Lecture 3: Language constructs for modularity and information hiding

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Overview

Review of modularity and information hiding (discussed in previous lecture)
Information hiding mechanisms in Eiffel
Information hiding mechanisms in Java
Comparison: Eiffel vs. Java
Information hiding mechanisms in C#
Modularity and information hiding in Ada 83
Wrap-up

Information hiding

Underlying question: how does one “advertise” the capabilities of a module?

Every module should be known to the outside world through an official, “public” interface.
The rest of the module’s properties comprises its “secrets”.
It should be impossible to access the secrets from the outside.

Information Hiding Principle

The designer of every module must select a subset of the module’s properties as the official information about the module, to be made available to authors of client modules.

Modularity

Reusability + Extendibility

Some principles of modularity:
- Decomposability
- Composability
- Continuity
- Information hiding
- The open-closed principle
- The single choice principle

How to ensure information hiding

NOT through management or marketing policies
BUT through language rules
Encapsulation

Wrapping data and routines within classes in combination with information hiding is often called "encapsulation". However, "encapsulation" is often used as a synonym for information hiding.

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Possible client privileges in Eiffel

If class A has an attribute att : SOME_TYPE, what may a client class C with
a : A
do with a . att ?

The attribute may be:

- Secret
- Read-only
- Read, restricted write
- Full write
- Modify through a . some_procedure
- Modify through a . set_att (v)

set_temperature (u : REAL) is
   -- Set temperature value to u.
   do
      temperature := u
      ensure
         temperature_set: temperature = u
   end

Client will use e.g. x. set_temperature (21.5).

Abstraction and client privileges

If class A has an attribute att : SOME_TYPE, what may a client class C with
a : A
do with a . att ?

Read access if attribute is exported

- a . att is an expression.

- An assignment a . att := v would be syntactically illegal.

(App would assign to an expression, like x . y := v)

Applying abstraction principles

Beyond read access: full or restricted write, through exported procedures.

Full write privileges: set_attribute procedure, e.g.
set_temperature (u : REAL) is
   -- Set temperature value to u.
   do
      temperature := u
      ensure
         temperature_set: temperature = u
   end
Client will use e.g. x. set_temperature (21.5).

Other uses of a setter procedure

set_temperature (u : REAL) is
   -- Set temperature value to u.
   do
      require
         not_under_minimum: u >= -273
         not_above_maximum: u <= 2000
      do
         temperature := u
         update_database
      ensure
         temperature_set: temperature = u
      end
end
Having it both ways

Make it possible to call a setter procedure

\[
\text{temperature: REAL assign set_temperature}
\]

Then the syntax

\[
x.\text{temperature} := 21.5
\]

is accepted as a shorthand for \(x.\text{set_temperature}(21.5)\)

Retains contracts etc.

Exporting selectively

\[
\text{class LINKABLE [G]}
\]

\[
\text{feature (LINKED_LIST)}
\]

\[
\text{put_right (\ldots) is do \ldots end}
\]

\[
\text{right: G is do \ldots end}
\]

\[
\ldots \text{end}
\]

These features are selectively exported to LINKED_LIST and its descendants (and no other classes)

Information hiding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status of calls in a client with a1: A:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

\[
\text{a1.f, a1.g valid in any client}
\]

\[
\text{a1.h invalid everywhere (including in A's own text!)}
\]

\[
\text{a1.j valid only in A, B, C and their descendants (not valid in A)}
\]

\[
\text{a1.m valid in A, B, C and their descendants, as well as in A and its descendants}
\]

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Possible client privileges in Java

Access specifiers (placed in front of each definition for each member of the class):
- public
- protected
- Package access (no keyword)
- private

Access specifiers

public
- The member declared to be public is available to everyone
private
- No one can access that member except the class that contains that member, inside methods of that class
protected
- Member can be accessed by:
  - Descendants of the class
  - Classes in the same package
Package access
- Default
- Also called “friendly”
- All other classes in current package have access to that member
- To all classes outside of current package, the member appears to be private

Access modifiers at the class level

Either public or default (no access modifier)
- public
- Makes the class available to a client programmer
- No access modifier
- Makes the class available only within the package

No private and protected!

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Comparison: Eiffel vs. Java

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Access level</th>
<th>Eiffel</th>
<th>Java</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>only current class</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>private</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>only current class and its descendants</td>
<td>feature (NONE)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>current class + “friends”</td>
<td>feature [A,B,C]</td>
<td>default [“friends” = classes in the same package]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>current class + its descendants + “friends”</td>
<td>feature [A,B,C]</td>
<td>protected [“friends” = classes in the same package]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>everyone</td>
<td>feature [ANY]</td>
<td>public</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

More comparison: Eiffel vs. Java

Eiffel - no package mechanism
Eiffel - no way of hiding a feature from your descendants
- Module viewpoint: If B inherits from A, all the services of A are available in B (possibly with a different implementation).
Java - no way of exporting a member only to self and descendants
Java - no language rule to distinguish between access to attributes for reading and for writing
Java - additional way of making a class available outside its package or not
Access control more fine grained in Eiffel
C# access modifiers

C# adds the **internal** access modifier, which restricts access within the assembly.

Classes can be:
- **public**
- **internal**

Class members can be:
- **public** - accessible to everyone
- **internal** - accessible only from current assembly
- **protected** - accessible only from containing class or types derived from containing class (a.k.a. “family” export status)
- **protected internal** - accessible only from current assembly or types derived from the containing class
- **private** - accessible only from containing type

The problem with attribute export status

If an attribute is exported, clients can both read it and assign any value that they want to it.

Ex: `heater.temperature := 19`

Packages in Ada 83

Construct for grouping logically related program elements

Purely syntactic notion

Only needed for readability and manageability of the software

The decomposition of a system into packages does not affect its semantics

Unlike the classes of object-oriented languages, a package does not by itself define a type
Ada packages - Separation of interface and body

Every package has 2 parts:
- “specification”
  - Introduced by the keyword `package`
  - Contains the interface
  - Lists the public properties of the package: exported variables, constants, types, and routines (only headers)
- “body”
  - Introduced by the keywords `package body`
  - Provides the routines’ implementations
  - Adds any needed secret elements
  - Needs to repeat most of the interface information (routine headers) that already appeared in the interface

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Ada - the private story

The problem:
- Declaring a type in the interface part of a package gives clients unrestricted access to the type, and not declaring it hides it completely from the clients.

The solution:
- The `private` part of the interface (introduced by the `private` keyword)
- Any declaration appearing in the private part is unavailable to clients.

Wrap-up

Why control access to features?
- To allow the class designer to change the internal workings of the class without worrying about how it will affect the client programmer (service to class designer)
- To show a client programmer what is important to him/her and what not (service to client programmer)

Levels of access for clients may vary from no access to full read and write.
Not all languages allow all levels of access.

Ada - an example of a package interface

generic
    type G is private;
package STACKS is
    type STACK (capacity: POSITIVE) is private;
    procedure put(x: in G; s: in out STACK);
    procedure remove(s: in out STACK);
    function item(s: STACK) return G;
    function empty(s: STACK) return BOOLEAN;
    type STACK_VALUES is array (POSITIVE range <>) of G;
    type STACK (capacity: POSITIVE) is record
        implementation: STACK_VALUES (1..capacity);
        count: NATURAL := 0;
    end record
    end STACK;
end STACKS;