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Synthesis, characterization and magnetic properties of glass ceramics containing nanoparticles of both Ba-hexaferrite and Zn-ferrite

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Abstract

Differential thermal analysis, X-ray diffractometry and transmission electron microscopy were used to study the crystallization behavior of glass ribbons with a composition of 35% BaO, 35% Fe_2O_3, 20% B_2O_3 and 10% TiO_2 (mol.%). Replacement of different amounts of BaO by ZnO was studied. Heat treatment was applied at both 700 and 1000 °C for 1 h with heating rate 3 °C/min. Both Ba-hexaferrite and Zn-ferrite, with crystallite size 2–7 nm, were detected by XRD and TEM. The magnetic properties of ribbons prepared via cooling the melts between steel rollers were measured with a vibrating sample magnetometer. Magnetization saturation (*Ms*) was increased by increasing ZnO, while coercivity (*Hci*) increased by increasing BaO. Partial replacement of Ba by Zn revealed preparation of samples contains both Zn ferrite and Ba hexaferrite which give wide range for engineering application.

Keywords: Ba-ferrite; Zn-ferrite; Glass-ceramics

1. Introduction

Nanoparticles ferro and ferri-magnetic glass-ceramics play an essential role for the future technology, especially in different health care uses, such as cell separation, magnetic resonance imaging contrast agents, hyperthermia treatment of cancer and drug delivery. On the other hand, permanent magnet plays very important role in engineering applications as particulate media for recording high density information [1] as credit, debit, and ATM cards. Speakers and microphones, electric motors and generators are other engineering applications.

The importance of magnetic nanoparticles comes from its remarkable new phenomena, such as super paramagnetism, high field irreversibility, high saturation field, extra anisotropy contributions or shifted loops after field cooling. These phenomena arise from finite size and surface effects that dominate the magnetic behavior of individual.

Barium hexaferrites, owing to their superior properties, have been utilized in various applications as permanent magnets and particulate media for recording high density information. In recent years, the glass crystallization method has been widely used to synthesis various magnetic materials, especially barium hexaferrites. Most investigators have chosen B_2O_3 as a glass former for their base glass compositions. The effects of composition, nucleating agents and heat treatment schedule upon magnetic properties have been reported [2–6]. Borate glass offers many advantages in this process, especially for manufacturing particulate recording media, where the amorphous phase must be leached out and the inherent low chemical durability of borate glasses facilitate the process [1]. However, for other applications, e.g. thin films, where the magnetic phase should be dispersed in a glassy matrix, the glass should be chemically more resistant and not vulnerable to moisture attack.

There have been some attempts to change the properties of matrix glasses by partially replacing B_2O_3 by 10 mol.% SiO_2 in the composition $0.45BaO \cdot 0.25Fe_2O_3 \cdot 0.30B_2O_3$ [4]. It was supposed that in addition to improve the durability of glass, this could decrease the crystallization rate of the melt and

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make it more controllable. However, it was proved that the resultant glass ceramics while showing a relatively high coercivity exhibited a low value of saturation magnetization. In order to increase the values of saturation magnetization, it was attempted to increase the content of Fe_2O_3 to 35 mol.% at the expense of BaO [5]. The above mentioned specimens although exhibited much improved values of *Ms* but generally showed mostly non-uniform and not quite the expected fine microstructures. In order to improve this, it was decided to add TiO_2 as nucleating agents to the main glass composition.

On the other hand, spinel ferrite nanocrystals are regarded as two of the most important inorganic nanomaterials because of their electronic, optical, electrical, magnetic, and catalytic properties. Spinel ferrites have the structure AB_2O_4 in which A and B display tetrahedral and octahedral cation sites, respectively, and O indicates the oxygen anion site. Metal spinel ferrite nanoparticles have the general molecular formula MFe_2O_4 (e.g., M=Zn, Ni, Co, Mn, or Mg), and they have a face-centered cubic (fcc) close packing structure. Among the spinel ferrite compounds, zinc ferrite ($ZnFe_2O_4$) has been studied extensively due to its high electromagnetic performance, excellent chemical stability, mechanical hardness, low coercivity, and moderate saturation magnetization, which make it a good contender for applications as soft magnets and low-loss materials at high frequencies [7].

In this paper, glass ceramic contains both of Ba- and Zn-ferrite nanoparticles was prepared and studied. A comprehensive account of the addition of TiO_2 to these glasses has been given with an emphasis on the microstructural changes and their effect on the magnetic properties.

2. Experimental methods

The chemical compositions of the examined samples are illustrated in Table 1.The samples were signed as Z0, Z0.5 and Z1 according to the percent of ZnO substitute BaO in the batch composition. The batch compositions were mixed well in ball miller for about 15 min.

The calculated batches were melted in platinum 2% Ru crucibles for 2 h after the last traces of the batch constituents had disappeared. The melting was carried out at 1350–1450 °C according to the glass composition using an electric furnace (Vecstar model VF3 UK). The melts were rotated several times 30 min apart to achieve homogeneity. The melts were poured on to a stainless steel plate at room temperature and pressed into a plate 1–2 mm thick by another cold steel plate.

Table 1
Chemical compositions of fifth group in mol.%.

Sample no.	BaO	ZnO	Fe_2O_3	B_2O_3	TiO_2
Z0	35	–	35	20	10
Z0.5	17.5	17.5	35	20	10
Z1	–	35	35	20	10

Thermal behaviors of the prepared samples were examined using differential thermal analysis (DTA). The glass transition temperature (T_g) and the temperature of crystallization (T_c) were evaluated from DTA data. DTA was performed using SETRAM Instrumentation Reulation, Labsys™ TG-DSC16 under inert gas. According to the DTA results the obtained glass were heat treated at different temperatures with heating rate 3 °C/min under reducing atmosphere in a SiC electric furnace to study the effect of heat treatment on the crystallization behavior. It was noticed that the synthesis parameters (such as temperature, time, heating rate, and atmosphere) play a fundamental role for magnetite crystallization.

The identification of the crystalline phases precipitated within the glass-ceramic samples was carried out by X-ray diffraction analysis. Bruker D8 Advanced Instrument adopting Ni-filtered Cu radiation was used in the present investigation. The X-ray diffraction patterns were recorded in a 2θ range of 10–70°.

TEM was used to study microstructure and crystallite size of the prepared samples. The heat treated glasses were crushed and sonically suspended in ethanol and few drops of the suspended solution were placed on an amorphous carbon film held by copper micro grid mesh and then observed under transmission electron microscope.

The magnetic properties of the as prepared and heat treated samples were measured at room temperature using a vibrating sample magnetometer (VSM; 9600-1 LDJ, USA) in a maximum applied field of 20 kOe. From the obtained hysteresis loops, the saturation magnetization (*Ms*), remanence magnetization (*Mr*) and coercivity (*Hci*) were determined.

3. Results and discussion

Fig. 1 reveals DTA traces of samples under investigation. Z0 sample (with zero ZnO) revealed endothermic effect at 548 °C and two exothermic effects at 674 and 725 °C, respectively. Appearance of two exothermic peaks means crystallization of two different phases or crystallization of a phase followed by transformation of this phase to another structure form; this will be confirmed by XRD later. DTA of Z0.5 and Z1 revealed one exothermic peak corresponding to crystallization of one crystallized phase followed by sharp endothermic effect which may be due to partial remelting of the crystallized phase.

Heat treatment of these samples at 700 and 1000 °C for 1 h with heating rate 3 °C/min under reducing atmosphere was done.

Figs. 2–4(a)–(c) reveal XRD analysis of Z0, Z0.5 and Z1 after quenching from melting temperature, heat treatment at 700 °C/1 h and 1000 °C/1 h, respectively, with heating rate 3 °C/min under reducing atmosphere.

From Fig. 2, for Z0 sample, it is noticed that, in general the major of detectable peaks can be indexed as belonging to the barium hexaferrite phase ($BaFe_{12}O_{19}$), in the standard data (card no. 27-1029) immersed in amorphous glassy phase. Traces of hematite were observed in quenched sample, while