

Compiling Techniques

Lecture 11: Introduction to Code Generation

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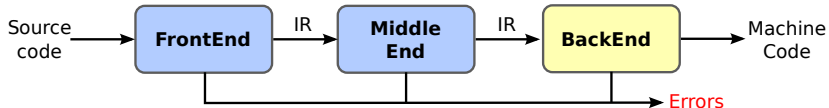
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Overview



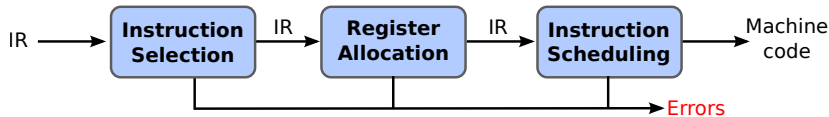
Front-end

- Lexer
- Parser
- AST builder
- Semantic Analyser

Middle-end

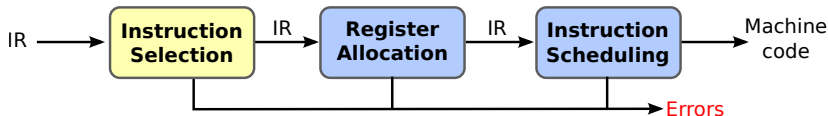
- Optimizations (Compiler Optimisations course)

The Back end



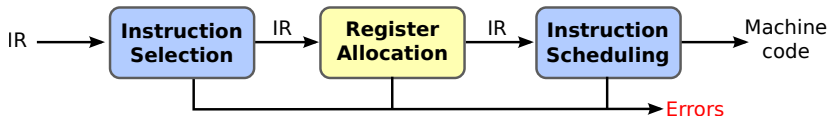
- Translate IR into target machine code
- Choose instructions to implement each IR operation
- Decide which value to keep in registers
- Ensure conformance with system interfaces
- Automation has been less successful in the back end

Instruction Selection



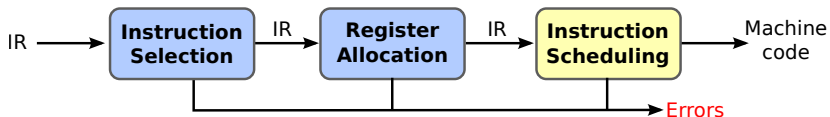
- Mapping the IR into assembly code (in our case AST to MIPS assembly)
- Assumes a fixed storage mapping & code shape
- Combining operations, using address modes

Register Allocation



- Deciding which value reside in a register
- Minimise amount of spilling

Instruction Scheduling



- Avoid hardware stalls and interlocks
- Reordering operations to hide latencies
- Use all functional units productively

Instruction scheduling is an optimisation

Improves quality of the code. Not strictly required.

The Big Picture

How hard are these problems?

- Instruction selection
 - Can make locally optimal choices, with automated tool
 - Global optimality is NP-Complete
- Instruction scheduling
 - Single basic block \Rightarrow heuristic work quickly
 - General problem, with control flow \Rightarrow NP-Complete
- Register allocation
 - Single basic block, no spilling, 1 register size \Rightarrow linear time
 - Whole procedure is NP-Complete (graph colouring algorithm)

These three problems are tightly coupled!

However, conventional wisdom says we lose little by solving these problems independently.

How to solve these problems?

- Instruction selection
 - Use some form of pattern matching
 - Assume enough registers or target “important” values
- Instruction scheduling
 - Within a block, list scheduling is “close” to optimal
 - Across blocks, build framework to apply list scheduling
- Register allocation
 - Start from virtual registers & map “enough” into k
 - With targeting, focus on “good” priority heuristic

Approximate solutions

Will be important to define good metrics for “close”, “good”, “enough”,

Generating Code for Register-Based Machine

The key code quality issue is holding values in registers

- when can a value be safely allocated to a register?
 - When only 1 name can reference its value
 - Pointers, parameters, aggregate & arrays all cause trouble
- when should a value be allocated to a register?
 - when it is both **safe** & **profitable**

Encoding this knowledge into the IR

- assign a virtual register to anything that go into one
- load or store the others at each reference

Register allocation is key

All this relies on a strong register allocator.

Register-based machine

- Most real physical machine are register-based
- Instruction operates on registers.
- The number of architecture register available to the compiler can vary from processor to processors.
- The first phase of code generation usually assumes an unlimited numbers of registers (virtual registers).
- Later phases (register allocator) converts these virtual register to the finite set of available physical architectural registers (more on this in lecture on register allocation).

Generating Code for Register-Based Machine

Memory

x

y

Example: $x+y$

```
loadI @x    → r1 // load the address of x into r1
loadA r1    → r2 // now value of x is in r2

loadI @y    → r3 // load the address of y into r3
loadA r3    → r4 // now value of y is in r4

add r2, r4  → r5 // r5 contains x+y
```

Exercise

Write down the list of assembly instructions for $x+(y*3)$

Exercise

Assuming you have an instruction `muli` (**m**ultiply **i**mmediate), rewrite the previous example.

This illustrates the instruction selection problem (more on this in following lectures).

Visitor Implementation for binary operators

Binary operators

```
Register visitBinOp(BinOp bo) {  
    Register lhsReg = bo.lhs.accept(this);  
    Register rhsReg = bo.rhs.accept(this);  
    Register result = nextRegister();  
    switch(bo.op) {  
        case ADD:  
            emit(add lhsReg.id rhsReg.id → result.id);  
            break;  
        case MUL:  
            emit(mul lhsReg.id rhsReg.id → result.id);  
            break;  
        ...  
    }  
    freeRegister(lhsReg);  
    freeRegister(rhsReg);  
    return result;  
}
```

Visitor Implementation for variables

x

```
loadI  @x    → r1 // load the address of x into r1
loadA  r1    → r2 // now value of x is in r2
```

Var

```
Register visitVar(Var v) {
    Register addrReg = nextRegister();
    Register result = nextRegister();
    emit(loadI v.address → addrReg.id);
    emit(loadA addrReg.id → result.id);
    freeRegister(addrReg);
    return result;
}
```

Visitor Implementation for integer literals

3

```
loadl 3 → r1
```

IntLiteral

```
Register visitIntLiteral(IntLiteral it) {  
    Register result = nextRegister();  
    emit(loadl it.value → result.id);  
    return result;  
}
```


Next lecture

Code Shape

- Conditions
- Function calls
- Loops
- If statement

Memory management

- Static/stack/heap allocation
- Data structure memory layout
- Register spilling