

# Fabrication Of A-C:B/N-Si Solar Cells With Low Positive Bias By Custom-Made-CVD

A. Ishak, Ahmad Nurrisal Muhamad, M. Rusop

**Abstract:** Boron doped amorphous carbon (a-C:B) film fabricated on n-type silicon using waste palm oil precursor by low positive bias voltage is presented. The rectifying curve were found for all samples under dark measurement revealed that those samples were p-type semiconductor. The +30 V was found the optimized of the electronic properties with the open circuit voltage (VOC), current density (JSC), fill factor (FF) and efficiency (%) were approximately 0.259034 V, 1.299456 mA/cm<sup>2</sup>, 0.240011, and 0.080788 %, respectively. The conversion efficiency of a-C:B has been improved under the influenced of low positive bias.

**Keywords:** Carbon; Palm-oil; Positive bias; Boron; Custom-made

## I. INTRODUCTION

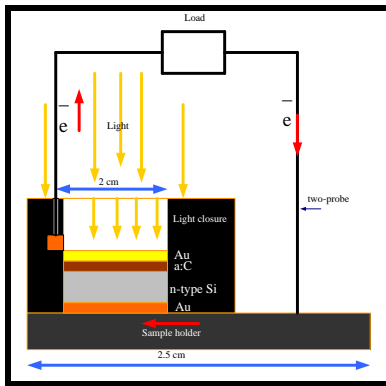
Renewable precursors such as camphor powder, turpentine oil, coconut oil have been used for synthesize many diversity of carbon instead of non-renewable precursor [1-3]. Beside of those precursors, palm oil the other abundantly promising 'green' source was successfully synthesized the carbon nanotube (CNT)[1-3]. Palm oil is scientifically known as hexaeconoic acid which was derived from fibrous exocorp and mesocarp of the fruits of palm tree [2-4]. The palm oil is contained carbon (67), hydrogen (127) and oxygen (8) to form the chemical binding of C<sub>67</sub>H<sub>127</sub>O<sub>8</sub> (3). If optimize energy were used for break down the binding, high number of carbon (67) will be released. Dc bias either positive or negative were reported by others groups in helping to accelerate particles through bombarding process [5,6]. The DC bias tried to attract the opposite charge atom and repel the equalize charge being reach on the substrate [7,8]. As a result, the chamber under deposition will be dominated by negative charge of carbon and boron atoms rather than unwanted particles thereby could minimize the other particles from being deposited on the surface of substrate. The present of amorphous carbon (a-C) in CNT has brought the negative effect of CNT production, it has benefited to the other area in semiconductor industry especially for fabricated carbon-based photovoltaic solar cell by the ability to be a semi-conductive material [9,10]. However, undoped a-C was reported as a weakly p-type [10,11] in nature despite of complex structure, high density of defect which restricted to dope efficiently and those factors were the main barrier for its application in various electronic devices.

As such, it was hypothesis that by properly control the doping the existing of defect could be reduced and at the same time could be modified the electronic properties. In this paper, the carbon-based solar cell of boron doped amorphous carbon (Au/a-C:B/n-Si/Au) were fabricated on the n-type silicon using low positive bias from 0 V to +50 V. There are less study on low positive bias for fabricated Au/a-C:B/n-Si/Au solar cell using palm oil precursor. To the best of our knowledge, none of the report on the use of 'green' source from palm oil fabricated by low positive bias for Au/a-C:B/n-Si/Au carbon-based photovoltaic solar cell.

## II. EXPERIMENTAL

The influenced of low positive bias on boron doped (a-C:B) a-C solar cells were deposited by using bias-assisted pyrolysis-CVD onto the corning glass substrates (thickness: 1mm) and n-Si (100) (thickness 325 ± 25 μm, resistivity 1-10 Ω cm). Substrates (glass and n-silicon) were together cleaned with acetone (C<sub>5</sub>H<sub>6</sub>O) followed by methanol (CH<sub>3</sub>OH) for 15 min in Ultrasonic Cleaner (power Sonic 405), respectively and the glass substrates were then rinse with DI water for 15 min. However, excess oxide layers of n-type silicon substrates were continued by the etching process with diluted hydrofluoric acid (10%) solution for about 2 min before rinsing in DI water. Substrates were then blown with nitrogen gas. The cleaned of glass and silicon substrate was finally attached inside the chamber as shown Fig. 1. The deposition temperature was set at 325°C for 1h deposition. A liquid palm oil precursor was heated outside the chamber at 150°C by using hot platter (Stuart CB162). The vaporized of palm oil was then pressured into the chamber by using aquarium air pumps (GA8000). The amount of vaporized palm oil, carrier gas argon used into were set to be constant at 114 mL/min, 200 mL/min, respectively. For doping process, 160mg of boron was placed on the heater metal plate by using aluminium foil. The positive bias is varied in the range of +10 V to +50 V. The zero bias is also fabricated and used as a reference. In the measurement of solar cell device, both sided of silicon (bottom and top) is deposited with approximately 60 nm and 12 nm of gold, respectively. The gold contact of 60 nm were sputtered at the top of 12 nm gold for conform the point of probe is properly contacted on the gold metal contact. The light closure is attached at the top of the device as shown in Fig. 2 to ensure light strike only the area of 2 cm<sup>2</sup>. The other probe is connected to the conductive metal holder as shown in Fig. 2.

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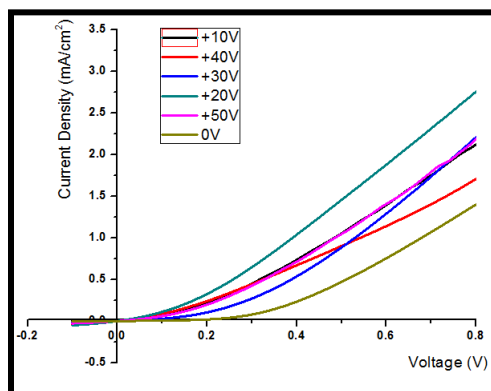


**Fig. 2.** The measurement technique of heterojunction Au/a-C:B/n-Si/Au solar cell

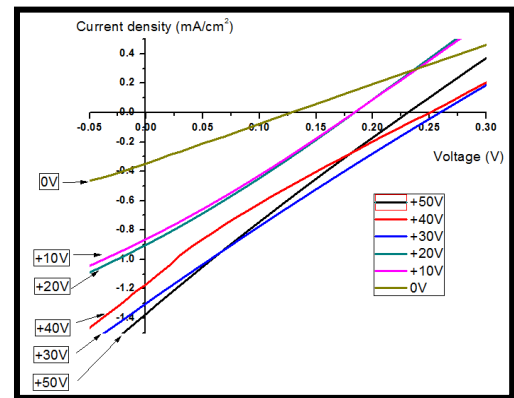
Solar simulator (Bukuh Keiki EP200), surface profiler (VeecoDektak 150), JASCO UV-VIS/NIR Spectrophotometer (V-670 EX) and Park system XE-100 atomic force microscope (AFM) to characterize the electronic and optical properties.

### III. RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

Fig. 3 shows the current density voltage (J-V) characteristics of the solar cell under dark at  $100 \text{ mW/cm}^2$  using AM 1.5 solar simulator fabricated by low positive bias voltage. The rectifying curve are found for J-V characteristics for all samples of heterojunction carbon-based solar cell. We predicted, the diode formation is came from the different layer of n-type Si and p-type a-C:B. The a-C:B layer acted as a p-type while silicon substrate acted as an n-type which formed the rectifying behaviour. The same trend behaviour of heterojunction carbon solar cell were obtained by others but fabricated using different method and precursor [12-14]. Beside forming of diode behaviour, precursor of palm oil has a good potential in fabricated photovoltaic carbon solar cell in the near future as proved in Fig. 4 where various level of working curve are present.



**Fig. 3.** The current-voltage characteristics under dark of Au/a-C:B/n-Si/Au fabricated with low positive bias voltage



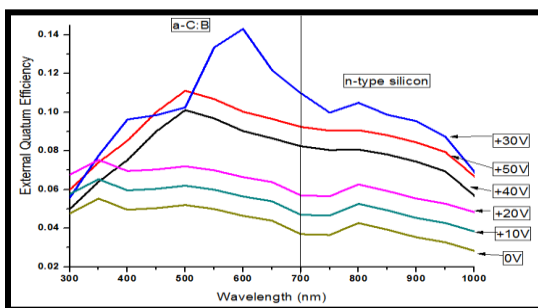
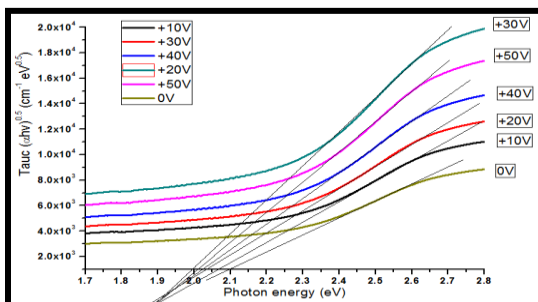
**Fig. 4.** The current density-voltage characteristics of the working curve of the Au/a-C:B/n-Si/Au solar cell fabricated with positive bias voltage

The light illuminated J-V characteristics of heterojunction carbon solar cell fabricated by low positive bias voltage using palm oil precursor is shown in Fig. 4. The photo current and open circuit voltage are found varied under the influenced of low positive bias voltage as depicted in Fig. 4. The curves of all solar cell devices by our configuration is less broaden and more to a straight line curve compared with ideal solar cell. This phenomena is attributed from the series and shunt resistance from the material and metal contact configuration which significantly affect the solar cell devices. The high series resistance gives rise to the voltage drop and therefore minimize the full photovoltaic voltage across the load. The shunt resistance on the other hand, deviate some part of the current from generated carriers and therefore deteriorate the photo current density  $J_{sc}$ . The electronic properties are summarized in Table I. The efficiency of boron doped fabricated without the used of low positive bias has found lower as compared with low positive bias where its open-circuit voltage ( $V_{oc}$ ), current density ( $J_{sc}$ ), fill factor (FF) and efficiency (%) are 0.127516 V, 0.346546  $\text{mA/cm}^2$ , 0.254029, and 0.011225 %, respectively. The electronic properties of boron doped fabricated by low positive bias in the range of +10 V to +50 V are shown in Table I. The optimize efficiency is found at +30V where its  $V_{oc}$ ,  $J_{sc}$ , FF, % is 0.259034 V, 1.299456  $\text{mA/cm}^2$ , 0.240011, and 0.080788 %. We found, conversion efficiency has been improved under the influenced of low negative bias. Low values of  $V_{oc}$ , and  $J_{sc}$  are believed from low built-in voltage which caused by defects in a-C:B thin film and thus influenced the shorter lifetime and diffusion length and movement of drift carriers. The drift of carriers by built-in electric field plays an important role in cells [12-14]. Less of drift carriers might be due to the smaller built in voltage and therefore electron-hole pairs generated are recombined near surface. The shorter lifetime of excess carriers and diffusion length are responsible for the low photocurrent [13-15]. The existing of weakly pi ( $\pi$ ) [15-17] bond are easy to be broken and therefore, form high density of intrinsic defect. Furthermore, boron will induce high concentration boron defect [15,16]. All these defect will introduce deep state in the gap, and as a result, the lifetime of minority carriers and diffusion length will be reduced, which in turn reduce the photocurrent density.

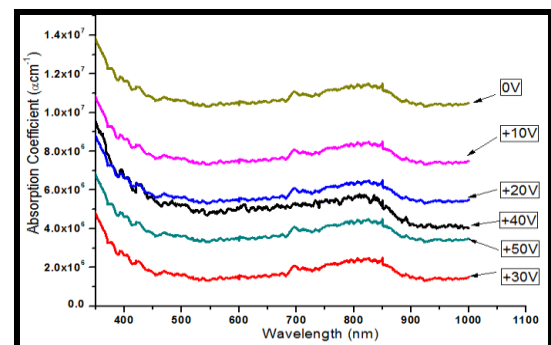
**Table I. The Electronic properties of boron-doped a-C solar cell fabricated with low positive bias voltage**

Positive bias (V)	Open circuit voltage ( $V_{oc}$ )	Current density ( $\text{mA}/\text{cm}^2$ )	Fill-factor (FF)	Conversion efficiency (%)
0	0.127516	0.346546	0.254029	0.011225
+10	0.183422	0.861707	0.270101	0.042691
+20	0.184036	0.946730	0.273165	0.047594
+30	0.259034	1.299456	0.240011	0.080788
+40	0.250352	1.169343	0.217392	0.063641
+50	0.231440	1.321446	0.238328	0.078289

Fig. 5 shows spectral response of boron doped a-C solar cell fabricated from 0 V to +50 V using palm oil precursor. The highest spectral response is at sample of +30 V while the lowest is at sample of 0 V. The highest spectral response is supported by the highest conversion efficiency as shown in Table I and Fig. 4. We found all samples fabricated with low negative bias has higher spectral response compared without low negative bias. Although solar cell properties are low, our objective is to clarify the function of boron and successfully vaporized of palm oil used as a precursor. The spectral response indicates two broad bands at the peak wavelength approximately 550 nm and 720 nm. It was reported that the wavelength above 700 nm is negligible since the photocurrent is mostly generated in the silicon substrate [15,16,18]. In the region below 700 nm, we predicted the boron doped layers act as carbon photon absorber, and quantum efficiency has a peak in short wavelength region. The photo current peak at approximately 550 nm is good agreement with the optical band gap measurement of boron doped thin film. We conclude the observed responses in the wavelength range from 300 to 700 nm are characteristics of the a-C:B cells.

**Fig. 5. Spectral response of a-C:B solar cell fabricated with low positive bias voltage****Fig. 6. The optical band gap of a-C:B thin film deposited with low positive bias voltage**

The optical properties of thin films are investigated by UV-visible spectroscopy measurements using the films deposited on glass substrates in the wavelength in the range of 200-1200 nm, to derive the Tauc optical band gap ( $E_g$ ) for amorphous semiconductors [18,19]. The  $E_g$  of the thin films is obtained from the extrapolation of the linear part of the curve at the  $\alpha=0$ , using the Tauc relation,  $(\alpha h\nu)^{1/2} = B_2(E_g - h\nu)$ , where  $B_2$  is the Tauc parameter. The estimated  $E_g$  of a-C:B is approximately in the range of 1.8 to 2.1 eV as shown in Fig. 6. The boron doped a-C thin film deposited by low positive bias decreased gradually the  $E_g$  from 2.1 to 1.8 eV. The interstitial doping of boron (B) in a-C films through modification of C-B bonding configurations might caused the changing of  $E_g$ . The declined in  $E_g$  by low positive bias voltage may be indicated an increase of tetrahedral ( $sp^3$ ) fraction due to graphitization of the a-C:B film which is probably induced by B content in the film similar to the high nitrogen content in the film induce graphitization in nitrogen doped thin films [6,20]. The values of these  $E_g$  were a good agreement why the spectral response and efficiency of boron doped with low positive bias have higher than without the use of low negative bias. The  $E_g$  of carbon solar cell by low positive bias are in the range of optimum  $E_g$  of solar cell (1 eV to 2 eV). None of the report of  $E_g$  by using this method and precursor have been found in the literature. However, the decreasing of  $E_g$  due to other parameters such as the percentage of dopants, (nitrogen and phosphorous), and deposition temperatures have been reported by others [19,20].

**Fig. 7. The absorption coefficient of a-C:B thin film deposited with low positive bias voltage**

The absorption coefficient of a-C:B thin film deposited with low positive bias voltage in the range of 0 to +50V is shown in Fig. 7. The results show all a-C:B films are responded with the photon energy at difference absorption distance for generating of minority carriers when reach the depletion region. The Aurum (Au) electrode films was high absorption coefficient ( $\alpha$ ) of about  $2.4 \times 10^5$ - $5.3 \times 10^5 \text{ cm}^{-1}$  in the lower wavelength region [12,13]. All a-C:B thin films have high  $\alpha$  from  $2.0 \times 10^6$  to  $1.2 \times 10^7$  compared with Au and therefore, photon incident on the front surface of a-C:B thin films might be strongly absorbed by the Au electrode rather than a-C:B. As a result, most part of the generated electron-hole pairs are recombined in the surface and only a few of them can arrive at depletion region. The low external quantum efficiency and high  $\alpha$  in lower wavelength region of the Au electrode, a-C:B are thought to be responsible for low external quantum efficiency and conversion efficiency of a-C:b/n-Si solar cells.

## IV. CONCLUSIONS

The a-C:B heterojunction carbon solar cell has been successfully fabricated using palm oil as precursor under the influence of low positive bias. Although the conversion efficiency is still low, it has shown that there is the possibility of the improvement of the efficiency of the a-C:B/n-Si heterojunction photovoltaic solar cells by optimizing the deposition conditions. The electronic properties of a-C:B heterojunction carbon solar cell were improved when deposited with low positive bias. The optimum a-C:B/n-Si was found at +30 V where the  $V_{oc}$ ,  $J_{sc}$ , FF, and  $\eta$  were 0.259034 V, 1.299456 mA/cm<sup>2</sup>, 0.240011, and 0.080788 %, respectively. The optical band gap of a-C:B at 0 V is approximately 2.1 eV and slightly drop to be 1.85 eV under negative bias deposition. Deposition with low negative bias were improved the electronic properties of a-C:B as well as optical band gap of a-C:B thin film. The results would encourage the future prospects of clean, low-cost and reasonably high efficiency carbon solar cells. Further studies on the junction properties of a-C:B/n-Si structure is still under progress.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The authors thank to Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) Malaysia for the scholarship, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Kota Samarahan Sarawak and Research Management Institute (RMI) Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) for the facilities.

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