Detection of the dc inverse spin Hall effect due to spin pumping in a novel meander-stripline geometry

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The dc voltage obtained from the inverse spin Hall effect (iSHE) due to spin pumping in ferromagnet/normal-metal (NM) bilayers can be unintentionally superimposed with magnetoresistive rectification of ac charge currents in the ferromagnetic layer. We introduce a geometry in which these spurious rectification voltages vanish while the iSHE voltage is maximized. In this geometry, a quantitative study of the dc iSHE is performed in a broad frequency range for Ni$_{80}$Fe$_{20}$/NM multilayers with NM=$\{\text{Pt, Ta, Cu/Au, Cu/Pt}\}$. The experimentally recorded voltages can be fully ascribed to the iSHE due to spin pumping. Furthermore we measure a small iSHE voltage in single CoFe thin films.

Index Terms—Microwave magnetics, spin pumping, spin rectification, inverse spin Hall effect

I. INTRODUCTION

Spin pumping is a significant source of damping in ultra-thin ferromagnet/normal-metal (FM/NM) bilayers [1]. In these bilayers, the precessing magnetization of the ferromagnet relaxes partially via the emission of ac transverse and dc longitudinal spin currents. Thus, magnetization dynamics in FM/NM junctions are a source of pure spin currents for spintronic applications [2], [3]. A large number of experimental and theoretical works are concerned with achieving a quantitative understanding of the spin pumping process [4]–[9]. The spin currents can be detected electrically via the inverse spin Hall effect (iSHE) [10]–[12] in the normal metal. However, electrical spin-current detection is complicated by the presence of inductive signals in the ac regime [13] and voltages due to microwave rectification in the dc regime [14]–[19]. Considerable efforts have been made to separate the dc spin pumping voltages from spurious rectification signals via line shape analysis [6], [7] or by studies where the external magnetic field orientation is changed in a prescribed way [20]. Here, we experimentally demonstrate the use of an optimized sample geometry that entirely eliminates these voltage rectification effects. We determine the effective spin-mixing conductance from broad-band ferromagnetic resonance (FMR) measurements and extract the dc spin Hall angles for Pt, Ta and Au from the recorded dc iSHE voltages. A dc voltage in ferromagnetic resonance (FMR) is also observed in a single Co$_{90}$Fe$_{10}$ (CoFe) layer, consistent with the hypothesis of a self-induced, inverse spin Hall effect in this alloy.

II. SAMPLE DESIGN AND PREPARATION

The geometry for iSHE detection of the dc component of the pumped spin current is shown in Fig. 1(a). We use a FM/NM bilayer with the interface normal along $z$, where the magnetic layer is a polycrystalline film with easy-plane anisotropy. The external magnetic field $H_0 \parallel z$ is applied orthogonal to the ac driving field $h_{mw} \parallel y$. This allows for...
the most efficient excitation of the magnetization $M$ with its equilibrium orientation along $H_{\text{eff}} \parallel x$. The dc component of the spin current $J_s$ has spin polarization $\hat{s}$ along $H_{\text{eff}}$. The open-circuit electric field $E_{\text{SHE}} \propto J_s \times \hat{s}$ due to the inverse spin Hall effect in the NM is oriented along $y$. The corresponding dc iSHE voltage is $V_{\text{dc}}^{\text{SHE}} = E_{\text{SHE}} L$, where $L$ is the length of the bilayer along $y$.

In our broadband experiments, $h_{\text{nw}}$ represents an Oersted field generated by a microwave charge current $I_{\text{nw}} \parallel x$ applied to the $w_{\text{CPW}} = 150 \mu m$-wide center conductor of the coplanar waveguide (CPW), shown in Fig. 1(b). Importantly, the spurious resonant rectification voltage due to anisotropic magnetoresistance that occurred in previous studies [6], [7] vanishes in this geometry because $H_0$ is applied along a highly symmetric axis within a precision of $\pm 2^\circ$. To take advantage of this measurement geometry, all samples are patterned into a meander-line structure, sketched in Fig. 1(c). Every other strip consists of identical thin-film Py/NM bilayers (Py=Ni$_{80}$Fe$_{20}$), while the remaining strips are single-layer 15 nm-thick CoFe films. All bilayers are $w = 25 \mu m$ wide and $L = 100 \mu m$ long. Contacts between the individual bilayers consist of 180 nm-thick Cu films capped with 20 nm Au. The iSHE voltages in all Py/NM and CoFe strips add and the measured total dc voltage $V_{\text{dc}}$ scales linearly with the number $N$ of meander repeats. For all data shown here, $N = 10$. All thin films are prepared by sputter deposition without breaking the vacuum between deposition of Py and NM. The samples are placed with the meander-line on top of the CPW center conductor with an air gap of $\delta \approx 50 \mu m$ and the NM facing the CPW.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

We use a 2-port vector network analyzer (VNA) with output power $P_{\text{nw}} = 2 \text{mW}$ that is connected and calibrated to ports P1 and P2 of the device sketched in Fig. 1(b). The VNA excites the CPW and inductively detects the magnetization dynamics. Figure 1(d) shows raw data obtained with a meander line composed of Py10/Pt5 bilayers and CoFe single layers. (Integer numbers in the sample names are nominal layer thicknesses in nanometers). The open squares (left scale) are data obtained with a meander line composed of Py10/Pt5 bilayers and CoFe single layers. All bilayers are $w = 25 \mu m$ wide and $L = 100 \mu m$ long. Contacts between the individual bilayers consist of 180 nm-thick Cu films capped with 20 nm Au. The iSHE voltages in all Py/NM and CoFe strips add and the measured total dc voltage $V_{\text{dc}}$ scales linearly with the number $N$ of meander repeats. For all data shown here, $N = 10$. All thin films are prepared by sputter deposition without breaking the vacuum between deposition of Py and NM. The samples are placed with the meander-line on top of the CPW center conductor with an air gap of $\delta \approx 50 \mu m$ and the NM facing the CPW.

Figure 2. (color online) (a) The resonance magnitude $A_{11}$ of the inductive signal obtained from fits to the $S_{11}$ data is similar for all samples with $10 \text{nm}$-thick Py. $A_{11}$ obtained from the Py5/Pt10 sample is a factor 2 smaller. (b) Linear fits to the field-swept linewidths of all Py/NM resonances are used to extract $\Delta H_0$ and $\alpha$.
Table I
Fitted parameters for the Py/NM samples used in this study.

| Sample         | $M_{\text{eff}}$ (kA/m) | $g$ | $\mu_0 \Delta H_0$ (mT) | $\alpha$ | $g_{\text{SH}}$ (10^{19} m^{-2}) | $\Theta_{\text{SH}}$ |
|----------------|------------------------|-----|-------------------------|----------|----------------------------------|----------------------|
| Py10/Cu4/Au2   | 73 ± 1                 | 2.106 ± 0.001 | -0.2 ± 0.1 | 0.0088 ± 0.0001 | 1.44 ± 0.05 | 0.005 ± 0.001 |
| Py10/Ta5       | 753 ± 2                | 2.113 ± 0.002 | 0.3 ± 0.09 | 0.0088 ± 0.0001 | 1.44 ± 0.05 | -0.018 ± 0.001 |
| Py10/Pt5       | 731 ± 5                | 2.113 ± 0.005 | 0.0 ± 0.1  | 0.0142 ± 0.0002 | 4.21 ± 0.10 | 0.107 ± 0.003 |
| Py10/Cu3/Pt3   | 740 ± 2                | 2.106 ± 0.002 | 0.2 ± 0.1  | 0.0097 ± 0.0001 | 1.90 ± 0.05 | 0.116 ± 0.004 |
| Py5/Pt10       | 626 ± 3                | 2.134 ± 0.03  | -1.0 ± 0.9 | 0.0232 ± 0.001 | 4.37 ± 0.03 | 0.096 ± 0.003 |

Py thickness and $\gamma = g \mu_B / h$ is the gyromagnetic ratio with the reduced Planck constant $\hbar$ and the Bohr magneton $\mu_B$. The parameters obtained from the fits are summarized in Table I.

The following three conditions need to be fulfilled if $V_{\text{dc}}$ is entirely due to detection of spin pumping via the iSHE: (a) $V_{\text{dc}}$ has a purely symmetric Lorentzian line shape, (b) $V_{\text{dc}}$ changes sign under $H_0$ inversion, and (c) the magnitude of $V_{\text{dc}}$ is unchanged under $H_0$ inversion. We thus fit the $V_{\text{dc}}$ data to the superposition of symmetric and antisymmetric Lorentzian line shapes

$$V_{\text{dc}} = \frac{V_{\text{dc}}^s \Delta^2 + V_{\text{dc}}^a \Delta (H_0 - H_{\text{res}})}{\Delta^2 + (H_0 - H_{\text{res}})^2} + C_3 + H_0 C_4 ,$$

where $\Delta = \Delta H/2$, $C_3$ and $C_4$ describe offset and drift in $V_{\text{dc}}$. The extracted $H_{\text{res}}$ and $\Delta H$ coincide with those extracted from the $S_{11}$ fit. The fitted symmetric ($V_{\text{dc}}^s$) and antisymmetric ($V_{\text{dc}}^a$) contributions of the Py10/Pt5 resonance are shown in Fig. 3(a) where $V_{\text{dc}}^a = 0$ to within uncertainty of the fit and $V_{\text{dc}}^s$ changes sign with inversion of $H_0$ while $|V_{\text{dc}}^a|$ remains unchanged [cf. full and open circles in Fig. 3(a)]. This is consistent with our interpretation that $V_{\text{dc}}$ is entirely due to the iSHE detection of spin pumping, as expected from the chosen experimental geometry. For a quantitative analysis, we introduce the normalized iSHE voltage

$$V_0^{\text{iSHE}} = \frac{V_{\text{dc}}^s H_0^2}{|\chi_{yy}(H_{\text{res}})||\chi_{xy}(H_{\text{res}})| h_{\text{mw}}^2},$$

with the susceptibility $\chi$ obtained from the fits to $S_{11}$, $V_0^{\text{iSHE}}$ is normalized to the magnetization precession cone angle and thus is a direct measure for the iSHE efficiency for a given Py/NM stack. In [3], $h_{\text{mw}}$ is calculated from the inductive signal magnitude $A_{11}$ in Fig. 3(a) by

$$h_{\text{mw}} = \frac{4 \sqrt{P_{\text{mw}} Z_0 A_{11}}}{2 \omega f \mu_0 w N t F \eta},$$

where $Z_0 = 50 \Omega$ and $P_{\text{mw}} = 2 \text{mW}$. Here, $\eta = 2 \text{arctan}(w_{\text{CPW}}/(2b))/\pi$ accounts for the non-zero spacing between the CPW and the meander line. By inferring $h_{\text{mw}}$ from the measured $A_{11}$, variations of $h_{\text{mw}}$ with frequency, due to non-idealities of the loaded CPW, are quantitatively taken into account.

From spin pumping theory, we expect [9]

$$V_0^{\text{iSHE}} = \frac{f L N e g_\eta \Theta_{\text{SH}} \lambda_{SD} \tanh \left(\frac{t_F}{2 \lambda_{SD}}\right)}{t_F \sigma_F + t_N \sigma_N + t_Cu \sigma_{Cu}},$$

where $e$ is the electron charge, $t_F$, $t_Cu$, and $t_N$ are the thickness of ferromagnet/Cu/normal metal layers and $\sigma_F$, $\sigma_N$, $\sigma_{Cu}$ are the corresponding electrical conductivities. In [5], $\Theta_{\text{SH}}$ and $\lambda_{SD}$ are the spin Hall angle and spin diffusion length of the normal metal, respectively. We assume that the iSHE of Cu is negligible and $\lambda_{SD} \gg t_{Cu}$, such that the insertion of Cu in the stack will change only $g_\eta$ and the multilayer resistance. The lines in Fig. 3(b) are fits to Eq. 5 where values of electrical conductances are obtained from dc resistance measurements, and $\lambda_{Au} = 34 \text{ nm}$ from [7], $\lambda_{Pt} = 1.5 \text{ nm}$ from [22] and $\lambda_{SD} = 1 \text{ nm}$ from [23] are used. From the fits, we obtain $\Theta_{\text{SH}}$ in Table I. In particular, $\Theta_{\text{SH}}$ for both Py/Pt samples and Py/Cu/Pt are nearly identical. Thus, we find no indication for either proximity-induced contributions to the dc voltage in Py/Pt or substantial change of interfacial spin flip for the dc spin-current by insertion of Cu. The negligibly small $V_0^{\text{iSHE}}$ in Py/Cu/Au is consistent with a weak/non-existent iSHE for both Cu and Au, as assumed in [13].

In Fig. 4 we plot the extracted $V_{\text{dc}}^s$ and $V_{\text{dc}}^a$ for the CoFe resonance. The interspersed multilayer stripes are Py10/Pt5 for...
this particular sample. Identical CoFe signals were obtained for all samples of this study. Within the fit uncertainty, $V_{dc}^a = 0$. However, a small but detectable $V_{dc}^s$ changes sign under inversion of $H_0$. $V_{dc}^s$ is attributed to the detection of spin pumping via the iSHE in a single layer of CoFe due to a nonuniform dynamic magnetization. 

We attribute $V_{dc}^s$ to the occurrence of the dc iSHE in the single layer of CoFe itself, similar to what was recently reported for a single layer of Py [24]. Such a "self-induced" iSHE requires some degree of symmetry breaking through the film thickness. We conjecture that the CoFe layer has a nonuniform dynamic magnetization profile through the film thickness due to nonzero conductivity effects [13], [25]. Thus, antisymmetric intralayer spin-currents are not balanced and can give rise to a net iSHE dc voltage. Because the nonuniform magnetization profile in CoFe could not be determined, a value for the spin Hall angle for CoFe cannot be estimated from the measured $V_{dc}^a$. However, ferromagnetic metals are known to generally display an iSHE [26].

IV. Summary

We have demonstrated a sample geometry that allows unambiguous, broadband detection of spin pumping via the dc-voltage due to the iSHE. An optimized meandering structure is used to suppress rectified voltages due to anisotropic magnetoresistance. $V_{dc}$ can easily be enhanced by increasing the number of repeats of the meander structure, and the high signal-to-noise ratio allows for detection of $V_{dc}$ signals in the 10 nV range. Among other benefits, this structure allows for the investigation of small iSHE effects at relatively low microwave powers that do not either heat the sample or induce undesired nonlinear spin dynamics. Experimental evidence supports a self-induced iSHE due to intralayer spin pumping in a single-layer 15 nm-thick CoFe film.

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