

Scaling Model for Silicon Germanium Heterojunction Bipolar Transistors

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Abstract

In the past half-century, scaling has been used to improve semiconductor devices performance. In this paper, we study the effects of scaling on SiGe(C) heterojunction bipolar transistors (HBTs) performances i.e. cutoff frequency (f_T), maximum frequency of oscillation (f_{max}) and gate delay (τ_g). The SiGe HBT scaling models are developed from more than twenty years accumulated reported data. The results show that the peak cutoff frequency shows an increasing trend with emitter width scaling with a factor of $\sim W_E^{-0.719}$, the peak maximum frequency of oscillation shows an increasing trend with emitter width scaling with a factor of $\sim W_E^{-0.723}$ and the gate delay shows a decreasing trend with emitter width scaling with a factor of $\sim W_E^{0.778}$.

Keywords: HBT, SiGe, scaling, model

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1. Introduction

Semiconductor devices have continuously been scaled down in size over the past few decades. Smaller devices are needed for several reasons. The main reason to make transistors smaller is to add more devices in a given chip area. This results in chips with more functionality in a smaller area. Smaller ICs allow more chips per wafer, reducing the chip price. It is also expected that smaller devices has better performance. The number of transistors per chip has been doubled every 2 years and was first observed by Gordon Moore in 1965 and is commonly referred as Moore's law. For example, the number of transistors in Intel microprocessors has doubled every 26 months. The 4004 processor introduced in 1971 has 2300 transistors while the Xeon processor introduced in 2007 has 820 million transistors [1].

Figure 1 and 2 show the performance trends of Si-based bipolar transistors, which include SiGe and SiGeC HBTs. The data points are accumulated for more than two decades since early 1980s to 2000s [2]. The cutoff frequency trend in Figure 1 shows that in two decades, the cutoff frequency is increased by a factor of 30, from less than 10 GHz to more than 350 GHz. The trend of the gate delay in Figure 2 shows that over the past two decades the gate delay has been reduced by a factor of 1/25, from more than 100 ps to less than 4 ps. The Si-based bipolar transistors are suitable for RF and mixed-signal applications, which need high device speed but do not require device density as high as the digital applications. These performance trends are the evident results of constant improvement efforts, ultimately by vertical and lateral scaling, supported by material and structural innovations.

Over the past half-century, scaling has been the key to the improvement of semiconductor device performance. Scaling has worked for all types of transistors, including the SiGe and SiGeC heterojunction bipolar transistors (HBTs). SiGe HBTs have SiGe as the base material which have smaller bandgap than that of Si. The SiGe base gives new degrees of freedom for the design of SiGe HBTs and allows much higher values of cutoff frequency to be achieved than in conventional silicon BJTs. The improvement in SiGe HBTs performance is shown by the reported SiGe HBTs with cutoff frequency exceeding 350 GHz [3].

Scaling rules are design rules which must be followed while scaling down geometry of semiconductor devices and interconnect lines. They provide device design parameters and performance parameters for a given scaling factor based on certain requirements and constraints. Scaling rules for CMOS devices have been extensively developed and used as a

tool for CMOS performance improvement. Even though scaling rules for bipolar transistors have not been extensively used in bipolar transistor performance improvement, there have been several efforts to develop scaling rules for bipolar transistor i.e. by Solomon and Tang [4], Bellaouar, Rosseel and Raje [3]. While there are rules to estimate the gate delay, as far as our knowledge there are no direct scaling rules to estimate the cutoff frequency and maximum frequency of oscillation. In this work, the scaling models to estimate the cutoff frequency (f_T), maximum frequency of oscillation (f_{max}) and gate delay (τ_g) for SiGe(C)-heterojunction bipolar transistors is developed based on published data over the span of two decades.

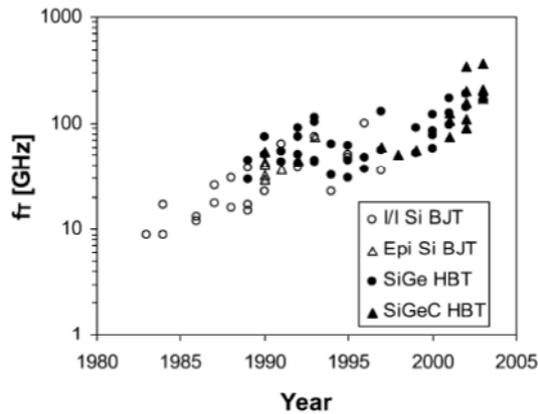


Figure 1. The trend of cutoff frequency (f_T) for Si-based transistors [3]

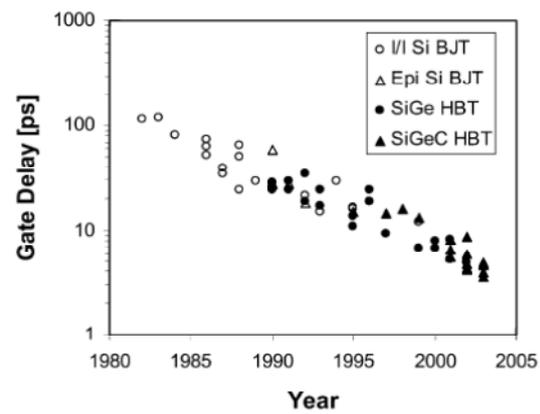


Figure 2. The trend of gate delay (τ_g) for Si-based transistors [3]

2. State of the Art of Bipolar Transistor Scaling Rules and Scaling Model Development

2.1. State of the Art Bipolar Transistor Scaling Rules

A theory for scaling bipolar transistors for ECL circuits has been developed by Solomon and Tang since 1979 and is shown in Table 1 [4]. The basic concept in this scaling theory is to reduce the dominant resistance and capacitance components in a coordinated manner so that the dominant delay components are reduced proportionally as the horizontal dimensions of the transistor are scaled down. In this way, if a transistor is optimized for a given circuit design point before scaling, the transistor remains more or less optimized after scaling.

Table 1. Solomon and Tang scaling rules

Parameter	Scaling Rules
Feature size or emitter-stripe width W_E	$1/\kappa$
Base doping N_B	$\kappa^{1.6}$
Base width W_B	$1/\kappa^{0.8}$
Collector doping N_C	κ^2
Collector current density J_C	κ^2
Gate delay τ_g	$1/\kappa$

Scaling factor $\kappa > 1$

The others bipolar transistor scaling rules have been developed by Bellaouar, Rosseel and Raje, however despite the different constraints and approaches assumed, overall trends suggested by these scaling rules for key bipolar parameters are not significantly far apart [3]. For example, when emitter stripe width is scaled by $1/\kappa$, the gate delay is expected to decrease by $1/\kappa$.

2.2. Data Collection and Mathematical Model Development

Before the scaling models for SiGe(C) HBTs are developed, the relation of lateral emitter width W_E to the cutoff frequency (f_T), maximum frequency of oscillation (f_{max}) and gate delay (τ_g) data are collected from secondary sources, i.e. from published papers over the span of two decades, from 1989 – 2010 [5] – [67]. The scaling models are assumed to have a simple power equation, for example the cutoff frequency (f_T)

$$f_T = AW_E^B \quad (1)$$

Linearization of Equation (1) yields:

$$\log f_T = \log A + B \log W_E \quad (2)$$

Least square linear regression is then applied for fitting the best line to data, and yields:

$$n \log A + \left(\sum \log W_{E,i} \right) B = \sum \log f_{T,i} \quad (3)$$

$$\left(\sum \log W_{E,i} \right) \log A + \left(\sum \log W_{E,i}^2 \right) B = \sum \log W_{E,i} \log f_{T,i} \quad (4)$$

3. Results and Analysis

The correlation between the peak cutoff frequencies (f_T) and emitter stripe widths (W_E) are presented in Figure 3, which shows compiled published data obtained from SiGe and SiGeC HBTs over the past two decades. The peak cutoff frequency shows an increasing trend with emitter width scaling, with a factor of $\sim W_E^{-0.719}$. It should be noted, though, that the data points in the plot are spread and the correlation factor (R^2) is 0.49, which means there are strong relationship between f_T and W_E .

Figure 4 shows the trend of peak maximum frequency of oscillation f_{max} over the emitter width, with correlation factor (R^2) 0.58, which is better correlated than the cutoff frequency trend. A scaling factor of $\sim W_E^{-0.723}$ is extracted, which is similar to cutoff frequency trend. Contrary to our expectation base on our previous results [69], the peak cutoff frequency and the peak maximum frequency of oscillation have similar increasing trend with emitter width scaling.

The correlation between the gate delay and emitter width are presented in Figure 5, which exhibits a decreasing trend with emitter width scaling, with a factor of $\sim W_E^{0.7782}$ and the correlation factor is 0.58. The trend is lower than expected from scaling rules i.e. $1/\kappa$, however the trend is slightly higher than compared to Rieh with $\sim W_E^{0.725}$ [3].

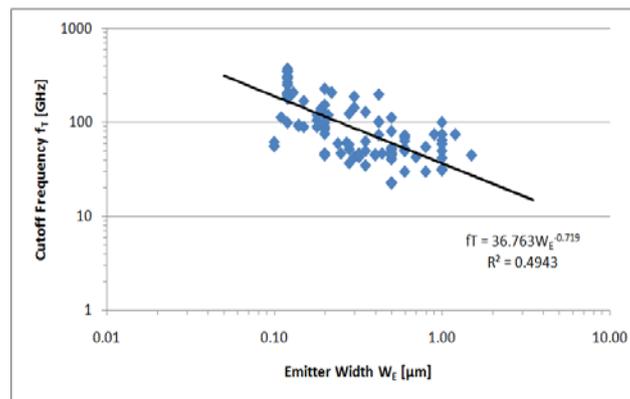


Figure 3. Scaling trend for peak cutoff frequency (f_T); Trend equations over W_E are also shown, along with correlation factor R

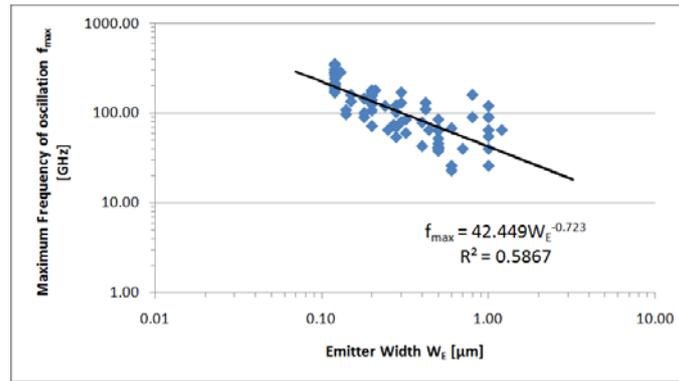


Figure 4. Scaling trend for peak maximum frequency of oscillation f_{\max}

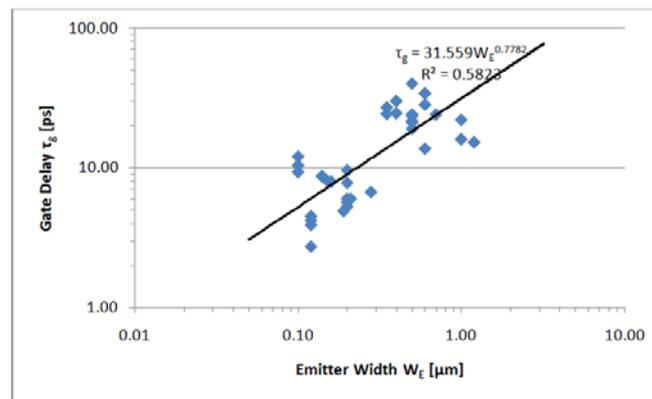


Figure 4. Scaling trend for the gate delay τ_g

4. Conclusion

1) It is shown that lateral scaling has beneficial effects on device performances such as cutoff frequency, maximum frequency of oscillation and gate delay.

2) The peak cutoff frequency shows an increasing trend with emitter width scaling with a factor of $\sim W_E^{-0.719}$.

3) The peak maximum frequency of oscillation shows an increasing trend with emitter width scaling with a factor of $\sim W_E^{-0.723}$.

4) The gate delay shows a decreasing trend with emitter width scaling with a factor of $\sim W_E^{0.778}$.

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