ABOUT THE INFLUENCE OF SiO_2 ON THE TEMPERATURE BEHAVIOUR OF RUTHENATE BASED THICK FILM RESISTORS

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Substituting glass by SiO_2 in thick film resistors results in a small increase of $R_{\square}$, a decrease of $dR_{\square}/dT$ and an increase of $d^2R_{\square}/dT^2$ (at room temperature). From these experimental results it follows that substituting glass by SiO_2 leads to an increase in the resistance of the tunnel barrier, determining the resistivity of the TFRs. The other microscopic quantities, like charging energy and HTC_p of ruthenate, are estimated using the model of Pike and Seager, the generalization of which (necessary in order to take into account the influence of the strain dependence of $R_{\square}$ and $R_{\square}(T)$ in a correct way) is derived.

Key words: Thick film resistors; Temp. coeff. of resistance (TCR) ·

1. INTRODUCTION

It is well known, especially from patent literature, that there are a lot of ingredients (e.g. Bi_2O_3 , SiO_2 , RuO_2), by means of which the TCR of ruthenium based TFRs can be changed in a defined manner¹. In spite of this experimental experience little is known as regards the influence of such TCR-modifiers on the conduction mechanism in these TFRs.

This contribution presents the results of investigations concerning the temperature behaviour of ruthenate based TFRs, in which glass was substituted by SiO_2 . Estimations show, that the dependence of the TCR on the SiO_2 content is not connected with the change of the coefficient of thermal expansion of the thick film (Section 1). In Section 2 the model of Pike and Seager² is generalized, in order to take into account strain effects, by which the temperature behaviour of any TFR is largely determined³. The comparison of the expressions obtained with the experimental results shows that with increasing content of SiO_2 the resistance of the tunnel barrier increases. Moreover, assuming the ratio of barrier resistance to total resistance of barrier and grain in series for the SiO_2 free case, it is possible to estimate all the other microscopic parameters determining the electrical conduction. The results are in reasonable agreement with the values given in² (Section 3).

1) EXPERIMENTAL RESULTS

The TFRs under study have been prepared by well known thick film technology. They consist of (i) a BiPb-ruthenate – for all resistors the same powders from the same batch have been used, and the volume fraction of this phase was the same in each sample, (ii) a glass frit, which, for some samples, was partially substituted by different amounts of SiO_2 . The results of the electrical measurements can be summarized as follows:

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With increasing v_{SiO_2} from 0 vol% to 13 vol%, $R_{\square}$ increased by about a factor 2 from $8 \text{ k}\Omega/\square$ to $17 \text{ k}\Omega/\square$, whereas the TCR decreased from $80 \cdot \text{ppmK}^{-1}$ to $-58 \cdot \text{ppmK}^{-1}$. The v_{SiO_2} dependence of the parameters a_1 , a_2 determined from the phenomenological equation:-

$$R_{\square}(T) = R(T_0) (1 + a_1 \vartheta + a_2 \vartheta^2), \vartheta = T - T_0, T_0 = 300 \text{ K} \quad (1)$$

is shown in Figure 1. It transpires that with increasing v_{SiO_2} , a_1 decreases, whereas a_2 increases. The decrease of a_1 leads to the behaviour of the TCR described above. It is well known that the $R_{\square}$ of TFRs depends on strain ϵ . This leads to the following approximate expression for the influence of the coefficient of thermal expansion of the film α_f on the measured TCR³:-

$$\text{TCR} = \rho^{-1} \cdot \partial \rho / \partial T + \rho^{-1} \cdot \partial \rho / \partial \epsilon \cdot (2\alpha_s + \alpha_f) \quad (2)$$

(α_s - thermal expansion coefficient of substrate, $\rho(T, \epsilon)$ -resistivity, dependent on the strain ϵ and the temperature of TFR). If SiO_2 would simply replace the glass and no change of conduction mechanism would occur (as one could imagine, because the volume fraction of ruthenate was not varied), from (2) the change of TCR per vol% SiO_2 would follow as:-

$$\Delta \text{TCR} / v_{\text{SiO}_2} = -\rho^{-1} \cdot \partial \rho / \partial \epsilon \cdot (\alpha_{\text{gl}} - \alpha_{\text{SiO}_2}). \quad (3)$$

Here $\rho^{-1} \cdot \partial \rho / \partial \epsilon$ can be approximated by the value of the gauge factor $\text{GF} \approx 15 \dots 20$. α_{SiO_2} is approximately $10^{-7} \cdot \text{K}^{-1}$ and can be neglected compared with $\alpha_{\text{gl}} \approx 6 \cdot \text{ppmK}^{-1}$. According to (3) this gives a contribution of about $-1 \cdot \text{ppm K}^{-1} / \text{vol}\% \text{SiO}_2$, which is at least one order of magnitude too small to explain the experimental value of about $-21 \text{ ppm K}^{-1} / \text{vol}\% \text{SiO}_2$. Thus one has to conclude, that substituting glass by SiO_2 in Bi-

FIGURE 1 Dependence of a_1 , a_2 on v_{SiO_2} for Bi-Pb-ruthenate resistors.

Pb-ruthenate TFRs (i) leads to a change of the electrical conduction mechanism, (ii) the change of the thermoelastic properties of TFRs makes a contribution to the change of TCR which can be neglected in the following model.

2) THEORETICAL MODEL

Pike and Seager developed a model, in which a_1 , a_2 (see Eq. 1) are determined by the microscopic parameters governing the electrical conduction in TFRs. The shortcoming of their considerations is that they neglected the influence of ϵ on TCR and a_1 , a_2 , respectively, whereas in a later publication³ it has been shown that the TCR is determined to a large extent by such strain effects. Thus, in the following discussion their model has to be generalized. Further, the physical reasons for the assumptions that need to be made will be given. The widely accepted model for a TFR consists of a network of current carrying chains, each built up from a microresistor r_o ⁴. Hence R is given by

$$R = r_o(T, \epsilon, v_{SiO_2}, v) \cdot l/mn \quad (4)$$

As a change of T or ϵ is a small disturbance for the TFR, l , m , n do not depend on T or ϵ . Therefore r_o does not depend only on T and ϵ , but also on the volume fraction of the metal-like phase v and v_{SiO_2} , otherwise the TCR would not depend on v (or $R_{\square}$, respectively) and the content of the TCR modifier, in contradiction to the experimental results. Following Pike and Seager (for further experimental evidence cf.^{5,6}) it is assumed, that the microresistor r_o itself consists of a tunnel barrier r_b and a contribution from the grain r_g :-

$$r_o(T, \epsilon, v_{SiO_2}) = r_b(T, \epsilon, v_{SiO_2}) + r_g(T) \quad (5)$$

(The factor v has been dropped, because in the case considered $v = \text{const.}$). r_g should not depend on v_{SiO_2} , as reactions between the ruthenate and SiO₂ are negligible. Thus, there remains the possibility that the electrical properties of the barrier are influenced by substituting glass by SiO₂. Comparing the electrical conduction in a metal grain and a tunnel barrier, it is reasonable to assume, that only r_b depends on ϵ . r_b is determined by tunneling and depends therefore in an exponential way on the barrier thickness. Thus:-

$$r_b(T, \epsilon, v_{SiO_2}) = r_{b,0}(T, v_{SiO_2}) \cdot \exp \epsilon s_0 \quad (6)$$

should hold qualitatively, where s_0 is determined by the barrier height and the thickness for $\epsilon = 0$. By means of equations (6) and (1) it is possible to replace $r_o^{-1} \cdot \partial r_o / \partial \epsilon$ by the experimentally available gauge factor $GF = R^{-1} \cdot dR/d\epsilon$. Taking this into account and taking the derivative of (4) with respect to T ($\epsilon = \alpha_s T$) for a_1 , a_2 , the following equations are obtained:-

$$a_1 = -\alpha \left(\frac{E}{2kT_0^2} + \frac{a^2 T_0}{3} \right) + (1 - \alpha)b + 3GF \alpha_s \quad (7)$$

$$T_0 a_2 = +\alpha \left(\frac{E}{2kT_0^2} - \frac{a^2 T_0}{6} \right) - 6 GF \alpha_s T_0 \left(\frac{E}{2kT_0^2} + \frac{a^2 T_0}{3} \right) \quad (8)$$

The notation follows Pike and Seager; E - charging energy, a - describes T dependence of tunnel barrier, $\alpha = r_b/(r_b + r_g)$, b - temperature coefficient of resistivity of metal-like grains. With regard to equations (7) and (8) the following comments can be made:-

- i) the change of α_f with varying v_{SiO_2} has been neglected (cf. Section 1). Also, the difference between α_f and α_s can be neglected.
- ii) The second term in (8) is due to the derivative $\partial^2 r_o / \partial T \partial \epsilon$.
- iii) The derivative $\partial^2 r_o / \partial \epsilon^2$ has been neglected, because (in spite of (Eq. 6)) up to now no non-linear behaviour of $R_{\square}$ with respect to ϵ has been observed.
- iv) The factors 3 and 6, respectively, arise because a change of T leads to strain components in three directions, and each of these contributes to the change of $R_{\square}$ ⁷.

With regard to the other terms the reader is referred to reference (2).

3) ANALYSIS OF EXPERIMENTS AND DISCUSSION

The model developed in the preceding section enables a very detailed discussion to be made as regards the influence of SiO_2 on the electrical conduction in the TFRs.

Firstly, it should be noted that within the investigated series the same ruthenate powder has always been used. Thus, and because chemical reactions between ruthenate and SiO_2 are negligible, E and b in equations (7), (8) cannot depend on v_{SiO_2} (E is given by $E = e^2/2\pi\epsilon_0 d^2$, d - diameter of ruthenate grains). GF values are obtained from experiment and depend weakly on $R_{\square}$ and v_{SiO_2} , respectively. Thus, substituting glass by SiO_2 leads to a change of α and/or a . Secondly, it has to be emphasized that a change of 'a' alone cannot explain the experiments: according to equations (7), (8) in that case a_1 as well as a_2 should both increase or decrease, whereas with increasing v_{SiO_2} , a_1 decreases and a_2 increases (cf. Figure 1). Thus it follows from the dependence of a_1 and a_2 on v_{SiO_2} that $\alpha = r_b/(r_b + r_g)$ increases with increasing v_{SiO_2} . By means of simple mathematics from equations (7) and (8) four equations (magnitude and slope for a_1 and a_2) follow for five variables: E , a , b , α and its derivative with respect to v_{SiO_2} ; (GF is obtained by experiment, $\alpha_s \approx 6.1 \text{ ppm} \cdot K^{-1}$, $T_o = 300 \text{ K}$). Hence, assuming a reasonable value for $\alpha(v_{SiO_2} = 0)^2$ and $a = \text{const.}$ all the other parameters can be calculated. These results are given in the following table:

TABLE I
Microscopic parameters, determining conduction in TFRs from dependence of $R_{\square}(T)$ on v_{SiO_2}

$\alpha(v_{SiO_2} = 0)$	E/k	a	b	$\alpha(8.8 \text{ vol}\%)$
0.8	27 K	$1.2 \cdot 10^{-3} K^{-1}$	$57 \cdot 10^{-6} K^{-1}$	1.15
0.6	53 K	$1.5 \cdot 10^{-3} K^{-1}$	$234 \cdot 10^{-6} K^{-1}$	0.76

It has to be emphasized, that the results for E , a , b follow from a_1 , a_2 , $\alpha(v_{SiO_2} = 0)$ without any further assumptions. The agreement with the figures given in⁴ is excellent. Because, by definition, $\alpha < 1$, the results for the case $\alpha(v_{SiO_2} = 0) = 0.6$ are more acceptable.

4. CONCLUSION

Summarizing, the following can be concluded:-

- i) substituting glass by SiO_2 results in an increase of the resistance of the tunnel barrier

ii) this explains, why a_1 and a_2 in equation (1) change in the opposite way. The different slopes in Figure 1 are determined mainly by E and b because GF depends weakly on $R_{\square}$ or v_{SiO_2} .

iii) a change of the parameter, 'a', due to different resonance centres cannot be excluded, but is not observable because of the effects for the tunnel barrier

iv) the derived values for both 'a', and temperature coefficient of resistivity of the metal-like phase, b, agree with published estimations. The value of $E/k = 53$ K corresponds to a mean grain size of $0.04 \mu\text{m}$, in rough agreement without BET measurements.

It should be remarked that it is not possible to explain the change of $R_{\square}$ by that of α , because the structure of the network (e.g. the numbers of chains and microresistors l, m, n) can be influenced by the SiO₂ content. For the investigation of the TCR, a_1 and a_2 this is unimportant, as these quantities do not depend on l, m, n.

All these conclusions are valid only for the ruthenate/glass system that has been studied. For other ruthenate glasses the situation may be quite different.

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