UNIVERSITY OF THESSALY
SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING
DEPARTMENT OF ELECTRICAL AND COMPUTER ENGINEERING

CONTROLLING POINT DEFECTS FOR NANOELECTRONIC APPLICATIONS

Diploma Thesis

ANGELOS SPYROU

Supervisor: ALEXANDER CHRONEOS

October 2023

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ΠΑΝΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΙΟ ΘΕΣΣΑΛΙΑΣ
ΠΟΛΥΤΕΧΝΙΚΗ ΣΧΟΛΗ
ΤΜΗΜΑ ΗΛΕΚΤΡΟΛΟΓΩΝ ΜΗΧΑΝΙΚΩΝ ΚΑΙ ΜΗΧΑΝΙΚΩΝ ΥΠΟΛΟΓΙΣΤΩΝ

ΕΛΑΤΤΩΜΑΤΑ ΣΗΜΕΙΩΝ ΕΛΕΓΧΟΥ ΓΙΑ ΝΑΝΟΗΛΕΚΤΡΟΝΙΚΕΣ ΕΦΑΡΜΟΓΕΣ

Διπλωματική Εργασία

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ ΣΠΥΡΟΥ

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Abstract

Germanium (Ge) and Silicon (Si); the two materials most frequently utilized in the semiconductor industry, are the focus of the survey that follows. The semiconductor industry is one of the most significant and valuable sectors of the global economy, with a projected global market value of $612 billion USD in 2022. It is crucial to understand why scientists in charge chose to rely on these two particular materials and indicate their fundamental role in applications of current technology. The following analysis contrasts the two materials' electrical, optical and thermal characteristics as well as their suitability for usage in various electronic applications taking into consideration the difficulties and restrictions associated with their use, as well as potential future advancements and market trends. This project is structured as such. The first section provides a general overview of the metals and other materials most frequently utilized by semiconductor manufacturers. Consequently Germanium is discussed in detail, from its acquisition to the development of the chip's transistor. Continuing with a similar section covering the extraction and harvesting of silicon. Lastly, a summary section that outlines our findings and opinions from the research.

Διπλωματική Εργασία

ΕΛΑΤΤΩΜΑΤΑ ΣΗΜΕΙΩΝ ΕΛΕΓΧΟΥ ΓΙΑ ΝΑΝΟΗΛΕΚΤΡΟΝΙΚΕΣ ΕΦΑΡΜΟΓΕΣ

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ ΣΠΥΡΟΥ

Περίληψη

Γερμάνιο (Ge) και πυρίτιο (Si) είναι τα δύο υλικά που χρησιμοποιούνται συχνότερα στα ημι-ηλεκτρονικά συστήματα αγωγών, και θα αποτελέσουν το επίκεντρο της έρευνας που ακολουθεί. Η βιομηχανία ημιαγωγών είναι ένας από τους σημαντικότερους και πολυτιμότερους τομείς της παγκόσμιας οικονομίας, με προβλεπόμενη αξία της παγκόσμιας αγοράς ύψους 612 δισεκατομμυρίων δολαρίων Αμερικής το 2022. Είναι βασικό να κατανοήσουμε σε βάθος το κρίσιμο ρόλο των υλικών στις εφαρμογές της τρέχουσας τεχνολογίας που οδηγεί τους επιστήμονες να βασίζονται σε αυτά. Η ανάλυσή μας αντιπαραβάλλει τα ηλεκτρικά, οπτικά και θερμικά χαρακτηριστικά των δύο υλικών, καθώς και την καταλληλότητά τους για χρήση σε διάφορες ηλεκτρονικές εφαρμογές. Εξετάζει επίσης τις δυσκολίες και τους περιορισμούς που συνδέονται με τη χρήση αυτών των υλικών, καθώς και τις πιθανές μελλοντικές εξελίξεις και τάσεις της αγοράς. Η εργασια που ακολουθεί είναι δομημένη ως εξής. Η πρώτη ενότητα παρέχει μια γενική επισκόπηση των μετάλλων και άλλων υλικών που χρησιμοποιούν συχνότερα οι κατασκευαστές ημιαγωγών. Εν συνεχεία, αναλύεται λεπτομερώς το γερμάνιο, από την απόκτησή του μέχρι την ανάπτυξη του τρανζίστορ του τσιπ. Ακολουθεί παρόμοια ανάλυσή που καλύπτει την εξόρυξη και το συγκομιδή του πυριτίου. Εν κατακλείδι, συνοψίζονται τα ευρήματα, αποτελέσματα και οι απόψεις που προκύπτουν από την ανάλυσή.

Table of contents

Chapter 1

Semiconductor industry materials

1.1 Usual semiconductor materials

Semiconductor materials can both insulate electricity at low temperatures and conduct it at high temperatures. This means that they are neither conductors nor insulator but have properties that are between. The materials that are used mostly as semiconductor are crystalline inorganic solids and they are grouped according to their atomic numbers. Silicon, Germanium and Gallium Arsenide are the most used semiconductor materials for the time being. The conductivity of a semiconductor depends greatly on the number of valence electrons that the material acquires. It is totally logical that different materials have advantages and disadvantages over others because of their different properties and that applies both on compound and element semiconductor materials.

1.1.1 Germanium

The first semiconductor ever used was Geranium (with four valence electrons in the outer shell of the atom) but it gave its place to silicon (with four valence electrons too) that is currently used in most occasions. They have similar properties and we usually find it in LEDs, solar cells, infrared optics etc.

1.1.2 Silicon

Silicon is one of the most plentiful materials on earth and compared to other semiconductors, it has easy, cheap and efficient methods to extract, purify and crystallize, producing silicon crystals with strong mechanical properties. Also, it has greate value in nanoelectronics and general electronics because of its high resistance.

1.1.3 Gallium Arsenide

Second in use is gallium arsenide, which is not an element but a compound made by connecting the three valence electrons of gallium with the five valence electrons of arsenic. It helps amplifying high frequency signals because of its eight valence electrons. It has six times higher electron mobility compared to silicon thus making it operating faster, it is more thermal resistant and has more optoelectronic properties than silicon and the devices made of it are quieter too. Because of those, it is vastly used in microwave frequency integrated devices, solar cells and optical windows.

1.1.4 Aluminum

Aluminum has a minimal resistivity and most of the time is doped with other elements just to better the reliability and characteristics of it. It is usually being used as metallic lines like a main conductor between components in an integrated circuit.

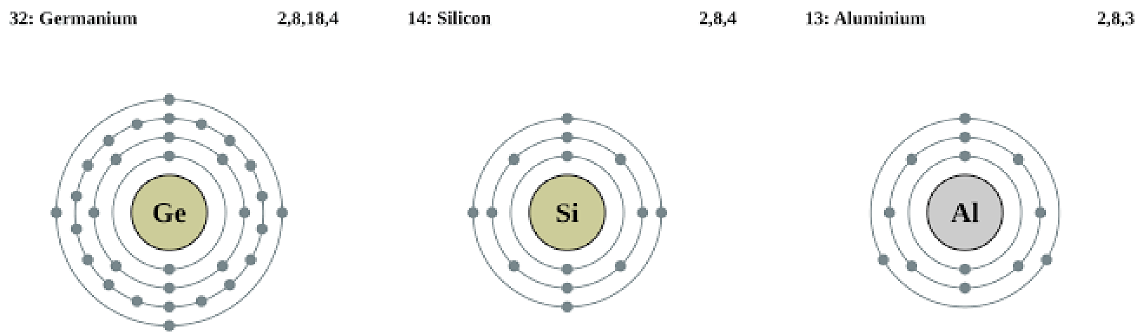

Figure 1.1: Starting from the left hand side are presented the atoms of Germanium, Silicon and Aluminum respectively

1.1.5 Chemical Mechanical Planarization (CMP)

Chemical Mechanical Planarization (CMP) is a process used in semiconductor fabrication to achieve a flat and smooth surface on a substrate, typically a silicon wafer. The process involves using a combination of mechanical polishing and chemical etching to remove the excess material and achieve the desired surface roughness and flatness. This is critical in semiconductor manufacturing as the surface of the substrate must be uniform and smooth to allow for proper and efficient transfer of electrical signals.

In CMP, the substrate is placed on a rotating polishing pad, which is then brought into contact with a slurry consisting of abrasive particles and chemical agents. The slurry serves as the grinding medium and helps remove material from the surface of the substrate. The process also involves controlling the pressure applied to the substrate and the rotational speed of the polishing pad to ensure that the surface is not damaged during the process. The duration of the CMP process depends on the desired surface roughness, thickness of the material being removed, and the chemical properties of the slurry. CMP is widely used in the semiconductor industry as a critical step in the fabrication process of integrated circuits.

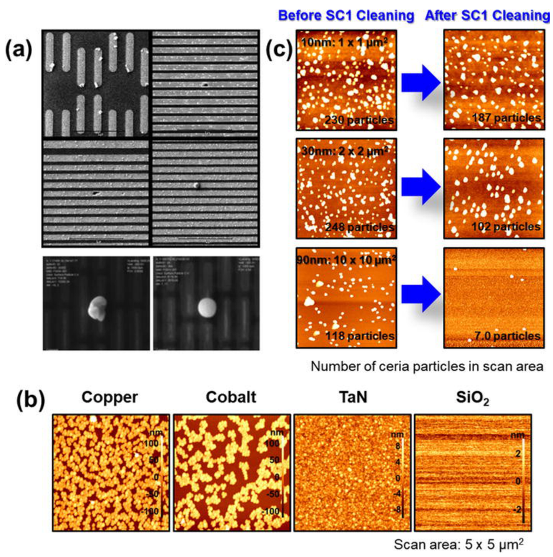

Figure 1.2: Chemical Mechanical Planarization Process

1.1.6 High-Temperature Plastics

High-temperature plastics are a type of plastic material that can withstand elevated temperatures without melting or losing its shape. These types of plastics are commonly used in applications where heat resistance is important, such as in electrical components, automotive parts, and aerospace components. Some of the most common high-temperature plastics include polyimide, polyphenylene oxide (PPO), polyphenylene sulfide (PPS), and polyetherimide (PEI). These materials have high thermal stability and resistance to heat, as well as good dimensional stability, making them ideal for high-temperature applications. Additionally, some high-temperature plastics also have excellent electrical and mechanical properties, making them ideal for use in a wide range of applications. Some of them are PVDF, PTFF, FEP, PFA, CPVC, PCTFE.

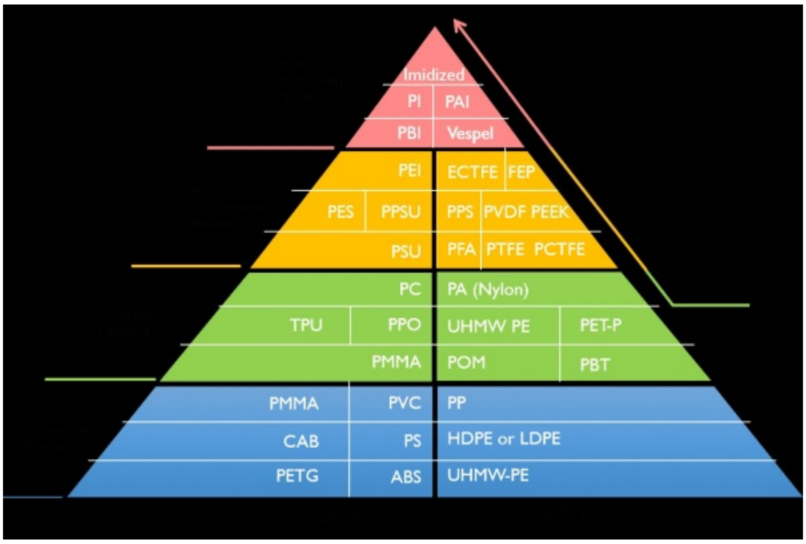

Figure 1.3: High-Temperature Plastics depending on their form and utility

1.1.7 Low Outpassing Plastics

Low Outpassing (LOP) plastics are materials used in the semiconductor industry that have low levels of outgassing, which refers to the release of gas from a material in response to temperature changes. These plastics are used in the manufacturing of semiconductor devices and components to prevent contamination from outgassing and to protect the devices from damage. They are essential for the semiconductor industry as they help to maintain the clean and dry environment required for high-quality semiconductor manufacturing. Outgassing from plastic materials can cause contamination of the wafers, leading to defects in the final product and reduced yields. Low Outpassing plastics are specially designed to prevent this, allowing for the production of high-quality semiconductors and ensuring that the manufacturing process remains efficient and cost-effective.

1.2 Alloying compounds

Alloying compounds in semiconductors refers to the process of mixing two or more elements in a semiconductor material to create a new compound with unique properties. The

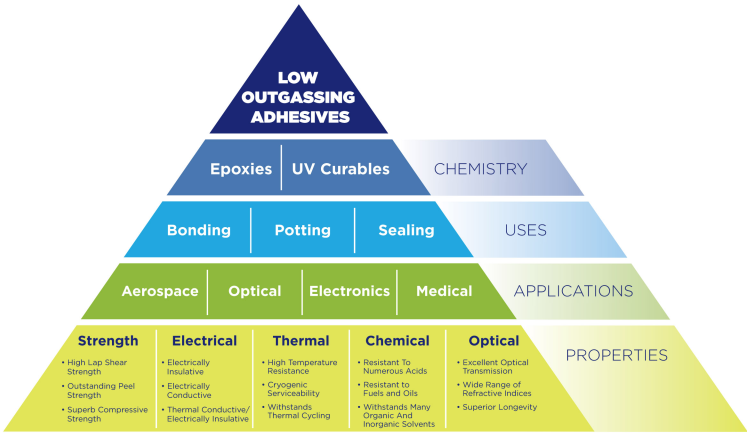

Figure 1.4: Low outgassing plastics

idea behind alloying compounds is to combine the best properties of each individual element to create a new material with improved electrical and mechanical characteristics. This process is commonly used in the semiconductor industry to produce high-performance materials for the manufacture of electronic devices. Some examples of alloying compounds in semiconductors include Aluminum-Gallium-Arsenide (AlGaAs), Indium-Gallium-Arsenide (InGaAs), and Cadmium-Telluride (CdTe). These materials are used in various applications such as high-speed electronic devices, solar cells, and laser diodes. The process of alloying compounds in semiconductors involves carefully controlling the composition and properties of the material to ensure consistent performance and reliability.

Chapter 2

Germanium Extraction, Process and Applications

2.1 Germanium Extraction Sources

Germanium is a chemical element with the symbol Ge and atomic number 32. It is a silvery-gray metal with a metallic luster. Germanium is widely used as a semiconductor material, and it is also used in the production of some types of fiber optics. Germanium can be found in a number of different sources, including ore deposits, coal, copper and lead smelting and others. In detail germanium can be extracted from ore deposits that contain germanium sulfide, such as sphalerite, germanite and argyrodite and from coal, in small amounts, during the coal cleaning process. Also it can be obtained as a by-product of zinc, lead and cooper smelting, while it is extracted from the slag produced during the smelting process. Of course there are many more other sources from which it can be obtained in smaller amounts, such as germanite, argyrodite, and schalenblende. In figure 2.1 are demonstrated some of the other mineral sources of Germanium obtained by the survey of [2] on germanium.

According to [2] the worldwide production of Ge was estimated to be about 134,000 kg that is mainly recovered from Zn concentrates, coal deposits, coal fly ashes, and recycled materials. While several authors have reported an increase (30%) of the Ge production in the last decade, it is known that Ge reserve is scarce and it is estimated to be 8600 tons. The presented contradiction enhances the Ge recycling process as it is necessary in order to keep meeting the markets needs and targets. The importance of this initiative can be easily demonstrated considering that in 2016, about 30% of the total Ge consumed was supplied

% germanium	Mineral name	Chemical formula	MW
69.41% Ge	Argutite	GeO_2	104.61
53.91% Ge	Eyselite	$Fe{+}{+}{+}Ge{+}{+}{+}{+}_3O_7(OH)$	401.40
45.27% Ge	Otjisumeite	$PbGe_4O_9$	641.63
35.78% Ge	Bartelkeite	$PbFe{+}{+}Ge_3O_8$	608.87
31.50% Ge	Stottite	$Fe{+}{+}Ge(OH)_6$	230.50
24.49% Ge	Carboirite-III	$Fe{+}{+}A_{12}GeO_5(OH)_2$	296.43
23.59% Ge	Krieselite	$(Al,Ga)_2(Ge,C)O_4(OH)_2$	230.81
22.36% Ge	Carboirite-VIII	$Fe{+}{+}(Al,Ge)_2O[(Ge,Si)O_4](OH)_2$	292.20
22.31% Ge	Brunogeierite	$(Ge{+}{+},Fe{+}{+})Fe{+}{+}{+}_2O_4$	244.11
18.57% Ge	Briartite	$Cu_2(Zn,Fe)GeS_4$	390.97
16.49% Ge	Barquillite	Cu_2CdGeS_4	440.38
13.42% Ge	Schaurteite	$Ca_3Ge{+}{+}{+}{+}(SO_4)_2(OH)_6 \bullet 3.(H_2O)$	541.06
10.83% Ge	Carraraite	$Ca_3Ge(OH)_6(SO_4)(CO_3) \bullet 12H_2O$	670.75
10.79% Ge	Maikainite	$Cu_{20}(Fe,Cu)_6Mo_2Ge_6S_{32}$	3296.63
10.15% Ge	Germanocolusite	$Cu_{13}V(Ge,As)_3S_{16}$	1609.66
10.03% Ge	Polkovicite	$(Fe,Pb)_3(Ge,Fe)_{1-x}S_4$	470.48
9.86% Ge	Ovamboite	$Cu_{20}(Fe,Cu,Zn)_6W_2Ge_6S_{32}$	3470.24
9.78% Ge	Morozeviczite	$(Pb,Fe)_3Ge_{1-x}S_4$	705.33
9.10% Ge	Germanite	$Cu_{26}Fe_4Ge_4S_{32}$	3192.14
7.89% Ge	Catamarcaite	Cu_6GeWS_8	902.31
7.76% Ge	Putzite	$(Cu_{4\cdot7}Ag_{3\cdot3})GeS_6$	925.86
7.62% Ge	Itoite	$Pb_3[GeO_2(OH)_2](SO4)_2$	952.35
7.21% Ge	Fleischerite	$Pb_3Ge(SO_4)_2(OH)_6 \bullet 3(H_2O)$	1006.40
6.58% Ge	Renierite	$(Cu,Zn)_{11}(Ge,As)_2Fe_4S_{16}$	1655.51
6.44% Ge	Argyrodite	Ag_8GeS6	1127.95
5.60% Ge	Calvertite	$Cu_5Ge_{0\cdot5}S_4$	495.06
2.90% Ge	Tsumgallite	$GaO(OH)$	100.05
2.71% Ge	Mathewrogersite	$Pb_7(Fe,Cu)Al_3GeSi_{12}O_{36} \bullet (OH,H_2O)_6$	2678.79
1.30%Ge	Colusite	$Cu_{12}\text{-}_{13}V(As,Sb,Sn,Ge)_3S_{16}$	1673.29
0.32%Ge	Cadmoindite	$CdIn_2S_4$	

MW: molecular weight.
Adapted from [13].

Figure 2.1: Most frequent sources of germanium sorted by their percentage of germanium they contain

from scrap (recycled materials) while recycling rates for fiberoptic scrap are reported as high as 80% [2].

However, even if the recycling process reduce the difference between the supply and demand Ge amounts its production will not stop. The main supplier in our days is China producing 65.7% of global production followed by Canada, Belgium, Germany and Russia producing the other 35%. Due to the importance of Ge in high-tech industry countries like Chine and USA treat Ge as a strategic reserve leading to an increasing value of germanium. Due to high strategic value of germanium the available trustworthy information is limited and outdated but the latest results shows that Ge market can reach the value of 123,073 $/Kg coming from China while the respective price coming from USA is 32,338 $/Kg Ge [3].

2.2 Germanium Most Frequent Applications

Germanium is used primarily as a semiconductor material in electronic devices such as transistors and diodes. It is also used in fiber-optic systems, infrared detectors, and solar cells. Additionally, germanium is used in some medical imaging equipment and as a catalyst in certain chemical reactions.

2.2.1 Semiconductor Industry

Germanium is used as a semiconductor material in a variety of electronic devices, particularly in the field of optoelectronics. Some of the most common applications of germanium in the semiconductor industry include transistors and diodes.

Germanium-based transistors are typically used in high-frequency and microwave applications. They have a higher electron mobility than silicon-based transistors [4], which allows them to operate at higher frequencies. This makes them useful in applications such as radio frequency (RF) amplifiers, oscillators, and mixers. Germanium-based transistors, due to their higher electron mobility have a higher current gain than silicon-based transistors, which makes them useful in applications where high current gain is required, such as in high-frequency amplifiers [5, 6].

Germanium-based diodes are typically used in high-frequency and microwave applications. They have a lower forward voltage drop than silicon-based diodes, which makes them more efficient at converting electrical energy into light [7, 8, 9]. This makes them useful in applications such as RF detectors and mixers. Germanium-based diodes also have a higher reverse breakdown voltage than silicon-based diodes, which makes them useful in applications where high voltage is required, such as in high-frequency power supplies.

However, Germanium-based transistors and diodes have some disadvantages, compared to silicon-based devices. One of the main disadvantages is that they are relatively expensive to manufacture. Additionally, Germanium-based transistors and diodes tend to have a lower maximum operating temperature than silicon-based devices, which can make them less suitable for high-temperature applications.

2.2.2 Fiber-Optics Industry

Fiber optics is a technology that uses thin, transparent fibers made of glass or plastic to transmit data in the form of light. The use of light to transmit data allows for much faster and more efficient data transmission compared to traditional copper wire. In fiber optics, germanium is used as a material for infrared optical fibers. These fibers are used in a variety of applications such as telecommunications, medical imaging, and industrial sensing as presented in figure 2.2 [10, 11]. In telecommunications for example, fiber-optic cables are used to transmit large amounts of data over long distances. The use of germanium-doped fibers can increase the amount of data that can be transmitted, allowing for faster internet speeds and more reliable connections.

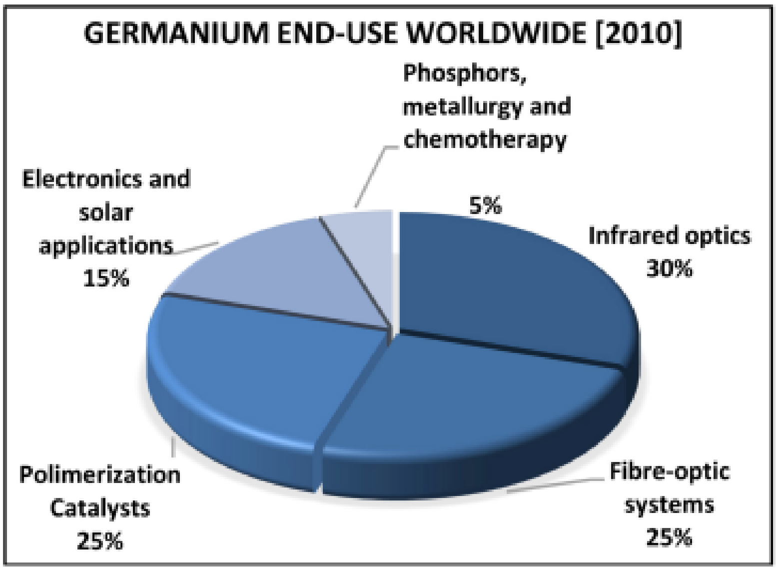

Figure 2.2: Worldwide end-use of germanium

It is obvious that the germanium has a number of advantages when used in fiber optics. One of the main advantages is its high refractive index, which allows it to bend light at a sharper angle than other materials. This allows for the creation of smaller and more flexible optical fibers and components [12]. Another advantage of germanium is its transparency in the infrared (IR) region of the spectrum [13]. This makes it useful for creating optical fibers that can transmit data using IR light, which can travel further and with less loss than visible light. This is particularly useful in telecommunications, where long-distance data transmission is required. Also, germanium fibers are also able to support a wide range of transmission bands. This makes them useful in applications that require the transmission of multiple types of data, such as video and audio.

However despite these advantages, germanium fibers also have some disadvantages. One of the main disadvantages is that they are relatively expensive to manufacture, as mentioned before, compared to other types of optical fibers. This can make them less cost-effective for some applications. Another disadvantage is that germanium fibers are relatively brittle and can be easily damaged if they are bent or twisted too much. This can make them less suitable for applications that require a lot of flexibility, such as in endoscopes.

2.2.3 Solar Cells

Also, germanium is used as a substrate material in the fabrication of some types of solar cells, particularly in multi-junction solar cells [14]. Multi-junction solar cells are made up of multiple layers of semiconductor materials, each designed to convert a specific range of the solar spectrum into electricity. Germanium is used as the substrate material for the topmost layer of the solar cell, which is responsible for converting the infrared portion of the solar spectrum into electricity.

The advantages of using Germanium as a substrate material for solar cells include its high thermal conductivity [15], which allows for better heat dissipation, and its high electron mobility [4], which allows for more efficient charge transport. Germanium also has a high refractive index, which allows for the creation of small and lightweight solar cells. Moreover, germanium has a high optical absorption coefficient [16] which can allow efficient light absorption. This makes Germanium a promising material to improve the efficiency of solar cells, especially in the infra-red portion of the solar spectrum. However, the process of growing the III-V compound semiconductor layers on a Germanium substrate is complex, particularly expensive and requires specialized equipment.

2.3 Germanium Extraction Process

As mentioned before germanium is typically extracted from zinc ore, coal fly ashes, and shale through a process of crushing and refining. The first step in the extraction process is to mine the ore or coal containing germanium. This is typically done using traditional mining techniques, such as open-pit or underground mining. Once the ore has been mined, it is crushed into small pieces and ground into a fine powder. This powder is then treated with chemicals to remove impurities and to concentrate the germanium. The germanium is then separated from the other elements using various techniques, such as solvent extraction or electrolysis. In general, after physical separation or pyro- and hydrometallurgical processes, a concentrate of Ge with around 30% content is obtained [2]. Thus, the Ge concentrate, regardless of its source, is chlorinated, distilled, and purified. The following Figure 2.3 presents step by step this process along side with its by-products. After the germanium has been extracted and purified, it is typically melted and cast into ingots or other forms for further processing or use. Germanium is a brittle and delicate element, so it must be handled carefully during the extraction and refining process to avoid damage.

2.3.1 Germanium from Zn ore

Today, Zn ore processing method, as described in figure 2.3, is the main source of Ge as they have large quantities of Ge. Refinery residuals, which are the by-products of hydrometalourgican zinc process contain noticeable amounts of germanium among other metals. However, on a global scale only the 3% [2] of the Ge reserve contained in Zn concentrates is recovered since it can also have a negative impact on Zn recovery. Thus, except Chinese refineries there are only two operating Zn refineries in the world extracting germanium as by-product. Due to the significant concentrations of Ge in Zn refinery by-products several studies have been performed through the years to increase the yield of Ge recovery and purification. Ge extraction in refineries has more frequently been carried out by leaching with H2SO4 being the resulting solution treated with solvent extraction (SX).

Leaching is the loss or extraction of certain materials from a carrier by dissolving them in a liquid form and Solvent Extraction SX, is a method to separate compounds or metal complexes, based on their relative solubilities in two different immiscible liquids, usually water (polar) and an organic solvent (non-polar). Currently, synergistic SX (SSX) has been proved to increase the yield of Ge recovery and purification. A list of some of studies explaining those methods is presented in table 2.1 including the paper introducing them. An interesting stat occurred from them indicating their significant progress in Ge extraction is that the novel flow proposed in 1987 using a reductive SO2 leaching process [17] leads to 57% Ge extraction in silica-germanium gel while Kelex 100 [18] method leads to 98% Ge extraction using high concentration of NaOH. Other methods like LIX 63 [19] can achieve Ge extraction over 99% using more complex chemicals combinations.

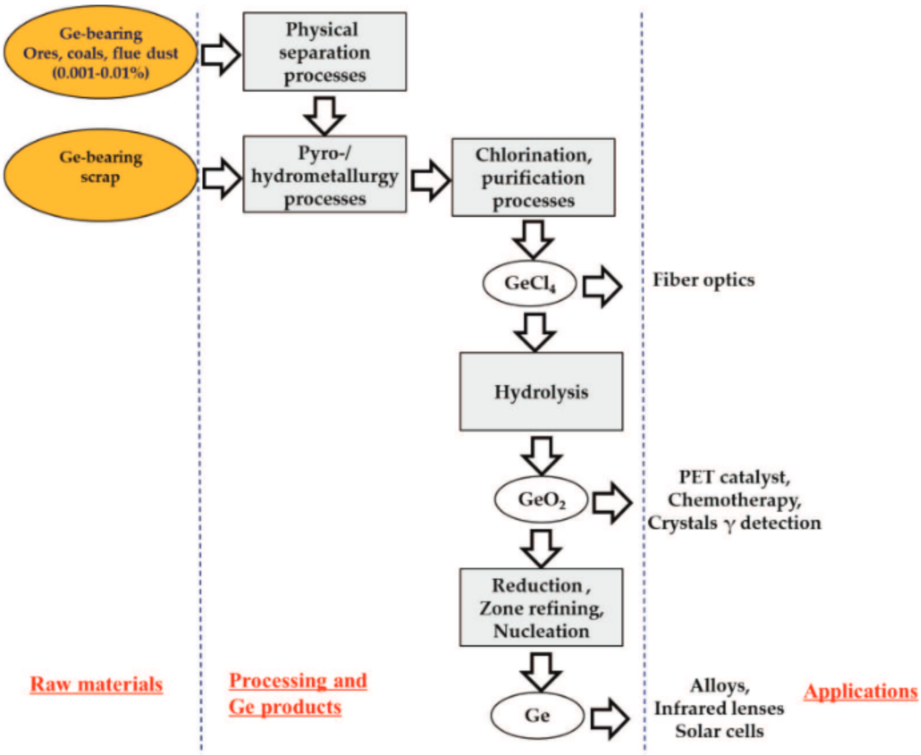

Figure 2.3: Germanium extraction from Zn ore processing pathway

2.3.2 Germanium from coal combustion and gasification fly ashes

Coal plays an essential role in our global energy scheme for power generation. There are sufficient coal reserves to meet 153 years of global production which makes coal a reliable energy source even though due to environmental pollution agreements tends to reduce its production and consumption. There are two widely used process to extract Ge from coal. The first is called Pulverized Coal Combustion (PCC) and the second Integrated Gasification

Extraction Process		Process Characteristics	Reference
Solvent Extraction (SX)	Kelex 100	Good separation of Ge from Zn by-products	[18]
		Poor phase separation in stripping	
		Poor phase separation in stripping	
	LIX 63	Good separation of Ge from Zn by-products	[19]
		Low extraction efficiency	
		Slow extraction kinetics	
	H106	Ga and Ge co-extraction	[20]
		Selective stripping	
		H106 is not commercially available	
	G315	95% Ge extraction efficiency at a low acidity	[21]
		G315 is not commercially available	
Synergistic Solvent Extraction (SSX)	D2EHPA + TBP	TBP improves extraction efficiency	[22]
		High concentration of NaOH for stripping	
	LIX 63 + LIX 26	Increased Ge extraction by addition of LIX 26	[23]
	LIX 63 + O.P	Good selective Ge extraction and high efficiency	[19]
		Fast degradation of LIX 63	

Table 2.1: Recent years Ge extraction processes characteristics and references

Combined Cycle (IGCC). In both of them Ge can either vaporize totally and then be easily adsorbed on the finest coal fly ash (FA) particles during flue gas cooling or vaporize partially and enrich in both the coal FAs and, in a lesser extent, bottom ashes or slags.

These process have high yield value up more than 90% but a small portion of the FAs may reach the flue-gas desulfurization (FGD). Using these methods the average content of Ge in coal FAs is approximately 18 mg/kg, but there are studies claiming that it can reach 420 mg/kg. Using the second method the produced FAs amount is very little (10% to 15%) opposed to the first hence the PCC method is much more known and used. Emphasizing more on the actual Ge extraction method it is composed from two phases, the FAs concentration and the Ge recovery. Classic methods inspired by pyro-metallurgy can not be used as the have high economic and environmental cost thus it was mandatory the scientists to propose new methods to produce the Ge enriched FAs.

In 1998 a method similar to zinc process was proposed based on the leaching of FA with H2SO4 and NaOH followed by ion flotation separation producing low yield of Ge recovery.

However the ion flotation idea was further explored and refined by other researchers which by introducing new chemical mixtures achieved 95-100% Ge recovery yield. In our days researchers aim to create methods which will further increase the FAs utilisation while heavy elements concentration will be reduced and more higher value by-products will be obtained. An abstract schematic of that process is presented in figure 2.4.

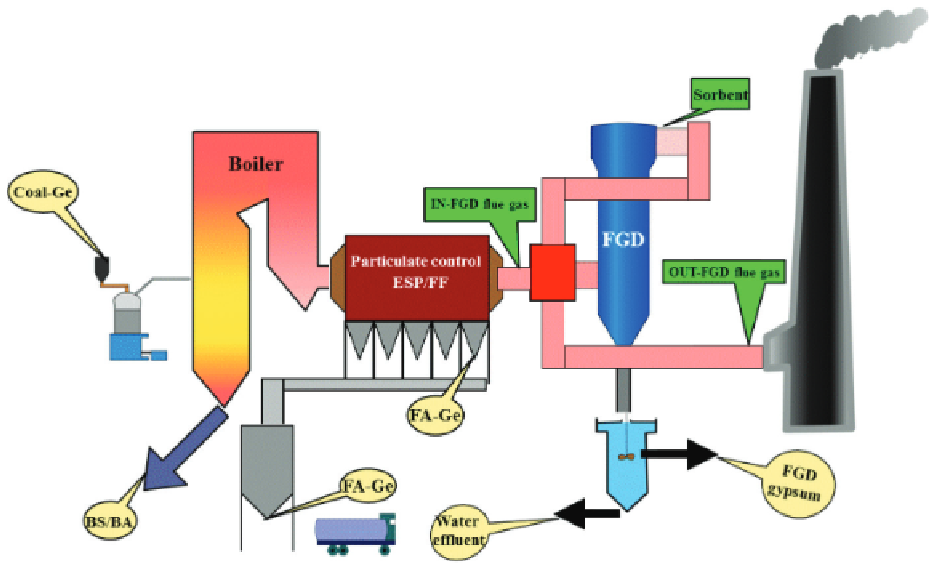

Figure 2.4: Germanium extraction from Coal Fly Ashes processing pathway

2.4 Germanium Mining and Processing Environmental Effects

Despite the grate positive impact of germanium in industry through the technology applications, it is important to mention the direct or potential environmental hazards of germanium usage. Starting from the most important, the mining of Germanium can result in the destruction of natural habitats. Particularly in areas where germanium deposits are located in or near sensitive ecosystems, could lead to the loss of biodiversity and the displacement of local communities. On top of that, the mining and processing of germanium can result in the release of disposals into surface and groundwater. These pollutants can include heavy metals, sulfuric acid, and other toxic chemicals. These can have a harmful effect on aquatic life and can make water unsafe for human consumption. Also, germanium mining can result in the erosion of topsoil, which can lead to the loss of fertile land and the destabilization of slopes and hillsides. This can increase the risk of landslides and flooding.

As regarding the air pollution, both the mining and processing of Germanium can release in the air toxic gases, containing dust or sulfur dioxide, and greenhouse gases, such as carbon dioxide and methane. These can have a harmful effect on human health and can contribute to the formation of acid rain and global warming.In addition to these environmental effects, the usage of Germanium in semiconductor industry may not have significant environmental effects, but the proper disposal of used Germanium-based devices may be necessary to prevent environmental contamination.

It's important to note that mining and processing companies are taking actions to minimize the environmental impact of Germanium extraction, such as using sustainable mining methods and implementing environmental regulations. Additionally, recycling of Germanium-based devices can reduce the environmental impact of Germanium usage.

2.5 Germanium Wafer Manufacturing

Germanium-based wafers are a key component in the semiconductor industry, used in the fabrication of electronic devices such as transistors and diodes. These wafers are created by growing a single crystal of germanium on a substrate, which is then cut into thin slices, or wafers, that can be used in device fabrication. The process of creating germanium-based wafers is known as crystal growth, and it involves a number of steps including substrate preparation, seed crystal growth, and bulk crystal growth.

In detail the process of creating germanium-based wafers begins with substrate preparation [24], where a substrate material, typically a semiconductor such as silicon, is cleaned and prepared for crystal growth. The substrate is then placed in a special chamber called a crucible, which is used to melt the germanium. The next step is the growth of the seed crystal, which is a small, perfectly shaped crystal of germanium that is used to initiate the growth of the bulk crystal. The seed crystal is carefully lowered into the crucible of melted germanium and slowly pulled out, creating a thin layer of germanium that adheres to the seed crystal. This process, presented in figure 2.5, is known as the Czochralski process [25, 26], and it is one of the most common methods used to grow Germanium-based wafers.

The next step is the growth of the bulk crystal [26], which is the actual Germanium-based wafer. This is done by carefully controlling the temperature and cooling rate of the crucible,

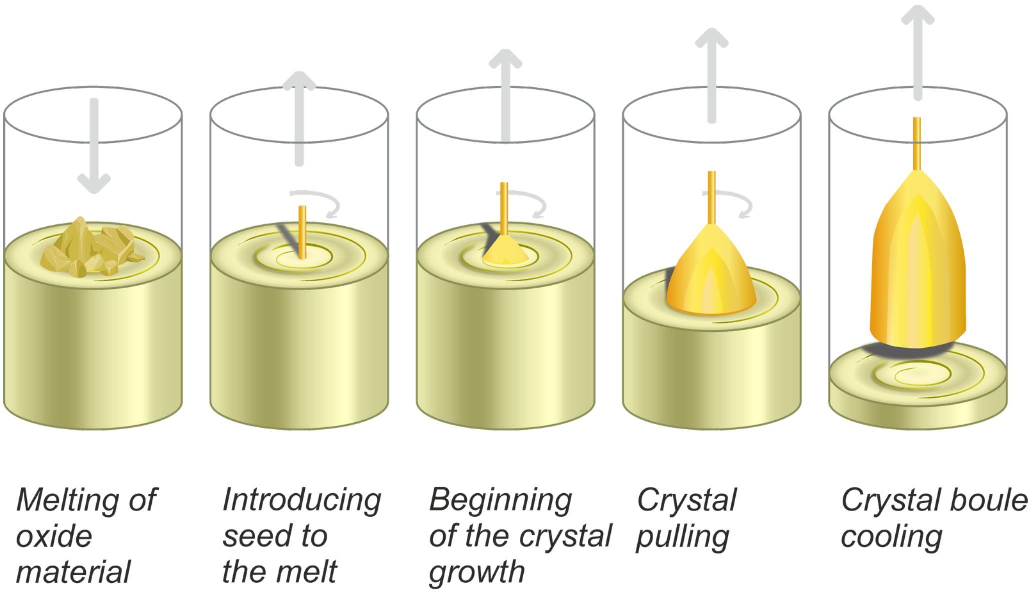

Figure 2.5: Germanium-based wafer creation using Czochralski process

allowing the germanium to slowly solidify around the seed crystal, forming a single crystal. The size of the bulk crystal will depend on the size of the seed crystal and the length of time the seed crystal is left in the crucible. Once the bulk crystal has been grown, it is carefully cut into thin slices, or wafers, using a diamond saw. The wafers are then polished and cleaned, removing any defects or impurities.

The process of creating Germanium-based wafers is challenging because of the high melting point of germanium [15, 26], which requires precise control of temperature and cooling rate. Additionally, Germanium-based wafers are relatively expensive to manufacture compared to other types of wafers, due to the relatively low availability of germanium and the high cost of the equipment used in the process.

Concluding the process creating Germanium-based wafers is a multi-step process that involves substrate preparation, seed crystal growth, and bulk crystal growth. The process is challenging due to the high melting point of germanium and the need for precise control of temperature and cooling rate. Additionally, Germanium-based wafers are relatively expensive to manufacture compared to other types of wafers.

2.6 Germanium based transistors Manufacturing

Today the most common use of germanium in semiconductor industry is the creation of ICs. However modern chips are not created only from germanium but from a composition of both silicon and germanium. These chips are called Silicon-Germanium (SiGe) integrated circuits [27] and are a type of semiconductor device that combines the properties of silicon and germanium to create a new type of device with improved performance. SiGe integrated circuits are created by growing a thin layer of germanium on a silicon substrate. This creates a material which adopts the useful characteristics of germanium allowing the device to operate at higher frequencies with higher current gain and with lower noise figure.

The manufacturing process of Silicon-Germanium-based transistors, as described in [28], involves several steps, including substrate preparation, growth of the germanium layer, formation of the base and emitter regions, and device packaging. This process is presented in figure 2.6. The first step in the manufacturing process is substrate preparation, where a substrate material, typically a semiconductor such as silicon, is cleaned and prepared for the growth of the germanium layer. The substrate is then placed in a special chamber called a reactor, which is used to deposit the germanium layer.

The next step is the growth of the germanium layer, which is typically done using one of several methods such as molecular beam epitaxy (MBE) or chemical vapor deposition (CVD). In MBE, a beam of germanium atoms is directed onto the substrate, where they deposit and grow into a single crystal layer. In CVD, germanium atoms are deposited on the substrate by chemical reactions between gases. Both these methods allow for precise control of the germanium layer thickness and composition.

After the growth of the germanium layer, the base and emitter regions are formed. This is typically done using a process called doping, where impurities such as boron or phosphorus are introduced into the germanium layer to create p-type and n-type regions. The p-type region acts as the base of the transistor, and the n-type region

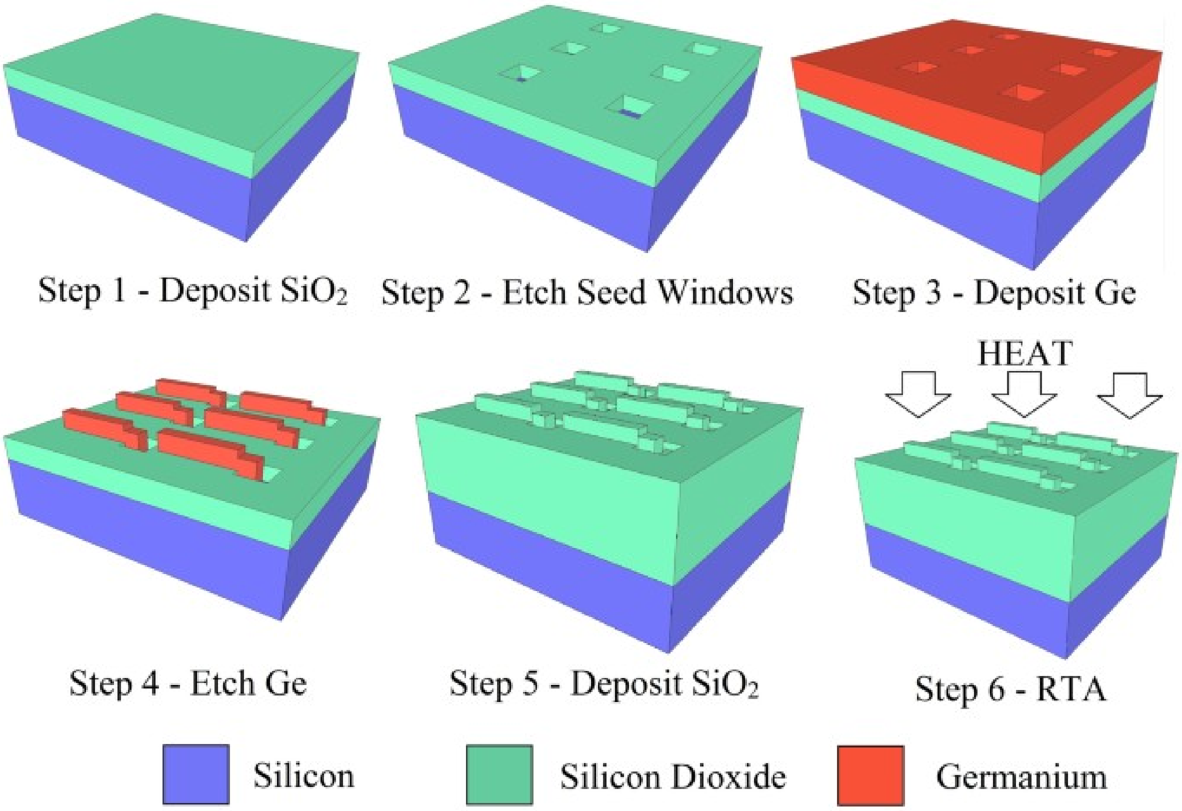

Figure 2.6: Germanium-based transistors creation process steps

Chapter 3

Silicon Extraction, Process and Applications

Silicon is a chemical element with the symbol Si and atomic number 14. It is a hard, brittle crystalline solid with a blue-grey metallic luster and is a metalloid, meaning it has properties of both metals and nonmetals. Silicon is the second most abundant element in the Earth's crust, after oxygen. It is widely used in the electronics industry, particularly in the production of microchips and computer components. It is also used as an alloying agent in the production of aluminum and in the production of solar cells and photovoltaics. In addition, silicon is used in the construction industry for making cement, glass, and ceramics. Silicon compounds have numerous applications, including being used in cosmetics, as a desiccant, in water purification, and in the food industry as a firming agent. Overall, silicon is an extremely versatile and important element with numerous applications in a wide range of industries.

3.1 Silicon Most Frequent Applications

3.1.1 Semiconductors

In the semiconductor industry, silicon is widely used as a material to create various electronic components, including transistors, diodes, and integrated circuits (ICs). The high thermal stability, low thermal expansion coefficient, and good electrical properties of silicon make it an ideal material for these applications. Additionally, the abundance of silicon in the earth's crust and its relatively low cost make it an attractive material for the semiconductor industry. Finally, silicon is one of the most studied elements on earth, thus this makes the process of silicon-based microelectronics is very mature, providing a reliable and efficient method for producing high-quality components.

In the production of silicon-based semiconductors, high-purity silicon is often used in the form of single crystal silicon, which is grown using methods such as the Czochralski process. The single crystal silicon is then sliced into thin wafers and processed further to create various electronic components. This process is complex and requires specialized equipment and expertise, but it results in high-quality silicon-based semiconductors that are essential for a wide range of electronic devices and systems.

Despite its dominance in the semiconductors industry, silicon has some disadvantages. For example, its high resistance can result in increased power consumption of the devices [29]. The crystal structure of silicon has an organized arrangement of atoms that creates a strong covalent bond between the atoms. This strong bond makes it difficult for electrons to move freely through the material, which results in a high resistance to the flow of electrical current. Moreover, the process of producing high-purity silicon, especially single crystal silicon, can be expensive and requires specialized equipment and expertise. Lastly, the extraction and refining of silicon can result in environmental issues, such as air and water pollution, and the release of greenhouse gases.

3.1.2 Solar Cells

Silicon is a key material used in the manufacture of solar cells. The majority of solar cells today are made from crystalline silicon, either monocrystalline or polycrystalline, due to its abundance, relatively low cost, and high efficiency. When silicon is exposed to sunlight, the energy of the photons in the light excites electrons, which then flow freely in the material and can be harvested as electricity. This photovoltaic effect is the basis for the operation of solar cells.

In solar cells, silicon is typically used in a highly purified form, known as electronic grade silicon, to minimize impurities and maximize efficiency. The silicon is then processed into thin wafers, which are then treated with impurities, such as boron or phosphorus, to create a p-n junction. This p-n junction allows the solar cell to effectively separate the flow of electrons, resulting in the production of an electrical current. Additionally, anti-reflective coatings are often applied to the surface of the silicon to increase the amount of light that is absorbed by the cell. Silicon solar cells have demonstrated high efficiency levels, with some cells achieving efficiencies in excess of 22%. This high efficiency combined with the abundance of silicon makes it a popular choice for use in solar cells. [30, 31]

3.1.3 Glass Production

Silicon is an important component in the production of glass for a variety of applications. One of its key properties is its ability to strengthen the structure of the glass, making it more durable and resistant to breakage. This is achieved by adding silicon dioxide, or silica, to the mixture used to make the glass.

Another benefit of silicon in glass production is its ability to improve the optical properties of the glass, such as its transparency and light transmission. This makes it ideal for use in optical fiber technology, where light needs to be transmitted through long distances with minimal loss. The presence of silicon in glass also enhances its ability to withstand high temperatures, making it ideal for use in high-temperature applications such as furnace linings, electric insulation, and laboratory apparatus. In summary, silicon plays a critical role in the production of glass, improving its strength, optical properties, and resistance to high temperatures.

3.2 Silicon Extraction Sources for Semiconductor Industry

Silicon is extracted from silica or silicon dioxide (SiO2) in order to be purified and used in the semiconductor industry. Silica can be found in many forms, including quartz, rocks, sand, and soil. The extraction process involves refining the silica to remove impurities and produce high-purity silicon dioxide. This high-purity silicon dioxide is then used as the starting material for the production of electronic-grade silicon, which is used in the manufacture of semiconductors and nanoelectronics devices. The process of producing electronic-grade silicon typically involves the reduction of silicon dioxide to silicon using a high-temperature process such as the traditional Siemens process or more modern processes such as the fluidized bed reactor process or the directional solidification process. These processes produce high-purity silicon ingots, which are then sliced into wafers to be used in the manufacture of nanoelectronics devices.

3.3 Silicon Extraction Process

3.3.1 Mining

Quartz is one of the most abundant minerals on the Earth's crust found in many rocks and soils. It is a hard, crystalline mineral composed of silicon dioxide(SiO_2) and is a major component of many types of rocks, and it is a good conductor of heat and electricity. The first step in the extraction process is to mine the quartz. This is typically done by open-pit mining, where the quartz deposits are exposed to the surface and extracted. The extracted quartz is then crushed and ground into a fine powder.

3.3.2 Metallurgical Grade polysilicon (MGP) [1]

The next step is to purify the silicon dioxide in the quartz by removing impurities such as aluminum, iron, and titanium. This is typically done using a process called reduction, where the silicon dioxide is heated to over 1900 °C (in an arc furnace) in the presence of a reducing agent such as carbon. The carbon reacts with the impurities, leaving behind high-purity silicon. The produced silicon from this procedure is called metallurgical Grade polysilicon (MGP) and it has a purity percentage of 98% silicon.

3.3.3 Electronic Grade polysilicon [1]

Although the purity of the MGP is high, it is not enough to be used in the production of semiconductor devices, thus it is mandatory to further purify it. To do so, MGP is converted to liquid trichlorosilane $SiHCl_3$ (TCS) which is then distilled to produce a very high purity liquid. This liquid then passes through a chemical vapor deposition (CVD) reactor along with H_2 at 1000 °C - 1200 °C, resulting in electronic grade polysilicon. This polysilicon has a purity percentage greater than 99.9999% silicon, which is suitable for use in semiconductor devices.

3.4 Single Crystal Silicon Growth

Once the high-purity silicon has been obtained, it can then be processed further to form ingots or blocks of silicon, called monocrystalline silicon. Monocrystalline silicon, also known as single crystal silicon, is a type of silicon that has a single crystal structure, and it is used extensively in the semiconductor industry due to its high electrical conductivity, uniform crystal structure, and high levels of purity The single crystal structure of monocrystalline silicon allows for precise control over its electrical and physical properties, making it ideal for use in the production of high-quality semiconductors. The uniform crystal structure also minimizes the number of defects that can affect the performance of electronic devices made from monocrystalline silicon.

The growth process of Single Crystal Silicon mostly done using the Czochralski method described in figure 2.5. The Electronic Grade is melted in a crucible at 1,425 °C. The seed crystal is then slowly rotated and pulled out of the melt, allowing the polysilicon to solidify around the seed and form a single crystal structure.

Figure 3.1: Czochralski silicon crystal with a diameter of 300 mm and a weight of more than 250 kg [32]

3.5 Silicon Wafer Fabrication

Once the monocrystalline silicon has been made, it time for the semiconductor wafer manufacturing process is slicing and grinding. The monocrystalline ingot is cut into thin wafers, typically between 200-300 microns thick, using a wire saw or a slicing machine [1]. This process must be carefully controlled to ensure that the wafers are uniform in thickness and that there is minimal damage to the crystal structure of the silicon.

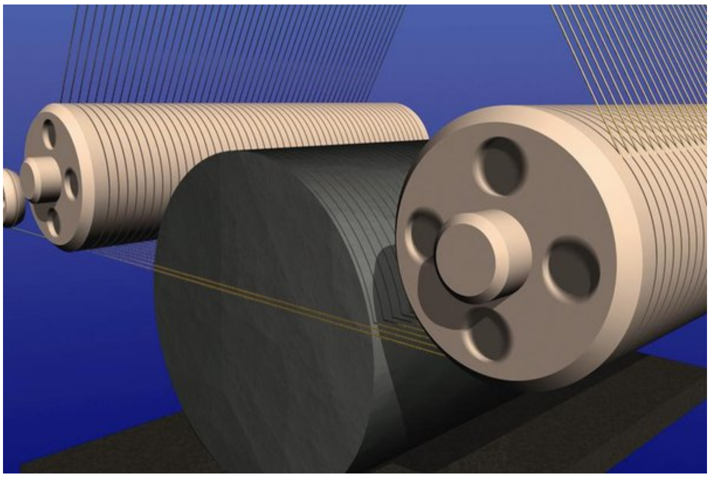

Figure 3.2: Wire saw cutting a silicon ignot.

After the slicing step, the wafers are then ground and polished to remove any surface defects and achieve a smooth, uniform and mirror surface. The wafers are typically polished using mechanical and chemical processes. The mechanical process involves using abrasive pads and progressively finer grits to remove the surface defects, while the chemical process involves etching the surface of the wafer to remove any remaining defects [1].

Next, the wafers are cleaned and prepared for the next step in the process, which is diffusion. In this step, impurities are introduced into the surface of the wafer to create the desired electrical properties for the final product. This is done by heating the wafers in a controlled environment and exposing them to various chemical gases to introduce the impurities. After diffusion, the wafers are then typically subjected to a high-temperature annealing process to activate the impurities and achieve the desired electrical properties. Finally, the wafers are ready for the next step in the semiconductor manufacturing process, which is typically the creation of the various layers and components that make up the final product, such as transistors, capacitors, and resistors.

3.6 Silicon Based Transistors Manufacturing

According to [33, 34] silicon transistors are made through photolithography. This process involves creating a pattern of the desired transistor on a silicon wafer using light and chemicals. The first step is to apply a layer of light-sensitive material, called a photoresist, onto the silicon wafer. The photoresist is then exposed to ultraviolet light through a mask, which has the pattern of the desired transistor. The exposed photoresist is then developed, removing the areas that were exposed to the light and leaving the protected areas behind.

The next step is to etch the silicon wafer to create the channels and gates of the transistor. This is done by exposing the silicon wafer to a mixture of chemicals that dissolve the silicon in the exposed areas. The photoresist is then removed, and the silicon wafer is subjected to a high-temperature annealing process to remove any defects and improve the crystal structure.

Finally, the source and drain regions of the transistor are created by doping the silicon with impurities, such as boron or phosphorus. This process creates a layer of positively charged or negatively charged material that forms the source and drain of the transistor. The last step is to create the contacts, which are metal interconnects that connect the source, drain, and gate regions of the transistor to the rest of the circuit. The resulting silicon transistor is then tested and packaged for use in electronic devices.

Figure 3.3 shows the main steps of transistor manufacturing process according to [35]. The steps can be summarized as follows:

> [label=( )]Ditch formation using silicon dioxide (SiO2) layer. High dielectric constant (high-K) metal gate is deposited. Source and Drain regions formation through ion implantation of dopants. Create the gate and source/drain contacts. Al2O3 is deposited on top of the device in order to protect the active area and gate stack from xenon difluoride (XeF2) etching. Generate etching holes. Create straight channels into the silicon substrate. Protect the sidewalls of the silicon channels. Remove silicon from the inner portion of the substrate.

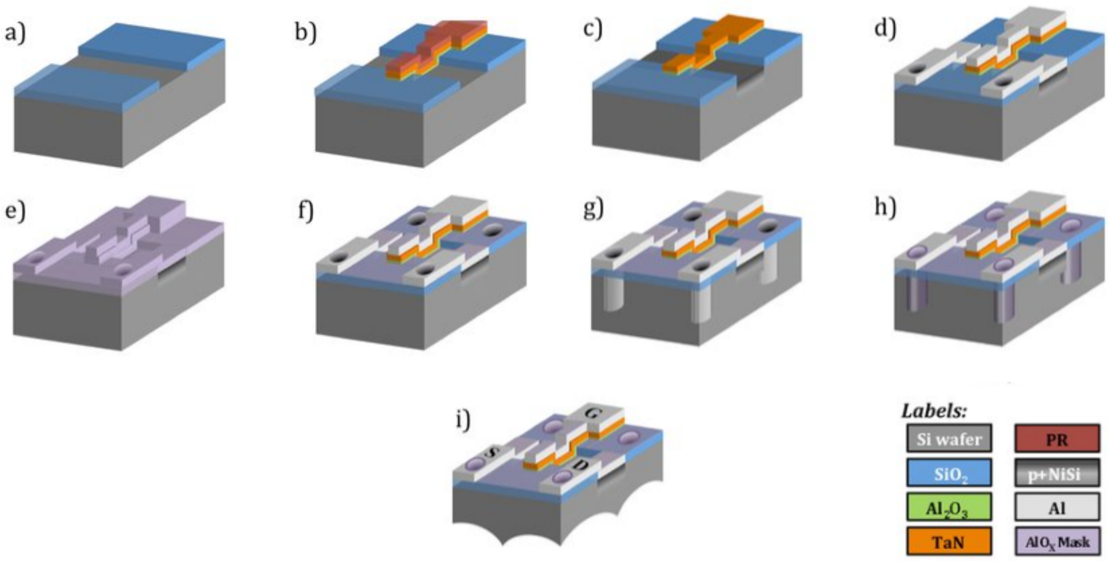

Figure 3.3: Silicon p-type MOSFET transistor fabrication steps. [35]

Chapter 4

Crystal Structures and Defects

The study of crystal structures and defects is crucial in understanding the properties and behavior of solid materials. Crystals are highly ordered structures composed of atoms, ions, or molecules arranged in a repeating pattern. However, it is important to note that perfect crystals with every atom in the correct position do not exist in reality. Instead, real crystals contain various types of defects, ranging from impurities to missing or misplaced atoms or ions.

These defects occur due to several reasons, such as the presence of impurities, cooling rates during crystal formation, and external stresses.

The presence of defects significantly influences the properties of solids. For example, metals can have point defects (defects involving a single particle), line defects (restricted to a row of lattice points), or plane defects (involving an entire plane of lattice points). Impurities can also be present in metals as interstitial or substitutional impurities. Similarly, ionic and molecular compounds exhibit defects similar to those found in metals.

Understanding crystal structures and defects is essential for various fields such as materials science, solid-state physics, and chemistry. By studying these imperfections, researchers can gain insights into the mechanical, electrical, and optical properties of materials.

4.1 Crystal Structure of Silicon and Germanium

Silicon and Germanium are examples of **covalent crystals**. In these solids, the atoms are linked to each other by covalent bonds rather than by electrostatic forces or by delocalized valence electrons that work in metals almost like a ”glue” . The most classic example of a covalent crystal is the diamond, which belongs to the fcc cubic crystal system. Each carbon atom covalently binds with four other carbon atoms arranged tetrahedrally to give the crystalline diamond structure . Covalent crystals are also called ”lattice crystals” because every atom of a covalent crystal is part of a giant molecule that is the crystal itself . These crystals melt at very high temperatures due to the considerable strength of the covalent bond .

The diamond structure is also known as the zinc-blend structure, where each site of a Zn 2+ e S 2- ion is occupied by a carbon atom. Each carbon atom covalently binds by sharing an electronic doublet with four neighboring carbon atoms, forming a lattice that extends over a huge number of elementary cells in each direction, forming a crystal with a covalent lattice . The structure of the diamond, formed by energetic bonds between carbon atoms that constitute a rigidly interconnected three-dimensional lattice, makes it very resistant to deformation and therefore extremely hard. The diamond is among the hardest known substances and is widely used in industry for cutting other materials .

The diamond structure is also adopted by silicon and germanium. Silicon has an fcc cubic structure with eight atoms in these positions: (0 0 0), (1/2 1/2 0), (1/2 0 1/2), (0 1/2 1/2), (1/4 1/4 1/4), (3/4 3/4 1/4), (3/4 1/4 3/4), and (1/4 3/4 3/4).[36] Germanium has the same diamond structure with a cell dimension of approximately 0.566 nm .

4.2 Crystal Defects in Silicon and Germanium

In crystalline materials like silicon and germanium, defects can significantly influence their properties and performance. These defects can be classified into several categories, including point defects, line defects, and planar defects.

4.2.1 Point Defects

Point defects are localized deviations from the perfect crystal lattice structure. They can occur due to vacancies, where an atom is missing from its lattice site, or interstitials, where an extra atom occupies a normally vacant site. These defects introduce energy levels within the band gap and can affect carrier mobility and recombination rates.

4.2.2 Line Defects (Dislocations)

Line defects, often referred to as dislocations, are one-dimensional defects that occur when there is a line of irregular atomic arrangement within the crystal lattice. Dislocations can be classified into edge dislocations and screw dislocations. They can act as charge carriers and impact the material's electrical properties.

4.2.3 Planar Defects

Planar defects include grain boundaries and stacking faults. Grain boundaries occur at the boundaries between crystal grains with different orientations, leading to disruptions in the atomic arrangement. Stacking faults involve deviations in the stacking sequence of crystal planes. These defects can impact the mechanical and electrical properties of the material .

4.3 Semiconductor Device Implications

The presence of crystal defects in silicon and germanium has significant implications for semiconductor devices. These defects can affect carrier transport, recombination, and overall device performance.

4.3.1 Impact on Carrier Mobility

Crystal defects, especially dislocations and grain boundaries, can scatter charge carriers, reducing their mobility. This scattering effect results in increased resistance and reduced device performance, particularly in high-frequency and high-power applications.

4.3.2 Recombination Rates

Defects can act as recombination centers, facilitating electron-hole recombination. This can lead to increased non-radiative recombination and reduced device efficiency in applications such as solar cells and light-emitting diodes (LEDs) .

4.4 Defect Engineering and Control

To mitigate the impact of defects on semiconductor devices, defect engineering and control strategies are employed during material growth and device fabrication processes.

4.4.1 High-Purity Materials

One approach is to use high-purity silicon and germanium materials. Reducing impurities minimizes the formation of point defects and enhances the overall crystal quality .

4.4.2 Advanced Processing Techniques

Advanced processing techniques, such as annealing and ion implantation, can be used to heal or minimize defects. These techniques are essential for tailoring material properties to specific device requirements.

4.5 Characterization Techniques

Characterizing crystal structures and defects is essential for quality control and research purposes. Several techniques are commonly employed:

4.5.1 X-ray Diffraction (XRD)

XRD is used to determine the crystal structure and lattice parameters of silicon and germanium. It provides information about the degree of crystallinity and the presence of defects .

4.5.2 Transmission Electron Microscopy (TEM)

TEM allows for high-resolution imaging of crystal defects, including dislocations and stacking faults. It provides detailed insights into the nature and distribution of defects within the material.

4.5.3 Atomic Force Microscopy (AFM)

AFM is a surface characterization technique that can be used to visualize and measure the topography of semiconductor materials. It can detect surface defects and roughness .

4.6 Future Directions

Ongoing research in the field of silicon and germanium semiconductor materials is focused on further improving defect control and developing new characterization techniques. Future advancements may lead to even more efficient and reliable semiconductor devices.

Chapter 5

Doping and Concentrations

5.1 Doping and Concentrations

Doping is the deliberate introduction of impurities into an intrinsic semiconductor to modify its electrical, optical, and structural characteristics. In the case of silicon and germanium, common dopants include boron, arsenic, phosphorus, and gallium. The concentration of dopants has a significant impact on the electrical properties of semiconductors. For example, low or light doping involves adding approximately one dopant atom per 100 million atoms, while high or heavy doping requires adding many more dopant atoms (approximately one per ten thousand atoms). The concentration of dopants affects the charge carrier concentration in the material, which is essential for conductivity. Silicon and germanium are Group IV semiconductors that find wide application in various electronic devices. Doping these materials can modify their electrical properties. For instance, germanium doping has been observed to suppress the formation of specific defects while promoting the formation of others.

5.1.1 Role of Doping in Modulating Properties

There are two primary types of dopants. The N-type (Donor) doping which involves adding atoms with extra electrons (e.g., phosphorus) into the crystal structure. These extra electrons become the majority carriers, enhancing conductivity, as well as P-type (Acceptor) doping which involves adding atoms with fewer electrons (e.g., boron) into the crystal structure. These ”holes” in the electron structure become the majority carriers, enhancing conductivity in a different way. Doping alters the number and mobility of charge carriers in a semiconductor, shifting its electrical behavior. It can be used to create p-n junctions for diodes and transistors, crucial components in electronic circuits. In summary, semiconductors are materials with unique electrical, optical, and structural properties that make them ideal for electronic applications. The ability to modulate these properties through doping is fundamental to the design and function of modern semiconductor devices, such as transistors, diodes, and integrated circuits, enabling the foundation of contemporary electronics and technology.

5.2 Doping Mechanism

Doping Process: To begin the doping process, specific impurity atoms are carefully selected based on their electronic properties. These dopants are chosen to have either more or fewer electrons in their outermost electron shell than the host semiconductor material. The two primary types of dopants are N-type (donor) and P-type (acceptor) dopants. The chosen dopant atoms are then introduced into the semiconductor crystal lattice during the crystal growth process. This can be achieved through several methods, including the following. High-energy ions of the dopant material are implanted into the semiconductor's surface. Dopant atoms are diffused into the crystal lattice by heating the semiconductor in the presence of the dopant material. Dopant gases are introduced during the deposition process to incorporate dopant atoms into the growing crystal. Once introduced, dopant atoms replace some of the host atoms in the lattice. The dopant atoms may have one more or one fewer electron than the host atoms, creating localized energy levels within the band gap. In N-type doping, dopant atoms introduce extra electrons into the semiconductor's crystal lattice. Common N-type dopants include phosphorus (P) and arsenic (As). These extra electrons become the majority charge carriers in the semiconductor. In P-type doping, dopant atoms introduce ”holes” or vacancies where electrons can move, effectively creating positive charge carriers. Common P-type dopants include boron (B) and gallium (Ga). These holes become the majority charge carriers in the semiconductor. The addition of small numbers of dopant atoms can significantly alter a semiconductor's electrical conductivity:

- In N-type doping, the extra electrons from the dopants increase the concentration of free electrons, making the material more conductive.
- In P-type doping, the holes created by the dopants increase the concentration of positive

charge carriers, also enhancing conductivity, but in a different manner.

Combining N-type and P-type doped regions in a semiconductor can lead to the formation of a p-n junction. At the p-n junction, electrons from the N-type region combine with holes from the P-type region, creating a depletion region with no majority carriers. This region acts as a barrier to current flow. By applying a voltage across the junction, the barrier can be either reduced (forward bias) or increased (reverse bias), allowing for the controlled flow of current, making p-n junctions the basis for diodes and transistors.

The doping mechanism involves the introduction of carefully selected impurity atoms into intrinsic semiconductors to modify their electrical properties. This process can lead to the creation of N-type and P-type regions within the same semiconductor material, enabling the design and construction of various electronic devices that rely on the controlled flow of charge carriers. The precise control of doping is critical to semiconductor technology and is essential for the development of integrated circuits and other electronic components.

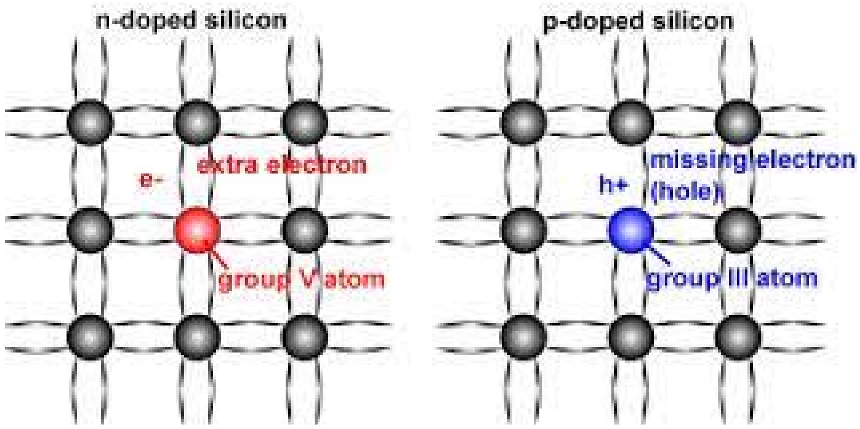

Figure 5.1: Schematic of a silicon crystal lattice doped with impurities to produce n-type and p-type semiconductor material.

5.3 Doping Techniques

Doping techniques are essential in the fabrication of semiconductor devices, including those made from silicon and germanium. Here, we will explore three common doping techniques: ion implantation, diffusion, and epitaxy, along with their advantages and limitations.

5.3.1 Ion Implantation

Ion implantation involves bombarding the semiconductor substrate (e.g., silicon or germanium) with high-energy ions of the dopant material. These ions penetrate the surface and become embedded within the crystal lattice. Ion implantation allows precise control over dopant concentration and depth profiling, making it suitable for creating highly controlled doping profiles. It operates at relatively low temperatures, which is crucial for preserving the crystal structure and avoiding thermal damage. High-energy ions can cause lattice damage and defects in the semiconductor material, necessitating post-implantation annealing to repair the crystal structure. The penetration depth of ions is limited, so it may not be suitable for very deep doping profiles.

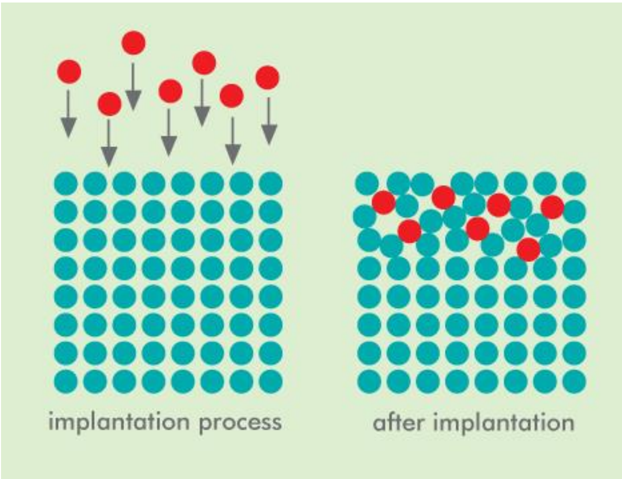

Figure 5.2: The method of ion implantation.

5.3.2 Diffusion

In the diffusion process, dopant atoms are introduced to the semiconductor by exposing it to a vapor or gas containing the dopant material at elevated temperatures. Over time, dopant atoms diffuse into the crystal lattice. Diffusion is a well-established technique and has been used for decades in semiconductor manufacturing. It can achieve a more homogeneous distribution of dopant atoms within the material. Diffusion is a relatively slow process compared to ion implantation. Precise control over doping concentration and depth can be challenging to achieve. High temperatures are required, which can lead to other diffusion-related issues and require additional thermal processing steps.

5.3.3 Epitaxy

Epitaxy involves growing a thin layer of semiconductor material on a substrate with controlled doping. This can be achieved through techniques like molecular beam epitaxy (MBE) or chemical vapor deposition (CVD). Epitaxial layers can be grown with extremely high purity and controlled doping profiles. It enables the integration of different semiconductor materials with varying properties. Epitaxial layers often exhibit superior crystalline quality. The thickness of epitaxial layers is limited, so it may not be suitable for bulk doping of a thick semiconductor substrate. Epitaxial growth requires specialized equipment and controlled environments. The equipment and materials for epitaxy can be expensive. Each doping technique has its advantages and limitations, and the choice of technique depends on the specific requirements of the semiconductor fabrication process and the desired device characteristics. Engineers and researchers carefully select the appropriate doping method to achieve the desired doping concentration, depth profile, and material quality for a particular semiconductor application. In practice, a combination of these techniques may be used at different stages of semiconductor device fabrication to achieve the desired properties and performance.

5.4 Dopant Types

Different dopant elements are commonly used in silicon and germanium doping to modify their electrical behavior. Here, we will explore some of the key dopant elements and their effects on the electrical behavior of semiconductors, focusing on silicon and germanium:

5.4.1 Boron (B)

Boron is typically used as a P-type dopant. When boron is introduced into the crystal lattice of silicon or germanium, it creates ”holes” by accepting electrons from neighboring atoms. These holes act as positive charge carriers. Thus, boron doping increases the concentration of positive charge carriers (holes), making the material more hole-dominant and enhancing its P-type conductivity.

5.4.2 Phosphorus (P)

Phosphorus is commonly used as an N-type dopant. Phosphorus has one more electron than silicon or germanium. When introduced into the crystal lattice, phosphorus atoms release an extra electron into the conduction band, effectively increasing the concentration of free electrons. This extra electron makes the material more electron-dominant, enhancing its N-type conductivity.

5.4.3 Arsenic (As)

Arsenic is another common N-type dopant. Similar to phosphorus, arsenic introduces an extra electron into the crystal lattice, increasing the concentration of free electrons and promoting N-type conductivity.

5.4.4 Antimony (Sb)

Antimony is used as an N-type dopant. Like arsenic, antimony introduces extra electrons into the crystal lattice, enhancing the material's N-type conductivity.

Chapter 6

Radiation effects in semiconductor materials

The term ”radiation effects in semiconductor materials” describes how ionizing radiation affects the structural and electrical characteristics of semiconductors. Ionizing radiation refers to a variety of radiation types having enough energy to ionize atoms and molecules in semiconductor materials, such as alpha particles, beta particles, gamma rays, and X-rays. Depending on the application, this interaction may have a number of effects, some of which may be negative and others of which may be advantageous.

6.1 Radiation environments

Different radiation environments can be exposed by semiconductors, and these environments can have an impact on semiconductor materials.

6.1.1 Space Radiation

Due to cosmic rays, solar radiation, and confined radiation belts surrounding Earth and other celestial bodies, semiconductors utilized in space applications are subjected to a hostile radiation environment. Ionizing radiation from space can take many different forms, such as high-energy protons, electrons, heavy ions, and galactic cosmic rays. Total Ionizing Dose (TID) effects, where ionizing particles gradually deposit energy in the semiconductor material, can be brought on by space radiation and result in damage and a decline in device performance. Due to the impact of high-energy particles on semiconductor devices, single-event effects (SEE), such as single-event upsets (SEUs), single-event latch-ups (SELs), and single-event burnouts (SEBs), can also happen in space. Radiation-hardening techniques are used to reduce degradation, and space-grade semiconductors are made to withstand these effects.

6.1.2 Nuclear Reactors

Ionizing radiation produced by nuclear fission operations is a risk to semiconductors used in and near nuclear reactors. Gamma rays and neutrons, which can permeate materials and interact with semiconductor devices, are typically present in nuclear reactor environments. Gamma radiation exposure can ionize and excite semiconductor materials, which can result in TID effects and higher leakage currents in devices. The semiconductor lattice can sustain displacement damage from neutron radiation, which leads to lattice imperfections and changes in electrical characteristics. In order to endure these conditions, specialized radiation-hardened semiconductors are utilized in nuclear reactor control and monitoring systems.

6.1.3 Particle Accelerators

For use in scientific research and medical procedures, particle accelerators produce high-energy beams of charged particles (such as protons and electrons). Radiation exposure is high for semiconductors inside or close to particle accelerators. A variety of ionizing radiations, such as gamma rays, X-rays, and secondary particles produced by beam-target interactions, are produced by particle accelerators. Particle accelerator radiation can cause SEE, especially in delicate electronic equipment. Device problems could be momentary or long-lasting as a result of these impacts, which could disturb or harm semiconductor components. Specialized radiation-hardened components or shielding techniques are used to lessen these effects.

6.1.4 Medical Radiation Therapy

Ionizing radiation is emitted during the operation of semiconductor-based medical devices, such as radiation therapy machines and imaging equipment. In medical radiation therapy, X-rays and gamma rays are frequently employed. Semiconductors react to these high-energy photons. Precision and dependability are essential for radiation therapy equipment. Treatment precision may be impacted by ionizing radiation exposure's effects on semiconductor component performance. To guarantee the performance and security of these devices, shielding and routine quality assurance procedures are used.

Ionizing radiation can have different impacts on semiconductor materials in each of these settings depending on the radiation energy, intensity, and semiconductor technology being employed. In order to design semiconductor devices for these radiation-rich settings, it is frequently necessary to use radiation-hardened materials, reduce SEE susceptibility, and create error-correction methods that can lessen the effects of radiation-induced mistakes. As reliable operation in these demanding settings is essential for numerous applications in space exploration, nuclear energy, particle physics, and medical technology, researchers and engineers are always working to increase the radiation tolerance of semiconductor materials and devices.

6.2 Radiation Damage Mechanisms

6.2.1 Ionization Effects

A primary radiation damage process is ionization. It happens when electrons in the semiconductor material receive energy from high-energy particles like alpha and beta particles, gamma rays, and X-rays, which causes them to be ejected from their atomic orbits. Electron-hole pairs are formed during this process.

Ionization produces free carriers, including electrons and holes, which support the semiconductor's electrical conductivity. Devices' power consumption and signal integrity may be impacted by higher leakage current caused by the presence of extra carriers. Ionization-induced flaws may trap carriers, causing a buildup of trapped charge that can change the properties of the device over time and impair performance. The electrical characteristics of the semiconductor may vary and undergo long-term degradation as a result of the cumulative effect of ionization over time, measured in Gray (Gy) or Rad (rad).

6.2.2 Displacement Damage

When high-energy neutrons or heavy ions hit semiconductor atoms, they are displaced from their normal lattice positions and cause displacement damage. Damage to the lattice and structural flaws are the results of this.

The mechanical and electrical properties of the material can be impacted by displaced atoms' ability to produce vacancies, interstitials, and dislocation defects within the crystal lattice. The mobility of charge carriers (such as electrons and holes) can be restricted by structural flaws, which lowers the material's conductivity. Displacement damage can bring energy levels into the semiconductor's bandgap, which might change its electrical characteristics and even produce undesired energy levels that could trap electrons.

6.2.3 Single Event Effects (SEE)

A single high-energy particle striking a delicate area of a semiconductor device can result in SEE, which are brief disturbances or damage. Single Event Upsets (SEUs), Single Event Latch-Ups (SELs), or Single Event Burnouts (SEBs) are three possible manifestations of SEE.

SEUs are brief modifications in a device's state brought on by the impact of a high-energy particle, such as flip-flops or memory cells. They may result in temporary problems or data mistakes. When a single particle sets off a latch-up condition, a large current flows through the device and results in SELs. If the situation is not handled right away, irreparable gadget damage could result. A single particle strike has the potential to cause catastrophic failures known as SEBs. They frequently result in a semiconductor device being destroyed, which can be troublesome in applications that are crucial.

6.2.4 Radiation-Induced Annealing

Ionization or displacement damage caused by radiation-induced flaws may occasionally anneal or heal over time. When vacancies and interstitials migrate or recombine to produce more stable structures, this process is known as annealing. Radiation damage can be mitigated over time through radiation-induced annealing, which can partially recover a semiconductor's electrical characteristics. To accurately forecast semiconductor materials' long-term performance in radiation-rich environments, it is essential to understand their annealing behavior.

Ionization, displacement damage, and SEE are all examples of radiation damage mechanisms that can occur in semiconductor materials. These methods can affect charge carrier mobility, create defects, change material properties, and have an effect on device performance. For applications where exposure to ionizing radiation is a problem, like space exploration, nuclear energy, particle physics, and high-reliability electronics, designing radiation-hardened semiconductors and putting them into practice are essential.

6.3 Radiation Effects in Group IV Semiconductor Materials

6.3.1 Silicon (Si)

Radiation Damage Mechanisms

Ionizing radiation has a strong tendency to ionize silicon. By forcing electrons from silicon atoms, incident particles can produce electron-hole pairs and free carriers. Total ionizing dose (TID) effects and higher electrical conductivity are both outcomes of this process.

High-energy neutrons or heavy ions can cause displacement damage to silicon. The mechanical and electrical properties of the material are impacted by lattice defects, vacancies, and interstitials that are produced when silicon atoms are knocked out of their lattice locations.

When subjected to high-energy particles, silicon-based devices, particularly integrated circuits (ICs), can experience SEE. Device failures may be momentary or long-lasting as a result of SEEs in silicon, which might appear as Single Event Upsets (SEUs), Single Event Latch-Ups (SELs), or Single Event Burnouts (SEBs).

Impact on Material and Devices

Increased leakage currents, altered threshold voltages, and changed electrical properties of devices can all be consequences of TID effects in silicon. Devices made of radiation-hardened silicon are made to tolerate higher ionizing radiation doses. Silicon's mechanical stability and electrical characteristics can be changed by structural flaws brought on by displacement damage. The performance of the gadget may be impacted by these flaws that can trap charge carriers and reduce their mobility. SEE mitigation techniques for silicon devices include building strong latch-up protection circuits, insulating vulnerable components, and utilizing error-correcting codes.

6.3.2 Germanium (Ge)

Radiation Damage Mechanisms

Germanium is sensitive to ionization by ionizing radiation, much like silicon is. In the material, ionization processes produce electron-hole pairs and free carriers. But compared to silicon, germanium often displays higher charge carrier mobilities, making it more appropriate for some radiation-resistant applications. Germanium's less closely linked crystal lattice makes it less susceptible to displacement damage than silicon. It can endure more intense neutron irradiation without suffering significant damage. When subjected to high-energy particles, germanium-based devices, like silicon-based ones, can suffer SEE. Electronic circuit operation can be disrupted by SEE events, hence mitigation measures are required.

Impact on Material and Devices

In germanium, TID effects can also result in increased leakage currents and modifications to electrical properties. In contrast to silicon, germanium is less susceptible to TID. Germanium is a good material for applications where exposure to heavy ions or neutrons is a problem, like radiation detectors in nuclear physics. This is because of its relative resistance to displacement damage. Similar to silicon, germanium electronics use shielding and error correction as SEE mitigation techniques.

In conclusion, Group IV semiconductor materials silicon and germanium both show distinct reactions to ionizing radiation and displacement damage. While silicon is frequently employed in the electronics sector and needs to be carefully radiation-hardened for use in nuclear and space applications, germanium is better suited for some radiation-rich situations because of its relative resistance to displacement damage. To achieve dependable and robust performance in radiation-prone situations, it is crucial to comprehend these radiation effects and select the proper semiconductor material for a given application.

6.4 Radiation Effects in III-V Semiconductor Materials

GaAs and other III-V semiconductors have special qualities that make them useful in a variety of electrical and optoelectronic applications. Applications in high-energy physics, the military, and space exploration depend heavily on understanding their radiation response.

6.4.1 Gallium Arsenide (GaAs)

Radiation Damage Mechanisms

Due to its III-V semiconductor nature, GaAs is susceptible to ionization by ionizing radiation. Ga and As atoms can be ionized by incident particles, producing free carriers and electron-hole pairs as a result. Ionization may have an impact on the material's bandgap and electron mobility. When subjected to heavy ions or high-energy neutrons, GaAs is also vulnerable to displacement damage. The crystal lattice may develop structural flaws, vacancies, and interstitials as a result of displaced Ga and As atoms. GaAs possess a special property known as radiation-induced annealing, wherein specific flaws caused by ionization and displacement damage may anneal or self-heal over time given advantageous circumstances, potentially restoring some of the material's electrical characteristics.

Impact on Material and Devices

Increased leakage currents, modifications to carrier mobility, and altered electrical properties of GaAs devices can all result from ionization-induced damage. Radiation-hardened GaAs devices or materials with wider bandgaps may be employed for applications where radiation is a concern. GaAs displacement damage can reduce carrier mobility and increase charge carrier trapping by defects, both of which have an impact on device performance. It's crucial to comprehend GaAs' annealing behavior in order to forecast how well it will operate over the long run in radiation-rich settings. The effects of radiation degradation over time can be reduced by annealing, which can partially restore electrical characteristics.

6.4.2 III-V Semiconductor Materials

GaAs is a well-known III-V semiconductor, but there are many other III-V compound semiconductors that are employed in a variety of applications, such as InP (indium phosphide), InSb (indium antimonide), and GaN (gallium nitride). Depending on its unique characteristics, bandgap, and crystal structure, each of these materials exhibits a unique radiation reaction. Lasers, photodetectors, and light-emitting diodes (LEDs) are examples of optoelectronic devices that frequently employ III-V semiconductor materials. The performance of these devices may be impacted by radiation-induced changes in the material's optical characteristics. In high-energy physics investigations, where exposure to ionizing radiation is typical, III-V semiconductors are also used. For sustaining precise readings and dependable detector performance, it is crucial to comprehend the radiation effects in these materials.

In conclusion, III-V semiconductor materials like GaAs show radiation damage processes such ionization and displacement damage that are similar to those in Group IV semiconductors. However, depending on their characteristics and crystal structures, III-V materials can react differently to radiation in different ways. To ensure dependable operation in radiation-rich situations, radiation-hardened materials, optimized device architectures, and consideration of these materials' particular annealing behavior are frequently used when designing radiation-resistant devices using III-V semiconductors.

6.5 Radiation Effects in Opto-Electronic Components

This chapter involves the impacts of radiation on opto-electronic parts with an emphasis on the mechanisms of radiation damage unique to components like light-emitting diodes (LEDs) and photodiodes. For a number of applications, such as optical communication, remote sensing, and medical imaging, these components are essential. Maintaining performance in radiation-rich situations requires an understanding of how they react to ionizing radiation.

6.5.1 Radiation Damage Mechanisms

LEDs and photodiodes are examples of opto-electronic components that may be impacted by ionization brought on by ionizing radiation. The semiconductor materials utilized in these devices can produce electron-hole pairs and free carriers as a result of ionization processes.

Ionization can have a number of outcomes: The optical characteristics of semiconductor materials, particularly their absorption and emission spectra, can be changed by ionization-induced defects and a rise in the concentration of free carriers. As a result, LEDs may emit light at a different wavelength or exhibit different absorption properties. Increased free carrier concentration in photodiodes may have an impact on how responsive the device is to incident photons, thereby lowering its sensitivity to light. Ionization can lower the signal-to-noise ratio by increasing the dark current, which is the current generated when no light is incident.

6.5.2 Single Event Effects (SEE)

Opto-electronic components can be vulnerable to SEE, particularly in situations like space and high-energy physics. When a single high-energy particle strikes the apparatus and interferes with it, SEE happens. SEE in opto-electronic components can cause momentary or persistent issues. For example, LEDs may experience brief disturbances that briefly alter their emission properties. In photodiodes, a brief signal loss may be seen. In rare circumstances, SEE might cause irreparable harm to the device, leading to total failure.

6.5.3 Radiation Hardening

During the design and production phases, radiation-hardening techniques may be used to reduce the effects of radiation on opto-electronic components. Reduced ionization-induced effects can be achieved by selecting semiconductor materials with greater radiation endurance or broader band gaps. GaN, a wide-bandgap material, is more radiation-resistant than silicon, for instance. It is possible to shield ionizing radiation from opto-electronic parts with shielding materials and methods. By identifying and fixing temporary faults, error correction techniques can help reduce the impacts of SEE. Multiple opto-electronic components can be used in critical applications to provide redundancy, which enables continuous functioning even when certain devices are exposed to radiation.

6.5.4 Radiation Testing

Opto-electronic components frequently go through radiation testing, including ionizing radiation exposure tests, prior to deployment in radiation-rich settings. This aids in evaluating the device's radiation sensitivity and radiation-related performance. In conclusion, the optical and electrical properties of opto-electronic components like LEDs and photodiodes can be affected by radiation effects. The two main processes of radiation damage are ionization and SEE. To guarantee the dependable performance of these components in settings where ionizing radiation is a problem, radiation-hardening procedures, careful material selection, shielding, and error correction measures are used. Verifying the functionality of opto-electronic components in radiation-rich environments also requires appropriate testing and qualification processes.

6.6 Radiation-Hardened Semiconductor Devices

This chapter is about how radiation-hardened semiconductor devices, such as field-effect transistors (FETs), bipolar transistors, and metal-oxide-semiconductor (MOS) devices, are designed and created. For applications in nuclear reactors, high-energy physics experiments, and space exploration where exposure to ionizing radiation may result in device malfunction or performance deterioration, radiation-hardened devices are essential.

6.6.1 Field-Effect Transistors (FETs)

Although silicon is a popular material for FETs, wide-bandgap materials with higher radiation tolerance, such as silicon carbide (SiC) and gallium nitride (GaN), are favored for radiation-hardened FETs. To reduce gate leakage and threshold voltage shifts, special gate oxide materials with enhanced radiation resistance are used, such as silicon dioxide (SiO2) with nitrogen added (SiNx). Radiation-hardened FETs may use methods like threshold voltage compensation circuits to offset shifts in threshold voltage brought on by ionization effects. To confirm their performance in the presence of ionizing radiation, radiation-hardened FETs undergo thorough testing in radiation settings.

6.6.2 Bipolar Transistors

By utilizing specific silicon materials with improved radiation tolerance, silicon bipolar transistors can be made more resistant. Due of its innate radiation resistance, silicon-germanium (SiGe) is another material of choice. Radiation-resistant passivation layers are used to shield the transistor’s surface from damage brought on by radiation. To reduce the effect of ionization effects on gain and performance, emitter ballasting techniques may be used in the design of bipolar transistors. To ensure their dependability in radiation-rich situations, bipolar transistors undergo extensive radiation testing.

6.6.3 Metal-oxide-semiconductor (MOS) Devices

Specialized gate dielectrics, such as silicon oxynitride (SiOxNy) or high-k dielectrics, which are less vulnerable to ionization-induced damage, are frequently used in radiation-hardened MOS devices. By electrically isolating the body terminal in some designs, MOS transistors can lessen the effect of radiation on the electrical properties of the device. MOS devices may include threshold voltage shift compensation circuits, just as FETs. In order to analyze performance and determine any shifts in the threshold voltage or increases in leakage current, MOS devices are put through radiation testing.

6.6.4 Mixed-Signal and Digital Devices

Radiation-hardened components, like FETs and bipolar transistors, are frequently combined with other radiation-hardened digital components to construct entire systems in mixed-signal and digital devices. Redundancy and error correction codes are widely used to lessen the impact of single event upsets (SEUs) in digital components.

6.6.5 Packaging and Shielding

Semiconductor devices that have been radiation-hardened frequently have unique packaging methods and materials that protect them from ionizing radiation. The usage of hermetic packaging with radiation-hardened ceramics is widespread. To further cover radiation-sensitive components inside the package, additional shielding materials, such as lead or tungsten, may be used in specific applications.

6.6.6 Radiation Testing and Certification

To verify their radiation hardness, radiation-hardened semiconductor devices are put through standardized radiation testing techniques, such as total ionizing dose (TID) and single event effects (SEE) testing. The radiation performance of the device, including TID tolerance, SEE thresholds, and suggested working settings, is detailed in the documentation and datasheets.

Chapter 7

Semiconductor Devices

7.1 Historical Development

The historical development of semiconductor devices is an intriguing journey that has revolutionized the world of electronics. It all began with the early pioneers who laid the foundation for this field.

One of the earliest mentions of semiconductors can be traced back to Alessandro Volta (1745–1827), an Italian scientist famous for inventing the electric battery. In his paper published in the Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London, Volta referred to certain materials as ”semi-conducting” due to their unique electrical properties.

Another notable figure is Humphry Davy (1778–1829), a renowned UK scientist who discovered chlorine and iodine. In 1821, Davy observed the effect of temperature on the electrical conductivity of metals, which laid the groundwork for understanding semiconductors.

In 1833, Michael Faraday (1791–1867), an English chemist and physicist, made a significant observation regarding silver sulfide. He found that its electrical conductivity increased with rising temperature[37].

These early discoveries set the stage for further advancements in semiconductor technology. Fast forward to 1947 when John Bardeen, Walter H. Brattain, and William B. Shockley invented the transistor at Bell Laboratories [38]. This groundbreaking invention marked a turning point in electronics, opening up new possibilities for electronic devices.

Your thesis focuses on silicon and germanium as semiconductor base materials. Silicon (Si) and germanium (Ge) are elemental semiconductors and have played pivotal roles in the development of semiconductor devices. Silicon, in particular, has become the dominant material due to its abundance and excellent electrical properties. Germanium, on the other hand, was one of the earliest semiconductor materials used[39].

By exploring the historical development of semiconductor devices and delving into the unique properties of silicon and germanium, your thesis will shed light on their significance in modern electronics.

7.1.1 Silicon Revolution

The Silicon Revolution refers to a pivotal period in semiconductor history when silicon-based integrated circuits began to dominate the industry. The invention of the integrated circuit was a significant step forward and took place simultaneously at Fairchild and Texas Instruments from 1957 to 1959. These integrated circuits revolutionized electronics due to their reduced cost, smaller size, and improved reliability compared to vacuum tubes[40].

During this period, research on silicon purification succeeded in producing material suitable for semiconductor devices. Silicon's abundance and lower cost compared to germanium made it an attractive choice for manufacturing new devices. Furthermore, silicon's ability to retain its semiconducting properties at higher temperatures contributed to its popularity[41].

The Silicon Revolution laid the foundation for modern computing and communications systems. It enabled computers to employ hundreds of thousands of transistors each and led to the development of integrated circuits that further revolutionized electronics[42].

7.1.2 Germanium's Early Role

Germanium, element No. 32, was discovered in 1886 by Clemens Winkler. Its first significant application was in the form of point contact Schottky diodes during World War II, which were used for radar reception1. The addition of a closely spaced second contact led to the creation of the first all-solid-state electronic amplifier device, known as the transistor[43].

Germanium played a crucial role in the early history of transistors. In fact, the first transistor was made using germanium. However, silicon soon replaced germanium as the preferred semiconductor material due to several reasons. Silicon is easier to process, can handle higher power levels, has less reverse bias leakage, and is more stable at higher temperatures[44].

Despite being supplanted by silicon, germanium is now experiencing a resurgence in interest. Researchers are exploring germanium's charge-carrying abilities and advanced fabrication technology to develop future chips. Germanium-on-insulator wafers have been used to construct inverters containing planar transistors and FinFETs, showcasing germanium's potential[45].

While silicon dominates the semiconductor industry today, it's important to acknowledge germanium's early contributions and its ongoing relevance in cutting-edge research. Understanding the historical significance of germanium provides valuable insights into the development of semiconductor devices.

7.2 Semiconductor Device Classes

Semiconductor devices are classified into two main categories: Active Devices and Passive Devices.

7.2.1 Active Devices

Active devices are those that can amplify or control the flow of current in a circuit. They require an external source of energy to function and are capable of providing power gain. Examples of active devices include transistors, diodes, and thyristors.

1. Diodes

   A diode is a two-terminal electronic component that allows current to flow in one direction while blocking it in the opposite direction. In this section, we will discuss the basic operation of semiconductor diodes, with an emphasis on how silicon and germanium diodes differ in terms of forward voltage drop, reverse leakage current, and temperature sensitivity.

   A semiconductor diode is formed by joining a small N-type crystal and a P-type crystal. At the junction of these two crystals, carriers (electrons and holes) tend to diffuse. Some electrons move across the barrier to join holes, creating a small voltage or potential between the regions near the junction. This potential barrier prevents other electrons and holes in the crystal from joining.

   Silicon and germanium diodes have some key differences in their electrical characteristics:

- Forward Voltage Drop: Silicon diodes typically have a forward voltage drop of approximately 0.6 volts, while germanium diodes have a lower forward voltage drop of around 0.2 volts.
- Reverse Leakage Current: Silicon diodes generally have lower reverse leakage currents compared to germanium diodes.
- Temperature Sensitivity: Silicon diodes are less temperature-sensitive than germanium diodes[46].

Diodes find applications in various electronic circuits due to their unique properties. Here are some examples:

- Rectification: Diodes are commonly used for converting alternating current (AC) to direct current (DC) in rectifier circuits.
- Clipping and Clamping: Diodes can be used to clip or clamp voltage waveforms in electronic circuits.
- Voltage Regulation: Zener diodes are employed for voltage regulation purposes.
- Signal Demodulation: Diodes play a crucial role in demodulating amplitude-modulated (AM) signals.
- Logic Gates: Diodes are essential components in logic gate circuits.

2. Transistors

Transistors are fundamental components of modern electronics. They are used for amplification, switching, and signal processing. In this section, we will discuss the operation of two types of transistors: bipolar junction transistors (BJTs) and metal-oxide-semiconductor field-effect transistors (MOSFETs). We will also explore the historical and contemporary use of silicon and germanium transistors.

- **Bipolar Junction Transistors (BJTs)**
  BJTs are three-layer devices made of p-type and n-type semiconductors. They use both electrons and electron holes as charge carriers. A BJT consists of three terminals: the base, emitter, and collector. By controlling a small current at the

base terminal, a much larger current can flow between the emitter and collector terminals, enabling amplification or switching.

Silicon and germanium BJTs have played a significant role in the development of electronic devices. Silicon BJTs are widely used due to their superior performance, reliability, and compatibility with integrated circuits. Germanium BJTs were popular in early electronics but have been largely replaced by silicon BJTs due to their lower operating temperatures and higher leakage currents.[47]

- **Metal-Oxide-Semiconductor Field-Effect Transistors (MOSFETs)**
  MOSFETs are another type of transistor commonly used in modern electronics. They are three-terminal devices with a gate, source, and drain. Unlike BJTs, MOSFETs use only one type of charge carrier: either electrons (n-channel MOSFET) or holes (p-channel MOSFET). By applying a voltage to the gate terminal, the conductivity between the source and drain can be controlled.

  Silicon MOSFETs dominate contemporary electronics due to their high performance, low power consumption, and compatibility with integrated circuits. Germanium MOSFETs have limited applications due to their lower bandgap energy and higher leakage currents compared to silicon MOSFETs.[48]

- **Advantages and Limitations**
  Silicon transistors offer several advantages over germanium transistors. Silicon has a wider bandgap energy, allowing for higher operating temperatures. Silicon transistors also exhibit lower leakage currents, making them more suitable for high-performance applications. Additionally, silicon is compatible with integrated circuit fabrication processes, enabling the development of complex electronic systems.

  On the other hand, germanium transistors have certain limitations. They are more sensitive to temperature variations and exhibit higher leakage currents compared to silicon transistors. These factors restrict their use in modern electronics but make them suitable for specific applications where lower operating temperatures are acceptable.[47][48]

3. Optoelectronic Devices

Optoelectronic devices are electronic devices that interact with light, enabling the conversion of electrical energy into light energy and vice versa. In this section, we will explore the utilization of silicon and germanium in two key optoelectronic devices: photodetectors and light-emitting diodes (LEDs). We will also discuss the optical properties and applications of these materials in photonics.[49]

- **Photodetectors**

  Photodetectors are devices that detect and convert light signals into electrical signals. Silicon and germanium are commonly used as semiconductors in photodetectors due to their favorable optical properties. These materials have a direct bandgap, allowing efficient absorption of photons in the visible and near-infrared regions. Photodetectors made from silicon and germanium exhibit high responsivity, low noise, and fast response times.

  Silicon photodetectors are widely used in various applications, including optical communication systems, imaging sensors, and solar cells. Germanium photodetectors have niche applications in infrared detection due to their superior performance in this spectral range.[50]

- **Light-Emitting Diodes (LEDs)**

  Light-emitting diodes (LEDs) are semiconductor devices that emit light when an electric current passes through them. Silicon and germanium LEDs have been explored for their potential in photonics applications. However, silicon LEDs have limited practical use due to their indirect bandgap nature, resulting in inefficient light emission4.

  Germanium LEDs have been investigated for their compatibility with silicon-based integrated circuits and potential applications in infrared light emission. However, their development is still in the research stage, and practical implementations are yet to be realized.

- **Optical Properties and Applications**

  Silicon exhibits excellent transparency in the visible and near-infrared regions, making it suitable for optical applications. It has a high refractive index, enabling efficient light confinement within waveguides and optical fibers. Silicon is extensively used in integrated photonics for applications such as optical interconnects, sensors, and modulators.

Germanium also possesses favorable optical properties, particularly in the infrared region. It has a high absorption coefficient for infrared light, making it suitable for photodetection at longer wavelengths. Germanium-based photonic devices find applications in telecommunications, spectroscopy, and thermal imaging.[51]

7.2.2 Passive Devices

Passive devices are those that do not require an external source of energy to function. They are incapable of providing power gain and can only attenuate or filter the flow of current in a circuit. Examples of passive devices include resistors, capacitors, and inductors.

7.3 Recent Advancements

Semiconductor technology has witnessed significant advancements in recent years, particularly in the context of silicon and germanium. These advancements have pushed the boundaries of device performance, enabling the development of more efficient and powerful electronic devices. In this section, we will highlight some of the key advancements that have shaped the field.

7.3.1 Strained Silicon

One notable advancement is the use of strained silicon. By introducing strain into the silicon lattice structure, researchers have been able to enhance carrier mobility, leading to improved device performance. Strained silicon has found applications in various fields, including microprocessors, memory devices, and high-speed communication systems.

7.3.2 High-k Dielectrics

Another significant advancement is the integration of high-k dielectrics. Traditional silicon dioxide (SiO2) has limitations in terms of its ability to provide effective gate insulation at reduced device dimensions. High-k dielectrics, such as hafnium oxide (HfO2) and zirconium oxide (ZrO2), offer higher dielectric constants, enabling better control over gate leakage and improved transistor performance[52].

7.3.3 Novel Device Architectures

Researchers have also explored novel device architectures to overcome the limitations of traditional designs. One such architecture is the FinFET (Fin Field-Effect Transistor), which features a three-dimensional fin structure that enhances electrostatic control and reduces leakage current[53]. FinFETs have become a cornerstone of modern semiconductor technology, enabling further scaling and improved energy efficiency.

These are just a few examples of recent advancements in semiconductor technology involving silicon and germanium. The field continues to evolve rapidly, with ongoing research efforts focused on pushing the boundaries of device performance and exploring new materials and fabrication techniques.

Chapter 8

Quantum Effects and Computing in Silicon and Germanium

8.1 Quantum Mechanics in Semiconductors

Semiconductors are materials that exhibit unique electronic properties due to the principles of quantum mechanics. In this section, we will explore two fundamental concepts: wave-particle duality and quantization of energy levels.

8.1.1 Wave-Particle Duality

According to wave-particle duality, particles such as electrons can exhibit both wave-like and particle-like properties. This concept was first proposed by Louis de Broglie and experimentally verified by the famous double-slit experiment. In semiconductors, electrons can be described as both particles and waves, allowing them to exhibit interference and diffraction phenomena.

8.1.2 Quantization of Energy Levels

Quantization of energy levels refers to the discrete energy states that electrons can occupy within a semiconductor material. Due to the confinement of electrons within the crystal lattice structure, their energy levels become quantized. This phenomenon is crucial for understanding the electronic band structure of semiconductors.

8.1.3 Quantum Mechanics and Electron Behavior in Semiconductors

Quantum mechanics governs the behavior of electrons in semiconductors, dictating their movement, energy levels, and interactions with other particles. The electronic properties of semiconductors, such as conductivity and bandgap, are directly influenced by quantum mechanical principles.

8.2 Quantum Effects in Silicon and Germanium

8.2.1 Quantum Confinement

Quantum confinement is a phenomenon that occurs when the dimensions of a material are reduced to a scale comparable to the de Broglie wavelength of its charge carriers. In silicon and germanium, this effect is observed when the size of the material is reduced to the nanoscale, such as in quantum dots or nanowires. At this scale, the energy levels of electrons and holes become quantized, leading to discrete energy states. This confinement alters the electronic properties of silicon and germanium, affecting their conductivity, bandgap, and optical properties.

8.2.2 Tunneling

Tunneling is another important quantum effect in silicon and germanium. It refers to the phenomenon where particles can pass through a barrier that would be classically forbidden. In these materials, tunneling occurs when electrons or holes traverse potential barriers or barriers created by heterojunctions. This effect plays a crucial role in various devices, such as tunnel diodes and quantum well transistors. By manipulating tunneling, engineers can control the flow of charge carriers and design novel electronic devices[54].

8.2.3 Quantum Hall Effect

The quantum Hall effect is a fascinating phenomenon that arises in two-dimensional electron systems subjected to a strong magnetic field perpendicular to their plane. In silicon and germanium, this effect has been observed in high-mobility electron gases confined to quantum wells or heterostructures. The quantum Hall effect manifests as quantized Hall resistance and plateaus in the Hall voltage as a function of magnetic field strength. This effect has revolutionized metrology and provided insights into the fundamental behavior of electrons in condensed matter systems[54].

These quantum effects have profound implications for the electronic properties of silicon and germanium. For instance, quantum confinement alters the band structure, leading to discrete energy levels and size-dependent optical properties. Tunneling enables the design of low-power electronic devices with unique characteristics. The quantum Hall effect provides a platform for precise electrical resistance standards and paves the way for topological quantum computing.

8.3 Quantum Computing: An Emerging Field

Quantum computing is an emerging field that holds immense potential for revolutionizing computation. Unlike classical computers, which use bits to store and process information, quantum computers leverage quantum bits or qubits. Qubits can exist in multiple states simultaneously, thanks to a phenomenon called superposition. This unique property allows quantum computers to perform complex calculations much faster than classical computers.

8.3.1 Advantages of Quantum Computing over Classical Computing

Quantum computing offers several advantages over classical computing. Some of these include:

- Speed: Quantum computers can solve certain problems exponentially faster than classical computers. This speedup is particularly significant for tasks involving large datasets or complex simulations.

- Parallelism: Quantum computers can process multiple computations simultaneously, thanks to superposition and entanglement. This parallelism enables them to explore multiple solutions simultaneously, leading to faster problem-solving.

- Quantum Simulation: Quantum computers can simulate quantum systems more accurately than classical computers. This capability is crucial for studying complex physical phenomena, such as chemical reactions and material properties.

8.3.2 Harnessing Silicon and Germanium for Quantum Computing

Silicon and germanium, two widely used semiconductors, have shown great promise in the field of quantum computing. Researchers have made significant progress in harnessing their unique properties for hosting qubits:

- Silicon: Silicon-based qubits are attractive due to their compatibility with existing semiconductor manufacturing technology. Recent breakthroughs have demonstrated near error-free quantum operations in silicon-based devices. These advancements pave the way for large-scale silicon-based quantum processors that can handle meaningful computation[55].

- Germanium: Germanium is another semiconductor that holds potential for quantum computing applications. Its compatibility with standard semiconductor manufacturing processes makes it an attractive candidate for hosting qubits. Researchers are exploring germanium-based quantum dot arrays as a practical solution for advancing quantum electronic devices[54].

8.4 Quantum Dots as Nanostructures within Silicon and Germanium

Quantum dots are nanostructures that exist within silicon and germanium. These structures can trap and manipulate individual electrons, leading to unique optical and electronic properties. Due to their small size, quantum dots exhibit quantum confinement, which results in discrete energy levels similar to atomic spectra[56]. This property makes them an exciting area of research in nanotechnology and materials science.

8.4.1 Utilization of Quantum Dots in Quantum Computing and Other Quantum Technologies

Quantum dots play a crucial role in quantum computing and other quantum technologies. Their ability to confine electrons allows for precise control over quantum states, which is essential for quantum information processing. Quantum dots can be used as qubits, the fundamental building blocks of quantum computers. By manipulating the charge or spin of individual electrons within quantum dots, researchers can perform quantum operations. Additionally, quantum dots have applications in other areas such as quantum cryptography, sensing, and energy harvesting[56].

8.5 Overview of Quantum Devices and Technologies that Leverage Silicon and Germanium

Silicon and germanium are widely used in quantum devices and technologies. They have unique properties that make them ideal for quantum computing, sensing, and communication systems. Some of the specific quantum devices that leverage silicon and germanium include:

- Quantum Gates: Quantum gates are the fundamental building blocks of quantum computers. They are used to manipulate qubits, which are the basic units of quantum information. Silicon-based quantum gates have been demonstrated using single-electron transistors. Germanium-based quantum gates have also been proposed, which could potentially operate at higher temperatures than silicon-based gates[54].

- Quantum Sensors: Quantum sensors are devices that use quantum phenomena to measure physical quantities such as magnetic fields, temperature, and pressure. Silicon-based quantum sensors have been developed for measuring magnetic fields. Germanium-based quantum sensors have also been proposed for measuring temperature[54].

- Quantum Communication Systems: Quantum communication systems use quantum phenomena to transmit information securely over long distances. Silicon-based quantum communication systems have been demonstrated using single-photon detectors. Germanium-based quantum communication systems have also been proposed, which could potentially operate at higher temperatures than silicon-based systems[54].

8.5.1 Recent Advancements and Breakthroughs in these Areas

Recent advancements in silicon and germanium quantum devices and technologies have led to exciting breakthroughs. For example:

- Researchers at TU Wien (Vienna) have developed a new type of material that is usable for chip technology. This material enables faster, more efficient computers, and new types of quantum devices.

- Scientists at Stanford University have discovered that germanium quantum wells grown on silicon can be used for high-performance modulators in silicon photonics. This discovery could lead to fully functional, high-performance platforms for electronics, optics, and optoelectronics all potentially integrated on one chip [57].

- Researchers at AIP Publishing have proposed using quantum dots in silicon and germanium to advance concepts like quantum computation to a practical level. They suggest that heterostructures built from silicon and germanium offer a large parameter space in which to engineer novel quantum electronic devices [54].

8.6 Application of Quantum Error Correction to Silicon and Germanium-Based Quantum Devices

Silicon and germanium-based quantum devices have shown great promise in the field of quantum computing. Recent advancements in silicon-based qubits have enabled the implementation of high-quality one and two-qubit systems. However, the demonstration of QEC, which requires three or more coupled qubits, remains an open challenge4. Researchers have proposed using silicon spin qubits to implement QEC. They have demonstrated a three-qubit phase-correcting code in silicon, where an encoded three-qubit state is protected against any phase-flip error on one of the three qubits. The correction to this encoded state is performed by a three-qubit conditional rotation, which is implemented by an efficient single-step resonantly driven iToffoli gate[58]. These results show a successful implementation of QEC and the potential of silicon-based platforms for large-scale quantum computing.

Germanium-based qubits have also been proposed for use in QEC. Researchers have discovered that germanium quantum wells grown on silicon can be used for high-performance modulators in silicon photonics[59]. This discovery could lead to fully functional, high-performance platforms for electronics, optics, and optoelectronics all potentially integrated on one chip.

8.6.1 Recent Developments in Error Correction Codes for Silicon and Germanium-Based Quantum Devices

Recent developments in error correction codes for silicon and germanium-based quantum devices have led to exciting breakthroughs. For example:

- Researchers at RIKEN have demonstrated a three-qubit phase-correcting code in silicon using an efficient single-step resonantly driven iToffoli gate[58].
- Scientists at Stanford University have discovered that germanium quantum wells grown on silicon can be used for high-performance modulators in silicon photonics[59].
- Researchers at AIP Publishing have proposed using quantum dots in silicon and germanium to advance concepts like quantum computation to a practical level. They suggest that heterostructures built from silicon and germanium offer a large parameter space in which to engineer novel quantum electronic devices.

Chapter 9

Manufacturing, environmental and sustainability considerations

9.1 Introduction to Manufacturing Processes

Semiconductor materials, such as silicon and germanium, play a crucial role in the electronics industry, serving as the foundation for various electronic devices. This chapter explores the manufacturing processes, environmental implications, and sustainability considerations associated with these semiconductor materials. Silicon and germanium have unique properties that make them ideal candidates for semiconductors, but their production processes raise important environmental concerns.

9.1.1 Purification Processes

The purification of silicon and germanium is a crucial step in semiconductor manufacturing. The process involves the removal of impurities from the base material. The most common purification method is the Czochralski method, which involves melting the base material in a crucible at high temperatures and then slowly cooling it to form a single crystal. Other purification methods include zone refining, chemical vapor deposition, and molecular layer doping .

9.1.2 Crystalline Growth

Crystalline growth is an important process in semiconductor manufacturing. The Czochralski method is also used for crystalline growth. In this process, a seed crystal is dipped into molten silicon or germanium, and then slowly pulled out while rotating. As the seed crystal is pulled out, it solidifies and forms a single crystal.

9.1.3 Doping Techniques

Doping is the process of introducing impurities into the base material to change its electrical properties. The most common dopants used in silicon and germanium are boron, phosphorus, arsenic, and antimony. Doping can be achieved through diffusion or ion implantation
.

9.2 Environmental Impact of Semiconductor Manufacturing

According to a 2021 report by The Guardian, the semiconductor industry has a huge carbon footprint, accounting for most of the carbon output from electronic devices. The report states that chip manufacturing requires huge amounts of energy and water, and creates hazardous waste. For instance, a chip fabrication plant can use millions of gallons of water per day. In addition, the production of silicon and germanium wafers requires large amounts of electricity. For example, Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company (TSMC), the world's largest chipmaker, uses almost 5% of all Taiwan's electricity [60].

The semiconductor industry is starting to grapple with its climate impacts. TSMC has pledged to reach net-zero emissions by 2050 . Intel has committed to net-zero greenhouse gas emissions in its global operations by 2040 and has targeted achieving 100% use of renewable electricity as an interim milestone in 2030 . Other semiconductor players have also committed to science-based targets [60].

In terms of waste generation, the production of silicon and germanium wafers generates hazardous waste such as arsenic, cadmium, and lead. According to a 2020 paper by Gupta et al., chip manufacturing accounts for most of the carbon output from electronic devices . The paper also states that the semiconductor industry is responsible for significant water consumption and hazardous waste generation[61] .

9.3 Green Manufacturing Initiatives

The semiconductor industry has been making significant efforts to minimize its environmental footprint. Several initiatives have been undertaken to reduce energy consumption, waste generation, and greenhouse gas emissions.

9.3.1 Cleaner Technologies

The semiconductor industry has been adopting cleaner technologies to reduce its environmental impact. For instance, the industry has been transitioning from wet etching to dry etching, which reduces the amount of hazardous waste generated . The industry has also been adopting plasma-enhanced chemical vapor deposition (PECVD) and atomic layer deposition (ALD) techniques, which use less energy and generate less waste than traditional deposition techniques [62].

9.3.2 Waste Reduction Strategies

The semiconductor industry has implemented several waste reduction strategies to minimize its environmental impact. For example, the industry has been recycling water used in the manufacturing process. Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company (TSMC), the world's largest chipmaker, recycles more than 90% of the water it uses in its manufacturing process . The industry has also been implementing strategies to reduce hazardous waste generation. For instance, Intel has implemented a zero-waste-to-landfill program in all of its manufacturing facilities[63] .

9.3.3 Renewable Energy Sources

The semiconductor industry has also been adopting renewable energy sources to reduce its carbon footprint. For example, TSMC has installed solar panels at its manufacturing facilities in Taiwan and is planning to install more in the future . Intel has also been investing in renewable energy sources. In 2020, Intel announced that it had achieved 100% renewable energy use for its global operations[64] .

9.4 Sustainability and Semiconductor Materials

The choice of base materials in semiconductor manufacturing has a significant impact on the sustainability of electronic devices. Silicon and germanium are widely used as base materials in semiconductor manufacturing due to their unique electrical properties. However, the production of these materials has significant environmental implications.For example, Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company (TSMC), the world's largest chipmaker, uses almost 5% of all Taiwan's electricity [65].

In comparison to other materials used in semiconductors, silicon and germanium have a lower environmental impact. For instance, gallium arsenide (GaAs) is another material used in semiconductors. However, GaAs is more toxic than silicon and germanium and requires more energy to produce . Another material used in semiconductors is indium phosphide (InP). InP has a higher environmental impact than silicon and germanium due to its toxicity and the amount of energy required to produce it [65].

In conclusion, while silicon and germanium have a lower environmental impact than other materials used in semiconductors, their production still has significant environmental implications. The semiconductor industry is starting to grapple with its climate impacts and is making significant efforts to minimize its environmental footprint.

9.5 Life Cycle Assessment (LCA)

A thorough study that assesses the environmental effects of materials from the extraction of raw materials through manufacturing, use, and disposal is the life cycle assessment (LCA) of silicon and germanium semiconductor materials.

Germanium is a semiconducting metalloid element utilized in optical fibers, catalysis, infrared optics, solar cells, and light-emitting diodes, according to a 2014 study by Robertz et al. The study contrasts the possible environmental effects of primary production of germanium from coal with those that could result from producing germanium from production waste from the solar industry. According to the study, recycling metals has a smaller negative impact on the environment than initial manufacture.

A life cycle analysis of silicon wafer processing for electronic chips and solar cells was conducted in 2011 by Majeau-Bettez et al. The goal of the study is to offer up-to-date, thorough information on how processing silicon wafers affects the environment. According to the study, the use stage has the second-highest environmental impact after the manufacturing stage.

9.6 Regulatory Compliance and Environmental Standards

Several environmental laws and standards that control semiconductor manufacturing are applicable to the semiconductor sector. Aiming to reduce the environmental impact of semiconductor manufacturing, these rules and standards.

The National Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants (NESHAP) for Semiconductor Manufacturing is one such regulation. The law places restrictions on the amount of dangerous air pollutants that semiconductor manufacturing plants are allowed to produce. Additionally, the legislation mandates that establishments develop pollution prevention strategies and track their emissions.

The Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) and the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA), in addition to NESHAP, are rules that apply to the semiconductor industry . These laws control how hazardous waste is managed, and they mandate that facilities safely store, transport, and dispose of hazardous waste.

By using pollution control strategies including recycling industrial process water, lowering hazardous waste creation, and applying cleaner technology, the industry complies with these standards. The sector is utilizing renewable energy sources as well to lessen its carbon footprint.

These regulations have important effects on sustainability. The semiconductor industry is reducing its environmental effect and promoting a more sustainable future by adhering to these laws. Compliance with these requirements, however, can also result in higher manufacturing costs and decreased productivity in businesses. As a result, it’s critical for the business to strike a balance between following these rules and preserving current output levels.

Chapter 10

Future Perspectives

The future of semiconductor manufacturing, particularly concerning silicon and germanium as base materials, holds exciting opportunities and challenges. As technology continues to advance, it is imperative to consider the following key aspects for a more sustainable and environmentally friendly semiconductor industry:

10.1 Advanced Manufacturing Technologies

As semiconductor technology evolves, so do manufacturing methods. New techniques, such as extreme ultraviolet lithography (EUVL), atomic layer deposition (ALD), and three-dimensional integrated circuits (3D-ICs), have the potential to revolutionize the industry's sustainability profile. EUVL, for example, enables greater precision and efficiency in the lithography process, reducing material waste and enhancing semiconductor performance. These advanced technologies are expected to further reduce energy consumption, material utilization, and overall environmental impact.

10.2 Material Innovation

While silicon and germanium remain crucial to the semiconductor industry, exploring alternative materials with improved environmental profiles is a promising avenue. Silicon carbide (SiC) and gallium nitride (GaN) are already being used in specific applications due to their superior efficiency and environmental benefits. SiC, in particular, has gained traction in power electronics for its excellent thermal properties and reduced energy losses. Investigating novel materials for semiconductors, especially those with low toxicity, high thermal conductivity, and minimal resource demand, can contribute to more sustainable electronics.

10.3 Circular Economy and Recycling

The circular economy concept, where products are designed for reuse and recycling, will play an increasingly critical role in reducing the environmental impact of semiconductor materials. Future efforts should focus on developing efficient recycling processes for silicon and germanium wafers, as well as fostering responsible e-waste management. The implementation of ”urban mining” practices, where electronic components are extracted and recycled from discarded devices, can recover valuable materials and minimize the need for new resource extraction.

10.4 Energy Efficiency and Renewable Resources

Sustainable energy sources for semiconductor manufacturing, such as solar and wind power, are expected to become even more prevalent. Integration of energy-efficient practices and renewable resources into production facilities can significantly reduce carbon emissions and energy consumption. Additionally, advancements in energy storage technologies can ensure a stable and sustainable power supply for semiconductor fabrication plants.

10.5 International Collaboration and Standards

Global cooperation in setting environmental standards for semiconductor manufacturing is crucial. Collaborative efforts can lead to more consistent regulations and a shared commitment to reducing the industry’s environmental footprint. International agreements and trade incentives can drive innovation in sustainable practices. For instance, establishing a global standard for ”green” semiconductors could encourage manufacturers to adopt environmentally friendly technologies and materials.

10.6 Public Awareness and Consumer Choices

Raising public awareness about the environmental impact of electronic devices can encourage consumer demand for sustainable products. The choices consumers make can influence manufacturers to adopt greener practices and materials, which can have a ripple effect on the industry. Sustainable certification labels and consumer education campaigns can inform the public about the environmental impact of their technology choices, driving a market shift toward more sustainable electronics.

10.7 Interdisciplinary Research and Policy Integration

Interdisciplinary research involving materials science, engineering, environmental science, and policy development will be key to addressing the environmental challenges in semiconductor manufacturing. Integration of sustainability considerations into government policies and regulations will ensure a comprehensive approach to mitigating environmental impact. Collaboration between academia, industry, and regulatory bodies can drive the development of sustainable practices and regulations. Moreover, the integration of circular economy principles into legislation can promote responsible resource use and reduce e-waste.

In conclusion, the semiconductor industry is at a crossroads, facing both opportunities and responsibilities. By embracing environmentally conscious practices, advancing technology, and collaborating at a global level, the future of semiconductor manufacturing, particularly concerning silicon and germanium, can be one that is sustainable, efficient, and environmentally responsible. As we look ahead, it is evident that the choices made in the industry will not only shape the electronics of tomorrow but also contribute to a greener and more sustainable future. The realization of these future perspectives hinges on the joint efforts of researchers, manufacturers, policymakers, and consumers to create a more sustainable and environmentally responsible semiconductor industry.

Chapter 11

Comparison & Conclusions

Silicon and Germanium are both elements that are commonly used in the electronics industry. They are both considered semiconductors, which means being able to control the flow of electrical current. As showed from our analysis, both materials have similar properties and their processing is pretty much the same apart from boil temperature and the other previously mentioned parameters. While the two are used in similar applications, they also have some important differences.

One of the main advantages of silicon is its low cost compared to germanium. This is due to the abundance of silicon in the earth's crust, making it easy and inexpensive to extract and refine. Germanium, on the other hand, is much rarer and therefore much more expensive to obtain. This higher cost is reflected in the cost of germanium-based transistors and chips, making them less competitive in cost-sensitive applications.

One of the key differences between silicon and germanium is the bandgap. The bandgap refers to the energy gap between the valence band and the conduction band in a material. A smaller bandgap means that a material is more conductive and can be used to produce more efficient electronics. Silicon has a larger bandgap than germanium, which means that it is less conductive. This make it more resistive which is less useful for applications that require high levels of conductivity, but it makes it ideal for high-power applications, such as in the production of high-speed transistors.

Another important difference between silicon and germanium is their thermal stability. Silicon is a much more stable material than germanium and can withstand higher temperatures without breaking down. This is why silicon is used in a wide range of electronic applications, while germanium is mainly used in niche applications that require its unique properties [66].

Additionally, silicon has a higher melting point and stability compared to germanium, making it much easier to work with.

In conclusion, the theoretical analysis of silicon and germanium as semiconductors has provided valuable insights into their properties and potential applications. Due to its availability and advantageous features, silicon has been the predominant semiconductor material for a long time. Recent studies have however revealed that germanium also possesses special qualities that make it a material of interest in a variety of applications. Germanium has a number of advantages over silicon, including a higher carrier mobility that enables faster electron movement and potential improvements in field-effect transistor performance. Given that excellent performance and energy efficiency are important factors, this makes germanium a possible alternative channel material for upcoming electronic devices. Additionally, both silicon and germanium are appropriate for integration in semiconductor devices due to their compatibility as base materials in terms of lattice structure, solubility, alloying, growth, and processing.Additionally, the resurgence of germanium as a crucial component for electrical-photonic integration on the silicon platform creates fresh opportunities for enhancing the functionality and performance of electronic systems. Additionally, germanium has a higher hole and electron injection velocity and mobility than silicon, which allows semiconductor devices to operate at higher frequencies. Overall, the theoretical research has shown the benefits and possibilities of germanium as a semiconductor base material that should not be neglected, even though silicon continues to be the industry standard material.

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