Identifying Black Carbon Emission Sources Using an Aethalometer Light Absorption Model in Northern Taiwan

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Abstract

Black carbon (BC), a by-product of incomplete combustion of fossil fuels, biofuels, and biomass, poses significant risks to human health and exacerbates climate change due to its fine particle size and light-absorbing properties. Addressing this issue is paramount globally. This research focused on monitoring the mass concentrations of PM_{2.5} and BC in New Taipei City, Taiwan. The study utilized an aethalometer (AE33; Magee Scientific) to provide real-time monitoring of BC, employing a light absorption observation method across seven different wavelengths. A source apportionment model was deployed to estimate the contributions of various sources of BC in the ambient environment, such as fossil fuel combustion (BCff) or biomass combustion (BC_{bb}), with respective Absorption Ångström Exponents (AAE) of 1.1 and 2.2. Over one year of monitoring, the mean mass concentrations of PM_{2.5} and BC were determined to be $13\pm8 \ \mu\text{g/m}^3$ (ranging from 1 to 67 $\ \mu\text{g/m}^3$) and $1016\pm816 \ \text{ng/m}^3$ (ranging from 14 to 11284 ng/m³), respectively. The average AAE was calculated to be 1.21 ± 0.05 (ranging from 1.10 to 1.71), with BC_{ff} accounting for a significantly higher proportion (87%) compared to BC_{bb} (13%) of the total BC mass. Seasonal variations revealed elevated PM_{2.5} and BC concentrations in spring, peaking at $17\pm10 \,\mu\text{g/m}^3$ and $1357\pm1037 \,\text{ng/m}^3$, respectively, whereas the lowest concentrations were observed in autumn, registering only $10\pm6 \,\mu\text{g/m}^3$ and 822 ± 631 ng/m^3 , respectively. Furthermore, the one-year monitoring period indicated that the average PM_{2.5} concentration exceeded the annual standard recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO) of 5 μ g/m³. These findings underscore the pressing need to mitigate BC emissions, particularly from fossil fuel sources, to alleviate pollution in northern Taiwan.

關鍵字:黑碳、Ångström吸收指數、化石燃料燃燒、生質燃燒、空氣品質

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