



Lectures of Molecular Spectroscopy  
Second Semester, Scholar year 2025-2026  
Prof. Dr. Abbas A-Ali Drea

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## **Lecture No. 3: Infrared Spectroscopy**

### **1-Introduction.**

IR technique gives information about the structure of a chemical compounds and it's an analytical tool to assess the purity of a compound.

#### **Theirs a mains points in IR- spectroscopy:**

- Chemical bond is electrical combination between two electrical charged compartments (energetic process).
- The rotational- vibrational motions occurs spontaneously through center of mass as soon as chemical bond formation.
- The permanent electric dipole moment is formed onto the chemical species due to differences in electrical charge distribution along the chemical bonds.
- Interaction between a permanent electric dipole moment of active Species and electrical force field of light produced energy absorption and excitation occurs in higher vibration energy levels.
- Rotational transitions occur between two vibrational energy level of transition.

The IR region is dived into three regions: the near, mid, and far IR as shown in figure 1. The mid IR region is of greatest practical using.

Region	Wavelength ( $\lambda$ ) Range, $\mu\text{m}$	Wavenumber ( $\bar{\nu}$ ) Range, $\text{cm}^{-1}$	Frequency ( $\nu$ ) Range, Hz
Near	0.78 to 2.5	12,800 to 4000	$3.8 \times 10^{14}$ to $1.2 \times 10^{14}$
Middle	2.5 to 50	4000 to 200	$1.2 \times 10^{14}$ to $6.0 \times 10^{12}$
Far	50 to 1000	200 to 10	$6.0 \times 10^{12}$ to $3.0 \times 10^{11}$
Most used	2.5 to 15	4000 to 670	$1.2 \times 10^{14}$ to $2.0 \times 10^{13}$

Figure 1. Classification of infrared regions.

## **2-Theory of Infrared Absorption.**

- The molecules must be polar to be active infrared, because they possess a permanent dipole moment.
- To absorb IR, the vibrations or rotations within a molecule must cause a net change in the dipole moment of the molecule.
- The alternating electrical field of the radiation interacts with fluctuations in the dipole moment of the chemical bond.
- If the frequency of the radiation matches, the vibrational frequency of the molecule then radiation will be absorbed, causing a change in the amplitude of molecular vibration.

### **Conditions IR absorbance to occur:**

- A change in the dipole moment of the *chemical bond* that allows interaction with the alternating electrical component of the IR radiation wave. (**Symmetric molecules (or bonds) do not absorb IR radiation since there is no dipole moment.**)
- The radiation frequency matches the natural frequency of the vibration (**the IR photon energy is absorbed and the amplitude of the vibration increases**).

### **3-Molecular transitions**

There are three main types of molecular transitions, which occur in IR

- Rotational transitions

When an asymmetric molecule rotates about its center of mass, the dipole moment seems to fluctuate.  $\Delta E$  for these transitions correspond to  $n < 100 \text{ cm}^{-1}$ . Quite low energy, show as sharp lines that subdivide vibrational peaks in gas phase spectra.

- Vibrational-rotational transitions

Complex transitions that arise from changes in the molecular dipole moment due to the combination of a bond vibration and molecular rotation.

- Vibrational transitions

The most important transitions observed in qualitative mid-IR spectroscopy.

### **4- Molecular Vibrations:**

There are two main types of molecular vibrations, which are stretching and bending vibrations, since actual case of bond lengths and angles represent the **average positions** about which atoms vibrate.

- A molecule consisting of  $n$  atoms has a total of  $3n$  degrees of freedom, corresponding to the Cartesian coordinates of each atom in the molecule.
- A nonlinear molecule, has 3 of these degrees are rotational and 3 are translational and the remaining corresponds to fundamental vibrations;
- A linear molecule, has 2 degrees are rotational and 3 are translational.

The net number of fundamental vibrations for nonlinear and linear molecules is therefore:

*Molecular degrees of freedom (nonlinear  $3n - 6$ ) and (linear  $3n - 5$ )*

The symmetrical stretch of  $\text{CO}_2$  is inactive in the IR because this vibration produces no change in the dipole moment of the molecule. In order to be

IR active, a vibration must cause a change in the dipole moment of the molecule.\*(The reason for this involves the mechanism by which the photon transfers its energy to the molecule.

**((The dipole moment is define as the product of the charge and the distance of separation. The distance has direction; therefore, dipole moments are vectors.))** Of the following linear molecules, carbon monoxide and iodine chloride absorb IR radiation, while hydrogen, nitrogen, and chlorine do not. In general, the larger the dipole change, the stronger the intensity of the band in an IR spectrum.



Only two IR bands ( $2350$  and  $666\text{ cm}^{-1}$ ) are found for carbon dioxide, instead of four corresponding to the four fundamental vibrations. Carbon dioxide is an example of why one does not always see as many bands as implied by our simple calculation. In the case of  $CO_2$ , two bands are degenerate, and one vibration does not cause a change in dipole moment.

**Other reasons why fewer than the theoretical number of IR bands are include:**

- 1- An absorption is not in the  $4000-400\text{ cm}^{-1}$  range.
- 2- An absorption is too weak to observe.
- 3- Absorptions are too close to each other to be resolved on the instrument.
- 4- Weak bands, which are overtones or combinations of fundamental vibrations, are observe.

The stretching and bending vibrations for the important organic group,  $-CH_2-$ , are illustrated in Figure .2 (The  $3n-6$  rule does not apply since the  $-CH_2-$  group represents only a portion of a molecule.) Note that bending

vibrations occur at lower frequencies than corresponding stretching vibrations.

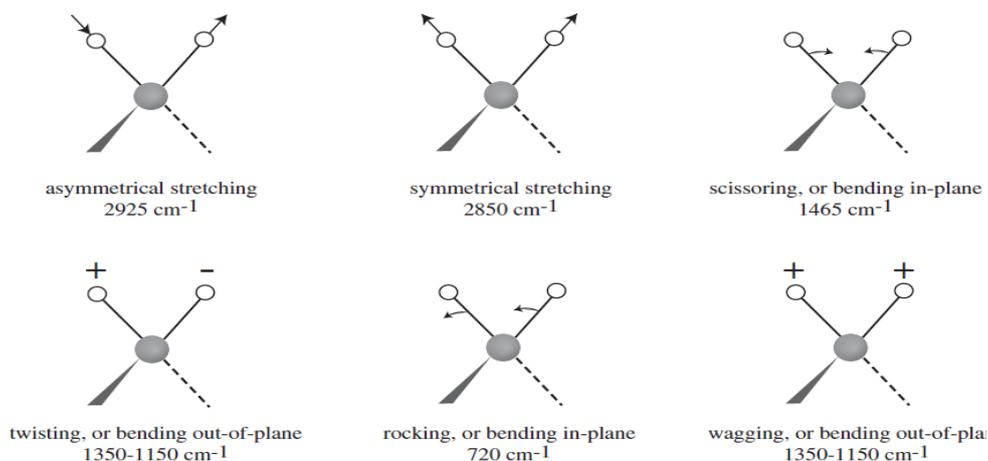


Figure 2. Stretching and bending vibrational modes for a CH<sub>2</sub> group.

### 5- Stretching Vibrations.

Hooke's Law can approximate the stretching frequency of a bond. In this approximation, two atoms and the connecting bond are treated as a simple harmonic oscillator composed of two masses (atoms) joined by a spring. The energy curve for a simple harmonic oscillator is illustrate in Figure 3. According to Hooke's law, the frequency of the vibration of the spring is relate to the mass and the force constant of the spring,  $k$ , by the following formula

$$\nu = \frac{1}{2\pi} \cdot \sqrt{\frac{k}{\mu}}$$

Where  $k$  is the force constant  $\mu$  is the reduced mass  $\nu$  is the frequency of the vibration. In the classical harmonic oscillator,

$$E = 1/2kx^2$$

Where  $x$  is the displacement of the spring.

The energy or frequency is dependent on how far one stretches or compressed the spring, which can be any value. If this simple model were true, a molecule could absorb energy of any wavelength.

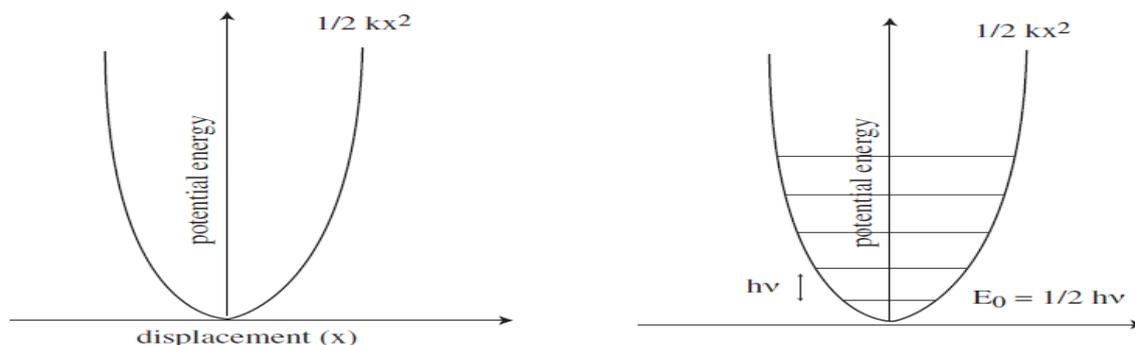


Figure 3. Energy curve for a vibrating spring (left) and energy constrained to quantum mechanical model (right).

However, vibrational motion is quantized, it must follow the rules of quantum mechanics, and the only transitions which are allowed fit the following formula:  $E_v = (v + \frac{1}{2})h\nu$

Where  $\nu$  is the frequency of the vibration and  $v$  is the vibration quantum number (0, 1, 2, 3, ...).

$$E_v = (v + \frac{1}{2})\omega_{osc} \text{ by joule units.}$$

$$\mathcal{E}_v = E/hC = (v + \frac{1}{2})\omega_{osc}^- \text{ by } \text{Cm}^{-1}$$

$\omega_{osc}^-$  is oscillator frequency, selection rule is  $\Delta v = \pm 1$ .

The lowest energy level is  $E_0 = 1/2 h\nu$ , the next highest is  $E_1 = 3/2 h\nu$ . According to the selection rule, only transitions to the next energy level are allowed; therefore, molecules will absorb an amount of energy equal to  $3/2 - 1/2 h\nu$  or  $h\nu$ . This rule is not inflexible, and occasionally transitions of  $2 h\nu$ ,  $3 h\nu$ , or higher are observed. These correspond to bands called overtones in an IR spectrum. They are of lower intensity than the fundamental vibration bands.

A molecule is actually an inharmonic oscillator. As inter atomic distance increases, the energy reaches a maximum, as seen in Figure 5. Note how the energy levels become more closely spaced with increasing inter atomic distance in the inharmonic oscillator. The allowed transitions,  $h\nu$ , become smaller in energy. Therefore, overtones can be lower in energy than predicted by the harmonic oscillator theory. The following formula is derived from Hooke's law. For the case of a diatomic molecule, ( $\nu$  has been substituted for  $\nu$ , recall that  $\nu = c\nu$  from equations).

The energy value for this modulation is

$$\mathcal{E}_v = E/hC = (v + \frac{1}{2})\omega_e^- - (v + \frac{1}{2})^2\omega_e^- \cdot x_e - (v + \frac{1}{2})^3\omega_e^- \cdot x_e \dots \text{exc by } \text{Cm}^{-1}$$

Since  $\omega_e$  is oscillator frequency, and  $\chi_e$  is a harmonic constant with value did not exceeded 0.01. Selection rule for corrected state is involved long transition, selection rule is  $\Delta v = \bar{+1}, \bar{+2}, \bar{+3}, \bar{+4}, \dots$

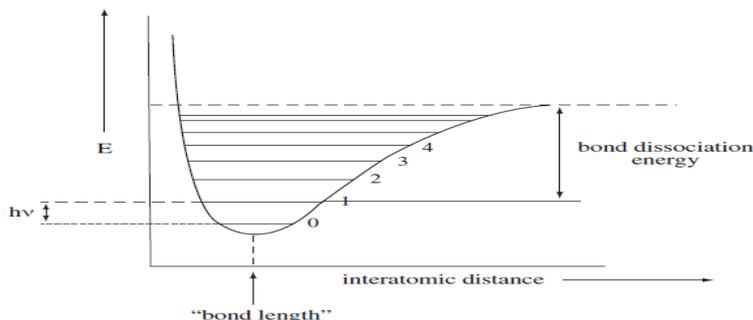


Figure 4. Energy curve of vibrating bond of inharmonic oscillator model.

Final Equation shows the relationship of bond strength and atomic mass to the wave number at which a molecule will absorb IR radiation. As **the force constant increases, the vibration frequency (wave number) also increases.**

As the mass of the atoms increases, the vibration frequency decreases. Using the following mass values: C, carbon  $12/6.02 \times 10^{23}$ . H, hydrogen  $1/6.02 \times 10^{23}$ .

### 6-Applications.

Example 1: Calculate the fundamental frequency of hydrogen molecules if you know that's the atomic mass of hydrogen atom is 1.0079AMU and the force constant of hydrogen molecule equal to  $573.4 \text{ Nm}^{-1}$ .

Solution:-

$$\begin{aligned} m_H &= 1.0079 \text{ amu} \\ &= 1.0079 \cdot 1.6606 \cdot 10^{-27} \text{ kg} \\ &= 1.673710^{-27} \text{ kg.} \end{aligned}$$

The reduced mass of the hydrogen molecule is

$$\begin{aligned} \mu &= \frac{m_H \cdot m_H}{m_H + m_H} \\ &= \frac{1}{2} m_H = 8.3686 \cdot 10^{-28} \text{ kg.} \end{aligned}$$

the frequency of the vibration is related to the mass and the force constant of the spring,  $k$ ,

$$v = \frac{1}{2\pi} \cdot \sqrt{\frac{k}{\mu}}$$

The force constant of the chemical bond in the hydrogen molecule is  $f = 573.4 \text{ Nm}^{-1}$ . Therefore the fundamental frequency is

$$\begin{aligned}\nu_e &= \frac{1}{2\pi} \sqrt{\frac{573.4 \text{ Nm}^{-1}}{8.3686 \cdot 10^{-28} \text{ kg}}} \\ &= 1.317 \cdot 10^{14} \text{ Hz.}\end{aligned}$$

The most common energy unit in vibrational spectroscopy is the wavenumber. In these units the fundamental frequency is

$$\tilde{\nu}_e = \frac{\nu_e}{c} = \frac{1.317 \cdot 10^{14} \text{ Hz}}{2.99792458 \cdot 10^{10} \text{ cm s}^{-1}} = 4395 \text{ cm}^{-1}.$$

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**Example2:** the infrared spectrum of  $^{39}\text{K}^{35}\text{Cl}$  has a single intense line at  $378.0 \text{ cm}^{-1}$ . What is the force constant?

Solution:-

Our first step is to convert the wavenumber to frequency, using. This yields  $\nu = c\tilde{\nu}$ -

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$$\nu = 378 \text{ cm}^{-1} \times 3.00 \times 10^{10} \text{ cm/s} = 1.134 \times 10^{13} \text{ s}^{-1}.$$

The reduced mass of  $^{39}\text{K}^{35}\text{Cl}$  is

$$\begin{aligned}\mu_{\text{KCl}} &= (35\text{AMU} \times 39\text{AMU}) / (35\text{AMU} + 39\text{AMU}) \times 1.67 \times 10^{-27} \text{ kg /AMU} \\ &= 3.08 \times 10^{-26} \text{ kg}\end{aligned}$$

Rewriting our frequency equation to solve for force constant yields

$$k = (2\pi\nu)^2 \mu = (2\pi \cdot 1.134 \times 10^{13})^2 \times 3.08 \times 10^{-26} = 156 \text{ N/m}.$$

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