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# Electromagnon with Sensitive Terahertz Magnetochromism in a Room-Temperature Magnetoelectric Hexaferrite

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## Abstract

An electromagnon in the magnetoelectric (ME) hexaferrite  $\text{Ba}_{0.5}\text{Sr}_{2.5}\text{Co}_2\text{Fe}_{24}\text{O}_{41}$  ( $\text{Co}_2\text{Z}$ -type) single crystal is identified by time-domain terahertz (THz) spectroscopy. The associated THz resonance is active on electric field ( $E^0$ ) of the THz light parallel to the  $c$  axis ( $\parallel [001]$ ), whose spectral weight develops at a markedly high temperature, coinciding with a transverse conical magnetic order below 410 K. The resonance frequency of 1.03 THz at 20 K changes -8.7 % and +5.8 % under external magnetic field ( $H$ ) of 2 kOe along  $[001]$  and  $[120]$ , respectively. A model Hamiltonian describing the conical magnetic order elucidates that the dynamical ME effect arises from anti-phase motion of spins which are coupled with modulating electric dipoles through exchange striction mechanism. Moreover, the calculated frequency shift points to the key role of Dzyaloshinskii-Moriya interaction that is altered by static electric polarization change under different  $H$ .

Quasiparticles in condensed matter manifest their collective interactions that lead to emergent phenomena and entanglement among various degrees of freedom. An electromagnon, the magnetic excitation induced by electric-dipole activeness, is one example representing entangled magnetic and electric properties in the dynamical regime [1,2]. It is generally observed as a magnon driven by the photo-induced oscillation of electric polarization ( $P$ ) and can be found in multiferroics [3-9] that manifest static magnetoelectric (ME) effect, i.e. cross-control of electric polarization and magnetization by magnetic and electric fields [10-13]. This dynamical ME effect is expected to mirror the character of ME ground state that shares the same ME coupling origins [2,4,14-16]: inverse Dzyaloshinskii-Moriya (DM) interaction [17], exchange striction [18], and spin-dependent covalency between ligand  $p$  state and metal  $d$  state ( $p$ - $d$  hybridization) [19]. An intriguing aspect of the ME state, however, is that the dynamics do not always correspond with the static ground state. For example,  $RMnO_3$  ( $R$  = rare earth ion) [3,20-22] and  $Ba_2Mg_2Fe_{12}O_{22}$  ( $Mg_2Y$ -type hexaferrite)[5] display the dynamical ME effect associated with the exchange striction, while the static effect is induced by the inverse DM interaction.  $Cu(Fe,Ga)O_2$  separately hosts dynamical and static effects in different magnetic phases despite the same ME coupling origin of the  $p$ - $d$  hybridization [6]. These peculiar characteristics of the ME phenomena calls for deeper understanding of the underlying physics.

Beyond this scientific perspective, an electromagnon residing in the terahertz (THz) frequency range points to the potential of application in the THz technology [23]. This emerging technology aims to exploit broad band of the THz light suitable for fast mass data-transfer communication device, or enhanced sensitivity to water molecules applicable for biomedical sensing. In the multiferroics, the capability to control THz resonance profile associated with an electromagnon by external magnetic field ( $H$ ) [3-9] is thought of as a key attribute for realizing a novel application such as  $H$ -controlled THz filtering device. This objective, however, is challenged in most multiferroics because of low operation temperature for realizing the dynamical ME effect and high magnetic field for manipulating THz light.

Magnetoelectric hexaferrites are candidates that fulfill both scientific and technological aspirations. The electromagnon of the  $\text{Mg}_2\text{Y}$ -type hexaferrite demonstrates the THz light absorption and the resonance frequency tunable by external magnetic field [5]. This dynamical ME effect is associated with the non-collinear spins forming conical magnetic structures confirmed below 164 K. On the other hand, the  $\text{Co}_2\text{Z}$ -type hexaferrite,  $(\text{Ba,Sr})_3\text{Co}_2\text{Fe}_{24}\text{O}_{41}$  hosts a transverse conical magnetic order that persists up to remarkably high temperature  $\sim 410$  K for  $\text{Sr}_3\text{Co}_2\text{Z}$ -type and  $\text{Ba}_{0.5}\text{Sr}_{2.5}\text{Co}_2\text{Z}$ -type. This magnetic state realizes the room-temperature static ME effects such as low-magnetic-field control of electric polarization [24,25] and electric-field control of magnetization [26]. The dynamical ME effect is expected to also exist, but identification of the electromagnon has been hindered by lacking of the single crystal with a proper size for the investigation despite the recent discovery of magnons in the  $\text{Co}_2\text{Z}$ -type ceramics [27].

In this Letter, we report the presence of the electromagnon in  $\text{Ba}_{0.5}\text{Sr}_{2.5}\text{Co}_2\text{Fe}_{24}\text{O}_{41}$  from the THz time-domain spectroscopy. The study on the single crystals allows us to unambiguously evidence the electric-dipole activeness and observe sensitive shifts of the THz resonance frequencies according to external magnetic field directions. We establish a model Hamiltonian that successfully identifies a magnon mode corresponding to the electromagnon. The model calculation of the magnon mode also reveals that the field-direction dependent frequency shifts can be properly explained by consideration of the DM interaction associated with the static ME effect in the Hamiltonian. This interconnection between the dynamical and static ME effects may offer a novel route to enhance the THz-device functionality.

Single crystals of  $\text{Ba}_{0.5}\text{Sr}_{2.5}\text{Co}_2\text{Fe}_{24}\text{O}_{41}$  ( $5\text{ mm} \times 5\text{ mm} \times 3\text{ mm}$ ) were grown by a flux method [26] and were thinned down to  $100 - 350\text{ }\mu\text{m}$  for THz time-domain spectroscopy (THz-TDS) that employed a  $1\text{ mm}$ -focused beam with the transmission geometry. The THz-light resonance arising from the electromagnon was identified from the absorption profiles obtained in various polarization of the light. The temperature dependence of data was obtained with a closed-cycle optical cryostat at the fs-THz beamline of Pohang Accelerator Laboratory and the data above

room temperature were verified using an independent THz-TDS apparatus at Seoul National University. An external DC magnetic field of 2 kOe was applied to the samples with the Voigt geometry [5] by placing neodymium magnets near the samples. The field monitored by a Hall sensor did not change significantly in the temperature window of our interest.

$\text{Ba}_{0.5}\text{Sr}_{2.5}\text{Co}_2\text{Fe}_{24}\text{O}_{41}$  has a layered structure of hexagonal lattice (close to the space group  $P6_3/mmc$ ) that has various channels of superexchange along the layers [Fig. 1(a)]. The layers can be grouped into magnetic building blocks labelled as  $L$  and  $S$  according to the dominant superexchange in each block, within which nearly antiparallel spin-alignment is formed [25]. Thus, magnetic structures are effectively represented by composition of the net magnetic moments in the  $L$  and  $S$  blocks,  $\bar{\mu}_L$  and  $\bar{\mu}_S$ . At the boundary of the blocks, a moderate superexchange in combination with single ion anisotropy yields diverse magnetic structures as temperature is varied. For instance, this  $\text{Co}_2\text{Z}$ -type hexaferrite undergoes the  $c$  axis-collinear ferrimagnetic order at 680 K with change of the easy axis close to the  $ab$  plane at 490 K, and then the transverse conical order at  $T_{\text{con}} = \sim 410$  K [25,26].

Figures 2(a)&(b) show dielectric constants in THz range at 20 K converted from the absorption profile. To find the resonance characteristic, i.e. an abrupt, step-like drop in the real part ( $\epsilon_1$ ) and sharp peak in the imaginary part ( $\epsilon_2$ ), we explored various configurations of the incident light-polarization ( $E^\omega$  &  $H^\omega$ ) with respect to the crystallographic axes. Note that the configuration of  $E^\omega \parallel [001]$  &  $H^\omega \parallel [120]$  (denoted as  $E^\omega_{[001]}H^\omega_{[120]}$ ) shows the most pronounced resonance features in the dielectric constants at 1.03 THz ( $\approx 4.26$  meV). The resonance in this frequency regime may arise from magnetic excitations, including the putative electromagnon or alternatively conventional AFMR (antiferromagnetic resonance) excited by  $E^\omega$  and  $H^\omega$ , respectively. We find that the resonance does not occur in another configuration of the same  $H^\omega$ , e.g.  $E^\omega_{[100]}H^\omega_{[120]}$ , which rules out AFMR as the origin [Fig. 2(a)]. The resonance was also observed in the configuration of the same  $E^\omega$ , e.g.  $E^\omega_{[001]}H^\omega_{[100]}$  (not shown). This establishes the electric-dipole activeness on  $E^\omega \parallel [001]$  and conclusively proves the electromagnon in the  $\text{Co}_2\text{Z}$ -type hexaferrite. Alternative way of proving electromagnon is to observe coupling between phonon and magnon

branches via experimental probes like, e.g. inelastic neutron scattering. Renormalization of both branches, for example, can provide an important clue to understand nature of electromagnon and the dynamical ME effects further.

The presence of the electromagnon at 20 K in the transverse conical phase implies its correlation with the magnetic order. We monitored temperature ( $T$ )-evolution of the  $\varepsilon_2$  spectra up to 420 K, above  $T_{\text{con}} = 410$  K, and found that the resonant peak became broader and weaker, and shifted to lower frequency while approaching  $T_{\text{con}}$  [Fig. 2(c)]. Despite the difficulty in resolving the peak above 200 K, considerable spectral weight ( $SW$ ) is noted, which gradually converges to the one near  $T_{\text{con}}$ . This  $T$ -dependence can be better displayed via  $\Delta SW(T) = SW(T) - SW(410 \text{ K})$  where  $SW(T) = \int \omega \varepsilon_0 \varepsilon_2(\omega, T) d\omega$  in the range of 0.5 - 1.3 THz. We compare in Fig. 2(d)  $\Delta SW(T)$  to the value of static  $P$  ( $P_{\text{static}}$ ), which is estimated in a single ME-domain state of the transverse conical order [26]. Note that  $T$ -evolution of both  $\Delta SW$  and  $P_{\text{static}}$  matches very well: both show a rapid drop above 200 K and approach zero above  $T_{\text{con}}$ . This evidences the correlation of the  $SW$  with the transverse conical order. It is noteworthy that the finite  $\Delta SW$  associated with the magnetic order below  $T_{\text{con}}$  supports the presence of electromagnon even at room temperature in the  $\text{Co}_2\text{Z}$ -type hexaferrite.

The electromagnon resonance developed in the transverse conical order can be manipulated by external magnetic fields. The response of the conical order depends on the field directions so that the  $\text{Co}_2\text{Z}$ -type hexaferrite exhibits magnetochromism, i.e.  $H$ -directional dependence of the resonance frequency. Figure 3(a) shows the  $\varepsilon_2$  spectra at 20 K for  $H = 2$  kOe  $\parallel$  [120] and  $\parallel$  [001], which display the resonances at 1.09 THz and 0.94 THz, corresponding to blue- and red-shifting of 5.8 % and 8.7 % from 1.03 THz for  $H = 0$ , respectively. We observe persistent magnetochromism at least up to 200 K on top of the general tendency of electromagnon softening [Fig. 3(b)], while damped resonance feature above 200 K makes it difficult to capture the frequency shifting within the experimental resolution. Such sensitive magnetochromism induced by application of relatively small  $H$  is a feature of the dynamical ME effect in the transverse conical state, offering an opportunity to realize new functional THz devices.

We now turn to elucidating the origin of the electromagnon resonance by assessing the relevant magnon mode. An effective Hamiltonian  $H$  is introduced on the basis of the  $L&S$  block model [28],

$$H = J_{LS} \sum_{i,j=1,2} (\vec{\mu}_{Si} \cdot \vec{\mu}_{Lj}) + 2J_{LL} (\vec{\mu}_{L1} \cdot \vec{\mu}_{L2}) + 2J_{SS} (\vec{\mu}_{S1} \cdot \vec{\mu}_{S2}) \\ + D_L \sum_{i=1,2} (\mu_{Liz})^2 + D_S \sum_{i=1,2} (\mu_{Siz})^2 - H_x \sum_{i=1,2} (\mu_{Lix} + \mu_{Six}) + \sum_{i,j=1,2} \vec{D}_{DMij} \cdot (\vec{\mu}_{Si} \times \vec{\mu}_{Lj})$$

where  $J_{LS}$ ,  $J_{LL}$ , and  $J_{SS}$  are the superexchange constants of  $L&S$ ,  $L&L$ , and  $S&S$  blocks;  $D_L$  &  $D_S$  are the magnetic anisotropy constants of  $L&S$  blocks along the  $z$  axis ( $\parallel$  [001]);  $H_x$  is the sum of internal ( $H_x^{int}$ ) and external ( $H_x^{ext}$ ) magnetic fields along the  $x$  axis ( $\parallel$  [120]);  $\vec{D}_{DMij}$  is the Dzyaloshinskii-Moriya vector between  $\vec{\mu}_{Si}$  &  $\vec{\mu}_{Lj}$ . Solving the Landau-Lifshitz-Gilbert equation leads to two  $k = 0$  normal modes, i.e. low- and high-lying modes that have anti-phase modulation between  $\vec{\mu}_{L1}$  &  $\vec{\mu}_{L2}$  and between  $\vec{\mu}_{S1}$  &  $\vec{\mu}_{S2}$ , all of which precess about their static directions (See Section 1 in Ref. 29 for the detailed calculation).

The mode characteristics calculated in reasonable ranges of the parameters can lead us to identify the mode corresponding to the observed electromagnon. To this end, we first deduce magnetization ( $M_x$ ) vs.  $H_x$  relation from the Hamiltonian (See Section 2 in Ref. 29 for the detailed calculation), and compared it with the experimental data. We use 5  $\mu_B$  per each  $Fe^{3+}/Co^{2+}$  site, which is in between the spin moment values of  $Fe^{3+}$  (Spin = 5/2) and  $Co^{2+}$  (Spin = 3/2). The antiparallel spin alignment within each block leads to  $\mu_L = 35 \mu_B$  and  $\mu_S = 5 \mu_B$ , respectively. The solid line in Fig. 4(d) is the calculation result based on a set of parameters:  $J_{LS}|\mu_L||\mu_S| = 1783 \mu_B \cdot kOe$ ,  $J_{LL}|\mu_L|^2 = 992 \mu_B \cdot kOe$ ,  $J_{SS}|\mu_S|^2 = 1174 \mu_B \cdot kOe$ ,  $D_S|\mu_S|^2 = -302 \mu_B \cdot kOe$ ,  $D_L|\mu_L|^2 = 302 \mu_B \cdot kOe$ , and  $D_{DM}|\mu_L||\mu_S| = 0 \mu_B \cdot kOe$ . We note that despite long distance between the  $S$  blocks, sizable  $J_{SS}$  is required to produce the considerable antiparallel components along the  $z$  direction between  $\vec{\mu}_{S1}$  &  $\vec{\mu}_{S2}$ . We postulate that this is a consequence in stacking of many exchange interaction paths along  $z$ , of which detail is worthy of further study. The parameters are used to estimate magnon frequencies, and in turn leads to the conclusion that the

high-lying mode is consistent with our observation while the low-lying mode has at least one order of magnitude lower frequency (See Section 2 in Ref. 29).

Figure 4(a) illustrates the calculated  $\delta\vec{\mu}_L$  and  $\delta\vec{\mu}_S$  trajectories of the high-lying mode, which are largely elongated along the  $z$  and  $y$  axes, respectively. The  $\vec{\mu}_{L1}$  and  $\vec{\mu}_{S1}$  precess in opposite direction each other with a phase relation that when  $\delta\vec{\mu}_{L1}$  points toward  $+z$  direction,  $\delta\vec{\mu}_{S1}$  is along  $-y$  direction. Figure 4(c) denotes this modulating relation with the  $x$ ,  $y$ , and  $z$  components of  $\delta\vec{\mu}_L$  and  $\delta\vec{\mu}_S$ . We note that this modulation can give rise to the electromagnon via exchange striction. For instance, when  $\delta\vec{\mu}_{S1}$  is along  $-y$  direction, it is parallel to the  $y$  component of the  $\vec{\mu}_{L1}$  while antiparallel to that of  $\vec{\mu}_{L2}$  [Figs. 4(b,c)]. The exchange striction leads the  $S_1$  block to repel the  $L_1$  and attract the  $L_2$ . In the meantime,  $\delta\vec{\mu}_{S2}$  along  $+y$  direction also contributes to this lattice distortion that yields modulating electric polarization ( $\delta P$ ) along the  $z$  direction. The THz light with  $E^\omega \parallel z$  modulates  $\delta P$ , and in turn conversely excites the magnon. This process is consistent with dynamical ME effect driven by exchange striction already revealed in other multiferroic hexaferrites [5, 33].

Confirming the consistent description of dynamical ME effect, we further move on to uncover the main cause of the observed sensitive magnetochromism by assessing characteristics of the high-lying magnon. We first notice that under the approximation of no DM interaction, the electromagnon resonance frequency monotonically diminishes as the field  $H_x$  is increased [Fig. 4(e)]. This is indeed inconsistent with the observation of blue-shifting at  $H_x = 2$  kOe and thereby leads to considering the role of DM interaction. Our calculation shows that the enhanced DM term while the other parameters are fixed in H results in the elevated frequency vs.  $H_x$  curves with increased slopes as depicted in Fig. 4(e). Thus, the frequency hardening can occur if the DM interaction is increased by  $H_x$ .

The DM interaction has not been considered so far for understanding magnetic properties of hexaferrites. In general, the crystal structures of Y-type and Z-type hexaferrites belong to the  $R\bar{3}m$  and  $P6_3/mmc$  groups, respectively, of which symmetries cancel out the DM interaction.



However, the ME state of the hexaferrites has lowered symmetries associated with  $P_{Static}$  and thereby the finite DM interaction can exist. The presence of the DM interaction and its variation under  $H_x$  is supported by the calculated  $M_x$  vs.  $H_x$  lines shown in Fig. 4(d). As the DM interaction is enhanced, the calculated lines are elevated while their slopes become more moderate. The interception of the experimental data with those lines indicates that the DM interaction rises up to  $\sim 10$  kOe and then diminishes with further increasing  $H_x$ . The microscopic origin of the DM interaction is claimed as the oxygen ion shift responding to  $P_{Static}$  by recent synchrotron x-ray diffraction study [31], but the complex crystal structure and ambiguity in the distortion amount has impeded the quantitative calculation by the band theory. Instead, our model that includes the interaction strength  $D_{DM}|\mu_L||\mu_S| = 145 \mu_B \cdot \text{kOe} \sim 8.1\%$  of the major antiferromagnetic interaction between  $L$  and  $S$  blocks successfully accounts for the observed electromagnon frequency 1.09 THz at  $H_x = 2$  kOe [Fig. 4(e)]. The estimated value is reasonably smaller than other magnetic interactions in H and points to the energy scale of the DM interaction in this  $\text{Co}_2\text{Z}$ -type hexaferrite.

We note the connection between the static ME effect and the DM interaction. The  $P_{Static}$  of the  $\text{Co}_2\text{Z}$ -type hexaferrite upon increasing  $H_x$  initially enhances ( $0 < H_x < 3$  kOe), diminishes ( $3 \text{ kOe} < H_x < 21$  kOe), and then becomes zero ( $H_x > 21$  kOe) [26]. As  $P_{Static}$  shifts the oxygen ions [34], the DM interaction strength is likely correlated to the variation of  $P_{Static}$ . Thus,  $H_x = 2$  kOe may enhance the DM interaction resulting in the increase of the electromagnon frequency. On the other hand,  $H \parallel z$  reduces  $P_{Static}$  as the cones of  $\vec{\mu}_L$  &  $\vec{\mu}_S$  deviate away from the transverse conical structure and in turn decreases the DM interaction. This interaction change consistently explains the red-shifting at  $H_z = 2$  kOe. The sensitive THz magnetochromism of the  $\text{Co}_2\text{Z}$ -type hexaferrite highlights the interconnected nature of the static and dynamical ME effects.

To summarize, the electromagnon in  $\text{Ba}_{0.5}\text{Sr}_{2.5}\text{Co}_2\text{Fe}_{24}\text{O}_{41}$  is observed by THz time-domain spectroscopy. It develops with the transverse conical magnetic order below 410 K and exhibits sensitive magnetochromism at low magnetic fields, both of which have been lacking in multiferroics and thereby serve as unique properties for THz device application. We propose a

model Hamiltonian that identifies a magnon mode with an electromagnon resonance in THz range. The model calculation allows us to uncover that the magnetochromism is the consequence of Dzyaloshinskii-Moriya interaction, which can be in turn modulated by static electric polarization under magnetic fields. This interconnection between the dynamical and static ME effects should be generally present in other multiferroics too and can thus provide a new route to realize the THz-functionality via the control of electromagnon resonance.

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## Figure captions

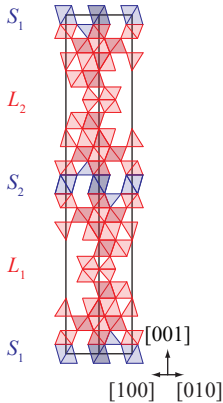
**FIG. 1** (color online). (a) Crystal structure of  $\text{Ba}_{0.5}\text{Sr}_{2.5}\text{Co}_2\text{Fe}_{24}\text{O}_{41}$  representing stacking of magnetic  $S$  (blue) and  $L$  (red) blocks. (b) Schematic illustration of transverse conical order (dotted lines) composed of  $\vec{\mu}_S$  (blue arrow) and  $\vec{\mu}_L$  (red arrow). Blue and red ellipsoids represent trajectories of the moment modulations.  $\theta$  and  $\phi$  refer to the angles of  $\vec{\mu}_S$  from  $[001]$  and  $\vec{\mu}_L$  from  $[120]$ , respectively.

**FIG. 2** (color online). Spectra of real (a) and imaginary (b) parts of complex dielectric constant for various  $E^\omega$  &  $H^\omega$  configurations at 20 K. (c) Temperature dependence of the  $\epsilon_2$  spectra for  $E^\omega_{[001]}H^\omega_{[120]}$ . (d) Temperature-evolution of  $\Delta SW$  (left axis) and the static  $P \parallel [100]$  (right axis) in a single ME domain state at  $H = 2$  kOe  $\parallel [120]$  [Ref. 26].  $T_{\text{con}}$  refers to transition temperature of the transverse conical state.

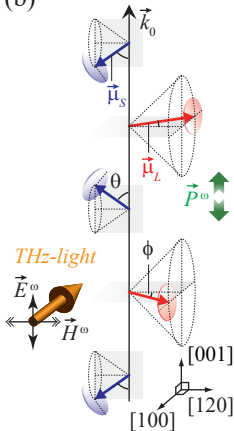
**FIG. 3** (color online).  $\epsilon_2$  spectra for  $E^\omega_{[001]}H^\omega_{[120]}$  under  $H = 2$  kOe  $\parallel [120]$  (blue),  $\parallel [001]$  (red), and 0 kOe (black). Solid (dashed) curves correspond to the data at 20 K (410 K). Inset shows  $H$  directions applied to the sample. (b) Temperature dependence of the resonance frequencies upon  $H$  directions.

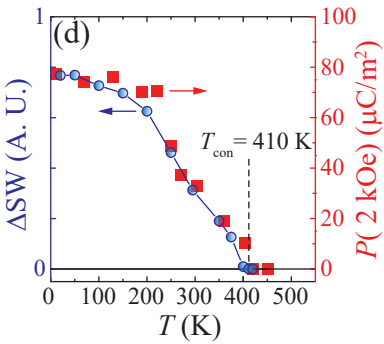
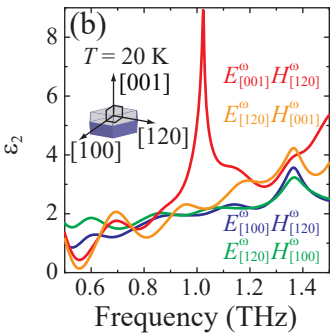
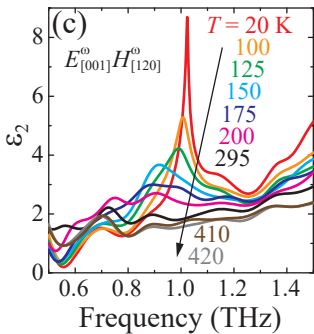
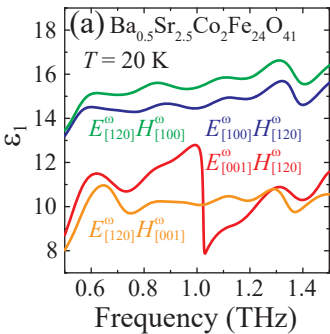
**FIG. 4** (color online). (a) Trajectories of the high-lying magnon mode. Red (blue) ellipsoid represents the modulation  $\delta\vec{\mu}_L$  ( $\delta\vec{\mu}_S$ ). Summary of  $x$ ,  $y$ , and  $z$  components of (b) the static moments and (c) their modulations. (d) Magnetization ( $M_x$ ) vs. external magnetic field ( $H_x$ )  $\parallel [120]$  relations at 20 K. Sphere denotes the experimental data. (e) Calculated frequencies of the high-lying mode under  $H_x$  for various DM interaction strengths. Solid symbols denote the observed electromagnon resonance frequencies.

(a)  $\text{Ba}_{0.5}\text{Sr}_{2.5}\text{Co}_2\text{Fe}_{24}\text{O}_{41}$

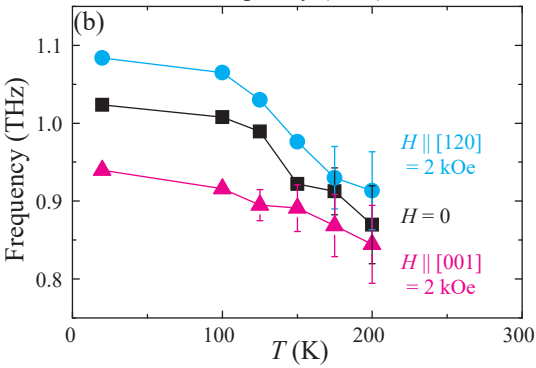
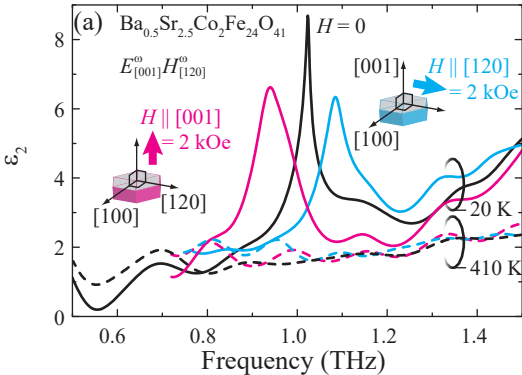


(b)

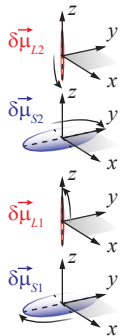








(a) *high-lying mode*      (b) *static moments*      (c) *modulating moments*



	$x$ → [120]	$y$ ⊗ [1̄00]	$z$ ↑ [001]
$S_1$	←		↓
$L_2$	→	⊗	
$S_2$	←		↑
$L_1$	→	⊙	
$S_1$	←		↓

	$x$ → [120]	$y$ ⊗ [1̄00]	$z$ ↑ [001]
$S_1$		⊙	
$L_2$			↓
$S_2$		⊗	
$L_1$			↑
$S_1$		⊙	

