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碩士論文

具有奈米線通道的多晶矽薄膜電晶體之特性改善

Performance Enhancement in Thin-Film-Transistors with Poly-Si Nanowire Channels

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中華民國九十五年六月

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摘……要

在本論文中,我們研製一種新型奈米線薄膜電晶體,並使用兩種方法來降低在該新型奈米線薄膜電晶體的漏電流。第一種方法是在頂部的閘極與汲極交疊區域中,閘極與氧化層之間,加入一層額外的氮化矽,藉此降低閘極/氧化層交界處的電場強度,以有效減少閘引致汲極漏電流(GIDL)漏電流。第二種方法則是加入快速升溫退火製程來改善晶體的特性,藉此降低缺陷對漏電流的貢獻。由研究中結果來看,兩種方法均為有效。

此外,針對奈米線通道品質的改進,我們也使用金屬誘導側向結晶 (MILC)的方式來加以改善,並藉此大幅提昇奈米線薄膜電晶體的特性。 由電子顯微鏡分析的結果發現,沿著電晶體通道方向有大的針狀形的晶 體結構,使得通道有類似單晶體的結構與特性,因此元件的電特性包含 載子遷移率、次臨界擺幅等可得到明顯的改善。此外,在本研究中也比 較了不同位置的成核開口配置對元件特性的影響。



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Abstract

In this study, a novel nanowire (NW) transistor was fabricated and characterized. Two methods were explored to reduce leakage current of the newly-proposed nanowire devices. One is to insert a Si_3N_4 layer in between the gate oxide and gate in the top gate-to-drain overlap region to effectively reduce the strength of electrical field and thus the magnitude of the gate-induced drain leakage (GIDL). The other scheme is to apply an additional RTA step to improve the film quality. Both methods are shown to be effective in this regard.

MILC method was also employed to improve the channel film crystallinity and the characteristics of NW-TFTs. Transmission electron microscopy (TEM) characterization indicates that the needle-like grain with crystallization direction along the NW channel is

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resulted, and leads to a single-crystal-like structure as the lateral size of the grain approach to the NW dimensions. Electrical characteristics including carrier mobility and subthreshold swing were dramatically improved with this approach. The impact of seeding window arrangements were also explored in this study.



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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Overview of polycrystalline silicon thin film transistors

Thin film transistors (TFTs), which employ a thin semiconductor film on an insulating substrate as the active device channel, were first demonstrated in 1961 by Dr. Weimer of RCA [1-3]. In 1966, the first polycrystalline silicon TFT (poly-Si TFT) was fabricated by Fa et al. [4]. Since then, conduction mechanism, fabrication process and electrical properties of polycrystalline silicon films were extensively studied [5] [6]. Compared with amorphous silicon TFTs (a-Si TFTs), poly-Si TFTs have many advantages, such as superior carrier mobility, CMOS capability, and better device reliability [7]. The growth of interest in poly-Si TFTs has been stimulated by the rapid commercial development of active matrix-addressed flat-panel liquid-crystal displays (AMLCDs) and high performance EEPROMs [8-10].

Poly-Si material consists of silicon crystallites (grains). Between them, there are regions with high density of impurities, called grain boundaries. The detrimental effects of grain boundaries and in-grain defects on the poly-Si TFT performance have been investigated and are well recognized [11] [12]. The performance degradation of the devices arises from the presence of a high density of trapping states at the grain boundaries. Therefore the crystallization methods that govern the number and size of

grains are very important. Up to date, there are mainly several crystallization methods employed to transfer α -Si into poly-Si, including solid phase crystallization (SPC) [13], metal induced crystallization (MIC) [14] and excimer laser crystallization (ELC) [15]. Besides, it is well known that hydrogen passivation eliminates these traps and improves the performance of poly-Si TFTs [16] [17]. The effect of hydrogen passivation on trap states has been characterized by using field-effect analysis on poly-Si TFTs [18], and the correlations between trap-state density reduction and hydrogen diffusivity in a TFT structure have been reported.

Although poly-Si TFTs with relatively high on/off current ratio have been fabricated, their leakage current still imposes a severe limit on the duration of video information that can remain on a pixel before it needs to be refreshed. Some mechanisms for the leakage current of TFTs have been investigated, and two major mechanisms were proposed [19] [20]. One is related to the thermal emission while the other involves the band-to-band tunneling process. Furthermore, specific device structure may be susceptible to specific leakage current, such as GIDL-like leakage generated at the gate to drain overlap region [21]. Generally, the leakage current is strongly dependent on the number of defects presenting in poly-Si channel. Measuring the off-state current and estimating the associated activation energy are useful to identify the dominant mechanism.

1.2 Overview of nanowires

Minimization of silicon electronics is being actively pursued. One-dimensional structures, such as nanowires (NWs), have great potential for testing and understanding

fundamental concepts about the role of dimensionality and size in electrical properties, and could be the ideal building block for nanoelectronics because they can function both as the devices and interconnect wires that access them. Owing to the inherent high surface-to-volume ratio feature, NWs can suppress short-channel effects encountered in nano-scale MOSFETs [22] and provide high surface sensitivity for sensing devices. Many possible applications of Si NWs have been exploited, including nano CMOS, memory devices [23], NW TFTs [24], and biosensors [25]. The preparation of Si NWs could be categorized into two types, namely, top-down [23] and bottom-up [24][25]. Methods used to assemble and align the NWs prepared by "bottom-up" approach include electric-field-directed assembly [26], microfluidic channel [27] and Langmuir-Blodgett (LB) technique [28]. Electric field method is to arrange NWs by means of the interactive electric field between two parallel electrodes and the polarity of NWs. Although electric fields enable more control over assembly, this method is limited by electrostatic interference between nearby electrodes and requirement of extensive lithography to fabricate the electrodes. Microfluidic channel method is to align wires by flowing NWs suspension inside a poly (dimethylsiloxane) (PDMS) mold, and could obtain layer-by-layer assembly of multiple crossed NW arrays. However, the size of fluidic channels may limit alignment of NWs. LB method could assemble a large-area anisotropic NWs by a compression process, but it is restricted to preparation of one monolayer. Overall, for practical applications, more refinement is needed to improve the reproducibility and controllability of the above methods.

1.3 Metal induced lateral crystallization of

amorphous silicon

Metal induced crystallization (MIC) of amorphous silicon, amorphous germanium, or amorphous SiGe has been intensely investigated with either double layers of metal and the amorphous semiconducting material [29-31] or metal implanted into Si or Ge [32] [33]. Studies showed that MIC could dramatically decrease the temperature necessary for the crystallization of *a*-Si and *a*-Ge. For those metals forming eutectics with Si, it is believed that the dissolution of metal atoms in the *a*-Si may weaken the Si bonds and enhance the nucleation and growth of crystalline Si [32]. Tan *et al.* [33] further suggested that the breaking of the metastable metal-Si (or –Ge) bonds facilitated the local rearrangement of atoms required for crystallization. On the other hand, for those metals forming silicides with Si, such as Ni, it has been suggested that the formation of silicides with lattice constants close to that of Si is a necessary prerequisite for MIC. Though this seems to indicate epitaxial growth, the exact mechanism needs to be further clarified.

Furthermore, selective deposition of metal on *a*-Si thin films was utilized [34] [35]. In this method, MIC occurs in the region where Si is covered by metal, and then MIC continues and transfers to lateral crystallization in the region where Si is without metal coverage. The silicon region outside of the metal coverage can have larger grains because of its lateral crystallization. This approach is called metal induced lateral crystallization (MILC). The devices fabricated by MILC can obtain better electrical characteristics because of larger grains and the elimination of the major grain boundaries transverse to the current flow. Besides, MILC may be influenced by some factors including metal thickness, dopant type, and anneal temperature [36]. In addition, the MIC/MILC grain

boundaries and the MILC/MILC grain boundaries degrade the performance of devices [37-39], therefore an asymmetric MILC was proposed [40]. In this method, the crystallization of *a*-Si is restricted to grow from only one-side to avoid the MILC/MILC grain boundaries and isolate MIC/MILC grain boundaries from channel.

1.4 Thesis organization

In this thesis, we employ the structure developed previously by the ADT Lab., NCTU [41] to fabricate and characterize the NW devices. Two methods that will be detailed in the thesis are proposed to reduce the leakage current. In addition, we exploit the MILC process in order to enhance the device performance.

In Chapter 2, we briefly describe the device structure and the process flow. The leakage current mechanism is characterized and discussed in Chapter 3. In Chapter 4, we show and analyze the electrical characteristics of the devices fabricated by MILC. Finally, we summarize our conclusions and future work in Chapter 5.

Chapter 2 Device Fabrication and Measurement

In this study we adopt a simple method developed previously by the ADT Lab., NCTU [41], to fabricate TFTs with polysilicon nanowire channels. Two methods for reducing the leakage current are employed. One is to add an extra dielectric layer between the gate and drain to avoid GIDL generation. The other is to employ an additional RTA process to reduce the defects in the NW channels of the TFTs. Besides, we also employ MILC method to increase the on-current of our devices.

2.1 Device structure and process flow

Test devices were fabricated on 6-inch silicon wafers. First, silicon wafers were capped with an oxide layer. Then a 100nm-thick poly-Si gate layer (to serve as the gate electrode) and a 100nm-thick Si₃N₄ hard mask (HM) layer (to serve as the hard mask) were deposited sequentially. The Si₃N₄ and poly-Si layers were subsequently etched to form the gate stack. This was followed by the deposition of a 40nm-thick chemical vapor deposition (CVD) oxide layer serving as the gate dielectric. A 100nm-thick amorphous-Si layer was then deposited by a low-pressure chemical vapor deposition (LPCVD) system. Next, the devices were divided into two splits.

One of the splits was fabricated by SPC performed at 600 in N₂ ambient for 24 hours to transform the amorphous-Si into poly-Si (i.e., SPC split). Subsequently, source/drain (S/D) implant was performed by P⁺ implantation at 15 keV and 1×10⁻¹⁵ cm⁻². S/D photoresist patterns were then formed by a standard lithography step. A reactive plasma etch step was subsequently employed to remove the poly-Si layer in order to form the sidewall poly-Si nanowire channels. An RTA process performed at 900 for 30 s was then executed on some of the wafers in this split. All wafers from this split then received the deposition of a 200-nm thick passivation CVD oxide layer. Finally, the fabrication was completed after the formation of test pads using standard metallization steps.

The other split was fabricated by MILC (i.e., MILC split). Briefly, after the deposition of amorphous-Si, the S/D implantation was executed by implanting P⁺ at 15 keV and 1×10⁻¹⁵ cm⁻², and then the dry etch step was employed to form the sidewall poly-Si nanowire channels. Subsequently a 100nm-thick LPCVD oxide was deposited and then MILC windows were formed by a standard lithography step. Afterwards, a thin 5nm Ni film was deposited by physical vapor deposition (PVD), followed by an MILC annealing at 550 in N₂ ambient for 16 h to crystallize the amorphous-Si. The remaining Ni layer was then removed. The remaining process steps, including RTA, passivation oxide deposition, and metallization, were the same as those for the SPC samples in the other split.

The schematics of the control and modified TFTs are illustrated in Fig. 2-1(a) and Fig 2-1(b), respectively. The modified structure shown in Fig. 2-1(b) features a Si₃N₄ HM embedded between the gate and drain. Top view of the devices is shown in Fig. 2-2. Fig.

2-3 displays the definition of the nanowire thickness and width used in this study. An SEM picture of the device fabricated by SPC is shown in Fig. 2-4. The thickness and width of the device are 53nm and 47nm, respectively.

2.2 Electrical characterization and measurement setup

Electrical characterizations were performed using an HP 4156 system. In all measurements, temperature-regulated hot chucks were used to control the temperatures.

In this study, threshold voltage (V_{th}) was calculated by the linear extrapolation method [42]. Specifically, the threshold voltage was determined from the extrapolated gate voltage V_{Gi} by

$$V_T = V_{Gi} - \frac{V_D}{2} \tag{2-1}$$

where V_{Gi} was determined by the following steps: first, the point on the I_D - V_G curve corresponding to the maximum in the transconductance (g_m) was determined. Next, a straight line across the point was used to extrapolate the I_D - V_G curve and locate the intercept at the V_G axis. In this work, V_D was set at 0.5V.

The field-effect mobility in the test devices was determined from the transconductance (g_m) at V_D = 0.5V by

$$\mu_{FE} = \frac{Lg_m}{WC_{ox}V_D} \tag{2-2}$$

Finally, subthreshold swing (SS) could be calculated from the subthreshold current

increase in the weak inversion region by

$$SS = \frac{\partial V_G}{\partial (\log I_D)}$$
 (2-3)



Chapter 3 Leakage current reduction in NW-TFTs

3.1 Leakage mechanisms

According to the structure of the fabricated devices, there are two regions where leakage currents are likely to generate, i.e., the channel near the drain and the gate-to-drain overlap region. In this chapter we first briefly review possible mechanisms in these regions.

3.1.1 Leakage mechanisms in channel region

In poly-Si channels, the band diagram is modulated by the drain and gate biases. According to the strength of the electric field at the drain/channel junction, there are basically three conduction mechanisms illustrated in Figs. 3-1(a), (b), and (c).

- (a) At a low drain field, the dominant leakage current mechanism is thermionic emission.

 This is due to thermal excitation of an electron from valence band into trap-state, and the trapped electron is emitted into conduction band by the same way.
- (b) As the drain bias increases, the dominant leakage current mechanism is thermionic field emission. This case comprises two steps: the first step is the thermal activation of an electron from the valence band to a trap state, and the second step is electron

tunneling through the reduced barrier to the conduction band as shown in Fig. 3-1(b).

(c) Under a strong electric field, the band gap is pulled more seriously. As a result band-to-band tunneling becomes the dominant leakage current mechanism. It causes the electrons to tunnel from valence band to conductance band via the traps.

According to Fig. 3-1 and the above discussions, these mechanisms all belong to trap-assisted leakage mechanisms. Hence the trap state density in the band gap plays an important role in the mechanism. The band-to-band current is strongly dependent on the applied bias. The pure thermal emission current is proportional to the intrinsic carrier concentration of silicon (n_i) , and n_i is proportional to exp $[-E_g/2kT]$ (where E_g is the energy band gap of silicon, k is the Boltzmann constant, and T is the temperature in Kelvin). For this reason, the activation energy of the pure thermal emission current should be approximately equal to $E_g/2$. In addition, the pure thermal generation current is nearly independent of gate voltage.

3.1.2 Leakage current mechanism in gate-to-drain overlap region

Another possible leakage current component occurring in the gate-to-drain overlap region is the gate induced drain leakage (GIDL). When the gate is negatively biased with respective to the drain and the voltage difference between the two is high, the n-type drain region overlapping the gate can be depleted and even inverted. As shown in Fig. 3-2, when the potential difference between gate and drain (V_{GD}) increases, the energy band is pulled severely. This results in some high-field effects in the depletion region such as

avalanche multiplication, band-to-band tunneling and trap-assisted band-to-band tunneling. Hence a lot of extra minority carriers are generated and swept to the source to complete the path for GIDL.

There are many parameters that influence GIDL. V_{GD} and the oxide thickness between gate and drain are the two most important parameters in the GIDL mechanism because they directly govern the electric field in the depletion region. Another important parameter is the volume in which minority carriers are generated. In this regard, the gate-to-drain overlap area and the drain doping concentration are the two major factors. The drain doping concentration determines the depletion width in the gate-to-drain region. An increasing drain doping concentration leads to a decreasing depletion width, therefore the volume in which minority carriers are generated decreases. Besides, defects that cause necessary trap sites for assisting the leakage flow also play an important role in GIDL mechanism.

3.2 Effects of Si₃N₄ hard mask layer

Figure 3-3 illustrates the gate-to-drain overlap region in the fabricated device. As has been identified in previous work [43], this unique feature in the proposed device structure actually contributes to the observed GIDL current. To reduce the GIDL, an extra Si₃N₄ layer (HM) between gate and drain is added in this study to reduce the strength of the electric field. Reduction of the electric field could help suppress the leakage, as mentioned in Section 3.1.2.

Fig. 3-4 shows the transfer characteristics of NW TFTs with Si₃N₄ HM. It can be

seen that with the 3hr NH₃ plasma hydrogenation treatment, the electrical characteristics of NW TFT with Si₃N₄ HM shows dramatic improvement as compared with the fresh device. On-current, subthreshold swing and leakage current are all improved by the NH₃ plasma hydrogenation. To clarify the exact region where the leakage current occurs, the drain current (measured at maximum |V_{GD}|) of the devices with various gate-to-drain overlap areas are compared. Such analysis is helpful to understand the impact of the gate-to-drain overlap area, which is proportional to the width of the gate electrode as is evidenced by the top view of the device shown in Fig. 3-3, on the off-state leakage. The results are shown in Fig. 3-5. In this figure it is found that the off-state leakage currents for the devices with HM are nearly identical for devices with various gate-to-drain overlap areas. Fig. 3-6(a) shows the drain current (measured at maximum $|V_{\text{GD}}|$) as a function of the gate width for NW TFTs with and without the Si₃N₄ HM, and the drain current values normalized to that with minimum gate width (0.8 micron) are shown in Fig. 3-6(b). It can be seen that the drain current of NW TFTs with Si₃N₄ HM is almost independent of the gate width. In contrast, the leakage current of NW TFTs without Si₃N₄ HM is strongly dependent on the gate-to-drain overlap area. From these results, we can infer that the leakage current of NW TFTs without Si₃N₄ HM mainly occurs in the region where the gate overlaps the drain, while the leakage current of NW TFTs with Si₃N₄ HM mainly occurs in poly-Si nanowire channel.

We also extract the activation energy of devices to gain a deeper insight into the leakage mechanism. The activation energy is extracted using the following relation:

$$I_{off} = I_0 e^{(-\frac{E_a}{kT})}$$
 (3-1)

where I_0 = a constant independent of temperature, and E_a = drain current activation

energy.

The equation also can be expressed as

$$\ln(I_{off}) = \ln(I_0) + (\frac{-E_a}{kT})$$
(3-2)

The drain current data measured at 25, 50, 75, 100, and 125 are exhibited in Fig. 3-7. Next, we use equation (3-2) to extract the activation energy. The extracted activation energies are summarized in Fig. 3-8. It can be seen that the activation energy of off-state leakage for NW TFTs without Si₃N₄ HM shows a stronger dependence on the gate voltage. The activation energy gradually decreases as the gate voltage becomes more negative. In contrast, the activation energy of off-state leakage for NW TFTs with Si₃N₄ HM is nearly independent of the gate voltage, indicating that its dependence on the strength of electric field is also weak. In other words, GIDL is greatly suppressed in these devices because Si₃N₄ HM can effectively shield the electrical field in the gate-to-drain overlap region. Fig. 3-9 shows the band diagram in the gate-to-drain overlap region for NW-TFTs with Si₃N₄ HM. Strength of electrical field at the Si/oxide interface in the gate-to-drain overlap region is dramatically reduced due to the appearance of the Si₃N₄ HM. It is worth noting that even though the presence of Si₃N₄ HM effectively eliminates the GIDL, the leakage current is still significant. A plausible reason is that the profile of poly-Si nanowire channel may have been changed in devices with an extra Si₃N₄ HM layer. Fig. 3-10 exhibits the cross-sectional picture of a device with HM. It is evidently seen that the poly-Si nanowire channel has a larger conduction width than the device without HM.

3.3 Effects of NH₃ plasma hydrogenation

For operation of poly-Si TFTs, the conduction carriers in the channel have to overcome the barrier at the grain boundaries, the on-currents of the devices are dependent on the amount of defects contained [44]. In addition, the trap density is related to the leakage current as mentioned in Section 3.1. Therefore reducing trap density is a direct method to enhance the performance of TFTs. In this regard, hydrogenation is the most commonly used method to reduce the trap density in TFTs. It has been widely demonstrated that such approach could effectively passivate the dangling bonds at the grain boundaries as well as the intragrain strained bonds with hydrogen species.

Hydrogenation incorporation can be carried out by some different techniques, such as hydrogen plasma [45], H⁺ implantation [46], hydrogen-rich Si₃N₄ capping layer [47] and NH₃ plasma [48]. In this work, we adopt the NH₃ plasma treatment to achieve the purpose. Fig. 3-11 presents the transfer characteristics of NW-TFTs with HM and subjecting to various NH₃ plasma times. Detailed data are summarized in Table 3-1. After a 2hr NH₃ plasma treatment, the device performance is apparently better than that of the as-fabricated counterpart. Higher mobility, higher On/Off ratio and lower subthreshold swing are observed after the plasma treatment, verifying the effectiveness of the NH₃ plasma treatment.

3.4 Effects of RTA

Besides HM approach, a post-crystallization rapid thermal annealing (RTA) process

was also explored to reduce the leakage current of NW TFTs. I_D-V_G characteristics of devices with RTA are shown in Fig. 3-11. The NW-TFT with RTA obviously has better performance. This is believed to be due to the fact that the RTA process improves the grain quality and thus reduces the defect density. Fig. 3-12 shows I_D-V_G characteristics of devices with or without RTA treatment, all receiving an additional 2hr NH₃ plasma hydrogenation. NW-TFT with RTA still exhibits lower leakage current after plasma hydrogenation. Similarly, we have also measured the drain current of the control devices (i.e., w/o Si₃N₄ hard mask) with various gate-to-drain overlap areas to analyze their leakage mechanisms. These results are shown in Fig. 3-13 and Fig.3-14. As can be seen in these figures, although the off-state current of the NW TFTs with RTA is lower than that of their non-RTA counterparts, the dependence on the gate-to-drain overlap area is still evident. This phenomenon indicates that the gate-to-drain overlap zone is the region where the leakage current originates. The extracted activation energy is shown in Fig. 3-15 for NW-TFTs. The activation energy for NW-TFTs with RTA is significantly higher than the case without RTA treatment, albeit both are influenced by the gate voltage under off-state. It is suggested that although the leakage current is reduced, the GIDL remains the major mechanism in NW-TFT with RTA.

Chapter 4 NW-TFTs fabricated by MILC

4.1 Electrical characteristics of NW-TFTs fabricated by MILC

The device structure is shown in Fig. 4.1. It was fabricated with similar process sequence as described in Chapter 2, except for the different treatments used for enhancing the film crystallization. The major steps are stated below: Briefly, after deposition of a 100nm-thick amorphous Si (a-Si) layer and subsequent S/D doping and patterning step, a 100nm-thick low-temperature oxide (LTO) was deposited by a plasma-enhanced (PE) CVD. For MILC purpose, the seeding windows were opened in the LTO layer. After opening the seeding windows, a 5nm-thick Ni layer was deposited to serve as the seeding layer. The lateral crystallization was carried out at 550 for 16 hours in N₂ ambient. The arrows illustrated in Fig. 4-1 depict the crystallization paths. Fig. 4-2 exhibits the plane-view TEM of MILC NW-TFT. The NW channel is evidently laterally crystallized with large grain size, as shown in Fig. 4-2.

The transfer characteristics of n-type NW-TFTs fabricated by MILC are shown in Fig. 4-3. Detail electrical characteristics of devices are summarized in Table 4-1. The performance of the MILC device is obviously much better than that of the SPC device. The extracted field-effect mobility is 247 cm²/V-sec for the MILC device, which is one order of magnitude higher than 25 cm²/V-sec of the SPC counterpart. The SS of MILC

device is about 0.25 V/dec, much lower than that of the SPC counterpart (about 0.96 V/dec). The performance s is improved by the incorporation of an additional RTA process for both MILC and SPC devices. The MILC NW-TFTs still depict better electrical characteristics including higher mobility, lower V_{th}, and lower SS as shown in Fig.4-4 and Table 4-1. The poly-Si channels in MILC devices have larger grains and less grain boundaries that are transverse to the current flow than the SPC devices because of lateral crystallization. The number and height of barrier at grain boundaries which conduction carriers in channel must overcome are reduced so that the MILC NW-TFTs have better conduction behavior. Fig.4-5 and Table 4-1 compare the electrical characteristics between p-type NW-TFTs fabricated by either MILC or SPC scheme. Similar to n-type devices, the p-type MILC devices have much better performance than their SPC counterparts.

Though the aforementioned enhancement in device performance is magnificent, the off-state leakage of the devices remains high despite the MILC treatment. This is likely to be due to potential Ni contamination. The formation of silicide at the grain boundaries during the MILC process has been reported previously [49], which would aggravate the leakage. This drawback could be alleviated by adopting the long Ni-offset structure [50] or by proper annealing condition [49].

4.2 Analysis for NW-TFTs with different MILC seeding window arrangement

The location of MILC seeding window is very important because it can directly influence the electrical characteristics of devices. In this study, we exploit three splits of

samples as illustrated in Fig. 4-6 to address this issue. The splits are divided into two categories, namely, asymmetric and symmetric arrangements. In the symmetric case, two seeding windows are separately located at source and drain, while in the asymmetric case only one seeding window is situated at either source or drain.

Fig. 4-7 and Fig. 4-8 show the I_D-V_G characteristics of devices with asymmetric seeding window at source and at drain, respectively. The data can be analyzed by dividing them into three regions. Since the poly-Si NW channels in all devices are the same, the properties are nearly identical in the on-region. In the off-region, the leakage current in the device with seeding window at drain is higher than that with seeding window at source. This is due to the fact that the MIC region is just situated at the gate-to-drain overlap region. The Ni concentration is higher in MIC region than MILC region, and there are many grain boundaries existing at the boundary between MIC region and MILC region. The Ni-related species that accumulate at the grain boundaries or inside the grains would cause a higher trap density in the gate-to-drain overlap region, and the leakage current of the device with seeding window at drain is therefore higher. In the subthreshold region, the currents are nearly identical at V_D=0.5V but the current in NW-TFT with seeding window at drain is higher than the other at V_D=3V. A plausible reason is that the Ni concentration is higher near the seeding window. For the device with seeding window at drain, the Ni may produce more deep states near the drain edge. These deep states may not be active at low field (i.e. V_D=0.5V) but will serve as the trap sites for trap-assisted tunneling current occurring at high field (i.e. V_D=3V). As a result, the subthreshold current becomes higher when the drain bias becomes larger.

The comparison of I_D-V_G characteristics between devices with asymmetric and

symmetric seeding window is presented in Fig. 4-9. It is found that the device with asymmetric window at source has higher on-current and lower SS. The NW-TFTs with symmetric window have higher leakage current than NW-TFTs with asymmetric window at source. Note that in the MILC process, the crystallization proceeds radially from the seeding window. In the symmetric case, the fronts of crystallization from the opposite sides meet each other at the central region of the channel. Trace amount of metallic species may be left inside the channel, leading to the degraded on-state performance as compared with the asymmetric case.



Chapter 5

Conclusions

In this work, two methods were proposed to reduce the off-state leakage in the newly-proposed NW-TFTs. The addition of an extra Si_3N_4 HM layer between the gate and drain is found to effectively eliminate the GIDL occurring in the gate-to-drain overlap region, albeit the etched profile of poly-Si nanowire may need to be readjusted for optimization of the electrical characteristics. Finally, an additional RTA process is also found to effectively reduce the leakage current through the improvement of the thin-film quality, although GIDL still acts as the major leakage mechanism in the fabricated devices .

We have also employed the MILC method to improve the device characteristics. Film crystallinity of the NW fabricated by this method is shown to be dramatically improved. Needle-like larger grain structure with crystallization direction along the NW channel is demonstrated. This leads to a single-crystal-like structure and the device characteristics could be significantly improved in terms of extremely high carrier mobility (>200 cm²/V-sec) and steeper subthreshold swing. Nevertheless, the Ni contamination would cause leakage problem in our MILC devices. More efforts are needed to address this issue.

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Table 3-1. Electrical characteristics of as-fabricated device and devices which received 2-hr and 3-hr NH_3 plasma treatment.

	V _{TH} (V)	SS(V/dec)	Mobility(cm ² V ⁻¹ s ⁻¹)
As fabricated	7.1	0.98	11.24
NH3 plasma 2HR	4.49	0.71	15.9
NH ₃ plasma 3HR	3.77	0.39	15.8

Table 4-1. Comparisons of device parameters between n-type SPC and MILC NW-TFTs.

	$V_{TH}(V)$	SS(V/dec)	Mobility(cm ² V ⁻¹ s ⁻¹)
SPC	7.42 ES	0.96	24.84
SPC+RTA	6.23	0.6	59.3
MILC	4.03	0.25	247
MILC+RTA	0.55	0.18	359.8

Table 4-2. Comparisons of device parameters between p-type SPC and MILC NW-TFTs.

	V _{TH} (V)	SS(V/dec)	Mobility(cm ² V ⁻¹ s ⁻¹)
SPC	-8.26	18961.06	16.9
MILC	-4.99	0.54	166

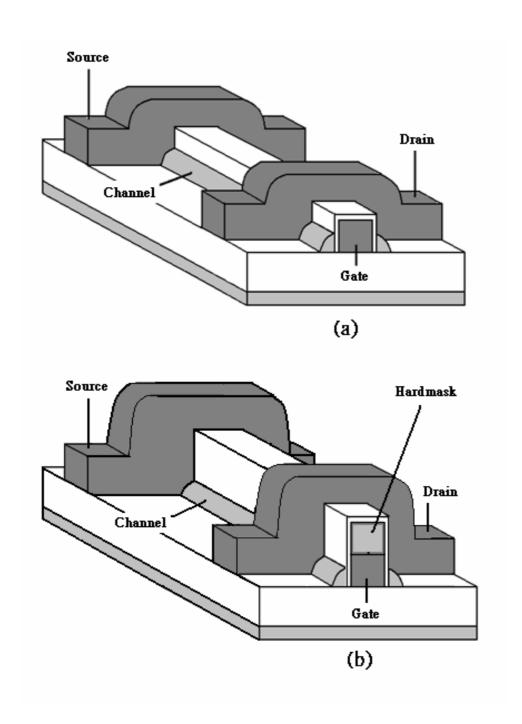


Fig. 2-1. Schematics of (a) control NW-TFT (b) NW-TFT with hard mask.

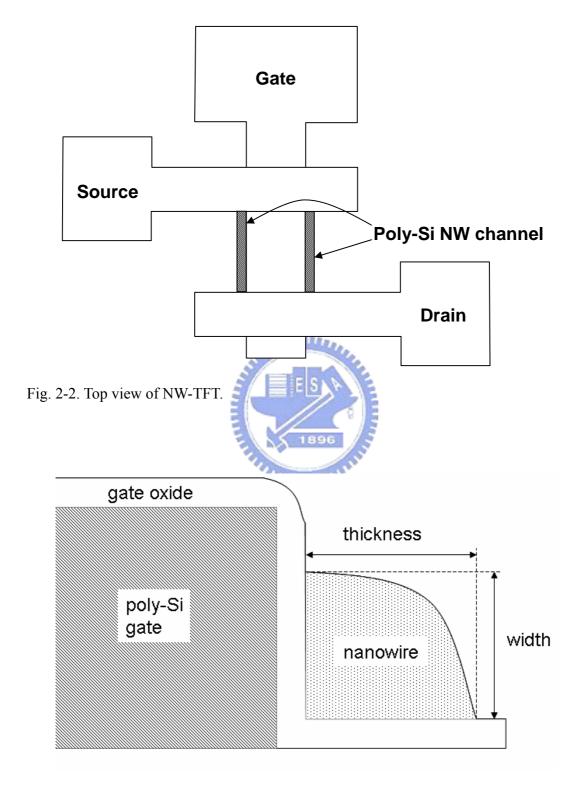


Fig. 2-3. The definition of the poly-Si nanowire channel.

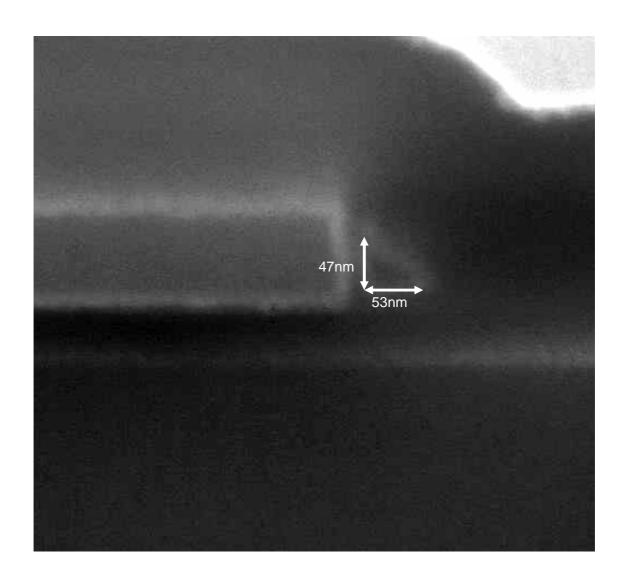
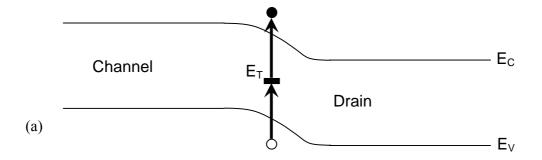


Fig. 2-4. SEM picture of a device fabricated by SPC.



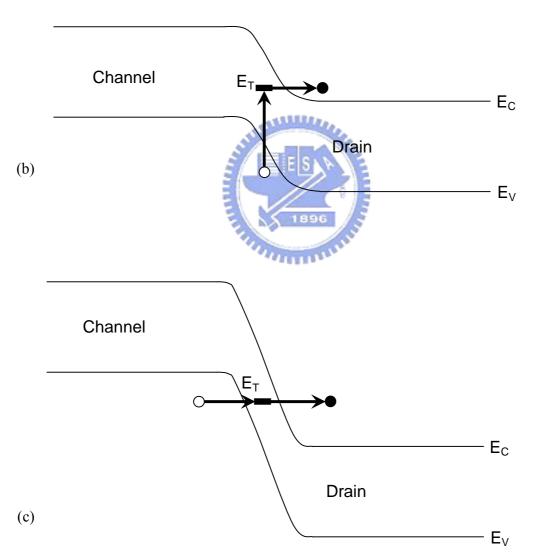


Fig. 3-1. Leakage mechanisms in channel. (a) Thermionic emission. (b) Thermioic field emission. (c) Band-to-band tunneling.

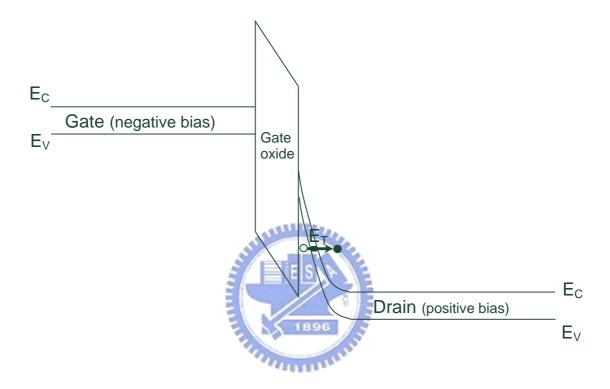


Fig. 3-2. Band diagram illustrating GIDL occurrence.

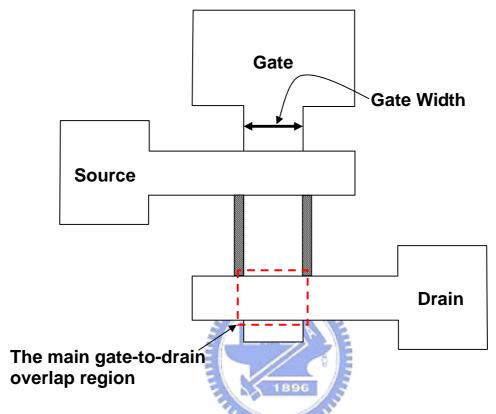


Fig. 3-3. Schematic layout illustrating the gate-to-drain overlap region.

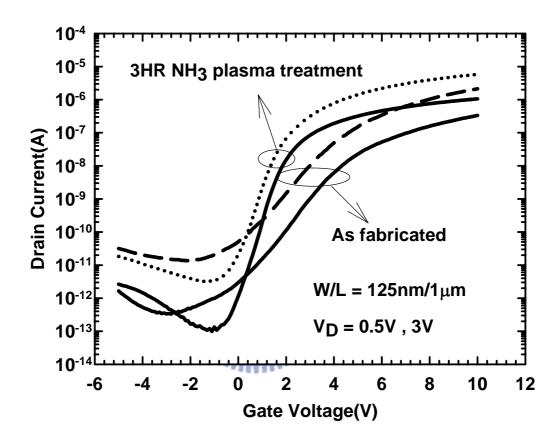


Fig. 3-4. Transfer characteristics of NW-TFTs with HM, both with and without plasma treatment.

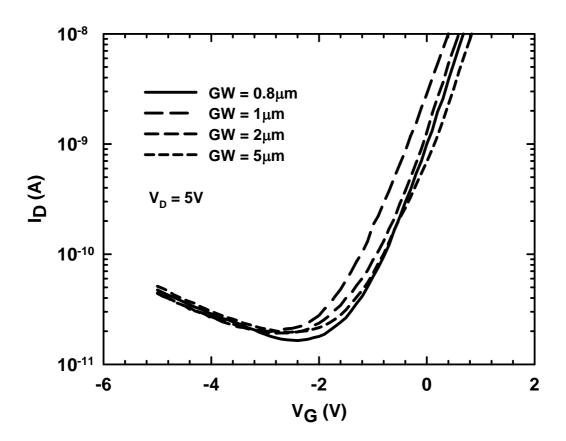


Fig. 3-5. Leakage currents of NW TFTs with HM having various gate widths.

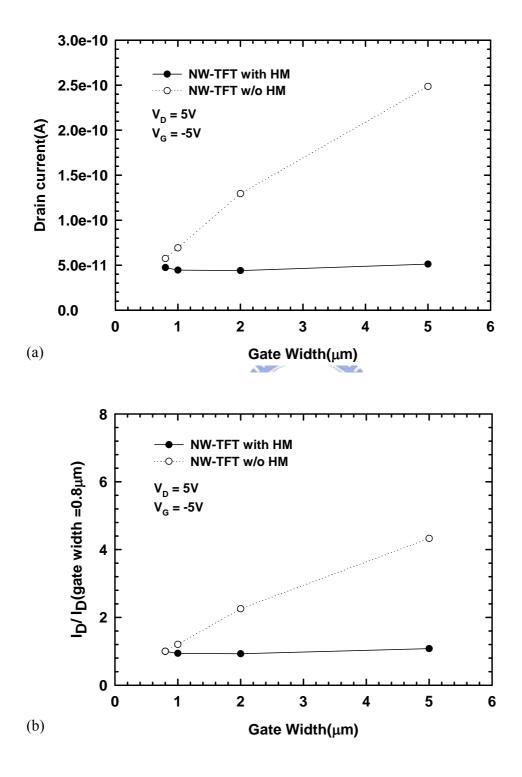


Fig. 3-6. (a) comparison of leakage currents of NW TFTs with and w/o HM having various gate widths, (b) comparison of the normalized off-state current for devices with and w/o HM as a function of gate width. $|V_{\rm GD}| = 10$ V.

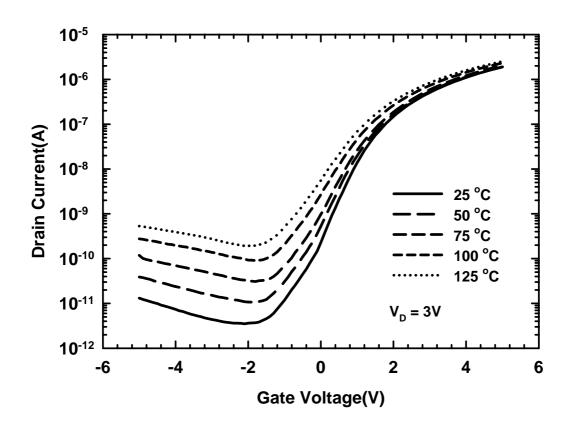


Fig. 3-7. Transfer characteristics of NW-TFT with HM at various temperatures.

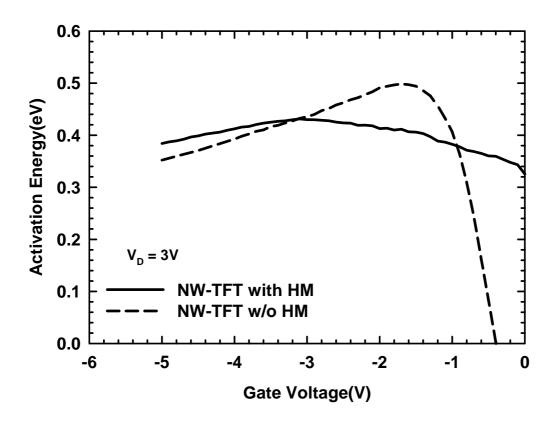


Fig. 3-8. Off-state activation energies of NW-TFTs with and without HM.

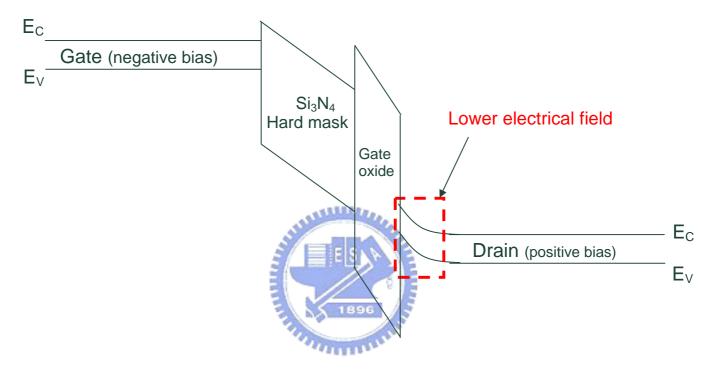


Fig. 3-9. Energy band diagram in gate-to-drain overlap region for NW-TFTs with HM.

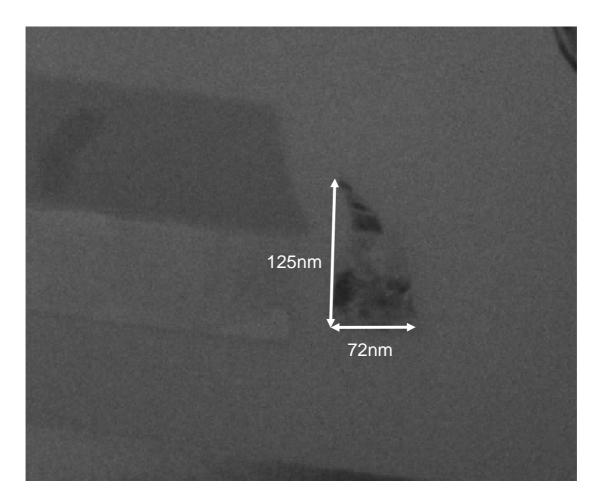


Fig. 3-10. TEM of NW-TFT with HM.

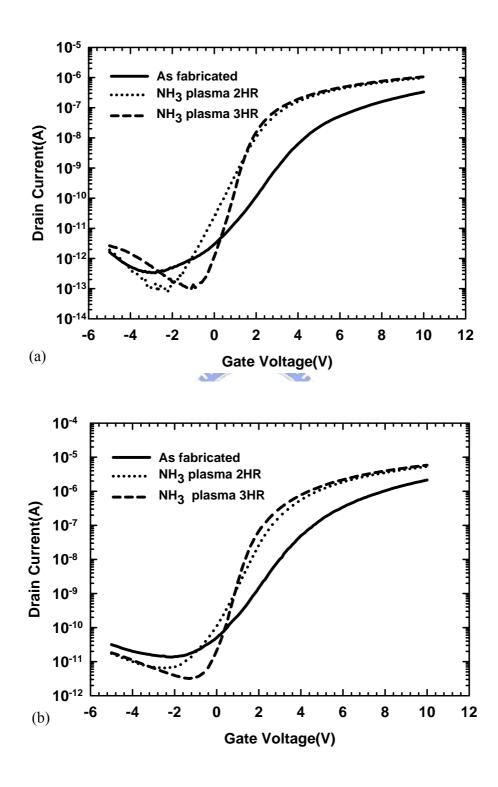


Fig. 3-11. Transfer characteristics of as-fabricated device and devices which received 2-hr and 3-hr NH_3 plasma treatment at (a) V_D =0.5V, (b) V_D =3V

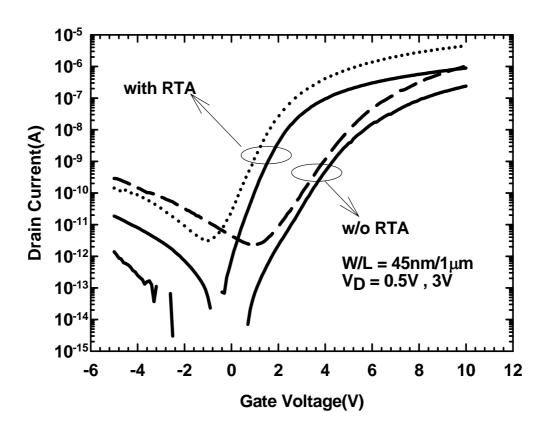


Fig. 3-12. Transfer characteristics of control NW-TFTs.

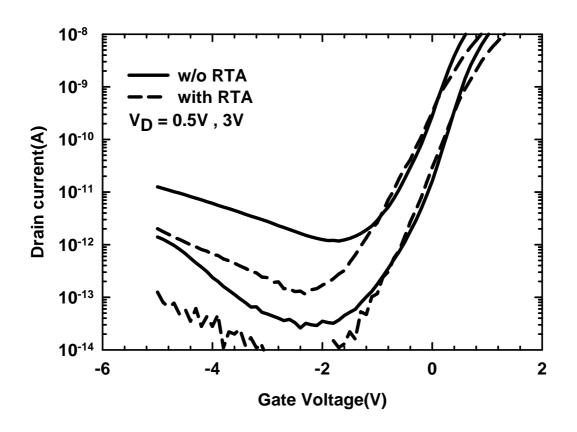


Fig. 3-13. Off-state $I_D\text{-}V_G$ characteristics of NW-TFTs after 2hr-NH $_3$ plama treatment.

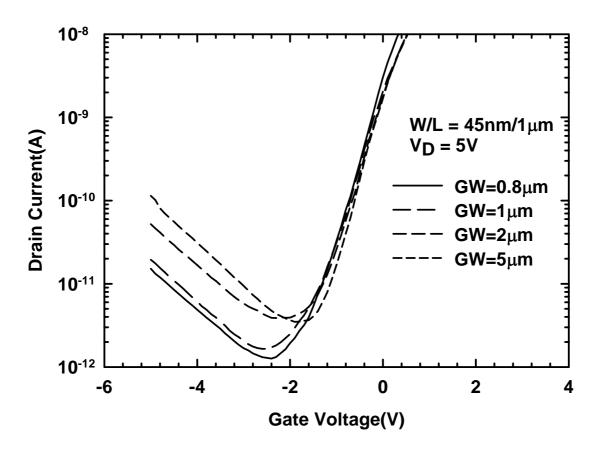


Fig. 3-14. Off-state currents of control NW-TFTs ($w/o Si_3N_4$ mark mask) having various gate widths.

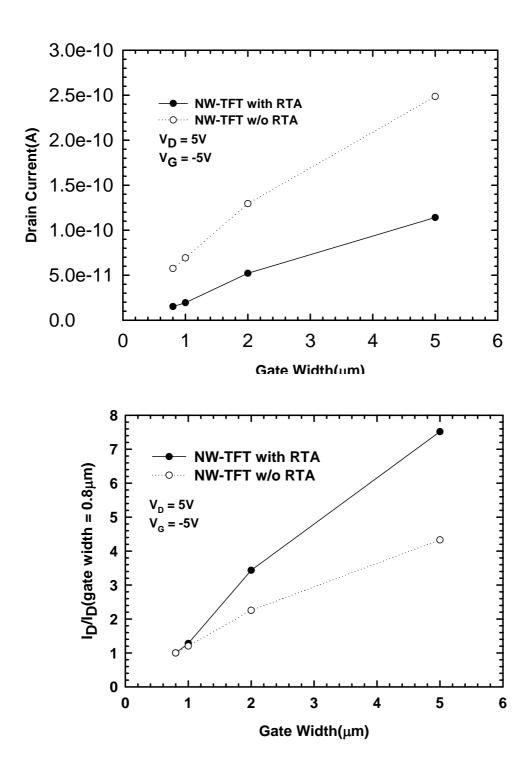


Fig. 3-15. (a) comparison of leakage currents of NW TFTs with and w/o RTA having various gate widths, (b) comparison of the normalized off-state current for devices with and w/o RTA as a function of gate width. $|V_{GD}| = 10 \text{ V}$.

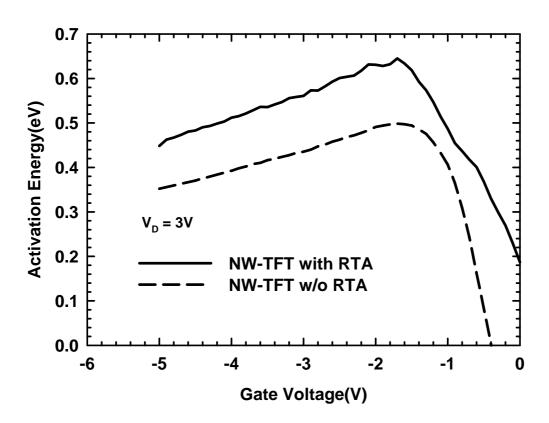


Fig. 3-16. Off-state activation energies of NW-TFTs with and without RTA.

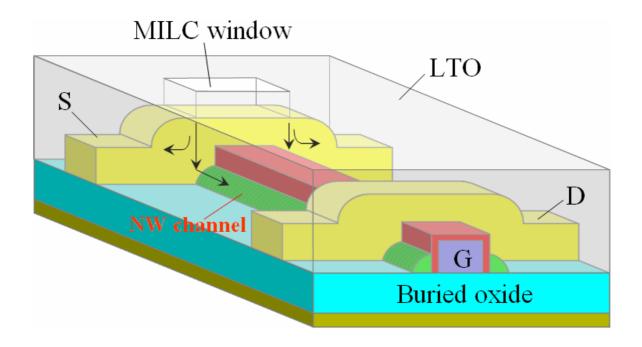


Fig. 4-1. Crystallization mechanism of MILC. The arrows represent the crystallization direction.

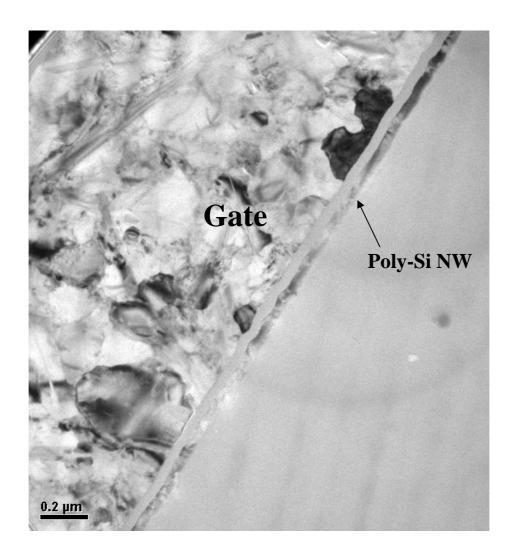


Fig. 4-2. The plane-view TEM of MILC NW-TFT.

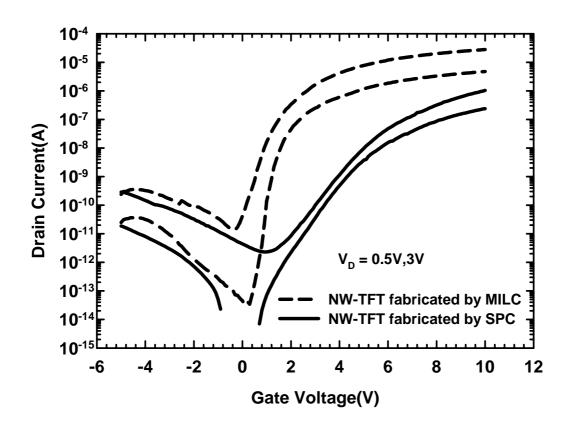


Fig. 4-3. Comparison of transfer characteristics between n-type MILC and SPC NW-TFTs.

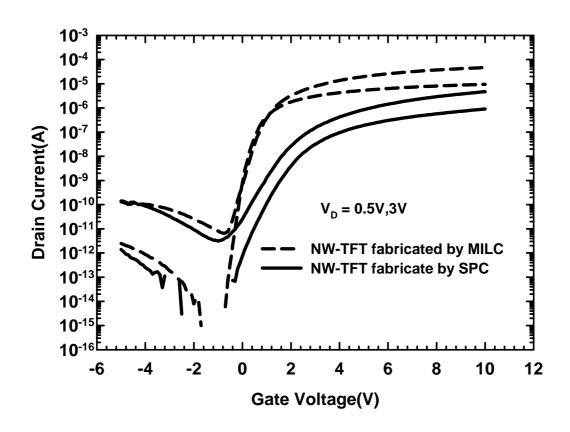


Fig. 4-4. Comparison of transfer characteristics between n-type MILC and SPC NW-TFTs with RTA.

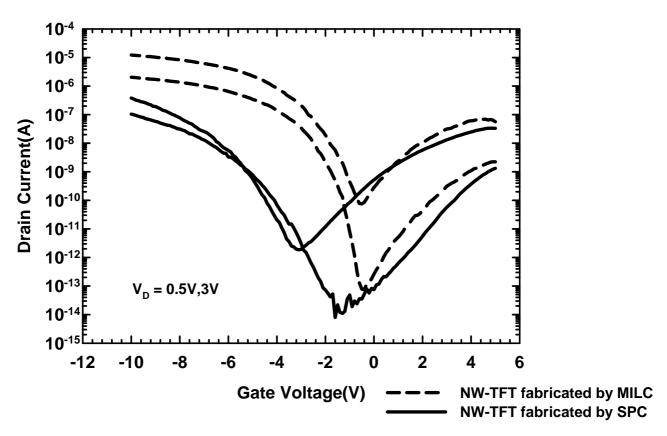


Fig. 4-5. Comparison of transfer characteristics between p-type MILC and SPC NW-TFTs

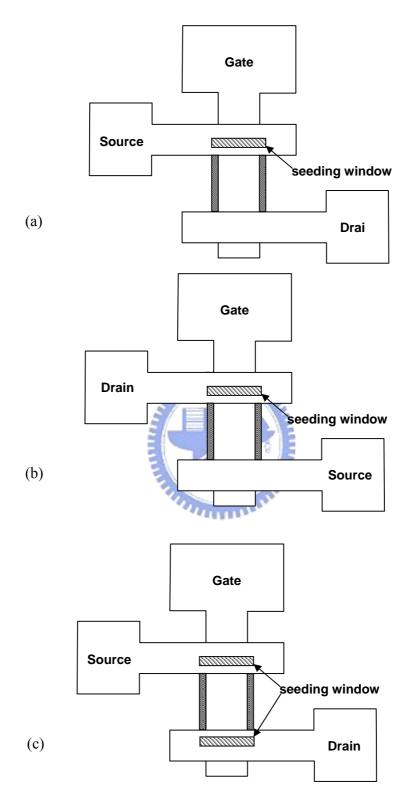


Fig. 4-6. Configurations of MILC seeding window. (a) Asymmetric seeding window (at source). (b) Asymmetric seeding window (at drain). (c) symmetric seeding window.

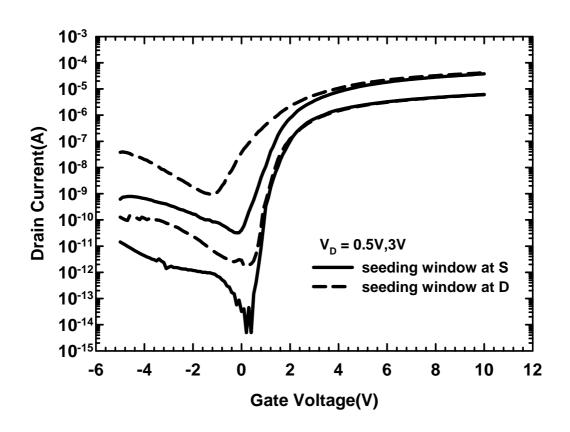


Fig. 4-7. I_D - V_G characteristics of devices fabricated by asymmetric MILC seeding window.

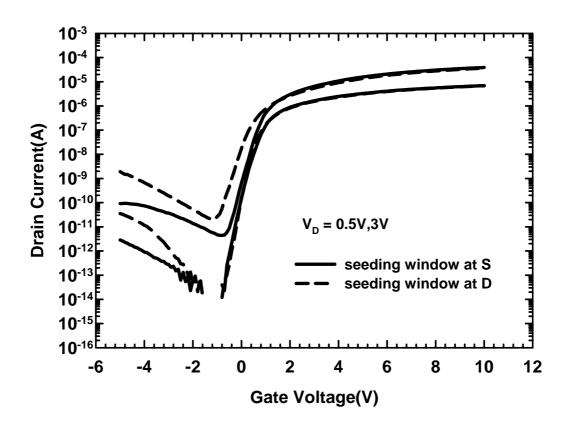


Fig. 4-8. I_D - V_G characteristics of RTA devices fabricated by asymmetric MILC seeding window.

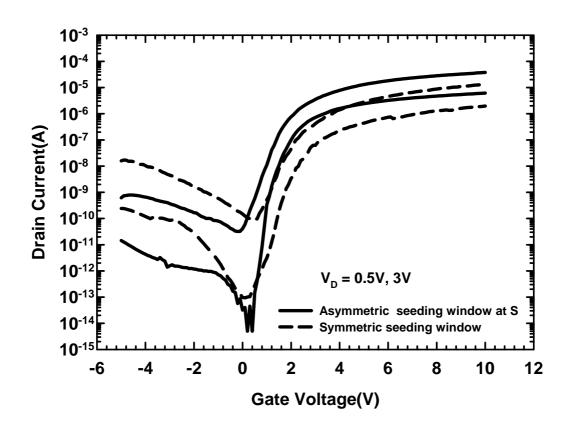


Fig. 4-9. Comparison of I_D - V_G characteristics between devices fabricated by asymmetric and symmetric seeding window configuration.

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