

# Study of Behaviors of Electronic Amplifiers using Nichols Chart

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# Outline

# 1. Research Background

- Motivation, objectives and achievements
- Self-loop function in a transfer function
- 2. Analysis of Behaviors of High-order Systems
- Operating regions of high-order systems
- **3. Ringing Test for Feedback Amplifiers**
- Stability test for shunt-shunt feedback amplifiers
- Stability test for unity-gain and inverting amplifiers
- 4. Ringing Test for High-order Low-Pass Filters
- Stability test for passive and active RLC circuits
- Stability test for Deboo low-pass filters
- 5. Conclusions

# 1. Research Background

### **Noise in Electronic Systems**



## **Common types of noise:**

 Electronic noise, thermal noise, intermodulation noise, cross-talk, flicker noise, thermal noise...

#### **Ringing does the following things:**

- Causes EMI noise,
- Increases current flow,
- Decreases the performance, and
- Damages the devices.



**1. Research Background** Objectives of Study

- Derivation of self-loop function based on the proposed comparison measurement
- Investigation of operating regions of linear negative feedback networks
- Observation of phase margin at unity gain on the Nichols chart
- → Over-damping (high delay in rising time)
- Critical damping (max power propagation)
- → Under-damping (overshoot and ringing)

# 1. Research Background

#### **Achievements of Study**

#### **Comparison measurement**

- Feedback amplifiers
- High-order low-pass filters

Self-loop  
function 
$$L(\omega) = \frac{A(\omega)}{H(\omega)} - \frac{1}{2}$$

#### 2<sup>nd</sup>-order Deboo low-pass LPF



#### **Alternating current conservation**



#### **Implemented circuit**



# **1. Research Background** Self-loop Function in A Transfer Function

#### Linear system



#### **Transfer function**

$$H(\omega) = \frac{V_{out}(\omega)}{V_{in}(\omega)} = \frac{A(\omega)}{1 + L(\omega)}$$

○ Polar chart → Nyquist chart
 ○ Magnitude-frequency plot
 ○ Angular-frequency plot
 ○ Magnitude-angular diagram → Nichols diagram

#### Model of a linear system

$$H(\boldsymbol{\omega}) = \frac{b_0(j\omega)^n + \dots + b_{n-1}(j\omega) + b_n}{a_0(j\omega)^n + \dots + a_{n-1}(j\omega) + a_n}$$

 $A(\omega)$ : Numerator function  $H(\omega)$ : Transfer function  $L(\omega)$ : Self-loop function Variable: angular frequency ( $\omega$ )

# 1. Research Background

#### **Comparison Measurement**

#### Linear system



Model of a linear system

 $H(\boldsymbol{\omega}) = \frac{b_0 (j\omega)^n + \dots + b_{n-1} (j\omega) + b_n}{a_0 (j\omega)^n + \dots + a_{n-1} (j\omega) + a_n}$ 

#### **Transfer function**

$$H(\omega) = \frac{V_{out}(\omega)}{V_{in}(\omega)} = \frac{A(\omega)}{1 + L(\omega)}$$

#### **Sequence of steps:**

- (i) Measurement of numerator function A(ω),
- (ii) Measurement of transfer function H(ω), and

# (iii) Derivation of self-loop function.

#### **Self-loop function**



# **1. Research Background Alternating Current Conservation**

#### **Transfer function**







Simplified linear system

#### **Self-loop function**



**Derivation of self-loop function** 

# 1. Research Background

## **Characteristics of Adaptive Feedback Network**



Adaptive feedback is used to control the output source along with the decision source (DC-DC Buck converter).

Transfer function of an adaptive feedback network is significantly different from transfer function of a linear negative feedback network. → Loop gain is independent of frequency variable (referent voltage, feedback voltage, and error voltage are DC voltages).

# **1. Research Background** Loop Gain in Feedback Systems



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# **2. Analysis of Behaviors of High-order Systems** Characteristics of 2<sup>nd</sup>-order Transfer Function

**Second-order transfer function:**  $H(\omega)$  =

$$=\frac{1}{1+a_0(j\omega)^2+a_1j\omega}$$

1

Case	<b>Over-damping</b>	<b>Critical damping</b>	Under-damping	
Delta (Δ)	$\frac{1}{a_0} < \left(\frac{a_1}{2a_0}\right)^2 \Longrightarrow \Delta = a_1^2 - 4a_0 > 0$	$\frac{1}{a_0} = \left(\frac{a_1}{2a_0}\right)^2 \Longrightarrow \Delta = a_1^2 - 4a_0 = 0$	$\frac{1}{a_0} > \left(\frac{a_1}{2a_0}\right)^2 \Longrightarrow \Delta = a_1^2 - 4a_0 < 0$	
Module $ H(\omega) $	$\frac{\frac{1}{a_0}}{\sqrt{\omega^2 + \left(\frac{a_1}{2a_0} - \sqrt{\left(\frac{a_1}{2a_0}\right)^2 - \frac{1}{a_0}}\right)^2}}\sqrt{\omega^2 + \left(\frac{a_1}{2a_0} + \sqrt{\left(\frac{a_1}{2a_0}\right)^2 - \frac{1}{a_0}}\right)^2}}$	$\frac{\frac{1}{a_0} \frac{1}{\left[\omega^2 + \left(\frac{a_1}{2a_0}\right)^2\right]} = \frac{1}{2} = -6dB$	$\frac{\frac{1}{a_0}}{\sqrt{\left(\omega - \sqrt{\frac{1}{a_0} - \left(\frac{a_1}{2a_0}\right)^2}\right)^2 + \left(\frac{a_1}{2a_0}\right)^2}\sqrt{\left(\omega + \sqrt{\frac{1}{a_0} - \left(\frac{a_1}{2a_0}\right)^2}\right)^2 + \left(\frac{a_1}{2a_0}\right)^2}}$	
$\begin{array}{c} \textbf{Angular} \\ \theta(\omega) \end{array}$	$-\arctan\left(\frac{\omega}{\frac{a_1}{2a_0} - \sqrt{\left(\frac{a_1}{2a_0}\right)^2 - \frac{1}{a_0}}}\right) - \arctan\left(\frac{\omega}{\frac{a_1}{2a_0} + \sqrt{\left(\frac{a_1}{2a_0}\right)^2 - \frac{1}{a_0}}}\right)$	$-2 \arctan\left(\frac{2a_0\omega}{a_1}\right)$	$-\arctan\left(\frac{\omega-\sqrt{\frac{1}{a_0}-\left(\frac{a_1}{2a_0}\right)^2}}{\frac{a_1}{2a_0}}\right)-\arctan\left(\frac{\omega+\sqrt{\frac{1}{a_0}-\left(\frac{a_1}{2a_0}\right)^2}}{\frac{a_1}{2a_0}}\right)$	
$\omega_{cut} = \frac{a_1}{2a_0}$	$\left   H(\omega_{cut})  < \frac{2a_0}{a_1} \right   \Theta(\omega_{cut}) > -\frac{\pi}{2}$	$ H(\omega_{cut})  = \frac{2a_0}{a_1}  \theta(\omega_{cut}) = -\frac{\pi}{2}$	$ H(\omega_{cut})  > \frac{2a_0}{a_1}$ $\theta(\omega_{cut}) < -\frac{\pi}{2}$	

# **2. Analysis of Behaviors of High-order Systems** Characteristics of 2<sup>nd</sup>-order Self-loop Function

**Second-order self-loop function:**  $L(\omega) = j\omega [a_0 j\omega + a_1]$ 

Case	<b>Over-damping</b>		Critical damping		Under-damping	
Delta ( $\Delta$ )	$\Delta = a_1^2 - 4a_0 > 0$		$\Delta = a_1^2 - 4a_0 = 0$		$\Delta = a_1^2 - 4a_0 < 0$	
$ L(\omega) $	$\omega \sqrt{\left(a_0 \omega\right)^2 + a_1^2}$		$\omega \sqrt{\left(a_0 \omega\right)^2 + a_1^2}$		$\omega \sqrt{\left(\frac{a_0}{\omega}\omega\right)^2 + a_1^2}$	
θ(ω)	$\frac{\pi}{2}$ +	$\arctan \frac{a_0 \omega}{a_1}$	$\frac{\pi}{2}$ + arctan $\frac{a_0\omega}{a_1}$		$\frac{\pi}{2} + \arctan \frac{a_0 \omega}{a_1}$	
$\omega_1 = \frac{a_1}{2a_0}\sqrt{\sqrt{5}-2}$	$\left(\left L(\omega_1)\right  > 1\right)$	$\pi - \theta(\omega_1) > 76.3^{\circ}$	$ L(\omega_1)  = 1$	$\pi - \theta(\omega_1) = 76.3^{\circ}$	$\left  L(\omega_1) \right  < 1$	$\pi - \theta(\omega_1) < 76.3^{\circ}$
$\omega_2 = \frac{a_1}{2a_0}$	$\left L(\omega_2)\right  > \sqrt{5}$	$\pi - \theta(\omega_2) > 63.4^{\circ}$	$\left L(\omega_2)\right  = \sqrt{5}$	$\pi - \theta(\omega_2) = 63.4^{\circ}$	$ L(\omega_2)  < \sqrt{5}$	$\pi - \theta(\omega_2) < 63.4^{\circ}$
$\omega_3 = \frac{a_1}{a_0}$	$ L(\omega_3)  > 4\sqrt{2}$	$\pi - \theta(\omega_3) > 45^{\circ}$	$\left L(\omega_3)\right  = 4\sqrt{2}$	$\pi - \theta(\omega_3) = 45^{\circ}$	$\left L(\omega_3)\right  < 4\sqrt{2}$	$\pi - \theta(\omega_3) < 45^{\circ}$

# 2. Analysis of Behaviors of High-order Systems **Operating Regions of 2<sup>nd</sup>-Order System**

- •Under-damping: *L*<sub>1</sub>( $\omega$ ) =  $(j\omega)^2 + j\omega$ ;  $H_1(\omega) = \frac{1}{(j\omega)^2 + j\omega + 1}$ ;
- - $L_2(\omega) = (j\omega)^2 + 2j\omega;$
- - $L_3(\omega) = (j\omega)^2 + 3j\omega;$

# •Critical damping: $H_2(\omega) = \frac{1}{(j\omega)^2 + 2j\omega + 1}; \quad \bigoplus_{j=1}^{2.5}$ •**Over-damping:** $H_3(\omega) = \frac{1}{(j\omega)^2 + 3j\omega + 1};$

#### **Transient response**



#### **Bode plot of transfer function**



#### Nichols plot of self-loop function



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# **3.Ringing Test for Feedback Amplifiers** Analysis of Shunt-Shunt Feedback Amplifier



Apply superposition at the nodes  $V_{\pi}$  and  $V_{out}$ , we have

$$V_{\pi}\left(\frac{1}{R_{s}} + \frac{1}{r_{\pi}} + \frac{1}{Z_{C\pi}} + \frac{1}{R_{F}} + \frac{1}{Z_{C\mu}}\right) = \frac{V_{in}}{R_{s}} + \frac{V_{out}}{Z_{C\mu}}; \quad V_{out}\left(\frac{1}{Z_{C\mu}} + \frac{1}{Z_{CCS}} + \frac{1}{R_{c}} + \frac{1}{r_{o}}\right) = V_{\pi}\left(\frac{1}{Z_{C\mu}} + \frac{1}{R_{F}} - g_{m}\right);$$

**Transfer function and self-loop function** 

$$H(\omega) = \frac{V_{out}}{V_{in}} = \frac{b_0 j\omega + b_1}{a_0 (j\omega)^2 + a_1 j\omega + 1}; \quad L(\omega) = j\omega [a_0 j\omega + a_1]$$

Where, 
$$b_0 = R_L C_{GD1}; b_1 = -R_L g_{m1}; a_0 = R_S R_L (C_{GD1} C_{GS1} + C_{GD1} C_{DB1} + C_{DB1} C_{GS1});$$
  
 $a_1 = R_L (C_{GD1} + C_{DB1}) + R_S (C_{GS1} + C_{GD1}) + R_S R_L g_{m1} C_{GD1};$  15

# **3.Ringing Test for Feedback Amplifiers** Characteristics of Shunt-Shunt Feedback Amplifier



# **3.Ringing Test for Feedback Amplifiers** Analysis of Op Amp without Miller's Capacitor

# Open-loop function $A_{op}(\omega) = \frac{b_0 (j\omega)^3 + b_1 (j\omega)^2 + b_2 j\omega + b_3}{a_0 (j\omega)^4 + a_1 (j\omega)^3 + a_2 (j\omega)^2 + a_3 j\omega + 1};$ Self-loop function $L_{op}(\omega) = a_0 (j\omega)^4 + a_1 (j\omega)^3 + a_2 (j\omega)^2 + a_3 j\omega;$ Without frequency compensation





# **3.Ringing Test for Feedback Amplifiers Unity-Gain Amplifier without Miller's Capacitor**



## **Bode plot** of transfer function $H(\omega)$ Magnitude of transfer function 15 dB 100 MHz 1 GHz 10 GHz Frequency (Hz) Nichols plot of self-loop function $L(\omega)$ Self-loop function 167° Phase margin = 13 degrees 110 115 120 125 130 135 140 145 150 155 160 165 170 175 180 18

Phase (deg)

# **3.Ringing Test for Feedback Amplifiers** Two-stage Op Amp with Frequency Compensation



 $L_{op}(\omega) = a_0 (j\omega)^6 + a_1 (j\omega)^5 + a_2 (j\omega)^4 + a_3 (j\omega)^3 + a_4 (j\omega)^2 + a_5 j\omega;$ 

Small signal model of 2<sup>nd</sup>-stage



With Miller's capacitor and resistor



**Transfer function** 

$$H(\omega) = \frac{b_0 (j\omega)^3 + b_1 (j\omega)^2 + b_2 j\omega + b_3}{a_0 (j\omega)^4 + a_1 (j\omega)^3 + a_2 (j\omega)^2 + a_3 j\omega + 1};$$

#### **Self-loop function**

$$L(\omega) = a_0 (j\omega)^4 + a_1 (j\omega)^3 + a_2 (j\omega)^2 + a_3 j\omega$$

# **3.Ringing Test for Feedback Amplifiers** Unity-Gain Amplifier with Miller's Capacitor



**Transfer function and self-loop function** 

$$H(\omega) = \frac{1}{1 + \frac{1}{A(\omega)}} \approx 1; \quad L(\omega) = \frac{1}{A(\omega)};$$

Simplified model



Under-damping: R1= 2 kΩ, C1 = 1 pF

**Critical damping:** 

R1 = 3.5 kΩ, C1 = 0.2 pF

**Over-damping:** 

R1 =  $3.5 \text{ k}\Omega$ , C1 = 0.8 pF

# **3.Ringing Test for Feedback Amplifiers** Behaviors of Unity-Gain Amplifier

Simplified model of unity gain amplifier



#### **Bode plot of transfer function**

#### **Simulated** transient response



#### Nichols plot of self-loop function



# **3.Ringing Test for Feedback Amplifiers** Inverting Amplifier with Miller's Capacitor

#### **Inverting amplifier**

Vdd M6 M4 M3 Cc **⊢** M2 M1 Vb2 vout M7 1 T ₩ M5 Vb1 R2 **R1** Vin

#### **Transfer function and self-loop function**

$$H(\omega) = \frac{-\frac{R_2}{R_1}}{1 + L(\omega)} \approx -\frac{R_2}{R_1}; L(\omega) = \frac{1}{A(\omega)} \left(1 + \frac{R_2}{R_1}\right);$$

#### Simplified model



Under-damping:  $Rz = 0 k\Omega, Cz = 0 pF$ Critical damping:  $Rz = 0.5 k\Omega, Cz = 0.5 pF$ Over-damping:  $Rz = 4 k\Omega, Cz = 0.5 pF$ 

# **3. Ringing Test for Feedback Amplifiers Behaviors of Inverting Amplifier**

#### Simplified model of inverting amplifier



#### Simulated transient response



#### Nichols plot of self-loop function



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# 5. Conclusions

# 4. Ringing Test for High-order Low-Pass Filters Analysis of 2<sup>nd</sup>-Order Passive RLC LPF

#### **Passive RLC Low-pass Filter**



#### **Derivation of self-loop function**



#### **Transfer function**

$$H(\omega) = \frac{V_{out}}{V_{in}} = \frac{1}{a_0 (j\omega)^2 + a_1 j\omega + 1};$$

**Self-loop function** 

$$L(\omega) = a_0 (j\omega)^2 + a_1 j\omega;$$

where,  $a_0 = LC; a_1 = RC;$ 

#### **Implemented circuit**



# **4. Ringing Test for High-order Low-Pass Filters** Measurement Results for 2<sup>nd</sup>-Order Passive RLC LPF



#### Nichols plot of self-loop function



#### **Transient responses**



26

# 4. Ringing Test for High-order Low-Pass Filters Stability Test for 2<sup>nd</sup>-Order Active Ladder LPF

#### Active ladder low-pass filter



#### **Transfer function**

$$H(\omega) = \frac{V_{out}}{V_{in}} = \frac{1}{a_0 (j\omega)^2 + a_1 j\omega + 1};$$

#### **Bode plot of transfer function**



#### **Implemented circuit**



#### **Self-loop function**



#### Nichols plot of self-loop function \_\_\_\_\_Over-damping \_\_\_\_ Critical damping \_\_\_\_ Under-damping



# 4. Ringing Test for High-order Low-Pass Filters Analysis of 2<sup>nd</sup>-Order Deboo low-pass LPF

Single ended Deboo low-pass LPF

**Fully differential Deboo low-pass LPF** 



**Transfer function & self-loop function** 

$$H(\omega) = -\frac{b_0}{a_0 (j\omega)^2 + a_1 j\omega + 1};$$
$$L(\omega) = a_0 (j\omega)^2 + a_1 j\omega;$$

where

$$b_{0} = \frac{R_{2}R_{4}R_{7}(R_{5} + R_{6})}{R_{1}[R_{2}R_{4}(R_{5} + R_{6}) + R_{7}(R_{4}R_{5} - R_{3}R_{6})]};$$
  

$$a_{0} = \frac{R_{2}R_{3}R_{4}R_{5}R_{7}C_{1}C_{2}}{R_{2}R_{4}(R_{5} + R_{6}) + R_{7}(R_{4}R_{5} - R_{3}R_{6})};$$
  

$$a_{1} = \frac{R_{2}R_{7}C_{1}(R_{4}R_{5} - R_{3}R_{6}) + R_{3}R_{4}R_{5}R_{7}C_{2}}{R_{2}R_{4}(R_{5} + R_{6}) + R_{7}(R_{4}R_{5} - R_{3}R_{6})};$$

 $R_1 = R_3 = R_5 = 1 k\Omega$ ,  $R_2 = 10 k\Omega$ ,  $R_6 = R_7 = 5 k\Omega$ ,  $C_1 = 1 nF$ ,  $C_2 = 0.5 nF$  at  $f_0 = 10 kHz$ .

- Over-damping (R4 =  $3 k\Omega$ ),
- Critical damping (R4 = 6 k $\Omega$ ), and
- Under-damping (R4 = 10 k $\Omega$ ). 28

# 4. Ringing Test for High-order Low-Pass Filters Implemented Circuit of Deboo low-pass LPF

# Schematic of Deboo low-pass LPF

**System Under Test** 



#### **Implemented Circuit**



#### Measurement set up



# **4. Ringing Test for High-order Low-Pass Filters** Measurement Results of Deboo low-pass LPF

![](_page_30_Figure_1.jpeg)

#### Transient response

![](_page_30_Figure_3.jpeg)

![](_page_30_Figure_4.jpeg)

#### **Over-damping:**

 $\rightarrow$  Phase margin is 81 degrees.

**Critical damping:** 

 $\rightarrow$  Phase margin is 73 degrees.

**Under-damping:** 

 $\rightarrow$  Phase margin is 62 degrees.

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# 5. Limitations of Conventional Methods

- Middlebrook's measurement of loop gain
- →Applying only in feedback systems (DC-DC converters).
- **o Replica measurement of loop gain**
- →Using two identical networks (not real measurement).
- Nyquist's stability condition
- $\rightarrow$  Theoretical analysis for feedback systems (Lab tool).
- $\odot$  Nichols chart of loop gain
- $\rightarrow$  Only used in feedback control theory (Lab tool).

# 5. Comparison

Features	Comparison measurement	Alternating current conservation	Replica measurement	Middlebrook's method
Main objective	Self-loop function	Self-loop function	Loop gain	Loop gain
Transfer function accuracy	Yes	Yes	Νο	Νο
Breaking feedback loop	Νο	Yes	Yes	Yes
Operating region accuracy	Yes	Yes	Νο	Νο
Phase margin accuracy	Yes	Yes	No	No
Passive networks	Yes	Yes	Νο	Νο

# 5. Discussions

- Loop gain is independent of frequency variable.
- →Loop gain in adaptive feedback network is significantly different from self-loop function in linear negative feedback network.

Nichols chart is only used in MATLAB simulation.

**Nichols Chart** 30 0.25 dB 0.5 dB Open-Loop Gain (dB) 0 01 05 1.dB 3 dB -3 dB 6 dB -6 dB -12 dB -10 -20 dB -20 180 270 630 720 450 Open-Loop Phase (deg)

https://www.mathworks.com/help/control/ref/nichols.html

Nichols chart isn't used widely in practical measurements (only used in control theory).

![](_page_34_Figure_7.jpeg)

![](_page_34_Picture_8.jpeg)

# 5. Conclusions

#### This work:

- Proposal of comparison measurement for deriving self-loop function in a transfer function
  - → Observation of self-loop function can help us optimize the behavior of a high-order system.
- Implementation of circuit and measurements of selfloop functions for high-order feedback amplifiers.
   →Theoretical concepts of stability test are verified by laboratory simulations and practical experiments.

**Future of work:** 

 Stability test for parasitic components in transmission lines, printed circuit boards, physical layout layers

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![](_page_38_Picture_0.jpeg)

# Thank you very much! 谢谢

![](_page_38_Picture_2.jpeg)

![](_page_38_Picture_3.jpeg)

![](_page_38_Picture_4.jpeg)

![](_page_38_Picture_5.jpeg)