<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Suppression of exciton annihilation at high current densities in organic light-emitting diode resulting from energy-level alignments of carrier transport layers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Author(s)</td>
<td>Matsushima, Toshinori; Adachi, Chihaya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citation</td>
<td>Applied Physics Letters, 92(6): 063306-1-063306-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issue Date</td>
<td>2008-02-14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type</td>
<td>Journal Article</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text version</td>
<td>publisher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>URL</td>
<td><a href="http://hdl.handle.net/10119/8538">http://hdl.handle.net/10119/8538</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rights</td>
<td>Copyright 2008 American Institute of Physics. This article may be downloaded for personal use only. Any other use requires prior permission of the author and the American Institute of Physics. The following article appeared in Toshinori Matsushima, Chihaya Adachi, Applied Physics Letters, 92(6), 063306 (2008) and may be found at <a href="http://link.aip.org/link/?APPLAB/92/063306/1">http://link.aip.org/link/?APPLAB/92/063306/1</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Suppression of exciton annihilation at high current densities in organic light-emitting diode resulting from energy-level alignments of carrier transport layers

Toshinori Matsushima and Chihaya Adachi

Core Research for Evolutional Science and Technology Program, Japan Science and Technology Agency, 1-32-12 Higashi, Shibuya, Tokyo 150-0011, Japan and Center for Future Chemistry, Kyushu University, 744 Motooka, Nishi, Fukuoka 819-0395, Japan

(Received 31 October 2007; accepted 22 January 2008; published online 14 February 2008)

We manufactured an organic light-emitting diode (OLED) in which the hole and electron transport layers are chemically doped with p- and n-type dopants and energy levels in between neighboring carrier transport layers and emitting molecules are aligned. From the results of the electroluminescence (EL) characteristics of the OLED, we found that (1) the OLED has an extremely low driving voltage of 2.65 ± 0.05 V at a current density of 100 mA/cm²; (2) the onset voltage of EL (≈ 2.4 V) corresponds to the photon energy of emitting molecules (≈ 2.5 eV), while the onset voltage of currents is ≈ 1.8 V; and (3) a decrease in EL efficiency at high current densities can be suppressed by matching the energy levels. © 2008 American Institute of Physics. [DOI: 10.1063/1.2844891]

Organic light-emitting diodes (OLEDs) doped with phosphorescent iridium complexes have been shown to achieve an internal electroluminescence (EL) efficiency of nearly 100%.1,2 Researchers are now interested in reducing driving voltages and improving durability for practical display and lighting applications. In particular, reducing the driving voltage is required for improving power conversion efficiencies3,4 and lifetimes5 in most OLEDs, carrier mobilities of organic layers are much lower than those of inorganic semiconductors5,6 and carrier injection barriers are present at metal/organic and organic/organic interfaces7–9 resulting in much higher driving voltages of OLEDs than those of inorganic LEDs. Doping organic hole transport layers (HTLs) and electron transport layers (ETLs) with p- and n-type dopants2,10–13 and softening energy barriers at the heterojunction interfaces7–9 have been frequently used to reduce driving voltages. However, the voltage levels reported thus far are still higher than the corresponding photon energy levels of emitting molecules. We have now reduced the voltages to a level equivalent to that of the photon energies using the above-mentioned techniques.

We manufactured an OLED with a device structure of glass substrate/indium tin oxide (ITO) anode (100 nm)/2 mol % -2,3,5,6-tetrafluoro-7,7,8,8-tetracyanoquinodimethane (F-T-CNQ)-doped alpha-sexithiophene (α-6 T) HTL (30 nm)/4,4',4''-tris(N-3-methylphenyl-N-phenyl-amino)triphenylamine (m-MTDATA) HTL (10 nm)/3 mol % -α-6 T-doped m-MTDATA emitting layer (EML) (10 nm)/3 mol % -α-6 T-doped phenylidyropyrrole-5,6-dicyanomethylene (POPy2) EML (10 nm)/POPy2 ETL (10 nm)/30 mol % -Cs-doped POPy2 ETL (30 nm)/ITO cathode (100 nm). The energy-level diagram of this OLED is shown in Figs. 1(a) and 1(b). The α-6 T HTL3,8 the m-MTDATA HTL,11 and the POPy2 ETL3,12 have been previously used to reduce driving voltages because these layers have relatively high carrier mobilities among organic materials. In our OLED, we doped p-type F-T-CNQ in the α-6 T HTL and n-type Cs in the POPy2 ETL and matched the energy levels among the neighboring organic layers and the α-6 T emitting molecules, which resulted in an extremely low driving voltage of 2.65 ± 0.05 V for the current density of 100 mA/cm².

In most OLEDs, EL efficiencies markedly decrease at high current densities.10 This decrease makes fabricating electrically pumped organic laser diodes (OLDs) difficult and, thus, the decrease must be completely eliminated in order to develop OLEDs and OLDs. The causes of this decrease have been ascribed to the lowered carrier balance of electrons and holes,16 singlet-singlet exciton annihilation,16,18 and singlet-polaron exciton annihilation.16,18 Recently, Luo

FIG. 1. (a) Schematic structure and (b) energy-level diagram of doped OLED. In (b), ionization potential energies of organic layers and work functions of metal layers were measured using AC-1 ultraviolet photoelectron spectrometer (Riken Keiki). Electron affinities of organic layers were calculated by subtracting optical absorption onset energies from ionization potential energies.

---

**Electronic mail: adachi@csf.kyushu-u.ac.jp**
et al. reported that charge carriers, which are built up at heterojunction interfaces and are trapped on small-energy-gap dopant molecules, cause a strong quenching of excitons in EMLs. From results of our study of OLED characteristics, we found that the decrease in ηext at high current densities is suppressed due to the energy-level alignments among the organic layers and the emitting molecules, as shown in Fig. 1(b).

We manufactured the OLED using the following steps. Glass substrates coated with a 100-nm-thick ITO layer with a sheet resistance of 25 Ω/sq (Sanyo Vacuum Industries) were ultrasonically cleaned in a mixture of detergent (Cica clean LX-II, Kanto Chemicals) and pure water (1/10 by volume). This was followed by ultrasonication in pure water, acetone, and isopropanol. The substrates were soaked in boiling isopropanol and then placed in an UV-ozone treatment chamber. In a vacuum evaporator, which was evacuated to =10⁻⁴ Pa, organic and Al layers were vacuum deposited on the ITO surfaces at deposition rates of 0.3 nm/s for the organic layers and 0.1 nm/s for the Al layer. The doping concentrations of the guest-to-host molecules were controlled at 2 mol % for the F4-TCNQ:α-6 T ETL, 3 mol % for the α-6 T-doped EMLs, and 30 mol % for the Cs:POPy2 ETL using two quartz crystal microbalances. The active area of the device was 0.785 mm². The EL spectrum of the device was measured with a spectrometer (SD-2000, Ocean Optics) at a constant current density of 100 mA/cm². The current density-voltage-external quantum efficiency (J-V-ηext) characteristics of the device were measured using a semiconductor parameter analyzer (E5250A, Agilent Technology) and a calibrated silicon photodiode (1930-C, Newport). The luminance (L) was calculated from ηext assuming a Lambertian emission pattern.

The EL spectrum of the doped OLED and the photoluminescence (PL) spectra of 3 mol %-α-6 T-doped m-MTDATA and 3 mol %-α-6 T-doped POPy2 films (100 nm) on quartz substrates are shown in Fig. 2. The excitation light wavelength for PL was 350 nm, where the absorption of POPy2 and m-MTDATA is large while the absorption of α-6 T is relatively small. We only observed the emissions arising from α-6 T in the EL spectrum and the PL spectrum of the α-6 T:POPy2 film. However, there were two emission peaks arising from both α-6 T and m-MTDATA in the PL spectrum of the α-6 T:m-MTDATA film. Moreover, the EL spectrum better corresponded to the PL spectrum of the α-6 T:POPy2 film than that of the α-6 T:m-MTDATA film. From these observations, we speculate that carrier recombination of electrons and holes mainly occur in the α-6 T:POPy2 EML. We calculated the photon energy of electrically excited α-6 T molecules to be =2.5 eV from the high-energy edge of the EL spectrum.

The J-V and L-V characteristics of the OLED are shown in Fig. 3. We achieved an extremely low driving voltage of 2.65 ± 0.05 V at 100 mA/cm² in the OLED. We can attribute this low voltage to the following factors. (1) We doped F4-TCNQ and Cs in the α-6 T HTL and the POPy2 ETL, which resulted in a charge transfer between the host and guest molecules and an increase in free carrier concentration. This concentration increase enhances electrical conductivities in the doped layers and the α-6 T emitting molecules, as shown in Fig. 1(b). (2) We used α-6 T, m-MTDATA, and POPy2 (Refs. 3 and 15) materials, which have high carrier mobilities. (3) We matched the energy levels among the neighboring organic layers and the α-6 T emitting molecules, as shown in Fig. 1(b). Matching the energy levels leads to efficient carrier injection at the heterojunction interfaces and prevents carrier accumulation at the interfaces, resulting in a reduction in the driving voltage of the OLED.

Since our OLED had much lower voltages than those of conventional OLEDs, we were able to investigate detailed J-V and EL characteristics at low voltages. When the device was biased beyond the flatband condition to cause current flow, the currents abruptly increased at =1.8 V (Fig. 3). However, we observed no EL from the device at this voltage. The onset voltage of EL was =2.4 V, which was higher than the onset voltage of the currents (=1.8 V) and corresponded to the photon energy of emitting α-6 T molecules (=2.5 eV). The J-ηext characteristics of the doped OLED are shown in Fig. 4. To compare these characteristics, we manu-
factured a conventional OLED with a glass substrate/ITO anode (100 nm)/N,N'-diphenyl-N,N'-bis(1-naphthyl)-1,1'-biphenyl-4,4'-diamine (α-NPD) HTL (50 nm)/tris(8-hydroxyquinoline) aluminum (Alq3) emitting ETL (50 nm)/MgAg cathode (100 nm) structure and measured its J-η ext characteristics, which are also shown in Fig. 4. Although the η ext markedly decreased at high current densities in the Alq3 OLED, we observed no decrease in η ext of the doped OLED in the high current region of over two orders of magnitude. We attribute the unaltered η ext to the energy-level alignments among the neighboring organic layers and the α-6 T emitting molecules, which can prevent the accumulation of carriers at the heterojunction interfaces and carrier trapping on the α-6 T molecules. In contrast, since there is a hole injection barrier of 0.2 eV at the α-NPD/Alq3 interface in the Alq3 OLED, a number of holes injected from the ITO contact are built up at this interface, resulting in exciton quenching by the accumulated holes and the marked decrease in η ext.

We calculate the generation rates of singlet excitons (n exciton) in a carrier recombination zone of the OLEDs. The n exciton can be estimated using

\[ n_{\text{exciton}} = \frac{J}{e} \times \eta_{\text{ext}} \times \frac{1}{\eta_{\text{out}}} \times \frac{1}{\eta_{\text{PL}}} \times \frac{1}{L_{\text{exciton}}}, \]

where e is the electronic charge, η out is the light out-coupling efficiency,17,22 η PL is the PL quantum efficiency, and L exciton is the width of a carrier recombination zone. The n exciton of the doped OLED at the maximum current can be calculated at 5.0 × 10^{25} cm^{-2}s using Eq. (1) with \( J = 18.5 \text{ A/cm}^2 \), \( \eta_{\text{ext}} = 0.69 \), \( \eta_{\text{out}} = 0.2 \), \( \eta_{\text{PL}} = 0.4 \) (for the α-6 T:POPy2 EML),23 and \( L_{\text{exciton}} = 20 \text{ nm} \) (the sum of the thickness of the α-6 T:POPy2 and α-6 T:m-MTDATA EMLs). On the other hand, the n exciton of the Alq3 OLED at the maximum current can be calculated at 9.2 × 10^{25} cm^{-2}s using Eq. (1) with \( J = 3.3 \text{ A/cm}^2 \), \( \eta_{\text{ext}} = 0.46 \), \( \eta_{\text{out}} = 0.2 \), \( \eta_{\text{PL}} = 0.2 \), and \( L_{\text{exciton}} = 26 \text{ nm} \).24 To calculate this n exciton, we assumed that the exciton diffusion length of 26 nm in Alq3 films corresponds to L exciton. Although the n exciton of the doped OLED was about five times higher than that of the Alq3 OLED, we observed no decrease in η ext at the maximum current in the doped OLED, which is caused by the energy-level alignments among the organic molecules.

In an OLED, we chemically doped an α-6 T HTL and a PO Py2 ETL with Fc-TCNQ and Cs and matched energy levels among neighboring carrier transport layers and α-6 T emitting molecules. We achieved an extremely low driving voltage of 2.65 ± 0.05 V at a current density of 100 mA/cm^2 in the OLED. We found that the onset voltage of EL (≈2.4 V) corresponds to the photon energy of α-6 T (≈2.5 eV) and a decrease in η ext at high current densities is suppressed by matching the energy levels. Our OLED with a low driving voltage and unchanged η ext will lead to the development of higher performance passive matrix OLED displays and electrically pumped OLEDs as well as a better understanding of exciton quenching mechanisms.

The present work was partly supported by a Grant-in-Aid for the Global COE Program, “Science for Future Molecular Systems” from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Science, Sports and Technology of Japan.

23. We measured the ηPL of the organic films to be 2% ± 2% for α-6T, 35% ± 2% for PO Py2, 4% ± 2% for m-MTDATA, 10% ± 2% for 3 mol %α-6T-doped m-MTDATA, 40% ± 1% for 3 mol %α-6T-doped PO Py2, and 20% ± 2% for Alq3 using an integrating sphere system (Ref. 22).