Implement SQL parser and type system in Databend

Databend Cloud is an affordable cloud data warehouse developed in Rust. In this exploration, we will dive into Databend's internal, specifically examining its SQL parser and type system that are meticulously crafted for Rust.

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Who am I

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Databend Planner Team Distributed transaction

Rust contributor Idris-lang contributor

Databend

https://databend.rs

Feature-Rich

Instant Elasticity

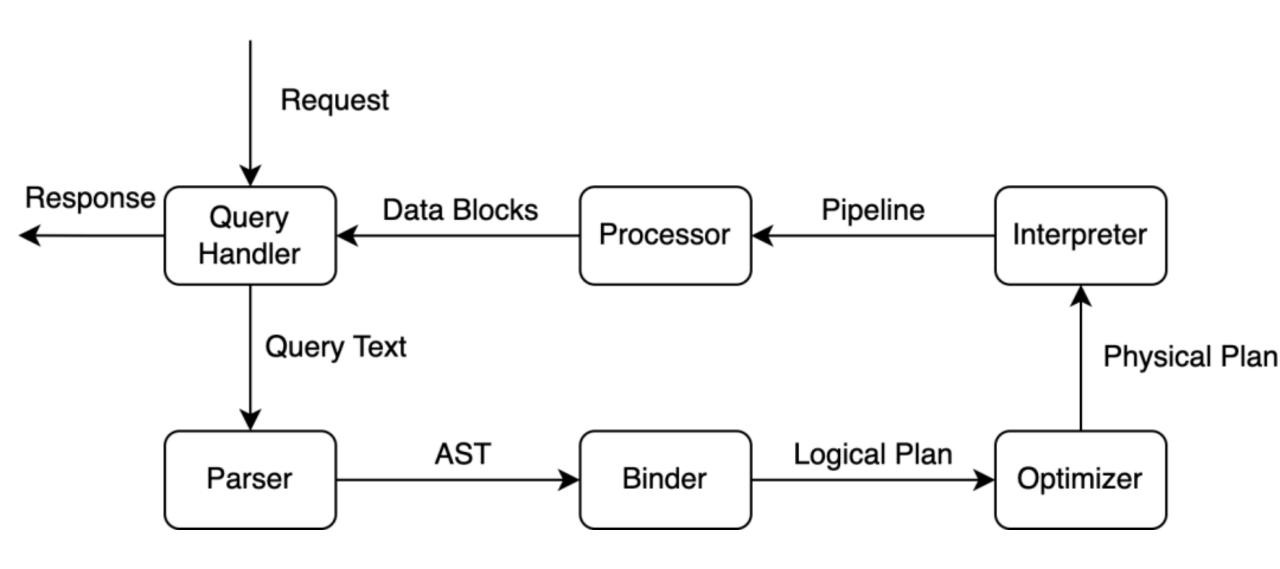
Support for Semi-Structured Data

MySQL/ClickHouse Compatible

Low Cost

Easy To Use

Cloud Native (S3, Azure Blob, Google Cloud Storage, Alibaba Cloud OSS, etc)



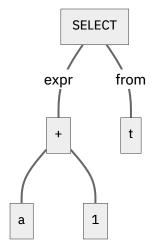
SQL Parser

Check for syntax violation and construct **Abstract Syntax Tree (AST)**

Input

SELECT a + 1 FROM t

Output



Tokenize

Convert **String** to **Token Stream**

Parse

Convert Token Stream to AST

Tokenize

Recognise **tokens** by regular expression

Regular expression for each token kind

```
Ident = [_a-zA-Z][_$a-zA-Z0-9]*
Number = [0-9]+
Plus = \+
SELECT = SELECT
FROM = FROM
```

Tokenize

Recognise **tokens** by regular expression

Input

```
SELECT a + 1 FROM t
```

Output

```
Keyword(SELECT),
Ident(a),
BinOp(+),
Number(1),
Keyword(FROM),
Ident(t),
```

Parse

Define **gramma rule** and construct **AST**

Backus–Naur form (BNF) grammars

Parse

Define **gramma rule** and construct **AST**

```
Input

[
    Keyword(SELECT),
    Ident(a),
    BinOp(+),
    Number(1),
    Keyword(FROM),
    Ident(t),
]
```

Output

```
SelectStatement {
    projection: Expr::BinaryOp {
        op: Op::Plus,
        args: [
            Expr::ColumnRef("a"),
            Expr::Constant(Scalar::Int(1))
        ]
    }
    from: "t",
}
```

Choosing SQL Parser

sqlparser-rs

ANTLR4

LALRPOP

nom

Tokenizer

https://github.com/maciejhirsz/logos

```
#[derive(Logos)]
pub enum TokenKind {
    #[regex(r"[ \t\r\n\f]+", logos::skip)]
    Whitespace,

#[regex(r#"[_a-zA-Z][_$a-zA-Z0-9]*"#)]
    Ident,
    #[regex(r"[0-9]+")]
    Number,

#[token("+")]
    Plus,

#[token("SELECT", ignore(ascii_case))]
    SELECT,
    #[token("FROM", ignore(ascii_case))]
    FROM,
}
```

Tokenizer

https://github.com/maciejhirsz/logos

```
Input
```

```
SELECT a + 1 FROM t
```

Output

```
Token { kind: TokenKind::Select, text: "SELECT", span: 0..6 },
Token { kind: TokenKind::Ident, text: "a", span: 7..8 },
Token { kind: TokenKind::Plus, text: "+", span: 9..10 },
Token { kind: TokenKind::Number, text: "1", span: 11..12 },
Token { kind: TokenKind::From, text: "from", span: 13..17 },
Token { kind: TokenKind::Ident, text: "t", span: 18..19 },
```

Tokenizer

https://github.com/maciejhirsz/logos

```
Input
```

```
SELECT a + 1 FROM t
```

```
Output
```

```
Token { kind: TokenKind::Select, text: "SELECT", span: 0..6 },
Token { kind: TokenKind::Ident, text: "a", span: 7..8 },
Token { kind: TokenKind::Plus, text: "+", span: 9..10 },
Token { kind: TokenKind::Number, text: "1", span: 11..12 },
Token { kind: TokenKind::From, text: "from", span: 13..17 },
Token { kind: TokenKind::Ident, text: "t", span: 18..19 },
```

Span

```
SELECT a + 1 FROM t
0..6 7..8 9..10 11..12 13..17 18..19
```

Error Report

Pretty print the error report thanks to the **span** information

Parser

https://github.com/rust-bakery/nom

Terminal

Recognize only one **token** from **token stream**

Combinator

Combine **terminals** and other small parsers into a larger parser

Terminal

Recognize only one **token** from **token stream**

Recongnize a token that has the exactly **text**

```
fn match_text(text: &str)
    -> impl FnMut(&[Token]) -> IResult<&[Token], Token>
{
    satisfy(|token: &Token| token.text == text)(i)
}
```

Recongnize a token that is of the **token kind**

```
fn match_token(kind: TokenKind)
    -> impl FnMut(&[Token]) -> IResult<&[Token], Token>
{
    satisfy(|token: &Token| token.kind == kind)(i)
}
```

Combinator

Combine **terminals** and other small parsers into a larger parser

tuple(a, b, c)

alt(a, b, c)

many0(a)

many1(a)

opt(a)

Formally defined **gramma rule**

```
<select_statement> ::=
    SELECT <expr> FROM <ident>
```

Code

```
tuple((
    match_token(SELECT),
    expr,
    match_token(FROM),
    match_token(Ident),
))
```

Formally defined **gramma rule**

```
<select_statement> ::=
    SELECT <expr> [FROM <ident>]
```

Code

```
tuple((
    match_token(SELECT),
    expr,
    opt(tuple((
        match_token(FROM),
        match_token(Ident),
    )))
```

Formally defined **gramma rule**

```
<select_statement> ::=
    SELECT <expr>+ [FROM <ident>]
```

Code

```
tuple((
    match_token(SELECT),
    many1(expr),
    opt(tuple((
        match_token(FROM),
        match_token(Ident),
    )))
```

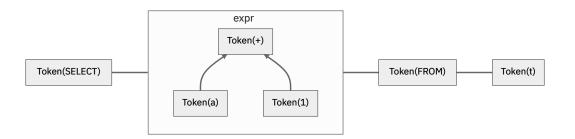
Formally defined **gramma rule**

```
<select_statement> ::=
    SELECT (<expr> AS <ident> | <expr>)+
    [FROM <ident>]
```

Code

Parse Tree

The parse tree of SELECT a + 1



AST

```
The AST of SELECT a + 1

SelectStatement {
    projection: Expr::BinaryOp {
        op: Op::Plus,
        args: [
            Expr::ColumnRef("a"),
            Expr::Constant(Scalar::Int(1))
        ]
    }
    from: "t",
}
```

map()

Use map() to convert Parse Tree into AST

```
fn select_statement(input: &[Token])
    -> IResult<&[Token], SelectStatement>
    map(
        tuple((
            match_token(SELECT),
            many1(alt((
                tuple((
                    expr,
                    match_token(AS),
                    expr,
                )),
                expr,
           ))),
            opt(tuple((
                match_token(FROM),
                match_token(Ident),
           )))
        )),
        |(_, projections, _, opt_from)| SelectStatement {
            projections: projections
                .map(|(expr, _, alias)| {
                    Projection::Aliased(expr, alias)
                })
                .collect(),
            from: opt_from.map(|(_, from)| from),
    )(input)
```

nom-rule

https://github.com/andylokandy/nom-rule

Simplify nom parser using **BNF**-like gramma

Syntax definition using **nom-rule**

Generated **nom** parser

nom-rule

https://github.com/andylokandy/nom-rule Simplify nom parser using **BNF**-like gramma Update the example using **nom-rule**

nom-rule

https://github.com/andylokandy/nom-rule

Simplify nom parser using **BNF**-like gramma

nom-rule cheatsheet

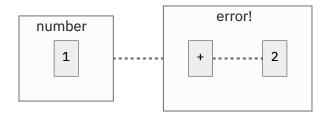
nom-rule	Translated
TOKEN	match_token(TOKEN)
"+"	match_text("+")
a ~ b ~ c	tuple((a, b, c))
()*	many0()
()+	many1()
()?	opt()
a b c	alt((a, b, c))

Left Recursion

A classical **problem** every parser will meet when parsing expression

Try to define the syntax for expression like 1 + 2

oops! The second rule will **never apply**

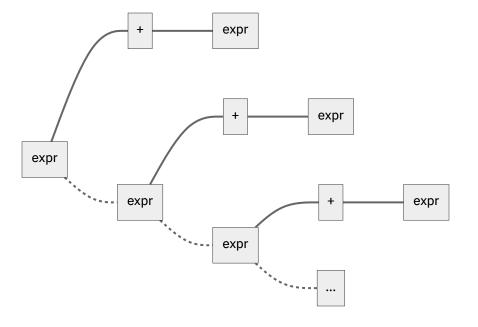


Left Recursion

A classical **problem** every parser will meet when parsing expression

Try again! Reverse the order!

but not gonna work... it'll **never stop**



Pratt Parser

https://github.com/segeljakt/pratt/

A decent solution to the problem of Left Recursion

Instead of parsing to a tree, parse the flatten elements

<expr_element> ::= + | <number>

Pratt Parser

https://github.com/segeljakt/pratt/

A decent solution to the problem of **Left Recursion**

Construct the AST using **Pratt Parser**

```
use pratt::PrattParser;
impl<I: Iterator<Item = ExprElement> PrattParser<I> for ExprParser {
    type Output = Expr;
    fn query(&mut self, elem: &ExprElement> -> Affix {
        match elem {
            ExprElement::Plus =>
                Affix::Infix(Precedence(20), Associativity::Left),
            ExprElement::Number( ) => Affix::Nilfix,
    fn primary(&mut self, elem: ExprElement) -> Expr {
        match elem {
            ExprElement::Number(n) => Expr::Number(n),
            _ => unreachable!(),
    fn infix(
       &mut self,
       lhs: Expr,
        elem: ExprElement,
        rhs: Expr,
    ) -> Expr {
       match elem {
            ExprElement::Plus(n) => Expr::Plus(lhs, rhs),
            _ => unreachable!(),
```

Type Check

Validate the **sematic** of the SQL

1. Given an AST

```
1 + 'foo'
```

2. **Desugar** AST into function calls

```
plus(1, 'foo')
```

3. Infer type of **literals**

```
1 :: Int8
'foo' :: String
```

Type Check

Validate the **sematic** of the SQL

4. So we desire to find a function overload tha matches

```
plus(Int8, String)
```

5. Query function overloads for plus()

```
plus(Int8, Int8) -> Int8
plus(Int16, Int16) -> Int16
plus(Timestamp, Timestamp) -> Timestamp
plus(Date, Date) -> Date
```

6. However, no matching overload is found, thus typechecker reports a **type error**

Type Judgement

Formal rules to **prove type** of a expression

1. Rule to assume the type of **boolean** literal

```
⊢ TRUE : Boolean
```

2. Also, the same for **numbers** and **string**

```
⊢ 1 : Int8
⊢ "foo" : String
```

3. Rule to prove the type of **function call**

```
\Gamma \vdash e1 : Int8 \Gamma \vdash e2 : Int8
\Gamma \vdash plus(e1, e2) : Int8
```

 $\star \Gamma$: Type Environment

Type Environment

The meaning of the mystery Γ

What is the type of variable a?

```
SELECT 1 + a
```

a. determined by querying the table metadata

```
SELECT 1 + a from t
```

b. determined by type checking the **subquery**

```
SELECT 1 + a from (
    SELECT number as a from numbers(100)
)
```

Subtype

1. Given an AST

1 + 256

2. **Desugar** AST to funtion call

plus(Int8, Int16)

3. oops! There is no matching overloads

plus(Int8, Int8) -> Int8
plus(Int16, Int16) -> Int16

Subtype

4. Because Int8 is subtype of Int16, Int8 can be cast to Int16

Int8 <: Int16</pre>

5. Update the type rule of function call to accept **subtype**

$$\Gamma \vdash$$
 e1 : T1 $\Gamma \vdash$ e2 : T2 T1 <: In16 T2 <: Int16
$$\Gamma \vdash$$
 plus(e1, e2) : Int16

6. Finally we prove

⊢ **plus**(1, 256) : Int16

Generic

1. Type of array

```
⊢ [1, 2, 3] : Array<Int8>
```

2. oops! It's impossible to enumerate all possible types

```
get(Array<Int8>, Int64) -> Int8
get(Array<Array<Int8>>, Int64) -> Array<Int8>
get(Array<Array<Array<Int8>>>, Int64) -> Array<Array<Int8>>
...
```

3. Use **generic** in the function signature

```
get<T>(Array<T>, Int64) \rightarrow T
```

Generic

4. Assume we are checking this expression

```
get([1, 2, 3], 0)
```

5. Type check its arguments first

```
get(Array<Int8>, Int8)
```

6. We have got the **substitution** after **unification**, then apply the substitution to the signature

```
{T=Int8}
// apply the substitution
get<Int8>(Array<Int8>, Int64) -> Int8
```

7. Finally we prove

```
\vdash get([1, 2, 3], 0) : Int8
```

Typechecker produces expression that is ready to be evaluated

```
pub enum Expr {
   Constant {
        scalar: Scalar,
        data_type: DataType,
   },
    ColumnRef {
       id: String,
        data_type: DataType,
   },
   Cast {
       is_try: bool,
        expr: Box<Expr>,
        dest type: DataType,
   FunctionCall {
       name: String,
        args: Vec<Expr>,
        return type: DataType,
        eval: Box<Fn([Value]) -> Value>,
   },
```

```
Expression of 1 + a

Expr::FunctionCall {
    name: "plus",
    args: [
        Expr::Constant {
            scalar: Scalar::Int8(1),
            data_type: DataType::int8,
        },
        Expr::ColumnRef {
            id: "a",
                 data_type: DataType::Int8,
        },
    ],
    return_type: DataType::Int8,
    eval: Box<Fn([Value]) -> Value>,
}
```

The place where actual work takes place

```
fn plus_eval(args: &[Value]) -> Value {
    ...
}
```

Vectorized input which can either be a **column** or **scalar** (all values are same)

```
enum Value {
    Scalar(Scalar),
    Column(Column),
}

enum Scalar {
    Int8(i8),
    Int16(i16),
    Boolean(bool),
    ...
}

enum Column {
    Int8(Vec<i8>),
    Int16(Vec<i16>),
    Boolean(Vec<bool>),
    ...
}
```

A working example for plus(Int8, Int8) -> Int8

```
fn plus eval(args: &[Value]) -> Value {
    match (&args[0], &args[1]) {
        (Value::Scalar(Scalar::Int8(lhs)), Value::Scalar(Scalar::Int8(rhs))) => {
            Value::Scalar(Scalar::Int8(lhs + rhs))
       (Value::Column(Column::Int8(lhs)), Value::Scalar(Scalar::Int8(rhs))) => {
            let result: Vec<i8> = lhs
                .iter()
                .map(|lhs| *lhs + rhs)
                .collect();
            Value::Column(Column::Int8(result))
        (Value::Scalar(Scalar::Int8(lhs)), Value::Column(Column::Int8(rhs))) => {
            let result: Vec<i8> = rhs
                .iter()
                .map(|rhs| lhs + *rhs)
                .collect();
            Value::Column(Column::Int8(result))
       },
        (Value::Column(Column::Int8(lhs)), Value::Column(Column::Int8(rhs))) => {
            let result: Vec<i8> = lhs
                .iter()
                .zip(rhs.iter())
                .map(|(lhs, rhs)| *lhs + *rhs)
                .collect();
            Value::Column(Column::Int8(result))
       },
       _ => unreachable!()
```

Extract the pattern for vectorization

```
fn register 2 arg int8(&mut self, name: String, eval: impl Fn(i8, i8) -> i8) {
    self.register_function(Function {
        signature: FunctionSignature {
            name: "plus",
            arg: [DataType::Int8, DataType::Int8],
            return type: DataType::Int8,
        eval: |args: &[Value]| -> Value {
            match (&args[0], &args[1]) {
                (Value::Scalar(Scalar::Int8(lhs)), Value::Scalar(Scalar::Int8(rhs))) => {
                    Value::Scalar(Scalar::Int8(eval(lhs, rhs)))
                (Value::Column(Column::Int8(lhs)), Value::Scalar(Scalar::Int8(rhs))) => {
                    let result: Vec<i8> = lhs
                        .iter()
                        .map(eval(*lhs, rhs))
                        .collect();
                    Value::Column(Column::Int8(result))
                (Value::Scalar(Scalar::Int8(lhs)), Value::Column(Column::Int8(rhs))) => {
                    let result: Vec<i8> = rhs
                        .iter()
                        .map(eval(lhs, *rhs))
                        .collect();
                    Value::Column(Column::Int8(result))
                },
                (Value::Column(Column::Int8(lhs)), Value::Column(Column::Int8(rhs))) => {
                    let result: Vec<i8> = lhs
                        .iter()
                        .zip(rhs.iter())
                        .map(|(lhs, rhs)| eval(*lhs, *rhs))
                        .collect();
                    Value::Column(Column::Int8(result))
               _ => unreachable!()
   });
```

As a result, it's easy to register overload for any **vectorized** input

```
registry.register_2_arg_int8("plus", |lhs: i8, rhs: i8| lhs + rhs);
```

But still many **duplicated types** to register

```
registry.register_2_arg_int16("plus", |lhs: i16, rhs: i16| lhs + rhs); registry.register_2_arg_int32("plus", |lhs: i32, rhs: i32| lhs + rhs); registry.register_2_arg_int64("plus", |lhs: i64, rhs: i64| lhs + rhs);
```

```
// Marker type for `Int8`
struct Int8Type;

// Define all methods needed to process data of the type
trait ValueType {
   type Scalar;

   fn data_type() -> DataType;
   fn downcast_scalar(Scalar) -> Self::Scalar;
   fn upcast_scalar(Self::Scalar) -> Scalar;
   fn iter_column(Column) -> impl Iterator<Item = Self::Scalar>;
   fn collect_iter(impl Iterator<Item = Self::Scalar>) -> Column;
}
```

```
impl ValueType for Int8Type {
   type Scalar = i8;
   fn data_type() -> DataType {
        DataType::Int8
   fn downcast scalar(scalar: Scalar) -> Self::Scalar {
        match scalar {
           Scalar::Int8(val) => val,
           _ => unreachable!(),
   fn upcast_scalar(scalar: Self::Scalar) -> Scalar {
        Scalar::Int8(scalar)
   fn iter column(col: Column) -> impl Iterator<Item = Self::Scalar> {
        match col {
           Column::Int8(col) => col.iter().cloned(),
           _ => unreachable!(),
   fn collect_iter(iter: impl Iterator<Item = Self::Scalar>) -> Column {
        let col = iter.collect();
        Column::Int8(col)
```

Extract the data type using marker type

```
fn register_2_arg<I1: ValueType, I2: ValueType, Output: ValueType>(
    &mut self,
    name: String,
    eval: impl Fn(I1::Scalar, I2::Scalar) -> Output::Scalar
) {
    self.register_function(Function {
        signature: FunctionSignature {
            name: "plus",
            arg: [I1::data_type(), I2::data_type()],
            return_type: Output::data_type(),
        },
        eval: |args: &[Value]| -> Value {
            match (&args[0], &args[1]) {
                (Value::Scalar(lhs), Value::Scalar(rhs)) => {
                    let lhs: I1::Scalar = I1::downcast_scalar(lhs);
                    let rhs: I2::Scalar = I2::downcast_scalar(rhs);
                    let res: Output::Scalar = eval(lhs, rhs);
                    Output::upcast_scalar(0::upcast_scalar(res))
                },
    });
```

As a result, its easy to register overload for input of **any data type**

```
registry.register_2_arg::<Int8Type, Int8Type, Int8Type>(
    "plus", |lhs: i8, rhs: i8| lhs + rhs
);
```

Three lines of code to register **any** overload

```
registry.register_1_arg::<Int64Type, Int64Type>(
    "abs", |val: i64| val.abs()
);
```

What about in Golang

The 135-lines-of-code abs() function definition in a vectorized database developed in Golang

```
func (c *absFunctionClass) getFunction(ctx sessionctx.Context,
       args []Expression) (builtinFunc, error) {
       if err := c.verifyArgs(args); err != nil {
                return nil, c.verifyArgs(args)
       argFieldTp := args[0].GetType()
       argTp := argFieldTp.EvalType()
       if argTp != types.ETInt && argTp != types.ETDecimal {
               argTp = types.ETReal
       bf, err := newBaseBuiltinFuncWithTp(ctx, c.funcName, args, argTp, argTp)
       if err != nil {
               return nil. err
        if mysql.HasUnsignedFlag(argFieldTp.GetFlag()) {
               bf.tp.AddFlag(mysql.UnsignedFlag)
       if argTp == types.ETReal {
               flen, decimal :=
           {\tt mysql.GetDefaultFieldLengthAndDecimal(mysql.TypeDouble)}
               bf.tp.SetFlen(flen)
               bf.tp.SetDecimal(decimal)
               bf.tp.SetFlenUnderLimit(argFieldTp.GetFlen())
               bf.tp.SetDecimalUnderLimit(argFieldTp.GetDecimal())
        var sig builtinFunc
       switch argTp {
       case types.ETInt:
                if mysql.HasUnsignedFlag(argFieldTp.GetFlag()) {
                       sig = &builtinAbsUIntSig{bf}
               } else {
                       sig = &builtinAbsIntSig{bf}
        case types.ETDecimal:
                sig = &builtinAbsDecSig{bf}
       case types.ETReal:
               sig = &builtinAbsRealSig{bf}
                panic("unexpected argTp")
        return sig, nil
```

```
type builtinAbsRealSig struct { baseBuiltinFunc }
type builtinAbsIntSig struct { baseBuiltinFunc }
type builtinAbsUIntSig struct { baseBuiltinFunc }
type builtinAbsDecSig struct { baseBuiltinFunc }
func (b *builtinAbsDecSig) Clone() builtinFunc {
        newSig := &builtinAbsDecSig{}
        newSig.cloneFrom(&b.baseBuiltinFunc)
        return newSig
func (b *builtinAbsRealSig) Clone() builtinFunc {
        newSig := &builtinAbsRealSig{}
        newSig.cloneFrom(&b.baseBuiltinFunc)
        return newSig
func (b *builtinAbsIntSig) Clone() builtinFunc {
        newSig := &builtinAbsIntSig{}
        newSig.cloneFrom(&b.baseBuiltinFunc)
        return newSig
func (b *builtinAbsUIntSig) Clone() builtinFunc {
        newSig := &builtinAbsUIntSig{}
        newSig.cloneFrom(&b.baseBuiltinFunc)
        return newSig
```

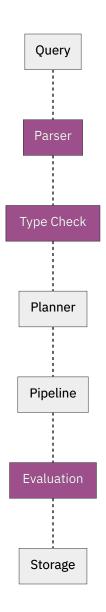
clone() definition for each function signature

Manually typecheck each function

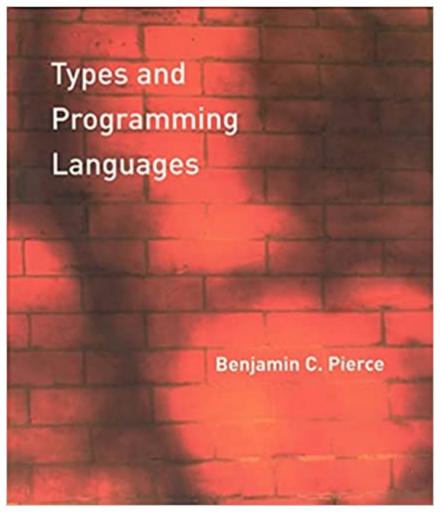
```
if err := b.args[0].VecEvalDecimal(b.ctx, input, result); err != nil {
       zero := new(types.MyDecimal)
       buf := new(types.MyDecimal)
       d64s := result.Decimals()
       for i := 0: i < len(d64s): i++ {
               if result.IsNull(i) {
                       continue
               if d64s[i].IsNegative() {
                       if err := types.DecimalSub(zero, &d64s[i], buf); err != nil {
                       d64s[i] = *buf
       return nil
func (b *builtinAbsRealSig) vecEvalReal(
   input *chunk.Chunk,
   result *chunk.Column
       if err := b.args[0].VecEvalReal(b.ctx, input, result); err != nil {
       f64s := result.Float64s()
       for i := 0; i < len(f64s); i++ {
               f64s[i] = math.Abs(f64s[i])
func (b *builtinAbsIntSig) vecEvalInt(
   input *chunk.Chunk,
   result *chunk.Column
       if err := b.args[0].VecEvalInt(b.ctx, input, result); err != nil {
               return err
       i64s := result.Int64s()
       for i := 0; i < len(i64s); i++ {
               if result.IsNull(i) {
                       continue
               if i64s[i] == math.MinInt64 {
                       return types.ErrOverflow.GenWithStackByArgs("BIGINT",
               fmt.Sprintf("abs(%d)", i64s[i]))
               if i64s[i] < 0 {
                       i64s[i] = -i64s[i]
```

func (b *builtinābsDecSiq) vecEvalDecimal(input *chunk.Chunk, result *chunk.Column) error {

Conclusion



Conclusion



Types and Programming Languages