

Photochemistry and Photophysics Workshops

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Welcome

The notes have been prepared in a package called BookDown for RStudio so that the equations are accessible to screen readers. However, by providing the notes as a .html webpage I can also embed short videos to further describe some of the topics. Further you can download the questions (and later the answers, top left of the screen) in a format that suits you (either pdf or epub) to view offline, or change the way this document appears for ease of reading.

Workshops for Photochemistry & Photophysics

The course will use a question first approach and we will learn the material by answering the questions. The questions will be shared here in an accessible format, and this page will be updated weekly.

This is the answers for workshop questions, the answers have been prepared from collaborative problem solving from the CH30129 class of 2020-21.

Version history

Week two answers finished 061020 Week one answer for final question finished 051020 Week one answers finished 300920 The initial commit of this book is dated 29th September 2020.

Chapter 1

Workshop Answers for Week 1

1.1 Short mathematical question - Beer Lambert law

- How far can monochromatic 489 nm light travel through a 0.100 M solution of fluorescein with an extinction coefficient at 489 nm of $92000 \text{ M}^{-1} \text{ cm}^{-1}$ before 90 % of it is absorbed?

If 90% of the incident light is being absorbed then 10% of the light is transmitted...

The Beer-Lambert law is (Equation (1.1)):

$$\log \frac{I}{I_0} = -\varepsilon cl \quad (1.1)$$

rearranging this:

$$l = \frac{\log \frac{I_0}{I}}{\varepsilon c}$$

$$l = \frac{\log \frac{100\%}{10\%}}{92000 \text{ M}^{-1} \text{ cm}^{-1} \times 0.100 \text{ M}}$$

$$l = \frac{1}{9200000 \text{ M}^{-1} \text{ m}^{-1} \times 0.100 \text{ M}}$$

$$l = 1.0 \text{ m}$$

1.2 Short conceptual question - molar extinction coefficient

- Modify the molecule in figure 1.1 to increase the molar extinction coefficient (do not worry about what may happen to wavelength).

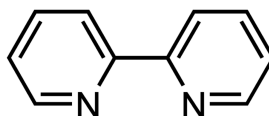


Figure 1.1: The structure of bipyridine (also known as bpy).

If a molecule is rigid the difference between the ground and excited state structure is smaller and this usually leads to a higher molar extinction coefficient, so any structural changes which increase this rigidity will likely lead to a higher molar extinction coefficient.

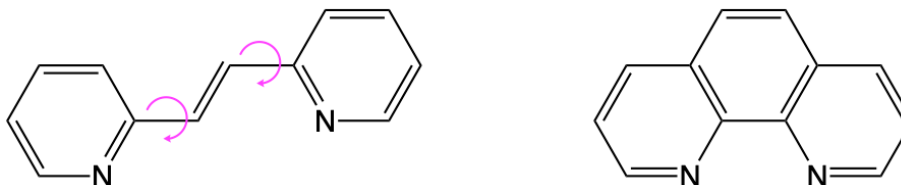


Figure 1.2: Two possible modifications of bpy, the stilbene derivative on the left has a very different ground and excited state structure due to the possible rotations around the two conjugated single bonds, the phenanthroline modification on the right does not allow much deviation in structure and so the excited state is only bent as the bond order is reduced leading to a larger overlap integral.

Excitation of an electron from a bonding or non-bonding orbital into an anti-bonding orbital reduces the bond order, and will ‘kink’ aromatic systems.

1.3 Short conceptual question - intensity of colour

- What factors influence the ‘intensity of colour’ of the following solutions?

CuSO_4 in solution forms the hexa aqua complex listed in figure 1.3. This is a centrosymmetric molecule which therefore runs foul of the Laporte selection rule which says that “allowed transitions in centrosymmetric molecules must

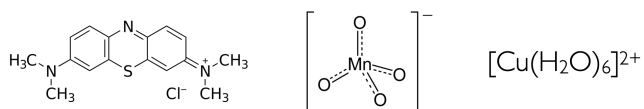


Figure 1.3: The structures of the organic dye methylene blue (left), potassium permanganate (centre) and copper hexa-aqua (right).



Figure 1.4: 1 mM solutions of the organic dye methylene blue (right), potassium permanganate (centre) and copper (hexa-aqua) sulfate (left).

involve a change in parity". So either $g \rightarrow u$ or $u \rightarrow g$ are allowed, and $g \rightarrow g$ and $u \rightarrow u$ are forbidden.

You will not be expected to work out symmetry types for orbitals but can 'back justify' to explain with this.

These symmetry labels appear on the energy level diagram for Cu^{2+} (figure 1.5).

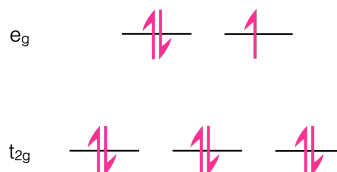


Figure 1.5: The splitting of the d-orbitals in octahedral Cu^{2+} , the transition is between the HOMO t_{2g} level and the LUMO e_g level. The subscript g on each of these orbitals is a symmetry label indicating there is no change of parity and so the transition is Laporte forbidden.

Both of the split energy levels are gerade (g) and so there is no change of parity for the transition from t_{2g} to e_g , therefore the transition is selection rule forbidden and has a low molar extinction coefficient. The 'breaking of symmetry' by possible rotamers of the water ligands mean this value is higher than for the gas phase atomic molar absorption coefficient. The maximum molar extinction coefficient of copper sulfate solutions is around $20 \text{ M}^{-1} \text{ cm}^{-1}$.

The permanganate (MnO_4^-) is a ligand to metal charge transfer transition, since excitation of an electron effectively moves an electron from one of the oxygen ligands to the manganese 'empty' metal centre there is no limitation from the spin selection rule and the complex is not subject to the Laporte selection rule. This leads to moderate to 'high' molar extinction coefficients. The maximum molar extinction coefficient of potassium permanganate solutions is around $1800 \text{ M}^{-1} \text{ cm}^{-1}$.

The final molecule is the synthetic dye methylene blue, this is not centrosymmetric and so is not subject to the Laporte selection rule, further the structure with fused aromatic rings and a large amount of conjugation is fairly rigid and so there is a large overlap of the wavefunctions of the ground and excited state. The maximum molar extinction coefficient of methylene blue solutions is around $75000 \text{ M}^{-1} \text{ cm}^{-1}$.

1.4 Short conceptual question - line width

- Why are some spectra very broad (figure 1.6), whereas others have sharp peaks (figure 1.7)?

You will need to look at the x-scale to truly note the difference in the width of these emission spectra.

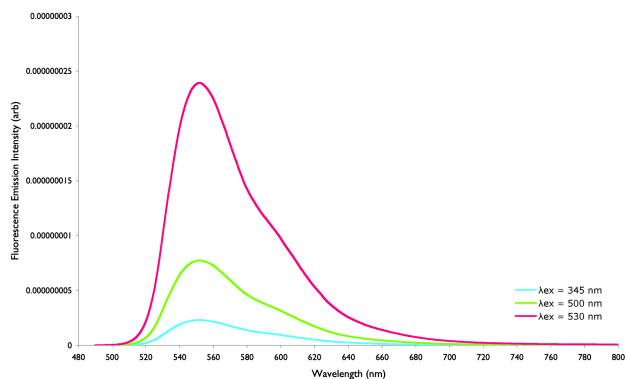


Figure 1.6: The fluorescence emission spectrum of rhodamine 6G in methanol

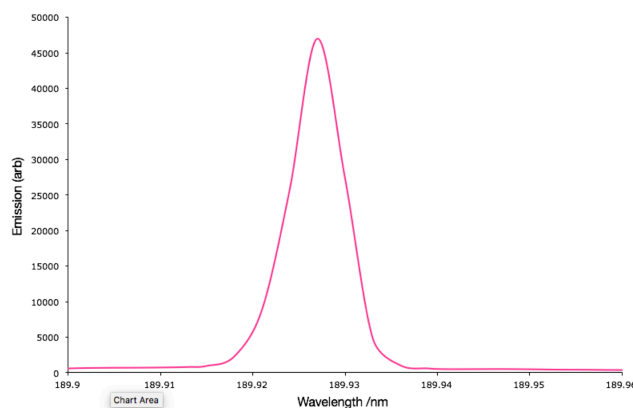


Figure 1.7: The emission spectrum of Sn(II) from ICP-OES

We are looking at two very different spectra here, first off we have an atomic transition and a molecular transition. Secondly one is solvated, the other in the gas (or more accurately plasma) phase. Both of these factors are important...

When we have a transition for either absorption or emission then on an atomic level those energy levels are incredibly well defined, this leads to the energy required to promote an electron between these levels to be equally well defined.

As soon as we solvate this the energy of the occupied (HOMO) is softened as intermolecular interactions will stabilise this level to different amounts, solvation may also allow previously absolutely parity forbidden processes to occur.

The molecular spectrum is much broader because each of the possible rotamers, vibratamers and isomers has a slightly different energy, the myriad possible energies are expanded still by solvation and temperature effects. The more possible structural isomers and rotamers the 'softer' any defining features in the spectrum. For example if we compare the rhodamine spectrum (figure 1.6) to that of anthracene (figure 1.8) we can see that there is more 'fine structure' in the anthracene spectrum, this is because of the smaller possible number of structural variations, there are no possible rotamers and so transitions are more defined.

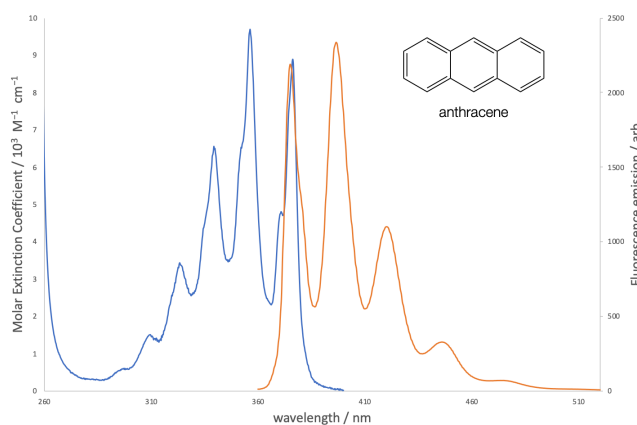


Figure 1.8: The absorption and emission spectra of anthracene indicating fine structure in the spectrum

1.5 Short conceptual question - the effect of solvation on absorbance

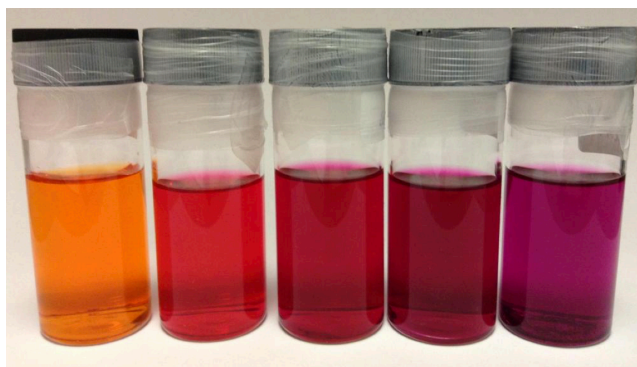


Figure 1.9: Ethidium bromide dissolved in from right; water(orange), methanol, ethanol, propanol and butanol(purple)

- Why does the observed colour of ethidium bromide depend upon the solvent (figure 1.9))?

Think about the effect of solvation on the energy levels and why those energy levels matter! Remember that if light is transmitted through a solution that is the colour we observe...

This is in essence answering the same question as in question 1.4, solvation affects the energy levels of occupied orbitals. Without going into any more detail than essential the different solvents stabilise the HOMO of ethidium bromide different amounts - this is likely due to different hydrogen bonding of the alcohols. The more stabilised the ground state the bigger the energy gap leading to a blue shift in the absorption spectra. The orange solution is absorbing blue light ($\lambda_{\text{max}} = 480 \text{ nm}$) and the purple solution absorbing orange ($\lambda_{\text{max}} = 550 \text{ nm}$) indicating the energy gap of the aqueous solution is larger and therefore the solvent stabilisation is biggest.

It is worth noting that the energy of 'empty' orbitals is unaffected and so the energy of the LUMO is unchanged (figure 1.10).

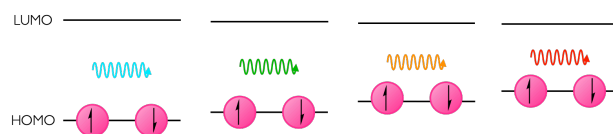


Figure 1.10: Solvation effects the energy level of the HOMO, but the unoccupied LUMO always has the same energy, consequently in different solvents the energy gap varies.

1.6 Extended question - Azobenzene

Azobenzene undergoes the following cis-trans isomerisation, the isomerisation occurs in the ps timescale.

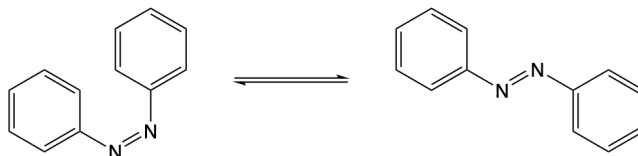


Figure 1.11: The cis-trans isomerisation of azobenzene

- Why would you expect the absorption spectrum of each isomer to be different?

Trans azobenzene is centrosymmetric and so is subject to the Laporte selection rule, cis azobenzene is non-centrosymmetric and so it is not parity forbidden.

Consequently the HOMO-LUMO transition which is allowed for the cis is forbidden for the trans and so the absorbance spectra is different.

- *Suggest why the trans conformation is more stable than the cis isomer.*

Steric hinderance will mean that the cis-isomer is not planar, if it isn't planar it isn't fully conjugated, and if it isn't fully conjugated it isn't as stable. There is no steric hinderance in the trans isomer.

- *Use the following data to predict the proportion of each isomer under 360 nm excitation.*

Table: The molar extinction coefficient of the two isomers of azobenzene.

	360 / M ⁻¹ cm ⁻¹	460 / M ⁻¹ cm ⁻¹
trans-azobenzene	22000	4500
cis-azobenzene	2100	5500

For the photostationary state the absorbance of the two isomers will be the same.

The excited state for both molecules will be the same, and the probability of the excited state decaying into any given isomer is the same.

So if $A = \epsilon cl$ and $A_{trans} = A_{cis}$ then at 360 nm:

$$\epsilon_{trans}c_{trans} = \epsilon_{cis}c_{cis}$$

$$c_{trans} = 0.095c_{cis}$$

- *Would there be more or less trans azobenzene at 460 nm? Justify your answer.*

There would be more trans at the photostationary state when excited at 460 nm, this is because the relative ration of molar extinction coefficients favors formation of more of the trans isomer.

- *It has been suggested the 360 nm absorption is an $S_0 \rightarrow S_2$ absorption, and the 460 nm band is an $S_0 \rightarrow S_1$ absorption. Suggest which energy levels are involved for each of the two transitions and compare it to stilbene which has a similar structure, but the cis and trans absorptions are 280 & 295 nm respectively.*

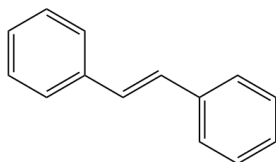


Figure 1.12: The structure of stilbene

Azobenzene has n , π and π^* orbitals whereas stilbene only has π and π^* orbitals. Given the different orbital types available in azobenzene the expectation that the transitions will have a wider energy spacing than in stilbene where we just have the bonding and antibonding π set, and so we would expect these energy levels to be more closely spaced.

I'm leaving you hanging on this one we will discuss it again next week.

Chapter 2

Workshop Answers for Week 2

2.1 Short mathematical question - Quantum Yield and lifetime

The quantum yield and lifetime of a dye were measured to be 0.43 & 2.6 ns respectively. What is the natural lifetime?

The fluorescence quantum yield (equation (2.2)) and fluorescence lifetime (equation (2.2)) are related to the rate constants for the different decay processes.

$$\phi_f = \frac{k_f^0}{k_f^0 + k_{ic} + k_{ST} + k_{\text{other}}} \quad (2.1)$$

$$\tau_f = \frac{1}{k_f^0 + k_{ic} + k_{ST} + k_{\text{other}}} \quad (2.2)$$

The natural lifetime is the lifetime when the only decay pathway is fluorescence emission (equation (2.3)).

$$\tau_f^0 = \frac{1}{k_f^0} \quad (2.3)$$

Combining equations (2.2) and (2.2):

$$\frac{\tau_f}{\phi_f} = \frac{\frac{1}{k_f^0 + k_{ic} + k_{ST} + k_{\text{other}}}}{\frac{k_f^0}{k_f^0 + k_{ic} + k_{ST} + k_{\text{other}}}} = \frac{1}{k_f^0} = \tau_f^0$$

Consequently $\tau_f^0 = \frac{\tau_f}{\phi_f} = \frac{2.6}{0.43} = 6.0 \text{ ns}$

2.2 Short conceptual question - Effect of other processes

For a given value of ϕ_f what happens to the lifetime and quantum yield as k_{IC} and k_{ISC} increases?

If k_f^0 is fixed (which it is for a given chromophore) then as we adjust the other rate constants in equation (2.2) the emission lifetime (the time it takes for the intensity to reduce to $1/e$ of the initial intensity) decreases, as shown in figure 2.1.

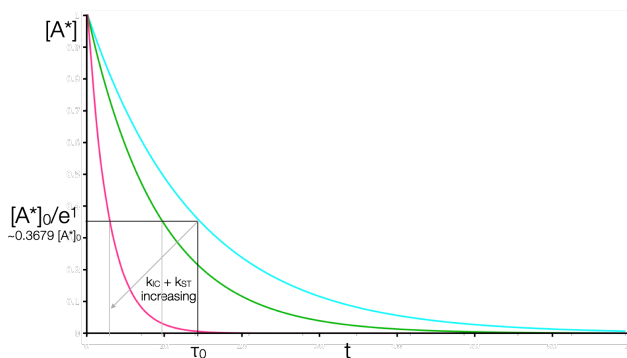


Figure 2.1: The variation of the emission lifetime (the time it takes to decay to $1/e$ of the initial concentration, for a constant rate of fluorescence emission but increasing rates of non-radiative decay.

2.3 Conceptual question - Effect of structure

Fluorescein (figure 2.2) in basic aqueous solution has a quantum yield of fluorescence, Φ_f , of 0.95, and fluorescence lifetime, τ_f , of 4.1 ns.

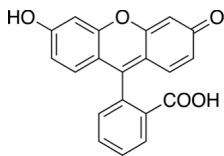


Figure 2.2: The structure of the fluorescent molecule fluorescein

Suggest why the fluorescence quantum yield in this system is so high.

2.4. CONCEPTUAL QUESTION - LACK OF SYMMETRY IN SPECTRA.19

The only things that affect the quantum yield and lifetime (equations (2.2) and (2.2)) are the different rate constants involved. The quantum yield is a measure of the proportion of excited states which decay by each pathway.

Therefore if the quantum yield of fluorescence is near unity then neither the rate of intersystem crossing or internal conversion is large. Intersystem crossing may occur due to the change in orbital type offered, but given the lack of heavy atoms this rate is unlikely to be high and will probably be a negligible proportion given the high rates of other processes.

The rate of intersystem crossing is more efficient for rotations than vibrations (due to the closer spacing of rotational energy levels), therefore if rotations can occur the rate of internal conversion tends to be quite high. In this case there is only one likely bond that could rotate to lose the excited state of the system. This is the single bond linking the two ring systems. Rotation around this bond is severely inhibited though due to the presence of the acid group which restricts rotation.

Please note that it is rotations around bonds that cross the conjugation within the molecule that allow for the most efficient energy loss.

2.4 Conceptual question - lack of symmetry in spectra.

The absorption and emission spectrum of fluorescein is shown in figure (2.3).

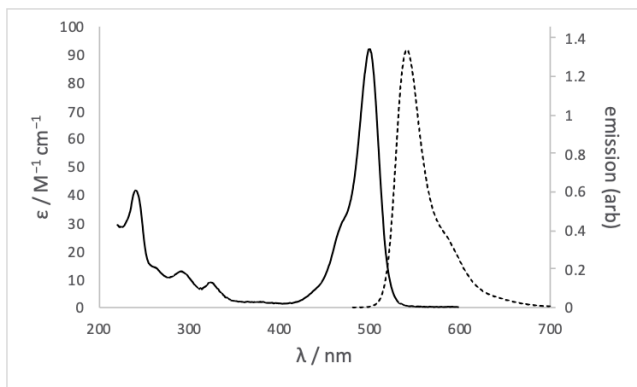


Figure 2.3: The absorption (solid) and emission (dashed) spectrum of fluorescein in basic ethanol.

Why are the absorption bands between 200 – 350 nm not reflected in the emission spectrum?

Kasha's rule states "An excited state always emits from the lowest energy level of that spin multiplicity state. Consequently we can excite into any available

orbital, but the excited state will rapidly decay into the lowest energy level of that multiplicity. So although we are exciting from S_0 into S_1 , S_2 , S_3 ... any excited state will rapidly decay by internal conversion down to the S_1 excited state and all emission will occur from this state.

Kasha's rule is a consequence of the energy gap law which I alluded to when talking about the special case of azulene, but this will be covered in a video specifically talking about the energy gap law.

2.5 Conceptual question - Stokes' shift

The inorganic dye $[\text{Ru}(\text{bpy})_3]^{2+}$ has a measured lifetime in water of 580 ns and a natural lifetime of 13.8 μs . The spectrum is shown in figure 2.4. What is the origin of the large Stokes' shift in this system?

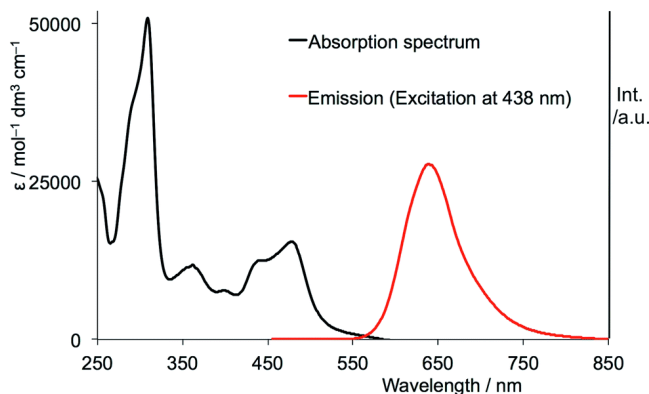


Figure 2.4: The absorption (black) and emission (red) spectrum of ruthenium tris bipyridine in water.

Firstly we need to separate two things - the first is just the origin of the Stokes' shift due to the transition of an electron occurring very quickly leaving an optimised state to occupy an unoptimised state, which later relaxes. A typical Stokes' shift is ~ 20 nm, the Stokes' shift in this example is more than 150 nm... why?

If we consider the system that we have at hand, in this case $[\text{Ru}(\text{bpy})_3]^{2+}$ we can note the HOMO-LUMO transition is an MLCT. This has a large difference in structure of the HOMO & LUMO with a redistribution of charge which will also have a large effect on the arrangement of the solvent shell. Given this large difference in optimised structure there would be a large shift.

However this isn't the only factor, the natural lifetime of 13.8 μs would indicate that the emission transition is phosphorescence, this spin forbidden transition has electrons aligned in parallel which is lower than the corresponding singlet

2.6. CONCEPTUAL QUESTION - THE EFFECT OF BINDING ON EMISSION21

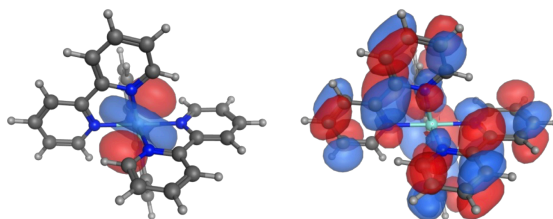


Figure 2.5: The HOMO (left) and LUMO (right) of ruthenium (II) tris bipyridine clearly showing the MLCT nature of the transition.

state. So after excitation there is a change in multiplicity of the excited state, this lowers the energy of the system further moving the λ_{max} of emission to lower energy (longer wavelength).

Data from Shi *et al.*, Synthesis and characterization of phosphorescent two coordinate copper(I) complexes bearing diamidocarbene ligands. Dalton Trans., 2017,46, 745-752.

2.6 Conceptual question - the effect of binding on emission

The asymmetric cyanine dye YO-Pro-1 is a DNA stain because it has a large increase on fluorescence emission when binding to DNA. The lifetime in free solution is around 2 ps and when bound to DNA is 2.4 ns. What is the structural origin of the large increase of emission upon binding?

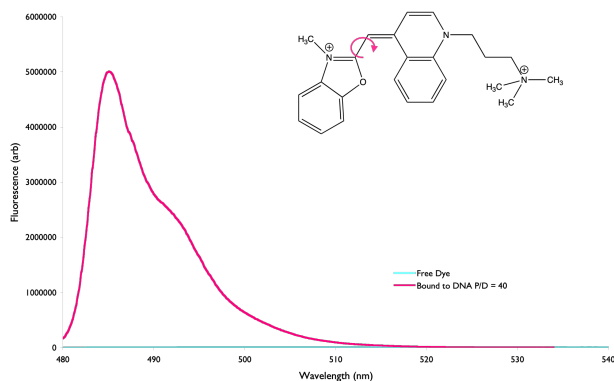


Figure 2.6: The emission spectrum of the chromophore YO-Pro-1 when free in aqueous solution (blue) and when bound to DNA (pink), the structure of the chromophore indicating a route of rotation relaxation is indicated.

The chromophore YO-Pro-1 has a methine bridge between the two halves of the chromophore, this offers efficient loss of the excited state *via* internal conversion (see question 2.3. As noted earlier free rotation around a bond which cuts across the conjugation is particularly efficient in deactivating an excited state.

If this pathway is inhibited by binding to the DNA (the dye intercalates between the base pairs but any dye DNA interaction would inhibit this mechanism of excited state decay) then the fluorescence lifetime will increase (equation (2.2)).

2.7 Extended question - Properties of Ethidium Bromide (Example Exam Question)

Ethidium bromide (EB, figure 2.7 is used as a DNA stain, which is essentially non-fluorescent in aqueous solution, but shows a strong enhancement of emission upon binding to double stranded DNA (which has a negatively charged backbone).

Emission is almost exclusively from the singlet excited state, but a triplet state has been shown to exist, which emits with a low quantum yield ($\Phi_P = 0.00006$).

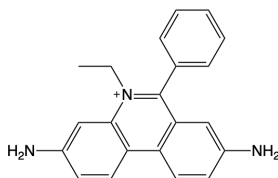


Figure 2.7: The structure of the cationic ethidium bromide chromophore.

- Sketch a Jablonski diagram for the processes you know to occur.

If phosphorescence occurs there must be some intersystem crossing in both directions.

- The molar extinction coefficient, ϵ , of EB has been measured to be $78500 \text{ M}^{-1} \text{ cm}^{-1}$. What factors contribute to EB having such a high extinction coefficient?

There is a rigid structure indicating a similar ground and excited state structure, which would lead to a good overlap integrals between the HOMO and LUMO. The molar extinction coefficient is a measure of this overlap integral.

The following spectra, lifetimes and quantum yield have been measured for EB in different free solution and DNA systems:

Table: The lifetimes and quantum yields of ethidium bromide in aqueous solution and when bound to DNA in protiated and deuterated systems.

	/ ns	Φ_f
H ₂ O (no DNA)	1.6	0.012

2.7. EXTENDED QUESTION - PROPERTIES OF ETHIDIUM BROMIDE (EXAMPLE EXAM QUESTION) 23

	/ ns	Φ_f
D ₂ O (no DNA)	6.3	
DNA	28.3	0.220
DNA (deuterated)	38.4	

- What factors likely lead to an enhancement of fluorescence quantum yield upon binding to DNA?

The chromophore single bond between the two halves of the chromophore, this offers efficient loss of the excited state *via* internal conversion (see question 2.3). As noted earlier free rotation around a bond which cuts across the conjugation is particularly efficient in deactivating an excited state.

If this pathway is inhibited by binding to the DNA (the dye intercalates between the base pairs but any dye DNA interaction would inhibit this mechanism of excited state decay) then the fluorescence lifetime will increase (equation (2.2)).

- Show that the natural lifetime of EB is 129 ns.

$$\phi_f = \frac{k_f^0}{k_f^0 + k_{ic} + k_{ST} + k_{\text{other}}}$$

$$\tau_f = \frac{1}{k_f^0 + k_{ic} + k_{ST} + k_{\text{other}}}$$

The natural lifetime is the lifetime when the only decay pathway is fluorescence emission (equation (2.3)).

$$\tau_f^0 = \frac{1}{k_f^0}$$

Combining equations (2.2) and (2.2):

$$\frac{\tau_f}{\phi_f} = \frac{\frac{1}{k_f^0 + k_{ic} + k_{ST} + k_{\text{other}}}}{\frac{k_f^0}{k_f^0 + k_{ic} + k_{ST} + k_{\text{other}}}} = \frac{1}{k_f^0} = \tau_f^0$$

Consequently $\tau_f^0 = \frac{\tau_f}{\phi_f} = \frac{1.6}{0.012} = 129 \text{ ns}$

- What is the origin of the large Stoke's shift ($\sim \text{max ex} = 520 \text{ nm}$, $\sim \text{max em} = 608 \text{ nm}$)

We are told the transition is fluorescence, but it has a very long natural lifetime. This long lifetime would indicate that despite the transition being selection rule allowed there is a structural explanation for the inefficiency of this process.

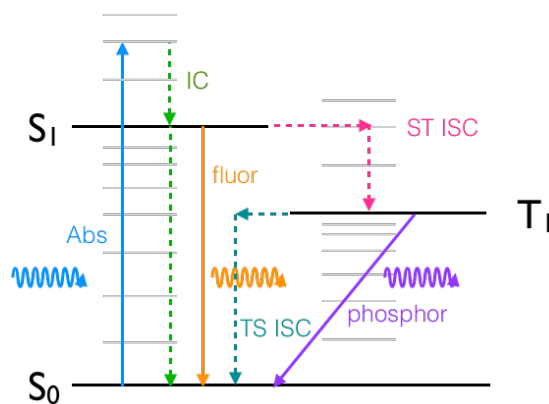


Figure 2.8: A Jablonski diagram indicating the allowed transitions within the system, absorbance, internal conversion, intersystem crossing, fluorescence and phosphorescence.

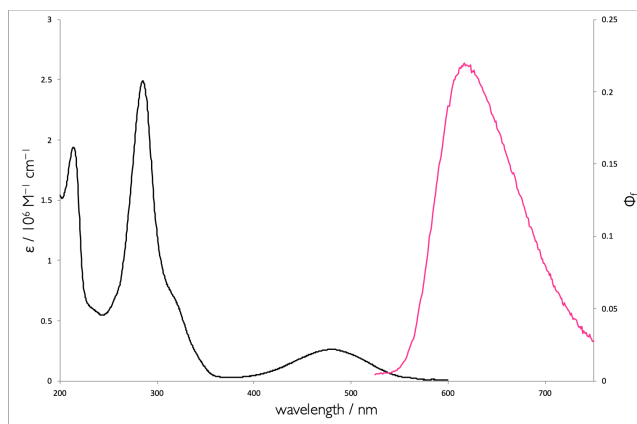


Figure 2.9: The absorption (black) and emission (pink) spectrum of ethidium bromide when bound to DNA.

2.7. EXTENDED QUESTION - PROPERTIES OF ETHIDIUM BROMIDE (EXAMPLE EXAM QUESTION) 25

This would indicate that there is now a poor overlap integral indicating a poor overlap of the excited state and ground state structures, or there is a large difference in the structures of the excited and ground states.

This large difference in structure would be accounted for in the Stokes' shift - a large deviation in structure would lead to a larger energy loss upon the optimisation of the excited state.

- What transitions are responsible for the absorption features in the: 400-600 nm range 200-350 nm range

The molecule has hetero atoms and so there will be both $n - \pi^*$ and $\pi - \pi^*$ transitions, the $n - \pi^*$ transitions will occur at lower energy (higher wavelength) and be the HOMO-LUMO transition.

- Why are the features in the 200-350 nm range not replicated in the emission spectrum?

Kasha's rule states "An excited state always emits from the lowest energy level of that spin multiplicity state. Consequently we can excite into any available orbital, but the excited state will rapidly decay into the lowest energy level of that multiplicity. So although we are exciting from S_0 into S_1 , S_2 , S_3 ... any excited state will rapidly decay by internal conversion down to the S_1 excited state and all emission will occur from this state.

- Why does deuterating the solvent (or DNA) effect the lifetime of the excited state?

Ultimately because it affects the rates of internal conversion, and so the lifetime is changed as described in equation (eq:lifetimefluor). We will learn more as to why when we cover the energy gap law.

- What effect would freezing the samples have on the lifetime, fluorescence quantum yield & phosphorescence quantum yield.

You would expect the emission lifetime and quantum yield to increase on freezing (as described in equation (eq:lifetimefluor)) as the efficiency (and therefore rate) of internal conversion mechanisms (particularly rotational relaxation) would be dramatically reduced in solid systems.

A study of the thermodynamics of the dye DNA system measured the binding constant of EB with DNA to be 1.05×10^6 .

- Why is the measured quantum yield for a system containing 2 μ M EB and 20 mM DNA only 0.18?

This will be due to there being two states - one where the chromophore is bound, one where it is not. It is an equilibrium so not all dye will be bound to DNA. When not bound there is no fluorescence enhancement. The quantum yield we see is in fact a weighted average between the two states.

This is a problem solving question and any reasonable attempt would have been given credit. It is demonstrating an ability to think about data and the problem in a scientific manner.

- *Why would increasing the ionic strength of the solution, increase the fluorescence intensity of EB in solution with DNA?*

This would push the equilibrium to form the dye:DNA complex increasing binding, as the binding increases the proportion of molecules displaying the higher quantum yield increases and the overall emission intensity of the sample increases.

This is a problem solving question and any reasonable attempt would have been given credit. It is demonstrating an ability to think about data and the problem in a scientific manner.