

An Introduction to
Piezoelectric Materials
and Applications

Published by:

Stichting Applied Piezo

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The cover picture on the front shows a schematic representation of the perovskite structure.

The cover picture on the back shows various typical piezoelectric components and products as well as a 'piezoelectric active lens mount' used for active vibration control in microlithography.

This book was written as part of the dissemination activities of the SmartPie research program (www.smartpie.nl). The first chapters of this book have been published in June 2012 in a separate book, *An Introduction to Piezoelectric Materials and Components*.

The SmartPie consortium gratefully acknowledges the support of the Smart Mix Programme of the Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.

Sources for figures and data: Patrick Pertsch, Philippus Feenstra, James Gilbert, Dago de Leeuw, Rene de Vries, Job van Amerongen, Rien Koster, Daan van den Ende, Dominiek Reynaerts, René Kragt, Morgan Electroceramics, Brüel & Kjær, Kistler, Optelec, Newscale, aixACCT, iStockphoto.com (8149597, 12100790, 1155862, 6722139), Shutterstock.com (1394697, 129749675)

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First published April 2013

ISBN 978-90-819361-1-8

NUR 971

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Preface

From the early history of mankind ceramics have played an important role. Historians can determine the different time periods in the world's history by recognising the ceramic products that were used. Ceramics were used for artificial expression, for household purposes and as a structural material. Today ceramics also play an important role in technological applications, such as biomedical implants or heat resistant tiles and of course piezoelectric ceramics. Although already studied during the mid-18th century, the Curie brothers demonstrated the piezoelectric effect in crystals of quartz, tourmaline, topaz, cane sugar and Rochelle salt in 1880. The first application was an ultrasonic submarine detector by Pierre Langevin in 1917. During the next decades intense research driven by the demand of new applications led to the development of barium titanate and later lead zirconate titanate. Piezoelectric materials nowadays play a major role in the so called smart materials.

Although not usually recognised, piezoelectric materials play an important role in numerous applications in our everyday life. In the morning at home the piezo buzzer from our alarm clock wakes us. In our car, fuel efficiency is enhanced by piezoelectric fuel injection, our airbag is controlled by a piezoelectric acceleration sensor and when we park an ultrasonic parking sensor keeps us from collisions. At work microscopes or precision machines use very accurate piezoelectric motors and sensors or at the factory an ultrasonic cleaning bath with a piezo transducer cleans our work pieces or tools. And what about piezo inkjet printers or hard disk drive positioning? Our mobile phones use piezoelectric haptic feedback and photo cameras adjust the camera focus for us with a piezo motor. At the hospital piezoelectric echoscopy devices look inside our body or piezo motors are used for MRI monitored microsurgery. Back at home again we cook our meal on a gas stove or barbecue with a piezo igniter. The applications of piezoelectric materials are ubiquitous. At least ten times a day we make use of the piezoelectric effect.

When I was first introduced to this fantastic piezoelectric material I was delighted by a material with such interesting, mechatronic properties. It is fascinating that this material has the inherent capability to convert mechanical action into electric energy, and vice versa. Not much later in 2005 we founded the Applied Piezo foundation in order to bring together researchers, users, developers and suppliers of piezoelectric materials and applications. At the start of the Smart-Pie research program a piezo course was developed in order to provide a common ground for our researchers. The authors of the current book Pim Groen and Jan Holterman played an important role in this piezo course. With these insights in mind we wanted to write a book in order to aid students and developers in the understanding of the theoretical background and practical application of piezoelectric materials.

With such a great but hidden impact on human life we want to provide a clear overview of this technology and its applications. This book *An Introduction to Piezoelectric Materials and Applications* is written to provide that overview for the student and engineer of mechatronic applications with piezoelectric materials.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the following people for their support in this project:

- The authors Jan Holterman and Pim Groen. Jan Holterman whose PhD research found a practical application in lithographic machines, and with whom I since then worked on many other applications. I appreciate Jan's never ending desire to explain things better and more accurate. Pim Groen who has spent a career in both academical and industrial environment gaining the knowledge he put in this book. Besides being an excellent scientist Pim also has a very pleasant, practical view on piezoelectric applications.
- Guus Rijnders, Ruud Steenwelle, and Vincent Spiering for their contributions on thin film piezo.
- Martin Verweij for his contribution to the chapter on acoustic transducers.
- Hao Sun for his contribution to the chapter on energy harvesting.
- Rien Koster for his contribution to the section on piezoelectric motors.
- Frans Blom, Stephan Tiedke, and Erik Veninga for their contributions to the chapter on practical considerations.
- Eddy Brinkman who wrote our book *The hidden use of piezo technology in applications all around us* helped us also to organise this book.
- Theo de Vries, Miranda Wessels and Mark Horsthuis made the colourful figures and tables. They left no stone unturned to get every pixel on its proper place and every colour just right.
- Sandra Bohnstedt who had a clear vision about the cover; the first impression of the book.
- The members of the SmartPie consortium who provided the opportunity to write this book.

I am honoured to work with these people. I hope this book will encourage and support you in the development of new applications and the needed technology for these applications.

Jan Peters

Chairman, Stichting Applied Piezo
and
Director, Imotec b.v.

About the authors

Jan Holterman got acquainted with piezoelectric materials and components during his PhD research at the University of Twente, into active vibration control using smart materials. He successfully applied integrated piezoelectric actuators and sensors for active damping within microlithography machines and he has been involved in various piezoelectric application projects and patents. Currently he is with Imotec b.v., a mechatronic engineering company with a specialization in piezoelectric applications.

Pim Groen got involved in perovskites and ceramics during his study in Solid State Chemistry at Leiden University. He joined Philips Research in Eindhoven in 1987 and did his PhD in the field of cuprate superconductors, again perovskite related structures, in 1990. At Philips Research he worked on a variety of inorganic materials and ceramics for electronic and lighting applications and later in Aachen (Germany) on electronic ceramics, including piezoelectric ceramics. In 2002 he changed position to Morgan Electroceramics to continue his work on piezoelectric ceramics. Currently he is working at Holst Centre as program manager and is also working as part-time professor at the University of Delft in the group Novel Aerospace Materials (NOVAM) on Smart Materials & Sensors.

About Applied Piezo

The Stichting (foundation) Applied Piezo is a group of cooperating industrial companies with supplemental expertise in the field of piezo technology. There is a close relation with universities and several organisations that are active in the field of piezo technology. The aim of Applied Piezo is to define and execute new projects together, to promote piezo technology, to stimulate knowledge development and innovation and to provide a network where knowledge, expertise and products can be exchanged. Besides traditional bulk applications Applied Piezo is working on piezo systems based on thin film processes for MEMS devices and piezo composites for making integrated products.

About SmartPie

SmartPie is a Dutch scientific research program on piezo technology. SmartPie is an acronym for "SMART systems based on integrated PIEzo". The aim of the SmartPie research is to strengthen the innovative position and perception of the Dutch high tech industry by providing it with new piezo-based technology. The research will provide new piezo materials and applications, through which a total paradigm shift will occur in the type of base technologies being used. This consortium is built upon an initiative of Dutch SME's and the following partners are involved: Aito, C2V, Imotec, Solmates, Océ Technologies, TNO, Delft University of Technology, Eindhoven University of Technology, University of Twente. The SmartPie consortium gratefully acknowledges the support of the Smart Mix Programme of the Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.

Contents

Preface	iii
1 Introduction	3
1.1 Piezoelectricity in everyday life	3
1.2 Piezoelectric effect	4
1.3 History of piezoelectrics	4
1.4 Applications of the piezoelectric effect	6
1.4.1 Applications of the direct effect	6
1.4.2 Applications of the inverse effect	8
1.4.3 Applications of the combined effect	10
1.5 Mechatronic applications	12
1.6 Piezoelectric engineering disciplines	13
1.7 Overview of the book	14
1.8 Classification of application fields	15
1.9 Piezoelectric components glossary	16
2 Basics of piezoelectricity	19
2.1 Introduction	19
2.2 Piezoelectric material parameters	21
2.2.1 Electric behaviour	22
2.2.2 Dielectric behaviour	23
2.2.3 Mechanical behaviour: elasticity	24
2.2.4 Electromechanical behaviour	26
2.2.5 Piezoelectric constitutive equations	29
2.2.6 Symmetry and piezoelectricity	30
2.2.7 Piezoelectric ceramics operation modes	31
2.2.8 Piezoelectric constants	33
2.2.9 Coupling coefficient	35
2.3 Dynamic material parameters	37
2.3.1 Material damping	37
2.3.2 Dielectric loss	37
2.3.3 Mechanical loss	39
2.3.4 Sound velocity	39
2.3.5 Acoustic impedance	40
2.4 Piezoelectric component parameters	41
2.4.1 Two-port description	41
2.4.2 Component parameters	45
2.4.3 Graphical representation	47
2.4.4 Mechanical amplification	52
2.5 Dynamic behaviour	54
2.5.1 Equivalent electric circuit	55
2.5.2 Quality factor	57
2.5.3 Bandwidth	58
2.5.4 Mechanical interpretation (d_{31} -operation)	58
2.5.5 Frequency constant	61

2.5.6	Single-mode approximation	63
2.6	References and further reading	65
3	Piezoelectric materials	67
3.1	Introduction	67
3.2	Single crystals	68
3.2.1	Crystal classification	68
3.2.2	Ferroelectricity	69
3.2.3	Natural versus artificial single crystals	70
3.2.4	Applications	72
3.3	Ceramics	72
3.3.1	Introduction	72
3.3.2	Perovskite crystal structure	74
3.3.3	Barium titanate	75
3.3.4	Lead zirconium titanate (PZT)	85
3.3.5	Anti-ferroelectric materials	89
3.3.6	Lead-free materials	90
3.3.7	High T_c materials	91
3.3.8	Stability and ageing	92
3.3.9	Typical material properties of piezoelectric ceramics	94
3.4	Thin film piezoelectrics	95
3.4.1	Introduction	95
3.4.2	PZT thin films	95
3.5	Piezoelectric polymers	96
3.6	Piezoelectric composites	98
3.7	References and further reading	101
4	Manufacturing of piezoelectric components	103
4.1	Introduction	103
4.2	Bulk ceramics: disks, rings, plates	103
4.3	Benders: unimorphs and bimorphs – actuators and sensors	107
4.4	Multilayer actuators	110
4.5	Thin films for piezoMEMS	113
4.6	References and further reading	119
5	Piezoelectric sensors	123
5.1	Introduction	123
5.2	Force sensor basics	124
5.3	Sensor materials	126
5.4	Charge versus voltage measurement	127
5.5	Sensitivity and bandwidth	128
5.5.1	Charge sensitivity	129
5.5.2	Voltage sensitivity	130
5.5.3	Bandwidth	133
5.6	Bending sensors	136
5.7	Sensor electronics	138
5.7.1	Voltage measurement	138
5.7.2	Charge measurement	139

5.8	Temperature effects	140
5.9	Acceleration sensors	142
5.9.1	Accelerometer sensitivity	142
5.9.2	Accelerometer bandwidth	143
5.10	Pressure sensors	145
5.11	PiezOMEMS for sensing applications	146
5.11.1	Introduction in biosensing	146
5.11.2	Thin film and micro-cantilever fabrication	147
5.11.3	Properties	148
5.12	Acoustic wave sensors	149
5.12.1	Introduction	149
5.12.2	Acoustic wave basics	150
5.12.3	Acoustic wave sensors - types	151
5.13	References and further reading	153
6	Piezoelectric generators and energy harvesters	155
6.1	Introduction	155
6.2	Energy conversion cycle	158
6.2.1	Qualitative analysis	159
6.2.2	Graphical analysis	161
6.2.3	Quantitative analysis – discharge under constant strain	163
6.2.4	Quantitative analysis – discharge under constant stress	171
6.2.5	In summary – comparison	175
6.3	Application with or without depolarization	177
6.4	Mechanical conditions and mechanical design	178
6.4.1	Energy source: time-dependence	178
6.4.2	Structural excitation: deformation or motion	179
6.4.3	General mechanical model	180
6.4.4	Global coupling coefficient	182
6.4.5	Mechanical energy constraints	183
6.4.6	Mechanical impedance matching	184
6.4.7	Mechanical non-linearities	185
6.5	Piezoelectric transducer material	185
6.6	Energy harvesting electronics	186
6.6.1	Introduction	186
6.6.2	AC impedance matching	187
6.6.3	Rectification	189
6.6.4	DC impedance matching	189
6.6.5	Voltage regulation	190
6.6.6	Improved energy conversion for weak coupling	191
6.6.7	Discussion	192
6.7	PiezOMEMS energy harvesters	193
6.7.1	Fabrication	193
6.7.2	Output signals and impedance matching	194
6.8	References and further reading	196

7	Piezoelectric actuators and motors	197
7.1	Introduction	197
7.2	Actuator basics	201
7.2.1	Piezoelectric multilayer ceramics	201
7.2.2	Operation modes	202
7.2.3	Mechanical amplification	205
7.3	Deformation and force generation	205
7.3.1	Two-port description	205
7.3.2	Ideal physical model (IPM) representations	206
7.3.3	Maximum actuator stroke (d_{33} -mode)	207
7.3.4	Blocking force (d_{33} -mode)	208
7.3.5	Mechanical preloading	210
7.3.6	Force-stroke diagram	211
7.4	Bending actuators	213
7.5	Non-linear behaviour	216
7.5.1	Large-signal versus small-signal behaviour	216
7.5.2	Hysteresis	217
7.5.3	Creep	217
7.5.4	Temperature effects	219
7.6	Positioning control	220
7.7	Actuator electronics	220
7.7.1	Operating voltage	220
7.7.2	Maximum operating frequency	220
7.7.3	Charge-feedback amplifier	221
7.7.4	Linear versus switching amplifier	222
7.8	Mechanical interfacing	222
7.9	PiezoMEMS application example	224
7.9.1	SMARTvalve	224
7.9.2	Design and fabrication	225
7.10	Piezoelectric motors	226
7.10.1	Introduction	226
7.10.2	Quasi-static piezomotors	228
7.10.3	Ultrasonic piezomotors	232
7.11	References and further reading	237
8	Piezoelectric acoustic transducers	239
8.1	Introduction	239
8.2	Narrowband versus broadband transducers	242
8.3	Transducer characteristics	245
8.3.1	Frequency	245
8.3.2	Radiation pattern	246
8.3.3	Electroacoustic efficiency	248
8.3.4	Bandwidth	250
8.3.5	Power constraints	250
8.4	Acoustic impedance matching	252
8.4.1	Acoustic impedance mismatch	252
8.4.2	Matching layer	252

8.4.3	Backing layer	253
8.4.4	Amplitude transformer	254
8.4.5	Flexure-mode resonators	255
8.5	Electric impedance matching	258
8.5.1	Resistive tuning	258
8.5.2	Inductive tuning	259
8.5.3	Example: flexure-mode resonator	260
8.6	Medical ultrasonic transducers	262
8.6.1	Transducer types	262
8.6.2	Design parameters	263
8.6.3	Example: dual frequency probe for Super Harmonic Imaging	264
8.7	References and further reading	267
9	Practical considerations	271
9.1	Introduction	271
9.2	Measurement techniques	271
9.2.1	Capacitance	271
9.2.2	d_{33} meter (Berlincourt)	272
9.2.3	Measurement of deflection and blocking force of bimorphs	275
9.2.4	Dynamic and static displacement	275
9.2.5	Hysteresis (P-E) loops	277
9.2.6	Special characterization techniques	278
9.3	Interfacing	280
9.3.1	Mounting of a piezoceramic component including bimorphs	280
9.3.2	Contacting piezoelectric ceramics	280
9.3.3	Soldering piezoelectric ceramics	281
9.4	Poling or re-poling	286
9.5	References and further reading	288
A	Piezoelectric parameters and relations	289
A.1	Piezoelectric constants and relations	289
A.2	Material parameters – subscripts and superscripts	290

Part I

Introduction and materials

In this chapter, we

- briefly sketch the history of piezoelectricity;
- give a glance of everyday life applications of piezoelectricity;
- present the scope of this book.

1

Introduction

Piezo technology is everywhere...

1.1 Piezoelectricity in everyday life

Materials always have had a large influence on society. This was obvious in the Stone Age, Bronze Age, and Iron Age. We have named these eras by the most advanced material in that period, since these materials determine and limit the state of technology at the time. Also in modern society, the influence of materials is still present. However, nowadays the materials as such are not as visible anymore as they used to be. They are more and more embedded in complex devices and high tech systems that make whole economies exist and function in an efficient way.

Piezoelectric materials are among these ‘invisible’ materials that are widespread around us, although they are unknown to the public at large. Mobile phones, automotive electronics, medical technology, and industrial systems are only a few areas where piezoelectric components are indispensable. Echoes to capture the image of an unborn baby in a womb make use of piezoelectricity. Even in a parking sensor at the back of our car, piezoelectric material is present.



FIGURE 1.1 Echoscopic image of an unborn baby in a womb

1.2 Piezoelectric effect

What's the reason for piezoelectric materials to be applicable so abundantly? Well, it's the nature of the material itself: it has the ability to convert mechanical energy into electric energy and vice versa.

direct effect

The *direct* piezoelectric effect is that these materials, when subjected to mechanical stress, generate an electric charge proportional to that stress. The *inverse*

inverse effect

piezoelectric effect is that these materials become strained when an electric field is applied, the strain again being proportional to the applied field. Clever use of piezoelectric materials enables the realization of a wide variety of technical functions.

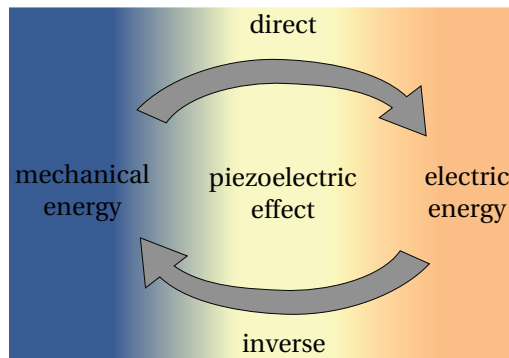


FIGURE 1.2 Piezoelectricity enables conversion from mechanical energy into electric energy and vice versa

1.3 History of piezoelectrics

The history of piezoelectricity – as a physical phenomenon to be used intentionally – goes back to the beginning of the 18th century. At that time the Dutch brought a precious stone called *tourmaline* from the East Indies to Europe. Tourmaline had a peculiar feature: while being heated, the material attracted other materials such as ashes. Almost half a century later the Swedish botanist and physician Carl Linnaeus – also famous as developer of biological nomenclature – had a hunch that this phenomenon might have something to do with electricity. And indeed, within a decade, the German physicist Franz Aepinus confirmed that this ‘peculiar feature’ was electric. This phenomenon was later known as *pyroelectricity*: the ability of a material to generate a temporary voltage when it is being cooled or heated.

tourmaline

pyroelectricity

Pyroelectricity led to the discovery of piezoelectricity, which was to a large extent a French affair. When Charles-Augustin de Coulomb assumed that electric charge might be produced by pressure, René-Just Haüy and later also Antoine César Becquerel tried to apply their knowledge of pyroelectricity to perform experiments to investigate Coulomb's assumption. However, they were not very successful.

discovery of piezoelectricity

In 1880 the brothers Pierre and Jacques Curie finally discovered the direct piezoelectric effect, also with pyroelectricity as a basis. They observed that by pressing in a certain direction on crystals of tourmaline, quartz, cane sugar and Rochelle salt

(also known as Seignette's salt), these crystals were able to generate charge on certain positions of their surfaces. The German physicist Wilhelm G. Hankel gave this phenomenon the name 'piezoelectricity' – named after the ancient Greek *piezein* that means to press or to squeeze, and *elektron* meaning amber, describing substances that (like amber) attract other substances when rubbed. One year later, the French-Luxembourgian physicist Gabriel Lippmann predicted the inverse piezoelectric effect, which was experimentally verified by the Curie brothers in that same year.

*etymology of
'piezoelectricity'*

Practical applications

So far the 'founding fathers' and the scientific history. This interesting phenomenon of materials that can convert mechanical energy into electric energy – and vice versa – cried out for practical applications. And they came. During World War I, in 1917 Paul Langevin developed the predecessor of *sonar*, a device to detect other objects under water. He managed to make a *quartz*-based transducer to send ultrasonic waves, and a receiver to detect the returning echo. By measuring the time span between the emitted wave and the wave that returned after bouncing off an object, a submarine should be able to determine the distance to that object. To date, sonar is still a major application of piezoelectric technology, where modern (ceramic) materials are being used.

*sonar
quartz*

Sonar as a successful application of a piezoelectric material stimulated others to discover new piezoelectric materials and to develop new devices. An eye-catching example is the use of Rochelle salt as a single crystal needle in the pick-up part of early electronic phonographs, starting in 1935. Around 1950 Rochelle salt was replaced by *piezoelectric ceramics*, and in turn they were replaced by magnetic cartridges in the 1970's. From then, it took about ten years before compact disc players massively replaced phonographs.

*piezoelectric
ceramics*

The second World War had a large influence on the development of new piezoelectric materials. Independent from each other – due to World War II – Japanese, Russian and American research groups discovered the so-called *ferroelectrics*, a new kind of man-made materials with much better piezoelectric properties than their natural counterparts. *Barium titanate* ceramics were the first materials in this

ferroelectrics

barium titanate



FIGURE 1.3 Quartz crystal