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To cite this version:
R. Verhoef, J. Franse, A. Menovsky, R. Radwaski, Ji Song-Quan, et al.. HIGH-FIELD MAGNETISATION MEASUREMENTS ON R2Fe14B SINGLE CRYSTALS. Journal de Physique Colloques, 1988, 49 (CS), pp.C8-565-C8-566. <10.1051/jphyscol:19888256>. <jpa-00228424>

HAL Id: jpa-00228424
https://hal.archives-ouvertes.fr/jpa-00228424
Submitted on 1 Jan 1988

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HIGH-FIELD MAGNETISATION MEASUREMENTS ON $R_2Fe_{14}B$ SINGLE CRYSTALS

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Abstract. – High-field magnetisation measurements on single crystalline samples of $Pr_2Fe_{14}B$, $Nd_2Fe_{14}B$ and $Dy_2Fe_{14}B$ are presented and discussed within a two-sublattice model. Special attention is given to the high-field part of the magnetic curves ($B_0 > 20$ T).

1. Introduction

Since the discovery in 1983 of the excellent magnetic properties of the $R_2Fe_{14}B$ family of compounds many research groups have made a large effort to elucidate its intriguing intrinsic magnetic properties. These properties are governed by the interplay between the crystalline-electric field (CEF) and the exchange interactions. In order to deduce the parameters describing these interactions a detailed study of the magnetisation curves of all the $R_2Fe_{14}B$ compounds is needed. For this study single crystals and high-magnetic fields are essential.

2. Samples and experimental techniques

The single crystals of $Pr_2Fe_{14}B$ (26 mg) and $Dy_2Fe_{14}B$ (19 mg) have been produced in the Laboratoire Louis Néel, Grenoble, France whereas the $Nd_2Fe_{14}B$ single crystal (sphere of 3 mm; 105 mg) has been produced in Amsterdam. In both cases a Czochralski technique was used.

High-field magnetisation measurements, at 4.2 K, were performed in the High-Field Installation of the University of Amsterdam [1]. Measurements were carried out by means of step-wise pulses with field intervals that can be programmed. For a more precise determination of the magnetisation curves, desirable in case of transitions, pulses in which the field increases or decreases linearly in time are employed.

3. Results and discussion

The magnetisation curves are analysed with the following phenomenological expression for the free energy:

$$E_{R-T}=E_R^T+E_e^T-\mu_B M_T M_R-B_0 - M_T B_0$$

where $M_T$ and $M_R$ denote the magnetisation of the iron and rare-earth sublattice respectively, and where $B_0 = \mu_0 H$. The anisotropy energy $E_a$ is expressed in terms of the Legendre functions, $P^m$, and the corresponding anisotropy coefficients, $\kappa^m$, which can be transformed into the CEF coefficients $A^m$. The 3d-4f exchange interaction is expressed in a molecular-field approximation where $nRT$ is the intersublattice molecular-field coefficient. For the iron anisotropy energy $E_a^T$ and the iron magnetic moment $M_T$, the values derived for the $Y_2Fe_{14}B$ compound are used. A more detailed description of this type of analysis is given elsewhere [2].

$Nd_2Fe_{14}B$. – In figure 1 the experimental magnetisation curves of $Nd_2Fe_{14}B$ are presented together with the calculated fits. From the experimental data we derive a value for the spontaneous magnetisation of $26 \, \text{mG}$ and a tilt angle of $30.8^\circ$ whereas the results are in good agreement with the data reported before [3, 4, 5].

![Fig. 1. – High-field magnetisation curves of $Nd_2Fe_{14}B$ at 4.2 K. Dotted lines represent fits to the experimental data.](http://dx.doi.org/10.1051/jphyscol:19888256)
and measured up to 40 T. No transition is found up to this field value along this direction and the magnetisation is still not saturated.

The fit to the experimental data results in the following CEF parameters (in $K_{\alpha n}$): $A_2^0 = +330$, $A_4^0 = -16$, $A_6^0 = -2.9$, $A_8^0 = +3.9$, $A_2^8 = -12$ and in a value of the molecular field experienced by the Nd moment ($\mu_B n_m H$) of about 350 T, which is a measure for the exchange interaction. These values are in satisfying agreement with data reported by Cadogan et al. [5].

Pr$_2$Fe$_{14}$B. – The magnetisation curves of Pr$_2$Fe$_{14}$B are presented in figure 2. Our experimental results differ from the results reported by Hiroyoshi et al. [6]. Firstly, we derive a somewhat lower value for the spontaneous magnetisation of 185 Am$^2$/kg and somewhat higher values for the transition fields of 13.2 T and 17.1 T along the [100] and [110] direction, respectively. Secondly, we observe an intersection of the [100] and [110] curves after the transitions which is not present in the curves of Hiroyoshi et al.

A satisfying fit with reasonable values for the CEF and exchange parameters has not yet been achieved. After the transitions the magnetisation does not reach the saturation value. This indicates that there is a minimum in the free energy for a direction which is tilted away from the c axis by about 55°. This minimum is mainly created by the CEF parameter $B_2^0$. However, the observed reduced magnetisation at high fields, $B \geq 25$ T, hampers the fitting procedure. This reduction may be related to field induced non-collinear magnetic structures. When forcing the magnetisation by means of the applied magnetic field to be in the basal plane, the anisotropy energy connected with the off-diagonal CEF parameters can be so large that the Pr moments at the two different rare-earth sites (f and g) can be split up into four sublattices.

Dy$_2$Fe$_{14}$B. – The magnetisation curves of the Dy$_2$Fe$_{14}$B sample are presented in figure 3. The essential point to note in these magnetisation curves is the intersection of the hard [100] and [110] axis curves with the easy axis [001] curve at 30 T. This intersection reflects the bending towards each other of the two sublattice moments under the influence of the increasing magnetic field. For the molecular field experienced by the Dy moment we derive, from our fit to the experimental data a value of 137 T. The crystal field parameters derived from the fit are (in $K_{\alpha n}$): $A_2^0 = +285$, $A_4^0 = -14$ and $A_6^0 = 0.5$, values which are somewhat different from data reported by Givord et al. [7]. In addition, the angle $\epsilon$ by which the moment configuration deviates from the strict antiparallel one, is determined as a function of the applied field. It is found that in a field of 10 T $\epsilon$ is already $6°$ increasing to $18°$ for 35 T.

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Acknowledgements

This work is supported by the Commission of the European Communities within the CEAM programme.