An SoC Test Scheduling Algorithm using Reconfigurable Union Wrappers

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Abstract
This paper presents a reconfigurable union wrapper that can wrap multiple cores into a single wrapper design. Moreover, we present a test scheduling algorithm to minimize a test application time using the proposed reconfigurable union wrapper. The proposed heuristic algorithm can achieve short test application time with low computational cost compared to the conventional approaches where every core has its own wrapper. Experimental results for the ITC’02 SOC Benchmarks show the effectiveness of our approach.

keywords: system-on-a-chip, test scheduling, reconfigurable union wrapper, test access mechanism

1 Introduction
In the SoC test environment, each embedded core is isolated from other logics during test of the core. Therefore, the following three components are necessary for SoC testing: 1) test pattern source and test response sink, 2) test access mechanism (TAM), and 3) wrapper [1]. The TAM propagates test patterns for a core from test pattern source to the core, and furthermore propagates the responses from the core to test pattern sink. The wrapper provides functions for cores to switch the mode of the cores: 1) normal, 2) INTEST, 3) EXTEST, and 4) BYPASS defined in IEEE 1500 standard [2]. The goal for SoC test is to develop techniques for wrapper design, TAM design and test schedule that minimizes test application time under given constraints. A number of approaches have addressed wrapper design [3, 4, 5]. Several TAM architectures have been proposed such as TestBus [6, 7], TESTRAIL [8], transparency based TAMs [9, 10, 11]. However, wrapper and TAM co-optimization problem was shown to be NP-hard in [3]. Therefore, many heuristic approaches for this problem have been proposed [4, 5, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17].

Recently, the reconfigurable wrapper was proposed by Koranne [18] that allows a core to have several wrapper configurations in contrast to the previous approaches. The advantage is the increased flexibility for the test scheduling. Larson and Peng proposed the reconfigurable power-conscious core test wrapper to increase the flexibility for power-constrained test scheduling [19].

One crucial aspect of these approaches including reconfigurable and non-reconfigurable wrapper designs is that each core has an own wrapper and a core is tested independently of other cores. Quasem et al. showed that further reductions in test application time can be achieved if multiple cores are wrapped into single wrapper design and the overlapped test application scheme is used [20]. They also proposed the reconfigurable wrapper design that includes all embedded cores in a single wrapper. In the proposed reconfigurable wrapper design, the length of each wrapper scan chain can be reconfigured (reduced) during test by bypassing scan chains which are not necessary for further test application.

However, wrapping all the cores into a single wrapper cannot always achieve the minimum test application time due to the lack of flexibility for test scheduling. Moreover, the proposed reconfigurable wrapper can only bypass scan chains in each wrapper scan chain, and cannot reassign scan chains to different wrapper scan chains.

This paper presents a reconfigurable union wrapper that can wrap multiple cores into a single wrapper design. Moreover, we present a test scheduling algorithm to minimize a test application time using the proposed reconfigurable union wrapper. The proposed algorithm finds the optimal core groups for designing reconfigurable union wrappers, and it can achieve short test application time with low computational cost. Experimental results for the ITC’02 SOC Benchmarks show the effectiveness of our approach.

The rest of this paper is organized as follows. We discuss our motivation in Section 2. Section 3 shows a reconfigurable union wrapper design. After formulating a test scheduling problem using reconfigurable union wrappers in Section 4, we present a test scheduling algorithm in Section 5. Experimental results are discussed in Section 6. Finally, Section 7 concludes this paper.

2 Motivation
In this section, we examine the effectiveness of the reconfigurable union wrapper for minimizing test application time by using example cores shown in Fig.1. A significant amount of research has been devoted to reducing test application time. Consequently, several test scheduling algorithms have been proposed. In these approaches, every core has its own wrapper and cores are tested independently of
Figure 1. Wrapper designs using three wrapper scan chains by [3].

Figure 2. A reconfigurable union wrapper and its configurations.

Figure 3. Reconfigurable union wrapper design procedure.

4 Problem Formulation

From our preliminary experiments, we observed that we cannot always achieve minimum test time by uniting all cores in a given SoC into one group and giving one proposed reconfigurable wrapper to them. The total SoC test time can be reduced if we can find the optimal groups for the proposed reconfigurable union wrappers during test scheduling. Therefore, we formulate the test scheduling problem using reconfigurable union wrappers as follows.

Definition 1 $P_{rwu}$: Given the maximum TAM width $W_{max}$, a set of cores $M$ and for each core $m \in M$ the test set parameters including the number of test patterns $p_m$, the number of input terminals $s_{in}$, the number of output terminals $s_{out}$, the number of bidirectional terminals $b_{dir}$, the number of scan chains $s_{scan}$ and for each scan chain $k$ the length of it $l_{in,k}$, determine the test groups, the TAM width and the
reconfigurable union wrapper design for each group, and a test schedule such that: (1) the total number of TAM wires utilized at any moment does not exceed \( W_{\text{max}} \), and (2) the overall test time is minimized.

5 Scheduling Algorithm using Reconfigurable Union Wrapper

In this section, we present an algorithm for determining a solution to the test scheduling problem using reconfigurable union wrappers. In our algorithm, a TAM \( b \) is represented as a set of cores which are connected to \( b \). Our algorithm determines a solution which consists of:

- the set of TAMs \( B \) such that every core is assigned to exactly one TAM,
- the width \( w(b) \) of every TAM \( b \in B \) such that the summed widths of the TAMs does not exceed \( W_{\text{max}} \),
- the reconfigurable union wrapper design for each TAM \( b \in B \) such that total test time \( T \) is minimized. To determine the test time \( t(b,w) \) for a TAM \( b \) with width \( w \), we assume the existence of a procedure \( \text{TestTime}(b,w) \) which use a procedure \( RUW(b,w) \) for designing a reconfigurable union wrapper for cores in \( b \) presented in Section 3.

An outline of this algorithm is presented in Fig.4. The algorithm is inspired by an existing effective algorithm (TR-Architect [14]), and it has three main steps which are \( \text{ASSIGN}, \text{TRANSFER} \) and \( \text{MERGE} \).

```
procedure TestSchedule
1 sort \( M \) in the descending order based on the amount of test data; 
2 for all \( m \in M \) in the decided order at line 1
3 ASSIGN(m); 
4 TRANSFER();
5 }
6 repeat until no more improvement on \( T \) is possible[
7 MERGE(); 
8 TRANSFER();
9 ]
```

Figure 4. Scheduling algorithm

First, it sorts cores in the descending order based on the amount of test data (line 1). The amount of test data of a core is equivalent to the test time provided by the wrapper design using one wrapper scan chain. Then, a core is assigned to a TAM such that current total test time \( T \) is minimized by \( \text{ASSIGN} \) procedure (line 3). Whenever a core is assigned, \( \text{TRANSFER} \) procedure is executed (line 4). The \( \text{TRANSFER} \) procedure tries to minimize \( T \) by finding a bottleneck TAM \( b_{\text{max}} \), which is a TAM with the longest test time and re-assigning a core in \( b_{\text{max}} \) to other TAM. \( \text{TRANSFER} \) repeats the above process until no more improvement on \( T \) is possible. After assigning all cores to TAMs, the algorithm performs the \( \text{MERGE} \) procedure (line 7). The \( \text{MERGE} \) procedure tries to minimize \( T \) by finding a bottleneck TAM \( b_{\text{max}} \) and merging \( b_{\text{max}} \) with other TAM. \( \text{MERGE} \) repeats the above process until no more improvement on \( T \) is possible. Then, the \( \text{TRANSFER} \) procedure is executed again (line 8). These \( \text{MERGE} \) and \( \text{TRANSFER} \) procedures are repeated until no more improvement on \( T \) is possible. Each of these steps is explained in more detail in the sequel of this section.

5.1 Assignment

The procedure \( \text{ASSIGN} \) as outlined in Fig.5 determines a TAM to which the current targeted core \( m \) is assigned. It consists of three main steps.

```
procedure ASSIGN(m)
1 /*Step1: Compute \( T_{ex} \) when \( m \) is assigned to the existing TAM */
2 find \( b_{ex} \in B \) s.t. \( t(b_{ex} \cup [m],w(b_{ex})) \) is minimized;
3 \( T_{ex} := t(b_{ex} \cup [m],w(b_{ex})) \);
4 /*Step2: Compute \( T_{new} \) when \( m \) is assigned to new TAM */
5 Generate new TAM \( b_{\text{new}} := [m] \);
6 \( B_{\text{new}} := B \cup \{b_{\text{new}}\} \);
7 Compute \( T_{\text{new}} \) by [14];
8 for all \( b \in B_{\text{new}} \)
9 Compute \( w(b) \) s.t. \( t(b,w(b)) \) is closest to \( T_{\text{tar}} \);
10 /*Step3: Update TAMs */
11 \( T := T_{\text{ex}} \); \( b_{\text{ex}} := b_{\text{ex}} \cup \{m\} \) for \( b_{\text{ex}} \in B \);
12 else
13 \( T := T_{\text{new}} \); \( B := B_{\text{new}} \);
```

Figure 5. ASSIGN procedure

In Step 1 (line 1-2), for each TAM \( b \in B \) which already exists in the current test schedule, it computes the test time when the core \( m \) is assigned to \( b \) and a reconfigurable union wrapper for \( b \) is designed. Then, it finds \( b_{ex} \), which is a TAM with the shortest test time \( T_{ex} \) after assigning \( m \). In Step 2 (line 3-18), it computes the test time \( T_{\text{new}} \) when a new TAM \( b_{\text{new}} \) is created and the core \( m \) is assigned to \( b_{\text{new}} \). When \( b_{\text{new}} \) is created, for each TAM \( b \in B \cup b_{\text{new}} \), the width of \( b \) is updated such that test time of \( b \) is the closest to the lower bound \( T_{\text{tar}} \) on test time proposed in [14] for the cores currently scheduled (line 6-8). Consequently, if the total TAM width \( W \) exceeds \( W_{\text{max}} \), the algorithm finds a TAM \( b_{\text{max}} \) such that \( t(b_{\text{min}}, w(b_{\text{min}}) - 1) \) is minimized and the TAM width \( w(b_{\text{min}}) \) is updated. This process is repeated until \( W \) does not exceed \( W_{\text{max}} \) (line 12-18). In Step 3 (line 19-22), two solutions created in Step 1 and 2 are compared and the solution with smaller test time is selected.

Fig.6 shows an example of the \( \text{ASSIGN} \) procedure. In this example, it tries to assign core 4 for the current test schedule shown in Fig.6(a). Fig.6(b) and (c) show the results of Step 1 and 2, respectively. Consequently, core 4 is
assigned to TAM 2 since the solution shown in Fig.6(b) has smaller test time.

5.2 Transfer

The procedure TRANSFER as outlined in Fig.7 tries to minimize the total test time $T$ by finding a bottleneck TAM $b_{\text{max}}$ and re-assigning a core in $b_{\text{max}}$ to other TAM.

![Figure 7. TRANSFER procedure](image)

```
procedure TRANSFER()
1 repeat until no more improvement on $T$ is possible |
2 Find a bottleneck TAM $b_{\text{max}}$;
3 $T_{\text{max}} := t(b_{\text{max}}, w(b_{\text{max}}))$;
4 for all core $s \in b_{\text{max}}$ |
5 repeat until no more improvement on $T_{\text{temp}}$ is possible |
6 $T_{\text{temp}} := \infty$;
7 $b_1 := b \cup \{s\}; b_2 := b_{\text{max}} - \{s\}$;
8 $w_{b_1} := w(b_1); w_{b_2} := w(b_2);$
9 repeat until no more improvement on $T_{\text{temp}}$ is possible |
10 if($T_{\text{temp}} > \max(t(b_1, w_{b_1} + 1), t(b_2, w_{b_2} - 1))$) |
11 $T_{\text{temp}} := \max(t(b_1, w_{b_1} + 1), t(b_2, w_{b_2} - 1))$;
12 $w_{b_1} := w_{b_1} + 1; w_{b_2} := w_{b_2} - 1$;
13 |
14 |
15 if($T_{\text{temp}} < T_{\text{max}}$) |
16 $T_{\text{max}} := T_{\text{temp}}$; $b_{\text{min}} := b_1; s_{\text{min}} := s$;
17 $w_{b_{\text{min}}} := w_{b_1}; w_{b_{\text{min}} - b_{\text{min}}} := w_{b_1}$;
18 |
19 |
20 |
21 if($T_{\text{max}} < T$) |
22 $b_{\text{max}} := b_{\text{min}} \cup \{s_{\text{min}}\}$; $b_{\text{max}} := b_{\text{max}} - \{s_{\text{min}}\}$;
23 $w(b_{\text{max}}) := w_{b_{\text{min}}} + w(b_{\text{max}}) - w_{b_{\text{min}}}$;
24 $T := T_{\text{max}}$;
25 |
26 |
```

Figure 8. An example of TRANSFER procedure.

![Figure 8. TRANSFER procedure](image)

During this step, TAM width of $b_{\text{max}}$ is also reduced from $b_{\text{max}}$ and re-assigned to $b$ until no more improvement on $T_{\text{temp}}$ is possible (line 9-14). After that, it finds a core $s_{\text{min}} \in b_{\text{max}}$ and $b_{\text{min}} = B - b_{\text{max}}$ such that test time $T_{\text{temp}}$ is minimized when $s_{\text{min}}$ is re-assigned to $b_{\text{min}}$ (line 15-20). If the re-assignment gives smaller test time than $T$, then it updates the solution. TRANSFER repeats the above reassignment until no more improvement on $T$ is possible.

Fig.8 shows an example of the TRANSFER procedure. In this example, core 3 in the bottleneck TAM 1 is re-assigned to TAM 3 and a part of width of TAM 1 is also re-assigned to TAM 3.

5.3 Merge

The procedure MERGE as outlined in Fig.9 tries to minimize the total test time $T$ by finding the bottleneck TAM $b_{\text{max}}$ and merging $b_{\text{max}}$ with other TAM.

![Figure 9. MERGE procedure](image)

```
procedure MERGE()
1 repeat until no more improvement on $T$ is possible |
2 Find a bottleneck TAM $b_{\text{max}}$;
3 $T_{\text{max}} := t(b_{\text{max}}, w(b_{\text{max}}))$;
4 for all $b \in B - b_{\text{max}}$ |
5 $b_{\text{temp}} := b \cup b_{\text{max}}$;
6 $w_{\text{temp}} := w(b_{\text{temp}})$;
7 if($w_{\text{temp}} < w(b_{\text{max}})$) |
8 $T_{\text{max}} := w_{\text{temp}}$; $b_{\text{max}} := b$;
9 |
10 |
11 if($T > T_{\text{max}}$) |
12 $w(b_{\text{max}}) := w(b_{\text{max}}) + w(b_{\text{max}})$;
13 $b_{\text{max}} := b_{\text{min}} \cup b_{\text{max}}$;
14 $B := B - b_{\text{max}}$;
15 $T := T_{\text{max}}$;
16 |
17 |
```

First, it finds a bottleneck TAM $b_{\text{max}}$ and computes its test time $T_{\text{max}}$ (line 2-3). Then, for each core $b \in B - b_{\text{max}}$, it computes the test time when $b_{\text{max}}$ is merged with $b$ (line 4-10). After that, it finds a TAM $b_{\text{min}} \in B - b_{\text{max}}$ such that test time $T_{\text{max}}$ is minimized when $b_{\text{max}}$ is merged with $b_{\text{min}}$ (line 15-20). If the merged TAM gives smaller test time than the current total test time $T$, then it updates the
solution. MERGE repeats the above process until no more improvement on $T$ is possible.

Fig. 10 shows an example of the MERGE procedure. In this example, the bottleneck TAM 3 is merged with TAM 1.

6 Experimental Results

Table 1 compares the test time results obtained using the proposed method with those using the test scheduling methods proposed by Im et al. [5], Xia et al. [16] and Zou et al. [4]. We have chosen the methods presented in [5, 16, 4] for comparison since they have been applied to the ITC’02 benchmarks [21] and give the best results to the best of our knowledge. Here, we considered the ITC’02 benchmarks SoCs to be flat. In 23 out of the 28 cases (7 TAM widths for 4 benchmarks) our method can find the solution with the smallest test time.

In Table 1, we also show the lower bound on test time proposed in [14] in order to discuss the potential advantage of the proposed reconfigurable union wrapper. We can observe that our method finds the solution with smaller test time than the lower bound in some cases. It should be noted that the lower bound of the test time proposed in [14] is computed assuming that every core has its own wrapper and tested independently of other cores. From these results, we can say that test time can be reduced further than the lower bound by using the proposed reconfigurable union wrapper where multiple cores have a single wrapper and are tested at the same time.

In terms of area overhead, the proposed reconfigurable union wrapper needs additional multiplexers for changing its configurations. Table 2 shows the area overhead computed by the following equation.

\[
\text{overhead} = \frac{\sum \text{(gates of additional multiplexers)}}{\sum \text{(gates of 1500 wrapper cells)}} \times 100 \tag{2}
\]

Please note that the area overhead is only to the logic introduced by IEEE 1500 wrapper cells, not to the overall SoC. In other words, the area overhead shows the increase ratio for each wrapper cell. The number of wrapper cells depend only on the number of I/O cells of the cores and do not depend on the number of gates of the cores. Therefore, for complex cores with hundreds of thousands of gates, this overhead will become insignificant.

7 Conclusion

In this paper we have proposed a reconfigurable union wrapper and a test scheduling algorithm using it. We have shown that by allowing multiple cores to have a single wrapper, test time can be reduced compared to the approaches where every core has its own wrapper. Moreover, our method finds the solution with smaller test time than lower bound proposed in [14] in some cases. This indicates the potential advantage of the proposed reconfigurable union wrapper for test time minimization.

Acknowledgments

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References

Table 1. Test time results (#cycles).

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Table 2. Area overhead (%) to IEEE wrapper cells.

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