



## OPERATIONAL AMPLIFIERS IN ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE SYSTEMS AND NEUROMORPHIC ELECTRONICS

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### ABSTRACT

*Operational amplifiers (op-amps) have been a cornerstone of analog electronics for decades. Although digital systems dominate artificial intelligence (AI) architectures, op-amps are re-emerging as vital components in neuromorphic electronics—systems that mimic the brain's neural architecture. This article explores the evolving role of operational amplifiers in AI and neuromorphic electronics, linking foundational concepts to modern applications and future potential.*

**Introduction.** Artificial intelligence has transformed from a theoretical concept into a practical technology reshaping industries. Traditionally, AI systems have been built upon digital architectures such as CPUs and GPUs. However, as the demand for low-power, brain-like computation grows, researchers are increasingly looking towards neuromorphic systems. These systems emulate biological neurons and synapses, often relying on analog circuit components such as operational amplifiers. Consequently, op-amps are gaining renewed relevance in this emerging field. This paper discusses their role in AI systems, particularly in neuromorphic computing, and highlights how they enable efficient, real-time data processing.

Operational amplifiers are integrated circuits that amplify voltage differences between two inputs. Due to their versatility, they are used in filters, integrators, comparators, and analog computing elements. Typically composed of several transistors, resistors, and capacitors, op-amps can be found in both linear and non-linear configurations. Moreover, their ability to perform mathematical operations—such as addition, subtraction, and integration—makes them ideal for analog signal processing. Given this, it is no surprise that they serve as foundational blocks in neuromorphic circuit designs [5].

While digital processors remain central to AI systems, analog approaches offer unique advantages, especially in edge computing. Firstly, analog circuits consume significantly less power than digital equivalents. Secondly, they allow for continuous-time processing, which can be beneficial for real-time applications like robotics or autonomous systems. Therefore, by incorporating analog computation using op-amps, AI systems can achieve faster and more energy-efficient operations. For example, in machine learning accelerators, analog matrix multipliers using op-amps can perform operations in parallel, enhancing speed and reducing energy consumption [2].



Neuromorphic electronics aim to replicate the structure and function of the human brain. In this context, op-amps are employed to model both neurons and synapses. Since the brain processes information through continuous analog signals and asynchronous events, analog circuits, especially op-amps, are naturally suited to emulate such behavior.

In particular, op-amps are used to implement:

Leaky integrate-and-fire (LIF) neurons

Synaptic weighting mechanisms

Spike-timing-dependent plasticity (STDP)

Furthermore, these circuits can adapt over time, allowing for learning and memory functions akin to biological systems. Through feedback and non-linearity, op-amps facilitate dynamic behavior that mirrors the temporal dynamics of real neurons [4, 102-114].

To illustrate, let us consider IBM's TrueNorth chip and Intel's Loihi processor. While these are primarily digital neuromorphic chips, hybrid systems that integrate analog components such as op-amps are becoming more common. For instance, researchers have developed analog neural networks where op-amps are arranged to simulate weighted summation and activation functions. Additionally, memristor-op-amp hybrid circuits have been created to store synaptic weights and amplify signals, thereby reducing the need for external memory access. Such systems highlight how op-amps can bridge memory and computation in a compact, energy-efficient format. Notably, in brain-machine interfaces, op-amps are used in the front-end analog signal processing stage to amplify and filter bioelectrical signals before digitization. Their high input impedance and low noise make them ideal for capturing subtle neural activity.

Despite their advantages, using op-amps in AI and neuromorphic circuits is not without challenges. One major concern is precision. Analog circuits are more susceptible to noise and component variability than digital ones. Moreover, designing stable and scalable op-amp-based systems requires meticulous calibration and robust design techniques. Another limitation is scalability. While op-amps are excellent for small-scale neural circuits, integrating millions of them on a single chip remains difficult due to area and power constraints. Nonetheless, research into novel materials, such as carbon nanotubes and organic semiconductors, may address these limitations in the future.

Looking ahead, operational amplifiers will continue to play a significant role in hybrid analog-digital systems. As AI moves toward the edge and into wearable devices, the need for ultra-low-power computation will grow. Op-amp-based circuits, particularly in combination with memristors and neuromorphic frameworks, will be central to achieving these goals. Furthermore, advances in analog VLSI design and fabrication techniques may pave the way for more complex and reliable op-amp-based neuromorphic systems. Researchers are also exploring the integration of plasticity mechanisms directly into op-amp circuits, enabling them to learn in real-time without digital intervention.

The integration of operational amplifiers with emerging technologies such as memristive devices, flexible electronics, and photonic circuits marks a significant evolution in the design of neuromorphic and AI hardware. Memristors, for instance, provide non-volatile memory capabilities, which, when paired with op-amps, enable energy-efficient learning mechanisms within neural networks. This pairing allows for both storage and amplification of



neural signals in a single compact unit. In wearable and implantable biomedical devices, flexible electronics incorporating op-amps can process physiological signals like EEG, ECG, and EMG in real-time. These systems benefit from the op-amps' low noise and high gain, ensuring accurate monitoring of bio-signals with minimal energy consumption. Photonic neuromorphic computing is another frontier where op-amps could play a role in hybrid architectures. While photonics offers high-speed signal transmission, analog electronics, including op-amps, can interface with optical components to perform essential preprocessing and signal conditioning. Additionally, op-amps are being explored in environmental sensing applications powered by ambient energy. Their use in analog sensor interfaces allows for continuous monitoring with extremely low power budgets, making them suitable for remote AI-driven sensors and autonomous edge devices. In sum, operational amplifiers continue to evolve alongside advanced technologies, adapting to new roles in AI and neuromorphic systems. Their integration into hybrid analog-digital platforms underscores their enduring relevance and adaptability.

**Conclusion.** In conclusion, while digital processors dominate current AI architectures, operational amplifiers are carving a niche in neuromorphic and edge computing. Their analog nature allows for energy-efficient, parallel, and real-time computation that mimics biological intelligence. Despite certain challenges, ongoing research and technological advancements suggest that op-amps will be indispensable in the next generation of AI systems. By linking traditional analog electronics with modern AI paradigms, operational amplifiers demonstrate that sometimes, revisiting old technologies can inspire revolutionary breakthroughs.

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