Doping effects of Sb and Pb in epitaxial topological insulator Bi$_2$Se$_3$ thin films: An in situ angle-resolved photoemission spectroscopy study

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Bi$_2$Se$_3$ is a typical three-dimensional topological insulator but always exhibits metallic behavior due to heavy n-type doping. With in situ angle-resolved photoemission spectroscopy, we have systematically studied the doping effects of Sb and Pb on the electronic structure of Bi$_2$Se$_3$ films grown by molecular beam epitaxy. The surface chemical potential of Bi$_2$Se$_3$ can be tuned by 110 and 145 meV by doping Sb and Pb atoms, respectively. By codoping Pb and Sb, the Fermi level can be shifted from above to below the Dirac point. The underlying mechanism in different doping effects of Sb and Pb is discussed. © 2010 American Institute of Physics. [doi:10.1063/1.3516160]

Topological insulators (TIs)\textsuperscript{1–10} are insulating in bulk but host metallic surface/edge states, which are protected by the topological characters of the bulk bands. This class of materials has recently attracted great attention due to their exotic physical properties and potential applications in spintronics and topological quantum computation. Bi$_2$Se$_3$ is one of the most studied three-dimensional TIs for its relatively large gap and simple nontrivial surface band structure.\textsuperscript{11–13} Tuning most studied three-dimensional TIs for its relatively large point.\textsuperscript{1,2} Bi$_2$Se$_3$ bulk crystals are always heavily n-type due to the relative position between Fermi level and Dirac point.\textsuperscript{1,2} Bi$_2$Se$_3$ bulk crystals are always heavily n-type doped due to selenium vacancies and other defects.\textsuperscript{12,13} Progress has been made in tuning the chemical potential of Bi$_2$Se$_3$ bulk crystals by chemical doping\textsuperscript{13–15} and field effect.\textsuperscript{16–18} In Sb-doped Bi$_2$Se$_3$, a carrier density as low as $2.9 \times 10^{-16}$ cm$^{-3}$ has been reported.\textsuperscript{15} In earlier studies, by codoping Sb and Pb, p-type Bi$_2$Se$_3$ has been realized.\textsuperscript{19}

In this work, by in situ angle-resolved photoemission spectroscopy (ARPES), we have systematically investigated the effects of Sb and Pb doping in Bi$_2$Se$_3$ films grown by molecular beam epitaxy (MBE) on the chemical potential near surface. This way, we could monitor the band evolution as a function of dopant concentration. It is found that Sb and Pb exhibit different doping behaviors. More importantly, by codoping the two elements, the surface chemical potential of Bi$_2$Se$_3$ film can be changed by as much as 255 meV, which shifts the Fermi level below the Dirac point. The results provide useful information on preparing desired materials for transport measurement of topological features and exploring the application of TIs.

The experiments were preformed in an ultrahigh vacuum system ($\leq 1.5 \times 10^{-10}$ Torr) that consists of an MBE growth chamber, a scanning tunneling microscope (STM) (Omicron) and an ARPES spectrometer (VG-Scienta). The substrate for thin film sample growth is bilayer-graphene-terminated 6H-SiC (0001).\textsuperscript{20,21} High purity Bi (99.9999%), Se (99.9999%), Sb (99.9999%), and Pb (99.9999%) were used, and they were evaporated from standard Knudsen cells. All the films used in this work have a thickness of 20 quintuple-layers (QLs). The photons used in ARPES measurement are unpolarized He-I$\lambda_1$ (21.21 eV) produced by a Gammadata VUV discharging lamp. A Scienta SES-2002 analyzer was used to collect the photoelectrons. All the ARPES data were taken at room-temperature.

Bi$_{2-x-y}$Sb$_x$Pb$_y$Se$_3$ films were grown under Se-rich conditions, which can significantly reduce Se vacancies in the films.\textsuperscript{21} When the Se source temperature is lower than that of the substrate, the deposition rate is only dependent on the flux of Bi (Sb and Pb), which have a low vapor pressure.\textsuperscript{21} Therefore, the concentration of doping can simply be controlled by the flux ratio of Bi, Sb, and Pb, which relates to the source temperature ($T$) via $J \approx P / \sqrt{T}$, where $J$ is the beam flux and $P$ is the vapor pressure at that source temperature $T$. $J$ at different evaporation temperatures can be calculated by a calibrated flux $J_0$ at a certain temperature $T_0$.

$$J = J_0 \frac{P}{P_0} \sqrt{\frac{T_0}{T}}. \quad (1)$$

$J_0$ was calibrated by STM\textsuperscript{23,24} and reflective high-energy electron diffraction (RHEED) oscillation.\textsuperscript{24} In the present work, the substrate temperature was kept at 220 °C in Bi$_{2-x-y}$Sb$_x$Pb$_y$Se$_3$ growth. The source temperatures of Bi and Se were 520 and 150 °C, respectively, with a Bi/Se flux ratio of 1:3 and 2:3.

![FIG. 1. (Color online) RHEED patterns of (a) 20QL Bi$_2$Se$_3$ film, (b) Bi$_{1.5}$Sb$_{0.1}$Se$_3$ film, (c) and Bi$_{0.906}$Sb$_{0.094}$Pb$_{0.003}$Se$_3$ film grown on bilayer-graphene-terminated 6H-SiC(0001) by MBE. (d) STM image of 20 QL Bi$_{1.5}$Sb$_{0.1}$Se$_3$ film with bias of +1.500 V and tunneling current of 0.02 nA.](http://ap绝缘学.org/about/rights_and_permissions)
of 1:15 and a growth rate of 0.14 QL/min. The evaporation temperature of Sb from 340 to 380 °C leads to a Sb concentration (x) from 0.18 to 0.75, and the temperature of Pb from 350 to 420 °C leads to a Pb concentration (y) from 1 × 10^{-4} to 0.15.

Figures 1(a)–1(d) show the RHEED patterns of a bare Bi$_2$Se$_3$ film, a Sb-doped Bi$_2$Se$_3$ film, and a Bi$_2$Se$_3$ film codoped by Sb and Pb, respectively. The Sb and Pb concentrations correspond to the optimized values for chemical doping, as will be addressed below. The sharp 1 × 1 streaks in all of the patterns demonstrate that the crystallographic structure and quality of the epitaxial Bi$_2$Se$_3$ films are little influenced by Sb/Pb doping.\(^\text{19,25}\) Figure 1(d) shows a STM image of Bi$_{1.5}$Sb$_{0.5}$Se$_3$ films. The uniform and atomic flat terraces indicate that the doped atoms are homogeneously diffused into Bi$_2$Se$_3$ matrix instead of segregating into clusters. ARPES band maps (second-order differential spectra are used) of Bi$_{2-x-y}$Sb$_x$Pb$_y$Se$_3$ films with different doping levels are shown in Figs. 2(a)–2(d). The bands indicated by dashed red and blue lines correspond to the Dirac-cone-like surface states (SSs), and the features with solid green lines are tops of the valence bands (VBs).\(^\text{20}\) The bands exhibit essentially a similar structure and dispersion except that their positions relative to the Fermi level ($E_F$) are different. In the bare Bi$_2$Se$_3$ [Fig. 2(a)], the Dirac point is located at $E_B = -0.170$ eV ($E_B$ is the binding energy), and the film is n-type. By doping Sb [x(Sb)=0.3, y(Pb)=0], both surface and valence bands are shifted toward the Fermi level [see Fig. 2(b)], which suggests that the film is depleted with electrons. The Dirac point is moved to $E_B = -0.06$ eV. Doping Pb atoms can also shift the band. Figure 2(c) shows the spectra of a Pb-doped film (x=0, y=0.0037). The Dirac point is shifted to $E_B = -0.025$ eV. Codoping Sb and Pb atoms in Bi$_2$Se$_3$ film [see Fig. 2(d)] makes the Dirac point shifted to above the Fermi level.

The Dirac point positions of Bi$_{2-x-y}$Sb$_x$Pb$_y$Se$_3$ films, as a function of Sb/Pb concentration, are shown in Fig. 3. For the samples with Dirac point above the Fermi level, we calculated the position of Dirac point with the top of valence band since the band dispersion does not change with Sb/Pb doping. Figure 3(a) shows the dependence of the Dirac point position on the Sb concentration. We can see that as Sb concentration increases the Dirac point moves toward the Fermi level until x=0.3 where the Dirac point is shifted by about 110 meV from bare Bi$_2$Se$_3$. Additional Sb doping makes the

![FIG. 2.](image-url) Second-order differential ARPES spectra of 20 QL Bi$_{2-x-y}$Sb$_x$Pb$_y$Se$_3$ films along $\Gamma - \bar{K}$ direction: (a) bare Bi$_2$Se$_3$ film, (b) Bi$_{1.7}$Sb$_{0.3}$Se$_3$ film, (c) Bi$_{1.6963}$Sb$_{0.3}$Pb$_{0.0037}$Se$_3$ film, and (d) Bi$_{1.6963}$Sb$_{0.3}$Pb$_{0.0037}$Se$_3$ film. The solid lines indicate the tops of VBs. The dashed lines indicate the Dirac-cone-like SSs. The Fermi level is indicated by the dotted line.

![FIG. 3.](image-url) The dependences of the Dirac point positions of (a) 20 QL Bi$_{2-x-y}$Sb$_x$Pb$_y$Se$_3$ film, (b) 20 QL Bi$_{2-x-y}$Sb$_x$Pb$_y$Se$_3$ film [the data points below $E_F$ in (b)] and 20 QL Bi$_{2-x-y}$Sb$_x$Pb$_y$Se$_3$ film [the data points above $E_F$ in (b)] on Sb/Pb concentration x/y. The coordinate of Pb concentration y in (b) is logarithmic. The Fermi level is indicated by the dotted lines.
Dirac point move away from the Fermi level. At the same time the ARPES spectra become blur and completely disappear for $x \sim 0.75$, suggesting that the crystalline structure is greatly interrupted. In the Pb case [black dots in Fig. 3(b)], at $y=0.0037$ the Dirac point reaches its maximal value, approximately at 145 meV above that of bare Bi$_2$Se$_3$. The blue dots in Fig. 3(b) show the Pb concentration dependence of the Dirac point position of the optimally Sb-doped Bi$_2$Se$_3$ films ($x=0.3$). We can find that the evolution is basically similar to the Pb case except for an additional shift of $\sim 110$ meV.

Interestingly, Sb and Pb exhibit different doping behaviors in Bi$_2$Se$_3$ films. For Sb, below the optimal concentration ($x=0.3$), the energy shift is linearly dependent on Sb concentration. However, Pb exhibits a logarithmic behavior [note the logarithmic coordinate used in Fig. 3(b)]. The result suggests that Sb and Pb have different doping mechanisms in Bi$_2$Se$_3$.

Lead is divalent in Bi$_2$Se$_3$, and thus each Pb atom introduces one hole by substitution for trivalent Bi atom. Our ARPES data show that for the undoped Bi$_2$Se$_3$ film, the Fermi level basically lies in the energy gap. Similar to a conventional semiconductor, the carrier density $n$ and $E_F$ are related by the formula:

$$n = \frac{N_{eff}}{e^C/\sqrt{2\pi k_B T}} = \frac{e^{E_F/\sqrt{2 k_B T}}}{\sqrt{2\pi k_B T}}, \quad (2)$$

where $E_C$ is the energy of the conduction band minimum (CBM) and $N_{eff}$ is the density of states at CBM. In this case, the Fermi energy is logarithmically dependent on carrier density $n$, which can account for the observed logarithmic relation between band shift and Pb concentration in Fig. 3(b).

The linear dependence in the case of Sb doping suggests that Sb does not directly contribute carriers in Bi$_2$Se$_3$ like Pb. Sb and Bi belong to the same group in the periodic table, and thus in principle, the substitution of Sb for Bi in Bi$_2$Se$_3$ will not introduce additional charges. The n-type doping in Bi$_2$Se$_3$ is mainly due to Se vacancies, which result from Se segregation at the surfaces. So, it is likely that Sb substitution reduces the n-type carriers by suppressing Se vacancies, as proposed in previous studies.

Sb atoms reduce the unit cell volume when doped in Bi$_2$Se$_3$, which might increase the formation energy of Se vacancies ($E_v$), in first approximation is linearly related to the concentration of Sb atoms. The vacancy density $n_v$ is exponentially related with $E_v$ due to Boltzmann distribution. The carrier density $n$ is exponentially dependent on the Fermi energy as shown in Eq. (2) and also on $E_v$ since it is proportional to $n_v$. So, the linear relation between Sb concentration and energy shift is obtained.

It is worthy to note that since ARPES is surface sensitive and the chemical potential at surface and inside of a film may be different due to band bending, the bulk carrier density of a Sb- and Pb-doped Bi$_2$Se$_3$ film cannot be directly obtained from the data shown in Fig. 3. Transport results from previous works as well as from ours have shown that the bulk carriers of Bi$_2$Se$_3$ can also be tuned from n- to p-type by codoping of Sb and Pb. We can expect that bulk chemical potential shows similar concentration dependent behavior to that shown in Fig. 3 but with an additional energy shift induced by band bending. Modulation doping of Sb and Pb in different layers of a Bi$_2$Se$_3$ film could be used to tune bulk and surface chemical potentials independently.

In conclusion, the doping effects of Sb and Pb atoms on the surface chemical potential of MBE grown Bi$_2$Se$_3$ films were systematically studied by ARPES. The optimized concentrations for both dopants were found, and conversion of surface region from n- to p-doped was realized. The quantitative analysis of the relationship between band shift and doping concentration reveals the different mechanisms of Sb and Pb doping.

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