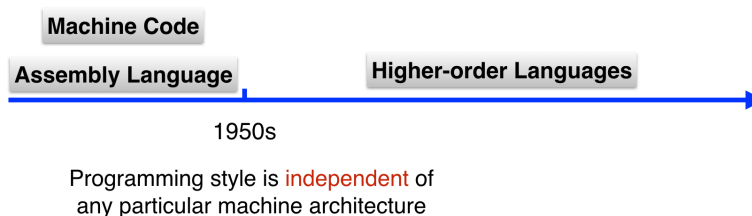


Overview of Programming Languages

History of Programming Languages (*Stephanie used a different approach during lecture 1, but doesn't want to delete these notes about the history of PL because they are so informative*)

- Earliest digital computers **without memory** adjust gears, connect cables and flip switches
- Later computers **with punch card reader** (Punch Card from a Fortran program https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Computer_programming_in_the_punched_card_era)
 - punch card: card-stock piece of paper with holes punched in it
 - data and instructions are holes
 - card reader reads holes
 - programmers **had to know the machine code** (different machines have different instructions)
 - *not easy to read and write*
- **Assembly language**
 - **machine-dependent**, CISC, RISC, close related to the machine architecture
 - the first abstraction of machine code, using text mnemonics to represent binary instructions and symbols to represent binary sequence
 - *punch card reader became interpreters*
 - more readable than pure machine code
 - **inefficient and error-prone** (count lines, no efficient flow control but JMP to lines)



- After 1950s
 - PL were intended to **bridge the gap** between natural language and the machine instructions
 - **Higher-ordered languages (our focus in CS333)**
 - Independent of any particular machine architecture
 - Closer to natural language
 - *Compilers/interpreters* translate the programs into assembly languages/machine code
- Early PL
 - developed to **satisfy particular needs**
 - **influenced later language** development
 - some **survived** and heavy used, some evolved or **replaced** by other languages (why)
 - too complex implement, too slow, or not general enough caused the language not survived
 - some early PLs:
 - Fortran: scientific computing
 - long term used
 - **fast**
 - Cobol: business computing
 - long term used
 - **user friendly**
 - Algol: general purpose programming
 - short term
 - Lisp: AI programming
 - long term
 - **functional PL, 63 years old, treat computation as the evaluation of mathematical function, avoid changing status and mutable data**
 - C: system programming
 - long term
 - **explicit memory management**
 - Prolog: theorem proof
 - long term
 - SEQUEL: database management
 - SQL
- **Tools** to Enable and Facilitate the use of PL
 - **compilers/interpreters** to convert the language into machine language/assembly language
 - languages must be described in an **unambiguous** manner (**grammar**)
 - underlying computer **architecture** supports the features of a language (e.g., precision 32- and 64-bit)

Nature of PLs (*notes not covered directly by Stephanie*)

- PLs **enable communication** between programmers and computers
 - **PLs describe** the tasks in a way both programmers and machines can understand.
- All applications in your laptop are written in certain PLs including OS, Office Word, PPT, Excel, Web browsers, text editors, IDEs (Integrated development environments, e.g. Visual Studio), etc.
- All these **programs share** the same hardware **resources** (CPU, memory, etc).
- Therefore, it's necessary to be aware of the resource constraints and write efficient programs.
- In this course, I hope to help you understand PLs better so that you can write more efficient programs.

PL Concepts (*Stephanie presents these in class*)

- **Syntax**: defines the structure of the language
 - Syntax is defined by a **vocabulary** that specifies the **set of possible symbols** and a **grammar** that defines the **set of possible valid programs**. Note that a **valid program is not necessarily a correct or useful program**.
 - *Project 2 addresses lexical analysis and syntax.*
 - *Project 3 addresses syntax*
- **Names**
 - Programs require that we give names to entities in the program.
 - *Project 3 addresses naming*
 - **Entities** include **constants**, **variables**, **expressions**, **functions**, **libraries**, and **programs**.
 - Names permit use to **manipulate entities**. (So, name is important!)
- **Scope**: defines the **part of the program** in which a **name refers to a specific entity**.
 - It is important to know when the name of an entity is available.
- **Visibility**:
 - Sometimes we use the same name for different entities.
 - The visibility rules define **which entity** a particular **name** usage **accesses**.
- **Binding**
 - The entity referred by a name is not always defined when the programmer writes the code.
 - Binding specifies **when the connection** between **entity** (variable) and its **property** (value) is **made**.
- **Types**
 - All data in a computer is a sequence of binary values.

- *Project 3 addresses types*
- The data types of a programming language define the **abstractions built on top of binary sequences** to permit a programmer to generate and manipulate information.
- Data types can be **simple**, such as integers or characters, or more **abstract** such as lists, hash tables and functions.
- **Semantics**
 - The **meaning of a program** is defined by its semantics.
 - Generally, semantics are defined in terms of the behavior of a particular architecture, or computing model that is independent of the actual underlying hardware (but not always).
 - *Project 4 addresses semantics*
- **Organization**
 - All programming languages contain **constructs** that **permit us to build abstractions**. In some languages this is easier than others.
 - Macros, functions, classes, interfaces, and packages examples of organization constructs that can exist in a language.
 - *Projects 5 and 6 address organization with functions and polymorphism.*
- **Memory Management**
 - Allocating, freeing, and making use of memory are central to writing programs.
 - In some language memory management is **hidden** from the programmer, while in others the programmer is **responsible for managing** its **use**.
 - The most important concepts in memory management are the system **stack** - which is generally used for handling **local variables and function calls** - and the **heap** - which is generally used for **dynamically allocated objects**. The system **stack** is **rarely explicitly** managed by the programmer, while the **heap** is **often** at least partly **exposed**.
 - *Project 7 addresses memory management.*

Disclaimer: Notes adapted from previous CS333 lecture materials at Colby College