

Table of Contents

Streszczenie	9
Abstract	10
List of Symbols	11
List of Acronyms	21
Acknowledgements	25
1. Introduction	27
1.1. Why Amorphous Silicon?	28
1.2. Ground Thin Film Silicon Electronics Structures	29
1.3. Instability of Amorphous Silicon Film Based Devices	32
2. Growth of Amorphous, Micro- and Poly- Silicon Material	34
2.1. Comparison of Deposition Methods	34
2.2. Plasma Enhanced Chemical Vapour Deposition (PECVD)	37
2.2.1. Example of Optimized Deposition Conditions and Apparatus Developed by the Author	40
2.3. Deposition Phase Diagrams Allow Controlling of the Technology	42
2.4. Reactive Magnetron Sputtering (RMS)	45
2.4.1. Experimental Details	47
2.5. Large Area Deposition and Production Systems	50
2.6. Conclusion	51
3. Basic Measurements and Properties of Thin Silicon Films	53
3.1. a-Si:H Films Studied by Schottky Barrier Method	55
3.1.1. An Example of Schottky Barrier Classical Studies	56
3.1.2. An Example of Analysis of Gap States by the Schottky Barrier	59
3.2. Photoconductivity	61

3.2.1. Sub-Bandgap Absorption	63
3.2.2. Hole Drift Mobility in a-Si:H	66
3.2.3. The Midgap Density of States Assisted Controlling of Deposition Process	71
3.3. Hydrogen Decides about a Set of Final Film Properties	72
3.3.1. Hydrogen Content	73
3.3.2. Study of a-Si:H Film Properties by IR Evolution Measurement	75
3.3.3. Optimization of Al/a-SiN _x /a-Si:H Structure	77
3.3.4. The Hydrogen Bonding in Microcrystalline Silicon	84
3.3.5. Hydrogen Effusion from Silicon Films	84
3.3.6. Analysis of NMR Measurements	86
3.4. Microcrystalline and Polycrystalline Silicon	88
3.4.1. Raman Spectroscopy	89
3.4.2. Orientation and Size of the Grains by X-ray Diffraction	91
3.4.3. Study of Al/n ⁺ /i and TCO/p ⁺ /i a-Si:H Structure by X-ray Small Angle Method	92
3.4.4. Studies of the Amorphous/Microcrystalline Structure by AFM Method	95
3.4.5. The Band Gap E _g , the Photo- and Dark Conductivity σ _{ph} and σ _d and the Activation Energy E _A	97
3.4.6. Experiments with Laser Crystallized Amorphous Film	100
3.5. Doped Materials	103
3.5.1. Doped Amorphous Silicon and Silicon Alloys	103
3.5.2. Conductivity of Doped a-Si:H Films	105
3.6. Electron Spin Resonance in the Analysis of Doped Silicon Films	107
3.6.1. Effectiveness of the p/i and i/n Junctions Applied in Optoelectronic Structures	111
3.6.2. Summary of Silicon Thin Film Parameters Allowing Inspection of the Deposition Process	113
3.7. Conclusion	116
4. Metastability, Thermal Equilibrium and Role of Hydrogen in a-Si:H	119
4.1. Introduction	119
4.2. Creation and Annealing of Defects	120
4.3. Examples of the Staebler–Wronski Effect (SWE) in a-Si:H	122
4.4. Nature of a-Si:H and Metastability	127
4.4.1. Hydrogen-Mediated Weak Bond/Dangling Bond Conversion and Distribution of Localized Defect States in a-Si:H	127
4.4.2. Simple Models Describing Electron States in a-Si:H and Energy Distribution of Hydrogen	129
4.4.3. H-bonding States in a-Si:H and Hydrogen Diffusion	131

4.5. New Experimental Data and Theories of Metastability	133
4.6. Methods of Reducing the SWE	137
4.7. Conclusions	139
5. Amorphous, Microcrystalline and Polycrystalline Si Thin	
Film Transistors and TFT Matrix	141
5.1. a-Si:H TFT Described Like MOSFET Transistors	143
5.1.1. TFT Characteristics Assisted Designing	
of Improved TFT Devices	147
5.1.2. Method of Measurement of TFTs Configured in Line Form	153
5.2. How to Avoid Threshold Voltage Shift	155
5.3. Influence of X-Radiation on a-Si:H TFT Threshold Voltage	160
5.4. Modelling of a-Si:H TFT Behaviour	165
5.5. Electrolyte Gate a-Si:H TFT (ISFET)	173
5.6. A Comparison of the Author's μ c-Si:H TFT	
with the World Achievements	177
5.7. New Solutions for Reducing Instabilities	185
5.8. Conclusions and Requirements of a TFT	189
6. p-i-n Photodiode Sensor	192
6.1. The Sensor Photocurrent	193
6.1.1. Reverse Bias Dark and Light Current	193
6.2. Current Stability	199
6.2.1. Thick Photodiode Sensors	200
6.2.2. Reasons for the Image Lag	201
6.3. Application of Large Area Image Sensors-Medical X-ray Imaging	201
6.3.1. Introduction	201
6.3.2. Spatial Resolution, Frame Rate, Signal to Noise Ratio	
and Long Term Stability	203
6.3.3. X-ray Scintillators and Photoconductors	205
6.3.4. Example of a Test X-ray Matrix	208
6.3.5. Smart and Self-Correcting Pixel Sensors	212
6.3.6. The Author's Achievements and New Ideas for a TFT	214
6.4. Conclusion	215
7. Silicon Thin Film Solar Cells	217
7.1. Operation of a Silicon Thin Film Solar Cell	220
7.1.1. Analysis of a Standard a-Si:H Cell Operation	220
7.1.2. Instabilities and Improvements of Solar Cells	225
7.2. Electrical and Optical Device Modelling	227
7.2.1. Simulation Programs: AMPS and Simul-SC	228
7.2.2. Defect Pool Model and Recombination Statistic	
in Amorphous Silicon	230

7.2.3. Analysis of the Dark Forward Current	233
7.2.4. An Example of Solar Cell Modelling	237
7.2.5. Optical Properties and Modelling of the a-Si:H Solar Cell Layers	239
7.3. Optimalization of Solar Cell Construction	242
7.3.1. Front System with Substrate, Texturization, TCO and Antireflection Films of Single or Multijunction Solar Cells	243
7.3.2. An Example of the Improvement of the Efficiency of Solar Cells with Double Side Coatings	246
7.3.3. Single or Multijunction p-i-n Si:H System with p ⁺ Window in the Superstrate and Substrate Configuration of Solar Cells	248
7.3.4. Back Electrode Systems	250
7.4. a/ μ c-Si:H Based Solar Cell Technologies	254
7.4.1. Multijunction Solar Cell Structures Made by the Author	254
7.4.2. An Example of Tandem Solar Cell Optimalization	259
7.5. Analysis of I-V Characteristics of Thin Film Solar Cells	266
7.5.1. Light and Dark I-V Characteristics	268
7.5.2. I-V Curve with Varying Illumination	270
7.5.3. Extraction of the Solar Cell Parameters	275
7.6. Examples of the Best Thin Silicon Solar Cells in the World	279
7.6.1. Record Thin Silicon Solar Cells	279
7.6.2. Thin Silicon Modules	281
7.7. Manufacturing of Modules	283
7.7.1. BP Solarex on Glass Technology	283
7.7.2. United Solar Ovonic Corporation Superstrate Technology	285
7.8. Conclusions	286
8. Summary and Outlook	289
References	292