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CORRELATION BETWEEN SURFACE FREE ENERGY AND SURFACE CONSTITUTION

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Correlation Between Surface Free Energy and Surface Constitution

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Abstract. Self-assembled monolayers (SAMs) of alkylsiloxanes on elastomeric PDMS (polydimethylsiloxane) were used as model systems to study interactions between surfaces. Surface free energies (γ_{sv}) of these chemically modified surfaces were estimated by measuring the deformations that resulted from the contact between small semispherical lenses and flat sheets of the elastomer under controlled loads. The measured surface free energies correlated with the surface chemical compositions of the SAMs and were commensurate with the values estimated from the measurements of contact angles. This study provides, for the first time, direct experimental evidence for the validity of estimates of the surface free energies of low-energy solids obtained from contact angles.

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Measurement of contact angles is a technique that is highly sensitive to the composition and properties of surfaces (1). The measured quantities are related to the surface and interfacial free energies via Young's equation (2) (eq 1).

$$\gamma_{sv} = \gamma_{lv} \cos \theta + \gamma_{sl} \quad (1)$$

Here the system is assumed to be at thermodynamic equilibrium, and γ_{lv} , γ_{sv} and γ_{sl} stand for the surface and interfacial free energies of the liquid-vapor, solid-vapor and solid-liquid interfaces. One use of this equation is to estimate γ_{sv} -- a fundamental thermodynamic state parameter characterizing the surface of materials. Although γ_{lv} can be determined directly, γ_{sl} cannot, in general. Thus there have been several efforts to express γ_{sl} in terms of γ_{sv} and γ_{lv} in order to reduce the number of unknowns in Young's equation. This objective has been best achieved (3) by treatments that assume specific forms for the intermolecular forces that operate across condensed phase boundaries. For systems where the London dispersion interactions are prominent, the most commonly used generalization of Young's equation is as shown in eq 2 (3).

$$\gamma_{sv} = \gamma_{lv} (1 + \cos \theta)^2 / 4 \quad (2)$$

Equation 2 occupies a central position in estimating the surface free energies of low-energy solids. Because the values of γ_{sv} of solids cannot, in general, be measured directly (4), no rigorous comparison between predicted and experimental values validate this equation. In this paper, we present an experimental system based on a methodology developed earlier by Johnson,

Kendall and Roberts (5), that allowed direct estimation of the surface free energies of several model low-energy surfaces. This system provides a suitable experimental basis for systematic evaluation of eq 2.

The basic protocol of these measurements is to study spreading occurring at the interface between two elastomeric solids. Solids, like liquids, have a tendency to spread on other solids. The driving force for this spreading, like that on solid-liquid interfaces, is the minimization of the interfacial free energies. Thus when a curved solid is brought into contact with a flat substrate, a deformation occurs at the zone of contact. The magnitude of this deformation is determined by the balance of the interfacial and elastic energies. If the elastic constants of the materials are known, the interfacial energies can be estimated directly from contact deformations (5-12). The materials used in these experiments must be compliant and have very smooth surfaces. Elastomeric PDMS, as we have shown in earlier publications (12,13), meets these requirements well and was thus the polymer of choice for our contact deformation experiments.

The basic experimental system (12) is comprised of a semispherical lens and a flat sheet of elastomeric PDMS (Dow Corning Syl-170). The surfaces of both lens and sheet were modified chemically using the technology of self-assembled organic monolayers (12-14). In a typical experiment (Figure 1), the lens was slowly brought into contact with the flat sheet, and an external load was then applied. A spontaneous deformation occurred at the contact zone as soon as the lens touched the flat sheet (Figure 2). This deformation increased in response to the external loads. Deformation was measured as a function of applied load.

At the end of the compressive cycle, the load was decreased stepwise and contact deformations were measured again, until the lens completely separated from the flat sheet. All measurements were made under ambient conditions. The data obtained from these load-deformation studies were analyzed (15) using eq 3 to estimate γ_{sv} for the surface of the elastomer.

$$a^3 = (R/K) \{ P + 6\pi R\gamma_{sv} + [12\pi R P \gamma_{sv} + (6\pi R \gamma_{sv})^2]^{0.5} \} \quad (3)$$

In this equation, a (cm) is the radius of the contact deformation, R (cm) is the radius of curvature of the lens, P (dynes) is the external load and K (dynes/cm²) is the composite modulus. In our studies, values of K clustered around 5×10^6 dynes/cm².

We controlled the chemical composition of the surface of PDMS using a procedure described previously (12,16). Exposure of PDMS to an oxygen plasma generated a thin (<50 Å by X-ray photoelectron spectroscopy, XPS) silica-like layer (17) on its surface. We denote this surface as PDMS^{ox}. Chemisorption of alkyltrichlorosilanes ($\text{Cl}_3\text{Si}(\text{CH}_2)_n\text{R}$) onto PDMS^{ox} produced monolayers of the corresponding alkylsiloxanes. By varying the head group functionalities (R) of these silanes, the chemical compositions of the surface of the PDMS lens and sheet could be controlled. Silanes used to modify PDMS^{ox} were $\text{Cl}_3\text{Si}(\text{CH}_2)_{10}\text{CH}_3$, $\text{Cl}_3\text{Si}(\text{CH}_2)_2(\text{CF}_2)_7\text{CF}_3$, $\text{Cl}_3\text{Si}(\text{CH}_2)_{11}\text{OCH}_3$, $\text{Cl}_3\text{Si}(\text{CH}_2)_{11}\text{OCOCH}_3$ and $\text{Cl}_3\text{Si}(\text{CH}_2)_{11}\text{Br}$. We denote the material produced by reaction of PDMS^{ox} and a chlorosilane as PDMS^{ox}- $\text{O}_3\text{Si}(\text{CH}_2)_n\text{R}$. XPS verified the presence of the relevant functional groups on the monolayer-coated PDMS surfaces. One remarkable feature of these

surfaces was that they all exhibited negligible hysteresis (18) in contact angles, except for the fluorocarbon surface, which exhibited large hysteresis with diiodomethane (Table I). The observation of low hysteresis was particularly important in our studies, because it suggested that the measured contact angles are close to equilibrium values, and that Young's equation should be valid.

The result of a typical load-deformation study (19) is shown in Figure 3. There was generally finite but small hysteresis in contact deformations as obtained from the compression and decompression cycles. This hysteresis resulted in two different values of γ_{sv} for a specific surface. In Table I, we present these values and compare them with the values obtained from the contact angles of hexadecane and diiodomethane. For the methyl and perfluoromethyl surfaces, we also report the surface free energies obtained from the contact angles of a fluorocarbon liquid -- perfluorodecalin. In all cases, we used the average of the advancing and receding contact angles to estimate γ_{sv} .

The data tabulated in Table I show that small variations in the chemical composition of the alkylsiloxane monolayers have a profound effect on adhesion of these surfaces and that the values of γ_{sv} measured using equation 3 agree remarkably well with those estimated from contact angles. There are, however, several details about these data that deserve comment. First, we note that the surface free energies of the methyl surface as estimated from the contact angles of hexadecane and diiodomethane are higher than those obtained with the contact angle of perfluorodecalin. Conversely, the surface free energy (20) of the fluorocarbon surface as obtained from the contact angle of hexadecane is

Table I. Contact Angles ($^{\circ}$) of Several Liquids on Functionalized PDMS and Surface Free Energies (ergs/cm 2) of These Systems.

	θ_a	HD	θ_r	HD	θ_a	PFD	θ_r	PFD	θ_a	DM	θ_r	DM	γ_{sv}^{com}	γ_{sv}^{decom}	γ_{sv}^{HD}	γ_{sv}^{PFD}	γ_{sv}^{DM}
PDMSOx-O $_3$ Si(CH $_2$) $_2$ (CF $_2$) $_7$ CF $_3$	71	68	35	35	98	67	67	15.5	16.5	12.7	15.0	-					
PDMSOx-O $_3$ Si(CH $_2$) $_{10}$ CH $_3$	41	40	37	37	73	73	73	19.5	22.0	21.5	14.7	20.6					
PDMSOx-O $_3$ Si(CH $_2$) $_{11}$ OCH $_3$	24	20	-	-	55	54	54	26.5	27.0	25.7	-	30.8					
PDMSOx-O $_3$ Si(CH $_2$) $_{11}$ OCOCH $_3$	0	0	-	-	45	45	45	32.5	33.5	-	-	36.0					
PDMSOx-O $_3$ Si(CH $_2$) $_{11}$ Br	0	0	-	-	42	40	40	36.0	37.5	-	-	37.9					

θ_a and θ_r represent advancing and receding contact angles respectively. HD, PFD, and DM stand for hexadecane (HD), perfluorodecalin (PFD), and diiodomethane (DM) respectively. The surface tensions of these three liquids are: 27.7 dynes/cm (HD), 18.2 dynes/cm (PFD), and 49.3 dynes/cm (DM). γ_{sv}^{com} and γ_{sv}^{decom} indicate the surface energy values obtained from compression and decompression experiments respectively. γ_{sv}^i indicates the surface energy value as obtained from contact angle measurements using liquid i. The errors in estimating γ_{sv} values were less than 1 ergs/cm 2 .

lower than that obtained using perfluorodecalin. The values of γ_{sv} measured directly of the methyl surface certainly agree well with those obtained from the contact angles of hexadecane and diiodomethane but not with that obtained using a fluorocarbon liquid. The situation becomes reversed for the fluorocarbon surface (see Table I).

For PDMS^{OX}-O₃Si(CH₂)₁₁OCH₃, the surface free energy as obtained from the contact angle of hexadecane is somewhat lower than that obtained from the contact angle of diiodomethane. Although the reason for this discrepancy is not clear, it is plausible that diiodomethane has a greater ability to sense underlying functional groups (i.e., ether groups) than does hexadecane (21). This observation is similar to that reported for the self-assembled monolayers of ω -mercaptoethers (HS(CH₂)₁₆O(CH₂)_nCH₃; n = 0-5) on gold, where hexadecane was inferred to be a more surface sensitive probe liquid than water and glycerol (22). The agreement between the values of γ_{sv} for the methyl ether surface (R = OCH₃) obtained from the contact angle of hexadecane and direct measurement indicates that adhesion between solids is very surface sensitive (23). The methyl ester surface (R = CO₂CH₃) was wettable by hexadecane, indicating the head group region of this surface is significantly disordered and populated with the carbonyl groups. The measured surface free energy of this surface is consequently higher than that of the methyl ether surface and is in reasonable agreement with the estimate based on the contact angle of diiodomethane. A similar high wettability (and thus high surface energy) is also observed for the surface containing bromide groups (R = Br).

These studies demonstrate that self-assembled alkylsiloxane monolayers on PDMS are excellent model systems for studying adhesion between surfaces. The method described here -- based on deformations in a compliant polymeric lens and sheet -- is sensitive to small variations in the compositions of the surface. In terms of analyzing surface energetics, it is complementary to measuring contact angles. Although, we have so far studied systems that interact primarily via London - van der Waals forces, the method can also be used to investigate more complex interfacial interactions (for example H-bonding) by incorporating relevant functional groups on the surface of the PDMS (24).

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15. The original JKR equation was expressed in terms of W , the work of adhesion. For two similar surfaces, W is equal to $2\gamma_{sv}$ and thus we have expressed JKR equation in terms of γ_{sv} .
16. The conditions used for silanization of PDMS^{OX} were slightly different from those reported in ref. 12. Under new conditions, desiccators containing paraffin oil solutions of silanes were evacuated to about 0.001 torr for 30 min. Oxidized PDMS samples were placed, as usual, a. about 1.5 cm from the oil level. The concentrations of silanes were 60 μ l of silane per 3 g of paraffin oil, except for the fluoroalkylsilane for which the concentration was 5 μ l silane per 3 g of paraffin oil. Using these conditions, we could consistently obtain surfaces exhibiting low hysteresis.
17. The exact nature of the plasma-oxidized surface of PDMS is unclear. Most reports, however, agree that it contains silanol groups. For instance, see: D. W. Fakes, M. C. Davies, A. Brown, J. M. Newton, Surf. Interface Sci. 13, 233 (1988); D. W. Fakes, J. M. Newton, J. M. Watts, M. J. Edgell,

Surf. Interface Sci. 10, 416 (1987); M. Morra, E. Occhiello, R. Marola, R. Garbassi, P. Humphrey, D. Johnson, J. Colloid Interface Sci. 137, 11 (1990).

18. The methyl ether surface, when freshly formed, exhibited significant hystereses in both contact angles and contact deformations (not reported here). It was necessary to rinse this surface in decalin, ethanol, and water in order to minimize hysteresis.
19. The load-deformation and contact angle measurements were performed on different samples taken from the same batch.
20. The origin of the large hysteresis of diiodomethane on the fluorocarbon surface is not clear. Because of the high hysteresis, we did not use this liquid to calculate γ_{sv} of the fluorocarbon surface.
21. These differences cannot be explained on the basis of the surface swelling, because neither hexadecane nor diiodomethane swell monolayer-coated PDMS.
22. C. D. Bain, G. M. Whitesides, J. Am. Chem. Soc. 110, 334 (1988). The term "high surface sensitivity" is used here loosely. Whether the liquids (water, glycerol, or diiodomethane) sense the underlying functional groups by long-range forces or by perturbing the structure of the surface is not clear.
23. High surface sensitivity of adhesion has also been demonstrated recently by Burnham et. al. [N. A. Burnham, D. D. Dominguez, R. L. Mowery, R. J. Colton, Phys. Rev. Lett. 64, 1931 (1990)]. Using an atomic force microscope, these authors have measured the force between tungsten and different surfaces, including Langmuir-Blodgett films of stearic acid and ω,ω,ω -trifluorostearic acid deposited on Al/Al_2O_3 . In these studies the

adhesion force between tungsten and monolayer-coated alumina changed remarkably when the surface composition varied from $-\text{CH}_3$ to $-\text{CF}_3$.

24. M. K. Chaudhury, unpublished results.

Figure Captions.

Figure 1. Contact between a semispherical lens and flat sheet of PDMS results in the formation of a circular region of radius a . For clarity, the area of contact is exaggerated. The surfaces of both the lens and flat sheets were modified by using self-assembled alkylsiloxane monolayers (SAM). In a typical load-deformation experiment, the radius of the lens was about 1 mm and the thickness of the flat sheet was about 1.5 mm.

Figure 2. Photomicrograph showing the contact area (innermost circle) resulting from the contact between a lens ($R = 0.72$ mm) and a flat sheet of $\text{PDMS}^{\text{OX}}\text{-O}_3\text{Si}(\text{CH}_2)_{10}\text{CH}_3$ under zero load. The radius of contact deformation was about $92\text{ }\mu\text{m}$.

Figure 3. Plots of a^3 against P showing weak hysteresis for the surface $\text{PDMS}^{\text{OX}}\text{-O}_3\text{Si}(\text{CH}_2)_{10}\text{CH}_3$. The radius of the lens was .97 mm. The open circles represent the data obtained from compressive loads and the closed circles represent the data obtained from decompressive loads. The solid lines in both plots are predicted from eq 3.

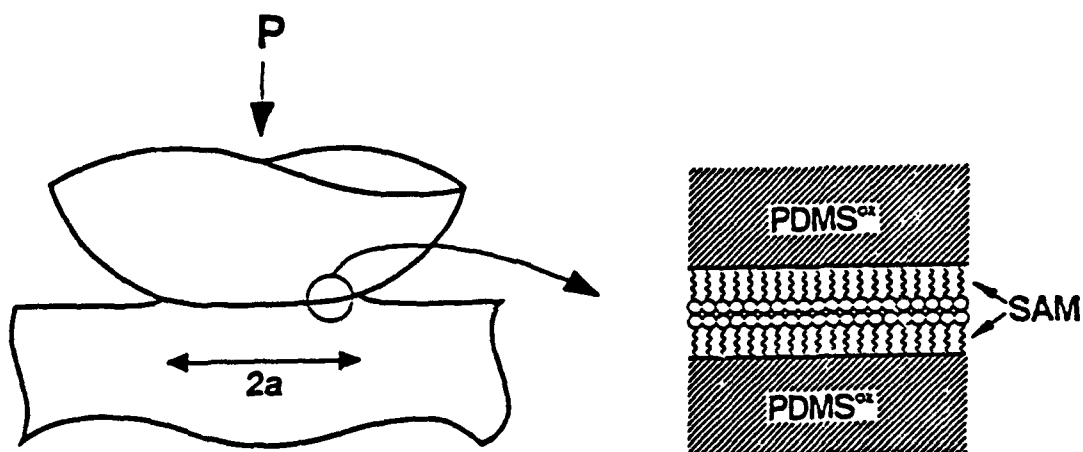


Fig 1

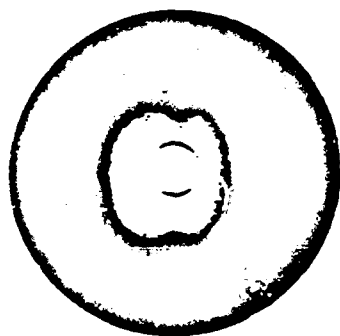


Fig 2

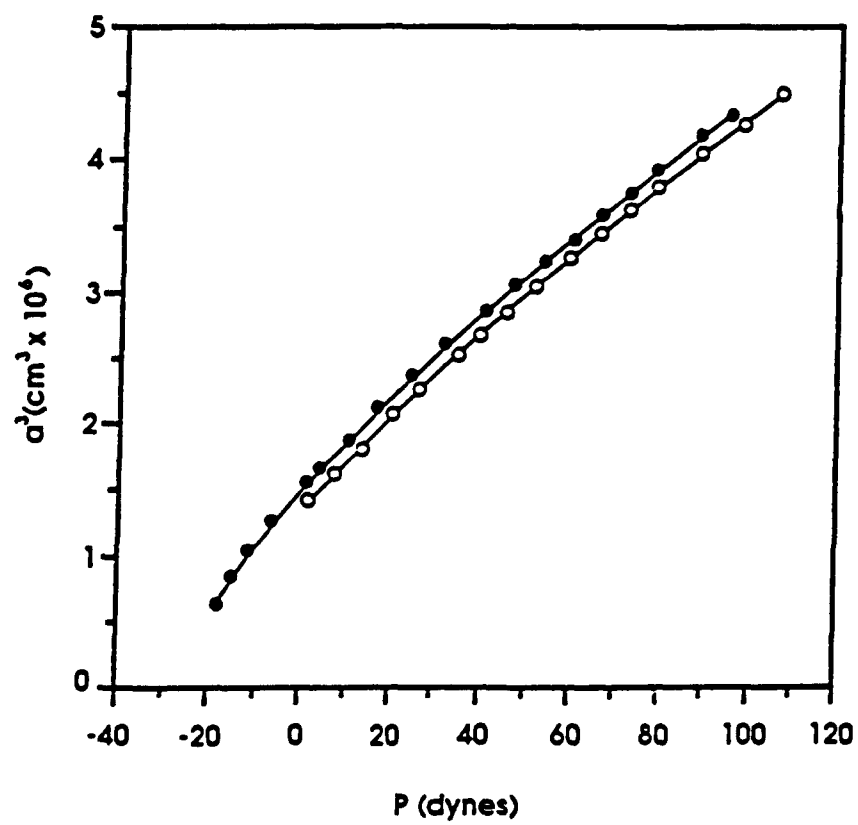


Fig 3