

Language Workbench Challenge 2013 Xtext Submission

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Abstract

The Language Workbench Challenge 2013 (LWC13) is an initiative created by a group of experts at the CodeGeneration 2010 conference¹. The aim is to set a common task² for Language Workbenches³ which is implemented with the different existing alternatives in a comparable way.

This document describes in detail how the task is solved with Xtext⁴. Xtext is one of the most well known Language Workbenches and part of the Eclipse Modeling Project⁵.

Testimonial

We would like to thank:

- 1. Angelo Hulshout for initiating and organizing the Language Workbench Challenge. It is his work that allows the Language Workbench Challenge to continue now in its 3rd year.
- 2. The Xtext Team is doing a great job on developing a robust, flexible and easy to use Language Workbench.

¹http://www.codegeneration.net/cg2010/

²see http://www.languageworkbenches.net/ for the detailed description of the LWC11 competition and other submissions

³http://martinfowler.com/articles/languageWorkbench.html, http://blog.efftinge.de/2007/11/definition-of-term-language-workbench.html

⁴http://www.xtext.org

⁵http://www.eclipse.org/modeling

Document History

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• Initial creation

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1 Introduction

1.1 Task Description

The LWC13 task is to implement a DSL for questionnaires (Questionnaire Language, QL), which basically allows the definition of forms with questions.

1.2 Technology Stack

This tutorial expects that you are somehow familiar with Java and Eclipse and have heard about EMF and how it works in general before. We start almost at the beginning, but not quite :-)

We will use Xtext 2.4.0, which is at the moment of writing the latest official release. Xtext 2.5 is in preparation and will be released with Eclipse Kepler in June 2013^6 . The solution approach described here would work also with any version of Xtext ≥ 2.0 , but the API might differ slightly, so there is no guarantee that each codeline printed here would work exactly with all versions. For better reproduction it is highly recommended to use the versions mentioned above.

For Code Generation we will use the language Xtend, which itself is based on Xtext. Xtend makes use of a common expression language shipped with Xtext called Xbase. The languages developed here will also be based on Xbase, but more on this later.

The reference implementation of the Xtend generator will generate, JavaServer Faces 2.1 (JSF).⁷ JSF is part of the Java Enterprise Edition (Java EE). It is useful to have a basic understanding of how web applications work even if JSF provides a nice level of abstraction. The JSF reference implementation from Oracle Mojarra 2.1.6⁸ is able to run within the well known Servlet container Apache Tomcat (v7.0).⁹

To get a nicely integrated developement environment we will install some components of the Web Tools Platform (WTP)¹⁰ into an existing Eclipse installation.

⁶http://wiki.eclipse.org/Kepler/Simultaneous_Release_Plan

⁷http://www.javaserverfaces.org/

⁸http://javaserverfaces.java.net/

⁹http://tomcat.apache.org/

¹⁰http://www.eclipse.org/webtools/

1.3 Xtext Overview

This overview will give you a rough idea about what Xtext¹¹ is all about. We will then dive into the details and work on a small project.

In a nutshell, Xtext is a workbench to create and work with textual domain-specific languages (DSLs). It comes as a feature (set of plugins) to the popular Eclipse IDE.

The first thing you will want to do is to create your own domain-specific language (DSL) and specify a grammar for it. The grammar file is a plain text file with ".xtext" filename extension, and the grammar within is defined with a BNF like syntax. While you can use any text editor to modify it, Xtext gives you a specialized editor for grammar files. It is aware of the Xtext language, gives you syntax coloring, code completion, and more. To get a first impression see the screenshot of the Xtext grammar file, opened with the Xtext grammar editor, below. It is not required to fully understand the content yet, this will be discussed in the next chapter in detail.

```
≥ Domainmodel.xtext 🖂
  2⊕ * Copyright (c) 2009 itemis AG (http://www.itemis.eu) and others...
  8 grammar org.eclipse.xtext.example.domainmodel.Domainmodel.with org.eclipse.xtext.xbase.Xbase¶
 10 generate domainmodel "http://www.xtext.org/example/Domainmodel"
 11
 12@ DomainModel: ¶
 13 »
         elements+=AbstractElement*; ¶
 14 ¶
 15@ AbstractElement: ¶
        PackageDeclaration | | Entity | | Import; ¶
 16 »
 17 ¶
 18@ Import:¶
 19 »
         'import' · importedNamespace=QualifiedNameWithWildCard; ¶
 20 ¶
 21@ PackageDeclaration: 9
         'package'-name=QualifiedName-'{'¶
 23 »
            elements+=AbstractElement*¶
 24 »
 25 ¶
 26⊖ Entity:¶
         'entity' name=ValidID ('extends' superType=JvmParameterizedTypeReference)? ' { '¶
 27
            features+=Feature*¶
 29 »
 30 ¶
 31@ Feature: ¶
        Property · I · Operation; ¶
 32
 33 ¶
 34@ Property: ¶
        name=ValidID ':' type=JvmTypeReference;¶
 35 >>
 36 ¶
 37@ Operation: ¶
         'op'-name=ValidID-'('-(params+=FullJvmFormalParameter-(','-params+=FullJvmFormalParameter)*)?-')'
 38 »
            body=XBlockExpression; ¶
 39 »
 40 ¶
 41⊖ QualifiedNameWithWildCard : ¶
 42 » QualifiedName · ('.' *')?;
```

 $^{^{11} {}m http://www.xtext.org}$

The aforementioned example DSL allows you to define entities like "Person", "Car", "Book", and so on. An entity has properties, e.g. a Person has a name, a gender, and a date of birth. A Book has a title, one or more authors, and an ISBN number.

A textual DSL model could look like this, but you could also imagine other syntaxes:

```
entity Person {
1
     name : String
2
     gender : m
3
     birthday : Date
4
   }
5
6
7
   entity Book {
     title: String
8
     authors: Person[]
9
     isbnNumber: String
10
11
```

Note that the Property authors is of type Person, so there can be references between entities. In the Xtext grammar file you specify how you want to define entities and their properties.

Once you have completed your language, you can do that: define some entities, say "Book" and "Person", together with their respective properties and with proper references between them. The nice thing is that Xtext not only gives you a syntax-driven editor for editing grammar files. Additionally it generates an editor that is specific to the language you have defined. It knows about your language's keywords and where to place them, it knows about all the syntactical constructs you have made up in your grammar, it includes all the nice stuff like syntax coloring, code completion, validation, and more. For example, if you are at some point where a reference to another entity must be inserted, your DSL editor shows you all the references that would be valid here – according to your language rules – and lets you choose among them. All in all, using the DSL editor generated by Xtext, it is quite easy to establish a text file that adhers to your DSL.

Depending on your language's type, you could call this text file e.g. a model, a document, a program, or whatever. We will refer to DSL files here as *models* (files).

Consider now that you have created a model. What can you do with it? A typical requirement is to generate an implementation of it in a language like Java, C++, or XML. Or a graphical representation. Or something quite different. This is where code generation comes in. Xtext creates a skeleton code generator for you. Typically you use that code generator as a starting point to produce e.g. Java source code, documentation in, say, DocBook or Wiki format, over-

view graphics using GraphViz, or any other stuff you need. Xtext offers special support for textual output formats, but it is also possible to generate binaries.

This was only a short outline of some prominent Xtext aspects. It is by far not everything Xtext can do for you, but it should suffice for now. The next chapters will show you in more detail how to work with Xtext.

1.4 Installing Eclipse and Xtext

Xtext is a SDK for the Eclipse IDE. To install it you have two options:

- You can download Xtext separately and install it in your Eclipse instance.
- You can download a specially-crafted complete Eclipse distribution which has Xtext prepackaged already.

We will take the latter approach here and describe the individual steps:

- 1. Go to the Xtext download page. Here you can get Eclipse 4.2.x (Juno) including Xtext 2.3.1 along with some tools Xtext depends on. The latter are subsumed here under "Xtext" for simplicity. If you want you can download also a distribution which is already bundled with Eclipse 4.3.0 Kepler, but be aware that this is not finalized until end of June 2013.
- 2. The Eclipse/Xtext distribution is available for multiple platforms.
 - a) Linux GTK x86 64 bit
 - b) Linux GTK x86 32 bit
 - c) Mac OSX x86 64 bit
 - d) Windows 64 bit
 - e) Windows 32 bit
- 3. Unpack the downloaded archive file in a directory of your choice.

Example (Linux):

```
cd /opt/local
gzip -dc /download/eclipse-SDK-4.2-Xtext-2.3.1-linux-gtk-x86_64.tar.gz | tar
xvfp -
```

The archive will be extracted to a new directory named eclipse. Before unpacking the archive, please ensure that there is no subdirectory named eclipse yet! Different operating systems may require different unpacking methods.¹²

4. Start Eclipse by running the eclipse executable in the newly-created eclipse directory.

¹²On Windows do not unpack it into a deep directory, since this might cause troubles with long path names.

1.5 Workspace Setup

Before we begin, start Eclipse and set up a fresh workspace.

Some settings should be done. Open the workspace settings:

• Windows: Window / Preferences

• Mac: Eclipse / Preferences

Workspace Encoding

File encoding is important to some type of files. It is better that the workspace is set to a common encoding to avoid any platform specific encoding. By default the workspace is using platform encoding, which is Cp1252 on Windows and MacRoman on Mac. We will use ISO-8859-1 as a common encoding here.

- Open Eclipse Preferences and go to General / Workspace
- Change setting Text file encoding to Other / ISO-8859-1

Launch Operation

- Open Run/Debug / Launching
- Change "Launch Operation" to "Always launch the previously launched application"

This will allow you re-running the previous launched application by just pressing the Run or Debug button in the Eclipse toolbar, or using keyboard shortcuts. The default settings does not always do what you want.

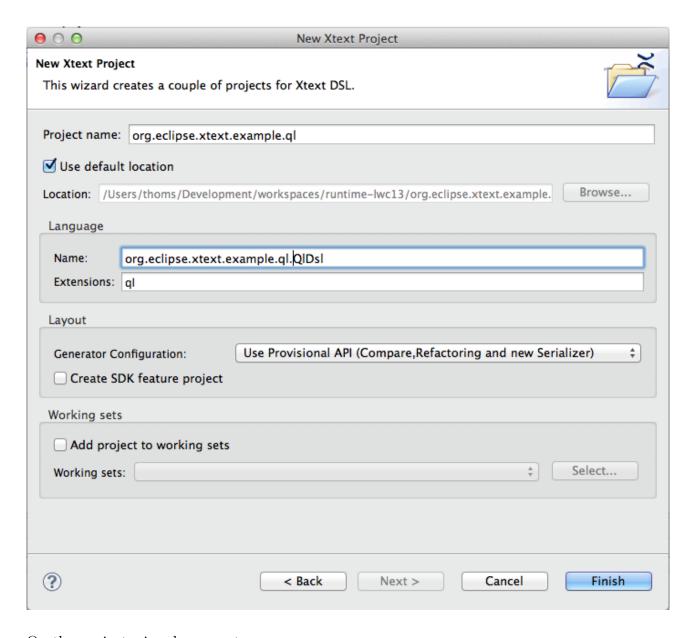
1.6 The Survey Application

2 Developing the Questionnaire Language

2.1 Create the DSL Projects

Let's start creating the projects for the Questionnaire DSL. Open the New Project Wizard with File / New / Project. Choose "Xtext Project" and press "Next".



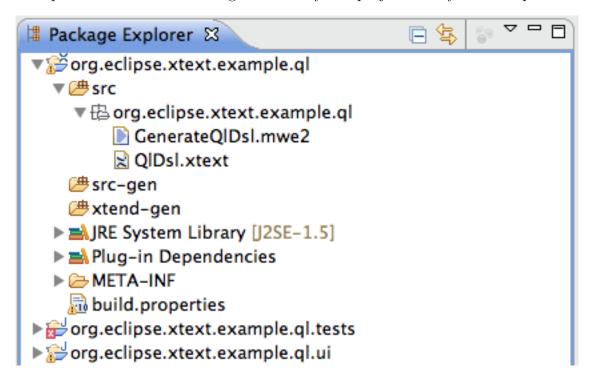


On the project wizard page enter:

- 1. Project name: org.eclipse.xtext.example.ql. Xtext will create multiple projects, which share this prefix. It is a convention to use a lowercase, dot-separated name.
- 2. Language name: org.eclipse.xtext.example.ql.QlDsl. This is an identifier for the language, which must be unique and follows a Java full qualified identifier name pattern.
- 3. Language Extensions: q1. This will be the file extension for DSL files.
- 4. Uncheck the option "Create SDK feature project". It would not harm to have that checked, it would just create an additional Feature Project, which we do not handle in this tutorial any further.



Now press "Finish". Xtext will generate for you 3 projects into your workspace:



- org.eclipse.xtext.example.ql: This is the Runtime Project, which holds the language definition and any implementation which is not UI dependent. Most of the implementation details of this tutorial will be done in this project.
- org.eclipse.xtext.example.ql.tests: This project is intended to hold test code for the language. Tests are implemented with JUnit. Xtext will generate some infrastructure code required for tests into here. We won't deal testing of DSLs in this tutorial any further. You can close or remove this project if you want.
- org.eclipse.xtext.example.ql.ui: Xtext produces a language specific text editor. The editor is an Eclipse plugin. While the runtime part of the language could be used in any UI or even from command-line, the Editor is dependent on the Eclipse platform.

All projects are almost empty right now. Only the Runtime Project contains two important files in the /src folder.

- GenerateQlDsl.mwe2: This is a so-called "MWE2 Workflow". MWE is short for "Modeling Workflow Engine", which is a framework that is intended to define processes for code generation. This file defines the process to generate code for the DSL implementation.
- QlDsl.xtext: This is the file that contains the DSL language definition itself. It is called the *Grammar* of the language.

2.2 Defining the Grammar

Open the Grammar file, QlDsl.xtext. In a first step, we will leave out the expression part in the syntax for simplicity. Enter the following text into the Grammar file¹³:

```
grammar org.eclipse.xtext.example.ql.QlDsl with org.eclipse.xtext.xbase.Xbase
2
   generate qlDsl "http://www.eclipse.org/xtext/example/ql/QlDsl"
3
4
   /* The top-most container of QL files is a Questionnaire */
5
   Questionnaire:
6
     imports+=Import*
7
     forms+=Form*;
8
9
   /* Allows importing of qualified names of types */
10
   Import:
11
     'import' importedNamespace=QualifiedName;
12
13
14
   /* QL consists of questions grouped in a top-level form construct. */
   Form:
15
     "form" name=ID "{"
16
       element += FormElement*
17
     "}":
18
19
   /* Abstract rule for elements contained in a Form */
20
   FormElement:
21
     Question
22
23
24
25
    * - Each question identified by a name that at the same time represents the result of the
26
        question.
    * - A question has a label that contains the actual question text presented to the user.
27
    * - Every question has a type.
28
    */
29
   Question:
30
     name=ID ":" label=STRING type=JvmTypeReference
31
32
```

With the grammar above, the QL language won't fulfill all requirements of the LWC2013 task. We will extend the grammar later to meet all requirements. With this grammar a valid model file would look like this:

¹³https://gist.github.com/kthoms/4758255

```
import types. Money
1
2
3
   form Box1HouseOwning {
     hasSoldHouse: "Did you sell a house in 2010?" boolean
4
     hasBoughtHouse: "Did you by a house in 2010?" boolean
5
     hasMaintLoan: "Did you enter a loan for maintenance/reconstruction?" boolean
6
7
8
     sellingPrice: "Price the house was sold for :" Money
     privateDebt: "Private debts for the sold house: " Money
9
     valueResidue: "Value residue: " Money
10
11
```

Now let us explain the grammar in more detail:

```
grammar org.eclipse.xtext.example.ql.QlDsl with org.eclipse.xtext.xbase.Xbase
```

The grammar has a unique identifier named org.eclipse.xtext.example.ql.QlDsl¹⁴. It is derived from another grammar, org.eclipse.xtext.xbase.Xbase. Xbase defines a grammar for expressions, but more on this later. Xtext supports *single inheritance* for grammars.

```
1 generate qlDsl "http://www.eclipse.org/xtext/example/ql/QlDsl"
```

This is an instruction for the metamodel used for the language. The generate statement means that Xtext generates an Ecore metamodel for this grammar¹⁵. The metamodel will represent the language's Abstract Syntax Tree (AST). Xtext creates the following structure in the Ecore metamodel:

- an EPackage for each generate statement. The name of the EPackage is the first argument (qlDsl), the package's nsURI is the second argument ("http://www.eclipse.org/xtext/example/ql/QlDsl").
- an EClass
 - for each return type of a parser rule. If a parser rule does not define a return type, an implicit one with the same name as the rule itself is assumed. You can specify multiple rules that return the same type but only one EClass will be generated.
 - for each type defined in an action or a cross-reference.
- an EEnum

¹⁴That's what has been entered in the project wizard

¹⁵http://www.eclipse.org/Xtext/documentation.html#metamodelInference



- for each return type of an enum rule.
- an EDataType
 - for each return type of a terminal rule or a data type rule.

Alternatively an Xtext grammar could be mapped to an existing Ecore metamodel ¹⁶.

```
Questionnaire:
imports+=Import*
forms+=Form*;
```

The top-most container rule is Questionnaire. Per model resource exactly one instance of this type will be contained in the root content of the resource. Any other element will be contained directly or indirectly within this instance.

Each QL model will contain zero to many import statements, e.g.:

```
import java.math.BigDecimal
import types.Money
```

We will use them to import types used as a question's answer type. The "+=" operator means, that a to-many containment reference with name imports is added as EReference to the Questionnaire EClass. The "*" means that this rule can be repeated zero to many times. After the import statements, the QL model can contain multiple form declarations.

```
1 Import:
2   'import' importedNamespace=QualifiedName;
```

The Import rule is defined to start with the keyword "import", followed by a QualifiedName. The QualifiedName rule is not defined in the QlDsl.xtext grammar itself, it is inherited from the Xbase grammar. This rule defines a so-called Datatype Rule, which maps to datatype, in this case EString.

```
Import:
    'import' importedNamespace=QualifiedName;
```

After the imports section QL forms are defined:

```
Form:
    "form" name=ID "{"
    element += FormElement*
    "}";
```

 $^{^{16} \}rm http://www.eclipse.org/Xtext/documentation.html\#grammarMixins$

¹⁷To enforce at least one rule call, the "+" operator would be used instead.

Forms have an attribute called name. ID is a *terminal rule*, which is defined in Xtext's root grammar Terminals. It allows typical Java-style identifiers (beginning with a word character followed by arbitrary many characters, numbers or underscores).

The next step is to define the rule FormElement. It is an abstract rule which will collect the different alternatives of elements that can be contained in a form. In our first step, the rule Question will be the only alternative. We will introduce a second alternative later in the grammar, and in order to reduce the refactoring effort we are introducing the FormElement already now.

```
FormElement:
Question
;
```

Finally, the Question rule is defined. In a first step, Questions are identified by a name, followed by a label string and a reference to a type. Later we will add expressions to compute the value.

```
Question:
   name=ID ":" label=STRING type=JvmTypeReference
;
```

A Question's type is a reference to a JVM Type. Think of this for now that we refer to Java types. The JvmTypeReference rule is also inherited through Xbase, actually Xbase derives itself from another grammar, Xtype, which declares these rules.

2.3 Generate Language Implementation

Now that the initial grammar of the language has been defined it is time to test the language. Xtext ships with a code generator which generates all the glue code needed for the language implementation.

To generate the code, we need to execute the generator workflow GenerateQlDsl.mwe2. For this, select the workflow file, open the context menu and select $Run\ As\ /\ MWE2\ Workflow$.

The generator will print some information to the Console, and finally it should print "Done.".

```
0 [main] INFO lipse.emf.mwe.utils.StandaloneSetup - Registering platform
uri ....

13727 [main] INFO .emf.mwe2.runtime.workflow.Workflow - Done.
```

After successful execution the projects will be filled with implementation code. Code that will be regenerated each time the generator is executed will go to the source folder /src-gen (in all three projects), whereas code generated to /src will be generated only once as skeleton. It is safe to edit these classes.

Xtext follows the Generation Gap Pattern¹⁸: Generated code is based on the Xtext API. Manual code is separated from generated code. Often manual classes are derived from generated classes to allow overriding of generated code or adding functionality.

Investigate the generated code a bit. Some pieces to mention:

Runtime Project - folder src

- The class QlDslRuntimeModule is a Guice configuration. Guice¹⁹ is a famous Dependency Injection²⁰ framework in Java. Xtext makes heavy use of Dependency Injection, which in turn allows to exchange nearly every bit of the framework for customizing or to work around limitations, if necessary, without the need to change the framework itself.
- Class Q1Ds1StandaloneSetup is needed when using the language in "standalone mode", i.e. without an Eclipse environment. Eclipse plugins, like Xtext and the language plugin, usually need an OSGi container as execution environment. Xtext is designed to be executable without the need to be deployed into an OSGi container, but for this certain registrations are required which an OSGi container would usually provide automatically. This is especially useful when Xtext based languages are used in build environments or other IDEs.
- Class QlDslFormatter allows the implementation of a declarative code formatter for the DSL.
- File Q1Ds1JvmModelInferrer.xtend is a class implemented with the Xtend language. The JVM Model Inferrer will play an important role later when we introduce expressions and code generation.
- Class QlDslJavaValidation allows the implementation of validation rules for the DSL.

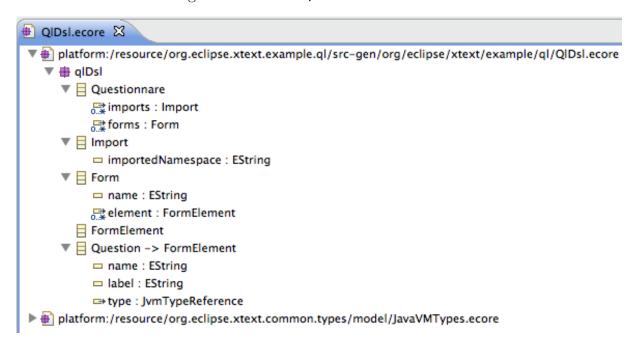
Runtime Project - folder src-gen

¹⁸http://heikobehrens.net/2009/04/23/generation-gap-pattern/

¹⁹http://code.google.com/p/google-guice/

²⁰http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dependency_injection

• The Ecore metamodel is generated to file QlDsl.ecore.



- The Java implementation code for the metamodel can be found in the package org.eclipse.xtext
- The package org.eclipse.xtext.example.ql.parser.antlr.internal contains an ANTLR3²¹ grammar and the Lexer and Parser classes generated from it.

2.4 Testing the Questionnaire Language

2.4.1 Creating a Launch Configuration

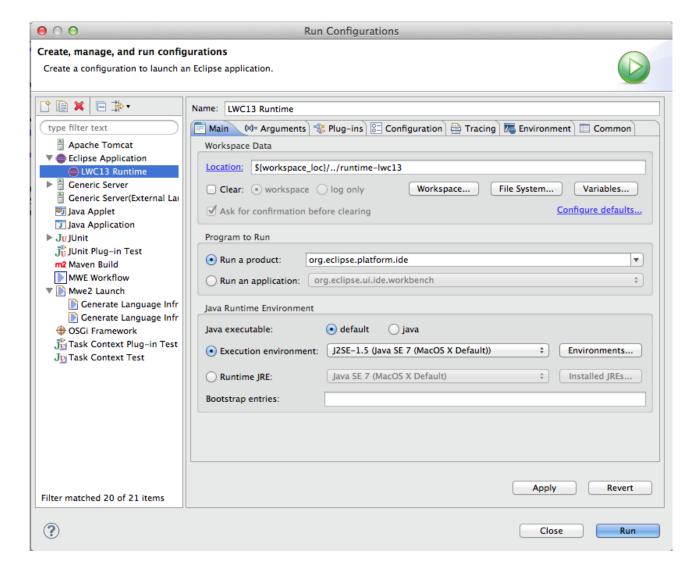
In order to test the language and the editor we need to deploy the developed plugins within another Eclipse instance. For testing the easiest way is start a so-called Runtime Instance.

Open the dialog Run / Run Configurations and select the node Eclipse Application from the left tree widget and press the icon with the + sign to create a new Launch Config.

You could leave the defaults here or change the name and location like in the screenshot.

 $^{^{21} {\}rm http://www.antlr.org}$





Now switch to the Arguments page and enter in the "VM arguments" text box:

```
-Xms40m -Xmx512m -XX:MaxPermSize=150m
```

Especially important is the MaxPermSize setting, since the default size of the PermGen space of the VM (64MB) often is not enough.

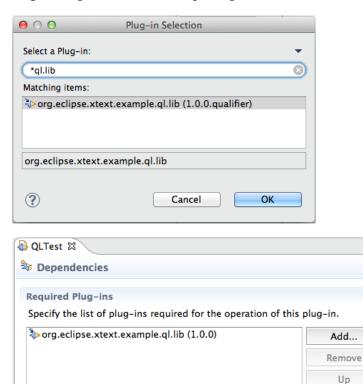
Now press the "Run" button. Another Eclipse instance will start with an empty workspace. Close the Welcome window.

2.4.2 Create Test Project

In the Runtime Workspace create a new Plug-in Project with name "QLTest". 22

 $^{^{22}\}mathrm{As}$ before, uncheck the options on the second wizard page.

First, we will create a dependency to the library plugin. Open the META-INF/MANIFEST.MF file and switch to page Dependencies. In the *Required Plug-ins* section, add a dependency to org.eclipse.xtext.example.ql.lib.



Overview Dependencies Runtime Extensions Extension Points Build MANIFEST.

The DSL has to support custom datatypes like Money, which must be defined. Select the /src folder and create a new Java class Money in package types:

Properties...

```
package types;
2
   import java.math.BigDecimal;
3
4
   public class Money {
5
     private BigDecimal amount;
6
7
     public Money(BigDecimal amount) {
8
       this.amount = amount;
9
     }
10
11
     public BigDecimal getAmount() {
12
       return amount;
13
14
   }
15
```

Select the /src folder and create a new file "housepurchase.ql". Once you have created the file a popup dialog will appear to ask, if you would like to add the Xtext nature on this project. Answer with "Yes".



From now on your project will be considered to contain files that Xtext should recognize (.ql files). Projects having the Xtext nature will be processed by the Xtext Builder when building projects, other projects are ignored. The Xtext Builder indexes the Xtext based resources, links the cross-references in the editor, and validates the model files. On errors, resource markers are created which can be seen in the editor and the *Problems View*.

Enter the content for "housepurchase.ql"²³:

```
import types. Money
1
2
3
   form Box1HouseOwning {
     hasSoldHouse: "Did you sell a house in 2010?" boolean
4
     hasBoughtHouse: "Did you by a house in 2010?" boolean
5
     hasMaintLoan: "Did you enter a loan for maintenance/reconstruction?" boolean
6
7
     sellingPrice: "Price the house was sold for :" Money
8
9
     privateDebt: "Private debts for the sold house: " Money
     valueResidue: "Value residue: " Money
10
11
```

You see now that the editor has recognized our DSL. The language's keywords are highlighted. Xtext offers far more than just syntax coloring for the language, it created a fully integrated editor. You may explore some of the features now.

- If you make errors, error markers are created and resolved while you type.
- Content assist is offered with CTRL+SPACE.
- The Outline view ²⁴ presents the structure of the document, and allows quick navigation.
- F3 allows jumping to the definition of an element, which is defined somewhere else. You

 $^{^{23}}$ https://gist.github.com/kthoms/5036304

²⁴if not present, open with Window / Show View / Outline

could try this by selecting "Money" and press F3. At the moment, only the type information of questions is cross-referenced.

From now on, we will extend the DSL a bit further. This usually requires to restart the test environment. So close it and proceed reading.

2.5 Xbase

The language developed in section 2.1 does not yet meet all demands on the LWC2013 task. Two core features are missing: First, a question's answer can be computed, i.e. its answer can be derived from an expression referring to previous questions' answers. Second, questions can be optional depending on the previous answers. For this, also the possibility to define expressions is needed. This is where Xbase comes into play.

Xbase is an expression language which can be reused in your own Xtext DSL. Its language concepts are similar to Java, but with some syntactical derivations improving readability. The Xbase grammar is defined in Xtext, thus its elements can be used in any other Xtext grammar by importing or directly extending Xbase via Xtext's possibility for grammar inheritance. In addition to the grammar, Xbase ships with further infrastructural parts like a compiler, interpreter, linker or static analyzer which all can be adapted to your own needs. In the background, Xbase produces plain Java code which is run on the JVM. Like other DSLs defined with Xtext, Xbase provides also editor features like syntax highlighting, content assistance and navigation via hyperlinks. In the following we will first introduce some language concepts of Xbase, and afterwards we will describe how to integrate Xbase into the Questionnaire DSL.

In Xbase everything is an expression which always has a return type which might be null for some expressions. Variables are defined with the var keyword, whereas for constant values the val keyword is used. Types are derived automatically, so they don't need to be defined explicitly:

```
var myVariable = 'some modifiable value'
val Integer myConstant = 42
```

Xbase ships with a library extending existing Java types like String or Integer with further functionality. So besides the already known String operations from Java like toUpperCase or toLowerCase, in Xbase expressions you can also use toFirstUpper and toFirstLower changing only the first letter's case which might come in handy in some situations. Large numbers can be written more readable by using underscores to separate digits:

```
"a day has ".toFirstUpper() + 86_400_000 + " milliseconds."

// results in: A day has 86400000 milliseconds.
```

As in Java, Xbase provides if-else-expressions for defining conditions. Since each expression has a return type, it is valid to use if-else-blocks similar to the ternary operator in Java:

```
1 var x = if (condition) 42 else 43
```

There are further concepts in Xbase which we will not cover here in more detail, since they have not much relevance for the Questionnaire language. So e.g. it is possible to use loops for iterating over a collection of element; there is a switch-case-expression with type guards allowing for defining behavior depending on the type of a parameter; and last but not least, Xbase allows the definition of closures. For more details, please look up the reference documentation²⁵ or the Xbase tutorials directly in Eclipse (File / New / Other.. / Xbase Tutorial).

With these capabilities integrated in the Questionnaire language it is feasible to define complex domain logic e.g. for the result of a questionnaire directly in its definition. For example, when designing a questionnaire for a test, let's say to define a person's stress level, you can write some Xbase code as expression for the last "result" question:

```
stressLevelResult: "Your Stress-Level: " String (
1
2
    {
      var Integer stressPoints = if (hasTimePressureAtWork) 30 else 0
3
      stressPoints = stressPoints + daysSleepingBadPerWeek * 3
4
      stressPoints = stressPoints + glassesOfAlcoholPerDay * 12
5
      stressPoints = stressPoints - daysWithSportPerWeek * 2
6
7
      if (stressPoints>80) "High" else if (stressPoints>40) "Medium" else "Low"
8
9
```

2.6 Including Expressions into the QL Language

Recall the example of a housowning questionnaire as mentioned in the LWC13 task:

```
import types.Money

form Box1HouseOwning {
   hasSoldHouse: "Did you sell a house in 2010?" boolean
   hasBoughtHouse: "Did you by a house in 2010?" boolean
   hasMaintLoan: "Did you enter a loan for maintenance/reconstruction?" boolean
```

 $^{^{25} \}texttt{http://www.eclipse.org/Xtext/documentation.html} \\ \texttt{#xbaseLanguageRef_Introduction}$

```
if (hasSoldHouse) {
    sellingPrice: "Price the house was sold for: " Money
    privateDebt: "Private debts for the sold house: " Money
    valueResidue: "Value residue: " Money (sellingPrice - privateDebt)
}
```

Compared to the language developed in section 2.1, we need to add (1) a condition statement to express optional questions (see line 8) and (2) the capability for automatically deriving a question's answer from previously answered questions (see line 11). As explained in section 2.1, our grammar inherits from Xbase making its rules reusable in the questionnaire language. To fulfill the missing requirements our grammar needs to be extended to the following: ²⁶

```
grammar org.eclipse.xtext.example.ql.QlDsl with org.eclipse.xtext.xbase.Xbase
1
2
   generate qlDsl "http://www.eclipse.org/xtext/example/ql/QlDsl"
3
4
   /* The top-most container of QL files is a Questionnaire */
5
   Questionnaire:
6
7
     imports+=Import*
     forms+=Form*;
8
9
   /* Allows importing of qualified names of types */
10
11
12
     'import' importedNamespace=QualifiedName;
13
   /* QL consists of questions grouped in a top-level form construct. */
14
15
   Form:
16
     "form" name=ID "{"
       element += FormElement*
17
     "}";
18
19
   /* Abstract rule for elements contained in a Form */
20
21
   FormElement:
     Question | ConditionalQuestionGroup
22
23
24
25
    * - Each question identified by a name that at the same time represents the result of the
26
        question.
      - A question has a label that contains the actual question text presented to the user.
27
    * - Every question has a type.
28
```

²⁶https://gist.github.com/kthoms/5114439

```
* - A question can optionally be associated to an expression:
29
    * this makes the question computed
30
31
32
   Question:
     name=ID ":" label=STRING type=JvmTypeReference expression=XParenthesizedExpression?
33
34
35
36
    * Groups questions within a block, optionally made conditional with an if-condition.
37
38
   ConditionalQuestionGroup: {ConditionalQuestionGroup}
39
     ("if" condition=XParenthesizedExpression)? "{"
40
       element += FormElement*
41
     "}"
42
43
```

Compared to the grammar defined in section 2.1, the following points have changed:

```
FormElement:
Question | ConditionalQuestionGroup
;
```

A FormElement is now either a normal question or a ConditionalQuestionGroup. Conditional question groups are groups of form elements embraced by an optional if-condition:

```
ConditionalQuestionGroup: {ConditionalQuestionGroup}
("if" condition=XParenthesizedExpression)? "{"
element += FormElement*
"}"
;;
```

For the condition of the if-statement the grammar rule XParenthesizedExpression inherited from Xbase is used. An XParenthesizedExpression is simply an expression in parenthesis. The if-statement is optional (as defined by the question mark '?' symbol) which allows for just grouping questions without the necessarity for a condition. The inner elements are again FormElements, making it possible to nest groups within groups and so on. The last part that has changed is the Question rule. Here again the rule XParenthesizedExpression is used to optionally embed Xbase expressions:

```
Question:
name=ID ":" label=STRING type=JvmTypeReference expression=XParenthesizedExpression?
;
```

After changing the grammar, the implementation has to be regenerated. Run the Generate-QlDsl.mwe2 workflow again. Then restart the runtime workbench. ²⁷

Xbase comes out of the box with the support for standard Java types like Strings or Integers inside expressions. However, in the questionnaire language own data types, like the Money type from the example, need also to be integrated. Such data types will be typically defined in a Java class. When importing such a type via the import statement, it will be available in the questionnaire definition. Xbase needs to know how to handle these types when they are used in expressions with operators like '+'. '-', '*' and '/'. The logic for these operators need to be implemented in special methods in the data type itself. As example, let's see how this is achieved for the Money type:²⁸

```
package types;
1
2
3
    import java.math.BigDecimal;
4
5
    public class Money {
     private BigDecimal amount;
6
7
     public Money (BigDecimal amount) {
8
       this.amount = amount;
9
10
     public BigDecimal getAmount() {
11
12
       return amount;
     }
13
14
     // Implement operators
15
     public Money operator_minus (Money other) {
16
       return new Money(this.amount.subtract(other.amount));
17
     }
18
     public Money operator_plus (Money other) {
19
       return new Money(this.amount.add(other.amount));
20
     }
21
     public Money operator_multiply (Money other) {
22
       return new Money(this.amount.multiply(other.amount));
23
     }
24
     public Money operator_divide (Money other) {
25
       return new Money(this.amount.divide(other.amount));
26
     }
27
28
```

²⁷Select it from the Run / Run Configurations dialog or from the drop down menu next to the green "play" button in the tool bar.

²⁸http://code.google.com/a/eclipselabs.org/p/lwc13-xtext/source/browse/examples/QLTest/src/
types/Money.java

The data type Money simply holds the amount as a value of type BigDecimal. For each operator a special method, e.g. operator_minus(Money other), defines how to procede when this operator is used two values of type Money. In this simple example, a new Money object is created and its value is computed corresponding to the operator type. When evaluating an expression, Xbase searches for these methods inside the used types to compute the result.

In order to test the new version of the questionnaire language, the MWE workflow needs to be executed again (*Right click on GenerateQlDsl.mwe2 / Run As.. / MWE2 Workflow*). The questionnaire language now supports expressions, but there is still one point missing: Questions cannot be referenced within an expression. For this, we need to derive a JVM model from the questionnaire model which we will discuss in the next section.

2.7 JVM Model Inference

For languages using Xbase it is necessary to tell Xtext, how to map concepts of a language to a Java model. In our example, a Form could be mapped to the Type concept, while Questions are the fields of a class. By doing this, elements of the language can be made available in expressions. Further, it allows that model elements are linkable where Java types are expected, without necessarily generate a Java class.

The derivation of the Java model for language concepts is the responsibility of the JVM Model Inferrer, which is a class that implements the IJvmModelInferrer interface. A skeleton has already been generated into package org.eclipse.xtext.example.ql.jvmmodel. The file QlDslJvmModelInferrer.xtend is a class written with Xtend.

The mapping that has to be implemented for the Questionnaire DSL should be as follows:

- 1. Each Form instance is mapped to a JvmDeclaredType (which is the common concept for Java classes and interfaces). The type's name is simply the form name, and the target package is forms.
- 2. Each Question of a Form is mapped to a JvmField, which is added as member of the declared type
- 3. For each Question accessor methods for the field are generated. The field gets only a setter if the value of the Question is not computed by an expression. If the field is computed, the content of the getter has to compute the result.

- 4. For each Question a method is<QUESTIONNAME>Enabled() is inferred. Questions with computed values are not enabled.
- 5. For each Question Group a method is produced that computes whether the group is visible or not.

Now place the content into the inferrer $class^{29}$:

```
package org.eclipse.xtext.example.ql.jvmmodel
1
2
   import com.google.inject.Inject
3
   import java.io.Serializable
4
   import org.eclipse.xtext.common.types.JvmOperation
   import org.eclipse.xtext.common.types.util.TypeReferences
6
   import org.eclipse.xtext.example.ql.qlDsl.ConditionalQuestionGroup
7
   import org.eclipse.xtext.example.ql.qlDsl.Question
8
   import org.eclipse.xtext.example.ql.qlDsl.Questionnaire
9
   import org.eclipse.xtext.xbase.XExpression
10
   import org.eclipse.xtext.xbase.XbaseFactory
11
   import org.eclipse.xtext.xbase.jvmmodel.AbstractModelInferrer
12
   import org.eclipse.xtext.xbase.jvmmodel.IJvmDeclaredTypeAcceptor
13
   import org.eclipse.xtext.xbase.jvmmodel.JvmTypesBuilder
14
15
   class QlDslJvmModelInferrer extends AbstractModelInferrer {
16
     @Inject extension JvmTypesBuilder
17
     @Inject TypeReferences typeReferences
18
19
   def dispatch void infer(Questionnaire element, IJvmDeclaredTypeAcceptor acceptor, boolean
20
       isPreIndexingPhase) {
       for (form: element.forms) {
21
         acceptor.accept(form.toClass("forms."+form.name))
22
         .initializeLater[
23
           //implements Serializable
24
          it.superTypes +=typeReferences.getTypeForName(typeof(Serializable),element,null)
25
26
          it.members += toField("serialVersionUID",typeReferences.getTypeForName("long",
27
               element),[final = false ^static = false ])
28
          val allQuestions = form.eAllContents.filter(typeof(Question)).toList
29
30
          for (question: allQuestions) {
31
            members += question.toField(question.name, question.type)
32
          }
33
34
```

 $^{^{29} \}mathtt{https://gist.github.com/kthoms/5132153}$

```
for (question: allQuestions) {
35
             if (question.expression == null) {
36
               members += question.toGetter(question.name, question.type)
37
               members += question.toSetter(question.name, question.type)
38
             } else {
39
               val getter = question.toGetter(question.name, question.type)
40
               getter.body = question.expression
41
               members += getter
42
             }
43
             members += question.createIsEnabledMethod
44
           }
45
46
           val allQuestionGroups = form.eAllContents.filter(typeof(ConditionalQuestionGroup)).
47
               toList
           var groupIndex=0;
48
           for (questionGroup: allQuestionGroups) {
49
             members += questionGroup.createIsGroupVisibleMethod(groupIndex)
50
             groupIndex = groupIndex+1
51
           }
52
53
         ]
54
55
     }
56
57
      def JvmOperation createIsEnabledMethod (Question question) {
58
        question.toMethod("is"+question.name.toFirstUpper+"Enabled", typeReferences.
59
            getTypeForName("boolean", question, null)) [
          body = [it.append('''return «question.expression == null»;''')]
60
       ٦
61
      }
62
63
      /** Create a method <code>public boolean isGroup[groupIndex]Visible ()</code>.*/
64
      def JvmOperation createIsGroupVisibleMethod (ConditionalQuestionGroup group, int
65
          groupIndex) {
        group.toMethod("isGroup"+groupIndex+"Visible", typeReferences.getTypeForName("boolean",
66
             group, null)) [
          if(group.condition != null) {
67
            body = group.condition
68
          } else {
69
            body = [it.append('''return true;''')]
70
          }
71
        ]
72
      }
73
74
   }
75
```

Now lets take a deeper look at the implementation:

```
class QlDslJvmModelInferrer extends AbstractModelInferrer {
    @Inject extension JvmTypesBuilder
    @Inject TypeReferences typeReferences
    def dispatch void infer(Questionnaire element, IJvmDeclaredTypeAcceptor acceptor, boolean isPreIndexingPhase) {
        ...
    }
}
```

The inferrer class implements IJvmModelInferrer, but for convenience we derive from its abstract implementation AbstractModelInferrer. The main method to implement is infer(). In the case of QL models, the root element of model resources is a Questionnaire. The base implementation uses polymorphic dispatching on the root element of a model resource, and the infer() method of our implementation hooks into the dispatching by using the dispatch keyword. That is also why the first argument can be of type Questionnaire, and not of the base type EObject, like defined in the infer() method that is definied in IJvmModelInferrer.

The implementation uses two services, which are injected as members into the class:

- The JvmTypesBuilder offers factory and builder functions to create instances of JVM Model types. The additional keyword extension has the effect, that the methods of the JvmTypesBuilder become so-called extension methods. This means, the functions become implicitly available as additional methods on the first argument of the function. We will see extensive use of this nice feature of Xtend in the implementation of the Xtend based code generator in the next chapter.
- TypeReferences is used to retrieve the respective JVM Model instances for given qualified Java class names through its getTypeForName() methods.

```
for (form: element.forms) {
   acceptor.accept(form.toClass("forms."+form.name))
   .initializeLater[
   ...
   ]
}
```

Let's take a deeper look on the infer() method. The outer loop simply iterates over the Form instances of the Questionnaire element. Inside the loop we first derive a Class instance for each Questionnaire element in package forms. JVM Model Inference is executed in two phases: In

the first phase all types are derived, without any content. In the second phase, the content of the types is derived. This is done by the closure passed to initializeLater(). The reason why this has to happen this way is that during inference of type members, they could refer again to types that are derived by the inferrer. The two phases prevent circular calls.

```
it.superTypes +=typeReferences.getTypeForName(typeof(Serializable),element,null)

it.members += toField("serialVersionUID",typeReferences.getTypeForName("long",element),[
    final = false ^static = false ])
```

We want to make the resulting Java class serializable. This is optional, but better style. Therefore the class has to implement the <code>java.io.Serializable</code> interface, whose JVM Model representative is retrieved from the <code>TypeReferences</code> instance and added to the <code>superTypes</code> collection. The identifier <code>it</code> denotes the implicit variable of type Form of the closure. It is not necessary to qualify it here, it could be left out.

```
val allQuestions = form.eAllContents.filter(typeof(Question)).toList

for (question: allQuestions) {
   members += question.toField(question.name, question.type)
}
```

All Question instances from the resource are bound to the final variable allQuestions. Since Questions can be nested into groups, the content has to be searched recursively. eAllContents will traverse over all elements.

Next, for each Question a JvmField instance is inferred. Here the JvmTypesBuilder is helping us with the method toField, which gets the name and type of the derived field. Here we see the effect of the extension keyword: It seems that toField is actually a method of type Question, but it is a method of the JvmTypesBuilder class.

```
for (question: allQuestions) {
1
     if (question.expression == null) {
2
       members += question.toGetter(question.name, question.type)
3
       members += question.toSetter(question.name, question.type)
4
     } else {
5
       val getter = question.toGetter(question.name, question.type)
6
7
       getter.body = question.expression
       members += getter
8
9
     }
10
     . . .
11
```

The next loop creates the accessor methods for the fields. We could have done this in the previous loop also, but it is better style to declare the fields first, and methods next in the class. The inferred JvmDeclaredType will be translated to Java later, so it is better to have that clean from the beginning.

Within the loop, we decide if the question has a computation expression or not. If it hasn't one, it is a simple field with getter and setter, where we call the toGetter()/toSetter() builder functions. If the question value is computed by an expression, it does not make sense to offer a setter method. The field needs to be read-only. The getter method does not simply return the value of a field. Instead, the method has to evaluate the expression. Thus, we assign the expression as body of the method.

```
for (question: allQuestions) {
1
2
3
     members += question.createIsEnabledMethod
   }
4
5
6
   def JvmOperation createIsEnabledMethod (Question question) {
7
     question.toMethod("is"+question.name.toFirstUpper+"Enabled",
8
    typeReferences.getTypeForName("boolean", question, null)) [ body = [it.append('''return
9
        «question.expression == null»;'')]
     ]
10
   }
11
```

For each question a method boolean is<QUESTIONNAME>Enabled() is inferred. The body of the method does simpley return true if the Question does not have an computation expression assigned, or false otherwise.

In this case we assign to the body a closure that computes the method implementation text. This is the first example where we make use of Xtend's Rich String (the text between the three single quotes "') feature, which is later heavily used in the code generator templates.

```
val allQuestionGroups = form.eAllContents.filter(typeof(ConditionalQuestionGroup)).toList
1
  var groupIndex=0;
2
  for (questionGroup: allQuestionGroups) {
3
    members += questionGroup.createIsGroupVisibleMethod(groupIndex)
4
    groupIndex = groupIndex+1
5
  }
6
7
  def JvmOperation createIsGroupVisibleMethod (ConditionalQuestionGroup group, int groupIndex)
8
   group.toMethod("isGroup"+groupIndex+"Visible", typeReferences.getTypeForName("boolean",
```

```
group, null)) [
if(group.condition != null) {
   body = group.condition
} else {
   body = [it.append('''return true;''')]
}
}
```

We now filter all ConditionalQuestionGroup instances from the Questionnaire and loop over them. For each of them, a method <code>is<QUESTIONGROUPINDEX>Visible()</code> is produced. Unfortunately, question groups are anonymous, thus we maintain an index counter and name the methods <code>isGroup<IDX>Visible()</code>.

Since condition expressions for groups are optional, the method body has to return simply true in the case that no expression is assigned. When groups have a condition, the condition expression is assigned as the method body.

2.8 Scoping

Scoping is, roughly said, the computation of referrable names in a given context. It is a quite complex topic, and we won't cover it here into deep. The topic itself is heavily documented by the Xtext user manual³⁰, several articles³¹ and implementation examples ³².

The Xtext framework already provides default implementations to solve scoping and linking. In the case of Xbase based languages the XbaseScopeProvider is configured by default as implementation of the IScopeProvider interface. We have to extend its behavior to recognize the current Form instance as variable "this" within an expression. By this, Question fields are noticed as variables in expressions, which allows us to use the required expressions.

Create the class QlScopeProvider in package org.eclipse.xtext.example.ql.customizing:33

```
package org.eclipse.xtext.example.ql.customizing;

import java.util.Iterator;

import javax.inject.Inject;
```

³⁰Xtext manual:Scoping

³¹e.g. http://blogs.itemis.de/stundzig/archives/776

³²e.g. https://github.com/LorenzoBettini/xtext-scoping

³³urlhttp://tinyurl.com/bd7kggk

```
6
   import org.eclipse.emf.ecore.EObject;
7
   import org.eclipse.xtext.EcoreUtil2;
   import org.eclipse.xtext.common.types.JvmType;
9
   import org.eclipse.xtext.example.ql.qlDsl.Form;
10
   import org.eclipse.xtext.resource.EObjectDescription;
11
   import org.eclipse.xtext.scoping.IScope;
12
   import org.eclipse.xtext.scoping.impl.SingletonScope;
13
   import org.eclipse.xtext.xbase.jvmmodel.IJvmModelAssociations;
14
   import org.eclipse.xtext.xbase.scoping.LocalVariableScopeContext;
15
   import org.eclipse.xtext.xbase.scoping.XbaseScopeProvider;
16
17
   import com.google.common.collect.Iterables;
18
19
20
    * Adds local variable bindings for expressions.
21
22
   @SuppressWarnings("restriction")
23
24
   public class QlScopeProvider extends XbaseScopeProvider {
     @Inject
25
     private IJvmModelAssociations associations;
26
27
     @Override
28
     protected IScope createLocalVarScope(IScope parentScope,
29
         LocalVariableScopeContext scopeContext) {
30
       // search the Form instance of the current context by traversing
31
       // the containment hierarchy
32
       Form qlForm = EcoreUtil2.getContainerOfType(scopeContext.getContext(),
33
          Form.class);
34
       if (qlForm != null) {
35
         // form found => get the JvmType representative of the Form
36
         JvmType jvmTypeOfForm = getJvmType(qlForm);
37
         // bind the EClass' JvmType as variable 'this' by creating
38
         // a scope that consists of only one element, and delegate
39
         // to the default implementation as outer scope
40
         IScope result = new SingletonScope(EObjectDescription.create(
41
            XbaseScopeProvider.THIS, jvmTypeOfForm), super.createLocalVarScope(
42
            parentScope, scopeContext));
43
         return result;
44
45
46
       return super.createLocalVarScope(parentScope, scopeContext);
47
     }
48
49
50
```

```
* Find the JvmType associated with an object
51
52
      * @param context
53
      * Some model object
54
      * @return The JvmType associated with the object, usually derived by the
55
      * IJvmModelInferrer. Returns <code>null</code> if the object is not
56
      * associated to an JvmType.
57
58
     private final JvmType getJvmType(EObject context) {
59
       Iterable<JvmType> jvmTypes = Iterables.filter(
60
           associations.getJvmElements(context), JvmType.class);
61
       Iterator<JvmType> it = jvmTypes.iterator();
62
       JvmType result = it.hasNext() ? it.next() : null;
63
       return result;
64
     }
65
66
67
```

Whenever a default implementation must be exchanged by a custom one, this has to be added or overridden in the respective Guice module. In the case of the scope provider, this has to be added to the QlDslRuntimeModule class. Open this class and add the binding:

```
public class QlDslRuntimeModule extends
    org.eclipse.xtext.example.ql.AbstractQlDslRuntimeModule {
    @Override
    public Class<? extends IScopeProvider> bindIScopeProvider() {
        return QlScopeProvider.class;
    }
    ...
}
```

3 Developing the Code Generator

3.1 Reference Implementation

Before implementing a code generator one has to know what the target code is. Therefore a reference implementation has been developed which was coded to large degree manually. From this reference code the templates can be derived. Also this is a manual step.

We use a Java Server Faces (JSF) based application, which can be deployed on any Java Web



container (also known as a Servlet container) like Glassfish, JBoss and Apache Tomcat.

The following screenshot shows the structure of the web application project. The application is available for download from the project homepage (JSF-QL-1.0.zip)

```
JSF-QL [lwc13-xtext master †1]
 ▼ 🏰 src

▼ 

forms

forms

     Box1HouseOwning.java
       Box1HouseOwning

▼ 

    types

     Money.java
 Apache Tomcat v7.0 [Apache Tomcat v7.0]
▶ ■ JRE System Library [JavaSE-1.6]
Web App Libraries
  build
Box1HouseOwning.xhtml
   ▶ ☐ META-INF
   🔻 🚰 img
            🌇 jsf.jpg
            🌃 tomcat_v7.jpg
            🌃 WebToolsPlatform.png
            🌃 xtext-logo-color-800_small.png
            🌃 xtext-logo-color-800.png
       📑 defaultLayout.xhtml
            🔝 footer.xhtml
            header.xhtml

▼ EB-INF

     🔻 🚰 lib
         🚮 javax.faces.jar
       n faces-config.xml
       ሃ web.xml
     📑 index.xhtml
```

Large parts of the application are not derivable from the model, they build the skeleton of the project. This is:

- Custom types (src/types/*)
- Custom type converter (src/converter/*)
- Images (WebContent/resources/default/img/*)
- Page Templates (WebContent/resources/default/templates/*)
- Libraries (WebContent/WEB-INF/lib/*)
- Web Application Descriptor (WebContent/WEB-INF/web.xml)
- Faces configuration (WebContent/WEB-INF/faces-config.xml)

We will focus on the parts which are dependent on the QL model and thus subject of code generation. These artifacts are:

- Java Bean classes representing the state of a Form (src/forms)
- JSF enabled XHTML pages representing the presentation of a Form (WebContent/forms/*)

... to be continued

- setup webtools
- import reference application
- install tomcat
- run reference application

To integrate the generated artifacts into our web application we have to make manually changes in the welcome-file declared in WebContent/WEB-INF/web.xml later. (WebContent/index.xhtml)

3.2 Xtend

Since we will use Xtend to write the code generator, this chapter describes some basic concepts of the Xtend language. However, we will not cover all aspects of Xtend in this section, for more information see also the official documentation³⁴.

Xtend is a statically-typed general purpose language similar to Java. Xtend uses Xbase as core language which was already roughly explained in section 2.5. Hence, the presented concepts of

³⁴http://www.eclipse.org/xtend/documentation.html

Xbase are also valid for Xtend. The main focus of Xtend lies in providing a language that is more readable than Java in certain situations. In the backgroud, Xtend compiles to Java code. Thus, it plays perfectly together with Java, e.g. methods declared in Java classes can be called in Xtend and vice versa. Several concepts of Xtend are especially beneficial when writing code generators.

```
def someMethod() {
   var myQuestion = 'where do we go?'
   myQuestion = myQuestion.toFirstLower
   val myAnswer = 42
   'The answer for question '+myQuestion+' is: '+myAnswer
}
```

In Xtend, a method is defined with the def keyword. The return type is optional and will be automatically inferred. Only when a method is recursively invoking itself, a return type needs to be specified explicitly. The keyword var defines a variable; constant values are defined with val. In Xtend - since it is based on Xbase - everything is an expression, meaning that it has a return type. The last expression of a method defines the return value and also the return type of the method.

In line 3 a so-called extension method is used. Recall that the String class in Java does not provide a method toFirstUpper. Xtend allows for extending closed types without changing (maybe you already guess where Xtend got its name from). You can easily write your own extension for the String type for example:

```
def square(Integer input) {
   input * input
}

def useExtension() {
   16.square // returns 256
}
```

What Xtend basically does is changing the syntax of how methods are called. Instead of writing toLastUpper("Hello"), Xtend always offers the alternative to use the first input parameter as receiver of the method call ("Hello".toLastUpper). This results in the syntax being more chained than nested which improves readability. To use methods from another class as extension methods in your class, the field defining an object of the other class needs to be marked with the extension keyword. In our scenario we will use dependency injection like the following:

```
class MyGenerator implements IGenerator{
    @Inject extension IJvmModelAssociations
```

```
3 ....
4 }
```

This statement simply allows to use the methods declared by the interface IJvmModelAssociations in our generator class as extension methods on our objects. Which concrete implementation of the interface is later actually called, is configured in the Guice module.

A further useful feature of Xtend is *polymorphic dispatching*. Using the dispatch keyword on multiple methods with identical signatures has the effect that the decision on which method should be called is based on the runtime type of the target object. In contrast, Java binds methods at compile time based on the static type of the target object. Since Xtend compiles to Java, polymorphic dispatching is internally realized by a dispatcher method using a cascade of instanceof constructs.

```
def dispatch doSomething(Integer input) {
1
       // do something with integer
2
     }
3
4
     def dispatch doSomething(Float input) {
5
       // do something with float
6
     }
7
8
     def useDispatching() {
9
       val Number x = 123
10
11
       val Number y = 0.1
       x.doSomething + y.doSomething
12
     }
13
```

// TODO gescheites beispiel \tilde{A}_{4}^{1} berlegen und zwei s \tilde{A} tze zu schreiben.

Xtend offers the possibility to define *rich Strings* (also called *templates*) which is especially useful when writing code generators. Rich Strings allow for writing complex Strings with line breaks and indentations without the need for concatenating special characters like '\n' or '\t'. A rich String construct starts and ends with triple single quotes ("'). Within such a String code pieces which themself return a String can be inserted (surrounded by guillemots $\hat{A} \ll \hat{A} \gg$). There are also logical structures like for loops or if-else statements supported:

Note the special keywords in the FOR loop declaration: BEFORE and AFTER will be called once before and after the iteration, but only if the loop will be iterated at least once. With the SEPARATOR keyword a string which will be inserted between two iteratins can be specified. Calling the example method with ['hello', 'Some more text'] results in:

Last but not least, Xtend offers a more sophisticated switch-case statement than Java does. The break statement as known from Java is implicit in Xtend. Furthermore, switching based on Strings and even types is possible:

```
def getTypeName(Number input) {
    switch (input) {
        Integer: "It is an Integer!"
        Float: "It is a Float!"
        default: "It is some other number type."
    }
}
```

Now as you know the basic concepts of Xtend, let's finally start writing the code generator.

3.3 Code Generator

In this section you will learn how to implement the code generator for the target application. For simplicity, the code generator templates are placed in the org.eclipse.xtext.example.ql project in a sub-package generator. Usually it would be better to create a separate project which contains the generator, since the language is independent from a single target platform.

It would be possible to create different code generators for different target platforms, and it would be better to implement each of them as separate projects.

Generator templates in Xtend are implementations of the IGenerator interface:

```
package org.eclipse.xtext.generator;

public interface IGenerator {
    /**
    * @param input - the input for which to generate resources
    * @param fsa - file system access to be used to generate files
    */
    public void doGenerate(Resource input, IFileSystemAccess fsa);
}
```

3.3.1 Dispatcher template

The code generator is invoked with a Resource instance, which holds a Questionnaire instance. We have to generate multiple artifacts for each resource, so it is a common pattern to create a template class which serves as entry point and dispatches to other template classes to create the artifacts. Usually one template per artifact is created.

Create the class Root.java in package org.eclipse.xtext.example.ql.generator:

```
package org.eclipse.xtext.example.ql.generator;
2
   import javax.inject.Inject;
3
4
   import org.eclipse.emf.ecore.resource.Resource;
5
   import org.eclipse.xtext.generator.IFileSystemAccess;
6
   import org.eclipse.xtext.generator.IGenerator;
   import org.eclipse.xtext.xbase.compiler.JvmModelGenerator;
8
9
   @SuppressWarnings("restriction")
10
   public class Root implements IGenerator {
11
     @Inject
12
     JvmModelGenerator jvmModelGenerator;
13
14
     public void doGenerate(Resource input, IFileSystemAccess fsa) {
15
       // dispatch to other generators
16
       jvmModelGenerator.doGenerate(input, fsa);
17
     }
18
   }
19
```

As a first generator to which is dispatched, we inject an instance of JvmModelGenerator. This is a standard generator shipped with Xtext which translates types inferred by the Jvm Model Inferrer to Java classes. In our case, the Java class for Forms are generated by the JvmModelGenerator. In JSF terms, we speek of the *Backing Bean*.

Next, Xtext has to know that Root is the template that has to be invoked as generator implementation. This has to be configured - you guessed right! - with Guice again. We need to add a configuration that binds the IGenerator interface to the Root class.

Open class QlDslRuntimeModule and add this method:

```
00verride
public Class<? extends IGenerator> bindIGenerator() {
   return Root.class;
}
```

Now we are ready to add additional templates and register them in the Root class.

3.3.2 JSF Generator

After creation of the Root class where we easily can add new Generators, we use the New Xtend Class Wizard to create a new Xtend class called JSFGenerator.xtend in package org.eclipse.xtext.example.ql.generator.

This class will be our entry point to generate JSF related artifacts.

The New Xtend Class Wizard provides the possibility to bind interfaces to the new class by use of the Add button near the interface section. As we want to create a new generator we add the interface org.eclipse.xtext.generator.IGenerator to our new Xtend class. After typing in the package, the name and the interface of our new Xtend class as shown in figure 1, we can finish the wizard so that the class shown in listing 1 will be created in our project.

```
package org.eclipse.xtext.example.ql.generator
1
2
3
   import org.eclipse.xtext.generator.IGenerator
   import org.eclipse.emf.ecore.resource.Resource
4
   import org.eclipse.xtext.generator.IFileSystemAccess
5
6
   class JSFGenerator implements IGenerator {
7
8
     override doGenerate(Resource input, IFileSystemAccess fsa) {
9
       throw new UnsupportedOperationException("TODO: auto-generated method stub")
10
```

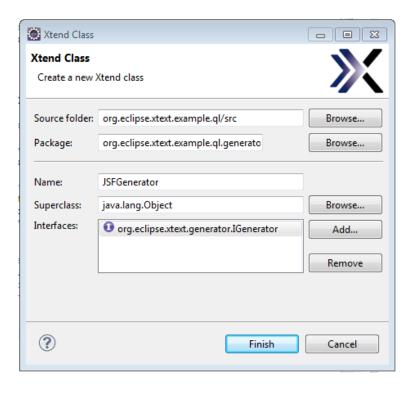


Abbildung 1: New Xtend Class Wizard

```
11 }
12 }
```

Listing 1: New Xtend Class

- show whole generater - explain step by step

3.3.3 OutputConfigurationProvider

//TODO explain OutputConfigurationProvider

```
package org.eclipse.xtext.example.ql.generator;
2
   import java.util.Set;
3
4
   import org.eclipse.xtext.generator.OutputConfiguration;
5
   import org.eclipse.xtext.generator.OutputConfigurationProvider;
6
7
   public class JsfOutputConfigurationProvider extends OutputConfigurationProvider {
8
9
     public final String WEB_CONTENT = "WebContent";
10
11
     /**
12
```

```
* @return a set of {@link OutputConfiguration} available for the generator
13
14
     public Set<OutputConfiguration> getOutputConfigurations() {
15
       Set<OutputConfiguration> outputConfigurations = super
16
           .getOutputConfigurations();
17
18
       OutputConfiguration webContent = new OutputConfiguration(WEB_CONTENT);
19
       webContent.setDescription("Read-only Output Folder for forms");
20
       webContent.setOutputDirectory("./WebContent");
21
       webContent.setOverrideExistingResources(true);
22
       webContent.setCreateOutputDirectory(true);
23
       webContent.setCleanUpDerivedResources(true);
24
       webContent.setSetDerivedProperty(true);
25
       outputConfigurations.add(webContent);
26
27
       return outputConfigurations;
28
     }
29
   }
30
```

Listing 2: JSFOutputConfigurationProvider

//TODO binding the OutputConfigurationProvider in QlDslRuntimeModule

```
00verride public void configure(Binder binder) {
    super.configure(binder);
    binder.bind(IOutputConfigurationProvider.class)
        .to(JSFOutputConfigurationProvider.class).in(Singleton.class);
}
```

Listing 3: Binding JSFOutputConfigurationProvider

3.4 Testing the Questionnaire Application

- describe how the application can be started, show some screenshots

4 Layout and Styling Language (QLS)

4.1 The Language QLS

In this chapter we will describe how the optional task to define a language for styling and layout information can be accomplished in our language workbench. The language QLS should allow for defining the following information:

- Grouping of question forms into pages, sections and subsections
- Navigation links between pages
- Styling of question texts by defining font style, font type and color
- Defining the appearance of a question by specifying the widget type to render

The following shows an example model that we want to be able to define with QLS:

```
page HouseOwningPage {
1
     section house uses Box1HouseOwning {
2
       question hasBoughtHouse [widget: CheckBox]
3
       question valueResidue [
4
         font-style: "italic"
5
         font-weight: "bold"
6
7
         font-color: "#2233FF"
         font-family: "Arial"
8
       ]
9
     }
10
     section garage uses GarageOwning {
11
       question hasBoughtGarage [widget: Radio["Yepp", "Nope"]]
12
13
     navigation {
14
       CarOwningPage
15
     }
16
   }
17
18
   page CarOwningPage uses CarOwning {
19
20
21
```

This example model defines two pages. The first page consists of two sections, one for the question form Box1HouseOwning which was defined in chapter 2 and one for a further form called GarageOwning. The form to be rendered inside a page or a section is specified by the

uses keyword. This definition must be unambiguously, e.g. if there is a form included by a page, it is not allowed to refer to another form in one of its containing sections. This restriction is ensured by implementing a corresponding validation which will be covered in chapter (TODO). In a section (or page) the styling information for the questions of the included form can be defined as in lines 3-9 and 13. The navigation keyword allows to define the order in which the pages are to be displayed by specifying which page should appear next.

Before we can write the corresponding Xtext grammar, we need to create the DSL projects for QLS as we have done for the Questionnaire language. For this, refer again to chapter 2.1 and replace all occurences of ql with qls. The project org.eclipse.xtext.example.qls should then contain the grammar file QlsDsl.xtext. We define the content of this file as the following:

```
grammar org.eclipse.xtext.example.qls.QlsDsl with org.eclipse.xtext.common.Terminals
1
2
    generate qlsDsl "http://www.eclipse.org/xtext/example/qls/QlsDsl"
3
    import "http://www.eclipse.org/xtext/example/ql/QlDs1" as ql
4
5
   QuestionnaireStyleModel:
6
7
     pages+=Page*;
8
9
   Page:
     "page" name=ID ("uses" form=[ql::Form|ID])? "{"
10
       element+=PageElement*
11
       navigation=Navigation?
12
     11711
13
14
15
   PageElement:
16
     QuestionStyling | Section
17
18
19
   QuestionStyling:
20
     "question" question=[ql::Question] styling+=StyleInformation?
21
22
23
   StyleInformation: {StyleInformation}
24
     "["(
25
       ("font-style:" fontStyle=STRING)? &
26
       ("font-weight:" fontWeight=STRING)? &
27
       ("font-color:" fontColor=STRING)? &
28
       ("font-family:" fontFamily=STRING)? &
29
        ("widget:" widget=Widget)?
30
     )"]"
31
32
```

```
33
   Widget: {Widget}
34
     widgetType=("Radio"|"DropDown"|"CheckBox"|"Text"|"Slider") ("[" labels+=STRING ("," labels
35
         +=STRING)* "]")?
36
37
   Section:
38
     "section" name=ID ("uses" form=[ql::Form|ID])? "{"
39
       element+=PageElement*
40
     11711
41
42
43
   Navigation: {Navigation}
44
     "navigation" "{" (nextPage+=[Page|ID])+ "}"
45
46
```

After reading chapter 2.1 you should be familiar with the concepts of Xtext grammar definitions and understand most parts of the QLS grammar. One new concept represented in the QLS grammar is the one of unordered lists:

```
StyleInformation: {StyleInformation}

"["(

("font-style:" fontStyle=STRING)? &

("font-weight:" fontWeight=STRING)? &

("font-color:" fontColor=STRING)? &

("font-family:" fontFamily=STRING)? &

("widget:" widget=Widget)?

)"]"

9
;
```

The styling information can be defined in an arbitrary order in which each kind of element (font style, font color and so on) may only occur at most once. The arbitrariness of the order is expressed by the '&' between the style elements. The optionality of each style information is again declared by the question mark '?'.

A further noteworthy aspect is the handling of references. In Xtext, references to language elements are expressed by using squared brackets. An example for this are the references to existing pages in the navigation section:

```
Navigation: {Navigation}
navigation" "{" (nextPage+=[Page|ID])+ "}"
;
```

Here, nextPage is a reference to an existing page description which may even be defined in a different file. ID defines which attribute should be used for the reference's name. Xtext automatically creates hyperlinks to the referenced elements which can be enabled by holding Ctrl and moving the curser over the reference or by pressing F3.

To define references to elements defined in other languages than the own, the reference needs to be qualified. An example in QLS is the reference to questions or forms defined in a QL model. To express this on the grammar level, the QL DSL needs first to be imported:

```
1 import "http://www.eclipse.org/xtext/example/ql/QlDsl" as ql
```

Since the QL DSL is imported under the name q1, references can now be qualified by using a double colon (::):

```
QuestionStyling:
    "question" question=[ql::Question] styling+=StyleInformation?
;
```

This grammar rule allows for refering all question elements defined in any QL model in our test project. However, since there is always an unambiguous form specified for a page or a section, only the questions defined within this form should be referable. This is a typical scoping issue which needs to be handled in the scope provider of the QLS language. We already learned about scoping in section 2.8. The scope provider for the QLS language looks like the following:

```
public class QlsDslScopeProvider extends AbstractDeclarativeScopeProvider {
1
2
3
     public IScope scope_QuestionStyling_question(EObject context, EReference reference) {
       Form usedForm = getUsedForm(context);
4
       List<Question> allQuestions = EcoreUtil2.getAllContentsOfType(usedForm,
5
6
           Question.class);
7
       return Scopes.scopeFor(allQuestions);
     }
8
9
     private Form getUsedForm(EObject context) {
10
       if (context instanceof Section) {
11
12
         Section section = (Section) context;
         if (section.getForm() != null) {
13
           return section.getForm();
14
15
         }
       } else if (context instanceof Page) {
16
         Page page = (Page) context;
17
         if (page.getForm() != null) {
18
           return page.getForm();
19
         }
20
```

The method scope_QuestionStyling_question is always invoked whenever the visible elements for the attribute question in the grammar rule QuestionStyling need to be computed. Here, we just use a recursive algorithm to get the form declaration of the parent section or page which is mandatory. With the helper method getAllContentsOfType all questions defined in this form are collected and a scope containing these questions is returned.

Now it's time to play around with the QLS language and to test its features. For this, switch to the test project in the runtime environment (see also section 2.4) and create a file with the file extension .qls.

4.2 QLS Code Generator

So far, our QLS models have no effect on the generated output. The first step is to think about which artifacts are to be generated from a qls model. The QLS model contains two kinds of information. The first is layout information: A page consists of one or more forms. Recall that for each form two xhtml files are already generated, one for the base content of the form site and a wrapper referencing this base xhtml. Hence a page maps to an xhtml file which is composed of all specified forms. The second information in QLS is styling information. As usual in web development, styling is expressed in the CSS format in our tool. To sum up:

For each page:

- Generate one CSS file
- Generate one Xhtml file wiring all form Xhtmls together and reference css file

Let's take the following QLS model as reference example:

```
page HouseOwningPage {
   section house uses HouseOwning {
    question hasBoughtHouse [font-style:"italic"]
   question valueResidue [
    font-weight: "bold"
```

```
font-color: "#2233FF"
6
         font-family: "Verdana"
7
       ]
8
     }
9
     section garage uses GarageOwning {
10
       question hasBoughtGarage [widget: Radio["Yepp", "Nope"]]
11
     }
12
     navigation {
13
       CarOwningPage
14
15
   }
16
17
   page CarOwningPage uses CarOwning {
18
     question hasSoldCar [font-color: "green"]
19
     question hasBoughtCar [font-color: "red"]
20
   }
21
```

The intended generated file structure is visualized in the following screenshot:

./images/chapter03/refer

// TODO screenshot, visualize what is generated by QL and what by QLS

The page HouseOwningPage contains two sections using the forms HouseOwning and GarageOwning, thus the generated file pages/HouseOwningPage.xhtml composes the two base files forms/HouseOwningBase.xhtml and forms/GarageOwningBase.xhtml (generated by the QL code generator) together:

```
<html xmlns="http://www.w3.org/1999/xhtml"
```

```
xmlns:ui="http://java.sun.com/jsf/facelets"
2
         xmlns:h="http://java.sun.com/jsf/html"
3
         xmlns:f="http://java.sun.com/jsf/core">
 4
     <h:head></h:head>
5
     <ui:composition template="/index.xhtml">
6
       <ui:define name="content">
7
         <h:outputStylesheet library="default/css/generated" name="HouseOwningPage.css" />
8
         <div><ui:include src="/generated/forms/HouseOwningBase.xhtml" /></div>
9
         <div><ui:include src="/generated/forms/GarageOwningBase.xhtml" /></div>
10
11
         <div>
12
         <h:outputLink value="Car0wningPage.jsf">Car0wningPage</h:outputLink>
13
       </div>
14
       </ui:define>
15
     </ui:composition>
16
    </html>
17
```

The two pages are referenced in lines 9 and 10. Line 13 defines the link to the next page as defined in the navigation section of the QLS model. Line 8 specifies which CSS file is to be used to render the site's elements. The CSS file for the house owning page contains all corresponding styling information which are linked to the corresponding label elements by their ids:

```
#houseowning\:lblHasBoughtHouse {
1
     font-style: italic;
2
3
   #houseowning\:lblValueResidue {
4
     color: #2233FF;
5
     font-family: Verdana;
6
     font-weight: bold;
7
8
   #garageowning\:lblHasBoughtGarage {
9
10
```

When JSF converts from Xhtml each element gets a unique (full qualified) id. In out scenario this is always the id of the parent form concatenated with the id of the elment itself. As separator JSF uses a colon. However, colons are special characters in CSS, hence they need to be escaped.

Now that the intended artifacts to be generated are clearified, the code generator itself can be written. Here again we use Xtend and some of its language concepts:

```
class QlsDslGenerator implements IGenerator {
    @Inject extension JsfOutputConfigurationProvider
    @Inject extension JSFGenerator
```

```
4
     override void doGenerate(Resource input, IFileSystemAccess fsa) {
5
     if (input.URI.fileExtension!="qls")
6
         return
7
8
       val styleModel = input.contents.head as QuestionnaireStyleModel
9
       for (page: styleModel.pages) {
10
         val cssContent = generateCssFile(page);
11
         val cssFileName = "resources/default/css/generated/"+page.name+".css"
12
         fsa.generateFile(cssFileName, WEB_CONTENT, cssContent)
13
14
         val xhtmlContent = generateXhtmlFile(page);
15
         val xhtmlFileName = "generated/pages/"+page.name+".xhtml"
16
         fsa.generateFile(xhtmlFileName, WEB_CONTENT, xhtmlContent)
17
       }
18
       val contentIndex = generateIndexPage(styleModel.pages.get(0))
19
       fsa.generateFile("generated/pages/index.xhtml", WEB_CONTENT, contentIndex)
20
     }
21
22
     def generateCssFile(Page page) '''
23
       <!-- @generated -->
24
       \hat{A} \ll FOR \text{ styleInfo: page.eAllContents.filter(typeof(StyleInformation)).toList} \hat{A} \gg FOR \text{ styleInformation)}
25
       \hat{A} \ll styleInfo.id\hat{A} \gg \{
26
         «IF styleInfo.fontColor != null»color: «styleInfo.fontColor»;«ENDIF»
27
         «IF styleInfo.fontFamily != null»font-family: «styleInfo.fontFamily»;«ENDIF»
28
         «IF styleInfo.fontStyle != null»font-style: «styleInfo.fontStyle»;«ENDIF»
29
         «IF styleInfo.fontWeight != null»font-weight: «styleInfo.fontWeight»;«ENDIF»
30
       7
31
      «ENDFOR»
32
33
34
     def generateXhtmlFile(Page page) '''
35
     <!-- Ogenerated -->
36
     <html xmlns="http://www.w3.org/1999/xhtml"</pre>
37
           xmlns:ui="http://java.sun.com/jsf/facelets"
38
           xmlns:h="http://java.sun.com/jsf/html"
39
           xmlns:f="http://java.sun.com/jsf/core">
40
       <h:head></h:head>
41
       <ui:composition template="/index.xhtml">
42
         <ui:define name="content">
43
           <h:outputStylesheet library="default/css/generated" name="«page.name».css" />
44
           \hat{A} \ll IF \text{ page.form } != null \hat{A} \gg
45
           <div><ui:include src="/generated/forms/«page.form.name»Base.xhtml" /></div>
46
           «ELSE»
47
             \hat{A} \ll FOR section: page.eAllContents.toList.filter(typeof(Section)).toList SEPARATOR '<
48
```

```
p/>'Â>
             <div><ui:include src="/generated/forms/«section.form.name»Base.xhtml" /></div>
49
             «ENDFOR»
50
           «ENDIF»
51
52
           <div>
53
           \hat{A} \ll IF \text{ page.navigation } != null \hat{A} \gg
54
             «FOR nextPage: page.navigation.nextPage»
55
             <h:outputLink value="«nextPage.name».jsf">«nextPage.name»</h:outputLink>
             «ENDFOR»
57
           «ENDIF»
58
         </div>
59
         </ui:define>
60
       </ui:composition>
61
     </html>
62
     , , ,
63
64
     def generateIndexPage(Page page)'''
65
     <?xml version='1.0' encoding='UTF-8' ?>
66
     <!-- @generated -->
67
     <!DOCTYPE html PUBLIC "-//W3C//DTD XHTML 1.0 Transitional//EN" "http://www.w3.org/TR/</pre>
68
         xhtml1/DTD/xhtml1-transitional.dtd">
     <html xmlns="http://www.w3.org/1999/xhtml"</pre>
69
           xmlns:h="http://java.sun.com/jsf/html"
70
           xmlns:ui="http://java.sun.com/jsf/facelets">
71
       <ui:composition template="/index.xhtml">
72
         <ui:define name="content">
73
           <h:outputLink value="«page.name».jsf">«page.name»</h:outputLink>
74
         </ui:define>
75
       </ui:composition>
76
     </html>
77
     , , ,
78
79
     def getId(StyleInformation styleInfo) {
80
     val question = (styleInfo.eContainer as QuestionStyling).question
81
     val form = EcoreUtil2::getContainerOfType(question, typeof(Form))
82
     "#"+form.id+ "\\:lbl"+question.id.toFirstUpper
83
     }
84
85
     def dispatch getForm(Section section) {
86
87
     if (section.form != null) {
       section.form
88
     }
89
90
       section.eContainer.form
91
```

itemis