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GAS CHROMATOGRAPHY UNVEILED: A SHORT EXAMINATION OF ANALYTICAL ADVANCEMENTS

[1]Rounak Bhattacharya, [2]Rudrajit Saha, [3]Somenath Mondal, [4]Titin Debnath

Assistant Professor, School of Pharmacy, Seacom Skills University, Bolpur, India

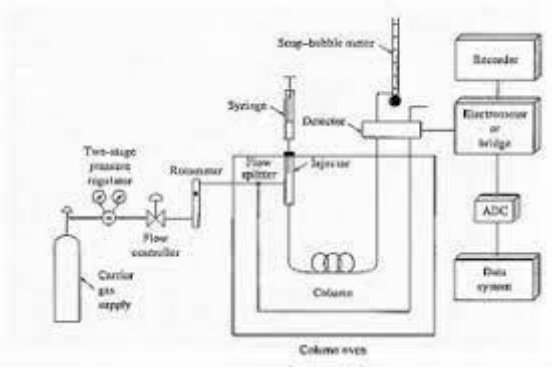
Abstract:

Gas chromatography is a kind of separation technique in which the compounds of a gaseous and volatile substance. Samples are separated on the stationary phase held in Column. In this technique, the component of a sample is dissolved in a solvent. The solvent is vaporized in order to separate the compound or analytes by distributing the sample between two phases: Stationary Phase and mobile Phase. The mobile phase is a chemically inert gas that travels the molecules of the analyte past the heated column. In gas chromatography generally, mobile phases do not interact with the analyte. If the stationary phase is solid absorbent, it is called gas-solid chromatography or if the stationary phase is liquid absorbent, it is called gas-liquid chromatography. Gas chromatography is not traditional because of the limited number of stationary phases. In gas chromatography technique gas-solid chromatography is used with only less solubility of a solute in stationary phase (it is rare). Therefore, in most cases, gas-liquid chromatography is used. It is an instrumental approach or method used forensically in drug analysis, arson, toxicology, and food analysis.

Keywords: Gas chromatography, Mobile Phase, Stationary Phase, Instrumental analysis.

INTRODUCTION

Chromatography was discovered by Russian MS Tswett in 1903. Gas chromatography is traditionally the analytical method applied to split and analyze gaseous and volatile compounds. Modern gas chromatography was invented by James and Martin in 1952. In early 1947 German Fritz Prior discovered gas-solid chromatography and in 1950 Archer JP Martine discovered gas-liquid chromatography. In 1950 the modern gas chromatography technique was first used for a split of amino acid now gas chromatography has a huge number of applications as this technique is first and has a large susceptibility. Both qualitative and quantitative analysis can be done through as chromatography. The core of gas chromatography is the column in which the split of the component takes place and therefore must be added the source and control of carrier gas pass through the column. An aim of sample launch and an aim to observe the components as they elute starting at the column's conclusion. A faster gas chromatographic split is an advantageous option. 50 years ago gas chromatography was generally used to help find food composition, come across our nutritional needs, better food quality, and launch novel foods. It's also used to determine many of the organic contamination in complex food and environment samples. The standard for the compound to be examined within gas chromatography is volatility and thermostability. [1], [3]



"Fig: -1" Schematic diagram of gas chromatography

PRINCIPLE

As a stationary phase in gas-solid chromatography, an adsorbent made of solids is employed & split takes place to past the adsorption procedure while in gas-liquid chromatography, the stationary phase contains of thin layer of non-volatile liquid bound to solid assist & split takes place to past the process of partition. Gas-liquid chromatography is the most frequently used method. The sample that is to be split is first transformed into vapors & thus alloyed with a gaseous mobile phase. If the Components of a sample that are much dissolved in the stationary phase move slower & the components that are less dissolved in the stationary phase move faster. The components are consequently split according to their partition coefficient. [1]

CHROMATOGRAPHIC CLASSIFICATION

1. Gas Chromatography (5)
   a. Gas / Liquid (partition)
   b. Gas / Solid (adsorption)
2. Liquid Chromatography
   a. Paper
   b. Column
3. Liquid / Liquid (partition)
4. Liquid / Solid (adsorption)
5. Gel permeation
6. Ion exchange
7. Thin layer

THREE MAJOR TYPES

- Gas - Solid chromatography (stationary phase: solid)
- Gas - Liquid chromatography (stationary phase: immobilized liquid)
- Gas - Bonded phase (relatively new)

BASIC TERMS

- Retention Time (tR): The total time that a compound spends in both the mobile phase and the stationary phase i.e., the time between sample injection and an analytical peak arriving at a detector at the end of the column.
- Capacity Factor (or Partition Ratio) (k'): The ratio of the mass of the compound in the stationary phase similar to the mass of the compound in the mobile phase.
- Phase Ratio (b): The phase ratio is similar to the column diameter and the film thickness of the stationary phase. The phase ratio is unitless and also constant for a particular column.
- Distribution Constant (KD): The distribution constant is a ratio of the concentration of a compound in the stationary phase parallel to the concentration of the compound in the mobile phase.
- Selectivity (or Separation Factor) (α): It is a ratio of the measurement factors of two peaks. The higher the selectivity, the more will be the split between two compounds or peaks.
- Linear Velocity (u): It is the speed of flow at which the carrier gas or mobile phase moves through the column.
- Efficiency: It is related to the number of compounds that can be split by the column.

WORKING PRINCIPLE OF GC

Gas Chromatography is an instrument that works to split, recognize, and quantitatively measure volatile compounds with boiling points up to 350 C or 400C. A managed gas moves on the liquid interface functioning as the mobile phase in partition chromatography (GC), while the thin film of liquid is clenched in a solid support that serves as a stationary phase. The operating temperature of the GC column is controlled based on the elements that are being divided and dissolved. Some restrictions of this technique include the necessity of the compounds being determined to be a fixed volatile to some area; and the dependency of temperature restriction on the column. Non-volatile polar substances must be obtained to a less polar form before an analysis. GC also involves maximum temperature in the process; thus, It is impossible to prevent compounds from spoiling. Prior to the procedure starting, a few items must be checked, such as the form of the sample, choice of column, and also the carrier gas, oven temperature, and evaporation in case of injections. A sample pushed to the instrument will be transformed into a gaseous state and carried by a carrier gas. The split of the components will take place at the column and will be determined by the detector. GC supplies both qualitative and quantitative very important and useful analytical data. The different components of the sample split & eluded at different & specific times which is called retention time. Retention time is identified by each component reaching the component at a natural time. [3], [4]

INSTRUMENTATION

Mainly, all the chromatographs (GSC or GLC) consist of six basic components:

1. Sample injection system: A sample port is required for launching the sample at the head of the column. An amount of sample is pushed through a rubber septum and into the vaporization compartment using a controlled tiny syringe. A specimen splitter is employed to route extra samples to garbage because the majority of splits only demand a tiny portion of the initial sample amount. Commercial gas chromatographs necessitate the use of both split and split-less injections when alternating between packed columns and capillary columns. To transfer the specimen into the column, the vaporization compartment is primarily raised to a temperature 50°C over the sample's minimum boiling point. The sample is then combined using the gas that acts as a carrier.
2. Carrier Gas: A carrier gas plays an essential role in GC. It should be slow, dry & free of oxygen. Helium, Nitrogen, argon & hydrogen gases are likely to be used as carrier gases depending upon the desired performance & detector being used. Carrier gas is supplied at high pressure & is moved to the instrument at a fast & reproducible rate.

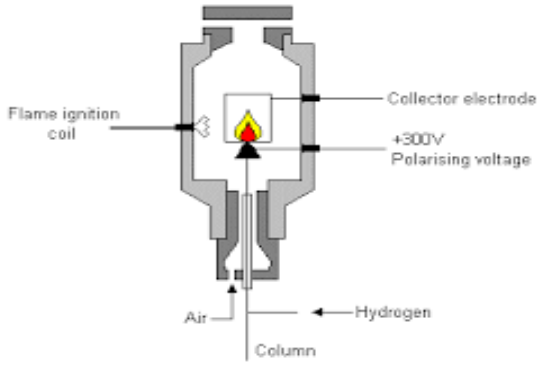
3. Separation column: Open tubular columns or capillary columns & packed columns both are used in GC. Wall-coated open tubular (WCOT) columns are the first kind of capillary columns, while support-coated open tubular (SCOT) columns are the second kind. WCOT columns have a fine layer of the stationary phase coated along the column walls. In SCOT columns, the column walls are first coated with a fine layer of adsorbent solid, such as Earth with diatoms, a substance that consists of single-celled, sea-plant skeletons. The adsorbent solid is then examined with the liquid stationary phase. While SCOT columns are able to hold a much greater volume of stationary phase than a WCOT column due to their greater sample capacity, WCOT columns still have much more column efficiencies. One of the most favorable types of capillary columns is called the coated Fused Silica open tubular column.

4. Column Oven or Thermostat Chambers: The thermostat oven is there to manage the temperature of the column to conduct exact work. The oven can be handled in two manners: isothermal programming and temperature programming. When using isothermal programming, the column's temperature is maintained throughout the whole split. In the temperature programming method, the column temperature is either increased continuously or in steps as the split progresses.

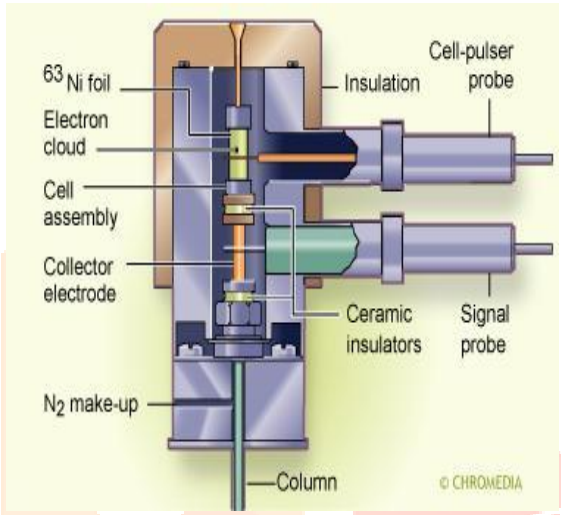
5. Detectors: There are many types of detectors used in GC: Mass Spectrometer, Flame ionization detector (FID), Electron capture detector (ECD), Thermal conductivity detector (TCD), Atomic emission detector (AED), Photoionization detector (PID), Nitrogen-phosphorus Detector (NPD), Mass Spectrometers. The detector is present at the end of the column & gives the quantitative measurement of the components of the mixture as they elute in amalgamation with the carrier gas.

Table 1: Types of detectors

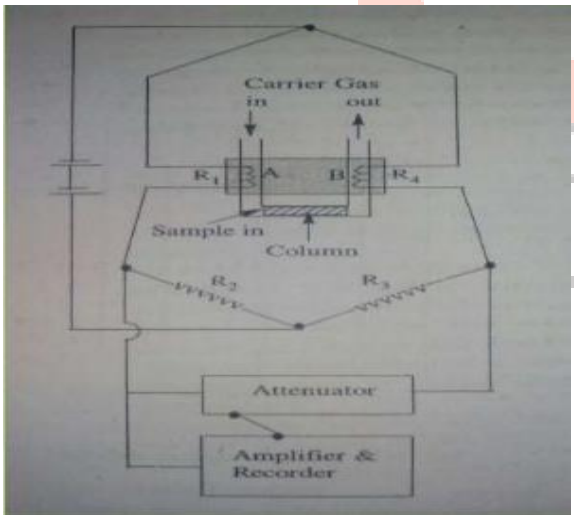
SL NO.	Detector	Application	Notes
1	TCD	Everything	Easy to operate, only one gas required
2	FID	Hydrocarbons	Very linear, required fuel gas
3	NPD	Nitrogen	Hard to operate, required fuel gas
4	ECD	Nitro	Radiation source, two gases
5	MS	Almost everything	Sensitive



"Fig: -2" Flame Ionisation Detector



"Fig: -3" ECD



"Fig: -4" TCD

6. Amplification & Recorder system: These are the last parts of the GC apparatus. These are used to indicate that information from the detector should be recorded. These use special electronic circuits that process & amplify the signals so as to show in a penetrable graphical format that flows several peaks of the constituents of the sample under analysis. Flow regulators & flow meters are also there in GC to deliver the carrier gas with constant pressure & flow rate. [1], [5]

CHROMATOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

The number of peaks identified that the number of components present in the given sample, the notification of the components are identified by their attribute retention times & the amount of the component in a given sample is notified by the area under the peaks. [1], [6]

APPLICATIONS

1. GC has a vast range of employment in various fields. It also has medicinal & pharmaceutical employment. It may be used in food, beverage, flavour & fragrance analysis. It is also used in environmental analysis and monitoring. It is used to identify dope of drugs. In forensics, it is used in the matter of firing, identification of body fluids, the testing of fibre, blood alcohol, and identification of poisons, and pesticides. It is also helpful in Safety and chemical warfare agent identification.
2. The application of gas chromatography to environmental analysis: GC has a remarkable role in the determination & evaluation of pollutants of the environment. Capillary GC is used in scanning various classes of persistent organic contaminants in air, water, and soils. Many organic pollutant groups are present like volatile organic compounds (VOCs); naphthalene and alkanes, organochlorine pesticides, etc. [1], [7]
3. Application of gas chromatography in food analysis: Gas chromatography (GC) has a remarkable role in food analysis. It has both Quantitative and qualitative roles in the identification of food composition, natural products, food additives, flavors, and aroma components, a variety of transformation products and contaminants, such as pesticides, fumigants, environmental pollutants, natural toxins, veterinary drugs, and packaging materials are done by this method. [1], [8]
4. Application of GC in catalysis: Identification of the physicochemical feature of solid catalysts and adsorbents, catalyst estimation and kinetics of catalytic reactions, and general study of catalytic reactions are done under chromatographic conditions. GC is 110 times longer to be regarded merely as an analytical tool for the quick identification of product composition but as a crucial part of an integrated program of kinetic analysis, including the identification of reaction tools as well as diffusional constants. GC is also used in the study of catalysis in two ways. In the first, the catalyst study is packed in a chromatographic column, and the features are estimated by the chromatographic parameters such as retention time, retention volume, bandwidth and shape, and behavior of the chromatographic peak; while in the second, a microreactor, in which a catalytic reaction or certain calculation on the catalyst are carried out, is directly connected to the chromatographic system whose function is to provide a rapid analysis of feed and products of the catalytic process.[1],[9]
5. GC analysis of xylene isomers: Xylene isomers are ambassadors to many chemicals like: - o-xylene is a precursor for phallic anhydride. The cresol isomers are ambassadors to many chemicals. [1], [10]
6. GC analysis of petroleum products: The petroleum products like: - jet fuel petrol, diesel, and kerosene are also identified by GC. [10]
7. Application of GC to the qualitative & quantitative Copolyimide analysis [1]

ADVANTAGES OF GC PERFORMANCE

The optimum qualitative and quantitative GC analysis of convoluted mixtures presupposes:

(1) Quality or fine resolution, as shown by sharp and even peaks. [3]

(2) High repeatability and reliability of retention times. [4]

(3) High veracity and accuracy in quantitation primarily based on peak space quantification

(4) Minimum thermal and chemical action disintegrate of sensitive sample components. [3]

(5) The use of fused-silica capillary columns with developed surface immobility, thermal stability, and resolution. [3], [4]

(6) The carrier gas, usually part of He, and its purity will together have an effect on the resolution. [4]

DEVELOPMENT OF GC METHOD

The technique is grown for new products when no official technique is available. An alternate technique for existing products is to reduce the cost and time for better attention and potency. Many steps are being followed for GC method improvement like: -

1. Column selection

2. Carrier gas selection

3. Temperature programming

4. Injector temperature and detector temperature

Using the following steps develop the techniques: - Properly known Physicochemical properties of the sample. Identification of the proper chromatographic conditions. Sample study to prepare. Method to optimization. Method to validation. [3], [11], [12], [13]

CONCLUSION:

Gas Chromatography is a more important analytical method for qualitative and measuring during a big selection of application areas. It is fast, supplies a high peak capability, is sensitive, and permits combination with a wide variety of selective measurement ways as well as mass spectrum analysis. However, the application space of GC is confined as a result the compounds that need to be examined must be adequately volatile and thermally inert. Miscellaneous molecules don't meet these needs and thus are not amenable to direct GC analysis. Recent analysis has ensured that more advanced chromatographic columns and sample processing techniques significantly impact the development of the molecular applicability variety of GC. The methods utilized to hold the conversion of (macro)molecules into smaller species and approach to cut back the polarity of molecules.

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17. Hua-Li Zuo1, Feng-Qing Yang1, Wei-Hua Huang2 and Zhi-Ning Xia1 1 School of Chemistry and Chemical Engineering, Chongqing University, Chongqing 400030, China, and 2 Institute of Clinical Pharmacology, Hunan Key Laboratory of Pharmacogenetics, Central South University, Changsha 410078, China
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