Scopes Describe Frames: A Uniform Model for Memory Layout in Dynamic Semantics

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The technical report extends the publication with an appendix describing a class-based language with inheritance and sub-typing, and two appendices specifying additional rules for “going wrong”, needed for the big-step type soundness proofs described in the publication.

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Scopes Describe Frames: A Uniform Model for Memory Layout in Dynamic Semantics

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Abstract
Semantic specifications do not make a systematic connection between the names and scopes in the static structure of a program and memory layout, and access during its execution. In this paper, we introduce a systematic approach to the alignment of names in static semantics and memory in dynamic semantics, building on the scope graph framework for name resolution. We develop a uniform memory model consisting of frames that instantiate the scopes in the scope graph of a program. This provides a language-independent correspondence between static scopes and run-time memory layout, and between static resolution paths and run-time memory access paths. The approach scales to a range of binding features, supports straightforward type soundness proofs, and provides the basis for a language-independent specification of sound reachability-based garbage collection.

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1 Introduction
Name binding and memory management are pervasive concerns in programming language design. There is clearly a connection between the names and scopes in the static structure of a program and patterns of memory allocation, access, and deallocation during its execution. However, existing semantic specifications of programming languages do not treat this connection systematically, and take a wide variety of approaches to handling name binding and memory management. For example, different type soundness proofs for Java-like languages might model types and memory using simple states that map identifiers and references to values [3], untyped frames that rely on traditional environments for typing [24], or ad-hoc lookup functions (or visibility predicates) designed to resolve particular kinds of identifiers such as classes or fields [6, 9]. Existing dynamic semantic specification frameworks (Redex [8], Ott [21], K [20], funcons [2]) provide little guidance in formalizing the connection between static names and dynamic memory.

In the language designer’s workbench project [27], we are pursuing high-level declarative language specifications that are amenable to both verification and implementation using
language-independent techniques. A particular goal is to separate the specifications into distinct aspects so far as possible, such as syntax, binding, typing, run-time behavior, etc. In this context we have developed scope graphs \cite{14, 25} to provide a language-independent framework for static name binding and name resolution. The framework holds promise for dealing with name binding in a uniform way that scales to many binding-aware tools, such as editor services, refactoring transformations, type checkers, interpreters, and compilers.

In this paper, we address the run-time aspect of specification, and develop the relationship between static scope graphs and the dynamic semantics of name binding and run-time memory. Specifically, we formalize a language-independent correspondence between static scopes and heap-allocated frames. The approach is designed to support both verification of meta-theoretic properties and generation of realistic interpreters using fairly low-level memory operations. Our framework is language-independent in the sense of providing a generic set of facilities for describing and implementing binding and memory operations for a wide range of languages.

We make the following contributions:

- We introduce the scopes-as-frames paradigm as a language-independent approach to dealing with name binding for both static and dynamic programming language semantics, by organizing frames in a run-time heap in correspondence to the organization of scopes in a scope graph, and relating static resolution paths to run-time memory access paths.
- We show how frame operations can be used in formulating big-step dynamic semantics, which resemble realistic interpreters. (The generation of high-performance frame-based interpreters from specifications in the DynSem operational semantics DSL \cite{26} is work in progress.)
- We show how phrasing the consistency between frames and scopes as an invariant gives a language-independent principle that helps structure type soundness proofs by providing generic lemmas about preservation of the invariant under various memory operations.
- We demonstrate that scopes-as-frames is independent of particular language features by applying it to a functional language (Section 3), an imperative language with records (Section 4), and a class-based language with subtyping (Appendix C). The same approach (scopes describing frames) is applied systematically to describe call frames, records, and objects instantiating a class.
- We give a high-level, language-independent specification of sound garbage collection of frames, and verify that several standard GC strategies refine this specification.
- We provide a Coq development\footnote{https://github.com/metaborg/scopes-describe-frames/} containing mechanized type soundness proofs for (supersets of) all languages in the paper. The type soundness proofs rely on a language-independent library formalizing scope graphs and frame heaps.

In the next section we introduce the approach by means of an example. In Section 3 we use the approach to specify and prove type soundness for a small language with first-class functions. In Section 4 we extend the formalization to a language with records. In Section 5 we discuss the formalization of garbage collection. In Section 6 we discuss related work. Section 7 summarizes this work and outlines ideas for future work.

\section{Static Scopes Describe Dynamic Frames}

Our approach builds on the theory of name resolution of Néron et al. \cite{14, 25}, which provides the foundation for a language-independent representation of static name binding in programs.
based on *scope graphs*. This section recalls the basics of scope graphs, and introduces a new paradigm for name binding at run time based on scope graphs.

### 2.1 Architecture

We first discuss how this work ties in with previous work on scope graphs. Figure 1 shows the overall architecture of the approach. We assume a program is represented by an abstract syntax tree (AST) produced by a parser. First, a set of name and type constraints is extracted from the AST. Second, a (language-independent) name and type resolution algorithm resolves the constraints and produces an annotated abstract syntax tree and a resolved scope graph [25]. Third, an interpreter evaluates this data structure using a run-time heap consisting of frames to represent the memory of the program.

This paper focuses on the third stage in Figure 1. Our starting point is a *well-bound* and *well-typed* program, represented as an *annotated AST* (where each AST node is annotated with scope- and type annotations) and a *resolved scope graph* (e.g., a scope graph produced by name and type resolution as described in [25]). Section 3 defines these notions formally. Before diving into the formal details, we illustrate the concepts of scope graphs and frame heaps by example.

### 2.2 Scope Graphs

Scope graphs [14, 25] provide a language-independent framework for describing static name binding and performing name resolution, which can support a wide variety of binding constructs. We recall the basic concepts of scope graphs here, starting with a simple but illustrative example.

Figure 2 presents a program that implements the factorial function and computes $\text{fac}(2)$. The figure also presents the scope graph of the program. The nodes of the scope graph represent three basic notions derived from the program abstract syntax tree: *scopes*, *declarations*, and *references*:

- A *scope* is an abstraction of a set of AST nodes that behave uniformly with respect to name binding.
- A *declaration* is an occurrence of an identifier that introduces a name.
- A *reference* is an occurrence of an identifier referring to a declaration.

A declaration is only visible in the scope in which it is declared and in other scopes connected to the declaration scope by a sequence of inter-scope edges. These edges represent visibility idioms such as nesting in lexical scoping and imports in module systems. A key idea is that scope graphs provide a means of resolving which declaration each reference in the AST refers...
letrec fac =
  fun (n : Int) : Int {
    if (n == 0) {
      1
    } else {
      n * fac(n - 1)
    }
  }
in
  fac(2)

---

**Figure 2** The left box contains an example program defining the factorial function. The boxes surrounding code blocks represent scopes. The call-outs refer to points in the execution of the program. The middle box shows the scope graph for this program; the graphical notation is explained in the legend. Distinct occurrences of similarly named references are stacked for conciseness (e.g., scope s2 contains three distinct n references). The right box shows the evolution of the heap as the program executes: there is one top-level frame and three call-frames for the fac function.

To, by finding a resolution path from a reference to a declaration. Thus, a reference represents the use of a name in a scope and is resolved via a path along the edges of the scope graph.

In the example in Figure 2, n is both declared in and referenced from scope s2, which is associated with the function body; the blue resolution paths involve only this scope. Lexical nesting of s2 within the outer scope s1 is modeled by an edge labeled P (for lexical parent); the reference fac in scope s2 resolves to declaration fac in scope s1 via the pink path.

If a given identifier is declared in more than one place, there may be multiple possible resolution paths for references to that identifier. In such cases, we choose the preferred path using a language-dependent specificity ordering and path well-formedness predicate. The resolution calculus introduced in [14] and refined in [25] defines the semantics of resolution and describes algorithms for finding most-specific resolution paths. In this paper, we assume that we already have a resolved scope graph in which each reference has a unique path to a corresponding declaration within the graph.

**Records and field access.** A key benefit of scope graphs is that they can describe many different language binding constructs in a uniform way. As a small illustration of this, we consider a language with records and named fields. Figure 3 shows an example program that defines a record type A with a single field n. The program declares two local variables, x and y. Each of these variables is first assigned new record instances of A; subsequently, the fields of the records stored in the variables are initialized.

The scope graph of the program in Figure 3 contains five scopes. The program scope s1 contains the record type declaration A, where A has an associated scope s2, which is the record scope containing the record field declaration. Scope s3 declares the local variables x and y. The two scopes s4 and s5 are import scopes containing the field references x and y, respectively. These scopes do not contain any declarations, but instead provide access to the fields of records via l-labeled edges. (Building these edges requires resolving the types of x

---
and y; again, in this paper we assume that this resolution has already occurred, e.g. using the methods of [25].) Resolution of field names uses the same paradigm as for variables. For example, the reference to \( n \) in \( s_4 \) is resolved to the declaration in \( s_2 \) via the pink path.

2.3 Dynamic Frames and Heaps

We have illustrated how scope graphs provide a uniform and language-independent model for static name binding. In this paper, we propose a uniform and language-independent model for the layout of memory and the binding of values to names at run time. In this model, the static scope graph provides a blueprint for the layout of memory. The model is based on the notions of frames, slots, and heaps. Frames and heaps provide building blocks for structuring memory that are inspired by how realistic implementations of programming languages organize memory using, e.g., stack frames (for function calls), and heap blocks (for structured memory objects).

- The memory of a program at run time is a heap consisting of frames.
- A frame is a unit of memory consisting of slots mapping names to values, and links to other frames.
- A frame is described by a scope in the sense that each slot corresponds to a scope declaration and each link corresponds to an outgoing scope edge.
- Frames may be allocated when control passes to a program point in a new lexical scope (e.g. on function entry) or when executing an explicit memory allocation command (e.g. `new`). Frames can be garbage-collected when no longer referenced.
- The path for a reference in the static scope graph can be applied directly to fetch the referenced value at run time by interpreting it relative to the “current” frame.

The connection between scopes and frames enables us to define invariants that formally guarantee the absence of run-time errors, as Sections 3 to 5 of this paper demonstrate. In the rest of this section we illustrate how scopes-as-frames support a wide range of name binding phenomena, including functions, let bindings, blocks with local variables, and records; all in a systematic way that follows the same pattern.

Frames and heaps for lexical scoping. Returning to the factorial function example from earlier, the rightmost illustration in Figure 2 shows the evolution of the heap as the example
program executes. In this example, all the frames contain lexically-scoped variables, and correspond to stack frames in conventional language implementations. We examine the execution steps of the program to illustrate how frames and heaps are used to structure memory during run time, and how these correspond to the static scope graph.

- The program frame for scope s1 is created at point (0); and the function closure is assigned to the fac slot. This is the initial current frame.
- The execution of the body of the letrec proceeds to initialize a new frame at point (1), which has the same structure as the scope (s2) that it instantiates: it is linked to a lexical parent frame that instantiates s1; and it has a single slot for n, the sole declaration of scope s2, which is initialized to contain 2.
- At point (2), the newly created frame becomes the current frame. Then the statically computed resolution path for the n reference (colored blue in Figure 2) can be applied, starting at the current frame, to fetch the value n = 2, whence a recursive call to fac is made in the else branch of the example program. Again, fac is dereferenced using the statically computed resolution path (highlighted in pink in Figure 2).
- The recursive call at point (3) creates another frame, and results in another recursive call and frame at point (4). At this point, n evaluates to 0, and the recursive calls return at point (5).

At each step of execution, references are dereferenced relative to the current frame. The run-time memory access path for each reference is the same as its static resolution path.

**Records and field access.** Just as scopes provide a static model for many kinds of binding, frames support a wide range of patterns for binding at run time (not just stack-like binding). In particular, frames can be used to model structured memory objects, such as the records in our second example. These frames are allocated by an explicit new operator in the language.

The rightmost illustration in Figure 3 shows the evolution of the heap during program evaluation. Step-by-step:

- The program frame is created at point (0). This frame has a single slot for A, matching the declaration in scope s1.
- At point (1), the frame for the local variables x and y is created.
- Points (2) and (3) populate the slots for x and y with record values which point to freshly allocated record frames (indicated by the dotted lines at points (2) and (3) in Figure 3). These record frames instantiate the scope (s2) associated to the declaration of record type A.
- Next, the field slots of the record frames are filled in. The slot names are declared in record scope s2, but references to them are placed in intermediate scopes s4 and s5, which import s2. To maintain a consistent relationship between static and run-time paths, we create an intermediate frame corresponding to s4 at point (4). Then at point (5) we use the static path for n to locate the relevant slot in the record frame for x and set the value of n to 1. Points (6) and (7) proceed similarly to (4) and (5).

Once more, the static and run-time resolution paths coincide, as illustrated by the colored paths in the scope graph and heap frame in Figure 3. Note that maintaining this correspondence leads to some infelicities in the dynamic frame layout. The slot created for A in the program frame is actually unused and could have been omitted; declarations of purely static things, like the type name A, do not need a run-time correlative. Similarly, the frames corresponding to the declaration-free scopes s4 and s5 are empty, and having to traverse...
them to reach the record frame is inefficient. We could avoid both of these problems in a real system by using a more nuanced definition of correspondence between static and run-time paths; in this paper, we have elected to keep the scopes-as-frames correspondence as simple as possible.

**Invariants.** We have sketched how the layout of memory in frames follows the scope graph, and how this applies uniformly to a range of binding patterns. We can phrase the systematic correspondence between static scopes and dynamic frames as an invariant. Doing so gives a basis for statically checking and ruling out run-time errors. In a nutshell, the scopes and frames considered in this section all satisfy invariants that can be summarized as:

- **Binding invariant:** (a) the slots of a frame are in one-to-one correspondence with the declarations in the frame’s scope; (b) the links of a frame are in one-to-one correspondence with the labeled edges of the frame’s scope, and the scope of each link target matches the corresponding edge target. Figure 4 illustrates the resulting commuting diagram.
- **Typing invariant:** assuming declarations and values are typed, each slot value has the same type as its corresponding declaration.

These invariants extend to heaps by requiring that all frames in a heap satisfy the invariant. A consequence of these invariants is that each static resolution path can be used to perform corresponding run-time lookups, and (again assuming everything is typed) the values obtained from such lookups will be correctly typed.

In the next sections we formalize the framework and invariants outlined above. Concretely, we show how to define the static and dynamic semantics of a number of model languages with typical programming language binding patterns, and demonstrate and discuss how the scopes-as-frames invariant provides a basis for straightforward type soundness proofs and sound garbage collection.

### 3 Dynamic Frames for a Simple Functional Language

In this section we formalize our approach using L1, a language with arithmetic expressions and first-class, simply-typed functions, as a running example (Figure 8). We first present the language-independent framework of scope graphs to represent the (resolved) name binding and type facts of programs, and we formalize well-bound and well-typed L1 programs in terms of scope graphs. Then we introduce a language-independent framework of frames and heaps for modeling memory layout, and formalize the dynamic semantics of L1 in terms of it. Finally, we will see how phrasing the consistency between frames and scopes as an invariant gives a language-independent principle for proving type soundness, which we apply to prove the type soundness of L1.

#### 3.1 Scope Graphs

We use scope graphs [14] extended with types [25] to provide a uniform (language-independent) treatment of name binding and type assignment in the definition of the static semantics of
Scopes Describe Frames

The path consistency relation checks that there is a path from the initial scope that contains a declaration to a scope containing a reference.

Figure 5 formally defines what we mean by a scope graph. Here we formalize scope graphs and resolution.

**Vertices and edges.** Figure 5 formally defines what we mean by a scope graph, consisting of vertices and edges. A scope graph vertex is either a scope (s), a declaration (x₀ᵢ), or a reference (xᵢ). We assume that each scope identifier, declaration, and reference is unique in the graph. For a declaration x₀ᵢ there is exactly one scope s which contains the declaration, represented as an edge s → x₀ᵢ in the scope graph; similarly, for a reference xᵢ there is exactly one scope s which contains the reference, represented as an edge xᵢ → s.

In addition to edges relating scope identifiers to references or declarations, there are labeled edges connecting two scopes. A labeled edge s →⁺ s' means that s has s' as its lexical parent, and an edge s →⁻ s' means that s imports s'. For language L₁, we only need lexical scoping, but in Section 4 we consider a language with records which relies on imports.

The bottom of Figure 5 defines some useful projection functions for a given scope graph: K(s) is a map from labels l to the set of scopes to which s is connected via label l; D(s) is the set of all declarations contained in a scope; and R(s) is the set of all references contained in a scope.

The last kind of edge defined in Figure 5 is an associated scope edge: x₀ᵢ →⁺ s connects the declaration x₀ᵢ of a named collection of names (e.g., a module or a record) to the scope s which declares the constituent names (e.g., the body of a module or a record). Again, language L₁ does not rely on associated scopes, but the language in Section 4 does.

Finally, in a typed scope graph, declarations are annotated with a type (x₀ᵢ : t).

**Resolution paths.** Figure 6 defines resolution paths. We use the ⊢ᵢᵢ turnstile for predicates and relations that query an underlying scope graph G. A path p is interpreted relative to an initial scope, and is given by a sequence of resolution steps. The resolution step D(x₀ᵢ) checks that the declaration x₀ᵢ is available in the initial scope, while E(l, s) checks that resolution continues by following the edge labeled by l from the initial scope to scope s. The path consistency relation ⊢ᵢᵢ p : s →⁺ (s', xₒᵢ) checks that a path p is consistent with the underlying scope graph, i.e. that there is an actual path in the graph from scope s to declaration x₀ᵢ in scope s'. The relation ⊢ᵢᵢ p : xᵢ →⁺ (s', xₒᵢ) checks that there is a path p from the initial scope that contains xᵢ to a scope s' containing xₒᵢ.

---

**Scope graph**

ScopeId ⊆ s
Vertex ⊆ v ::= s | x₀ᵢ | xᵢ
Edge ⊆ e ::= s l s | s xᵢ | xᵢ s | xᵢ
Label ⊆ l ::= P ⊢ P

**Resolution paths**

Path ⊆ p ::= D(x₀ᵢ) \mid E(l, s) \cdot p
Path consistency

⊢ᵢᵢ s → x₀ᵢ
⊢ᵢᵢ D(x₀ᵢ) : s →⁺ (s, x₀ᵢ)
⊢ᵢᵢ s →⁺ s' \mid ⊢ᵢᵢ p : s' →⁺ (s', xᵢ)
⊢ᵢᵢ E(l, s') \cdot p : s →⁺ (s', xᵢ)
⊢ᵢᵢ p : xᵢ →⁺ (s', xₒᵢ)

---

**Figure 5** Scope graphs  **Figure 6** Resolution paths

programming languages. We introduced scope graphs by example, including their graphical notation, in the previous section. Here we formalize scope graphs and resolution.
fun (x₁ : Int) {  
    (fun (x₂ : Int) {  
        fun (y₃ : Int) {x₄ + y₅}  
    })(x₆ + 3)  
}

In this paper, we assume that scope graphs have been resolved, following the resolution calculus of [14, 25], so that each reference is associated with a unique and consistent path to a declaration. In other words, a resolved scope graph includes a mapping from each reference \( x_i \) to a path \( p \) which corresponds to an actual resolution, i.e. there exist \( s' \) and \( x_j \) such that \( \rightarrow_{\mathcal{G}} p : x_i \mapsto s' (s', x_j) \). When there are multiple possible resolution paths for a reference, the resolution calculus uses language-specific well-formedness and specificity ordering rules to choose which path to prefer. Since we are assuming resolution has already occurred, we ignore the details of these rules in this paper.

**An example scope graph.** Figure 7 defines the scope graph for an L1 expression which nests three functions (where we have replaced identifiers with unique references and declarations). Here, the \( \mathcal{P} \) edges connect the inner scope of each function to its enclosing (lexical) scope. For example, the reference \( x_4 \) has a trivial path in the scope graph. We write \( p_0 = D(x_4) : x_4 \mapsto x_4 \) for this resolution path, which says that the declaration \( x_4 \) is found in the same scope as the reference \( x_4 \). Similarly, the resolution path for \( y_5 \) is \( p_5 = D(y_5) : y_5 \mapsto y_5 \). In contrast, there are two possible paths from reference \( x_3 \) to matching declarations: \( p_4 = E(P, s_2) \cdot D(x_3) \) and \( p'_4 = E(P, s_2) \cdot E(P, s_1) \cdot D(x_3) \). In this case, the shorter path \( p_4 \) would be preferred over the longer path \( p'_4 \) according to L1’s path specificity ordering rules, which encode lexical scoping (shadowing). Thus, the complete resolution mapping for this graph is \( \{ x_0 \mapsto p_0, y_0 \mapsto p_5, x_4 \mapsto p_4 \} \).

### 3.2 Well-Bound and Well-Typed Terms

Scope graphs provide a language-independent data structure for representing name binding and typing facts about the declarations and references in a program. To reason about the relation of this model to the program that it represents, we define a well-boundness and a well-typedness predicate on abstract syntax trees annotated with scope and type information. Figure 9 defines annotated terms for L1, ranged over by \( a \), where expressions are annotated by their scope \( s \) and their type \( t \). Identifiers have been replaced with unique references and declarations. We define well-boundness and well-typedness as separate predicates that check the consistency of (the annotations of) a term with respect to its scope graph. In definitions of these predicates, we omit the annotation that is not relevant for the property checked by the rule; that is, we leave out the type annotation in the well-boundness rules, and the scope annotation in the well-typedness rules. All rules are implicitly parameterized by a common underlying scope graph \( \mathcal{G} \); all occurrences of \( \rightarrow_{\mathcal{G}} \) query this \( \mathcal{G} \).

The well-boundness rules in Figure 10 check that a term is well-bound relative to a resolved scope graph \( \mathcal{G} \). That is, the scope graph is consistent with the scoping patterns of the term, and each reference is bound, i.e., resolves to a declaration with a path that is consistent with the scope graph. Rules [WbArithOp, WbApp] check that the child terms...
We now develop the formalization of the language-independent system of heaps and frames to represent memory at run-time. Figure 12 defines frames, heaps, and some operations on them that we will use in the dynamic semantics of L1. The framework is parameterized with a domain \( \text{Val} \) of values.

A heap \( h \) is a finite map from frame identifiers (pointers) to frames. A frame consists of a scope identifier, a collection of dynamic links, and a collection of slots. The scope identifier refers to the scope that the frame instantiates. The dynamic links are defined as a two-dimensional mapping from labels and scopes to frame identifiers. These links are the dynamic counterparts of labeled edges in the scope graph and implement the link from a

3.3 Frames and Heaps

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Frames and heaps

\[ f \in \text{FrameId} = \{f_1, f_2, \ldots\} \]
\[ ks \in \text{DynLinks} = \text{Label} \mapsto \text{ScopeId} \mapsto \text{FrameId} \]
\[ \sigma \in \text{Slots} = \text{Decl} \mapsto \text{Val} \]
\( (s, ks, \sigma) \in \text{Frame} = \text{ScopeId} \times \text{DynLinks} \times \text{Slots} \)
\( h \in \text{Heap} = \text{FrameId} \mapsto \text{Frame} \)

Projection functions

\[ S_h(f) = s \quad \text{where} \quad h(f) = \langle s, ks, \sigma \rangle \]
\[ K_h(f) = ks \quad \text{where} \quad h(f) = \langle s, ks, \sigma \rangle \]
\[ D_h(f) = \sigma \quad \text{where} \quad h(f) = \langle s, ks, \sigma \rangle \]

Operations on frames

- initFrame
- get
- lookup

Dynamic address lookup

\[ x^0_i \in \text{Dom}(D_h(f)) \]
\[ \text{lookup}(f, h, D(x^0_i)) \Rightarrow \text{Addr}(f, x^0_i) \]
\[ K_h(f)(l)(s) = f' \quad \text{lookup}(f', h, p) \Rightarrow \text{Addr}(f'', x^0_i) \]
\[ \text{lookup}(f, h, E(l, s) \cdot p) \Rightarrow \text{Addr}(f'', x^0_i) \]

Fetching and mutating slot values

\[ \text{get}(f, h, x^0_i) \Rightarrow v \]
\[ \text{set}(f, h, x^0_i, v) \Rightarrow h' \]
\[ x^0_i \in \text{Dom}(D_h(f)) \]

Values

\( Val \ni v ::= \text{NumV}(z) \mid \text{CloV}(x^0_i, a, f) \)

Dynamic semantics

\[ f \vdash z/h \Rightarrow \text{NumV}(z)/h \]
\[ f \vdash p : x^0_i \Rightarrow (s', x^0_j) \quad \text{lookup}(f, h, p) \Rightarrow \text{Addr}(f', x^0_j) \quad \text{get}(f', h, x^0_j) \Rightarrow v \]
\[ f \vdash x^0_i/h \Rightarrow v/h \]
\[ f \vdash a_1/h_1 \Rightarrow \text{NumV}(z_1)/h_2 \]
\[ f \vdash a_2/h_2 \Rightarrow \text{NumV}(z_2)/h_3 \]
\[ f \vdash a_1 \oplus a_2/h_1 \Rightarrow \text{NumV}(\oplus(z_1, z_2))/h_3 \]
\[ f \vdash \text{fun}(x^0_i : t) (a_1/h) \Rightarrow \text{CloV}(x^0_i, a, f)/h \]
\[ f \vdash a_1/h_1 \Rightarrow \text{CloV}(x^0_i, a', f')/h_2 \]
\[ f \vdash a_2/h_2 \Rightarrow v/h_3 \]
\[ \text{initFrame}(S(a'), \{P \mapsto \{S_h(f') \mapsto f'\}, \{x^0_i \mapsto v\})/h_3 \Rightarrow \text{f''}/h_4 \]
\[ f'' \vdash a'/h_4 \Rightarrow v'/h_5 \]
\[ f \vdash a_1(a_2)/h_1 \Rightarrow v'/h_5 \]

Figure 12 A language-independent formalization of frames and heaps

Figure 13 Dynamic semantics of L1
frame to the frame that represents its lexical context or an imported module. The slots of a frame are defined as a finite map from declarations to values.

We define operations on heaps to construct new frames and retrieve slot values. Note that all operations will refer to frames using their frame identifier \( f \). Accessing frames is done via a lookup in the heap \( (b(f)) \) and using the projection functions \( S(\_), K(\_), \) or \( D(\_) \). We will write ‘frame’ \( f \) as shorthand for ‘the frame referred to by frame identifier \( f \)’. The \texttt{initFrame}(s, ks, \sigma) operation adds a new frame with scope identifier \( s \), links \( ks \), and slots \( \sigma \), to the heap at a fresh frame identifier. The operation is defined as a relation \texttt{initFrame}(s, ks, \sigma)/h \Rightarrow f'/h'\), using the notation \( t/h \) to represent the pair of a term (or value) \( t \) and a heap \( h \). We use this notation throughout to explicitly represent heap threading. (We could use a state monad to implicitly thread the heap, but we prefer to make semantic rules explicit for this presentation.)

The lookup operation \texttt{lookup}(f, h, p) \Rightarrow \texttt{Addr}(f', x^0)\) dereferences a path \( p \) relative to frame \( f \), resulting in an address, consisting of a pair of a frame \( f' \) and a slot \( x^0 \) in that frame. The operation \texttt{get}(f, h, x^0) \Rightarrow v\) retrieves the value \( v \) of slot \( x^0 \) from frame \( f \); and \texttt{set}(f, h, x^0, v) \Rightarrow h'\) sets the value of slot \( x^0 \) of frame \( f \) to \( v \), resulting in a new heap \( h'\).

### 3.4 Dynamic Semantics

Figure 13 specifies the big-step dynamic semantics for L1 using a heap to represent the memory during execution. The value domain \texttt{Val} consists of numbers \texttt{NumV}(z) and closures \texttt{CloV}(x^0, a, f). The judgment \( f \vdash a/h \Rightarrow v/h'\) specifies that evaluating an annotated expression \( a \) in the context of frame \( f \) in heap \( h \) gives a value \( v \) and heap \( h' \). We discuss the rules and use the example in Figure 14 as illustration:

- The Rules \texttt{EvInt}, \texttt{EvArithOp} for arithmetic are standard and do not affect memory other than passing the current frame to evaluation of arguments and threading the heap.
- Rule \texttt{EvFun} constructs a closure which records the formal parameter, the body of the function, and the lexical context at the point of function definition, which is exactly represented by the current frame \( f \). In Figure 14, the result of evaluating the function in the body of the function at \( (3) \) leads to a closure with frame \( s3 \) as lexical context.
- Rule \texttt{EvApp} defines the evaluation of a function application. The function argument \( a_1 \) should evaluate to a closure. Using \texttt{initFrame} a new frame instantiating the scope of the function body \((S(a'))\) is constructed to represent the call frame of the function call. The frame from the closure \((f')\) is used as the lexical parent of the call frame. The argument value \((v)\) is assigned to the slot for the formal parameter of the function \((x^0)\). The body of the function \((a')\) is evaluated in the context of the new frame. In Figure 14, in the application \( f(1)\), \( f \) evaluates to a closure with a pointer to the \( s3 \) frame. The call frame for the body then constructs a frame for \( s4 \) with the \( s3 \) frame as its parent.
- Rule \texttt{EvRef} defines the evaluation of a variable \( x_a \). The frame \( f \) represents the lexical context of the variable and the static scope graph path of the (reference representing the) variable is the offset into that context. The lookup happens in multiple steps: first, we find the path associated with \( x_a \) in the resolved scope graph; second, we dynamically follow the path to compute the dynamic memory address for the reference; lastly, we get the value of the dynamic memory address. In Figure 14, the evaluation at \((5)\) of variable \( x \) in the \( s4 \) frame follows the path defined for \( x \) in the scope graph. (Note how the call-time context of \( f \) is not accessible to the evaluation of the closure in frame \( s4 \).)
fun(f: Int -> Int): Int {
  f(1)
}(
  fun(x: Int){ 
    fun(y: Int) { 
      x + y 
    } 
  }(3)
)

Figure 14 Example L1 program with scope graph and heap.

3.5 Intermezzo

What have we learned from this exercise so far? (1) There is a systematic correspondence between static name binding and binding at run-time. Static scopes are collections of declarations. Dynamic frames are units of memory allocation, holding values for the declarations in a scope. Static name binding is about visibility of declarations following a path from reference through the scope graph. Binding at run-time is about paths from evaluation frame to storage frame. This correspondence provides a guiding principle for the definition of the dynamic semantics. Evaluating a binding construct requires creation of a frame that instantiates the corresponding static scope. Evaluating a reference requires looking up its value in the heap using its static path as offset. (2) We can mostly separate the specification of binding and typing rules. Binding rules are concerned with describing the structure of and the access to memory. Typing rules are concerned with the types of the arguments and results of operations. In the dynamic semantics this corresponds to factoring out (and making systematic and uniform) the treatment of memory from other ‘domain-specific’ operations (such as arithmetic). We have seen that typing depends on binding in order to establish the types of references. In the next section we will see that binding depends on typing exactly when types are used to describe memory in data type definitions.

In conclusion: defining name binding in terms of scope graphs provides a uniform methodology (an API if you want) for the treatment of memory in static and dynamic semantics. This scales to a range of language features: in Section 4 we show that the approach scales to imperative features and records, and Appendix C shows how to deal with classes and subtyping.

What other benefits does the approach provide? The design of this uniform memory model is just the start of a study of making language-independent those aspects of programming language design that are usually treated as language-specific. In Section 3.6 we will see how phrasing the consistency between frames and scopes as an invariant gives a language-independent principle for proving type soundness, i.e. that well-bound and well-typed programs cannot go wrong. Later, in Section 5 we discuss a high-level language-independent specification of sound reachability-based garbage collection of frames, and verify that several standard GC strategies refine this specification.

3.6 Type Soundness

We have argued that the structure of frames follows the structure of scopes. Now we make this argument precise by defining the correspondence between frames and scopes, and discuss how that supports a language-independent formulation and systematic proof of type soundness.
**Good frame**

For any definition of types $t$, values $v$, and value typing relation $\vdash$:

wellBound$(h, f) \triangleq$

$$\exists s. \; s = S_h(f) \land D(s) = Dom(D_h(f)) \land$$

$$(\forall l. \; s' \in K(s)(l) \iff S_h(K_h(f)(l))(s') = s')$$

wellTyped$(h, f) \triangleq$

$$\forall t. \; x \in D(S_h(f)). \; x \vdash t \Rightarrow \forall v. \; D_h(f)(x) = v \Rightarrow h \vdash v : t$$

goodFrame$(h, f) \triangleq$

wellBound$(h, f) \land$ wellTyped$(h, f)$

**Good heap**

goodHeap$(h) \triangleq (f \in Dom(h) \Rightarrow$ goodFrame$(h, f))$

---

**Value typing**

- $h \vdash \text{NumV}(z) : \text{Int}$
- $h \vdash \text{fun}(x^0 : t_1) \{ a \}^{S_h(f)} \vdash \text{fun}(x^0 : t_1) \{ a \}^{t_1 \rightarrow t_2}$
- $h \vdash \text{ClosV}(x^0, a, f) : t_1 \rightarrow t_2$

**Figure 15** Good frames, good heaps, and value typing

**Good frames.** The goodFrame property defined in Figure 15 formally captures the correspondence between frames and scopes. The definition relies on two auxiliary properties:

1. **wellBound:** Maintains the binding invariant that frames have the same structure as their scopes. Specifically, the slots $D_h(f)$ of each frame $f$ are in one-to-one correspondence with the declarations of scope $S_h(f)$, and the links $K_h(f)$ of $f$ are in one-to-one correspondence with the edges $\{ l \mapsto s' \} \in K(s)$, such that $K_h(f)(l)(s') = s'$.

2. **wellTyped:** Maintains the typing invariant that slots contain values of the type that their declarations expect. Specifically, for each declaration and its corresponding slot (if it exists) in the frame, the value in the slot is of the same type as the declaration.

These properties are language-independent, i.e. define a generic correspondence between scopes and frames, but are parameterized by a language-specific value typing judgment $h \vdash v : t$ (also defined in Figure 15) which asserts that the value $v$ has type $t$ in the heap $h$.

The value typing of closures (Rule $[\text{VtClo}]$) checks that the closure corresponds to an actual well-typed and well-bound function relative to the scope of the lexical frame recorded in the closure, using the rules from Figure 10 and Figure 11.

**Good heaps.** The goodHeap property also defined in Figure 15 generalizes the goodFrame property to the entire heap; that is, a heap $h$ is good if every frame in $h$ satisfies the goodFrame property.

**Language-independent lemmas.** The scopes-as-frames approach provides structure to type soundness proofs by using a small suite of language-independent helper lemmas about dynamic memory operations, such as looking up a path, initializing a new frame, etc. For example, Lemma 1 formalizes the property that each static resolution path has a corresponding run-time memory access path.
Lemma 1 (Good paths). Suppose goodHeap(h) and S_h(f) = s. For any reference x_R^i where \( \Gamma \vdash x_R^i \rightarrow s \), it holds for any p, s', ... and checks that the record definitions ds are well-bound, and that the expression e of a program is well-bound.

This, along with a number of other lemmas, provides structure to the type preservation proof that we discuss next. We refer the reader to our Coq development for the full details.

**Type preservation.** Theorem 2 proves type preservation, i.e., that if evaluation of a well-bound and well-typed program in a frame that is in a good heap succeeds, then the resulting value is of the expected type, and the resulting heap is good.

Theorem 2 (Type preservation for L1). Suppose goodHeap(h_1) and S_{h_1}(f) = s, as well as \( \Gamma, e^* \vdash e^t \) hold. Then, for any v and h_2, \( f \vdash e^t/h_1 \Rightarrow v/h_2 \) implies goodHeap(h_2) and \( h_2 \vdash v : t \).

There are several ways to extend type preservation proofs to type soundness proofs. A traditional approach [11] to proving type soundness using big-step semantics is to add explicit “wrong” rules to a big-step semantics anywhere evaluation can get stuck. This allows distinguishing between getting stuck and diverging, which is otherwise impossible using the inductively defined big-step rules in Figure 13. Appendix A presents the rules that need to be added to the language. The rules and full type soundness proof can also be found in our Coq development. Adding wrong rules to a language does not alter the structure of the cases for the preservation proof. Section 6 recalls and discusses alternative means of proving type soundness using big-step semantics.

**4 Dynamic Frames for Records**

In this section we apply our approach to L2, an extension of L1 with records and imperative features. This shows that frames-as-scopes scales to model the memory layout for records, and that the invariants about frames and heaps given in the previous section also provide a basis for type soundness proofs for languages with such features.

Figure 16 defines the well-formed terms of L2 with changes from L1 highlighted. A program in L2 consists of a sequence of record type definitions d, and a program expression e, enclosed in a `begin ... end` block. A record type definition declares the type name and the record’s field names. Records are constructed using the `new` construct, which takes a reference that resolves to a record type name declaration. L2 also adds an assignment operation (`_ := _`), which assigns a value to a memory address. Memory addresses (or L-values [23]) consist of frame-declaration pairs \((f, x^0)\), and are computed by left-hand side (lhs) expressions, namely variables \((x^0)\) and record field access \((a.x^0)\). Finally, L2 has a sequential composition operator \(_; _\).

**4.1 Well-Bound and Well-Typed Terms**

Figure 17 specifies the well-boundness rules for the newly introduced L2 terms. The well-boundness of L1 expressions from Figure 10 carry over to L2. Well-boundness checking in L2 uses three new kinds of judgments: \(b^p, b^f\) for programs, \(b^d, b^l\) for declarations, and \(b^l, b^r\) for lhs expressions. The well-typedness of terms in L1 also carries over to L2. Figure 18 defines rules for checking the well-typedness of the new programs and terms in L2.

- Rule [WbProg] defines the well-boundness of programs and checks that the record definitions ds are well-bound, and that the expression e of a program is well-bound.
Well-bound programs
\[ \forall d \in ds. \quad \frac{\vdash p}{\vdash e^s} \quad \frac{\vdash d^s}{\vdash e^s} \quad \frac{\vdash ds \begin{array}{l} \text{begin} \end{array} \begin{array}{l} e \end{array} \text{end}}{\vdash e^s} \]

Well-bound declarations
\[ \frac{\vdash s \rightarrow x_i^0}{\vdash e^s} \quad \frac{\forall \langle x_j^0 : t \rangle \in \text{flds}. \quad \vdash e^s \rightarrow x_j^0}{\vdash e^s} \]

Well-bound expressions
\[ \frac{\vdash p \rightarrow x_i^0 \rightarrow (s', x_j^0)}{\vdash e^s} \quad \frac{\vdash \text{new } x_i^0}{\vdash e^s} \quad \frac{\vdash \text{rec } x_i^0 \{ \text{flds } \}}{\vdash e^s} \]

Well-bound Lhs expressions
\[ \frac{\vdash e^s}{\vdash \text{rec } x_i^0} \quad \frac{\vdash x_i^0 \rightarrow s'}{\vdash \text{rec } x_i^0} \quad \frac{\vdash \text{new } x_i^0}{\vdash \text{rec } x_i^0} \]

Well-typed programs
\[ \forall d \in ds. \quad \frac{\vdash d^s}{\vdash e^t} \quad \frac{\vdash ds \begin{array}{l} \text{begin} \end{array} \begin{array}{l} e \end{array} \text{end}}{\vdash e^t} \]

Well-typed declarations
\[ \forall \langle x_j^0 : t \rangle \in \text{flds}. \quad \frac{\vdash x_j^0 \rightarrow t}{\vdash x_j^0 \rightarrow t} \]

Well-typed Lhs expressions
\[ \frac{\vdash e^t}{\vdash \text{rec } x_i^0} \quad \frac{\vdash x_i^0 \rightarrow s'}{\vdash \text{rec } x_i^0} \quad \frac{\vdash \text{new } x_i^0}{\vdash \text{rec } x_i^0} \]

Figure 16 Annotated syntax of L2 with distinguished references and declarations

Figure 17 Well-boundness in L2

Figure 18 Well-typedness in L2
Rule [WbRD] in Figure 17 checks that the type name \( x_i \) is declared in the surrounding scope \( s \), that it is associated with scope \( s' \), which has the surrounding scope \( s \) as its lexical parent, and that each field of the record is declared in scope \( s' \).

Rule [WbNew] checks that the record name resolves to a record declaration. Also, the associated record scope does not have any edges, a fact which is needed when initializing a matching record frame.

Rules [WbAsgn] and [WtAsgn] simply check that both the lhs expression and the value expression are well-bound and well-typed. Rules [WbLhs,WtLhs] in turn rely on a separate judgment for checking that an lhs expression (either a field access or a variable) is well-bound and well-typed.

Rules [WbLFAcc] and [WtLFAcc] describe the static semantics of field access. In a field access expression such as \( a.x_i \), the annotated expression \( a \) computes a record, and the reference \( x_i \) refers to a field declared in this record. The field reference is installed in an auxiliary scope \( s' \) that imports the scope \( s_{rec} \) associated with the record type \( \text{Rec}(x_i) \).

4.2 Dynamic Semantics

The dynamic semantics of most existing constructs from \( L_1 \) is unchanged in \( L_2 \). Figure 19 gives the dynamic semantics of the new constructs in the \( L_2 \) extension and replaces the rule for variables since variables are now lhs expressions. We describe these changes.

Rule [EvNew] says that evaluating a new expression constructs a record frame via initDefault\((s, ks)\). Here, \( s \) is a scope identifier and \( ks \) is the map of dynamic links for the frame. As specified in Figure 20, initDefault instantiates all slots of the frame with default values. The \( f \) judgment in Figure 20 defines default values for all types in \( L_2 \). We introduce a special default function \( \text{DFun}(v) \) which, when applied to anything, returns the value \( v \). Rule [EvAppDef] specifies the semantics for applications involving this value.

We also introduce the null value, NullV, as the default value for record types. Trying to access a null value, NullV, as a field results in a null-pointer exception being raised (Rule [LhsFAccNull]). Not shown in Figure 19 are the straightforward rules for propagating such exceptions, which are summarized in Appendix B. We choose to let frames contain null values by default for several reasons: firstly, null values (or a variant thereof) are required if we want to construct self-referential records. Secondly, using default values and null values ensures that frames are always well-typed, which makes reasoning about type soundness easier.

The rules in Fig. 19 closely follow the static semantics for binding and typing. For example, Rule [LhsFAcc] initializes an import frame which is used as the basis for dynamic resolution. In order to evaluate lhs expressions, a new judgment \( f \vdash \text{lhs} \to u/h' \) is introduced that evaluates a \( \text{lhs} \) to an address, or throws a null-pointer exception if the lhs expression attempts to access a field of a null value. Lhs expressions compute auxiliary values ranged over by \( u \), as defined in Figure 19.

Rule [EvAsgn] uses set\((f, h, x_i, v) \Rightarrow h' \) for updating frame \( f \) in heap \( h \) by assigning \( v \) to slot \( x_i \) to produce a new frame \( h' \). Setting a slot fails if the slot has not been allocated. Note that Rule [EvAsgn] defines assignment not just for record fields but also for variables, which makes variables bound by functions mutable. Our framework currently does not distinguish between mutable and immutable variables, but we expect it would be straightforward to introduce such a distinction, e.g. by classifying declarations into separate namespaces.
### Frame operations

**Figure 19** Dynamic semantics of L2

- **Program evaluation**
  - initDefault(s, {}) / h => f_root / h, f_root ⊢ e / h => v / h'
  - \( T \) ds begin e^s end => v / h'

- **Expression evaluation**
  - \( f \vdash \text{lhs} / h_1 \Rightarrow \text{Addr}(f', x^o_j) / h_2 \) get(f', h_2, x^o_0) => v
  - \( f \vdash \text{lhs} / h_1 \Rightarrow v / h_2 \)
  - \( \vdash p : x^o_i \mapsto (s', x^o_j) \) \( \vdash g : x^o_i \mapsto s \) initDefault(s, {}, / h_1 \Rightarrow f'/h_2
  - \( f \vdash \text{new} x^p_i / h_1 \Rightarrow \text{RecordV}(f') / h_2 \)
  - \( f \vdash \text{lhs} / h_1 \Rightarrow \text{Addr}(f', x^p_i) / h_2 \) f \vdash e / h_2 \Rightarrow v / h_3 \) set(f', h_3, x^p_0, v) => h_4
  - \( f \vdash a_1 / h_1 \Rightarrow \text{DFun}(v_3) / h_2 \) f \vdash a_2 / h_2 \Rightarrow v_2 / h_3
  - \( f \vdash a_1(a_2) / h_1 \Rightarrow v_1 / h_3 \)

- **Lhs evaluation**
  - \( \vdash p : x^o_i \mapsto (s', x^o_j) \) lookup(f, h, p) => Addr(f', x^o_j)
  - \( f \vdash \text{lhs} / h \Rightarrow \text{Addr}(f', x^p_0) / h \)
  - \( f \vdash e / h_1 \Rightarrow \text{RecordV}(f_{rec}) / h_2 \) \( \vdash g : x^o_i \mapsto s \) initDefault(s, {/ h_2 \Rightarrow f'/h_3
  - \( \vdash p : x^o_i \mapsto (s', x^o_j) \) lookup(f', h_3, p) => Addr(f'', x^p_0)
  - \( f \vdash e : x^o_i / h_1 \Rightarrow \text{Addr}(f'', x^o_j) / h_3 \)
  - \( f \vdash e / h_1 \Rightarrow \text{NullV} / h_2 \)
  - \( f \vdash e : x^o_i / h_1 \Rightarrow \text{ExcV}(\text{NullPointer}) / h_2 \)

**Figure 20** Frame operations for updating slots and initializing frames with default values

- **Frame operations**
  - defaults(D(s)) \( \Rightarrow \sigma \) initFrame(s, ks, \sigma) / h \Rightarrow f'/h'
  - \( \text{initDefault}(s, ks) / h \Rightarrow f'/h' \)

- **Default slots**
  - defaults(\( \emptyset \) \( \Rightarrow \emptyset \)) [DNil]
  - \( x^o_i \in ds \) \( \vdash g : x^o_i \mapsto t \) \( \vdash \text{new} : t / h \)
  - defaults(ds \( \rightarrow \emptyset \)) \( \Rightarrow \sigma \) [DCons]
  - defaults(ds) \( \Rightarrow \sigma[x^o_i \mapsto v] \)

- **Default values**
  - \( \vdash t : v \)
  - \( \vdash 0 : \text{Int} \) [DefaultInt]
  - \( \vdash v : t_2 \) [DefaultFun]
  - \( \vdash \text{DFun}(v) : t_1 \rightarrow t_2 \) [DefaultRec]
4.3 Type Soundness

The rules in Figure 21 summarize the value typing judgment for L2. Here, null-pointer exceptions are viewed as well-typed values of any kind, which allows such exceptions to occur anywhere in well-typed programs. Theorem 3 states type preservation for L2.

▶ Theorem 3 (Type preservation for L2). Suppose \( \text{goodHeap}(h_1) \) and \( S_{h_1}(f) = s \), as well as \( f \vdash e^s \) and \( H \vdash e^s \) hold. Then, for any \( v \) and \( h_2 \), \( f \vdash e^s / h_1 \Rightarrow v / h_2 \) implies \( \text{goodHeap}(h_2) \) and \( h_2 \vdash v : t \).

As argued in connection with the proof of Theorem 2 in Section 3.6, we can extend this proof to a proof of type soundness by adding cases for “going wrong”. The wrong cases, which are given in Appendix B follow along the same lines as the cases in the preservation proof.

4.4 From Records to Classes

In Appendix C we present L3, an extension of L2 which replaces records with classes, which can inherit from other classes, and can override declarations from super classes. The appendix is not essential for understanding the approach of this paper, but it does demonstrate that the techniques we have presented, scope graphs to represent binding, frames to represent memory at run-time, and their correspondence to prove type soundness, scale to classes, objects, and subtyping.

5 Garbage Collection

So far, we have described how the heap grows by adding frames. Any realistic language implementation also needs to consider how unused frames can be reclaimed. To this end, we now give a high-level specification of sound reachability-based garbage collection of frames in our setting, and verify that several standard GC strategies refine this specification. We leave actual implementation of concrete collectors as future work.

We model garbage collection as removal of frames from the heap map; the removed frame identifiers then become fresh again for subsequent frame allocations. It is safe to remove a frame exactly when doing so would not change subsequent observable program behavior [12]. Since this is an undecidable criterion, collectors instead use an approximation based on whether there are live pointers to the frame; if not, the frame certainly cannot be accessed again (assuming pointers are unforgeable) and hence may be safely removed.

A frame may be referenced in one of two ways, either (i) from a root pointer in the execution state of the program, or (ii) from another frame. We focus first on category (ii),
References from values
\[ \text{ClosV}(x_i^v, a, f) \sim f \quad \text{[RefClos]} \]
\[ \text{RecordV}(f) \sim f \quad \text{[RefRecord]} \]

References from frames
\[ \text{get}(f, h, x_i^v) \Rightarrow v \quad v \sim f' \quad \text{[RefSlot]} \]
\[ h \vdash f \sim f' \]
\[ K_h(f)(l)(s) = f' \quad \text{[RefLink]} \]

Unreferenced frames
\[ h \vdash \not\exists f \quad \forall f' \in \text{Dom}(h). \ h \vdash f' \not\sim f \]

Removing frames from heaps
\[ \text{safeRemoval}(h, fs, h') \triangleq h' = (h - fs) \land \forall f \in fs, h' \not\sim f \]
\[ \text{removeUnreferenced}(h, f, h') \triangleq h' = (h - \{f\}) \land h \vdash \not\exists f \]
\[ \text{removeAllUnreachable}(h, rs, fs, h') \triangleq h' = (h - fs) \land fs = \{ f | \forall f' \in rs. h \vdash f' \not\sim f \} \]

where \((h - fs)\) is the result of removing all frames in \(fs\) from \(h\)

Expression evaluation (selected rules)
\[ f, rs \vdash a/h \Rightarrow v/h' \]
\[ f, rs \vdash a_1/h_1 \Rightarrow \text{ClosV}(x_i^v, a', f')/h_2 \quad f, \{f'\} \cup rs \vdash a_2/h_2 \Rightarrow v/h_3 \quad \text{[EvApp]} \]
\[ \text{initFrame}(S(d'), \{P \mapsto \{S_{h_3}(f') \mapsto f'\}\}, \{x_i^v \mapsto v\})/h_3 \Rightarrow f''/h_4 \quad f''/\{f\} \cup rs \vdash a'/h_4 \Rightarrow v'/h_5 \]
\[ f, rs \vdash a_1(a_2)/h_1 \Rightarrow v'/h_5 \]
\[ f, rs \vdash a/h \Rightarrow v/h'' \quad \text{[EvGC]} \]

Figure 22 Definitions for Garbage Collection

for which we can give a simple and largely language-independent characterization. All our formal definitions are in Figure 22.

Frame-to-frame pointers. We write \(h \vdash f \sim f'\) if frame \(f\) in heap \(h\) makes a direct reference to frame \(f'\), either through a link or via a slot value \(v\). The latter case, which we write \(v \sim f'\), depends on the definition of values in our language. A frame \(f'\) is reachable from another frame \(f\) if there is a sequence of direct references from \(f\) to \(f'\); this is just the reflexive transitive closure of the reference relation, so we write it \(h \vdash f \sim^* f'\). We write \(h \vdash \not\exists f\) if no frame in \(h\) references \(f\).

The key observation is that it is safe to remove any set of frames \(fs\) from a heap \(h\) provided that no frame in \(fs\) is referenced from the resulting heap \(h'\), written \(\text{safeRemoval}(h, fs, h')\). In other words, a safe removal is one that does not produce any new dangling pointers. We then have the following easy lemma:

Lemma 4 (Safe removal preserves heap invariants). Suppose \(\text{goodHeap}(h)\) holds. Then, for any set of frames \(fs\) and heap \(h'\), \(\text{safeRemoval}(h, fs, h')\) implies \(\text{goodHeap}(h')\).

Roots. How to track roots into the heap from the program state depends on the details of the language and the semantic approach. For the big-step semantic style used in this paper, most live frames are reachable from the “current” frame \((f\) in the judgments \(f \vdash a/h \Rightarrow v/h')\). However, evaluation of certain big-step rules may introduce other frames, not reachable from the current frame, that must be temporarily registered as roots. To handle these, we add an additional root frame set component \(rs\) to the configurations described by the rules. Figure 22 shows the revised rule for application to illustrate how the auxiliary root set is
used, here in two different ways: to save the closure frame while evaluating the argument
and to save the calling context frame while evaluating the function body.

Several other rules also augment the root set; the need for auxiliary roots is unfortunately
a bit ad-hoc and language-specific. We could limit the number of auxiliary roots by requiring
source programs to be in A-normal form or continuation-passing style, which both have the
effect of putting more rule-internal values into named variables, and hence into the current
frame.

**Type-safe collection.** Finally, we can add Rule [EvGC] for garbage collection shown in
Figure 22, which can be applied non-deterministically prior to any of the syntax-directed
rules. The resulting system still enjoys type soundness. The proof is straightforward once
we strengthen the inductive invariant at each big step to say that $\{f\} \cup rs \subseteq \text{Dom}(h)$. The

**Refinements.** To show that safeRemoval is a reasonable specification, we note that it can
be refined to specifications of two well-known GC algorithms. removeUnreferenced specifies
removal of a single unreferenced frame; it models one step in a reference counting collection.
removeAllUnreachable specifies removal of all frames unreachable from an arbitrary root set;
it models a complete tracing-based collector, such as a mark-and-sweep or copying collector.

▶ Lemma 5 (Unreferenced and unreachable frames are safe to remove). It holds that:
(a) $\text{removeUnreferenced}(h, f, h')$ implies $\text{safeRemoval}(h, \{f\}, h')$; and
(b) $\text{removeAllUnreachable}(h, rs, fs, h')$ implies $\text{safeRemoval}(h, fs, h')$.

We have not yet developed a concrete GC implementation, but writing one should be
straightforward. The heap-traversal part of an implementation can be language-independent
except for determining references from values. Note that, for many languages, an imple-
mentation can use the scope labels on frames to detect all references efficiently, without the
need for tagging individual pointers. This follows from the goodFrame property, which states
that every frame slot corresponds to a statically known typed declaration in the scope; if
the language is sufficiently monomorphic or restricts polymorphism to boxed types, we can
consult the scope description to determine whether or not the slot contains a pointer.

### 6 Discussion

This paper presents a systematic correspondence between static name binding and binding
at run time. We have also proposed the correspondence as a guiding principle for dynamic
semantic specification, and a language-independent principle for proving type soundness. In
this section we discuss our approach and compare with previous work on type soundness
and, more generally, on representing and reasoning about semantics and memory layout.

**Type soundness.** Milner [11] summarized the essence of type soundness in his famous
catch-phrase: “well-typed programs cannot go wrong”. The common point of type soundness
proofs is that they provide this guarantee. Other than that, type soundness proofs come in
many different varieties and flavours, depending on both the underlying semantic style (such
as big-step vs. small-step) and the underlying language being specified.

**Semantic specification and type soundness.** Wright and Felleisen’s *syntactic approach to
type soundness* [28] argues in favor of using small-step reduction semantics and evaluation
contexts for type soundness proofs. This avoids some of the shortcomings of big-step
semantics, namely that big-step rules do not distinguish getting stuck and diverging. The small-step style is also better suited for formalizing semantics with concurrency and/or interleaving. However, this kind of specification does not correspond to how programming language interpreters are typically implemented.

This paper uses big-step semantics (or natural semantics [7]) for type soundness. In order to prove type soundness we have been following in the footsteps of Milner [11] and added explicit rules for going wrong to our language. An inherent danger of this approach is that leaving out such a wrong rule may render the type soundness theorem vacuous. We stress that the approach of using scopes to describe frames is by no means limited to big-step semantics: we expect it to be equally applicable to other styles of semantic specification, including small-step SOS [17], reduction semantics [5], definitional interpreters [18], and abstract machines. We chose big-step semantics because it corresponds to how programming language interpreters are typically implemented. In the future, we plan to use I-MSOS [13] and DynSem [26] to make our big-step rules even more concise. We also plan to investigate ways of alleviating some of the drawbacks of big-step type soundness proofs proposed in the literature, such as:

- using coinductive big-step semantics to represent diverging computations and proving big-step progress, following Leroy and Grall [10];
- checking that wrong rules are correctly defined either by using a coverage lemma as proposed by Ernst et al. [4] or using Charguérard’s pretty-big-step style [1] with a novel big-step progress predicate, which subsumes explicit wrong rules in a safe way (e.g., failure to add sufficient rules for progress makes it impossible to prove type soundness);
- using a functional definitional interpreter instrumented with a clock (or “fuel”) which counts down with each function call [22, 15, 19].

The modularity of the small-step approach in [28] comes from the use of reduction semantics, which supports localizing new patterns of name binding to particular constructs, such that proofs of existing constructs do not need to change. In contrast, our approach using scopes to describe frames scales to deal with name binding of both functional and imperative features in a uniform manner. Thus, there is no need to use different stores or notions of substitution or to localize these to particular constructs: name binding is uniformly handled both in the dynamic semantics and in the proof.

A selling point of the syntactic approach is that it scales to prove the type soundness of an ML-like language with Hindley-Milner polymorphism such that the structure of proofs change relatively little as new features are added. Indeed, many of the challenges with substitution in [28] stem from dealing with polymorphism and references. We believe that describing scopes as frames will scale to deal with polymorphic type inference, and suspect it might alleviate some of the difficulties inherent to substitution lemmas, but leave it to future work to verify this.

**Default values.** A shortcoming of our approach compared with, e.g., Wright and Felleisen [28], is our use of default values. Default values make the proofs easy, but introduce the risk of dereferencing null values. In order to deal with function types, we proposed to generate “default functions” too, but this approach is restricted to simple type systems, since the problem of finding inhabitants of a given type quickly becomes undecidable. In the future, we plan to investigate extending our type soundness principle to temporarily allow a frame to be ill-typed, so long as it is initialized when it is accessed. Nipkow et al.’s [9] formalization of Java’s definite assignment analysis could provide a useful guide to this end.
Modeling memory in programming language semantics. In addition to the different semantic specification styles, there is a proliferation of ways to deal with name binding and memory management in semantic specifications. For example, consider a type soundness proof for Java-like languages, where formalization of name binding and memory ranges from simple states mapping identifiers and references to values, as used by Drossopoulou and Eisenbach [3], to untyped frames [24] relying on traditional environments for typing, to use of ad-hoc lookup functions (or visibility predicates) uniquely defined to resolve a specific kind of identifiers (e.g. classes or fields) as used in Featherweight Java [6] or Jinja [9].

Similarly, considering the state of affairs in semantic specification frameworks gives a similarly muddled picture. These frameworks can be roughly categorized into two camps: those that deal with binding via substitution (redex [8], Ott [21]), and those that provide support for ad hoc binding via auxiliary entities (K [20], funcons [2]).

None of these pre-existing approaches hits the same sweet spot as our framework: it corresponds to how memory is often organized in real implementations (as also remarked by Syme [24, page 7]); it scales to deal with various models of name binding and memory in a uniform manner; and it provides a language-independent principle for proving the absence of binding and typing errors.

We also remark that our compartmentalization of binding and typing as separate concerns and separate sets of rules in theory allows us to prove the absence of binding errors and typing errors separately. This may be useful for dynamically-typed languages, where proving the absence of typing errors might not be a concern, but the absence of binding errors is.

7 Conclusion

This paper presented a systematic and uniform correspondence between static scopes and dynamic frames. This correspondence provides a mostly separate specification of binding and typing. This is a novelty compared to traditional approaches, where typing rules usually describe both name binding and typing, occasionally relying on ad hoc predicates (such as those found in, e.g., Featherweight Java). The scopes-as-frames paradigm supports uniform and straightforward type soundness proofs for a number of different language features, as demonstrated by applying it to a simple functional language (Section 3) and a language with first-class functions and records (Section 4). Section 5 shows how the invariants also support verifying the safety of a number of different garbage collection schemes. Appendix C shows how the approach also scales to a class-based object-oriented language with sub-typing and run-time upcasting.

In future work, we plan to investigate how the approach scales to larger languages including languages with type-level polymorphism; generating Coq infrastructure for mechanizing type soundness proofs using the language-independent framework for well-boundness and well-typedness developed for this paper; and how to derive efficiently executable prototype interpreters based on dynamic semantic specifications in DynSem.

Acknowledgments. We thank Sebastian Erdweg, Peter D. Mosses, and the anonymous reviewers for their feedback on previous versions of this paper. This research was partially funded by the NWO VICI Language Designer’s Workbench project (639.023.206). Andrew Tolmach was partly supported by a Digiteo Chair at Laboratoire de Recherche en Informatique, Université Paris-Sud.
References

6. Atsushi Igarashi, Benjamin C. Pierce, and Philip Wadler. Featherweight Java: a minimal core calculus for Java and GJ. *TOPLAS*, 23(3):396–450, 2001.


## A Wrong rules for L1

### Values
\( v ::= \ldots | \text{Stuck} \)

### Dynamic semantics

\[
\begin{align*}
\Gamma, p : x_i^k & \to x_j^o. \forall f'. x_j^o. \neg (\text{lookup}(h, f, p) \Rightarrow \text{Addr}(f', x_j^o)) \\
f & \vdash x_i^k/h \Rightarrow \text{Stuck}/h & \text{[EvVarB1]} \\
\Gamma, p : x_i^k & \to x_j^o. \text{lookup}(h, f, p) \Rightarrow \text{Addr}(f', x_j^o) \quad \forall v. \neg (\text{get}(f', h, x_j^o) \Rightarrow v) \\
f & \vdash a_1/h_1 \Rightarrow v_1/h_2 & v_1 \neq \text{NumV}(\_); \text{[EvArithOpB1]} \\
f & \vdash a_1 \oplus a_2/h_1 \Rightarrow \text{Stuck}/h_2 & \text{[EvArithOpB2]} \\
f & \vdash a_1/h_1 \Rightarrow z_1/h_2 & f \vdash a_2/h_2 \Rightarrow v_2/h_3 & v_2 \neq \text{NumV}(\_) \\
f & \vdash a_1 \oplus a_2/h_1 \Rightarrow \text{Stuck}/h_3 \text{[EvApp]} \\
f & \vdash a_1/h_1 \Rightarrow \text{ClosV}(x_i^o, a', f')/h_2 & f \vdash a_2/h_2 \Rightarrow v/h_3 & v \neq \text{Stuck} \\
& \text{initFrame}(\mathcal{S}(a'), \{\mathcal{P} \mapsto \{\mathcal{S}_h(f') \mapsto f'\}, \{x_i^o \mapsto v\})/h_3 \Rightarrow f''/h_4 \\
f & \vdash a_1(h_1) \Rightarrow v'/h_5 & \text{[EvApp]} \\
f & \vdash a_1/h_1 \Rightarrow v_1/h_2 & v_1 \neq \text{ClosV}(\_, \_, \_); \text{[EvAppB1]} \\
f & \vdash a_1(a_2)/h_1 \Rightarrow \text{Stuck}/h_2 & \text{[EvAppB2]} \\
f & \vdash a_1/h_1 \Rightarrow \text{ClosV}(x_i^o, a', f')/h_2 & f \vdash a_2/h_2 \Rightarrow \text{Stuck}/h_3 & \text{[EvAppB2]} \\
f & \vdash a_1(a_2)/h_1 \Rightarrow \text{Stuck}/h_3 & \text{[EvAppB2]}
\end{align*}
\]
### B Wrong rules and exception propagation in L2

We present rules for propagating exceptions, and for checking if a program gets stuck, and rules meant to replace existing rules (Rules \[EvAsgn,EvAppDef,EvApp\]), since these require additional premises in order to ensure that exceptions are correctly propagated.

\[
\begin{align*}
    \text{Expr} & \ni X ::= \ldots \mid \text{Stuck} \\

    A(\text{Exc}(X)) &= \text{Exc}(X) \\
    A(v) &= \text{Exc}((\text{Stuck}) \quad \text{when} \ v \neq \text{Exc}(\ldots)) \\
    A(u) &= \text{Exc}((\text{Stuck}) \quad \text{when} \ u \neq \text{Exc}(\ldots))
\end{align*}
\]

**Expression evaluation**

\[
\begin{align*}
    f \overset{\text{Lhs}}{\vdash} \text{lhs}/h_1 & \Rightarrow u/h_2 \quad u \neq (\_, \_) \\
    f \vdash \text{lhs}/h_1 \Rightarrow A(u)/h_2 & \quad \text{[EvLhsB1]} \\
    f \overset{\text{Lhs}}{\vdash} \text{lhs}/h_1 & \Rightarrow \text{Addr}(f', x^R_i)/h_2 \quad \forall v. \neg (\text{get}(f', h_2, x^R_i) \Rightarrow v) \\
    f \vdash \text{lhs}/h_1 \Rightarrow \text{Exc}((\text{Stuck})/h_2 & \quad \text{[EvLhsB2]} \\
    \vdash_{G} p : x^R_i \overset{h_1}{\rightarrow} (s', x^R_j) \quad \forall s. \neg \vdash_{G} x^R_j \rightarrow s & \quad \text{[EvNewB1]} \\
    f \vdash \text{new} x^R_i/h_1 & \Rightarrow \text{Exc}((\text{Stuck})/h_1 \\
    f \overset{\text{Lhs}}{\vdash} \text{lhs}/h_1 & \Rightarrow u/h_2 \quad u \neq (\_, \_) \\
    f \vdash \text{lhs} : = e/h_1 & \Rightarrow \text{Exc}((X)/h_2 \\
    f \overset{\text{Lhs}}{\vdash} \text{lhs}/h_1 & \Rightarrow \text{Addr}(f', x^R_i)/h_2 \\
    f \vdash e/h_2 & \Rightarrow \text{Exc}((X)/h_3 & \quad \text{[EvLhsB2]} \\
    f \vdash \text{lhs} : = e/h_1 & \Rightarrow \text{Exc}((X)/h_3 \\
    f \overset{\text{Lhs}}{\vdash} \text{lhs}/h_1 & \Rightarrow \text{Addr}(f', x^R_i)/h_2 \\
    f \vdash e/h_2 & \Rightarrow v/h_3 & \quad \forall v. h_4. \neg \text{get}(f', h_3, x^R_i, v) \Rightarrow h_4 & \\
    f \vdash \text{lhs} : = e/h_1 & \Rightarrow \text{Exc}((\text{Stuck})/h_3 & \quad \text{[EvLhsB3]} \\
    f \overset{\text{Lhs}}{\vdash} \text{lhs}/h_1 & \Rightarrow \text{Addr}(f', x^R_i)/h_2 \\
    f \vdash e/h_2 & \Rightarrow v/h_3 & \quad v \neq \text{Exc}((\ldots) \\
    \forall v. h_4. \neg \text{get}(f', h_3, x^R_i, v) \Rightarrow h_4 & \\
    f \vdash \text{lhs} : = e/h_1 & \Rightarrow \text{Exc}((\text{Stuck})/h_3 & \quad \text{[EvLhsB3]} \\
    f \overset{\text{Lhs}}{\vdash} \text{lhs}/h_1 & \Rightarrow \text{Addr}(f', x^R_i)/h_2 \\
    f \vdash e/h_2 & \Rightarrow v/h_3 & \quad v \neq \text{Exc}((\ldots) \\
    \forall v. h_4. \neg \text{set}(f', h_3, x^R_i, v) \Rightarrow h_4 & \\
    f \vdash \text{lhs} : = e/h_1 & \Rightarrow v/h_4 & \\
    f \vdash a_1/h_1 & \Rightarrow \text{DFun}(v_1)/h_2 \\
    f \overset{\text{Lhs}}{\vdash} \text{lhs}/h_1 & \Rightarrow \text{Exc}((X)/h_3 & \quad \text{[EvLhsB3]} \\
    f \vdash a_1(a_2)/h_1 & \Rightarrow v_1/h_3 & \\
    f \vdash a_1/h_1 & \Rightarrow \text{DFun}(v_1)/h_2 \\
    f \vdash a_2/h_2 & \Rightarrow v_2/h_3 & \quad v_2 \neq \text{Exc}((\ldots) & \\
    f \vdash a_1(a_2)/h_1 & \Rightarrow v_1/h_3 & \\
    f \vdash a_1/h_1 & \Rightarrow \text{DFun}(v_1)/h_2 \\
    f \vdash a_2/h_2 & \Rightarrow \text{Exc}((X)/h_3 & \\
    f \vdash a_1(a_2)/h_1 & \Rightarrow \text{Exc}((X)/h_3 & \quad \text{[EvLhsB3]} \\
    f \vdash a_1(a_2)/h_1 & \Rightarrow \text{Exc}((X)/h_3 & \quad \text{[EvAppDefB]} \\
\end{align*}
\]
### Expression evaluation (continued)

\[ f \vdash a/h \Rightarrow v/h' \]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rule</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[ f \vdash a_1/h_1 \Rightarrow v_1/h_2 \quad v_1 \neq \text{NumV}(_) ]</td>
<td>[EvArithOpB1]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ f \vdash a_1 \oplus a_2/h_1 \Rightarrow A \ldots xR_i ]</td>
<td>[EvArithOpB2]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ f \vdash a_1/h_1 \Rightarrow \text{ClosV}(x^0_i, a', f')/h_2 \quad f \vdash a_2/h_2 \Rightarrow v/h_3 \quad v \neq \text{ExcV}(_) ]</td>
<td>[EvApp]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ f \vdash a_1(a_2)/h_1 \Rightarrow v'/h_5 ]</td>
<td>[EvAppB1]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ f \vdash a_1/h_1 \Rightarrow \text{ClosV}(x^0_i, a', f')/h_2 \quad f \vdash a_2/h_2 \Rightarrow \text{ExcV}(X)/h_3 ]</td>
<td>[EvAppB2]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Lhs evaluation

\[ f \vdash \text{lhs}/h \Rightarrow u/h' \]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rule</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[ \vdash p : x^0_i \overset{r}{\rightarrow} (s', x^0_j) \quad \forall f' x^0_i. \neg(\text{lookup}(f, h, p) \Rightarrow \text{Addr}(f', x^0_i)) ]</td>
<td>[LhsVarB1]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ f \vdash \text{lhs}/h \Rightarrow \text{ExcV}(\text{Stuck})/h ]</td>
<td>[LhsFAccB1]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ f \vdash e \cdot x^0_i/h_1 \Rightarrow \text{ExcV}(v)/h_2 ]</td>
<td>[LhsFAccB2]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ f \vdash e/h_1 \Rightarrow \text{RecV}(f_{rec})/h_2 \quad \forall s, \neg(\vdash p : x^0_i \overset{r}{\rightarrow} s) ]</td>
<td>[LhsFAccB3]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ f \vdash e \cdot x^0_i/h_1 \Rightarrow \text{ExcV}(\text{Stuck})/h_2 ]</td>
<td>[LhsFAccB4]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ \vdash p : x^0_i \overset{r}{\rightarrow} (s', x^0_j) \quad \forall f'^0_i x^0_j. \neg(\text{lookup}(f', h_3, p) \Rightarrow \text{Addr}(f'^0_i, x^0_j)) ]</td>
<td>[LhsFAccB5]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ f \vdash e \cdot x^0_i/h_1 \Rightarrow \text{ExcV}(\text{Stuck})/h_3 ]</td>
<td>[LhsFAccB6]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
C From Records to Classes

Section 4 showed that using scopes to describe frames also scales as a model to describe and prove the type soundness of records. In this section we consider the extension of records to classes.

C.1 Well-formed Terms

Figure 23 defines the extension of L1 with classes instead of records. A program in L3 consists of a set of declarations and a program expression (enclosed in a `begin ... end` block) that may utilize these declarations. In L3, the only kind of declaration is class definitions. A class definition consists of a declaration $x_i^0$, an optional reference to a superclass, $x_i^1$, and a set of fields.

A key feature of class-based inheritance is **overriding**, i.e., when an inheriting class replaces a field of a superclass by another field. L3 supports overriding by syntactically distinguishing between: (i) actual fields in classes, consisting of a declaration $x_i^0$, a type annotation and an initialization expression $a$; and (ii) an override, consisting of a reference to the field or method which is being overridden in a superclass, and an initialization expression $a$ which overrides it.

Instead of record types, L3 has class types `Class(x_i^0)` that classify expressions producing objects that are instances of the class identified by $x_i^0$. Additionally, the type `ClassDef(x_i^0)` classifies values recording the AST of class definitions. These values are used at run time to instantiate new objects of a class by iterating through the field initializers stored in the class definition and initializing the corresponding fields of the newly created object. This is reminiscent of treating classes as prototypes, and using cloning to instantiate new objects. Class definitions should only be used for initializing new objects via the `new` construct. Source programs should not be able to dereference class definitions directly.

Expressions are the same as in L2, except for the introduction of a `null` expression which represents the `NullV` value. Since classes have obligatory initialization expressions, it is useful to have explicit `null` values in order to support constructing cyclic objects.

C.2 Well-bound Terms

The well-boundness rules for L3 first check that all declarations are well-bound, specifically that class definitions and their initializer expressions are. Subsequently, program expressions are checked. Most of the well-boundness rules are identical to those for records. The only changed rule is that for `new`. The new rule for the `new` construct is:

$$\Gamma \vdash x_i^0 \rightarrow s \quad \Gamma \vdash p : x_i^0 \rightarrow (s', x_j^0) \quad \Gamma \vdash x_j^0 \rightarrow s_{rec}$$

$$\Gamma \vdash (\text{new } x_i^0)^s$$ [WbNew]

As opposed to the rule in Figure 17, this rule no longer checks that there are no links for the associated scope of the declaration $x_j^0$ to which $x_i^0$ resolves. The motivation for having this check in L2 was that it was necessary to know which links record frames should have at runtime (i.e., none for L2). In L3, this information is recorded in class definitions, which are used for creating new objects at runtime.

The remaining well-boundness rules for expressions are identical to those from Figure 17. Figure 24 defines the well-boundness of programs for L3. The figure omits well-boundness of expressions and `lhs` expressions, since these are identical to the rules for records (Figure 17).
**Figure 23** Annotated syntax of L3 with distinguished references and declarations

**Figure 24** Well-boundness and well-typedness in L3
except for the difference for `new` described above, and an additional trivial well-boundness rule for `null` (omitted here). There are two rules for class definitions: Rule `[WbCD]` and Rule `[WbCDE]`. The first of these is practically identical to the corresponding rule for records. The latter applies to classes with links to superclasses, and checks that the superclass reference actually resolves to a declaration with an associated scope.

Class inheritance is modeled as import edges, as defined in Rule `[WbRDE]`. The import edge makes fields declared in superclass(es) reachable from the inheriting classes.

### C.3 Well-typed Terms

Another key feature of L3 is that it supports sub-typing. Figure 23 defines the notion of sub-typing for the language: Rule `[SubClass]` says that `Class(x)ᵣ` is a sub-type of `Class(x)ᵢ` if there is an import link from the associated scope of `xᵣ` to the associated scope of `xᵢ`. Because of the way we represent scopes of classes, this notion of sub-typing corresponds exactly to the notion that one would expect. We use `<` for direct sub-typing, and `<:` for the reflexive-transitive closure of `<`. Rule `[SubFun]` is the usual [16] sub-typing rule for function types.

The rules in Figure 24 use *algorithmic* sub-typing; e.g., Figure 24 uses subsumption premises in typing rules instead of a general subsumption rule like:

\[
\frac{\Gamma \vdash e \quad t <: t'}{\Gamma \vdash e'} \quad \text{[Sub]}
\]

Rule `[WtCD]` and Rule `[WtCDE]` mark the only uses of the `ClassDef` type: the rules check that declarations `xᵢ` that identify class types are associated with class definition values,
Figure 26 An example program, its scope graph, and its object frame structure

i.e., values of type \texttt{ClassDef}(x^0_i), at runtime. Corresponding frame slots at runtime will thus contain the class definition to be used for initializing new instances of the class.

C.4 Dynamic Semantics

Figure 27 defines values and exceptions for L3. Class definition values are given by \texttt{ClassDefV}(x^0_i, optR, flds, f) and record: the declaration of the class definition, \( x^0_i \); an optional reference \( \text{optR} \) to a superclass definition; a set of fields \( \text{flds} \); and the lexical scope frame \( f \) in which the class is defined, and in which class field initializers should be evaluated. Class definitions are stored in slots and are used for initializing new objects.

There are several ways to implement and model objects with inheritance at runtime. Following the scopes-as-frames methodology, the dynamic semantics in Figure 28 sticks closely to how the scopes of classes are modeled in the well-boundness and well-typedness rules from Figure 24 and 25. There, the scopes of classes are organized in a nested, hierarchical fashion, where subclass inheritance is modeled by import links between scopes. We thus let an object be given by a hierarchy of frames, such that each frame in the hierarchy has a link to its superclass frame instance (if any). Crucial is that frames in the hierarchy of an object are not shared; each object instance has distinct superclass frames.

Consider, for example, the program in Figure 26 and its scope graph. Here, the scope of class B has an import edge to the scope of A. An object frame instantiating B thus has a similar structure.

Rule [\texttt{EvNew}] relies on an auxiliary dedicated relation for object initialization, using the judgment \( f \overset{\text{EvNew}}{\Rightarrow} x^0_i/h \Rightarrow f'/h \), which takes a reference \( x^0_i \) to a class definition. If a class definition inherits from a superclass (Rule [\texttt{OIP}]), the \( \overset{\text{EvNew}}{\Rightarrow} \) judgment recursively instantiates and initializes the superclass frame. Once the superclass frame has been created, Rule [\texttt{OIP}] creates the class frame, and initializes its fields by means of the class definition.

The judgment \( f', f' \overset{\text{EvNew}}{\Rightarrow} \text{flds}/h_\text{A} \Rightarrow h_s \) is used in Rule [\texttt{OIP}] and Rule [\texttt{OI}] to iterate through the fields of a class definition, and execute the initialization expressions. The semantics of this initialization judgment is given in Rules [\texttt{IRCD}, \texttt{IRCR}, \texttt{IRNil}]. Following the well-boundness rules for field declarations (Rules [\texttt{WbFD}, \texttt{WbFO}] in Figure 24), initialization expressions for fields are scoped by the class scope. Consequently, initialization expressions may refer to other fields in the class which may not have been initialized at the point where they are accessed. The semantics of field initialization in 29 does not specify the order in which fields should be initialized: a field initializer is non-deterministically selected by Rules [\texttt{IRCD}, \texttt{IRCR}]. If a field is accessed which is not initialized, the value for that field is the default value, since Rules [\texttt{OIP}, \texttt{OI}] use \texttt{initDefault} to initialize object frames.

Since objects are represented as hierarchies of frames, lhs expressions for field access rely on paths that traverse the structure of these frames. For example, consider the following...
Values and exceptions

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Val} \ni v & \ := \text{NumV}(z) \ | \ \text{ClosV}(x_i^a,\ a, f) \\
& \ | \ \text{ExcV}(X) \ | \ \text{DFun}(v) \\
& \ | \ \text{ObjectV}(f) \ | \ \text{NullV} \\
& \ | \ \text{ExcV}(X) \ | \ \text{ClassDefV}(x_i^a,\ ...)
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Exc} \ni X & \ := \text{NullPointer} \\
\text{AuxVal} \ni u & \ := \text{Addr}(f, x_i^a) \ | \ \text{ExcV}(X) \\
& \ | \ \text{ObjectV}(f)
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{c|c}
\text{Runtime casts} & h \not\sim \text{upcast}(f, s) \Rightarrow f' \\
\hline
\text{Sup} & h \not\sim \text{upcast}(f, s) \Rightarrow f \\
\hline
\text{CRef} & \exists s' \in \text{Dom}(K_h(f)(I)) \\
& h \not\sim \text{upcast}(K_h(f)(I)(s'), s) \Rightarrow f'' \\
\text{CUp} & h \not\sim \text{upcast}(f, s) \Rightarrow f''
\end{array}
\]

C.5 Type Soundness

Modeling objects and classes as frames scales to specify dynamic semantics for classes such that there is a close relationship between the static scopes and dynamic frames. Similarly to previous sections, this allows us to reuse the binding and typing invariants for heaps and frames to prove type soundness, with only minor extensions to support sub-typing.

Figure 30 summarizes the only change required for the frame invariant: namely that slots may contain values of a sub-type of the declaration type. The figure also recalls value typing rules (Rules [VtObj]) is essentially the same as the value typing of records from previous section. The value typing rules (Rules [VtCDE,VtCD]) for class definitions use the binding and typing rules (Rules [WbCDE,WbCD,WtCDE,WtCD]) for class definitions from Figure 24.

Theorem 6 proves sub-type preservation for L3.

- Theorem 6 (Sub-type preservation for L3). Suppose \(\text{goodHeap}(h_1)\) and \(\text{S}_h(f) = s\), as well as \(\not\sim e^t\) and \(\not\sim e^{t'}\) hold. Then, for any \(v\) and \(h_2\), \(f \vdash e^{s,t}/h_1 \Rightarrow v/h_2\) implies \(\text{goodHeap}(h_2)\) and \(h_2 \not\sim v : t'\) for some \(t' \prec t\).

Theorem 6 uses the following upcast lemma (Lemma 7), which proves that upcasting an object frame from a sub-class to a super-class is guaranteed to succeed.

- Lemma 7 (Upcast lemma). Suppose \(\text{Class}(x_i^a) \prec \text{Class}(x_j^a)\) and \(\vdash c : x_i^a \rightarrow s_{obj}\) hold. Then, for any \(f\), \(h \not\sim \text{ObjectV}(f) : \text{Class}(x_i^a)\) implies that \(\exists f'\). \(h \not\sim \text{upcast}(f, s_{obj}) \Rightarrow f'\)
Program evaluation

\[ \text{EvProg} \]
\[ \begin{align*}
&\text{initDefault}(s, \emptyset)/\emptyset \Rightarrow f_{\text{root}}/h_1 \\
&f_{\text{root}} \overset{\text{EvCD}}{\Rightarrow} ds/h_1 \Rightarrow h_2 \quad f_{\text{root}} \vdash e/h_2 \Rightarrow v/h_3 \\
&\text{EvDNi} \quad f \vdash e/h \Rightarrow v/h' \\
&\text{EvNew} \quad f \vdash \text{new } x^n_i/h_1 \Rightarrow \text{ObjectV}(f')/h_2 \\
&\text{LhsFAcc} \quad f \overset{\text{LHS}}{\vdash} e.x^n_i/h_1 \Rightarrow \text{Addr}(f', x^n_i)/h_3 \\
&\text{OIP} \quad f \overset{\text{LHS}}{\vdash} x^n_i/h \Rightarrow u/h' \\
&\text{OIP} \quad f \overset{\text{LHS}}{\vdash} x^n_i/h_1 \Rightarrow \text{ObjectV}(f'/h_2) \\
&\text{OI} \quad f \overset{\text{LHS}}{\vdash} x^n_i/h_1 \Rightarrow \text{ObjectV}(f'/h_2) \\
&\text{OI} \quad f \overset{\text{LHS}}{\vdash} x^n_i/h_1 \Rightarrow \text{ObjectV}(f'/h_2) \\
&f \overset{\text{OIP}}{\vdash} x^n_i/h_1 \Rightarrow \text{ExcV}(\text{NullPointer})/h_5
\end{align*} \]

Figure 28 Dynamic semantics for L3 (continued in Figure 29)
Field initialization

\[ f, f' \vdash \text{flds}/h \Rightarrow h' \]
\[ f, f' \vdash \text{flds}/h \Rightarrow h' \]
\[ f, f' \vdash \text{flds}/h \Rightarrow h' \]
\[ f, f' \vdash \text{flds}/h \Rightarrow h' \]
\[ f, f' \vdash \text{flds}/h \Rightarrow h' \]
\[ f, f' \vdash \text{flds}/h \Rightarrow h' \]

Figure 29 Field initialization semantics for L3

Good frame

For any definition of types \( t \), values \( v \), and value typing relation \( \vdash \):

\[ \text{wellTyped}(h, f) \triangleq \forall t \ x^0_t \in \text{D}(\text{S}_h(f)). \vdash_G x^0_t : t \implies \forall v. \text{D}_h(f)(x^0_t) = v \implies \exists t'. h \vdash v : t' \land t' < t \]

Value typing

\[ h \vdash v : t \]

\[ h \vdash \text{ObjectV}(f) : \text{Class}(x^0_t) \]

\[ h \vdash \text{Some}(x^0_t) \]

\[ h \vdash \text{ClassDefV}(x^0_t, \text{flds}, f) : \text{ClassDef}(x^0_t) \]

\[ h \vdash \text{NullIV} : \text{ClassDef}(x^0_t) \]

Default values

\[ \vdash v : t \]

\[ \vdash \text{DefaultObj} \]

\[ \vdash \text{DefaultCD} \]

Figure 30 Well-typed frames with subtyping, value typing, and default values for class definitions

C.6 More Class Features and Design Alternatives

In this section we have shown that using scopes to describe frames scales to describe a class-based language with inheritance and upcasting, and proving its type soundness. There are several other features that we might have added to the language, and alternative designs that one might explore in future work.
Methods and late binding of this or self. Late binding of this or self is straightforward to add to L3 by representing methods as special fields of function type which expect their first argument to be an instance of the class being defined. For example, the following class definition:

```java
class A {
    method m(x : Int) { this.f(0) }
    method f(y : Int) { 42 }
}
```

could desugar into the following L3 class definition:

```l3
class A {
    m : A \rightarrow Int \rightarrow Int :=
        fun (this : A) { fun (x : Int) { this.f(this)(0) } }
    f : A \rightarrow Int \rightarrow Int :=
        fun (this : A) { fun (x : Int) { 42 } }
}
```

Unfolding the inheritance hierarchy of frames. The memory layout for frames could also be represented more efficiently, by representing objects as a single frame, for example by unfolding or merging scopes and frames. This would shorten paths and save some likely inefficient traversals of frames in the heap when accessing fields of objects. The focus of this paper is on showing how scopes describing frames scales as a language-independent principle and basis for type soundness, not on efficiency (even though we expect the semantics to be implementable in a reasonably efficient way). We leave a further investigation of such optimizations to future work.