



Norwegian University of  
Science and Technology

# Compiler Construction

Lecture 6: Top-down parsing and LL(1) parser construction

2020-01-24

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**Includes material by  
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# Overview

- Ambiguity of grammars revisited
- Elimination of left recursion
- Top-down parsing
  - Recursive descent parsers: structure and implementation
  - Table-driven LL(1) parsers
    - Table generation

# Ambiguity of grammars

- For the compiler, it is important that each sentence in the language defined by a context-free grammar has a **unique** rightmost (or leftmost) **derivation**
- A grammar in which multiple rightmost (or leftmost) derivations exist for a sentence is called an **ambiguous grammar**
  - it can produce multiple derivations and multiple parse trees
- Multiple parse trees imply **multiple possible meanings for a single program!** ⚡

# Ambiguity of grammars: example

"*dangling else*"-  
problem in  
ALGOL-like  
languages  
(e.g. PASCAL)

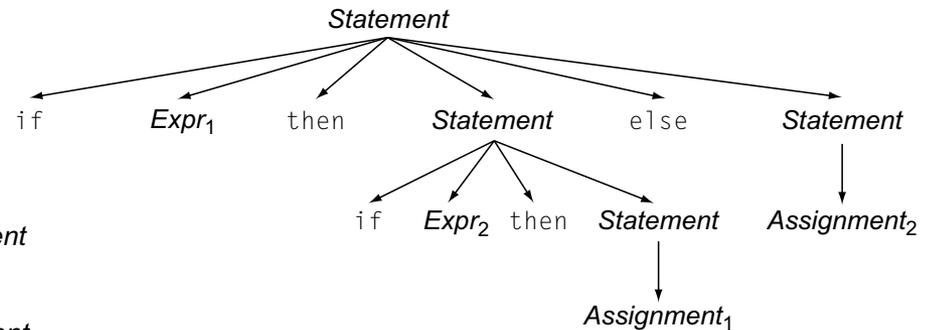
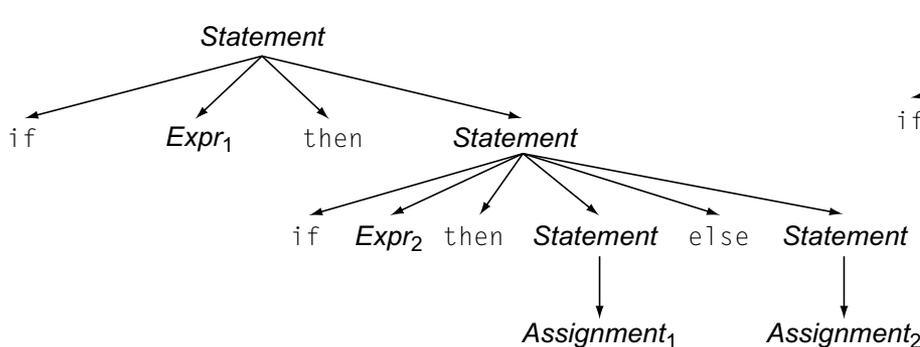
```
1 Statement → if Expr then Statement else Statement
2           | if Expr then Statement
3           | Assignment
4           | ...other statements...
```

"else" part is optional

This statement

```
if Expr1 then if Expr2 then Assignment1 else Assignment2
```

has two distinct rightmost derivations with different behaviors:



# Removing ambiguity

We can modify the grammar to include a rule that determined which **if** controls an **else**:

```
1 Statement → if Expr then Statement
2           | if Expr then WithElse else Statement
3           | Assignment
4 WithElse  → if Expr then WithElse else WithElse
5           | Assignment
```

This solution restricts the set of statements that can occur in the **then** part of an **if-then-else** construct

- It **accepts the same set of sentences** as the original grammar
- but ensures that each else has an unambiguous match to a specific if

# Removing ambiguity: example

The modified grammar has only one rightmost derivation for the example

```

1 Statement → if Expr then Statement
2           | if Expr then WithElse else Statement
3           | Assignment
4 WithElse  → if Expr then WithElse else WithElse
5           | Assignment

```

```
if Expr1 then if Expr2 then Assignment1 else Assignment2
```

Rule	Sentential form
	<i>Statement</i>
1	<b>if</b> <i>Expr</i> <b>then</b> <i>Statement</i>
2	<b>if</b> <i>Expr</i> <b>then</b> <b>if</b> <i>Expr</i> <b>then</b> <i>WithElse</i> <b>else</b> <i>Statement</i>
3	<b>if</b> <i>Expr</i> <b>then</b> <b>if</b> <i>Expr</i> <b>then</b> <i>WithElse</i> <b>else</b> <i>Assignment</i>
5	<b>if</b> <i>Expr</i> <b>then</b> <b>if</b> <i>Expr</i> <b>then</b> <i>Assignment</i> <b>else</b> <i>Assignment</i>

# Order of derivations

## Rightmost:

rewrite, at each step, the rightmost nonterminal

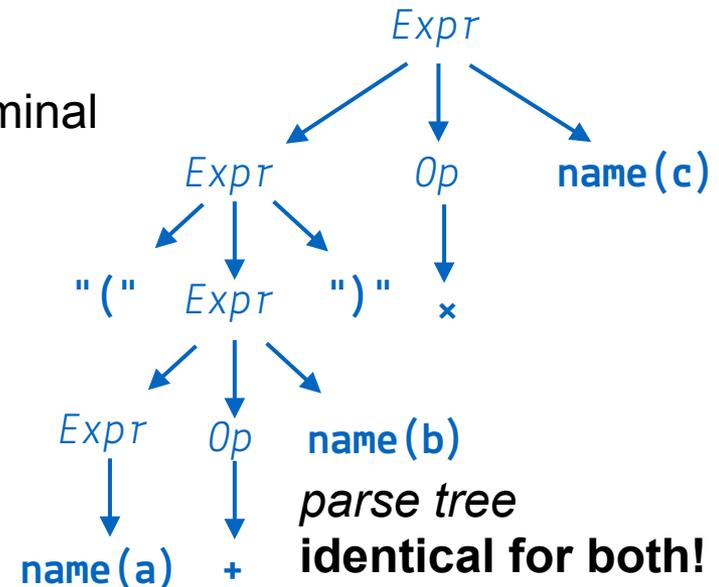
Rule	Sentential form
	<i>Expr</i>
2	<i>Expr Op name</i>
6	<i>Expr × name</i>
1	"(" <i>Expr</i> ")" × <i>name</i>
2	"(" <i>Expr Op name</i> ")" × <i>name</i>
4	"(" <i>Expr + name</i> ")" × <i>name</i>
3	"(" <i>name + name</i> ")" × <i>name</i>

1	<i>Expr</i>	→	"(" <i>Expr</i> ")"
2			<i>Expr Op name</i>
3			<i>name</i>
4	<i>Op</i>	→	+
5			-
6			×
7			÷

## Leftmost:

rewrite, at each step, the leftmost nonterminal

Rule	Sentential form
	<i>Expr</i>
2	<i>Expr Op name</i>
1	"(" <i>Expr</i> ")" <i>Op name</i>
2	"(" <i>Expr Op name</i> ")" <i>Op name</i>
3	"(" <i>name Op name</i> ")" <i>Op name</i>
4	"(" <i>name + name</i> ")" <i>Op name</i>
6	"(" <i>name + name</i> ")" × <i>name</i>



# Left factoring

- Parsers (and scanners) only have a limited *lookahead* to upcoming tokens
- Example: given a production

$$A \rightarrow \mathbf{abcdef} X \mathbf{gh} \mid \mathbf{abcdef} Y \mathbf{gh}$$

the parser is unable to choose between the two production if it can only look one character ahead

- As with NFA→DFA conversion, if we can postpone the decision until it makes a difference, that works
  - Rewriting the grammar as

$$A \rightarrow \mathbf{abcdef} A'$$

$$A' \rightarrow X \mathbf{gh} \mid Y \mathbf{gh}$$

preserves the language by adding one production to collect a common prefix shared by several other productions

# Left recursion

- Let's consider this grammar for a list of 'a's:

$$A \rightarrow Aa \mid a$$

which derives the following words:

$$A \rightarrow a$$

$$A \rightarrow Aa \rightarrow aa$$

$$A \rightarrow Aa \rightarrow Aaa \rightarrow aaa$$

...

- The production  $A \rightarrow Aa$  is **left recursive**, the head (nonterminal symbol) always appears on the left side of the production

# An equivalent grammar

- The same sequences can be generated by this grammar:

$$A \rightarrow aA'$$

$$A' \rightarrow aA' \mid \epsilon$$

the empty string  $\epsilon$  returns from the production

It derives the following words:

$$A \rightarrow a$$

$$A \rightarrow aA' \rightarrow aaA' \rightarrow aa$$

$$A \rightarrow aA' \rightarrow aaA' \rightarrow aaaA' \rightarrow aaa$$

...

# Eliminating left recursion

- If a nonterminal has  $m$  productions that are left recursive and  $n$  productions that are not

$$A \rightarrow A\alpha_1 \mid A\alpha_2 \mid A\alpha_3 \mid \dots \mid A\alpha_m$$

$$A \rightarrow \beta_1 \mid \beta_2 \mid \beta_3 \mid \dots \mid \beta_n$$

greek letters (except  $\varepsilon$ ) stand for arbitrary combinations of other (non-)terminals

we can introduce  $A'$  and rewrite the productions as (see [1]):

$$A \rightarrow \beta_1 A' \mid \beta_2 A' \mid \beta_3 A' \mid \dots \mid \beta_n A'$$

$$A' \rightarrow \alpha_1 A' \mid \alpha_2 A' \mid \alpha_3 A' \mid \dots \mid \alpha_m A' \mid \varepsilon$$

- This generates the same language and removes (immediate) left recursion
  - “Immediate” because left recursion can also happen in several steps (indirectly), e.g. in the following productions

$$A \rightarrow Bx \text{ and } B \rightarrow Ay \text{ result in } A \rightarrow Bx \rightarrow Ayx$$

Here,  $A$  again shows up on the left when derived from  $A$

# What can we do with CFGs now?

- So far, we have encountered (see also [2])
  - Context-Free Grammars, their derivations and syntax trees
  - Ambiguous grammars, and mentioned that there's no single, true way to disambiguate them (it depends on what we want them to stand for)
  - Left factoring, which always shortens the distance to the next nonterminal
  - Left recursion elimination, which always shifts a nonterminal to the right

# Recursive descent parsing

- Example: grammar that models "if" and "while" statements:

$$\begin{aligned} P &\rightarrow \text{if } COND \text{ then } STATEMENT \text{ end} \\ &\quad | \text{if } COND \text{ then } STATEMENT \text{ else } STATEMENT \text{ end} \\ &\quad | \text{while } COND \text{ do } STATEMENT \text{ end} \end{aligned}$$

- Let's make it a bit simpler:

$$\begin{aligned} P &\rightarrow \text{ictSz} \mid \text{ictSeSz} \mid \text{wCdSz} \\ C &\rightarrow \text{c} \\ S &\rightarrow \text{s} \end{aligned}$$

- Let us parse the string "ictsesz"
- A top-down parser begins at the **start symbol**  $P$  and chooses a production:

$P$   
↓  
???

# Recursive descent: what next?

- If we can only look ahead by one token and read an "i", we can choose between two productions:

$$P \rightarrow iCtSz$$

$$| iCtSeSz$$

- We cannot make this choice before seeing more of the token stream
- Left factoring makes this problem decidable with only one character of lookahead
- It generates the following grammar:

$$P \rightarrow iCtSP' \mid wCdSz$$

$$P' \rightarrow z \mid eSz$$

$$C \rightarrow c$$

$$S \rightarrow s$$

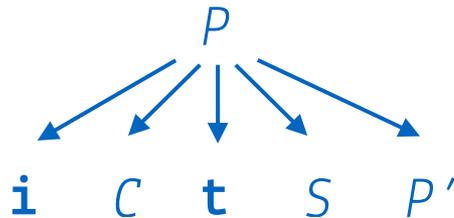
# Recursive descent: what next?

- Now we only have one production to choose from when reading an "i":

$$P \rightarrow \mathbf{i}CtSP'$$

$$\begin{array}{l} P \rightarrow \mathbf{i}CtSP' \mid \mathbf{wCdSz} \\ P' \rightarrow \mathbf{z} \mid \mathbf{eSz} \\ C \rightarrow \mathbf{c} \\ S \rightarrow \mathbf{s} \end{array}$$

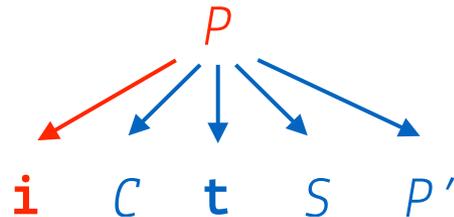
- and we can generate the *parse tree* equivalent to the derivation:



# Recursive descent: going down...

- Recursive descent implies that we follow the children of the current parse tree node down to the leaves (which must be terminal symbols)
- So let's see if we can parse "ictsesz"
- We follow the tree from  $P$  to its first child:

$P$	$\rightarrow$	$iCtSP'$	$ $	$wCdSz$
$P'$	$\rightarrow$	$z$	$ $	$eSz$
$C$	$\rightarrow$	$c$		
$S$	$\rightarrow$	$s$		



- we have an "i" as lookahead  
 $\Rightarrow$  *matches the first production for  $P$ !*
- Now, the remaining token stream is "ctsesz"

The input token sequence:

**i**ctsesz

↑

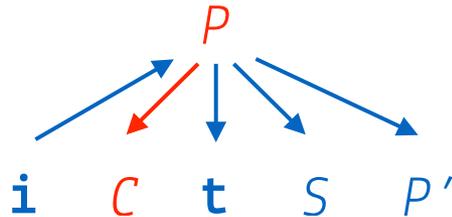


the arrow indicates  
the parser's position  
in the token stream

# Backtrack and repeat

- we have an "i" as lookahead  $\Rightarrow$  **match!**
- Now, the remaining token stream is "ctsesz"
  - We return (backtrack) to  $P$  to continue parsing:

$P$	$\rightarrow$	<b>i</b> <b>C</b> <b>t</b> $SP'$		<b>w</b> <b>C</b> <b>d</b> <b>S</b> <b>z</b>
$P'$	$\rightarrow$	<b>z</b>		<b>e</b> <b>S</b> <b>z</b>
$C$	$\rightarrow$	<b>c</b>		
$S$	$\rightarrow$	<b>s</b>		



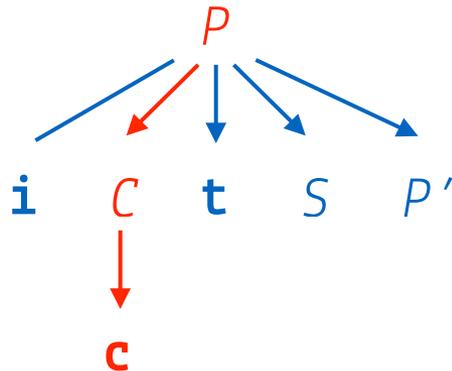
The input token sequence:  
**i c t s e s z**  
 ↑

- This gives us the nonterminal  $C$
- A nonterminal cannot match any token, so we need to pick another production

# Pick the next production

- There is only one choice to expand  $C$ 
  - When going from  $P$  to  $C$  in the previous step, we did not consume a token
- The lookahead is now  $c$ 
  - Pick production  $C \rightarrow c$  and expand the tree:

$P$	$\rightarrow$	$iCtSP'$	$ $	$wCdSz$
$P'$	$\rightarrow$	$z$	$ $	$eSz$
$C$	$\rightarrow$	$c$		
$S$	$\rightarrow$	$s$		



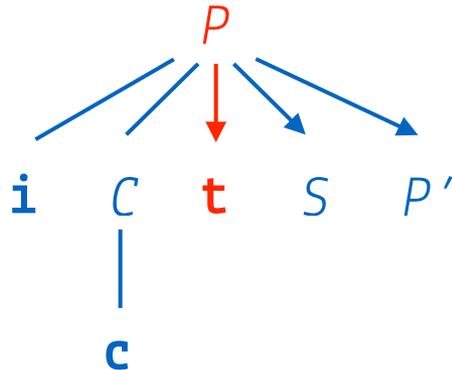
The input token sequence:  
**i c t s e s z**  
 ↑

- we have a "c" as lookahead  $\Rightarrow$  "tsez"

# The next terminal symbol

- The next terminal symbol in  $P$  is  $t$
- The lookahead is also  $t$ 
  - Consume the token and expand the tree once more:

$P$	$\rightarrow$	$iCtSP'$	$ $	$wCdSz$
$P'$	$\rightarrow$	$z$	$ $	$eSz$
$C$	$\rightarrow$	$c$		
$S$	$\rightarrow$	$s$		



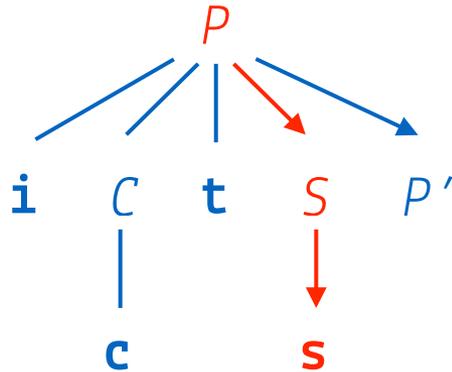
The input token sequence:  
**ic tsesz**  
 ↑

- remaining token stream: "**sesz**"

# The next nonterminal symbol $S$

- The next nonterminal in the first production is  $S$ , so we apply its production
- The lookahead is now  $s$ 
  - This matches the pattern derived from  $S$ , so we can expand the tree again:

$P$	$\rightarrow$	$iCtSP'$	$ $	$wCdSz$
$P'$	$\rightarrow$	$z$	$ $	$eSz$
$C$	$\rightarrow$	$c$		
$S$	$\rightarrow$	$s$		



The input token sequence:  
**ict** **esz**  
 ↑

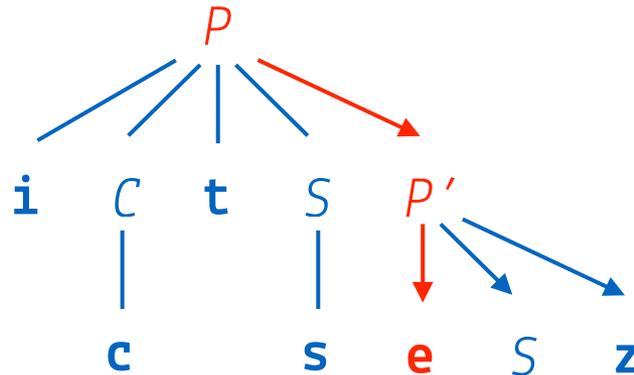
- remaining token stream: "**esz**"

# The next nonterminal symbol S

- The final nonterminal in the first production is  $P'$
- Now we have to choose between:  
 $P' \rightarrow z$  and  $P' \rightarrow eSz$

$P$	$\rightarrow$	$iCtSP'$	$ $	$wCdSz$
$P'$	$\rightarrow$	$z$	$ $	$eSz$
$C$	$\rightarrow$	$c$		
$S$	$\rightarrow$	$s$		

We can now choose the right production using only one token of lookahead!



The input token sequence:  
**ictsesz**  
 ↑

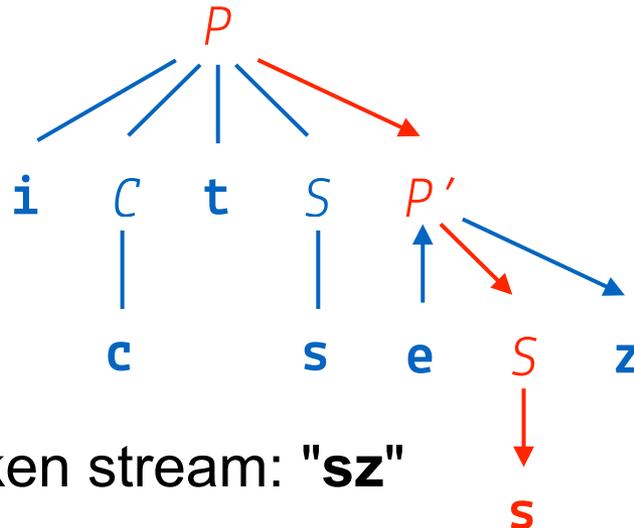
- remaining token stream: "**sz**"

# The final steps

- The remaining steps are similar to ones we have already seen
- Take the next nonterminal symbol  $S$  and match the input to production  $S \rightarrow s$

$P$	$\rightarrow$	$iCtSP'$	$ $	$wCdSz$
$P'$	$\rightarrow$	$z$	$ $	$eSz$
$C$	$\rightarrow$	$c$		
$S$	$\rightarrow$	$s$		

**We can again choose the right production using only one symbol of lookahead!**



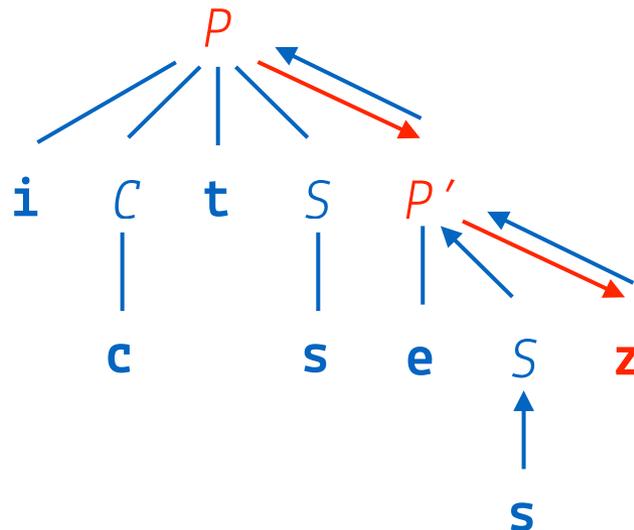
The input token sequence:  
**ictse sz**  
 ↑

- remaining token stream: **"sz"**

# Validated!

- The remaining nonterminal in the production  $P' \rightarrow eSz$  is  $z$
- This matches the remaining input token  
→ **we backtrack and find no further children**  
→ **we are able to match all characters, thus the input matches our grammar**

$P$	$\rightarrow$	$iCtSP' \mid wCdSz$
$P'$	$\rightarrow$	$z \mid eSz$
$C$	$\rightarrow$	$c$
$S$	$\rightarrow$	$s$



The input token sequence:  
**ictses z**  $\rightarrow$  **ictsesz**



# Top-down parsing summarized

- Predictive parsing by recursive descent:
  - Start from the start symbol (top)
  - Verify terminals
  - Pick a unique production for nonterminals based on the lookahead
  - Expand the syntax tree by productions and recursively treat the new subtree in the same way
- This requires that the grammar is suitable, but we can adapt them somewhat
  - Left factor where a common lookahead prevents picking the right production
  - Eliminate left-recursive productions
  - We only saw left factoring in action so far, but let's do one other grammar

**LL(1) parsing:**

- scan from Left to right
- use Leftmost derivation
- 1 symbol lookahead

# Implementing recursive descent

- Recursive descent parsers can easily be implemented by hand
- Example: parsing  $A = aAc \mid b$
- We can naively try to implement the parser like this:

```

symbol sym;
...
sym = next();
if (sym == 'a') {
    sym = next();
    if (sym == 'A') { sym = next(); } else { error(); }
    if (sym == 'c') { sym = next(); } else { error(); }
}
else
if (sym == 'b') { sym = next(); } else { error(); }

```

Wait... will  
this work?

next() is the interface  
to the scanner!

$A = aAc$   
|  
 $b$

# Correct implementation

- Example: parsing  $A = aAc \mid b$
- Whenever we encounter a *nonterminal* such as  $A$  we have to parse its *production*!
- Let us implement the parser as a function:

What is the correct way to call A() from main to ensure the parser works correctly in all cases?

```

symbol sym;
...
void A(void) {
    if (sym == 'a') {
        sym = next();
        A();
        if (sym == 'c') { sym = next(); } else { error(); }
    }
    else
        if (sym == 'b') { sym = next(); } else { error(); }
}

```

$A = aAc$   
|  
 $b$

Recursively calling the parser for A allows to parse arbitrarily nested inputs!

Some more implementation hints (not in C) can be found in [3]

# Table-driven parsing

- As with scanners, coding a recursive descent parser for a complex language is lots of work and error prone
- Idea: use tables to configure the parser
  - parser makes decisions based on indexing (nonterminal, terminal) pairs and find a single production
- To make that table, it's a good idea to determine
  - What can the strings derived from a nonterminal begin with?
  - Which nonterminals can vanish, so that the lookahead symbol is actually part of the *next* production to choose?
  - What can come directly after a nonterminal that can vanish?  
(where 'vanish' means that there is a production  $X \rightarrow \epsilon$ , so that nonterminal  $X$  disappears from the intermediate form in the derivation without consuming any characters from the input token stream)

# Another example grammar

$$\begin{array}{l} S \rightarrow u B D z \\ B \rightarrow B v \mid w \\ D \rightarrow E F \\ E \rightarrow y \mid \varepsilon \\ F \rightarrow x \mid \varepsilon \end{array}$$

It doesn't model anything in particular, it's just a useful example

# FIRST

- The set  $\text{FIRST}(\alpha)$  is the set of terminals that can appear to the left in  $\alpha$ 
  - $\alpha$  is any combination of terminals and nonterminals
- If we tabulate FIRST for all the heads in the grammar, we obtain
  - $\text{FIRST}(S) = \{u\}$  –  $u$  begins the only production
  - $\text{FIRST}(B) = \{w\}$  – however many times  $B \rightarrow Bv$  is taken,  $w$  appears on the left in the end
  - $\text{FIRST}(E) = \{y\}$  – only production that derives any terminal
  - $\text{FIRST}(F) = \{x\}$  – ditto
  - $\text{FIRST}(D) = \{y, x\}$ 
    - $y$  because  $D \rightarrow EF \rightarrow yF$
    - $x$  because  $D \rightarrow EF \rightarrow F \rightarrow x$  ( $E$  can disappear by  $E \rightarrow \epsilon$ )

$S$	$\rightarrow$	$u$	$B$	$D$	$z$
$B$	$\rightarrow$	$B$	$v$	$ $	$w$
$D$	$\rightarrow$	$E$	$F$		
$E$	$\rightarrow$	$y$	$ $	$\epsilon$	
$F$	$\rightarrow$	$x$	$ $	$\epsilon$	

# FOLLOW

Syntax  
analysis

- FOLLOW ( $N$ ) for a nonterminal  $N$  is the set of terminals that can appear directly to its right
  - In order to find these, you have to examine all the places  $N$  appears in production bodies, and find the terminals directly to its right
  - If it has a nonterminal on its right, you have to follow all its productions too, and find out what can come up instead of it
    - That will be its FIRST set
  - If it has a nonterminal that can vanish to its right, you have to look at what comes afterwards...
    - ...and in general, collect all the terminals that can appear to the right in one way or another
- This is a little trickier than FIRST, but it can be done manually
  - See fig. 3.8, p. 106 in [4] for an algorithm to compute FOLLOW

$S$	$\rightarrow$	$u$	$B$	$D$	$z$
$B$	$\rightarrow$	$B$	$v$		$w$
$D$	$\rightarrow$	$E$	$F$		
$E$	$\rightarrow$	$y$			$\epsilon$
$F$	$\rightarrow$	$x$			$\epsilon$

# FOLLOW for our grammar

Syntax  
analysis

- $\text{FOLLOW}(S) = \{\$ \}$  (the end of input)
- $\text{FOLLOW}(B) = \{v, x, y, z\}$  taken from the derivations
  - $S \rightarrow uBDz \rightarrow uBvDz$
  - $S \rightarrow uBDz \rightarrow uBEFz \rightarrow uBFz \rightarrow uBxz$
  - $S \rightarrow uBDz \rightarrow uBEFz \rightarrow uByFz$
  - $S \rightarrow uBDz \rightarrow uBEFz \rightarrow uBFz \rightarrow uBz$
- $\text{FOLLOW}(D) = \{z\}$  (from  $S \rightarrow uBDz$ )
- $\text{FOLLOW}(E) = \{x, z\}$  taken from the derivations
  - $S \rightarrow uBDz \rightarrow uBEFz \rightarrow uBExz$
  - $S \rightarrow uBDz \rightarrow uBEFz \rightarrow uBEz$
- $\text{FOLLOW}(F) = \{z\}$  – from  $S \rightarrow uBDz \rightarrow uBEFz$

$S$	$\rightarrow$	$u$	$B$	$D$	$z$
$B$	$\rightarrow$	$B$	$v$		$w$
$D$	$\rightarrow$	$E$	$F$		
$E$	$\rightarrow$	$y$		$\epsilon$	
$F$	$\rightarrow$	$x$		$\epsilon$	

# Nullability

- A nonterminal is **nullable** if it can produce the empty string (in any number of steps)
  - Here, the notation might be different between various textbooks
  - E.g., the Aho/Ullman/Seti/Lam "Dragon book" [5] (one of the standard compiler textbooks) denotes this by putting  $\epsilon$  in the FIRST set
  - We denote it by keeping a separate record
- To summarize,
  - nullable ( $S$ ) = no – there are terminals in the only production
  - nullable ( $B$ ) = no – there are terminals in both productions
  - nullable ( $E$ ) = yes – it produces  $E \rightarrow \epsilon$
  - nullable ( $F$ ) = yes – it produces  $F \rightarrow \epsilon$
  - nullable ( $D$ ) = yes –  $D \rightarrow EF \rightarrow F \rightarrow \epsilon$

$S$	$\rightarrow$	$u$	$B$	$D$	$z$
$B$	$\rightarrow$	$B$	$v$		$w$
$D$	$\rightarrow$	$E$	$F$		
$E$	$\rightarrow$	$y$		$\epsilon$	
$F$	$\rightarrow$	$x$		$\epsilon$	

# Building the parsing table

- Obtain the FIRST and FOLLOW sets and nullable information for your grammar
- Consider every production  $X \rightarrow \alpha$  in the grammar, and apply two rules
  - Enter the production  $X \rightarrow \alpha$  at  $(X, t)$  where  $t$  is in  $\text{FIRST}(\alpha)$
  - When  $\alpha \rightarrow^* \epsilon$ , enter the production  $X \rightarrow \alpha$  at  $(X, t)$  where  $t$  is in  $\text{FOLLOW}(X)$

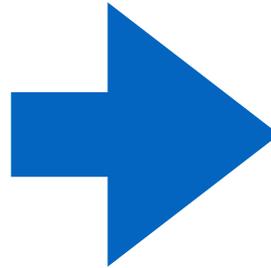
# Oops, a left recursion!

This will not work, expanding B on lookahead 'w' requires a choice the parser cannot make

	u	w	v	x	y	z
S	$S \rightarrow uBDz$					
B		$B \rightarrow w$ $B \rightarrow Bv$				
D				$D \rightarrow EF$	$D \rightarrow EF$	
E					$E \rightarrow y$	
F				$F \rightarrow x$		

# Fix the grammar

- Eliminating left recursion gives us

$$\begin{array}{l}
 S \rightarrow u B D z \\
 B \rightarrow B v \mid w \\
 D \rightarrow E F \\
 E \rightarrow y \mid \varepsilon \\
 F \rightarrow x \mid \varepsilon
 \end{array}$$


$$\begin{array}{l}
 S \rightarrow u B D z \\
 B \rightarrow w B' \\
 B' \rightarrow v B' \mid \varepsilon \\
 D \rightarrow E F \\
 E \rightarrow y \mid \varepsilon \\
 F \rightarrow x \mid \varepsilon
 \end{array}$$

- Update the FIRST, FOLLOW, nullable sets after the change:
  - $\text{FIRST}(B) = \{w\}$ ,  $\text{FOLLOW}(B) = \{x, y, z\}$ ,  $\text{nullable}(B) = \text{no}$
  - $\text{FIRST}(B') = \{v\}$ ,  $\text{FOLLOW}(B') = \{x, y, z\}$ ,  $\text{nullable}(B') = \text{yes}$

# This is better... after rule 1

	u	w	v	x	y	z
S	$S \rightarrow uBDz$					
B		$B \rightarrow wB'$				
B'			$B' \rightarrow vB'$			
D				$D \rightarrow EF$	$D \rightarrow EF$	
E					$E \rightarrow y$	
F				$F \rightarrow x$		

# Now apply rule 2

Where nonterminal symbols are *nullable*, insert at FOLLOW

	u	w	v	x	y	z
S	$S \rightarrow \mathbf{uBDz}$					
B		$B \rightarrow \mathbf{wB'}$				
B'			$B' \rightarrow \mathbf{vB'}$	$B' \rightarrow \epsilon$	$B' \rightarrow \epsilon$	$B' \rightarrow \epsilon$
D				$D \rightarrow EF$	$D \rightarrow EF$	$D \rightarrow EF$
E				$E \rightarrow \epsilon$	$E \rightarrow \mathbf{y}$	$E \rightarrow \epsilon$
F				$F \rightarrow \mathbf{x}$		$F \rightarrow \epsilon$

# Result: a LL(1) parse table

- There is only one rule to choose from given a combination (NT, T) of a nonterminal and a terminal symbol
- Thus, the parse tree can be built deterministically by following the method from the first example
  - Pick productions for NTs by looking them up in the table
  - Encountering a combination without production  $\Rightarrow$  error
- The LL(1) parse table can, of course, also be constructed by an algorithm that processes (parses) the input grammar
  - See [4], fig. 3.12, p. 113  
(note: the book adds the set FIRST<sup>+</sup> to simplify notation)
- This is the first step to create a ***parser generator*** (also called ***compiler compiler***)

# So far, so good...

- Most programming language constructs can be expressed in a backtrack-free grammar
- Predictive parsers for these are simple, compact, and efficient
  - They can be implemented in a number of ways, including hand-coded, recursive descent parsers and generated LL(1) parsers, either table driven or direct coded
- The primary drawback of top-down, predictive parsers lies in their inability to handle left recursion
  - Left-recursive grammars model the left-to-right associativity of expression operators in a more natural way than right-recursive grammars
- What lies ahead?
  - More parsing: bottom up – LR(1) parsers
  - These are the basis for many parser generators, e.g. yacc/bison

# References

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Revised edition 2017 freely available at  
<https://inf.ethz.ch/personal/wirth/CompilerConstruction/index.html>  
– in this small book of a bit more than 100 pages, Wirth explains the design and implementation of a small compiler for a subset of the Oberon language. This book is rather implementation-oriented, so don't expect too much theoretical detail
- [4] Keith Cooper and Linda Torczon:  
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