Lecture #31: Code Generation

[This lecture adopted in part from notes by R. Bodik]

Intermediate Languages and Machine Languages

- From trees such as output from project #2, could produce machine language directly.
- However, it is often convenient to first generate some kind of *intermediate language (IL):* a "high-level machine language" for a "virtual machine."
- Advantages:
  - Separates problem of extracting the operational meaning (the *dynamic semantics*) of a program from the problem of producing good machine code from it, because it...
  - Gives a clean target for code generation from the AST.
  - By choosing IL judiciously, we can make the conversion of IL → machine language easier than the direct conversion of AST → machine language. Helpful when we want to target several different architectures (e.g., gcc).
  - Likewise, if we can use the same IL for multiple languages, we can re-use the IL → machine language implementation (e.g., gcc, CIL from Microsoft's Common Language Infrastructure).

Stack Machines as Virtual Machines

- A simple evaluation model: instead of registers, a stack of values for intermediate results.
- Examples: The Java Virtual Machine, the Postscript interpreter.
- Each operation (1) pops its operands from the top of the stack, (2) computes the required operation on them, and (3) pushes the result on the stack.
- A program to compute 7 + 5:

```
push 7      # Push constant 7 on stack
push 5
add         # Pop two 5 and 7 from stack, add, and push result.
```

- Advantages
  - Uniform compilation scheme: Each operation takes operands from the same place and puts results in the same place.
  - Fewer explicit operands in instructions means smaller encoding of instructions and more compact programs.
  - Meshes nicely with subroutine calling conventions that push arguments on stack.

Stack Machine with Accumulator

- The add instruction does 3 memory operations: Two reads and one write of the stack.
- The top of the stack is frequently accessed
- Idea: keep most recently computed value in a register (called the *accumulator*) since register accesses are faster.
- For an operation op($e_1, \ldots, e_n$):
  - compute each of $e_1, \ldots, e_{n-1}$ into acc and then push on the stack;
  - compute e_n into the accumulator;
  - perform op computation, with result in acc.
  - pop $e_1, \ldots, e_{n-1}$ off stack.
- The add instruction is now

```
acc := acc + top_of_stack
pop one item off the stack
```

and uses just one memory operation (popping just means adding constant to stack-pointer register).

- After computing an expression the stack is as it was before computing the operands.

Example: Full computation of 7+5

```
acc := 7
push acc
acc := 5
acc := acc + top_of_stack
pop stack
```

A Point of Order

- Often more convenient to push operands in *reverse* order, so rightmost operand pushed first.
- This is a common convention for pushing function arguments, and is especially natural when stack grows toward lower addresses.
- Also nice for non-commutative operations on architectures such as the ia32.
- Example: compute x - y. We show assembly code on the right

```
acc := y                       movl  y, %eax
push acc                       pushl %eax
acc := x                       movl  x, %eax
acc := acc - top_of_stack      subl  (%esp), %eax
pop stack                      addl  $4, %esp
```

Translating from AST to Stack Machine

- A simple recursive pattern usually serves for expressions.
- At the top level, our trees might have an expression-code method:

```
class AST {
    ...
    /** Generate code for me, leaving my value on the stack. */
    virtual void cgen (VM* machine);
}
```

- Implementations of `cgen` then obey this general comment, and each assumes that its children will as well. E.g.,

```
class BinopNode : public AST {
   ...
   void cgen (VM* machine) {
      getRight ()->cgen (machine);
      getLeft ()->cgen (machine);
      machine->emitInst (translateToInst (getOp ()));
   }
}
```

We assume here a VM is some abstraction of the virtual machine we're producing code for. `emitInst` adds machine instructions to the program, and `translateToInst` converts, e.g., a *'+'* to *add*.

Virtual Register Machines and Three-Address Code

- Another common kind of virtual machine has an infinite supply of *registers*, each capable of holding a scalar value or address, in addition to ordinary memory.
- A common IL in this case is some form of *three-address code*, so called because the typical "working" instruction has the form

  target := $\text{operand}_1 \oplus \text{operand}_2$

  where there are two source "addresses," one destination "address" and an operation ($\oplus$).
- Often, we require that the operands in the full three-address form denote (virtual) registers or immediate (literal) values.

Three-Address Code, continued

- A few other forms deal with memory and other kinds of operation:

```
memory_operand := register_or_immediate_operand
register_operand := memory_operand
goto label
if operand1 ≺ operand2 then goto label
param operand                ; Push parameter for call.
call operand, # of parameters  ; Call, put return in specific r
```

- Here, $\prec$ stands for some kind of comparison. Memory operands might be labels of static locations, or indexed operands such as (in C-like notation) `*(r1+4)` or `*(r1+r2)`.

Translating from AST into Three-Address Code

- This time, we'll have the `cgen` routine return where it has put its result:

```
class AST {
    ...
    /** Generate code to compute my value, returning the location
     *  of the result. */
    virtual Operand* cgen (VM* machine);
}
```

- Where an Operand denotes some abstract place holding a value.
- Once again, we rely on our children to obey this general comment:

```
class BinopNode : public AST {
   Operand* cgen (VM* machine) {
      Operand* left = getLeft ()->cgen (machine);
      Operand* right = getRight ()->cgen (machine);
      Operand* result = machine->allocateRegister ();
      machine->emitInst (result, translateToInst (getOp ()), left, right);
      return result;
   }
}
```

- `emitInst` now produces three-address instructions.

A Larger Example

- Consider a small language with integers and integer operations:

```
P:    D ";" P | D
D:    "def" id(ARGS) "=" E;
ARGS: id "," ARGS | id
E:    int | id | "if" E1 "=" E2 "then" E3 "else" E4 "fi"
          | E1 "+" E2 | E1 "-" E2 | id "(" E1,...,En ")"
```

- The first function definition f is the "main" routine
- Running the program on input i means computing f(i)
- Assume a project-2-like AST.
- Let's continue implementing `cgen` ('+' and '-' already done).

Simple Cases: Literals and Sequences

Conversion of D ";" P:

```
class StmtListNode : public AST {
   ...
   Operand* cgen (VM* machine) {
      for (int i = 0; i < arity (); i += 1)
         get (i)->cgen (machine);
   }
   return Operand::NoneOperand;
}

class IntLiteralNode : public AST {
   ...
   Operand* cgen (VM* machine) {
       return machine->immediateOperand (intTokenValue ());
   }
}
```

- `NoneOperand` is an Operand that contains None.

Identifiers

```
class IdNode : public AST {
   ...
   Operand* cgen (VM* machine) {
      Operand result = machine->allocateRegister ();
      machine->emitInst (MOVE, result, getDecl()->getMyLocation (machine));
      return result;
   }
}
```

- That is, we assume that the declaration object holding information about this occurrence of the identifier contains its location.

Calls

```
class CallNode : public AST {
   ...
   Operand* cgen (VM* machine) {
      AST* args = getArgList ();
      for (int i = args->arity ()-1; i >= 0; i -= 1)
          machine->emitInst (PARAM, args.get (i)->cgen (machine));
      Operand* callable = getCallable ()->cgen (machine);
      machine->emitInst (CALL, callable, args->arity ());
      return Operand::ReturnOperand;
   }
}
```

- `ReturnOperand` is abstract location where functions return their value.

Control Expressions: if

```
class IfExprNode : public AST {
   ...
   Operand* cgen (VM* machine) {
      Operand* left = getLeft ()->cgen (machine);
      Operand* right = getRight ()->cgen (machine);
      Label* elseLabel = machine->newLabel ();
      Label* doneLabel = machine->newLabel ();
      machine->emitInst (IFNE, left, right, elseLabel);
      Operand* result = machine->allocateRegister ();
      machine->emitInst (MOVE, result, getThenPart ()->cgen (machine));
      machine->emitInst (GOTO, doneLabel);
      machine->placeLabel (elseLabel);
      machine->emitInst (MOVE, result, getElsePart ()->cgen (machine));
      machine->placeLabel (doneLabel);
      return result;
   }
}
```

- `newLabel` creates a new, undefined assembler instruction label.
- `placeLabel` inserts a definition of the label in the code.

Code generation for 'def'

```
class DefNode : public AST {
   ...
   Operand* cgen (VM* machine) {
      machine->placeLabel (getName ());
      machine->emitFunctionPrologue ();
      Operand* result = getBody ()->cgen (machine);
      machine->emitInst (MOVE, Operand::ReturnOperand, result);
      machine->emitFunctionEpilogue ();
      return Operand::NoneOperand;
   }
}
```

- Where function prologues and epilogues are standard code sequences for entering and leaving functions, setting frame pointers, etc.

A Sample Translation

Program for computing the Fibonacci numbers:

```
def fib(x) = if x = 1 then 0 else
                if x = 2 then 1 else
                   fib(x - 1) + fib(x - 2)
```

Possible code generated:

```
f:  function prologue
    r1 := x
    if r1 != 1 then goto L1
    r2 := 0
    goto L2
L1: r3 := x
    if r3 != 2 then goto L3
    r4 := 1
    goto L4
L3: r5 := x
    r6 := r5 - 1
    param r6
    call fib, 1
    r7 := rret
    r8 := x
    r9 := r8 - 2
    param r9
    call fib, 1
    r10 := r7 + rret
    r4 := r10
L4: r2 := r4
L2: rret := r2
    function epilogue
```