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High Efficiency Slotted Microring Si-Photodetector based on Internal Photoemission Effect

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1 Introduction
Over recent years, the field of CMOS-compatible Si-based photodetectors (PDs) for optical communication has undergone intensive research efforts [1-2]. Among these efforts, the exploitation of the internal photoemission effect (IPE) over the metal-semiconductor Schottky barrier has attracted great attention. The need for high quantum efficiency in Si-based IPE-PDs has motivated the development of these detectors. Although some structures have been presented to enhance the QE of Si-based IPE-PDs [1-3], there is still a need for a Si-based IPE-PDs with more efficiencies. An alternative approach to enhance the IPE-based PD's QE is to use microring resonators (MRRs). MRR enhances the intensity of the optical field in the cavity and also act as a waveguide (WG) that will reduce the transit time which will increase PD's bandwidth [3-5].

In this paper, the design of Si-based slotted-microring-internal photoemission effect photodetector (S-MR-IPE-PD) is proposed. By means of slotted WGs, the optical field can be enhanced and confined in a low-refractive-index material. Our results prove that the low QE can be enhanced by placing the thin metal layer in S-MR-IPE-PD. The proposed structure is rather different with respect to MRR-IPE-PD [3]. In our device the air slot enhances the intensity of the optical field and as a result the absorption in metal layer. The main advantage of this device is its compatibility with CMOS based structures and Si-based PDs.

This paper is organized as follows. In section (2) we describe the structure. In section (3) the physical model for analysis of its optical response is explained and finally, in section (4) we present the calculated results and discussion.

2 Structure
Fig. 1(a) shows a schematic top view of the proposed S-MR-IPE-PD. A straight WG is used to couple light in to a slot- waveguide ring of radius R. The straight WG and microring are separated by coupling distance of g. Fig. 1(b) illustrates a cross-section of the straight-MRWG and the coupling region. Both straight WG and ring slot WGs consist of 300nm-thick, h, p-Si strips on a p⁺-Si bottom cladding layer. The top of the whole device (cover) is exposed to the air. The inner and outer widths of the ring slot WG are \( W_{r1} \) and \( W_{r2} \), respectively (symmetric slot WG), whereas the width of the straight WG is \( W_c \). The slot-region width is \( W_r \). The p-Si and metal/silicide strips are placed on p⁺-Si pedestals of height p and widths equal to the corresponding p-Si strips.

Assuming fundamental mode propagates in straight WG. Optical field will be coupled to MRR of radius R at coupling region and will be enhanced and confined in the air-slot simultaneously. The MRR is covered partially by a nano-layer of metal/silicide of thickness d that forms a Schottky barrier with Si MRR. Additionally it is assumed that a single mode unidirectional field propagates in the ring slot WG and the coupling condition is lossless.
3 Modeling of S-MR-IPE-PD

3.1 Optical Mode

The optical mode of the MRR can be expressed as:

$$\text{mod} \ e = \frac{PF_{MR}}{PF_{3W}}$$  (1)

where $PF_{MR}$ is the integration of MRR optical power flow and $PF_{3W}$ is the integration of straight WG optical power flow.

3.2 Quantum Efficiency

Several research groups have modeled the efficiency of the IPE-based PDs [1-3]. In this work we use Scales's model to predict S-MR-IPE-PD efficiency, which is the more accurate and compatible with experimental results [2].

4 Results and Discussions

Here, we consider an S-MR-IPE-PD in which a fundamental mode of an optical field is launched into the straight WG and is assumed to couple to the MR. The optical field will be enhanced and confined in a 30-nm-wide air slot and will absorb simultaneously in a 5-nm-wide metal/silicide layer of the PD. The generated photocurrent is collected via contacts.

Fig. 2 plots the wavelength dependence of optical mode of a conventional MRR-IPE-PD and an S-MR-IPE-PD. By considering MRR of R=5μm with various widths (300nm ≤ W ≤ 500nm), the finite element numerical method is used to estimate the confinement factor, $\Gamma$ as a function of W for 2nm thick layers of PdSi, PtSi, TaSi$_2$ and CoSi$_2$ in both MRR-IPE-PD and S-MR-IPE-PD as shown in Fig. 4. The properties of silicides are given in [2]. The bending loss for TE-wave of 1550nm traveling inside these MRRs have been neglected [4].
According to the figure, as the waveguide width increases the mode is more confined in the wider MRR and hence $\Gamma$ becomes smaller. Additionally for a given $W$, confinement inside each silicide nanolayer is more sensitive to the real part of its refractive index, and because of that in both structures the confinement factor for Pd$_2$Si is larger than other silicides, as the optical field penetrates more in Pd$_2$Si. The other important point is that for a given $W$, the $\Gamma$ of S-MR-IPE-PD is much larger than MRR-IPE-PD. The fact behind this is in the S-MR-IPE-PD, the silicide nanolayer is embedded inside the WG in which fundamental part of mode is confined in it, whereas in MRR-IPE-PD a low evanescent mode propagates in the boundaries of the WG to overlap with silicide film.

![Figure 4: Confinement factor inside 3nm silicide layers as a function of W, for S-MR-IPE-PD and MRR-IPE-PD, for 1550nm.](image)

Figure 4: Confinement factor inside 3nm silicide layers as a function of $W$, for S-MR-IPE-PD and MRR-IPE-PD, for 1550nm.

Having calculated the confinement factor, now we can design the S-MR-IPE-PD for an optimized condition. The QE wavelength spectrums in critical coupling condition [5] of the same radius $R=5\mu$m, covered by 2nm thick layers of Pd$_2$Si for three different confinement factors are illustrated in Fig. 5. This figure reveals that, the smaller value of $\Gamma$ results in narrower QE bandwidth and hence the larger the cavity quality factor.

5 Conclusion

In this paper, we have proposed a novel photodetector based on internal photoemission effect over a Schottky barrier formed between a 30-nm wide air slot, a nonlayer of metal/silicide and a CMOS-compatible Si microring resonator. We examined S-MR-IPE-PDs and compared the photoresponse to that of MRR-IPE-PD. We found that S-MR-IPE-PD can achieve higher optical mode, speed and quantum efficiency characteristics, in comparison with MRR-IPE-PD.

![Figure 5: Wavelength dependence of QE in S-MR-IPE-PD for different confinement factors.](image)

Figure 5: Wavelength dependence of QE in S-MR-IPE-PD for different confinement factors.

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References


