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Fuzzy simulated evolution algorithm for VLSI cell placement

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Abstract

Placement is a major step encountered during the design of very large scale integrated circuits. It is a generalization of the quadratic assignment problem with numerous constraints, several objectives, and a very noisy solution space. Besides the NP-hard nature of this problem, many circuit parameters such as area, interconnect delays, wire requirements, etc. can only be imprecisely estimated before completing the remaining design automation steps and committing the circuit to silicon. Further, the best placement is usually one that combines several desirable physical characteristics. There has not been a consensus on how to accommodate all these (conflicting) requirements in the search for near optimal feasible solutions. In this paper, we present a fuzzy simulated evolution (FSE) algorithm to tackle this problem. Identification of near optimal solutions is achieved through a novel goal-directed fuzzy search approach. This approach can be followed by other iterative (meta-) heuristics to find desirable solutions to optimization problems with noisy search space and possibly more than one objective. This approach is dominance preserving, i.e. if a solution A dominates another solution B with respect to all objective criteria, then A will surely have a higher membership in the fuzzy set of good solutions than solution B. Further, the approach scales well with larger problem instances and/or a larger number of objective criteria. Also, the operators of all stages of simulated evolution have been implemented using fuzzy logic to exploit the nature of fuzzy information of the problem domain. Experiments with benchmark tests demonstrate a noticeable improvement in solution quality.

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Keywords: Combinatorial optimization; Meta-heuristic; Very large scale integrated; Standard-cell layout; Placement; Simulated evolution; Fuzzy logic

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1. Introduction

Most phases of VLSI design automation comprise very large and complex combinatorial optimization problems with numerous constraints and a very noisy solution space. A category of algorithms that have been found robust in tackling this class of problems are stochastic iterative heuristics. These heuristics are characterized by hill climbing property that allows occasional acceptance of inferior solutions (Sait & Youssef, 1999). Heuristics like genetic algorithm (Goldberg, 1989), simulated annealing (Kirkpatrick, Gelatt, & Vecchi, 1983), tabu search (Glover & Laguna, 1997), simulated evolution (Kling & Banerjee, 1989), and stochastic evolution (Saab & Rao, 1990) are examples of general stochastic iterative heuristics. These heuristics belong to the general class of meta-heuristics. Detailed description of these heuristics can be found in (Sait & Youssef, 1999), and an interesting classification of some of them is given in (Glover & Laguna, 1997).

In this work, we adopt simulated evolution (SE) to solve VLSI placement which is an important problem encountered during the design of VLSI circuits. Besides the NP-hard nature of this problem, many circuit parameters such as area, interconnect delays, wire requirements, etc. can only be imprecisely estimated before completing the remaining design automation steps and committing the circuit to silicon. Further, the best placement is usually one that combines several desirable physical characteristics such as small area, short wire-length, and low delay. These desirable characteristics as well as some of the designer expert knowledge can best be expressed in linguistic terms, where each linguistic term represents a range of values rather than a single crisp value. Fuzzy logic provides a rigorous algebraic notation and operators to represent and manipulate such important expert human knowledge.

Many placement algorithms have been reported in the past like Sechen and Sangiovanni-Vincentelli (1986), Razaz (1993), Razaz and Gan (1990), Ball, Kraus, and Mlynski (1994), Kang, Lin, and Shragowitz (1994) and Mackey and Carothers (1996). Except of a few studies like Lin and Shragowitz (1992), Kang, Lin, and Shragowitz (1994), and Shragowitz, Youssef, Sait, and Adiche (1997), none of the reported heuristics exploited the existence of imprecise expert knowledge in the search of near optimal solutions to the placement problem. Further, the majority of the reported approaches describe deterministic algorithms. For over-constrained multi-objective optimization problems such as placement, modern meta-heuristics such as SE are better alternatives in identifying superior solutions than those found by their constructive and/or deterministic counterparts. Because of the very large search space and the many constraints, constructive/deterministic approaches will usually make steady progress toward a local optimum. They may even fail to find a feasible solution.

Iterative (meta-) heuristics have been used for the VLSI cell placement. The use of genetic algorithm (GA) for placement is proposed by Sait, Youssef, Nassar, and Bente (1998), Shahookar and Mazumder (1990), and Holt and Tyagi (1996). Similarly use of simulated annealing (SA) for VLSI cell placement is discussed by Sechen and Sangiovanni-Vincentelli (1986), Sait and Youssef (1995), Shahookar and Mazumder (1991). There are some concerns about the execution time of these schemes (Tao & Zhao, 1993) and premature convergence of GA (Fogel, 1994). In order to overcome these problems, Kling and Banerjee proposed the SE meta-heuristic (Kling, 1990), which combines iterative improvement and constructive perturbation. It saves itself from getting trapped in local optima by using stochastic selection of solution components for perturbation. This heuristic has a lower execution time than SA and GA (Kling & Banerjee, 1989).

In this paper we present a placement algorithm based on SE. We propose a new fuzzy goal-directed

search strategy, a general approach for multi-objective optimization problems. The proposed strategy relies on the flexibility and expressive power of fuzzy logic to easily accommodate any number of objectives and/or designer preferences. We also suggest improvements to the SE algorithm.

The rest of this paper is organized as follows. Section 2 covers background material such as problem definition, the SE algorithm, and a brief introduction on fuzzy logic. The proposed *fuzzy goal directed search* approach is described in Section 3. Section 4 describes the proposed fuzzy simulated evolution (FSE) algorithm. Experimental results are given in Section 5. We conclude in Section 6.

2. Background

Many combinatorial optimization problems can be formulated as follows (Saab & Rao, 1990): given a finite set M of distinct movable elements and a finite set L of locations, a state is defined as an assignment function $S : M \rightarrow L$ satisfying certain constraints. The placement problem fits this generic model. For this problem, given a set of modules $M = \{m_1, m_2, \dots, m_n\}$ and a set of signals $S = \{s_1, s_2, \dots, s_k\}$, we associate with each module $m_i \in M$ a set of signals S_{m_i} , where $S_{m_i} \subset eqS$. Similarly with each signal $s_j \in S$ we associate a set of modules M_{s_j} , where $M_{s_j} = \{m_i | s_j \in S_{m_i}\}$ is said to be a signal *net*. Also available are a set of slots or locations $L = \{L_1, L_2, \dots, L_p\}$, where $p \geq n$. The objective of placement is to assign each $m_i \in M$ to a unique location L_j such that some criteria are optimized, which are function of technology and layout style (Sait & Youssef, 1995). In the past, minimization of interconnect wire-length has been widely used as the objective of VLSI placement. However, advancement in technology has resulted in reduction of gate switching delays, making the interconnect delays a prominent factor in overall circuit speed (Sait & Youssef, 1997). Reduction of interconnect delays and layout area along with wire-length are important objectives in the placement stage.

In standard-cell layout style all the circuit modules or *cells* are constrained to have the same height, while width of the cell is variable and depends upon its complexity (Sait & Youssef, 1995). Cells are placed in horizontal rows and the cell rows are separated by horizontal routing channels. In order to connect cells within a row or cells from two different rows, channels are used for running interconnect wires. Connecting cells from two non-adjacent rows requires feed through cells in intermediate rows. The feed through cells allow running vertical wires from cell rows. Fig. 1 shows a generic standard-cell layout.

Unlike constructive algorithms, which produce a solution only at the end of the design process, iterative algorithms operate with design solutions defined at each iteration. In order to compare alternative placement solutions of a circuit, the cost of each placement is estimated for the objectives under consideration. Important placement objectives are the minimization of circuit area, interconnects length, and circuit delay. The cost of the placement due to interconnects length is determined by adding the wire-length estimates for all the nets in the circuit. Steiner tree approximation is a quick and accurate way to estimate net length (Sait & Youssef, 1995; Shahookar & Mazumder, 1991). This method estimates the net-length as follows (see Fig. 2). The smallest rectangle enclosing all the pins of the net is drawn. Then a line is run through the rectangle gravity center (assuming each pin is of mass 1) in the direction of the longer sides of the rectangle. Let W be the length of that line and h_i be the distance of pin i to the line, $1 \leq i \leq n$. Then the estimate of the net-length is set equal to $W + \sum_{i=1}^n h_i$.

The number of cell rows and wiring channel height are estimated based on past circuits of similar complexity, and are assumed known. This assumption of having a fixed number of cell rows and fixed

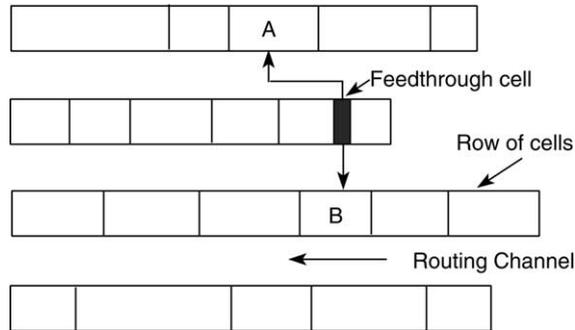


Fig. 1. Layout of a standard-cell placement.

routing channel height leaves only layout width to be considered as a cost parameter instead of area. The layout width depends upon the longest cell row in the solution. The circuit delay cost, the third objective criterion, is computed by accumulating the switching delays and the propagation delays of all the cells and nets of the longest path in the placement solution (Sait & Youssef, 1997). A *path* is a sequence of cells and nets whose source and sink are controlled by a single clock cycle (or the same clock phase for multi-phase clocking).

2.1. SE algorithm

SE is a stochastic evolutionary search strategy that falls in the general category of meta-heuristics. It was first proposed by Kling and Banerjee (1989). SE adopts the generic state model described above, where a solution is seen as a population of movable elements. Each element i is characterized by a *goodness* measure $g_i \in (0, 1)$ where $g_i = O_i/C_i$. C_i is the estimated real cost of module m_i in its position in current state, and O_i is a lower bound on the cost of m_i . For example, in the case of VLSI cell placement, the cost of a given module m_i could be taken as the length of all the nets connected to the module. For each module m_i , O_i can be estimated by packing all the modules connected to m_i near each other and computing the wire-length of the interconnections. In that case, a goodness near 1 indicates a highly fit individual with respect to wire-length.

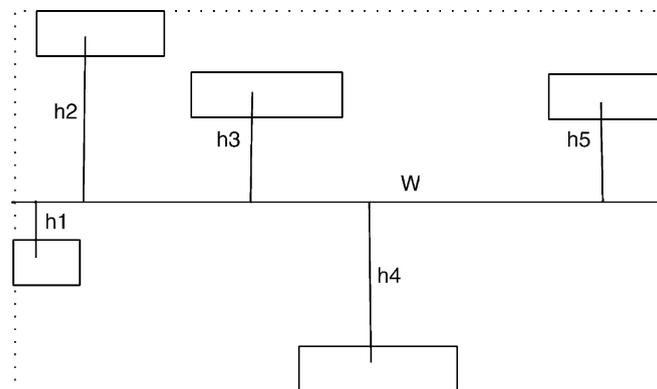


Fig. 2. Steiner tree approximation to estimate the length of a net.

Starting from a given initial solution, SE repetitively executes in sequence three steps, *evaluation*, *selection*, and *allocation*, until stopping conditions are met.

The pseudo-code of the SE algorithm is given in Fig. 3. The evaluation step estimates the goodness of each element in its current location. The goodness of an element is a ratio of its optimum cost to its actual cost estimate, and therefore belongs to the interval $[0,1]$. It is a measure of how near each element is to its optimum position. The higher the goodness of an element, the closer is that element to its optimum location with respect to the current configuration. In selection step, the algorithm probabilistically selects elements for relocation. Elements with low goodness values have higher probabilities of getting selected. A selection *bias* (B) is used to compensate errors made in the estimation of goodness measure. Its objective is to inflate or deflate the goodness of elements. A high positive value of *bias* decreases the probability of selection and vice versa. Fig. 4 shows the effect of *bias* on various aspects of the SE algorithm. A low bias value results in large selection sets, leading to longer run-times. Large selection sets also degrade the solution quality due to uncertainties created by large perturbations (Kling & Banerjee, 1991). Similarly, for high bias values the size of the selection set is small, which degrades the quality of solution due to limitations of algorithm to escape local minima (Kling & Banerjee, 1991). A carefully tuned bias value results in good solution quality and reduced execution time (Kling & Banerjee, 1991). A suitable bias value can be found by doing several trial runs of the algorithm for each instance of the problem with different bias values. The bias value found this way will be constant throughout the execution of the actual run for that instance of the problem. The plots of Fig. 4 are obtained with one placement instance and clearly indicate that the most appropriate value of bias to use with that particular problem instance is 0.2.

The selected elements during the selection step are reassigned to new locations in a constructive allocation step so as to improve their goodness values, thereby reducing the overall cost of the solution. Different constructive allocation schemes are proposed in Kling and Banerjee (1989). One such scheme is *sorted individual best fit*, where all the selected elements are sorted in descending order with respect to their connectivity with the partial solution and placed in a queue. The sorted elements are removed one at a time and *trial* moves are carried out for all the available empty positions. The element is *finally* placed in a position where maximum reduction in cost for the partial solution is achieved. This process is continued until the selected queue is empty. The overall complexity of this scheme is $O(s^2)$ where s is the number of selected elements. Other more elaborate allocation schemes are *weighted bipartite matching allocation* and *branch-and-bound search allocation* (Kling & Banerjee, 1989). However, these allocation schemes are more complex and have higher run-time requirement than ‘sorted individual best fit’, with marginal improvement in the quality of solution (Kling & Banerjee, 1989). In this work we adopted sorted individual best fit fuzzy allocation. Note that the selection and allocation steps determine and dictate the search directions, while the evaluation step provides feedback to the search.

Though SE falls in the category of meta-heuristics such as SA and GA, there are significant differences between these heuristics. In SA, a perturbation of current state (solution) is a single move, while for SE it is a compound move. For SA the elements involved in the move are selected at random, while for SE the elements (usually more than two) are selected based on their fitness values. Moreover, for SA the degree of randomness in the search is controlled by a parameter called *temperature*. In the early hot regime the search is nearly random and as the temperature is lowered, the search resembles more and more a gradient descent. On the other hand, the randomness in the SE search is always controlled by domain specific knowledge embodied in the evaluation and allocation steps of the algorithm.

Algorithm *Simulated_Evolution*($B, E_{initial}, StoppingCondition$)

NOTATION

B = Bias Value. E = Complete Solution.

e_i = Individual cell in E . O_i = Lower bound on cost of i^{th} cell.

C_i = Current cost of i^{th} cell in E . g_i = Goodness of i^{th} cell in E .

S = Queue to store the selected cells.

$ALLOCATE(e_i, E_i)$ = Function to allocate e_i in partial solution E_i

Repeat

EVALUATION: **ForEach** $e_i \in E$ **DO**

begin

$g_i = \frac{O_i}{C_i}$

end

SELECTION: **ForEach** $e_i \in E$ **DO**

begin

IF $Random > Min(g_i + B, 1)$

THEN begin

$S = S \cup e_i$; Remove e_i from E .

end

end

end

Sort the elements of S

ALLOCATION: **ForEach** $e_i \in S$ **DO**

begin

$ALLOCATE(e_i, E_i)$

end

Until *Stopping Condition is satisfied*

Return Best solution.

End (*Simulated_Evolution*)

Fig. 3. General structure of the SE algorithm.

There are also significant differences between GA and SE. GA works on a population of solutions and relies on genetic reproduction through crossover operators. SE works on a single solution and relies on a complex mutation operation to achieve evolution. Thus, SE falls in the category of algorithms which emphasize the behavioral link between parent and offspring, or between reproductive populations, rather than the genetic link (Sait & Youssef, 1999). Another difference is that GA computes the fitness of complete solution while SE computes the goodness of each individual element of a solution.

A classification of meta-heuristics proposed by Glover and Laguna (1997) is based on three basic features: (1) the use of adaptive memory where the letter *A* is used if the meta-heuristic employs adaptive

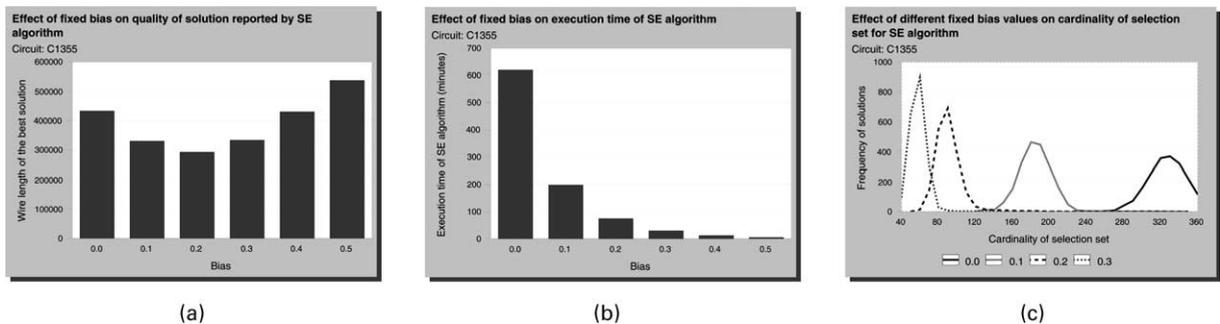


Fig. 4. Effect of bias on the SE algorithm. (a) Quality of solution generated, (b) execution time of the algorithm, (c) cardinality of selection set against frequency of solutions.

memory and the letter M is used if it is memoryless; (2) the kind of neighborhood exploration, where the letter N is used if the meta-heuristic performs a systematic neighborhood search and the letter S is used if stochastic sampling is followed; and (3) the number of current solutions carried from one iteration to the next, where the digit 1 is used if the meta-heuristic maintains a single solution, and the letter P is used if a parallel search is performed with a population of solutions of cardinality P . For example, according to this classification, Genetic algorithm is $M/S/P$, tabu search is $A/N/1$, and both SA and SE are $M/S/1$.

2.2. Fuzzy logic and fuzzy set theory

Many engineering problems face imprecise non-statistical information. Fuzzy set theory (FST) is a powerful and robust mathematical framework introduced by Zadeh (1965) to model and exploit such information.

A crisp set is normally defined as a collection of elements or objects $x \in X$, where each element can either belong to a set or not. However, in many real-life situations, objects do not have crisp (1 or 0) membership criteria. FST aims to represent imprecise linguistic information, like ‘small area’ and ‘quite small area’, which are difficult to represent in classical (crisp) set theory. In fuzzy sets, an element may partially belong to a set. Fuzzy linguistic terms abstract a range of numerical values which actually represent what has been termed a fuzzy set. Formally, a fuzzy set is characterized by a membership function which provides a measure of the degree of presence for every element in the set (Zadeh, 1965). A fuzzy set A of a universe of discourse X is defined as $A = \{(x, \mu_A(x)) | x \in X\}$, where $\mu_A(x)$ is a membership function of $x \in X$ being an element in A (Zadeh, 1965).

Like crisp sets, operations such as union, intersection, and complementation, are also defined on fuzzy sets. There are many implementations of fuzzy union and fuzzy intersection operators. Fuzzy unions are known as s -norm operators while fuzzy intersections as t -norm. Generally, s -norm is implemented using max function and t -norm as min function, i.e. $\mu_{A \cup B}(x) = \max(\mu_A(x), \mu_B(x))$, and $\mu_{A \cap B}(x) = \min(\mu_A(x), \mu_B(x))$. However, the formulation of multi-criteria decision functions do not desire pure ‘anding’ of t -norm nor the pure ‘oring’ of s -norm. The reason for this is the complete lack of compensation of t -norm for any partial fulfillment and complete submission of s -norm to fulfillment of any criteria. Also the indifference to the individual criteria of each of these two forms of operators led to the development of Ordered weighted averaging (OWA) operators (Yager, 1988). This operator falls in the category of compensatory fuzzy operators and allows easy adjustment of the degree of ‘anding’ and ‘oring’ embedded in the aggregation. According to Yager (1988), ‘orlike’ and ‘andlike’ OWA for two fuzzy sets A and B are implemented as given in Eqs. (1) and (2) respectively.

$$\mu_A \cup_B(x) = \beta \max(\mu_A, \mu_B) + (1 - \beta) \frac{1}{2}(\mu_A + \mu_B) \quad (1)$$

$$\mu_A \cap_B(x) = \beta \min(\mu_A, \mu_B) + (1 - \beta) \frac{1}{2}(\mu_A + \mu_B) \quad (2)$$

β is a constant parameter in the range $[0,1]$. It represents the degree with which OWA operator resembles the pure ‘or’ or pure ‘and’ respectively.

In order to represent imprecise ideas, Zadeh (1973) introduced the concept of linguistic variable. A *linguistic variable* is a variable whose values are words or sentences in natural or artificial language (Lin, 1994). The set of values a linguistic variable can take is called a *term set*. This set is constructed by means of primary terms and by placing modifiers known as *hedges* such as *more*, *many*, *few*, *quite*, etc.

before primary terms. For example *area* may be a fuzzy variable with the term set *quite small*, *small*, *large*, and *quite large*. The term set represents a precise syntax in order to form a vast range of values the linguistic variable can take.

Reasoning in the fuzzy domain is called fuzzy reasoning. Fuzzy reasoning is achieved with fuzzy logic rules constructed with fuzzy operators and fuzzy logic values. A fuzzy rule is a proposition expressing human reasoning. Unlike classical reasoning in which propositions are either true or false, fuzzy logic establishes approximate truth value of propositions based on linguistic values and inference rules. A proposition is an **IF–THEN** rule. The **IF** part (antecedent) is a fuzzy predicate defined in terms of fuzzy values and operators (also called *connectors*) like **AND**, **OR** and **NOT**. The **THEN** part is the consequent of the rule. In our case it specifies a fuzzy value of the objective function. For example, If a *good placement* is one with *small area*, *short wire-length*, and *low delay*, then the following fuzzy rule may be used to state such fact.

IF small area **AND** short wire-length **AND** low delay **THEN** good placement

The terms good placement, small area, short wire-length, and low delay, are all fuzzy values for the base variables placement, area, wire-length, and delay. The result of evaluation of the antecedent of the above fuzzy rule identifies the degree of membership of the given placement solution in the fuzzy subset of good placements, with respect to the rule in question.

3. Fuzzy goal based cost computation

A placement is evaluated against several objective criteria, namely, wire-length, delay and layout width. The best placement is one which scores lowest with respect to all objectives. A notion of optimality that respects the integrity of each of the separate criteria is the concept of Pareto optimality (Horn, Nafpliotis, & Goldberg, 1994). However, the Pareto optimality concept does not assist in making a single choice. Further, the set of Pareto-optimal solutions can be extremely large. Also, one usually has to tradeoff the various objectives. In such a case, the concept of optimum is not clear. Traditional approach consists of combining all objectives in a weighted sum utility or cost function, and the placement with lowest weighted sum is reported as the best solution (Sait & Youssef, 1997). This approach is at best controversial. Furthermore, the individual placement objectives are very imprecise due to errors in their computation. These errors are due to the fact that there remain subsequent design steps which may considerably change earlier estimates of these objectives. In addition, in the presence of several objectives, achieving optimality of all criteria will most likely be unattainable. Usually, from the point of view of a designer, a desirable placement is one whose wire-length, delay, and area, are as small as possible. However, lower-bounds for these objectives can only be imprecisely known and are most conveniently expressed in fuzzy algebra. In this work we adopt a fuzzy goal directed search approach, where the best placement is the one that satisfies as much as possible a user specified vector of fuzzy goals.

Let there be π solutions generated by the SE algorithm. Assume that we are optimizing a p -valued cost vector given by $C(x) = (C_1(x), C_2(x), \dots, C_p(x))$ where $x \in \Pi$. Assume that a vector $F = (F_1, F_2, \dots, F_p)$ gives lower bound estimates on individual objectives, i.e. $F_i \leq C_i(x) \forall i, \forall x \in \pi$. These are lower bounds on each objective which do not have to be achievable in practice. Further,

assume that there is a user specified goal vector $G = (g_1, g_2, \dots, g_p)$ which indicates the relative *acceptable limits* for each objective. It means that x will be an acceptable solution if $C_i(x) \leq g_i F_i$ where $\forall i, g_i \geq 1.0$. For a 2-valued cost vector problem, Fig. 5 shows the region of acceptable solutions.

In the proposed scheme, the acceptable solution set is a fuzzy set. For VLSI cell placement problem of minimizing three objective criteria, we propose the following rule to determine the membership in the fuzzy set of acceptable solution.

Rule 1: IF a solution is *within wire-length goal* **AND** *within circuit delay goal* **AND** *within width goal* **THEN** it is an *acceptable solution*.

In the above rule, the expressions within wire-length goal, within circuit delay goal, within width goal, and acceptable solution are linguistic values of the fuzzy linguistic variables wire-length, delay, width, and solution respectively. Using the *andlike* compensatory fuzzy operator, Rule 1 above translates to the following equation,

$$\mu^c(x) = \beta^c \min(\mu_1^c(x), \mu_2^c(x), \mu_3^c(x)) + (1 - \beta^c) \frac{1}{3} \sum_{i=1}^3 \mu_i^c(x) \quad (3)$$

where $\mu^c(x)$ is the membership value for solution x in the fuzzy subset acceptable solution, and μ_i^c , $i = 1, 2, 3$, represent the membership values of solution x in the fuzzy sets within wire-length goal, within circuit delay goal and within width goal respectively. The superscript c stands for cost function. The solution which results in the maximum value of $\mu^c(x)$ is reported as the best solution found by the SE algorithm. The membership function for a general objective goal i is shown in Fig. 6. User preferences can be easily expressed in goal vector G . For example, by decreasing the goal value g_i to g_i in Fig. 6, the subsequent membership value $\mu_i^c(x)$ for objective i will decrease. Hence, by lowering the value of g_i we will be reducing the cardinality of the fuzzy subset of i th objective. This will force the search to be more biased toward satisfying this goal, which might dictate the acceptance or rejection of solutions. In this work, the lower bounds on objectives are computed at initialization by the placement program.

4. Fuzzy simulated evolution algorithm

This section describes the proposed FSE algorithm. Section 4.1 gives the details of different versions of evaluation scheme. The selection scheme is described in Section 4.2. Section 4.3 lists different techniques used for allocation step of the algorithm. The quality of each solution generated by the algorithm is evaluated by the ‘fuzzy goal-based cost computation’ approach introduced in Section 3.

4.1. Evaluation

In this step of the algorithm, individual cell goodnesses are computed. In this work, fuzzy evaluation scheme is proposed and compared with wire-length based evaluation scheme.

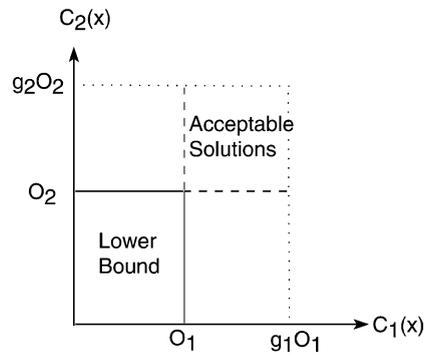


Fig. 5. Range of acceptable solution set.

4.1.1. Wirelength based evaluation

The evaluation measure proposed in [Kling and Banerjee \(1989\)](#) computes the cell goodness on the basis of wire-length. For such a measure, goodness of cell c_i which is a part of nets $\{s_1, s_2, \dots, s_k\}$, is computed as follows.

$$g_{c_i} = \frac{1}{k} \sum_{j=1}^k \frac{L_{s_j}^*}{L_{s_j}} \quad (4)$$

where $L_{s_j}^*$ and L_{s_j} are respectively optimum and actual wire-length of net s_j . The $L_{s_j}^*$ is computed by placing the cells of a net next to each other on the layout surface and then estimating the wire-length, using the Steiner tree approximation method introduced earlier.

4.1.2. Multicriteria fuzzy measure

In the previous measure, a cell violating other cost parameters but satisfying wire-length will have a high goodness. It means that the cell will have low selection probability. In this case, the chances of improving other cost measures are limited. For example, a cell satisfying wire-length and violating net delay bounds will negatively affect the overall circuit delay. Thus, inclusion of a penalty for not satisfying the corresponding net bound in goodness measure will increase the chances of selection of such cells. The proposed fuzzy evaluation scheme combines the satisfaction of the optimum wire-length and the net delay bounds in the computation of goodness.³ This will result in an improvement in the circuit delay. The following fuzzy rule characterizes a cell of high goodness.

Rule 2: IF cell is *near optimum wire-length* **AND** *near net delay bound* **THEN** it has *high goodness value*.

In the above rule, the expressions near optimum wire-length, near net delay bound, and high goodness are linguistic values of the fuzzy linguistic variables wire-length, net delay, and cell goodness respectively. Using the *andlike* compensatory fuzzy operator, Rule 2 above translates to the following

³ Net delay bounds are computed based on overall circuit timing requirement using the algorithm introduced in ([Youssef, Lin, & Shragowitz, 1992](#)).

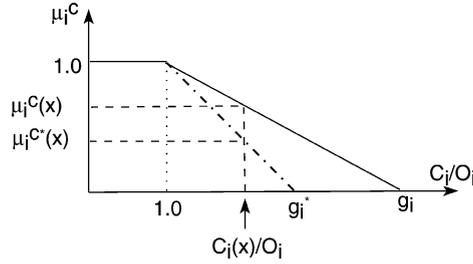


Fig. 6. Membership function of fuzzy subset within acceptable range. By lowering the goal to g_i to g_i^* , the preference for objective i has been increased.

equation for the fuzzy goodness measure of a particular cell,

$$g_{c_i} = \mu^e(x_1^e, x_2^e) = \beta^e \min(\mu_1^e(x_1^e), \mu_2^e(x_2^e)) + (1 - \beta^e) \frac{1}{2} \sum_{i=1}^2 \mu_i^e(x_i^e) \tag{5}$$

The superscript e stands for evaluation and is used to distinguish similar notation in other fuzzy rules. In Eq. (5), $\mu^e(x_1^e, x_2^e)$ is the membership function of the fuzzy subset of high goodness, g_{c_i} is goodness value and β^e is a constant in the interval $[0,1]$. The $\mu_1^e(x_1^e)$ and $\mu_2^e(x_2^e)$ represent the membership functions of the fuzzy subsets of near optimum wire-length and of near net delay bound. The membership functions for these subsets are given in Fig. 7. The base values are computed as follows. If a cell m drives a net identified by s and is also connected to nets $\{s_1, s_2, \dots, s_k\}$, then the base values $X_1^e(x_1^e)$ for the fuzzy set near optimum wire-length and $X_2^e(x_2^e)$ for the fuzzy set near net bound are computed as given in Eq. (6) and (7).

$$X_1^e = \frac{1}{k} \sum_{j=1}^k \frac{L_{s_j^*}}{L_{s_j}} \tag{6}$$

$$X_2^e = \frac{u_{s_i^*}}{ID_{s_i}} \tag{7}$$

where u_{s_i} is the delay bound for net s_i (Youssef et al., 1992) and ID_{s_i} is actual interconnect delay (Sait & Youssef, 1997).

4.2. Selection

In this stage of the algorithm, for each cell c_i ($i = 1, 2, \dots, n$) a random number in the range $[0,1]$ is generated and compared with $g_{c_i} + \text{bias}$. If the generated random number is greater than $g_{c_i} + \text{bias}$ then cell c_i is selected for allocation and inserted in a queue. The cell is then removed from the layout and its location is marked as empty.

4.3. Allocation

Allocation is the step that has most impact on the quality of the search performed by the SE algorithm. A completely random allocation makes the SE algorithm behave like a random walk. Therefore, this

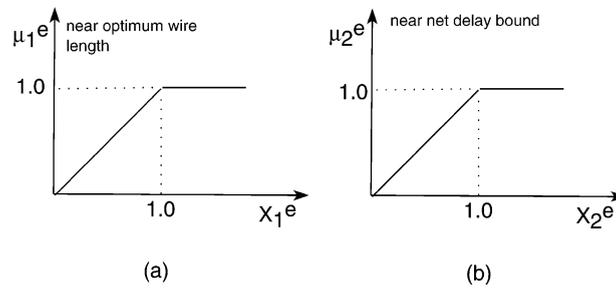


Fig. 7. Membership functions used in fuzzy evaluation stage. (a) Function for near optimum wirelength (μ_1^e), (b) function for near net delay bound (μ_2^e).

operator should be carefully engineered to the problem instance and must include domain-specific knowledge.

During the allocation step of the algorithm, the selected cells are repositioned on empty locations in such a way that they result in reduced cost. As described in Section 2.1, ‘sorted individual best fit’ is an allocation scheme with low run-time requirement and exhibiting good performance compared to other schemes (Kling, 1990). This scheme identifies the best location for the first cell in the queue of selected cells which results in maximum reduction in cost. The best location is considered occupied and removed from the list of empty locations. The remaining cells will not be tried in this location and will be allocated to other locations according to their order in the queue. The decision to identify the best location affects the quality of the final solution. In this work, three different allocation strategies have been implemented and compared. These allocation strategies are described in Sections 4.3.1 and 4.3.2.

4.3.1. Wirelength-based allocation

This allocation scheme uses the proposal of Kling and Banerjee (1989). Selected cells are repositioned on the basis of wire-length criterion only. The best location is the one that results in the maximum reduction of wire-length cost.

4.3.2. Weighted average allocation

For each trial location of a cell, the reduction in circuit area (layout width), delay, and wire-length are estimated, normalized, and summed together using weights assigned to each objective. The selected cell is then placed in a position which results in the highest value for the overall reduction in weighted score.

Assuming that cell c_i is temporarily placed in a location l during the m th iteration of the SE algorithm. Let $\{s_1, \dots, s_k\}$ be the nets connected to c_i and r be the row number of the cell location l . The quality of this trial placement can be measured as follows.

$$\text{gain}_{c_i,l}^m = w_1^a \Delta L_{c_i,l} + w_2^a \Delta D_{c_i,l} + w_3^a \Delta W_{c_i,l} \quad (8)$$

where $\Delta L_{c_i,l}$, $\Delta D_{c_i,l}$, and $\Delta W_{c_i,l}$ respectively measure the gains in wire-length, delay and width of the layout for the trial placement of cell c_i in location l . w_1^a , w_2^a and w_3^a are respectively averaging weights for the gains in wire-length, delay and width of the layout, with $\sum_{h=1}^3 w_h^a = 1.0$. The gains are computed as

follows:

$$\Delta L_{c_i,l} = \frac{\sum_{j=1}^k (L_{s_j}^{m-1} - L_{s_j}^m)}{\sum_{j=1}^k L_{s_j}^{m-1}} \quad (9)$$

$$\Delta D_{c_i,l} = \frac{\sum_{j=1}^k (D_{s_j}^{m-1} - D_{s_j}^m)}{\sum_{j=1}^k D_{s_j}^{m-1}} \quad (10)$$

$$\Delta W_{c_i,l} = \frac{W_{\text{opt}} - W_r^m}{W_{\text{opt}}} \quad (11)$$

In Eq. (9), $L_{s_j}^{m-1}$ and $L_{s_j}^m$ are respectively wire-length estimates for net s_j in $m - 1$ st and m th iterations of the SE algorithm. Similarly $D_{s_j}^{m-1}$ and $D_{s_j}^m$ in Eq. (10) are propagation delays for net s_j in $m - 1$ st and m th iterations respectively. W_{opt} in Eq. (11) represents the optimum row width (lower bound on maximum row width) for the layout. It is computed by adding the widths of all the cells and dividing it by the number of cell rows. While W_r^m is the width of row r during the trial placement of cell c_i .

The above weight based sorted individual allocation scheme suffers from two main problems.

1. It is difficult to come up with appropriate weights for Eq. (8).
2. It is possible that the leading cell in the selected queue will block optimum positions for remaining selected cells (once a position is marked occupied for a cell then it is not considered for the remaining cells during that iteration of the algorithm).

Fuzzy logic can be used to overcome the first problem. The effect of the second problem can be reduced by making the allocation operator less greedy. The proposed fuzzy allocation scheme is characterized by the following two properties.

1. It uses fuzzy rules and membership functions to combine multiple objectives.
2. It adds a controlled randomness in relocating the selected cells in available locations. In this scheme it is possible that a cell is placed anywhere on a set of empty locations within a fuzzy window. The fuzzy window contains locations which result in near identical reductions in cost.

The logic behind the ‘controlled randomness’ is that it decreases the chances of blocking an optimal location for the rest of the selected cells by head-of-line cell. Section 4.3.3 describes the proposed fuzzy allocation scheme.

4.3.3. Fuzzy allocation scheme

Following the sorting of selected cells in descending order with respect to their connectivity with partial placement, the head-of-line cell is trial placed on all the available empty locations at that time and the membership of these locations in the fuzzy subset of good location is computed. The fuzzy subset of good location falling within a fuzzy window is identified and is called favorable locations. The cell will be randomly placed on any location within this subset. Following is a description of how these sets are formed and the rules that govern them.

4.3.3.1. Good location. Let E be the set of empty locations and S the set of selected cells. For each cell

$c_i \in S$, a location $l \in E$ will be a member in the fuzzy set good location with membership function $\mu_{c_i}^a(l)$. The determination of this membership function is expressed by the following fuzzy rule:

Rule 3: **IF** a location results in *small length AND reduced timing AND small layout width THEN* it is a *good location*.

Using the *andlike* compensatory fuzzy operator, Rule 3 above translates to the following equation for the membership of a given cell c_i is the fuzzy subset good location:

$$\mu_{c_i}^a(l) = \beta^a \min(\mu_1^a(l), \mu_2^a(l), \mu_3^a(l)) + (1 - \beta^a) \frac{1}{3} \sum_{i=1}^3 \mu_i^a(l) \quad (12)$$

where $\mu_{c_i}^a(l)$ is the fuzzy set of good locations and β^a is a constant parameter in the range [0,1]. The values $\mu_i^a(l)$, $i = 1, 2, 3$, are the membership values of location l in fuzzy sets small length, reduced timing and small layout width respectively. The base values $X_i(l)$, for the membership functions $\mu_i^a(l)$, $i = 1, 2, 3$, are computed below using the notation of Eqs. (9)–(11).

$$X_1(l) = \frac{\sum_{j=1}^k L_{s_j}^m}{\sum_{j=1}^k L_{s_j}^{m-1}} \quad (13)$$

$$X_2(l) = \frac{\sum_{j=1}^k D_{s_j}^m}{\sum_{j=1}^k D_{s_j}^{m-1}} \quad (14)$$

$$X_3(l) = \frac{W_r^m}{W_{\text{opt}}^m} \quad (15)$$

The above base variables $X_i(l)$, $i = 1, 2, 3$ constitute measures of the improvement in wire-length, timing, and width if cell c_i is assigned to location l . Following the computation of the base values, memberships in respective fuzzy sets are determined using the functions given in Fig. 8. These functions are tuned after several experiments.

4.3.3.2. Favorable locations. A subset of the fuzzy set good locations is named as favorable locations. The upper and lower boundaries for favorable locations are determined by a fuzzy window. For a cell $c_i \in S$, location $l \in E$ will fall within fuzzy window if it satisfies the following inequality:

$$\max_{\forall e \in E} (\mu_{c_i}^a(e)) \left(1 - w \frac{\text{No. of unplaced cells}}{\text{No. of selected cells}} \right) \leq \mu_{c_i}^a(l) \leq \max_{\forall e \in E} (\mu_{c_i}^a(e)) \quad (16)$$

where E is the set of empty locations, S is the set of selected cells and w is a small positive value which determines the lower limit of $\mu_{c_i}^a(l)$ for presence in fuzzy window. It controls the randomness in the fuzzy allocation scheme. All locations falling in the fuzzy window will be identified as favorable locations. The cell will be placed randomly in any of the locations within this set. The presence of the ratio of number of unplaced cells to selected cells will make sure that the size of favorable location set will decrease as allocation progresses. At the beginning of allocation all selected cells are unplaced and the ratio is equal to 1. Therefore, since the head-of-line cell is strongly connected with the partial layout, there will be many locations with near identical gains. The cell can be placed on any of these locations

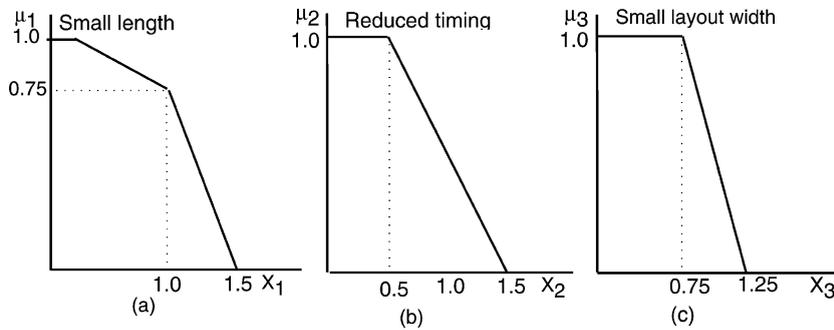


Fig. 8. Membership functions for three fuzzy variables used in ‘fuzzy allocation scheme’ of the SE algorithm.

without adversely affecting the quality of solution. However, the cells at the end of the selected queue are sparsely connected and therefore, a narrower favorable location set is used for them.

5. Experiments and results

This section summarizes experimental study conducted on several variations of the SE algorithm, namely

1. Wire-length based SE algorithm similar to the one proposed in (Kling & Banerjee, 1989). This implementation is labeled as SE.
2. Fuzzy goal based SE algorithm using weighted sum allocation and wire-length based evaluation schemes. This algorithm is identified as FSE_WA.
3. Fuzzy goal based SE algorithm using fuzzy controlled stochastic allocation and wire-length based evaluation scheme. This algorithm is identified as FSE_FA.
4. Fuzzy goal based SE algorithm using fuzzy evaluation and weighted average allocation scheme. The algorithm is labeled as FSE_FE.

The algorithm specific parameters are tuned after several experiments and are summarized in Table 1. For example, weighted sum allocation scheme in FSE_WA is tuned after several combinations of allocation averaging weights (w_1^a, w_2^a, w_3^a) of Eq. (8) are tried. The best solution reported by the fuzzy

Table 1
Parameter values for different stages of the SE algorithm

Stage	Parameters
Fuzzy-goal based Cost	$\beta^c = 0.6, (g_1 = 2.0, g_2 = 3.0, g_3 = 1.1)$
Weighted allocation	$(w_1^a = 0.6, w_2^a = 0.1, w_3^a = 0.3)$
Fuzzy allocation	$\beta^a = 0.7, w = 0.1$
Fuzzy evaluation	$\beta^e = 0.7$
Stopping condition	Fixed 5000 iterations
Initial solution	Random
Bias (B)	Fixed

goal-based cost measure for each weight combination is identified. As a result, the weights of $w_1^a = 0.6$, $w_2^a = 0.1$ and $w_3^a = 0.3$ are used in subsequent runs of FSE_WA for all circuits. These algorithms are tested on eight ISCAS-85 benchmark circuits. The smallest circuit has 56 cells and the largest has 2243 cells. For all instances of the problem, initial solutions are randomly generated and saved in respective files. For all experiments the same identical solution is used as initial solution. The experiments are carried out under identical conditions. The code of the algorithm is written in the C programming language and executed on Sun Ultra-1 SPARC machines. The values of other constants are given in Table 2. The solution is represented as a two dimensional array with alternating rows of cells and routing channels.

5.1. Effect of the size of the fuzzy window on FSE_FA

In the proposed fuzzy allocation scheme, the presence in the fuzzy set favorable locations is bounded by Eq. (16). The size of this window is controlled by a parameter w . For example if $w = 0.1$ and $\max(\mu_s^a(e)) = 0.7$ then the lower range for the fuzzy window will start from 0.63. It means that all the locations with membership functions in the fuzzy set good locations in the range $[0.63, 0.7]$ will be members of favorable locations. For higher values of w , the size of fuzzy window will increase. In order to understand the effect of the size of this window on quality of solution, FSE_FA algorithm is executed with different values of w . Fig. 9 shows the effect of different fuzzy window sizes on wire-length, delay and algorithm execution time for circuit c1355. Similar results are obtained for other circuits. From Fig. 9(c), it is clear that by increasing the value of w , the algorithm run-time increases. This is because of additional computation carried out to maintain the fuzzy set of favorable locations. As clear from Fig. 9(a) and (b) the quality of final solution for small values of w is better than the solution generated by $w = 0$. This improvement is due to the fact that the algorithm probabilistically leaves few best locations for remaining cells in the selected queue. This allows some of the remaining cells to be better placed, resulting in improvement in the solution quality. At the same time, the window size for leading cells is small (in the range $[0.05, 0.1]$). This ensures that these cells will be placed in near identical quality positions with respect to the best position. However, for high values of w , quality of the best reported solution decreases. A large fuzzy window allows the presence of inferior locations in the set favorable locations. This will make the allocation more random, increasing by the same token the randomness of the search. From experiments, it is observed that a small value of w (0.1) gives better results for most test circuits. This value has been used in subsequent runs of FSE_FA.

5.2. Comparison of proposed schemes

In order to see the performance of proposed fuzzy allocation scheme (FSE_FA), it is compared with two versions of SE algorithm: SE and FSE_WA. SE is implemented as originally reported in Kling and Banerjee (1989). It is a single objective SE algorithm. SE tries to optimize wire-length only and reports the solution with the minimum wire-length cost. While FSE_WA is a multi-objective optimization algorithm and uses weighted average allocation scheme. Both FSE_FA and FSE_WA use a fuzzy-goal based cost computation to identify the best generated solution.

The cost parameters of the best layout generated by all three schemes are reported in Table 2. It is clear that except for few cases (like c532 and c880) the proposed fuzzy allocation scheme (FSE_FA) was able to generate a better quality solution in terms of reduced wire-length cost (L) than FSE_WA. The

Table 2

Best layout found by SE, FSE_WA and FSE_FA. Percentage improvement in for each parameter (length, delay and area) with respect to SE are also included

Circuit		FSE_FA			FSE_WA			SE		
		L (μ)	D (ns)	W (μ)	L (μ)	D (ns)	W (μ)	L (μ)	D (ns)	W (μ)
Highway	Best	7735	5.56	520	9919	6.15	520	8109	5.85	520
	%	4.61	4.96	0.00	-22.32	-5.13	0.00	-	-	-
Fract	Best	31528	13.62	784	37285	14.58	800	35945	14.76	792
	%	12.29	7.72	1.01	-3.73	1.22	-1.01	-	-	-
c499	Best	56506	14.13	1200	59278	14.51	1200	57194	15.85	1216
	%	1.20	10.85	1.32	-3.64	8.45	1.32	-	-	-
c532	Best	80779	37.96	1160	72789	38.55	1184	75872	38.46	1168
	%	-6.47	1.30	0.68	4.06	-0.23	-1.37	-	-	-
c880	Best	137309	29.46	1872	135509	30.92	1848	144501	35.36	1848
	%	4.98	16.69	-1.30	6.22	12.56	0.00	-	-	-
c1355	Best	290221	27.05	2320	335589	28.41	2344	297677	32.05	2336
	%	2.50	15.60	0.68	-12.74	11.36	-0.34	-	-	-
Struct	Best	667850	28.8	3336	685328	26.65	3312	672735	32.70	3344
	%	0.73	11.93	0.24	-1.87	18.50	0.96	-	-	-
c3540	Best	750153	46.01	3152	844069	54.03	3152	787199	58.72	3136
	%	4.71	21.65	-0.51	-7.22	7.99	-0.51	-	-	-

wire-length increase for c532 and c880 can be attributed to the fact that the weight combination in the FSE_WA allocation strategy is suitable for medium range circuits only. For smaller circuits (like highway) or bigger circuits (like c3540) these weight combinations do not perform well. Furthermore, for c532 and c880, the reduction in the circuit delay compensates the loss in wire-length. For the circuit delay objective, FSE_FA surpasses FSE_WA for almost all circuits. The layout width of both schemes is comparable for all circuits. This is due to the fact that the widths of generated layouts are very close to the respective lower bound on the maximum width.

It was observed that both FSE_FA and FSE_WA were able to generate better quality solutions than

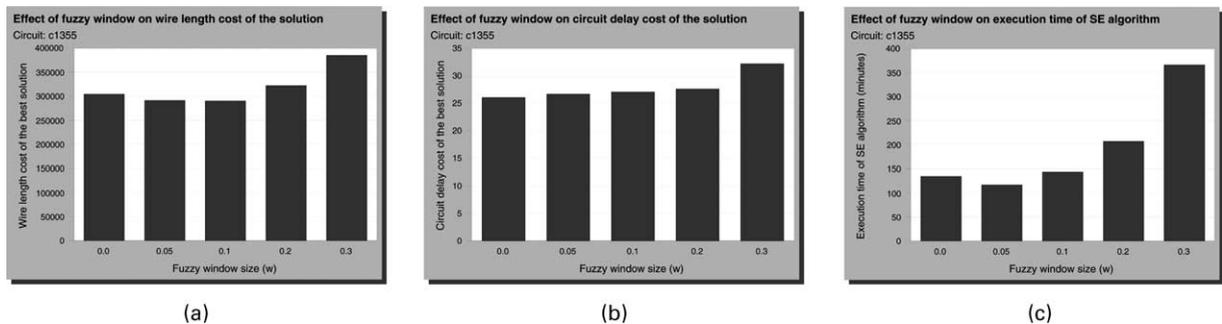


Fig. 9. Effect of fuzzy window on FSE_FA algorithm (a) wire-length cost, (b) circuit delay of the cost, (c) execution time of the algorithm on a Sun Ultra-1 sparc machine.

SE. It is clear from Table 2 that FSE_FA generated solutions of reduced wire-length and delay costs than SE. This was observed for all of the test cases except c532, where SE was able to generate solution with less wire-length cost. In spite of this, the circuit delay cost of FSE_FA solution for c532 was less than SE and it compensated the loss in wire-length. The improvement in delay performance of FSE_FA compared to SE varied between 5% and nearly 22%. It is interesting to observe that the magnitude of the improvement is increasing with the complexity of the test circuit. It means that FSE_FA is more adaptable to the size of the circuit. This improvement in solution quality is due to the use of problem specific intelligence added in FSE_FA algorithm. On the other hand, SE relies only on minimization of wire-length with an expectation that it will also reduce delay and area. SE generated solutions of better wire-length cost for most of the cases than FSE_WA. However, it was observed that FSE_WA was able to give reduced circuit delay solutions compared to SE for all circuits except for highway and c532. The difference in the delay cost for c532 is negligible and therefore can be ignored. Table 2 illustrates another important fact. Although in some cases FSE algorithms produced placements with slightly degraded wire-length compared to placements obtained with original SE algorithm, there was a significant improvement with respect to the circuit delay performance (sometimes by nearly 22%). This is a clear indication, that despite the correlation among the wire-length and delay of a circuit, it is unwise to rely only on the wire-length as the sole measure of solution quality since a circuit with shorter wire-length will not necessarily exhibit reduction in circuit delay.

The search space quality of FSE_FA, FSE_WA and SE is compared by drawing different cost parameters for the circuit c3540. Fig. 10(a) shows the current wire-length cost of solutions found after every 20 iterations. This plot confirms earlier observations. Fig. 10(b) plots the current circuit delay cost for these schemes. Again, FSE_FA generated less delay cost solutions than SE and FSE_WA. FSE_WA performed better than SE because it is a multi-objective optimization algorithm, minimizing length, delay and width. Fig. 10(c) plots layout width for these schemes. From this plot it is concluded that all three schemes result in comparable layout width. After comparing individual cost parameters, overall solution quality (cost) is compared in Fig. 10(d). This plot shows the membership value of the current solution in the fuzzy set of acceptable solutions. The membership values are computed by fuzzy-goal based cost measure to quantify the quality of generated solutions. The objective is to maximize the membership in the fuzzy set of acceptable solution. This graph shows that FSE_FA is able to generate overall better quality layouts than the other two schemes, and FSE_WA generates slightly better quality layouts than SE. Fig. 10(e) plots the behavior of current average cell goodness for these schemes. The average goodness of FSE_FA plot is better than FSE_WA and SE. Since SE was able to find better wire-length solutions than FSE_WA, its average cell goodness was better than FSE_WA. This figure also shows that quality of solution is improving, since, as the algorithm progresses, more and more cells are approaching their respective near optimal positions in the layout. It also shows that the algorithm converges because lesser number of cells are selected for perturbation at successive iterations.

Fig. 10(f) illustrates the quality of solution subspaces searched by the SE and Fuzzy SE algorithms for the largest test circuit (c3540). The x-axis shows the value of the membership function in the fuzzy subset good solution, and the y-axis counts the number of solutions found by each algorithm at succeeding intervals of these membership values. The figure clearly shows the superior behavior of the proposed Fuzzy SE algorithms, since the bar chart of FSE_FA is more skewed to the right.

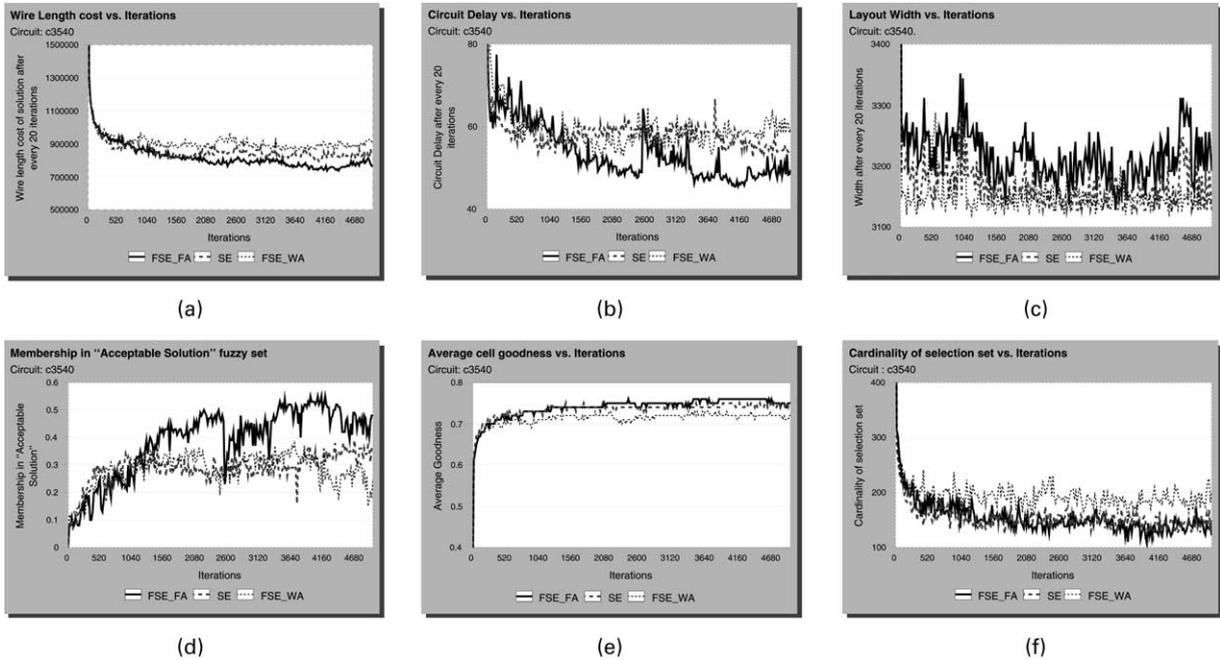


Fig. 10. Comparison of Proposed Schemes. (a), (b), (c), (d), and (e) respectively compares the current wire-length, circuit delay, layout width, membership in acceptable solution and average cell goodness. (f) Illustrates the bar chart comparing the subspaces searched by SE, FSE_FA and FSE_WA.

5.3. Comparing FSE_WA and FSE_FE

The objectives of the third set of experiments are:

1. Study of the effect of using net timing constraints on quality of solution.
2. Study of the effect of fuzzification of evaluation stage on the SE algorithm.

Table 3
Best layout found by FSE_FE and FSE_WA

Circuit	FSE_FA			FSE_WA		
	L (μ)	D (ns)	W (μ)	L (μ)	D (ns)	W (μ)
Highway	9503	6.74	528	9919	6.15	520
Fract	35,635	13.50	808	37,285	14.58	800
c499	60,964	14.83	1192	59,278	14.51	1200
c532	75,216	35.80	1200	72,789	38.55	1184
c880	137,838	29.03	1852	135,509	30.92	1848
c1355	349,953	28.23	2368	335,589	28.41	2344
Struct	667,850	28.8	3336	685,328	26.65	3312
c3540	883,503	52.59	3128	844,069	54.03	3152

FSE_FE uses a fuzzy evaluation scheme in which goodness of an individual cell has two components. One component is satisfaction of wire-length and the second component represents the satisfaction of the net timing bounds (constraints). These two components are expressed using a fuzzy rule and appropriate membership functions. While FSE_WA uses only one component, that is, satisfaction of optimum wire-length. Both these algorithms use a weighted average allocation scheme described in Section 4.3. The values of allocation weights are $w_1^a = 0.6$, $w_2^a = 0.1$ and $w_3^a = 0.3$. The results of this experiment are summarized in Table 3.

Generally, fuzzy evaluation (FSE_FE) gave inferior results than FSE_WA with respect to wire-length. However, it was able to reduce the circuit delay for most of the circuits. The wire-length cost of FSE_FE increased because cells were not selected on the basis of wire-length only. Having a component for the net constraints satisfaction in cell goodness resulted in non-selection of many wire-length violating nets. On the other hand, many nets satisfying wire-length constraints were selected because they were violating the net constraints. These factors resulted in the increase in wire-length.

From this experiment we conclude that net constraints when used with wire-length based goodness measure in the selection step result in improvement in circuit delay. On the other hand, they cause increase in wire-length cost.

6. Conclusion

This paper describes a FSE algorithm for VLSI standard-cell placement problem. The proposed algorithm relies on a novel fuzzy goal-based search approach. This approach avoids the problems associated with the controversial weighted sum approach. It also allows easy incorporation of user preferences for different objectives. It offers a practical alternative to dealing with multi-objective combinatorial optimization problems. We have also used fuzzy logic in the evaluation and allocation steps of the SE algorithm. The suggested fuzzy allocation approach combines controlled randomness with the purely constructive sorted individual best fit allocation technique. The identification of favorable locations for a cell is carried out through the use of fuzzy decision maker. Being the most important stage of SE algorithm, fuzzy allocation results in noticeable improvement in the quality of final solution. In the fuzzy evaluation scheme two parameters are combined to compute the goodness of each cell. The proposed fuzzy SE algorithm produced superior results than those obtained with traditional SE. For the largest circuit, delay and wire-length improved by nearly 22 and 5% respectively.

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