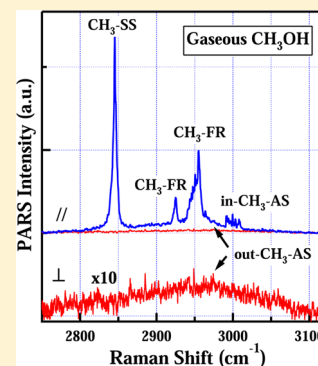


Complete Raman Spectral Assignment of Methanol in the C–H Stretching Region

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ABSTRACT: In this work, the Raman spectrum of gaseous methanol in the C–H stretching region was investigated by polarized Photoacoustic Raman spectroscopy (PARS). On the basis of the depolarization ratio measurement and density functional theory (DFT) calculations, a complete spectral assignment has been presented. The band at $\sim 2845\text{ cm}^{-1}$ was assigned to CH_3 symmetric stretching, the bands at ~ 2925 and $\sim 2955\text{ cm}^{-1}$ were assigned to two Fermi resonance modes of CH_3 bending overtones, and the bands at ~ 2961 and $\sim 3000\text{ cm}^{-1}$ were assigned to out-of-plane and in-plane vibrations of splitting CH_3 antisymmetric stretching. Such assignments can clarify the confusions among the previous spectral studies from the different experimental methods and be confirmed by the Raman spectrum of liquid methanol. Furthermore, the large splitting of 39 cm^{-1} between two antisymmetric stretching in gaseous methanol was ascribed to the strong coupling between CH_3 and OH groups within methanol molecule because it decreased rapidly in other long-chain alcohol, such as $\text{CH}_3\text{CD}_2\text{OH}$.



1. INTRODUCTION

The C–H functional groups, such as $-\text{CH}$, $-\text{CH}_2$, and $-\text{CH}_3$, exist widely in organic and biological molecules, and the vibrational spectroscopy in the C–H stretching region from 2700 to 3100 cm^{-1} can be used as a valuable tool to understand molecular conformations, intermolecular interactions, chemical reaction pathways and so on.^{1–8} However, it is well-known that the spectra in this region are quite complicated due to the existence of various vibrational modes, including C–H symmetric stretching, antisymmetric stretching, and overtone or combination modes. Furthermore, for CH_3 group, the degenerated antisymmetric stretching modes would split into doublets (in-plane and out-of-plane vibrations) when the local symmetry of the CH_3 group no longer belongs to C_{3v} point group. Therefore, the spectral assignments in the C–H stretching region tend to be ambiguous, especially for the molecules containing several kinds of C–H groups.

Among all molecules containing C–H groups, methanol (CH_3OH) is the simplest but important one used as clean liquid fuels and ideal solvents in industry. Also, methanol is usually taken as an experimental and theoretical benchmark system to investigate large-amplitude torsional motion, the hydrogen bond effect, intramolecular vibrational energy redistribution, and other chemical dynamical processes.^{9–17} Many IR, Raman, and SFG spectroscopic studies have been performed to investigate the vibrational spectra of methanol, especially in the C–H stretching region. Generally, one would think that the spectral assignment of methanol in the C–H stretching region has been settled due to its simple structure. In fact, this matter is unsatisfactory up to now because the results from infrared, liquid Raman, and SFG techniques are not consistent and the debates continue.

The experimental data indicate that the vibrational spectra of methanol in the C–H stretching region exhibit two main bands at ~ 2834 and $\sim 2944\text{ cm}^{-1}$ in liquid phase and air/liquid interface. The first band at 2834 cm^{-1} is consistently assigned to the CH_3 symmetric stretching. However, for the second band at 2944 cm^{-1} , the assignments are in disagreement among the studies by the different experimental methods or even by the same experimental method, as summarized in Table 1. In the infrared spectra, the band at 2944 cm^{-1} in the liquid phase (located at $\sim 2960\text{ cm}^{-1}$ in gas phase) is assigned to one of the splitting antisymmetric stretching vibrations of CH_3 group.^{4,18–23} In liquid Raman spectra, some publications assign the band at 2944 cm^{-1} to the CH_3 antisymmetric stretching according to the corresponding IR assignments,^{11,12,23–25} whereas others assign it to the Fermi resonance of CH_3 bending overtone because of its strong polarization.^{26–30} In the SFG studies at air/methanol interface, the band at 2944 cm^{-1} is ascribed to the Fermi resonance of bending overtone by various research groups^{3,29,31,32} except that one group³³ assigned it to CH_3 antisymmetric stretching in the SFG spectrum of methanol on a TiO_2 film surface and determined the orientation of methanol on TiO_2 on the basis of the intensities of symmetric and antisymmetric stretching. These inconsistent spectral assignments have also been used to interpret relevant dynamical process of methanol. For example, using an ultrafast IR–Raman technique, Dlott et al. investigated the vibration energy redistribution within CH and OH stretching vibrations in liquid methanol or methanol– CCl_4

Received: January 26, 2013

Revised: May 1, 2013

Published: May 2, 2013

mixtures and observed the fast energy transfer between the different vibrational modes.^{11,12} These explanations on the dynamical process depended on the spectral assignments of methanol in the C–H stretching region.

Recently, using the methods of molecular dynamics (MD) and empirical potential parameter shift analysis (EPSA), Ishiyama et al. qualitatively analyzed the inconsistency on the spectral assignments of liquid methanol in the C–H stretching region.^{34,35} To more explicitly clarify the ambiguous spectral assignments, more experimental and theoretical works are needed. In this work, a sensitive nonlinear spectral technique, called polarized photoacoustic Raman spectroscopy (PARS), is used to measure the gas-phase Raman spectrum of methanol. Compared to the infrared, liquid Raman, and SFG methods, the gas-phase Raman spectroscopy exhibits more separated and narrow band shapes and thus has its advantages in investigating the congested C–H stretching region. This is due to the facts that the transition selection rules in Raman are different from those in infrared and gas-phase molecules are free of intermolecular interactions such as hydrogen bonding in the liquid or at the interface. As a result, more spectral details can be observed. Combining these with the depolarization ratio measurements and DFT calculations, we present the complete spectral assignments of gaseous methanol in the C–H stretching region, which can explicitly explain the inconsistencies of the previous studies. In addition, we conduct an experiment on Raman spectra of liquid methanol to confirm the assignments in the gas phase and provided more information on the intermolecular interactions in the liquid phase, especially the hydrogen-bond effect.

2. EXPERIMENTAL AND COMPUTATIONAL METHODS

The basic theory and experimental setup of polarized PARS have been fully described in the previous papers,^{36–41} but to be complete, a short review is included here. When the frequency difference between two laser beams (pump and Stokes beams) is resonant with a Raman-active vibrational transition, the molecules are transferred to the vibrationally excited state by a stimulated Raman scattering process. Then collisions cause the excitation energy to be converted into local heating. This creates a sound wave that is detected by a microphone. Compared to the direct measurement of weak spontaneous Raman scattering photons, the spectral sensitivity of PARS is greatly increased. On the other hand, using polarized PARS, the Raman depolarization ratio can be accurately determined by measuring and fitting the $I-\theta$ curve because the PARS intensity I is periodically dependent on the cross angle θ between the polarization directions of two laser beams.⁴¹ More straightforwardly, the intensity ratios of $\theta = 90^\circ$ and $\theta = 0^\circ$ are the depolarization ratio, where $\theta = 90^\circ$ and $\theta = 0^\circ$ mean that the polarization directions of the two laser beams are orthogonal and parallel to each other, respectively. In the present study, the depolarization ratio was obtained by fitting the $I-\theta$ curve because it is more accurate.

In experiment, the second-harmonic output of 532.1 nm from a pulsed Nd:YAG laser (line width 1.0 cm^{-1} , pulse width 10 ns) was split into two beams by a quartz wedge. About 90% of the 532.1 nm laser energy directly entered into the dye laser system (line width 0.05 cm^{-1}) for generating a tunable Stokes beam (623–638 nm), and the remainder was used as a pump beam for PARS. The two linearly polarized laser beams were focused in the center of the photoacoustic cell with counterpropagating configuration. The photoacoustic signal

was detected by a sensitive microphone and monitored by an oscilloscope or averaged by a Boxcar integrator. The energies of pump and Stokes beams were typically 10 and 3 mJ/pulse, respectively, and the sample pressure was kept at 5.0 Torr. The PARS spectrum was normalized to the intensity of the Stokes beam, and the wavelengths of both laser beams were calibrated by a laser wavelength meter with an accuracy of 0.005 nm.

The Raman spectrum of liquid methanol was recorded by a conventional spontaneous Raman technique. The instrument and setup parameters have been described previously.^{42,43} Pure methanol was obtained from Aldrich (>99.9%, GC grade) and used as received.

All theoretical calculations, including full geometry optimization and vibrational frequency calculations, were performed using the DFT-B3LYP method with the 6-311++G(d, p) basis set by GAUSSIAN09 software.⁴⁴ During calculations, the interactions between the vibrational modes, such as Fermi resonance, were not considered. The calculated frequencies were scaled down by a factor of 0.973 to assist the analysis of experimental spectra.⁴⁵

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Gas-Phase Raman Spectra of Methanol in C–H Stretching Region. The polarized and depolarized Raman spectra of gaseous methanol in the C–H stretching region from 2750 to 3150 cm^{-1} have been recorded with PARS at both parallel ($\theta = 0^\circ$) and perpendicular ($\theta = 90^\circ$) polarization configurations, respectively, as presented in Figure 1a. For visual clarity, the depolarized PARS spectrum is magnified by 10 times and plotted in Figure 1b. As shown in Figure 1a, there is a dramatic change of PARS intensities under two laser polarization configurations. The polarized Raman spectrum shows four prominent bands at 2845, 2925, 2955, and 3000

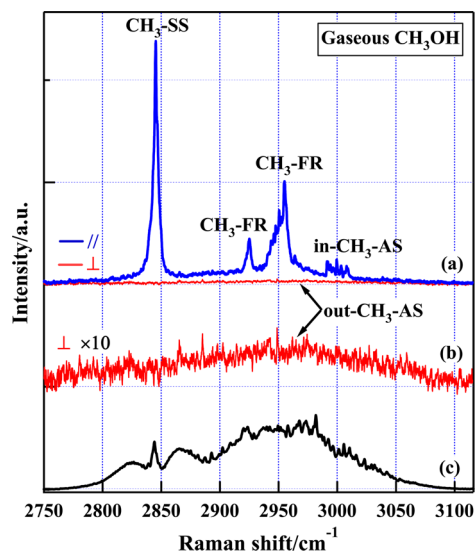
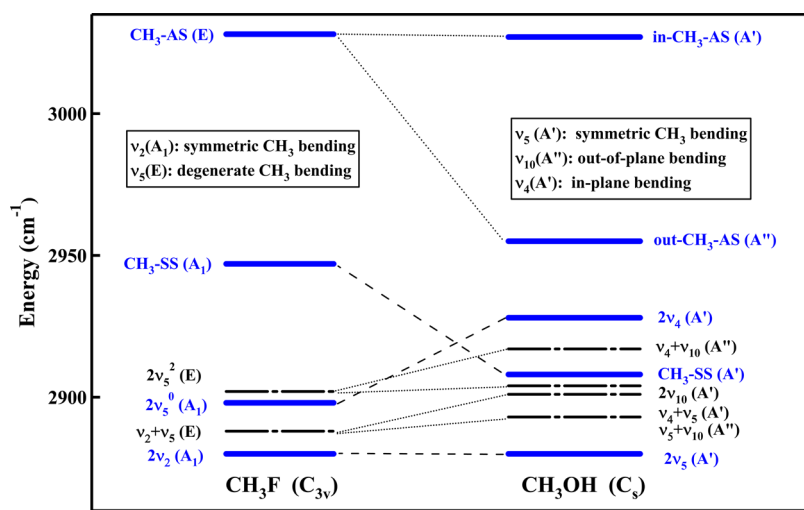


Figure 1. (a) Polarized and depolarized PARS spectra of gaseous methanol in the C–H stretching region under parallel (blue line, upper) and perpendicular (red line, lower) laser polarization configurations, respectively. CH₃-SS: CH₃ symmetric stretching, CH₃-FR: CH₃ Fermi resonance, in-CH₃-AS and out-CH₃-AS: in-plane and out-of-plane CH₃ antisymmetric stretching. (b) Depolarized PARS spectrum multiplied by a factor of 10 for visual clarity. (c) Infrared spectrum of gaseous methanol in C–H stretching region for comparison.

Table 1. Observed Vibrational Frequencies (cm^{-1}) and Raman Depolarization Ratios of Methanol in the Gas and Liquid Phases, as Well as Their Spectral Assignments in the C–H Stretching Region

| Raman frequency | | | | Spectral assignments | | | | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------|---------------|--------------------|----------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|--|--|
| ν_{gas} | ν_{liquid} | $\Delta\nu^a$ | Inten ^b | ρ_{gas} | ρ_{liquid} | this work | infrared ^c | Raman ^{liquid} | SFG |
| 2845 | 2834 | 11 | vs | 0.010 | 0.007 | CH ₃ -SS | CH ₃ -SS | CH ₃ -SS | CH ₃ -SS |
| 2925 | 2919 | 6 | m | 0.090 | 0.097 | CH ₃ -FR | | CH ₃ -FR ^d | CH ₃ -FR ^f |
| 2955 | 2944 | 11 | s | 0.038 | 0.007 | CH ₃ -FR | out-CH ₃ -AS | CH ₃ -AS ^e or CH ₃ -FR ^d | CH ₃ -FR ^f or CH ₃ -AS ^g |
| 2961 | 2952 | 9 | vw, br | | | out-CH ₃ -AS | | | |
| 3000 | 2980 | 20 | m | 0.150 | 0.594 | in-CH ₃ -AS | in-CH ₃ -AS | CH ₃ -AS ^d | |

^a $\Delta\nu$, the frequency difference between the gas and liquid phases. ^bvs, very strong; s, strong; m, medium; vw, very weak; br, broad. ^cInfrared spectral assignment in the gaseous or liquid phases from refs 4 and 18–23. ^dReferences 27–30. ^eReferences 11, 12, 24, and 25. ^fReferences 3, 29, 31, and 32. ^gReference 33.

**Figure 2.** Calculated vibrational energy levels of CH₃OH and CH₃F in the C–H stretching region. The molecule of CH₃F was used as an example for CH₃ group with rigid C_{3v} symmetry, and the positions of its 2*v*₅⁰ and 2*v*₅² are schematic for presentation based on the calculated 2*v*₅.

cm^{-1} . Among these four bands, the one at 2845 cm^{-1} is the most intense, being 5, 2.5, and 10 times stronger than those at 2925, 2955, and 3000 cm^{-1} , respectively. The depolarized spectrum exhibits only one weak and broad band centered at $\sim 2961 \text{ cm}^{-1}$, as shown in Figure 1b.

The depolarization ratios have been measured and are summarized in Table 1 as an important means to assist the assignment of the observed spectra. It is known that the depolarization ratio ρ is a symmetry indicator of one Raman-active vibration mode. When using an ideal linearly polarized excitation laser, the ρ value for a symmetric mode is $0 \leq \rho < 0.75$, whereas for an antisymmetric mode ρ equals to 0.75. From Table 1, it can be seen that the values of ρ are very small for the four prominent bands in Figure 1a, indicating that they are strongly polarized and belong to symmetric modes. For the depolarized band at $\sim 2961 \text{ cm}^{-1}$ in Figure 1b, the depolarization ratio is not given because it is very weak and overlaps with the high frequency part of intense band at 2955 cm^{-1} .

3.2. Theoretical Calculations on Vibrational Energies of Gaseous Methanol. To aid the assignment of the experimental spectra, the vibrational energy levels of gaseous methanol in the C–H stretching region have been calculated and are presented in Figure 2.

Usually, the CH₃ group is treated as having C_{3v} symmetry in most molecular system,^{33,46–48} where the structural parameters such as three C–H bonds are equivalent, and the antisymmetric stretching vibration is doubly degenerated with E symmetry.

However, when the CH₃ group is attached to OH group to form methanol, the symmetry of CH₃ group is lowered to C_s and three C–H bonds are no longer equal. This leads to the splitting of degenerated antisymmetric stretching into two bands. One is the out-of-plane vibration of A'' symmetry (out-CH₃-AS); the other is the in-plane vibration of A' symmetry (in-CH₃-AS). To better display the changes of CH₃ vibrational energy levels under C_{3v} and C_s symmetry conditions, the vibrational energies of CH₃F, which is used as an example with rigid C_{3v} symmetry for the CH₃ group, are also calculated in the C–H stretching region and also plotted in Figure 2. It is evident that the antisymmetric stretching is degenerated in CH₃F but splits into two bands in CH₃OH with an interval of 72 cm^{-1} . The out-of-plane and in-plane antisymmetric stretching of methanol are described in Figure 3, and the plane refers to H–O–C–H.

Because the Fermi resonance often occurs in the C–H stretching region, the calculated overtones and combinations of CH₃ bending modes are also included in Figure 2. The positions of overtones and combinations are double their calculated fundamental. For methanol, the overtones and combinations 2*v*₅, *v*₅ + *v*₄, 2*v*₁₀, and 2*v*₄ are very close to CH₃ symmetric stretching fundamental and they have the same A' symmetry. Therefore, the multiple Fermi resonance can be expected among them. Following the conventional labels, the overtones or combination from Fermi resonance are denoted as CH₃-FR, and the symmetric and antisymmetric stretching denoted as CH₃-SS and CH₃-AS, respectively. It should be

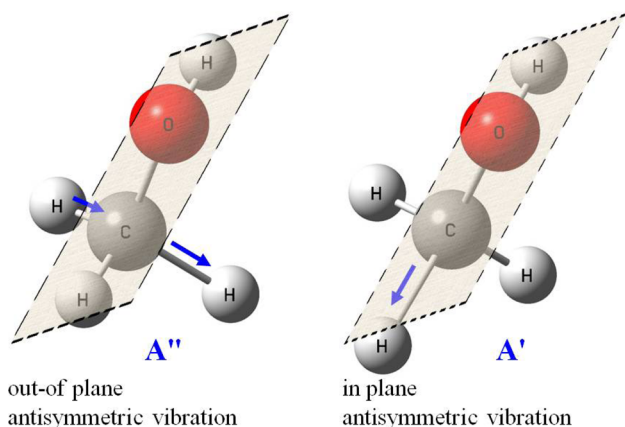


Figure 3. Descriptions of out-of-plane and in-plane vibrations of CH_3 antisymmetric stretching in methanol. The plane refers to $\text{H}-\text{O}-\text{C}-\text{H}$.

noted that the in-plane CH_3 -AS of methanol has the same symmetry as the CH_3 -SS. Thus, the in-plane CH_3 -AS may also interact with CH_3 -SS by Fermi resonance, which would lead to the unequal spectral intensity between two splitting bands. This is consistent with the observed PARS spectra of gaseous methanol.

3.3. Spectral Assignments of Gaseous Methanol in the C–H Stretching Region. Combined with the measured depolarization ratios and theoretical calculations, the explicit spectral assignments for gaseous methanol in the C–H stretching region are presented in Figure 1 and also listed in Table 1.

According to the theoretical calculations on methanol, the bending overtones and combinations $2\nu_5$ ($\sim 2880\text{ cm}^{-1}$), $\nu_5 + \nu_4$ ($\sim 2904\text{ cm}^{-1}$), and $2\nu_{10}$ ($\sim 2906\text{ cm}^{-1}$) are below CH_3 -SS ($\sim 2908\text{ cm}^{-1}$) whereas the overtone $2\nu_4$ ($\sim 2928\text{ cm}^{-1}$) is above CH_3 -SS, as indicated in Figure 2. The results from gas-phase infrared spectra of methanol show that the fundamentals of bending modes are located at ~ 1455 (ν_5), ~ 1477 (ν_{10}), and $\sim 1477\text{ cm}^{-1}$ (ν_4),¹⁸ which are larger than the corresponding calculated values of ~ 1440 , ~ 1453 , and $\sim 1464\text{ cm}^{-1}$, respectively. Considering the experimental data, we assign the low-frequency intense band at 2845 cm^{-1} as CH_3 -SS, the high-frequency band at 2925 cm^{-1} as CH_3 -FR from $2\nu_5$ or $\nu_5 + \nu_4$, and the band at 2955 cm^{-1} as CH_3 -FR from $2\nu_4$ or $2\nu_{10}$, as labeled in Figure 1a. For the bands at 2925 and 2955 cm^{-1} , we cannot clearly establish which overtone (or combination) principally involves the Fermi resonance because the anharmonicity and Fermi resonance may change the energy positions. The large difference of 63 cm^{-1} ($2908 - 2845 = 63$) between the calculated and observed CH_3 -SS can be attributed to the Fermi resonance interaction and the calculation uncertainty. The former factor pushes the unperturbed CH_3 -SS to shift toward low frequency and the overtones to shift toward high frequency.

Additionally, we attribute the polarized band at 3000 cm^{-1} in Figure 1a to in-plane CH_3 -AS and the depolarized band centered at 2961 cm^{-1} to out-of-plane CH_3 -AS according to the corresponding calculated positions at 3027 and 2955 cm^{-1} . Such assignment is also consistent with the symmetric properties of A' for in-plane CH_3 -AS and A'' for out-of-plane CH_3 -AS, respectively. The splitting of the above two CH_3 -AS is not observed in the previous liquid Raman and SFG studies on methanol.^{3,11,12,23–32} Here, these two bands are clearly

distinguished and assigned in our polarized PARS spectra with the two different polarization configurations.

It can be seen from Figure 1a,b that the out-of-plane CH_3 -AS at $\sim 2961\text{ cm}^{-1}$ shows a broad band shape and thus overlaps with the CH_3 -FR at 2955 cm^{-1} . This broad feature can be explained by the fact that the antisymmetric band results from $\Delta J = 0, \pm 1, \pm 2$ rotational transitions whereas the symmetric one mainly from $\Delta J = 0$ transitions (Q branch) in the Raman spectrum. On the other hand, the out-of-plane CH_3 -AS is very weak and close to the noise level, as shown in Figure 1a. This is in agreement with the general case that the antisymmetric band is weak in Raman measurement whereas strong in infrared. To contrast with the Raman spectrum, we measure the gas-phase infrared spectrum of methanol in the C–H stretching region with FTIR spectrometer (Bruker IFS120HR), as shown in Figure 1c, which is consistent with that in NIST chemistry Web site.¹⁸ It is evident that the band at $\sim 2961\text{ cm}^{-1}$ becomes the most intense in the infrared spectrum, which is very different from the corresponding part in our Raman spectrum. Because of the overlapped spectral features and the opposite behaviors of out-of-plane CH_3 -AS in infrared and Raman cases, the spectral assignments from the different experimental techniques such as infrared, liquid Raman, and SFG are inconsistent, and the detailed interpretations are given in the following.

As mentioned above, the antisymmetric stretching is strong in infrared but weak in Raman. Therefore, in the infrared spectra of methanol, the most intense bands at $\sim 2944\text{ cm}^{-1}$ in the liquid phase and at $\sim 2960\text{ cm}^{-1}$ in the gas phase are assigned to out-of-plane CH_3 -AS.^{4,18–23} Here, the polarized PARS spectrum clearly shows that this band should include the contribution from the CH_3 bending overtone. For liquid Raman spectrum of methanol, some literatures assign the band at $\sim 2944\text{ cm}^{-1}$ to CH_3 -AS according to the corresponding IR assignment,^{11,12,23–25} whereas the others assign it to CH_3 -FR due to its strong polarization,^{26–30} as summarized in Table 1. Because of the overlapped spectral features shown in our polarized PARS spectra, both kinds of assignments are incomplete. However, the contribution from out-of-plane CH_3 -AS is so weak that it can be ignored in the Raman spectrum, as indicated in Figure 1a. Therefore, the band at 2944 cm^{-1} should be contributed by CH_3 -FR in liquid Raman of methanol. As for the SFG spectrum at the air/methanol interfaces, the explanation for inconsistent assignments is similar to liquid Raman spectrum because the intensity of SFG is the product of infrared dipole transition and Raman tensor elements.

From the above analysis, one can see that our assignments of the Raman spectrum for gaseous methanol can clarify the confusion among the studies from different spectral techniques. Compared to the recent theoretical analysis by molecular dynamics (MD) simulation and empirical potential parameter shift analysis (EPSA) methods,^{34,35} the interpretation from the present gas-phase Raman spectra is more explicit and direct.

3.4. The Splitting of CH_3 Antisymmetric Stretching in Different Molecular Systems. It should be stressed that the direct observation on the splitting between two CH_3 -AS bands is key to our complete spectral assignments of gaseous methanol. Nevertheless, as mentioned in section 3.2, the antisymmetric stretching is often treated as degeneracy in most molecular systems. MacPhail et al. have systematically investigated the splitting and degeneracy of CH_3 antisymmetric stretching in some long-chain alkanes such as $n\text{-C}_{16}\text{H}_{34}$, $n\text{-C}_{20}\text{H}_{40}$, and $n\text{-C}_{21}\text{H}_{44}$.^{49,50} Their results indicate that two

prominent bands are observed at the extreme low temperature of 9 K with an interval of $\sim 10\text{ cm}^{-1}$ and collapsed into one as the temperature increased. On the basis of their results, the antisymmetric stretching of CH_3 group is usually regarded as close degeneracy at room temperature in many molecules.^{31,32,51} Here one would ask why methanol has so large a splitting at room temperature.

To answer this question, the Raman spectra of gaseous deuterated ethanol ($\text{CH}_3\text{CD}_2\text{OH}$) in the C–H stretching region are illustrated in Figure 4, which have been reported

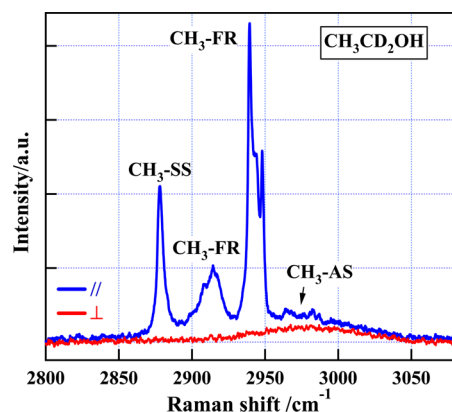


Figure 4. Polarized and depolarized PARS spectra of gaseous $\text{CH}_3\text{CD}_2\text{OH}$ in the C–H stretching region measured under parallel (blue line, upper) and perpendicular (black line, lower) laser polarization configurations, respectively.

recently by our group with the same polarized PARS method.⁴⁰ The broad feature at 2978 cm^{-1} is assigned to the CH_3 antisymmetric stretching of gaseous $\text{CH}_3\text{CD}_2\text{OH}$. However, unlike gaseous methanol, there is no distinguishable splitting between two $\text{CH}_3\text{-AS}$ in $\text{CH}_3\text{CD}_2\text{OH}$, indicating that the splitting of antisymmetric stretching rapidly decreases with the increase of chain length. This conclusion can be interpreted by the following theoretical calculations.

Table 2 lists the calculated out-of-plane and in-plane CH bond lengths and the frequencies of CH_3 antisymmetric

Table 2. Calculated out-of-Plane and in-Plane CH Bond Lengths (\AA) and CH_3 Antisymmetric Stretching Vibrations (cm^{-1}) as Well as Corresponding Depolarization Ratio in Gaseous Methanol and Deuterated Ethanol

| molecule | $\text{CH}_3\text{CD}_2\text{OH}^c$ | | | CH_3OH | | |
|--------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|--------|------------------------|-------------------------|--------|
| | R_{CH}^a | $\text{CH}_3\text{-AS}$ | ρ | R_{CH}^a | $\text{CH}_3\text{-AS}$ | ρ |
| out-of-plane | 1.0919 | 3020 | 0.75 | 1.0970 | 2955 | 0.75 |
| in-plane | 1.0918 | 3028 | 0.722 | 1.0903 | 3027 | 0.511 |
| Δ^b | 0.0001 | 8 | | 0.0067 | 72 | |

^a R_{CH} , C–H bond length of CH_3 group. ^b Δ , differences of out-of-plane and in-plane $\text{CH}_3\text{-AS}$ and CH bonds. ^cCalculations were performed for *trans*- $\text{CH}_3\text{CD}_2\text{OH}$ only, the results for *gauche*- $\text{CH}_3\text{CD}_2\text{OH}$ are similar and not listed in. The plane of $\text{CH}_3\text{CD}_2\text{OH}$ refers to H–O–C–C–H.

stretching in gaseous CH_3OH and $\text{CH}_3\text{CD}_2\text{OH}$. As indicated by the theoretical calculations, in gaseous $\text{CH}_3\text{CD}_2\text{OH}$, the in-plane CH bond is only 0.0001 \AA shorter than the other two out-of-plane CH bond, and the splitting interval between two $\text{CH}_3\text{-AS}$ is 8 cm^{-1} . These results are much smaller than the corresponding values of 0.0067 \AA and 72 cm^{-1} in gaseous

methanol. The more unequal out-of-plane and in-plane CH bonds and the consequent large splitting between two $\text{CH}_3\text{-AS}$ can be ascribed to the strong coupling between CH_3 and OH groups within methanol molecule. For $\text{CH}_3\text{CH}_2\text{OH}$ or other long-chain alcohols, the interaction between CH_3 and OH groups is weakened due to the existence of CH_2 or CH or other groups, and the splitting consequently decreases. This can be further verified by Raman spectra of gaseous deuterated 1-propanol ($\text{CH}_3\text{CD}_2\text{CD}_2\text{OH}$) and 2-propanol ($\text{CH}_3\text{CDOHCH}_3$), and the data will be reported elsewhere. Therefore, in long-chain molecules, where CH_3 group is not directly connected to OH group or other strongly electronegative group, two antisymmetric stretching can be deemed as close degeneracy. This conclusion is consistent with the investigations on long-chain alkane systems from MacPhail et al.

Despite close degeneracy of two antisymmetric stretching in gaseous $\text{CH}_3\text{CD}_2\text{OH}$, the out-of-plane and in-plane components can still be distinguished because they behave differently in polarized and depolarized Raman spectra, as shown in Figure 4. For the band at 2978 cm^{-1} , several weak polarized peaks are overlapped on the depolarized band. These polarized structures similarly appear in gaseous methanol at $\sim 3000\text{ cm}^{-1}$ and should correspond to the in-plane $\text{CH}_3\text{-AS}$ of gaseous $\text{CH}_3\text{CD}_2\text{OH}$, and the broad and depolarized band at 2978 cm^{-1} corresponds to out-of-plane $\text{CH}_3\text{-AS}$.

3.5. Raman Spectra of Liquid Methanol in the C–H Stretching Region. The polarized and depolarized Raman spectra of liquid methanol in the range from 2750 to 3150 cm^{-1} were measured with the conventional Raman technique and presented in Figure 5.

According to the spectral assignment in gaseous methanol, both polarized and depolarized Raman spectra of liquid methanol are fitted with five component peaks using the Voigt profile,^{52–55} and the fitting parameters are listed in Table

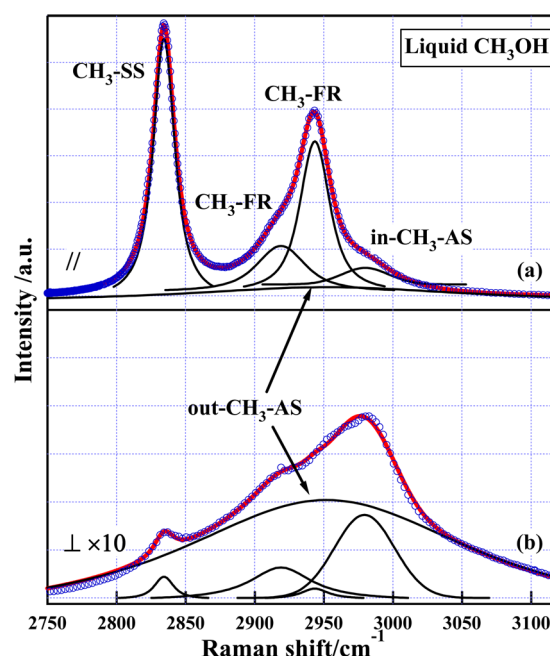


Figure 5. Raman spectra of liquid methanol in the C–H stretching region. The solid lines are fittings with the Voigt profiles. (a) Polarized spectrum. (b) Depolarized spectrum magnified by 10 times for visual clarity.

Table 3. Fitting Peak Positions (cm^{-1}), Areas (au), Gaussian and Lorentzian Width (cm^{-1}) of the Polarized and Depolarized Spectra in the C–H Stretching Region of Liquid Methanol Using the Voigt Profile

| peak | position | polarized | | | depolarized | | |
|-------------------------|----------|-----------|----------------|---------------|-------------|----------------|---------------|
| | | area | Gaussian width | Lorentz width | area | Gaussian width | Lorentz width |
| CH ₃ -SS | 2834 | 1577910 | 6 | 16 | 11285 | 7 | 13 |
| CH ₃ -FR | 2919 | 591398 | 20 | 31 | 57582 | 8 | 25 |
| CH ₃ -FR | 2944 | 1204140 | 12 | 19 | 8089 | 1 | 23 |
| out-CH ₃ -AS | 2952 | 1252020 | 6 | 246 | 941392 | 84 | 220 |
| in-CH ₃ -AS | 2980 | 158270 | 38 | 3 | 94046 | 50 | 1 |

3. The Gaussian, Lorentzian, and Voigt profiles were all tested for the best spectral fit. The Voigt profile was superior to Gaussian and Lorentzian for this liquid spectrum. As shown in Figure 5a,b, the spectral features of liquid methanol are very similar to those in the gas phase except for the band broadening and the changes on the peak positions and intensities. The five bands with the maxima at 2834, 2919, 2944, 2952, and 2980 cm^{-1} correspond to those in the gas phase at 2845, 2925, 2955, 2961, and 3000 cm^{-1} with red shifts of 11, 6, 11, 9, and 20 cm^{-1} , respectively. Therefore, the spectral assignments in the gas phase can be applied directly to the liquid phase, as labeled in Figure 5.

From Figure 5a,b, it can be seen that the out-of-plane CH₃-AS is very weak in the polarized spectrum of liquid methanol but it becomes relatively apparent in the depolarized spectrum. These behaviors are consistent with those in the gas phase. In previous studies of Raman spectra for liquid methanol, the splitting of CH₃ antisymmetric stretching was not considered because the out-of-plane CH₃-AS had never been observed.^{11,12,23–26,28–30} Another possible reason is that the antisymmetric stretching of CH₃ group was often treated as degeneracy in most molecular systems, as explained in section 3.4. Our results indicate that the splitting of antisymmetric stretching still exists in liquid methanol. According to the spectral fit, the interval of two CH₃-AS is about 28 cm^{-1} in liquid phase, being 11 cm^{-1} smaller than that in the gas phase. This can be attributed to intermolecular interactions such as the hydrogen-bond interaction, which weakens the coupling between CH₃ and OH groups within methanol molecule. A recent study on the microscopic structure of liquid methanol from Raman spectroscopy indicates that liquid methanol comprises combinations of rings or chains of methanol molecules linked with hydrogen bonds and is dominated by structures of trimer, tetramer, and pentamer clusters.⁴²

It should be mentioned that unlike the polarized spectrum, there are some deviations between the fitted and observed depolarized spectrum of liquid methanol, as shown in Figure 5b. This may be caused by two factors. First, the Voigt profile cannot completely describe the band shape of Raman spectrum in liquid methanol because methanol is a strong hydrogen-bond system. The usual, accepted theoretical model to interpret the band shape of vibrational peaks perturbed by external interactions such as hydrogen bond is the Kubo model.^{56–59} Second, the polarized and depolarized Raman bands of the same vibrational mode appear at different frequency positions.^{60,61} In the present spectral fit, the five component peaks in depolarized spectra were fixed at the same positions as those in the polarized one. If the positions of five component peaks in the depolarized spectra are allowed to be different within 7 cm^{-1} from those in the polarized spectra, the depolarized spectrum can also be well fitted. A further

investigation on above two factors is being performed for the best spectral fit and will be reported in the future.

4. CONCLUSION

In this study, the Raman spectra of gaseous and liquid methanol in the C–H stretching region have been investigated and a complete spectral assignment has been presented with the aid of depolarization ratio measurements and DFT calculations. For the vibrational spectra of methanol, the band at 2944 cm^{-1} , which was assigned controversially to CH₃-FR or CH₃-AS by the different experimental techniques such as infrared, Raman, and SFG spectroscopy, was the overlapping of the CH₃-FR and out-of-plane CH₃ antisymmetric stretching vibration. Combining with the different behaviors of antisymmetric stretching in infrared and Raman, the confusions in previous spectral studies can be clarified. On the other hand, we explained the large splitting between two antisymmetric stretching vibrations in gaseous methanol by contrast with the Raman spectrum of gaseous CH₃CD₂OH and other long-chain alcohols in the same spectral region, and concluded that the antisymmetric stretching was close degeneracy in the cases that CH₃ group is not directly connected to OH group or other strongly electronegative group. These results not only provide reliable groundwork for understanding the structure and dynamical process of methanol in the different environments but also shed new light on the other long-chain molecules containing CH₃ group.

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Notes

The authors declare no competing financial interest.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The present work was supported financially by the Natural Science Foundation of China (NSFC, 20903002, 21273211, 91127042) and National Key Basic Research Special Foundation (NKBRSF, 2013CB834602, 2010CB923300) and the 211 Project of Anhui University.

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