

Operation of GaN Planar Nanodiodes as THz Detectors and Mixers

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Abstract—In this paper, we perform, by means of Monte Carlo simulations and experimental measurements, a geometry optimization of GaN-based nano-diodes for broadband Terahertz direct detection (in terms of responsivity) and mixing (in terms of output power). The capabilities of the so-called self-switching diode (SSD) are analyzed for different dimensions of the channel at room temperature. Signal detection up to the 690 GHz limit of the experimental set-up has been achieved at zero bias. The reduction of the channel width increases the detection responsivity, while the reduction in length reduces the responsivity but increases the cut-off frequency. In the case of heterodyne detection an intrinsic bandwidth of at least 100 GHz has been found. The intermediate frequency (IF) power increases for short SSDs, while the optimization in terms of the channel width is a trade-off between a higher non-linearity (obtained for narrow SSDs) and a large current level (obtained for wide SSDs). Moreover, the RF performance can be improved by biasing, with optimum performances reached, as expected, when the DC non-linearity is maximum.

Index Terms—Mixing, Monte Carlo simulations, nanoelectronics, rectification, terahertz science.

I. INTRODUCTION

THE range of the electromagnetic spectrum commonly referred to as “Terahertz gap” is still missing devices able to boost the availability of applications that the market requires nowadays. Among the candidates, like Schottky diode-based

detectors [1] or THz transistors [2], we report on a unipolar device, known as self-switching diode (SSD). Originally proposed by A. M. Song [3], GaAs-based SSDs have already shown experimentally a good responsivity of 300 V/W at 1.5 THz at room temperature [4]; and noise equivalent power of $65 \text{ pW}/\sqrt{\text{Hz}}$ at 110 GHz [5] in the case of InGaAs-based SSDs. This paper is a follow up of two prior works where the capabilities of SSDs based on an AlGaIn/GaN heterostructure operating as detectors [6] and mixers [7] have been experimentally demonstrated. Even if III-V narrow band-gap materials like InAs [8] or InSb [9] are more suitable for THz applications, in this work the choice of GaN has been made because SSDs based on this semiconductor are theoretically expected to be able to generate sub-millimeter wave oscillations based on Gunn effect [10]. In this context, our final target is to design a simple, compact, room temperature, continuous wave, tunable and powerful integrated sub-THz emitter/detector system within the same material.

The use of GaN nanodiodes as sub-THz detectors is fairly new but with a lot of room for improvement to make SSDs competitive as compared to the mainstream technologies (Schottky barrier diodes [11], [12] and bolometers [13]) and promising recent developments (plasma detection with Si MOSFETs [14] and Sb-based backward diodes [15]). Indeed, up to now our highly resistive devices have not been designed to achieve an optimum power matching. On the other hand, the capability of GaN-based devices for high power handling is unparalleled by any other technology. We expect the widebandgap of this material to allow GaN SSDs being used as ultra-high power RF detectors. Moreover, the planar geometry and the ease of fabrication make SSDs highly competitive in the prospect of a new generation of room temperature sub-THz detectors. Finally, to overcome the high impedance of the SSDs many of them in parallel are typically employed to minimize the mismatch loss.

The aim of this paper is to present a systematic numerical study, based on an in-house Monte Carlo (MC) simulator, of the performance of such GaN nanodiodes as direct and heterodyne detectors as a function of their geometry and bias conditions supported and validated with experimental measurements. The paper is organized as follows. Section II introduces the geometries of the different SSDs, the experimental set-ups and the results of the DC simulations along with the measurements for calibration of the MC model. The dynamic performance at high frequency is reported, first, in Section III for the direct detection scheme and, later, in Section IV for the heterodyne one. Some conclusions are finally given in Section V.

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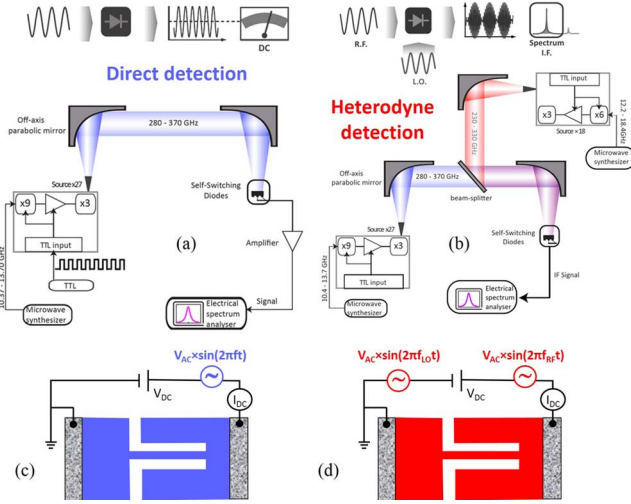


Fig. 1. Schematic diagrams for and experimental setup configuration for: (a) direct detection and (b) mixing or heterodyne detection (see [7]). The corresponding numerical framework are sketched in (c) and (d), respectively.

II. DEVICE UNDER TEST, MONTE CARLO SIMULATIONS AND EXPERIMENTAL SETUP

The device under test consists of a narrow semiconductor channel with broken symmetry defined by L-shaped insulating trenches etched on a GaN heterostructure. The working operation of SSDs is based on the geometrical asymmetry and the presence of surface states at the sidewalls of the channel [16]. The two main design parameters are the length and the width of the channel, denoted as L and W . The width of the trenches and its filling material could also be considered for further optimization. Two different applications of the SSDs will be studied: 1) direct detection [Fig. 1(a)] and 2) heterodyne detection or mixing [Fig. 1(b)]. Figs. 1(c) and 1(d) shows the corresponding MC representation. In the first case, as a consequence of its non-linear response, when a device is irradiated with a RF wave, the voltage between the terminals of the SSDs has a DC component which is proportional to the power of the input signal, so that it can be used to perform direct detection. In the case of heterodyne detection, the signal carrying information (with a RF or THz carrier) is combined with the output of a local oscillator (LO, operating at a frequency near that of the carrier) using the device as a mixer. As a result, the output from the mixer has a component or contribution around an intermediate frequency (IF, equal to the difference between the LO and the original carrier) which is easier to amplify and work with than the original signal (it has much lower frequencies but contains all the information).

To include the THz radiation in the MC tool we just apply an oscillatory voltage to the contact, which represents the signal that is coupled through the integrated bow-tie antennas in the measurements performed in free space. To simulate the behavior of electrons in the device we make use of a semi-classical ensemble MC simulator self-consistently coupled with a 2D Poisson solver. Previous works demonstrate the validity of our model to explain not only the static but also the noise and dynamic properties of the SSD device [17]–[19].

Two sets of devices have been simulated, the first dedicated to the study of direct detection and the second to mixing properties. In order to perform the study of the dependence on L and W , of both direct and heterodyne detection, devices with: 1) constant L and different W and 2) constant W and different L have been simulated. The DC response of all of them is plotted in Fig. 2, showing the expected dependences with W and L and exhibiting good agreement with the available measurements of two devices, both with $L = 1 \mu\text{m}$, one with $W = 90 \text{ nm}$ (used for the demonstration of direct detection in [6]) and the other with $W = 150 \text{ nm}$ (used for heterodyne detection in [7]). It is to be noted that to obtain correct results we have employed a self-consistent model for the surface charge effects, recently implemented for GaN SSDs [10]. For the dimensions considered here, the static response, current level and impedance depend more significantly on the channel width than on the channel length. Note that the typical impedance is in the order of $k\Omega$.

Once the DC response has been simulated and compared with values measured experimentally, in the next sections we provide design rules to optimize the performance of the GaN SSDs.

III. DIRECT DETECTION

The MC modelling of the direct detection is performed as follows. A sinusoidal signal of varying frequency is superimposed to the V_{DC} bias: $V(t) = V_{\text{DC}} + V_{\text{AC}} \cos(2\pi ft)$. The rectified current, $I_{\text{rect}}(f)$, is obtained as the time-average value, $\overline{I}(f)$, of the instantaneous values of the current response $I(t)$ minus the DC current corresponding to the DC bias point I_{DC} ; $I_{\text{rect}}(f) = \overline{I}(f) - I_{\text{DC}}$. The matched or maximum, with an optimum lossless match, voltage responsivity, $R_m(f)$, is then determined by converting $I_{\text{rect}}(f)$ into voltage, $V_{\text{rect}}(f)$, by means of the resistance of the diode R_0 as $V_{\text{rect}}(f) = R_0 \times I_{\text{rect}}(f)$. Evaluating the active power dissipated at the matched SSD as $P_m(f) = \text{Re}[(V_{\text{AC}}^2)/(2Z(f))]$, one can obtain the frequency dependent impedance-matched responsivity as $R_m(f) = V_{\text{rect}}(f)/P_m(f)$. $Z(f)$, see the inset of Fig. 3, is the frequency dependent complex impedance of the SSD, which has also been extracted from the MC simulation taking as a base the values of $I(t)$ (following [20]). The unmatched responsivity (when the device is connected to a line with characteristic impedance Z_0), $R_{\text{um}}(f)$, is simply determined by exchanging $P_m(f)$ in the denominator by the delivered power $P_{\text{um}}(f)$. Thus $R_{\text{um}}(f) = V_{\text{rect}}(f)/P_{\text{um}}(f)$ with $P_{\text{um}}(f) = P_m(f)/[1 - |\Gamma(f)|^2]$, obtained by using the reflection coefficient of the device, Γ , when inserted into the coplanar access line with characteristic impedance Z_0 , $\Gamma(f) = [Z(f) - Z_0]/[Z(f) + Z_0]$. Note that the number of parallel SSDs has been taken into account for the calculation of the value of $\Gamma(f)$. Here we use the typical $Z_0 = 50 \Omega$.

The unmatched MC results of direct detection at room temperature and equilibrium ($V_{\text{DC}} = 0 \text{ V}$) are presented in Fig. 3, where the good agreement with the on-wafer electrical experimental results of Ref. 6 for a single SSD with $L = 1.0 \mu\text{m}$ and $W = 90 \text{ nm}$ can be observed. Reducing the width from 110 nm down to 50 nm significantly enhances the responsivity up to almost 300 V/W [Fig. 3(a)] at low frequency, as a result of more prominent surface effects that increase the non-linearity

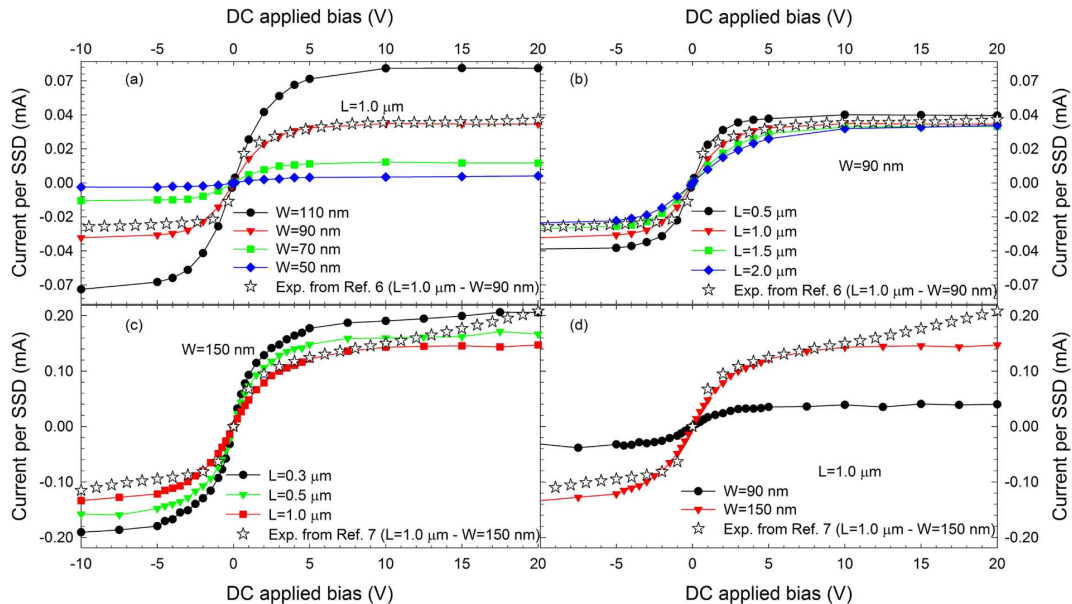


Fig. 2. Monte Carlo I - V curves of the SSDs used for the two types of experiments: direct detection (a) $L = 1.0 \mu\text{m}$ and $W = 110, 90, 70$ and 50 nm, and (b) $W = 90$ nm and $L = 0.5, 1.0, 1.5$ and $2.0 \mu\text{m}$; and for mixing (c) $W = 150$ nm and $L = 0.3, 0.5$ and $1.0 \mu\text{m}$ and (d) $L = 1.0 \mu\text{m}$, and $W = 90$ and 150 nm. The experimental results used to calibrate the simulations are taken from [6] and [7].

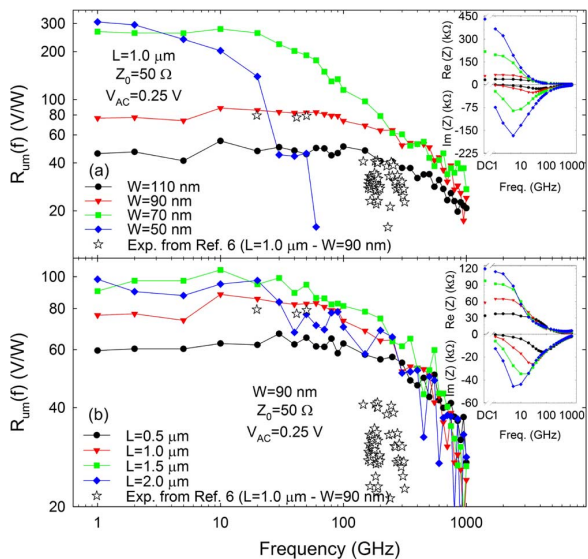


Fig. 3. Monte Carlo unmatched responsivity in V/W calculated for the devices of Fig. 2(a) and 2(b). In particular: (a) $L = 1.0 \mu\text{m}$ and $W = 110, 90, 70$ and 50 nm and (b) $W = 90$ nm and $L = 0.5, 1.0, 1.5$ and $2.0 \mu\text{m}$. Insets show the frequency dependence of $Z(f)$ of each device. In all cases the simulations are performed for a single SSD at room temperature, with an excitation of $V_{AC} = 0.25$ V, $V_{DC} = 0$ V and considering a 50Ω coplanar waveguide. The experimental values for $L = 1.0 \mu\text{m}$ and $W = 90$ nm are from [6].

of the I - V curve. On the other hand, the narrower the channel the higher frequency roll-off. A good compromise is found for $W = 70$ nm, providing a responsivity above 200 V/W up to almost 50 GHz. Moreover the noise behavior of the SSD with $W = 50$ nm is also significantly degraded by the sharp increase of the zero bias DC resistance R_0 . Finally, acceptable values of tens of V/W are still expected beyond 0.5 THz. Fig. 3(b) shows how the responsivity slightly increases with L , while its frequency roll-off is stronger. In addition to the frequency depen-

dence of the intrinsic response, the intrinsic impedance $Z(f)$ of the different SSDs (shown in the insets of Fig. 3) is responsible, in part, of the frequency behavior of the experimental responsivity and $R_{un}(f)$ through the value of $\Gamma(f)$. Moreover, the parasitics (mainly the crosstalk capacitance) have also a significant influence on the high frequency behaviour of the responsivity, and we believe that it is at the origin of the disagreement between the experiments and MC results of Fig. 3.

In order to corroborate the predictions of MC simulations new free space detection measurements have been done using three tunable electronic sources from Virginia Diodes, Inc. based on a frequency-synthesizer whose input signal was multiplied by factors of 18, 27, and 49. The accessible frequencies ranges are 220 – 320 GHz, 280 – 380 GHz, and 640 – 690 GHz. The beam was chopped at 1 kHz using a TTL input. The beam is collimated using an off-axis parabolic mirror, and then it is focalized by means of a second parabolic mirror on our sample. The signal is amplified using a 40 dB amplifier, and measured by an electrical spectrum analyzer. A schematic of the setup is shown in Fig. 1(a). The SSDs are mounted on a FR7-holder where DC-lines are printed. In order to improve the noise equivalent power of the detectors [19], we designed each device as an array of 16 or 32 SSDs integrated within a single bow-tie antenna. The use of arrays not only reduces the voltage noise (as a consequence of a lower resistance) but also benefits the impedance matching due to the highly resistive character of the SSDs. The connection between the devices and the holder are ensured by gold-bonding, whereas connections with RF coaxial cables are made through SMA (SubMiniature version A) connectors.

Fig. 4(a) shows the results at zero bias ($V_{DC} = 0$ V) for $L = 1.0$ and $0.5 \mu\text{m}$ and $W = 500$ and 700 nm in an arrangement of 32 SSDs in parallel. The responsivities are very small due to the large width of the SSDs but, interestingly, a tiny responsivity of about 0.1 mV/W has been recorded for frequencies

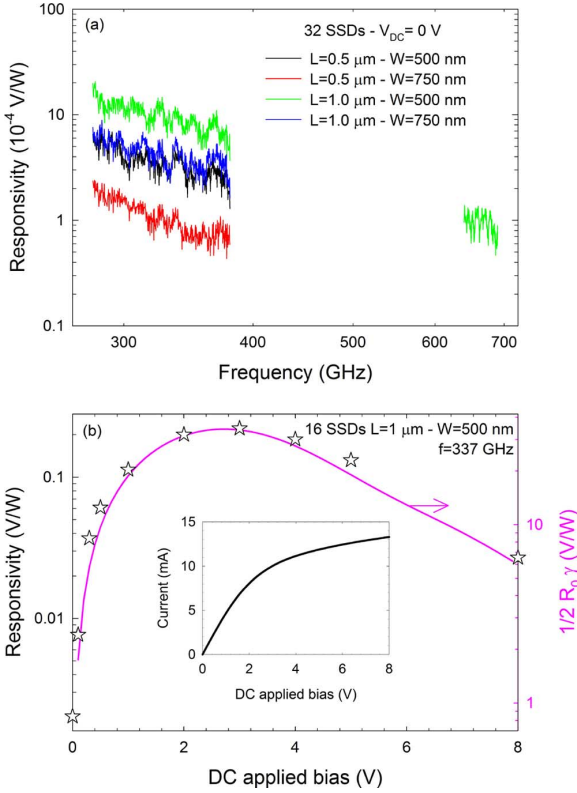


Fig. 4. (a) Experimental responsivity in V/W at equilibrium, measured to study the influence of the channel width and channel length is 32 SSDs with: $L = 1.0 \mu\text{m} - W = 500 \text{ nm}$, $L = 1.0 \mu\text{m} - W = 750 \text{ nm}$, $L = 0.5 \mu\text{m} - W = 500 \text{ nm}$ and $L = 0.5 \mu\text{m} - W = 750 \text{ nm}$. (b) Bias dependence of the responsivity at 337 GHz for 16 SSDs with $L = 1.0 \mu\text{m}$ and $W = 500 \text{ nm}$ and curvature coefficient (right axis) corresponding to the $I(V)$ curve of the inset. In all cases, the measurements are in free space at room temperature and with 1 mW power of the source.

up to 690 GHz, which demonstrates the intrinsic capability of these devices to operate at such high frequencies. The plotted responsivity is directly calculated as the ratio between the induced voltage and the absolute power of the THz source. Since no normalization related to the areas of the radiation beam spot and the devices (which is very difficult to estimate and originates a lot of uncertainty) has been performed, the effective responsivities can be higher than those plotted in Fig. 4(a). In any case, we must remark that the efficiency of the power coupling between the free space radiation and the device antennas is quite low. Comparing these results with those obtained in guided measurements (with RF probes and coplanar waveguide accesses) in the same devices, we have estimated the efficiency loss of free space measurements to be roughly about -10 dB. This makes impossible the quantitative comparison with the MC results. However, the qualitative trend observed in the simulations (higher response for longer and narrower SSDs) is again confirmed by the free space experiments.

Finally, we have measured in free space, at a fixed frequency of 337 GHz, the responsivity as a function of the DC bias for 16 parallel SSDs with $L = 1.0 \mu\text{m}$ and $W = 500 \text{ nm}$. The results of Fig. 4(b) show a strong enhancement of the responsivity when biasing the SSD, almost 2 orders of magnitude, with a maximum in the range 2–4 V, just in the knee of the $I-V$ curve of the SSD [see inset of Fig. 4(b)], as expected from the well-known link

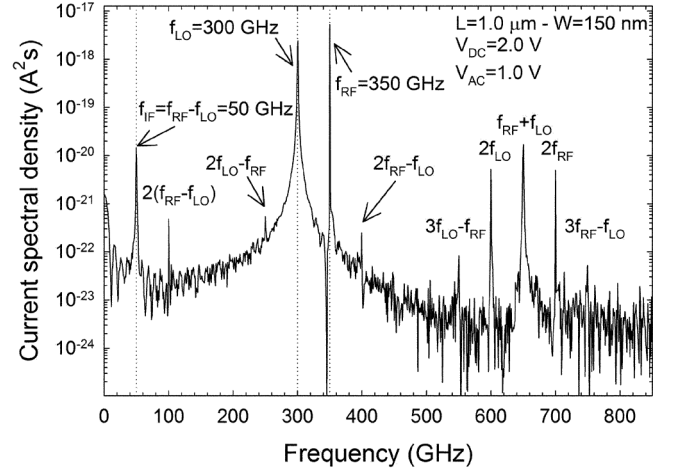


Fig. 5. Monte Carlo spectral density of the simulated current history in a SSD with $L = 1.0 \mu\text{m}$ and $W = 150 \text{ nm}$. The frequency of the LO and RF signals are $f_{LO} = 300 \text{ GHz}$ and $f_{RF} = 350 \text{ GHz}$, respectively, and the bias conditions are $V_{DC} = 2.0$ and $V_{AC} = 1.0 \text{ V}$.

between the RF detection and the nonlinearity of the $I-V$ curve. In fact, the measured values perfectly agree with the dependence of the theoretical matched responsivity [21], which is equal to $1/2R_0\gamma$, being R_0 the zero-bias resistance and γ the curvature of the $I-V$ curve, defined as $\gamma = (d^2I/dV^2)/(dI/dV)$ [right axis of Fig. 4(b)].

IV. HETERODYNE DETECTION

For the second set of simulations to analyze the mixing capabilities of the GaN-SSDs we use two sinusoidal signals with different frequencies, denoted f_{RF} and f_{LO} , with the same amplitude on top of a DC bias. In the MC simulation we have access to the instantaneous values of the current between the two terminals, $I(t)$. By means of a fast Fourier transform (FFT) we can easily obtain its spectral density to determine the IF amplitude in devices with different geometries under diverse bias conditions. The frequency resolution, Δf , is given by the inverse of $Ni \times dt$, being Ni the number of MC iterations and dt the time step. Typically $dt = 1 \text{ fs}$ and $Ni = 10^6$, so that $\Delta f = 1 \text{ GHz}$. Fig. 5 shows the current spectral density, $S_I(f)$, obtained with $f_{LO} = 300 \text{ GHz}$ and $f_{RF} = 350 \text{ GHz}$, so that the IF is at $50 \text{ GHz} = f_{RF} - f_{LO}$. Other harmonics are also visible at frequencies $2(f_{RF} - f_{LO}) = 100 \text{ GHz}$, $2f_{LO} - f_{RF} = 250 \text{ GHz}$, $2f_{RF} - f_{LO} = 400 \text{ GHz}$, $3f_{LO} - f_{RF} = 550 \text{ GHz}$, $2f_{LO} = 600 \text{ GHz}$, $f_{RF} + f_{LO} = 650 \text{ GHz}$, $2f_{RF} = 700 \text{ GHz}$ and $3f_{RF} - f_{LO} = 750 \text{ GHz}$. The dimensions of the SSD are $L = 1000 \text{ nm}$ and $W = 150 \text{ nm}$, and the bias conditions are $V_{AC} = 1.0 \text{ V}$ and $V_{DC} = 2.0 \text{ V}$. This result demonstrates not only the possibility of SSDs to work as heterodyne detectors but also to generate higher harmonics [22].

In order to correctly perform the comparison with experimental measurements, we first calculate the matched MC power per diode, where the IF component is just extracted at $f = f_{IF}$

$$P_{MC}(f) = S_I(f) \times \Delta f \times \text{Re}[Z(f)]. \quad (1)$$

Then, the IF power in dBm delivered to a 50Ω load oscilloscope, $P(f_{IF})$, is simply determined by taking into account the

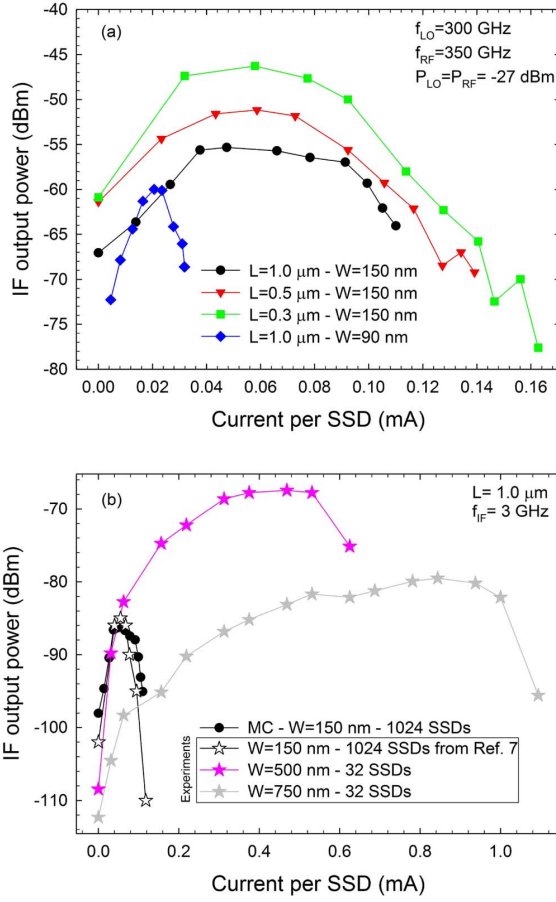


Fig. 6. (a) Matched IF output power obtained with Monte Carlo simulations using (1) at 50 GHz ($f_{LO} = 300$ GHz – $f_{RF} = 350$ GHz) versus the bias current for a single SSD with four geometries: $W = 150$ nm and three different lengths $L = 1.0, 0.5$ and $0.3 \mu\text{m}$, and $L = 1.0 \mu\text{m} - W = 90$ nm. (b) Measured power of the IF signal versus bias current for arrays of SSDs with $L = 1.0 \mu\text{m}$ and $W = 150, 500$ nm and 750 nm with $f_{LO} = 300$ GHz and $f_{RF} = 303$ GHz, so that IF is 3 GHz. The unmatched MC result, using (2), for an array of 1024 SSDs with $L = 1.0 \mu\text{m} - W = 150$ nm is also plotted in (b).

reflection coefficient, Γ (that depends on the number of SSDs), at the IF frequency

$$P(f_{IF}) = 10 \times \log \left[\frac{P_{MC}(f_{IF}) \times (1 - |\Gamma(f_{IF})|^2)}{1 \text{ mW}} \right]. \quad (2)$$

Contrarily to direct detectors, which operate at equilibrium in order to reduce the excess noise (mainly $1/f$, appearing when $V \neq 0$), the efficiency of heterodyne detection (working around the IF, typically above the corner frequency of $1/f$ noise) can be improved by applying a DC bias to the devices. Fig. 6(a) shows the power at the IF obtained in the matched MC simulations using (1) for four devices: (A) $L = 1.0 \mu\text{m} - W = 150$ nm; (B) $L = 0.5 \mu\text{m} - W = 150$ nm; (C) $L = 0.3 \mu\text{m} - W = 150$ nm; and (D) $L = 1.0 \mu\text{m} - W = 90$ nm. To allow the comparison between different devices (for which simulations have been performed with the same AC excitation voltage, but providing different current), we have shifted the curves in order to compensate the different input power (and thus assuming LO and RF inputs of -27 dBm each). The simulations of SSDs with different geometries offer the following information: 1) shorter

SSDs provide higher values of power at the IF and 2) the operation as heterodyne detectors is optimum when a DC bias corresponding to the knee of the $I-V$ curve is applied. In contrast with the results of direct detection (Fig. 3), the reduction of the channel width does not enhance the output, even if the nonlinearity of the SSD is improved, since the current level is reduced. This happens because for heterodyne detection the output power is the magnitude of interest, instead of just the voltage, so that a significant current level is necessary. As such, the optimum value width must be chosen as a trade-off between a higher nonlinearity (obtained for narrow SSDs) and a large current level (obtained for large W).

Employing the THz set-up, see Fig. 1(b), two new geometries, $L = 1.0 \mu\text{m} - W = 500$ nm and $L = 1.0 \mu\text{m} - W = 750$ nm, have been tested and the experimental results are presented in Fig. 6(b), where an IF of 3 GHz has been chosen. Measurements were done using two sources of radiation: one was tuned from 0.22 to 0.32 THz and the second from 0.28 to 0.36 THz, thus providing an available zone for heterodyne detection from 280 to 320 GHz. The results for different W confirm the prediction of the simulations commented just before, showing that the performance of the SSD with $W = 500$ nm is much better than for $W = 150$ nm, even if the power matching is improved in the latter case by the use of an array of 16 bow-tie antennas with 64 SSDs on each (results extracted from [7]).

The amplitude of the LO and RF sources used in the MC simulations is $V_{AC} = 0.25$ V. In order to perform the comparison between the experimental and simulated values for the array of 1024 SSDs of $L = 1.0 \mu\text{m}$ and $W = 150$ nm we have taken into account that the simulated matched input power is about 2.5 dBm (corresponding to -27 dBm dissipated in each SSD) while the input power from the real sources is about -2 dBm, that is, 4.5 dB less. The good agreement between simulation and experiments shown in Fig. 6(b) has been obtained by including a value of 60 dB for the total losses in (2). They correspond partially to the electrical losses of the output connection that in [7] were estimated to be about 6 dB at the 3 GHz of the IF, the corrections related to a beam spot size much larger than the devices, the possible misalignment of the setup and the non-perfect coupling of the free space signal to the antenna connected to the SSDs. Therefore, we estimate these optical losses to be about 49.5 dB ($= 60 - 6 - 4.5$ dB), a very high value, which is yet consistent with the mentioned difficulties. Note that in this case $\text{Re}[Z(f_{IF})]$ and Γ in (1) is calculated using $16 \times 64 = 1024$ SSDs in parallel.

Note that some of the experimental results shown in this paper correspond to SSDs with wider channels than those reported in previous papers [6], [7], devoted to direct detection. The wider channel allows not only for an improved performance of SSDs as heterodyne detectors, but it also should allow for the onset of Gunn oscillations, thus opening the possibility to achieve emission [10] and detection with the same technology. Unfortunately, our prediction for THz generation has not yet been confirmed experimentally [23].

MC simulations allow to check the intrinsic limits of operation of our GaN-SSD as ultrahigh data-rate detectors. For that sake two types of MC simulations were performed using device A (Fig. 7): (i) keeping f_{LO} fixed to 250 GHz and sweeping f_{RF}

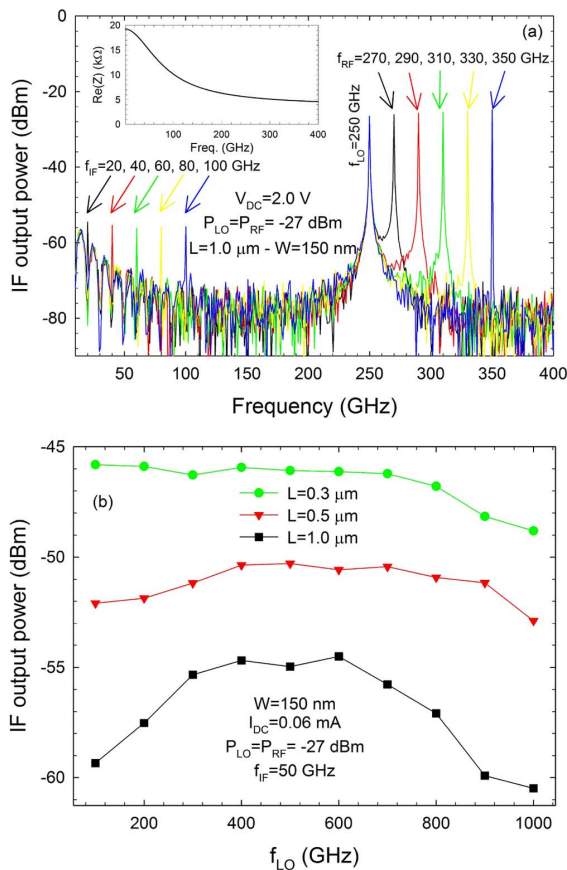


Fig. 7. Power spectra obtained using MC simulations and (i) (matched value) for different IF frequencies from 20 GHz up to 100 GHz for a single SSD with $L = 1.0 \mu\text{m} - W = 150 \text{ nm}$. Inset: $\text{Re}\{Z(f)\}$. (b) Matched IF power output obtained using Monte Carlo simulation using (i) at 50 GHz versus the LO frequency from 0.1 to 1 THz for a single SSD with $W = 150 \text{ nm}$ and $L = 0.3, 0.5$ and $1.0 \mu\text{m}$.

from 270 GHz up to 350 GHz in order to increase the IF from 20 to 100 GHz [Fig. 7(a)] and (ii) maintaining the same IF frequency of 50 GHz and increasing simultaneously the LO and RF frequencies, Fig. 7(b). In the first study, the simulations show that the amplitude of the IF signal is constant up to 100 GHz, with an intrinsic mixing conversion loss of about 30 dB, thus demonstrating no intrinsic frequency limitation. The second one shows that even if both frequencies approach the THz range (0.7–0.75 THz) the SSD with $L = 1.0 \mu\text{m} - W = 150 \text{ nm}$ still operates correctly, showing only a slight intrinsic power roll-off. Moreover, such impressive intrinsic performances can be further improved by reducing the length of the SSDs. Fig. 7(b) shows a clear enhancement of the response at IF when the length of the SSDs is shortened down to 300 nm. Additionally, the roll-off observed at around 700 GHz for the LO in the SSD with $L = 1.0 \mu\text{m}$ is much improved for shorter L .

V. CONCLUSION

In summary, this paper demonstrates the functionalities of GaN SSDs as direct and heterodyne detectors and provides the guidelines for improving their performances at sub-THz frequencies. The experimental results of responsivity and output IF power are rather low, but they have been obtained on a setup

which has not yet been optimized (optical and electrical losses are huge), so that a large room for improvement is expected. In fact, MC simulations foresee the possibility of increase of both the frequency of the carrier signals and the bandwidth of the heterodyne receiver. The different design rules to fabricate optimum devices for each application have been provided taking as a base the dependence of the responsivity and IF power on L and W obtained from MC simulations and confirmed by experimental measurements.

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