Parameter and Coupling Ratio Extraction for SPICE-Compatible MACRO Modeling of Source Side Injection (SSI) Flash Cell

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Abstract

We present a new methodology to generate a two-transistor MACRO model of a SSI Flash cell based on a practical cell partitioning and a systematic and rigorous parameter extraction scheme. Through extensive TCAD simulation and precise measurement techniques, BSIM3 parameters of the individual transistors and coupling ratios of the cell were extracted, yielding a SPICE-compatible MACRO model for a three-poly split-gate Flash cell.

1. Introduction

Source Side Injection (SSI) Flash cell has drawn much attention during the past few years for its high injection efficiency and low programming current, as a leading candidate for low-voltage operation or multi-bit storage technology [1, 2]. To optimize the cell operation and to facilitate the array control circuit design, better understanding of the cell behavior and accurate prediction of the I-V characteristics of the cell are necessary. In this paper, we present a general methodology to create a MACRO model for a split-gate Flash cell using a two-transistor representation. Through judicious use of TCAD simulation and precise measurement techniques, BSIM3 parameters of the individual transistors and coupling ratios (CR's) of the cell were extracted, yielding a SPICE-compatible MACRO model for a three-poly split-gate Flash cell [3].

2. MACRO Cell Representation of SSI Cell

Fig. 1 (a) shows a cross-sectional view of our three-poly split-gate Flash cell and its operating parameters are shown in Table 1. The cell is approximated by a representation of two transistors and five coupling capacitors[1)] as shown in Fig. 1 (b). Device simulation shows that this 2-transistor representation is reliable under most operating conditions except when both transistors are in deep saturation. Here current flows penetrate deep into the bulk between SG (select gate) and FG (floating gate), and the node ***C*** between the two transistors does not have a well-defined position and hence is a virtual node. Further, interaction between M_{FG} and M_{SG} transistors can

[1)] We note the "gap" transistor is not included here and the capacitors are assumed to be bias-independent to yield fixed coupling ratios

occur. For instance, the drain voltage of M_{FG}, which is applied to a deep junction, can substantially affect V_{th} of M_{SG}. Thus, the effect of the drain voltage of M_{FG} on the current of M_{SG} should be considered. We have studied this effect and found it to be small for this specific cell and hence it was not modeled here.

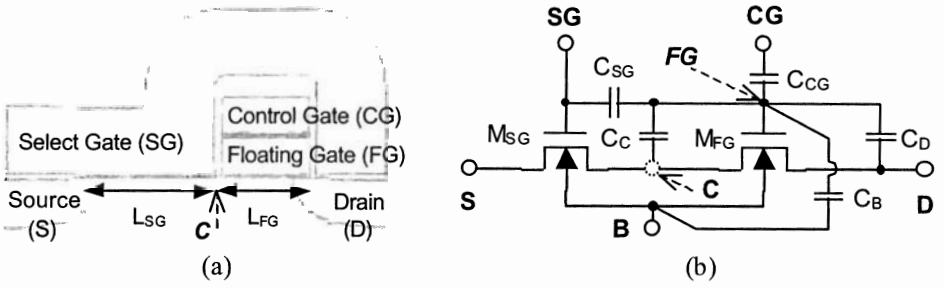


Fig. 1: Cross-sectional schematic of SSI Flash cell (a) and Equivalent circuit of MACRO cell (b). ***C*** represents a virtual node between the two transistors. The ***FG*** node is connected to 5 capacitors. L_{SG}=0.5μm, L_{FG}=0.4μm.

	V_{SG}	V_{CG}	V_S	V_D	V_B
Write	1.0	10	0	5	0
Erase	0	-10	Open	5	0
Read	3.3	1.2	1.2	0	0

Table. 1: Operating conditions of 3-poly split-gate Flash cell. Values shown are in units of [V].

3. Parameter and Coupling Ratio Extraction

For developing a reliable MACRO model, accurate and systematic parameter extraction for all these elements is critical. But the series-connected transistor configuration makes it difficult to extract parameters of one transistor independently of the other. Moreover, for each transistor, one of the junctions is physically absent. As shown in Fig. 2 (a), under the stated biasing condition, the drain of M_{SG} can be considered as an induced junction extended from the inversion layer of M_{FG}. Consequently the DIBL effect of M_{SG} is expected to be smaller than that of its stand-alone counterparts while the body effect is larger[2]. Measurements results shown in Fig. 2 (b) confirm these projections. The parameter extraction procedure is given schematically in Fig. 4. Here a divide-and-conquer strategy is deployed. First we extracted a full set of BSIM3 parameters for M_{SG} and M_{FG} via their respective groups of stand-alone transistors. Then using the accessible gate cell[3], some key parameters of each component-transistor M_{SG} and M_{FG} are extracted without any significant effect from the other transistor. Using a device simulator, in which we can arbitrarily exclude the effect of the series-connected transistors, we found that the following

[2] This entails the modeling parameters of each component-transistor will be dependent on the direction of the current flow.

[3] In accessible gate cell, FG and CG are tied.

device parameters--effective channel length, body effect, DIBL, and channel length modulation--of the component-transistor are mostly different from those of a stand-alone transistor. Then the 2 sets of parameters are combined to yield an optimized parameter set to fit the split-gate transistors I-V characteristics using a commercial parameter optimizer, UTMOST [4].

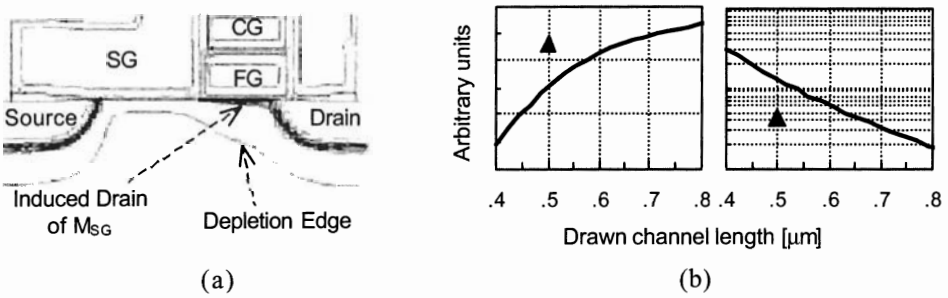


Fig. 2: (a) Simulated electron density contours with high V_{FG}. This bias condition is used to investigate M_{SG} without series resistance effect from M_{FG}. (b) Measured body effect (left) and DIBL (right) of M_{SG}. Component transistor of the split-gate cell (▲) shows much different characteristics from stand-alone transistor (line).

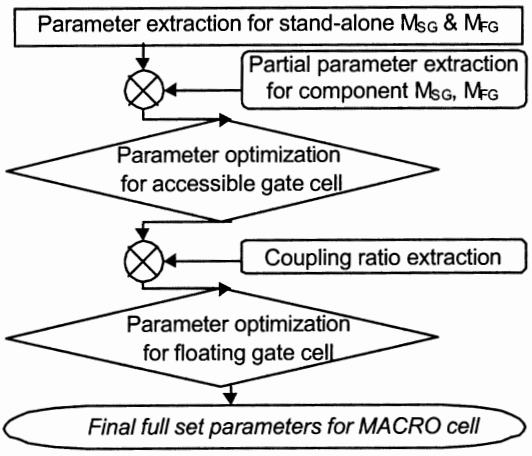
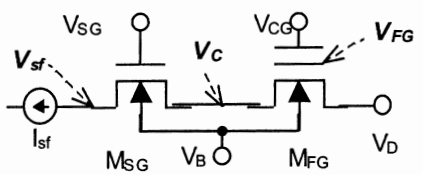


Fig. 3 : Flow diagram for parameter extraction.

To extract CR's, a method based on source follower voltage (V_{sf}) measurement as illustrated in Fig. 4 was used [5]. V_{sf} has a unique relationship with the floating gate potential (V_{FG}), which can be accurately measured using an accessible gate reference cell. The change in V_{FG}, which results in change in V_{sf}, is given by,

$$\Delta V_{FG} = \sum \alpha_i \Delta V_i + (\Delta Q_{FG} / C_{total})$$

where coupling ratio α_i is defined as C_i/C_{total} for each coupling node with voltage V_i and capacitance C_i.



	α_{SG}	α_{CG}	α_C	α_D	α_B
CR	0.12	0.56	0.14	0.15	0.03

Fig. 4 : Measurement set-up where $V_{sf} \cong V_C = (V_{FG} - V_{th}$ of $M_{FG})$ and extracted coupling ratio (CR) values under "Read" operation.

Measuring V_{sf} by ramping each of V_{SG}, V_{CG}, V_D, and V_B sequentially, we obtain 4 equations containing 5 unknown coupling ratios α_i's. With $\sum \alpha_i = 1$ being the fifth equation, all 5 α_i's can be computed.

4. Results and Conclusion

Using the optimized BSIM3 parameters and the extracted coupling ratios, our MACRO cell model was implemented under a variety of conditions. Figs. 5 and 6 show excellent agreement between SPICE simulation and measurement results. In summary, we presented a SPICE-compatible MACRO model of a SSI Flash cell based on a methodology of practical cell partitioning and a systematic and rigorous parameter extraction scheme, augmented and guided by extensive TCAD simulation.

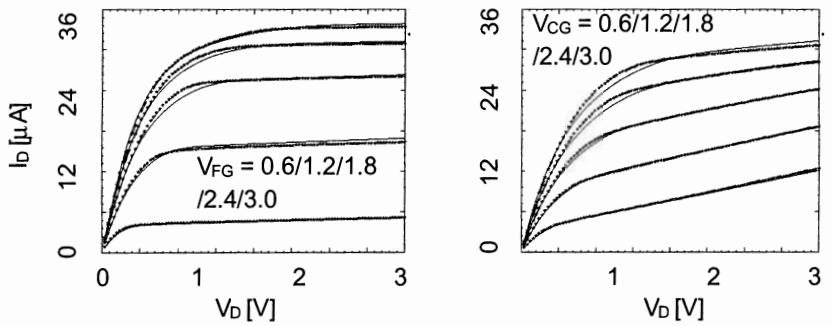


Fig. 5: Comparison of I-V characteristics between measurement (solid line) and SPICE simulation (dotted line) for accessible gate cell (left) and for floating gate cell (right) at $V_S = V_B = 0$, $V_{SG} = 1.2$[V].

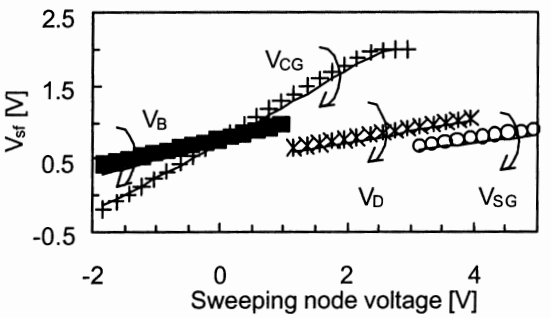


Fig. 6: V_{sf} as functions of sweeping voltages is well matched between measurements (symbols) and simulation (line).

References

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