





# Turn-OFF dV/dt Controllability in 1.2-kV MOS-Bipolar Devices

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**Abstract**—Turn-OFF dV/dt controllability is an essential feature in insulated gate bipolar transistors (IGBTs) for flexible design in power switching applications. However, the occurrence of dynamic avalanche (DA) during the turn-OFF transients plays a key role on the turn-OFF power loss, dV/dt controllability and safe operating area of IGBTs. This article aims to clarify the impact of DA on the turn-OFF characteristics of 1.2-kV trench IGBTs through three-dimensional technology computer aided design (TCAD) simulations as well as experimental demonstrations. Measurement results show that DA is enhanced at high current density and high supply voltage conditions, which aggravates its influence on the dV/dt controllability as well as turn-OFF power loss. To eliminate the DA for high current density and low loss operations, a DA free design is experimentally demonstrated in the Trench Clustered IGBT (TCIGBT). Due to effective management of electric field and unique p-channel metal oxide semiconductor (PMOS) actions during turn-OFF, TCIGBT can retain high dV/dt controllability and low power loss at high current density operations.

**Index Terms**—Clustered IGBT, dV/dt controllability, dynamic avalanche, high current density operation, IGBT.

## I. INTRODUCTION

INSULATED gate bipolar transistor (IGBT) modules are widely used as electric switches in variable power switching applications, such as electric vehicle (EV), industrial motor drives and transportations. In comparison to the conventional planar IGBTs, Trench-gated IGBTs (TIGBTs) with blocking voltages from 600 V up to 6.5 kV have achieved significant improvements in the switching loss ( $E_{off}$ ) and on-state voltage drop ( $V_{ce(sat)}$ ) tradeoff due to higher channel density and injection enhancement (IE) effect [1]–[4]. The remarkable progress in  $E_{off}$ - $V_{ce(sat)}$  tradeoff have resulted in not only higher energy efficiency, but also increase in power density and cost reduction of IGBT modules. In order to increase the switching frequency of IGBT modules, high switching slopes (high dV/dt and di/dt) are required to minimize the switching losses and

delay time. However, high dV/dt can induce electromagnetic interference (EMI) noise in the electric systems due to parasitic components. Therefore, high levels of dV/dt controllability are required to meet power efficiency and EMI noise requirements in power electronic systems. Recently, it was found that high current densities and high dV/dt can induce dynamic avalanche (DA) during switching, which can lead to current filamentations [5]–[8]. The resulting excessive carriers have a significant impact on the switching slopes, power losses as well as gate stability. Since the development of TIGBTs is aimed at applications demanding ever so increasing power density, switching frequency as well as long-term reliability, the DA phenomena must be eliminated to meet these requirements. Several approaches, such as deep P-float [9] and emitter gate with additional P-layer [7] have been reported to suppress but not eliminate DA in the TIGBTs. More recently, a DA free design has been experimentally demonstrated in the Trench clustered IGBT (TCIGBT) [10]. Due to self-clamping feature and p-channel metal oxide semiconductor (PMOS) actions, the TCIGBT shows DA free performance with low power losses. Moreover, in comparison to the TIGBT, high dV/dt controllability can be maintained by TCIGBT at high operating current densities [11].

In this article, the turn-OFF behavior of TIGBTs considering DA effect is explained through theoretical analysis and 3-D technology computer aided design (TCAD) simulations. 3-D Sentaurus device [12] within synopsys is utilized to simulate the switching characteristics. Moreover, the turn-OFF transient of TCIGBT is studied in detail to explain its high dV/dt controllability. Finally, for the first time, the influence of current density and supply voltage on the turn-OFF dV/dt controllability of TIGBTs is investigated through experiments.

## II. dV/dt LIMITATION BY DA IN TIGBTs

### A. Analysis of DA in the Turn-OFF of TIGBTs

Fig. 1 shows the simulated turn-OFF characteristics of a TIGBT and the circuit configuration is specified in Fig. 2. The detailed turn-OFF transient can be explained as follows.

*Phase 1:* At the beginning of turn-OFF, the gate voltage ( $V_g$ ) falls exponentially with time. The gate current ( $I_g$ ) flows along the gate resistance ( $R_g$ ) and discharges the gate-emitter capacitance ( $C_{ge}$ ). The turn-OFF delay time in this phase is

$$t_{d\_off} = R_g \times C_{ies} \times \ln \left( \frac{V_g}{V_{th} + I_c/g_m} \right) \quad (1)$$

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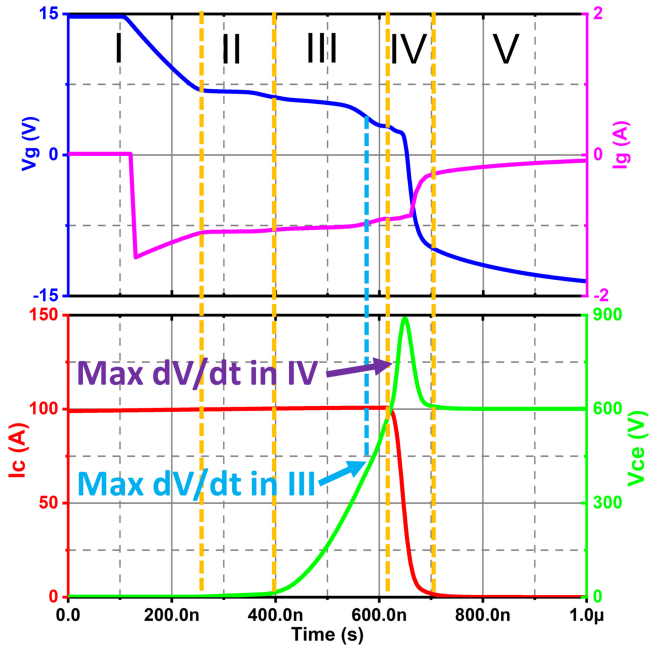
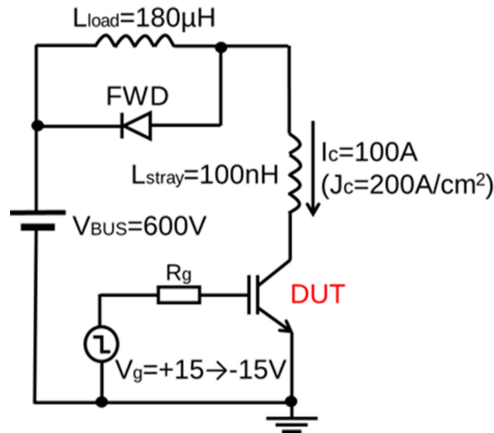

 Fig. 1. Turn-OFF characteristics of a TIGBT ( $R_g = 20 \Omega$ ).


Fig. 2. Test circuit configuration.

where  $C_{ies}$  is the input capacitance,  $V_{th}$  is the threshold voltage, and  $g_m$  is the transconductance of the IGBT structure. As shown, larger  $R_g$  results in longer turn-OFF delay time.

**Phase II:** After  $V_g$  falls to the level required to maintain the collector current ( $I_c$ ) at the load current level, the  $V_g$  remains constant and the  $I_g$  discharges the gate-collector capacitance ( $C_{gc}$ )

$$I_g = \frac{V_{th} + I_c/g_m}{R_g}. \quad (2)$$

**Phase III:** The collector-emitter voltage ( $V_{ce}$ ) start to rise up at a rate of

$$\frac{dV_{ce}}{dt} = \frac{I_g}{C_{CC}} = \frac{V_{th} + I_c/g_m}{R_g \times C_{CC}}. \quad (3)$$

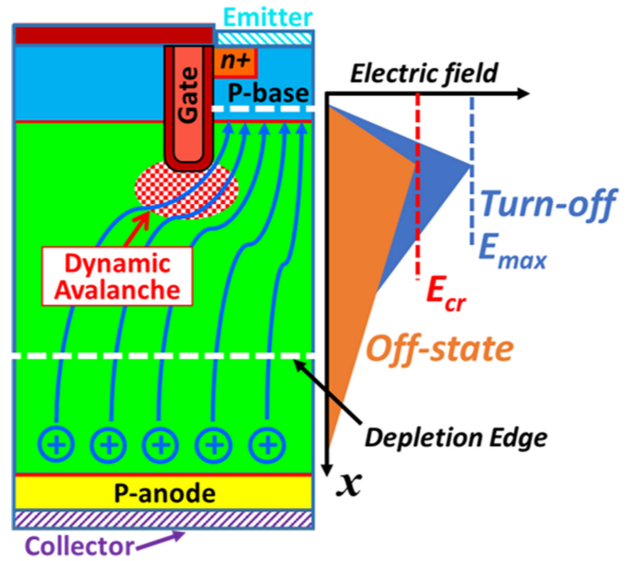


Fig. 3. Schematic of DA during turn-OFF of TIGBT.

As expressed, the  $dV/dt$  rate can be simply controlled by the  $R_g$ . The depletion region within the TIGBT expands as  $V_{ce}$  increases and the stored excessive carriers are swept out by the internal electric field. Moreover, the  $C_{gc}$  decreases due to the extension of depletion region and results in an increase in  $dV/dt$ . The maximum  $dV/dt$  appears at the point when  $V_g$  and  $I_g$  start to show a slight decrease at the end of this phase. The decrease in  $I_g$  is due to the consumption in the discharging of  $C_{gc}$  [13].

**Phase IV:** After  $V_{ce}$  increases to the supply voltage ( $V_{bus}$ ), the free-wheeling diode (FWD) turns ON and the load current starts to divert from TIGBT to FWD. Therefore, the  $I_c$  decreases immediately and induces a surge voltage ( $V_{surge}$ ) due to stray inductance ( $L_{stray}$ ) in the circuit

$$V_{surge} = L_{stray} \times \frac{dI_c}{dt}. \quad (4)$$

If the  $L_{stray}$  is not low enough, it will result in a high  $dV/dt$  which may be even higher than that of phase III.

**Phase V:** As the MOSFET structure has turned OFF and most of the excessive carriers have been swept out, the tail current is mainly contributed by the recombination current.

In phases IV and V, the expanding depletion boundary is obstructed by the stored ON-state carriers as depicted in Fig. 3. DA will take place if the resulting electric field ( $E_{max}$ ) exceeds the critical electric field ( $E_{cr}$ ), which can occur even at a voltage well below the static breakdown voltage. The detailed schematic of DA in the turn-OFF transient of trench gated IGBTs has been explained in [10]. The occurrence of DA results in additional excess carriers within the device, which slows down the discharging of  $C_{gc}$  (expansion of depletion region) and affects the  $dV/dt$ .

### B. Influence of DA on the $dV/dt$ Controllability

Fig. 4(a) shows the simulated turn-OFF waveforms of a 1.2-kV TIGBT in field-stop (FS) technology as a function of  $R_g$ . In

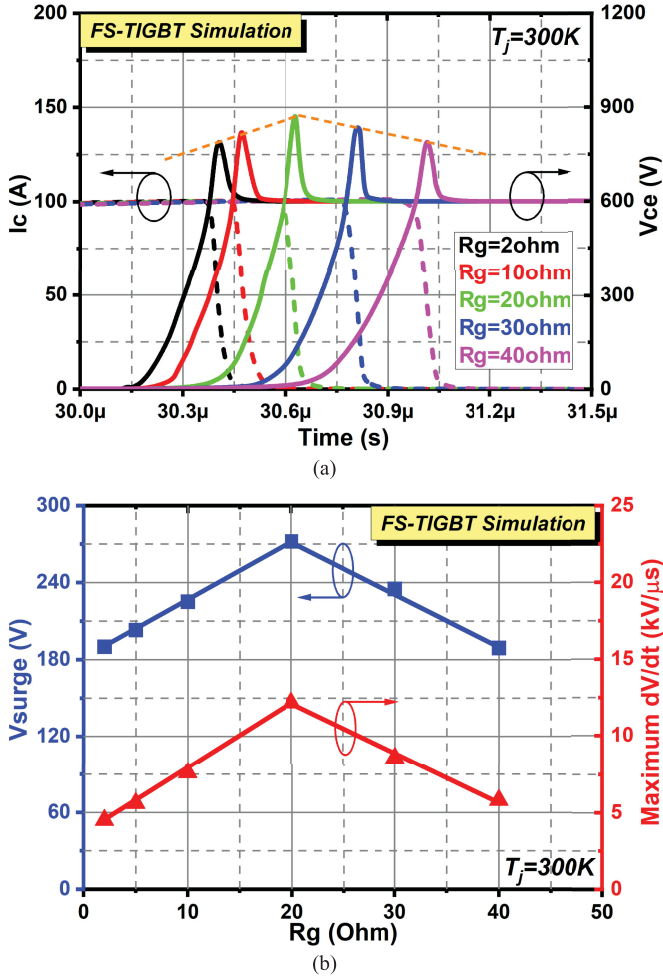


Fig. 4. Influence of  $R_g$  on (a) switch-OFF characteristics, and (b) surge voltage ( $V_{surge}$ ) and maximum  $dV/dt$  of a conventional TIGBT, respectively.

practice, smaller  $R_g$  should induce larger  $dV/dt$ , as expressed in (3). However, the DA decreases the  $V_{surge}$  as well as the  $dV/dt$  at small  $R_g$  conditions, as shown in Fig. 4(b). This clearly indicates that DA occurs in the cases of  $R_g < 20 \Omega$  and that the  $dV/dt$  is limited by DA. The detailed reason can be explained as follows: In the cases of  $R_g < 20 \Omega$ , due to faster increase in collector voltage (higher  $dV/dt$ ), the stored excessive holes do not have enough time to be evacuated from the device and flow along the trench bottom, leading to a peak electric field strength which exceeds the critical value ( $E_c$ ), as shown in Fig. 5(b). As a result, DA occurs and generates additional excessive charges to lower the  $dV/dt$ . Therefore, in order to meet the development of TIGBTs to satisfy various power applications, DA must be eliminated to achieve high  $dV/dt$  controllability and high switching frequency.

### III. DA FREE SOLUTION—HIGH $dV/dt$ CONTROLLABILITY BY TCIGBT

As a fundamental solution toward the DA elimination, TCIGBT is attractive because of its design for electric field management and unique PMOS actions [10]. Fig. 6 shows the

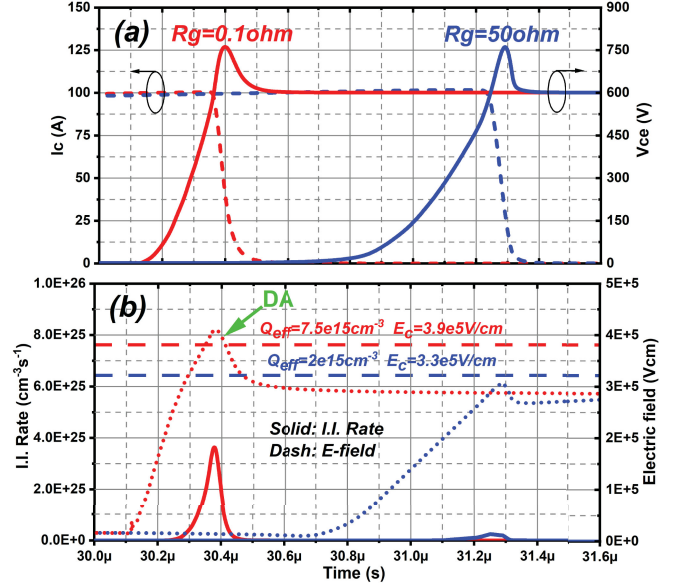


Fig. 5. Comparison of (a) turn-OFF curves and (b) I.I. rates and  $E_{max}$  of a TIGBT at  $R_g = 0.1 \Omega$  and  $R_g = 50 \Omega$ .

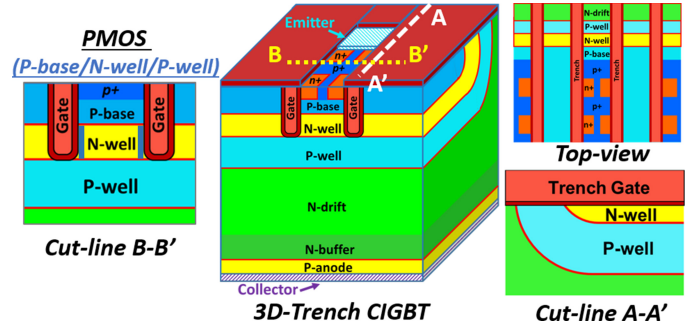


Fig. 6. 3-D cross-sectional view of TCIGBT.

3-D cross-sectional view of the TCIGBT. The TCIGBT device is a MOS-gated thyristor structure, which consists of P-anode, N-drift, P-well and N-well. The detailed device physics has been explained in [14]. During turn-OFF transient, due to the internal self-clamping feature of the TCIGBT, the N-well layer is punched through at a collector voltage of less than 20 V and the further increase in collector voltage is supported by the P-well/N-drift junction. Thus, the maximum electric field is shifted away from the trench regions. Fig. 7 compares the electric field distributions when  $V_{ce}$  increases to 600 V during turn-OFF between TIGBT and TCIGBT under  $R_g = 0.1 \Omega$  and identical  $V_{ce(sat)}$  (ON-state carrier density) conditions. As can be seen, the trench gates of TCIGBT are protected from high electric field concentrations during turn-OFF. This results in effective control of the DA and  $dV/dt$ , as depicted in Figs. 8 and 9. The surge voltage and  $dV/dt$  show linear increases with reduced  $R_g$ . Note that the turn-OFF  $dV/dt$  of TCIGBT can be easily controlled by adjusting the P-anode dose without the occurrence of DA, as shown in Fig. 9. However, in comparison, the TIGBT shows a strong electric field crowding beneath the trench bottom, which

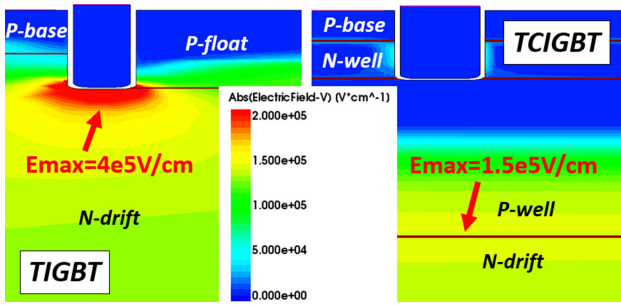


Fig. 7. Comparison of electric field distribution when  $V_{ce}$  raises to 600 V during turn-OFF between TIGBT and TCIGBT. ( $R_g = 0.1 \Omega$ ).

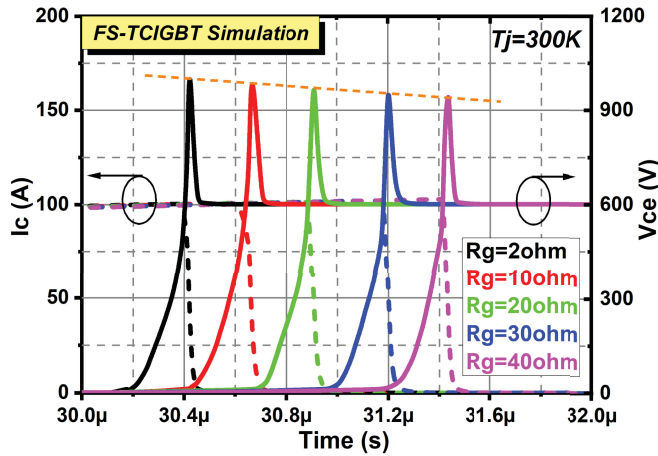


Fig. 8. Simulated switch-OFF waveforms of TCIGBT as a function of  $R_g$ .

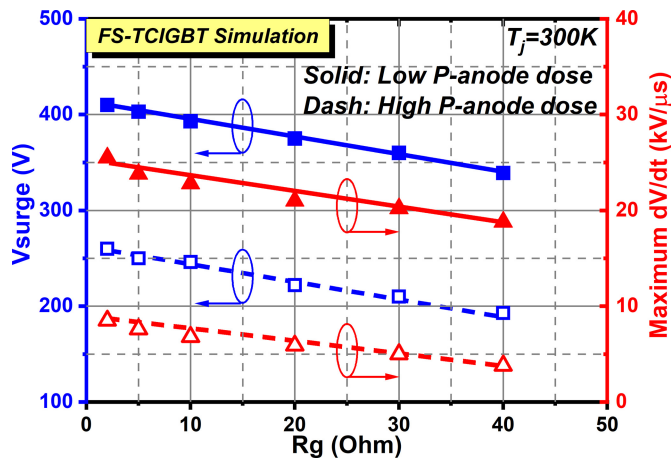


Fig. 9.  $V_{surge}$  and maximum  $dV/dt$  during turn-OFF of the TCIGBT.

exceeds the  $E_{cr}$  and leads to a high impact ionization rate, as shown in Fig. 7. Therefore, as shown in Fig. 10, the TIGBT shows an increase trend of  $E_{off}$  as  $R_g$  reduces to a small value due to the occurrence of DA. However, the TCIGBT shows a linear decrease of  $E_{off}$  as  $R_g$  reduces due to DA free and the  $E_{off}$  is much lower than that of the TIGBT due to PMOS actions. The detailed reason for the reduction in  $E_{off}$  can be explained as follows: During the turn-OFF of TIGBT structure, hole current flows along

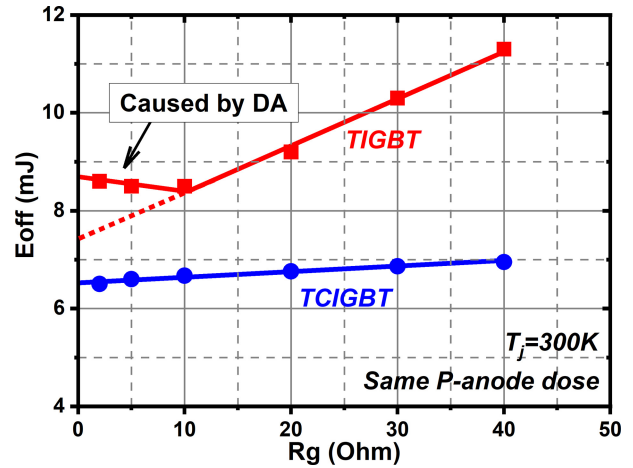


Fig. 10. Comparison of  $E_{off}$  dependence on  $R_g$  between TIGBT and TCIGBT at same P-anode dose condition.

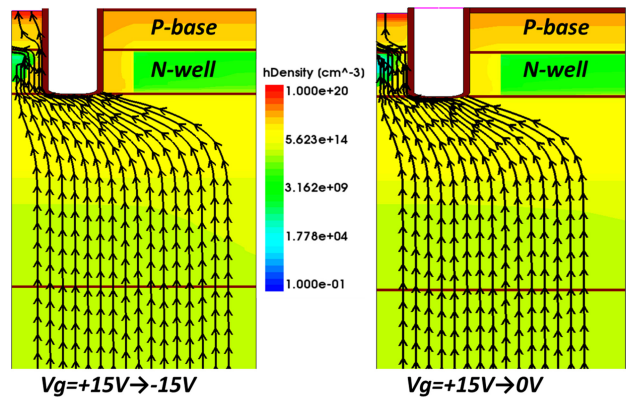


Fig. 11. Comparison of hole current flowlines at various off-state gate voltages when  $V_{ce}$  raises to 600 V during turn-OFF of the TCIGBT.

the trench gate bottom and side wall to the P-base region [15]. As the hole current concentrates at the trench gate bottom, the hole evacuation resistance is high. In contrast, in the TCIGBT, with increase in the collector potential, the N well reaches the its self-clamping voltage, and in this process the N-well layer is fully depleted and the PMOS structure which consists of P-well, N-well and P-base is “ON”. Excessive holes collected by the deep P-well are evacuated directly through the PMOS structure with low resistance by the electric field, as shown in Fig. 11. The  $E_{off}$  is therefore significantly reduced compared to that of a TIGBT, as shown in Fig. 10. In addition, note that the N-well layer is fully depleted so that the PMOS structure can turn ON without the necessity of channels. Therefore, the OFF-state gate bias (0 or  $-15$  V) has no influence on the turn-OFF behavior of TCIGBT.

High  $dV/dt$  controllability of TCIGBT with DA free performance is confirmed from the measurement results of the turn-OFF waveforms and maximum  $dV/dt$  as a function of  $R_g$  of a 1.2-kV TCIGBT device [16], as shown in Fig. 12(a) and (b), respectively. The  $dV/dt$  can be controlled even at low  $R_g$  conditions. The demonstrated devices were made in non punch-through (NPT) technology. Since the DA is determined by the cathode

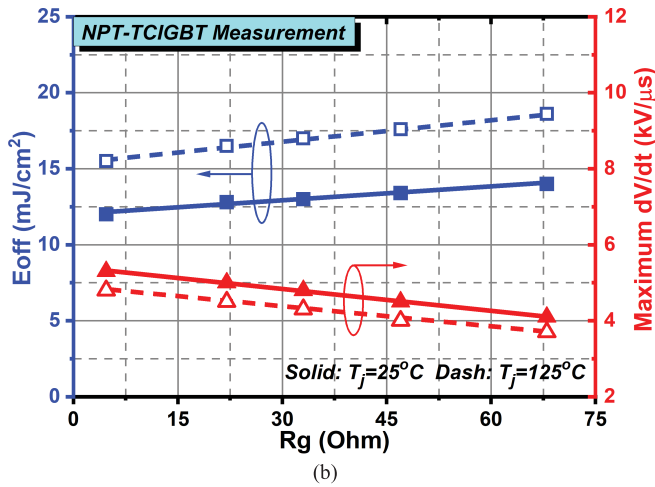
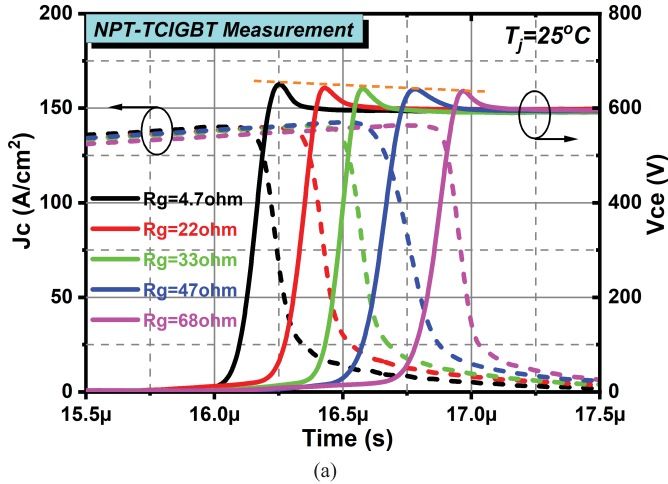


Fig. 12. Experimental results of (a) switch-OFF curves. (b)  $E_{\text{off}}$  and maximum  $dV/dt$  during turn-OFF as a function  $R_g$  of the TCIGBT.

structure design, moving from NPT technology to a thinner FS technology for improving  $E_{\text{off}}-V_{\text{ce(sat)}}$  tradeoff has no impact on the DA phenomenon.

#### IV. IMPACT OF STRAY INDUCTANCE ON $dV/dt$ CONTROLLABILITY

High  $L_{\text{stray}}$  can induce a high surge voltage as well as a high  $dV/dt$  during device turn-OFF, as expressed in (4). Therefore, the  $L_{\text{stray}}$  has a significant impact on the turn-OFF  $dV/dt$  controllability. Figs. 13 and 14 show the simulation results of the influence of  $L_{\text{stray}}$  on the maximum  $dV/dt$  of TIGBT and TCIGBT, respectively. As shown, higher  $L_{\text{stray}}$  results in a higher maximum  $dV/dt$  in both TIGBT and TCIGBT. However, in the TIGBT, the maximum  $dV/dt$  shows decreasing trends when  $R_g$  is reduced to less than  $20 \Omega$ . This is because DA occurs at small  $R_g$  conditions, resulting in excessive charge to lower  $dV/dt$  at various  $L_{\text{stray}}$  conditions. In contrast, the  $dV/dt$  shows linear increases as  $R_g$  reduces in TCIGBT due to DA free.

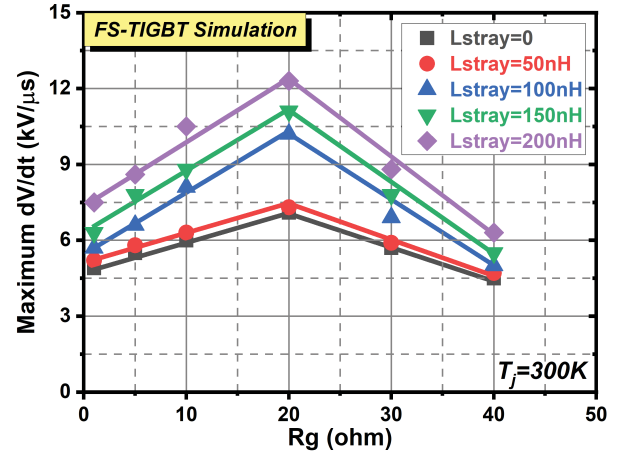


Fig. 13. Impact of stray inductance on the maximum  $dV/dt$  during turn-OFF of TIGBT.

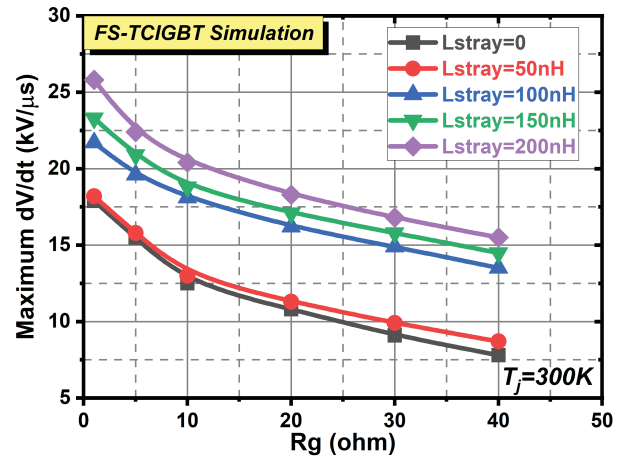


Fig. 14. Impact of stray inductance on the maximum  $dV/dt$  during turn-OFF of TCIGBT.

#### V. IMPACT OF CURRENT DENSITY ON $dV/dt$ CONTROLLABILITY

The development of IGBT modules have been devoted towards increasing power density to achieve cost reduction and flexible design for power converter systems. The requirement of higher power density is directly associated with increased operating current density with low power losses per chip area. Moreover, high  $dV/dt$  controllability at high operating current densities is also essential to satisfy various IGBT applications. In order to clarify the impact of DA on the  $dV/dt$  controllability of TIGBTs at high current densities, a 1.2-kV, 25-A TIGBT device in the FS technology [17] was investigated in detail and compared with the experimental results of an NPT TCIGBT [16]. Fig. 15 shows the photograph of the fabricated 1.2-kV TCIGBT in NPT technology. The measured ON-state voltage drops between the FS-TIGBT and the NPT-TCIGBT at various current densities at  $25^\circ\text{C}$  and  $125^\circ\text{C}$  are compared in Fig. 16. At both rated current density ( $J_c = 140 \text{ A/cm}^2$ ) and high current

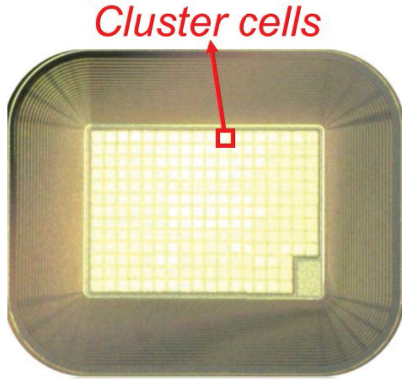


Fig. 15. Photograph of the fabricated TCIGBT device.

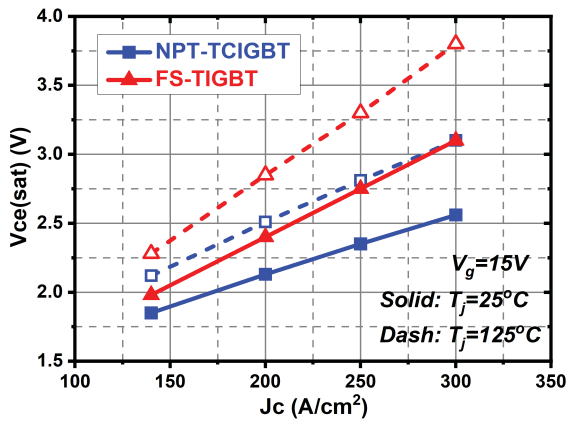
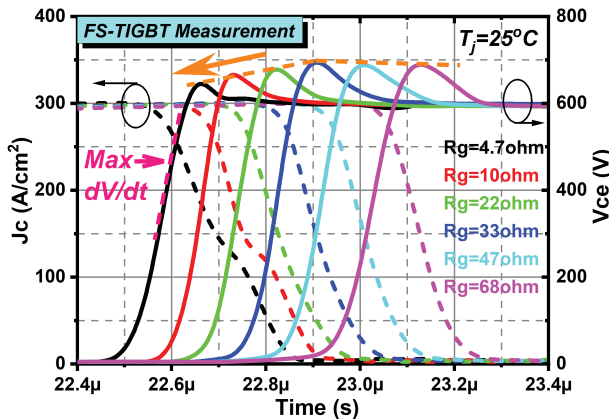


Fig. 16. Experimental results of the on-state voltage drop as a function of current density of TIGBT and TCIGBT.


 Fig. 17. Experimental results of switch-OFF waveforms as a function  $R_g$  of the TIGBT at  $J_c = 300$  A/cm<sup>2</sup>.

densities, due to thyristor conduction, the NPT TCIGBT (device thickness = 200  $\mu$ m) shows much lower ON-state voltage drops compared to that of FS TIGBT, which owns a much thinner device thickness of 115  $\mu$ m. Figs. 17 and 18 show the turn-OFF waveforms as a function of  $R_g$  of TIGBT and TCIGBT at  $J_c = 300$  A/cm<sup>2</sup>, respectively. A decreasing trend of  $V_{surge}$  and

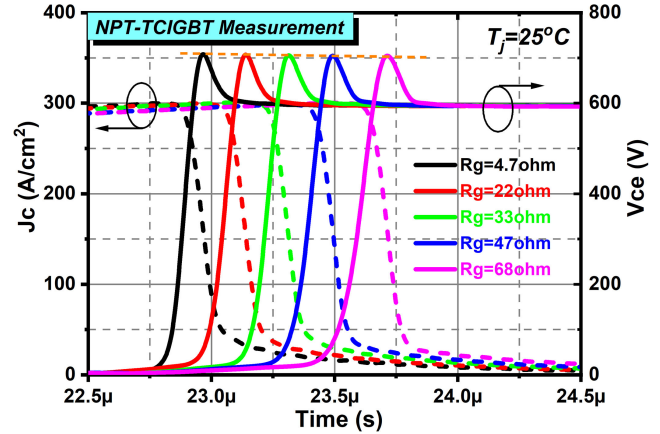
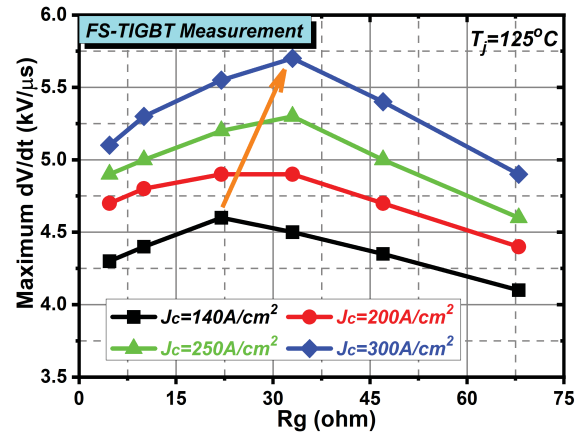

 Fig. 18. Experimental results of switch-OFF waveforms as a function  $R_g$  of the TCIGBT at  $J_c = 300$  A/cm<sup>2</sup>.


Fig. 19. Impact of current density on the maximum dV/dt during turn-OFF of TIGBT.

a lower dI/dt at small  $R_g$  can be clearly observed from the case of TIGBT, which confirms the occurrence of DA. Since the surge voltage is largely independent of temperature [7], the temperature has no significant impact on the DA phenomenon. Figs. 19 and 20 show the impact of current density on the maximum dV/dt of TIGBT and TCIGBT at  $T_j = 125$  °C, respectively. As shown in Fig. 20, absence of DA in TCIGBT is maintained at low as well as high current densities. This is because low electric field strength beneath trench gates and high carrier evacuation speed are maintained in all conditions. Therefore, TCIGBT can maintain high dV/dt controllability even at high current densities and low power losses operations.

However, it is clear evident from Fig. 19 that the DA phenomenon is enhanced at high current densities in TIGBT as the peak dV/dt value appears at a larger  $R_g$  at high current densities. Note that the maximum dV/dt shows an increase with the increase of current density in both TIGBT and TCIGBT, as shown in Figs. 19 and 20. This is because high operating current densities in the experiments are achieved by increasing load currents ( $I_c$ ). Therefore, the dV/dt shows increases at high current densities due to larger  $I_g$ , as expressed in (3).

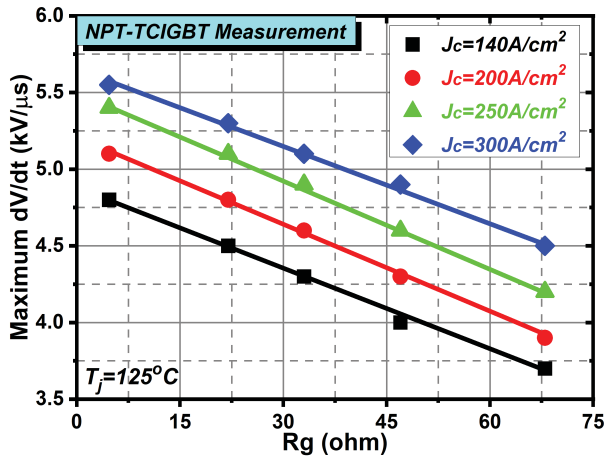


Fig. 20. Impact of current density on the maximum dV/dt during turn-OFF of TCIGBT.

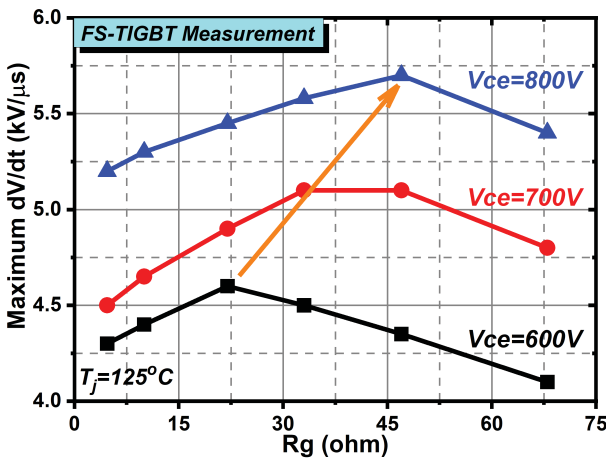


Fig. 21. Impact of supply voltage on the maximum dV/dt during turn-OFF of TIGBT.

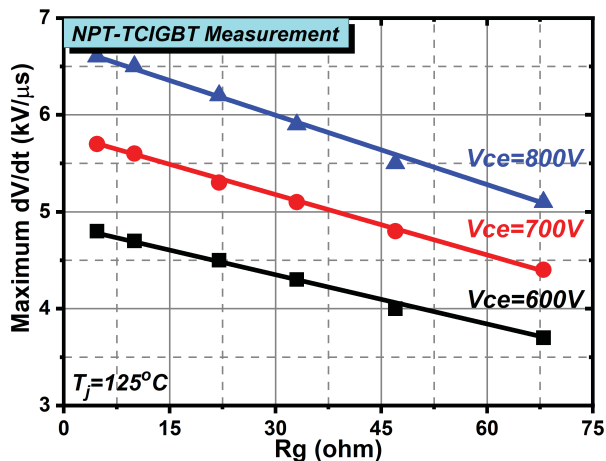


Fig. 22. Impact of supply voltage on the maximum dV/dt during turn-OFF of TCIGBT.

## VI. IMPACT OF SUPPLY VOLTAGE ON dV/dt CONTROLLABILITY

As the collector voltage has a direct impact on the maximum electric field strength within the TIGBT during turn-OFF, the DA phenomenon is enhanced as supply voltage increases. Fig. 21 shows the measured maximum dV/dt of the TIGBT as a function of  $R_g$  at various supply voltages. As shown, the peak dV/dt value in the case of  $V_{ce} = 800$  V appears at a larger  $R_g$  in comparison to the case of  $V_{ce} = 600$  V, which confirms that higher supply voltage enhances the DA phenomenon of TIGBTs. In contrast, the supply voltage has no impact on the high dV/dt controllability of TCIGBT, as shown in Fig. 22.

## VII. CONCLUSION

Detailed analysis has been undertaken to explain the impact of DA effects on the switching behavior of the 1.2-kV trench IGBT. Both simulations and experimental results confirm that DA poses fundamental limits on the reduction of switching losses as well as the dV/dt controllability of TIGBTs. In order to eliminate this phenomenon, a DA free turn-OFF operation is demonstrated in a TCIGBT through simulations and experiments. Absence of DA is clearly evident from the experimental results of the switching waveforms and maximum dV/dt of a TCIGBT device. Moreover, experimental results confirm that DA is enhanced at high current densities and high supply voltages, which further degrades the turn-OFF dV/dt controllability of TIGBTs. In contrast, TCIGBTs remain DA free performance at high current density operations and high supply voltage conditions. Therefore, as a MOS controlled thyristor device, TCIGBT can be reliably operated with very low power losses at high current densities without DA and provides high design flexibility for power electronics systems as a result of high dV/dt controllability.

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