

PILOT GROUPING AND ROUTE PROTOCOLS IN MULTI-CARRIER COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS

Claim of Priority under 35 U.S.C. §119

[0001] This Application for Patent claims priority to Provisional Patent Application No. 60/719,760, entitled "Pilot Grouping and Route Protocols in Multi-carrier Communication Systems," filed on September 22, 2005, which is assigned to the Assignee hereof and hereby expressly incorporated by reference herein.

BACKGROUND

Field

[0002] This disclosure relates generally to wireless communications. More specifically, embodiments disclosed herein relate to pilot grouping and reporting, route protocols, and scheduling in multi-carrier communication systems.

Background

[0003] Wireless communication systems are widely deployed to provide various types of communication (e.g., voice, data, etc.) to multiple users. Such systems may be based on code division multiple access (CDMA), time division multiple access (TDMA), frequency division multiple access (FDMA), orthogonal frequency division multiple access (OFDMA), or other multiple access techniques. A communication system may be designed to implement one or more standards, such as IS-95, cdma2000, IS-856, W-CDMA, TD-SCDMA, and other standards.

[0004] As the demand for multimedia and high-rate data services rapidly grows, multi-carrier modulation has been attracted considerable attention in wireless communication systems. There lies a challenge to provide efficient and robust multi-carrier communication systems.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

- [0005] FIG. 1 illustrates an embodiment of a multi-carrier communication system;
- [0006] FIG. 2 illustrates an embodiment of a cell having multiple sectors in a multi-carrier communication system;
- [0007] FIG. 3 illustrates an embodiment of several sectors and associated pilot signals in a multi-carrier communication system;
- [0008] FIG. 4 illustrates an embodiment of pilot grouping in a multi-carrier communication system;
- [0009] FIG. 5 illustrates a section of the embodiment of FIG. 4;
- [0010] FIGS. 6A-6C illustrate an embodiment of set management in a multi-carrier communication system;
- [0011] FIG. 7 illustrates an embodiment of traffic channel assignment in a multi-carrier communication system;
- [0012] FIG. 8 illustrates an embodiment of scheduling in a multi-carrier communication system;
- [0013] FIG. 9 illustrates a flow chart of a process, which may be used in an embodiment to implement pilot grouping and reporting in a multi-carrier communication system;
- [0014] FIG. 10 illustrates a flow chart of a process, which may be used in connection with traffic channel assignment in a multi-carrier communication system;
- [0015] FIG. 11 illustrates a flow chart of a process, which may be used in connection with scheduling in a multi-carrier communication system;
- [0016] FIG. 12 illustrates a block diagram of an apparatus, in which some disclosed embodiments may be implemented;
- [0017] FIG. 13 illustrates a block diagram of an apparatus, in which some disclosed embodiments may be implemented; and
- [0018] FIG. 14 illustrates a block diagram of an apparatus, in which some disclosed embodiments may be implemented.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0019] Embodiments disclosed herein relate to methods and systems for pilot grouping and reporting, route protocols, and scheduling in multi-carrier communication systems.

[0020] FIG. 1 illustrates an embodiment of a multi-carrier communication system 100. By way of example, various access terminals (ATs) 110, including ATs 110a–110c, are dispersed throughout the system. Each AT 110 may communicate with an access network (AN) 120 via one or more channels at different frequencies on a forward link and/or a reverse link at a given moment, as illustrated by double-sided arrows 130. For illustration and clarity, two double-sided arrows 130 are shown for each AT 110. There may be any number of channels (or frequencies) on the forward link or reverse link in a communication system. Further, the number of frequencies on the forward link (or “forward link frequencies”) need not be the same as the number of frequencies on reverse link (or “reverse link frequencies”).

[0021] AN 120 may further be in communication with a core network, such as a packet data network via a packet data serving node (PDSN) 140. In an embodiment, system 100 may be configured to support one or more standards, e.g., IS-95, cdma2000, IS-856, W-CDMA, TD-SCDMA, other multi-carrier standards, or a combination thereof.

[0022] An AN described herein may refer to the portion of a communication system configured to interface with a core network (e.g., a packet data network via PDSN 140 in FIG. 1) and route data between ATs and the core network, perform various radio access and link maintenance functions, control radio transmitters and receivers, and so on. An AN may include and/or implement the functions of a base station controller (BSC) (such as found in a 2nd, 3rd, or 4th generation wireless network), a base-station transceiver system (BTS), an access point (AP), a modem pool transceiver (MPT), a Node B (e.g., in a W-CDMA type system), etc.

[0023] An AT described herein may refer to various types of devices, including (but not limited to) a wireless phone, a cellular phone, a laptop computer, a wireless communication personal computer (PC) card, a personal digital assistant (PDA), an external or internal modem, etc. An AT may be any data device that communicates through a wireless channel and/or through a wired channel (e.g., by way of fiber optic or coaxial cables). An AT may have various names, such as access unit, subscriber unit, mobile station, mobile device, mobile unit, mobile phone, mobile, remote station,

remote terminal, remote unit, user device, user equipment, handheld device, etc. Different ATs may be incorporated into a system. ATs may be mobile or stationary, and may be dispersed throughout a communication system. An AT may communicate with one or more ANs on a forward link and/or a reverse link at a given moment. The forward link (or downlink) refers to transmission from an AN to an AT. The reverse link (or uplink) refers to transmission from the AT to the AN.

[0024] A multi-carrier communication system described herein may include a frequency division multiplexing system, an orthogonal frequency division multiplexing system, or other multi-carrier modulation systems, where each carrier corresponds to a frequency range.

[0025] A cell may refer to a coverage area serviced by an AN. A cell may be divided into one or more sectors. One or more frequencies may be assigned to cover a cell. FIG. 2 illustrates an embodiment of a cell 200 in a multi-carrier communication system. By way of example, cell 200 is shown to be divided into three sectors 210, 220, 230. Three frequencies, f_1 , f_2 , f_3 , are assigned to cover cell 200. For illustration and clarity, cell 200 is shown as a cylinder, whose cross-section area corresponds with cell 200's coverage area, and whose height along an axis 240 corresponds with the frequency dimension of cell 200. As such, each wedge of the cylinder (across all frequencies) constitutes a sector. In other embodiments, cells may have different shapes, and may have any number of sectors. There may also be any number of frequencies allocated to a cell. For example, in some situations, multiple frequencies may be allocated to a cell covering a large coverage area, such as shown in FIG. 2. In other situations, one frequency may be allocated to a cell covering a small dense area (e.g., a "hot spot").

[0026] A pilot signal (or "pilot") described herein may be characterized (or specified) by a set of parameters, e.g., denoted as <PN offset, channel> (or <channel, PN offset>), where "channel" may refer to the frequency of the pilot signal. The term "channel" may be used herein interchangeably with the term "frequency." Further, a "coverage area" of a pilot signal may refer to a "strength vs. distance" profile of the pilot signal.

[0027] In a single-carrier communication system, an AT is required to report the strengths of all the pilot signals received, as the pilot signals become strong or weak in strength. In a multi-carrier communication system, there may be multiple pilot signals associated with a sector, as shown in FIG. 2. If an AT were to report the strength of

each pilot signal received (as in the single-carrier system), such would cause too many triggers for a pilot strength report (e.g., a route update message in an IS-856 type system) because there are more pilots signals and each of which may cross the reporting thresholds independently due to short-term fading; and each report would also be larger because there are more pilot signals to report. Further, many of these pilot signals may have comparable coverage areas and reporting one of them may provide sufficient information to the AN with regard to the set of pilot signals the AT is receiving. A need, therefore, exists for efficient management of pilot signals in multi-carrier communication systems.

[0028] Embodiments disclosed herein relate to methods and systems for pilot grouping and reporting, route protocols, and scheduling in multi-carrier communication systems.

[0029] FIG. 3 illustrates an embodiment of several sectors and associated pilot signals in a multi-carrier communication system 300. System 300 may generally include any number of sectors, each associated with one or more pilot signals having distinct frequencies. For illustration and clarity, three sectors 310, 320, 330 are explicitly shown. Also shown by way of example are pilot signals 311, 312 associated with sector 310, pilot signals 321-324 associated with sector 320, and pilot signals 331, 332 associated with sector 330. These pilot signals are shown in reference to a frequency axis 340, indicating that pilot signals associated with a given sector have different frequencies.

[0030] FIG. 3 further illustrates a strength vs. distance profile 350 presenting the coverage area of pilot signal 321 or 322, and a strength vs. distance profile 355 presenting the coverage area of pilot signal 323 or 324.

[0031] In an embodiment, an AN (not explicitly shown) serving sector 320 may assign a group identifier (or ID) to each of pilot signals 321-324 based on their coverage areas, such that the pilot signals having the substantially same coverage area share a common group ID. PN offset may be used as the group ID in one embodiment. For example, pilot signals 321, 322 may share a common group ID (or PN offset); pilot signals 323, 324 may also share a common group ID (or PN offset). The AN may then transmit pilot signals 321-324 with the corresponding group IDs. Upon receiving pilot signals 321-324, an AT 360 may group pilot signals 321, 322 into a first pilot group and pilot signals 323, 324 into a second pilot group in accordance with their group IDs. AT 360

may select one pilot signal from each pilot group as a representative pilot signal for the group: e.g., pilot signal 321 may be selected as the representative pilot signal for the first pilot group, and pilot signal 324 may be selected as the representative pilot signal for the second pilot group. AT 360 may measure the strength of each received pilot signal, or at least one pilot signal from each pilot group (such as the representative pilot signal). AT 360 may include only the representative pilot signal (as opposed to the entire pilot group) in a pilot strength report, as further described below.

[0032] In FIG. 3, two pilot strength thresholds, “pilot-add” and “pilot-drop”, are marked on profiles 350, 355. These thresholds may be used to determine to which one of AT 360’s candidate set and neighbor set each received pilot signal belong. For example, if the strength of a pilot signal received by AT 360 exceeds the pilot-add threshold, the pilot signal may potentially be added to AT 360’s candidate set, as further described below. If the strength of a pilot signal received by AT 360 falls below the pilot-drop threshold, the pilot signal may be removed from AT 360’s active set or candidate set.

[0033] In one embodiment, as AT 360 moves away from sector 320, it may first detect that the strengths of pilot signals 323, 324 in the second pilot group fall below the pilot-drop threshold, and later those of pilot signals 321, 322 in the first pilot group. (Such may be due to that pilot signals 321, 322 do not have counterparts in neighboring sectors 310, 330, hence being subject to less interference.) As a result, AT 360 may first send a pilot strength report for the representative pilot signal associated with the second pilot group and later a pilot strength report for the representative pilot associated with the first pilot group to the AN, in connection with these two events. The pilot strength report may include, e.g., the strength, the PN offset, and the frequency of the corresponding representative pilot signal. In another embodiment, as AT 360 moves closer to sector 320, AT 360 may first send a pilot strength report for the representative pilot signal associated with the first pilot group and later a pilot strength report for the representative pilot associated with the second pilot group to the AN (in connection with the sequential rise of the strengths of the pilot signals in these two groups).

[0034] Further, pilot signals in sectors 310, 330 may also be grouped in a similar manner. For example, pilot signals 311, 312 in sector 310 may form a pilot group. Pilot signals 331, 332 in sector 330 may also form a pilot group. In an embodiment, sector 320 (or the AN servicing it) may select one pilot signal from each pilot group in

neighbor sectors 310, 330, e.g., pilot signal 311 and pilot signal 332, and advertise only the selected pilot signals from its neighbor sectors.

[0035] The pilot grouping and reporting thus described allows ATs to communicate effectively with an AN in a multi-carrier communication system, while avoiding excessive use of network resources. It further allows an AT to perform set management effectively, as further described below.

[0036] In some embodiments, a pilot group may be identified by a set of parameters, e.g., <PN offset, GroupID>, where GroupID denotes a group ID, and the pilot signals having substantially the same coverage area fall within the same pilot group. An AT may further select a single pilot from each pilot group as the representative pilot for the group, and send a pilot strength report (e.g., a route update message) only for the representative pilot. By grouping the pilots in this manner, the AT need not send multiple reports for the pilots having substantially the same coverage area.

[0037] FIG. 4 illustrates an embodiment of pilot grouping in a multi-carrier communication system. For illustration and clarity, each pilot is represented by a box labeled with <frequency, PN offset>; further, the area of each box is shown to be in relation (e.g., proportional) to the coverage area of the associated pilot. For example, pilot < f_2 , PN=b> is shown to have a larger coverage area than pilot < f_1 , PN=b> associated with the same sector, due to no adjacent channel interference.

[0038] By way of example, GroupID = x and GroupID = y are shown to be associated with the pilots illustrated in FIG. 4. The sector associated with pilot < f_1 , PN=a> may advertise pilots < f_1 , PN=b, GroupID=x> and < f_2 , PN=b, GroupID=y> as neighbors. As such, the pilot grouping thus described allows the AN to get separate pilot strength reports from the AT when the coverage areas of the co-located pilots are different and to use the same pilot PN planning in the overlaid frequency.

[0039] In an embodiment, to take advantage of the additional coverage of pilot < f_2 , PN=b>, the AT may be allowed to point its data source control (DSC) channel to different cells (e.g., those in its active set) on different frequencies, such as DSC_ f_1 and DSC_ f_2 illustrated in FIG. 5. For example, if the AT is allowed to point its DSC only to the cell with PN=a, then it may get only the single carrier coverage as there is no coverage on frequency f_2 . On the other hand, if the AT is allowed to point its DSC only

to the sector with $PN=b$ on frequency f_1 , it may get a bad coverage associated with pilot $\langle f_1, PN=b \rangle$, because it is closer to pilot $\langle f_1, PN=a \rangle$.

[0040] FIGS. 6A-6C illustrate an embodiment of set management in a multi-carrier communication system. For clarity and illustration, each pilot signal is specified by $\langle \text{"PN offset|GroupID"}, \text{frequency} \rangle$. By way of example, FIG. 6A shows that an AT (not explicitly shown) may initially have an active set 610 including a first pilot group and a second pilot group. The first pilot group includes two pilot signals specified by $\langle x, f_1 \rangle$ and $\langle x, f_2 \rangle$, and the second pilot group includes two pilots specified by $\langle y, f_1 \rangle$ and $\langle y, f_2 \rangle$. The AT may also have a candidate set 620, which may initially include, a third pilot group having one pilot specified by $\langle z, f_2 \rangle$.

[0041] FIG. 6B illustrates one example, where a pilot specified by $\langle z, f_1 \rangle$ is added to active set 610. As a result, a pilot specified by $\langle z, f_2 \rangle$ is removed from candidate set 620, because both would belong to the same pilot group.

[0042] FIG. 6C illustrates another example, where a pilot specified by $\langle x, f_2 \rangle$ is removed from active set 610 and is not added to candidate set 620. This is because there remains another pilot specified by $\langle x, f_1 \rangle$ belonging to the first pilot group in active set 610.

[0043] The pilot grouping disclosed herein allows for efficient set management in a multi-carrier system. There may be other embodiments of set management.

[0044] FIG. 7 illustrates an embodiment of how information may be conveyed in the traffic channel assignment in a multi-carrier communication system. A traffic channel assignment (TCA) message from an AN to an AT may carry various types of information, including (but not limited to):

- Pilots in the AT's active set.
- Frequencies on which the AT may transmit.
- $\langle \text{FeedbackMultiplexingIndex}, \text{RL frequencies} \rangle$, where "FeedbackMultiplexingIndex" indicates how the following information related to multiple forward link (FL) channels may be multiplexed into a single reverse link (RL) channel: information such as cell selection, hybrid automatic repeat request (ARQ) acknowledgement (ACK), signal-to-noise-and-interference ratio (C/I) feedback, etc.

- Data rate control (DRC) cover and DSC for each sector/cell in the AT's active set.

[0045] For example, one or more FL channels associated with a plurality (or first set) of frequencies, including FL channel 710 at FL_frequency_a, FL channel 720 at FL_frequency_b, FL channel 730 at FL_frequency_c, and FL channel 740 at FL_frequency_d, are to be transmitted from an AN to an AT (both not explicitly shown). One or more RL channels associated with a second set of frequencies, including RL channel 750 at RL_frequency_x, RL channel 760 at RL_frequency_y, and RL channel 770 at RL_frequency_z, are assigned to the AT. In an embodiment, the AN may assign a subset of the FL channels each to carry RL-related information (e.g., a reverse power control (RPC) bit stream) for each of the RL channels assigned to the AT. For example, FL channel 720 may be assigned to carry the RPC bit stream for RL channel 750, FL channel 730 may be assigned to carry the RPC bit stream for RL channel 760, and FL channel 740 may be assigned to carry the RPC bit stream for RL channel 770, such as illustrated in FIG. 7. Note, in this assignment, each pair of FL and RL channels need not have the same frequency.

[0046] In an embodiment, the AN may select one of the FL channels, e.g., FL channel 720, as the "primary FL channel," and inform the AT to monitor the control channel carried by the primary FL channel (e.g., for supervision and other purposes). In this way, the AT may ignore other FL channels insofar as monitoring the control channel is concerned.

[0047] In some embodiments, an RL channel may also carry FL-related information for one or more FL channels. For example, as illustrated by dashed lines in FIG. 7, RL channel 750 may carry FL-related information for each of FL channels 710, 720, 730, which may include (but is not limited to) cell selection, sector selection, hybrid ARQ ACK, C/I feedback, etc.

[0048] FIG. 8 illustrates an embodiment of scheduler groups in a multi-carrier communication system. If a plurality of pilots belong to the same scheduler group, they may for example share the same sequence number (e.g., ARQ or "QuickNAK" sequence number) in multi-link radio link protocol (RLP), where the sequence number may be associated with detecting gap(s) in the data packet received through a single carrier. By way of example, pilots 810, 820, 830, 840 (shown with solid shading) may

belong to the same scheduler group and share BTS queue 850 in the same scheduling, as shown on the left hand side of the figure.

[0049] In some embodiments, a plurality of pilots may belong to the same scheduler group under any of the following conditions:

- The scheduler tags associated with the pilots are the same (such as illustrated in FIG. 8).
- The pilots are in the same sub-active set of the AT (which may include potential sectors to which the AT may point its DRC cover) and belong to the sectors (e.g., sectors B and C) that are in softer handoff with each other (such as identified in the TCA message).

[0050] In some instances, if the TCA message does not specify the scheduler tag for a pilot in the active set of the AT, then the scheduler tag associated with that pilot may be assumed to be a number different from other scheduler tag(s) specified in the message.

[0051] FIG. 9 illustrates a flow diagram of a process 900, which may be used in an embodiment to implement pilot grouping and reporting in a multi-carrier communication system. Step 910 groups a plurality of pilot signals into one or more pilot groups, each pilot group being identified by a plurality of parameters (e.g., PN offset and GroupID, such as described above). Step 920 selects a representative pilot signal from each pilot group for pilot strength reporting (such as described above). Process 900 may further include measuring the strength of the representative pilot signal, as shown in step 930.

[0052] FIG. 10 illustrates a flow diagram of a process 1000, which may be used in connection with traffic channel assignment in a multi-carrier communication system. Step 1010 receive a message (e.g., a TCA message such as described above) indicating a plurality of forward link channels each carrying RL-related information for each of reverse link channels associated with an access terminal. Step 1020 assigns one of the reverse link channels to carry FL-related information associated with at least one of the forward link channels (such as described above).

[0053] FIG. 11 illustrates a flow diagram of a process 1100, which may be used in connection with scheduling in a multi-carrier communication system. Step 1110 groups a plurality of pilot signals into one or more scheduler groups in accordance with the sequence numbers of the pilot signals, wherein the pilot signals are characterized by a

plurality of frequencies. Step 1120 associates each scheduler group with a transmission queue (such as described above).

[0054] FIG. 12 shows a block diagram of an apparatus 1200, which may be used to implement some disclosed embodiments (such as described above). By way of example, apparatus 1200 may include a receiving unit (or module) 1210 configured to receive a plurality of pilot signals characterized by a plurality of frequencies; a grouping unit 1220 configured to group the pilot signals into one or more pilot groups, each pilot group identified by a plurality of parameters (e.g., PN offset and GroupID, such as described above); and a selecting unit 1230 configured to select a representative pilot signal from each pilot group for pilot strength reporting. Apparatus 1200 may further include a measuring unit 1240 configured to measure the strengths of the pilot signals (e.g., the strength of the representative pilot signal associated with each pilot group), and a reporting unit 1250 configured to report the strength of the representative pilot signal for each pilot group to an AN (e.g., as the strengths of the pilot signals in the pilot group exceed the pilot-add threshold, or fall below the pilot-drop threshold, such as described above). Apparatus 1200 may also include a DSC unit 1260 configured to determine/point the DSC associated with an AT to each of a plurality of cells on different frequencies (such as described above).

[0055] In apparatus 1200, receiving unit 1210, grouping unit 1220, selecting unit 1230, measuring unit 1240, reporting unit 1250, and DSC unit 1260 may be coupled to a communication bus 1270. A processing unit 1280 and a memory unit 1290 may also be coupled to communication bus 1270. Processing unit 1280 may be configured to control and/or coordinate the operations of various units. Memory unit 1290 may embody instructions to be executed by processing unit 1280. In some embodiments, memory unit 1290 may also store an AT's active set, candidate set, and neighbor set (such as described above).

[0056] FIG. 13 illustrates a block diagram of an apparatus 1300, which may be used to implement some disclosed embodiments (such as described above). By way of example, apparatus 1300 may include a receiving unit (or module) 1310 configured to receive a message (e.g., a TCA message described above) indicating a plurality of forward link channels each carrying RL-related information for each of reverse link channels associated with an access terminal; and a channel-assignment unit 1320

configured to assign one of the reverse link channels to carry FL-related information associated with at least one of the forward link channels (such as described above). Apparatus 1300 may further include a monitoring unit 1330 configured to monitor the control channel carried by one of the forward link channels (e.g., the primary FL channel described above).

[0057] In apparatus 1300, receiving unit 1310, channel-assignment unit 1320, and monitoring unit 1330 may be coupled to a communication bus 1340. A processing unit 1350 and a memory unit 1360 may also be coupled to communication bus 1340. Processing unit 1350 may be configured to control and/or coordinate the operations of various units. Memory unit 1360 may embody instructions to be executed by processing unit 1350. Apparatus 1300 may for example be implemented in an AT, or other communication devices.

[0058] FIG. 14 illustrates a block diagram of an apparatus 1400, which may be used to implement some disclosed embodiments (such as described above). By way of example, apparatus 1400 may include a grouping unit 1410 configured to group a plurality of pilot signals into one or more scheduler groups (e.g., in accordance with the sequence numbers of the pilot signals); and a scheduling unit 1420 configured to associate each scheduler group with a transmission queue (such as described above).

[0059] In apparatus 1400, grouping unit 1410 and scheduling unit 1420 may be coupled to a communication bus 1430. A processing unit 1440 and a memory unit 1450 may also be coupled to communication bus 1430. Processing unit 1440 may be configured to control and/or coordinate the operations of various units. Memory unit 1450 may embody instructions to be executed by processing unit 1440. Apparatus 1400 may for example be implemented in an AN, or other network elements.

[0060] Embodiments disclosed herein provide some embodiments of pilot signal grouping and reporting, set management, route protocols, and scheduling in a multi-carrier communication system. There are other embodiments and implementations.

[0061] Various units/modules in FIGs. 12-14 and other embodiments may be implemented in hardware, software, firmware, or a combination thereof. In a hardware implementation, various units may be implemented within one or more application specific integrated circuits (ASIC), digital signal processors (DSP), digital signal processing devices (DSPDs), field programmable gate arrays (FPGA), processors,

microprocessors, controllers, microcontrollers, programmable logic devices (PLD), other electronic units, or any combination thereof. In a software implementation, various units may be implemented with modules (e.g., procedures, functions, and so on) that perform the functions described herein. The software codes may be stored in a memory unit and executed by a processor (or processing unit). The memory unit may be implemented within the processor or external to the processor, in which case it can be communicatively coupled to the processor via various means known in the art.

[0062] Various disclosed embodiments may be implemented in an AN, an AT, and other elements in multi-carrier communication systems.

[0063] Those of skill in the art would understand that information and signals may be represented using any of a variety of different technologies and techniques. For example, data, instructions, commands, information, signals, bits, symbols, and chips that may be referenced throughout the above description may be represented by voltages, currents, electromagnetic waves, magnetic fields or particles, optical fields or particles, or any combination thereof.

[0064] Those of skill would further appreciate that the various illustrative logical blocks, modules, circuits, and algorithm steps described in connection with the embodiments disclosed herein may be implemented as electronic hardware, computer software, or combinations of both. To clearly illustrate this interchangeability of hardware and software, various illustrative components, blocks, modules, circuits, and steps have been described above generally in terms of their functionality. Whether such functionality is implemented as hardware or software depends upon the particular application and design constraints imposed on the overall system. Skilled artisans may implement the described functionality in varying ways for each particular application, but such implementation decisions should not be interpreted as causing a departure from the scope of the present invention.

[0065] The various illustrative logical blocks, modules, and circuits described in connection with the embodiments disclosed herein may be implemented or performed with a general purpose processor, a Digital Signal Processor (DSP), an Application Specific Integrated Circuit (ASIC), a Field Programmable Gate Array (FPGA) or other programmable logic device, discrete gate or transistor logic, discrete hardware components, or any combination thereof designed to perform the functions described

herein. A general purpose processor may be a microprocessor, but in the alternative, the processor may be any conventional processor, controller, microcontroller, or state machine. A processor may also be implemented as a combination of computing devices, e.g., a combination of a DSP and a microprocessor, a plurality of microprocessors, one or more microprocessors in conjunction with a DSP core, or any other such configuration.

[0066] The steps of a method or algorithm described in connection with the embodiments disclosed herein may be embodied directly in hardware, in a software module executed by a processor, or in a combination of the two. A software module may reside in Random Access Memory (RAM), flash memory, Read Only Memory (ROM), Electrically Programmable ROM (EPROM), Electrically Erasable Programmable ROM (EEPROM), registers, hard disk, a removable disk, a CD-ROM, or any other form of storage medium known in the art. An exemplary storage medium is coupled to the processor such the processor can read information from, and write information to, the storage medium. In the alternative, the storage medium may be integral to the processor. The processor and the storage medium may reside in an ASIC. The ASIC may reside in an AT. In the alternative, the processor and the storage medium may reside as discrete components in an AT.

[0067] The previous description of the disclosed embodiments is provided to enable any person skilled in the art to make or use the present invention. Various modifications to these embodiments will be readily apparent to those skilled in the art, and the generic principles defined herein may be applied to other embodiments without departing from the spirit or scope of the invention. Thus, the present invention is not intended to be limited to the embodiments shown herein but is to be accorded the widest scope consistent with the principles and novel features disclosed herein.

[0068] **WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:**

CLAIMS

1. A method in a multi-carrier communication system, comprising:
grouping a plurality of pilot signals into one or more pilot groups, each pilot group being identified by a plurality of parameters; and
selecting a representative pilot signal from each pilot group for pilot strength reporting.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein the plurality of parameters include a PN offset and a group identifier.
3. The method of claim 1, wherein each pilot group includes one or more pilot signals having substantially the same coverage area.
4. The method of claim 1, wherein the pilot signals are characterized by a plurality of frequencies.
5. The method of claim 1, further comprising measuring a strength of the representative pilot signal.
6. The method of claim 5, further comprising reporting the strength of the representative pilot signal, if the strength of the representative pilot signal exceeds a predetermined threshold.
7. The method of claim 5, further comprising reporting the strength of the representative pilot signal, if the strength of the representative pilot signal falls below a predetermined threshold.
8. The method of claim 1, further comprising pointing a data source control (DSC) channel associated with an access terminal to each of a plurality of cells on different frequencies.

9. An apparatus adapted for multi-carrier communications, comprising:
means for grouping a plurality of pilot signals into one or more pilot groups, each pilot group being identified by a plurality of parameters; and
means for selecting a representative pilot signal from each pilot group for pilot strength reporting.
10. The apparatus of claim 9, wherein the plurality of parameters include a PN offset and a group identifier.
11. The apparatus of claim 9, wherein each pilot group includes one or more pilot signals having substantially the same coverage area.
12. The apparatus of claim 9, further comprising means for measuring a strength of the representative pilot signal.
13. The apparatus of claim 12, further comprising means for reporting the strength of the representative pilot signal, if the strength of the representative pilot signal exceeds a predetermined threshold.
14. The apparatus of claim 12, further comprising means for reporting the strength of the representative pilot signal, if the strength of the representative pilot signal falls below a predetermined threshold.
15. The apparatus of claim 9, wherein the pilot signals are characterized by a plurality of frequencies.
16. The apparatus of claim 9, further comprising means for pointing a data source control (DSC) channel associated with an access terminal to each of a plurality of cells on different frequencies.