Green emitting CdSiO₃:Yb³⁺,Tb³⁺ materials: combining up-conversion and persistent luminescence

Lucas C.V. Rodrigues¹,²(PQ), Cássio C.S. Pedroso¹(PQ), Tero Lahinen²,³(PQ), Hermi F. Brito¹(PQ), Liana K.O. Nakamura⁴(PQ), Maria C.F.C. Felinto⁴(PQ), Mika Lastusaari²,³(PQ), Jorma Hölsä¹,²,⁵(PQ)

¹University of São Paulo, Institute of Chemistry, 05508-000, São Paulo-SP, Brazil
²University of Turku, Department of Chemistry, FI-20014, Turku, Finland
³University of Turku Graduate School (UTUGS), Turku, Finland
⁴Instituto de Pesquisas Energéticas e Nucleares, 05508-900, São Paulo-SP, Brazil
⁵Turku University Centre for Materials and Surfaces (MatSurf), Turku, Finland
*Corresponding author: lucascvr@iq.usp.br

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Introduction

Up-conversion materials produce light or UV radiation under infrared excitation by converting, two or more low energy photons into one of higher energy. These materials receive special attention due to their potential applications to increase solar cell efficiency [1] and as biomarkers. Recently, persistent up-conversion luminescence was observed in ZrO₂:Yb³⁺,Er³⁺ materials for the first time [2] but, hitherto, it is the only report on this the new phenomenon. As a new approach to obtain persistent up-conversion luminescence materials, this work presents the preparation and up-conversion properties of the new CdSiO₃:Yb³⁺,Tb³⁺ material.

Results and Discussion

The CdSiO₃:Yb³⁺,Tb³⁺ materials were synthesized with a solid state reaction at 950 °C with Tb³⁺ and Yb³⁺ concentrations of 1 and 0.1 to 20 mol-% of the Cd amount, respectively. The XPD patterns (Fig. 1) confirm the presence of the monoclinic metasilicate (CdSiO₃) phase with the usual orthosilicate (Cd₂SiO₄) impurity. The materials with high (10 and 20 mol-%) Yb³⁺ concentrations also showed the presence of the Yb₂SiO₇ phase.

![Figure 1. XPD patterns of CdSiO₃:Yb³⁺,Tb³⁺.](image)

The materials exhibit green persistent luminescence after UV (254 nm) irradiation, similar to that observed in CdSiO₃:Tb³⁺ [3]. However, no persistent luminescence is obtained after ceased IR irradiation. On the other hand, the material exhibits green up-conversion luminescence (Fig. 2) under 980 nm excitation. The up-conversion spectra are similar to the UV irradiated, except for the absence of the 5D₄ emission, indicating that the IR excitation populates mainly the 5D₃ emitting level. Since the 5D₄ level is below the conduction band of CdSiO₃ [3], trapping of electrons is not efficient, thus reducing the probability of persistent up-conversion luminescence in this material. An increase in the Yb³⁺ concentration leads to quenching of Tb³⁺ luminescence (Fig. 2, inset) probably due to segregation of the Yb₂SiO₇ phase which deprives Yb³⁺ concentration in CdSiO₃.

![Figure 2. Up-conversion emission spectra of CdSiO₃:Yb³⁺,Tb³⁺.](image)

Conclusions

These results indicate that CdSiO₃:Yb³⁺,Tb³⁺ can be used as an optical marker yielding both persistent and up-conversion luminescence but not a combination of them. More studies are necessary to obtain new persistent up-conversion materials.

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