A Fully-Balanced Current-Tunable Gm-C Low Pass Filter

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Abstract. This paper proposes a circuit of a fully balanced, current-tunable Gm-C low pass filter (LPF). The proposed circuit is relatively simple and symmetrical with different signals. The filter consists of six bipolar junction transistor (BJT) and one capacitor. The tuning range of the filter’s cutoff frequency is from 4.2793 Hz to 2.0279 MHz. The filter operates from a supply of 1.5 V. Simulation results using PSpice program for the proposed reconfigurable LPF are presented.

Keywords: Low Pass Filter (LPF), Fully-balance, Gm-C

1. Introduction

In the rapid development of the wireless communication field, the transceiver system with high performance is a hot research area in recent years [1]. The filter is one of the most important part in this system, Low Pass Filter (LPF) is widely used to remove undesired harmonics or spurious of the mixing products in the nonlinear portion of RF front-end and baseband circuits. For LPF, wide-and good-stopband rejection is important to achieve good signal-over-noise ratio and to reduce the bit error rate for the high-data-rate wired or wireless communication systems [2]-[12]. A Gm-C filter is a kind of the continuous-time filter which needs the operational transconductance amplifier to be a basic building block. The cutoff frequency of a Gm-C filter is directly proportional to the gain of trans-conductance and inversely proportional to the capacitance. The Gm-C filters have many applications in communication systems as they can reach the highest frequency and a body of literature has been published [13]. Switched-capacitor filter has been successfully applied to many voice band applications. It has good accuracy of time constants and good temperature characteristics; whereas the problem of clock feedthrough is difficult to be solved and it also needs continuous-time filters as anti-aliasing filters [12]. Another alternative is to use Gm-C filters which do not have the aliasing problem of sampled-data systems. Due to the dependence of the cutoff frequency of the filter on the absolute values of monolithic components such as capacitors and transistor transconductances, which are both process and temperature dependent, feedback and cancellation techniques are required to control the cutoff frequency of this type of filters. And it also needs a small transconductance in order to avoid using large area capacitors at low frequency [13].

In this paper, a relatively simple circuit technique to realise an integrable fully-balanced current-tunable Gm-C low pass filter presented. The cutoff frequency filter is linearly current-tunable using a tunable network where $r_e$ is the small-signal dynamic resistance of a forward biased base-emitter junction of a bipolar transistor.

2. Circuit Descriptions

Fig. 1 shows the proposed circuit a fully-balanced current-tunable Gm-C low pass filter consisting of six matched npn transistor T1 to T6, capacitor C and one identical current sinks of value $I_f$. It can be seen from Fig. 1 that the architecture of the circuit is symmetrical and hence the name “fully-balanced” low pass.
3. Ideal Analysis

Referring to Fig. 1, Firstly, Feed A small-signal input voltage of $V_{AB}$ between the emitters of T3 and T4 (or nodes A and B), Enables a small-signal current I1 passing through the emitters of T1, T2, T3, T4 and C can be expressed in equation (1)

$$I1 = \frac{V_{in}sc}{4re\cdot S + 1}$$  \hspace{1cm} (1)

And a small-signal current I2 as emitter resistance T5, T6 (or nodes C and D), of the form

$$I2 = \frac{V_{in} - I1}{2re\cdot S + C}$$  \hspace{1cm} (2)

Substituting (1) with (2) yields

$$\frac{V_o}{V_{in}} = \frac{2re}{\tau S + 1}$$  \hspace{1cm} (3)

where $\tau = 4reC$.

The corner frequency of (4) is $\omega_0 = 1/\tau = 1/\frac{4reC}$.

4. Sensitivities

Generally, a sensitivity of $y$ to a variation of $x$ is given by

$$S_{xy} = \left[ \frac{\partial y}{\partial x} \right] \left[ \frac{x}{y} \right]$$

where $y$ is a parameter of interest and $x$ is a parameter of variation [15, 16]. Since, the thermal voltage $V_T$, capacitance C and current sink $I_f$ also represent effect of temperature on the corner frequency $\omega_0$, as shown in equation (5). Therefore, Table 1 shows the sensitivity $S_{xy}^\omega$; where $(C, \omega_0)$, $(V_T, \omega_0)$ or $(I_f, \omega_0)$.

Consequently, It can be seen from Table 1 the sensitivities of $\omega_0$ are relatively constant between -1 to 1. Such sensitivities are unlike existing approaches [16]-[18]

$$S_{C} = -1.0 \quad S_{T} = 1.0 \quad S_{F} = -1.0$$

Table 1: Sensitivity $S_{xy}^\omega$; where $(C, \omega_0)$, $(V_T, \omega_0)$ or $(I_f, \omega_0)$

5. Simulation Results

The performance of the circuit shown in Fig.1 has been simulated using a Spice [19]. The npn transistors are modeled by 2N2222A, whose transition frequency $f_T$ is at 300 MHz. Fig.2 illustrates magnitude (dB) and phase shift (degrees) of $V_o/V_{in}$ versus frequency (Hz) obtained from the simulation using, for example, capacitor C = 10 nF and $I_f = 0.001 \ A$, 0.003 A and 0.009 A.

It can be seen from Fig.2 that, the corresponding frequency $\omega_o$, where the magnitude of $V_o/V_{in}$ is become -3 dB for individual values of $I_f$ are at 2.071 kHz, 5.682 kHz and 15.786 kHz, respectively, and the corresponding phase shifts for individual values of $I_f$ are all approximately -45 degree. Fig.3 depicts the simulation results of both the corner frequencies (Hz) of $V_o/V_{in}$ versus the bias current $I_f(\text{A})$, using capacitor $C = 10 \ \text{nF}$. For the comparative purposes, the ideal (expected) results are also included. It can be seen from Fig.3 that both the expected and the simulated results are consistent, and the frequency $f_o$ is linearly current-tunable over a “wide-frequency” sweep range of approximately 3rd order of magnitude.
Fig. 4 shows the simulation results of both the corner frequencies (Hz) and the corresponding phase shift (degrees) of $V_o/V_{in}$ become -3 dB, versus the capacitance $C$, using a fixed bias current $I_f$ of value 1 mA. For purposes of comparison, the ideal (expected) results are also included. It can also be seen form Fig. 4 that both expected and the simulated results are linear and consistent and, by using a minimum frequency setting capacitance of 0.01 nF, the upper frequency limit can be expected to be 2.0273 MHz.

Fig. 2: Magnitude (db) and Phase shift (degree) of $V_o/V_{in}$ versus frequency (Hz) using the capacitance $C = 10$ nF and current $I_f = 0.001 A$, 0.003 A and 0.009 A

Fig. 3: Corner frequencies (Hz) and the corresponding phase shift at -45 degrees of $V_o/V_{in}$ versus the bias current $I_f$ (A), using a fixed capacitance $C$ of value 0.01 nF.

Fig. 4: Corner frequency (Hz) and the corresponding phase shift at -45 degrees of $V_o/V_{in}$ versus the capacitance $C$ (F), using a fixed bias current $I_f$ of value 1mA.

6. Conclusions

A Fully-Balanced Current-Tunable Gm-C Low Pass Filter has been proposed. The architecture of the circuit is symmetrical with different signals. Both the simulated and ideal results are consistent. It is a simple procedure that has been presented for approximating the transfer characteristic of linearized bipolar emitter-coupled pairs. Sensitivities of either the $\omega$ have been constant between -1 to 1 independent of variables. The corner frequency is linearly current-tunable over a wide-frequency sweeping range of three orders of magnitude. The maximum useful corner frequency is around 2.0279 MHz.

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to express gratitude to Pitchayabundit College, Thailand, for research funding and supporting. Special thanks to all the experts who provided research tools and equipment, as well as, valued suggestions.

References


**Biography**

Samran Lertkonsarn was born in Thailand. He received his M.Eng.(Electrical and Computer Engineering) from Mahasarakham University, Thailand, in 2011. His research interests include the IC design.