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Intraband absorption of electromagnetic radiation by electrons with optical phonon participation in quantum dot superlattices Guseyn B. Ibragimov, Raida Z. Ibayeva

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Abstract: In this paper, we investigate the absorption of electromagnetic radiation by a free electron gas interacting with lattice vibrations in a quantum dot superlattice. It is assumed that the electron gas in the quantum dot superlattice is limited by the anisotropic parabolic potential. The absorption of light by free carriers with the participation of phonons is calculated in the second order of the perturbation theory. When calculating the absorption coefficient, the matrix elements of the electron-photon and electron-phonon interactions (with polar and nonpolar optical phonons) are used. We can expect three possible transitions in the absorption coefficient for electron- polar phonon scattering: (1) a transition due to the size subband levels for only the x direction, (2) a transition due to the size subband levels for both the x direction and the y direction. For electron- nonpolar phonon scattering we can expect only one possible transitions in the, the absorption coefficient: a transition due to the size subband levels for both the x direction and the y direction.

Keywords: quantum dot, superlattice, miniband, intraband absorption

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1. INTRODUCTION

Advances in methods for growing crystals with sizes close to the interatomic distance, such as molecular beam epitaxy and metal-organic vapor deposition, have made it possible to obtain such low-dimensional systems as quantum wells, superlattices, quantum dots, etc. Since the beginning of the pioneering work of Esaki and Tsu [1], a large amount of research has been devoted to semiconductor superlattices due to their transport properties and their application in electronic devices such as generators, tunnel diodes, hot electron transistors, and optoelectronic devices [2,3]. Modern nanotechnology makes it possible to manufacture quantum dots of various shapes, which are successfully used in various devices, quantum cascade lasers based on quantum dot superlattices [1–3]. Such systems have a significantly higher performance compared to existing quantum cascade lasers based on quantum well superlattices [4]. Superlattices of quantum dots attract the attention of researchers also due to their unusual optical and optoelectronic properties, which can be used to develop new optoelectronic devices [5-13].

It is well known that the electron-phonon interaction is an important factor affecting the physical properties of polar crystals, such as the binding energy of impurities, charge transfer, linear and nonlinear optical properties, especially in lowdimensional quantum systems [14,15].

In this paper, we develop a theory of light absorption by free carriers in a superlattice of quantum dots with an anisotropic parabolic potential upon scattering of carriers by polar and nonpolar optical phonons.

In bulk semiconductors, a quantum mechanical theory of light absorption by free carriers using the second-order perturbation theory was given by Dumke [16]. Later, it was studied in detail for acoustic phonons (through the deformation potential and piezoelectric coupling), non-polar and polar optical phonons, and impurities in bulk semiconductors [17]. These studies have shown a different powerlaw dependence of the absorption coefficient on wavelength to radiation for different scattering mechanisms. Moreover, these power laws differ from the classical dependence of the absorption coefficient. The absorption of light by free carriers in the scattering of electrons by phonons has been theoretically investigated in semiconductor quantum wells and wires [18-28] and in quantum dots [29,30].

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

It is known that the motion of an electron in a superlattice is limited and its energy spectrum is quantized. It is assumed that the quantization takes place in the z-direction. The electron-phonon interaction in a quantum dot superlattice with a periodic potential U(z) of period d along the z-direction of the form [31] is considered:

$$H = G_{GAPL}(v') = \operatorname{Concat}_{j=1}^{O'} \left(\frac{1}{B} \sum_{a=1}^{B} v_a^{'} \right) \in \mathbb{R}^{h \times O'}.$$
 (1)

where m^* is the effective mass and ω_x , ω_y are the confinement frequencies in the *x*- and *y*-directions, respectively. In the strong-coupling approximation, the Hamiltonian for charge carriers in a quantum dot superlattice can be written as [8,9]:

$$H = \frac{(p_x^2 + p_y^2)}{2m^*} + \frac{m^*}{2}(\omega_x^2 x^2 + \omega_y^2 y^2) + \frac{\Delta}{2}(1 - \cos\frac{p_z d}{\hbar}), \quad (2)$$

where Δ is the miniband width. The normalized eigenwave functions of the electron $\Psi_{n,e,k_z}(r)$ and the eigenvalues of the energy $E_{n,l}(k_z)$ in the conduction band are set, respectively, in the form [10]:

$$\Psi_{n,l,k_z}(r) = \frac{1}{\sqrt{L_z}} \Psi_n(x) \Psi_l(y) \xi_{k_z}(z),$$
(3)

$$E_{n,l}(k_z) = (n + \frac{1}{2})\hbar\omega_x + (l + \frac{1}{2})\hbar\omega_y +$$

$$+ \frac{\Delta}{2}(1 - \cos k_z d) = \varepsilon_{n,l} + \varepsilon(k_z),$$
(4)

where n = 0, 1, 2, ... and l = 0, 1, 2, ... are the level indices of the electronic subbands, k_z is the component of the wave vector in the z-direction, $\Psi_n(x) = \sqrt{1/\sqrt{\pi l_x 2^n n!}} \exp\left[-x^2/2l_x^2\right] H_n(x/l_x),$

$$\Psi_{l}(y) = \sqrt{1/\sqrt{\pi l_{y}} 2^{l} l!} \exp\left[-y^{2}/(2l_{-}^{2})\right] H_{l}(y/l_{-})$$

are the eigenwave functions of the harmonic oscillator, $H_n(x)$ is the Hermite polynomial, $l_x = \sqrt{\hbar/(m^*\omega_x)}, l_y = \sqrt{\hbar/(m^*\omega_y)}, \xi_{k_z}(z)$ is the Bloch function in the approximation of strong coupling in the z-direction, and L_z is the normalized length in the direction.

The absorption of light by free carriers with the participation of phonons is calculated in the second order of the perturbation theory. The absorption coefficient is determined by the well-known formula [20]:

$$\alpha = \frac{\varepsilon^{1/2}}{n_0 c} \sum_i W_i f_i, \tag{5}$$

where ε is the dielectric constant, n_0 is the number of photons in the radiation field, f_i is the distribution function of free current carriers, W_i is the transition probability, determined by the following expression:

$$W_{i} = \frac{2\pi}{\hbar} \sum_{fq} \left[\left| \left\langle f \left| M_{+} \right| i \right\rangle \right|^{2} \delta \left(E_{f} - E_{i} - \hbar \Omega - \hbar \omega_{q} \right) + \left| \left\langle f \left| M_{-} \right| i \right\rangle \right|^{2} \delta \left(E_{f} - E_{i} - \hbar \Omega + \hbar \omega_{q} \right) \right],$$
(6)

where E_i and E_f are the energies of the initial and final states of electrons, respectively, $\hbar\Omega$ is the photon energy, $\hbar\omega_q$ is the phonon energy, and $\langle f | M_{\pm} | i \rangle$ are the elements of the matrix of transition from the initial state to the final state for the interaction between electrons, phonons, and photons. Elements of the transition matrix can be represented as:

$$\left\langle f \left| M_{\pm} \right| i \right\rangle = \sum_{\alpha} \left(\frac{\left\langle f \left| H_{R} \right| \alpha \right\rangle \left\langle \alpha \left| V_{s} \right| i \right\rangle}{E_{i} - E_{\alpha} \mp \hbar \omega_{q}} + \frac{\left\langle f \left| V_{s} \right| \alpha \right\rangle \left\langle \alpha \left| H_{R} \right| i \right\rangle}{E_{i} - E_{\alpha} - \hbar \Omega} \right), \tag{7}$$

where *i*, α , *f* indices denote the initial, intermediate and final states of an electron with quantum numbers *k*, *n*, *l*, *H*_R is the operator of electron-photon interaction, V_s is the operator of electron-phonon interaction.

Substituting expressions for wave functions (3) into expressions (7) for matrix elements of electron-photon interaction, we obtain:

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$$\left\langle n'l'k_{z}'\right|H_{R}\left|nlk_{z}\right\rangle = \frac{e\Delta d\sin\left(k_{z}d\right)}{2\hbar} \left(\frac{2\pi\hbar n_{0}}{V\Omega\epsilon}\right)^{\frac{1}{2}} \delta_{nn'}\delta_{ll'}\delta_{kk_{z}}, \quad (8)$$

where V is the volume of the crystal, the radiation field is polarized along the z-direction, ε – is the vector of polarization.

The electron distribution function for a nondegenerate electron gas has the form:

$$f_0(E_{nlk_z}) = \frac{2n_{ld}de^{\frac{\Delta}{k_BT}}\sinh\left(\frac{h\omega_x}{2k_BT}\right)\sinh\left(\frac{\hbar\omega_y}{2k_BT}\right)}{M\left(\frac{1}{2},1,\frac{\Delta}{k_BT}\right)}\exp\left(-\frac{E_{nlk_z}}{k_BT}\right), \quad (9)$$

where n_{1D} is the number of electrons per unit length and M(a, c, x) is the confluent hypergeometric function [31]

$$M(a,c;x) = \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} \frac{(a)_n x_n}{(c)_n n!}.$$
 (10)

The matrix element of the electron-phonon interaction has the following form:

$$\left|\left\langle k_{z}^{\prime}n^{\prime}l^{\prime}\right|V_{s}\left|k_{z}nl\right\rangle\right|^{2}=C_{j}^{\prime2}J_{nn^{\prime}}\left(x\right)J_{ll^{\prime}}\left(y\right)I\left(q_{z}\right),\quad(11)$$

where V_s is the operator of the interaction energy of an electron with a phonon, C_j is a function that characterizes the interaction between electrons and phonons,

$$J_{nn'}(q_x) = \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} e^{iq_x x} dx \Psi_n(x) \Psi_{n'}(x),$$

$$J_{ll'}(q_y) = \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} e^{iq_y y} dy \Psi_l(y) \Psi_{l'}(y),$$
 (12)

$$I(q_z) = \int_{0}^{d} \xi_{k_z}(z) \xi_{k'_k}(z) e^{iq_z z} dz,$$

For the interaction of an electron with polar optical phonons, we have:

$$\tilde{N}_{POL}^{2} = 2\pi e^{2} \hbar \omega_{0} \left\{ \frac{1}{\varepsilon_{\infty}} - \frac{1}{\varepsilon_{0}} \right\},$$

$$F_{POL} = \frac{N_{0}^{\pm}}{q^{2}}, \quad N_{0} = \left[\exp\left(\frac{\hbar \omega_{0}}{K_{B}T}\right) - 1 \right]^{-1},$$
(13)

where $N_0^- = N_0$, $N_0^+ = N_0 + 1$.

Here ε_{∞} and ε_0 are the high-frequency and static dielectric constants of the semiconductor, respectively. The phonon energy is taken $\hbar\omega_q = \hbar\omega_0$ = const

$$N_0 = \left[\exp\left(\frac{\hbar\omega_0}{K_B T}\right) - 1 \right]^{-1}, \ N_0^- = N_0, \ N_0^+ = N_0 + 1, \ (14)$$

where $N_0^-(N_0^+)$ describes the annihilation and creation of a phonon.

For the interaction of an electron with non-polar optical phonons

$$C_{np}^{2} = \frac{\hbar D}{2\rho\omega_{0}V}, \quad F_{np}(q) = N_{0}^{\pm}, \quad (15)$$

where D is the constant of the non-polar optical deformation potential.

Taking into account formulas (6) and (11) in (5) and summing over k'_z , for the absorption coefficient we obtain:

$$\begin{aligned} \alpha &= \left(\frac{\pi e \Delta d}{\hbar^2}\right)^2 \frac{1}{CV\Omega^3} e^{\frac{j}{2}} \times \\ &\times \sum_{n'e'} \sum_{q} \int_{abc} C_j^2 \left| I_{ae'}(q_x) \right|^2 \left| I_{ee'}(q_y) \right|^2 \left(\sin(k_z + q_z) d - \sin k_z d \right)^2 \times \\ &\times \left\{ N_0 \delta \left((n'-n) \hbar \omega_x + (e'-e) \hbar \omega_y + \frac{\Delta}{2} (\cos k_z d - \cos(k_z + q_z) d - \hbar \Omega + \hbar \omega_q) \right) + \\ &+ (N_0 + 1) \delta \left((n'-n) \hbar \omega_x + (l'-l) \hbar \omega_y + \frac{\Delta}{2} (\cos k_z d - \cos(k_z + q_z) d) - \hbar \Omega - \hbar \omega_q \right) \right\}. \end{aligned}$$

$$(16)$$

In formula (16), passing from summation over k_{z} and q to integration over k_{z} and q using the expression:

$$\sum_{q} \frac{V}{\left(2\pi\right)^3} \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \int_{-\pi/d}^{\pi/d} dq_x dq_y dq_z, \qquad (17)$$

$$\sum_{k_z} (\ldots) = \left(\frac{L_z}{2\pi}\right) \int_{-\pi/d}^{\pi/d} (\ldots), \tag{18}$$

and using the properties of the Dirac δ -function:

$$\delta\left[f(x)\right] = \sum_{i} \frac{\delta(x - x_{i})}{\left|f'(x_{i})\right|},$$
(19)

where x are simple zeros of the function f(x),

$$\int_{-\pi/d}^{\pi/d} dq_z f(q_z) \delta(q_z - a) = f(a).$$
⁽²⁰⁾

for the absorption coefficient for scattering by polar and non-polar optical phonons, we obtain:

$$\begin{aligned} \alpha_{pol} &= \frac{4\pi e^{4} \Delta d \omega_{0} L_{z}}{c \Omega^{3} e^{\frac{1}{2}} \hbar^{3}} \left(\frac{1}{\varepsilon_{\infty}} - \frac{1}{\varepsilon_{0}} \right) \times \\ &\times \sum_{n'e'} \sum_{ne} \sum_{\pm} \int_{-\pi/d}^{\pi/d} dk_{z} f_{nek_{z}} \left(N_{0} + \frac{1}{2} \pm \frac{1}{2} \right) \frac{\sqrt{1 - \frac{4}{\Delta^{2}} \theta_{\pm}^{2}} - \sin k_{z} d}{\sqrt{1 - \frac{4}{\Delta^{2}} \theta_{\pm}^{2}}} \times \end{aligned}$$

$$(21)$$

$$\times \int_{0}^{\infty} \int_{0}^{\infty} \frac{\left| I_{nn'}(q_{x}) \right|^{2} \left| I_{ee'}(q_{y}) \right|^{2}}{\left(q_{x}^{2} + q_{y}^{2} \right) + a_{\pm}^{2}} dq_{x} dq_{y},$$

$$\alpha_{n.pol} = \frac{D^2 e^2 \Delta d}{\pi c \rho \omega_0 \Omega^3 L_x L_y \in \frac{1}{2}} \times \\ \times \sum_{n'e'} \sum_{ne} \sum_{\pm} \int_{-\pi/d}^{\pi/d} dk_z f_{nek_z} \left(N_0 + \frac{1}{2} \pm \frac{1}{2} \right) \frac{\sqrt{1 - \frac{4}{\Delta^2} \Theta_{\pm}^2} - \sin k_z d}{\sqrt{1 - \frac{4}{\Delta^2} \Theta_{\pm}^2}} \times$$
(22)
$$\times \frac{1}{n'-n} \cdot \frac{1}{l'-l},$$

where

$$\Theta_{\pm}(k_{z}d) = (n'-n)\hbar\omega_{x} + (l'-l)\hbar\omega_{y} \pm \pm \hbar\omega_{0} + \hbar\Omega + \frac{\Delta}{2}\cos k_{z}d,$$

$$a_{\pm}^{2} = \frac{1}{d^{2}}\left(k_{z}d - \cos^{-1}\left(\frac{2}{\Delta}\Theta_{\pm}(k_{z}d)\right)\right)^{2},$$
(23)

When deriving formula (22), it was taken into

n

account that
$$\int_{0}^{\infty} \frac{\left|I_{nn'}(u)\right|^{2} du}{u} = \frac{1}{n'-1}$$

3. RESULTS

From expression (22) it is seen that the absorption coefficient diverges whenever the condition $1-4\Theta_i^2/\Delta^2 = 0$ is satisfied. In addition, from the fact that $1-4\Theta_i^2/\Delta^2 = 0$ are real and positive, we can obtain an energy range in which the absorption coefficient are allowed.

As follows from equations (21-22), peaks are observed at certain frequencies of the incident photon. The resonance behavior of the absorption coefficient for electron-phonon scattering appears for frequencies satisfying the relation

$$N\hbar\omega_x + P\hbar\omega_y \pm \hbar\omega_0 = \hbar\Omega, \qquad (24)$$

here
$$N = n' - n = 1, 2, 3, ..., and P = l' - l = 1, 2, 3,...$$

From Eq. (24), in the course of scattering events, the electrons in the subband levels specified by the level index n(l) can make transitions to one of the subband levels n'(l') by absorbing and/or emitting a photon of energy $\hbar\Omega$ during the absorption of a LO phonon of energy $\hbar\omega_0$.

Eq. (24) is the basic equation for the absorption coefficient spectral lineshape, which enable us to analyze resonant effects in semiconductors.

In **Fig. 1** α_+ dependence on $h\Omega$ for $h\omega_x = 0.03$ eV, and $h\omega_y = 0.02$ eV, 0.06 eV, 0.08 eV is given. **Fig. 2** is presented α_{+max} dependence on ω_y for $\Delta = 0.0024$ eV.



Fig. 2. a_{+max} dependence on ω_y at $\Delta = 0.0024$ eV. As seen, with increasing ω_y the α_+ maximum grows. The ω_y values, affecting the change of α_{+max} , as well as the frequency at which it is achieved $(b\Omega)$, shift towards small frequencies.

0.06

0,04

ω_y 0,08

4. CONCLUSION

0,02

In conclusion, we calculated free-carrier absorption of electromagnetic radiation with polar and nonpolar optical phonons. It should be noted that the summations of Eq. (21) over the size subband levels contain three types of contributions: (i) $n' \neq n$, l' = l, (ii) n' = n, $l' \neq l$, and (iii) $n' \neq n$, $l' \neq l$. From the selection rules, we can expect three possible transitions in the absorption coefficient for electron-polar phonon scattering: (1) a transition due to the size subband levels for only the *x*-direction, (2) a transition due to the size subband levels for only the *y*-direction and (3) a transition due to the size subband levels for both the x-direction and the y-direction.

From the Eq. (22) we can expect only one possible transitions in the, the absorption coefficient for electron-nonpolar phonon scattering: a transition due to the size subband levels for both the *x*-direction and the *y*-direction.

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