CLAIMS

1. A method for decoding a video bit stream comprising encoded video data,

whereby a picture of a sequence of pictures consists of maximum size coding units, said maximum size coding units being data units having predetermined maximum coding unit size;

whereby each maximum size coding unit consists of coding units of smaller size, said coding units being arranged in a hierarchical manner in a tree structure and according to depth, said depth being a number of times said maximum size coding units is split, down to a minimum size coding unit;

whereby a prediction mode of a prediction unit is one of an intra mode, an inter mode, and a skip mode, a prediction unit being a basis unit for prediction and being either a coding unit that is no longer split or a partition thereof;

whereby split information for each maximum size coding unit indicates whether said maximum size coding unit is split into coding units of smaller size at a related depth;

whereby skip mode information indicates whether a prediction mode of a prediction unit is a skip mode;

the method comprising:

- extracting, from said video bit stream, split information of a maximum coding unit;
- determining whether the split information of said maximum coding unit indicates that said maximum size coding unit is not split or is split;
- when the split information of said maximum size coding unit indicates that said maximum coding unit is not split, parsing the skip mode information of the maximum coding unit; and
    - when the skip mode information of the maximum size coding unit indicates that the prediction mode of said maximum coding unit is skip mode, decoding said current maximum size coding unit by borrowing motion information of a prediction unit adjacent to said current maximum size coding unit, or inferring motion information of said current maximum size coding unit from motion information of the adjacent prediction unit;
    - when the skip mode information of the maximum size coding unit indicates that the prediction mode of said maximum coding unit is not skip mode, determining one or more prediction units from the maximum size coding unit and decoding said one or more prediction units;
- when the split information of the maximum size coding unit indicates that said maximum size coding unit is split:
- determining the coding units of a current depth by dividing a height and width of the maximum coding unit;
- extracting, from the video bit stream, split information of a coding unit of the current depth, among the coding units of a current depth, the split information of a coding unit of the current depth indicating whether the coding unit of the current depth is split into coding units of a lower depth; and
- when the split information of a coding unit of the current depth indicates that said coding unit is not split, decoding the coding unit of the current depth.