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Synthetic Polymeric Membranes

Characterization by Atomic Force Microscopy

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Preface

This book concentrates on atomic force microscopy (AFM), a method recently developed to study the surfaces of synthetic polymeric membranes. AFM is becoming a very important tool for the characterization of synthetic polymeric membranes. The development of membranes of improved performance depends on the exact knowledge of the morphology of a thin selective layer that exists at the surface of the membrane. The control of the morphology of the selective layer is crucial for the design of synthetic polymeric membranes. With a relatively short history of only twenty-five years, AFM has firmly established its position as a method to characterize the membrane surface.

Each chapter of this book includes information on basic principles, commercial applications, current research, and guidelines for future research. Each chapter is summarized at the end and contains a comprehensive list of references.

The introductory chapter gives a brief overview of synthetic polymeric membranes and their applications both in industrial processes and in biomedical fields. It also gives an overview of studies on membrane surface morphology by various methods.

Chapter 2 deals with the synthesis of membranes, the properties of membranes, and the application of membranes. The beginning also identifies the three types of membranes (i.e., biological, synthetic, and theoretical) and their applications.

The details of AFM are discussed in Chap. 3. It is divided into two parts. In the introduction, a brief history of the development of AFM is given, followed by a list of manufacturers and their products. The second part contains the details of the AFM components and the experimental protocols for different AFM modes, i.e., contact, non-contact, and tapping. As the synthetic polymers are soft, generally tapping mode is preferred to study the polymeric membranes. Details of the AFM image analysis, in conjunction with synthetic polymeric membranes, are also given.

The fourth chapter examines the nodular structure of the membrane surface observed under AFM. It has been known for a long time that macromolecules form nodules at the membrane surface, and the size and the shape of the nodules strongly govern the membrane performance. In conjunction with an advanced technique such as plasma etching, AFM can reveal the nodular structure at the membrane surface more clearly than any other technique. In this chapter, the relationship between the nodular structures and the membrane preparation conditions is discussed for flat sheet membranes in the first part and hollow fibers in the second part. This chapter also deals with the roughness at the membrane surface.

Chapter 5 explores the pore structure of the membrane. Pores are clearly observed under AFM when their sizes are more than 1 nm. The method to characterize the membrane surface by the mean pore size and the pore size distribution is described, and the results are compared with those obtained from other more conventional methods.

Unlike Chaps. 4 and 5, Chap. 6 deals with the cross-sectional view of the membrane when observed under AFM. Since the technique of capturing cross-sectional views was developed only recently, relatively few images are currently available. However, this technique may have a strong influence on future research, particularly in studying cell growth under the membrane surface and fouling by blocking membrane pores.

Chapter 7 discusses the use of AFM to investigate the adhesion of particles to polymer surfaces. Adhesion of particles on membrane surfaces is the main cause of fouling. In the beginning of the chapter, a short note on DLVO (Derjaguin, Landau, Verwey, and Overbeek) theory (a theory of the stability of colloidal dispersions) has been given. However, few studies of adhesion in the membrane field by AFM have been reported. The pioneer work of Bowen's school has been described.

Finally, in Chap. 8, attempts are made to correlate the AFM parameters, such as nodule and pore sizes, to the membrane performance data. Membranes used for a variety of membrane processes, including reverse osmosis, nanofiltration, ultrafiltration, microfiltration, gas and vapor separation, pervaporation, and other membrane separation processes, are covered in this chapter. AFM parameters are also correlated to membrane biofouling. This chapter also includes applications of AFM to characterize biomedical materials, including artificial organs and drug release.

Thus, the book covers all aspects of AFM studies on the characterization of synthetic polymeric membranes. The authors believe that this book is the first attempt to find cause and effect relationships using AFM between membrane preparation, membrane characterization, and membrane performance for synthetic polymeric membranes applied in various separation processes. The authors also believe that the knowledge provided in this book will contribute to the design and preparation of improved synthetic polymeric membranes.

Importance of This Book

Although several books have already been published on AFM, they were written for different applications. The novel feature of this book is that it is focused on the study of synthetic membranes and their surfaces by AFM. For this reason, this book is monumental in the fields of both AFM and synthetic membranes. Another feature of this book is that it will provide a very useful guide to readers who wish to enter this field of study. By going through the chapters that deal with various AFM images, the reader will be exposed to the latest research results of the field. However, the strength of the book lies in its friendliness to the reader in describing details of AFM experimental methods and interpretation of experimental data, particularly when AFM is used to study membrane surfaces. Hence, the potential readers of the book

are academic researchers who are investigating synthetic membranes and also R&D specialists who wish to improve and control the quality of synthetic membranes for various purposes.

This book may also attract a wider range of readers, since synthetic membranes are now considered to be one of the most important tools in the areas of seawater desalination, wastewater treatment, water production, food processing, treatment of pharmaceutical products, air and water cleaning, separation of chemical and petrochemical products, drug release, and other biomedical applications.

Ottawa, September 2007

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Abbreviations and Symbols

Δt	Temperature difference
λ	Heat of vaporization of the solvent (kJ kg^{-1})
λ'	Ratio of solute radius and pore radius
μ	Viscosity
μ_p	Mean pore size
μm	Micron, micrometer
ρ	Density
σ_p	Standard deviation
\AA	Angstrom
AFM	Atomic force microscopy
AFS	Atomic force spectroscopy
BSA	Bovine serum albumin
$^{\circ}\text{C}$	Degree centigrade
CA	Cellulose acetate
CAB	Cellulose acetate butyrate
C-AFM	Contact mode atomic force microscopy
cAMP	Adenosine 3',5'-cyclic monophosphate
CE	Cellulose
cm	Centimeter
CTA	Cellulose triacetate
C_p	Heat capacity
Da	Dalton
DEHPA	Di-2-ethylhexylphosphoric acid
DLVO	DLVO (Derjaguin, Landau, Verwey, and Overbeek) theory
DMAC	<i>N, N</i> -Dimethylacetamide
DMF	Dimethylformamide
DSC	Differential scanning calorimetry
DSPM	Donnan-steric-pore model
DTPA	Di-2-ethylhexylthiophosphoric acid
ED	Electrodialysis
F	Force
f_{NaCl}	Apparent rejection of NaCl (%)
FE-SEM	Field emission scanning electron microscopy
FFT	Fast Fourier transform
G	Gravity constant

GBL	γ -Butyrolactone
gm	Gram
gm L ⁻¹	Gram per liter
h	Hour
<i>h</i>	Thickness of the cast film
HEMA	Hydroxyethyl methacrylate
HFP	Hexafluoropropylene
HMDSO	Hexamethyldisiloxane
HPC	Hydroxypropylcellulose
J_v	Permeate flux (kg m ⁻² h ⁻¹)
J_w	Water permeate flux (kg m ⁻² h ⁻¹)
<i>k</i>	Spring constant
<i>K_c</i>	Thermal conductivity
kDa	Kilodalton
LEPw	Liquid entry pressure of water
LFM	Lateral force microscopy
<i>Ma</i>	Marangoni number
<i>Mac</i>	Critical Marangoni number
MD	Membrane distillation
MF	Microfiltration
min	Minute
mL	Milliliter
MPa	Megapascal
MPD	<i>m</i> -Phenylene diamine
M_w	Molecular weight
MWCO	Molecular weight cutoff
nN	Nanonewton
NC-AFM	Non-contact mode atomic force microscopy
NF	Nanofiltration
nm	Nanometer
NMMO	<i>N</i> -Methylmorpholine- <i>N</i> -oxide
NMP	<i>N</i> -Methyl-2-pyrrolidone
NMR	Nuclear magnetic resonance
PA	Polyamide
PAN	Polyacrylonitrile
PC	Polycarbonate
PE	Polyethylene
PEEK	Poly(ether ether ketone)
PEG	Polyethylene glycol
PEI	Poly(etherimide)
PES	Poly(ether sulfone)
PET	Poly(ethylene terephthalate)
PI	Polyimide
pMDA	Pyromellitic dianhydride

PMMA	Polymethyl methacrylate
ppm	Part per million
PP	Polypropylene
PAA	Polyacrylic acid
PPO	Poly(phenylene oxide) or poly(2,6-dimethyl-1,4-phenylene oxide)
PPO-C ₆ H ₆	PPO membrane cast by PPO solution in benzene
PPO-C ₆ H ₅ Br	PPO membrane cast by PPO solution in bromobenzene
PPO-C ₆ H ₅ CH ₃	PPO membrane cast by PPO solution in toluene
PPO-C ₆ H ₅ Cl	PPO membrane cast by PPO solution in chlorobenzene
PPO-CS ₂	membrane cast by PPO solution in carbon disulfide
PPO-TCE	PPO membrane cast by PPO solution in trichloroethylene
PSf	Polysulfone
psi	Pound per square inch
PTFE	Polytetrafluoroethylene
PV	Pervaporation
PVA	Poly(vinyl alcohol)
PVDF	Poly(vinylidene fluoride)
PVP	Poly(vinylpyrrolidone)
PWP	Pure water permeation
r_p	Pore radii
r_s	Solute radii
R	Gas constant
R'	Radius of sphere
R_a	Mean roughness
Ra	Rayleigh number
Rac	Critical Rayleigh number
rms	Root mean square
RO	Reverse osmosis
s	Second
SDS	Sodium dodecyl sulfate
SEM	Scanning electron microscopy
SMMs	Surface modifying macromolecules
SPEEK	Sulfonated poly(ether ether ketone)
SPM	Scanning probe microscopy
SPPO	Sulfonated poly(phenylene oxide)
SPPOH	Sulfonated poly(phenylene oxide) in hydrogen form
SPS	Sulfonated polysulfone
STM	Scanning tunneling microscopy
T	Temperature
T_g	Transition temperature
TBP	Tributyl phosphate
TCE	Trichloroethylene
TEM	Transmission electron microscopy
TFC	Thin film composite

TFE	Tetrafluoroethylene
TIPS	Thermally induced phase separation
TM-AFM	Tapping mode atomic force microscopy
TMC	Trimesoyl chloride
TRIM	Trimethyl propane trimethacrylate
TTD	2,2,4-Trifluoro-5-trifluoromethoxy-1,3-dioxole
UF	Ultrafiltration
UV	Ultraviolet
V	Volt
VOCs	Volatile organic compounds
WAXS	Wide angle X-ray spectroscopy
wt. %	Weight percentage
XPS	X-ray photoelectron spectroscopy
Z	Difference between the highest and the lowest point within the given area (nm)

Table of Contents

1	INTRODUCTION	1
	References	3
2	SYNTHETIC MEMBRANES FOR MEMBRANE PROCESSES	5
2.1	Introduction	5
2.2	Membrane Preparation	6
2.2.1	Membranes with Symmetric Structure	6
2.2.2	Membranes with Asymmetric Structure	6
2.2.2.1	Phase Inversion Technique for Preparation of Integrally Skinned Asymmetric Membranes ...	7
2.2.2.2	Preparation of Composite Membranes	8
2.2.2.3	Membrane Surface Modification	9
2.2.3	Membrane Drying	10
2.3	Membranes for Separation Processes	11
2.3.1	Membranes for the Separation of Solutions and Solvent Mixtures	11
2.3.1.1	Reverse Osmosis Membranes	11
2.3.1.2	Nanofiltration Membranes	11
2.3.1.3	Ultrafiltration Membranes	11
2.3.1.4	Microfiltration Membranes	12
2.3.2	Membranes for Gas and Vapor Separation	12
2.3.3	Membranes for Pervaporation and Membrane Distillation .	14
2.3.3.1	Pervaporation	14
2.3.3.2	Membrane Distillation	14
2.3.4	Membranes for Other Separation Processes	15
2.3.4.1	Electrodialysis	15
2.3.4.2	Dialysis	15
2.4	Membrane Applications	15
2.5	Membrane Characterization	17
	References	18
3	ATOMIC FORCE MICROSCOPY	19
3.1	Introduction	19
3.1.1	Terms and Abbreviations	22

3.1.2	Advantages and Disadvantages of AFM	22
3.2	AFM: Principles and Applications	23
3.2.1	AFM Principles	23
3.2.2	Components of AFM Equipment	26
3.2.3	Different AFM Modes	30
3.2.3.1	Forces Working in AFM	30
3.2.3.2	AFM Modes of Operation	31
3.2.3.3	Contact Mode	32
3.2.3.4	Non-contact Mode	32
3.2.3.5	Tapping Mode	33
3.2.4	More Information about the Cantilever	34
3.2.5	Phase Imaging and Roughness Parameters	38
3.2.5.1	Image Display by AFM	38
3.2.5.2	AFM Imaging	38
3.2.5.3	Phase Imaging	38
3.2.5.4	Roughness Parameters	38
3.2.5.5	Key Measurements from AFM	39
3.3	Instructions for AFM Experiments	39
3.4	AFM Applications for Synthetic Membranes	43
3.5	Summary	43
	References	45
4	NODULAR STRUCTURE OF POLYMERS IN THE MEMBRANE	47
4.1	Introduction	47
4.1.1	Nodular Structure on the Membrane Surface: Images of Transmission Electron Microscopy and Scanning Electron Microscopy	50
4.1.2	Studies of Nodules by AFM	51
4.2	Flat Sheet Membranes	52
4.2.1	Nodular Structure of the Top Surface	52
4.2.2	Nodular Structure under the Top Surface: Plasma Treatment	62
4.2.2.1	Functionalization of Surface by Plasma Treatment	62
4.2.2.2	Plasma Etching	69
4.3	Hollow Fiber Membranes	73
4.4	Effects of Membrane Preparation and Posttreatment Parameters on the Nodular Size	84
4.5	Summary	94
	References	99
5	PORE SIZE, PORE SIZE DISTRIBUTION, AND ROUGHNESS AT THE MEMBRANE SURFACE	101
5.1	Introduction	101
5.1.1	Porous Structure of the Membrane Surface, SEM	102
5.1.2	Porous Structure of Membrane Surface, AFM	103
5.2	Pore Size and Pore Size Distribution at the Membrane Surface	104

5.2.1	Determination of Pore Size and Pore Size Distribution by AFM	104
5.2.2	Comparison with Other Methods	116
5.2.3	Effects of Membrane Preparation and Posttreatment Parameters on Pore Size and Pore Size Distribution	123
5.3	Roughness of the Membrane Surface	128
5.3.1	Roughness Parameters	128
5.3.2	Effects of Membrane Preparation and Posttreatment Parameters on Roughness Parameters	129
5.4	Summary	138
	References	138
6	CROSS-SECTIONAL AFM IMAGE	141
6.1	Introduction	141
6.2	Cross-sectional Images	141
6.2.1	Cross-sectional Images of Membranes by SEM	141
6.2.2	Cross-sectional Images of Membranes by AFM	147
6.3	Summary	154
	References	154
7	ADHESION	157
7.1	Introduction	157
7.2	Study of Adhesion Forces by AFM	160
7.3	Summary	166
	References	167
8	MEMBRANE SURFACE MORPHOLOGY AND MEMBRANE PERFORMANCE	169
8.1	Introduction	169
8.2	Relationship Between Membrane Morphology and Membrane Performance	170
8.2.1	Reverse Osmosis and Nanofiltration Membranes	170
8.2.2	Ultrafiltration Membranes	172
8.2.3	Pervaporation membranes	174
8.2.4	Gas separation membranes	174
8.2.5	Membranes for Other Membrane Processes	180
8.3	Surface Roughness and Membrane Fouling	183
8.4	AFM Study of the Dry and Wet Surfaces of the Membrane	188
8.5	Summary	189
	References	190
	SUBJECT INDEX	193