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Free-standing CoFe thin-film doubly clamped stress reconfigurable resonators were investigated as a function of magnetic field and pressure. A large uniaxial anisotropy resulting from residual uniaxial tensile stress, as revealed from magnetic hysteresis loops, leads to an easy magnetization axis aligned along the length of the beams. The quality factor of the driven resonator beams under vacuum is increased by 30 times, leading to an enhanced signal-to-noise ratio and a predicted reduction in the intrinsic magnetic noise by a factor of 6, potentially reaching as low as \( \sim 25 \, \text{pT/Hz} \) at 1 Torr. Stress reconfigurable sensors operating under vacuum could thus further improve the limit of detection and advance development of magnetic field sensing technology.

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Recent work on magnetoelectric (ME) composites exploiting high coupling between piezoelectric and magnetostrictive phases has established ME materials as very promising candidates for magnetic field sensing. Magnetic field sensors based on ME composites have been demonstrated to exhibit comparable sensitivity and noise floor to magnetic sensors based on ME composites have been demonstrated to exhibit comparable sensitivity and noise floor to magneto-optic Kerr effect (MOKE) sensors. However, their sensitivity has been limited by an increase in the bandwidth and a decrease in the magnetic field sensitivity. ME sensors can therefore significantly increase the limit of detection and improve the resolution and sensitivity by increasing the quality factor. It is also desirable to lower the limit of detection and improve the resolution and sensitivity by increasing the quality factor. It is also desirable to lower the limit of detection and improve the resolution and sensitivity by increasing the quality factor. This approach has previously been demonstrated in doubly clamped ME bimorphs with Metglas and FeNi (Ref. 6) as well as in ME cantilevers, where the shift in frequency is related to the AE effect. Stress reconfigurable doubly clamped magnetostrictive resonators offer the possibility for near-DC magnetic field sensing by determining the magnetic field induced shift in the resonant frequency resulting from a change in stress owing to magnetostriction. In this scheme, it is possible to minimize the impact of noise by increasing the equivalent magnetic noise floor by increasing the device size. The use of MEMS fabrication techniques to create these structures allows for standardized production of sensor arrays as well as integration with other CMOS components.

With this stress reconfigurable approach, it is now possible to increase the quality factor and enhance resolution without sacrificing bandwidth. Several parameters can affect the quality factor of a mechanical resonator such as thermoelastic losses, clamping losses, and surface effects like defects or surface roughness. However, air damping has been established as the foremost limitation on the quality factor as the volume-to-surface ratio of the resonator decreases. Reducing contributions from air damping by operating micromechanical cantilevers in vacuum can therefore significantly increase the quality factor by several orders of magnitude. Furthermore, ME composite cantilevers under vacuum showed an increase in ME coupling and a lowered limit of detection for magnetic field sensing. Yet similar studies have not been performed on doubly clamped reconfigurable sensors that are expected to have higher quality factors, and consequently, enhanced resolution. It is also desirable to lower the limit of detection and improve the resolution and sensitivity by increasing the quality factor, while maintaining the tunability of these devices.

We have recently fabricated stress reconfigurable magnetoelastic CoFe thin film sensors and demonstrated a change in the bending mode resonant frequency with applied field perpendicular to the length of the bridges as well as improved magnetic field sensitivity as compared to large scale devices. In this work, we examine and verify the stress induced origin of this anisotropy as well as investigate the pressure dependence of the quality factor of these sensors.

\( \text{Co}_{60}\text{Fe}_{32} \) free-standing resonators were fabricated on Si substrates, as previously described. A length of 1 mm was chosen based on fabrication techniques and targeted resonant frequency. Longitudinal magneto-optic Kerr effect (MOKE)
was used to measure the in-plane angular dependence of magnetic hysteresis loops on the free standing resonators at room temperature in atmospheric conditions. A rotation stage with x-y adjustment ensured accurate alignment of the laser beam with the resonators. For measurements of resonance, a PbZr1−xTixO3 (PZT) piezoelectric transducer was used to drive the vibration of the sample [schematic of sample is shown in Figure 1(a)]. This structure was placed in a small vacuum chamber between the poles of an electromagnet for measurements with applied magnetic field \( (H) \) at different background pressures. The transverse displacement of an individual beam was measured with a laser Doppler vibrometer (LDV) (Polytec OFV-5000). This signal was processed by a lock-in amplifier (Signal Recovery 7280) to determine the amplitude \( A \). The \( f_R \) and \( Q \) were obtained by fitting the frequency dependent amplitude with \( A(f) = A_0 f_R^2 (f^2 - f_R^2)^2 + f f_R^2 Q^{-2})^{-1/2} \) for damped driven simple harmonic oscillation, where \( A_0 \) is the amplitude of the excitation.\(^{16,17}\)

The resonance peaks with an in-plane \( H \) applied both parallel (defined as \( 0^\circ \)) and perpendicular \( (90^\circ) \) to the length of the beam are shown in Figures 1(b) and 1(c), respectively. Although a change in amplitude is immediately apparent for \( H \) along \( 0^\circ \), no shift in \( f_R \) is observed as opposed to the clear increase in frequency of about 1.5 kHz when \( H \) is perpendicular to the beam. To further investigate this anisotropic magnetic response, longitudinal MOKE measurements for a single beam (as shown in Figure 1) were performed. These hysteresis loops reveal that the remnant magnetization normalized to saturation magnetization \( (M_r/M_s) \) is decreased from 0.95 at \( 0^\circ \) to 0.49 at \( 90^\circ \), where the angle is defined relative to the beam axis. This is in contrast to the hysteresis loops of the CoFe film on the edges of the beam structure (not shown), which did not show a significant difference with \( 90^\circ \) rotation. This clearly indicates that the easy magnetization axis is parallel to the length of the beams, whereas the data for \( H \) perpendicular to the beam length displays some characteristics of a hard axis. These results are consistent with the expected strong uniaxial stress-induced anisotropy \( K_a = (3/2) \sigma \lambda_s \), where \( \sigma \) is the stress and \( \lambda_s \) is the saturation magnetostriction, \( \sim 20 \text{ kJ/m}^3 \) even with a conservative value of \( \lambda_s \) of FeCo \( \lambda_s \sim 40 \text{ ppm} \). This is larger than the demagnetization energy in the plane of the beam, which is calculated\(^{18} \) to be \( 12 \text{ kJ/m}^3 \). The in-plane angular dependence of the coercive magnetic field \( (H_C) \) shows a sharp increase with applied magnetic field at precisely \( 0^\circ \) and is qualitatively consistent with the Kondorsky model of \( 180^\circ \) domain wall growth and propagation through the film.\(^{19,20}\)

The resonant mode [Figure 2(a)] displays a dependence on pressure \( P \). The value of \( f_R \) is found to increase with decreasing pressure (not shown), and this shift, consistent with previous reports,\(^{14,21}\) is attributed to the reduction of inertia of the air moved by the beam.\(^{22}\)

For the peaks shown in Figure 2(a), \( Q \) increased from \( \sim 103 \) at atmospheric pressure to \( \sim 2728 \) at 1 Torr. Two distinct regimes can be seen in the \( P \) dependence of the \( Q \) [Fig. 2(b)] with a large jump in \( Q \) at lower pressure \( P \), reaching over 8000 at 85 mTorr. The total quality factor from all of the damping parameters present sums as \( \frac{1}{Q_{\text{eff}}} = \sum \frac{1}{Q_j} = \frac{1}{Q_{\text{air}}} + \frac{1}{Q_{\text{intrin}}} \), where \( Q_{\text{air}} \) is the quality factor related to damping by air and \( Q_{\text{intrin}} \) is that due to the device. Air damping is the dominant mechanism in micromechanical systems until it becomes comparable to intrinsic damping at very low pressures,\(^{13,14}\) and therefore, \( Q_{\text{eff}} \) is controlled by how the drag force is determined in different pressure ranges.

Near atmospheric pressure, air must be treated as a viscous fluid. Due to the difficulty of obtaining analytical solutions for the Navier-Stokes equation for an oscillating beam, Hosaka et al.\(^{23}\) have approximated a resonating beam as a string of independently vibrating spheres of radius \( r \) to give

\[
Q_{\text{visc}} = \frac{\omega p_{\text{CoFe}} w t}{3 \mu (1 + w/\delta)},
\]

where \( \omega \) is the resonant frequency of the beam, \( p_{\text{CoFe}} \) is the density of the cantilever \( (8370 \text{ kg/m}^3) \), \( w \) is the beam width \( (\sim 40 \mu m) \), \( t \) is the beam thickness \( (\sim 200 \text{ nm}) \), \( \mu \) is the

![FIG. 1. (a) Schematic diagram showing the structure consists of a CoFe film that has been patterned on a silicon substrate and back-etched resulting in free-standing beams. This is backed by a PZT stack. (b) The frequency dependent displacement at several magnetic fields applied parallel to the length of the beam (0°) and (c) perpendicular to the beam (90° in-plane). (d) Representative magnetic hysteresis loops from magneto-optical Kerr effect measurements for a CoFe bridge with magnetic field applied near zero and 90 degrees (±10°). (e) Angular dependence of the coercive field. Angle is defined with respect to the length of the bridge, as shown in the inset.](image-url)
shown that one can consider these as analogous to two resistors in parallel. That is, we consider
\[ Q_{\text{air}} = Q_{\text{mol}} + Q_{\text{visc}}. \]  

Figure 2(b) shows that by combining Eqs. (2)–(4), the model fits the \( Q(P) \) data for the present resonator very well with the only two free parameters \( a \approx 0 \) and \( b = 0.21 \). The value of \( Q_{\text{intrinsic}} \) for clamped beams is expected to be larger than that for a cantilever with identical dimensions as \( f_R \) will be higher due to stress developed during processing, as well as \( Q_{\text{support}} \) is theoretically predicted to increase for clamped-clamped versus clamped-free boundary conditions. In addition to the present results showing a sharp increase in \( Q \) in the molecular regime, the enhancement of \( Q_{\text{intrinsic}} \) for the present stress reconfigurable beams would suggest that \( Q \) in ultrahigh vacuum could be considerably higher than that for cantilever devices.

For use of these stress reconfigurable devices as magnetic field sensors, it is important to also investigate the effects of \( H \) on \( f_R \) at various pressures. Figure 3 shows the shift in resonance at 700, 100, and 1 Torr which correspond to the viscous, intermediate, and molecular damping regimes, respectively. The increase in \( Q \) as noted previously appears to contribute to an improvement in the signal-to-noise ratio at 1 Torr as compared to that at atmospheric pressure. The effects of magnetic field and pressure are expected to be decoupled, as the magnetostriction-induced stress should be independent of pressure and of a different nature than the shift in \( f_R \) due to a change in effective mass with pressure. Thus, the apparent difference in \( df_R/dH \) [Fig. 3(d)] is not intrinsic but rather a result of increased resolution at lower pressures due to higher \( Q \), which is consistent with the data appearing noisier and the peak less sharp at atmosphere than at lower pressures.

We previously demonstrated that intrinsic magnetic noise (\( b_n \)) of the bridge can be determined by the thermomechanical noise as calculated by the following equation:
\[ b_n = \frac{\mu_0}{2} \left( \frac{df_R}{dH} \right)^{-1} \sqrt{\frac{2\pi k_B T f_R}{Q V \sigma}}, \]  

where \( V \) is the volume of the device, and the stress \( \sigma \) is calculated from \( f_R \) assuming each bridge is treated as a one-dimensional string. From the experimentally determined values of field sensitivity \( df_R/dH, f_R \), and \( Q \), at room temperature and atmospheric pressure, the calculated value of \( b_n \) is assessed to be 155 pT/\( \sqrt{\text{Hz}} \), which is consistent with our previous results. As the pressure is decreased to 1 Torr, Eq. (5) predicts that the intrinsic magnetic noise is reduced by a factor of 6 (\( b_n \sim 25 \) pT/\( \sqrt{\text{Hz}} \)). These values suggest that encapsulating the present sensors in vacuum will result in enhanced performance of these devices as magnetic field sensors. In addition, by fabricating a magnetoelectric composite by integrating a piezoelectric layer with the CoFe beams, decreasing the pressure is also expected to increase the resonant magnetoelectric coupling and the induced voltage, thereby further improving the limit of detection. Measurements of the equivalent magnetic sensor noise are under progress. The effects of further miniaturization of the beams or mitigation

![FIG. 2. (a) The mechanical resonance of one of the present CoFe beams at 700 Torr and 1 Torr. A shift in resonant frequency is observed, and the quality factor \( Q_{\text{eff}} \) is enhanced at low pressures. (b) The pressure dependence of \( Q_{\text{eff}} \) for the present beam. The data are fitted by combining Eqs. (2)–(4).](image-url)
of internal stress from processing on the equivalent magnetic noise floor would also be of interest in establishing the range of useful device sizes and optimal fabrication processes.

In summary, it was determined that the easy magnetization axis of CoFe free-standing thin film resonators is aligned with the length of the beams due to a combination of stress and shape anisotropy. The mechanical quality factor was enhanced under vacuum, which could contribute considerably to an increase in signal-to-noise ratio of the sensor and improve magnetic field sensitivity. A significant reduction in the intrinsic magnetic noise is also predicted, making these stress reconfigurable sensors a promising candidate for near DC magnetic field sensing.

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