

# Studies on the Selectivity in RPLC

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## Introduction

The properties of stationary phases are not static, they change with the composition and nature of the mobile phase. Because of that we wanted to study chromatographic selectivity in a broader way than is possible with a single mobile phase test. In our study a set of 15 columns was tested in 6 mobile phase conditions with 70 probes of different functionalities and structures. We used gradients of the more commonly used organic modifiers, methanol and acetonitrile, and worked in the full range of pH that each column allowed. These conditions generated different degrees of ionization, which modified the characteristics of the compounds and created changes in the selectivity of the stationary phases.

## Experimental

### Stationary phases

**Column dimensions** 4.6x50mm **Particle size** 5 µm  
**Temperature** 30°C.

Xterra® MS C<sub>18</sub>, MS C<sub>8</sub>, RP<sub>18</sub>, RP<sub>8</sub>, Phenyl  
Symmetry® C<sub>18</sub>, C<sub>8</sub>, C<sub>4</sub>, C<sub>1</sub>, SymmetryShield® RP<sub>18</sub>  
Atlantis® dC<sub>18</sub>  
Hybrid Pentafluorophenyl (PFP), Tridecafluoro-octyl (TDO), Cyano, Adamantylethyl

**Flow** 1ml/min (0.8 ml/min to UV and 0.2 ml/min to MS).

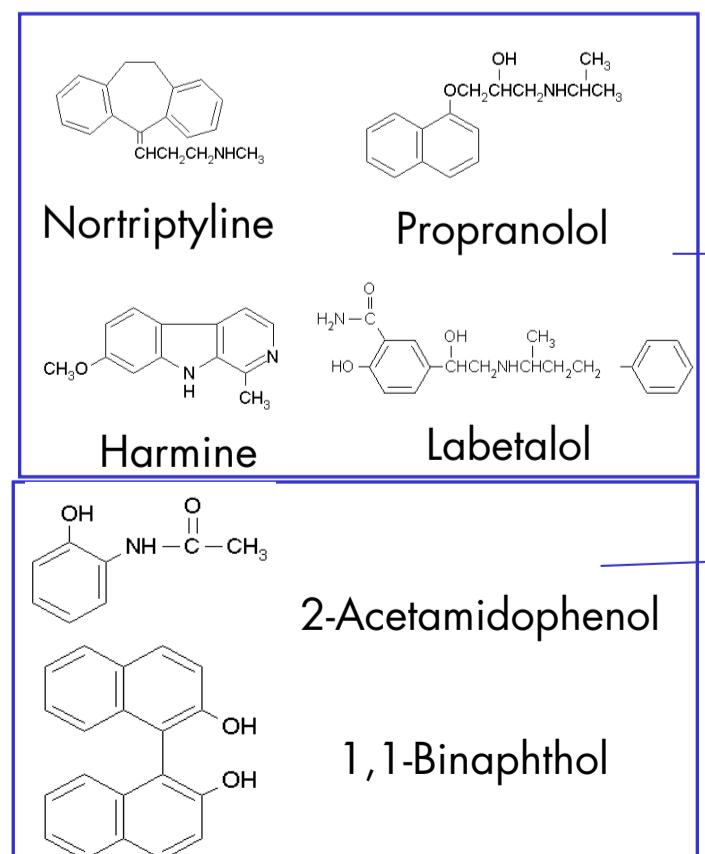
**Organic modifiers** MeOH and ACN.

**Buffers**  
Ammonium formate pH 3.0  
Ammonium phosphate pH 7.0  
Ammonium bicarbonate pH 10.0

### Gradient

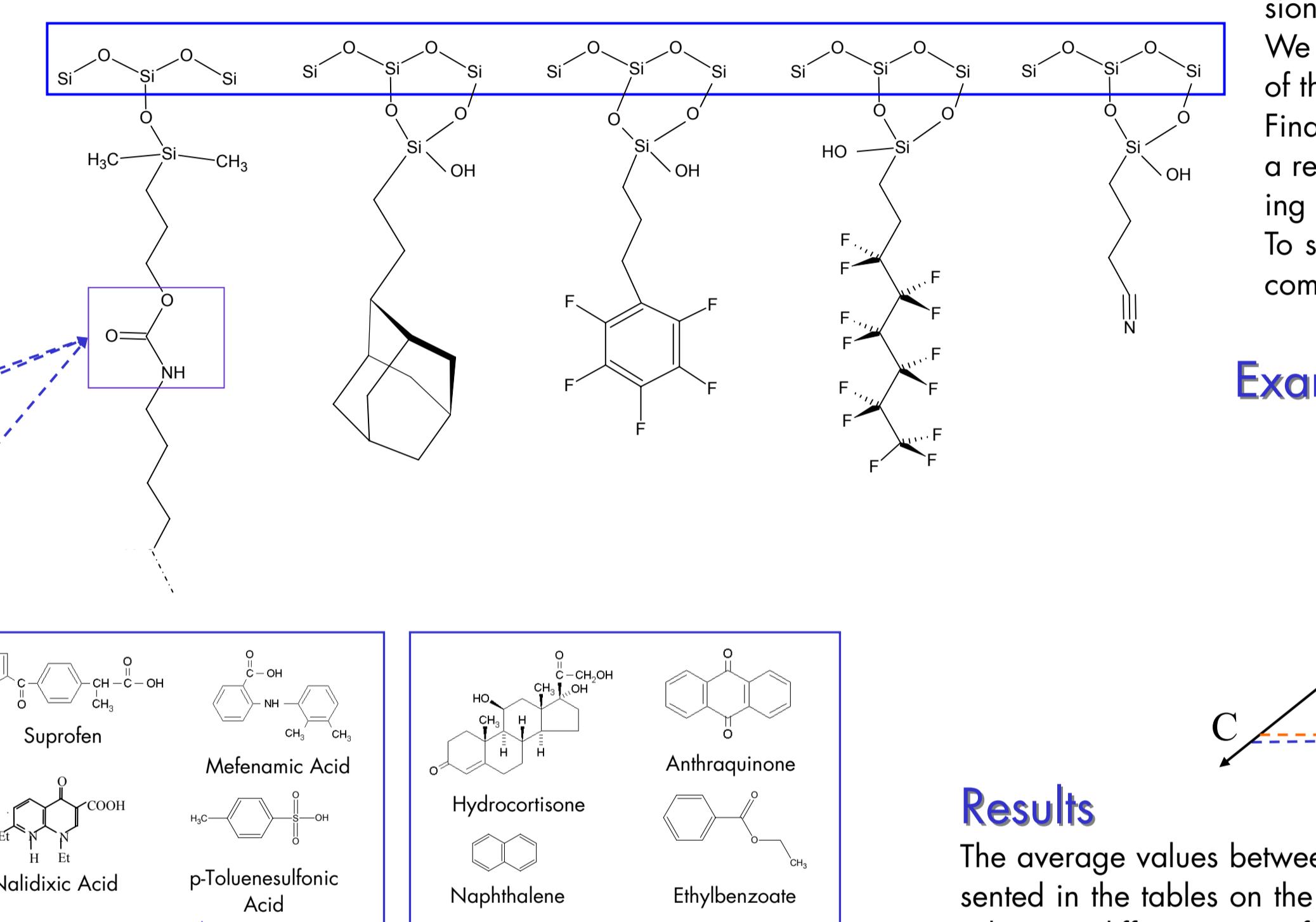
	Time	%A	%B	%C
0	5	90	5	
20	5	0	95	
22	5	0	95	

A 10mM Buffer B Water C Organic

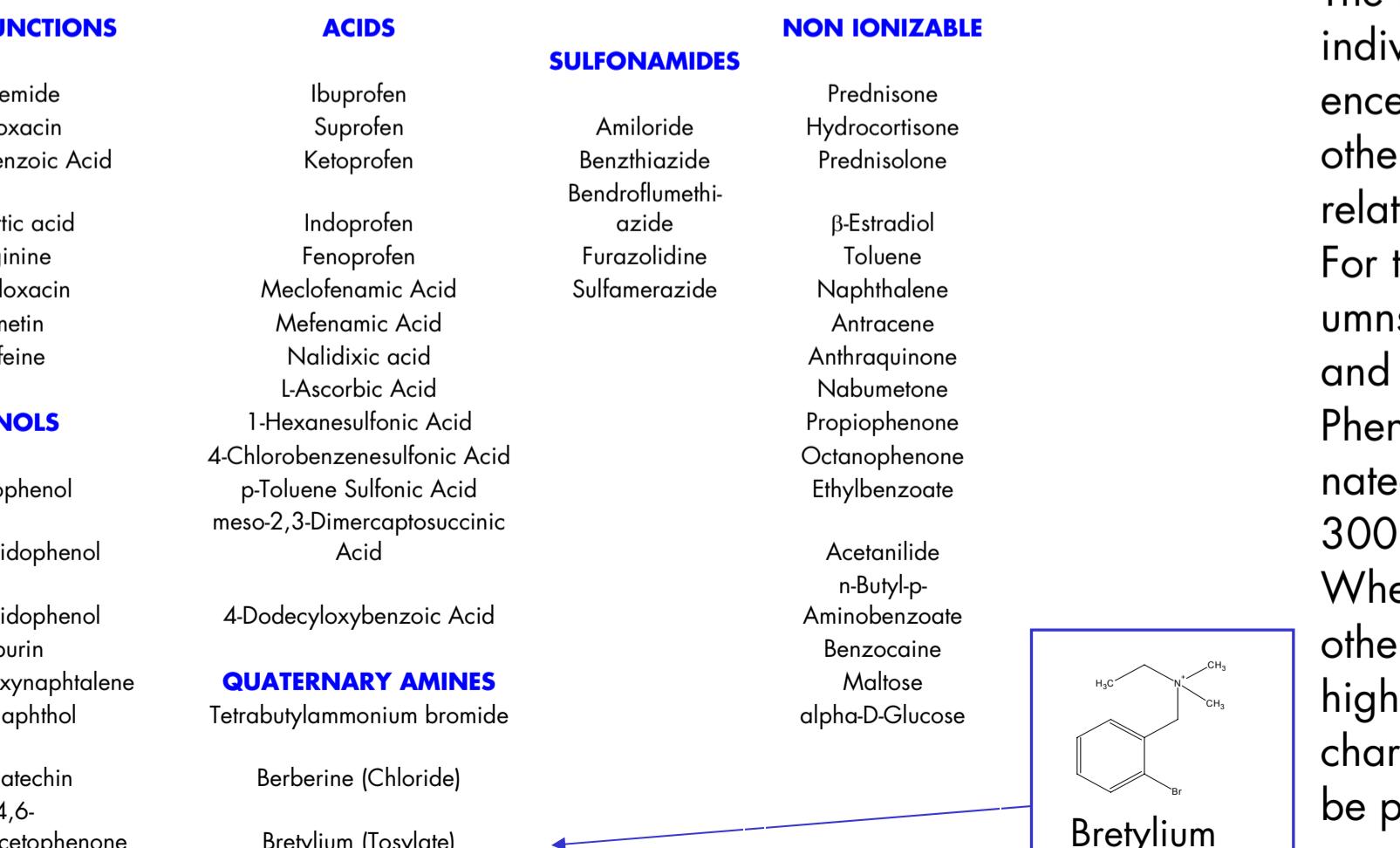


## Uncommon stationary phases

**EPG** Embedded Polar Group    **ADA** Adamantylethyl    **PFP** Pentafluorophenyl    **TDO** Tridecafluorooctyl    **CN** Cyano



## Compounds



## Analysis of the data

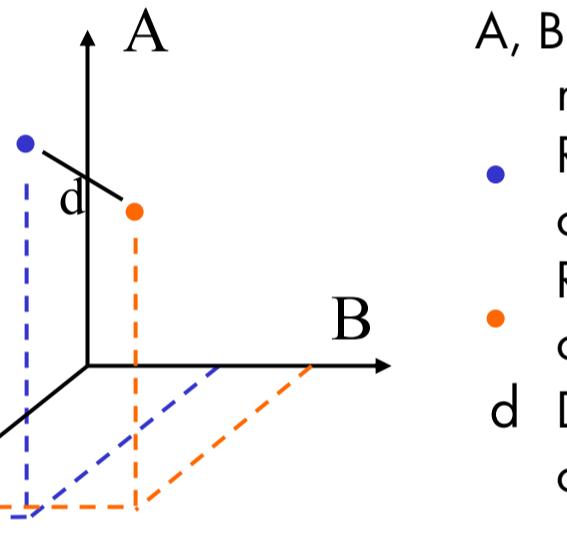
To establish the differences in selectivity between phases we calculated the distance between the representation of the retention of the compounds in a multidimensional space, where the dimensions are the different mobile phases used.

We averaged the differences of all the compounds for two given phases, getting an estimation of the differences in retention between these two phases.

Finally we normalized these averaged values between all the possible pairs of columns, getting a relative value of the difference in selectivity between the different stationary phases and allowing a comparison of the differences in selectivity between phases.

To see specific differences in the selectivity we repeated the same process with specific sets of compounds. A value of 1 represents the largest difference in selectivity.

## Example



- A, B and C: Retention times in one mobile phase
- Representation of the retention of compound X on column a
- Representation of the retention of compound X on column b
- d Difference of the retention of X on column a and column b

## Legend

Columns	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	XI	XII	XIII	XIV	XV
Neutral compounds	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	XI	XII	XIII	XIV	XV
Acidic compounds	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	XI	XII	XIII	XIV	XV
Phenolic compounds	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	XI	XII	XIII	XIV	XV
Basic compounds	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	XI	XII	XIII	XIV	XV

Columns	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	XI	XII	XIII	XIV	XV
All compounds	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	XI	XII	XIII	XIV	XV
Columns	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	XI	XII	XIII	XIV	XV
Neutral compounds	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	XI	XII	XIII	XIV	XV
Acidic compounds	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	XI	XII	XIII	XIV	XV
Phenolic compounds	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	XI	XII	XIII	XIV	XV
Basic compounds	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	XI	XII	XIII	XIV	XV

## Results

The average values between the differences of all the compounds for each pair of columns are normalized and represented in the tables on the right. When we look at the table with all the compounds included, we see that the highest selectivity differences are found for the Hybrid Cyano column, but to see if this was a general behavior or if this is specific for some group of compounds we can look at the different groups of the compounds present in the group studied. The Hybrid Cyano column shows the higher differences when neutral compounds are considered. But we can see other individual pairs of columns that show moderate differences in their selectivity. For these compounds the higher differences in selectivity are seen between Hybrid Cyano and XTerra Phenyl columns, instead of Hybrid PFP as in all the other cases. The fact that the highest differences are always between the Hybrid Cyano and an aromatic ring phase is related to  $\pi-\pi$  interactions.

For the acidic compounds the Hybrid Cyano column showed again a high selectivity difference, while all the other columns gave lower values, all below 0.4. These differences indicate a specific interaction between acidic compounds and this phase.

Phenolic compounds show a similar behavior as acidic compounds, which is not surprising since they are deprotonated at high pH. They show however slightly higher differences in selectivity than the acids, especially for Symmetry 300 C<sub>4</sub> and Hybrid TDO phases.

When basic compounds are analyzed the highest differences are obtained with the PFP column compared to all the other columns. This behavior is observed to a lesser extent for the Hybrid Cyano and the Symmetry C1 phases. The higher differences in selectivity of the PFP column versus the others can be explained since this phase is negatively charged on the surface, even at acidic pH values, giving a specific interaction with the basic compounds which can be positively charged.