

A Gain Compensation Circuit for CMOS Amplifiers

Background of the Invention

Field of the Invention

This invention relates to high gain, high frequency amplifier circuits. More particularly, this invention relates to circuits that compensate for changes and fluctuations in the gain of high gain, high frequency amplifier circuits due environmental factors such as manufacturing process, temperature, and operating conditions.

Description of Related Art

The basic structure of a differential amplifier well known in the art and is generally as shown in Fig. 1. The n-type metal oxide semiconductor (NMOS) transistors **M1** and **M2** are generally coupled at their sources and connected to the current source I_B . The drains of the NMOS transistors **M1** and **M2** are respectively connected to the equal valued load resistors **RL1** and **RL2**. The gates of the NMOS transistors **M1** and **M2** are respectively connected to the input terminals **IN1** and **IN2**. The drain currents of the NMOS transistors **M1** and **M2** are summed and must be equal to the current of the current source I_B . It can thus be shown that the voltage present at the drain of the NMOS transistors **M1** and **M2** is equal to:

$$V_{OUTd} = -g_m R_{Ln} V_{IND}$$

where:

V_{OUTd} is the differential voltage at the output nodes **OUT1** and **OUT2**.

g_m is the transconductance of the NMOS transistors **M1** and **M2**.

R_{Ln} is the resistance of the resistors **RL1** or **RL2**.

V_{IND} is the differential voltage at the input nodes **IN1** and **IN2**.

The variations in the differential voltage V_{OUTd} due to variations in the environmental factors such as temperature, process parameters, and operating conditions can be shown to effect the values of the transconductance g_m of the NMOS transistors **M1** and **M2** and the dependence of the resistors **RL1** and **RL2** to the environmental factors. One method for compensation of these variations is to place the source degeneration resistors R_{s1} and R_{s2} respectively in the source connections of the NMOS transistors **M1** and **M2**. The source degeneration resistors R_{s1} and R_{s2} have resistance designs to sufficiently improve the immunity

of the differential amplifier to the variations, but not impact the dynamic range of the output voltage V_{OUTd} .

The effective transconductance g_{ms} of the NMOS transistors **M1** and **M2** in combination with the source degeneration resistors R_{s1} and R_{s2} can be shown to be equal to:

$$g_{ms} = \frac{g_m}{1 + g_m R_s} \quad \text{Eq. 1}$$

Further, the gain of the differential amplifier is then expressed as:

$$A_v = \frac{V_{OUTd}}{V_{IND}} = g_{ms} R_{Ln} \quad \text{Eq. 2}$$

As is known the appropriate choices of the materials for the resistors R_{s1} and R_{s2} and the resistors **RL1** and **RL2** minimize the effects of the environmental factors. However, this does not stabilize the gain completely.

As the gain requirements for an amplifier increases, multiple differential amplifiers of Fig. 1 are cascaded as shown in Fig. 2. The first differential stage A_{v1} of the cascaded amplifier is formed of the NMOS transistors **M20** and **M21**, the load resistors **RL3** and **RL4**, the current source I_{B1} , and the source degeneration resistors R_{s1} and R_{s2} configured as shown in Fig. 1. The second differential stage A_{v2} of the cascaded amplifier is formed of the NMOS transistors **M22** and **M23**, the load

resistors **RL5** and **RL6**, the current source I_{B2} , and the source degeneration resistors **Rs₃** and **Rs₄**, also configured as shown in Fig. 1. Similarly, the third differential stage **Av₃** of the cascaded amplifier is formed of the NMOS transistors **M24** and **M25**, the load resistors **RL7** and **RL8**, the current source I_{B3} , and the source degeneration resistors **Rs₅** and **Rs₆**, which are configured as shown in Fig. 1. The input nodes **IN1** and **IN2** are coupled by capacitors **C_{P1}** and **C_{P2}** to the gates of the NMOS transistors **M20** and **M21**. The bias resistors **R_{B1}** and **R_{B2}** provide a biasing voltage from the biasing voltage power supply V_{GG} to bias the amplifier **Av₁** to operate in a linear, high gain region. The output terminals of the amplifier **Av₁** are coupled through the capacitors **C_{P3}** and **C_{P4}** to the gates of the NMOS transistors **M22** and **M23**. As described for the bias resistors **R_{B1}** and **R_{B2}**, the bias resistors **R_{B3}** and **R_{B4}** provide a biasing voltage from the biasing voltage power supply V_{GG} to bias the amplifier **Av₂** to operate in a linear, high gain region. Next, the output terminals of the amplifier **Av₂** are coupled through the capacitors **C_{P5}** and **C_{P6}** to the gates of the NMOS transistors **M24** and **M26**. As described for the bias resistors **R_{B1}** and **R_{B2}** and the bias resistors **R_{B3}** and **R_{B4}**, the bias resistors **R_{B5}** and **R_{B6}** provide a biasing voltage from the biasing voltage power supply V_{GG} to bias the amplifier **Av₃** to operate in a linear, high gain region. The output signal of the amplifier is coupled through the capacitors **C_{P7}** and **C_{P8}** to the output terminals **OUT1** and **OUT2**. The gain of the amplifier of Fig. 2 is the product of the individual gains of the

differential amplifier stages Av_1 , Av_2 , and Av_3 and are determined as defined above for the amplifier described in Fig. 1. Further, the number of differential amplifier stages Av_1 , Av_2 , and Av_3 is determined by the total gain required for the amplifier, thus the design of the individual stages may vary to accommodate the design requirements.

As described above the source degeneration resistors Rs_3 , Rs_4 , Rs_5 and Rs_6 , Rs_7 and Rs_8 are added to partially compensate for the variations in the environmental factors. Further, other compensation techniques employ feedback to adjust the gain of the differential amplifier stages with changes in the environmental factors. However, feedback techniques do not work well when very large gain factors are required for the amplifier. In Analog Integrated Circuit Design, Johns and Martin, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York, 1999, pp. 248-251, the author notes that the transconductance of the NMOS transistors of a differential amplifier is the most important parameter to stabilize. The authors detail and analyze basic techniques to prevent variations of the transconductance with variations in the environmental factors.

U.S. Patent 6,018,270 (Stuebing, et al.) describes a single biasing circuit for a single or multiple stage low voltage RF circuits including one or more amplifiers and one or more single or double balanced mixers. The biasing circuit incorporates compensation for temperature and integrated circuit process parameters.

U.S. Patent 4,409,558 (Knijnenburg, et al.) describes a gain compensated transistor amplifier arrangement for use in power protection circuits. The amplifier includes an emitter-follower transistor. The collector current of the emitter-follower transistor is fed to a resistor to compensate for variations in the current gain factor of the transistors of the amplifier.

U.S. Patent 4,916,407 (Olver) illustrates a gain variation compensating circuit for a feed-forward linear amplifier. The gain compensating circuit counteracts the gain variations and restores balance and fundamental cancellation to the circuit while retaining the highly linear characteristics of the amplifier.

U.S. Patent 5,274,339 (Wideman, et al.) teaches circuit for compensating for GaAs FET amplifier gain variations over a frequency band as a function of temperature. The circuit includes a passive equalizer circuit having a fixed gain over the frequency band and an active equalizer circuit, in series with the passive equalizer, having a gain, which varies over the frequency band as a function of temperature.

U.S. Patent 6,046,642 (Brayton, et al.) describes an active bias compensation circuit that senses a quiescent current flowing in an amplifier and adjusts the quiescent current to maintain an optimal DC biasing of the amplifier over a wide range of temperature variation, process variation, history of the amplifier, etc.

U.S. Patent 5,673,047 (Moreland) describes a gain compensating differential reference circuit that is used to match the gain of an input differential amplifier that is an input of an analog-to-digital converter to provide a biasing voltage to the analog-to-digital converter.

U.S. Patent 4,929,909 (Gilbert) teaches a single differential amplifier including a current source for generating a biasing tail current to compensate for the non-ideal transistor geometries and properties. The compensation results in an amplification ratio, which is substantially independent of all component variations.

U.S. Patent 5,994,961 (Lunn, et al.) teaches an amplifier circuit that has a gain control input signal to adjust the gain of the amplifier. The gain control input signal is passed through a temperature compensating circuit, which provides a gain compensation to adjust the gain of the amplifier for temperature. The gain of the amplifier is adjusted as desired, however, the amplifier gain is compensated for temperature variations.

Summary Of The Invention

An object of this invention is to provide a gain compensation circuit that compensates for variations in gain of a high gain, high frequency amplifier.

Another object of this invention is to provide a circuit that adjusts biasing currents of a high gain, high frequency amplifier to compensate

fully for changes in mobility of transistor and resistor components of the amplifier.

To accomplish at least one of these objects and other objects, a gain compensation circuit includes a current adjustment circuit and a gain factor evaluation circuit. The current adjustment circuit modifies a bias current provided to each amplifier stage of a plurality of amplifier stages that make up a high gain, high frequency amplifier. The modification of the bias current adjusts the gain factor of the amplifier. The gain factor evaluation circuit is in communication with the current adjustment circuit to determine changes in the gain factor of the high gain, high frequency amplifier. From the determination, the gain factor evaluation circuit provides a compensation signal to the current adjustment circuit indicating a modification factor for the biasing current for each amplifier stage.

In a first embodiment of this invention, the current adjustment circuit has a first reference constant current source mirrored from a reference current source to generate a reference current. A first replica amplifier is connected to the first reference constant current source to conduct a master biasing current that is modified according to the compensation signal. Biasing currents for each amplifier is provided by a plurality of mirroring current sources. Each mirroring current source is in communication with the first replica amplifier stage such that each

mirroring current sources generates one bias current proportional to the master bias current of the replica amplifier stage.

In a second and third embodiment of this invention, the current adjustment circuit is a plurality of mirroring current sources. The mirroring current sources provide the bias currents for each amplifier stage. The mirroring current sources receive the compensating signal from the gain factor evaluation circuit. In this embodiment, the compensating signal is a compensation current from which the bias currents are mirrored.

The gain factor evaluation circuit has a reference voltage source to provide a first and a second reference voltage, which are inputs to a second replica amplifier stage. The second replica amplifier stage amplifies a voltage difference between the first and the second reference voltages. The gain factor evaluation circuit has a compensation signal generator connected to the second replica amplifier stage to receive the amplified voltage difference, modulate a biasing current of the second replica amplifier stage and, when the amplified voltage difference approaches a null level, produce the compensation signal. The compensation signal generator is formed of an operational amplifier having an in-phase input and an out-of-phase input connected to receive the amplified voltage difference. The compensation signal generator has a first master current source that provides the biasing current to the second replica amplifier and a second master current source joined to the

out-of-phase input of the operational amplifier. The second master current source causes a voltage level to be present at the out-of-phase input to be modified. The second master current source is coupled to the first master current source such that they are proportional, irrespective of environmental changes. The compensation signal generator further has a current feedback circuit connected between an output of the operational amplifier and the first master current source to sink a compensation current to the first master current source. The biasing current of the second replica amplifier and the compensating current are combined such that, as the operational amplifier changes the compensation current, the biasing current of the second replica amplifier adjusts inversely. The compensation signal generator additionally has a compensation signal converter communicating with the operational amplifier to form the compensation signal as a function of the compensating current. In the preferred implementation the compensation signal converter is a first voltage-to-current converter.

The current feedback is formed by a second voltage-to-current converter that transforms a compensating voltage at the output of the operational amplifier to the compensation current.

Brief Description of the Drawings

Fig. 1 is a schematic diagram of a differential amplifier stage having degenerative feedback of the prior art.

Fig. 2 is a schematic diagram of a high gain, high frequency amplifier of the prior art.

Fig. 3 is block diagram drawing of a first embodiment of a gain compensation circuit for a high gain, high frequency amplifier of this invention.

Fig. 4 is a schematic diagram of a first embodiment of a gain compensation circuit for a high gain, high frequency amplifier of this invention.

Fig. 5 is a schematic diagram of a high gain, high frequency amplifier that employs the first embodiment of a gain compensation circuit of this invention.

Fig. 6 is block diagram drawing of a second embodiment of a gain compensation circuit for a high gain, high frequency amplifier of this invention.

Fig. 7 is a schematic diagram of a second embodiment of a gain compensation circuit for a high gain, high frequency amplifier of this invention.

Fig. 8 is a schematic diagram of a high gain, high frequency amplifier that employs the second embodiment of a gain compensation circuit of this invention.

Fig. 9 is block diagram drawing of a third embodiment of a gain compensation circuit for a high gain, high frequency amplifier of this invention.

Fig. 10 is a schematic diagram of a third embodiment of a gain compensation circuit for a high gain, high frequency amplifier of this invention.

Fig. 11 is a schematic diagram of a high gain, high frequency amplifier that employs the third embodiment of a gain compensation circuit of this invention.

Detailed Description Of The Invention

To adjust the total gain of the differential amplifier as shown in Fig. 1, the current through the NMOS transistors **M1** and **M2** must be adjusted to compensate for the changes in the transistors parameters due to the variations in the environmental factors such as process, temperature, and applied voltage. In the first embodiment of this invention, the current of the biasing current source I_B is adjusted as the environmental factors change. In the second and third embodiments of this invention, the current of the current source I_B is held as a constant value. A compensation current is added or subtracted with the biasing current source I_B of the NMOS transistors **M1** and **M2**. As the environmental factors change, the parameters such as mobility of the NMOS transistors

M1 and **M2** and the resistivity of the resistors RL_1 , RL_2 , Rs_1 , and Rs_2 change. The compensation current is inversely varied to counteract these effects of the change in the parameters of the NMOS transistors **M1** and **M2** such that the gain of the high gain, high frequency amplifier remains essentially constant.

Refer now to Fig. 3 for a description of a bias current generator of the first and principal embodiment of this invention. The master current source I_0 is the reference current source that provides the controlling current for the current sources I_1 , I_2 , I_3 , and I'_2 that are mirrored from the reference current source I_0 . The current source I_1 is coupled to supply the controlling current to the voltage reference generator V_{REF} . The voltage reference generator V_{REF} produces the reference voltages V_{REF1} and V_{REF2} .

The reference voltages V_{REF1} and V_{REF2} are the inputs to the differential amplifier **DA1**. The differential amplifier **DA1** is structured as shown in Fig. 1 having similar device geometries and resistance values. The biasing current I_B of the differential amplifier **DA1** is supplied by the current source I_2 . The output nodes N_1 and N_2 are the inputs to the operational amplifier **OA1**. The current source I_3 is connected to the output node N_2 to provide a biasing current that adjusts the voltage level of the output node N_2 . The output of the operational amplifier is connected to a voltage-to-current converter **VI1**. The voltage output of the

operational amplifier **OA1** is converted and scaled to a current value within the voltage-to-current converter **VI1**. The compensation current I_{CT} from the voltage-to-current converter **VI1** is subtracted from the constant current I_2 to form the biasing current I_B for the differential amplifier **DA1**. The compensation current I_{CT} provides the feedback to adjust the biasing current I_B of the differential amplifier **DA1**. This, in turn, adjusts the voltage at the output nodes **N₁** and **N₂** by changing the amplification factor of the differential amplifier **DA1**.

Any changes in the environmental factors cause the voltage at the output nodes **N₁** and **N₂** to be different. The compensation current I_{CT} causes the biasing current I_B to readjust such that the voltages at the output nodes **N₁** and **N₂** are brought to the same level. This, as shown hereinafter, ensures that the gain of the operational amplifier **DA1** remains constant.

In the first embodiment, as explained above, the biasing currents of the differential amplifier stages are modulated to stabilize the gain of the differential amplifier stages as the environmental factors change. In Fig. 5, the high gain, high frequency amplifier is structured and functions as shown in Fig. 2 with the exception the current sources I_{B1} , I_{B2} , and I_{B3} are now incorporated to the gain compensation circuit of this invention. The junction of the resistors **RS₃** and **RS₄**, the junction of the resistors **RS₅** and **RS₆**, and the junction of the resistors **RS₇** and **RS₈** are connected

respectively to the nodes N_3 , N_4 , and N_5 that are connected to the gain compensation circuit of this invention. The gain compensation circuit provides the modulated biasing currents I_{B4} , I_{B5} , and I_{B6} .

Returning to Fig. 3, the nodes N_3 , N_4 , and N_5 are connected to the current mirror **IM1**, which sinks the modulated biasing currents modulated biasing currents I_{B4} , I_{B5} , and I_{B6} . To generate the modulated biasing currents I_{B4} , I_{B5} , and I_{B6} , the output of the operational amplifier **OA1** is the input to the voltage-to-current converter **VI2**. The voltage-to-current converter **VI2** is connected to the current source I'_2 and the output of the replica differential amplifier stage **DA2**. The replica differential amplifier stage **DA2** is structured to be equivalent to the differential amplifier **DA1** and has its input connected to the voltage reference generator V_{REF} to receive the reference voltages V_{REF1} and V_{REF2} . The current source I'_2 is designed to provide a current substantially equal to the current source I_2 . The second compensation output current I'_{CT} of the voltage-to-current converter **VI2** is substantially equal to the compensation current I_{CT} , thus the bias current I'_B is forced to be equal to the bias current I_B , which has been adjusted to compensate for variations due to the environmental factors. The biasing current I'_B is the controlling current for the current mirror **IM1**. The modulated biasing currents I_{B4} , I_{B5} , and I_{B6} are thus dependent upon the biasing current I'_B .

Refer now to Fig. 4 for a more detailed description of the gain compensation circuit of this invention. The NMOS transistors **M5**, **M6**, **M7**, **M8**, and **M15** are structured to form a current mirror with the control current being the current source I_0 , and the currents I_1 , I_2 , I_3 , and I'_2 being mirrored from the control current I_0 . The resistors R_1 and R_2 are connected serially to form a voltage divider. The voltage drop ($I_1 R_2$) across the resistor R_1 determines the reference voltages V_{REF1} and V_{REF2} .

[0040] The differential amplifier **DA1** is formed by the transistors **M3** and **M4**, the source degeneration resistors RS_9 and RS_{10} , and the load resistors RL_9 and RL_{10} arranged as shown in Fig. 1. The NMOS transistor **M7** with the NMOS transistor **M5** form the current source I_2 for the differential amplifier **DA1**. The output node N_1 is the junction of the drain of the NMOS transistor **M3** and the load resistor RL_9 . Similarly, the output node N_2 is formed at the junction of the drain of the NMOS transistor **M4** and the load resistor RL_{10} . The operational amplifier **OA1** is formed of the single stage differential amplifier **A1**, the capacitors C_{C1} and C_{C2} , and the resistors R_{C1} and R_{C2} . The capacitors C_{C1} and C_{C2} , and the resistors R_{C1} and R_{C2} form a compensation network for the differential amplifier **A1**. The noninverting input of the amplifier **A1** is connected to the output node $N1$ of the differential amplifier **DA1** and the inverting input of the amplifier **A1** is connected to the output node $N2$ of the differential amplifier **DA1**.

The current source I_3 is formed by the NMOS transistor **M8** with the NMOS transistor **M5** and is connected to the inverting input (node **N2**) of the amplifier **A1**. The voltage at the Node **N2** thus changed by the amount equal to $RL_{10}I_3$.

The PMOS transistors **M9** and **M10** respectively form the voltage-to-current converters **VI1** and **VI2**. The PMOS transistors **M9** and **M10** have identical aspect ratios to insure that the compensation currents are I_{CT} and I'_{CT} are essentially equal. The current I_{CT} is fed back to form the bias current I_B after the subtraction from the current I_2 .

The replica differential amplifier **DA2** is formed by the NMOS transistors **M11** and **M12**, and source degeneration resistors RS_{11} and RS_{12} arranged as shown in Fig. 1. The load resistors are replaced by the active load configured PMOS transistor **M13**. The NMOS transistor **M15** with the NMOS transistor **M5** form the current source I'_2 for the replica differential amplifier **DA2**.

As is known in the art the active load formed by the PMOS transistor **M13** is essentially a current source. The PMOS transistor **M14** is connected to mirror the current I'_B . The PMOS transistor **M14** and the NMOS **M16** form the controlling current source for the current mirror **IM1** that generates the bias currents I_{B4} , I_{B5} , and I_{B6} . The current through the PMOS transistor **M14** and the NMOS **M16** designed to be essentially equal to the current I'_B . The NMOS transistors **M17**, **M18**, and **M19** are

structured respectively to the current sources to sink the bias currents I_{B4} , I_{B5} , and I_{B6} .

A negative feedback loop is formed with differential amplifier **DA1**, resistors R_1 and R_2 , operational amplifier **A1**, the voltage-to-current converter **VI1**. The negative feedback loop forces the nodes **N1** and **N2** to the same DC potential.

The discussion presented hereinafter describes the function of the negative feedback loop and its operation to compensate for the variation in the environmental factors of temperature, process and power supply variations. The reference voltages V_{REF1} and V_{REF2} as created by the voltage drop $I_1 R_2$ across the resistor R_2 causes a voltage difference between the nodes **N1** and **N2**. The node **N2** is at a higher potential, because of amplification by differential amplifier **DA1** is equal to $g_{ms} R_L$ as shown in Eq. 1. Since the drop across resistor R_2 is fixed, the amount by which the potential at the node **N2** is higher compared that at the node **N1** depends on the magnitude of effective transconductance g_{ms} only. However, the operational amplifier **A1** is only sensitive to the difference of potentials at nodes **N1** and **N2**. Therefore, the discussion can be simplified by assuming the voltage level at the node **N1** is fixed at zero potential. The potential at the node **N2** increases with the transconductance g_{ms} in the positive direction. On the other hand, the current I_3 acts to decrease the voltage potential at the node **N2**.

The examination of the feedback loop begins by assuming that the node **N2** is at a positive voltage potential. This voltage potential will be amplified by the amplifier **A1** which will, in turn, will cause the gate of the PMOS transistor **M9** to go low causing the latter's drain current (the compensation current) I_{CT} to increase. It can be observed from the circuit that the bias current I_B of differential amplifier **DA1** is actually the difference of current I_2 through the current source formed by the NMOS transistor **M7** and the compensation current I_{CT} . Since the current I_2 is fixed, the bias current I_B reduces as the compensation current I_{CT} increases, reducing the effective transconductance g_{ms} in turn. This reduction in the effective transconductance g_{ms} causes the potential at the node **N2** to decrease until it becomes zero. Conversely, assume that the node **N2** is at a negative voltage potential. This time the amplifier **A1** will cause the gate of the PMOS transistor **M7** to go high causing its drain current (compensation current) I_{CT} to reduce. Consequently, bias current I_B increases, increasing effective transconductance g_{ms} and this increases the voltage potential at node **N2** until it becomes zero again. Thus, if the feedback loop is designed correctly, the potentials at the nodes **N1** and **N2** remain virtually equal under steady state conditions.

The absolute voltages V_{N1} and V_{N2} at nodes **N1** and **N2** are respectively determined by the following equations as:

$$V_{N1} = V_{DD} - \left(\frac{g_{ms} R_{L1} R_2}{2} + \frac{I_B R_L}{2} \right) \quad \text{Eq. 3}$$

and

$$V_{N2} = V_{DD} - \left(-\frac{g_{ms} R_{L1} R_2}{2} + \frac{I_B R_L}{2} \right) - I_3 R_L \quad \text{Eq. 4}$$

The feedback loop, under steady state conditions ensure that the absolute voltages V_{N1} and V_{N2} at nodes **N1** and **N2** are essentially equal. Thus combining equations Eq. 3 and Eq. 4 the effective transconductance g_{ms} is determined by the equation.

$$g_{ms} = \frac{I_3}{I_1} \frac{1}{R_2} \quad \text{Eq. 5}$$

The equation Eq. 5 demonstrates the effect of the feedback loop in determining the transconductance g_{ms} in terms of resistance R_2 .

Without disturbing the feedback loop, several replicas of the bias current I_B are generated using replica biasing and mirroring with voltage-to-current converter **VI2** and the current mirror **IM1**. The voltage gains of the differential amplifier stages **AV₁**, **AV₂**, and **AV₃** are determined by the combination of the equations Eq. 2 and Eq. 5 to become:

$$A_{vN} = g_{ms} R_{LN} = \frac{I_3}{I_1} \frac{R_{LN}}{R_2} \quad \text{Eq. 6}$$

Where, $N = 1, 2, 3, \dots$

The currents I_1 and I_3 track each other as they are generated from the same current source I_0 by mirroring. If the resistors **RL3**, **RL4**, **RL5**, **RL6**, **RL7**, and **RL8** in Fig. 5 are of the same type as **R₂** in Fig. 3 then, equation Eq. 2 it can be shown that the voltage gains A_{VN} of the individual differential amplifier stages are independent of variations in the environmental factors of process, temperature, and power supply voltage. Physically, the master bias current I_B changes with the above variations adjusting g_{ms} such a manner that the amplifier voltage gain A_{VN} remains constant.

Simulation using the known H-spice simulation program found that a high gain, high frequency amplifier of the prior art has a gain of 55dB +/- 10dB. Whereas, the high gain, high frequency amplifier employing the gain compensation circuit of this invention improves the gain variation to 55dB +/- 2dB @ 190MHz over the process corners and a temperature range of -35°C to +85°C with compensation.

Referring now to Figs. 8 and 11, the high gain, high frequency amplifier is structured and functions as shown in Fig. 2. The modulation of the biasing current for each of the differential amplifier stages **AV₁**, **AV₂**, and **AV₃** is a result of the addition (Fig. 8) or subtraction (Fig. 11) of the compensation currents I_{CT1} , I_{CT2} , I_{CT3} of Fig. 8 and the compensation

currents I_{CT4} , I_{CT5} , I_{CT6} of Fig. 11 from or to the biasing current sources I_{B1} , I_{B2} , and I_{B3} .

As shown in Fig. 6, the second embodiment of the gain compensation current of this invention has the voltage reference generator V_{REF} , the differential amplifier **DA1**, the operational amplifier **OA1**, the voltage-to-current converter **VI1**, and the current sources I_1 , I_2 , and I_3 form the feedback loop as described for Fig. 3. The voltage-to-current converter **VI2** is now connected directly to the current mirror circuit **IM2**. The current mirror circuit **IM2** sinks the compensation currents I_{CT1} , I_{CT2} , I_{CT3} . The compensation currents I_{CT1} , I_{CT2} , I_{CT3} are adjusted as described above where the compensation current I_{CT} varies as the environmental factors vary. In this embodiment the voltage-to-current converters **VI1** and **VI2** are designed to ensure the compensation current I_{CT} and the compensation currents I_{CT1} , I_{CT2} , I_{CT3} are equal or proportional to each other over any variation of the environmental factors.

Refer now to Fig. 7 for a more detailed discussion of the second embodiment of the gain compensation circuit of this invention. The output current I_{err} of the voltage-to-current converter **VI1** (the drain of the PMOS transistor **M9**) is the input to the feedback current mirror **IMFB**. The output of the feedback current mirror **IMFB** sinks the compensation current I_{CT} . The NMOS transistors **M42** and **M43** are configured as a current mirror

such that the output current I_{err} of the voltage-to-current converter **VI1** is the control current for the compensation current I_{CT} .

The output current I'_{err} of the second voltage-to-current converter **VI2** is the control current for the current mirrors that sink the compensation currents I_{CT1} , I_{CT2} , I_{CT3} and is substantially equal to the output current I_{err} . These currents are added to the bias currents I_{B1} , I_{B2} , and I_{B3} of Fig. 8 respectively. These currents are adjusted as described above by stabilizing the balance between the bias current I_B and the compensating current I_{CT} as described above. The NMOS transistors **M45**, **M47**, **M48**, and **M49** are configured to form the current mirror **IM2** which functions as current mirror **IM1** of Fig. 4 except the level of the currents are at the level of compensation current rather than the biasing currents. Even though only the compensation currents I_{CT1} , I_{CT2} , I_{CT3} are provided, the gain of the differential amplifier stages **AV1**, **AV2**, and **AV3** is as calculated in Eq. 6.

As shown in Fig. 9, the third embodiment of the gain compensation current of this invention also has the voltage reference generator V_{REF} , the differential amplifier **DA1**, the operational amplifier **OA1**, the voltage-to-current converter **VI1**, and the current sources I_1 , I_2 , and I_3 form the feedback loop as described for Fig. 3. The voltage-to-current converter **VI2** is now connected to the current mirror circuit **IM3**. The current mirror circuit **IM3** sinks the compensation currents I_{CT4} , I_{CT5} , I_{CT6} . These currents

are subtracted to the bias currents I_{B1} , I_{B2} , and I_{B3} of Fig. 11 respectively. The compensation currents I_{CT4} , I_{CT5} , I_{CT6} are adjusted as described above where the compensation current I_{CT} varies as the environmental factors vary. In this embodiment the voltage-to-current converters **VI1** and **VI2** are designed to ensure the compensation current I_{CT} and the compensation currents I_{CT4} , I_{CT5} , I_{CT6} are equal or proportional to each other over any variation of the environmental factors.

Refer now to Fig. 10 for a more detailed discussion of the third embodiment of the gain compensation circuit of this invention. The output current I_{err} of the voltage-to-current converter **VI1** (the drain of the NMOS transistor **M62**) is the input to the feedback current mirror **IMFB**. The output of the feedback current mirror **IMFB** sinks the compensation current I_{CT} . The NMOS transistors **M64** and **M65** are configured as a current mirror such that the output current I_{err} of the voltage-to-current converter **VI1** is the control current for the compensation current I_{CT} .

The output current I_{err} of the second voltage-to-current converter **VI2** is the control current for the current mirrors that source the compensation currents I_{CT4} , I_{CT5} , I_{CT6} and is substantially equal to the output current I_{err} . These currents are adjusted as described above by stabilizing the balance between the bias current I_B and the compensating current I_{CT} as described above. The PMOS transistors **M66**, **M67**, **M68**, and **M69** are configured to form the current mirror **IM2** to provide the level

of the currents at the level of compensation current rather than the biasing currents. Even though only the compensation currents I_{CT4} , I_{CT5} , I_{CT6} are provided, the gain of the differential amplifier stages **AV1**, **AV2**, and **AV3** is also as calculated in Eq. 6.

As is evident from the second and third embodiment, other configurations of the gain compensation circuit of this invention are possible by substituting PMOS transistors for NMOS transistors and NMOS transistors for PMOS transistors. While this invention has been particularly shown and described with reference to the preferred embodiments thereof, it will be understood by those skilled in the art that various changes in form and details may be made without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention.

Claims

1. A gain compensation circuit to adjust a gain factor of an amplifier, said amplifier having a plurality of series connected differential amplifier stages, said gain compensation circuit comprising:

a current adjustment circuit that provides a master biasing signal that modulates a biasing current provided to each differential amplifier stage of the plurality of differential amplifier stages for adjusting the gain factor of the amplifier; and

a gain factor evaluation circuit in communication with the current adjustment circuit to determine changes in the gain factor and to provide a compensation signal to the current adjustment circuit indicating a modulation factor that changes said master biasing signal for modulating said biasing current for each differential amplifier stage.

2. The circuit of claim 1 wherein the current adjustment circuit comprises:

a first reference constant current source mirrored from a reference current source to generate a reference current;

a first replica amplifier connected to the first reference constant current source to conduct the master biasing signal that is modified according to the compensation signal; and

a plurality of mirroring current sources to provide the biasing currents for each differential amplifier stage and in communication with the first replica amplifier stage such that each mirroring current source generate one biasing current proportional to the master biasing signal.

3. The circuit of claim 1 wherein the current adjustment circuit comprises:

a plurality of mirroring current sources to provide the biasing currents for each differential amplifier stage and in communication with the gain factor evaluation circuit to receive the compensation signal, said compensation signal being a compensation current from which said biasing currents are mirrored.

4. The circuit of claim 1 wherein the gain factor evaluation circuit comprises:

a reference voltage source to provide a first and a second reference voltage;

a second replica amplifier stage having a first input connected to the reference voltage source to receive the first reference voltage and a second input connected to the reference voltage source to receive the second reference voltage, said second replica amplifier stage amplifying a voltage difference between the first and the second reference voltages; and

a compensation signal generator connected to the second replica amplifier stage to receive the amplified voltage difference, modulate a biasing current of the second replica amplifier stage and, when the amplified voltage difference approaches a null level, producing the compensation signal.

5. The circuit of claim 4 wherein the compensation signal generator comprises:

an operational amplifier having an in-phase input and an out-of-phase input connected to receive the amplified voltage difference;

a first master current source to provide the biasing current to the second replica amplifier;

a second master current source joined to the out-of-phase input of the operational amplifier to cause a voltage level to be present at said out-of-phase

input and in communication with the first master current source such that the first and second master current sources are modified by environmental changes;

a current feedback connected between an output of the operational amplifier and the first master current source to sink a compensation current to said first master current source wherein the biasing current of the second replica amplifier and the compensating current are combined such as the operational amplifier changes the compensation current, the biasing current of the second replica amplifier being adjusted inversely; and

a compensation signal converter communicating with the operational amplifier to form the compensation signal as a function of the compensating current.

6. The circuit of claim 5 wherein the compensation signal converter is a first voltage-to-current converter.

7. The circuit of claim 5 wherein the current feedback comprises a second voltage-to-current converter to convert a compensating voltage at the output of the operational amplifier to the compensation current.

8. A high gain, high frequency amplifier comprising:

a plurality of differential amplifier stages connected serially; and

a gain compensation circuit connected to each of the differential amplifier stages to adjust a gain factor of each differential amplifier stage, said gain compensation circuit comprising:

a current adjustment circuit that provides a master biasing signal that modulates a biasing current provided to each differential amplifier stage of the plurality of differential amplifier stages, said modulation of the biasing current adjusting the gain factor of each of the differential amplifier stages, and

a gain factor evaluation circuit in communication with the current adjustment circuit to determine changes in the gain factor and to provide a compensation signal to the current adjustment circuit indicating a modulation factor that changes said master biasing signal for modulating said biasing current for each differential amplifier stage.

9. The amplifier of claim 8 wherein the current adjustment circuit comprises:

a first reference constant current source mirrored from a reference current source to generate a reference current;

a first replica amplifier connected to the first reference constant current source to conduct the master biasing signal that is modified according to the compensation signal; and

a plurality of mirroring current sources to provide the biasing currents for each differential amplifier stage and in communication with the first replica amplifier stage such that each mirroring current source generates one biasing current proportional to the master biasing signal.

10. The amplifier of claim 8 wherein the current adjustment circuit comprises:

a plurality of mirroring current sources to provide the biasing currents for each differential amplifier stage and in communication with the gain factor evaluation circuit to receive the compensation signal, said compensation signal being a compensation current from which said biasing currents are mirrored.

11. The amplifier of claim 8 wherein the gain factor evaluation circuit comprises:

a reference voltage source to provide a first and a second reference voltage;

a second replica amplifier stage having a first input connected to the reference voltage source to receive the first reference voltage and a second input connected to the reference voltage source to receive the second reference voltage, said second replica amplifier stage amplifying a voltage difference between the first and the second reference voltages; and

a compensation signal generator connected to the second replica amplifier stage to receive the amplified voltage difference, modulate a biasing current of the second replica amplifier stage and, when the amplified voltage difference approaches a null level, producing the compensation signal.

12. The amplifier of claim 11 wherein the compensation signal generator comprises:

an operational amplifier having an in-phase input and an out-of-phase input connected to receive the amplified voltage difference;

a first master current source to provide the biasing current to the second replica amplifier;

a second master current source joined to the out-of-phase input of the operational amplifier to cause a voltage level to be present at said out-of-phase

input and in communication with the first master current source such that the first and second master current sources are modified by environmental changes;

a current feedback connected between an output of the operational amplifier and the first master current source to sink a compensation current to said first master current source wherein the biasing current of the second replica amplifier and the compensating current are combined such as the operational amplifier changes the compensation current, the biasing current of the second replica amplifier being adjusted inversely; and

a compensation signal converter communicating with the operational amplifier to form the compensation signal as a function of the compensating current.

13. The amplifier of claim 12 wherein the compensation signal converter is a first voltage-to-current converter.

14. The amplifier of claim 12 wherein the current feedback comprises a second voltage-to-current converter to convert a compensating voltage at the output of the operational amplifier to the compensation current.

15. A gain compensation circuit to adjust a gain factor of an amplifier, said amplifier having a plurality of series connected differential amplifier stages, said gain compensation circuit comprising:

a current adjustment circuit that provides a master biasing signal that modulates a biasing current provided to each differential amplifier stage of the plurality of differential amplifier stages for adjusting the gain factor of the amplifier, said current adjustment circuit comprising:

a first reference constant current source mirrored from a reference current source to generate a reference current,

a first replica amplifier connected to the first reference constant current source to conduct the master biasing signal that is modified according to a compensation signal, and

a plurality of mirroring current sources to provide the biasing currents for each differential amplifier stage and in communication with the first replica amplifier stage such that each mirroring current source generates one biasing current proportional to the master biasing signal; and

a gain factor evaluation circuit in communication with the current adjustment circuit to determine changes in the gain factor and to provide the

compensation signal to the current adjustment circuit indicating a modulation factor for said biasing current for each differential amplifier stage, said gain factor evaluation circuit comprising:

a reference voltage source to provide a first and a second reference voltage;

a second replica amplifier stage having a first input connected to the reference voltage source to receive the first reference voltage and a second input connected to the reference voltage source to receive the second reference voltage, said second replica amplifier stage amplifying a voltage difference between the first and the second reference voltages; and

a compensation signal generator connected to the second replica amplifier stage to receive the amplified voltage difference, modulate a biasing current of the second replica amplifier stage and, when the amplified voltage difference approaches a null level, producing the compensation signal.

16. The circuit of claim 15 wherein the compensation signal generator comprises:

an operational amplifier having an in-phase input and an out-of-phase input connected to receive the amplified voltage difference;

a first master current source to provide the biasing current to the second replica amplifier;

a second master current source joined to the out-of-phase input of the operational amplifier to cause a voltage level to be present at said out-of-phase input and in communication with the first master current source such that the first and second master current sources are modified by environmental changes;

a current feedback connected between an output of the operational amplifier and the first master current source to sink a compensation current to said first master current source wherein the biasing current of the second replica amplifier and the compensating current are combined such as the operational amplifier changes the compensation current, the biasing current of the second replica amplifier being adjusted inversely; and

a compensation signal converter communicating with the operational amplifier to form the compensation signal as a function of the compensating current.

17. The circuit of claim 16 wherein the compensation signal converter is a first voltage-to-current converter.

18. The circuit of claim 16 wherein the current feedback comprises a second voltage-to-current converter to convert a compensating voltage at the output of the operational amplifier to the compensation current.

19. A gain compensation circuit to adjust a gain factor of an amplifier, said amplifier having a plurality of series connected differential amplifier stages, said gain compensation circuit comprising:

a current adjustment circuit that provides a master biasing signal that modulates a biasing current provided to each differential amplifier stage of the plurality of differential amplifier stages for adjusting the gain factor of the amplifier; said current adjustment circuit comprising:

a plurality of mirroring current sources to provide the biasing current for each differential amplifier stage and in communication with a gain factor evaluation circuit to receive the compensation signal, said compensation signal being a compensation current from which said biasing currents are mirrored; and

the gain factor evaluation circuit in communication with the current adjustment circuit to determine changes in the gain factor and to provide a compensation signal to the current adjustment circuit indicating a modulation factor that changes said master biasing signal for modulating said biasing current for each differential amplifier stage, said gain factor evaluation circuit comprising:

a reference voltage source to provide a first and a second reference voltage;

a second replica amplifier stage having a first input connected to the reference voltage source to receive the first reference voltage and a second input connected to the reference voltage source to receive the second reference voltage, said second replica amplifier stage amplifying a voltage difference between the first and the second reference voltages; and

a compensation signal generator connected to the second replica amplifier stage to receive the amplified voltage difference, modulate a biasing current of the second replica amplifier stage and, when the amplified voltage difference approaches a null level, producing the compensation signal.

20. The circuit of claim 19 wherein the compensation signal generator comprises:

an operational amplifier having an in-phase input and an out-of-phase input connected to receive the amplified voltage difference;

a first master current source to provide the biasing current to the second replica amplifier;

a second master current source joined to the out-of-phase input of the operational amplifier to cause a voltage level to be present at said out-of-phase input and in communication with the first master current source such that the first and second master current sources are modified by environmental changes;

a current feedback connected between an output of the operational amplifier and the first master current source to sink the compensation current to said first master current source wherein the biasing current of the second replica amplifier and the compensating current are combined such as the operational amplifier changes the compensation current, the biasing current of the second replica amplifier being adjusted inversely; and

a compensation signal converter communicating with the operational amplifier to form the compensation signal as a function of the compensating current.

21. The circuit of claim 19 wherein the compensation signal converter is a first voltage-to-current converter.

22. The circuit of claim 19 wherein the current feedback comprises a second voltage-to-current converter to convert a compensating voltage at the output of the operational amplifier to the compensation current.