Investigation of Adhesive and Electrical Performance of Waterborne Epoxies for Interlayer Dielectric Material

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Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

In

Materials Engineering Science

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November 3, 1999
Blacksburg, Virginia

KEYWORDS: Waterborne epoxy, latex drying, surfactant plasticization, peel viscoelasticity, dielectric measurement, copper-epoxy adhesion

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(Abstract)

The primary differences between the solventborne and waterborne epoxy printed circuit board (PCB) impregnating resins arise from the distinct physical compositions and drying characteristics of the polymer solution and the latex emulsion. The presence of residual surfactant from the waterborne epoxy emulsion poses a concern for dielectric performance and adhesive durability. Another problem involves the crystallization of insoluble solid dicyandiamide (DICY), which is significantly different in morphology than that found in solution cast resins.

A two-stage drying model was employed to gain a better understanding of the drying and coalescence processes. The process of surface DICY crystal formation during the drying of glass prepreg sheet was related to a threshold concentration of the curing agent in the impregnating latex resin formulation. Conditions favoring faster drying lead to the rapid formation of a coalesced skin layer of latex resin, thereby trapping the curing agent in the bulk and reducing the surface deposition of DICY by percolating water. Surfactant is believed to remain concentrated in a receding wet zone until it is driven to the surfaces of the glass fibers upon the completion of drying.

The copper foil/laminate interface was evaluated by a 90° peel test as part of two different studies: an analysis of the viscoelastic response of the interface during peel and a study of the thermal durability of the copper/laminate interfacial peel strength. The surfactant acted as a plasticizer to toughen the fiber/matrix interphase, resulting in larger observed peel strengths in the latex resin impregnated materials relative to the solventborne system. Surfactant segregated to the fiber surface during coalescence to form a plasticized fiber/matrix interphase; surfactant migrated into the bulk during postcure to yield a more homogeneously plasticized epoxy matrix.

Dielectric measurements of neat resin and laminate materials revealed that the dielectric constants of the model resin-impregnated laminates met the performance criteria for PCB substrates of their class, regardless of surfactant content.

Overall, the adhesive performance, adhesive durability, and dielectric properties of PCB systems fabricated with model latex epoxy resin, containing native surfactant (5 wt %), met or exceeded the performance of an equivalent solventborne resin impregnated system.
Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the following people and organizations for their help and guidance in conducting this study, preparing this dissertation, and enjoying my many years of graduate school at Virginia Tech:

Dr. Brian J. Love, chairman of my committee, who offered me an opportunity to achieve this goal. His generosity, patience, insight, and friendship over the past several years have been invaluable. I am especially grateful for his openness in sharing valuable philosophies, which will serve me well in the future.

Dr. W. A. Davis, Dr. J. G. Dillard, Dr. R. G. Kander, and Dr. T. C. Ward for serving on my graduate advisory committee, answering my questions, and taking valuable time to review my work.

Dr. Jack Graybeal for the use of his microwave measurement facilities over the past several years.
Mr. Hal Kimrey at Microwave Materials Technologies for the use of his dielectric measurement facility, his tutelage, and his friendship.
Dr. C. Stern for his support during my early graduate career.
Dr. J. G. Dillard and his research group for the use of his laboratory facilities and analytical instruments.
Mr. Shatil Haque for his assistance in designing and preparing etch masks.
Dr. S. Corcoran and Mr. Steve McCartney for their assistance with experiments.
Dr. G. Wilkes for his guidance in dealing with the MESc program.
Mrs. Susette Sowers for her many instances of help with paperwork, her quick attendance to my problems, and her patience.
Mr. Frank Cromer for his assistance with the many aspects of surface analysis.

The combined research groups of Drs. Love and Kander, specifically: Jennifer McPeak, Rachel Giunta, Julie Dvorkin, Michelle Jensen, Scott Steward, Scott Trenor, Allison Suggs, Scott Hebner, Patricia Dolez, Steve Clay, Kelley Renshaw, Jeff Schultz, Julie Martin, Sumitra Subrahmanyan, David Brooks, and the many others who passed through the lab.

Dr. T. C Ward and the Polypkem Group for the use of the DEA and for their friendship, specifically: Emmett O’Brien, Rob Jensen, Dave Porter, Sandra Henderson, Amy Eichstadt, Mark Muggli, Kermit Kwan, Jianli Wang, and many other old timers.

The Texture Technologies Corporation for financial support in attending conferences.
The Shell Chemical Company for supplying epoxy resins and curing agents.
The National Science Foundation Science and Technology Center for funding this research.
The Center for Adhesives and Sealant Science, for their allowing me to attend several Adhesion Society conferences.

And finally, those closest to me:
My parents Robert and Jane Jackson who always had faith in me. Their love and support made me who I am. My brothers who were always willing to help. My in-laws, David and Sherry Holmes, who have gracefully accepted me into their family.

My wife Brenda, without whom I would have never made it through. Her love, encouragement, devotion, and hard work have meant everything. All of my love and thanks for your help.
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