Generating correct code for your programmers

PLISS 2025 – Part I

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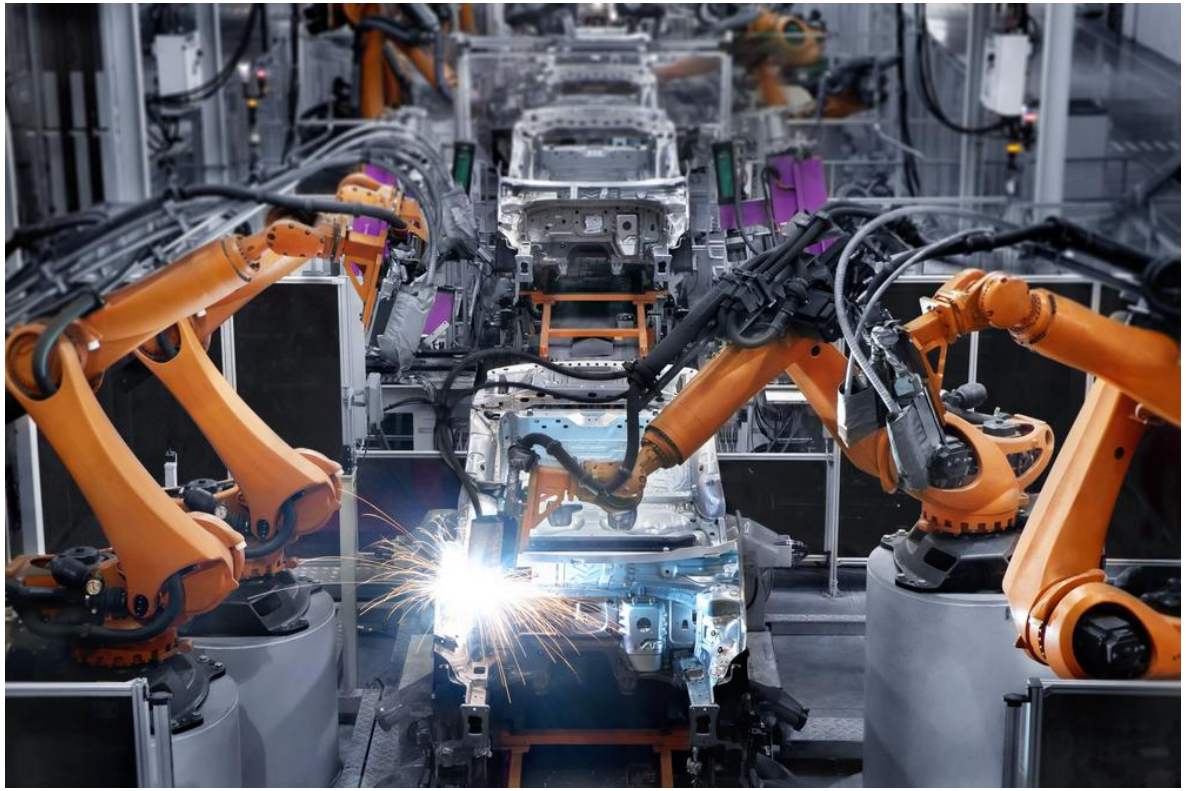
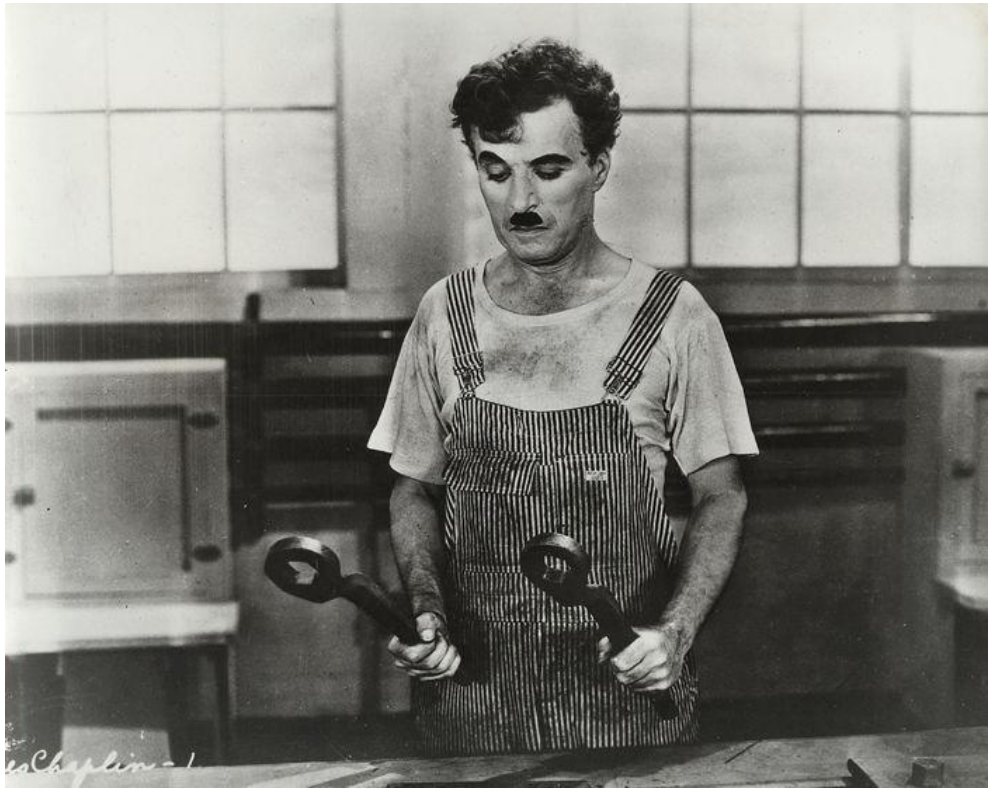
The goal: Automate some programming





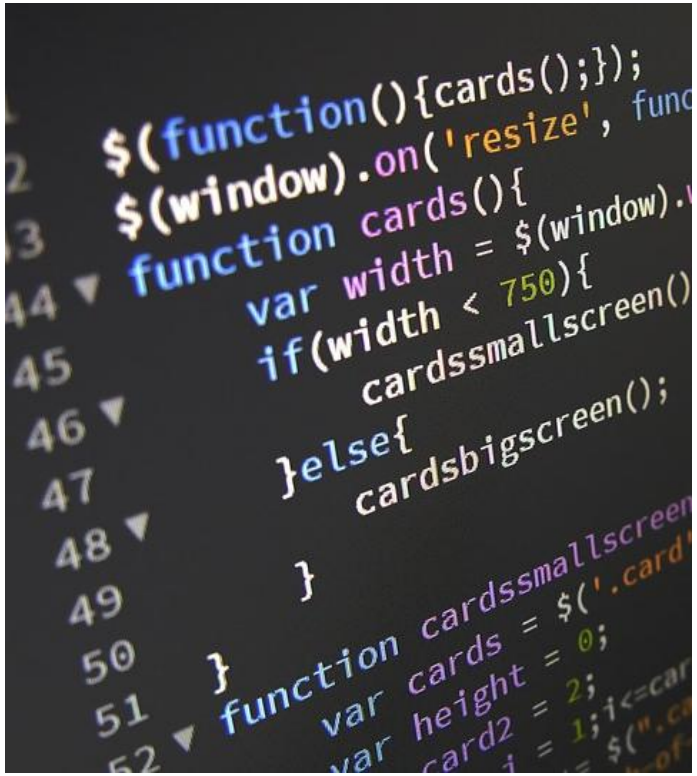
…in a *correct by construction* way

GitHub Copilot

```
def max_sum_slice(xs):
    if len(xs) == 0:
        return None

    max_sum = 0
    max_sum_index = 0
    max_sum_slice = []

    for i in range(len(xs)):
        if sum(xs[:i+1]) > max_sum:
            max_sum = sum(xs[:i+1])
            max_sum_index = i
            max_sum_slice = xs[:i+1]

    return max_sum_slice
```

Specifications go in, code comes out

$$
\begin{array}{l}
\land \forall p \in Proc, d \in Disk : \\
\quad \land (d \in disksWritten[p]) \Rightarrow \land\ phase[p] \in \{1,2\} \\
\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad \land\ disk[d][p] = dblock[p] \\
\quad \land (phase[p] \in 1,2) \Rightarrow \land\ (blocksRead[p][d] \neq \{\}) \Rightarrow \\
\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad (d \in disksWritten[p]) \\
\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad \land \neg hasRead(p,d,p) \\
\land \forall p \in Proc : \\
\quad \land (phase[p] = 0) \Rightarrow \land\ dblock[p] = InitDB \\
\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad \land\ disksWritten[p] = \{\} \\
\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad \land \forall d \in Disk : \forall br \in blocksReaa \\
\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad \land\ br.proc = p \\
\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad \land\ br.block = disk[d][p] \\
\quad \land (phase[p] \neq 0) \Rightarrow \land\ dblock[p].mbal \in Ballot(p) \\
\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad \land\ dblock[p].bal \in Ballot(p) \cup \{0\} \\
\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad \land \forall d \in Disk : \forall br \in blocksReaa \\
\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad br.block.mbal < dblock[p]. \\
\quad \land (phase[p] \in \{2,3\}) \Rightarrow (dblock[p].bal = dblock[p].mt \\
\quad \land\ output[p] = \text{IF } phase[p] = 3 \text{ THEN } dblock[p].inp \text{ E} \\
\land\ chosen \in allInput \cup \{NotAnInput\} \\
\land \forall p \in Proc : \land\ input[p] \in allInput \\
\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad \land\ (chosen = NotAnInput) \Rightarrow (output[p]
\end{array}
$$



What is program synthesis?

Find a program

A correctness criterion

$$\exists p \in \mathcal{L}(G).\ \forall x.\ \phi(p, x)$$

From a language

How do you find a program?

How do you express correctness?

How do you express correctness?

Specification of intent – the olden days

$$
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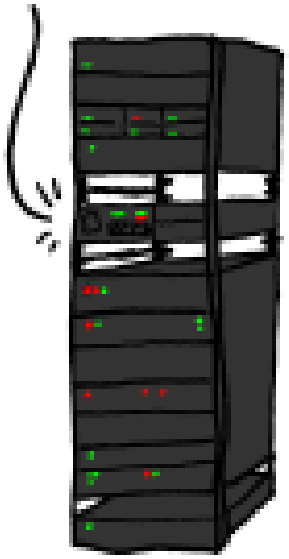
$$

Right-O, here's some code:



Specification of *partial* intent

$$\mathcal{E} = \{\iota_i \rightarrow \omega_i\}$$

Examples

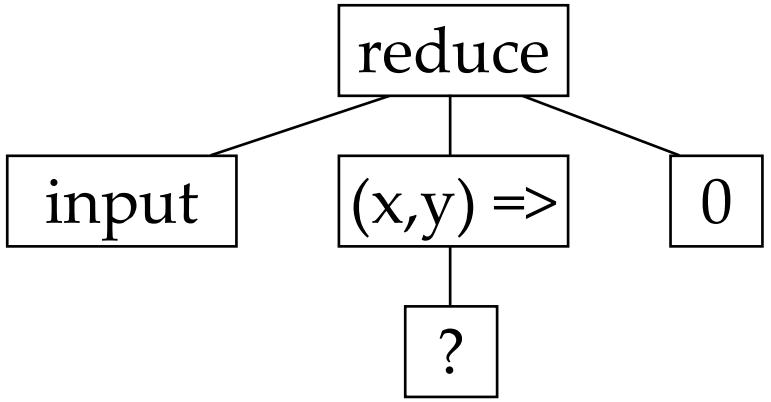
```
var inStream:SequenceInputStream =

var eof:Boolean = false;
var byteCount:Int = 0;
while (!eof) {
  var c:Int = inStream.read()
  if (c == -1)
    eof = true;
  else {
    System.out.print(c.toChar);
    byteCount+=1;
  }
}
```

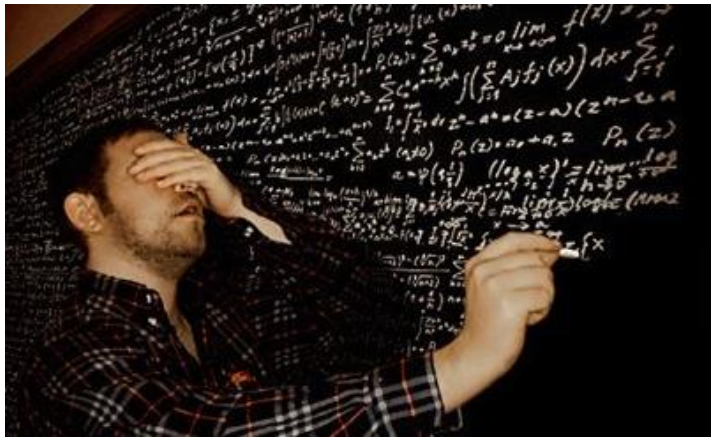
```
new SequenceInputStream(new FileInputStream(sig), new FileInputStream(sig))
new SequenceInputStream(new FileInputStream(sig), new FileInputStream(body))
new SequenceInputStream(new FileInputStream(body), new FileInputStream(sig))
new SequenceInputStream(new FileInputStream(body), new FileInputStream(body))
new SequenceInputStream(new FileInputStream(sig), System.in)

Press 'Ctrl+Space' to show Default Proposals
```

Types



Sketching



Logical specifications

Programming by Example

$$\phi(p, x) = (x = \iota_1 \Rightarrow [\![p]\!](x) = \omega_1) \wedge (x = \iota_2 \Rightarrow [\![p]\!](x) = \omega_2) \wedge \cdots$$

or in other words

$$\mathcal{E} = \{\iota_i \rightarrow \omega_i\}$$

values of all the variables/the state of the environment

output of an expression/an effect/ the new state of the environment

Type-Driven Synthesis

$$(\tau_1, \tau_2, \ldots, \tau_k) \rightarrow \tau_{out}$$

or in other words,

“Use variables of these types that are in scope to make something of this type”

```
Eq a => a -> [a] -> Maybe [a]
```

(Fancy-)Type-Driven Synthesis

$$(\tau_1, \tau_2, \ldots, \tau_k) \rightarrow \tau_{out}$$

or in other words,

“Use variables of these types that are in scope to make something of this type”

```
n:Nat -> x:a -> {List a | len _v = n}
```

Sketching

“I already know some of the code for my program”

```
generator int sumB(int x, int y, int z, int bnd){
    assert bnd > 0;
    generator int factor(){
        return {| x | y | z |}*{| x | y | z |??|};
    }
    if(??){ return factor(); }
    else{ return factor() + sumB(x,y,z, bnd-1);}}
```

An expression that looks kind of like this

goes here

(next time, I promise)

How do you find a program?

Generic synthesis recipe

1. Generate a candidate program

- Enumerate trees
  - Top-down
  - Bottom-up
- Traverse automata
- Graph reachability
- Enumerate deduction rules

2. Test against specification

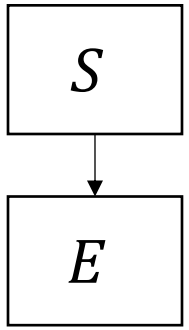
- Run tests
  - Examples
  - Unit
- Encode for SMT solver
- Apply typing rules

Enumerating trees

S

$S \rightarrow E$
$E \rightarrow E + E$
$E \rightarrow E \ * \ E$
$E \rightarrow [EList]$
$EList \rightarrow E \mid EList, E$
$E \rightarrow len(E)$
$E \rightarrow id$
$E \rightarrow num$

Enumerating trees



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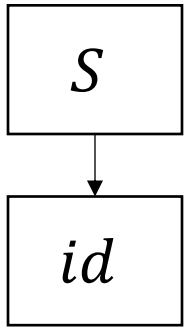

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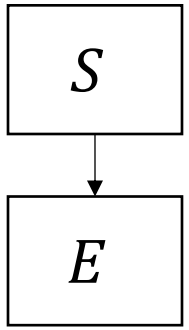

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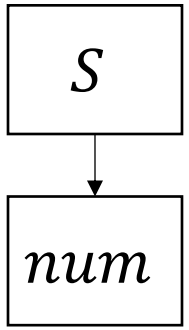

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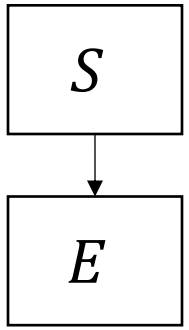

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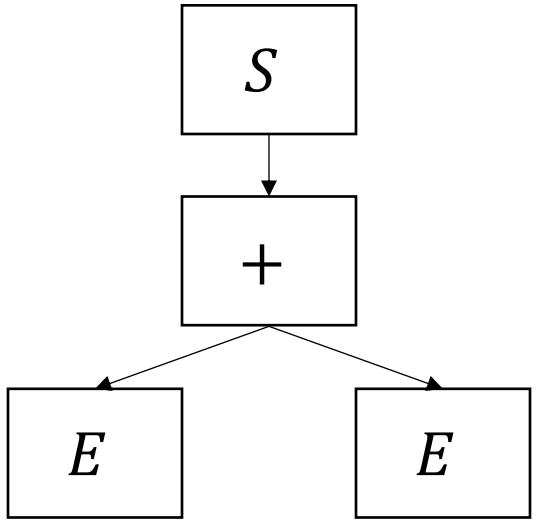

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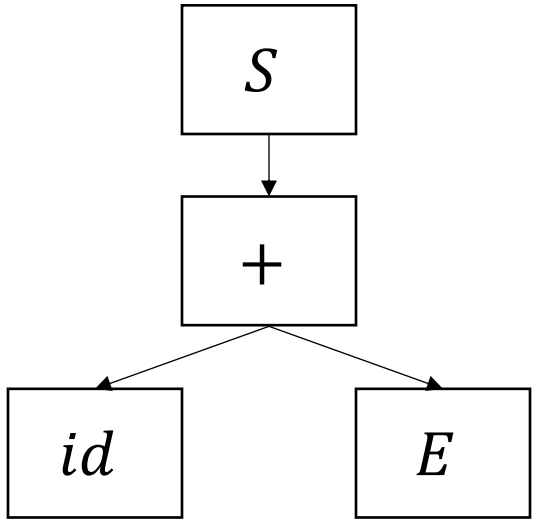

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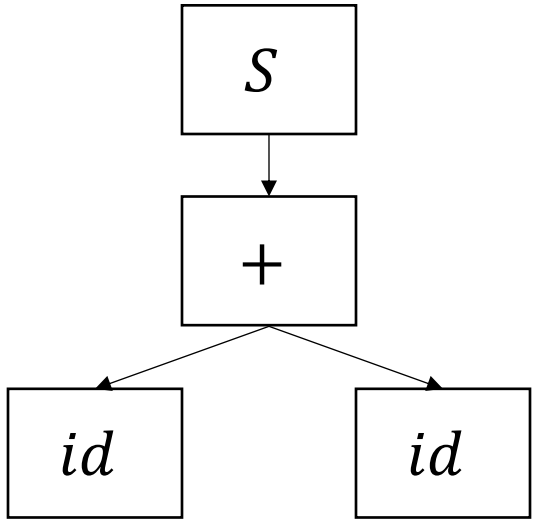

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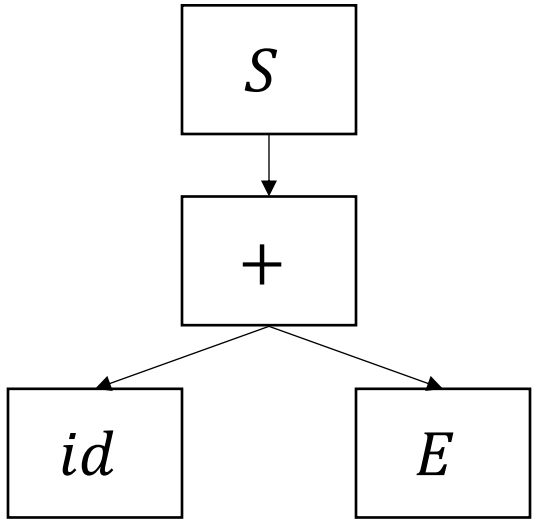

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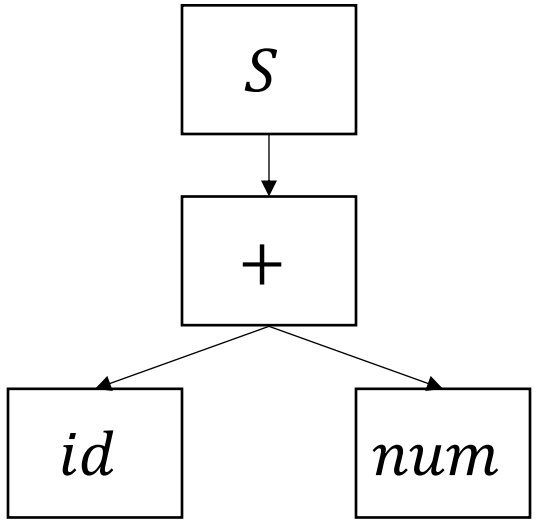

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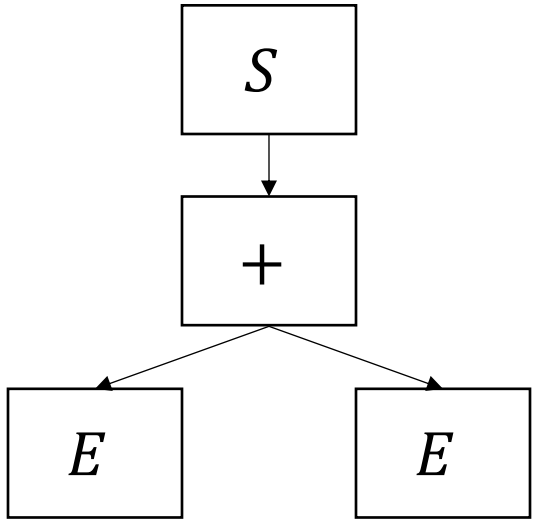

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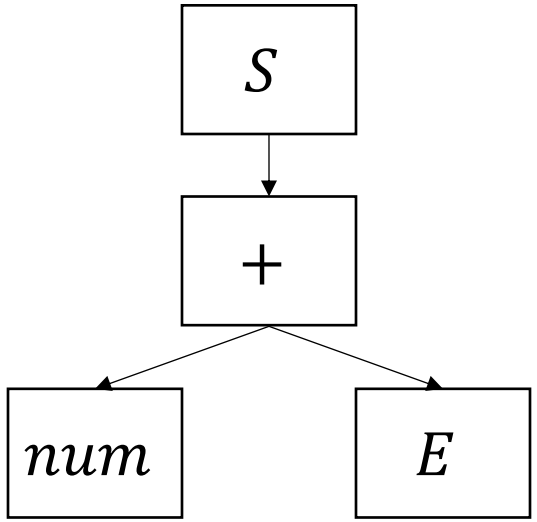

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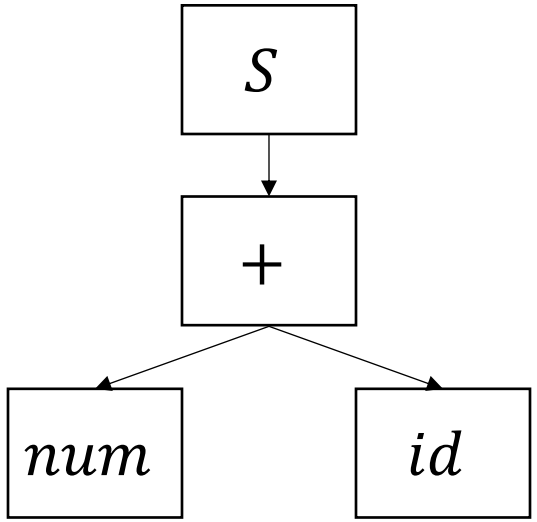

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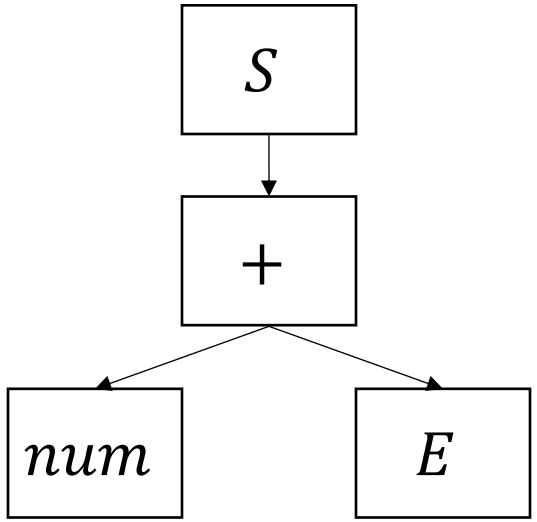

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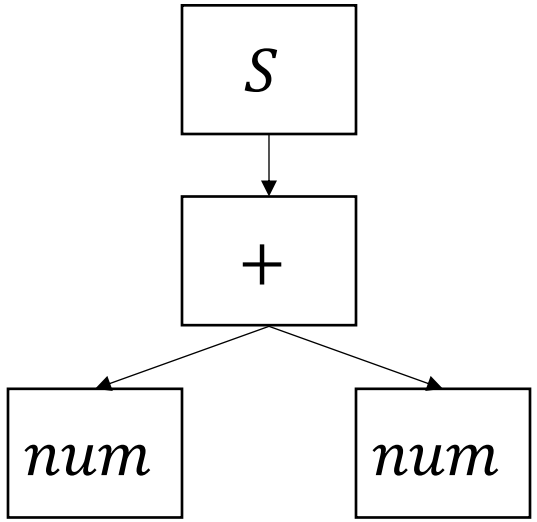

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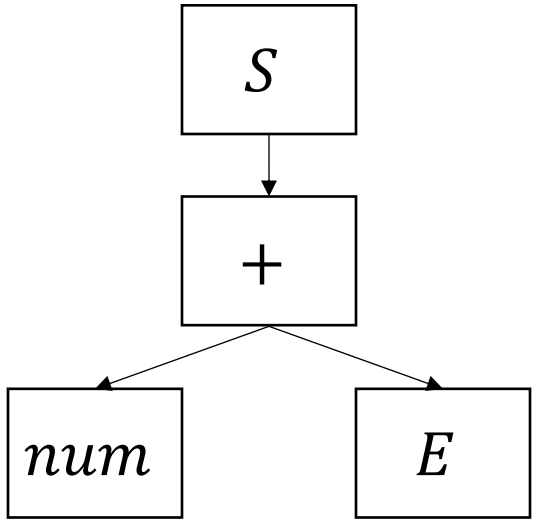

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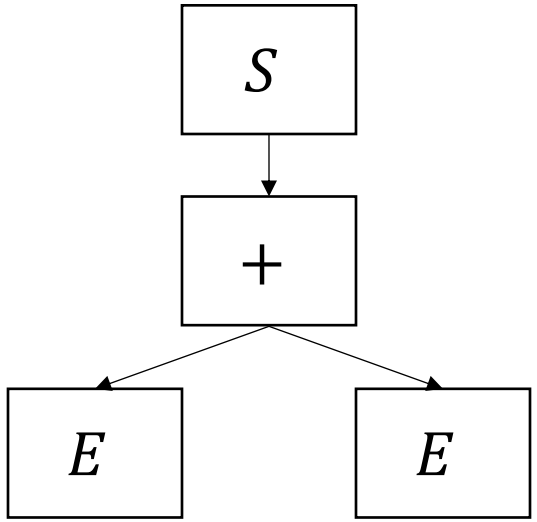

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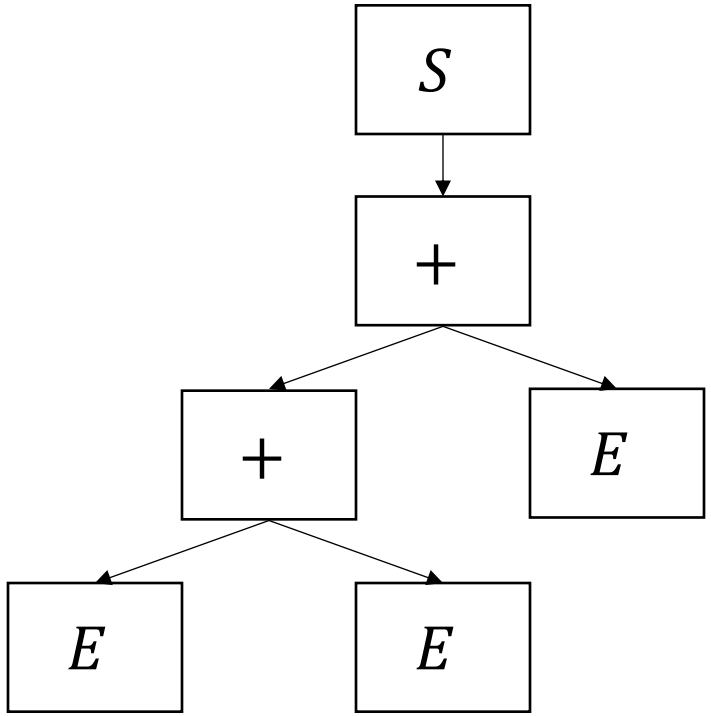

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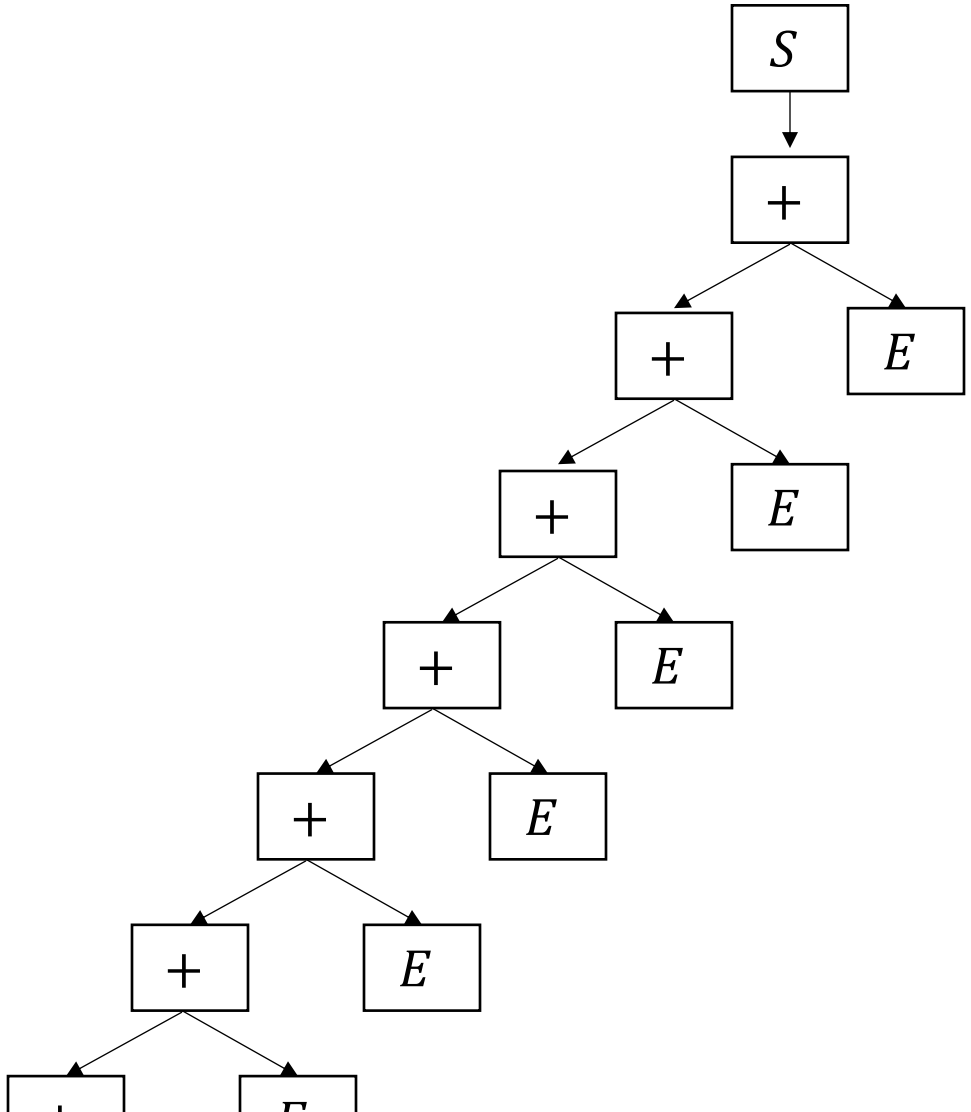
Enumeration stack overflow



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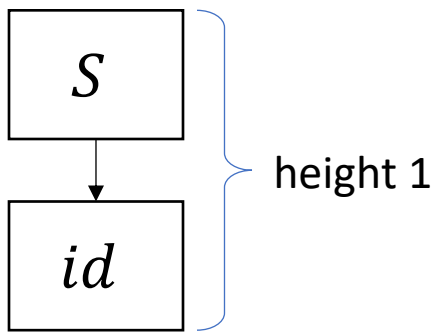
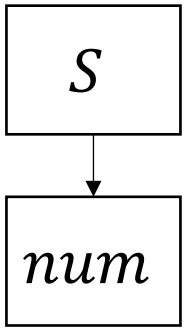
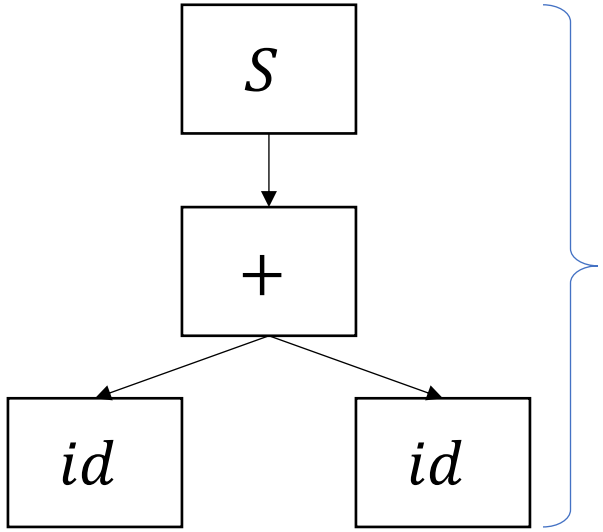
Solution: iterative deepening

- Limit the height of programs being enumerated
- First, all programs of height 0
- then 1
- then 2…



height 1

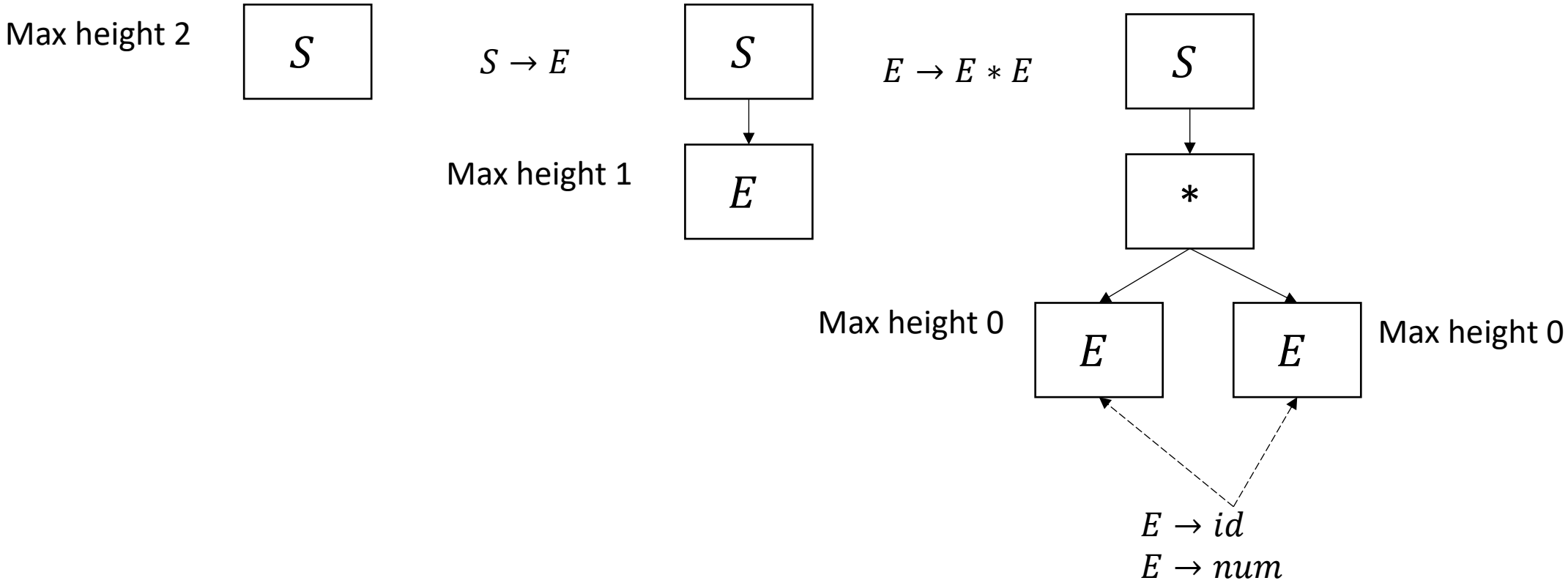




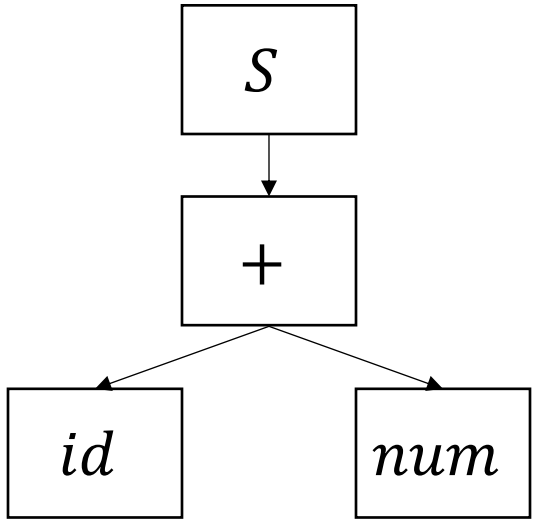
height 2

Iterative deepening

To enumerate height 2:

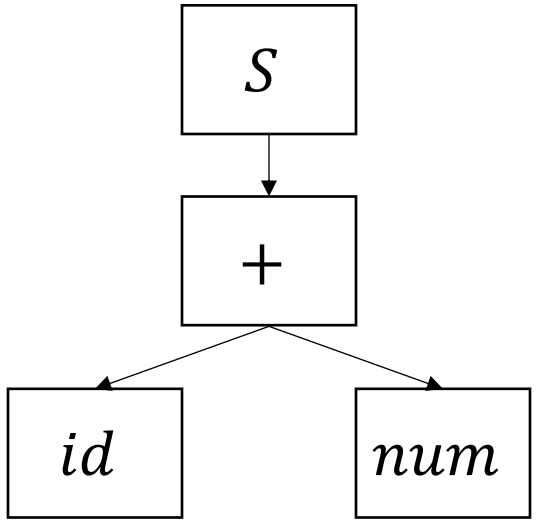


An infinite space

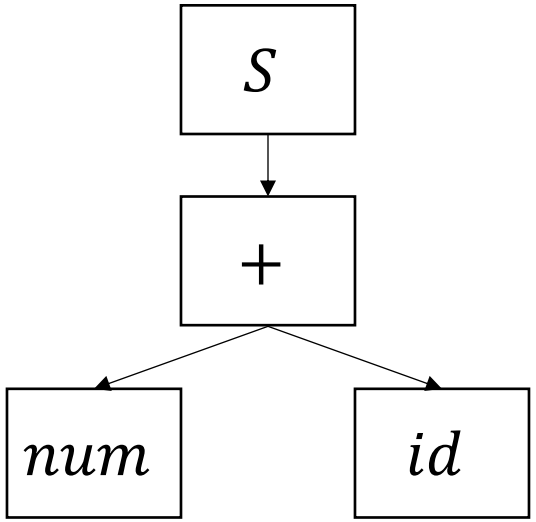



```
x   +   2
x   +   3
x   +   42
y   +   2
y   +   -3
```

An infinite space full of redundancy

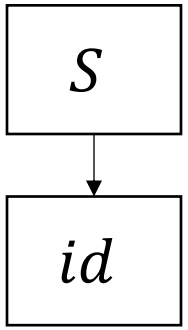


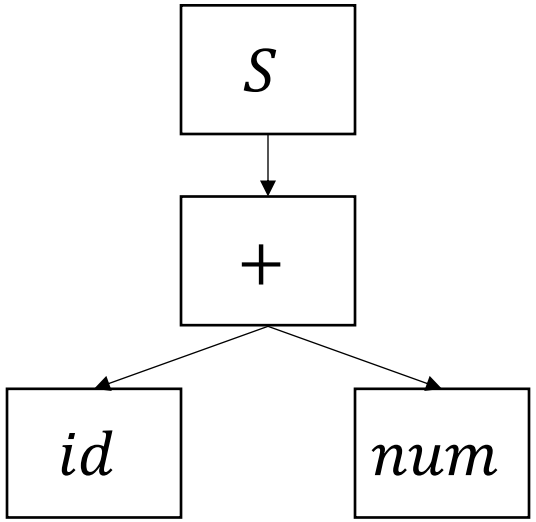
x + 2

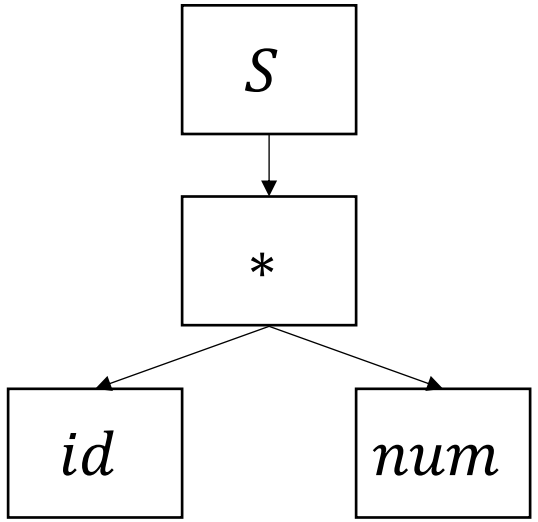


2 + x

An infinite space full of redundancy





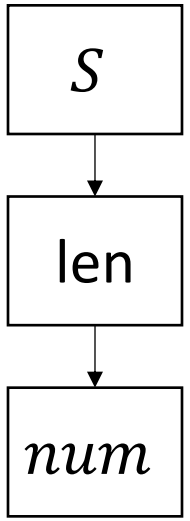



```
x
```

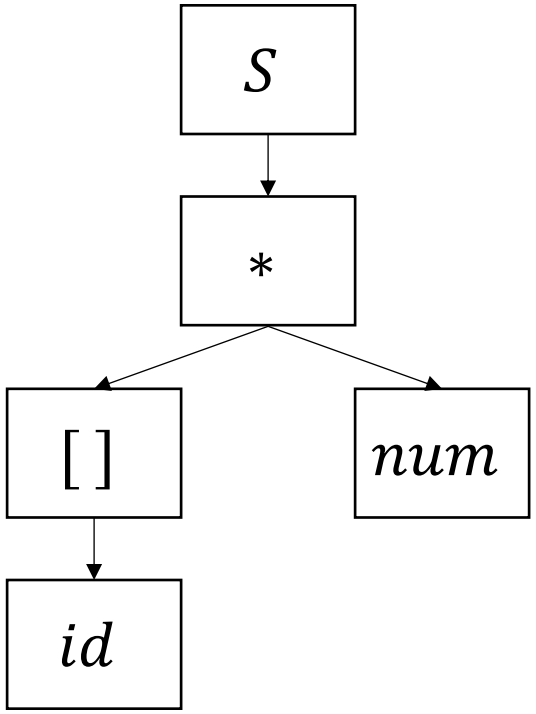
```
x + 0
```

```
x * 1
```

An infinite space full of bad programs




```
len(2)
```




```
[x]   *   1
```

Maybe enumerating the space in full is bad, actually?

Pruning the space 1: well-typedness

$$\frac{e_1 : int \quad e_2 : int}{e_1 + e_2 : int} \qquad \frac{e_1 : [\tau] \quad e_2 : [\tau]}{e_1 + e_2 : [\tau]}$$

$$\frac{e_1 : int \quad e_2 : int}{e_1 * e_2 : int} \qquad \frac{e_1, \ldots, e_k : \tau}{[e_1, \ldots, e_k] : [\tau]}$$

$$\frac{e : [\tau]}{len(e) : int} \qquad \frac{var\ x\ has\ type\ \tau}{x : \tau}$$

$$\frac{}{num : int}$$

$$S \rightarrow E$$
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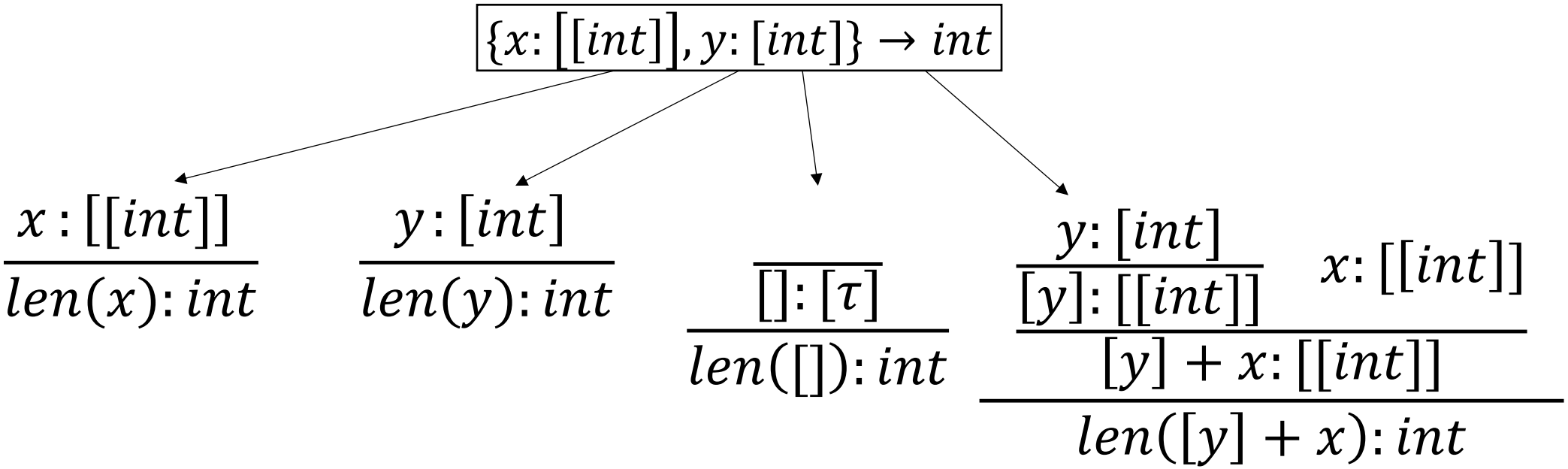
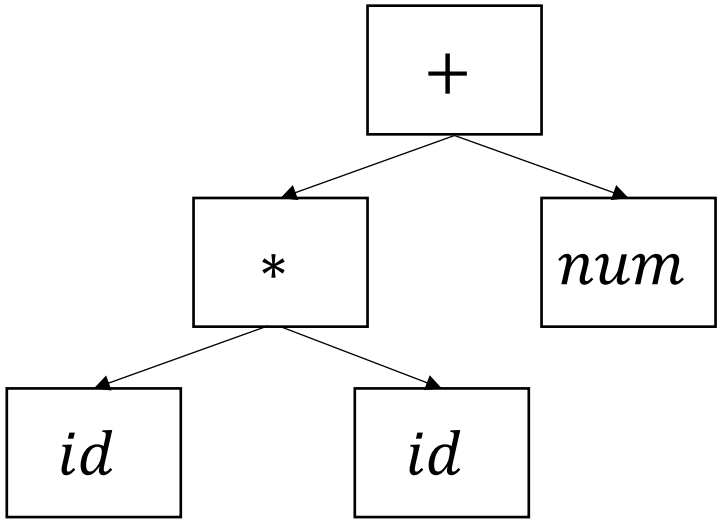
Looking at spec with types



Deductive proof search

What about examples?

What we enumerated was not a concrete program



Can we combine that with examples?

What about examples?

What we enumerated was not a concrete program

Given:

$$\epsilon_1 : \{x \mapsto 6, y \mapsto 8\} \rightarrow 49$$
$$\epsilon_2 : \{x \mapsto 4, y \mapsto 7\} \rightarrow 29$$

And a (meta) candidate: $(\texttt{id}_1 \ * \ \texttt{id}_2) \ + \ \texttt{num}$

Can we solve for id_1, id_2, num?

SMT solvers to the rescue

Given:

$$\epsilon_1 : \{x \mapsto 6, y \mapsto 8\} \rightarrow 49$$
$$\epsilon_2 : \{x \mapsto 4, y \mapsto 7\} \rightarrow 29$$

And a (meta) candidate: $\texttt{(id}_1\ \texttt{*}\ \texttt{id}_2\texttt{)}\ \texttt{+}\ \texttt{num}$

Can we solve for id_1, id_2, num?

x y

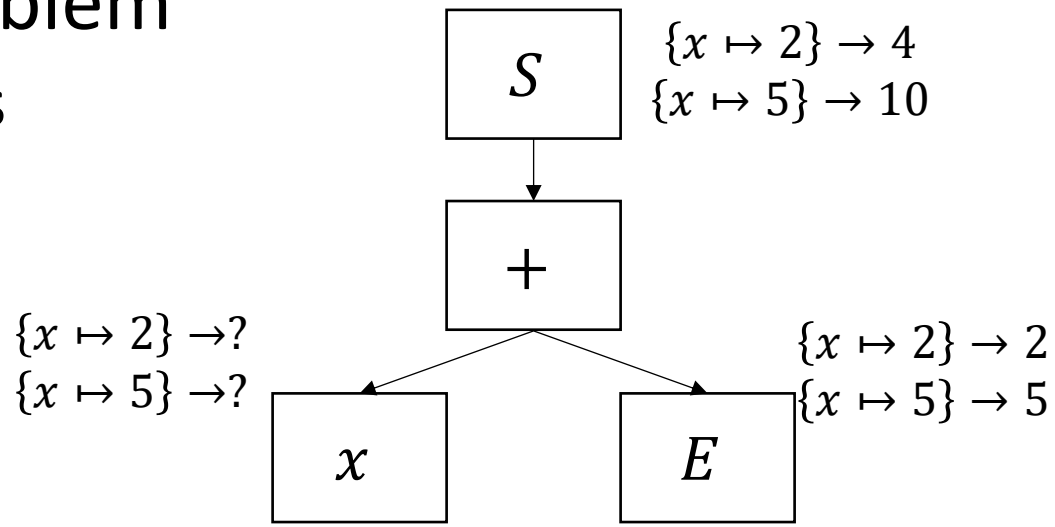
$$\forall arr \in \mathbb{Z} \times \mathbb{Z}.\, (arr = [6,8] \Rightarrow (arr[i_1] * arr[i_2]) + num = 49) \wedge$$
$$(arr = [4,7] \Rightarrow (arr[i_1] * arr[i_2]) + num = 29)$$

Model: $i_1 = 1, i_2 = 0, num = 1$

free variables

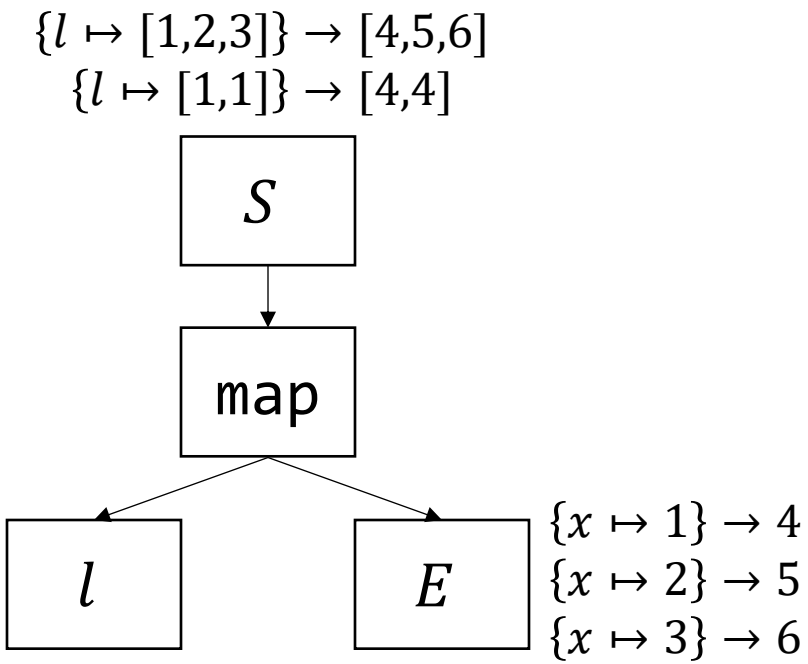
Can we do better?

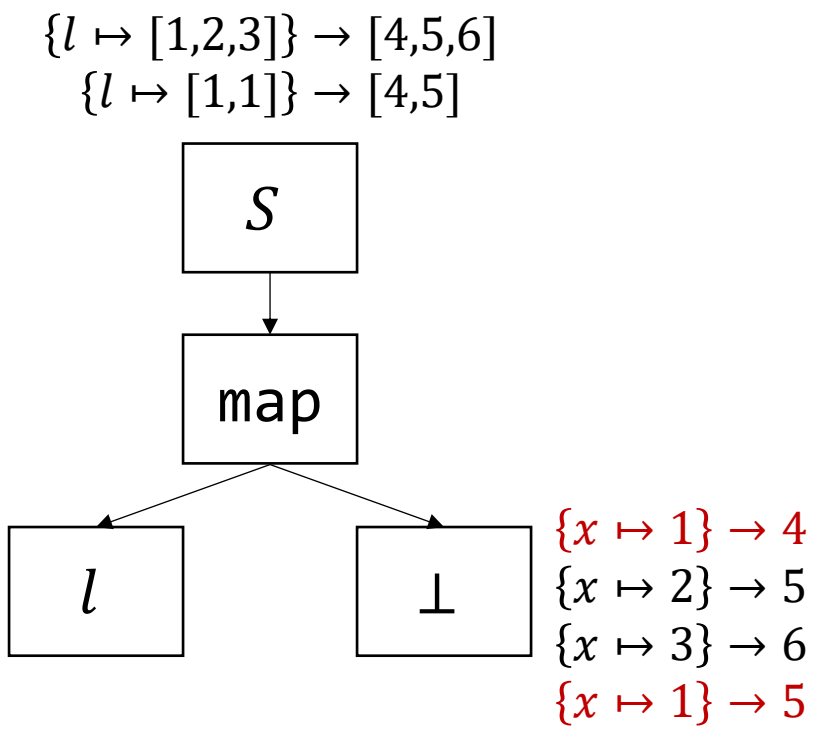
- Specification x Semantics of node = Specifications for remaining problem
  - … sometimes

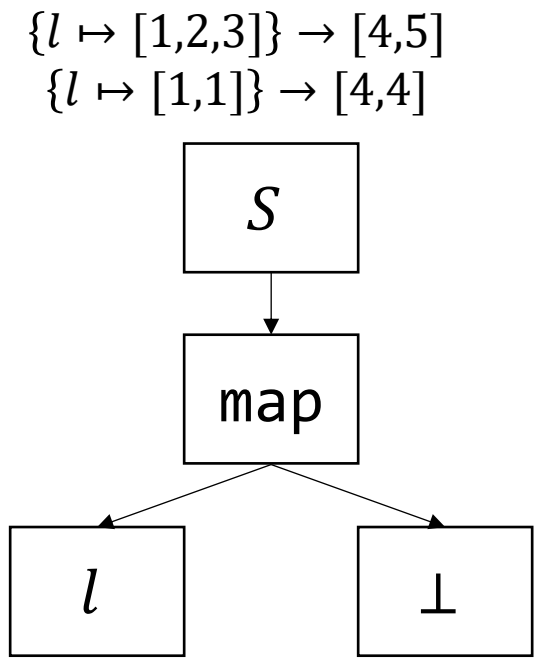


- Called *Example Refinement*

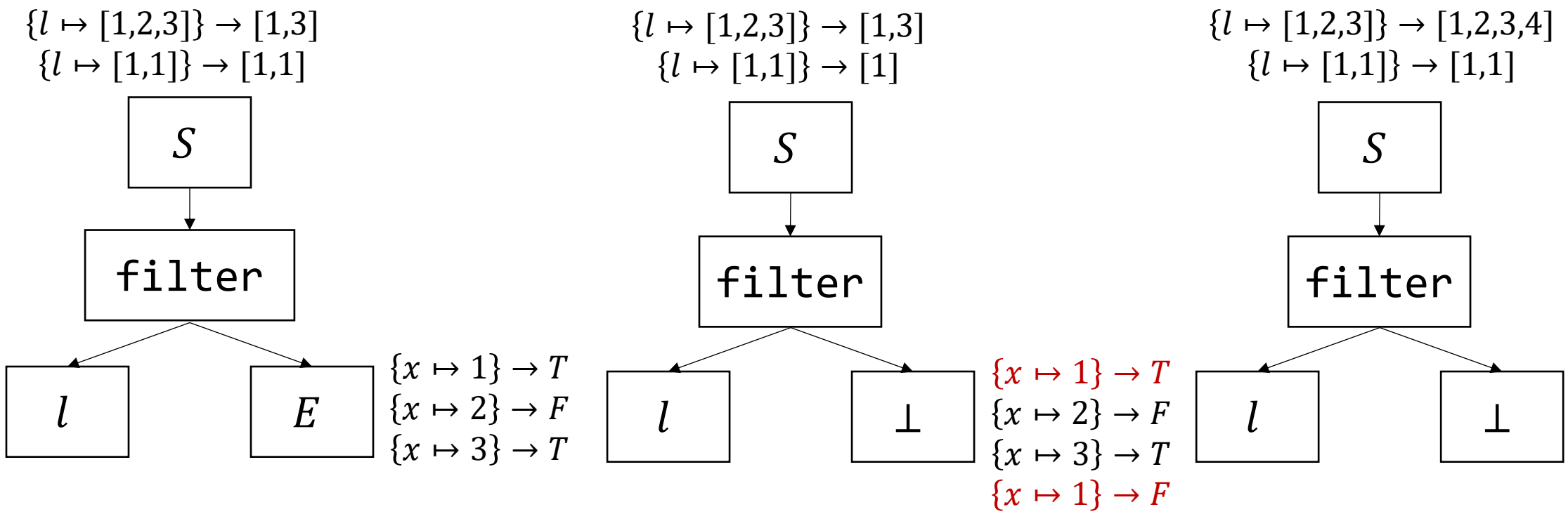
Refinements and higher-order functions







Refinements and higher-order functions



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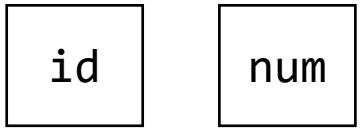
Enumerative Search

We did great with: Generate programs from the grammar, one by one, and test them on the specification

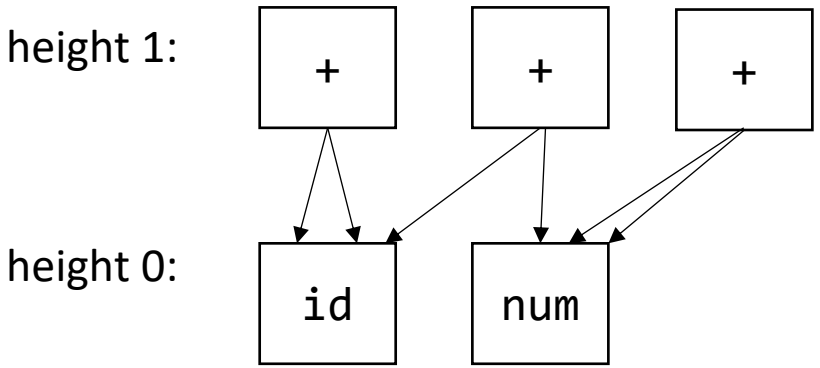
Enumerating trees

$$S \to E$$
$$E \to E + E$$
$$E \to E \ * \ E$$
$$E \to [EList]$$
$$EList \to E \mid EList, E$$
$$E \to len(E)$$
$$E \to id$$
$$E \to num$$

height 0:



Enumerating trees



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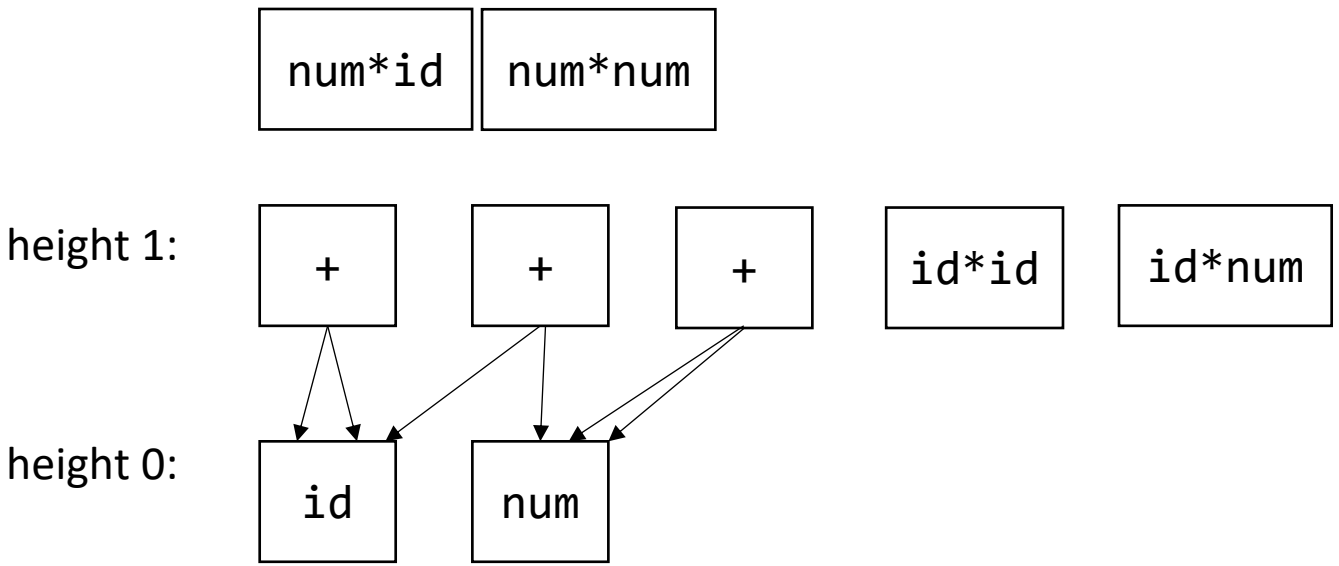
Enumerating trees



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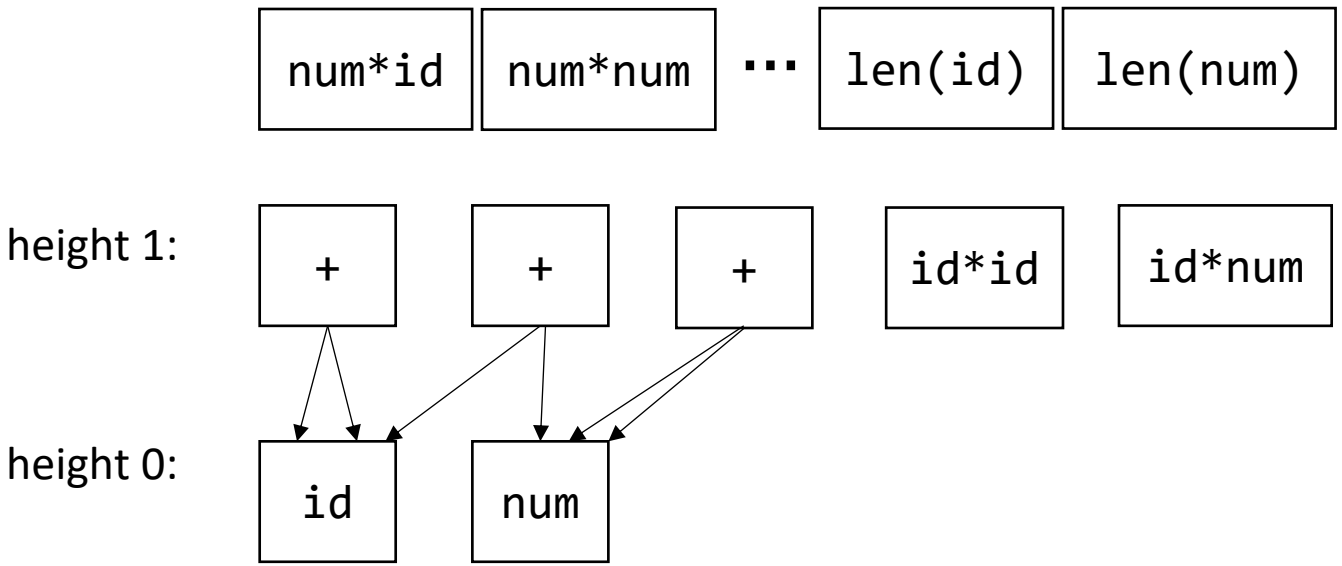
Enumerating trees



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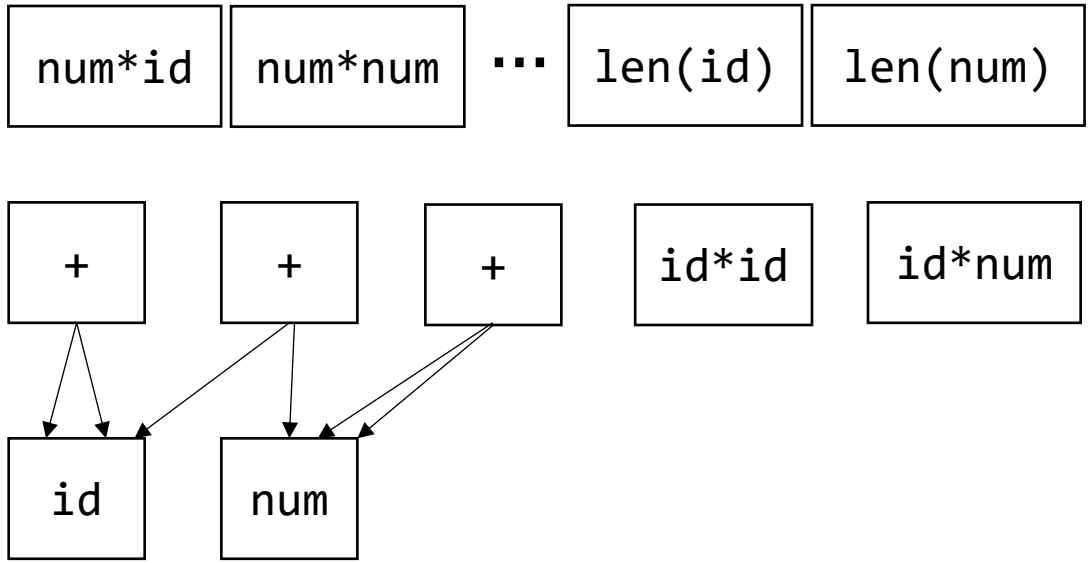
Enumerating trees

height 2:



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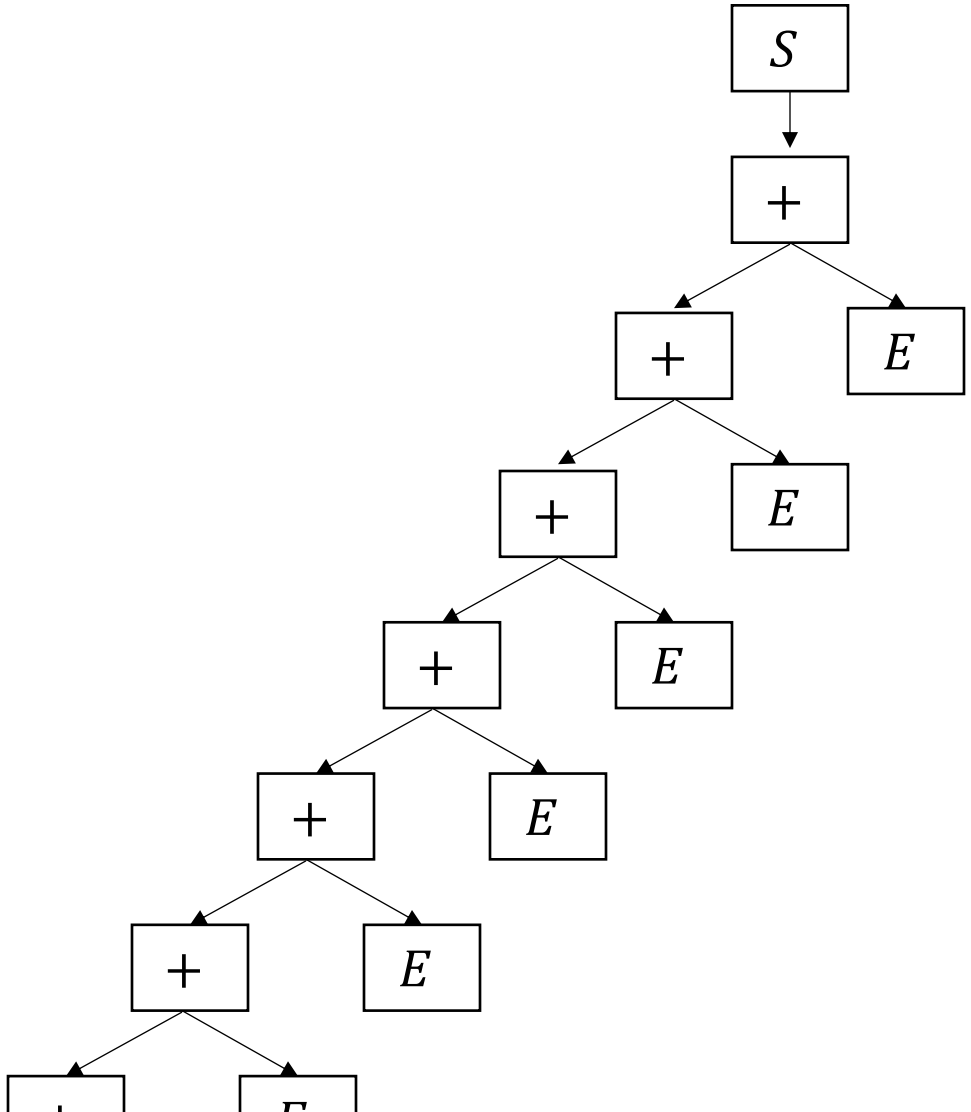
$$E \to id$$
$$E \to num$$

On one hand: no stack overflow



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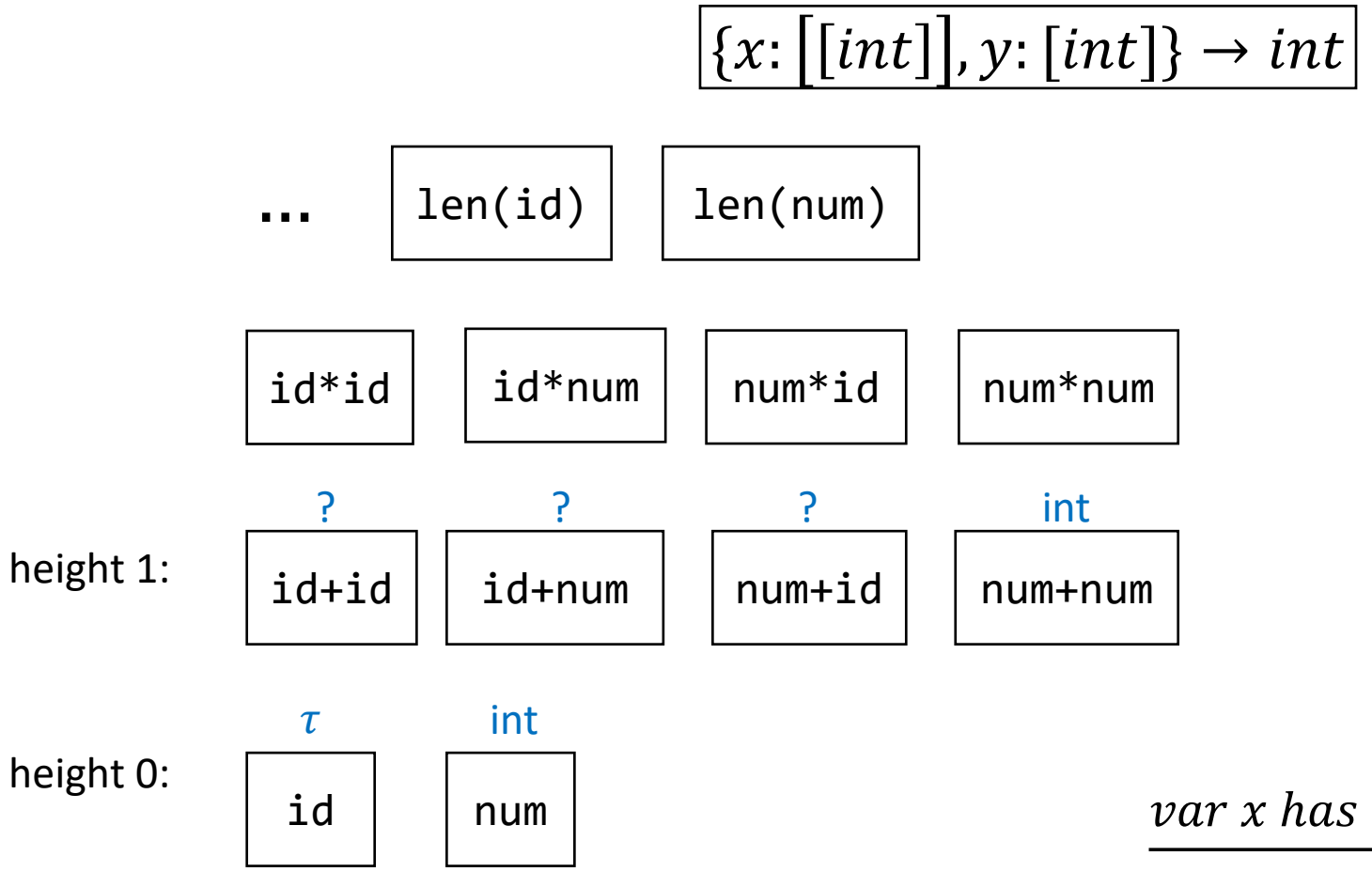
On the other hand:

A lot of things suddenly got harder

What if we have a type specification?



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$$\frac{var\ x\ has\ type\ \tau}{x: \tau} \qquad \frac{}{num: int} \qquad \frac{e_1: int \quad e_2: int}{e_1 + e_2: int}$$

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Programming by Example

$$\phi(p, x) = (x = \iota_1 \Rightarrow [\![p]\!](x) = \omega_1) \wedge (x = \iota_2 \Rightarrow [\![p]\!](x) = \omega_2) \wedge \cdots$$

or in other words

$$\mathcal{E} = \{\iota_i \rightarrow \omega_i\}$$

values of all the variables/the state of the environment

output of an expression/an effect/ the new state of the environment

Programming by Example

$\epsilon_1: \{x \mapsto 6, y \mapsto 8\} \to 49$
$\epsilon_2: \{x \mapsto 4, y \mapsto 7\} \to 29$

... `len(id)` `len(num)`

`id*id` `id*num` `num*id` `num*num`

height 1:

?	?	?	int
`id+id`	`id+num`	`num+id`	`num+num`

height 0:

τ	int
`id`	`num`

$S \to E$
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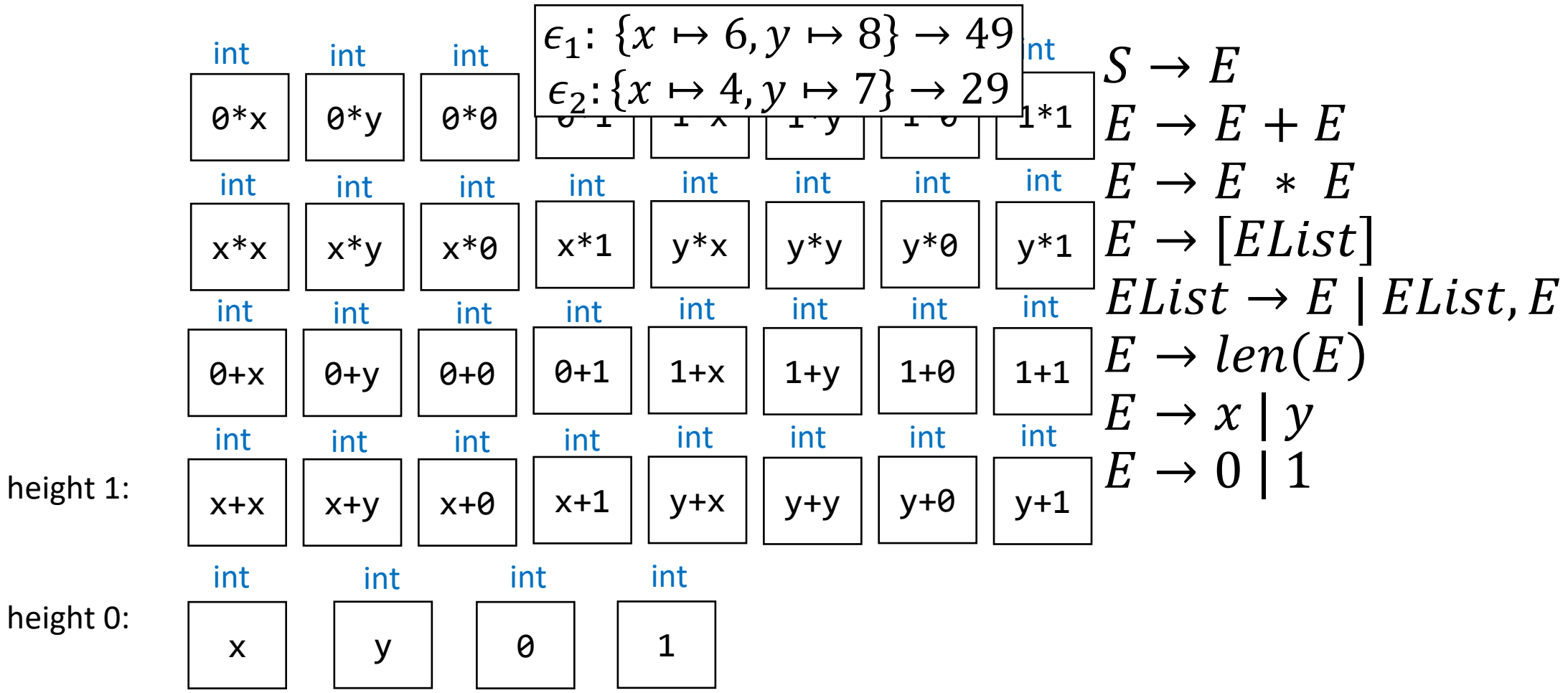
We can evaluate every program!

…almost

Programming by Example



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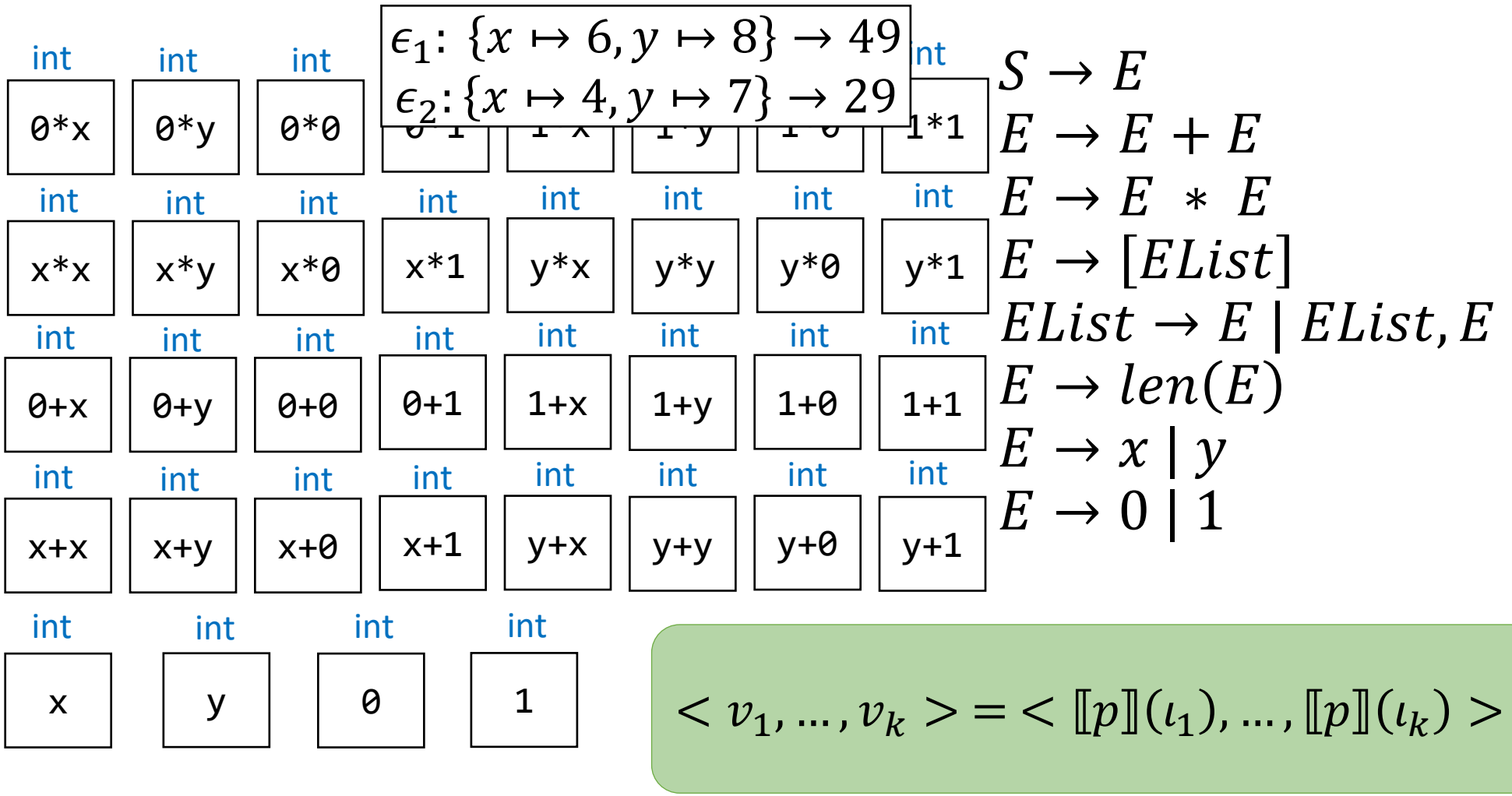
Programming by Example



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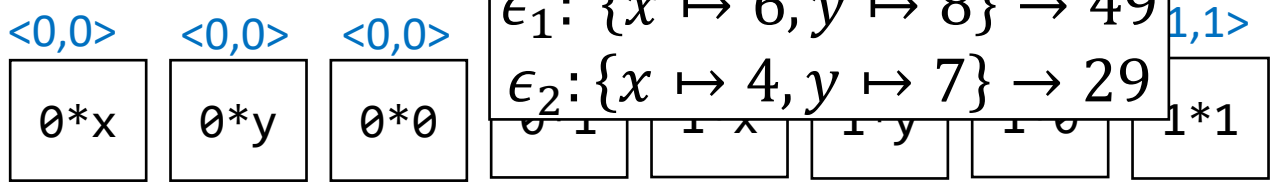

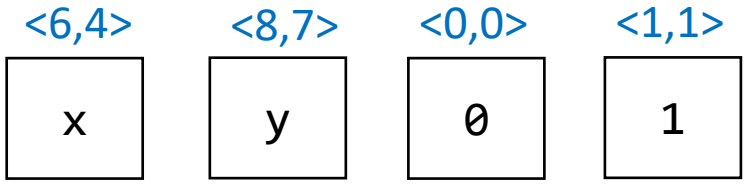

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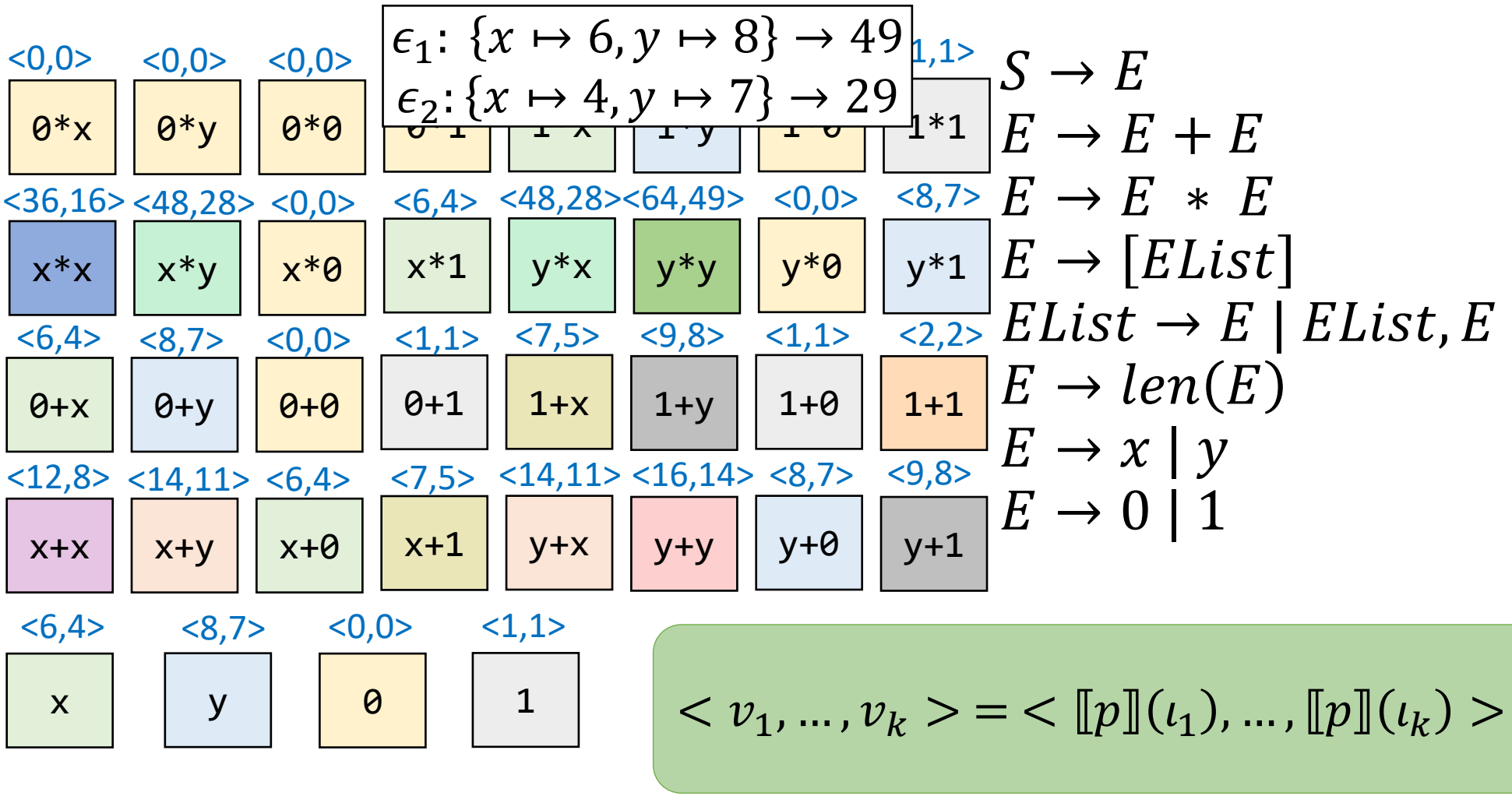
$$< v_1, \ldots, v_k > = < [\![p]\!](\iota_1), \ldots, [\![p]\!](\iota_k) >$$

Equivalence classes

[Albarghouthi et al. 2013, Udupa et al. 2013]



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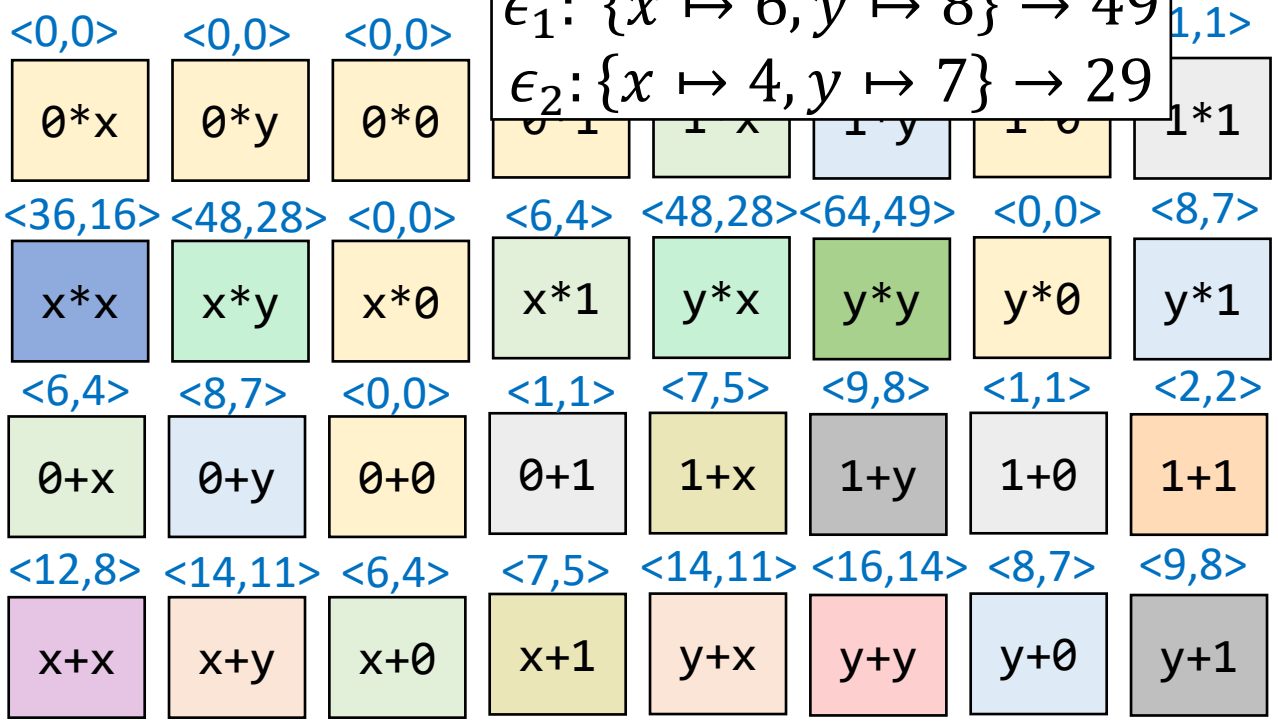

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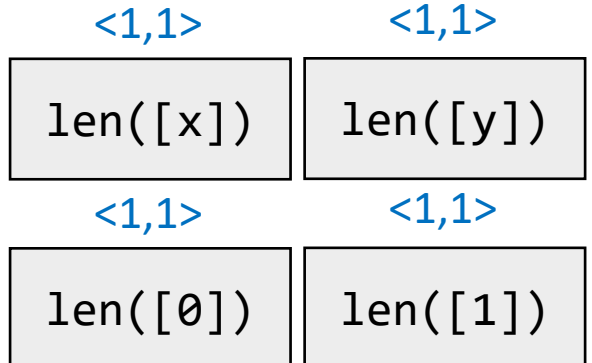
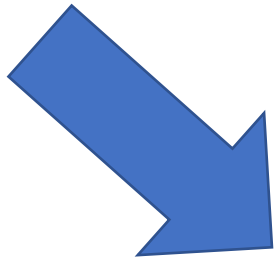


Observational equivalence [Albarghouthi et al. 2013, Udupa et al. 2013]

Equivalence:

$p_1 \equiv p_2$ i.f.f. for every possible input i ever, $[\![p_1]\!](i) = [\![p_2]\!](i)$



Observational equivalence:

$p_1 \equiv_{OE} p_2$ i.f.f. for every input i the user cares about, $[\![p_1]\!](i) = [\![p_2]\!](i)$

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[Albarghouthi et al. 2013, Udupa et al. 2013]

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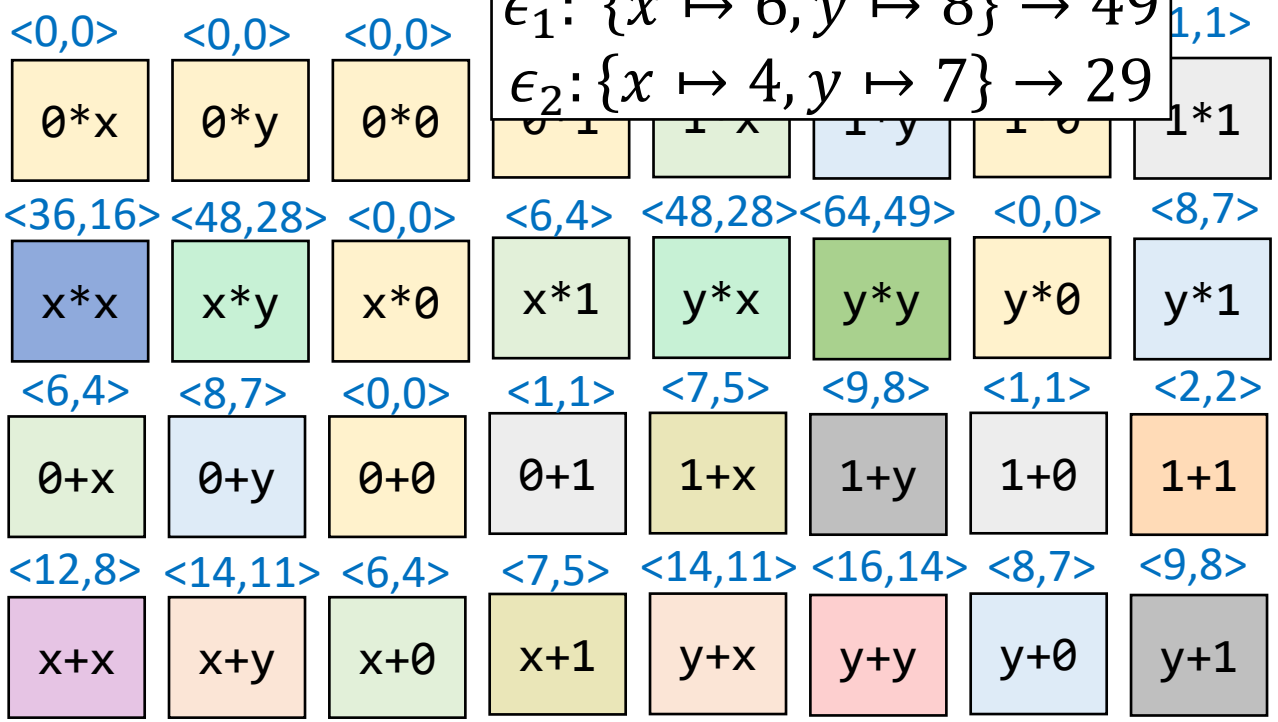

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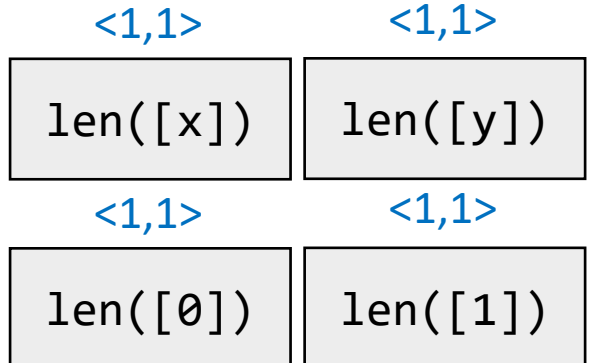

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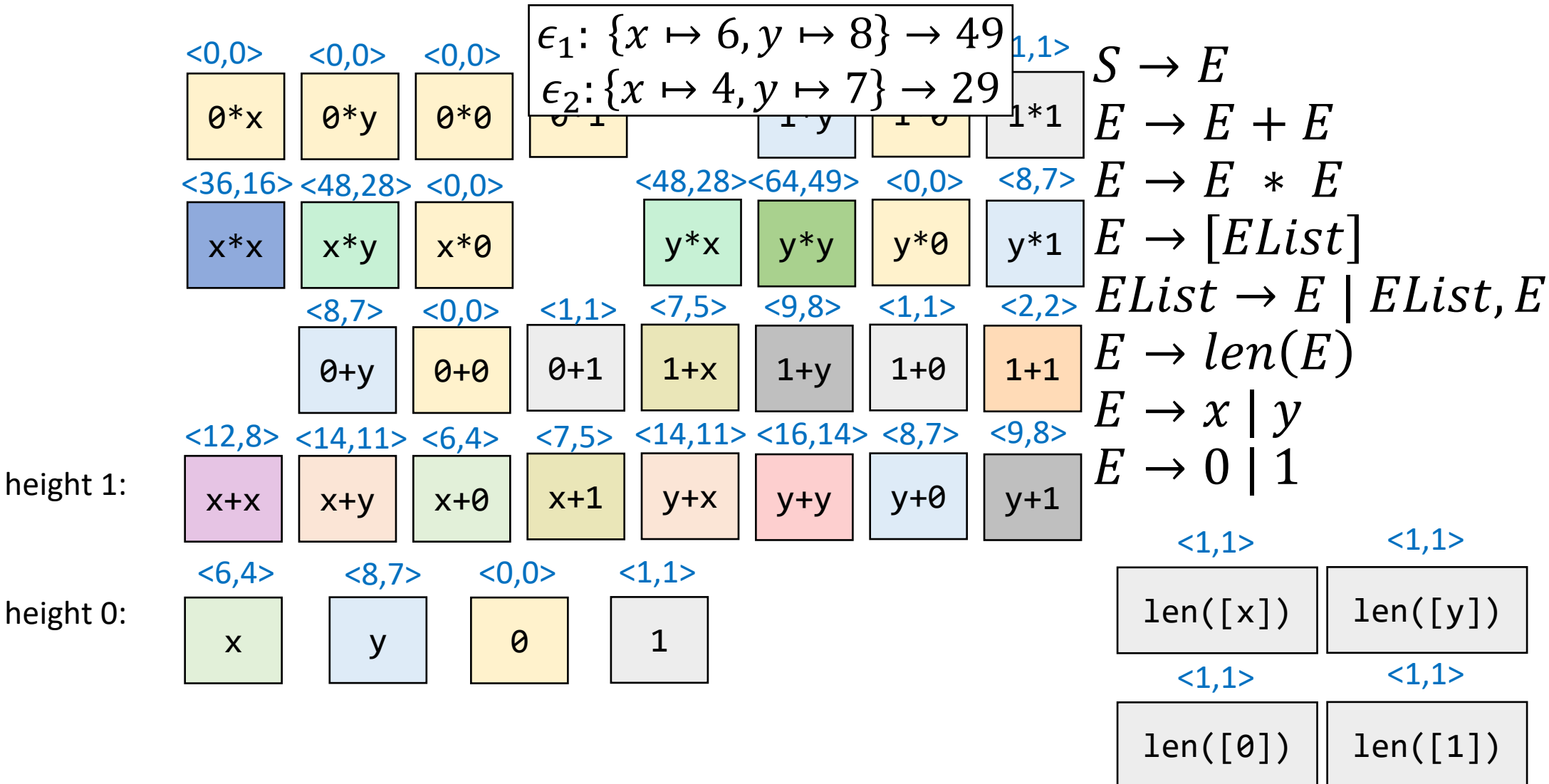

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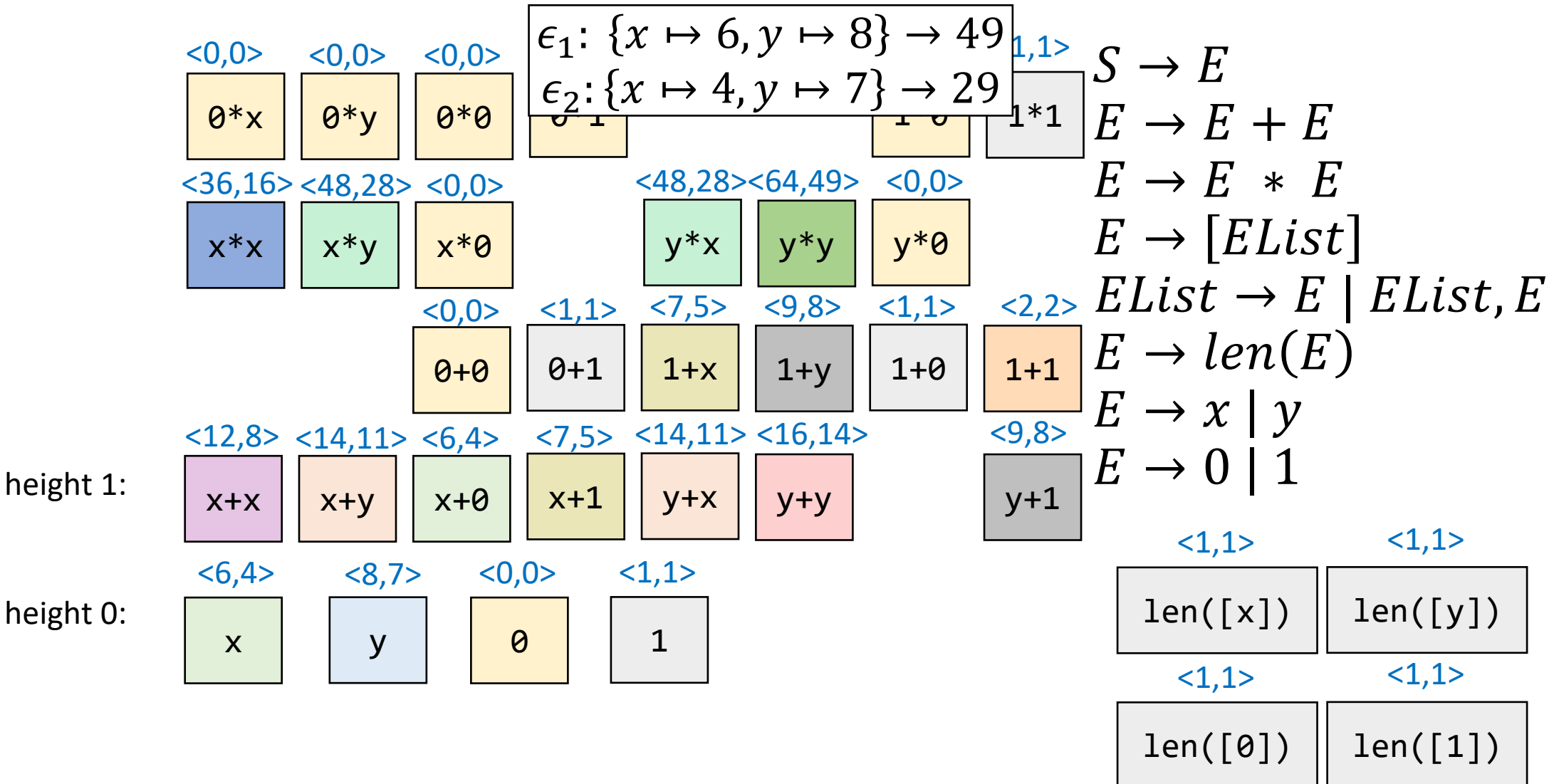

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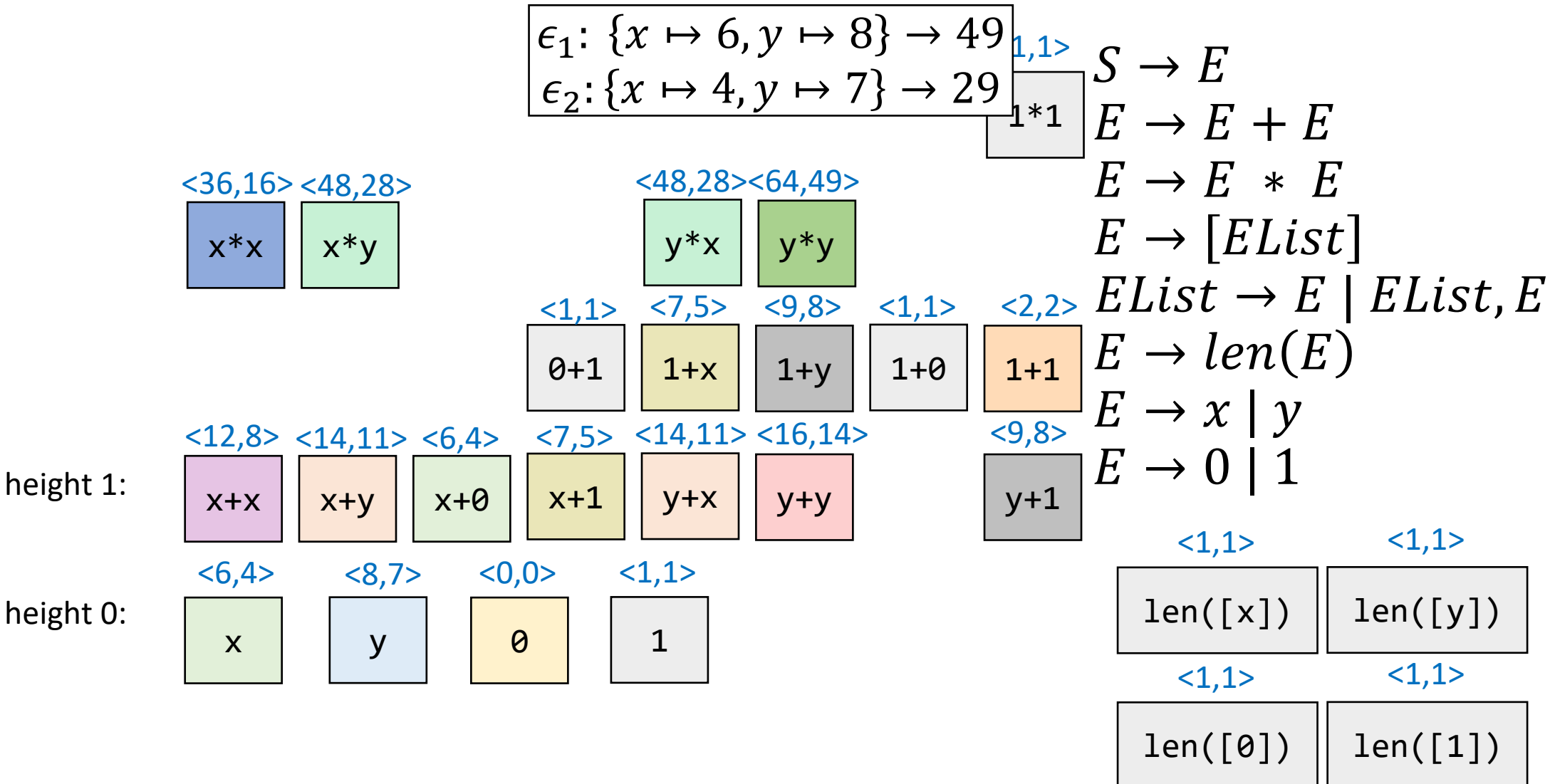

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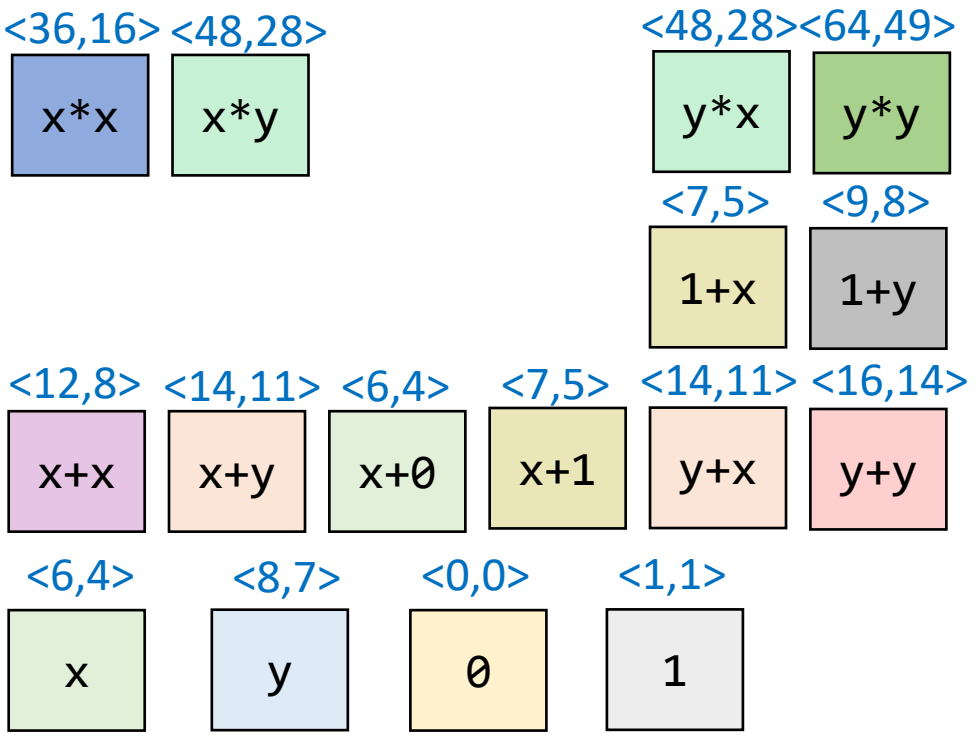

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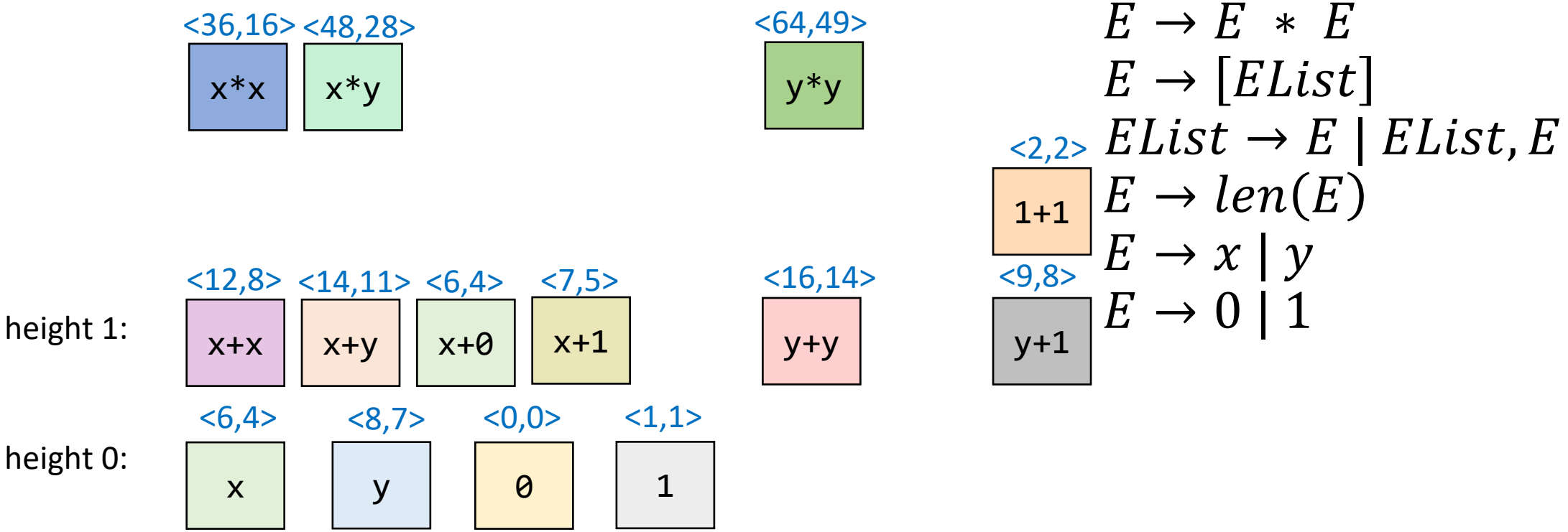

On the fly

[Albarghouthi et al. 2013, Udupa et al. 2013]

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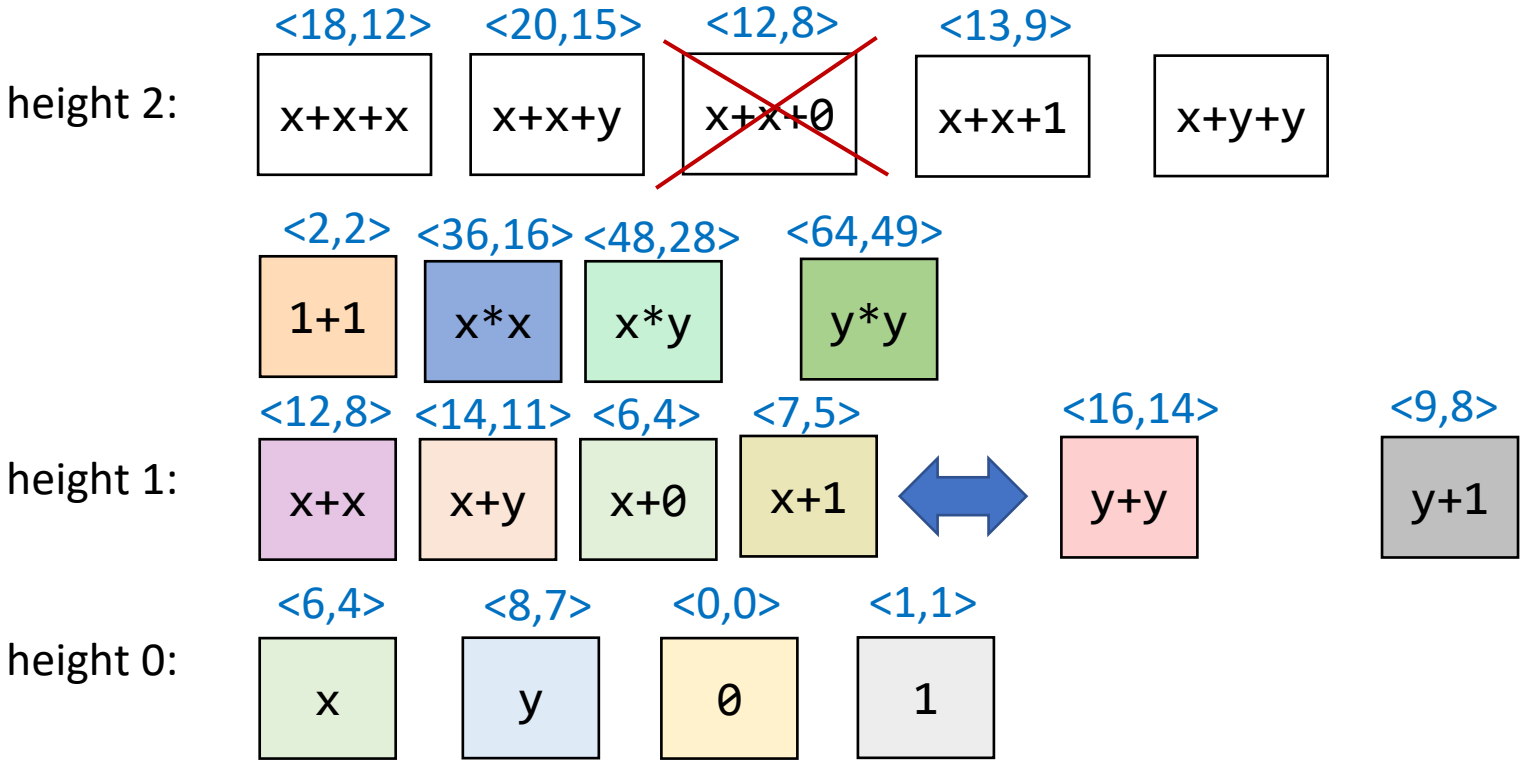

$S \rightarrow E$
$E \rightarrow E + E$
$E \rightarrow E * E$
$E \rightarrow [EList]$
$EList \rightarrow E \mid EList, E$
$E \rightarrow len(E)$
$E \rightarrow x \mid y$
$E \rightarrow 0 \mid 1$

Pros and cons of bottom-up

Pros:

- Iterative deepening is free
- No need to solver-encode anything

Cons:

- Have to specify literals
- Purity
- OE is very aggressive

Summary

- This time:
  - Program synthesis
  - Types of specification
  - Search algorithms
  - Directions for enumerative search
- Next time:
  - What happens when you give this to people?