

Optimal design of BiCMOS second generation current conveyor using the genetic algorithm

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ABSTRACT

This article presents an innovative implementation of the plus-type second-generation current conveyor (CCII+) using BiCMOS technology, which combines the benefits of bipolar and CMOS technologies. The optimization problem of minimizing the X-port input resistance and maximizing the current cut-off frequency value was solved using genetic algorithm (GA). The proposed approach allows the optimization of the BiCMOS CCII+ to achieve better performance compared to previous designs. As a practical application, a second-order band-pass filter using the optimized BiCMOS CCII+ was successfully realized. The performance of the proposed design was evaluated using SPICE simulations and compared with previously published works. This study shows that the BiCMOS CCII+ can be effectively optimized using GA to improve its performance, which has potential applications in various analog and mixed-signal circuits.

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1. INTRODUCTION

There are currently four viable integrated technologies for analog circuits, known as bipolar, complementary metal-oxide-semiconductor (CMOS), GaAs, and BiCMOS technology. Gallium arsenide (GaAs) technology is maturing very rapidly and offers many possibilities as a niche technology. This technology is well developed for microwave analog circuits, however it's less developed for analog signal processing [1]. GaAs technology's cost and processing time are more important than those of other technologies.

Technology mixed silicon bipolar and complementary metal oxide semiconductor (BiCMOS) comes to combine the main advantages of both bipolar and CMOS technologies in a single integrated circuit. CMOS gives this technology low power dissipation, high input resistance, and small silicon manufacturing area while by using bipolar, high transconductance and high-frequency performance are achieved [2], [3]. With the growing interest in the current mode approach to analog circuit design, the current conveyor is considered as the most prominent current-mode building block which has received huge attention from researchers, academics and circuit designers from around the world.

Since the 1970s, second-generation current conveyors (CCII) introduced by Sedra and Smith [4] started to be adapted and utilized in various applications as building blocks with a few other components like diodes, capacitors, resistors. Some of those applications are: Full-wave precision rectifiers, current-mode op-amp, integrators, differentiators, summers [5], filters [6]–[9], inductance simulators [10], [11], Oscillators [12], [13]. By the end of the millennium current-controlled conveyors (CCCII) based on BiCMOS technology are utilized to design a high-frequency current mode band-pass filter [10], [14]. Analog circuits

design is a hard task that relies on the designer's experience [15]. In [16], [17], and [18], some optimization techniques have been used named the statistic-based sizing approaches. These techniques are time consuming and require a 'good' starting quiescent point [16].

A few years ago, some (meta-) heuristics were proposed in the literature to deal with the optimal sizing of analog circuits efficiently, including: tabu search (TS) [19], simulated annealing (SA) [20], genetic algorithms (GA) [21]–[23], particle swarm optimization (PSO) [24], [25] ant colony optimization (ACO) [26]–[29] and artificial bee colony (ABC) [30], [31]. The GA is a popular metaheuristic technique known for its ease of use and ability to handle a wide range of optimization, design and application areas [32]. Thus, this research aims to examine how the GA can be utilized to determine the optimal size of BiCMOS plus-type second-generation current conveyors (BiCMOS-CCII+), specifically focusing on achieving minimal parasitic input resistance at port X (R_X) and maximizing the frequency for the current waveform (f_{ci}).

This article is structured as follows: Section 2, presents the proposed method; Section 3, details the circuit topic of the optimization; Optimization/simulation results and a comparison with some published works are highlighted in Section 4; and Section 5, presents the BiCMOS-CCII based second order pass band filter architecture and finally the last section presents the general conclusions of this research.

2. GENETIC ALGORITHM

The genetic algorithm (GA) is a metaheuristic inspired by the process of natural selection [33]. It is used to generate high-quality solutions to optimization and search problems by utilizing biologically-inspired operators such as mutation, crossover, and selection. The process of the genetic algorithm is depicted in Figure 1, which illustrates the flowchart of the algorithm [34].

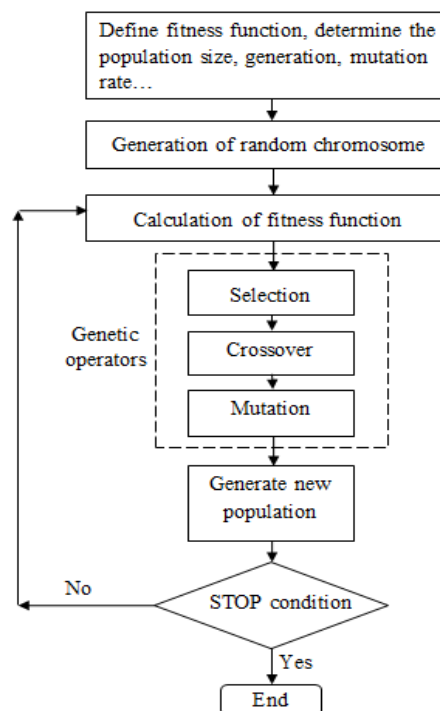


Figure 1. Flowchart of the genetic algorithm

The GA begins by randomly generating a set of solutions (chromosomes) to form the initial population. Each individual in the first population is then evaluated using a fitness function to rank a specific chromosome against all the others. The fittest chromosomes are then selected for reproduction, which involves combining portions of two or more solutions to create new offspring. This process is known as crossover. After crossover, the new offspring may undergo mutation, which involves randomly changing the value of one or more genes in a chromosome with a low probability. This introduces additional variation into the population and can prevent the algorithm from getting stuck in local optima.

Finally, the fittest solutions from the current population are selected to form the next generation, and the process repeats until a satisfactory solution is found or a stopping criterion is met, such as the maximum number of iterations. The genetic algorithm has found applications in numerous domains. Mitchell and Forrest identified nine categories of problems that can be tackled using GA [35], including optimization, machine and robot learning, automated programming, immune system, ecological models, economic models, population genetics models, models of social systems, and interactions between evolution and learning.

3. BICMOS SECOND GENERATION CURRENT CONVEYOR (BiCMOS-CCII+)

The current conveyor is a current mode equivalent of OPAMP in voltage mode circuits. It is a three terminals device as shown in Figure 2 with a describing matrix given in (1) [5].

$$\begin{pmatrix} I_Y \\ V_X \\ I_Z \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 1 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & \pm 1 & 0 \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} V_Y \\ I_X \\ V_Z \end{pmatrix} \quad (1)$$

Thus, the voltage at port X follows that applied to port Y and the current supplied to X (I_X) is conveyed to the output terminal Z where it is supplied with either positive polarity (in CCII+) or negative polarity (in CCII-). Ideal CCII are commonly characterized by low impedance on port X and high impedance on ports Y and Z [36].

The BiCMOS positive second-generation current conveyor circuit is shown in Figure 3 [37]. The two main parts of this circuit are the cascode current mirror formed by bipolar transistors Q1- Q4, and Q5-Q8 and the CMOS translinear loop formed by transistors M1-M4. The use of CMOS transistors instead of bipolar ones to build the mixed translinear loop provides a very high input resistance at terminal Y while reducing the required silicon area and the power dissipation. On the other hand, the cascode current mirror is more suitable to give a wide dynamic range to operate at low voltage and reduce the power supply as well. It also has a high output resistance, which reduces the load effect.

It has been confirmed that the frequency application range is limited by the current bandwidth, since the current is intrinsically lower than the voltage. Thus, for high-frequency current mode applications, current conveyors (CCs) have to be well sized. Furthermore, due to the non-ideality of CCs, it has been proven that the parasitic X-port resistance (R_X) is one of the most dominant parasitic components that affects CCs' performances. Hence, in this work, we focus on optimizing these two influent performances, i.e. the resistance (R_X) and the current high cut-off frequency (f_{ci}). The small-signal analysis of the circuit yields the following parasitic X-port resistance expression:

$$R_X \cong \frac{1}{gm_3 + g_{o3} + gm_4 + g_{o4}} \quad (2)$$

where, g_m and g_o are the transconductance and the conductance of the corresponding MOS transistor, respectively.

According to the study of the high-frequency equivalent circuit of BiCMOS CCII+ where C_{gd} , C_{μ} and r_o have been neglected during the analysis, we have obtained the following current transfer function:

$$A_i = \frac{I_Z}{I_X} = \frac{g_m^2 (g_{m4} + g_{o4})}{s^3 2C_{gs4} C_{\pi}^2 + s^2 (2(g_{m4} + g_{o4}) C_{\pi}^2 + 2C_{gs4} C_{\pi} (\frac{1}{r_{\pi}} + 2g_{mQ})) + s((g_{m4} + g_{o4}) (2C_{\pi} (\frac{1}{r_{\pi}} + 2g_{mQ}) + g_{mQ} C_{gs4} (g_{mQ} + g_{o4} + \frac{2}{r_{\pi}}))) + g_{mQ} (g_{m4} + g_{o4}) (g_{mQ} + \frac{2}{r_{\pi}})} \quad (3)$$

The equation above is a transfer function of 3rd order low pass filter and the expression for the upper 3 dB frequency of this filter is given as [38]:

$$\omega_H \cong \frac{1}{\sqrt{\left(\frac{1}{\omega_{p1}^2} + \frac{1}{\omega_{p2}^2} + \dots\right) - 2\left(\frac{1}{\omega_{z1}^2} + \frac{1}{\omega_{z2}^2} + \dots\right)}} \quad (4)$$

where, ω_{p1} , ω_{p2} , ..., and ω_{z1} , ω_{z2} , ..., are respectively the location of poles and zeros appearing in the transfer function. The approximate current high cut off frequency for a BiCMOS CCII+ is given as:

$$f_{ci} \cong \frac{1}{2\pi \sqrt{\left(\frac{1}{\omega_{p1}^2} + \frac{1}{\omega_{p2}^2} + \frac{1}{\omega_{p3}^2}\right)}} \quad (5)$$

The approximate pole locations P1, P2 and P3 are calculated by using (3) and MATLAB, but their expressions are not mentioned because of their huge number of terms.

In the following section, we adopted the GA to minimize R_X and to maximize f_{ci} , those two objective functions are limited by specific constraints, which ensure that the CMOS transistors of the BiCMOS-CCII+ operate in the saturation mode. Where, C_{OX} , μ_N , μ_P , V_T , I_{SN} and I_{SP} are technological parameters.

$$\frac{V_{DD}}{2} + \sqrt{\frac{2I_0}{\mu_P C_{OX} \frac{W_4}{L_4}}} \geq 2V_T \ln\left(\frac{I_0}{I_{SN}}\right) \tag{6}$$

$$\sqrt{\frac{2I_0}{\mu_N C_{OX} \frac{W_3}{L_3}}} - \frac{V_{DD}}{2} \leq 2V_T \ln\left(\frac{I_0}{I_{SP}}\right) \tag{7}$$

The first objective function, R_X , has decision variables that involve the sizes of the NMOS and PMOS transistors, which include the lengths of the channels (L_N and L_P) and the widths of the gates (W_N and W_P) and for the second function, f_{ci} , we add to the geometric dimensions above, the current gain (β) and the base-emitter junction capacitance (C_π) of bipolar transistors.

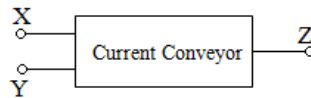


Figure 2. Current conveyor block diagram

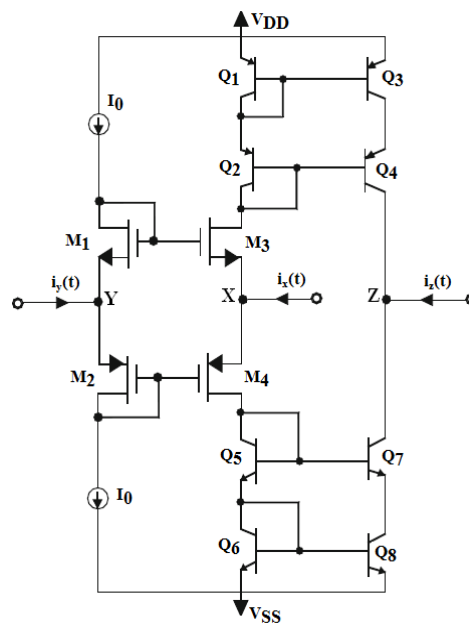


Figure 3. A positive second-generation current conveyor (BiCMOS CCII+)

4. OPTIMIZATION/ SIMULATION RESULTS

In this section, the GA algorithm was performed to optimize the BiCMOS CCII+ with the parameters given in Table 1. This algorithm is implemented in MATLAB and linked to SPICE software to measure performances. The simulation conditions are listed in Table 2 and the way to set the hybrid parameters of the BJT-transistor in the spice platform is detailed in [21]. Table 3 presents the optimal geometric measurements for the MOS transistors and hybrid parameters achieved using the GA. The comparison between the theoretical and simulation values reveals that the two results are in good agreement.

Table 1. The parameters of GA

Parameter	Value
Population size	800
Iteration cycles	1000
Crossover	Arithmetical Crossover
Mutation rate	0.01
Selection probability	50%

Table 2. The simulation conditions of the circuit

Condition	Value
Technology	CMOS AMS 0.35 μm
Bias current	100 μA
Voltage Supply	-2.5v/+2.5v
NPN transistor	Q2N2222A
PNP transistor	Q2N2907

Table 3. Optimization and simulation results for R_X and f_{ci}

	LN (μm)	WN (μm)	LP (μm)	WP (μm)	β	$C\pi$ (fF)	Optimal value	Simulation value
R_{X_min} (Ω)	0.56	174.86	0.35	296.33	—	—	150.13	213.54
f_{ci_max} (GHz)	0.37	04.10	0.35	11.50	650	74	1.833	1.979

We present in Figures 4 and 5 spice simulation results using the optimal values presented in Table 3, respectively, of R_X and f_{ci} . In Table 4, we present a comparison of performances according to the technology and the metaheuristic used. It can be clearly noticed that the GA outperforms the other metaheuristics for both technologies (BiCMOS and CMOS) while the CCII based on BiCMOS technology reached the best performances.

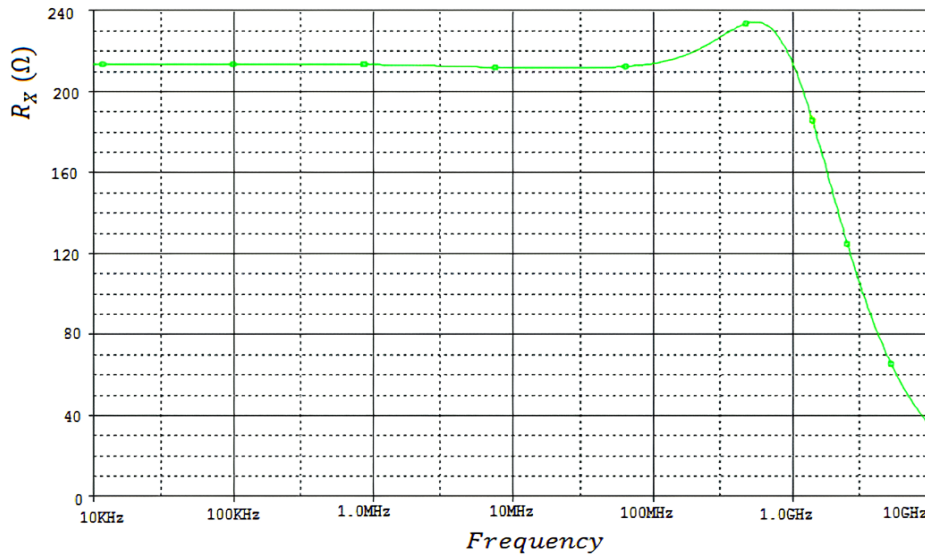


Figure 4. Variation of R_X (ohm) vs frequency (Hz) using GA

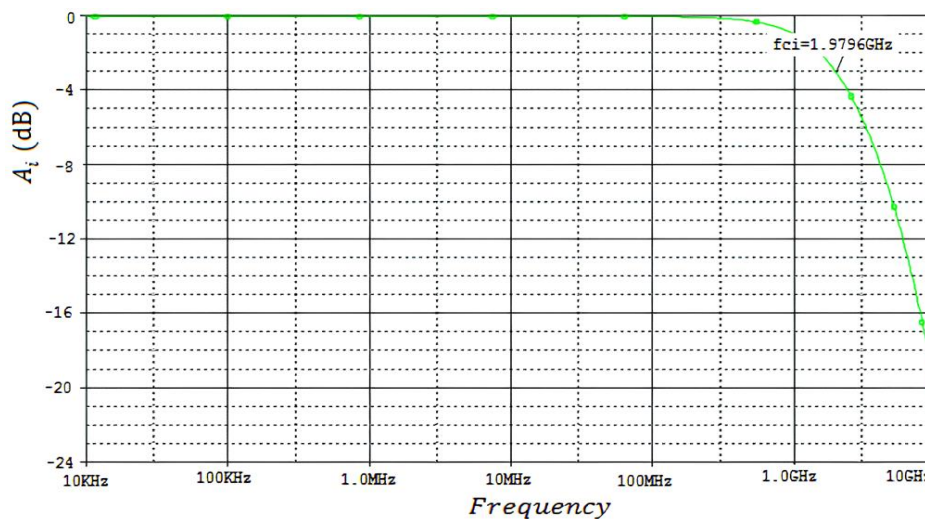


Figure 5. Current gain A_i (dB) vs frequency (Hz) using GA

Table 4. Comparison of performances

	Technology	f_{ci_max} (GHz)	R_{X_min} (Ω)
GA	BiCMOS	1.833	150.13
GA [39]	CMOS	1.841	435.19
ACO [22]	CMOS	1.792	443.00
PSO [40]	CMOS	1.751	464.00

5. APPLICATION: CURRENT-MODE SECOND ORDER BAND PASS FILTER BASED ON BICMOS CCII+

In this section, we present a second-order current-mode band-pass filter based on impedance simulation [10]. The Figure 6 shows the implementation of this filter by using four plus-type current conveyors and two capacitors [36]. The two current conveyors (CCII+ (1) and CCII+ (2)) and capacitor (C1) are equivalent to the non-ideal inductance (i.e., an inductance having a parasitic positive resistance in parallel, see Figure 7. The connection of the third CCII+ as shown in Figure 8 builds a controlled negative resistor used for nulling the effects of the parasitic shunt resistors (R_{x1} and R_{x2}), while the fourth builds the output current source. Therefore, by considering C2 equal to the shunt capacitor C, the studied filter is equivalent to a shunt RLC circuit, where its transfer function is given by [36]:

$$H(s) = \frac{I_{out}}{I_{in}}(s) = \frac{\left[\left(\frac{R_{x1}R_{x2}C_1}{R_{x4}}\right)\right]s}{1 + \left[\left(\frac{R_{x1}R_{x2}C_1}{R_G}\right)\right]s + (R_{x1}R_{x2}C_1C_2)s^2} \tag{8}$$

with:

$$\frac{1}{R_G} = \frac{1}{R_{x1}} + \frac{1}{R_{x2}} - \frac{1}{R_{x3}} + \frac{1}{R_{x4}}$$

where R_{x1} , R_{x2} , R_{x3} and R_{x4} are the X-port parasitic resistances of the corresponding CCII+. The expression of the resonance frequency is given by:

$$f_o = \frac{1}{2\pi} \sqrt{\frac{1}{R_{x1}R_{x2}C_1C_2}} \tag{9}$$

The second-order band pass filter was simulated using SPICE software, where the optimized CCII+ with the optimal parameters shown in Table 3 was used. Therefore, two filters are considered: the first is based on CCII+ which provides the lowest R_x , while the second is based on CCII+ which provides the highest f_{ci} . Figure 8 illustrates the simulated transfer response obtained for the two filters, with $C1 = C2 = 0.1pF$. We can notice from Table 5 that the GA gives the highest resonance frequency in the case of the filter based on BiCMOS CCII+ giving the maximum of f_{ci} and for the filter giving the lowest R_x based on CMOS technology.

Table 5. The obtained resonance frequencies

		R_{X_min}	f_{ci_max}
f_o (MHz)	GA (BiCMOS)	319.257	694.586
	GA (CMOS) [39]	736.643	639.397
	ACO (CMOS) [41]	497.896	641.389

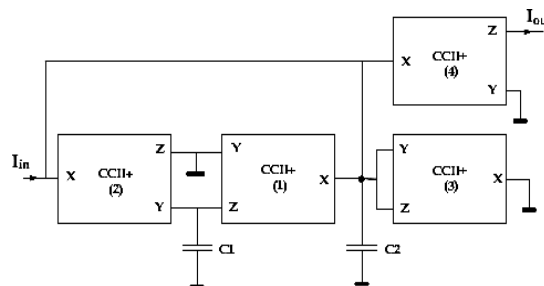


Figure 6. Current-mode second order band pass filter

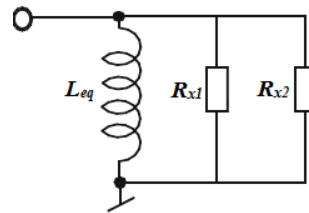


Figure 7. Non-ideal inductance with $Leq=R_{x1}.R_{x2}.C$, where C is the sum of the capacitor $C1$ and the shunt parasitic input–output capacitors on ports Y and Z of the CCII+

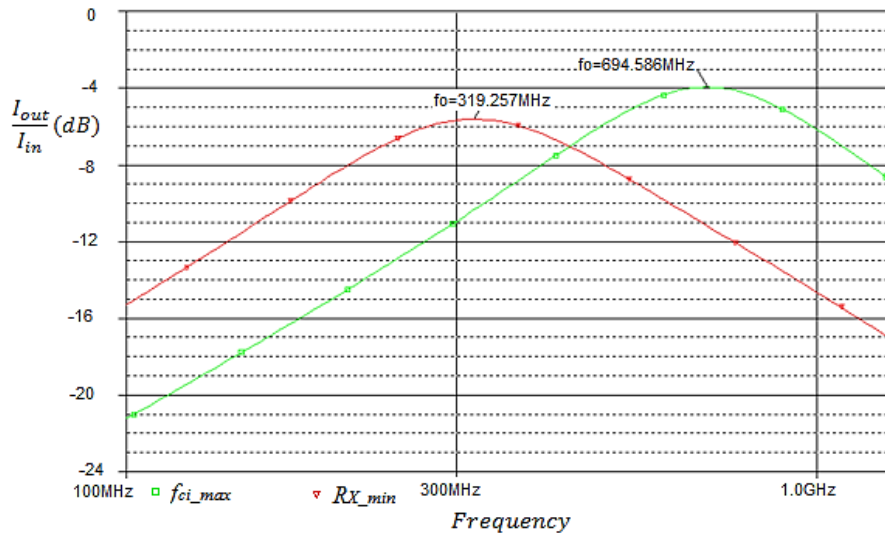


Figure 8. Resonance frequency of the second order current mode band-pass filter

6. CONCLUSION

In this work, an optimal design of BiCMOS CCII+ has been given by using the genetic algorithm (GA). The proposed CCII has a very low input resistance at terminal X compared to his counterpart in technology CMOS and a high current cut off frequency exceeding the GHz. The obtained results prove that the GA is capable of producing better results in comparison with other metaheuristics. As an application, a BiCMOS CCII+ based current mode second order band pass filter was proposed. The proposed algorithm's viability is demonstrated by SPICE simulation results.





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