

сообщения
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C326

E17-83-624

6255/83

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ON THE THEORY
OF STRUCTURAL PHASE TRANSITIONS
IN RbCaF_3

1983

1. INTRODUCTION

Transitions caused by condensation of zone boundary modes associated with rotation of BX_6 octahedra occur in a number of perovskites ABX_3 . It is well established that these phase transitions are caused by the condensation of one or two normal modes and these transform like irreducible representations R_{25} and M_3 . These both modes represent the rotational vibrations of BX_6 octahedra around cubic principal axes. The difference between R_{25} and M_3 is that the R_{25} represents the opposite rotation of the neighbouring BX_6 octahedra along the rotation axis, whereas the M_3 represents the rotations in the same direction.

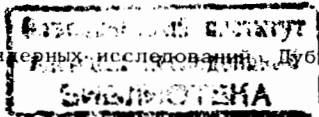
One can find examples of these transitions in refs.^{/1,2/}. Neutron and X-ray structure determinations^{/3/} have shown, that for the phases which have two or more octahedral rotations the static displacements of the ions cannot be accounted for by the linear superposition of R- and M-type rotational modes alone. It was suggested in^{/1/} that for phases in which these modes have condensed, static displacements associated with the normal mode of X-type are also present.

A structural phase transition in the perovskite ABX_3 caused by the condensation of the parallel components of the R- and M-modes with taking into account the displacements of A-ions corresponding to X-mode has been considered in ref.^{/4/}.

The purpose of the present paper is to analyze the structural phase transitions in ABX_3 corresponding to the condensation of nonparallel components of R- and M-modes. Such a transition is encountered in $RbCaF_3$, for example.

2. SYMMETRY ANALYSIS

The atomic displacements corresponding to R_{25} and M_3 modes can be described by three-dimensional irreducible representation r_8 (through this paper, the irreducible representations will be labelled in accordance with^{/5/}) of the one-component star $\{\vec{k}_{13}\}$ (the R-point of the Brillouin zone, $\vec{k}_R = (\pi/a)(1,1,1)$) and by the one-dimensional irreducible representation r_5 of the three-component star $\{\vec{k}_{11}\}$ (the M-point of the Brillouin zone, $\vec{k}_{1M} = (\pi/a)(0,1,1)$, $\vec{k}_{2M} = (\pi/a)(1,0,1)$, $\vec{k}_{3M} = (\pi/a)(1,1,0)$).



As is shown in paper^{/1/}, for phases in which R- and M-modes have condensed, static displacements of A-ions associated with a normal mode with wave vector of the X-point are also present.

In phases, in which the parallel components of the R- and M-modes have condensed ($r_a \neq 0, m_a \neq 0, a = 1, 2, 3$), the displacements of A-ions along the axis a take place and they transform like the one-dimensional irreducible representation r_4 of the three-component star $\{k_{10}\}$ (the X-point of the Brillouin zone $k_{1X} = (\pi/a) (1, 0, 0)$, $k_{2X} = (\pi/a) (0, 1, 0)$, $k_{3X} = (\pi/a) (0, 0, 1)$).

However, if the nonparallel components of R and M condense ($r_a \neq 0, m_\beta \neq 0, a \neq \beta$), then the A-ions are displaced along the axis of the R-type rotation, and these displacements transform like the two-dimensional irreducible representation r_{10} of the star $\{k_{10}\}$. In this case the displacements of X-ions accompanied by the displacements of A-ions under the structural phase transitions may be described by 12-component order parameter:

$$p = \{ (r_1, r_2, r_3), (m_1, m_2, m_3), (X_1^y, X_1^z, X_2^z, X_2^x, X_3^x, X_3^y) \}.$$

Following Landau's phenomenological theory of the second order phase transition, we expand the free energy of the system in terms of $(r_1, r_2, r_3), (m_1, m_2, m_3), (X_1^y, X_1^z, X_2^z, X_2^x, X_3^x, X_3^y)$ up to the fourth order

$$\begin{aligned} F = F_0 &+ a_1 \sum_{i=1}^3 r_i^2 + \beta_1 \sum_{i=1}^3 r_i^4 + \gamma_1 \sum_{i \neq j} r_i^2 r_j^2 + \\ &+ a_2 \sum_{i=1}^3 m_i^2 + \beta_2 \sum_{i=1}^3 m_i^4 + \gamma_2 \sum_{i \neq j} m_i^2 m_j^2 + \\ &+ A_1 \left(\sum_{i=1}^3 r_i^2 \right) \left(\sum_{i=1}^3 m_i^2 \right) + A_2 \sum_{i=1}^3 r_i^2 m_i^2 + \\ &+ a_3 \sum_{i \neq j} (X_i^j)^2 + \delta \sum_{i \neq j} r_j m_i X_i^j. \end{aligned} \quad (1)$$

Each term is constructed so that cubic symmetry operations leave it invariant. It is assumed that only temperature dependent coefficients are a_1, a_2 and

$$a_1 = a_1^0 (T - T_R^0), \quad a_2 = a_2^0 (T - T_M^0),$$

where T_R^0, T_M^0 are, respectively, the critical temperatures of (r_1, r_2, r_3) and (m_1, m_2, m_3) separately.

The expression (1) differs from the one used to describe the system in which the condensation of R_{25} and M_3 modes takes place through the inclusion of terms in X_i^j .

The equilibrium state at an arbitrary temperature should be determined by the minimization of F with respect to r_i, m_i and X_i^j , in particular

$$\frac{\delta F}{\delta X_i^j} = 2a_3 X_i^j + \delta r_j m_i; \quad X_i^j = -\frac{\delta}{2a_3} r_j m_i. \quad (2)$$

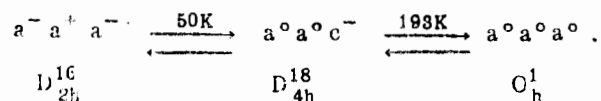
So, one can see that a particular set of non-zero components of R- and M-modes determines which of various X_i^j have non-zero values.

3. PHENOMENOLOGY OF $RbCaF_3$

The expression (1) for the free energy will be now applied to $RbCaF_3$.

Experimental work up to date indicates that it undergoes a series of structural phase transitions: the 193K transition (O_h^1 to D_{4h}^{18}) induced by the condensation of one of the components of the triply degenerated R_{25} mode^{/8/} and the 50K transition (D_{4h}^{18} to D_{2h}^{16}) induced by the condensation of M_3 mode^{/7/}. In the phase below 50K the rubidium displacements along $|101|$ are observed^{/8/}.

According to Glazer's notation^{/9/} the successive phases correspond to the following sequence of tilts:



The solution of (1) corresponding to the above tilt system is

$$r_1^2 = r_3^2 = \frac{-2\beta_2 a_1 + \bar{A}_1 a_2}{2\beta_2 (2\beta_1 + \gamma_1) - 2\bar{A}_1^2}, \quad (3a)$$

$$m_2^2 = \frac{-a_2 (2\beta_1 + \gamma_1) + 2\bar{A}_1 a_1}{2\beta_2 (2\beta_1 + \gamma_1) - 2\bar{A}_1^2}, \quad (3b)$$

$$X_2^z = -\frac{\delta}{2a_3} r_3 m_2, \quad (3c)$$

$$X_2^x = -\frac{\delta}{2a_3} r_1 m_2, \quad (3d)$$

where $\tilde{A}_1 = A_1 - \frac{\delta^2}{4a_3} \equiv A_1 - \delta'$. The stability of this phase requires

$$(4\beta_2 m_2^2 + 2\delta' r_1^2) [(4\beta_1 + 2\gamma_1) r_1^2 + \delta' m_2^2] - 4\tilde{A}_1^2 r_1^2 m_2^2 > 0, \quad (4a)$$

$$a_3 > 0, \quad (4b)$$

$$(4\beta_1 - 2\gamma_1) r_1^2 + \delta' m_2^2 > 0. \quad (4c)$$

Under the assumption that the structural phase transitions in RbCaF_3 are well described by the dynamic model^{10/}, we are led to:

$$\beta_1 = \beta_2, \quad \gamma_1 = \gamma_2; \quad (5)$$

$$A_1 = \gamma_1, \quad A_2 = 6\beta_1 - \gamma_1.$$

If we furthermore take into account that $r_1^2 = m_2^2$, we can rewrite the inequality (4a) in the form

$$-(\delta')^2 + 6(\beta_1 + \gamma_1)\delta' + 2(4\beta_1^2 + 2\beta_1\gamma_1 - \gamma_1^2) > 0. \quad (6)$$

It yields together with inequality (4c) the following condition for the coupling constant δ' :

$$2(\gamma_1 - 2\beta_1) < \delta' < 3(\beta_1 + \gamma_1) + w, \quad (7)$$

where $w = (17\beta_1^2 + 22\beta_1\gamma_1 + 7\gamma_1^2)^{1/2}$.

It should be here noted that by considering only the R- and M-modes in the expression (1), the following stability conditions for the phase ($r_1 = r_3 \neq 0, m_2 \neq 0$) are readily obtained

$$\beta_1 > 0, \quad (8a)$$

$$4\beta_1^2 - \gamma_1^2 > 0. \quad (8b)$$

If the phase ($r_3 \neq 0$) is the previous to the phase mentioned above, the following condition should be satisfied additionally

$$2\beta_1 < \gamma_1. \quad (9)$$

One can see that the set of inequalities (8a)-(8b) is inconsistent with the inequality (9).

To the light of these results it is seen that the displacements of Rb-ions corresponding to X-mode play an important role in stabilization of the observed phases.

Comparing the free energies of the neighbouring ($a^0 a^0 c^-$) and ($a^- a^+ a^-$) phases, we obtain the following expression for the critical temperature:

$$T_M = \frac{2aT_R^0 + 2bT_M^0 - c(T_R^0 + T_M^0) - (T_R^0 - T_M^0)\sqrt{c^2 - 4ab}}{2(a + b - c)}, \quad (10)$$

where

$$a = [\beta_1(2\beta_1 - \gamma_1) - \tilde{A}_1^2](a_1^0)^2,$$

$$b = \beta_1(2\beta_1 + \gamma_1)(a_2^0)^2,$$

$$c = 4\tilde{A}_1\beta_1 a_1^0 a_2^0.$$

It is easy to check that at $T = T_M$ the squares of the order parameters r_1^2, m_2^2 are nonvanishing, hence this transition is of the first order.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank prof. N.M.Plakida who has contributed greatly to the content of this paper through valuable discussions.

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Received by Publishing Department
on August 31, 1983.

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E17-83-624

К теории структурных фазовых переходов в RbCaF_3

Рассматриваются структурные фазовые переходы в перовските RbCaF_3 , индуцированные мягкими модами R_{25} и M_3 . На основе симметричного анализа получено разложение свободной энергии с учетом сопутствующих переходу $D_{4b}^{18} \rightarrow D_{2b}^{18}$ смещений ионов Rb. При анализе условия стабильности фаз, показано, что одновременная конденсация мод R_{25} и M_3 возможна лишь при определенной величине константы связи ионов Rb с решеткой.

Работа выполнена в Лаборатории теоретической физики ОИЯИ.

Сообщение Объединенного института ядерных исследований. Дубна 1983

Podolska-Strycharska A.

E17-83-624

On the Theory of Structural Phase Transitions in RbCaF_3

Structural phase transitions in perovskite RbCaF_3 induced by the soft modes R_{25} and M_3 are considered. On the basis of the symmetry analysis a free energy expansion is obtained, where displacements of Rb ions are taken into account. By analyzing the stability conditions, it was shown that soft modes R_{25} and M_3 may condensate simultaneously only for a definite value of Rb-ion coupling with the lattice.

The investigation has been performed at the Laboratory of Theoretical Physics, JINR.

Communication of the Joint Institute for Nuclear Research. Dubna 1983