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► To cite this version:

Guillaume Ducournau, Y. Yoshimizu, S. Hisatake, F. Pavanello, Emilien Peytavit, et al.. 200 GHz coherent wireless link using photonics-based emission. 39th International Conference on Infrared, Millimeter, and Terahertz waves (IRMMW-THz), Sep 2014, Tucson, United States. <10.1109/IRMMW-THz.2014.6956001>. <hal-03286172>

HAL Id: hal-03286172

<https://hal.science/hal-03286172v1>

Submitted on 16 Sep 2021

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200 GHz Coherent Wireless Link using Photonics-based Emission

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Abstract— We investigated a coherent THz link at 200 GHz, with variable data rate up to 11 Gbit/s, featuring the combination of a quasi-optic UTC-PD emitter and a high sensitivity electronic receiver. This coherent link relies on an optical frequency comb generator at emission to produce an optical beat note with 200-GHz separation. BER testing has been carried out using an indoor link configuration and the error-free operation is obtained up to 10 Gbit/s with a received power less than 2 μ W.

I. INTRODUCTION

THz communications are very promising [1] as it opens a huge space for new high data-rate services. Among different technological solutions, coherent THz links pave the way to high performances in terms of data-rate and sensitivity at receiver circuits. For example, using photonics at emission, [2] have achieved real-time coherent 100 GHz up to 11 Gbit/s and [3] reported 200 Gbit/s in W-band using off-line demodulation and signal processing. Above W-band, [4] reported very recently up to 100 Gbit/s for a 20 m link at 237.5 GHz, also using off-line detection.

II. WIRELESS LINK AND RESULTS

The wireless link is described in fig. 1. First, an optical frequency comb generator [5] is used to produce a dual mode optical signal, with 200-GHz separation. This signal is modulated up to 11 Gbit/s using a Mach-Zehnder modulator (MZM), and a quasi-optic uni-travelling carrier (UTC-PD) module is used to radiate the modulated 200 GHz signal.

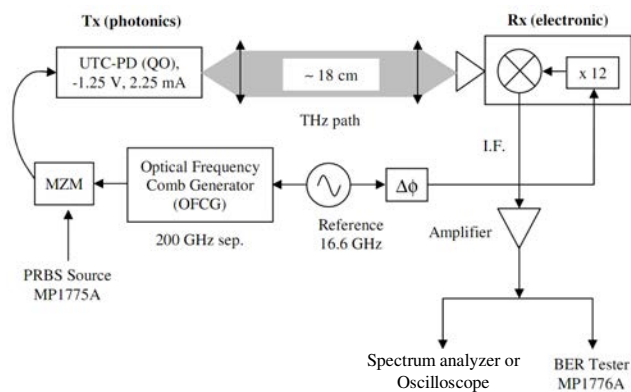


Fig. 1. Experimental setup of the 200-GHz coherent data link. CW = Continuous Wave, $\Delta\phi$ = Fixed electrical phase shifter.

The receiver is an electrical mixer working at 200 GHz, pumped by an electrical multiplication chain, working at 100 GHz. The mixer output feeds a 33-dB gain amplifier and a limiting amplifier is used at the end for eye diagram monitoring and BER testing.

The fig. 2 shows the photonics-based emission (UTC-PD) and electronic receiver (Schottky-based).

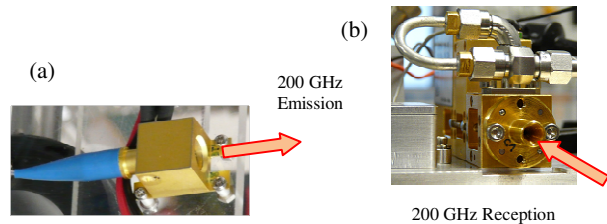


Fig. 2. Views of Quasi-optic UTC-PD module (a) and electronic receiver (b), both operated at 200 GHz.

No off-line processing to tackle the phase locking problem between Tx and Rx is required in the proposed architecture, i.e. the BER is measured in real-time. For that, BER was tested using the combination of MP1775A (Anritsu) for PRBS generation and MP1776A (Anritsu) for BER measurement with $2^{15}-1$ bit sequences.

The error-free operation is obtained at 5 Gbit/s for 0.7 mA in the UTC-PD, corresponding to a 1.5- μ W power at UTC-PD output (Fig. 3). This should correspond to ~ 0.75 - μ W (< -30 dBm) received power. For 10 Gbit/s, the error-free operation was obtained with 1-mA photocurrent in the UTC-PD, corresponding to ~ -28 -dBm received power.

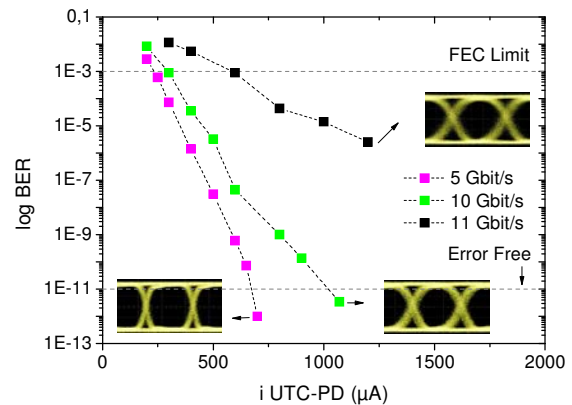


Fig. 3. BER curves, using a 11-Gbit/s limiting amplifier, and eye diagrams for highest photocurrents tested in each data-rate.

The BER curve obtained for the 11-Gbit/s data rate was presenting a reduced slope, and the achieved BER performance was limited to few 10^{-6} . This comes from a limited available bandwidth at the heterodyne receiver. To illustrate that point, the Rx was tested in waveguide condition using a continuous wave source coming from a vector-network

analyzer, and the frequency was tuned from 180 GHz and 220 GHz. The figure 4 presents the results.

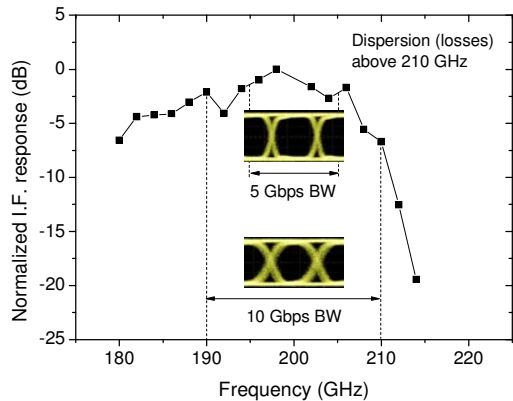


Fig. 4. Frequency response of the heterodyne receiver including I.F. wideband amplifier.

From this curve, the 20 GHz bandwidth found (± 10 GHz around carrier frequency) enables an up-to 10 Gbit/s error free operation. For higher data rates, a too large amount of amplitude distortion is affecting the receiver, caused by an increase of the conversion losses (decreasing IF response). For that reason, the eye diagrams beyond 10 Gbit/s were degraded and the BER performance was limited.

III. CONCLUSIONS

A coherent transmission system was demonstrated at 200 GHz, using a photonics-based emission, and featuring a very low power requirement at reception. Error-free operation was obtained up to 10-Gbit/s data rates, with a limitation due to the receiver bandwidth, not by the comb or UTC-PD transmitter. Next steps will concern high distance transmission using powerful photomixers at emission.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This work has been partially supported by the “Agence Nationale de la Recherche” and “Japanese Science and Technology Agency” within the framework of “WITH” project, and was partly supported by the French Ministry of Higher Education and Research, Nord-Pas de Calais Regional Council and FEDER through the “Contrat de Projets Etat Région “Campus Intelligence Ambiante” (CPER-CIA).

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