

Optical Phase Noise Cancellation through Differential Detection Using Analog Circuit Techniques

Toshiyuki Inoue^{1*}, Yuta Hanai², Itsuki Tanaka², Daisuke Ito³, and Makoto Nakamura³

¹Kyoto Institute of Technology, Matsugasaki, Sakyo-ku, Kyoto 606-8585, Japan

inoue@vlsi.es.kit.ac.jp *Corresponding author

²The University of Shiga Prefecture, 2500 Hassaka, Hikone, Shiga 522-8533, Japan

³Gifu University, 1-1 Yanagido, Gifu 501-1193, Japan

Abstract—In optical fiber communication systems, intensity modulation and direct detection (IM-DD) is widely used. In contrast, coherent detection based on optical phase modulation improves receiver sensitivity compared to IM-DD. This paper describes a method for canceling optical phase noise through differential detection. This method is particularly suitable for optical fiber networks requiring high reliability, such as in-vehicle optical fiber networks. First, the principle of noise cancellation is explained, and its effectiveness is verified through theoretical analysis considering the frequency bandwidth of the analog circuits. Furthermore, the post-layout simulation results of the designed analog circuits in a 65-nm CMOS process demonstrate effective noise-canceling performance at 25 Gb/s.

Index Terms—Coherent optical fiber communication, 65-nm CMOS, Fully autonomous driving system.

I. INTRODUCTION

Optical fiber communication technique has been mainly applied to a backbone optical network and fiber to the home (FTTH) [1], and it enables the transfer of big data gathered by various terminals, such as smart phones and wireless sensors. In recent years, data center interconnection (DCI) application is a hot topic of optical fiber communication technique because the amount of data traffic in a data center has increased explosively [2]. Because a data-transfer system for DCI requires higher speed and larger capacity, the length of electrical wiring should be shortened and an electrical network should be replaced with an optical network. One of the key techniques for DCI is the co-packaged optics (CPO) technique, in which optical transceivers and a switch ASIC are integrated into the same package [3], [4].

In optical fiber communication systems, the intensity modulation and direct detection (IM-DD) method is the mainstream method due to a simple configuration. In contrast, the coherent detection method based on optical phase modulation improves receiver sensitivity and bit-error rate (BER) compared to IM-DD method. The coherent detection method has been proposed and developed since the 1980s [5], and the digital coherent technique using analog-to-digital converters (ADCs) and digital signal processors (DSPs) had taken place of the earlier analog coherent technique [6]. However, the DSP-free analog coherent method has drawn renewed attention for DCI

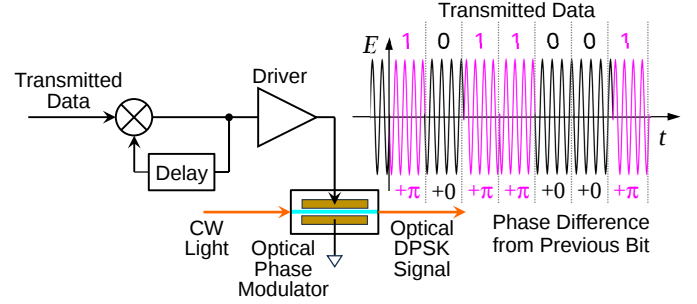


Fig. 1. Method for optical DPSK modulation.

application because ADCs and DSPs consume large amounts of power [7]–[11].

In this paper, an analog coherent method for canceling optical phase noise through differential detection is presented. This method is particularly suitable for high-reliability optical fiber networks, such as in-vehicle optical fiber networks. First, the principle of demodulating optical DPSK signal, which is one of the phase-modulation signal, and canceling optical phase noise is explained. Next, based on theoretical equations, the noise-canceling effect is verified, and its tolerance for variation of operating conditions is evaluated. Then, the post-layout simulation (PLS) results of the designed analog circuits using the parameters of the 65-nm CMOS process are shown, and the noise-canceling performance is demonstrated at 25 Gb/s.

II. DEMODULATION OF OPTICAL DPSK SIGNAL AND CANCELING OPTICAL PHASE NOISE

In this section, a method for demodulating an optical DPSK signal is presented. Also, an operation principle of canceling optical phase noise is described.

A. Optical DPSK modulation

Fig. 1 shows a block diagram for the optical DPSK modulation and a waveform of an optical DPSK signal. A continuous-wave (CW) light from a laser diode is modulated by an optical phase modulator. A DPSK pattern is generated by a frequency mixer (or exclusive OR circuit) and a delay element (delay line or delay flip-flop circuit) and is input to an optical phase modulator through a modulator driver. As a result, the

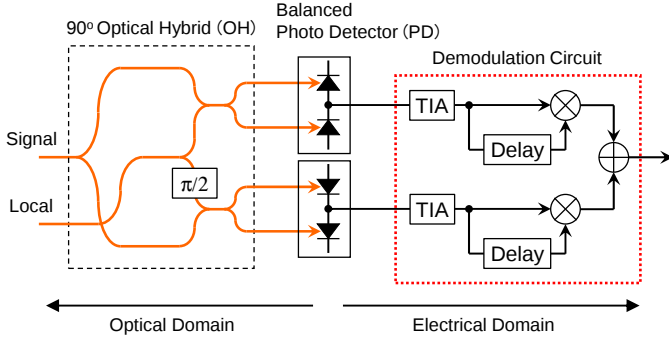


Fig. 2. Block diagram of optical DPSK signal receiver.

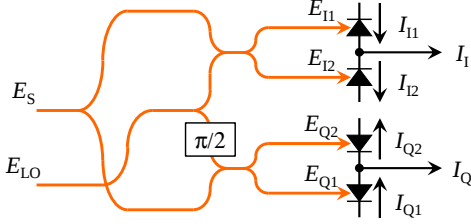


Fig. 3. Block diagram of optical to electrical signal conversion.

optical phase difference between the present and previous bits becomes 0 or π (applied voltage: 0– V_π) corresponding to the transmitted data of ‘0’ or ‘1’, respectively.

B. Operation principle of demodulation of DPSK signal using differential detection

A block diagram of an optical DPSK signal receiver is shown in Fig. 2. It consists of a 90-degree optical hybrid (90° OH) using optical 3-dB couplers and a 90-degree optical phase shifter, balanced photodetectors (PDs), and a demodulation circuit. Fig. 3 shows a block diagram of the optical to electrical signal conversion. When the complex amplitude, the angular frequency, and time-varying phase of the signal light are put as A_S , ω_S , $\theta_S(t)$, respectively, the complex electric field $E_S(t)$ is given by

$$E_S(t) = A_S \exp[j\{\omega_S t + \theta_S(t)\}], \quad (1)$$

In the same manner, the complex electric field of the local light (LO) is given by

$$E_{LO}(t) = A_{LO} \exp[j\{\omega_{LO} t + \theta_{LO}(t)\}], \quad (2)$$

where A_{LO} , ω_{LO} , $\theta_{LO}(t)$ are the complex amplitude, the angular frequency, and the time-varying phase of LO light, respectively. In the following explanation, (t) is omitted for simplicity. The optical power P is related to the complex electric field E as

$$P = k|E|^2, \quad (3)$$

where k is the constant of proportionality. After the signal and local lights pass through the 90° OH, we can obtain the four outputs as

$$E_{I1} = \frac{1}{2}(E_S + E_{LO}), \quad (4)$$

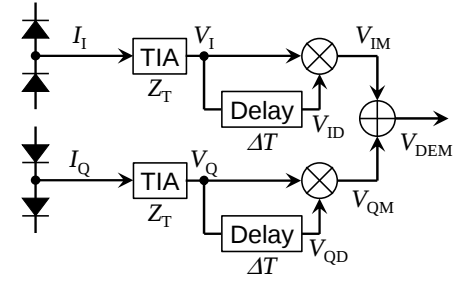


Fig. 4. Block diagram of demodulation circuit for optical DPSK signal.

$$E_{I2} = \frac{1}{2}(E_S - E_{LO}), \quad (5)$$

$$E_{Q1} = \frac{1}{2}(E_S + jE_{LO}), \quad (6)$$

$$E_{Q2} = \frac{1}{2}(E_S - jE_{LO}). \quad (7)$$

Here, subscripts I and Q mean in- and quadrature-phase signals, respectively. Using Eq. (3), the output currents from each PD can be expressed as

$$\begin{aligned} I_{I1} &= RP_{I1} \\ &= kR|E_{I1}|^2 \end{aligned} \quad (8)$$

$$= \frac{kR}{4} [|E_S|^2 + |E_{LO}|^2 + 2\text{Re}\{E_S E_{LO}^*\}],$$

$$\begin{aligned} I_{I2} &= RP_{I2} \\ &= kR|E_{I2}|^2 \\ &= \frac{kR}{4} [|E_S|^2 + |E_{LO}|^2 - 2\text{Re}\{E_S E_{LO}^*\}], \end{aligned} \quad (9)$$

$$\begin{aligned} I_{Q1} &= RP_{Q1} \\ &= kR|E_{Q1}|^2 \\ &= \frac{kR}{4} [|E_S|^2 + |E_{LO}|^2 + 2\text{Im}\{E_S E_{LO}^*\}], \end{aligned} \quad (10)$$

$$\begin{aligned} I_{Q2} &= RP_{Q2} \\ &= kR|E_{Q2}|^2 \\ &= \frac{kR}{4} [|E_S|^2 + |E_{LO}|^2 - 2\text{Im}\{E_S E_{LO}^*\}], \end{aligned} \quad (11)$$

where R is the responsivity of the PD. Then, the balanced PD outputs I_1 and I_2 can be obtained from

$$\begin{aligned} I_1 &= I_{I1} - I_{I2} \\ &= kR \cdot \text{Re}\{E_S E_{LO}^*\} \\ &= I' \cos[(\omega_S - \omega_{LO})t + (\theta_S - \theta_{LO})], \end{aligned} \quad (12)$$

$$\begin{aligned} I_Q &= I_{Q1} - I_{Q2} \\ &= kR \cdot \text{Im}\{E_S E_{LO}^*\} \\ &= I' \sin[(\omega_S - \omega_{LO})t + (\theta_S - \theta_{LO})], \end{aligned} \quad (13)$$

where $kRA_S A_{LO}^*$ is replaced with I' . Assuming the homodyne detection ($\omega_S = \omega_{LO}$), Eqs. (12) and (13) can be simplified as

$$I_1 = I' \cos(\theta_S - \theta_{LO}), \quad (14)$$

$$I_Q = I' \sin(\theta_S - \theta_{LO}). \quad (15)$$

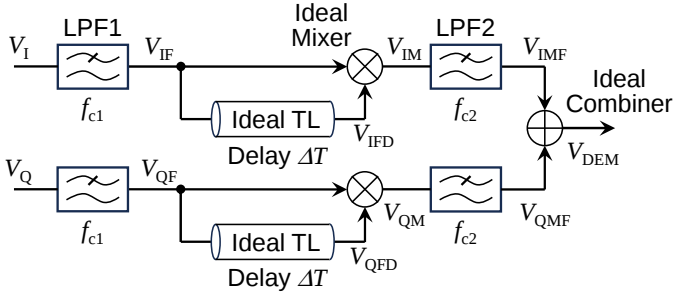


Fig. 5. Block diagram of equivalent model for demodulation circuit.

Next, we consider the phase change due to the phase modulation and the phase noise. We put the time-varying phase of the signal and LO lights as $\theta_S(t) = \theta_{S0} + \alpha(t)$ and $\theta_{LO}(t) = \theta_{LO0} + \beta(t)$, where θ_{S0} and θ_{LO0} are the initial phase of the signal and LO lights, respectively, $\alpha(t)$ is the phase modulation component, and $\beta(t)$ is the phase noise component derived from the noise voltage applying to an optical phase modulator. Fig. 4 shows a block diagram of the demodulation circuit. When the transimpedance gain of each TIA is Z_T , the output voltage is calculated as

$$\begin{aligned} V_I &= Z_T I_I \\ &= V' \cos\{\theta_{\text{init}} + \alpha(t) - \beta(t)\}, \end{aligned} \quad (16)$$

$$\begin{aligned} V_Q &= Z_T I_Q \\ &= V' \sin\{\theta_{\text{init}} + \alpha(t) - \beta(t)\}, \end{aligned} \quad (17)$$

where $Z_T I'$ and $\theta_{S0} - \theta_{LO0}$ are replaced with V' and θ_{init} , respectively. V_{ID} , V_{QD} are generated by delaying V_I and V_Q by 1-bit width (ΔT) and can be expressed as

$$V_{ID} = V' \cos\{\theta_{\text{init}} + \alpha(t - \Delta T) - \beta(t - \Delta T)\}, \quad (18)$$

$$V_{QD} = V' \sin\{\theta_{\text{init}} + \alpha(t - \Delta T) - \beta(t - \Delta T)\}. \quad (19)$$

When the pairs of V_I , V_{ID} and V_Q , V_{QD} are input to multipliers (frequency mixers) with the conversion gain of G_M , the mixer output V_{IM} and V_{QM} can be obtained from

$$\begin{aligned} V_{IM} &= G_M V_I V_{ID} \\ &= G_M V'^2 \cos\{\theta_{\text{init}} + \alpha(t) - \beta(t)\} \\ &\quad \cdot \cos\{\theta_{\text{init}} + \alpha(t - \Delta T) - \beta(t - \Delta T)\}, \end{aligned} \quad (20)$$

$$\begin{aligned} V_{QM} &= G_M V_Q V_{QD} \\ &= G_M V'^2 \sin\{\theta_{\text{init}} + \alpha(t) - \beta(t)\} \\ &\quad \cdot \sin\{\theta_{\text{init}} + \alpha(t - \Delta T) - \beta(t - \Delta T)\}. \end{aligned} \quad (21)$$

Note that we assume an operation of the mixer is equivalent to a mathematical multiplication and neglect limitation of the frequency bandwidth. V_{DEM} is the sum of V_{IM} and V_{QM} , and can be obtained from

$$\begin{aligned} V_{DEM} &= V_{IM} + V_{QM} \\ &= V_G \cos\{\alpha(t) - \alpha(t - \Delta T)\} \\ &\quad - \{\beta(t) - \beta(t - \Delta T)\}, \end{aligned} \quad (22)$$

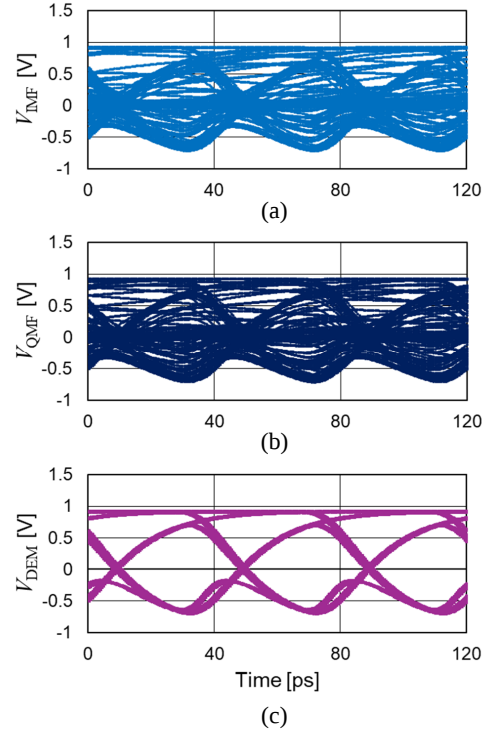


Fig. 6. Eye diagrams of (a) I-signal mixer output V_{IMF} , (b) Q-signal mixer output V_{QMF} , and (c) combiner output V_{DEM} ($BR = 25$ Gb/s, $\Delta T = 40$ ps, $f_n = 1$ GHz, $\beta_{\text{amp}} = \pi/4$, $f_{c1} = 20$ GHz, $f_{c2} = 12.5$ GHz).

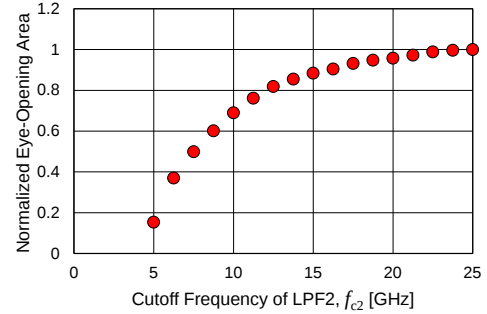


Fig. 7. Dependence of normalized eye-opening area upon cutoff frequency f_{c2} ($BR = 25$ Gb/s, $\Delta T = 40$ ps, $f_n = 1$ GHz, $\beta_{\text{amp}} = \pi/4$, $f_{c1} = 20$ GHz).

where $G_M V'^2$ is replaced with V_G . Therefore, when the phase change derived from the phase noise is relatively slower compared to the phase modulation ($\beta(t) \cong \beta(t - \Delta T)$), the phase noise can be cancelled out. Consequently, V_{DEM} can be rewritten by

$$V_{DEM} \cong V_G \cos\{\alpha(t) - \alpha(t - \Delta T)\}. \quad (23)$$

Eq. (23) means that the logic value corresponding the phase difference between the present and previous bits can be extracted, and that the DPSK signal can be demodulated successfully.

III. THEORETICAL PREDICTION OF NOISE-CANCELING EFFECT

To evaluate the noise-canceling effect, we consider an equivalent model for the demodulation circuit. Fig. 5 shows a

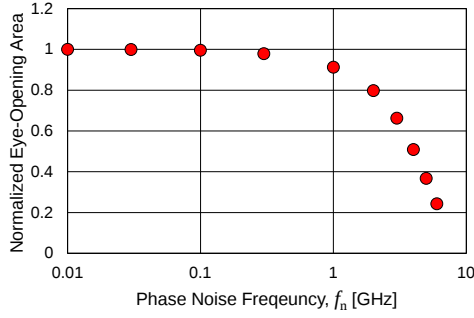


Fig. 8. Dependence of normalized eye-opening area upon noise frequency f_n ($BR = 25$ Gb/s, $\Delta T = 40$ ps, $\beta_{\text{amp}} = \pi/4$, $f_{c1} = f_{c2} = 20$ GHz).

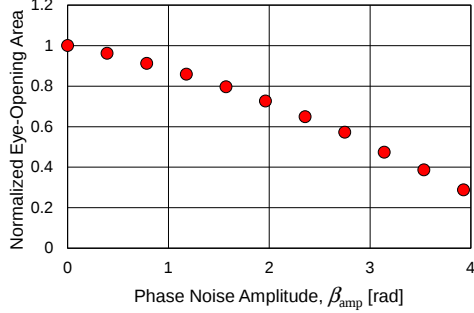


Fig. 9. Dependence of normalized eye-opening area upon noise amplitude β_{amp} ($BR = 25$ Gb/s, $\Delta T = 40$ ps, $f_n = 1$ GHz, $f_{c1} = f_{c2} = 20$ GHz).

block diagram of the equivalent model. Based on the mathematical model using Eqs. (16)–(22), the frequency bandwidth is limited by a first-order low-pass filter (LPF) to simulate the actual circuit behavior. The LPF1 has the -3 -dB cutoff frequency of f_{c1} and is used to smooth the rising/falling edges of the input signal. The LPF2 has the -3 -dB cutoff frequency of f_{c2} and is used to limit the frequency bandwidth of the frequency mixer. Ideal transmission lines (TLs) gives the delay time of ΔT without electrical loss. Operations of ideal mixers and combiners are equivalent to mathematical multiplication and addition, respectively. To quantify the noise-canceling effect, we compare the eye-opening areas (diamond shape) of the demodulation output under each calculation condition. In Eqs. (16) and (17), we define $\beta(t)$ as $\beta_{\text{amp}} \cos(2\pi f_n t)$, where β_{amp} and f_n are the phase noise amplitude and frequency, respectively, and express $\alpha(t)$ as a 25-Gb/s NRZ (PRBS $2^9 - 1$) signal with the amplitude from 0 to π . The initial phase θ_{init} is set to $-\pi/4$.

Fig. 6 shows the eye diagrams of (a) I-signal mixer output V_{IMF} , (b) Q-signal mixer output V_{QMF} , and (c) combiner output V_{DEM} . It seems that eye diagrams with various amplitudes are overlaid. This is because $\beta(t)$ changes periodically with the amplitude of β_{amp} and the frequency of f_n and the amplitudes of V_I and V_Q also change. On the other hand, the demodulation output has a clear eye opening because of the noise-canceling effect of Eq. (22). The dependence of the normalized eye-opening area upon the cutoff frequency of LPF2 is shown in Fig. 7, where the values of the vertical axis is normalized by the value at $f_{c2} = 25$ GHz. From Fig. 7, it is desirable that the

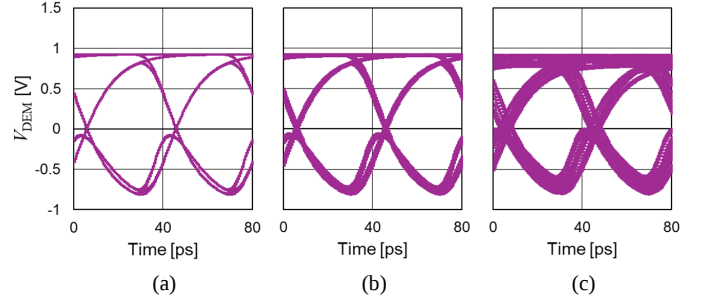


Fig. 10. Eye diagrams of (a) $f_n = 0.1$ GHz, (b) $f_n = 1$ GHz, and (c) $f_n = 3$ GHz ($BR = 25$ Gb/s, $\Delta T = 40$ ps, $\beta_{\text{amp}} = \pi/4$, $f_{c1} = f_{c2} = 20$ GHz).

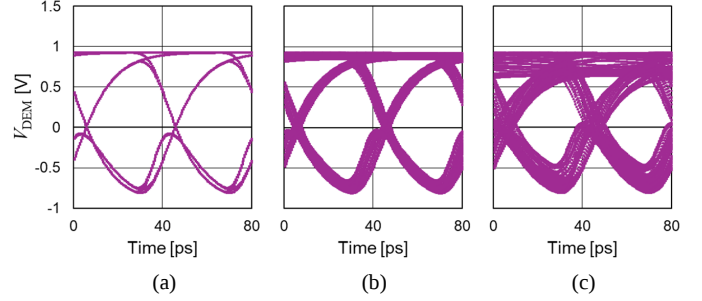


Fig. 11. Eye diagrams of (a) $\beta_{\text{amp}} = 0$, (b) $\beta_{\text{amp}} = \pi/2$, and (c) $\beta_{\text{amp}} = \pi$ ($BR = 25$ Gb/s, $\Delta T = 40$ ps, $f_n = 1$ GHz, $f_{c1} = f_{c2} = 20$ GHz).

frequency bandwidth of the mixer is larger than 12.5 GHz for 25-Gb/s data transmission.

Figs. 8 and 9 show the dependencies of the normalized eye-opening area upon the phase noise frequency f_n and amplitude β_{amp} , respectively. As the noise frequency increases, the eye-opening area becomes smaller in the range more than 0.1 GHz. This is because the difference between $\beta(t)$ and $\beta(t - \Delta T)$ becomes larger. $\beta_{\text{amp}} = \pi/2$ corresponds to phase noise with peak-to-peak value of π , which means that the half-wave voltage V_π is applied to an optical phase modulator as a noise voltage. The value of V_π depends on the interaction length of the phase modulator, and it is larger than a few volts in the case of a lithium niobate modulator. The eye diagrams for each phase-noise condition are shown in Figs. 10 and 11.

We examined tolerance for variation of the delay time ΔT and the operating bitrate BR . Figs. 12 and 13 show the dependencies of the normalized eye-opening area upon ΔT and BR , respectively. It is found that the shape of the data series is asymmetrical to the reference condition ($\Delta T = 40$ ps in Fig. 12 and $BR = 25$ Gb/s in Fig. 13). When ΔT exceeds the 1-bit width, the phase of the present bit affects not only that of the previous bit but also that of the before previous bit in Eq. (22). Therefore, the delay detection cannot operate properly. For the same reason, the phase of the present bit affects that of the before previous bit in the case of increasing the bitrate. Besides, increasing BR causes degradation of the eye-opening area because of the frequency bandwidth limitation of the mixer (f_{c2}).

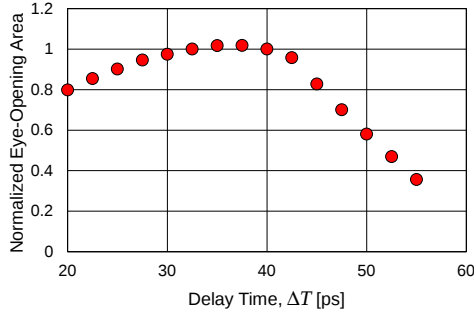


Fig. 12. Dependence of normalized eye-opening area upon delay time ΔT ($BR = 25$ Gb/s, $f_n = 1$ GHz, $\beta_{amp} = \pi/4$, $f_{c1} = f_{c2} = 20$ GHz).

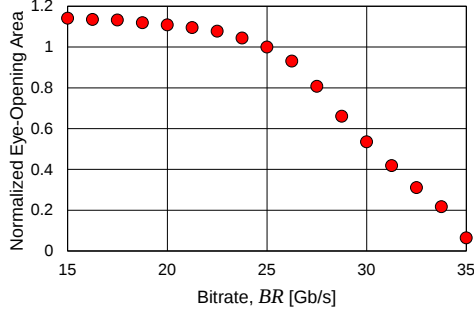


Fig. 13. Dependence of normalized eye-opening area upon bitrate BR ($\Delta T = 40$ ps, $f_n = 1$ GHz, $\beta_{amp} = \pi/4$, $f_{c1} = f_{c2} = 20$ GHz).

IV. EVALUATION OF DESIGNED DEMODULATION CIRCUIT

A. Circuit description

Based on the above analyses, we designed a fully differential demodulation circuit (excluding TIAs and delay lines) for 25-Gb/s data transmission using the parameters of the 65-nm CMOS process. Fig. 14 shows a schematic diagram of a standard Gilbert cell mixer [12]–[14]. This mixer is a well-known circuit and has a fully differential configuration using two single-balanced switching mixers. For the delay detection, a differential signal is input to the transconductance (TC) stage, and the 1-bit delayed signal is input to the switching (SW) stage. The post-layout simulation (PLS) results of the frequency response of the designed mixer is shown in Fig. 15, where the solid and dashed lines mean the results for inputting the RF signal to the SW and TC stages and giving the DC bias to the TC and SW stages, respectively. The -3 -dB frequency bandwidths in the case of the SW and TC stage inputs are 21 GHz and 14 GHz, respectively. Fig. 7 suggests that these values are sufficient for 25-Gb/s data transmission.

Fig. 16 shows a schematic diagram of a current-steering combiner. It consists of two current-mode logic (CML) differential amplifiers, and the load resistors are shared by the amplifiers. Assuming that the transconductance of NMOSs is g_m and the resistance of the load resistors is R_L , the small-signal differential output v_{demd} can be expressed as

$$v_{demd} = g_m R_L \{ (v_{imp} - v_{imn}) + (v_{qmp} - v_{qmn}) \}, \quad (24)$$

where v_{imp} , v_{imn} , v_{qmp} , and v_{qmn} are small-signal input voltages of V_{IMP} , V_{IMN} , V_{QMP} , and V_{QMN} , respectively. Eq.

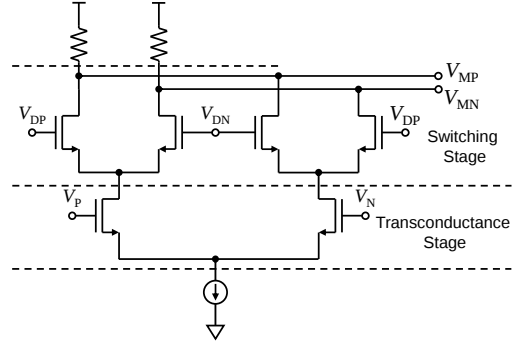


Fig. 14. Schematic diagram of standard Gilbert cell mixer.

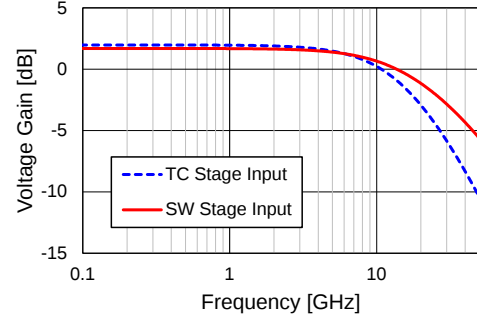


Fig. 15. Frequency response of designed Gilbert cell mixer in PLS.

(24) means that the output voltage is proportional to the sum of input voltages.

B. PLS results of designed demodulation circuit

We examined the operation of the designed demodulation circuit using Gilbert cell mixers and a current-steering combiner through post-layout simulations (PLSs). A layout of the designed demodulation circuit is shown in Fig. 17. The supplied voltage V_{DD} is set to 1.2 V. Based on Eqs. (16)–(19), differential input signals for the mixer, $V_{IP/N}$, $V_{QP/N}$, $V_{IDP/N}$, and $V_{QDP/N}$, are generated, where $\alpha(t)$ is a 25-Gb/s NRZ (PRBS $2^9 - 1$) signal with the amplitude from 0 to π . The voltage amplitude V' is set to 0.15 V, corresponding to a differential voltage of $0.6 V_{ppd}$. The offset voltage of 1.0 V is given to the input signals because the operating point (common-mode voltage) of the designed circuit was 1.0 V. The delay-time difference ΔT is set to 40 ps.

Fig. 18 shows eye diagrams of (a) the I-signal mixer output signal V_{IMP} , (b) the Q-signal mixer output signal V_{QMP} , and (c) the differential demodulation output signal $V_{DEMP} - V_{DEMn}$ in the designed demodulation circuit, where the phase-noise frequency and amplitude are $f_n = 6$ GHz and $\beta_{amp} = \pi/4$, respectively. In Figs. 18(a) and (b), the eye-opening is unclear due to the phase noise. On the other hand, a clear eye opening of the demodulation output can be observed in Fig. 18(c). Although low-frequency phase noise generated in adjacent bits can be cancelled out, the phase of high-frequency noise changes during 1-bit width and $\beta(t) \cong \beta(t - \Delta T)$ is not satisfied in Eq. (22). This is because the line width of the eye diagram in the case of $f_n = 6$ GHz (167-ps period for the

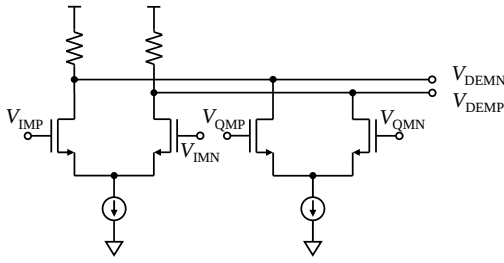


Fig. 16. Schematic diagram of current-steering combiner.

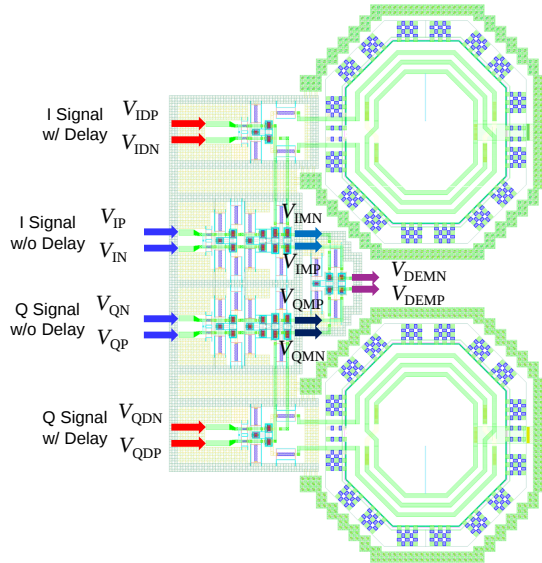


Fig. 17. Layout of designed demodulation circuit.

1-bit width of 40 ps) is broadened. According to CISPR 25, a standard for automotive applications, radiated noise in the frequency range of 150 kHz to 5.925 GHz must be considered. Therefore, our demodulation circuit is highly suitable for such applications.

V. CONCLUSIONS

We presented a method for canceling optical phase noise through differential detection using analog circuits. From the theoretical analyses considering the frequency bandwidth limitation of the analog circuits, the noise-canceling effect was verified, and the tolerance for operating conditions for noise canceling was clarified. Furthermore, the PLS results of the demodulation circuit using the parameters of the 65-nm CMOS process were shown, and its operation at 25 Gb/s was demonstrated.

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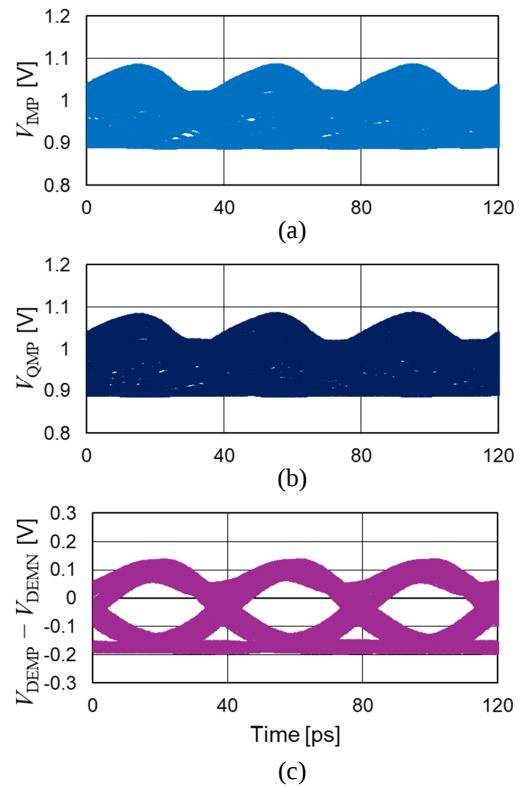


Fig. 18. PLS eye diagrams of (a) I-signal mixer output V_{IMP} , (b) Q-signal mixer output V_{QMP} , and (c) differential demodulation output $V_{\text{DEMP}} - V_{\text{DEMN}}$ in designed demodulation circuit ($BR = 25$ Gb/s, $\Delta T = 40$ ps, $\theta_{\text{init}} = \pi/4$, $f_n = 6$ GHz, $\beta_{\text{amp}} = \pi/4$).

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