



Cairo University

# **Effect of PECVD process parameters on structural transition of a-Si/ $\mu$ c-Si thin-film solar cell and its operational parameters**

By  
**Heba Ragab Abd El-aaty Mohamed**

A Thesis Submitted to the  
Faculty of Engineering at Cairo University  
in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of  
**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**  
in  
**Metallurgical Engineering**

**FACULTY OF ENGINEERING, CAIRO UNIVERSITY**  
**GIZA, EGYPT**  
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**Title of Thesis:**

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**Key Words:**

a-Si/ $\mu$ c-Si thin-film solar cell; Silver nanoparticles; light trapping; structural transition from a-Si to  $\mu$ c-Si.

**Summary:**

In the first part of this work the Plasma Enhanced Chemical Vapor Deposition PECVD process parameters; namely dilution ratios and substrate temperature, were controlled to build i-layer at low dilution ratios with moderate substrate temperatures. An intrinsic layer was deposited on Indium Tin Oxide glass by PECVD technique, with different dilution ratios of silane in hydrogen and different substrate temperatures to study the transition from amorphous to microcrystalline phase. The Si:H thin film was evaluated by field emission scanning electron microscopy, x-ray diffraction and atomic force microscopy. The structural transition between a-Si:H to  $\mu$ c-Si:H was achieved at dilution ratio 13.3 and substrate temperature 250°C with surface roughness 22.5 nm. This condition was used to build a p-i-n junction. The second part of the work included using the p-i-n junction as a substrate and applying a silver nanoparticles layer by Physical Vapor Deposition (PVD) technique at different substrate temperatures. The microstructure and the morphology of the entire silver deposited a-Si:H/ $\mu$ c-Si:H p-i-n junction was studied by FESEM and atomic force microscope AFM. The performance of the a-Si:H/ $\mu$ c-Si:H solar cell was evaluated by current-voltage measurements and optical absorption. It was observed that PVD silver nanoparticles layer deposited at 200°C had a surface roughness of 88nm, which resulted an increase in the optical absorbance to 74% at 300nm wavelength with a cell efficiency of 7.38%.

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## **DEDICATION**

I would like to thank and dedicate this thesis to my husband, Eng. Ahmed M. Fouad, and to my parents, who all have always supported me in my scientific work and whole life.



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	I
DEDICATION.....	II
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	III
LIST OF TABLES.....	VII
LIST OF FIGURES.....	VIII
NOMENCLATURE.....	X
ABSTRACT.....	XII
 CHAPTER 1 : INTRODUCTION.....	 1
1.1. Introduction on PV technologies .....	1
1.2. Fundamentals of photovoltaics .....	3
1.3. Second generation of PV technologies (thin film solar cells) .....	6
1.3.1. Physics of amorphous silicon thin film solar cells. ....	6
1.3.2. Light-induced degradation in a-Si:H solar cells.....	9
1.3.3. Optical losses of thin film solar cells.....	9
1.3.4. Advantages of second generation solar cells.....	10
1.3.5. Disadvantages of second generation solar cells.....	10
1.4. Deposition techniques of thin film solar cells.....	10
1.4.1. Chemical vapor deposition CVD.....	11
1.4.2. Physical vapor deposition PVD.....	12
1.5. Evaluation of the amorphous silicon thin film solar cells.....	13
1.5.1. Morphology characterization.....	13
1.5.2. Evaluation the performance of amorphous silicon thin film solar cells.....	16
1.6. The objective of the work.....	16
1.7. Outline of thesis.....	17
 CHAPTER 2 : LITERATURE REVIEW.....	 19
2.1. Introduction.....	19
2.2. Importance of thin film solar cells and its extrinsic losses.....	19
2.3. Plasma enhanced chemical vapor deposition procedure.....	20
2.4. Plasma enhanced chemical vapor deposition parameters.....	22
2.4.1. The deposition time.....	22
2.4.2. The substrate temperature.....	23

2.4.3. The gas dilution ratio.....	23
2.4.4. The gas pressure.....	24
2.4.5. The plasma power.....	24
2.4.6. The plasma frequency.....	24
2.5. Physical vapor deposition procedure.....	25
2.6. Physical vapor deposition parameters.....	25
2.6.1. The deposition time .....	25
2.6.2. The vacuum pressure.....	26
2.6.3. The substrate temperature.....	26
2.7. The current state-of-the-art.....	26
2.7.1. The effect of PECVD parameters on the light induced degradation.....	26
2.7.2. The effect of the dilution ratio on the crystallinity.....	27
2.7.3. The effect of the substrate temperature on the thin film solar cells.....	28
2.7.4. The effect of the annealing process on the thin film solar cells.....	28
2.7.5. The effect of the silver nanoparticles layer on the light trapping.....	29
2.7.6. Silver nanoparticle optical properties.....	30
2.8. Identifying the gap in the current state of the art and the aim of work.....	32
 CHAPTER 3: EXPERIMENTAL WORK.....	 34
3.1. Introduction.....	34
3.2. The plan of experimental work (PECVD).....	34
3.3. Plasma enhanced chemical vapor deposition technique.....	35
3.4. The substrate and the deposited p-i-n layers materials of PECVD process .....	37
3.4.1. The ITO glass substrate.....	37
3.4.2. The p-layer.....	37
3.4.3. The i-layer.....	38
3.4.4. The n-layer.....	38
3.5. The deposition procedures (PECVD).....	38
3.5.1. The ITO glass substrate preparation.....	39
3.5.2. The deposition of the p-layer.....	39
3.5.3. The deposition of the i-layer.....	40
3.5.4. The deposition of the n-layer.....	41
3.6. The plan of experimental work (PVD).....	42
3.7. Physical vapor deposition (PVD) technique.....	42

3.8. The substrate and the deposited layers materials of PVD process .....	43
3.8.1. The p-i-n structure substrate.....	43
3.8.2. Silver nanoparticles deposition material.....	43
3.9. The deposition procedures (PVD).....	44
3.9.1. The p-i-n structure substrate preparation.....	44
3.9.2. The deposition of silver nanoparticles layer.....	44
3.10. Morphology characterization.....	45
3.10.1. X-Ray diffraction technique.....	45
3.10.2. Field emission scanning electron microscope technique .....	46
3.10.3. Atomic force microscope technique.....	46
3.11. Evaluation of the performance of the thin film solar cells.....	47
3.11.1. The current -voltage measurements technique.....	47
3.11.2. The optical absorption measurement technique.....	48
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION.....	50
4.1. Introduction.....	50
4.2. Morphology characterization.....	50
4.2.1. X-Ray diffraction results.....	51
4.2.1.1. The effect of gas dilution ratio on the deposited i-layer specimens .....	51
4.2.1.2. The effect of substrate temperature on the deposited i-layer specimens .....	52
4.2.2. Morphology of the ITO glass substrate.....	54
4.2.3. Morphology of the deposited i-layer deposited specimens .....	55
4.2.3.1. The effect of the gas dilution ratio.....	55
4.2.3.2. The effect of the substrate temperature.....	59
4.2.4. Morphology of the deposited silver nanoparticles layer.....	62
4.2.4.1. The effect of the substrate temperature.....	62
4.3. The current-voltage measurements results.....	67
4.4. The optical absorption measurements results.....	70
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS .....	77
5. Conclusions.....	77
6. Future work.....	79
REFERENCES.....	80

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*TABLE OF CONTENTS*

APPENDIX.....	88
ARABIC ABSTRACT.....	i

## **LIST OF TABLES**

Table 1.1: Terminology for types of c-Si and a-Si.....	6
Table 1.2: The comparison between CVD and PVD techniques.....	11
Table 3.1: The operation parameters of p- layer .....	39
Table 3.2: The operation parameters of i-layer with dilution ratio series.....	40
Table 3.3: The parameters of i-layer with substrate temperature series.....	41
Table 3.4: The operation parameters of n layer.....	42
Table 3.5: The deposition parameters of nano silver by PVD .....	44
Table 4.1: I-V results of solar cell with silver nanoparticles film by PVD with various substrate temperatures.....	67
Table 4.2: The operation parameters of silver nanoparticles layer and the analysis results of FESEM, AFM, I-V measurements and optical absorption.....	73
Table 4.3: The comparison between our results and the previous results.....	74

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1: Different types of solar cells.....	2
Figure 1.2: The efficiencies were recorded for each PV solar cell type over years.....	3
Figure 1.3: Diagram of a solar cell.....	4
Figure 1.4: Characteristic I-V curves for a solar cell.....	4
Figure 1.5: Crystalline, Polycrystalline and amorphous structure.....	6
Figure 1.6: The structure of a-Si:H thin film solar cell.....	7
Figure 1.7: The absorption of a photon in a semiconductor.....	7
Figure 1.8: Density of electronic states $g(E)$ in hydrogenated amorphous silicon.....	8
Figure 1.9: Process types of CVD technique .....	12
Figure 1.10: Process types of PVD technique .....	13
Figure 1.11: The column of field emission scanning electron microscope.....	14
Figure 1.12: SEM images of AFM probes.....	14
Figure 1.13: Diagram of an AFM setup.....	15
Figure 1.14: Schematic illustration of XRD setup.....	15
Figure 2.1: The deposition process chamber with it accessories.....	20
Figure 2.2: schematic diagram of the chemical reactions that occur during PECVD process .....	21
Figure 2.3: Schematic diagram of PVD process .....	25
Figure 2.4: Schematic diagram of thin film solar cell.....	31
Figure 2.5: Silver nanoparticles.....	31
Figure 2.6: The incident light is trapped by using silver nanoparticles.....	32
Figure 3.1: PECVD Device.....	35
Figure 3.2: Gases line with valves that feed the PECVD device chamber.....	36
Figure 3.3: PECVD device chamber.....	36
Figure 3.4: PVD device .....	43
Figure 3.5: X-ray diffraction device.....	45
Figure 3.6: Field emission scanning electron microscope device.....	46
Figure 3.7: Atomic force microscope device.....	47
Figure 3.8: PV system analyzer setup.....	48
Figure 3.9: Spectrophotometer V-770 Jasco device and its setup.....	49
Figure 4.1: XRD patterns for the i-layer with the dilution ratio series at TS 250°C... 51	51
Figure 4.2: XRD patterns for the i-layer with the substrate temperature series at rH 13.3.. .....	53
Figure 4.3: FESEM image for ITO glass substrate.....	54
Figure 4.4: AFM images for ITO glass substrate.....	55
Figure 4.5: FESEM images for the i-layer with different dilution ratios at TS 250°C.....	56
Figure 4.6: AFM images for the i-layer with the dilution series at TS 250°C.....	57
Figure 4.7: The relation between rH and the surface roughness of the i-layer.....	58
Figure 4.8: FESEM images for the i-layer with different substrate temperatures at rH13.3 .....	59
Figure 4.9: AFM images for the i-layer with different substrate temperatures at rH	

13.3 .....	61
Figure 4.10: The relation between the substrate temperature and surface roughness of the i-layer .....	62
Figure 4.11: FESEM images for the silver nanoparticles layer with different substrate temperatures.....	64
Figure 4.12: AFM images for the silver nanoparticles layer with different substrate temperatures.....	65
Figure 4.13: The relation between the substrate temperatures and the surface roughness of the silver nanoparticles layer .....	66
Figure 4.14: The relation between the substrate temperatures of the silver nanoparticles layer and the solar cell efficiency .....	69
Figure 4.15: Absorbance of a-Si:H/ $\mu$ c-Si:H thin film solar cell with silver nanoparticles layer deposited by PVD at different substrate temperatures.....	70
Figure 4.16: Camera image of all resulted specimens .....	76