

DIELECTRIC CERAMIC COMPOSITION AND
MONOLITHIC CERAMIC CAPACITOR USING THE SAME

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

This invention relates to a dielectric ceramic composition and a monolithic ceramic capacitor using the same, more particularly a middle- to high-voltage monolithic ceramic capacitor having internal electrodes made of nickel or a nickel alloy.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

A monolithic ceramic capacitor is generally produced according to the following procedures. Dielectric ceramic layers in sheet form each having applied thereon an electrode material serving as an internal electrode are prepared. A ceramic material mainly comprising, e.g., BaTiO_3 , is used as a dielectric ceramic layer. A prescribed number of the dielectric ceramic layers with the electrode material applied thereon are piled up and press-bonded under heat into one body. The resulting laminate is calcined in a natural atmosphere at 1250 to 1350°C to obtain a ceramic laminate having internal electrodes. An external electrode is provided on both sides of the ceramic laminate by baking to make an electrical connection to the internal electrodes to obtain a monolithic ceramic capacitor.

The material for the internal electrodes are required to satisfy the following conditions:



1. To have a melting point at or above the calcining temperature of the ceramic laminate because the internal electrodes and the ceramic laminate are calcined simultaneously.
2. To be insusceptible to oxidation in a high-temperature oxidative atmosphere and be unreactive with the dielectric ceramic layer.

Noble metals, such as platinum, gold, palladium, and a silver-palladium alloy, have been used as an electrode material satisfying these requirements. While excellent in performance, these electrode materials are so expensive that the proportion of the electrode material cost reaches 30 to 70% of all the material cost, which has been the greatest factor of increasing the production cost of monolithic ceramic capacitors.

In addition to noble metals, base metals, such as Ni, Fe, Co, W, and Mo, also have a high melting point. However, these base metals are readily oxidized in a high-temperature oxidative atmosphere, failing to perform the function as an electrode. Therefore, calcination of the base metal together with dielectric ceramic layers must be carried out in a neutral or reducing atmosphere before it can be used as an internal electrode of a monolithic ceramic capacitor. However, the problem is that a conventional dielectric ceramic material undergoes vigorous reduction into a semiconductor if calcined in a neutral or reducing atmosphere.

Dielectric ceramic materials which have been proposed



in order to solve the above problem include a dielectric ceramic composition comprising a barium titanate solid solution having a barium site to titanium site ratio in excess of a stoichiometric one (see JP-B-57-42588, the term "JP-B" as used herein means an "examined published Japanese patent application") and a dielectric ceramic composition comprising a barium titanate solid solution having incorporated therein an oxide of a rare earth element, such as La, Nd, Sm, Dy or Y (see JP-A-61-101459, the term "JP-A" as used herein means an "unexamined published Japanese patent application").

On the other hand, dielectric ceramic compositions whose dielectric constant has reduced temperature dependence, such as a $\text{BaTiO}_3\text{-CaZrO}_3\text{-MnO-MgO}$ system (see JP-A-62-256422) and a $\text{BaTiO}_3\text{-(Mg, Zn, Sr or Ca)O-B}_2\text{O}_3\text{-SiO}_2$ system (see JP-B-61-14611), have also been proposed.

Use of these dielectric ceramic compositions have made it possible to obtain a ceramic laminate that is not transformed into a semiconductor even when calcined in a reducing atmosphere, thereby making it feasible to produce a monolithic ceramic capacitor in which a base metal, such as nickel, is used as an internal electrode.

In recent years, size reduction of electronic components has been accelerated rapidly with the development of electronics. Monolithic ceramic capacitors have also shown a remarkable tendency to reduction in size and increase in



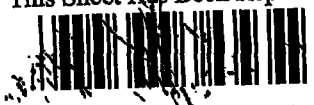
capacity. There has thus been an increasing demand for a dielectric ceramic composition which has a high dielectric constant with reduced variation with temperature change, shows a high dielectric breakdown voltage, and is thereby highly reliable.

The dielectric ceramic compositions disclosed in JP-B-57-42588 and JP-A-61-101459 exhibit a high dielectric constant but have a large crystal grain size on calcination. When they are applied to a monolithic ceramic capacitor in which each dielectric ceramic layer has such a small thickness as 10 μm or less, the number of crystal grains existing per layer is decreased, resulting in diminished reliability. Besides, these materials show considerable variation of dielectric constant with temperature change and are not regarded to meet the market demand sufficiently.

The dielectric ceramic composition disclosed in JP-A-62-256422, on the other hand, exhibits a relatively high dielectric constant and provides, on calcination, a ceramic laminate having a small crystal grain size and showing small variation of dielectric constant with temperature change. However, CaZrO_3 and CaTiO_3 , produced on calcination tend to form a secondary phase together with Mn, etc., which has made the resulting monolithic ceramic capacitor less reliable in high temperatures.

The dielectric ceramic composition disclosed in JP-B-

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61-14611 exhibits a dielectric constant of 2000 to 2800, which is disadvantageously low for achieving size reduction and capacity increase of a monolithic ceramic capacitor. Moreover, the composition fails to fulfill the requirement of X7R characteristics specified by EIA (Electronic Industries Association) Standards that the percentage of change in electrostatic capacitance be within a range of $\pm 15\%$ in a temperature range of from -55°C to $+125^{\circ}\text{C}$.

Further, the so far proposed dielectric ceramic compositions that are insusceptible to reduction have undergone various improvements in resistance against deterioration of insulation resistance in a high-temperature loading test, but there has been no marked improvement on resistance against deterioration of insulation resistance in a high-humidity loading test.

In addition, a monolithic ceramic capacitor used as a middle- to high-tension condenser is required to have a high insulation breakdown voltage as well. The market demand for dielectric strength has been getting intenser on account of the ever-continuing demand for capacity increase and the tendency to reduction in thickness of a dielectric ceramic layer, and therefore a demand for a dielectric ceramic composition having high dielectric strength to cope with the thickness reduction has been increasing. Accordingly, there has been necessity for development of a small-sized and high-capacity monolithic



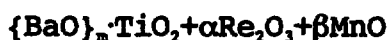
ceramic capacitor having excellent dielectric strength.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

An object of the present invention is to provide an economical, small-sized, and high-capacity monolithic ceramic capacitor which has a dielectric constant of 3000 or higher and an insulation resistance as high as 6000 MΩ·μF or more at room temperature or 2000 MΩ·μF or more at 125°C, as expressed in terms of the product of capacitance and insulation resistance (hereinafter referred to as a CR product), excellent weathering performance in, for example, loading in high temperature or high humidity, and excellent dielectric strength, and whose capacity exhibits temperature characteristics satisfying the B characteristics specified by JIS (Japanese Industrial Standards) and the X7R characteristics specified by EIA.

Another object of the present invention is to provide a dielectric ceramic composition providing a monolithic ceramic capacitor having the above-described excellent characteristics.

The present invention provides a dielectric ceramic composition containing (a) barium titanate, (b) at least one member selected from the group consisting of europium oxide, gadolinium oxide, terbium oxide, dysprosium oxide, holmium oxide, erbium oxide, thulium oxide, and ytterbium oxide and is made up of a material comprising (1) 100 parts by weight of a main component represented by compositional formula:



wherein Re_2O_3 represents at least one member selected from the group consisting of Eu_2O_3 , Gd_2O_3 , Tb_2O_3 , Dy_2O_3 , Ho_2O_3 , Er_2O_3 , Tm_2O_3 , and Yb_2O_3 ; $0.0005 \leq \alpha \leq 0.027$; $0.002 \leq \beta \leq 0.054$; $\beta/\alpha \leq 5$; and $1.000 < m \leq 1.035$,

and, as a secondary component, (2) 0.2 to 3.0 parts by weight of an $\text{SiO}_2\text{-TiO}_2\text{-M}^1$ -based oxide (wherein M^1 represents at least one member selected from the group consisting of BaO , CaO , SrO , MgO , ZnO , and MnO) (hereinafter referred to as a first invention) or an $\text{Li}_2\text{O-(Si,Ti)O}_2\text{-M}^2$ -based oxide (wherein M^2 represents at least one of Al_2O_3 and ZrO_2) (hereinafter referred to as a second invention).

The present invention also provides a monolithic ceramic capacitor having a laminate of dielectric ceramic layers, at least two internal electrodes each formed between every two dielectric ceramic layers in such a manner that one end of each internal electrode is exposed at one end of the dielectric ceramic layer alternately, and a pair of external electrodes each electrically connected to the exposed internal electrode on each side of the laminate, in which the dielectric ceramic layer comprises the dielectric ceramic composition of the first invention or the dielectric ceramic composition of the second invention.

In a preferred embodiment of the dielectric ceramic composition of the first invention and the monolithic ceramic capacitor using the same, the composition of the $\text{SiO}_2\text{-TiO}_2\text{-M}^1$ -



based oxide is, when plotted on a triangular diagram of (SiO_2 , TiO_2 , M^1), in the area surrounded by, or on, four straight lines connecting four points: A (85,1,14), B (35,51,14), C (30,20,50), and D (39,1,60) (unit: mol%), and contains at least one of Al_2O_3 and ZrO_2 in a total amount of not more than 15 parts by weight per 100 parts by weight of the (SiO_2 , TiO_2 , M^1) component, provided that the amount of ZrO_2 is not more than 5 parts by weight.

In a preferred embodiment of the dielectric ceramic composition of the second invention and the monolithic ceramic capacitor using the same, the composition of the $\text{Li}_2\text{O}-(\text{Si},\text{Ti})\text{O}_2-\text{M}^2$ -based oxide is, when plotted on a triangular diagram of $\{\text{Li}_2\text{O}$, $(\text{Si}_w\text{Ti}_{1-w})\text{O}_2$, $\text{M}^2\}$ (wherein $0.30 \leq w \leq 1.0$), in the area surrounded by, or on, six straight lines connecting six points: A (20, 80, 0), B (10, 80, 10), C (10, 70, 20), D (25, 45, 20), E (45, 45, 10), and F (45, 55, 0) (unit: mol%), provided that $0.30 \leq w < 1.0$ when the composition is on the line A-F.

In another preferred embodiment of the present invention, the external electrode is made up of a sintered layer of an electrically conductive metal powder which may contain glass frits. In a still preferred embodiment of the present invention, the external electrode is composed of a first layer made of a sintered layer of an electrically conductive metal powder which may contain glass frits and a second layer that is formed on the first layer by plating.



The present invention is particularly effective when applied to a monolithic ceramic capacitor using nickel or a nickel alloy as an internal electrode.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Fig. 1 is a schematic cross section of a monolithic ceramic capacitor according to one embodiment of the present invention.

Fig. 2 is a schematic plan of a ceramic layer with an internal electrode which is used in the monolithic ceramic capacitor of Fig. 1.

Fig. 3 is a perspective exploded view of the ceramic laminate used in the monolithic ceramic capacitor of Fig. 1.

Fig. 4 is a triangular diagram of $(\text{SiO}_2, \text{TiO}_2, \text{M}^1)$ showing a preferred range of the composition of $\text{SiO}_2\text{-TiO}_2\text{-M}^1$ -based oxide.

Fig. 5 is a triangular diagram of $\{\text{Li}_2\text{O}, (\text{Si}_x\text{Ti}_{1-x})\text{O}_2, \text{M}^2\}$ showing a preferred range of the composition of $\text{Li}_2\text{O}-(\text{Si,Ti})\text{O}_2\text{-M}^2$ -based oxide.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

The dielectric ceramic composition according to the present invention which comprises the main component having the above-described compositional formula and a specific oxide component as a secondary component can be calcined in a reducing atmosphere without suffering from deterioration of characteristics to provide a dielectric ceramic layer.



Therefore, the monolithic ceramic capacitor prepared by using the dielectric ceramic composition is highly reliable, satisfying the B characteristics specified by JIS and the X7R characteristics specified by EIA, both of which are the capacity-temperature characteristics, and exhibiting high insulation resistance at room temperature and high temperature and excellent dielectric strength.

In the dielectric ceramic composition of the present invention, the rare earth element oxides (Re_2O_3) have improved dispersibility and do not undergo agglomeration. As a result, even if the dielectric ceramic layer has a small thickness, reduction in dielectric strength can be avoided.

The barium titanate constituting the main component contains, as impurities, alkaline earth metal oxides (e.g., SrO and CaO), alkali metal oxides (e.g., Na_2O and K_2O), and other oxides (e.g., Al_2O_3 and SiO_2). Of these impurities alkali metal oxides, such as Na_2O and K_2O , have been confirmed greatly influential on the electrical characteristics. It was proved that a dielectric constant of 3000 or higher can be obtained by using barium titanate having an alkali metal oxide content of not more than 0.02% by weight.

It has also been found that the presence of an oxide component $\text{SiO}_2\text{-TiO}_2\text{-M}^1$ (wherein M^1 is at least one member selected from the group consisting of BaO , CaO , SrO , MgO , ZnO , and MnO) in the dielectric ceramic composition brings about



improved sintering properties and improved resistance to loading under a high humidity condition. Further, addition of Al_2O_3 and/or ZrO_2 to the SiO_2 - TiO_2 - M^1 -based oxide makes it possible to obtain higher insulation resistance (first invention).

It has further been found that the presence of an oxide component $\text{Li}_2\text{O}-(\text{Si},\text{Ti})\text{O}_2-\text{M}^2$ in the dielectric ceramic composition brings about improved sintering properties and improved dielectric strength (second invention).

Use of the dielectric ceramic composition according to the first and second inventions makes it feasible to use nickel or a nickel alloy as an internal electrode.

The external electrode is not particularly limited in composition. For example, it can be a sintered layer of a conductive powder of various metals (e.g., Ag, Pd, Ag-Pd, Cu, and Cu alloys) or a sintered layer of a mixture of such a conductive metal powder and glass frits of various kinds (e.g., B_2O_3 - Li_2O - SiO_2 - BaO -based glass frits, B_2O_3 - SiO_2 - BaO -based glass frits, Li_2O - SiO_2 - BaO -based glass frits, B_2O_3 - SiO_2 - ZnO -based glass frits). It is preferable that the sintered layer is plated with Ni, Cu, an Ni-Cu alloy, etc. The plated layer may further be plated with solder, tin, etc.

Preferred embodiments of the present invention will be described by referring to the accompanying drawings.

Fig. 1 is a schematic cross section of the monolithic



ceramic capacitor. Fig. 2 is a schematic plan of a ceramic layer having an internal electrode used in the monolithic ceramic capacitor of this embodiment. Fig. 3 is a perspective exploded view of the ceramic laminate used in the monolithic ceramic capacitor of this embodiment.

As shown in Fig. 1, the monolithic ceramic capacitor 1 is of rectangular chip type having a ceramic laminate 3 composed of a plurality of dielectric ceramic layers 2a and 2b, with an internal electrode 4 being interposed between every two ceramic layers. On each side of the ceramic laminate 3 are formed an external electrode 5, a first plating layer 6 formed by plating with nickel, copper, etc., and a second plating layer 7 formed by plating with solder, tin, etc.

The monolithic ceramic capacitor 1 shown in Fig. 1 can be produced as follows.

A powder mixture comprising (a) barium titanate, (b) at least one rare earth element oxide selected from the group consisting of europium oxide, gadolinium oxide, terbium oxide, dysprosium oxide, holmium oxide, erbium oxide, thulium oxide, and ytterbium oxide, (c) manganese oxide, and (e) an oxide component mainly comprising $\text{SiO}_2\text{-TiO}_2\text{-M}^1$ or an oxide component mainly comprising $\text{Li}_2\text{O-(Si,Ti)O}_2\text{-M}^2$ is compounded into a slurry and molded to prepare a dielectric ceramic layer 2a (green sheet). An internal electrode 4 is formed of nickel or a nickel alloy on one side of the dielectric ceramic layer 2 by



screen printing, vacuum evaporation or plating to obtain a dielectric ceramic layer 2b having an internal electrode 4 as shown in Fig. 2.

A prescribed number of the dielectric ceramic layers 2b are piled up and press-bonded in between a pair of dielectric ceramic layers 2a having no internal electrode to obtain a laminate as shown in Fig. 3. The laminate of the dielectric ceramic layers 2a, 2b ... 2b, 2a is calcined in a reducing atmosphere at a prescribed temperature to form a ceramic laminate 3.

An external electrode 5 is then formed on each side of the ceramic laminate 3 to make an electrical connection to the internal electrodes 4. The external electrodes 5 can be made of the same material as used for the internal electrodes 4. In addition, silver, palladium, a silver-palladium alloy, copper, a copper alloy, etc. are also useful. These metal powders may be used in combination with glass frits, such as B_2O_3 - SiO_2 - BaO -based glass frits or Li_2O - SiO_2 - BaO -based glass frits. The material of the external electrode should be selected appropriately taking into consideration the use of the resulting monolithic ceramic capacitor, the place of use, and the like. The external electrodes 5 can be formed by applying a paste of the metal powder selected to the ceramic laminate 3 (i.e., a calcined laminate) followed by baking. Alternatively, the paste may be applied to the laminate of the green sheets



before calcination and baked to form the electrodes 5 and the ceramic laminate 3 simultaneously.

The external electrodes 5 are then plated with nickel, copper, etc. to form a first layer 6. Finally, the first layer 6 is plated with solder, tin, etc. to form a second layer 7, thereby to produce a monolithic ceramic capacitor 1 of chip type.

As described above, the ceramic composition according to the present invention does not undergo reduction and therefore does not change into a semiconductor even if calcined in a reducing atmosphere, which allows use of a base metal (nickel or a nickel alloy) as an electrode material. Further, calcination of the ceramic composition can be achieved at a relatively low temperature of not higher than 1300°C. As a result, both the material cost and the process cost of monolithic ceramic capacitors can be reduced.

The monolithic ceramic capacitor according to the present invention exhibits excellent characteristics, having a dielectric constant of 3000 or more, having a high insulation resistance, and undergoing no deterioration in characteristics under a high temperature or high humidity condition.

Since the rare earth element oxides in the ceramic composition have improved dispersibility, producing no agglomerates in the dielectric ceramic layers. Therefore, if the thickness of dielectric ceramic layers constituting a



monolithic ceramic capacitor is reduced, each layer exhibits high dielectric strength. There is thus provided a small-sized and yet high-capacity monolithic ceramic capacitor.

The present invention will now be illustrated in greater detail with reference to Examples, but it should be understood that the present invention is not construed as being limited thereto.

EXAMPLE 1

TiCl_4 and $\text{Ba}(\text{NO}_3)_2$ both having a varied purity were weighed and treated with oxalic acid to precipitate barium titanyl oxalate ($\text{BaTiO}(\text{C}_2\text{O}_4) \cdot 4\text{H}_2\text{O}$). The precipitate was thermally decomposed at or above 1000°C to synthesize 4 species of barium titanate (BaTiO_3) shown in Table 1 below.

TABLE 1

Kind of BaTiO_3	Content of Impurities (wt%)					Average particle Size (μm)
	Alkali Metal Oxide	SrO	CaO	SiO_2	Al_2O_3	
A	0.003	0.012	0.001	0.010	0.005	0.60
B	0.020	0.010	0.003	0.019	0.008	0.56
C	0.012	0.179	0.018	0.155	0.071	0.72
D	0.062	0.014	0.001	0.019	0.004	0.58

Oxides, carbonates or hydroxides of silicon, titanium, barium, and manganese were weighted and mixed so as to give an $\text{SiO}_2:\text{TiO}_2:\text{BaO}:\text{MnO}$ molar ratio of 0.66:0.17:0.15:0.02. The



mixture was ground and heated to 1500°C in a platinum crucible, quenched, and ground to obtain a powdered oxide mixture having an average particle size of not greater than 1 μm .

A ceramic composition shown in Table 2 below was compounded from (i) the barium titanate of Table 1, (ii) the powdered oxide mixture prepared above, (iii) BaCO_3 serving for adjustment of the Ba/Ti molar ratio of barium titanate, and (iv) at least one of Eu_2O_3 , Gd_2O_3 , Tb_2O_3 , Dy_2O_3 , Ho_2O_3 , Er_2O_3 , Tm_2O_3 , and Yb_2O_3 , and MnO , each having a purity of not lower than 99%.

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TABLE 2

Sample No.	Main Component $\{BaO\}_mTiO_2+\alpha Re_2O_3+\beta MnO$										β	β/α	m	Secondary Component $SiO_2-TiO_2-M^I$ -based Oxide (part ^{II})
	Kind of $BaTiO_3$	α												
		Eu_2O_3	Gd_2O_3	Tb_2O_3	Dy_2O_3	Ho_2O_3	Er_2O_3	Tm_2O_3	Yb_2O_3	Total				
101 [*]	A	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.0000	0.0100		1.030	0.80
102 [*]	A	-	-	0.0100	-	-	0.0040	-	-	0.0140	0.0000	0	1.010	0.80
103 [*]	A	-	-	-	0.0100	-	-	-	0.0040	0.0140	0.0100	5/7	0.990	0.80
104 [*]	A	-	0.0100	-	-	-	-	0.0040	-	0.0140	0.0100	5/7	1.000	0.80
105 [*]	A	0.0100	-	-	-	0.0040	-	-	-	0.0140	0.0100	5/7	1.022	0.00
106	A	-	0.0005	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.0005	0.0020	4	1.005	0.50
107	A	0.0100	-	-	-	0.0100	-	-	-	0.0200	0.0200	1	1.010	0.20
108	A	-	-	0.0010	0.0030	-	-	-	-	0.0040	0.0040	1	1.035	0.80
109	A	-	0.0020	-	-	-	0.0020	-	-	0.0040	0.0080	2	1.010	0.80
110	A	-	-	-	0.0010	-	-	0.0010	0.0020	0.0040	0.0080	2	1.030	0.80
111	A	0.0070	-	-	0.0200	-	-	-	-	0.0270	0.0540	2	1.025	1.50
112	C	-	0.0050	-	-	-	-	0.0050	-	0.0100	0.0050	1/2	1.005	1.50
113	B	-	-	-	-	0.0050	0.0050	-	-	0.0100	0.0100	1	1.010	3.00
114	A	-	-	0.0010	-	-	-	-	0.0010	0.0020	0.0100	5	1.010	2.50
115	A	-	0.0030	-	0.0050	-	-	-	-	0.0080	0.0040	1/2	1.015	2.50
116	A	0.0005	0.0005	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.0010	0.0010	1	1.015	1.50
117	A	-	-	-	0.0200	0.0030	-	-	-	0.0230	0.0230	1	1.010	0.80
118 [*]	A	-	0.0100	0.0200	-	-	-	-	-	0.0300	0.0300	1	1.010	0.80
119 [*]	A	-	-	-	0.0100	-	0.0100	-	-	0.0200	0.0800	4	1.010	0.80
120 [*]	A	-	-	0.0007	-	-	-	-	-	0.0007	0.0077	11	1.020	0.80
121 [*]	A	0.0030	-	-	-	-	-	0.0050	-	0.0080	0.0160	2	1.050	0.80
122 [*]	A	-	0.0050	-	-	0.0050	-	-	-	0.0100	0.0200	2	1.020	5.00

123*	D	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.0010	-	-	-	-	0.0010	0.0020	2	1.020	1.50
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Note:

* Samples with an asterisk are those out of the scope of the invention.

** Per 100 parts by weight of the main component.

The resulting ceramic composition was kneaded in a ball mill in a wet process together with a polyvinyl butyral type binder and an organic solvent, such as ethanol, to prepare a ceramic slurry. The slurry was shaped into a 11 μm thick rectangular green sheet by means of a doctor blade. A conductive paste mainly comprising nickel was screen printed on the ceramic green sheet to form a conductive paste layer one end of which reached one of the ends of the green sheet.

A plurality of the ceramic green sheets were piled up in such a manner that the every other ceramic green sheet had its end with the internal electrode exposed arranged on the same side of the resulting laminate. The laminate was heated at 350°C in a nitrogen atmosphere to burn the binder and then calcined at a temperature shown in Table 3 below for 2 hours in a reducing atmosphere of H_2 - N_2 - H_2O gas having an oxygen partial pressure of 10^{-9} to 10^{-12} MPa to obtain a ceramic laminate.

A silver paste containing B_2O_3 - Li_2O - SiO_2 - BaO -based glass frits was applied onto each side of the ceramic laminate where a group of the internal electrodes were exposed and baked at 600°C in a nitrogen atmosphere to form an external electrode electrically connected to the internal electrodes.



The thus prepared monolithic ceramic capacitor had a width of 5.0 mm, a length of 5.7 mm, and a thickness of 2.4 mm. Each dielectric ceramic layer between two internal electrode layers had a thickness of 58 μm . The number of effective dielectric ceramic layers was 32. The area of the opposing electrodes was $16.3 \times 10^{-6} \text{ mm}^2$ per side.

The electric characteristics of the condenser were measured as follows. The capacitance (C) and the dielectric loss ($\tan\delta$) were measured with an automatic bridge type meter at 1 kHz, 1 Vrms, and 25°C. From the capacitance was calculated the dielectric constant (ϵ). The insulation resistance (R) was measured by applying a direct voltage of 630 V for 2 minutes at 25°C and 125°C with an insulation resistance tester, and a product of the capacitance (C) and the insulation resistance (R), i.e., CR product, was obtained.

Further, capacitance was measured at a varying temperature to determine a percentage of a difference between capacitances measured at -25°C or 85°C and 20°C to the capacitance at 20°C (percentage change: $_C/C_{20}$), a percentage of a difference between capacitances measured at -55°C or 125°C and 25°C to the capacitance at 25°C (percentage change: $_C/C_{25}$), and the maximum absolute percentage change in capacitance measured in a temperature range of from -55 to 125°C ($|_C|_{\text{max}}$).

The duration of the condenser was evaluated by a high-temperature loading test. A direct voltage of 1000 V was



applied to each of 36 condensers per sample at 150°C, and the insulation resistance (R) was measured with time. The time when the insulation resistance fell to $10^6 \Omega$ or lower was taken as a duration of life, and an average duration of life was obtained for each sample.

Furthermore, an AC voltage or a DC voltage was applied to each condenser at a rate of voltage increase of 100 V/sec, and the dielectric breakdown voltage under the AC or DC voltage was measured.

The results of the above measurements are shown in Table 3 below.

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TABLE 3

Sample No.	Calcining Temp. (°C)	Dielectric Constant 'ε	dielectric loss (tanδ) (%)	Percentage Change in Capacitance with Temp. (%)					CR Product (Ω·F)		Dielectric Breakdown Voltage (kV/mm)		Average Duration of Life (hr)
				_C/C ₂₀		_C/C ₂₅							
				-25°C	+85°C	-55°C	125°C	max	25°C	125°C	AC	DC	
101*	1300	2850	1.5	-1	-7	-2.1	-13	13	4330	1730	12	14	10
102*	1280	unmeasurable due to transformation into a semiconductor											
103*	1280	unmeasurable due to transformation into a semiconductor											
104*	1280	3120	1.2	-0.8	-8.5	-1.7	-11.4	11.4	3850	820	10	11	122
105*	1360	unmeasurable due to undersintering											
106	1300	3350	1.2	-2	-8	-2.8	-10.5	10.5	6960	2100	13	15	943
107	1280	3210	1.5	-0.5	-6.9	-1.3	-11.9	11.9	7010	2190	13	15	625
108	1300	3230	1.7	-3	-9.1	-5.1	-12.5	12.5	6090	2030	13	15	809
109	1280	3130	1.6	-4.9	-7.2	-5.7	-10.9	10.9	6960	2130	12	14	873
110	1280	3150	1.1	-2.8	-6.4	-4.6	-11.1	11.1	6820	2090	13	15	930
111	1280	3350	1.2	-3.1	-8.5	-5.7	-12.5	12.5	7100	2210	13	15	679
112	1300	3090	1.5	-0.6	-7.3	-1.4	-13.6	13.6	7040	2170	13	15	704
113	1260	3240	1.2	-4	-7.4	-5.6	-10.2	10.2	6080	2040	12	14	777
114	1280	3060	1.3	-0.1	-7	-0.8	-13	13	6830	2090	13	15	915
115	1280	3340	1.6	-2.6	-8.4	-4	-10.3	10.3	6950	2120	13	15	763
116	1300	3130	1.5	-0.9	-9.1	-1.9	-12.3	12.3	6840	2110	13	15	840
117	1300	3080	1.5	-3.8	-9.2	-5.2	-11	11	6760	2100	13	15	761
118*	1360	2310	1.5	-0.1	-7.9	-1.1	-11.4	11.4	2990	700	10	11	63
119*	1280	3200	1.9	-1.6	-8.3	-3.9	-12.3	12.3	4770	1050	10	11	121
120*	1280	3110	1.2	-3.4	-6.4	-4.8	-13	13	4200	950	11	12	105
121*	1360	unmeasurable due to undersintering											
122*	1200	2110	2.3	-3	-8.1	-5.2	-12.4	12.4	5210	1730	8	10	274
123*	1280	2700	1.5	-1.7	-9.2	-4.2	-13.9	13.9	6310	2530	13	15	511

Note: Samples with an asterisk are those out of the scope of the invention.

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As is apparent from Tables 1 through 3, the monolithic ceramic capacitors according to the first invention have a dielectric constant (ϵ) of 3000 or higher and a dielectric loss ($\tan\delta$) of 1.7% or less, and their percentage change in capacitance with temperature satisfies the B characteristics standard (JIS) between -25°C and 85°C and the X7R characteristics standard (EIA) between -55°C and 125°C . The insulation resistance at 25°C and 125°C , as expressed in terms of CR product, is as high as $6000 \text{ M}\Omega\cdot\mu\text{F}$ or more and $2000 \text{ M}\Omega\cdot\mu\text{F}$ or more, respectively. The dielectric breakdown voltage is 12 to 13 kV/mm under AC and 14 to 15 kV/mm under DC. The average duration of life is as long as 600 hours or longer. The ceramic composition used in these condensers can be calcined at relatively low temperatures of 1300°C or lower.

In the main component represented by formula $\{\text{BaO}\}_m\cdot\text{TiO}_2+\alpha\text{Re}_2\text{O}_3+\beta\text{MnO}$ (wherein Re_2O_3 is as defined above), α should range from 0.0005 to 0.027. If α representing the amount of Re_2O_3 is less than 0.0005 as in sample 101, the dielectric constant ϵ is lower than 3000, the CR products at 25°C and 125°C are small, and the average duration of life is short.

If α exceeds 0.027 as in sample 118, the calcining temperature must be increased, the dielectric constant does not exceed 3000, the CR products are small, the dielectric breakdown voltage is low under both AC and DC, and the average



duration of life is short.

In the above formula, β representing the amount of MnO should range from 0.002 to 0.054. If β is less than 0.002 as in sample 102, the dielectric ceramic is reduced upon calcination in a reducing atmosphere and changes into a semiconductor having a reduced insulation resistance.

If β exceeds 0.054, on the other hand, reductions in CR product at 25°C and 125°C, dielectric breakdown voltage, and average duration of life result, as is observed with sample 119.

The ratio β/α representing the ratio of manganese oxide to rare earth element oxides should be 5 or less. If it exceeds 5, the CR products at 25°C and 125°C, the dielectric breakdown voltage, and the average duration of life are reduced as is observed with sample 120.

m representing the molar ratio of barium titanate should be more than 1.000 and not more than 1.035. If it is 1.000 or less as in samples 103 and 104, the dielectric ceramic composition is transformed into a semiconductor having reduced insulation resistance when calcined in a reducing atmosphere (sample 103) or the dielectric breakdown voltage is low under both AC and DC, the CR products are small, and the average duration of life is short (sample 104). If the molar ratio m exceeds 1.035, the sintering properties are extremely poor as is observed with sample 121.

The amount of the $\text{SiO}_2\text{-TiO}_2\text{-M}^1$ -based oxide should be in



a range of from 0.2 to 3.0 parts by weight per 100 parts by weight of the main component. If it is less than 0.2 part as in sample 105, the ceramic composition suffers from undersintering. If it exceeds 3.0 parts as in sample 122, the dielectric constant does not exceed 3000, the dielectric loss exceeds 2.0%, the CR product at 25°C and 125°C does not exceed 6000 MΩ·μF and 2000 MΩ·μF, respectively, the dielectric breakdown voltage does not exceed 12 kV/mm under AC or 14 kV/mm under DC, and the duration of life is short.

The content of alkali metal oxide impurities in barium titanate should be 0.02% by weight or less. If it exceeds 0.02% as in sample 123, reduction in dielectric constant results.

EXAMPLE 2

An $\text{SiO}_2\text{-TiO}_2\text{-M}^1$ -based oxide having a composition shown in Table 4 below and an average particle size of not greater than 1 μm was prepared by heating a raw material mixture at 1200 to 1500°C. The resulting oxide was added to a main component represented by compositional formula: $\text{Ba}_{1.035}\text{O-TiO}_2+0.0010\text{Tb}_2\text{O}_3+0.0030\text{Dy}_2\text{O}_3+0.0040\text{MnO}$ (molar ratio) in which barium titanate A shown in Table 1 was used to prepare a ceramic composition.

A monolithic ceramic capacitor was produced in the same manner as in Example 1, except for using the above prepared ceramic composition. The shape and size of the monolithic



ceramic capacitor were the same as those in Example 1. The electrical characteristics of the resulting condenser were evaluated in the same manner as in Example 1. The results obtained are shown in Table 5 below.

This Sheet Has Been Replaced



TABLE 4

Sample No.	Amount of Oxide Added (wt%)	Components of SiO ₂ -TiO ₂ -M ⁺ -based Oxide										
		Main Components (mol%)									Additive Component (wt% ^{**})	
		SiO ₂	TiO ₂	MO								
				BaO	CaO	SrO	MgO	ZnO	MnO	Total	Al ₂ O ₃	ZrO ₂
201	1.0	85	1	1	-	-	-	4	9	14	-	-
202	1.0	35	51	-	10	-	-	-	4	14	-	-
203	1.0	30	20	-	30	-	15	4	1	50	-	-
204	1.0	39	1	20	20	2	-	13	5	60	-	-
205	1.0	70	10	5	5	-	-	10	-	20	-	-
206	1.0	45	10	-	-	-	-	15	30	45	-	-
207	1.0	50	20	10	10	3	7	-	-	30	-	-
208	1.0	50	30	-	16	-	-	-	4	20	-	-
209	1.0	35	30	25	10	-	-	-	-	35	-	-
210	1.0	40	40	10	-	-	-	5	5	20	-	-
211	1.0	45	22	3	30	-	-	-	-	33	15	-
212	1.0	45	22	3	30	-	-	-	-	33	10	5
213 [*]	1.0	65	25	5	5	-	-	-	-	10	-	-
214 [*]	1.0	25	40	15	-	10	-	5	5	35	-	-
215 [*]	1.0	30	10	30	25	-	-	5	-	60	-	-
216 [*]	1.0	50	0	35	15	-	-	-	-	50	-	-
217 [*]	1.0	45	22	30	-	-	-	-	-	33	25	-
218 [*]	1.0	45	22	30	-	-	-	-	-	33	-	15
219 [*]	1.0	30	60	10	-	-	-	-	-	10	-	-

Note: * Samples with an asterisk are those out of the scope of the invention.

** Based on the total weight of the main components.



TABLE 5

Sample No.	Calcining Temp. (°C)	Dielectric Constant ϵ	dielectric loss ($\tan\delta$) (%)	Percentage Change in Capacitance with Temp. (%)					CR Product ($\Omega\cdot F$)		Dielectric Breakdown Voltage (kV/mm)		Average Duration of Life (hr)
				$\Delta C/C_{20}$		$\Delta C/C_{25}$			25°C	125°C	AC	DC	
				-25°C	+85°C	-55°C	125°C	max					
201	1300	3310	1.3	-0.3	-6.5	-0.9	-8.9	8.9	6710	2060	12	14	705
202	1300	3060	1.4	-1.5	-6	-2.2	-9	9	6920	2190	13	15	953
203	1300	3120	1.4	-1.5	-7.5	-2.3	-10.1	10.1	6840	2130	13	15	881
204	1300	3170	1.1	-3.2	-8.6	-4.5	-12.3	12.3	6850	2150	13	15	786
205	1280	3150	1.3	-0.9	-6.9	-1.6	-10	10	6910	2190	13	15	732
206	1280	3220	1.5	-1.5	-8.3	-2.3	-12.5	12.5	6740	2080	12	14	689
207	1300	3090	1.4	-2	-7.6	-3.9	-11.2	11.2	6830	2170	13	15	847
208	1280	3300	1.6	-1.6	-8.4	-3	-11.9	11.9	6840	2180	13	15	940
209	1280	3200	1.6	-0.8	-6.5	-2.1	-10	10	6710	2050	12	14	716
210	1280	3050	1.3	-2.1	-8.5	-3.8	-12.3	12.3	6960	2190	13	15	809
211	1300	3170	1.7	-1.9	-7.7	-3.3	-10.5	10.5	7690	2660	13	15	793
212	1300	3230	1.1	-1.5	-7.2	-3	-10.3	10.3	7350	2600	13	15	786
213'	1360	2330	2.4	-1.3	-6.7	-2.9	-11.3	11.3	4620	1430	10	11	102
214'	1360	unmeasurable due to undersintering											
215'	1360	unmeasurable due to undersintering											
216'	1360	2410	3.1	-1.4	-7.2	-3	-11.6	11.6	4900	1560	10	11	256
217'	1360	unmeasurable due to undersintering											
218'	1360	unmeasurable due to undersintering											
219'	1360	unmeasurable due to undersintering											

Note: Samples with an asterisk are those out of the scope of the invention.



As is apparent from Tables 4 and 5, the monolithic ceramic capacitors constituted by the dielectric ceramic layers containing $\text{SiO}_2\text{-TiO}_2\text{-M}^1$ -based oxide according to the first invention exhibit a high dielectric constant of 3000 or more and a dielectric loss ($\tan\delta$) of not more than 1.7%, and their percentage change in capacitance with temperature satisfies the B characteristics standard (JIS) between -25°C and 85°C and the X7R characteristics standard (EIA) between -55°C and 125°C . The insulation resistance at 25°C and 125°C , as expressed in terms of CR product, is as high as $6000\text{ M}\Omega\cdot\mu\text{F}$ or more and $2000\text{ M}\Omega\cdot\mu\text{F}$ or more, respectively. The dielectric breakdown voltage is 12 to 13 kV/mm under AC and 14 to 15 kV/mm under DC. The average duration of life is as long as 600 hours or longer. The ceramic composition can be calcined at a relatively low temperature of 1300°C or lower.

To the contrary, samples 213 to 219 suffer from undersintering or, if sufficiently sintered, show a reduction in dielectric constant, an increase in dielectric loss, an increase in dielectric loss with an alternating voltage of 100 V/mm applied, a reduction in CR product at 25°C and 125°C , a reduction in dielectric breakdown voltage (under both AC and DC), and an extreme reduction in average duration of life. That is, when the composition of $\text{SiO}_2\text{-TiO}_2\text{-M}^1$ -based oxide is plotted on a triangular diagram of (SiO_2 , TiO_2 , M^1) as shown in Fig. 4, the composition of the oxide used in these samples is



not in the area surrounded by four straight lines connecting four points: A (85,1,14), B (35,51,14), C (30,20,50), and D (39,1,60) (unit: mol%) nor on these lines.

As is understood from the results of samples 211 and 212, addition of Al_2O_3 and/or ZrO_2 to the SiO_2 - TiO_2 - M^1 -based oxide is effective to provide a monolithic ceramic capacitor having an insulation resistance (CR product) of not lower than 7000 $\text{M}\Omega\cdot\mu\text{F}$ at 25°C and not lower than 2500 $\text{M}\Omega\cdot\mu\text{F}$ at 125°C. Note that addition of more than 15 parts by weight of Al_2O_3 or more than 5 parts by weight, per 100 parts by weight of the SiO_2 - TiO_2 - M^1 -based oxide results in extreme deterioration in sintering properties as is observed with samples 217 and 218.

EXAMPLE 3

Oxides, carbonates or hydroxides of lithium, silicon, titanium, and aluminum were weighted and mixed so as to give a composition of $0.25\text{Li}_2\text{O}-0.65(0.30\text{TiO}_2\cdot0.70\text{SiO}_2)-0.10\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3$ (molar ratio). The mixture was ground and evaporated to dryness. The resulting powder was melted by heating to 1300°C in an aluminum crucible, quenched, and ground to obtain a powdered oxide mixture having an average particle size of not greater than 1 μm .

A ceramic composition shown in Table 6 below was compounded from (i) the barium titanate of Table 1, (ii) the powdered oxide mixture prepared above, (iii) BaCO_3 serving for adjustment of the Ba/Ti molar ratio of barium titanate, and



(iv) at least one of Eu_2O_3 , Gd_2O_3 , Tb_2O_3 , Dy_2O_3 , Ho_2O_3 , Er_2O_3 , Tm_2O_3 , and Yb_2O_3 and MnO , each having a purity of not lower than 99%.

This Sheet Has Been Replaced



TABLE 6

Sample No.	Main Component {BaO} _m ·TiO ₂ +αRe ₂ O ₃ +βMnO										β	β/α	m	Secondary Oxide component (part")
	Kind of BaTiO ₃	α												
		Eu ₂ O ₃	Gd ₂ O ₃	Tb ₂ O ₃	Dy ₂ O ₃	Ho ₂ O ₃	Er ₂ O ₃	Tm ₂ O ₃	Yb ₂ O ₃	Total				
301*	A	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.0000	0.0100		1.030	0.80
302*	A	-	-	0.0100	-	-	0.0040	-	-	0.0140	0.0000	0	1.010	0.80
303*	A	-	-	-	0.0100	-	-	-	0.0040	0.0140	0.0100	5/7	0.990	0.80
304*	A	-	0.0100	-	-	-	-	0.0040	-	0.0140	0.0100	5/7	1.000	0.80
305*	A	0.0100	-	-	-	0.0040	-	-	-	0.0140	0.0100	5/7	1.022	0.00
306	A	-	0.0005	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.0005	0.0020	4	1.005	0.50
307	A	0.0100	-	-	-	0.0100	-	-	-	0.0200	0.0200	1	1.010	0.20
308	A	-	-	0.0010	0.0030	-	-	-	-	0.0040	0.0040	1	1.035	0.80
309	A	-	0.0020	-	-	-	0.0020	-	-	0.0040	0.0080	2	1.010	0.80
310	A	-	-	-	0.0010	-	-	0.0010	0.0020	0.0040	0.0080	2	1.030	0.80
311	A	0.00700	-	-	0.0200	-	-	-	-	0.0270	0.0540	2	1.025	1.50
312	C	-	0.0050	-	-	-	-	0.0050	-	0.0100	0.0050	1/2	1.005	1.50
313	B	-	-	-	-	0.0050	0.0050	-	-	0.0100	0.0100	1	1.010	3.00
314	A	-	-	0.0010	-	-	-	-	0.0010	0.0020	0.0100	5	1.010	2.50
315	A	-	0.0030	-	0.0050	-	-	-	-	0.0080	0.0040	1/2	1.015	2.50
316	A	0.0005	0.0005	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.0010	0.0010	1	1.015	1.50
317	A	-	-	-	0.0200	0.0030	-	-	-	0.0230	0.0230	1	1.010	0.80
318*	A	-	0.0100	0.0200	-	-	-	-	-	0.0300	0.0300	1	1.010	0.80
319*	A	-	-	-	0.0100	-	0.0100	-	-	0.0200	0.0800	4	1.010	0.80
320*	A	-	-	0.0007	-	-	-	-	-	0.0007	0.0077	11	1.020	0.80
321*	A	0.0030	-	-	-	-	-	0.0050	-	0.0080	0.0160	2	1.050	0.80
322*	A	-	0.0050	-	-	0.0050	-	-	-	0.0100	0.0200	2	1.020	5.00
323*	D	-	-	-	0.0010	-	-	-	-	0.0010	0.0020	2	1.020	1.50

Note:

* Samples with an asterisk are those out of the scope of the invention.

** Per 100 parts by weight of the main component.

A monolithic ceramic capacitor was produced in the same manner as in Example 1, except for using the resulting ceramic composition. The calcining temperature adopted is shown in Table 7 below. The shape and size of the monolithic ceramic capacitor were the same as those in Example 1.

The electric characteristics of the resulting condenser were measured in the same manner as in Example 1. The results obtained are shown in Table 7.

This Sheet Has Been Replaced



TABLE 7

Sample No.	Calcining Temp. (°C)	Dielectric Constant ϵ	dielectric loss (tan δ) (%)	Percentage Change in Capacitance with Temp. (%)					CR Product ($\Omega \cdot F$)		Dielectric Breakdown Voltage (kV/mm)		Average Duration of Life (hr)
				$-C/C_{20}$		$-C/C_{25}$			25°C	125°C	AC	DC	
				-25°C	+85°C	-55°C	125°C	max					
301*	1300	2800	1.4	-1.5	-5.8	-2.4	-13.2	13	4520	1710	11	14	15
302*	1280	unmeasurable due to transformation into a semiconductor											
303*	1280	unmeasurable due to transformation into a semiconductor											
304*	1280	3090	1.2	-0.7	-8.1	-1.9	-12.3	11.4	4030	840	10	10	134
305*	1360	unmeasurable due to undersintering											
306	1300	3240	1.3	-1.6	-6.7	-3.4	-10.2	10.3	7030	2110	13	14	856
307	1280	3150	1.4	-0.2	-7.2	-1.6	-11.6	11.3	7120	2170	12	14	630
308	1300	3200	1.6	-2.6	-8.6	-4.2	-11.9	11.9	6310	2020	12	14	750
309	1280	3080	1.4	-4.3	-6.4	-5.3	-10.2	10.6	7050	2110	13	14	860
310	1280	3060	1.1	-3.1	-6.3	-4.1	-10.9	12.1	6940	2070	13	15	880
311	1280	3240	1.3	-3.2	-7.8	-5.8	-11.9	13.1	7070	2190	12	14	703
312	1300	3020	1.4	-0.5	-7.5	-1.6	-13.1	13.2	6980	2150	13	15	721
313	1260	3160	1.1	-3.8	-6.8	-6.3	-10.1	10.4	6070	2050	12	15	750
314	1280	3050	1.3	-0.2	-6.5	-0.7	-12.6	12.4	6730	2070	13	14	892
315	1280	3280	1.4	-2.5	-8.3	-4.3	-10.5	11.1	7010	2150	13	15	794
316	1300	3100	1.5	-1.1	-9.4	-2.1	-12.8	11.8	6890	2140	12	15	843
317	1300	3060	1.4	-4.1	-8.6	-4.3	-10.7	10.5	6840	2130	13	15	771
318*	1360	2230	1.3	-0.3	-7.3	-0.9	-12.3	10.9	3420	800	9	11	102
319*	1280	3160	1.8	-1.5	-9.1	-4.1	-13.1	11.3	4500	1100	10	12	134
320*	1280	3080	1.3	-3.6	-6.5	-5.2	-13.2	12.6	4310	900	10	12	105
321*	1360	unmeasurable due to undersintering											
322*	1200	2040	2.1	-4.2	-9.1	-5.3	-12.5	11.5	5300	1700	8	11	285
323*	1280	2560	1.4	-1.3	-8.3	-4.5	-13.5	13.5	6100	2500	12	14	435

Note: Samples with an asterisk are those out of the scope of the invention.





As is apparent from Tables 1, 6 and 7, the monolithic ceramic capacitors constituted by the dielectric ceramic layers containing $\text{Li}_2\text{O}-(\text{Si},\text{Ti})\text{O}_2-\text{M}^2$ -based oxide according to the second invention exhibit a high dielectric constant of 3000 or more and a dielectric loss ($\tan\delta$) of not more than 1.7%, and their percentage change in capacitance with temperature satisfies the B characteristics standard (JIS) between -25°C and 85°C and the X7R characteristics standard (EIA) between -55°C and 125°C . The insulation resistance at 25°C and 125°C , as expressed in terms of CR product, is as high as $6000 \text{ M}\Omega\cdot\mu\text{F}$ or more and $2000 \text{ M}\Omega\cdot\mu\text{F}$ or more, respectively. The dielectric breakdown voltage is 12 to 13 kV/mm under AC and 14 to 15 kV/mm under DC. The average duration of life is as long as 600 hours or longer. The ceramic composition can be calcined at a relatively low temperature of 1300°C or lower.

To the contrary, sample 330, in which α representing the amount of Re_2O_3 is less than 0.0005, has a dielectric constant ϵ of lower than 3000, small CR products at 25°C and 125°C , and a short average duration of life. Sample 318, in which α exceeds 0.027, requires an increased calcining temperature, a dielectric constant lower than 3000, small CR products, a small dielectric breakdown voltage under AC or DC, and a short average duration of life.

Sample 302, in which β representing the amount of MnO is less than 0.002, undergoes reduction upon calcination in a

reducing atmosphere and changes into a semiconductor having a reduced insulation resistance. Sample 319, in which β exceeds 0.054, on the other hand, shows reductions in CR product at 25°C and 125°C, dielectric breakdown voltage, and average duration of life.

Sample 320, in which β/α representing the ratio of manganese oxide to rare earth element oxides exceeds 5, shows reductions in CR products at 25°C and 125°C, dielectric breakdown voltage, and average duration of life.

In samples 303 and 304, in which m representing the molar ratio of barium titanate is 1.000 or less, the dielectric ceramic is transformed into a semiconductor having reduced insulation resistance when calcined in a reducing atmosphere (sample 303) or the dielectric breakdown voltage is low under both AC and DC, the CR product is small, and the average duration of life is short (sample 304). If the molar ratio m exceeds 1.035, as in sample 321, the sintering properties are extremely poor.

The amount of the $\text{Li}_2\text{O}-(\text{Si,Ti})\text{O}_2-\text{M}^2$ -based oxide should be in a range of from 0.2 to 3.0 parts by weight per 100 parts by weight of the main component. If it is less than 0.2 part as in sample 305, the ceramic composition suffers from undersintering. If it exceeds 3.0 parts as in sample 322, the dielectric constant cannot exceed 3000, the dielectric loss exceeds 2.0%, the CR products at 25°C and 125°C do not exceed



6000 MΩ·μF and 2000 MΩ·μF, respectively, the dielectric breakdown voltage does not exceed 12 kV/mm under AC or 14 kV/mm under DC, and the duration of life is short.

The content of alkali metal oxide impurities in barium titanate should be 0.02% by weight or less. If it exceeds 0.02% as in sample 323, reduction in dielectric constant results.

EXAMPLE 4

An $\text{Li}_2\text{O}-(\text{Si},\text{Ti})\text{O}_2-\text{M}^2$ -based oxide component having a composition shown in Table 8 below and an average particle size of not greater than 1 μm was prepared by heating a raw material mixture at 1200 to 1500°C. The resulting oxide component was added to a main component represented by compositional formula: $\text{Ba}_{1.035}\text{O-TiO}_2+0.0010\text{Tb}_2\text{O}_3+0.0030\text{Dy}_2\text{O}_3+0.0040\text{MnO}$ (molar ratio) in which barium titanate A shown in Table 1 was used to prepare a ceramic composition.

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TABLE 8

Sample No.	Amount of Oxide Added (wt%)	Components of $\text{Li}_2\text{O}-(\text{Si,Ti})\text{O}_2\text{-M}^2\text{-based Oxide}$				
		Li_2O	$(\text{Si}_w\text{Ti}_{1-w})$	w	Al_2O_3	ZrO_2
401	1.00	20	80	0.3	0	0
402	1.00	10	80	0.6	5	5
403	0.80	10	70	0.5	20	0
404	0.80	35	45	1.0	10	10
405	1.50	45	45	0.5	10	0
406	1.50	45	55	0.3	0	0
407	1.00	20	70	0.6	5	5
408	1.00	20	70	0.4	10	0
409	1.20	30	60	0.7	5	5
410	1.20	30	60	0.8	10	0
411	2.00	40	50	0.6	5	5
412	2.00	40	50	0.9	0	10
413*	1.50	10	85	0.4	5	0
414*	2.00	5	75	0.6	10	10
415*	1.20	20	55	0.5	25	0
416*	1.00	45	40	0.8	0	15
417*	0.80	50	45	0.7	5	0
418	1.20	25	75	0.9	0	0
419*	1.50	25	75	1.0	0	0
420	1.00	35	65	0.9	0	0
421*	1.50	35	65	1.0	0	0
422*	1.20	20	70	0.2	0	10

Note: Samples with an asterisk are those out of the scope of the invention.



A monolithic ceramic capacitor was produced in the same manner as in Example 1, except for using the above prepared ceramic composition. The calcining temperature adopted is shown in Table 9 below. The shape and size of the monolithic ceramic capacitor were the same as those in Example 1. The electrical characteristics of the resulting condenser were evaluated in the same manner as in Example 1. The results obtained are shown in Table 9.

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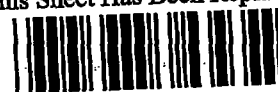
TABLE 9

Sample No.	Calcining Temp. (°C)	Dielectric Constant, ϵ	dielectric loss (tan δ) (%)	Percentage Change in Capacitance with Temp. (%)					CR Product ($\Omega \cdot F$)		Dielectric Breakdown Voltage (kV/mm)		Average Duration of Life (hr)
				$-C/C_{20}$		$-C/C_{25}$							
				-25°C	+85°C	-55°C	125°C	max	25°C	125°C	AC	DC	
401	1300	3250	1.5	-0.6	-7.1	-1.2	-9.1	9.5	6910	2130	12	14	713
402	1300	3120	1.3	-2.1	-6.9	-1.9	-9.3	9.8	7050	2230	12	14	899
403	1300	3110	1.2	-1.9	-8.1	-1.7	-10.5	10.3	7020	2030	13	15	846
404	1300	3200	1.3	-2.9	-8.3	-3.2	-12.1	11.9	6720	2110	13	14	803
405	1280	3180	1.2	-1.1	-7.2	-1.3	-10.1	11.1	6810	2210	13	15	740
406	1280	3260	1.2	-1.6	-8.4	-1.8	-11.5	12.3	6840	2040	12	15	700
407	1300	3110	1.3	-1.8	-8.1	-4.2	-10.9	11.6	6730	2200	12	15	856
408	1280	3290	1.9	-1.7	-8.1	-3.1	-11.1	11.7	7030	2190	13	14	912
409	1280	3310	1.5	-0.9	-7.2	-2.5	-10.1	10.1	7110	2090	13	14	760
410	1280	3090	1.3	-2.3	-8.3	-3.9	-11.9	11.8	7060	2260	12	15	831
411	1300	3150	1.6	-1.9	-8.1	-3.1	-10.3	11.6	7730	2530	13	14	811
412	1300	3200	1.3	-1.6	-7.5	-2.7	-10.5	12	7640	2460	13	15	794
413*	1360	unmeasurable due to undersintering											
414*	1360	unmeasurable due to undersintering											
415*	1360	2530	3.3	-0.9	-8.2	-1.6	-13.2	11.1	5020	1340	9	11	193
416*	1360	unmeasurable due to undersintering											
417*	1360	unmeasurable due to undersintering											
418	1300	3110	1.4	-2.1	-8.1	-4.2	-11.7	11.8	6480	2010	12	14	673
419*	1360	unmeasurable due to undersintering											
420	1300	3160	1.1	-1.5	-7.3	-4.2	-10.6	11.9	6830	2160	12	14	650
421*	1360	unmeasurable due to undersintering											
422*	1360	unmeasurable due to undersintering											

Note: Samples with an asterisk are those out of the scope of the invention.

As is apparent from Tables 8 and 9, the monolithic ceramic capacitors constituted by the dielectric ceramic layers containing $\text{Li}_2\text{O}-(\text{Si,Ti})\text{O}_2\text{-M}^2$ -based oxide according to the second invention exhibit a high dielectric constant of 3000 or more and a dielectric loss ($\tan\delta$) of not more than 1.7%, and their percentage change in capacitance with temperature satisfies the B characteristics standard (JIS) between -25°C and 85°C and the X7R characteristics standard (EIA) between -55°C and 125°C . The insulation resistance at 25°C and 125°C , as expressed in terms of CR product, is as high as $6000\ \Omega\cdot\text{F}$ or more and $2000\ \Omega\cdot\text{F}$ or more, respectively. The dielectric breakdown voltage is 12 to 13 kV/mm under AC and 14 to 15 kV/mm under DC. The average duration of life is as long as 600 hours or longer. The ceramic composition can be calcined at a relatively low temperature of 1300°C or lower.

To the contrary, samples 413 to 417 suffer from undersintering or, if sufficiently sintered, show a reduction in dielectric constant, an increase in dielectric loss, an increase in dielectric loss with an alternating voltage of 100 V/mm applied, a reduction in CR product at 25°C and 125°C , a reduction in dielectric breakdown voltage (under both AC and DC), and an extreme reduction in average duration of life. That is, when the composition of $\text{LiO}_2-(\text{Si,Ti})\text{O}_2\text{-M}^2$ -based oxide is plotted on a triangular diagram of $(\text{SiO}_2, \text{TiO}_2, \text{M}^2)$, the composition of the oxide used in these samples is not in the



area surrounded by six straight lines connecting six points: A (20, 80, 0), B (10, 80, 10), C (10, 70, 20), D (25, 45, 20), E (45, 45, 10), and F (45, 55, 0) (unit: mol%) nor on these lines.

It should be noted, however, that when the composition is on the line A-F, if $w=1.0$ as in samples 419 and 421, the calcination properties are extremely deteriorated. Calcination properties are also extremely reduced if w is less than 0.30 as in sample 422.

While barium titanate powder used in the foregoing Examples 1 to 4 is one prepared by an oxalic acid process, barium titanate powder prepared by an alkoxide process or a hydrothermal process can be used as well. In some cases, use of barium titanate powder prepared by an alkoxide process or a hydrothermal process can bring about better characteristics than demonstrated in Examples.

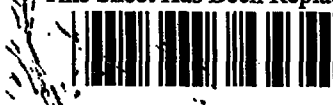
Further, while oxide powders, such as europium oxide, gadolinium oxide, terbium oxide, dysprosium oxide, holmium oxide, erbium oxide, thulium oxide, ytterbium oxide, and magnesium oxide, were used as raw materials, the raw materials for the dielectric ceramic layers are not limited to these oxides. For example, a solution of an alkoxide or an organometallic compound of each metal element can be used as well as long as the resulting ceramic layer has the composition according to the present invention.

While the invention has been described in detail and



with reference to specific examples thereof, it will be apparent to one skilled in the art that various changes and modifications can be made therein without departing from the spirit and scope thereof.

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WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A dielectric ceramic composition containing (a) barium titanate, (b) at least one member selected from the group consisting of europium oxide, gadolinium oxide, terbium oxide, dysprosium oxide, holmium oxide, erbium oxide, thulium oxide, and ytterbium oxide and is made up of a material comprising (1) 100 parts by weight of a main component represented by compositional formula:



wherein Re_2O_3 represents at least one member selected from the group consisting of Eu_2O_3 , Gd_2O_3 , Tb_2O_3 , Dy_2O_3 , Ho_2O_3 , Er_2O_3 , Tm_2O_3 , and Yb_2O_3 ; $0.0005 \leq \alpha \leq 0.027$; $0.002 \leq \beta \leq 0.054$; $\beta/\alpha \leq 5$; and $1.000 < m \leq 1.035$,

and, as a secondary component, (2) 0.2 to 3.0 parts by weight of an SiO_2 - TiO_2 - M^1 -based oxide component (wherein M^1 represents at least one member selected from the group consisting of BaO , CaO , SrO , MgO , ZnO , and MnO).

2. A dielectric ceramic composition according to claim 1, wherein said barium titanate has an alkali metal oxide as an impurity.

3. A dielectric ceramic composition according to claim 2, wherein the content of said alkali metal oxide is not more than 0.02% by weight.

4. A dielectric ceramic composition according to claim 1, wherein said SiO_2 - TiO_2 - M^1 -based oxide is, when plotted on a



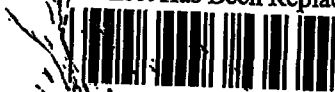


triangular diagram of (SiO_2 , TiO_2 , M^1), in the area surrounded by, or on, four straight lines connecting four points: A (85,1,14), B (35,51,14), C (30,20,50), and D (39,1,60) (unit: mol%), and contains at least one of Al_2O_3 and ZrO_2 in a total amount of not more than 15 parts by weight per 100 parts by weight of the (SiO_2 , TiO_2 , M^1) component, provided that the amount of ZrO_2 is not more than 5 parts by weight.

5. A monolithic ceramic capacitor having a laminate of dielectric ceramic layers, at least two internal electrodes each formed between every two dielectric ceramic layers in such a manner that one end of each internal electrode is exposed at one end of the dielectric ceramic layer alternately, and a pair of external electrodes each electrically connected to the exposed internal electrode on each side of the laminate, in which said dielectric ceramic layer comprises a dielectric ceramic composition containing (a) barium titanate having an alkali metal oxide content of not more than 0.02% by weight, (b) at least one member selected from the group consisting of europium oxide, gadolinium oxide, terbium oxide, dysprosium oxide, holmium oxide, erbium oxide, thulium oxide, and ytterbium oxide and is made up of a material comprising (1) 100 parts by weight of a main component represented by compositional formula:



wherein Re_2O_3 represents at least one member selected from the





group consisting of Eu_2O_3 , Gd_2O_3 , Tb_2O_3 , Dy_2O_3 , Ho_2O_3 , Er_2O_3 , Tm_2O_3 , and Yb_2O_3 ; $0.0005 \leq \alpha \leq 0.027$; $0.002 \leq \beta \leq 0.054$; $\beta/\alpha \leq 5$; and $1.000 < m \leq 1.035$,

and, as a secondary component, (2) 0.2 to 3.0 parts by weight of an SiO_2 - TiO_2 - M^1 -based oxide component (wherein M^1 represents at least one member selected from the group consisting of BaO , CaO , SrO , MgO , ZnO , and MnO).

6. A monolithic ceramic capacitor according to claim 5, wherein said internal electrodes are made of nickel or a nickel alloy.

7. A monolithic ceramic capacitor according to claim 5, wherein said SiO_2 - TiO_2 - M^1 -based oxide is, when plotted on a triangular diagram of (SiO_2 , TiO_2 , M^1), in the area surrounded by, or on, four straight lines connecting four points: A (85,1,14), B (35,51,14), C (30,20,50), and D (39,1,60) (unit: mol%), and contains at least one of Al_2O_3 and ZrO_2 in a total amount of not more than 15 parts by weight per 100 parts by weight of the (SiO_2 , TiO_2 , M^1) component, provided that the amount of ZrO_2 is not more than 5 parts by weight.

8. A monolithic ceramic capacitor according to claim 5, wherein said external electrodes are each made up of a sintered layer of an electrically conductive metal powder or an electrically conductive metal powder containing glass frits.

9. A monolithic ceramic capacitor according to claim 5, wherein said external electrodes are each composed of a first





layer made of a sintered layer of an electrically conductive metal powder or an electrically conductive metal layer containing glass frits and a second layer that is formed on said first layer by plating.

10. A dielectric ceramic composition containing (a) barium titanate, (b) at least one member selected from the group consisting of europium oxide, gadolinium oxide, terbium oxide, dysprosium oxide, holmium oxide, erbium oxide, thulium oxide, and ytterbium oxide and is made up of a material comprising (1) 100 parts by weight of a main component represented by compositional formula:



wherein Re_2O_3 represents at least one member selected from the group consisting of Eu_2O_3 , Gd_2O_3 , Tb_2O_3 , Dy_2O_3 , Ho_2O_3 , Er_2O_3 , Tm_2O_3 , and Yb_2O_3 ; $0.0005 \leq \alpha \leq 0.027$; $0.002 \leq \beta \leq 0.054$; $\beta/\alpha \leq 5$; and $1.000 < m \leq 1.035$,

and, as a secondary component, (2) 0.2 to 3.0 parts by weight of an $Li_2O-(Si,Ti)O_2-M^2$ -based oxide component (wherein M^2 represents at least one of Al_2O_3 and ZrO_2).

11. A dielectric ceramic composition according to claim 10, wherein said barium titanate has an alkali metal oxide as an impurity.

12. A dielectric ceramic composition according to claim 11, wherein the content of said alkali metal oxide is not more than 0.02% by weight.

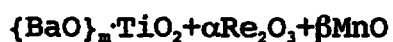
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13. A dielectric ceramic composition according to claim 10, wherein said $\text{Li}_2\text{O}-(\text{Si},\text{Ti})\text{O}_2-\text{M}^2$ -based oxide is, when plotted on a triangular diagram of $\{\text{Li}_2\text{O}, (\text{Si}_w\text{Ti}_{1-w})\text{O}_2, \text{M}^2\}$ (wherein $0.30 \leq w \leq 1.0$), in the area surrounded by, or on, six straight lines connecting six points: A (20, 80, 0), B (10, 80, 10), C (10, 70, 20), D (25, 45, 20), E (45, 45, 10), and F (45, 55, 0) (unit: mol%), provided that $0.30 \leq w < 1.0$ when the composition is on the line A-F.

14. A monolithic ceramic capacitor having a laminate of dielectric ceramic layers, at least two internal electrodes each formed between every two dielectric ceramic layers in such a manner that one end of each internal electrode is exposed at one end of the dielectric ceramic layer alternately, and a pair of external electrodes each electrically connected to the exposed internal electrode on each side of the laminate, in which said dielectric ceramic layer comprises a dielectric ceramic composition containing (a) barium titanate, (b) at least one member selected from the group consisting of europium oxide, gadolinium oxide, terbium oxide, dysprosium oxide, holmium oxide, erbium oxide, thulium oxide, and ytterbium oxide and is made up of a material comprising (1) 100 parts by weight of a main component represented by compositional formula:



wherein Re_2O_3 represents at least one member selected from the group consisting of Eu_2O_3 , Gd_2O_3 , Tb_2O_3 , Dy_2O_3 , Ho_2O_3 , Er_2O_3 , Tm_2O_3 ,





and Yb_2O_3 ; $0.0005 \leq \alpha \leq 0.027$; $0.002 \leq \beta \leq 0.054$; $\beta/\alpha \leq 5$; and $1.000 < m \leq 1.035$,

and, as a secondary component, (2) 0.2 to 3.0 parts by weight of an $\text{Li}_2\text{O}-(\text{Si},\text{Ti})\text{O}_2-\text{M}^2$ -based oxide component (wherein M^2 represents at least one of Al_2O_3 and ZrO_2).

15. A monolithic ceramic capacitor according to claim 14, wherein said internal electrodes are made of nickel or a nickel alloy.

16. A monolithic ceramic capacitor according to claim 14, wherein said $\text{Li}_2\text{O}-(\text{Si},\text{Ti})\text{O}_2-\text{M}^2$ -based oxide is, when plotted on a triangular diagram of $\{\text{Li}_2\text{O}, (\text{Si}_w\text{Ti}_{1-w})\text{O}_2, \text{M}^2\}$ (wherein $0.30 \leq w \leq 1.0$), in the area surrounded by, or on, six straight lines connecting six points: A (20, 80, 0), B (10, 80, 10), C (10, 70, 20), D (25, 45, 20), E (45, 45, 10), and F (45, 55, 0) (unit: mol%), provided that $0.30 \leq w < 1.0$ when the composition is on the line A-F.

17. A monolithic ceramic capacitor according to claim 14, wherein said external electrodes are each made up of a sintered layer of an electrically conductive metal powder or an electrically conductive metal powder containing glass frits.

18. A monolithic ceramic capacitor according to claim 14, wherein said external electrodes are each composed of a first layer made of a sintered layer of an electrically conductive metal powder or an electrically conductive metal layer containing glass frits and a second layer that is formed on





said first layer by plating.

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