Instruction Set Extraction From Programmable Structures

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Abstract-Due to the demand for more design flexibility and design reuse, ASIPs have emerged as a new important design style in the area of DSP systems. In order to obtain efficient hardware/software partitionings within ASIP-based systems, the designer has to be supported by CAD tools that allow frequent re-mapping of algorithms onto variable programmable target structures. This leads to a new class of design tools: retargetable compilers. Considering existing retargetable compilers based on pattern matching, automatic instruction set extraction is identified as a profitable frontend for those compilers. This paper presents concepts and an implementation of an instruction set extractor.

1 Introduction

Recent application areas for VLSI circuits, in particular real time DSP systems, have led to a new design style: application-specific instruction set processors (ASIPs). ASIPs offer a compromise between ASIC implementations and programmable off-the-shelf processors. Increasing circuit performance by technological advances now enables system designers to trade off between speed and programmability. ASIC development is no longer obligatory on high-throughput system design, since ASIPs can fulfill the real-time requirements by dedicated hardware modules, yet offering programmability. Therefore, ASIPs can dramatically reduce design costs. This trend was recently outlined in a survey by Paulin [1].

On the other hand, moving pieces of functionality from hardware to software increases software development costs. Traditionally, software development for DSP systems has been done at the assembly level, due to the lack of high level language compilers for each different target processor. Because of the obvious drawbacks of assembly level programming, high level language pro-gramming is strongly desirable for ASIPs, but requires compilers capable of exploiting application specific instruction sets. Therefore a new class of CAD tools is currently investigated by researchers: retargetable compilers (RCs). RCs read both a behavioral description given at a high level of abstraction (C, PASCAL, VHDL processes) and a structural hardware description given in a HDL. The behavior is mapped onto the programmable structure and binary code implementing the behavior is generated. Since the target structure is part of the compiler input, no compiler redesign is necessary when changing the target. Only the HDL description has to be adapted. Therefore, using RCs instead of target-specific ones obviously can keep the software development costs for DSP systems low. Several implementations of RCs have been reported. The



Figure 1: Functionality of PRISMA

approach taken by Mavaddat [2] is focussed on local microcode generation, i.e. mapping pieces of straight-line code onto a given datapath. The datapath is regarded as a formal language, and binary code generation is done by parsing. Langevin and Cerny [3] propose another theoretic method for local microcode generation, which uses a state machine model of the target datapath. Binary code is derived by traversing state sequences.

Both methods do not support compilation of control structures and need large amounts of computation time. The compilers MSSQ and MSSV by Marwedel and Nowak [4, 5] are based on pattern matching between register transfers and hardware structures. Compilation of data flow as well as control flow structures is supported. Since the complete controller specification is part of the structural hardware input description, neither the microinstruction format nor instruction restrictions due to encoding or sharing have to be for-mulated by the user but are detected by the compiler itself. Microcode compaction and maintenance of temporary cells is restricted to basic blocks resulting in suboptimal code, but pattern matching as a paradigm for code generation guarantees fast compilation times. Thus, the designer is allowed to "play around" with the target architecture in order to achieve an efficient hardware/software partitioning within an ASIP-based system. The CodeSyn compiler by Paulin [6] uses pattern matching as well and is tailored towards DSP applications. Pattern matching is done between data/control flow patterns and instructions. Therefore, the target hardware description is not pure structural, but is based on an instruction set specification. This includes the instruction behaviors and formats as well as the interinstruction restrictions, which all have to be manually specified by the user. It is stated that full retargetability of CodeSyn required automatic instruction set capture, i.e. the compiler should be able to extract the possible instructions of a programmable target structure automatically.



Figure 2: Expression tree

The MSSQ compiler [4] generates binary instructions "on demand" for each statement within the input behavioral description, which results in unnecessary repetitions of operator allocation and data routing within the target structure. Only branch instructions are allocated in advance during a *preallocation phase*.

Thus, automatic instruction set extraction from a target hardware description is well motivated. In this paper we present the tool PRISMA (<u>Pr</u>edetermination of <u>Instruction Sets of Microprogrammed ASIPs</u>), that performs this task. PRISMA reads a flat RTL netlist of a programmable hardware structure and extracts the set of possible microoperations the hardware can perform. Additionally, binary code for disabling unused storage devices is produced. This information can directly be fed into a RC (fig. 1). Note that instruction set extraction has to be performed only once for each specific target structure.

The rest of this paper is organised as follows. Sections 2 and 3 describe the tool functionality and the basic internal data structures. The main extraction steps are presented in sections 4 to 7. Finally, the practical applicability of PRISMA is discussed using several example datapaths and some conclusions are drawn.

2 Basic definitions

Instruction set extraction from a programmable hardware structure yields a list of microoperations the structure can perform. In order to explain the functionality, we informally define some basic notations.

Def: A microoperation is a tuple mo = (t, e, a, c, p), where

t is a target module (register or memory port)

- e is an expression which is assigned to t
- a is an address, in case that t is a memory, otherwise empty
- c is a partial control word field setting,
- necessary to execute the assignment
- p is a precondition, that has to be fulfilled to execute the assignment

An expression e is a tree, whose inner nodes represent operators (arithmetic, logic, concatenation, comparison) and whose leaves represent storage modules, constants, or external inputs. For instance, the tree in fig. 2 represents the term (REG1 SHIFTL 2) + ACCU. The address a is an expression as well.

The control code c is a string over $\{0, 1, X, C\}$, where X denotes a don't care value and C denotes a bit belonging to an immediate constant. The length of c is equal to the instruction word length. Conditions are represented by the following data structure:



Figure 3: Condition tree

Def: A condition tree is either empty or a triple $ct = (r, ct_{and}, ct_{or})$, where

r is the root

 ct_{and} is a condition tree

 ct_{or} is a condition tree

The root r of a condition tree is a single equation or inequation. A condition tree ct is true, if one of the following conditions holds:

- a) ct = empty
- b) (r = true) AND $(ct_{and} = true)$ c) $ct_{ar} = true$

Thus, for example the condition tree shown in fig. 3 represents the condition $\$

(REG1 = 0011 AND REG2 = 0110) OR (ACCU > 0)

The equations and inequations within a condition tree refer to storage contents, module ports, bitstrings or constants. A precondition p of a microoperation mo is a condition tree, in which no (in)equation refers to the instruction memory, since all conditions concerning the instruction memory are already encoded in the control code c of mo. The necessity of preconditions can be seen in the structure in fig. 4, which will serve as a running example throughout this paper.

In this 8 bit processor, the binary instructions are located in the instruction memory I, whose width is 24 bits. All modules are directly controlled by the instruction word ¹, except the **shifter**, which is residually controlled by the contents of the 2 bit shift mode register SM. Depending on the SM contents (00,01,10,11) the shifter performs a left shift of 0, 2, 4, or 5 bits. Thus, e.g. moving data from the accumulator accu to the main memory MAIN with a left shift of 4 requires SM = "10" besides the necessary control codes. SM = "10" has to be ensured in a machine cycle before the data transfer is executed, therefore we call this a precondition. Preconditions always refer to states being reached in an earlier machine cycle.

Two functions for inserting an additional (in)equation q into a condition tree are defined:

- 1. **OR-Insert** inserts a new (in)equation q into a condition tree ct so that q is an *alternative* to fulfill ct.
- 2. **AND-Insert** inserts a new (in)equation q into a condition tree ct so that q is *necessary* in any case to fulfill ct.

Both functions can be extended for inserting a complete condition tree ct into another tree ct'. In addition to microoperations, we define special operations for disabling storage modules, i.e. operations

¹I.(k:l) denotes an instruction word subrange



Figure 4: Example structure

that preserve the current state of a storage module. **Def:** A *disabling operation* is a triple do = (t, c, p), where

- t is the module to be disabled
- c is the according partial control word field setting p is the necessary precondition

The purpose of PRISMA is to extract the possible microoperations and disabling operations for all storage modules within a programmable structure described in a HDL. We assume a microcontrolled structure and monophase execution. Instruction encoding and bit sharing are permitted. Note that it is not useful to extract the set of micro<u>instructions</u> instead of micro-operations from a hardware structure, since this would result in a very large computation time for pairwise consistency check for all extracted micro- and disabling operations. Compacting microoperations into a microinstruction can quickly be done by the RC on demand, avoiding consideration of unnecessary microinstructions.

3 Circuit representation

The HDL read by PRISMA allows description of hardware structures comprising the following types of generic components: multiplexers, ALUs, decoders, logic gates, comparators, hardwired constants, busses, registers, memories, tristate drivers, and external pins. RTL netlists are described by enumeration of all modules together with their interconnections. One distinguished ROM within the specification has to be marked as memory for instructions. The netlist contains the complete controller structure, so that instruction conflicts are detected by PRISMA itself.



Figure 5: Internal graph structure

The hardware description is parsed into an internal graph structure, where nodes represent modules and edges represent interconnections. We assume that modules with variable behaviors have a distinguished control input ctr. The list of possible module behaviors together with the according control code is attached to each node. Fig. 5 shows a part of the graph for the example structure (fig. 4).

Graph edges are directed opposite to the data flow direction. The behavior tables are shown within the nodes, e.g. the ALU alu performs four different operations on its data inputs d0 and d1, depending on the control code ctr (00,01,10,11): addition, subtraction, and passing d0 resp. d1 unchanged to the output outp. The multiplexer alumux only performs PASS operations on its inputs. The register accu stores a new value at its input when its control input is 0, otherwise preserves its state. Modules without a control input have a behavior table consisting of a single entry. Busses are represented as dummy modules only supporting a PASS operation. Every bus driving module has to have a **TRISTATE** operation. All storage modules are assumed to change their state at the same clock edge if they are enabled.

A restriction is, that modules may have only one output port, except multiport memories. This restriction can be circumvented by splitting the output into several subranges.

The internal graph structure is similar to the one proposed in [4] and allows quickly backtracking data sources within the structure. This is essential for the tasks described in the following two sections.

4 Extraction of expressions

As defined in section 2, every microoperation assigns an expression e to a target storage module t. Each assignment in general requires several conditions to be fulfilled, e.g. (see fig. 4) loading memory MAIN at a certain address with the accumulator contents shifted left by 4 requires²:

shifter.ctr = "10" (perform left shift of 4)
accudrv.ctr = "1" (accudrv drives the databus)
MAIN.ctr = "00" (MAIN reads from databus)
idrv.ctr = "0" (idrv is in TRISTATE mode)

Since these conditions can be represented by a condition tree, we can think of every expression e to have an associated condition tree ct_e . In order to extract all microoperations systematically, at first all expressions with the associated condition trees for each storage module input are extracted. This is the purpose of the function

Find Expressions : module \mapsto list of pairs (e, ct_e) yielding a list of expressions e a module can deliver at its output port, assuming condition ct_e is fulfilled. Due to the underlying graph structure, FindExpressions can be implemented recursively. Recursion stops when a leaf module, (i.e. storage, HW constant or external input) is reached. The expression delivered by a leaf module is simply its contents resp. value. For non-leaf modules, *FindExpressions* backtracks the data flow and possible operations within the structure, while building up the according condition trees on-the-fly. Necessary conditions are AND-inserted, whereas alternatives are OR-inserted in the current condition tree. When Find-*Expressions* is called for a bus, it ensures that all bus drivers unused for a certain expression are in TRISTATE mode in order to avoid bus conflicts. Recursion also must terminate when cyclic paths are detected, e.g. due to bus exchanges.

We consider a call to *FindExpressions* for module pcmux, which determines the next state of the program counter PC. The pcmux has the behavior table

- 00: PASS d0
- 01: PASS d1

1X: IF cnd THEN PASS d1 ELSE PASS d0

i.e. control codes 00 resp. 01 pass the inputs d0 resp. d1 to the output, and control codes 10 and 11 pass one input depending on the condition input cnd. *FindExpressions*(pcmux) calls itself recursively for the predecessor modules pcincr and I and yields the following results:

No.	Expression	
1	PC + 1	pcmux.ctr = "00" OR (pcmux.ctr =
2	I[PC].(7:0)	[*] 1X" AND pcmux.cnd = "0") pcmux.ctr = "01" OR (pcmux.ctr = "1X" AND pcmux.cnd = "1")

FindExpressions also takes into account semantical information about the operations performed by the different modules. This is e.g. done by exploiting left and right neutral elements of operations, like 0 for addition and disjunction or 1 for multiplication and conjunction.

Thus, an ALU performing subtraction on two inputs a and b implicitly has a *virtual* PASS operation, presuming the constant 0 can be allocated at input b. Exploiting virtual operations leads to an extended set of microoperations which in turn provide higher degrees of freedom for a compiler.

Using *FindExpressions* as a subroutine, all expressions assignable to any storage module can be extracted in the following manner:

```
m_inp := module connected to the input port of t;
 L_inp := FindExpressions(m_inp);
 FOR EACH (e_inp,ct_inp) IN L_inp DO
 IF (t is an addressable memory)
  THEN
   m_adr := module connected to the address port of t;
   L_adr := FindExpressions(m_adr);
   FOR EACH (e_adr,ct_adr) IN L_adr DO
   ct := empty condition tree;
   AND-Insert(ct," control code for LOAD operation of t");
    AND-Insert(ct,ct_inp);
   AND Insert(ct.ct_adr);
   ATTACH (e_inp,e_adr,ct) TO t;
   OD
  ELSE (* m is a single register *)
   ct := empty condition tree;
   AND-Insert(ct," control code for LOAD operation of t");
   AND-Insert(ct,ct_inp);
   ATTACH (e_inp,ct) TO t;
 FI
OD
END;
```

Procedure ExtractAllExpressions is called for each storage module. As a result of this phase, each register has been attached a list of expression/condition tree pairs that represent possible assignments to it. For memory modules, additionally all address expressions have been generated together with the according condition trees. A triple (e_inp,e_adr,ct) attached to memory M means M[e_adr] := e_inp if ct is true.

All single conditions are equations of the type "module input port = bitstring". In order to determine whether a condition can be fulfilled and thus results in a valid microoperation, the bitstrings have to be allocated. This task is subject of the following section.

5 Constant allocation

The next step is to *expand* the condition trees found in the expression extraction phase. A condition tree is called expanded, when all its single conditions only refer to storage contents instead of module ports. For instance the condition "shifter.ctr = 10" can be expanded to "SM = 10" in the example structure. Condition tree expansion requires constant allocation at module ports. This is the purpose of the function

Allocate : module \times bitstring \mapsto condition tree computing a condition tree that forces a module to produce a given bitstring at its output port³. If the module cannot provide the required constant, Allocate

 $^{^2 {\}rm The}$ notation < m >.< p > denotes port < p > of module < m >.

³Actually, PRISMA also considers port subranges during extraction. This has been left out in the paper for sake of simplicity.

returns an "IMPOSSIBLE" value. Similar to *FindExpressions* the function *Allocate* recursively backtracks data flow through the graph structure until leaf modules are reached. In general, constants are allocated at storages, HW constants or decoders. Semantical information about operations is taken into account as well, e.g. an ALU can (among other alternatives) produce a constant c by computing c + 0 or c AND 11...11. Note that "perfect" constant allocation is practically impossible due to the large number of alternatives that may arise (consider, for instance, the number of versions to generate a certain 32 bit constant by addition). Thus, there cannot exist a tool for extracting *all possible microoperations* from any *arbitrary* target structure. Expanding a condition tree resulting from expression extraction is done by the following procedure.

PROCEDURE ExpandConditionTree(condition tree ct); BEGIN FOR EACH node "module.port = bitstring" IN ct DO m = module whose output is connected to module.port; ct' = Allocate(m,bitstring); IF ct' != IMPOSSIBLE THEN REPLACE node BY ct'; FI OD END;

The structure of condition trees can be exploited, e.g. if expansion of a node fails, all nodes in its AND-subtree can be skipped. Calling *ExpandConditionTree* for the two trees in the previous example (see section 4), one obtains:

No.	Expression	Expanded condition
1	PC + 1	I[PC].(14:13) = "00" OR (I[PC].(14:13))
		= "1X" AND accu <= 0)
2	I[PC].(7:0)	I[PC].(14:13) = "01" OR(I[PC].(14:13))
	/	= "1X" AND accu > 0)

ExpandConditionTree is called for each condition tree produced during expression extraction. Therefore, finally all conditions only refer to the distinguished instruction memory or to other storages. This allows splitting the conditions into control word field settings and preconditions.

6 Microoperation generation

In order to transform the previously extracted register/memory assignments into microoperations as defined in section 2, the subroutine

Split : condition tree \mapsto list of pairs (c, ct)

is used, where c is a partially initialised instruction word and ct is a condition tree only comprising preconditions. *Split* performs several subtasks:

a) Check whether a condition refers to the instruction memory or to another storage. If the instruction memory is referenced, set the according bits in c and eliminate the condition from the tree. Otherwise keep this condition as a precondition.

b) Check for instruction conflicts of conditions sharing subranges of the instruction word.

c) Check whether the remaining precondition tree is consistent, i.e. all conditions to be fulfilled concurrently are pairwise compatible.⁴

Calling Split for the previous example trees results in

No.	Expression	(partial instruction, precondition)
1	PC + 1	(xxxxxxxx00xxxxxxxxxxx, empty) (xxxxxxxxx1xxxxxxxxxxx, "accu <= 0")
2	I[PC].(7:0)	$\begin{array}{l} (xxxxxxx0) xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx$

yielding two alternatives for assigning each of the two expressions to register PC.

All register/memory assignments (see section 4) are transformed into microoperations. Assuming Split computes a list $((c_1, ct_1), \ldots, (c_n, ct_n))$ for the condition tree ct of an assignment (e-inp,ct) to a target register t, the set of microoperations $mo_i = (t, e_inp, \cdot, c_i, ct_i)$ is constructed for this assignment. Memory assignments are transformed accordingly into microoperations with a non-empty address field.

In order to avoid unnecessary restrictions, all microoperations having the same target and the same expression/address are heuristically compacted, i.e. if the preconditions are compatible and the instruction words differ only in one bit b_i , two microoperations can be replaced by one with $b_i = X$. After compaction the extraction of microoperations is finished. For the example structure, PRISMA finds:

- 4 Operations for register PC
- 1 operation for register SM
- 10 operations for register accu
- 5 operations for memory MAIN

The output including bit range information in case of register PC is:

MICROOPERATIONS FOR REGISTER PC:

- (1) Expression: (PC.(7:0) + 1).(7:0)
 Preconditions: <empty>
 Code:
 24 20 16 12 8 4 0
 -|---|--|--|--|--|
 xxxxxxx00xxxxxxxxx
- (3) Expression: I[PC.(7:0)].(7:0)
 Preconditions: accu.(7:0) > 0
 Code:
 24 20 16 12 8 4 0
 -|---|---|---|
 xxxxxxxx1xxxxxCCCCCCCCC
- (4) Expression: (PC.(7:0) + 1).(7:0)
 Preconditions: accu.(7:0) <= 0
 Code:
 24 20 16 12 8 4 0
 -|---|--|--|---|
 xxxxxxxx1xxxxxxxxxx</pre>

There are two alternative operations (2 and 3) for loading the program counter immediately from I. Operation (3) only needs bit 14 of the instruction word to be set to 1, but requires **accu** to be greater zero from a previous instruction cycle. A RC might regard this as a conditional jump operation, whereas operation (2) could serve as an unconditional jump.

⁴Since occurence of **cyclic** inconsistencies in practical structures is very unlikely, only pairwise compatibility is checked.

When subranges of the instruction word occur in expressions, the according bits in the control code are symbolically set to "C" to indicate that the instruction provides an immediate constant at these bits, and thus a restriction exists for setting these bits in microoperations to be executed concurrently.

7 Storage disabling

When several microoperations are packed into one microinstruction, unused storage modules must remain unchanged. Therefore, PRISMA also extracts disabling operations for each register or memory port. This task is very similar to extraction of microoperations. All (expression, precondition) pairs are computed that guarantee NOLOAD operations for each storage. Additionally, in case of registers, versions are extracted that force a register to store its previous value, i.e. PRISMA looks for cyclic paths within the structure. For instance, the accu can preserve its state by setting instruction bit 15 to 1 ("NOLOAD", see fig. 4 and 6), or by setting instruction bit 15 to 0 ("LOAD") and bits (9:8) to 10 ("PASS d0" via alu). Generating these additional disabling operations can provide more alternatives for a compiler to select from during code compaction.

8 Experimental results

PRISMA has been implemented with about 10,000 lines of C++ code on a Sun SPARCstation 10. It has been applied to several target structures, among them the datapaths mentioned in [3] (diff) and [5] (mssv), and partial datapaths of the TMS320 DSP family [7] and of the ADSP2101 signal processor [8]. Since no information about the internal controller structure is provided for TMS and ADSP, an arbitrary VLIW controller has been added to these structures in order to permit extraction.

structure	# modules	#μ-OPs	CPU sec
example	15	20	0.57
diff	23	79	0.95
E1000	18	48	0.66
ADSP	43	746	305
mssv	8	53	0.90
mssq	13	127	13.76
TMS	29	545	378

Table 1: Experimental results

The results shown in table 1 indicate that instruction set extraction is feasible even for larger realistic structures. Runtime grows rapidly with the number of extracted microoperations due to the compaction phase. Time for compaction could be reduced by pre-sorting the extracted operations into several groups according to their expressions and compaction only within each group, but this is only an implementation issue. The number of extracted microoperations itself is mainly influenced by features of the structural model: the *number of RT level modules*, the *number of different behaviors per module*, and the *chaining degree* within the structure. The number of resulting microoperations is only reduced by instruction word restrictions, such as bit sharing (see e.g. **alumux** and **alu** in fig. 4).

9 Conclusions

With ASIPs emerging as a new important means of DSP system implementation, CAD tool support becomes necessary for software development for these systems. Retargetable compilers that map behavioral descriptions onto specific structures by exploiting complex instruction sets with high degree of potential parallelism have been proposed to solve this problem. Pattern matching has been identified as one key technique in this context [5, 6]. Matching is performed between data/control flow patterns in the behavioral description and RT patterns in the hardware structure. The latter can be extracted from the hardware descriptions automatically, resulting in full compiler retargetability. A prototype tool for instruction set extraction was presented in this paper, which provides a convenient interface between compiler and target structure, since the possible patterns of a given structure can be computed in advance and be stored in a database. Restrictions arising from the controller structure are already detected in this phase. During the steps of binary code generation (allocation and code compaction), the compiler can rely on this pattern database rather than on the RTL structure, permitting a higher level of abstraction. Experiments with realistic structures proved feasibility of instruction set extraction. Future work will include extending the structure domain towards modules with multi-cycle operations.

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