
The influence of nano-particles on microstructural development at the interface of Sn3.5Ag-solder and Cu-substrate

D.C. Lin*

Department of Mechanical Engineering,
Research Center for Advanced Manufacturing,
Southern Methodist University,
3101 Dyer Street, Dallas TX 75205, USA
E-mail: dlin@mail.smu.edu
*Corresponding author

T.S. Srivatsan and G-X. Wang

Division of Materials Science and Engineering,
Department of Mechanical Engineering,
The University of Akron,
302 E. Buchtel Mall, Akron OH 44325, USA
E-mail: tsrivatsan@uakron.edu
E-mail: gwang@uakron.edu

R. Kovacevic

Department of Mechanical Engineering,
Research Center for Advanced Manufacturing,
Southern Methodist University,
3101 Dyer Street, Dallas TX 75205, USA
E-mail: kovacevi@enr.smu.edu

Abstract: Preliminary experimental results have shown that an unexpected large needle-like phase Ag_3Sn grows from the solder/substrate interface and large polygon-like Sn-Cu intermetallic compounds are present in the region, which is close to the interface when using lead-free binary Sn3.5Ag solder alloy. This paper summarises the efforts made to prevent the formation of these deleterious phases. An addition of 0.25 wt% of either copper nano-particles or nickel nano-particles was found to effectively avoid the formation of large Ag_3Sn phase and to modify the solder matrix through a random dispersion of the in-situ intermetallic compounds Cu_6Sn_5 or Sn_4Ni_3 . The mechanism involved in influencing the interfacial structure is quite different for copper and nickel nano-particles. The addition of copper nano-particles stimulates the formation of the Sn-Cu compound Cu_6Sn_5 at the solder/substrate interface, while the nickel nano-particles promotes the formation of Sn-Cu-Ni-Ag compound to replace the regular scallop-like Cu_6Sn_5 having a round morphology.

Keywords: lead free solders; Sn3.5Ag solder; interfacial structure; nano-particles; microstructure; reinforcement; nickel; copper.