

## Temperature dependence of electromechanical properties of PLZT $x/57/43$ ceramics

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**Abstract.** The compositions of lead lanthanum zirconate titanate PLZT [ $\text{Pb}(\text{Zr}_{0.57}\text{Ti}_{0.43})\text{O}_3 + x$  at% of La, where  $x = 3, 5, 6, 10$  and  $12$ ] have been synthesized using mixed oxide route. The temperature dependent electromechanical parameters have been determined using vector impedance spectroscopy (VIS). The charge constant  $d_{31}$  and elastic compliance  $s_{11}^E$  show a peak in all the samples at a temperature  $T_{\text{mt}}$  much below the ferroelectric – paraelectric transition temperature, whereas the series resonance frequency  $f_s$  shows a dip at these temperatures. The Poisson's ratio  $\sigma^E$  increases with temperature  $T$  showing a broad peak at a temperature higher than  $T_{\text{mt}}$ . The voltage constant  $g_{31}$  decreases and the planar coupling coefficient  $K_p$  remains constant up to half of the  $T_{\text{mt}}$  and then falls sharply with  $T$ . Half of the  $T_{\text{mt}}$  can, therefore, be used for specifying the working temperature limit of the piezoceramics for the device applications.

**Keywords.** PLZT; MPB; vector impedance spectroscopy; electromechanical parameters.

### 1. Introduction

La-doped lead zirconate titanate (PLZT) piezoelectric ceramics near the morphotropic phase boundary (MPB) region possessing high value of the electromechanical properties have found extensive use in various electromechanical, ultrasonic and underwater acoustic devices (Haertling 1999). The PLZT family also finds technological applications in the electrooptic and pyroelectric devices. Earlier studies revealed that the ceramic compositions having high piezoelectric strain can find their applications in emerging areas of micromechanics, such as in camera installed cellular phones for auto focusing, cooling module for fuel cell power supply in laptops, optical fibre alignment, robotics, artificial fertilization system, micro pumps, drug delivery systems, ultrasonic distillations, injection valves and energy harvesting (Haertling 1999; Uchino 2008). The various compositions of PLZTs have shown excellent electromechanical properties that suited for such applications (Haertling 1999; Shukla *et al* 2004) and so, the functional properties of PLZTs have been extensively studied (Ochiai *et al* 1998; Bobnar *et al* 1999; Paik *et al* 1999; Kamba *et al* 2000; Volkov *et al* 2003; Tang *et al* 2007; Chen *et al* 2008). However, there has not been much systematic study of

the temperature dependence of electromechanical properties of PLZT.

It has been observed that the compositions of PLZT ceramics with Zr/Ti 57/43 show enhanced piezoelectric response at room temperature and can be used in low power transducer devices (Shukla *et al* 2004). Keeping the device application in view, we have studied the temperature dependence of electromechanical properties of PLZT for different compositions. In the present work, we report effect of temperature on the electromechanical properties of compositions of PLZT of Zr/Ti 57/43 using vector impedance spectroscopy.

### 2. Experimental

The compositions of La doped PZT [ $\text{Pb}(\text{Zr}_{0.57}\text{Ti}_{0.43})\text{O}_3 + x$  at% of La, where  $x = 3, 5, 6, 10$  and  $12$ ] have been synthesized using mixed oxide route. The details of sample preparation and poling have been discussed by us earlier (Shukla *et al* 2004, 2006). The diameter  $2a$ , thickness  $t$ , live capacitance,  $C_L$  and density of the synthesized samples are listed in table 1. The impedance and phase measurements of the disc shaped samples have been carried out using a computer controlled Solartron 1260 Impedance Gain Phase analyzer coupled with Solartron 1296 dielectric interface in the frequency range of 1 Hz – 1 MHz varying the temperature from room temperature ( $RT$ ) to 400°C.

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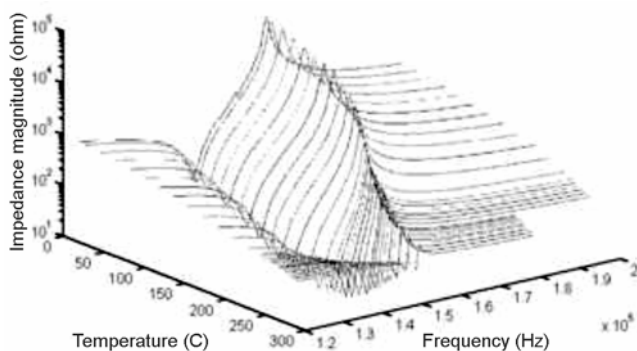
### 3. Results and discussion

Variation of the magnitude of impedance,  $Z$ , with temperature and frequency for 3 at% La sample is shown in figure 1. The impedance spectra of all the fabricated samples of PLZT show that the temperature range of piezoelectric response decreases with increasing La concentration for the fundamental radial mode as well as for the overtones showing a decrease in the ratio  $Z_{\max}/Z_{\min}$  and  $\Delta f_{\text{ps}}$  ( $=f_p - f_s$ , where  $f_p$  and  $f_s$  are the parallel and series resonance frequencies).  $Z_{\max}$  is the maximum impedance at the frequency,  $f_n$  and  $Z_{\min}$  is the minimum impedance at the frequency,  $f_m$ . At  $f_s$  real part of  $1/(\omega|Z(\omega)|)$  is maximum whereas at  $f_p$  the real part of  $\omega|Z(\omega)|$  is maximum (Shukla et al 2004), where angular frequency  $\omega = 2\pi f$ . A typical plot of the variation of  $Z_{\max}/Z_{\min}$  of the fundamental radial mode with temperature,  $T$ , is given in figure 2. After a certain temperature, the values of  $Z_{\max}/Z_{\min}$  decrease rapidly with  $T$ , which depends on La concentration. On further increasing the temperature, the piezoelectric response disappears at the temperature much lower than the ferroelectric to paraelectric phase transition of the material. The same behaviour is observed for the overtones also. However, the piezoelectric response of the overtones disappears at a lower temperature than the fundamental mode.

The quantity,  $\Delta f_{\text{ps}}$ , depends on the electromechanical coupling coefficient as well as geometry of the piezoceramic material (Jaffe et al 1971). The behaviour of  $\Delta f_{\text{ps}}$

**Table 1.** Geometrical parameters: diameter  $D$ , thickness  $t$ , live capacitance  $C_L$  and density  $\rho$  of different La doped PZT.

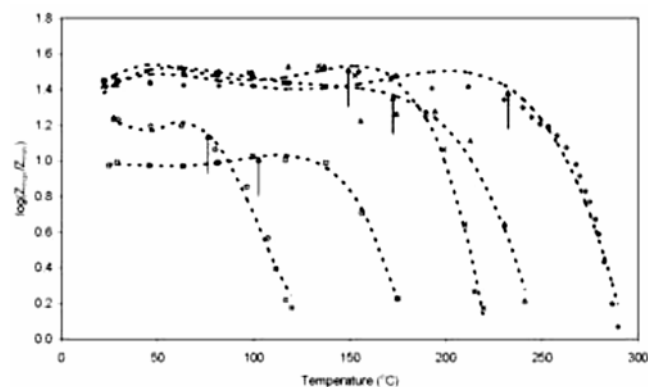
$x$ (at%)	$2a$ (mm)	$t$ (mm)	$C_L$ (pF)	$\rho$ (g/cm <sup>3</sup> )
3.0	14.30	1.09	1.30	7.46
5.0	14.05	1.08	1.27	7.38
6.0	13.93	1.10	1.23	7.33
10.1	14.23	1.09	1.29	6.81
12.1	13.57	1.09	1.18	7.19



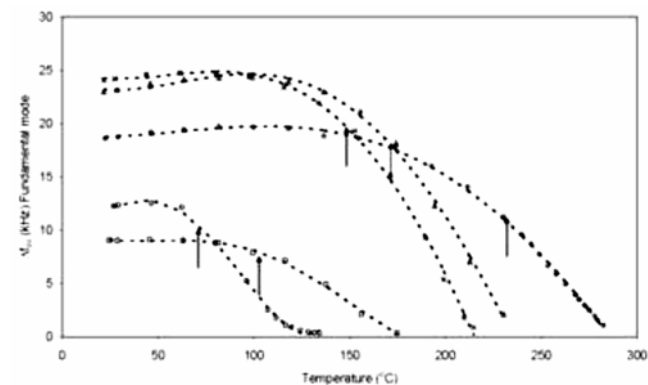
**Figure 1.** Variation of magnitude of impedance with temperature and frequency for  $x = 3.0$  at% of La.

with  $T$  is shown in figure 3 and is similar to that of  $Z_{\max}/Z_{\min}$  for the fundamental mode (see figure 2).

The variation of series resonance frequencies,  $f_s$ , corresponding to the fundamental resonance mode is shown in figure 4. The values of  $f_s$  decrease with increase in La concentration except for La = 12.1 at% for which it increases. A similar behaviour of  $f_s$  with  $T$  has also been observed for the first and second overtones. It may also be noted that for each sample the series resonance frequency decreases up to a certain temperature beyond which they increase showing a broad minima, the broadening increases with the doping of La in the base PZT except for La = 12.1 at%. A similar temperature dependence in  $f_s$  has been reported for PZT systems close to the MPB region (Uchida and Ikeda 1967; Thomann 1972; Cheon and Park 1997; Zhang et al 1997), and also away from the MPB region (Dong and Kojima 1997). It has been shown that the temperature coefficient of resonant



**Figure 2.** Variation of ratio of magnitude of maximum impedance to the minimum impedance for the fundamental radial mode corresponding to various compositions of PLZT. The symbols  $\diamond$ ,  $\Delta$ ,  $\times$ ,  $\square$  and  $\circ$  correspond to  $x = 3.0, 5.0, 6.0, 10.1$  and  $12.1$  at% of La.

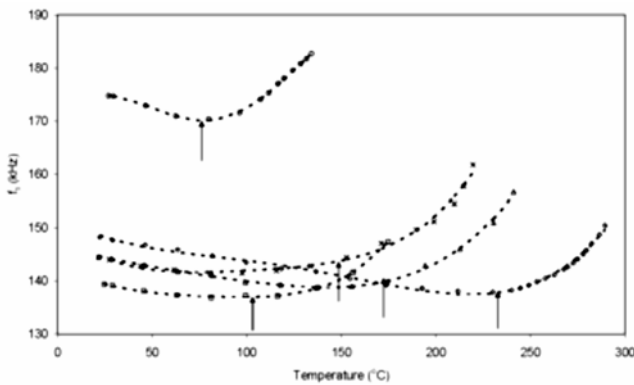


**Figure 3.** Change in difference of parallel and series resonance frequency  $\Delta f_{\text{ps}}$  for fundamental mode with temperature corresponding to different compositions of PLZT. The symbols  $\diamond$ ,  $\Delta$ ,  $\times$ ,  $\square$  and  $\circ$  correspond to  $x = 3.0, 5.0, 6.0, 10.1$  and  $12.1$  at% of La.

frequency is negative in the rhombohedral dominant phase and positive in the tetragonal phase (Heywang and Thomann 1984). It is known that at the room temperature PZT compositions in MPB region are in the mixed phase of rhombohedral and tetragonal phases in which rhombohedral phase is predominant and on heating they go to tetragonal phase (Heywang and Thomann 1984). As such the behaviour of resonance frequencies changing its slope with  $T$  from negative to positive sign may be a manifestation of the structural phase transition of the mixed rhombohedral – tetragonal phase to the tetragonal phase at  $T_{mt}$ . Such a broad phase transition has also been observed in Nb doped lead zirconate titanate (PZT), and attributed to the rhombohedral to tetragonal phase transition (Zhang *et al* 1997). The reason for a very large increase in  $f_s$  for  $x = 12.1$  at% is anomalous.

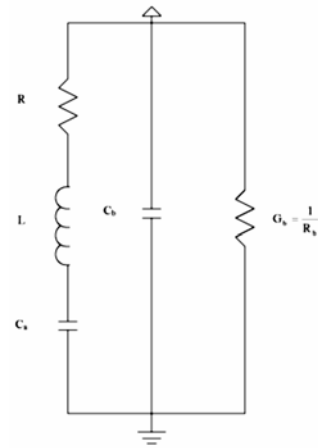
The piezoelectric response has been simulated on the equivalent circuit shown in figure 5. The simulated circuit parameters  $R$ ,  $L$ ,  $C_a$ ,  $C_b$  and  $R_b$  for the fundamental radial mode and first two overtones of PLZT at La 6 at% are presented in table 2. A similar behaviour is observed for the PLZT samples at  $x = 3, 5, 10$  and 12 at%.  $R$  first decreases with  $T$  and then increases for the fundamental mode (see figure 6) as well as the first and second overtones.  $R$  increases with the overtones almost at all the temperatures. It may, however, be noted that at high temperatures the simulated parameters have large uncertainties because of very weak piezoelectric response. Inclusion of  $R_b \parallel C_b$  does improve the simulation at high temperatures, and significantly for the overtones.

$R$  in the equivalent circuit represents the mechanical loss of the piezoelectric response of the material and increase in  $R$  beyond a certain temperature indicates that the freezing of domains is disturbed and they become mobile due to the thermal agitation. This is supported by the increase in dielectric data with temperature,  $T$  (see figure 6(b)).

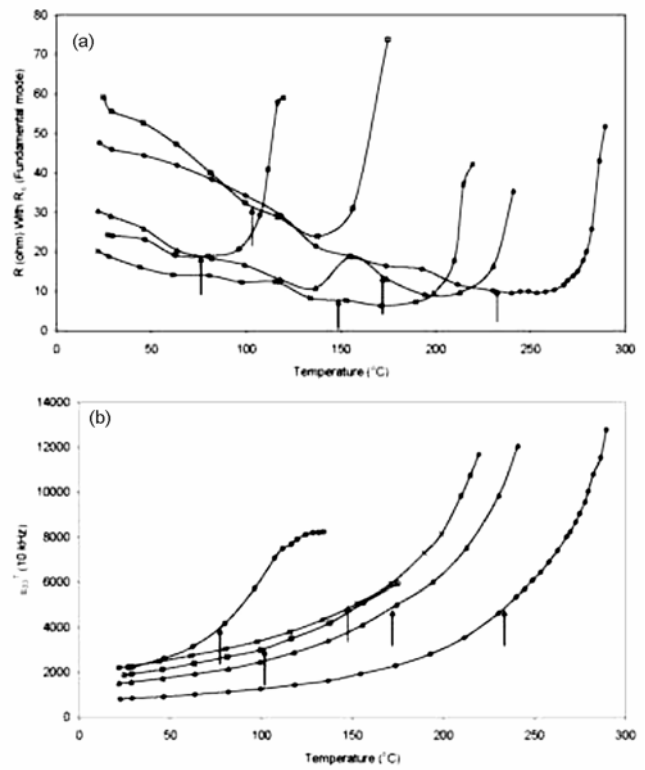


**Figure 4.** Temperature dependence of series resonance frequency for fundamental mode of various samples of PLZT. The symbols  $\diamond$ ,  $\Delta$ ,  $\times$ ,  $\square$  and  $\circ$  correspond to  $x = 3.0, 5.0, 6.0, 10.1$  and 12.1 at% of La.

Simulated values of  $L$  first decreases with  $T$  and beyond a certain  $T$  it starts increasing for the fundamental mode and the overtones, following almost the same behaviour as the simulated values of  $R$ . For the fundamental mode variation of  $L$  as a function of  $T$  is shown in figure 7. The increase in  $L$  at elevated temperatures is more pronounced.



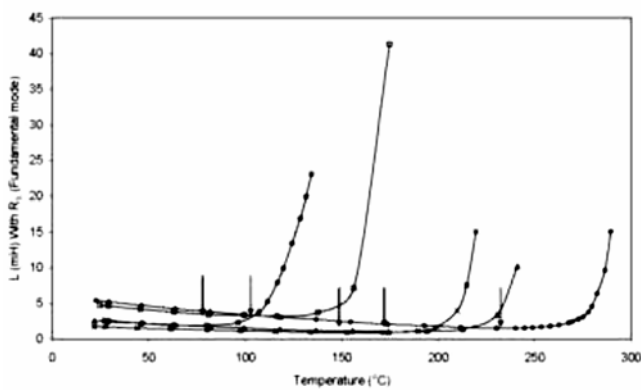
**Figure 5.** Piezoelectric equivalent circuit of single isolated piezoelectric resonance.



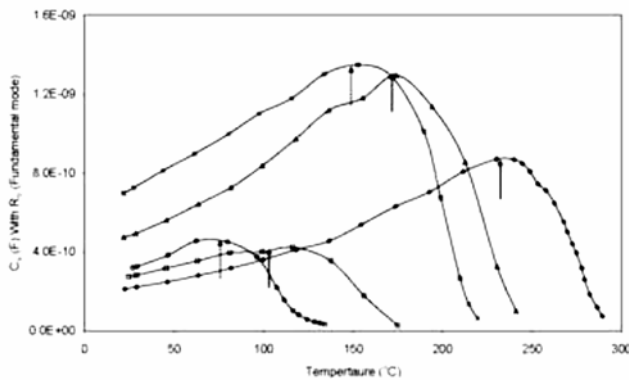
**Figure 6.** Variation of (a) equivalent circuit parameter  $R$  and (b) dielectric constant  $\epsilon_{33}^T$  with temperature for various compositions of PLZT. The symbols  $\diamond$ ,  $\Delta$ ,  $\times$ ,  $\square$  and  $\circ$  correspond to  $x = 3.0, 5.0, 6.0, 10.1$  and 12.1 at% of La.

**Table 2.** Temperature dependence of different equivalent circuit parameters with  $R_b$  for the fundamental mode, first overtone and second overtone for  $x = 6$  at% of La.

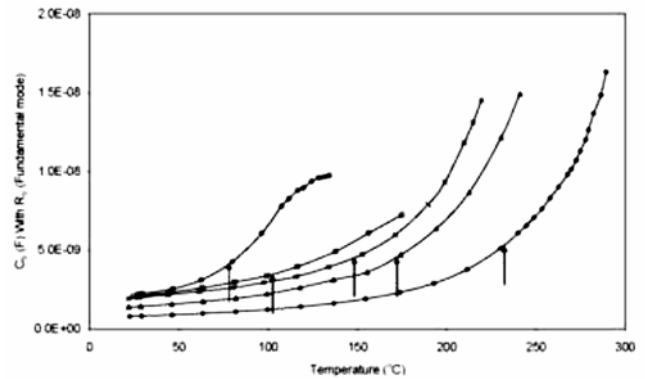
Temperature (°C)	Fundamental mode					First overtone					Second overtone				
	$R$ (ohm)	$L$ (mH)	$C_a$ (pF)	$C_b$ (nF)	$R_b$ (kΩ)	$R$ (ohm)	$L$ (mH)	$C_a$ (pF)	$C_b$ (nF)	$R_b$ (kΩ)	$R$ (ohm)	$L$ (mH)	$C_a$ (pF)	$C_b$ (nF)	$R_b$ (kΩ)
21.75	20.2	1.74	697	1.93	∞	75.5	1.87	97	1.77	—	115	1.91	39	1.88	2.10
27.50	18.9	1.68	725	1.99	∞	73.7	1.80	102	1.83	∞	107	1.85	41	1.95	2.20
44.05	16.1	1.53	812	2.17	∞	65.1	1.64	113	1.99	∞	89	1.68	46	2.14	2.10
61.59	14.2	1.40	898	2.37	∞	54.3	1.52	125	2.19	∞	73	1.51	52	2.64	2.00
80.44	14.0	1.27	997	2.62	∞	46.9	1.38	138	2.44	∞	63	1.36	57	2.64	1.40
97.66	12.3	1.15	1100	2.94	∞	39.3	1.26	152	2.75	∞	55	1.28	63	2.89	1.40
115.83	12.4	1.07	1180	3.31	∞	35.7	1.16	166	3.13	∞	48	1.15	69	3.31	0.80
133.88	8.3	0.96	1300	3.93	∞	27.4	1.11	172	3.74	∞	39	1.00	79	4.00	0.70
152.75	7.7	0.90	1350	4.73	∞	22.8	0.99	190	4.63	∞	30	0.90	87	5.11	0.50
171.37	6.4	0.91	1290	5.96	∞	18.0	1.00	182	5.91	1.70	24	0.84	90	6.79	0.30
189.62	7.4	1.12	1010	7.89	∞	18.4	0.99	180	8.16	0.70	24	0.77	95	9.59	0.10
199.06	9.6	1.64	674	9.30	22	20.0	1.17	148	9.84	0.30	27	0.91	79	12.30	0.08
209.81	17.7	3.98	267	11.8	1.50	28.1	1.93	85	13.80	0.20	37	0.69	98	17.50	0.05
214.81	37.2	7.56	135	13.1	0.70	57.9	3.31	48	14.80	0.10	43	0.91	71	17.10	0.02
219.63	42.2	15.12	640	14.5	0.70										



**Figure 7.** Change in inductance  $L$  of equivalent circuit with temperature for compositions of PLZT. The symbols  $\diamond$ ,  $\Delta$ ,  $\times$ ,  $\square$  and  $\circ$  correspond to  $x = 3.0, 5.0, 6.0, 10.1$  and  $12.1$  at% of La.



**Figure 8.** Trend of equivalent circuit parameter  $C_a$  with temperature for various samples of PLZT. The symbols  $\diamond$ ,  $\Delta$ ,  $\times$ ,  $\square$  and  $\circ$  correspond to  $x = 3.0, 5.0, 6.0, 10.1$  and  $12.1$  at% of La.



**Figure 9.** Temperature dependence of equivalent circuit parameter  $C_b$  for compositions of PLZT. The symbols  $\diamond$ ,  $\Delta$ ,  $\times$ ,  $\square$  and  $\circ$  correspond to  $x = 3.0, 5.0, 6.0, 10.1$  and  $12.1$  at% of La.

nounced for the fundamental mode than those for the first and second overtones. For a piezoelectric resonator, the value of  $L$  represents equivalent mass in the mechanical systems (Jaffe *et al* 1971), and a low value of  $L$  is a measure of good quality of the piezoelectric material (Katiyar *et al* 1994). In the present study the material with La at 6.0 at% has the lowest value of  $L$  below the temperature from which it rises and hence it should have better electromechanical properties compared to the other members of the series.

$C_a$  increases with  $T$  up to a certain value, beyond which, it decreases sharply (see figure 8).  $C_a$  decreases with the overtones also.  $C_a$ , in the piezoelectric equivalent circuit, represents the elastic compliance  $s_{11}^E$  and the charge constant  $d_{31}$ , transformed into its electrical equivalent by the piezoelectric effect (Mason 1964; Jaffe *et al* 1971; Katiyar *et al* 1997).

The circuit parameter  $C_b$  represents the capacitance of the material under no resonance condition (Jaffe *et al* 1971). It is found that  $C_b$  remains almost same for the fundamental mode and overtones.  $C_b$  increases monotonically with  $T$  (see figure 9).

$R_b (=1/G_b)$  is the shunt resistance in the equivalent circuit across  $C_b$  and the conductance  $G_b$  is a measure of the dielectric loss of the material in the absence of electromechanical resonance. For the fundamental mode, the values of  $R_b$  are found to be very large ( $\sim 10^{20} \Omega$ ) up to a certain  $T$ . On further increase in  $T$ , the values of  $R_b$  fall. For the first and second overtones, values of  $R_b$  are in  $k\Omega$  range in the entire temperature range (see table 2).

The variation of the oscillator figure of merit  $M = (Q_m/r) = (1/\omega_s C_b R)$  with  $T$  for the fundamental radial mode is shown in figure 10.  $M$  shows a weak variation with temperature for all the samples and decreases after a certain temperature  $T_{mt}$ . The maximum value of  $M$  has been observed for  $x = 6.0$  at%. The behaviour of  $M$  with  $T$  is a combined temperature dependent behaviour of mechanical quality factor,  $Q_m$  and capacitive ratio,  $r = C_b/C_a$ .

The electromechanical parameters Poisson's ratio  $\sigma^E$ , planar coupling coefficient  $K_p$ , transverse coupling coefficient  $K_{31}$ , elastic compliance  $s_{11}^E$ , piezoelectric charge constant  $d_{31}$  and voltage constant  $g_{31}$  have been calculated using the following equations (Shukla *et al* 2004).

$$\frac{K_p^2}{1-K_p^2} = \frac{\left( \begin{array}{l} (1-\sigma^E)J_1[\varphi(1+(\Delta f_{ps}/f_s))] \\ -\varphi(1+(\Delta f_{ps}/f_s))J_0[\varphi(1+(\Delta f_{ps}/f_s))] \end{array} \right)}{(1+\sigma^E)J_1[\varphi(1+(\Delta f_{ps}/f_s))]},$$

$$\left( \frac{f_{si}}{f_{s0}} \right)^2 = (\varphi_i/\varphi_0)^2 \left[ \frac{1-(1/3)(\varphi_i \sigma^E t / (1-\sigma^E) 2a)^2}{1-(1/3)(\varphi_0 \sigma^E t / (1-\sigma^E) 2a)^2} \right],$$

$$(1-\sigma^E)J_1(\varphi) = \varphi J_0(\varphi),$$

$$K_{31}^2 = 0.5(1-\sigma^E)K_p^2,$$

$$\frac{1}{s_{11}^E} = \frac{4\pi^2 a^2 f_s^2 (1-\sigma^{E^2}) \rho}{\varphi^2},$$

$$d_{31} = K_{31}(\varepsilon_0 \varepsilon_{33}^T s_{11}^E)^{1/2}$$

and

$$g_{31} = d_{31} / \varepsilon_0 \varepsilon_{33}^T.$$

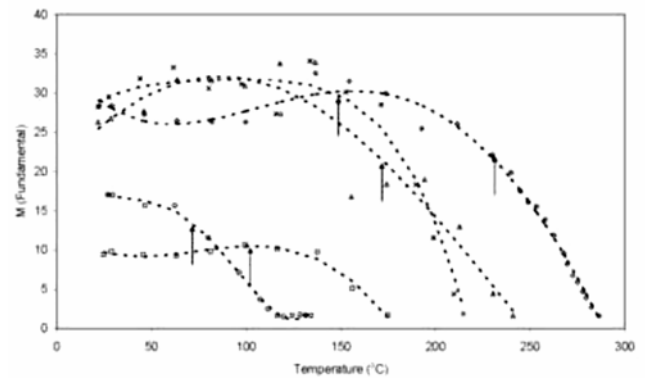
Symbols have their usual meanings.

Poisson's ratio  $\sigma^E$  gradually increases with  $T$  for each sample up to a certain maximum and a further increase in

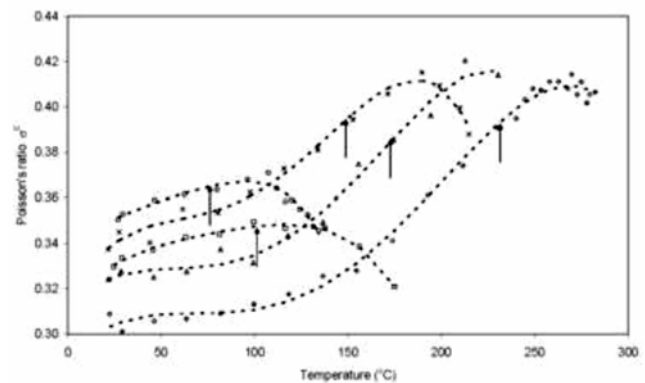
$T$  results in a gradual decrease in  $\sigma^E$  (see figure 11). Such a behaviour in  $\sigma^E$  for Nb doped PZT near and away from the MPB region has also been reported earlier (Dong and Kojima 1997; Zhang *et al* 1997).

Variations of the electromechanical coupling coefficient  $K_p$  with  $T$  are shown in figure 12.  $K_p$  remains almost constant with  $T$  up to a certain value and then decreases. The decrease in  $K_p$  is of the diffuse type. A small increase in  $K_p$  for all the samples is observed below the temperature from which it starts to decrease. Several workers have also reported that the coupling coefficient,  $K_p$ , peaks at a temperature for PZT close and away to MPB, and also for lead titanate (Meitzler and O'Bryan 1973; Kim *et al* 1989; Dong and Kojima 1997; Zhang *et al* 1997; Bobnar *et al* 1999). However, a continuous decrease of  $K_{31}$  ( $K_p$ ) with  $T$  followed by saturation for PLZT 8/65/35 has also been reported (Bobnar *et al* 1999).

The elastic compliance,  $s_{11}^E$ , increases gradually with  $T$  (see figure 13) and shows a peak at a certain  $T$ . The maximum value of  $s_{11}^E$  is observed for La composition of



**Figure 10.** Variation of figure of merit  $M$  of the equivalent circuit with temperature for each composition of PLZT. The symbols  $\diamond$ ,  $\Delta$ ,  $\times$ , and  $\circ$  correspond to  $x = 3.0$ ,  $5.0$ ,  $6.0$ ,  $10.1$  and  $12.1$  at% of La.



**Figure 11.** Variation of Poisson's ratio  $\sigma^E$  with temperature for different compositions of PLZT. The symbols  $\diamond$ ,  $\Delta$ ,  $\times$ ,  $\square$  and  $\circ$  correspond to  $x = 3.0$ ,  $5.0$ ,  $6.0$ ,  $10.1$  and  $12.1$  at% of La.

$x = 10.1$  at%. Meitzler and Bryan (1973) reported a sharp peak in  $s_{11}^E$  with temperature for PLZT 7.2/65/35, whereas Bobnar et al (1999) observed a broad maximum in  $s_{11}^E$  for PLZT 8/65/35. Zhang et al (1997) reported that temperature dependence of shear modulus of PZT near MPB region exhibits a broad minimum around the phase coexistence region.

The variation of strain constant or charge constant,  $d_{31}$ , is shown in figure 14.  $d_{31}$  also shows a peak at a certain  $T$  for all samples. A maximum of  $d_{31}$  is found for La composition of  $x = 6.0$  at%.

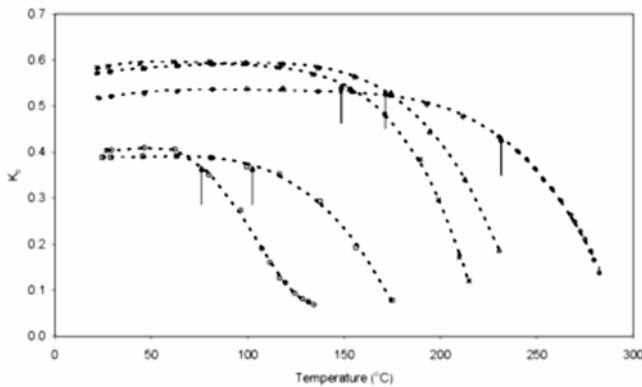
The voltage constant,  $g_{31}$ , decreases with both  $T$  and La dopant concentration as shown in figure 15. This is in conformity with the dominating tetragonal structure over the rhombohedral phase at  $T > T_{mt}$ , because ‘g’ values are maximum in the rhombohedral side (Jaffe et al 1971).

It has been observed that the electromechanical properties of piezoceramics degrade with temperature and hence the maximum working temperature limits of these materials are required to be known for their use in fabrication

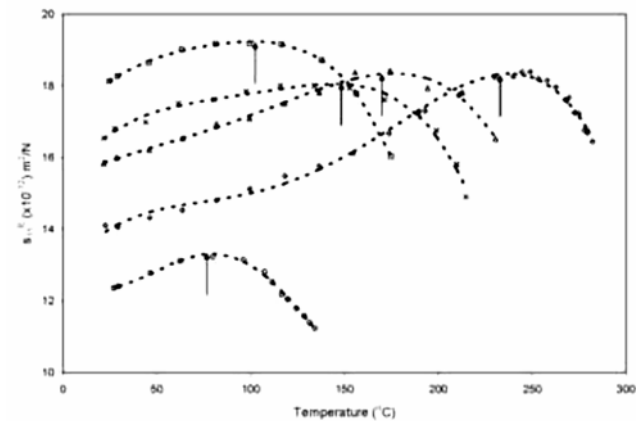
of the transducer devices. In general, half of the temperature,  $T_m$ , at which the dielectric constant of piezoceramics becomes maximum is considered safe for device application (Turner et al 1994). Also the temperature coefficients of various dielectric and electromechanical constants are important in predicting the behaviour of the piezoceramic materials particularly those which have a high electro-mechanical coupling (IEEE Standards on Piezoelectricity 1987). The electromechanical parameters of presently studied compositions could be fitted on a fourth order polynomial using the method of least square (IEEE Standards on Piezoelectricity 1987)

$$X = X_{ref} \left[ 1 + \sum_{n=1}^4 a_n (\Delta T)^n \right],$$

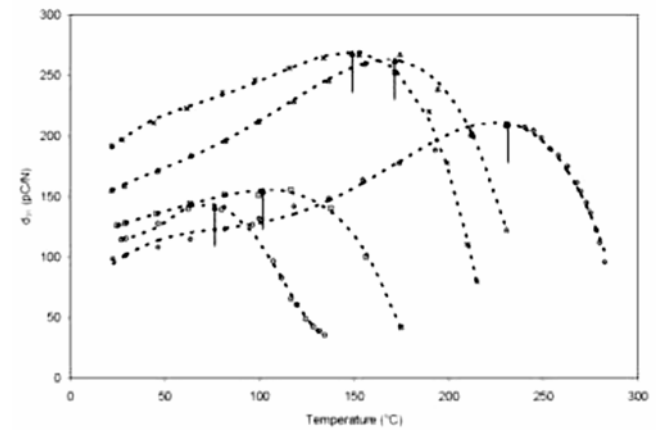
where  $\Delta T = T - T_{ref}$ . The  $X_{ref}$  and  $T_{ref}$  correspond to the room temperature. The coefficients  $a_n$ , for various para-



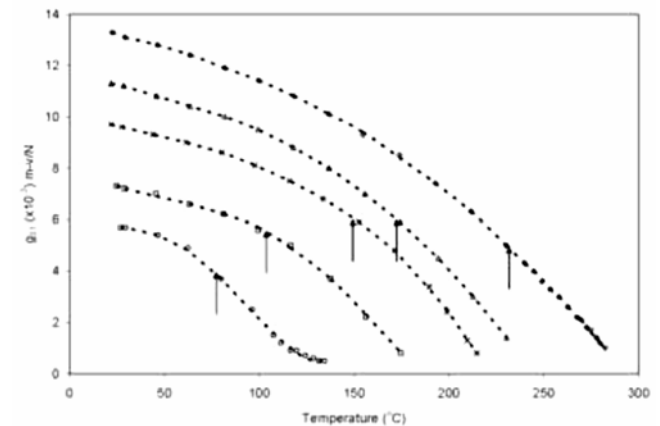
**Figure 12.** Temperature dependence of planar coupling coefficient  $K_p$  for various PLZT samples. The symbols  $\diamond$ ,  $\Delta$ ,  $\times$ ,  $\square$  and  $\circ$  correspond to  $x = 3.0, 5.0, 6.0, 10.1$  and  $12.1$  at% of La.



**Figure 13.** Temperature dependence of elastic compliance  $s_{11}^E$  for PLZT compositions. The symbols  $\diamond$ ,  $\Delta$ ,  $\times$ ,  $\square$  and  $\circ$  correspond to  $x = 3.0, 5.0, 6.0, 10.1$  and  $12.1$  at% of La.



**Figure 14.** Variation of strain constant  $d_{31}$  with temperature for PLZTs. The symbols  $\diamond$ ,  $\Delta$ ,  $\times$ ,  $\square$  and  $\circ$  correspond to  $x = 3.0, 5.0, 6.0, 10.1$  and  $12.1$  at% of La.



**Figure 15.** Temperature dependence of voltage constant  $g_{31}$  for different compositions of PLZT  $x/57/43$ . The symbols  $\diamond$ ,  $\Delta$ ,  $\times$ ,  $\square$  and  $\circ$  correspond to  $x = 3.0, 5.0, 6.0, 10.1$  and  $12.1$  at% of La.

**Table 3.** Normalized temperature coefficients of 4th order polynomial fit of various electromechanical parameters of 6 at% of La.

x = 6.0 at% of La				
	$a_1(\times 10^{-3}/^\circ\text{C})$	$a_2(\times 10^{-5}/^\circ\text{C}^2)$	$a_3(\times 10^{-7}/^\circ\text{C}^3)$	$a_4(\times 10^{-10}/^\circ\text{C}^4)$
$\log(Z_{\max}/Z_{\min})$	7.50	-22.70	22.90	-73.50
$f_s$	-1.10	1.94	-1.48	4.61
$Q_m$	-8.60	27.80	-26.80	87.90
$M$	4.50	-8.62	8.32	-32.70
$\sigma^E$	2.00	-4.52	5.20	-16.50
$K_p$	2.20	-5.79	6.12	-24.90
$K_{31}^E$	1.80	-5.06	5.12	-21.20
$s_{11}^E$	2.50	-3.99	3.47	-11.50
$d_{31}$	8.20	-14.60	16.00	-59.50
$g_{31}$	-1.40	-1.10	0.48	-4.19

**Table 4.** Values of  $T_{\text{mt}}$  determined by the variation of  $s_{11}^E$  and  $d_{31}$  with  $T$ , thermal depoling temperature,  $T_d$  and ferroelectric phase transition temperature,  $T_m$ , for compositions of PLZT.

	x = 3.0 at%	x = 5.0 at%	x = 6.0 at%	x = 10.1 at%	x = 12.1 at%
	$T_{\text{mt}} (^\circ\text{C})$	$T_{\text{mt}} (^\circ\text{C})$	$T_{\text{mt}} (^\circ\text{C})$	$T_{\text{mt}} (^\circ\text{C})$	$T_{\text{mt}} (^\circ\text{C})$
$s_{11}^E (x10^{-12})\text{m}^2/\text{N}$	238	176	148	101	79
$d_{31} (\text{pC}/\text{N})$	225	168	149	104	73
Average $T_{\text{mt}} (^\circ\text{C})$	$232 \pm 7$	$172 \pm 2$	$148.5 \pm 0.5$	$102.5 \pm 2.5$	$76 \pm 3$
$T_d (^\circ\text{C})$	292	245	222	180	137
$T_m (^\circ\text{C})$	300	256	233	196	143

meters, for 6 at% of La are listed in table 3. The fitted curves of  $\log(Z_{\max}/Z_{\min})$ ,  $\Delta f_{\text{ps}}$ ,  $f_s$ ,  $M$ ,  $\sigma^E$ ,  $K_p$ ,  $s_{11}^E$ ,  $d_{31}$  and  $g_{31}$  are shown by dotted lines in the respective plots.

It is clear from the above study that there exist two distinct regions of various electromechanical parameters with  $T$  for the compositions of PLZT under investigation. Such a change in material constants of PLZT has been observed by Tang *et al* (2007), who have attributed this to the ferroelectric rhombohedral – tetragonal phase transition. The low temperature phase transition is a common feature of poled PZT close to the MPB region (Heywang and Thomann 1984; Cordero *et al* 2007; Tang *et al* 2007; Pandey *et al* 2008; Singh *et al* 2008).

The charge constant (also known as the strain constant) of a piezoelectric crystal is given by

$$d = \frac{\partial S}{\partial E} = \frac{\partial D}{\partial T'}$$

where  $S$  is the strain,  $E$  the applied electric field,  $D$  the dielectric displacement and  $T'$  the stress (Jaffe *et al* 1971). Through vector impedance spectroscopy we apply an electric field,  $E$ , which for the piezoelectric materials produces the strain ‘ $S$ ’, which in turn results in the stress  $T'$ . The elastic compliance,  $s_{11}^E = (\partial S/\partial T')_E$  and ‘ $d$ ’ may, therefore, be more appropriate electromechanical parameters for the determination of the temperature,  $T_{\text{mt}}$ , which may represent the phase transition from the mixed rhom-

bohedral – tetragonal phase to the tetragonal phase. These temperatures are listed in table 4 and arrows on different curves correspond to the average  $T_{\text{mt}}$ . The gradual change, either of decreasing or increasing nature in each electromechanical property is observed through the mixed rhombohedral – tetragonal phase transition to the tetragonal phase transition. It may be noted that all these phenomena are happening below the ferroelectric – paraelectric phase transitions. As such all the electromechanical properties diminish below the ferroelectric – paraelectric phase transition temperature at which the macroscopic polarization in the material is lost due to the thermal depoling. This temperature is known as the thermal depoling temperature,  $T_d$ ; which is listed in table 4 along with the ferroelectric phase transition temperature  $T_m$ . It has been further observed that the  $T_{\text{mt}} < T_d < T_m$ .

#### 4. Conclusions

The piezoelectric materials based on the PLZT x/57/43 are systematically investigated at elevated temperature by using VIS technique. The various electromechanical parameters are determined and fitted on a fourth order polynomial using the method of least square.

The electromechanical parameters of La doped PZT at a characteristic temperature  $T_{\text{mt}}$  suggests a structural phase transition from rhombohedral – tetragonal to

tetragonal phase below the ferroelectric – paraelectric phase transition. This is evidenced mainly by the behaviour of  $d_{31}$  and  $s_{11}^E$  with temperature. As such the charge constant ‘ $d$ ’ and elastic compliance  $s_{11}^E$  may be the appropriate parameters in determination of phase transition temperature,  $T_{mt}$ , by VIS technique.

As no appreciable variation in the piezoelectric coupling coefficients,  $K_p$  and  $K_{31}$ , has been observed within half of the  $T_{mt}$ , hence it would be safe to use these piezoelectric materials as transducer element within half of the  $T_{mt}$  for low power transducer devices.

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