

# Domain-Specific Languages and Xtext

Mathieu Acher

Maître de Conférences

[mathieu.acher@irisa.fr](mailto:mathieu.acher@irisa.fr)

# Material

[https://github.com/acherm/teaching-MDE-  
IL1718](https://github.com/acherm/teaching-MDE-IL1718)

# Plan

- Domain-Specific Languages (DSLs)
  - Languages and abstraction gap
  - Examples and rationale
  - DSLs vs General purpose languages, taxonomy
- **External DSLs**
  - Grammar and parsing
  - Xtext
- DSLs, DSMLs, and (meta-)modeling

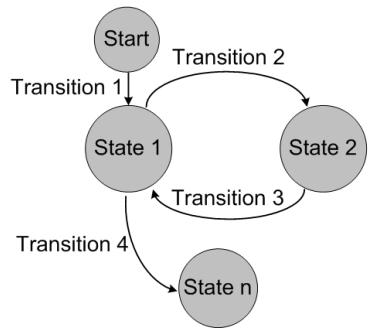
# Contract

- Better understanding/source of inspiration of software languages and DSLs
  - Revisit of history and existing languages
- Foundations and practice of Xtext
  - State-of-the-art language workbench (Most Innovative Eclipse Project in 2010, mature and used in a variety of industries)
- Models and Languages
  - Perhaps a more concrete way to see models, metamodels and MDE (IDM in french)

# BIBTEX



**Graphviz**



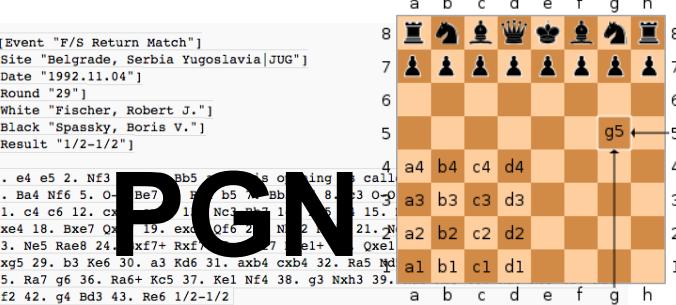
**Finite State  
Machine**



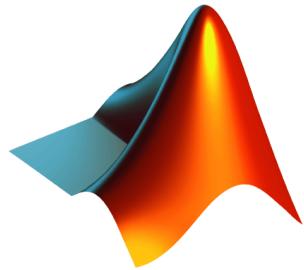
**Domain-Specific Languages (DSLs)**

```
[Event "F/S Return Match"]
[Site "Belgrade, Serbia Yugoslavia[JUG]"]
[Date "1992.11.04"]
[Round "29"]
[White "Fischer, Robert J."]
[Black "Spassky, Boris V."]
[Result "1/2-1/2"]
```

```
1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Bb5 3. c3 Nc6 4. Bb5 Nf6 5. O-O Be7 6. Bb7 Bb5 7. Nc3 Bb7 8. e5 Nf5 9. Bb7 Nxe4 10. Bxe7 Qe7 11. c4 c6 12. c5 Nf5 13. Nc3 Bf6 14. Nf3 Nc6 15. Nxe4 Nf5 16. Nf3 Nxe4 17. Nxe4 Qe7 18. Bxe7 Qe8 19. exd5 Qf6 20. Nf3 Nf5 21. Nxe4 Nxe4 22. Nf3 Nf5 23. Ne5 Rae8 24. Nxf7+ Rxf7 25. Nxe4 Nf5 26. Nf3 Nf5 27. Nxe4 Nxe4 28. Nf3 Nf5 29. b3 Ke6 30. a3 Kd6 31. axb4 cxb4 32. Ra5 Nd5 33. Nc3 Nf5 34. Nxe4 Nxe4 35. Ra7 g6 36. Ra6+ Kc5 37. Ke1 Nf4 38. g3 Nxh3 39. Nf2 g4 40. Ra5 Nf5 41. Ra6+ Kc6 42. g4 Bd3 43. Re6 1/2-1/2
```



**Make**



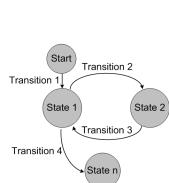
**Matlab**



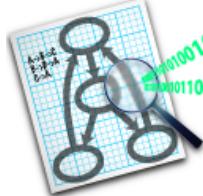
# DSL = Syntax + Services

## Specialized notation:

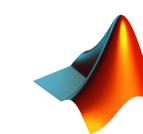
Textual or Graphical  
Specific Vocabulary  
Idiomatic constructs



BIBT<sub>E</sub>X

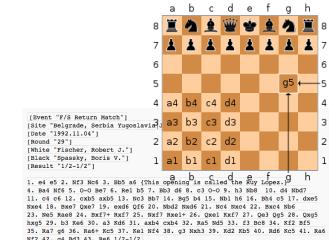


SQL



## Specialized tools/IDE:

Editor with auto-completion, syntax highlighting, etc.  
Compiler  
Interpreter  
Debugger  
Profiler  
Syntax/Type Checker  
...



# Language workbenches

- Tools for reducing the gap between the design and implementation of (external) domain-specific languages
- The Killer App for DSLs? <http://www.martinfowler.com/articles/languageWorkbench.html>

# Language Workbenches

Erdweg et al. SLE'13

		Ensō	Más	MetaEdit+	MPS	Onion	Rascal	Spoofax	SugarJ	Whole	Xtext
Notation	Textual	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	Graphical	●	○	●			○			●	
	Tabular		●	●	●					●	
	Symbols			●	●					●	
Semantics	Model2Text		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	Model2Model			●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	Concrete syntax			●	●	●	●	●	●		
	Interpretative	●		●	●		○	●		●	●
Validation	Structural	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	Naming	○	●	●	●	●		●		●	○
	Types				●				●		●
	Programmatic	●			●	●	●	●	●		●
Testing	DSL testing				●		○	●		●	●
	DSL debugging	●		●	●		●			●	●
	DSL prog. debugging	●			●					●	●
Composability	Syntax/views	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	○
	Validation			●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	Semantics	●		●	●	●	●	●	●		●
	Editor services			●	●	●	●	●	●		●
Editing mode	Free-form	●		●		●	●	●	●		●
	Projectional		●		●	●				●	
Syntactic services	Highlighting	○	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	Outline			●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	Folding	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	Syntactic completion			●	●	●		●	●		●
	Diff	●		●	●	●	●	●	●		●
	Auto formatting	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●
Semantic services	Reference resolution		●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●
	Semantic completion		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	Refactoring	○	●	●	●		●	●		●	
	Error marking	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	Quick fixes				●						●
	Origin tracking	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	Live translation		●		●	●	○	●	●	●	●

Table 1: Language Workbench Features (● = full support, ○ = partial/limited support)

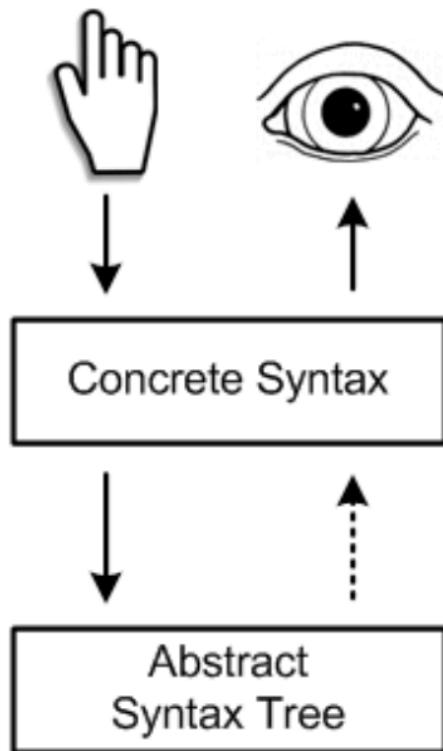
The screenshot shows the Eclipse IDE interface with the following details:

- Title Bar:** Java – strategoxt-sugar-papers/test/BookHandler.sugj – Eclipse – /Users/seba/tmp/ecli...
- Toolbar:** Includes icons for file operations (New, Open, Save, Print, Find, Copy, Paste, Cut, Undo, Redo), Transform, and navigation.
- Left Panel (BookHandler.sugj):** Displays Java code for `BookHandler`. The code imports `xml.Sugar`, `xml.Editor`, and `xml.schema.BookSchema`. It defines a class `BookHandler` with a method `appendBook` that takes a `ContentHandler` parameter and throws a `SAXException`. The method initializes a string `title` to "Sweetness and Power" and uses `@Validate` annotations on several XML elements. A warning icon is shown next to the `author` element, and an error icon is shown next to the `edition` element. A dropdown menu is open over the XML code, showing suggestions like `<{lib}author`, `<{lib}book`, `<{lib}edition`, and `<{lib}editions`.
- Right Panel (Outline View):** Shows the outline of the XML schema. It includes nodes for `BookHandler`, `appendBook`, `book`, `author`, `editions`, `isPublished`, and `getLanguage`.
- Bottom Left (Problems View):** Shows 1 error and 1 warning. The error is "expected element edition of namespace lib" at line 18, and the warning is "skipping validation of quoted attribute value" at line 14.
- Bottom Right (Resource View):** A table showing the resource and location of errors and warnings.
- Bottom Navigation:** Includes buttons for Writable, Smart Insert, and a status bar indicating the current line.

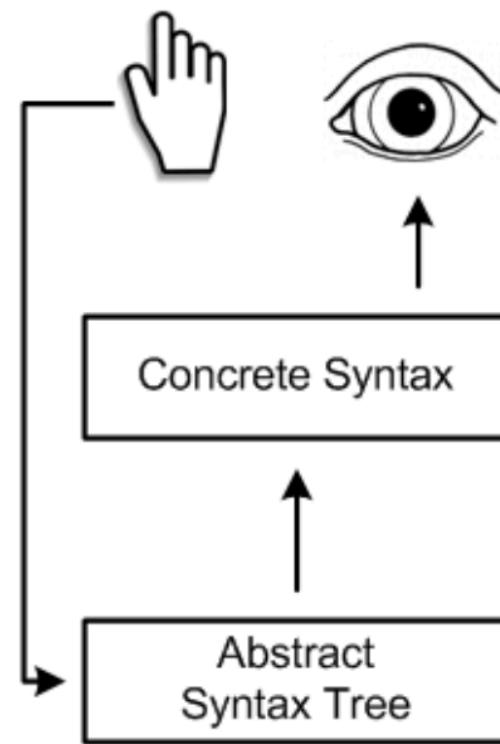
Sebastian Erdweg, Tillmann Rendel, Christian Kästner, and Klaus Ostermann. Sugarj: Library-based syntactic language extensibility. OOPSLA'11

# Projectional editing

**Parsing**



**Projection**



# Projectional editing

```
exported component Judge extends nothing {
    provides FlightJudger judger
    int16 points = 0;
    void judger_reset() <= op judger.reset {
        points = 0;
    } runnable judger_reset
    void judger_addTrackpoint(Trackpoint* tp) <= op judger.addTrackpoint {
        points += 0
            | tp->alt <= 2000 m | tp->alt >= 2000 m
            | tp->speed < 150 mps | 0 | 10
            | tp->speed >= 150 mps | 5 | 20
    } runnable judger_addTrackpoint
    int16 judger_getResult() <= op judger.getResult {
        return points;
    } runnable judger_getResult
} component Judge
```

# Projectional Editing

```
exported statemachine FlightAnalyzer initial = beforeFlight {
    next(Trackpoint* tp)                                reset()
    beforeFlight [tp->alt == 0 m] -> airborne
    airborne   [tp->alt == 0 m && tp->speed == 0 mps] -> crashed
                [tp->alt == 0 m && tp->speed > 0 mps] -> landing
                [tp->speed > 200 mps && tp->alt == 0 m] -> airborne
                [tp->speed > 100 mps && tp->speed <= 200 mps &&
                 tp->alt == 0 m] -> airborne
    landing    [tp->speed == 0 mps] -> landed
                [tp->speed > 0 mps] -> landing
    landed     [ ] -> beforeFlight
    crashed    [ ] -> beforeFlight
}
```

```

SM.sdf3
System.Machine = [
  state machine [ID] [Extends]
  [{Element "\n"}*]
]

Extends.Extends =
[extends [ID]]

Extends.NoExtends = □

Element.State =
[state [ID]]

Element.Transition = [
transition from [StateRef] to
[Guard] [Actions]
]

names.nab
11 Machine(m, elems, extends) :
12   defines Machine m
13   scopes State, Variable
14
15 Extends(m) :
16   imports State, Variable from M
17
18 State(s) :
19   defines State s
20
21 StateRef(s) :
22   refers to State s
23
24 VarDef(x, c) :
25   defines Variable x of type t
26   where c has type t

types.ts
6 False() : BoolType()
7 True() : BoolType()
8
9
10 Var(x) : t
11 where definition of x : t
12
13 Or(e1, e2) + And(e1, e2) :
14   where e1 : BoolType()
15     else error "bool expected"
16     and e2 : BoolType()
17     else error "bool expected"
18
19 Eq(e1, e2) + Gt(e1, e2) :
20   where e1 : IntType()
21     else error "int expected"

generate.str
6 sm-to-java :
7   machine@Machine(m, exten...
8   public class [m] [<ext...
9   String current = [<...
10  [vardefs]
11
12  String next(String e) {
13    [<cond-stat*]
14    while(true) {
15      [<uncond-stat*]
16    }
17  }
18
19  ]
20
21 where ...
22 ...
23 ...
24 ...

VendingMachine.ATOML
state Vend_Drink
state Vend_Sweet
state Empty
transition from Waiting to Vend_Drink: V
[drinks > 0] / drinks := drinks - 1
transition from Vend_Drink to Waiting: V
[drinks > 0 or sweets > 0]

VendingMachine.aterm
1 Machine(
2   "VendingMachine"
3   , NoExtends()
4   , [VarDef("drinks", Int("10")))
5   , VarDef("sweets", Int("20")))
6   , State("Waiting"))

```

# The Spoofax Language Workbench

Spoofax is a platform for developing textual domain-specific languages with full-featured [Eclipse](#) editor plugins.

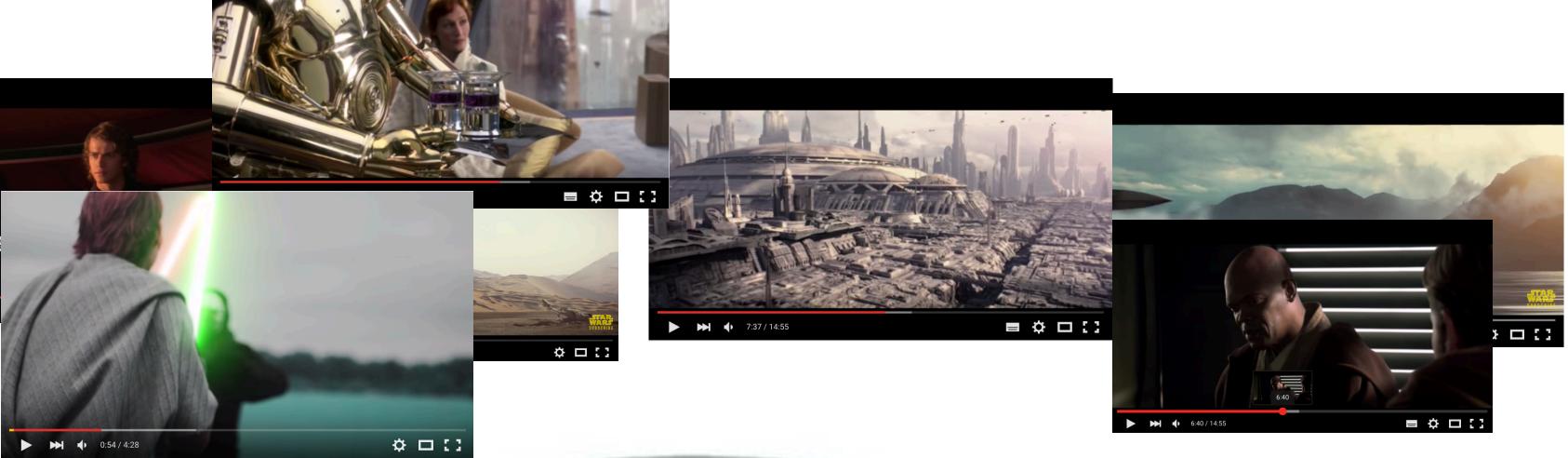
With the Spoofax language workbench, you can write the grammar of your language using the high-level SDF grammar formalism. Based on this grammar, basic editor services such as syntax highlighting and code folding are automatically provided. Using high-level descriptor languages, these services can be customized. More sophisticated services such as error marking and content completion can be specified using rewrite rules in the Stratego language.

## Meta Languages

Language definitions in Spoofax are constructed using the following meta-languages:

- The [SDF3](#) syntax definition formalism
- The [NaBL](#) name binding language
- The [TS](#) type specification language
- The [Stratego](#) transformation language

xtext

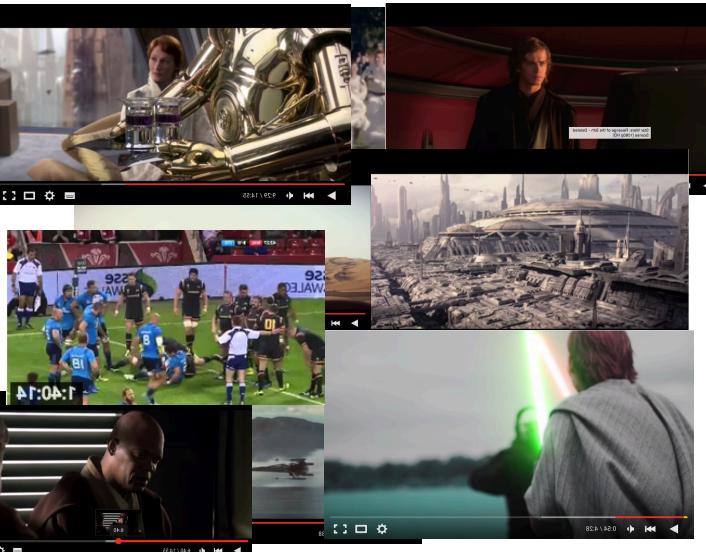




**Generator**  
**~ composition of**  
**video sequences**

**video  
variants**





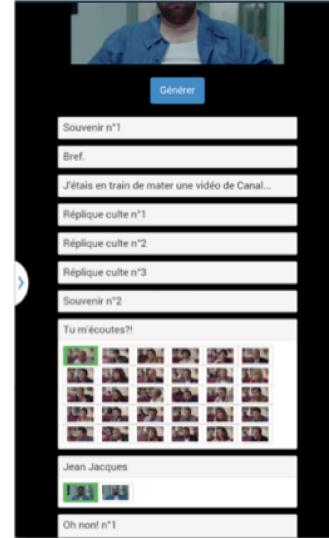
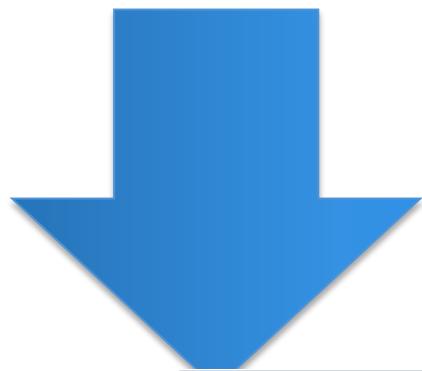
```

foo1.videogen ✎

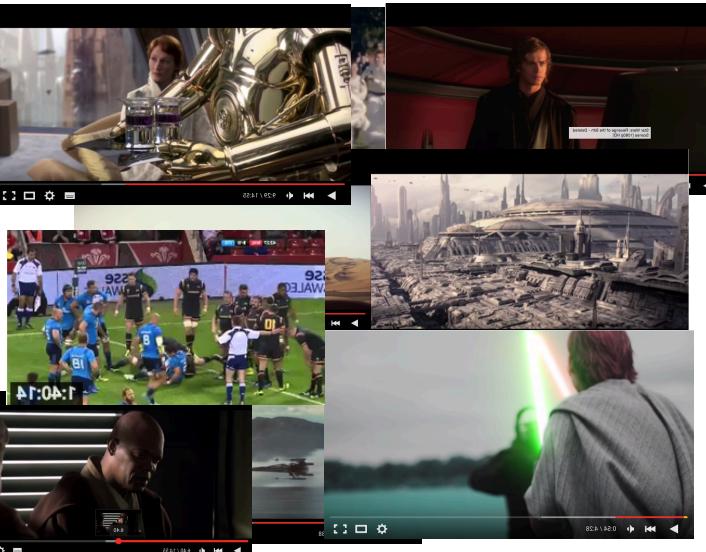
mandatory videoseq v1 "https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PJNi1uYhV5w"
optional videoseq v2 "v2Folder/v2.mp4"
alternatives v3 {
    videoseq v31 "v3/seq1.mp4"
    videoseq v32 "v3/seq1.mp4"
    videoseq v33 "v3/seq1.mp4"
}

alternatives v4 {
    videoseq v41 "v4/seq1.mp4"
    videoseq v42 "v4/seq1.mp4"
}
mandatory videoseq v5 "https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ezKx-S0LiNQ"

```



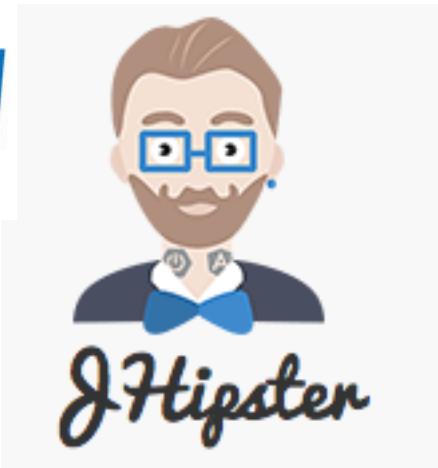
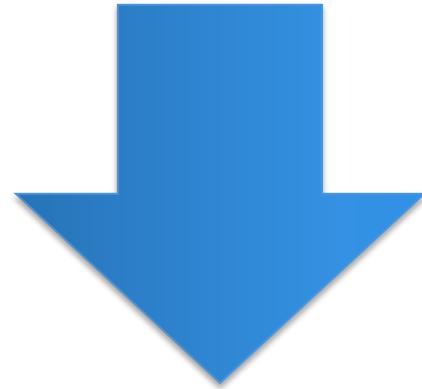
- ## Website/online
- Random generation
  - Configurator
  - Game
  - ...



```
foo1.videogen ✘

mandatory videoseq v1 "https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PJNi1uYhV5w"
optional videoseq v2 "v2Folder/v2.mp4"
alternatives v3 {
    videoseq v31 "v3/seq1.mp4"
    videoseq v32 "v3/seq1.mp4"
    videoseq v33 "v3/seq1.mp4"
}

alternatives v4 {
    videoseq v41 "v4/seq1.mp4"
    videoseq v42 "v4/seq1.mp4"
}
mandatory videoseq v5 "https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ezKx-S0LiNQ"
```



 FFmpeg

foo1.videoogen

```
mandatory videooseq v1 "https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PJNi1uYhV5w"
optional videooseq v2 "v2folder/v2.mp4"
alternatives v3 {
    videooseq v31 "v3/seq1.mp4"
    videooseq v32 "v3/seq1.mp4"
    videooseq v33 "v3/seq1.mp4"
}

alternatives v4 {
    videooseq v41 "v4/seq1.mp4"
    videooseq v42 "v4/seq1.mp4"
}
mandatory videooseq v5 "https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ezKx-S0LiNQ"
```

#1 How to design, create, and support dedicated languages (DSLs)?

#2 How to transform models/programs?



#3 How to manage variability/variants?

#4 How do frameworks internally work?

Xtext, a popular, easy-to-use model-based tool  
for developping DSLs

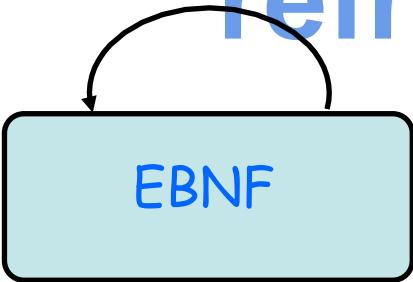
Your DSL in 5' (incl.  
editors and serializers)

Your DSL in 5'

Short Demonstration

# Foundations (or some course refresh)

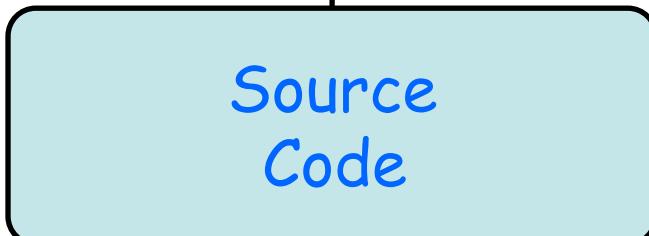
M<sup>3</sup>



M<sup>2</sup>



M<sup>1</sup>



## Java Grammar

```
CHARLITERAL
: '\'' 
| '\"' EscapeSequence
| '\"'
| '\\'
;

STRINGLITERAL
: '\"' 
| '\'' EscapeSequence
| '\"'*
| '\''
;

fragment
EscapeSequence
: '\\'
| 'b'
| 't'
| 'n'
| 'r'
| '\\'
| '\\\\'
| '\\\''
| '\\\"'
;

modifiers
: (
annotation
| PUBLIC
| PROTECTED
| PRIVATE
| STATIC
| ABSTRACT
| FINAL
| NATIVE
| SYNCHRONIZED
| TRANSIENT
| VOLATILE
| STRICTFP
)*
;

variableModifiers
: (
FINAL
| annotation
)*
;

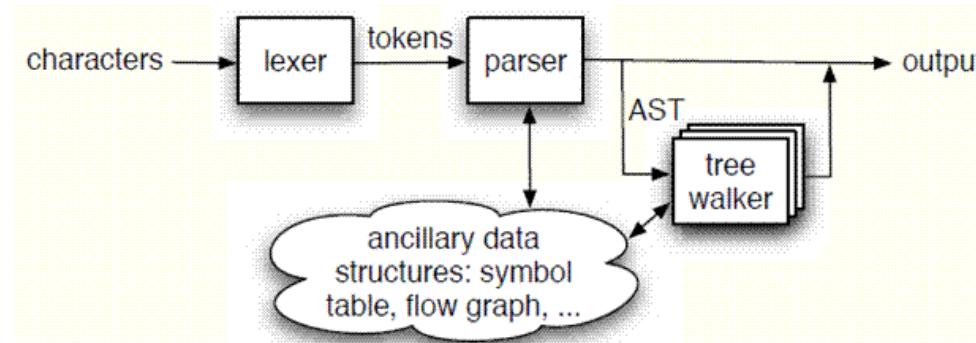
classDeclaration
: normalClassDeclaration
| enumDeclaration
```

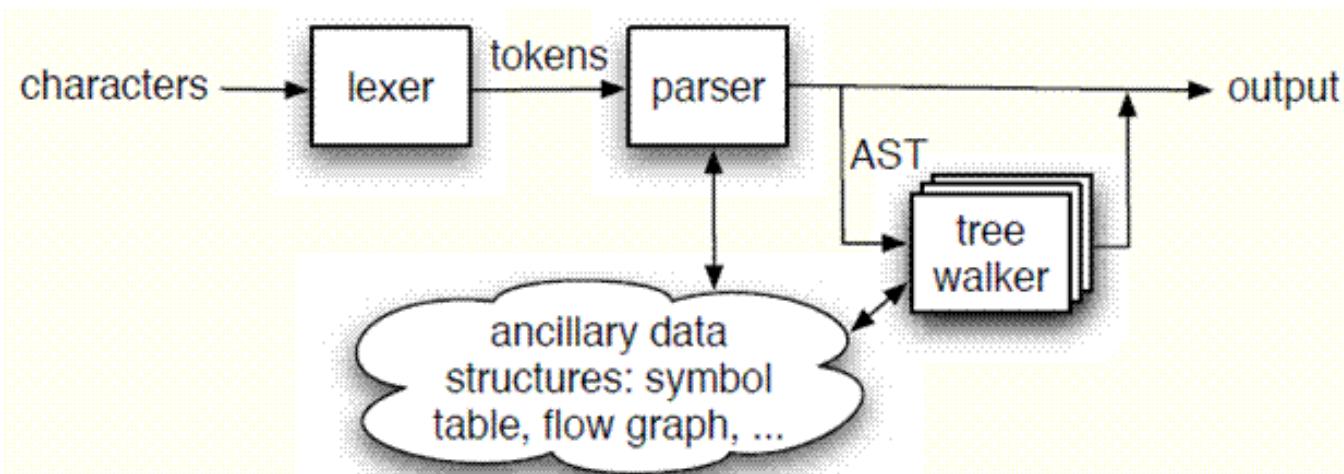
## Java Program

```
/*
public class HelloWorld {
    public static void main(String[] args) {
        System.out.println("Hello, World");
    }
}
```

# Compilation Process

- Source code
  - Concrete syntax used for specifying a program
  - Conformant to a grammar
- Lexical analysis
  - Converting a sequence of characters into a sequence of **tokens**
- Parsing (Syntactical analysis)
  - Abstract Syntax Tree (AST)





The Definitive  
ANTLR  
Reference

Building Domain-  
Specific Languages

Terence Parr

```

CHARLITERAL
:   '\\'
(   EscapeSequence
|   ~( '\\\' | '\\\\' | '\\r' | '\\n' )
)
'\\'
;

STRINGLITERAL
:   """
(   EscapeSequence
|   ~( '\\\' | '\"' | '\\r' | '\\n' )
)*
"""

;

fragment
EscapeSequence
:   '\\' (
    'b'
|   't'
|   'n'
|   'f'
|   'r'
|   '\"'
)
;
```

```

classOrInterfaceDeclaration
:   classDeclaration
|   interfaceDeclaration
;

modifiers
:   (
    annotation
|   PUBLIC
|   PROTECTED
|   PRIVATE
|   STATIC
|   ABSTRACT
|   FINAL
|   NATIVE
|   SYNCHRONIZED
|   TRANSIENT
|   VOLATILE
|   STRICTFP
)*
;

variableModifiers
:   (
    FINAL
|   annotation
)*
;

classDeclaration
:   normalClassDeclaration
|   enumDeclaration
;
```

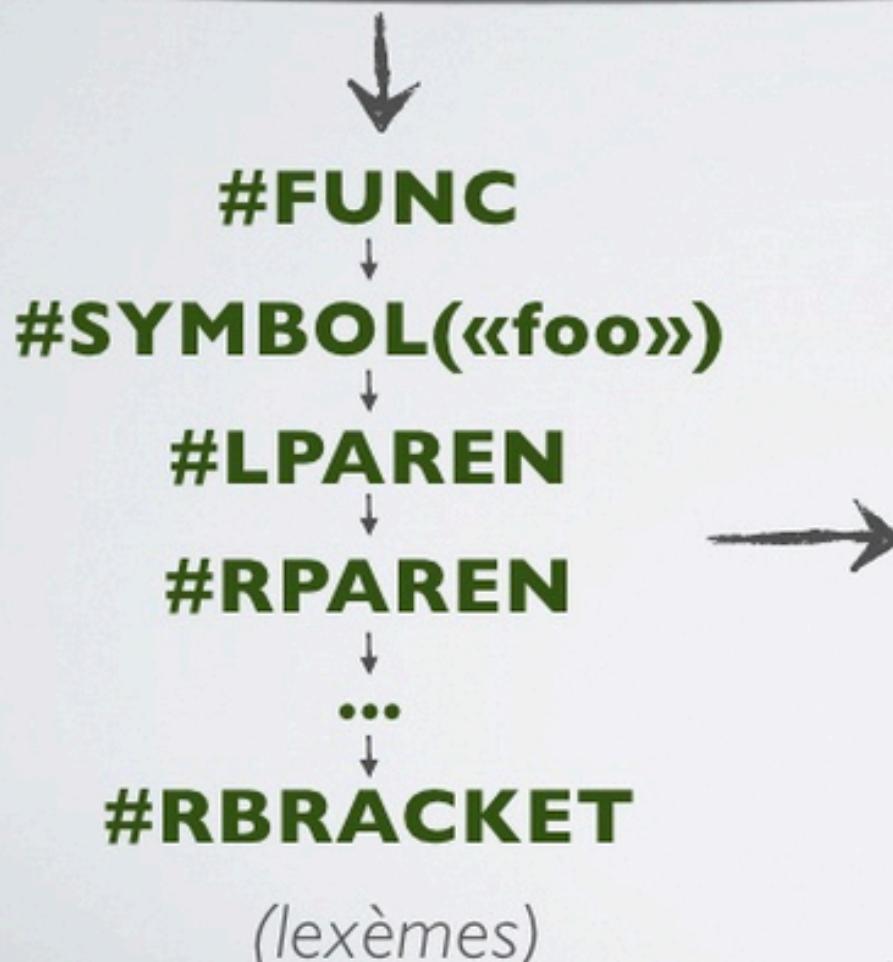


O'REILLY®

John R. Levine,  
Tony Mason & Doug Brown

# EXEMPLE

```
function foo() {  
    echo «Hello, World !»;  
}  
(Syntaxe concrète)
```



```

class StringInterp {
    val int = 42
    val dbl = Math.PI
    val str = "My hovercraft is full of eels"

    println(s"String: $str Double: $dbl Int: $int Int Expr: ${int * 1.0}")
}

```

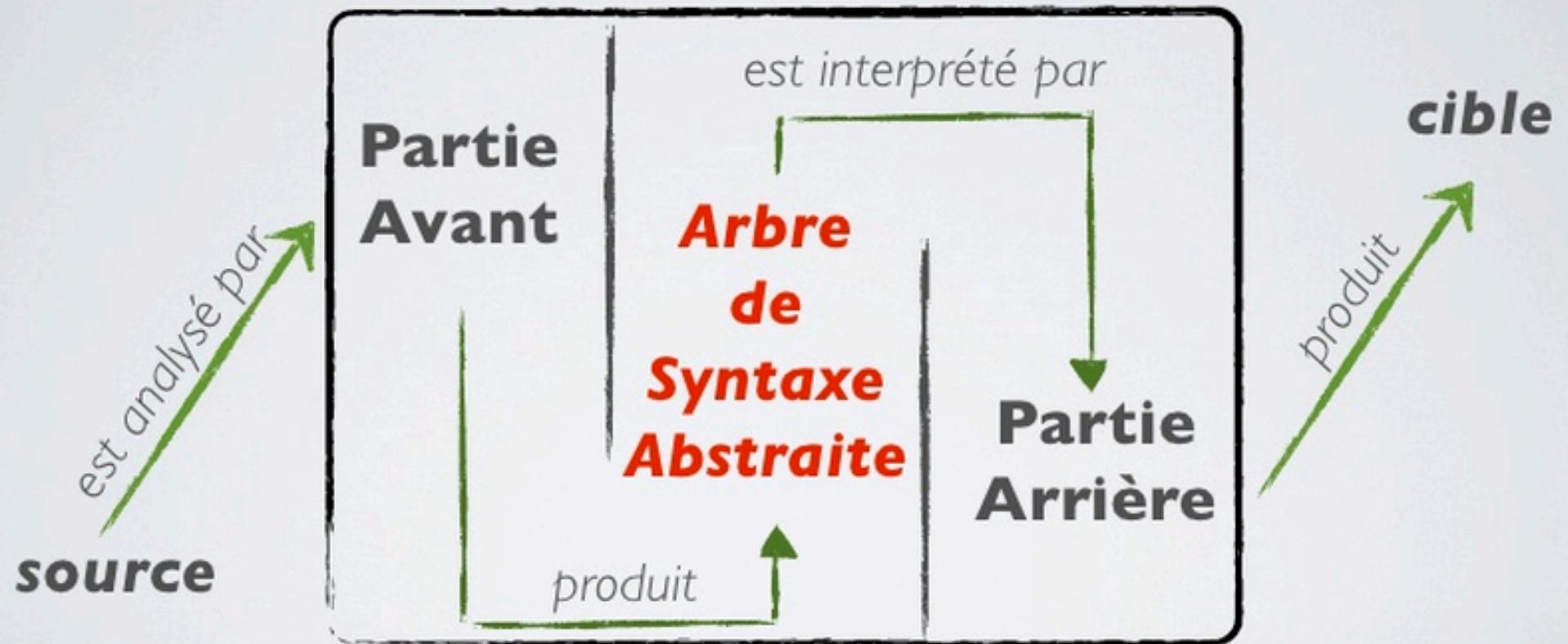
## Scala AST (example)

```

Block(
  List(
    ClassDef(Modifiers(), TypeName("StringInterp"), List(), Template(
      List(Ident(TypeName("AnyRef"))), noSelfType, List(DefDef(Modifiers(), termNames.CONSTRUCTOR,
      List(),
      List(List())),
      TypeTree(), Block(List(Apply(Select(Super(This(typeNames.EMPTY), typeNames.EMPTY),
      termNames.CONSTRUCTOR), List()))), Literal(Constant(()))), ValDef(Modifiers(), TermName("int"),
      TypeTree(), Literal(Constant(42))), ValDef(Modifiers(), TermName("dbl"), TypeTree(),
      Literal(Constant(3.141592653589793))), ValDef(Modifiers(), TermName("str"), TypeTree(),
      Literal(Constant("My hovercraft is full of eels"))), Apply(Select(Ident(scala.Predef),
      TermName("println")), List(Apply(Select(Apply(Select(Ident(scala.StringContext), TermName("apply")),
      List(Literal(Constant("String: ")), Literal(Constant(" Double: ")), Literal(Constant(" Int: ")),
      Literal(Constant(" Int Expr: ")), Literal(Constant(""))))), TermName("s")),
      List(Select(This(TypeName("StringInterp")), TermName("str")), Select(This(TypeName("StringInterp")),
      TermName("dbl")), Select(This(TypeName("StringInterp")), TermName("int")),
      Apply(Select(Select(This(TypeName("StringInterp")), TermName("int")), TermName("$times")),
      List(Literal(Constant(1.0))))))), TermName("s"))),
      List(Literal(Constant(())))))))

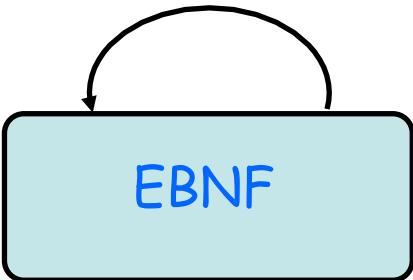
```

# Compilation (en français)



# DSL? The same!

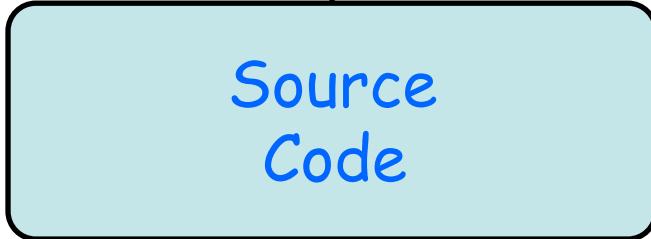
M<sup>3</sup>



M<sup>2</sup>



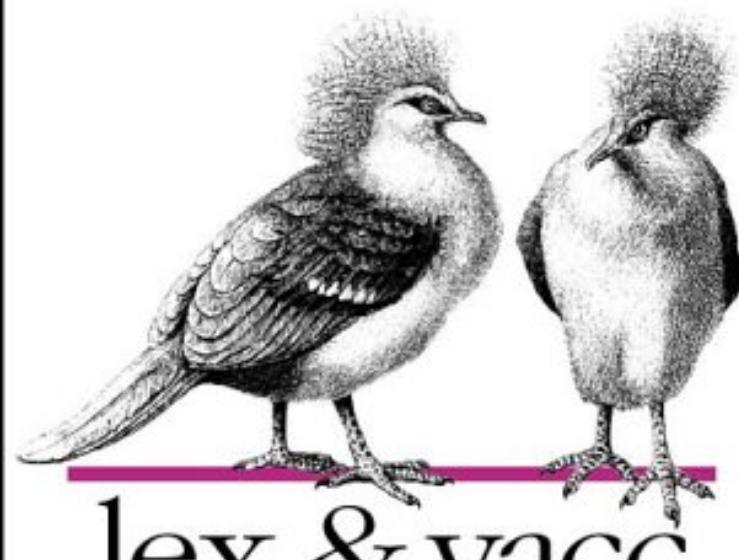
M<sup>1</sup>



DSL Grammar

DSL specification/  
program

*UNIX Programming Tools*



# lex & yacc

O'REILLY™

*John R. Levine,  
Tony Mason & Doug Brown*

The  
Pragmatic  
Programmers

## The Definitive **ANTLR** Reference

Building Domain-  
Specific Languages

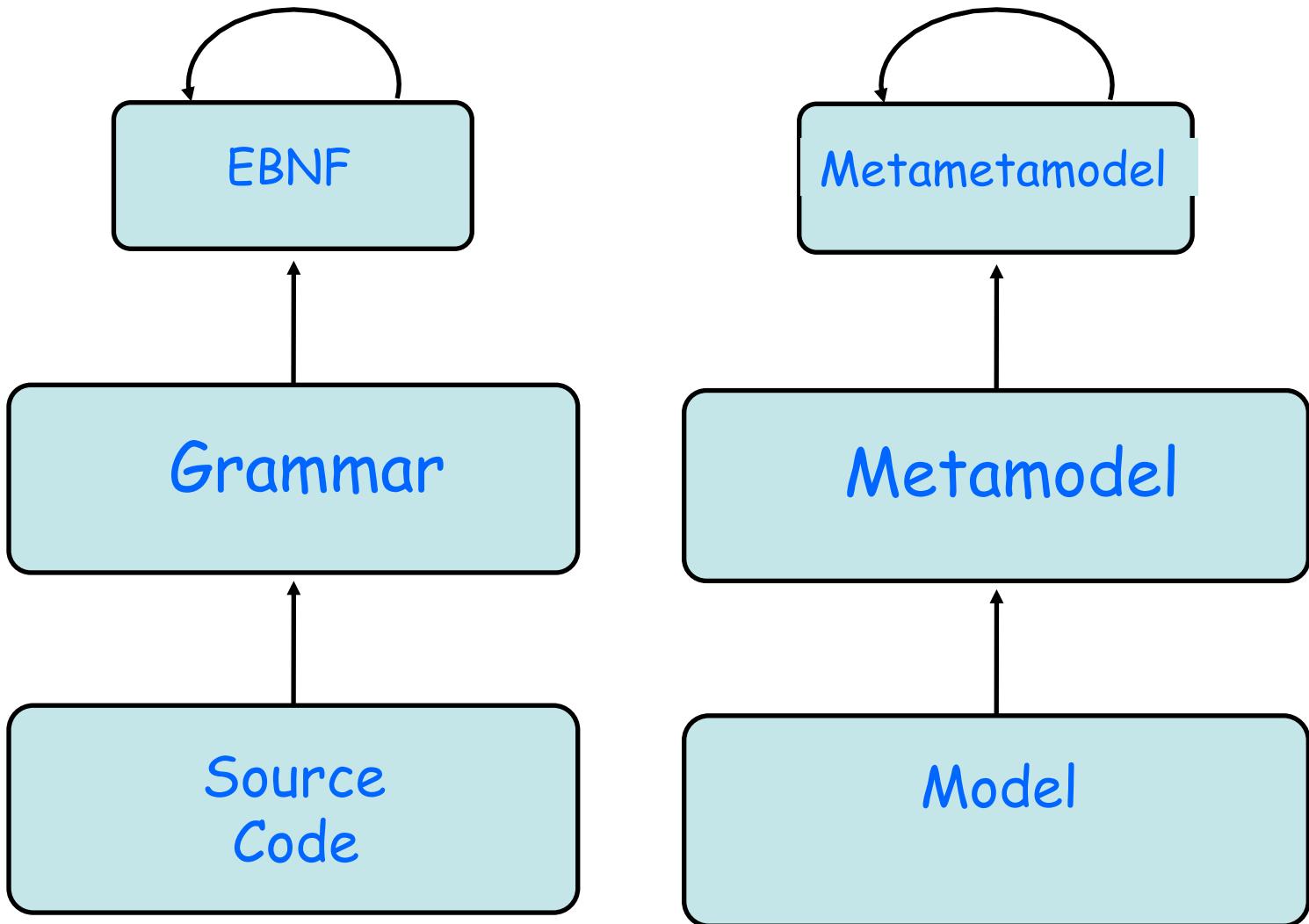


Terence Parr

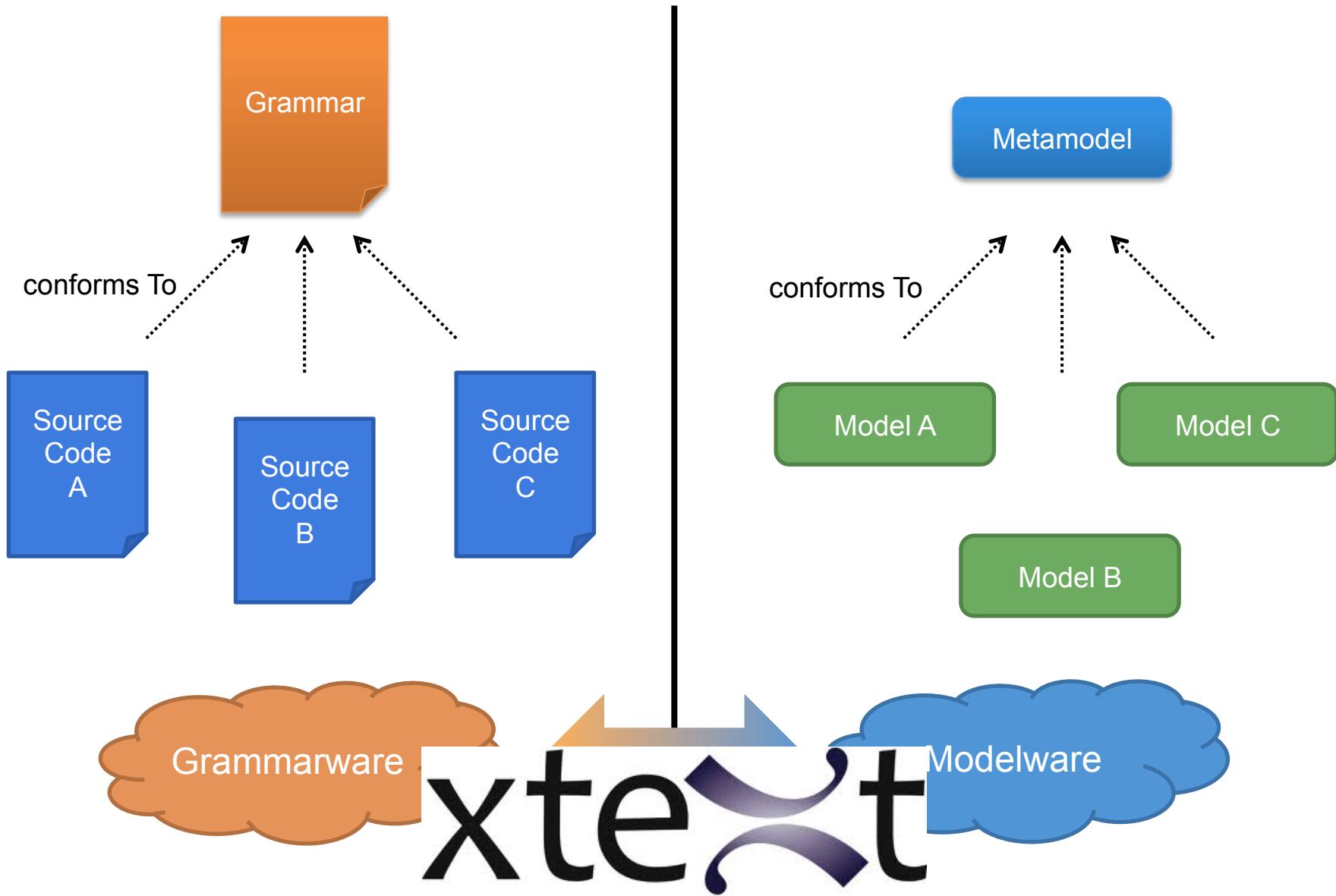
M<sup>3</sup>

M<sup>2</sup>

M<sup>1</sup>



# Language and MDE





Give me a **grammar**,

I'll give you (for free)

- \* a comprehensive editor (auto-completion, syntax highlighting, etc.) in Eclipse
- \* an Ecore metamodel and facilities to load/serialize/visit conformant models (Java ecosystem)
- \* extension to override/extend « default » facilities (e.g., checker)

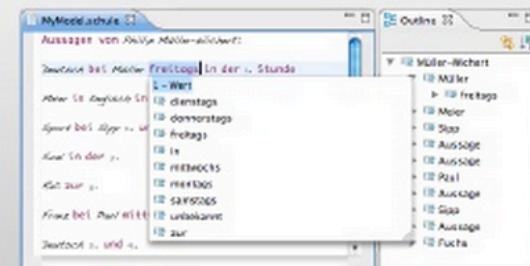
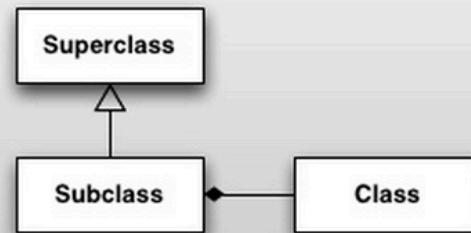
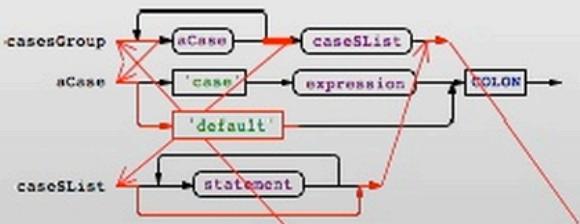
Model

Grammar

Xtext  
Generator



## Xtext Runtime

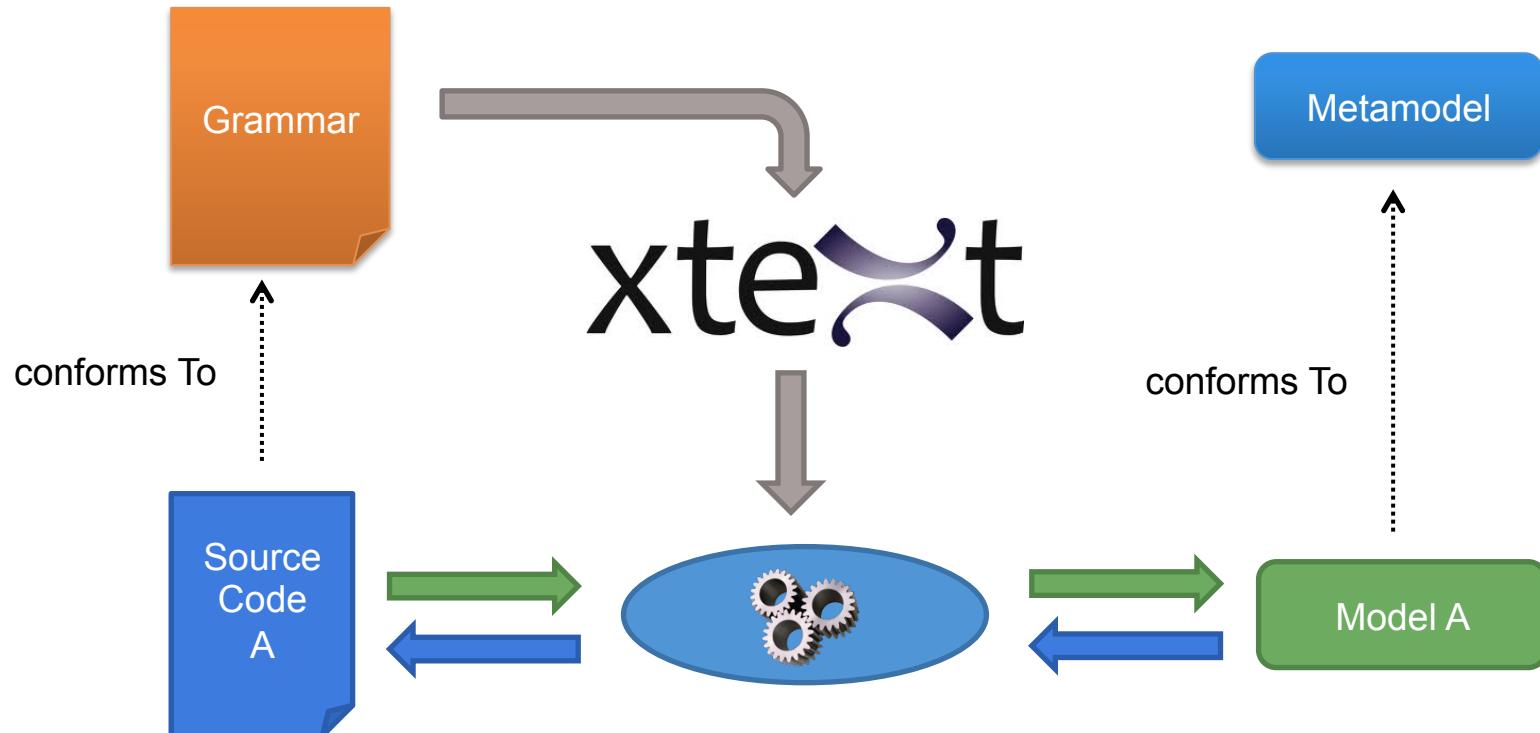


LL(\*) Parser

ecore meta model

editor

# Xtext, Grammar, Metamodel

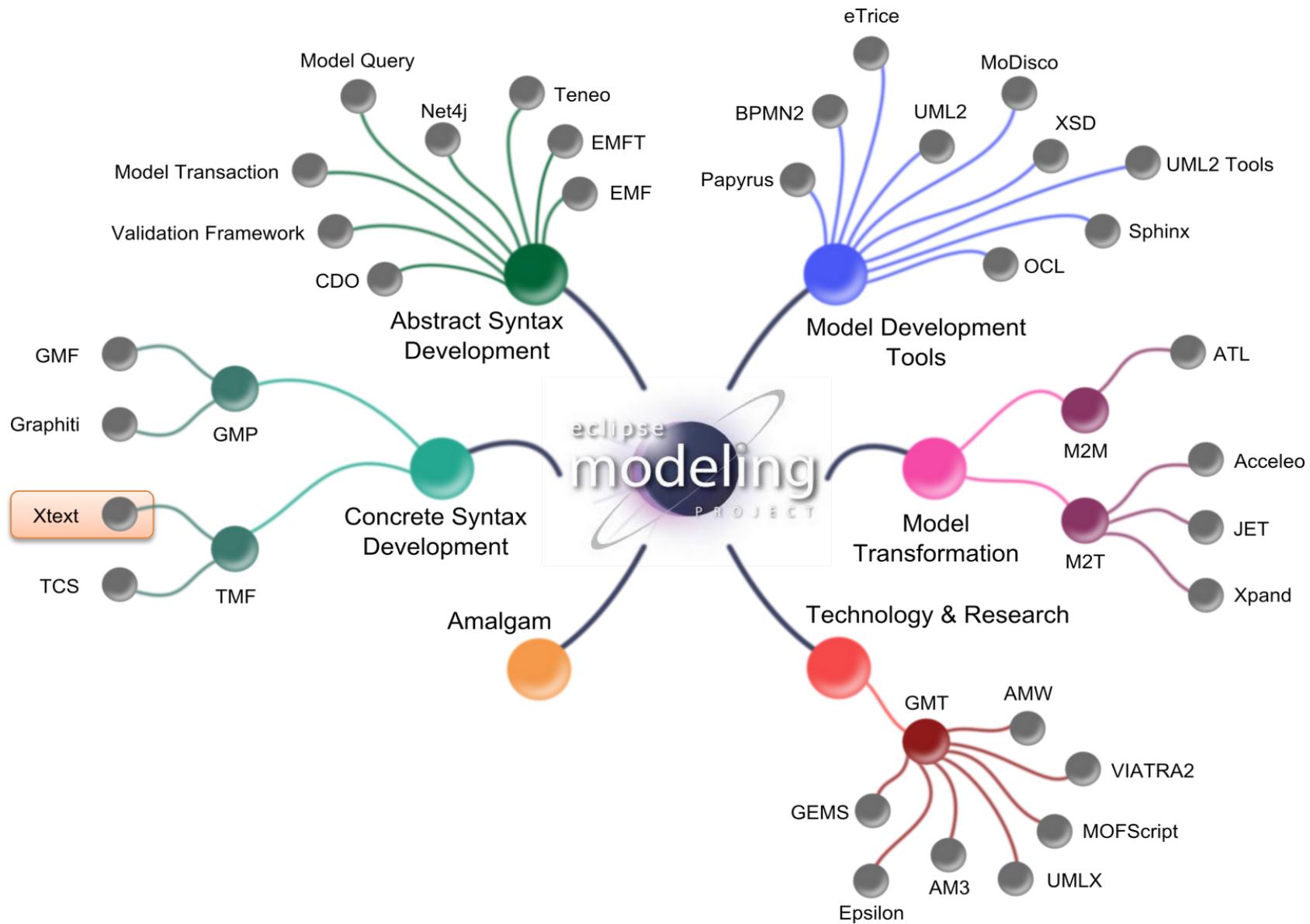


# Xtext Project

- Eclipse Project
  - Part of Eclipse Modeling
  - Part of Open Architecture Ware
- Model-driven development of Textual DSLs
- Part of a family of languages
  - **Xtext**
  - Xtend
  - Xbase
  - Xpand
  - Xcore



# Eclipse Modeling Project



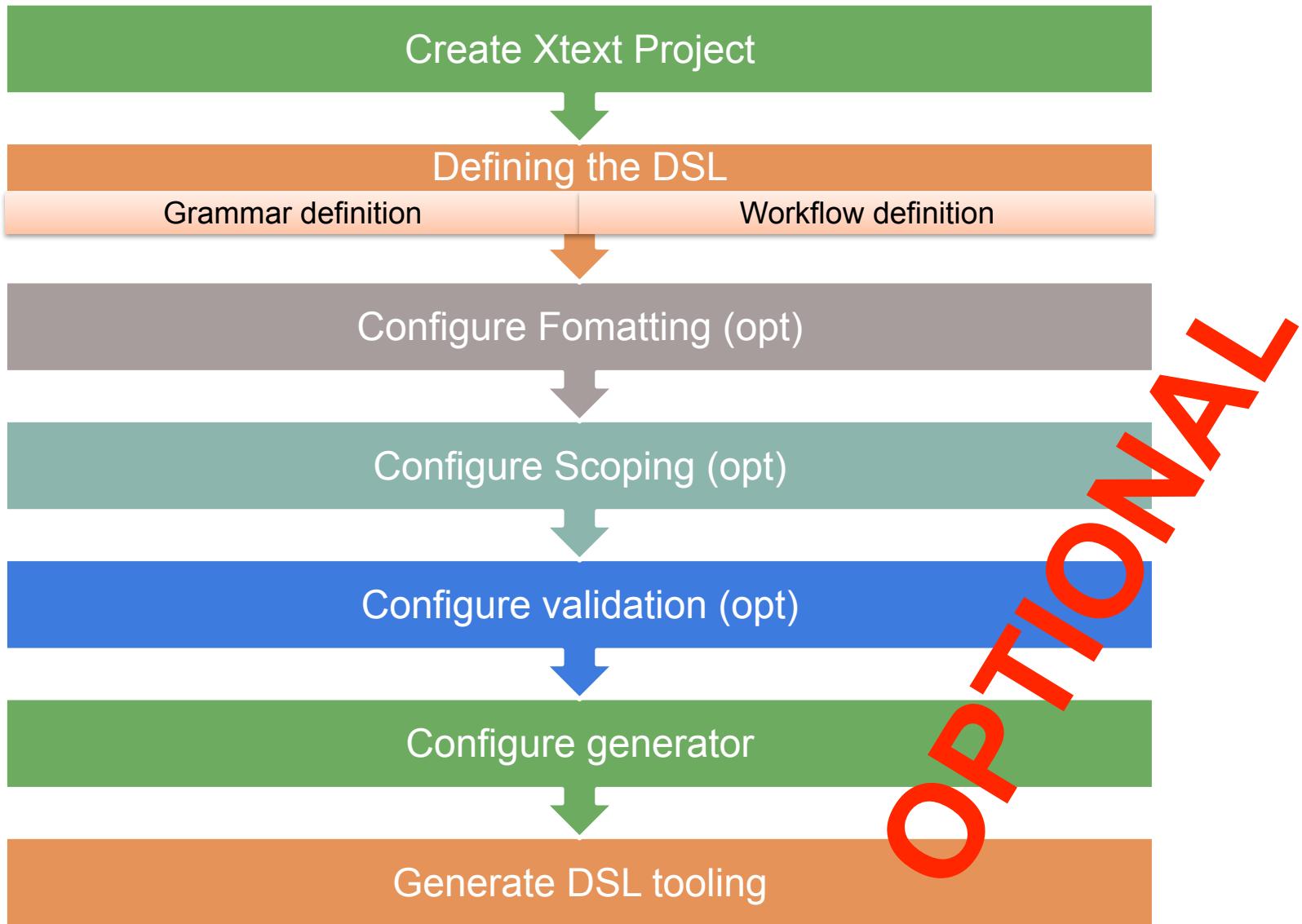
# The Grammar Language of Xtext

- Corner-stone of Xtext
- A... DSL to define textual languages
  - Describe the concrete syntax
  - Specify the mapping between concrete syntax and domain model
- From the grammar, it is generated:
  - The domain model
  - The parser
  - The tooling

# Main Advantages

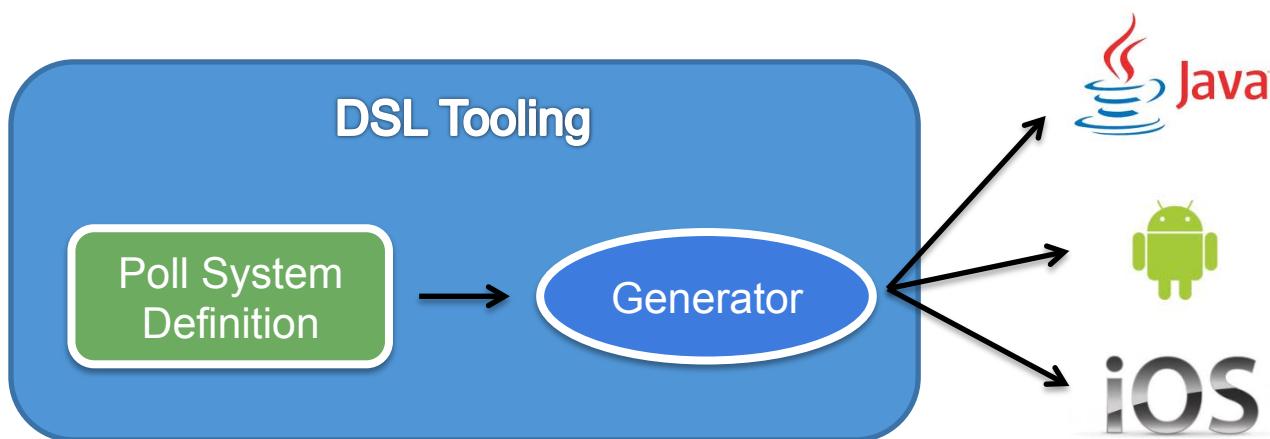
- Consistent look and feel
- Textual DSLs are a resource in Eclipse
- Open editors can be extended
- Complete framework to develop DSLs
- Easy to connect to any Java-based language

# Development Process



# A first example

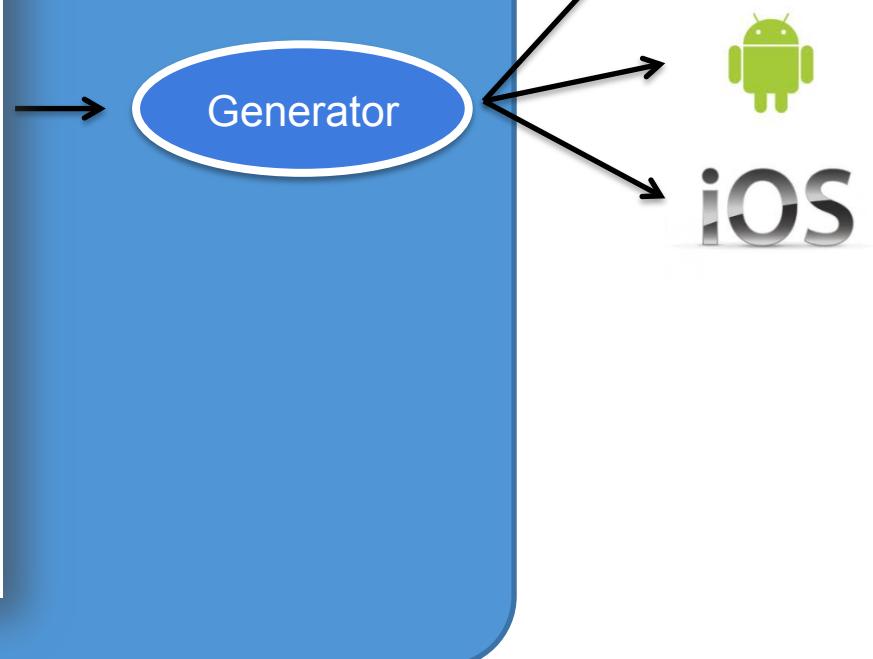
- Poll System application
  - Define a Poll with the corresponding questions
  - Each question has a text and a set of options
  - Each option has a text
- Generate the application in different platforms



# Something like...

## DSL Tooling

```
PollSystem {  
    Poll Quality {  
        Question q1 {  
            "Value the user experience"  
            options {  
                A : "Bad"  
                B : "Fair"  
                C : "Good"  
            }  
        }  
        Question q2 {  
            "Value the layout"  
            options {  
                A : "It was not easy to locate elements"  
                B : "I didn't realize"  
                C : "It was easy to locate elements"  
            }  
        }  
    }  
    Poll Performance {  
        Question q1 {  
            "Value the time response"  
            options {  
                A : "Bad"  
                B : "Fair"  
                C : "Good"  
            }  
        }  
    }  
}
```



# Xtext Grammar

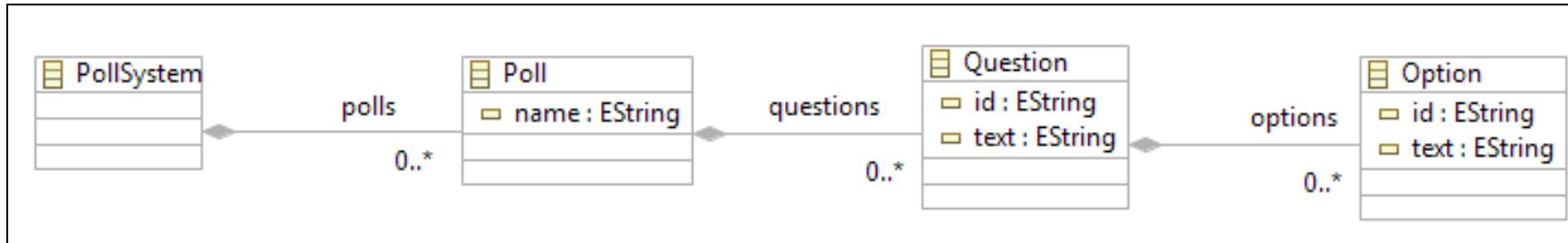
Grammar  
definition →

```
grammar fr.miage.xtext.Poll with org.eclipse.xtext.common.Terminals

generate poll "http://www.miage.fr/xtext/Poll"

PollSystem:
    'PollSystem' '{' polls+=Poll+ '}';
    
Poll:
    'Poll' name=ID '{' questions+=Question+'}'';

Question:
    'Question' id=ID '{' text=STRING 'options' '{' options+=Option+ '}';
    
Option:
    id=ID ':' text=STRING;
```



# Xtext Grammar

Grammar  
reuse

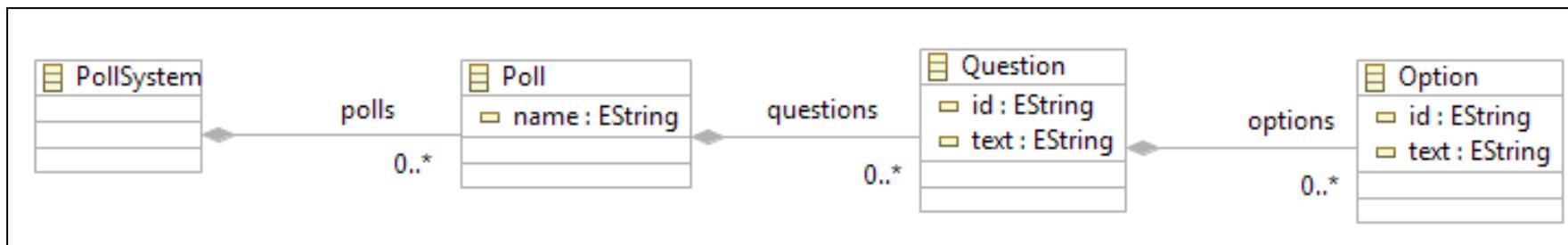
```
grammar fr.miage.xtext.Poll with org.eclipse.xtext.common.Terminals

generate poll "http://www.miage.fr/xtext/Poll"

PollSystem:
    'PollSystem' '{' polls+=Poll+ '}';
    
Poll:
    'Poll' name=ID '{' questions+=Question+'}';

Question:
    'Question' id=ID '{' text=STRING 'options' '{' options+=Option+ '}'} '}';

Option:
    id=ID ':' text=STRING;
```



# Xtext Grammar

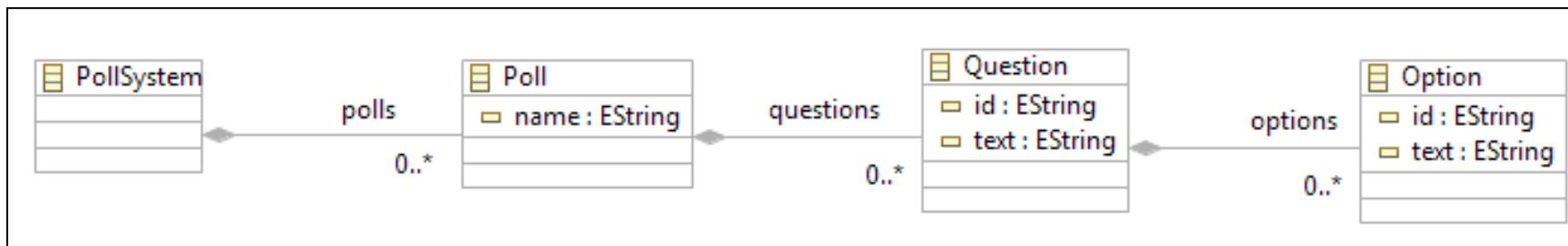
```
grammar fr.miage.xtext.Poll with org.eclipse.xtext.common.Terminals

generate poll "http://www.miage.fr/xtext/Poll"

PollSystem:
    'PollSystem' '{' polls+=Poll+ '}';
    
Poll:
    'Poll' name=ID '{' questions+=Question+'}'';

Question:
    'Question' id=ID '{' text=STRING 'options' '{' options+=Option+ '}';
    
Option:
    id=ID ':' text=STRING;
```

Derived  
metamodel



# Xtext Grammar

## Parser Rules

```
grammar fr.miage.xtext.Poll with org.eclipse.xtext.common.Terminals

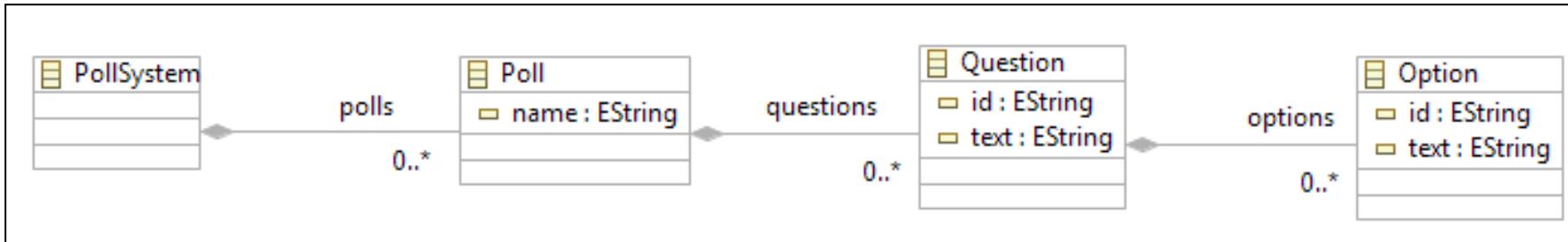
generate poll "http://www.miage.fr/xtext/Poll"

PollSystem:
    'PollSystem' '{' polls+=Poll+ '}';
    }

Poll:
    'Poll' name=ID '{' questions+=Question+ '}';
    }

Question:
    'Question' id=ID '{' text=STRING 'options' '{' options+=Option+ '}';
    }

Option:
    id=ID ':' text=STRING;
```



# Xtext Grammar

```
grammar fr.miage.xtext.Poll with org.eclipse.xtext.common.Terminals

generate poll "http://www.miage.fr/xtext/Poll"
```

PollSystem:

```
→ 'PollSystem' '{' polls+=Poll+ '}';

```

Poll:

```
→ 'Poll' name=ID '{' questions+=Question+ '}';

```

Question:

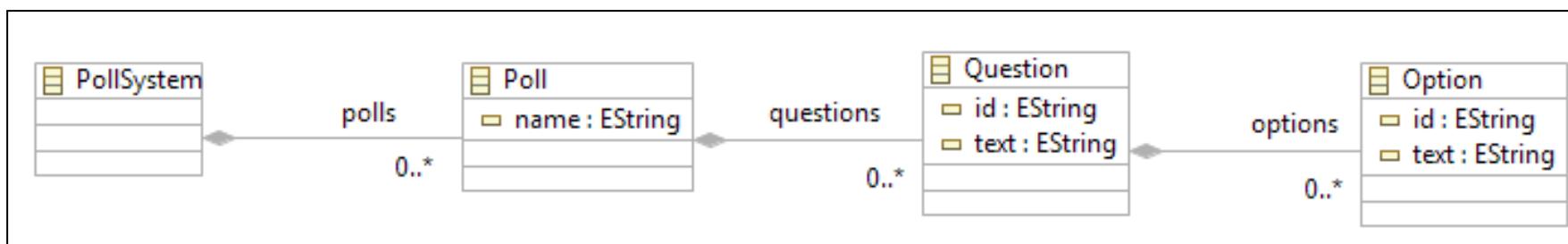
```
→ 'Question' id=ID '{' text=STRING 'options' '{' options+=Option+ '}'} '}';

```

Option:

```
id=ID ':' text=STRING;
```

Keywords



# Xtext Grammar

```
grammar fr.miage.xtext.Poll with org.eclipse.xtext.common.Terminals

generate poll "http://www.miage.fr/xtext/Poll"

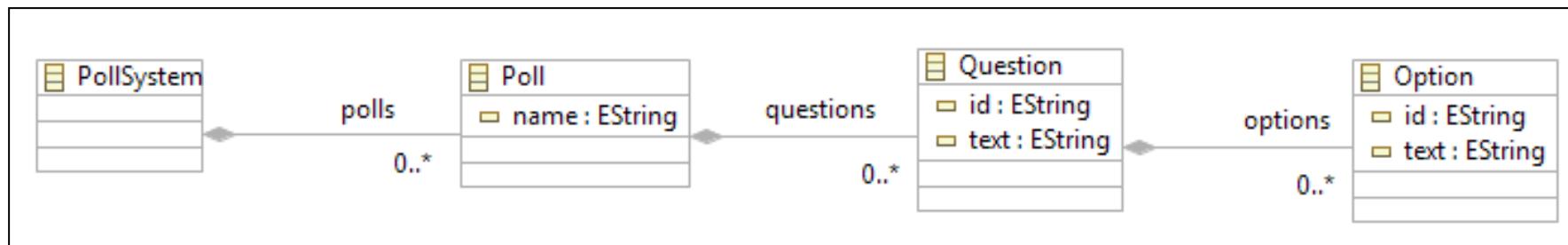
PollSystem:
    'PollSystem' '{' polls+=Poll+ '}';
    ^ Multivalue assignment

Poll:
    'Poll' name=ID '{' questions+=Question+ '}';

Question:
    'Question' id=ID '{' text=STRING 'options' '{' options+=Option+ '}'}';

Option:
    id=ID ':' text=STRING;
    ^ Simple assignment
```

(not here → **?= Boolean assignment**)



# Xtext Grammar

```
grammar fr.miage.xtext.Poll with org.eclipse.xtext.common.Terminals

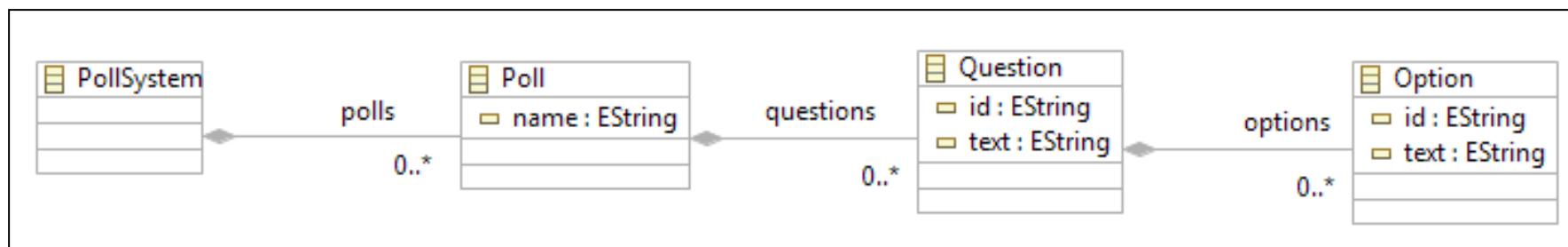
generate poll "http://www.miage.fr/xtext/Poll"

PollSystem:
    'PollSystem' '{' polls+=Poll+ '}';
    ^Cardinality (others: * ?)

Poll:
    'Poll' name=ID '{' questions+=Question+ '}';

Question:
    'Question' id=ID '{' text=STRING 'options' '{' options+=Option+ '}'}';

Option:
    id=ID ':' text=STRING;
```



# Xtext Grammar

```
grammar fr.miage.xtext.Poll with org.eclipse.xtext.common.Terminals
```

```
generate poll "http://www.miage.fr/xtext/Poll"
```

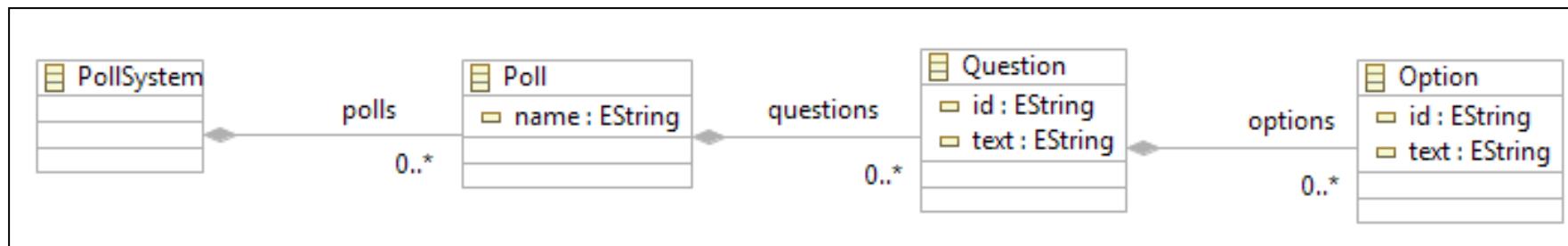
```
PollSystem:  
    'PollSystem' '{' polls+=Poll+ '}' ;
```

```
Poll:  
    'Poll' name=ID '{' questions+=Question+'}';
```

Question:  
    'Question' id=ID '{{ text=STRING 'options' '{{ options+=Option+' }}'}};

Option:  
    id=ID ';;' text=STRING;

## Containment



# Grammar and Programs/Specifications/Models

```
grammar fr.miage.xtext.Poll with org.eclipse.xtext.common.Terminals

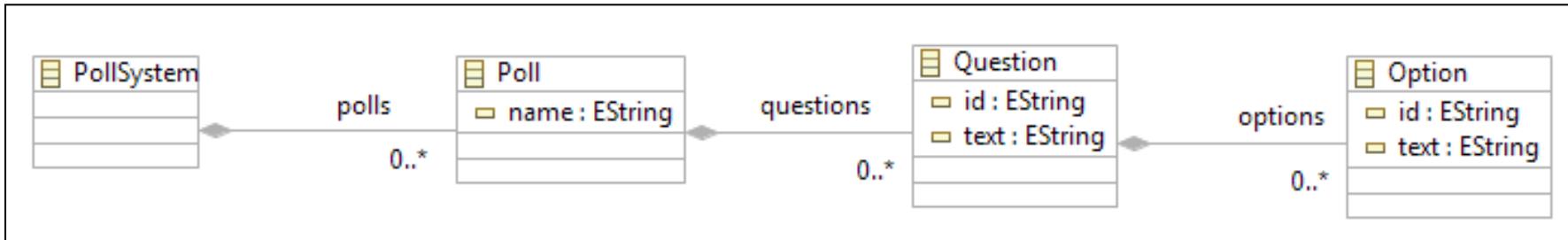
generate poll "http://www.miage.fr/xtext/Poll"

PollSystem:
    'PollSystem' '{' polls+=Poll+ '}';
    
Poll:
    'Poll' name=ID '{' questions+=Question+'}'';

Question:
    'Question' id=ID '{' text=STRING 'options' '{' options+=Option+ '}'}';

Option:
    id=ID ':' text=STRING;
```

```
PollSystem {
    Poll Quality {
        Question q1 {
            "Value the user experience"
            options {
                A : "Bad"
                B : "Fair"
                C : "Good"
            }
        }
        Question q2 {
            "Value the layout"
            options {
                A : "It was not easy to locate elements"
                B : "I didn't realize"
                C : "It was easy to locate elements"
            }
        }
    }
    Poll Performance {
        Question q1 {
            "Value the time response"
            options {
                A : "Bad"
                B : "Fair"
                C : "Good"
            }
        }
    }
}
```



# Grammar and Programs/Specifications/Models

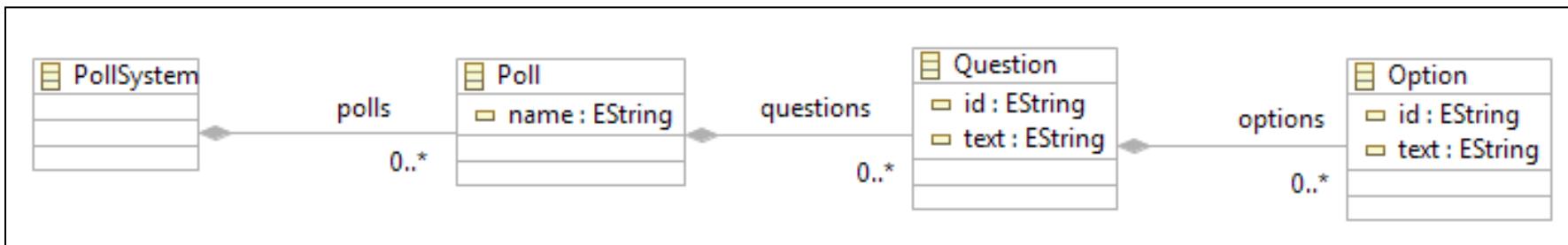
```
grammar fr.miage.xtext.Poll with org.eclipse.xtext.common.Terminals

generate poll "http://www.miage.fr/xtext/Poll"

PollSystem:
    'PollSystem' '{' polls+=Poll+ '}';
    
Poll:
    'Poll' name=ID '{' questions+=Question+'}'';

Question:
    'Question' id=ID '{' text=STRING 'options' '{' options+=Option+ '}';
    
Option:
    id=ID ':' text=STRING;
```

```
PollSystem {
    Poll Quality {
        Question q1 {
            "Value the user experience"
            options {
                A : "Bad"
                B : "Fair"
                C : "Good"
            }
        }
        Question q2 {
            "Value the layout"
            options {
                A : "It was not easy to locate elements"
                B : "I didn't realize"
                C : "It was easy to locate elements"
            }
        }
    }
    Poll Performance {
        Question q1 {
            "Value the time response"
            options {
                A : "Bad"
                B : "Fair"
                C : "Good"
            }
        }
    }
}
```



# Grammar and Programs/Specifications/Models

```
grammar fr.miage.xtext.Poll with org.eclipse.xtext.common.Terminals

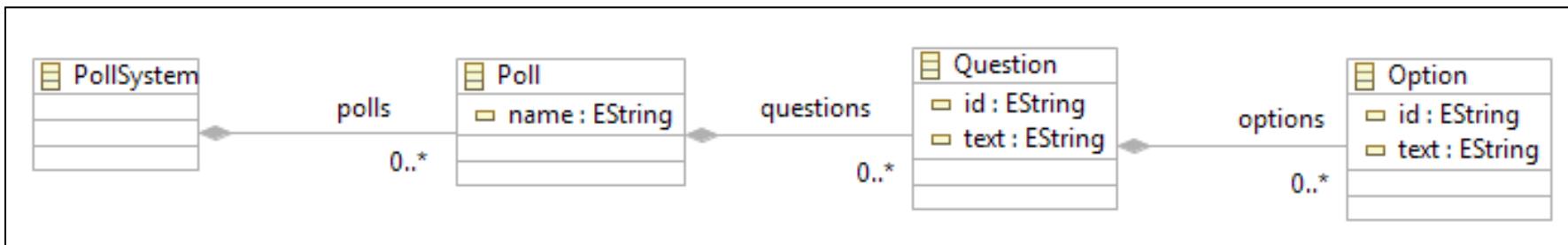
generate poll "http://www.miage.fr/xtext/Poll"

PollSystem:
    'PollSystem' '{' polls+=Poll+ '}';
    
Poll:
    'Poll' name=ID '{' questions+=Question+'}'';

Question:
    'Question' id=ID '{' text=STRING 'options' '{' options+=Option+ '}'}';

Option:
    id=ID ':' text=STRING;
```

```
PollSystem {
    Poll Quality {
        Question q1 {
            "Value the user experience"
            options {
                A : "Bad"
                B : "Fair"
                C : "Good"
            }
        }
        Question q2 {
            "Value the layout"
            options {
                A : "It was not easy to locate elements"
                B : "I didn't realize"
                C : "It was easy to locate elements"
            }
        }
    }
    Poll Performance {
        Question q1 {
            "Value the time response"
            options {
                A : "Bad"
                B : "Fair"
                C : "Good"
            }
        }
    }
}
```



# Grammar and Programs/Specifications/Models

```
grammar fr.miage.xtext.Poll with org.eclipse.xtext.common.Terminals

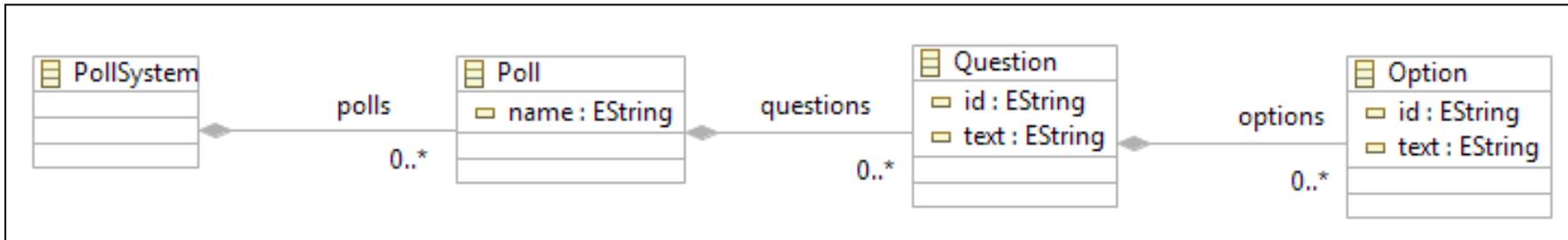
generate poll "http://www.miage.fr/xtext/Poll"

PollSystem:
    'PollSystem' '{' polls+=Poll+ '}';
    
Poll:
    'Poll' name=ID '{' questions+=Question+'}'';

Question:
    'Question' id=ID '{' text=STRING options='{' options+=Option+ '}'}';

Option:
    id=ID ':' text=STRING;
```

```
PollSystem {
    Poll Quality {
        Question q1 {
            "Value the user experience"
            options {
                A : "Bad"
                B : "Fair"
                C : "Good"
            }
        }
        Question q2 {
            "Value the layout"
            options {
                A : "It was not easy to locate elements"
                B : "I didn't realize"
                C : "It was easy to locate elements"
            }
        }
    }
    Poll Performance {
        Question q1 {
            "Value the time response"
            options {
                A : "Bad"
                B : "Fair"
                C : "Good"
            }
        }
    }
}
```



# Quizz Time

Quetionnaire.xtext

```
1 grammar org.xtext.example.mydsl.Quetionnaire with org.eclipse.xtext.common.Terminals
2
3 generate questionnaire "http://www.xtext.org/example/mydsl/Questionnaire"
4
5 @PollSystem:
6     'PollSystem' '{' polls+=Poll+ '}';
7
8 @Poll:
9     'Poll' name=ID '{' questions+=Question+ '}';
10
11 Question : 'Question' ID? '{' text=STRING 'options' options+=Option+ '}';
12
13 Option : id=ID ':' text=STRING ;
```

Est-ce que le fichier vide .q est correct vis-à-vis de la grammaire Xtext? Pourquoi?

# Quizz Time

```
grammar org.xtext.example.mydsl.Quetionnaire with org.eclipse.xtext.common.Terminals

generate questionnaire "http://www.xtext.org/example/mydsl/Questionnaire"

PollSystem:
    {PollSystem} 'PollSystem' '{' polls+=Poll* '}';

Poll:
    'Poll' name=ID '{' questions+=Question+ '}';

Question : 'Question' ID? '{' text=STRING 'options' options+=Option+ '}';

Option : id=ID ':' text=STRING ;
```

Est-ce que le fichier.q suivant est correct vis-à-vis de la grammaire Xtext?  
Pourquoi?

```
PollSystem [
}
```

# Quizz Time

Quetionnaire.xtext

```
1 grammar org.xtext.example.mydsl.Quetionnaire with org.eclipse.xtext.common.Terminals
2
3 generate questionnaire "http://www.xtext.org/example/mydsl/Questionnaire"
4
5@ PollSystem:
6     'PollSystem' '{' polls+=Poll+ '}';
7
8@ Poll:
9     'Poll' name=ID '{' questions+=Question+ '}';
10
11 Question : 'Question' ID '{' text=STRING 'options' options+=Option+ '}';
12
13 Option : id=ID ':' text=STRING ;
```

Est-ce que le fichier.q suivant est correct vis-à-vis de la grammaire Xtext? Pourquoi?

```
PollSystem {
    Poll p1 {
        Question {
            "Q1"
            options o1 : "R1"
        }
    }
}
```

Xtext, your DSL in  
5' (incl. editors and  
serializers)

Live Demonstration

The screenshot shows the Eclipse IDE interface with the Package Explorer and a code editor.

**Package Explorer:**

- org.xtext.example.questionnaire

  - src

    - org.xtext.example.mydsl

      - GenerateQuestionnaire.mwe2
      - Questionnaire.xtext

    - src-gen
    - xtend-gen

  - JRE System Library [JavaSE-1.8]
  - Plug-in Dependencies
  - META-INF
  - build.properties
  - org.xtext.example.questionnaire.sdk
  - org.xtext.example.questionnaire.tests
  - org.xtext.example.questionnaire.ui

**Code Editor (Questionnaire.xtext):**

```
1 grammar org.xtext.example.mydsl.Questionnaire with org.eclipse.xtext.common.Terminals
2
3 generate questionnaire "http://www.xtext.org/example/mydsl/Questionnaire"
4
5 PollSystem:
6     'PollSystem' '{' polls+=Poll+ '}';
7
8 Poll:
9     'Poll' name=ID '{' questions+=Question+ '}';
10
11 Question : 'Question' id=ID '{' text=STRING 'options' '{' options+=Option+ '}' '}';
12
13 Option : id=ID ':' text=STRING ;
```

Package Explorer



Questionnaire.xtext

org.xtext.example.questionnaire

src

org.xtext.example.mydsl

GenerateQuestionnaire.mwe2

Questionnaire.xtext

src-gen

xtend-gen

JRE System Library [JavaSE-1.8]

Plug-in Dependencies

META-INF

build.properties

org.xtext.example.questionnaire.sdk

org.xtext.example.questionnaire.tests

org.xtext.example.questionnaire.ui

org.xtext.example.videogenerator

org.xtext.example.videogenerator.sdk

org.xtext.example.videogenerator.tests

org.xtext.example.videogenerator.ui

```
1 grammar org.xtext.example.mydsl.Questionnaire
2
3 generate questionnaire "http://www.xtext.org/dsl/Questionnaire"
4
```

## New

Open

Open With

Show In

Copy

Copy Qualified Name

Paste

Delete

Build Path

Refactor

Import...

Export...

Refresh

Assign Working Sets...

## Validate

Run As

Debug As

Replace With

Team

Compare With

Properties

System' '{' polls+=Poll+ '}';

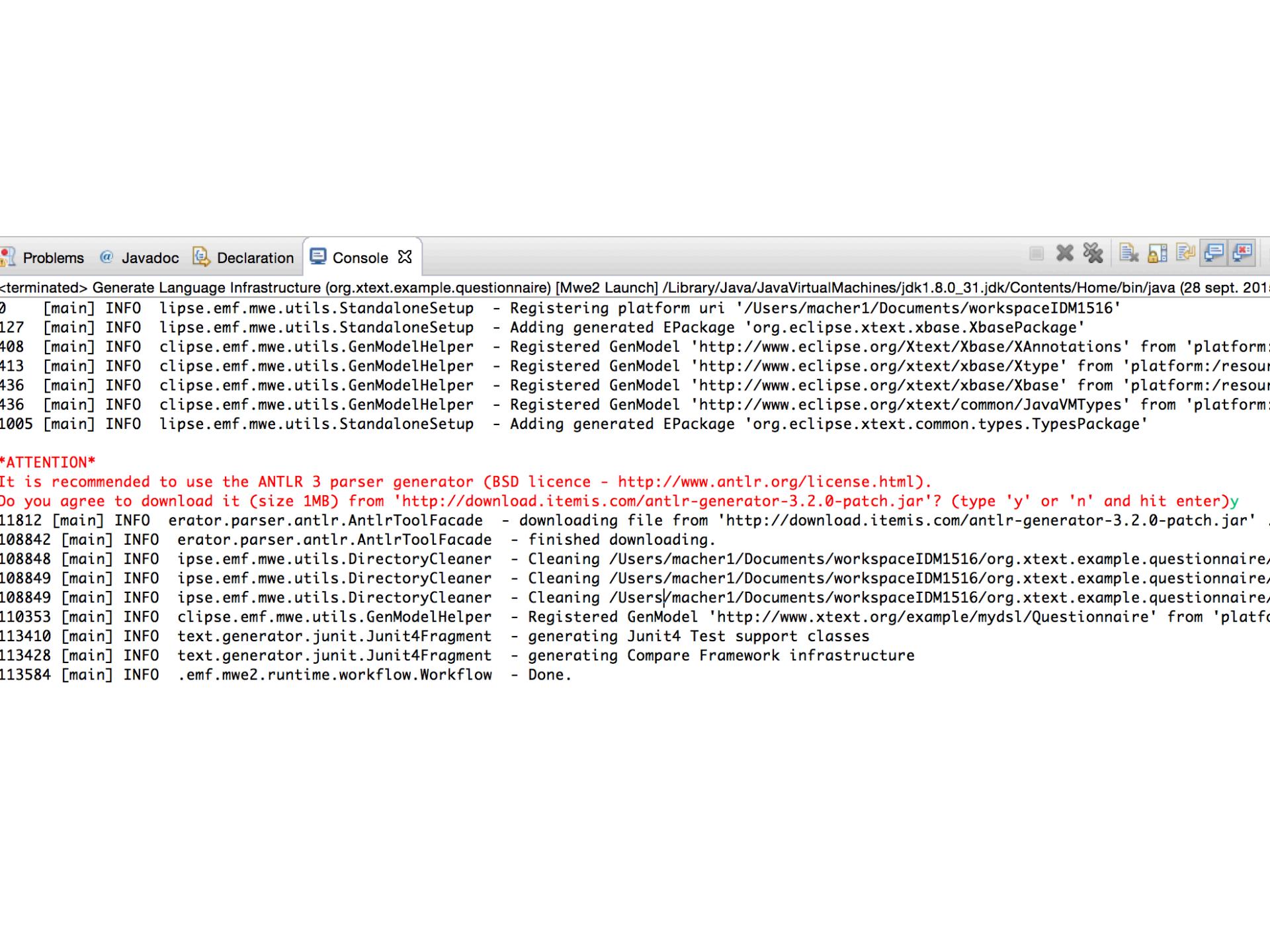
name=ID '{' questions+=Questi

Question' id=ID '{' text=\$1

=ID ':' text=STRING ;

1 MWE2 Workflow

Run Configurations...



Problems Javadoc Declaration Console

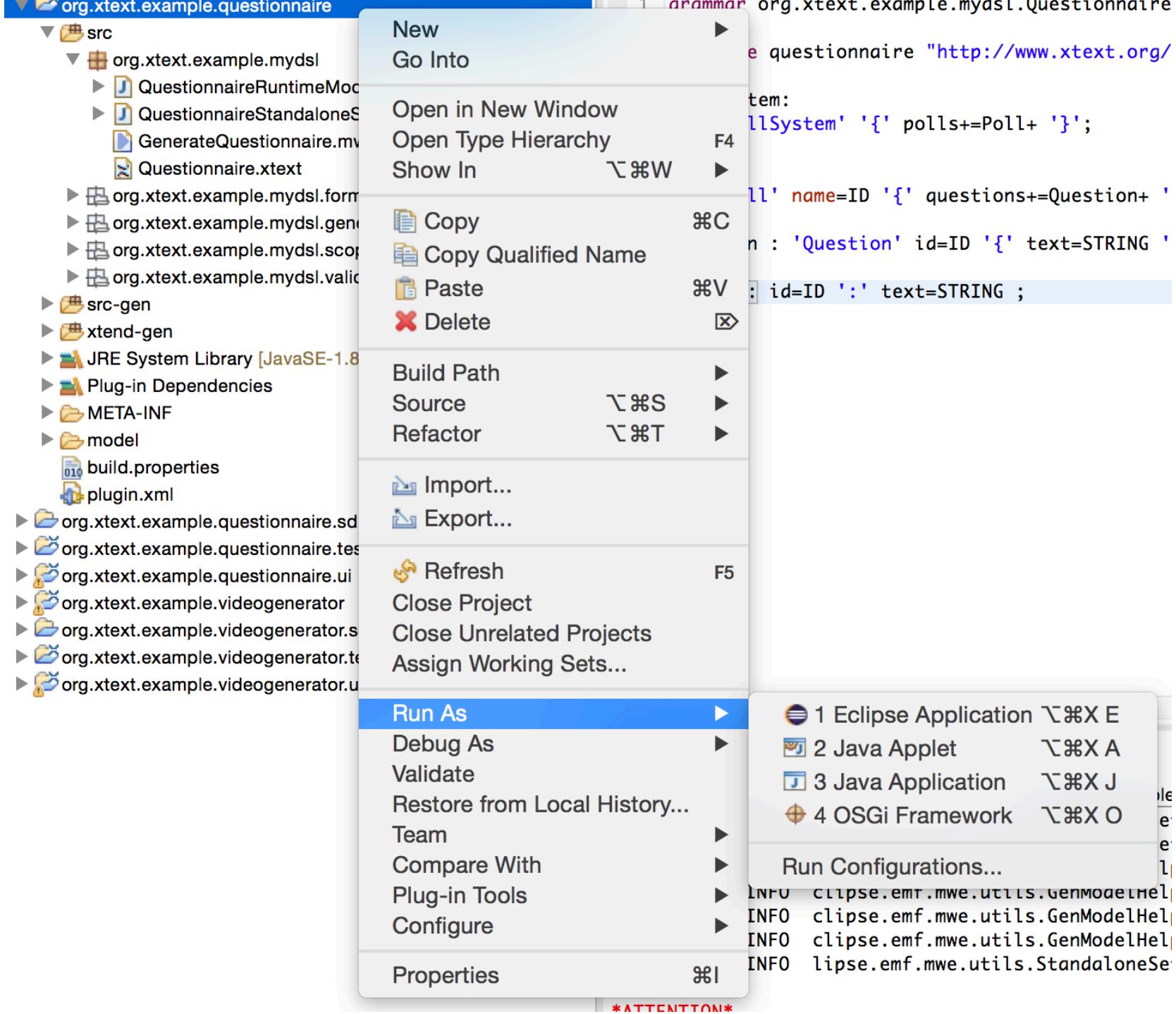
<terminated> Generate Language Infrastructure (org.xtext.example.questionnaire) [Mwe2 Launch] /Library/Java/JavaVirtualMachines/jdk1.8.0\_31.jdk/Contents/Home/bin/java (28 sept. 2014)

```
0 [main] INFO lipse.emf.mwe.utils.StandaloneSetup - Registering platform uri '/Users/macher1/Documents/workspaceIDM1516'
127 [main] INFO lipse.emf.mwe.utils.StandaloneSetup - Adding generated EPackage 'org.eclipse.xtext.Xbase.XbasePackage'
408 [main] INFO clipse.emf.mwe.utils.GenModelHelper - Registered GenModel 'http://www.eclipse.org/Xtext/Xbase/XAnnotations' from 'platform:/resource/Questionnaire/XAnnotations.genmodel'
413 [main] INFO clipse.emf.mwe.utils.GenModelHelper - Registered GenModel 'http://www.eclipse.org/xtext/xbase/Xtype' from 'platform:/resource/Questionnaire/Xtype.genmodel'
436 [main] INFO clipse.emf.mwe.utils.GenModelHelper - Registered GenModel 'http://www.eclipse.org/xtext/xbase/Xbase' from 'platform:/resource/Questionnaire/Xbase.genmodel'
436 [main] INFO clipse.emf.mwe.utils.GenModelHelper - Registered GenModel 'http://www.eclipse.org/xtext/common/JavaVMTypes' from 'platform:/resource/Questionnaire/JavaVMTypes.genmodel'
1005 [main] INFO lipse.emf.mwe.utils.StandaloneSetup - Adding generated EPackage 'org.eclipse.xtext.common.types.TypesPackage'
```

\*ATTENTION\*

It is recommended to use the ANTLR 3 parser generator (BSD licence - <http://www.antlr.org/license.html>).  
Do you agree to download it (size 1MB) from '<http://download.itemis.com/antlr-generator-3.2.0-patch.jar>'? (type 'y' or 'n' and hit enter)  
y

```
11812 [main] INFO erator.parser.antlr.AntlrToolFacade - downloading file from 'http://download.itemis.com/antlr-generator-3.2.0-patch.jar' ...
108842 [main] INFO erator.parser.antlr.AntlrToolFacade - finished downloading.
108848 [main] INFO ipse.emf.mwe.utils.DirectoryCleaner - Cleaning '/Users/macher1/Documents/workspaceIDM1516/org.xtext.example.questionnaire'
108849 [main] INFO ipse.emf.mwe.utils.DirectoryCleaner - Cleaning '/Users/macher1/Documents/workspaceIDM1516/org.xtext.example.questionnaire'
108849 [main] INFO ipse.emf.mwe.utils.DirectoryCleaner - Cleaning '/Users/macher1/Documents/workspaceIDM1516/org.xtext.example.questionnaire'
110353 [main] INFO clipse.emf.mwe.utils.GenModelHelper - Registered GenModel 'http://www.xtext.org/example/mydsl/Questionnaire' from 'platform:/resource/Questionnaire/Questionnaire.genmodel'
113410 [main] INFO text.generator.junit.Junit4Fragment - generating Junit4 Test support classes
113428 [main] INFO text.generator.junit.Junit4Fragment - generating Compare Framework infrastructure
113584 [main] INFO .emf.mwe2.runtime.workflow.Workflow - Done.
```



**File**

Create a new file resource.



Enter or select the parent folder:

FooQuestionnaire



FooQuestionnaire

VideoGen1

File name:

Advanced >>



Cancel

Finish

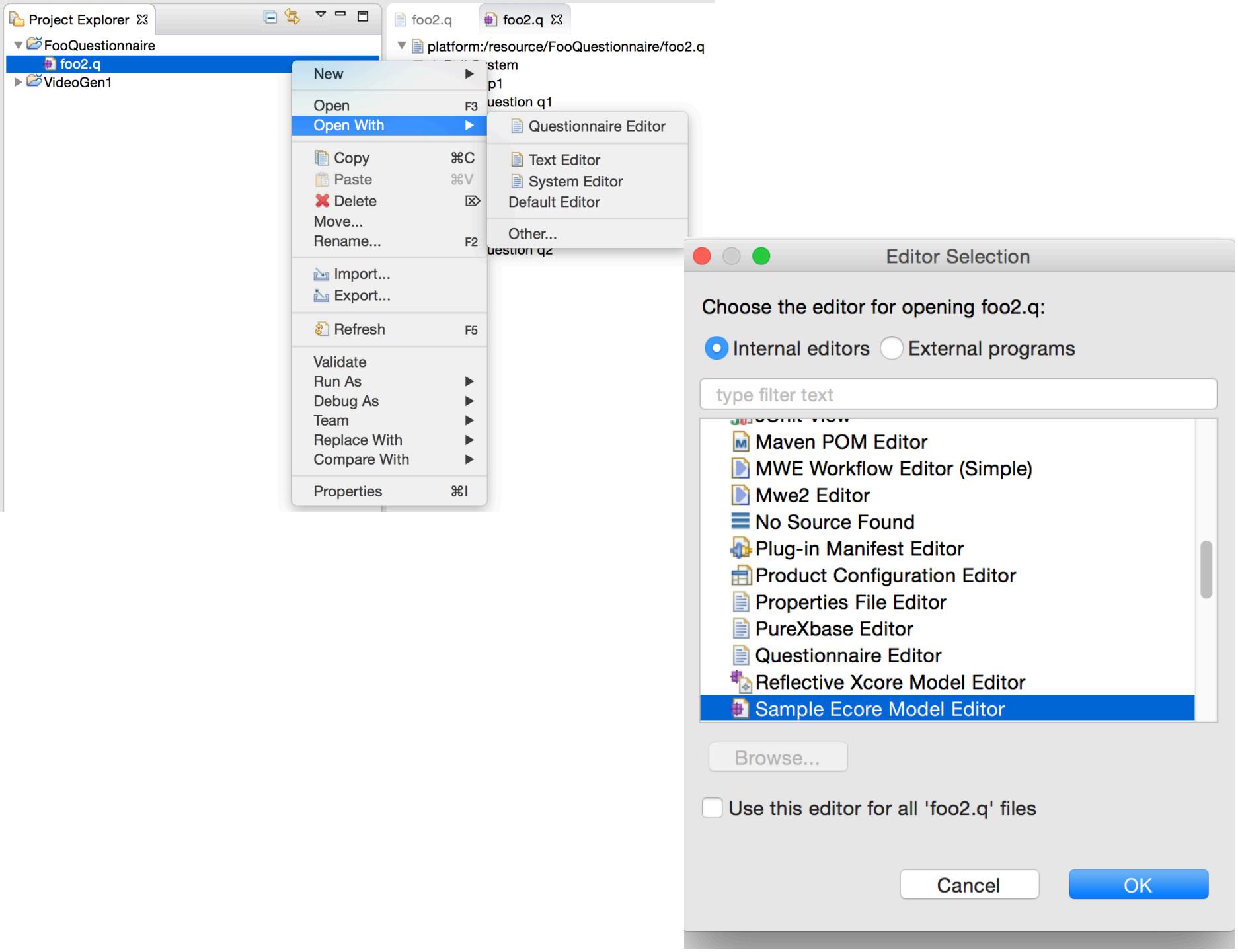
```
PollSystem {

    Poll p1 {
        Question q1 {
            "What is the best JavaScript framework for testing?"
            options [
                A1: "PhantomJS"
                A2: "Jasmine"
                A3: "Mocha"
                A4: "I prefer to develop my own framework"
            ]
        }

        Question q2 {
            "What is the best CSS preprocessor?"
            options [
                A1: "Less.js"
                A2: "Sass"
                A3: "Stylus"
                A4: "I don't care about preprocessing CSS"
            ]
        }
    }

    Poll p2 {
        Question q1 {
            "What is the best Java framework for testing?"
            options [
                A1: "JUnit"
                A2: "Jasmine"
                A3: "I prefer to develop my own framework"
            ]
        }

        Question q2 {
            "What is the best Java library for logging?"
            options [
                A1: "Log4J"
                A2: "java.util.logging"
                A3: "I don't care about logging"
            ]
        }
    }
}
```



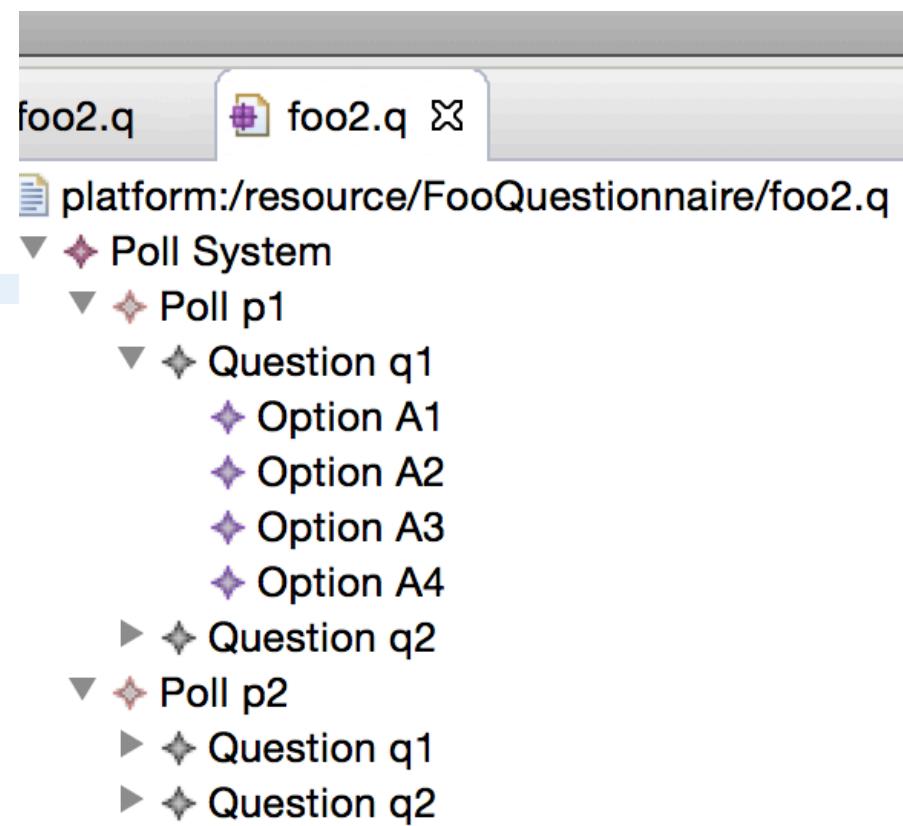
```
2.q ✎
ollSystem {

Poll p1 {
    Question q1 {
        "What is the best JavaScript framework for testing?"
        options [
            A1: "PhantomJS"
            A2: "Jasmine"
            A3: "Mocha"
            A4: "I prefer to develop my own framework"
        ]
    }

    Question q2 {
        "What is the best CSS preprocessor?"
        options {
            A1: "Less.js"
            A2: "Sass"
            A3: "Stylus"
            A4: "I don't care about preprocessing CSS"
        }
    }

Poll p2 {
    Question q1 {
        "What is the best Java framework for testing?"
        options {
            A1: "JUnit"
            A2: "Jasmine"
            A3: "I prefer to develop my own framework"
        }
    }

    Question q2 {
        "What is the best Java library for logging?"
        options {
            A1: "Log4J"
            A2: "java.util.logging"
            A3: "I don't care about logging"
        }
    }
}
}
```



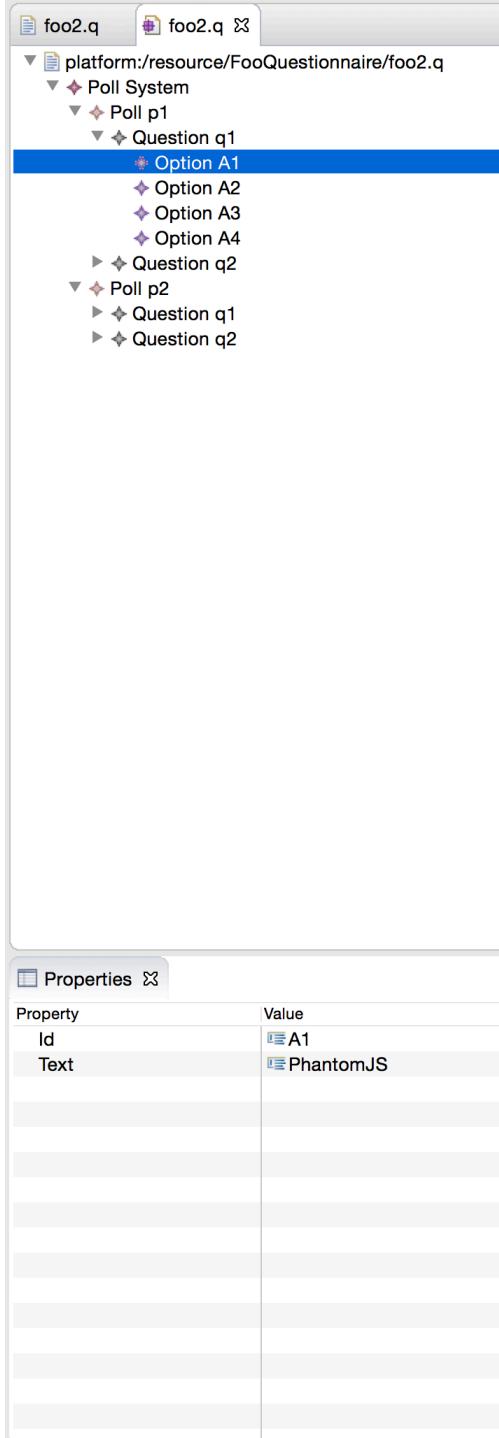
```
2.q ✎
ollSystem {

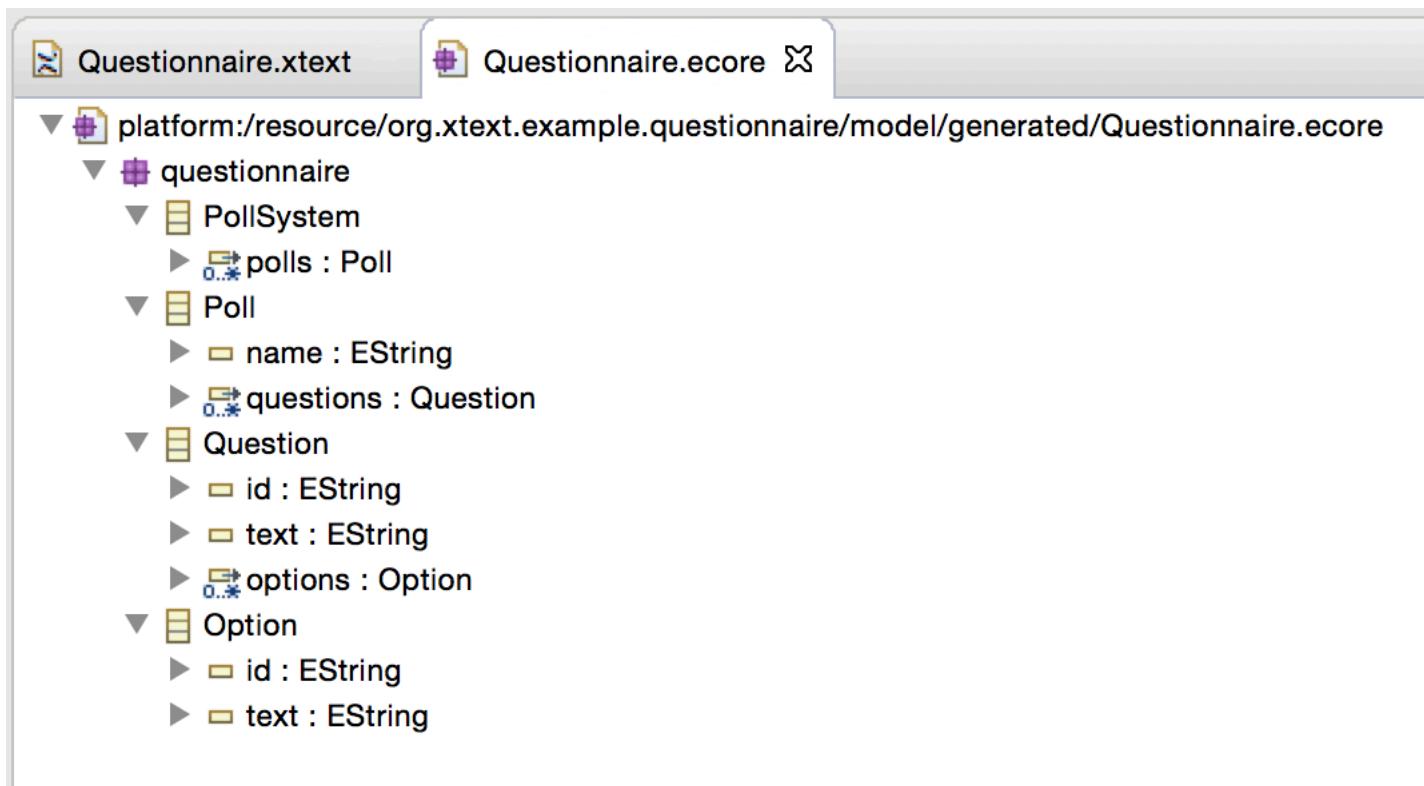
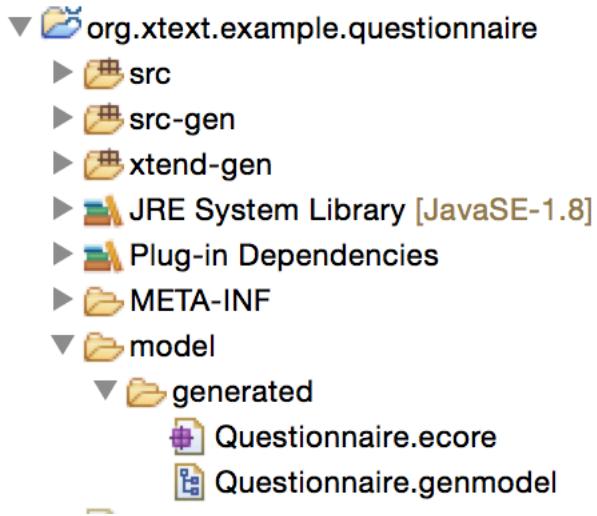
    Poll p1 {
        Question q1 {
            "What is the best JavaScript framework for testing?"
            options [
                A1: "PhantomJS"
                A2: "Jasmine"
                A3: "Mocha"
                A4: "I prefer to develop my own framework"
            ]
        }

        Question q2 {
            "What is the best CSS preprocessor?"
            options [
                A1: "Less.js"
                A2: "Sass"
                A3: "Stylus"
                A4: "I don't care about preprocessing CSS"
            ]
        }
    }

    Poll p2 {
        Question q1 {
            "What is the best Java framework for testing?"
            options [
                A1: "JUnit"
                A2: "Jasmine"
                A3: "I prefer to develop my own framework"
            ]
        }

        Question q2 {
            "What is the best Java library for logging?"
            options [
                A1: "Log4J"
                A2: "java.util.logging"
                A3: "I don't care about logging"
            ]
        }
    }
}
```





Another example:

Chess

**“Queen to c7.  
Check.”**



**“Rd2-c2,  
rook at d2 moves to c2”**

# Moves in Chess:

Rook at a1 moves to a5.

Piece      Square      Action      Destination

Bishop at c8 captures knight at h3.

Piece      Square      Action      Destination

N b1 x c3

Piece      Square      Action      Destination

g2 - g4

Square      Action      Destination

Bishop at c8 captures knight at h3

$\mathbb{B} \text{ c8 x h3}$



P e2 – e4

p g7 – g5

Knight at b2 moves to c3

pawn at f7 moves to f5

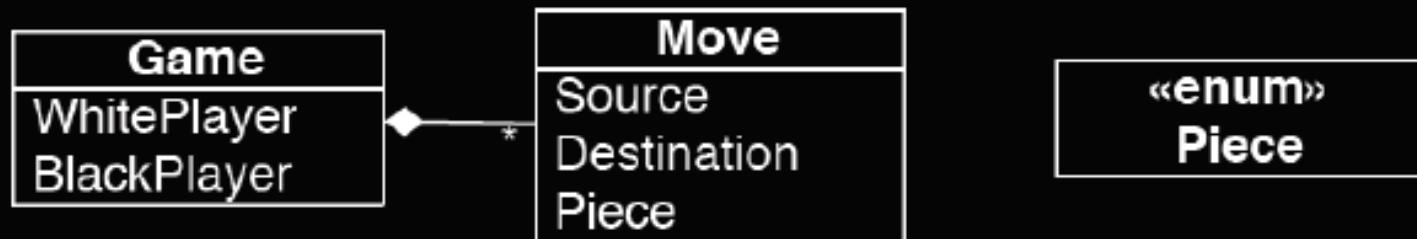
Q d1 – h5

# 1-0

**Concrete Syntax**

**Constraints !!!**

**Abstract Syntax**



# Chess Example - Grammar

**Game:**

```
"White:" whitePlayer=STRING  
"Black:" blackPlayer=STRING  
(moves+=Move) +;
```

**Move:**

```
AlgebraicMove | SpokenMove;
```

**AlgebraicMove:**

```
(piece=Piece) ? source=Square (captures?='x' | '-') dest=Square;
```

**SpokenMove:**

```
piece=Piece 'at' source=Square  
(captures?='captures' capturedPiece=Piece 'at' | 'moves to')  
dest=Square;
```

**terminal Square:**

```
('a'..'h')('1'..'8');
```

**enum Piece:**

```
pawn    = 'P' | pawn = 'pawn' |  
knight  = 'N' | knight = 'knight' |  
bishop  = 'B' | bishop = 'bishop' |  
rook    = 'R' | rook = 'rook' |  
queen   = 'Q' | queen = 'queen' |  
king    = 'K' | king = 'king';
```

# Chess Example - Model

White: "Mayfield"

Black: "Trinks"

pawn at e2 moves to e4

pawn at f7 moves to g5

K b1 - c3

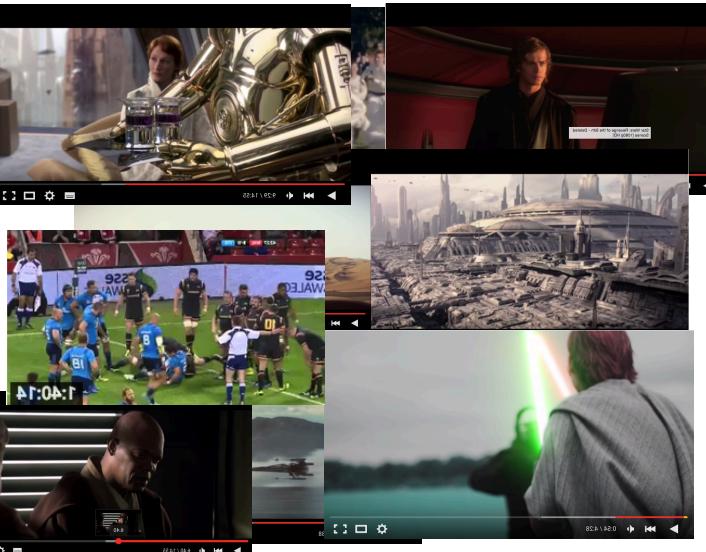
f7 - f5

queen at d1 moves to h5

// 1-0

Back to Video

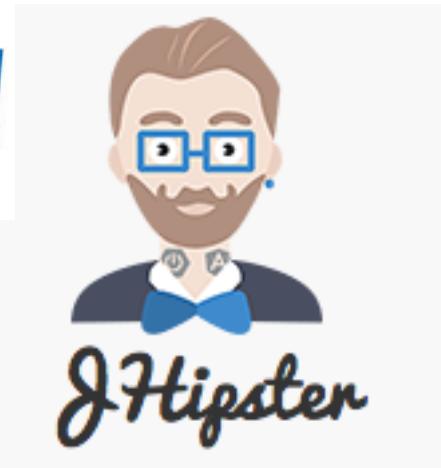
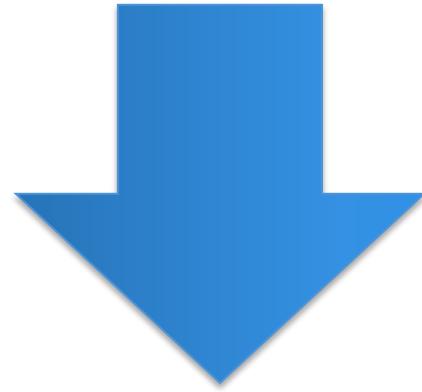
(VideoGen)



```
foo1.videogen ✘

mandatory videoseq v1 "https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PJNi1uYhV5w"
optional videoseq v2 "v2Folder/v2.mp4"
alternatives v3 {
    videoseq v31 "v3/seq1.mp4"
    videoseq v32 "v3/seq1.mp4"
    videoseq v33 "v3/seq1.mp4"
}

alternatives v4 {
    videoseq v41 "v4/seq1.mp4"
    videoseq v42 "v4/seq1.mp4"
}
mandatory videoseq v5 "https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ezKx-S0LiNQ"
```



 FFmpeg

## foo1.videoogen

```
mandatory videoseq v1 "https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PJNi1uYhV5w"
optional videoseq v2 "v2folder/v2.mp4"
⊖ alternatives v3 {
    videoseq v31 "v3/seq1.mp4"
    videoseq v32 "v3/seq1.mp4"
    videoseq v33 "v3/seq1.mp4"
}
⊖ alternatives v4 {
    videoseq v41 "v4/seq1.mp4"
    videoseq v42 "v4/seq1.mp4"
}
mandatory videoseq v5 "https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ezKx-S0LiNQ"
```

# Quizz Time

**Write a Xtext grammar so that the specification below is conformant**

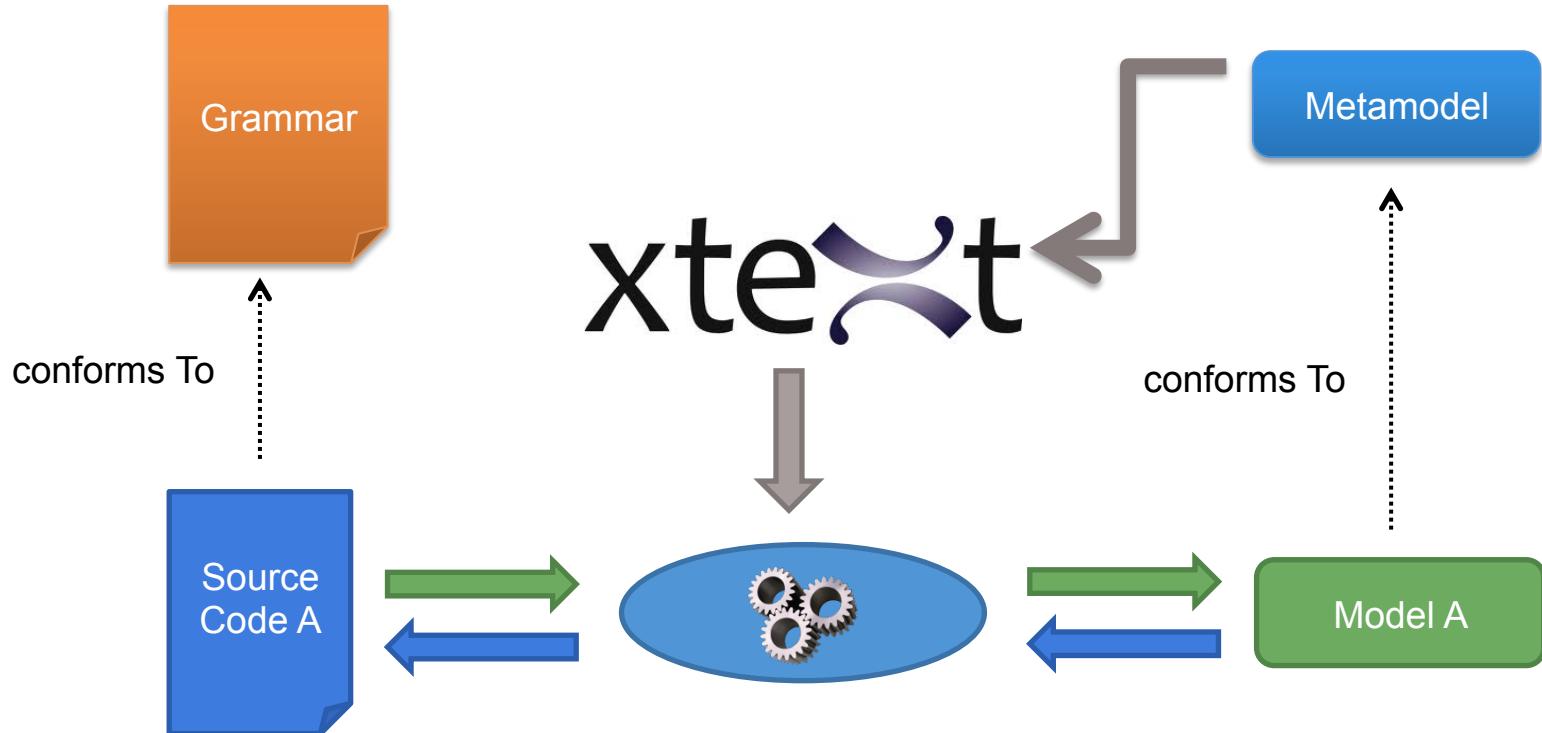
```
foo1.videogen ✎
mandatory videoseq v1 "https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PJNi1uYhV5w"
optional videoseq v2 "v2Folder/v2.mp4"
@alternatives v3 {
    videoseq v31 "v3/seq1.mp4"
    videoseq v32 "v3/seq1.mp4"
    videoseq v33 "v3/seq1.mp4"
}
@alternatives v4 {
    videoseq v41 "v4/seq1.mp4"
    videoseq v42 "v4/seq1.mp4"
}
mandatory videoseq v5 "https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ezKx-S0LiNQ"
```

From Metamodel

To

Grammar (other side)

# From Metamodel to Grammar





Give me a **metamodel**,

I'll give you (for free)

- \* a comprehensive editor (auto-completion, syntax highlighting, etc.) in Eclipse
- \* a grammar and facilities to load/serialize/visit conformant models (Java ecosystem)
- \* extension to override/extend « default » facilities (e.g., checker)



Give me a **metamodel**,

The grammar can be « weird » (i.e., not as concise and as comprehensible than if you made it manually)

[Same observation actually applies to the other side: generated metamodels (from grammar) can be weird as well, but you have at least some control in Xtext-based grammar]  
[We will experiment in the lab sessions]

Live  
Demonstration

New

Select a wizard

Create an Xtext project from existing Ecore models

Wizards:

Xtext

- ▼ Xtext
  - Xtext Project
  - Xtext Project From Existing Ecore Models**
- ▼ Continuous Integration
  - Build Xtext with Buckminster
- ▼ Examples
  - Xtext Domain-Model Example
  - Xtext Home Automation Example
  - Xtext Simple Arithmetics Example
  - Xtext State-Machine Example
- ▼ Examples
  - Xtext Examples
    - Xtext Domain-Model Example
    - Xtext Home Automation Example

?

< Back    Next >    Cancel    Finish

New Xtext Project From Ecore

Select EPackages

Select the EPackages to generate an Xtext grammar for.

EPackages:

org.xtext.example.mydsl.questionnaire.QuestionnairePackage (default package)

Add...    Set Default    Remove

Entry rule:

PollSystem - questionnaire

?

< Back    Next >    Cancel    Finish

Questionnaire.xtext Questionnaire.ecore Questionnaire.xtext Questionnaire.ecore Questionnaire2.xtext

```
// automatically generated by Xtext
grammar org.xtext.example.mydsl.Questionnaire2 with org.eclipse.xtext.common.Terminal

import "http://www.xtext.org/example/mydsl/Questionnaire"
import "http://www.eclipse.org/emf/2002/Ecore" as ecore

PollSystem returns PollSystem:
    {PollSystem}
    'PollSystem'
    '{'
        ('polls' '{' polls+=Poll ( "," polls+=Poll)* '}' )?
    '}';
    13
    14
    15
    16

Poll returns Poll:
    {Poll}
    'Poll'
    name=EString
    '{'
        ('questions' '{' questions+=Question ( "," questions+=Question)* '}' )?
    '}';
    24

EString returns ecore::EString:
    STRING | ID;
    27

Question returns Question:
    {Question}
    'Question'
    '{'
        ('id' id=EString)?
        ('text' text=EString)?
        ('options' '{' options+=Option ( "," options+=Option)* '}' )?
    '}';
    36

Option returns Option:
    {Option}
    'Option'
    '{'
        ('id' id=EString)?
        ('text' text=EString)?
    '}';
    44
```

# **Quizz Time**

**Explain (roughly) the  
« algorithm » of Xtext to  
generate a grammar from an  
ecore Metamodel**

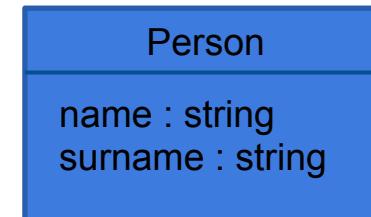
# Graphical DSL (vs Textual DSL)

# Graphical vs Textual DSLs

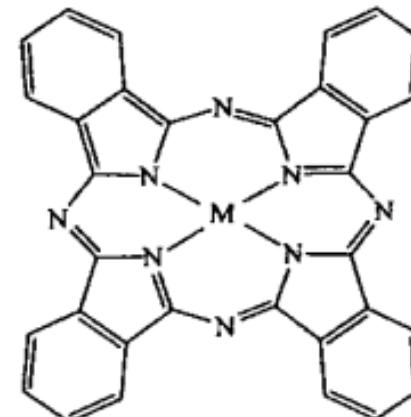
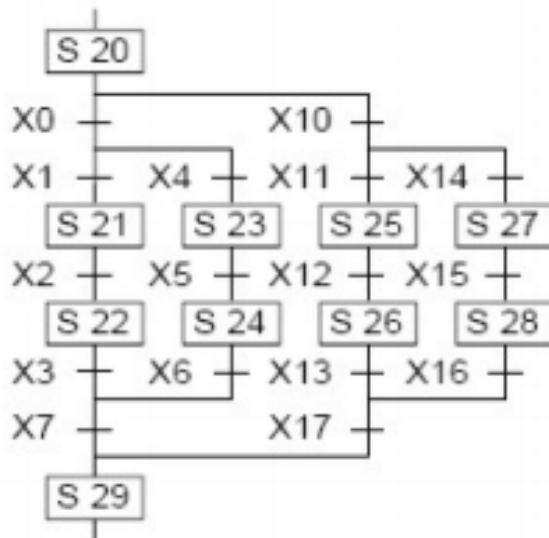
- Success depends on how the notation fits the domain

```
class Person {  
    private String name;  
    private String name;  
}
```

```
Person has (name, surname)
```

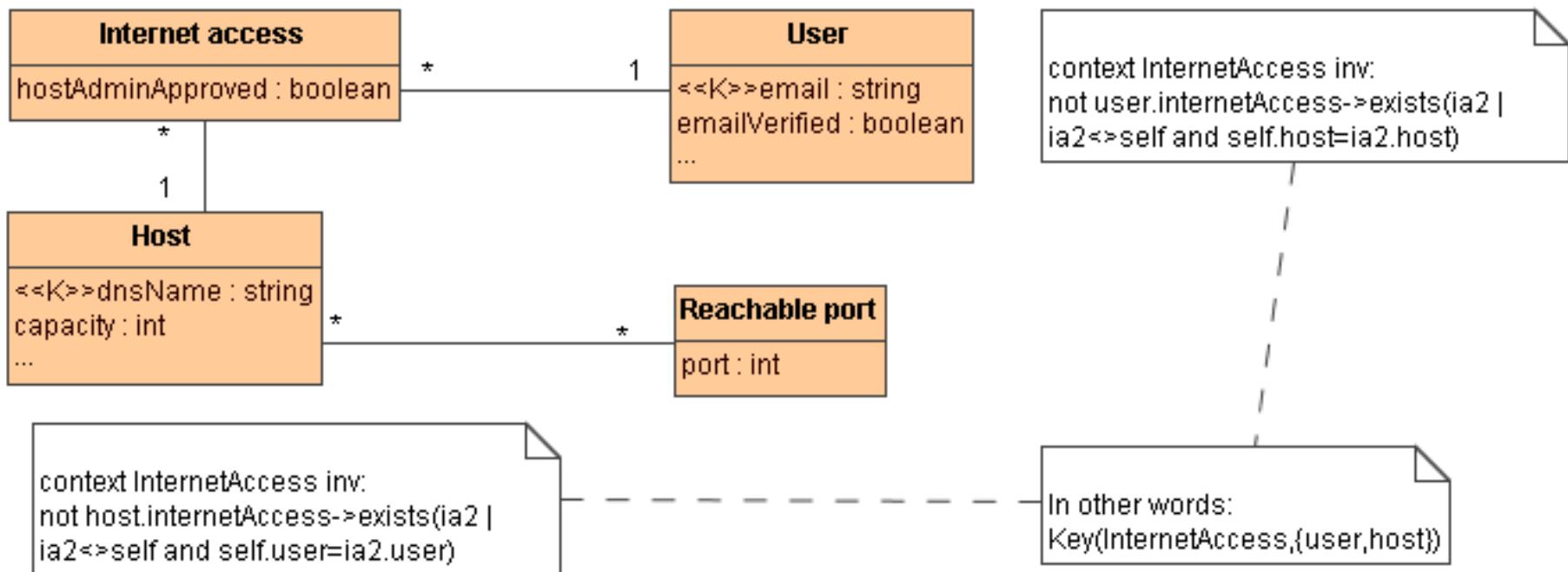


- Graphical DSLs are not always easier to understand



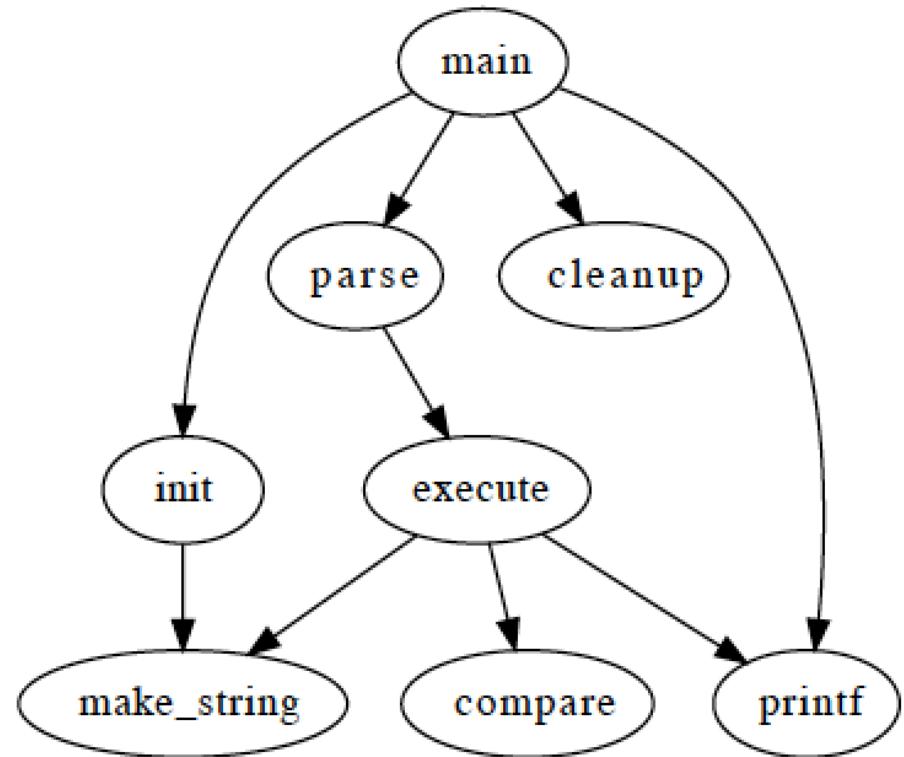
phthalocyanine

# A language can be graphical and textual

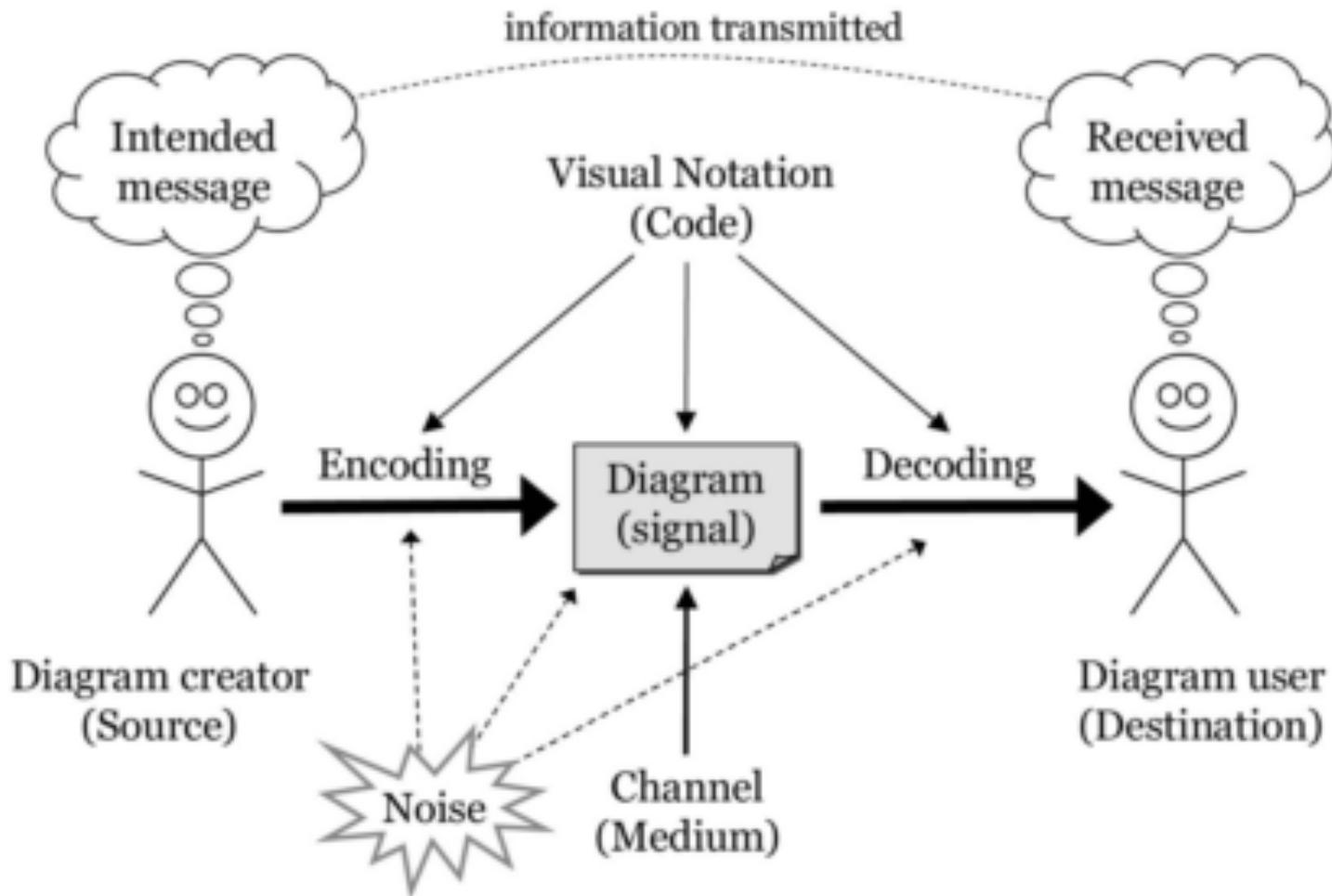


# Alternative representation

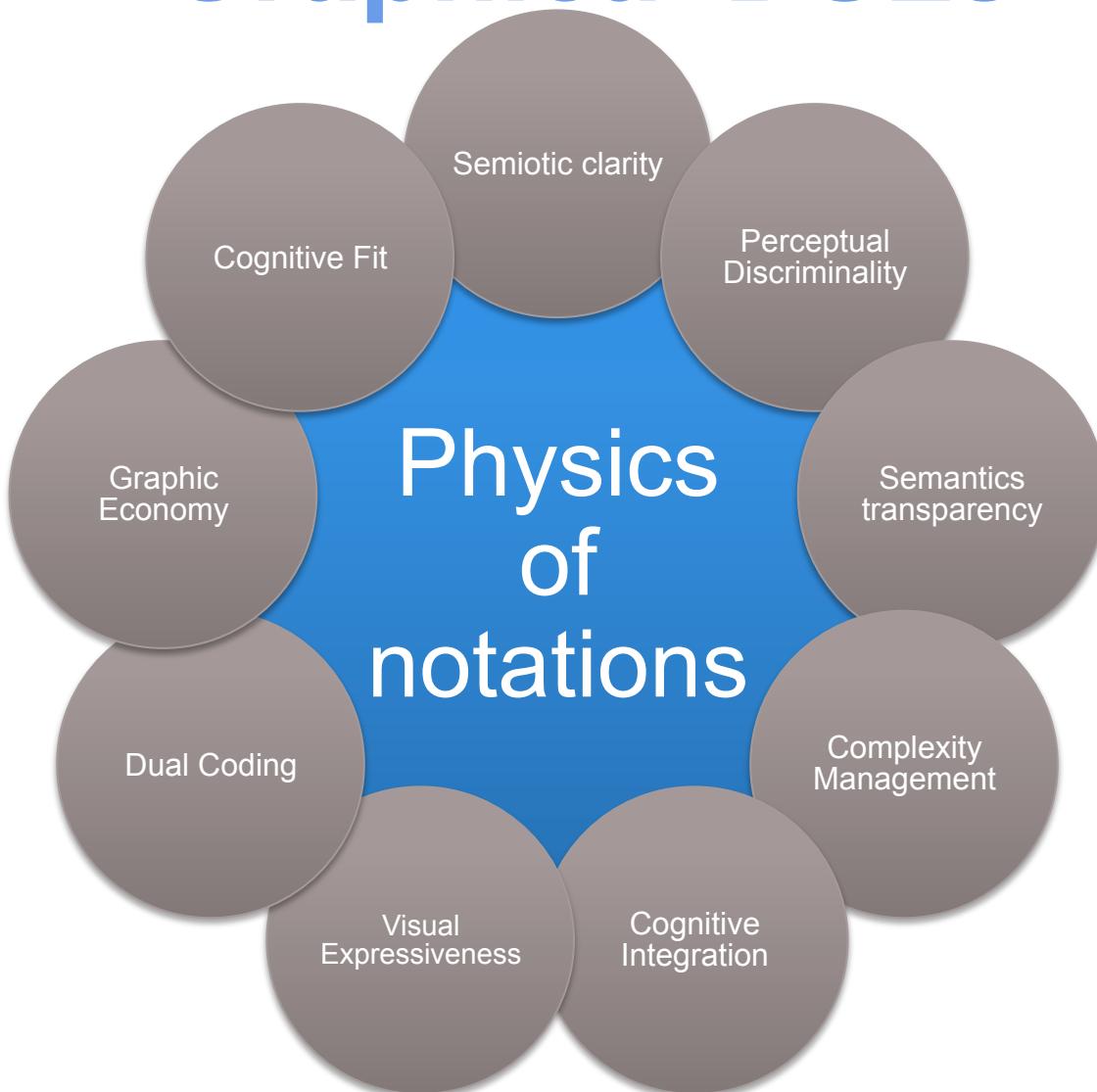
```
digraph G {  
    main -> parse -> execute;  
    main -> init;  
    main -> cleanup;  
    execute -> make_string;  
    execute -> printf;  
    init -> make_string;  
    main -> printf;  
    execute -> compare;  
}
```



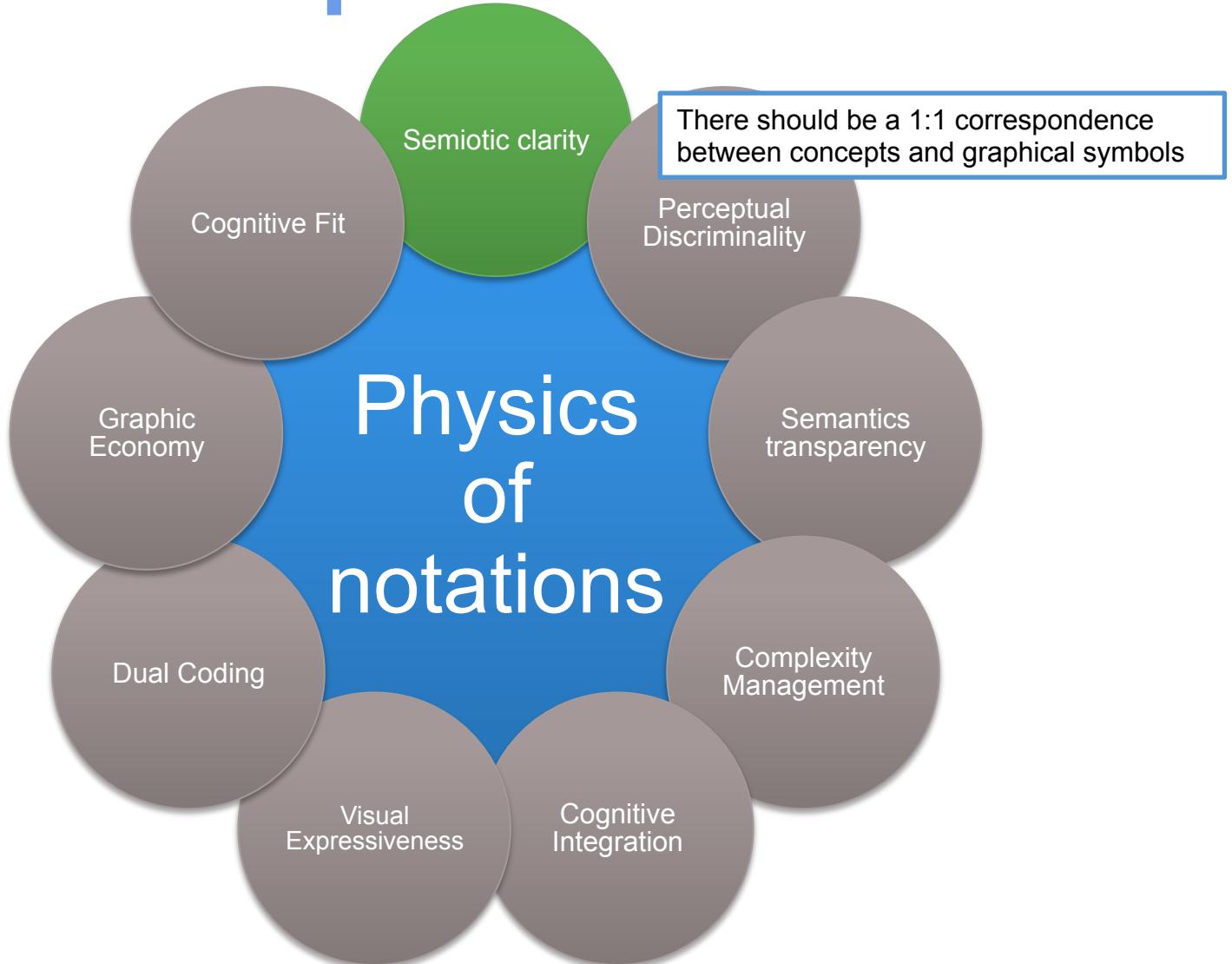
# Recommendations for Graphical DSLs



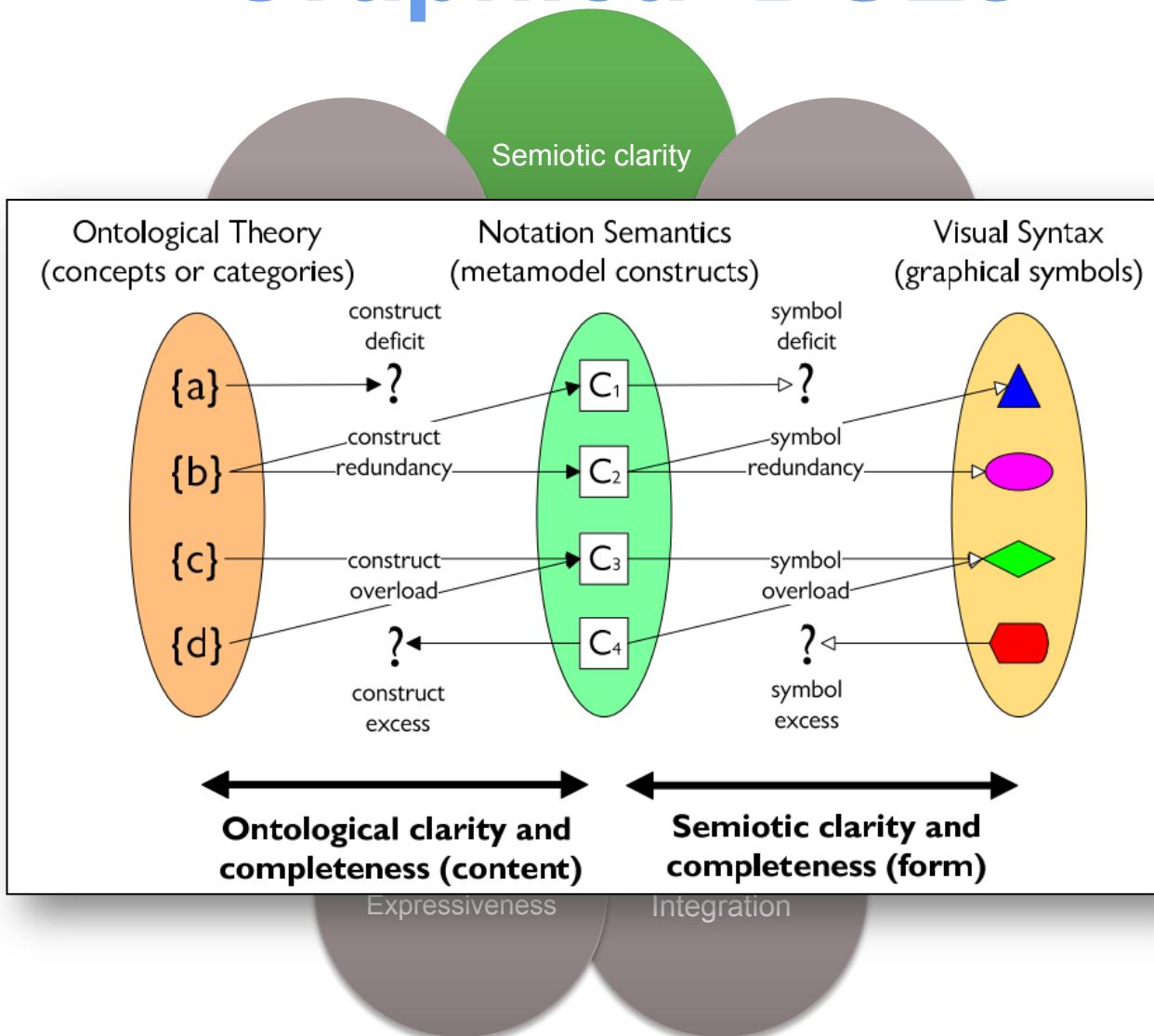
# Recommendations for Graphical DSLs



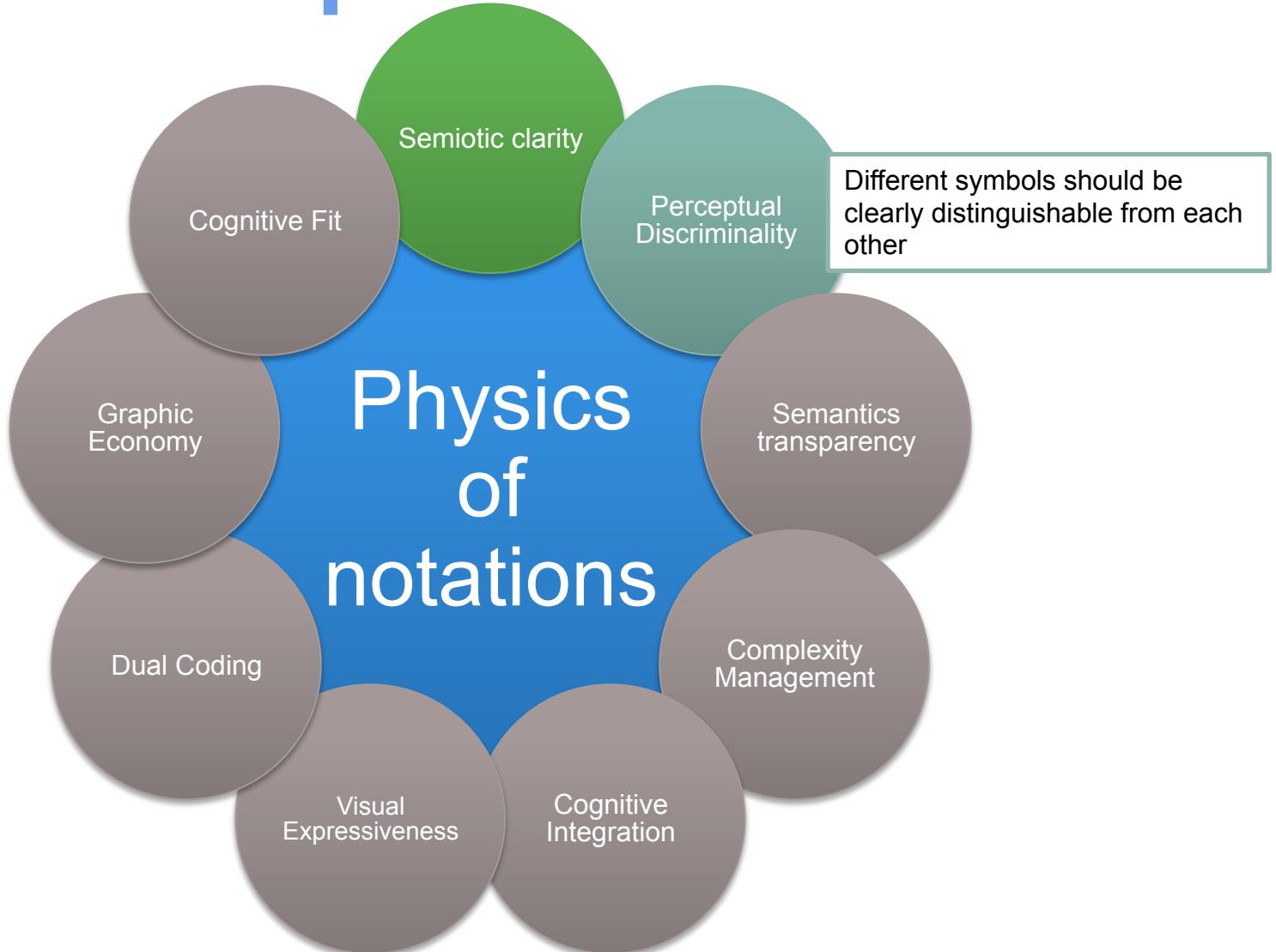
# Recommendations for Graphical DSLs



# Recommendations for Graphical DSLs



# Recommendations for Graphical DSLs



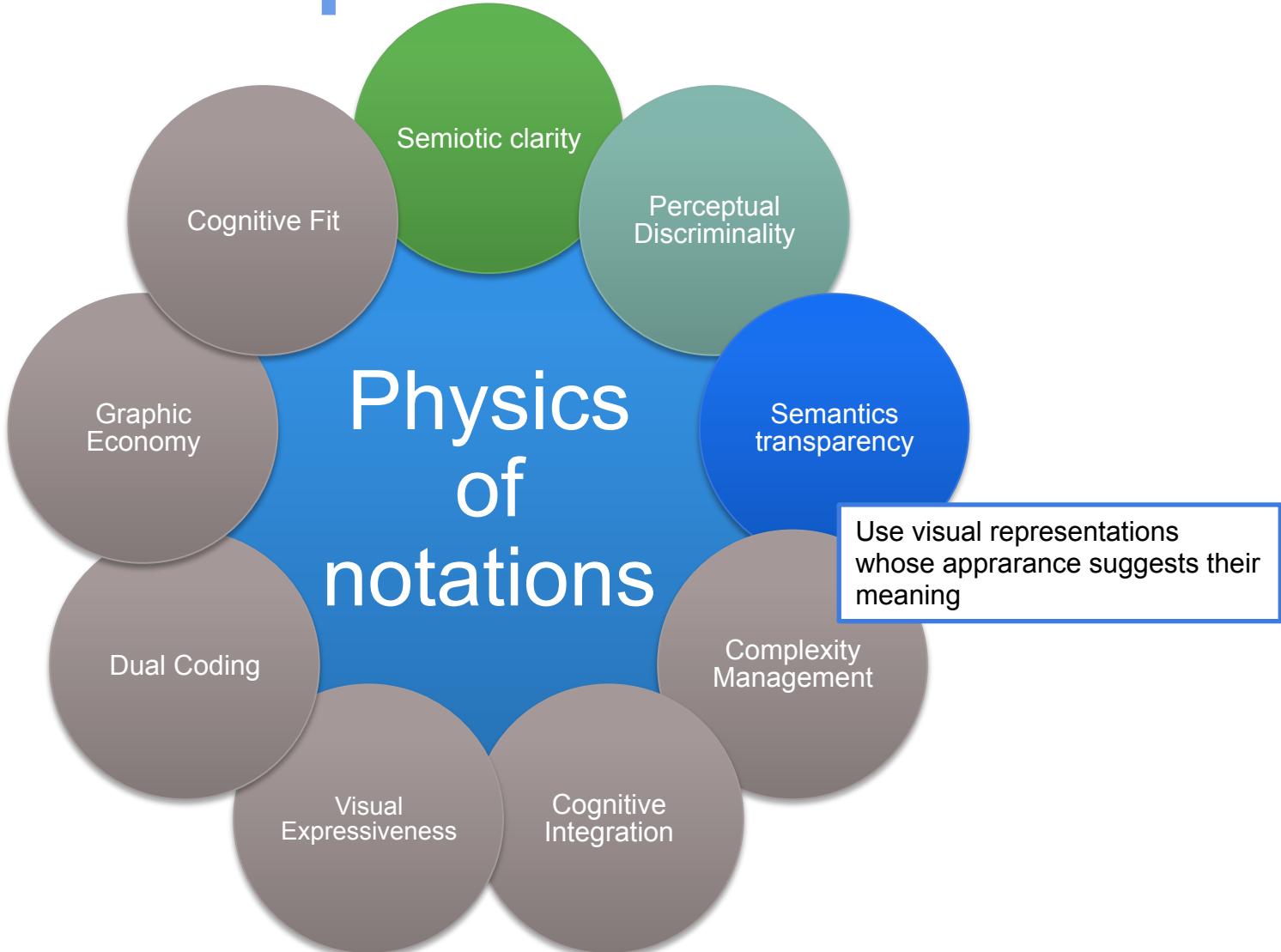
# Recommendations for Graphical DSLs

Aggregation	Association (navigable)	Association (non-navigable)	Association class relationship	Composition
Constraint	Dependency	Generalisation	Generalisation set	Interface (provided)
Interface (required)	N-ary association	Note reference	Package containment	Package import (public)
Package import (private)	Package merge	Realisation	Substitution	Usage

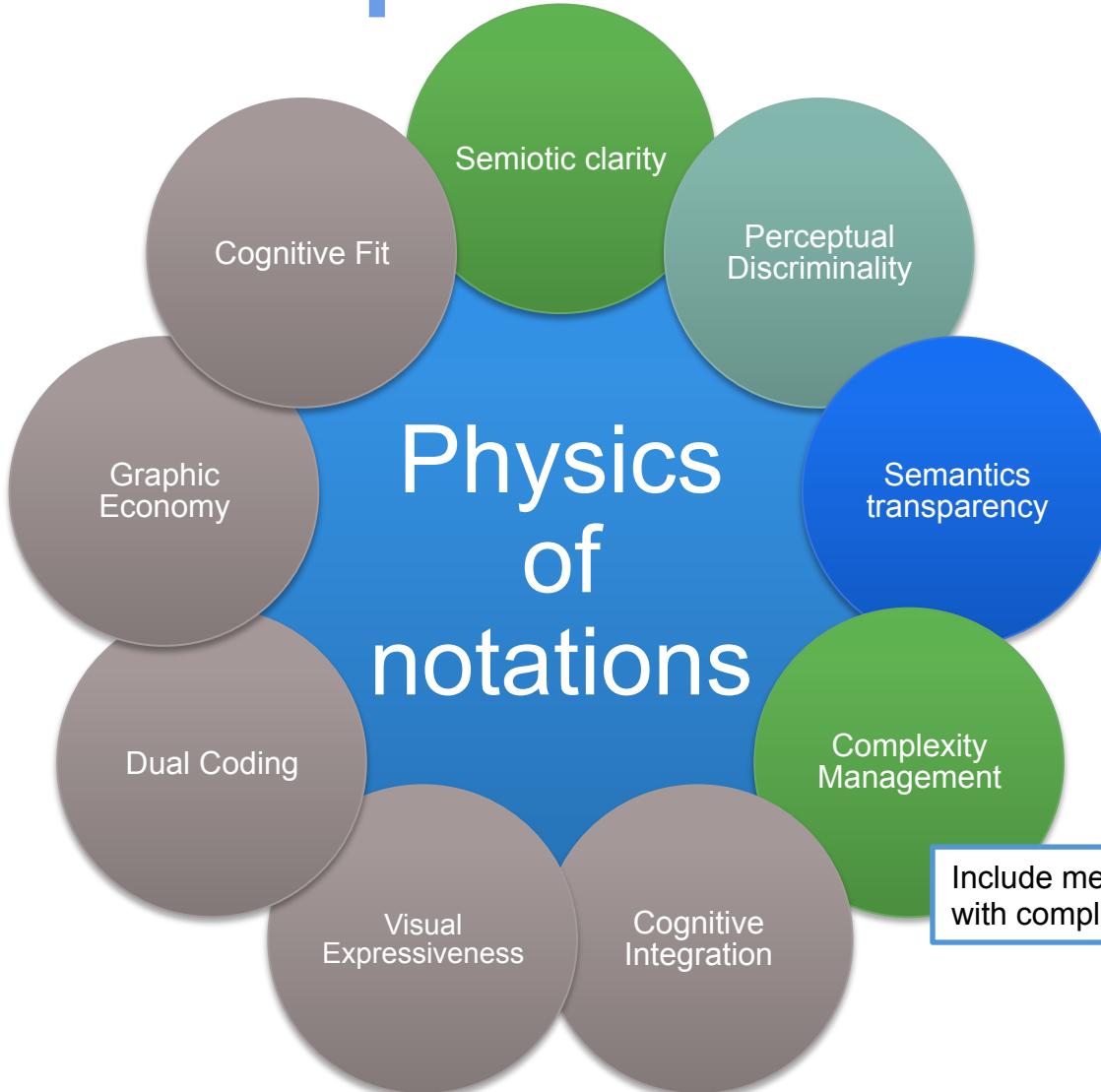
Visual Expressiveness

Cognitive Integration

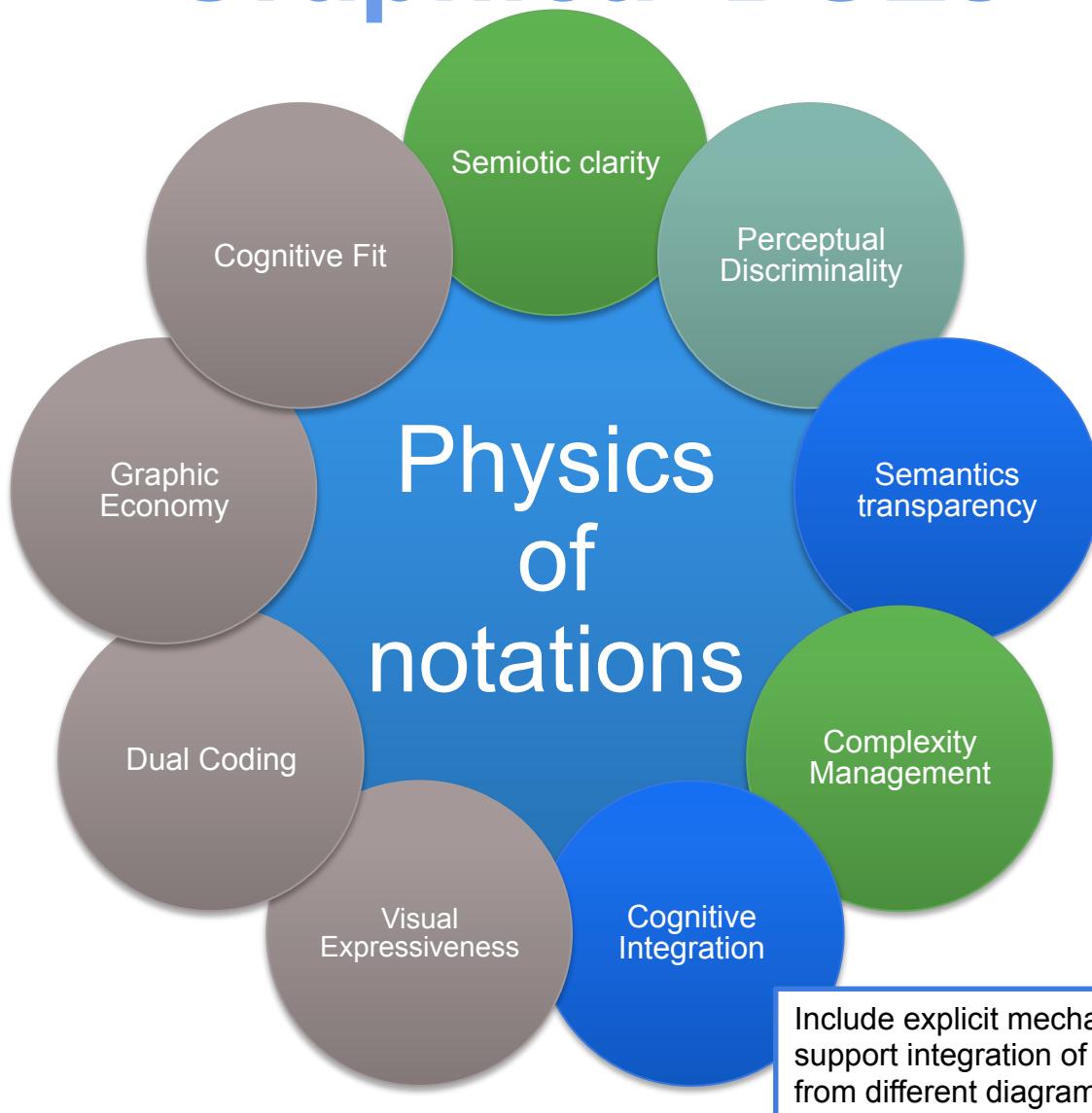
# Recommendations for Graphical DSLs



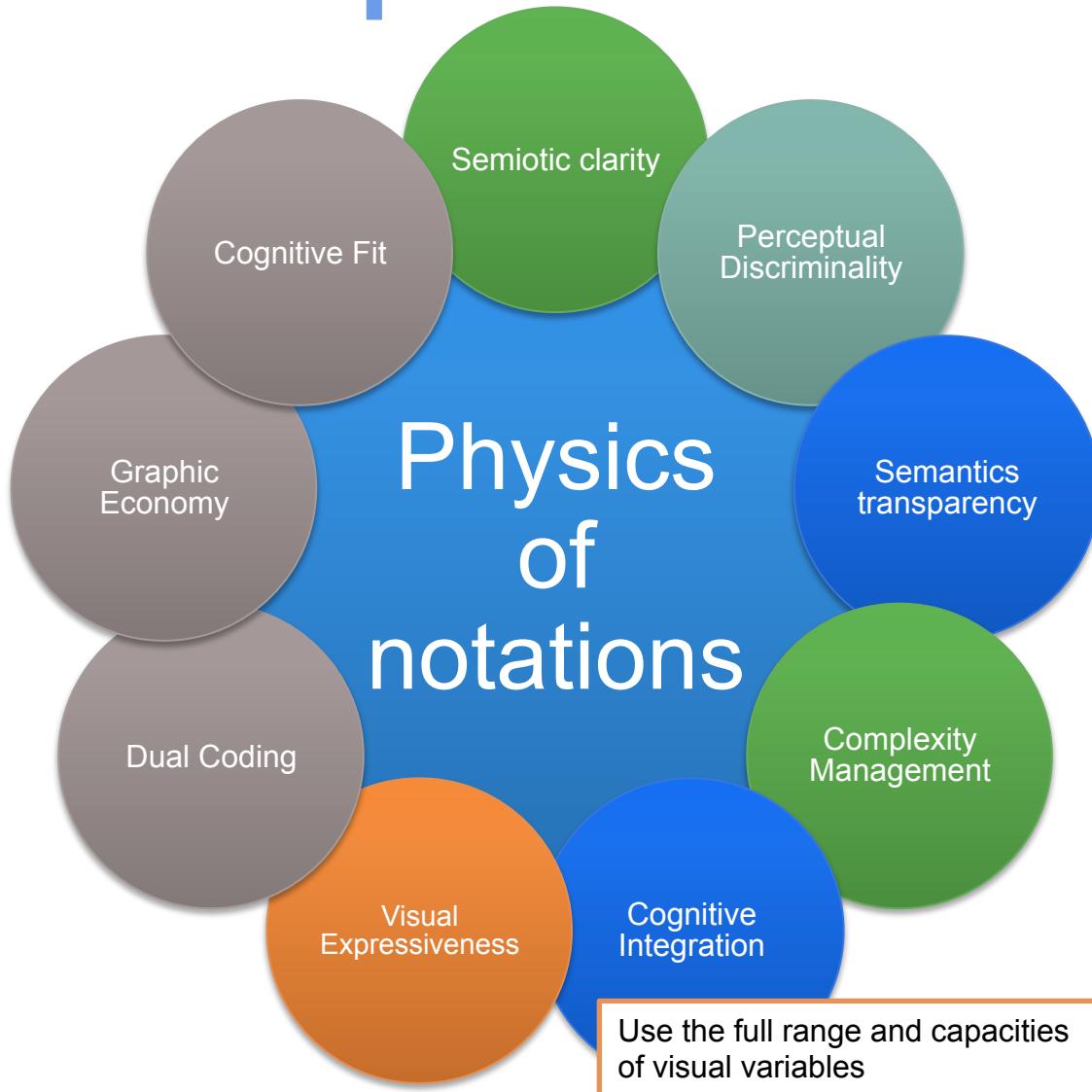
# Recommendations for Graphical DSLs



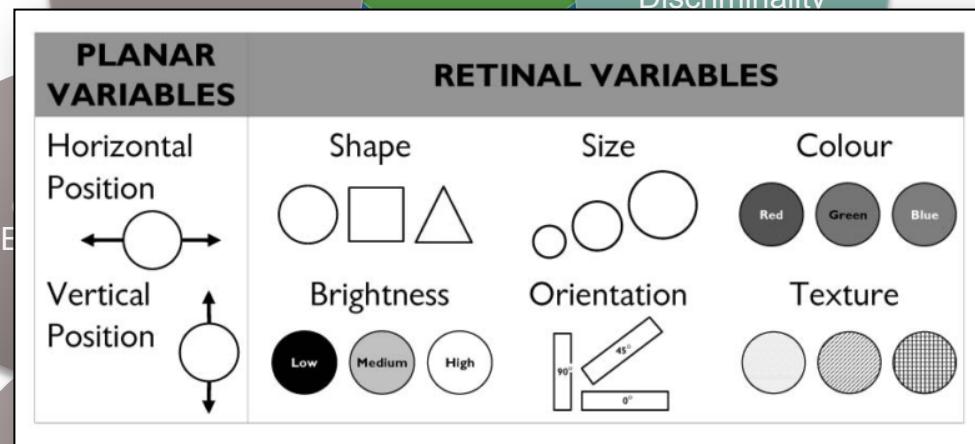
# Recommendations for Graphical DSLs



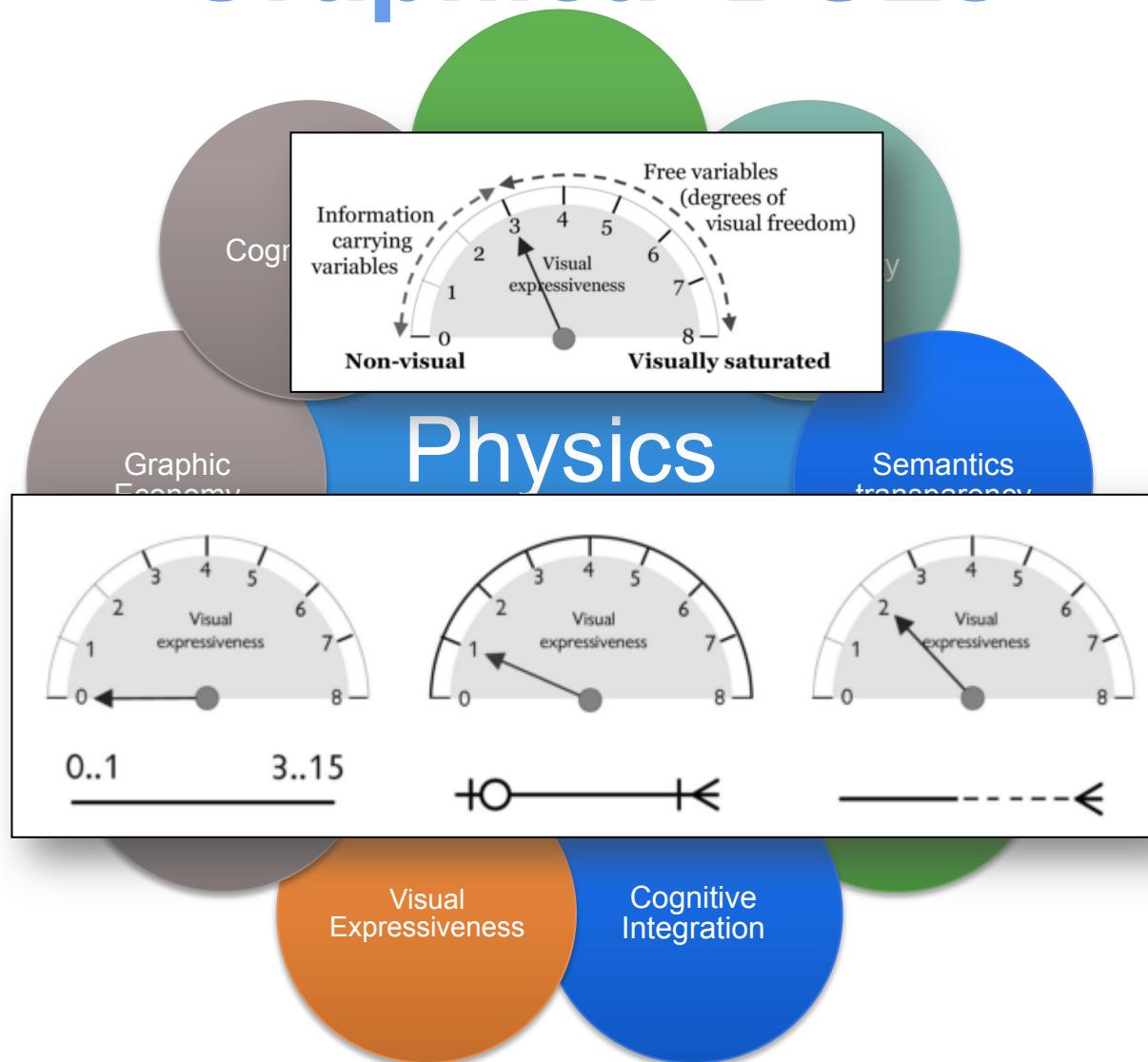
# Recommendations for Graphical DSLs



# Recommendations for Graphical DSLs



# Recommendations for Graphical DSLs



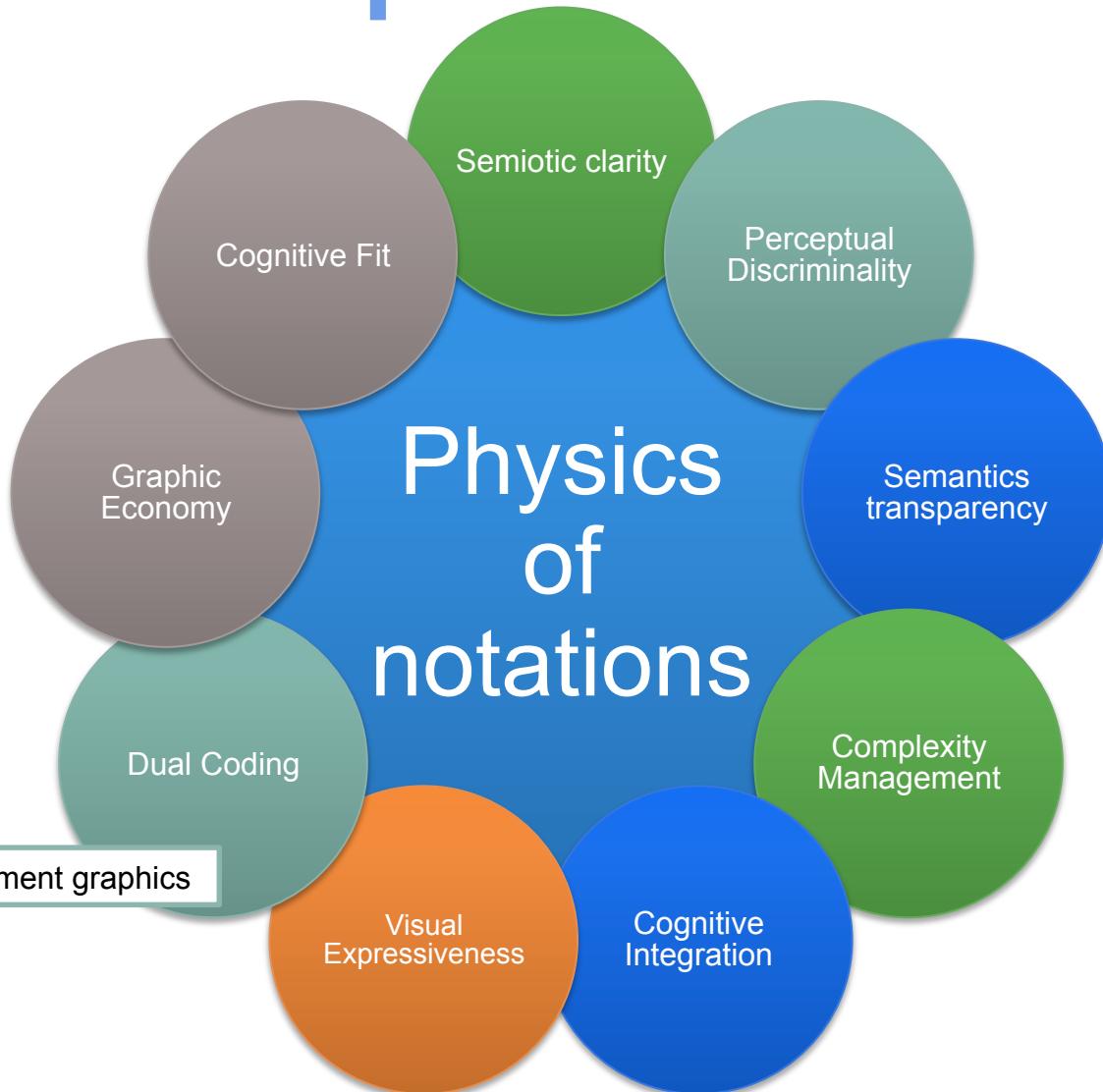
# Recommendations for Graphical DSLs

Diagram Type	X	Y	Size	Brightness	Colour	Shape	Texture	Orientation
Activity	●	●		●		●		
Class				●		●		
Communication				●		●		
Component				●		●		
Composite structure				●		●		
Deployment				●		●		
Interaction overview				●		●		
Object				●		●		
Package				●		●		
Sequence	●					●		
State machine				●		●		
Timing	●	●				●		
Use case	●					●		

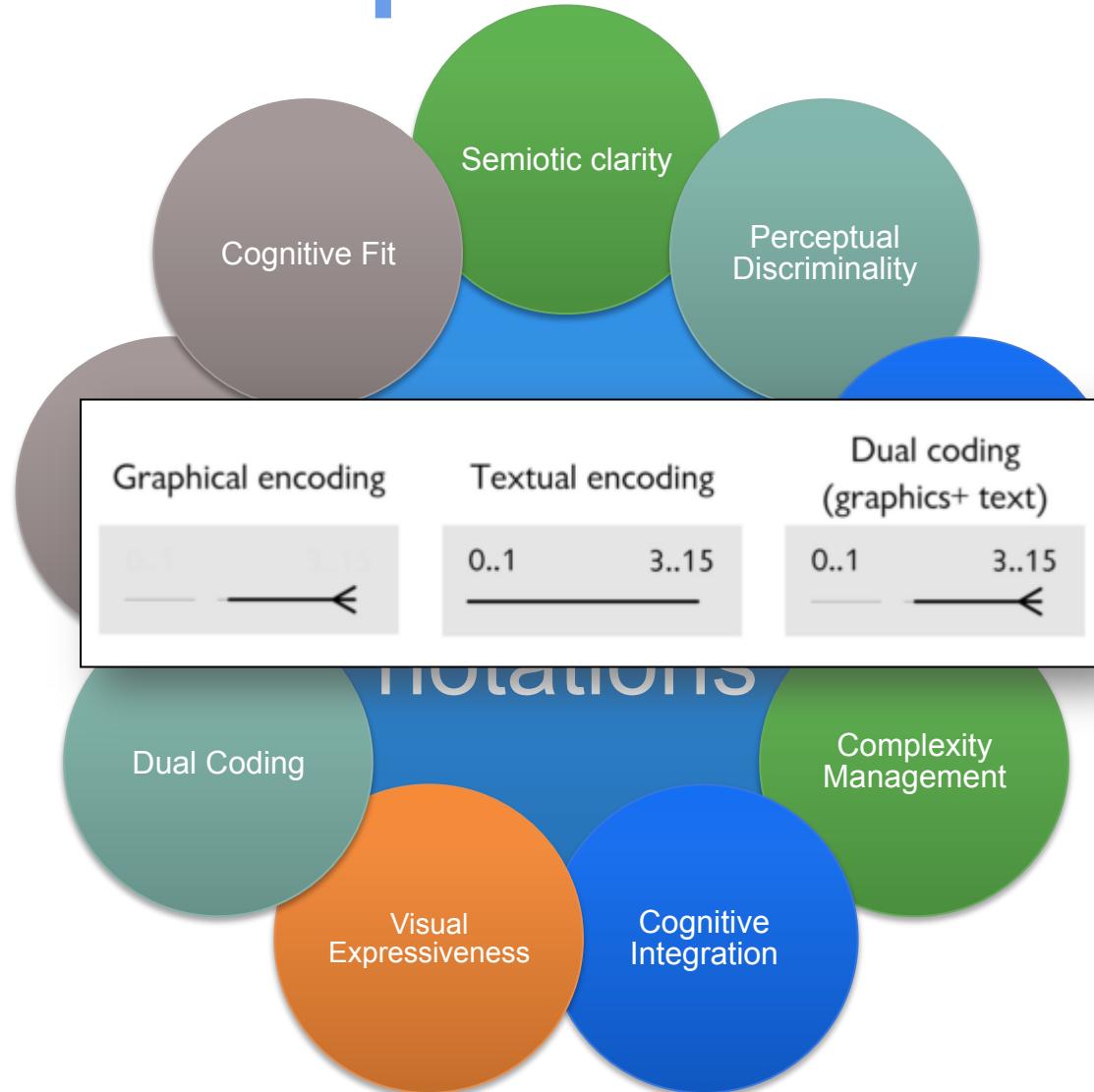
Visual Expressiveness

Cognitive Integration

# Recommendations for Graphical DSLs



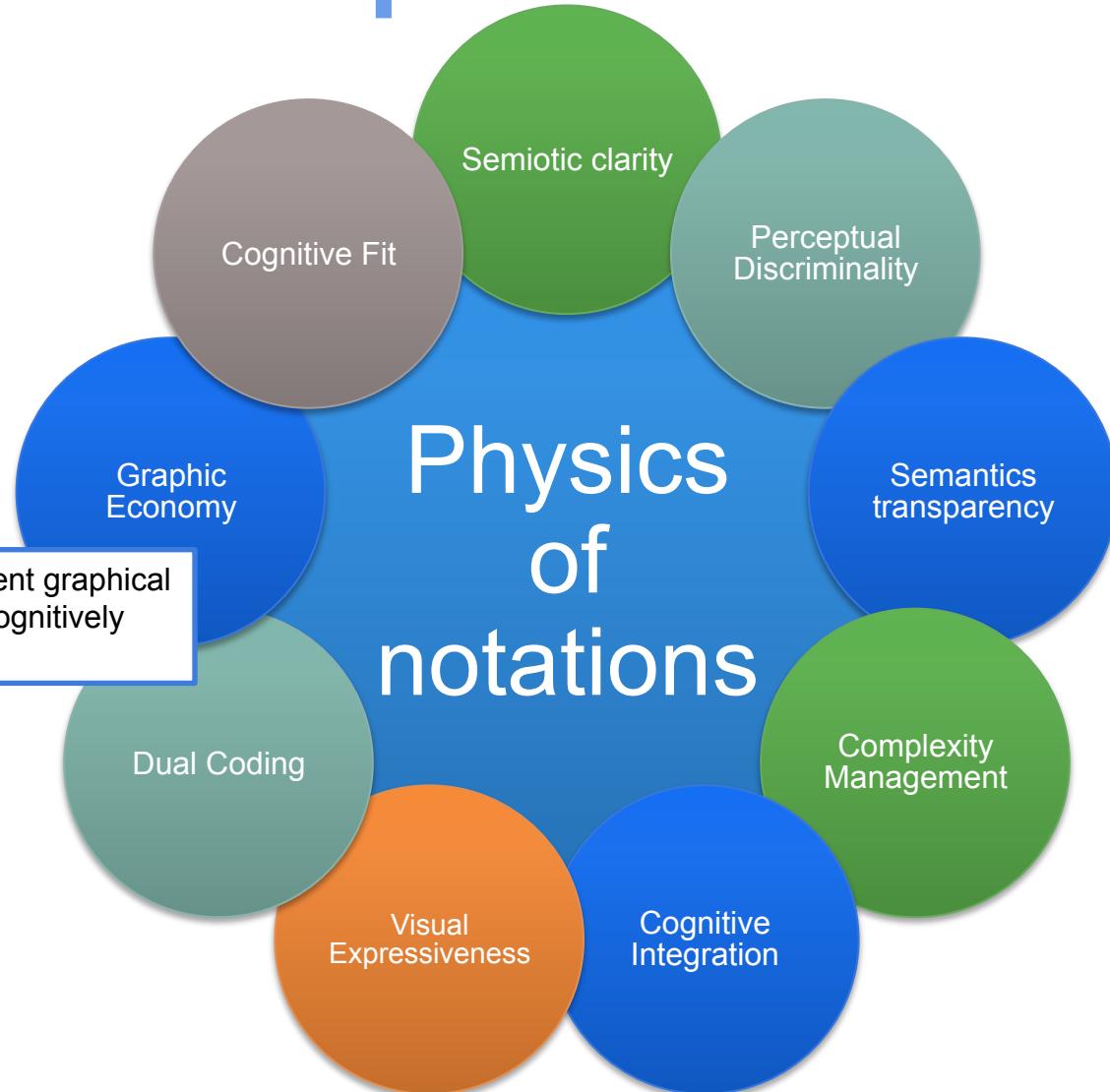
# Recommendations for Graphical DSLs



# Recommendations for Graphical DSLs

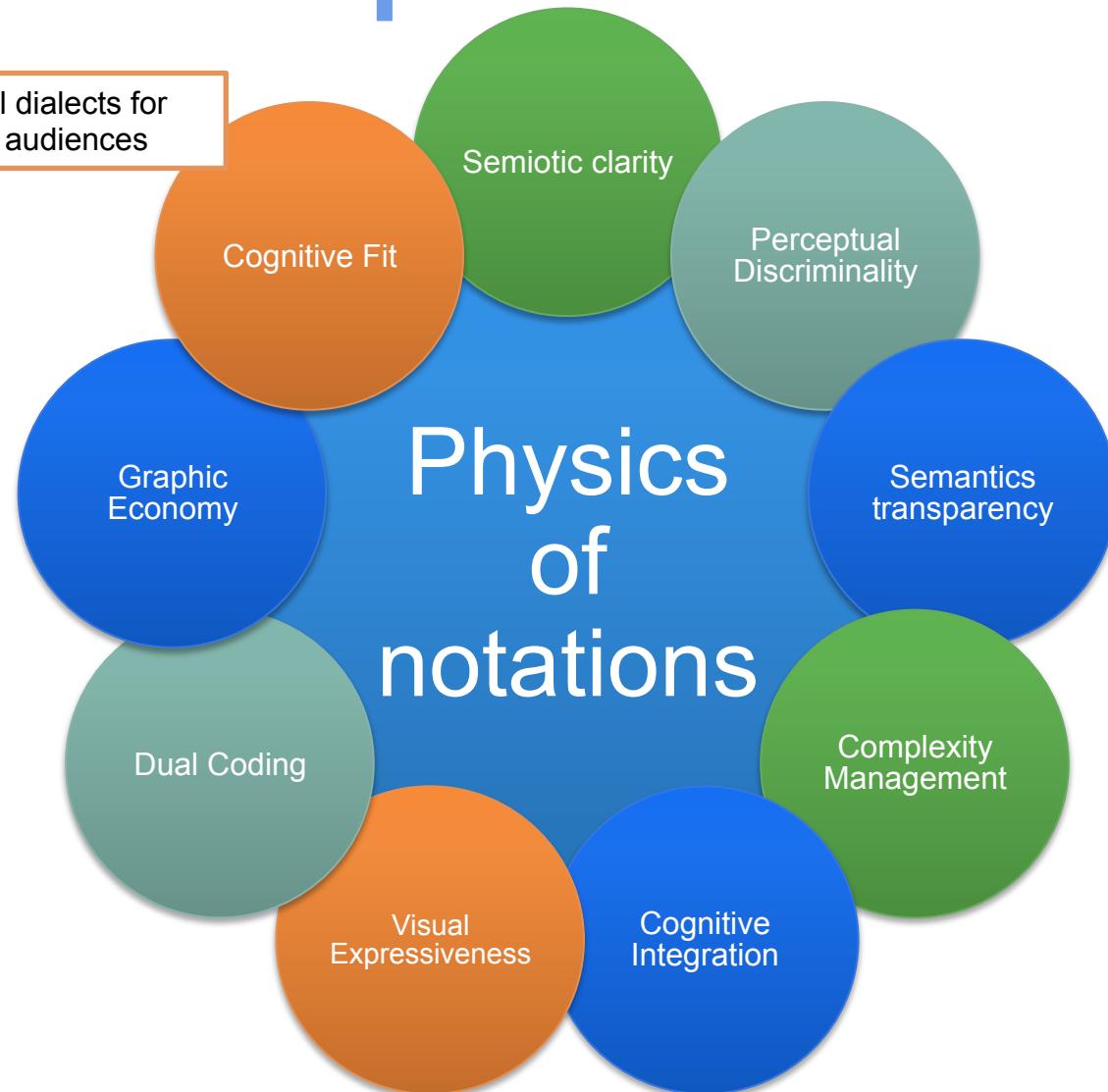
## Physics of notations

The number of different graphical symbols should be cognitively manageable



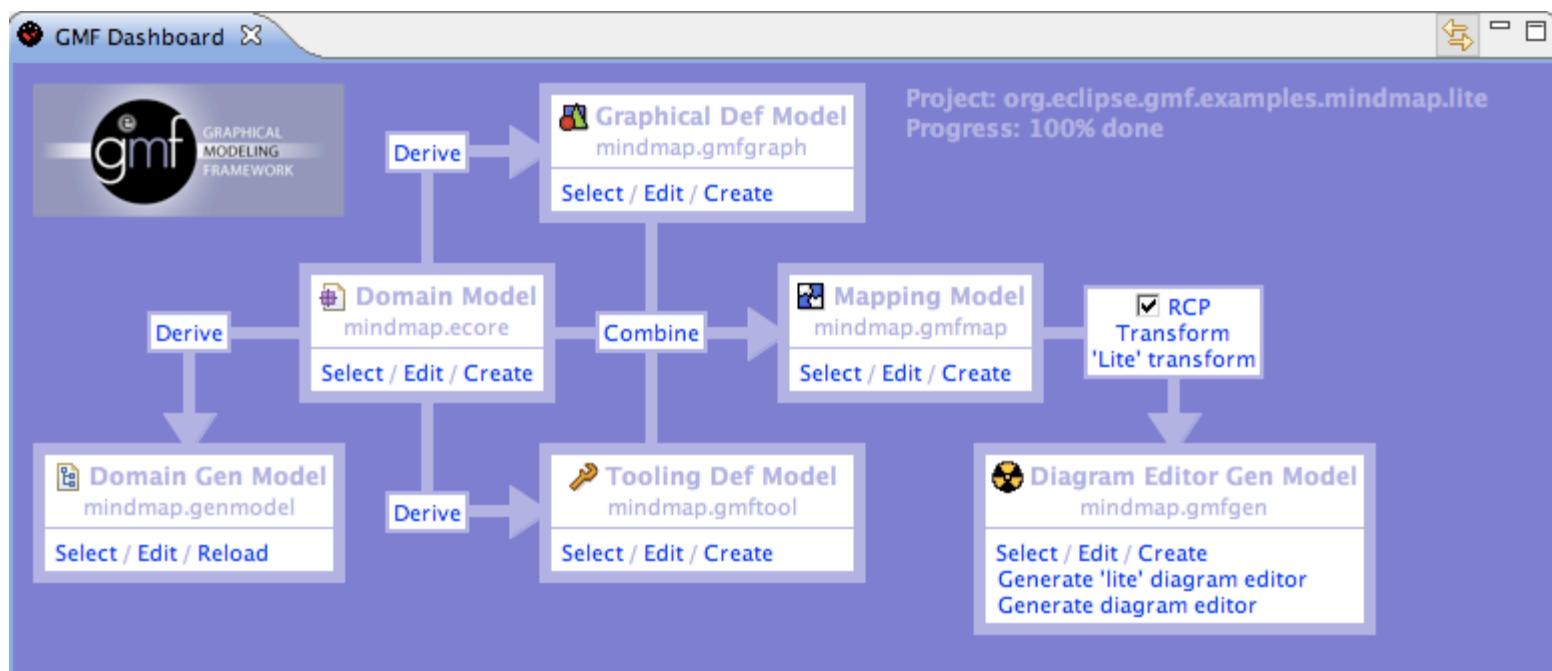
# Recommendations for Graphical DSLs

Use different visual dialects for different tasks and audiences



# Graphical Modeling Framework (GMF)

- Model-Driven Framework to develop graphical editors based on EMF and GEF
- GMF is part of Eclipse Modeling Project
- Provides a generative component to create the DSL tooling
- Provides a runtime infrastructure to facilitate the development of graphical DSLs

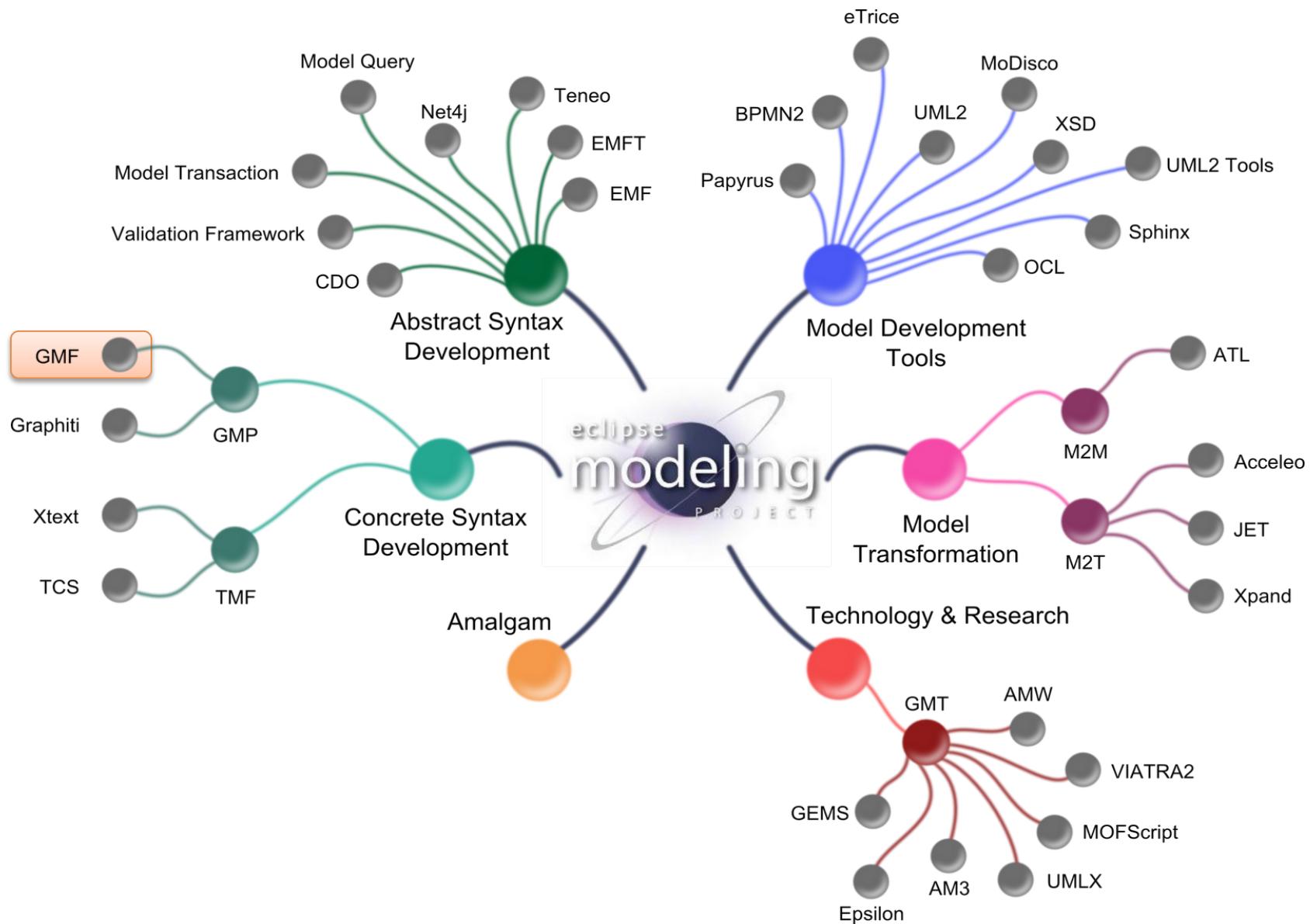


# GMF

- Eclipse project
  - Eclipse Modelling components
  - Uses
    - EMF (Eclipse Modeling Framework)
    - GEF (Graphical Editing Framework)
- Model-driven framework for Graphical DSLs
  - Everything is a model
- DSL definition easy, tweaking hard



# Eclipse Modeling Project



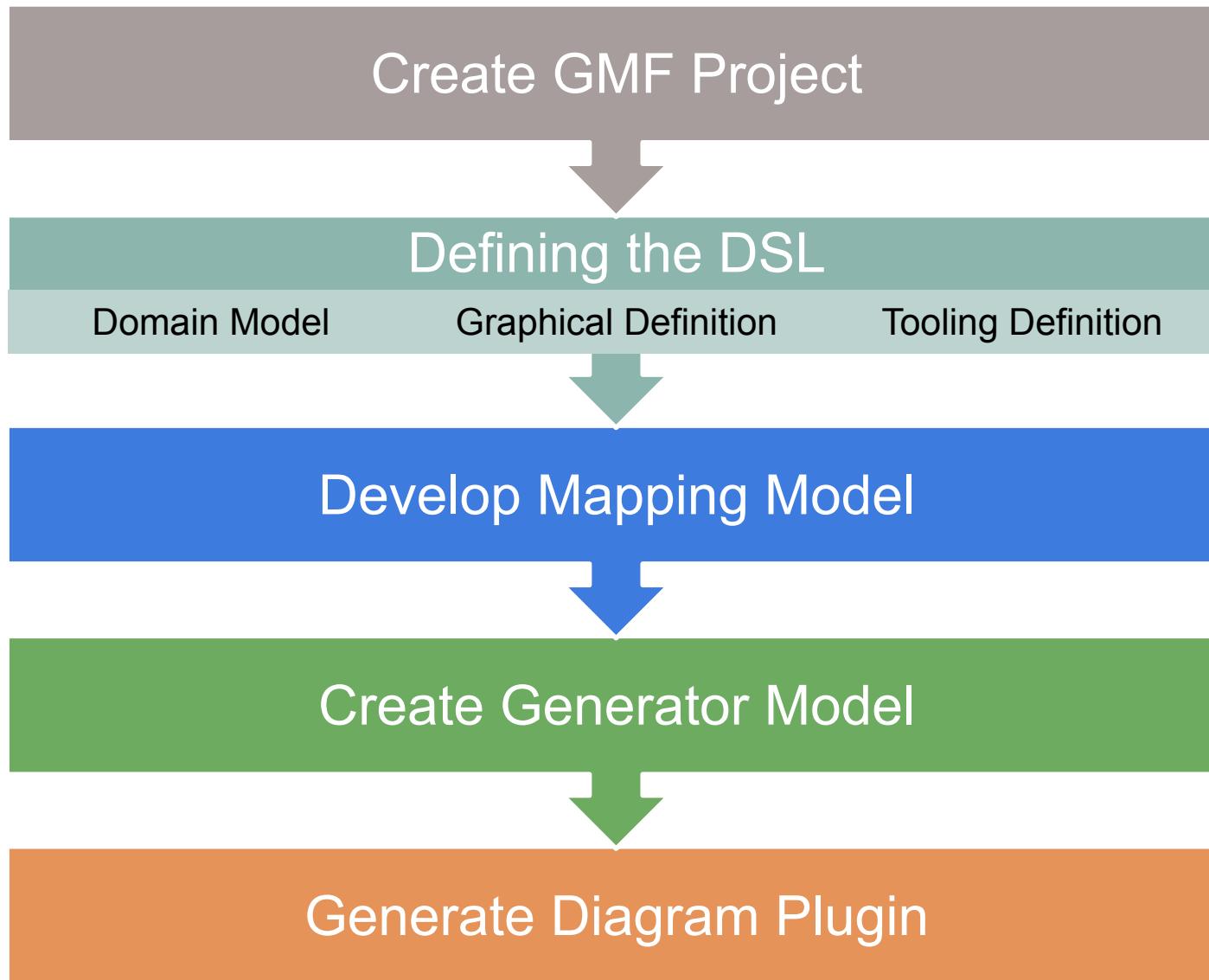
# GMF features

- Tooling
  - Editors for notation, semantic and tooling
  - GMF Dashboard
  - Generator to produce the DSL implementation
- Runtime
  - Generated DSLs depend on the GMF Runtime to produce an extensible graphical editor

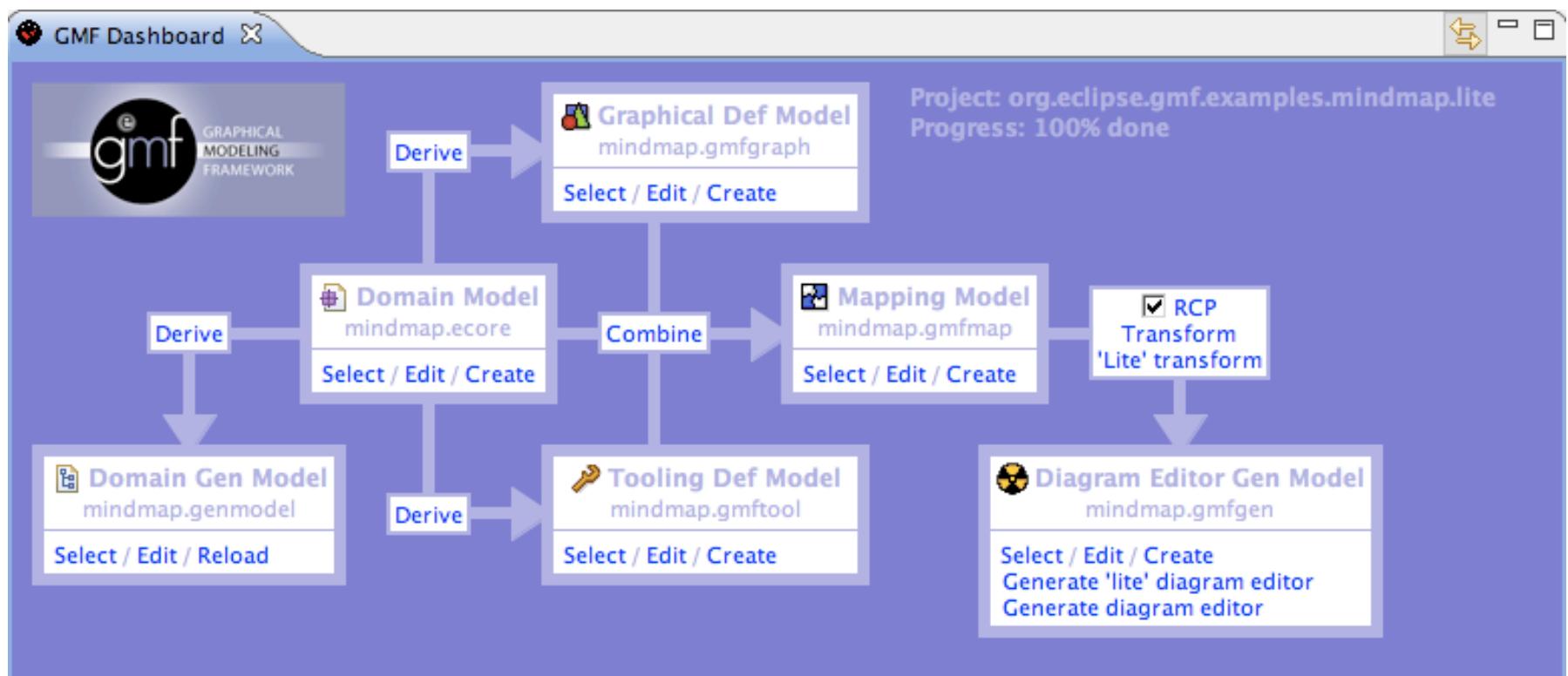
# Main Advantages

- Consistent look and feel
- Diagram persistence
- Open editors can be extended by third-parties
- Already integrated with various Eclipse components
- Extensible notation metamodel to enable the isolation of notation from semantic concerns
- Future community enhancements will easily be integrated

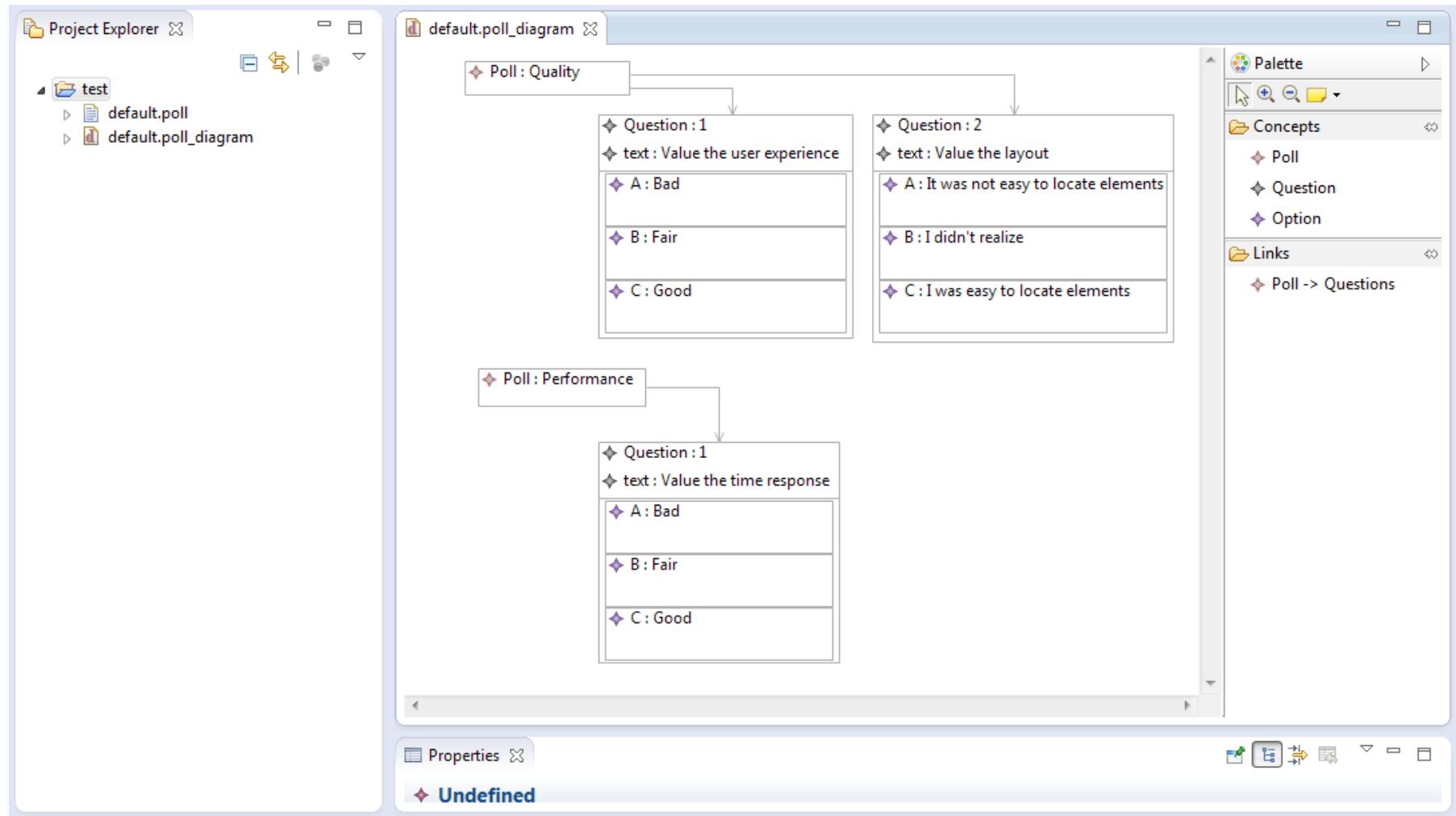
# Development Process



# Development Process

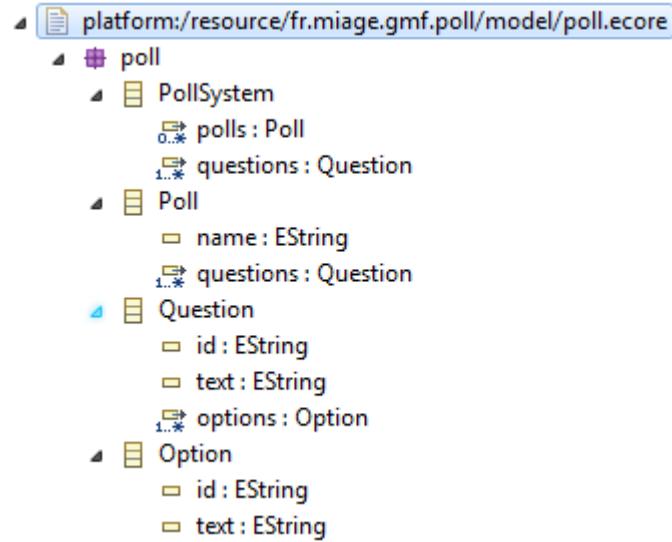


# Example (Graphical Notation)



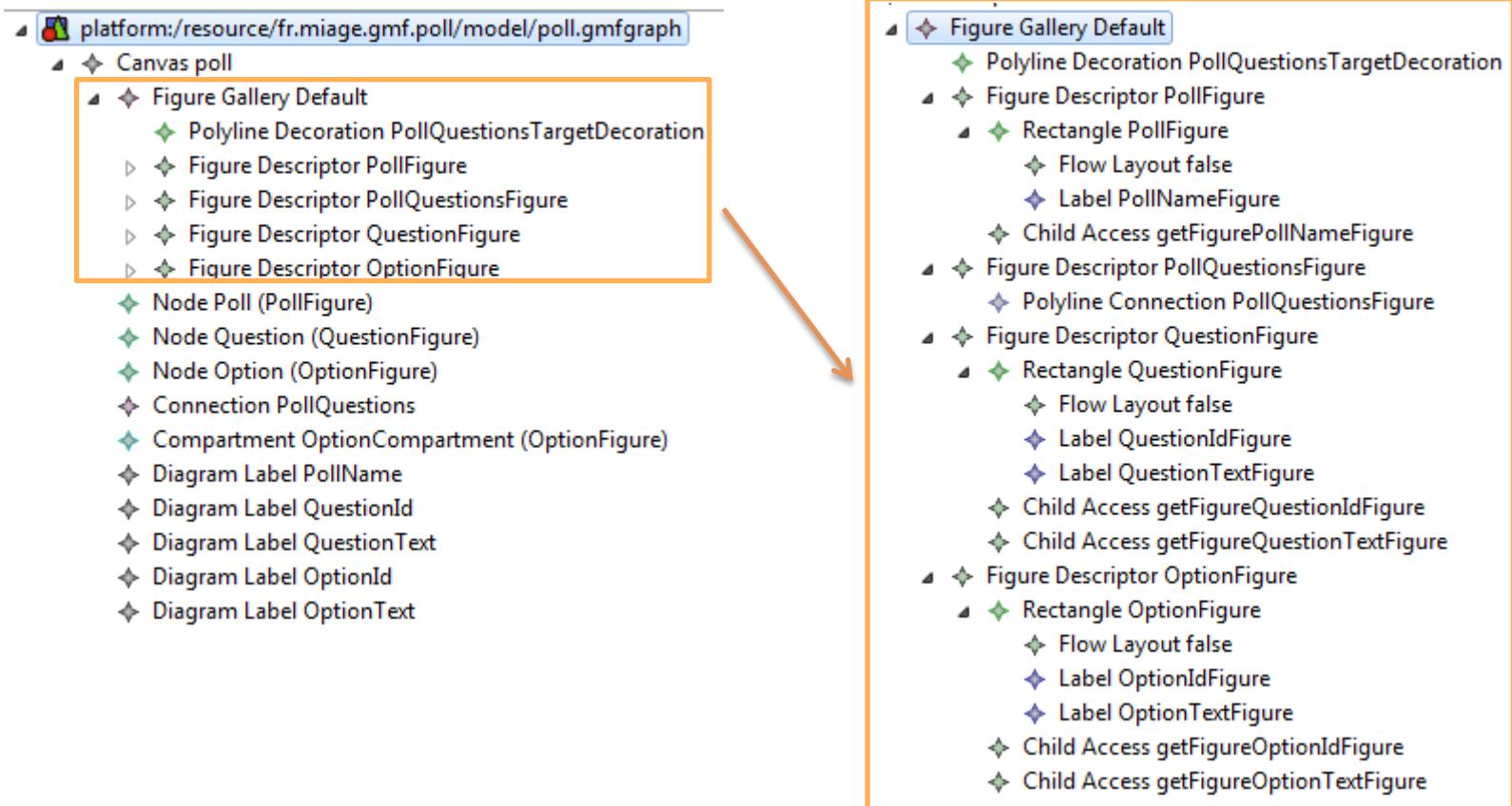
# Poll System Metamodel

- Concepts
  - PollSystem
  - Poll
  - Question
  - Option
- Attributes
  - A Poll has a name
  - A Question has an identifier and a descriptive text
  - An Option has an identifier and a descriptive text
- Relationships
  - PollSystem is composed of polls and questions
  - Question has a set of options



# Graphical Definition

- A model will represent a PollSystem
- A Poll will be a node
- A Question will be a rectangular node
- An Option will be a rectangular node included in the Question node



# Plan

- Domain-Specific Languages (DSLs)
  - Languages and abstraction gap
  - Examples and rationale
  - DSLs vs General purpose languages, taxonomy
- External DSLs
  - Grammar and parsing
  - Xtext
- **DSLs, DSMLs, and (meta-)modeling**

# Contract

- Better understanding/source of inspiration of software languages and DSLs
  - Revisit of history and existing languages
- Foundations and practice of Xtext
  - State-of-the-art language workbench (Most Innovative Eclipse Project in 2010, mature and used in a variety of industries)
- Models and Languages
  - Perhaps a more concrete way to see models, metamodels and MDE (IDM in french)

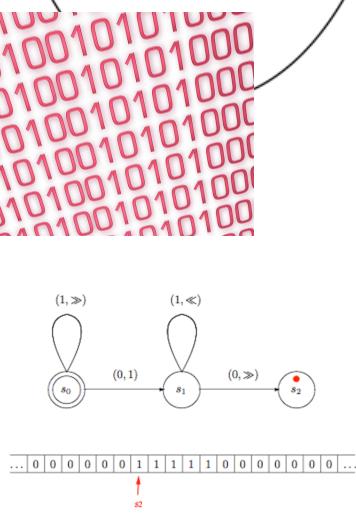
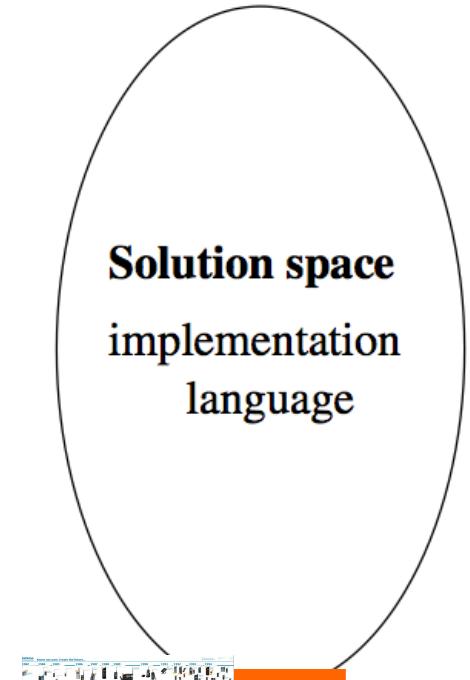
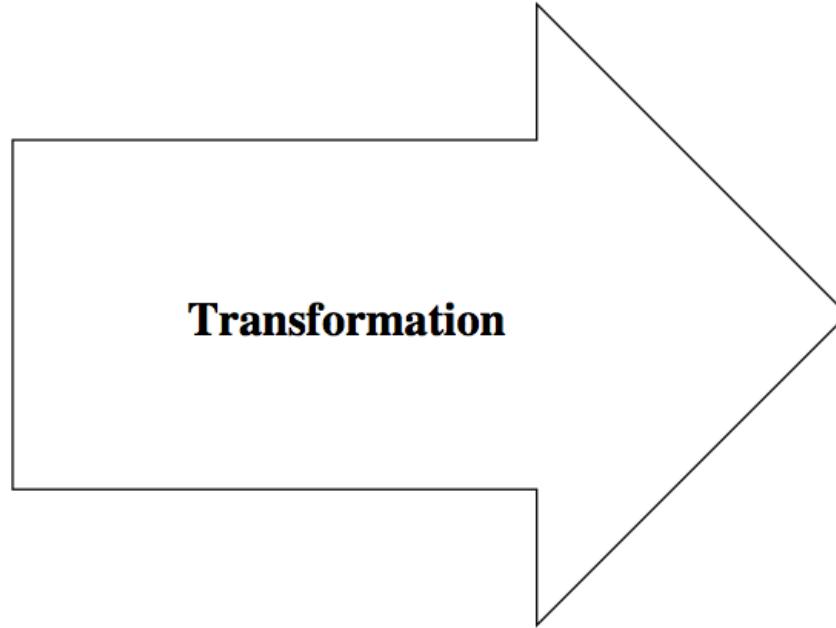
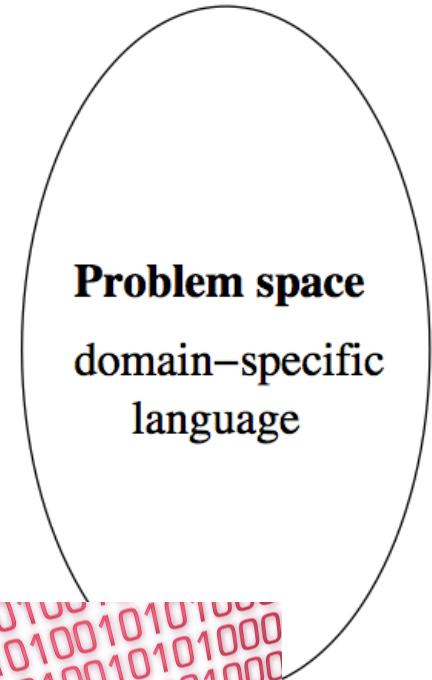
DSL,

Model,

Metamodel,

Summary

# Abstraction Gap



# Models/MDE

- In essence, a model is an **abstraction** of some aspect of a system under study.
- Some details are hidden or removed to **simplify** and focus attention.
- A model is an abstraction since **general** concepts can be formulated by abstracting common properties of instances or by extracting common features from specific examples
- **(Domain-specific) Languages** enable the specification or execution of models

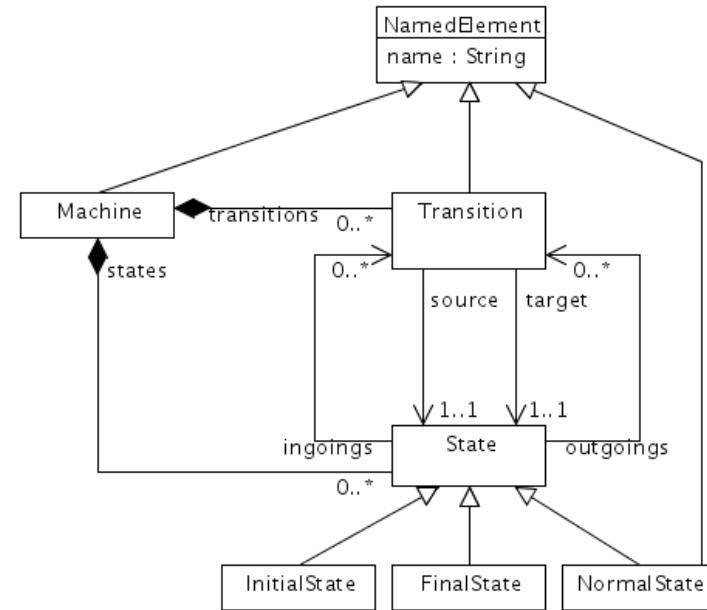
# Generative approach

- Programming the generation of programs
  - Very old practice
  - Metaprogramming: generative language and target language are the same
    - Reflection capabilities
- Generalization of this idea:
  - from a specification written in one or more textual or graphical domain-specific languages
  - you generate customized variants

# Grammar

```
machineDefinition:  
  MACHINE OPEN_SEP stateList  
  transitionList CLOSE_SEP;  
  
stateList:  
  state (COMMA state)*;  
  
state:  
  ID_STATE;  
  
transitionList:  
  transition (COMMA transition)*;  
  
transition:  
  ID_TRANSITION OPEN_SEP  
  state state CLOSE_SEP;  
  
MACHINE: 'machine';  
OPEN_SEP: '{';  
CLOSE_SEP: '}';  
COMMA: ',';  
ID_STATE: 'S' ID;  
ID_TRANSITION: 'T' (0..9)+;  
ID: (a..zA..Z_) (a..zA..Z0..9)*;
```

# MetaModel



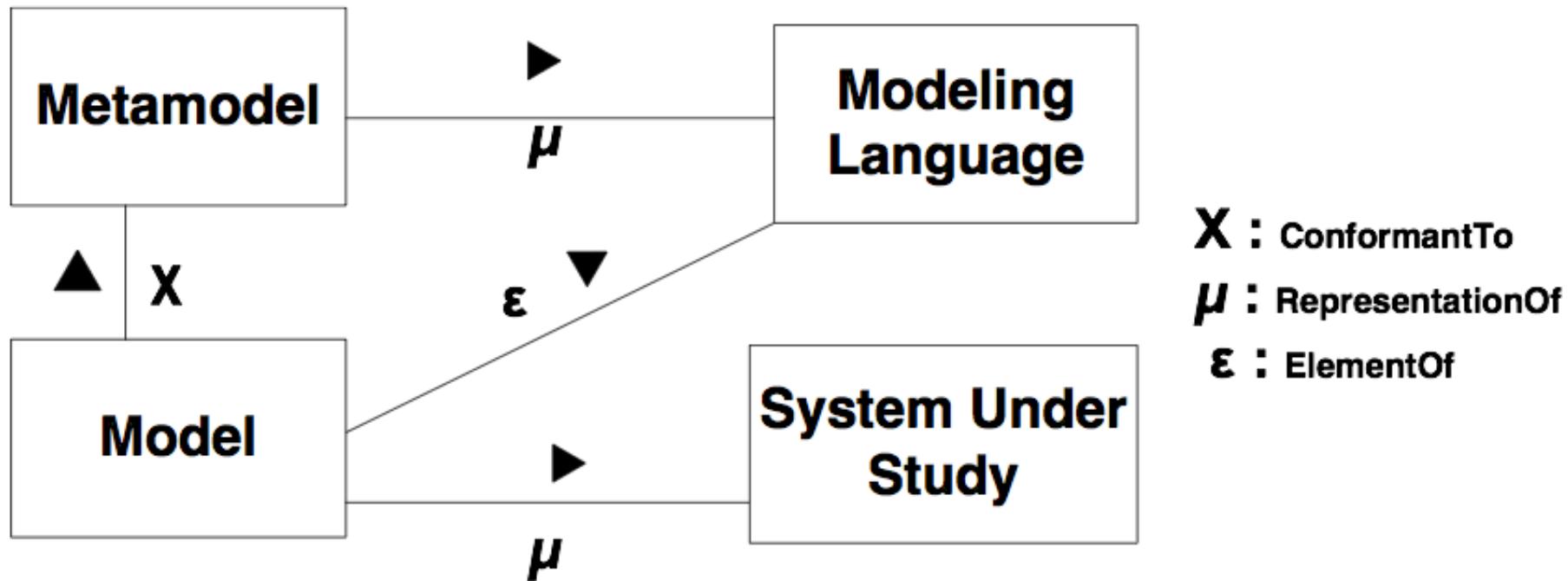
conforms To

```
machine {  
  SOne STwo  
  T1 { SOne STwo }  
}
```

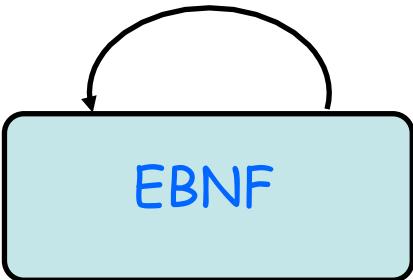
Source Code/Model

conforms To

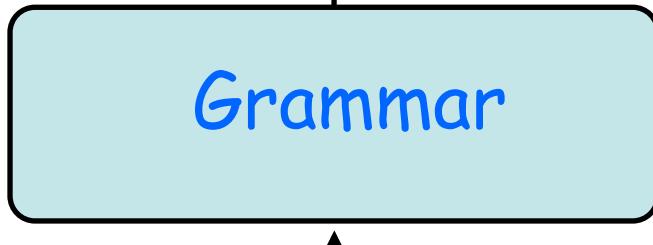
# Model, Metamodel, Metametamodel, DSML



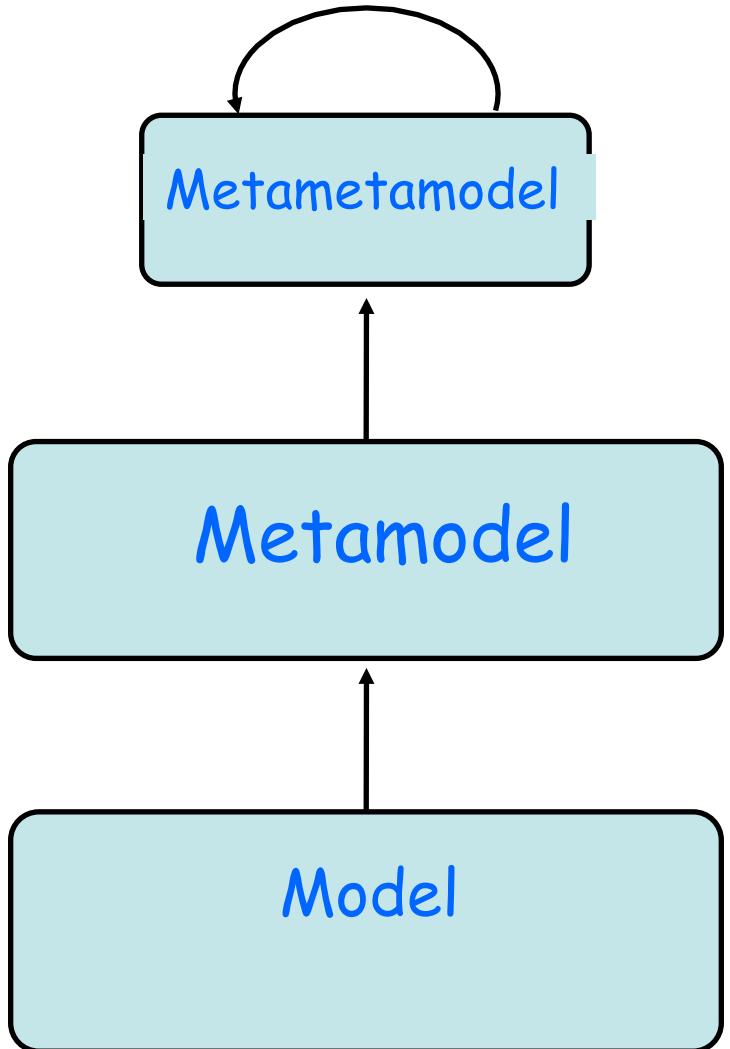
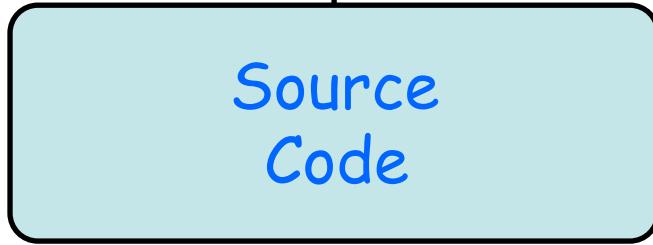
M<sup>3</sup>



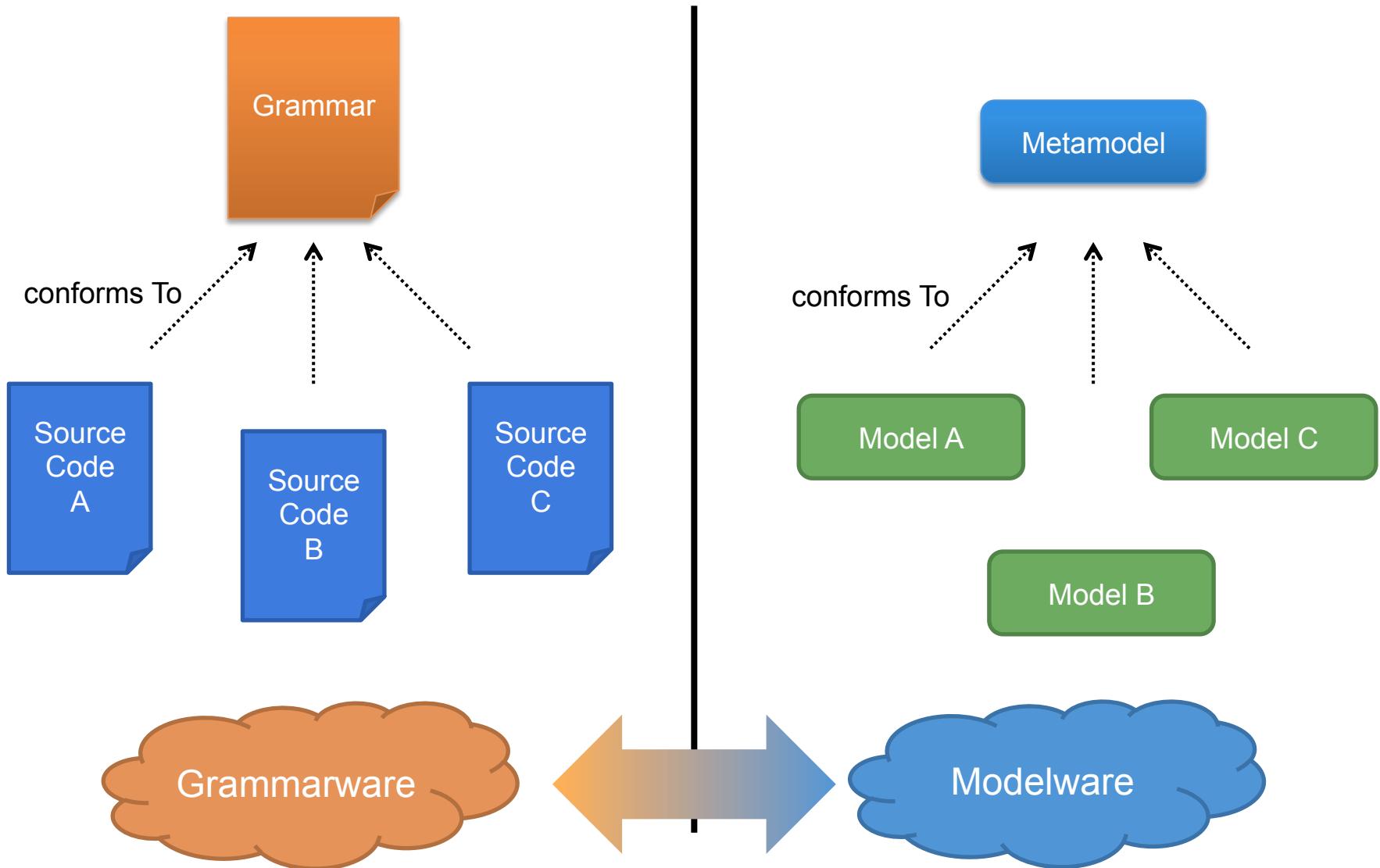
M<sup>2</sup>



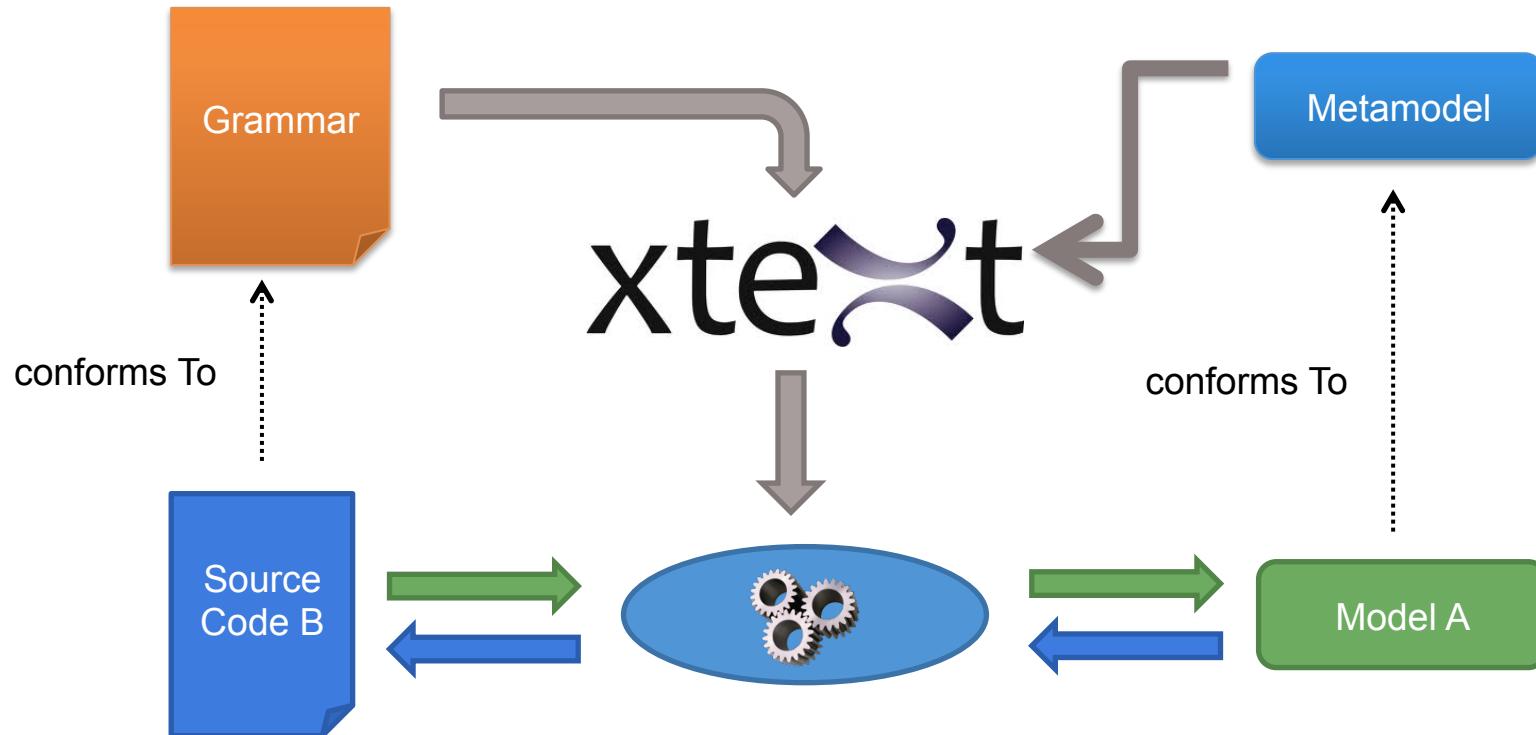
M<sup>1</sup>



# Language and MDE



# MDE, Grammar: there and back again



# **Empirical Assessment of MDE in Industry**

John Hutchinson, Jon Whittle, Mark Rouncefield

School of Computing and Communications  
Lancaster University, UK  
+44 1524 510492

{j.hutchinson, j.n.whittle,  
m.rouncefield}@lancaster.ac.uk

Steinar Kristoffersen

Østfold University College and Møreforskning Molde AS  
NO-1757 Halden  
Norway  
+47 6921 5000

steinar.kristoffersen@hiof.no

## **Model-Driven Engineering Practices in Industry**

John Hutchinson  
School of Computing and  
Communications  
Lancaster University, UK  
+44 1524 510492

{j.hutchinson@lancaster.ac.uk}

Mark Rouncefield  
School of Computing and  
Communications  
Lancaster University, UK  
+44 1524 510492

{m.rouncefield@lancaster.ac.uk}

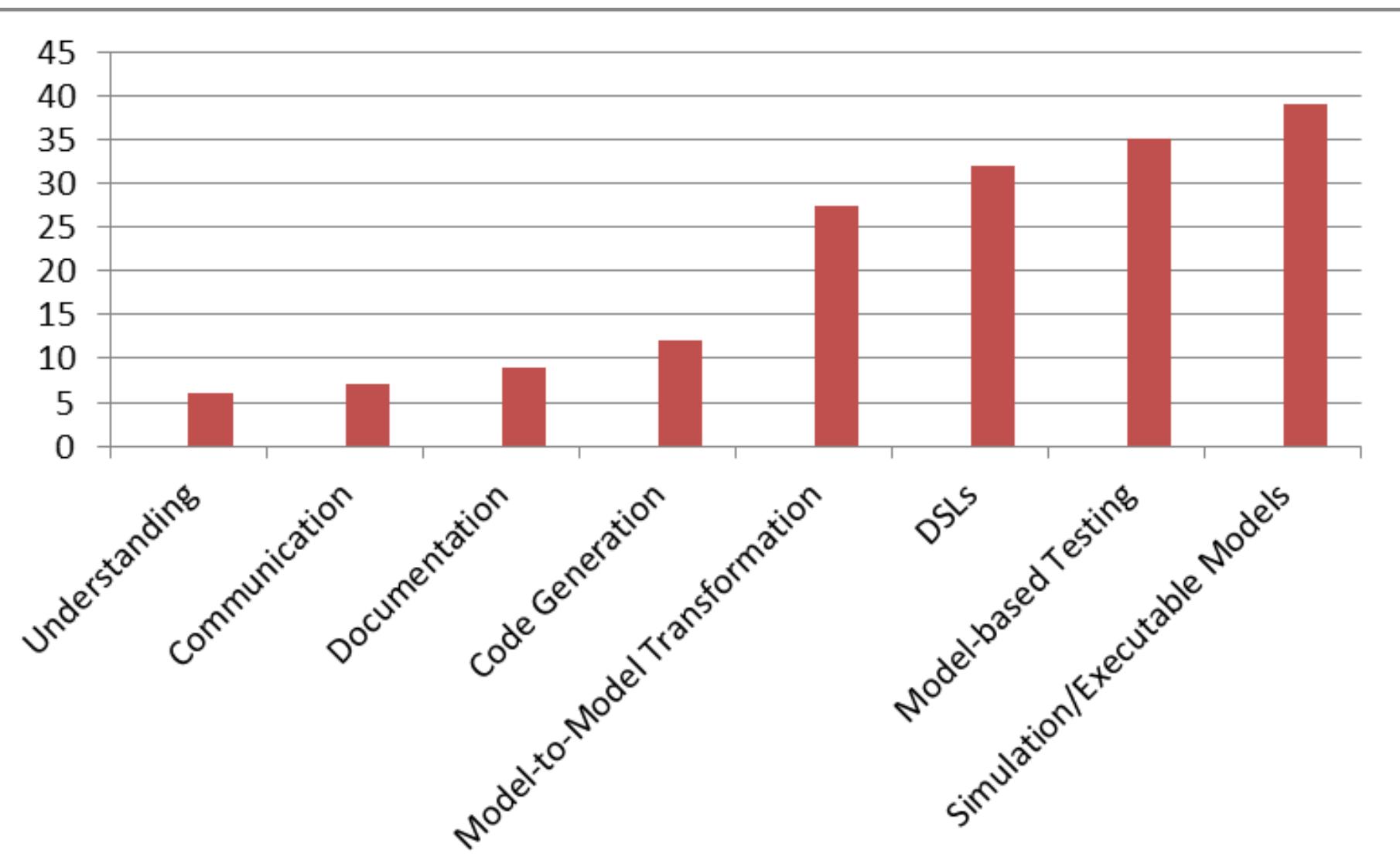
Jon Whittle  
School of Computing and  
Communications  
Lancaster University, UK  
+44 1524 510492

{j.n.whittle@lancaster.ac.uk}

**2011**

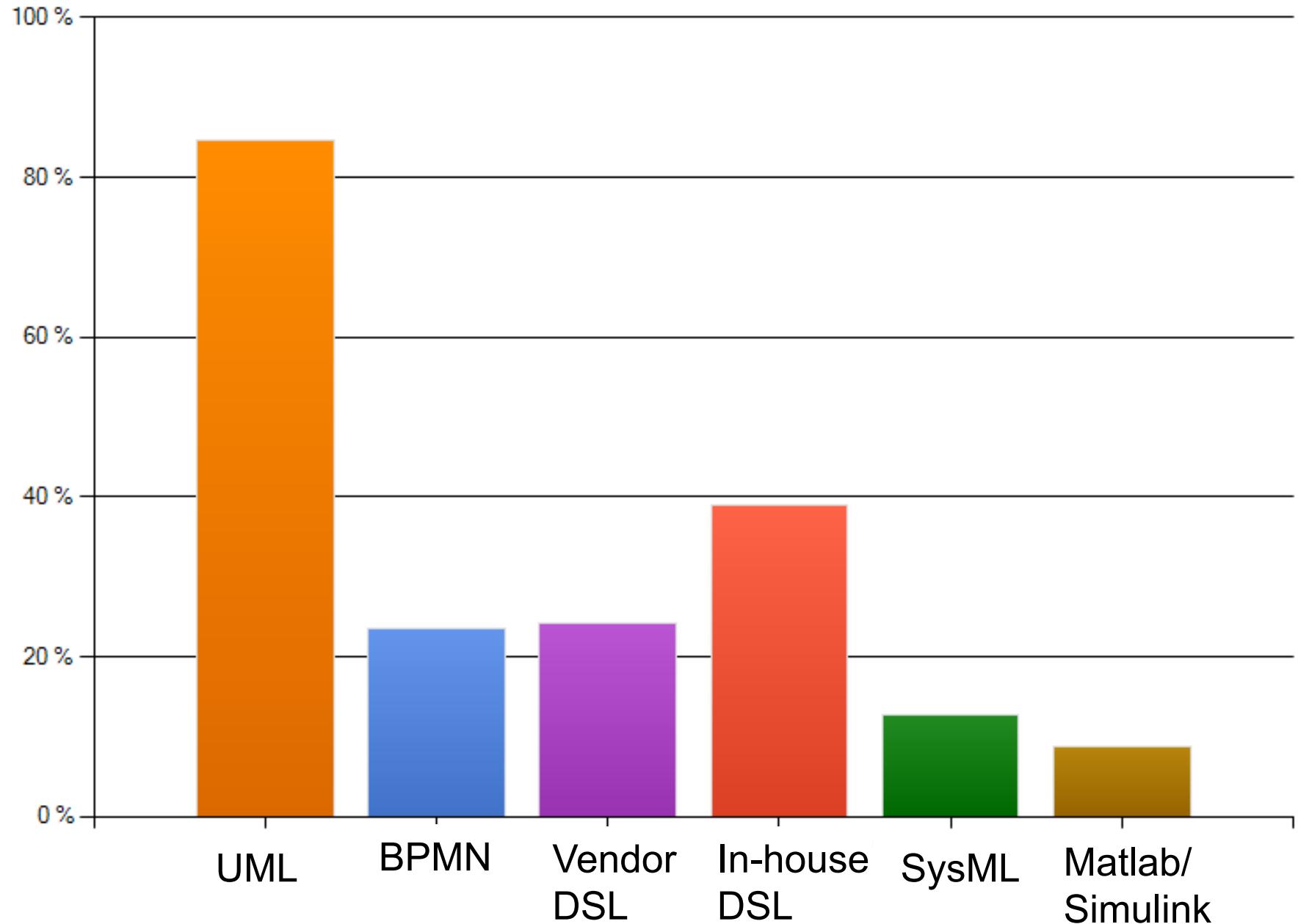
**« Domain-specific  
languages are far more  
prevalent than  
anticipated »**

# What are models used for?

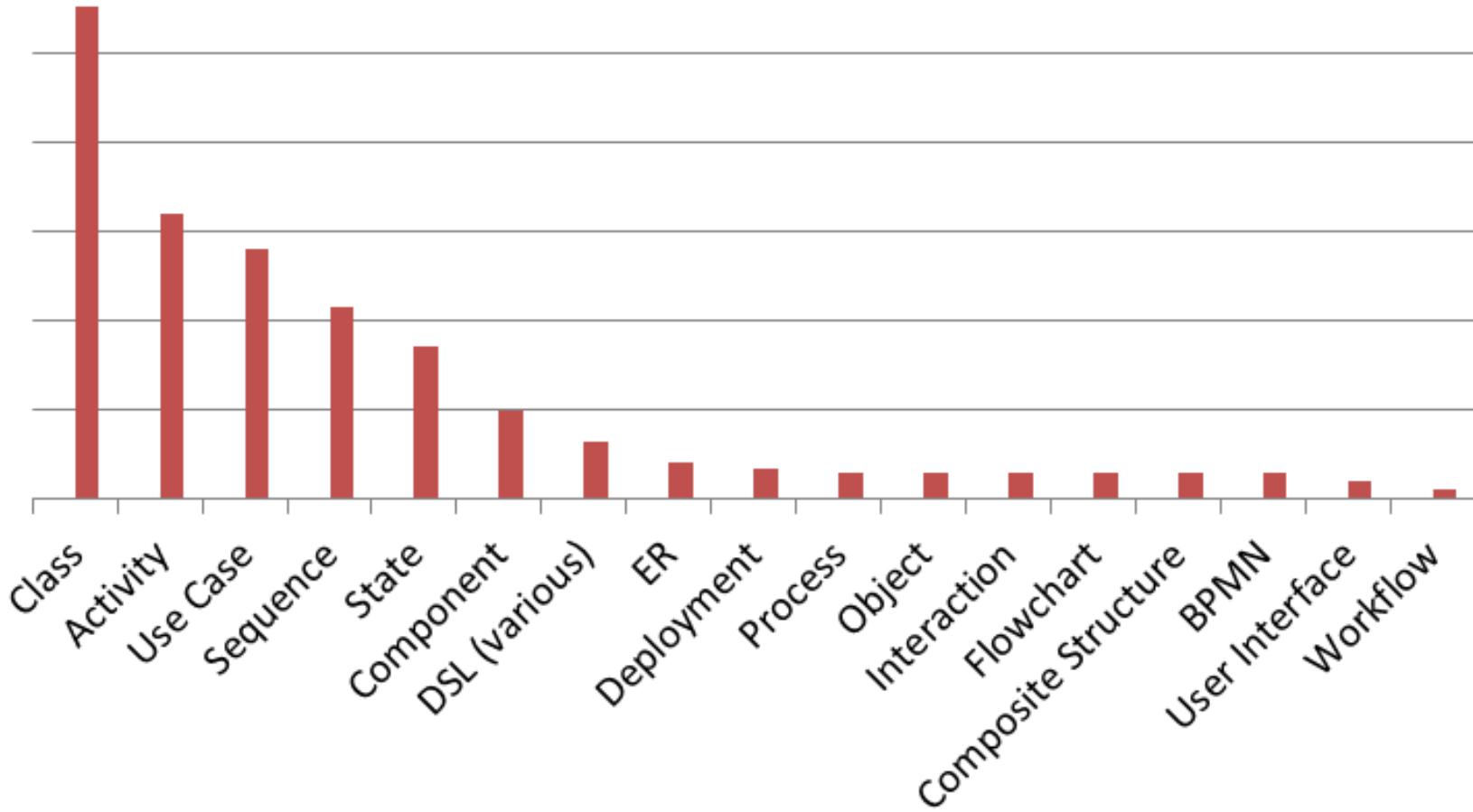


"Do not use" percentages for MDE activities

# Which modeling languages do you use?



# Which diagrams are used?



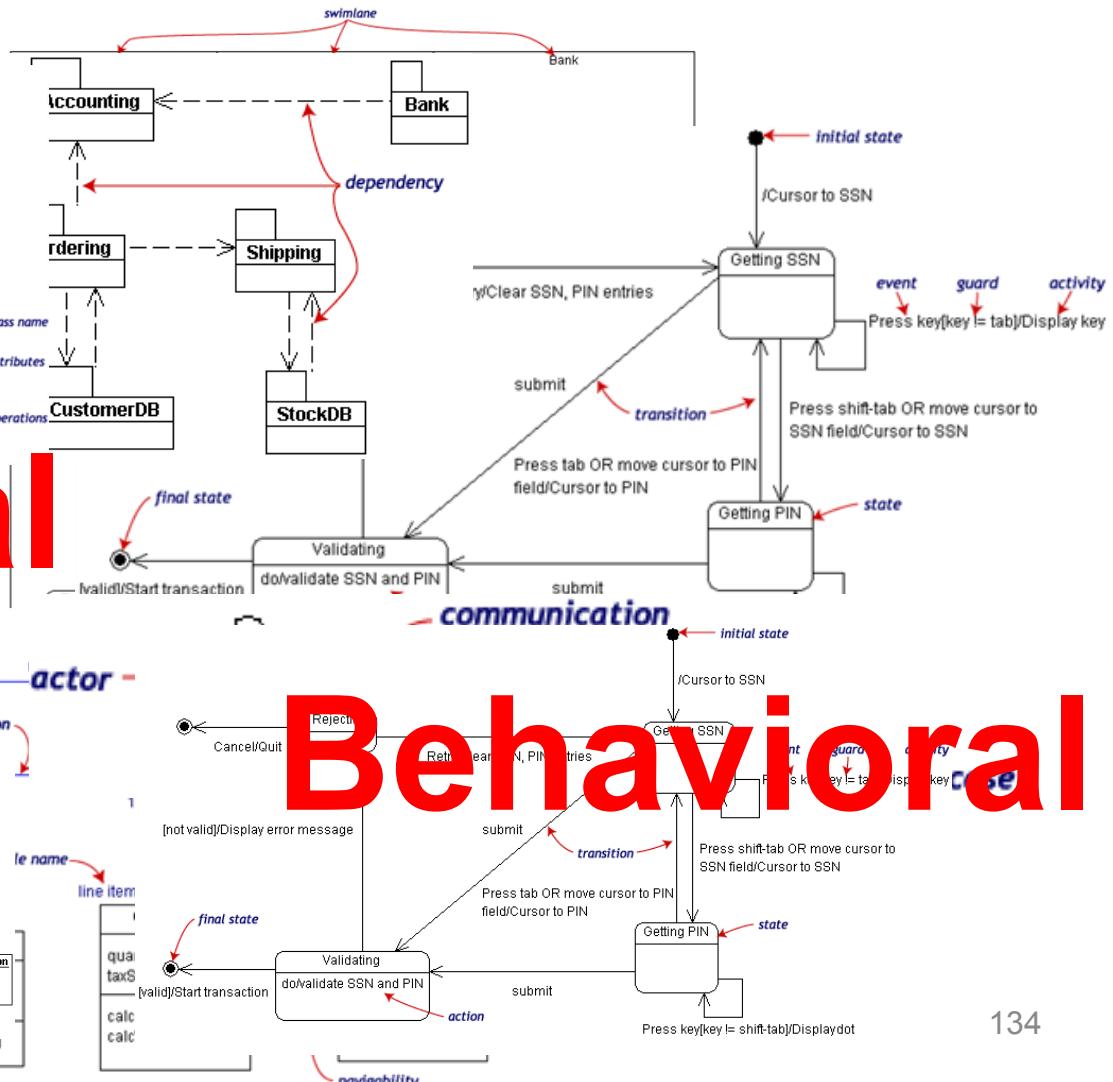
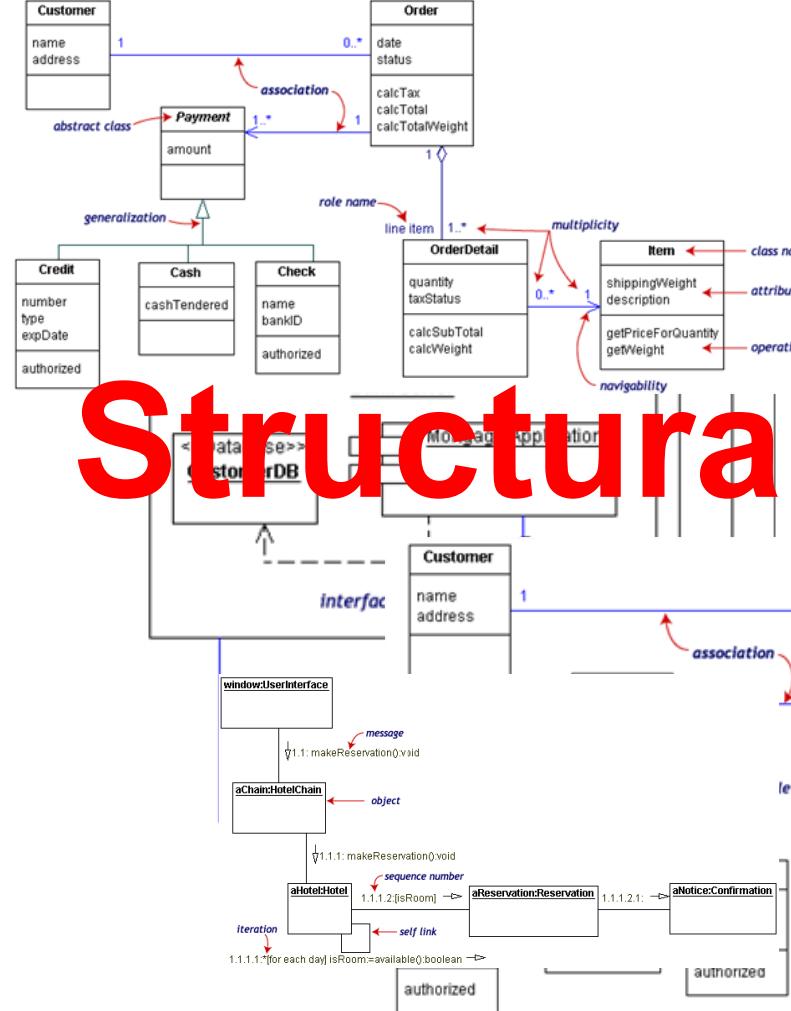
19 different diagram types are used regularly

## **Use of multiple languages (DSLs)**

- 62% of those using custom DSLs also use UML
- Almost all users of SysML and BPMN also use UML
- UML is the most popular ‘single use’ language
  - 38% of all respondents
- UML used in combination with just about every combination of modeling languages
  - 14% of UML users combine with vendor DSL
  - 6% with both custom and vendor DSL

# UML can be seen as a collection of domain-specific modeling languages

**Structural Behavioral**



# Xtext is built using MDE technologies



The Definitive  
ANTLR  
Reference



Xtext (and alternatives) democratize DSL development

# My 3 take away messages

- #1 DSLs are important (as intuited for a long time - it will become more and more apparent)
- #2 DSL technology is here (no excuse)
- #3 MDE meets language engineering

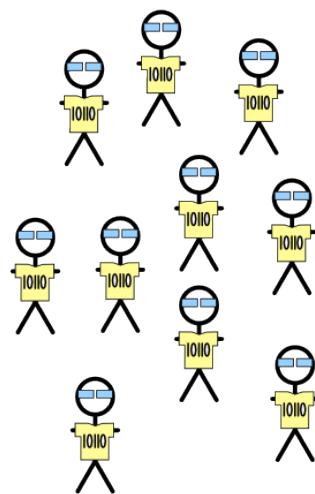
But my take away  
message is NOT

That DSLs should be used  
systematically, in every  
situations

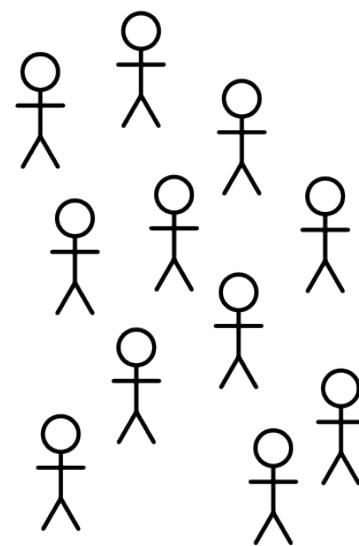
# When Developing DSLs?

- Tradeoff cost/time of development versus productivity gained for solving problems
  - If you use your DSL for resolving one problem, just one time, hum...
  - DSL: reusable, systematic means to resolve a specific task in a given domain
- DSL development can pay off quickly
  - 5' you can get a DSL
- But DSL development can be time-consuming and numerous worst practices exists

# Actors

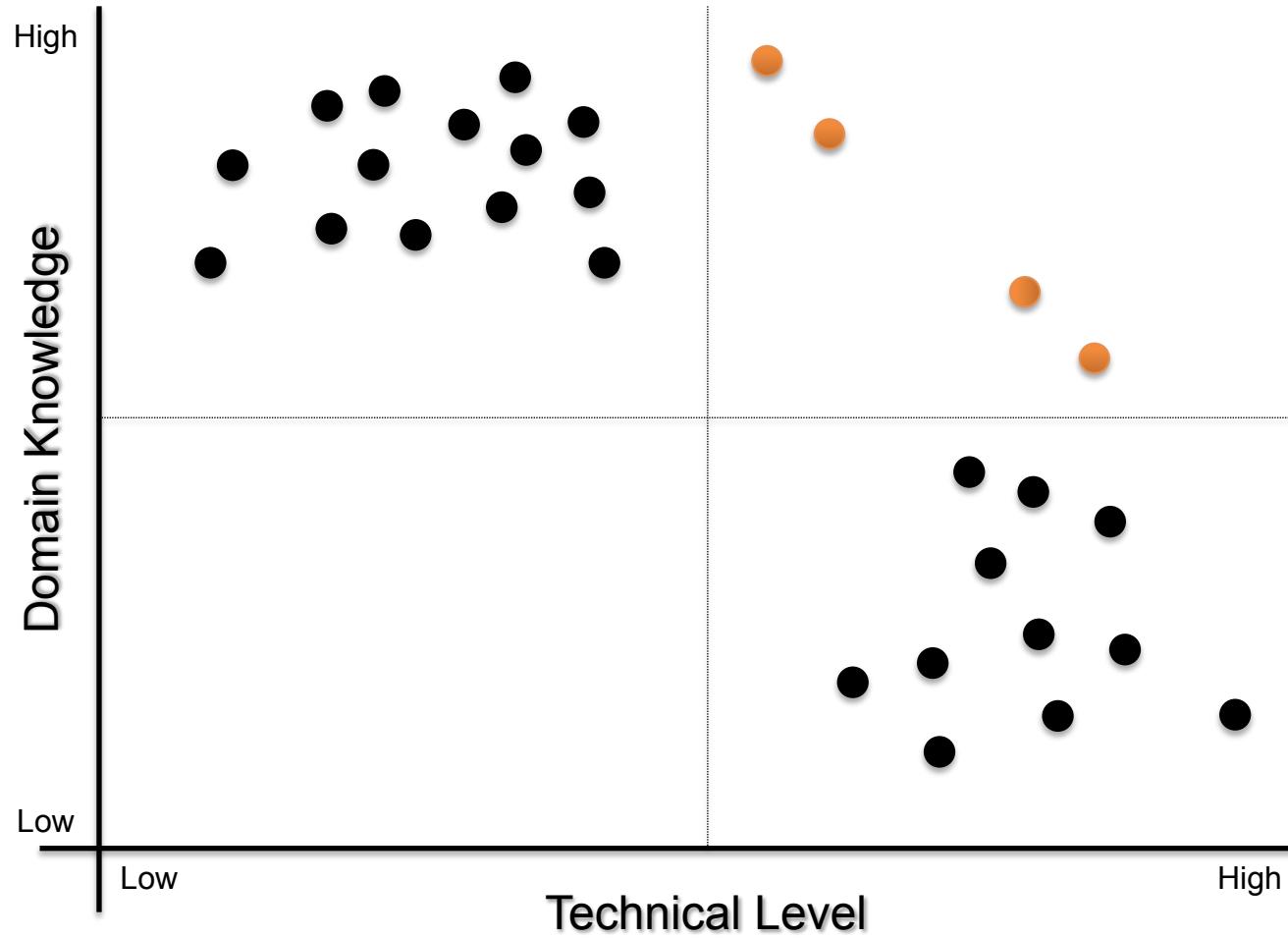


Developers



End-Users

# Actors



# Best Practices

Limit  
Expressiveness

Viewpoints

Evolution

Learn from  
GPLs

Support

Tooling

# Worst Practices

- Initial conditions
  - Only Gurus allowed
    - Believe that only gurus can build languages or that “I’m smart and don’t need help”
  - Lack of Domain Understanding
    - Insufficiently understanding the problem domain or the solution domain
  - Analysis paralysis
    - Wanting the language to be theoretically complete, with its implementation assured

# Worst Practices

- The source for Language Concepts
  - UML: New Wine in Old Wineskins
    - Extending a large, general-purpose modeling language
  - 3GL Visual Programming
    - Duplicating the concepts and semantics of traditional programming languages
  - Code: The Library is the Language
    - Focusing the language on the current code's technical details
  - Tool: if you have a hammer
    - Letting the tool's technical limitations dictate language development

# Worst Practices

- The resulting language
  - Too Generic / Too Specific
    - Creating a language with a few generic concepts or too many specific concepts, or a language that can create only a few models
  - Misplaced Emphasis
    - Too strongly emphasizing a particular domain feature
  - Sacred at Birth
    - Viewing the initial language version as unalterable

# Worst Practices

- Language Notation
  - Predetermined Paradigm
    - Choosing the wrong representational paradigm or the basis of a blinkered view
  - Simplistic Symbols
    - Using symbols that are too simple or similar or downright ugly

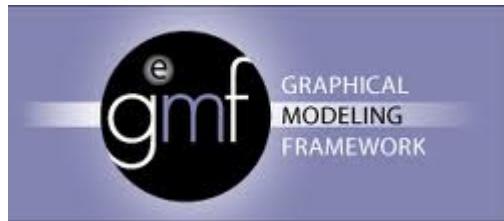
# Worst Practices

- Language Use
  - Ignoring the use process
    - Failing to consider the language's real-life usage
  - No training
    - Assuming everyone understands the language like its creator
  - Pre-adoption Stagnation
    - Letting the language stagnate after successful adoption

# Questions ?

(see also resources and  
lab sessions)

[http://martinfowler.com/bliki/  
DomainSpecificLanguage.html](http://martinfowler.com/bliki/DomainSpecificLanguage.html)

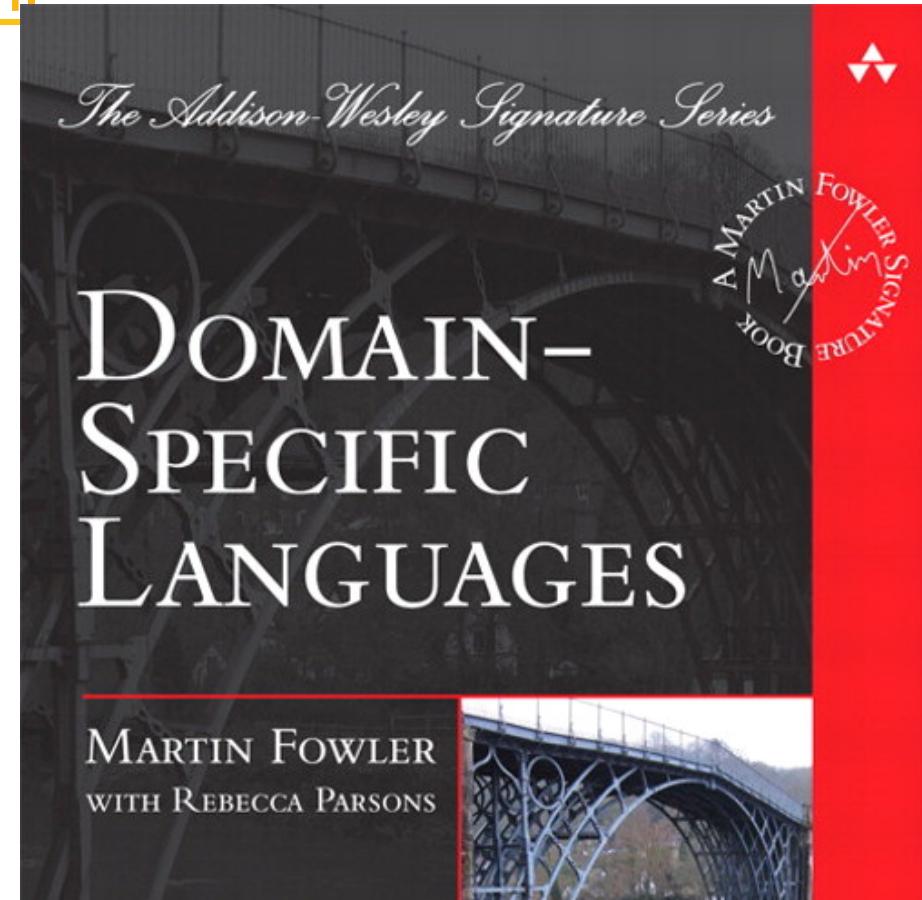


## Empirical Assessment of MDE in Industry

Jon Hutchinson, Jon Whittle, Mark Rouncefield  
School of Computing and Communications  
Lancaster University, UK  
+44 1524 510492

{j.hutchinson, j.n.whittle,  
m.rouncefield}@lancaster.ac.uk

Steinar Kristoffersen  
Østfold University College and Møreforskning Molde AS  
NO-1757 Halden  
Norway  
+47 6921 5000  
steinar.kristoffersen@hiof.no



# References

- Martin Fowler. Domain Specific Languages. Addison-Wesley Professional, 2010.
- Markus Voelter et al. “DSL Engineering: Designing, Implementing and Using Domain-Specific Languages.” dslbook.org, 2013.
- Sven Efftinge, Moritz Eysholdt, Jan Köhnlein, Sebastian Zarnekow, Robert von Massow, Wilhelm Hasselbring, and Michael Hanus. Xbase: Implementing domain-specific languages for java. GPCE ’12
- Steven Kelly and Risto Pohjonen. Worst practices for domain-specific modeling. IEEE Software, 26(4):22–29, 2009.
- Lennart C.L. Kats and Eelco Visser. The spoofax language workbench: Rules for declarative specification of languages and ides OOPSLA’10

# References

- Sebastian Erdweg, Tijs van der Storm, Markus Völter, Meinte Boersma, Remi Bosman, William R. Cook, Albert Gerritsen, Angelo Hulshout, Steven Kelly, Alex Loh, Gabriël D. P. Konat, Pedro J. Molina, Martin Palatnik, Risto Pohjonen, Eugen Schindler, Klemens Schindler, Riccardo Solmi, Vlad A. Vergu, Eelco Visser, Kevin van der Vlist, Guido Wachsmuth, and Jimi van der Woning. The state of the art in language workbenches conclusions from the language workbench challenge. SLE'13
- Steven Kelly, Kalle Lyytinen, Matti Rossi, and Juha-Pekka Tolvanen. Metaedit+ at the age of 20. In Seminal Contributions to Information Systems Engineering, pages 131–137. Springer, 2013.
- Sebastian Erdweg, Tillmann Rendel, Christian Kästner, and Klaus Ostermann. Sugarj: Library-based syntactic language extensibility. OOPSLA'11