Spin electronics sensors for biomagnetic signals detection and medical imaging

L. Caruso, P. Campiglio, H. Dyvorne, Q. Herreros, E. Paul, G. Jasmin-Lebras, C. Fermon, M. Pannetier-Lecoeur

Service de Physique de l’Etat Condensé, DSM/IRAMIS/SPEC - CNRS UMR 3680
CEA Saclay 91191 Gif sur Yvette cedex, France

E-mail: myriam.lecoeur@cea.fr

Spin electronics have opened the field of numerous applications in data storage, magnetic field sensing or MRAM. In particular, spin valve devices offer very good sensitivity – below the nanotesla range at room temperature - and since these systems are field sensors and not flux sensors, their sensitivity is weakly dependent with their size, and they can maintain very good performance at extremely small scale, allowing integration of multiple sensors or very small size magnetometer.

Magnetometry addresses many fields, from industrial, as in car industry, to more fundamental problems like in space-magnetometry or biomagnetism. Biomagnetism, being defined by the very weak signature of magnetic fields generated by living tissues and organisms, either by magnetic particles embedded or attached to cells, or by the electrical activity such as neural currents, requires extremely sensitive sensors to reach the picotesla to femtotesla range of the corresponding signals. Superconducting Quantum Interference Devices (SQUIDS), operating at liquid helium temperature, have been the preferred type of sensors for this purpose.

We have developed new types of magnetometers based on spin electronics [1] to allow measuring the weak fields generated the electrical activity of heart, brain or neuron cells. These sensors exhibit field sensitivities ranging from the nanotesla (10^-9T) down to the femtotesla (10^-15T).

The principles of the sensors and their operation for magnetic cardiac mapping [2], low field Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) [3], [4] or local neuronal electromagnetic activity will be shown in this contribution.

Left : Micrograph of a femtotesla-sensitivity magnetometer for Magneto-Cardiography and Low field MRI ; Right : Needle-shape Giant Magneto-Resistance sensor for local electromagnetic neuronal signal detection.

Myriam PANNEITIER-LECOEUR
Principal Investigator
CEA-Saclay/SPEC
91191 Gif sur Yvette cedex, France
+33 1 69 08 74 10
myriam.lecoeur@cea.fr

>60 articles - 14 patents
James Zimmerman Prize of the International Federation for Medical and Biological Engineering Society (2014)
Aymé Poirson Prize from the French Academy of Sciences (2008)

Education
2010 Habilitation à Diriger des Recherches, University Paris 6 (France)
   « Superconducting-magnetoresistive sensor: Reaching the femtotesla at 77 K”
1996-1999 PhD Condensed Matter Physics, LUSAC-Cherbourg, University of Caen (France)
   “Vortex dynamics in High-Tc films and applications to superconducting flux flow transistor”
1996 DEA Physique de la Matière et du Rayonnement, University of Caen (France)
1995 Maitrise de Physique, University of Rennes I (France)

Professional Experience
2004- Senior Scientist, Service de Physique de l’Etat Condensé, CEA Saclay (France)
2001-2004 Post-doctoral Research Fellow, SPEC-CEA Saclay (France)
1999-2001 Post-doctoral Research Fellow, Condensed Matter Group, Vrije Universiteit-Amsterdam (The Netherlands)

Fields of Research
Spin electronics, magnetic sensors, biomagnetism, oxides thin films.

Publications