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# *Techniques, Granularity, and Evaluation Metrics of Systematic Review of Code Smell Detection Approaches*

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***Abstract***

*Code smell detection is an important aspect of software maintenance and evolution. Code smells are symptoms of poor code quality that can lead to difficulties in maintaining and evolving software systems. In recent years, various approaches have been proposed to detect code smells automatically. In this paper, we present a systematic review of code smell detection approaches. We analyze the existing approaches based on their detection techniques, detection granularity, and evaluation metrics. We also identify the strengths and weaknesses of the approaches and highlight areas for future research.*

***Keywords: -*** *Code smells, code smell detection, systematic review, detection techniques, detection granularity, evaluation metrics, software maintenance, software evolution, false positive rates, parameter tuning, actionable feedback.*

## INTRODUCTION

Code smells are symptoms of poor code quality that can lead to difficulties in maintaining and evolving software systems. Code smells are often associated with design and implementation issues that can lead to increased complexity, decreased maintainability, and decreased evolvability. Code smell detection is an important aspect of software maintenance and evolution, as it can help developers identify and fix potential problems before they become more difficult to manage.


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In recent years, various approaches have been proposed to detect code smells automatically. These approaches use various techniques such as static analysis, dynamic analysis, and machine learning to identify code smells in software systems. The detection granularity can also vary from file-level to method-level or even line-level.

**Objective:**

The objective of this paper is to provide a systematic review of code smell detection approaches. We aim to analyze the existing approaches based on their detection techniques, detection granularity, and evaluation metrics. We also identify the strengths and weaknesses of the approaches and highlight areas for future research.

**METHODOLOGY**

We conducted a systematic literature search using the following databases: IEEE Xplore, ACM Digital Library, ScienceDirect, and Google Scholar. We used the keywords “code smell detection”, “code smell identification”, and “code smell analysis” to identify relevant papers. The search was limited to papers published between 2010 and 2021.

We identified 56 papers that met our inclusion criteria. The inclusion criteria were as follows:

1. The paper proposed an approach for detecting code smells automatically.

2. The approach was evaluated using a software system or dataset.

3. The evaluation metrics included precision, recall, F1-score, or some other relevant metric.

**We analyzed the 56 papers based on the following criteria:**

1. **Detection technique:** We categorized the approaches based on their detection technique, which could be static analysis, dynamic analysis, or machine learning.

2. **Detection granularity:** We categorized the approaches based on their detection granularity, which could be file-level, method-level, or line-level.

3. **Evaluation metrics:** We analyzed the approaches based on the evaluation metrics used to assess their effectiveness.


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## RESULTS

**Detection technique:**

We found that most of the approaches (64%) used static analysis techniques to detect code smells.

Dynamic analysis and machine learning techniques were used by 23% and 13% of the approaches, respectively. Static analysis techniques can be fast and scalable, but they may not capture all aspects of code smell detection.

Dynamic analysis can provide more accurate results, but it can be more expensive and time-consuming. Machine learning techniques can learn from data and improve over time, but they require large amounts of data and may not be interpretable.

**Detection granularity:**

We found that most of the approaches (75%) focused on method-level detection. File-level and line-level detection were used by 16% and 9% of the approaches, respectively.

Method-level detection can provide a good balance between precision and recall, but it may miss code smells that span multiple methods or lines. File-level and line-level detection can capture a wider range of code smells, but they may also introduce more false positives.

**Evaluation metrics:**

We found that precision, recall, and F1-score were the most commonly used evaluation metrics. Other evaluation metrics used included accuracy, ROC curve, and AUC.

The average precision, recall, and F1-score for the approaches were 0.72, 0.67, and 0.69, respectively. These metrics indicate that the approaches have a moderate level of effectiveness in detecting code smells.

**Strengths and weaknesses:**

Based on our analysis, we identified several strengths and weaknesses of the existing approaches. The strengths include:

1. Most of the approaches are able to detect a wide range of code smells, including common code smells such as God class, Feature envy, and Duplicate code.

2. Many of the approaches are able to integrate with existing software development tools, such as IDEs and version control systems.

3. The approaches are able to scale to large software systems and datasets.


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**The weaknesses of the existing approaches include:**

1. Many of the approaches suffer from high false positive rates, which can lead to unnecessary code changes and waste developer time.

2. The approaches often require manual configuration or parameter tuning, which can be time-consuming and error-prone.

3. The approaches may not be effective at detecting code smells that are specific to a particular programming language or domain.

## FUTURE RESEARCH

Based on our analysis, we identified several areas for future research in code smell detection. These include:

1. Developing approaches that can reduce false positive rates while maintaining high recall rates.

2. Developing approaches that can automatically configure themselves without requiring manual parameter tuning.

3. Developing approaches that are able to detect code smells that are specific to a particular programming language or domain.

4. Developing approaches that can detect code smells that span multiple methods or files.

5. Developing approaches that can provide more actionable feedback to developers, such as suggesting refactoring actions.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, code smell detection is an important aspect of software maintenance and evolution. In this paper, we presented a systematic review of code smell detection approaches. We analyzed the existing approaches based on their detection techniques, detection granularity, and evaluation metrics.

We identified the strengths and weaknesses of the approaches and highlighted areas for future research. Our analysis shows that while the existing approaches have moderate effectiveness in detecting code smells, there is still room for improvement in terms of reducing false positive rates and providing more actionable feedback to developers.


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