

## An Evaluation of Thermal Conductivity of High-Temperature Superconductors



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### ABSTRACT

The paper presents a method of evaluation of thermal conductivity of high  $T_c$  superconductivity as a function of temperatures. The high  $T_c$  superconductors are  $\text{La}_{2-x}\text{Sr}_x\text{CuO}_4$  of difference volumes of  $x$  (as  $x=0.15$ ,  $T_c=38\text{k}$  and  $x=0.20$ ,  $T_c=30\text{k}$ ) and  $\text{YBa}_2\text{Cu}_3\text{O}_{7-\delta}$  ( $T_c=92\text{k}$ ) we have compared our theoretical results with that of Graebner<sup>20</sup> and Morelli<sup>21</sup>. Our theoretically evaluated results are in good influent with these workers. Our theoretical results indicate that thermal conductivities of the above superconductors increases with temperature. As it was pointed out by Uher et al<sup>22</sup> that phonons contribute close to 90% of the thermal conductivity in  $\text{YBa}_2\text{Cu}_3\text{O}_{7-\delta}$  at  $T_c$ . Given the relatively large magnitude of  $T_c$  for  $\text{YBa}_2\text{Cu}_3\text{O}_{7-\delta}$  ( $T_c/\theta_{\text{debye}}=0.25$ ). It is possible that the transition occurs in a region where the thermal conductivity's is limited mainly by phonon-phonon and carriers-phonon scattering. The enhancement of the thermal conductivity above the normal state conductivity for  $T < T_c$  in  $\text{YBa}_2\text{Cu}_3\text{O}_{7-\delta}$  is consistent with this interpretation. It indicates that the phonons make a major contribution to the thermal conductivity and that carrier phonon scattering is important in limiting the phonon contribution to the thermal conductivity at  $T_c$ . On the other hand the data for  $\text{La}_{2-x}\text{Sr}_x\text{CuO}_4$  are less conclusive. Although phonon makes major contribution to the thermal conductivity at  $T_c$ , no clear enhancement is observed as for  $\text{YBa}_2\text{Cu}_3\text{O}_{7-\delta}$  only a slight change in shape is noticeable at  $T_c$ . An outstanding of the scattering mechanisms which lead to the low magnitude of the thermal conductivity for  $\text{LaCuO}_4$  will be important for explains<sup>24,25</sup> the magnitude and temperature behaviour of the thermal conductivity of  $\text{La}_{2-x}\text{Sr}_x\text{CuO}_4$ .

**Keywords :-** Thermal conductivity, High  $T_c$  Superconductor, Scattering mechanism, Phonon-Phoron scattering, Phonon defect.

### I. INTRODUCTION

The scattering mechanisms involved in heat transport may be investigated through thermal conductivity measurements. In particular, measurements on high temperature superconductor  $\text{YBa}_2\text{Cu}_3\text{O}_{7-5}$  and  $\text{La}_{0.85}\text{Sr}_{0.15}\text{CuO}_4$  provide information on the scattering of photons by electrons for  $T \sim T_c$ . Low temperature measurements on single crystal  $\text{YBa}_2\text{Cu}_3\text{O}_{7-5}$  can give

information on photon scattering by two level systems<sup>2</sup> characteristic of amorphous solids. In order to interpret the thermal conductivity experiments on the high  $T_c$  superconductor it is useful to compare their behaviour with that of conventional superconductor (i.e. superconductor which are well discussed by the BCS mechanism of phonon-mediated Cooper pair formation).

## II. THERMAL CONDUCTIVITY OF HIGH T<sub>c</sub> SUPERCONDUCTOR NON-IDEAL SAMPLES

Thermal conductivity measurements on high T<sub>c</sub> superconductor have been limited mainly to ceramic samples of YBa<sub>2</sub>Cu<sub>3</sub>O<sub>7-δ</sub> and La<sub>2-x</sub>Sr<sub>x</sub> CuO<sub>4</sub>. Since the thermal conductivity is sensitive to the scattering mechanisms in a solid, the presence of grain and interface boundaries in ceramic materials makes the thermal conductivity data more difficult to interpret than for single crystal materials. Nonetheless, the qualitative form of the thermal conductivity as a function of temperature for the La<sub>2-x</sub>Sr<sub>x</sub> CuO<sub>4</sub> and YBa<sub>2</sub>Cu<sub>3</sub>O<sub>7-δ</sub> ceramics can give us information of the scattering of phonons by electrons for T ~ T<sub>c</sub>. Note that no matter what the mechanism for superconductivity is for the high T<sub>c</sub> superconductor, electrons below T<sub>c</sub> which have condensed with the ground state cannot transport heat or scatter phonons. Only one group<sup>9</sup> has measured the thermal conductivity of one sample each of single crystal YBa<sub>2</sub>Cu<sub>3</sub>O<sub>7-δ</sub> and HoBa<sub>2</sub>Cu<sub>5</sub>O<sub>7-δ</sub>. Then data provide evidence for the existence of two level symmetries<sup>10,11</sup> in YBa<sub>2</sub>Cu<sub>3</sub>O<sub>7-δ</sub>.

In this paper, we have evaluated the thermal conductivities of two high temperature superconductor YBa<sub>2</sub>Cu<sub>3</sub>O<sub>7-δ</sub> (T<sub>c</sub> = 92K) and La<sub>2-x</sub>Sr<sub>x</sub> CuO<sub>4</sub> for the values of x = 0.15 T<sub>c</sub> = 38K and x = 0.209 and T<sub>c</sub> = 30K as a function of temperature T. One theoretical result indicates that the thermal conductivity K increases with temperature. Here we have mentioned the given results in table T<sub>1</sub> & T<sub>2</sub>,

## III. MATHEMATICAL FORMATION USED IN THE EVALUATION

One knows that the heat currents carried by conduction electrons are closely related to electrical currents. An additional complication in the heat

transport case is that the carriers of heat can be either charge carriers like electrons or electrically neutral phonons, whereas electrical current arises only from charge carrier transport. The transformation to the superconducting state changes the nature of the carriers of the electric current. So it is to be expected that the transport of heat will be strongly affected.<sup>12-16</sup> The thermal current density J in the thermal energy per unit time crossing a unit area adjusted perpendicular to the direction of heat flow. It is a vector representing the transport of entropy during S<sub>ap</sub> at the velocity J.

$$V = TS \nabla T \quad (1)$$

From the hotter to the cooler region of the material. It is proportional to the gradient of the temperature  $\nabla T$  through Fourier's law

$$V = -K \nabla T \quad (2)$$

Where K is the coefficient of thermal conductivity.

In the normal state, electrical conductors are good conductors of heat in accordance with the law of Wiedemann and Franz.

$$(K/\sigma) = \frac{3}{2} (K_B / e)^2 T \quad (3)$$

$\sigma$  is the electrical conductivity. In the superconducting state, in contrast the heat conductivity can be much lower because Cooper pairs carry no entropy and do not scatter phonons. The principal carriers of thermal energy through metals in the normal state are conduction electrons and phonons. Heat conduction via each of these two channels acts independently, so that the two channels constitute parallel paths for the passage of heat. A simple model for the conduction of heat between two points A and B in the sample is to represent the two channels by parallel resistors with

conductivities  $K_e$  and  $K_{ph}$  for the electronic and phonons paths. The conductivities add directly as the electrical analogue of parallel resistors to give the total thermal conductivities  $K$ .

$$K = K_e + K_{ph} \quad (4)$$

The electronic path has an electron lattice contribution  $K_{l-1}$  which is always present and an impurity term  $K_{l-1}$  which becomes dominant at high defect concentrations. In like manner, the phonon path has a phonon-electron contribution  $K_{ph-1}$ , plus an additional contribution  $K_{ph-l}$  from impurities. The result is

$$1/K_l = 1/K_{l-L} + 1/K_{l-1-L} \quad (5)$$

$$1/K_{ph} = 1/K_{ph-L} + 1/K_{ph-1-L} \quad (6)$$

Applying the law of Wiedemann and Franz gives us

$$K_{l-L} = \{ \text{Constant}/T^2 \quad T \ll \theta_D, \text{Constant} \quad T \gg \theta_D \} \quad (7)$$

For temperatures that are low and high respectively relative in the degree temperature  $\theta_D$ . We know that at the lowest temperatures the electrical conductivity  $\sigma(T)$  approaches a limiting value,  $\sigma(T) \rightarrow \sigma(0)$  arising from the impurity contribution.

The temperatures dependence of  $C_{ph}$  is more complicated than that predicted by the specific heat term, since  $C_{ph}$  increases with  $T$  whereas the phonon mean free path  $l_{ph}$  decreases with increasing temperature which not only compensates for  $C_{ph}$  but also tends to cause  $K_{ph-l}$  to drop. In two metals the electronic contribution to the thermal conductivity tends to dominate at all temperatures. When defects are present, as in disorganised alloys, they affect  $K_{ph}$  more than  $K_e$  and the phonon contribution can approach or exceed that of the conduction items.

#### IV. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

In this paper, we have presented a method of evaluation of thermal conductivity of high  $T_c$  superconductor as a function of temperatures. The high  $T_c$  superconductors are  $\text{La}_{2-x}\text{Sr}_x\text{CuO}_4$  of different values of  $x$  (as  $x = 0.15$ ,  $T_c = 38\text{K}$  and  $x = 0.20$ ,  $T_c = 30\text{K}$ ) and  $\text{YBa}_2\text{Cu}_3\text{O}_{7-\delta}$  ( $T_c = 92\text{K}$ ). We have compared our theoretical results with that of Graebner<sup>20</sup> and Morelli<sup>21</sup>. Our theoretically evaluated results are in good agreement with these workers. Our theoretical results indicate that thermal conductivities of the above superconductors increase with temperature. As it was pointed out by Uher et al<sup>22</sup> that phonons contribute close to 90% of the thermal conductivity in  $\text{YBa}_2\text{Cu}_3\text{O}_{7-\delta}$  at  $T_c$ . Given the relatively large magnitude of  $T_c$  for  $\text{YBa}_2\text{Cu}_3\text{O}_{7-\delta}$  ( $T_c/\theta_{\text{Debye}} \sim 0.25$ ) it is possible that the transition occurs in a region where the thermal conductivity is limited mainly by phonon-phonon and carrier-phonon scattering. The enhancement of the thermal conductivity above the normal state conductivity for  $T < T_c$  in  $\text{YBa}_2\text{Cu}_3\text{O}_{7-\delta}$  is consistent with this interpretation. It indicates that the phonons make a major contribution to the thermal conductivity and that carrier-phonon scattering is important in limiting the phonon contribution to the thermal conductivity at  $T_c$ . On the other hand the data for  $\text{La}_{2-x}\text{Sr}_x\text{CuO}_4$  are less conclusive. Although phonons make a major contribution<sup>23</sup> to the thermal conductivity at  $T_c$ , no clear enhancement is observed as for  $\text{YBa}_2\text{Cu}_3\text{O}_{7-\delta}$  only a slight change in shape is noticeable at  $T_c$ . It is possible that the enhancement effect is observed in  $\text{La}_{2-x}\text{Sr}_x\text{CuO}_4$  by scattering mechanisms other than phonon-carrier scattering. The most likely scattering mechanisms limiting the phonon contribution to the thermal conductivity at  $T_c$  ( $T_c/\theta_{\text{Debye}} \sim 0.1$ ) are phonon-defect, phonon-carrier and phonon-phonon scattering. An understanding of the scattering mechanisms which lead to the low magnitude of the

thermal conductivity for  $\text{LaCuO}_4$  will be important for explains<sup>24,25</sup> the magnitude and temperature behaviour of the thermal conductivity of  $\text{La}_{2-x}\text{Sr}_x\text{CuO}_4$ .

**Table 1.** An Evaluation of Thermal Conductivity K ( $\text{Wcm}^{-1}\text{K}^{-1}$ ) as a function of temperature for  $\text{YBa}_2\text{Cu}_3\text{O}_{7-\delta}$  ( $T_c=90\text{ K}$ )

T(K)	Ohms	Graebener	Marelli
5	0.025	0.032	0.03
10	0.038	0.036	0.038
20	0.046	0.042	0.049
30	0.058	0.055	0.059
40	0.062	0.0360	0.061
50	0.068	0.069	0.070
100	0.072	0.074	0.075
150	0.075	0.078	0.080
200	0.082	0.083	0.086
250	0.096	0.095	0.092

**Table 2.** Evaluation of Thermal Conductivity K ( $\text{Wcm}^{-1}\text{K}^{-1}$ ) as a function temperature T for  $\text{La}_{2-x}\text{Sr}_x\text{CuO}_4$  T(K)

T(K)	K( $\text{Wcm}^{-1}\text{K}^{-1}$ ) X=0.15, $T_c=38\text{ K}$	K( $\text{Wcm}^{-1}\text{K}^{-1}$ ) X=0.2, $T_c=30\text{ K}$
1	0.0052	0.0046
5	0.0067	0.0058

10	0.0072	0.0070
20	0.0087	0.0084
30	0.0097	0.0095
40	0.0127	0.0120
50	0.0138	0.0136
60	0.0252	0.0246
70	0.0286	0.0273
80	0.0329	0.0308
90	0.0468	0.0458
100	0.0587	0.0553

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