Preparation and spectroscopic properties of $\text{Ca}_2\text{MgTeO}_6:\text{Tm}^{3+}$ blue-emitting tellurate phosphors

Sumeng Jiang^{1,2}, Fanhua Zeng^{1,2}, Hui Liu^{1,2}, Yan Duan^{1,2}, and Bin Deng^{1,2*}

¹College of Chemistry & Biology and Environmental Engineering, Xiangnan University, Chenzhou 423043, Hunan, P. R. China

²Hunan Provincial Key Laboratory of Xiangnan Rare-Precious Metals Compounds Research and Application, Chenzhou 423043, Hunan, P. R. China

Abstract. Various novel $\text{Ca}_2\text{MgTeO}_6:\text{Tm}^{3+}$ blue-emitting tellurate materials were synthesized via solid-state reaction. The structure and phase purity of prepared $\text{Ca}_2\text{MgTeO}_6:x\text{Tm}^{3+}$ ($x = 0.0025\text{--}0.10$ mol) were examined by X-ray powder diffraction. The $\text{Ca}_2\text{MgTeO}_6:\text{Tm}^{3+}$ phosphors emit blue emission at 359 nm excitation. The optimum doping concentration was 0.02 mol. The concentration quenching mechanism in the $\text{Ca}_2\text{MgTeO}_6$ host was due to the electric dipole-dipole interaction. The CIE chromaticity coordinates of $\text{Ca}_2\text{MgTeO}_6:\text{Tm}^{3+}$ phosphors located in the blue region. These results validated the $\text{Ca}_2\text{MgTeO}_6:\text{Tm}^{3+}$ tellurate phosphor can be used as good blue-emitting candidate for W-LEDs.

1 Introduction

White light-emitting diodes (W-LEDs), particularly phosphors-covered LEDs, have replaced traditional lighting sources (e.g., incandescent light, halogen tungsten lamp, and fluorescent lamp) owing to their energy conservation, long lifetime, high efficiency, and environment-friendly properties [1–5]. The common combination of commercial W-LEDs is that of blue InGaN chips and $\text{Y}_3\text{Al}_5\text{O}_{12}:\text{Ce}^{3+}$ yellow phosphors. Given the lack of a red component, this combination has a low rendering index and correlated color temperature (CCT). The other common method combines near-ultraviolet (n-UV) LED chips with trichromatic phosphors (yellow-, blue-, and red-emitting phosphors) [6–9]. It is imperative to fabricate a novel blue-emitting phosphor with effective absorption in the near-UV region.

There are many kinds of phosphors those have been reported. Rare-earth ions doped tellurates have arisen extensive interest due to excellent chemical and physical stability, such as $\text{Li}_3\text{Gd}_3\text{Te}_2\text{O}_{12}:\text{Dy}^{3+}$, $\text{Ca}_3\text{TeO}_6:\text{Eu}^{3+}$, and $\text{NaLaCaTeO}_6:\text{Mn}^{4+}$ [10–13]. Tm^{3+} is widely used as an efficient blue light emitting center, such as $\text{CaHfO}_3:\text{Tm}^{3+}$, $\text{Li}_3\text{Gd}_3\text{Te}_2\text{O}_{12}:\text{Tm}^{3+}$, $\text{Ca}_9\text{NaGd}_{2/3}(\text{PO}_4)_7:\text{Tm}^{3+}$, and $\text{CaBi}_4\text{Ti}_4\text{O}_{15}:\text{Tm}^{3+}, \text{Yb}^{3+}$ many alternative Tm^{3+} -doped phosphors have been reported [14–17]. $\text{Ca}_2\text{MgTeO}_6$ ceramics were reported to a double perovskite family member and exhibited a monoclinic $P2_1/n$ structure [18]. Recently, $\text{Ca}_2\text{MgTeO}_6:\text{Eu}^{3+}$, $\text{Ca}_2\text{MgTeO}_6:\text{Sm}^{3+}$ phosphors emitted bright red/orange-emitting light under UV excitation [19, 20]. However, the Tm^{3+} -doped $\text{Ca}_2\text{MgTeO}_6$ phosphors had not been reported. In this work, Tm^{3+} -doped $\text{Ca}_2\text{MgTeO}_6$ blue-emitting phosphor has been

synthesized by solid-state reaction. The powder X-ray diffraction (XRD), the photoluminescence excitation (PLE) properties, the photoluminescence emission (PL) spectra, and concentration quenching mechanism were investigated in depth.

2 Experimental section

The $\text{Ca}_2\text{MgTeO}_6:x\text{Tm}^{3+}$ powders were achieved through the solid-phase synthesis method. CaCO_3 (analytical reagent), TeO_2 (99.99%), $(\text{MgCO}_3)_4\cdot\text{Mg}(\text{OH})_2\cdot 5\text{H}_2\text{O}$ (analytical reagent), Tm_2O_3 (99.99%), and Na_2CO_3 (analytical reagent). Na_2CO_3 was taken as charge compensation. They were fully mixed and ground in an agate mortar. Then, the mixture was calcined in air at 600°C for one hour, and further sintered at 1100°C for 24 h. Finally, after the muffle furnace cooled down to near room temperature, the products were ground for luminescence characterization. The structural properties of phosphor were measured by XRD through a Bruker D2 PHASER X-ray diffractometer with $\text{Cu K}\alpha$ radiation source ($\lambda = 0.15405$ nm) operated at 40 kV with results between the range of $2\theta = 15^\circ\text{--}70^\circ$. The morphology was tested through scanning electron microscopy (JEOL, JSM-6490). The photoluminescence spectra and decay curves of the samples were characterized by the Edinburgh spectrometer (FLS 980).

3 Results and discussion

Fig. 1 presents the XRD patterns of $\text{Ca}_2(1-x)\text{Tm}_x\text{Na}_x\text{MgTeO}_6$ ($x = 0.0025, 0.005, 0.01, 0.02, 0.03, 0.05, \text{ and } 0.10$) phosphors. Obviously, with the increase

* Corresponding author: dengbinxnu@163.com (Bin Deng)

of Tm³⁺ dopant concentration, all the diffraction peaks were in accordance with the standard card (JCPDS no. 48-0108) of Ca₂MgWO₆ [21, 22]. It indicated that the small amount of Tm³⁺ ions does not evidently influence the crystal structure of Ca₂MgTeO₆. The ionic radii of the Ca²⁺ and Tm³⁺ ions are approximate corresponding to 1.12 Å and 0.994 Å (coordination number, CN = 8), respectively [23]. Apparently, a small amount of Ca²⁺ ions can be readily replaced by Tm³⁺ ions in the Ca₂MgTeO₆ host lattice. The as-prepared samples were with high phase purity.

Fig. 1. XRD patterns of the Ca₂(1-x)TmxNaMgTeO₆ phosphors (x = 0.0025, 0.005, 0.01, 0.02, 0.03, 0.05, and 0.10).

Fig. 2. Representative SEM micrograph of Ca₂MgTeO₆:0.02Tm³⁺.

The morphology of the Ca₂MgTeO₆:0.02Tm³⁺ phosphor was characterized through scanning electron microscopy (SEM) and is shown in Fig. 2. The shapes of the particles are irregular and non-uniform, and some clusters are present. The existence of agglomerates is ascribed to high-temperature sintering. Particle size has a range of 1-2 μm.

The excitation spectrum of representative sample Ca₂MgTeO₆:0.02Tm³⁺ is monitored at 457 nm and shown in Fig. 3 curve (a). A broadband in the range of 200-250 nm related to O²⁻→Tm³⁺ charge transfer band [10]. Another peak in the excitation spectrum at 359 nm is assigned to the typical 4f-4f transition of 3H₆→1D₂ of Tm³⁺. Fig. 3 curve (b) displays the emission spectrum of Ca₂MgTeO₆:0.02Tm³⁺ at near-UV light λ_{ex} = 359 nm. The main emission band at 457 nm due to the electronic dipole transition of 1D₂ →³F₄ of Tm³⁺

[15]. Importantly, the blue region's emission peaks suggested that Ca₂MgTeO₆:Tm³⁺ can be promising blue-emitting phosphors.

Fig. 3. Excitation spectrum (λ_{em} = 468 nm) and emission spectrum (λ_{ex} = 359 nm) of Ca₂MgTeO₆:0.02Tm³⁺ phosphor.

Fig. 4. The PL spectra (λ_{ex} = 359 nm) of Ca₂(1-x)TmxNaMgTeO₆ (x = 0.0025, 0.005, 0.01, 0.02, 0.03, 0.05, and 0.10) phosphors. The upper inset showed the influence of Tm³⁺ ion with different concentrations.

The PL spectra of Ca₂(1-x)TmxNaMgTeO₆ (x = 0.0025, 0.005, 0.01, 0.02, 0.03, 0.05, and 0.10) phosphors as with different Tm³⁺ ions content are presented in Fig. 4. It is obvious that all the emission spectra have similar shape profiles with the increasing concentration. When the doping Tm³⁺ concentration in Ca₂(1-x)TmxNaMgTeO₆ was x = 0.02 mol, the emission intensity of sample reached the most intense. Subsequently, exceeding 0.02 mol, the emission intensities of Tm³⁺ began to decrease gradually due to concentration quenching phenomena induced through the resonant energy transfer.

Blasse proposed the critical transfer distance (R_c) for analyzing the energy transfer mechanism, and the value can be estimated by this equation (1) [24, 25]:

$$R_c \approx 2 \left(\frac{3V}{4\pi x_c N} \right)^{1/3} \quad (1)$$

here V (238.31 Å³) referred to the cell volume, X_c (0.02) represented the best doping concentration, and N (2) was the number of substitutable cations in a unit cell, the critical transfer distance R_c was estimated to be 22 Å,

much higher than that of exchange interaction distance (5.0 Å). Therefore, the electric multipole interactions between Tm³⁺ ions will be responsible for the concentration quenching phenomenon.

Furthermore, the following equation was used to evaluate the specific type of interaction mechanism in the energy transfer process of Tm³⁺ ions [26]:

Fig. 5. Dependence of $\lg x$ on $\lg(I/x)$ of $\text{Ca}_2\text{MgTeO}_6:\text{Tm}^{3+}$ phosphors.

$$\frac{I}{x} = K \left[1 + \beta (x)^{Q/3} \right]^{-1} \quad (2)$$

Here, Q is constant at 6, 8, and 10. They represent different energy transfer interactions, such as electric dipole-dipole (Q=6), dipole-quadrupole (Q=8), or quadrupole-quadrupole (Q=10) interactions, respectively. x stood for the activator concentration, K and β were constants at the same excitation condition [27]. Fig. 5 illustrates the linear plot. The slope parameter of the line was found to be -1.6. The Q value was fitted to 4.8, which approaches 6, indicating that the electric dipole-dipole interaction was the primary reason for the concentration quenching of $\text{Ca}_2\text{MgTeO}_6:\text{Tm}^{3+}$ phosphors [28].

Fig. 6 The CIE chromaticity diagram $\text{Ca}_2(1-x)\text{Tm}_x\text{Na}_x\text{MgTeO}_6$ ($x = 0.0025, 0.005, 0.01, 0.02, 0.03, 0.05$, and 0.10) phosphors.

The CIE chromaticity coordinates are reasonable parameters for evaluating the performance of phosphor. Fig. 6 shows the CIE chromaticity diagram of $\text{Ca}_2(1-x)\text{Tm}_x\text{Na}_x\text{MgTeO}_6$ ($x = 0.0025, 0.005, 0.01, 0.02, 0.03, 0.05$, and 0.10) phosphors. The chromaticity coordinates of $\text{Ca}_2\text{MgTeO}_6:0.02\text{Tm}^{3+}$ are (0.147, 0.029). These Chromaticity coordinates are situated in the blue color

region, Moreover, the color coordinates are all near the standard blue color coordinates.

Fig. 7. Luminescence decay curves of $\text{Ca}_2(1-x)\text{Tm}_x\text{Na}_x\text{MgTeO}_6$ ($x = 0.005, 0.02$, and 0.05) phosphors.

Fig. 7 exhibits the luminescence decay lifetimes of $\text{Ca}_2(1-x)\text{Tm}_x\text{Na}_x\text{MgTeO}_6$ ($x = 0.005, 0.02$, and 0.05) ($\lambda_{\text{ex}} = 359 \text{ nm}$, $\lambda_{\text{em}} = 456 \text{ nm}$). The average decay lifetimes of Eu^{3+} ions are concluded by Equation (3) [29,30]:

$$\tau_m = \frac{\int_0^\infty t \times I(t) dt}{\int_0^\infty I(t) dt} \quad (3)$$

where $I(t)$ is the luminescence intensity at t , and τ_m represents the value of lifetime. The decay lifetimes are calculated to be 1.007, 0.566, and 0.267 ms when the concentrations were 0.005, 0.02, and 0.05 mol, respectively. The decay time decreased with the enhancement of Tm^{3+} concentration. When the doping ion concentration of Tm^{3+} increases, the interaction between $\text{Tm}^{3+}-\text{Tm}^{3+}$ gradually strengthens, resulting in an increase in non-radiative transition possibility.

4 Conclusions

The $\text{Ca}_2\text{MgTeO}_6:\text{Tm}^{3+}$ phosphors with different concentrations were successfully synthesized by the solid-state reaction method at 1100°C for 24 h. Their phase purities were checked by XRD measurement. Particle size has a range of 1-2 μm . When excited at 359 nm, the $\text{Ca}_2\text{MgTeO}_6:\text{Tm}^{3+}$ phosphors presented prominent emission peaks at 457 nm. The highest relative intensity was at 0.02 mol doping level. The concentration quenching was due to the electric dipole-dipole interaction. The critical distance related to concentration quenching to be 22 Å. The chromaticity coordinates of $\text{Ca}_2\text{MgTeO}_6:0.02\text{Tm}^{3+}$ are (0.147, 0.029). The decay time of $\text{Ca}_2(1-x)\text{Tm}_x\text{Na}_x\text{MgTeO}_6$ decreased with the increase of Tm^{3+} concentration. In conclusion, the $\text{Ca}_2\text{MgTeO}_6:\text{Tm}^{3+}$ phosphor is a promising blue-emitting candidate for W-LEDs.

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