

A 28-GHz CMOS Power Amplifier with Ribbon Cell

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Abstract - In this paper, we present a ribbon cell CMOS power amplifier in which the structure of the power cell is like a ribbon. As the frequency increases, the output impedance decreases due to parasitic capacitors, so an interstage inductor is used. The interstage inductor used in previous research has the problem of increasing the size of the chip. Ribbon cells use larger interstage inductors through mutual inductance. Therefore, a metal smaller than the desired inductor metal size can be used. This allows the chip size to be designed to be small. It also improves AM-PM distortion and IMD3. It operates at 28 GHz with a 2.4 V supply voltage and achieves IMD3 of -40dBc at 10 dBm output power and -30dBc at 12.3 dBm output power and PAE of 19% and 25% respectively. It has a saturated output power of 18.4dBm and achieves a gain of 11.6dB at a P1dB of 16.4dBm.

Keywords—28GHz, AM-PM, CMOS, IMD3, PA

I. INTRODUCTION

Recently, with the development of the Internet of Things (IoT), various types of IoT communication networks are being used, such as smart factories, smart buildings, smart homes, and smart farms. The e-UM 5G application using the 28GHz band supports IoT systems, and a 28 GHz transceiver is required to configure the network, as everything needs to be transmitted and received to communicate. In addition, since communication is performed based on a battery, low power consumption and miniaturization are essential. Therefore, a single-chip transceiver using the CMOS process is suitable.

When developing a single-chip transceiver using the CMOS process, linearization techniques are essential because it is very difficult to secure the linearity of the power amplifier due to the nonlinearity of the transistor. Existing researched techniques include adaptive bias circuits, structures that minimize capacitance changes with additional bias voltage, and Digital Pre-Distortion (DPD) [1-5]. The above linearization techniques have the disadvantage of requiring additional passive elements and circuit

connections, resulting in additional area. Therefore, in this paper, we designed a CMOS power amplifier using the Ribbon Cell linearization technique that minimizes the chip area and does not use additional power.

II. CMOS PA WITH RIBBON CELL CIRCUIT DESIGN

Figure 2 shows the schematic of the proposed CMOS power amplifier. Power amplifiers with a ribbon cell structure operate in a differential cascode structure. A differential cascode structure has been used due to CMOS process issues. The transistor used was NMOS, and the size of each transistor is in Table 2. Additionally, a ribbon cell structure was proposed to improve the linearity of the power amplifier.

A. Differential Cascode structure

The CMOS process is grounded with a bonding wire or metal line. Because there is no ground VIA. Therefore a differential amplifier structure was used to provide a virtual

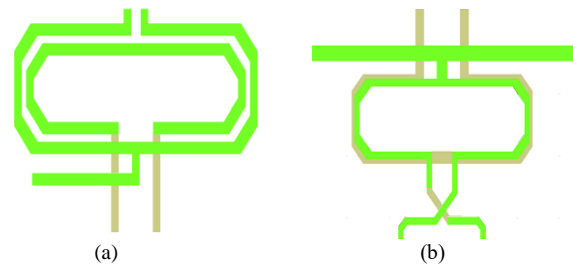


Fig. 1. Transmission line transformer matching network
(a) Input TLT design (b) Output TLT design

TABLE I. Transmission Line Transformer Parameters.

	Input TLT	Output TLT
Type	Edge Coupling	Broadside Coupling
Primary (Metal /Width)	OI / 5um	OI / 5um
Secondary (Metal /Width)	IB/ 8um	IB/ 5um
Size	170um x 135um	160um x 155um

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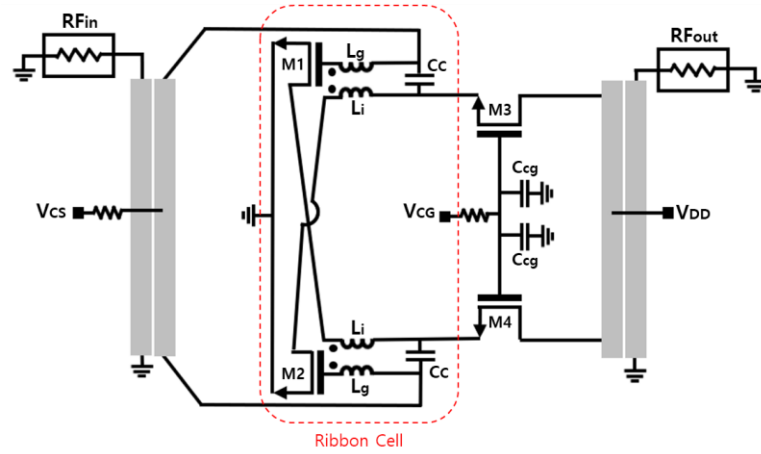


Fig. 2. Schematic of the proposed CMOS Power Amplifier

TABLE 2. Transistor Size.

TR Name	Gate finger width	Number of fingers	Multiplier	Total Gate width	Gate length
M1~M4	2 μm	16	8	256 μm	0.03 μm

ground. And when a differential amplifier structure is used, conversion between RF and differential signals is required. Therefore, a transmission line transformer (TLT) was used at the input and output to operate as a balun. In addition, the TLT allows the input and output impedance of the power amplifier to be matched. The input and output TLTs are shown in Figure 1 and the parameters are shown in Table 1. The input TLT is an edge coupling type with a size of 160 μm x 155 μm and the output TLT is a broadside coupling type with a size of 170 μm x 135 μm .

In addition, the proposed power amplifier has a cascode structure. This is because the CMOS process has a low breakdown voltage. The cascode structure provides sufficient voltage to the power amplifier. In addition, the cascode structure can reduce the Miller effect.

B. Interstage inductor through Ribbon Cell structure

As the operating frequency increases, the real and imaginary parts of the drain impedance of a power amplifier using a cascode structure decrease due to parallel parasitic capacitance. However, if you connect a series interstage inductor between the Common Source (CS) amplifier and the Common Gate (CG) amplifier, The impedance of the real and imaginary parts of the drain increases.[6],[7] Therefore, mismatch of the power amplifier can be avoided through the series interstage inductor. However, mismatch can be avoided by inserting and connecting a large series inductor, but since the metal length increases to use a large inductance in the layout, the chip size increases and RF path loss occurs. To address the above problems, we propose a power amplifier using a ribbon cell structure. Figure 3 shows the layout of the proposed ribbon cell structure. The series interstage inductor L_i , which connects the drain of the CS amplifier and the source of the CG amplifier, is close to the gate metal line of the CS amplifier. In this layout, there is mutual indu-

-tance between L_i and L_g . Figure 4 is equivalently converted to the ribbon cell Structure T - model. It can be expressed as (1). L_m is the mutual inductance. Through the above equation, it can be confirmed

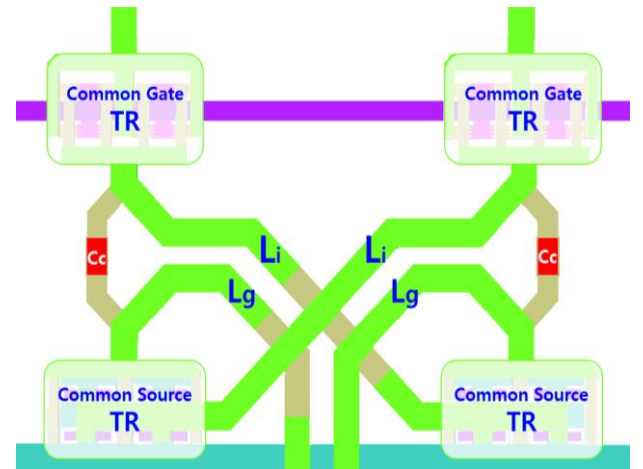


Fig. 3. Layout of the proposed Ribbon Cell

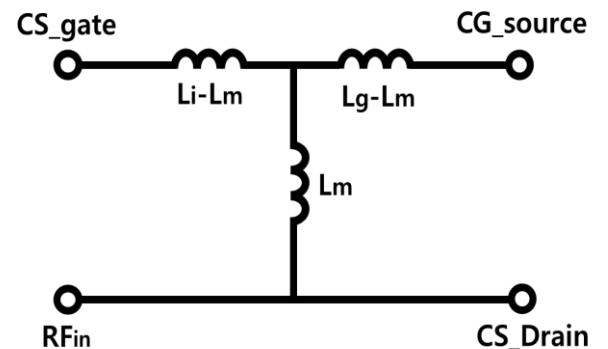


Fig. 4. T-model of Ribbon Cell

TABLE 3. Mutual Inductance of Ribbon Cell

inductor	pH
L	41.5
L_i	47.3
L_g	55
m	18

$$L = L_i - \frac{m^2}{L_g} \quad (1)$$

that there is mutual inductance, and the inductance of L_i appears larger due to the mutual inductance. Therefore, the desired value of inductance can be achieved by using a small inductor, resulting in a size advantage. Table 3 shows the mutual inductance used in the proposed power amplifier.

III. SIMULATION RESULTS

Linearity is improved when a ribbon cell structure is used in a CMOS power amplifier. Figure 5 and Table 4 show the AM-PM distortion and IMD3 simulation results with and without the ribbon cell structure. With the ribbon cell structure, an IMD3 of -40dBc is achieved at 10 dBm output power, and an IMD3 of -30dBc is achieved at 12.3 dBm output power.

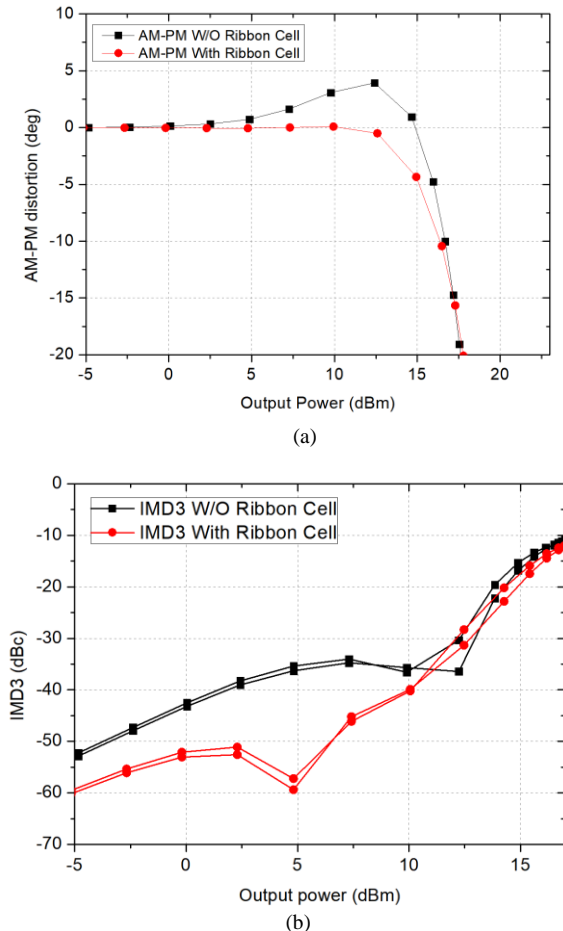


Fig. 5. Simulation results (a)AM-PM (b)IMD3

In Figure 6, it has a PAE of 19% and 25%. Therefore, with the ribbon cell structure, the desired series inductance can be used without increasing the size of the layout due to the inductor, and linearity is improved.

TABLE 4. Simulation Results of Linearity

	W/O ribbon cell' result	With ribbon cell result
AM-PM	3.8 at 12dBm 3.1 at 10dBm	-0.38 at 12dBm 0.08 at 10dBm
IMD3	-30dBc at 12.3 dBm	-40dBc at 10 dBm -30dBc at 12.1 dBm
Linear PAE (IMD3 -40dBc)	-	19%

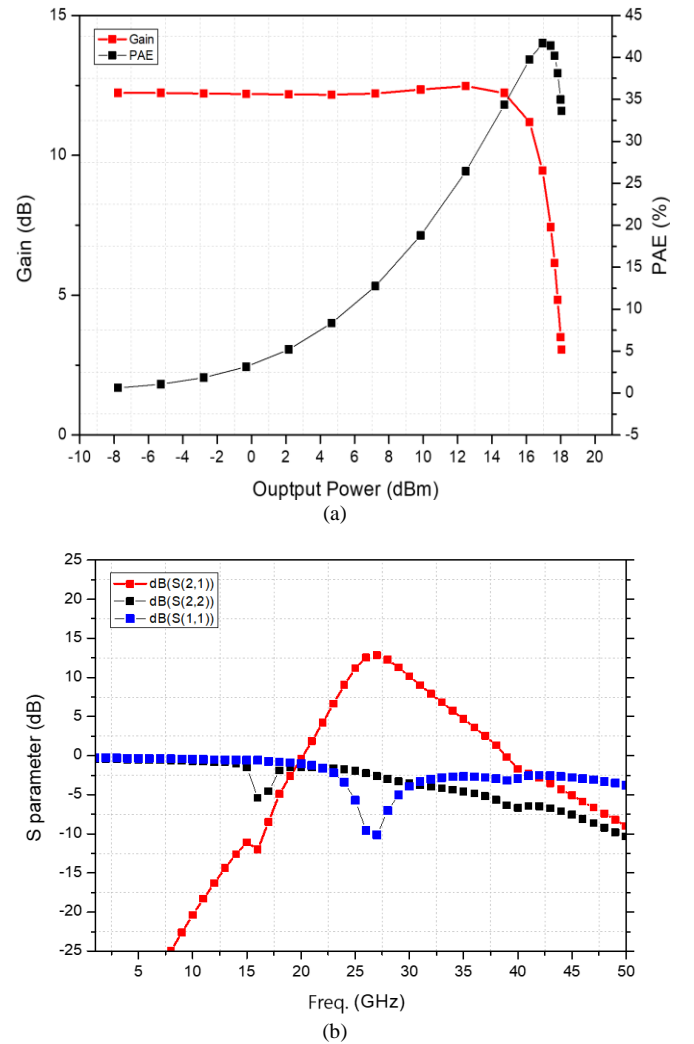


Fig. 6. Simulation results (a)Gain, PAE (b)S-parameter

Figure 6 shows the 1-tone simulation results of a CMOS power amplifier with a ribbon cell structure. At a frequency of a 28 GHz, the gain is 11.6 dB and the peak PAE is 41.8%. The S-parameter results, $S(1,1) / S(2,2) / S(2,1)$, are -7 dB / -3 dB / 12.4 dB at 28 GHz frequency. The results in Figure 7 show that the stability factor is greater than 1 at all frequencies, indicating unconditional stability. Figure 8 shows the layout of the proposed CMOS power amplifier. It

has a size of 595 μ m x 660 μ m including the ESD PAD. Table 5 shows the performance comparison with a 28GHz CMOS PA with linearization.

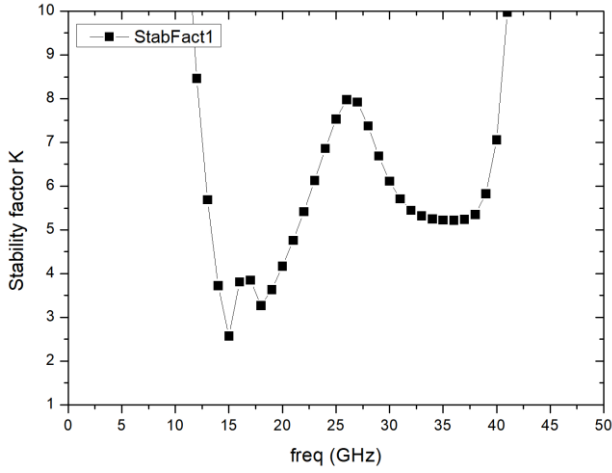


Fig. 7. Stability factor

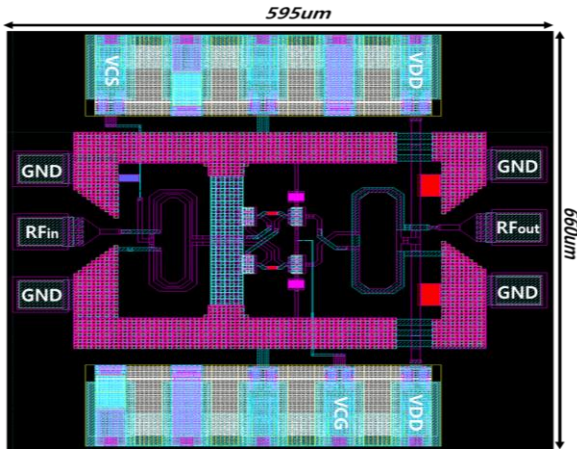


Fig. 8. Proposed CMOS Power Amplifier layout

TABLE 5. Performance Comparison with 28GHz CMOS PA with Linearization

	[8]	[9]	This Work (Simulated)
Freq (GHz)	28	28	28
Linear Power (dBm)	11	7.5	12.3
Peak PAE(%)	43.3	27.3	41.8
Gain (dB)	13.6	18	12.4
# of stage	1	2	1
Linearization	2fo control	Dual power mode S-PCC	Ribbon cell
Area*(mm ²)	0.78	0.5	0.4
Process	CMOS 28nm	CMOS 65nm	CMOS 28nm

*including pads

IV. CONCLUSION

This paper proposes a ribbon cell structure to improve the linearity of a CMOS power amplifier operating at 28 GHz. As a result of the simulation, the AM-PM is 0.08 degrees at 10dBm and -0.38 degrees at 12 dBm. The IMD3 results are

-40 dBc at 10 dBm and -30 dBc at 12.3 dBm, with PAEs of 19% and 25%, respectively. It has a gain of 11.6 dB, a peak PAE of 41.8%, and a stability factor of more than 1, so it is unconditionally stable.

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