Type II heterojunction tunnel diodes based on GaAs for multi-junction solar cells: Fabrication, characterization and simulation

Kevin Louarn, Chantal Fontaine, Alexandre Arnoult, Dimitri Hapiuk, Christophe Licitra, Thierry Taliercio, Yann Claveau, François Olivé, Nicolas Cavassilas, François Piquemal, et al.

To cite this version:
Kevin Louarn, Chantal Fontaine, Alexandre Arnoult, Dimitri Hapiuk, Christophe Licitra, et al.. Type II heterojunction tunnel diodes based on GaAs for multi-junction solar cells: Fabrication, characterization and simulation. 2016 IEEE Nanotechnology Materials and Devices Conference (NMDC), Oct 2016, Toulouse, France. pp.7777108, 10.1109/NMDC.2016.7777108 . hal-01436488

HAL Id: hal-01436488
https://hal-amu.archives-ouvertes.fr/hal-01436488
Submitted on 26 Mar 2020

HAL is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L’archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire HAL, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d’enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.
Type II heterojunction tunnel diodes based on GaAs for multi-junction solar cells: Fabrication, characterization and simulation.


Abstract—In this work, Molecular Beam Epitaxy (MBE) grown tunnel junctions (TJs) based on GaAs(Sb)(In) materials are experimentally and numerically studied. From simple GaAs TJs grown with various n-doping levels, we develop a semi-classical interband tunneling model able to quantify the magnitude of the tunneling current density, which shows that direct interband tunneling is the predominant tunneling mechanism in GaAs tunnel junctions instead of trap-assisted-tunneling mechanisms. Numerical simulations based on non-equilibrium perturbation theory through Non Equilibrium Green’s Functions (NEGF) and a multi-band kp Hamiltonian that includes both gamma and L valleys were performed by the IM2NP (Marseille) and confirmed this result. In order to further improve the performance of the TJs, we are fabricating a type II tunnel heterojunction based on GaAsSb and InGaAs materials.

I. INTRODUCTION

Tunnel junctions are key devices for multi-junctions solar cells (MJSCs), in which they ensure the electrical series connection between each subcells. In MJSCs, the subcells are designed and stacked to absorb a specific spectral domain of the solar spectrum, which enhanced the global absorption of the solar cell and reduce the thermalization losses making it possible to reach efficiency as high as 46% [1]. TJs consist in a P+/N+ junction made of degenerately doped materials, thus enabling a "broken-gap" like band diagram in which carriers can tunnel from one band to the other one. In this work, we investigate the nature of the predominant tunneling mechanism based on experimental GaAs TJs in order to propose an improved GaAsSb / InGaAs TJ.

II. EXPERIMENTS

A. Fabrication of GaAs and type II heterojunction

6 GaAs TJs with various n-doping levels were fabricated on n-doped GaAs:Si substrates using a Riber 412 MBE system. The P+ doping levels were fixed to 3x10^{19} cm^{-3} whereas the N+ doping levels were fixed in the range of [4x10^{18} cm^{-3} - 9x10^{18} cm^{-3}]. The structure were mesa-isolated in 800 μm diameters circles and TiAu contacts were deposited on the top and the back of the structure.

B. Characterization of the doping levels and the electron effective masses

All the doping levels were previously calibrated on especially designed Hall calibration samples. Because of the reported variation of the electron effective mass in Si doped GaAs due to the non-parabolicity of the conduction band [2], IR reflectometry and ellipsometry were performed by the CEA-LETI and the IES on these samples in order to track the frequency of the Brewster mode, which is doping levels and effective mass dependant.

III. EXPERIMENTAL AND NUMERICAL MODELS

A. Presentation of the semi-classical tunneling model

As pointed out in [3], the physical nature of the transport mechanisms in TJs has been a subject of debate in the literature. Recent literature suspect that trap related mechanisms could be the predominant tunneling effect in such devices [4]. However, we presented in previous work [5] a direct interband tunneling model model able to quantify the current-voltage characteristics of GaAs tunnel junction from reliable materials data when the coupling between the Conduction Band (CB) and the Light-Holes Valence Band (LH-VB) is carefully taken into account by the Flitner’s formula for the tunneling probability evaluation. As presented in figure 1, the model succeed in quantifying the current density of a P + (3x10^{19} cm^{-3}) / N+ (4.5x10^{18} cm^{-3}) when uncertainties up to 4% are considered on the N+ doping level.

Figure 1: Experimental and simulated J-V characteristic of a GaAs TJ
B. Influence of the N+ doping level

The validity of the previously mentioned model was tested for a wide range of N+ doping levels. The evolution of the electron effective mass with the doping level in GaAs:Si was experimentally studied following the procedure described in II- B and taken into account in the modeling. The experimental evolution with the previously reported curve of [2] is represented in figure 1.

Such consideration of the electron effective mass evolution make it possible to accurately model TJ's for N+ doping levels higher than $5 \times 10^{18} \text{ cm}^{-3}$, as shown on the example of figure 3.

C. Comparison with an NGEF based model

The previously reported experimental and numerical results were then confronted to a full quantum model developed by the IM2NP and based on the equilibrium perturbation theory through Non Equilibrium Green's Functions (NEGF) and a multi-band kp hamiltonian that includes both gamma and L valleys [6], in which no traps into the barrier are considered. As presented in figure 4, a great agreement was found between the two simulated J-V characteristic and the experimental results for the TJ simulated in figure 1.

Such good matching between the two different models uphold the hypothesis that direct interband tunneling instead of trap assisted tunneling is the predominant tunneling mechanism in such GaAs TJ's.

IV. CONCLUSION

Based on a wide range of experimental GaAs TJ's devices, we had shown with the development of a simple semi-classical direct interband tunneling model and a full quantum approach that direct interband tunneling is probably responsible for the large current density in such devices. Based on this results, we are developing an improved TJ by the addition of In and Sb compounds in order to form a type II tunnel heterojunction.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This work was supported financially by the EURAMET agency in the frame of JRP ENG51 SolCell project, and by the ANRT-CIFRE. The authors also acknowledge the French RENATECH network for technological support. The EMRP is jointly funded by the EMRP participating countries within EURAMET and the European Union.

REFERENCES