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Wideband Semiconductor Optical Amplifier Steady-State Numerical Model

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Abstract—A wideband steady-state model and efficient numerical algorithm for a bulk InP–InGaAsP homogeneous buried ridge stripe semiconductor optical amplifier is described. The model is applicable over a wide range of operating regimes. The relationship between spontaneous emission and material gain is clarified. Simulations and comparisons with experiment are given which demonstrate the versatility of the model.

Index Terms—Modeling, semiconductor optical amplifier.

I. INTRODUCTION

SEMICONDUCTOR optical amplifier (SOA) technology has matured to the point where commercial devices are available for use in optical communication systems. Mathematical models are required to aid in the design of SOAs and to predict their operational characteristics. Many such models have been presented in the literature [1]–[5]. However, many of these models make assumptions that restrict the range of operating conditions over which the SOA can be modeled. These assumptions are used either to obtain analytic solutions for the amplifier characteristics, or to aid numerical computation. SOAs can be used to simultaneously amplify a number of signals at different wavelengths. To model such an application, a wideband model of the SOA is required. In this paper, a comprehensive wideband model of a bulk InP–InGaAsP SOA is presented. Through the use of suitable gain models it can be extended to SOAs with quantum-well active regions. In the model, the relationship between spontaneous and stimulated emission is clarified. This relationship does not require the use of a spontaneous emission factor used in many models. Spontaneous emission within the amplifier is modeled by traveling-wave power equations, which neglect the phase of the spontaneous signal. The model can be applied to determine the steady-state properties of an SOA over a wide range of operating regimes. A numerical algorithm is described which enables efficient implementation of the model. Simulations and comparisons with experiment are given which demonstrate the versatility of the model.

II. AMPLIFIER STRUCTURE AND BULK MATERIAL MODEL

The SOA modeled is a 1.55- μm InP–In $_{1-x}$ Ga $_x$ As $_y$ P $_{1-y}$ homogeneous buried ridge stripe device with schematic cross-section shown in Fig. 1 [6]. y and x are the molar fractions of Ar-

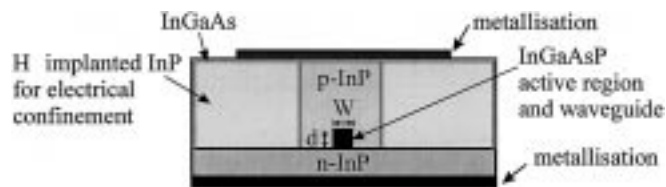


Fig. 1. Homogenous buried ridge stripe SOA schematic cross-section [6].

senide and Gallium, respectively, in the undoped active region. Lattice matching is assumed, for which $x = 0.47y$. The device structure consists of central active region of width W , thickness d , and length L_c . The active region narrows linearly as a lateral taper of width W at the central region to zero width at each end. Each taper has length L_t . The tapers reduce the optical confinement factor from its maximum value Γ at the central active region to zero at the amplifier ends. This causes the guided mode lateral profile to expand which improves the input and output coupling efficiencies to single mode optical fiber. As a first approximation the SOA is modeled as a device of mean length L , given by

$$L = L_c + L_t \quad (1)$$

with identical geometrical properties and an optical confinement factor as the central active region. Pertinent geometrical and material parameters for the device under consideration are given in Table I. The InGaAsP direct bandgap bulk-material active region has a material gain coefficient $g_m(m^{-1})$ [7], given by

$$g_m(\nu, n) = \frac{c^2}{4\sqrt{2}\pi^{3/2}n_1^2\tau\nu^2} \left(\frac{2m_e m_{hh}}{\hbar(m_e + m_{hh})} \right)^{3/2} \times \int_0^\infty \left[\sqrt{\nu' - \frac{E_g(n)}{h}} (f_c(\nu') - f_v(\nu')) \right] \times \left(\frac{2T_0}{(1 + (2\pi T_0)^2(\nu' - \nu)^2)} \right) d\nu' \quad (2)$$

where

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| c | speed of light in a vacuum; |
| ν | optical frequency; |
| n_1 | active region refractive index; |
| τ | radiative carrier recombination lifetime [see (52)]; |
| \hbar | Planck's constant h divided by 2π ; |
| m_e, m_{hh} | conduction band (CB) electron and valence band (VB) heavy hole effective masses, respectively; |
| n | CB carrier (electron) density. |
| T_0 | mean lifetime for coherent interaction of electrons with a monochromatic field and is of the order of 1 ps. |

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TABLE I
SOA GEOMETRICAL AND MATERIAL PARAMETERS

| Symbol | Parameter | Value |
|----------------------|---|--|
| y | Molar fraction of Arsenide in the active region | 0.892 [6] |
| L_c | Central active region length | 600 μm [6] |
| L_t | Tapered active region length | 100 μm [6] |
| d | Active region thickness | 0.4 μm [6] |
| W | Central active region width | 0.4 μm [6] |
| Γ | Optical confinement factor | 0.45 [6] |
| K_g | Bandgap shrinkage coefficient | 0.9×10^{-10} eVm [9] |
| n_1 | InGaAsP active region refractive index | 3.22 [18] |
| n_2 | InP region refractive index | 3.167 [18] |
| $\frac{dn_1}{dn}$ | Differential of active region refractive index with respect to carrier density | -1.8×10^{-26} m ⁻³ [18] |
| n_{eq0} | Equivalent refractive index at zero carrier density (from (29)) | 3.22 |
| $\frac{dn_{eq}}{dn}$ | Differential of equivalent refractive index with respect to carrier density (from (30)) | -1.34×10^{-26} m ⁻³ |
| η_{in} | Input coupling loss | 3.0 dB [6] |
| η_{out} | Output coupling loss | 3.0 dB [6] |
| R_1 | Input facet reflectivity | 5.0×10^{-3} [6] |
| R_2 | Output facet reflectivity | 5.0×10^{-3} [6] |
| K_o | Carrier independent absorption loss coefficient | 6200 m ⁻¹ |
| K_l | Carrier dependent absorption loss coefficient | 7500 m ² |
| A_{rad} | Linear radiative recombination coefficient | 1.0×10^7 s ⁻¹ |
| B_{rad} | Bimolecular radiative recombination coefficient | 5.6×10^{-16} m ³ s ⁻¹ |
| A_{nrad} | Linear nonradiative recombination coefficient due to traps | 3.5×10^8 s ⁻¹ |
| B_{nrad} | Bimolecular nonradiative recombination coefficient | 0.0×10^{-16} m ³ s ⁻¹ |
| C_{aug} | Auger recombination coefficient | 3.0×10^{-41} m ⁶ s ⁻¹ |
| D_{leak} | Leakage recombination coefficient | 0.0×10^{48} m ^{13.5} s ⁻¹ |
| a | Bandgap energy quadratic coefficient | 1.35 [8] |
| b | Bandgap energy quadratic coefficient | -0.775 [8] |
| c | Bandgap energy quadratic coefficient | 0.149 [8] |
| m_e | Effective mass of electron in the CB | 4.10×10^{-32} kg [18] |
| m_{hh} | Effective mass of a heavy hole in the VB | 4.19×10^{-31} kg [18] |
| m_{hl} | Effective mass of a light hole in the VB | 5.06×10^{-32} kg [18] |

The bandgap energy E_g can be expressed as

$$E_g(n) = E_{g0} - \Delta E_g(n). \quad (3)$$

E_{g0} , the bandgap energy with no injected carriers, is given by the quadratic approximation [8]

$$E_{g0} = c(a + by + cy^2) \quad (4)$$

where a, b and c are the quadratic coefficients and e the electronic charge. $\Delta E_g(n)$ is the bandgap shrinkage due to the injected carrier density [9] given by

$$\Delta E_g(n) = eK_g n^{1/3} \quad (5)$$

where K_g is the bandgap shrinkage coefficient. The value of K_g used in the model is taken to be slightly less than the value for In_{0.15}Ga_{0.85}As. The main effect of ΔE_g is to shift the peak of

the gain and spontaneous emission spectra toward longer wavelengths.

The Fermi-Dirac distributions in the CB and VB [7] are given by

$$f_c(\nu) = \left\{ \exp\left(\frac{E_a - E_{fc}}{kT}\right) + 1 \right\}^{-1} \quad (6)$$

$$f_v(\nu) = \left\{ \exp\left(\frac{E_b - E_{fv}}{kT}\right) + 1 \right\}^{-1} \quad (7)$$

where

$$E_a = (h\nu - E_g(n)) \frac{m_{hh}}{m_e + m_{hh}}$$

$$E_b = -(h\nu - E_g(n)) \frac{m_e}{m_e + m_{hh}}. \quad (8)$$

T is absolute temperature and k the Boltzmann constant. E_{fc} is the quasi-Fermi level of the CB relative to the bottom of the band. E_{fv} is the quasi-Fermi level of the VB relative to the top

of the band. They can be estimated using the Nilsson approximation [10]

$$\begin{aligned} E_{fc} &= \{\ln \delta + \delta[64 + 0.05524\delta(64 + \sqrt{\delta})]^{-\frac{1}{4}}\}kT \\ E_{fv} &= -\{\ln \varepsilon + \varepsilon[64 + 0.05524\varepsilon(64 + \sqrt{\varepsilon})]^{-\frac{1}{4}}\}kT \end{aligned} \quad (9)$$

where

$$\delta = \frac{n}{n_c}; \quad \varepsilon = \frac{p}{n_v}. \quad (10)$$

p is the VB hole density. At the carrier density levels usually present in SOAs, p is equal to n . n_c , and n_v are constants given by

$$n_c = 2 \left(\frac{m_e kT}{2\pi \hbar^2} \right)^{\frac{3}{2}}; \quad n_v = 2 \left(\frac{m_{\text{lh}} kT}{2\pi \hbar^2} \right)^{\frac{3}{2}} \quad (11)$$

where

$$m_{\text{lh}} = \left(m_{\text{lh}}^{\frac{2}{3}} + m_{\text{hh}}^{\frac{2}{3}} \right)^{\frac{3}{2}}. \quad (12)$$

m_{lh} is the effective mass of a light hole in the VB. In (2), we can make the substitution

$$\left(\frac{2T_0}{(1 + (2\pi T_0)^2(\nu' - \nu)^2)} \right) = \delta(\nu - \nu') \quad (13)$$

as this function has a much narrower spectrum than the other terms within the integral [7]. Hence, (2) becomes

$$\begin{aligned} g_m(\nu, n) &= \frac{c^2}{4\sqrt{2}\pi^{3/2}n_1^2\tau\nu^2} \left(\frac{2m_e m_{\text{lh}}}{\hbar(m_e + m_{\text{lh}})} \right)^{3/2} \\ &\times \sqrt{\nu - \frac{E_g(n)}{h}} (f_c(\nu) - f_v(\nu)). \end{aligned} \quad (14)$$

g_m is composed of two components, a gain coefficient g'_m (≥ 0) and an absorption coefficient g''_m (≥ 0), so

$$g_m = g'_m - g''_m \quad (15)$$

where

$$\begin{aligned} g'_m &= \frac{c^2}{4\sqrt{2}\pi^{3/2}n_1^2\tau\nu^2} \left(\frac{2m_e m_{\text{lh}}}{\hbar(m_e + m_{\text{lh}})} \right)^{3/2} \\ &\times \sqrt{\nu - \frac{E_g(n)}{h}} f_c(\nu)(1 - f_v(\nu)) \end{aligned} \quad (16)$$

$$\begin{aligned} g''_m &= \frac{c^2}{4\sqrt{2}\pi^{3/2}n_1^2\tau\nu^2} \left(\frac{2m_e m_{\text{lh}}}{\hbar(m_e + m_{\text{lh}})} \right)^{3/2} \\ &\times \sqrt{\nu - \frac{E_g(n)}{h}} (1 - f_c(\nu))f_v(\nu). \end{aligned} \quad (17)$$

Typical spectral plots of g_m and g'_m are shown in Fig. 2. To enable fast computations, the net gain coefficient is often approximated by a polynomial that is a function of the photon wavelength and carrier density. However, such approximations are

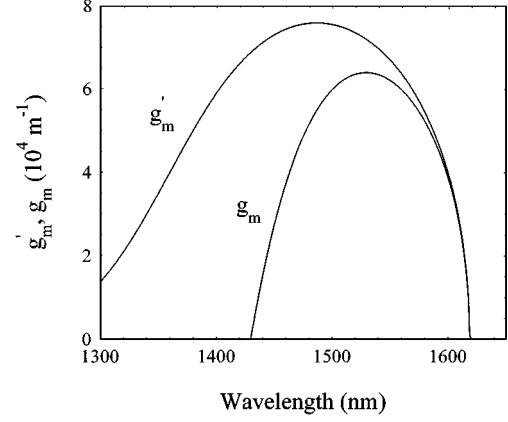


Fig. 2. Typical InGaAsP bulk semiconductor g_m and g'_m spectra. The carrier density is $2.0 \times 10^{24} \text{m}^{-3}$.

usually only valid for wavelengths near the gain peak. The material loss coefficient α (m^{-1}) is modeled as a linear function of carrier density [11]

$$\alpha(n) = K_0 + \Gamma K_1 n. \quad (18)$$

K_0 and K_1 are the carrier-independent and carrier-dependent absorption loss coefficients, respectively. K_0 represents the intrinsic material loss. K_1 is mainly due to intervalence band absorption.

III. TRAVELING-WAVE EQUATIONS FOR THE SIGNAL FIELDS

In the model, N_s signals are injected with optical frequencies ν_k ($k = 1$ to N_s) and power P_{in_k} before coupling loss. The signals travel through the amplifier, aided by the embedded waveguide, and exit at the opposite facet. The SOA model is based on a set of coupled differential equations that describe the interaction between the internal variables of the amplifier, i.e., the carrier density and photon rates. The solution of these equations enables external parameters such as signal fiber-to-fiber gain and mean noise output to be predicted. In the following analysis, it is assumed that transverse variations in the photon rates and carrier density are negligible. This assumption is valid for SOAs with narrow active regions. In the model, the left (input) and right (output) facets have power reflectivities R_1 and R_2 , respectively. Within the amplifier, the spatially varying component of the field due to each input signal can be decomposed into two complex traveling-waves, $E_{s_k^+}$ and $E_{s_k^-}$, propagating in the positive and negative z directions, respectively. z lies along the amplifier axis with its origin at the input facet. The modulus squared of the amplitude of a traveling-wave is equal to the photon rate (s^{-1}) of the wave in that direction, so

$$N_{s_k^+} = |E_{s_k^+}|^2; \quad N_{s_k^-} = |E_{s_k^-}|^2. \quad (19)$$

The lightwave representing the signal must be treated coherently since its transmission through the amplifier depends on its frequency and phase when reflecting facets are present. $E_{s_k^+}$ and $E_{s_k^-}$ obey the complex traveling-wave equations [2]

$$\frac{dE_{s_k^+}(z)}{dz} = \left(-j\beta_k + \frac{1}{2}(\Gamma g_m(\nu_k, n) - \alpha(n)) \right) E_{s_k^+}(z) \quad (20)$$

$$\frac{dE_{s_k}^-(z)}{dz} = \left(j\beta_k - \frac{1}{2}(\Gamma g_m(\nu_k, n) - \alpha(n)) \right) E_{s_k}^-(z) \quad (21)$$

where $j = \sqrt{-1}$. (20) and (21) are subject to boundary conditions

$$\begin{aligned} E_{s_k}^+(0) &= (1 - r_1)E_{in_k} + r_1 E_{s_k}^-(0) \\ E_{s_k}^-(L) &= r_2 E_{s_k}^+(L) \end{aligned} \quad (22)$$

where the k -th input signal field to the left of the input facet is

$$E_{in_k} = \sqrt{\frac{\eta_{in} P_{in_k}}{h\nu_k}}. \quad (23)$$

The k -th output signal field to the right of the output facet is

$$E_{out_k} = (1 - r_2)E_{s_k}^+(L). \quad (24)$$

The k -th output signal power after coupling loss is

$$P_{out_k} = h\nu_k \eta_{out} |E_{out_k}|^2. \quad (25)$$

η_{in} and η_{out} are the input and output coupling efficiencies, respectively. The amplitude reflectivity coefficients are

$$r_1 = \sqrt{R_1}; \quad r_2 = \sqrt{R_2}. \quad (26)$$

The k -th signal propagation coefficient is

$$\beta_k = \frac{2\pi n_{eq} \nu_k}{c}. \quad (27)$$

n_{eq} is the equivalent index of the amplifier waveguide [11] given by

$$n_{eq} = \left[(n_1^2 - n_2^2) \frac{\Gamma}{2 - \Gamma} + n_2^2 \right]^{1/2}. \quad (28)$$

n_2 is the refractive index of the InP material surrounding the active region. n_{eq} is modeled as a linear function of carrier density [19]

$$n_{eq} = n_{eq0} + \frac{dn_{eq}}{dn} n. \quad (29)$$

n_{eq0} is the equivalent refractive index with no pumping. The differential in (29) is given by

$$\frac{dn_{eq}}{dn} = \frac{n_1 \Gamma}{n_{eq0}(2 - \Gamma)} \frac{dn_1}{dn}. \quad (30)$$

Numerical values for n_{eq0} and dn_{eq}/dn are given in Table I.

IV. TRAVELING-WAVE EQUATIONS FOR THE SPONTANEOUS EMISSION

The amplification of the signal also depends on the amount of spontaneously emitted noise generated by the amplifier. This is because the noise power takes part in draining the available carrier population and helps saturate the gain. However, it is not necessary to treat the spontaneous emission as a coherent signal, since it distributes itself continuously over a relatively wide band of wavelengths with random phases between adjacent

wavelength components. When reflecting facets are present, the spontaneously emitted noise will show the presence of longitudinal cavity modes. For this reason, it may be assumed that noise photons only exist at discrete frequencies corresponding to integer multiples of cavity resonances. These frequencies are given by

$$\nu_j = \nu_c + \Delta\nu_c + jK_m \Delta\nu_m, \quad j = 0 \dots N_m - 1 \quad (31)$$

where the cutoff frequency at zero injected carrier density is given by

$$\nu_c = \frac{E_{g0}}{h}. \quad (32)$$

$\Delta\nu_c$ is a frequency offset used to match ν_0 to a resonance. K_m and N_m are positive integers. The values of K_m and N_m chosen depend on the gain bandwidth of the SOA and accuracy required from the numerical solution of the model equations. The longitudinal mode frequency spacing is

$$\Delta\nu_m = \frac{c}{2 \int_0^L n_{eq} dz}. \quad (33)$$

This technique can be applied to both resonant and near-traveling-wave SOAs and greatly reduces computation time. The detailed shape of the noise output can then be determined using the method shown in Section VII. It can be shown that averaging the coherent signal over two adjacent cavity resonances is identical to treating the signal coherently in terms of traveling-wave power (or photon rate) equations. It is sufficient to describe the spontaneous emission in terms of power, while signals must be treated in terms of waves with definite amplitude and phase. N_j^+ and N_j^- are defined as the spontaneous emission photon rates (s^{-1}) for a particular polarization [transverse electric (TE) or transverse magnetic (TM)] in a frequency spacing $K_m \Delta\nu_m$ centered on frequency ν_j , traveling in the positive and negative z directions, respectively. N_j^+ and N_j^- obey the traveling-wave equations

$$\frac{dN_j^+(z)}{dz} = (\Gamma g_m(\nu_j, n) - \alpha(n))N_j^+ + R_{sp}(\nu_j, n) \quad (34)$$

$$\frac{dN_j^-(z)}{dz} = -(\Gamma g_m(\nu_j, n) - \alpha(n))N_j^- + R_{sp}(\nu_j, n) \quad (35)$$

subject to the boundary conditions

$$N_j^+(0) = R_1 N_j^-(0), \quad N_j^-(L) = R_2 N_j^+(L). \quad (36)$$

The function $R_{sp}(\nu_j, n)$ represents the spontaneously emitted noise coupled into N_j^+ or N_j^- . An expression for R_{sp} can be derived by a comparison between the noise output from an ideal amplifier obtained using (34) with the quantum mechanically derived expression [12]. An ideal amplifier has no gain saturation (which implies a constant carrier density throughout the amplifier), material gain coefficient $g_m = g'_m (>0)$, and zero loss coefficient, facet reflectivities, and coupling losses. In this case, N_j^+ is obtained from the solution to

$$\frac{dN_j^+}{dz} = \Gamma g'_m(\nu_j, n)N_j^+ + R_{sp}(\nu_j, n). \quad (37)$$

The solution of (37), in this ideal case, gives an output noise power at a single polarization in a frequency band $K_m\Delta\nu_m$ centered on ν_j of

$$N_{\text{out}} = \frac{G-1}{\Gamma g'_m(\nu_j, n)} h\nu_j R_{\text{sp}}(\nu_j, n) \quad (38)$$

where G is the amplifier gain at ν_j . The equivalent quantum mechanical expression [7] is

$$N_{\text{out}} = (G-1)h\nu_j K_m \Delta\nu_m. \quad (39)$$

Equating (38) with (39) gives

$$R_{\text{sp}}(\nu_j, n) = \Gamma g'_m(\nu_j, n) K_m \Delta\nu_m. \quad (40)$$

The traveling-wave power equations describing N_j^+ and N_j^- assume that all the spontaneous photons in spacing $K_m\Delta\nu_m$ are at resonance frequencies. In a real device the injected spontaneous photons, originating from R_{sp} , are uniformly spread over $K_m\Delta\nu_m$. The noise is filtered by the amplifier cavity. To account for this, N_j^+ and N_j^- are multiplied by a normalization factor K_j which is derived as follows. If the single-pass gain is G_s at ν_j , then the signal gain for frequencies within spacing $\Delta\nu_m$ around ν_j [2] is

$$G(\nu) = \frac{(1-R_1)(1-R_2)G_s}{(1-\sqrt{R_1 R_2} G_S)^2 + 4G_S \sqrt{R_1 R_2} \text{Sin}^2 \phi} \quad (41)$$

where the single-pass phase shift is

$$\phi = \frac{2\pi\nu}{c} \int_0^L n_{\text{eq}}(z) dz. \quad (42)$$

At resonance, the signal gain is

$$G(\nu_j) = \frac{(1-R_1)(1-R_2)G_s}{(1-\sqrt{R_1 R_2} G_S)^2}. \quad (43)$$

Let the amplifier have a noise input spectral density σ_{in} (photons/s/Hz) distributed uniformly over $\Delta\nu_m$ centered at ν_j . The total output noise (photons/s) in $\Delta\nu_m$ is then

$$\begin{aligned} N_{\text{out}} &= \sigma_{\text{in}} \int_{\nu=\nu_j-\Delta\nu_m/2}^{\nu=\nu_j+\Delta\nu_m/2} G(\nu) d\nu \\ &= \sigma_{\text{in}} \Delta\nu_m \frac{1}{\pi} \int_0^\pi G(\phi) d\phi. \end{aligned} \quad (44)$$

If the input noise power were concentrated at ν_j (resonance), then the output noise photon rate would be

$$N_{\text{resout}} = \sigma_{\text{in}} \Delta\nu_m G(\nu_j) K_j. \quad (45)$$

The factor K_j is included in (45) to equate N_{out} with N_{resout} , so

$$K_j = \frac{\int_0^\pi G(\phi) d\phi}{\pi G(\nu_j)} = \frac{1}{\pi} \int_0^\pi \frac{d\phi}{1 + \gamma^2 \text{Sin}^2(\phi)} \quad (46)$$

where

$$\gamma = \frac{4G_s(\nu_j)\sqrt{R_1 R_2}}{(1-\sqrt{R_1 R_2} G_S(\nu_j))^2}. \quad (47)$$

K_j is equal to unity for zero facet reflectivities.

V. CARRIER-DENSITY RATE EQUATION

The carrier density at z obeys the rate equation

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{dn(z)}{dt} &= \frac{I}{edLW} - R(n(z)) \\ &\quad - \frac{\Gamma}{dW} \left\{ \sum_{k=1}^{N_s} g_m(\nu_k, n(z)) (N_{s_k}^+(z) + N_{s_k}^-(z)) \right\} \\ &\quad - \frac{2\Gamma}{dW} \left\{ \sum_{j=0}^{N_m-1} g_m(\nu_j, n(z)) K_j ((N_j^+(z) + N_j^-(z))) \right\} \end{aligned} \quad (48)$$

where I is the amplifier bias current. In (48) all of the bias current is assumed to pass through the active region only and not the surrounding InP regions. The bias current is assumed to have a uniform distribution across the active region width. The first term on the right hand side (RHS) of (48) represents the addition of carriers to the active region from the bias current. These injected carriers are then depleted by various mechanisms occurring within the amplifier. The recombination rate term $R(n)$ is given by

$$R(n) = R_{\text{rad}}(n) + R_{\text{nr}}(n). \quad (49)$$

$R_{\text{rad}}(n)$ and $R_{\text{nr}}(n)$ are the radiative and nonradiative carrier recombination rates, respectively, both of which can be expressed as polynomial functions of n [13], [14]

$$R_{\text{rad}}(n) = A_{\text{rad}}n + B_{\text{rad}}n^2 \quad (50)$$

$$R_{\text{nr}}(n) = A_{\text{nr}}n + B_{\text{nr}}n^2 + C_{\text{aug}}n^3 + D_{\text{leak}}n^{5.5}. \quad (51)$$

In (50), A_{rad} and B_{rad} are the linear and bimolecular radiative recombination coefficients. In (51), A_{nr} is a linear nonradiative recombination coefficient due to traps in the semiconductor material [14]. B_{nr} represents nonradiative bimolecular recombination. C_{aug} is the Auger recombination coefficient and D_{leak} represents recombination due to leakage effects. Auger recombination and leakage effects can be significant in SOAs with high carrier densities. For the particular device considered, it is assumed that carrier leakage from the active region into surrounding InP regions is negligible [15].

The third and fourth terms on the RHS of (48) represent radiative recombination of carriers due to the amplified signal and amplified spontaneous emission (ASE). Γ is included as only this fraction of amplified photons resides in the active region. The factor of two in (48) accounts for the fact that spontaneously emitted photons can exist in one of two mutually orthogonal polarizations (TE or TM). In the model, the SOA is assumed to be polarization independent. Polarization dependence can be included by the use of different TE and TM optical confinement factors.

VI. STEADY-STATE NUMERICAL ALGORITHM

As the SOA model equations cannot be solved analytically, a numerical solution is required. In the numerical model the amplifier is split into a number of sections labeled from $i = 1$ to N_z as shown in Fig. 3. The signal fields and spontaneous emission photon rates are estimated at the section interfaces. In evaluating the RHS of (48), $Q(i)$ for the i -th section, the signal and noise

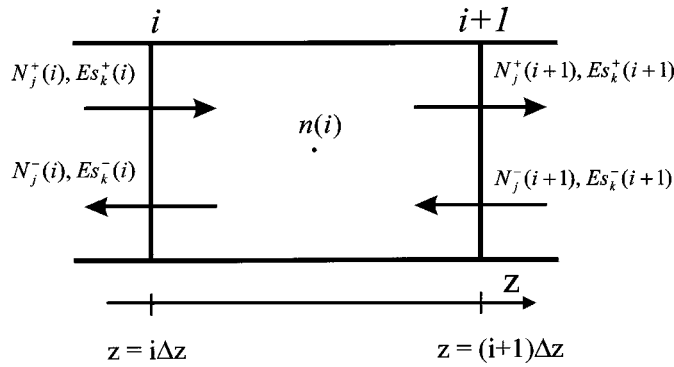


Fig. 3. The i th section of the SOA model. Signal fields and spontaneous emission are estimated at the section boundaries. The carrier density is estimated at the center of the section.

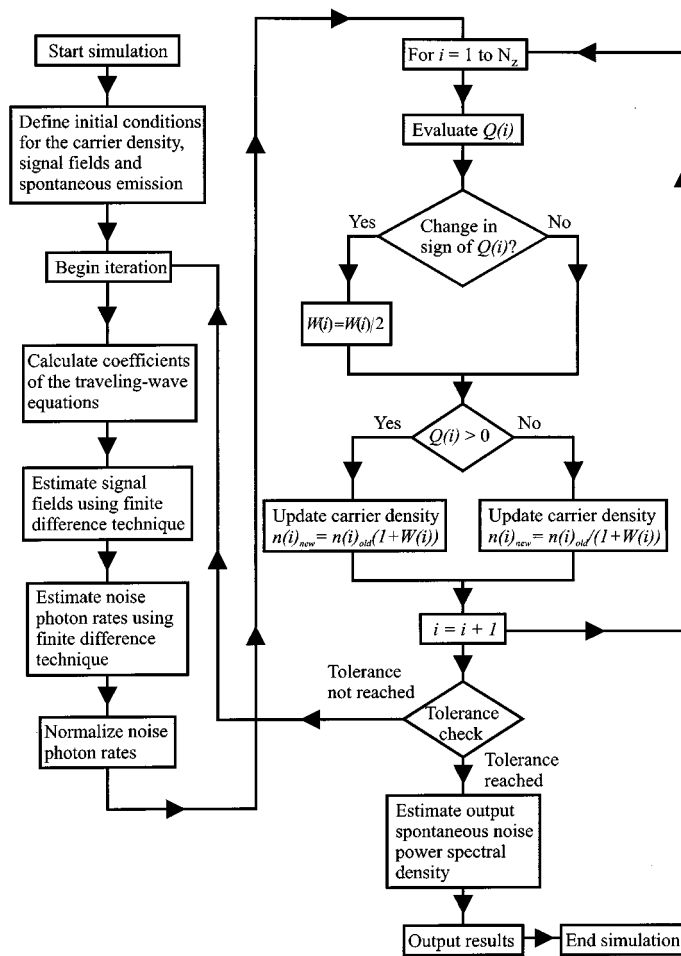


Fig. 4. SOA steady-state model algorithm. The algorithm updates the carrier density $n(i)_{\text{new}}$ throughout the amplifier cavity so $Q(i)$ [the RHS of (48)] approaches zero.

photon rates used are given by the mean value of those quantities at the section boundaries. In the steady-state $Q(i)$ is zero. To predict the steady-state characteristics, an algorithm is used which adjusts the carrier density so the value of $Q(i)$ throughout the amplifier approaches zero. A flowchart of the algorithm is shown in Fig. 4. The first step in the algorithm is to initialize the signal fields and spontaneous emission photon rates to zero. The initial carrier density is obtained from the solution of (48), with

all fields set to zero, using the Newton–Raphson technique [16]. The iteration now begins. The coefficients of the traveling-wave equations are computed. In the gain coefficient calculations, the radiative carrier recombination lifetime is approximated by

$$\tau = n/R_{\text{rad}}(n) = A_{\text{rad}} + B_{\text{rad}}n. \quad (52)$$

Next, the signal fields and noise photon densities are estimated using finite difference solutions of (20)–(21) and (34)–(35). Forward differences are used for positive traveling-waves and backward differences for negative traveling-waves. If X^+ is a forward traveling-wave, then for the i th section, the spatial derivative is approximated by

$$\frac{dX^+}{dz} = \frac{X_i - X_{i-1}}{\Delta z}. \quad (53)$$

Similarly, if X^- is a backward traveling-wave, then for the i th section, the spatial derivative is approximated by

$$\frac{dX^-}{dz} = \frac{X_{i+1} - X_i}{\Delta z} \quad (54)$$

where $\Delta z = L/N_z$ is the length of a single section. The noise normalization factors are then computed using trapezoidal integration of (46). $Q(i)$ is then calculated for each section. If $Q(i)$ is positive, then the carrier density is too low, in which case the new value of carrier density for the section is increased by a factor $1 + W(i)$. $W(i)$ is a weight less than unity. An initial value for $W(i)$ of 0.1 was found to give good convergence. If $Q(i)$ is negative, then the carrier density is too high, in which case the new value of carrier density for the section is decreased by a factor $1 + W(i)$. If the sign of $Q(i)$ differs from the previous iteration, $W(i)$ is halved. This process enables convergence toward the correct value of carrier density by using smaller carrier density increments. The iteration continues until the percentage change in the signal fields, noise photon rates and carrier density throughout the SOA between successive iterations is less than the desired tolerance. When the iteration stops, the output spontaneous emission power spectral density is computed using the method of Section VII and parameters such as signal gain, noise figure and output spontaneous noise power are calculated. The algorithm shows good convergence and stability over a wide range of operating conditions.

VII. ESTIMATION OF THE OUTPUT SPONTANEOUS EMISSION POWER SPECTRAL DENSITY

The average output noise photon rate spectral density (photons/s/Hz) after the coupling loss over both polarizations and bandwidth $K_m \Delta \nu_m$ centered on ν_j is

$$\sigma_N(\nu_j) = 2\eta_{\text{out}}(1 - R_2)K_j N_j^+(L)/(K_m \Delta \nu_m), \quad j = 0 \dots N_m - 1. \quad (55)$$

The average output noise photon rate spectral density $\sigma_N(\nu_{\text{res},j})$ centered on the cavity resonance frequencies $\nu_{\text{res},j}$ is interpolated using a cubic spline fit to the set of $\sigma_N(\nu_j)$ points [16]. The amplifier resonant frequencies are given by

$$\nu_{\text{res},j} = \nu_c + \Delta \nu_c + j \Delta \nu_m, \quad j = 0 \dots K_m(N_m - 1). \quad (56)$$

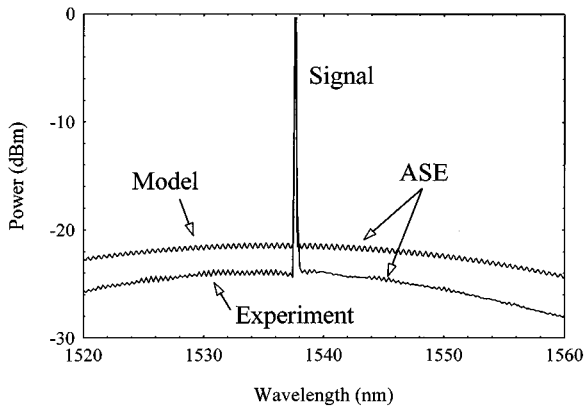


Fig. 5. SOA output spectrum. Resolution bandwidth is 0.1 nm. The input signal has a wavelength of 1537.7 nm and power of -25.6 dBm. Bias current is 130 mA. The predicted and experimental fiber-to-fiber signal gains are both 25.0 dB. The experimental gain ripple of 0.5 dB is identical to that predicted. The difference between the predicted and experimental ASE level is approximately 2.5 dB.

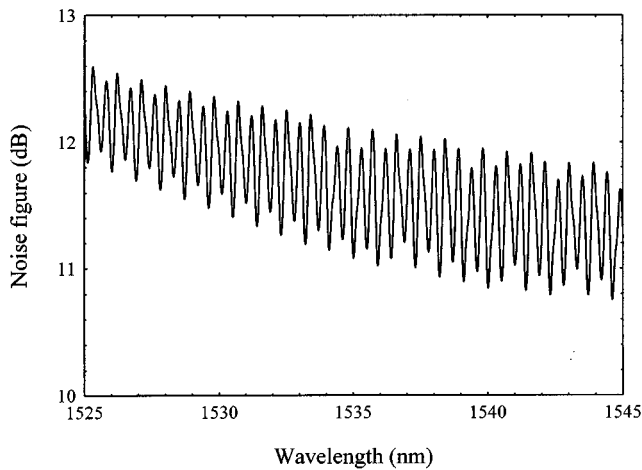


Fig. 6. Predicted SOA noise figure spectrum. Input parameters are as for Fig. 5. A noise figure of 11.4 ± 0.5 dB at 1537.7 nm is predicted compared to an experimental value of 8.8 ± 0.3 dB.

The anti-resonant frequencies are given by

$$\nu_{ares, j} = \nu_{res, j} - \Delta\nu_m/2, \quad j = 1 \dots K_m(N_m - 1). \quad (57)$$

The SOA gains at the resonant and anti-resonant frequencies are

$$G_{res}(\nu_{res, j}) = \frac{(1 - R_1)(1 - R_2)G_s(\nu_{res, j})}{(1 - \sqrt{R_1 R_2} G_S(\nu_{res, j}))^2} \quad (58)$$

$$G_{ares}(\nu_{ares, j}) = \frac{(1 - R_1)(1 - R_2)G_s(\nu_{ares, j})}{(1 + \sqrt{R_1 R_2} G_S(\nu_{ares, j}))^2} \quad (59)$$

where the single-pass gain at optical frequency ν is given by

$$G_s(\nu) = \exp \left\{ \int_0^L [\Gamma g_m(\nu, n) - \alpha(n)] dz \right\}. \quad (60)$$

Trapezoidal integration is used to evaluate the integral in (60). The amplifier gain profile $T(\nu)$ is obtained by fitting a cubic spline to the resonant and anti-resonant gain points. The output spontaneous emission noise power spectral density $\sigma_{ASE}(\nu)$ (Watts/Hz) is determined by multiplying $\sigma_N(\nu_{res, j})$ by the

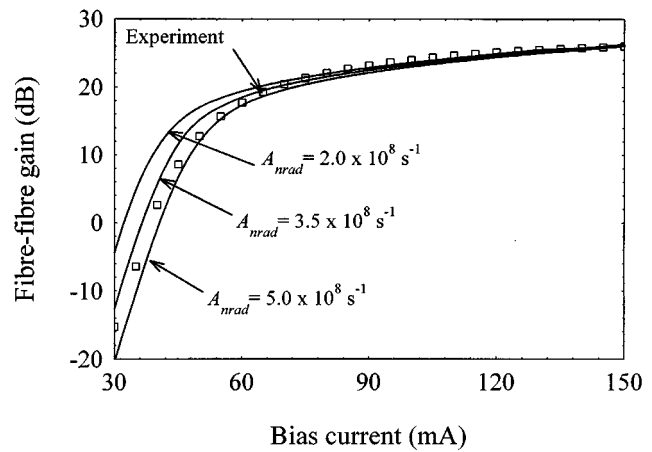


Fig. 7. Predicted and experimental SOA fiber-to-fiber gain versus bias current characteristics. The input signal has a wavelength of 1537.7 nm and power of -25.6 dBm. The device parameters are as in Table I, except for the nonradiative recombination coefficient A_{rad} .

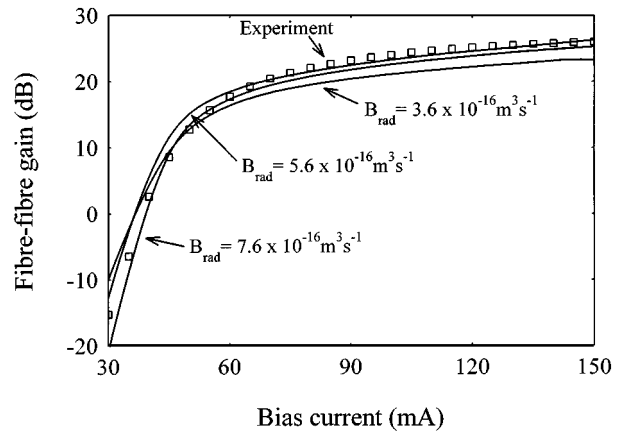


Fig. 8. Predicted and experimental SOA fiber-to-fiber gain versus bias current characteristics. The input signal has a wavelength of 1537.7 nm and power of -25.6 dBm. The device parameters are as in Table I, except for the nonradiative recombination coefficient B_{rad} .

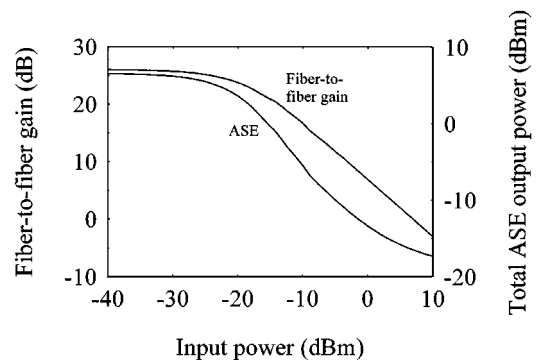


Fig. 9. SOA predicted fiber-to-fiber gain and output ASE power versus input signal power. Signal wavelength is 1537.7 nm and bias current is 130 mA.

photon energy $h\nu$ and the ratio of the gain at that frequency $T(\nu)$ to the average gain of the closest longitudinal mode j to ν , i.e.,

$$\sigma_{ASE}(\nu) = \frac{h\nu\sigma_N(\nu_{res, j})T(\nu)}{\frac{1}{\Delta\nu_m} \int_{\nu_{ares, j}}^{\nu_{ares, j+1}} T(\nu') d\nu'}. \quad (61)$$

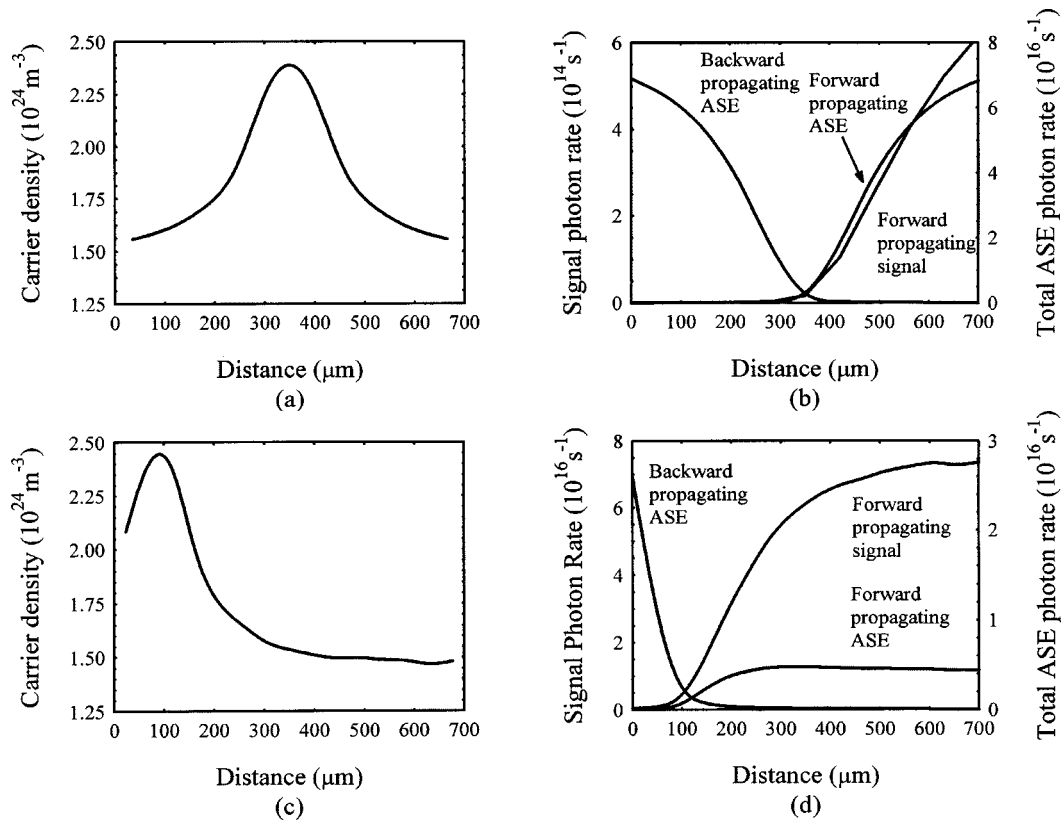


Fig. 10. SOA carrier density, forward- and backward-propagating total ASE photon rates and signal photon rates spatial distributions. Distance is measured from the SOA input facet. (a) and (b) -40 dBm input signal power. (c) and (d) -10 dBm input signal power. Saturation effects due to the amplified signal and ASE are evident. Signal wavelength is 1537.7 nm and the bias current is 130 mA.

The integral in the denominator of (61) is the average gain of the j -th longitudinal mode. From (61), the output spontaneous emission power into a frequency (resolution) bandwidth $\Delta\nu$ centered on frequency ν is

$$P_{\text{ASE}}(\nu) = \int_{\nu-\Delta\nu/2}^{\nu+\Delta\nu/2} \sigma_{\text{ASE}}(\nu') d\nu'. \quad (62)$$

This is the spontaneous emission power that would be displayed on an optical spectrum analyzer with a wavelength resolution bandwidth $\Delta\lambda = c\Delta\nu/\nu^2$.

VIII. SIMULATIONS AND COMPARISON WITH EXPERIMENT

In Figs. 5–10, simulations are presented for the above SOA under a variety of operating conditions. The device temperature was 300 K. The loss and recombination coefficients used in the simulations were those that gave the best fit to the experimental gain versus bias current characteristic of Fig. 7. In the numerical simulations, the following settings were used: $N_z = 10$, $N_m = 40$, and $K_m = 20$. In Fig. 5, the modeled and simulated SOA output spectra, at a bias current of 130 mA and input signal power of -25.6 dBm and signal wavelength of 1537.7 nm, are shown. The predicted gain ripple of 0.5 dB at the signal wavelength is identical to experiment. The predicted and experimental signal gain is 25.0 dB. The difference between the predicted and experimental ASE power levels is approximately 2.5 dB. This difference is probably because the amplifier length

used in the model is the mean amplifier length taking the tapers into account. This approximation has the effect of overestimating the noise relative to the amplified signal. However, the general shape of the predicted noise spectrum and gain ripple is close to experiment. Discrepancies between the simulation and experimental results are also caused by inaccuracies in estimation of the coupling losses, signal propagation, and loss and recombination coefficients. The signal propagation coefficient determines the positions of the ripple in the SOA gain spectrum. The exact location of the gain ripple is not an important operational parameter in SOA's with low facet reflectivities. In Fig. 6, the predicted noise figure spectrum is shown for an unsaturated SOA. The noise figure NF is calculated using the formula [17]

$$NF = 10 \log_{10} \left(\frac{\sigma_{\text{ASE}}(\nu)}{h\nu G(\nu)} + \frac{\eta_{\text{out}}}{G(\nu)} \right) \text{ (dB)} \quad (63)$$

where the amplifier input signal noise is assumed to be negligible. $G(\nu)$ is the fiber-to-fiber gain at optical frequency ν . A noise figure of 11.4 ± 0.5 dB at 1537.7 nm is predicted compared with the experimental value of 8.8 ± 0.3 dB. The difference here is due to the overestimation of the ASE noise by the model. In Fig. 7, predicted and experimental fiber-to-fiber gain versus bias current characteristics are shown. The shape of this characteristic depends largely on the values of the recombination coefficients used in (50)–(51). These coefficients are usually not known to a high degree of accuracy. The dependency on A_{nrad} is also shown in Fig. 7 for values of A_{nrad} of $2.0 \times 10^8 \text{ s}^{-1}$ and $5.0 \times 10^8 \text{ s}^{-1}$. The dependence is more

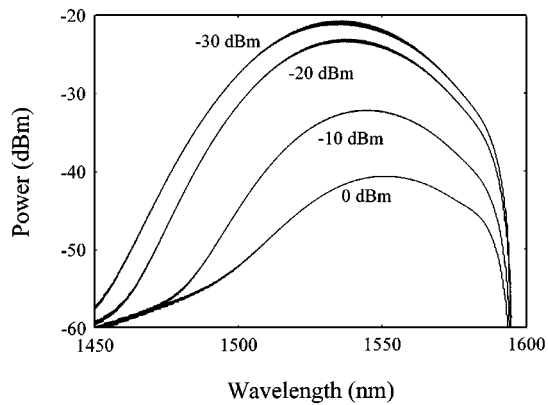


Fig. 11. Predicted SOA output ASE spectra with the input signal power as parameter, showing non-linear gain compression. Signal wavelength is 1537.7 nm and the bias current is 130 mA. Resolution bandwidth is 0.1 nm.

marked at lower bias currents, as the carrier density is lower and A_{rad} has greater influence on carrier recombination. Fig. 8 shows that the amplifier gain versus bias current characteristic is particularly sensitive to B_{rad} . This dependency is marked at all bias current levels. This is expected as the dominant radiative recombination mechanism is bimolecular. In Fig. 9, the predicted amplifier fiber-to-fiber gain and output ASE power versus input power characteristics are shown. These characteristics can be explained by reference to Fig. 10. In Fig. 10, the SOA carrier density, forward- and backward-propagating total ASE photon rates, and signal photon rates are shown as a function of distance for low and high input signal powers. The backward-propagating signal is negligible due to the low facet reflectivities. At low input powers, the carrier density has a symmetrical spatial distribution, peaking at the center of the SOA and tailing off toward the input and output facets as shown in Fig. 10(a). This is because the ASE peaks in these regions as shown in Fig. 10(b). At high input powers, the carrier density spatial distribution becomes more asymmetrical [Fig. 10(c)], with the peak moving toward the input facet. This is caused by the input signal dominating over ASE, as shown in Fig. 10(d). Analysis of spatial distributions can be used to aid SOA design. In Fig. 11, simulated SOA output ASE spectra are shown with the input signal power as parameter. The signal wavelength is near the unsaturated gain curve peak. At low signal power the carrier density is high giving a high signal gain. As the signal power is increased, the carrier density decreases causing the material gain spectrum peak to shift to longer wavelengths so reducing the signal gain even further. This is the well-known effect of nonlinear gain compression.

IX. CONCLUSION

A wideband SOA steady-state model and numerical solution has been described. The model predictions show good agreement with experiment. The model can be used to investigate the effects of different material and geometrical parameters on SOA characteristics and predict wideband performance under a wide range of operating conditions.

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