Extremely Polysubstituted Magnetic Material Based on Magnetoplumbite with a Hexagonal Structure: Synthesis, Structure, Properties, Prospects

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Abstract: Crystalline high-entropy single-phase products with a magnetoplumbite structure with grains in the µm range were obtained using solid-state sintering. The synthesis temperature was up to 1400 °C. The morphology, chemical composition, crystal structure, magnetic, and electrodynamic properties were studied and compared with pure barium hexaferrite BaFe$_{12}$O$_{19}$ matrix. The polysubstituted high-entropy single-phase product contains five doping elements at a high concentration level. According to the EDX data, the new compound has a formula of Ba(Fe$_{6}$Ga$_{1.25}$In$_{1.17}$Ti$_{1.21}$Cr$_{1.22}$Co$_{1.15}$)O$_{19}$. The calculated cell parameter values were $a = 5.9253(5)$ Å, $c = 23.5257(22)$ Å, and $V = 715.32(9)$ Å$^3$. The increase in the unit cell for the substituted sample was expected due to the different ionic radius of Ti/In/Ga/Cr/Co compared with Fe$^{3+}$. The electrodynamic measurements were performed. The dielectric and magnetic permeabilities were stable in the frequency range from 2 to 12 GHz. In this frequency range, the dielectric and magnetic losses were $-0.2/0.2$. Due to these electrodynamic parameters, this material can be used in the design of microwave strip devices.

Keywords: high-entropy phase; magnetoplumbite structure; inorganic compounds; magnetic materials; crystal growth; crystal structure; magnetic properties

1. Introduction

Starting from 2010 [1], the properties of high-entropy oxide phases have been intensively studied [2–10]. Primarily, cubic oxide phases formed by divalent metals Mg, Co, Ni, Cu, and Zn [4,7,8],
or rare earth metals were studied [9,10]. High-entropy oxide nanotubes were also reported [11],
but this material is hard to consider as stable crystalline phase. Next, high-entropy phases with a
more complex crystal structure-like spinel [12] or (Al,Cr,Ti)FeCoNiO$_x$ [13] were achieved. Two papers
describe high-entropy phases with the perovskite structure [14,15].

Some researchers have studied the electrophysical and magnetic properties of high-entropy oxide
phases [3,5,6,13,16,17]. It was shown that Ti$_x$FeCoNiO$_y$ films have extremely low-electrical resistance
values [17]. Some authors [3] declared an exceptionally high value of the dielectric constant of materials
formed by Mg, Co, Ni, Cu, Zn, Li, and Ga oxides. The following studies on such materials led to the
discovery of phases (Mg,Co,Ni,Cu,Zn)$_{1-x}$Ga$_x$A$_x$O (with A=Li,Na,K) with high-ionic conductivity, which
makes them promising for use as solid electrolytes [5] that could be obtained as a thin film [16]. A recently
published paper aimed to generalize the theoretical description of high-entropy phase stability [18].

Still, there were no reports on high-entropy oxide materials with the magnetoplumbite structure
PbFe$_{12}$O$_{19}$, which are widely used in modern technology thanks to a combination of its electrophysical
and magnetic properties [19–26].

Traditionally, the barium and strontium hexaferrites have been explored as the parent phases in
which iron atoms are replaced by a certain amount of one or two other elements. The introduction
of dopants makes it possible to manage the electrical and magnetic properties of the resulting phase.
This opens up the possibility of obtaining materials whose electrical and magnetic characteristics
exactly correspond to the requirements of electronic devices [19]. Synthesis of high-entropy phases with
the magnetoplumbite structure can be considered as the next step in obtaining substituted structures,
which allow regulating the properties of materials in wider limits [27].

This work is devoted to studying the possibility of synthesizing a high-entropy phase with
a magnetoplumbite structure, whose composition can be described as BaFe$_6$(Ti,Co,In,Ga,Cr)$_6$O$_{19}$,
studying its structure, and magnetic and electrophysical properties.

2. Materials and Methods

The set of elements used for the synthesis was selected on the basis of the following considerations.
For the parent “BaB$_{12}$O$_{19}$” structure, the doping elements of “B” type include Ti and In (that both
proved to have a high ability to substitute iron [28,29]), and the elements that have similar ionic
radii—Ga, Co, and Cr (Table 1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>B</th>
<th>In$^{3+}$</th>
<th>Ga$^{3+}$</th>
<th>Cr$^{3+}$</th>
<th>Fe$^{2+}$</th>
<th>Ti$^{4+}$</th>
<th>Fe$^{3+}$</th>
<th>Co$^{3+}$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ionic radii (pm)</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>61.5</td>
<td>61/77</td>
<td>60.5</td>
<td>55/64.5</td>
<td>52.5/61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the target composition, half of the atoms of the “B” type were iron atoms, and the second half
consisted of doping elements in equimolar concentrations. The configurational entropy of mixing in
this case was lower than for the case when the concentrations of all elements, including iron, were
equal. Thus, for the Ba(Fe$_2$Ti$_2$Co$_2$In$_2$Ga$_2$Cr$_2$)O$_{19}$ phase, the configurational entropy of mixing would
be equal to 1.792 R, whereas for our composition, Ba(Fe$_6$Ti$_{1.2}$Co$_{1.2}$In$_{1.2}$Ga$_{1.2}$Cr$_{1.2}$)O$_{19}$ was 1.498 R.

However, reducing the iron content below that of Ba(Fe$_6$Ti$_{1.2}$Co$_{1.2}$In$_{1.2}$Ga$_{1.2}$Cr$_{1.2}$)O$_{19}$ led to the
disappearance of useful electrophysical and magnetic properties of the material obtained.
Therefore, the composition under study represents a compromise between the need to preserve the
magnetic characteristics of magnetoplumbite and to obtain a sufficiently high-configurational entropy.

The solid-state sintering was used for crystalline high-entropy single-phase with a magnetoplumbite
structure. The BaCO$_3$, Fe$_2$O$_3$, TiO$_2$, In$_2$O$_3$, Ga$_2$O$_3$, Cr$_2$O$_3$, and CoO (Russia, Yekaterinburg, Ural plant)
were used as initial charge components. The mixture was ground in an agate mortar and filled into a
30-mL platinum crucible. Table 2 presents the initial weight ratios of charge compositions. The synthesis
temperature that provides the single-phase formation was up to 1400 °C. The synthesis time was up to 5 h.
The sample morphology and chemical composition were investigated using a scanning electron microscope, Jeol JSM7001F (Tokyo, Japan), with an energy dispersive spectrometer, Oxford INCA X-max 80, for elemental analysis. Average composition and deviation were measured from 5–7 single-phase areas from each sample.

**Table 2. Initial weight ratios of charge compositions (wt.%).**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Target Composition</th>
<th>BaCO₃</th>
<th>Fe₂O₃</th>
<th>TiO₂</th>
<th>In₂O₃</th>
<th>Ga₂O₃</th>
<th>Cr₂O₃</th>
<th>CoO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>BaFe₁₂O₁₉</td>
<td>17.078</td>
<td>82.922</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Ba(Fe₆Ga₁₂In₁₂Ti₁₂Cr₁₂Co₁₂)O₁₉</td>
<td>16.013</td>
<td>38.873</td>
<td>7.777</td>
<td>13.517</td>
<td>9.126</td>
<td>7.400</td>
<td>7.296</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

X-ray powder diffraction analyses were performed on a diffractometer Rigaku Ultima IV (Tokyo, Japan) in the 2Theta angular range from 10° to 80° with the speed of 2°/min. For this purpose, the samples were thoroughly powdered and then applied on a thin layer of single-crystalline silicon.

For the electrodynamic properties determination, the powder particles of the studied material had a size of no more than 0.1 mm. Due to this, the space between the outer and inner conductors of a filled coaxial line segment and the probability of void appearance, which may affect the measured parameters, decreased. The test material in the coaxial line was clamped on both sides, with polystyrene rings. More details about the measurement technique can be read elsewhere [31].

Since the values of polystyrene permittivity and permeability in the frequency range 2–12 GHz are ε ~ 1.1 and µ ~ 1 [32], their influence can be neglected in further calculations.

To account for the influence of polystyrene rings on the measured S-parameters, the following measurements were performed:

- measuring S-parameters of the air-filled coaxial line with polystyrene rings;
- measuring S-parameters of the material-filled coaxial line with polystyrene rings.

When filling the coaxial line segment with samples of the material, the weight of the filling substance was controlled. The weight of the studied samples was 7.3 ± 0.1 g.

The use of a powder material makes it possible not to make samples of a certain shape, but to fill the volume required for measurement with a fine-grained structure.

When measuring S-parameters of the coaxial line with the test material as a dielectric, a dual-port (Thru-Reflect-Line) TRL-calibration was applied. Calibration Kit RPC-N, 50 Ω, LRL Version manufactured by Rosenberger (Tittmoning, Germany), an additional airline (type N Beadless Air Line) 2553T15 manufactured by Maury (Ontario, California, USA), and measuring adapters were used as calibration standards. Measurement was performed using a single-port vector reflectometer CABAN 180-02 (Chelyabinsk, Russia).

To calculate the dielectric and magnetic permeability, the following measurements were made. In the first dimension, a segment of the coaxial line with the material was connected to the reflectometer, a load was set at the other end of the segment. In this case, measurements were made of the real and imaginary parts of the input resistance. Then, instead of the matched load, a short circuit was established, and the real and imaginary parts of the input resistance was measured.

**3. Results**

This section provides a concise and precise description of the experimental results of the morphology, chemical composition, crystal structure, magnetic, and electrodynamic properties investigation.

**3.1. Morphology and Chemical Composition**

The obtained crystalline high-entropy single-phase products with a magnetoplumbite structure were obtained within the µ-range grains. Typical SEM images of the free surfaces of the samples (Figure 1) illustrate the sizes and shapes of the crystals. Presumably, the hexagonal-shaped crystals...
can be associated with a magnetoplumbite phase. For all samples, the EDX analysis of 10 individual hexagonal crystals and sample areas was performed. The chemical composition and average sample formulas are given in Table 3. The special procedure was used for sample preparation for quantitative SEM/EDX analysis. To improve the measurement accuracy, the sample powders were applied to the holder and flattened with a glass. The standard deviations of the analyses were up to 5%.

![SEM images of a high-entropy sample with a magnetoplumbite structure.](image)

**Figure 1.** SEM images of a high-entropy sample with a magnetoplumbite structure.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Chemical Composition, wt. %</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.36 Fe 38.90 Ti In Ga Cr Co</td>
<td>BaFe(<em>{12})O(</em>{19})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.45 19.28 3.91 3.78 4.06 3.94 3.71</td>
<td>Ba(Fe(<em>{6})Ga(</em>{1.25})In(<em>{1.17})Ti(</em>{1.21})Cr(<em>{1.22})Co(</em>{1.15}))O(_{19})</td>
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3.2. Crystal Structure

From the PXRD data, it was concluded that the high-entropy sample was the single magnetoplumbite phase with the general formula BaFe\(_{6}\)M\(_{6}\)O\(_{19}\) (M—sum of dopant cations). The single-phase sample pattern is shown in Figure 2. The space group was established. The substituted sample and initial matrix have the same space group P6(3)/mmc. Calculated unit cell parameters of experimental pure matrix BaFe\(_{12}\)O\(_{19}\), high-entropy sample Ba(Fe\(_{6}\)Ga\(_{1.25}\)In\(_{1.17}\)Ti\(_{1.21}\)Cr\(_{1.22}\)Co\(_{1.15}\))O\(_{19}\), and literature data are presented in Table 3.
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Table 3. The chemical composition and average sample formulas.

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Figure 2. Powder XRD patterns: 1—simulated according to crystal structure data in the literature [33]; 2—experimental sample of Ba(Fe_{6}Ga_{1.25}In_{1.17}Ti_{1.21}Cr_{1.22}Co_{1.15})O_{19}. Differences arose due to the minor variations in intensities according to the high-substitution levels of Fe by Ti/In/Ga/Cr/Co and mostly different degrees in the preferred orientation of the grains.

Unit cell determination from powder diffraction (Table 4) already indicated a substitution influence of Fe by Ti/In/Ga/Cr/Co. Due to the different ionic radius of Ti/In/Ga/Cr/Co compared with Fe^{3+} \( r(\text{Fe}^{3+}) = 0.55 \text{ Å} \); r(Ti^{4+}) = 0.605 Å; r(In^{3+}) = 0.80 Å; r(Ga^{3+}) = 0.62 Å; r(Cr^{3+}) = 0.615 Å; r(Co^{2+}) = 0.73 Å with CN = 6 [30]), and an increasing unit cell with dopants appearing was expected.

Table 4. Calculated unit cell parameters of barium hexaferrite.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Synthesis Method</th>
<th>( a ) [Å]</th>
<th>( c ) [Å]</th>
<th>( V ) [Å(^3)]</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[31]</td>
<td>BaFe_{12}O_{19}</td>
<td>5.893</td>
<td>23.194</td>
<td>697.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>BaFe_{12}O_{19}</td>
<td>5.8922 (1)</td>
<td>23.1953 (6)</td>
<td>697.40 (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Ba(Fe_{6}Ga_{1.25}In_{1.17}Ti_{1.21}Cr_{1.22}Co_{1.15})O_{19}</td>
<td>5.9253 (5)</td>
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3.3. Electrodynamic Properties

The results of measuring the real and imaginary parts of the dielectric permittivity of the frequency of the samples of materials are present in Figures 3 and 4. Sample 1 is initial matrix BaFe_{12}O_{19} and Sample 2 is substituted sample Ba(Fe_{6}Ga_{1.25}In_{1.17}Ti_{1.21}Cr_{1.22}Co_{1.15})O_{19} (numbers 1 and 2 at Tables 2–4).
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Figure 3. Frequency dependence of the real part of the dielectric permittivity of the samples.

The results of calculations of the dependence of the real and imaginary parts for magnetic permeability on the frequency of the material samples are present in Figures 5 and 6.

Figure 4. Frequency dependence of the imaginary part of the dielectric permittivity of the samples.

Figure 5. Frequency dependence of the real part of the magnetic permeability of the samples.

The results of calculations of the dependence of the real and imaginary parts for magnetic permeability on the frequency of the material samples are present in Figures 5 and 6.
Figure 4. Frequency dependence of the imaginary part of the dielectric permittivity of the samples.

The results of calculations of the dependence of the real and imaginary parts for magnetic permeability on the frequency of the material samples are present in Figures 5 and 6.

Figure 5. Frequency dependence of the real part of the magnetic permeability of the samples.

Figure 6. Frequency dependence of the imaginary part of magnetic permeability of samples.

The calculated dependences of the electric loss tangent and magnetic loss tangent on the frequency of the material samples are present in Figures 7 and 8.
Figure 6. Frequency dependence of the imaginary part of magnetic permeability of samples.

Figure 7. Frequency dependence of the dielectric loss tangent of samples.

Figure 8. Frequency dependence of the tangent of magnetic loss samples.

The calculated dependences of the skin layer on the frequency of the material samples are present in Figure 9.

It can be concluded that the electrodynamic parameters’ change in the polysubstituted material was not significant. In the frequency range from 10 to 18 GHz, the real part of the dielectric permittivity decreased for the Ba(Fe6Ga1.25In1.17Ti1.21Cr1.22Co1.15)O19 and increased for the BaFe12O19. The real and imaginary parts of the magnetic permeability have now significant changed and are very close for both samples. The dielectric loss tangents for these samples almost coincide, but the increase
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4. Conclusions

In the present work, a high-entropy single-phase product with a magnetoplumbite structure was obtained. The calculated brutto formula of substituted phase was Ba(Fe$_{6}$Ga$_{1.25}$In$_{1.17}$Ti$_{1.21}$Cr$_{1.22}$Co$_{1.15}$)O$_{19}$. From the PXRD data it was concluded that the high-entropy sample was the single magnetoplumbite phase. The increased cell parameters values of the substituted sample were observed. The calculated cell parameter values were $a = 5.9253(5)$ Å and $V = 715.32(9)$ Å$^3$. The electrodynamic investigation was performed. The dielectric and magnetic permeabilities were stable in the frequency range from 2 to 12 GHz. In this frequency range, the dielectric and magnetic losses were $-0.6/1.2$. Due to these electrodynamic parameters, this material can be used in the design of microwave strip devices.

Author Contributions: E.A.T., O.V.Z., V.E.Z., and D.A.Z. conceived and designed the experiments; V.E.Z., O.V.Z., D.P.S., E.E.S. and A.Y.S. performed the experiments; S.A.G. and A.V.T. contributed to the powder XRD measurements; S.V.T. contributed to the properties’ measurements; D.S.K. and M.G.V. contributed electrodynamic measurements; D.A.V. wrote the paper.

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Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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