# Master's thesis

Implementation of a type-safe generalized syntax-directed editor

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#### Agenda

- Motivation
- Goal of the project
- Background
- Implementation
- Editor examples
- Conclusion
- Questions

• Structure editors

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  - Avoid syntax errors

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  - (Arguably) Improved code overview

#### Motivation

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- Structure editors
  - Avoid syntax errors
  - (Arguably) Improved code overview
  - With ability to support
    - Typed holes
    - Context-sensitive syntax

# Motivation (Continued)

• Cornell Program Synthesizer (1981)<sup>1</sup>

placeholder. The following file segment shows with underlines all the possible stopping points for the cursor when the up and down keys are used:

```
IF(k>0)
  THEN statement
  ELSE PUT SKIP LIST ('not positive'):
```

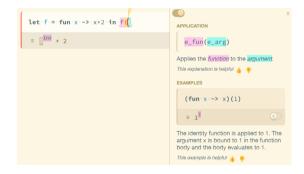
Left and right differ from up and down by also moving the cursor to every character within a phrase:

```
IF(k>0)
  THEN statement
  ELSE PUT SKIP LIST ('not positive');
```

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Teitelbaum and Reps. "The Cornell Program Synthesizer: A Syntax-Directed Programming Environment"

# Motivation (Continued)

 Hazel programming environment (2019)<sup>2</sup>



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Omar et al., "Live functional programming with typed holes".

• Type-Safe Structure Editor Calculus<sup>3</sup>

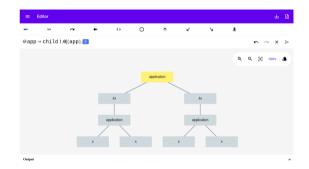
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# Motivation (Continued)

- Type-Safe Structure Editor Calculus<sup>3</sup>
- Implemented by a group of UCPH students<sup>4</sup>



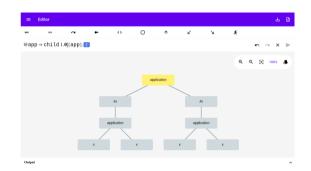
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# Motivation (Continued)

- Type-Safe Structure Editor Calculus<sup>3</sup>
- Implemented by a group of UCPH students4
- Generalized by a group of AAU students<sup>5</sup>



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- Implement an editor based on the generalized calculus
- Criteria for a good implementation:
  - Editing the abstract syntax of any program directly
  - Generic editing
  - Handling context-sensitive syntax
  - Multiple views of code being edited
  - Non-challenging way of specifying syntax
- Minimum viable product:
  - Editing the abstract syntax of any program directly
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#### Picking good language examples

- What makes a good set of examples?
  - Different paradigms and purposes:
    - General purpose programming language
    - Domain-specific language
    - Markup language
  - Popular (present in GitHub top 30 ranking<sup>6</sup>)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>GitHub Inc. Programming languages.

### Picking good language examples

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  - Different paradigms and purposes:
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    - Markup language
  - Popular (present in GitHub top 30 ranking<sup>6</sup>)
- Examples:
  - C
  - SQL
  - LATEX

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>GitHub Inc. Programming languages.

# Picking good language examples (Continued)

• A C program with syntax errors

```
int main() {
   int x = 0;
   for (int i; i < 5; i++) {
       x++;
   }
   return 0;
}</pre>
```

# Picking good language examples (Continued)

• A SQL query with syntax errors

```
SELECT col-a, col-b FROM table
WHERE col-a == 'x';
```

# Picking good language examples (Continued)

• A LATEX document with syntax errors

```
...
\begin{equation}
\|\vect{v}\| = \sqrt{\sum_{i=1}^n v_i^2}
\end{equation}
...
```

- Abstract syntax
- Generalized editor calculus

- Described by Harper<sup>7</sup>
- ullet Set of sorts  ${\cal S}$
- Arity-indexed family of operators O
- ullet Sort-indexed family of variables  ${\mathcal X}$

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup>Harper, Practical Foundations for Programming Languages (2nd. Ed.)

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- Set of sorts S
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- $S = \{exp\}$
- $plus \in \mathcal{O}_{\alpha}$  with arity  $\alpha = (exp_1, exp_2)exp$

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup>Harper, Practical Foundations for Programming Languages (2nd. Ed.)

### Abstract Binding Trees

- Enriched AST with bindings
- All operators are assigned generalized arity  $(\vec{x_1}.x_1,...,\vec{x_n}.x_n)s$

- Enriched AST with bindings
- All operators are assigned generalized arity  $(\vec{x_1}, x_1, ..., \vec{x_n}, x_n)s$

- $S = \{exp, stmt\}$
- $let \in \mathcal{O}_{\alpha}$  with arity  $\alpha = (exp_1, exp_2.stmt)stmt$

#### Generalized editor calculus

- Assumes that abstract syntax of a language is given by:
  - 1. A set of sorts  $\mathcal{S}$
  - 2. An arity-indexed family of operators  $\mathcal{O}$
  - 3. A sort-indexed family of variables  $\mathcal{X}$
- Then, for every sort  $s \in \mathcal{S}$ , the following operators are added to  $\mathcal{O}$ 
  - 1. A *holes* operator with arity ()s
  - 2. A cursor<sub>s</sub> operator with arity (s)s

#### • Abstract syntax of general editor calculus

$$E ::= \pi.E \mid \phi \Rightarrow E_1 \mid E_2 \mid E_1 \ggg E_2 \mid rec \ x.E \mid x \mid nil$$

$$\pi ::= child \ n \mid parent \mid \{o\}$$

$$\phi ::= \neg \phi \mid \phi \land \phi \mid \phi \lor \phi \mid @o \mid \lozenge o \mid \Box o$$

#### Cursorless trees

• Trees without cursors - crucial for defining cursor contexts and well-formed trees

- 1. The sorts  $\hat{S} = \{\hat{s}\}_{s \in S}$
- 2. The family of cursorless operators  $\hat{\mathcal{O}}$  is made by adding the operator  $\hat{o}$  of arity  $(\vec{\hat{s}}_1.\hat{s}_1,...,\vec{\hat{s}}_n.\hat{s}_n)\hat{s}$  for every  $o \in \mathcal{O}$  of arity  $(\vec{s}_1.s_1,...,\vec{s}_n.s_n)s$ , excluding cursors
- 3. The family of variables  $\hat{\mathcal{X}}$

#### Cursor context

• Holds information about the current tree, up until a context hole

- 1. The sorts  $S^C = \hat{S} \cup \{C\}$
- 2. The family of operators  $\mathcal{O}^{\mathcal{C}}=\hat{\mathcal{O}}$  extended with the  $[\cdot]$  operator with arity () $\mathcal{C}$
- 3. For every operator  $\hat{o} \in \hat{\mathcal{O}}$  of arity  $(\vec{\hat{s}}_1.\hat{s}_1,...,\vec{\hat{s}}_n.\hat{s}_n)\hat{s}$  and for every  $1 \leq i \leq n$  the operator  $o_i^C$  of arity  $(\vec{\hat{s}}_1.\hat{s}_1,...,\vec{\hat{s}}_i.C,...,\vec{\hat{s}}_n.\hat{s}_n)C$  to  $\mathcal{O}^C$
- 4. The family of variables  $\mathcal{X}^{\mathcal{C}} = \hat{\mathcal{X}}$

#### Well-formed trees

• Well-formed: contains only a single cursor

- 1. The sorts  $\dot{S} = \hat{S} \cup \{\dot{s}\}_{s \in S}$
- 2. The family of operators  $\dot{\mathcal{O}} = \hat{\mathcal{O}}$  extended with an operator of arity  $(\hat{s})\dot{s}$  for every  $\hat{s} \in \hat{\mathcal{S}}$
- 3. For every operator  $\hat{o} \in \hat{\mathcal{O}}$  of arity  $(\hat{\vec{s}}_1.\hat{s}_1,...,\hat{\vec{s}}_n.\hat{s}_n)\hat{s}$  and for every  $1 \leq i \leq n$  the operator  $\dot{o}_i$  of arity  $(\hat{s}_1,\hat{s}_1,...,\hat{s}_i,\hat{s}_i,...,\hat{s}_n,\hat{s}_n)\dot{s}$  is added to  $\dot{\mathcal{O}}$
- 4. The family of variables  $\dot{\mathcal{X}} = \hat{\mathcal{X}}$

# Semantics (Editor Expressions)

$$(\mathsf{Cond-1}) \ \frac{\mathsf{a} \vDash \phi}{\langle \phi \Rightarrow E_1 | E_2, C[\mathsf{a}] \rangle \stackrel{\epsilon}{\Rightarrow} \langle E_1, C[\mathsf{a}] \rangle}$$

$$(\mathsf{Cond-2}) \ \frac{\mathsf{a} \not\vDash \phi}{\langle \phi \Rightarrow E_1 | E_2, C[\mathsf{a}] \rangle \stackrel{\epsilon}{\Rightarrow} \langle E_2, C[\mathsf{a}] \rangle}$$

$$(\mathsf{Context}) \ \frac{\mathsf{a} \stackrel{\pi}{\Rightarrow} \mathsf{a}'}{\langle \pi.E, C[\mathsf{a}] \rangle \stackrel{\pi}{\Rightarrow} \langle E, C[\mathsf{a}'] \rangle}$$

## Semantics (Substitution and cursor movement)

(Insert-op) 
$$\frac{}{[\hat{a}]} \stackrel{\{o\}}{\Rightarrow} [o(\vec{x}_1.||\|_{s_1};...;\vec{x}_n.||\|_{s_n})]} \hat{a} \in \mathcal{B}[\mathcal{X}]_s \text{ where } s \text{ is the sort of } o$$

(Child-i) 
$$\frac{}{\left[\hat{o}(\vec{x}_{1}.\hat{a}_{1};...;\vec{x}_{n}.\hat{a}_{n})\right]} \stackrel{child}{\Rightarrow} {}^{i} o(\vec{x}_{1}.\hat{a}_{1};...;\vec{x}_{i}.[\hat{a}_{i}];...;\vec{x}_{n}.\hat{a}_{n})$$
(Parent) 
$$\frac{}{o(\vec{x}_{1}.\hat{a}_{1};...;\vec{x}_{i}.[\hat{a}_{i}];...;\vec{x}_{n}.\hat{a}_{n})} \stackrel{parent}{\Rightarrow} \left[\hat{o}(\vec{x}_{1}.\hat{a}_{1};...;\vec{x}_{n}.\hat{a}_{n})\right]$$

# Semantics (Conditionals and modal logic)

$$(\text{Negation}) \frac{[a] \not\models \phi}{[\hat{a}] \models \neg \phi}$$

$$(\text{Conjunction}) \frac{[\hat{a}] \models \phi_1 \quad [\hat{a}] \models \phi_2}{[\hat{a}] \models \phi_1 \land \phi_2}$$

$$(\text{At-op}) \frac{[o(\vec{x}_1.\hat{a}_1; ...; \vec{x}_n.\hat{a}_n)] \models @o}{[o(\vec{x}_1.\hat{a}_1; ...; \vec{x}_i.\hat{a}_i; ...; \vec{x}_n.\hat{a}_n)] \models \lozenge o}$$

$$(\text{Possibly-i}) \frac{[\hat{a}_i] \models \lozenge o}{[o(\vec{x}_1.\hat{a}_1; ...; \vec{x}_i.\hat{a}_i; ...; \vec{x}_n.\hat{a}_n)] \models \lozenge o}$$

$$(\text{Possibly-trivial}) \frac{[\hat{a}] \models @o}{[\hat{a}] \models \lozenge o}$$

- ullet Simply-typed  $\lambda$ -calculus with pairs, pattern matching and recursion
- Assuming that:
  - Type system of the simply-typed  $\lambda$ -calculus is sound
  - Encoding is correct
  - Then any instance of the editor will have a sound type system

#### Extended $\lambda$ -calculus

::= x

Terms		Types		
<i>M</i>		(abstraction) $\tau$ (application) (variable) (operator) (pair) (first projection)	$::= \tau_1 \to \tau_2$ $\mid  \mathbf{s}$ $\mid  \tau_1 \times \tau_2$ $\mid  Bool$	(function) (sort) (product type) (boolean)
M, N	::= match $M$ $p  o N$	(match construct)		

(variable)

• Typing rules for operators

(T-Operator) 
$$oldsymbol{o} \in \mathcal{O}$$
 and has arity  $(\vec{s}_1.s_1,...,\vec{s}_n.s_n)s$   
 $\Gamma \vdash o: (\vec{s}_1 \rightarrow s_1) \rightarrow ... (\vec{s}_n \rightarrow s_n) \rightarrow s$ 

• Encoding of abts

$$[\![o(\vec{x}_1.a_1,...,\vec{x}_n.a_n)]\!] = o(\lambda \vec{x}_1 : \vec{s}_1.[\![a_1]\!])...(\lambda \vec{x}_n : \vec{s}_n.[\![a_n]\!])$$

• Encoding of editor expressions

$$[\![\pi.E]\!] = \lambda CC : Ctx.[\![E]\!] (([\![\pi]\!]C.1), C.2)$$
 ...

- Representing syntax
- Code generation vs. generic model
- Generating source code
- Editor expressions

- Abstract syntax per Robert Harper<sup>8</sup>
  - Set of sorts S
  - ullet Arity-indexed family of operators  ${\cal O}$
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  - Binders:  $(\vec{x_1}.x_1)s$

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#### Representing syntax

- Abstract syntax per Robert Harper<sup>8</sup>
  - Set of sorts S
  - ullet Arity-indexed family of operators  ${\cal O}$
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  - Binders:  $(\vec{x_1}.x_1)s$
- How can a user provide this in a non-challenging way?

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup>Harper, Practical Foundations for Programming Languages (2nd. Ed.)

Metal<sup>9</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup>Kahn et al., "Metal: A Formalism to Specify Formalisms".

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup>Wang et al., "The Zephyr Abstract Syntax Description Language".

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup>Li and Jain, "Abstract Syntax Notation One".

- Metal<sup>9</sup>
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- Metal<sup>9</sup>
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- ASN.1<sup>11</sup>

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### Representing syntax (Continued)

- Metal<sup>9</sup>
- Zephyr ASDL<sup>10</sup>
- ASN.111
- Common problem: no support for binders

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup>Kahn et al., "Metal: A Formalism to Specify Formalisms".

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#### Representing syntax (Continued)

 Let's make our own specification language

```
q \in Query
               cmd \in Command
                                               id \in Id
               const \in Const
                                      clause \in Clause
               cond \in Condition
                                     exp \in Expression
Sort
            Term
                                    Arity
                                                           Operator
            "SELECT " id1
                                    (id_1, id_2, clause) query
query ::=
                                                           select
            " FROM " ido clause
cmd ::=
            "INSERT INTO " id<sub>1</sub>
                                   (id_1, id_2, query)cmd
                                                           insert
            " AS " ida queru
id ::=
            %string
                                    ()id
                                                           id[String]
            %number
                                                           num[Int]
const ::=
                                    ()const
            "" id ""
                                    (id)const
                                                           str
           "WHERE " cond.
clause ::=
                                    (cond)clause
                                                           where
            "HAVING " cond
                                    (cond) clause
                                                           having
cond ::=
            exp_1 ">" exp_2
                                    (exp_1, exp_2)cond
                                                           greater
            exp_1 "=" exp_2
                                    (exp_1, exp_2)cond
                                                           equals
exp ::=
                                    (const)exp
                                                           econst
            const
            id
                                    (id)exp
                                                           eident
```

query in Query

#### Representing syntax (Continued)

 Let's make our own specification language

```
emd in Command
id in Id
clause in Clause
query ::= "SELECT" id "FROM" id clause # (id,id,clause)query # select
cmd ::= "INSERT INTO" id "AS" id query # (id,id.query)cmd # insert
```

```
q \in Query
               cmd \in Command
                                              id \in Id
               const \in Const
                                     clause \in Clause
               cond \in Condition
                                    exp \in Expression
Sort
           Term
                                   Arity
                                                          Operator
           "SELECT " id1
                                   (id_1, id_2, clause) query
query ::=
                                                          select
           " FROM " ido clause
cmd ::=
           "INSERT INTO " id1
                                   (id_1, id_2, query)cmd
                                                          insert
           " AS " ida queru
id ::=
           %string
                                   ()id
                                                          id[String]
           %number
const ::=
                                   ()const
                                                          num[Int]
           "" id ""
                                   (id)const
                                                          str
           "WHERE " cond
clause ::=
                                   (cond)clause
                                                          where
            "HAVING" cond
                                   (cond) clause
                                                          havina
cond ::=
           exp_1 ">" exp_2
                                   (exp_1, exp_2)cond
                                                          areater
           exp_1 "=" exp_2
                                   (exp_1, exp_2)cond
                                                          equals
exp ::=
                                   (const)exp
           const
                                                          econst
           id
                                   (id)exp
                                                          eident
```

#### Generic model or code generation?

- Generic model:
  - No need for code generation (less work and error prone)
  - However less efficient and needs thorough well-formedness checks
- Code generation:
  - Take advantage of algebraic data types (only well-formed terms can be created)
  - However requires code generation

#### Generating source code

• Elm CodeGen package<sup>12</sup>

 Can be useful if integrated with language specification parser

```
Elm.declaration "anExample"
    (Elm.record
         ("name", Elm.string "a fancy string!")
        ("fancy", Elm.bool True)
    > Elm.ToString.declaration
The above will generate following string:
anExample: { name: String, fancy: Bool}
anExample =
     name = "a fancy string!"
     fancy = True
```

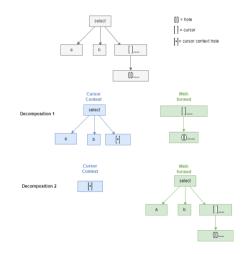
<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup>Elm packages. Elm CodeGen.

### Generating source code (Continued)

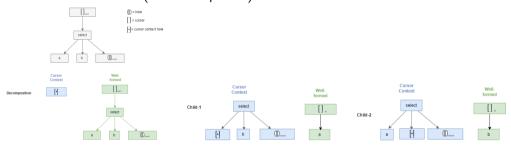
This declaration, if passed to Elm CodeGen's File function, would generate a source file with following contents:

```
type Statement
= Assignment Id Exp
| StmtPunCall Id Funargs
| Return Exp
| Conditional Conditional
```

- Unique decomposition
  - Generate a path to the cursor
  - Generate an abt of sort  $s^{\mathcal{C}} \in \mathcal{S}^{\mathcal{C}}$  based on the path and stop at the cursor
  - Generate an abt of sort  $\dot{s} \in \dot{\mathcal{S}}$  based on the rest of the tree that was not traversed



• Cursor movement (child and parent)



### Generating Editor Expression Code (Continued)

- Substitution
- Conditionals
- Sequence
- Recursion

- C
- SQL
- LATEX

#### (

```
> example = P ∢ Program ∢Fundecl1 Tint ( [ Ident "main" ], Fundecldone ) Tint ( [ Ident "x" ], Block (Blockstmts)
 (Program (Fundecl1 Tint ([Ident "main"].Fundecldone) Tint ([Ident "x"].Block (Blockstmts (Compstmt (Assignment (I
dent "x") (Cursor e Hole e)) (Return (Expident (Ident "x")))))))
> decomposed = decompose example
(Program CLess cctx1 (Fundecl1 CLess cctx4 Tint CLess ([Ident CLess "main"].Fundecldone CLess) Tint CLess ([Ident C
Less "x"] Block CLess cctx1 (Blockstmts CLess cctx1 (Compstmt CLess cctx1 (Assignment CLess cctx2 (Ident CLess "x")
 Cctx hole) (Return CLess (Expident CLess (Ident CLess "x")))))), Root e CLess Hole e CLess)
> movedup = Maybe.withDefault (Cctx hole. Root e CLess Hole e CLess) < parent decomposed
(Program CLess cctx1 (Fundecl1 CLess cctx4 Tint CLess ([Ident CLess "main"].Fundecldone CLess) Tint CLess ([Ident C
Less "x"] Block CLess cctx1 (Blockstmts CLess cctx1 (Compstmt CLess cctx1 Cctx hole (Return CLess (Expident CLess (
Ident CLess "x")))))), Root s CLess (Assignment CLess (Ident CLess "x") Hole e CLess))
> evalCond movedup ◁ At ◁ S CLess ◁ Assignment CLess Hole id CLess Hole e CLess
True : Bool
> evalCond movedup ◁ Neg ◁ At ◁ S CLess ◁ Assignment CLess Hole id CLess Hole e CLess
False : Bool
> evalCond movedup 
    Possibly 
Id CLess 
    Ident CLess "x"

True : Bool
> evalCond movedup 
    Necessarily 

    T_CLess 

    Tint_CLess

False : Bool
```

#### SQL

```
> example = Q (Select (Ident "col-a") (Ident "table-b") (Where (Greater (Eident (Ident "col-a")) (Econst (Num 2))))
0 (Select (Ident "col-a") (Ident "table-b") (Where (Greater (Eident (Ident "col-a")) (Econst (Num 2)))))
> decomposed = decompose example
(Cctx hole Root g Cless (Select Cless (Ident Cless "col-a") (Ident Cless "table-b") (Where Cless (Greater Cless (Ei
dent_CLess (Ident_CLess "col-a")) (Econst_CLess (Num_CLess 2))))))
> new = parent decomposed
Nothing: Maybe ( Cctx. Wellformed )
> child 1 decomposed
Just (Select CLess cctx1 Cctx hole (Ident CLess "table-b") (Where CLess (Greater CLess (Eident CLess (Ident CLess '
col-a")) (Econst CLess (Num CLess 2)))).Root id CLess (Ident CLess "col-a"))
> substitute decomposed (Q CLess Hole a CLess)
Just (Cctx_hole,Root_q_CLess Hole_q_CLess)
> evalCond decomposed 4 At 4 Q CLess 4 Select_CLess Hole id CLess Hole id CLess Hole clause CLess
> evalCond decomposed ◁ Neg ◁ At ◁ Q CLess ◁ Select CLess Hole id CLess Hole id CLess Hole clause CLess
False : Bool
> evalCond decomposed ⊲ Possibly ⊲ Const CLess ⊲ Num CLess 1
True : Bool
> evalCond decomposed ⊲ Necessarily ⊲ Const CLess ⊲ Num CLess 1
False | Bool
```

### MEX

```
example = D (Latexdoc (Ident "article") Hole_e Hole_a Hole_a ( [ Ident "myenv" ], Cursor_c (TextContent "Hello W)
D (Latexdoc (Ident "article") Hole e Hole a Hole a ([Ident "myenv"].Cursor c (TextContent ("Hello World!"))))
> decomposed = decompose example
(Latexdoc_CLess_cctx5 (Ident_CLess "article") Hole_e_CLess Hole_a_CLess Hole_a_CLess ([Ident_CLess "myenv"],Cctx_ho
le),Root_c_CLess (TextContent_CLess ("Hello World!")))
> new = parent decomposed
Just (Cctx hole Root d CLess (Latexdoc CLess (Ident CLess "article") Hole e CLess Hole a CLess Hole a CLess ([Ident
CLess "myeny"].TextContent CLess ("Hello World!"))))
  child 1 (Maybe.withDefault (Cctx hole, Root d CLess Hole d CLess) new)
Just (Latexdoc CLess cctx1 Cctx hole Hole e CLess Hole a CLess Hole a CLess ([Ident CLess "myeny"]. TextContent CLes
s ("Hello World!")), Root id CLess (Ident CLess "article"))
> substitute decomposed (C CLess (TextContent CLess "Updated content"))
Just (Latexdoc Cless cctx5 (Ident Cless "article") Hole e Cless Hole a Cless Hole a Cless ([Ident Cless "myeny"].Cc
tx hole), Root c CLess (TextContent CLess ("Updated content")))
> evalCond decomposed 
At 

C CLess 

TextContent CLess "x"

> evalCond decomposed ◁ At ◁ C CLess ◁ CmdContent CLess Hole cmd CLess
> evalCond decomposed ◁ Conjunction (At ◁ C CLess ◁ CmdContent CLess Hole cmd CLess) (At ◁ C CLess ◁ TextCont)
> evalCond decomposed ◁ Disjunction (At ◁ C CLess ◁ CmdContent CLess Hole cmd CLess) (At ◁ C CLess ◁ TextCont)
True : Bool
```

• MVP has been achieved

#### Conclusion of the project

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#### Conclusion of the project

- MVP has been achieved
- Some editor expressions are not yet implemented
- Missing criteria for a "good" implementation:
  - Handling context-sensitive syntax
  - Views of code being edited

- Implement the missing editor expressions
- Handling context-sensitive syntax
- Views of code being edited
- Consider a more concise implementation (maybe in Haskell)
- Add support for adding starting symbol to the specification language

Thank you for your attention!