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Investigation of Various Types of Ferrites and Manganites Prepared via Sol-Gel Synthetic Approach

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Multiferroics are described as materials with the presence of two or more ferroic orders (such as magnetic, electric or elastic). While both piezoelectrics (where ferroelectricity occurs with ferroelasticity) and piezomagnetism (where ferromagnetism and ferroelasticity coexists) are investigated, the main research focus is on magnetoelectric multiferroics [1]. Out of all multiferroics, the bismuth ferrite (BiFeO₃) is considered to be the most prominent one [2]. It displays antiferromagnetic and ferroelectric properties with a strong remnant polarization of ~100 μC/cm² at room temperature [3]. Moreover, bismuth manganite (BiMnO₃), yttrium ferrite (YFeO₃), yttrium manganite (YMnO₃), gadolinium ferrite (GdFeO₃) and gadolinium manganite (GdMnO₃) have also demonstrated multiferroic properties.

One of the ways to tune the physical properties of the materials is by preparing solid solutions. For this reason few different composition Y_{1-x}Gd_xFeO₃ [4], Y_{1-x}Gd_xMn_{0.97}Fe_{0.03}O₃ [5] and Bi_{1-x}Gd_xFe_{0.85}Mn_{0.15}O₃ solid solutions series were prepared by sol-gel synthesis technique using ethylene glycol and citric acid as complexing agents. For the obtained samples structural, morphological and magnetic properties were investigated with different characterization techniques. It was observed that by varying Gd³⁺ content for Y_{1-x}Gd_xFeO₃ samples, the magnetization changed from hysteresis characteristic of YFeO₃, to almost linear dependence of magnetization of GdFeO₃. With the increasing amount of the Gd³⁺ the crystal structure of Y_{1-x}Gd_xMn_{0.97}Fe_{0.03}O₃ gradually transformed from hexagonal to orthorhombic one. While most samples were monophasic, the sample containing 60 mol% of yttrium was mixture between hexagonal and orthorhombic structures. After annealing Bi_{1-x}Gd_xFe_{0.85}Mn_{0.15}O₃ compounds at 500 °C temperature, it was seen that only 10 mol% of Gd³⁺ ions can be introduced into the BiFe_{0.85}Mn_{0.15}O₃ structure. Heat treatment at higher temperatures (650 and 800 °C) led to formation of solid solutions in the whole compositional range.

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