Synchronous Objects with Scheduling Policies

Introducing safe shared memory in Lustre

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Motivations

- address the **modular programming** of synchronous systems with **modes**

- allowing to **separate** their **specification** from their **implementation** and their **instantiation** with a particular controller

Existing solutions are either unsafe or too restrictive to allow for a truly modular design

- in synchronous data-flow, shared states must be transmitted explicitly

- the Simulink solution is more modular but rely on unsafe read/write to shared variables

**Proposal:** We make an analogy between modes and object orientation and propose to organize a design in term of classes and objects:

- shared variables play the part of attribute

- subsystems defining the behavior of each mode correspond to methods

- provide modular means to guaranty the absence of conflict (e.g., critical races)
Example: an automotive power-train modeling

- a set of modes described as data-flow block (in Simulink)
- activated through hierarchical automata (in Stateflow)

-- http://amp.ece.cmu.edu/eceseminar/2000/Spring/slides/Butts
Observation

Interest of the approach

- control laws are described as data-flow systems whereas their activation is defined as an hierarchical automaton
- both styles (data-flow + control-flow (automata)) live together and can be combined

Weaknesses

- the control structure is completely hidden in boolean variables
  - E.g., nothing states that do_1 and do_2 are exclusive
  - exclusive flows have to be merged; concurrent writes are not statically checked
- too much wires in this diagram!
  - the current and last value managed explicitly (e.g., t_c2_c and t_c2_l)
  - otherwise, use the “Read/Write” blocks but this may lead to critical races
Other tools/languages

This design methodology can be followed with many other tools combining two different languages/notations: SCADE 5+SSM, PtolemyII, etc.

Still, we need a better/more integrated solution inside a unique language

Mode automata (SCADE 6) [Maraninchi et all, ESOP’98; Colaço et all, EMSOFT’05 and ’06]

Provide a programming construct to describe systems with modes

- modes communicate through shared variables (last o)

- ensure the absence of data-race by simple means

```plaintext
let node updown(y) returns (o)
  last o = 0 in
  automaton
  | Up -> do o = last o + y until (o = 4) then Down Done
  | Down -> do o = last o - y until (o = -4) then Up Done
end

val updown : int => int
```

Seminar INRIA, Paris, March 10th, 2009, page 7/46
Mode Automata

• data-flow equations and hierarchical automata can be **mixed arbitrarily**

• the resulting language is **compiled into a subset language**, mainly Lustre with clocks

• this programming construct is **integrated to SCADE 6**

Still, **mode-automata do not allow for a truly modular** programming of modes allowing to separate:

• the specification of modes

• its instantiation with a precise control automaton

The actual solution is to program modes in a purely functional manner:

• **explicitly communicate values between states** (add extra wires)

• this reduces **modularity** and leads to **poor generated code**

In this sense, the Simulink solution using imperative shared variables is more modular
Mode Automata and Structured Design

Mode-automata are not only related to questions of mixing discrete and continuous dynamics but also to questions of modular design.

Suppose that two teams must develop a system with two modes, up and down...

Software architecture design

- define the functional requirements of the two main modes

- define the interface between them, i.e., the shared state variables the modes have to exchange

- together with their name, types, ranges, precision, timing characteristics, etc.

Mode design

- each team can build its own mode, modeling it, simulating it, testing it

- in Simulink, this will be done thanks to the “Data Read/Data Write” and “Data” blocks.
The up mode

```
A
Data Store
Read

f()
Trigger

A
Data Store
Write

Gain

1
Out1

1
In1
```
The up mode test harness
The up mode test result
The down mode

In a similar way:
In parallel, the architecture team can start studying the global system model dealing with the transition logic.

Intensive use of Stateflow at this stage with global variable blocks of Simulink

For example...
Integration Phase (the updown subsystem)
Integration Phase (the updown test harness)
Interest of the Approach

- it is modular: teams can work quite independently
- problems are dealt with at the right level: problems at each mode are treated at the mode level and global problems are treated at the integration level.
- clearer: global variables allow avoiding complex wiring (and corresponding wiring error)

Question

- this last point is the classical weakness of purely functional programming
- it could be simulated in a purely functional way (with monads-like constructs)
- this would not give good target code
Drawbacks

- those of Simulink/Stateflow first: imprecise semantics, termination problems, weak typing and absence of static checks

- ensure the modes are exclusive in time; otherwise, the semantics of the “Read” and “Write” Data block can become as chaotic as to depend upon the lexicographic order of the subsystems they are included in

- the “Data” block corresponds to the declaration of a shared variable with a “dynamic binding” semantics
  - in the updown system, the fact that “A” reads in “up” match “A” writes in “down” is discovered when the global model “updown” is constructed.
  - this is not necessarily a bad principle but...
  - most modern functional language stick to static binding for safety reasons (remember that block-diagram language are functional first-order languages)
  - Shared variables become global variables: Simulink is not that modular
Some Proposal for Improvement

We have thus identified two main drawbacks related to:

- the exclusivity of mode activation,
- the dynamic binding of shared variable names

Proposal

- a system is an object where shared variables stand for instance variables and modes are methods
- equip with a mean to specify the valid use of an object ensuring the absence of concurrent writes
- build upon control-structures (e.g., [EMSOFT’05, EMSOFT’06])
- source-to-source compilation into an object-based imperative code
Examples

let f x =
  object
    last o = x
    when up(y) returns (o) where
      o = last o + y
    when down(y) returns (o) where
      o = last o - y
    with up # down
  end

val f :
  int -> < up: int => int; down: int => int with up # down >

f is essentially a parameterized class. When evaluated, it returns an object with two methods
The synthesized type gives names of methods, their type and reminds the scheduling policy of the object. Every instance will have to follow it.

```ml
val f : int -> < up: int => int;
     down int => int
     with up # down >
```

- the notation `up # down` states that `up` and `down` are exclusive, i.e., they should not appear both in a synchronous reaction
- `up # down` is a scheduling policy which define what is a valid synchronous reaction
- it defines a finite set of valid scheduling
Instantiation

(* instantiation *)
let node g(x) returns (w) where
   new o = f (x + 2) in
automaton
    | Up -> do v = o.up(y) until (v = 5) then Down done
    | Down -> do v = o.down(y) until (v = -5) then Up done
end

val g : int => int

- new o = f(x+2) instantiates the object. o has a local scope
- the two modes are executed exclusively
- this verification is simple and syntax-directed
Observation Methods

Separate the code that modifies the state form the code that observe it.

let move x y =
   object
      last nx = x
      last ny = y

      when movex(x) returns () where
         nx = last nx + x

      when movey(y) returns () where
         ny = last ny + y

      when show() returns (nx, ny)

         with ((movex || movey) # {}) < show
   end

\[ P_1 \parallel P_2 \] is the shuffle operator; \( P_1 < P_2 \) for the sequence; \{\} is the empty schedule
(Re)-building Lustre primitives: pre, \(\rightarrow\)

let ipre(x) =
    object
        last nx = x
        when get() returns (last nx) where
        when set(y) returns () where
            do nx = y done
    with get < set
end

val ipre : 'a \rightarrow < get: unit \rightarrow 'a; set: 'a \rightarrow unit with get < set >

let pre =
    object
        last nx
        when get() returns (last nx) where
        when set(y) returns () where
            do nx = y done
    with get < set end
val pre : 'a \rightarrow < get: unit \rightarrow 'a; set: 'a \rightarrow unit with get < set >
let (->) =
object
  last init = true
  when get(x,y) returns (o) where
    var o in
    do o = if last init then x else y
    and init = false
    done
  with get end

let node fby(x,y) returns (x -> pre(y))

That is:

let (fby) =
object
  new p = pre
  new o = (->)
  when get(x) returns (o.get(x,p.get()))
  when set(y) returns (p.set(y))
  with get < set
end
What is minimal?

A Lustre node is a particular case of a **synchronous object**

```lustre
let node counter(x,y) returns (z) where
  var y in
  do z = 0 -> pre z + y + cpt done
...
```

\[ r = \text{counter}(x1,x2) \]

is equivalent to

```lustre
let counter =
  object
    when step (x,y) returns (z) where
      var y in
      do z = 0 -> pre z + y done
    with step
  end
...
new m = counter in ... r = m.step(x1,x2)
```
Verification: correct use of an object

In the current implementation, the calling context should respect the scheduling policy specified by the programmer, i.e., it should be included in the set of declared schedules.

```ml
let f x =
  object
    last o1 = x
    last o2 = x

    when one(y) returns (o) where
      o1 = last o1 + y

    when two(y) returns (o) where
      o2 = last o2 + y

  with up || down
end
```

The policy `one || two` policy says that the two methods `one` and `two` must be called in parallel.
Verification: correct use of an object

We can call \texttt{one} and \texttt{two} in a context where the two processes are run in parallel.

\begin{verbatim}
let node main1 x returns o where
  var o in
  new m = f (x+1) in
  do o = m.one(x) + m.two(x) done

let node main1 x returns o where
  var o in
  new m = f (x+1) in
  do o = m.two(m.one(x)) done
\end{verbatim}

The calling context defines a scheduling which must be included in the set of possible schedules.

- $\text{m.one} \parallel \text{m.two}$ projected on $m$ gives $\text{one} \parallel \text{two}$
- $\text{m.two} < \text{m.one}$ gives $\text{two} < \text{one}$ included in $\text{one} \parallel \text{two}$
Verification: soundness of a definition

The policy defines a set of schedules: we check that all of them are coherent

let f x =
  object
    last o = x

    when up(y) returns (o) where
      do o = last o + y done

    when down(y) returns (o) where
      do o = last o - y done

  with up < down end

is statically rejected

- Let \( S = [(\text{last } o < \downarrow o)/up, (\text{last } o < \downarrow o)/down] \)
- \( S(up < down) = (\text{last } o < \downarrow o) < (\text{last } o < \downarrow o) \) is not satisfiable because \( \downarrow o < \downarrow o \) is not
Higher-order

Write a component which take a component as an argument and infer the most general scheduling policy.

let node g h x returns (w)
  new o = h(x+2) in
  do automaton
    | Up -> do v = o.up(y) until (v = 5) then Down done
    | Down -> do v = o.down(y) until (v = -5) then Up done
  end
  and
  w = o.show(x)
  done

val g : (int -> < up: int => int; down: int => int;
        show: int => 'a, ... with (up#down)||show) => 'a

Since we do not know the dependences between methods of o, we infer the strongest constraint.
Higher-order and implicit dependences

We can also syntactically force an execution order

let node g h x returns (w)
  new o = h(x+2) in
  do automaton
    | Up -> do v = o.up(y) until (v = 5) then Down done
    | Down -> do v = o.down(y) until (v = -5) then Up done
  end
  in
  w = o.show(x)
  done

val g : (int -> < up: int => int; down: int => int;
            show: int => 'a, ... with (up#down)<show) => 'a

Here, the context says that show is necessarily done after.
Now we instantiate the previous code with an actual object.

```ocaml
let myf m = object
  when up(x) returns (v) ... 
  when down(x) returns (v) ... 
  when show() returns (...) ... 
  with (up#down)<show
  end

... 

(* instantiation *)
let node main x returns (w) where 
  do o = f myf x done
```

This program is statically rejected in case (1) because \( (up\#down) \mid \mid down \) is not included in \( (up\#down) < show \). It is accepted in case (2).
Scheduling policies and Scheduling Constraints

Policies:

- a scheduling policy is an expression telling what is a valid reaction
- the activation of a mode corresponds to the definition of a clock name; the policy is a boolean property

\[ P ::= m \mid \epsilon \mid P \mid P < P \mid P \neq P \]

Constraints:

- Add shared variables and named methods to policies

\[ C ::= o.m \mid \epsilon \mid C \mid C < C \mid C \neq C \mid \downarrow x \mid \uparrow x \mid \text{last } x \]
Soundness of Policies and Constraints

A stands for an action (e.g., method call, read, write).

Parallel composition as a shuffle operator. This lead to two interesting normal forms:

Constraints as sets of schedules:

\[
\begin{align*}
  t & ::= A \mid A < t \\
  C & ::= \# t_i 
\end{align*}
\]

- Equality, inclusion, intersection simple to compute
- mostly unreadable and algorithmically expensive

Constraints as disjunctions of parallel/sequential schedules:

\[
\begin{align*}
  t & ::= t < t \mid t \mid t \mid A \\
  C & ::= \# t_i 
\end{align*}
\]

- less explosive; this is used for checking that a constraint is causal
Causality

let node f(x) returns (o) where
    var o1 in
    var o2 in
    do o1 = o2 + 1
    and o2 = o1 + 2 done

file "t1.ls", line 7-10, characters 2-63:

Type error: the following constraint is not causal.
^o2 < o1 || ^o1 < o2

A constraint is causal when every schedule is causal. This can be computed efficiently on
the weak normal form. We check the absence of cycles.

let node f(x) returns (o2) where
    var o1 in
    var o2 in
    do o1 = o2 + 1
    and o2 = o1 + 2 done
Soundness and Correction

**Soundness:** $C$ is sound iff for every variable $x$ in $C$, its normal form does not contain $(\downarrow x < \downarrow x)$ nor $(\downarrow x < \uparrow x)$ nor $(\downarrow x < \uparrow \text{last } x)$.

**Relating policies:** inclusion between normal forms

**Restriction:** If $C$ is a constraint, $C|_o$ is the projection of $C$ on $o$. It returns a policy where only method calls $o.m$ have been kept.

**Correct Use of an Object:** If $P_c$ is the declared policy of $o$ and $C|_o$ is the actual policy of $o$. It has to respect $P_c$, that is, $C|_o \subseteq P_c$. 
The Type Language

\[\sigma ::= \forall \alpha_1, \ldots, \alpha_n. \forall \rho_1, \ldots, \rho_m. t\]
\[t ::= t \to t \mid t \times t \mid \alpha \mid c(t, \ldots, t) \mid r\]
\[r ::= \emptyset \mid m : t, r \mid r \text{ with } P \mid \rho\]

A typing environment \(H\) is defined in the following way:

\[H ::= \emptyset \mid H + x : \sigma \mid H + \text{last } x : t \mid H + \text{new } o : t\]

The Type Judgment:

\[H, C \vdash e : t\]

Under typing environment \(H\) and scheduling constraints \(C\), \(e\) is of type \(t\).
Syntax-directed construction of constraints, e.g.,:

\[
\begin{align*}
H, C_1 & \vdash e_1 : t_1 & H, C_2 & \vdash e_2 : t_2 \\
\hline
H, C_1 || C_2 & \vdash (e_1, e_2) : t_1 \times t_2 \\
H, C_1 & \vdash e_2 : t_1 \to t_2 & H, C_2 & \vdash e_1 : t_1 \\
\hline
H, C_1 || C_2 & \vdash e_2 e_1 : t_2 \\
H, \epsilon & \vdash e : \{r \text{ with } C\bigr|_o\} & H + \text{new } o : \{r \text{ with } C\bigr|_o\}, C & \vdash d : H_0 \\
\hline
H, C_o & \vdash \text{new } o = e \text{ in } d : H_0 \\
H & \vdash fields : H_0 & H, s(P) & \vdash objs : H_1 \\
H + H_0 + H_1 + \text{self} : \{r \text{ with } P\} & \vdash modes : r, s & \text{Sound}(s(P)) \\
\hline
H, \epsilon & \vdash \langle fields \text{ objs modes with } P \rangle : \{r \text{ with } P\}
\end{align*}
\]
The Type System:

• it is based on row types as introduced by Rémy & Vouillon for Objective ML [TPOS’97]

• we extend row types with policies

The comma operator (,) is the concatenation for method names and act as the exclusion operator (#) on scheduling policies. Rules are:

\[(r \text{ with } P_1) \text{ with } P_2 = (r \text{ with } P_2) \text{ with } P_1\]
\[(r \text{ with } P_1) \text{ with } P_2 = r \text{ with } P_1 \# P_2\]
\[m_1 : t_1, m_2 : t_2, r = m_2 : t_2, m_1 : t_1, r\]

Using above properties, a row type can be normalized into:

\[\{m_1 : t_1, ..., m_n : t_n \text{ with } P ; \rho\} \text{ or } \{m_1 : t_1, ..., m_n : t_n \text{ with } P\}\]

The unification algorithm of Rémy & Vouillon is modified accordingly.
Example

let node g(f)(x) returns (r) where
  new o1 = f (x) in
  new o2 = f (x+1) in
  var r in
  if (x = 0) then do r = o1.m(x) + o2.m(x) done
  else do r = o1.n(x) + o1.m(x) done

val g :
  (int -> < m: int => int; n: int => int ...
    with {} # m # (m || n) >) -> int => int

Constraints:

\[ H', (o_1.m || o_2.m) \vdash o_1.m(x) + o_2.m(x) : \text{int} \]

and

\[ H', (o_1.n || o_1.m) \vdash o_1.n(x) + o_1.m(x) : \text{int} \]

then

\[ C = (o_1.m || o_2.m) \# (o_1.n || o_1.m) \]
Discussion

Still, we cannot develop and test modes separately without adding extra wires.

An alternative to objects was to simply add (restricted forms) of references + an effect type system. E.g., :

\[
\text{let node up(last x)(y) returns () where}
\]
\[
\text{do x = last x + y done}
\]

- up takes a reference (a left-value) and modifies it

- a type-system with effect (e.g., policy constraints) to check the coherency. E.g.:

\[
\forall \text{last } x: \text{int.int} \Rightarrow \text{unit with } \text{last } x < \downarrow x
\]

- heavy, types hard to read; type inference is complicated in case of higher-order and not conservative
Extensions: inheritance

Still, we cannot develop and test modes separately.

class virtual cup =
  object
    virtual last x : int
    when up(y) returns (x) where
      do x = last x + y done
  end

class type cdown =
  object
    virtual last x : int
    when down(y) returns (x) where
      do x = last x - y done
  end

• join the two with multiple inheritance

• what should be the minimal policies given to each class?

class updown x0 =
  object
    last x = x0
    inherit up
    inherit down end

• The minimal constraint for cup is that up(y) reads and writes x
Related Works

- **Reactive modules** [Alur & Henzinger, FMSD’99]: more expressive (synchronous/asynchronous)

- **Interface automata** [De Alfaro & Henzinger, ESEC/FSE’01]: more expressive signatures (dynamic properties as automata) but need model-checking techniques

- **42 model** [Maraninchi et al, GPCE’07]: general model of a component (synchronous/asynchronous), more general scheduling policies

- A synchronous object generalises the notion of a Lustre node

- The idea of separating the specification from the possible implementations is present in Signal; this is hidden in clocks; needs the full power of the clock calculus
Conclusion and Future Works

• a completely new implementation with these ideas (10000 LOC, Ocaml)

• the target language is imperative and object-based

• automata, signals and flows, (static) higher-order,

• compilation through source-to-source program transformation.

• provide more constructs (as macros) for describing policies

• avoid the declaration of policies

• introduce class and inheritance
References
