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Phys. Rev. B **97**, 214437 — Published 29 June 2018

DOI: [10.1103/PhysRevB.97.214437](https://doi.org/10.1103/PhysRevB.97.214437)

Polarization Analysis of Magnetic Excitation in Multiferroic Ba₂CoGe₂O₇

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Magnetic excitations in the multiferroic Ba₂CoGe₂O₇ are measured by combination of unpolarized and polarized neutron scattering techniques. The unpolarized neutron spectrum reveals an anisotropic \mathbf{Q} -dependence of the intensity of the electromagnon mode at 4 meV. The analysis of the polarized neutron spectra identifies the directions of the magnetic fluctuations of the observed modes. The determined modes are consistent with the calculation by the extended spin wave theory. A couple of transverse modes and single longitudinal mode are involved in the magnetic excitation of Ba₂CoGe₂O₇. The longitudinal fluctuation takes on a main role in the electromagnon mode.

PACS numbers: 75.85.+t, 75.30.Ds, 78.70.Nx, 75.50.Ee

I. INTRODUCTION

In multiferroics, where the ferroelectricity is accompanied by magnetic ordering, coupling between magnetism and dielectricity has been extensively studied¹⁻⁴. The phenomena of a magnetization response with applying an electric field⁵⁻⁸ and a change of an electric polarization induced by a magnetic field⁹⁻¹¹ are known as the dc magnetoelectric (ME) effect. In the dynamics, the hybridization of the spin and the electric polarization waves has attracted great interest¹²⁻¹⁵. The harmonic oscillation of spins can be induced by the electric component of light, and this electric-field active magnon is known as electromagnon. The multiferroic properties including the electromagnon have been reported in many multiferroics with the cycloidal and proper-screw magnetic structures. Nevertheless multiferroic materials with a collinear structure are rather few¹⁶⁻¹⁸, and akermanaite compounds A₂CoB₂O₇ (A = Ca, Ba, B = Ge, Si)¹⁸⁻²³ are the good playground.

The Ba₂CoGe₂O₇ has a two-dimensional square lattice formed by Co²⁺ ions as shown in Fig. 1(a). Co²⁺ ions with spin $S = 3/2$ undergo an antiferromagnetic order with a collinear-magnetic structure below $T_N = 6.7$ K^{24,25}. The Ba₂CoGe₂O₇ has a multiferroic property^{18,26}, and the local electric polarization of CoO₄ tetrahedra is explained by the spin-dependent d - p hy-

bridization mechanism^{27,28}. The magnetic anisotropy is described in terms of a large single-ion anisotropy D of the easy-plane type and a small spin-nematic interaction J_p , which is equivalent to an interaction of local electric polarizations^{20,21}. The spin-nematic interaction realizes the antiferroelectric ground state which relates to the magnetic structure with the easy axis along $\langle 100 \rangle$, as shown in Fig. 1(b). The spin dynamics in Ba₂CoGe₂O₇ was studied by inelastic neutron scattering (INS)^{20,25} and ESR²⁹ measurements. In the neutron study, three modes were observed in the energy transfer ($\hbar\omega$) region $0 < \hbar\omega < 4$ meV, and one of the observed modes is an optical flat mode, which corresponds to the electromagnon confirmed by electromagnetic wave absorption experiments¹⁹. In order to explain the observed magnetic excitations, the effective Hamiltonian composed of the conventional bilinear spin interaction \mathcal{H}_{xxz} , the single ion anisotropy \mathcal{H}_D , a Dzyaloshinskii-Moriya interaction \mathcal{H}_{DM} , and a spin-nematic interaction \mathcal{H}_p was analyzed by the extended spin wave theory^{20,30-33}. The INS spectrum was reasonably reproduced by the Hamiltonian, and it was found that the large single-ion anisotropy D was closely related to the electromagnon mode in Ba₂CoGe₂O₇. Nevertheless, the detailed scattering function $S(\mathbf{q}, \omega)$ with the wide \mathbf{Q} -region was not clear in the ESR and the previous neutron studies. Furthermore, three modes of the fluctuating magnetic moments are expected in the extended spin wave theory. Next challenge

is to confirm the $S(\mathbf{q}, \omega)$ including the mode direction in the wide \mathbf{Q} -region, and compare it directly with the theoretical study.

In the present study, we performed the unpolarized and polarized neutron scattering measurements in $\text{Ba}_2\text{CoGe}_2\text{O}_7$ to analyze the modes of the magnetic excitations. The obtained results are consistent with the calculation by the extended spin wave theory. The observed magnetic excitations arise due to three types of fluctuations, and the electromagnon around 4 meV contains the longitudinal fluctuation.

II. EXPERIMENTAL DETAILS

The single crystals of $\text{Ba}_2\text{CoGe}_2\text{O}_7$ were grown by the floating-zone method. Unpolarized neutron scattering measurements were carried out using hybrid spectrometer HYSPEC installed at SNS, ORNL, USA³⁴. Two experimental conditions with the incident neutron energies of $E_i = 7.5$ and 15 meV were chosen. Polarized neutron scattering measurements were carried out by combination of the polarization analysis device, MuPAD, and the cold-neutron triple axis spectrometer TASP installed at SINQ, PSI, Switzerland³⁵. The final neutron energy E_f was set at 4.66 meV. The neutrons were polarized along the x -, y -, and z -directions as shown in Fig. 1(c); here the x is parallel to the scattering vector \mathbf{Q} , the z is perpendicular to the scattering plane, and the y is perpendicular to both of the x - and z -directions. The non-spin-flip (NSF) and spin-flip (SF) scattering cross sections with the neutron spin polarized along the α -directions ($\alpha = x, y$, and z) are described as α -NSF and α -SF scatterings, respectively. The expected components for the NSF and SF scatterings are summarized in Table I, where

$$\sigma_N = \frac{k_f}{k_i} \frac{1}{2\pi\hbar} \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \langle N(\mathbf{Q}, 0) N^\dagger(\mathbf{Q}, t) \rangle \exp(-i\omega t) dt,$$

$$\sigma_M^\beta = \frac{k_f}{k_i} \frac{1}{2\pi\hbar} \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \langle M^\beta(\mathbf{Q}, 0) M^{\beta\dagger}(\mathbf{Q}, t) \rangle \exp(-i\omega t) dt.$$

Here $N(\mathbf{Q}, t)$ is the nuclear structure factor, $M^\beta(\mathbf{Q}, t)$ is a Fourier transform of the β component of the magnetization, and $\beta = x, y$, and z . In this study, the magnetic-nuclear interference and the chiral terms were excluded. The flipping ratio of the polarized neutron beam was about 4.9. Throughout this paper, the tetragonal unit cell where the lattice constants are $a = b = 8.410$ Å and $c = 5.537$ Å was used and the scattering plane was the a - c plane. There are magnetic domains of the antiferromagnetic structures with the easy axis along $[100]$ and $[010]$ directions in the tetragonal crystal structure, as shown in Fig. 1(b). The volume ratios of two magnetic domains are assumed to be equal. All measurements were carried out at $T = 1.5$ K by using a liquid-helium cryostat.

TABLE I: The expected components with the neutron spin along the x -, y -, and z -directions.

| | NSF | SF |
|-----|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| x | σ_N | $\sigma_M^y + \sigma_M^z$ |
| y | $\sigma_N + \sigma_M^y$ | σ_M^z |
| z | $\sigma_N + \sigma_M^z$ | σ_M^y |

III. RESULTS

A. Unpolarized Neutron Scattering

Figure 2(a) shows the INS spectrum measured at $\mathbf{Q} = (H, 0, 0)$ in the HYSPEC spectrometer with $E_i = 7.5$ meV. Two dispersive excitations at $0 < \hbar\omega < 2.5$ meV and one excitation at 4 meV, which is almost dispersionless, are observed. The spectra are consistent with the previous neutron studies^{20,25}. The first branch is the acoustic mode that the excitation energy approaches to zero at $(1, 0, 0)$. It is noted that the small anisotropy gap was confirmed in the previous study²⁰. The second transverse acoustic branch shifted by $\mathbf{q} = (1, 0, 0)$ appears in the spectrum because of two interpenetrating magnetic sublattices. The excitation at 4 meV corresponds to an electromagnon¹⁹.

To investigate the mode around 4 meV, the neutron spectrum was measured in the wide \mathbf{Q} -region using $E_i = 15$ meV. Figure 3(a) shows the constant energy cut at $\hbar\omega = 4$ meV for $\mathbf{Q} = (H, 0, L)$. The neutron intensity monotonically decreases with the increase of the $|\mathbf{Q}|$, which is due to the magnetic form factor. In addition it has the directional dependence; the intensity along $(0, 0, L)$ is larger than that along $(H, 0, 0)$. This means that the fluctuation of the magnetic moment is anisotropic.

B. Polarized Neutron Scattering

In order to analyze the modes of the magnetic excitations in detail, the polarized neutron scattering has been carried out at the TASP spectrometer. Figures 4(a), 4(b), and 4(c) show the constant- \mathbf{Q} scans at $\mathbf{Q} = (1.25, 0, 0)$ with the neutron spin polarized along x -, y -, and z -directions, respectively. The clear peaks are observed at $\hbar\omega = 1.25$ and 2.25 meV, but the excitation at 4 meV is not clear. In order to make the difference between the NSF and SF intensities at $\hbar\omega = 4$ meV more clearly, we count 10 times longer time at the energy. To estimate the background intensity, the NSF scatterings at $\hbar\omega = 3$ meV, where no excitation is observed, are measured. Table II shows the neutron intensities at $\hbar\omega = 4$ meV for the signal and 3 meV for the background. The clear differences were found for all directions of the neutron polarization; x -SF, y -SF, and z -NSF scatterings probe the magnetic excitations, and x -NSF, y -NSF, and z -SF scatterings are at the background level. Data in Figs.

TABLE II: Neutron intensities (counts/8 Mmon.) with the neutron spin along the x -, y -, and z -directions at $\mathbf{Q}=(1.25,0,0)$.

| | 4 meV-NSF | 4 meV-SF | 3 meV-NSF |
|-----|-----------|----------|-----------|
| x | 112 | 198 | 102 |
| y | 116 | 183 | 96 |
| z | 178 | 144 | 149 |

TABLE III: The observed scatterings at $\mathbf{Q}=(1.25,0,0)$, and the modes allowed in the result of the polarized neutron experiment.

| | 1.25 meV | 2.25 meV | 4 meV |
|----------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| x | SF | SF | SF |
| y | SF | NSF | SF |
| z | NSF | SF | NSF |
| domain A | T ₁ | T ₂ | T ₁ |
| domain B | L | T ₂ | L |

4(a), 4(b), 4(c), and Table II show that x -SF, y -SF, and z -NSF scatterings probe the excitations at $\hbar\omega = 1.25$ and 4 meV, and x -NSF, y -NSF, and z -SF scatterings probe the excitation at $\hbar\omega = 2.25$ meV. The small peaks at 1.25 meV with the x -NSF, y -NSF, and z -SF scatterings are not intrinsic, and it is ascribed to relatively small flipping ratio. Types of the scattering, SF and NSF, for the polarization direction, x , y , and z , for the excitations at 1.25, 2.25, and 4 meV are summarized in Table III.

The constant- \mathbf{Q} scans at $\mathbf{Q}=(0,0,1.5)$ with the neutron spin polarized along the x -, y -, and z -directions are shown in Figs. 4(d), 4(e), and 4(f), respectively. The clear peaks are observed at $\hbar\omega = 2.25$ and 4 meV for x -SF, and no peak is observed for x -NSF. In contrast these peaks are observed both for the NSF and SF for the neutron spin polarized along the y - and z -directions.

IV. DISCUSSION

The spin dynamics in $\text{Ba}_2\text{CoGe}_2\text{O}_7$ is discussed by the effective spin Hamiltonian

$$\mathcal{H} = \mathcal{H}_{xxz} + \mathcal{H}_D + \mathcal{H}_{DM} + \mathcal{H}_p,$$

as reported in the previous study²⁰. Each term is written as

$$\begin{aligned}\mathcal{H}_{xxz} &= \sum_{i,j} \sum_{\alpha=x,y,z} J^\alpha S_i^\alpha S_j^\alpha, \\ \mathcal{H}_D &= \sum_i D(S_i^z)^2, \\ \mathcal{H}_{DM} &= \sum_{i,j} D_{DM}^z(i,j)(S_i^x S_j^y - S_i^y S_j^x), \\ \mathcal{H}_p &= -J_p^{\text{eff}} \sum_{i,j} O_{XY}(i) O_{XY}(j).\end{aligned}$$

Here, S^α is the $S = 3/2$ spin operator, and $O_{XY} = S^X S^Y + S^Y S^X$ is the spin-nematic operator^{36,37}. In considering $J^x = J^y = 0.208$ meV, $J^z = 0.253$ meV, $D = 1.034$ meV, $D_{DM}^z = 8.61$ μeV , and $J_p^{\text{eff}} = -0.198$ μeV , which were estimated in the previous study²⁰, the magnon dispersion for $\mathbf{Q}=(H,0,0)$ was calculated by the extended spin wave theory, as shown in Fig. 2(d). The focused dispersions and intensities around $\hbar\omega = 4$ meV are shown in Figs. 2(e) and 2(f), respectively. In this calculation, the magnetic domains of the collinear antiferromagnetic structures with the spins aligned along the $[100]$ (domain A) and $[010]$ (domain B) directions are considered. The calculated modes are classified into three fluctuations; the transverse fluctuation in the a - b plane, T₁-mode, that in the c -direction, T₂-mode, and the longitudinal fluctuation of the ordered moment, L-mode, as depicted in Figs. 2(b) and 2(c)^{20,33}. The acoustic and the optical modes at $0 < \hbar\omega < 2.5$ meV correspond to T₁- and T₂-modes, respectively. On the other hand, the excitation at 4 meV includes the T₁- and T₂-modes with the small intensities and the L-mode with the large intensity, as shown in Fig. 2(f). The L-mode plays a major role in the 4 meV excitation. These T₁-, T₂-, and L-modes are consistent with those identified in the previous ESR studies²⁹.

The total intensity with T₁-, T₂-, and L-modes around 4 meV is calculated for $\mathbf{Q}=(H,0,L)$, as shown in Fig. 3(b). In this calculation, the main intensity is induced by the L-mode. Since the magnetic neutron scattering is caused by the component perpendicular to the scattering vector, the L-mode, which correspond to the fluctuation within the c -plane, have the large intensity with the scattering vector along the c -direction. The directional dependence of the observed intensity in Fig. 3(a) is consistent with the calculation by the extended spin wave theory.

From the results of the polarized neutron scattering experiments, we can clarify the direction of the magnetic fluctuation of each mode. Figures 4(a) and 4(d) mean that the observed excitations are induced only by the magnetic scattering because the x -NSF and x -SF scatterings correspond to the nuclear and magnetic ones, respectively, as shown in Table I. Furthermore, we can distinguish the components either the y - and z -ones of the fluctuating moment. As for $\mathbf{Q} = (1.25, 0, 0)$, the scattering vector is along $[100]$, which corresponds to the x -direction. The y -direction is $[001]$, and the z -direction is always $[010]$. It is noted that the z -direction is, by convention, the one going out of the scattering plane, which in our case is $(H \ 0 \ L)$. The z -NSF scattering probes σ_M^z as in Table I, and in the present coordinate it probes T₁-mode in the domain A in Fig. 2(b) and L-mode in the domain B in Fig. 2(c). The z -SF probes T₂-mode in the domains A and B. On the contrary, the y -NSF scattering probes T₂-mode in the domains A and B, and the y -SF probes T₁-mode in the domain A and L-mode in the domain B. At $\mathbf{Q} = (1.25, 0, 0)$, thus, the magnetic excitations at 1.25 and 4 meV are induced by the T₁- and/or L-modes, while that at 2.25 meV is induced by T₂-mode.

The expected modes for the excitations at 1.25, 2.25, and 4 meV are summarized in Table III.

The observed and calculated intensities for the excitations at 1.25, 2.25, and 4 meV at $\mathbf{Q} = (1.25, 0, 0)$ are summarized in Table IV. Here the observed intensities for the excitations at 1.25, 2.25 meV are estimated by the Gaussian fits in Figs. 4(a), 4(b), and 4(c). The observed intensities for the excitations at 4 meV are estimated by using the peak intensities in Table II and the energy width at $\mathbf{Q} = (0, 0, 1.5)$ because the profile width at $\mathbf{Q} = (1.25, 0, 0)$ is not clear. The NSF and SF intensities for the excitations at 1.25, 2.25, and 4 meV are quantitatively consistent with the extended spin wave theory although there is a influence of the small flipping ratio. The neutron intensities of L-, T_1 -, and T_2 -modes around 4 meV are 1.05, 0.32, and 0.21, respectively, at $\mathbf{Q} = (1.25, 0, 0)$, as shown in Fig. 2(f), and we can confirm that the observed intensity around 4 meV is mainly from the L-mode. Since the intensity ratio of y -SF to y -NSF is estimated to be $(1.37/0.21) \sim 6.5$, the intensity of y -NSF is negligibly small.

The observed modes at $\mathbf{Q}=(0,0,1.5)$ are different from those at $\mathbf{Q}=(1.25,0,0)$. As for $\mathbf{Q}=(0,0,1.5)$, the x -direction which corresponds to the scattering vector is along [001], the y -direction is [100], and the z -direction is [010]. At $\mathbf{Q}=(0,0,1.5)$, the y -NSF scattering, which is magnetically equivalent to the z -SF one, probes the L-mode in the domain A and the T_1 -mode in the domain B. The y -SF scattering, which is equivalent to the z -NSF one, probes the T_1 -mode in the domain A and the L-mode in the domain B. Because of the twinned domains, the NSF and SF scatterings have the similar intensities at $\mathbf{Q}=(0,0,1.5)$. The observed intensities are estimated by the Gaussian fits in Figs. 4(d), 4(e), and 4(f), and the observed and calculated intensities at $\mathbf{Q} = (0, 0, 1.5)$ are also summarized in Table IV. The magnetic excitation modes determined by the polarized neutron experiment at $\mathbf{Q}=(1.25,0,0)$ and $(0,0,1.5)$ are consistent with the predicted modes in the extended spin wave theory.

The possibility of the magnon-phonon coupling is considered in the multiferroics, and the L-mode in $\text{Ba}_2\text{CoGe}_2\text{O}_7$ corresponds to the electromagnon^{19,33}. In this experiment, however, the magnetic-nuclear interference term, which is induced by the magnon-phonon coupling, could not be studied. If the magnetic-nuclear interference term exists, the y -NSF and z -NSF scatterings should have the additional intensities, which correspond to $\langle N \cdot M^\dagger \rangle + \langle N^\dagger \cdot M \rangle$, besides the scatterings shown in Table I. We could not detect any evidence of the magnon-phonon coupling because no difference between the y -NSF and z -SF scatterings or that between the z -NSF and y -SF scatterings could be observed in the present setup. There is also a possibility that another \mathbf{Q} -position is suitable to observe the magnon-phonon coupling. In order to establish the existence of the magnon-phonon coupling, the experiment with the improved flipping ratio and signal-noise ratio is needed in the future.

V. CONCLUSION

A combination of the unpolarized and polarized inelastic neutron scattering studies has revealed the magnetic excitation modes in the multiferroic $\text{Ba}_2\text{CoGe}_2\text{O}_7$. In the former neutron experiment, the neutron intensity in the wide- \mathbf{Q} region was measured. In the latter neutron experiment, the directions of the fluctuating magnetic moments were determined directly. Two excitations with the low energy are induced by the two transverse fluctuation modes, and the high energy excitation which is equivalent to the electromagnon mainly corresponds to the longitudinal fluctuation mode. The obtained results are consistent with the extended spin wave theory.

Acknowledgments

Unpolarized neutron experiment was performed by using HYSPEC at SNS/ORNL, USA. The research at ORNL's Spallation Neutron Source was sponsored by the Scientific User Facilities Division, Office of Basic Energy Sciences, U.S. Department of Energy. Polarized neutron experiment was performed by using TASP at SINQ/PSI, Switzerland. Travel expense for the neutron experiment on HYSPEC was supported by US-Japan collaboration program, and that on TASP was supported by General User Program for Neutron Scattering Experiments, Institute for Solid State Physics, The University of Tokyo (proposal Nos. 13570 and 15518). This work was supported by KAKENHI (15K05123 and 17K05516) from MEXT, Japan.

TABLE IV: Comparison between the observed intensities and the calculation at $\mathbf{Q}=(1.25,0,0)$ and $(0,0,1.5)$. The values in parentheses are ones estimated by using the present flipping ratio.

| | $\mathbf{Q}=(1.25,0,0)$ | | | | | | $\mathbf{Q}=(0,0,1.5)$ | | | |
|-------------------|-------------------------|---------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|-------------|------------------------|-------------|-----------|-------------|
| | 1.25 meV | | 2.25 meV | | 4 meV | | 2.25 meV | | 4 meV | |
| | obs. | cal. | obs. | cal. | obs. | cal. | obs. | cal. | obs. | cal. |
| x -SF | 11.34 | 11.49 (11.49) | 5.72 | 5.36 (5.36) | 1.06 | 1.58 (1.58) | 4.01 | 4.14 (4.14) | 2.48 | 2.28 (2.28) |
| y -NSF/ z -SF | 0.85/1.24 | 0 (2.36) | 4.72/4.10 | 5.36 (5.36) | 0.22/0 | 0.21 (0.49) | 2.01/1.21 | 2.07 (2.50) | 1.88/1.36 | 1.14 (1.37) |
| y -SF/ z -NSF | 12.46/11.63 | 11.49 (11.49) | 1.24/1.65 | 0 (1.10) | 0.96/0.32 | 1.37 (1.41) | 2.23/2.19 | 2.07 (2.50) | 1.74/1.33 | 1.14 (1.37) |

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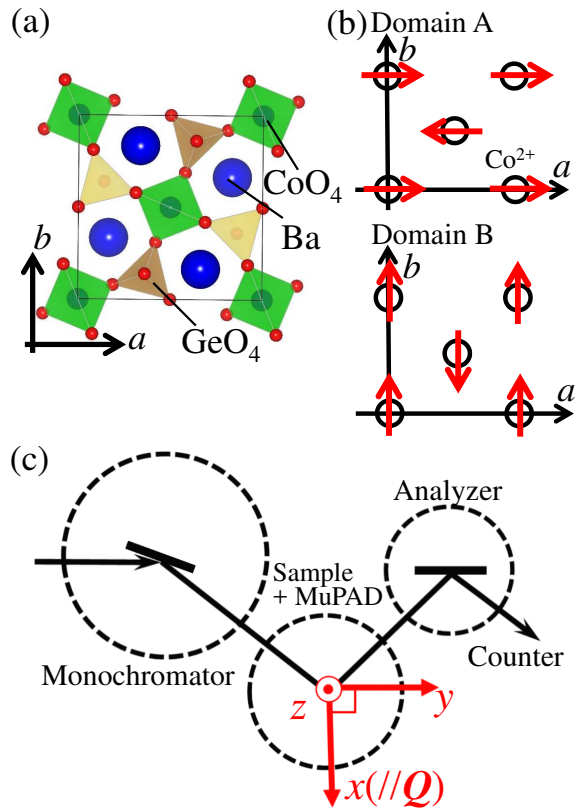


FIG. 1: (color online) (a) Schematic crystal structure of $\text{Ba}_2\text{CoGe}_2\text{O}_7$. (b) Schematic magnetic structure of $\text{Ba}_2\text{CoGe}_2\text{O}_7$. (c) Experimental configuration in TASP.

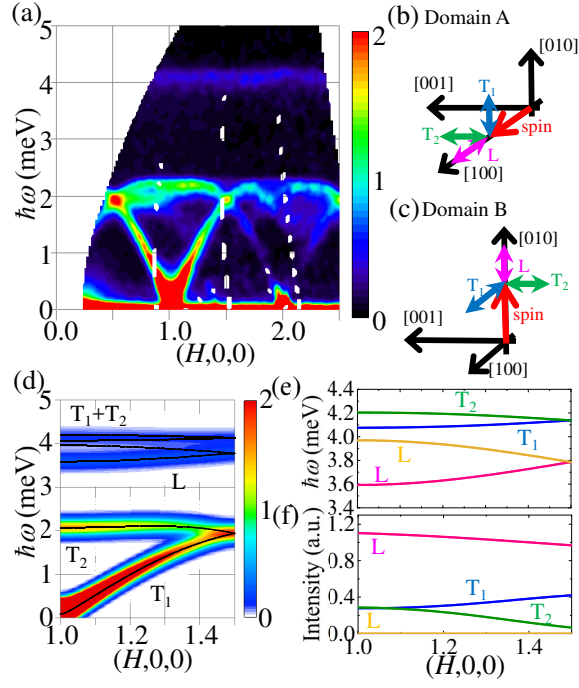


FIG. 2: (color online) (a) Inelastic neutron scattering spectrum obtained by using the HYSPEC spectrometer for $\mathbf{Q}=(H,0,0)$. Intensity is indicated by a shade of color. (b,c) Schematics of spin fluctuation for two magnetic domains. Transverse fluctuation in the a - b plane is named T_1 -mode, that along the c -direction is named T_2 -mode, and longitudinal fluctuation is named L -mode. (d-f) Magnon calculated by extended spin-wave theory for $\mathbf{Q}=(H,0,0)$. (d) Contour map of calculated intensity. Calculated dispersion is shown by the black solid curves. (e,f) Magnon dispersion and intensity at around $\hbar\omega = 4$ meV.

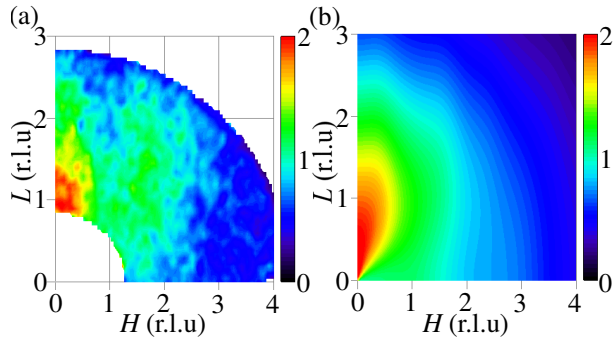


FIG. 3: (color online) (a) Neutron scattering intensity obtained by using the HYSPEC spectrometer in $(H\ 0\ L)$ -plane obtained by integrating the scattering over the energy range 3.5 to 4.5 meV. (b) Intensity calculated by the extended spin-wave theory in $(H\ 0\ L)$ -plane. The calculated intensity is the total one of the T_1 -, T_2 -, and L -modes.

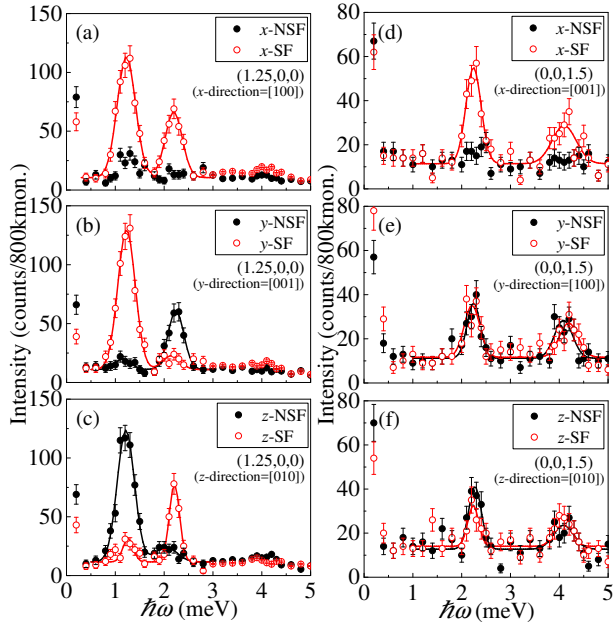


FIG. 4: (color online) Typical constant- Q scans obtained by using the TASP spectrometer in PSI. Black closed circles indicate NSF scattering and red opened circles indicate SF scattering. Solid curves are fits to the data by Gaussian functions. (a-c) Constant- Q scans at $Q=(1.25,0,0)$ with the neutron spin along (a) x -, (b) y -, and (c) z -directions. (d-f) Constant- Q scans at $Q=(0,0,1.5)$ with the neutron spin along (d) x -, (e) y -, and (f) z -directions.