Highsensitive room temperature gas sensor based on cobalt phthalocyanines and reduced graphene oxide nanohybrids for ppb-levels of ammonia detection†

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1. Experimental detail

1.1 Materials

All chemicals were analytical grade and commercially available and used without further purification. 3-nitrophthalonitrile was purchased from Sigma-Aldrich Co., LLC., and was used without further purification. The synthesis scheme of tetra-β-carboxyphenoxylphthalocyanine cobalt (cpoPcCo), tetra-β-(4-carboxy-3-methoxyphenoxy)phthalocyanine cobalt (cmPoPcCo), tetra-β-phenoxylphthalocyanine cobalt (poPcCo), and tetra-β-(3-methoxyphenoxy)phthalocyanine cobalt (mPoPcCo) is shown in scheme S1.

Scheme S1. Synthesis scheme of cpoPcCo, cmPoPcCo, poPcCo and mPoPcCo.

1.2 The structure for gas sensors

Al₂O₃ ceramic substrate is used for gas sensors. TaN, TiW, Ni and Au are sputtered on substrate as resistive layer, supporting layer, solder mask and conductor layer, respectively. Standard photolithography is then used to create Au interdigitated electrodes with 180 µm electrode widths, and 50 µm electrode gaps.

1.3 Characterization

EI and MALDI-TOF mass spectra were performed using an Agilent spectrometer (HP
and a Bruker microflex LT (Bruker Daltonics, Bremen, Germany) mass spectrometer, respectively. Scanning electron microscopy (SEM) images were recorded with a Hitachi S-4800 field emission scanning electron microscope operating at 15 kV. Samples were drop-deposited onto the interdigitated electrodes and measured directly. UV/Vis absorption spectra were recorded with an UV-2700 spectrometer (SHIMADZU, Jap). FT-IR spectra were recorded on a Spectrum two spectrometer (PerkinElmer).

1.4 Synthesis of 4-(4-carboxyphenoxy)phthalonitrile

4-Nitrophthalonitrile (6.93 g, 0.040 mol) was dissolved in DMSO (160 mL) under a nitrogen atmosphere, and then p-hydroxybenzoic acid (10.97 g, 0.080 mol) was added to the solution. After stirring for 30 minutes, anhydrous potassium carbonate (K$_2$CO$_3$) (19.35 g, 0.14 mol) was added portion wise over 3 days with constant stirring. The reaction mixture was stirred at room temperature for 5 days under a nitrogen atmosphere. The solid residue was removed by filtration, and the filtrate was acidified to pH 1-2 and then allowed to stand for 10 minutes. The resulting precipitate was collected by filtration, washed with distilled water and dried in vacuo. Recrystallization twice with methanol gave finally white 4-(4-carboxyphenoxy)phthalonitrile. Similarly, after the conversion of p-hydroxybenzoic acid to sodium 4-hydroxy-3-methoxybenzoate, phenol and guaiacol. The same method can be used to prepare 4-(4-carboxyl-3-methoxybenzonitrile) phthalonitrile, 4-phenoxyphthalonitrile and 4-(3-methoxyphenoxybenzonitrile) phthalonitrile.

1.5 Synthesis of tetra-β-carboxyphenoxyphthalocyanine cobalt

At room temperature, 4-(4-carboxyphenoxy) phthalonitrile (2.64 g, 0.010 MOL), anhydrous cobalt chloride (II) (0.39 g, 0.003 MOL) and DBU (4.0 mL) were added to distilled n-pentanol (60 mL). The subsequent mixture was continuously stirred under reflux for 20 hours under a nitrogen atmosphere. After naturally cooling to about 20 °C, the precipitate was filtered, washed sequentially with methanol (50 mL) and
acetone (50 mL) and dissolved in potassium hydroxide solution (1 mol L⁻¹, 100 mL). The solid residue in the solution was removed by filtration, and the filtrate was acidified to pH 3-4 by adding concentrated hydrochloric acid with stirring, and left overnight. The resulting precipitate was collected by centrifugation, washed with distilled water until the pH of the supernatant was about 7, and then dried in a vacuum oven at 50 °C to obtain a purple-black crystal cpoPcCo. MALDI-TOF-MS Calcd (found): m/z = 1115.02 (1117.16) (Fig. S1). Three other phthalocyanines can be synthesized by replacing 4-(4-carboxyphenoxy) phthalonitrile with 4-(4-carboxy-3-methoxyphenoxy) phthalonitrile, 4-phenoxy phthalonitrile and 4-(3-methoxyphenoxy) phthalonitrile. That is tetra-β-carboxymethoxyphthalocyanine cobalt, MALDI-TOF-MS Calcd (found): m/z = 1239.21 (1237.21) [M⁺].

tetra-β-phenoxyphthalocyanine cobalt, MALDI-TOF-MS Calcd (found): m/z = 942.19 (941.20) [M⁺]. tetra-β-methoxyphthalocyanine cobalt, MALDI-TOF-MS Calcd (found): m/z = 1062.22 (1061.25) [M⁺].

Fig. S1 MALDI-TOF-MS of cpoPcCo.

2. Result and discussion

Fig. S2. Uv-Vis spectra of rGO, RPcCo, and RPcCo/rGO hybrids.
Fig. S3. FT-IR spectra of rGO, RPcCo, and RPcCo/rGO hybrids.

Fig. S4. TG spectra of rGO, RPcCo, and RPcCo/rGO hybrids.

Fig. S5. XPS full survey of rGO and RPcCo/rGO hybrids.

Fig. S6. N 1s XPS spectra of cmpoPcCo, poPcCo and mpoPcCo hybrids
Fig. S7. C 1s XPS spectra of cmpoPcCo, poPcCo and mpoPcCo hybrids

Fig. S8 SEM images of RPcCo/rGO hybrids on the interdigital electrode.

Fig. S9. Response recovery curve of rGO at room temperature.
Fig. S10. (A) Response of cmpoPcCo/rGO hybrid sensor exposure to 100 ppm NH₃ and recovery under UV light or without UV light; (B) resistance of cmpoPcCo/rGO hybrid sensor upon exposure to varying concentrations of NH₃; (C) relationship of the response of cmpoPcCo/rGO hybrid sensor to the concentration NH₃; (D) ten sensing cycles of cmpoPcCo/rGO hybrid sensor to 100 ppm NH₃ (inset: the reproducibility characteristics of the cmpoPcCo/rGO hybrid sensor to 100 ppm NH₃ within 60 days) at 29 °C.

Fig. S11. (A) Response of mpoPcCo/rGO hybrid sensor exposure to 100 ppm NH₃ and recovery under UV light or without UV light; (B) resistance of mpoPcCo/rGO hybrid sensor upon exposure to varying concentrations of NH₃; (C) relationship of the response of mpoPcCo/rGO hybrid sensor to the concentration NH₃; (D) ten sensing cycles of mpoPcCo/rGO hybrid sensor to 100 ppm NH₃ (inset: the reproducibility characteristics of the mpoPcCo/rGO hybrid sensor to 100 ppm NH₃ within 60 days) at 29 °C.

Fig. S12. (A) Response of poPcCo/rGO hybrid sensor exposure to 100 ppm NH₃ and recovery under UV light or without UV light; (B) resistance of poPcCo/rGO hybrid sensor upon exposure to varying concentrations of NH₃; (C) relationship of the response of poPcCo/rGO hybrid sensor to the concentration NH₃; (D) ten sensing cycles of poPcCo/rGO hybrid sensor to 100 ppm NH₃ (inset: the reproducibility characteristics of the poPcCo/rGO hybrid sensor to 100 ppm NH₃ within 60 days) at 29 °C.
Fig. S13 Response of cpoPcCo/rGO, cpoPcCo/rGO2 and cpoPcCo/rGO3 sensors upon varying the concentration of NH$_3$.

Fig. S14. Schematic diagram of the NH$_3$-sensing mechanism of the sensor (a); UV-Vis absorption spectra (b,d) and band gap energies (c,e) of cpoPcCo and rGO.

Fig. S15. Resistance of cpoPcCo/rGO hybrid sensor upon exposure to 10 ppm of NO$_2$ at 29 °C.
Fig. S16. (A) UV-vis spectra; (B) FT-IR spectra; (C) TG profiles of rGO, cpoPcCo and cpoPcCo-rGO hybrid.

Fig. S17. (A) UV-vis spectra; (B) FT-IR spectra; (C) TG profiles of rGO, cmpoPcCo and cmpoPcCo-rGO hybrid.

Fig. S18. Relationship of the response of RPcCo/rGO and RPcCo-rGO hybrid sensors to the concentration of NH$_3$.

Fig. S19. Nyquist plots of rGO and Equivalent circuit diagram.

Table S1. Comparison of the detection performances of different NH$_3$ sensors
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sensor material</th>
<th>Response(%)/Detection conc. (ppm)</th>
<th>Detection limit(ppm)</th>
<th>Working temperature (°C)</th>
<th>Response time(s)/Detection conc.(ppm)</th>
<th>Recovery time(s)/Detection conc.(ppm)</th>
<th>Detection range (ppm)</th>
<th>Ref.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CuPc/N-graphene/PED OT-PSS</td>
<td>8/50</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>RT</td>
<td>138/200</td>
<td>63/200</td>
<td>1-1000</td>
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<td>PQT-12</td>
<td>8.6/100</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>RT</td>
<td>8/100</td>
<td>103/100</td>
<td>10-100</td>
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<tr>
<td>PANI-CeO₂</td>
<td>262.7/50</td>
<td>0.016</td>
<td>RT</td>
<td>600/50</td>
<td>1800/50</td>
<td>10-50</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>coral-shaped Dy₂O₃</td>
<td>7.754/50</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>RT</td>
<td>17.4/50</td>
<td>840/50</td>
<td>0.1-100</td>
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<tr>
<td>RGO/MnO₂ + PANI</td>
<td>25.1/5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>RT</td>
<td>1080/5</td>
<td>240/5</td>
<td>5-50</td>
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<td>NiV₂O₆</td>
<td>92/100</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>9/100</td>
<td>16/100</td>
<td>20-100</td>
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<td>SnO₂/SnS₂</td>
<td>2.48/100</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>RT</td>
<td>21/100</td>
<td>110/100</td>
<td>10-500</td>
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<td>In₂O₃/PANI</td>
<td>52.4/1000</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>RT</td>
<td>500/1000</td>
<td>500/1000</td>
<td>100-1000</td>
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<td>Flower-shaped SnS₂</td>
<td>7.4/100</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>50.6/100</td>
<td>624/100</td>
<td>0.5-100</td>
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<td>2D SnS₂</td>
<td>4.2/500</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>RT</td>
<td>16/500</td>
<td>450/500</td>
<td>20-800</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>Pt/Cr/ZnO</td>
<td>81.6/1000</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>74/1000</td>
<td>29/1000</td>
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<td>Co₃O₄</td>
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<td>160</td>
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<td>TeO₂</td>
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<td>170</td>
<td>186/500</td>
<td>336/500</td>
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<td>ZnO/RGO</td>
<td>19.2/50</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>RT</td>
<td>50/500</td>
<td>250/500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Material</td>
<td>% Detection</td>
<td>RGO</td>
<td>Response (%)</td>
<td>Recovery Time</td>
<td>Range (ppm)</td>
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<td>27.5/80</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>RT</td>
<td>8/80</td>
<td>1-200</td>
<td>15</td>
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<td>RGO</td>
<td>5.7/50</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>RT</td>
<td>24/50</td>
<td>5-50</td>
<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pd/SnO₂/RGO</td>
<td>19.6/100</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>RT</td>
<td>420/100</td>
<td>5-300</td>
<td>17</td>
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<tr>
<td>SnO₂/rGO</td>
<td>30/200</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>RT</td>
<td>8/200</td>
<td>500-3000</td>
<td>19</td>
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<td>MWCNTs</td>
<td>18/500</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>RT</td>
<td>798/500</td>
<td>100,200,500</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ag₃PO₄</td>
<td>52/100</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>276/100</td>
<td>10-1000</td>
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<td>cpoPcCo/rGO</td>
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<td>3.7 ppm</td>
<td>RT</td>
<td>450/0.1</td>
<td>30/0.1</td>
<td>0.1-200</td>
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<td>2.5/0.1</td>
<td>16 ppm</td>
<td>RT</td>
<td>540/0.1</td>
<td>30/0.1</td>
<td>0.1-200</td>
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<tr>
<td>poPcCo/rGO</td>
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<td>21 ppm</td>
<td>RT</td>
<td>450/0.1</td>
<td>36/0.1</td>
<td>0.1-200</td>
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<td>1.5/0.1</td>
<td>23 ppm</td>
<td>RT</td>
<td>480/0.1</td>
<td>84/0.1</td>
<td>0.1-200</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

[a] If the sensor detection limit was not explicitly provided in the original report, then the lowest tested analyte concentration is listed.

[b] If the response (%), response time (s) or recovery time (s) of the sensor was not explicitly provided in the original report, then the estimate from the curve in that report is listed.

[c] RT, abbreviation for room temperature.
sensor prepared with the RPcCo/rGO aqueous dispersion concentrations of 1.0 mg ml$^{-1}$

References


sensor based on flower-shaped SnS$_2$ nanostructures with sub-ppm detection ability, J. Hazard Mater. 341 (2018) 159-167.


