Design Patterns as Language Constructs

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Abstract
Design patterns have proven to be very useful for the design of object-oriented systems. The power of design patterns stems from their ability to provide generic solutions to reappearing problems that can be specialised for particular situations. The implementation of design patterns, however, has received only little attention and we have identified four problems associated with the implementation of design patterns using conventional object-oriented languages. First, the *traceability* of a design pattern in the implementation is often insufficient; often the design pattern is 'lost'. Second, since several patterns require an object to forward messages to other objects to increase flexibility, the *self problem* often occurs. Thirdly, since the pattern implementation is mixed with the domain class, the *reusability* of pattern implementations is often limited. Finally, implementing design patterns may present significant *implementation overhead* for the software engineer. Often, a, potentially large, number of simple methods has to be implemented with trivial behaviour, e.g. forwarding a message to another object. In this paper, a solution to these problems is presented in the context of the layered object model (**LayOM**). **LayOM** provides language support for the explicit representation of design patterns in the programming language. **LayOM** is an extended object-oriented language in that it contains several components that are not part of the conventional object model, such as *states*, *categories* and *layers*. Layers are used to represent design patterns at the level of the programming language and example layer types for eight design patterns are presented, i.e. `Adapter`, `Bridge`, `Composite`, `Facade`, `State`, `Observer`, `Strategy` and `Mediator`. Since **LayOM** is an extensible language, the software engineer may extend the language model with abstractions for other design patterns.

1 Introduction

Design patterns are becoming increasingly popular as a mechanism to describe solutions to general design problems that can be customised to particular applications. Several authors, e.g. [Gamma *et al.* 94, Pree 95, Coplien & Schmidt 95], have written about the various aspects of design patterns. Several categories of design patterns have been proposed for both general, i.e. domain independent, patterns, as well as domain specific patterns. Since our collective understanding of the object-oriented paradigm is develops continuously, the number of available design patterns is also growing constantly.

A software engineer uses a *paradigm*, i.e. a set of related concepts, when designing a system. The size and contents of the concept set is depending on the experience of the software engineer. An inexperienced software engineer may just use the concepts present in the used programming language, whereas an experienced engineer has a much larger set. The popularity of design patterns is based on their ability to capture the design concepts of a experienced software engineer, i.e. good designs. Most authors propose design patterns as a mechanism specifically used during design. The relation to the implementation level is often discussed in terms of example or template code that allows the software engineer to conveniently transform the design pattern. In general, a traditional object-oriented language such as C++ is used. The disadvantage of a programming language based on the conventional object-oriented paradigm such as C++ is that no support for the representation of design patterns is provided by the language. This leads to problems related to traceability, the *self* problem, expressiveness and implementation overhead problems related to the implementation of design patterns.

We take the standpoint that design patterns are part of the software engineer's paradigm and that it is the task of the programming language to represent the concepts in the paradigm as accurate as possible. Although it is impossible to represent all concepts, we believe that, with the proper programming language design, many more concepts, including several design patterns, could be represented by the programming language.

In this paper, the layered object model (**LayOM**) is proposed as a language model with explicit support for representing design patterns. **LayOM** is a language model that provides explicit support for modelling constructs used during object-

oriented design, such as *design patterns*, but also *relations* between objects and *abstract object state*. An object in **LayOM** consists, next to instance variables and methods, of states, categories and layers. Layers encapsulate the object and intercept messages that are send to and by the objects. The layers are organised into classes and each layer class represents a concept, such as a relation with another object or a design pattern. **LayOM** is supported by a development environment that translates classes and applications defined in **LayOM** into C++ code. The generated C++ code can then be used to construct applications, either direct or integrated with existing C++ code. The advantage of using **LayOM** instead of a traditional object-oriented language is that it does not suffer from the identified problems related to the implementation of design patterns. **LayOM** can be used without losing compatibility with legacy systems and code developed elsewhere as it is translated to C++. The resulting C++ code can be integrated in other code as any C++ program.

The remainder of this paper is organised as follows. In the next section, design patterns are introduced and the problems associated with the implementation of design patterns are discussed. In section 3, the layered object model is presented. Section 4 describes the implementation of four structural and four behavioural design patterns as layers of LayOM. Section 5 compares the presented ideas with related work and the paper is concluded in section 6.

2 Design Patterns

When designing a system, the software engineer makes use of a *paradigm*, i.e. a set of related concepts. Within the object-oriented paradigm, concepts such as object, class, method, inheritance, etc. are used to model the system. An inexperienced engineer generally has a small concept set, primarily consisting of the concepts represented in the used programming language. Somewhat more experienced software engineers have access to larger concept sets, including the concepts presents in a typical data structures and algorithms course. After this course, the only way for a student to get access to more advanced concepts is through personal, hands-on experience. The popularity of design patterns, we believe, stems from their ability to capture such implicit experience and make it shared by the (object-oriented) software engineering community.

Patterns, as a concept, originate from the work by Christopher Alexander [Alexander et al. 77]. Each pattern describes a recurring problem and a generic solution that can be adopted for particular situations. A set of patterns can be organised in a *pattern language*, thus providing a set of composable solutions for problems in a particular domain.

The patterns notion has been adopted in object-orientation as *design patterns*. [Gamma et al. 94] define design patterns as *descriptions of communicating objects and classes that are customised to solve a general design problem in a particular context*. The authors present a catalogue of 23 design patterns, organised in three categories depending on the pattern's purpose. *Creational patterns* are concerned with object creation, whereas *structural patterns* address the composition of classes and objects. *Behavioural patterns* are concerned with the ways in which classes or objects interact and distribute responsibility.

However, the domain of patterns is not limited to the design patterns discussed by [Gamma et al. 94]. For example, [Pree 95] discusses, next to the design pattern catalogue by [Gamma et al. 94], object-oriented patterns [Coad 92], coding patterns, framework cookbooks and formal contracts [Helm et al. 90] as patterns for solving general design problems. [Buschmann et al. 96] classifies design patterns according to granularity, functionality and structural principles. For example, three levels of granularity are recognised, i.e. *architectural frameworks*, *design patterns* and *idioms*. Also, in [Coplien & Schmidt 95] and [Vlissides et al. 95], several design pattern related papers are presented. Due to the fact that design patterns have only recently become popular in the object-oriented community, no generally accepted classification of design patterns exists.

An issue seldom addressed by the design pattern community is the implementation support for design patterns. Since design patterns are part of the set of concepts, i.e. the paradigm, used by a software engineer for modelling systems, the engineer would benefit from handling design patterns as first-class entities both during design and implementation. I.e. a pattern used during design should be implementable as an identifiable unit in the programming language. The goal of a programming language design is to represent the concepts in the software development paradigm as accurately as possible.

When implementing design patterns using a conventional object-oriented language, e.g. C++, one can identify several problems. The problems we identified are discussed in the next section, but the underlying problem is that the design pattern cannot be represented as a first-class entity. Since a design pattern often affects multiple aspects, e.g. methods, of a class, or even multiple classes or objects, a pattern language construct often cannot be inherited or composed in

the traditional way. More powerful composition techniques are required that allow the design pattern to superimpose its behaviour on a class or object, while both the pattern and the domain entity remain identifiable entities.

2.1 Problems of Implementing Design Patterns

We focus in this paper on the implementation in an object-oriented language of the design patterns that are contained in an object-oriented design model. We have experienced problems when implementing the design patterns in a traditional object-oriented language as C++. These problems are primarily related to the traceability of design patterns in the implementation, the self problem, language expressiveness and the implementation overhead of design patterns.

- **Traceability**: The traceability of a design pattern is often lost because the programming language does not support a corresponding concept. The software engineer is thus required to implement the pattern as distributed methods and message exchanges, i.e. the pattern which is a conceptual entity at the design level is scattered over different parts of an object or even multiple objects. This problem has also been identified by [Soukup 95].
- **Self problem**: The implementation of several design patterns requires forwarding of messages from an object receiving a message to an object implementing the behaviour that is to be executed in response to the message. The receiving object can, for example, be an application domain object which delegates some messages to a strategy object. However, once the message is forwarded, the reference to the object originally receiving the message is no longer available and references to self refer to the delegated object, rather than to the original receiver of the message. The problem is known as the *self problem* [Lieberman 86].
- **Reusability**: Design patterns are primarily presented as design structures. Since design patterns often cover several parts of an object, or even multiple objects, patterns have no first class representation at the implementation level. The implementation of a design pattern can therefore not be reused and, although its design is reused, the software engineer is forced to implement the pattern over and over again.
- **Implementation Overhead**: The implementation overhead problem is due to the fact that the software engineer, when implementing a design pattern, often has to implement several methods with only trivial behaviour, e.g. forwarding a message to another object or method. This leads to significant overhead for the software engineer and decreased understandability of the resulting code.

Examples of these problems can be found in section 4. To address these problems, we propose a solution within the context of the layered object model, discussed in section 3. The layered object model is an extensible object model and its objects are encapsulated by so-called *layers*. In this paper, we illustrate how a design pattern can be implemented as a layer type. The software engineer can instantiate the layer type corresponding to a design pattern and associate a specification with the layer that specialises the behaviour of the layer type for the particular context. We illustrate our approach by applying it to eight design patterns from the design pattern catalogue by [Gamma et al. 94]. The reason for using this catalogue is that the semantics of these design patterns are relatively well defined and address relevant design problems.

3 Layered Object Model

The layered object model is an extended object model, i.e. it defines additional components next to the traditional object model components such as layers, states and categories. In figure 1, an example **LayOM** object is presented. The layers encapsulate the object, so that messages send to or by the object have to pass the layers. Each layer, when it intercepts a message, converts the message into a passive message object and evaluates the contents to determine the appropriate course of action. Layers can be used for various types of functionality. Layer classes have been defined

for the representation of relations between objects, discussed in section 3.1 and 3.2. In this paper, we present the representation of design patterns through the use of layers.

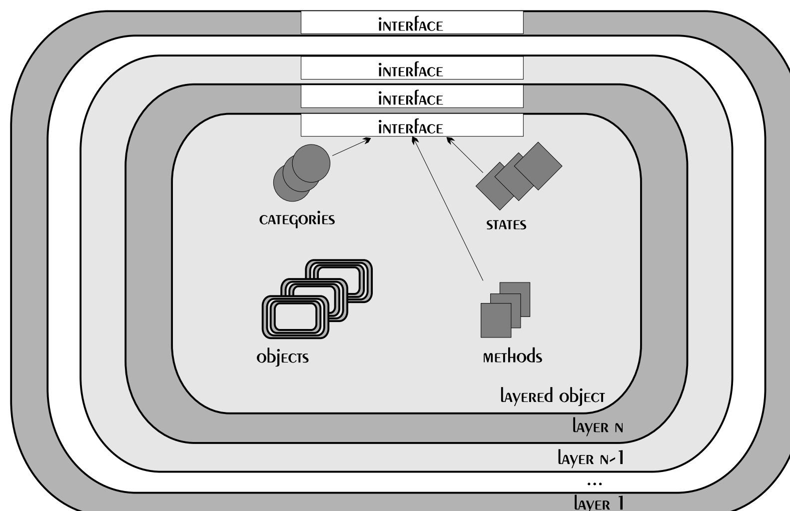

Figure 1. The layered object model

A **LayOM** object contains, as any object model, instance variables and methods. The semantics of these components is very similar to the conventional object model. The only difference is that instance variables can have encapsulating layers adding functionality to the instance variable. In figure 2, an example **LayOM** class `TextEditWindow` is shown, containing one instance variable `loc`.

A *state* in **LayOM** is an abstraction of the internal state of the object. In **LayOM**, the internal state of an object is referred to as the *concrete state*. Based on the object's concrete state, the software engineer can define an externally visible abstraction of the concrete state, referred to as the abstract state of an object. The abstract object state is generally simpler in both the number of dimensions, as well as in the domains of the state dimensions. In figure 2, the abstract state `distFromOrigin` is shown. It abstracts the location of the mouse and the window origin into a distance measure. We refer to [Bosch 96b] for an extended description of abstract object state.

A category is an expression that defines a client category. A client category describes the discriminating characteristics of a subset of the possible clients that should be treated equally by the class. For example, the class in figure 2 defines a `Programmer` client category, restricting the use of the object to instances of class `Programmer` and its subclasses. The behavioural layer types use categories to determine whether the sender of a message is a member of a client category. If the sender is a member, the message is subject to the semantics of the specification of the behavioural layer type instance.

A layer, as mentioned, encapsulates the object and intercepts messages. It can perform all kinds of behaviour, either in response to a message or otherwise. Previously, layers have primarily been used to represent relations between objects. In **LayOM**, relations have been classified into structural relations, behavioural relations and application-domain relations.

Structural relation types define the structure of a class and provide *reuse*. These relation types can be used to *extend* the functionality of a class. Inheritance and delegation are examples of structural relation types.

The second type of relations are the *behavioural relations* that are used to relate an object to its clients. The functionality of the class is used by client objects and the class can define a behavioural relation with each client (or client category). Behavioural relations *restrict* the behaviour of the class. For instance, some methods might be restricted to certain clients or in specific situations.

The third type of relations are *application domain relations*. Many domains have, next to reusable application domain classes, also application domain relation types that can be reused. For instance, the *controls* relation type is a very important type of relation in the domain of process control. In the following two sections, structural and behavioural relation layer types will be discussed. For information on application-domain relation types, we refer to [Bosch 95, Bosch 96a].

The class in figure 2 has three layers. The `PartOf` layer defines an instance of `TextEditor` as a part of the class. The `PartialInherit` layer defines that class `TextEditWindow` inherits all methods from class `Window`, except method `moveOrigin`. The `RestrictState` layer restricts access to instances of class `Programmer` and its subclasses, but only if the distance between the mouse location and the window origin is less than 100 units.

```
class TextEditWindow
   layers
      rs : RestrictState(Programmer,accept all when distFromOrigin<100 otherwise reject);
      pin : PartialInherit(Window, *, (moveOrigin));
      po : PartOf(TextEditor);
   variables
      loc : Location;
   methods
      moveOrigin(newLoc : Location) returns Boolean
         begin
            loc := newLoc;
            self.updateWindow;
         end;
   states
      distFromOrigin returns Point
         begin return ((lox.x - self.origin.x).sqr + (lox.y - self.origin.y).sqr).sqrt; end;
   categories
      Programmer
         begin sender.subClassOf(Programmer); end;
end; // class TextEditWindow
```

Figure 2. Example LayOM class TextEditWindow

Next to an extended object model, the layered object model is also an *extensible* object model, i.e. the object model can be extended by the software engineer with new components. **LayOM** can, for example, be extended with new layer types, but also with structural components, such as *events*. The notion of extensibility, which is a core feature of the object-oriented paradigm, has been applied to the object model itself. Object model extensibility may seem useful in theory, but in order to apply it in practice it requires extensibility of the translator or compiler associated with the language. In the case of **LayOM**, classes and applications are translated into C++. The generated classes can be combined with existing, hand-written C++ code to form an executable. The **LayOM** compiler is based on *delegating compiler objects* [Bosch 96c], a concept that facilitates modularisation and reuse of compiler specifications and extensibility of the resulting compiler. The implementation of the **LayOM** compiler is discussed in section 3.3.

3.1 Structural Relation Layers

Structural relation types, as described above, define the *structure* of an application. A class uses the structural relations to *extend* its behaviour and the class can be seen as the *client*, i.e. the class that obtains functionality provided by other classes. Generally, three types of structural relations are used in object-oriented systems development: *inheritance*, *delegation* and *part-of*. These types of relation all provide some form of *reuse*. The inherited, delegated or part object provides behaviour that is reused by, respectively, the inheriting, delegating or whole object. Therefore, next to referring to these relation types as *structural*, we can also define them as *reuse* relations.

Orthogonal to the discussed relation types one can recognise two additional dimensions of describing the extended behaviour of an object, i.e. *conditionality*, and *partiality*. Conditionality indicates that the reusing object limits the reuse to only occur when it is in certain states. Partially indicates that the reusing object reuses only part of the reused object.

We consider it very important that a relation between two classes or objects, regardless of its complexity, is modelled as a single entity within the model. An alternative approach would be to define a collection of orthogonal constructs and to decompose a relation between objects into instances of each orthogonal construct. This approach does, however, not represent a conceptual entity in analysis and design as an entity in the language model.

The different aspects of a structural relation, i.e. its type, partiality and conditionality, form a three-dimensional space which contains all possible combinations. In compliance with our modelling principle, we define a relation type for each combination. This results in twelve structural relation types. These structural relation types are shown in table 1.

Due to space constraints, it is not possible to describe the syntax and semantics of all structural relation types. Instead, one layer of type *Partial Inheritance* is described in detail. The semantics of the other layer types can be deduced by the reader.

relation type	inheritance	delegation	part-of
default	Inherit	Delegate	PartOf
conditionality	ConditionalInherit	ConditionalDelegate	ConditionalPartOf
partiality	PartialInherit	PartialDelegate	PartialPartOf
conditional and partial	CondPartInherit	CondPartDelegate	CondPartPartOf

Table 1. Structural relation type identifiers

In figure 2, class `TextEditWindow` contains a partial inheritance layer with the following configuration:

```
pin: PartialInherit(Window, *, (moveOrigin));
```

The semantics of the partial inheritance layer is, that a part of the interface of the inherited class is reused or excluded. The name of this layer is `pin` and its type is `PartialInherit`. The layer type accepts three arguments. The first argument is the name of the class that is inherited from; `Window` in this case. The second argument is a '*' or a list of interface elements and indicates the interface elements that are to be inherited. The '*' in this example indicates that all interface elements are inherited. The third argument can also contain a '*' or a list of interface elements. In this example, the list only consists of one element: `moveOrigin`. The semantics of layer `pin` is that class `TextEditWindow` inherits the complete interface of class `Window`, except for `moveOrigin`.

Note that, different from other object-oriented languages, the software engineer has to explicitly specify which interface elements of the superclass are to be inherited (or reused). A method is not automatically overridden by subclass method with the same name.

In figure 3, the implementation of this semantics is illustrated. The partial inheritance layer is the second layer of class `TextEditWindow`. There is the most outer layer, shown around layer `pin` and an inner layer, shown around `TextEditWindow`. All inheritance layers create an instance of the inherited superclass. In figure 3, an instance of class `Window` is shown. The layer contains a message handler, that, for each received message, determines whether the message is passed on inwards or outwards or that it is redirected to the instance of class `Window`. In the figure, an incoming message is shown. The message is reified and handed to the message handler. The message handler reads the selector field of the message and compares it with the (partially) inherited interface of class `Window`. If the selector is part of the set of interface elements, the message is redirected to the instance of class `Window` (situation (b) in figure 3). If the selector does not match with the interface of class `Window`, it is not redirected but forwarded to the next layer (situation (a) in figure 3).

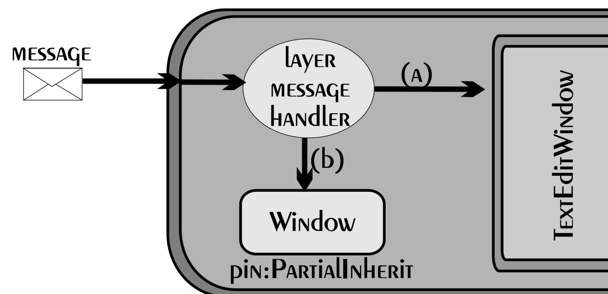

Figure 3. The `PartialInherit` layer

For an extensive description of the semantics of the other structural relation types we refer to [Bosch 95, Bosch 96a].

3.2 Behavioural Relation Layers

In the previous section, we discussed relations where the object containing the relation is the client, i.e. the object 'extends' itself with the structural relations. In this section we discuss relation types between the object and its clients. These relation types, generally, constrain the access of clients and the behaviour of the object in some way.

In order to keep the type and number of clients of the object open ended, we define client categories and for each message is determined whether the sender of the message is a member of a client category. The message is then subject to the behavioural relation(s) defined for that client category.

A relation between the object and a client category can be defined by a number of behavioural constraints. The types of constraints are *client-based access*, *state-based access*, *concurrency* and *real-time*. The layered object model takes a different approach to defining modelling constructs when compared to the conventional approaches. Rather than aiming at defining 'clean', orthogonal constructs, we try to define constructs that correspond to conceptual entities. Hence, we are convinced, supported by the object-oriented analysis and design methods, that the concept of a relation between objects is a conceptual entity and that the different aspects of this relation should be defined as part of this relation, rather than as several unrelated orthogonal constructs that, when combined, provide equivalent behaviour.

In table 2, the behavioural relation (or layer) types are shown. Each relation type can be viewed as a location in the space build by the four constraint dimensions defined above. However, a relation always requires a client category to be specified. This results in three dimensions which can be part of or not part of the relation. For each combination, a relation type is defined.

No factor	One factor	Two factors	Three factors
RestrictClient	RestrictState	RestrictStateAndConc	RestrictStateConcAndTime
	RestrictConc	RestrictStateAndTime	
	RestrictTime	RestrictConcAndTime	

Table 2. Behavioural relation type identifiers

Again, due to space constraints, we are unable to discuss the semantics of all behavioural relation types. Instead, we will discuss the semantics of the `RestrictState` layer type in detail.

The `RestrictState` layer type restricts the access for a particular client category when the object is in a certain states. Class `TextEditWindow` (see figure 2) has a `RestrictState` layer with the following configuration syntax:

```
rs : RestrictState(Programmer, accept all when distFromOrigin < 100 otherwise reject);
```

The semantics of this layer specification is the following. Clients that are classified as members of the `Programmer` client category can access all methods of the object provided that `distFromOrigin` is less than or equal to 100. If it is larger than 100, the message is rejected, i.e. an error message is returned to the client object that sent the message.

In figure 4, the functionality of the `RestrictState` layer type is presented graphically. The layer will intercept messages sent to the object. If the message is sent by an object that is not classified as a member of the client category that is indicated by the layer specification, the message will just be passed on to the next layer. Otherwise, the selector of the message is matched with the identifier list in the layer specification. If it matches, the state that is referred to in the specification is evaluated. Depending on the use of the keyword `unless` or `when`, the message will be passed on to the next layer (see (a) in figure 4). If the message is not passed on, the message is stored in the message queue if the `delay` keyword is used (see (b) in figure 4) or, in case of the use of keyword `reject`, the message is discarded and an error message is sent to the sender object (see (c) in figure 4).

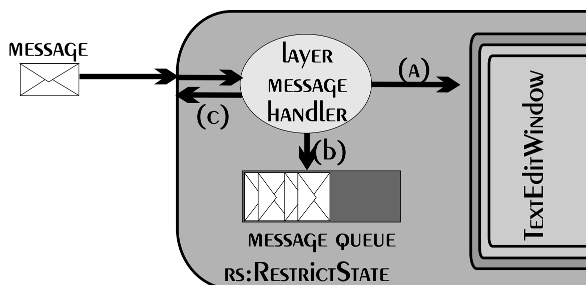

Figure 4. The `RestrictState` layer

3.3 Implementation

As mentioned earlier, the layered object model is both an *extended* and an *extensible* object model. Extended, since it contains components in addition to the components of the traditional object model, i.e. states, categories and layers. Extensible, since it may be extended with new components whenever the software engineer considers it to be appropriate. Possible extensions are new layer types, but also new object components such as events. Over the years, primarily new layer types for the representation of structural and behavioural inter-object relations, acquaintance handling and, the topic of this paper, design patterns have been defined. However, over time it may become clear that the layer types for design pattern represented proposed in the next section lack expressiveness for particular situations or should be implemented differently. In response to this, the language should be extended or changed to reflect these new requirements. In conventional object-oriented languages this, would be very complex due to the monolithic, rigid compiler technology that is used to construct compilers for these languages. However, it is important to make clear that the rigidness of conventional programming languages is due to technological problems, i.e. compiler technology, and not due to conceptual or other human factors. The software engineer, while modelling a domain, ideally is able to represent each domain concept with a corresponding concept in the programming language.

Since traditional compiler technology is unsuitable to implement extensible languages, an alternative approach had to be defined. The implementation of the layered object model is based on the notion of *delegating compiler objects* (DCOs) [Bosch 96c]. A DCO is an object that compiles a part of the syntax of the input language. It consists of one or more lexers, one or more parsers and a parse graph. The nodes in the parse graph have the ability to generate code for themselves. In case of the **LayOM** class compiler, it consists of a class DCO, method DCO, state DCO, category DCO and a DCO for each layer type. Each DCO definition results in a class and a DCO object can instantiate another DCO and delegate control to it. The delegated DCO will perform its functionality and return control to the delegating DCO when it is finished. The **LayOM** compiler DCOs generate C++ output code. **LayOM** code is either a class or an application. A **LayOM** class is compiled into a C++ class and a **LayOM** application is compiled into a C++ main program. The generated C++ class can be incorporated in any C++ function and, subsequently, into an executable program. The structure of the **LayOM** compiler is shown in figure 5.

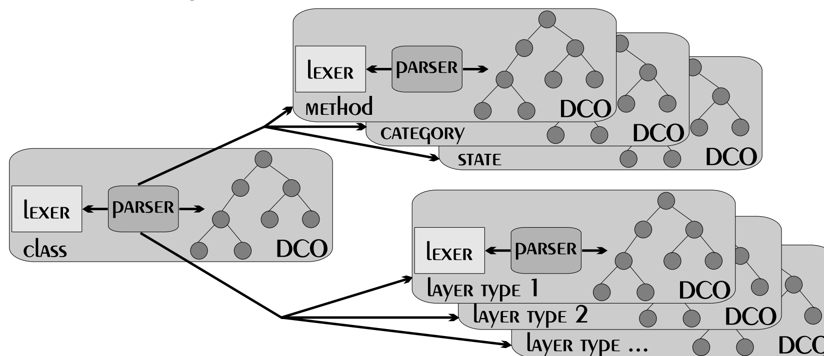

Figure 5. Overview of the LayOM compiler

An advantage of using the DCO approach is that it supports extensibility of the language very well. When the software engineer wants to add a new concept to the language, all that is required is a DCO defining the syntax and code generation information of that particular concept. The new DCO is added to the set of DCOs in the existing compiler and it can be used. Except for some minor modifications in the DCOs that should instantiate the new DCO, no changes are required.

The delegating compiler objects concept is supported by a tool that allows the software engineer to compose compilers by instantiating one or more DCOs. Each DCO can subsequently be assigned a lexer and a parser. Each compiler has a base DCO that is initially instantiated. The tool also provides editing facilities for specifying parsers, lexers and parse graph node classes. For a more detailed description of the delegating compiler object concept and the associated tool, we refer to [Bosch 96c].

4 Design Patterns as Language Constructs

Most design patterns have a well-defined semantics that could be used as the basis for defining language constructs that explicitly support the representation of the design pattern in the programming language. However, it should be

noted that some researchers and engineers have the opinion that design patterns should be used as design guidelines that are adapted to each application. As a consequence, design patterns are considered not sufficiently specific and contain too much application specific aspects once applied that it is infeasible to represent them as language constructs. We disagree with this point of view. To us, design patterns belong to the paradigm used by experienced software engineers. Since the primary aim of programming languages should be to provide accurate language constructs for all those paradigm concepts that can be logically integrated in the language. The argument that this would increase the complexity of the language does not hold since the programming language represents the paradigm concepts used by the software engineer. Therefore, it is the lack of expressive constructs for paradigm concepts that will increase complexity, since the engineer will be forced to implement the concept in terms of lower level language constructs, thereby reducing traceability and understandability. Furthermore, a software engineer is free to use the available language constructs but is not forced! While obtaining experience, many programming students increase the set of language constructs they use to build their programs. A similar development one might expect in languages that provide expressiveness for design patterns.

The above discussion brought us to the understanding that it is beneficial for a programming language to provide constructs for representing design patterns. However, we have identified problems associated with the implementation of patterns in the conventional object-oriented languages. These languages, like C++, provide insufficient support to implement design patterns in a traceable, efficient manner. Traceability is problematic because several design patterns are lost during implementation. Secondly, several pattern implementation involve the forwarding of messages, causing the self problem. Thirdly, implementations of patterns in programming languages such as C++ are generally not reusable. Finally, since several design patterns require the definition of a, potentially large, number of methods with very trivial behaviour, e.g. forwarding a message to a nested object, the software engineer is forced to implement all these methods causing considerable implementation overhead.

To address these problems, the approach taken in this paper is to provide design patterns with a first-class implementation construct corresponding to the conceptual design entity a pattern represents. However, first-class design pattern implementations require a more advanced language model than the conventional object-oriented model. The behaviour of a design pattern is, in a way, *superimposed* on the object behaviour and a language model that allows for design pattern representation should provide corresponding composition techniques. In this section, we present a number of **LayOM** layer types that represent design patterns. The design patterns have been selected from the collection defined by [Gamma et al. 94], in particular from the structural and behavioural design patterns. Since the collection contains seven structural design patterns and 11 behavioural design patterns, we are unable to describe layer types for all these design patterns for reasons of space. Instead, we limit ourselves to describing those design patterns that are most illustrative and suitable to be presented as layer types. In this section, eight design patterns are discussed; four structural and four behavioural patterns.

4.1 Structural Design Patterns

As described in section 2, the structural design patterns are used to define parts of the structure of the system. These patterns are concerned with the composition of classes and objects. In [Gamma et al. 94], seven design patterns are described. However, as mentioned, traditional object-oriented languages have difficulty in implementing design patterns in a traceable and efficient manner. The solution proposed in this paper is to make use of the layered object model for the implementation of design models that make use of patterns. As **LayOM** is an extensible object model, the object model can be extended by, among others, adding new layer types. We have used this facility to define layer types that implement the functionality of design patterns. In the following sections, the `Adapter`, `Bridge`, `Composite` and `Facade` pattern are discussed.

4.1.1 Adapter

Intent. The `adapter` design pattern is used to convert the interface of a class into another interface that is expected by its clients. The adapter design pattern allows classes to cooperate that otherwise would be incompatible due to the differences in expected interfaces.

Problem. In a conventional object-oriented language, the adapter is implemented as an object that forwards the calls, after adaptation, to the adaptee, i.e. the adapted object. In figure 6, the structure of an adapter for object adaptation as presented in [Gamma et al. 94] is shown. Class adaptation is not shown in this figure.

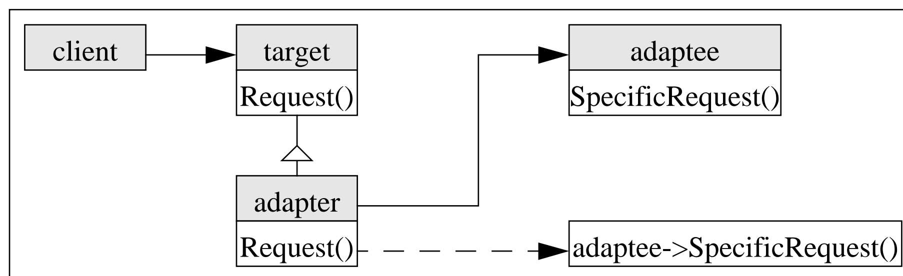

Figure 6. Structure of `Adapter` design pattern

Although the `adapter` indeed allows classes to work together that otherwise could not, there are some disadvantages associated with the implementation of the pattern. One disadvantage is that for every element of the interface that needs to be adapted, the software engineer has to define a method that forwards the call to the actual method `SpecificRequest`. Moreover, in case of object adaptation, also those requests that otherwise would not have required adaptation have to be forwarded as well, due to the intermediate adapter object. This leads to implementation overhead for the software engineer, suffers from the self problem and lacks expressiveness. Also, since behaviour of the adapter pattern is mixed with the domain related behaviour of the class, traceability is reduced.

Solution. In the layered object model, the functionality of the `Adapter` design pattern does not require a separate object (or class) to be defined. Instead, a layer of type `Adapter` is defined that provides the functionality associated with the design pattern. The layer can be used as part of a class definition, in which case it represents class adaptation. It can also be defined for an object thus representing object adaptation. The syntax of layer type `Adapter` is the following:

```
<id> : Adapter(accept <mess-sel>+ as <new-mess-sel>, accept <mess-sel>+ as <new-mess-sel>, ...);
```

The semantics of the layer type is that a message with a message selector `<mess-sel>` that is specified in the layer is passed on with a new selector `<new-mess-sel>`. The `adapter` layer type also allows more than one message selector to be translated to a new message selector. The layer will translate both messages send to the object encapsulated by the layer and messages send by the object.

The `Adapter` layer can be used for class adaptation by defining a new adapter class consisting only of two layers. Below, an example class `adapter` is shown:

```
class adapter
   layers
      adapt : Adapter(accept mess1 as newMessA, accept mess2, mess3 as newMessB);
      inh : Inherit(Adaptee);
end; // class adapter
```

The example class `adapter` translates a `mess1` message into a `newMessA` message and a `mess2` or `mess3` message into a `newMessB` message. The methods `newMessA` and `newMessB` are presumably implemented by class `Adaptee` and the `Inherit` layer will redirect these and other messages to the instance of class `Adaptee` that is contained within the layer.

Adaptation at the object level can be achieved by encapsulating the object with an additional layer upon instantiation. In this case, the adaptation will only be effective for this particular instance and not for the other instances of the same class. Below, an example of an adapted object declaration is shown.

```
...
// object declaration
adaptedAdaptee : Adaptee with layers
   adapt :  Adapter(accept mess1 as newMessA, accept mess2, mess3 as newMessB);
end;
...
```

The instance adaptedAdaptee will be extended with an additional layer of type Adapter that adapts its interface to match the interface expected by its clients. The Adapter layer will be the most outer layer of the object, intercepting all messages going into and out of the object.

Layer type Adapter can also be used in an inverted situation, i.e. a situation where a single client needs to access several server objects, but the client expects an interface different from the interface offered by the server objects. In this case, the client object (or its class) can be extended with an Adapter layer translating messages send by the client into messages understood by the server objects.

Evaluation. The Adapter layer type allows the software engineer to translate the Adapter design pattern directly into the implementation, without losing the pattern. There is a clear one-to-one relation between the design and the implementation. A second advantage is that the software engineer is not required to define a method for every method that needs to be adapted. The specification of the layer is all that is required. In addition, in case of object adaptation, the software engineer, in the traditional implementation approach, also needs to define a method for the methods of the adapted class that do not have to be adapted. When using the Adapter layer, this is avoided.

A disadvantage of the Adapter layer type definition presented in this paper is that the arguments of the message will be passed on as sent. In some situations, one would like to pass the arguments on in a different order or add or remove some arguments.

4.1.2 Bridge

Intent. The Bridge pattern decouples an abstraction from the implementation of the abstraction so that the two can vary independently.

Problem. The structure of a class employing the bridge design pattern is shown in figure 7. The relevant methods in the abstraction forward their calls to the part object containing the implementation. Although the bridge pattern allows to separate the abstraction from the implementation, at least three problems can be identified with this approach. The first problem is the implementation overhead resulting from the separation between the abstraction and the implementation. Each method in the abstraction class needs to forward the message to the corresponding method in the implementation class. The second problem is the *self problem*, i.e. once the abstraction class has called the implementation class, every call to self is directed to the implementation class. This excludes the possibility for the abstraction class to catch self calls and change the implementation of a particular method. The third problem is related to traceability; the implementation of the bridge pattern is distributed over the object and there is no one-to-one correlation between the pattern and the implementation structure.

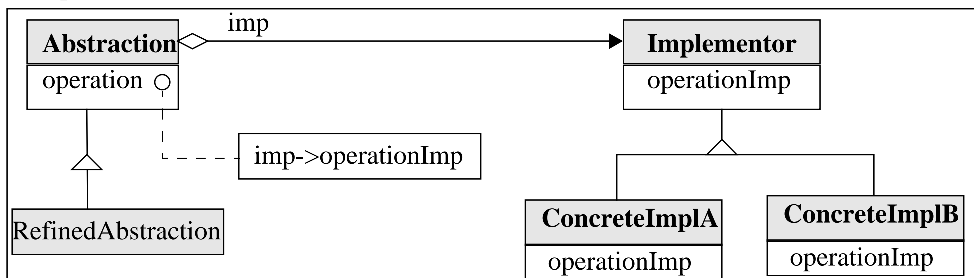

Figure 7. Structure of the Bridge design pattern

Solution. In **LayOM**, this problem is addressed through the Bridge layer type that allows the software engineer to specify for each message by which object.method combination it should be implemented. The syntax of the Bridge layer type is the following:

```
<id> : Bridge(implement <mess-sel>+ as [<object>.]<method>, ...);
```

The layer intercepts all messages matching <mess-sel> and redirects the message to the indicated object and method. More than one message selector can be redirected to the same object and method. The layer is implemented such that the self pseudo variable references the object encapsulated by the Bridge layer rather than the object that is redirected to, thereby avoiding the *self problem*.

The `Bridge` layer type can be used in two ways, i.e. a class-based and an object-based approach. An example of the class based approach is shown below.

```
class Abstraction
   layers
      bridge : Bridge( implement mess1 as imp.mess1, implement mess2, mess3 as imp.mess2);
      ...
   methods
      implementation(anImp : Implementor)
         begin
            imp := anImp;
         end;
   variables
      imp : Implementor;
end; // class Abstraction
```

One can also use individual objects and extend them with an implementation, i.e. the object-based approach. In the example below, the object representing an abstraction is extended with a bridge layer and a part-of layer, providing the implementation and a bridge to the implementation.

```
...
anAbstraction : Abstraction with layers
   bridge : Bridge( implement mess1 as imp.mess1, implement mess2, mess3 as imp.mess2);
   imp : PartOf(ConcreteImplA);
end;
...
```

Evaluation. The design pattern removes the implementation overhead for the forwarding methods in the abstraction. In addition, since the layered object model supports true delegation of messages, the self problem is not present. Finally, the traceability of the design pattern increases when using the `Bridge` layer type compared to the conventional implementation.

4.1.3 Composite

Intent. The `Composite` design pattern supports the organisation of objects into part-whole hierarchies. The resulting objects present a uniform interface to clients, whether the object is an individual object or a composition of objects.

Problem. The `Composite` pattern has a structure as shown in figure 8. The pattern can be used in two ways, i.e. maximizing safety or transparency. Transparency is optimal if the superclass `Component` provides implementations for child handling, e.g. `Add` and `Remove`. However, since these methods have no meaning for leaf classes, these methods should only be invoked on composites. Therefore, safety is increased when the child handling methods are only implemented in the `composite` class, but this decreases transparency.

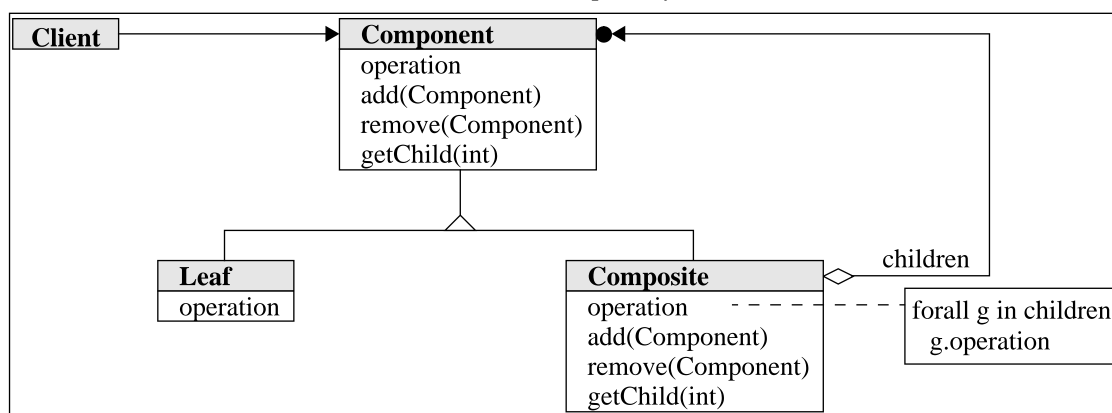

Figure 8. Structure of the `Composite` pattern

The `Composite` design pattern is an important pattern that has proven its use in many applications. However, we identified three problems associated with the pattern; related to traceability, reusability and modelling. The `Composite`

pattern is not implemented as single, identifiable entity, but divided over the various child handling methods, leading to diminished traceability of the pattern. Several class libraries define container classes that allow one to store objects of an arbitrary type in a container. The problem with that approach is that the container cannot be used as a component. The composite pattern solves this problem, but introduces the problem of reusability of the code for child handling. Since the child handling code has to be embedded in the domain classes, the code cannot be separately reused. The modelling problem is caused by the fact that while modelling the domain, the software engineer is forced to also address implementation aspects for child handling since these two aspects are mixed in the code.

Solution. The reusability problem is caused by the fact that the child handling behaviour cannot be composed with the domain concepts in a single class. The solution to the problem is to remove this limitation and to allow for more expressive composition of behaviour, such as provided by layers. The `Composite` layer type contains the behaviour for child handling and can be used to extend domain classes with composite behaviour. The syntax of the layer is the following:

```
<id> : Composite( [add is <mess-sel> and] [remove is <mess-sel> and]
                  [getChild is <mess-sel> and] multicast <mess-sel>+);
```

The layer implements the child handling behaviour specified in the composite design pattern, i.e. `add`, `remove`, `getChild` and the multicasting of operation messages to all children. If other names than the default names for the child handling should be used, the layer allows the software engineer to redefine these names. If operations should be multicasted in a non default way, e.g. the arguments should be different for each child or multicasting should only take place to a subset of the children, this should be implemented as a method in the class itself. The child handling interface can be used to through calls to `self`.

The layer can be added to the definition of the abstract superclass `Component`, or to one of the subclasses, depending on whether the software engineer prefers transparency or safety. Also instances of existing domain classes can be extended with composite behaviour by adding a `Composite` layer to the instance.

Evaluation. The `Composite` layer type provides a solution to the identified problems. The traceability of the pattern is improved through the first-class representation as a layer. Reusability is improved since the layer type contains code for child handling and every instantiation of the layer type reuses this code. The composite layer can be added to the class at any point in time and is not mixed with the domain concepts, but rather superimposed on them.

A disadvantage of the layer type is that different implementations of the child handling cannot easily be expressed. Instead the conventional implementation has to be used or, in the true spirit of extensible languages, a new layer type, extending the `Composite` layer has to be defined. As described in section 3.3, this is by no means infeasible in **LayOM**.

4.1.4 Facade

Intent. The `Facade` design pattern is used to provide a single, integrated interface to a set of interfaces in a subsystem. `Facade` defines a higher-level interface that simplifies the use of the subsystem.

Problem. The structure of a subsystem incorporating the `Facade` design pattern often looks as in figure 9. The subsystem is defined as a class containing the classes that are part of the subsystem. The function of the subsystem class is basically twofold. The first is the coordination between the classes in the subsystem, whereas the second function is to provide an integrated interface to clients of the subsystem. By defining the subsystem as a class, the first function can be dealt with in an acceptable manner. However, the second function, which often is the forwarding of messages to objects within the subsystem is problematic. The traditional approach is to define a method in the subsystem class that forwards a message sent by a client to the appropriate object inside the subsystem. The disadvantage of this approach is that for every message send by a client the subsystem class has to define a method. The number of meth-

ods might easily grow very large and defining these methods is much work for just forwarding a message. A second disadvantage is that the traceability of the design pattern in the implementation is lost.

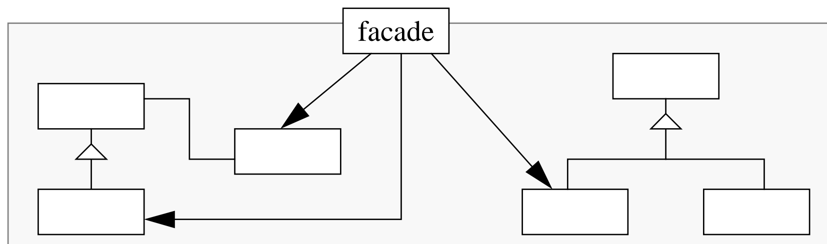

Figure 9. Structure of the `Facade` design pattern

Solution. As a solution to the identified problems associated with the traditional implementation approach one can, within the layered object model, make use of the `Facade` layer type. The `Facade` layer type provides the functionality of forwarding messages to objects that are part of the subsystem. A layer of type `Facade` is defined as follows:

```
<id> : Facade(forward <mess-sel>+ to <object>, forward <mess-sel>+ to <object>, ...);
```

The behaviour of a `Facade` layer is the following. It matches the selector of the message with the message selectors defined in `<mess-sel>+`, the message will be forwarded to the object `<object>`. The `Facade` layer can contain several forwarding elements, allowing the subsystem class to forward to several objects using a single `Facade` layer.

A subsystem class using a `Facade` layer can be defined as follows:

```
class FacadeExample
   layers
      face : Facade(forward mess1, mess2 to Part01, forward mess3 to Part02);
      Part01 : PartOf(ClassOf01);
      Part02 : PartOf(ClassOf02);
   ...
end; // class FacadeExample
```

As described in section 3, the layered object model models relations between objects as layers. These relations include the *part-of* relation, which is implemented as the `PartOf` layer type. The `Facade` layer forwards messages matching `mess1` and `mess2` to `Part01`, which is an object contained in the subsystem. Messages matching `mess3` are forwarded to object `Part02`.

Evaluation. The use of the `Facade` layer type has two main advantages over the traditional implementation techniques. The first advantage is that the software engineer does not have to define a, possibly large, number of trivial methods that just pass on a message to one of the objects in the subsystem. The second advantage is that there is a direct correspondence between the design pattern that is used at the design level and the `Facade` layer defined in the implementation.

4.2 Behavioural Design Patterns

Behavioural design patterns focus on algorithms and cooperation and interaction between objects. In addition to the structure of a group of objects and classes, these design patterns are concerned with the communication between these objects and classes. In [Gamma et al. 94] the collection of behavioural design patterns consists of 11 patterns. As mentioned earlier, four of behavioural design patterns are discussed in this section, i.e. `State`, `Observer`, `Strategy` and `Mediator`.

4.2.1 State

Intent. The `State` pattern is used in situations where the behaviour of the object depends on the internal state of the object. Thus, when the object changes a relevant aspect of its state, it changes behaviour.

Problem. The implementation approach suggested by [Gamma et al. 94] is to define an abstract superclass defining the methods that change behaviour, depending on the state. This class is subclassed by as many concrete subclasses as

there are different relevant states and associated behaviours. These classes are used by the object that is supposed to show state-dependent behaviour, referred to as Context. The Context object always contains an instance of one of the concrete state subclasses. When the Context object changes state, it replaces the instance with an instance of another concrete subclass. In figure 10, the structure of the State design pattern is shown.

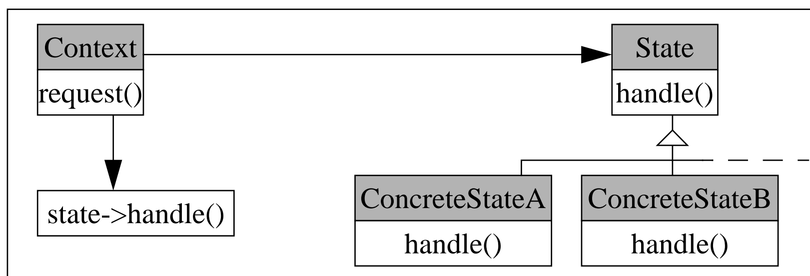

Figure 10. Structure of the State design pattern

Although this implementation approach is very appropriate within the traditional object-oriented languages, the approach has, at least two problems associated with it. The first problem is that this approach assumes that there is a relatively small number of boolean states, that all require a unique implementation for each method in the set of state-dependent methods. However, in several cases the required dynamicity in the object behaviour is not as well structured as this. We refer to [Bosch 96b] for a more extended discussion of these problems. The second problem is that the Context object has to implement a trivial method for each state-dependent method implemented by the State class, resulting in the self problem and implementation overhead for the software engineer. Finally, traceability of the implementation of the pattern is far from optimal.

Solution. Similar to the solutions presented for the problems associated with the aforementioned design patterns, we define a layer of type State that allows the software engineer to specify, depending on the object state, the appropriate method or object for a message requesting state-dependent behaviour. As described in section 3, **LayOM** provides the notion of *abstract state*. Abstract state is an abstraction of the internal, concrete object state that presents the relevant state of an object at its interface. The State layer type makes use of the abstract object state. The syntax of the State layer type is defined below:

```
<id> : State(if <state-expr> forward <mess-sel>+ to [<mess-sel> | <object>]
       if <state-expr> forward <mess-sel>+ to [<mess-sel> | <object>], ...);
```

The semantics of the State layer type is that a message received by the layer is evaluated for each element of the layer specification if the state expression <state-expr> evaluates to true and the selector of the message matches with one of the specified message selectors, the message is forwarded to either the method indicated by <mess-sel> or the object <object>.

The State layer type can be used in two scenarios. If the situation is such that a number of well-defined states exist that each have an associated behaviour, then the software engineer can define a concrete subclass for each state and declare it as a part of the context class. The State layer can then be used to direct messages to the appropriate state object. Below, an example class specification is shown. The handle message is state dependent. Depending on the value of stateA and stateB, the message is directed to part object ConStA (concrete state A) or ConStB.

```
class context
   layers
      st : State(if stateA forward handle to ConStA, if stateB forward handle to ConStB);
      ConStA : PartOf(ConcreteStateA);
      ConStB : PartOf(ConcreteStateB);
   ...
   states
      stateA returns Boolean
         begin ... end;
   ...
end; // class context
```

If the state dependent behaviour of the object is not as well structured as in the previous scenario, the software engineer can define different methods for a message selector and use the State layer to direct the message to the appropri-

ate method. Below, an example of this approach is shown. Depending on the value of `stateA` and `stateB`, the handle message is directed to either method `handleImp1` or `handleImp2`.

```
class context
   layers
      st : State( if stateA forward handle to handleImp1(),
                  if stateB forward handle to handleImp2());
   ...
   methods
      handleImp1 returns ...
   ...
end; // class context
```

Evaluation. The `State` layer type has three advantages, when compared to traditional implementation techniques. First, the software engineer does not have to write a, possibly large, set of trivial methods forwarding the message to the appropriate method, depending on a state. Secondly, the relation between the design pattern and its implementation is kept, thereby improving traceability. Finally, since the `State` layer performs message delegation rather than forwarding, the self problem is avoided.

4.2.2 Observer

Intent. The `Observer` design pattern deals with the situation where a set of objects is depending on state changes in an object; when the object changes state, all its dependents are notified.

Problem. The `Observer` pattern is a widely used in object-oriented systems since is significantly decreases the dependency between an object and its dependent objects. The structure of the Observer pattern is shown in figure 11. When analysing the approach taken to implement the pattern, several issues can be identified. First, the traceability of the pattern in the implementation is not ideal. The three methods `attach`, `detach` and `notify` do not form a conceptual entity, but especially the fact that the invocation of the `notify` message has to be placed at all locations where the object state is changed is not very elegant. A second issue is that in the proposed implementation of the pattern, inheritance is proposed to be used for obtaining the observant behaviour in a domain class. This behaviour does not represent an abstraction of the domain concept, but behaviour required for implementation. Preferably, the object should be extended with the observant behaviour in another way than through inheritance. A third problem is that a class that is to be used as a subject needs to be prepared with notification messages during design. If this behaviour is to be added for an existing class, the software engineer will be forced to understand the implementation of the class and add all notification behaviour in a subclass of the existing class.

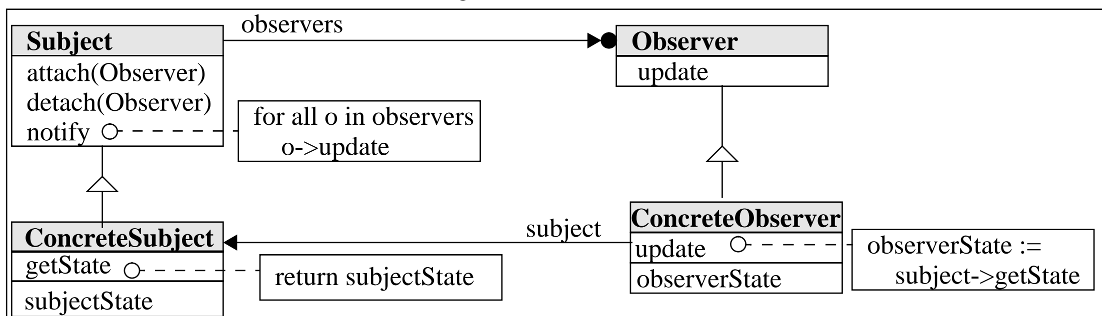

Figure 11. Structure of the `Observer` pattern

Solution. The solution in the context of the layered object model is to define a layer type `Observer`, that is used to extend a class to be used as a subject with behaviour for notifying dependent objects. Since layers intercept messages sent to and from the object and are able to inspect the abstract state of the object and notice state changes, an Observer layer is able to detect changes in the subject and notify the observants. The syntax of the layer is the following:

```
<id> : Observer( notify [before|after] on <mess-sel>+ [on aspect <aspect>], ... );
```

The layer intercepts messages and determines whether the selector in the message matches with one of the message selectors, `<mess-sel>`, specified in the layer configuration. If it does, the layer will notify the observants either before or after the message has been processed by the object. When the notification occurs depends on whether the `before` or

after keyword is used in the layer. Similar to the Smalltalk-80 implementation [Goldberg & Robson 89] of the observer pattern, the observant can be notified on a particular aspect, allowing the object to limit actual updates to only those aspects interesting for the particular observant. The administration of observer objects is also part of the functionality of the layer type. The attach and detach methods are thus implemented in the layer and messages to the object with these message selectors will be intercepted by the layer and handled locally by the layer itself.

The Observer layer type can be used for extending a class with observer pattern functionality. Below an example class ObservablePoint is shown. The class has three methods setX, setY and moveTo that change the value of the X and Y instance variables. The class can be used as a subject by other objects since it also contains an Observer layer that will notify observer objects whenever a method is invoked that changes the values of X and Y. For this layer instance, the observer objects are notified after the message has been processed by the object. The aspect for which is notified depends on the method name.

```
class ObservablePoint
   layers
      st : Observer(notify after on setX on aspect "X-axis", notify after on setY
                  on aspect "Y-axis", notify after on moveTo on aspect "Location");
   ...
   methods
      setX(newX : Location) returns Location
         begin ... end;
      setY(newY : Location) returns Location
         begin ... end;
      moveTo(move : Location2D) returns Location2D
         begin ... end;
   ...
end; // class ObservablePoint
```

Next to defining an Observer layer in a class definition, one can also extend individual instances with an Observer layer. This may even be more useful since it allows the software engineer to use a class without observer pattern functionality in a situation where it, among others, should play the role of a subject. Below, a instance of a regular Point class without observer pattern behaviour is defined and extended with an Observer layer. This addition allows it to also be used as a subject.

```
aPoint : Point with layers
   st : Observer(notify after on setX on aspect "X-axis", notify after on setY
                  on aspect "Y-axis", notify after on moveTo on aspect "Location");
end;
```

Evaluation. The Observer layer type models the observer design pattern as a first-class entity that can be used to extend classes as well as individual instances with observer pattern behaviour. The advantages of the layer type over a traditional implementation are the increased traceability, improved reusability and reduced implementation overhead. The implementation of the Observer layer type has purposely been defined as close to the original pattern as possible. However, one could imagine alternative semantics for the layer type. For example, the observants could register on particular aspects, rather than on all notified changes. This would also solve the problem of the Observer layer type that if multiple instances of it are defined for a single object, the layer may not know for which layer a particular attach or detach message was intended.

4.2.3 Strategy

Intent. The Strategy design pattern represents an algorithm or a behaviour as an object so that objects using the pattern can replace their algorithm or part of their behaviour by replacing the part object containing the behaviour. The pattern solves the situation where a hierarchy of similar objects is defined to address the fact that top object requires a situation dependent algorithm.

Problem. The strategy design pattern is used in situations where the implementation of a behavioural part of the class needs to be replaceable with other implementations. A typical situation where the strategy is used is in object-oriented frameworks. For example, in a framework for measurement systems that we designed [Bosch 96d], we made extensive use of strategies, e.g. update strategies for sensors, calculation strategies for converting read data to the form required by the entity and actuation strategies for the actuators in a measurement system. All these strategies were

characterised by the fact that they all were rather application dependent. The effect of using strategies was that some applications could be developed from the framework solely by defining the appropriate, application dependent strategies. However, also the strategy pattern has some problems associated with its use. The first problem is *traceability* since a strategy is implemented as a part object that is invoked by the object when the algorithm has to be executed. Without analysing the code, the software engineer cannot determine whether the part object is a regular part object, a strategy object or something else. Secondly, the strategy pattern suffers from the *self problem*, i.e. when the strategy object refers to *self*, it addresses itself instead of the object containing the strategy. Since the strategy object in principle implements one or more methods of the containing object, one would ideally just plug-in methods in the containing object rather than implementing them in a separate object. Thirdly, there is implementation overhead since the containing object needs to forward client calls requiring the strategy to the strategy object. In addition, the software engineer, while defining the containing and strategy objects, needs to explicitly distinguish between calls to the object itself and the strategy or containing object, respectively.

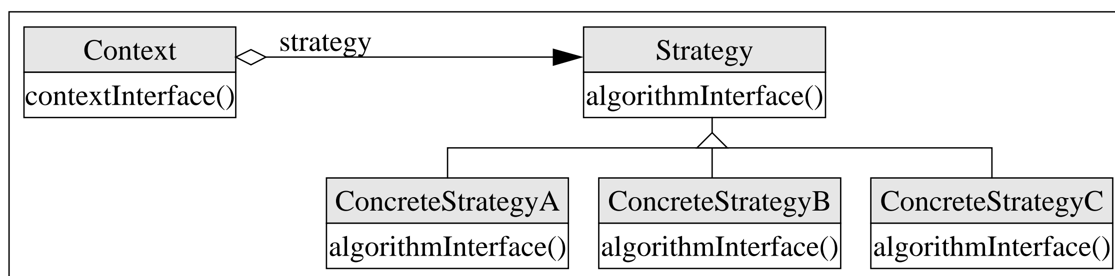

Figure 12. Structure of the `Strategy` pattern

Solution. When designing a solution within the context of **LayOM**, one has two solution approaches. The first is to define a delegating layer that delegates all messages to the strategy object to a strategy object that it contains, whereas the second solution is to define a layer type that allows one to specify a method implementation as part of the layer configuration. The layer will then act as a method of the object that it encapsulates. However, as we decided to define the layer types as close to the definition of the design patterns as possible, we adopted the former solution approach.

To address the problems described above, a layer type `Strategy` was defined that delegates relevant messages to a strategy object that is contained inside the layer. The syntax of the layer type is as shown below. The strategy layer delegates all matching messages to the strategy object. Whether a message matches depends on the layer configuration. If a list of messages is defined, a message has to match this set to be delegated. Otherwise, all messages matching the interface of the strategy object are delegated. On instantiation of the layer, the layer instantiates an instance of class `<class>` which represents the strategy object. However, the strategy object can be replaced if the '`set by <mess-sel>`' part is present.

```
<id> : Strategy( delegate [<mess-sel>+| ] to <class> [set by <mess-sel>]);
```

A class can define one or more instances of the Strategy layer type to deal with its application dependent parts. For example, a class Sensor with an update and a calculation strategy could be defined as shown below. The sensor has two strategies, i.e. an update strategy and a calculation strategy. Both layers instantiate some default strategy class but allow for replacement with a new strategy by specifying the method for replacing the strategy object.

```
class Sensor
   layers
      update : Strategy( delegate to UpdateStrategy set by newUpdateStrategy);
      calculate : Strategy( delegate to CalculationStrategy set by newCalculationStrategy);
   ...
end; // class Sensor
```

Evaluation. When evaluating the `Strategy` layer type with respect to the original design pattern specification, one can identify that the strategy layer type implements the complete functionality of the pattern in an intuitive way. In addition, it solves the identified problems related to traceability, the self problem and the implementation overhead. Traceability is, obviously, improved since the layer type explicitly specifies what design pattern it implements. Due to the delegating behaviour of a layer, i.e. the original receiver of the message is stored, the self problem does not occur. References to `self` in the strategy object are directed to the originally message receiving object. Similarly, `self` calls to methods implemented in the strategy object are intercepted by the layer and delegated to the strategy object.

Finally, the layer type requires only a minimal implementation effort from the software engineer. Only the relevant aspects need to be specified and no overhead due to message forwarding or otherwise occurs.

4.2.4 Mediator

Intent. The Mediator design pattern encapsulates the interaction of a set of objects. The Mediator decreases the coupling between the objects since they do not refer to each other directly. The Mediator can be replaced independently, allowing one to vary the interaction between the objects.

Problem. The implementation approach for the Mediator design pattern is to decouple the functionality of an object from its interaction with other objects. The interaction of a group of objects is encapsulated in a separate object, indicated as the Mediator. As shown in figure 13, a class Mediator has a reference to each object in the set that it mediates. Each object in the set (Colleague) has a reference to its mediator. Thus instead of sending a message to one of its colleagues directly, it sends the message to the Mediator that will forward the message to the appropriate object.

Although this approach separates the functionality of an object from its interaction with other objects and thus making it more reusable and flexible, one can identify some problems in the implementation when using a traditional object-oriented language. First, the Mediator consists of a set of methods that can be called by the colleague objects. The methods, in general, only consist of a call to the colleague object that is supposed to take care of the message. This is much work, but it also leads to the second problem: The structure of the interactions between the objects is lost in the implementation and can not be traced from design to implementation.

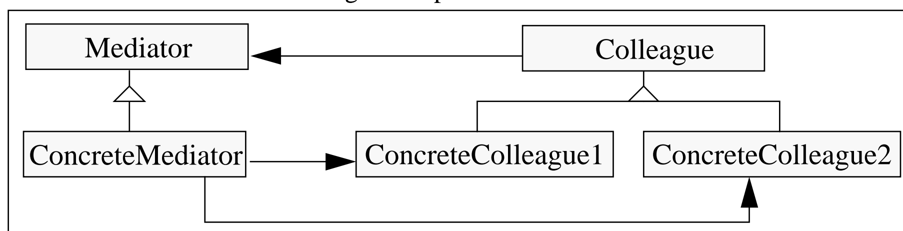

Figure 13. Structure of the Mediator design pattern

Solution. As a solution, the layer type Mediator is proposed. The Mediator layer is part of a mediator class and contains the specification of the interactions between the objects. The syntax of the Mediator layer type is shown below.

```
<id> : Mediator( forward <mess-sel>+ from <client> to <object>,
                 forward <mess-sel>+ from <client> to <object>, ... );
```

The semantics of the Mediator layer is that a message in the <mess-sel>+ set of message selectors sent by a client object <client> is forwarded to an object <object>. The <client> specification is based on the client categories of **LayOM**. The software engineer can specify a client category for each relevant subset of the interacting objects. Instead of a defined client category, the keyword Any can be used matching all possible clients.

Below an example class ConcreteMediator is shown. The Mediator layer forwards all messages with selector messA to object ConcreteColleague1 and all messages messB sent by object ConcreteColleague1 to object ConcreteColleague2.

```
class ConcreteMediator
   layers
      med : Mediator(forward messA from Any to ConcreteColleague1,
                     forward messB from ConcreteColleage1 to ConcreteColleague2);
   ...
end; // class ConcreteMediator
```

Evaluation. The Mediator layer type solves the identified problems. First, the software engineer does not have to write a series of methods only for forwarding purposes. The specification of a single layer is sufficient. Secondly, the layer specification shows very clearly the structure of the interaction between the objects. The traceability is thus preserved.

4.3 Composition

The design pattern layer types discussed in section 4.1 and 4.2 and several other layer types implementing design pattern or other abstractions are freely composable in class descriptions or instance declarations. Since layers based their functioning on message interception and a message afterwards most often proceeds to its intended destination, a message can be intercepted by several layers. Thus, several layers can affect the contents of the message or implicitly trigger actions. For instance, a layer of type `Adapter` and a layer of type `Mediator` can be composed in a class `ConcreteMediator`. The `Adapter` can change the selector of certain messages so that the `Mediator` can forward the message to colleague objects that otherwise could not have been in the same group due to incompatible interfaces.

This type of composability is important in object-oriented software development based on design patterns, such as object-oriented framework development. Designers are increasingly making use of design patterns as design mechanisms and for describing designs to other software engineers. As a consequence, some classes in the design might play a role in two or more design patterns. The intertwining of the various patterns in the implementation of these classes in a traditional object-oriented language may result in rather complicated structures. The increased complexity and the poor traceability of the individual design patterns obviously are important hindrances for effective use of design patterns. An implementation of these classes in **LayOM** does not suffer from these problems.

5 Related Work

[Soukup 95] is one of the few author that specifically addresses the implementation aspects of patterns. Soukup discusses the implementation of design patterns and identified three problems. First, patterns often get lost during implementation. Second, composed patterns can lead to large clusters of mutually dependent classes. Third, although design pattern authors present the classes that make up the implementation of the design patterns, no library of concrete design pattern classes has been described. Soukup addresses this by implementing design patterns as C++ classes. When evaluating this approach, one can conclude that the traceability of design patterns in the implementation is improved. However, only a few pattern classes are presented and we are uncertain whether all patterns can be implemented as classes. We consider several patterns, e.g. the patterns addressed in this paper, unsuited for representation as classes. A second aspect is that the implementation efficiency problems are not addressed by Soukup's approach.

[Kim & Benner 95] discuss the implementation of the observer pattern. They identified that the observer pattern as proposed in [Gamma et al. 94] still leaves much room for implementation decissions. The authors propose several implementation patterns to address this issue, but they remain within the conventional object-oriented paradigm.

In [Budinsky et al. 96], a tool for automatic code generation from design patterns is described. The authors also identified problems with the implementation of patterns, e.g. some designers have difficulty converting patterns into code and most designers consider implementing a chore they would rather avoid. As a solution, a tool was developed that allows the user to specify the application specific aspects of the pattern based on which the tool generates output code that can be incorporated in the system. Although there are similarities between this approach and the **LayOM** model, e.g. both use a code generator for generating code in a conventional object-oriented language, the main difference is that **LayOM** provides an integrated language model whereas the use of a tool not results in the same level of integration. In addition, we are uncertain whether the traceability problem and the self problem have been addressed.

6 Conclusion

The problems associated with the implementation of design patterns in traditional object-oriented languages have been identified and discussed in this paper. These problems can be categorised into the lack of traceability of design patterns in the implementation, the self problem that several pattern implementations suffer from, the lack of reusability of design pattern implementations and the implementation overhead for the software engineer when implementing design pattern.

A solution within the context of the layered object model has been introduced. The layered object model (**LayOM**) is an extended and extensible object model. It is *extended* because it contains *states*, *categories* and *layers* as additional components. **LayOM** is an *extensible* object model because it can be extended with new components and new layer types. In this paper, the identified problems were addressed by defining a layer type for a design pattern. Several design patterns, `i.e.` `Adapter`, `Bridge`, `Composite`, `Facade`, `State`, `Observer`, `Strategy` and `Mediator`, and the

associated layer types have been presented as examples of the applicability of our approach. We have illustrated that these layers do not suffer from the aforementioned problems.

We consider the layered object model a superior approach for practitioners, as **LayOM** is supported by an advanced implementation environment that translates **LayOM** classes and applications to C++ code. The generated C++ code can be used in combination with arbitrary C++ programs to generate applications. Thus, the software engineer using **LayOM** has the advantages of the extended expressiveness and avoids potential disadvantages as being limited to a particular environment language because the environment generates C++ code.

A second advantage of the layered object model and its supporting environment, only briefly mentioned in this paper, is the extensibility of the object model. This allows the software engineer, among others, to define layer types for design patterns that were not available. One is able to extend the compiler relatively easy due to the fact that it is constructed using the concept of *delegating compiler objects*.

As part of future work, we intend to study how design patterns from different sources will be incorporated in the layered object model. Several authors have reported on application domain specific design patterns. The extensibility of the layered object model makes it very suitable to incorporate these design patterns.

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