High \( f_T \) 30nm In\(_{0.7}\)GaAs HEMT fabricated with SiO\(_2\)/SiN\(_x\) sidewall gate Process and BCB Planarization

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1. Introduction

InGaAs/InAlAs HEMT on InP substrate has shown the excellent frequency characteristics due to the enhanced electron mobility and the increased conduction band discontinuity (\( \Delta E_c \)) [1-2]. Recently, the device microwave characteristics have been improved by reducing the gate length (\( L_g \)) to nano-meter scale and adopting the highly strained In\(_{0.7}\)GaAs channel (\( x>0.53 \)) [3]. According to the Fujitsu group's work, \( f_T \) of 396GHz for the strained In\(_{0.7}\)GaAs channel HEMT with \( L_g \) of 50nm was reported [3].

In this work, the sidewall gate process was developed in order to overcome the lithography limitation. Through the sidewall process, initially defined line length could be lessened to half [4]. To fill the schottky gate metal effectively in narrow line opening with high aspect ratio above 3, the sputtered tungsten (W) was used instead of conventional E-beam evaporated metal. With the developed processes, 30nm In\(_{0.7}\)GaAs HEMT was fabricated and characterized.

2. 30nm Triple Gate Process

Figure 1 shows the over-all SEM photographs for the sidewall gate process in detail. Through dielectric re-deposition and dielectric etch-back, the final gate length (\( L_g \)) could be lessened by the dimension of the two side-wall spacers [4]. The obtained final gate length after the dielectric etch-back was 30nm.

The procedure for the fabrication of triple shaped gate structure is shown in figure 2. After the tungsten sputtering in the sidewall gate, 2\(^{nd}\) gate metal (Ti/Au) with 100nm thickness was evaporated and lifted off, and then unnecessary tungsten was removed by RIE. Finally, planarization using BCB dielectric with low dielectric constant (\( e_r \)) of 2.8 was carried out and 3\(^{rd}\) gate metal (Ti/Au) with 600nm thickness was evaporated and lifted off. Figure 3 shows the SEM photographs of the fabricated 30nm triple shaped gate structures.

3. Characterization of 30nm In\(_{0.7}\)GaAs HEMT's

Pseudomorphic InGaAs/InAlAs HEMT epitaxial layer was grown by a solid-source molecular beam epitaxy (MBE) on a 3 inch semi-insulating InP substrate. Strained 8nm In\(_{0.7}\)GaAs channel was adopted to enhance the carrier transport properties. The hall measurement results indicated a 2-DEG density of \( 3 \times 10^{12} \)cm\(^2\) with a low field Hall mobility of 10,300cm\(^2\)/V-sec at 300K.

Device fabrication begins with mesa isolation down to the InAlAs buffer layer by wet chemical etching. For S/D ohmic contact, Ni/Ge/Au(10/45/120nm) was evaporated, lifted off and alloyed at 320°C in H\(_2\) ambient. The measured ohmic contact resistance was as small as 0.035Ω-mm, which is acceptable for sub-50nm gate device. The sidewall gate process was applied to form 30nm gate opening, in which selective gate recess etching with succinic acid was done.

The fabricated devices were characterized through on-wafer measurements for DC and microwave performance analysis. The output I-V transfer curves were plotted in figure 4. The device was found to have \( V_{th} \) of -0.3V, \( I_{ds} \) of 180mA/mm, \( G_{mm\max} \) of 1.68S/mm and BV_{ge} of -4V. Up to the drain bias (\( V_d \)) of 1.3V, the device has showed little short channel effects such as the abnormal increase of \( G \) and the shift of \( V_{th} \) with drain bias. The small-signal S-parameters for 2x50μm device were measured using on-wafer probing and network analyzer (1~40GHz). Shown in figure 5 was the plot of \( H_2 \) versus the frequency for the device biased near peak \( G_{mm\max} \) region. Extrapolating \( H_2 \) to zero gain with -6dB/octave slope, the estimation of 421GHz was made for \( f_T \). We believe that these results demonstrated the excellent sub-50nm InGaAs HEMT with a little short channel effect.

4. Conclusions

We have fabricated 30nm In\(_{0.7}\)GaAs HEMT with triple shaped gate metal using sidewall process and BCB planarization. Fine lines such as 30nm could be obtained by dual SiO\(_2\)/SiN\(_x\) sidewall process and the triple shaped gate metal process assisted by BCB layer did provide the metal structure stability and small parasitics. The developed process was applied to fabricate 30nm InGaAs HEMTs, which led to \( G_{mm\max} \) of 1.68S/mm and \( f_T \) of 421GHz. We demonstrated that 30nm InGaAs HEMT's could be successfully fabricated through reproducible and damage-free sidewall process without the aid of state-of-the-art lithography machine.

Acknowledgements

This work was financially supported by the National Program for Tera-level Nano-devices of the Ministry of
Science & Technology as one of the 21-Century Frontier Programs. The authors would like to thank Dr. Jiak Jia at MBE Technology (Singapore) for the epitaxial growth.

References

Fig 1. SEM Photographs for 30nm SiO2/SiN X Sidewall Process

Fig 2. Procedure for BCB Assisted Triple Gate Process

Fig 3. SEM Photographs for Triple Gate Metal Process

Fig 4. DC characteristics of 30nm HEMT’s

Fig 5. Microwave Performance of 30nm HEMT’s