

AFM

(Atomic Force Microscopy)

Atomic Force Microscopy or Scanning Force Microscopy

AFM is one of many techniques which fall under the Scanned Probe Microscopy (SPM) family of instruments. In all of these SPM techniques a small probe (10-100 nm radius of curvature) is scanned by a piezoelectric device over a sample to produce an image of the sample surface.

The first of the SPM techniques was the Scanning Tunneling Microscope (STM), developed by Binnig & Rohrer, which got them the Nobel prize for Physics in 1986. The contrast mechanism in the STM is based on the tunneling of electrons from a sharp metal probe tip to a conductive sample.

A simple schematic of an AFM instrument is given in Fig.1.

In this instrument the probe tip is mounted on the end of a triangular cantilever arm.

A piezoelectric device scans the sample beneath the probe tip.

As the probe tip undergoes attractive or repulsive forces, the cantilever will bend. This bending of the cantilever can be monitored by bouncing a laser beam off of the cantilever onto a 2 element photodiode (Position Sensitive Photo Diode).

In normal operation the tip - sample force is held constant by a computer controlled feedback loop that examines the force and tells the piezoelectric device whether to move the sample closer or farther away in order to maintain the set force value.

The AFM image produced is a measure of the topography of the sample.

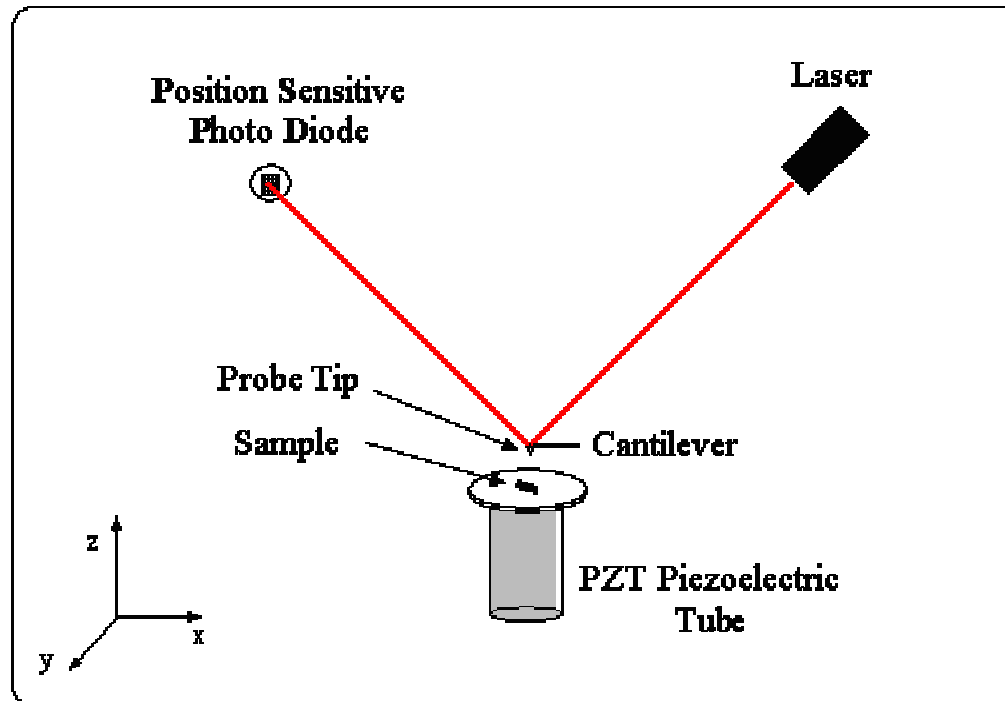


Fig.1. Schematic diagram of AFM.

The AFM uses the attractive or repulsive forces encountered by a probe tip when it is in close proximity to a sample surface (<200 nm).

There are three main modes of AFM operation:
Contact, Non-Contact and Intermittant Contact (Tapping).

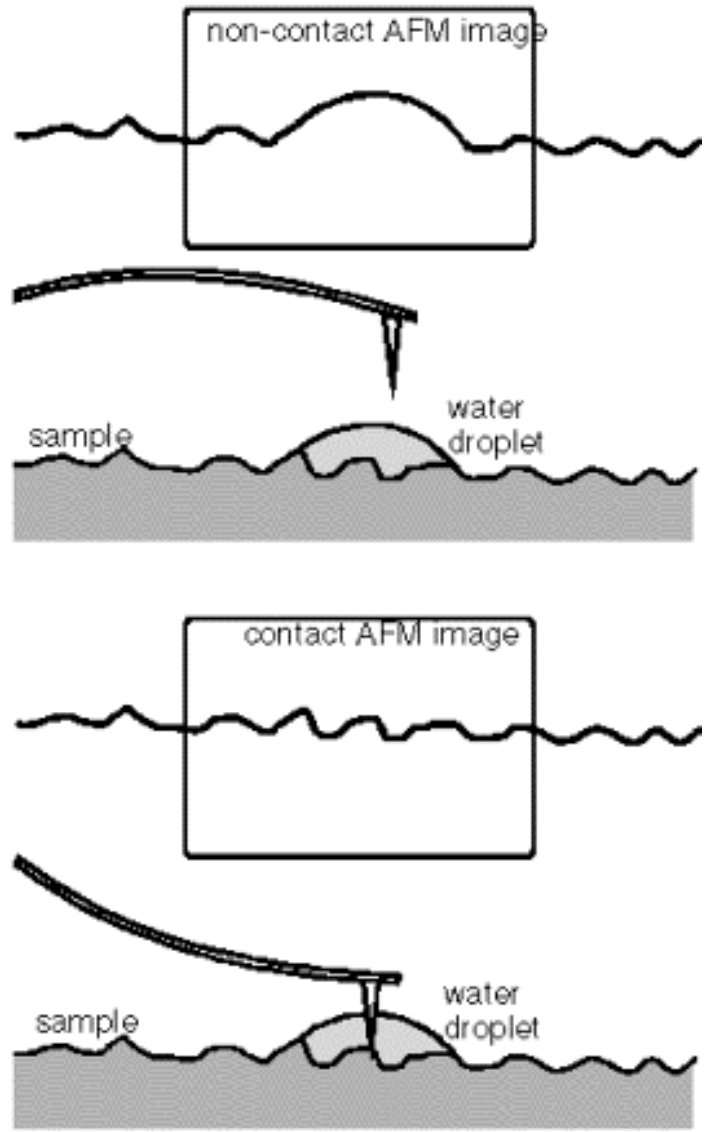


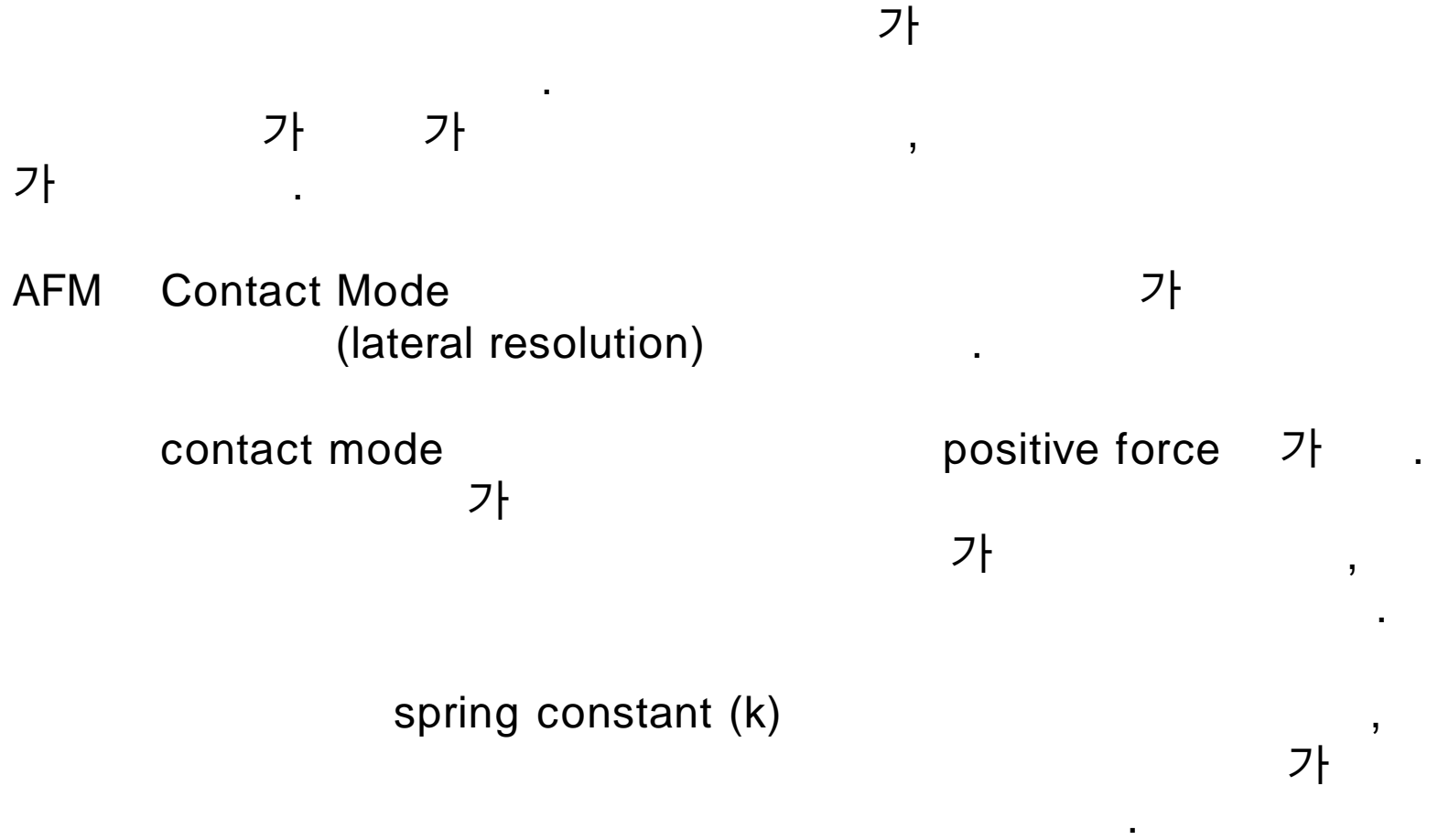
Fig.2. Contact mode and non - contact mode on the water surface.

Contact AFM is done by bringing the tip to a distance at which repulsive forces dominate the tip-sample interaction.

Non-Contact AFM is done such that the tip-sample interaction is in the attractive or van der Waals regime. In order to perform measurements in this attractive force region the cantilever is oscillated with a low amplitude (<5 nm), near its resonant frequency. For Non-Contact AFM the force is measured by comparing the frequency and/or amplitude of the cantilever oscillation relative to the driving signal.

Tapping or Intermittant Contact mode is also done by oscillating the cantilever near its resonant frequency, but the amplitude is significantly higher (~10-50 nm?). This Intermittant contact mode operates in the repulsive force region, but touches the surface only for short periods of time, in order to reduce damage to potentially fragile samples (ie. biological molecules).

Contact AFM



contact mode
 lateral force . lateral force 가
 force scan 가 vertical
 (set-point or set force) lateral force , 가
 가 가 . , scan

가 가 contact mode
 cantilever spring constant 1 N/m .
 1 N/m

가
 contact AFM . Micro-
 lever (k=0.01 ~ 0.05 N/m)

Non - contact(NC) AFM

Non - contact mode AFM
0.1 ~ 0.01 nN

가

contact mode

.

가

가

가

non - contact mode

.

가가
가

lock - in amp

가
.

Non - contact mode

(F)

force gradient (dF/dz)

(F)

force gradient image

.

electrostatic force
magnetic domain

potential, ferroelectric domain,

.

,

.

가
non-contact AFM force gradient

.

spring constant k_0

가

spring constant (k_0)
 $k_{eff} = k_0 - dF/dz$
 k_0

spring constant
, $dF/dz > 0$, k_{eff}

non-contact mode

spring constant 가
(Fig.3).

(resonance frequency : f_0) 가
bimorph: ac 가 가
)
(f_0)

bimorph 가

가 (lock-in

)

. PSI software "NCM - Sweep"

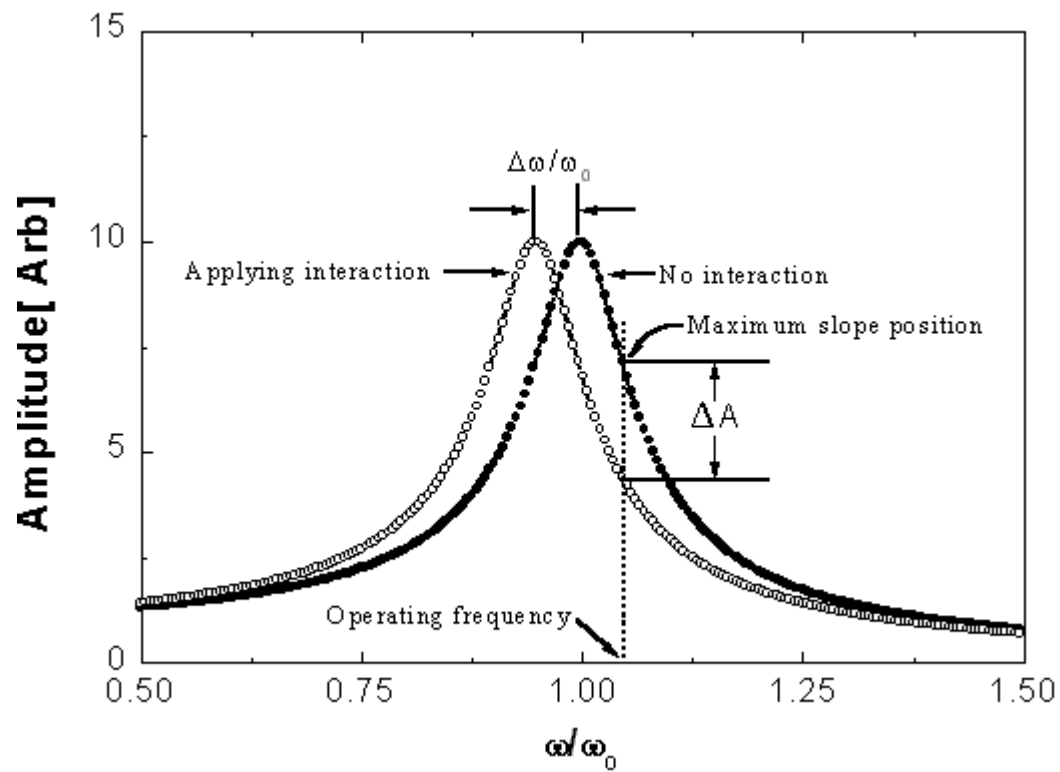


Fig.3.

가 가 dF/dz 가 가 , keff
 f_0

Intermittent - contact AFM

Intermittent - contact(IC) AFM NC - AFM IC - AFM

IC - AFM

NC - AFM

IC - AFM

IC - AFM

NC - AFM

NC - AFM.

.(Fig.4)

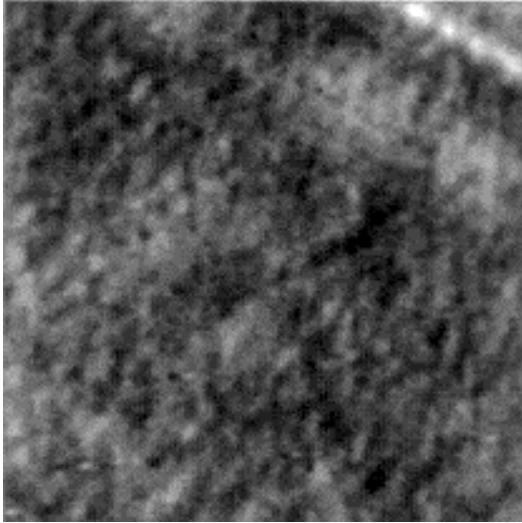
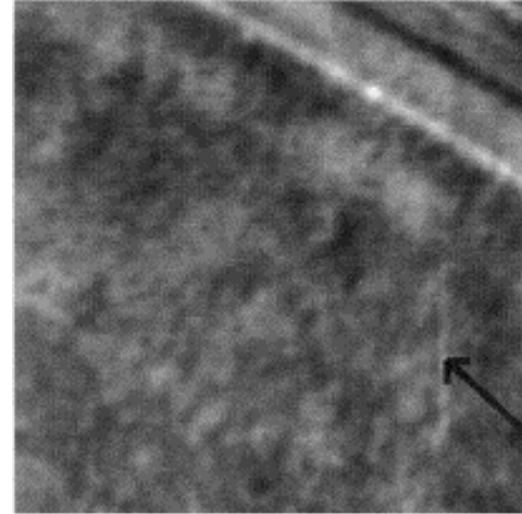


Fig. 4. IC - AFM



(NC - AFM)

.