



## **A Low-Power High-Speed ADC-Based Equalizer for Serial Links**

by

Mostafa M. Ayesh

B.Sc. of Electrical Engineering

(Electronics and Communications Engineering)

Alexandria University, 2013

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of Master of Science in Electrical Engineering  
Ain Shams University, Cairo

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Spring 2017



AIN SHAMS UNIVERSITY  
FACULTY OF ENGINEERING  
Electronics Engineering and Electrical Communications

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# Statement

This dissertation is submitted to Ain Shams University for the degree of Master of Science in Electrical Engineering (Electronics and Communications Engineering).

The work included in this thesis was carried out by the author at the Electronics and Communications Engineering Department, Faculty of Engineering, Ain Shams University, Cairo, Egypt.

No part of this thesis was submitted for a degree or a qualification at any other university or institution.

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**Thesis title:** "A Low-Power High-Speed ADC-Based Equalizer for Serial Links"

**Degree:** Masters of Science in Electrical Engineering

**Summary**

The thesis is divided into six chapters including lists of contents, tables, and figures as well as a list of references.

**Chapter 1**

This chapter is an introduction including the motivation for this work, followed by the thesis outline.

**Chapter 2**

This chapter includes the literature survey for the analog and digital wireline receivers, and the literature survey for the high-speed ADCs.

**Chapter 3**

It describes the charge-steering concept, the circuit level of the proposed comparator, the proposed ADC and the overall system of the digital receiver.

**Chapter 4**

The chapter shows the system level and circuit level simulations. This chapter includes different results for schematics, post-layout simulations, and layouts.

**Chapter 5**

This chapter discusses the concept of equalization and the different types of equalization. It also provides a literature review for the equalizers and shows the designed DTLE along with its simulation results.

**Chapter 6**

This last chapter includes the conclusion for this work and the suggested future work on this system either an optimization or further needed implementation.

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## Abstract

A Low-Power High-Speed ADC-Based Equalizer for Serial Links

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Driven by an accelerating high demand in the interface IPs market for much faster communication links, market enormously moved from the parallel I/Os to high-speed serial links. An increasing hunger for more bandwidth appeared in all applications from networking and computers to wireless and consumer Electronic devices. Moreover, the end user has a growing need for faster exchange of data through Internet, watching full HD movies or listening to ultra-pure music using portable devices which should run for enough long time.

Multi-Gbps transceivers are expected to operate error-free for high-performance-based applications, consume as small silicon area and as low power as possible. This imposes new design and optimization challenges that are difficult to meet, especially for a small area, a low power, and a high speed. However, having a single PHY that meets multiple standards reduces the time-to-market of SOC designs. That is why large companies race to build their own multi-standard reconfigurable PHYs for new high data-rates and technology nodes.

One way to meet different standards is reconfigurability, heavily depending on programmability and the digital portion of the system. To make system easily reconfigurable we should process the signal digitally as much as we can, that is why ADC-based-receivers come ahead. ADC is utilized to change the signal from the analog domain to the digital domain where we can perform feed-forward equalization or decision-feed-back equalization with a variable number of switchable taps to achieve various ranges of channel equalization and hence meets multi-standard requirements.

The main challenge of the digital receivers is the ADC itself. To get high-data-rates, ADCs are required to be Flash to reach such speeds. Flash architectures are well-known traditionally to have the highest speeds, largest area and highest power dissipation.

This thesis proposes a 20-GS/s low-power ADC-based equalizer for high-speed serial wireline receivers. Digital receivers are recently adopted to overcome the challenges facing circuits in the analog domain such as power, delay, and mismatches, besides exploiting benefits of the digital circuits and systems, these benefits are scaling, different and easier adaptation algorithms, calibration, reconfigurability and noise immunity. The ADC-based

equalizer is designed and post-layout-simulated in a 65-nm CMOS technology. It consumes 15.5 mW in the ADC and 0.57 mW in the discrete-time linear equalizer from a 1-V and 1.2-V power supplies. Low power consumption is achieved by using time-interleaving in the ADC architecture, utilizing charge-steering concept, sharing single reference ladder across the four interleaved channels of ADC, and introducing a novel proposed design for the comparator itself in the Flash analog to digital converter besides using the novel discrete-time linear equalizer circuit.

Keywords: Flash ADC, Charge-Steering, High-speed ADC, Preamplifier, Linear Equalizers, Time-interleaved, ADC-based Equalizer, DTLE.

Publications: M. M. Ayesh, S. A. Ibrahim, H. F. Ragai, and M. M. Rizk “A Low-power High-speed Charge-steering ADC-based Equalizer for Serial Links,” ICECS, M.Sc/Ph.D. Forum, December 2015.

## Acknowledgments

I would like to thank ALLAH for his blessings and kindness, for helping me through all the stages of this thesis. This work is dedicated to my father, my mother, and my lovely wife Marwa.

I am very grateful to my advisors, Prof. Hani Fikry Ragai, Prof. Mohamed Rizk and Dr. Sameh Ibrahim. A great appreciation for Prof. Mohamed Rizk and Prof. Hani Fikry for allowing me to do such a work. A special thanks and appreciation for Dr. Sameh Ibrahim for his guidance, consideration, and motivational encouragement through the whole work of my research and my thesis, he was the one who encouraged me and helped me a lot through this work. A very special appreciation for Dr. Mohamed Aboudina from EECE-Cairo University for his continuous help and guidance, A warm thank you for Eng. Samer Bahr and Eng. Amr Saad and all ICL fellows for their support and time.

Special thanks for Eng. Fady Atef, Eng. Moataz Kadry, Eng. Ahmed Yassin, and all staff of “Silicon-Vision”, for their help and advice during the layout and final phases of work. A great gratitude to Prof. Ahmed Khairy Abouelseoud, Dr. Yasser Yousry, and Dr. Wael El-Sharkasy for helping me finding my way.

“In a memoriam of my beloved passed-away-brother Eng. Mohamed Mahmoud Abdelkader Hassan, the Teaching Assistant at Mechanical Engineering Department-Alexandria University, who inspired me all the way after the high school”.

M. Ayesh  
May 2017



To my Father, my Mother, and my lovely wife Marwa

# Contents

<b>Contents</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>List of Figures</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>List of Tables</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>1 Introduction</b>	<b>15</b>
1.1 Introduction to SerDes . . . . .	15
1.2 Motivation and Objectives . . . . .	18
1.3 Organization of this Thesis . . . . .	19
<b>2 System Study and Literature Review</b>	<b>21</b>
2.1 Backplane Channel . . . . .	21
2.2 The Equalization Concept . . . . .	24
2.3 The Different Types of Equalizers . . . . .	25
2.4 Literature Survey on the Most Recent Digital Receivers for SerDes . . . . .	30
2.5 Literature Survey on ADCs . . . . .	36
2.6 Time-Interleaving Concept . . . . .	42
2.7 The Dynamic Clocked Comparators . . . . .	44
<b>3 The Proposed Comparator and ADC</b>	<b>49</b>
3.1 Methodology and Concept of Charge-Steering . . . . .	49
3.2 Design of the Proposed Comparator . . . . .	50
3.3 Delay Analysis for the Proposed Circuit . . . . .	56
3.4 The Architecture of the Designed ADC . . . . .	56
3.5 Using the ADC within a Multi-Standard Receiver . . . . .	60
<b>4 System-Level and Circuit-Level Simulations</b>	<b>63</b>
4.1 Simulation Results for the Proposed Charge-Steering Comparator . . . . .	63
4.2 System-Level Simulations of the ADC . . . . .	66
4.3 The Floor-Plan and the Layout of the ADC Circuits . . . . .	70
4.4 Post-Layout Simulation Results . . . . .	76

<b>5</b>	<b>Design and Simulation Results of the Front-End Equalizer</b>	<b>79</b>
5.1	The Designed DTLE Equalizer . . . . .	79
5.2	Matching the Input Impedance . . . . .	82
5.3	Simulations Results for the Designed DTLE . . . . .	83
<b>6</b>	<b>Conclusions and Suggested Future Work</b>	<b>87</b>
6.1	Conclusions . . . . .	87
6.2	Suggested Future Work . . . . .	88
<b>A</b>	<b>A Modified Single-Ended Version of the Comparator</b>	<b>89</b>
A.1	Conventional StrongARM Comparator . . . . .	89
A.2	Proposed Charge-Steering Based StrongARM Comparator . . . . .	90
A.3	Simulation Results . . . . .	93
<b>B</b>	<b>Additional Circuits for ADCs</b>	<b>95</b>
B.1	Sample and Hold Network . . . . .	95
B.2	The designed DAC for testing . . . . .	96
B.3	The Digital Encoder . . . . .	97
B.4	The De-Serializer . . . . .	97
<b>C</b>	<b>Verilog-A and Matlab codes</b>	<b>99</b>
C.1	Verilog-A Model for a Comparator . . . . .	99
C.2	Verilog-A Model for a 4-bits DAC . . . . .	100
C.3	Verilog-A Model for 4 to 1 Multiplexer . . . . .	100
C.4	Verilog-A Model for a D Flip-Flop . . . . .	101
C.5	Verilog-A Model for Sample and Hold Circuit . . . . .	102
C.6	Verilog-A Model for a VGA . . . . .	103
C.7	A Verilog-A Model for a CTLE . . . . .	103
C.8	A Matlab Code for the ADC Static-Performance Results . . . . .	106
C.9	A Matlab Code for the ADC Dynamic-Performance Results . . . . .	108
C.10	Verilog-A Model for the Pseudo Random Bits (PRBS) Generator . . . . .	109
	<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>110</b>

# List of Figures

1.1	I/O Scaling Projections as Projected by the ITRS. [1] . . . . .	16
1.2	Simple Implementation for the Serial-Link at Low-Speed Signaling. . . . .	16
1.3	Eye Diagram Along the Channel at Low-Speed Signaling. [2] . . . . .	16
1.4	More Complicated Implementation for the Serial-Link at High-Speed Signaling. [2]	17
1.5	Eye Diagram Along the Channel at High-Speed Signaling. [2] . . . . .	17
1.6	Eye Diagram Before and After Equalization. [2] . . . . .	18
1.7	(a) Conventional Receiver (b) ADC-Based Receiver with DSP Backend. [6] . . .	19
2.1	A High-Speed Backplane Channel. [9] . . . . .	22
2.2	Frequency Response and Impulse Response of Some Backplane Channels. [12] .	22
2.3	Different Frequency Responses of FR4 Backplane Channels with Different Lengths. [12] . . . . .	23
2.4	The Response of the Channel to a 160-ps Wide Pulse. [12] . . . . .	24
2.5	The Effect of ISI. [12] . . . . .	24
2.6	The Frequency Response of the Channel, the Required Equalizer and the Overall Flat Response. . . . .	25
2.7	The Channel Frequency Response and its Pulse Response at Different Data Rates. [13] . . . . .	26
2.8	The Eye Diagrams Corresponding to the 24-inch Backplane at Different Data Rates. [13] . . . . .	26
2.9	A Schematic for a Second Order Passive Continuous Time Linear Equalizer. [14]	27
2.10	An Active CTLE. (a) The Circuit Topology. (b) Its Frequency Response. [15] .	28
2.11	The Frequency Response of the Tunable CTLE. [15] . . . . .	28
2.12	The Schematic of Feed-Forward Equalizer (FFE). [14] . . . . .	29
2.13	The Basic Implementation of the DFE in the Receiver. [16] . . . . .	29
2.14	A Simple Implementation of the Digital DFE. [20] . . . . .	30
2.15	An ADC-Based Receiver with 2 Time-Interleaved ADCs Forming a 12.5-Gb/s ADC, a 2-Tap FFE and a 5-Tap DFE. [5] . . . . .	31
2.16	A Simple Diagram of the ADC-Based Receiver. [25] . . . . .	32
2.17	A Proposed Receiver Architecture. [26] . . . . .	33
2.18	An 8X Parallel Selection-Based 5-tap DFE. [26] . . . . .	33
2.19	Block Diagrams of Embedded and Digital Equalizers. [27] . . . . .	34

2.20	A Proposed Hybrid ADC-Based Receiver Architecture. [27]	35
2.21	A Suggested Single-Tap DFE Implanted Inside the ADC-Based Receiver. [28]	35
2.22	Different Types of ADCs Architecture According to Resolution and Sampling Rate. [30]	37
2.23	The Basic Architecture of a Flash ADC.	38
2.24	A 4.5-Bit Flash ADC Architecture. [33]	40
2.25	A Pipeline ADC Architecture. [37]	41
2.26	A Representation for Time-Interleaving Concept and its Effect.	42
2.27	A Time-Interleaved Analog-to-Digital Converter. (a) The Overall System Architecture. (b) Timing diagram. [42]	43
2.28	A Simple Symbol for the Clocked Comparator. [51]	45
2.29	A Schematic Diagram for the Dynamic StrongARM Comparator. [51]	45
2.30	The Timing Scheme for the StrongARM Comparator. [51]	46
2.31	A Schematic Diagram of the Conventional Double-Tail Dynamic Comparator. [47]	46
2.32	A Schematic Diagram of the CML Dynamic Comparator. [54]	47
3.1	(a) Current-Steering Differential Amplifier. (b) Charge-Steering Differential Amplifier. (c) Charge-Steering Differential Latch.	50
3.2	(a) Proposed Latched Dynamic Charge-Steering Pre-Amplifier (b) Clocking Scheme.	51
3.3	The Single-Ended Version of the Proposed Comparator.	51
3.4	The Proposed Charge-Steering Comparator in the Reset Phase.	52
3.5	The Proposed Charge-Steering Comparator in the Amplification Phase.	53
3.6	Clocking Schemes Used with the Comparator and the Outputs of the Comparators.	53
3.7	The Proposed Charge-Steering Comparator in the Regeneration Phase.	54
3.8	A Schematic Diagram for the RS-Latch.	55
3.9	The Designed Time-Interleaved ADC Architecture.	56
3.10	The Required Clocks for All Branches.	58
3.11	The Designed Clocking System to Generate the Required Clocks.	58
3.12	A Schematic for the Differential to Single-Ended Converter.	59
3.13	A Schematic for the Reference Ladder.	59
3.14	The Designed ADC in a Full-Rate Mode (Rate < 5 Gbps).	60
3.15	The Designed ADC in a Half-Rate Mode (5 Gbps < Rate < 10 Gbps).	61
3.16	The Designed ADC in a Quarter-Rate Mode (10 Gbps < Rate < 20 Gbps).	61
4.1	Outputs of Comparator Cores.	63
4.2	Output of RS Latch vs. Input of Comparator.	64
4.3	Monte-Carlo Simulation Results (a) For Offset. (b) For Delay.	64
4.4	The Relation Between the Delay and the Input Amplitude.	65
4.5	The Relation Between the Delay and the Input Common Mode Voltage.	65
4.6	Frequency Response of Output for Sinusoidal Inputs of 4.84 GHz and 9.84 GHz Input Frequencies.	66
4.7	The Kick-back Noise Level Imposed on One of the Reference Values.	67

4.8	The Relation Between ENOB and Input Frequency. . . . .	68
4.9	The Output Ramp From the ADC. . . . .	68
4.10	The Differential Non-Linearity with the Digital Word. . . . .	68
4.11	The Integral Non-Linearity with the Digital Word. . . . .	69
4.12	The Layout of the D-Flip-Flop Used in Divider. . . . .	70
4.13	The Layout of the Differential to Single-Ended Converter. . . . .	71
4.14	The Layout of the Timing System. . . . .	71
4.15	The Layout of the Proposed Comparator. . . . .	72
4.16	The Layout of a Full ADC Branch with its DAC Circuit. . . . .	72
4.17	The Layout of the DAC Used in Measurement and Testing. . . . .	73
4.18	The Layout of the Resistive Reference Ladder. . . . .	73
4.19	The Layout of the Designed ADC. . . . .	74
4.20	The Floor Plan of the Transceiver Chip. . . . .	75
4.21	The Spectral Density of the Extracted-ADC Output (with the Ideal Schematics of the Clocking System). . . . .	76
5.1	(a) A Schematic of the DTLE Circuit. (b) The Track-and-Equalize Mode (CLK = "High"). (c) The Hold Mode (CLK = "Low"). . . . .	80
5.2	The DTLE with Leakage Blockers. . . . .	81
5.3	The Overall Modified Architecture of the Digital Receiver Front End. . . . .	82
5.4	A Schematic of the Simple Programmable Termination at the Receiver Front End. . . . .	83
5.5	A Schematic for Equivalent Model of 1-inch FR4 Channel. [15] . . . . .	83
5.6	The Frequency Response of a 12-inch FR4 Channel. . . . .	84
5.7	The Frequency Response of the DTLE Showing the Gain Boosting at 5 GHZ. . . . .	84
5.8	The Eye Diagrams at the Receiver Input (Upper) and After DTLE (Lower) . . . . .	84
5.9	The Frequency Response of the DTLE for Different Values of $R_s$ and $C_s$ . . . . .	85
A.1	Conventional StrongARM Comparator. . . . .	90
A.2	Proposed Charge-Steering Based StrongARM Comparator . . . . .	91
A.3	Proposed StrongARM Comparator a) Reset Phase b) Start of Amplification-Regeneration Phase c) Settling State During Amp-Reg Phase ( $V_{in} > V_{ref}$ ). . . . .	92
A.4	Clocking Scheme and Delay Components. . . . .	92
A.5	Power Consumption versus Sampling Frequency. . . . .	93
A.6	Power Consumption versus Input Common Mode Voltage. . . . .	94
A.7	Delay versus Input Common Mode Voltage. . . . .	94
A.8	Output Nodes Voltages of the Comparator and the RS latch. . . . .	94
B.1	Input and Output of the Simple and Hold Network. . . . .	96
B.2	The Schematic of the Current Steering Digital to Analog Converter. . . . .	96

# List of Tables

2.1	ADC-Based Receiver Performance Comparison. . . . .	36
2.2	Comparison Between Different Architectures of ADCs. . . . .	42
4.1	Comparison Between the Proposed Comparator and StrongArm Comparator at 5 GHz. . . . .	66
4.2	The Flash ADC Power Consumption Breakdown. . . . .	69
4.3	ADC Performance Summary. . . . .	69
4.4	Comparison Between this Work and Recently Reported Flash ADCs. . . . .	70
5.1	DTLE Performance Comparison. . . . .	85
A.1	Comparing conventional StrongARM with Our Proposed Comparators. . . . .	94