

Green synthesis and characterization of Li0.5-0.5xMgxFe2.5-0.5xO4 (0.0 \leq x \leq 1.0) nano ferrite

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Green Synthesis and Characterization Of $Li_{0.5-0.5x}Mg_xFe_{2.5-0.5x}O_4$ (0.0 $\leq x \leq 1.0$) Nano Ferrite

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Abstract. We report synthesis of Li_{0.5-0.5x}Mg_xFe_{2.5-0.5x}O₄ (x = 0.0, 0.1, 0.4, 0.6, 0.8, 1.0) ferrite, utilizing honey green synthesis via sol gel auto combustion method (*without any post-preparation thermal treatment*). X-ray diffraction (XRD), vibrating sample magnetometer (VSM) were used to monitor structural, magnetic properties. XRD validates the formation of nanocrystalline spinel phase with Scherrer's grain diameter varies between 21.5 – 27.9 nm. Results reveal that Mg²⁺ addition: i) changes experimental lattice parameter (a_{exp}), showing incorporation of Mg²⁺ ion in the spinel lattice, ii) changes the cation distribution showing presence of that both Li¹⁺, Mg²⁺ ions on A, B site, iii) modifies inversion parameter (δ) shows transition from inverse to mixed spinel structure, leads to reduction of saturation magnetization ($M_{s (exp)}$), iv) alters M_s , understood in terms of cationic redistribution at A, B-sites, v) alters coercivity (H_c), range between 101.4 – 889.9 Oe, vi) shows similar trend of both experimental ' $M_{s (exp)}$ ', theoretical ' $M_{s (t)}$ 'saturation magnetization, reveal that magnetization behavior of the studied samples is governed by Néel model.

INTRODUCTION, EXPERIMENTAL DETAILS, AND DATA ANALYSIS

Ferrite are insulating magnetic oxide and possess high electrical resistivity, low eddy current, dielectric losses, high saturation magnetization and high permeability. Therefore ferrite materials have application in almost every field such as high frequency devices, microwave devices, bioscience (hyperthermia, MRI), switching devices, gas sensing, multi-layer chip inductor etc. [1-4]. Spinel ferrites display face centred cubic (fcc) structure comprise of two sub-lattices A (tetrahedral) and B (octahedral). Occupation of ions on site A, B (*which affects both structural and magnetic properties*) is a complex process and strongly depends on synthesis process, composition, presence of a particular cation, post-preparation treatments etc. It is important to achieve proper information about occupation of various cations on A,B site. In this situation, x-ray diffraction (XRD) has recognized as one of the most suitable and successful tools for proper determination of cation distribution [5,6,7], although the success of XRD is somewhat limited by the comparable scattering factors of some of the cations present in the spinel structure.

Currently, there is a need to investigate simple, cost-effective, eco-friendly techniques to synthesize nanocrystalline spinel ferrites. Literature reports bio-synthetic protocols utilizing microorganisms, plant extracts etc., has come out as rather straightforward and feasible alternative to physical procedures, and chemical synthetic methods. Literature also reports the use of undemanding synthesis procedure utilizing efficient green precursors e. g.- banana peel, honey, garlic, ginger, neem (*Azadirachta indica*) leaves, , cardamom seeds, and aloe vera plant extract, given superior yield of nano-ferrites, displaying appropriate magnetic properties [8]. It is of value to note that, the presence of carbohydrates, flavonoids, phenols, polysaccharides, amino acids, terpenoids, etc. in plant extracts acts as chelating agent, stabilizing agent, capping agents, [9], needed for the synthesis of ferrite nano particles via sol gel auto combustion method. In addition toxicity of nano-particles can be reduced via green synthesis, making them attractive for bio-medical applications, due to better biocompatibility [10].

Li-ferrite has inverse spinel structure with Li-ion have a preference to occupy octahedral B-site and Fe ions occupy both A, B-site. Li-ferrites are used in many electronic devices such as inductors, converters or

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electromagnetic wave absorbers, phase-shifters, radar, etc. in the radio frequency range due to their high Curie temperature, high saturation magnetization and squareness in their hysteresis loop. Literature reports study of Li-Co [11], Li-Mg [12], Li-Cd [13,14], Li-Zn [15] ferrites, where properties of Li ferrites was modified by doping various ions. Substitution of ions increases squareness of hysteresis loop of Li-ferrite leads to increase of coercivity (H_c). It is worth noting that, due to lower melting point of Li (~180 °C), in order to preserve the stoichiometery, there is a need for either lower temperature sintering or no sintering. To meet this requirement during synthesis, sol gel auto combustion technique is of use to facilitate the formation of the spinel phase, and also has the advantage of energy efficient synthesis. Although literature reports Li-based ferrites, however green synthesis utilizing sol-gel auto-combustion method (where no post-preparation synthesis was used) is less-explored in the literature. Thus in this work, we report synthesis of Li_{0.5-0.5x}Mg_xFe_{2.5-0.5x}O₄ (x = 0.0, 0.1, 0.4, 0.6, 0.8, 1.0) ferrite, utilizing honey green synthesis via sol gel auto combustion method (*without any post-preparation thermal treatment*), and their structural (*via x-ray diffraction*), magnetic characterization (*via vibrating sample magnetometer 'VSM'*).

Sol gel auto-combustion method as described in detail in [15], was used for synthesizing $Li_{0.5-0.5x}Mg_xFe_{2.5-0.5x}O_4$ (x = 0.0, 0.1, 0.4, 0.6, 0.8, 1.0). For preparing the samples, AR grade citrate-nitrate precursors were dissolved in 10 mml de-ionized water in stoichiometric ratio. Honeys (as green fuel) were used to carry out green synthesis keeping metal salt to honey ratio as 1:1, and pH of the solution was not adjusted. Honey acts as chelating agent as well as fuel to facilitate the combustion process. Resulting solution was heated at ~ 110 °C to obtain fluffy powder called as '*dry gel*', which was used for structural, magnetic studies.

Room temperature x-ray diffraction (XRD) measurements ($\theta - 2\theta$ configuration) were done by Bruker D8 diffractometer utilizing CuK_a radiation (*wavelength: 0.15406 nm*) equipped with fast counting detector (*Bruker LynxEye detector*). Hysteresis measurements were done by vibrating sample magnetometer (VSM) Lakeshore Model 7410 by applying maximum field - H_{max} $\approx \pm$ 1.9 T.

Rietveld refinement of XRD patterns was done by MAUD (Material Analysis Using Diffraction) software [16] to compute experimental lattice parameter ($a_{exp.}$). Specific surface area (S) was calculated using the expression: S = [$6 / (D_s \times \rho_{XRD})$], where D_s – Scherrer's grain size and ρ_{XRD} - x-ray density. XRD peak intensities were used to obtain cation distribution of the studied samples, employing Bertaut method [17]. Obtained cation distribution was used to calculate theoretical lattice parameter ($a_{th.}$), Néel magnetic moment (theoretical magnetization at 0 K $M_{s(t)}$) is calculated using formula: $n_N = M_B - M_A$ in Bohr magneton (μ_B) where M_A is magnetic moment of A-site and M_B is magnetic moment of B-site, oxygen positional parameter (u), inversion parameter (δ), ionic radius for A, B-site (r_{A} , r_B). Coercivity (H_c), saturation magnetization (M_s), magnetic losses were obtained from hysteresis measurements.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The x-ray diffraction patterns of the synthesized samples (*by honey green synthesis, without any post-preparation thermal treatment*) confirm the formation of spinel phase shown in figure 1 (a) for Mg substituted Li ferrite. Via presence of important peaks corresponding to (220), (311), (222), (400), (422), (511), (440), planes confirms the formation of single phase face centered cubic structure. All parameters were calculated from most intense peak (311) of XRD pattern. Figure 1 (b) displays the Rietveld refinement of the X – ray diffraction pattern for x = 0.0, done by the program MAUD (Material Analysis Using Diffraction) [18].



FIGURE 1. (a) XRD patterns of studied samples, (b) Rietveld refinement for x = 0.0, (c) Variation of a_{exp} with Mg content Inset: Variation of D with Mg content.

Table 1 . Compositional dependence of grain diameter (D), cell volume (V), x-ray density (ρ_{xrd}), specific surface area (S)						
and hopping length for A-site, B- site (L_A, L_B) for the studied samples.						
X	D	V	ρ _{xrd}	S	$\mathbf{L}_{\mathbf{A}}$	L_B
	(nm)	(nm³)	(kg/m³)	(m ² /g)	(nm)	(nm)
0.0	23.2	0.9330	2945.2	47.92	0.4232	0.3460
0.1	23.9	0.5774	4748.8	52.64	0.3605	0.2947
0.4	27.9	0.5774	4698.2	45.61	0.3605	0.2947
0.6	24.0	0.5791	4651.7	53.70	0.3609	0.2950
0.8	23.3	0.5860	4565.0	56.26	0.3623	0.2962
1.0	21.5	0.5878	4519.4	61.65	0.3627	0.2965

Figure 1 (c) shows the variation of experimental lattice parameter with Mg^{2+} content. Observed changes are attributed to the smaller ionic radius Fe^{3+} (0.064 nm), being replaced by Mg^{2+} (0.072 nm) ion which has higher ionic radius, causing expansion of unit cell.

Table 1 depicts, variation of grain diameter (*D*), cell volume (*V*), X-ray density (ρ_{XRD}), specific surface area (*S*), and hopping length for A-site (L_A), B-site (L_B) of studied samples. Perusal of table 1 shows that grain diameter obtained from Scherrer's formula varies between 21.5 to 23.2 nm. Observed cell volume, X-ray density (ρ_{XRD}) of Li-Mg ferriteincreases with increasing Mg²⁺ content, attributed to the smaller ionic radius of Fe³⁺ (0.064 nm) is being replaced by an ion of greater ionic radius: Mg²⁺ (0.072 nm), that causes the expansion of tetrahedral, octahedral site. Specific surface area of the samples decreases for all values of x except for x = 0.4. High specific surface area of particles is useful for catalytic processes. There is an inverse relationship of particle size and density with surface area. In general, high surface areas suggests small particle size(s). Smaller is the particle size, larger is the surface area. The behavior of hopping length for tetrahedral and octahedral site with Mg content is similar with behavior of lattice parameter [19].

Table 2 depicts the distribution of cation: on A (tetrahedral site) are given in parentheses and the ions on B (octahedral sites) between the square bracket. The values of, theoretical lattice parameter (a_{th}) , ionic radius of tetrahedral and octahedral site (r_A, r_B) , inversion parameter (δ) , oxygen positional parameter (u) with Mg²⁺ contentwere estimated by cation distribution. Obtained cation distribution shows that both Li¹⁺ and Mg²⁺ ion prefer B site and a small fraction of Li¹⁺ and Mg²⁺ ion goes on A site for sample x = 0 or x > 0 except in sample x = 0.8, in this sample large fraction Li¹⁺ ion goes on tetrahedral site and small fraction goes on octahedral B site. The delta parameter (δ) is referred as inversion parameter. For a completely random distribution initially shows completely inverse structure for Li_{0.5-0.5x} Mg_xFe_{2.5-0.5x} O₄ ferrite but with the increasing Mg²⁺ content it shows mixed spinel structure for $\delta = 0.35$ The cation distribution obtained from the X-ray diffraction is in close conformity with the real distribution, as there is good agreement between theoretical (a_{th}) and experimental (a_{exp} -) lattice parameter (shown in table 2).

The decrease of r_A is due the decrease in the concentration of larger Mg^{2+} ions (ionic radius = 0.072 nm) on Asite, which increases the concentration of smaller Fe^{3+} ions (ionic radius = 0.064 nm), but the same trend is not observed for the sample with x = 0.8 because of the fact that Mg^{2+} ions (0.072 nm) completely replaces the Li^{1+} ions and decreases the smaller Fe^{3+} ions (ionic radius = 0.064 nm) and, thus r_A increases.

Table 2. Cation distribution (for A, B site), inversion parameter (δ), experimental, theoretical lattice parameter (a_{exp} , a_{Th}), ionic							
	radii for A, B-sites, oxygen positional parameter (u) of Li _{0.5-0.5x} Mg _x Fe _{2.5-0.5x} O ₄ ferrite as a function of Mg content.						
Х	Cation distributions	δ	a _{exp}	a _{Th}	r _A	r _B	u
			(nm)	(nm)	(n m)	(nm)	
0.0	$(Li_{0.25}Fe_{0.75})^{A}[Li_{0.25}Fe_{1.75}]^{B}$	0.0	0.8324	0.8356	0.0515	0.0659	0.3814
0.1	$(Li_{0.25}Mg_{0.05}Fe_{0.7})^{A}[Li_{0.15}Mg_{0.05}Fe_{1.8}]^{B}$	0.05	0.8326	0.8351	0.0519	0.0655	0.3816
0.4	$(Li_{0.2}Mg_{0.2}Fe_{0.9})^{A}[Li_{0.1}Mg_{0.2}Fe_{1.7}]^{B}$	0.2	0.8327	0.8365	0.0516	0.0658	0.3821
0.6	$(Li_{0.05}Mg_{0.2}Fe_{0.75})^{A}[Li_{0.15}Mg_{0.2}Fe_{1.65}]^{B}$	0.2	0.8335	0.8356	0.0511	0.0662	0.3809
0.8	$(Li_{0.05}Mg_{0.3}Fe_{0.65})^{A}[Li_{0.05}Mg_{0.5}Fe_{1.45}]^{B}$	0.3	0.8368	0.8381	0.0519	0.0666	0.3810
1.0	$(Li_{0.0}Mg_{0.35}Fe_{0.65})^{A}[Li_{0.0}Mg_{0.65}Fe_{1.35}]^{B}$	0.35	0.8376	0.8387	0.0518	0.0669	0.3808

X	H _c (O _e)	M _s (Am²/kg)	M _{s(th)} (Am ² /kg)	M _r (Am ² /kg)	M _r /M _s	Losses (J/Kg)
0.0	127.4	43.20	134.84	9.1	0.21	1.41
0.1	114.4	50.80	149.05	11.9	0.24	1.61
0.4	101.4	40.39	150.38	10.2	0.26	1.12
0.6	889.9	23.47	123.90	4.5	0.16	0.49
0.8	880.4	29.09	110.91	6.7	0.23	0.74
1.0	728.1	16.34	97.73	2.8	0.17	0.33

Table 3. Variation of coercivity (H_c) , experimental saturation magnetization (M_s) , magnetization at 0K $(M_{s,(0K)})$, static magnetic
losses, reduce remanence magnetization (M_r) and static losses as a function of Mg content.

The ionic radius r_B are found to be increase, can be ascribed to the population of the substituted Mg²⁺ ions increases on *B-site* and Mg²⁺ (0.072 nm) ions are also occupied on *B-site*. The decrease of ionic radius on *B-site* (r_B) can be explain that for sample with x = 0.8, Li¹⁺ ions are completely replace the Mg²⁺ ions. Oxygen position parameter (*u*) values varies between 0.3814 to 0.3808 which is higher than the ideal value of 0.375 for Li-Mg nanoferrits suggests that the movement of O²⁺ ions, so A-O distance increases, thus increasing distortion.

Table 3, shows coercivity (H_c), saturation magnetization (M_s) at 300 K, theoretical magnetization at 0 K M_{s(t)}, remanence (M_r), squareness ratio (M_r/M_s), and static losses determined from the M–H curve of the studied Li-Mg ferrite system. It is worth noting that he Fe³⁺ ions occupy both A, B-sites in the spinel lattice, and they interact with each other through superexchange interaction: A - A, A - B and B – B with Li⁺ ions occupy B-site in the spinel lattice whereas Mg²⁺ ions can occupy both the A and B-sites. Some of the doped Mg²⁺ ions displace theFe³⁺ ions from A-site to B-site. The increase in M_s with increase in Mg²⁺ ion composition can be understood on the basis of redistribution of cations at A, B-sites. The resultant magnetization ' M_s ' (which is theoretical magnetization at 0K, expressed as $M_{s(t)}$) comes from the difference of B-site magnetization (M_B) and A-site magnetization (M_A), i.e., M_s = M_B - M_A. The octahedral (B-site) has larger magnetic moment than the tetrahedral (A- site), therefore the resultant magnetization increases, thereafter decreases with increasing Mg content, understood in terms of cation distribution

Figure 2(a), shows room temperature hysteresis loops for the studied samples confirms soft magnetic behavior of Li-Mg ferrite, shows compositional dependence of experimental M_s . Figure 4(b), displays that the experimental value of M_s at 300 K ranges between 16.34 – 50.80 Am²/kg and theoretical magnetization at 0 K: M_{s (t)} varies between 97.73 – 150.38 Am²/kg), shown in figure 2 (b) for the studied samples decreases with increasing Mg²⁺ content, ascribable to reduction of Fe³⁺ (*Magnetic moment:* $5\mu B$) population with concurrent increase of Mg²⁺ ions (Magnetic moment: $0\mu B$) on B site. Similar trend of experimental Ms at 300 K (*obtained from VSM measurements*) and that of theoretical magnetization at 0 K: M_{s(t)} (*obtained from cationic distribution, computed from XRD measurements*) shows that the magnetization behavior of the studied samples [18]. Observed similar trend of M_s (*w*) inset gives M_s variation with δ , shows linear variation of M_s with δ , demonstrating the importance of δ in determining M_s . Figure 2 (c), shows linear variation of M_s , while variation of H_c is shown in inset, with increasing Mg²⁺ content.



FIGURE 2. (a) Hysteresis loops, Inset: zoom part of hysteresis loops, (b) Experimental M_s at 300K and theoretical Ms(t) at 0K. Inset : Linear variation of M_s with δ_s (c) Linear variation of M_s with Mg content: Inset : Variation of H_c with Mg content

SUMMARY

XRD validates the formation of single phase $Li_{0.5-0.5x}Mg_xFe_{2.5-0.5x}O_4$ nano ferrite, via green synthesis protocol, without any post-preparation thermal treatment, whereas lattice parameter incorporation of Mg^{2+} ion in the spinel lattice. Observed alteration of cationic distribution proves transition from inverse to mixed spinel structure, are reflects in magnetic properties, modifying both $M_{s(exp)}$, H_c , and also confirms that the magnetization behavior of the studied samples is governed by Néel model.

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