Supplementary information

Continuous sheath-less microfluidic separation of nonmagnetic microparticles in a novel viscoelastic-based ferrofluid

Jun Zhang\textsuperscript{a}, Sheng Yan\textsuperscript{b}, Dan Yuan\textsuperscript{b}, Qianbin Zhao\textsuperscript{b}, Say Hwa Tan\textsuperscript{c}, Nam-Trung Nguyen\textsuperscript{c*}, Weihua Li\textsuperscript{b*}

\textsuperscript{a} School of Mechanical Engineering, Nanjing University of Science and Technology, Nanjing 210094, China
\textsuperscript{b} School of Mechanical, Materials and Mechatronic Engineering, University of Wollongong, Wollongong, NSW 2522, Australia, Fax: +61 2 4221 3238; Tel: +61 2 4221 3490; E-mail: weihuali@uow.edu.au
\textsuperscript{c} Queensland Micro and Nanotechnology Centre, Griffith University, Brisbane QLD 4111, Australia, Fax: +61 07 373 58021; Tel: +61 (07) 373 53921; E-mail: nam-trung.nguyen@griffith.edu.au

(1) Figure S1 Fluid velocity profile along channel width for two different cross-sections (50\textmu m\times 56\textmu m \& 600\textmu m\times 56\textmu m).

(2) Numerical Simulation
Physics:

(I) Magnetic Fields, no Currents

\[ H = - \nabla V_m \]  
\[ \nabla \cdot B = 0 \]

\( V_m \): Magnetic scalar potential

\( B \): Magnetic flux density

\( H \): Magnetic field

Magnetic field: Constitutive relation: Magnetization

\[ B = \mu_0 (H + M) \]  

(II) Laminar flow

Steady, incompressible Newtonian laminar flow

\[ \rho (u \cdot \nabla) u = \nabla \cdot \left[ -p I + \mu (\nabla u + (\nabla u)^T) \right] \]  
\[ \rho \nabla \cdot (u) = 0 \]

where \( u \) is velocity vector of fluid, \( P \) is fluid pressure, and \( \rho \) is fluid density. Noted here, the Newtonian flow with constant viscosity is used for simplicity, and the average dynamic viscosity was obtained from the rotational rheometer (Anton-Paar MCR 301, AU) at room temperature.

(III) Particle tracing for Fluid Flow

Magnetophoretic force

\[ F_t = 2\pi r^3 \rho \mu_0 K \nabla H^2 \]  
\[ K = \frac{\mu_{r,p} - \mu_r}{\mu_{r,p} + 2\mu_r} \]

where \( \mu_r \) is relative permeability, which is related to susceptibility \( \chi \) as \( \mu_r = 1 + \chi \).

Drag force:

\[ F_p = 3\pi \mu d_p (u_f - u_p) \]

Meshing:

Mapped mesh for microchannel and the permanent magnet

The rest space is meshed using Free Triangular
Parameters

The values of parameters used in the simulation are listed in the following table.

Table S1 Parameter values in the numerical simulation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Properties</th>
<th>value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Permanent magnet relative permeability</td>
<td>1.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air and PDMS relative permeability</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polystyrene particles relative permeability</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PEO-based ferrofluid relative permeability</td>
<td>1.026</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fluid density (kg/m$^3$)</td>
<td>1007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fluid dynamic viscosity (mPa•s)</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polystyrene particle diameters (µm)</td>
<td>5 and 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polystyrene particle density (kg/m$^3$)</td>
<td>1050</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(3) Figure S3 Particle size-dependent magnetophoretic deflection with and without magnetic field in the PEO-based ferrofluid. (a) and (b) particles magnetophoretic deflection within magnet
region and outlet when the magnet exists. (c) and (d) when the magnet is absent, particles focus at centreline without magnetophoretic deflection within magnet region and outlet.

(4) Supplementary video 1: Numerical results of negative magnetophoresis

(5) Supplementary video 2: Separation of non-magnetic particles in PEO-based ferrofluid at the outlet

(6) The reason why we applied the flow rate of 15 µl/min for particle separation tests
It is based on our experimental results of viscoelastic focusing and negative magnetophoresis in Figure 2 and Figure 3. In Figure 3b, we found that the optimal flow rate for particle viscoelastic focusing is 15 µl/min. Therefore, in order to confine particles in a narrow area in the downstream, particles need to be well focused by the viscoelastic effects. Meanwhile, from Figure 2, we found that the negative magnetophoretic deflection of 5-µm particles becomes insignificant when the flow rate is 15 µl/min, but magnetophoresis of 13-µm particles at the flow rate of 15 µl/min will be similar to that of 5-µm particles at a flow rate around 2.2 µl/min by a simple analytical analysis.
\[
(V_y/V_x)_{13\mu m, 15\mu l/min} = \left(\frac{F_m}{3\pi \mu aV_x}\right)_{13\mu m, 15\mu l/min}
\]
\[
= A\left(\frac{a^2}{V_x}\right)_{13\mu m, 15\mu l/min}
\]
\[
= 6.76A\left(\frac{a^2}{V_x}\right)_{5\mu m, 15\mu l/min}
\]
\[
= A\left(\frac{a^2}{V_x}\right)_{5\mu m, 2.2\mu l/min}
\]
\[
= (V_y/V_x)_{5\mu m, 2.2\mu l/min}
\]

where A is a constant independent of particle size and flow speed.

If the flow rate is too high, not only the viscoelastic focusing becomes worse, causing a wide particle streak, but also the magnetophoretic deflection of large particles may become less distinct with smaller particles, therefore hindering particle separation performance. If the flow rate is too low, the magnetophoretic force may repel both small and large particles to the opposite wall, and it will deteriorate particle separation too.

(7) Rheology of the PEO-based ferrofluid

![Graph showing dynamic viscosity vs. shear rate for different concentrations of ferrofluids](image)