

Accepted Manuscript

Title: Mid-infrared photonic gas sensing using a silicon waveguide and an integrated emitter

Author: C. Consani C. Ranacher A. Tortschanoff T. Grille P. Irsigler B. Jakoby



PII: S0925-4005(18)31334-0
DOI: <https://doi.org/doi:10.1016/j.snb.2018.07.096>
Reference: SNB 25065

To appear in: *Sensors and Actuators B*

Received date: 13-2-2018
Revised date: 20-6-2018
Accepted date: 18-7-2018

Please cite this article as: C. Consani, C. Ranacher, A. Tortschanoff, T. Grille, P. Irsigler, B. Jakoby, Mid-infrared photonic gas sensing using a silicon waveguide and an integrated emitter, *Sensors & Actuators: B. Chemical* (2018), <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.snb.2018.07.096>

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Mid-infrared photonic gas sensing using a silicon waveguide and an integrated emitter

C. Consani^{a,*}, C. Ranacher^a, A. Tortschanoff^a, T. Grille^b, P. Irsigler^b, B. Jakoby^c

^a*CTR Carinthian Tech Research AG, Europastrae 12, 9524 Villach, Austria*

^b*Infineon Technologies Austria AG, Siemensstrae 2, 9500 Villach, Austria*

^c*Institute for Microelectronics and Microsensors, Johannes-Kepler University, Altenberger Str. 69, 4040 Linz, Austria*

Abstract

The miniaturization of optical gas sensors is of interest for automotive and consumer electronics. We recently presented the use of silicon waveguides for evanescent-field gas detection in the mid-infrared by using an external laser source. However, the feasibility of the method is not guaranteed when the laser source is replaced by an integrated light source, typically a thermal emitter, due to the lower emitted power of the latter. Here, after experimentally characterizing the evanescent-field ratio of the fabricated structures, we demonstrate the feasibility of gas detection using a silicon waveguide and a low-cost integrated thermal emitter. Specifically, using the first demonstrators we achieve CO₂ detection down to a concentration of 10% with a confidence level of three standard deviations. The current detection limit is close to that previously measured with an external laser source and it is mainly limited by the yet not-optimized waveguide structure. This research represents a promising advancement for the development of fully-integrated photonic gas sensors in the mid-infrared.

Keywords:

Optical gas sensing, Evanescent-field absorption, Silicon photonics, Beer-Lambert law

*Corresponding author

Email address: cristina.consani@ctr.at (C. Consani)

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