Compiler Design

Lecture 12: Introduction to Code Generation

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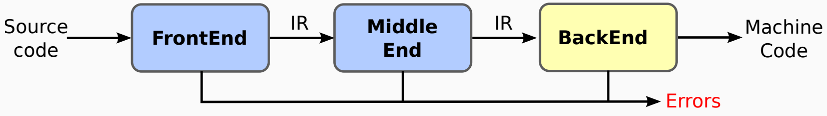
Introduction

Introduction

Overview

Overview



Front-end

- Lexer
- Parser
- AST builder
- Semantic Analyser

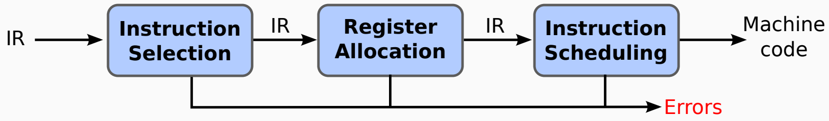
Middle-end

- Optimizations (Compiler Optimisations course)

Introduction

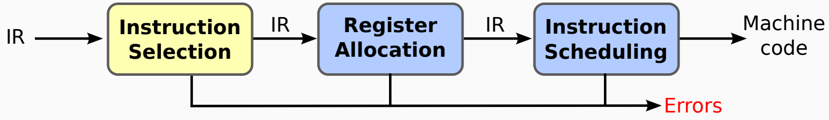
The Backend

The Back end



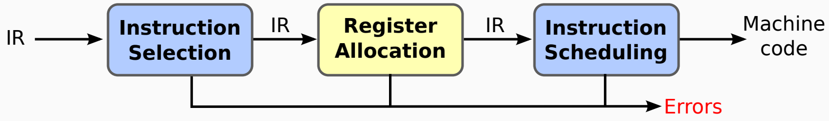
- Translate IR into target machine code
- Choose instructions to implement each IR operation
- Decide which value to keep in registers
- Ensure conformance with system interfaces
- Automation has been less successful in the back end

Instruction Selection



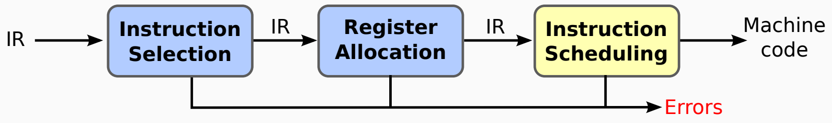
- Mapping the IR into assembly code
  (in our case AST to MIPS assembly)
- Assumes a fixed storage mapping & code shape
- Combining operations, using addressing modes

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.

Introduction

The Big Picture

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 $\Rightarrow$ 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", ...

Code Generation

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 registers to the finite set of available physical architectural registers (more on this in lecture on register allocation).

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 one name can reference its value
- pointers, structs & 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

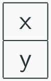
- assign a virtual register to anything that goes into one
- load or store the others at each reference

Register allocation is key

All this relies on a strong register allocator.

Generating Code for Register-Based Machine

Memory



Example: x+y

```
lw    $t0, x # load content of memory at address x into $t0

lw    $t1, y # load content of memory at address y into $t1

add   $t2, $t0, $t1
```

Exercise

Write down the list of equivalent assembly instructions for `4+x*y`

Exercise

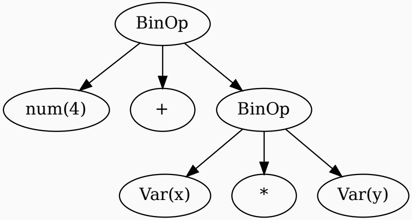
Assuming you have an instruction `addi` (**add i**mmediate), rewrite the previous example.

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

Code Generator Visitor for Arithmetic Expressions

Visitor for Arithmetic Expressions

```
4 + x * y
```



Main idea:

- Traverse AST with visitor: depth first, post-order;
- After traversing a subtree, the visitor returns the register that contains the result of evaluating the subtree.

We will assume an unlimited number of registers is available to us (virtual registers).

Two helper functions:

- `newVirtualRegister` to obtain a unique register
- `emit` to produce an instruction

The following example shows how to implement a visitor to produce code that evaluates expressions.

Expression Code Generator Visitor

IntLiteral

```
Register visitIntLiteral(IntLiteral it) {
  Register resReg = newVirtualRegister();
  emit("li", resReg, it.value);
  return resReg;
}
```

Expression Code Generator Visitor

Var

```
Register visitVar(Var v) {
  Register resReg  = newVirtualRegister();
  emit("lw", resReg, v.label);
  return resReg;
}
```

Here we assume our variables are all `integer` and global.

We will see how to deal with arrays/structs and stack allocated variables in another lecture.

Expression Code Generator Visitor

Binary operators

```
Register visitBinOp(BinOp bo) {
  Register lhsReg = bo.lhs.accept(this);
  Register rhsReg = bo.rhs.accept(this);
  Register resReg = newVirtualRegister();
  switch(bo.op) {
    case ADD:
      emit("add", resReg, lhsReg, rhsReg);
      break;
    case MUL:
      emit("mult", lhsReg, rhsReg);
      emit("mflo", resReg);
      break;
    ...
  }
  return resReg;
}
```

Next lecture

Code Shape

- Conditions
- Function calls
- Loops
- If statement

Memory management

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