}}{n, s \vdash (s = 0;): stmt} \\ n, s \vdash (n = 100; s = 0;): stmt \end{cases}$$

$$tree_2 = \begin{cases} \frac{\overline{n, s \vdash n : int}}{n, s \vdash (n \le 0) : bool} \\ \frac{\overline{n, s \vdash (n \le 0) : bool}}{n, s \vdash (! (n \le 0)) : bool} \end{cases}$$

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Big-Step SOS Type Derivation

$$tree_{3} = \begin{cases} \begin{array}{c} \begin{array}{c} \frac{n}{n,s \vdash s:int} & \overline{n,s \vdash n:int} \\ n,s \vdash (s + n):int \\ \hline n,s \vdash (s = s + n;):stmt \\ \end{array} & \begin{array}{c} \frac{n,s \vdash (n + -1):int}{n,s \vdash (n = n + -1;):stmt} \\ \hline n,s \vdash (s = s + n; n = n + -1;):stmt \\ \hline n,s \vdash \{s = s + n; n = n + -1; \}:block \end{cases} \end{cases}$$

SMALL-STEP SOS

Small-step structural operational semantics

Small-Step Structural Operational Semantics (Small-Step SOS)

- Gordon Plotkin (1981)
- □ Also known as transitional semantics, or reduction semantics
- One can regard a small-step SOS as a device capable of executing a program step-by-step
- Configuration: tuple containing code and semantic ingredients
 E.g., (a, σ) (b, σ) (s, σ) (p)
 Sequent (transition): Pair of configurations, to be derived (proved)
 - $\blacksquare \text{ E.g., } \langle a_1, \sigma \rangle \rightarrow \langle a'_1, \sigma \rangle \qquad \qquad \langle a_1 + a_2, \sigma \rangle \rightarrow \langle a'_1 + a_2, \sigma \rangle$
- Rule: Tells how to derive a sequent from others

• E.g., $\frac{\langle a_1, \sigma \rangle \to \langle a'_1, \sigma \rangle}{\langle a_1 + a_2, \sigma \rangle \to \langle a'_1 + a_2, \sigma \rangle}$

Small-Step SOS of IMP - Arithmetic



 $\langle i_1 + i_2, \sigma \rangle \rightarrow \langle i_1 +_{Int} i_2, \sigma \rangle$

+ is non-deterministic (its arguments can evaluate in any order, and interleaved (SmallStep-Lookup)

(SmallStep-Add-Arg1)

(SMALLSTEP-ADD-ARG2)

(SmallStep-Add)

Small-Step SOS of IMP - Arithmetic

$$\frac{\langle a_{1}, \sigma \rangle \rightarrow \langle a'_{1}, \sigma \rangle}{\langle a_{1} / a_{2}, \sigma \rangle \rightarrow \langle a'_{1} / a_{2}, \sigma \rangle} \qquad (\text{SMALLSTEP-DIV-ARG1})$$

$$\frac{\langle a_{2}, \sigma \rangle \rightarrow \langle a'_{2}, \sigma \rangle}{\langle a_{1} / a_{2}, \sigma \rangle \rightarrow \langle a_{1} / a'_{2}, \sigma \rangle} \qquad (\text{SMALLSTEP-DIV-ARG2})$$

$$\langle i_{1} / i_{2}, \sigma \rangle \rightarrow \langle i_{1} / I_{Int} i_{2}, \sigma \rangle \quad \text{if } i_{2} \neq 0 \qquad (\text{SMALLSTEP-DIV})$$
Side condition ensures rule will never apply when denominator is 0

/ is also non-deterministic

Small-Step SOS of IMP - Boolean

$$\frac{\langle a_1, \sigma \rangle \to \langle a'_1, \sigma \rangle}{\langle a_1 \langle = a_2, \sigma \rangle \to \langle a'_1 \langle = a_2, \sigma \rangle}$$
$$\frac{\langle a_2, \sigma \rangle \to \langle a'_2, \sigma \rangle}{\langle i_1 \langle = a_2, \sigma \rangle \to \langle i_1 \langle = a'_2, \sigma \rangle}$$
$$\langle i_1 \langle = i_2, \sigma \rangle \to \langle i_1 \leq_{Int} i_2, \sigma \rangle$$

(SMALLSTEP-LEQ-Arg1)

(SmallStep-Leq-Arg2)

(SMALLSTEP-LEQ)

Ensures sequential strictness

Small-Step SOS of IMP - Boolean

$$\frac{\langle b, \sigma \rangle \rightarrow \langle b', \sigma \rangle}{\langle ! \ b, \sigma \rangle \rightarrow \langle ! \ b', \sigma \rangle}$$

$$\langle ! \ true, \sigma \rangle \rightarrow \langle false, \sigma \rangle$$

$$\langle ! \ false, \sigma \rangle \rightarrow \langle true, \sigma \rangle$$

$$\frac{\langle b_1, \sigma \rangle \rightarrow \langle b'_1, \sigma \rangle}{\langle b_1 \ \& \& \ b_2, \sigma \rangle \rightarrow \langle b'_1 \ \& \& \ b_2, \sigma \rangle}$$

$$\langle false \ \& \& \ b_2, \sigma \rangle \rightarrow \langle false, \sigma \rangle$$

$$jit$$

(SMALLSTEP-NOT-ARG)

(SMALLSTEP-NOT-TRUE)

(SmallStep-Not-False)

(SMALLSTEP-AND-ARG1)

(SMALLSTEP-AND-FALSE)

(SMALLSTEP-AND-TRUE)

Short-circuit semantics

Small-Step SOS Derivation

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The following is a valid proof derivation, or proof tree, using the small-step SOS proof system for expressions of IMP above. Suppose that x and y are identifiers and $\sigma(x)=1$. (SmallStep-Lookup) (SMALLSTEP-DIV-ARG2) $\langle x, \sigma \rangle \rightarrow \langle 1, \sigma \rangle$ (SmallStep-Add-Arg2) $\langle y / x, \sigma \rangle \rightarrow \langle y / 1, \sigma \rangle$ (SMALLSTEP-LEQ-ARG1) $\langle x + (y / x), \sigma \rangle \rightarrow \langle x + (y / 1), \sigma \rangle$ $\langle (x + (y / x)) \langle x, \sigma \rangle \rightarrow \langle (x + (y / 1)) \langle x, \sigma \rangle$

Small-Step SOS of IMP - Statements



Small-Step SOS of IMP - Statements

$$\frac{\langle b, \sigma \rangle \rightarrow \langle b', \sigma \rangle}{\langle \text{if} (b) s_1 \text{else} s_2, \sigma \rangle \rightarrow \langle \text{if} (b') s_1 \text{else} s_2, \sigma \rangle} \qquad (\text{SMALLSTEP-IF-Arg1}) \\ \langle \text{if} (\text{true}) s_1 \text{else} s_2, \sigma \rangle \rightarrow \langle s_1, \sigma \rangle \qquad (\text{SMALLSTEP-IF-TRUE}) \\ \langle \text{if} (\text{false}) s_1 \text{else} s_2, \sigma \rangle \rightarrow \langle s_2, \sigma \rangle \qquad (\text{SMALLSTEP-IF-FALSE}) \\ \langle \text{while} (b) s, \sigma \rangle \rightarrow \langle \text{if} (b) \{ s \text{ while} (b) s \} \text{else} \{ \}, \sigma \rangle \qquad (\text{SMALLSTEP-WHILE}) \\ \langle \text{int} xl; s \rangle \rightarrow \langle s, xl \mapsto 0 \rangle \qquad (\text{SMALLSTEP-VAR}) \\ \hline$$