



(51) International Patent Classification:

H04W 72/04 (2009.01) *H04W* 80/00 (2009.01)
H04B 7/26 (2006.01) *H04W* 84/12 (2009.01)

(21) International Application Number:

PCT/KR2011/001336

(22) International Filing Date:

25 February 2011 (25.02.2011)

(25) Filing Language:

English

(26) Publication Language:

English

(30) Priority Data:

61/308,310 26 February 2010 (26.02.2010) US
 61/319,273 31 March 2010 (31.03.2010) US
 10-2010-0035917 19 April 2010 (19.04.2010) KR

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(81) Designated States (unless otherwise indicated, for every kind of national protection available): AE, AG, AL, AM, AO, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BH, BR, BW, BY, BZ, CA, CH, CL, CN, CO, CR, CU, CZ, DE, DK, DM, DO, DZ, EC, EE, EG, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, GT, HN, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IS, JP, KE, KG, KM, KN, KP, KZ, LA, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LY, MA, MD, ME, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, MY, MZ, NA, NG, NI, NO, NZ, OM, PE, PG, PH, PL, PT, RO, RS, RU, SC, SD, SE, SG, SK, SL, SM, ST, SV, SY, TH, TJ, TM, TN, TR, TT, TZ, UA, UG, US, UZ, VC, VN, ZA, ZM, ZW.

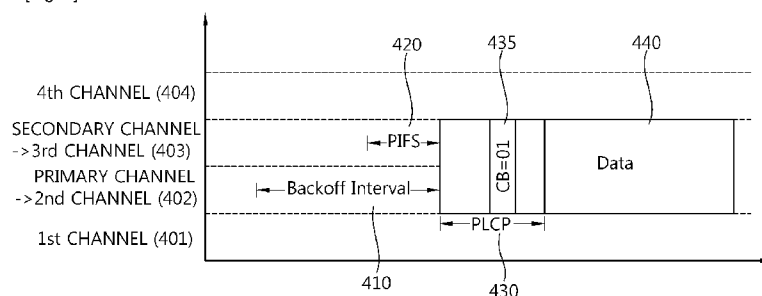
(84) Designated States (unless otherwise indicated, for every kind of regional protection available): ARIPO (BW, GH, GM, KE, LR, LS, MW, MZ, NA, SD, SL, SZ, TZ, UG, ZM, ZW), Eurasian (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM), European (AL, AT, BE, BG, CH, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, HR, HU, IE, IS, IT, LT, LU, LV, MC, MK, MT, NL, NO, PL, PT, RO, RS, SE, SI, SK, SM, TR), OAPI (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GQ, GW, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).

Published:

— without international search report and to be republished upon receipt of that report (Rule 48.2(g))

(54) Title: METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR ALLOCATING TRANSMISSION CHANNEL IN WIRELESS LOCAL AREA NETWORK SYSTEM

[Fig. 4]



(57) Abstract: A method of allocating a channel in a wireless local area network (WLAN) system is provided. The method includes generating a MAC protocol data unit (MPDU) to be transmitted to a target station (STA), generating a PLCP protocol data unit (PPDU) by attaching a physical layer convergence procedure (PLCP) header to the MPDU, and transmitting the PPDU to the STA, wherein the PLCP header includes channel allocation information for transmission of the PPDU.

Description

Title of Invention: METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR ALLOCATING TRANSMISSION CHANNEL IN WIRELESS LOCAL AREA NETWORK SYSTEM

Technical Field

[0001] The present invention relates to wireless communications, and more particularly, to a method of allocating a transmission channel in a wireless local area network (WLAN) system and an apparatus supporting the method.

Background Art

[0002] With the advancement of information communication technologies, various wireless communication technologies have recently been developed. Among the wireless communication technologies, a wireless local area network (WLAN) is a technology whereby Internet access is possible in a wireless fashion in homes or businesses or in a region providing a specific service by using a portable terminal such as a personal digital assistant (PDA), a laptop computer, a portable multimedia player (PMP), etc.

[0003] Ever since the institute of electrical and electronics engineers (IEEE) 802, i.e., a standardization organization for WLAN technologies, was established in February 1980, many standardization works have been conducted.

[0004] In the initial WLAN technology, a frequency of 2.4GHz was used according to the IEEE 802.11 to support a data rate of 1 to 2 Mbps by using frequency hopping, spread spectrum, infrared communication, etc. Recently, the WLAN technology can support a data rate of up to 54 Mbps by using orthogonal frequency division multiplex (OFDM). In addition, the IEEE 802.11 is developing or commercializing standards of various technologies such as quality of service (QoS) improvement, access point protocol compatibility, security enhancement, radio resource measurement, wireless access in vehicular environments, fast roaming, mesh networks, inter-working with external networks, wireless network management, etc.

[0005] The IEEE 802.11n is a technical standard relatively recently introduced to overcome a limited data rate which has been considered as a drawback in the WLAN. The IEEE 802.11n is devised to increase network speed and reliability and to extend an operational distance of a wireless network. More specifically, the IEEE 802.11n supports a high throughput (HT), i.e., a data processing rate of up to 540 Mbps or higher, and is based on a multiple input and multiple output (MIMO) technique which uses multiple antennas in both a transmitter and a receiver to minimize a transmission error and to optimize a data rate. In addition, this standard may use a coding scheme which transmits several duplicate copies to increase data reliability and also may use the

OFDM to support a higher data rate.

[0006] With the widespread use of the WLAN and the diversification of applications using the WLAN, there is a recent demand for a new WLAN system to support a higher throughput than a data processing rate supported by the IEEE 802.11n. A very high throughput (VHT) WLAN system is one of IEEE 802.11 WLAN systems which have recently been proposed to support a data processing rate of 1 Gbps or higher. The VHT system is named arbitrarily. To provide a throughput of 1 Gbps or higher, a feasibility test is currently being conducted for the VHT system using 88 MIMO and a channel bandwidth of 80MHz.

[0007] In general, a case where a bandwidth of 80MHz can be fully used by different communication systems or devices that use the same frequency band is very limited. In addition, since a hotspot for providing a WLAN service is increased as the WLAN is widely used and utilized, an overlapping basic service set (OBSS) environment is increased in which a basic service area (BSA) which is a service area of that hotspot overlaps partially or fully. In such an OBSS environment, the channel bandwidth of 80MHz can be partially or fully used by a neighboring BSS. Therefore, there is a need for a method for determining a channel for transmitting data adaptively according to a change in a channel condition of a full bandwidth that can be used in a WLAN system, and an apparatus supporting the method.

Summary of Invention

Technical Problem

[0008] The present invention provides a method of transmitting a frame by selecting/allocating an optimal channel and bandwidth adaptively to a change in a channel condition in a wireless local area network (WLAN) system that uses a channel consisting of several sub-channels, and an apparatus supporting the method.

Solution to Problem

[0009] In an aspect, a method of allocating a channel in a wireless local area network (WLAN) system includes generating a MAC protocol data unit (MPDU) to be transmitted to a target station (STA), generating a PLCP protocol data unit (PPDU) by attaching a physical layer convergence procedure (PLCP) header to the MPDU, and transmitting the PPDU to the STA, wherein the PLCP header includes channel allocation information for transmission of the PPDU.

[0010] The channel allocation information may be a relative position of a secondary channel with respect to a primary channel.

[0011] The channel allocation information may be channel bandwidth information of a secondary channel and a channel number of the secondary channel.

[0012] The channel allocation information may be included in a VHTSIG field included in

the PLCP header in a format of indicating whether to allocate each channel used in transmission.

[0013] An allocated transmission channel indicated in the channel allocation information may be determined by being sensed by an access point (AP).

[0014] The AP may determine whether to allocate the channel according to a channel noise or interference level obtained as a result of the sensing.

[0015] In another aspect, a wireless apparatus for transmitting channel allocation information in a wireless local area network (WLAN) system includes a frame generator for generating a MAC protocol data unit (MPDU) to be transmitted to a target station (STA), and a frame transmitter for transmitting the MPDU to the target STA, wherein a physical layer convergence procedure (PLCP) header of the MPDU includes channel allocation information for transmission of a PLCP protocol data unit (PPDU).

Advantageous Effects of Invention

[0016] According to the present invention, an optimal channel and a bandwidth thereof are selected/allocated adaptively to a channel condition, and thus an overall system throughput can be improved and data can be transmitted reliably with small transmit power.

Brief Description of Drawings

[0017] FIG. 1 shows an IEEE 802.11 physical layer architecture.

[0018] FIG. 2 is a diagram showing an example of a PPDU frame structure.

[0019] FIG. 3 shows an example of a channel that can be used in a VHT WLAN system.

[0020] FIG. 4 shows an example of channel allocation and PPDU transmission based on the channel allocation according to an embodiment of the present invention.

[0021] FIG. 5 is an example of dynamic channel allocation according to an embodiment of the present invention.

[0022] FIG. 6 shows an example of an OBSS environment to which an embodiment of the present invention is applicable.

[0023] FIG. 7 shows an OBSS environment according to an embodiment of the present invention.

[0024] FIG. 8 shows an example of secondary channel allocation for each STA and data frame transmission based on the secondary channel allocation according to an embodiment of the present invention.

[0025] FIG. 9 is a block diagram showing a wireless apparatus for implementing an embodiment of the present invention.

Mode for the Invention

[0026] Hereinafter, exemplary embodiments of the present invention will be described with reference to the accompanying drawings.

- [0027] A wireless local area network (WLAN) system according to an embodiment of the present invention includes at least one basic service set (BSS). The BSS is a set of stations (STAs) successfully synchronized to communicate with one another. The BSS can be classified into an independent BSS (IBSS) and an infrastructure BSS.
- [0028] The BSS includes at least one STA and an access point (AP). The AP is a functional medium for providing a connection to STAs in the BSS through respective wireless media. The AP can also be referred to as other terminologies such as a centralized controller, a base station (BS), a scheduler, etc.
- [0029] The STA is any functional medium including a medium access control (MAC) and wireless-medium physical layer (PHY) interface satisfying the institute of electrical and electronics engineers (IEEE) 802.11 standard. The STA may be an AP or a non-AP STA. Hereinafter, the STA refers to the non-AP STA unless specified otherwise. The STA may also be referred to as other terminologies such as a user equipment (UE), a mobile station (MS), a mobile terminal (MT), a handheld device, an interface card, etc.
- [0030] The STA can be classified into a VHT-STA, an HT-STA, and a legacy (L)-STA. The HT-STA is an STA supporting IEEE 802.11n. The L-STA is an STA supporting a previous version of IEEE 802.11n, for example, IEEE 802.11a/b/g. The L-STA is also referred to as a non-HT STA.
- [0031] FIG. 1 shows an IEEE 802.11 physical layer architecture.
- [0032] The IEEE 802.11 physical (PHY) architecture includes a PHY layer management entity (PLME), a physical layer convergence procedure (PLCP) sub-layer 110, and a physical medium dependent (PMD) sub-layer 100. The PLME provides a PHY management function in cooperation with a MAC layer management entity (MLME). The PLCP sub-layer 110 located between a MAC sub-layer 120 and the PMD sub-layer 100 delivers to the PMD sub-layer 100 a MAC protocol data unit (MPDU) received from the MAC sub-layer 120 under the instruction of the MAC layer 120, or delivers to the MAC sub-layer 120 a frame received from the PMD sub-layer 100. The PMD sub-layer 100 is a lower layer of the PLCP sub-layer and serves to enable transmission and reception of a PHY entity between two STAs through a radio medium.
- [0033] The PLCP sub-layer 110 attaches an additional field including information required by a PHY transceiver to the MPDU in a process of receiving the MPDU from the MAC sub-layer 120 and delivering the MPDU to the PMD sub-layer 100. The additional field attached in this case may be a PLCP preamble, a PLCP header, tail bits required on a data field, etc. The PLCP preamble serves to allow a receiver to prepare a synchronization function and antenna diversity before a PLCP service data unit (PSDU = MPDU) is transmitted. The PLCP header includes a field that contains frame in-

formation, which will be described below in greater detail with reference to FIG. 2.

- [0034] The PLCP sub-layer 110 generates a PLCP protocol data unit (PPDU) by attaching the aforementioned field to the MPDU and transmits the generated PPDU to a reception STA via the PMD sub-layer. The reception STA receives the PPDU, acquires information required for data recovery from the PLCP preamble and the PLCP header, and recovers the data.
- [0035] FIG. 2 is a diagram showing an example of a PPDU frame structure.
- [0036] A PPDU frame 200 includes an L-STF 210, an L-LTF 220, an L-SIG 230, a common VHTSIG 240, a VHTSTF 250, a plurality of VHTLTFs 260, a user specific VHTSIG 270, and data 280.
- [0037] A PLCP sub-layer converts an MPDU delivered from a MAC layer into the data 280 of FIG. 2 by attaching required information to the MPDU, generates the PPDU frame 200 by attaching various fields such as the L-STF 210, the L-LTF 220, the L-SIG 230, the common VHTSIG 240, the VHTSTF 250, the VHTLTFs 260, the user specific VHTSIG 270, etc., and transmits the PPDU frame 200 to one or more STAs through a PMD layer.
- [0038] The L-STF 210 is used for frame timing acquisition, automatic gain control (AGC), coarse frequency acquisition, etc.
- [0039] The L-LTF 220 is used for channel estimation for demodulation of the L-SIG 230 and the common VHTSIG 240.
- [0040] The VHTSTF 250 is used by a VHT-STA to improve AGC estimation.
- [0041] The plurality of VHTLTFs 260 are configured for the use of channel estimation for demodulation of the VHTSIG 270 and the data 280. This may be referred to as a data VHT-LTF. In addition, an extension VHT-LTF for channel sounding may be used.
- [0042] A short training field (STF) such as the L-STF 210 and the VHTSTF 250 is used for frame timing acquisition, AGC, etc., and thus is also called a synchronization signal or a synchronization channel. That is, the STF is used to establish synchronization between STAs or between an STA and an AP.
- [0043] A long training field (LTF) such as the L-LTF 220 and the VHTLTFs 260 is used for channel estimation for demodulation of data and/or control information, and thus is also called a reference signal, a training signal, or a preamble.
- [0044] The L-SIG 230 and the VHTSIGs 240 and 270 provide a variety of information necessary for data demodulation and decoding, and thus are also called control information.
- [0045] The common VHTSIG 240 may include common control information which is common between transmission target STAs, and for example, may include at least one of fields of Table 1.
- [0046]

[Table 1]

[Table]

Field name	Description
SIG-B length	It indicates a length of a VHTSIG-B.
MU-MIMO indicator	It indicates whether MU-MIMO is used, or may be used to toggle SU-MIMO/MU-MIMO.
bandwidth	It indicates a channel bandwidth.
STA indicator	It indicates an STA for receiving the VHTSIG-B. It may also indicate an STA address or may indicate an STA ID or an index of the VHTSIG-B.
Multiplexing count	It indicates the number of STAs (or users) to be multiplexed using MU-MIMO.
Decoding indicator	It indicates information for decoding the VHTSIG-B.

[0047] The user specific VHTSIG 270 may include control information for each of a plurality of transmission target STAs, and for example, may include at least one of fields of Table 2.

[0048] [Table 2]

[Table]

Field name	Description
MCS	It indicates modulation and coding scheme (MCS) information required for data decoding.
STA ID	It indicates an STA for using the MCS.

[0049] In Tables 1 and 2 above, the field name is for exemplary purposes only, and thus other terms may also be used. The fields of Tables 1 and 2 above are for exemplary purposes only, and thus certain fields may be omitted and other fields may be further added. In addition, a PPDU frame based on the PPDU frame format exemplified in FIG. 2 is generated in a PLCP sub-layer of the STA, and is transmitted to a transmission target STA via a PMD sub-layer. Some parts of the PPDU frame field of FIG. 2 may be omitted, or may be added optionally.

[0050] FIG. 3 shows an example of a channel that can be used in a VHT WLAN system. In the example of FIG. 3, the channel used in the VHT WLAN system includes a 1st channel 301, a 2nd channel 302, a 3rd channel 303, and a 4th channel 304. A bandwidth of each sub-channel is 20MHz, and thus a full channel bandwidth may be 80MHz.

Although it is described hereinafter that a channel of 80MHz consists of 4 sub-channels having a bandwidth of 20MHz for example, this is only for convenience of explanation, and thus technical features of the present invention are not limited thereto. A bandwidth of each sub-channel can be set variously such as 5MHz, 6MHz, 40MHz, etc., and the number of sub-channels can also be set variously. Thus, the full bandwidth of the channel can exceed 80MHz. In additional, the respective sub-channels may be non-contiguous.

- [0051] According an embodiment of the present invention, an AP and an STA use a channel bandwidth of 80MHz, and can transmit/receive a PPDU by using a bandwidth of 20MHz (for one sub-channel), 40MHz (for two sub-channels), or 80MHz (for four sub-channels or for a full bandwidth). Hereinafter, a case of transmitting the PPDU by using a bandwidth of N MHz is called N MHz transmission.
- [0052] When the STA performs 20MHz transmission, a channel to be used for transmission is allocated by the AP to the STA as a primary channel. In IBSS, an STA for performing a role of an AP in an infrastructure BSS is designated, and a technique described hereinafter may be equally applied thereto. It is assumed hereinafter that operations are performed in the infrastructure BSS.
- [0053] Allocation of the primary channel may be achieved by receiving information indicating the primary channel to be used by the STA from the AP. The information indicating the primary channel to be used by the STA may be transmitted in such a format that it is included in a primary channel field, and the primary channel field may be transmitted as a part of a VHT operation element.
- [0054] The VHT operation element includes information required for an operation of an VHT STA, and for example, may include primary channel information, secondary channel information, information indicating whether reduced inter-frame spacing (RIFS) is used, information indicating whether an HT STA or an L-STA exists in the BSS, etc. The VHT operation element may be transmitted to the STA by using an association response frame, a re-association response frame, a probe response frame, a beacon frame, etc., or may be transmitted by using a separate management action frame for transmission of the VHT operation element.
- [0055] In the present invention, the STA to which the primary channel is allocated may confirm that the primary channel is idle, and then may receive/transmit a PPDU through the primary channel.
- [0056] The STA that performs 40MHz transmission receives/transmits a PPDU by using the primary channel and a secondary channel which are allocated to the STA. The AP/STA confirms that the primary channel is idle, and if the secondary channel is idle for a specific time period (e.g., PCF inter-frame spacing (PIFS)), may subsequently transmit a PPDU by using a channel of 40MHz (i.e., the primary channel + the secondary

channel).

- [0057] In this case, how to allocate the secondary channel may be problematic. In an IEEE 802.11n standard in which a channel bandwidth of 20MHz or 40MHz is used, the primary channel and the secondary channel are sequentially allocated. For example, if it is assumed that the AP and the STA have 40MHz channel bandwidth capability and a channel number is given, channel allocation is achieved in such a format as (primary channel, secondary channel)=(x, x-1) or (primary channel, secondary channel)=(x, x+1) with respect to a primary channel #x.
- [0058] According to the embodiment of the present invention, the AP allocates a channel corresponding to a boundary channel among channels having an 80MHz (or higher) channel bandwidth as the primary channel. That is, the AP allocates the 2nd channel 302 or the 3rd channel 303, not the 1st channel 301 or the 4th channel 304, as the primary channel. In FIG. 3, the 2nd channel 302 is allocated as the primary channel for example. If the primary channel is allocated to the 2nd channel 302 or the 3rd channel 303, not a boundary band of the full channel band, then the number of combinations of channels that can be allocated as the primary channel and the secondary channel is increased, and thus frequency spectrum can be more effectively utilized.
- [0059] According to the present invention, a transmission channel can be switched in each frame unit (i.e., PPDU unit) in which allocation information of the secondary channel is transmitted by being included in a PLCP header. By performing transmission through a channel having small noise or interference in an adaptive manner on the basis of a channel condition according to dynamic allocation of a transmission channel in a frame unit, a throughput can be improved and power consumption can be reduced. This is because the PPDU can be transmitted by using low transmit power when data is transmitted through a channel having relatively small noise and interference. In addition, it is possible to effectively cope with interference caused by a neighboring BSS in an overlapping BSS (OBSS), and this will be described below in greater detail.
- [0060] As an example of dynamically allocating the secondary channel in a frame unit, secondary channel indication information may be included in a VHTSIG field. For example, the VHTSIG field may include a secondary channel indication bit consisting of one bit, so that if a secondary channel indication bit value is 0, it is reported to the STA that a channel above the primary channel is allocated as the secondary channel, and if the secondary channel indication bit value is 1, it is reported to the STA that a channel below the primary channel is allocated as the secondary channel.
- [0061] As another example of dynamically allocating the secondary channel in the frame unit, a channel bandwidth allocated to the VHTSIG field and a channel bandwidth indicator CB indicating the channel may be included. The CB(also referred to as CW) may be set in 2 bits, and an example thereof is shown in Table 3.

[0062] [Table 3]
[Table]

Setting value	Meaning (allocated channel and bandwidth)
00	20MHz
01	40MHz - a primary channel and another channel above the primary channel
10	40MHz - a primary channel and another channel below the primary channel
11	80MHz

[0063] The STA can know the secondary channel in addition to a bandwidth allocated to the STA according to the setting value of the CB transmitted by being included in the VHTSIG field.

[0064] As another example of dynamically allocating the secondary channel in the frame unit, information on a channel allocated to the VHTSIG field and bandwidth information can be expressed in a bitmap when transmitted. According to the present embodiment, the channel bandwidth indicator CB is included in the VHTSIG field when transmitted. In this case, if there are four channels, i.e., 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th channels as shown in the example of FIG. 3, the CB may have a bit indicating an allocation status of each channel, and thus may have a value of 4 bits. For one example, when the 1st and 3rd channels are allocated, the CB may be set to '1010'. For another example, when it is intended to use the 1st, 3rd, and 4th channels for 60MHz transmission, the CB may be set to '1011'. The bitmap expression may be effectively utilized when the secondary channel is set to a channel not contiguous to the primary channel.

[0065] When it is intended to transmit data by using a bandwidth of 40MHz, 60MHz, or 80MHz, the STA confirms allocated channel information from the VHTSIG. The STA confirms that the primary channel is idle. If the secondary channel and an extension channel are also idle during a PIFS time period before a backoff counter of the primary channel expires, a PPDU can be transmitted by using the bandwidth of 40MHz, 60MHz, or 80MHz.

[0066] FIG. 4 shows an example of channel allocation and PPDU transmission based on the channel allocation according to an embodiment of the present invention.

[0067] It is shown in FIG. 4 that an AP and an STA which have 80MHz channel bandwidth capability transmit/receive a PPDU by using a bandwidth of 40MHz. The AP selects/allocates a primary channel by considering a noise and interference level or the like. In the example of FIG. 4, a 2nd channel 402 is allocated as the primary channel. If a 3rd

channel 403 allocated as a secondary channel is idle during a PIFS time period 420 before a backoff counter of the 2nd channel allocated as the primary channel expires, the AP can transmit a 40MHz PPDU through the primary channel and the secondary channel. In this case, the AP reports secondary channel allocation information to the STA by using a VHTSIG field in addition to transmission of a VHT operation element by setting a secondary channel offset value. That is, by transmitting information indicating whether the secondary channel is a channel above the primary channel or a channel below the primary channel by using the VHTSIG field, the secondary channel can be selected/allocated in a frame unit. In the example of FIG. 4, a CB value of the VHTSIG field is transmitted by setting the value to '01' according to the example of FIG. 3, so as to report to the STA that the 3rd channel 403 is allocated as the secondary channel. The STA knows that the 3rd channel is allocated as the secondary channel from the CB value of the VHTSIG field, and thus can receive and decode the 40MHz PPDU transmitted by using the 2nd channel and the 3rd channel.

[0068] FIG. 5 is an example of dynamic channel allocation according to an embodiment of the present invention.

[0069] It is assumed that an AP allocates a primary channel to an STA by using a beacon frame 510, then transmits a data frame 520 and a data frame 530, and then transmits a beacon frame 560 and a data frame 570. The AP allocates a 2nd channel 502 by using the beacon frame 510 as the primary channel by considering each channel's interference, noise level, etc. If a backoff interval expires and if a 3rd channel 503 is idle during a PIFS time period before the backoff interval expires, the AP transmits the data frame 520 with 40MHz transmission through the 2nd channel 502 and the 3rd channel 503. In this case, the data frame 520 includes a PLCP header 525 and a data field 528. Secondary channel allocation information is included in the PLCP header 525. In the example of FIG. 5, a transmission method of the secondary channel allocation information is shown based on the example of Table 3. It is indicated that a value of a CB 526 is set to '01' and thus a secondary channel is allocated as a channel above the primary channel. Upon confirming the CB value of the PLCP, the STA knows that the 3rd sub-channel is allocated as the secondary channel, and thus can receive and decode the data frame 520 transmitted through the 2nd channel and the 3rd channel.

[0070] If a result of sensing the 3rd channel 503 when the AP transmits the data frame 530 (herein, either one or both of a physical carrier sensing function or a virtual carrier sensing function may be used) shows that the channel is busy or interference is significant, the AP may set a value of a CW 536 included in a PLCP header 535 of the data frame 530 differently from when the data frame 520 is transmitted. If a result of sensing the 1st channel 501 shows that the 1st channel 501 is idle in a situation where the 3rd channel 503 cannot be used because the 3rd channel 503 is busy or interference

is significant in the example of FIG. 5, the AP may allocate a 1st channel 501 as the secondary channel by setting the CW value to '10'. By using the CW 536, the STA knows that the secondary channel is allocated to the 1st channel 501, and thus can recognize, receive, and decode the data frame 530 transmitted through the 2nd channel 502 and the 1st channel 501.

[0071] If the use of the 2nd channel 502 is limited due to a change in a channel environment of the 2nd channel 502 after the data frame 530 is transmitted, the AP may switch the primary channel from the 2nd channel 502 to the 3rd channel 503 by using the beacon frame 560. Upon receiving the beacon frame 560, the STA knows that the primary channel is allocated to the 3rd channel 503 (i.e., the channel is switched from the 2nd channel to the 3rd channel), obtains secondary channel information by confirming a CW included in a PLCP header 575 of the data frame 570, and thus can receive and decode the data frame on the basis of the obtained secondary channel information.

[0072] FIG. 6 shows an example of an OBSS environment to which an embodiment of the present invention is applicable. A BSS2 620 operates in an OBSS environment in which a basic service area (BSA) partially overlaps with a BSS1 610 and a BSS3 630. In this case, an example of channel allocation in a process of transmitting/receiving a PPDU among an STA 625-1, an STA 625-2, and an STA 625-3 will be described. The STA 625-1, the STA 625-2, and the STA 625-3 may be an exemplary situation in which one STA moves within a BSA of the BSS2 620 or an exemplary situation in which the STAs receive influence of the BSS1 610 and the BSS3 630 according to a change in a BSA of the BSS1 610 and the BSS3 630.

[0073] FIG. 7 shows an OBSS environment according to an embodiment of the present invention.

[0074] The STA 625-1 operating in the BSS2 620 in the example of FIG. 6 operates by using a 2nd channel 702 allocated by an AP2 621 as a primary channel. The STA 625-1 is located within the BSA of the BSS1 610, and is affected when an AP1 611 transmits/receives a PPDU with respect to STAs (not shown) within the BSS1 610. In this case, it is assumed that the AP1 611 transmits/receives the PPDU with respect to the STAs (not shown) within the BSS1 610 by using a 4th channel 704 (as indicated by 710 of FIG. 7). The AP2 621 allocates the 2nd channel 702 as the primary channel, and knows that the 4th channel 704 is busy in the BSS1 610 as a result of sensing the remaining channels (i.e., a 1st channel 701, a 3rd channel 703, and the 4th channel 704). The AP2 621 inserts channel allocation information to a PLCP header and transmits it to the STA 625-1 in order to allocate the 1st channel 701 as a secondary channel by using the same method as shown in the example of FIG. 5. Upon receiving this, the STA 625-1 can receive a data frame 720 with 40MHz transmission through the 2nd channel 702 and the 1st channel 701.

- [0075] Thereafter, it is assumed that the STA 625-1 moves to the STA 625-2. In this case, as a result of sensing the 1st channel 701, the 3rd channel 703, and the 4th channel 704, the AP2 621 knows that all of the channels can be used, and thus can transmit a data frame 730 by fully using a bandwidth of 80MHz. For this, channel allocation information CB included in a PLCP header of the data frame 730 is set to '11' in the transmission of the data frame 730. The STA 625-2 may know that 80MHz transmission is performed by confirming the CW value which is set to '11'.
- [0076] Thereafter, it is also assumed that the STA 625-2 moves again to the STA 625-3. In this case, as a result of sensing the 1st channel 701, the 3rd channel 703, and the 4th channel 704, the AP2 621 knows that a data frame 750 is transmitted through the 1st channel 701 in the BSS3 630. The AP2 621 may set the 3rd channel 703 as the secondary channel, and may transmit a data frame 740 with 40MHz transmission by using the 2nd channel and the 3rd channel.
- [0077] In a case where the 1st channel 701 and the 2nd channel 702 are allocated as the primary channel and the secondary channel according to the conventional method, 40MHz transmission is performed even if the data frame 730 is transmitted to the STA 625-2, which hinders the effective use of frequency spectrum. In addition, when the data frame 740 is transmitted to the STA 625-3, even if the 3rd channel 703 can be used because the 1st channel 701 cannot be used, 20MHz transmission has to be performed. As such, in case of dynamic channel allocation in a PPDU unit of the present invention, frequency spectrum can be effectively used by performing optimal channel allocation adaptively to a change in a channel environment.
- [0078] Meanwhile, the AP may have 80MHz channel bandwidth capability, and the STA in the BSS may have 40MHz channel bandwidth capability. In this case, since the STA has 40MHz capability, the STA can perform clear channel assessment (CCA) only for a channel bandwidth less than or equal to 40MHz. If a frame including primary channel and secondary channel allocation information is broadcast in this environment, the primary channel and the secondary channel are allocated to all STAs within the BSS. That is, the STA may perform the CCA only for channels having the same frequency band of 40MHz. As a result, a problem may arise in the support of dynamic secondary channel switching. This is because complexity of the STA and implementation costs may be increased to support a situation in which a channel of which a channel condition is measured by the STA through CCA has to change rapidly according to the dynamic allocation method.
- [0079] As a method of solving the aforementioned problem, the present invention proposes a method in which the STA1 and the STA2 in the BSS measure a channel bandwidth of 40MHz in different situations. According to an embodiment, a different secondary channel may be allocated for each STA. That is, a primary channel is allocated to the

STA1 and the STA2 by using a frame including a VHT operation element such as a beacon frame or the like, but different secondary channels are allocated to the STA1 and the STA2.

[0080] FIG. 8 shows an example of secondary channel allocation for each STA and data frame transmission based on the secondary channel allocation according to an embodiment of the present invention.

[0081] It is assumed that an STA1 and an STA2 having 40MHz channel bandwidth capability operate in a BSS2 in an OBSS environment as shown in FIG. 6. The STA1 may perform CCA with respect to a bandwidth of 40MHz which is the sum of bandwidths of a 3rd channel 803 and a 4th channel 804, and the STA2 may perform CCA with respect to a bandwidth of 40MHz which is the same of bandwidths of the 3rd channel 803 and a 2nd channel 802. In this case, an AP2 allocates the 3rd channel 803 to the STA1 and the STA2 as a primary channel. In this case, as shown in the example of FIG. 8, a data frame 820 and a data frame 830 may be transmitted to the STA1 and the STA2 through a variable available channel according to channel usage of neighboring BSS1 and BSS3 which constitute the OBSS environment.

[0082] As an embodiment for supporting such a method, an AP allocates a different secondary channel to each STA within a BSS by using a VHT operation element of a beacon frame. In this case, information indicating the secondary channel allocated for each STA is included in the VHT operation element.

[0083] As another embodiment for supporting such a method, the secondary channel may be allocated at the request of the STA other than allocating a secondary channel by the AP. In this method, the STA transmits its channel bandwidth and channel information to be used to the AP. A new frame used for transmission of the channel bandwidth to be used by the STA and the channel information to be used may be defined for use, and a notify channel width action frame of the conventional IEEE 802.11n standard may be extended for use.

[0084] The notify channel width action frame of the IEEE 802.11n standard is transmitted to another STA or AP when the STA intends to change the channel bandwidth. The notify channel width action frame includes a channel bandwidth field for indicating a channel bandwidth to be changed in addition to a category field for explaining contents and functions of the frame. Table 4 below shows setting of the channel bandwidth field specified in the IEEE 802.11n standard.

[0085]

[Table 4]

[Table]

Value	Meaning
0	Channel bandwidth of 20MHz
1	Any channel bandwidth within a channel bandwidth set range supported by an STA
2-255	Reserved

[0086] Table 5 shows an example of modified channel bandwidth field setting according to an embodiment of the present invention.

[0087] [Table 5]

[Table]

Value	Meaning
0	20MHz - a primary channel
1	40MHz - the primary channel and another channel above the primary channel
2	40MHz - the primary channel and another channel below the primary channel
3	Any channel bandwidth within a channel bandwidth set range supported by an STA
4-255	Reserved

[0088] The STA may transmit to the AP the notify channel width action frame which is set to the channel bandwidth field setting value of Table 5 and which corresponds to a bandwidth and a channel to be used by the STA, so as to report the secondary channel to be used by the STA.

[0089] FIG. 9 is a block diagram showing a wireless apparatus for implementing an embodiment of the present invention. A wireless apparatus 900 may be a part of a non-AP STA or an AP.

[0090] The wireless apparatus 900 includes a frame generator 910 and a frame transmitter 920. The frame generator 910 generates a PPDU frame according to the aforementioned embodiment. In this case, channel allocation information is included in a PLCP header (more specifically, a VHTSIG field) of the PPDU. The frame transmitter 920 transmits the generated frame to one or more wireless apparatuses.

[0091] The frame generator 910 and the frame transmitter 920 may be implemented into one chip in a form of a processor. An embodiment for generating a frame may be

configured with software modules, may be stored in a memory, and may be executed by the processor.

[0092] Although a series of steps or blocks of a flowchart are described in a particular order when performing methods in the aforementioned exemplary system, the steps of the present invention are not limited thereto. Thus, some of these steps may be performed in a different order or may be concurrently performed. Those skilled in the art will understand that these steps of the flowchart are not exclusive, and that another step can be included therein or one or more steps can be omitted without having an effect on the scope of the present invention.

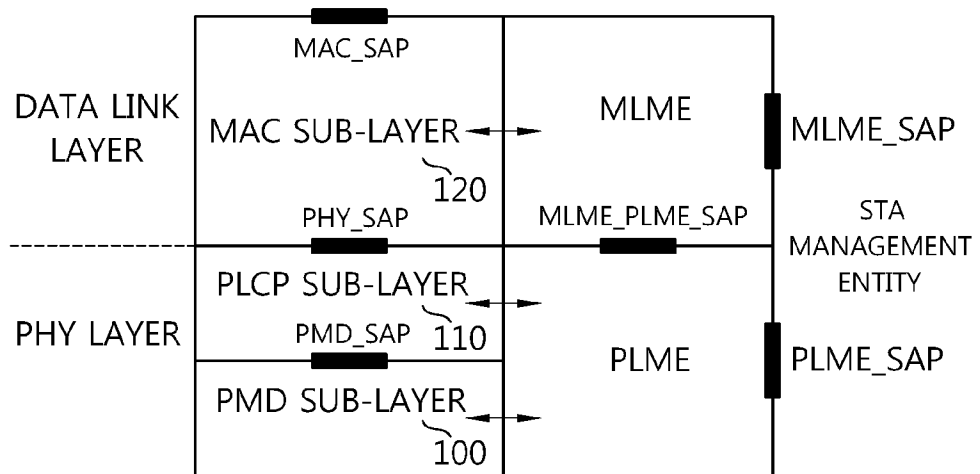
[0093] The aforementioned embodiments include various exemplary aspects. Although all possible combinations for representing the various aspects cannot be described, it will be understood by those skilled in the art that other combinations are also possible. Therefore, all replacements, modifications and changes should fall within the spirit and scope of the claims of the present invention.

Claims

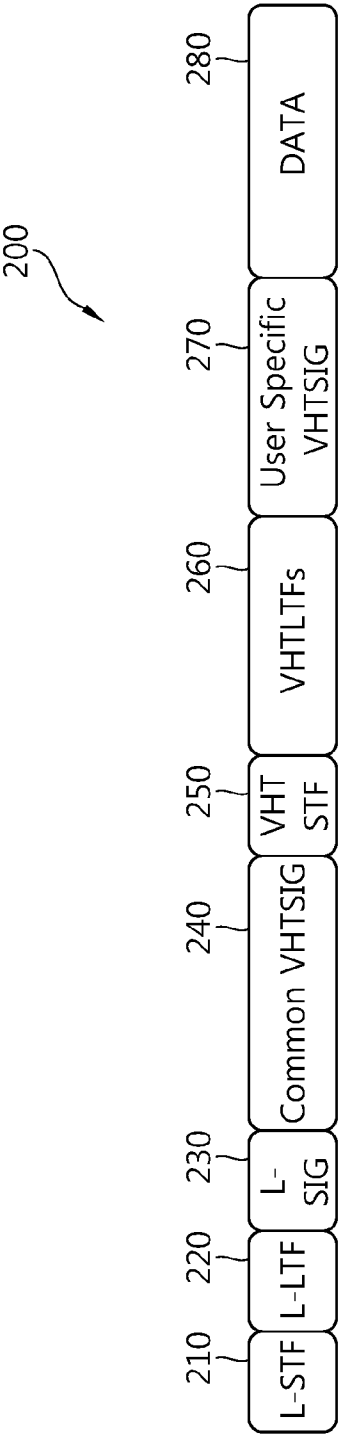
- [Claim 1] A method of allocating a channel in a wireless local area network (WLAN) system, the method comprising:
generating a MAC protocol data unit (MPDU) to be transmitted to a target station (STA);
generating a PLCP protocol data unit (PPDU) by attaching a physical layer convergence procedure (PLCP) header to the MPDU; and
transmitting the PPDU to the STA,
wherein the PLCP header includes channel allocation information for transmission of the PPDU.
- [Claim 2] The method of claim 1, wherein the channel allocation information includes a relative position of a secondary channel with respect to a primary channel.
- [Claim 3] The method of claim 1, wherein the channel allocation information includes channel bandwidth information of a secondary channel and a channel number of the secondary channel.
- [Claim 4] The method of claim 3, wherein the channel allocation information is included in a VHTSIG field included in the PLCP header in a format of indicating whether to allocate each channel used in transmission.
- [Claim 5] The method of claim 1, wherein an allocated transmission channel indicated in the channel allocation information is determined by being sensed by an access point (AP).
- [Claim 6] The method of claim 5, wherein the AP determines whether to allocate the channel according to a channel noise or interference level obtained as a result of the sensing.
- [Claim 7] A wireless apparatus for transmitting channel allocation information in a wireless local area network (WLAN) system, the apparatus comprising:
a frame generator for generating a MAC protocol data unit (MPDU) to be transmitted to a target station (STA); and
a frame transmitter for transmitting the MPDU to the target STA,
wherein a physical layer convergence procedure (PLCP) header of the MPDU includes channel allocation information for transmission of a PLCP protocol data unit (PPDU).
- [Claim 8] The wireless apparatus of claim 7, wherein the channel allocation information includes a relative position of a secondary channel with respect to a primary channel.

- [Claim 9] The wireless apparatus of claim 7, wherein the channel allocation information includes channel bandwidth information of a secondary channel and a channel number of the secondary channel.
- [Claim 10] The wireless apparatus of claim 9, wherein the channel allocation information is included in a VHTSIG field included in the PLCP header in a format of indicating whether to allocate each channel used in transmission.
- [Claim 11] The wireless apparatus of claim 7, wherein an allocated transmission channel indicated in the channel allocation information is determined by being sensed by an access point (AP).
- [Claim 12] The wireless apparatus of claim 11, wherein the AP determines whether to allocate the channel according to a channel noise or interference level obtained as a result of the sensing.

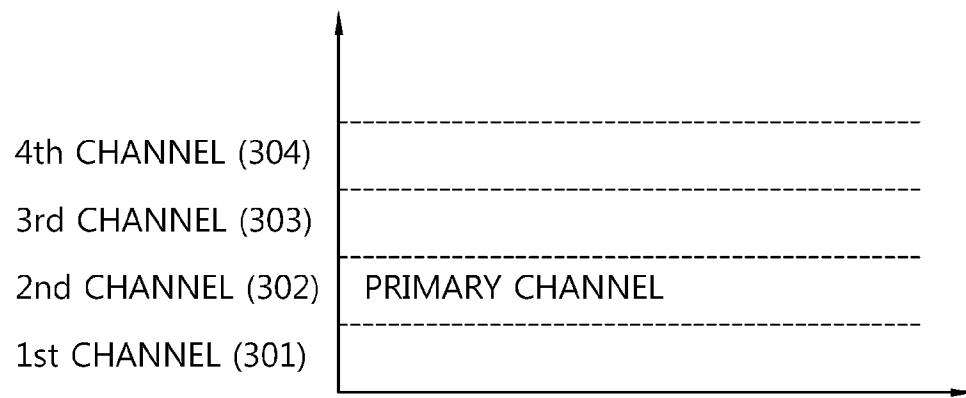
[Fig. 1]



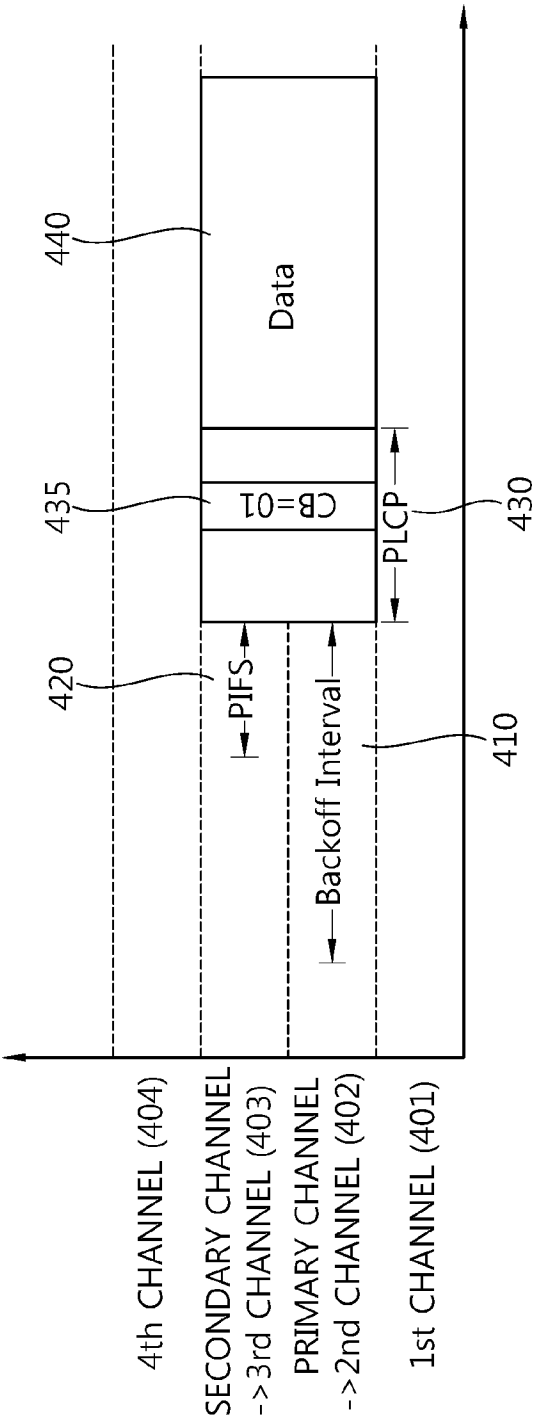
[Fig. 2]



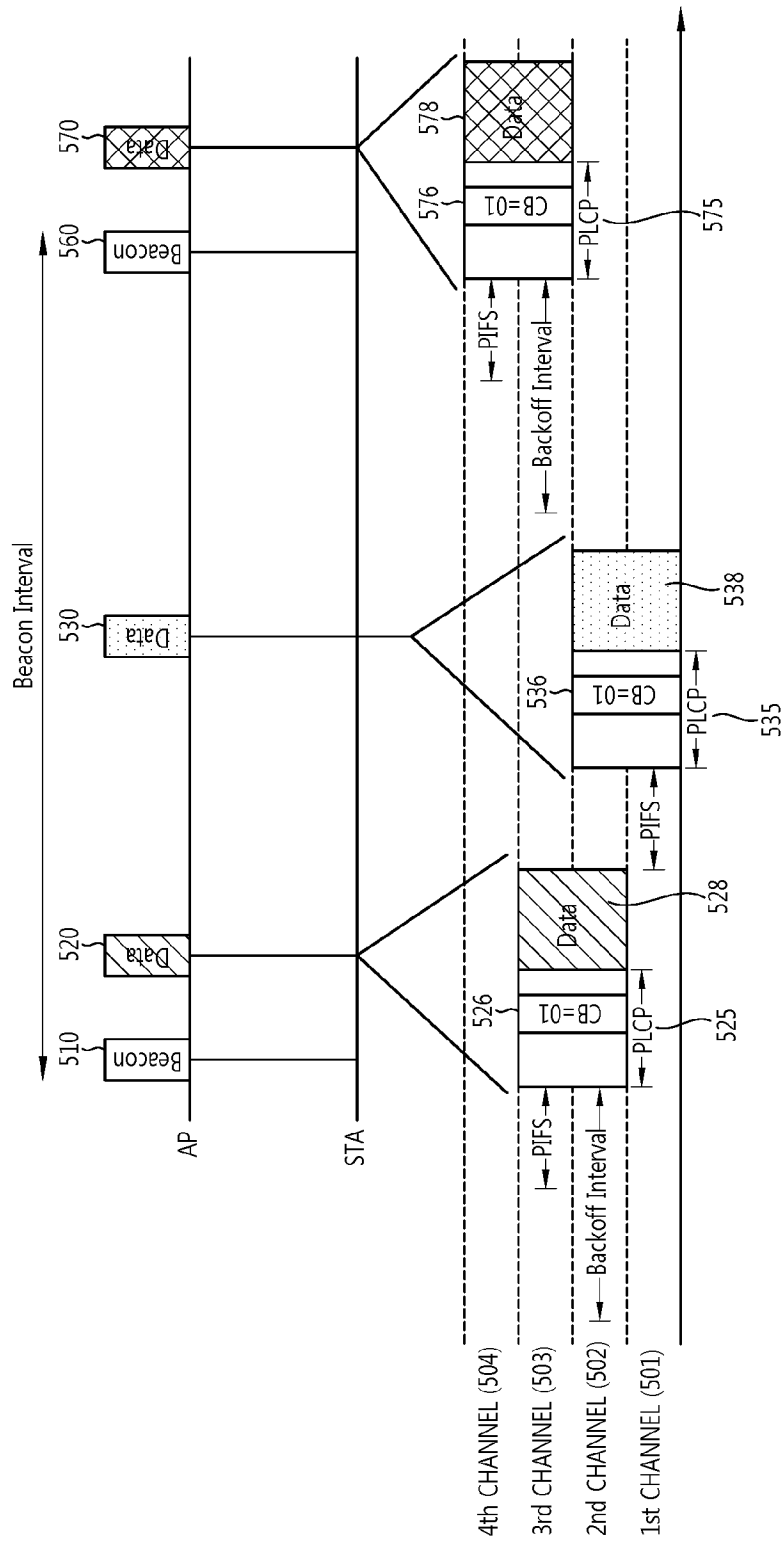
[Fig. 3]



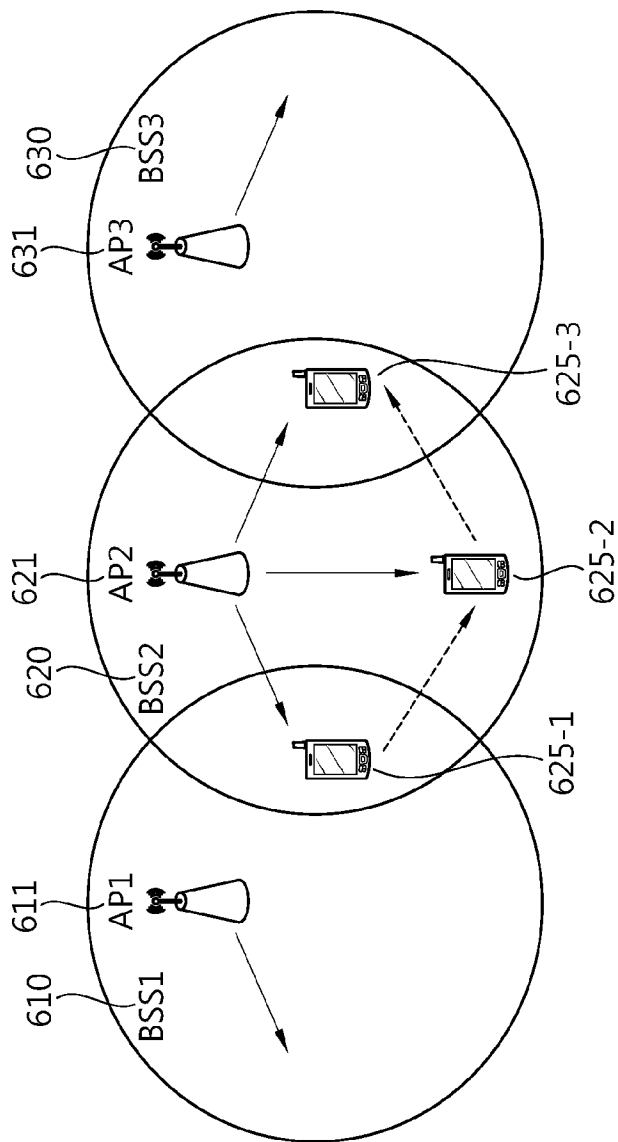
[Fig. 4]



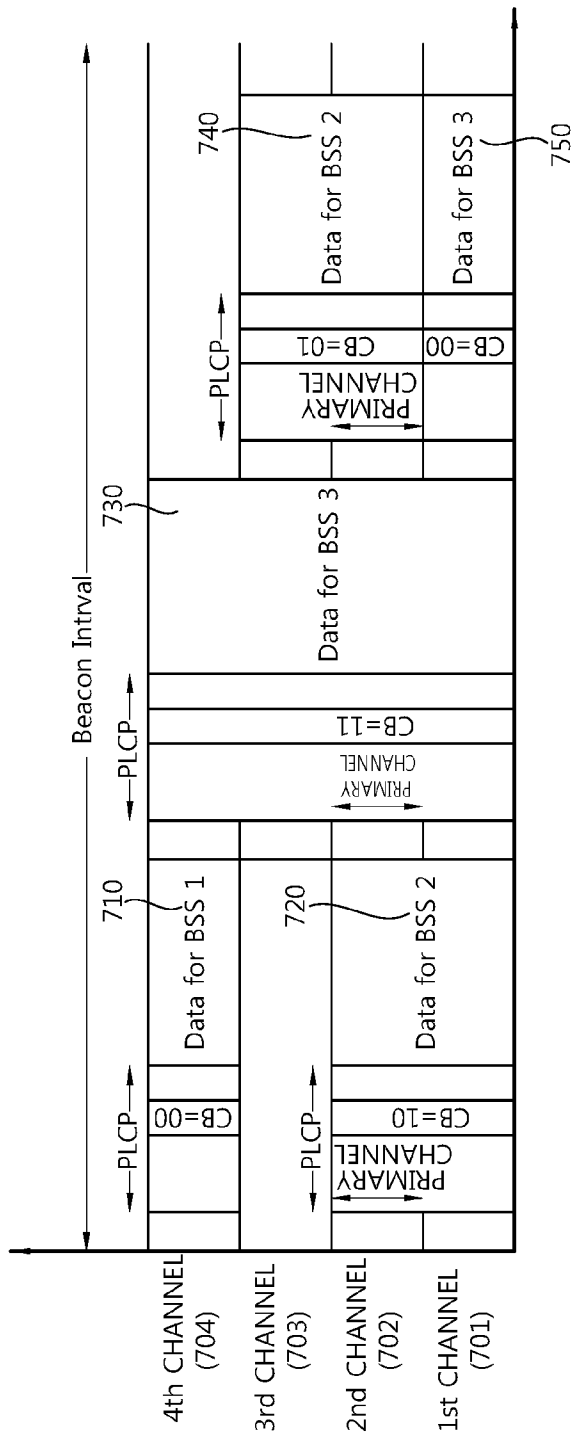
[Fig. 5]



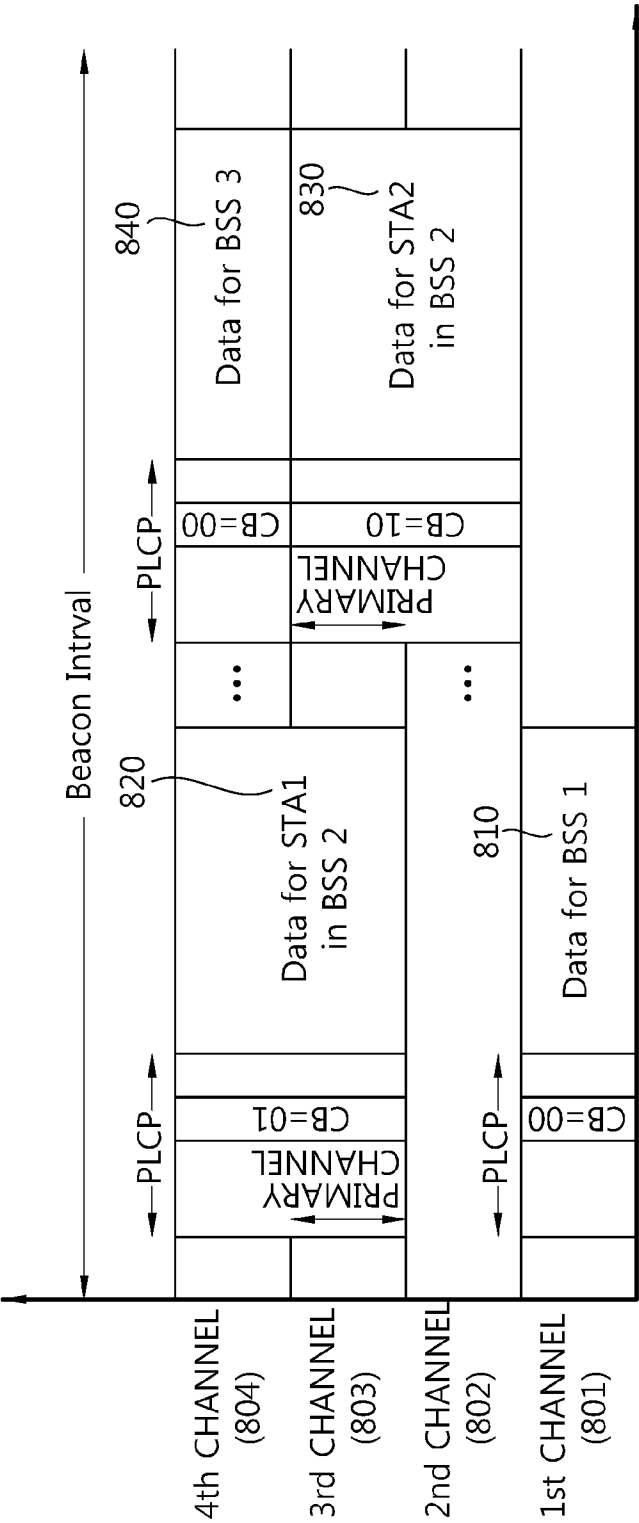
[Fig. 6]



[Fig. 7]



[Fig. 8]



[Fig. 9]

