Lecture 18 - The Bipolar Junction Transistor (II)

Regimes of Operation

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Reading assignment:

Howe and Sodini, Ch. 7, §§7.3, 7.4
Key questions

• What other regimes of operation are there for the BJT?

• What is unique about each regime?

• How do equivalent circuit models for the BJT look like?
1. Regimes of operation

- **forward active**: device has good isolation and high gain; most useful regime;

- **saturation**: device has no isolation and is flooded with minority carriers ⇒ takes time to get out of saturation; avoid

- **reverse**: poor gain; not useful;

- **cut-off**: negligible current: nearly an open circuit; useful.
\[ \text{FORWARD-ACTIVE REGIME: } V_{BE} > 0, V_{BC} < 0 \]

Minority carrier profiles \textit{(not to scale):}
• Emitter injects electrons into base, collector collects electrons from base:

\[ I_C = I_S \exp \frac{qV_{BE}}{kT} \]

• Base injects holes into emitter, recombine at emitter contact:

\[ I_B = \frac{I_S}{\beta_F} (\exp \frac{qV_{BE}}{kT} - 1) \]

• Emitter current:

\[ I_E = -I_C - I_B = -I_S \exp \frac{qV_{BE}}{kT} - \frac{I_S}{\beta_F} (\exp \frac{qV_{BE}}{kT} - 1) \]

• State-of-the-art IC BJT’s today: \( I_C \sim 0.1 - 1 \, mA, \beta_F \sim 50 - 300. \)

• \( \beta_F \) hard to control tightly \( \Rightarrow \) circuit design techniques required to be insensitive to variations in \( \beta_F. \)
\[ \text{Reverse regime: } V_{BE} < 0, \ V_{BC} > 0 \]

Minority carrier profiles:
• Collector injects electrons into base, emitter collects electrons from base:

\[ I_E = I_S \exp \frac{qV_{BC}}{kT} \]

• Base injects holes into collector, recombine at collector contact and buried layer:

\[ I_B = \frac{I_S}{\beta_R} (\exp \frac{qV_{BC}}{kT} - 1) \]

• Collector current:

\[ I_C = -I_E - I_B = -I_S \exp \frac{qV_{BC}}{kT} - \frac{I_S}{\beta_R} (\exp \frac{qV_{BC}}{kT} - 1) \]

• Typically, \( \beta_R \approx 0.1 - 5 \ll \beta_F \).
\[ \Box \text{CUT-OFF: } V_{BE} < 0, \quad V_{BC} < 0 \]

Minority carrier profiles:
• Base extracts holes from emitter:

\[ I_{B1} = -\frac{I_S}{\beta_F} = -I_E \]

• Base extracts holes from collector:

\[ I_{B2} = -\frac{I_S}{\beta_R} = -I_C \]

• These are tiny leakage currents (\(\sim 10^{-12} \, A\)).
\[ SATURATION: \ V_{BE} > 0, \ V_{BC} > 0 \]

Minority carrier profiles:
Saturation is superposition of forward active + reverse:

\[
I_C = I_S \left( \exp \frac{qV_{BE}}{kT} - \exp \frac{qV_{BC}}{kT} \right) - \frac{I_S}{\beta_R} \left( \exp \frac{qV_{BC}}{kT} - 1 \right)
\]

\[
I_B = \frac{I_S}{\beta_F} \left( \exp \frac{qV_{BE}}{kT} - 1 \right) + \frac{I_S}{\beta_R} \left( \exp \frac{qV_{BC}}{kT} - 1 \right)
\]

\[
I_E = -\frac{I_S}{\beta_F} \left( \exp \frac{qV_{BE}}{kT} - 1 \right) - I_S \left( \exp \frac{qV_{BE}}{kT} - \exp \frac{qV_{BC}}{kT} \right)
\]

- \(I_C\) and \(I_E\) can have either sign, depending on relative magnitude of \(V_{BE}\) and \(V_{BC}\), and \(\beta_F\) and \(\beta_R\).

- In saturation, collector and base flooded with excess minority carriers \(\Rightarrow\) takes lots of time to get transistor out of saturation.
2. Large-signal equivalent circuit model

System of equations that describes BJT operation:

\[ I_C = I_S \left( \exp \frac{qV_{BE}}{kT} - \exp \frac{qV_{BC}}{kT} \right) - \frac{I_S}{\beta_R} \left( \exp \frac{qV_{BC}}{kT} - 1 \right) \]

\[ I_B = \frac{I_S}{\beta_F} \left( \exp \frac{qV_{BE}}{kT} - 1 \right) + \frac{I_S}{\beta_R} \left( \exp \frac{qV_{BC}}{kT} - 1 \right) \]

\[ I_E = -\frac{I_S}{\beta_F} \left( \exp \frac{qV_{BE}}{kT} - 1 \right) - I_S \left( \exp \frac{qV_{BE}}{kT} - \exp \frac{qV_{BC}}{kT} \right) \]

Equivalent-circuit model representation:

*Non-Linear Hybrid-\( \pi \) Model*

Three parameters in this model: \( I_S \), \( \beta_F \), and \( \beta_R \).

Model equivalent to Ebers-Moll model in text.
Simplifications of equivalent-circuit model:

- **Forward-active regime:** $V_{BE} > 0$, $V_{BC} < 0$

  ![Diagram](image)

  For today’s technology: $V_{BE, on} \simeq 0.7 \, V$. $I_B$ depends on outside circuit.

- **Reverse:** $V_{BE} < 0$, $V_{BC} > 0$

  ![Diagram](image)

  For today’s technology: $V_{BC, on} \simeq 0.5 \, V$. $I_B$ also depends on outside circuit.
$I_B$ vs. $V_{BE}$ for $V_{CE} = 2.5$ V:

![Graph showing $I_B$ vs. $V_{BE}$ with $V_{CE} = 2.5$ V]

$I_B$ vs. $V_{BC}$ for $V_{EC} = 2.5$ V:

![Graph showing $I_B$ vs. $V_{BC}$ with $V_{EC} = 2.5$ V]
• Saturation: $V_{BE} > 0, V_{BC} > 0$

Today’s technology: $V_{CE,sat} = V_{BE,on} - V_{BC,on} \approx 0.2 \, V$

$I_B$ and $I_C$ depend on outside circuit.

• Cut-off: $V_{BE} < 0, V_{BC} < 0$

Only negligible leakage currents.
3. Output characteristics

First, common-base output characteristics:

Next, common-emitter output characteristics:
$I_C$ vs. $V_{CB}$ for $0 \leq I_B \leq 100 \mu A$:
\( I_C \) vs. \( V_{CE} \) for \( 0 \leq I_B \leq 100 \, \mu A \):
$I_C$ vs. $V_{CE}$ for $0 \leq I_B \leq 100 \, \mu A$: 
Key conclusions

- Forward-active regime: most useful, device has gain and isolation. For bias calculations:

- Saturation: device flooded with minority carriers. Not useful. For bias calculations:

- Cut-off: device open. Useful. For bias calculations: