Effects of Deuteration of a Polystyrene Chain on Its
Thermodynamics and Hydrodynamics in Cyclohexane around
the Flory \(\Theta\)-Temperature: The Static and Dynamic Laser Light
Scattering Investigation

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ABSTRACT: The average radii of gyration \(\langle R_g \rangle\) and hydrodynamic radii \(\langle R_h \rangle\) of a set of deuterated polystyrene (DPS) standards with different molar masses in cyclohexane around its \(\Theta\)-temperature were precisely measured by using static and dynamic laser light scattering. In comparison with a normal polystyrene (PS), DPS has a smaller \(\langle l \rangle\) and a larger \(\nu_T\). The smaller \(\langle l \rangle\) indicates that at the \(\Theta\)-temperature a DPS chain has a smaller conformation (i.e., coils more) than a PS chain with the same contour length. The larger \(\nu_T\) indicates that in a good solvent a DPS chain extends more than a PS chain for a given increase of the reduced temperature \((T - \Theta)/\Theta\). Our results showed that the difference in thermodynamics also leads to an
opposite and different temperature dependence of the hydrodynamic radius \(\langle R_h \rangle\) for DPS and PS in
cyclohexane.

Introduction

Due to the large difference among the neutron-scattering lengths of protons or deuterons and the rest of the atoms in a polymer chain, the deuteration of a polymer has become a standard labeling method in neutron scattering for monitoring a single polymer chain in the presence of many other polymer chains. It provides a basis for the studies of chain dimensions, local chain dynamics, and thermodynamic interactions in melts, dense systems, and concentrated solutions.3–4 In addition to its use in neutron scattering, the deuteration of a polymer chain is also used in nuclear magnetic resonance (NMR). It has always been assumed that the deuteration has no effect on the thermodynamics and conformation of a polymer chain, so that a deuterated chain is a true representative of all the polymer chains in the system.

However, this assumption has recently been challenged by a number of reports related to the effect of deuteration on thermodynamics of polymer blends5–7 and polymer solutions.6,9 Unfortunately, these effects, if they exist, were generally ignored in most data analysis. The effects of deuteration are mostly observable when the system is near its critical points, e.g., the Flory \(\Theta\)-temperature, at which the overall interactions are delicately concealed and even a small additional contribution can significantly shift the critical points. For example, normal polystyrene (PS) and deuterated polystyrene (DPS) have different \(\Theta\)-temperatures and solubility parameters in cyclohexane.9 It has also been shown that PS and DPS have a similar mean segment size \(\langle l \rangle\), but different chemistry-dependent constants \(\nu_T\), which is only affected by thermodynamic interactions.9

To our knowledge, the accurate and consistent experimental data of deuterated polymers are still missing, which prevents a reliable determination of the mean segment size \(\langle l \rangle\) and chemistry-dependent constant \(\nu_{TD}\), where the subscript D represents the deuterated polymer. On the other hand, the deuteration of a polymer chain might also affect its hydrodynamics if it affects
its thermodynamics. The main objective of this study is to measure the accurate values of the average radius of gyration \(\langle R_g \rangle\) and hydrodynamic radius \(\langle R_h \rangle\) of a set of narrowly distributional DPS standards around its \(\Theta\)-temperatures by using a combination of static and dynamic laser light scattering (LLS), so that we will be able to calculate \(\langle l \rangle\) and \(\nu_T\) used in the renormalization group theory and evaluate the reported difference between PS and DPS.

Theoretical Background

Using the renormalization group theory, Schäfer10 calculated the experimentally accessible correlation lengths and thermodynamic quantities of a dilute polymer solution. The theory is based on a model of self-repelling Gaussian chains characterized in terms of the mean segment size \(\langle l \rangle\), the number of segments per chain \((N)\), and the excluded volume constant \(\langle \beta \rangle\). According to its definition, the excluded volume vanishes at the \(\Theta\)-temperature. In order to prevent the breaking down of the expansion parameter \((\beta N^{1/2})\) for a long polymer chain \((N \gg 1)\) at \(T > \Theta\), the renormalization has been used to generate the starting values in terms of the parameters:

\[
\begin{align*}
R_{\Theta}^2 & = \langle l \rangle^2 N \\
Z & = \beta N^{1/2} = \nu_T N^{1/2}(T - \Theta)/\Theta 
\end{align*}
\]  

where \(R_{\Theta}\) is the radius of a polymer chain at its
we have \( L = N_0 \phi \sin(\phi/2) \), where \( L \), \( N_0 \), \( l_0 \), and \( \phi \) are the contour length, the number of the chemical bonds, the average length of each chemical bond, and the angle between the two neighboring bonds in its chain backbone, respectively. On the other hand, from the definition of \( l \) and \( N \), we have \( L = l N \), so that eq 1 can be rewritten as

\[
R_\Theta^2 = \left| l \right| \left| l_0 \phi \sin(\phi/2) \right| N_0
\]

with \( N_0 = 2M_{\text{polymer}}/M_{\text{monomer}} \), where \( "2" \) accounts for the fact that each monomer produces two chemical bonds. Furthermore, in terms of the radius of gyration \( R_g \) we can define the swelling factor of an isolated polymer chain as

\[
\alpha_g^2 = \frac{R_g^2}{R_\Theta^2}
\]

where \( R_g \) is the radius of gyration and \( R_\Theta \) is the radius of gyration of an isolated polymer chain. The experimental results have shown that for a long polymer chain at \( T \geq \Theta \) the swelling factor \( \alpha_g^2 \) depends only on the scaling variable \( Z \) defined in eq 2. Within the accuracy of the first-order renormalized perturbation theory in the calculation, \( \alpha_g^2 \) can be parametrized as

\[
\alpha_g^2 = (1 + 1.01Z + 0.216Z^2)^{0.18}
\]

In principle, eqs 1 and 2 hold only for monodisperse chains. In reality, we have to replace \( M_{\text{polymer}} \) with the weight-average molar mass \( M_w \), i.e., \( N_0 = M_w/M_{\text{monomer}} \). For a narrowly distributed polymer fraction, the residual polydispersity dependence can be ignored. By measuring the values of \( R_g \) of a set of narrowly distributed polymer standards with different molar masses around its \( \Theta \)-temperature, we are able to obtain \( l \) on the basis of eq 3, \( Z \) on the basis of eqs 4 and 5, and \( \nu_T \) on the basis of eq 2. The detail of the theory can be found elsewhere.\(^{11}\)

**Experimental Section**

**Sample Preparation.** Deuterated polystyrene (DPS) samples were synthesized by the anionic polymerization of deuterostyrene. Normal polystyrene (PS) standards were courtesy of Nanjing University, China. The weight-average molar masses (\( M_w \)) and polydispersity indexes (\( M_w/M_n \)) of DPS and PS used are listed in Table 1. Analytical grade cyclohexane (Aldrich) was used without further purification. The polymer concentration was in the range of \( \sim 10^{-3} \) g/mL. The solution was kept at 40 °C for at least 3 days to ensure a complete dissolution and was clarified with a 0.2-μm Millipore filter inside an oven to avoid precipitation. All the solutions were kept at 40 °C before the light-scattering experiment.
Figure 2. Plot of the scaling variable $Z(R_h)$ versus the square root of the number of segments $N^{1/2}$ for DPS in cyclohexane at 40 °C, where the straight line represents a least-square fitting of $Z(R_h) = 0.0345N^{1/2}$.

Figure 3. Plot of $Z(R_h)$ versus $N^{1/2}(T - \Theta)/\Theta$ respectively for DPS-5 and PS-5 in cyclohexane, where the error bars were estimated from the errors of $\langle R_h \rangle$ and the lines represent the least-square fitting of $Z(R_h) = 0.527N^{1/2}(T - \Theta)/\Theta$ and $Z_D(R_h) = 0.872N^{1/2}(T - \Theta)/\Theta$, respectively.

Figure 4. Plot of $\langle R_h \rangle^2$ versus $M_w$ for DPS in cyclohexane at 40 °C, where the straight line represents a least-square fitting of $\langle R_h \rangle^2 = 3.72 \times 10^{-4}M_w$.

Figure 5. Plot of $Z(R_h)$ versus $N^{1/2}$ for DPS in cyclohexane at 40 °C, where the straight line represents a least-square fitting of $Z(R_h) = 0.319 + 0.0108N^{1/2}$.

Figure 6 respectively shows the plots of $\langle R_h \rangle^2$ versus $N^{1/2}$ for DPS in cyclohexane at 40 °C, where the straight line represents a least-square fitting of $\langle R_h \rangle^2 = 3.72 \times 10^{-4}M_w$. We found that $l_p(R_h) = 0.169$ nm, and $l_0(R_h)/l_0(R_n) = 2.0$, much larger than 1.4, the ratio of $\langle R_h \rangle^2/\langle R_n \rangle^2$ for a normal linear polymer chain at the $\Theta$-temperature. Furthermore, each $\langle R_h \rangle^2/\langle R_n \rangle^2$ leads to a corresponding $Z(R_h)$.

Figure 5 shows a plot of $Z(R_h)$ versus $N^{1/2}$ for DPS in cyclohexane at 40 °C, where the straight line represents a least-square fitting of $Z(R_h) = 0.319 + 0.0108N^{1/2}$. In contrast to Figure 3, $Z(R_n)$ does not vanish at $T = \Theta$, which is understandable because $R_n$ contains both the thermodynamic and hydrodynamic interactions. When the thermodynamic interaction vanishes at $T = \Theta$, the hydrodynamic interaction still exists. It is interesting to compare the temperature dependence of $\langle R_n \rangle$ of DPS and PS in cyclohexane, under their corresponding $\Theta$-temperatures and examine the effect of the deuteration on their hydrodynamics.

Figure 6 respectively shows the plots of $\langle R_h \rangle^2/\langle R_n \rangle^2$ versus $(T - \Theta)/\Theta$ for DPS and PS in cyclohexane, in which the effects of the deuteration on their hydrodynamics can be clearly viewed. In the case of PS, $\langle R_h \rangle^2/\langle R_n \rangle^2$ decreases as temperature increases, while in the case of DPS, $\langle R_h \rangle^2/\langle R_n \rangle^2$ increases as temperature increases. This might be attributed to the fact that $\nu_{T,D} > \nu_{T,H}$, so that a DPS chain expands more than a PS chain for a given increase of the reduced temperature.16

Figure 7 respectively shows the plots of $\langle R_h \rangle^2/\langle R_n \rangle^2$ versus $(T - \Theta)/\Theta$ for DPS and PS in cyclohexane, where $\langle R_h \rangle^2/\langle R_n \rangle^2$ reflects the deuteration effects on both thermodynamics and hydrodynamics. The ratios of $\langle R_h \rangle^2/\langle R_n \rangle^2$ for both PS and DPS slightly increase as the reduced temperature increases, showing the expansion of polymer chains, which has been predicted by Schäfer and Baumgärtner.16
In summary, our results indicate that the deuteration of a polystyrene chain increases its intrachain interaction in solution at the \( \Theta \)-temperature so that it has a smaller conformation (i.e., coils more) than a PS chain with the same contour length. The deuteration also leads to a much larger chemistry-dependent constant \( \nu_T \), revealing that in a good solvent a deuterated polystyrene chain extends more than a normal polystyrene chain for a given reduced temperature \( (T - \Theta)/\Theta \).

To our knowledge, a reliable value of \( \nu_T = 1.10 \) for deuterated polystyrene has, for the first time, been reported, which provides a basis for further theoretical calculations. The difference in the thermodynamics of DPS and PS is also reflected in their hydrodynamics. Therefore, we have to examine the use of deuteration in neutron scattering and NMR, and reconsider the interpretation of the experimental results.

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**References and Notes**

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![Figure 6](image-url) **Figure 6.** Plot of \( \langle R_h \rangle_T/\langle R_h \rangle_\Theta \) versus \( (T - \Theta)/\Theta \) respectively for DPS-5 and PS-5 in cyclohexane around their corresponding \( \Theta \)-temperatures.

![Figure 7](image-url) **Figure 7.** Plot of \( \langle R_g \rangle_T/\langle R_h \rangle_T \) versus \( (T - \Theta)/\Theta \) respectively for DPS-5 and PS-5 in cyclohexane around their corresponding \( \Theta \)-temperatures.