

Programming Languages and Compilers (CS 421)

Elsa L Gunter
2112 SC, UIUC



<https://courses.engr.illinois.edu/cs421/sp2023>

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



Two Problems

- Type checking

- Question: Does exp. e have type τ in env Γ ?
- Answer: Yes / No
- Method: Type **derivation**

- Typability

- Question Does exp. e have **some type** in env. Γ ?
If so, what is it?
- Answer: Type τ / error
- Method: Type **inference**



Type Inference - Outline

- Begin by assigning a type variable as the type of the whole expression
- Decompose the expression into component expressions
- Use typing rules to generate constraints on components and whole
- Recursively find substitution that solves typing judgment of first subcomponent
- Apply substitution to next subcomponent and find substitution solving it; compose with first, etc.
- Apply comp of all substitution to orig. type var. to get answer



Type Inference - Example

- What type can we give to

`(fun x -> fun f -> f (f x))`

- Start with a type variable and then look at the way the term is constructed

Type Inference - Example

- First approximate:

$$\{ \} \vdash (\text{fun } x \rightarrow \text{fun } f \rightarrow f (f x)) : \alpha$$

- Second approximate: use fun rule

$$\frac{\{x : \beta\} \vdash (\text{fun } f \rightarrow f (f x)) : \gamma}{\{ \} \vdash (\text{fun } x \rightarrow \text{fun } f \rightarrow f (f x)) : \alpha}$$

$$\{ \} \vdash (\text{fun } x \rightarrow \text{fun } f \rightarrow f (f x)) : \alpha$$

- Remember constraint $\alpha \equiv (\beta \rightarrow \gamma)$

Type Inference - Example

- Third approximate: use fun rule

$$\{f : \delta ; x : \beta\} \vdash f (f x) : \varepsilon$$

$$\frac{\{x : \beta\} \vdash (\text{fun } f \rightarrow f (f x)) : \gamma}{\{ \} \vdash (\text{fun } x \rightarrow \text{fun } f \rightarrow f(f x)) : \alpha}$$

- $\alpha \equiv (\beta \rightarrow \gamma); \gamma \equiv (\delta \rightarrow \varepsilon)$

Type Inference - Example

- Fourth approximate: use app rule

$$\frac{\{f:\delta; x:\beta\} \vdash f : \varphi \rightarrow \varepsilon \quad \{f:\delta; x:\beta\} \vdash f x : \varphi}{\{f : \delta ; x : \beta\} \vdash (f (f x)) : \varepsilon}$$

$$\frac{\{f : \delta ; x : \beta\} \vdash (f (f x)) : \varepsilon}{\{x : \beta\} \vdash (\text{fun } f \text{ -> } f (f x)) : \gamma}$$

$$\frac{\{x : \beta\} \vdash (\text{fun } f \text{ -> } f (f x)) : \gamma}{\{ \} \vdash (\text{fun } x \text{ -> } \text{fun } f \text{ -> } f (f x)) : \alpha}$$

- $\alpha \equiv (\beta \rightarrow \gamma); \gamma \equiv (\delta \rightarrow \varepsilon)$

Type Inference - Example

- Fifth approximate: use var rule, get constraint $\delta \equiv \varphi \rightarrow \varepsilon$, Solve with same
- Apply to next sub-proof

$$\frac{\{f:\delta; x:\beta\} \vdash f : \varphi \rightarrow \varepsilon \quad \{f:\delta; x:\beta\} \vdash f x : \varphi}{\{f : \delta ; x : \beta\} \vdash (f (f x)) : \varepsilon}$$

$$\frac{\{x : \beta\} \vdash (fun f -> f (f x)) : \gamma}{\{ \} \vdash (fun x -> fun f -> f (f x)) : \alpha}$$

$$\{ \} \vdash (fun x -> fun f -> f (f x)) : \alpha$$

- $\alpha \equiv (\beta \rightarrow \gamma); \gamma \equiv (\delta \rightarrow \varepsilon)$

Type Inference - Example

- Current subst: $\{\delta \equiv \varphi \rightarrow \varepsilon\}$

$$\dots \quad \{f:\varphi \rightarrow \varepsilon; x:\beta\} \vdash f x : \varphi$$

$$\{f : \delta ; x : \beta\} \vdash (f (f x)) : \varepsilon$$

$$\{x : \beta\} \vdash (\text{fun } f \text{ -> } f (f x)) : \gamma$$

$$\{\} \vdash (\text{fun } x \text{ -> fun } f \text{ -> } f (f x)) : \alpha$$

- $\alpha \equiv (\beta \rightarrow \gamma); \gamma \equiv (\delta \rightarrow \varepsilon)$

Type Inference - Example

- Current subst: $\{\delta \equiv \varphi \rightarrow \varepsilon\}$ Use App Rule

$$\frac{\{f:\varphi \rightarrow \varepsilon; x:\beta\} \vdash f:\zeta \rightarrow \varphi \quad \{f:\varphi \rightarrow \varepsilon; x:\beta\} \vdash x:\zeta}{\dots \quad \{f:\varphi \rightarrow \varepsilon; x:\beta\} \vdash f x : \varphi}$$

$$\dots \quad \{f:\varphi \rightarrow \varepsilon; x:\beta\} \vdash f x : \varphi$$

$$\frac{\{f:\delta; x:\beta\} \vdash (f (f x)) : \varepsilon}{\{x:\beta\} \vdash (\text{fun } f \rightarrow f (f x)) : \gamma}$$

$$\frac{\{x:\beta\} \vdash (\text{fun } f \rightarrow f (f x)) : \gamma}{\{ \} \vdash (\text{fun } x \rightarrow \text{fun } f \rightarrow f (f x)) : \alpha}$$

$$\{ \} \vdash (\text{fun } x \rightarrow \text{fun } f \rightarrow f (f x)) : \alpha$$

- $\alpha \equiv (\beta \rightarrow \gamma); \gamma \equiv (\delta \rightarrow \varepsilon)$

Type Inference - Example

- Current subst: $\{\delta \equiv \varphi \rightarrow \varepsilon\}$
- Var rule: Solve $\zeta \rightarrow \varphi \equiv \varphi \rightarrow \varepsilon$ **Unification**

$$\frac{\{f:\varphi \rightarrow \varepsilon; x:\beta\} \vdash f:\zeta \rightarrow \varphi \quad \{f:\varphi \rightarrow \varepsilon; x:\beta\} \vdash x:\zeta}{\dots \quad \{f:\varphi \rightarrow \varepsilon; x:\beta\} \vdash f x : \varphi}$$

$$\dots \quad \{f:\varphi \rightarrow \varepsilon; x:\beta\} \vdash f x : \varphi$$

$$\frac{\{f:\delta; x:\beta\} \vdash (f (f x)) : \varepsilon}{\{x:\beta\} \vdash (\text{fun } f \text{ -> } f (f x)) : \gamma}$$

$$\frac{\{x:\beta\} \vdash (\text{fun } f \text{ -> } f (f x)) : \gamma}{\{ \} \vdash (\text{fun } x \text{ -> fun } f \text{ -> } f (f x)) : \alpha}$$

$$\{ \} \vdash (\text{fun } x \text{ -> fun } f \text{ -> } f (f x)) : \alpha$$

- $\alpha \equiv (\beta \rightarrow \gamma); \gamma \equiv (\delta \rightarrow \varepsilon)$

Type Inference - Example

- Current subst: $\{\zeta \equiv \varepsilon, \varphi \equiv \varepsilon\} \circ \{\delta \equiv \varphi \rightarrow \varepsilon\}$

- Var rule: Solve $\zeta \rightarrow \varphi \equiv \varphi \rightarrow \varepsilon$ **Unification**

$\{f: \varphi \rightarrow \varepsilon; x: \beta\} \vdash f: \zeta \rightarrow \varphi$ $\{f: \varphi \rightarrow \varepsilon; x: \beta\} \vdash x: \zeta$

... $\{f: \varphi \rightarrow \varepsilon; x: \beta\} \vdash f x : \varphi$

$\{f : \delta ; x : \beta\} \vdash (f (f x)) : \varepsilon$

$\{x : \beta\} \vdash (\text{fun } f \text{ -> } f (f x)) : \gamma$

$\{ \} \vdash (\text{fun } x \text{ -> fun } f \text{ -> } f (f x)) : \alpha$

- $\alpha \equiv (\beta \rightarrow \gamma); \gamma \equiv (\delta \rightarrow \varepsilon)$

Type Inference - Example

- Current subst: $\{\zeta \equiv \varepsilon, \varphi \equiv \varepsilon, \delta \equiv \varepsilon \rightarrow \varepsilon\}$
- Apply to next sub-proof

$$\dots \quad \{f:\varepsilon \rightarrow \varepsilon; x:\beta\} \vdash x:\varepsilon$$

$$\dots \quad \{f:\varphi \rightarrow \varepsilon; x:\beta\} \vdash f x : \varphi$$

$$\{f : \delta ; x : \beta\} \vdash (f (f x)) : \varepsilon$$

$$\{x : \beta\} \vdash (\text{fun } f \text{ -> } f (f x)) : \gamma$$

$$\{ \} \vdash (\text{fun } x \text{ -> fun } f \text{ -> } f (f x)) : \alpha$$

- $\alpha \equiv (\beta \rightarrow \gamma); \gamma \equiv (\delta \rightarrow \varepsilon)$

Type Inference - Example

- Current subst: $\{\zeta \equiv \varepsilon, \varphi \equiv \varepsilon, \delta \equiv \varepsilon \rightarrow \varepsilon\}$
- Var rule: $\varepsilon \equiv \beta$

$$\begin{array}{c}
 \dots \quad \frac{\dots \quad \{f:\varepsilon \rightarrow \varepsilon; x:\beta\} \vdash x:\varepsilon}{\dots \quad \{f:\varphi \rightarrow \varepsilon; x:\beta\} \vdash f x : \varphi} \\
 \hline
 \frac{\dots \quad \{f:\delta; x:\beta\} \vdash (f (f x)) : \varepsilon}{\dots \quad \{x:\beta\} \vdash (\text{fun } f \text{ -> } f (f x)) : \gamma} \\
 \hline
 \frac{\dots \quad \{x:\beta\} \vdash (\text{fun } f \text{ -> } f (f x)) : \gamma}{\{ \} \vdash (\text{fun } x \text{ -> } \text{fun } f \text{ -> } f (f x)) : \alpha}
 \end{array}$$

- $\alpha \equiv (\beta \rightarrow \gamma); \gamma \equiv (\delta \rightarrow \varepsilon)$

Type Inference - Example

- Current subst: $\{\varepsilon \equiv \beta\} \circ \{\zeta \equiv \varepsilon, \varphi \equiv \varepsilon, \delta \equiv \varepsilon \rightarrow \varepsilon\}$
- Solves subproof; return one layer

$$\begin{array}{c}
 \dots \quad \{f:\varepsilon \rightarrow \varepsilon; x:\beta\} \vdash x:\varepsilon \\
 \hline
 \dots \quad \{f:\varphi \rightarrow \varepsilon; x:\beta\} \vdash f x : \varphi \\
 \hline
 \{f : \delta ; x : \beta\} \vdash (f (f x)) : \varepsilon \\
 \hline
 \{x : \beta\} \vdash (\text{fun } f \text{ -> } f (f x)) : \gamma \\
 \hline
 \{ \} \vdash (\text{fun } x \text{ -> fun } f \text{ -> } f (f x)) : \alpha
 \end{array}$$

- $\alpha \equiv (\beta \rightarrow \gamma); \gamma \equiv (\delta \rightarrow \varepsilon)$

Type Inference - Example

- Current subst: $\{\varepsilon \equiv \beta, \zeta \equiv \beta, \varphi \equiv \beta, \delta \equiv \beta \rightarrow \beta\}$
- Solves this subproof; return one layer

...

... $\{f:\varphi \rightarrow \varepsilon; x:\beta\} \vdash f x : \varphi$

$\{f : \delta ; x : \beta\} \vdash (f (f x)) : \varepsilon$

$\{x : \beta\} \vdash (\text{fun } f \text{ -> } f (f x)) : \gamma$

$\{ \} \vdash (\text{fun } x \text{ -> fun } f \text{ -> } f (f x)) : \alpha$

- $\alpha \equiv (\beta \rightarrow \gamma); \gamma \equiv (\delta \rightarrow \varepsilon)$

Type Inference - Example

- Current subst: $\{\varepsilon \equiv \beta, \zeta \equiv \beta, \varphi \equiv \beta, \delta \equiv \beta \rightarrow \beta\}$
- Need to satisfy constraint $\gamma \equiv (\delta \rightarrow \varepsilon)$, given subst, becomes: $\gamma \equiv ((\beta \rightarrow \beta) \rightarrow \beta)$

...

$$\frac{\{f : \delta ; x : \beta\} \vdash (f (f x)) : \varepsilon}{\{x : \beta\} \vdash (\text{fun } f \rightarrow f (f x)) : \gamma}$$

$$\frac{\{x : \beta\} \vdash (\text{fun } f \rightarrow f (f x)) : \gamma}{\{\} \vdash (\text{fun } x \rightarrow \text{fun } f \rightarrow f (f x)) : \alpha}$$

- $\alpha \equiv (\beta \rightarrow \gamma); \gamma \equiv (\delta \rightarrow \varepsilon)$

Type Inference - Example

- Current subst:

$\{\gamma \equiv ((\beta \rightarrow \beta) \rightarrow \beta), \varepsilon \equiv \beta, \zeta \equiv \beta, \varphi \equiv \beta, \delta \equiv \beta \rightarrow \beta\}$

- Solves subproof; return one layer

...

$\{f : \delta ; x : \beta\} \vdash (f (f x)) : \varepsilon$

$\{x : \beta\} \vdash (\text{fun } f \text{ -> } f (f x)) : \gamma$

$\{ \} \vdash (\text{fun } x \text{ -> fun } f \text{ -> } f (f x)) : \alpha$

- $\alpha \equiv (\beta \rightarrow \gamma); \gamma \equiv (\delta \rightarrow \varepsilon)$

Type Inference - Example

- Current subst:

$\{\gamma \equiv ((\beta \rightarrow \beta) \rightarrow \beta), \varepsilon \equiv \beta, \zeta \equiv \beta, \varphi \equiv \beta, \delta \equiv \beta \rightarrow \beta\}$

- Need to satisfy constraint $\alpha \equiv (\beta \rightarrow \gamma)$
given subst: $\alpha \equiv (\beta \rightarrow ((\beta \rightarrow \beta) \rightarrow \beta))$

...

$\frac{\{x : \beta\} \vdash (\text{fun } f \text{ -> } f (f x)) : \gamma}{\{ \} \vdash (\text{fun } x \text{ -> fun } f \text{ -> } f (f x)) : \alpha}$

- $\alpha \equiv (\beta \rightarrow \gamma);$

Type Inference - Example

- Current subst:

$\{\alpha \equiv (\beta \rightarrow ((\beta \rightarrow \beta) \rightarrow \beta)),$

$\gamma \equiv ((\beta \rightarrow \beta) \rightarrow \beta), \varepsilon \equiv \beta, \zeta \equiv \beta, \varphi \equiv \beta, \delta \equiv \beta \rightarrow \beta\}$

- Solves subproof; return one layer

$$\frac{\{x : \beta\} \vdash (\text{fun } f \text{ -> } f (f x)) : \gamma}{\{\} \vdash (\text{fun } x \text{ -> } \text{fun } f \text{ -> } f (f x)) : \alpha}$$

Type Inference - Example

- **Current subst:**

$\{\alpha \equiv (\beta \rightarrow ((\beta \rightarrow \beta) \rightarrow \beta)),$

$\gamma \equiv ((\beta \rightarrow \beta) \rightarrow \beta), \varepsilon \equiv \beta, \zeta \equiv \beta, \varphi \equiv \beta, \delta \equiv \beta \rightarrow \beta\}$

- **Done:** $\alpha \equiv (\beta \rightarrow ((\beta \rightarrow \beta) \rightarrow \beta))$

$\{ \} \vdash (\text{fun } x \rightarrow \text{fun } f \rightarrow f (f x)) : \alpha$



Type Inference Algorithm

Let $\text{infer}(\Gamma, e, \tau) = \sigma$

- Γ is a typing environment (giving polymorphic types to expression variables)
- e is an expression
- τ is a type (with type variables),
- σ is a substitution of types for type variables
- Idea: σ is substitution solving the constraints on type variables necessary for $\Gamma \vdash e : \tau$
- Should have $\sigma(\Gamma) \vdash e : \sigma(\tau)$ valid



Type Inference Algorithm

$\text{infer} (\Gamma, \text{exp}, \tau) =$

- Case exp of
 - $\text{Var } v \rightarrow$ return $\text{Unify}\{\tau \equiv \text{freshInstance}(\Gamma(v))\}$
 - Replace all quantified type vars by fresh ones
 - $\text{Const } c \rightarrow$ return $\text{Unify}\{\tau \equiv \text{freshInstance } \varphi \}$
where $\Gamma \vdash c : \varphi$ by the constant rules
 - $\text{fun } x \rightarrow e \rightarrow$
 - Let α, β be fresh variables
 - Let $\sigma = \text{infer} (\{x: \alpha\} + \Gamma, e, \beta)$
 - Return $\text{Unify}(\{\sigma(\tau) \equiv \sigma(\alpha \rightarrow \beta)\}) \circ \sigma$



Example of inference with Var Rule

Instance $\{\text{'a} \rightarrow \text{'w}\}$ ('w a fresh variable)

$\{x:\text{All 'a. ('a * 'b) list}, y:\text{All. 'b}\}|- x : (\text{int} * \text{string}) \text{ list}$

$\text{freshInstance}(\text{All 'a. ('a * 'b) list}) = (\text{'w} * \text{'b) list}$

$\text{Unify}\{((\text{int} * \text{string}) \text{list} = (\text{'w} * \text{'b) list})\} = \{\text{'w} \rightarrow \text{int}, \text{'b} \rightarrow \text{string}\}$

After substitution:

Instance $\{\text{'a} \rightarrow \text{int}\}$

$\{x:\text{All 'a. ('a * string) list}, y:\text{All. string}\}|- x:(\text{int} * \text{string}) \text{ list}$



Type Inference Algorithm (cont)

- Case *exp* of
 - App ($e_1 e_2$) \dashrightarrow
 - Let α be a fresh variable
 - Let $\sigma_1 = \text{infer}(\Gamma, e_1, \alpha \rightarrow \tau)$
 - Let $\sigma_2 = \text{infer}(\sigma_1(\Gamma), e_2, \sigma_1(\alpha))$
 - Return $\sigma_2 \circ \sigma_1$



Type Inference Algorithm (cont)

- Case *exp* of
 - If e_1 then e_2 else $e_3 \rightarrow$
 - Let $\sigma_1 = \text{infer}(\Gamma, e_1, \text{bool})$
 - Let $\sigma_2 = \text{infer}(\sigma_1\Gamma, e_2, \sigma_1(\tau))$
 - Let $\sigma_3 = \text{infer}(\sigma_2 \circ \sigma_1(\Gamma), e_3, \sigma_2 \circ \sigma_1(\tau))$
 - Return $\sigma_3 \circ \sigma_2 \circ \sigma_1$

Type Inference Algorithm (cont)

- Case *exp* of
 - let $x = e_1$ in $e_2 \rightarrow$
 - Let α be a fresh variable
 - Let $\sigma_1 = \text{infer}(\Gamma, e_1, \alpha)$
 - Let $\sigma_2 =$
 $\text{infer}(\{x:\text{GEN}(\sigma_1(\Gamma), \sigma_1(\alpha))\} + \sigma_1(\Gamma),$
 $e_2, \sigma_1(\tau))$
 - Return $\sigma_2 \circ \sigma_1$



Type Inference Algorithm (cont)

- Case *exp* of
 - let rec $x = e_1$ in $e_2 \rightarrow$
 - Let α be a fresh variable
 - Let $\sigma_1 = \text{infer}(\{x: \alpha\} + \Gamma, e_1, \alpha)$
 - Let $\sigma_2 = \text{infer}(\{x: \text{GEN}(\sigma_1(\Gamma), \sigma_1(\alpha))\} + \sigma_1(\Gamma), e_2, \sigma_1(\tau))$
 - Return $\sigma_2 \circ \sigma_1$



Type Inference Algorithm (cont)

- To infer a type, introduce `type_of`
- Let α be a fresh variable
- `type_of` (Γ, e) =
 - Let $\sigma = \text{infer}(\Gamma, e, \alpha)$
 - Return $\sigma(\alpha)$
- Need an algorithm for `Unif`