Nuclear Magnetic Resonance Laboratory course
Assignment 8

Quadrupole Interaction III: Single crystals

Dr. rer. nat. habil Thomas Meier, HPSTAR

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Abstract

Single crystal Nuclear Magnetic Resonance (NMR) spectroscopy provides a powerful tool for studying the atomic-scale properties of crystalline materials. In this lab course, the focus will be on angular-dependent NMR studies of corundum (Al_2O_3), a material with a well-defined crystal structure. Understanding the behavior of the ^{27}Al NMR system within a single crystal will allow for the investigation of anisotropic interactions and provide insights into the crystal's symmetry and local electronic environment.

In single crystal NMR, the spectra are highly dependent on the orientation of the crystal with respect to the applied magnetic field. The aim of this course is to explore how these angular dependencies arise, and how they can be interpreted to reveal key information about the quadrupole interactions and chemical shifts in corundum. By systematically rotating the crystal and recording the corresponding ^{27}Al NMR spectra, the dependence of the resonance frequencies on the crystal's orientation will be studied.

Through careful analysis of these angular-dependent spectra, the interaction between the ^{27}Al nucleus and its surrounding electric field gradient, as well as its magnetic shielding environment, can be elucidated. This will lead to a deeper understanding of how NMR spectra in single crystals come to be and the factors that influence the observed resonance frequencies and line shapes.

The course will involve both experimental and theoretical components, where the experimental results from the angular-dependent NMR measurements will be compared with theoretical models of the quadrupolar and chemical shift anisotropy interactions. The ultimate goal is to gain a comprehensive understanding of the relationships between crystal orientation, local atomic structure, and the NMR observable features in single crystals like corundum.

1 Theoretical background

For these experiments, you will need the following theoretical background. Please prepare necessary mathematical expressions and derivations:

- **Single Crystal NMR and Angular Dependencies**: The principles behind NMR spectroscopy of single crystals, where the orientation of the crystal with respect to the magnetic field affects the resonance frequencies. This includes the relationship between crystal orientation, the symmetry of the electric field gradient, and the observed NMR signal.
- **Symmetry and Crystallography of Corundum (Al_2O_3)**: The structural properties of corundum and its symmetry should be examined. This includes understanding the relationship between the crystallographic axes and how the electric field gradient is aligned with respect to the applied magnetic field.
- **Angular-Dependent NMR Spectra**: The theoretical basis for how angular-dependent NMR spectra are generated. This involves studying the mathematical relationship between the orientation of the crystal, the quadrupole and CSA tensors, and how these influence the observed spectrum.

- **Tensor Mathematics and Eigenvalue Analysis**: Since both quadrupolar and CSA interactions are described by second-rank tensors, students need to understand the mathematical framework for working with tensors. This includes eigenvalue analysis, which is crucial for predicting and interpreting angular-dependent NMR data.
- **Experimental Techniques in Single Crystal NMR**: An understanding of the methods used to rotate single crystals in the magnetic field and how angular positions are controlled and measured. This also involves studying the practical setup for angular-dependent NMR measurements, including the orientation matrix and goniometer usage.
- **Signal Processing and Spectral Analysis**: Techniques for processing the raw NMR data, such as Fourier transform, and analyzing the resulting spectra. The ability to interpret angular-dependent shifts, splittings, and line shapes to extract quadrupolar coupling constants and chemical shift tensors.
- **Comparison with Theoretical Models**: Familiarity with theoretical models that describe quadrupole interactions and chemical shift anisotropy in single crystals. These models are used to predict the behavior of ^{27}Al in corundum and should be understood in order to compare experimental results with theory.

2 Tasks

Please work on the tasks step-by-step and summarize your observations thoroughly and logically when you hand in the assignment. Please provide data plots and calculations to underline your conclusions. We recommend the use of ONMR running in Origin7 or later, for data analysis.

- **Setup of the NMR Spectrometer and Goniometer**: The NMR spectrometer must be configured for the ^{27}Al NMR system, and the single crystal of corundum (Al_2O_3) should be mounted on the goniometer. The alignment of the crystal with respect to the magnetic field must be carefully adjusted, ensuring precise angular control.
- **Measurement of Angular-Dependent NMR Spectra in 10-degree Steps**: NMR spectra of the ^{27}Al nuclei should be acquired while rotating the crystal in 10-degree increments. The goal is to systematically record the angular dependence of the spectra, tracking how the resonance frequencies shift as the orientation of the crystal relative to the magnetic field changes.
- **Non-Selective Excitation of All Resonances**: Non-selective excitation should be used to detect all transitions of the ^{27}Al system simultaneously. RF pulses must be set to ensure that all relevant resonance frequencies are excited, allowing for a complete capture of the angular dependence across the spectrum.
- **High-Resolution Detection of Individual Transitions**: At specific angles where the individual transitions are well-separated, high-resolution spectra are to be acquired for detailed analysis. The exact angles where each signal is sufficiently resolved should be determined based on the angular-dependent data, and higher resolution acquisitions should focus on these key positions to resolve the quadrupole interaction effects.
- **T_1 and T_2 Relaxation Time Measurements**: For each transition of the ^{27}Al nuclei, longitudinal (T_1) and transverse (T_2) relaxation times must be measured.
- **Comparison of Relaxation Times Across Transitions**: After obtaining the T_1 and T_2 measurements for each transition, the relaxation times are to be compared across the different transitions. The goal is to investigate any correlation between the relaxation behavior and the orientation of the crystal, as well as any differences between individual transitions due to quadrupolar interactions and chemical shift anisotropy.
- **Data Processing and Spectral Reconstruction**: The raw data from the angular-dependent measurements and relaxation experiments must be processed. Spectra should be analyzed to extract the resonance frequencies, line shapes, and relaxation parameters at each angle.

- **Analysis of Angular Dependence and Quadrupole Parameters**: The angular dependence of the ^{27}Al resonances should be analyzed to extract the quadrupole coupling constant (C_Q) and the asymmetry parameter (η). The experimental data will be compared with theoretical predictions for corundum, focusing on how the local environment of the ^{27}Al nucleus influences the observed angular behavior.
- **Comparison with Literature Values**: Finally, the quadrupole parameters, relaxation times, and spectral shifts obtained from the experimental data should be compared with known values from the literature. Any deviations or new insights regarding the structure of corundum and the behavior of ^{27}Al in single crystal NMR studies are to be discussed.

3 Literature

- doi: 10.1103/PhysRev.80.580
- doi: 10.1021/ar400045t
- https://www.pascal-man.com/EACself.pdf