Safe Memory Deallocation for Non-Terminating Programs

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Abstract We propose a type system to prevent programs infinitely consuming memory cells. The main idea is based on the previous type system that augments pointer types with fractional ownerships and behavioral type system that abstracts the behavior of programs. We design a behavioral type system for verification of behavioral correctness.

1 Introduction

Manual memory management primitives (e.g., malloc and free in C) often cause serious problems such as double frees, memory leaks, and illegal read/write to a deallocated memory cell. Verifying safe memory deallocation – a program not leading to such an unsafe state – is an important problem.

Most of safe memory deallocation verification techniques proposed so far [?, ?, ?, ?] focus on the memory leak for *terminating* programs: If a program terminates, the program satisfies safe memory deallocation. For example, the type system by Suenaga and Kobayashi [?] guarrantees that (1) a well-typed program does not perform read/write/free operations to any deallocated memory cell and that (2) after execution of a well-typed program, all the memory cells are deallocated.

Currently, we are investigating safe memory deallocation for non-terminating programs, because the safe memory deallocation is very important in real world programs such as Web servers and operating systems.

The main idea of our approach is to decompose this problem into two subproblems: (1) partial correctness and (2) behavioral correctness. The former is verified based on the previous type system [?], whereas the latter based on the behavioral type system that is mainly used to abstact the behavior of a program. I will describe the concept "memory leak" and our idea by several examples written in an ML-like language as shown in Figure 1 and Figure 2:

A program *leaks* memory if the program consumes unbounded number of memory cells. For example, the left-hand side program in Example 1 does not leak memory, whereas the right-hand side does; the former consumes at most one memory cell at

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1 f(x)= g(x)=

2 let x = \text{malloc}() in let x = \text{malloc}() in g(x); free(x)
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Figure 1. Examples of memory leak.

once but the latter consumes unbounded number of memory cells. Notice that these two programs are all partially corrected by the previous type system, because they do not terminate. Let us consider another examples as follows: The same to examples

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\begin{array}{lll} 1 & h(x) = & h'(x) = \\ 2 & \text{let } x = \text{malloc}() \text{ in} & \text{let } x = \text{malloc}() \text{ in} \\ 3 & \text{let } y = \text{malloc}() \text{ in} & \text{let } y = \text{malloc}() \text{ in} \\ 4 & \text{free}(x); & \text{free}(y); & h(x); & \text{free}(x); & \text{free}(y) \end{array}
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Figure 2. Example for demonstrating the main observation.

in Figure 1, the left-hand side program does not leak memory but the right-hand side does; these two are all partially corrected by previous type system. Another thing about programs in Figure 2 we should notice is that once partial correctness is guaranteed, we can guarantee memory-leak freedom by estimating upper bound of memory consumption ignoring the relation between variables and pointers to memory cells. Specially speaking, partial correctness has proved that there is no double free in programs, which means if allocating a memory cell in the program, definitely there is a deallocation to that pointer. Say, in order to verify h consumes at most two cells at once, we can ignore x and y in h; We can focus on the fact that h executes **malloc** twice, **free** twice, and then calls h. This abstraction is sound because the correspondence between allocations and deallocations is guaranteed by the partial correctness verification. And from the abstraction of h, we know the number of **malloc** and **free** is balanced, so we can say that function his memory-leak freedom. About the function h', its behavior is abstracted as **malloc** twice, free once, calls h' itself, and then free once. So the number of malloc exceeds the number of free once, which makes the recursive function h' consume infinitely memory cells.

Thanks to the previous type system, which guarantes partial correctness, We can focus on the abstraction of behaviour by behavioral type system. In our paper, the behaviour of a program is abstracted by CCS-like processes. For example, the behaviour of f is abstracted as $\mu\alpha$.malloc; free; α ; the behaviour of g is abstracted as $\mu\alpha$.malloc; α ; free; the behaviour of g is abstracted as g is ab

$\mathbf{malloc}; \mathbf{free}; \alpha; \mathbf{free}.$

The rest of this paper is structed as follows. Section 2 introduces a simple imperative language, as well as its syntax and operational semantics. Section 3 introduces the behavioral type system and its semantics.

2 Language

This section introduces a sublanguage of Suenaga and Kobayashi [?] with primitives for memory allocation/deallocation. And the values in our paper are only pointers. The syntax of language is as follows.

2.1 Syntax

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s \; (statements) ::= skip | s_1; s_2 | *x \leftarrow y | free(x) | let x = malloc() in s | let x = null in s | let x = y in s | let x = *y in s | ifnull (x) then s_1 else s_2 | f(\vec{x}) d (definition) ::= f(x_1, \ldots, x_n) = s
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A program is a pair (D, s), where D is the set of definition.

The command **skip** does nothing. The command s_1 ; s_2 is executed as a sequence, first executing s_1 and then s_2 . The command $*x \leftarrow y$ update the content of the memory cell which is pointed by pointer x with value y. The command $\mathbf{free}(x)$ deallocates the memory cell which is pointed by pointer x. Then command $\mathbf{let} \ x = e\mathbf{in} \ s$ first evaluates the expresstion e and binds the return value of e to x and then executes statement s. The command $\mathbf{let} \ x = \mathbf{mallocin} \ s$ first allocates a memory cell to a pointer x and then executes the statement s. The command $\mathbf{let} \ x = \mathbf{null} \ \mathbf{in} \ s$ first allocates a null pointer to x and then executes s. The command $\mathbf{let} \ x = y\mathbf{in} \ s$ assign the pointer y to x, so the pointer x and y are said aliases for the same memory cell, and then executes statement s. The command $\mathbf{let} \ x = *y\mathbf{in} \ s$ transfers a part of memory cells pointed by y and then executes statement s. The command $\mathbf{ifnull} \ (x) \ \mathbf{then} \ s_1 \ \mathbf{else} \ s_2 \ \mathbf{denotes} \ \mathbf{that} \ \mathbf{executing} \ \mathbf{statement} \ s$. The command $f(\vec{x})$ is a function call in which \vec{x} denotes mutually distinct variables like $\{x_1, \ldots, x_n\}$. The notation d denotes the definition of function $f(\vec{x})$ which has a body of statement s. And examples are described by this syntax you can see in Figure 1 and Figure 2.

2.2 Operational Semantics

Because we want to estimate the number of available memory cells at every operation step, we extend the triple $\langle H, R, s \rangle$ that is represented as run-time state in previous type system to a quadruple $\langle H, R, s, n \rangle$ in our paper. The introduced notation n denotes the number of available memory cells. When executing the operation **malloc**, the number of available memory cells will decrease 1, which is denoted as (n-1); when executing the operation **free**, the number of available memory cells will increase 1, which is denoted as (n+1). The notation H, which models heap memory, is a mapping from finite subset of \mathcal{H} to $\mathcal{H} \cup \{null\}$, where \mathcal{H} represents the set of heap addresses. R, which models registers, is a mapping from finite set of variables to $\mathcal{H} \cup \{null\}$.

Transition rules are listed in Figure 3. In these rules, $f\{x \to v\}$ is defined as a function f'(y) such that f'(y) = v if x = y, otherwise f'(y) = f(y). n represents the

number of available memory cells, so it is a nature number.

$$\begin{array}{c} n \in \mathbb{N} \\ \overline{\langle H,R,\operatorname{skip};s,n\rangle} \longrightarrow_D \langle H,R,s,n\rangle} & \text{(E-Skip)} \\ \hline R(x) \in dom(H), n \in \mathbb{N} \\ \overline{\langle H,R,*x\leftarrow y,n\rangle} \longrightarrow_D \langle H \{R(x)\rightarrow R(y)\},R,\operatorname{skip},n\rangle} & \text{(E-Assign)} \\ \hline R(x) \in dom(H), n \in \mathbb{N} \\ \hline \langle H,R,\operatorname{free}(\mathbf{x}),n\rangle & \overset{\operatorname{free}}{\longrightarrow}_D \langle H \setminus \{R(x)\},R,\operatorname{skip},n+1\rangle} & \text{(E-Free)} \\ \hline R(x) \notin dom(H), n \in \mathbb{N} \\ \hline \langle H,R,\operatorname{free}(\mathbf{x}),n\rangle & \overset{\operatorname{free}}{\longrightarrow}_D \langle H \setminus \{R(x)\},R,\operatorname{skip},n+1\rangle} & \text{(E-LetNull)} \\ \hline R(x) \notin dom(R) \\ \hline \langle H,R,\operatorname{let} x = \operatorname{null} \operatorname{in} s,n\rangle \longrightarrow_D \langle H,R \{x'\rightarrow \operatorname{null}\},[x'/x]s,n\rangle} & \text{(E-LetEq)} \\ \hline R(H,R,\operatorname{let} x = y\operatorname{in} s,n\rangle \longrightarrow_D \langle H,R \{x'\rightarrow H(R(y))\},[x'/x]s,n\rangle} & \text{(E-LetDref)} \\ \hline R(H,R,\operatorname{let} x = *y\operatorname{in} s,n\rangle \longrightarrow_D \langle H,R \{x'\rightarrow H(R(y))\},[x'/x]s,n\rangle} & \text{(E-LetDref)} \\ \hline R(x) = \operatorname{null} \\ \hline \langle H,R,\operatorname{let} x = \operatorname{malloc}()\operatorname{in} s,n\rangle & \overset{\operatorname{malloc}}{\longrightarrow}_D \langle H \{h\rightarrow v\},R \{x'\rightarrow h\},[x'/x]s,n-1\rangle} \\ \hline R(x) = \operatorname{null} \\ \hline \langle H,R,\operatorname{ifnull}(x)\operatorname{then} s_1\operatorname{else} s_2,n\rangle \longrightarrow_D \langle H,R,s_1,n\rangle} & \text{(E-HNullF)} \\ \hline R(x) \neq \operatorname{null} \\ \hline \langle H,R,\operatorname{ifnull}(x)\operatorname{then} s_1\operatorname{else} s_2,n\rangle \longrightarrow_D \langle H,R,s_2,n,\rangle} & \text{(E-HNullF)} \\ \hline R(x) = \operatorname{null} \\ \hline \langle H,R,\operatorname{ifnull}(x)\operatorname{then} s_1\operatorname{else} s_2,n\rangle \longrightarrow_D \langle H,R,s_2,n,\rangle} & \text{(E-Call)} \\ \hline R(x) = \operatorname{null} \\ \hline \langle H,R,\operatorname{ifnull}(x)\operatorname{then} s_1\operatorname{else} s_2,n\rangle \longrightarrow_D \langle H,R,\operatorname{ifnull}(x)\operatorname{ifnull}(x)\operatorname{then} s_1\operatorname{else} s_2,n\rangle \longrightarrow_D \langle H,R,\operatorname{ifnull}(x)\operatorname{ifnull}($$

(E-Malloc)

$$\frac{R(y) \notin dom(H) \cup \{null\}}{\langle H, R, \text{ let } x = *y \text{ in } s, n \rangle \longrightarrow_D Error} \quad \text{(E-DrefError)}$$

$$\frac{R(x) \notin dom(H) \cup \{null\}}{\langle H, R, \text{ free}(\mathbf{x}), n \rangle} \xrightarrow{\text{free}}_D Error \quad \text{(E-FreeError)}$$

$$\frac{R(x) = null}{\langle H, R, \text{ free}(\mathbf{x}), n \rangle} \xrightarrow{\text{free}}_D NullEx} \quad \text{(E-FreeNullError)}$$

$$\langle H, R, \text{ let } x = \text{malloc}() \text{ in } s, 0 \rangle \xrightarrow{\text{malloc}}_D Error \quad \text{(E-MallocError)}$$

3 Type System

This section elaborate the behavioral type system to prevent leaking memory in non-terminating programs. We define behavioral types, CCS-like processes that abstract the behavior of programs, as follows.

3.1 Syntax of Types

$$P(behaviral\ types) ::=$$
 $\mathbf{0} \mid P_1; P_2 \mid P_1 + P_2 \mid \mathbf{malloc} \mid \mathbf{free} \mid \alpha \mid \mu\alpha.P$ $\tau(value\ types) ::=$ \mathbf{Ref} $\sigma(function\ types) ::=$ $(\tau_1, \dots, \tau_n)P$

The type **0** abstracts the behavior of **skip** and means "does nothing". $P_1; P_2$ is for sequential exetution. $P_1 + P_2$ is abstracted as contional. **malloc** is the behavior of a program that allocates a memory cell exactly once. **free** is for deallocating memory cell exactly once. $\mu\alpha.P$ is a recursive type. For example, the behavior of the body of function h in Figure 2 is abstracted as $\mu\alpha.$ malloc; malloc; free; free; α . α is a type variable and bounded to the recursive constructor $\mu\alpha$.

The only value in our paper is reference, and its type is **Ref**.

The function type is described as $(\tau_1, \ldots, \tau_n)P$.

3.2 Semantics of Behavioral Types

$$0; P \to P$$

$$\mu\alpha.P \to [\mu\alpha.P/\alpha]P$$

$$\mathbf{malloc} \xrightarrow{\mathbf{malloc}} 0$$

$$\mathbf{free} \xrightarrow{\mathbf{free}} 0$$

$$P_1 \xrightarrow{\alpha} P_1'$$

$$P_1; P_2 \xrightarrow{\alpha} P_1'; P_2$$

$$P_1 + P_2 \longrightarrow P_1$$

 $P_1 + P_2 \longrightarrow P_2$

where $\alpha := \mathbf{malloc} \mid \mathbf{free}$

3.3 Type Judgments

$$\Theta$$
: $\Gamma \vdash s : P$

 Θ : a finite mapping from function variables to function types.

 Γ : a finite mapping from variables to value types.

3.4 Typing Rules

$$\Theta; \Gamma \vdash \mathbf{skip} : \mathbf{0} \quad (\text{T-Skip})$$

$$\frac{\Theta; \Gamma \vdash s_1 : P_1 \quad \Theta; \Gamma \vdash s_2 : P_2}{\Theta; \Gamma \vdash s_1; s_2 : P_1; P_2} \quad (\text{T-Seq})$$

$$\frac{\Theta; \Gamma \vdash y : \mathbf{Ref} \quad \Theta; \Gamma \vdash x : \mathbf{Ref}}{\Theta; \Gamma \vdash x : \mathbf{Kef}} \quad (\text{T-Assign})$$

$$\frac{\Theta; \Gamma \vdash x : \mathbf{Ref}}{\Theta; \Gamma \vdash \mathbf{free}(x) : \mathbf{free}; 0} \quad (\text{T-Free})$$

$$\frac{\Theta; \Gamma \vdash x : \mathbf{Ref}}{\Theta; \Gamma \vdash \mathbf{free}(x) : \mathbf{free}; 0} \quad (\text{T-Malloc})$$

$$\frac{\Theta; \Gamma \vdash y : \mathbf{Ref} \quad \Theta; \Gamma, x \vdash s : P}{\Theta; \Gamma \vdash \mathbf{let} \ x = \mathbf{malloc}() \quad \mathbf{in} \ s : \mathbf{malloc}; P} \quad (\text{T-LetEq})$$

$$\frac{\Theta; \Gamma \vdash y : \mathbf{Ref} \quad \Theta; \Gamma, x \vdash s : P}{\Theta; \Gamma \vdash \mathbf{let} \ x = \mathbf{vy in} \ s : P} \quad (\text{T-LetDref})$$

$$\frac{\Theta; \Gamma \vdash y : \mathbf{Ref} \quad \Theta; \Gamma, x \vdash s : P}{\Theta; \Gamma \vdash \mathbf{let} \ x = \mathbf{mull in} \ s : P} \quad (\text{T-LetNull})$$

$$\frac{\Theta; \Gamma \vdash \mathbf{k} : \mathbf{Ref} \quad \Theta; \Gamma \vdash s_1 : P \quad \Theta; \Gamma \vdash s_1 : P}{\Theta; \Gamma \vdash \mathbf{ifnull}(x) \ \mathbf{then} \ s_1 \ \mathbf{else} \ s_2 : P} \quad (\text{T-IfNull})$$

$$\frac{\Theta; \Gamma \vdash x : \mathbf{Ref} \quad \Theta; \Gamma \vdash s_1 : P \quad \Theta; \Gamma \vdash s_1 : P}{\Theta; \Gamma, \vec{x} : \vec{\tau} \vdash f(\vec{x}) : P} \quad (\text{T-Call})$$

$$\frac{P}{\Theta; \Gamma \vdash s : P} \quad (\mathbf{T-Call})$$

$$\frac{P}{\Theta; \Gamma \vdash s : P} \quad (\mathbf{T-Call})$$

$$\frac{P}{\Phi; \Gamma \vdash s : P} \quad (\mathbf{T-Program})$$

$$\frac{P}{\Phi; \Gamma \vdash s : P} \quad (\mathbf{T-Sub})$$

4 Type Soundness

Theorem 4.1. If $\vdash (D, s)$ then (D, s) does not lead to memory leak. Memory leak freedom: $\exists n \in \mathbb{N} \ s.t. \ \langle \emptyset, \emptyset, s, n \rangle \rightarrow^* Error$

Lemma 4.2 (Preservation I). If $OK_n(P)$, $\Theta; \Gamma \vdash s : P \text{ and } \langle H, R, s, n \rangle \xrightarrow{\alpha} \langle H', R', s', n' \rangle$, then $\exists P' \text{ s.t.}$

- (1) Θ ; $\Gamma \vdash s' : P'$
- (2) $P \stackrel{\alpha}{\Longrightarrow} P'$
- (3) $OK_{n'}(P')$

Lemma 4.3 (Preservation II). If $OK_n(P)$, Θ ; $\Gamma \vdash s : P$ and $\langle H, R, s, n \rangle \rightarrow \langle H', R', s', n' \rangle$, then $\exists P' \ s.t.$

- (1) Θ ; $\Gamma \vdash s' : P'$
- $(2) P \xrightarrow{\tau} {}^* P'$
- (3) $OK_{n'}(P')$

Lemma 4.4. when partial correctness is guaranteed $\vdash \langle H, R, s \rangle$ and if $\vdash \langle H, R, s, n \rangle$, then $\vdash \langle H', R', s', n' \rangle \nrightarrow Error$

5 Syntax Directed Typing Rules

C is contraint for subtype.

$$\frac{C = \emptyset}{\Theta; \Gamma; C \vdash \mathbf{skip} : \mathbf{0}} \quad (ST\text{-Skip})$$

$$\frac{\Theta; \Gamma; C_1 \vdash s_1 : P_1 \quad \Theta; \Gamma; C_2 \vdash s_2 : P_2 \quad C = C_1 \cup C_2 \cup \{P_1; P_2 \leq P\}}{\Theta; \Gamma; C \vdash s_1; s_2 : P} \quad (ST\text{-Seq})$$

$$\frac{\Theta; \Gamma; C_1 \vdash y \quad \Theta; \Gamma; C_2 \vdash x : \mathbf{Ref} \quad C = C_1 \cup C_2}{\Theta; \Gamma; C \vdash *x \leftarrow y : \mathbf{0}} \quad (ST\text{-Assign})$$

$$\frac{C = \emptyset}{\Gamma; C \vdash \mathbf{free}() : \mathbf{free}; \mathbf{0}}$$
 (ST-Free)

$$\frac{\Theta; \Gamma, x; C_1 \vdash s : P_1 \quad C = C_1 \cup \{P_1 \leq P\}}{\Theta; \Gamma; C \vdash \mathbf{let} \ x = \mathbf{malloc}() \ \mathbf{in} \ s : \mathbf{malloc}; P} \quad (\text{ST-Malloc})$$

$$\frac{\Theta; \Gamma; C_1 \vdash y \quad \Theta; \Gamma, x; C_2 \vdash s : P_1 \quad C = C_1 \cup C_2 \cup \{P_1 \leq P\}}{\Theta; \Gamma; C \vdash \mathbf{let} \ x = y \ \mathbf{in} \ s : P} \quad (\text{ST-LetEq})$$

$$\frac{\Theta; \Gamma; C_1 \vdash y : \mathbf{Ref} \quad \Theta; \Gamma, x; C_2 \vdash s : P_1 \quad C = C_1 \cup C_2 \cup \{P_1 \le P\}}{\Theta; \Gamma; C \vdash \mathbf{let} \ x = *y \ \mathbf{in} \ s : P} \quad (ST\text{-LetDref})$$

$$\frac{\Theta; \Gamma; C_1 \vdash x \quad \Theta; \Gamma; C_2 \vdash s_1 : P_1 \quad \Theta; \Gamma; C_3 \vdash s_2 : P_2 \quad C = C_1 \cup C_2 \cup C_3 \{P_1 \leq P, P_2 \leq P\}}{\Theta; \Gamma; C \vdash \mathbf{ifnull} \ (x) \mathbf{then} \ s_1 \mathbf{else} \ s_2 : P}$$

$$\frac{\Theta(f) = P_1 \quad C = P_1 \leq P}{\Gamma, \vec{x} : \vec{\tau} \vdash f(\vec{x}) : P} \quad (\text{ST-Call})$$

$$\frac{\Theta \vdash D : \Theta \quad \Theta; \emptyset; C_1 \vdash s : P \quad C = C_1 \cup \{OK_n(P)\}}{C \vdash (D, s)} \quad (\text{ST-Prog})$$

6 Type Inference

 $PT_v(x) = (\emptyset, \emptyset)$, where x maybe a value or reference.

 PT_{Θ} is a mapping from statements to a pair of constraints and types with function Θ from function names to function types, like $\Theta(f) = P$.

$$PT_{\Theta}(f) =$$

$$\mathbf{let} \ \alpha = \Theta(f)$$

$$\mathbf{in} \ (C = \{\alpha \le \beta\}, \beta)$$

$$PT_{\Theta}(\mathbf{skip}) = (\emptyset, 0)$$

$$PT_{\Theta}(s_1; s_2) =$$

$$\mathbf{let} \ (C_1, P_1) = PT_{\Theta}(s_1)$$

$$(C_2, P_2) = PT_{\Theta}(s_2)$$

$$\mathbf{in} \ (C_1 \cup C_2 \cup \{P_1; P_2 \le \beta\}, \beta)$$

$$PT_{\Theta}(*x \leftarrow y) =$$

$$\mathbf{let} \ (C_1, \emptyset) = PT_v(*x)$$

$$(C_2, \emptyset) = PT_v(y)$$

$$\mathbf{in} \ (C_1 \cup C_2, 0)$$

$$PT_{\Theta}(\mathbf{free}(x)) = (\emptyset, \mathbf{free}; 0)$$

$$\begin{split} PT_{\Theta}(\mathbf{let}\ x = \mathbf{malloc}()\ \mathbf{in}\ s) = \\ \mathbf{let}\ (C_1, P_1) = PT_v(s) \\ \mathbf{in}\ (C_1 \cup \{P_1 \leq \beta\}, \mathbf{malloc}; \beta) \end{split}$$

$$\begin{split} PT_{\Theta}(\mathbf{let}\ x = y\ \mathbf{in}\ s) = \\ \mathbf{let}\ (C_1, \emptyset) = PT_v(y) \\ (C_2, P_1) = PT_{\Theta}(s) \\ \mathbf{in}\ (C_1 \cup C_2 \cup \{P_1 \leq \beta\}, \beta) \end{split}$$

$$\begin{split} PT_{\Theta}(\textbf{let}\ x = *y\ \textbf{in}\ s) = \\ \textbf{let}\ (C_1, \emptyset) = PT_v(y) \\ (C_2, P_1) = PT_{\Theta}(s) \\ \textbf{in}\ (C_1 \cup C_2 \cup \{P_1 \leq \beta\}, \beta) \end{split}$$

$$\begin{split} PT_{\Theta}(\mathbf{ifnull}\;(x)\;\mathbf{then}\;s_1\;\mathbf{else}\;\;s_2) = \\ &\mathbf{let}\;(C_1,P_1) = PT_{\Theta}(s_1) \\ &(C_2,P_2) = PT_{\Theta}(s_2) \\ &(C_3,\emptyset) = PT_v(x) \\ &\mathbf{in}\;(C_1 \cup C_2 \cup C_3 \cup \{P_1 \leq \beta,P_2 \leq \beta\},\beta) \end{split}$$

$$\begin{split} PT(< D, s>) = \\ & \textbf{let }\Theta = \{f_1: \alpha_1, \dots, f_n: \alpha_n\} \\ & where \ \{f_1, \dots, f_n\} = dom(D) \ and \ \alpha_1, \dots, \alpha_n \ are \ fresh \\ & \textbf{in let } (C_i, P_i) = PT_{\Theta}(D(f_i)) \ for \ each \ i \\ & \textbf{in let } C_i' = \{\alpha_i \leq P_i\} \ for \ each \ i \\ & \textbf{in let } (C, P) = PT_{\Theta}(s) \\ & \textbf{in } (C_i \cup C_i') \cup C \cup \{OK(P)\}, P) \end{split}$$

Experiments

7 Conclusion

this is the end

References