# Programming with Recursion and Symbolic Expressions

CIS 352 — Spring 2020 Kris Micinski





### Calculating factorial in Racket (define (factorial n) (if (= n 0) 1 (\* n (factorial (sub1 n))))



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# Calculating factorial in Racket (define (factorial n) (if (= n 0))(\* n (factorial (sub1 n)))) and inductive / recursive case

(define (factorial n)
 (if (= n 0)
 1
 (\* n (factorial (sub1 n)))))

 $(\lambda(x) (x x))$ 

We can think of recursion as "substitution"



Copy defn, substitute for argument **n** 

 $(\lambda(x) (x x))$ (define (factorial n) (if (= n 0))1 (\* n (factorial (sub1 n)))) We can think of recursion as "substitution" > (factorial 2) = (if (= 2 0) (\* 2 (factorial (sub1 2))) = (if #t 1 (\* 2 (factorial (sub1 2)))

Evaluate if

 $(\lambda(x) (x x))$ (define (factorial n) (if (= n 0))(\* n (factorial (sub1 n)))) We can think of recursion as "substitution" > (factorial 2) = (if (= 2 0) (\* 2 (factorial (sub1 2))) = (if #t 1 (\* 2 (factorial (sub1 2))) = (\* 2 (factorial (sub1 2)))

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Evaluate sub1

```
(\lambda(x) (x x))
(define (factorial n)
  (if (= n 0))
       (* n (factorial (sub1 n))))
 We can think of recursion as "substitution"
> (factorial 2)
= (if (= 2 0)
       (* 2 (factorial (sub1 2)))
= (if #t 1 (* 2 (factorial (sub1 2)))
= (* 2 (factorial (sub1 2)))
= (* 2 (factorial 1))
= (* 2 (if (= 1 0))
                             Substitute (again)
         (* n (factorial (sub1 1)))
```

 $(\lambda(x) (x x))$ 

 $(\lambda(x) (x x))$ (define (factorial n) (if (= n 0))1 (\* n (factorial (sub1 n)))) = (\* 2 (if (= 1 0))(\* 1 (factorial (sub1 1))) = (\* 2 (\* 1 (factorial (sub1 1))) = (\* 2 (\* 1 (factorial 0)))= (\* 2 (\* 1 (if (= 0 0) 1 ...)))= (\* 2 (\* 1 (if #t 1 ...))) = (\* 2 (\* 1 1))= (\* 2 1)= 2

 $(\lambda(x) (x x))$ 

 $(\lambda(x) (x x))$ (define (factorial n) (if (= n 0))1 (\* n (factorial (sub1 n)))) = (\* 2 (if (= 1 0))(\* 1 (factorial (sub1 1))) = (\* 2 (\* 1 (factorial (sub1 1))) = (\* 2 (\* 1 (factorial 0)))= (\* 2 (\* 1 (if (= 0 0) 1 ...)))= (\* 2 (\* 1 (if #t 1 ...))) = (\* 2 (\* 1 1))This is "textual reduction" semantics = (\* 2 1)More on this later = 2





 $(\lambda(x) (x x))$ 

 $(\lambda(x) (x x))$ 

Then recursion "bottoms out:" returns back to finish the work

(More on this next week...)

### Complete the following substitution for (log2 2)

**Exercise** 

(define (log2 n) (if (= n 1) 0 (+ 1 (log2 (/ n 2))))

# Write the definition of (fib n) in Racket using the following definition:

$$fib(n) = \begin{cases} 0 & n = 0\\ 1 & n = 1\\ fib(n-1) + fib(n-2) & otherwise \end{cases}$$

#### Answer (one of many)

### **Question**: what is the big-O time complexity of this implementation?

## Answer: O(2<sup>n</sup>) or exponential (Fun fact: actually $\phi^n$ , where $\phi$ is the golden ratio)

We say that this algorithm uses a "top-down" approach

 $(\lambda(x) (x x))$ 

 $(\lambda(x) (x x))$ 

Because it calculates each number by first calculating the previous two fibonacci numbers







#### Lots of redundant work

Instead, use **dynamic programming:** design a recursive solution top-down, but implement as a bottom-up algorithm!



Instead, use *dynamic programming:* design a recursive solution top-down, but implement as a bottom-up algorithm!



### Key idea: only need to look at **two most recent** numbers





Accumulate via arguments

(define (fib n) (fib-h n 0 1))

**Question**: what is the runtime complexity of fib?



**Answer**: O(n), fib-helper runs from **n** to **0** 

### Consider how fib-h executes (define (fib-h i n0 n1) (if (= i 0) n0 (fib-h (- i 1) n1 (+ n0 n1)))) (define (fib p) (fib h p 0 1))

(define (fib n) (fib-h n 0 1))

### (fib-helper 3 0 1) = (if (= 3 0) 0 (fib-h (- 3 1) 1 (+ 0 1))) = ... = (fib-h 2 1 1) = (if (= 2 0) 1 (fib-h (- 2 1) 1 (+ 1 1))) = ... = (fib-h 1 1 2)

Notice that we don't get the "stacking" behavior: recursive calls don't grow the stack

### This is because fib-h is tail recursive

Intuitively: a callsite is in **tail-position** if it is the **last thing** a function will do before exiting (We call these **tail calls**)

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### Tail calls / tail recursion

- Unlike calls in general, *tail calls* do not affect the stack:
  - Tail calls *do not grow* (or shrink) the stack.
    - They are more like a goto/jump than a normal call.
- A subexpression is in *tail position* if it's the last subexpression to run, whose return value is also the value for its parent expression:
  - In (let ([x rhs]) body); body is in tail position...
  - In (if grd thn els); thn & els are in tail position...
- A function is *tail recursive* if all recursive calls in tail position
- Tail-recursive functions are analogous to loops in imperative langs

Which of the following is tail recursive? (define (length-0 l) (if (null? l) 0 (+ 1 (length-0 (cdr l)))) (define (length-1 l n) (if (null? l) n

(length-1 (cdr l) (+ n 1))))

### Answer
# Structured Data

- A list is an example of a recursive data structure
  - Defined via a base case and inductive case:
    - A list is either the **empty list / null / '()**
    - Or a **cons cell** of any element and **another list**
- We can check whether it's **null**? or **cons**? or **list**?
- Can access via car and cdr; or first and rest
  - Many recursive functions on lists built using these

Write a function to calculate the sum of a list

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Answer (one of many)

# Accumulator Passing

- Many functions can be written by *passing an* **accumulator**: a value that is repeatedly extended to obtain a final value.
- Esp. in tail-recursive / looping algorithms; e.g.:

## S-exprs (symbolic expressions)

- The **S-expression** is our parenthesized notation for a list
  - Can use lists to group data common to some structure
- We can *tag* expressions with a symbol to note its "type"
  - '(point 2 3)
  - '(square (point 0 1) 5)
- Can define "constructor" functions

(define (mk-point x y) (list 'point x y)) (define (mk-square pt0 len) (list 'square pt0 len))

## quasi-quotes

- Racket offers **quasi-quotes** to build S-expressions fast
- `(,x y 3) is equivalent to (list x `y `3)
  - I.e., Racket splices in values that are unquoted via ,
  - (quasiquote ...) will substitute any expression , e with the return value of e within the quoted S-expression
- Works multiple levels deep:
  - `(square (point ,x0 ,y0) (point ,x1 ,y1))
- Can unquote entire expressions:
  - `(point ,(+ 1 x0) ,(- 1 y0))

Define mk-point and mk-square using Quasi-quotation:

(define (mk-point x y) (list 'point x y)) (define (mk-square pt0 pt1) (list 'square pt0 pt1)) Define mk-point and mk-square using Quasi-quotation:

(define (mk-point x y) (list 'point x y)) (define (mk-square pt0 pt1) (list 'square pt0 pt1))

#### Answer

(define (mk-point x y) `(point ,x ,y)) (define (mk-square pt0 pt1) `(square ,pt0 ,pt1))

# Pattern Matching

- Racket also has **pattern matching** 
  - (match e [pat<sub>0</sub> body<sub>0</sub>] [pat<sub>1</sub> body<sub>1</sub>]...)
- Evaluates e and then checks each **pattern**, in order
- Pattern can bind variables, body can use pattern variables
- Many patterns (check docs to learn various useful forms)
- Patterns checked in order, first matching body is executed
  - Later bodies won't be executed, even if they also match!
- E.g., (match '(1 2 3)
   [`(,a ,b) b]
   [`(,a . ,b) b]) ; returns '(2 3)





Define a function **foo** that returns:

- -twice its argument, if its argument is a number?
- -the first two elements of a list, if its argument is a list of length three, as a list
- -the string "error" if it is anything else

```
(define (foo x)
  (match x
    [(? ...) ...]
    ...))
```

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```
Answer (one of many)
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```
(define (foo x)
```

```
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```

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- -the string "error" if it is anything else

```
Answer (one of many)
(define (foo x)
(match x
[(? number? n) (* n 2)]
[`(,a ,b ,_)`(,a ,b)]
[_ "error"]))
```

# Structural Recursion

- Structural recursion
  - Recurs on some smaller piece of the input obtained by destructing (e.g., matching) on it.
- Easy to prove termination
  - Code is making input smaller at each recursive step, thus will eventually bottom out
- Much of the code you will write is structurally recursive
- But some things cannot be expressed in a structurally recursive way
  - E.g., generative recursion, other algorithms, ...

Consider that we define trees as follows:

```
(define (tree? t)
  (match t
   [`(leaf ,n) #t]
   [`(node ,(? tree? t0) ,(? tree? t1)) #t]
   [_ #f]))
```

Assuming trees are sorted, write a recursive function using match patterns, (least t) to get the smallest element in the tree (i.e., bottom left leaf). (least (node (leaf 0) (leaf 1)) should be 0 (Hint: look at the definition of tree?)

## Generative Recursion

- Generative recursion
  - Recurs on some structure built / calculated from input
- Not as easy (in general) to prove termination
  - How do we know it won't just loop forever?
- Strictly **more powerful** than structural recursion
  - Some programs we can't write w/ just structural recursion
  - E.g., QuickSort



- To sort list I, first choose a **pivot** element (arbitrary), p, from I
- $\bullet$  Next, construct I' of the elements in I that are < p
- $\bullet$  Also, construct I" of the elements in I that are > p
- Now, return...
  - QuickSort(l') ++ [p] ++ QuickSort(l'')



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Write a function which returns the elements in a list, l, which are less than some number n

# (define (elements< l n) ...)</pre>

Hint: use match

Write a function which returns the elements in a list, l, which are less than some number **n** 

Answer (one of many)

```
(define (elements< l n)
  (match l
  ['() '()]
  [`(,first ,rest ...)
     #:when (< first n)
     (cons first
                         (elements< rest n))]
  [_ (elements< (rest l) n)]))</pre>
```

#### Can also easily write elements>

```
(define (elements< l n)</pre>
  (match l
    ['() '()]
    [`(,first ,rest ...) #:when (< first n)</pre>
      (cons first (elements< rest n))]</pre>
    [ (elements< (rest l) n)]))</pre>
                              Redundant, will fix
(define (elements> l n)
                                  next week
  (match l
    ['() '()]
    [`(,first ,rest ...) #:when (> first n)
      (cons first (elements> rest n))]
    [ (elements> (rest l) n)]))
```

#### **Complete the definition**

- To sort list I, first choose a **pivot** element (arbitrary), p, from I
- Next, construct I' of the elements in I that are < p</li>
- Also, construct I" of the elements in I that are > p
- Now, return...
  - QuickSort(l') ++ [p] ++ QuickSort(l'')

```
(define (quicksort l)
 (if (empty? l)
 '()
   (let* ([pivot (first l)]
       [restl (rest l)]
       [elements-lt (elements< restl pivot)]
       [elements-gt (elements> restl pivot)])
   ...)))
```

```
(define (quicksort l)
  (if (empty? l)
    '()
    (let* ([pivot (first l)]
        [restl (rest l)]
        [elements-lt (elements< restl pivot)]
        [elements-gt (elements> restl pivot)])
        (append
        (quicksort elements-lt)
        (list pivot)
        (quicksort elements-gt)))))
```

Unfortunately, our implementation still has a bug!

#### Exercise: find a list I such that

```
(not (equal? (sort l <) (quicksort l)))</pre>
```

```
(define (quicksort l)
  (if (empty? l)
      '()
      (let* ([pivot (first l)]
           [restl (rest l)]
           [elements-lt (elements< restl pivot)]
           [elements-gt (elements> restl pivot)])
        (append
        (quicksort elements-lt)
        (list pivot)
        (quicksort elements-gt)))))
```

```
Our QuickSort "drops" numbers
(not (equal? (sort '(1 1) <)
(quicksort '(1 1))))
```

```
(define (quicksort l)
  (if (empty? l)
      '()
      (let* ([pivot (first l)]
           [restl (rest l)]
           [elements-lt (elements< restl pivot)]
           [elements-gt (elements> restl pivot)])
        (append
        (quicksort elements-lt)
        (list pivot)
        (quicksort elements-gt)))))
```
```
Solution is to make pivot a list!
(define (quicksort l)
  (if (empty? l)
      '()
      (let* ([pivot (first ])]
              [pivot-list (elements= l pivot)]
              [restl (remove pivot l)]
              [elements-lt (elements< restl pivot)]</pre>
              [elements_gt (elements> restl pivot)])
        (append
         (quicksort elements-lt)
         pivot-list
         (quicksort elements-gt))))
```

Observe: QuickSort recursive on data **built from** input Thus, QuickSort uses **generative recursion** 

```
(define (quicksort l)
  (if (empty? l)
      '()
      (let* ([pivot (first l)]
              [pivot-list (elements= l pivot)]
              [restl (remove pivot l)]
              [elements-lt (elements< restl pivot)]</pre>
              [elements-gt (elements> restl pivot)])
        (append
         (quicksort elements-lt)
         pivot-list
         (quicksort elements-gt))))
```

## Differential / Random Testing

- Want to be **very sure** our code is right
- One strategy: **fuzzing** ("fuzz testing")
  - Generate huge amounts of input, throw it at our code
- One issue: need to check answer is correct
  - Idea one: compare against **known good** version
    - This is "differential" testing
    - Sometimes want a "slow" and "fast" version
      - Slow is obviously-correct but slow
  - Idea two: just check some **properties** of output
    - Property-based testing



Let's write a differential fuzzer for our QuickSort algorithm

```
(define (random-list i n)
  (if (= i 0)
        '()
        (cons (random 0 n)
                    (random-list (- i 1) n))))
```

Generate random list of length *i*, whose elements are all in [0,n-1]

 $(\lambda(x) (x x))$ 

 $(\lambda(x) (x x))$ 



Compare our quicksort against Racket's sort

```
(define (counterexamples num-tries list-size max-n)
  (define (loop i l)
    (if (= i 0))
        (let* ([lst (random-list list-size max-n)]
               [sorted-via-sort (sort lst <)]</pre>
               [sorted-via-qsort (quicksort lst)])
          (if (equal? sorted-via-sort sorted-via-qsort)
              (loop (- i 1) l)
              (loop (- i 1) (cons lst l)))))
  (loop num-tries '()))
```

 $(\lambda(x) (x x))$ 

(counterexamples 300 300 1000)