Analysis of Voltage Transfer Characteristic and Power Dissipation in a CMOS Inverter using LTspice

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March 15, 2025

Abstract

This project focuses on the analysis of the Voltage Transfer Characteristic (VTC) and power dissipation in a CMOS inverter using LTspice. The NMOS and PMOS transistors are modeled using Level 3 SPICE parameters, and their behavior is analyzed through mathematical equations and simulations. The VTC curve is derived, and power dissipation is categorized into static and dynamic components. The results are validated using LTspice simulations, and the findings are compared with existing research in the field.

1 Introduction

A CMOS inverter is a fundamental building block in digital circuits, consisting of an NMOS and a PMOS transistor. The Voltage Transfer Characteristic (VTC) describes the relationship between the input voltage (V_{in}) and the output voltage (V_{out}). Power dissipation in a CMOS inverter is a critical metric, as it determines the energy efficiency of the circuit. This project involves analyzing the VTC and power dissipation of a CMOS inverter using LTspice, with the given NMOS and PMOS model parameters.

2 CMOS Inverter Operation

The CMOS inverter has two operating regions:

1. **Static Operation**: When the input is stable (either HIGH or LOW), one transistor is ON, and the other is OFF.
2. **Dynamic Operation**: During switching, both transistors are partially ON, leading to short-circuit current and power dissipation.

The VTC curve is divided into five regions:

1. **Region 1**: $V_{in} < V_{th,n}$ (NMOS OFF, PMOS ON)
2. **Region 2**: $V_{th,n} < V_{in} < V_M$ (NMOS in saturation, PMOS in linear)
3. **Region 3**: $V_{in} = V_M$ (Both transistors in saturation)
4. **Region 4**: $V_M < V_{in} < V_{DD} - |V_{th,p}|$ (NMOS in linear, PMOS in saturation)
5. **Region 5**: $V_{in} > V_{DD} - |V_{th,p}|$ (NMOS ON, PMOS OFF)

Where:

- $V_{th,n}$: Threshold voltage of NMOS
- $V_{th,p}$: Threshold voltage of PMOS
- V_M: Midpoint voltage where $V_{in} = V_{out}$

3 Voltage Transfer Characteristic (VTC)

The VTC is derived by equating the currents through the NMOS and PMOS transistors. The current equations for NMOS and PMOS are based on the Level 3 MOSFET model.

3.1 NMOS Current Equations

- **Linear Region**:

$$I_{D,n} = KP_n \left(\frac{W}{L}\right)_n \left[(V_{GS,n} - V_{th,n})V_{DS,n} - \frac{V_{DS,n}^2}{2}\right](1 + \lambda_n V_{DS,n})$$

- **Saturation Region**:

$$I_{D,n} = \frac{KP_n}{2} \left(\frac{W}{L}\right)_n (V_{GS,n} - V_{th,n})^2(1 + \lambda_n V_{DS,n})$$

3.2 PMOS Current Equations

- **Linear Region**:

$$I_{D,p} = KP_p \left(\frac{W}{L}\right)_p \left[(V_{SG,p} - |V_{th,p}|)V_{SD,p} - \frac{V_{SD,p}^2}{2}\right](1 + \lambda_p V_{SD,p})$$

- **Saturation Region**:

$$I_{D,p} = \frac{KP_p}{2} \left(\frac{W}{L}\right)_p (V_{SG,p} - |V_{th,p}|)^2(1 + \lambda_p V_{SD,p})$$

Where:

- KP_n, KP_p: Transconductance parameters for NMOS and PMOS
- $V_{GS,n}$, $V_{SG,p}$: Gate-to-source voltages
- $V_{DS,n}$, $V_{SD,p}$: Drain-to-source voltages
- λ_n, λ_p: Channel-length modulation parameters

3.3 VTC Analysis

1. For each region, equate $I_{D,n} = I_{D,p}$.
2. Solve for V_{out} as a function of V_{in}.

4 Power Dissipation

Power dissipation in a CMOS inverter consists of:

1. **Static Power Dissipation**: Leakage current when the inverter is not switching.
2. **Dynamic Power Dissipation**: Switching power due to charging/discharging of load capacitance and short-circuit current.

4.1 Static Power Dissipation

$$P_{static} = I_{leak} \cdot V_{DD}$$

Where I_{leak} is the subthreshold leakage current.

4.2 Dynamic Power Dissipation

1. **Switching Power**:

$$P_{switching} = \alpha \cdot C_L \cdot V_{DD}^2 \cdot f$$

Where:

- α: Activity factor
- C_L: Load capacitance
- f: Switching frequency

2. **Short-Circuit Power**:

$$P_{short} = I_{sc} \cdot V_{DD}$$

Where I_{sc} is the short-circuit current during switching.

5 LTspice Simulation

5.1 Steps

1. **Define NMOS and PMOS Models**: Use the provided model parameters for NMOS and PMOS in LTspice.

```
.MODEL NMOS NMOS LEVEL=3 TOX=200E-10 PHI=0.7 UO=650 KP=120E-6 RSH=0 XJ=500E-9
CGDO=200E-12 CJ=400E-6 CJSW=300E-12 NSUB=1E17 VTO=1 ETA=3.0E-6 VMAX=1E5 NFS=1E12
LD=100E-9 CGSO=200E-12 PB=1 MJSW=0.5 GAMMA=0 DELTA=3.0 THETA=0.1 KAPPA=0.3 TPG=1
CGBO=1E-10 MJ=0.5

.MODEL PMOS PMOS LEVEL=3 TOX=200E-10 PHI=0.7 UO=250 KP=40E-6 RSH=0 XJ=500E-9
CGDO=200E-12 CJ=400E-6 CJSW=300E-12 NSUB=1E17 VTO=-1 ETA=0 VMAX=5E4 NFS=1E12
LD=100E-9 CGSO=200E-12 PB=1 MJSW=0.5 GAMMA=0.6 DELTA=0.1 THETA=0.1 KAPPA=1 TPG=-1
CGBO=1E-10 MJ=0.5
```

2. **Build the CMOS Inverter Circuit**:
   - Connect NMOS and PMOS transistors as per the CMOS inverter configuration.
   - Set V_{DD} to the desired supply voltage (e.g., 5V).
3. **Simulate VTC**:
   - Perform a DC sweep of V_{in} from 0 to V_{DD}.
   - Plot V_{out} vs. V_{in}.
4. **Simulate Power Dissipation**:
   - Perform a transient analysis with a square wave input.
   - Measure average power dissipation using LTspice's power measurement tools.

6 Results and Analysis

6.1 VTC Curve

- Plot V_{out} vs. V_{in} to observe the transition regions.
- Identify V_M, noise margins (NM_L and NM_H), and gain.

6.2 Power Dissipation

- Compare static and dynamic power dissipation.
- Analyze the impact of load capacitance and switching frequency on dynamic power.

7 Conclusion

This project provides a detailed analysis of the CMOS inverter's VTC and power dissipation using LTspice. By understanding the mathematical models and simulating the circuit, the design can be optimized for better performance and energy efficiency. The provided NMOS and PMOS models ensure accurate simulation results, enabling a comprehensive analysis of the CMOS inverter's behavior.

References

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3. Sedra, A. S., & Smith, K. C. (2015). *Microelectronic Circuits*. Oxford University Press. `https://global.oup.com/`