

# Optimization of planar Hall effect sensor for magnetic bead detection using spin-valve NiFe/Cu/NiFe/IrMn structures

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**Abstract:** Present paper deals with the planar Hall effect (PHE) of Ta(5 nm)/NiFe( $t_f$ )/Cu(1.2 nm)/NiFe( $t_p$ )/IrMn(15 nm)/Ta(5 nm) spin-valve structures. Experimental investigations are performed for  $50 \times 50 \text{ } \mu\text{m}^2$  junctions with various thicknesses of free and pinned layer  $t_f$  4, 8, 10, 15, 20 nm and  $t_p$  2, 3, 6, 8, 9, 12 nm. The results show that the thicker free layers, the higher PHE signal is obtained. In addition, the thicker pinned layers, the lower PHE signal. The highest PHE sensitivity  $S$  of  $15.6 \text{ m}\Omega/\text{Oe}$  is obtained in the spin-valve configuration with  $t_f$  20 nm and  $t_p$  2 nm. This optimum structure is rather promising for micro magnetic bead detections. © 2009 IOP Publishing Ltd.

**Author Keywords:** Biosensors; Hall effect; Magnetization reversal; Magnetoresistance

Year: 2009

Source title: Journal of Physics: Conference Series

Volume: 187

Art. No.: 12056

Link: [Scopus Link](#)

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ISSN: 17426588

DOI: 10.1088/1742-6596/187/1/012056

Language of Original Document: English

Abbreviated Source Title: Journal of Physics: Conference Series

Document Type: Article

Source: Scopus

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