Manipulation of a Two-Photon Pump in Superconductor-Semiconductor Heterostructures

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We investigate the photon statistics, entanglement, and squeezing of a p-n junction sandwiched between two superconducting leads and show that such an electrically driven photon pump generates correlated and entangled pairs of photons. In particular, we demonstrate that the squeezing of the fluctuations in the quadrature amplitudes of the emitted light can be manipulated by changing the relative phase of the order parameters of the superconductors. This reveals how macroscopic coherence of the superconducting state can be used to tailor the properties of a two-photon state.

The realization of solid-state photon sources that are capable of on-demand generation of entangled photon pairs is highly desired for quantum-information processing and communication [1], as well as for high-precision measurements [2–4]. Such two-photon processes are inherently nonclassical; i.e., they cannot be expressed naturally in terms of simple coherent states. Pairs of entangled photons are routinely generated by parametric down-conversion [5,6]. In this approach, a laser pumps a nonlinear optical crystal, leading to extremely low overall conversion efficiencies from electrons pumped into the laser to photon pairs out of the nonlinear crystal. These obstacles could be overcome by the two-photon counterpart of a light-emitting diode (LED), i.e., a device in which electrons are injected and which emits entangled photon pairs directly, leading to squeezed light. The overall quantum efficiency of such a device could be close to unity. Recently, entanglement of an electrically driven source of photon pairs was demonstrated, based on the recombination of biexcitons [7]. Cooper pairs are an alternative to biexcitons. In both cases, one expects that upon radiative recombination, the entanglement of the electrons is inherited by the two-photon final state. In distinction to biexcitons, Cooper pairs form coherent two-electron states that scatter weakly among each other, are only weakly affected by impurities, and, quite crucially, can be manipulated externally, e.g., using SQUID geometries, Andreev reflection at applied magnetic fields, or electrically tunable Josephson coupling. The proximity effect at superconductor-semiconductor junctions was indeed demonstrated for InAs/InAlAs coupled to niobium [8]. This is in accordance with the theoretical prediction [9,10] and observation [11–14] of an enhanced luminescence rate at such an interface. The exciting physics of a Josephson LED was discussed in the context of quantum-dot [15–18] and solid-state-based devices [19].

In this Letter, we show that a superconductor-LED-superconductor heterostructure is a source of nonclassical light and, most importantly, demonstrate how one can manipulate the two-photon coherence by varying the relative phase between the two superconductors that are coupled to the p-n junction. The key physical idea of our theory can be rationalized as follows: the nonequilibrium dynamics of the photon pump can be described in terms of an effective photon Hamiltonian that is similar to the Hamiltonian of a quantum parametric amplifier:

\[ H_{PA} = \omega b^\dagger b + (\xi e^{-i\epsilon V_0} b^\dagger b + \gamma e^{-i\epsilon V_0} b^\dagger b^\dagger), \]

where \( b^\dagger \) is a photon creation operator, \( \omega \) is the photon frequency (we set \( \hbar = 1 \)), and the coefficients \( \xi \) and \( \gamma \) arise from pumping photons electronically via superconducting leads with applied potential difference \( eV_0 \). The resulting

![FIG. 1 (color online). The schematic setup of a squeezed light-emitting diode consists of a p-n junction with proximity induced superconductivity present in both valence (\( v \)) and conduction (\( c \)) bands. Electronic coherence of Cooper pairs is transferred to the photons, leading to two-mode squeezing of the quadrature operators \( \hat{A}_{q}^\dagger \) in vacuum controlled by the relative phase of the two superconductors \( \Delta \varphi = \varphi_c - \varphi_v \). Entangled photon pairs of frequency of the order of the band gap \( \omega_q \approx \epsilon_c - \epsilon_v \) are emitted in the active region (red star).](image-url)

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control the squeezing in a detuned parametric amplifier
[21]. This demonstrates how the coherence of the Cooper
pair, together with the macroscopic coherence of the
superconducting state, can be tailored to the properties of
a two-photon state. In what follows, we substantiate this
qualitative picture by explicit many-body calculations,
show that the squeezing of the resulting photon state can
indeed be manipulated by changing \( \Delta \varphi \), and determine the
two-photon correlation function that emerges as a result of
the superconducting coherence.

The setup of our system is sketched in Fig. 1. We couple
a \( p-n \) junction on each side to superconducting leads
and apply an external voltage. The system is characterized by
the Hamiltonian

\[
H = H_{\text{ph}} + H_{c} + H_{r} + \sum_{k,q,\sigma,\lambda} \left( gb_{kq}^{\dagger} c_{\lambda k} e^{i \lambda k \sigma} + \text{H.c.} \right),
\]

where \( H_{\text{ph}} = \sum_{q} \omega_{q} b_{q}^{\dagger} b_{q} \) is the bare photon
Hamiltonian. We assume emission of linearly polarized
photons with \( \lambda = \pm \), but the case of circular polarization,
such as which occurs, for example, in GaAs due to
spin-orbit coupling [16], is a straightforward generalization
of our model. The electronic part \( H_{c} + H_{r} \) describes
the leads consisting of a superconducting conduction band on
the right, with creation operators \( c_{\lambda k} \) and band dispersion \( e_{\lambda k} \)
and proximity induced superconducting gap \( \Delta_{c} \), and a
superconducting valence band on the left, with creation operators \( n_{\lambda k}^{\dagger} \), band dispersion \( e_{\lambda k} \), and superconducting
gap \( \Delta_{v} \). If we include the respective chemical potentials \( \mu_{e} \)
and \( \mu_{v} \) with \( \mu_{e} - \mu_{v} = eV_{0} \), given by the applied voltage
\( V_{0} \), we have \( (\alpha = c \text{ or } v) \)

\[
H_{\alpha} - \mu_{\alpha} N_{\alpha} = \sum_{k \sigma} \left( e_{\alpha k} - \mu_{\alpha} \right) a_{k \sigma}^{\dagger} a_{k \sigma} + \sum_{k} \left( \Delta_{\alpha} a_{k \sigma}^{\dagger} c_{\sigma k \dagger} + \text{H.c.} \right).
\]

The coupling between photons and electrons is described
by a coupling constant \( g \) and leads to emission of a photon
for each electron transition from conduction to valence
band. We give an estimate for \( g \) in the Supplemental
Material [22].

We first derive an effective photon Hamiltonian \( H_{\text{eff}} \) for
this heterostructure. Technical details are provided in
the Supplemental Material [22]. Its purpose is to elucidate
the nature of the photon dynamics and to obtain a tool
to investigate the properties of the photon subsystem.

The effective Hamiltonian is designed to generate, up to
second order in perturbation theory, the same Heisenberg
equations of motion for the photonic operators as the
full Hamiltonian. We thus determine the equations of motion for the photon operators \( b_{q}^{\dagger} (t) \) perturbatively in
the electron-photon constant \( g \) and deduce \( H_{\text{eff}} \)
from them. We deal with a nonequilibrium problem in
steady state. The external bias voltage that drives the
system out of equilibrium leads to time-dependent phases
in the effective Hamiltonian, and we obtain

\[
H_{\text{eff}} = \sum_{q,\lambda} \left\{ \omega_{q} b_{q}^{\dagger} b_{q} + \left[ g e^{-ieV_{0}} \xi_{q} (t) b_{q}^{\dagger} + g^{2} e^{-2ieV_{0}} \gamma_{q} b_{q}^{\dagger} b_{-q}^{\dagger} + \text{H.c.} \right] \right\}.
\]

The effective Hamiltonian \( H_{\text{eff}} \) has the form of the
Hamiltonian of the quantum parametric amplifier in
Eq. (1) and describes electronic pumping of photons via
coupling to superconducting leads. It consists of three parts
that correspond to different aspects of the junction.

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The first part is the photon energy renormalized by the interaction $a_{\mathbf{q}} - a_{\mathbf{q}}^0 \propto |\mathbf{q}|^2$, which is of no fundamental importance to our analysis.

The second term describes the effect of the device being a source of single photons. It also occurs in the normal state, where it describes radiation of the usual light-emitting diode and produces single photons at a constant rate. In the presence of superconducting leads and the macroscopic electronic coherence, however, this term also contributes to the emergence of two-photon coherence. The different physical processes that contribute to the coherence are depicted in Fig. 2(a). The “coefficients” $\zeta_q(t)$ contain fermionic creation and annihilation operators. As a consequence of the nonequilibrium state, these operators depend on the initial values of the fermionic operators well in the past, where we assume that the system was decoupled and in local equilibrium. They act as random external (noncommuting) fields, which arise from the coupling of the photons to the fermionic bath, and commute with the photon operators $[\hat{b}_q(t), \zeta_q(t')] = 0$ but not with their Hermitian conjugate $[\zeta_q(t), \zeta_q^*(t')] \neq 0$. At $T = 0$ in the superconducting state, they are defined by correlators such as (for details, consult the Supplemental Material [22])

$$\int_{-\infty}^{t} dt' dt'' \langle \zeta_q(t') \zeta_{-q}(t'') \rangle e^{i(a_{q} - eV_0 - i\Delta_q^1)(t'' - t')} = -2 \sum_{k} \frac{\mu_{ck} v_{ck} u_{ck}^* v_{ck}^* e^{2i(a_{q} - eV_0)t}}{(a_{q} - eV_0 - i\Delta_q^1)^2 - (E_{ck} + E_{ck})^2}. \tag{5}$$

They contain the superconducting energy dispersions $E_{ck} = \sqrt{(\mu_{ck} - \mu_0)^2 + |\Delta_q|^2}$ and the BCS coherence factors $u_{ck}$ and $v_{ck}$, and we have neglected corrections to the quasiparticle energies by photon momenta $E_{ck} \pm q \approx E_{ck}$. Most important is the third term, where at $T = 0$ holds

$$\gamma_q = \sum_{k,x=\pm} \frac{-\frac{1}{2} \sum_{k} \mu_{ck} v_{ck} u_{ck}^* v_{ck}^*}{(a_{q} - eV_0 - i\Delta_q^1)^2 - (E_{ck} + E_{ck})^2}. \tag{6}$$

This term is responsible for the fact that $H_{\text{eff}}$ does have the form of a parametric amplifier, producing entangled photon pairs. Entanglement is meant in the sense that the emitted photon pairs have opposite momentum and the same chirality. If the coefficients $\zeta_q^*$ and $\zeta_q$ were numbers and would not contain fermionic operators of the initial state, we would immediately see that Eq. (4) describes a system that produces squeezed light [20]. The subsequent analysis shows that this is still the case, even with the more complicated form of $H_{\text{eff}}$.

To analyze whether the emitted light is squeezed, we determine the uncertainties of the quadrature amplitudes of the electric field

$$\mathbf{E}(\mathbf{x}, t) = \sum_{q, \mathbf{k}} iE_{qk}(\hat{b}_{q \mathbf{k}}(\mathbf{x}, t) + H.c.), \tag{7}$$

with $\hat{b}_{q \mathbf{k}}(t) = b_{q \mathbf{k}}(t) e^{i\omega_{\mathbf{k}} t}$, $E_{qk} = \sqrt{\alpha_{qk}/2\epsilon_0 c_0 L^3}$, vacuum and relative permittivity $\epsilon_0$ and $\epsilon_r$, volume $L^3$, and linear polarization vector $\mathbf{e}$. We consider the fluctuations of the two-mode quadrature operators

$$A_{q \mathbf{k}}^\pm = \mathcal{N}_\pm [\hat{b}_{q \mathbf{k}}^\dagger + \hat{b}_{q \mathbf{k}}^\dagger \pm (\hat{b}_{q \mathbf{k}} + \hat{b}_{q \mathbf{k}}^\dagger)], \tag{8}$$

with $\mathcal{N}_+ = 2^{-3/2}$ and $\mathcal{N}_- = -i2^{-3/2}$. In vacuum, where $\langle \hat{b}_{q_0 \mathbf{k}}^\dagger \hat{b}_{q_0 \mathbf{k}} \rangle = 0$, it follows directly from the bosonic commutation relations that (for details, see the Supplemental Material [22])

$$\langle (\Delta A_{q \mathbf{k}}^\pm)^2 \rangle = \frac{1}{4} (1 \pm 2 \Re \langle \hat{b}_{q \mathbf{k}}^\dagger \hat{b}_{q \mathbf{k}} \rangle), \tag{9}$$

where $(\Delta A)^2 = (A - \langle A \rangle)^2$. Here, $\langle \hat{b}_{q \mathbf{k}}\hat{b}_{q \mathbf{k}}^\dagger \rangle$ depends on the superconducting phase difference $\Delta \phi$ and can easily be determined from our model. The key finding is that the expectation value [see Eq. (12)] that determines the uncertainties of the quadrature amplitudes of $A_{q \mathbf{k}}^\pm$ can be changed if one changes the relative phase of the superconductor. If we picture the squeezing as an uncertainty ellipse (see Fig. 1), changing $\Delta \phi$ simply rotates it.

Next, we address the problem of squeezing and photon statistics using a more rigorous approach that allows more easily for a generalization to higher order processes and feedback of the photon system onto the superconducting leads. To this end, we use the Schwinger-Keldysh formulation [23] of the Hamiltonian in Eq. (2) and integrate out the fermionic degrees of freedom to arrive at an effective photonic action on the Keldysh time contour given by

$$S_{\text{ph}}^{\text{eff}} = \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} dt dt' \sum_{q, \mathbf{k}, \mathbf{j}} \bar{B}_{q \mathbf{k}}(t) D_q^{-1}(t', t) B_{q \mathbf{k}}(t'), \tag{10}$$

where $B_q(t) = (b_q^\dagger, \bar{b}_q^\dagger, b_q^\dagger, \bar{b}_q^\dagger)^T$ carries both the Keldysh $\{c_l, q\}$ and the Nambu structures. The photonic propagator

$$D^{-1} = D_0^{-1} - \Pi_{\text{el}} - \Pi_{\text{bath}} \tag{11}$$

acquires self-energy corrections due to the coupling to the superconducting leads $\Pi_q$ as well as a coupling to an external (Markovian) photon bath $\Pi_{\text{bath}}$, which leads to a finite photon linewidth $\eta$ [24,25]. We consider one-loop processes such as those shown in Figs. 3(a) and 3(b). Importantly, the electronic coherence of the Cooper pairs is transferred to the photons via the anomalous elements of the photon self-energy [see Fig. 3(b)].

We first focus on the zero temperature limit in both the leads and the photonic system, and calculate the resulting photonic coherence between modes of opposite momenta by inverting the Dyson equation (11) up to second order in the electron-photon coupling $g$ to find...
FIG. 3. (a), (b) Normal and anomalous diagrams contributing to the dressed photon propagator \( D = D_0 + D_0 \Pi D_0 \), where \( D_0 \) denotes the free photon propagator and \( \Pi \) the photon self-energy due to coupling to electrons. Solid (dashed) lines denote conduction (valence) electron propagators, and wiggly lines denote photon propagators.

\[
\langle \hat{b}_{q_1}(t) \hat{b}_{-q_2}(t) \rangle = \sum_{k} \frac{2g^2 \mu_{ck} v_{ck} \mu_{ck}^* e^{2i(o_q - \omega_{c})t}}{(\nu_q - i\eta)(\nu_q + E_k - i\eta)}. \tag{12}
\]

Here, \( \nu_q = \omega_q - eV_0 \) is the photon frequency measured relative to the applied potential difference and the location of one of the resonances is determined by the Bogoliubov dispersion \( E_k = E_{ck} + E_{ck} \). The product of BCS coherence factors \( \mu_{ck} v_{ck} \mu_{ck}^* v_{ck} = |\Delta_c||\Delta_v|e^{i\Delta\phi}/4E_{ck}E_{ck} \) depends on the relative phase \( \Delta\phi = q_c - q_v \) between the two superconductors. Using the Keldysh approach, we can thus confirm the above results for the phase-dependent quadrature amplitudes and our ability to manipulate light squeezing by coupling to the superconducting phase difference \( \Delta\phi \). Note that in the rotating frame of the photon fields, the squeezing ellipse rotates with the detuning off the central (Cooper-pair) peak like \( \langle \hat{b}_{q_1}(t) \hat{b}_{q_2}(t) \rangle \approx \exp[2i(\omega_q - eV_0)t] \).

While we can perform the momentum sum numerically for the most general parameters, here we make a simplifying assumption of parabolic band dispersions \( e_{ck} = k^2/2m^*_c + D/2 \) and \( e_{ck} = -k^2/2m^*_v - D/2 \) with effective masses \( m^*_c, m^*_v \), and band gap \( D \). For a symmetric choice \( |\Delta_c| = |\Delta_v| = |\Delta|, m^*_c = m^*_v, \mu_c = D/2 + \delta, \) and \( \mu_v = -\mu_c \), where \( \delta \) defines the (quasi-)Fermi energies in the two bands related to the applied voltage by \( eV_0 = D + 2\delta \), we can evaluate the correlator analytically. The summation over momenta in Eq. (12) in this case yields

\[
\langle \hat{b}_{q_1}(t) \hat{b}_{-q_2}(t) \rangle = \frac{g^2 \rho_c |\Delta|^2 e^{i\Delta\phi} e^{2i(o_q - \omega_{c})t}}{4\Delta^2 (\nu_q - i\eta)^2 + 4|\Delta|^2 - (\nu_q - i\eta)^2}
\]

where \( \rho_c \) denotes the fermionic density of states at the Fermi surface, and \( \nu_q = \nu_q/2|\Delta| \) and \( \eta = \eta/2|\Delta| \) are dimensionless frequencies and decay rates.

In Fig. 2(b), we present the zero temperature expectation value \( \langle \hat{b}_{q_1}(t) \hat{b}_{-q_2}(t) \rangle \) of Eq. (13) for a particular choice of parameters. The function exhibits two peaks, one at frequency \( o_q = eV_0 - |\Delta_c| - |\Delta_v| \) and one at \( o_q = eV_0 \). The lower frequency peak corresponds to quasiparticle tunneling from the conduction to the valence band, while the peak at \( o_q = eV_0 \) is due to tunneling of Cooper pairs. The sum over momenta only broadens the quasiparticle peak. Both processes involve the emission of photons and are thus possible at \( T = 0 \) in the absence of a finite photon density.

We have also obtained results for the photon coherence in the presence of a finite temperature \( T_{ph} > 0 \) thermal background of photons. As shown in Fig. 2(c), a third peak at frequency \( o_q = eV_0 + |\Delta_c| + |\Delta_v| \) appears at photon temperature \( T_{ph} > 0 \), which corresponds to the absorption of photons from the thermal background and transfer of quasiparticles from the valence to the conduction band. The three processes are schematically depicted in Fig. 2(a).

In addition, we analyze the photon-photon correlation functions by coupling the photons \( B_q(t) \) to external counting fields. As expected, the density correlations between the photons of the same momentum \( \langle \langle n_{q_1} n_{q_2} \rangle \rangle = \langle \langle n_{q_1} \rangle^2 \rangle = \langle \langle n_{q_2} \rangle \rangle = 1 \). These correlations simply reflect the tendency of bosonic particles to bunch. Two photons with the same momentum \( q \) must have been emitted in uncorrelated events since Cooper pairs have total momentum zero.

In the presence of electronic coherence, however, there also appear density correlations between photons of opposite momenta

\[
\langle \langle n_{q_1} n_{-q_2} \rangle \rangle = |g|^4 \sum_{k,k'} \frac{|\Delta_c|^2 |\Delta_v|^2}{16E_{ck}E_{ck'}E_{ck}E_{ck'}} \times \frac{1}{(\nu_{q_1}^2 + \eta^2)(\nu_{q_1} + E_k + i\eta)(\nu_{q_1} + E_{k'} - i\eta)}, \tag{14}
\]

where \( \nu_q = \omega_q - eV_0 \) and \( E_k = E_{ck} + E_{ck} \). These correlations are inherited from the coherence of the Cooper pairs within the BCS many-body state. As before, we observe the asymmetric peak structure at zero temperatures with two peaks occurring at \( o_q = eV_0 - |\Delta_c| - |\Delta_v| \) and \( o_q = eV_0 \) corresponding to tunneling of quasiparticle and Cooper pairs from the conduction to the valence band. Again, at finite (photon) temperatures, a third peak emerges at \( o_q = eV_0 + |\Delta_c| + |\Delta_v| \) due to the correlated absorption of photons from the thermal background imprinting density correlations between \( n_{q_1} \) and \( n_{-q_2} \).

In summary, we have shown that a p-n junction in proximity to two BCS superconductors can be operated to emit squeezed light, produces entangled photon pairs, and affects the photon density correlations. Squeezing occurs between modes of opposite momenta and results from a transfer of the electronic coherence of the Cooper pairs to the photons. The squeezing angle is controlled by the phase difference between the two superconductors. This squeezed light-emitting diode enables us to use the macroscopic
coherence of superconductors to manipulate the photon coherence in a two-photon pump.

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