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(54) **INTEGRATED RADIO FREQUENCY
FRONT-END CIRCUIT**

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USPC 455/78–83, 550.1, 279.1, 292

See application file for complete search history.

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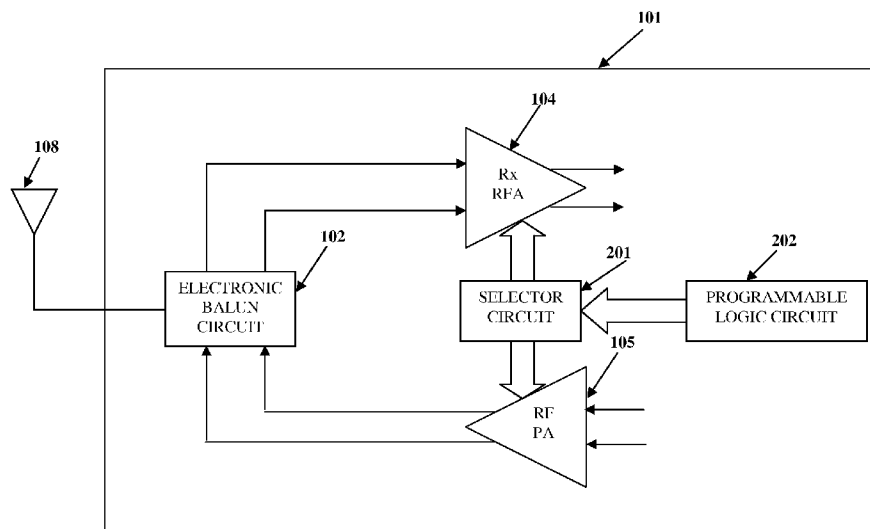
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Weinberger & Husick

(57) **ABSTRACT**

An integrated RF front-end circuit comprising a balun, a
receiver amplifier, a power amplifier, and a selector circuit is
provided. The balun comprises a center-tapped inductor hav-
ing a first node, a center-tap switchlessly coupled to a fixed
voltage, and a second node. The balun receives a single-ended
signal through the first node to produce a differential signal at
the first and second nodes. The differential signal is provided
to balanced input lines of the receiver amplifier. Balanced
output lines of the power amplifier provide a differential signal
to the first and second nodes. The balun converts the
differential signal to a single-ended signal. The single-ended
signal is available at the first node of the center-tapped induc-
tor. The selector circuit activates the receiver amplifier and
deactivates the power amplifier, and vice versa. The power
amplifier may comprise only a single-ended output line con-
nected to either the first or the second node.

37 Claims, 8 Drawing Sheets



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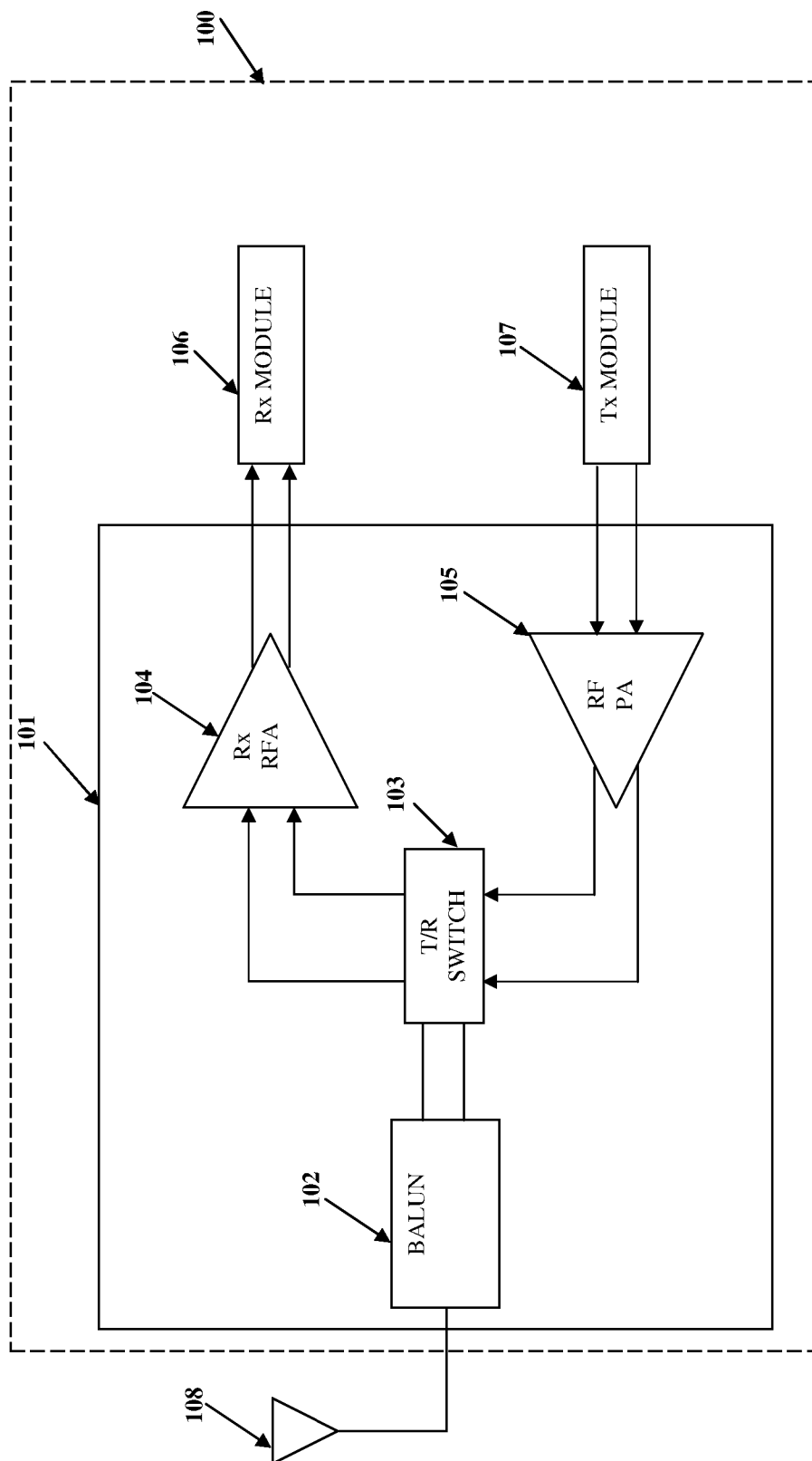


FIG. 1

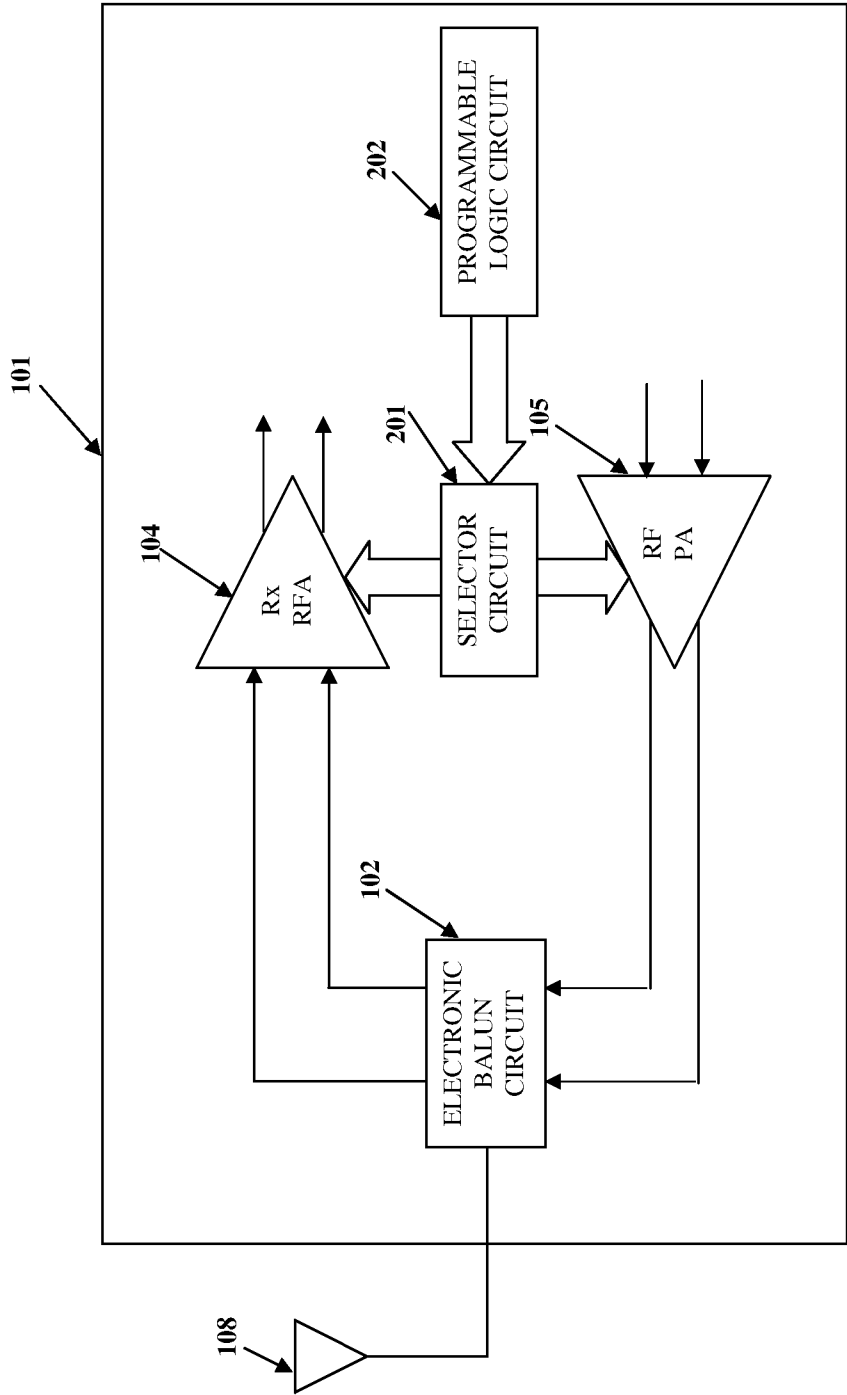


FIG. 2

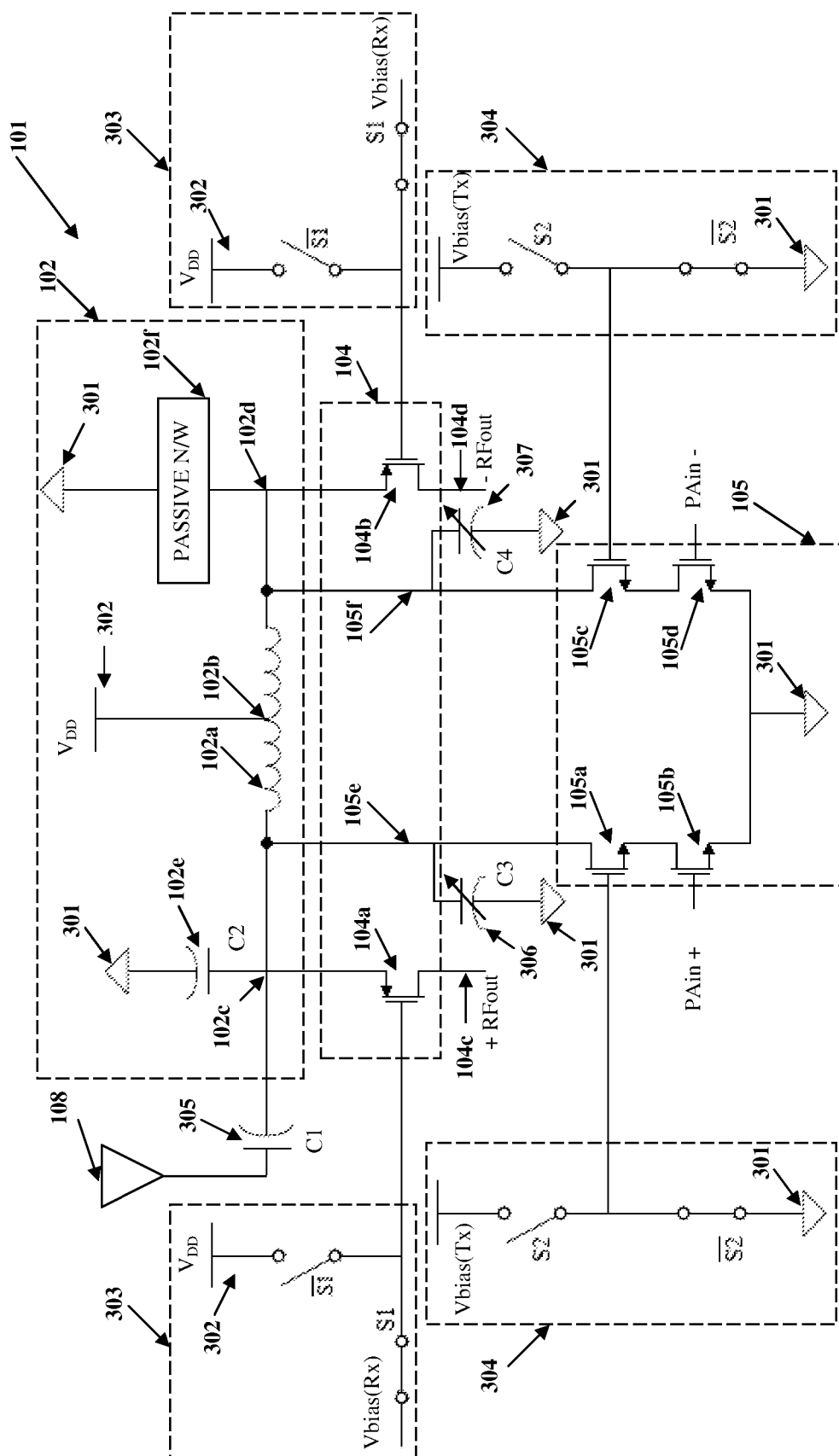


FIG. 3A

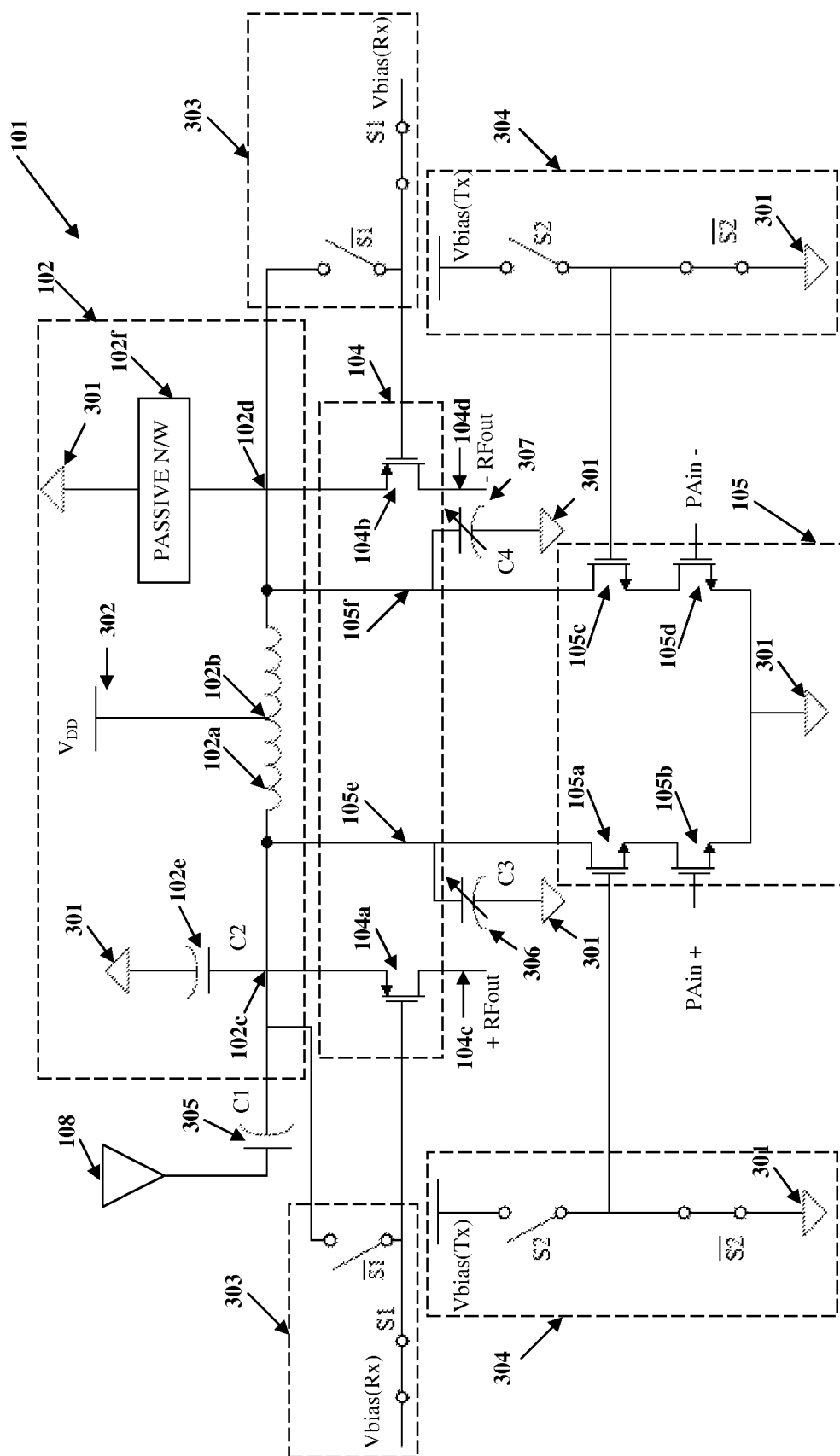


FIG. 3B

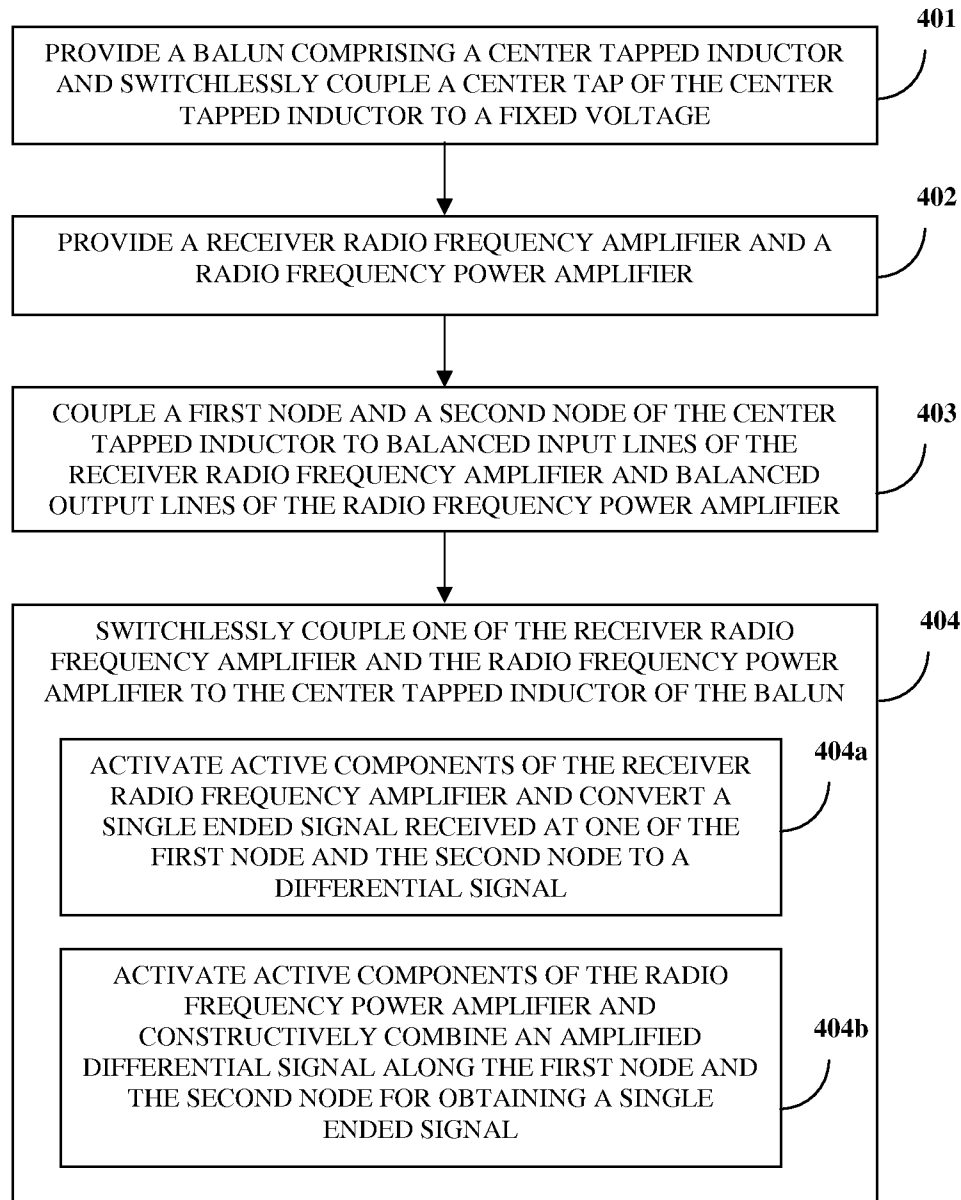


FIG. 4

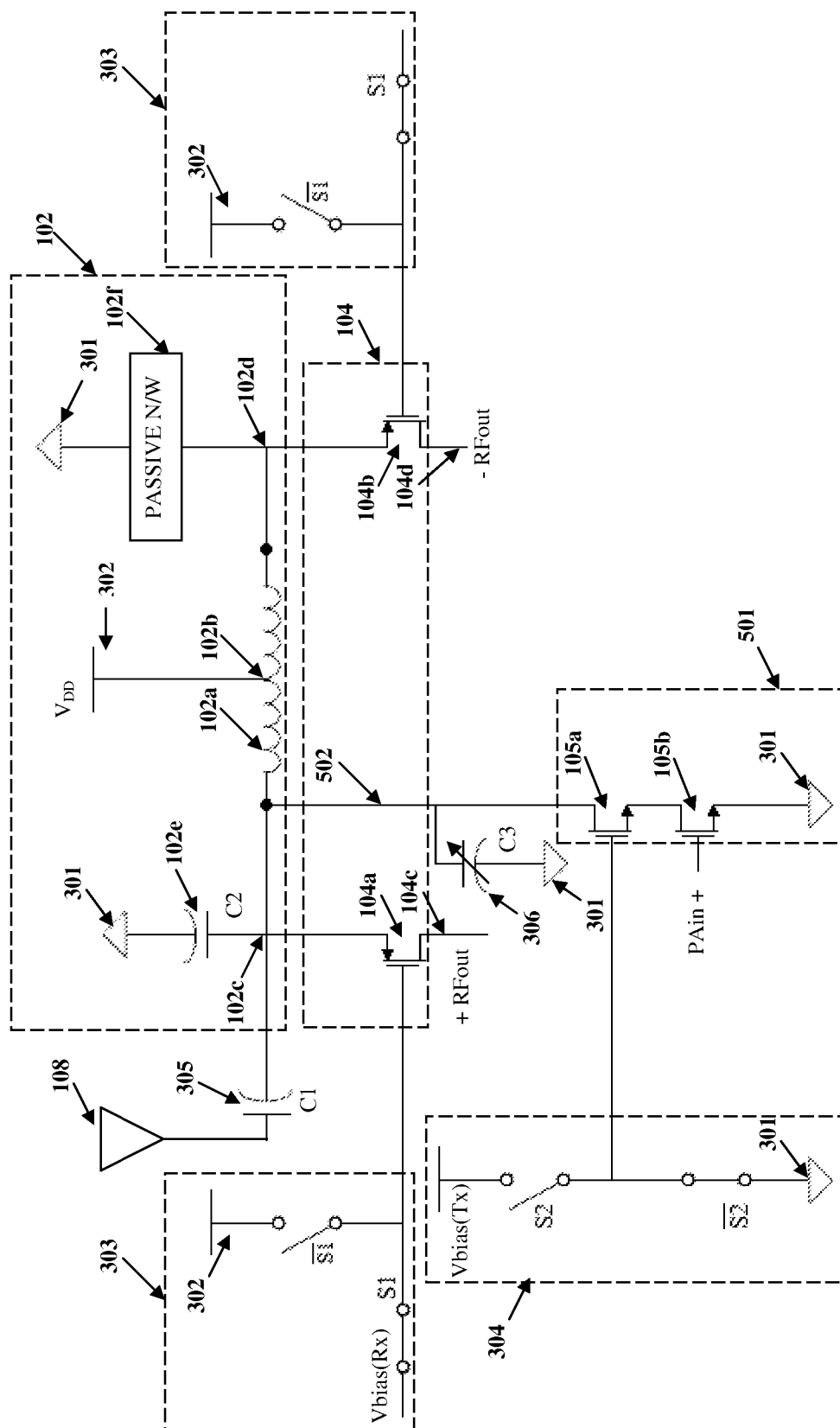


FIG. 5A

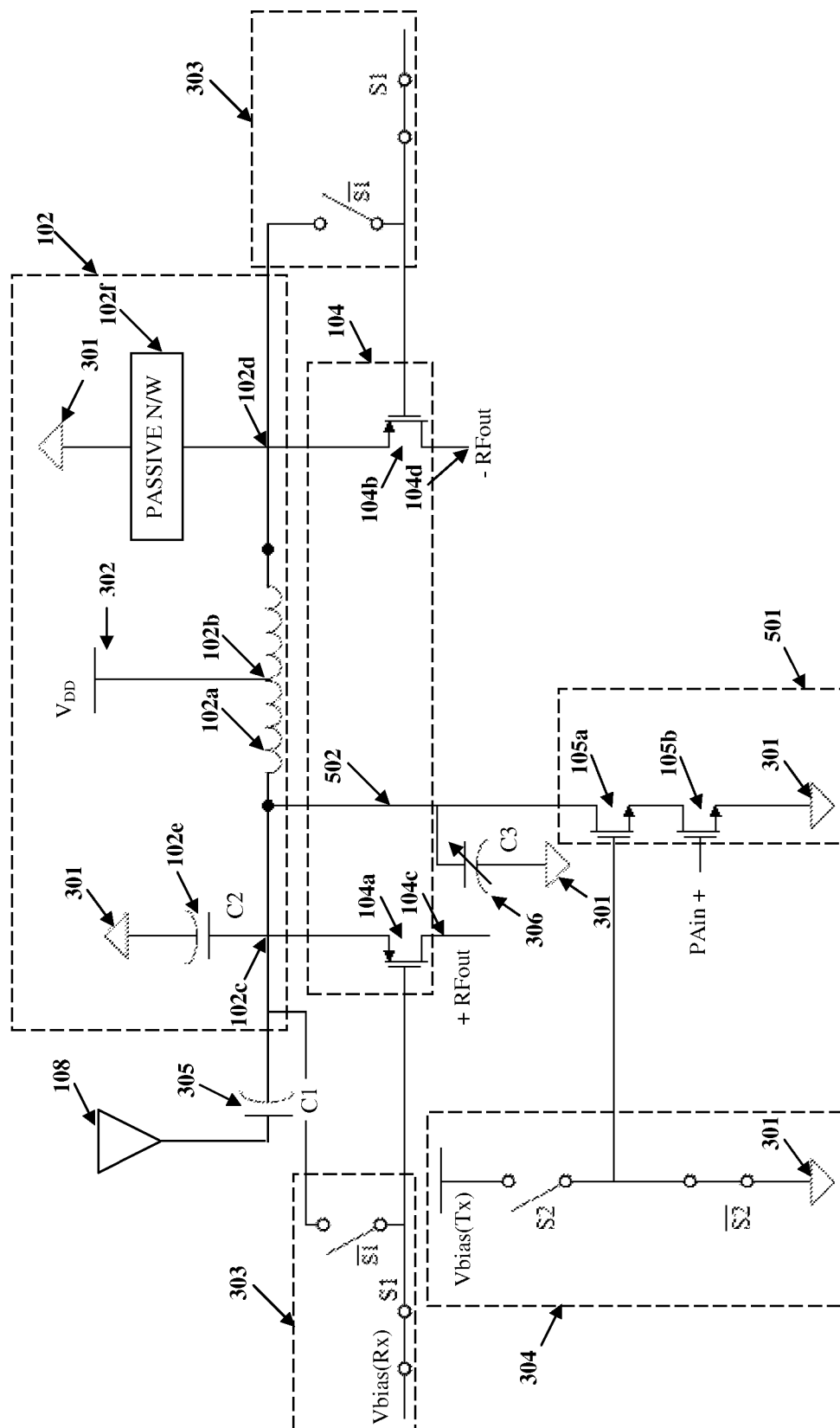


FIG. 5B

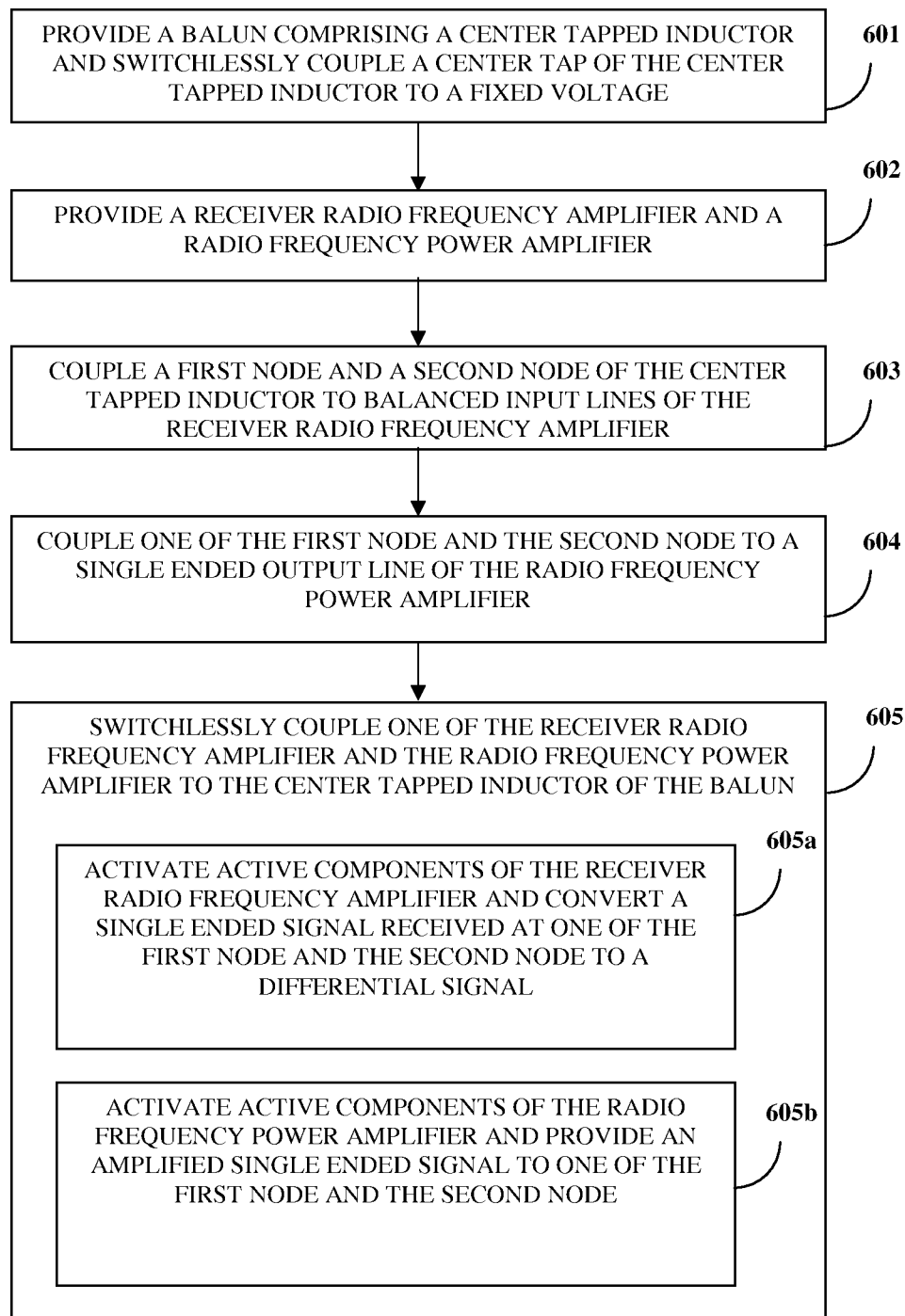


FIG. 6

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INTEGRATED RADIO FREQUENCY FRONT-END CIRCUIT

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

This application claims the benefit of non-provisional patent application number 1752/CHE/2010 titled "Integrated Radio Frequency Front-End Circuit", filed on Jun. 23, 2010 in the Indian Patent Office.

The specification of the above referenced patent application is incorporated herein by reference in its entirety.

BACKGROUND

Short range wireless systems utilizing radio frequency (RF) integrated circuits use time division multiplexing for transmitting and receiving signals. The transmitted signals and the received signals use the same frequency band. However, the transmitting (Tx) and receiving (Rx) paths often use differential signaling after a certain stage for increasing performance. The short range wireless systems use a single antenna for both transmission (Tx) and reception (Rx) of signals by utilizing a transmit and receive (T/R) switch. The transmit and receive (T/R) switch toggles the antenna between transmission (Tx) and reception (Rx). The transmit and receive (T/R) switch needs high linearity at high signal swing. A block diagram of a conventional radio frequency (RF) front-end with a transmit and receive (T/R) switch is shown in FIG. 1. For each communication band, the transmit and receive (T/R) switch couples an antenna and a balun either to a low noise amplifier (LNA) of a receiver or to a power amplifier (PA) of a transmitter.

Differential implementation of radio frequency front-ends and analog circuit sections is a critical need, particularly in system-on-a-chip (SOC) scenarios which are characterized by noisy environment and different package requirements. Input lines of the receiver low noise amplifier (LNA) and output lines of the transmitter power amplifier (PA) can either be combined on-chip with common pins brought out for antenna connection or separate pins brought out and combined externally for further connection to an antenna. Conventionally, both these methods are complex and require many internal or external components. These methods often involve having the transmit and receive (T/R) switch disconnect a transmitter (Tx) during a receiver (Rx) operation and vice versa. The transmit and receive (T/R) switch losses directly affect the receiver (Rx) sensitivity and transmitter (Tx) output power delivery. Transmit and receive (T/R) operation can also be implemented using on-chip transformer component. However the on-chip radio frequency (RF) transformer component is not available in many foundries. Furthermore, the on-chip radio frequency (RF) transformer component is not well characterized and induces several signal losses upon implementation.

It would be desirable if the entire radio frequency (RF) front-end could be integrated with the baseband and radio or portions eliminated and the remainder be fully integrated for short range wireless, cellular and other communications.

Hence there is a long felt but unresolved need for a compact radio frequency (RF) front-end with reduced chip area (real estate), reduced energy dissipation, reduced signal loss, reduced switching loss, and reduced cost of manufacture while providing a variety of circuit and system products.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

This summary is provided to introduce a selection of concepts in a simplified form that are further described in the

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detailed description of the invention. This summary is not intended to identify key or essential inventive concepts of the claimed subject matter, nor is it intended for determining the scope of the claimed subject.

5 The integrated radio frequency (RF) front-end circuit disclosed herein addresses the above stated need for a compact radio frequency (RF) front-end with reduced chip area (real estate), reduced energy dissipation, reduced signal loss, reduced switching loss, and reduced cost of manufacture.

10 The radio frequency (RF) front-end circuit disclosed herein comprises a) a balun comprising a center-tapped inductor having a first node, a center-tap switchlessly coupled to a fixed voltage, and a second node, wherein the balun receives a single-ended signal through the first node of the center-tapped inductor and converts the single-ended signal to a differential signal, wherein the balun receives the differential signal through the first node and the second node and converts the differential signal to the single-ended signal, and wherein the differential signal is available at the first node and the second node, and the single-ended signal is available at the first node; b) a receiver radio frequency amplifier (Rx RFA) having balanced input lines connected to the first node and the second node for reception and amplification of the differential signal, wherein the receiver radio frequency amplifier (Rx RFA) comprises one or more first active components; c) a radio frequency power amplifier (RFPA) having balanced output lines connected to the first node and the second node for providing an amplified differential signal to the balun, wherein the radio frequency power amplifier (RFPA) comprises one or more second active components; and d) a selector circuit in communication with the receiver radio frequency amplifier (Rx RFA) and the radio frequency power amplifier (RFPA) for activating the active components of the receiver radio frequency amplifier (Rx RFA) and deactivating the active components of the radio frequency power amplifier (RFPA) during the conversion of the single-ended signal to the differential signal, and vice versa during the conversion of the differential signal to the single-ended signal; whereby the balun is switchlessly and selectively coupled to the receiver radio frequency amplifier (Rx RFA) during the conversion of the single-ended signal to the differential signal and the radio frequency power amplifier (RFPA) during the conversion of the differential signal to the single-ended signal.

45 The fixed voltage to which the center-tap is switchlessly coupled to is either a supply ground or a supply voltage.

Active components of the receiver radio frequency amplifier (Rx RFA) and the radio frequency power amplifier (RFPA) are selectively activated and deactivated to separately utilize the same center-tapped inductor balun and other passive components, thereby rendering a compact radio frequency (RF) front-end. The active components of the receiver radio frequency amplifier (Rx RFA) and the radio frequency power amplifier (RFPA) comprise one or more transistors. The selector circuit switches on the transistors of the receiver radio frequency amplifier (Rx RFA) during conversion of the single-ended signal to a differential signal and switches on the transistors of the radio frequency power amplifier (RFPA) during conversion of the differential signal to a single-ended signal.

60 The radio frequency (RF) front-end circuit further comprises an antenna coupled to either the first node or the second node of the center-tapped inductor. The impedance of the antenna approximately matches the input impedance of the receiver radio frequency amplifier (Rx RFA) and also approximately matches the output impedance of the radio frequency power amplifier (RFPA). If, for example, the

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impedance of the antenna is R_{in} , a receiver radio frequency amplifier (Rx RFA) with balanced input lines, each having an impedance of $2R_{in}$ is selected. Similarly, for example, if the impedance of the antenna is R_L , a radio frequency power amplifier (RFPA) with balanced output lines, each having an impedance of $2R_L$ is selected.

The radio frequency (RF) front-end circuit further comprises a programmable logic circuit for programming the selector circuit for activating the active components of the receiver radio frequency amplifier (Rx RFA) and deactivating the active components of the radio frequency power amplifier (RFPA) during the conversion of a single-ended signal to a differential signal, and vice versa during the conversion of a differential signal to a single-ended signal.

In an embodiment, a radio frequency power amplifier (RFPA) having a single-ended output line is used to construct a radio frequency (RF) front-end circuit.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The foregoing summary, as well as the following detailed description of the invention, is better understood when read in conjunction with the appended drawings. For the purpose of illustrating the invention, exemplary constructions of the invention are shown in the drawings. However, the invention is not limited to the specific methods and instrumentalities disclosed herein.

FIG. 1 illustrates a block diagram of a front-end of a radio frequency transceiver having a transmit and receive switch.

FIG. 2 illustrates a block diagram of a radio frequency front-end of this embodiment.

FIG. 3A illustrates a schematic diagram of a radio frequency front-end circuit of this embodiment.

FIG. 3B illustrates another embodiment of the radio frequency front-end circuit illustrated in FIG. 3A.

FIG. 4 illustrates a method of alternately accessing a balun in a radio frequency front-end circuit.

FIG. 5A illustrates a schematic diagram of the radio frequency front-end circuit comprising a single-ended radio frequency power amplifier.

FIG. 5B illustrates another embodiment of the radio frequency front-end circuit illustrated in FIG. 5A.

FIG. 6 illustrates a method of alternately accessing a balun in a radio frequency front-end circuit comprising a single-ended radio frequency power amplifier.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

FIG. 1 illustrates a block diagram of a front-end 101 of a radio frequency (RF) transceiver 100 having a transmit and receive (T/R) switch 103. The radio frequency (RF) transceiver 100 is used to implement two-way radio communication devices. The radio frequency (RF) transceiver 100 comprises an antenna 108, a balun (balanced/unbalanced) 102, the transmit and receive (T/R) switch 103, a receiver radio frequency amplifier (Rx RFA) 104, a radio frequency power amplifier (RFPA) 105, a receiver (Rx) module 106, and a transmitter (Tx) module 107. The balun 102, the transmit and receive (T/R) switch 103, the receiver radio frequency amplifier (Rx RFA) 104, and the radio frequency power amplifier (RFPA) 105 form the radio frequency (RF) front-end 101, where the receiver radio frequency amplifier (Rx RFA) 104 is for example, a low noise amplifier (LNA). The antenna 108 receives an incoming single-ended radio frequency (RF) signal and transmits an outgoing single-ended radio frequency (RF) signal. The single-ended radio frequency (RF) signal is herein referred to as a single-ended signal.

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A single-ended signal is used in single-ended signaling. Single-ended signaling is a method of transmitting signals over wires. One wire carries a varying voltage that represents the single-ended signal, while the other wire is connected to a reference voltage which is usually ground.

A balun 102 is an electronic circuit, generally used to convert a single-ended signal to a differential signal and conversely, to convert a differential signal to a single-ended signal. Therefore, a single-ended signal may, for example, be received from sources other than the antenna 108, as illustrated in FIG. 1. For example, the radio frequency (RF) front-end 101 may be an intermediate circuit that receives a single-ended signal from a single-ended radio frequency (RF) source and converts the received single-ended signal to a differential signal. Conversely, the radio frequency (RF) front-end 101 may also receive a differential signal from a differential signal source and convert the differential signal to a single-ended signal. After the conversion, the differential signal and the single-ended signal may for example, be used by one or more adjoining electronic circuits.

A differential signal comprises two complementary components sent on two separate wires. In the radio frequency (RF) transceiver 100, a single-ended signal, for example, an incoming single-ended signal from the antenna 108 is converted to a differential signal by the balun 102. The differential signal from the balun 102 is provided to the receiver radio frequency amplifier (Rx RFA) 104 for amplification. The amplified differential signal from the receiver radio frequency amplifier (Rx RFA) 104 is then provided to the receiver (Rx) module 106. Conversely, the radio frequency power amplifier (RFPA) 105 receives a differential signal from the transmitter (Tx) module 107 for amplification. The differential signal is amplified by the radio frequency power amplifier (RFPA) 105. The balun 102 converts the amplified differential signal to a single-ended signal. The single-ended signal is provided to the antenna 108 for transmission.

The transmit and receive (T/R) switch 103 allows utilization of the balun 102 and the antenna 108 by the receiver (Rx) module 106 and the transmitter (Tx) module 107, at different time instances. During a receiving mode, the transmit and receive (T/R) switch 103 routes an incoming differential signal from the balun 102 to the receiver radio frequency amplifier (Rx RFA) 104 and maintains an open circuit for an outgoing differential signal from the radio frequency power amplifier (RFPA) 105 to the balun 102. Conversely, during a transmitting mode, the transmit and receive (T/R) switch 103 routes the outgoing differential signal from the radio frequency power amplifier (RFPA) 105 to the balun 102 and maintains an open circuit for an incoming single-ended signal.

FIG. 2 illustrates a block diagram of a radio frequency (RF) front-end 101 of this embodiment. The radio frequency (RF) front-end 101 of FIG. 2 is similar to the radio frequency (RF) front-end 101 of FIG. 1, except for the elimination of the transmit and receive (T/R) switch 103. The radio frequency (RF) front-end 101 comprises a selector circuit 201 for alternately selecting the receiver radio frequency amplifier (Rx RFA) 104 during reception of a single-ended signal and the radio frequency power amplifier (RFPA) 105 during transmission of a single-ended signal.

FIG. 3A illustrates a schematic diagram of a radio frequency (RF) front-end circuit 101 of this embodiment. The radio frequency (RF) front-end circuit 101 comprises a balun 102, a receiver radio frequency amplifier (Rx RFA) 104, and a radio frequency power amplifier (RFPA) 105. The balun 102 comprises a center-tapped inductor 102a having a first node

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102c, a center-tap **102b** switchlessly coupled to a fixed voltage source **302**, and a second node **102d**. The radio frequency (RF) front-end circuit **101** illustrated in FIG. 3A is exemplarily implemented using a p-type metal oxide semiconductor field effect transistor (p-MoSFET) based Rx RFA **104** and an n-type metal oxide semiconductor field effect transistor (n-MoSFET) based radio frequency power amplifier (RPFA) **105**. For the above configuration and as illustrated in FIG. 3A, a supply voltage V_{DD} **302** is given as the fixed voltage source **302**. A supply ground **301** for example, is also considered a fixed voltage source **302**. The supply ground is herein also referred to as a signal ground. The balun **102** receives a single-ended signal through the first node **102c** of the center-tapped inductor **102a** and converts the single-ended signal to a differential signal. The differential signal is available at the first node **102c** and the second node **102d** of the center-tapped inductor **102a**.

The radio frequency (RF) front-end circuit **101** of FIG. 3A can be readily converted to another embodiment comprising, an n-MoSFET based receiver radio frequency power amplifier (Rx RFA) **104** and a p-MoSFET based radio frequency power amplifier (RPFA) **105**, with the center-tap **102b** of the center-tapped inductor **102a** connected to a supply ground **301**.

Most radio frequency (RF) signal transmissions are single-ended and conversion from a single-ended signal to a differential signal is performed during reception of the single-ended signal. The center-tapped inductor **102a** of the balun **102** converts the single-ended signal to a differential signal. For example, a single-ended signal received at the first node **102c**, creates a strong mutual coupling among windings of the center-tapped inductor **102a** located between the first node **102c** and the center-tap **102b**, and the second node **102d** and the center-tap **102b**. The single-ended signal received at the first node **102c** traverses the windings between the first node **102c** and the center-tap **102b** of the balun **102**, inducing a complementary single-ended signal in the windings between the second node **102d** and the center-tap **102b**. The complementary single-ended signal is nominally opposite in phase to the single-ended signal. Due to mutual coupling, the sum of AC voltage due to the single-ended signal at the first node **102c** and AC voltage due to the complementary single-ended signal at the second node **102d** of the center-tapped inductor **102a** become nominally equal to the voltage at the center-tap **102b**. By coupling the center-tap **102b** to the fixed voltage source V_{DD} **302** or the signal ground **301** and applying the single-ended signal at the first node **102c**, a voltage is generated at the second node **102d** which is nominally opposite in phase to the single-ended signal at the first node **102c**. However, the voltage generated at the second node **102d** may be equal in magnitude to the single-ended signal at the first node **102c**. Accordingly, the differential electronic signal is generated at the first node **102c** and second node **102d**, where one component of the differential signal is obtained at the first node **102c** and another component of the differential signal is obtained at the second node **102d**.

Further, the first node **102c** and the second node **102d** receive the differential signal, and the balun **102** converts the differential signal to a single-ended signal. The complementary components of the differential signal constructively add up after conversion by the balun **102**, to provide a single-ended signal. For example, consider the two complementary signals as current signals. A first of the two complementary current signals of the differential signal may be represented as I_{rfp} (not shown) and a second of the two complementary current signals of the differential signal may be represented as I_{rfn} (not shown).

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The center-tap inductor **102a** induces a complementary signal of I_{rfn} , represented as I_{xx} (not shown) at windings between the first node **102c** and the center-tap **102b**. The complementary signal of I_{rfn} is nominally equal in magnitude and opposite in phase to I_{rfn} . Accordingly, I_{rfp} and the complementary signal of I_{rfn} at the windings between the first node **102c** and the center-tap **102b** constructively add up to produce a single-ended signal which is available at the first node **102c** of the center-tapped inductor **102a**.

The receiver radio frequency amplifier (Rx RFA) **104** comprises balanced input lines **104c** and **104d** connected to the first node **102c** and the second node **102d** of the center-tapped inductor **102a**. Balanced input lines **104c** and **104d** of the receiver radio frequency amplifier (Rx RFA) **104** imply that each of the input lines **104c** and **104d** of the receiver radio frequency amplifier (Rx RFA) **104** provide equal input impedances. For an antenna having an impedance of R_{in} , impedance match may be achieved between the antenna **108** and the first node **102c** by selecting a receiver radio frequency amplifier (Rx RFA) **104** having balanced input lines **104c** and **104d**, each providing an input impedance of $2R_{in}$ at the first node **102c**. Therefore, a single-ended signal incoming from the antenna **108** at the first node **102c** will face an input impedance R_{in} , equal to effective impedance of the input impedances of balanced input lines **104c** and **104d**, due to parallel configuration of the balanced input lines **104c** and **104d**, as illustrated in FIGS. 3A and 3B. In an embodiment, each balanced input lines **104c** and **104d** is coupled to an impedance source having a nominal impedance value $2R_{in}$.

The receiver radio frequency amplifier (Rx RFA) **104** receives the differential signal from the balun **102** through the balanced input lines **104c** and **104d** and amplifies the differential signal. In an embodiment, the receiver radio frequency amplifier (Rx RFA) **104** is for example, a low noise amplifier (LNA) for amplifying radio frequency (RF) signals. Further, the receiver radio frequency amplifier (Rx RFA) **104** comprises active components such as transistors, resistors, capacitors, etc. The transistors in the receiver radio frequency amplifier (Rx RFA) **104** amplify the radio frequency (RF) signals, and the resistors and capacitors tune the receiver radio frequency amplifier (Rx RFA) **104** to an appropriate operating frequency.

The radio frequency power amplifier (RPFA) **105** comprises balanced output lines **105e** and **105f** connected to the first node **102c** and the second node **102d** of the center-tapped inductor **102a**. Balanced output lines **105e** and **105f** of the radio frequency power amplifier (RPFA) **105** imply that the output lines **105e** and **105f** of the radio frequency power amplifier (RPFA) **105** have equal output impedances. Each of the balanced output lines **105e** and **105f** carries one of two complementary current signals of the differential signal from the radio frequency power amplifier (RPFA) **105** to the first node **102c** and the second node **102d**, respectively. The radio frequency power amplifier (RPFA) **105** amplifies the differential signal received from for example, the transmitter (Tx) module **107** and provides the amplified differential signal to the balun **102** through the balanced output lines **105e** and **105f**. The balun **102** converts the differential signal to a single-ended signal which is then provided to the antenna **108** for transmission. For an outgoing single-ended signal at first node **102c**, impedance match between the antenna **108** and the radio frequency (RF) front-end circuit **101** is achieved at the first node **102c** by selecting a radio frequency power amplifier (RPFA) **105** having effective impedance at node **102c** equal to antenna **108** impedance R_L . For example, if the output impedance of each of the balanced output lines **105e** and **105f** is configured as $2R_L$, the single-ended signal leaving

the first node **102c** will face an effective impedance of R_L due to effective parallel configuration of the balanced output lines **105e** and **105f**. Therefore, impedance match is achieved between the antenna **108** and the first node **102c**.

The radio frequency power amplifier (RFPA) **105** comprises one or more active components such as transistors, resistors, capacitors, etc. The transistors **104a** and **104b** amplify the differential signal received from the transmitter (Tx) module **107** and the resistors and capacitors tune the radio frequency power amplifier (RFPA) **105** to an appropriate operating frequency.

The selector circuit **201** is in communication with receiver radio frequency amplifier (Rx RFA) **104** and radio frequency power amplifier (RFPA) **105** for activating the active components of the receiver radio frequency amplifier (Rx RFA) **104** and deactivating the active components of the radio frequency power amplifier (RFPA) **105** during conversion of a single-ended signal to a differential signal. The selector circuit **201** also activates the active components of the radio frequency power amplifier (RFPA) **105** and deactivates the active components of the receiver radio frequency amplifier (Rx RFA) **104** during conversion of a differential signal to a single-ended signal.

The radio frequency (RF) transceiver **100** for example, comprises a programmable logic circuit **202** for programming the selector circuit **201** to activate or deactivate the transistors **104a** and **104b** of the receiver radio frequency amplifier (Rx RFA) by switching on or switching off the transistors **104a** and **104b**. The programmable logic circuit **202** also programs the selector circuit **201** to activate or deactivate the transistors **105a** and **105c** of the radio frequency power amplifier (RFPA) **105** by switching on or switching off the transistors **105a** and **105c**. The selector circuit **201** utilizes switch S1 **303** to switch on or switch off the transistors **104a** and **104c** of the receiver radio frequency amplifier (Rx RFA) **104** and switch S2 **304** to switch on or switch off the transistors **105a** and **105c** of the radio frequency power amplifier (RFPA) **105**. Thus, the balun **102** is switchlessly and selectively coupled to the receiver radio frequency amplifier (Rx RFA) **104** during conversion of the single-ended signal to a differential signal and the radio frequency power amplifier (RFPA) **105** during the conversion of the differential signal to the single-ended signal.

A passive network **102f** couples the second node **102d** to the signal ground **301** and matches the amplitudes of the complementary components of the differential signal generated at the first node **102c** and the second node **102d**. The passive network **102f** may comprise a combination of passive components comprising one or more resistors, capacitors, and inductors.

As explained above, the active components of the receiver radio frequency amplifier (Rx RFA) **104** and radio frequency power amplifier (RFPA) **105** comprise transistors **104a** and **104b**, and **105a-105d**. The receiver radio frequency amplifier (Rx RFA) **104** and radio frequency power amplifier (RFPA) **105** may be realized using transistors such as bipolar junction transistors (BJTs), field effect transistors (FETs) such as metal oxide semiconductor field effect transistors (MoSFETs), metal semiconductor field effect transistors (MeSFETs), metal insulator field effect transistors (MISFETs), etc. Flow of current between the source terminal and the drain terminal is based on bias voltage applied at the gate terminal. Similarly, a bipolar junction transistor (BJT) comprises an emitter terminal, a base terminal, and a collector terminal. Flow of current between the emitter terminal and the collector terminal is based on the sign and magnitude of the voltage applied at the base terminal.

In an embodiment, receiver radio frequency amplifier (Rx RFA) **104** is realized using two p-type metal oxide semiconductor field effect transistors (p-MoSFETs) **104a** and **104b**, and the radio frequency power amplifier (RFPA) **105** is realized using four n-type metal oxide semiconductor field effect transistors (n-MoSFETs) **105a-105d**. In this embodiment, during conversion of an incoming single-ended signal to a differential signal, the p-MoSFETs **104a** and **104b** of the receiver radio frequency amplifier (Rx RFA) **104** are switched on and the n-MoSFETs **105a** and **105c** of the radio frequency power amplifier (RFPA) **105** are switched off. This facilitates amplification of the differential signal received from the balun **102** by the receiver radio frequency amplifier (Rx RFA) **104**. Furthermore, the n-MoSFETs **105a** and **105c** of the radio frequency power amplifier (RFPA) **105** are switched on while the p-MoSFETs **104a** and **104b** of the receiver radio frequency amplifier (Rx RFA) **104** are switched off. The radio frequency power amplifier (RFPA) **105** provides an amplified differential signal to the balun **102**. The balun **102** converts the amplified differential signal to a single-ended signal.

Conversion of an incoming single-ended signal to a differential signal is considered as a receiving mode of the radio frequency (RF) front-end circuit **101** operation. In the receiving mode, the balun **102** converts the incoming single-ended signal to a differential signal. The differential signal is provided to the receiver radio frequency amplifier (Rx RFA) **104** for amplification. Similarly, conversion of an amplified differential signal to a single-ended signal is considered as a transmitting mode of the radio frequency (RF) front-end circuit **101** operation. In the transmitting mode, the balun **102** converts the amplified differential signal provided by the radio frequency power amplifier (RFPA) **105** to a single-ended signal. The single-ended signal is provided to an antenna **108** for transmission.

In this embodiment, the radio frequency (RF) front-end circuit **101** may be used to convert an incoming single-ended signal to a differential signal by programming the selector circuit **201** to switch on the p-MoSFETs **104a** and **104b** of the receiver radio frequency amplifier (Rx RFA) **104** using the switch S1 **303** and switch off the n-MoSFETs **105a** and **105c** of the radio frequency power amplifier (RFPA) **105** using the switch S2 **304**. The selector circuit **201** sends control signals to switch S1 **303** and switch S2 **304**. In response, switch S1 **303** switches on the p-MoSFETs **104a** and **104b** by connecting the gate terminals of the p-MoSFETs **104a** and **104b** to a bias voltage $V_{bias}(Rx)$ that is at least lesser than voltage at the source terminals by a threshold voltage $V_{TH}(p-MoSFET)$. Furthermore, amplification of the differential signal may also be controlled by controlling the voltage difference between the gate terminal and the source terminal. The switch S2 **304** switches off the n-MoSFETs **105a** and **105c** of the radio frequency power amplifier (RFPA) **105** by grounding the gate terminals. The drain terminals of the p-MoSFETs **104a** and **104b** of the receiver radio frequency amplifier (Rx RFA) **104** provide the amplified components of the differential signal +RFout and -RFout. The amplified components of the differential signal +RFout and -RFout are provided to the receiver (Rx) module **106** for further processing. FIG. 3A exemplarily illustrates the operation of the radio frequency (RF) front-end circuit **101** in the receiving mode.

For amplifying a differential signal during transmitting mode, the selector circuit **201** may be programmed to switch off the p-MoSFETs **104a** and **104b** of the receiver radio frequency amplifier (Rx RFA) **104** using the switch S1 **303** and switch on the n-MoSFETs **105a** and **105c** of the radio frequency power amplifier (RFPA) **105** using the switch S2

304. The selector circuit **201** sends control signals to switch S1 **303** and switch S2 **304**. In response, switch S1 **303** switches off the p-MoSFETs **104a** and **104b** by connecting the gate terminals of the p-MoSFETs **104a** and **104b** to supply voltage V_{DD} **302**. The p-MoSFETs **104a** and **104b** may effectively be switched off by providing a fixed supply voltage V_{DD} **302**, greater than the voltage at source terminals of the p-MoSFETs **104a** and **104b**. The p-MoSFETs **104a** and **104b** may also be effectively switched off using switch S1 **303** by connecting the gate terminals of the p-MoSFETs **104a** and **104b** to the source voltages of the p-MoSFETs **104a** and **104b** at nodes **102c** and **102d**, as illustrated in FIG. 3B. This connection establishes an equal voltage at the source terminals and the gate terminals of the p-MoSFETs **104a** and **104b**. Choice of voltage at the gate terminals of the p-MoSFETs **104a** and **104b** is based on a specific performance requirement.

Also in response to the selector circuit **201**, the switch S2 **304** connects the gate terminals of the n-MoSFETs **105a** and **105b** to a bias voltage $V_{bias}(Tx)$ greater than a threshold voltage $V_{TH}(n-MoSFET)$ for effectively switching on the n-MoSFETs **105a** and **105c** of the radio frequency power amplifier (RFPA) **105**. In one example, the threshold voltage $V_{TH}(Tx)$ is 0.5V and the n-MoSFETs **105a** and **105c** of the radio frequency power amplifier (RFPA) **105** are switched on by providing a bias voltage $V_{bias}(Tx)$ greater than 0.5V. Differential signal components P_{Ain+} and P_{Ain-} received from the Tx module **107** are amplified by the n-MoSFETs **105b** and **105d** of the radio frequency power amplifier (RFPA) **105**. The two complementary current signals of the differential signal, I_{rfp} and I_{rfn} are then provided to the balun **102** for converting the two complementary current signals of the differential signal to a single-ended signal having an amplitude which is nominally equal to $2 \cdot I_{rfp}$.

As explained above, the radio frequency (RF) front-end circuit **101** also comprises a programmable logic circuit **202**. The programmable logic circuit **202** programs the selector circuit **201** for activating the active components of the receiver radio frequency amplifier (Rx RFA) **104** and deactivating the active components of the radio frequency power amplifier (RFPA) **105** during conversion of a single-ended signal to a differential signal, and vice versa during conversion of a differential signal to a single-ended signal.

In the above embodiment, the transmit and receive (T/R) switch **103** illustrated in FIG. 1 is implicitly implemented using the p-MoSFETs **104a** and **104b** of the receiver radio frequency amplifier (Rx RFA) **104**, and the n-MoSFETs **105a** and **105c** of the radio frequency power amplifier (RFPA) **105**. Accordingly, the transmit and receive (T/R) switch **103** does not intrude the path of the differential signal provided by the balun **102** to the receiver radio frequency amplifier (Rx RFA) **104** or the path of the differential signal provided to the balun **102** by the radio frequency power amplifier (RFPA) **105**. Since there is no explicit switch between the balun **102** and the receiver radio frequency amplifier (Rx RFA) **104** and between the balun **102** and the radio frequency power amplifier (RFPA) **105**, there is no switching loss commonly associated with a radio frequency (RF) front-end **101** having an explicit switch between the transmit and receive signal paths. Furthermore, there is no loss in receiver sensitivity and transmitter sensitivity due to the absence of an explicit switch in the receiver and transmitter signal paths.

Capacitor C1 **305** connected between the antenna **108** and the first node **102c** is a decoupling capacitor **305**. The decoupling capacitor C1 **305** blocks direct current (DC) components incoming from the antenna **108**. Furthermore, the decoupling capacitor C1 is variable to set an appropriate

capacitance value to cope with any variation of power of the radio frequency (RF) signal incoming from the antenna **108**. Capacitor C2 **102e** coupling the first node **102c** to the signal ground **301** represents an effective capacitance **102e** at the first node **102c**. The effective capacitance **102e** at the first node **102c** is a combination of an explicit capacitor used to tune the balun **102** at the operating frequency and parasitic capacitance at the first node **102c**. Furthermore, programmable capacitors C3 **306** and C4 **307** coupled to the signal ground may, for example, be used to remove parasitic capacitance difference present between the first node **102c** and the second node **102d** of the center-tapped inductor **102a** during receiving and transmitting modes.

The center-tap **102b** of center-tap inductor **102a** is switchlessly connected to a fixed voltage source V_{DD} **302**. Connecting the center-tap **102b** to the fixed voltage source V_{DD} **302** precludes the need for switching to different potentials during the receiving mode and the transmitting mode. If a switch (not shown) is utilized to connect the center-tap **102b** to different potentials, the switch carries a significant amount of supply current. This is particularly true in case of the radio frequency power amplifier (RFPA) **105**. The resistance of the switch and parasitic capacitance introduced by the switch is a critical factor that affects the performance of the radio frequency (RF) front-end circuit **101**. Therefore, performance of the radio frequency (RF) front-end circuit **101** may be enhanced by avoiding a switch in center-tap **102b**.

In another embodiment, impedance matching is achieved between the antenna **108** and the receiver radio frequency amplifier (Rx RFA) **104** for transferring the single-ended signal from the antenna **108** to the balun **102** without considerable loss in power of the single-ended signal. The receiver radio frequency amplifier (Rx RFA) **104** for example, provides input impedance equal to impedance of the antenna **108** at the first node **102c**. Similarly, impedance matching is also achieved between the antenna **108** and the radio frequency power amplifier (RFPA) **105** for transferring the single-ended electronic signal from the balun **102** to the antenna **108**, wherein an amplified differential signal provided by the radio frequency power amplifier (RFPA) **105** is converted to a single-ended signal by the balun **108**.

FIG. 4 illustrates a method of selectively accessing a balun **102** in a radio frequency (RF) front-end circuit **101**. First, a balun **102** comprising a center-tapped inductor **102a** is provided **401**. The center-tap **102b** of the center-tapped inductor **102a** is switchlessly coupled to a fixed voltage. The balun **102** for example, is as illustrated in FIGS. 3A and 3B. The fixed voltage is for example a supply voltage V_{DD} **302**, illustrated in FIGS. 3A, 3B, 5A, and 5B. A receiver radio frequency amplifier (Rx RFA) **104** and a radio frequency power amplifier (RFPA) **105** are provided **402**. The receiver radio frequency amplifier (Rx RFA) **104** and the radio frequency power amplifier (RFPA) **105** comprise active components. A first terminal **102c** and a second terminal **102d** of the center-tapped inductor **102a** are coupled **403** to balanced input lines **104c** and **104d** of the receiver radio frequency amplifier (Rx RFA) **104** and balanced output lines **105e** and **105f** of the radio frequency power amplifier (RFPA) **105** respectively. The active components of the receiver radio frequency amplifier (Rx RFA) **104** and the active components of the radio frequency power amplifier (RFPA) **105** comprise a combination of one or more transistors. Depending on the type of transistors used to realize the active components of the receiver radio frequency amplifier (Rx RFA) **104** and the active components of the radio frequency power amplifier (RFPA) **105**, the fixed voltage is either the supply voltage V_{DD} **302** or the supply ground **301**. During any time instant, one of the receiver radio

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frequency amplifier (Rx RFA) **104** and the radio frequency power amplifier (RPFA) **105** are switchlessly coupled **404** to the center-tapped inductor **102a** of the balun **102** to switchlessly and selectively access the balun **102**.

For example, the receiver radio frequency amplifier (Rx RFA) **104** is switchlessly coupled to the balun **102** by activating **404a** active components of the receiver radio frequency amplifier (Rx RFA) **104** and deactivating the active components of the radio frequency power amplifier (RPFA) **105**. A single-ended signal received at one of the first node **102c** and the second node **102d** is converted to a differential signal by the balun **102**. This differential signal is obtained at the first node **102c** and the second node **102d**. The differential signal is provided to the balanced input lines **104c** and **104d** of the receiver radio frequency amplifier (Rx RFA) **104**. The receiver radio frequency amplifier (Rx RFA) **104** for example, amplifies the differential signal and provides it to a receiver (Rx) module **106** of a radio frequency (RF) transceiver **100**, illustrated in FIG. 1, for further processing. Deactivating the active components of the radio frequency power amplifier (RPFA) **105** prevents the differential signal from entering the balanced output lines **105e** and **105f** of the radio frequency power amplifier (RPFA) **105**. Therefore, the differential signal is not corrupted by the signals present at the balanced output lines **105e** and **105f** of the radio frequency power amplifier (RPFA) **105**.

Similarly, the radio frequency power amplifier (RPFA) **105** is switchlessly coupled to the balun **102** by activating **404b** the active components of the radio frequency power amplifier (RPFA) **105** and deactivating the active components of the receiver radio frequency amplifier (Rx RFA) **104**. The radio frequency power amplifier (RPFA) **105** may receive a differential signal from a transmitter (Tx) module **107** of the radio frequency (RF) transceiver **100** and provide two complementary current signals of an amplified differential signal through the balanced output lines **105e** and **105f**. The amplified differential signal is converted to a single-ended signal by constructively combining the amplified differential signal along the first node **102c** and the second node **102d** to obtain a single-ended signal at the first node **102c**. The single-ended signal obtained is nominally equal to twice the amplitude of each of the two complementary current signals of the differential signal. The single-ended signal is for example, transmitted through the antenna **108** or provided to an adjacent electronic circuit.

FIG. 5A illustrates a schematic diagram of a radio frequency (RF) front-end circuit **101** comprising an embodiment of a single-ended radio frequency power amplifier (RPFA) **501**. For applications that require only a single-ended radio frequency power amplifier **501** output for power amplifying a single-ended signal, one of the branches of the radio frequency power amplifier (RPFA) **105** illustrated in FIGS. 3A and 3B may be removed. The power amplified single-ended radio frequency (RF) signal is directly provided to one of the first and second nodes **102c** and **102d** of the center-tapped inductor **102a**. As a result, a single-ended signal is obtained that is nominally equal in magnitude to the power amplified single-ended signal. If the power amplified single-ended signal is for example, provided to the first node **102c** of the center-tapped inductor **102a** and an antenna **108** is connected at the first node **102c**, the transmitted single-ended signal is equal in phase to the power amplified single-ended signal. However, if the power amplified single-ended signal is for example, provided to the first node **102c** of the center-tapped inductor **102a** and the antenna **108** is connected at the second node **102d**, the transmitted single-ended signal is opposite in phase to the power amplified single-ended signal.

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The p-MoSFETs **104a** and **104b** may also be switched off using switch S1 **303** by connecting the gate terminals of the p-MoSFETs **104a** and **104b** to the source voltages at nodes **102c** and **102d**, as illustrated in FIG. 5B. The p-MoSFETs **104a** and **104b** can be effectively switched off by providing equal voltages at the source terminals and the gate terminals of the p-MoSFETs **104a** and **104b**. Voltage at the gate terminals of the p-MoSFETs **104a** and **104b** is based on a specific performance requirement.

FIG. 6 illustrates a method of selectively accessing a balun **102** in a radio frequency front-end circuit **101** comprising a single-ended radio frequency power amplifier **501**. A balun **102** comprising a center-tapped inductor **102a** is provided **601**. Center-tap **102b** of the center-tapped inductor **102a** is switchlessly coupled to a fixed voltage. A receiver radio frequency amplifier (Rx RFA) **104** and a radio frequency power amplifier (RPFA) **105** are provided **602**. The receiver radio frequency amplifier (Rx RFA) **104** and the radio frequency power amplifier (RPFA) **105** comprise active components. Depending on the active components used to implement the receiver radio frequency amplifier (Rx RFA) **104** and the radio frequency power amplifier (RPFA) **501**, the fixed voltage is for example a supply voltage V_{DD} **302** or a supply ground **301**. First node **102c** and second node **102d** of the center-tapped inductor **102a** are coupled **603** to balanced input lines **104c** and **104d** of the receiver radio frequency amplifier (Rx RFA) **104**. One of the first node **102c** and the second node **102d** is coupled **604** to the single-ended output line **502** of a single-ended radio frequency power amplifier (RPFA) **501**. During any time instant, one of the receiver radio frequency amplifier (Rx RFA) **104** and the radio frequency power amplifier (RPFA) **501** are switchlessly coupled **605** to the center-tapped inductor **102a** of the balun **102** to switchlessly and selectively access the balun **102**.

For example, the receiver radio frequency amplifier (Rx RFA) **104** is switchlessly coupled to the balun **102** by activating **605a** active components of the receiver radio frequency amplifier (Rx RFA) **104** and deactivating the active components of the radio frequency power amplifier (RPFA) **501**. A single-ended signal received at one of the first node **102c** and the second node **102d** is converted to a differential signal by the balun **102**. This differential signal is obtained at the first node **102c** and the second node **102d**. The obtained differential signal is provided to the balanced input lines **104c** and **104d** of the receiver radio frequency amplifier (Rx RFA) **104**. The receiver radio frequency amplifier (Rx RFA) **104b** amplifies the differential signal and provides it to a receiver (Rx) module **106** of a radio frequency (RF) transceiver **100** illustrated in FIG. 1 for further processing. Deactivating the active components of the radio frequency power amplifier (RPFA) **501** prevents a signal from the radio frequency power amplifier (RPFA) **501** to enter the output line **105e**. Therefore, the differential signal provided as input to the receiver radio frequency amplifier (Rx RFA) **104** is not corrupted by the single-ended signal of the radio frequency power amplifier (RPFA) **105**.

Similarly, the radio frequency power amplifier (RPFA) **501** is switchlessly coupled to the balun **102** by activating **605b** active components of the radio frequency power amplifier (RPFA) **501** and deactivating the active components of the receiver radio frequency amplifier (Rx RFA) **104**. The radio frequency power amplifier (RPFA) **501** may receive a single-ended signal from a transmitter (Tx) module **107** of the radio frequency (RF) transceiver **100**. An amplified single-ended signal is provided to one of the first and second nodes **102c** and **102d** by the single-ended radio frequency power amplifier (RPFA) **501** through the single-ended output line **502**.

The single-ended signal reaches the antenna **108**. The antenna **108** transmits the amplified single-ended signal.

A method of manufacturing a radio frequency front-end circuit **101** is also disclosed herein. The method comprises integrating on a single semiconductor integrated circuit chip (not shown), a balun **102** comprising a center-tapped inductor **102a** having a first node **102c**, a second node **102d**, and a center-tap **102b** coupled to a fixed voltage. The fixed voltage is either a supply voltage V_{DD} **302** or a supply ground **301**, depending on the type of transistors used to realize the receiver radio frequency amplifier (Rx RFA) **104** and the radio frequency power amplifier (RFPA) **105**. The method also comprises integrating on the single semiconductor chip, a receiver radio frequency amplifier (Rx RFA) **104** having balanced input lines **104c** and **104d** coupled to the first and second nodes **102c** and **102d** of the center-tapped inductor **102a**. Furthermore, the method comprises integrating on the single semiconductor chip, a radio frequency power amplifier (RFPA) **105** having balanced output lines **105e** and **105f** coupled to the first and second nodes **102c** and **102d** of the center-tapped inductor **102a**. The method further comprises integrating on the single semiconductor chip, a selector circuit **201** for selectively activating active components of the receiver radio frequency amplifier (Rx RFA) **104** and deactivating active components of the radio frequency power amplifier (RFPA) **105** during conversion of a single-ended signal to a differential signal. The selector circuit **201** also activates the active components of the radio frequency power amplifier (RFPA) **105** and deactivates the activating active components of the receiver radio frequency amplifier (Rx RFA) **104** for amplification of a differential signal and conversion of the amplified differential signal to a single-ended signal.

In another embodiment, the method of manufacturing a radio frequency front-end circuit **101** also comprises integrating on the single semiconductor integrated chip, one or more of a receiving module **106** coupled to outputs of the receiver radio frequency amplifier **104**, a transmitter module **107** coupled to inputs of the radio frequency power amplifier **105**, and a programmable logic circuit **202** for programming the selector circuit **201** for selectively operating either the receiver radio frequency amplifier **104** or the radio frequency power amplifier **105**.

Furthermore, a method of manufacturing a radio frequency (RF) front-end circuit **101** comprising a radio frequency power amplifier (RFPA) **501** having a single-ended output line **502** is also described. The method comprises integrating on a single semiconductor integrated circuit chip (not shown), a balun **102** comprising a center-tapped inductor **102a** having a first node **102c**, a second node **102d**, and a center-tap **102b** coupled to a fixed voltage. The fixed voltage is either a supply voltage V_{DD} **302** or a supply ground **301**, depending on the type of transistors used to realize the receiver radio frequency amplifier (Rx RFA) **104** and the radio frequency power amplifier (RFPA) **501**. The method also comprises integrating on the single semiconductor chip, a receiver radio frequency amplifier (Rx RFA) **104** having balanced input lines **104c** and **104d** coupled to the first and second nodes **102c** and **102d** of the center-tapped inductor **102a**. Furthermore, the method comprises integrating on the single semiconductor chip, the single-ended radio frequency power amplifier **501** having the single-ended output line coupled to one of the first and second nodes **102c** and **102d** of the center-tapped inductor **102a**. The method further comprises integrating on the single semiconductor chip, a selector circuit **201** for activating active components of the receiver radio frequency amplifier (Rx RFA) **104** and deactivating active components of the radio fre-

quency power amplifier (RFPA) **501** during conversion of a single-ended signal to a differential signal. The selector circuit **201** also activates the active components of the radio frequency power amplifier (RFPA) **501** and deactivates the activating active components of the receiver radio frequency amplifier (Rx RFA) **104** for transmission of an amplified single-ended signal received from the radio frequency power amplifier (RFPA) **501**.

Consider an exemplary application of the radio frequency front-end circuit **101** illustrated in FIGS. 3A and 3B for transmission and reception over an ISM (Industrial, Scientific and Medical) band. The ISM band is reserved internationally for the use of RF electromagnetic fields for industrial, scientific and medical purposes other than communications. For an operating frequency of 2.4 GHz of the ISM band, the design of the radio frequency front-end circuit **101** is as follows. An antenna **108** of 50 ohm impedance for receiving and transmitting signals at the 2.4 GHz operating frequency is provided. The antenna **108** is connected to the first node **102c** of a center-tapped inductor **102** having 5 nano Henry (nH) to 10 nano Henry (nH) inductance. The inductance of the center-tapped inductor **102** varies significantly based on the overall radio frequency (RF) front-end circuit **101** topology and the performance requirements in radio frequency (RF) complementary metal-oxide-semiconductor (CMOS) requirements. Values of decoupling capacitor **C1 305** and capacitor **C2 102e** may also vary based on the overall parasitic capacitance of the radio frequency (RF) front-end circuit **101**. For this example, a decoupling capacitor **C1 305** of value 4 pico Farad (pF) and a capacitor **C2 102e** of value 0.5 pico Farad (pF) are considered. Capacitor **C3 306** and capacitor **C4 307** are not required for this example.

Furthermore, as explained above, the passive network **102f** may comprise a combination of passive components comprising one or more resistors, capacitors, and inductors. In this example, by using a capacitor of value 1 pico Farad (pF) in the passive network **102f**, amplitudes of the complementary components of the differential signal generated at the first node **102c** and the second node **102d** are approximately matched to the implementation requirements of the radio frequency (RF) front-end circuit **101**. Capacitor **C2 102e** and the capacitor in the passive network **102f** are shared by both the receiver radio frequency amplifier (Rx RFA) **104** (on the source terminal sides of the transistors **104a** and **104b**) and the radio frequency power amplifier (RFPA) **105** (on the load terminal sides of transistors **105a** and **105c**), rendering a compact implementation of the radio frequency front-end circuit **101**.

The p-MoSFETs **104a** and **104b** of the receiver radio frequency amplifier (Rx RFA) **104** are biased appropriately. The p-MoSFETs **104a** and **104b** are each attached to individual impedances of 100 ohm (not shown) each, to configure the impedance looking into the p-MoSFET **104a** from the first node **102c** to be nominally equal to 100 ohm and the impedance looking into the p-MoSFET **104b** from the second node **102d** to be nominally equal to 100 ohm.

The p-MoSFETs **104a** and **104b** are effectively switched off during the transmitting mode utilizing the switch **S1 303**, as described in the description of FIGS. 3A and 3B. To switch off the p-MoSFETs **104a** and **104b**, the gate terminals of p-MoSFETs **104a** and **104b** are connected to a fixed supply voltage V_{DD} **302**. The p-MoSFETs **104a** and **104b** are also switched off by providing equal voltages to the gate terminals and the source terminals of each of the p-MoSFETs **104a** and **104b**. The choice of switching off the p-MoSFETs **104a** and **104b** by either of the methods is based on the characteristics of the p-MoSFETs **104a** and **104b**, actual voltage swings and

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other performance requirements. Furthermore, depending on the requirement, additional cascode p-MoSFET devices are connected between the p-MoSFET **104a** and the receiver radio frequency amplifier (Rx RFA) **104** load +RfOut and between the p-MoSFET **104b** and the receiver radio frequency amplifier (Rx RFA) **104** load -RfOut for reverse isolation.

Furthermore, load impedance (not shown) of the receiver radio frequency amplifier (Rx RFA) **104** is designed to provide a requisite gain greater than 20 decibel (dB). The load impedance of the receiver radio frequency amplifier (Rx RFA) **104** is typically a tuned inductive load realized using a center-tapped inductor.

The radio frequency power amplifier (RFPA) **105** nominally delivers an output power of +2 decibels milliwatt (dBm) to the 50 ohm antenna **108**. The n-MoSFETs **105a**, **105b** and **105c**, **105d** are implemented as multiple fingers which can be individually selected to realize a programmable gain in the output power of the radio frequency power amplifier (RFPA) **105**. Depending on the gain requirement from the power radio frequency power amplifier (RFPA) **105**, one or more of the fingers i.e. the n-MoSFETs **105a**, **105b** and the n-MoSFETs **105c**, **105d** are switched off during the transmitting mode. If both the fingers, n-MoSFETs **105a**, **105b** and the n-MoSFETs **105c**, **105d** are switched on during the transmitting mode, the n-MoSFETs **105a**, **105b** provide the first complementary current signal Irfp of the differential signal and the n-MoSFETs **105c**, **105d** provide the second complementary current signal Irfn of the differential signal. The first complementary current signal Irfp and the second complementary current signal Irfn constructively add up to produce a single-ended signal which is available at the first node **102c** of the center-tapped inductor **102a**. The single-ended signal is then provided to the antenna **108** for transmission. Amplitude of the single-ended signal provided to the antenna **108** is nominally twice the amplitude of both the first complementary current signal Irfp and the second complementary current signal Irfn.

The foregoing examples have been provided merely for the purpose of explanation and are in no way to be construed as limiting of the present invention disclosed herein. While the invention has been described with reference to various embodiments, it is understood that the words, which have been used herein, are words of description and illustration, rather than words of limitation. Further, although the invention has been described herein with reference to particular means, materials and embodiments, the invention is not intended to be limited to the particulars disclosed herein; rather, the invention extends to all functionally equivalent structures, methods and uses, such as are within the scope of the appended claims. Those skilled in the art, having the benefit of the teachings of this specification, may effect numerous modifications thereto and changes may be made without departing from the scope and spirit of the invention in its aspects.

I claim:

1. A radio frequency front-end circuit, comprising:

a balun, comprising:

a single coil center-tapped inductor having a center-tap drawn from center of the single coil, said single coil center-tapped inductor comprising a first node and a second node, said center-tap switchlessly coupled to a fixed voltage, wherein said balun is configured to receive a single-ended signal through said first node of said single coil center-tapped inductor and convert said single-ended signal to a differential signal, wherein said balun is configured to receive said differential signal through said first node and said second

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node and convert said differential signal to said single-ended signal, and wherein said differential signal is available at said first node and said second node, and said single-ended signal is available at said first node;

a receiver radio frequency amplifier having balanced input lines connected to said first node and said second node, said receiver radio frequency amplifier configured for receiving and amplifying said differential signal, wherein said receiver radio frequency amplifier comprises one or more active components;

a radio frequency power amplifier having balanced output lines connected to said first node and said second node, said radio frequency power amplifier configured for providing an amplified differential signal to said balun, wherein said radio frequency power amplifier comprises one or more active components; and

a selector circuit in communication with said receiver radio frequency amplifier and said radio frequency power amplifier, said selector circuit configured for activating said active components of said receiver radio frequency amplifier and deactivating said active components of said radio frequency power amplifier during said conversion of said single-ended signal to said differential signal, and vice versa during said conversion of said differential signal to said single-ended signal;

whereby said balun is switchlessly and selectively coupled to said receiver radio frequency amplifier during said conversion of said single-ended signal to said differential signal and said radio frequency power amplifier during said conversion of said differential signal to said single-ended signal.

2. The radio frequency front-end circuit of claim 1, wherein said fixed voltage is a supply ground.

3. The radio frequency front-end circuit of claim 1, wherein said fixed voltage is a supply voltage.

4. The radio frequency front-end circuit of claim 1, wherein said active components of said receiver radio frequency amplifier comprise one or more transistors, and wherein said selector circuit switches on said one or more transistors during said conversion of said single-ended signal to said differential signal.

5. The radio frequency front-end circuit of claim 1, wherein said active components of said radio frequency power amplifier comprise one or more transistors, and wherein said selector circuit switches on said one or more transistors during said conversion of said differential signal to said single-ended signal.

6. The radio frequency front-end circuit of claim 1, further comprising an antenna coupled to one of said first node and said second node of said single coil center-tapped inductor.

7. The radio frequency front-end circuit of claim 6, wherein impedance of said antenna approximately matches input impedance of said receiver radio frequency amplifier.

8. The radio frequency front-end circuit of claim 6, wherein impedance of said antenna approximately matches output impedance of said radio frequency power amplifier.

9. The radio frequency front-end circuit of claim 6, wherein impedance of said antenna is R_{in} and impedance of each of said balanced input lines of said receiver radio frequency amplifier is $2R_{in}$.

10. The radio frequency front-end circuit of claim 6, wherein impedance of said antenna is R_L and impedance of each of said balanced output lines of said radio frequency power amplifier is about $2R_L$.

11. The radio frequency front-end circuit of claim 1, further comprising a programmable logic circuit for programming

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said selector circuit for activating said active components of said receiver radio frequency amplifier and deactivating said active components of said radio frequency power amplifier during said conversion of said single-ended signal to said differential signal, and vice versa during said conversion of said differential signal to said single-ended signal.

12. A radio frequency front-end circuit, comprising:

a balun, comprising:

a single coil center-tapped inductor having a center-tap drawn from center of the single coil, said single coil center-tapped inductor comprising a first node and a second node, said center-tap switchlessly coupled to a fixed voltage, wherein said balun is configured to receive a said single-ended signal through said first node of said single coil center-tapped inductor and convert said single-ended signal to a differential signal, wherein said balun is configured to receive said differential signal through said first node and said second node and convert said differential signal to said single-ended signal, and wherein said differential signal is available at said first node and said second node, and said single-ended signal is available at said first node;

a receiver radio frequency amplifier having balanced input lines connected to said first node and said second node, said receiver radio frequency amplifier configured for receiving and amplifying said differential signal, wherein said receiver radio frequency amplifier comprises one or more active components;

a radio frequency power amplifier having a single-ended output line connected to one of said first node and said second node, said radio frequency power amplifier configured for providing an amplified single-ended signal for transmission, wherein said radio frequency power amplifier comprises one or more active components; and

a selector circuit in communication with said receiver radio frequency amplifier and said radio frequency power amplifier, said selector circuit configured for activating said active components of said receiver radio frequency amplifier and deactivating said active components of said radio frequency power amplifier during said conversion of said single-ended signal to said differential signal, and vice versa during said conversion of said differential signal to said single-ended signal;

whereby said balun is switchlessly and selectively coupled to said receiver radio frequency amplifier during said conversion of said single-ended signal to said differential signal and said radio frequency power amplifier during said conversion of said differential signal to said single-ended signal.

13. The radio frequency front-end circuit of claim 12, wherein said fixed voltage is a supply ground.

14. The radio frequency front-end circuit of claim 12, wherein said fixed voltage is a supply voltage.

15. The radio frequency front-end circuit of claim 12, further comprising an antenna coupled to one of said first node and said second node of said single coil center-tapped inductor.

16. The radio frequency front-end circuit of claim 15, wherein impedance of said antenna approximately matches input impedance of said receiver radio frequency amplifier.

17. The radio frequency front-end circuit of claim 12, further comprising a programmable logic circuit for programming said selector circuit for activating said active components of said receiver radio frequency amplifier and deactivating said active components of said radio frequency power amplifier during said conversion of said single-ended

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signal to said differential signal, and vice versa during said conversion of said differential signal to said single-ended signal.

18. A method of selectively accessing a balun in a radio frequency front-end circuit, comprising:

providing said balun comprising a single coil center-tapped inductor with a center-tap drawn from center of the single coil;

switchlessly coupling said center-tap of said single coil center-tapped inductor to a fixed voltage;

providing a receiver radio frequency amplifier and a radio frequency power amplifier, wherein said receiver radio frequency amplifier and said radio frequency power amplifier comprise active components;

coupling a first node and a second node of said single coil center-tapped inductor to balanced input lines of said receiver radio frequency amplifier and balanced output lines of said radio frequency power amplifier; and

switchlessly coupling one of said receiver radio frequency amplifier and said radio frequency power amplifier to said single coil center-tapped inductor of said balun by performing one of:

activating active components of said receiver radio frequency amplifier and converting a single-ended signal received at one of said first node and said second node to a differential signal, wherein said differential signal is obtained at said first node and said second node, and wherein said differential signal is provided to said balanced input lines of said receiver radio frequency amplifier; and

activating active components of said radio frequency power amplifier and constructively combining an amplified differential signal along said first node and said second node for obtaining a single-ended signal at said first node, wherein said amplified differential signal is received from said radio frequency power amplifier through said balanced output lines.

19. The method of claim 18, wherein said fixed voltage is a supply ground.

20. The method of claim 18, wherein said fixed voltage is a supply voltage.

21. The method of claim 18, wherein said step of activating active components of said receiver radio frequency amplifier comprises deactivating said active components of said radio frequency power amplifier.

22. The method of claim 18, wherein said step of activating active components of said radio frequency power amplifier comprises deactivating said active components of said receiver radio frequency amplifier.

23. A method of selectively accessing a balun in a radio frequency front-end circuit, comprising:

providing said balun comprising a single coil center-tapped inductor with a center-tap drawn from center of the single coil;

switchlessly coupling said center-tap of said single coil center-tapped inductor to a fixed voltage;

providing a receiver radio frequency amplifier and a radio frequency power amplifier, wherein said receiver radio frequency amplifier and said radio frequency power amplifier comprise active components;

coupling a first node and a second node of said single coil center-tapped inductor to balanced input lines of said receiver radio frequency amplifier;

coupling one of said first node and said second node to a single-ended output line of said radio frequency power amplifier; and

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switchlessly coupling one of said receiver radio frequency amplifier and said radio frequency power amplifier to said single coil center-tapped inductor of said balun by performing one of:

activating active components of said receiver radio frequency amplifier and converting a single-ended signal received at one of said first node and said second node to a differential signal, wherein said differential signal is obtained at said first node and said second node, and wherein said differential signal is provided to said balanced input lines of said receiver radio frequency amplifier; and

activating active components of said radio frequency power amplifier and providing an amplified single-ended signal to one of said first node and said second node, wherein said amplified single-ended signal is received from said radio frequency power amplifier through said single-ended output line.

24. The method of claim 23, wherein said fixed voltage is a supply ground.

25. The method of claim 23, wherein said fixed voltage is a supply voltage.

26. The method of claim 23, wherein said step of activating active components of said receiver radio frequency amplifier comprises deactivating said active components of said radio frequency power amplifier.

27. The method of claim 23, wherein said step of activating active components of said radio frequency power amplifier comprises deactivating said active components of said receiver radio frequency amplifier.

28. A method of manufacturing a radio frequency front-end circuit, comprising:

integrating on a single semiconductor integrated circuit chip:

a balun comprising a single coil center-tapped inductor having a center-tap drawn from center of the single coil, said single coil center-tapped inductor comprising a first node and a second node, said center-tap coupled to a fixed voltage, wherein said single coil center-tapped inductor configured to convert between a single-ended signal and a differential signal;

a receiver radio frequency amplifier having balanced input lines coupled to said first node and said second node of said single coil center-tapped inductor;

a radio frequency power amplifier having balanced output lines coupled to said first node and said second node of said single coil center-tapped inductor; and

a selector circuit for selectively activating active components of said receiver radio frequency amplifier and deactivating active components of said radio frequency power amplifier, and vice versa.

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29. The method of claim 28, wherein coupling said center-tap to said fixed voltage comprises coupling said fixed voltage to a supply ground.

30. The method of claim 28, wherein coupling said center-tap to said fixed voltage comprises coupling said fixed voltage to a supply voltage.

31. The method of claim 28, further comprising integrating on said single semiconductor integrated chip, a receiving module coupled to outputs of said receiver radio frequency amplifier.

32. The method of claim 28, further comprising integrating on said single semiconductor integrated chip, a transmitter module coupled to inputs of said radio frequency power amplifier.

33. The method of claim 28, further comprising integrating on said single semiconductor integrated chip, a programmable logic circuit for programming said selector circuit to selectively operate one of said receiver radio frequency amplifier and said radio frequency power amplifier.

34. A method of manufacturing a radio frequency front-end circuit, comprising:

integrating on a single semiconductor integrated circuit chip:

a balun comprising a single coil center-tapped inductor having a center-tap drawn from center of the single coil, said single coil center-tapped inductor comprising a first node and a second node, said center-tap coupled to a supply voltage, wherein said single coil center-tapped inductor configured to convert between a single-ended signal and a differential signal;

a receiver radio frequency amplifier having balanced input lines coupled to said first node and said second node of said single coil center-tapped inductor; a radio frequency power amplifier having a single-ended output line coupled to said first node of said single coil center-tapped inductor; and

a selector circuit for selectively activating active components of said receiver radio frequency amplifier and deactivating active components of said radio frequency power amplifier, and vice versa.

35. The method of claim 34, wherein coupling said center-tap to said fixed voltage comprises coupling said fixed voltage to a supply ground.

36. The method of claim 34, wherein coupling said center-tap to said fixed voltage comprises coupling said fixed voltage to a supply voltage.

37. The method of claim 34, further comprising integrating on said single semiconductor integrated chip, a programmable logic circuit for programming said selector circuit to selectively operate one of said receiver radio frequency amplifier and said radio frequency power amplifier.

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