ANALYTICAL DISPERSION MODELS FOR EFFICIENT SIMULATION OF COMPLEX MICROCHIP ELECTROPHORESIS SYSTEMS  
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ABSTRACT  
This paper presents analytical band broadening models that account for skew induced dispersion for composable system simulation of electrophoretic separation microchips. The models not only accurately describe the behavior of individual components, but also capture their interactions. The validity of the models is verified by comparison to experimental data and numerical results.  

Keywords: dispersion, electrophoresis, microchips, simulation  

1. Introduction  
While electrophoretic separation microchips have been widely studied in the past decade, their efficient design continues to be a challenge. Trial and error design methods involving extensive experiments and numerical computation can lead to unacceptably long design cycles. Several analytical [1, 2] and semi-analytical [3] dispersion models have been proposed to speed up microchip design. A system simulation approach in which a design is decomposed into components has been proposed [4], but involves oversimplified dispersion models that do not accurately account for component interactions. To address these issues, this paper presents closed-form, parameterized analytical dispersion models that are both accurate and efficient for composable system simulation of electrophoretic separation microchips.  

2. Analytical dispersion models  
Consider an electrophoretic separation column consisting of a straight channel with length \( L_{bi} \) and width \( w \), and two complimentary turns with average radius \( R \), (Figure 1). An electric field \( E \) causes a charged analyte to move in a buffer solvent. The combined effects of decreasing migration distance and increasing \( E \) toward the inside wall of the turn skew and broaden the analyte band in the first turn [3]. Some of the skew may be undone in the inter-turn straight channel, leading to “overcorrection” in the second turn. This can be more pronounced in multiple turns and makes calculation of final analyte band width difficult. To address this issue, a composable simulation approach is applied (Figure 1), in which every component (turn, straight channel, etc.) is represented by a behavioral model and linked by appropriate interfacial parameters. Starting from the injector, each component’s model sets the input values to its downstream neighbor.  

Following the procedure described in [1] and assuming small value of \( w/R_c \), we can transform the advection-diffusion equation in a turn into an unfolded Cartesian coordinate (see Eq. (1.a)), where \( c \) is the analyte concentration, \( x \) the longitudinal
coordinate in the unfolded Cartesian frame, $y$ the width-wise coordinate. The linear apparent velocity $u$ in such Cartesian coordinate is found as $u = U(l + (w - 2y)/R_h)$, where $U = E/u$ is the average velocity, and $\mu$ is the analyte electrophoretic mobility. This apparent velocity accounts for both effects of migration distance and electric field variation along the channel width.

Adopting the method of moments [5], we can normalize the governing equation (1.a) in a new coordinate frame (Eq (1.b)) that moves at velocity $U$:

$$\frac{\partial c}{\partial t} = D \cdot \nabla ^2 c - u \cdot \frac{\partial c}{\partial x}$$
$$\frac{\partial c}{\partial y} = 0$$
$$c(x, y, 0) = c_0(x, y)$$  (1.a)

$$\frac{\partial c}{\partial t} = \nabla ^2 c - P_e \cdot \frac{\partial c}{\partial \xi}$$
$$\frac{\partial c}{\partial \eta} = 0$$
$$c(\xi, \eta, 0) = c_0(\xi, \eta)$$  (1.b)

where $t$ is the separation time, $D$ the analyte diffusivity, $\tau = tD/w^2$ the dimensionless time indicating the ratio of transverse diffusion to axial convection in a component. Here $\xi = (x-Ut)/w$, $\eta = y/w$, $\nabla ^2 = \partial^2 / \partial \xi^2 + \partial^2 / \partial \eta^2$. Peclet number $P_e = Uw/D$, and $\tau^2 = (u-U)/U$ the analyte velocity relative to the mean. Define $\bar{m}_p = \bar{c}_p = \int c^p d\gamma$ as the $p^{th}$ moment of the cross-section-averaged concentration of the analyte band, where $c_p(\xi, \eta) = \int c^p(\xi, \eta, \tau) d\tau$ is the $p^{th}$ moment of the concentration in the filament through $\gamma$. Then Eq. (1.b) can be reformulated in terms of $m_p$ and $c_p$ and be solved for $c_l$, $m_0$, $m_1$, and $m_2$ to provide interfacial parameters $c_0$, $m_0$, and $m_2$ for each filament and gravity associated with the band skew, $m_0(\gamma)$ the total mass of the analyte band, $m_1(\gamma)$ the location of the whole band's center of gravity, and $\sigma^2$ the longitudinal standard deviation (variance) of the cross-sectional average concentration. The band width ($\sigma^2$) is related to $m_0(\gamma)$ through $\sigma^2 = \bar{w}^2(m_2/m_0 - m_1^2/m_0^2)$. All of them are measured relative to a transverse plane that moves at $U$, a consequence of the normalization reducing Eq. (1.a) to Eq. (1.b).
Eqs. (2, 3) and Eqs. (4, 5) give the variation of $c_i$ and $\sigma^2$ in a turn and in a straight channel respectively based on their individual dimensionless residence time $z_i$ and $z_{hi}$:

$$c_{i,\text{avw}}(\eta, z_i) = \sum_{a=\text{avw}} \left( \pm J_a \left( 1 - e^{-\lambda_i z_i} \right) / \lambda_a + B_a e^{-\lambda_i z_i} \right) \cos \left( a \pi \eta \right)$$

(2)

$$\Delta \sigma^2_{i,\text{avw}} = \left\{ 2 \pi \pm \frac{8 \pi}{\tau_1} \sum_{a=\text{avw}} \left( B_a \lambda_a \left( 1 - e^{-\lambda_i z_i} \right) \pm J_a \left( -\lambda_i z_i + e^{-\lambda_i z_i} - 1 \right) \right) / \lambda_a \right\} w^2$$

(3)

$$c_{i,\text{single}}(\eta, z_{hi}) = \sum_{a=\text{avw}} B_a e^{-\lambda_i z_i} \cos \left( a \pi \eta \right)$$

(4)

$$\Delta \sigma^2_{i,\text{single}} = 2 \pi \sigma_i z_i$$

(5)

where $\eta = \pi R_c/P_{aw}, \tau_1 = L_{aw}/P_{aw}, \lambda_i = (n \pi)^2, J_a = 8P_{aw}/(\lambda_i R_c)$. Here $B_a$ is the Fourier series coefficients for the input skew and $c_i(\eta, 0) = \sum B_a \cos(n \pi \eta)$. In Eq. (3), the plus sign is assigned to the first turn and any turn strengthening the skew caused by the first; the minus sign is assigned to any turn undoing the skew. The input skew's effect on the variance in the turn is considered by the first term in the summation in Eq. (3). We find that the normalized system variance $\sigma_i/\sigma_{i,\text{avw}}$ only depends on $z_i$ and $z_{hi}$ as shown in Figure 2 for a system of two complimentary turns. At low $z_{hi}$ and $z_i$, the final variance is low due to nearly complete skew cancellation in the two turns. At high $z_{hi}$, relatively large transverse diffusion smears out the skew before the band arrives at the second turn, which overcorrects the skew. This effectively introduces another dispersion source leading to a higher final variance.

3. Simulation and verification

System simulation results from our models using mean widths of 37 $\mu m$ and 50 $\mu m$ [1, 3] are compared with experimental data [3] in Figures 3 and 4, showing that each subsequent turn overcorrects and increases the band dispersion due to the high $z_i$ and $z_{hi}$.

![Fig. 3. Comparison of system simulation results with experimental data [3] ($\tau_i=3.85$ and $z_{hi}=10$).](image)

![Fig. 4. Comparison of system simulation results with experimental data [3] ($\tau_i=0.48$ and $z_{hi}=0.48$).](image)

In Figure 5, all parameters in Figure 4 are kept unchanged except for a reduced diffusivity, which leads to lower $z_i$ and $z_{hi}$. The second turn now corrects the skew from
the first, leading to a reduced final variance. In Figure 6, the composable dispersion model for complex separation system involving up to six complimentary turns is compared to numerical simulation, in which $\tau_1$ ranges from 0.1 to $5 \times 10^3$ and $\tau_2$ from 0.04 to $1.96 \times 10^3$. A relative error of 9.5% is found in the worst case when $\tau_1$ and $\tau_2$ are very low. We observe that the variance increases with the number of complimentary turns in a linear, sublinear or superlinear relationship [6] depending on $\tau_1$ and $\tau_2$.

**Fig. 5.** Comparison of system simulation results with numerical data ($\tau_1 = 4.1 \times 10^{-4}$ and $\tau_2 = 4.1 \times 10^{-3}$).

**Fig. 6.** Comparison of system simulation results of six complimentary turns with numerical data ($w/R_c = 0.2$).

### 4. Conclusion

Analytical dispersion models have been presented for efficient simulations of complex microchip electrophoresis system. The models have been verified by numerical simulation and experimental data, and are able to accurately capture the combined effects of component geometry and analyte properties on analyze dispersion.

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**References**


