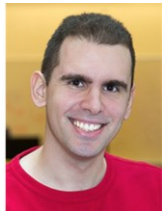
Programming Languages and Compilers (CS 421)

Sasa Misailovic

4110 SC, UIUC

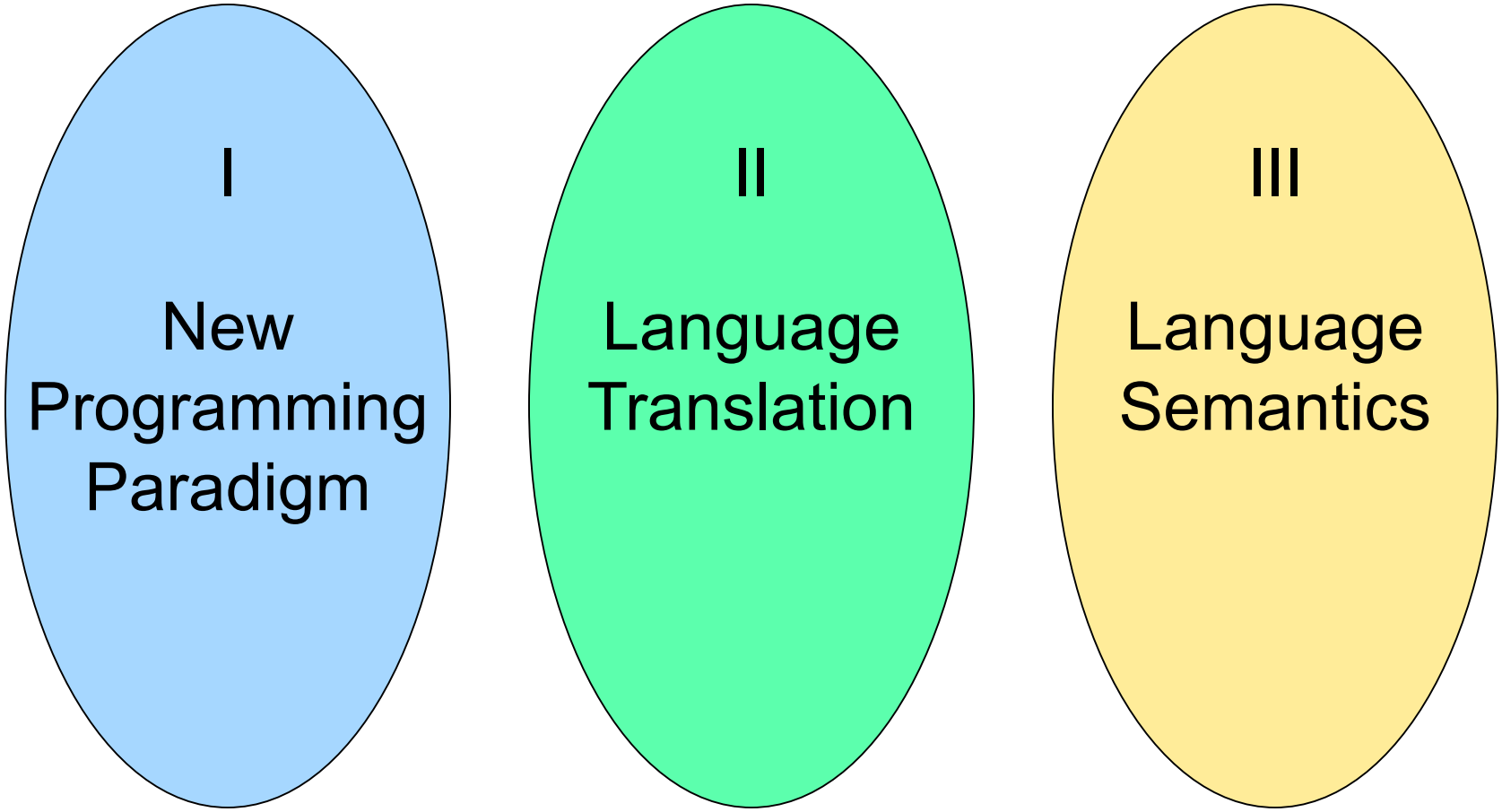


https://courses.engr.illinois.edu/cs421/fa2017/CS421A

Based in part on slides by Mattox Beckman, as updated by Vikram Adve, Gul Agha, and Elsa L Gunter

Programming Languages & Compilers

Three Main Topics of the Course



Programming Languages & Compilers

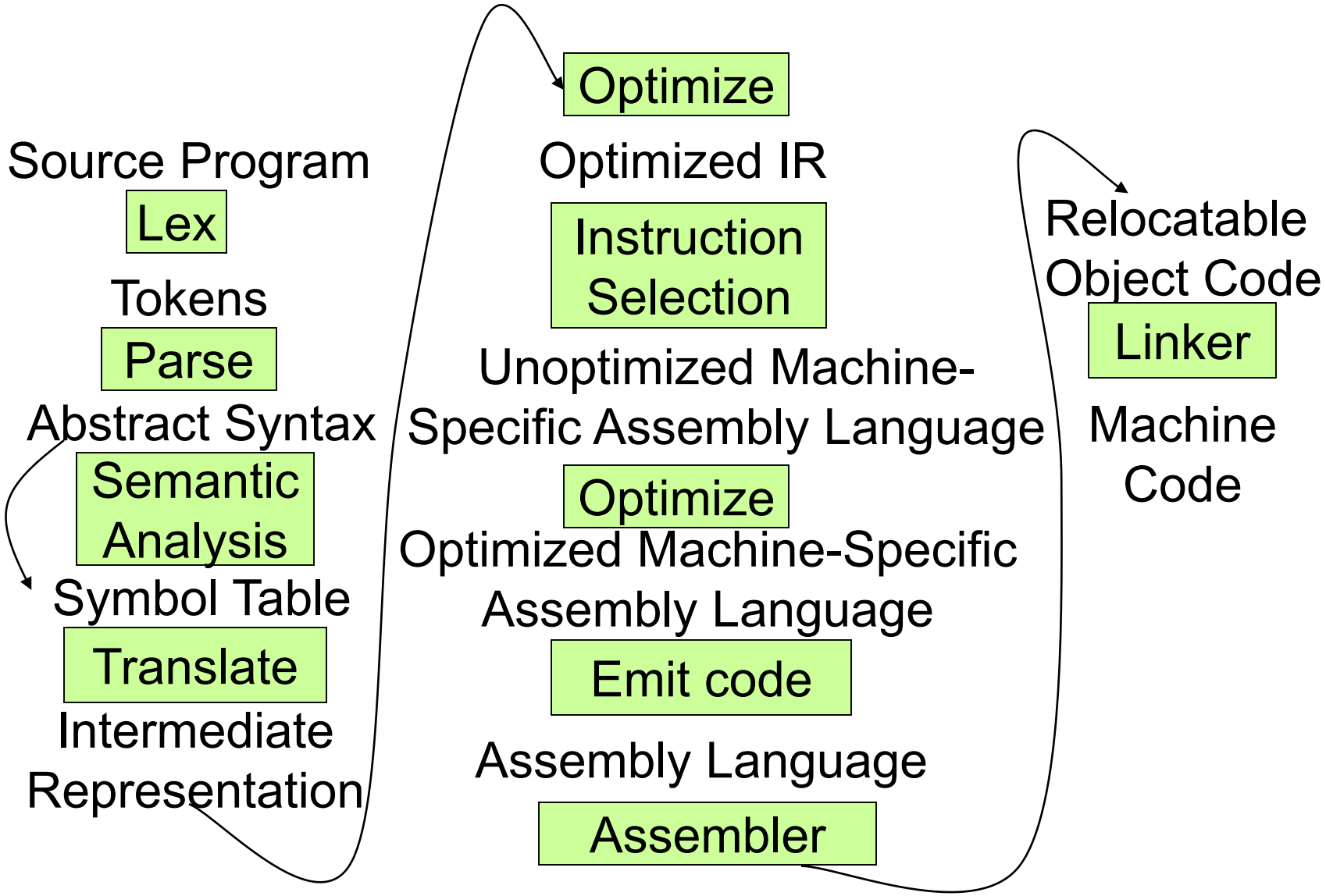
II : Language Translation

Type Systems

Lexing and Parsing

Interpretation

Major Phases of a Compiler



Modified from "Modern Compiler Implementation in ML", by Andrew Appel

Where We Are Going Next?

- We want to turn strings (code) into computer instructions
- Done in phases
- Break the big strings into tokens (lex)
- Turn tokens into abstract syntax trees (parse)
- Translate abstract syntax trees into executable instructions (interpret or compile)

Meta-discourse

- Language Syntax and Semantics
- Syntax
  - Regular Expressions, DFSAs and NDFSAs
  - Grammars
- Semantics
  - Natural Semantics
  - Transition Semantics

Language Syntax

- Syntax is the description of which strings of symbols are meaningful expressions in a language
- It takes more than syntax to understand a language; need meaning (semantics) too
- Syntax is the entry point

Syntax of English Language

- Pattern 1

Subject	Verb
David	*sings*
The dog	*barked*
Susan	*yawned*

- Pattern 2

Subject	Verb	Direct Object
David	*sings*	*ballads*
The professor	*wants*	*to retire*
The jury	*found*	*the defendant guilty*

Elements of Syntax

- Character set – previously always ASCII, now often 64 character sets
- Keywords – usually reserved
- Special constants – cannot be assigned to
- Identifiers – can be assigned to
- Operator symbols
- Delimiters (parenthesis, braces, brackets)
- Blanks (aka white space)

Elements of Syntax

- Expressions

  if ... then begin ... ; ... end else begin ... ; ... end

- Type expressions

  $typexpr_1$ -> $typexpr_2$

- Declarations (in functional languages)

  let *pattern* = *expr*

- Statements (in imperative languages)

  a = b + c

- Subprograms

  let $pattern_1$ = $expr_1$ in *expr*

Elements of Syntax

- Modules
- Interfaces
- Classes (for object-oriented languages)

Lexing and Parsing

- Converting strings to abstract syntax trees done in two phases
  - **Lexing:** Converting string (or streams of characters) into lists (or streams) of tokens (the "words" of the language)
    - Specification Technique: Regular Expressions
  - **Parsing:** Convert a list of tokens into an abstract syntax tree
    - Specification Technique: BNF Grammars

Formal Language Descriptions

- Regular expressions, regular grammars, finite state automata
- Context-free grammars, BNF grammars, syntax diagrams
- Whole family more of grammars and automata – covered in automata theory

Grammars

- Grammars are formal descriptions of which strings over a given character set are in a particular language
- Language designers write grammar
- Language implementers use grammar to know what programs to accept
- Language users use grammar to know how to write legitimate programs

Regular Expressions - Review

- Start with a given character set – **a, b, c**…

- Each character is a regular expression
  - It represents the set of one string containing just that character

Regular Expressions

- If **x** and **y** are regular expressions, then **xy** is a regular expression
  - It represents the set of all strings made from first a string described by **x** then a string described by **y**

    If x={a,ab} and y={c,d} then xy ={ac,ad,abc,abd}.
- If **x** and **y** are regular expressions, then **x∨y** is a regular expression
  - It represents the set of strings described by either **x** or **y**

    If x={a,ab} and y={c,d} then x ∨ y={a,ab,c,d}

Regular Expressions

- If **x** is a regular expression, then so is **(x)**
  - It represents the same thing as **x**
- If **x** is a regular expression, then so is **x***
  - It represents strings made from concatenating zero or more strings from **x**

  If x = {a,ab} then x* ={“”,a,ab,aa,aab,abab,…}
- ε
  - It represents {“”}, set containing the empty string
- Φ
  - It represents { }, the empty set

Example Regular Expressions

- **(0∨1)*1**
  - The set of all strings of **0**'s and **1**'s ending in 1,
  - **{1, 01, 11,…}**
- **a*b(a*)**
  - The set of all strings of a's and b's with exactly one b
- **((01) ∨(10))***
  - You tell me
- Regular expressions (equivalently, regular grammars) important for lexing, breaking strings into recognized words

Regular Grammars

- Subclass of BNF (covered in detail sool)
- Only rules of form
  <nonterminal>::=<terminal><nonterminal> or
  <nonterminal>::=<terminal> or <nonterminal>::=ε

- Defines same class of languages as regular expressions

- Important for writing lexers (programs that convert strings of characters into strings of tokens)

- Close connection to nondeterministic finite state automata
  - nonterminals = states;
  - rule = edge

Example

- Regular grammar:

  <Balanced> ::= ε

  <Balanced> ::= 0<OneAndMore>

  <Balanced> ::= 1<ZeroAndMore>

  <OneAndMore> ::= 1<Balanced>

  <ZeroAndMore> ::= 0<Balanced>

- Generates even length strings where every initial substring of even length has same number of 0's as 1's

Example: Lexing

- Regular expressions good for describing lexemes (words) in a programming language
  - Identifier = (a ∨ b ∨ … ∨ z ∨ A ∨ B ∨ … ∨ Z) (a ∨ b ∨ … ∨ z ∨ A ∨ B ∨ … ∨ Z ∨ 0 ∨ 1 ∨ … ∨ 9)*
  - Digit = (0 ∨ 1 ∨ … ∨ 9)
  - Number = 0 ∨ (1 ∨ … ∨ 9)(0 ∨ … ∨ 9)* ∨
    - (1 ∨ … ∨ 9)(0 ∨ … ∨ 9)*
  - Keywords: if = if, while = while,…

Implementing Regular Expressions

- Regular expressions reasonable way to generate strings in language
- Not so good for recognizing when a string is in language
- Problems with Regular Expressions
  - which option to choose,
  - how many repetitions to make
- Answer: finite state automata
- Should have seen in CS374

Lexing

- Different syntactic categories of “words”: tokens

Example:

- Convert sequence of characters into sequence of strings, integers, and floating point numbers.
- "asd 123 jkl 3.14" will become:

  [String "asd"; Int 123; String "jkl"; Float 3.14]

Lex, ocamllex

- Could write the reg exp, then translate to DFA by hand
  - A lot of work
- Better: Write program to take reg exp as input and automatically generates automata
- Lex is such a program
- ocamllex version for ocaml

How to do it

- To use regular expressions to parse our input we need:
  - Some way to identify the input string — call it a lexing buffer
  - Set of regular expressions,
  - Corresponding set of actions to take when they are matched.

How to do it

- The lexer will take the regular expressions and generate a state machine.
- The state machine will take our lexing buffer and apply the transitions...
- If we reach an accepting state from which we can go no further, the machine will perform the appropriate action.

Mechanics

- Put table of reg exp and corresponding actions (written in ocaml) into a file <*filename*>.mll
- Call

  ocamllex <*filename*>.mll
- Produces Ocaml code for a lexical analyzer in file <*filename*>.ml

Sample Input

```
rule main = parse
 ['0'-'9']+ { print_string "Int\n"}
 | ['0'-'9']+'.'['0'-'9']+ { print_string "Float\n"}
 | ['a'-'z']+ { print_string "String\n"}
 | _ { main lexbuf }
 {
 let newlexbuf = (Lexing.from_channel stdin) in
 print_string "Ready to lex.\n";
 main newlexbuf
}
```

General Input

```
{ header }
let ident = regexp ...
rule entrypoint [arg1 ... argn] = parse
        regexp { action }
    | ...
    | regexp { action }
and entrypoint [arg1 ... argn] =  parse ...and ...
{ trailer }
```

Ocamllex Input

- *header* and *trailer* contain arbitrary ocaml code put at top an bottom of <*filename*>.ml

- let *ident* = *regexp* ... Introduces *ident* for use in later regular expressions

Ocamllex Input

- <*filename*>.ml contains one lexing function per *entrypoint*
  - Name of function is name given for *entrypoint*
  - Each entry point becomes an Ocaml function that takes *n*+1 arguments, the extra implicit last argument being of type Lexing.lexbuf
- *arg1* ... *argn* are for use in *action*

Ocamllex Regular Expression

- Single quoted characters for letters: 'a'
- _: (underscore) matches any letter
- Eof: special "end_of_file" marker
- Concatenation same as usual
- "*string*": concatenation of sequence of characters
- $e_1 \mid e_2$: choice - what was $e_1 \vee e_2$

Ocamllex Regular Expression

- [c_1 - c_2]: choice of any character between first and second inclusive, as determined by character codes
- [^c_1 - c_2]: choice of any character NOT in set
- e*: same as before
- e+: same as e e*
- e?: option - was $e_1 \vee \varepsilon$

Ocamllex Regular Expression

- e_1 # e_2: the characters in e_1 but not in e_2; e_1 and e_2 must describe just sets of characters
- *ident*: abbreviation for earlier reg exp in let *ident* = *regexp*
- e_1 as *id*: binds the result of e_1 to *id* to be used in the associated *action*

Ocamllex Manual

- More details can be found at

http://caml.inria.fr/pub/docs/manual-ocaml/lexyacc.html

Example : test.mll

```
{
   type result = Int of int | Float of float |
  String of string
}
let digit = ['0'-'9']
let digits = digit+
let lower_case = ['a'-'z']
let upper_case = ['A'-'Z']
let letter = upper_case | lower_case
let letters = letter+
```

Example : test.mll

```
rule main = parse
   (digits)'.'digits as f
                  { Float (float_of_string f) }
 | digits as n    { Int (int_of_string n) }
 | letters as s   { String s}
 | _              { main lexbuf }

{
   let newlexbuf = (Lexing.from_channel stdin) in
   print_string "Ready to lex.";
   print_newline ();
   main newlexbuf
}
```

Example

```
# #use "test.ml";;
…
val main : Lexing.lexbuf -> result = <fun>
val __ocaml_lex_main_rec : Lexing.lexbuf ->
  int -> result = <fun>
Ready to lex.
hi there 234 5.2
- : result = String "hi"
```

What happened to the rest?!?

Example

```
# let b = Lexing.from_channel stdin;;
# main b;;
hi 673 there
- : result = String "hi"
# main b;;
- : result = Int 673
# main b;;
- : result = String "there"
```

Problem

- How to get lexer to look at more than the first token at one time?
- Answer: *action* has to tell it to -- recursive calls
- Side Benefit: can add "state" into lexing
- Note: already used this with the _ case

Example

```
rule main = parse
   (digits) '.' digits as f
     { Float (float_of_string f) :: main lexbuf}
 | digits as n
     { Int (int_of_string n) :: main lexbuf }
 | letters as s
     { String s :: main lexbuf}
 | eof  { [] }
 | _    { main lexbuf }
```

Example Results

```
Ready to lex.
hi there 234 5.2
- : result list = [String "hi"; String "there";
                   Int 234; Float 5.2]
#
```

Used Ctrl-d to send the end-of-file signal

Dealing with comments

First Attempt

```
let open_comment = "(*"
let close_comment = "*)“

rule main = parse
   (digits) '.' digits as f
   { Float (float_of_string f) :: main lexbuf}
 | digits as n
   { Int (int_of_string n) :: main lexbuf }
 | letters as s
   { String s :: main lexbuf}
```

Dealing with comments

```
(* Continued from rule main *)
 | open_comment          { comment  lexbuf}
 | eof                   { [] }
 | _ { main lexbuf }

and comment = parse
   close_comment         { main lexbuf }
 | _                     { comment lexbuf }
```

Dealing with nested comments

```
rule main = parse …
  | open_comment   { comment 1 lexbuf}
  | eof            { [] }
  | _ { main lexbuf }

and comment depth = parse
    open_comment   { comment (depth+1) lexbuf }
  | close_comment  { if depth = 1
                     then main lexbuf
                     else comment (depth - 1)
                          lexbuf
                   }
  | _              { comment depth lexbuf }
```

Types of Formal Language Descriptions

- Regular expressions, regular grammars
- Context-free grammars, BNF grammars, syntax diagrams
- Finite state automata

- Whole family more of grammars and automata – covered in automata theory

Sample Grammar

- Language: Parenthesized sums of 0's and 1's

- <Sum> ::= 0
- <Sum >::= 1
- <Sum> ::= <Sum> + <Sum>
- <Sum> ::= (<Sum>)

BNF Grammars

- Start with a set of characters, **a,b,c,…**
  - We call these *terminals*
- Add a set of different characters, **X,Y,Z,…**
  - We call these *nonterminals*
- One special nonterminal **S** called *start symbol*

BNF Grammars

- BNF rules (aka *productions*) have form

  X ::= *y*

  where **X** is any nonterminal and *y* is a string of terminals and nonterminals
- BNF *grammar* is a set of BNF rules such that every nonterminal appears on the left of some rule

Sample Grammar

- Terminals: 0 1 + ( )
- Nonterminals: <Sum>
- Start symbol = <Sum>

- <Sum> ::= 0
- <Sum >::= 1
- <Sum> ::= <Sum> + <Sum>
- <Sum> ::= (<Sum>)
- Can be abbreviated as

<Sum> ::= 0 | 1
| <Sum> + <Sum> | (<Sum>)

BNF Deriviations

- Given rules

$$\mathbf{X} ::= y\mathbf{Z}w \text{ and } \mathbf{Z} ::= v$$

we may replace **Z** by *v* to say

$$\mathbf{X} \Rightarrow y\mathbf{Z}w \Rightarrow yvw$$

- Sequence of such replacements called *derivation*
- Derivation called *right-most* if always replace the right-most non-terminal

BNF Derivations

- Start with the start symbol:

<Sum> =>

BNF Derivations

- Pick a non-terminal

<Sum> =>

BNF Derivations

- Pick a rule and substitute:
  - <Sum> ::= <Sum> + <Sum>

<Sum> => <Sum> + <Sum >

BNF Derivations

- Pick a non-terminal:

<Sum> => <Sum> + <Sum >

BNF Derivations

- Pick a rule and substitute:
  - <Sum> ::= (<Sum>)

<Sum> => <Sum> + <Sum >

=> (<Sum>) + <Sum>

BNF Derivations

- Pick a non-terminal:

<Sum> => <Sum> + <Sum >

=> (<Sum>) + <Sum>

BNF Derivations

- Pick a rule and substitute:
  - <Sum> ::= <Sum> + <Sum>

<Sum> => <Sum> + <Sum >

=> (<Sum>) + <Sum>

=> (<Sum> + <Sum>) + <Sum>

BNF Derivations

- Pick a non-terminal:

<Sum> => <Sum> + <Sum >

=> (<Sum>) + <Sum>

=> (<Sum> + <Sum>) + <Sum>

BNF Derivations

- Pick a rule and substitute:
  - <Sum >::= I

<Sum> => <Sum> + <Sum >

=> (<Sum>) + <Sum>

=> (<Sum> + <Sum>) + <Sum>

=> (<Sum> + I) + <Sum>

BNF Derivations

- Pick a non-terminal:

<Sum> => <Sum> + <Sum >

=> (<Sum>) + <Sum>

=> (<Sum> + <Sum>) + <Sum>

=> (<Sum> + 1) + <Sum>

BNF Derivations

- Pick a rule and substitute:
  - <Sum >::= 0

<Sum> => <Sum> + <Sum >

=> (<Sum>) + <Sum>

=> (<Sum> + <Sum>) + <Sum>

=> (<Sum> + 1) + <Sum>

=> (<Sum> + 1) + 0

BNF Derivations

- Pick a non-terminal:

<Sum> => <Sum> + <Sum >

=> (<Sum>) + <Sum>

=> (<Sum> + <Sum>) + <Sum>

=> (<Sum> + 1) + <Sum>

=> (<Sum> + 1) + 0

BNF Derivations

- Pick a rule and substitute
  - <Sum> ::= 0

<Sum> => <Sum> + <Sum >

=> (<Sum>) + <Sum>

=> (<Sum> + <Sum>) + <Sum>

=> (<Sum> + 1) + <Sum>

=> (<Sum> + 1) 0

=> (0 + 1) + 0

BNF Derivations

- (0 + 1) + 0 is generated by grammar

<Sum> => <Sum> + <Sum >

=> (<Sum>) + <Sum>

=> (<Sum> + <Sum>) + <Sum>

=> (<Sum> + 1) + <Sum>

=> (<Sum> + 1) + 0

=> (0 + 1) + 0