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Spontaneously electrical solids in a new light

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Reflection-absorption infrared spectroscopy (RAIRS) of nitrous oxide (N\textsubscript{2}O) thin films is shown to provide an independent means of observing the spontaneous state, the first new structural phase of matter, with unique electrical properties, to have emerged in decades. The presence of a spontaneous and powerful static electric field within the film, the defining characteristic of spontelectrics, is demonstrated through observations of longitudinal-transverse optical (LO-TO) splitting in RAIR spectra, using an analysis based on the vibrational Stark effect. In particular the dependence of the LO-TO splitting on the film deposition temperature may be wholly attributed to the known temperature dependence of the spontelectric field.

1. Introduction

Spontaneously electrical solids, so-called ‘spontelectrics’,\textsuperscript{1,2,3,4,5,6,7} represent a new electrical phase of the solid state.\textsuperscript{1,2,3,4,5,6,7} The characteristic property of spontelectric materials is that they exhibit an electric field within the bulk of the solid, without any outside intervention. These fields are spontaneous, created without any external stimulus, such as an applied electric field;\textsuperscript{5,6} hence the term ‘spontelectric’, an illusion of ‘spontaneously electrical’. Essentially, it has been found that if one condenses a gas onto a solid surface, a film may be formed which spontaneously exhibits a static electric field. Numerous data, outlined in [1], and its corresponding analysis, point to dipole orientation as the origin of the spontaneous polarization giving rise to these electric fields.

The molecular materials of which spontlectric films are composed have one thing in common: the individual species must possess a permanent dipole moment. Other than that, the species are very diverse, ranging over simple hydrocarbons, halocarbons, alcohols, organic formates, benzene derivatives and such simple inorganics as nitrous oxide (N\textsubscript{2}O), the latter being the subject of the current work. Films of material may contain electric fields which can exceed 10\textsuperscript{8} V m\textsuperscript{-1}, noting that the breakdown fields of solids typically lie between 10\textsuperscript{8} to 10\textsuperscript{9} V m\textsuperscript{-1}.

Spontelectrics exhibit polarization through dipole orientation in the material, where this polarization is the origin of the electric field mentioned above. The salient properties of spontelectrics, described in detail in [1] and further in [6,7], are that (i) the spontelectric field is lower for higher deposition temperatures (but see [5]), (ii) the nature of the substrate has no bearing on the strength of the bulk spontelectric field, (iii) the spontelectric field depends on both the nature of the material which is deposited and on the temperature at which the film is deposited, (iv) at greater than a certain temperature of deposition, no spontelectric effect can be observed, (v) there exists a critical temperature, termed the Curie point by analogy with ferromagnetism, at which films depolarize and the spontelectric field disappears.

The spontelectric phase is unique in the physics of solids and shows non-linear and non-local characteristics, making it quite distinct from any other known phase, such as the ferroelectric phase of matter. It also appears to be very widespread, much more so than the ferroelectric phase. As such, it is of considerable value to furnish independent evidence for the existence of this new phase, over and above that already described in the literature. The latter has been limited to the use of a direct electron repulsion technique. The object of the current work is to report just such an independent verification of the spontelectric phenomenon. This is performed using infrared (IR) spectroscopy.

The essential physics of the current work is as follows. The spontelectric field results in a vibrational Stark effect in the solid causing a shift in characteristic vibrational frequencies.\textsuperscript{5,9,10,11} Since the strength of the spontelectric field depends strongly on the temperature of deposition of the film of material, there is a corresponding temperature dependence of the vibrational frequencies measured using RAIRS. Based upon a model for the spontelectric effect,\textsuperscript{1} we show in section 3 that the apparent LO-TO splitting in solid N\textsubscript{2}O has a significant contribution from the Stark effect arising from the spontelectric field. We find here that at a deposition temperature of 48 K, for example, the Stark effect contributes ~30% of the total measured splitting. However the observed temperature dependence of LO-TO splitting is attributed wholly to the dependence of the spontelectric field on the film deposition temperature. An analytical description of this is given in section 3.

For simplicity, we refer throughout to the observed spectral
splitting in N₂O as LO-TO splitting, whilst recognizing that the absolute value of the splitting arises through a combination of the intrinsically different vibrations associated with LO and TO modes and, at the level of approximation adopted here, an independent contribution due to the vibrational Stark effect.

In the current work, spontaneous films are interrogated using RAIRS with a grazing infrared beam, such that the incident electric field of the beam has components both parallel and perpendicular to the film normal. Relative to the incident beam wavelength, the film can be considered infinite in the plane of the film and only transverse optical (TO) phonons can be excited in this plane. If however the thickness of the film is comparable to the wavelength of the incident beam, the boundary conditions allow for the excitation of longitudinal optical (LO) phonons along the normal axis. This is known as the Berreman effect, and has been studied extensively in non-hionic films, including N₂O. Longitudinal phonons resonate at higher frequencies, in general because of the induced field associated with longitudinal waves passing through a dipolar medium. Thus, LO–TO splitting occurs for normal vibrational modes when a grazing incident beam interrogates a thin film. Henceforth ν_L and ν_T represent the frequencies for the LO and TO phonons respectively and ∆ν = ν_L−ν_T represents the value of the splitting. Here we propose, as indicated above, that the force field for vibrational modes normal to the surface is modified by the vibrational Stark effect through the presence of the spontaneous field. We show that the presence of the static spontaneous field, oriented along the surface normal, and whose values were obtained in previous work, can reproduce RAIRS measurements of both the LO-TO splitting, relative to ν_T, and its temperature dependence.

2. Experimental method and results

2.1. The experimental method

RAIRS experiments were performed in an ultrahigh vacuum system, described elsewhere. The substrate, an oxygen-free high conductivity copper block coated with a 300 nm amorphous silica layer, is mounted on the end of a closed-cycle helium cryostat, reaching a base temperature of 18 K, measured with a KP-type thermocouple connected to an IJ-6 temperature controller (IJ Instruments). The central chamber is equipped with a line-of-sight quadrupole mass spectrometer (QMS, Hiden Analytical) and a Fourier-transform infrared spectrometer (Varian 670-IR) used in reflection-absorption mode, at a grazing incidence of 75° with respect to the normal to the substrate. After reflection from the sample, the IR beam is focused into a liquid nitrogen cooled HgCdTe detector. The RAIR spectra presented here result from the co-addition of 512 spectra recorded at 1 cm⁻¹ resolution.

Films are deposited by background dosing of N₂O gas (Sigma-Aldrich, purity ≥ 99.998%) onto the substrate at a rate of 0.14 ML s⁻¹. Thicknesses of N₂O films in monolayers (ML) were determined through temperature-programmed desorption experiments, performed by applying a heating ramp of 0.6 K s⁻¹ from the deposition temperature, with desorbed species detected using the QMS. Exposures are expressed in units of Langmuir (1 L = 10⁻⁶ Torr s) where an ionisation coefficient of N₂O molecules in the ion gauge of 1.2 is taken into account.

2.2. Results

Figure 1 shows a typical RAIR spectrum for a N₂O multilayer. Spectral fitting of the LO and TO bands of the NN stretching mode (νNN) in RAIR spectra of solid N₂O films was performed with Gaussian functions using the Igor Pro software. The fits allow the frequencies to be quoted to ±0.1 cm⁻¹ for the longitudinal mode and ±0.0 cm⁻¹ for the transverse mode, which shows broader features (see Fig. 1). The quoted uncertainties correspond to the maximum variation that can be applied to the central value of the fitted peak whilst maintaining a match between the experimental spectrum and the fitted curve.

The choice of substrate for these experiments was determined by the metal surface selection rule, which dictates that TO modes are silent on a metal surface. This may be seen in the inset to Figure 1, where the TO mode is absent on a flat, clean Cu substrate. The presence of the silica layer coating, on the copper, relaxes this selection rule and allows the observation of both LO and TO modes in solid N₂O on silica, while retaining the enhanced sensitivity associated with RAIR spectroscopy.

![Figure 1. RAIR spectrum of a 100 L (14 ML) N₂O film deposited at 48 K on a copper plate coated with 300 nm silica. The inset shows the νNN region of the RAIR spectra of 100 L N₂O films deposited on bare copper (blue), on copper coated with 200 nm (red) or 300 nm (black) amorphous silica layer at 48 K. The intensity of each spectrum has been normalized to that of its LO mode. Dotted lines highlight the positions of the LO and TO modes. All spectra were recorded at 48 K.](image-url)
intensities however vary with silica layer thickness, with more intense TO relative to LO for thicker layers. The characteristics of the spontaneous effect do not depend on the nature of the substrate onto which the films are deposited. Thus, the quantitative use of the RAIRS data remains valid in conjunction with models, described below, based on surface potential measurements performed, for example, on gold or solid Xe.

Figure 2 shows the νNN band of 14 ML N₂O films, deposited between 48 and 66 K, on 300 nm silica. The inset presents the RAIR spectrum of the film deposited at 48 K (open symbols) and the Gaussians used to fit the LO and TO modes (full lines) for frequency determination. One can see that increasing the deposition temperature red-shifts the LO mode, whilst the TO mode is blue-shifted.

Figure 3 shows RAIR spectra of the νNN band of a 14 ML N₂O film deposited at 18 K on 300 nm silica and after progressive annealing to 50, 53, 56, 60 and 63 K. During the annealing process, the temperature is slowly raised to the indicated value, and left for 5 minutes, noting that longer annealing times give similar results. The film is then cooled down to base temperature (18 K) to record a RAIR spectrum. Annealing the film slightly red-shifts the LO mode, and blue-shifts the TO mode; this is qualitatively what is seen when increasing the deposition temperature (Figure 2), although the shifts are smaller during annealing. Figure 4 shows data for the νNN LO (stars) and TO (circles) modes of 14 ML N₂O films, deposited on 300 nm silica, as a function of both deposition and annealing temperature, as deduced from fits to experimental data shown in Figures 2 and 3.

Figure 2. RAIR spectra showing the νNN band of 14 ML N₂O films deposited at 48, 53, 60, 62 and 66 K on 300 nm silica. The arrows highlight the shift of the LO and TO modes with increasing deposition temperature of the films. The inset presents the RAIR spectrum of the film deposited at 48 K (open symbols) and the Gaussian fits to the LO and TO modes (full lines). All spectra were recorded at the respective deposition temperatures.

Figure 3. RAIR spectra collected at 18 K showing the νNN band of a 14 ML N₂O film deposited at 18 K on 300 nm silica (broad spectrum) and after annealing to 50, 53, 56, 60 and 63 K. The arrows highlight the shift of the LO and TO modes.

Figure 4. Peak position of the νNN LO (stars) and TO (circles) modes of 14 ML N₂O films deposited on 300 nm silica, as a function of deposition and annealing temperature, deduced from fits to experimental data. Full symbols correspond to the annealing of the 14 ML N₂O film deposited at 18 K and subsequently annealed to the temperatures shown; open symbols correspond to 14 ML N₂O films deposited at the temperatures shown. The lines are a guide for the eye. Errors in frequencies are ±0.1 and ±0.2 cm⁻¹ for LO and TO, respectively. Data are collated in Table 1, section 3.3.

Figure 5. Intensity measured at 2250 cm⁻¹ in the RAIR spectra and normalized by the total area of the νNN band for each spectrum, as a
function of temperature. Full symbols correspond to the annealing process of the 14 ML N$_2$O film deposited at 18 K; open symbols correspond to 14 ML N$_2$O films deposited at various temperatures. The dotted lines result from a linear fit of the data but are only presented here to guide the eye.

It has been found that LO-TO splitting can be observed at lower temperature than in the data shown here, but with strong inhomogeneous spectral broadening due to the amorphous nature of the films below 48 K. Characteristic low temperature data are shown in Figure 3 for 18 K. Sharp RAIRS data can be obtained on films only at deposition temperatures $\geq$ 48 K and the present study is limited to a discussion of this temperature regime only.

We may also use the variation of the inhomogeneous broadening of LO and TO bands, with annealing and deposition temperature, as a qualitative indication of the degree of dipole orientation in the film. Figure 5 shows a measurement of the inhomogeneous broadening of the vNN band for both annealing and deposition temperatures. The degree of broadening is estimated by measuring the intensity of the RAIR spectrum at 2250 cm$^{-1}$, the average frequency of the LO and TO modes, and normalizing by the integrated area of the band. This allows comparison between different experiments and yields the ordinate in Figure 5. This figure illustrates that the increase in inhomogeneous broadening with deposition temperature is $\sim$50% larger than with annealing temperature. Insofar as inhomogeneous broadening is a measure of the range of environments in which any component species finds itself, the greater the inhomogeneous broadening the less the dipole orientation. Results in Figure 5 are therefore consistent with data, recorded in [1], which show that the drop in dipole orientation is greater with an increasing deposition temperature, as opposed to an increasing annealing temperature, over the same temperature range.

3. A theoretical model for the spontelectric Stark effect

The sharpness and well-defined splitting of the vNN peaks at and above 48 K, just referred to, indicate that these spectra relate to films with a significant degree of structural order. Viewing the film as a partially disordered crystal, optical phonons can be recognized, which propagate molecular vibrations throughout the film. It is helpful to envisage transverse optical (TO) phonons as vibrations which arise while preserving the structural form of the film, as sketched on Figure 6. The internal electronic structure of the individual molecules (the two mesomeric forms of N$_2$O) molecules are depicted in Figure 6, influenced by electrostastic effects from neighbouring molecules, is responsible for TO modes. In this mode, there are no relative motions of the molecular species to induce additional electrostatic interactions, and hence they lie at frequencies close to the normal modes of gas-phase molecules. The vibrations of longitudinal optical (LO) phonons, by contrast, involve physical displacement of the molecules, such that molecular dipoles move relative to one another. This relative movement intrinsically stiffens the potential describing the LO vibrations. Thus LO vibrations are shifted to higher energies (i.e. higher frequencies) compared with TO.

We now seek to relate the variation of the frequencies of LO and TO bands, with deposition temperature, to the properties of spontelectrics. As mentioned in the introduction, we set out to test whether the decrease of the LO-TO splitting, with increasing deposition temperature, can be attributed to the corresponding decrease of the spontelectric field with increasing temperature. An analytical model has been developed elsewhere, which describes the variation of the spontelectric field with temperature. The model is briefly reviewed below. This model is then coupled to the linear vibrational Stark effect. Expressions are developed which explicitly yield the variation of LO and TO frequencies with temperature of deposition. On substitution of suitable spontelectric parameters, described in section 3.2 and evaluated in section 3.4.3, these expressions are found to give a satisfactory description of our experimental observations.

In section 3.1, we first consider possible causes for the temperature variation of the LO-TO splitting, other than the temperature variation of the spontelectric field just mentioned. In section 3.2, we outline the model for the spontelectric phase. In section 3.3, we derive, from experimental data, the relative contributions, of the intrinsic LO-TO effect and the spontelectric Stark effect, to the values of these LO-TO splittings, as a function of deposition temperature. Section 3.4 sets out the model for the temperature dependence of the LO and TO spectral features based upon vibrational Stark tuning and the spontlectric model. Section 3.5 provides a comparison between experimental
results for the variation of the LO-TO splitting with deposition temperature and those computed from the spontelectric Stark effect.

3.1. Other contributions to the variation with deposition temperature of the LO-TO splitting in solid N\textsubscript{2}O

In sections 3.1.1 and 3.1.2 below, we consider two possible contributions, other than spontelectric Stark tuning, to the observed reduction of LO-TO splitting with increasing temperature of deposition and of annealing of films.

3.1.1. The effect of thermal expansion with increasing deposition temperature

At higher temperature, the material, being less dense, is composed of molecules sitting at a greater average distance apart and thus more weakly interacting. Since the LO frequency is associated with molecular dipoles effectively rubbing against each other, the LO-TO splitting should therefore decrease with decreasing density.

This effect is described by equation 4 of [Error! Bookmark not defined.], which relates the dipole moment derivative associated with the relevant vibration, $\partial \mu/\partial Q$, where $Q$ is the normal coordinate, to the density of the solid material and the LO-TO splitting. Rewriting this equation, we find that the density of material, $N$, in molecules cm\(^{-3}\), is given by

$$N = 2.037 \times 10^{11} (\nu_2^2 - \nu_1^2)/(\partial \mu/\partial Q)^2$$

(1)

where values of $\nu_2$, the LO frequency and $\nu_1$, the TO frequency, at 48 K are 2256.35±0.1 cm\(^{-1}\) and 2239.15±0.2 cm\(^{-1}\) respectively, and $\partial \mu/\partial Q = 0.292$ for VNN in N\textsubscript{2}O, the latter figure in SI units. In passing we note that Equation (1) yields $N = 1.848 \times 10^{21}$ molecules cm\(^{-3}\) which corresponds to a density of 1.36 g cm\(^{-3}\), close to a reported value of 1.35 g cm\(^{-3}\) of bulk solid N\textsubscript{2}O, at an unrecorded temperature (Encyclopedia Astronautica). At all events, Equation (1) shows that $\Delta \nu \propto N/(\nu_2 + \nu_1)$. Thus Equation (1) quantifies what we had already surmised, that thermal expansion associated with a higher deposition temperature or annealing of the film, and therefore a lower density, could be the origin of a decrease in $\Delta \nu$, or of a proportion of the decrease.

We now make the assumption that the mean of $\nu_1$ and $\nu_2$ is independent of the density of oscillators in the solid, N. Writing the LO-TO splitting as $\Delta \nu$ and inserting the relevant values into (1), we find $N = 1.074 \times 10^{11} \Delta \nu$. Thus that $\partial N/\partial \Delta \nu = 1.074 \times 10^{21}$ cm\(^{-3}\) per cm\(^{-1}\) of increase of $\Delta \nu$. Using experimental deposition data in Figure 4 and Table 1 between 48 and 51 K as an example, $\partial \Delta \nu/\partial T = -0.3$ cm\(^{-1}\) K\(^{-1}\). This implies that $\partial N/\partial T$, the thermal expansion coefficient of solid N\textsubscript{2}O, takes the value $\partial N/\partial \Delta \nu \partial \Delta \nu/\partial T = -3.22 \times 10^{20}$ cm\(^{-3}\) K\(^{-1}\). This states that there are 3.22 $\times$ 10\(^{20}\) fewer molecules of N\textsubscript{2}O cm\(^{-3}\) for every degree K increase in temperature. This is equivalent to a volume expansion coefficient of 0.017 K\(^{-1}\), given that there are $1.848 \times 10^{21}$ molecules cm\(^{-3}\) in solid N\textsubscript{2}O at 48 K, as recorded above.

However typical low temperature volume expansion coefficients for molecular materials lie between $10^{-1}$ and $10^{-3}$ K\(^{-1}\), showing therefore that thermal expansion cannot be the origin of the decrease in $\Delta \nu$ with temperature observed here. Thus thermal expansion makes no significant contribution to the variation of $\Delta \nu$ with deposition temperature.

3.1.2. Artefacts due to changes in film thickness with temperature of deposition

Film thickness and LO-TO splitting are correlated. To demonstrate this, control experiments (not shown) were performed in which spectra were recorded as a function of increasing thickness of N\textsubscript{2}O at 50 K. For example, a comparison of a 7 ML film with one of 14 ML shows that the LO mode is redshifted by -0.3 cm\(^{-1}\) and the TO mode is blueshifted by 0.2 cm\(^{-1}\), in the 7 ML film compared with the 14 ML film. Therefore any decrease in true film thickness at higher deposition temperatures could account for some proportion of the observed decrease in $\Delta \nu$.

We now must consider whether there is any correlation between film thickness and temperature of deposition. It was found that the intensities of the VNN LO and TO modes were lower by a factor of ~2 in spectra recorded after deposition at 66 K, compared to deposition at 48 K. Given that the intensity of the VNN LO and TO modes is proportional to the film thickness, the control experiments described above inform us that such a corresponding decrease in thickness of a factor of two might account for a contraction of the LO-TO splitting by roughly 0.5 cm\(^{-1}\). This may be compared with the contraction observed in deposition experiments, which is 3.8 cm\(^{-1}\) between 48 and 66 K.

In passing we note that the inferred decrease in film thickness between 48 and 66 K is likely due to the decrease of the sticking coefficient of N\textsubscript{2}O molecules, when the temperature of the silica substrate is raised to 66 K, close to the sublimation point. Thus the apparent same dose of gas gives rise to a thinner film. Given that any effect on $\Delta \nu$ upon growth of a thinner film is small, we have chosen to ignore the influence of film thickness in our subsequent analysis of experimental data for $\Delta \nu$ vs deposition temperature.

3.2. A brief resume of the model for the spontelectric effect

We now return to the central theme of this section: the spontelectric effect as the origin of a significant fraction of the observed LO-TO splitting and of its variation with deposition temperature. Recollecting that the spontelectric effect is believed to arise through dipole orientation within the bulk of the solid film, data may be interpreted in terms of a decrease in the orientation of dipoles in N\textsubscript{2}O films, with increasing the deposition temperature. This results in a decrease in electric field, for example, through a factor of 1.8 between deposition temperatures of 48 and 60 K. Data in Figure 2 and Table 1 show
that, with increasing deposition temperature from 48 to 60 K, the LO mode redshifts from 2256.35 to 2255.4 cm\(^{-1}\), whereas the TO mode blueshifts from 2239.15 to 2239.85 cm\(^{-1}\). This suggests some sort of correlation between the LO-TO splitting and the spontaneous field, which we now set out to explore.

To make the connection between RAIRS results and the spontaneous effect, we first refer to a parameterized model for spontelectrics. This model successfully describes the variation with deposition temperature, of the observed spontelectric field in films of N\(_2\)O, of N\(_2\)O diluted in xenon\(^7\), of methyl formate and of CF\(_3\)Cl, CF\(_2\)Cl\(_2\) and CFCI\(_3\) films\(^1\).

A mean-field model is used to describe the spontlectric steady state. This model was originally introduced in [4] and is set out in detail in [1]. The model is based on the concept that the net \(z\)-component of the electric field within a spontelectric film and normal to the plane of the film, \(E_z\), is composed of two parts. The first is a local symmetrical part, defining the interactions which both bind layers to one another and dictates the molecular force field and thus molecular vibrational frequencies. The second is an asymmetrical part, due to the long-range field which permeates the film. The symmetrical part is expressed as a constant term plus a dipole-dipole term, proportional to \(<\mu_z\>/\mu\), and representing average intermolecular dipole-dipole interactions. Here, \(<\mu_z\>/\mu\), the degree of dipole orientation, is the ratio of the average \(z\)-component of the dipole moment and the total dipole moment of the molecular species in the solid state, where the \(z\)-axis is perpendicular to the plane of the film. The \(<\mu_z\>/\mu\) form, adopted to describe dipole-dipole interactions, \(^{10}\) reflects the fact that all such interactions, involving dipole-image charge, extended dipoles and arrays of dipoles, follow this squared relation. \(^{27,28,29}\) We note that the symmetrical part of the contribution to \(E_z\) is related to the ‘local field’ at any molecular site, as defined in standard texts.\(^{30}\)

The asymmetrical part, \(<E_{\text{asy}}=\langle\mu_z\>/\mu\), is equal to the observed spontlectric field and is found only in the description of spontelectrics, with no direct counterpart for any other form of material. This asymmetrical part resembles the Weiss field in ferromagnetism, which is assumed to be proportional to the magnetisation.\(^{31}\) Here, read degree of dipole orientation for magnetisation and read polarisation field for the Weiss field. We emphasise that the polarisation field, that is, the spontlectric field, is self-generated within the spontelectric material.\(^{32}\) The polarization field acts in opposition to the symmetrical part and represents the long-range field created by the average dipoles and experienced by an average dipole.

Hence, using atomic units throughout,

\[
E_z = \left( \frac{E_{\text{asy}}}{\mu} \right) \left[ 1 + \zeta \left( \frac{\langle \mu_z \rangle}{\mu} \right)^2 \right] - \left( \frac{E_{\text{asy}}}{\mu} \right) \frac{\langle \mu_z \rangle}{\mu}
\]

where \(<E_{\text{asy}}=\langle\mu_z\>/\mu\) and \(\zeta\) are taken to be temperature independent parameters. The \(\xi(\langle \mu_z \rangle/\mu)^2\) term in Equation (2) may be interpreted as a measure of the tendency of one dipolar species to restrict the angular motion of another, a ‘locking’ term or, as it is sometimes called, a ‘frustration’ term.

Mean field theory gives an implicit expression for \(<\mu_z>/\mu\), yielding the familiar Langevin function for orientational interactions\(^{30}\)

\[
\frac{<\mu_z>/\mu}{\mu} = \coth \left( \frac{E_z/\mu}{T} \right) - \left( \frac{E_z/\mu}{T} \right)^{-1}
\]

where \(T\) is the deposition temperature of the layer of material. The dipole moment of N\(_2\)O in the solid state is reduced from that in the gas phase through depolarization in the environment of other N\(_2\)O species according to:

\[
\mu = \frac{\mu_s}{1 + k s^3}
\]

where \(s\) is the average spacing between successive layers, equal to 0.32 nm for N\(_2\)O,\(^1,4\) \(\alpha\) is the molecular polarizability of N\(_2\)O (3.03 \times 10\(^{-20}\) m\(^3\)), \(k = 11.034\) \(^{32}\) and \(\mu_o\) is the gas phase dipole moment of N\(_2\)O (= 0.166 D).

### 3.3. Contributions of the intrinsic effect and the Stark effect to the LO-TO splitting

The first three columns of Table 1 summarize RAIRS spectroscopic data, for LO-TO frequencies in solid N\(_2\)O, as a function of deposition temperature, \(T\). These are shown as open symbols in Figure 4. Column 4 of Table 1 shows the LO-TO splitting, that is, column 3 – column 2. Column 5 shows the Stark splitting due to the spontlectric field, column 6 the ratio of this splitting compared to the total LO-TO splitting and the final column the degree of dipole orientation associated with each temperature of deposition, as derived from experimental data in [1].

The vibrational Stark effect, expressed as a frequency shift, is known to be linearly proportional to the perturbation provided by a local electric field\(^9,10,11\). Recollecting that the spontlectric field is given by the \(<E_{\text{asy}}=\langle\mu_z\>/\mu\) multiplied by the degree of dipole orientation, we note that values in Table 1 show that the degree of dipole orientation, and therefore the spontlectric field, falls by a factor of ~4 between 48 and 66 K. However the LO-TO splitting, \(\Delta \nu_s\), falls by a factor of ~1.3. We interpret this as demonstrating \(\Delta \nu_s\) may be represented by the sum of two terms, one of which, the intrinsic splitting, \(\Delta \nu_s\), is independent of temperature of deposition, whereas the other, \(\Delta \nu_B\), the spontlectric term, is a function of temperature. Thus \(\Delta \nu = \Delta \nu_s + \Delta \nu_B\). We can use the data in Table 1 to determine an experimentally based value of \(\Delta \nu_s\). This gives the desired values of \(\Delta \nu_B\), as a function of temperature.
we find the total LOhTO splitting, in Table 1. We may then write that

\( \Delta \nu = \Delta \nu_L \), for the LO frequency and \( \Delta \nu_T \), for the TO frequency.

The RH-RHN transition may be estimated from the data in Figure 6 to be 2.9 cm\(^{-1}\) per MV cm\(^{-1}\) electric field, given that the linear fit goes through the origin. The extensive literature in the area of Stark vibrational tuning has been reviewed most recently in [33]. Data presented there, and elsewhere, reveal that Stark tuning rates tend to be 3 to 4 times lower than the figure that we propose here, with some exceptions involving higher rates. Remarks in [8] and [34] suggest that the presence of inherent dipole orientation in the sample, as proposed in the present work, may be the origin of an enhanced tuning rate in solid \( \text{N}_2\text{O} \).

At all events, our contention is that the variation of \( \Delta \nu \) with deposition temperature should follow that of the spontelectric field with deposition temperature, where the spontelectric field is given by \( \langle E_{\text{sym}} \rangle \langle \mu_c / \mu \rangle \). We now address how to formulate the variation of this field with temperature.

3.4. A model for the temperature dependence of the LO and TO spectral features in spontelectric material based upon the vibrational Stark effect

3.4.1 Expressing the LO-TO splitting in terms of spontelectric parameters for \( \text{N}_2\text{O} \)

The purpose of this section is to develop a model which shows how the spontelectric field may contribute to the observed value of the LO-TO splitting, relative to the TO frequency (say), through the vibrational Stark effect.

We have remarked above that the internal electronic structure of the individual molecules, influenced by electrostatic effects from neighbouring molecules, is responsible for TO modes. Thus \( \langle E_{\text{sym}} \rangle \langle 1 + z \langle \mu_c / \mu \rangle \rangle \), the first term of Equation (2), may be regarded as the average effective electric field at any molecule, giving rise to the force field which determines the value of vNN in the TO mode. However, the occurrence of a spontelectric field adds an additional potential in the direction normal to the plane of the film, shifting the LO vibrations to yet higher wavenumber than in standard LO-TO splitting. Thus the force field for LO vibrations, as measured in RAIRS, includes an additional term involving the torque exerted on the molecular dipole in the spontlectric field. The field involved in this additional term has the form of the projection of the spontlectric field onto the direction in which the average dipole points, that is \( \langle E_{\text{sym}} \rangle \langle \mu_c / \mu \rangle \). Dipole orientation also influences the force field dictating the TO mode, via the term \( \langle E_{\text{sym}} \rangle \langle 1 + z \langle \mu_c / \mu \rangle \rangle \) in Equation (2) and the coupling of \( \langle \mu_c / \mu \rangle \) to \( E_z \) in Equation (3).

Table 1: Measured frequencies, as shown in Figure 4, of the TO and LO modes in solid \( \text{N}_2\text{O} \) as a function of deposition temperature, T. \( \Delta \nu \) is the measured LO-TO splitting and \( \Delta \nu_S \) is that part due to the spontlectric field. The last column shows degree of dipole orientation associated with each deposition temperature.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>T (K)</th>
<th>TO (cm(^{-1}))</th>
<th>LO (cm(^{-1}))</th>
<th>( \Delta \nu ) (cm(^{-1}))</th>
<th>( \Delta \nu_S ) (cm(^{-1}))</th>
<th>( \Delta \nu_S / \Delta \nu )</th>
<th>( &lt;\mu_c / \mu \rangle )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>2254.1</td>
<td>2269.6</td>
<td>15.55</td>
<td>0.229</td>
<td>0.0449</td>
<td>0.35 cm(^{-1})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>2254.3</td>
<td>2269.6</td>
<td>15.55</td>
<td>0.229</td>
<td>0.0449</td>
<td>0.35 cm(^{-1})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>2254.5</td>
<td>2269.6</td>
<td>15.55</td>
<td>0.229</td>
<td>0.0449</td>
<td>0.35 cm(^{-1})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>2254.7</td>
<td>2269.6</td>
<td>15.55</td>
<td>0.229</td>
<td>0.0449</td>
<td>0.35 cm(^{-1})</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It follows from the above that values of \( \Delta \nu_S \) are equal to the ratios of degrees of dipole orientation at deposition temperatures \( T_1 \) and \( T_2 \), where all values may be found in Table 1. The ratio of the total LO-TO splitting, \( \Delta \nu / \Delta \nu_f \), is also given by values shown in Table 1. We may then write that

\[
\Delta \nu_f = \left( \frac{\langle \mu_c / \mu \rangle}{\langle \mu \rangle} \right) \left( \Delta \nu / \Delta \nu_f - 1 \right)
\]

Now \( \Delta \nu = \Delta \nu_L + \Delta \nu_T \) and substituting \( \Delta \nu_T \) from Equation (5), we find \( \Delta \nu = \Delta \nu_L (1 + \psi) \) where \( \psi \) equals the rhs of Equation (5).

Hence

\[
\Delta \nu_f = \psi \Delta \nu_L / (1 + \psi)
\]

As a check on this analysis, values of \( \Delta \nu_S \) derived from Equation (6) are found to be unchanged with deposition temperature, within experimental error. The average value is 12.0±0.35 cm\(^{-1}\). The corresponding values of \( \Delta \nu_S \), that is, those parts of the LO-TO splitting attributed to the spottlectric field, are shown in Table 1. Within experimental error, these values are indeed proportional to \( <\mu_c / \mu \rangle \), which is itself proportional to the ambient spontlectric field at any deposition temperature. This is shown in Figure 6, which reflects the expected property that the vibrational Stark effect is linearly proportional to the perturbation provided by the local electric field.
This then yields the following relationship between $U$ which is accurate to better than ~0.75% overall. In order to simplify the subsequent analysis, note that we have used $\Delta\nu/\nu_T$ in writing Equation (9). Approximations involved in deriving Equation (9) lead to a negligible inaccuracy in the differential of $\Delta\nu/\nu_T$ with respect to $<\mu_\nu>/\mu$, used in section 3.4.2.

We now set out to relate the ratio of $U_L - U_T$ to parameters governing the spontelectric effect. Consider first the total field at the molecule, $U_T$, relevant to the TO mode. This total field includes that giving rise to both the intrinsic and spontelectric effects. Spontelectric effects may be represented by the term $<E_\text{sym}z>(1+\zeta(<\mu_\nu>/\mu)^2)$, from Equation (2). Since the ratio of the total field to the spontelectric part $\propto \Delta\nu/\Delta\nu_s$, the total field governing $\nu_T$ must itself be proportional to $(\Delta\nu/\Delta\nu_s)<E_\text{sym}z>(1+\zeta(<\mu_\nu>/\mu)^2)$. Second, $U_L - U_T \propto x$ the spontelectric field times the degree of dipole orientation, giving the effective field. In each case there is an additional independent term describing the intrinsic LO-TO splitting, $\Delta\nu_h$. It then follows from Equation (9) that:

$$\frac{\Delta\nu}{\nu_T} = \frac{(\Delta\nu_s/\nu_T)(<E_\text{sym}z>/\mu)^2}{(1+\zeta(<\mu_\nu>/\mu)^2)} + \frac{\Delta\nu_h}{\nu_T}$$

Below, we use the theoretical model of spontelectrics, outlined in section 3.2, to establish an analytic expression for the variation of the degree of dipole orientation with deposition temperature. We then show that the LO-TO splitting and its variation with temperature follows the variation dictated by Equation (10). This is performed using appropriate values of the spontelectric parameters, $<E_\text{sym}z>$, $\zeta$ and $<\mu_\nu>/\mu$, derived in section 3.4.3, obtained from fitting to experimental data presented in [1].

Further, a numerical check on Equation (10) is presented at the end of section 3.4.3, to establish self-consistency between values of $\Delta\nu_h$ derived from Equation (10), which is founded upon the Stark field interpretation and associated spontelectric theory of LO-TO splitting, and from Equation (6) which involves experimental quantities.

The differential of Equation (10) with respect to $<\mu_\nu>/\mu$, multiplied by the differential of $<\mu_\nu>/\mu$ wrt deposition temperature, gives the differential of the LO-TO splitting wrt temperature, the quantity which we seek. This is expressed here in terms of the variation of the individual LO and TO frequencies wrt T, using the quantities measured (Figure 4) and given in Table 1. The next task is to formulate the differential of the LO and TO frequencies wrt $<\mu_\nu>/\mu$ in 3.4.2 and, following that, the differential of the LO and TO splitting wrt temperature of deposition, in 3.4.3.

### 3.4.2 Variation of the LO and TO frequencies with the degree of dipole orientation, $<\mu_\nu>/\mu$

It is our intention to differentiate Equation (10) wrt the degree of dipole orientation, $<\mu_\nu>/\mu$. We choose here to make the approximation that the intrinsic effect, expressed as $\Delta\nu_h$, is independent of $<\mu_\nu>/\mu$. In doing so we recognise that $\Delta\nu_h$ may in
principle be affected by the degree of dipole alignment, since the potentials associated with transverse and longitudinal motions will be influenced by dipole alignment. If these potentials are affected each in a different manner, the intrinsic effect will have a temperature dependence due to the temperature dependence of the spontelectric effect. Thus the intrinsic and spontelectric effects may be coupled together. For simplicity however, we make the assumption that any such coupling may be ignored.

The data in Figure 4 show that the average rate of change of ν₁ with deposition temperature, taken over the temperature range 48 to 60 K is -0.12±0.020 cm⁻¹ K⁻¹ and of ν₁ is 0.06±0.022 cm⁻¹ K⁻¹. The simplifying assumption is now made that these rates are indistinguishable numerically, since they overlap within experimental error. We note that there is no fundamental reason why the absolute values of these rates should be equal; it is just a convenience in the present case of N₂O. For CO, for example, this does not hold (work in preparation). At all events, dv₁/dT₁ = -dv₁/dT₁ implies dv₁/dm>/>/µ₁ = -dv₁/dm>/>/µ₁.

Following some manipulation, we find

\[
\frac{dv_1}{d(\mu_1/\mu)} = \frac{\{F_{m_1}(F_{m_1})\}[(\mu_1/\mu)\Delta v_1 - \Delta v_{m_1}][2\zeta + (\mu_1/\mu)\zeta]}{\{F_{m_1}(F_{m_1})\} consolation of Equation (10) may now be evaluated.

\[
\frac{d<\mu_1/\mu>}{dT} = \frac{\sqrt{\mu E_r - (\mu E_r/\mu)} |\mu E_r/\mu| \cosh(\mu E_r/\mu) \mu E_r/\mu |\mu E_r/\mu| - 1}{\mu E_r/\mu |\mu E_r/\mu| \cosh(\mu E_r/\mu) \mu E_r/\mu |\mu E_r/\mu| - 1}
\]

where \( E' = <E_{sym} > - 2\zeta <E_{asym} > <\mu_1/\mu > \). Multiplying Equation (11) by Equation (12) yields dv₁/dT ( = dv₁/dT₁). We now seek to compare the numerical values of the product of Equations 11 and 12 with experimental data.

We need first however to establish appropriate values of the spontelectric parameters \(<E_{sym}>, <E_{asym}>\) and ζ. These are required to fit experimental data for the spontelectric field and the degree of dipole orientation between 48 and 62 K. In this connection, we note that the spontelectric model cannot reproduce the downturn in dipole orientation or spontelectric field, observed closer to the sublimation temperature at ~66 K.1 For this reason we ignore data at 66 K from hereon.

Using a single set of spontelectric parameters, the model set out in [1], summarised in section 3.2, fits data accurately between 38 and 48 K but departs from agreement at > 48 K. Our RAIRS data indicate that this is due to a phase change in solid N₂O at ~48 K, from one spontelectric phase to another. This is demonstrated by both the abrupt change, described in section 2, in the RAIRS linewidth at this temperature and the departure, just mentioned, between model and experiment at > 48 K. Moreover, neutron scattering data and Temperature-Programmed Desorption experiments, reported elsewhere (in preparation), show clear evidence of a structural change around 48 K.

Such a phase change around 48 K flags a change in the potential landscape and implies a requirement for new values of the spontelectric parameters \(<E_{sym}>, <E_{asym}>\) and ζ. To fit data for the observed spontlectric fields at ≥ 48 K in [1], we find \(<E_{sym} > = 4.57 \times 10^8 \text{ V m}^{-1}\) (reduced from 5.43 \times 10^8 \text{ V m}^{-1} in [1]), \(<E_{asym} > = 8.63 \times 10^8 \text{ V m}^{-1}\) (increased from 7.88 \times 10^8 \text{ V m}^{-1} and ζ = 75 (increased from 43.8), values which fit experimental data for electric fields in the sample, and values of <μ₁/>µ deduced from those electric fields, vs deposition temperature for 48 to 60 K to better than 3%, save for 60 and 62 K data where the error approaches 10 to 15%. Note the current modification of spontelectric parameters leads to some small modifications in the values of <μ₁/>µ reported here (Table 1), compared with values given in [1].

These modified spontelectric parameters are now used to evaluate Equations (11) and (12). Table 2 shows the results of such calculations and their product, that is, the values of dv₁/dT. Note that the figures shown in Table 2 are in each case local to the temperature, or degree of dipole orientation, at which they are evaluated.

In addition, the internal consistency of Equation (10) may now be checked, given the values of \(<E_{sym} > = 4.57 \times 10^8 \text{ V m}^{-1}, <E_{asym} > = 8.63 \times 10^8 \text{ V m}^{-1}\) and ζ = 75 established above. Rearranging
Equation (10), the value of the intrinsic term, $\Delta \nu_{\text{th}}$, averaged over 48 to 56 K is found to be $12.5 \pm 0.3$ cm$^{-1}$, using values for $\Delta \nu_{\text{th}}$, $\Delta \nu$, $\nu_T$ and $<\mu_z>/\mu$ taken from Table 1. For comparison, the value of $\Delta \nu_{\text{th}}$ from Equation (6), independent of the spontelectric parameters mentioned, gave $12.0 \pm 0.35$ cm$^{-1}$. These two values are in agreement within experimental error.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>$T$/K</th>
<th>$-d\nu_T/d&lt;\mu_z&gt;/\mu - d&lt;\mu_z&gt;/\mu dT$/cm$^{-1}$K$^{-1}$</th>
<th>$d\nu_T/dT$/cm$^{-1}$K$^{-1}$</th>
<th>Model $\Delta \nu$/cm$^{-1}$</th>
<th>Observed $\Delta \nu$/cm$^{-1}$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>76.9</td>
<td>0.00430</td>
<td>0.330</td>
<td>17.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td>65.8</td>
<td>0.00253</td>
<td>0.167</td>
<td>16.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>61.3</td>
<td>0.00218</td>
<td>0.129</td>
<td>16.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>60.6</td>
<td>0.00197</td>
<td>0.119</td>
<td>15.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>51.0</td>
<td>0.00164</td>
<td>0.0836</td>
<td>15.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56</td>
<td>49.8</td>
<td>0.00150</td>
<td>0.0748</td>
<td>15.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>44.9</td>
<td>0.00111</td>
<td>0.0446</td>
<td>14.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62</td>
<td>34.2</td>
<td>0.00183</td>
<td>0.0625</td>
<td>14.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Column 1: temperature of deposition, $T$. Column 2: calculated values of the rate of change of $\nu_T$ with degree of dipole orientation (Equation (11)). Column 3: Calculated values of the rate of dipole orientation with temperature of deposition (Equation (12)). Column 4: Calculated values of the rate of change of $\nu_T$, the TO frequency, with temperature of deposition. Column 5: values of the LO-TO splitting estimated from the model. Column 6: experimental values for comparison.

3.5. Comparison between experiment and model

Our goal was to compare the variation of LO-TO splitting with deposition temperature to the properties of spontelectrics. This comparison is now performed using values of the LO-TO splitting, $\Delta \nu$, vs temperature of deposition. The values of $\Delta \nu$ are in agreement within experimental error. The result of this procedure is shown as a solid line in Figure 7.

Figure 7: Comparison between model and experiment. Points represent the experimental variation of the LO-TO splitting, $\Delta \nu$, vs temperature of deposition, using values given in Table 1. Errors of $\pm 0.3$ cm$^{-1}$ have been assigned to values of $\Delta \nu$, in accord with individual errors of $\pm 0.1$ and $\pm 0.2$ cm$^{-1}$ for LO and TO frequencies, respectively. The solid line represents the variation of $\Delta \nu$ based upon the spontlectric model presented in the text. For numerical uncertainties in the model, see text.

4. Concluding remarks

The significance of the results in section 3 is as follows. Our analysis is based squarely upon the occurrence of the spontlectric effect in N$_2$O films. This analysis can be used to reproduce both qualitative and quantitative features of the LO-TO splitting and its variation with deposition temperature of N$_2$O films. This therefore gives considerable credence to the contention that the data presented here are independent evidence for the presence of a powerful electric field within the solid film and thus for the occurrence of the spontlectric effect. Further, since our analysis is founded on the premise that the spontlectric effect has a basis in dipole orientation, the current results provide further support for this model of the effect.

In addition we have shown here that the magnitude of the LO-TO splitting in solid state spectroscopy of N$_2$O has a significant contribution from the spontlectric effect. This contribution, given by $\Delta \nu_{\text{th}}/\Delta \nu$ in Table 1, extends from 30% at 48 K to 10% at 66 K. This must be a general phenomenon and introduces a new factor in our understanding of LO-TO splitting in molecular films when these are known to be spontlectric, in particular with regard to any anomalously large temperature dependence of LO-TO splitting. We suggest therefore that any such anomalous temperature dependence is good evidence that the solid film is spontlectric.

Acknowledgements

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