

Interfacing between High Performance Drivers and Low Power Devices using ABP Bridge

N. Sudhakar¹, M. Kiran Kumar²

¹Jawaharlal Nehru Technical University, JNTU Road, Kukatpalle, Hyderabad, A.P, India
sudhakar.yes@gmail.com

²Andhra University, College of Engineering, Visakapattanam, A.P, India
7112@gmail.com

Abstract: ARM introduced the Advanced Micro controller Bus Architecture (AMBA) 4.0 specifications in March 2010, which includes Advanced extensible Interface (AXI) 4.0. AMBA bus protocol has become the de facto standard SoC bus. That means more and more existing IPs must be able to communicate with AMBA 4.0 buses. Based on AMBA 4.0 bus, we designed an Intellectual Property (IP) core of Advanced Peripheral Bus (APB) bridge, it can translates the AXI4.0- lite transactions into APB 4.0 transactions. The bridge provides an interface between the high-performance AXI bus and low-power APB domain.

Keywords: SoC; AMBA; AXI; APB

1. Introduction

Integrated circuits have entered the era of System-on-a-Chip (SoC), which refers to integrating all components of a computer or other electronic system into a single chip. It may contain digital, analog, mixed-signal, and often radio-frequency functions – all on a single chip substrate. With the increasing design size, IP is an inevitable choice for SoC design. And the widespread use of all kinds of IPs has changed the nature of the design flow, making On-Chip Buses (OCB) essential to the design. Of all OCBs existing in the market, the AMBA bus system is widely used as the de facto standard SoC bus.

On March 8, 2010, ARM announced availability of the AMBA 4.0 specifications. As the de facto standard SoC bus, AMBA bus is widely used in the high-performance SoC designs. The AMBA specification defines an on-chip communication standard for designing high-performance embedded microcontrollers. The AMBA 4.0 specification defines five buses/interfaces [1]:

- Advanced eXtensible Interface (AXI)
- Advanced High-performance Bus (AHB)
- Advanced System Bus (ASB)
- Advanced Peripheral Bus (APB)
- Advanced Trace Bus (ATB)

2. Block Diagram

In this study, we focused mainly on the implementation aspect of an AXI4-Lite to APB Bridge. The APB Bridge provides an interface between the high-performance AXI domain and the low-power APB domain. It appears as a slave on AXI bus but as a master on APB that can access up to sixteen slave peripherals. Read and write transfers on the AXI bus are converted into corresponding transfers on the APB. The AXI4-Lite to APB bridge clock diagram is shown in Figure. 1.

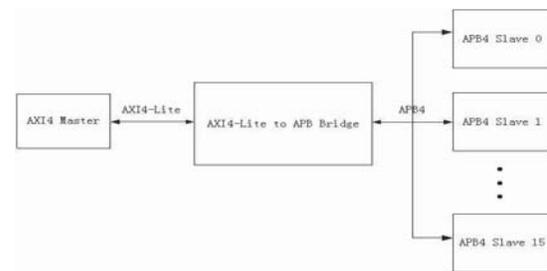


Figure 1. Block Diagram

3. AXI Handshake Mechanism

The VALID and READY handshaking mechanism in AXI allows both masters and slaves to control the flow of data. This can be problematic if, for example, a poorly designed master makes a write request while still assembling write data that is coming in from a slower or narrower interface. One real benefit of having the handshake mechanism is that slaves with long latencies can accept more requests than they have buffer space for. So, for example, an AXI PCIe slave may queue eight reads, but only have enough buffer space for four.

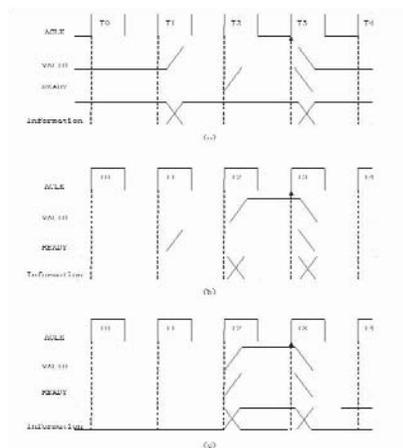


Figure 2. Handshake Mechanism

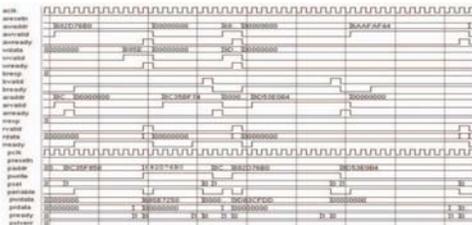


Figure 10. Typical Read and Write Transfer

4.2 Tables

Table1. Write address channel signals

	Source	Description
AWID [3:0]	Master	Write address ID. This signal is the identification tag for the write address group of signals.
AWLEN [3:0]	Master	Burst length. The burst length gives the exact number of transfers in a burst. This information determines the number of data transfers
AWSIZE [2:0]	Master	Burst size. This signal indicates the size of each transfer in the burst. Byte lane strobes indicate exactly which byte lanes to update.

Table2. Read Data Channel Signals

Signal	Source	Description
RDATA[31:0]	Slave	Read data. The read data bus can be 8, 16, 32, 64, 128, 256, 512, or 1024 bits wide.
RRESP[1:0]	Slave	Read response. This signal indicates the status of the read transfer. The allowable responses are OKAY, EXOKAY, SLVERR, and DECERR.
RLAST	Slave	Read last. This signal indicates the last transfer in a read burst.

5. Other recommendations

Applications

- Computing: Net book, Smart book, Tablet, eReader, thin client.
- Mobile Handset: Smartphone’s, Feature phones.

6. Conclusions

The APB Bridge provides an implementation of AXI4-Full to APB Bridge which has the following features:

- 32-bit AXI slave and APB master interfaces.
- PCLK clock domain completely independent of ACLK

clock domain.

- Support up to 16 APB peripherals
- Burst length is 32 bits
- Support the PREADY signal which translates to wait states on AXI.
- An error on any transfer results in SLVERR as the AXI read/write response.

7. Future scope

- When read request and write request are simultaneously occurs the bridge gives the high priority to read request. This condition creates the race condition in APB Bridge.
- For example FIFO has only one data item to read operation. If read and write requests are simultaneously occurs the bridge first execute the read request and it read the single data item from the FIFO and now the read data FIFO was empty.
- Again read and write requests are simultaneously occurs again it execute read request but there is no data item in read data FIFO so transaction will fail. This situation is called race condition.

References

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Author Profile

N. Sudhakar received the B. Tech degree in Electronics and Communication Engineering from Jawaharlal Nehru technical university in 2006 respectively. During 2006-2010, he worked in Vijay Rural Engineering College (VREC) and Avanthi Engineering College as an assistant professor in Electronics and Communication Engineering department utilized signals and systems, analog communication, digital communication and electronic devices and circuits, microwave engineering, and antennas. He now with pursuing M. Tech in VLSI system design Anurag group of institutions (formerly CVSR College of engineering) in Hyderabad.