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1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose

This document describes the proposed processes, methods and tools for the specification and implementation of an eXecutable Domain Specific Modeling Language (xDSML) in the GEMOC Studio.

1.2 Perimeter

Heterogeneous modeling combines several models expressed in different languages in order to define the various concerns involved in a system. These models are currently designed and used almost independently one from the other. More precisely, the consistency and integration between the various aspects is enforced by the human designers as the languages are almost always independent one from the other. Thus, the model analysis for a given language are performed using harness models designed in the same language that approximate the models expressed using the other languages in an heterogeneous model.

One key point to tackle down heterogeneous modeling is to clearly define one language, we call it a language unit, and specify the interface it exposes in order to allow composition of models from different languages. Composition is addressed in the WP3. The WP1 focuses on the definition of a language unit. To ease the definition of such a language unit and to favor reuse among language units, WP1 investigates a modularized definition of a language (see 1.1) with a the clear separation of the MoCC to describe concurrency aspects and the actions which describe evolution of the model at runtime (DSA). The definition of the MoCC is done in the WP2. The MoCC orchestrates the actions from DSA. It should be thus possible to change the MoCC or the DSA. To map the MoCC and the DSA, the concept of DSE is introduced. It constitutes the behavioral interface of the language unit: it specifies what kinds of stimuli a model conforming to that language can accept or generate and when.

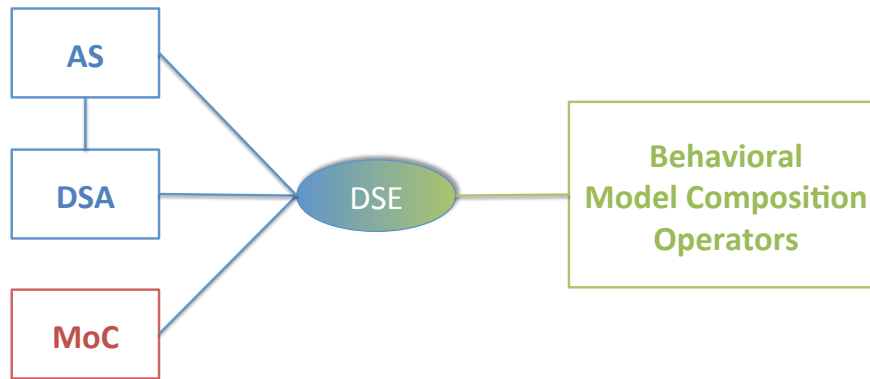
The common specification for a DSML usually focuses on its abstract syntax (provided in MDE as a metamodel that relies on the MOF and OCL metalanguages). Parts of its static semantics is provided by the OCL rules. However, its dynamic semantics is only provided in natural languages.

Several possibilities have been explored to implement dynamic (aka behavioral) semantics of DSMLs [7]:

- To use an executable metamodeling language to express directly the executable semantics like a set of operations for each concept (e.g., Kermeta [14], xOCL [3], MOF action languages [19] or even Java with the EMF API)
- To use *endogenous transformations* on the abstract syntax. As an example, [Markovic08a] uses QVT [18] to express inplace rewriting rules that gradually compute the values of an OCL expression. Top-cased currently relies on that approach using SmartQVT.
- To define the executable semantics of a DSML with so called *translational semantics*. Unlike operational semantics, a translational semantics maps the model elements onto another (formally defined) technical space. Thus, it relies on an existing semantics defined on the target technical space. For instance, translational semantics is used by the group pUML2, called *Denotational Meta Modeling*, to formalize some UML diagrams [2].

While all these approaches adopt very different strategies to give an executable semantics to a DSML, they all share a common problem: they mix the behavior of the application with the behavior of the domain. The application should focus on the manipulation of the data model while a specific Model of Computation (MoCC, sometimes also called Model of Computation and Communication or MoCC) should drive the behavior of the domain. In GEMOC, we want these two kinds of behavior to be separated.

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WP1: metamodeling facilities to implement language units

WP2: MoC modeling language

WP3: metamodeling facilities to implement behavioral composition operators

Figure 1.1: An eXecutable Modeling Language "a la" GEMOC

This separation is illustrated by figure 1.1. The operational semantics is split into two sections as per [6] (explained in chapter 2). The first one, DSA, is broadly defined as the set of attributes, references and classes needed to represent the runtime state of the model and operations that modify these elements. It is an extension of the abstract syntax (AS) and dependent of the domain addressed by the DSML. The second one, defined as MoC, will be the scheduling policy of the above-mentioned actions.

The expected benefits of such a separation are: the ability to identify the MoCC clearly, and consequently the analyses that can be conducted on the model; the ability to equip a same DSML with various MoCCs; the possibility to apply an adequate MoCC explicitly on different entities of the model; the possibility to deal with semantic variation points; the possibility to identify clearly the connections between entities directed by different MoCCs.

1.3 Definitions, Acronyms and Abbreviations

- **AS:** Abstract Syntax.
- **API:** Application Programming Interface.
- **Behavioral Semantics:** see *Execution semantics*.
- **CCSL:** Clock-Constraint Specification Language.
- **CS:** Concrete Syntax.
- **Domain Engineer:** user of the Modeling Workbench.
- **DSA:** Domain-Specific Action.
- **DSE:** Domain-Specific Event.
- **DSML:** Domain-Specific (Modeling) Language.
- **Dynamic Semantics:** see *Execution semantics*.
- **Eclipse Plugin:** an Eclipse plugin is a Java project with associated metadata that can be bundled and deployed as a contribution to an Eclipse-based IDE.
- **ED:** Execution Data (part of DSA).

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- **EF:** Execution Function (part of DSA).
- **Execution Semantics:** Defines when and how elements of a language will produce a model behavior.
- **GEMOC Studio:** Eclipse-based studio integrating both a language workbench and the corresponding modeling workbenches.
- **GUI:** Graphical User Interface.
- **Language Workbench:** a language workbench offers the facilities for designing and implementing modeling languages.
- **Language Designer:** a language designer is the user of the language workbench.
- **MoCC:** Model of Concurrency and Communication.
- **Model:** model which contributes to the content of a View.
- **Modeling Workbench:** a modeling workbench offers all the required facilities for editing and animating domain specific models according to a given modeling language.
- **MSA:** Model-Specific Action.
- **MSE:** Model-Specific Event.
- **RTD:** RunTime Data.
- **Static semantics:** Constraints on a model that cannot be expressed in the metamodel. For example, static semantics can be expressed as OCL invariants.
- **TESL:** Tagged Events Specification Language.
- **xDSML:** Executable Domain-Specific Modeling Language.

1.4 Summary

Chapter 1 provides an introduction to this document. It defines the goal of WP1 and the general idea on how we are going to create xDSMLs in a modular way so as to deal with heterogeneous models in the context of the GEMOC project. Chapter 2 presents the previous work of the project members regarding those language units, mainly the *eExecutable DSML* pattern and the attempt to reify an explicit concurrency model. Chapter 3 presents the proposed approach to define language units. Chapter 4 lists the main identified challenges that are raised by these approach and that will be tackled in the project. Chapter 5 describes a methodology as well as guidelines (good and bad practices) to define an xDSML from its abstract syntax. Finally, section 6 gives some concluding remarks.

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2. Background

This chapter presents the previous scientific works on these issues handled by WP1. Please note that the vocabulary is thus not aligned with the GEMOC one. The original vocabulary. So we use SDMM, EDMM, TM3 instead of DSA and ED, DSE and trace model.

2.1 The Executable DSML Pattern

To present the Executable DSML pattern [4], we follow the common design pattern description format used in [10]. for describing our metamodeling pattern. We rely on the model simulation and graphical animation of UML State Machine (UML-SM) diagrams [17] in order to introduce the requirements for model execution at a conceptual level.

2.1.1 Motivation

As explained in the introduction, the DSML semantics is usually enclosed (generally hard-coded) in the execution and transformation functions hidden in the system development tools. Our purpose is to make its definition explicit, including the semantic domain and the mapping as advocated in [11].

The designer of a model that describes a system behavior usually needs to simulate and animate it to check whether it behaves as expected. Unfortunately, the metamodel does not generally describe all the information that has to be managed at execution time (i.e. the semantic domain). For example, UML-SM defines the concepts of *Region*, *State*, *Transition*, *Event*, etc. but lacks the notions of active states in a region, or of fireable transitions (cf. Figure 2.1).

Also, no elements are available to store the sequence of events received by a state machine. Furthermore, during model animation, the designer has to simulate the behavior of the system environment through stimuli. The UML-SM designer will inject UML events in a state machine that will trigger fireable transitions and change the current states of the regions. Obviously, the way the system reacts to the stimuli defines its execution semantics. This reaction updates the execution related data according to the current state of the model and the received stimulus. In the end, the designer may want to replay the same execution, for example, to check whether defects have been corrected or not, or to be able to perform non regression tests. Scenarios are then useful to describe a sequence of stimuli.

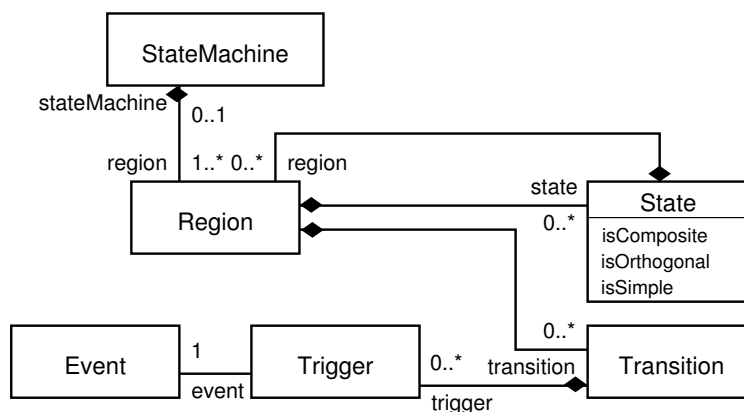


Figure 2.1: Subset of the UML StateMachine Metamodel

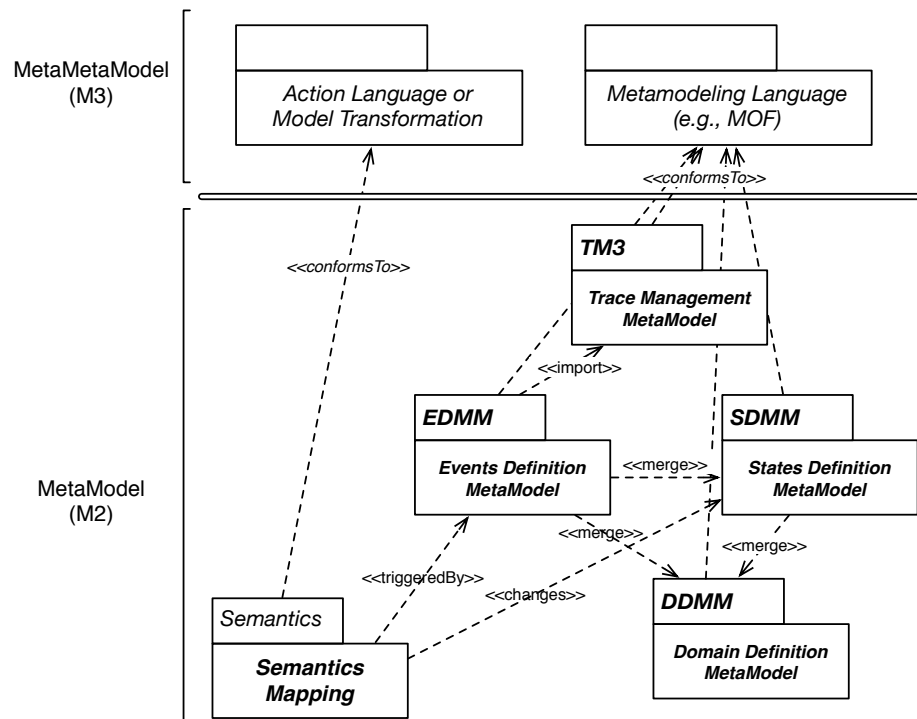


Figure 2.2: The eXecutable DSML Pattern

We have highlighted that model execution requires the extension of a DSML metamodel with: i) the definition of information managed during execution, ii) the definition of the stimuli that trigger the evolution of the model, iii) the organization of stimuli as scenarios, iv) the definition of an execution semantics (or transition function) that describes how the model state evolves when a stimulus occurs.

An xDSML is a DSML which defines the execution of its conforming models for a particular purpose. Therefore, an xDSML at least includes the definition of its language's abstract syntax, and its execution semantics (including semantic domain and semantic mapping related information)

We propose to reify execution related elements to make them explicit and manageable. We aim to provide flexibility, evolvability and interoperability in the semantics definition. Furthermore such elements must ease the development of tools related to model execution, for example V&V tools.

2.1.2 Structure

Figure 2.2 shows the structure of the proposed *eXecutable DSML* pattern. It is built from four structural parts (detailed in the next subsection) that are woven together using the `merge` and `import` predefined package operators of MOF [16]. These parts organize the data related to the DSML and its execution semantics. A fifth part called *Semantics* provides the execution semantics itself relying on the previous four parts (i.e., the semantic mapping based on the previous reification of the semantic domain information). As it is a pattern to organize data at the metamodel level (i.e., a *metamodeling pattern*, as motivated in [1]), the structure shows dependencies between packages that represent parts of a metamodel. This pattern is architectural like *MVC* or *3-tiers*. It emphasizes the common structure that a metamodel for an xDSML should use in order to define the language semantics. In addition to providing guidelines in language definition, the purpose is to be able to define generic and generative tools relying on that architecture.

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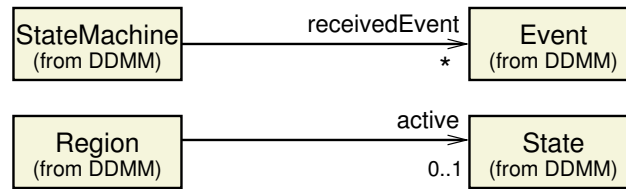


Figure 2.3: One possible SDMM for UML State Machines

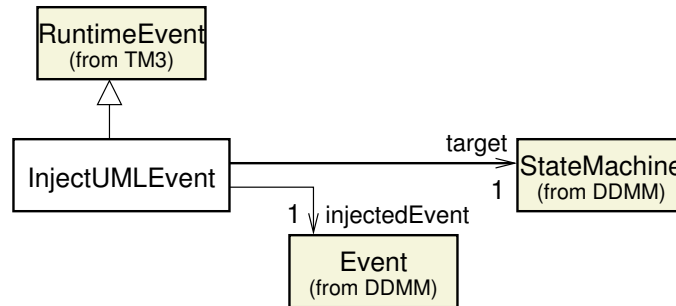


Figure 2.4: One possible EDMM for UML State Machines

2.1.3 Participants

2.1.3.1 Domain Definition MetaModel (DDMM)

It is the usual metamodel used by standardization bodies to define the modeling language. It provides the key concepts of the language (representing the considered domain) and their relationships. For instance, the UML metamodel defined by the OMG is a DDMM (see Figure 2.1 for a small subset). Usually, the DDMM does not contain all the execution-related information. For instance, the UML DDMM does not formalize the notions of *active state* nor *event queue*. Thus, even if a model describes the implicit potential behavior of a system, it does not usually provide explicitly the elements for its execution.

2.1.3.2 State Definition MetaModel (SDMM)

During the execution of a model, additional data is usually mandatory for expressing the execution itself (a.k.a. dynamic information). Such data must be manipulated and recorded (in the form of metaclass instances). For example, each active UML region must have one active state and a state machine must store the sequence of received events. These execution related data make up the SDMM, and are related to the semantic domain: the data required to express the execution semantics. Thus the SDMM is built on top of the DDMM. For instance, the UML State Machines SDMM (figure 2.3) may add a reference from *Region* to *State* (both defined in the DDMM) to record the active state of one region.

2.1.3.3 Event Definition MetaModel (EDMM)

The EDMM of a given DSML specifies the concrete stimuli (called runtime events) that drive the execution of a model that conforms to this DSML. These stimuli are not only concrete system hardware events, but also more abstract software events like storage events for reading or writing, communication events for sending or receiving, clock events as ticks, function events like computation results given parameters, etc. Concrete stimuli define properties of events related to the formal execution semantics to be supported.

As an illustration, the runtime event we consider for the UML State Machine stores an UML event (an instance of *Event*, see Fig. 2.1) in a state machine queue (figure 2.4). When the UML event in the queue is handled by the state machine, it fires the transitions that it triggers.

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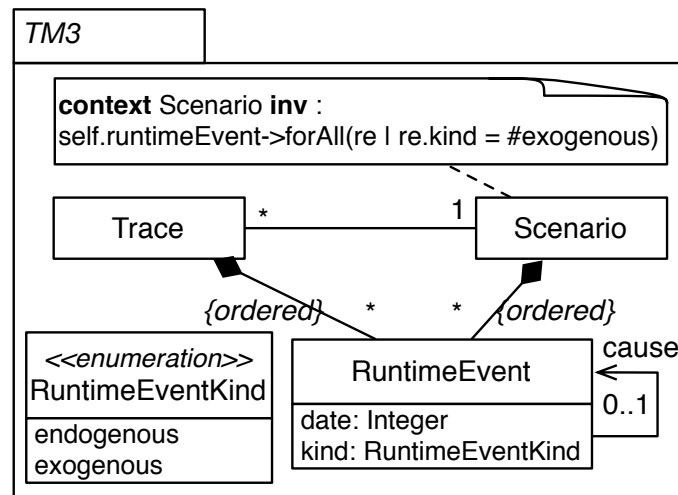


Figure 2.5: A simplified TM3 for Discrete-Events Modeling

2.1.3.4 Trace Management MetaModel (TM3)

The TM3 is specific to a particular MoCC and is reused for all DSML s using this MoCC. As an example, Figure 2.5 shows a simplified TM3 dedicated to discrete-events system modeling [21]. It defines three main metaclasses called `Trace`, `Scenario` and `RuntimeEvent`. `RuntimeEvent` is an abstract metaclass which reifies the concept of stimulus. It is an abstraction for any kind of semantic related stimulus defined in the EDMM. To this end, `RuntimeEvent` is imported in the EDMM, and all the concrete runtime events must inherit from it. This metaclass has executability-related features, like (partially ordered) dates of occurrence (i.e., symbolic representation of the time when the runtime event occurs). Any `RuntimeEvent` that triggers a semantic action involving a state change should have a reference to its source and target states information in the SDMM. `RuntimeEvent` instances fall into two categories, which are modeled by the `RuntimeEventKind` enumeration. Exogenous runtime events are injected by the environment, while endogenous runtime events are produced internally by the system in response to another runtime event (cf. `cause` in Figure 2.5). As stated by the OCL constraint in Figure 2.5, a scenario is made of exogenous runtime events whereas a trace corresponds to one possible execution of a scenario and is thus composed of any kind of runtime events. A more sophisticated trace management metamodel or a “standard” one (like the UML Testing Profile [15]) may be integrated in our pattern.

2.1.3.5 Semantics

The last and key participant is the package *Semantics*. It abstracts both the semantic mapping [11] (DSML-specific part) and the interactions with the environment (MoCC-specific part). It describes how the running model (SDMM) evolves according to the stimuli defined in the EDMM. An important point in applying the pattern is to define the content of the package *Semantics* that depends on the application context. On the one hand the semantic mapping may be explicitly defined as a transition function and thus conforms to an action language (a.k.a. operational semantics). In this case, the four previous participants correspond to the semantic domain. On the other hand, the semantic mapping may be implicitly defined thanks to a translation to another language (a.k.a. translational semantics). Consequently SDMM and EDMM do not correspond to the semantic domain but help in defining the mapping, and in getting results back.

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2.1.4 Consequences

According to the *eExecutable DSML* pattern, an xDSML is supported by an executable metamodel MM_x structured as three DSML-specific parts (DDMM, SDMM, and EDMM) and one MoCC-specific part (TM3):

$$MM_x = \{DDMM, SDMM, EDMM\} \cup \{TM3\}$$

MM_x reifies the elements involved in model execution. The DDMM is the starting point. It is usually standardized and cannot be changed in order to preserve interoperability. The TM3 is shared by any DSMLs relying on the same MoCC. Thus, a semantics is defined by a triplet (SDMM, EDMM, *Semantics*). The SDMM and the EDMM introduce the needed information to express the execution semantics (i.e. the semantic domain) whereas the package *Semantics* implements the semantic mapping. These three different parts should not be defined independently in order to reduce the risks of inconsistencies. Any change in this triplet entails a new semantics. In order to reduce these risks, we propose through the use of this pattern to reify the various aspects linked to the definition of the execution semantics in order to allow systematic specification, analysis and validation of an executable DSML metamodel.

Applying this pattern produces several consequences, both for the definition of the semantics, and for the definition of the execution-related tools.

2.1.4.1 Definition of the Semantics

The pattern allows a modular implementation of the execution semantics (i.e., an implementation that is separated out, encapsulated, and easily replaceable) with respect to the core language metamodel. The specification of the DSML semantics is split in two parts: first, a generic MoCC based on the TM3, and shared with other DSMLs; and then DSML specific elements based on the SDMM and EDMM. This strong property provides several benefits described here after.

It favors the evolvability of the semantics during the DSML lifetime thanks to the separation of concerns involved in the definition of an execution semantics.

It eases the factorization of commonalities. The pattern favors the definition of a family of semantics for a single language as well as the semantics of a family of languages. For example, semantic variation points (like in UML) lead to different but similar semantics definitions. In most cases, SDMM and EDMM are the same and only the package *Semantics* has to be adapted.

It provides flexibility in the association of semantics to a given DSML in order to define several purpose driven semantics for the same DSML. Obviously, runtime information (SDMM), concrete runtime events (EDMM) and the package *Semantics* are dependent on the user purpose during the execution of models. For instance, the user may prefer to carry out more abstract execution with fewer runtime events and/or runtime information that demonstrates one aspect of the system under assessment or the user may want to define a fine-grained semantics that exhibits most aspects of the system. Each semantics will have its own set of events in the EDMM and states in the SDMM.

No specific method is enforced to apply the pattern. Nevertheless, we have proposed in [8] a method for the definition of DSML execution semantics dedicated to verification activities. It advocates a property driven approach: only runtime information and events required to evaluate properties of interest to the end user are described. In doing so, the EDMM and SDMM are a minimal mandatory subset of data to express the semantics relevant for the user, as advocated by the substitutability principle [13].

The definition of the package Semantics is postponed. The pattern is mainly an architectural pattern that helps in structuring information required to make a DSML executable while ensuring interoperability between tools based on this DSML. Thus, the semantic mapping and the interaction with the environment are not described in the pattern (as discussed in Section 2.1.3). According to the purpose of empowering a DSML with execution, the content of the package *Semantics* may be detailed. For example, Figure 2.6 shows a MoCC-specific framework for model execution. Besides the interpreter, the execution engine is composed of two main components which implement the discrete events MoC: *Agenda* and *Driver*. The agenda (*Agenda*) stores the runtime events (*RuntimeEvent*) corresponding to one particular execution. These events are ordered according to their occurring date. The agenda provides the API required by the driver to handle the events (e.g., retrieving the next event and adding a new event). The driver (*Driver*) controls the execution. It contains a *step* method, which gets the next runtime event from the agenda and asks the

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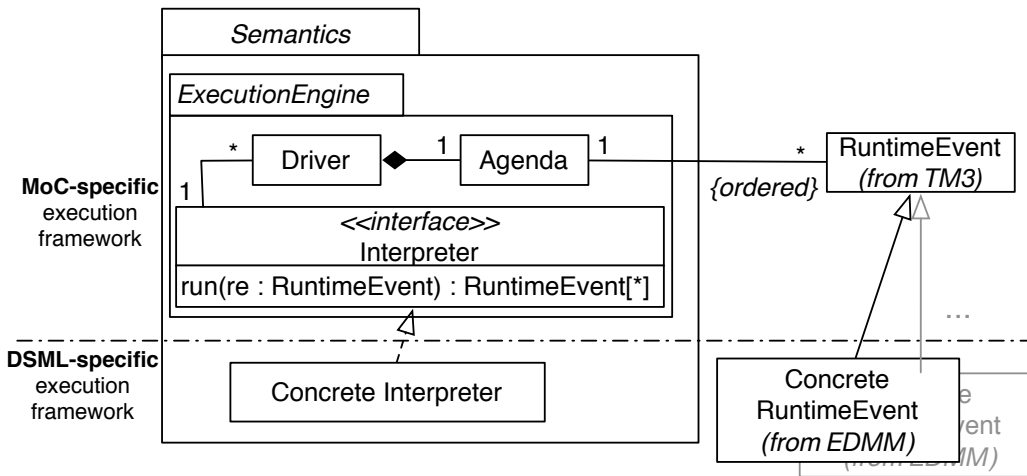


Figure 2.6: The TOPCASED Model Execution Framework for Model Animation

interpreter (*Interpreter*) to handle it. The generated endogenous runtime events are then added to the agenda. The driver provides an API that allows both batch and interactive execution. For each execution semantics of a given DSML, a *Concrete Interpreter* must implement *Interpreter* (cf. Figure 2.6).

In most cases, the architecture of the MM_x eases the definition of the package *Semantics*. However, for scalability, efficiency, and some time readability purposes, it might be useful to introduce a new metamodel not relying on the standard DDMM. For instance, the use of matrices to encode Petri nets instead of graphs is mandatory to allow the execution of huge models. This is also true in the case of General Purpose Modeling Languages (GPML) whose standard metamodel (DDMM) and semantics can be extremely complex. The introduction of purpose-specific metamodels allows to ease the definition of the semantics for a subset of the language that the end user wants to access.

Semantics is discrete event oriented. The EDMM part of the pattern stresses the use of discrete events to represent system stimuli. It may not be well-suited for all systems, like continuous one. Nevertheless, we can notice that when one wants to observe a continuous system, a discretization (on events or time) is performed. Thus, the pattern is still applicable as this is done in Ptolemy II [12] for example. Time may be managed continuously as part of the MoCC or discretized as runtime events.

2.1.4.2 Definition of the Execution-Related Tools

The formalization of pattern elements favors the definition of generic and generative execution-based tools. For example, it has been used to develop model animators [9] and V&V tools [20].

Several models of computation (MoCCs) may be used to support symbolic execution semantics. The description of the EDMM and TM3 might give the impression that the semantics is restricted to a discrete event MoCC. In fact, these parts of the pattern define the discrete observations and interactions between the user/environment and the system, but any MoCC can be used, including continuous ones. Our aim is to describe systems that in the end will be managed by either discrete software or human end users. Both can only handle a finite discrete history of the system. The MM_x architecture is strongly based on the user point of view: observation of the interaction between the model and its environment (depicted by the model state) at some key points in time represented by the runtime events. However, the package *Semantics* can implement any MoCC or abstract the translation to an existing one.

Cosimulation and models at runtime can be integrated. The package *Semantics* can also be implemented as a wrapper over, either real physical systems in which sensors and actuators are mapped to MM_x directly or through software layers, or existing softwares and execution engines. Several DSMLs can also be integrated through shared data in their MM_x and synchronization/cooperation in their packages *Semantics*.

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It favors interoperability between the various semantics-related tools for a given DSML. Different kinds of tools may be based on the same executable DSML. The separation between MM_x and the package *Semantics* makes possible to share data between tools (i.e., a counter example provided by a verification tool can be analyzed using a graphical animator). However, this relies only on structural similarities and thus requires to assess the compatibility of both packages *Semantics* (i.e., by checking the bisimilarity of the transition relations).

2.1.5 Limits of the eExecutable DSML pattern

The main limits of the *eExecutable DSML* pattern are :

- The pattern does not enforce the definition of the semantics package. It has thus to be defined for each new application, even if it may be factorized for a kind of application. It thus needs to be further detailed for a given purpose, for example model animation, model verification, etc.
- Once the application domain has been defined, for example model animation, we have defined the semantics as a monolithic component in which the model of computation is weaved with the elementary actions of the behavioral semantics. It is thus difficult to adapt the semantics to use a different kind of model of computation.

This last limit is addressed in the approach proposed by Combemale *et al.* [6] which is described in the next section.

2.2 Explicit definition of a concurrency model

2.2.1 Introduction

Harel *et al.* [11] synthesize the construction of a DSL as the definition of a triple: Abstract Syntax, Concrete Syntax and Semantic Domain. Combemale *et al.* [6] focus on the definition of the Abstract Syntax (*AS*), the Semantic Domain (*SD*) and the respective mapping between them (M_{as_sd}). Several techniques can be used to define those three elements. In [6], the authors use executable metamodeling techniques, which allow one to associate operational semantics to a metamodel. In this context, they argue that the formal definition of the Semantic Domain must rely on two essential assets: the semantics of Domain-Specific Actions and the scheduling policy that orchestrates these actions. It is currently possible to capture the former in a metamodel with associated operational semantics and the latter in a *Model of Computation* (*MoCC*), but the supporting tools and methods are such that it is very difficult to connect both to form a whole semantic domain (see right of Figure 2.7).

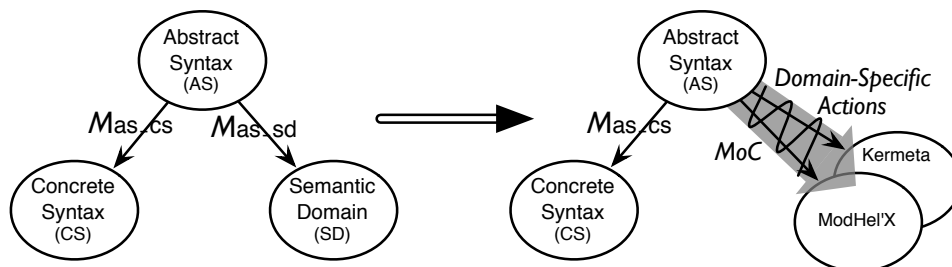


Figure 2.7: A modular approach for implementing the behavioral semantics of a DSL

The authors propose to model Domain-Specific Actions (DSAs) and MoCCs in a modular and composable manner, resulting in a complete and executable definition of a DSL. The proof of concept relies on two state-of-the-art modeling frameworks developed in both communities: the Kermeta workbench that supports the investigation of innovative concepts for metamodeling, and the ModHel'X environment that supports the

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definition of MoCCs. Major benefits of this composition should include the ability to reuse a MoCC in different DSLs and the ability to reuse DSAs with different MoCCs to implement semantic variation points of a DSL. Saving the verification effort on MoCCs and Domain-Specific Actions also reduces the risk of errors when defining and validating new DSLs and their variants. This approach and the reuse capacities are illustrated through the actual composition of the standard fUML modeling language with a sequential and then a concurrent version of the discrete event MoCC.

2.2.2 Details of the approach

2.2.2.1 About fUML and ModHel'X

fUML As previously mentioned, fUML is used as an example of a DSML which has several semantic variation points, either because the specification allows it or because it is not specific enough. In this document, we will not present the fUML language. The reader can find more documentation on fUML on the Object Management Group's website: <http://www.omg.org/spec/FUML/>. The fUML specification includes both a subset of the Abstract Syntax of UML, and an execution model of that subset supported by a behavioral semantics. An example of an fUML Activity is given in figure 2.8.

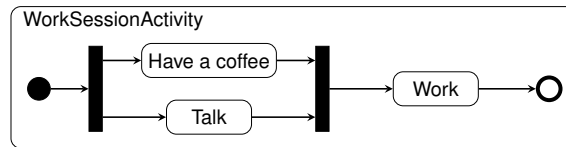


Figure 2.8: Activity at a work session.

About ModHel'X ModHel'X¹ is a framework for simulating multi-formalism models. ModHel'X is able to simulate the behavior of a multi-formalism models using the descriptions of the different MoCCs involved in the model and the mappings to glue the MoCCs to the operational semantics of the languages. A proof-of-concept implementation is available in Java/EMF but for technical reasons the authors of [6] decided to implement its core in Kermeta.

2.2.2.2 Defining an xDSML

- It is possible to define the abstract syntax and the operational semantics of fUML using Kermeta. However, a new Model of Computation has to be written from scratch for each fUML model in order to define the scheduling policy of the defined Domain-Specific Actions (DSAs).
- ModHel'X allows us to write such MoCCs on top of an execution engine which allows the simulation of heterogeneous models. However, no specific tool is provided to help the user connect the generic block structure of ModHel'X to Domain-Specific Concepts (DSCs) and associated DSAs.

Thus, a mapping of some sort needs to be defined between fUML and ModHel'X. The reification of this approach can be observed on figure 2.9.

The implementation steps are explained below.

Abstract Syntax Mapping First, the Abstract Syntax of the DSML is mapped onto the Abstract Syntax of ModHel'X, to enable model execution through the generic engine. In the case of fUML, the control structure and the activity nodes must be mapped onto ModHel'X elements. Activity nodes have DSAs that must be callable, so they are naturally mapped onto atomic blocks (that can be observed through the *update* operation). Control edges are mapped onto relations between blocks, which represent the possible flow of control.

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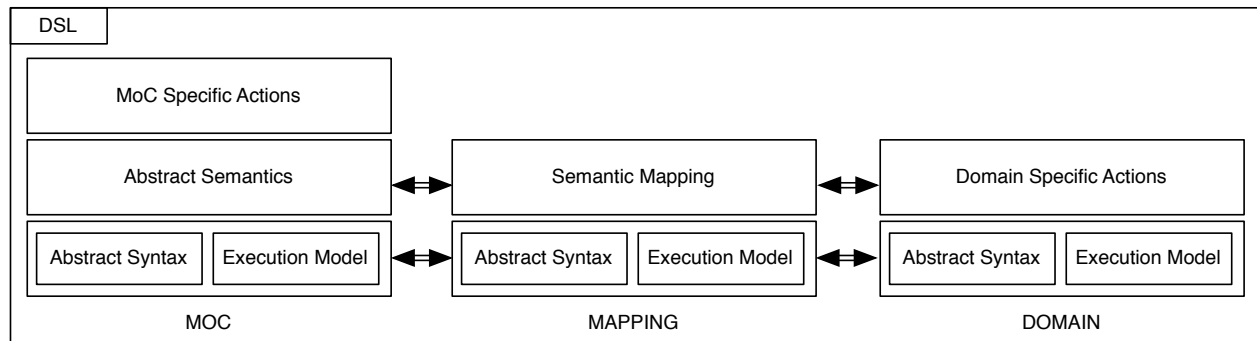


Figure 2.9: Elements of the semantics of a DSL in this approach.

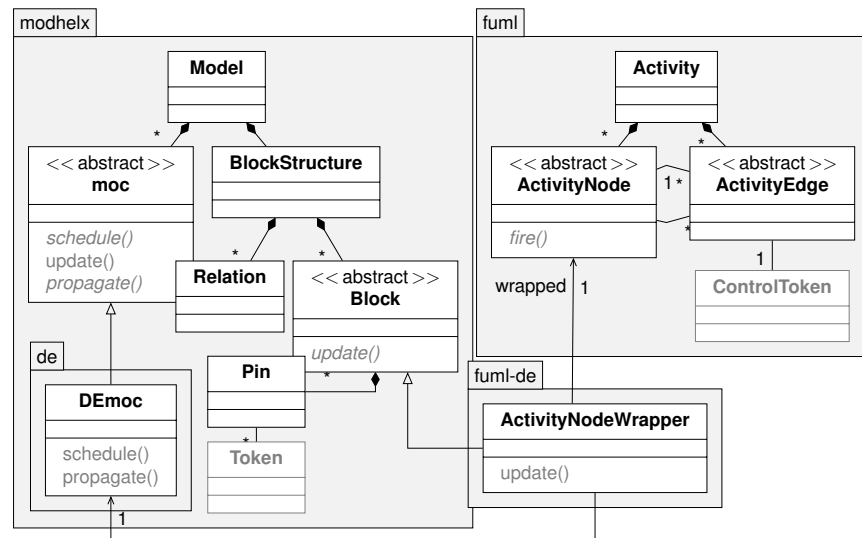


Figure 2.10: Mapping (package *fuml-de*) between the kermeta-based implementation of fUML (package *fuml*) and ModHel'X (package *modhelx*) to use any of its MoCCs (e.g., here the discrete event MoCC, package *de*)

Figure 2.10 shows the mapping between the two metamodels, and Figure 2.11 shows the result of the syntactic transformation of an fUML model into a ModHel'X model using the DE MoCC. This model transformation is made before the execution starts, by instantiating a wrapper for each activity node.

Abstract Semantics to Domain Specific Actions Mapping Lastly, the abstract semantics of ModHel'X needs to be mapped onto the domain-specific actions. The entry point of the abstract semantics for blocks is the *update* operation. Therefore, an activity node is wrapped into a special kind of block, which has an *update* operation that calls the domain-specific actions of the node. The wrapper acts as a block in the ModHel'X model, so its class is a subclass of *Block*. On the other hand it must execute the associated domain-specific actions, so it relies on the DSML's method signatures. Figure 2.12 shows how the wrapper maps the abstract semantics of ModHel'X onto the domain-specific semantics of fUML. When DE gives control to the wrapper block by calling its *update* method, the wrapper calls the DSA (the *fire* operation). If the wrapped activity node is an action which takes time, the wrapper also requests to be observed in the future, so that it can handle the termination of the action.

The *schedule* and *propagate* operations allow the MoCC to choose which block should be updated next, and how information produced by the update should be propagated to the other blocks.

¹<http://www.di.supelec.fr/software/ModHelX/>

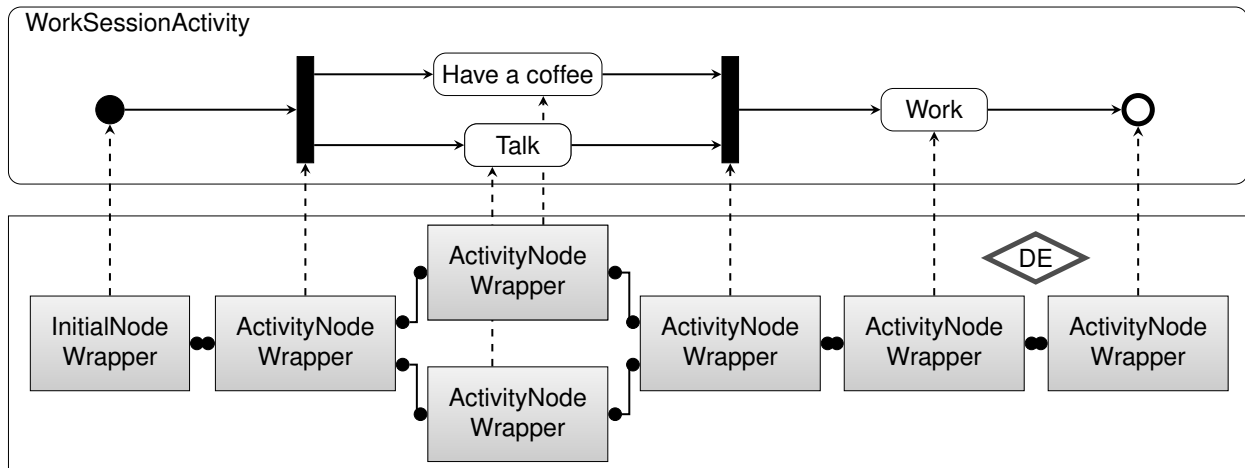


Figure 2.11: Example fUML model and its wrapping ModHel'X model using DE.

Execution Model Mapping The last item of Figure 2.9 to be mapped is the *execution model*, which represents the state of the execution of the model. The *update* operation of the wrapper synchronizes the execution models on both sides. In the case of the DE MoCC and of fUML, DE events represent control on the MoCC side, and must be translated into fUML control tokens before the domain-specific actions are called. When the fUML model has updated its execution model, control tokens must be converted into DE events so that the MoCC has the necessary information to schedule the rest of the execution. Time must also be synchronized so that the MoCC knows when to schedule a block, and activity nodes know when they terminate.

In the general case, the wrapper has to synchronize three aspects of the execution model: control, time and data. In this example, the DE/fUML wrapper adapts control and time only; the adaptation of data in [6].

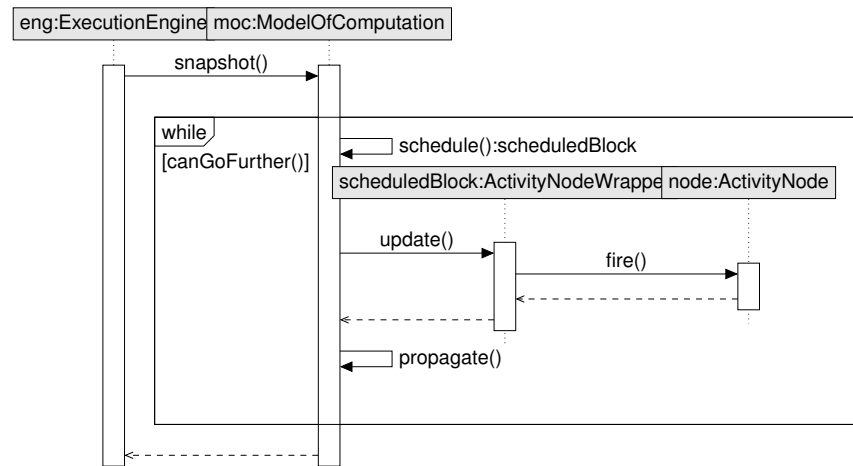


Figure 2.12: Mapping fUML domain-specific semantics on ModHel'X abstract semantics

Difficulties One of the difficulties of the approach is to decide what to model in the MoCC and what to model in the domain-specific actions. In order to favor the modularity and the reuse of the MoCC for different DSLs, they decided to handle only the control and time aspects in the MoCC and the wrapper. An example of such a design decision is the choice of whether to check in the MoCC or in a domain-specific action if an activity node can be activated. Both can be done: *the wrapper* can be responsible for calling *fire* only when

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all the inputs of the block have received an event, or *fire* can be responsible for executing the activity only when all incoming control edges have a control token. They chose to implement the latter behavior in the *fire* domain-specific action even though this is related to control, because it is the *core semantics* of fUML that states that an activity node is executed only when it has control on all its incoming edges.

2.2.3 Results

This section presents the execution traces obtained using the classical “Concurrent” DE MoCC, then its “Sequential DE” variant. To help differentiating the two executions, different durations were chosen for the *Have a coffee* action (10 minutes), the *Talk* action (15 minutes) and the *Work* action (45 minutes). The execution traces obtained are graphically depicted by the timing diagrams shown on Figure 2.13. Those diagrams illustrate the time at which the different actions respectively start and complete.

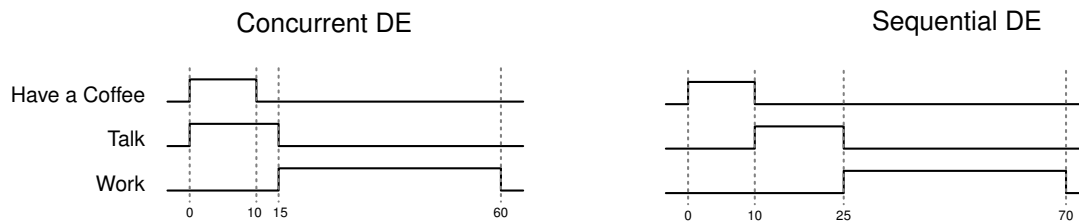


Figure 2.13: Timing diagrams of the execution traces when the model is scheduled by different MoCCs

Using the Concurrent DE MoCC The execution obtained using the Concurrent DE MoCC is illustrated by the timing diagram shown on the left part of Figure 2.13. With Concurrent DE, the two actions after the Fork start concurrently at $t = 0$, the beginning of the execution of the overall activity. So a first snapshot is taken at time $t = 0$, and one can see on the timing diagram that both the *Have a coffee* and the *Talk* actions start. After that, two more snapshots are taken when each of the actions completes: at $t = 10$ for *Have a coffee*; at $t = 15$ for *Talk*. Within the latter snapshot, the Join is activated since the two preceding actions are finished and it releases control to the *Work* action, which therefore starts at $t = 15$. A last snapshot is taken when the *Work* action completes at $t = 15 + 45 = 60$.

Using the Sequential DE Variant The execution obtained using the Sequential DE MoCC is illustrated by the timing diagram shown on the right part of Figure 2.13. With Sequential DE, the two actions after the Fork become active-able at the initial time ($t = 0$). But since only one of them can be active at the same time, the MoCC chooses to start one of them, for instance *Have a coffee*. So a first snapshot is taken at time $t = 0$. A second snapshot is taken when the *Have a coffee* action completes ($t = 10$). At that time, the *Talk* action can start. A third snapshot is taken when the *Talk* action completes ($t = 25 = 10 + 15$). During this snapshot, the Join is activated and it releases control to the *Work* action, which therefore starts at $t = 25$. A last snapshot is taken at $t = 25 + 45 = 70$, when the *Work* action completes.

2.2.4 Conclusion

As illustrated by the timing diagrams of Figure 2.13, the authors have managed to obtain two different executions of the same fUML model by changing the model of computation which is used to schedule it. This shows how the modular description of the semantics of DSLs as the association of a model of computation and a set of domain-specific actions facilitates the obtention of variants of a given DSL.

Such a modular design and implementation of a behavioral semantics leverages on experience coming from two communities to achieve many expectations. As illustrated by the fUML example coming from the OMG, many languages have variants of their model of computation, which current implementations do not take into consideration. Moreover, since the correct behavior of models is very dependent on the properties of their MoCC, the design and implementation of a MoCC can be critical. Being able to reuse validated

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MoCCs, or validating an implementation of a MoCC through reuse in various contexts is an advantage. This approach addresses these two considerations by offering the reuse of MoCCs between DSLs. The other way around, being able to reuse the domain-specific actions of a DSL with different MoCCs in order to implement semantic variation points is also an advantage.

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3. Proposed Approach

In this chapter, we define the structure of xDSMLs so that different xDSMLs can be combined through behavioral model composition operators. xDSMLs are formalized as *Language Units* (section 3.1) whose constituents are further detailed in section 3.2. These aspects have been published in [5].

3.1 Language Unit

A Language Unit is composed of several components as depicted in Figure 3.1. These components are explained in the next subsections. Behavioral Model Composition Operators are not part of a Language Unit. They are the mean to compose models conforming to different xDSMLs. They are defined at the language level but they apply at the model level. Cooperation between xDSMLs is thus only possible through the DSEs (see 3.1.5) the different xDSMLs expose. Behavioral Model Composition Operators are addressed by WP3.

3.1.1 Abstract Syntax (AS)

The Abstract Syntax is typically a metamodel which describes concepts, attributes and references among concepts. It describes all the elements required to define a concrete syntax (graphical or textual) that would allow the domain designer to build models.

3.1.2 Domain-Specific Actions (DSAs)

The Domain-Specific Actions are composed of the Execution Data and the Execution Functions.

3.1.2.1 Execution Data (ED)

The Execution Data represent the runtime state of the model. They are implemented as new attributes or references to existing concepts of the AS.

3.1.2.2 Execution Functions (EF)

The Execution Functions are the atomical actions that can make a model evolve during its execution through the updating of the ED. These actions belong to the behavioral semantics of the xDSML. The order in which they are called, however, pertains to the MoCC. In particular, an EF may call code external to the xDSML being executed. For example, an EF could consist in updating an attribute from the ED with a value given by a sensor that can be used through an API written in any General-purpose Programming Language (GPL) the language used for the DSAs can be interfaced with. One could also imagine calling more complicated code like starting complex operations on Graphics Processing Units (GPUs) or restarting servers. Obviously all these functionalities could be originally implemented using the language of the DSAs, but being able to reuse existing application code is invaluable.

Some Execution Functions may have a return value, which is interpreted by the Feedback Policies of the language. This issue is mentioned later on as one of the challenges of this WP, see 4.2.2. We haven't yet ruled out the possibility of Execution Functions having parameters, but we are for now limiting ourselves to Execution Functions without parameters.

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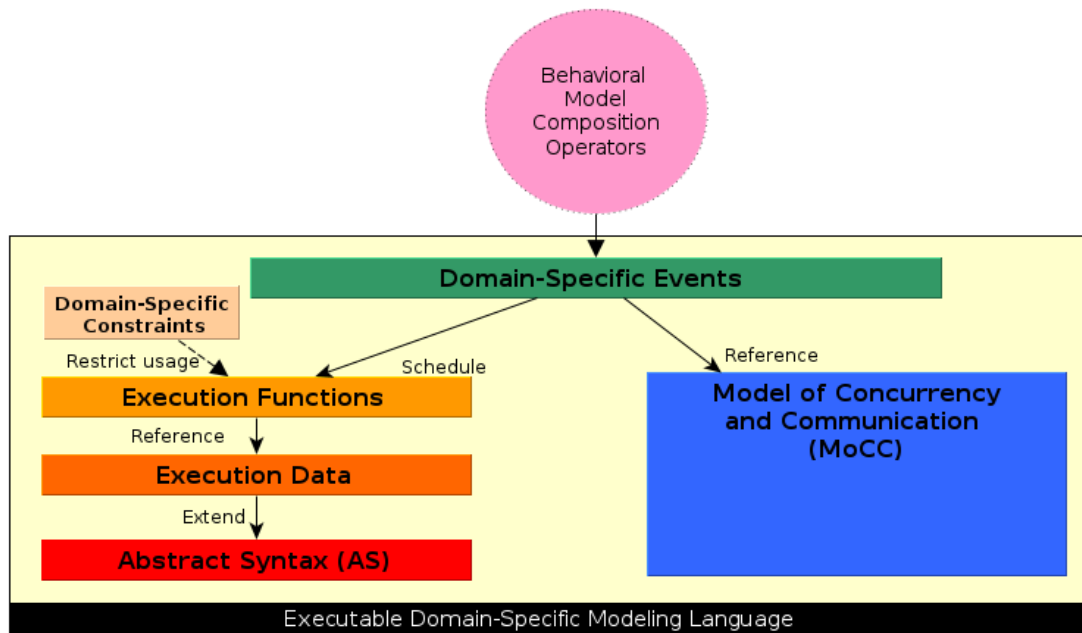


Figure 3.1: An eExecutable Modeling Language "a la" GEMOC

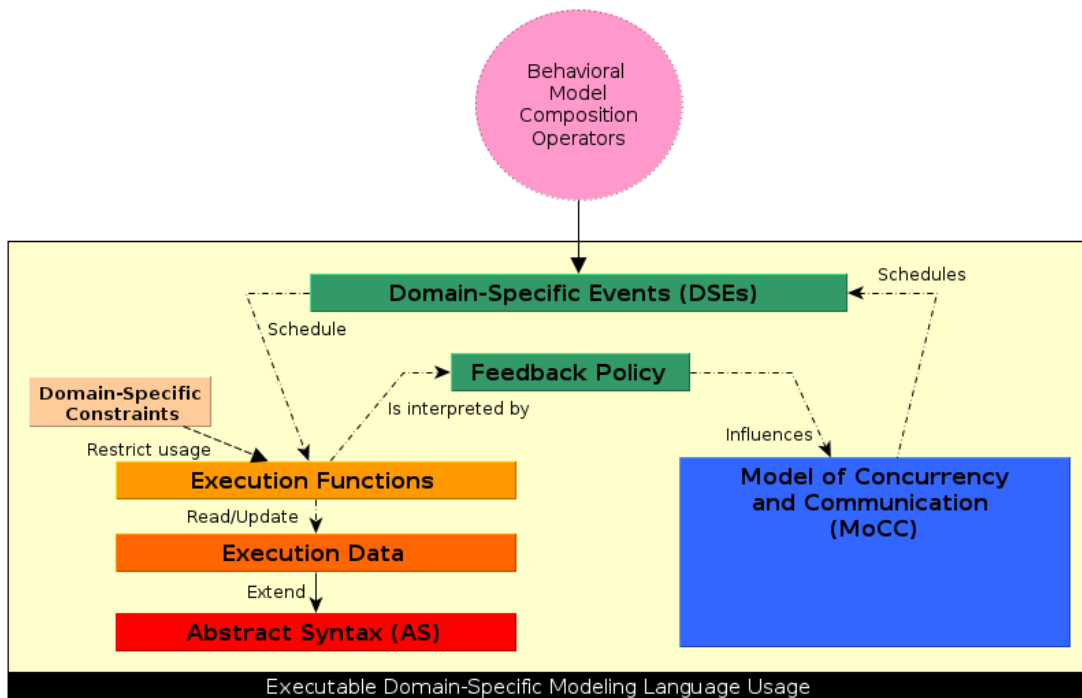


Figure 3.2: Using an xDSML

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3.1.3 Domain-Specific Constraints

The specification and implementation presented concerning Constraints is highly likely subject to future changes.

3.1.3.1 Motivations

The need for such constraints is not necessarily clear at first sight. The main reason for this is because they are totally implicit in previous techniques for producing xDSMLs "by hand" where the behavior of the domain and the behavior of the application were mixed. But since we are working at the language level, there is a need to reify this concept.

The need for such constraints is motivated by the observation that designing the DSAs involves some assumption on their use. For example, if one writes two DSAs called `init()` and `run()` for the same metaclass, then it's highly likely that calling any `run()` before `init()` will result in either a crash of some sort or in a distorted behavior. This requirement would usually be either specified in a documentation, or completely integrated so as to be user-proof. Since we want every action to be explicit by being mapped to a Domain-Specific Event, it is not possible to integrate this sort of requirements in our xDSML approach. Therefore, we need a mechanism that guarantees that the scheduling produced by the MoC (*behavior of the application* mentioned earlier) is coherent with the expected scheduling of the domain (*behavior of the domain* mentioned earlier).

The used MoCC should ensure that `init()` is always called before `run()`. We separate the *Domain-Specific Constraints* into two categories, hard constraints and soft constraints, which are described hereafter.

3.1.3.2 Domain-Specific Hard Constraints

First, *Domain-Specific Hard Constraints* are a set of constraints based on the Domain-Specific Actions of the language. They are designed alongside the ED and the DSAs. The DSAs, in their present form, are not far from an Application Programming Interface (API) for which a documentation or tutorial will often guide the developer into designing classes or using methods in a certain order or in a certain way. In the same spirit, we want to provide a mechanism that allows the DSAs-designer to indicate to the MoCC what are the minimum requirements when using the DSAs in order to have a working application. Such *Domain-Specific Hard Constraints* should prevent the model from reaching irrecoverable or illogical states. A possible way to implement such constraints is by defining pre- and post- conditions on the DSAs so that the state of the system before and after each DSA is correct, in regards to what the DSAs-designer judges as correct. Another way can be to integrate them into the DSEs. Ideally, we could also calculate the compatibility between a MoCC and a set of AS, ED, DSAs, DSEs, as not all MoCCs will be able to ensure the *Domain-Specific Hard Constraints* are all respected.

Example: if a FIFO of a given size is used in a DSA, then there needs to be a hard constraint on how one cannot retrieve more than a certain number of elements from this FIFO. The MoCC thus has to either be aware of such a constraint or have a mechanism to recover from such errors.

3.1.3.3 Domain-Specific Soft Constraints

The other category of constraints is called *Domain-Specific Soft Constraints*. They can be considered as optional, as not using them should not prevent the application from working correctly. However it does not mean the application will work as intended. This is why such constraints are like guidelines for the MoCC on how to run the model. A very strict set of *Soft Constraints* would tighten the execution to only one deterministic execution of the model, while a more loosened set of such constraints could allow for multiple and varied executions of this same model. Ideally, such constraints should be loaded at the start of the execution as one may want to try out different "configurations" of constraints. It would also allow the comparison of different MoCCs as some MoCC could work under stricter constraints than other MoCCs thus

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giving us a notion of compatibility between a MoCC and an Operationable Metamodel within the context of certain *Soft Constraints* to respect.

Example: a classic Petri Net semantics (with data on the tokens) uses a FIFO on Places to store the data. But using a LIFO is also possible, however the semantic is very different than in our first case, and may not be what the users expect when using a "Petri Net" xDSML. Still, as one of our main goals in reusability of language units, we do not want to totally forbid this possibility. Which is why this requirement is expressed as a *Domain-Specific Soft Constraint* instead of as a *Domain-Specific Hard Constraint*.

3.1.4 Model of Concurrency and Communication(MoCC)

The Model of Concurrency and Communication (MoCC) addresses the concurrency. It defines the possible executions and thus a partial order on DSAs calls. The communication between MoCC and DSAs is achieved thanks to the DSEs ; while the communication between DSAs' return values and the MoCC is achieved thanks to the Feedback Policy.

MoCC-related aspects are addressed in the WP2.

3.1.5 Domain Specific Events (DSE)

Domain Specific Events (DSEs) allow two kinds of communication. First, it defines the communication between the MoCC and the DSAs which is internal to a language unit. Second, in the case of a heterogeneous model composed of several language units, the behavioral semantics of the model is expressed through behavioral composition operators based on the DSEs exposed by the various language units.

From a language unit viewpoint, DSEs are events that the MoCC handles or an abstraction of such events (a kind of complex event processing may define DSEs from MoCC events). When an event of DSEs is fired by the MoCC, it triggers DSA(s) which make the model evolve.

DSE-usage related aspects are addressed by the WP3.

3.2 Reification of the required meta-facilities

In this section, we further detail the main components of a GEMOC xDSML and focus on the required meta-facilities which are illustrated on Figure 3.3 according to the levels of the MDE stack.

The bottom line of Figure 3.3 is the model level (M1) which is composed of the a model and its execution model. The model conforms to the Abstract Syntax (AS) and the DSAs, including the ED. The execution model (or Model of Execution) contains the DSEs events instanciated down to the model level that are ruled by the MoCC.

The middle line of Figure 3.3 describes the language level with the components described in the previous subsection.

The top line reifies the languages present on the middle line. The abstract syntax is defined using a language like Ecore.

The ED (not represented on the Figure) are defined using the same language as for the Abstract Syntax. The ED are defined using the Aspect concept of Kermeta or the merge operator of MOF. Thus it consists in extending the Abstract Syntax with the data manipulated at runtime.

The DSAs are defined both as an operation defined on a metaclass of the Abstract Syntax and the behavior associated to this operation. The behavior itself is described in an action language (not represented on the Figure).

The MoCC is composed of events and constraints on these events. The constraints are the mean to define a partial order on the events and thus define all the possible executions. An execution is a total order among the events managed by the MoCC. We call the specification of the MoCC to a particular model an Execution Model.

The Event meta-language describes DSEs according to both events and operations. The multiplicities indicate, on one side, that a DSE may be an abstraction of several MoCC events (using a kind a complex event processing) and, on the other side, that a DSE may trigger several DSAs. The purpose of the DSEs

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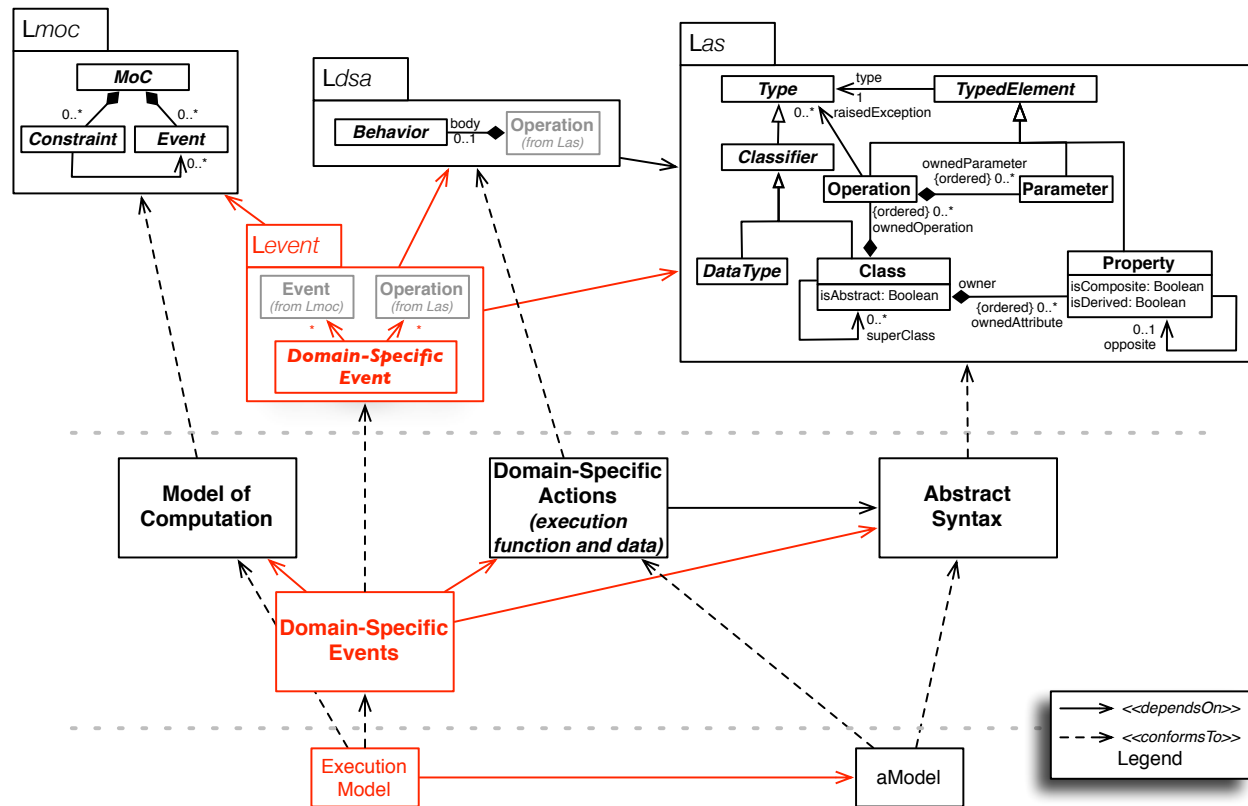


Figure 3.3: Language Unit in the MDE Stack

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is indeed to ensure the independence of MoCC and DSAs so that both of them may be reused in various contexts.

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4. Identified Challenges

This chapter lists the main challenges that have to be tackled in the WP1.

4.1 Reusability

Aside from dealing with heterogeneous executable models, one goal of the project is to favor the reusability of an xDSML's definition's components. For example, the same MoCC could be used by several xDSML as well as the Abstract Syntax or the DSAs. Changing one of these elements would lead to a new xDSML with its own semantics.

DSEs aim at addressing this purpose because MoCC and DSAs are independent from each other.

4.2 DSA— MoCC Coordination

4.2.1 *Connections between the DSEs and the AS, ED, DSAs*

Obviously, a DSE is connected to the DSAs, to the AS and to the ED. Indeed, an event from DSE targets elements of the Abstract Syntax or of the RunTime Data and triggers actions defined in the DSAs. For example, in a Petri net, a DSE may be “fire a transition”: the transition is defined on the abstract syntax, and the `fire` method is defined in the DSAs.

Here are some questions which arise:

- Are DSAs atomic? Atomic action means that they do not generate new events that would have to be known to the xDSML's MoCC. It does not prevent internal events but they must not have impact on the xDSML's MoCC.
- Can the DSAs create new AS elements? The answer is certainly no, at least in a first stage.
- A DSE may trigger several DSAs.
 1. Should we limit a DSE so that it may trigger only one DSA?
 2. Are the execution of actions parallel or sequential?
 3. Is it required to define more complex schedules using for example regular expressions, control structures of structured programming, etc? It seems that the MoCC is in charge of such scheduling.
- How should we specify DSAs? Can pre-/post-conditions be useful?

They could be used to abstract the real code of the action (the Kermeta code). It can be seen as a specification that the Kermeta code has to respect.

4.2.2 *How to realize the Connection from DSAs to MoCC?*

The MoCC should be independent from the AS and from the MoCC. It only has to be aware of constraints used in the DSEs to schedule and then the DSE can map them to AS elements and trigger actions of the DSA.

Nevertheless, some feedbacks are required. Indeeds, the MoCC's side needs to know what has happened on the DSA's side in order to compute new possible events. For example, when a decision node with several outputs is evaluated, the MoCC only knows that any of the possible outputs will come out. But, because a particular model is animated, the execution of the decision node using the model state allows us

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to invalidate some of the outputs. This knowledge has to be made available to the MoCC, for example as a set of new constraints that will reduce the set of possible executions, in order to continue with the execution.

- How can the feedback from the executed DSA be communicated to the MoCC?
- → This issue is treated in Deliverable D1.3.1.

4.2.3 MoCC events and DSE

MoCCs describe relations between clocks, and ticking clocks are what we call MoCC events. These events can be abstracted as DSEs using some Complex Event Processing facility. However, we are still unsure about what expressivity should be allowed. Should the DSEs only be a gathering of MoCC events, or can it be more ? How complex should it be allowed to be ? At what point does this pattern matching short-circuit the role of the MoC ?

4.2.4 Behavior of a DSE

A DSE is a mean for the MoCC to interact with the DSAs:

- synchronous or asynchronous?
Synchronous is certainly easier to handle.
- Connection to real code?
Like in monitoring systems, it may be useful to abstract real code. A DSA is then used to update data that are required to run the system.
- From the external side (composition operators), it may be required to aggregate several events, etc. (Complex event processing).
- Maybe some DSEs are only meant for a more internal uses, and should not be exposed to other xDSMLs. We should consider whether or not this is the case, and how we can remedy to this issue. Our approach towards this problem should get clearer once we are able to implement several examples of xDSML composition.
- In order to be able to cope with **reactive systems**, there are some more issues. If our approach does not explicitly provide mechanisms for this issue, then reactive systems may be designed by integrating the environment's events mechanism inside the Domain-Specific Actions. Unfortunately, this breaks a lot of concepts from our approach, as the MoC cannot be explicitly aware of these events and the end-result is bound to be messy. Also, reactive systems are very much in the scope of this project and of our approach, so we decided to provide mechanisms to design such systems. Reactive systems need to be able to react to "external events" as described in section 2.1.3.3. We propose to place them side by side with the Domain-Specific Events. Even, we make them Domain-Specific Events that are not linked to any MoC functionality. Indeed, the environment or user of an xDSML can be seen as part of the MoC, as it provides a scheduling of actions, typically through a GUI for example. So it makes sense for such events to be linked to Domain-Specific Actions but to "nothing" at the MoC. Not really "nothing" because the API of the Execution Engine (see Task 4.2.1.) will expose these events to any connected ControlPanel, and thus these events will be triggered by the environment (user, or another xDSML for example). However, this mechanism raises a lot of questions. Are these events prioritized over other DSEs? In which order exactly are the events dealt with? Is it always possible for the environment to trigger these events?

4.3 Behavioral Interface of a Language (Implementation — Interface)

Once the questions of the previous section have been answered, it should be necessary to choose the means to implement the different components identified in the architecture of a language unit.

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4.4 Defining Guidelines and Methods

To be able to execute a model from an xDSML, one has to define the behavioral semantics of this xDSML. ED, DSAs, MoCC and DSEs contribute to the definition of its semantics.

The MoCC deals with scheduling concerns. ED and DSAs are used to store and manage runtime data during the execution. And DSEs connects one MoCC to one Operationable MetaModel (OpMM).

This separation of concerns is not so easy to achieve. It is thus necessary to provide the xDSML designer with guidelines (positive: what to do, but also negative: what to not do) and a general methodology to define the components of xDSML.

Other aspects will certainly have to be considered, like the V&V related aspects.

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5. Guidelines

This chapter describes the GEMOC methodology to define an xDSML (section 5.2). It also provides some hints about good practices (5.3) and practices to avoid in relation to the GEMOC xDSML definition methodology (section 5.4).

We can consider three main kinds of actors in the GEMOC process:

- **System Engineer:** the user of GEMOC Modeling Workbench and end-user of the xDSML it proposes.
- **Language Engineer:** the designer of an xDSML. Aside defining the AS and CS of a DSML, he defines its execution semantics to make it an xDSML. He is the end-user of the GEMOC Language Workbench.
- **Language Integrator:** He is a kind of architect who identifies the adequate languages to model a kind of system as well as composition operators to coordinate them.

This chapter focuses on the methodology to define an xDSML according to the GEMOC approach and thus each of its parts but it does not explain how to concretely create, edit or handle xDSML parts in the GEMOC Studio. These aspects are described into the D1.2.1 deliverable. The main actor of this project is the Language Designer. The global process which concerns the Language Integrator is not addressed in this section and will be considered in a future revision of this deliverable when the composition operators will be integrated in the GEMOC Language Workbench and used in industrial use cases.

5.1 Overview of the main steps

Once the AS¹ is defined – and possibly the CS—, the execution semantics of the DSML has to be defined. It includes the definition of:

- the DSA which includes EF and ED: it defines the runtime data and the actions to handle them,
- the MoCC which deals with concurrency aspects,
- the DSE which maps DSA and MoCC,
- the visualization which provides views to control and monitor the execution of models conforming to the xDSML.

There is no clear rules on the order in which these different parts have to be built. Thus, a first description of the process can focus on this characteristic. It is shown on figure 5.1. The xDSML parts may be built in any order. This process stresses a first step which consists in eliciting the requirements on the execution semantics to define for the DSML. This elicitation is not always easy to achieve for the system engineers, thus we believe that providing samples of models as well as some scenarios on them and the expected results at runtime is a good way for system engineers to describe their expectations.

The main characteristics of the definition of an xDSML according to GEMOC are the following:

- It is **user-oriented**. Indeed, we believe that to build the right xDSML, the end-users' expectations have to be handled in the first place. As GEMOC targets simulation of models, it is important to elicit the expectations of the end-users, i.e. the system engineers, in term of simulation of its models.
- It is **incremental**. All end-users expectations will not be handled all at the same time but we recommend to define several increments that will progressively include these expectations seen as requirements. The purpose is to make the definition of the execution semantics simpler by gradually integrating the requirements, and thus the difficulties.

¹We consider that the AS is already defined and that its design is not part of the GEMOC xDSML process. Nevertheless, the process could easily be extended with a new step which consists in defining the AS and its CS.

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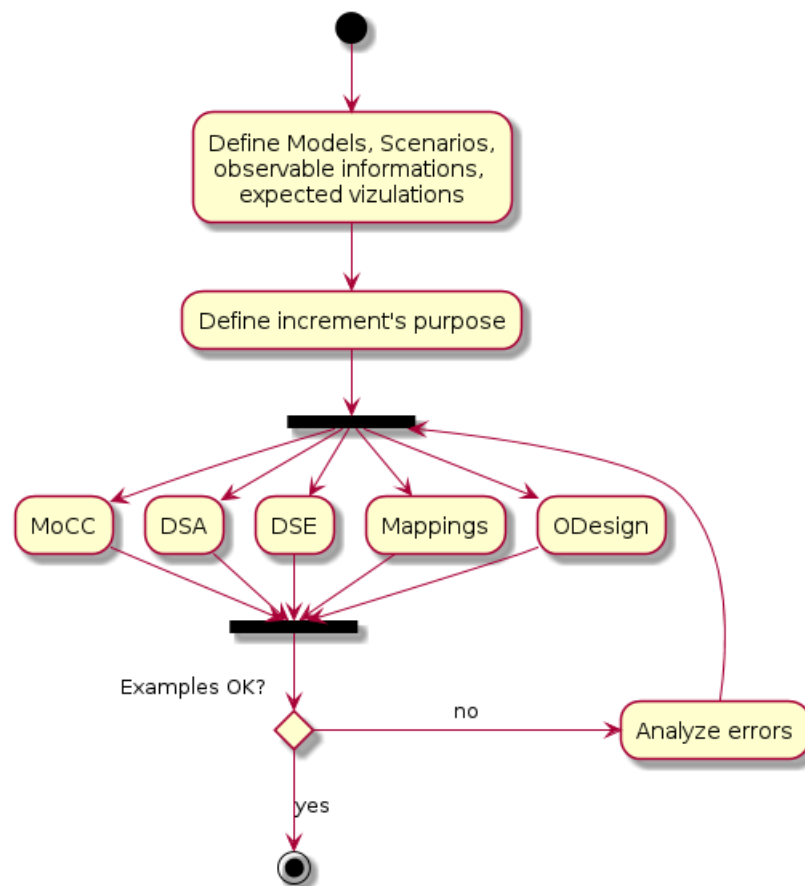


Figure 5.1: Overview of the GEMOC xDSML Process as an UML activity diagram. For clarity, the iteration to choose the next increment is not represented of the diagram.

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- It is **iterative**. For an increment, all the components will certainly not be done right and complete at the first time. Thus, iterations will be necessary to tweak the definitions of the xDSML. Examples provided by the end users will help in deciding whether an iteration is finished or not.
- It is **highly concurrent**. Indeed, the main steps can be run at the same time, possibly by different persons (even if it not always very easy using Eclipse). We can imagine that the DSE model and mappings can be first defined to specify the overall architecture of the xDSML semantics, including requirements on DSA as specification of the expected execution functions and requirements on the MoCC as expected MoCC events and relations on them. The MoCC libraries, the DSA implementation and the animator can then be developed at the same time, by different persons. Of course the DSE model can still be changed and the others updated.

5.2 General methodology

In this section, we propose a more precise but still general methodology to define an xDSML. It is a kind of top/down methodology as it starts with the end users' expectations and constructs the different parts of the xDSML. This process ensures that the xDSML will fulfill the end-users expectations but it is possible to achieve the same results by other ways (for example, by following the more general process depicted in Fig. 5.1).

An xDSML is a language that targets a specific purpose. When defining such a language it is important to first identify that purpose so as to build the right language. Thus, we propose a methodology which focuses on the end-user expectations — why models are animated? — and then build the different parts of the xDSML to fulfill these expectations.

In the context of the GEMOC project, the main aim is to be able to animate and simulate heterogeneous models based on different xDSMLs. Thus the end-user expectations will encompass the different xDSML involved in the model to build. This global process which includes the dispatch of expectations on the different parts of a model will be addressed in a future revision of this document when all constituents will be further defined.

The main steps to achieve the definition of an xDSML according to the GEMOC approach are described hereafter. They are summarized as a UML activity diagram on figure 5.2). Package notation is used to group activities by domain (and could be considered as a kind of compound activity).

5.2.1 Identify simulation expectations.

The first step consists in pondering about what characteristics of the executed model need to be seen from the outside, either for simulation purposes or for composition purposes.

The result of this step is an informal description of the expectations of the end users. It can be completed with any useful documents like a snapshot of a model describing what the end users expect to see during simulation, scenarios to run on a given model (including initial conditions, stimuli triggered during the simulation and feedbacks from the model), examples of properties they want to check on a model, etc.

Deliverables of this steps could be set of models, scenarios on these models, snapshots of models at runtime which show the data the end-user is interested in, etc.

This steps is important to understand the expectations of the end-users. As giving a formal specification of his/her expectation is generally not easy, giving some examples including expected results on specific scenario is a good way to specify through examples.

Furthermore, these examples will be used to validate the implemented xDSML.

Finally they can be used to define the increments in the development of the xDSML by defining the set of models and scenarios each increment must handle.

5.2.2 Specify interfaces of the xDSML (DSE and end-users' queries)

The results of the previous step are analysed in order to:

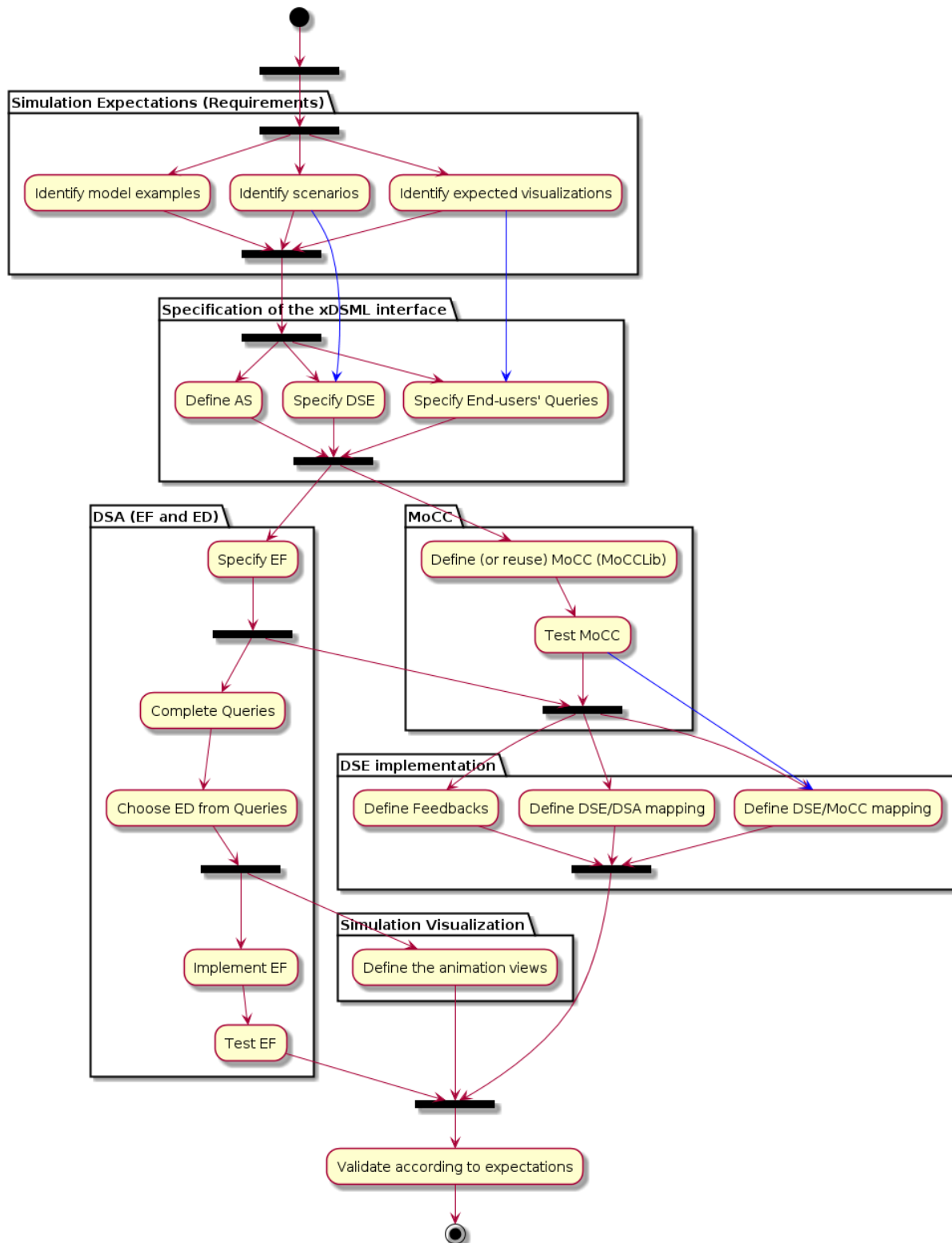


Figure 5.2: GEMOC xDSML definition formalized as a UML activity diagram. Blue arrows explicit a dependency between two activities but are not part of the control flow.

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1. Define AS

This step is not directly in the scope of the GEMOC project because the AS is often already defined and because the project's focus is on the definition of an execution semantics. Nevertheless, if no abstract syntax already exists for the considered domain, it will be defined from the simulation expectations. The examples of models may help in identifying concepts, properties of these concepts and references between the concepts.

The proposed AS must allow to define all the models listed in the step "Identify model examples" as conforming models.

2. Specify DSE (Domain Specific Events)

It consists in identifying the Domain-Specific Events (DSEs) of the language. Indeed, it is quite natural for the end-users to describe what are the stimuli that will trigger changes during the model execution. We formalize these stimuli as DSEs. They will constitute the specification of the interface of that language, interface on which will depend the composition operators used to define heterogeneous executable models.

In this step only the specification of the DSE is identified, including its name, its direction, its eventual parameters (data) as well as an informal description.

An important point to keep in mind is that the two tasks of using composition operators (and their validation in regards to the interface of the xDSMLs) and of implementing xDSMLs are done concurrently. However in the following we only consider the latter activity.

3. Specify end-users' queries

A query is a method which returns a value and which does not modify the state of the model. Queries are used to capture all the queries the end users want to make on the model. In the future steps, they may be refined as Execution Data when they can not be defined in term of the AS of the language. Queries will serve as a specification for the Execution Data of the xDSML.

In this process, identifying queries instead of Execution Data provides us with an abstract view of what is expected from the end-user's point of view, while leaving us the possibility of choosing an implementation (the ED) that will be efficient.

We have also defined a step to define the AS even if it generally considered as already defined in the GEMOC process of defining execution semantics.

5.2.3 Defining the Domain-Specific Actions and the Execution Data (DSA).

The Domain-Specific Actions (DSAs) implemented are the execution functions that will be triggered when the stimuli (DSE) are received. Most DSAs should have a direct impact on the value of one or multiple ED and thus on queries' results.

This step is in turn split in several substeps:

1. Specify Domain-Specific Actions.

It includes defining their name, their parameters and their documentation (informal description like javadoc) as well as their contracts (a formal description of the documentation), including preconditions.

Specify preconditions (and postconditions) are important to formally describe the (intended) behaviour of the DSA.

It is a good practice to first specify what to do and to formalize it to avoid misunderstanding before implementing it.

It can be used to check consistency either before (static analysis) or during simulation.

2. Specify Queries.

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Defining the contracts may lead to identify and thus specify new queries. For example, it is a way to define an implicit order between different DSA: the effect of one DSA should hold before another DSA can be called.

Once again it is only a specification of the queries. We do not yet deal with ED but only with queries that are useful or required to express contracts on DSAs.

3. Define the ED.

Now that the Queries and DSAs are specified, it is time to choose the ED. The defined ED should allow to implement all the queries and the DSA.

4. Implement Queries and DSAs.

Once the ED is defined, Queries and DSAs can be implemented.

5. Test EF.

It consists in testing EF by explicitly calling them and checking they produce the expected effects on the ED. The MoCC is not involved in this testing step.

5.2.4 Define the MoCC

The DSE allows to define when EF are called in terms of MoCC events and concurrency. Thus, at some point we have to define or choose which MoCC library(ies) will be referenced by the DSEs specification file. These library(ies) are used at runtime by the associated MoCC Solver in order to provide a scheduling in terms of MoCC events which are interpreted by the execution engine to instantiate DSE.

Even if the described approach is top/down, we explicitly consider reusing existing MoCC as a desirable way to build a new language.

5.2.5 Implement the Domain-Specific Events

Domain-Specific Events definition includes:

1. Mapping a DSE to DSA(s).

According to the proposed method, this first mapping is quite strait forward because one DSE generally triggers one DSA. Nevertheless, it could be possible that the same DSE triggers several DSA.

2. Mapping a DSE to MoCC rule(s).

According to the MoCC moments, occurrences of DSE have to be identified. At this moment, only a one to one mapping is considered but a DSE occurrence could be defined as the result of a complex event processing of the MoCC moments.

3. Specification of feedbacks.

This steps also include the definition of the feedback, which is a communication from DSA to MoCC (and allow to chose the future that will be actually happen among the possible one).

5.2.6 Define Simulation Views

One step is dedicated to the definition of the simulation views as expected by the end-users. It mainly consists in explaining how ED will be be presented to the end-user during animation.

Visualizations may be very specific, using a dedicated user interface. In this case a mechanism has to be defined to communicate results from the animation to the visualization (it can be done thanks to specific EF dedicated to user interface updates) and to monitor the simulation form the user interface (generation of DSE).

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5.3 Guidelines

In this section, we will sometimes use the term *execution function* instead of DSA to avoid confusion between the different kinds functions: queries, helpers and execution functions.

5.3.1 DSAs and concurrency

DSA must not deal explicitly with concurrency because concurrency must be handled by the MoCC. Thus it should be forbidden for a DSA to create a thread or any similar concurrency resource.

If a continuous phenomenon happens, then DSAs would be only points of observation (at a given time). As example, if we want to define an xDSML to monitor software services, perform load balancing and so one, one has to periodically poll that the service is still alive. Doing the check will be the purpose of one DSA.

5.3.2 Method calls in the body of DSAs

Should the xDSML designer be allowed to use method calls in the body of DSAs? On the one hand, this may lead to a lack of respect of the GEMOC methodology, for example by chaining DSA calls which should be done through the use of the MoCC/DSEs. On the other hand, being able to call other methods can be useful to factorize code that could be called by several DSAs at several different moments. Therefore, the solution we recommend would be to have either some sort of private methods identified as 'helpers' which can be used by any DSAs at any time, avoiding duplication of code ; or to have the DSAs be explicitly tagged as DSAs and making sure they can not be called by the rest of the code.

Obviously, such helpers could be deduced once the xDSML is defined. Helpers are simply functions that are not called from the DSEs. It would be then possible to check whether the xDSML respects this rule or not. Nevertheless, we believe that it is a good practice for the designer to explicitly define the intent of the functions it defines (queries, helper, execution function).

In Kermeta 3 (our first and main language for the writing of ED and DSAs), the visibility of methods can be set to private, protected, package or public (default). Such helpers would probably be the private or protected methods. Active annotations would be also considered for additional information if necessary.

Nevertheless, the possibility of defining a kind of macro-DSA (or macro-DSE) is under investigation in D1.3.1 to allow the programmer to write direct call to DSA which, of course, will have to be handled by the solver to be consistent with the MoCC.

5.3.3 Specification of the contracts of the DSAs and of the Queries

Contracts are expressed through preconditions and postconditions. Preconditions describe the conditions which are required so that the DSA (or Query) may execute correctly. If preconditions do not hold, then there is no guarantee on the execution. The used MoCC should not violate the preconditions of the Queries and DSAs.

Postconditions describes the effects of the DSA.

Defining these contracts is an important step because:

- Specifying before coding is a Software Engineering good practice.
- Expressing contracts is a good mean to identify ED in an abstract way. First we identify queries (what questions one wants to ask
- Expressing contracts is a good mean to identify Execution Data in an abstract way. First we identify queries (what questions one wants to ask to a model at runtime) and then we can, in a second step, choose the best way to implement them and thus have accurate ED.

Queries could be seen as model attributes of JML and do not necessarily need to be really implemented in the final code. Only the instrumentation, if any, will have to handle them.

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- Check the consistency with the linked MoCC, either statically or at runtime — when executing the model.

Statically checking the consistency may be difficult. Thus, instrumenting contracts, in particular pre-conditions, may be useful to identify misunderstandings between the DSA part and the Moc. If a precondition fails, it means that the scheduling defined by the MoCC was not expected by the DSA designer (or the DSE layer is wrong or the contracts is wrong!)

- Perform reasoning based on the contracts (static verification).

May be useful to compute properties on the model, without requiring a real execution or simulation.

5.3.4 Write and run tests

Test are an important mean to gain confidence in the written code. They can take place at different levels:

- Unit test can be performed on individual DSAs.
- Unit tests can be performed on several DSAs with a generated relevant sequence of DSEs (to simulate the MoCC).
- MoCC can be tested by giving setting some constraints and looking at which MoCC events are found in the resolving of the MoCC Solver.
- DSEs can be tested by verifying that a given MoCC execution returns the expected MoCC events which can be mapped to the expected DSEs.
- Validation tests can be written when MoCC, DSAs and DSE are defined. Scenarios may be played with sensors to spy the effect of the concrete execution and possibly detect defects by comparing their values to expected ones.

5.3.5 No ED on AS

By definition, the AS cannot contain Execution Data. All Execution Data are defined on the ED. As an example, the marking of a Petri net is defined on the AS. It could be considered also as a Execution Data. Nevertheless, it will only be considered as an AS item representing the initial marking. The actual marking will be defined on the ED.

5.3.5.1 Feedback

The MoCC is an abstraction of the concurrency model. Sometimes, the real choice will depend on the ED which are handled on the DSA side. For instance, on a fUML decision node, all outgoing branches are possible at the MoCC level and only the knowledge of the concrete model being executed and its ED can help to find the compatible futures among those proposed by the solver. The purpose of the *feedback* is to specify and handle this communication from the DSA to the MoCC (thanks to the simulation engine and the solver policies).

Feedback is identified when defining the MoCC. Indeed, it takes places every time the MoCC designer lacks information to be more precise in the MoCC definition. In such cases, he must identify what kind of information will allow to decide what must happen on the MoCC side (it will become an EF on the DSA) and explicit the policy the solver will have to apply (according to the results of the query, the indeterminism of the MoCC will be solved).

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5.3.5.2 MoCC guidelines

Here are listed some guidelines related to the definition of the MoCC.

- Take care of coincide and precede while defining constraints on clock.
- Avoid to have duplicated information on MoCC side and DSA side.
- ...

5.3.6 Verification of models

The recommended process — based on end-users expectations — can also be applied if the aim of end-users is to perform verification on their models. Indeed, end-users will express the properties they want to check on their models. This properties will be first expressed informally and will then be the starting point to identify queries. A temporal logic could be used to formalize them but such languages are known to be difficult for end-users to cope with. Other approaches like Dwyer *et al.* patterns are certainly a better choice to bring formal aspects in the hands of end-users.

5.4 Bad/forbidden practices

Following is a first list of bad or forbidden practices.

1. Calling a DSA from another DSA. Only DSEs should be able to call DSAs. One can use helpers to factorize code between several DSAs.
2. Creating a thread (or equivalent). It is a way to handle concurrency on the DSA side. In our approach, only the MoCC can deal with concurrency.
3. Side effects on the abstract syntax. Only the Execution Data should be mutable at execution time.

5.5 Guidelines under investigation

5.5.1 Handling time

A DSA is considered as an instantaneous function according to the logic time of the simulator. If an action takes time on the DSA side, then it must be split into several DSAs to stress the important points. For example the beginning and the end of the computation.

- The DSA may be wrapped on an external continuous computation. In this case execution functions are means to get information on the computation that will be of interest for others XDSML.
- Lea's pattern for concurrency (implemented in the java.util.concurrent API of Java) may be used. In particular the Future construct.

These solutions will have to be further explored when new examples are conducted.

5.5.2 Semantics of coincident things

What happens if coincident things occur? As an example, let's consider "add a new line at the 16th char". When will the new line occur, before or after the 16th char? In fact, the expected behavior is to put a new line *after* the 16th char!

Is it at the MoCC level that it should be resolved or could it be handled at the DSE level?

This aspect has to be investigated.

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6. Conclusion

This version 2 of the deliverable has first depicted the background and experiences of the teams involved in the GEMOC project. The approach to define language units in the GEMOC project is also proposed. Challenges to be tackled by the GEMOC project have been identified concerning the GEMOC approach, the components of language units and their relationships. A process is proposed as well as guidelines to help in defining an xDSML according to the GEMOC approach.

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