Putting Software Testing Terminology to the Test

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Abstract—Testing is a pervasive software development activity that is often complicated and expensive (if not simply overlooked), partly due to the lack of a standardized and consistent taxonomy for software testing. This hinders precise communication, leading to discrepancies and ambiguities across the literature and even within individual documents! In this paper, we systematically examine the current state of software testing terminology. We 1) identify established standards and prominent testing resources, 2) capture relevant testing terms from these sources, along with their definitions and relationships—both explicit and implicit—and 3) construct graphs to visualize and analyze this data. Our research uncovered 526 test approaches and four methods for describing "implied" test approaches. We also build a tool for generating graphs that illustrate relations between test approaches and track ambiguities captured by this tool and manually through the research process. Our results reveal 140 discrepancies or ambiguities, including ten terms used as synonyms to two (or more) disjoint test approaches and 11 pairs of test approaches may either be synonyms or have a child-parent relationship. They also reveal notable confusion surrounding functional, operational acceptance, recovery, and scalability testing. These findings make clear the urgent need for improved testing terminology so that the discussion, analysis and implementation of various test approaches can be more coherent. We provide some preliminary advice on how to achieve this standardization.

Index Terms—Software testing, terminology, taxonomy, literature review, test approaches

I. Background

Testing software is complicated, expensive, and often overlooked. Improving the productivity of testing and testing research requires a standard language for communication. Unfortunately, a search for a systematic, rigorous, and "complete" taxonomy for software testing revealed that the existing ones are inadequate:

- Tebes et al. [1] focus on parts of the testing process (e.g., test goal, testable entity),
- Souza et al. [2] prioritize organizing testing approaches over defining them, and
- Unterkalmsteiner et al. [3] provide a foundation for classification but not how it applies to software testing terminology.

Thus we set about closing this gap. We first define the scope of what kinds of "software testing" are of interest (Section II) and examine the existing literature (Section III). This reinforces the need for a proper taxonomy! Despite the amount of well understood and organized knowledge (Section IV), there are still many discrepancies and ambiguities in the literature, either within the same source or between various sources (Section V). We provide some potential solutions covering some of these discrepancies (Section VI).

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II. Scope

Since our motivation is restricted to testing of code, only the "testing" component of Verification and Validation (V&V) is considered. For example, design reviews and documentation reviews (see [4, pp. 132, 144], respectively) are out of scope, as they focus on the V&V of design and documentation, respectively. Likewise, ergonomics testing and proximity-based testing (see [5]) are out of scope as they fundamentally involve hardware. Security audits that focus on "an organization's … processes and infrastructure" [5], are also out of scope, but security audits that "aim to ensure that all of the products installed on a site are secure when checked against the known vulnerabilities for those products" [6, p. 28] are not.

Furthermore, only some aspects of some testing approaches are relevant. This mainly manifests as a testing approach that applies to both the V&V itself and to the code. For example:

1) Error seeding is the "process of intentionally adding known faults to those already in a computer program", done to both "monitor[] the rate of detection and removal", which is a part of V&V of the V&V itself (out of scope), "and estimat[e] the number of faults remaining" [4, p. 165], which helps verify the actual code (in scope).
2) Fault injection testing, where "faults are artificially introduced into the SUT [System Under Test]", can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of a test suite [7, p. 5-18], which is a part of V&V of the V&V itself (out of scope), or "to test the robustness of the system in the event of internal and external failures" [8, p. 42], which helps verify the actual code (in scope).
3) "Mutation [t]esting was originally conceived as a technique to evaluate test suites in which a mutant is a slightly modified version of the SUT" [7, p. 5-15], which is in the realm of V&V of the V&V itself (out of scope). However, it "can also be categorized

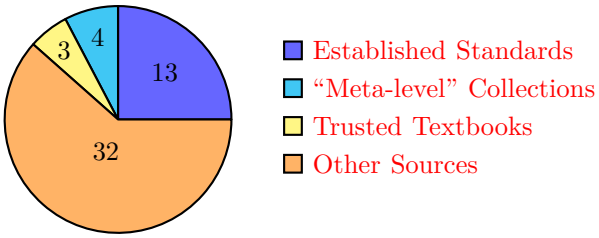

Fig. 1. Summary of how many sources comprise each source category.

as a structure-based technique" and can be used to assist fuzz and metamorphic testing [7, p. 5-15] (in scope).

III. Methodology

A. Sources

As there is no single authoritative source on software testing terminology, we need to look at many. Unfortunately, this brings to light a variety of discrepancies. Starting from some set of sources, we then use "snowball sampling" (a "method of … sample selection … used to locate hidden populations" [9]) to gather further sources (see Section III-C). Sources with a similar degree of "trustworthiness" are grouped in the categories given by Sections III-A1 to III-A4, and a summary of how many sources comprise each category is given in Figure 1. Each category is given a unique colour to better track how their information appears in relevant graphs (see Figures 2 to 6).

1) Established Standards: [4], [8], [10]–[20]
- Colored green
- Information on software development and testing from standards bodies (such as IEEE and ISO)

2) "Meta-level" Collections: [5], [7], [21], [22]
- Colored blue
- Collections of relevant terminology (such as ISTQB's glossary and the SWEBOK Guide)
- Often based on Established Standards

3) Trusted Textbooks: [23]–[25]
- Colored maroon
- Was the original (albeit ad hoc and arbitrary) starting point

4) Other Sources: [2], [6], [26]–[55]
- Colored black, along with any "surface-level" analysis that followed straightforwardly
- Includes less-formal classifications (such as [56]), sources investigated to "fill in" missing definitions (see Section III-C), and testing-related resources that emerged for unrelated reasons

B. Procedure

To track terminology used in the literature, we build a glossary of test approaches, including the term itself, its definition, and any synonyms or parents. Many test approaches are multi-faceted and can be "specialized" into others, such as Performance(-related) Testing. These "specializations" will be referred to as "children" or "sub-approaches[1]" of the multi-faceted "parent". Any additional notes, such as questions or sources to investigate further, are also recorded. Approach categorizations, such as those found in Table I and some outliers (e.g., "artifact"), are tracked for future investigation.

All sources are analyzed in their entirety to systematically extract terminology. (Some sources given in Section III-C were only partially investigated to focus on the area of interest or since the test approach was determined to be out-of-scope.) Heuristics are used to guide this process, by investigating:

- glossaries and lists of terms,
- testing-related terms (e.g., terms containing "test(ing)", "validation", or "verification"),
- terms that had emerged as part of already-discovered testing approaches, especially those that were ambiguous or prompted further discussion (e.g., terms containing "performance", "recovery", "component", "bottom-up", or "configuration"), and
- terms that implied testing approaches (see Section IV-B).

When terms have multiple definitions, either the clearest and most concise version is kept, or they are merged to paint a more complete picture. If any discrepancies or ambiguities arise, they are reasonably investigated and always documented. If a testing approach is mentioned but not defined, it is added to the glossary to indicate it should be investigated further (see Section III-C). A similar methodology is used for tracking software qualities, albeit in a separate document (see Section IV-B2).

During the first pass of data collection, all software-testing-focused terms are included. Some of them are less applicable to test case automation or too broad (such as Section IV-B4), so they will be omitted over the course of analysis.

C. Undefined Terms

The search process led to some testing approaches being mentioned without definition; [8] and [21] in particular introduced many. Once "standard" sources had been exhausted, we devised a strategy to look for sources that explicitly define these terms, consistent with our snowballing approach. This uncovers new approaches, both in and out of scope (such as EManations SECurity (EMSEC) testing, HTML testing, and aspects of loop testing and orthogonal array testing).

The following terms (and their respective related terms) were explored, bringing the number of testing approaches from 442 to 526 and the number of undefined terms from 156 to 172 (the assumption can be made that about 81% of added terms also included a definition):

[1]This nomenclature extends to other categories of approaches from Table I, such as "sub-type".

- Assertion Checking: [36], [47], [48]
- Loop Testing[2]: [33], [40], [41], [50]
- EMSEC Testing: [61], [62]
- Asynchronous Testing: [54]
- Performance(-related) Testing: [31]
- Web Application Testing: [35], [44]
  - HTML Testing: [6], [43], [52]
  - Document Object Model (DOM) Testing: [32]
- Sandwich Testing: [30], [49]
- Orthogonal Array Testing[3]: [38], [55]
- Backup Testing: [26]

We then developed a tool to automatically generate graphs of the relations between test approaches. All child-parent relations are graphed, as well as synonym relations where either:

1) both terms are present in the glossary, or
2) one term is synonyms with more than one term that is present in the glossary (see Section V-A).

Figures 2 and 4 are modified versions of these graphs generated based on the existing literature, focused on specific subsets of testing terminology. This tool was also expanded to be able to make changes to these generated graphs based on our Recommendations. Figures 3, 5 and 6 are modified versions of these proposed graphs.

IV. Observations

A. Categories of Testing Approaches

Different sources categorize software testing approaches in different ways. ISO/IEC and IEEE [8] provide a classification for different kinds of tests (see Table I). Since this seems to be widely used ("test level" and "test type" in particular) and is useful when focusing on a particular subset of testing, this terminology is used for now.

It also seems that these categories are orthogonal. For example, "a test type can be performed at a single test level or across several test levels" [8, p. 15], [10, p. 7]. Due to this, a specific test approach can be derived by combining test approaches from different categories.

B. Derived Test Approaches

Since the field of software is ever-evolving, being able to adapt to new developments, as well as being able to talk about and understand them, is crucial. In addition to methods of categorizing test approaches, the literature also provides the following methods of deriving new ones.

1) Coverage-driven Techniques: Test techniques are able to "identify test coverage items … and derive corresponding test cases" [8, p. 11] (similar in [4, p. 467]) in a "systematic" way [4, p. 464]. This means that a given coverage metric implies a test approach aimed to maximize it; for example, "path testing" is testing that "aims to execute all entry-to-exit control flow paths in a SUT's control flow graph" [7, p. 5013], thus maximizing the path coverage (see also [30, Fig. 1]).

2) Quality-driven Types: Since test types are "focused on specific quality characteristics" [8, p. 15], [10, p. 7], [4, p. 473], they can derived from software qualities: "capabilit[ies] of software product[s] to satisfy stated and implied needs when used under specified conditions" [4, p. 424]. This is supported by reliability and performance testing, which are both examples of test types [8], [10] that are based on their underlying qualities [64, p. 18].

Given the importance of software qualities to defining test types, the definitions of 75 software qualities are also tracked in this current work. This was done by capturing their definitions, any precedent for the existence of an associated test type, and any additional notes in a glossary. Over time, software qualities were "upgraded" to test types when mentioned (or implied) by a source.

3) Requirements-driven Approaches: While not as universally applicable, some types of requirements have associated types of testing (e.g., functional, non-functional, security). This may mean that categories of requirements also imply related testing approaches (such as "technical testing").

4) Attacks: Since attacks are given as a test practice [8, p. 34], different kinds of software attacks, such as code injection and password cracking, can also be used as test approaches.

V. Discrepancies and Ambiguities

After gathering all this data[4], we found many discrepancies and ambiguities. A summary of these is shown in Table II, where a given row corresponds to the number of discrepancies either within that category and/or with a "more trusted" category (i.e., with a source from a category higher up in the table). Issues with Synonyms, Parent Relations, and Categories of Testing Approaches are (Exp)licit or (Imp)licit. Issues with Functional Testing, Operational (Acceptance) Testing (OAT)[5], Recovery Testing, and Scalability Testing are also given, although not listed separately in Table II; these are counted alongside Other Discrepancies, all grouped into degrees of severity as follows. (Note that only select discrepancies are listed for brevity.)

- High: Semantic differences between test approaches
- (Med)ium: Differences in supporting information about test approaches
- Low: Typos, redundancy, or issues with referencing

A. Synonyms

The same approach often has many names. For example, specification-based testing is also called:

[2]References [15] and [14] were used as reference for terms but not fully investigated, [57] and [58] were added as potentially in scope, and [59] and [60] were added as out-of-scope examples.

[3]References [42] and [45] were added as out-of-scope examples.

[4]Available in ApproachGlossary.csv and QualityGlossary.csv at https://github.com/samm82/TestGen-Thesis.

[5]Section omitted for brevity.

TABLE I
IEEE Testing Terminology

Term	Definition	Examples
Approach	A "high-level test implementation choice, typically made as part of the test strategy design activity" that includes "test level, test type, test technique, test practice and the form of static testing to be used" [8, p. 10]; described by a test strategy [4, p. 472] and is also used to "pick the particular test case values" [4, p. 465]	black or white box, minimum and maximum boundary value testing [4, p. 465]
(Design)[a] Technique	A "defined" and "systematic" [4, p. 464] "procedure used to create or select a test model, identify test coverage items, and derive corresponding test cases" [8, p. 11] (similar in [4, p. 467]) "that … generate evidence that test item requirements have been met or that defects are present in a test item" [10, p. vii]; "a variety … is typically required to suitably cover any system" [8, p. 33] and is "often selected based on team skills and familiarity, on the format of the test basis", and on expectations [8, p. 23]	equivalence partitioning, boundary value analysis, branch testing [8, p. 11]
Level[b] (sometimes "Phase"[c] or "Stage"[d])	A stage of testing "typically associated with the achievement of particular objectives and used to treat particular risks", each performed in sequence [8, p. 12], [10, p. 6] with their "own documentation and resources" [4, p. 469]; more generally, "designat[es] … the coverage and detail" [4, p. 249]	unit/component testing, integration testing, system testing [4, p. 467], [8, p. 12], [10, p. 6]
Practice	A "conceptual framework that can be applied to … [a] test process to facilitate testing" [4, p. 471], [8, p. 14]; more generally, a "specific type of activity that contributes to the execution of a process" [4, p. 331]	scripted testing, exploratory testing, automated testing [8, p. 20]
Type	"Testing that is focused on specific quality characteristics" [4, p. 473], [8, p. 15], [10, p. 7]	security testing, usability testing, performance testing [4, p. 473], [8, p. 15]

[a] "Design technique" is sometimes abbreviated to "technique" [5], [8, p. 11].
[b] "Test level" can also refer to the scope of a test process; for example, "across the whole organization" or only "to specific projects" [8, p. 24].
[c] "Test phase" can be a synonym for "test level" [4, p. 469], [12, p. 9] but can also refer to the "period of time in the software life cycle" when testing occurs [4, p. 470], usually after the implementation phase [4, pp. 420, 509], [63, p. 56].
[d] Used by [5], [7, pp. 5-6 to 5-7], [53, pp. 9, 13].

TABLE II
Breakdown of identified discrepancies by source and type.

	Synonyms		Parents		Categories		Other			
Source Category	Exp	Imp	Exp	Imp	Exp	Imp	High	Med	Low	Total
Established Standards	0	1	5	1	8	2	2	4	4	27
"Meta-level" Collections	6	3	7	4	3	6	8	8	7	52
Trusted Textbooks	8	0	2	1	1	0	3	2	0	17
Other Sources	12	5	10	0	5	2	3	3	4	44
Total	26	9	24	6	17	10	16	17	15	140

1) Black-Box Testing [4, p. 431], [5], [7, p. 5-10], [8, p. 9], [25, p. 399], [10, p. 8], [37, p. 344]
2) Closed-Box Testing [4, p. 431], [8, p. 9]
3) Functional Testing[6] [4, p. 196], [25, p. 399], [44, p. 44]
4) Domain Testing [7, p. 5-10]

While some of these synonyms may express mild variations, their core meaning is nevertheless the same. Here we use the terms "specification-based" and "structure-based testing" as they articulate the source of the information for designing test cases, but a team or project also using gray-box testing may prefer the terms "black-box" and "white-box testing" for consistency. Thus, synonyms do not inherently signify a discrepancy. Unfortunately, there are many instances of incorrect or ambiguous synonyms, such as the following:

[6] This may be an outlier; see Section V-D1.

1) Reference [52] gives "white-", "grey-", and "black-box testing" as synonyms for "module", "integration", and "system testing", respectively, but this mapping is incorrect; black-box testing can be performed on a module, for example. This makes the claim that "red-box testing" is a synonym for "acceptance testing" [p. 18] lose credibility.
2) "Program testing" is given as a synonym of "component testing" [44, p. 46], although it probably should be a synonym of "system testing" instead.
3) Reference [44] seems to imply that "mutation testing" is a synonym of "back-to-back testing", but these are two quite distinct techniques.
4) "Conformance testing" is implied to be a synonym of "compliance testing" by [44], which only makes sense because of the vague definition of "compliance testing": "testing to determine the compliance of the

component or system" [p. 43].

There are also cases in which a term is given a synonym to two (or more) disjoint, unrelated terms, which would be a source of ambiguity to teams using these terms. Ten of these cases were identified through automatic analysis of the generated graphs. The following four are the most prominent examples:

1) Invalid Testing:
   - Error Tolerance Testing [44, p. 45]
   - Negative Testing [5] (implied by [10, p. 10])
2) Soak Testing:
   - Endurance Testing [10, p. 39]
   - Reliability Testing[7] [6, Tab. 1, p. 26], [53, Tab. 2]
3) User Scenario Testing:
   - Scenario Testing [5]
   - Use Case Testing[8] [44, p. 48] (although "an actor can be a user or another system" [10, p. 20])
4) Link Testing:
   - Branch Testing (implied by [10, p. 24])
   - Component Integration Testing [44, p. 45]
   - Integration Testing (implied by [53, p. 13])

B. Parent Relations

Parent relations are not immune to difficulties, including self-referential definitions[9], which were identified through automatic analysis of the generated graphs. Performance and usability testing are both given as sub-approaches of themselves [6, Tab. 1], [53, Tab. 2], while performance testing is not described as a sub-approach of usability testing. This would have been more meaningful information to capture.

There are also pairs of synonyms where one is described as a sub-approach of the other, abusing the meaning of "synonym" and causing confusion. We identified 11 of these pairs through automatic analysis of the generated graphs, which are given in Table III.

C. Categories of Testing Approaches

While the IEEE categorization of testing approaches is useful, it is not without its faults. The boundaries between items within a category may be unclear: "although each technique is defined independently of all others, in practice [sic] some can be used in combination with other techniques" [10, p. 8]. For example, "the test coverage items derived by applying equivalence partitioning can be used to identify the input parameters of test cases derived for scenario testing" [p. 8]. Even the categories themselves are not consistently defined, and some approaches are categorized differently by different sources:

1) ISO/IEC and IEEE categorize experience-based testing as both a test design technique and a test practice on the same page—twice [8, Fig. 2, p. 34]!
2) The following test approaches are categorized as test techniques by [10, p. 38] and as test types by the sources provided:
   a) Capacity testing [8, p. 22], [12, p. 2],
   b) Endurance testing [12, p. 2],
   c) Load testing [4, p. 253], [5], [8, pp. 5, 20, 22],
   d) Performance testing [8, pp. 7, 22, 26-27], [10, p. 7], and
   e) Stress testing [4, p. 442], [8, pp. 9, 22].
3) "Installability testing" is given as a test type [8, p. 22], [10, p. 38] but is sometimes called a test level as "installation testing" [24, p. 445].
4) Model-based testing is categorized as both a test practice [8, p. 22], [10, p. viii] and a test technique [44, p. 4].
5) Data-driven testing is categorized as both a test practice [8, p. 22] and a test technique [44, p. 43].
6) Although ad hoc testing is sometimes classified as a "technique" [7, p. 5-14], it is one in which "no recognized test design technique is used" [44, p. 42].

There are also instances of inconsistencies between parent and child test approach categorizations. This may indicate they aren't necessarily the same, or that more thought must be given to this method of classification.

D. Functional Testing

"Functional testing" is described alongside many other, likely related, terms. This leads to confusion about what distinguishes these terms, as shown by the following five:

1) Specification-based Testing: This is defined as "testing in which the principal test basis is the external inputs and outputs of the test item" [8, p. 9]. This agrees with a definition of "functional testing": "testing that … focuses solely on the outputs generated in response to selected inputs and execution conditions" [4, p. 196]. Notably, [4] lists both as synonyms of "black-box testing" [pp. 431, 196, respectively], despite them sometimes being defined separately. For example, the International Software Testing Qualifications Board (ISTQB) defines "specification-based testing" as "testing based on an analysis of the specification of the component or system" and "functional testing" as "testing performed to evaluate if a component or system satisfies functional requirements" [5]. Overall, specification-based testing [8, pp. 2-4, 6-9, 22] is a test design technique used to "derive corresponding test cases" [8, p. 11] from "selected inputs and execution conditions" [4, p. 196].

2) Correctness Testing: The SWEBOK Guide V4 says "test cases can be designed to check that the functional

[7] Endurance testing is given as a kind of reliability testing by [21, p. 55], although the terms are not synonyms.

[8] "Scenario testing" and "use case testing" are given as synonyms by [5] and [44, pp. 47-49] but listed separately by [8, p. 22], which also gives "use case testing" as a "common form of scenario testing" [10, p. 20]. This implies that "use case testing" may instead be a child of "user scenario testing" (see Table III).

[9] Since these are by nature self-contained within a given source, these are counted once as explicit discrepancies within their sources in Table II.

TABLE III
Pairs of test approaches with both child-parent and synonym relations.

"Child"	→	"Parent"	Child-Parent Source(s)	Synonym Source(s)
All Transitions Testing	→	State Transition Testing	[10, p. 19]	[44, p. 15]
Co-existence Testing	→	Compatibility Testing	[8, p. 3], [16], [10, Tab. A.1]	[10, p. 37]
Fault Tolerance Testing	→	Robustness Testing[a]	[21, p. 56]	[5]
Functional Testing	→	Specification-based Testing[b]	[10, p. 38]	[4, p. 196], [25, p. 399], [44, p. 44]
Orthogonal Array Testing	→	Pairwise Testing	[55, p. 1055]	[7, p. 5-11], [38, p. 473]
Performance Testing	→	Performance-related Testing	[8, p. 22], [10, p. 38]	[31, p. 1187]
Use Case Testing	→	Scenario Testing	[10, p. 20]	[5], [44, pp. 47-49]

[a]Fault tolerance testing may also be a sub-approach of reliability testing [4, p. 375], [7, p. 7-10], which is distinct from robustness testing [21, p. 53].
[b]See Section V-D1.

specifications are correctly implemented, which is variously referred to in the literature as conformance testing, correctness testing or functional testing" [7, p. 5-7]; this mirrors previous definitions of "functional testing" [4, p. 196], [8, p. 21] but groups it with "correctness testing". Since "correctness" is a software quality [4, p. 104], [7, p. 3-13] which is what defines a "test type" [8, p. 15] (see Section IV-B2), it seems consistent to label "functional testing" as a "test type" [8, pp. 15, 20, 22]; this conflicts with its categorization as a "technique" if considered a synonym of Specification-based Testing. "Correctness testing" is listed separately from "functionality testing" by [21, p. 53].

3) Conformance Testing: Testing that ensures "that the functional specifications are correctly implemented", and can be called "conformance testing" or "functional testing" [7, p. 5-7]. "Conformance testing" is later defined as testing used "to verify that the SUT conforms to standards, rules, specifications, requirements, design, processes, or practices" [7, p. 5-7]. This definition seems to be a superset of testing methods mentioned earlier as the latter includes "standards, rules, requirements, design, processes, … [and]" practices in addition to specifications!

A complicating factor is that "compliance testing" is also (plausibly) given as a synonym of "conformance testing" [44, p. 43]. However, "conformance testing" can also be defined as testing that evaluates the degree to which "results … fall within the limits that define acceptable variation for a quality requirement" [4, p. 93], which seems to describe something different.

4) Functional Suitability Testing: Procedure testing is called a "type of functional suitability testing" [8, p. 7], but no definition of that term is given. "Functional suitability" is the "capability of a product to provide functions that meet stated and implied needs of intended users when it is used under specified conditions", including meeting "the functional specification" [16]. This seems to align with the definition of "functional testing" as related to "black-box/specification-based testing". "Functional correctness", a child of "functional suitability", is the "capability of a product to provide accurate results when used by intended users" [16] and seems to align with the quality/ies that would be tested by "correctness" testing.

5) Functionality Testing: "Functionality" is defined as the "capabilities of the various … features provided by a product" [4, p. 196] and is said to be a synonym of "functional suitability" [5], although it seems like it should really be a synonym of "functional completeness" based on [16], which would make "functional suitability" a sub-approach. Its associated test type is implied to be a sub-approach of build verification testing [5] and made distinct from "functional testing" [53, Tab. 2]. "Functionality testing" is listed separately from "correctness testing" by [21, p. 53].

E. Recovery Testing

"Recovery testing" is "testing … aimed at verifying software restart capabilities after a system crash or other disaster" [7, p. 5-9] including "recover[ing] the data directly affected and re-establish[ing] the desired state of the system" [16] (similar in [7, p. 7-10]) so that the system "can perform required functions" [4, p. 370]. It is also called "recoverability testing" [44, p. 47] and potentially "restart & recovery (testing)" [53, Fig. 5]. The following terms, along with "recovery testing" itself [8, p. 22] are all classified as test types, and the relations between them can be found in Figure 2.

- Recoverability Testing: Testing "how well a system or software can recover data during an interruption or failure" [7, p. 7-10] (similar in [16]) and "re-establish the desired state of the system" [16]. Synonym for "recovery testing" in [44, p. 47].
- Disaster/Recovery Testing serves to evaluate if a system can "return to normal operation after a hardware or software failure" [4, p. 140] or if "operation of the test item can be transferred to a different operating site and … be transferred back again once the failure has been resolved" [10, p. 37]. These two definitions seem to describe different aspects of the system, where the first is intrinsic to the hardware/software and the second might not be.

- Backup and Recovery Testing "measures the degree to which system state can be restored from backup within specified parameters of time, cost, completeness, and accuracy in the event of failure" [12, p. 2]. This may be what is meant by "recovery testing" in the context of performance-related testing and seems to correspond to the definition of "disaster/recovery testing" in [4, p. 140].
- Backup/Recovery Testing: Testing that determines the ability "to restor[e] from back-up memory in the event of failure, without transfer[ing] to a different operating site or back-up system" [10, p. 37]. This seems to correspond to the definition of "disaster/recovery testing" in [10, p. 37]. It is also given as a sub-type of "disaster/recovery testing", even though that tests if "operation of the test item can be transferred to a different operating site" [p. 37]. It also seems to overlap with "backup and recovery testing", which adds confusion.
- Failover/Recovery Testing: Testing that determines the ability "to mov[e] to a back-up system in the event of failure, without transfer[ing] to a different operating site" [10, p. 37]. This is given as a sub-type of "disaster/recovery testing", even though that tests if "operation of the test item can be transferred to a different operating site" [p. 37].
- Failover Testing: Testing that "validates the SUT's ability to manage heavy loads or unexpected failure to continue typical operations" [7, p. 5-9] by entering a "backup operational mode in which [these responsibilities] … are assumed by a secondary system" [5]. While not explicitly related to recovery, "failover/recovery testing" also describes the idea of "failover", and [21, p. 56] uses the term "failover and recovery testing", which could be a synonym of both of these terms.

F. Scalability Testing

There were three ambiguities around the term "scalability testing", listed below. The relations between these test approaches (and other relevant ones) are shown in Figure 4.

1) ISO/IEC and IEEE give "scalability testing" as a synonym of "capacity testing" [10, p. 39] while other sources differentiate between the two [21, p. 53], [26, pp. 22-23]
2) ISO/IEC and IEEE give the external modification of the system as part of "scalability" [10, p. 39], while [16] implies that it is limited to the system itself
3) The SWEBOK Guide V4's definition of "scalability testing" [7, p. 5-9] is really a definition of usability testing!

G. Other Discrepancies

We now outline discrepancies/ambiguities found in the literature that were not "large" enough to merit their own sections, grouped by the "categories" of sources outlined in Section III-A.

1) Other Discrepancies from Standards:

- "Compatibility testing" is defined as "testing that measures the degree to which a test item can function satisfactorily alongside other independent products in a shared environment (co-existence), and where necessary, exchanges information with other systems or components (interoperability)" [8, p. 3]. This definition is nonatomic as it combines the ideas of "co-existence" and "interoperability". The term "interoperability testing" is not defined, but is used three times [8, pp. 22, 43] (although the third usage seems like it should be "portability testing"). This implies that "co-existence testing" and "interoperability testing" should be defined as their own terms, which is supported by definitions of "co-existence" and "interoperability" often being separate [4, pp. 73, 237], [5], the definition of "interoperability testing" from [4, p. 238], and the decomposition of "compatibility" into "co-existence" and "interoperability" by [16]!
  - The "interoperability" element of "compatibility testing" is explicitly excluded by [10, p. 37], (incorrectly) implying that "compatibility testing" and "co-existence testing" are synonyms.
  - The definition of "compatibility testing" in [44, p. 43] unhelpfully says "See interoperability testing", adding another layer of confusion to the direction of their relationship.
- A component is an "entity with discrete structure … within a system considered at a particular level of analysis" [17] and "the terms module, component, and unit [sic] are often used interchangeably or defined to be subelements of one another in different ways depending upon the context" with no standardized relationship [4, p. 82]. This means unit/component/module testing can refer to the testing of both a module and a specific function in a module. However, "component" is sometimes defined differently than "module": "components differ from classical modules for being re-used in different contexts independently of their development" [65, p. 107], so distinguishing the two may be necessary.
- Retesting and regression testing seem to be separated from the rest of the testing approaches [8, p. 23], but it is not clearly detailed why; [46, p. 3] considers regression testing to be a test level.

2) Other Discrepancies from "Meta-Level" Sources:

- The SWEBOK Guide V4 defines "privacy testing" as testing that "assess[es] the security and privacy of users' personal data to prevent local attacks" [7, p. 5-10]; this seems to overlap (both in scope and name) with the definition of "security testing" in [8]: testing "conducted to evaluate the degree to which a test item, [sic] and associated data and information,

are protected so that" only "authorized persons or systems" can use them as intended.

- It is ambiguous whether "tool/environment testing" refers to testing the tools/environment themselves or using them to test the object under test; the latter is implied, but the wording of its subtypes [21, p. 25] seems to imply the former.
- The distinctions between development testing [4, p. 136], developmental testing [21, p. 30], and developer testing [21, p. 39], [53, p. 11] are unclear and seem miniscule.
- Various sources say that alpha testing is performed by different people, including "only by users within the organization developing the software" [4, p. 17], by "a small, selected group of potential users" [7, p. 5-8], or "in the developer's test environment by roles outside the development organization" [5].
- "Machine Learning (ML) model testing" and "ML functional performance" are defined in terms of "ML functional performance criteria", which is defined in terms of "ML functional performance metrics", which is defined as "a set of measures that relate to the functional correctness of an ML system" [5]. The use of "performance" (or "correctness") in these definitions is at best ambiguous and at worst incorrect.
- There is disagreement on the structure of tours; they can either be quite general [8, p. 34] or "organized around a special focus" [5].
- Performance and security testing are given as subtypes of reliability testing by [16] but these are all listed separately by [21, p. 53].

3) Other Discrepancies from Other Sources:

- Reference [44] says that the goal of negative testing is "showing that a component or system does not work" which is not true; if robustness is an important quality for the system, then testing the system "in a way for which it was not intended to be used" [5] (i.e., negative testing) is one way to help test this!
- "Visual browser validation" is described as both static and dynamic in the same table [53, Tab. 2], even though they are implied to be orthogonal classifications: "test types can be static or dynamic" [p. 12, emphasis added].

VI. Recommendations

We provide different recommendations for resolving various discrepancies (see Section V). This was done with the goal of organizing them more logically and making them:

1) Atomic (e.g., disaster/recovery testing seems to have two disjoint definitions)
2) Straightforward (e.g., backup and recovery testing's definition implies the idea of performance, but its name does not)

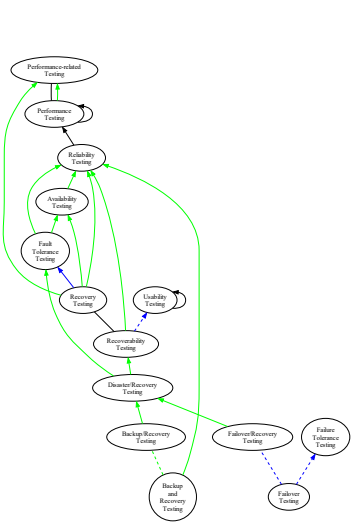

Fig. 2. Current relations between "recovery testing" terms.

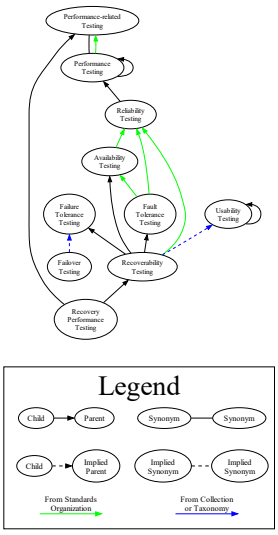

Fig. 3. Proposed relations between rationalized "recovery testing" terms.

3) Consistent (e.g., backup/recovery testing and failover/recovery testing explicitly exclude an aspect included in its parent disaster/recovery testing)

The following are our recommendations for the areas of Recovery, Scalability, and Performance(-related) Testing, along with graphs of these subsets.

A. Recovery Testing

The following terms should be used in place of the current terminology to more clearly distinguish between different recovery-related test approaches. The result of the proposed terminology, along with their relations, is demonstrated in Figures 2 and 3.

- Recoverability Testing: "Testing … aimed at verifying software restart capabilities after a system crash or other disaster" [7, p. 5-9] including "recover[ing] the data directly affected and re-establish[ing] the desired state of the system" [16] (similar in [7, p. 7-10]) so that the system "can perform required functions" [4, p. 370]. "Recovery testing" will be a synonym, as in [44, p. 47], since it is the more prevalent term throughout various sources, although "recoverability testing" is preferred to indicate that this explicitly focuses on the ability to recover, not the performance of recovering.
- Failover Testing: Testing that "validates the SUT's ability to manage heavy loads or unexpected failure to continue typical operations" [7, p. 5-9] by entering a "backup operational mode in which [these responsibilities] … are assumed by a secondary system" [5]. This will replace "failover/recovery testing", since it is more clear, and since this is one way that a system can

recover from failure, it will be a subset of "recovery testing".

- Transfer Recovery Testing: Testing to evaluate if, in the case of a failure, "operation of the test item can be transferred to a different operating site and … be transferred back again once the failure has been resolved" [10, p. 37]. This replaces the second definition of "disaster/recovery testing", since the first is just a description of "recovery testing", and could potentially be considered as a kind of failover testing. This may not be intrinsic to the hardware/software (e.g., may be the responsibility of humans/processes).
- Backup Recovery Testing: Testing that determines the ability "to restor[e] from back-up memory in the event of failure" [10, p. 37]. The qualification that this occurs "without transfer[ing] to a different operating site or back-up system" [p. 37] could be made explicit, but this is implied since it is separate from transfer recovery testing and failover testing, respectively.
- Recovery Performance Testing: Testing "how well a system or software can recover … [from] an interruption or failure" [7, p. 7-10] (similar in [16]) "within specified parameters of time, cost, completeness, and accuracy" [12, p. 2]. The distinction between the performance-related elements of recovery testing seemed to be meaningful, but was not captured consistently by the literature. This will be a subset of "performance-related testing" as "recovery testing" is in [8, p. 22]. This could also be extended into testing the performance of specific elements of recovery (e.g., failover performance testing), but this be too fine-grained and may better be captured as an orthogonally derived test approach.

B. Scalability Testing

The ambiguity around scalability testing found in the literature is resolved and/or explained by other sources! [10, p. 39] gives "scalability testing" as a synonym of "capacity testing", defined as the testing of a system's ability to "perform under conditions that may need to be supported in the future", which "may include assessing what level of additional resources (e.g. memory, disk capacity, network bandwidth) will be required to support anticipated future loads". This focus on "the future" is supported by [5], which defines "scalability" as "the degree to which a component or system can be adjusted for changing capacity". In contrast, capacity testing focuses on the system's present state, evaluating the "capability of a product to meet requirements for the maximum limits of a product parameter", such as the number of concurrent users, transaction throughput, or database size [16]. Because of this nuance, it makes more sense to consider these terms separate and not synonyms, as done by [21, p. 53] and [26, pp. 22-23].

Unfortunately, only focusing on future capacity requirements still leaves room for ambiguity. While the previous

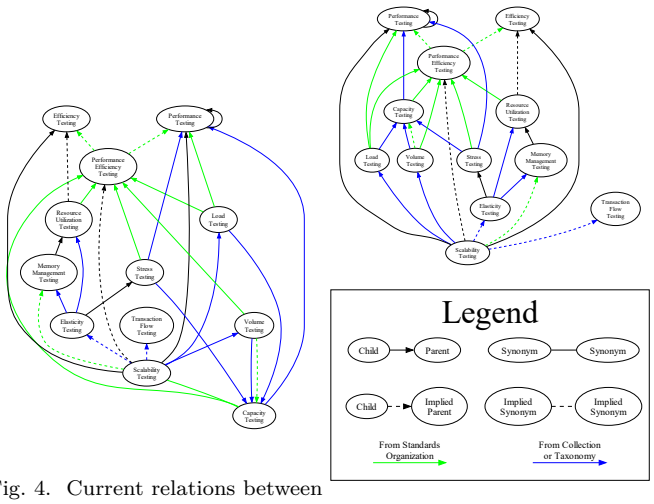

Fig. 4. Current relations between "scalability testing" terms.

Fig. 5. Proposed relations between rationalized "scalability testing" terms.

definition of "scalability testing" includes the external modification of the system, [16] describes it as testing the "capability of a product to handle growing or shrinking workloads or to adapt its capacity to handle variability", implying that this is done by the system itself. The potential reason for this is implied by the SWEBOK Guide V4's claim that one objective of elasticity testing is "to evaluate scalability" [7, p. 5-9]: [16]'s notion of "scalability" likely refers more accurately to "elasticity"! This also makes sense in the context of other definitions provided by the SWEBOK Guide V4:

- Scalability: "the software's ability to increase and scale up on its nonfunctional requirements, such as load, number of transactions, and volume of data" [7, p. 5-5]. Based on this definition, scalability testing is then a subtype of load testing and volume testing, as well as potentially transaction flow testing.
- Elasticity Testing[10]: testing that "assesses the ability of the SUT … to rapidly expand or shrink compute, memory, and storage resources without compromising the capacity to meet peak utilization" [7, p. 5-9]. Based on this definition, elasticity testing is then a subtype of memory management testing (with both being a subtype of resource utilization testing) and stress testing.

This distinction is also consistent with how the terms are used in industry: [28] says that scalability is the ability to "increase … performance or efficiency as demand increases over time", while elasticity allows a system to "tackle changes in the workload [that] occur for a short period".

To make things even more confusing, the SWEBOK Guide V4 says "scalability testing evaluates the capability

[10]While this definition seems correct, it only cites a single source that doesn't contain the words "elasticity" or "elastic"!

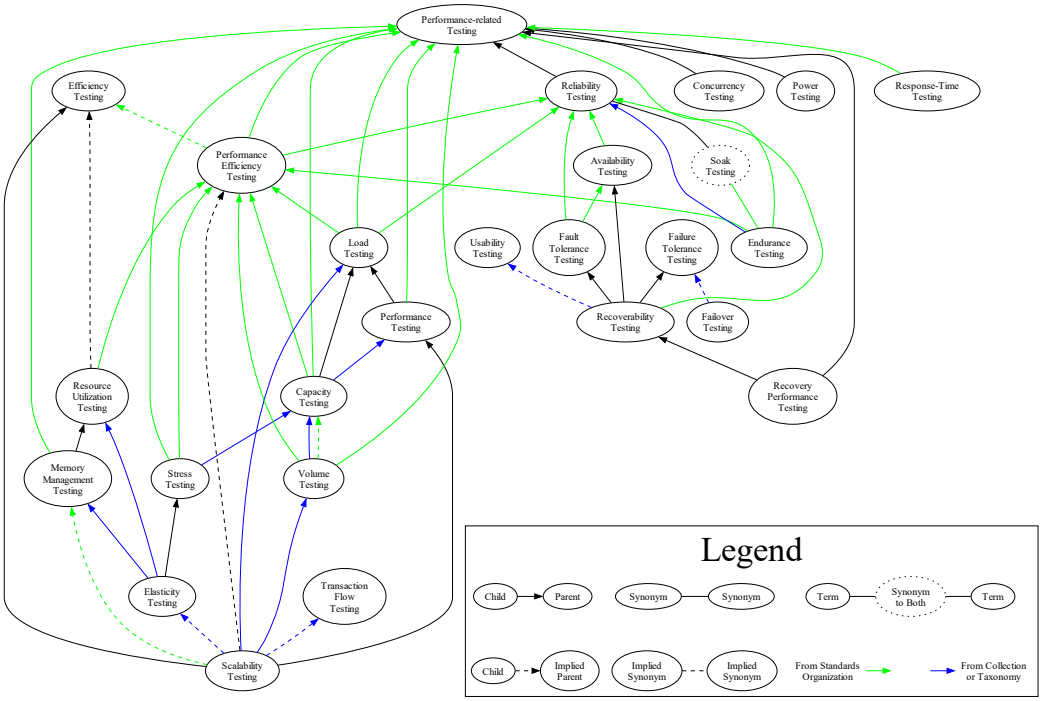

Fig. 6. Proposed relations between rationalized "performance-related testing" terms.

to use and learn the system and the user documentation" and "focuses on the system's effectiveness in supporting user tasks and the ability to recover from user errors" [7, p. 5-9]. This seems to define "usability testing" with elements of functional and recovery testing, which is completely separate from the definitions of "scalability", "capacity", and "elasticity testing"! This definition should simply be disregarded, since it is inconsistent with the rest of the literature. The removal of the previous two synonym relations is demonstrated in Figures 4 and 5.

C. Performance(-related) Testing

"Performance testing" is defined as testing "conducted to evaluate the degree to which a test item accomplishes its designated functions" [4, p. 320], [8, p. 7] (similar in [10, pp. 38-39], [31, p. 1187]). It does this by "measuring the performance metrics" [31, p. 1187] (similar in [5]) (such as the "system's capacity for growth" [6, p. 23]), "detecting the functional problems appearing under certain execution conditions" [31, p. 1187], and "detecting violations of non-functional requirements under expected and stress conditions" [31, p. 1187] (similar in [7, p. 5-9]). It is performed either …

1) … "within given constraints of time and other resources" [4, p. 320], [8, p. 7] (similar in [31, p. 1187]), or
2) … "under a 'typical' load" [10, p. 39].

It is listed as a subset of performance-related testing, which is defined as testing "to determine whether a test item performs as required when it is placed under various types and sizes of 'load'" [10, p. 38], along with other approaches like load and capacity testing [8, p. 22]. In contrast, [7, p. 5-9] gives "capacity and response time" as examples of "performance characteristics" that performance testing would seek to "assess", which seems to imply that these are sub-approaches to performance testing instead. This is consistent with how some sources treat "performance testing" and "performance-related testing" as synonyms [7, p. 5-9], [31, p. 1187], as noted in Section V-A. This makes sense because of how general the concept of "performance" is; most definitions of "performance testing" seem to treat it as a category of tests.

However, it seems more consistent to infer that the definition of "performance-related testing" is the more general one often assigned to "performance testing" performed "within given constraints of time and other resources" [4, p. 320], [8, p. 7] (similar in [31, p. 1187]), and "performance testing" is a sub-approach of this performed "under a 'typical' load" [10, p. 39]. This has other implications for relations between these types of testing; for example, "load testing" usually occurs "between anticipated conditions of low, typical, and peak usage" [4, p. 253], [5], [8, p. 5], [10, p. 39], so it is a child of "performance-related testing" and a parent of "performance testing".

Finally, the "self-loops" mentioned in Section V-B provide no new information and can be removed. These

changes (along with those from Sections VI-A and VI-B made implicitly) result in the relations shown in Figure 6.

VII. Conclusion

While a good starting point, the current literature on software testing has much room to grow. The many ambiguities and confusions create unnecessary barriers to software testing. While there is merit to allowing the state-of-the-practice terminology to descriptively guide how terminology is used, there may be a need to prescriptively structure terminology to intentionally differentiate between and organize various test approaches. Future work in this area will continue to investigate the current use of terminology, in particular Undefined Terms, determine if IEEE's current Categories of Testing Approaches are sufficient, and rationalize the definitions of and relations between terms.

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