Perturbed angular correlation spectroscopy of complex oxide heterostructures

Lukas Korosec,¹ Claribel Domínguez,¹ Adeleh Mokhles Gerami,² João Guilherme Correia,² and Jean-Marc Triscone¹

¹ Department of Quantum Matter Physics, University of Geneva
² CERN

Perturbed angular correlation spectroscopy (PAC) measures the local magnetic field and electric field gradient (EFG) in materials by introducing radioactive nuclei and observing their emitted radiation [1]. The sensitivity to the EFG can be a crucial advantage of PAC over other local hyperfine probe techniques such as muon spin rotation and relaxation (µSR). The EFG provides spectroscopic access to lattice distortions (e.g. in ferroelectrics) as well as the local chemical environment (e.g. in heterostructures).

We will study the magnetic phase diagram of \((\text{SmNiO}_3)_m / (\text{NdNiO}_3)_m\) \(_L\) superlattices grown epitaxially on [001]\(_{pc}\)-oriented LaAlO\(_3\) by \(^{111}\text{In}^{/\text{111}}\text{Cd}\)-PAC measurements. Using µSR, we have found that two distinct magnetic phase transition occur in this system only if \(m > 17\) [2, 3]. Based on DFT simulations, we expect that the difference in EFG between SmNiO\(_3\) and NdNiO\(_3\) is sufficiently large to be resolved in a PAC measurement. Thus, each spectral line in the paramagnetic state can be assigned to one compound. If the two magnetic transitions correspond to separate transitions of the SmNiO\(_3\) and NdNiO\(_3\) layers, this will appear in PAC as a splitting of different lines at different temperatures.

We expect that this work will enable future PAC experiments on other complex oxide heterostructures.

This is an ongoing project. We hope to obtain first PAC data by the end of June and to show preliminary experimental results in this presentation.