CLAIMS

1. A method of contacting integrated circuit components, comprising the steps of:

providing an atmosphere comprising an inert gas; and

contacting contact regions, in particular contact regions of contact springs, of a contact socket with respective contacting areas of an integrated circuit component to be tested, the contacting being performed in the provided atmosphere comprising the inert gas.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the inert gas comprises at least one gas selected from the group including nitrogen and the noble gases, in particular from the group including nitrogen, helium, neon and argon, and wherein the inert gas preferably comprises nitrogen.

3. The method of claim 1 or 2, wherein the atmosphere comprising an inert gas is provided continuously.

4. The method of one of claims 1 to 3, wherein the inert gas has a temperature of at least 42°C, in particular a temperature in the range of 42°C to 175°C, preferably in the range of 50°C to 175°C.

5. The method of one of claims 1 to 3, wherein the inert gas has a temperature of less than 42°C.

6. The method of one of claims 1 to 5, further comprising the step of heating the inert gas and/or further comprising the step of cooling the inert gas.

7. A contact socket for contacting an integrated circuit component, the contact socket comprising:

contact regions, in particular contact springs each comprising a contact region, for contacting respective contacting areas of an integrated circuit component;

means for providing an atmosphere comprising an inert gas;

wherein the contact socket is configured to perform contacting of an integrated circuit component in the provided atmosphere under operating conditions.

8. The contact socket of claim 7, wherein the means for providing an atmosphere comprising an inert gas include at least one nozzle for directing a flow of inert gas to the contact tips of the contact socket.

9. The contact socket of claim 7 or 8, further comprising:

an inert gas chamber defining a space for the atmosphere comprising an inert gas.

10. The contact socket of one of claims 7 to 9, wherein the inert gas chamber comprises a gas inlet for introducing the inert gas into the chamber and a gas outlet for discharging the inert gas.

11. A contactor for contacting an integrated circuit component, comprising:

the contact socket of one of claims 7 to 10; and

a contact holder for holding an integrated circuit.

12. The contactor of claim 11, further comprising:

means for heating the inert gas and / or means for cooling the inert gas.

13. The contactor of claim 11 or 12, wherein the gas outlet and the gas inlet are interconnected outside of the chamber to provide a recirculation circuit for the inert gas.

14. A test system for testing integrated circuit components, comprising:

a contactor or a plurality of contactors according to any one of claims 11 to 13, in particular, further comprising a handler for feeding integrated circuit components to the contactor or the plurality of contactors.

15. The test system of claim 14, wherein the integrated circuit components are provided as parts of a test strip including a plurality of separate integrated circuit components or wherein the integrated circuit components are provided as parts of a waver probe including a plurality of integrated circuit components.

CLAIMS

1. A method of contacting integrated circuit components, comprising the steps of:

providing an atmosphere comprising an inert gas;

contacting contact regions, in particular contact regions of contact springs, of a contact socket with respective contacting areas of an integrated circuit component to be tested, the contacting being performed in the provided atmosphere comprising the inert gas;

wherein the atmosphere comprising an inert gas is provided continuously.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the inert gas comprises at least one gas selected from the group including nitrogen and the noble gases, in particular from the group including nitrogen, helium, neon and argon, and wherein the inert gas preferably comprises nitrogen.

3. The method of one of claims 1 to 2, wherein the inert gas has a temperature of at least 42°C, in particular a temperature in the range of 42°C to 175°C, preferably in the range of 50°C to 175°C.

4. The method of one of claims 1 to 2, wherein the inert gas has a temperature of less than 42°C.

5. The method of one of claims 1 to 4, further comprising the step of heating the inert gas and/or further comprising the step of cooling the inert gas.

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6. A contact socket for contacting an integrated circuit component, the contact socket comprising:

contact regions, in particular contact springs each comprising a contact region, for contacting respective contacting areas of an integrated circuit component;

means for providing an atmosphere comprising an inert gas, the inert gas comprising a gas inlet for introducing the inert gas into the chamber and a gas outlet for discharging the inert gas;

wherein the contact socket is configured to perform contacting of an integrated circuit component in the provided atmosphere under operating conditions.

7. The contact socket of claim 6, wherein the means for providing an atmosphere comprising an inert gas include at least one nozzle for directing a flow of inert gas to the contact tips of the contact socket.

8. The contact socket of claim 6 or 7, further comprising:

an inert gas chamber defining a space for the atmosphere comprising an inert gas.

9. A contactor for contacting an integrated circuit component, comprising:

the contact socket of one of claims 6 to 8; and

a contact holder for holding an integrated circuit.

10. The contactor of claim 9, further comprising:

means for heating the inert gas and / or means for cooling the inert gas.

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11. The contactor of claim 9 or 10, wherein the gas outlet and the gas inlet are interconnected outside of the chamber to provide a recirculation circuit for the inert gas.

12. A test system for testing integrated circuit components, comprising:

a contactor or a plurality of contactors according to any one of claims 9 to 11, in particular, further comprising a handler for feeding integrated circuit components to the contactor or the plurality of contactors.

13. The test system of claim 12, wherein the integrated circuit components are provided as parts of a test strip including a plurality of separate integrated circuit components or wherein the integrated circuit components are provided as parts of a waver probe including a plurality of integrated circuit components.

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