

Edited by Adem Ozcelik, Ryan Becker,
and Tony Jun Huang

Acoustic Technologies in Biology and Medicine

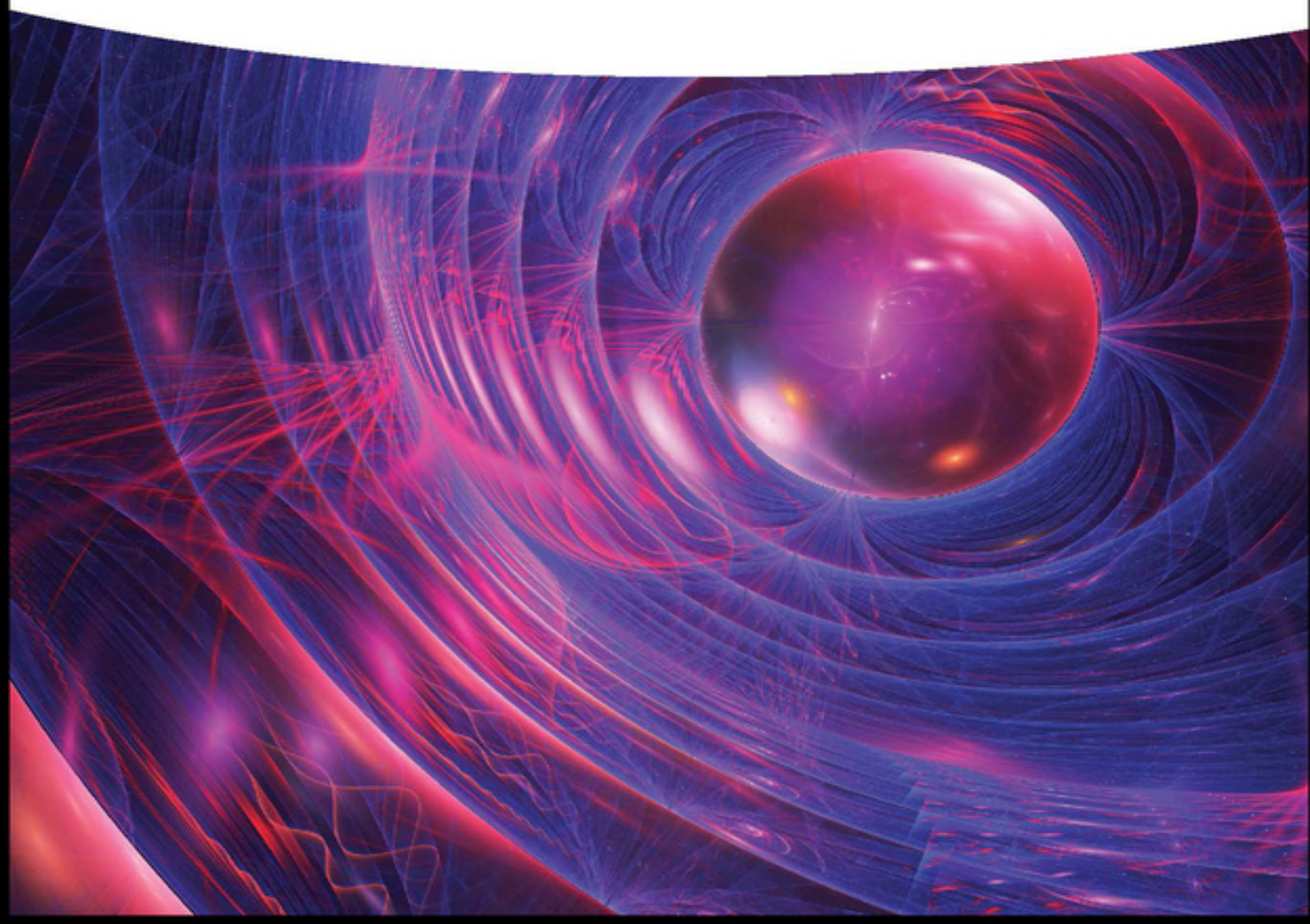


Table of Contents

[Cover](#)

[Table of Contents](#)

[Title Page](#)

[Copyright](#)

[Preface](#)

[1 Fundamentals of Acoustic Wave Generation and Propagation](#)

[1.1 Introduction](#)

[1.2 Brief History of Acoustic Waves](#)

[1.3 What Is an Acoustic Wave?](#)

[1.4 Modes of Acoustic Waves](#)

[1.5 Acoustic Wave Propagation and Interaction](#)

[1.6 Acoustic Wave Attenuation](#)

[1.7 Generation and Propagation of Acoustic Waves](#)

[1.8 Acoustic Waves Effects in Fluidic Media](#)

[List of Abbreviations and Symbols](#)

[References](#)

[2 Basic Theories and Physics of Acoustic Technologies](#)

[2.1 Introduction](#)

[2.2 Acoustic Waves in Solids](#)

[2.3 Acoustic Waves in Fluids](#)

[2.4 Forces in Acoustofluidic Systems](#)

[2.5 Conclusions and Perspectives](#)

[References](#)

[3 Materials for Acoustic Wave Generation and Modulation](#)

[3.1 Introduction](#)

[3.2 Piezoelectricity](#)

[3.3 Piezoelectric Materials](#)

[3.4 Ultrasound Transducers](#)

[3.5 Ultrasound Beams](#)

[3.6 Acoustic Lenses](#)

[References](#)

[Notes](#)

[4 Ultrasound and Ultrasonic Imaging in Medicine: Recent Advances](#)

[4.1 Introduction](#)

[4.2 Ultrasound Waves](#)

[4.3 Ultrasonic Imaging](#)

[4.4 Sound-Tissue Interactions in Ultrasonography](#)

[4.5 Ultrasonic Imaging Methods](#)

[4.6 Tissue Harmonic Imaging \(THI\)](#)

[4.7 Recent Advances in Ultrasound Imaging for
Medicine](#)

[References](#)

[5 Photoacoustic Imaging and Sensing for Biomedical Applications](#)

[5.1 Introduction](#)

[5.2 Photoacoustic Imaging Applications](#)

[5.3 Photoacoustic Sensing for Biomedical
Applications](#)

[References](#)

[6 Therapeutic Ultrasound](#)

[6.1 Introduction](#)

[6.2 Ultrasound-Induced Bioeffects](#)

[6.3 Therapeutic Ultrasound Applications](#)

[6.4 Conclusions](#)

[References](#)

[Notes](#)

[7 Application of Ultrasound-Responsive Reagents for Drug Delivery Systems](#)

[7.1 Historical Background of Research on Bubble Reagents for Medicine](#)

[7.2 Use of Bubble Reagents as Drug Delivery Systems](#)

[7.3 Variation of Ultrasound-Responsive Reagents for DDS](#)

[7.4 Research on Treatment of Diseases Using Ultrasonic Drug Delivery](#)

[7.5 Conclusion](#)

[References](#)

[8 Acoustic Levitation and Acoustic Holograms](#)

[8.1 Introduction](#)

[8.2 Acoustic Holograms](#)

[8.3 Numerical Simulation of Acoustic Levitator](#)

[8.4 Acoustic Hologram Optimization](#)

[8.5 Applications in Biology and Medicine](#)

[8.6 Conclusion and Future Remarks](#)

[Acknowledgments](#)

[References](#)

[9 Application of Ultrasonic Waves in Bioparticle Manipulation and Separation](#)

[9.1 Introduction](#)

[9.2 Bioparticle Manipulation](#)

[9.3 General Architecture of Acoustofluidic Devices](#)

[9.4 Governing Equations in Acoustic Bioparticle Manipulation](#)

[9.5 Simulation of Acoustophoretic Bio-Particle Manipulation](#)

[9.6 Acoustofluidic Devices in Biological and Medical Applications](#)

[9.7 Commercial and Regulatory Considerations for Acoustofluidic Devices](#)

[9.8 Summary and Outlook](#)

[References](#)

[10 Acoustic Biosensors](#)

[10.1 Introduction](#)

[10.2 Biochemical Fundamentals of Sensing](#)

[10.3 Bulk Acoustic Wave Biosensors](#)

[10.4 Surface Transverse Wave Biosensors](#)

[10.5 Commercial Biosensors and Trends](#)

[10.6 Conclusion](#)

[References](#)

[11 Acoustic Micro/Nanorobots in Medicine](#)

[11.1 Introduction](#)

[11.2 Theoretical Background](#)

[11.3 Acoustic Micromanipulation Techniques](#)

[11.4 Micro/Nanorobotic Devices Actuated by Acoustic Fields](#)

[11.5 In Vivo Actuation of Micro/Nanorobotic Devices](#)

[11.6 Discussion and Outlook](#)

[Acknowledgment](#)

[References](#)

[Index](#)

[End User License Agreement](#)

List of Tables

Chapter 4

[Table 4.1 Acoustic parameters of some tissues.](#)

Chapter 5

[Table 5.1 Glucose absorption peaks and the origin functional groups.](#)

Chapter 6

[Table 6.1 Temperature effects.](#)

Chapter 7

[Table 7.1 Clinically applied ultrasound contrast agents.](#)

Chapter 8

[Table 8.1 Types of acoustic traps.](#)

[Table 8.2 Acoustic radiation force calculation in PALs.](#)

[Table 8.3 Acoustic hologram optimization.](#)

Chapter 9

[Table 9.1 Performance comparison of different bioparticle manipulation methods...](#)

[Table 9.2 A comparison table for the advantages and disadvantages of BAW and S...](#)

[Table 9.3 Summary of the literature on acoustofluidic particle/cell manipulat...](#)

Chapter 10

[Table 10.1 Applications, materials, and operation frequencies for different SA...](#)

[Table 10.2 State-of-the-art comparison design parameter comparison.](#)

[Table 10.3 Advantage/disadvantage table for QCM, FBAR and SAW devices.](#)

List of Illustrations

Chapter 1

[Figure 1.1 Categorization of acoustic waves based on frequency range.](#)

[Figure 1.2 Particle oscillation in a medium because of an acoustic wave propag...](#)

[Figure 1.3 Position of “acoustic technologies for medicine and biology” within...](#)

[Figure 1.4 \(left\) Acoustic wave reflection and transmission at an air-water in...](#)

[Figure 1.5 Nondispersive vs dispersive media.](#)

[Figure 1.6 Summary of ultrasonic frequencies and their applications.](#)

[Figure 1.7 Categorization of waves based on propagation. \(a\) Propagation modes...](#)

[Figure 1.8 Traveling waves vs standing waves.](#)

[Figure 1.9 Wave reflection and transmission.](#)

[Figure 1.10 \(a\) Schematics of the acoustic scattering of an incident pressure ...](#)

[Figure 1.11 Total normalized pressure field. Scattering regimes for different](#)

[Figure 1.12 Different theories on wave scattering and their connection.](#)

[Figure 1.13 Migration, patterning, and swirling behavior of particles in the m...](#)

[Figure 1.14 \(a\) Stress-strain diagram for elastic and viscoelastic materials. ...](#)

[Figure 1.15 Acoustic streaming flows.](#)

[Figure 1.16 \(a\) Eckart streaming flow in the presence of weak wave reflector \(...\)](#)

[Figure 1.17 Rayleigh streaming patterns within standing wave resonators of dif...](#)

[Figure 1.18 Echolocation examples for predator/prey \(a\) and elephant communica...](#)

[Figure 1.19 Two different ways of working principle for piezoelectric ceramics...](#)

[Figure 1.20 \(a\) Thickness mode vibrations. \(b\) Shear mode vibrations. \(c\) Surf...](#)

[Figure 1.21 \(A\) Schematic of the sharp-edge-based acoustofluidic pumping device...](#)

[Figure 1.22 Schematic of optoacoustic imaging device.](#)

Chapter 2

[Figure 2.1 Schematic illustration of Eckart streaming flow comprising a fluid ...](#)

[Figure 2.2 Schematic illustration of boundary-driven streaming. The dotted lin...](#)

[Figure 2.3 Schematic plot of Eulerian velocity, Lagrangian velocity, and Stoke...](#)

[Figure 2.4 Streaming flow around a small rigid sphere placed at \(a\) velocity a...](#)

[Figure 2.5 Streamlines of the Lagrangian streaming outside the boundary layer ...](#)

[Figure 2.6 Motion of immersed foreign inclusions within a weakly dissipating p...](#)

[Figure 2.7 Acoustic radiation force-based 2D single-cell patterning. \(a\) Schem...](#)

[Figure 2.8 \(a\) Schematic illustration of the experimental setup for an acousto...](#)

Chapter 3

[Figure 3.1 Piezoelectric effect in a crystal with non-inversion symmetry. When...](#)

[Figure 3.2 Piezoelectric effect in a polycrystalline material. When the materia...](#)

[Figure 3.3 Piezoelectric disc for vibration in thickness mode.](#)

[Figure 3.4 Model of a basic ultrasound piezoelectric transducer for vibration ...](#)

[Figure 3.5 Diagram of a flat circular transducer and calculation points.](#)

[Figure 3.6 Example of the field radiated by a circular piston of aperture \$2a = 25\$ mm...](#)

[Figure 3.7 Schematic of a focused acoustic transducer and calculation points.](#)

[Figure 3.8 Example of the field produced by an aperture focused transducer \$2a = 25\$ m...](#)

[Figure 3.9 Linear phased-array probe using apodization to excite the array wit...](#)

[Figure 3.10 Spherical acoustic lenses.](#)

[Figure 3.11 Ellipsoidal acoustic lenses.](#)

[Figure 3.12 Axicon acoustic lenses.](#)

[Figure 3.13 Fresnel and fraxicon acoustic lenses.](#)

[Figure 3.14 Diffraction grating over a period set of apertures, waves are diff...](#)

[Figure 3.15 Axisymmetric diffraction grating, generates a zeroth-order Bessel ...](#)

[Figure 3.16 Fresnel zone plate produces a focused beam. Only the first diffrac...](#)

[Figure 3.17 Archimedean spiral diffraction gratings. Archimedes spiral generat...](#)

[Figure 3.18 Fresnel-spiral zone plate lens, generates a sharply focused vortex...](#)

[Figure 3.19 Paraboloidal acoustic mirror.](#)

[Figure 3.20 Ellipsoidal reflector, focusing a point source located at the firs...](#)

[Figure 3.21 \(b\) Projection process of the field generated by an acoustic sourc...](#)

[Figure 3.22 Application of acoustic holograms for therapeutic ultrasound in ne...](#)

Chapter 4

[Figure 4.1 Medical ultrasound systems are used for diagnostic purposes.](#)

[Figure 4.2 The front surface of the probe.](#)

[Figure 4.3 The incident wave is reflected from the interface, creating reflect...](#)

[Figure 4.4 Block diagram of an A-mode imaging system.](#)

[Figure 4.5 An example of A-mode ultrasound imaging.](#)

[Figure 4.6 An example of M-mode imaging.](#)

[Figure 4.7 An example of a B-mode imaging system.](#)

[Figure 4.8 An example of B-mode imaging: \(a\) Illustration of the imaging setup...](#)

[Figure 4.9 Measurement of blood flow velocity with Doppler ultrasound.](#)

Chapter 5

[Figure 5.1 Different schematics of photoacoustic imaging \(PAI\) systems. \(a\) Op...](#)

[Figure 5.2 Vascular images of breast acquired using a PA mammoscope \(a\) Magnet...](#)

[Figure 5.3 Two-dimensional \(2D\) US and PA imaging of breast tumor having a neg...](#)

[Figure 5.4 Images \(clinical and PA\) of non-melanoma skin cancer on representat...](#)

[Figure 5.5 RSOM images of healthy and atopic dermatitis skin and classifying t...](#)

[Figure 5.6 \(A\) photoacoustic-guided photothermal therapy setup. \(B\) Original \(...\)](#)

[Figure 5.7 \(A\) \(a\) Setup of the microscopic PA glucose sensing system. \(b\) Pho...](#)

Chapter 6

[Figure 6.1 Schematic image of acoustic-induced \(a\) stable and \(b\) inertial cav...](#)

[Figure 6.2 Microbubble oscillations at center frequencies of \(a\) 1 MHz and \(b\)...](#)

[Figure 6.3 Illustration of ultrasound-induced nanodroplet vaporization.](#)

[Figure 6.4 Different pulsing schemes used in \(a\) cavitation cloud histotripsy ...](#)

[Figure 6.5 Typical histotripsy waveform.](#)

[Figure 6.6 Tumor-targeted microbubbles combined with low-frequency ultrasound ...](#)

[Figure 6.7 Nanodroplet-mediated low-energy histotripsy generates mechanical le...](#)

[Figure 6.8 Targeted microbubble-mediated sonoporation of cancer cells illustra...](#)

Chapter 7

[Figure 7.1 Schematic of how ultrasound produces inertial cavitation \(a\) and no...](#)

[Figure 7.2 Schematic of the formation of radial collapses \(a\) and asymmetric c...](#)

[Figure 7.3 Schematic of drug delivery to the brain by ultrasound and microbubb...](#)

[Figure 7.4 Various patterns of the design of drug-loaded microbubbles stabiliz...](#)

[Figure 7.5 Schematic of future developments in ultrasound-responsive materials...](#)

Chapter 8

[Figure 8.1 Levitation of alcohol droplets as demonstrated by...](#)

[Figure 8.2 Categories and types of acoustic levitators available to date, incl...](#)

[Figure 8.3 Single-axis acoustic levitator demonstrated by Whymark. It is mount...](#)

[Figure 8.4 Nonresonant acoustic levitator using a single transducer and reflec...](#)

[Figure 8.5 Squeeze film CAL designed by Ueha et al. By generating a traveling ...](#)

[Figure 8.6 Near-field standing wave acoustic levitator. A standing wave is gen...](#)

[Figure 8.7 Multi-axis PAL by Ochiai et al.](#)

[Figure 8.8 Single-sided acoustic levitator demonstrated by Marzo et al.](#)

[Figure 8.9 Acoustic hologram for underwater developed by Melde et al.](#)

[Figure 8.10 Metamaterial bricks developed by Memoli et al.](#)

[Figure 8.11 Levitation of small animals, as demonstrated by Xie et al. in 2006...](#)

[Figure 8.12 Midair ultrasonic microfluidic platform with a phased array levita...](#)

Chapter 9

[Figure 9.1 Representative architectures and governing equations for particle m...](#)

[Figure 9.2 \(a\) Components of a BAW device, \(b\) shifted PZT configuration, \(c\) ...](#)

[Figure 9.3 \(a\) Components of a SAW acoustofluidic device with two IDTs, and \(b...](#)

[Figure 9.4 The derivation schematic of the first-order acoustic field with the...](#)

[Figure 9.5 The derivation schematic of the second-order acoustic field with th...](#)

[Figure 9.6 1D representation of the acoustic chip-channel interaction consider...](#)

[Figure 9.7 Numerical simulation scheme of a BAW acoustofluidic device.](#)

[Figure 9.8 The list of factors that may affect the commercialization of an aco...](#)

Chapter 10

[Figure 10.1 The biosensor classification according to physical-biochemical ope...](#)

[Figure 10.2 Bulk acoustic wave modes. \(a\) Shear bulk wave mode and \(b\) longitu...](#)

[Figure 10.3 Linear source plane excitation for surface and bulk wave propagati...](#)

[Figure 10.4 \(a\) and \(b\) shows a leaky SH-SAW and a leaky Rayleigh-SAW, respect...](#)

[Figure 10.5 The plate wave modes: \(a\) Lamb wave \(b\) SH wave.](#)

[Figure 10.6 Dispersion curves for Lamb waves traveling along an aluminum nitri...](#)

[Figure 10.7 \(a\) QCM biosensor structure, \(b\) QCM biosensor operation: TSM bulk...](#)

[Figure 10.8 The different FBAR device structures: cavity type, hole type, brid...](#)

[Figure 10.9 Stylistic representation of a basic Love mode device.](#)

[Figure 10.10 Measured change of signal transfer amplitude on a quartz device w...](#)

[Figure 10.11 Simulated effect of the top layer thickness on the insertion loss...](#)

[Figure 10.12 The structure where the whole thickness is the piezoelectric layer...](#)

[Figure 10.13 \(a\) Cross section of a Lamb wave device on a silicon nitride membrane...](#)

[Figure 10.14 Setup of the sandwich Lamb wave device.](#)

[Figure 10.15 Whole blood measurement device using Parylene-C coating layer.](#)

[Figure 10.16 High aspect ratio electrodes for Lamb wave devices.](#)

[Figure 10.17 A Rayleigh Wave biosensor structure is illustrated.](#)

[Figure 10.18 Example of the application of Euler angles Z-X-Z sequence by rotation...](#)

[Figure 10.19 The Qorvo® Biotechnologies TRUFORMA product.](#)

[Figure 10.20 Principle of working of the device: \(a\) the schematic of fluid flow...](#)

[Figure 10.21 The AWSensors X4 Advanced Multichannel QCMD system.](#)

[Figure 10.22 Sensor types provided by AWSensors Inc. \(a\) HFF QCM, \(b\) QCM, \(c\)...](#)

[Figure 10.23 Wearable SAW sensor fabricated on a flexible substrate.](#)

Chapter 11

[Figure 11.1 Illustration of a spherical wave that resembles a planar wave far ...](#)

[Figure 11.2 Sound wave propagation in a homogenous, quiescent medium. Local an...](#)

[Figure 11.3 The geometry of a bubble pair.](#)

[Figure 11.4 The normalized secondary Bjerknes forces as a function of the norm...](#)

[Figure 11.5 Acoustic forces acting on objects submerged in fluid. \(a\) Primary ...](#)

[Figure 11.6 Schematics showing typical \(a\) SAW and \(b\) BAW tweezers.](#)

[Figure 11.7 Illustration of conventional bulk acoustic tweezers. \(a\) Typical B...](#)

[Figure 11.8 Single-sided acoustic tweezers. \(a\) The acoustic beam is tightly f...](#)

[Figure 11.9 Mobile acoustic micromachines based on bubbles and sharp-edge. \(a\)...](#)

[Figure 11.10 3D nanoprinted soft robotic microsystems. \(a\) The illustration sh...](#)

[Figure 11.11 An acoustically powered soft robotic device. \(a\) Schematic of the...](#)

[Figure 11.12 Demonstration of in vivo acoustic micromanipulation. A 3-mm spher...](#)

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Preface

Acoustic technologies have played an increasingly significant role in both biology and medicine, empowering scientists and clinicians to explore and understand the intricate workings of living organisms and develop innovative diagnostic and therapeutic approaches. From ultrasound imaging to acoustic tweezers, from acoustic biosensors to acoustic stimulation, acoustic technologies have become indispensable tools in the arsenal of researchers and practitioners in these fields.

Acoustic Technologies in Biology and Medicine is designed to be a cornerstone reference bridging the rapidly advancing acoustic technologies with state-of-the-art applications in biology and medicine. The research in acoustics for biology and medicine requires a multidisciplinary approach involving fluid mechanics, physics, chemistry, electronics, and the life sciences. The burgeoning success and eminence of this field is fueled by the realization of groundbreaking technological innovations and impactful solutions addressing significant biological problems. Thus, it is imperative to present this field to a diverse audience spanning multiple engineering disciplines and the life sciences, targeting their involvement and education on the basic principles, breadth of technologies, and interdisciplinary applications of the acoustics. In this respect, *Acoustic Technologies in Biology and Medicine* adopts a unique role and context to introduce the graduate students and professionals from a broad range of backgrounds to this active research field, aiming to increase the synergy and interaction between the engineers and life scientists.

The book takes an interdisciplinary approach by covering the mechanistic and physical basics, as well as the applications. First, the book covers the underlying physical and theoretical principles of acoustic technologies. This aims to help the reader grasp the fundamental principles of acoustics. Second, different technologies of acoustic systems, including bulk and surface acoustic wave-based platforms, acoustic imaging, acoustic sensors, and acoustic levitators, are discussed. A clear understanding of the principles, advantages, and disadvantages of different acoustic technologies is crucial for evaluating and determining which acoustic methods are most suitable for particular biological applications. Third, state-of-the-art applications of acoustics in biology and medicine are presented. These applications include single cell and organism manipulation, acoustic biosensing, cancer cell isolation (liquid biopsy), cell/tissue stimulation and ablation, micro-robot actuation, acoustic imaging, and drug delivery.

The book is intended for a broad audience, including researchers and students in physics, biology, and engineering, as well as clinicians and practitioners in medicine. It is our hope that this book will provide a useful reference and inspire further research and innovation in the exciting and rapidly evolving field of acoustic technologies in biology and medicine.

February 28, 2023
Durham, NC, USA

Dr. Adem Ozcelik
Dr. Ryan Becker
Dr. Tony Jun Huang

1

Fundamentals of Acoustic Wave Generation and Propagation

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1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 Acoustic or Sound Waves

The use of acoustic technologies is widespread, from radio frequency (RF) surface acoustic wave (SAW) filters in most telecommunication devices and nondestructive testing (NDT) of solid parts in expensive machineries to ultrasonic imaging of fetuses during pregnancy and of joints and bones in case of injuries. At the heart of any acoustic technology are sound waves at work – a combination of pressure and velocity fluctuations propagating through a medium. The terms “acoustic” or “sound” waves are interchangeably used. Since “sound” is commonly associated with hearing audible acoustic waves as perceived by the human auditory organs, it would be restrictive to limit the term sound to human perception

only, the audible frequency range of 20 Hz to 20 kHz ([Figure 1.1](#)). Dogs and cats can even hear much higher-frequency ultrasound waves, whereas elephants via their feet can sense very low-frequency seismic vibrations propagating long distances across the land, i.e. infrasound. The ability of whales and bats to echolocate their targets at much higher frequencies of up to 200 kHz is also well known. Moreover, the use of MHz frequency waves in NDT and GHz frequency waves in SAW filters further broadens the scope of sound/acoustic waves. Therefore, any periodic pressure/velocity fluctuation in a solid, liquid, or gaseous media over a wide range of frequencies (10^0 – 10^9 Hz) can be safely called a sound/acoustic wave [\[1\]](#).

1.1.2 Dominos Effect

In an acoustic wave, the localized pressure at any given point within the medium oscillates between the maximum and minimum pressure values, linked to regions of compression and rarefaction, respectively ([Figure 1.2](#)). Any particle of the discretized medium, without moving along the propagating wave, will vibrate about a mean position with an oscillating velocity field. Propagation of an acoustic wave with these oscillating pressure and velocity fields through a medium can be understood by a simple analogy of a stack of falling dominoes, where the disturbance originating from one end of the dominoes' stack reaches the opposite end in no time, even without a single domino piece significantly moving away from its original position. Here, the average velocity of an individual domino is related to the particle velocity of the medium, whereas the disturbance moving across the stack is analogous to wave propagation. It is important to distinguish the oscillating particle velocity from the velocity of wave propagation [\[2\]](#).

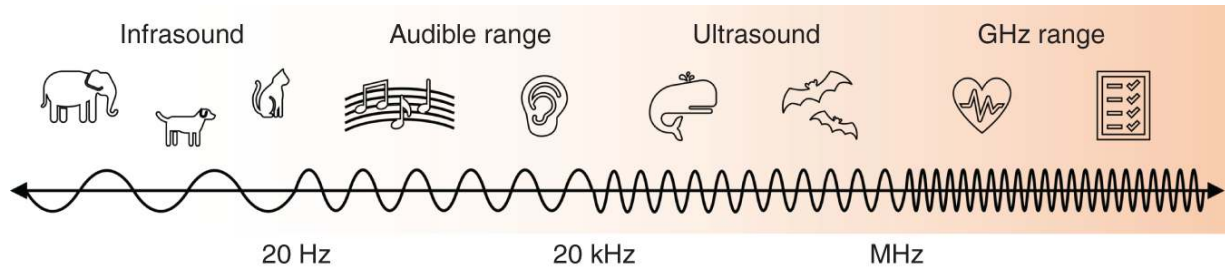


Figure 1.1 Categorization of acoustic waves based on frequency range.

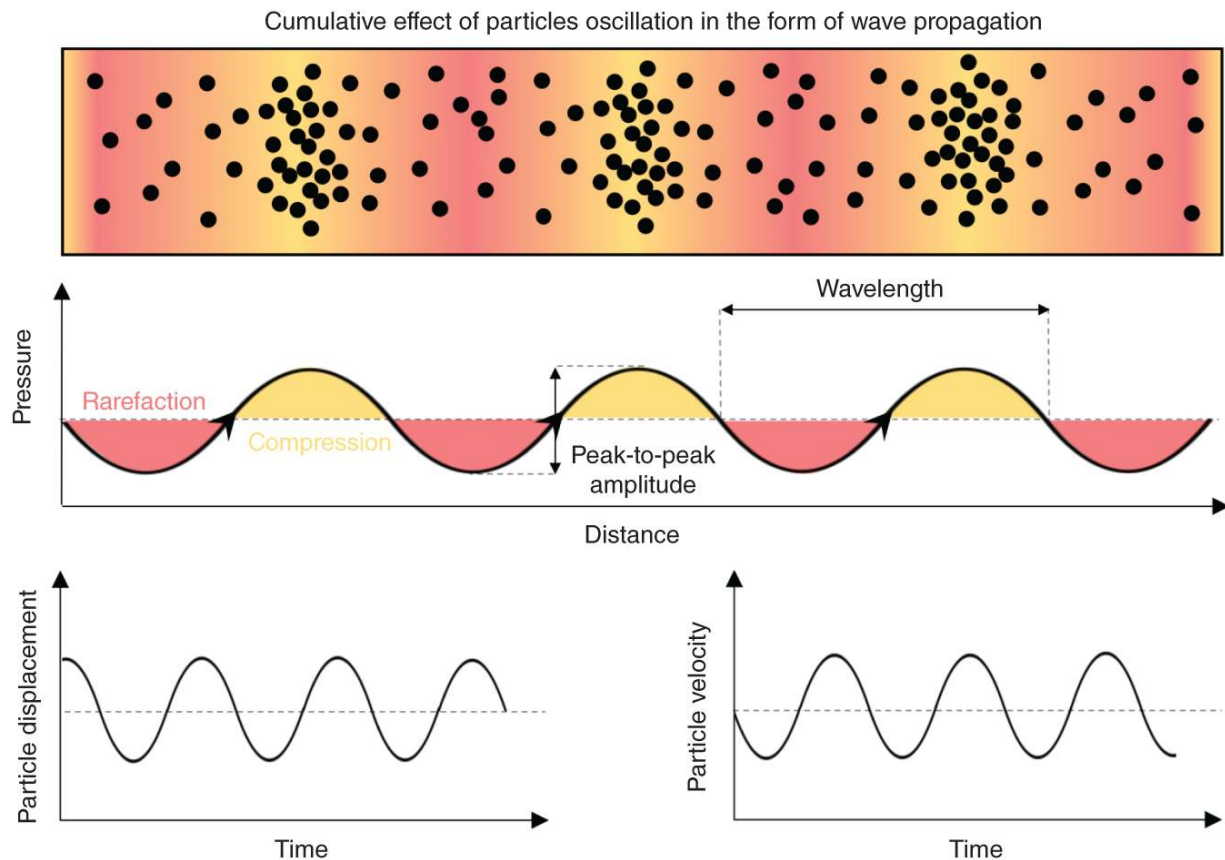


Figure 1.2 Particle oscillation in a medium because of an acoustic wave propagation.

1.1.3 Elastic vs Inelastic Waves

Acoustic waves under discussion are broadly categorized as elastic waves since they need an elastic medium to propagate. For an acoustic wave propagation, as the particles of the elastic medium move about an equilibrium

position, the velocity of these particles determines the kinetic energy, whereas the displacement away from the equilibrium position (i.e. wave amplitude) determines the potential energy associated with the acoustic wave. Similarly, mechanical waves, e.g. a transverse wave visualized on a vibrating string, require a medium to propagate that can store kinetic and potential energies. Elastic waves also share a lot in terms of wave propagation and energy with electromagnetic waves that can even travel through vacuum and have an enormous frequency range: 10 – 10^6 Hz radio waves, 10^{14} Hz visible light, 10^{20} Hz gamma rays, etc. Since vacuum can store electric and magnetic energies, analogous to potential and kinetic energies in elastic waves, it can sustain electromagnetic waves propagation. Electromagnetic waves (e.g. visible light) can also propagate through medium other than vacuum; however, the waves will be subjected to phenomena like reflection and refraction at interfaces where electromagnetic properties of media (e.g. refractive index) change. Similarly, acoustic waves can be reflected and refracted at an interface where the wave propagation velocity or acoustic impedance is not continuous. Building upon the fundamental assumptions of geometrical optics, where a wave can be represented by a ray directed normal to the wavefront, the paths taken by an acoustic wave in a complex medium can be described by Snell's law [[3](#), [4](#)].

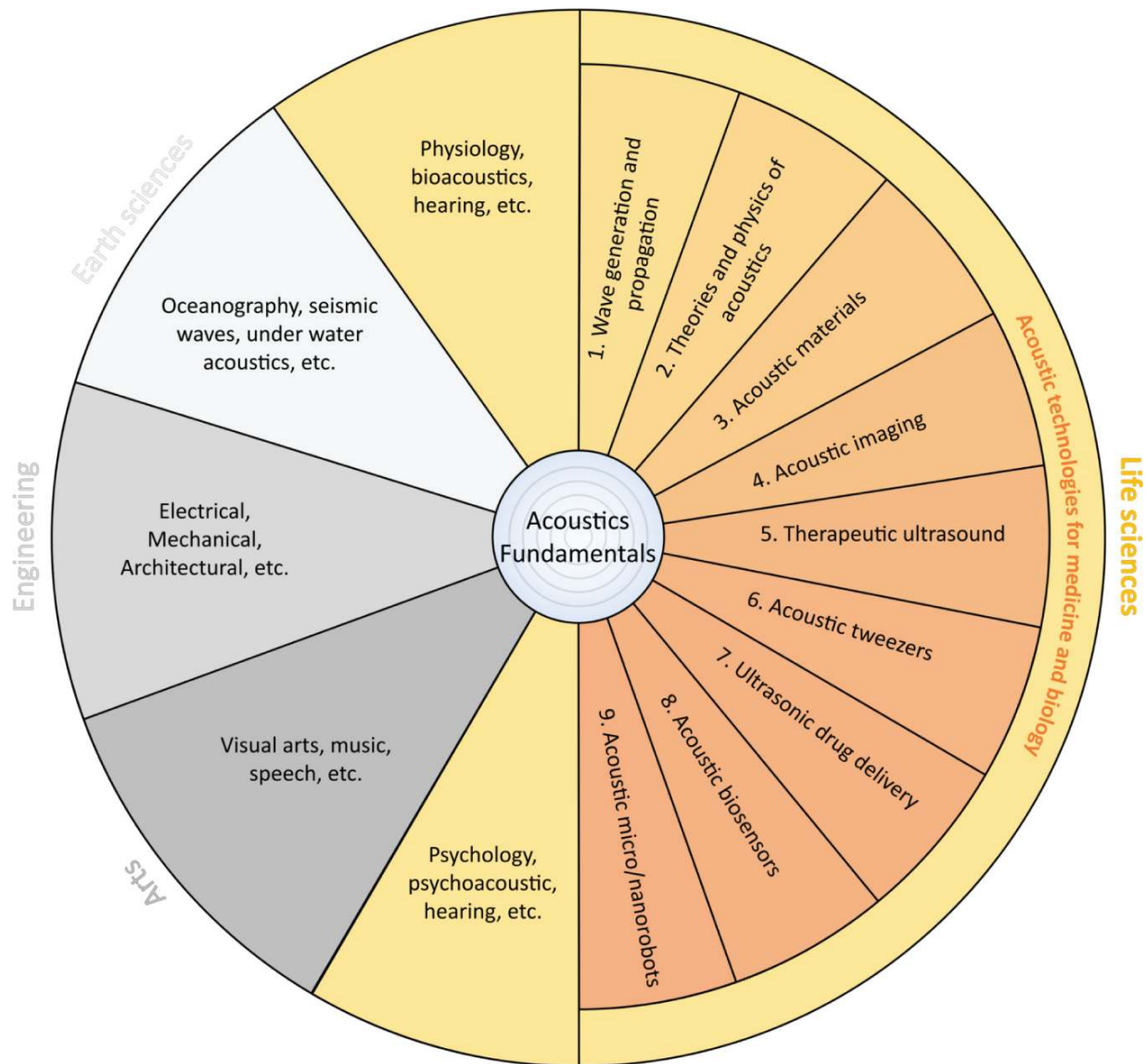


Figure 1.3 Position of “acoustic technologies for medicine and biology” within the scope of acoustics plotted in a circular chart analogous to Lindsay's wheel.

Source: Adapted from Lindsay [5].

1.1.4 Scope of Acoustics

The scope and ramifications of acoustics span across disciplines, i.e. from arts and engineering to earth and life sciences, where the boundaries separating them are not strictly defined ([Figure 1.3](#)). For example, acoustics of large spaces are closely linked to architectural engineering and

Time Gain Reduction (TGR) [114](#)
time-averaged acoustically induced forces [348](#)
 drag and thrust-induced acoustic streaming [354](#)–355
 primary radiation forces [348](#)–351
 secondary radiation forces [351](#)–353
time-averaged steady components [45](#)
time-domain photoacoustic waveform spectroscopy (tPAWS) [147](#)
tissue harmonic imaging (THI) [121](#)
 advantages [122](#)
 occurrence [121](#)
 separation [122](#)
transcranial-focused ultrasound [344](#)
transcription factor hypoxia inducible factor 1 (HIF1) [195](#)
transducer specifications [236](#)
transverse waves [10](#), [100](#), [291](#), [356](#)
travelling waves [12](#)–13
TRUFORMA product [328](#)
tumor homing peptide [193](#)

u

ultrasonic imaging [103](#)

beamforming [110](#)

central processing unit [109](#)

in diagnostic imaging [106](#)

for diagnostic purposes [104](#)

focus [109](#)

high-frequency sound waves [106](#)

output display [109](#)

in pregnancy [105](#)

probes [107](#)-109

resolution [109](#)

transducer [106](#)-107

ultrasonic waves

longitudinal waves [100](#)

surface acoustic waves [100](#)

transverse waves [100](#)

ultrasonography

- absorption [112](#)

- attenuation [112](#)-114

- Doppler ultrasonography [118](#)-119

- factors affecting [120](#)-121

- real-time artifacts [119](#)-120

- real-time imaging [114](#)-115

- reflection [110](#)-111

- refraction [111](#)-114

- sound tissue interaction [110](#)-114

ultrasound

- applications [102](#)-103

- behavior of [100](#)-101

- generation and detection of [67](#)

- longitudinal waves [100](#)

- power and intensity [101](#)-102

- transverse waves [100](#)

- waves [99](#)-100

ultrasound beams

- circular aperture transducers [78](#)-80

- focused transducers [80](#)-83

- phased-array transducers [83](#)

- ultrasound contrast agents [161](#), [167](#), [169](#), [181](#), [182](#), [186](#), [188](#), [194](#)

- ultrasound frequency, for medical imaging [343](#)

- ultrasound imaging, in medicine [122](#)-123

ultrasound transducers

electrical impedance matching network [78](#)

elements of [75](#)–76

matching layers [76](#)–77

slab [75](#)–76

technologies for [68](#)

ultrasound-irradiated bubbles [184](#)

v

VEGFR2 [193](#), [194](#)

virtual deterministic lateral displacement (vDLD) device [288](#)

vortex tweezers [360](#), [361](#)

w

waves in the piezoelectric material [72](#)–73

wearable SAW sensor [330](#)

x

X-linked inhibitor of apoptosis (XIAP) [195](#)

z

zeroth-order velocity [44](#)