

Ferrite Nanocomposites: Characteristics of Optical and Microwave Performance

Araa H. Hadi^{1*}, Sameer H. Al-Nesrawy²

¹College of Biotechnology, Al-Qasim Green University, Qasim 51013, Iraq

²Department of Physics, College of Education for Pure Sciences, University of Babylon, Hilla 51002, Iraq

Corresponding Author Email: edu222.araa.hasan@student.uobabylon.edu.iq



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ABSTRACT

In this work, we investigated the effect of ferrite addition on two polymers (PEO/PMMA) with different weight percentages (1.2, 2.4, and 3.6 wt%). The solution casting technique was used to fabricate the samples. The nanocomposites were studied to further investigate their composition, structure, and insulating properties (PEO/PMMA-Co-Ni-Cr Fe₂O₄). Optical micrographs show an additional distribution of nPs, and the mixture was homogeneous; the Co-Ni-Cr Fe₂O₄ nanoparticles were found in a continuous and ordered structure. Within the lattice, a polymer was present at a concentration of 6 wt%. The spectra exhibited variations in band position and intensity, indicating significant chemical interaction between the polymer and the nanoparticles. Experimental results show that with increasing concentration of (PEO/PMMA-Co-Ni-Cr Fe₂O₄) nanocomposites, their dielectric loss, insulating constant, and dielectric loss increase, while the ferrite nanomaterial decreases, with increasing electric field repetition rate. On the other hand, the AC electrical conductivity increases. The nanoparticles increase in both frequency and concentration. The (PEO/PMMA-Co-Ni-Cr Fe₂O₄) nanostructures may be used to develop new nanocomposite films for microwave absorption applications.

1. INTRODUCTION

The field of applied science known as "nanotechnology" investigates the issue of atomic and molecular-level matter size control. The creation of materials or devices that are 100 nanometers or smaller is the focus of nanotechnology, which is primarily concerned with structures that are that small [1]. Several sectors, like as the automotive, electronics, and systems industries, have benefited from the new methods and trade prospects made possible by nanotechnology's production and nanocomposite applications. Many people believe that nanotechnology will bring about a new era in manufacturing [2]. Ferrites are very hard and brittle ceramic materials that have a dark grey or black appearance. Because of their ferromagnetic behavior, ferrites are categorized as magnetic materials and have a variety of uses [3]. Their structural features can distinguish three types of permanent magnetism: one of the features of magnetic materials (hard ferrite, garnet ferrite, and soft ferrite) [4].

Novel delivery systems have been developed because of developments in the science of polymers. New polymers have been incorporated, leading to the creation of polymers with distinctive properties. In addition to their chemical makeup, the properties of polymeric materials for a particular type of polymer also depend on their molecular weight and the roles that the chain of polymer salts plays in providing useful complexes [5]. New kinds of polymer-filled particles, ranging in size from nanometers to micrometers, are known as polymer

nanocomposites [6]. In a nanoscale area, organic polymers and inorganic nanoparticles combine to form nanocomposite polymers [7, 8].

Among the most well-known and ancient polymers is poly(methyl methacrylate) (PMMA). Its versatile usage and appealing physical and visual characteristics make it an important and fascinating polymer. There are a number of intriguing biological characteristics of this polymer. PMMA is an inert polymer that has excellent mechanical strength, low weight, chemical resistance, and transparency [9, 10]. Its refractive index, which may vary from 1.3 to 1.7, further enhances its optical properties and makes it a popular alternative to inorganic glass [9]. A thermoplastic material that is resistant to weathering and corrosion, has excellent hardness and tensile strength, is very rigid, is colorless, and transmits light almost without loss in the (360-1000 nm) wavelength range. It also has sound insulating qualities. It is possible to alter PMMA physically or chemically to make it less brittle and more resistant to chemicals, two of its drawbacks. Hydrophobic (ethylene) and hydrophilic (carbonyl) groups are present in every unit of PMMA. Because it is an insulator polymer, PMMA has many more potential uses. The need to create conducting materials with balanced features, such as high conductivity and acceptable mechanical qualities, has, nevertheless, maintained a long-term focus on synthesizing these materials primarily from PMMA [11]. Also, additional conducting polymers may be physically mixed with PMMA or

co-polymerized chemically to create a novel material with synergistic qualities [12].

Polymerization of methyl methacrylate yields PMMA. Due to its extensive usage in the automotive sector, PMMA has surpassed all other methacrylate polymers in terms of usage [13]. With a molecular weight ranging from 600,000 to 4,000,000 g/mol, polyethylene oxide is a nonionic homopolymer of ethylene oxide. Because of its polarity, it may combine with various solvents to create a broad variety of composites. A range of grades is available for this white to off-white powder, each corresponding to a distinct profile of the viscosity of an aqueous isopropyl alcohol solution. It might include an appropriate antioxidant. The environmental friendliness, abundance, cheap cost, and lack of toxicity of polyethylene oxide were the deciding factors in its selection [10, 14].

2. EXPERIMENTAL WORK

Ferrite materials (Co-Ni-Cr Fe_2O_4) were synthesized using the casting method. 75 wt% PMMA and 25 wt% polyethylene oxide (PEO) were added to 100 ml of chloroform. The polymers were mixed for half an hour without heating using a magnetic stirrer to create a uniform solution. The thickness could be measured using a micrometer, reaching a thickness of 10 cm [15]. Different concentrations of polymer materials (1.2, 2.4, and 3.6 wt%) could be added to produce ferrite nanomaterials. The solution container was a Petri dish. Drying took five days at room temperature. The formation of polymer nanocomposites was determined as a function of temperature. The analysis was performed by removing the nanoparticles from Petri dishes made of PEO/PMMA (Co-Ni-Cr Fe_2O_4). Utilizing a double-beam spectrophotometer (Shimadzu, UV-1800 A) operating between the 250 to 850 nm wavelength range, this optical property of nanocomposite films was investigated. Using a 10 \times magnification optical microscope of the Olympus-type Nikon-73346, the samples were examined at various concentrations. Cu, Ni, Cr, and Fe_2O_4 . An electron microscope of the type Vertex 5600LV, manufactured by Bruker Nano GmbH, a German business, is used to analyze the films of nanocomposites [16]. This is seen in Figure 1 below:

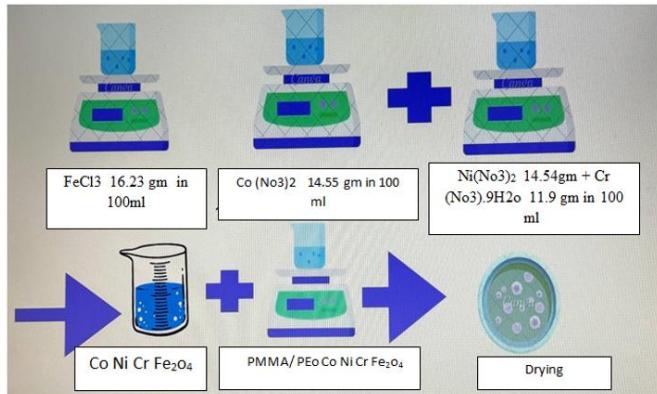


Figure 1. The diagram explaining the steps for preparing the sample

The formula for absorbance (A) is given below [17].

$$A = IA/I_0 \quad (1)$$

where, IA is the absorbed light intensity by the material and I_0 is the incident intensity of light. Transmittance (T) is computed as Eq. (2) [18]:

$$T = \exp [-2.303A] \quad (2)$$

The dielectric constant is categorized into Two Real (ϵ_r) and imaginary (ϵ_{im}) parts. which are given by the following equations [19]:

$$\epsilon_r = n^2 - k^2 \quad (3)$$

$$\epsilon_{im} = 2nk \quad (4)$$

The optical conductivity (σ) is obtained by using the relation [20]:

$$\sigma = \alpha nc/4\pi \quad (5)$$

where, c is the velocity of light, n is the refractive index and α is the absorption coefficient.

3. SECTION HEADINGS

Figure 2 shows the relationship between wavelength and absorbance of (Co-Ni-Cr Fe_2O_4) nanocomposites. The figure clearly demonstrates that film absorbance is at its peak at 250 nm, close to the fundamental absorption edge, and gradually decreases with increasing wavelength. In the visible and near-infrared spectrums, film absorbance is typically modest. This performance may be described in this way. The incoming photon has sufficient energy to interact with atoms and is transmitted as its wavelength decreases, approaching the basic absorption edge. As the input photon's wavelength decreases, it interacts with the material, leading to a rise in absorbance [21, 22].

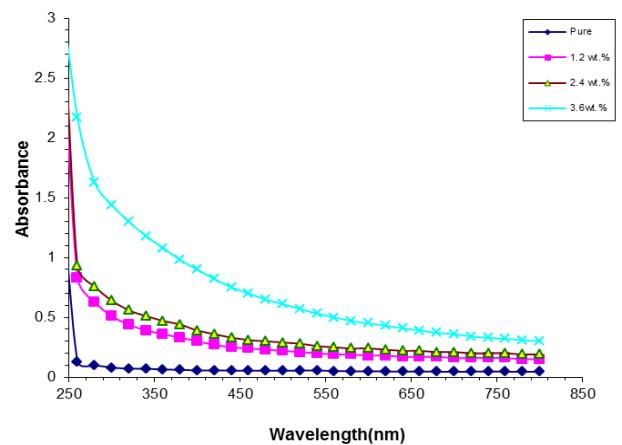


Figure 2. Absorbance spectra for (PEO/PMMA-Co-Ni-Cr Fe_2O_4) nanocomposites films sintering at 1200°C with different ferrite

Figure 3 shows the optical transmittance spectra of (PEO/PMMA-Co-Ni-Cr Fe_2O_4) nanocomposites as a function of incident wavelength. The graph clearly shows that the transmittance decreases with increasing concentration [22].

The absorption coefficient (α) of the materials used nowadays is determined by Eq. (6) [22]:

$$\alpha = (2.303 \times A) / d \quad (6)$$

where, d is the thickness of the film and A is the absorbance.

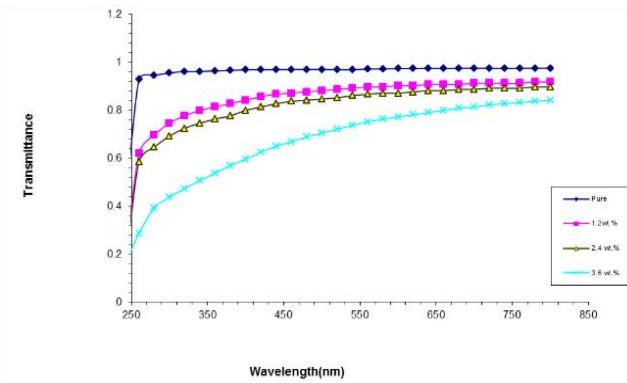


Figure 3. Transmittance spectra for (PEO/PMMA-Co-Ni-Cr Fe₂O₄) nanocomposites films sintering 1200°C with different ferrite ratios

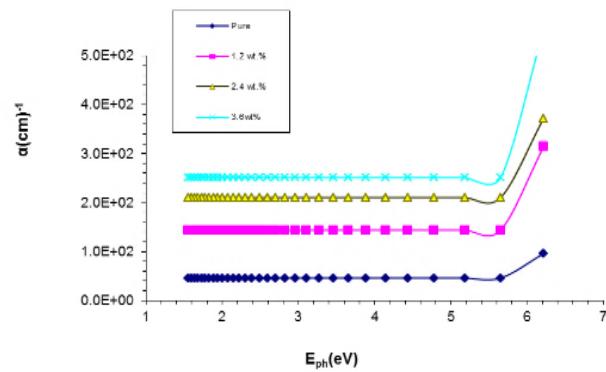


Figure 4. Absorption coefficient for (PEO/PMMA-Co-Ni-Cr Fe₂O₄) nanocomposites films 1200°C with different ferrite ratios

It is dependent on optical transmission, reflection, and film thickness.

The absorption coefficient increased with increasing concentration, as seen in Figure 4. Even when the photon energy (α) increased, the value stayed high and kept going up. In the tested frequency range, an absorption coefficient below 10⁴ cm⁻¹ indicates that there is an indirect energy band gap in the nanocomposites [23, 24].

The relationship is used to calculate the indirect transition [25]:

$$\alpha h\nu = B(h\nu - E_g) r \quad (7)$$

where, $r = 2$ for an allowed indirect transition, $r = 3$ for a forbidden indirect transition, E_g is the optical band gap, B is constant, and $h\nu$ is the incident photon energy (Figures 5 and 6).

With the creation of additional levels in the band gap, the indirect energy gap decreases as the ferrite concentration increases, as shown in Figure 5 for prohibited and permitted indirect energy gaps, respectively.

The extinction coefficient, (k) obtained from the relation [26]:

$$k = \alpha\lambda/4\pi \quad (8)$$

where, λ is the wavelength and α is the coefficient of absorption.

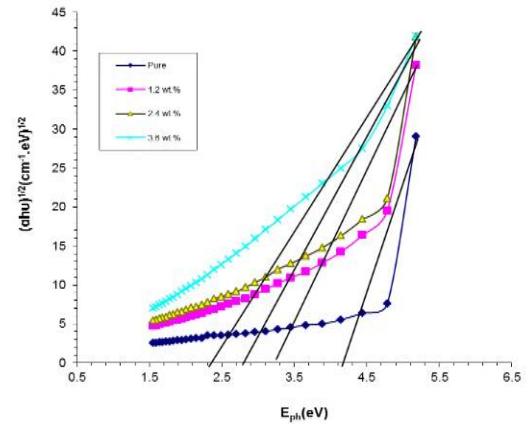


Figure 5. Allowed indirect energy gap for (PEO/PMMA-Co-Ni-Cr Fe₂O₄) nanocomposites films 1200°C with different ferrite ratios

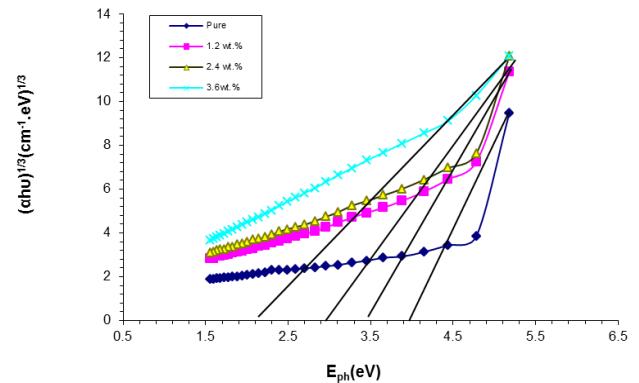


Figure 6. Forbidden indirect energy gap for (PEO/PMMA-Co-Ni-Cr Fe₂O₄) nanocomposites films 1200°C with different ferrite ratios

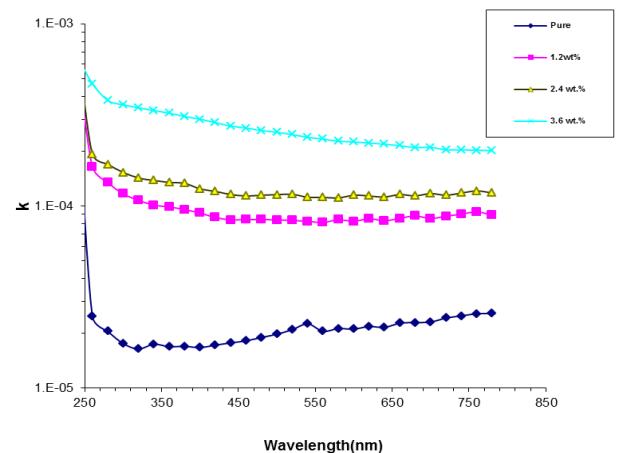


Figure 7. Extinction coefficient for (PEO/PMMA-Co-Ni-Cr Fe₂O₄) nanocomposites films 1200°C with different ferrite ratios

Figure 7 shows the variation of the extinction coefficient of (PEO/PMMA-Co-Ni-Cr Fe₂O₄) nanocomposites with photon energy, this figure shows that when the ferrite concentration rises, the extinction coefficient rises as well [27].

The index of refractive (n) is calculated from Eq. (9) [28]:

$$n = \sqrt{\frac{4R - K^2}{(R - 1)^2}} - \frac{R + 1}{R - 1} \quad (9)$$

where, k is the coefficient of extinction and R is the reflectance.

As a function of wavelength, Figure 8 displays the change index of nanocomposite films of (PEO/PMMA-Co-Ni-Cr Fe₂O₄) with varying ferrite concentrations. The chart clearly demonstrates that the refractive index rises in direct proportion to the ferrite w t%. Reason being, the density of the films made of nanocomposite materials rises [29].

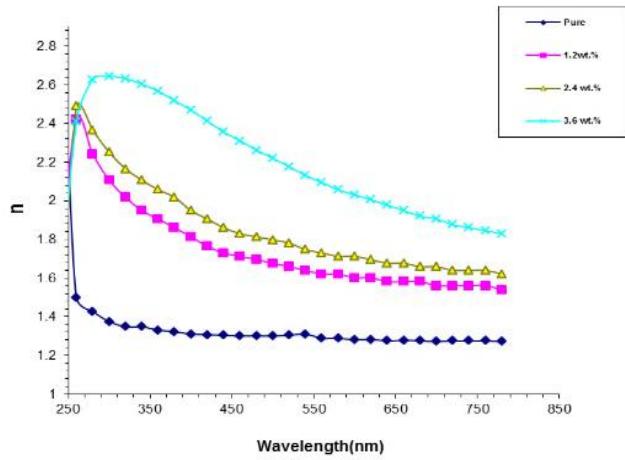


Figure 8. Refractive index for (PEO/PMMA-Co-Ni-Cr Fe₂O₄) nanocomposites films 1200°C with different ferrite ratios

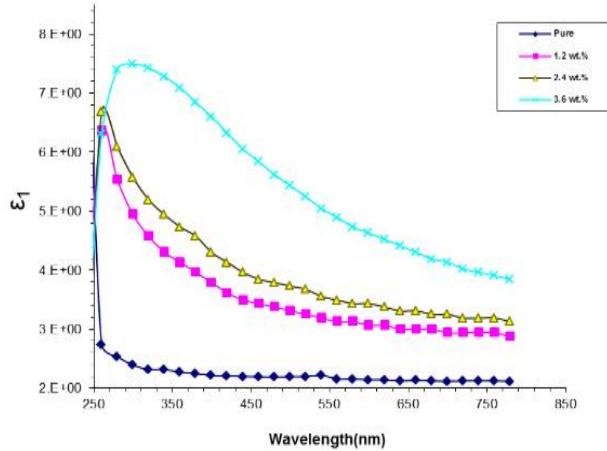


Figure 9. Real dielectric constant for (PEO/PMMA-Co-Ni-Cr Fe₂O₄) nanocomposites films 1200°C with different ferrite ratios

The influence of the samples' real and imaginary portions on photon energy is seen in Figures 8-10, respectively. Given that it is mostly affected by n_2 , it follows that ϵ_1 is bigger than ϵ_2 . This is because the actual component of the dielectric constant diminishes with increasing concentrations of ferrite nanoparticles in PEO/PMMA [30, 31].

The relationship can be used to determine the optical conductivity (σ) [32]:

$$\sigma_{op} = \alpha c / 4\pi \quad (10)$$

where, α is the absorption coefficient, c is the velocity of light, and n is the refractive index.

Figure 11 shows the relationship between the optical conductivity and wavelength in (Co-Ni-Cr Fe₂O₄) nanocomposites, which may be represented by a film made of (PEO/PMMA-Co-Ni-Cr Fe₂O₄). The optical conductivity of the increases with increasing percentages of the, according to the research [33]. Because of these additional levels in the band gap, electrons may more easily transition from the very bandgap to these specific levels in the central bandgap. As a consequence, the conductivity increases and the band gap decreases [34].

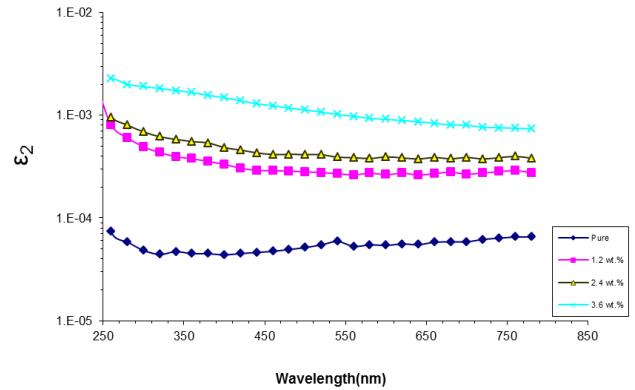


Figure 10. Imaginary dielectric constant for (PEO/PMMA-Co-Ni-Cr Fe₂O₄) nanocomposites films before and after sintering 1200°C with different ferrite ratios

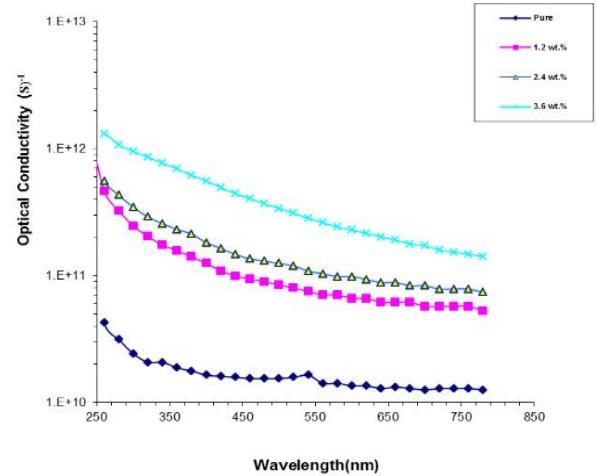


Figure 11. Optical conductivity for (PEO/PMMA-Co-Ni-Cr Fe₂O₄) nanocomposites films 1200°C with different ferrite ratios

Microwave absorption properties:

In order to uncover the characteristics of microwave absorption for (PEO/PMMA-Co-Ni-Cr Fe₂O₄) nanocomposites at 1200°C, the following reflection loss (RL) was calculated using transmission line theory [35, 36]:

$$RL = 20 \log \left| \frac{Z_{in} - 1}{Z_{in} + 1} \right| \quad (11)$$

$$Z_{in} = \sqrt{\frac{\mu r}{\epsilon r}} \tanh \left[j \left(\frac{2\pi f d}{c} \right) \sqrt{\mu r \epsilon r} \right] \quad (12)$$

The following formula provides the normalized input impedance (Z_{in}).

$\epsilon_r = \epsilon' - j\epsilon''$, $\mu_r = \mu' - j\mu''$, d is the absorber's thickness in meters, c is the velocity of light in meters per second, and f is microwave frequency in hertz.

At a sample thickness of 50 μm , the RL of various weight fractions of PEO/PMMA-Co-Ni-Cr Fe_2O_4 nanocomposites was measured [37, 38]. Here, a different weight fraction of Co-Ni-Cr Fe_2O_4 is used to compare the reflection loss of PEO/PMMA-Co-Ni-Cr Fe_2O_4 nanocomposites. A minimum RL of -22.8 dB at 11.5 GHz for 3.6 wt% at sintering 1200°C is then displayed in Figure 12 of the PEO/PMMA-Co-Ni-Cr Fe_2O_4 nanocomposite [39, 40]. The following explanation explains why the PEO/PMMA-Co-Ni-Cr Fe_2O_4 composite's microwave absorption improved as the Co-Ni-Cr Fe_2O_4 content rose.

Complex permeability and permittivity are efficiently increased by increasing the Co-Ni-Cr Fe_2O_4 nanocomposite content [39], which produces dielectric/magnetic loss capabilities and matched characteristic impedances [41].

As mentioned, PEO/PMMA-Co-Ni-Cr Fe_2O_4 nanocomposites are promising for a range of technological applications due to their large absorbing bandwidths, lightweight nature, and excellent reflection loss [42].

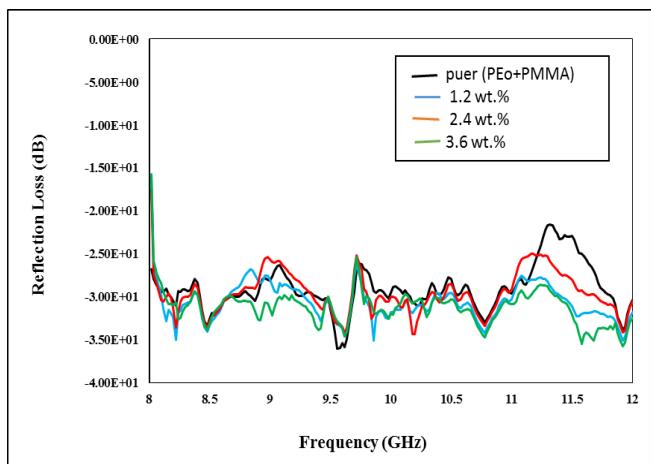


Figure 12. Reflection loss curves for PEO/PMMA-Co-Ni-Cr Fe_2O_4 nanocomposite after sintering at 1200°C with different weight fractions of Co-Ni-Cr Fe_2O_4 in the frequency range 8–12 GHz at the thickness of 50 μm

4. CONCLUSIONS

Nanoparticles of (Co-Ni-Cr Fe_2O_4) were effectively included using the solution-casting technique. Under the light of an optical microscope, the polymers' nanoparticles appear as a seamless network. Charging carriers are able to traverse this network, which is comprised of channels inside nanocomposites. The optical properties showed that the absorption, extinction coefficient, refractive index, real and imaginary dielectric constants, optical conductivity, transmittance, and optical energy gap all rose with increasing nanoparticle concentrations of (Co-Ni-Cr Fe_2O_4). Nanostructures of (Co-Ni-Cr Fe_2O_4) showed promise as a material for optoelectronic devices based on their optical properties. Potential applications for the electromagnetic functionalized synthesized PEO/PMMA-ferrite nanocomposites include materials that absorb microwaves.

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