Graphene as a promising electrode for low current attenuation in molecular junctions

Yannick J. Dappe1
Qian Zhang2,3, Longlong Liu4, Shuhui Tao2,3, Congyi Wang5, Cezhou Zhao2
Ley1,5, Richard J. Nichols3, and Li Yang2,3
1SPEC, CEA, CNRS, Un Paris-Saclay, CEA Saclay 91191 Gif-sur-Yvette Cedex, France
2Department of Chemistry and Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering, Xi’an-Jiaotong Liverpool University, Suzhou, Jiangsu, 215123 China
3Department of Chemistry, University of Liverpool, Liverpool, L69 7ZD U.K.
4Department of Chemistry and Chemical Engineering, Chongqing University, Chongqing, 400030, China
5Instituto de Ingeniería y Tecnología de Computadores, Universidad de Granada, Campus de Fuente Nueva & CITIC, Campus de Aynadamar 18071, Granada, Spain
yannick.dappe@cea.fr

Although technologically relevant molecular electronic devices still seem a long way off, the ability to measure the electrical properties of single molecules can be nowadays achieved with a variety of techniques. From these new measurements, there is an increasing realization that new single molecule electrical junction functionality can be achieved through the use of nonmetallic electrodes, with contacts such as carbon-based materials. It is then suggested that these materials have the potential to be valuable alternative electrode materials for molecular electronics in the next generation of nanostructured devices. Here, as a first step toward realizing the graphene potential as electrodes, we demonstrate its use as a bottom electrode in place of the more commonly used gold. The well-studied system of thiol-terminated alkane molecular bridges was selected as a test-bed to investigate the possibility to use graphene electrodes to form single molecule junctions.

Combined STM measurements and Density Functional Theory associated to a Keldysh-Green formalism, reveal a strong reduction of the electronic length decay. This lower attenuation factor leads to higher junction conductance for the longest junctions studied here. This work suggests that novel nonmetallic 2D materials could serve as promising electrodes to construct nonsymmetric junctions with tunable attenuation factors.

References


Figures

Figure 1: logarithmic plot of the conductance as a function of the number of CH2 groups. The red line represents the theoretical values, the black line is experimental data for Au–molecule–graphene junctions, and the blue line is the literature data for Au–molecule–Au junctions.