Illustration of the Bison workflow

lang.l → input → Flex → generates → lang.l.cpp → input → C++-Compiler

grammar.y → input → Bison (Parser Generator) → generates → grammar.y.cpp → input → C++-Compiler

Parser Skeleton → optional input → Bison (Parser Generator)

Program Logic → input → C++-Compiler

C++-Compiler → generates → Binary
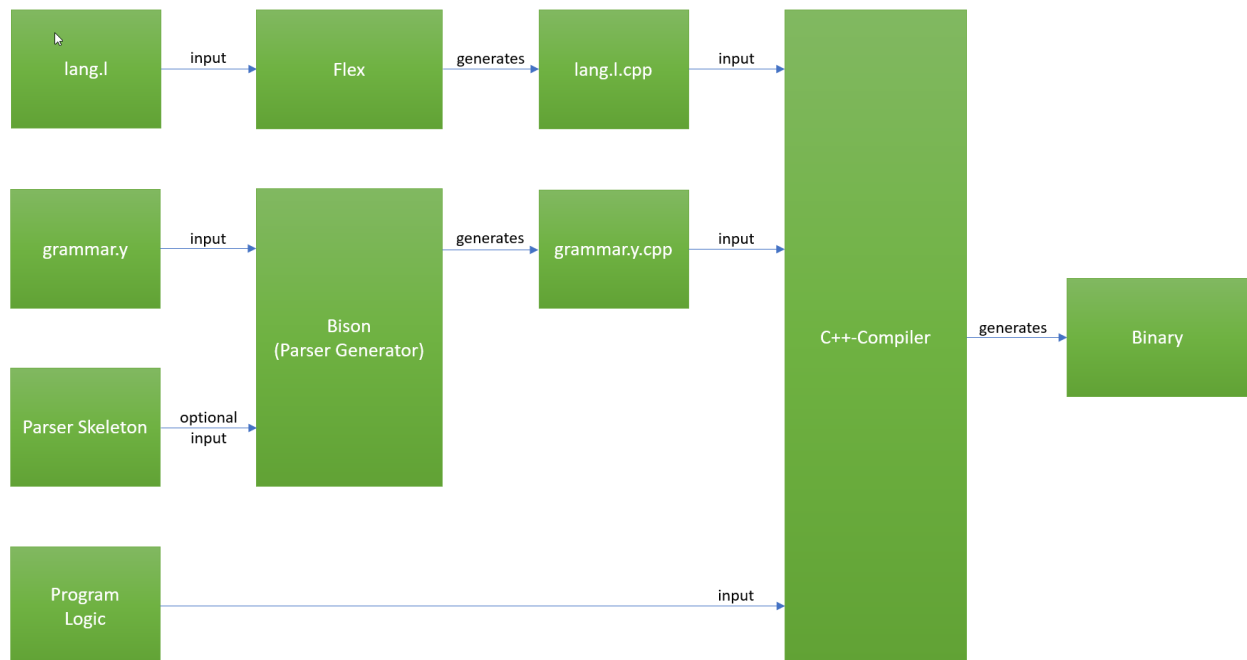
What is a Parser Skeleton?

As the term "Parser Skeleton" occurs multiple times in the Bison Exception, it is crucial to understand the term.

A parser skeleton is M4 code used as a template to write the generated parser. The parser skeletons are provided by Bison and can be found in the repository under https://github.com/akimd/bison/tree/v3.8.2/data/skeletons (v3.8.2. is currently the latest tagged version)

Break down of the GNU General Public License v2.0 w/Bison exception

Full text

As a special exception, you may create a larger work that contains part or all of the Bison parser skeleton and distribute that work under terms of your choice, so long as that work isn't itself a parser generator using the skeleton or a modified version thereof as a parser skeleton. Alternatively, if you modify or redistribute the parser skeleton itself, you may (at your option) remove this special exception, which will cause the skeleton and the resulting Bison output files to be licensed under the GNU General Public License without this special exception.

From <https://spdx.org/licenses/GPL-2.0-with-bison-exception.html>

Break down 1

As a special exception, you may create a larger work that contains part or all of the Bison parser skeleton and distribute that work under terms of your choice, [...]

Permission to distribute Bison generated code under the "terms of your choice" (e.g. proprietary) although Bison itself is licensed under GPL.

Break down 2

[...] so long as that work isn't itself a parser generator [...]

Restriction of permission of Break down 1: It is just allowed (to distribute Bison generated code under the "terms of your choice") if that work isn't itself a parser generator, like Bison.

Break down 3

[...] using the skeleton or a modified version thereof as a parser skeleton. [...]

Refinement of the permission restriction of Break down 2: If you use a parser skeleton, generated by Bison, to create an own parser generator, you are not allowed to distribute under the "terms of your choice" and therefore inherit the GPL-License of Bison. For the sake of understanding: The word "thereof" can be replaced with "of it".

Break down 4

[...] Alternatively, if you modify or redistribute the parser skeleton itself, you may (at your option) remove this special exception, which will cause the skeleton and the resulting Bison output files to be licensed under the GNU General Public License without this special exception.

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