

# Effect of source-drain electric field on the Meyer–Neldel energy in organic field effect transistors

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We studied the influence of the lateral source-drain electric field on the Meyer–Neldel phenomenon observed for the charge mobility measured in C<sub>60</sub>-based organic field effect transistors (OFETs). It was found that the characteristic Meyer–Neldel temperature notably shifts with applied source drain electric field. This finding is in excellent agreement with an analytic model recently extended to account also for the field dependence of the charge carrier mobility in materials with a Gaussian density-of-states distribution. As the theoretical model to predict charge carrier mobility is not limited to zero-electric field, it provides a more accurate evaluation of energetic disorder parameters from experimental data measured at arbitrary electric fields. © 2011 American Institute of Physics. [doi:10.1063/1.3584131]

Empirical Meyer–Neldel (MN) compensation rule<sup>1</sup> has been typically observed in Arrhenius plots (for the temperature dependencies) of the charge carrier mobility ( $\mu$ ) in organic field-effect transistors (OFETs) (Refs. 2 and 3) with changing carrier density in these devices. In context of the charge transport in OFETs, the MN rule suggests a specific empirical relation between the Arrhenius activation energy  $E_a$  and the mobility prefactor. More specifically, it implies that the Arrhenius-type [ $\log(\mu)$  versus  $1/T$ ] dependencies, measured at different gate voltages and, concomitantly, at different charge carrier densities, intersect at a given finite isokinetic temperature  $T_{MN}$ . We recently studied both experimentally and theoretically the MN effect in C<sub>60</sub> OFETs and have shown that the characteristic parameter called MN energy “ $E_{MN}=kT_{MN}$ ” is determined by the width of the density-of-state (DOS) distribution,  $\sigma$ , in the conductive channel of an organic semiconducting film.<sup>4–6</sup> Measurements of the MN effect in C<sub>60</sub> films grown at different conditions have revealed a significant shift in the MN energy (and consequently change in the energetic disorder parameter  $\sigma$ ) with changing film morphology.<sup>5</sup> Thus it was proposed<sup>5</sup> that “ $E_{MN}$ ” can be used as an important material characterizing parameter for active organic semiconductor layers in OFETs independent of the device geometry.

The initial theoretical consideration of the MN effect<sup>4</sup> in organic materials was based on a Gaussian disorder model with accounting for the carrier concentration dependence of the OFET mobility, however, it was limited to zero-electric field implying thus it is justified just for a very low lateral field. Recently Fishchuk *et al.*<sup>7</sup> extended the above theoretical model to consider the OFET mobility at arbitrary electric fields, viz., lateral field caused by source-drain voltage. In

the present letter, we report on experimental and theoretical investigation of the influence of the lateral electric field on the MN energy in OFETs. The shift in the MN temperature in an OFET upon applied lateral electric field was found and described by the extended analytic model of Fishchuk *et al.*<sup>7</sup> that accounts for the field dependence of the OFET mobility. We show that the observed electric field dependence of the MN energy is a consequence of the spatial energy correlations in the organic semiconductor film which features a Poole–Frenkel type behavior ( $\ln \mu \propto F^{1/2}$ ) for OFET mobility upon applied source-drain field. Since the present model is not limited to zero-field, it allows more accurate evaluation of energetic disorder parameters from experimental data measured at a given electric field.

We investigated in C<sub>60</sub> based OFET structure the temperature dependence of charge carrier mobility which was evaluated from the transfer characteristics in the linear regime ( $V_g \gg V_d$ , where  $V_g$  and  $V_d$  are the gate and drain source voltages, respectively) in order to ensure a homogeneous charge distribution in the conductive channel. In order to maintain the linear regime conditions we used low source drain voltages. These OFET devices were fabricated using divinyltetramethyldisiloxane-bis(benzocyclobutane) as gate dielectric on ITO/glass substrates and C<sub>60</sub> thin films as organic semiconductor as described previously.<sup>2</sup>

The observation of different Arrhenius activation energies of electron mobility for OFET at different carrier concentrations leads to the phenomenological MN rule. Figure 1(a) shows the MN type behavior of charge carrier mobility at a source-drain voltage of 2 V and Fig. 1(b) shows the MN behavior at a source-drain voltage of 10 V. A shift in the MN temperature from 409 to 372 K is clearly visible in both Arrhenius plots Figs. 1(a) and 1(b).

As shown in Fig. 2 the Arrhenius activation energy of charge carrier mobility decreases with increasing  $V_g$ , which

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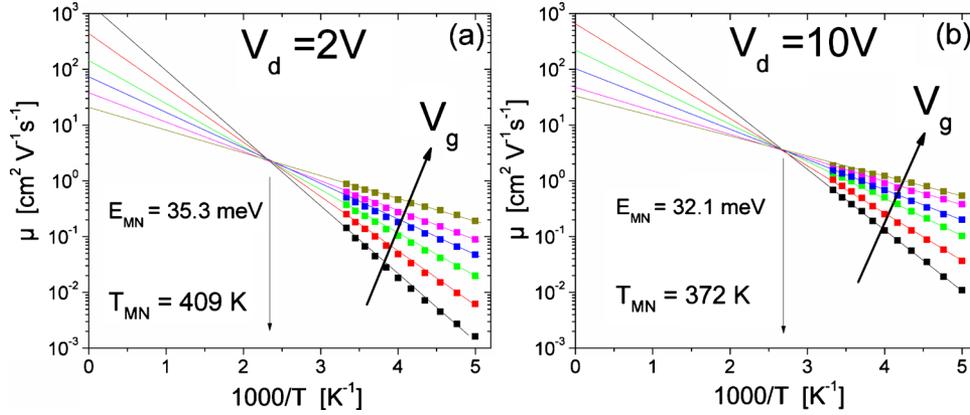


FIG. 1. (Color online) Meyer Neldel rule behavior of charge-carrier mobility measured at different gate voltages for two applied source–drain voltages (a) 2V (b) 10 V. Range for  $V_g$  is from 25 to 60 V.

can be explained by the fact of filling up the DOS with increasing charge carrier concentration and consequently shifting the Fermi level closer to the effective transport energy level.<sup>8,9</sup> This decreases the activation energy, charge carriers has to overcome in order to be mobile.

The activation energy decreases with increasing electric field in the film, which can be explained by the fact, that the electric field lowers the average barrier height for energetic uphill jumps in the field direction.<sup>10</sup> Figure 2 shows a Poole–Frenkel type behavior of the activation energy which decreases linearly with square-root of the source-drain voltage.

The MN energies measured in  $C_{60}$  OFETs at different source-drain voltages are plotted in Fig. 3 (symbols). The  $E_{MN}$  was found to shift from 35 to 32 meV with increasing lateral electric field in the device.

Recently, we extended our analytic model, which was originally suggested for a zero-field limit, to consider the temperature dependent OFET mobility also at *arbitrary electric fields*.<sup>7</sup> The model is based on effective medium formalism and takes also into account spatial energy correlation effects using the results of recent computer simulations<sup>11</sup> of charge-carrier transport in energy correlated system at large carrier concentrations (see for calculation details in Ref. 7). Energy correlations in organic disordered solids imply slowly varying static spatial fluctuation in the potential energy landscape and can arise due to charge-dipole<sup>12</sup> or charge-quadrupole interactions or fluctuations (inhomogeneity) in electronic polarization energy, resulting from molecular density fluctuations in an organic material due to micro-

scopic regions that are under compression or dilation.<sup>13</sup>

In particular, the analytic model<sup>7</sup> accounts for a reduced *local* variance in the energy distribution of nearby hopping sites due to the correlation-induced smoothing of the energy landscape in a disordered organic solid and, what was found to be of special relevance for the description of the presented experimental results, is that it accounts for a decrease in the slope of the Poole–Frenkel-type field dependence with increasing carrier density.<sup>11</sup> The latter was found to be an immediate reason giving rise to the lateral field ( $F$ ) dependence of the MN energy. This dependence can be parametrized in the following form<sup>7</sup> for  $a/b=5$

$$\frac{E_{MN}}{\sigma} = 0.5 + 0.029 \frac{eaF}{\sigma} - 0.039 \left( \frac{eaF}{\sigma} \right)^2. \quad (1)$$

where  $e$  is the elementary charge,  $a$  is an average intermolecular distance assumed for  $C_{60}$  films to be similar to  $C_{60}$  crystals, viz.,  $a=1.4$  nm,<sup>14</sup> and  $b$  is the carrier localization radius. The width of the DOS  $\sigma$  can be determined as

$$\sigma = E_{MNA} \left[ 1 + \sqrt{1 + \left( \frac{eaF}{E_{MN}} \right)^2 \frac{0.078}{A^2}} \right], \quad A = 1 - 0.029 \frac{eaF}{E_{MN}}. \quad (2)$$

Equations (1) and (2) are valid for  $eaF/\sigma > 0.25$ , i.e., when the Poole–Frenkel-type field dependence ( $\ln \mu \propto F^{1/2}$ ) of the

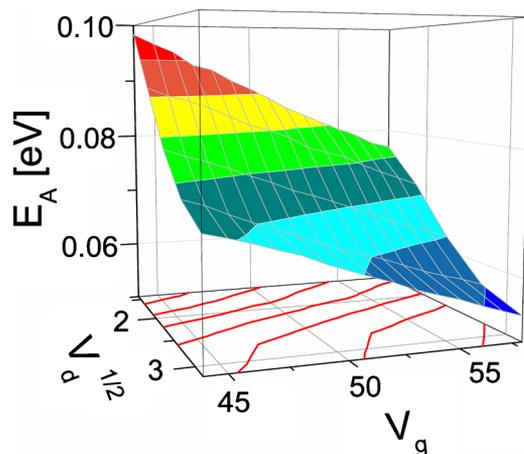


FIG. 2. (Color online) Arrhenius activation energy measured as a function of gate voltage  $V_g$  at different applied source-drain voltages  $V_d$ .

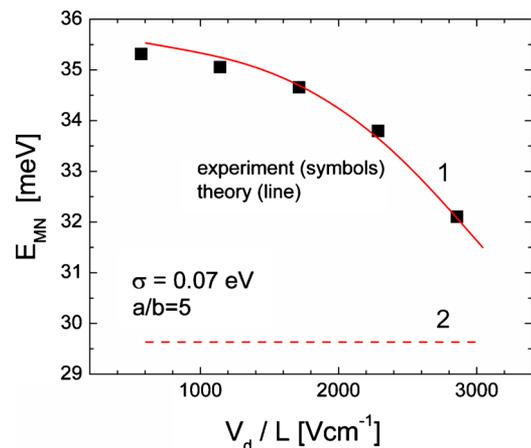


FIG. 3. (Color online) Meyer–Neldel energy as a function of the lateral electric field measured in  $C_{60}$ -based OFET (symbols) and the theoretical fit based on our extended model as described by Eq. (1) and (2). Dashed curve 2 was calculated by neglecting any energy correlation effects.

OFET mobility is obeyed. At lower fields, the charge mobility tends to saturate upon approaching zero-field and thus deviates from the Poole–Frenkel law.<sup>7,11</sup> Consequently, the actual zero-field mobility differs from that obtained by extrapolations of  $\ln \mu \propto F^{1/2}$  plots to  $F \rightarrow 0$ . It should be noted that present extended theoretical model yields  $E_{MN}/\sigma \cong 0.33$  for zero-field mobility. Previous theoretical treatment limited to zero-field case,<sup>4</sup> which disregarded the energy correlations and percolation effects, yielded a somewhat different ratio  $E_{MN}/\sigma \cong 0.40$ .

Thus, the experimentally determined  $E_{MN}$  at a finite electric field can directly be used for evaluation of the energy disorder parameter  $\sigma$  by Eq. (2) without the necessity of an extrapolation of the experimental data to zero-electric field.

It should be noted, that for the quantitative description of the lateral field dependence of the OFET mobility one has to involve a concept of a strong inhomogeneity of the lateral electric field inside the accumulation layer formed in an OFET caused by an inhomogeneous morphology of the semiconductor, which results in strong local fields confined to specific places having the largest energetic barrier heights and, hence, controlling the overall (effective) hopping charge mobility through the OFET channel, as suggested elsewhere.<sup>7</sup> Thus, it is actually the effective local field that should be used in Eq. (2) instead of the average applied electric field. The ratio  $q$  between the local electric field strength and that averaged over the transistor channel  $V_d/L$  can be readily determined from the field dependence of  $E_{MN}$ . In fact, a set of just two  $E_{MN}$  values measured at two different electric fields inserted into Eq. (2) enables calculating  $\sigma$  and  $q$  parameters.

Solid curve 1 in Fig. 3 shows the calculated lateral electric field dependence of  $E_{MN}$  using Eqs. (1) and (2) at  $q = 256$  and  $a = 1.4$  nm, and it demonstrates a remarkably good fitting of the experimental data by the present analytic model for  $F = V_d/L > 500$  V cm<sup>-1</sup>, when  $\ln \mu \propto F^{1/2}$  dependence for the OFET mobility takes place. The calculated field dependence of  $E_{MN}$  for the system devoid of any spatial energy correlations is given by dashed curve 2 in Fig. 3. Thus, the experimentally observed decrease in the MN energy with increasing electric field results from presence of spatial energy correlations.

In conclusion, the MN behavior for the temperature dependent OFET mobility has been studied in C<sub>60</sub> films at dif-

ferent applied lateral electric fields. The characteristic MN energy  $E_{MN}$  is found to shift from 35 meV  $\rightarrow$  32 meV by increasing the applied source drain electric field. The experimental results are in excellent agreement with the predictions of the recent analytic model<sup>7</sup> which was extended to account for the dependence of the OFET mobility upon the applied lateral electric field in organic semiconductors with a Gaussian DOS distribution. The present model is superior to the previously suggested one as it allows more accurate evaluation of important material parameters from experimental data measured at any electric field and does not require an extrapolation of experimental data to the zero-electric fields.

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