

# Small $V_{th}$ Shift and Low Dynamic $R_{ON}$ in GaN MOSHEMT With $ZrO_2$ Gate Dielectric

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**Abstract**—The off-state stress-induced threshold voltage ( $V_{th}$ ) instability and dynamic on-resistance ( $R_{ON}$ ) of GaN metal-oxide-semiconductor high-electron mobility transistor (MOSHEMT) with  $ZrO_2$  gate dielectric are thoroughly investigated. Upon negative gate bias stressing, a small threshold voltage shift of  $-0.31$  V is observed and the deviation is attributed to the emission of electrons at the  $ZrO_2/AlGaIn$  interface. An emission activation energy of  $0.28$  eV and a capture activation energy of  $0.30$  eV are extracted by threshold voltage transient spectroscopy performed at various temperatures. When the device is exposed to off-state drain-source bias stressing, the drain current is found to decrease despite negative shift of  $V_{th}$ . A low dynamic  $R_{ON}$  of  $2.05$  is obtained by time-resolved measurements, given a  $50$ -V drain voltage stressing for a duration of  $100$  s. The decrease in forward conductance is related to the capture of electrons in the access region, with a capture activation energy of  $0.18$  eV revealed by temperature-dependent drain current transient (DCT) analysis. The results indicate that high-quality  $ZrO_2$  represents an attractive high- $k$  gate dielectric option for GaN MOSHEMTs in power switching electronics.

**Index Terms**—Dynamic on-resistance ( $R_{ON}$ ), GaN, metal-oxide-semiconductor high-electron mobility transistor (MOSHEMT), threshold voltage ( $V_{th}$ ) instability,  $ZrO_2$  dielectric.

Manuscript received 18 July 2023; accepted 5 September 2023. Date of publication 25 September 2023; date of current version 24 October 2023. This work was supported in part by the ShanghaiTech University Startup Fund under Grant 2017F0203-000-14, in part by the National Natural Science Foundation of China under Grant 52131303, in part by the Natural Science Foundation of Shanghai under Grant 22ZR1442300, and in part by Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) Strategic Science and Technology Program under Grant XDA18000000. The review of this article was arranged by Editor M. Shrivastava. (Corresponding authors: Xinbo Zou; Huaxing Jiang; Kei May Lau.)

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Color versions of one or more figures in this article are available at <https://doi.org/10.1109/TED.2023.3313999>.

Digital Object Identifier 10.1109/TED.2023.3313999

## I. INTRODUCTION

III-N-BASED high-electron mobility transistors (HEMTs) are promising candidates for next-generation high-frequency and high-power applications due to their unique material properties, including large energy bandgap, high-electron saturation velocity, high-critical breakdown electric field, and high-temperature stability. However, gate leakage and drain current collapse in HEMTs with Schottky-type gate greatly hindered their applications in power conversion [1], [2]. Replacing the Schottky-type gate with a metal-oxide-semiconductor (MOS) structure can significantly suppress gate leakage, giving rise to a large gate swing and improved terminal stability. Various gate dielectrics have been utilized to fabricate III-N MOSHEMT or MISHEMT, including  $SiO_2$ ,  $SiN_x$ ,  $Al_2O_3$ , and so on [3], [4], [5], [6], [7], [8], [9], [10], [11], [12], [13], [14].

In particular, high- $k$  gate dielectrics have been extensively introduced in MOSHEMTs to enhance transconductance and minimize off-state leakage current.  $ZrO_2$  is highly promising among the available high- $k$  gate dielectric options due to its high dielectric constant ( $20$ – $30$ ), large bandgap ( $7.8$  eV), excellent thermal stability, and large conduction band offset [15], [16], [17], [18]. With high-quality  $ZrO_2$  gate dielectric by atomic-layer deposition (ALD), GaN MOSHEMTs exhibited an outstanding ON/OFF current ratio of  $5 \times 10^{10}$  and a low dynamic-to-static ON-resistance ( $R_{ON}$ ) ratio of  $1.78$  at the off-state  $V_{ds}$  of  $600$  V [16]. In comparison with a Schottky-gate HEMT, it was revealed that the gate leakage of a  $ZrO_2$ -MOSHEMT was suppressed by four orders of magnitude [18]. Using a novel recess-free barrier engineering technique,  $ZrO_2$  has been successfully incorporated in fabricating an  $E$ -mode GaN MOSHEMT [15]. This unique technique achieved a large threshold voltage ( $V_{th}$ ) over  $2$  V and a low  $R_{ON}$ .

Despite the fact that dc performance of GaN MOSHEMTs with a  $ZrO_2$  gate dielectric has been well documented, dynamic characteristics, including  $V_{th}$  instability and dynamic  $R_{ON}$ , have not been thoroughly investigated. In addition, time-resolved  $V_{th}$  shift and forward conductance degradation at various temperatures still remain unclear.

In this work, a comprehensive study on threshold voltage instability and dynamic  $R_{ON}$  of GaN MOSHEMTs with a  $ZrO_2$  gate dielectric layer is reported. First, threshold voltage instabilities of GaN MOSHEMT upon various gate and drain bias voltages were investigated. Subsequently, temperature-dependent threshold voltage transient spectrums during the stressing and recovery process were analyzed. Furthermore, time-resolved  $R_{ON}$  for different stressing voltages and

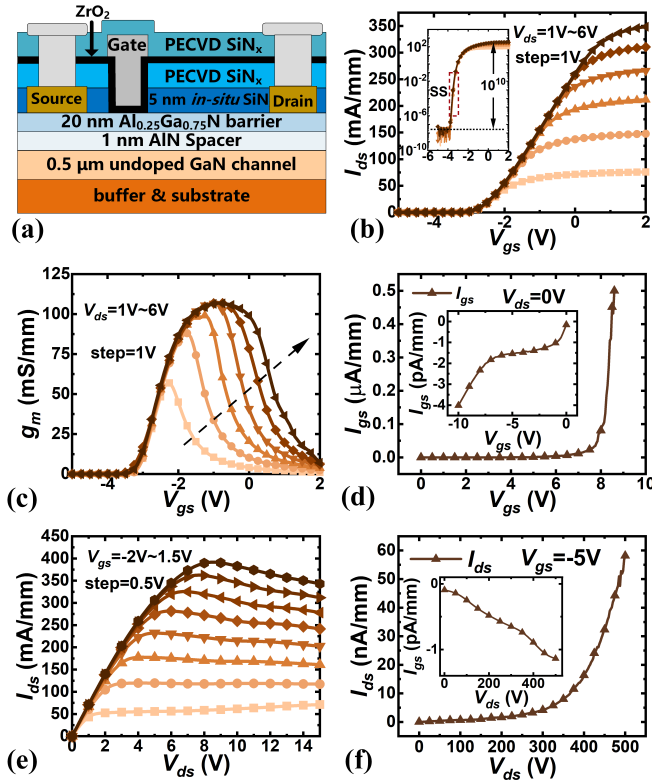


Fig. 1. (a) Cross-sectional schematic of GaN MOSHEMT. (b) Transfer characteristics (inset: logarithmic plots). (c) Transconductance, (d) forward gate leakage current (inset: reverse gate leakage current), (e) output characteristics, and (f) OFF-state  $I_{ds}$  (inset: OFF-state  $I_{ds}$ ) of GaN MOSHEMT.

temperatures was investigated. Finally, the degradation of drain current was also revealed by drain current transient (DCT) spectroscopy. The small  $V_{th}$  shift and low dynamic  $R_{ON}$  in MOSHEMT showed  $ZrO_2$  is a promising high- $k$  dielectric for power switching electronics.

## II. DEVICE FABRICATION AND METHOD

Fig. 1(a) showed the schematic cross section of the fabricated GaN MOSHEMT structure with  $ZrO_2$  as a dielectric. The AlGaIn/GaN HEMT structure was grown on a 6-in n-type Si (111) substrate by metal-organic chemical vapor deposition (MOCVD). The epitaxial structures, from bottom to top, were as follows: a 0.3- $\mu m$  AlN, a 1- $\mu m$  step-graded AlGaIn, a 2.5- $\mu m$  carbon-doped GaN, a 0.5- $\mu m$  unintentionally doped GaN channel layer, a 1-nm AlN spacer layer, a 20-nm  $Al_{0.25}Ga_{0.75}N$  barrier layer, and a 5-nm in-situ  $SiN_x$  cap. Hall measurement conducted at room temperature revealed a 2-D electron gas (2DEG) density of  $1.05 \times 10^{13} cm^{-2}$  and an electron mobility of  $1730 cm^2/V \cdot s$  [16]. The source/drain ohmic metallization was formed before depositing 100-nm  $SiN_x$  passivation layer using plasma-enhanced chemical vapor deposition (PECVD). This PECVD  $SiN_x$  layer grown on in-situ  $SiN_x$  was used as an additional passivation layer to suppress current collapse [19]. Next, mesa isolation was performed through argon ion implantation. Using a low-power (20 W)  $SF_6$ -based inductively coupled plasma dry etch, the gate region was exposed by removing both the PECVD and the in-situ  $SiN_x$ . Tetrakis (ethylmethylamino) zirconium and  $H_2O$  vapor were used as precursors in the ALD process to

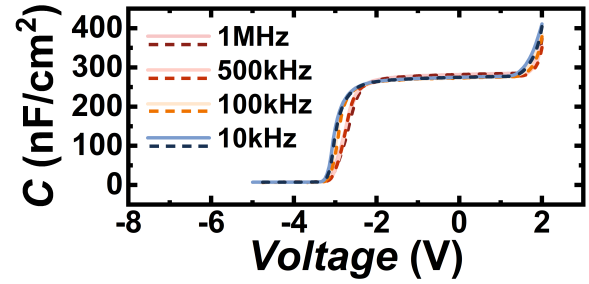


Fig. 2. Double sweep  $C$ - $V$  characteristics of GaN MOSHEMTs at different frequencies. Dashed line represents the down-sweep measurements.

deposit a 28-nm  $ZrO_2$  dielectric at 200 °C after cleaning the barrier surface with a diluted HCl solution ( $HCl:H_2O = 1:3$ ). Subsequently, Ni/Au-based gate metal was formed and another 300-nm PECVD  $SiN_x$  was grown as a final passivation layer. The second passivation layer was used to passivate the  $ZrO_2$  dielectric layer, decreasing the surface traps and enhancing the drain breakdown voltage. Finally, the regions in  $SiN_x$  at source/drain areas were etched prior to the deposition of the Al-based pad metal. The device in this article featured a gate length  $L_g$ , a gate-source distance  $L_{gs}$ , a gate-drain distance  $L_{gd}$ , and a gate width  $W_g$  of 2, 3, 20, and 200  $\mu m$ , respectively.

## III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Fig. 1(b) illustrated the transfer characteristics of GaN MOSHEMT with a  $ZrO_2$  dielectric layer. The threshold voltage, defined at a drain current of 1 mA/mm, was extracted to be  $-3.0$  V from the transfer curves. The ON/OFF current ratio of  $10^{10}$  and subthreshold swing of 90 mV/decade were achieved for the MOSHEMTs [inset in Fig. 1(b)], indicating outstanding charge modulation of MOS gate structures. The device featured a peak transconductance of 106.75 mS/mm with  $V_{ds} = 6$  V, as depicted in Fig. 1(c). Fig. 1(d) displayed the  $I_{gs} - V_{gs}$  characteristic, where the leakage remained below  $0.5 \mu A/mm$  until  $V_{gs}$  reaches 8.65 V, and the device exhibited a low gate leakage of 4 pA/mm at  $-10$  V [inset in Fig. 1(d)]. Fig. 1(e) showed the output characteristics, where maximum drain current density of 390.2 mA/mm was obtained at  $V_{gs} = 1.5$  V. Extracted  $R_{ON}$  of the device was  $14 \Omega \cdot mm$  at  $V_{gs} = 1.5$  V. Fig. 1(f) showed the OFF-state breakdown characteristics. The highest drain breakdown voltage of the device exceeds 500 V, as defined at the leakage current of  $10 \mu A/mm$ . The OFF-state  $I_{gs}$  leakage current was four orders of magnitude lower than the  $I_{ds}$  leakage current at  $V_{ds} = 500$  V, confirming the excellent current blocking capability of the MOS gate [inset in Fig. 1(f)].

Fig. 2 showed the double sweep capacitance-voltage ( $C$ - $V$ ) curves measured on a MOSCAP (MOS capacitor) with a diameter of 200  $\mu m$  at various frequencies ranging from 50 kHz to 1 MHz. As increasing voltage bias, the  $C$ - $V$  curves exhibited two distinct rising steps. The gate voltage at the first rising step corresponded to the 2DEG formation, and the second rising step was associated with the spill-over of electrons from the 2DEG channel to the barrier surface. In addition, the  $C$ - $V$  curves exhibited a sharp transition from the deep depletion to accumulation and a small hysteresis of 50 mV, indicating high quality of the  $ZrO_2$  dielectric film and low trap density at the interface between  $ZrO_2$  and AlGaIn barrier layer.

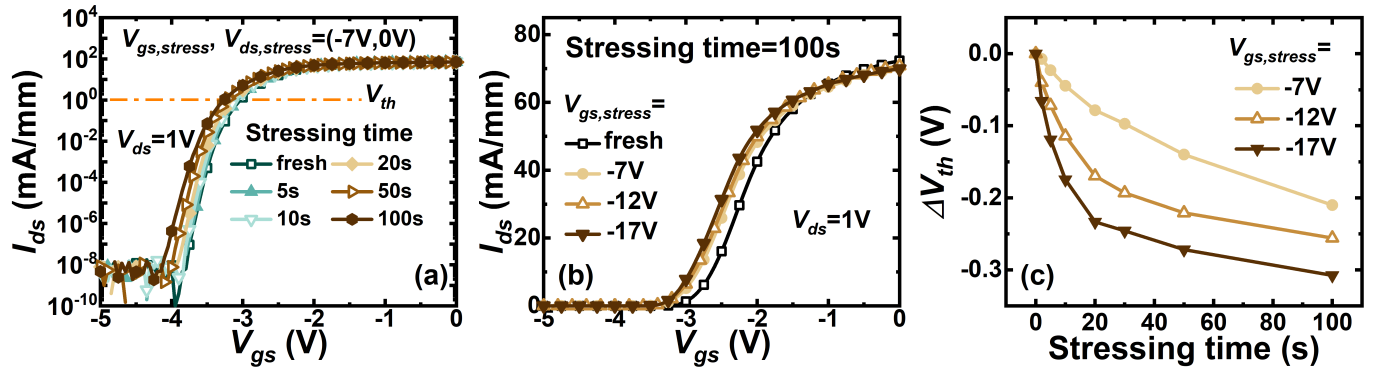


Fig. 3. (a) NBTI measurements with different stressing durations for  $V_{gs, stress} = -7$  V. (b) Transfer curves with different reverse gate bias for stressing time 100 s. (c) Variation of  $V_{th}$  as a function of stressing time.

TABLE I

COMPARISON OF NEGATIVE  $V_{th}$  SHIFT AMPLITUDE BETWEEN THIS WORK AND OTHER GAN MOSHEMTS

Ref.	Dielectric	$ V_{gs, stress} - V_{th} $	$ \Delta V_{th} $
This work	28-nm $ZrO_2$	14 V	0.31 V
[11]	20-nm $Al_2O_3$	8 V	1.00 V
[27]	47-nm <i>in-situ</i> $SiN_x$	15 V	2.03 V
[26]	30-nm $Al_2O_3$	6 V	0.20 V
[28]	30-nm <i>in situ</i> $SiN_x$	6 V	0.20 V

Fig. 3 depicted the negative bias-induced threshold-voltage instability (NBTI) measurement results with different stressing durations for a fixed OFF-state voltage. As shown in Fig. 3(a), an OFF-state stressing of  $-7$  V ( $V_{gs, stress} = -7$  V) induced a negative shift in the threshold voltage of the device. A small  $\Delta V_{th}$  of  $-0.21$  V was observed as the stressing time was extended to 100 s. Fig. 3(b) illustrated the results of transfer curves upon different OFF-state stressing bias voltages for 100 s. When the device was subjected to a higher gate stressing voltage of  $-12$  V, a larger negative shift of  $-0.26$  V was noticed. Fig. 3(c) summarized the variation of  $V_{th}$  as a function of stressing time. After the device was subjected to a harsh stress condition ( $V_{gs, stress} = -17$  V) for 100 s, a  $-0.31$ -V shift in  $V_{th}$  was measured. In previous literatures, positive  $V_{th}$  shift has been extensively observed and attributed to electron trapping in traps at barrier/insulator interface or in oxide layer [7], [20], [21], [22]. Only a few studies reported negative  $V_{th}$  shift in GaN MOS or MIS structures [23], [24], [25], [26], [27]. Table I illustrated the comparison of negative shift in  $V_{th}$  between this work and GaN MISHEMTs with some other representative dielectrics. A gate-first devices showed a  $V_{th}$  shift of  $-2.03$  V after stressing at an OFF-state bias of  $-30$  V [27]. Devices with other dielectrics (including 30-nm  $Al_2O_3$  [26] and 30-nm *in-situ*  $SiN_x$  [28]) achieved the  $V_{th}$  shift of 0.2 V with moderate OFF-state stressing ( $|V_{gs, stress} - V_{th}| < 10$  V). In this work, a 28-nm  $ZrO_2$  dielectric helped achieve a small  $\Delta V_{th}$  of  $-0.31$  V for a relatively larger OFF-state stressing  $|V_{gs, stress} - V_{th}| = 14$  V. These results indicated that this device has good threshold voltage stability with a relatively large gate OFF-state stress.

The negative shift of  $V_{th}$  was attributed to the emission of electrons from traps in the gate dielectric and/or at the insulator/AlGaN interface [23]. When zero bias was applied

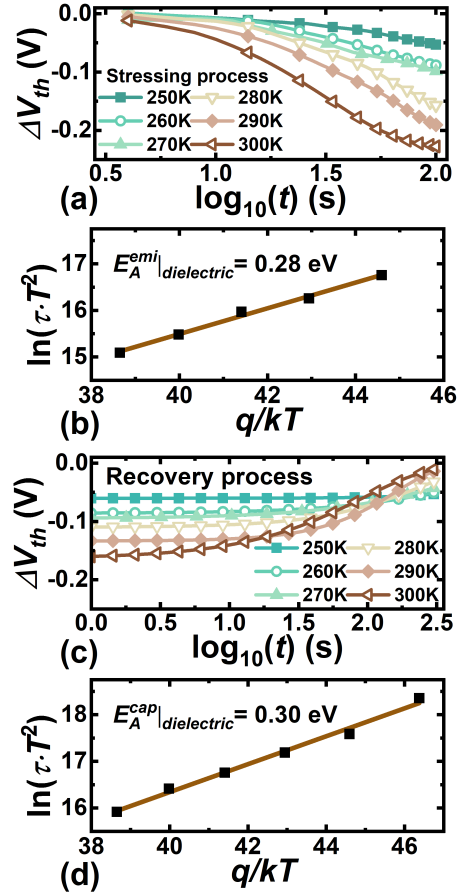


Fig. 4. (a) Measured  $\Delta V_{th}$  transient spectroscopy for stressing process [ $V_{gs, stress}, V_{ds, stress} = (-7$  V, 0 V)] and (c) corresponding recovery process from 250 to 300 K. Arrhenius plot of (b) stressing and (d) recovery process.

to the device, trap states below the Fermi level were filled with electrons. These electrons depleted the 2DEG in the channel, which restrained the drain current of the device during the ON-state. However, when an OFF-state stressing voltage ( $V_{gs, stress} < V_{th}$ ) was applied to the device, the electrons were emitted from trap states with energies above the Fermi level. The emission of electrons led to a negative  $V_{th}$  shift. The magnitude of  $V_{gs, stress}$  and the duration of stressing also modulated the extent of  $V_{th}$  shift. With a longer stressing time and a larger  $V_{gs, stress}$ , a relatively larger  $V_{th}$  shift would be observed



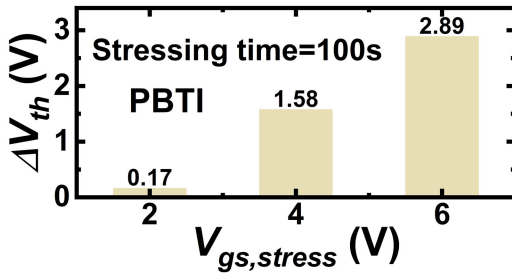


Fig. 5. Variation in  $V_{th}$  during PBTI experiments with different positive bias stress conditions.

[Fig. 3(c)]. In a separate deep-level transient spectroscopy (DLTS) measurement on a MOSCAP, the transient capacitance also displayed the emission process of traps, confirming the occurrence of electron emission when the device was subjected to an OFF-state stressing.

The  $\Delta V_{th}$  transient spectrum was employed to extract activation energy of trap states related to the negative shift of  $V_{th}$ , as shown in Fig. 4. Fig. 4(a) illustrated the time-resolved stressing process of  $V_{th}$  at different temperatures. A moderate stress condition ( $V_{gs, stress} = -7$  V) was selected to minimize the effects of transverse electric fields. During the stressing process, the device was periodically turned on to extract  $V_{th}$ . Each  $I_{ds}-V_{gs}$  measurements lasted for 30  $\mu$ s with the drain voltage being fixed at 1 V. When applying the OFF-state stressing voltage of  $-7$  V, the value of  $V_{th}$  became more negative. Meanwhile, the shifting amplitude of  $V_{th}$  was decreased as the temperature was reduced.  $\Delta V_{th}$  transient followed a stretched exponential trend [ $\sim \exp(-t/\tau)^\beta$ ] and the time constant ( $\tau$ ) of  $\Delta V_{th}$  transient could be determined [23]. The coefficient  $\beta$  quantified the degree of deviation between the stretched exponential function and the ideal behavior. When the temperature decreased, a larger time constant was observed. After extracting time constants at different temperatures, the activation energy of traps can be obtained through the construction of the Arrhenius plot. The Arrhenius law takes the following form [29]:

$$\ln\left(\frac{T^2}{e_n}\right) = \frac{E_a}{k_B T} - \ln(\sigma_n \gamma) \quad (1)$$

where  $e_n$  is the emission rate,  $\sigma_n$  is the apparent cross section,  $\gamma_n$  is a material-dependent constant,  $T$  is the temperature,  $E_a$  is the activation energy, and  $k_B$  is the Boltzmann constant. As shown in Fig. 4(b), an emission activation energy  $E_A^{eml}|_{dielectric}$  of 0.28 eV was extracted by fitting the Arrhenius plots [29]. During the recovery process,  $V_{th}$  would gradually recover to the initial state [Fig. 4(c)]. After a natural recovery for 300 s, the threshold voltage of the device almost completely restored at 300 K. As temperature decreased, it took a longer recovery time for the device to return to the initial value of  $V_{th}$ . The device scarcely recovered during the recovery process for 300 s at 250 K. The recovery of the device was caused by the recapture of electrons by unfilled traps. Similarly, a capture activation energy  $E_A^{cap}|_{dielectric}$  of 0.30 eV was extracted for the traps in the gate region, as shown in Fig. 4(d).

Fig. 5 showed  $\Delta V_{th}$  as a function of positive  $V_{gs, stress}$  for a stressing time of 100 s in positive bias-induced threshold voltage instability (PBTI) experiment. When the device was subjected to a  $V_{gs, stress}$  of 2 V for 100 s, a minor positive shift of 0.17 V was observed. With the increase of  $V_{gs, stress}$ , the offset of the threshold voltage rapidly reached 1.58 V. When a

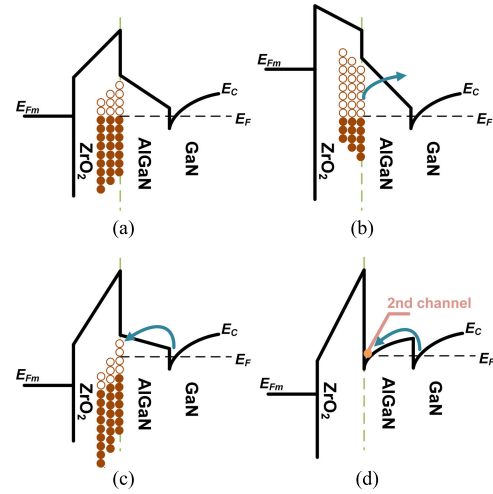


Fig. 6. Band diagram of the  $ZrO_2/AlGaIn/GaN$  MIS structure with (a) initial state, (b) negative  $V_{gs, stress}$ , (c) positive  $V_{gs, stress}$ , and (d) overdrive  $V_{gs, stress}$ .

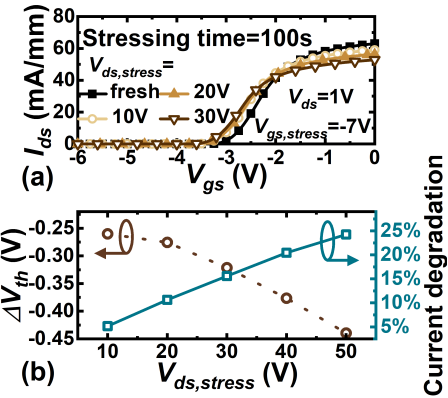


Fig. 7. (a) Transfer characteristics of the GaN MOSHEMT after various  $V_{ds, stress}$  values for 100 s. (b) Variation of  $V_{th}$  and  $I_{ds}$  as a function of  $V_{ds, stress}$  from the transfer curve of (a).

higher overdrive voltage was employed, the threshold voltage shifted to  $-0.1$  V ( $\Delta V_{th} = 2.9$  V) for a stressing time of 100 s. As further increasing  $V_{gs, stress}$  or the stressing time, the threshold voltage of the device would even exceed 0 V. Unlike zero bias (initial state) and negative  $V_{gs, stress}$  [Fig. 6(a) and (b)], the positive shift of  $V_{th}$  was related to electron capture from traps at the gate dielectric and/or insulator/AlGaIn interface, when the device was subjected to a low positive gate stressing voltage ( $V_{gs, stress} < 2$  V), as shown in Fig. 6(c). When the positive gate stressing voltage exceeded the spill-over voltage ( $V_{gs, stress} > 2$  V), the electrons from the 2DEG flowed through the AlGaIn barrier to the  $ZrO_2/AlGaIn$  interface, forming a second channel and resulting in a large threshold voltage shift [Fig. 6(d)].

Fig. 7 showed the results of drain voltage-induced threshold voltage instabilities in GaN MOSHEMT with a  $ZrO_2$  dielectric layer. Fig. 7(a) displayed the transfer curve of device, which was subjected to different  $V_{ds, stress}$ , with  $V_{gs, stress}$  fixed at  $-7$  V and a stressing time of 100 s. A simultaneous negative shift of  $V_{th}$  and reduction of drain current (at  $V_{gs} = 0$  V) were observed. With the same  $V_{gs, stress}$ , a greater extent of  $V_{th}$  shift and a lower drain current (at  $V_{gs} = 0$  V) were obtained as  $V_{ds, stress}$  was strengthened. Fig. 7(b) illustrated  $\Delta V_{th}$  and current ratio as a function of  $V_{ds, stress}$ . Compared with the results in the case of  $V_{ds, stress} = 0$  V, a drain stressing voltage

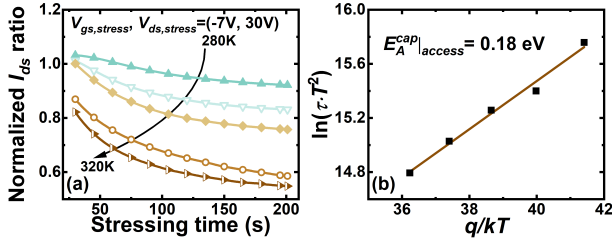


Fig. 8. (a) Normalized DCT spectroscopy with stressing process [ $V_{gs, stress} = -7$  V,  $V_{ds, stress} = 30$  V] from 280 to 320 K. (b) Extracted activation energy in the access region of the device.

of 10 V for 100 s resulted in a  $V_{th}$  shift to the value of  $-0.26$  V. The amount of  $V_{th}$  shift was further enlarged as biasing a higher  $V_{ds, stress}$ . When  $V_{ds, stress}$  was enhanced to 50 V,  $\Delta V_{th}$  was extracted to  $-0.45$  V for 100 s. Additionally, the decrease of drain current extracted at  $V_{gs} = 0$  V and  $V_{ds} = 1$  V was summarized. The current degradation ratio was defined to  $(1 - I_{ds}/I_{ds, fresh})$  at  $V_{gs} = 0$  V, where  $I_{ds, fresh}$  represents the drain current measured in the absence of stress. When the device was exposed to a  $V_{ds, stress}$  of 50 V for 100 s, a current degradation ratio of 25% was observed.

The observed negative  $V_{th}$  shift was attributed to the emission of electrons from traps in the gate area, with an extracted  $E_A^{emi}|_{dielectric}$  of 0.28 eV. When a drain voltage stress was applied, the release of electrons from traps was accelerated.  $\Delta V_{th}$  was enhanced as the drain voltage increases [Fig. 7(b)]. In addition, a reduction in drain current was observed when the device was exposed to a large  $V_{ds, stress}$  voltage [Fig. 7(a)]. This decrease in current was due to the capture of electrons by traps in the access region.

Temperature-related DCT spectroscopy was employed to explore trap properties related to the decreased  $I_{ds}$ . Fig. 8(a) displayed the normalized  $I_{ds}$  as a function of stressing time with different temperatures. The device was biased at the stressing condition of  $(V_{gs, stress}, V_{ds, stress}) = (-7$  V, 30 V) for an extended period of 200 s and a relatively short sampling time of 3 ms was selected. When the device was switched to ON-state,  $I_{ds}$  was measured in the saturation region of output curves ( $V_{gs} = -1$  V and  $V_{ds} = 5$  V). The normalized  $I_{ds}$  was defined as  $(I_{ds, dynamic}/I_{ds, static})$ , where  $I_{ds, static}$  was measured in the nonstressed fresh state [ $(V_{gs, stress}, V_{ds, stress}) = (0$  V, 0 V)]. With extending the stressing time, the normalized  $I_{ds}$  decreased due to the electrons was captured by trap states in the access region. The decrease of  $I_{ds}$  was thermally accelerated, and electrons were more likely to be injected into access region at a relatively higher temperature. Fig. 8(b) showed an Arrhenius plot of time constants during stressing process, and a capture activation energy  $E_A^{cap}|_{access}$  of 0.18 eV for trap states related to the access region was extracted. This energy was in consistence with previously reported activation energy of SiN<sub>x</sub> thin films [30], [31].

Fig. 9(a) showed the dynamic  $R_{ON}$  ratio with OFF-state drain stressing bias ranging from 10 to 50 V. The dynamic  $R_{ON}$  ratio was defined as  $(R_{ON, d}/R_{ON, s})$ , where  $R_{ON, s}$  was measured in the nonstressed fresh state [ $(V_{gs, stress}, V_{ds, stress}) = (0$  V, 0 V)].  $R_{ON}$  was extracted in the linear region of output curve, and the measurement voltage of the device was  $V_{gs} = -0.5$  V and  $V_{ds} = 1$  V. When merely an OFF-state stressing bias of  $-7$  V was applied to the device,  $R_{ON}$  remained almost unchanged, indicating gate stressing voltage only would not affect  $R_{ON}$ . In the case of  $(V_{gs, stress}, V_{ds, stress}) = (-7$  V, 10 V), the dynamic  $R_{ON}$  remained as low as 1.09 for a stressing time

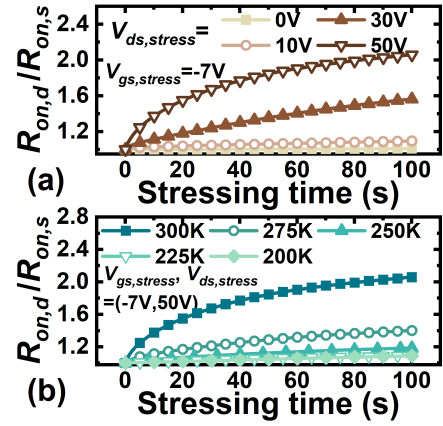


Fig. 9. (a) Variation of  $R_{ON}$  as a function of stressing time with various  $V_{ds, stress}$  values. (b) Variation of  $R_{ON}$  with different temperatures at  $(V_{gs, stress}, V_{ds, stress}) = (-7$  V, 50 V).

of 100 s. When the drain stressing voltage was increased to 30 V, a significant increase in  $R_{ON}$  was observed. The dynamic  $R_{ON}$  ratio deteriorated to 2.05 with a larger  $V_{ds, stress}$  of 50 V for 100 s. In recent literatures, dynamic  $R_{ON}$  ratio of a recessed MISHEMT was increased to 1.6 at  $V_{ds, stress} = 10$  V for 60 s [32]. A MOSHEMT with a 4-nm-thick ZrO<sub>2</sub> dielectric layer exhibited a normalized dynamic  $R_{ON}$  of 5 for a  $V_{ds, stress} = 50$  V and duty cycle of 10% [33]. A recessed MISHEMT with a relatively thick LPCVD Si<sub>3</sub>N<sub>4</sub> mask effectively suppressed dynamic  $R_{ON}$  to 1.2 ( $V_{ds, stress} = 60$  V) [13]. In this work, a low dynamic  $R_{ON}$  ratio of 2.05 has been observed when the device was exposed to a relatively large OFF-state drain stressing ( $V_{ds, stress} = 50$  V) and a long stressing time (100 s). The results demonstrated that thin and high-quality in-situ SiN<sub>x</sub> layers represent a promising solution to achieve a low dynamic  $R_{ON}$  ratio.

Fig. 9(b) showed the dynamic  $R_{ON}$  as a function of stressing time with different temperatures. At 275 K, the degradation of the dynamic  $R_{ON}$  ratio was restrained to 1.39. The dynamic  $R_{ON}$  ratio further decreased as the device temperature was lowered. When the temperature was decreased to 225 K, the  $R_{ON}$  ratio reached 1.1 for a stressing time of 100 s. The variation of  $R_{ON}$  was related to the capture of electrons in the access region (in-situ SiN<sub>x</sub>) of the device. The decrease of temperature inhibited the capture capability of traps and suppressed the increase of dynamic  $R_{ON}$ . The capture of electrons was accelerated with a higher temperature and a larger  $V_{gs, stress}$ , and thus, an increase in  $R_{ON}$  would be observed. This phenomenon was consistent with capture process revealed in GaN MISHEMT with an in-situ SiN<sub>x</sub> dielectric layer [7].

#### IV. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the OFF-state stress-induced threshold voltage instability and dynamic  $R_{ON}$  of GaN MOS-HEMTs with ZrO<sub>2</sub> gate dielectric were investigated. The negative  $V_{th}$  shift during NBTI experiments was recorded and was attributed to electron emission in the gate area. The threshold voltage was shifted by  $-0.31$  V when an OFF-state stressing ( $|V_{gs, stress} - V_{th}|$ ) of 14 V was applied for 100 s. Temperature-dependent threshold voltage transient spectroscopy revealed an emission activation energy  $E_A^{emi}|_{dielectric}$  of 0.28 eV and a capture activation energy  $E_A^{cap}|_{dielectric}$  of 0.30 eV related to threshold voltage shift. The  $V_{th}$  shift during PBTI experiments was also discussed. A much larger positive shift in  $V_{th}$  was observed when the device was

biased to overdrive voltage. In addition to the shift of threshold voltage, the decrease of drain current was found when the device was exposed to an OFF-state drain stressing. This degradation in drain current was attributed to electron trapping at the access region, which contributed to the increase of  $R_{ON}$ . The time-resolved  $R_{ON}$  displayed the  $R_{ON}$  increased with stressing time under higher drain stressing condition. DCT measurement also revealed an activation energy  $E_A^{cap}|_{access}$  of 0.18 eV in connection with the  $R_{ON}$  degradation. These results indicate that GaN MOSHEMT with  $ZrO_2$  gate dielectric is a promising technology for high-power switching applications.

### ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The authors would like to thank ShanghaiTech Quantum Device Lab (SQDL) for providing technical support.

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