The phase evolution with temperature in $0.94PbZrO_3$–$0.06Pb(Mg_{1/2}W_{1/2})O_3$ antiferroelectric ceramic

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ABSTRACT

The perovskite structure of the lead zirconate–lead magnesium tungstate ceramic, $0.94PbZrO_3$–$0.06Pb(Mg_{1/2}W_{1/2})O_3$ (0.94PZ–0.06PMW), was prepared by the wolframite precursor method. The phase evolution with temperature in the 0.94PZ–0.06PMW ceramic was investigated, with dielectric permittivity, differential scanning calorimetry and polarization measurements. The ceramic was in the antiferroelectric phase when below 177 °C, based on dielectric measurement, and an intermediate phase was detected between 177 and 219 °C. Evidence from ferroelectric data was found to suggest that this intermediate phase is ferroelectric.

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1. Introduction

Active studies of antiferroelectric (AFE) materials have been recently enhanced for next-generation electronic systems, for example, microelectromechanical systems consisting of sensors and actuators and high performance energy storage devices [1,2]. The phase transition from AFE to the field-forced ferroelectric (FE) state, induced by an electric field [3,4], is characterized by typical double P–E hysteresis loops. These materials are suitable for nonlinear charge storage capacitors because a field-forced ferroelectric state releases all polarized charges and can therefore supply very high instantaneous currents at the ferroelectric to antiferroelectric reverse phase transition. Recently, AFE materials, including $Pb(Zr,Ti)O_3$, $(Pb,Ba)ZrO_3$, $(Pb,Sr)TiO_3$, $(Pb,La)(Zr,Ti)O_3$, $NaNbO_3$, and $(Bi_{0.5}Na_{0.5})TiO_3$ systems, have attracted increasing scientific attention [3–9]. Among them, lead zirconate ($PbZrO_3$; PZ) and $PbZrO_3$-based are the most attractive AFE materials, due to their high longitudinal strain response, and the latter is a proto-type of AFE ceramics that belongs to an ABO_3-type perovskite family of oxides [10,11]. At temperatures below the Curie temperature (230 °C), PZ displays an orthorhombic perovskite structure with lattice parameters of $a = 5.87$ Å, $b = 11.74$ Å and $c = 8.20$ Å [12]. This structure possesses an antiparallel shift of Pb ions along the [1 1 0], resulting in antiferroelectricity [13]. At temperatures above 230 °C, $PbZrO_3$ is in the paraelectric phase, with cubic $m3m$ symmetry [13,14]. An intermediate phase, characterized by $1/2\{110\}_c$-type superlattice diffractions, is in between the AFE and paraelectric phase, within a narrow temperature range of 225–230 °C [13,14]. It is well known that the AFE to FE phase transformation in PZ ceramic requires a very strong electric field; otherwise, dielectric breakdown occurs. Consequently, most commercial AFE ceramics are chemically modified by adding Ba^{2+}, Sr^{2+}, Ti^{4+} or Sn^{4+} to reduce the critical field and optimize the physical and electrical properties [3–9]. Sawaguchi [15] studied the effect of Ti^{4+} substitution in PZ on temperature variation of the P–E hysteresis loop and established the ferroelectric intermediate phase between the AFE and PE phase. Shirane [16] investigated the phase transition behavior of Ba^{2+} doping in PZ and reported that the ferroelectric intermediate phase between the AFE and PE phase for Ba^{2+} concentrations was lower than $x = 0.175$. Pokharel and Pandey [17,18] reported that relaxor ferroelectric behavior for Ba^{2+} concentrations was higher than $x = 0.25$. Recently, it was reported that antiferroelectric $(Pb_{1-x}Ba_x)ZrO_3$ (PBZ) films, with a higher barium content of more than 45 mol%, were in paraelectric state at room temperature and possessed excellent dielectric properties comparable to $(Ba,Sr)TiO_3$ [6]. On the contrary, a ferroelectric intermediate phase was not observed in lanthanum doping in PZ. Otherwise, lanthanum

doping in PZ would be found to increase the stability range of the antiferroelectric phase [19,20]. Furthermore, Tan et al. [20] studied the doping effect of various metal oxide elements on field-induced polarization in PZ ceramics and found that addition of Bi^{3+} and K^+ substantially increased stability of the antiferroelectric phase. Chen et al. [21] observed antiferroelectric-like or double hysteresis loops behavior in $(Pb,Sr)TiO_3$. However, the antiferroelectric nature is different from PZ ceramics. Rubia et al. [22] investigated the effect of Hf^{4+} substitution in PZ on phase transition, when the intermediate phase was found to increase with increasing Hf^{4+} concentrations. Up to now, scientific information about the effect of metal oxide substitution in PZ and nature of the intermediate phase is still unclear. Recently, our research work reported that the intermediate phase can also be introduced by partial replacement of Zr^{4+} ions with complex B-site ions such as Ni^{2+}/Nb^{5+} [23,24], Zn^{2+}/Nb^{5+} [25], or Co^{2+}/Nb^{5+} [26]. Furthermore, our previous study found that by adding minor amounts (2–10 mol%) of antiferroelectric $Pb(Mg_{1/2}W_{1/2})O_3$ (PMW) into antiferroelectric PZ, the temperature range expanded to an intermediate phase, which was characterized by evident frequency dispersion in dielectric permittivity [27]. As a consequence, a series of outstanding phase transitions were revealed by the dielectric measurement [27]. Nevertheless, the nature of the intermediate phase is still open for debate. The $0.94PbZrO_3$–$0.06Pb(Mg_{1/2}W_{1/2})O_3$ ceramic was selected in this study for further investigation of phase transformation sequence, while heating to 250 °C with ferroelectric measurement.

2. Experimental procedures

The perovskite structure of the lead zirconate–lead magnesium tungstate ceramic, $0.94PbZrO_3$–$0.06Pb(Mg_{1/2}W_{1/2})O_3$ (0.94PZ–0.06PMW), was prepared by the wolframite precursor method via the ball-milling technique. The wolframite structure ($MgWO_4$) was synthesized first before stoichiometric amounts of the precursor (MgO and WO_3) were mixed and milled in ethyl alcohol for 18 h. The mixture was then dried and calcined at 1100 °C for 4 h, and $MgWO_4$ and ZrO_2 were subsequently mixed with PbO. After re-milling and drying, the mixtures were calcined at 900 °C for 4 h in a closed alumina crucible. Pellets measuring 15 mm in diameter were pressed using 5% PVA, the binder was burned out slowly by heating to 500 °C over 2 h, and the samples were sintered at 1150 °C for 4 h. Phase formation of 0.94PZ–0.06PMW was investigated by X-ray diffraction (XRD). Scanning electron microscopy (SEM; Hitachi, s4007) was employed to investigate the microstructure of the sintered pellets. The major faces of the samples were lapped to determine their dielectric and ferroelectric properties, and silver electrodes were made from a low-temperature silver paste by firing at 550 °C for 30 min to enable electrical measurements to be taken. The relative permittivity (ε_r) and dissipation factor (tan δ) were measured using an HP-4284A LCR meter. The capacitance and dissipation factors of the sample were measured at 1–100 kHz, and the temperature varied between 25 and 350 °C. A heating rate of 2 °C/min was used during measurement, and the phase transitions also were measured by differential scanning calorimeter (DSC 2920, TA Instrument) between ambient temperature and 350 °C at a rate of 10 °C/min. The electrical polarization versus field hysteresis loops was recorded at a series of temperatures by a standardized ferroelectric test system (RT-66A, Radiant Technologies). The peak field was maintained at 30 kV/cm during measurement, and the ferroelectric hysteresis loop was recorded after the temperature was stabilized for at least 5 min.

3. Results and discussion

The XRD pattern of 0.94PZ–0.06PMW ceramic is presented in Fig. 1. The 0.94PZ–0.06PMW ceramic was identified from the patterns as a single-phase material with a perovskite structure having orthorhombic symmetry. Evidence of the pyrochlore or other second phases was not detected in the pattern, but the $1/4(hkl)$ superstructure lines were present in the 0.94PZ–0.06PMW ceramic, indicating that the Pb^{2+} ions suffer antiparallel displacements with respect to their original position in the cubic perovskite lattice. The indexed pattern with the least number of refinement squares gave a cell with dimensions of $a = 5.85(1)$ Å, $b = 11.67(3)$ Å and $c = 8.16(8)$ Å. The cell parameters of 0.94PZ–0.06PMW were close to those of the standard data: PDF#751607 [$a = 5.88(4)$, $b = 11.76(0)$ and $c = 8.22(0)$]. A 97.8% relative density of the ceramic was measured
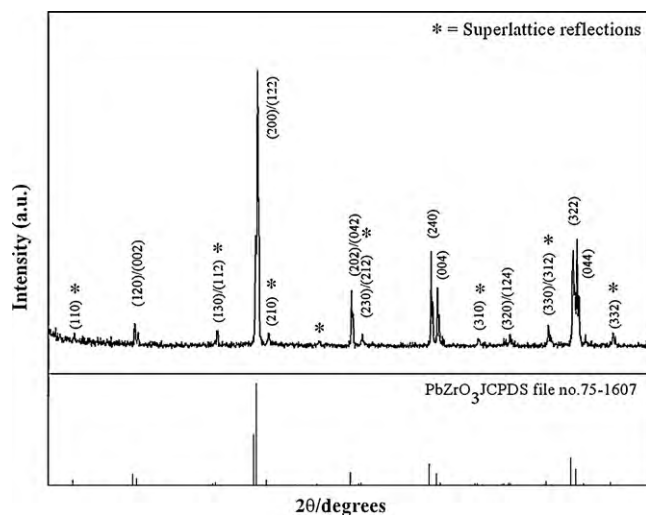

Fig. 1. XRD pattern of 0.94PZ–0.06PMW ceramic.

using the Archimedes method, and the grain size was examined by scanning electron microscopy (SEM). The fresh surface of the 0.94PZ–0.06PMW ceramic was almost free of pores, with a grain size in the range of 10–14 μm, as shown in Fig. 2.

The temperature dependence of relative permittivity and dielectric loss was measured at frequencies of 1, 10 and 100 kHz, while heating from 25 to 350 °C, and the results are displayed in Fig. 3. There were clearly two abrupt changes in both relative permittivity and dielectric loss in the 0.94PZ–0.06PMW ceramic. The first one occurred at around 177 °C, where both relative permittivity and dielectric loss increased by one order of magnitude. The other one took place at the Curie temperature of 219 °C, where significant suppression of dielectric loss was seen. Therefore, the dielectric response in the 0.94PZ–0.06PMW ceramic can be divided into three stages. At temperatures below 177 °C, both the relative permittivity and the dielectric loss have low values and show negligible increases with increasing temperatures. At temperatures above 219 °C, the relative permittivity begins to decrease following the Curie–Weiss law [3,4]. In the intermediate temperature range (177–219 °C), the relative permittivity increases dramatically, while the dielectric loss remains high at around 0.08.

To elucidate further on the dielectric behavior of different phases in the 0.94PZ–0.06PMW ceramic, electrically polarized hysteresis loop measurements were performed at a series of tem-
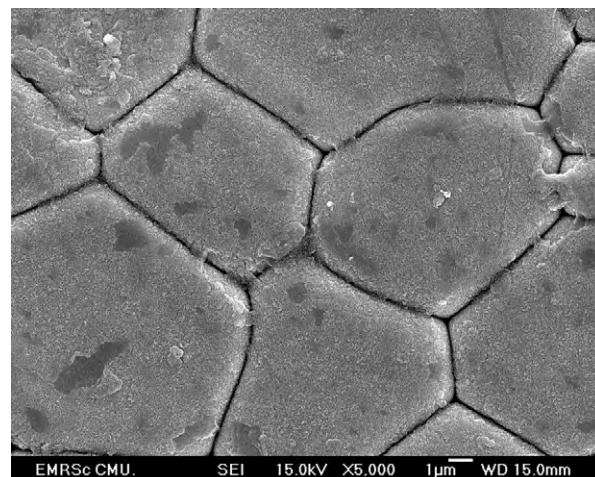

Fig. 2. SEM image of 0.94PZ–0.06PMW ceramic surfaces.