

Photosynthesis Course Note

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Abstract

This is a note of the course *An Introduction to Light Harvesting in Bacteria and Plants*. The course is more of a research than of a pedagogic taste: ideas and methods are only mentioned, with reference to the published paper available in the corresponding slides. Therefore, this note aims to provide a guidance to read those slides. Note that the page numbers in this note are the page numbers of each individual PDF, not necessarily the page numbers displayed on the bottom-right corner inside the PDFs.

1 June 29th

In this lecture, the teacher presents background for light-harvesting mechanism in biology systems:

- **pp.1 to 9 of PPT** General background to Biophysics.
- **pp.10 to 18 of PPT** Review of several mechanisms of light harvesting in different species.
- **pp.19 to 20 of PPT** The central topics of this course
 - The nature of exciton in biological light harvesting system. Is it of Frenkel (short-ranged) or Wannier (long-ranged) type?
 - The transfer mechanism. (pp.20) It was mentioned that the transfer is much more efficient than predicted by a classical diffusion model.
 - How is active self-regulation achieved. (pp.20)

pp.21 displays a observed long-range transport of excitation energy in a biomimetic light-harvesting system. Then, after a review of Quantum Mechanics (**pp. 22 to 32**)¹, the teacher illustrated a model to calculate the excitation energy of a dimer. (**pp.33 to 36**) Note that here it is expected that only one of the dimer is excited, because this energetically easier to achieve. Note also that the symbol " \dagger " denotes neither conjugation nor creation operator, but simply a label for an excited state's wavefunction.

The calculated excited state energies on page 35 are splitted into two levels. the difference between them, denoted by \mathcal{E} , is expressed as a function of the two transition dipole moments and the separation length of two molecules. Details about the interaction potential V_{uv} can be found on the next lecture.

2 July 1th

Begin with a review of two modes of excitons in organic system **pp.1**, this lecture proceeds to explain in detail the dipole interaction potential (**pp.2 to 3**) V_{uv} mentioned in previous lecture. **Page 4** digresses on the difference between the transition dipole moment and the permanent dipole moment. The picture shows the transition dipole moment for a Bacteriachlorophyll (the photosynthetic pigments that occur in various phototrophic bacteria). The right side plot illustrates the absorption spectra for Bacteriachlorophyll. **Page 6 and 7** also digresses on electronic momenta and oscillator strength.

The following slide comes back to the excitation energy. It states two forms of dimer: the J aggregation (**pp.9 to 10**, and the H aggregation (**pp.11**). The accessible energy level for absorption is determined by conservation of momentum. As the result, the J aggregated dimer absorbs less energy than the monomer case, and a red shift will be observed when comparing the absorption spectra. The case of H aggregation is similar. **Page 12 to 13** mentions the transition dipole in more complicated cases.

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3 July 6th

This lecture begins with a note on the unbelievable efficiency of biological system. Then it proceeds to review some concepts in quantum statistical mechanics (**page 2 to 21**). Since we are quite familiar with this subject, it will be omitted from this note. The last page mentioned an important equation for the evolution of density matrix in an open system, called the "master equation".

¹ Interestingly, the teacher mentioned Bohmian Mechanics, an alternative model of Quantum Mechanics that features determinism and nonlocality. A comprehensive discussion of this model could be found here: <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/qm-bohm/>

²Reference could be found in *J. Phys. Chem. B*, Vol. 107, No. 35, 2003.

4 July 8th

In the previous lecture, the *master equation* for density matrix ³ could lead to problematic result. When the density matrix propagates as described by the master equation, the eigenvalues for it might evolve into comprising negative values. This is because the added terms are not rigorously derived, but just an approximation. On **page 2** the teacher mentioned a specific case.⁴ Therefore, one introduces the **Lindblad equations (pp.3)**. This equation ensures that the density matrix $\rho \geq 0$ (i.e. having all positive eigenvalues). However, this operator sometimes breaks down the symmetries of the system. That is, a system started with translation symmetry at t_0 might not have translation symmetry at $t > t_0$.

The teacher wrote an example for the V_m term on ppt on blackboard: Considering the case of a harmonic oscillator.

$$H = w_0 a^\dagger a$$

If we add an interaction between the oscillator and other excitons:

$$A^\dagger A(a^\dagger + a) = \text{extra} \otimes \text{bath}$$

Then $A^\dagger A$ is V_m in ppt.

Next, the author provided a specific model of energy transfer.⁵

pp.5 shows diagrammatically the exciton transport process. External influence to the system includes trapping, decaying and dissipation. Here k_t characterizes the trapping rate. And k_d characterizes the decay rate.

pp.6 of PPT explains some notations. Here τ_n characterize the life time of exciton in on state n .⁶ We hope that the total life time $\langle t \rangle = \sum \tau_n$ is small, because the shorter an exciton is fixed on a state, the more random the system is and the more likely that the exciton is trapped.

Following are a series of toy cases that has been calculated.

pp.8 to 9 are the $\rho(t)$ for these simple cases.

pp.10 of PPT⁷ This ring with 16 sites shows that there is always a peak Max population in the opposite site(See upper-right plot). This is because there is always two channels of equal length for excitons to get to the opposite site.

pp.11 of PPT is a two ring case, with 8 sites on each ring. The initial configuration is that excitons are evenly excited in the left ring. The right ring comprised of trapping sites.

³Reference not found.

⁴ Digression: in the article PRE 65 056120, we can find something about the entanglement between two oscillators.

⁵ **Note:** This section's material could be found in *Excitonic energy transfer in light-harvesting complexes in purple bacteria*. *JChemPhys_136_245104.pdf*

⁶ Here $\rho_n \equiv \rho_{nn}$.

⁷ Could be found on *Efficient energy transfer in light-harvesting systems*. Cao and Silbey et al New J Phys (2010)

pp.12 of PPT is another two ring case, with a change in the right ring's number of trapping sites. It shows that a asymmetric design would somehow improve the efficiency, since the plot on the right has a maximum region while the left one has none. The next slide shows similar result.

Caution: I am quite confused by the following content, from pp.16 to the end of PPT. Ergo the following notes are not well organized. It is advised that one should look at the original literature instead.

pp.15 to 16 shows a more advanced calculation of excited states.

pp.16 of PPT Calculating the absorption spectrum, showing that only one level is acceptable.

pp.17 of PPT Changing the configuration of laser could result (in generally) more acceptable levels. However, these laser configurations are not practically achievable.

pp.19 of PPT Using Frankel-Exciton Model and find very good fit, balabala.