

Title Page

- Title of Research:

The relationship of microscopic material characteristics and physical behavior of quantum dots

- Key Researcher(s) involved in the Proposed Project:

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- Past AOARD or US government support:

None

Abstract:

The research collected and analyzed the composition, structure and microstructure information at microscopic scales for the self-organized InAs/GaAs quantum dots through development of proper characterization techniques. The relationship between the microscopic materials characteristics and physical behavior, including quantum effect and optical properties was explored. The InAs/GaAs thin films were prepared using MBE process.

Introduction:

Quantum dot lasers have gained increasingly interest due to higher differential gain, lower threshold current density and higher T_0 as compared to quantum well lasers. Quantum dots are grown in highly mismatched systems by following the Stranski-Krastanow mode, instead of the Frank-Van der Merwe mode in growing quantum wells. Upon completing the growth of a two-dimensional wetting thin layer, the strain is partially released via the formation of coherent three-dimensional islands. Quantum dots will form when, first, it is energetically favorable for the film to relax by forming three-dimensional islands rather than by forming misfit dislocations and, second, the strain energy relieved by forming islands exceeds the additional surface energy resulting from islanding. Heteroepitaxy in the Stranski-Krastanow growth mode is one of the promising routes for fabricating QDs, because this process is not only self-assembling but also avoids the drawbacks of the lithographic techniques.

The processing parameters used in the fabrication techniques either MBE or MOCVD will affect the island structure in size, shape, density, chemical composition,

Report Documentation Page				Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188	
Public reporting burden for the collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to a penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number.					
1. REPORT DATE 25 AUG 2006		2. REPORT TYPE FInal		3. DATES COVERED 21-04-2004 to 20-07-2005	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE The Relationship of Microscopic Material Characteristics & Physical Behavior of Quatum Dots				5a. CONTRACT NUMBER FA520904P0302	
				5b. GRANT NUMBER	
				5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
6. AUTHOR(S) Shan Torng				5d. PROJECT NUMBER	
				5e. TASK NUMBER	
				5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Chung-Shan Institute of Science & Technology,PO Box No. 90008-8-5 Lung-Tang,Tao-Yuan 325,Taiwan,TW,325				8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER N/A	
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) AOARD, UNIT 45002, APO, AP, 96337-5002				10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S) AOARD	
				11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S) AOARD-034054	
12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release; distribution unlimited					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES					
14. ABSTRACT This research collected and analyzed the composition, structure and microstructure information at microscopic scales for the self-organized InAs/GaAs quantum dots through development of proper characterization techniques.					
15. SUBJECT TERMS Nanotechnology, Quantum Dots					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT Same as Report (SAR)	18. NUMBER OF PAGES 3	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT unclassified	b. ABSTRACT unclassified	c. THIS PAGE unclassified			

lattice strain and surface diffusion and hence the associated optical properties. The correlation between the processing parameters and the structural characteristics becomes the key issue from the scientific viewpoint and should be well controlled. In the past decade, the main methods applied to investigate this issue include instrumentation techniques such as TEM, AFM, STM, XRD and SEM, and mathematical techniques such as modeling and simulation. The results acquired from the above techniques are verified each other. In addition, techniques such as PL, CL were then used to measure the opto-electronic properties for revealing the effects of processing on properties. The goal of this work was to focus on using several techniques in combination to explore the processing - structure - property relationship of the quantum dots infrared photodetector (QDIP) produced by MBE technique.

Approach:

The material used in the study was InAs/GaAs Single QDIP produced by MBE technique. Techniques involving TEM, SPM, SEM and PL were used for finding out the correlation between the structure characteristics of QDs and islands, properties and process parameters. The project was conducted by the following steps:

- A. We compared the uniformity of the QDs before and after the GaAs layer was modified.
- B. We compared the effects of different processing conditions like the growth temperature, the interruption time and the substrate orientation to the island size, shape, composition distribution and the lattice mismatch between the island structure and the surrounding matrix.
- C. We analyzed the relationships between the structure features and process parameters with the corresponding opto-electronic properties, such as wavelength vs. composition, wavelength vs. growth rate, island shape vs. peak intensity, growth rate vs. QD density, growth rate vs. island size, and the effect of capping layer, and so on.
- D. We used the analytical results for optimizing the process of QDIP.
- E. We wrote this report.

Proposed collaboration:

We will cooperate with the Section in charge of QDIP fabrication in CSIST for providing the required samples and close discussions.

Summary

This research correlated the structure factors such as the size, shape and chemical composition and the corresponding opto-electronic properties. Consequently, acquirement of the structure factors accurately by analytical techniques including TEM, AFM and STM became better understood. In addition, it was proven to be an effective method for the manufacturer to modify the process parameters by using these results. By performing this project, not only the relationship of process-structure-property of the InAs/GaAs system became clearer, but also the environment of both fabrication and analysis of quantum dot was completely constructed. The QDIP and other derivative devices will be expectable in the future.