

Synthesis and upconversion luminescence of $\text{Lu}_2\text{O}_3:\text{Yb}^{3+}, \text{Tm}^{3+}$ nanocrystals

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Abstract: Lutetium oxide nanocrystals codoped with Tm^{3+} and Yb^{3+} were synthesized by the reverse-like co-precipitation method, using ammonium hydrogen carbonate as precipitant. Effects of the Tm^{3+} , Yb^{3+} molar fractions and calcination temperature on the structural and upconversion luminescent properties of the Lu_2O_3 nanocrystals were investigated. The XRD results show that all the prepared nanocrystals can be readily indexed to pure cubic phase of Lu_2O_3 and indicate good crystallinity. The experimental results show that concentration quenching occurs when the mole fraction of Tm^{3+} is above 0.2%. The optimal Tm^{3+} and Yb^{3+} doped molar fractions are 0.2% and 2%, respectively. The strong blue (490 nm) and the weak red (653 nm) emissions from the prepared nanocrystals were observed under 980 nm laser excitation, and attributed to the $^1\text{G}_4 \rightarrow ^3\text{H}_6$ and $^1\text{G}_4 \rightarrow ^3\text{F}_4$ transitions of Tm^{3+} , respectively. Power-dependent study reveals that the $^1\text{G}_4$ levels of Tm^{3+} can be populated by three-step energy transfer process. The upconversion emission intensities of 490 nm and 653 nm increase gradually with the increase of calcination temperature. The enhancement of the upconversion luminescence is suggested to be the consequence of reducing number of OH^- groups and the enlarged nanocrystal size.

Key words: $\text{Lu}_2\text{O}_3:\text{Yb}^{3+}, \text{Tm}^{3+}$ nanocrystal; co-precipitation method; upconversion luminescence

1 Introduction

In recent years, upconversion luminescence of lanthanide-doped nanocrystals have attracted much attention due to their unique optical properties and potential applications in such fields as infrared to visible upconversion lasers, fibre amplifiers, color displays, optical communications and biological fluorescence labels [1–3]. Many trivalent rare earth ions, such as Er^{3+} [4], Tm^{3+} [5] and Pr^{3+} [6], are doped as emission and absorption centres in these materials. Among the rare earth ions, Yb^{3+} becomes the most suitable sensitizer ion because of its special energy levels and long excited level lifetime. Tm^{3+} is a promising optical activator that opens the possibility for simultaneous blue and ultraviolet emission of laser action and various applications [7]. When a rare earth-doped optical device is developed, the host material is a very important factor to be considered. The host material with low phonon energy can result in a

reduction of the multiphonon relaxation and help efficient upconversion occur. Therefore, choosing an appropriate host is very important for obtaining highly efficient upconversion luminescence. Rare earth oxides, as promising hosts for upconversion, possess relatively low phonon energy, high chemical durability and favorable physical properties [8]. During the past few years, extensive studies have been concentrated on the upconversion luminescence of Y_2O_3 host [9, 10]. The sesquioxide Lu_2O_3 is isostructural to Y_2O_3 and crystallizes in a cubic bixbyite structure. Lutetium could be a more favorable cation for RE^{3+} ions dopant emission [11]. Additionally, Yb^{3+} (86 pm) and Tm^{3+} (87 pm) have ionic radii similar to Lu^{3+} (85 pm), in favor of the dopant substitution. Therefore, Lu_2O_3 is an ideal host for the upconversion luminescent materials.

Co-precipitation method is one of the most promising techniques because of its advantages, such as the relatively simple synthetic route, low cost and ease of mass production. Although there are only some reports on the upconversion of rare earth ions-doped Lu_2O_3

nanocrystals [12–14], there is no systematic study on the effect of Tm^{3+} content and calcination temperature on the structural and upconversion luminescent properties of $\text{Lu}_2\text{O}_3:\text{Yb}^{3+},\text{Tm}^{3+}$ nanocrystals. In this work, lutetium oxide nanocrystals codoped with Tm^{3+} and Yb^{3+} were synthesized by a reverse-strike co-precipitation method. The effects of Tm^{3+} , Yb^{3+} molar fractions and calcination temperature on the structure and the upconversion emission intensity of the $\text{Lu}_2\text{O}_3:\text{Yb}^{3+},\text{Tm}^{3+}$ nanocrystals were investigated. The upconversion mechanisms were also discussed.

2 Experimental

Lu_2O_3 nanocrystals codoped with 2% Yb^{3+} (molar fraction, the same below) and 0.04%, 0.2%, 0.5%, 1%, and 2% Tm^{3+} were prepared by the reverse-like co-precipitation method, respectively. High pure Lu_2O_3 (99.99%), Yb_2O_3 (99.99%) and Tm_2O_3 (99.99%) were used as starting materials and ammonium hydrogen carbonate (NH_4HCO_3 , A. R., 1 mol/L solution) was precipitant. Aqueous nitrate solutions were prepared by dissolving Lu_2O_3 , Yb_2O_3 and Tm_2O_3 in HNO_3 (A. R.) and distilled water under stirring and heating. The respective nitrate solutions were mixed with an appropriate proportion. The mixed salt solution was then added drop by drop to the excess NH_4HCO_3 solution at a speed of 2 mL/min under vigorous stirring at room temperature. After the process of titration, the precipitate was aged for 2 h with agitation by a electric stirrer to make the reaction proceed sufficiently. After filtering and washing with distilled water and anhydrous ethanol several times, the precipitates were dried at 80 °C for 12 h in an oven. The precipitates were further calcined in air at 900 °C for 2 h to obtain nanocrystals. Moreover, Lu_2O_3 nanocrystals codoped with 0.2% Tm^{3+} and 1%, 2%, 4%, 6%, 10%, and 15% Yb^{3+} were synthesized by the same procedure, respectively.

To investigate the effect of calcination temperature on the upconversion luminescence of $\text{Lu}_2\text{O}_3:2\% \text{Yb}$, 0.2% Tm nanocrystals, the nanocrystals were obtained by calcining the precipitates at 800, 900, 1000 and 1100 °C for 2 h, respectively, using the same procedure.

The crystal structures were analyzed by a MXPAHF rotating anode X-ray diffractometer with $\text{Cu K}\alpha$ radiation ($\lambda=0.154056$ nm). The morphology of nanocrystals was examined on a FEI-Sirion 200 field-emission scanning electron microscope. The FT-IR transmittance spectra were recorded in the range of 400–4000 cm^{-1} on a Magna-IR 750 Fourier transformation infrared spectrometer. The upconversion luminescence spectrum was detected by R955 (Hamamatsu) from 400 to 700 nm, using an 980 nm diode laser Module (K98D08m–30W, China) as the excitation source. The excitation power

was 455 mW. All spectra were collected at room temperature.

3 Results and discussion

3.1 Influence of Tm^{3+} molar fraction on structural and upconversion luminescent properties for $\text{Lu}_2\text{O}_3:2\% \text{Yb}^{3+}, x\text{Tm}^{3+}$ nanocrystals

Figure 1 shows the XRD patterns of Lu_2O_3 nanocrystals doped with 2% Yb^{3+} and $x\text{Tm}^{3+}$ ($x=0.04\%$, 0.2%, 0.5%, 1%, 2%) and calcined at 900 °C and the data of JCPDS card No. 43–1021 for Lu_2O_3 were used as a reference. The patterns indicate that the nanocrystals were crystallized as cubic Lu_2O_3 with spatial group $Ia3(206)$. No additional peaks of other phases have been found, indicating that the RE^{3+} ions are effectively doped into the host lattice. The high intensity of the diffraction peaks indicates good crystallinity of the nanocrystals. The average crystalline sizes can be estimated by using Scherrer equation [15]:

$$D = \frac{0.89\lambda}{\beta \cos \theta} \quad (1)$$

where λ stands for the wavelength of $\text{Cu K}\alpha$ radiation; β is the corrected full width at half maximum (FWHM) of the diffraction peak; θ denotes the diffraction angle; 0.89 is the characteristic of spherical particle. Using the Scherrer equation, the estimated crystalline size of $\text{Lu}_2\text{O}_3:\text{Yb}^{3+}, \text{Tm}^{3+}$ nanocrystals is 40–60 nm.

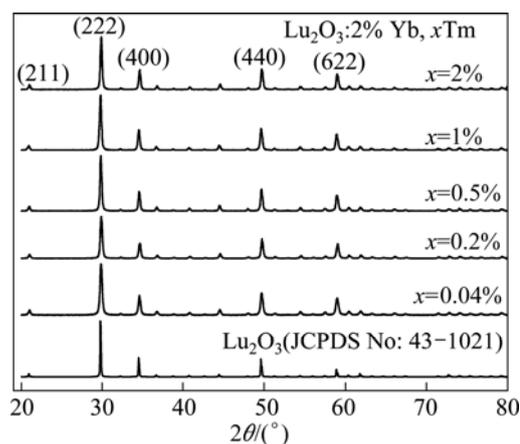


Fig. 1 XRD patterns of Lu_2O_3 nanocrystals doped with 2% Yb^{3+} and 0.04%, 0.2%, 0.5%, 1%, 2% Tm^{3+} and calcined at 900 °C and compared with standard pattern of JCPDS 43–1021

Figure 2 presents the typical FE-SEM image of $\text{Lu}_2\text{O}_3:2\% \text{Yb}^{3+}, 0.2\% \text{Tm}^{3+}$ nanocrystals calcined at 900 °C. As shown in Fig. 2, the obtained $\text{Lu}_2\text{O}_3:2\% \text{Yb}^{3+}, 0.2\% \text{Tm}^{3+}$ nanocrystals are aggregated, and have nearly spherical shape and an average diameter of 60 nm, which are consistent with the XRD results. The similar results were also observed for other $\text{Lu}_2\text{O}_3:\text{Yb}^{3+}, \text{Tm}^{3+}$

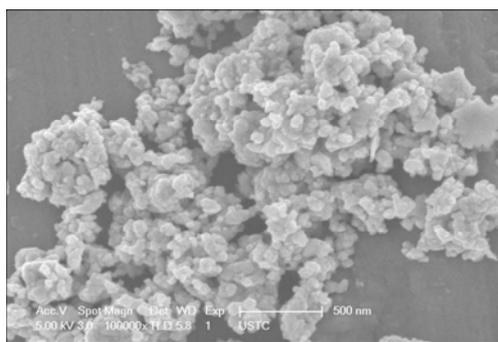


Fig. 2 FE-SEM image of $\text{Lu}_2\text{O}_3:2\% \text{Yb}^{3+}, 0.2\% \text{Tm}^{3+}$ nanocrystals

nanocrystals with various contents of Tm^{3+} (not shown here).

The typical upconversion spectrum of the $\text{Lu}_2\text{O}_3:2\% \text{Yb}^{3+}, 0.2\% \text{Tm}^{3+}$ nanocrystals calcined at 900°C and excited by 980 nm diode laser excitation at room temperature is shown in Fig. 3. The strong blue emission around 490 nm easily seen by naked eye is assigned to the $^1\text{G}_4 \rightarrow ^3\text{H}_6$ transition of Tm^{3+} . Weak red emission around 653 nm is attributed to the $^1\text{G}_4 \rightarrow ^3\text{F}_4$ transition. The experimental results show that the upconversion emission intensity ratio of the blue to red is approximately equal to 12 for the $\text{Lu}_2\text{O}_3:2\% \text{Yb}^{3+}, 0.2\% \text{Tm}^{3+}$ nanocrystals.

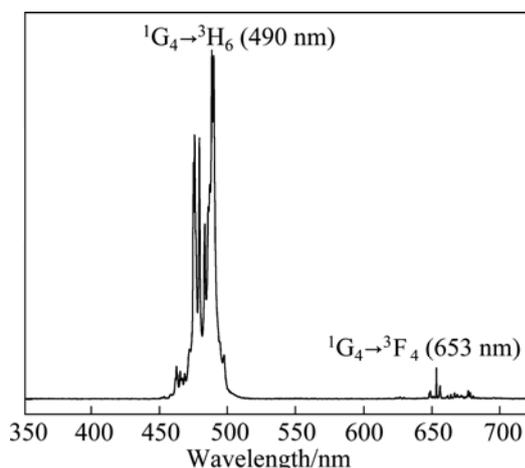
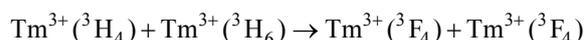
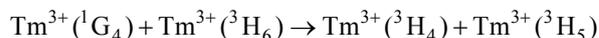
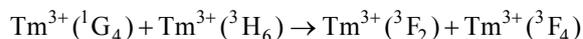


Fig. 3 Upconversion emission spectrum of $\text{Lu}_2\text{O}_3:2\% \text{Yb}^{3+}, 0.2\% \text{Tm}^{3+}$ nanocrystals calcined at 900°C under 980 nm excitation

Figure 4 shows the upconversion emission intensity of Lu_2O_3 nanocrystals doped with 2% Yb^{3+} and $x\text{Tm}^{3+}$ and calcined at 900°C as a function of Tm^{3+} content. As shown in Fig. 4, with increasing the Tm^{3+} content, the upconversion emission intensity increases at first, reaching a maximum value with 0.2% Tm^{3+} and then gradually decreases at higher doping concentrations.

Concentration quenching occurs above 0.2% dopant content. When Tm^{3+} content is high, the self-quenching or cross-relaxation mechanisms between Tm^{3+} ions becomes active [16–18]. The energy transfer processes can be described as follows:



which can depopulate the $^1\text{G}_4$ levels but populate the $^3\text{H}_5$ levels, leading to an increase in the extent of non-radiative transitions. Moreover, host may transfer the energy to lattice defects discussed later, which may trap energy, resulting in concentration quenching.

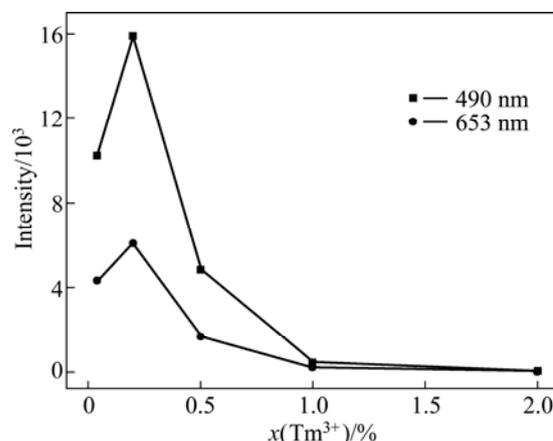


Fig. 4 Upconversion emission intensity of Lu_2O_3 nanocrystals doped with 2% Yb^{3+} and $x\text{Tm}^{3+}$ and calcined at 900°C as a function of Tm^{3+} mole fraction (The red emission intensity of 653 nm is magnified by a factor of 5)

3.2 Influence of Yb^{3+} molar fraction on structural and upconversion luminescent properties for $\text{Lu}_2\text{O}_3:x\text{Yb}^{3+}, 0.2\% \text{Tm}^{3+}$ nanocrystals

Figure 5 shows the XRD patterns of Lu_2O_3 nanocrystals doped with 0.2% Tm^{3+} and $x\text{Yb}^{3+}$ ($x=1\%, 2\%, 4\%, 6\%, 10\%, 15\%$) and calcined at 900°C . The XRD results show that the diffracting peak positions of all the $\text{Lu}_2\text{O}_3:x\text{Yb}^{3+}, 0.2\% \text{Tm}^{3+}$ nanocrystals are consistent with the standard powder diffraction pattern of Lu_2O_3 (JCPDS 43–1021). The crystalline size of $\text{Lu}_2\text{O}_3:x\text{Yb}^{3+}, 0.2\% \text{Tm}^{3+}$ nanocrystals is 40–60 nm using the Scherrer equation.

Figure 6 shows the upconversion emission intensity of Lu_2O_3 nanocrystals doped with 0.2% Tm^{3+} and $x\text{Yb}^{3+}$ and calcined at 900°C as a function of Yb^{3+} content. It is noticed that the emission intensities of 490 nm and 653 nm first increase and approach a maximum at a doping content of 2% and then decrease with the increase of Yb^{3+} content. It is obvious that with the increase

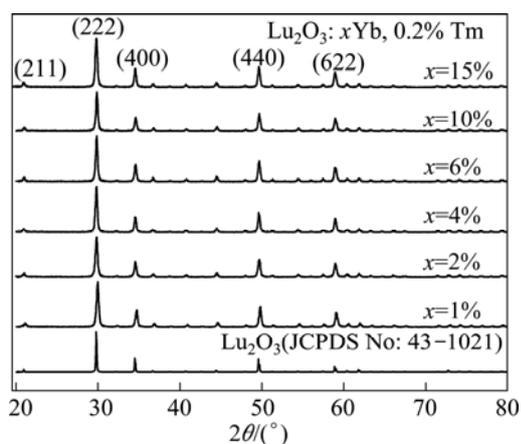


Fig. 5 XRD patterns of Lu_2O_3 nanocrystals doped with 0.2% Tm^{3+} and 1%, 2%, 4%, 6%, 10%, 15% Yb^{3+} and calcined at 900 °C and compared with standard pattern of JCPDS 43–1021

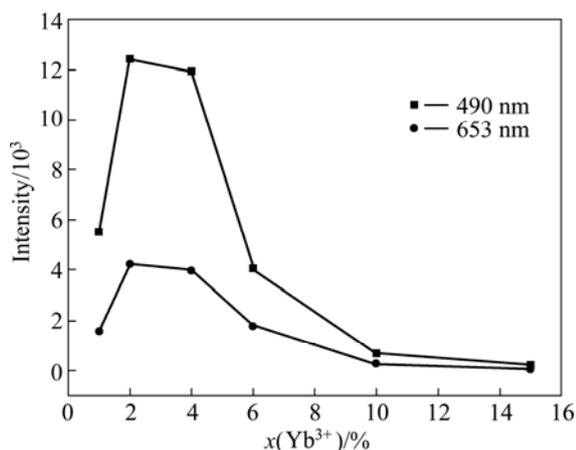


Fig. 6 Upconversion emission intensity of Lu_2O_3 nanocrystals doped with 0.2% Tm^{3+} and $x\text{Yb}^{3+}$ as function of Yb^{3+} mole fraction (The red emission intensity of 653 nm is magnified by a factor of 5)

of Yb^{3+} content, more energy is transferred from Yb^{3+} to Tm^{3+} . However, when Yb^{3+} ions are heavily doped, many factors such as increased amount of impurities, concentration-quenching of Yb^{3+} , energy back transfer from Tm^{3+} to Yb^{3+} can be described as $\text{Tm}^{3+}({}^1\text{G}_4) + \text{Yb}^{3+}({}^2\text{F}_{7/2}) = \text{Tm}^{3+}({}^3\text{H}_4) + \text{Yb}^{3+}({}^2\text{F}_{5/2})$, which effectively reduces upconversion emission intensity.

3.3 Influence of calcination temperature on structural and upconversion luminescent properties for $\text{Lu}_2\text{O}_3:2\% \text{Yb}^{3+}, 0.2\% \text{Tm}^{3+}$ nanocrystals

Figure 7 shows the XRD patterns of $\text{Lu}_2\text{O}_3:2\% \text{Yb}^{3+}, 0.2\% \text{Tm}^{3+}$ nanocrystals calcined at various temperatures. The results reveal that all the prepared Lu_2O_3 nanocrystals are of cubic structure, and the diffracting peak positions are well consistent with the standard powder diffraction pattern of Lu_2O_3 (JCPDS

43–1021). The average crystalline size can be estimated by using Scherrer equation. In cubic crystal lattice [19], the lattice constant can be calculated from Eq. (2).

$$\frac{1}{d^2} = \frac{h^2 + k^2 + l^2}{a^2} \quad (2)$$

where d , a , and (hkl) are the interplanar distance, lattice constant and crystal indices (Miller indices), respectively. The strongest peaks (222) at $2\theta=29.775, 29.812, 29.807, 29.806^\circ$ and $d=3.0010, 2.9962, 2.9967, 2.9961 \text{ \AA}$ were used to calculate the average crystallite size (D) and lattice constants (a) of the $\text{Lu}_2\text{O}_3:2\% \text{Yb}^{3+}, 0.2\% \text{Tm}^{3+}$ nanocrystals, respectively. Table 1 presents the calculated crystallite sizes and lattice constants of $\text{Lu}_2\text{O}_3:2\% \text{Yb}^{3+}, 0.2\% \text{Tm}^{3+}$ nanocrystals at different calcination temperatures. The lower the calcination temperature is, the smaller the crystallite sizes are. The crystallite size increases from 32 to 70 nm with the increase of calcination temperatures from 800 to 1100 °C. The lattice constants are compatible with the literature values (10.390 Å) from the standard card (JCPDS 43–1021).

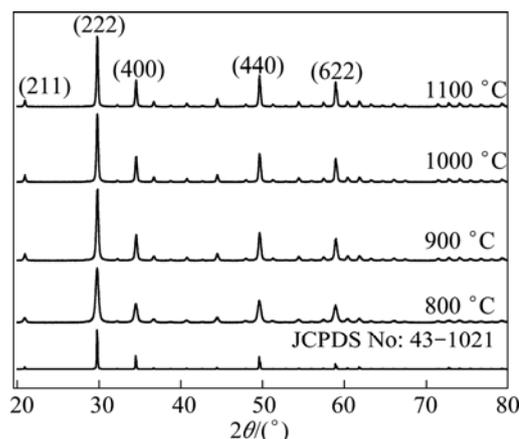


Fig. 7 XRD patterns of $\text{Lu}_2\text{O}_3:2\% \text{Yb}^{3+}, 0.2\% \text{Tm}^{3+}$ nanocrystals calcined at various temperatures and compared with standard pattern of JCPDS 43–1021

Table 1 Calculated crystallite sizes and lattice constants of $\text{Lu}_2\text{O}_3:2\% \text{Yb}^{3+}, 0.2\% \text{Tm}^{3+}$ nanocrystals calcined at various temperatures

Calcination temperature/°C	Crystallite size/nm	Lattice constant/Å
800	32	10.395
900	48	10.379
1000	63	10.381
1100	70	10.378

Figure 8 shows the FT-IR spectra of $\text{Lu}_2\text{O}_3:2\% \text{Yb}^{3+}, 0.2\% \text{Tm}^{3+}$ nanocrystals calcined at various temperatures. The data show that the bands around 490 and 580 cm^{-1} are assigned to the Lu—O vibration of cubic Lu_2O_3 [20].

The absorption bands of OH^- (around 3400 cm^{-1}) become weaker with the increase of calcination temperature. OH^- groups with high vibration frequency will increase the nonradiative relaxation rate and hence decrease upconversion efficiency [21]. This indicates that the enhanced upconversion intensity may come from the reducing of OH^- groups, which are located on the surface of nanocrystals. From Table 1, it is known that the crystallite size of $\text{Lu}_2\text{O}_3:2\% \text{Yb}^{3+}, 0.2\% \text{Tm}^{3+}$ nanocrystals increases with increasing the calcination temperature. The decrease of surface-to-volume ratio can reduce the OH^- groups on the surface of nanocrystals. Therefore, the reducing of OH^- groups is suggested to be relevant to the enhancement of the upconversion emission.

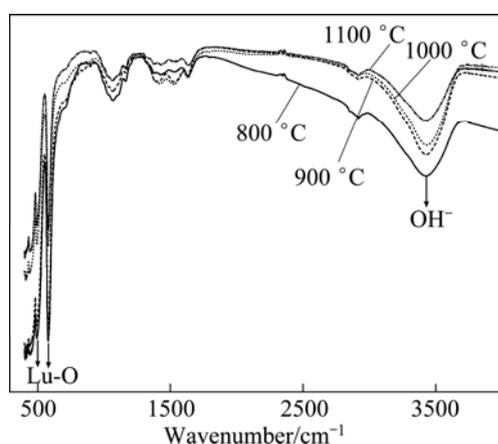


Fig. 8 FT-IR spectra of $\text{Lu}_2\text{O}_3:2\% \text{Yb}^{3+}, 0.2\% \text{Tm}^{3+}$ nanocrystals calcined at various temperatures

Figure 9 shows the influence of calcination temperature on the upconversion emission intensity of 490 nm and 653 nm under 980 nm laser excitation. It can be seen that the emission intensities of 490 nm and 653 nm become stronger gradually with the increase of calcination temperature. The increased nanocrystal size can also contribute to the upconversion emission enhancement, since the larger nanocrystal size has less defects [22]. Larger $\text{Lu}_2\text{O}_3:2\% \text{Yb}^{3+}, 0.2\% \text{Tm}^{3+}$ nanocrystals have lower surface-to-volume ratio which leads to lower surface scattering of the excitation light by the surface of the radiated Lu_2O_3 nanocrystals. As a result, the $\text{Lu}_2\text{O}_3:2\% \text{Yb}^{3+}, 0.2\% \text{Tm}^{3+}$ nanocrystals with larger diameter can absorb more efficiently the excitation light than $\text{Lu}_2\text{O}_3:2\% \text{Yb}^{3+}, 0.2\% \text{Tm}^{3+}$ nanocrystals with smaller diameter. It can be seen from Fig. 9 that the enhanced upconversion intensity may be due to the reduction of OH^- groups [23]. Therefore, the enhancement of the upconversion luminescence is suggested to be the consequence of reducing number of OH^- groups and the enlarged nanocrystal size.

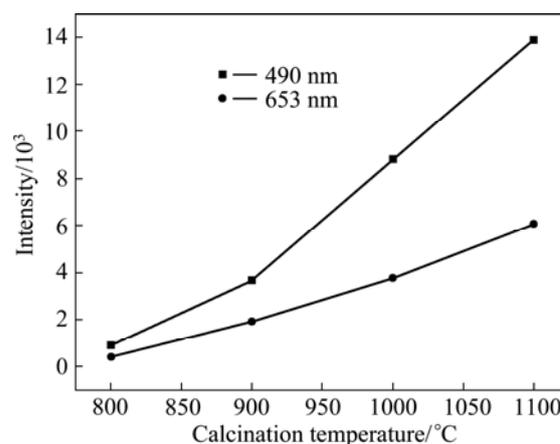


Fig. 9 Effect of calcination temperature on upconversion emission intensity of $\text{Lu}_2\text{O}_3:2\% \text{Yb}^{3+}, 0.2\% \text{Tm}^{3+}$ nanocrystals (The red emission intensity of 653 nm is magnified by a factor of 5)

3.4 Upconversion mechanisms

The energy level diagram of Tm^{3+} and Yb^{3+} shown in Fig.10 can be used to explain the upconversion mechanism. The pump photons of 980 nm laser only excite Yb^{3+} ion, because Tm^{3+} ion has no matched excited level above its ground state. The upconversion emission intensity depends on the population of $^1\text{G}_4$ levels for Tm^{3+} , which can be populated by three-step process [24]. Under 980 nm laser excitation, the $^1\text{G}_4$ excited state can be populated by a three-step energy transfer (ET) process. Firstly, the $^2\text{F}_{7/2} \rightarrow ^2\text{F}_{5/2}$ transition of Yb^{3+} occurs due to absorption of 980 nm photons. Then, Yb^{3+} in the $^2\text{F}_{5/2}$ level transfers its energy to Tm^{3+} , which is excited to the $^3\text{H}_5$ level and relaxes nonradiatively to

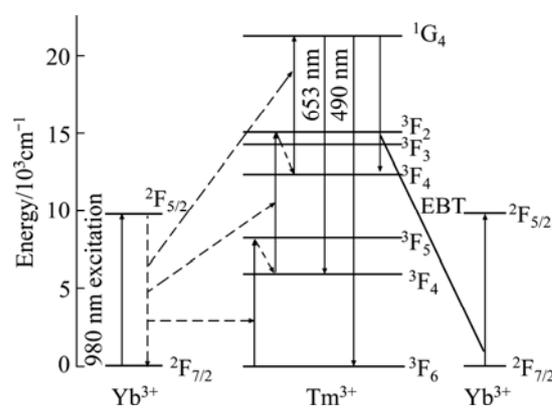


Fig. 10 Energy level diagram of Tm^{3+} and Yb^{3+} with excitation and emission process scheme (The full arrows pointing upwards represent energy absorption; full arrows pointing downwards represent emission; dotted arrows pointing downwards represent multiphonon relaxations (nonradiative decay); the diagonal line without arrows represents energy back transfer; dash-dotted arrows indicate energy transfer processes, respectively.)

the 3F_4 level. Tm^{3+} in the 3F_4 level can be excited to the 3F_2 level by energy transfer process after which nonradiative relaxation to 3H_4 occurs. Subsequently, Yb^{3+} in the $^2F_{5/2}$ level transfers its energy to Tm^{3+} and excites Tm^{3+} at 3H_4 level to 1G_4 level. Therefore, the Tm^{3+} decays radiatively to the 3H_6 ground state and the 3F_4 metastable state generating strong blue and weak red emissions around 490 nm and 653 nm from the 1G_4 levels, respectively.

The upconversion efficiency is principally governed by nonradiative processes in materials, which are dependent on the energy gap separating the upper and lower levels as well as the highest phonon energy in the materials. The multiphoton nonradiative decay rate can be expressed as [25]

$$W_n(T) = W_0(0) \left(\frac{\exp(h\nu/kT)}{\exp(h\nu/kT) - 1} \right)^n \quad (3)$$

where T is the absolute temperature; $W_n(T)$ is the rate at temperature T ; $W_0(0)$ is the rate at 0 K; k is the Boltzmann constant; $n = \Delta E / (h\nu)$, n accounts for the number of phonons involved in the sensitizer excitation; $h\nu$ is the maximum phonon energy of the host matrix; ΔE is the energy gap involved. According to the energy gap law, multiphoton relaxation is dominant when $n < 5$ [26]. The energy gap of Tm^{3+} between the levels 1G_4 and the 3F_2 is approximately equal to 5840 cm^{-1} , which corresponds to 9 phonons of the highest phonon energy (the maximum phonon energy of 600 cm^{-1} in our experiments), so the probability of non-radiative transition from the level 1G_4 to the level 3F_2 can be negligible. This indicates that high population at the level 1G_4 can be achieved.

To further understand the upconversion mechanisms, pump power (P_{pump}) dependences on the upconversion emission intensities (I_{up}) of $Lu_2O_3:2\% Yb^{3+}, 0.2\% Tm^{3+}$ nanocrystals calcinated at $900 \text{ }^\circ\text{C}$ are shown in Fig. 11. According to the relationship between I_{up} and P_{pump}^n ,

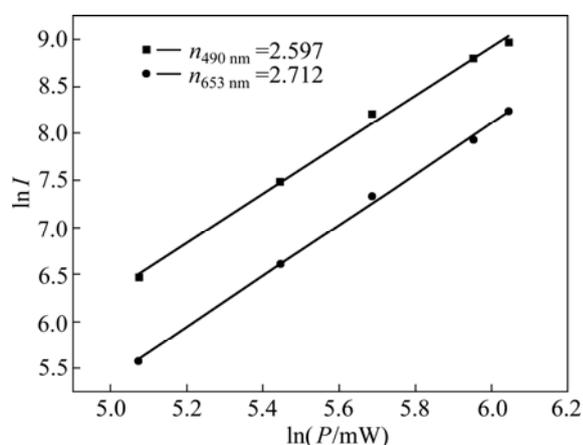


Fig. 11 Relationship between $\ln I$ and $\ln P$ of $Lu_2O_3:2\% Yb^{3+}, 0.2\% Tm^{3+}$ nanocrystals under 980 nm excitation

where n is the number of photons involved in the pump process [27], the typical upconversion luminescent intensity I_{up} depends on the incident pump power P_{pump} . The upconversion emission intensities of $Lu_2O_3:2\% Yb^{3+}, 0.2\% Tm^{3+}$ nanocrystals were integrated at 490 and 653 nm for various pump powers. A plot of $\ln I$ versus $\ln P$ yields a straight line with slope n . On the basis of the experimental data in Fig. 11, the obtained n values are 2.597 and 2.712. The two slopes are close to 3, which indicates that the blue and weak red upconversion luminescence is indeed a three-photon upconversion process.

4 Conclusions

1) The Lu_2O_3 nanocrystals codoped with 2% Yb^{3+} and 0.04%, 0.2%, 0.5%, 1%, 2% Tm^{3+} were successfully synthesized by the reverse-like co-precipitation method. The further investigation reveals that the upconversion emission intensity depends on the Tm^{3+} and Yb^{3+} contents and calcination temperature.

2) The experimental results show that all the prepared $Lu_2O_3:2\% Yb^{3+}, 0.2\% Tm^{3+}$ nanocrystals can be readily indexed to pure cubic phase of Lu_2O_3 . The strong blue and weak red emissions from the prepared nanocrystals were observed, and attributed to the $^1G_4 \rightarrow ^3H_6$ and $^1G_4 \rightarrow ^3F_4$ transitions of Tm^{3+} ion, respectively. Concentration quenching occurs when the content of Tm^{3+} is above 0.2%. Power-dependent study reveals that the 1G_4 level can be populated by three-step energy transfer process.

3) The upconversion emission intensities of 490 nm and 653 nm increase gradually with the increase of calcination temperature. The enhancement of the upconversion luminescence is suggested to be the consequence of reducing number of OH⁻ groups and the enlarged nanocrystal size.

4) The data presented in this study might provide useful information for further development of upconversion ceramic laser associated with the $^1G_4 \rightarrow ^3H_6$ transitions of Tm^{3+} ions.

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$\text{Lu}_2\text{O}_3:\text{Yb}^{3+}, \text{Tm}^{3+}$ 纳米晶的制备和上转换发光性能

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摘要: 采用碳酸氢铵(NH_4HCO_3)为沉淀剂, 用共沉淀法制备 Yb^{3+} 和 Tm^{3+} 共掺杂的 $\text{Lu}_2\text{O}_3:\text{Yb}^{3+}, \text{Tm}^{3+}$ 纳米晶。研究 Tm^{3+} 摩尔分数、 Yb^{3+} 摩尔分数和煅烧温度对 $\text{Lu}_2\text{O}_3:\text{Yb}^{3+}, \text{Tm}^{3+}$ 纳米晶的结构和上转换发光性能的影响。结果表明: 所制备的纳米晶具有纯的 Lu_2O_3 相, 结晶性较好。当掺杂的 Tm^{3+} 浓度超过 0.2% (摩尔分数) 时, 出现浓度淬灭效应。 Tm^{3+} 和 Yb^{3+} 的最佳掺杂比分别为 0.2% 和 2% (摩尔分数)。在 980 nm 半导体激光器的激发下, 样品发射出蓝光(490 nm)和红光(653 nm), 分别对应 Tm^{3+} 的 $^1\text{G}_4 \rightarrow ^3\text{H}_6$ 和 $^1\text{G}_4 \rightarrow ^3\text{F}_4$ 跃迁。发射强度与激发功率的关系表明, Tm^{3+} 的 $^1\text{G}_4$ 能级布居是三光子能量传递过程。随着煅烧温度的升高, 上转换发光强度增强, 这主要是因为随着温度的升高纳米晶表面的 OH^- 减少和纳米晶尺寸增大。

关键词: $\text{Lu}_2\text{O}_3:\text{Yb}^{3+}, \text{Tm}^{3+}$ 纳米晶; 共沉淀法; 上转换发光