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# U-Grooved SIT CMOS Technology with 3 fJ and 49 ps (7 mW, 350 fJ) Operation

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**Abstract**—In this paper Static Induction Transistor CMOS is analyzed by a circuit simulation method. According to the results, the propagation delay time of the SIT CMOS could be represented as the ratio of the load capacitance over the transconductance. The U-grooved structure plays an important role in the fabrication of MOS SIT with large transconductance and small parasitic capacitance. U-grooved SIT CMOS has been fabricated by anisotropic plasma etching, and its switching speed has been evaluated by a 31-stage ring oscillator. A minimum  $p\text{-}\tau$  product of 3 fJ/gate has been obtained for a design rule of 1- $\mu\text{m}$  channel length. A minimum propagation delay time of 49 ps/gate has also been obtained at a dissipation power of 7 mW/gate, which corresponds to a  $p\text{-}\tau$  product of 350 fJ/gate.

## I. INTRODUCTION

THE static induction transistor (SIT), which has non-saturating current versus voltage characteristics just like a vacuum triode tube, was invented by Nishizawa and Watanabe in 1950 [1]. The operating mechanism of the SIT is based upon the barrier height control of injecting carriers from the source to the channel by the electrostatic induction effect [2], [3]. The drain current of the SIT changes exponentially under the gate and drain voltages, in contrast to the "Analog Transistor" which was expected by Shockley in 1952 to follow the space-charge conduction law [4].

At first, the SIT was used in audio amplifiers, and the development of the SIT has led to other applications in electric power supplies, microwave communication [5], [6], and thyristors [7]–[9].

When integrated circuits are designed with SIT as an active device, they are able to operate with extremely high speed and low power. A type of SITL which is equivalent to integrated injection logic ( $I^2L$ ) was realized in 1975 [10]. At present, the minimum  $p\text{-}\tau$  product has been lowered to 0.2 fJ/gate [11], and a propagation delay time less than 1 ns has been achieved by a molybdenum Schottky gate SITL designed with 3  $\mu\text{m}$  rule [12]. An SITL equivalent of current mode logic (CML) can be built as well [13].

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In junction gate SITL's, the excess minority carrier injection limits the switching speed. In the metal-oxide-semiconductor (MOS) gate structure or the Schottky gate structure, there are no storage effects of minority carriers. Therefore, extremely high-speed operation is possible.

The MOS SIT has exponential  $I\text{-}V$  characteristics in contrast to the punch-through MOSFET of Richman which operates under the space-charge conduction law [14]. According to recent data from MOS SIT IC, a minimum propagation delay time of 75 ps/gate and a minimum  $p\text{-}\tau$  product of 2 fJ/gate have already been achieved [15]. Moreover, a minimum  $p\text{-}\tau$  product of 0.3 fJ/gate and a minimum dissipation power of 1.7 pW/gate have been obtained in planar SIT CMOS IC's [16]. To improve the switching speed of the SIT CMOS, the U-grooved structure is one of the appropriate structures [17].

In this paper, we present a circuit simulation method to analyze the operation of the SIT CMOS and then explain the preparation of the U-grooved SIT CMOS device.

## II. CIRCUIT SIMULATION

In order to design the SIT CMOS IC for high-speed and low-power operation, it must be made clear as to what device parameters influence the propagation delay time of the device.

One of the useful methods for this purpose is circuit simulation by discrete devices and elements such as MOS SIT's, resistors, and capacitors. Of course, computer simulation is a popular method for analyzing circuits and devices, but accurate treatment for large signal operation is not so simple. Also, the results are dependent upon the accuracy of modeling. Therefore it is useful to allow the simulated circuits to be operated with large signals, even though the circuits have time constants greater than the fabricated devices. In these circuits, equivalent device parameters can easily be changed by resistors and capacitors externally connected to evaluate the dominant device parameter. Accordingly, we can design the integrated circuits by taking advantage of the results from circuit simulation in Section II-B.

### A. Circuit Diagram

A basic SIT CMOS circuit composed of an n-channel MOS SIT and a p-channel MOS SIT is shown in Fig. 1(a). To vary device parameters, source resistors  $R_{nS}$ ,  $R_{pS}$ ; gate resistors  $R_{nG}$ ,  $R_{pG}$ ; and a load capacitor  $C_L$  can be connected externally as shown in Fig. 1(b).

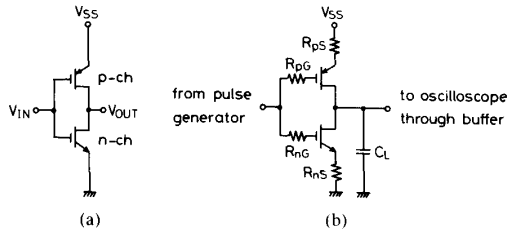


Fig. 1. Circuit diagram for simulation using discrete devices and elements.

These devices and elements are assembled on a teflon-glass substrate using microstrip lines to transmit electrical pulses. An input signal is supplied from a pulse generator through an impedance matching circuit and an output signal is observed by an oscilloscope through a source-follower buffer. The propagation delay time, the rise time, and the fall time are measured under various conditions.

### B. Measurements

The relation between the propagation delay time and the external load capacitance  $C_L$  is given in Fig. 2. The propagation delay time increases with the external load capacitance. Thus the load capacitance, which is an input capacitance of the next stage in the integrated circuit, must be reduced for the fast operation. The extended value  $C_{L0}$  where the propagation delay time becomes zero means that the load capacitance  $C_L$  corresponds to the input capacitance of the source-follower buffer.

The propagation delay time related to the external source resistance is shown in Fig. 3. The propagation delay time that the n-channel transistor changes to its on-state is designated here as "n-on time." Similarly, the propagation delay time that the p-channel transistor changes to its on-state is designated as "p-on time." When the external source resistance  $R_{nS}$  is connected to the n-channel transistor, the n-on time increases as the resistance becomes larger (Fig. 3(a)). However, the p-on time remains unchanged. With the external source resistance  $R_{pS}$  connected to the p-channel transistor, the p-on time increases while the n-on time is constant (Fig. 3(b)).

A comparison between the above two figures shows that the transistor which changes from the off-state to the on-state dominates the propagation delay time of the CMOS circuit. The increase in the external source resistance decreases the effective transconductance of the transistor. The effective transconductance  $G'_m$  is expressed by

$$G'_m = \frac{G_m}{1 + G_m R_{nS} \text{ (or } R_{pS})}$$

where  $G_m$  is the intrinsic transconductance of the transistor. When the value of  $R_{nS}$  (or  $R_{pS}$ ) is much smaller than the value of  $1/G_m$ ,  $G'_m$  is nearly equal to  $G_m$ . On the other hand, when the value of  $R_{nS}$  (or  $R_{pS}$ ) becomes larger,  $G'_m$  approaches  $1/R_{nS}$  (or  $R_{pS}$ ). As the source resistance of the SIT is further reduced to a value lower than that of

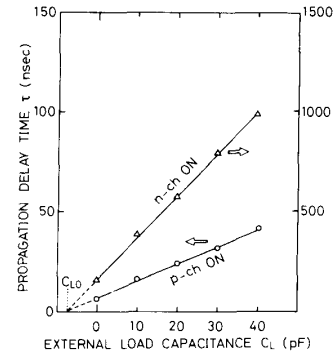


Fig. 2. Circuit simulation of propagation delay time versus external load capacitance.

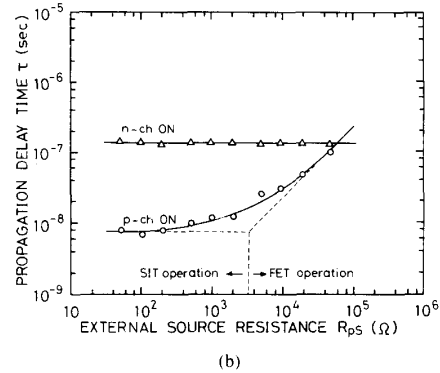
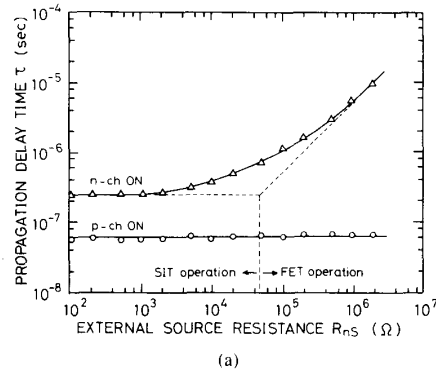


Fig. 3. Circuit simulation of propagation delay time versus external source resistance.

the regular FET, the former can be regarded as the operating condition of the SIT and the latter as that of the FET, as shown in Fig. 3.

Fig. 4 shows the relation between the propagation delay time and  $1/G'_m$ , where  $G'_m$  is estimated from the  $I-V$  characteristics of the transistor. The dotted line which indicates the total load capacitance  $C_{L0}$  divided by the transconductance  $G'_m$  shows good agreement with the measured values. Thus it becomes clear that the improvement of the transconductance is important for high-speed operation.

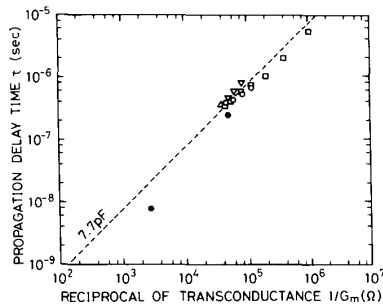


Fig. 4. Propagation delay time versus reciprocal of measured transconductance.

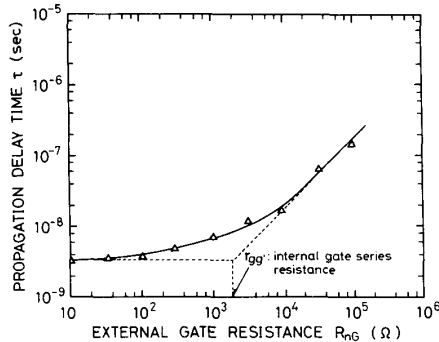


Fig. 5. Circuit simulation of propagation delay time versus external gate resistance.

Fig. 5 shows the relation of the propagation delay time versus the external gate resistance. As the gate resistance increases, the propagation delay time increases. The extended value  $r'_{gg}$ , where the two dotted lines are crossing, corresponds to the internal gate series resistance. Parasitic resistances such as the internal gate series resistance and the parasitic capacitances in the devices must be reduced for fast switching speed.

### III. PREPARATION OF THE U-GROOVED SIT CMOS

The U-grooved structure plays an important role in the fabrication of the MOS SIT with large transconductance and small parasitic capacitance [18]. This structure has not only small capacitance but also can be built with a very short channel, due to the fact that it is formed vertically. While submicrometer resolution is difficult by conventional photolithography using visible light, the precision of depth-wise processing can be determined by the deposition or the etching rate. Thus the submicrometer channel length can be realized reproducibly. There have been lately some other technologies to realize minute structures such as X-ray lithography or electron-beam lithography, but these approaches encounter some problems such as quality of the photoresist.

#### A. Device Structure

Fig. 6 shows a cross-sectional view of the U-grooved SIT CMOS inverter gate. The U grooves are formed on

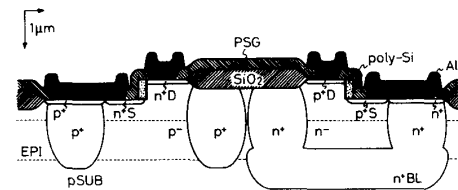


Fig. 6. Cross-sectional view of the U-grooved SIT CMOS.

the surface of the p (100) substrate along the  $\langle 100 \rangle$  direction at an angle of  $45^\circ$  from the  $\langle 110 \rangle$  orientation surface. In this structure, both surface of the substrate and the sidewall surfaces of the grooves are formed by (100) planes. It is easy to design the U-grooved MOS SIT and the planar MOS SIT (or FET) on the same chip. As the U-groove depth is  $0.5 \mu\text{m}$ , the surface steps caused by the grooves are not so large compared with the steps caused by the deposited films such as oxide, poly-Si, and Al.

At the sidewall of the U groove, a gate oxide film 20 nm in thickness is formed and the formation of self-aligned poly-Si gate adjacent to it takes place.

The drain region is formed at the top of the surface, and the source region at the bottom of the U groove. There are no overlapped portions across the channel in these regions in order to reduce the bulk current which cannot be controlled by the gate electrode. Channels are formed in the epitaxial layer divided into two steps of growth to reduce the thermal treatment time for the formation of the deep channel stoppers. To isolate the n-channel transistor and the p-channel transistor from each other, an  $n^+$  buried layer is formed in the substrate. This  $n^+$  layer prevents latch-up.

Fig. 7 shows the surface SEM photograph of a U-grooved MOS SIT in which the Al wiring and the passivation oxide film are removed to clearly reveal the gate structure. It is seen that the gate poly-Si is just adjacent to the sidewall of the groove and the gate contact pad is formed on the field oxide film.

In the fabrication of this structure, the design rule  $F$  is chosen as 3, 2, 1.5, and  $1 \mu\text{m}$ . As the mask alignment margin is taken to be  $F/2$ , one inverter gate occupies an area of  $18F \times 6F$ .

#### B. Fabrication Process

The fabrication process of the U-grooved SIT CMOS is as follows:

a) A p (100) substrate (resistivity =  $8\text{--}12 \Omega \cdot \text{cm}$ ) is used. First,  $^{75}\text{As}^+$  (dose =  $2 \times 10^{15} \text{cm}^{-2}$ ) is implanted for the formation of an  $n^+$  buried layer. After annealing, an epitaxial layer ( $5 \times 10^{13} \text{cm}^{-3}$ ,  $1 \mu\text{m}$ ) is grown in a low-pressure  $\text{SiCl}_4/\text{H}_2$  CVD system at  $1100^\circ\text{C}$  and 76 torr. The channel of the n-channel transistor ( $5 \times 10^{12} \text{cm}^{-2}$ ) and its surroundings for a channel stopper ( $5 \times 10^{14} \text{cm}^{-2}$ ) are implanted with  $^{11}\text{B}^+$ . In the case of the p-channel transistor, implantation of  $^{31}\text{P}^+$  is performed. Afterwards, another  $1 \mu\text{m}$  thick epitaxial layer is regrown (Fig. 8(a)).

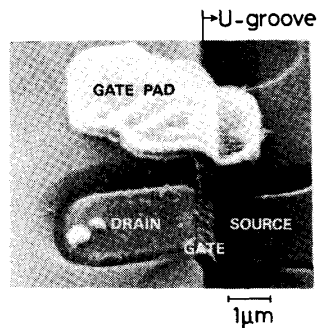


Fig. 7. Surface SEM photograph of the U-grooved MOS SIT.

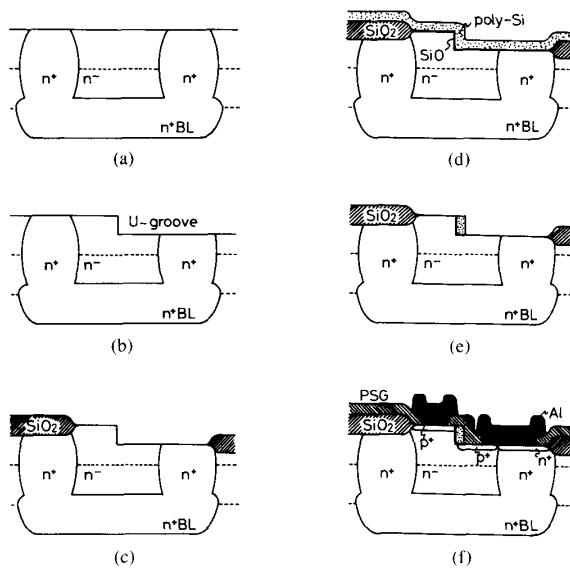


Fig. 8. Process sequence of the U-grooved SIT CMOS.

b) The U-shaped groove with a depth of  $0.5 \mu\text{m}$  is etched by  $\text{PCl}_3$  anisotropic plasma etching [19] at 0.05 torr (Fig. 8(b)).

c) An active area including the U groove is defined and the field oxide film is formed by the conventional LOCOS method (Fig. 8(c)).

d) The thin gate oxide film is formed by dry oxidation, and the poly-Si film for the gate electrode is deposited to a thickness of 350 nm using the  $\text{SiH}_4/\text{H}_2$  CVD system. Impurities are deposited simultaneously by using  $\text{PH}_3$  or  $\text{B}_2\text{H}_6$ , because the poly-Si adjacent to the sidewall of the U groove cannot be doped sufficiently by ion implantation. The sheet resistance of both  $n^+$  and  $p^+$  poly-Si are about 50 and 150  $\Omega/\square$ , respectively (Fig. 8(d)).

e) The gate poly-Si film is etched by  $\text{PCl}_3$  anisotropic plasma etching at 0.1 torr in such a way as to retain it on the sidewall of the U groove. To reduce the gate series resistance, silicide formation is effective [20]. W silicides or Ti silicides are formed by electron-beam evaporation and rapid thermal annealing. A sheet resistance of 15

$\Omega/\square$  in W silicide and 2  $\Omega/\square$  in Ti silicide is obtained (Fig. 8(e)).

f) The drain/source in both the n-channel transistor and the p-channel transistor ( $6 \times 10^{15} \text{cm}^{-2}$ ) are implanted with  $^{31}\text{P}^+$  and  $^{49}\text{BF}_2^+$ , respectively, using the gate poly-Si as a self-aligned mask. Simultaneously, contact layers to the p substrate and the  $n^+$  buried layer are formed.

A PSG/ $\text{SiO}_2$  film with a thickness of 350 nm is deposited for passivation using a  $\text{SiH}_4/\text{O}_2/\text{PH}_3$  CVD system. After opening the contact holes, Al-Si is evaporated to a thickness of 500 nm for metallization (Fig. 8(f)).

As mentioned above, the fabrication process of the U-grooved SIT CMOS is nearly identical to that of Bi-CMOS except for the U-groove etching process.

The problem that arises in the fabrication of the U-grooved structure is the damage and contamination during plasma etching. For example, n-type  $C$ - $V$  characteristic occurs at the as-etched surface even if a p-type substrate is used. A combined use of slight plasma etching with  $\text{SiCl}_4$ , chemical oxidation with a  $\text{HNO}_3/\text{HCl}$  solution, and light etching of oxide is very effective for removing the layer contaminated by phosphorus, etc. Fig. 9 shows the  $C$ - $V$  characteristics of the Al gate MOS diode after the above treatment. The solid line indicates the etched samples, and the dotted line indicates the control samples. A small amount of flat-band voltage shift and the tail characteristics are observed in the etched sample, but a surface-state density of about  $1 \times 10^{11} \text{eV} \cdot \text{cm}^{-2}$  and a breakdown electric field of about 10 MV/cm are obtained. These values are sufficient to fabricate a MOS transistor at the etched surfaces.

### C. Electrical Characteristics

Typical drain current versus drain voltage characteristics of the n-channel and p-channel transistors with  $1\text{-}\mu\text{m}$  channel width are shown in Fig. 10. Up to the current scale of 10  $\mu\text{A}$  per division in Fig. 10(a) and (b), the drain current does not saturate as with a vacuum triode tube. Over a wide current range, the drain current increases exponentially with increasing drain bias voltage. Thus it is considered that the current flow follows the mechanism of the barrier height control in the channel. At a current level of around 100  $\mu\text{A}$  per division in Fig. 10(c) and (d), the drain current tends to saturate due to the effect of residual source series resistance.

Fig. 11 shows the typical drain current versus gate voltage characteristics related to the conductivity type of the poly-Si gate and the channel. The n-channel transistor with the  $n^+$  poly-Si gate and the p-channel transistor with the  $p^+$  poly-Si gate are the depletion/enhancement modes in which a small amount of drain current flows when the gate bias is equal to zero. This is due to the drain-induced barrier lowering (the so-called short-channel effect). These devices have large transconductance even at a relatively low gate bias of 2 V or less. In order to realize the enhancement mode in which no drain current flows when the gate bias is equal to zero, it is useful to apply the  $p^+$

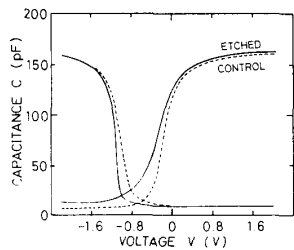


Fig. 9.  $C$ - $V$  characteristics of the plasma-etched surface.

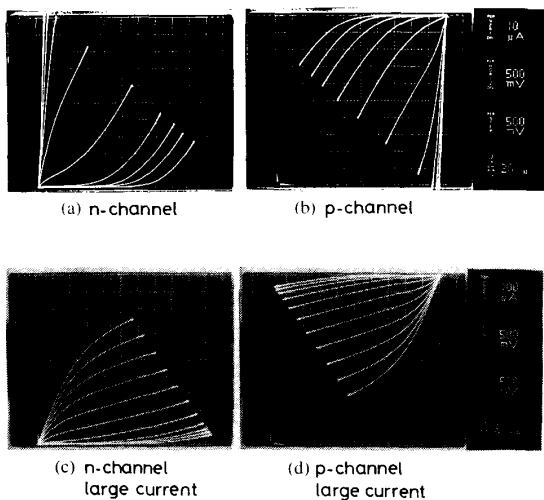


Fig. 10. Drain current versus drain voltage characteristics of the U-grooved MOS SIT.

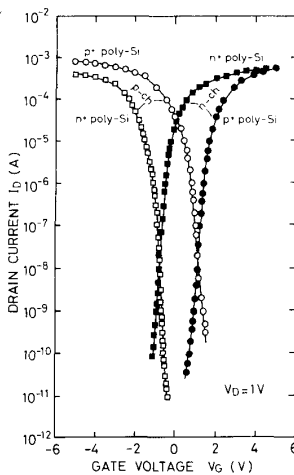


Fig. 11. Drain current versus gate voltage characteristics of the U-grooved MOS SIT.

poly-Si gate for the n-channel transistor and the  $n^+$  poly-Si gate for the p-channel transistor. Due to the work function difference between  $p^+$  poly-Si and  $n^+$  poly-Si, a potential barrier of sufficient height to cut off the drain cur-

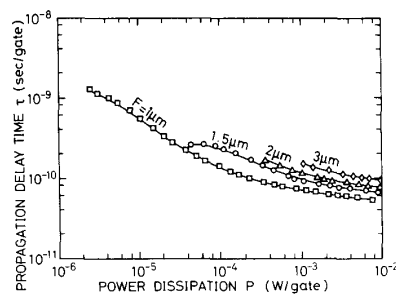


Fig. 12. Variation with design rules in  $p$ - $\tau$  curves of the U-grooved SIT CMOS:  $W/F = 1$  where  $W$  is the channel width and  $F$  is the design rule.

rent is formed even if the gate bias is equal to zero. Although the enhancement mode can be realized by increasing the impurity concentration of the channel, drain current saturation occurs, reducing transconductance.

All types of U-grooved MOS SIT have large transconductance. A maximum transconductance of 106 mS/mm in the n-channel transistor and 100 mS/mm in the p-channel transistor are obtained at a drain voltage of 1 V. This value is at least one order of magnitude greater than that of the 0.8  $\mu\text{m}$  gate planar MOS SIT. Therefore, it appears that the U-grooved SIT CMOS has a potential comparable to Bi-CMOS technology [21].

In order to evaluate the switching characteristics, 31-stage ring oscillators have been fabricated. Fig. 12 shows the power dissipation versus propagation delay time ( $p$ - $\tau$ ) curves at varying design rules while maintaining the ratio of the channel width  $W$  and the design rule  $F$  to be unity. As the design rule is miniaturized, the device operates with higher speed and lower power. At a design rule of 1  $\mu\text{m}$ , a minimum dissipation energy of 3 fJ/gate is obtained for oscillation. Also, a minimum propagation delay time of 49 ps/gate, which is faster than that of the bulk FET CMOS [22], is obtained at a dissipation power of 7 mW/gate, which corresponds to a  $p$ - $\tau$  product of 350 fJ/gate.

In Fig. 13, the depletion/enhancement mode device and the enhancement mode device are compared on the  $p$ - $\tau$  curves. In the case of the former device, a propagation delay time of 180 ps/gate is obtained at a supply voltage of 1.5 V (36  $\mu\text{W}$ ), and 0.57 V operation is confirmed, too. Therefore, the former device is suitable for low-voltage high-speed operation. In the case of the latter device, a power dissipation of 9  $\mu\text{W}$  is obtained at a supply voltage of 1.5 V (2.7 ns), showing its suitability for low-power operation.

In Fig. 14, the propagation delay time is plotted as a function of the reciprocal of transconductance  $1/G_m$ , where  $G_m$  is estimated from the  $I$ - $V$  characteristics of ring oscillators. The propagation delay time decreases in proportion to the reduction of  $1/G_m$ . This result is similar to that of the circuit simulation as shown in Fig. 4. It is considered that the proportionality constant  $1/G_m$  indicates the effective load capacitance per stage in the ring oscill-

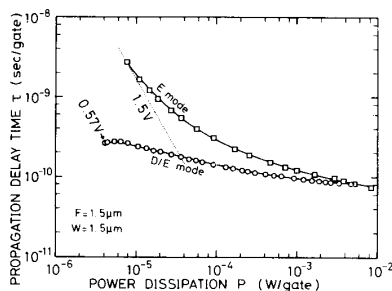


Fig. 13. Dependence of operation modes on  $p$ - $\tau$  curve of the U-grooved SIT CMOS.

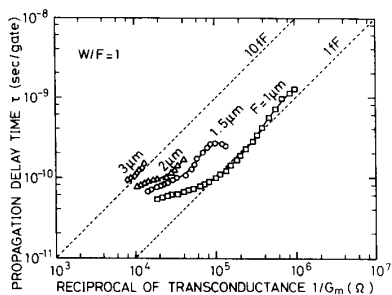


Fig. 14. Propagation delay time versus reciprocal of transconductance.

lator. This effective load capacitance can be reduced by miniaturization. The minimum propagation delay time is obtained at the point where  $G_m$  becomes largest. As the  $I$ - $V$  characteristics tend to saturate as shown in Fig. 10(c) and (d), it is important to reduce the residual source series resistance for the improvement of  $G_m$ . Even if the transconductance becomes larger, however, the reduction of the propagation delay time tends to saturate. The reason for this may be attributed to the limited switching speed by the gate series resistance as shown by the data on circuit simulation in Fig. 5. The reduction of gate series resistance is another important problem for improvement of the propagation delay time.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

A circuit simulation by the discrete devices and elements which are in actual operation with large signals is a useful method to clarify what device parameters influence the propagation delay time of the SIT CMOS. According to the results of the circuit simulation, the propagation delay time is proportional to the load capacitance divided by the transconductance. Therefore, the devices must be designed to have a small input capacitance as well as a large transconductance.

To realize the MOS SIT with large transconductance and small input capacitance, the U-grooved structure is very appropriate. In this structure, parasitic capacitances are small, and the reproducibility of short-channel length is excellent because the channel is formed depthwise.

The U-grooved SIT CMOS is fabricated by  $PCl_3$  anisotropic plasma etching. The damage and contamination

during the plasma etching is sufficiently reduced to fabricate the MOS devices by the combined use of  $SiCl_4$  plasma etching, chemical oxidation with a  $HNO_3/HCl$  solution and light etching of the  $SiO_2$ .

The switching characteristic of the U-grooved SIT CMOS is measured by 31-stage ring oscillators. At the design rule of  $1 \mu m$ , a minimum dissipation energy for oscillation of 3 fJ/gate is obtained. Also, a minimum propagation delay time of 49 ps/gate is obtained at a power dissipation of 7 mW/gate which corresponds to a  $p$ - $\tau$  product of 350 fJ/gate. As is the case with circuit simulations, the propagation delay time measured by the ring oscillator decreases in proportion to the reduction of  $1/G_m$ . In order to achieve further improvement in the propagation delay time, the reduction of the gate series resistance is another problem yet to be solved.

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