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## Study on Morphology and Crystal Structure of Pd Doped $\text{Nd}_{1.2}\text{FeO}_3$

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### Abstract

Study on morphology and crystal structure of  $\text{Nd}_{1.2}\text{Pd}_x\text{Fe}_{1-x}\text{O}_3$  doped Pd (1,2,3,4 and 5 wt%) synthesized by solid state reaction method have been investigated. X-ray diffraction (XRD) and scanning electron microscope (SEM) were used to identify phase and morphology of sample. Further analysis using *X'Pert High Score Plus* software show that samples have two phases:  $\text{Nd}_{1.2}\text{Pd}_x\text{Fe}_{1-x}\text{O}_3$  as major phase and  $\text{Nd}_2\text{O}_3$  as a minor phase.  $\text{Nd}_{1.2}\text{Pd}_x\text{Fe}_{1-x}\text{O}_3$  crystalline size obtained by Scherrer equation has a value ranging from 43 to 50 nm and also has spherical shapes with the small existence of Pd confirmed by EDS results.

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**Keywords:** palladium;  $\text{NdFeO}_3$ ; morphology; crystal structure; crystalline size

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### 1. Introduction

The  $\text{ReFeO}_3$  (Re: rare-earth elements) as known as the rare-earth orthoferrites has an orthorhombic structure derived from a perovskite structure [1]. These rare-earth orthoferrites have attracted much interest due to their properties such as magnetic and magneto-optic [2]. Further,  $\text{NdFeO}_3$  material also can be used as raw material of gas sensors[3], fuel cells[4] and catalyst material gas sensors [5-6]. The preparation of  $\text{NdFeO}_3$  material can be achieved by several methods including a high-temperature ceramic method, hydrothermal synthesis [7], sol-gel method [8] and many more.

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Among those several methods, the solid-state reaction method was selected to synthesized the  $\text{NdFeO}_3$  material because this method is cheap and easy to achieve. Furthermore, the product of the reaction has high purity and good crystallinity [9]. Perovskite materials such as  $\text{NdFeO}_3$  give a good opportunity to improve its properties by varying their chemical composition [10-11]. The  $\text{ReFeO}_3$  can be doped with other metals to increase its properties such as Ni-doped  $\text{GdFeO}_3$ , Co-doped  $\text{LaFeO}_3$ , Mn-doped  $\text{LuFeO}_3$  but less information about using noble elements such as palladium as a doping material in  $\text{NdFeO}_3$ .

In this paper, the Palladium (Pd) doped  $\text{NdFeO}_3$  samples were prepared by using a solid-state reaction method. The Pd that used was varied from 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 wt%. All samples of  $\text{Nd}_{1.2}\text{Pd}_x\text{Fe}_{1-x}\text{O}_3$  then characterized to obtain their crystal structure properties and morphology. Further, the Refinement results also presented using the Rietveld method.

## 2. Experimental method

In this paper, the Pd doped  $\text{Nd}_{1.2}\text{FeO}_3$  sample was synthesized by the following process. The first process, raw materials of  $\text{Nd}_2\text{O}_3$  (Strem Chemicals, 99.99%),  $\text{Pd}_2\text{O}_3$  (Sigma-Aldrich, 99.99%) and  $\text{Fe}_2\text{O}_3$  (Sigma-Aldrich, 99.99%) were mixed and ground using mortar for 3 hours. That mixed material then calcined using an electric furnace at  $700^\circ\text{C}$  for 6 hours. The calcined sample was milled for 5 hours following by sintering at  $950^\circ\text{C}$  for 6 hours.

The sintered material was ground for 3 hours and recalined at  $950^\circ\text{C}$  for 6 hours. The material then ground for 5 hours and sintered at  $1050^\circ\text{C}$  for 9 hours. Those procedures were then implemented for different Pd content from 1 to 5 wt%.

The phase of  $\text{Nd}_{1.2}\text{Pd}_x\text{Fe}_{1-x}\text{O}_3$  samples was characterized using XRD (Rigaku Mini Flex II  $\text{CuK}\alpha$ ,  $\lambda = 0.154 \text{ nm}$ ) and SEM-EDAX (FEI Inspect S50) to obtain the phase and morphology, respectively.

## 6. Results and discussions

### 3.1. Analysis of x-ray diffraction patterns

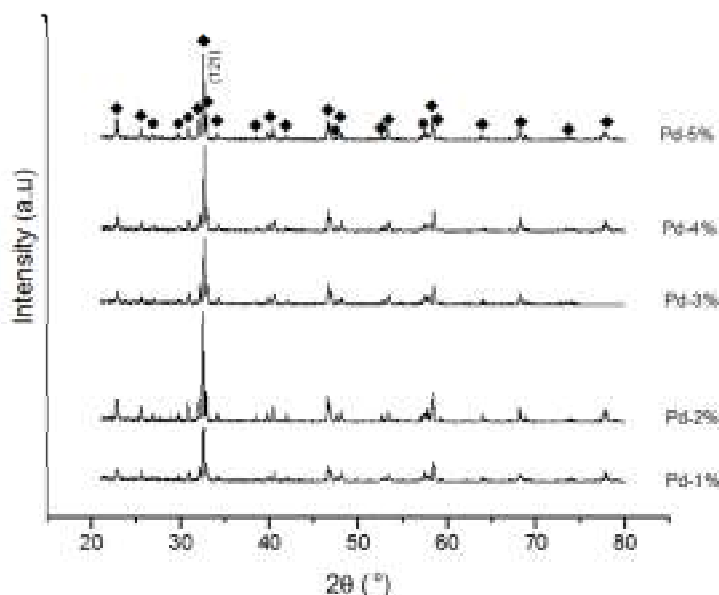


Fig. 1. X-ray diffraction pattern of Pd doped  $\text{Nd}_{1.2}\text{FeO}_3$  (◆ =  $\text{Nd}_{1.2}\text{Pd}_x\text{Fe}_{1-x}\text{O}_3$ , ● =  $\text{Nd}_2\text{O}_3$ )

Fig. 1. shows the result of X-ray diffraction characterization for  $\text{Nd}_{1.2}\text{Pd}_x\text{Fe}_{1-x}\text{O}_3$  samples. Analysis using X'Pert High Score Plus software shows that all of  $\text{Nd}_{1.2}\text{Pd}_x\text{Fe}_{1-x}\text{O}_3$  ( $x = 1, 2, 3, 4$  and  $5 \text{ wt}\%$ ) compounds crystallize as

perovskite phase with orthorhombic structure with two major phases:  $Nd_{1.2}Pd_xFe_{1-x}O_3$  and  $Nd_2O_3$  with the highest peak lead to  $Nd_{1.2}Pd_xFe_{1-x}O_3$  phase at plane (121) in orthorhombic structure for each sample which is similar to previous results [9,12-13]. Fig.1. also shows the presence of  $Nd_2O_3$  phase. The presence of  $Nd_2O_3$  phase due to the low temperature during the calcination process [9] and  $Nd_2O_3$  which did not react perfectly with  $Fe_2O_3$  to form  $NdFeO_3$  [19]. There is no peak of impurity observed which indicates that the samples consist of pure phases [14].

Fig. 2. shows information about the relative intensity of  $Nd_{1.2}Pd_xFe_{1-x}O_3$  phase and  $Nd_2O_3$ . It can be seen that the presence of palladium in the lattice of  $Nd_{1.2}FeO_3$  has a significant effect on the relative intensity of the sample. The highest intensity lies to sample with palladium content at 3 wt% which explain the best crystallinity.

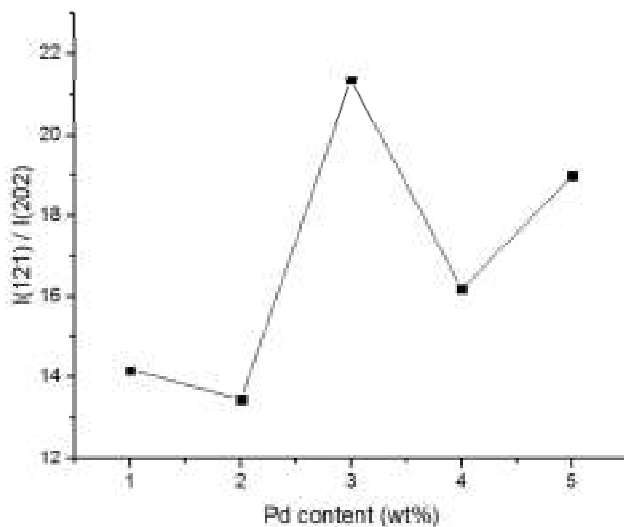


Fig. 2. Relative intensity of  $Nd_{1.2}Pd_xFe_{1-x}O_3$  phase at  $2\theta = 32.56^\circ$  and  $Nd_2O_3$  phase at  $2\theta = 64.08^\circ$  as a variation of palladium content

Further analysis of Pd doped  $Nd_{1.2}FeO_3$  is presented in Table 1. It is observed that the peak position of (121) Bragg's plane lower as Pd content increases. It indicates that the expansion of the lattice parameters occurs [15] due to the diffusion of ion  $Pd^{3+}$  into  $NdFeO_3$  mother compound [16] substituting the  $Fe^{3+}$  ion. The crystalline size of the samples can be obtained using the Debye–Scherrer equation (1) [17]:

$$D = \frac{0.89\lambda}{\beta \cos(\theta)}$$

2  
(1)

where  $\lambda$  is the wavelength of X-ray (0.15406 nm),  $\beta$  is FWHM value at (121), and  $\theta$  is diffraction angle.

Table 1. X-ray analysis results of Pd doped  $Nd_{1.2}FeO_3$  at plane (121)

Pd (%)	2θ (degree)	FWHM* (degree)	Crystalline size (nm)
1	32.6107	0.18948±0.00394	43.21
2	32.4937	0.16436±0.00394	43.80
3	32.5915	0.18473±0.00394	44.32
4	32.5843	0.16180±0.00394	50.60
5	32.4821	0.16376±0.00394	49.99

As shown in Table 1. the crystal size increase from 43.21 to 50.60 nm as the dopant increase from 1 to 4 wt%. A higher dopant does not make the lattice expand, but a little reduce. The nonlinear lattice expansion phenomena may be originated not only the ion substitution but more the limit of solid solubility.

Further analyses of the XRD histograms using Rietveld refinement method also interesting to be reported. The results of refinement are presented in Table 2. It is found that increasing of palladium content in  $Nd_{1.2}FeO_3$  makes its

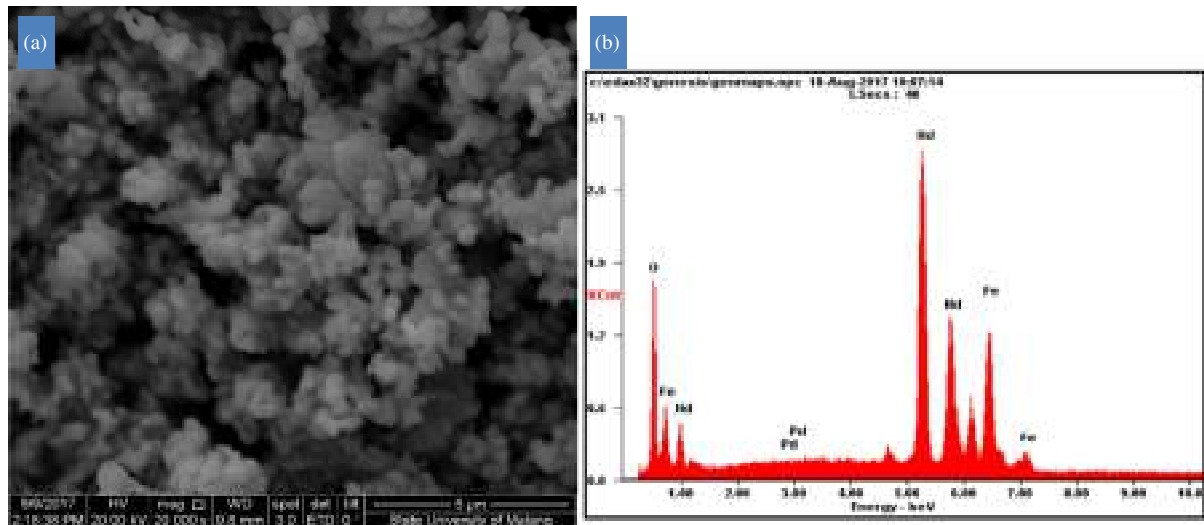
lattice parameter expand due to different ionic radii of  $\text{Pd}^{3+}$  which larger than  $\text{Fe}^{3+}$  ion. It also makes FWHM value decrease when the concentration of Pd increase to 5% and the crystalline size increase as the doping increase. The range of crystalline size of these samples is about 40 to 50 nm which has a similar value from another work [18]. Table 2. also gives the value of Goodness of Fit (GoF) for resulting refinement which in range of 0 to 1 indicating the fit patterns of between experimental data and model was good and acceptable [19-20].

Table 2. Lattice parameters of Pd doped  $\text{Nd}_{1.2}\text{FeO}_3$  by Rietveld refinement

Pd Content (%)	a (Å)	b (Å)	c (Å)	Rp (%)	Rwp (%)	GoF (%)
1	5.581114 ± 0.001018	7.760299 ± 0.001435	5.449368 ± 0.000938	30.40	21.54	0.5
2	5.581471 ± 0.000908	7.764312 ± 0.001218	5.452063 ± 0.000816	30.24	19.67	1
3	5.582604 ± 0.001013	7.760463 ± 0.001473	5.450199 ± 0.000946	30.61	20.05	0.1
4	5.583977 ± 0.000774	7.761196 ± 0.001063	5.449952 ± 0.000697	31.05	21.35	0.7
5	5.584483 ± 0.000606	7.763024 ± 0.000827	5.453594 ± 0.000549	33.06	19.40	0.7

### 3.2. Analysis of morphology

Influence of palladium on the morphology of  $\text{Nd}_{1.2}\text{FeO}_3$  was investigated by using SEM can be seen in Fig. 3. It is found that all of the samples show inhomogeneous morphology. This is indicated that increasing  $\text{Pd}^{3+}$  content on  $\text{Nd}_{1.2}\text{FeO}_3$  does not significantly change the shape of grains, but change grain size larger. From the SEM images, we also observed that there are agglomerations occur. The sample with 1 wt% of palladium content exhibits more agglomerations than the sample with 5 wt%. It happens due to the small size of particles leading to the high surface area. This high surface area provides high surface energy, to minimize it the agglomeration is formed [21-22].



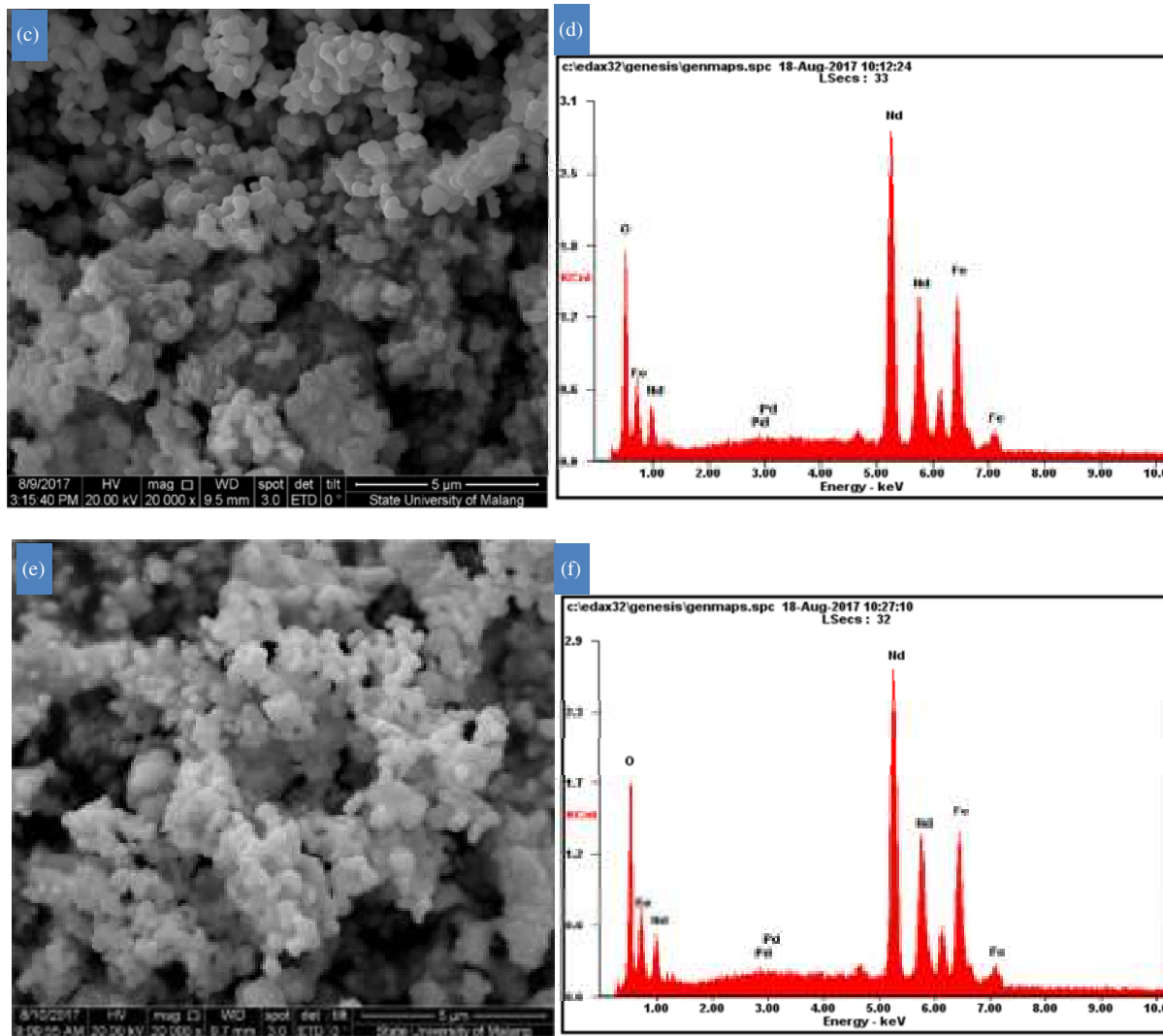


Fig. 3. Morphology of sample Pd doped  $Nd_{1.2}FeO_3$  and its EDS spectrum at Pd doped: 1% (a – b); 3% (c – d); and 5% (e – f).

Further information of EDS results from all samples is listed in Table 3. It is interesting to see that the increase of Pd ion give rise to increase iron but decrease Nd ions. According to the ionic radii, the radius of Pd is closer to Fe ions rather than Nd ion. Table 3. explains that Pd substitution does not as simple as expected. A few amounts of Pd also could interstitially or substitute Nd ion. This result showed the presence of iron and neodymium as the dominant element. We also found the existent of palladium with a much lower fraction.

Table 3. The elemental composition of  $Nd_{1.2}FeO_3$  from EDS measurement.

Pd content (%)	Elements (wt%)			
	O	Pd	Nd	Fe
1	12.36	00.23	69.72	17.69
2	12.02	00.30	70.23	17.44
3	12.66	00.53	68.04	18.77
4	13.47	00.65	66.49	19.40
5	12.92	00.80	67.19	19.09

Since the crystalline phase is mostly dominated by the  $\text{Nd}_{1.2}\text{Pd}_x\text{Fe}_{1-x}\text{O}_3$  compare to  $\text{Nd}_2\text{O}_3$ , as discussed previously. The elemental data also indicate that the Pd has been incorporated into the  $\text{Nd}_{1.2}\text{FeO}_3$  into to two forms. The composite of  $\text{Nd}_{1.2}\text{FeO}_3$  / $\text{Nd}_2\text{O}_3$  and chemically substitute into  $\text{Nd}_{1.2}\text{Pd}_x\text{Fe}_{1-x}\text{O}_3$ . Therefore the main crystalline phase of the samples is  $\text{Nd}_{1.2}\text{Pd}_x\text{Fe}_{1-x}\text{O}_3$  as confirmed using XRD, SEM and EDS results, respectively.

#### 4. Conclusion

The Pd doped  $\text{Nd}_{1.2}\text{FeO}_3$  samples were successfully synthesized by using a solid-state reaction method. The XRD analysis confirms that all samples exhibit an orthorhombic structure with two phases  $\text{Nd}_2\text{O}_3$  and  $\text{Nd}_{1.2}\text{Pd}_x\text{Fe}_{1-x}\text{O}_3$ . The presence of Pd gradually shifted the  $2\theta$  into a lower  $2\theta$  degree. It causes because the  $\text{Pd}^{3+}$  ion successfully substitutes into  $\text{Nd}_{1.2}\text{FeO}_3$  lattice replacing the  $\text{Fe}^{3+}$  ion due to the small difference of ionic radii to  $\text{Pd}^{3+}$ . According to the calculation, the average of the crystalline size of all samples ranging from 40.0-50.0 nm. Although Pd gives rise to effect on the crystal structure, it does not give significant effect to morphology. A further study is necessary to find the relation of pure phase Pd doped  $\text{NdFeO}_3$  and its crystal structure.

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