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Surface chemical analysis — Auger electron spectroscopy and X-ray photoelectron spectroscopy — Guide to the use of experimentally determined relative sensitivity factors for the quantitative analysis of homogeneous materials

Analyse chimique des surfaces — Spectroscopie des électrons Auger et spectroscopie de photoélectrons — Lignes directrices pour l'utilisation de facteurs expérimentaux de sensibilité relative pour l'analyse quantitative de matériaux homogènes

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Case postale 56 • CH-1211 Geneva 20
Tel. + 41 22 749 01 11
Fax + 41 22 749 09 47
E-mail copyright@iso.org
Web www.iso.org

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Foreword

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International Standards are drafted in accordance with the rules given in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2.

The main task of technical committees is to prepare International Standards. Draft International Standards adopted by the technical committees are circulated to the member bodies for voting. Publication as an International Standard requires approval by at least 75 % of the member bodies casting a vote.

Attention is drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this document may be the subject of patent rights. ISO shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights.

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Introduction

Auger electron spectroscopy (AES) and X-ray photoelectron spectroscopy (XPS) are surface-analytical techniques that are sensitive to the composition in the surface region of a material to depths of, typically, a few nanometres (nm). Both techniques yield a surface-weighted signal, averaged over the analysis volume. Most samples have compositional variations, both laterally and with depth, and quantification is often performed with approximate methods since it can be difficult to determine the magnitude of any compositional variations and the distance scale over which they may occur. The simplest sample for analysis is one that is homogeneous. Although this situation occurs infrequently, it is often assumed, for simplicity in the analysis, that the sample material of interest is homogeneous. This International Standard provides guidance on the measurement and use of experimentally determined relative sensitivity factors for the quantitative analysis of homogeneous materials by AES and XPS.

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Surface chemical analysis — Auger electron spectroscopy and X-ray photoelectron spectroscopy — Guide to the use of experimentally determined relative sensitivity factors for the quantitative analysis of homogeneous materials

1 Scope

This International Standard gives guidance on the measurement and use of experimentally determined relative sensitivity factors for the quantitative analysis of homogeneous materials by Auger electron spectroscopy and X-ray photoelectron spectroscopy.

2 Normative references

The following referenced documents are indispensable for the application of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

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ISO 18115, *Surface chemical analysis — Vocabulary*

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ISO 21270, *Surface chemical analysis — X-ray photoelectron and Auger electron spectrometers — Linearity of intensity scale*

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the terms and definitions given in ISO 18115 apply. The definitions of absolute elemental sensitivity factor and relative elemental sensitivity factor from ISO 18115 are given for convenience in 3.1 and 3.2. Definitions of average matrix relative sensitivity factor and pure-element relative sensitivity factor from a future amendment to ISO 18115 are given in 3.3 and 3.4.

3.1
absolute elemental sensitivity factor
coefficient for an element with which the measured intensity for that element is divided to yield the atomic concentration or atomic fraction of the element present in the sample

NOTE 1 The choice of use of atomic concentration or atomic fraction should be made clear.

NOTE 2 The type of sensitivity factor used should be appropriate for the equations used in the quantification process and for the type of sample analysed, for example, of homogeneous samples or segregated layers.

NOTE 3 The source of the sensitivity factors should be given in order that the correct matrix factors or other parameters have been used.

NOTE 4 Sensitivity factors depend on parameters of the excitation source, the spectrometer and the orientation of the sample to these parts of the instrument. Sensitivity factors also depend on the matrix being analysed, and in SIMS this has a dominating influence.

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3.2
relative elemental sensitivity factor
coefficient proportional to the absolute elemental sensitivity factor, where the constant of proportionality is chosen such that the value for a selected element and transition is unity

NOTE 1 Elements and transitions commonly used are C 1s or F 1s for XPS and Ag $M_{4,5}VV$ for AES.

NOTE 2 The type of sensitivity factor used should be appropriate for the analysis, for example, of homogeneous samples or segregated layers.

NOTE 3 The source of the sensitivity factors should be given in order that the correct matrix factors or other parameters have been used.

NOTE 4 Sensitivity factors depend on parameters of the excitation source, the spectrometer and the orientation of the sample to these parts of the instrument. Sensitivity factors also depend on the matrix being analysed and in SIMS, this has a dominating influence.

3.3
average matrix relative sensitivity factor
coefficient proportional to the intensity calculated for a pure element in an average matrix with which the measured intensity for that element is divided in calculations to yield the atomic concentration or atomic fraction of the element present in the sample

NOTE 1 The choice of use of atomic concentration or atomic fraction should be made clear.

NOTE 2 The type of sensitivity factor used should be appropriate for the equations used in the quantification process and for the type of sample analysed, for example, of homogeneous samples or segregated layers.

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NOTE 3 The source of the sensitivity factors should be given. Matrix factors are taken to be unity for average matrix relative sensitivity factors.

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NOTE 4 Sensitivity factors depend on parameters of the excitation source, the spectrometer and the orientation of the sample to these parts of the instrument.

3.4
pure-element relative sensitivity factor
coefficient proportional to the intensity measured for a pure sample of an element with which the measured intensity for that element is divided in calculations to yield the atomic concentration or atomic fraction of the element present in the sample

NOTE 1 The choice of use of atomic concentration or atomic fraction should be made clear.

NOTE 2 The type of sensitivity factor used should be appropriate for the equations used in the quantification process and for the type of sample analysed, for example, of homogeneous samples or segregated layers.

NOTE 3 The source of the sensitivity factors should be given in order that the correct matrix factors or other parameters have been used. Matrix factors are significant and should be used with pure-element relative sensitivity factors.

NOTE 4 Sensitivity factors depend on parameters of the excitation source, the spectrometer and the orientation of the sample to these parts of the instrument.

4 Symbols and abbreviated terms

AES Auger electron spectroscopy

AMRSF average matrix relative sensitivity factor

ARSF atomic relative sensitivity factor

ERSF elemental relative sensitivity factor

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IERF intensity-energy response function

S_i^{At} atomic relative sensitivity factor for element i

S_i^{Av} average matrix relative sensitivity factor for element i

S_i^{E} elemental relative sensitivity factor for element i

RSF relative sensitivity factor

XPS X-ray photoelectron spectroscopy

5 General information

It is convenient in many quantitative applications of AES and XPS to utilize relative sensitivity factors (RSFs) for quantitative analyses. Three types of RSF have been used for this purpose: elemental relative sensitivity factors (ERSFs), atomic relative sensitivity factors (ARSFs), and average matrix relative sensitivity factors (AMRSFs). Equations defining these three types of RSF are given in A.3 of Annex A, and the principles on which these equations are based are given in A.2 of Annex A.

While the ERSFs are the simplest and easiest to apply, they are the least accurate because no account is taken of matrix correction factors (as described in A.3). The matrix correction factors for AES can vary between 0,1 and 8 [1] while for XPS they can vary between 0,3 and 3 [2]. The ARSFs are more accurate than ERSFs in that they take account of differences in atomic densities, generally the largest single matrix correction. The AMRSFs are the most reliable RSFs in that there is almost complete correction of matrix effects. It is recommended that ERSFs be used only for semi-quantitative analyses (that is, rough estimates of composition) and that ARSFs or preferably AMRSFs be used for quantitative analyses. For the latter applications, ARSFs shall be used only in situations for which it is not possible to make use of AMRSFs (for example, measurements involving Auger electrons or photoelectrons at energies for which inelastic mean free paths cannot be reliably determined).

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In analytical applications of AES and XPS, it is essential that Auger-electron and photoelectron intensities be measured using exactly the same procedure as that used for measurement of the RSFs. For some applications of AES (e.g. sputter depth profiles), it is convenient to use peak-to-peak heights of Auger-electron signals in the differential mode as measures of Auger-electron intensities. For other applications of AES (e.g. scanning Auger microscopy), the Auger-electron intensity may be determined from the difference between the intensity at a peak maximum in the direct spectrum and the intensity of a nearby background signal. Finally, for many applications in XPS and for some applications of AES, areas of peaks in direct spectra are used as measures of photoelectron or Auger-electron intensities.

Relative sensitivity factors depend on the parameters of the excitation source (for example, the incident electron energy in AES and the choice of X-ray energy in XPS), the spectrometer configuration (for example, the angle of incidence of the electron beam in AES, the angle between the X-ray source and the analyser axis in XPS, the sample area viewed by the analyser, and the acceptance solid angle of the analyser) and the orientation of the sample to these parts of the instrument [3]. The sample area viewed by the analyser and the analyser acceptance solid angle can depend on analyser settings (for example, selection of apertures, whether the analyser is operated in the constant analyser energy mode or the constant retardation ratio mode, and the corresponding choices of analyser pass energy or retardation ratio). Finally, the measured Auger-electron or photoelectron intensities can depend on the instrumental parameters described in Clause 6. It is therefore essential that Auger-electron and photoelectron intensities be determined using exactly the same instrumental settings and the same sample orientation as those employed for the ERSF measurements. It is also essential that the same data-analysis procedures (described in Clause 7) be used in measurements of signal-electron intensities for the unknown sample as those used in the ERSF measurements.

Commercial AES and XPS instruments are generally supplied with a set of ERSFs for one or more common operating conditions. These ERSFs were typically determined on an instrument of the same type or, in some cases, on similar instruments. It is recommended that an analyst check the ERSFs supplied with the instrument for those elements expected to be of analytical interest to ensure that the supplied ERSFs are

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correct. In addition, the intensity-energy response function (IERF) of the instrument may change with time as described in Clause 8. Such changes can be detected and corrective actions taken using calibration software available from the UK National Physical Laboratory [4]. Alternatively, an analyst can check for possible changes in IERF with time by measuring selected ERSFs as described in Clause 8.

6 Measurement conditions

6.1 General

The same measurement conditions (for example, instrumental configuration, sample orientation and instrumental settings) shall be used for the measurement with the unknown sample as those chosen for the ERSF measurements. Particular attention shall be given to the following parameters.

6.2 Excitation source

In AES, the incident-electron energy and in XPS the X-ray source shall be the same for the measurement of the unknown sample as that chosen for the measurement of the ERSFs.

6.3 Energy resolution

Unless peak areas are used to measure the signal intensities, the energy resolution of the electron-energy analyser (that is determined by choice of aperture sizes, pass energy or retardation ratio) shall be the same for the unknown-sample measurement as for the measurement used to generate the ERSFs [5].

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6.4 Energy step and scan rate

The size of the energy step (energy per channel) used to acquire spectral data and the spectral scan rate shall be chosen so that there is negligible spectral distortion in the acquired data for the selected energy resolution.

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6.5 Signal intensity

The incident-electron current (in AES) or the X-ray intensity (in XPS) shall be adjusted together with the voltage applied to the detector so that the measured signal intensity is proportional to the incident current or X-ray intensity to within 1 % as described in ISO 21270. Alternatively, the measured signal intensity that is corrected for counting losses as described in ISO 21270 shall be proportional to the incident current or X-ray intensity to within 1 %.

6.6 Gain and time constant (for AES instruments with analogue detection systems)

The settings of the detector system shall be the same in the unknown-sample measurement as in the measurement used to generate the ERSFs. The time constant [6] in the measurements shall be sufficiently short so that shapes of spectral features are not significantly distorted during data acquisition. The gain of the detector system shall be adjusted so that the intensities measured for the relevant peaks are within the range for linear detector response.

NOTE Procedures to check for linear detector response in pulse-counting systems are described in ISO 21270. The first method described there may be used for analogue AES systems if there are sufficient instrumental controls.

6.7 Modulation to generate a derivative spectrum

It is often convenient in AES to utilize the differential spectrum. The derivative spectrum can be acquired by applying a modulation energy to the analyser [7,8] or by numerical processing of a measured direct spectrum [9,10]. For this purpose, a modulation or numerical differential of between 2 eV and 10 eV (peak-to-peak) is commonly used. The same modulation energy shall be used for the measurements with the unknown sample as that used to determine the ERSFs.

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NOTE The details of the peak attenuation in numerical differentiation and of the Savitzky and Golay differentiation method in AES can be obtained from References [9] and [10].

7 Data-analysis procedures

The same procedures shall be used for the analysis of the spectra measured for the unknown sample and for the ERSF measurements.

To obtain a peak area or a peak height from a measured direct spectrum, a background shall be chosen and subtracted from the measured spectrum (see ASTM E 995 [11]). The backgrounds most commonly used for this purpose [12] are a linear background, a Shirley background [13] or a Tougaard background [14].

In AES, it is often convenient to measure a peak-to-peak height or a peak-to-background height in a differential spectrum. The differential spectrum can be recorded (in analogue detection instruments) or a measured direct spectrum can be numerically differentiated for this purpose. The same numerical procedure and choices shall be made in the differentiation of the spectra for the unknown sample and for the reference samples used to determine the ERSFs [11,15]. See also 6.7.

NOTE 1 Details of background-subtraction procedures are given in ASTM E 995 [11].

NOTE 2 Details of peak attenuation in numerical differentiation and of the Savitzky and Golay differentiation method in AES can be obtained from References [9] and [10].

NOTE 3 Reference [16] gives information on procedures to obtain consistent results in the use of differentiation for measurements with different chemical states of an element. This reference provides similar information for the determination of peak areas.

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8 Intensity-energy response function

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The intensity-energy response function (IERF) is a measure of the efficiency of the electron-energy analyser in transmitting electrons and of the detector system in detecting them as a function of electron energy [1,17,18]. In general, the IERF will change if the analyser pass energy, retardation ratio and aperture sizes are modified. In addition, different instruments of the same type (and from the same manufacturer) may have different IERFs for the same instrumental settings because the detector efficiency as a function of energy will often change during its service life. As a result, it is recommended that the intensity scale be calibrated at regular intervals (for example, every six months) using calibration software available from the UK National Physical Laboratory [4] or that ERSFs be measured for selected elements (having Auger-electron or photoelectron peaks over the working range of the energy scale). Such checks should also be made if the detector surface has been exposed to any environment that could affect its efficiency and if insulating films (e.g. from sputtering of non-conducting samples) have been deposited on analyser surfaces. Local measurements of ERSFs for selected elements shall be recorded in the log book for the instrument and plotted as a function of time so that changes can be easily detected.

9 Determination of chemical composition using relative sensitivity factors

9.1 Calculation of chemical composition

9.1.1 General

The chemical composition of an unknown sample may be determined using Equations (A.5) and (A.6) or one of the other equations given in Annex A. Equation (A.6) is commonly used but ignores matrix terms. For some types of relative sensitivity factor, these matrix terms are effectively unity, and may be ignored but, when other types of sensitivity factor are used, the matrix factors may be as high as 8 in AES [1] and 3 in XPS [2]. The accuracy of calculated chemical compositions thus depends significantly on the type of sensitivity factor used. This is discussed in Annex A.

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NOTE 1 AES and XPS cannot directly detect hydrogen or helium. A quantitative analysis of an unknown sample that is likely to contain one of these elements (e.g. organic compounds) will have a systematic error unless some method is devised to overcome this limitation.

NOTE 2 In some applications, it may be satisfactory to determine the composition of an unknown sample if a reference sample of similar composition is available. For this situation, measurements are made of signal-electron intensities from the unknown and reference samples, and the composition is calculated from Equation (A.4) of Annex A. If the two materials are close in composition, matrix correction factors can be ignored and Equation (A.4) is valid. The analyst should nevertheless be aware that it can be difficult to prepare reference samples of known composition; for example, compounds cleaned by ion sputtering will generally have a surface composition different from the bulk composition due to preferential-sputtering effects. This can be helpful if the sample to be analysed has been similarly sputtered. However, artefacts due to sputtering are beyond the scope of this International Standard. Scraping, fracturing or cleaving of the reference sample, where feasible, may be a suitable means of generating a suitable surface for comparisons with the unknown sample.

9.1.2 Composition determined from elemental relative sensitivity factors

The composition of the unknown sample can be obtained from Equation (A.6) using ERSFs, S_i^{E}, supplied by the instrument manufacturer or as measured by the analyst.

9.1.3 Composition determined from atomic relative sensitivity factors or average matrix relative sensitivity factors

The composition of the unknown sample can be obtained from Equation (A.6) using ARSFs, S_i^{At}, or AMRSFs, S_i^{Av}.

NOTE 1 The ARSFs may be supplied by the instrumental manufacturer or be calculated by the analyst using Equation (A.9).

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NOTE 2 The AMRSFs can be obtained from Equation (A.10) together with Equations (A.11) to (A.34).

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9.2 Uncertainties in calculated compositions

Many factors can contribute to the uncertainty of a chemical composition determined from RSFs [19]. Information on possible uncertainties in such measurements is given in Annex B.

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