SELF-INDUCED RESONANT OPTICAL ROTATION IN CRYSTALS KCl:Li


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(Received 20 January 1979 by K.A. Kaner)

The specific rotation of the resonant radiation polarization plane predicted earlier for cubic crystals with tunneling centers is observed in KCl containing P_A(Li) centers. The rotation is supposed to be connected essentially with the well-known off-center position of Li^+ ion. The simple theory based on this assumption agrees with the experimental data.

There are known many impurity centers in cubic crystals which have several equivalent positions or orientations in the lattice cell \( I_1^2 \). The probability of the tunneling transition from one position (orientation) to another depends on the impurity electron state. As a rule this probability in the excited state exceeds that in the ground one. The excitation of the impurity may be easily performed by resonant radiation. The absorption coefficient of a given center is anisotropic because its local symmetry is lower than cubic one. This anisotropy allows to excite the impurities selectively (depending on their orientation) by the linearly polarized radiation. The fast reorientation of the excited centers results in the optical alignment of the impurities and hence in the anisotropy of the impure cubic crystal as a whole. In the theory of the optical orientation this anisotropy was taken into account self-consistently and was shown to cause the turn of the orienting radiation polarization plane to one of the crystallographic axes. The nature of the latter effect may be easily understood if one consider the centers oriented along the axes of the type \( \langle 100 \rangle \).

Let the radiation frequency lie in the absorption bend corresponding to the excitation of the impurity by the radiation with the electric vector \( \vec{E} \) parallel to the center axis. Then the light propagating in the [001] direction (z-axis) excites resonantly only the centers oriented along x and y axes (the excitation probability is proportional to \( E_x^2 \) and \( E_y^2 \) respectively). This leads to the decrease in the total concentration of x- and y-centers (they go to z-orientation) and hence to the decrease in the resonant radiation absorption, i.e. the self-transparency appears. The latter effect becomes more pronounced when the ratio of the reorientation time in the ground state to that in the excited state grows because the transitions from z-orientation take place in the ground state only. If the radiation is linearly polarized and \( E_x \gt E_y \), then x-centers are excited stronger than y-
centers. Hence the concentration of x-centers appears to be smaller than that of y-centers under stationary conditions and in its turn the x-component of the radiation is absorbed weaker than the y one. As a consequence the propagation of the resonant radiation is followed by the polarization plane rotation toward the x-axis.

To reveal the self-induced optical rotation experimentally the $F_A^-(Li)$-centers in KCl were chosen because of their high reorientation quantum efficiency. In the "$F_A^-$ configuration", one nearest-neighbor cation of the $F$-center is replaced by the alkali (Li$^+$) ion. The impurity absorption spectrum consists of two bands. The $F_{AI}^-$ band corresponds to the transition polarized along the center axis, while the $F_{A2}^-$ band corresponds to the twofold degenerate transition polarized in the plane perpendicular to the center axis.

The $F_A^-(Li)$-centers in KCl were produced from F-centers, created by X-ray irradiation using the method, described in I. The optical orientation was performed by excitation of $F_{AI}^-$-transition with a He-Ne laser ($\lambda=632.8$ nm). To provide the angular polarization measurements the laser beam, passed through the Fresnel prism, traverses a path consisting of two Glan-Thompson polarizers, with the crystal, mounted in cryostat, between them. The experimental accuracy of the angle determination was $\pm 1^\circ$.

The angle $\gamma$ between the E-vectors of the incident and outgoing light versus the angle $\alpha$ between the E-vector of the incident radiation and the [100]-axis is plotted in Fig.1 by points. It is seen that the polarization plane turns to the nearest between [100], [010] directions. The sign of $\gamma$ is changed at $\alpha=45^\circ$. In the range 0$\leq\phi\leq45^\circ$ (one-half period) the dependence $\gamma(\phi)$ is somewhat asymmetrical and its maximum is shifted to the nearest among [100] directions.

![Fig.1. Rotation of polarization for crystals with various $F_A(Li)$ concentrations. $T=77^\circ K$. The X-ray irradiation doses are: 1- 7 Mrad; 2- 15 Mrad. The sample thickness is: 1- 0.26 cm; 2- 0.41 cm.](image)

The rotation depends essentially on the $F_A^-$-concentration (radiation dose) and the thickness of specimen.

Although our experimental evidence agree qualitatively with the theoretical predictions one cannot use for the direct interpretation of these data. Indeed the ground state reorientation time for $F_A^-(Li)$ centers in KCl is extremely large (it exceeds $10^8$ sec at $T<200^\circ K$). As a result the stationary polarization rotation is practically impossible for such centers in the model. According to in the configuration under consideration ($E_x=0; E_y=0; E_z=0$) all centers must go to the orientation [101], where they do not absorb the radiation. Hence after rather short time (it is inversely proportional to the light intensity and the excited state reorientation probability) the impurity absorption disappears and the polarization rotation vanishes.
The rotation we have observed may be connected with the off-center position of the Li\(^+\) ion in the \(P_A(Li)\) configuration discovered in \(^2\). The corresponding reduction of the site symmetry (as compared with \(C_{4v}\) for the central Li\(^+\) position) causes the mixing of the wave functions of the nondegenerate and degenerate excited states of the \(P_A(Li)\) centers (their splitting is comparatively small and equals 0.26 ev). Consequently the polarization selection rules are softened and there is weak \(P_{AI}\) absorption of the radiation polarized normally to the center axis. Then all centers appear to be excited by resonant radiation (with more or less probability depending on the polarization) and it is impossible to achieve a complete optical alignment. The latter was observed in \(^1\)\(^,\) \(^2\) indeed.

To consider the optical orientation of the \(P_A(Li)\) centers quantitatively it is convenient to generalize the approach taking into account the change in the absorption selection rule. Neglecting the reorientation in the ground electronic state and taking into account the fast rotation of a Li\(^+\) ion around the center axis the following kinetic equation may be obtained for the impurities:

\[
\frac{d\rho_n}{dt} = -\sum_{m} (C_{nm}\rho_n - C_{mn}\rho_m);
\]

\[
\sum_{n} \rho_n = 1; \quad n, m = x, y, z; \quad (I)
\]

\[
C_{nm} = A \left[ E_n^2 + \chi (E_n^2 - E_m^2) \right]; \quad E_n^2 = \sum_{n} E_n^2.
\]

Here \(\rho_n\) determines the distribution of the centers over the orientations (optical equivalence of the orientations \([100]\) and \([100]\) etc has been taken into account, cf. \(^3\)); \(C_{nm}\) is the probability of the transition from \(n\)-th orientation to the \(m\)-th one; \(E_n^2\) is the amplitude of the projection of the radiation electric vector on the \(n\)'s axis. Parameter \(A\) presents the product of the resonant absorption cross section on the reorientation probability in the excited state \((1/4\) for \(P_{AI}(Li)\) in KCl \(^I\)). Parameter \(\chi\) characterizes the ratio of the absorption cross sections for the light polarized normal and parallel to the center axis.

To describe the resonant radiation propagation in crystal self-consistently it is necessary to calculate the impurity contribution to the crystal polarization taking into account the center reorientation determined by Eq.\((I)\). In the actual case of the linearly polarized radiation propagating in the direction \([001]\) under stationary conditions \(t \gg \alpha^{-1}\) at \(\chi \ll I\) the change of the angle \(\psi\) between the vector \(E\) and \([100]\) may be shown to satisfy the equation

\[
\frac{d\psi}{dz} = -\frac{3}{2I_0^2} \frac{\sin 4\psi}{2(\chi^{-1} + 2)\sin 2\psi}; \quad \psi(0) = \alpha. \quad (2)
\]

Here \(I_0\) is the absorption constant in the absence of orientation \(\left(\rho_x = \rho_y = \rho_z = I/3\right)\). The radiation frequency is supposed to fall into the middle of \(P_{AI}\) band and the contribution of impurities to the crystal refractive index is neglected. The corrections of the higher order in \(\chi\) are neglected also. The angle \(\psi\) in Fig.\(I\) is connected with \(\Psi\) by the obvious relation \(\Psi = \chi - \Psi(I)\) where \(I\) is the crystal thickness. According to Eq.\((2)\) the angle \(\psi\) is independent on the light intensity. This coincides with our observation (laser intensity was varied in 60 times).

The results of the numerical solution of Eq.\((2)\) are plotted in Fig.\(I\) (solid curves) for \(\chi = I/15\). The curves \(I\) and \(2\) correspond to \(I_0 = I\) and \(2.2\). The chosen value of \(\chi\) is consistent in the order of magnitude with the ratio of intensities for \(P_{AI}\) absorption bands before and after optical orientation which may be obtained from \(I_1\). It seems to be reasonable also if one suppose that the shift of the Li\(^+\) ion from the centre of the unit cell in \(P_A(Li)\) system is of the same order as that of the isolated
Li⁺ in KCl (≈0.2 lattice constant). Our experimental error in the determination of χ makes up ≈30%.

The temperature dependence of the rotation is shown in Fig. 2. It is seen that ϕ is independent on temperature up to T $200^\circ$K. This fact can be explained if one takes into account that the increase in $I_0$ (according to Eq. (2) it results in the decrease in ϕ) is compensated to some extent by the increase in the parameter χ with temperature. At T $>200^\circ$K ϕ decreases gradually. This may be caused by several reasons e.g. the decrease of the impurity absorption anisotropy due to the overlap of $F_{A1}$ and $F_{A2}$ bands in this temperature range, exponential growth of the ground state transition probability, the partial dissociation of the $F_A$(Li) centers and so on.

It should be noted that an additional information concerning the origin of the polarization selection rule violation may be obtained by the investigation of the spectral dependence of the optical rotation.

REFERENCES