Conceptual Modeling Language Specification Version 1.0 (Draft)

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Contents

1	Intr	oduction	1				
	1.1	The CML Compiler	1				
	1.2	Organization and Notations	3				
2	Concepts						
	2.1	Properties	8				
	2.2	Generalization / Specialization	9				
	2.3	Abstract Concepts	2				
3	Attributes						
	3.1	Primitive Types	5				
4	Associations						
	4.1	Unidirectional Associations	6				
	4.2	Bidirectional Associations	6				
	4.3	Collection Types	6				
	4.4	Collections	6				
5	Expressions 17						
	5.1	Literal Values	8				
	5.2	Prefix Expressions	8				
	5.3	Infix Expressions	8				
	5.4	Conditional Expressions	8				
	5.5	Path Expressions	8				
6	Que	eries 2	1				
7	Cod	le Generation 2	2				
	7.1	Tasks	2				

CONTENTS	ii
----------	----

	7.2 Constructors 7.3 Templates 7.4 Targets	22 22 22	
8	Modules		
9	Libraries		
A	CML Concrete Syntax (Grammar) A.1 ANTLR Grammar	25 26	
В	CML Abstract Syntax (Metamodel)	30	
C	CML Abstract Syntax Tree (Instantiation)	31	
D	CML Constraints (Validations)	32	
E	Language Specification Notation	34	
Bi	Bibliography		

List of Figures

1.1	An architectural overview of the CML compiler	2
2.1	Concept Examples	6
2.2	Concept Declaration Syntax	6
2.3	Concept Metamodel	7
2.4		7
2.5		8
2.6		8
2.7		9
2.8		9
2.9	Generalization Examples	1
2.10	Generalization Constraints	3
	Abstract Concept Example	4
5.1	Expression Examples	8
5.2	Expressions Syntax	9
5.3	Expression Metamodel	0
5.4	Literals Lexical Structure	0

List of Tables

One

Introduction

This document specifies the *Conceptual Modeling Language*, or CML for short. CML enables the modeling of the information of software systems. It focuses on modeling the structural aspects of such systems, having less emphasis on the behavioral aspects. Using CML, it is possible to represent the information as understood by the system users, while disregarding its physical organization as implemented by target languages or technologies.

The CML compiler has:

- as input, source files defined using its own conceptual language (as specified in this document), which provides an abstract syntax similar to (but less comprehensive than) a combination of UML [4] and OCL [3];
- and, as output, any target languages based on extensible templates, which
 may be provided by the compiler's base libraries, by third-party libraries,
 or even by developers.

Section $\S 1.1$ will provide an overview of the CML compiler's architecture. Section $\S 1.2$ describes the organization and notation used in the remainder of this document.

1.1 The CML Compiler

The CML compiler's overall architecture follows the standard compiler design literature [2]. An overview diagram of the architecture is shown in figure 1.1.

The two main components of the compiler, and the artifacts they work with, are presented in the next subsections.



Figure 1.1: An architectural overview of the CML compiler.

The Compiler Frontend

The frontend receives as input the *CML source files*. It will parse the files and generate an internal representation of the *CML model*.

Syntactical and semantic validations will be performed at this point. Any syntax and constraint errors are presented to the developer, interrupting the progress to the next phase. If the *source files* are parsed and validated successfully, then the internal representation (the AST) of the *CML model* is provided as the input for the *backend* component.

The Compiler Backend

The backend receives the *CML model AST* as input. Based on the *target specification* provided by the AST, chooses which *extensible templates* to use for code generation. The *target files* are then generated, and become available to be consumed by other tools. The *target specification* plays a key role in order to determine the kind of *target* to be generated.

CML extensible templates are implemented in StringTemplate [7]. The CML compiler uses StringTemplate for two purposes:

 File names and directory structure: each type of target generated by the CML compiler requires a different directory structure. The CML compiler expects each target type to define a template file named "files.stg" (also known as *files template*), which will contain the path of all files to be generated. The *files template* may use information provided by the *target specification* (specified in chapter § 7.4) in order to determine the file/directory names.

File content generation: each file listed under the files template will have a corresponding content template that specifies how the file's content must be generated. The content template will receive as input one root-level element of the CML model, which will provide information to generate the file's content. The type of model element received as input by the content template depends on which function of the files template has defined the file to be generated.

1.2 Organization and Notations

The following chapters will specify every element of CML metamodel. Each chapter starts with a definition, followed by: an example; the specification of the concrete syntax; and then presenting the abstract syntax, and how to transform the concrete syntax into the abstract one.

Chapters may also have sections that specify sub-elements of the top-level CML metamodel element being described in the chapter level. Each sub-element is described under its section using the same definition structure (detailed below) that is used to define the top-level elements.

Definition. The definition of each CML metamodel element is stated in plain English on a paraprah (such as this one) starting with the "**Definition.**" heading. If a correspondence exists to an element of the Entity-Relationship (ER) [1] metamodel, or to an element of the Unified Modeling Language (UML) [4] metamodel, it is provided.

Examples. For each metamodel element declaration in CML, examples are provided on a paraprah (such as this one), starting with the "**Examples.**" heading. This type of paragraph refers to a verbatim figure containing the examples, and describes them as needed. The examples are provided for illustrative purposes only, and they are *not* intended to be normative. They may be excerpts of larger CML source files, and thus may not be successfully compiled on their own.

Concrete Syntax. The concrete syntax of each CML metamodel element is described on a paragraph (such as this one), starting with the "Concrete Syntax." heading. This type of paragraph refers to a verbatim figure, which contains the actual ANTLR [6] grammar specifying the syntax for the CML

metamodel element in question, and it must be considered normative. The appendix § A presents all the grammar rules in a single listing.

Abstract Syntax. The abstract syntax of each CML metamodel element is described on a paragraph (such as this one), starting with the "**Abstract Syntax.**" heading. This type of paragraph refers to two types of figure: the first figure presents a class diagram with the EMOF [5]-based metamodel of the element being described; the second figure specifies the transformation from the concrete syntax into instances of the metamodel classes, which are the nodes of the abstract syntax tree (the intermediate representation described in section § 1.1). The notation used to specify the transformations is presented in the appendix § E. Both figures must be considered normative.

Constraints. The constraints of each CML metamodel element are described on a paragraph (such as this one), starting with the "Constraints." heading. This type of paragraph refers to a verbatim figure, which contains the OCL [3] invariants (and its definitions) of the CML metamodel element in question, and it must be considered normative. Each invariant has a name in the format inv_name so that it can be referred by the compiler's error messages and users. Derived properties may also be defined before the constraints in order to simplify the constraint expressions. The appendix § D presents all the constraint rules in a single listing.

All metamodel elements referred by one of the descriptions defined above (definitions, examples, etc.) are emphasized in *italic*. If the descriptions of a CML metamodel element refer to another CML metamodel element, the corresponding chapter or section defining the other element is provided in parenthesis, like so $(\S 1.2)$.

Some sections may not follow the structure defined above. These normally provide additional semantic information in plain English, which cannot be described using the notations presented above.

Two

Concepts

Definition. A concept in CML represents anything that has a coherent, cohesive and relevant meaning in a domain. In the ER [1] metamodel, it corresponds to an entity type; in UML [4], to a class. The CML concept differs, however, from the UML class, because it has only properties (§ 2.1), while the UML class may also have operations.

Examples. Figure 2.1 presents some examples of *concepts* declared in CML. As shown, a *concept* may have zero or more *properties* ($\S 2.1$), and a *property* may optionally declare a *type* ($\S 3.1$, $\S 4.3$). Also, as shown in the concept **EBook** of the example, a *concept* may specialize ($\S 2.2$) another *concept*.

Concrete Syntax. Figure 2.2 specifies the syntax used to declare a *concept*. The **concept** keyword is followed by a NAME. Optionally, a list of other NAMEs may be enumerated, referring to other *concepts* that are generalizations (§ 2.2) of the declared *concept*. A list of *properties* (§ 2.1) may be declared under the **concept** block. And the **abstract** keyword may precede the **concept** keyword, making a *concept* abstract (§ 2.3).

Abstract Syntax. Figure 2.3 presents the *concept* metamodel in an EMOF [5] class diagram, and figure 2.4 specifies the *concept* transformation from its concrete syntax to its abstract syntax. For each *concept* parsed by the compiler, an instance of the *Concept* class will be created, and its properties will be assigned according to parsed information:

- name: assigned with the value of the terminal node NAME.
- *abstract*: set to *true* if the **abstract** keyword is found before the **concept** keyword; otherwise, set to *false*.

```
// Empty concept:
concept Book;

// Property without a type:
concept TitledBook
{
    title;
}

// Property with the String type:
concept StringTitledBook
{
    title: String;
}

// Specializing another concept:
concept Ebook: Book;
```

Figure 2.1: Concept Examples

```
conceptDeclaration returns [Concept concept]:
   ABSTRACT? 'concept' NAME
   (':' generalizations)?
   (';' | propertyList);

generalizations:
   NAME (',' NAME)*;
```

Figure 2.2: Concept Declaration Syntax

- *elements*: an *ordered set* referencing all *properties* parsed in the **concept** block.
- generalizations: an ordered set referencing all concepts whose NAMEs were enumerated in the Generalization list.

Constraints. Figure 2.5 presents the invariants of the *concept* metamodel:

 unique_concept_name: Each concept must have a unique NAME within its module (§ 8).



Figure 2.3: Concept Metamodel

Figure 2.4: Concept AST Instantiation

```
inv unique_concept_name:
    parent.concepts
    ->select(c| c != self and c.name = self.name)
    ->isEmpty()
```

Figure 2.5: Concept Constraints

```
// Attributes of primitive types:
concept Book
{
    title: String;
    quantity: Integer;
}

// Role in unidirectional association:
concept Order
{
    customer: Customer;
}
```

Figure 2.6: Property Examples

2.1 Properties

Definition. A property in CML may hold values of primitive types, in which case they correspond to attributes on the ER [1] and UML [4] metamodels; or they may hold references (or collections of references) linking to instances of other concepts, in which case they correspond to a relationship on the ER metamodel, and to associations on the UML metamodel.

Examples. Figure 2.6 presents some examples of *properties* declared in CML. As shown in the examples, a *property* may be an *attribute* (\S 3) of a *primitive* type (\S 3.1), or represent the role/end of an *association* (\S 4).

Concrete Syntax. Figure 2.7 specifies the syntax used to declare a *property*. The NAME is followed by a *typeDeclaration* (§ 3.1 and § 4.3). Optionally, an *expression* (§ 5) may be specified in order to set the initial value.

Abstract Syntax. Figure **??** presents the *property* metamodel in an EMOF [5] class diagram, and figure 2.8 specifies the transformation from the *property*

```
propertyList:
    '{' (propertyDeclaration ';')* '}';
propertyDeclaration returns [Property property]:
    NAME (':' typeDeclaration)? ('=' expression)?;
```

Figure 2.7: Property Declaration Syntax

```
node PropertyList: '{' (Property ';')* '}';

node Property: NAME (':' Type)? ('=' STRING)?
{
    name = NAME;
    value = unwrap(STRING?);
    type = Type?;
}
```

Figure 2.8: Property AST Instantiation

concrete syntax to its abstract syntax. For each *property* parsed by the compiler, an instance of the *Property* class will be created, and its properties will be assigned according to parsed information:

- name: assigned with the value of the terminal node NAME.
- type: if typeDeclaration is provided, type is set with the instance of the Type class matching the typeDeclaration.
- expression: if provided, it contains the instance of the Expression class matching the parsed expression.

2.2 Generalization / Specialization

Definition. A concept (§ 2) in CML may be generalized by another concept. In other words, a concept may be considered a specialization of another concept. Generalized concepts have properties (§ 2.1) that apply to a larger set of instances, while specialized concepts have properties that only apply to a subset of those instances. In the UML [4] metamodel, such generalization/specialization relationship between classes is known as generalization, which is the

name of the metaclass in the UML metamodel. The original version of the ER [1] metamodel lacked this kind of relationship between *entity types*.

Examples. Figure 2.11 presents some examples of generalization/specialization relationships declared in CML. As shown, a concept (§2) may specialize zero or more other concepts. The latter are called the generalizations, while the former is called the specialization. A generalization, such as Shape, may define attributes (§ 3), such as color and area, or also unidirecional associations $(\S 4.1)$, which are properties $(\S 2.1)$ shared among all its specializations. Some of these properties may be redefined by the some of the specializations, as it is the case with the area property, which is redefined by Rectangle, Rhombus and Square. Some specializations may also define new properties, such as width and height in Rectangle, which characterize only instances of this specialization. A concept may be a specialization of two or more other concepts, as seen with Square, which specializes both Rectangle and Rhombus, and thus can redefine properties of both generalizations. If a property has been defined by more than one generalization, then it must be redefined by the specialization in order to resolve the definition conflict, which is the case with area in **Square**. If a redefinition suitable for both generalizations is unattainable, it may be an indication that either the specialization or the generalizations are unsound from the domain's prospective.

Concrete Syntax. Figure 2.2 specifies the syntax used to declare a *concept* (§2), and in turn its generalizations. A list of NAMEs may be enumerated after the declared *concept*'s NAME, referring to other *concepts* that this concept is a specialization of.

Abstract Syntax. Figure 2.3 presents the *concept* metamodel in an EMOF [5] class diagram, and figure 2.4 specifies the *concept* transformation from its concrete syntax to its abstract syntax. There is a unidirecional association in the *Concept* class that keeps track of the generalization/specialization relationships, which is named *generalizations*. It is an *ordered set* referencing all *concepts* whose NAMEs were enumerated in the *GeneralizationList* of the declared *concept*.

Constraints. Figure 2.10 presents the invariants of the *Concept* and *Property* classes related to *generalizations*:

 not_own_generalization: A concept (§ 2) may not be listed on its own GeneralizationList, nor on the GeneralizationList of its direct or indirect generalizations.

```
    Generalization of Circle and Rectangle:

concept Shape
   — Specializations below share the color attribute as—is:
   color: String;
    — Specializations below redefine the area attribute:
   area: Double;
}
— Specialization of Shape:
concept Rectangle: Shape
   — New attributes that characterize a rectangle:
   width: Double;
   height: Double;
   — Redefinition of the area attribute:
   /area = width * height;
}

    Another specialization of Shape:

concept Rhombus: Shape
   — Diagonal attributes that characterize a rhombus:
   p: Double;
   q: Double;
    — Another redefinition of the area attribute:
   /area = (p * q) / 2;
— Specialization of both Rectangle and Rhombus:
concept Square: Rectangle, Rhombus
   — Only attribute needed to characterize a square:
    side_length: Double;
   — Redefinitions of Rectangle's attributes:
    /width = side_length;
   /height = side_length;
   — Redefinitions of Rhombus' attributes:
   /p = side_length * 1.41421356237d; — square root of 2
    /q = p;
   — Required to redefine area in order to resolve conflict
   — between Rectangle's area and Rhombus' area:
   /area = side_length ^ 2;
}
```

Figure 2.9: Generalization Examples

- compatible_generalizations: The generalizations of a concept must all be compatible between themselves, that is, no two generalizations may have a property with the same name but a different type.
- generalization_compatible_redefinition: A property may only be redefined with the same type defined in the generalizations.
- conflict_redefinition: A concept is required to redefine a property that has been defined by two or more of its generalizations in order to resolve the definition conflict. That is required only if the property has been initialized or derived in at least one of the generalizations. Otherwise, the redefinition is not required.

2.3 Abstract Concepts

Definition. An abstract concept is one that does not represent specific instances, but instead serves as a generalization (§ 2.2) for other concepts, which in turn represent specific instances. Thus, all instances of an abstract concept are first instances of its specializations. CML supports tagging a concept as abstract. An abstract concept in CML may also define a derived property (§ 2.1) without providing an expression (§ 5) in its definition; such properties may also be called abstract properties. CML's support for abstract concepts matches UML's [4], which allows the declaration of abstract classes – by setting the is-Abstract attribute of the Class metaclass instance to true. UML also allows the declaration of corresponding abstract attributes and abstract operations. The original version of the ER [1] metamodel, however, as a consequence of lacking the generalization/specialization relationship, has not considered the notion of abstract entities.

```
context Concept::all_generalizations: Set(Concept)
derive:
    generalizations -> closure ( generalizations )
context Concept::all_properties: Set(Property)
    all_generalizations -> excludes(self)
derive:
    elements -> union (
        generalizations.all_properties -> select(p1|
            not elements \rightarrow exists (p2 | p1.name == p2.name)
    )
context Concept::generalization_pairs
                  : Set(Tuple(left: Concept, right: Concept))
derive:
    generalizations -> collect (g1 |
        generalizations
            \rightarrow select (g2 | g1 != g2)
            ->collect(g2| Tuple { left: g1, right: g2 })
    )->flatten()
context Concept::generalization_property_pairs
                  : Set(Tuple(left: Property, right: Property))
derive:
    generalization_pairs -> collect ( pair |
        pair.left.all_properties -> collect (p1|
             pair.right.all_properties
                \rightarrowselect (p2 | p1 != p2 and p1.name = p2.name)
                ->collect(p2| Tuple { left: p1, right: p2 })
        )—>flatten()
    )—>flatten()
context Concept
inv not_own_generalization:
    all_generalizations -> excludes (self)
context Concept
inv compatible_generalizations:
    generalization_property_pairs
        ->forAll(left.type = right.type)
context Concept
inv conflict_redefinition:
    generalization_property_pairs
        ->select(left.type = right.type)
        ->select(left.derived or left.expression->notEmpty() or
                  right.derived or right.expression—>notEmpty())
        ->forAll(self.elements->exists(name = left.name))
context Property
inv generalization_compatible_redefinition:
    self.scope.generalizations.all_properties
        ->select(property | self.name = property.name)
        ->forAll(property | self.type = property.type)
```

Figure 2.10: Generalization Constraints

```
— As an abstract concept,
— no direct instances of Shape are ever created.
abstract concept Shape
   — A derived property without an expression
   — is considered abstract.
   — Only abstract concepts may have abstract properties.
   /area: Double;
   — Abstract concepts may also have concrete properties:
   color: String;
}

    All instances of Circle are in turn instances of Shape.

concept Circle: Shape
   radius: Double;
   — In order to be considered a concrete concept,
   — Circle must redefine the abstract properties
   — inherited from Shape.
   /area = 3.14159 * radius ^ 2;
   — Circle may also redefine concrete properties of Shape.
   — However, the redefinition is not required in this case.
   color = "Blue";
}
concept UnitCircle: Circle
   - Observe below that the redefinition of
   — an abstract property may be concrete;
   — that is, it does not have to be derived
   — as it was done in Cicle.
   area = 3.14159;
   — In the case above, however,
   — it is desirable to redefine "area" as a derived property,
   — in order to guarantee area's value cannot be modified
   -\!-\! after the instantiation of UnitCircle.
   — This is done with the redefinition of "radius" below.
   — Notice that, in Circle, radius was concrete,
   — but its redefinition below makes it derived.
   — That's allowed in CML just as the other way around,
   — as it was done with "area" above.
   / radius = 1;
```

Figure 2.11: Abstract Concept Example

Three

Attributes

3.1 Primitive Types

Four

Associations

- 4.1 Unidirectional Associations
- 4.2 Bidirectional Associations
- 4.3 Collection Types
- 4.4 Collections

Five

Expressions

Definition. An expression in CML is used to compute values and collections that initialize properties or define derived properties. On the UML [4] metamodel, it corresponds to an Expression; in OCL [3], to OclExpressionCS. The CML expressions are designed to provide the same level of expressivity provided by OCL expressions, but the CML syntax varies from OCL, especially for collection operations.

Examples. Figure 5.1 has some examples of CML *expressions*. As shown, there are different types of expressions: literals ($\S 5.1$), prefix expressions ($\S 5.2$), infix expressions ($\S 5.3$), conditional expressions ($\S 5.4$), path expressions ($\S 5.5$) and queries ($\S 6$).

Concrete Syntax. Figure 5.2 specifies the syntax of all CML *expressions*. It also lists them in their order of precedence. Observe that the grammar in figure 5.2 has left recursions, and thus is ambiguous. However, ANTLR [6] will use the order in which the alternatives are listed in order to resolve the ambiguity, and so define the precedence among the operators. Also, according to ANTLR, and as required by CML, all expressions in the grammar are left-to-right associative, except for the *exponentiation expression*, which is right-to-left associative, as defined by the **">assoc=right>** clause.

Abstract Syntax. Figure 5.3 presents the *Expression* metamodel in an EMOF [5] class diagram. For each kind of *expression* parsed by the compiler, an instance of an *Expression* subclass will be created, and its properties will be assigned according to parsed information:

 kind: a String value matching the Expression subclass; for example, for the Literal subclass, kind = "literal".

```
concept Expressions
    // Literals:
   c: String = "SomeString";
    d: Integer = 123;
    // Prefix Expression:
    minus\_sign = -2;
    // Infix Expressions:
    addition = 1 + 2;
    equality = 3 \implies 3;
    boolean_expr = q and p;
    // Conditional:
    if_then_else = if a > 0 then a else b;
    // Path:
    path = somePath.bar;
    // Query:
    select_query = items | select name == "this";
```

Figure 5.1: Expression Examples

 type: a derived attribute that computes the Type of the expression; each Expression subclass will do its own Type computation by providing its own definition for this derived attribute.

5.1 Literal Values

5.2 Prefix Expressions

5.3 Infix Expressions

5.4 Conditional Expressions

5.5 Path Expressions

```
expression returns [Expression expr]
    : literalExpression
     pathExpression
      operator = ('+' | '-' | NOT) expression
      <assoc=right> expression operator='^1 expression
      expression operator = (1*1 | 1/1 | 1\%1) expression expression operator = (1+1 | 1/1 | 1\%1) expression
      expression operator=('<' \mid '<=' \mid '>' \mid '>=') expression
      expression operator=('==' | '!=') expression
      expression operator=AND expression
      \hbox{\tt expression operator=} OR \hbox{\tt expression}
      expression operator=XOR expression
      expression operator=IMPLIES expression
      IF cond=expression
      THEN then=expression
      ELSE else_expression
      queryExpression
      '(' inner=expression ')';
queryExpression returns [Expression expr]
    : pathExpression
      joinExpression
    queryExpression '| transformDeclaration;
joinExpression returns [Join join]:
    FOR enumerator Declaration (',' enumerator Declaration)*;
enumeratorDeclaration:
    var=NAME IN pathExpression;
transformDeclaration returns [Transform transform]:
    (FROM var=NAME '=' init=expression)?
    operation=
         ( SELECT
                      REJECT
          YIELD
                     I RECURSE
          INCLUDES | EXCLUDES
          EVERY
                    | EXISTS
          REDUCE
          TAKE
                     I DROP
          FIRST
                     | LAST
          COUNT
                     SUM
                                  | AVERAGE
                     MIN
          MAX
         REVERSE)
    suffix=(UNIQUE | WHILE)?
    expr=expression ?;
```

Figure 5.2: Expressions Syntax

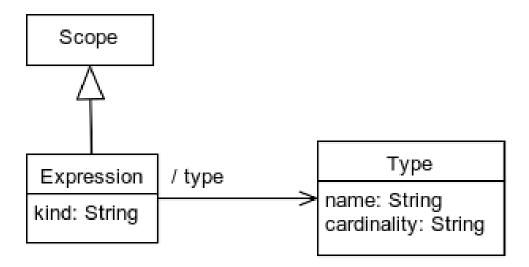


Figure 5.3: Expression Metamodel

Figure 5.4: Literals Lexical Structure

Six

Queries

Seven

Code Generation

- 7.1 Tasks
- 7.2 Constructors
- 7.3 Templates
- 7.4 Targets

Eight

Modules

Nine

Libraries

A

CML Concrete Syntax (Grammar)

A.1 ANTLR Grammar

```
// Compilation Units:
compilationUnit:
    declarations*;
declarations:
    moduleDeclaration | conceptDeclaration | taskDeclaration;
// Concept Declarations:
conceptDeclaration returns [Concept concept]:
    ABSTRACT? 'concept' NAME
    (':' generalizations)?
    (';' | propertyList);
generalizations:
    NAME (',' NAME)*;
// Property Declarations:
propertyList:
    '{' (propertyDeclaration ';')* '}';
propertyDeclaration returns [Property property]:
    NAME (':' typeDeclaration)? ('=' expression)?;
// Type Declarations:
typeDeclaration returns [Type type]:
    NAME cardinality?;
cardinality:
   ('?' | '*');
```

```
// Target Declarations:
targetDeclaration returns [Target target]:
   'target' NAME propertyList;
// Names:
// All keywords must be declared before NAME.
// Otherwise, they are recognized as a NAME instead.
FOR: 'for';
IN: 'in';
SELECT: 'select';
REJECT: 'reject';
YIELD: 'yield';
RECURSE: 'recurse';
INCLUDES: 'includes';
EXCLUDES: 'excludes';
EVERY: 'every';
EXISTS: 'exists';
FROM: 'from';
REDUCE: 'reduce';
TAKE: 'take';
DROP: 'drop';
FIRST: 'first';
LAST: 'last';
COUNT: 'count';
SUM: 'sum';
AVERAGE: 'average';
MAX: 'max';
MIN: 'min';
REVERSE: 'reverse';
```

```
UNIQUE: 'unique';
WHILE: 'while';
IF: 'if';
THEN: 'then';
ELSE: 'else';
BOOLEAN: 'true' | 'false';
AND: 'and';
OR: 'or';
XOR: 'xor';
IMPLIES: 'implies';
NOT: 'not';
ABSTRACT:
    'abstract';
NAME:
    ('A'...'Z' | 'a'...'z')
    ('A'...'Z' | 'a'...'z' | '0'...'9' | '_' )*;
// Literals:
literalExpression returns [Literal literal]: BOOLEAN | STRING | INTEGER | DECIMAL;
STRING:
   "'' (ESC | . )*? '"';
fragment ESC: '\\', [btnr"\\];
INTEGER:
    ('0'...'9')+;
```

В

CML Abstract Syntax (Metamodel)

CML Abstract Syntax Tree (Instantiation)

CML Constraints (Validations)

```
inv unique_concept_name:
    parent.concepts
        ->select(c| c != self and c.name = self.name)
        ->isEmpty()

context Property

inv unique_property_name:
    self.parent.properties
        ->select(p| p != self and p.name = self.name)
        ->isEmpty()
```

Ε

Language Specification Notation

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