Vapor Phase Epitaxial Growth of AlAs by Chloride Transport Method

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AlAs epitaxial layer was successfully grown by chloride VPE method for the first time. Al was supplied as a Metal Organic compound, i.e. DMAC -- Al(CH3)3Cl -- or TMA -- Al(CH3)3, with a carrier gas of He, and As was supplied by AsCl3/(He+H2) instead of AsH3. DMAC or TMA is mixed with AsCl3 at the source zone to produce aluminum chloride, and (AlCl3+AlClX) and As, are conveyed to the deposition zone. AlAs was deposited by introducing H2 into the deposition zone, whose temperature is the same as that of the source zone (700°C - 800°C). Only when the AsCl3/(DMAC or TMA) ratio was in a proper range (0.3-1.0), the AlAs was deposited. The growth rate of about 3um/hr was obtained for AsCl3/TMA=0.65.

$1$. Introduction

AlGaAs layers for production of LED or LD (laser diodes) are generally grown by LPE (Liquid Phase Epitaxy). But surface morphology and productivity are not necessarily good in LPE. Recently more sophisticated growth methods such as MOCVD (Metal Organic Chemical Vapor Deposition) or MBE (Molecular Beam Epitaxy) are being extensively developed. However, for practical applications, MOCVD and MBE have some disadvantages such as poor productivity, high running cost, and usage of highly poisonous gas.

On the other hand, for production of GaAs epitaxial layers for microwave GaAs FETs, chloride VPE (vapor phase epitaxy) is widely used. However, the biggest drawback of chloride VPE method was the fact that compound semiconductors containing AI could not be grown. Hydride VPE of AlAs has been tried by several people. Ettenberg et al. demonstrated the growth of AlAs by chloride VPE, but the growth temperature was about 1000°C, and AsH3 was used as a source of As.

Bachem and Heyen showed that AlGaAs layers could be grown by the hydride VPE method at lower temperatures such as 700°C-800°C, which are comparable to the growth temperature of GaAs). AlGa metal alloy was used as a source and was placed in an Alumina crucible. In order to get a fresh AlGa melt surface, the HCl/H2 gas was bubbled through the AlGa melt. Their results are significant, but poisonous AsH3 gas had to be used as the As source, and composition of Al could not be controlled well.

The purpose of this work is to investigate the possibility of growing AlAs or AlGaAs by chloride VPE method in a similar way to GaAs growth. A Metal Organic compound was adopted as the Al source and AsCl3 as the As source. The single flat temperature zone method, which has been developed by Seki et al., was used for the growth of AlAs.

Prior to the experiments, thermodynamic analysis was performed to find the possibility of AlAs chloride VPE by the flat temperature zone method. It was confirmed that AlAs can be deposited in the all temperature range calculated (700°C-800°C).

It was experimentally shown that AlAs can be grown by chloride VPE method similar to that of GaAs growth system, by selecting growth parameters and adopting a carbon coated quartz reactor. In this method, we do not need to use the poisonous AsH3. The V/III ratio was less than unity whereas it is 10-30 for MOCVD. The gas flow rate is also about 1/10 of that of MOCVD.

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2. Growth Apparatus and Methods

Figure 1 shows a schematic diagram of the reactor. It is essentially the same as the system used for growth of GaAs. There are two chambers in the source zone of the quartz reactor tube, but only one chamber was substantially used for the growth of AlAs. The second one is for Ga source for growth of AlGaAs in the future. The quartz reactor tube was coated with carbon by decomposing As(CH₃)₃ at 800°C. The DMAC and TMA were supplied by bubbling high purity He through the liquid of these materials, and reacted with the DMAC or TMA to produce AlCl₃ and AlCl.

Temperature of the deposition zone was maintained the same as that of the source zone (700°C-800°C). Deposition can be obtained by introducing H₂ gas from another independent path, since the aluminum chloride is reduced by the H₂. This is principle of the flat temperature zone method.

The growth conditions tried so far are as follows:

- Bubbler temperature: AsCl₃ temperature
  - DMAC: 13°C, (20°C) 5°C - 13°C
- Flow rates: He for DMAC or TMA --- 200cc/min
  - He + 1%H₂ for AsCl₃ --- 200cc/min
  - H₂ for by path --- 200cc/min
  - He for Ga chamber --- 200cc/min.

4. Results and Discussions

4.1 Growth rate against AsCl₃/TMA ratio

Figure 2 shows the growth rate vs V/III ratio for the case that Al is supplied by TMA. The growth temperature was 755°C. The growth was observed in the V/III ratio range of 0.53 < V/III < 1.0. When the DMAC was used as the Al source, the V/III ratio was 0.35 < V/III < 0.48 which was slightly smaller than that for TMA. This is probably due to the fact that the DMAC has Cl atom compared with TMA. The maximum growth rate of 3.2 μm/hr was obtained for TMA and AsCl₃ temperatures of 25°C and 20°C, respectively, (V/III = 0.65).

A cleaved surface of the grown layer observed by SEM is shown in Fig.3(a). The AlAs layer can be clearly observed without staining. The surface of the grown layer was mirror like as shown in Fig.3(b), when the V/III ratio was about 0.65 and the growth temperature was less than 750°C.
The reason why growth is obtained only for a certain range of V/III ratio is inferred as follows: When the partial pressure of AsCl₃ is too low, of course, the growth is not obtained. If all the Al is converted to AlCl₃, it is expected that the maximum growth rate is obtained when AsCl₃/DMAC = 0.66 or AsCl₃/TMA = 1, since the following reaction should occurs;

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Al(CH₃)₂Cl + (2/3)AsCl₃ + H₂} & \rightarrow \text{AlCl₃ + (1/6)As₄ + 2CH₄} \quad (1) \\
\text{Al(CH₃)₃ + AsCl₃ + (3/2)H₂} & \rightarrow \text{AlCl₃ + (1/4)As₄ + 3CH₄} \quad (2)
\end{align*}
\]

In the experiments, the maximum growth rates were obtained for AsCl₃/DMAC = 0.43 and AsCl₃/TMA = 0.65. These values are about 2/3 of the estimated values by the above reactions. The reason is not made clear yet, but one possibility is that the aluminum chloride is not only AlCl₃ but also AlCl and about 1/3 of the aluminum chloride produced at the source zone is AlCl. Therefore, the optimum V/III ratio decreases from the values estimated by Eqs.1 & 2.

If the AsCl₃ partial pressure becomes too high for forming (AlCl + AlCl₃), excess Cl atoms are conveyed to the deposition zone as HCl, and etch the GaAs substrate. Therefore, the etching rate increases quickly with increase of the AsCl₃ partial pressure.

4.2 Dependence on the growth temperature

Growth rate against inverse of absolute temperature is shown in Fig.4. The Al source is TMA and the bubbler temperatures of TMA and AsCl₃ were 25°C and 20°C, respectively. For temperature range less than 760°C, the growth rate decreases exponentially against the inverse of absolute temperature with increase of the temperature. This means that the growth is kinetically limited in this temperature range even for the AlAs growth as the case of GaAs growth by the flat temperature zone method⁶,⁷. The activation energy estimated from the gradient is 38 Kcal/mol, which is about 2/3 of that for GaAs growth with the same system⁷. The growth rate seems to saturate at the temperature range over 770°C, indicating that the growth is diffusion limited in this temperature range.

![Fig.4, Growth rate against inverse of absolute temperature. Al source is TMA. Bubbler temperatures are 25°C for TMA and 20°C for AsCl₃.](image)

4.3 Composition profile

An example of composition profile of the AlAs epitaxial layer measured by a sputtering Auger Electron Spectroscopy (AES) is shown in Fig.5. The values are not normalized in this figure. Since a GaAs capping layer is not grown, the surface of the epitaxial layer is oxidized, but the inside seems to be a perfect AlAs. At the interface, Al composition increases gradually over about 150 nm instead of an abrupt change. We have to investigate furthermore whether this is
inherent to this growth system or can be solved by changing the growth condition and the reactor tube shape. However, since InGaAsP laser diode can be grown by the hydride VPE by adopting a sophisticated reactor chamber\(^8\), the same abruptness and the same kind of thin layers should be obtained for AlGaAs layers grown by the Chloride VPE, once AlAs layer is proved to be grown by a chloridic transport method.

When the composition of AlAs layer is measured by the AES, a few % of oxygen is always detected, but this does not necessarily mean that the oxygen actually exists in the grown layer, because a few % of oxygen was detected even in established MBE grown AlAs. During the sputtering by Ar, the surface of AlAs layer is thought to be oxidized by residual oxygen gas in the measurement chamber.

4.4 Electrical properties of the grown layer

The Hall measurement was performed on an AlAs layer grown on a semi-insulating GaAs substrate by putting electrodes directly on the AlAs layer. The growth conditions and thickness are as follows: DMAC=13 C, AsCl\(_3\)=7°C, growth temperature = 785°C, thickness=2μm. Only one AlAs layer has been measured so far, but the results are as follows: Carrier density is 1.5x10\(^{15}\) cm\(^{-3}\), and mobility is 482 cm\(^2\)/V.sec. The mobility is high enough compared with the one (μ = 294 cm\(^2\)/V.sec ) reported so far on an epitaxial AlAs layer\(^2\), so the quality of the grown layer is thought to be reasonably good.

$5$. Summary

It was demonstrated that AlAs layer can be grown at relatively low temperatures (700°C-800°C) by Chloride VPE method without using poisonous AsH\(_3\) gas for the first time.

Al was supplied as DMAC --Al(CH\(_3\))\(_2\)Cl-- or TMA --Al(CH\(_3\))\(_3\)--, and As was as AsCl\(_3\). The growth was obtained for 0.35 < AsCl\(_3\)/DMAC < 0.48 and 0.53 < AsCl\(_3\)/TMA < 1.0. For a larger V/III ratio, gas etching occurred. The growth rate was 2 - 4 μm/min. Growth was kinetically limited when the growth temperature is less than 760°C, and the activation energy was 38 Kcal/mol. The surface was mirror like in this temperature range.

Fig.5, Composition profile of the AlAs layer measure by a sputtering AES.

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