

Lecture 5

CIS 341: COMPILERS

Announcements

- HW2: X86lite
 - Available on the course web pages.
 - Due: Thursday, February 2nd at 11:59:59pm
 - Pair-programming:
 - Register the group on the submission page
 - Submission by any group member counts for the group

Directly Translating AST to Assembly

- For simple languages, no need for intermediate representation.
 - e.g. the arithmetic expression language from
- Main Idea: Maintain invariants
 - e.g. Code emitted for a given expression computes the answer into rax
- Key Challenges:
 - storing intermediate values needed to compute complex expressions
 - some instructions use specific registers (e.g. shift)

One Simple Strategy

- Compilation is the process of “emitting” instructions into an instruction stream.
- To compile an expression, we recursively compile sub expressions and then process the results.
- Invariants:
 - Compilation of an expression yields its result in `rax`
 - Argument (X_i) is stored in a dedicated operand
 - Intermediate values are pushed onto the stack
 - Stack slot is popped after use (so the space is reclaimed)
- Resulting code is wrapped to comply with `cdecl` calling conventions:
- See the `compile.ml` `compile2`.

INTERMEDIATE REPRESENTATIONS

Why do something else?

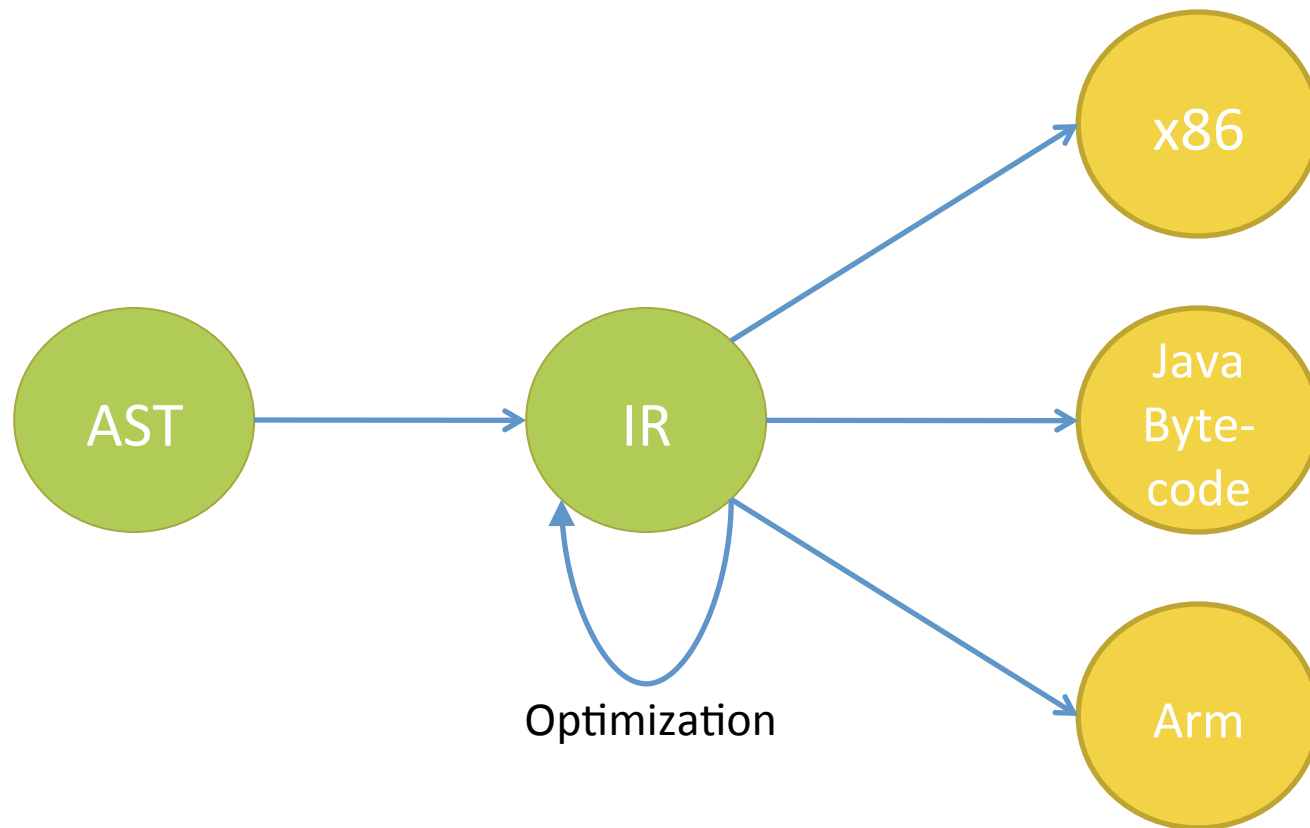
- This is a simple *syntax-directed* translation
 - Input syntax uniquely determines the output, no complex analysis or code transformation is done.
 - It works fine for simple languages.

But...

- The resulting code quality is poor.
- Richer source language features are hard to encode
 - Structured data types, objects, first-class functions, etc.
- It's hard to optimize the resulting assembly code.
 - The representation is too concrete – e.g. it has committed to using certain registers and the stack
 - Only a fixed number of registers
 - Some instructions have restrictions on where the operands are located
- Control-flow is not structured:
 - Arbitrary jumps from one code block to another
 - Implicit fall-through makes sequences of code non-modular (i.e. you can't rearrange sequences of code easily)
- Retargeting the compiler to a new architecture is hard.
 - Target assembly code is hard-wired into the translation

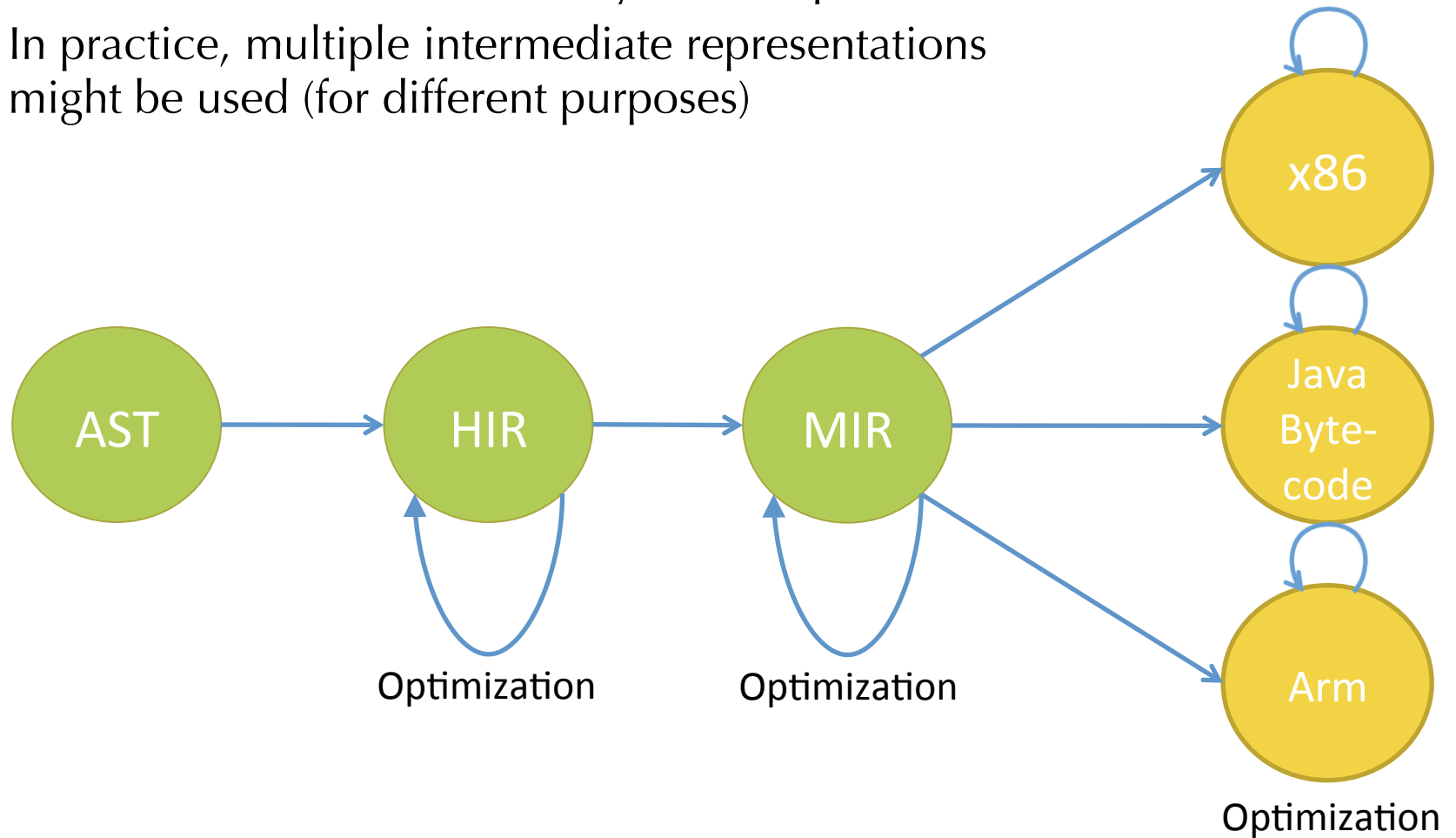
Intermediate Representations (IR's)

- Abstract machine code: hides details of the target architecture
- Allows machine independent code generation and optimization.



Multiple IR's

- Goal: get program closer to machine code without losing the information needed to do analysis and optimizations
- In practice, multiple intermediate representations might be used (for different purposes)



What makes a good IR?

- Easy translation target (from the level above)
- Easy to translate (to the level below)
- Narrow interface
 - Fewer constructs means simpler phases/optimizations
- Example: Source language might have “while”, “for”, and “foreach” loops (and maybe more variants)
 - IR might have only “while” loops and sequencing
 - Translation eliminates “for” and “foreach”

```
[[for(pre; cond; post) {body}]]  
=  
[[pre; while(cond) {body;post}]]
```

- Here the notation `[[cmd]]` denotes the “translation” or “compilation” of the command `cmd`.

IR's at the extreme

- High-level IR's
 - Abstract syntax + new node types not generated by the parser
 - e.g. Type checking information or disambiguated syntax nodes
 - Typically preserves the high-level language constructs
 - Structured control flow, variable names, methods, functions, etc.
 - May do some simplification (e.g. convert `for` to `while`)
 - Allows high-level optimizations based on program structure
 - e.g. inlining “small” functions, reuse of constants, etc.
 - Useful for semantic analyses like type checking
- Low-level IR's
 - Machine dependent assembly code + extra pseudo-instructions
 - e.g. a pseudo instruction for interfacing with garbage collector or memory allocator (parts of the language runtime system)
 - e.g. (on x86) a `imulq` instruction that doesn't restrict register usage
 - Source structure of the program is lost:
 - Translation to assembly code is straightforward
 - Allows low-level optimizations based on target architecture
 - e.g. register allocation, instruction selection, memory layout, etc.
- What's in between?

Mid-level IR's: Many Varieties

- Intermediate between AST (abstract syntax) and assembly
- May have unstructured jumps, abstract registers or memory locations
- Convenient for translation to high-quality machine code
 - Example: all intermediate values might be named to facilitate optimizations that attempt to minimize stack/register usage
- Many examples:
 - Triples: $OP\ a\ b$
 - Useful for instruction selection on X86 via “tiling”
 - Quadruples: $a = b\ OP\ c$ (“three address form”)
 - SSA: variant of quadruples where each variable is assigned exactly once
 - Easy dataflow analysis for optimization
 - e.g. LLVM: industrial-strength IR, based on SSA
 - Stack-based:
 - Easy to generate
 - e.g. Java Bytecode, UCODE

Growing an IR

- Develop an IR in detail... starting from the very basic.
- Start: a (very) simple intermediate representation for the arithmetic language
 - Very high level
 - No control flow
- Goal: A simple subset of the LLVM IR
 - LLVM = “Low-level Virtual Machine”
 - Used in HW3+
- Add features needed to compile rich source languages

SIMPLE LET-BASED IR

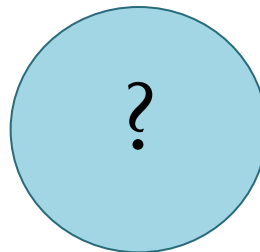
Eliminating Nested Expressions

- Fundamental problem:
 - Compiling complex & nested expression forms to simple operations.

Source `((1 + X4) + (3 + (X1 * 5)))`

AST `Add(Add(Const 1, Var X4),
 Add(Const 3, Mul(Var X1,
 Const 5)))`

IR



- Idea: *name* intermediate values, make order of evaluation explicit.
 - No nested operations.

Translation to SLL

- Given this:

```
Add(Add(Const 1, Var X4),  
      Add(Const 3, Mul(Var X1,  
                        Const 5)))
```

- Translate to this desired SLL form:

```
let tmp0 = add 1L varX4 in  
let tmp1 = mul varX1 5L in  
let tmp2 = add 3L tmp1 in  
let tmp3 = add tmp0 tmp2 in  
tmp3
```

- Translation makes the order of evaluation explicit.
- Names intermediate values
- Note: introduced temporaries are never modified