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Author(s)	Yuan, Luyang; Hyodo, Takeo; Shimizu, Yasuhiro; Egashira, Makoto
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Article

Preparation of Mesoporous and/or Macroporous SnO₂-Based Powders and Their Gas-Sensing Properties as Thick Film Sensors

Luyang Yuan ¹, Takeo Hyodo ², Yasuhiro Shimizu ^{2,*} and Makoto Egashira ²

¹ Graduate School of Science and Technology, Nagasaki University, 1-14 Bunkyo-machi, Nagasaki 852-8521, Japan; E-Mail: d708057c@cc.nagasaki-u.ac.jp (L.Y.)

² Faculty of Engineering, Nagasaki University, 1-14 Bunkyo-machi, Nagasaki 852-8521, Japan; E-Mails: hyodo@nagasaki-u.ac.jp (T.H.); egashira@nagasaki-u.ac.jp (M.E.)

* Author to whom correspondence should be addressed; E-Mail: shimizu@nagasaki-u.ac.jp; Tel.: +81-95-819-2642; Fax: +81-95-819-2643.

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Abstract: Mesoporous and/or macroporous SnO₂-based powders have been prepared and their gas-sensing properties as thick film sensors towards H₂ and NO₂ have been investigated. The mesopores and macropores of various SnO₂-based powders were controlled by self-assembly of sodium bis(2-ethylhexyl)sulfosuccinate and polymethyl-methacrylate (PMMA) microspheres (*ca.* 800 nm in diameter), respectively. The introduction of mesopores and macropores into SnO₂-based sensors increased their sensor resistance in air significantly. The additions of SiO₂ and Sb₂O₅ into mesoporous and/or macroporous SnO₂ were found to improve the sensing properties of the sensors. The addition of SiO₂ into mesoporous and/or macroporous SnO₂ was found to increase the sensor resistance in air, whereas doping of Sb₂O₅ into mesoporous and/or macroporous SnO₂ was found to markedly reduce the sensor resistance in air, and to increase the response to 1,000 ppm H₂ as well as 1 ppm NO₂ in air. Among all the sensors tested, meso-macroporous SnO₂ added with 1 wt% SiO₂ and 5 wt% Sb₂O₅, which were prepared with the above two templates simultaneously, exhibited the largest H₂ and NO₂ responses.

Keywords: mesopore; macropore; meso-macropore; SnO₂ gas sensors; SiO₂; Sb₂O₅

1. Introduction

In recent years, the development for porous materials is been an essential objective of materials science research. This interest is the result of the progress in all fields of industry and technology [1-5]. According to the IUPAC definition, microporous materials are those with pore diameters less than 2 nm, mesoporous materials are those that have pore diameters between 2 and 50 nm, and macroporous materials are those with pores bigger than 50 nm [6]. Among them, macroporous and mesoporous silica with sufficient thermal stability has been applied to catalysts [7,8] membranes [9], adsorbents [10], chemical sensors [11] and templates for nanowires [12]. On the contrary, the poor thermal stability of non-silica mesoporous materials limits their applications. Over the past 50 years, semiconductor metal oxides such as SnO₂, ZnO and In₂O₃ have been extensively studied as gas sensing materials due to their various advantages such as the facile fabrication process of thin and thick films, low cost and high thermal stability [13,14]. Among the various metal oxides, SnO₂ is one of the most attractive materials for semiconductor gas sensors [13-23] operated at elevated temperatures (200–600 °C). The gas sensing property of semiconductor gas sensors is largely dependent on various factors such as shape and size of the oxide particles [24-30]. In addition, strict control of nanostructure of the oxide powders is also quite effective in improving the gas sensing properties [31-34]. Thus, our group's efforts have so far been directed to preparing thermally stable mesoporous (m-) [15-17] and macroporous (mp-) [18,21] oxide films. However, the H₂ sensing properties of the m-SnO₂ sensors were relatively lower than expected from their large specific surface area and mp-SnO₂ showed rather excellent sensing properties to H₂. Moreover, our recent studies have demonstrated the successful preparation of thermally stable meso-macroporous (m:mp-) SnO₂ and the improvement of gas sensing properties by employing pellet-type sensor structures [19]. However, the mechanical strength of the m mp-SnO₂ pellets was not enough for long-term operation and this then became a subject for further investigation.

The present study is thus directed to developing m-, mp- and m mp-SnO₂ thick film sensors. The sensors were fabricated by screen-printing of their as-prepared powders, which were produced by employing sodium bis(2-ethylhexyl)sulfosuccinate (aerosol-OT, AOT) as a mesopore template and PMMA microspheres with an average diameter of 800 nm as a macropore template, and then subsequent calcination at 600 °C for 5 h. The effects of the addition of SiO₂ and Sb₂O₅ to m-, mp- and m mp-SnO₂ powders on their H₂ and NO₂ sensing properties were also examined.

2. Experimental Section

2.1. Preparation of Mesoporous and/or Macroporous SnO₂-Based Powders

Various SnO₂-based powders with well-developed mesopores and/or macropores were prepared by a sol-gel method using SnCl₄ 5H₂O (Kishida Chem. Co., Ltd.) as a Sn source, AOT (Kishida Chem. Co., Ltd.) as a mesopore template and PMMA microspheres with an average diameter of 800 nm (MP-1600, Soken Chem. & Eng. Co., Ltd.) as a macropore template. A given amount of SnCl₄ 5H₂O (1.75 g) was mixed in 400 mL of ultra pure water together with an appropriate amount of AOT and/or PMMA microspheres. In some cases, appropriate amounts of tetraethoxysilane (TEOS, Kishida Chem. Co., Ltd.) and/or SbCl₃ (Kishida Chem. Co., Ltd.) were also added to the solution, in

order to prepare SnO₂ powders added with the given amounts of SiO₂ and/or Sb₂O₅. Then the pH value of the resulting mixture was adjusted to 8.5 by adding an aqueous solution of NH₃. The solid product obtained was aged in the solution at 20 °C for 3 days, then the resulting product was separated from the solution by centrifugation. After drying the product in an oven at 80 °C overnight, the resulting powder product was treated with a 0.1 mol L⁻¹ phosphoric acid solution for about 2 h, and the resulting product was dried in an oven at 80 °C overnight. The powder product resulting after pulverization is referred to as-prepared powder. The as-prepared powders were used for fabricating thick film sensors, but for the characterization tests, as-prepared powders were subjected to calcination at 600 °C for 5 h in air, which are the same conditions adopted for the thick film sensors after the screen-printing of a paste of as-prepared powders. The preparation conditions and compositions of all SnO₂-based powders obtained in this study and their abbreviations are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Preparation conditions of SnO₂-based powders.

Sensors		Mesopore template (AOT) /g*	Macropore template (PMMA) /g*	Amount of MO added to SnO ₂ (x or y)/wt%	
Kind of powder	Abbreviation			MO: Sb ₂ O ₅ (using NbCl ₅)	MO: SiO ₂ (using TEOS)
Mesoporous (m-) SnO ₂	m-T0S0	1.75	none	none	none
	m-T1S0			5.0	1.0
	m-T1S5			5.0	1.0
Meso-macroporous (m·mp-) SnO ₂	m·mp-T1S0	1.75	0.35	none	1.0
	m·mp-T1S0.5			0.5	
	m·mp-T1S1			1.0	
	m·mp-T1S3			3.0	
	m·mp-T1S5			5.0	
Macroporous (mp-) SnO ₂	mp-T1S0	none	0.35	none	1.0
	mp-T1S0.5			0.5	
	mp-T1S1			1.0	
	mp-T1S3			3.0	
	mp-T1S5			5.0	

* In 400 mL aqueous solution.

In our study, the SnO₂-based powders prepared using AOT or PMMA microspheres as a template are identified by using abbreviations such as m-TxSy or mp-TxSy, respectively, and the SnO₂-based powder prepared using both AOT and PMMA microspheres as templates is indicated as m mp-TxSy, as shown in Table 1. Here, T and S mean the addition of TEOS and SbCl₃ in the precursor solution, respectively, and x (x = 0, 1, 5) and y (y = 0, 1, 5) represent the added amounts of SiO₂ and Sb₂O₅ (wt%) with respect to the weight of SnO₂, respectively, on the basis of the expected weight of constituent oxides after calcination.

Crystal phase and crystallite size of SnO₂-based powders were characterized with X-ray diffraction (XRD, CuKα, Shimadzu Corp., RINT-2200). The crystallite size was calculated by using Scherrer's formula:

$$CS = 0.89\lambda/\beta\cos\theta \quad (1)$$

where λ is the wavelength of $\text{CuK}\alpha$, β is the full-width at the half-maximum of the (110) line and θ is the diffraction angle of the (110) peak. The specific surface area, pore volume and pore size distribution of SnO_2 -based powders were measured by the BET method using a N_2 sorption isotherm (Micromeritics Instrument Corp., TriStar3000). Morphology of SnO_2 -based thick films was observed by a scanning electron microscope (SEM, JEOL Ltd., JCM-5700).

2.2. Fabrication of Mesoporous and/or Macroporous SnO_2 -Based Thick Film Sensors

The as-prepared SnO_2 -based powder was mixed with a printing oil which is composed of an alkyl ester of methacrylic acid as a binder, a toluene-based solvent, and an ammonium salt of polyacrylic acid as a plasticizer, and the resulting paste was screen printed on an alumina substrate, on which a pair of interdigitated Pt electrodes (gap between electrodes: 130 μm) had been printed (the thickness of the film was controlled to be about 20 μm after calcination for all the sensors fabricated). Then the printed film was subjected to heat treatment at 600 $^\circ\text{C}$ for 5 h in air prior to response measurements. The gas-sensing properties of the thick film sensors to 1,000 ppm H_2 and 1 ppm NO_2 balanced with air were measured in the temperature range of 350–500 $^\circ\text{C}$. The magnitude of the gas response was defined as the ratio (R_a/R_g) of the sensor resistance in air (R_a) to that in a target gas (R_g) for H_2 , but the reverse ratio (R_g/R_a) was used for NO_2 .

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Characterization of Mesoporous and/or Macroporous SnO_2 -Based Powders

Pore size distribution and specific surface area (SSA) of representative m- SnO_2 , mp- SnO_2 and m mp- SnO_2 powders after calcination are shown in Figure 1. As shown in Figures 1(a-i), m-TOS0 powder, which was prepared only with the addition of AOT, showed a SSA of 150.9 $\text{m}^2 \text{g}^{-1}$ and a larger pore volume of 0.153 $\text{cm}^3 \text{g}^{-1}$ with a pore diameter of ca. 3.1 nm at the maximum pore volume (hereafter, it will be referred to as the maximum pore diameter). The characterization data of representative SnO_2 -based powders is summarized in Table 2. The addition of 1 wt% SiO_2 to m-TOS0 induced a slight increase in SSA (162.3 $\text{m}^2 \text{g}^{-1}$) and reduced the maximum pore diameter to ca. 2.7 nm (see m-TIS0). This result implies the repression of growth of SnO_2 crystallites and/or grains by the added SiO_2 , as was reported by Fukuoka *et al.* [12]. Simultaneous addition of 1 wt% SiO_2 and 5 wt% Sb_2O_5 to m-TOS0 resulted in further increase in SSA slightly to a value of 176.5 $\text{m}^2 \text{g}^{-1}$ (see m-TIS5). Thus, the addition of Sb_2O_5 was suggested to be also effective in controlling grain growth, which will be confirmed by the change in SnO_2 crystallite size discussed later.

It was revealed that the introduction of macropores into m-TIS5 was very effective for increasing SSA to a value of 262.7 $\text{m}^2 \text{g}^{-1}$ (see m mp-TIS5, Figures 1(c-ii)). This arises undoubtedly from the decrease in the maximum pore diameter and the increase in pore volume, as summarized in Table 2. On the other hand, the introduction of macropores only (mp-TIS5), instead of mesopores (m-TIS5), into SnO_2 -based powder reduced SSA to a value of 112.0 $\text{m}^2 \text{g}^{-1}$ (compare Figure 2(b-ii) with Figure 2(a-iii)) and then decreased pore volume (see Table 2). From these results, it is confirmed that the introduction of mesopores is essential for obtaining both large specific surface and large pore volume of SnO_2 -based powders.

Figure 1. Pore size distributions and specific surface area of representative (a) m-SnO₂, (b) mp-SnO₂ and (c) m·mp-SnO₂ powders.

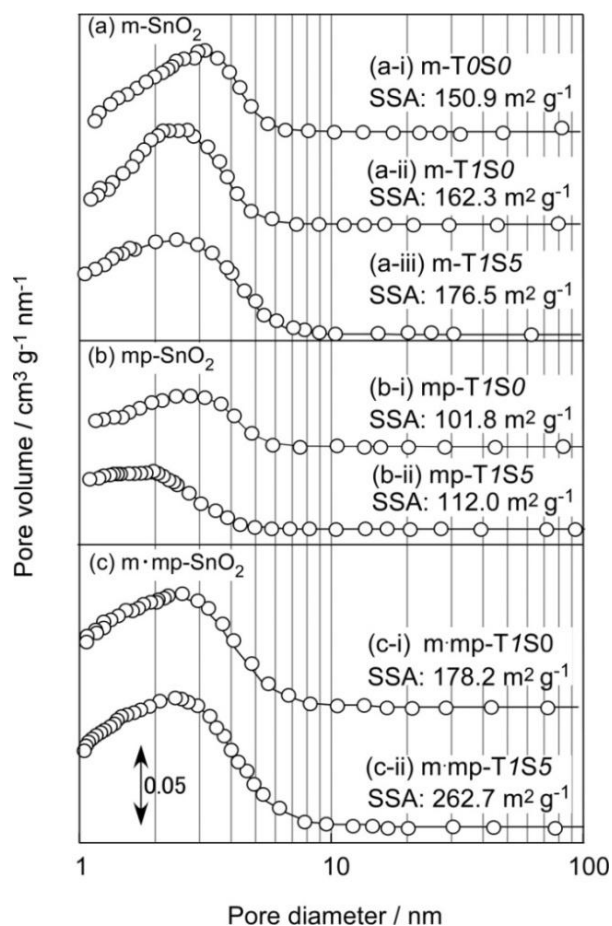


Table 2. Characterization data of representative m-SnO₂, mp-SnO₂ and m·mp-SnO₂ powders.

Sensors		Specific surface	Pore	Maximum pore	Crystallite size
Kind of powder	Abbreviation	area (SSA) /m ² g ⁻¹	volume /cm ³ g ⁻¹	diameter * /nm	(CS) /nm
m-SnO ₂	m-T0S0	150.9	0.153	3.1	7.0
	m-T1S0	162.3	0.160	2.7	3.8
	m-T1S5	176.5	0.155	2.5	3.2
m·mp-SnO ₂	m·mp-T1S0	178.2	0.184	2.5	4.2
	m·mp-T1S5	262.7	0.191	2.3	3.2
mp-SnO ₂	mp-T1S0	101.8	0.090	2.9	3.9
	mp-T1S5	112.0	0.079	2.0	2.7

* Pore diameter at the maximum pore volume in the pore size distribution curve.

Figure 2 shows variations in SSA of representative SnO₂-based powders with amount of Sb₂O₅ added. The effect of the Sb₂O₅ on SSA can be seen more clearly from this figure. As for the cases of m-T1Sy and mp-T1Sy series, SSA values increased slightly with increasing amounts of Sb₂O₅ added, but only for the m·mp-T1Sy series, it is obvious that SSA increased markedly with an increase in the additive amount of Sb₂O₅ reaching the largest value of 262.7 m² g⁻¹ obtained in the present study. The

reason for this preferable effect for sensor application observed only the m mp-T1S_y series is not yet clarified and is a subject for future work.

Figure 2. Variations in specific surface area of representative SnO₂-based powders with amounts of Sb₂O₅ added.

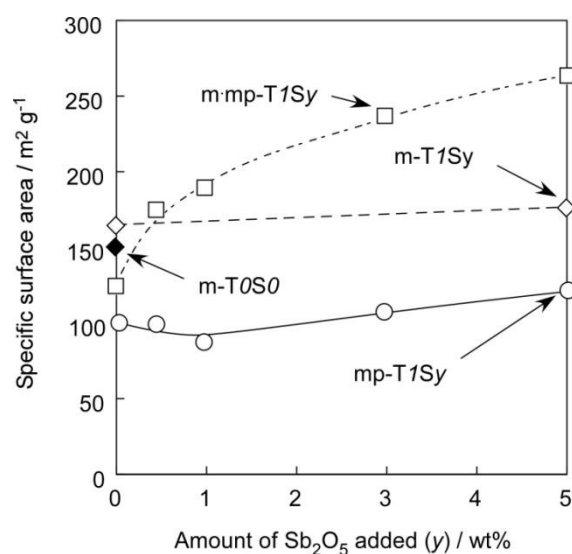
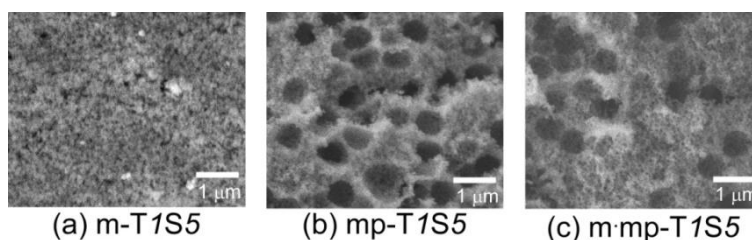


Figure 3 shows the SEM images of the fracture surface of m-T1S₅, mp-T1S₅ and m mp-T1S₅ thick film sensors. No formation of macropores in m-T1S₅ is reasonable, since no PMMA microspheres were added, as shown in Figure 3(a). But, Figure 3(b,c) confirm the formation of many spherical macropores originating from the morphology of PMMA microspheres as a template in the mp-T1S₅ and m mp-T1S₅ thick film sensors. However, the diameter of macropores observed was in the 400–750 nm range, which was smaller than that of the diameter of raw PMMA microspheres, due to shrinkage of resulting voids during the growth of SnO₂ crystallites.

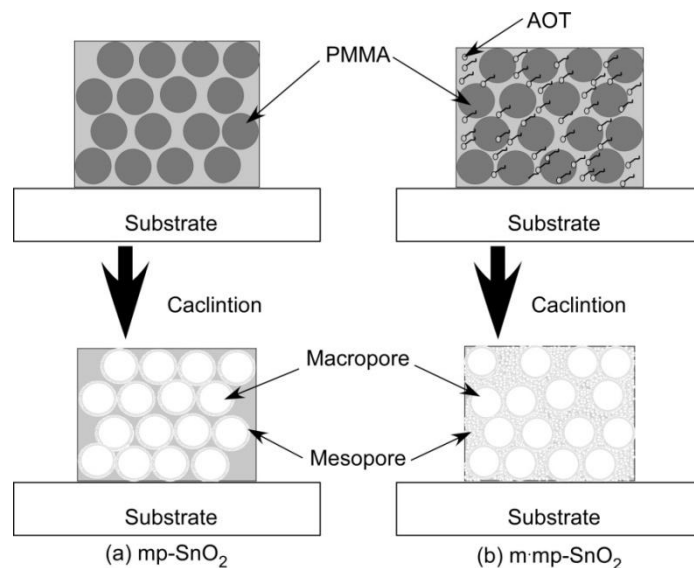
Figure 3. SEM images of fracture surface of (a) m-T1S₅, (b) mp-T1S₅ and (c) m mp-T1S₅ thick film sensors.



As shown in Figure 1 and Table 1, mp-SnO₂ powder prepared in the present study showed relatively larger SSA than the conventional SnO₂ powder (8.4 m² g⁻¹, [35]), indicating the formation of a certain amount of mesopores, irrespective of the addition or not of AOT as a mesoporous structure template. This result implies penetration or diffusion of PMMA fragments into the dried SnO₂ precursor material during the calcination and such fragments may act as a mesoporous template at the interface between the PMMA microsphere and surrounding dried SnO₂ precursor. Thus, after the calcination at 600 °C for 5 h of the mp-SnO₂ thick film, a thin mesoporous layer may be formed at the interface between the

pores and SnO₂ particles, as shown schematically in Figure 4(a) [36]. As for m mp-SnO₂, it is considered that mesopores are formed uniformly inside all the SnO₂ particles and the whole thick film structure, as shown in Figure 4(b).

Figure 4. Schematic drawing of formation mechanism of mesopores and macropores in (a) mp-SnO₂ and (b) m mp-SnO₂ thick film sensors.



Another notable finding in Figure 3 is a relatively longer distance of the macropores in m mp-T/S5 than that in mp-T/S5. Since AOT was used as a mesoporous template in fabricating m mp-SnO₂ powder, thermal decomposition and subsequent firing along with generation of combustion gases may induce sponge and/or bulky structure with mesopores, leading to a longer distance of the macropores, as also shown schematically in Figure 4(b).

Figure 5 shows XRD patterns of representative m-SnO₂, mp-SnO₂ and m mp-SnO₂ powders. Diffraction peaks of all powders were rather broad, indicating low crystallinity, but all peaks could be ascribed to those of tetragonal SnO₂. The CS value which was calculated for each powder using Scherrer's formula is summarized in Table 2. Variations in CS of representative SnO₂-based powders are shown Figure 6. On the whole, the CS values were small and were in a range of 2.7–7 nm in diameter, due to the limitation of crystallite growth induced by the phosphoric acid treatment before the calcination [15,16]. Exceptionally, m-T/S0 showed the largest CS value of 7 nm. The CS value was decreased drastically to 3.8 nm by the addition of 1 wt% SiO₂ to m-T/S0 (see m-T/S1 in Table 2 and Figure 6). Thus, the repression of the growth of SnO₂ crystallites by the added SiO₂ could be confirmed from these results [37]. As for the powders containing 1 wt% SiO₂, CS values were almost comparable, whereas they tended to decrease slightly with increasing amounts of the Sb₂O₅ additive in each series. In addition, the kind of porous structure, *i.e.*, mesopore, macropore, and mesopore plus macropore, was found to have only a little effect on controlling the CS values. Thus, we can confirm again that the addition of 1 wt% SiO₂ was the most powerful method in reducing the CS value among several factors. The CS values decreased slightly by the Sb₂O₅ addition in each series, but no diffraction peaks other than SnO₂ were observed in XRD patterns even for the cases of 5 wt% Sb₂O₅ addition (Figure 5). This implies that Sb ions added were sufficiently incorporated into the SnO₂

crystal lattice and this solid-solution is also effective for the repression of the crystal growth among SnO₂-based crystallites [23,38,39]. These results demonstrate that the pore size distribution, SSA and CS values of SnO₂-based powders can be controlled by selecting the kinds of templates, the kind of additives and their additive amounts.

Figure 5. XRD patterns of (a) m-SnO₂, (b) mp-SnO₂ and (c) m mp-SnO₂ powders.

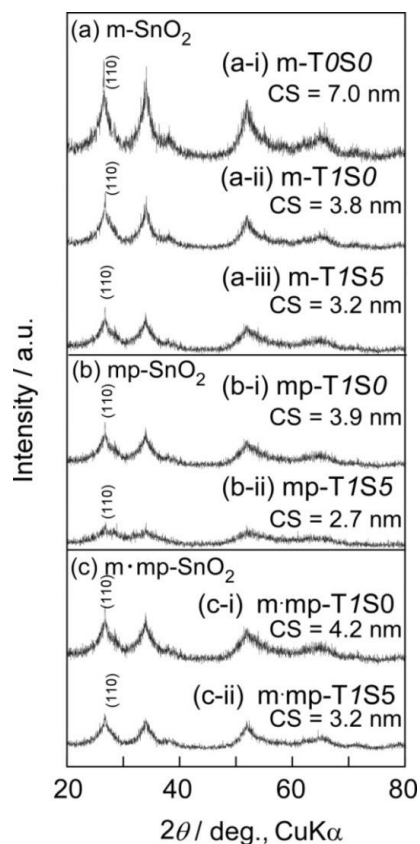
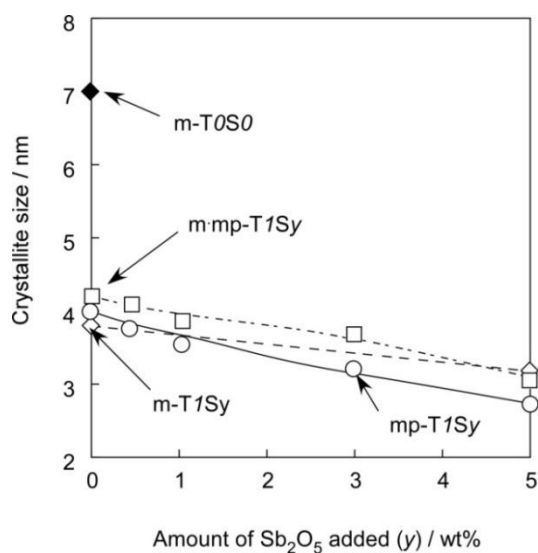


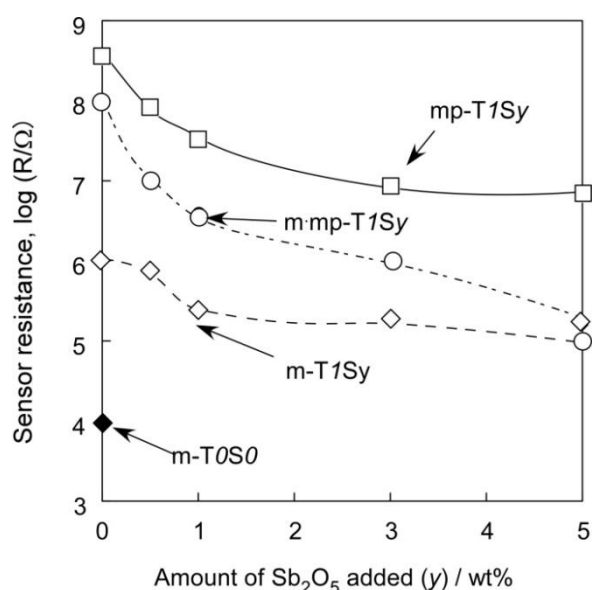
Figure 6. Variations in crystallite size of representative SnO₂-based powders with amounts of Sb₂O₅ added.



3.2. H_2 and NO_2 Sensing Properties of Mesoporous and/or Macroporous SnO_2 -Based Sensors

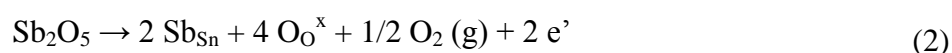
Variations in sensor resistance of SnO_2 -based thick film sensors in air at 450 °C with amounts of Sb_2O_5 added are shown in Figure 7. The m-TOS0 sensor showed the lowest resistance in air, but the addition of 1 wt% SiO_2 to m-TOS0 increased the sensor resistance in air (see m-TIS0). The sensor resistance of other two series sensors, *i.e.*, mp-TIS0 and m mp-TIS0, in air was also very high. Even if Si^{4+} ions would be substituted for Sn^{4+} ion sites, no valency control effect could be expected. Therefore, SiO_2 added was anticipated to be segregated among SnO_2 crystallites and/or grains and then to reduce electronic conduction of SnO_2 -based thick film sensors, although the segregation of SiO_2 was not confirmed by the XRD measurements due to its small amount added.

Figure 7. Variations in sensor resistance of SnO_2 -based thick film sensors in air at 450 °C with amounts of Sb_2O_5 added.



Introduction of macropores into SnO_2 by using PMMA microspheres (see mp-TISy series), instead of the introduction of mesopores, and/or the simultaneous introduction of macropores (see m mp-TISy series) also resulted in an increase in sensor resistance. This phenomenon can be considered to arise mainly from the introduction of air voids, which are electrical insulators, via various pores in the thick film sensors, but the mp-TISy sensor with macropores showed the largest resistance in air, irrespective of the smallest pore volume, among three series of sensors. This fact implies the existence of another factor, besides the pore volume, in determining the sensor resistance in air, such as the manner of distribution of pores in the thick film and so on, though the details are not clear at present.

In each sensor series, the sensor resistance in air decreased with increasing amounts of Sb_2O_5 additive. This behavior can be explained by the valency control, *i.e.*, partial substitution of Sn^{4+} sites with Sb^{5+} ions, producing free electrons, as described in Equation (2) [38-40]:



These results also confirm the existence of substituted Sb^{5+} ions, *i.e.*, the solid-solution of between Sb_2O_5 and SnO_2 and then little amount of segregated Sb_2O_5 among SnO_2 -based particles.

Figures 8 and 9 show temperature dependence of response of SnO₂-based thick film sensors to 1,000 ppm H₂ balanced with air and 1 ppm NO₂ balanced with air. Almost all sensors showed the maximum response to 1,000 ppm H₂ at a temperature of 450 °C. In contrast, the response to 1 ppm NO₂ of all sensors tended to increase as the operating temperature decreased, and showed the largest response in the temperature range studied at 350 °C.

Figure 8. Temperature dependence of response SnO₂-based thick film sensors to 1,000 ppm H₂.

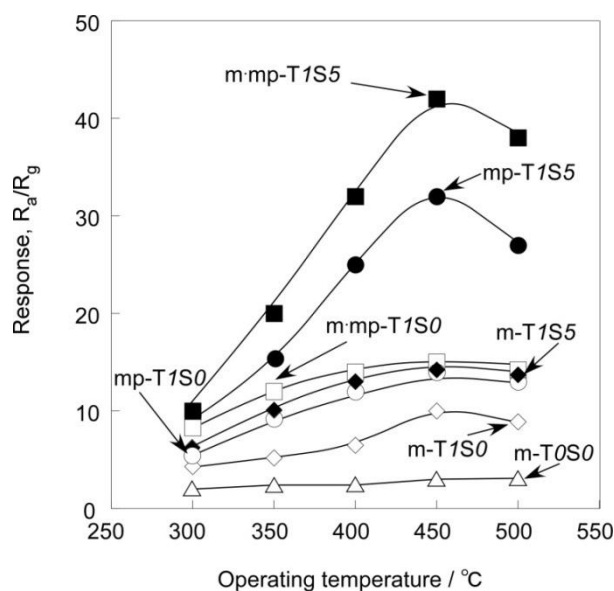
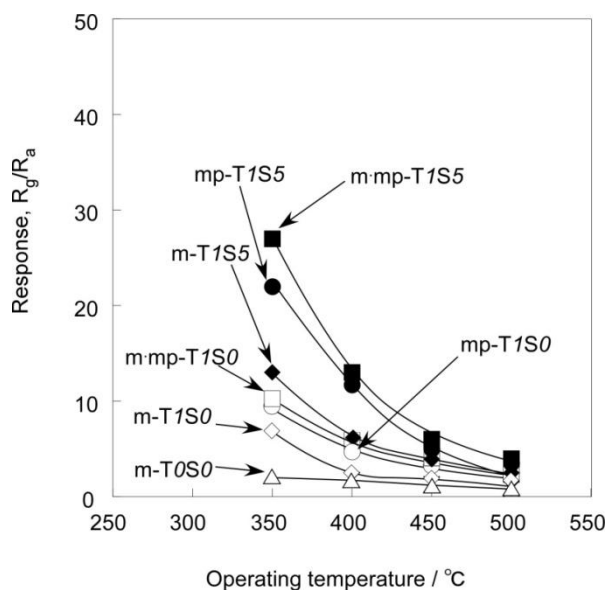


Figure 9. Temperature dependence of response SnO₂-based thick film sensors to 1 ppm NO₂.



Response transients of SnO₂-based thick film sensors to 1,000 ppm H₂ at 450 °C and 1 ppm NO₂ at 350 °C balanced with air are shown in Figures 10 and 11, respectively. In this study, 50% response time is defined as a period necessary to achieve 50% of resistance value of $R_a - R_g$, while 50% recovery time is defined as that necessary to achieve 50% of resistance value of $R_g - R_a$ for H₂.

The 50% response and recovery times to NO_2 are also defined in the similar manner, but by using $R_g - R_a$ for response time and $R_a - R_g$ for recovery time. Hereafter, they are simply expressed as response time and recovery time, respectively. Response and recovery times of SnO_2 -based thick film sensors to 1,000 ppm H_2 at 450 °C and 1 ppm NO_2 at 350 °C were summarized in Table 3. The m-T0S0 sensor showed the longest response and recovery times to H_2 among the sensors listed in Table 3. The simultaneous addition of 1 wt% SiO_2 and 5 wt% Sb_2O_5 to m-T0S0 was found to shorten slightly response and recovery times to H_2 (see m-T1S5).

Figure 10. Response transients of SnO_2 -based thick film sensors to 1,000 ppm H_2 in air at 450 °C.

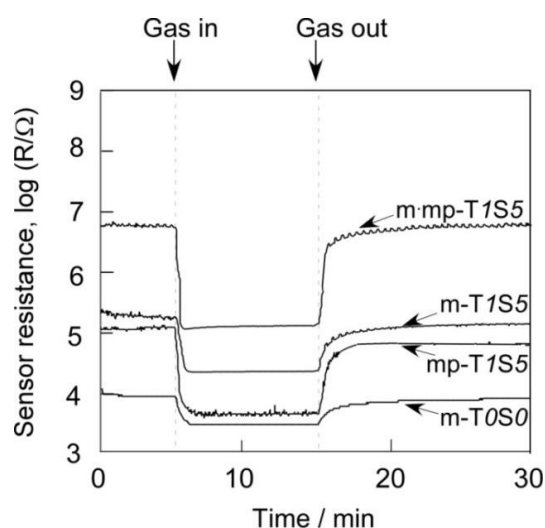
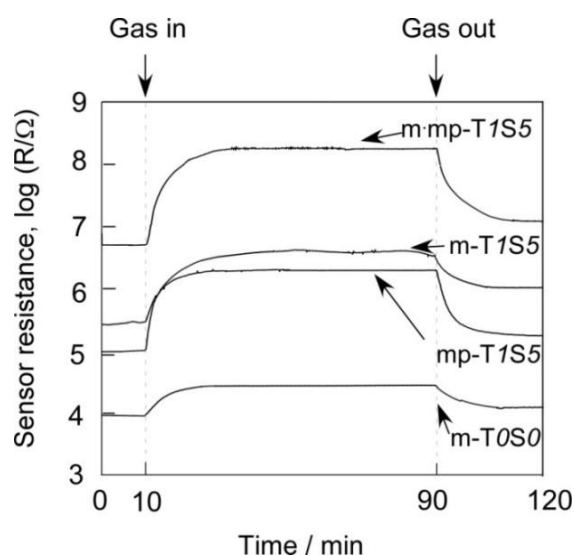


Figure 11. Response transients of SnO_2 -based thick film sensors to 1 ppm NO_2 in air at 350 °C.



However, the m-T1S5 sensor showed longer response and recovery times to 1 ppm NO_2 than m-T0S0. Thus, the effect of additive on the response and recovery times varied with the kind of target gas. The introduction of macropores into m-T1S5 shortens the response and recovery times to H_2 . More remarkable shortening of the recovery time to H_2 as well as response and recovery times to NO_2 were observed with m mp-T1S5. It is reasonable to consider that the response time to H_2 is closely

related to the diffusivity of H₂, while the recovery time is controlled by the diffusivity of O₂ which has a larger molecular size than H₂. As for NO₂, on the other hand, both the response and recovery times are considered to be affected by the diffusivity of NO₂ itself, which has a larger molecular size than H₂, from its gas sensing mechanism. Such considerations predict a shorter recovery time to H₂ as well as shorter response and recovery times to NO₂ by the introduction of macropores into the sensor materials. The results obtained with m mp-T/S5 were in good agreement with this prediction. Thus, the mp-T/S5 sensor, which was fabricated only by the introduction of macropores, showed the fastest response to H₂ as well as the fastest response and recovery times to NO₂ among the sensors tested. But, the reason for the longer recovery time to H₂ of mp-T/S5 than m mp-T/S5 is not clear at present. Anyway, such behavior undoubtedly arises from more easy diffusion of a target gas as well as oxygen through mesopores rather than macropores. On the other hand, all of the response and recovery times to NO₂ are much longer than those to H₂. This may arise not only from slow diffusivity of NO₂ in comparison to H₂, but also from slow adsorption rate and strong interaction of NO₂⁻ species on the oxide surface.

Table 3. 50% response time and 50% recovery time of SnO₂-based thick film sensors to 1,000 ppm H₂ at 450 °C and 1 ppm NO₂ at 350 °C balanced with air.

Sensors		1,000 ppm H ₂ (450 °C)		1 ppm NO ₂ (350 °C)	
Kind of powder	Abbreviation	50% response time/s	50% recovery time/s	50% response time/s	50% recovery time/s
m-SnO ₂	m-T/S0	25	35	182	330
	m-T/S5	22	29	195	600
m mp-SnO ₂	m mp-T/S5	20	17	154	325
mp-SnO ₂	mp-T/S5	16	22	110	220

Figures 12 and 13 show variations in responses of SnO₂-based sensors to 1,000 ppm H₂ at 450 °C and to 1 ppm NO₂ at 350 °C in air with amounts of Sb₂O₅ added, respectively. From these figures, it is also apparent that the m-T/S0 sensor showed the smallest responses to both H₂ and NO₂ among the sensors studied. The addition of 1 wt% SiO₂ to m-T/S0 enhanced responses to both H₂ and NO₂ to a certain level for every series of sensors. In addition, H₂ and NO₂ responses increased with increasing amounts of Sb₂O₅ additive in each series of sensors. On the whole, the magnitude of the response was in the order of m mp-T/Sy > mp-T/Sy > m-T/Sy, when the comparison was made at the same additive amount of Sb₂O₅, with only one exception observed for the NO₂ response of the m mp-T/S0 sensor. It is worth noting that the mp-T/Sy series sensors showed higher H₂ and NO₂ responses than those of m-T/Sy series sensors, irrespective of their smaller surface area. This implies that all the surface of sensor materials including the inner surface of mesopores is not utilized effectively for gas detection, and that easy diffusion of a target gas as well as oxygen to the active surface, *i.e.*, the existence of certain amounts of macropores inside the thick film sensors, is more important for improving gas response. The highest H₂ and NO₂ responses observed with the m mp-T/Sy sensors may be a result of good combination of mesopore and macropores in the thick film sensors. From these results, it was revealed that the strict control of microstructure having well-developed mesoporous and macroporous

is indispensable to enhancing gas reactivity and diffusivity and thus to improving responses to H_2 and NO_2 in air.

Figure 12. Variations in response of SnO_2 -based sensors to 1,000 ppm H_2 in air at 450 °C with amounts of Sb_2O_5 added.

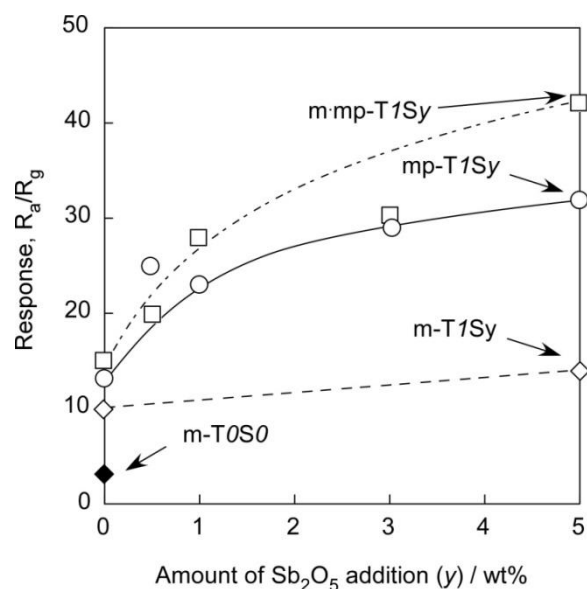
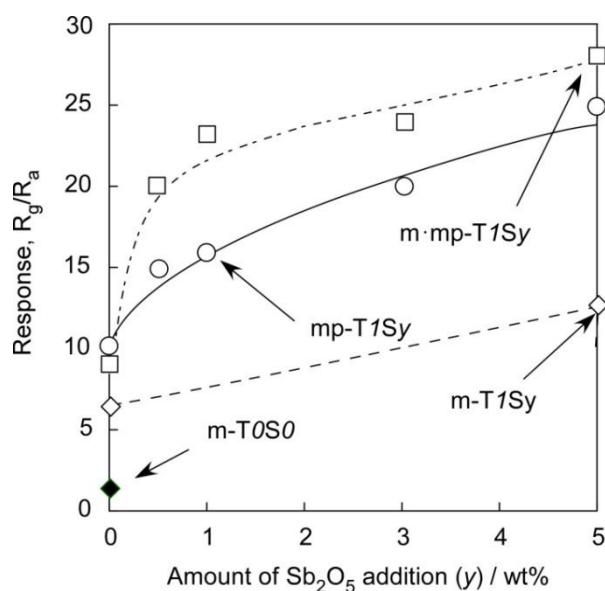


Figure 13. Variations in response of SnO_2 -based sensors to 1 ppm NO_2 in air at 350 °C with amounts of Sb_2O_5 added.



4. Conclusions

Mesoporous and/or macroporous SnO_2 -based powders have been prepared by a sol-gel method by employing $SnCl_4 \cdot 5H_2O$, ATO as a mesopore template, PMMA microspheres as a macropore template, and their gas-sensing properties as thick film sensors towards 1 ppm NO_2 as well as 1,000 ppm H_2 in air have been investigated. The addition of SiO_2 into mesoporous and/or macroporous SnO_2 was found to increase SSA of mesoporous SnO_2 . However, the SSA of all samples increased and their CS tended

to decrease slightly with the addition of the Sb_2O_5 . The additions of SiO_2 and Sb_2O_5 into mesoporous and/or macroporous SnO_2 were found to improve the sensing properties of the resulting sensors. The addition of SiO_2 into mesoporous and/or macroporous SnO_2 was found to increase the sensor resistance in air. However, the doping of Sb_2O_5 into mesoporous and/or macroporous SnO_2 was found to markedly reduce the sensor resistance in air, and to increase the response to 1,000 ppm H_2 as well as 1 ppm NO_2 in air. Among all the sensors tested, meso-macroporous SnO_2 mixed with 1 wt% SiO_2 and 5 wt% Sb_2O_5 , which were prepared with above two templates simultaneously, exhibited the largest H_2 and NO_2 responses.

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