

## Accepted Manuscript

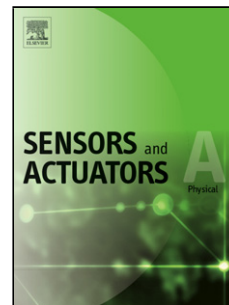
Title: Effect of molecular structure of alcohols on wet anisotropic etching of silicon

Author: Krzysztof P. Rola Irena Zubel

PII: S0924-4247(16)30086-3  
DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/doi:10.1016/j.sna.2016.02.032>  
Reference: SNA 9543

To appear in: *Sensors and Actuators A*

Received date: 23-10-2015  
Revised date: 3-2-2016  
Accepted date: 15-2-2016



Please cite this article as: Krzysztof P.Rola, Irena Zubel, Effect of molecular structure of alcohols on wet anisotropic etching of silicon, *Sensors and Actuators: A Physical* <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.sna.2016.02.032>

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# Effect of molecular structure of alcohols on wet anisotropic etching of silicon

Krzysztof P. Rola<sup>1</sup>, Irena Zubel

Faculty of Microsystem Electronics and Photonics, Wrocław University of Technology, 50-372  
Wrocław, Poland

## Highlights

- Si (100) surface etched with alcohol larger than propanol exhibits hillocks coverage.
- Convex corners etched with various alcohols are defined by {221} planes.
- Length and branching of alcohol molecules chains have an impact on Si etch rates.
- Surface tension, contact angle and etch rate decrease as alcohol length increases.

## Abstract

The study concerns anisotropic etching of silicon (100) and (110) planes in potassium hydroxide aqueous solutions saturated with different monohydric alcohols ( $C_3H_7OH$ ,  $C_4H_9OH$  and  $C_5H_{11}OH$ ). The main goal of the research is to systematically examine the influence of length and branching of alcohol molecules alkyl chains on etching process. The etch rate ratio  $R(100)/R(110) > 2$  and (110) planes having zigzag pattern are obtained as a result of etching in KOH solutions with all considered alcohols. Additionally, it is demonstrated that convex corners of spatial structures etched in aforementioned solutions are probably formed by exact or vicinal {221} planes. It is shown that for alcohols whose molecules have more than 3 carbon atoms the Si (100) surface is covered with pyramidal hillocks after etching. Moreover, the etch rate of (110) plane decreases as the alcohol molecules alkyl chain becomes longer and more branched. The attempt to explain the impact of molecular structure of different alcohols on the Si etch rates is made, based on results of surface tension and contact angle measurements.

Keywords: wet etching, silicon, KOH, alcohol, contact angle, surface tension

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<sup>1</sup> Corresponding Author. E-mail: krz.rola@gmail.com, present address: Institute of Low Temperature and Structure Research, Polish Academy of Sciences, Okólna 2, 50-422 Wrocław, Poland

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