A Graph based architectural (re)configuration language

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A Graph Based Architectural (Re)configuration Language

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ABSTRACT
For several different reasons, such as changes in the business or technological environment, the configuration of a system may need to evolve during execution. Support for such evolution can be conceived in terms of a language for specifying the dynamic reconfiguration of systems. In this paper, continuing our work on the development of a formal platform for architectural design, we present a high-level language to describe architectures and for operating changes over a configuration (i.e., an architecture instance), such as adding, removing or substituting components or connections. The language follows an imperative style and builds on a semantic domain established in previous work. Therein, we model architectures through categorical diagrams and dynamic reconfiguration through algebraic graph rewriting.

1. INTRODUCTION
One of the topics that is raising increased interest in the Software Architecture community is the ability to specify how an architecture evolves over time, in particular at run-time, in order to adapt to new requirements, new business rules or new environments, to failures, and to mobility. This topic raises several issues [26], among which:

modification time and source Architectures may change before execution, or at run-time (called dynamic reconfiguration). Run-time changes may be triggered by the current state or topology of the system (called programmed reconfiguration [7]) or may be requested unexpectedly by the user (called ad-hoc reconfiguration [7]).

modification operations The four fundamental operations are addition and removal of components and connections. Although their names vary, those operators are provided by most reconfiguration languages (like [7][20][1][15]). In programmed reconfiguration, the changes to perform are given with the initial architecture, but they may be executed when the architecture has already changed. Therefore it is necessary to query at run-time the state of the components and the topology of the architecture.

modification constraints Often changes must preserve several kinds of properties: structural (e.g., the architecture has a ring structure), functional, and behavioural (e.g., real-time constraints).

system state The new system must be in a consistent state.

To overcome these disadvantages, we have proposed in the last ESEC/FSE an algebraic approach [29], using categorical diagrams to represent architectures, the double-pushout graph transformation approach [6] to specify reconfigurations, and a program design language with explicit state to describe computations [17]. In [30] we have further refined and extended the work, using typed graphs to represent simple topological invariants for the reconfiguration process. We have shown that our approach has several advantages over previous work, avoiding the drawbacks mentioned above:

• Architectures, reconfigurations, and connectors are represented and manipulated in a graphical yet mathematical rigorous way at the same language-independent level of abstraction, resulting in a uniform framework based simply on diagrams and their colimits (a universal categorical construction).
• The chosen program design language is at a high level of abstraction, allowing a more intuitive representation of program state and computations.

• Computations and reconfigurations are kept separate but related in an explicit, simple, and direct way through the colimit construction.

• Typed graphs provide a simple and declarative notion of modification constraints.

• Several practical problems—maintaining the constraints during reconfiguration, transferring the state during replacement, removing components in a quiescent state—adding components properly initialized—are easily handled.

However, the work presented was meant as an investigation into solid formal foundations for dynamic reconfiguration. It was not meant as an actual specification language. In fact, as argued in [27], describing certain kinds of transformations using only graph rewriting rules can be quite cumbersome, because it leads to heavy use of dummy nodes and arcs to control the exact way in which rewriting rules are to be applied. Unfortunately, ADLs either do not handle reconfiguration (like [24]) or they provide only a few basic reconfiguration constructs (like [23, 1, 4, 19, 20]), making it hard or impossible to express moderately complex reconfigurations. Therefore we turned to work in Distributed Systems, in which the technological aspects of reconfiguration have been investigated for a long time.

Two of the most elegant and expressive approaches we found are Gerel [7] and reconfiguration programming [23]. Both allow the description of very complex reconfigurations in a relatively easy way, combining the usual programming language constructs (like selection and iteration) with specialised reconfiguration commands. However, approaches like these lack a formal basis, and they do not have an explicit notion of the system’s software architecture in which the reconfiguration occurs. Taking a distributed systems perspective, some approaches describe reconfigurations at a low level of abstraction, usually (dis)connecting components on a port by port basis.

In this paper we try to make a bridge between the rigour of formal approaches, the abstractions of Software Architecture approaches, and the pragmatics of Distributed Systems approaches, by presenting a language to describe architectures and complex reconfigurations in a straightforward way, while keeping the algebraic foundations laid out in our previous work. We are more interested in what are the necessary constructions needed for an effective but formal reconfiguration language, than in the actual language itself. Therefore, this paper only presents a minimal language with one specialised construct for each task (iteration, removing components, interconnecting components, querying the configuration, etc.).

The running example is taken from banking. We consider customers and accounts, in a one-to-one relationship. Besides a normal kind of accounts, there may also exist salary accounts, in which its owner gets her/his salary deposited every month. For normal accounts, it is not possible to withdraw more than the current balance, but a salary account may be overdrawn up to the salary amount. Of course, such a benefit has a price, to be paid in terms of interest calculated over the period and amount the account is below zero. Therefore, when such an account is created, or when an existing normal account becomes a salary account, the customer must explicitly state how much credit s/he wants. The credit must not exceed the salary, and in particular it may be zero, i.e., the customer may wish not to take advantage of having credit. The bank is not interested in accounts that have an average balance below zero. In those cases, the policy is to return those accounts automatically to their normal status, to prevent the financial situation of the account, and the debt of the customer towards the bank, of getting worse.

We start by summarising COMMUNITY, the program design language used to describe computations. We then introduce the language fragment to describe architectures and their constraints. Finally, in Section 4 we present the remaining of the language, in order to describe reconfigurations.

2. COMMUNITY

COMMUNITY programs are in the style of UNITY programs [3], but they also combine elements from IP [11]. However, COMMUNITY has a richer coordination model and, even more important, it requires interaction between components to be made explicit. In this way, the coordination aspects of a system can be separated from the computational aspects and externalised, making explicit the gross modularisation of the system in terms of its components and its interactions.

In this section, we summarise the syntax of COMMUNITY programs and introduce a notation for describing system configurations. Each configuration can be transformed into a single, semantically equivalent, program that represents the whole system. Finally, we discuss refinement of COMMUNITY programs. The formal definitions and proofs were presented in [17,19].

2.1 Designs

COMMUNITY is independent of the actual data types used and, hence, we assume there are pre-defined sorts and functions given by a fixed algebraic signature in the usual sense. For the purpose of examples, we consider an algebraic signature containing sorts bool (booleans), nat (natural numbers) and int (integers) with the usual operations.

A COMMUNITY design consists of a set of typed variables and a set of actions. There are input, output and private variables. Input variables are read-only. Output and private variables are called local variables and cannot be changed by the environment. A design with input variables is open in the sense that it needs to be connected to other components of the system to read data, as explained in Section 2.2.

There are private and shared actions, but our example only uses the latter. Each action has a name, two guards, and a set of non-deterministic assignments. The safety and progress guards are propositions over the local variables and establish an interval in which the enabling condition of the action must lie, the safety guard being the lower bound. When the guards are equivalent we write only one of them. At each execution step, one of the actions whose enabling condition holds of the current state is selected, and its assignments are executed atomically in parallel. A non-deterministic assignment $l \in E$ assigns to $l$ one of the elements of set $E$. We abbreviate $v \in \{t\}$ as $v := t$, and we write skip to denote the absence of assignments.

For our example, we need the following designs. The first simply describes the basic functionality of an account: it lets money to be
the second case, 
i
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nents. Although these are common forms of interaction, C 
variables of a component with output variables of other compo-
Based on action synchronisation and the interconnection of input 
the pair 
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must be a non-private variable of 
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able or a set of shared actions of design 
A
2.2 Configurations

In COMMUNITY, the model of interaction between components is 
based on action synchronisation and the interconnection of input 
variables of a component with output variables of other com-
ponents. Although these are common forms of interaction, COMMU-
NITY, unlike other program design languages, requires interaction 
between components (name bindings) to be made explicit.

Connecting a design \( D_1 \) with a design \( D_2 \) is done through a channel: a set of bindings \( i_{1,j} : i_{2,j} \), where each \( i_{1,j} \) is a non-private vari-
able or a set of shared actions of design \( D_1 \). In the first case, \( i_{2,j} \) 
must be a non-private variable of \( D_2 \), of the same sort as \( i_{1,j} \), and 
the pair \( i_{1,1}, i_{2,1} \) denotes that the two variables are to be shared. In 
the second case, \( i_{2,j} \) must be a set of shared actions of \( D_2 \). More-
over, every shared action of the involved designs can appear at most 
one in the channel definition. Intuitively, a pair 
\[
\{a_1, \ldots, a_{1,n}\} \parallel \{a_2, \ldots, a_{2,m}\}
\]
states that any action \( a_{1,j} \) of \( D_1 \) must occur simultaneously (i.e., 
synchronise) with some action \( a_{2,j} \) of \( D_2 \) and vice versa.

For example, the channel 
\[
\{\text{value-amount, deposit-deposit, withdraw-withdraw}\}
\]
to connect a customer directly to a normal account, allows the cus-
tomer to withdraw unlimited funds anytime, a highly undesirable 
situation (for the bank, of course).

A configuration is given by an undirected labelled graph, where 
each node is labelled by a design, and each arc by a channel, such 
that: 1) no node is connected to itself; 2) no two output variables 
are (directly or indirectly) shared.

Such a configuration has a very precise mathematical semantics, 
given by a diagram in a category whose objects are designs and 
whose morphisms capture a notion of program superposition [5]. 
An interconnection between two components is described by a de-
sign that just declares the common variables and actions of the 
components, without introducing any additional behaviour, thus 
corresponding to the recently proposed notion of duct [21]. This 
semantics has been presented previously [17, 16] and it is trivial 
to translate configurations into categorical diagrams. One of the 
advantages of this categorical semantics is that any diagram cor-
responding to a configuration can be transformed, by a universal 
categorical construction called colimit, into a single design that rep-
resents the whole system, as proven in [16].

A run-time configuration is a configuration in which each node, 
besides being labelled with a design \( D \), is also labelled with its 
current state, i.e., with one pair \((l, value)\) for each local variable 
\( l \) of \( D \). Because local variables cannot be shared among designs, 
it is not possible for two different nodes to have different values 
for the same variable. Hence, the colimit of a run-time configu-
ration always exists and is given by the colimit of the underlying 
configuration together with the disjoint union of all variable-value 
pairs.

2.3 Refinement

A key factor for architectural description is a notion of refinement 
that can be used to support abstraction. A design \( R \) refines design 
\( P \) if each variable of \( P \) is mapped to a variable of \( R \) of the same 
sort and kind (input, output or private), and each action of \( P \) is 
mapped to a set of actions of \( R \) of the same kind (private or shared), 
such that the functionality and interface (i.e., the “binding points”) 
of \( P \) are preserved. The interface is preserved by requiring the 
mapping of input and output variables to be injective and the image 
of a shared action to be a non-empty set. To preserve functionality 
safety guards may not be weakened, progress guards may not be 
strengthened, and assignments may not be less deterministic.

The concrete syntax to define refinement morphisms is 
\[
\text{refinement Name: } D_1 \rightarrow D_2 \\
x_{1,1} \parallel \ldots \\
\text{end refinement}
\]
such that each \( x_{1,i} \) is a variable of design \( D_1 \)—and in that case 
\( x_{2,i} \) is a variable of \( D_2 \)—or an action of \( D_1 \)—and in that case \( x_{2,i} \) 
is a set of actions of \( D_2 \). The identity and inclusion refinement 
morphisms are implicitly defined (see Section 3.4). For our exam-
ple, we have the inclusion of ‘NormalAccount’ in ‘SalaryAccount’.

Another way of defining refinements is through composition:

\[
\text{refinement Name: } D_1 \rightarrow D_{n+1} \\
\text{Name}_1 : \text{Name}_2 : \ldots : \text{Name}_n \\
\text{end refinement}
\]

with \( \text{Name}_n : \text{end-refinement} \) a previously defined refinement or the
Channels can be composed with refinement morphisms. To be more precise, given a channel between designs \( D_1 \) and \( D_2 \) and a refinement \( D_3 \) of \( D_2 \), one can calculate a channel between \( D_1 \) and \( D_3 \) by composing every binding \( i_{1,j}i_{2,j} \) with the mapping \( i_{2,j}i_{3,j} \). Moreover, the colimit of the obtained configuration is a refinement of the colimit of the original configuration.

3. SOFTWARE ARCHITECTURE

An architecture is a class of configurations that exhibit some conceptual unity. An architectural description must therefore include the designs and interactions to be used in those configurations and a set of restrictions on the possible configurations.

We start by describing a construct to specify complex interactions between components, using the primitive mechanisms of action synchronization and variable sharing given by channels. Next we show how to describe conditions on the run-time configurations and finally we present the concrete syntax for architectures.

3.1 Connectors

Although components have always been considered the fundamental building blocks of software systems, the way the components of a system interact may be also determinant on the system properties. Component interactions were recognised also to be first-class design entities and architectural connectors have emerged as a powerful tool for supporting the description of these interactions.

According to [2], an \( n \)-ary connector consists of \( n \) roles and one glue stating the interaction between the roles. The use of a connector in the construction of a particular system is realised by the instantiation of its roles with specific components of the system. Therefore the roles act as “formal parameters”, restricting which components may be linked together through the connector.

In our framework, a connector is represented by a star-shaped configuration, with the glue, in the center, linked to the roles, in the points of the star [9]. Normally, different connectors may use the same designs for roles, because there may exist different kinds of interactions between the same kinds of components. Moreover, the roles are the “interface” of a connector, i.e., they must be publicly known in order to instantiate them with the actual components. For these two reasons, we require the designs used for roles to be specified before and outside the specification of connectors. A connector then just specifies the glue and the channels.

For our running example we need a connector with two roles, one to be instantiated with a customer and the other to be instantiated with any account. To make the example more compact, we use for the first role the ‘Customer’ design itself. The second role is the account that instantiate the roles. Hence, no action of the glue modifies the ‘credit’ variable.

```plaintext
connector Movement(Customer, AnyAccount) 
  design Movement 
  in amount : nat; balance : int 
  prv credit : nat 
  do put: true \rightarrow \text{skip} 
  [ ] get: balance - amount \geq \text{credit} \rightarrow \text{skip} 
  channel amount-value put-deposit get-withdraw 
  channel amount-value put-credit get-debit balance-balance 
end connector
```

Notice that the name of a connector is the name of its glue, and that the \( i \)-th channel describes the bindings between the glue and the \( i \)-th role.

An \( n \)-ary connector is applied to \( n \) components by defining which component refines which role in which way. Usually, general-purpose connectors (e.g., for asynchronous communication or RPC) have also very general roles (i.e., which impose very little restrictions on the components that instantiate them), because such connectors are supposed to be applicable to a wide class of components. This means that several different component designs may refine the same role. Moreover, for a given role-component pair there may be several different possible refinements. However, for a particular architecture, several of these possibilities may not make sense. Normally, each role is to be refined by only a few component designs and each one of them has to refine the role in only one way. Hence, we require the architect to specify just those refinements that are possible. Identity and inclusion refinement morphisms are always allowed.

For our example, ‘AnyAccount’ can be refined in two ways.

```plaintext
refinement AN: AnyAccount \rightarrow NormalAccount 
value/amount, balance/balance, credit/deposit, debit/withdraw
end refinement
```

```plaintext
refinement AS: AnyAccount \rightarrow SalaryAccount 
AN; inclusion
end refinement
```

Moreover, there is the identity between the ‘Customer’ role and the component design.

3.2 Constraints

The components, connectors, and refinements specified by the architecture only provide the vocabulary to write configurations. In other words, they only impose minimal, syntactic restrictions on the class of configurations for an intended software system.

To describe more complex constraints we use a first-order language where variables are typed by designs or connectors. Such variables range over the nodes of the current run-time configuration, in the case of a connector the referred node being the glue. The connector predicate

\[ \text{ConnectorVar}([\text{RefinementName}_1 \rightarrow \text{ComponentVar}_1, \ldots]) \]

is satisfied if the configuration contains a star-shaped subgraph with the node \( \text{ConnectorVar} \) connected to the given component nodes.


\[∀(∀∧∀∧(∀\exists)\)\]

\[∀(∀∧∀∧(∀\exists)\)\]
4. RECONFIGURATION

The only possible changes to a configuration are creation and removal of nodes (whether they are components or glues). These basic commands can be combined into more complex changes using sequencing, choice, and iteration operators. Changes can be grouped into scripts, which correspond to procedures in Pascal-like languages. Besides the global configuration variables declared at the architectural level, scripts may declare local configuration variables, and may have configuration variables as parameters. These variables are changed by the scripts and their values are used to compute the new configuration. There is also a command to query the current configuration, returning all tuples of nodes that match some conditions. These nodes can then be processed by the reconfiguration commands.

The semantics of basic reconfiguration commands is given by conditional graph productions over the categorical diagram representing the current run-time configuration. The reconfiguration interpreter executes these productions in the order specified by the scripts and composite commands.

4.1 Commands

As was the case with constraints on the architecture, the reconfiguration language to be presented next makes heavy use of node references, which are variables that are typed by designs. A node reference is undefined if it does not refer to any node of the current run-time configuration. In the following description of the language, Node stands for such a variable. The state of any node can be accessed using a dotted notation: Node.Var refers to the local variable Var of node Node. This makes it possible to write arbitrary expressions Exp involving the operations of the data types used by COMMUNITY and the values of the local variables of the nodes of the current configuration. Of course, Exp is undefined if at least one of the node references it uses is undefined.

The examples in this subsection assume the existence of the following declarations:

\( n : \text{NormalAccount} \quad s : \text{SalaryAccount} \quad c : \text{Customer} \quad \text{number} : \text{nat} \)

4.1.1 Component Creation

The command to create a component node is

\[
\text{[Node :=] create Design with } l_1 := \text{Exp}_1 \parallel l_2 := \text{Exp}_2 \ldots
\]

where Node must be declared of type Design and \( l_i \) are the local variables of Design. All local variables must be assigned to, in order to correctly initialise the new component. This reconfiguration command does nothing if some expression \( \text{Exp}_i \) is undefined. The reference to the created component is stored in Node, if given. The names occurring in \( \text{Exp}_i \) are resolved in the context in which this command occurs, not in the context of Design. This makes it possible to use script parameters that have the same names as the local variables of designs, to improve readability of the script.

For example, consider the following command:

\[
n := \text{create NormalAccount with balance := } n.\text{balance} \parallel \text{avgbal := } 0 \parallel \text{number := } \text{number}
\]

This creates a new account, transferring the money from an existing account \( n \). The number of the new account is given by the value of the variable declared above. After the command, \( n \) refers to the new account. If \( n \) is undefined, no component is created (because it is impossible to initialise it), and hence \( n \) remains undefined.

4.1.2 Component Refinement

A common reconfiguration is to update a component, e.g., to add new functionality, eliminate bugs, or improve efficiency. In our framework, this is achieved through replacement of a component by a refinement (other than the identity) of it. The syntax is

\[
\text{[Node :=] create Design}_2 \text{ as [Refinement}([\text{Node}_1])\text{] with } l_1 := \text{Exp}_1 \parallel \ldots
\]

where \( \text{Node}_2 \) is of type Design and \( \text{Node}_1 \)’s type is some Design.

This command removes \( \text{Node}_1 \) and replaces it by a new node \( \text{Node}_2 \). For any glue to which \( \text{Node}_1 \) was connected, through some channel \( c \), the new node becomes connected to the same glue through a channel that is the composition of \( c \) with Refinement. Only the new local variables \( l_i \)—i.e., those of Design\(_2\) that do not correspond to any variable of Design\(_1\)—are assigned to; the rest of the state of \( \text{Node}_2 \) is transferred from \( \text{Node}_1 \).

The command does nothing if \( \text{Node}_1 \) or some \( \text{Exp}_j \) is undefined, otherwise \( \text{Node}_2 \) becomes undefined after the execution of the command. If the parentheses and the refinement name are omitted, then Design\(_1\) and Design\(_2\) must be different and the refinement is an inclusion.

For example, the command

\[
s := \text{create SalaryAccount as } n \text{ with } \text{salary := } 100000
\]

replaces the normal account ‘\( n \)’ by a salary account with the same balance, average balance, and account number as ‘\( n \)’. Since design ‘SalaryAccount’ only adds one variable to design ‘NormalAccount’, only that variable has to be explicitly initialised.

4.1.3 Connector Creation

The command to create a connector has a slightly different syntax:

\[
\text{[Node :=] apply Connector ([Refinement}_1 \rightarrow ]\text{[Node}_1, \ldots\text{]) with } l_1 := \text{Exp}_1 \parallel l_2 := \text{Exp}_2 \ldots
\]

where \( l_i \) are the local variables of the glue of the Connector. This command applies the connector to the given components, creating a node typed by the glue, and linking it to the given components \( \text{Node}_1 \) through channels that are obtained by composition of the channels declared in the connector definition with the refinements given by the command. This composition can be calculated at compile time since all information is available. If the refinement name and arrow are absent, this indicates an identity or inclusion morphism.

This command does nothing if some \( \text{Node}_i \) or \( \text{Exp}_j \) is undefined, or if the creation of the connector would make output variables to be shared, which would violate the conditions on configurations.
For example, the command

\[
\text{apply Movement(c, AS} \rightarrow \text{s)} \text{ with credit := s.salary}
\]

connects the salary account created above with a customer who has chosen the maximum allowed credit, namely her/his salary. In this example the reference to the new node is not stored in any variable.

### 4.1.4 Removal

The command to remove a node is `remove Node`. After this command, `Node` is undefined. As usual, the command does nothing if `Node` was already undefined. If `Node` refers to a glue, then the node and all its attached channels are removed. If `Node` refers to a component, then it is removed only if it is attached to no channels, because otherwise the resulting configuration would not be an instance of the architecture anymore, since the glues connected to `Node` would have an arity less than prescribed by the architectural definition.

For example, the command `remove c` (or `remove s`) does not change the configuration if it comes right after the connector creation command given above, because customer `c` (resp. account `s`) is connected, namely to salary account `s` (resp. customer `c`).

### 4.1.5 Query

The query expression

\[
\text{match } \{ \text{Decl}_1 \mid \{ \text{Decl}_2 \} \text{ [Configuration] with Condition } \} \]

returns all tuples of nodes `Decl_1` for which there exist nodes `Decl_2` such that the current run-time configuration includes the sub-configuration `Configuration` in a state where `Condition` holds.

`Configuration` is just a set of (in)equalities or connector predicates (as defined in Section 3.2) over previously declared node variables, in particular those in `Decl_1` and `Decl_2`. The scope of those two declaration sequences is just the query expression. `Condition` is a boolean expression over the operations provided by the available data types, i.e., it may not contain connector predicates or (in)equalities over node references. In other words, `Condition` tests the state of the current configuration, while `Configuration` tests its topology.

The `with` part can be omitted if the condition is a tautology, and `Decl_2` and `Configuration` can also be omitted when not necessary, e.g., if we wish just to find in the current run-time configuration all nodes given in `Decl_1`.

For the query expression to be possible, the reconfiguration language must include record types `record(Field_1; Type_1; Field_2; Type_2; ...)` and list types `list(Type)` with the usual operations `head`, `tail`, `cons`, `append`, and the empty list constant `∅`. The type of the query expression is then `list(record(Decl_1))`.

By storing the node tuples that match the query in a list, they become amenable to further manipulation, like iteration, sorting, filtering according to other criteria, counting, etc. Moreover, computing once the nodes on which we want to further operate, eliminates the need to use dummy variables to make sure that no operation is performed twice on the same tuple of nodes.

For example, the expression

\[
\text{match } \{ c: \text{Customer} \mid a: \text{SalaryAccount}; m: \text{Movement} (m(c, AS} \rightarrow a) \text{ with } m.\text{credit} = 0 \}
\]

selects all customers that have a salary account but have chosen not to have any credit. The resulting list can be used for different purposes, e.g., just counting how many customers are in that situation, or transforming those accounts automatically into normal accounts. The latter involves removing the connector and the salary account, creating a normal account with the same balance and number, and then connecting it to the customer. Therefore, a better expression would be

\[
\text{match } \{ c: \text{Customer}; a: \text{SalaryAccount}; m: \text{Movement} (m(c, AS} \rightarrow a) \text{ with } m.\text{credit} = 0 \}
\]

because it would also return the references to the accounts and movements necessary for the ensuing transformations.

As another example, `match \{ a: \text{SalaryAccount} \mid a ≠ s \}` returns all salary accounts except the one referred by variable `s`. If `s` is undefined, so is the configuration condition, and therefore the query returns the empty list.

### 4.1.6 Assignment

The assignment `Var := Exp` updates the configuration variable `Var`, if `Exp` is not undefined. Notice that `Var` is not a local variable of some node, because reconfiguration does not change the state of existing nodes; it only initialises new nodes and removes nodes.

For example, assuming the existence of a function to calculate the length of a list, the assignment

\[
\text{number := length(append(match } \{ a: \text{NormalAccount} \}, \text{ match } \{ a: \text{SalaryAccount} \})}
\]

would store in ‘number’ how many accounts the bank currently has.

### 4.1.7 Composite Commands

The basic commands just presented can be combined into composite commands using the sequencing operator `;`, the conditional command

\[
\text{if Condition then Command [else Command] end if}
\]

and the iteration command

\[
\text{while Condition loop Command end loop}
\]

where `Command` is a basic or composite command, and `Condition` is as explained in Section 4.1.5.

Since iterating through a list of nodes is so frequent, we introduce the following abbreviation:

\[
\text{for Var in Expression loop Command end loop}
\]
Expression is a list, Var must be of the type of the list elements, and this command expands into

NewVar := Expression;
while NewVar ≠ ∅ loop
  Var := head(NewVar); NewVar := tail(NewVar);
  Command
end loop

For example, to remove all unconnected customers, the command is simply

\[
\text{for i in match } \{\text{c:Customer}\} \text{ loop remove i end loop}
\]

with 'i': record(c:Customer)'. In fact, it is guaranteed that remove does nothing if 'c' is connected.

4.2 Scripts

A script is a command that has a name so that it can be called from other scripts. A script may have input and output parameters, and private variables, with concrete syntax as for COMMUNITY designs (see examples below). Scripts may be recursive (e.g., this is useful to process tree topologies) and nested. Only top-level scripts can be called directly by the user. The coordination between computation and reconfiguration is achieved by a reconfiguration interpreter that constantly executes the following loop:

1. Execute one computation step on the run-time configuration.
2. Let the user execute one of the scripts, if s/he wishes.
3. If there is a script called ‘Main’, execute it.
4. Go to step 1.

Step 2 caters for ad-hoc reconfiguration and step 3 handles programmed reconfiguration. By interleaving computation and reconfiguration (as also done in [15]), one can be assured that changes to the configuration will be triggered by changes to the state as soon as needed. Furthermore, the changes performed in step 2 and 3 are committed to the architecture only if, after execution of the called script, the constraints on the architecture are still valid.

Notice that users may only call scripts; they may not write arbitrary commands. This is to prevent them from making changes that would invalidate the architectural invariants. We assume that only system administrators have the necessary overall knowledge of the system to write scripts. Ad-hoc reconfiguration is also coped by letting the set of available scripts change during system life-time. The administrator may hence add, remove or replace scripts at any time.

We now present the scripts for our bank example. We begin with the main script. It is responsible for transforming salary accounts automatically into normal accounts if the average balance is negative, and thereby updates the 'salAccounts' counter.

**script Main**

\[
\text{prv } n: \text{NormalAccount}; i: \text{record(m:Movement; c:Customer)}
\]

\[
\text{s: record(a:SalaryAccount)}
\]

\[
\text{for i in match } \{\text{a:SalaryAccount} \mid \text{with a.avgbal < 0}\} \text{ loop}
\]

\[
i := \text{head(match } \{\text{m:Movement; c:Customer } \mid \text{m(c, AS → s.a)}\})\;
\]

\[
n := \text{create NormalAccount with balance := s.a.balance} \mid \text{avgbal := s.a.avgbal} \mid \text{number := s.a.number; remove i.m; remove s.a; salAccounts := salAccounts - 1; apply Movement(i.c, AN → n) with credit := 0 end loop end script}
\]

Notice how the state of the salary account is transferred to the normal account.

The next script creates a normal account, with a given number. It also creates a client and connects it to the account. The script does nothing if an account with the given number already exists.

\[
\text{script CreateNormal in number: nat out n: NormalAccount prv c: Customer}
\]

\[
\text{if match } \{\text{a:NormalAccount} \mid \text{with a.number = number}\} = \emptyset \
\quad \land \text{match } \{\text{a:SalaryAccount} \mid \text{with a.number = number}\} = \emptyset 
\quad \text{then}
\]

\[
n := \text{create NormalAccount with balance := 0} \mid \text{avgbal := 0} \mid \text{number := number;}
\]

\[
c := \text{create Customer with value := 0} \mid \text{ready := false;}
\]

\[
\text{apply Movement(c, AN → n) with credit := 0; allAccounts := allAccounts + 1 end if end script}
\]

The third script creates a salary account, given the salary, the credit the customer wishes, and the account number. The script first checks that the credit asked for is less than the salary. Next, it proceeds according to the three possible cases: if a salary account with that number already exists, nothing is done; if a normal account with that number exists, it is refined into a salary account, and the connector is replaced; otherwise, the salary account has to be created from scratch. Just to illustrate calling of scripts, this is done by creating a normal account and then proceeding as in the second case.

\[
\text{script CreateSalary in salary, credit, number: nat out s: SalaryAccount}
\]

\[
\text{prv n: NormalAccount; i: list(record(n: NormalAccount))}
\]

\[
i := \text{record(m:Movement; c:Customer)}
\]

\[
\text{if credit ≤ salary} \land \text{match } \{\text{s:SalaryAccount} \mid \text{with s.number = number}\} = \emptyset 
\quad \text{then}
\]

\[
l := \text{match } \{\text{n:NormalAccount} \mid \text{with n.number = number}\};
\]

\[
\text{if } l = \emptyset \text{ then CreateNormal(number, n)}
\]

\[
\text{else } n := \text{head}(l).n
\]

\[
\text{end if; i := head(match } \{\text{m:Movement c:Customer } \mid \text{m(c, AN → n)}\})
\]

\[
\text{remove i.m; s := create SalaryAccount as s with salary := salary; create Movement(i.c, AS → s) with credit := credit;}
\]


4.3 Semantics

There are two kinds of commands: the basic commands perform the actual reconfiguration, while the composite commands and scripts only control the flow of execution. The semantics we provide to the language consists in translating the basic commands into the graph rewrite rules (also called graph productions) defined in [29, 30]. The composite commands then just instruct the graph rewriting machine in which order the rules are to be executed. We do not present the complete translation process, nor do we provide formal definitions. We just sketch the main idea and provide concrete examples. A report with further details is in preparation.

The compilation of the reconfiguration commands into productions proceeds as follows. First, each component and glue design is compiled into a design that adds a new private variable ‘NI: nat’, such that NI is a name that does not occur in any design given in the architecture. The purpose of the variable is to hold a unique node identifier. For our example, we assume NI is ‘node’.

Second, the compiler generates configuration designs that have only private variables. Each design corresponds to one lexical scoping level (i.e., to one reconfiguration script), and the private variables correspond to the configuration variables that are visible in that level. This means that all those designs include the global configuration variables declared with the architecture. If a configuration variable is a node reference (e.g., c:Customer) then it will be compiled into a variable of type ‘nat’ (i.e., c:nat). That variable will hold zero if the node reference is undefined, otherwise it will hold the value of the NI variable of the referred node. Moreover, all those configuration designs have a variable ‘C: nat’ which counts how many nodes have been globally created, so that each newly created node can get a unique identifier. The name C must of course be different from the names of all configuration variables. For our example we assume C is ‘nodes’. The actual names of the designs must be chosen by the compiler so that it does not conflict with any other design specified in the architecture. For our example, we assume those designs are named ‘C_S’ with S ranging over the script names.

A basic command in script s is translated into a set of graph productions in which the left-hand side always includes ‘C_S’ and any other nodes that are referred by the expressions occurring in the command. The right-hand side includes also those same nodes, but ‘C_S’ is updated with the new values for the configuration variables and for the node counter. The right-hand side also includes any newly created component or glue and omits any removed component or glue.

As an example, we show in Figure 1 the graph production corresponding to the component creation command given in the ‘Main’ script in Section 4.2. Each node is labelled with the design name and with design variable/logical value pairs. According to the definitions in [29, 30], the production can only be applied if there is a substitution for the logical variables vnodes, vn, bal, etc., such that the left hand side graph can be mapped to a subgraph of the current run-time configuration. Notice that if the node reference ‘sa’ is undefined (i.e., sa = 0), then the production cannot be applied (because ‘node’ is always positive), and the configuration does not change, as required by the description of create in Section 4.1.1. Notice also how C_Main is updated and how the new node is initialised.

Our next example, in Figure 2, is the translation of the connector removal command of script ‘Main’. Notice that one rule is generated for each possible instantiation of the roles. In this case, there are only two possibilities: the first role is instantiated with a customer and the second one is instantiated with a normal or salary account. In the particular context of the execution of script ‘Main’, by the time one of these rules is executed, one has ve = cust. The channel bindings have been omitted from the figure due to space limitations.

The command to replace a component is the most complex one, because one cannot know a priori to which connectors the component to be replaced is attached. Therefore the command is compiled into a set of productions that do the replacement in three phases: the first introduces the new component, the second relinks all connectors to the new component, and the last phase removes the original component. For the second phase, there is one production for each role of each connector that the node to be replaced may instantiate. For example, if there were two connectors C1(R1, R2) and C2(R4, R5, R6), and a node n1 of type N1 were to be replaced by a node n2 of type N2, with refinements from R1, R4 and R6 to N1, then there would be three productions, one replacing the first channel of C1 to n1 by a channel from C2 to n2, another production for the first channel of C2 and the last production for the third channel of C2. The set of productions generated for this second phase of the replacement is to be applied until no left-hand side can be matched to the current configuration. At that point, the node to be replaced has no connector attached and the single rule for the last phase can be applied: it simply removes the node, updating the node reference given in the command.

As a concrete example, let us take the component refinement command of ‘CreateSalary’. The semantics of this command is given by three productions (Figure 3). The first introduces a new salary account, transfers the state from ‘n’, initialises the ‘salary’ local variable, and updates the node reference ‘s’. The second production rebinds any ‘Movement’ connector that might be attached to ‘n’ to the new node ‘s’. The rebinding is done by moving the channel between the glue and the old node to the new node. The last rule removes the node referred by ‘n’, which becomes undefined (i.e., zero).

5. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Dynamic reconfiguration is an important topic for an increasing number of software systems that must be continuously available while coping with all kinds of changes. However, to our knowledge, there is no work that tackles this problem from the Software Architecture point of view and provides a formally based language that integrates the three aspects argued for in [26]: architectural description, constraint, and modification. This paper is a first step in that direction.

We have provided an approach that is both heterogeneous (for pragmatic reasons) and uniform (for formal reasons). It is heterogeneous because it provides an dedicated, separate sub-language for each aspect: a program design language for computation, a declarative language for constraints, and an operational language for reconfiguration. It is uniform because it uses Category Theory as a semantic foundation both for configurations (taken as categorical diagrams) and reconfiguration (achieved through algebraic graph
The approach also provides a strict separation between computation and (re)configuration, while keeping them explicitly related. This was already done at the formal level in our previous papers [29][30], and the language presented herein complies with that principle: the components do not have access nor can change the configuration variables or call scripts, and the reconfiguration scripts have access but cannot change the state of components. Notice that replacing a component by another one of the same design but with a different state is not what we mean by state change, because there are actually two components involved: the original one is removed and a new one is created.

The main goal of our language is to provide high-level constructs that are suited to the architectural level of description of a system. In particular, interactions are created and removed at the level of connectors, hence guaranteeing that configurations are always instances of the architecture. This contrasts with other approaches which, like the Armani ADL [24], force the designer to write explicit constraints to prevent dangling roles, or, like distributed systems approaches, require reconfiguration scripts to connect the components port by port.

Because our emphasis was on obtaining an integrated language that covers the three aspects (description, constraints, modification), we are aware that other approaches handle some individual aspects better, but in turn they have to sacrifice formality or breadth. For example, Armani allows more complex architectures and constraints, Gerel [7] provides more expressive queries, and Goudarzi [23] takes full advantage of the Java language to program reconfigurations.

Therefore, in future work, we want to further investigate which fundamental constructs (not syntactic sugar!) are needed for the various aspects, and how they can be formally grounded on our algebraic framework. Practical feedback from such research will be gathered by incorporating such reconfiguration primitives into a tool [12] being built to construct and manage coordination contracts—which are akin to connectors—among components implementing core business functionalities [3].

Two other issues are also of concern to us. First, we would like to be able to prove whether a given script maintains the architectural invariants. For that purpose we intend to adapt the logic developed in [10]. Second, we want to extend this work to allow the architecture itself to evolve. This means that during some period the configuration is not an instance of any architecture, neither the original nor the new one. This poses interesting problems both for the language design (because the script will be typed by two architectural descriptions) and for the verification of the correctness of such a reconfiguration process. We will look into [14] and see how it can be adapted to our framework.

**Acknowledgments**

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### 6. REFERENCES


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**Figure 1: Semantics of ‘n := create NormalAccount with balance := s.a.balance \| avgbal := s.a.avgbal \| number := s.a.number’**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>C Main</th>
<th>SalaryAccount</th>
<th>C Main</th>
<th>SalaryAccount</th>
<th>NormalAccount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>nodes</td>
<td>vnodes</td>
<td>node</td>
<td>vnodes + 1</td>
<td>vnodes + 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>in</td>
<td>balance</td>
<td>avgbal</td>
<td>bal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i</td>
<td>(im, ic)</td>
<td>number</td>
<td>avg</td>
<td>avg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>s</td>
<td>(sa)</td>
<td>salary</td>
<td>bal</td>
<td>bal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>avgbal</td>
<td>s.a.avgbal</td>
<td>s.a.avgbal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>number</td>
<td>s.a.number'</td>
<td>s.a.number'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 2: Semantics of ‘remove i.m’


Figure 3: Semantics of ‘s := create SalaryAccount as n with salary := salary’


