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# Slight Co-doping tuned magnetic and electric properties on cubic BaFeO<sub>3</sub> single crystal

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The single crystal of cubic perovskite BaFeO<sub>3</sub> shows multiple magnetic transitions and external stimulus sensitive magnetism. In this paper, a 5%-Co-doped BaFeO<sub>3</sub> (*i.e.* BaFe<sub>0.95</sub>Co<sub>0.05</sub>O<sub>3</sub>) single crystal was grown by combining floating zone methods with high-pressure techniques. Such a slight Co doping has little effect on crystal structure, but significantly changes the magnetism from the parent antiferromagnetic ground state to a ferromagnetic one with the Curie temperature  $T_C \approx 120$  K. Compared with the parent BaFeO<sub>3</sub> at the induced ferromagnetic state, the saturated magnetic moment of the doped BaFe<sub>0.95</sub>Co<sub>0.05</sub>O<sub>3</sub> increases by about 10% and reaches 3.64  $\mu_B/f.u$ . Resistivity and specific heat measurements show that the ferromagnetic ordering favors metallic-like electrical transport behavior for BaFe<sub>0.95</sub>Co<sub>0.05</sub>O<sub>3</sub>. The present work indicates that Co-doping is an effective method to tune the magnetic and electric properties for the cubic perovskite phase of BaFeO<sub>3</sub>.

Keywords: floating-zone single crystal, high-pressure synthesis, chemical doping, magnetic and electrical properties

PACS: 75.30.Et, 75.10.Lp, 81.10.Fq, 81.40.Vw

#### 1. Introduction

Perovskite oxides  $AFeO_3$  (A = Ca, Sr, and Ba) with unusually high Fe<sup>4+</sup> state show very interesting structural and physical properties.<sup>[1-7]</sup> At room temperature, CaFeO<sub>3</sub> crystallizes to an orthorhombic Pnma structure. As the temperature decreases to about 290 K, a so-called charge disproportionation  $(2Fe^{4+} \rightarrow Fe^{3+} + Fe^{5+})$  takes place, leading to a metal-insulator transition as well as a *Pnma* to  $P2_1/n$  structural phase transition. On further cooling to 116 K, a helical antiferromagnetic (AFM) phase transition is observed, with the spin propagation vector along the pseudocubic [111] direction.<sup>[2,3]</sup> In comparison with CaFeO<sub>3</sub>, the crystal structure of SrFeO<sub>3</sub> changes to a simple cubic perovskite with space *Pm-3m*, which exhibits a helical AFM ordering at  $T_{\rm N1} \approx$ 134 K. On further cooling, SrFeO3 undergoes another two AFM transitions respectively at  $T_{\rm N2} \approx 110$  K and  $T_{\rm N3} \approx 56$  K due to the higher-order spiral order adjustment.<sup>[4,7–10]</sup> Therefore, the helical AFM transitions of SrFeO3 seem rather complex, and even topological magnetic structures which have two kinds of multiple-q spin structures has been proposed recently.<sup>[11]</sup> In spite of complicated spin transitions, SrFeO<sub>3</sub> always shows metallic electrical transport behavior.<sup>[4]</sup> Compared with the easily synthesized cubic perovskite phase of SrFeO<sub>3</sub>, such a simple cubic phase is very difficult to prepare for the analogue BaFeO<sub>3</sub>. Since the ionic radius of

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 $Ba^{2+}$  is considerably larger than that of  $Sr^{2+}$ ,<sup>[12]</sup> conventional annealing always leads to the presence of a hexagonal phase for BaFeO<sub>3</sub>.<sup>[13]</sup> Until 2011, the simple cubic perovskite phase BaFeO<sub>3</sub> was obtained by a topological chemical oxidization method for the precursor BaFeO2.5 at lower temperature (473 K) using ozone as an oxidizing agent. However, such a surface oxidization method can only obtain a small amount of powder samples with the thickness about 1 µm.<sup>[14]</sup> Most recently, large-size single crystals (> 3 mm) for the cubic perovskite phase of BaFeO<sub>3</sub> are successful for growth by using floating zone methods combined with high-pressure treatment techniques.<sup>[15]</sup> The BaFeO<sub>3</sub> single crystal also shows three magnetic phase transitions. With decreasing temperature, a spin glass transition is found to occur at  $T_{SG} \approx 181$  K, followed by two long-range helical AFM transitions at about 117 K and 97 K, respectively. Moreover, a semiconductor-metal-like transition occurs near 117 K.<sup>[15]</sup> These complicated magnetic behaviors indicate competing ferromagnetic (FM) and AFM interactions in BaFeO<sub>3</sub>.

Because of the helical magnetic structure, the magnetism of *A*FeO<sub>3</sub> are highly sensitive to external stimuli such as pressure and chemical doping. For example, CaFeO<sub>3</sub> experiences a structural phase transition and a spin state transition at a critical around 30 GPa.<sup>[16]</sup> The AFM ground state of SrFeO<sub>3</sub> can be tuned into an FM one if one uses a pressure up to

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7 GPa<sup>[17]</sup> or doping with Co for Fe by 20%.<sup>[18]</sup> Compared with SrFeO<sub>3</sub>, the AFM and FM competition is more remarkable in BaFeO<sub>3</sub>.<sup>[19]</sup> Therefore, it is very interesting to study the chemical doping effects on the magnetic and electrical properties of the cubic BaFeO<sub>3</sub>. In this paper, we found that a tiny Co doping for Fe by 5% in nominal can change the AFM ground state of BaFeO<sub>3</sub> to an FM state in BaFe<sub>0.95</sub>Co<sub>0.05</sub>O<sub>3</sub> single crystal. Different electrical transport properties are also observed by such a small chemical doping.

# 2. Experimental details

The polycrystalline BaFe<sub>0.95</sub>Co<sub>0.05</sub>O<sub>2.5</sub> precursors were prepared by a solid-state reaction method.<sup>[15,20]</sup> Appropriate amounts of highly pure (99.9%) BaCO<sub>3</sub>, Fe<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>, and Co<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> were stoichiometrically weighed, and fully mixed and ground. The mixed powders were heated at 1373 K for 24 hours under flowing Ar gas. The resulting product was reground in air and pressed into a rod of 4.0 mm in diameter and 8.0 mm in length at 200 MPa for annealing at 1373 K for 12 hours in flowing Ar. The annealing rod was adopted to grow the oxygen deficient BaFe<sub>0.95</sub>Co<sub>0.05</sub>O<sub>2.5</sub> single crystals by using the floating zone method with a growth rate of 2.4 mm/h at Ar atmosphere. To obtain oxygen stoichiometric BaFe<sub>0.95</sub>Co<sub>0.05</sub>O<sub>3</sub> single crystal, the oxygen deficient precursor of BaFe<sub>0.95</sub>Co<sub>0.05</sub>O<sub>2.5</sub> single crystal was treated on a large volume cubic-anvil-type highpressure apparatus at 5 GPa and 1023 K for 60 min with the usage of exceeding KClO<sub>4</sub> oxidizing agent.<sup>[15,18,20]</sup>

Powder x-ray diffraction (XRD) and Laue back reflection were used to identify the crystal quality and structure on a Huber diffractometer at room temperature with Cu  $K\alpha_1$  radiation. The diffraction range of  $2\theta$  angle is from 10° to 100° with a step of 0.005°. Structural refinement for the XRD data was performed based on the Rietveld method using the GSAS program.<sup>[21]</sup> An Setaram TG-DTA system was used to perform thermogravimetric (TG) analysis with a heating rate of 10 K/min to 1300 K in Ar flow. The temperaturedependent magnetic susceptibility and isothermal magnetization were measured using a superconducting quantum interference device magnetometer (Quantum Design, MPMS3-VSM). Specific heat and resistivity data were obtained on a physical property measurement system (Quantum Design, PPMS-9T) at zero magnetic field.

#### 3. Results and discussion

Figure 1(a) shows the precursor single crystal of  $BaFe_{0.95}Co_{0.05}O_{2.5}$  and full oxidization  $BaFe_{0.95}Co_{0.05}O_3$  single crystal with ~ 3 mm in diameter and height. In order to facilitate the anisotropy study of the physical properties of the single crystal, we used Laue diffraction to determine the crystal planes and cut specific planes for physical property mea-

surements. The bulk XRD pattern was performed on the selected (100) plane of BaFe<sub>0.95</sub>Co<sub>0.05</sub>O<sub>3</sub> crystal with the size of 2 mm  $\times$  2 mm  $\times$  1 mm as shown in Fig. 1(b), only h00 peaks can be observed, suggesting that the as-made crystals are of single domain without observed twins. The insets of Fig. 1(b) show the sharp Laue diffraction spots of the high symmetrical (001), (110), and (111) planes, which further confirm the high quality of BaFe<sub>0.95</sub>Co<sub>0.05</sub>O<sub>3</sub> single crystal we obtained. Furthermore, this doped single crystal were crushed into powders for XRD measurement. The powder XRD pattern as well as the Rietveld refinement results are presented in Fig. 1(c). One can find that all the diffraction peaks can be well fitted based on a simple cubic perovskite structure with space group Pm-3m. The refined structural parameters are shown in Table 1. Compared with the parent single crystal of BaFeO<sub>3</sub> with a = 3.96833 Å,<sup>[15]</sup> the refined lattice constant of BaFe<sub>0.95</sub>Co<sub>0.05</sub>O<sub>3</sub> crystal slightly increases to 3.97131(7) Å. The lattice expansion results from the covalent effect of B-O in cubic BaFeO3 weakened by Co doping, and the B-O bond length increased.

Table 1. Refined structure parameters for  $BaFe_{0.95}Co_{0.05}O_3$  single crystal at room temperature<sup>a</sup>.

Parameter	Value	Parameter	Value
a (Å)	3.97131(7)	Ва–О (Å) ×12	2.80814(3)
V (Å <sup>3</sup> )	62.633(3)	Fe/Co–O (Å) ×6	1.98565(3)
Uiso(Ba) $(100 \times \text{\AA}^2)$	0.32(2)	$R_{\rm wp}$ (%)	2.8
Uiso(Fe/Co) $(100 \times \text{\AA}^2)$	0.54(4)	<i>R</i> <sub>p</sub> (%)	1.9
Uiso(O) $(100 \times \text{\AA}^2)$	0.58(1)		

<sup>a</sup>Space group *Pm*-3*m* (No. 221); atomic sites are Ba 1*a* (0, 0, 0), Fe/Co 1*b* (0.5, 0.5, 0.5), and O 3*c* (0.5, 0.5, 0).



**Fig. 1.** (a) Morphology of  $BaFe_{0.95}Co_{0.05}O_{2.5}$  and  $BaFe_{0.95}Co_{0.05}O_3$  single crystals. (b) XRD pattern for the high symmetrical (001) plane of the  $BaFe_{0.95}Co_{0.05}O_3$  single crystal. The inset shows the Laue diffraction spots of the (100), (110), and (111) planes. (c) Powder XRD pattern measured at room temperature and Rietveld refinement results of pulverized  $BaFe_{0.95}Co_{0.05}O_3$  single crystal. The observed (black circles), calculated (pink line), and difference (orange line) patterns are shown. The green ticks indicate the allowed Bragg reflections with space group Pm-3m. (d) Temperature-dependent mass and oxygen content of  $BaFe_{0.95}Co_{0.05}O_3$  single crystal.

Considering that the oxygen content has significant influence on physical properties of materials, the TG measurement was performed to examine the oxygen content of BaFe<sub>0.95</sub>Co<sub>0.05</sub>O<sub>3</sub> single crystal. Figure 1(d) shows the sample mass as a function of temperature. Obviously, the oxygen starts to release at about 370 K. At temperatures above 1000 K, the decomposed product becomes stable. According to the mass loss and the final product, which is the precursor BaFe<sub>0.95</sub>Co<sub>0.05</sub>O<sub>2.5</sub> as confirmed by XRD, the calculated oxygen content of BaFe<sub>0.95</sub>Co<sub>0.05</sub>O<sub>3</sub> single crystal is determined to be 3.01(2), indicating the stoichiometric composition for the single crystal we grown. This result in turn suggests the presence of Fe<sup>4+</sup>/Co<sup>4+</sup> valence states in BaFe<sub>0.95</sub>Co<sub>0.05</sub>O<sub>3</sub> as reported in SrFeO<sub>3</sub><sup>[4]</sup> and SrCoO<sub>3</sub><sup>[20]</sup> single crystals.

Figure 2(a) shows the temperature dependence of magnetic susceptibility ( $\chi$ ) of BaFe<sub>0.95</sub>Co<sub>0.05</sub>O<sub>3</sub> single crystal with an applying magnetic field (H = 0.1 T) parallel to the (100), (110), and (111) crystal planes in a field-cooling mode. As the temperature decreases to a critical temperature  $T_{\rm C} \approx$ 120 K, the magnetic susceptibility experiences a sharp increase, indicting an FM phase transition. One can find that there is no significant difference in the susceptibility curves with field along different crystal planes, suggesting negligible magnetocrystalline anisotropy in the cubic perovskite phase of BaFe<sub>0.95</sub>Co<sub>0.05</sub>O<sub>3</sub>. The inset of Fig. 2(a) shows the inverse susceptibility as function of temperature. Above 240 K, the data can be fitted based on the Curie-Weiss law with the function  $\chi^{-1} = (T - \theta)/C$ . The fitted Weiss temperature  $\theta = 175.7$  K is in agreement with the FM ordering. According to the fitted Curie constant  $C = 4.199 \text{ emu} \cdot \text{K} \cdot \text{mol}^{-1}$ , the effective magnetic moment is calculated to be 5.79  $\mu_{\rm B}$ /f.u. If one considers the spin-only contribution for a high-spin Fe<sup>3+</sup>  $(Fe^{4+})$  state, the effective moment per ion in theory should be 5.89 (4.90)  $\mu_{\rm B}$ . Because of the strong p-d negative charge transfer energy, the high  $Fe^{4+}(3d^4)$  state can be regard as an Fe<sup>3+</sup>(3d<sup>5</sup>) combined with an oxygen hole L, (*i.e.*, a d<sup>5</sup>L state).<sup>[15,22]</sup> The Curie–Weiss fitting seems to suggest the formation of such a  $d^5L$  state in BaFe<sub>0.95</sub>Co<sub>0.05</sub>O<sub>3</sub>.

Figure 2(b) depicts the isothermal magnetization curves measured at selected temperatures with the magnetic field parallel to the (100) plane. Above  $T_{\rm C}$ , the linear magnetization behavior is consistent with the paramagnetism. Below  $T_{\rm C}$  (*e.g.* at 100, 15, and 2 K), however, canonical magnetic hysteresis is found to occur. Moreover, the magnetization sharply increases with field and becomes saturated at 1.0 T. The coercive field is quite small (13.6 Oe at 2 K, 1 Oe = 79.5775 A·m<sup>-1</sup>), indicating the soft FM feature. The saturated magnetic moment observed at 2 K and 6 T is 3.64  $\mu_{\rm B}$ /f.u., which is somewhat larger than that of the parent BaFeO<sub>3</sub> single crystal (3.2  $\mu_{\rm B}$ /f.u.).<sup>[15]</sup> Figure 2(c) shows the comparison of magnetization with field along the three typical planes of (100), (110), and (111). Basically, there is no essential difference occurring in these three directions. At this stage, it is difficult to distinguish the easiest magnetization axis from [110] and [111] directions. Sharply different from BaFeO<sub>3</sub> where the magnetization undergoes a clear metamagnetic transition at  $\sim 0.5$  T from the initial AFM ground state to a higher-field FM state, the ground spin state of the Co-5% doped system has already been FM without any metamagnetic variation taking place.



**Fig. 2.** (a) The temperature-dependent magnetic susceptibility of  $BaFe_{0.95}Co_{0.05}O_3$  single crystal measured at 0.1 T with magnetic field parallel to the (100), (110), and (111) planes. The inset shows the Curie–Weiss fitting for the inverse susceptibility in 240 K–300 K. (b) Isothermal magnetization curves measured at selected temperatures with the field parallel to the (100) plane. (c) Comparison of field-dependent magnetization curves with field parallel to the (100), (110), and (111) planes.

In  $SrFe_{1-r}Co_rO_3$  solid solution, the Co-doping induced FM phase does not appear until the substitution content of Co increase to 20%.<sup>[18]</sup> Therefore, the cubic BaFeO<sub>3</sub> is more sensitive to be tailored than SrFeO<sub>3</sub>. The propagation vector expression of the spiral spin ordering of the cubic Sr/BaFeO<sub>3</sub> is  $Q = \phi \times (2\pi/a)$ ,<sup>[11,14,23]</sup> where a is the lattice constant. The spin arrangement thus depends largely on the value of the spiral angle  $\varphi$ . For example, if  $\varphi = 0$ , the spins will all align in parallel and an FM state occurs. The value of  $\varphi$  for BaFeO<sub>3</sub> and SrFeO<sub>3</sub> is 0.06 and 0.112,<sup>[23]</sup> respectively. Therefore, a slight Co-doping only by 5% can induce the ground spin state transition from helical AFM to collinear FM for BaFeO<sub>3</sub>. In addition, Mostovoy<sup>[24]</sup> in theory proposed a phase diagram from helical AFM order to FM order by considering the charge transfer energy  $\Delta$ , p-d transition integral (pd $\sigma$ ), p-p transition amplitude  $t_{p-p}$ , and the superexchange coupling integral J between  $t_{2g}$  spins. In such a phase diagram, the FM order appears in the region with high  $\Delta/(pd\sigma)$  value. When the lattice expands due to chemical doping, the  $(pd\sigma)$  decreases rapidly. Meanwhile, the charge transfer energy does not change much. As a result, the FM order is more likely to occur with increasing lattice constant. Since the Co doping favors lattice increase, the FM ground rather than the helical AFM one emerges in the current BaFe<sub>0.95</sub>Co<sub>0.05</sub>O<sub>3</sub> single crystal.



Fig. 3. Temperature dependence of resistivity for  $BaFe_{0.95}Co_{0.05}O_3$  single crystal measured with electrical current parallel to the (110) plane. The inset shows the fitting result using the thermal excitation model in 240 K–300 K.

Figure 3 shows the temperature dependence of resistivity for BaFe<sub>0.95</sub>Co<sub>0.05</sub>O<sub>3</sub> single crystal with the current parallel to the (110) plane. The value of resistivity at 300 K is about  $6.2 \times 10^{-2} \Omega$ -cm. As the temperature decreases, the resistivity slightly increases, suggesting a semiconducting electrical transport behavior. Once the temperature decreases to  $T_{\rm C}$ , the resistivity displays a small increase. On further cooling to less than ~ 50 K, the resistivity is nearly unchanged any more, implying a bad metal-like behavior at lower temperatures. In 240 K–300 K, the temperature dependence of resistivity can be fitted the thermal excitation model (see the inset of Fig. 3), yielding the activation energy to be 14.3 meV. Such a small activation energy as well as the bad metal-like electrical transport suggest the itinerant electronic behavior of  $BaFe_{0.95}Co_{0.05}O_3$  single crystal below  $T_C$ .

To get a deeper insight into the transport properties for  $BaFe_{0.95}Co_{0.05}O_3$ , the temperature dependence of specific heat  $(C_p)$  was measured. As showed in Fig. 4, a  $\lambda$ -type anomaly is found to occur in the specific heat curve near  $T_{\rm C}$ , indicating the second-order nature for the long-range FM phase transition. At the temperatures below 12 K, the specific heat data can be well fitted using the function  $C_{p} =$  $\gamma T + \beta T^{3/2} + \alpha T^3$  (see the inset of Fig. 4). The fitted parameters are  $\gamma = 1.52(8) \times 10^{-2}$  J·mol·K<sup>-2</sup>,  $\beta = 2.44(3) \times$  $10^{-3}$  J·mol·K<sup>-5/2</sup>, and  $\alpha = 1.67(4) \times 10^{-4}$  J·mol·K<sup>-4</sup>. In comparison, the value of  $\gamma$  coefficient is larger than that of  $\beta$  and  $\alpha$ , suggesting the solid contribution of itinerant electrons in BaFe<sub>0.95</sub>Co<sub>0.05</sub>O<sub>3</sub>. In the parent BaFeO<sub>3</sub>, the fitted value of  $\gamma = 2.78 \times 10^{-2}$  J·mol·K<sup>-2</sup>,<sup>[15]</sup> which is larger than that of the current Co-doped one. Actually, one can find an apparent metallization transition at the long-range spin ordering temperature, but the resistivity experiences a small increase in BaFe<sub>0.95</sub>Co<sub>0.05</sub>O<sub>3</sub>. The Co introduction thus looks unfavorable for the presence of itinerant electronic behavior, probably due to the reduced p-d hybridization caused by lattice expansion.



**Fig. 4.** Temperature dependence of specific heat for BaFe<sub>0.95</sub>Co<sub>0.05</sub>O<sub>3</sub> single crystal. The inset shows the fitting result for specific heat date below 12 K using the function  $C_p = \gamma T + \beta T^{3/2} + \alpha T^3$ .

## 4. Conclusion

In summary, the single crystal of BaFe<sub>0.95</sub>Co<sub>0.05</sub>O<sub>3</sub> was prepared by the combination of floating zone methods with high-pressure techniques for the first time. The crystal crystallizes to a simple cubic perovskite structure with *Pm-3m* symmetry. The TG analysis confirms the stoichiometric oxygen content for the as-made single crystal, suggesting the presence of Fe<sup>4+</sup>/Co<sup>4+</sup> state. Compared with parent BaFeO<sub>3</sub>, the slight introduction of Co in BaFe<sub>0.95</sub>Co<sub>0.05</sub>O<sub>3</sub> only induces a small lattice expansion, but essentially changes the magnetism from the initial helical AFM ground state to an FM one with the Curie temperature  $T_{\rm C} \approx 120$  K. The resistivity and specific heat measurements indicate that the FM ordering favors a bad metal-like electrical transport behavior in BaFe<sub>0.95</sub>Co<sub>0.05</sub>O<sub>3</sub>. The present work shows that Co-doping is an effective method to modify the magnetic and electrical properties for the cubic perovskite of BaFeO<sub>3</sub>.

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