

Enhanced performance of SnO₂ nanowires ethanol sensor by functionalizing with La₂O₃

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ABSTRACT

A SnO₂ nanowires (NWs) sensor was coated with a functional La₂O₃ layer by solution deposition and its gas sensing characteristics were compared with those of an uncoated SnO₂ NWs sensor. The responses (R_a/R_g , R_a : resistance in air, R_g : resistance in gas) of an undoped SnO₂ NWs sensor to 100 ppm C₂H₅OH and CH₃COCH₃ were 10.5 and 9.6, respectively, while those to 100 ppm C₃H₈, CO, and H₂ ranged from 3.1 to 3.3. The R_a/R_g values of the La₂O₃-coated SnO₂ NWs to 100 ppm C₂H₅OH and CH₃COCH₃ increased to 57.3 and 34.9, respectively, but there was no significant change in the responses to C₃H₈, CO, and H₂. The ~5.5-fold enhancement in R_a/R_g to C₂H₅OH as well as the selective detection of C₂H₅OH in the interference gases such as C₃H₈, CO, and H₂ was accomplished simultaneously by coating with La₂O₃. In particular, the selective discrimination of C₂H₅OH over CH₃COCH₃, which is a difficult issue on account their similar chemical nature, was possible.

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1. Introduction

Quasi-one-dimensional (Q1D) nanostructures of semiconductor metal oxides (SMO) have attracted considerable attention since the successful synthesis of nanobelts of various semiconductor oxides [1]. Significant progress has been made in the synthesis, characterization, and device application of Q1D nanostructures [2]. These structures with a high aspect ratio (i.e., size confinement in two coordinates) offer better crystallinity, higher integration density, and lower power consumption. In addition, they demonstrate superior sensitivity to surface chemical processes due to the large surface-to-volume ratio and small diameter comparable to the Debye length (a measure of the field penetration into the bulk) [3–5]. Although many different Q1D nanostructures of SMO such as SnO₂, ZnO, In₂O₃, and TiO₂ have been investigated for their gas sensing properties, researchers have paid greater attention to SnO₂ nanowires (NWs)-based sensors because their counterparts such as a thick film, porous pellets and thin films are versatile in being able to sense a variety of gases [6–8] and are commercially available. Thus far, the excellent sensing properties of SnO₂ Q1D nanostructures have been applied to the detection of various gases such as C₂H₅OH [9–11], CO [12], NO₂ [11,13], O₂ [12], and O₃ [13].

The selectivity and sensitivity of SnO₂ NWs sensors can be enhanced either by doping with other oxide materials [14–16] or by functionalizing with catalytically active materials [17–19]. Oxide materials are usually doped by the thermal evaporation of a mixed source material [14–16]. Noble catalyst materials are generally deposited by vapor deposition [17,18] or sputtering [19] next to the growth of SnO₂ NWs. A source material for doping with an appropriate vapor pressure is indispensable for the thermal evaporation of mixed materials and there is a limitation in the precise control of the dopant concentration. Moreover, the deposition of catalyst materials after the growth of NWs is relative complex and not cost-effective. Accordingly, a convenient approach to form a functional layer on SnO₂ NWs is essential for enhancing the selectivity and sensitivity, as well as for achieving a simple process at low cost.

It is remarkable that most of the studies on SnO₂ NWs sensors for detecting C₂H₅OH to date are based on the SnO₂ NWs [9–11]. However, there are no reports on the enhancement of sensitivity and selectivity through functionalization with catalytically active oxide materials. This paper suggests a convenient solution deposition route for functionalizing SnO₂ NWs sensors with La₂O₃. La₂O₃ was selected as the catalytically active material because it has been reported to be a promising promoter for SnO₂-based C₂H₅OH sensors [20,21]. Although the role of La₂O₃ in enhancing the sensitivity to C₂H₅OH is relatively well known, the effect of La₂O₃ doping on the sensing

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of other gases and the selective detection of a specific gas is unclear.

In this study, SnO_2 NWs were grown by thermal evaporation and the SnO_2 NWs sensors were functionalized with La_2O_3 by dropping a $\text{La}(\text{NO}_3)_3$ solution at different concentrations. The sensing characteristics to $\text{C}_2\text{H}_5\text{OH}$, CH_3COCH_3 , C_3H_8 , CO , and H_2 of the SnO_2 NWs sensors without and with the functional La_2O_3 layer were compared. The main focus was placed on the role of La_2O_3 in enhancing the sensitivity to $\text{C}_2\text{H}_5\text{OH}$, the selective detection of $\text{C}_2\text{H}_5\text{OH}$ in the presence of interference gases such as CH_3COCH_3 , C_3H_8 , CO and H_2 , and the gas response time.

2. Experimental

2.1. Growth of SnO_2 nanowires

The schematic diagram of experimental setup for the growth of SnO_2 NW was shown in Fig. 1. The SnO_2 NWs were grown in a quartz tube located in a horizontal furnace with a sharp temperature gradient. Both ends of the quartz tube were sealed with rubber O-rings. The ultimate vacuum for this configuration was $\sim 2 \times 10^{-3}$ torr. The carrier gas-line (Ar) and O_2 gas-line were connected to the left-end of a quartz tube and their flow rate was modulated by a digital mass-flow-control system. The right end of the quartz tube was connected to a rotary pump through a needle valve in order to maintain a desired pressure in the tube. High-purity SnO_2 powder (Merck, 99.9%) was placed in one end of an alumina boat as an evaporation source. In the same boat, an alumina substrate with a previously deposited Au catalyst layer (thinness: ~ 10 nm) was placed approximately 2–3 cm from the source along the direction of gas flow. The entire boat was covered with an alumina plate. A small opening was left to allow the gas to flow into the assembly. The complete unit was placed into the quartz tube for the NWs growth. The growth process was divided into two steps. Initially, the quartz tube was evacuated to 10^{-2} torr and purged several times with Ar gas. Subsequently, the furnace temperature was increased to 960°C for 30 min. During this step, only Ar gas was introduced into the furnace at a flow rate of 50 sccm and the pressure was maintained in the range of 100–200 torr. When the temperature reached 960°C , oxygen gas was added to the quartz tube at a flow rate of 0.5 sccm, and the process was maintained for 2 h during the growth of the SnO_2 NWs. The SnO_2 NWs were analyzed by scanning electron microscopy (SEM, Hitachi S-4300), transmission electron microscopy (TEM, FEI Tecnai 20), and X-ray diffraction (XRD, Rigaku D/MAX-2500V/PC).

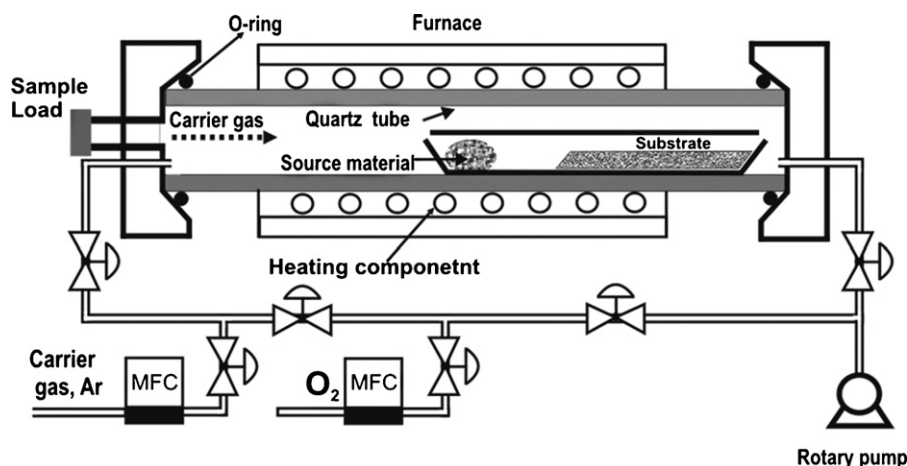


Fig. 1. Experimental setup for the growth of SnO_2 nanowires.

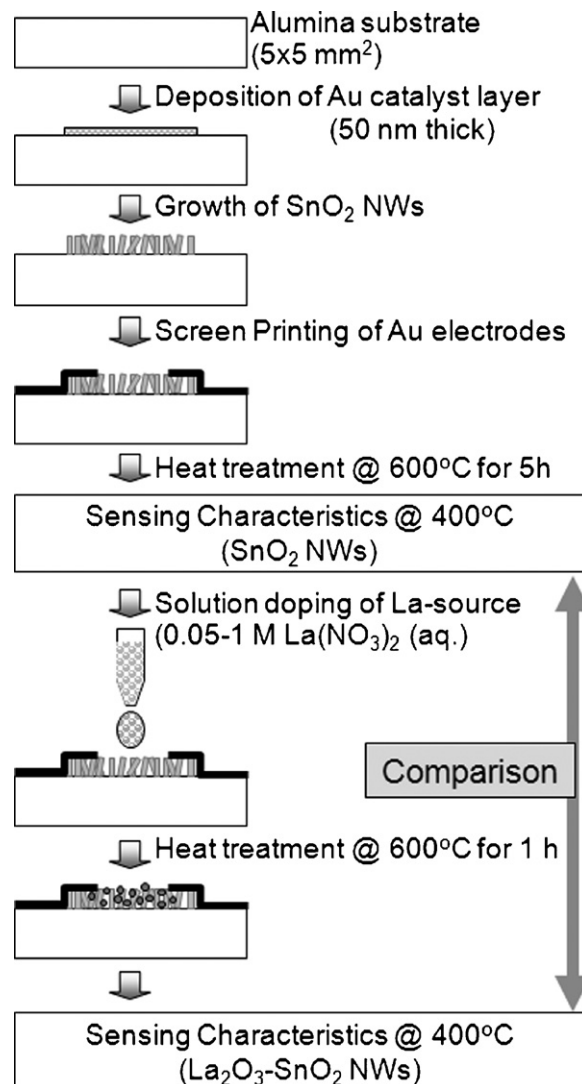


Fig. 2. Schematic diagram of the sensor configuration and experimental procedures.

2.2. Sensor fabrication and characterization

Fig. 2 shows a schematic diagram of sensor fabrication and characterization. Comb-shape Au electrodes were screen printed on the

top of the SnO_2 NWs grown on an alumina substrate and subsequently heat-treated at 600°C for 5 h. The sensor was installed in a quartz tube and the furnace temperature was stabilized at a constant sensing temperature (400°C). The gas concentration was controlled by changing the mixing ratio of the parent gases (200 ppm $\text{C}_2\text{H}_5\text{OH}$, 100 ppm CH_3COCH_3 , 200 ppm C_3H_8 , 100 ppm CO, and 200 ppm H_2 all in air balance) and dry synthetic air. A flow-through technique with a constant flow rate (500 ml/min) was used. The gas response ($S = R_a/R_g$) was measured at 400°C by comparing the resistance of the sensor in high-purity air (R_a) with that in the target gases (R_g). The electrical resistance of the sensor was monitored using a Picoammeter/Voltage Source (Keithley 6487) interfaced with a computer.

The effect of La_2O_3 doping on the sensitivity and selectivity of the SnO_2 sensor was examined by placing a droplet of 0.05, 0.5, and 1 M $\text{La}(\text{NO}_3)_3$ aqueous solutions (volume = $\sim 0.87 \mu\text{l}$) onto the SnO_2 NW sensors using a micropipette (DV10, High Tech Labs). The sensor was heat-treated at 600°C for 1 h to remove any moisture and to convert the $\text{La}(\text{NO}_3)_3$ into La_2O_3 . The gas sensing characteristics of the La_2O_3 -doped SnO_2 NWs sensor were measured under identical experimental conditions used for the pure SnO_2 NWs sensor. The sensing characteristics before and after La_2O_3 doping were compared.

3. Results and discussion

3.1. Microstructural characterizations

Fig. 3 shows the morphology of the as-prepared SnO_2 NWs. Uniform SnO_2 NWs with homogeneous entanglement were produced on a large area ($1 \text{ cm} \times 5 \text{ cm}$). The diameter of the SnO_2 NWs ranged from 50 to 100 nm and the lengths ranged from several tens to hundreds of micrometers. All the NWs were smooth and uniform along the fiber axis. SnO_2 NWs with a catalyst particle on its tip (Fig. 3(c)) were observed. EDS analysis (not shown) revealed

that the catalyst particle was composed of Au, Sn, and O, which indicates that the SnO_2 NWs were grown via a vapor–liquid–solid (VLS) mechanism [1–3,11,13]. The morphology of SnO_2 NWs functionalized with La_2O_3 using a 0.5 M $\text{La}(\text{NO}_3)_3$ solution was shown in Fig. 4. In the low magnification image (Fig. 4(a)), it was difficult to observe the La_2O_3 -related phase. However, the second phases could be frequently found on the surface of SnO_2 NWs in the high-magnification SEM and TEM images (see arrows in Fig. 4 (b–d)), which were identified not as catalyst particles but as La_2O_3 -containing phase according to EDS analysis.

The XRD patterns of the as-synthesized SnO_2 NWs (Fig. 5) were indexed to the tetragonal rutile structure, which agrees well with JCPDS 77-0450. According to the JCPDS file, the intensity ratio between the (1 1 0) and (1 0 1) peaks is 1000/767. However, the intensity ratio between the (1 1 0) and (1 0 1) peaks in Fig. 5 was 653/1000, which suggests a preferred orientation.

3.2. Gas sensing properties

Fig. 6 shows the responses to $\text{C}_2\text{H}_5\text{OH}$, CH_3COCH_3 , C_3H_8 , CO, and H_2 of the SnO_2 NWs sensor before and after La_2O_3 doping using a 0.5 M $\text{La}(\text{NO}_3)_3$ aqueous solution. All the gas concentrations were fixed to 100 ppm for comparison. In the undoped SnO_2 NWs sensor, the responses ($S = R_a/R_g$) to $\text{C}_2\text{H}_5\text{OH}$ and CH_3COCH_3 were 10.5 and 9.6, respectively. These responses are higher than those for C_3H_8 ($S = 3.3$), CO ($S = 3.3$), and H_2 gases ($S = 3.1$). Therefore, the selective sensing of $\text{C}_2\text{H}_5\text{OH}$ and CH_3COCH_3 in the presence of C_3H_8 , CO, and H_2 is possible. The responses to $\text{C}_2\text{H}_5\text{OH}$ and CH_3COCH_3 were increased to 57.3 and 34.9 by doping with La_2O_3 , respectively, which are significantly higher than those of the pure SnO_2 NWs sensor. In contrast, the responses of the La_2O_3 -doped SnO_2 NWs to C_3H_8 , CO and H_2 were 3.8, 3.5, and 2.8, respectively, which are similar to the undoped SnO_2 NWs sensor.

The level of La_2O_3 doping was controlled by varying the concentrations of the $\text{La}(\text{NO}_3)_3$ aqueous solution from 0.05 to 1 M. The

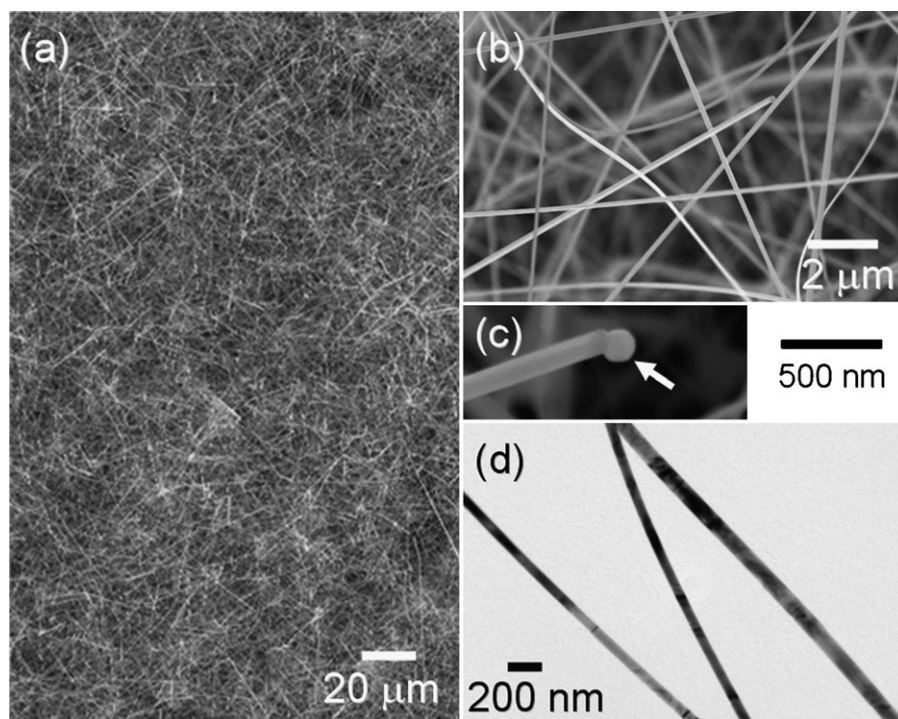


Fig. 3. SEM and TEM images of SnO_2 nanowires: (a) low resolution SEM image; (b) high resolution SEM image; (c) high resolution SEM image showing catalytic particle on top of SnO_2 nanowire; and (d) high resolution TEM image.

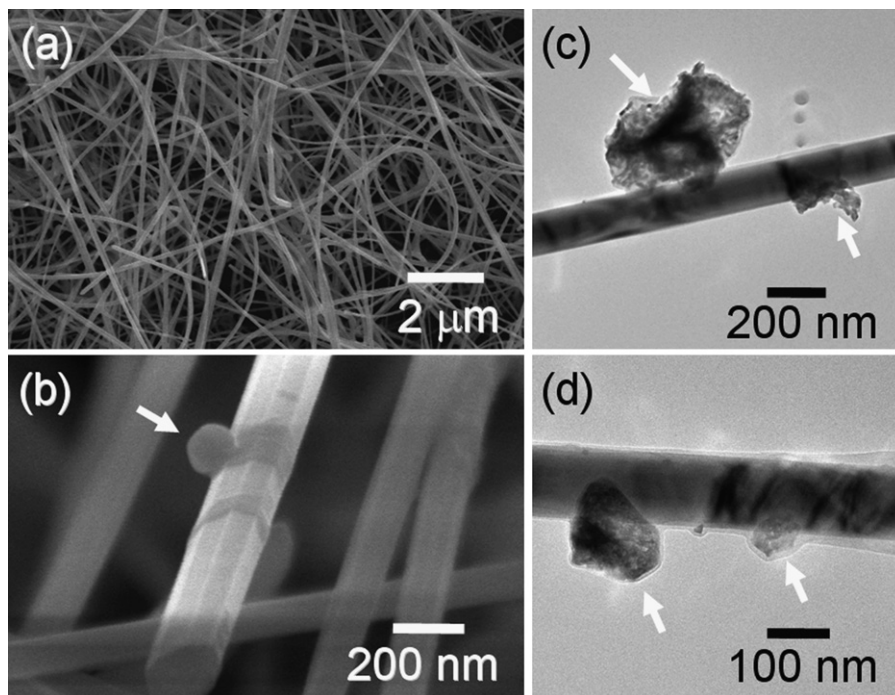


Fig. 4. SEM and TEM images of SnO_2 nanowires functionalized with La_2O_3 using a 0.5 M $\text{La}(\text{NO}_3)_3$ solution after heat-treatment at 600°C for 5 h: (a) low resolution SEM image; (b) high resolution SEM image; and (c), (d) high resolution TEM images.

gas sensing characteristics of the sensors before and after La_2O_3 doping were compared using a polar plot (Fig. 7). Three undoped SnO_2 NW sensors showed similar sensing characteristics (Fig. 7, empty circles in left three diagrams), which confirmed the reproducibility of the SnO_2 NWs sensors. After doping with La_2O_3 , the responses to $\text{C}_2\text{H}_5\text{OH}$ and CH_3COCH_3 increased 2–6 times while those to C_3H_8 , CO , and H_2 remain approximately the same. This indicates that La_2O_3 doping enhances the responses to $\text{C}_2\text{H}_5\text{OH}$ and CH_3COCH_3 .

In order to quantify the effect of La_2O_3 on the gas responses, the ratio between the responses to a specific gas before and after La_2O_3 doping ($\text{RR}_{\text{gas}} = S_{\text{gas}}(\text{La}_2\text{O}_3\text{-SnO}_2)/S_{\text{gas}}(\text{SnO}_2)$) were calculated and plotted in right three diagrams, as shown in Fig. 7. For example, $\text{RR}_{\text{ethanol}}$ is the ratio between the response to 100 ppm $\text{C}_2\text{H}_5\text{OH}$ of the La_2O_3 -doped SnO_2 NWs and that of the undoped SnO_2 NWs. When doped with La_2O_3 using a 0.05 M $\text{La}(\text{NO}_3)_3$ solution, the $\text{RR}_{\text{ethanol}}$ and $\text{RR}_{\text{acetone}}$ values were 3.7 and 3.2, respectively (Fig. 7 right upper). It should be noted that the $\text{RR}_{\text{ethanol}}$ value was increased to 5.5 by doping La_2O_3 using a 0.5 M $\text{La}(\text{NO}_3)_3$ solution while the $\text{RR}_{\text{acetone}}$ value was increased to 3.6 (Fig. 7 right mid-

dle). A further increase in the La_2O_3 concentration decreased the $\text{RR}_{\text{ethanol}}$ and $\text{RR}_{\text{acetone}}$ values to 2.6 and 1.9, respectively (Fig. 7 right below). This shows that the concentration of La_2O_3 should be optimized in order to maximize the sensing responses to $\text{C}_2\text{H}_5\text{OH}$ and CH_3COCH_3 .

The decomposition of $\text{C}_2\text{H}_5\text{OH}$ at high temperature is dependent upon the acid–base properties of the oxide catalyst used [12].

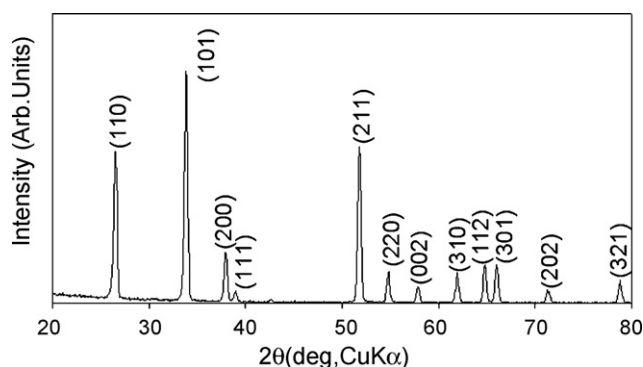
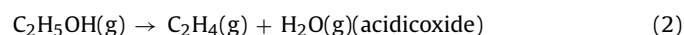
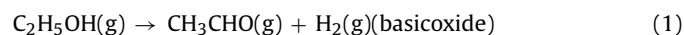


Fig. 5. X-ray diffraction pattern of the undoped SnO_2 nanowires.

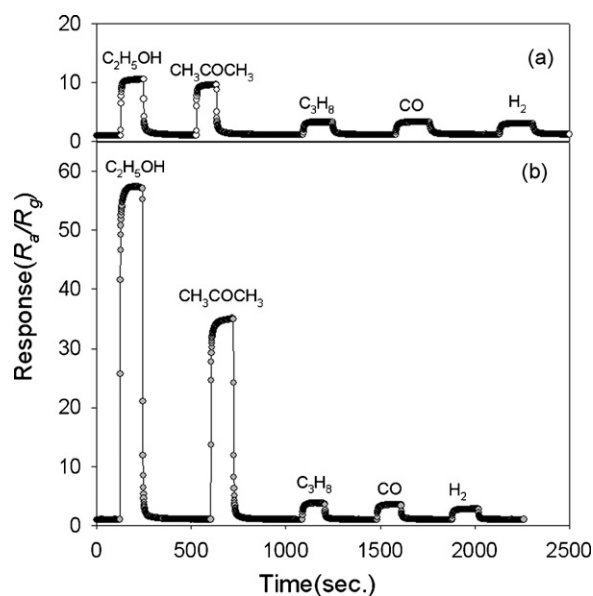


Fig. 6. Gas responses to 100 ppm of $\text{C}_2\text{H}_5\text{OH}$, CH_3COCH_3 , C_3H_8 , CO , and H_2 at 400°C of (a) undoped SnO_2 nanowires and (b) La_2O_3 -doped SnO_2 nanowires using 0.5 M $\text{La}(\text{NO}_3)_3$ solution.

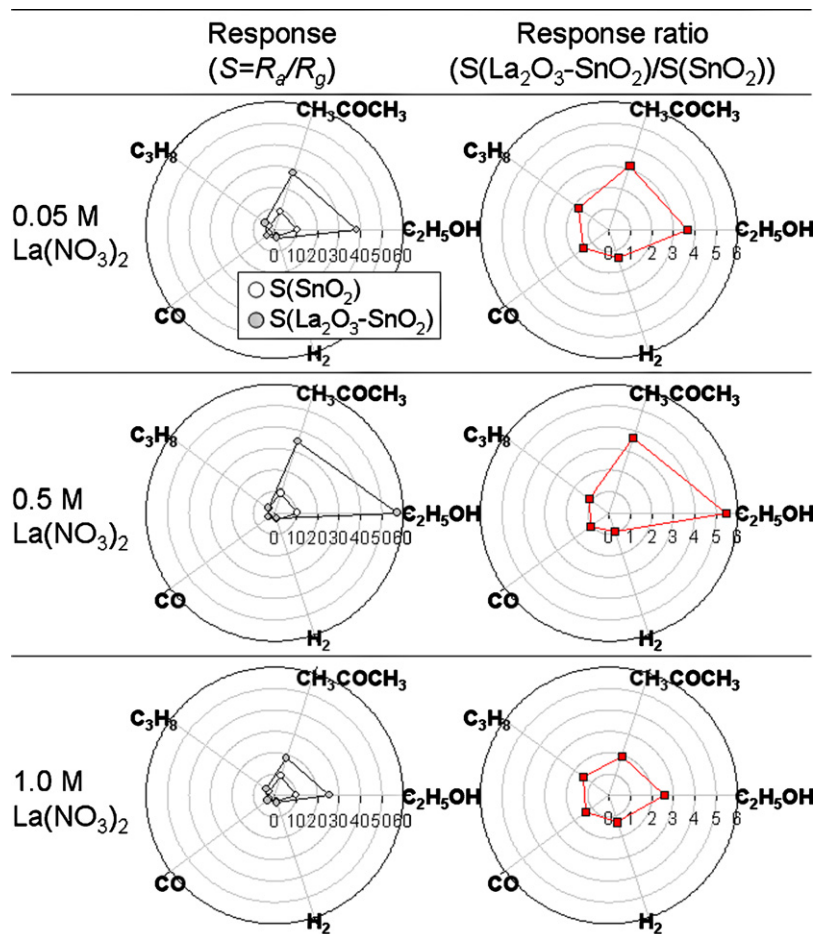


Fig. 7. Polar plots of the gas responses to C₂H₅OH, CH₃COCH₃, C₃H₈, CO, and H₂ before and after doping with La₂O₃ using 0.05, 0.5, and 1.0 M La(NO₃)₃ solutions, and the ratio between the responses to a specific gas before and after La₂O₃ doping. Gas sensing characteristics were measured at 400 °C, and the concentration of all gases was fixed to 100 ppm.

Jinkawa et al. [20] reported that the sensitivity to C₂H₅OH is increased 10–40 times by the addition of basic oxides such as Cs₂O, La₂O₃, and Gd₂O₃. CH₃CHO(g) + H₂(g) in a basic oxide induces a larger increase in conductance than C₂H₄(g) in an acidic oxide. Therefore, the 5.5-fold increase in S_{ethanol} by La₂O₃ doping can be attributed to the promotion of reaction (1).

The doping of different La₂O₃ concentrations increased the RR_{ethanol} value more than the RR_{acetone} value. The $S_{\text{ethanol}}/S_{\text{acetone}}$ ratio, which is the degree of selective detection to C₂H₅OH in the presence of CH₃COCH₃, was ~1.10 for the undoped SnO₂ NW sensors. In this circumstance, discrimination between C₂H₅OH and CH₃COCH₃ is almost impossible. Indeed, the S_{ethanol} value in the most oxide semiconductor gas sensors was reported to be similar to the S_{acetone} value [21–27]. The reason for this can be found from the similar reaction intermediates, CH₃CHO(g), which is formed by the decompositions of C₂H₅OH [12] and CH₃COCH₃ [28].

In this study, the $S_{\text{ethanol}}/S_{\text{acetone}}$ ratio increased to 1.38, 1.64, and 1.39 when doped with La₂O₃ using the 0.05, 0.5, and 1 M La(NO₃)₃ solutions, respectively. This means that doping with La₂O₃ promotes the sensing reaction to C₂H₅OH more than to CH₃COCH₃. Accordingly, La₂O₃ doping not only enhances the response to C₂H₅OH to a great extent but also enables the selective detection of C₂H₅OH in the presence of CH₃COCH₃, which is a challenging issue.

The dynamic response transients were obtained for the undoped and La₂O₃-functionalized SnO₂ NWs sensors (Fig. 8). The 90% response time for gas exposure ($t_{90\%(\text{air-to-gas})}$) and that for recovery ($t_{90\%(\text{gas-to-air})}$) were calculated from the resistance–time data

shown in Figs. 6 and 8 and are summarized in Table 1. In the undoped SnO₂ NWs sensor, the $t_{90\%(\text{air-to-gas})}$ values in the sensing of C₂H₅OH and CH₃COCH₃ ranged from 2 to 4 s, while the $t_{90\%(\text{gas-to-air})}$ value ranged from 98 to 136 s. The $t_{90\%(\text{air-to-gas})}$ values in the sensing of C₃H₈, CO, and H₂ were 9–13 s while the $t_{90\%(\text{gas-to-air})}$ value decreased to 62–65 s. This shows that the sensing mechanisms of C₂H₅OH and CH₃COCH₃ are different from those of C₃H₈, CO, and H₂. Note that the $t_{90\%(\text{air-to-gas})}$ values in the range of 2–4 s in sensing C₂H₅OH and CH₃COCH₃ and those in the range of 9–13 s in sensing C₃H₈, CO, and H₂ are quite short considering that the sensor response times in the most of the literature range from 60 to 120 s [10,29,30]. This can be explained by the rapid in-diffusion of gas towards the sensing surface due to the less-agglomerated network structure of NWs. When doped with La₂O₃, both the $t_{90\%(\text{air-to-gas})}$ values and $t_{90\%(\text{gas-to-air})}$ values were shortened compared with those of the undoped SnO₂ NWs sensors. Therefore, doping with La₂O₃ is a promising approach for enhancing the sensitivity and selectivity to C₂H₅OH without deteriorating the rapid sensor response.

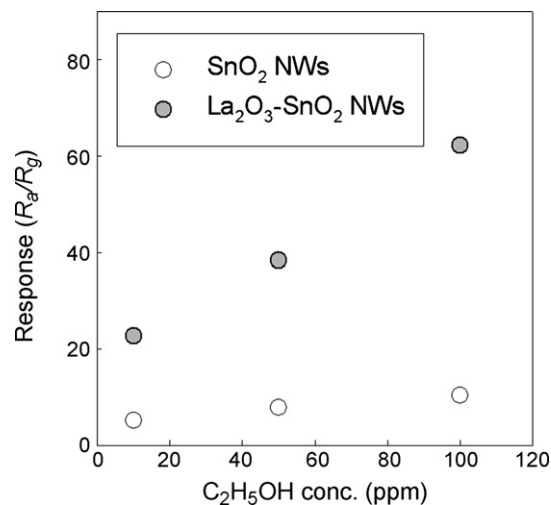
The sensor resistance in air (R_a) was increased by doping with La₂O₃, as shown in Fig. 8. Kugishima et al. [31] reported that the R_a value of undoped SnO₂ at 400 °C is increased by ~1.5 orders of magnitude by doping with 0.5 wt% La₂O₃. They [32] also reported that the R_a value of Sb-doped SnO₂ at 400 °C is increased by up to ~5 orders of magnitude with increasing La₂O₃ doping concentrations from 0.5 to 5 wt%. A further increase in the La₂O₃ concentration to 7 wt% decreased the R_a value. It is interesting that the response

Table 1The 90% response time for the gas exposure ($t_{90\%(\text{air-to-gas})}$) and that for recovery ($t_{90\%(\text{gas-to-air})}$) (measured at 400 °C)

Gas	SnO ₂ NWs		La ₂ O ₃ -SnO ₂ NWs	
	$t_{90\%(\text{air-to-gas})}$ (s)	$t_{90\%(\text{gas-to-air})}$ (s)	$t_{90\%(\text{air-to-gas})}$ (s)	$t_{90\%(\text{gas-to-air})}$ (s)
C ₂ H ₅ OH 10 ppm	4	98	1	88
C ₂ H ₅ OH 50 ppm	3	114	1	81
C ₂ H ₅ OH 100 ppm	2	136	1	110
CH ₃ COCH ₃ 100 ppm	2	127	1	78
C ₃ H ₈ 100 ppm	9	65	6	47
CO 100 ppm	12	65	7	54
H ₂ 100 ppm	13	62	8	40

to 20 ppm ethylene oxide (C₂H₄O) increases until 5 wt% La₂O₃ and then decreases at 7 wt% La₂O₃. This reflects that the response (R_a/R_g) is related to the R_a value and can be understood from the finding that the relative decrease of sensor resistance becomes more evident at the higher R_a when a constant amount of electrons is supplied by the gas sensing reaction at the surface. The R_a values for the three undoped SnO₂ NWs sensors were 11.7, 14.1, and 8.5 MΩ, respectively. These values increased to 66.8, 415.4, and 181.0 MΩ after doping with La₂O₃ using 0.05, 0.5, and 1.0 M La(NO₃)₃ aqueous solutions, respectively. These correspond to a 7.8-, 29.6-, and 15.4-fold increase in R_a , respectively. Although further systematic studies will be necessary, La₂O₃ appears to play a dual roles as an acceptor and a catalytic promoter and the highest enhancement of the C₂H₅OH response with the La₂O₃ coating using a 0.5 M La(NO₃)₃ aqueous solution can be understood in a similar viewpoint. The relative contributions between the catalytic activation and the increase in R_a by doping with La₂O₃ need to be studied in order to better understand the detailed C₂H₅OH sensing mechanism of La₂O₃-doped SnO₂ sensors.

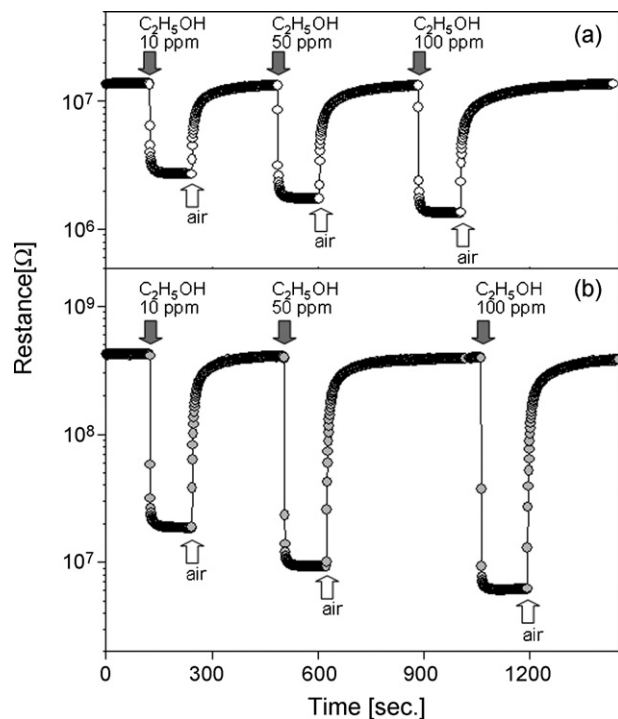
One of important applications for a C₂H₅OH sensor is the screening of inebriated drivers. Under heavy traffic conditions, the ambient concentrations of CO can increase up to 100 ppm as a result of emission from gasoline engines [33]. In addition, CH₃COCH₃

**Fig. 9.** Response to 10–100 ppm C₂H₅OH of the SnO₂ NWs sensors before and after the doping with La₂O₃ using a 0.5 M La(NO₃)₃ solution (measured at 400 °C).

vapor can be contained in the expiration from a diabetes patient [34], which can reach concentrations up to 300 ppm in the case of an aceto-acidotic coma related to diabetes mellitus [35]. In this respect, SnO₂ NWs functionalized with La₂O₃ using a 0.5 M La(NO₃)₃ solution can be used to detect C₂H₅OH selectively in the presence of interfering gases such as CO and CH₃COCH₃ although the cross-sensitivity to CH₃COCH₃ should be decreased further.

Fig. 9 shows the responses to 10–100 ppm C₂H₅OH of undoped and La₂O₃-doped SnO₂ NWs sensors. The response to 10 ppm increased from 5.1 to 22.7 and that to 100 ppm increased from 22.7 to 62. This is higher than SnO₂-nanobelts ($\Delta G/G = 41.2$ for 250 ppm C₂H₅OH) [10], Sb-doped SnO₂ NWs ($R_a/R_g = \sim 3$ for 800 ppm C₂H₅OH) [14], indium-doped SnO₂ NWs ($R_a/R_g = \sim 7$ for 50 ppm C₂H₅OH) [15], ZnO NWs ($R_a/R_g = \sim 15$ for 100 ppm C₂H₅OH) [36], ZnSnO₃ NWs ($R_a/R_g = \sim 18$ for 100 ppm C₂H₅OH) [37], In₂O₃ NWs ($R_a/R_g = \sim 2$ for 100 ppm C₂H₅OH) [38], and V₂O₅ NWs ($R_a/R_g = \sim 2$ for 200 ppm C₂H₅OH) [39], and is comparable to the results of other SnO₂-nanobelts ($\Delta G/G = 25$ for 10 ppm C₂H₅OH) [11]. This clearly shows that these SnO₂ NWs with a La₂O₃ functional layer have the potential to achieve ultra-high gas sensitivity.

Finally, it should be noted that the sensor fabrication platform in this study is quite simple and inexpensive. A coating of a functional La₂O₃ layer by solution deposition and the control of the doping concentration is very convenient compared with the element doping in the stage of NWs growth. This suggests that a solution-based coating of a functional layer on SnO₂ NWs is a powerful approach for accomplishing high sensitivity and selectivity without deteriorating the gas response time. This method can be easily used to develop semiconducting NWs sensors functionalized with different catalyst materials such as Pd, Pt, or Au, which has great potential in the sensing of multiple gases using a sensor array.

**Fig. 8.** Response transients to 10–100 ppm C₂H₅OH of (a) undoped SnO₂ nanowires sensor and (b) La₂O₃-doped SnO₂ nanowires sensor using a 0.5 M La(NO₃)₃ solution (measured at 400 °C).

4. Conclusion

A La_2O_3 layer was coated on SnO_2 nanowires gas sensors by the deposition of $\text{La}(\text{NO}_3)_3$ aqueous solutions, and its effect on the gas sensing characteristics to $\text{C}_2\text{H}_5\text{OH}$, CH_3COCH_3 , C_3H_8 , CO and H_2 were investigated. The La_2O_3 coating using a 0.5 M $\text{La}(\text{NO}_3)_3$ aqueous solution greatly increased the responses to $\text{C}_2\text{H}_5\text{OH}$ (~5.5 times) and CH_3COCH_3 (~3.6 times) but did not vary the responses to C_3H_8 , CO, and H_2 . The discrimination between $\text{C}_2\text{H}_5\text{OH}$ and CH_3COCH_3 , which is a challenging issue due to their similar chemical nature, was accomplished by the more active promotion of $\text{C}_2\text{H}_5\text{OH}$ sensing over CH_3COCH_3 sensing. The deposition of La_2O_3 via the solution route, suggested in this study, provides an effective and convenient route for accomplishing both high sensitivity and high selectivity to $\text{C}_2\text{H}_5\text{OH}$ without deteriorating the gas response kinetics.

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