

Reasonable Agda Is Correct Haskell: Writing Verified Haskell using agda2hs

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Abstract

Modern dependently typed languages such as Agda can be used to statically enforce the correctness of programs. However, they still lack the large ecosystem of a more popular language like Haskell. To combine the strength of both approaches, we present AGDA2HS, a tool that translates an expressive subset of Agda to readable Haskell, erasing dependent types and proofs in the process. Thanks to Agda's support for erasure annotations, this process is both safe and transparent to the user. Compared to other tools for program extraction, AGDA2HS uses a syntax that is already familiar to functional programmers, allows for both intrinsic and extrinsic approaches to verification, and produces Haskell code that is easy to read and audit by programmers with no knowledge of Agda.

We present a practical use case of AGDA2HS at IOG to verify properties of a program generator. While both AGDA2HS and its ecosystem are still young, our experiences so far show that this is a viable approach to make verified functional programming available to a broader audience.

This paper is a literate Agda script, hence all rendered (Agda) code has been typechecked.

CCS Concepts: • **Software and its engineering** → Source code generation; Functional languages; Formal software verification; Correctness.

Keywords: Dependent types, Agda, Formal verification, Program extraction



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1 Introduction

Haskell is a strongly typed, purely functional programming language. One big advantage of purity is that it makes it easy to reason about the correctness of algorithms and data structures. This is demonstrated for example in the book by Hutton [19, Chapter 16], where equational reasoning, case analysis, and induction are used to prove properties of Haskell functions. However, since these proofs are done ‘on paper’, there is always a risk that the proof contains a mistake, or that the code changes to a new version but the proof is not updated.

In a dependently typed programming language such as Agda [2], we can do better and actually write a formal proof of correctness in the language itself. This proof is checked automatically by the typechecker. Moreover, any time the program is modified, the proof is re-checked, so it is guaranteed to be up-to-date with the latest version. Thus, it provides an unusually high degree of confidence in the correctness of the program.

Unfortunately, despite several big successes in dependently typed programming such as the CompCert verified C compiler [21], these languages remain relatively inaccessible to the general public. Compared to a language like Haskell, they lack an extensive ecosystem of libraries, tools for testing, profiling, debugging, and integration with other languages. Since none of the current languages with theorem proving capabilities has the user base to support such an ecosystem, we must look into alternative methods to make verified functional programming accessible to a broader audience.

```

data Tree (@0 l u : Nat) : Set where
  Leaf  : (@0 pf : l ≤ u) → Tree l u
  Node  : (x : Nat) → Tree l x → Tree x u → Tree l u
{-# COMPILER AGDA2HS Tree #-}

insert : {@0 l u : Nat} (x : Nat) → Tree l u
  → @0 (l ≤ x) → @0 (x ≤ u) → Tree l u
insert x (Leaf _) l ≤ x x ≤ u = Node x (Leaf l ≤ x) (Leaf x ≤ u)
insert x (Node y l r) l ≤ x x ≤ u =
  case compare x y of λ where
    (LT x ≤ y) → Node y (insert x l ≤ x x ≤ y) r
    (EQ x ≡ y) → Node y l r
    (GT y ≤ x) → Node y l (insert x r y ≤ x x ≤ u)
{-# COMPILER AGDA2HS insert #-}

```

```

data Tree = Leaf
          | Node Natural Tree Tree

insert :: Natural -> Tree -> Tree
insert x Leaf = Node x Leaf Leaf
insert x (Node y l r)
  = case compare x y of
    LT -> Node y (insert x l) r
    EQ -> Node x l r
    GT -> Node y l (insert x r)

```

Figure 1. A representation of binary search trees in Agda that enforces the internal invariants, and an intrinsically verified insertion function (left) and the corresponding Haskell definitions produced by AGDA2HS (right). Note that all traces of the verification of the bounds are erased from the Haskell code.

Another issue with current tools for code extraction is that we might start from a large existing codebase in a language such as Haskell, where it is not feasible to rewrite all code in a proof assistant and prove it correct. In this case, we might want to improve our trust in an existing program by reimplementing a critical component in a verified way and dropping the result into the existing code. We could call this a “seismic correctness retrofit”, analogous to the “seismic security retrofit” [16], which is itself inspired by the technique in structural engineering where existing buildings are made more resistant to earthquakes by improving their foundations and other critical components.

We present AGDA2HS¹, a tool that aims to combine the rich ecosystem of Haskell with the verification capabilities of Agda. In particular, AGDA2HS identifies a common subset of the two languages, and provides a faithful translation of this subset from Agda to Haskell. This translation erases all traces of dependent types and proofs embedded in the program, leaving just clean and readable Haskell code. Thus AGDA2HS allows library developers to implement libraries in Agda and verify their correctness, and then translate the result to Haskell so it can be used and understood by Haskell programmers. In particular, it can be audited by Haskell programmers without any Agda expertise of their own.

As an example, we define a type of binary trees with values between two given bounds in Fig. 1. At each node the lower and upper bounds of the subtrees are iteratively tightened, and each leaf contains evidence that the bounds are consistent. AGDA2HS makes use of *erasure annotations* @0 [4, 25] to mark explicitly which parts of the code should be

erased during the translation to Haskell. After this erasure is finished, we end up with a simple Haskell datatype.

Next, we implement an insertion function that requires the inserted value between the lower and upper bound and ensures the bounds are unchanged. AGDA2HS translates this function to a simple Haskell function. Thanks to the expressive Agda type of this function, we can be sure that it preserves the internal invariants of the tree.

AGDA2HS allows you to verify as many or as few properties as you desire. On one side of the spectrum, you could write what amounts to Haskell code in Agda syntax, benefiting from Agda’s support for *type-driven development* with interactive features such as holes and case splitting as well as powerful metaprogramming facilities through *elaborator reflection* [10]. You can then gradually increase the trustworthiness of the program by adding extra indices to datatypes or proof arguments to this code, statically enforcing pre-/post-conditions and invariants while keeping the generated Haskell code simple and clean. With these more expressive types, errors in the program are detected as it is being written.

On the other side of the spectrum, you have the full power of Agda’s theorem proving capabilities at your fingertips to prove functional correctness of your algorithms, using your choice of extrinsic or intrinsic approaches to verification. In extrinsic verification the proof is completely separate from the program, while in intrinsic verification, properties are encoded directly in the type of data and functions. Extrinsic verification makes it easier to decouple the programs from their proofs, while intrinsic verification often does not require writing any proofs as such, which makes it more intuitive to functional programmers. For both intrinsic and extrinsic verification, all type indices and proofs can be erased

¹AGDA2HS is available at <https://github.com/agda/agda2hs>.

from the generated code, leaving just a clean and simply-typed Haskell program.

Contributions.

- We present AGDA2HS, a tool for automatically translating a subset of Agda to readable Haskell code (Sect. 2).
- We demonstrate how the *erasure annotations* of McBride [25] can be used to make erasure of proofs and type-level indices both safer and more explicit to the user (Sect. 2.1).
- We describe a practical use case of AGDA2HS at IOG, where it is used to verify properties of a program generator (Sect. 3).

We discuss the correctness of our approach in Sect. 4 and its implementation in Sect. 5. Sect. 6 presents related work, and Sect. 7 concludes.

This paper is a literate Agda script, hence all rendered (Agda) code has been typechecked.

2 AGDA2HS

The goal of AGDA2HS is to produce nice looking, readable, and verified Haskell code. One way of achieving this would be to take the Haskell code as given and translate it to Agda or another theorem prover for verification. As explained in the introduction, this makes it impossible to use intrinsic verification, and it decouples the program from its proof of correctness, which means that they risk going out of sync.

So instead we have chosen to translate in the other direction. That is, programs are written in a subset of Agda that supports a straightforward translation to readable Haskell code. Since the translation erases proofs and properties from the code, these can be written using the full Agda language without compromising the readability of the resulting Haskell code. The resulting workflow is rather satisfying; the user interactively edits an Agda file as usual, with the only difference being additional `COMPILE AGDA2HS` pragmas for invoking compilation of specific definitions.

2.1 Erasure of Type-Level Arguments

Some parts of a Agda type or expression may be present only for the purpose of proving some property or invariant and can thus be erased from the Haskell code. These parts often rely on dependent types in an essential way so they are difficult or impossible to represent faithfully on the Haskell side. In particular, we want to erase indices of indexed datatypes, thus translating a *correct-by-construction*, *intrinsically typed* datatype such as `Tree` in Fig. 1 directly to a plain Haskell type with no indices.

To determine which arguments of an expression should be erased, AGDA2HS adheres to the following rules:

- Any argument that is marked as *erased*² with an `@0` annotation [4] is erased from the Haskell code.
- Any argument of type `Level` (used for universe polymorphism in Agda) or `Set ℓ` is also erased.

By marking³ arguments that should be erased with `@0`, we get the guarantee from Agda’s type system that the runtime behaviour of the function does not depend on the value of the erased argument, so erasing the argument is sound (see Sect. 4 for more details on the correctness of our approach). Likewise, pattern matching on values of type `Level` or `Set ℓ` is impossible, so erasing them is sound as well.

2.2 Intrinsic versus Extrinsic Verification

The translation described thus far accommodates both intrinsic and extrinsic verification. We already saw an example of intrinsically verifying the `insert` function in Fig. 1, but one can also arrive at the exact same translation artifact—as well as prove the same guarantees—*extrinsically*, as demonstrated in Fig. 2.

In this case, we opt for a plain, non-dependent `Tree` with no type indices and a corresponding simply typed `insert`. Verification happens *a posteriori* as a separate theorem after the definitions. Notice how the form of `insert` remains almost identical through the translation, while there is a significant overhead to compensate for the type information we dropped from the intrinsic version.

2.3 Primitives & Prelude

If we are to accomplish seamless integration across language barriers, it is of utmost importance to make the current definitions in Haskell’s Prelude accessible on the Agda side as well. To this end, we have ported most of Haskell’s Prelude on the Agda side, staying as faithful as possible to the Haskell idiom. This essentially forms the *trusted computing base*, along with the code implementing the actual translation. That is, we have to be absolutely certain that the Agda implementation of these functions corresponds precisely to the original functionality in Haskell. Alas, there are cases where this process is not as straightforward as one might initially expect.

Haskell’s primitive types and operations are matched directly to their Agda counterparts if they exist (e.g. Agda’s `Agda.Builtin.Nat` is translated to Haskell’s `Numeric.Natural`), otherwise we provide a new Agda implementation in the `Haskell.Prelude` module as close as possible to the original interface and extend the translation to account for this new mapping (e.g. n-ary tuples, if-then-else notation, and pattern matching with case). For a better user experience, the backend discovers when built-in types are

²Also known as *run-time irrelevant*, see <https://agda.readthedocs.io/en/v2.6.2/language/runtime-irrelevance.html>.

³In theory, these erasure annotations could be inferred automatically, but this would require an extension of Agda with erasure inference [31], which is outside of our current scope.

```

data Tree : Set where
  Leaf : Tree
  Node : Nat → Tree → Tree → Tree
{-# COMPILE AGDA2HS Tree #-}

insert : Nat → Tree → Tree
insert x Leaf = Node x Leaf Leaf
insert x (Node y l r) =
  case compare x y of λ where
    (LT _) → Node y (insert x l) r
    (EQ _) → Node y l r
    (GT _) → Node y l (insert x r)

{-# COMPILE AGDA2HS insert #-}

@0 _≤_≤_ : Nat → Tree → Nat → Set
l ≤ Leaf      ≤ u = l ≤ u
l ≤ Node x t' t' ≤ u = (l ≤ t' ≤ x) × (x ≤ t' ≤ u)

@0 insert-correct : ∀ {t x l u} → l ≤ t ≤ u
  → l ≤ x → x ≤ u → l ≤ insert x t ≤ u
insert-correct {Leaf} _ l ≤ x x ≤ u = l ≤ x, x ≤ u
insert-correct {Node y t' t'} {x} (IHl, IHr) l ≤ x x ≤ u
  with compare x y
... | LT x ≤ y = insert-correct IHl l ≤ x x ≤ y, IHr
... | EQ refl = IHl, IHr
... | GT y ≤ x = IHl, insert-correct IHr y ≤ x x ≤ u

```

```

data Tree = Leaf
          | Node Natural Tree Tree

insert :: Natural -> Tree -> Tree
insert x Leaf = Node x Leaf Leaf
insert x (Node y l r)
  = case compare x y of
    LT -> Node y (insert x l) r
    EQ -> Node y l r
    GT -> Node y l (insert x r)

```

Figure 2. An unverified insertion function and its extrinsic proof of correctness (left) and the Haskell code produced by AGDA2HS (right). The type `_≤_≤_` extrinsically specifies the invariant that was enforced intrinsically by the `Tree` type in Fig. 1.

used and automatically inserts necessary imports in the generated Haskell code.

To simulate Haskell’s automatic insertion of universal quantifiers for type variables, the `Haskell.Prelude` also exports certain often-used lowercase letters as *generalised type variables*.⁴ This allows us to write for example `id : a → a` instead of `id : ∀{a} → a → a`.

2.4 Partiality

A particularly striking difference between Haskell and Agda is the former’s support for *partial* functions, such as `head` that throws an error on empty lists. Although there is a way to model partiality in Agda and precisely match the original behaviour in Haskell, we leave this for future work (c.f. Sect. 7) as it would introduce significant complexity to the translation. Instead, we provide a more direct work-around for the time being, by restricting all definitions to be **total**. This is achieved by attaching additional proof obligations as a function’s *preconditions*, to be erased after compilation,

that guarantee the function is total and thus never reaches the erroneous path. However, when actually executing the generated code, it is entirely possible for the function to be called with invalid arguments that do not satisfy these preconditions, therefore we still want an appropriate error message to be reported on this occasion.

To model this behaviour in Agda without losing logical consistency, we require that any calls to `error` occur only when an impossible case has been reached, in which case the auxiliary precondition would provide a witness of the empty/void type.

```

error : (@0 i : ⊥) → String → a
error ()

```

As an example, we can make `head` total by requiring the input list to be non-empty as can be seen in Fig. 3. Notice how the context of the second clause contains the absurd proposition `p : NonEmpty []`, which allows us to safely call `error`. Compiling down to Haskell produces the expected partial implementation.

⁴<https://agda.readthedocs.io/en/v2.6.2/language/generalization-of-declared-variables.html>

<pre> head : (xs : List a) {@0 _ : NonEmpty xs} → a head (x :: _) = x head [] {p} = error i "Prelude.head: empty list" where @0 i : ⊥ i = case p of λ () </pre>	<pre> head :: [a] -> a head (x : _) = x head [] = error "Prelude.head: empty list" </pre>
---	--

Figure 3. The definition of the `head` function in Agda, taking as argument a proof that the given list is non-empty (left) and the partial function definition generated by `AGDA2HS` with the proof erased (right).

The actual `error` definition in the `AGDA2HS` prelude uses a *tactic argument*⁵ to automatically discover an absurdity in the current context, hence requiring no value of the empty type to be explicitly provided.

2.5 Type Classes

Haskell type classes [36] can easily be emulated using instance resolution⁶ on the Agda side. Concretely, **class definitions** are represented as records containing the class methods as fields and the class context as type parameters. The compiler pragma for class definitions should explicitly end with the `class` keyword, to distinguish from the case of translating a plain record. **Instance declarations** are then modeled with regular definitions of the record type, instantiated to the specific type whose instance we are implementing. Finally, constraints in a qualified type or qualified instance declaration compile to instance arguments holding the translated type. Fig. 4 shows the case for the `Monoid` type class. Naturally, we can also enforce that instances satisfy the monoid laws by adding *erased* fields to the record, requiring proofs to be provided when implementing them on the Agda side, yet resulting in identical Haskell output.

Default methods. Haskell also supports *default method implementations*, as well as a way to specify the *minimal complete definition* of a class. Unfortunately, there is no equivalent functionality in Agda, so we have to devise a way to emulate the same behaviour using existing features. While doing so, we have to avoid introducing a lot of syntactic overhead on the Agda side, but at the same time keep the translation procedure as simple as possible.

The solution we propose consists of having a main record containing the method type signatures like before, and then representing each minimal complete definition as a separate record, whose fields are only a subset of the original fields and the rest are given as derived definitions. Default methods, on the other hand, have to be replicated across all minimal records and contain the exact same code. That way, all minimal records contain all class methods, divided amongst its fields and definitions. Combined with the fact that a record definition also defines a module of the same

name containing all its fields and definitions,⁷ we can easily retrieve a value of the original record by *opening* the *record-module* of the minimal record value: when defining an instance of a class `C` with possible minimal record `C1`, the user can choose to construct a minimal record value of type `r : C1` instead (with strictly less fields to specify) and construct the final record value with the expression `record {C1 r}`. Internally, `AGDA2HS` will chase down the definition of the minimal record and inline its definition to generate the expected ‘flat’ Haskell definition.

In Fig. 5, we see an example translation for the `Show` type class. The `Show` record is the original record you would expect, but there are now two additional minimal records: `Show1` only requires an implementation of `showsPrec` and derives `show` from it, while `Show2` does the inverse, and both have a (matching) default implementation for `showList`. Finally, the compiler directive is extended to inform the backend about these minimal records. To declare an instance for `Maybe`, one can now simply define a value `s1` of type `Show1 Maybe` and transform it into a value of type `Show Maybe` using the Agda syntax `record {Show1 s1}}`, which instantiates the remaining fields `show` and `showList` of `Show` with their implementations given in `Show1`.

While things on the Agda side are more verbose than we would like, we have managed to offer a systematic and intuitive way to cover these type class features without compromising the quality of the generated code, as witnessed in the generated Haskell code of Fig. 5.

3 Case Study: Verifying Properties of a Program Generator

IOG uses `AGDA2HS` for a programming language implementation [9]. Programs are written in Haskell and compiled to a simple core language based on System F_{ω}^H . As System F_{ω}^H supports computation at the type level, types are arguably programs too.

Wen Kokke contributed a novel program generator that exhaustively generates System F_{ω}^H types and programs using NEAT [14], a property-based testing system similar to SmallCheck [27]. At the time of writing, the generator is used to test the production Haskell implementation of the

⁵<https://agda.readthedocs.io/en/v2.6.2/language/reflection.html#tactic-arguments>

⁶<https://agda.readthedocs.io/en/v2.6.2/language/instance-arguments.html#instance-resolution>

⁷<https://agda.readthedocs.io/en/v2.6.2/language/record-types.html#record-modules>

```

record Monoid (a : Set) : Set where
  field
    mempty : a
    mappend : a → a → a
    @0 left-identity : mappend mempty x ≡ x
    @0 right-identity : mappend x mempty ≡ x
    @0 associativity : mappend (mappend x y) z ≡
      mappend x (mappend y z)
open Monoid {...} public
{-# COMPILE AGDA2HS Monoid class #-}

instance
  MonoidNat : Monoid Nat
  MonoidNat = λ where
    .mempty → 0
    .mappend i j → i + j
    .left-identity → ...
    .right-identity → ...
    .associativity → ...
{-# COMPILE AGDA2HS MonoidNat #-}

sumMon : {{ Monoid a }} → List a → a
sumMon [] = mempty
sumMon (x :: xs) = mappend x (sumMon xs)
{-# COMPILE AGDA2HS sumMon #-}

```

```

class Monoid a where
  mempty :: a
  mappend :: a -> a -> a

instance Monoid Nat where
  mempty = 0
  mappend i j = i + j

sumMon :: Monoid a => [a] -> a
sumMon [] = mempty
sumMon (x : xs) = mappend x (sumMon xs)

```

Figure 4. Using records and instance arguments to represent Haskell’s Monoid type class.

core language against the Agda model which is compiled using MALonzo and makes use of the same Haskell libraries for cryptography etc. The NEAT generator for types and terms was originally written in Haskell but the type level part has subsequently been ported to Agda with minimal changes, and is compiled using AGDA2HS. Before using the NEAT generator in testing we would like to verify that it is correctly implemented. One of the key components of the generator is a type checker for terms that makes essential use of type substitution which, in turn, relies on type renaming. We could try to test the correctness properties of type renaming and substitution operations by generating types and using NEAT but instead we prove the properties in Agda. It is straightforward to prove these properties in Agda whereas to test them would be computationally expensive, as it would require not only generating individual types but also arbitrary renamings and substitutions containing an arbitrary number of types.

We introduce the intrinsically well-scoped syntax of kinds and types of System F_ω (see Fig. 6). The types of System F_ω are similar to the terms of lambda calculus extended with constants for function arrow and forall. Instead of indexing by the (natural) number of variables and using `Fin` to manage variable scope, we index by sets of variables and use `Maybe` to manage variable scope. This representation, due

to [6], has the advantage that it is readily translated to a nested datatype in Haskell rather than a GADT. The former representation, due to [3], is more commonly used in Agda. Note the use of `Maybe` in the arguments of `TyForall` and `TyLam` which signifies that the variable set n has been extended by an additional element. We define operations to apply (parallel) renamings and (parallel) substitutions to types (see Fig. 7). The datatype `Type` is a functor where `ren` is the morphism map and the functor laws are given by `ren-id` and `ren-comp`:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{ren-id} & : (ty : \text{Type } n) \rightarrow \text{ren id } ty \equiv ty \\ \text{ren-comp} & : (ty : \text{Type } n) (\rho : n \rightarrow n') (\rho' : n' \rightarrow n'') \\ & \rightarrow \text{ren } (\rho' \circ \rho) ty \equiv \text{ren } \rho' (\text{ren } \rho ty) \end{aligned}$$

The datatype `Type` is also a monad where `TyVar` is return and `sub` is bind. The three monad laws are given by `sub-id`, `sub-var` and `sub-comp`:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{sub-id} & : (t : \text{Type } n) \rightarrow \text{sub TyVar } t \equiv t \\ \text{sub-var} & : (x : n) (\sigma : n \rightarrow \text{Type } n') \\ & \rightarrow \text{sub } \sigma (\text{TyVar } x) \equiv \sigma x \\ \text{sub-comp} & : (ty : \text{Type } n) \\ & \rightarrow (\sigma : n \rightarrow \text{Type } n') (\sigma' : n' \rightarrow \text{Type } n'') \\ & \rightarrow \text{sub } (\text{sub } \sigma' \circ \sigma) ty \equiv \text{sub } \sigma' (\text{sub } \sigma ty) \end{aligned}$$

```

record Show (a : Set) : Set where
  field show      : a → String
        showsPrec : Nat → a → ShowS
        showList  : List a → ShowS

record Show1 (a : Set) : Set where
  field showsPrec : Nat → a → ShowS

  show : a → String
  show x = showsPrec 0 x ""

  showList : List a → ShowS
  showList = defaultShowList (showsPrec 0)

record Show2 (a : Set) : Set where
  field show : a → String

  showsPrec : Nat → a → ShowS
  showsPrec _ x s = show x ++ s

  showList : List a → ShowS
  showList = defaultShowList (showsPrec 0)

open Show {...}
{-# COMPILER AGDA2HS Show class Show1 Show2 #-}

instance
  ShowMaybe : {{Show a}} → Show (Maybe a)
  ShowMaybe {a = a} = record {Show1 s1}
    where
      s1 : Show1 (Maybe a)
      s1.Show1.showsPrec n = λ where
        Nothing → showString "nothing"
        (Just x) → showParen True
          ( showString "just " ∘ showsPrec 10 x )
{-# COMPILER AGDA2HS ShowMaybe #-}

```

```

class Show a where
  show :: a -> String
  showsPrec :: Nat -> a -> ShowS
  showList :: [a] -> ShowS
  {-# MINIMAL showsPrec | show #-}
  show x = showsPrec 0 x ""
  showList = defaultShowList (showsPrec 0)
  showsPrec _ x s = show x ++ s

instance (Show a)
  => Show (Maybe a) where
  showsPrec n = \case
    Nothing -> showString "nothing"
    (Just x) -> showParen True
      (showString "just " . showsPrec 10 x)

```

Figure 5. Translating the `Show` type class with a single default method (`showList`) and two possible minimal definitions (`showsPrec` | `show`).

```

data Kind : Set where
  Star : Kind
  _:=>_ : Kind → Kind → Kind

data Type (n : Set) : Set where
  TyVar   : n → Type n
  TyFun   : Type n → Type n → Type n
  TyForall : Kind → Type (Maybe n) → Type n
  TyLam   : Type (Maybe n) → Type n
  TyApp   : Type n → Type n → Kind → Type n

```

```

data Kind
  = Star
  | Kind :=> Kind

data Type n
  = TyVar n
  | TyFun (Type n) (Type n)
  | TyForall Kind (Type (Maybe n))
  | TyLam (Type (Maybe n))
  | TyApp (Type n) (Type n) Kind

```

Figure 6. The definition of kinds and well-scoped types of System F_{ω} in Agda (left) and the corresponding datatypes generated by AGDA2HS (right).

$\text{ren} : (n \rightarrow n') \rightarrow \text{Type } n \rightarrow \text{Type } n'$ $\text{sub} : (n \rightarrow \text{Type } n') \rightarrow \text{Type } n \rightarrow \text{Type } n'$	$\text{ren} :: (n \rightarrow n') \rightarrow \text{Type } n \rightarrow \text{Type } n'$ $\text{sub} :: (n \rightarrow \text{Type } n') \rightarrow \text{Type } n \rightarrow \text{Type } n'$
--	--

Figure 7. The type signatures for parallel renaming and parallel substitution in Agda (left) and the corresponding Haskell type signatures generated by AGDA2HS (right).

We then use substitution (implemented in Agda and compiled to Haskell) to implement type reduction which is used in typechecking. Type reduction and typechecking are implemented in Haskell. Type checking is used in the generator to ensure that all generated terms are well typed.

4 Correctness of Agda2HS

Since the goal of AGDA2HS is to produce verified Haskell code, correctness of the translation is an important consideration. On a high level, one could argue that the semantics of Agda and Haskell are sufficiently close to each other, and the translation is sufficiently simple, that the correctness of the translation is obvious. However, on a closer look one can see that AGDA2HS erases certain parts of a term, and if it erases too much then this can affect the semantics of a term. For example, in an earlier version of AGDA2HS, the translation would erase all implicit arguments instead of all arguments marked as erased with $\@0$. However, with this rule the function `sneaky` in Fig. 8 was translated incorrectly.⁸ In the new version of AGDA2HS, all implicit arguments are required to have a $\@0$ annotation, which means that Agda will check that the run-time result of the function is not dependent on the erased argument, causing the function `sneaky` to be rejected.

Because both Agda and Haskell are rather large languages and neither has a full formal specification of its semantics, it is currently not feasible to provide a formal correctness proof for AGDA2HS. However, what we can do is give a precise statement of the properties of the translation that we expect to hold, and of the assumptions that need to be true for these properties to hold.

We can break down the correctness of AGDA2HS into two main properties:

1. If AGDA2HS successfully produces a Haskell file from a given Agda file, then this file is valid Haskell code.
2. If an Agda term evaluates to some value v , then the corresponding Haskell term produced by AGDA2HS evaluates to the (translation of the) same value v .

Of these properties, the second one is the most important: when the first property fails, we at least know that something is wrong when trying to compile the produced Haskell code. However, when the second property fails (as in the example of Fig. 8) the properties we have proven about the Agda code might fail to hold for the generated Haskell code.

Validity of generated Haskell code. In order for AGDA2HS to generate valid Haskell code, the Agda code needs to fall within the common subset of Haskell and Agda that is supported by AGDA2HS as described above. In particular, the code should satisfy the following requirements:

- The code needs to obey the naming rules of Haskell: type and term constructors need to start with a capital letter, while names of functions and variables need to start with a small letter.
- Names of constructors and record fields should not be overloaded (which is supported by Agda but not by Haskell).
- The Agda module needs to import the module `Haskell.Prelude` provided by AGDA2HS, and should not reuse any names that are used in the Haskell Prelude.
- All defined functions, types, and classes that are used in non-erased positions of a definition with a `COMPILE AGDA2HS` pragma should either be defined in `Haskell.Prelude` or have a `COMPILE AGDA2HS` pragma themselves. In particular, functions from the builtin `Agda.Builtin.*` modules should not be used directly.
- All type parameters of functions and type constructors should be of a kind that is translated to a valid Haskell kind.
- Type quantifiers and constraints should only appear at the top-level of a function type. (Higher-rank types are currently not supported, though they would not be difficult to add.)
- All type arguments and class instances used in applications of polymorphic functions should be inferrable by Haskell, since they are erased by AGDA2HS.
- Type class instances in the Agda code should adhere to Haskell's requirement of global uniqueness.

From the point of view of an Agda programmer these restrictions may seem onerous, but for a user of AGDA2HS it may help to remember that you are not writing Agda code: you are writing Haskell code which happens to be using the syntax of Agda.

Currently, most of these properties are not yet checked by AGDA2HS. However, as noted before this just means that the Haskell compiler will reject the generated code. In practice, this can sometimes be annoying as the user gets an error message from Haskell rather than from AGDA2HS, however there is no risk of unsoundness.

⁸<https://github.com/agda/agda2hs/issues/88>

<pre> data Vec (a : Set) : {n : Nat} → Set where Nil : Vec a {zero} Cons : {n : Nat} → a → Vec a {n} → Vec a {suc n} sneaky : {n : Nat} → Vec Bool {n} → Nat sneaky Nil = 0 sneaky {1} (Cons True xs) = 1 sneaky (Cons x xs) = 2 </pre>	<pre> data Vec a = Nil Cons a (Vec a) sneaky :: Vec Bool -> Int sneaky Nil = 0 sneaky (Cons True xs) = 1 sneaky (Cons x xs) = 2 </pre>
--	--

Figure 8. A function that would be translated incorrectly if AGDA2HS would erase all implicit arguments: in Agda, `sneaky (Cons True (Cons False Nil))` evaluates to 2, but the translated Haskell term evaluates to 1 instead.

Preservation of semantics. Most syntactic constructs of Agda are just mapped one-to-one to the corresponding Haskell construct. Hence, the most important assumption that needs to hold in order to guarantee the preservation of the semantics of programs compiled by AGDA2HS is that the Agda and Haskell semantics of these constructs agree. Since both Agda and Haskell are declarative and purely functional languages, it is sufficient to check that each evaluation step of an Agda term corresponds to zero or more evaluation steps on the Haskell side. We distinguish the following cases:

- Lambda-abstractions and function applications in Agda are translated to the corresponding constructs in Haskell, so a β -reduction on the Agda side corresponds to a β -reduction of the translated Haskell term.
- Record values and record projections in Agda are translated to their equivalent constructs in Haskell, so their evaluation is likewise preserved.
- Function clauses in Agda are translated to function clauses in Haskell, so any evaluation step of a function in Agda corresponds to an evaluation of the translated function in the Haskell code. Both languages use a first-match approach to pattern matching, and Agda forbids pattern matching on arguments that are marked as erased (as well as arguments of type `Set` or `Level`), hence the same clause will always be chosen on both sides of the translation.
- Record values that are marked as an `instance` on the Agda side are translated to type class instances in the Haskell code. Any call to a field of this record that uses this instance is translated to a call to the corresponding method in the Haskell code. Thanks to Haskell’s guarantee of global uniqueness of type class instances, we know that the same instance will be inferred by Haskell (or else the translation will fail).

Note also that Agda guarantees that all terms are strongly normalizing, so any differences in the order of evaluation do *not* influence the correctness of AGDA2HS.

Other assumptions that need to hold to ensure preservation of the semantics of translated programs are:

- **Prelude:** The implementation of functions in `Haskell.Prelude` and `Haskell.Prim.*` should be consistent with their Haskell implementation.
- **Erasure:** All implicit arguments that are erased by AGDA2HS are either marked with `@0`, or have a return type of the form `Level` or `Set i`.
- **Type classes:** All instance arguments (that are not marked with `@0`) should be canonical, i.e. they should be constructed from declared `instances` that are compiled to Haskell instances.

The first property is currently only checked manually, but only needs to be checked once for each function in the AGDA2HS prelude. The other two properties are checked by AGDA2HS, so any violation will lead to an error during the translation to Haskell.

5 The Implementation of AGDA2HS

In order to implement our translation we use Agda’s support for custom backends, which allows easy development of custom code generators similar to the built-in ones for generating Haskell,⁹ Javascript, HTML and LaTeX. In contrast to the builtin backends that can be activated with a flag, new custom backends in Agda are standalone Haskell executables that import Agda’s internals as a library. This makes them faster and easier to develop as it shortens the edit-compile-run loop considerably. It also means that backend releases do not need to be tied to Agda releases.

To implement the backend one needs to provide a compilation function from Agda definitions to Haskell ones. Crucially, the backend operates on the phase after type-checking, reading the generated interface `.agda.i` files for the (successfully checked) definitions and spitting out their Haskell translations. (Practically, our translation function is executed under Agda’s typechecking monad, allowing us to conveniently re-use Agda internals for our own purposes.)

⁹We compare the existing Haskell code generator with our approach and explain why it is unsuitable for our purposes in [Sect. 6.1](#).

The user can then invoke the translation on specific definitions via the `COMPILE` pragma or include verbatim Haskell code in a `FOREIGN` block.¹⁰

As the source and target languages share a lot of similarities, a major part of the translation process is straightforward, merely translating Agda constructs to the corresponding Haskell constructs (e.g. for lambda abstractions). However, there are some cases that are subtle due to differences between the source and target language that need more careful attention.

First and foremost, the backend only handles a certain subset of Agda, excluding the parts that have no Haskell equivalent (e.g. defining a type by pattern matching, indexed datatypes). In these cases, the backend rejects the unsupported input with an appropriate error message. Note that the user can still use dependent types to prove theorems about their non-dependently typed programs, but these are only typechecked without any counterpart on the Haskell side.

In some other cases, the design of the two languages diverge and a similar construct is handled in a totally different way, as in the case of ‘where’ clauses: `where` clauses in Agda introduce anonymous modules with parameters drawn from the enclosing scope, so we have to remedy this during translation by tracking down this module and compiling its contained definitions applied to the current scope, essentially reversing Agda’s *lambda-lifting* phase.

6 Related Work

We distinguish two main forms of related work: other tools for extracting executable code from a proof assistant, and tools for verifying code written in Haskell directly.

6.1 Program Extraction

AGDA2HS can be seen as a form of *program extraction*, as used in theorem provers such as Coq¹¹ [22, 23], Isabelle/HOL [8, 18], Minlog [5], ACL2 [17], and Russell [29]. Compared to these approaches, we expect our approach to be much more familiar and easy to learn to a (Haskell) programmer: instead of first having to write a mathematical proof and then extracting the executable program from that, the programmer can instead write an Agda program with precise and expressive types without being forced into proving anything. One important difference with other program extractors is that we do not consider the full source language and instead restrict ourselves to a subset of Agda that corresponds to valid Haskell, so we do not need to insert any calls to `unsafeCoerce` or similar functions. This restriction also means we can generate code that is easy to read and understand independently, so a Haskell programmer does

not need to learn Agda in order to use a library written using AGDA2HS. Moreover, a programmer using AGDA2HS can collaborate easily with other programmers/maintainers who are using Haskell directly as they are able to review the generated code they would normally do. This is not the case for extraction mechanisms that generate reliable, performant, but unreadable code even if the mechanism is fully verified. Furthermore if the AGDA2HS programmer makes no further contributions to the project the other developers can take over maintenance of Haskell code without having to use AGDA2HS. This is a particular advantage in open source projects where activity from a particular contributor may be transient. Another difference with extraction is that we use explicit erasure annotations, which allows us to erase all traces of proof arguments. For example, an Agda function `div : (x y : Nat) → @0 y ≠ 0 → Nat` is translated to a Haskell function `div : Natural -> Natural -> Natural`. The price we pay for this is that nothing prevents a programmer from calling `div 1 0` on the Haskell side. Finally, it is important to note that the goal of AGDA2HS is not necessarily to compete directly with existing program extraction tools. Rather, our aim is to build a lightweight tool that is easy to use and produces readable Haskell code in a predictable manner.

MAlonzo backend. Agda already has a Haskell backend called MAlonzo, so one might wonder why we do not just use that instead. MAlonzo is designed to compile any Agda program to Haskell. Hence it can handle arbitrarily complex dependently typed programs and produce relatively performant Haskell code. The downside is that it does so by circumventing the Haskell type system. The nature of this process also makes the generated code almost unreadable and generally hard to work with: see Fig. 9 for an example of the code generated by MAlonzo. While many of the coercions inserted by MAlonzo are not necessary to make the code be accepted by GHC, they cannot be avoided in general because Agda supports full dependent types, while GHC (currently) does not. The coercions inserted by MAlonzo make it difficult to make the jump from having an Agda prototype of a Haskell program (or a component in a larger Haskell project) to having a production Haskell program. Arguably, when we use MAlonzo our trustworthy verified Agda code is compiled to Haskell code that is less trustworthy than handwritten Haskell code as it cannot be meaningfully checked by either a human reader or the Haskell typechecker. The AGDA2HS project is aimed at solving this problem, producing trustworthy Haskell output from verified Agda input.

Coq extraction. The built-in extraction command in Coq seems to produce considerably more readable Haskell output than MAlonzo, however we *do* get unwanted implicit arguments and automatically generated variable names in the extracted Haskell code of Fig. 10. (This can be remedied

¹⁰<https://agda.readthedocs.io/en/v2.6.2/language/foreign-function-interface.html#compiler-pragma>

¹¹<https://coq.inria.fr/refman/addendum/extraction.html>

```

d_insert_1494 :: Integer -> Integer -> Integer
              -> T_Tree_1340 -> T_''8804''_1324 -> T_''8804''_1324 -> T_Tree_1340
d_insert_1494 ~v0 ~v1 v2 v3 ~v4 ~v5 = du_insert_1494 v2 v3
du_insert_1494 :: Integer -> T_Tree_1340 -> T_Tree_1340
du_insert_1494 v0 v1 = case coe v1 of
  C_Leaf_1348 -> coe C_Node_1352 (coe v0) (coe C_Leaf_1348) (coe C_Leaf_1348)
  C_Node_1352 v2 v3 v4 -> coe MAlonzo.Code.Haskell.Prim.du_case_of__54
    (coe d_compare_1474 (coe v0) (coe v2))
    (coe du_''46''extendedlambda0_1514 (coe v0) (coe v2) (coe v3) (coe v4))
  _ -> MAlonzo.RTE.mazUnreachableError

```

Figure 9. A fragment of the Haskell code generated by MAlonzo from the Agda code in Fig. 1. MAlonzo circumvents Haskell’s type system with unsafe casts with `coe`.

by manually instructing the erasure of these arguments: `Extraction Implicit insert [l u].)`

In contrast to AGDA2HS, Coq does not seem to readily support type classes, as seen in Fig. 11 where classes get translated to plain datatypes and instances are given in *dictionary-passing style*.

We can easily conceive a port of our work to Coq that adds proper Prelude support and handles type classes, but it still remains more natural to choose Agda whose syntax and idioms are closer in spirit to Haskell’s.

Reflection-based extraction. Sinkarovs and Cockx [28] show how Agda’s reflection API can be used for the purpose of developing custom code extractors from within Agda. This work is mostly orthogonal to ours: they explain how to implement an extractor, while we focus here on the use of a specific extraction tool AGDA2HS. We expect it would have been possible to implement AGDA2HS using reflection instead, but we decided to use Agda’s backend mechanism instead because it is more mature and allows easy integration with existing libraries for generating Haskell syntax.

6.2 Verification of Haskell Code

Since Haskell code is amenable to equational reasoning and formal verification, there have been many attempts to verify code written in Haskell directly. One obvious point of comparison for AGDA2HS is `hs-to-coq` [7, 30]. While `hs-to-coq` starts from Haskell code that is translated to Coq code that must then be verified by hand, we start from Agda code that is (intrinsically or extrinsically) verified and translate that to Haskell, erasing proofs and type dependencies in the process. Compared to `hs-to-coq`, with AGDA2HS it is possible to:

- change or refine the type signature of functions to ensure totality,
- verify properties using a mix of intrinsic and extrinsic verification,
- develop and maintain programs using the interactive features of Agda,

- build libraries that are usable from both Haskell and Agda.

Of course, there is a price to be paid for these advantages, the most significant part is that AGDA2HS does not support verification of existing Haskell code directly. While this is a real disadvantage for some applications, writing both the program and its proof of correctness in the same language allows for a much tighter integration between the two. Also, thanks to Agda’s FFI features we can still make use of existing Haskell functions as long as we are happy to postulate their properties.

Abel et al. [1] also used Agda to verify properties of Haskell programs. However, their approach is closer to `hs-to-coq` than to ours: they translate GHC’s Core language into a monadic embedding in Agda. As a consequence, most of the advantages and disadvantages from the comparison with `hs-to-coq` apply here as well. In the 16 years since publication of this paper, there have been many changes to Agda so applying this approach would require a whole new implementation. Thanks to significant advances in Agda’s usability as a programming language, it is now entirely feasible to develop both programs and their proofs side-by-side in Agda directly.

Christiansen et al. [11] use Coq to prove properties of *partial* Haskell programs by wrapping computations in a (free) monad. This could similarly be supported in AGDA2HS by working with the Maybe monad to model possible failure and/or the General monad to model general recursion [24].

Liquid Haskell [32, 33, 35] extends Haskell with refinement types in order to specify and automatically check correctness properties in Haskell code directly. When it can be applied, this approach clearly has a much lower overhead than using either `hs-to-coq` or AGDA2HS. However, not all properties can easily be expressed as refinement types. Moreover, using an automatic prover means that it is much harder to guide the proving process in case it fails. Vazou et al. [34] make a detailed comparison between Liquid Haskell and Coq. We expect AGDA2HS to share many of the characteristics of Coq in this comparison.

```

Inductive Tree {l u : nat} : Set :=
  Leaf : l <= u -> Tree
  | Node : forall x,
    @Tree l x -> @Tree x u -> Tree.

Fixpoint insert {l u} x (t : @Tree l u)
(p : l <= x) (q : x <= u) : Tree :=
  match t with
  | Leaf _ => Node x (Leaf p) (Leaf q)
  | Node y l r => match cmp x y with
    | LT q => Node y (insert x l p q) r
    | EQ q => Node y l r
    | GT p => Node y l (insert x r p q)
  end
end.

```

```

data Tree = Leaf
  | Node Nat Tree Tree

insert :: Nat -> Nat -> Nat
  -> Tree -> Tree
insert l u x t = case t of {
  Leaf -> Node x Leaf Leaf;
  Node y l0 r -> case cmp x y of {
    LT -> Node y (insert l y x l0) r;
    EQ -> Node y l0 r;
    GT -> Node y l0 (insert y u x r)}}

```

Figure 10. The insertion example from Fig. 1; implicit arguments l and u survive the translation.

```

Class Monoid (a : Set) :=
  { mempty : a
  ; mappend : a -> a -> a }.

Instance MonoidNat : Monoid nat :=
  { mempty := 0
  ; mappend i j := i + j }.

Fixpoint sumMon {a} `{Monoid a}
(xs : list a) : a :=
  match xs with
  | [] => mempty
  | x :: xs => mappend x (sumMon xs)
end.

```

```

data Monoid a = Build_Monoid a (a -> a -> a)

mempty :: (Monoid a1) -> a1
mempty = ...
mappend :: (Monoid a1) -> a1 -> a1 -> a1
mappend = ...
monoidNat :: Monoid Nat
monoidNat = Build_Monoid 0 add

sumMon :: (Monoid a1) -> (List a1) -> a1
sumMon h xs = case xs of {
  ([]) -> mempty h;
  (:) x xs0 -> mappend h x (sumMon h xs0)}

```

Figure 11. Default class extraction in Coq that produces no Haskell type classes and exposes internal names.

GHC Haskell is also steadily getting closer to becoming a full-fledged dependently typed language itself [15, 37]. Once this transformation is complete, we expect it will replace AGDA2HS for some use cases, in particular for encoding pre-/post-conditions and invariants at the type level. However, even with dependent types Haskell will remain a partial language and hence not suited for actual theorem proving, while Agda comes with a termination checker as well as a large standard library that can be used for writing proofs. Another benefit of AGDA2HS is that it produces *simple* Haskell code that can be used by any Haskell programmer, while effectively using code written in dependent Haskell will still require a learning curve.

7 Conclusion and Future Work

In this paper, we have presented AGDA2HS and demonstrated its usefulness for producing verified Haskell code. We were particularly delighted by the streamlined development process provided by Agda’s backend infrastructure;

we implemented the translation without significant development effort, and the codebase is minimal enough to allow for future extensions.

Supporting more Haskell features. While the current subset of Haskell and Agda used by AGDA2HS is expressive enough to write many programs, our experience has shown that there is a need for more features that facilitate working with intrinsically typed data structures. In the future, we plan to continue extending AGDA2HS with additional features to make it possible to verify a wider range of programs. Our aim is to represent more features of Haskell in Agda, not to compile arbitrary Agda code to Haskell. This is what allows us to produce clean and usable Haskell code in the end. Among the features of Haskell that are not yet supported by AGDA2HS, we can identify three rough categories:

- First, we have Haskell features that already have an Agda equivalent that is equally or more expressive. For example, this is the case for generalized algebraic data types (GADTs) [20] and higher-rank types. Since these Agda features are more general than their Haskell counterparts, the main difficulty here is to

identify the fragment of the Agda syntax that can be supported by AGDA2HS.

- Second, there are Haskell features that have no direct Agda equivalent but that can be emulated with some creativity. One example of this is the support for default methods we already implemented (see Sect. 2.5). Another example would be to use Agda’s `with` abstraction [26] to support pattern guards and view patterns.
- Finally, some features have no built-in equivalent in Agda and are not easily emulated either. One example of this is 32-bit arithmetic, which is supported by Haskell (`Float`, `Int32`, `Word32`), but has no built-in equivalent in Agda. Other examples include strictness annotations, unboxed datatypes, and specialize pragmas. In order to support these features in AGDA2HS, they would first need to be added to Agda itself.

Compiling static properties to run-time checks. With our current approach, function preconditions and datatype invariants that are enforced statically on the Agda side are erased in the translation to Haskell. This is problematic when AGDA2HS is used to develop a part of a larger Haskell project: ‘plain’ Haskell code can call a function without checking the preconditions, or construct an element of a datatype that violates the invariants. To provide an extra layer of safety, we could add run-time checks to the generated Haskell code. This is possible for any property that is decidable, which is usually the case (e.g. the decidability of the tree invariants from Sect. 1 is a consequence of the decidable ordering of the natural numbers).

Another possible extension would be to integrate static verification and property-based testing by allowing the user of AGDA2HS to postulate certain properties on the Agda side and translate those properties to QuickCheck properties [12]. However, it remains unclear how to account for random generation and shrinking of test data.

Totality and infinite data. A limitation of the current approach of AGDA2HS is that all properties are proven in Agda by assuming functions are total, while Haskell functions can result in an error or fail to terminate. While there is a good argument to be made for why this is usually not a big problem [13], it would be interesting to investigate the possibility of compiling monadic Agda code (using some kind of partiality monad) to pure Haskell code. This would give a more accurate representation of Haskell code at the price of additional overhead on the Agda side.

We do not provide any support for infinite data structures yet either, but we are currently experimenting with representing them using *coinductive types*.¹²

HS2AGDA: translating in the inverse direction. Sometimes we have existing Haskell code that we would like to re-use, rather than porting it in AGDA2HS from scratch. To

¹²<https://agda.readthedocs.io/en/v2.6.2/language/coinduction.html>

this end, it would be convenient to provide the developer with a *back-translation* from Haskell to AGDA2HS-compliant Agda code, which can then serve as a starting point for verification. Such a tool would streamline the verification process and make AGDA2HS easier to adopt within an existing project.

Applications of AGDA2HS. On the side of applications, so far we have focused on the verification of libraries that offer purely functional data structures and algorithms. However, typical Haskell programs involve a significant amount of monads to manage side effects. Further experiments are needed to investigate how to apply AGDA2HS to monadic code. We would also like to evaluate the usability and effectiveness of our approach by comparing the verification effort with competing approaches such as Liquid Haskell and `hs-to-coq`.

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