

Abstract

The morphology and density of black carbon (BC) cores in internally mixed BC (In-BC) particles affects their mixing state and absorption enhancement. In this work, we developed a new method to measure the morphology and effective density of BC cores of ambient In-BC particles using a single particle soot photometer (SP2) and a volatility tandem differential mobility analyzer (VTDMA), during the CAREBeijing-2013 campaign from 8 to 27 July 2013 at Xianghe Observatory. The new measurement system can select size-resolved ambient In-BC particles and measure the mobility size and mass of In-BC cores. The morphology and effective density of ambient In-BC cores are then calculated. For In-BC cores in the atmosphere, changes in the dynamic shape factor (χ) and effective density (ρ_{eff}) can be characterized as a function of aging process (D_p/D_c) measured by SP2 and VTDMA. During an intensive field study, the ambient In-BC cores had an average χ of ~ 1.2 and an average density of $\sim 1.2 \text{ g cm}^{-3}$, indicating that ambient In-BC cores have a near-spherical shape with an internal void of $\sim 30\%$. With the measured morphology and density, the average shell/core ratio and absorption enhancement (E_{ab}) from ambient black carbon were estimated to be 2.1–2.7 and 1.6–1.9 for different sizes of In-BC particles at 200–350 nm. When assuming the In-BC cores have a void-free BC sphere with a density of 1.8 g cm^{-3} , the shell/core ratio and E_{ab} could be overestimated by ~ 13 and $\sim 17\%$ respectively. The new approach developed in this work will help improve calculations of mixing state and optical properties of ambient In-BC particles by quantification of changes in morphology and density of ambient In-BC cores during aging process.

1 Introduction

The light-absorbing capability of black carbon (BC) particles closely relates to their morphology and density in the atmosphere (Zhang et al., 2008; Rissler et al., 2014). The morphology and density of BC particles is affected by their aging processes (Rissler

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et al., 2013; Geller et al., 2006). Fresh or externally mixed BC (Ex-BC) particles close to emission sources exist in fractal-like agglomerates, consisting of small BC spherules with a size of 15–30 nm formed via coagulation processes (Park et al., 2003; Slowik et al., 2004). BC particle then undergoes significant changes in physicochemical characteristics during aging process in the atmosphere, forming the internally mixed BC (In-BC) particle consisting of BC core and coating materials (Cheng et al., 2006). When coated with a non-absorbing shell, void-containing BC particle with open structure transforms into a compact BC core with a near-spherical morphology, less internal voids, and higher density, resulting in a decrease of core size and an increase of refractive index for BC core (Bond and Bergstrom, 2006; Qiu et al., 2012; Khalizov et al., 2013). According to Mie theory, the absorption enhancement of In-BC was depended on its BC core size, coating thickness, and refractive index of both BC core and coatings (Fuller et al., 1999; Bond et al., 2006; Lack and Cappa, 2010). In this regard, understanding the atmospheric evolution of the morphology and density of BC core is important for investigating optical properties of In-BC particles, given that the size and refractive index of BC core are determined by its morphology and density (Adler et al., 2010; Scarnato et al., 2013; Radney et al., 2014).

By now, the absorption enhancement of In-BC particles is still unclear, partly due to lack of understanding on the evolution of morphology and density of BC particles in the atmosphere (Xue et al., 2009a; Knox et al., 2009; Chan et al., 2011; Cappa et al., 2012). Recent in-situ measurements argued that the absorption enhancement of In-BC particles may have been overestimated in previous estimates (Cappa et al., 2012), because they usually treated the In-BC core as spherical with no voids throughout the atmospheric lifetime when calculating absorption enhancement of In-BC particles (Jacobson et al., 2000, 2001; Bond et al., 2006). This improper assumption may lead to significant biases on absorption enhancement estimates by omitting the evolution of morphology and density of BC core during atmospheric aging as well as the impact of aging time to absorption enhancement.

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are decreased and increased respectively, indicating that In-BC cores transformed to a more regular and compact shape during aging. We found that In-BC cores hardly transform its morphology into a void-free sphere during atmospheric aging process, and thereby the effective density of most ambient In-BC cores is lower than the BC material density of 1.8 g cm^{-3} . During the campaign period, the average shape factor and effective densities of ambient In-BC cores are ~ 1.2 and $\sim 1.2 \text{ g cm}^{-3}$ respectively, implying a near-spherical shape with 30 % internal void of ambient In-BC cores.

Light absorption enhancement of ambient In-BC particles was then calculated by Mie model. Light absorption enhancement ratio was estimated to be 1.6–1.9 when using the average In-BC core density (1.2 g cm^{-3}) observed in Xianghe, ~ 15 % lower than estimates with assumption of void-free spherical structure with density of 1.8 g cm^{-3} . We can then conclude that previous models tend to overestimate the light absorption of BC particles over polluted regions where large fractions of BC are locally emitted.

With the new measurements techniques developed in this work, absorption enhancement of ambient BC particles can be more accurately with measured morphology and density of In-BC cores. To better understand the morphology and density of In-BC cores during aging process in the atmosphere, more in situ measurements in different regions should be carried out. In the future, climate models could be possibly improved by characterizing morphology and density of In-BC cores with the help of in situ measurements.

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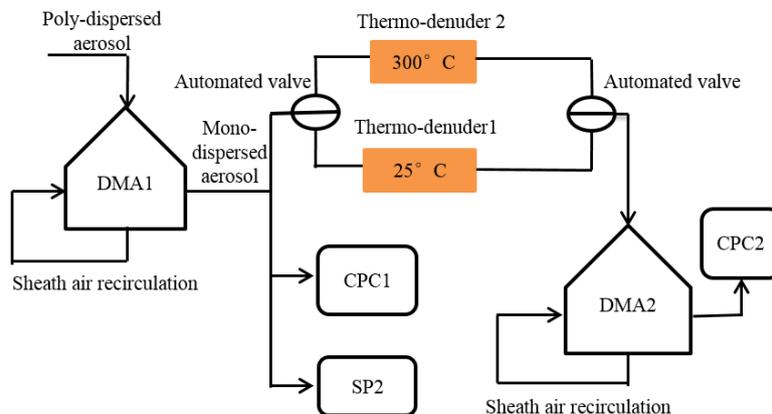


Figure 1. Schematic of instrument setup.

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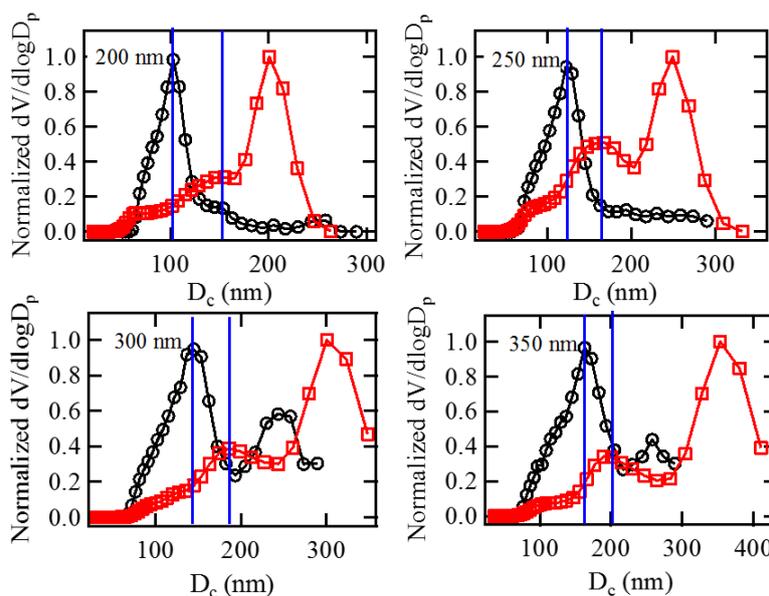


Figure 2. Normalized volume size distribution of the In-BC cores from SP2 measurements (black marks and line) and the residual particles from VTDMA measurements at 300°C (red marks and line); before measurements of SP2 and heating at 300°C, the initial particle size selected by DMA1 are 200, 250, 300 and 350 nm, respectively; the blue lines represent the In-BC core size at peaks of volume size distribution from VTDMA and SP2 measurement.

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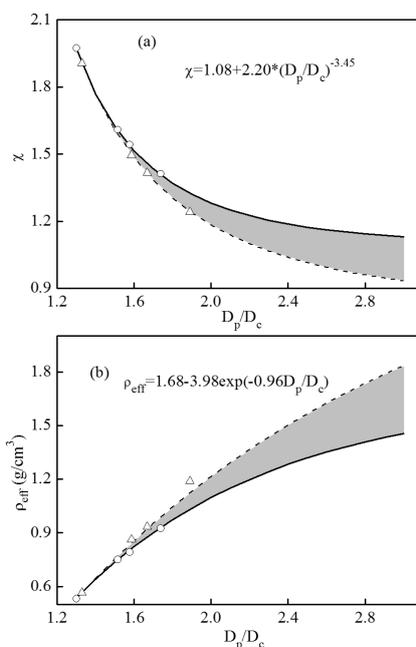


Figure 3. Changes in χ (a) and ρ_{eff} (b) of In-BC cores undergoing aging. The solid lines are fitted based on the data (circle markers) calculated by the measured peak values for size-resolved In-BC particles shown in Fig. 2; the dash lines are fitted based on the data (triangle markers) derived from the assumption of 5% non-volatile coating fraction; the grey shaded area represented the uncertainty of morphology and density of In-BC cores obtained from our study.

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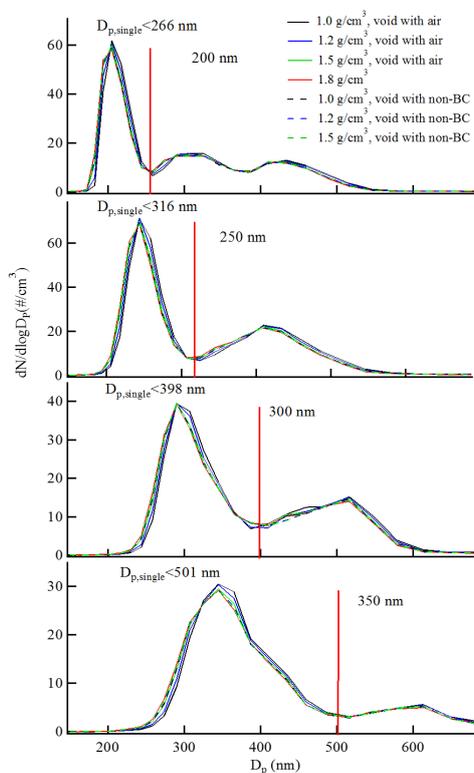


Figure 4. The number size distribution of size-resolved ambient In-BC particles with different core densities and void types.

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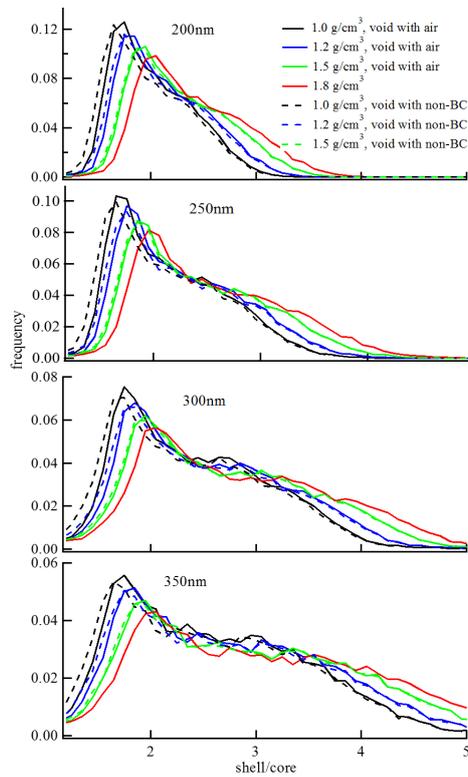


Figure 5. The shell / core (D_p/D_c) ratios of size-resolved ambient In-BC particles with different core densities and void types.

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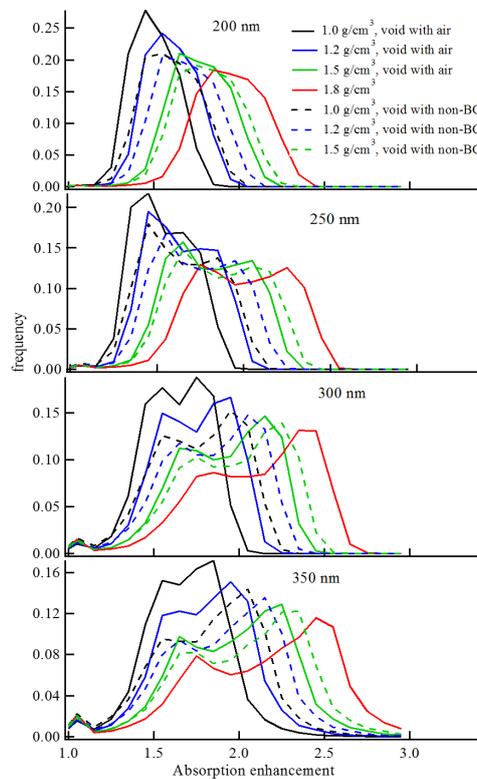


Figure 6. Absorption enhancement of size-resolved ambient In-BC particles with different core densities and void types.

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