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Enantioselective high-performance liquid chromatographic separation of fluorinated β - phenylalanine derivatives utilizing *Cinchona* alkaloid-based ion-exchanger chiral stationary phases Enantioselective separation of fluorinated β -phenylalanine derivatives



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ABSTRACT

The enantioselective separation of newly synthesized fluorine-substituted β -phenylalanines has been performed utilizing *Cinchona* alkaloid-based ion-exchanger chiral stationary phases. Experiments were designed to study the effect of eluent composition, counterion content, and temperature on the chromatographic properties in a systematic manner. Mobile phase systems containing methanol or mixtures of methanol and acetonitrile together with acid and base additives ensured highly efficient enantioseparations. Zwitterionic phases [Chiralpak ZWIX (+) and ZWIX(-)] were found to provide superior performance compared to that by the anion-exchangers (Chiralpak QN-AX and QD-AX). A detailed thermodynamic characterization was also performed by employing van't Hoff analysis. Using typical liquid chromatographic experimental conditions, no marked effect of the flow rate could be observed on the calculated thermodynamic parameters. In contrast, a clear tendency has been revealed about the effect of the eluent composition on the thermodynamics for the zwitterionic phases.

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1. Introduction

Enantiomerically pure β -aryl-substituted β -amino acids have attracted much attention due to their pharmaceutical importance and their utility in drug research. For example, (2*R*,3*S*)-3-amino-3-phenyl-2-hydroxypropionic acid is a key intermediate for the preparation of the taxol side-chain [1] used in the semi-synthesis of Taxol®, approved by the FDA for treatment of ovarian cancer and metastatic breast cancer [2]. (*S*)-3-Amino-3-(*o*-tolyl)propanoic acid [3] was identified as the preferred enantiomeric form for the construction of Cathepsin (CatHA) inhibitors with potential beneficial effects in cardiovascular diseases [4]. The development of fluorinated amino acids has gained increasing attention resulting from their recognition as an important class of compounds in the design and synthesis of potential pharmaceutical drugs [5,6]. As an example, Januvia^{TE} (sitagliptin phosphate), a drug approved for

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the treatment of type 2 diabetes containing (R)-3-amino-4-(2,4,5-trifluorophenyl)butanoic acid as a subunit, and acts via inhibition of dipeptidyl peptidase IV [7]. To control the steps of preparation and to determine the enantiomeric impurities suitable analytical techniques and methods are needed.

Enantioselective liquid chromatography separations are the most frequently applied techniques either at analytical or preparative scale for the discrimination of chiral compounds nowadays. Due to their relevance, they are frequently discussed in review articles [8–12]. To achieve higher efficiencies using superficially or fully porous particles is a challenging area in "chiral chromatography" [13–15], however, most of the enantioselective separations are being carried out on traditional HPLC systems. Wide range of chiral compounds have been studied so far, but there is only sparse information on the liquid-phase enantioseparation of fluorinated amino acids in the literature. Utilizing ligand-exchange micellar capillary chromatography, *o-*, *m-*, and *p*-fluoro-D,L-phenylalanines were separated [16], while a Chiralcel OD-H column was applied for the enantiomeric separation of nonproteogenic polyfluoro amino acids and peptides [17]. Our group has reported a study using

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Fig. 1. Structures of analytes.

five fluorinated cyclic β^3 -amino acid derivatives and their nonfluorinated counterparts on polysaccharide-based chiral stationary phases (CSPs) [18].

Of the liquid-phase "chiral chromatographic" techniques, *Cinchona* alkaloid-based ion-exchangers have found their niche for the enantioseparations of diverse chiral analytes, *e.g.*, anionic, cationic, or ampholytic compounds [19–22]. Since these CSPs have pronounced relevance in amino acid analysis [23–26], we have decided to study their applicability for the enantioselective separation of newly synthesized fluorinated β -phenylalanines. The effects of the experimental variables have been investigated in a systematic study to acquire information on enantiorecognition. The nature and concentration of the mobile phase components and counterions as additives were varied to characterize the utilized CSPs. Based on the structural features of the applied analytes (selectands, SAs) and selectors (SOs), structure–retention (selectivity) relationships were evaluated. Analysis of the temperature dependence allowed a detailed thermodynamic characterization.

2. Experimental

2.1. Chemicals and materials

Five enantiomeric pairs of fluorine-containing β -amino acids together with the enantiomers of non-fluorinated β -phenylalanine (Fig. 1) were studied. Racemic amino acid **1** was prepared through ring cleavage of racemic 4-phenylazetidin-2-one with 18% HCl [27], while **2-6** were synthesized via a modified Rodionov synthesis, through condensation of the corresponding aldehydes with malonic acid in the presence of ammonium acetate in ethanol [28]. Phenyl-substituted β -amino acid (*S*)-**1** ($ee \geq 99\%$) was prepared through CAL-B (*Candida antarctica* lipase B)-catalyzed ring cleavage of 4-phenylazetidin-2-one [27]. Enantiomeric fluorophenylsubstituted β -amino acids (*S*)-**2**–(*S*)-**6** ($ee \geq 99\%$) were synthesized through lipase PSIM (*Burkholderia cepacia*)-catalyzed hydrolysis of racemic β -amino carboxylic ester hydrochloride salts in the presence of triethylamine (TEA) and water [28].

Methanol (MeOH) of LC-MS grade and acetonitrile (MeCN) of HPLC gradient grade were from Molar Chemicals Ltd. (Halásztelek, Hungary). Ethylamine (EA) of HPLC grade was from Sigma-Aldrich (St. Louis, MO, USA). H₂O of LC-MS grade, formic acid (FA), diethy-

lamine (DEA), and TEA of HPLC grade were obtained from VWR International (Leuven, Belgium).

2.2. Instrumentation and chromatography

Chromatographic measurements were carried out on a Waters Breeze system consisting of a 1525 binary pump, a 2996 photodiode array detector, a 717 plus autosampler, and Empower 2 data manager software (Waters Chromatography, Milford, MA, USA). The chromatographic system was equipped with Rheodyne Model 7125 injector (Cotati, CA, USA) with a 20-µl loop. The columns were thermostated in a Lauda Alpha RA-8 thermostat (Lauda Dr. R. Wobser GmbH & Co. KG., Lauda-Königshofen, Germany). The precision of temperature adjustment was $\pm 0.1^{\circ}$ C.

Chiralpak ZWIX(+) and ZWIX(-) columns (150 × 3.0 mm I.D., 3 μ m particle size for both columns) and QN-AX, QD-AX columns (150 × 4.6 mm I.D., 5 μ m particle size for both columns) were from Chiral Technologies Europe (Illkirch, France). Their structures are depicted in Figure S1.

Stock solutions of amino acids (1 mg ml⁻¹) were prepared by dissolution in MeOH and further dilution with the mobile phase. The dead times (t_0) of the columns were determined by injecting acetone mixed with MeOH at each investigated temperature and eluent composition. The flow rate was set at 0.6 ml min⁻¹ and the column temperature at 25°C, if not otherwise stated.

2.3. Evaluation of thermodynamic data and determination of the confidence intervals

To decrease sensitivity to outliers the ln α (and ln k) vs. T^{-1} curves were evaluated based on weighted linear regression (weighted least squares, WLR or WLS). The weighing variable of the seeming outlier data points was reduced to obtain more accurate mean values and confidence intervals. The WLR and confidence intervals (at a confidence level of 95%) were calculated with Microsoft Excel 2016 using the Real Statistics Resource Pack Add-In. Since the free energies were calculated from enthalpy and entropy parameters confidence intervals of them were calculated by taking the propagation of error into account.

3. Results and discussion

3.1. Column selection and effects of bulk solvent composition

The *Cinchona* alkaloid-based CSPs can be applied in different chromatographic modes. However, the best performances are usually achieved in polar-ionic mode (PIM), when a mixture of MeOH (possessing polar and protic properties) and MeCN (as a polar but aprotic solvent) is applied. To achieve better peak shapes and promote ionic interactions, acid and base additives are needed in the mobile phase. The excess of acid is generally preferred. In this way, the quinuclidine group of the SO is mainly protonated promoting the enantioselective ion-pairing process.

Initially, the anion-exchanger-based QN-AX and QD-AX columns were studied applying MeOH/MeCN mobile phases of different ratios (100/0, 50/50, 25/75 v/v) with acid (FA) and base (DEA) additives. As the results summarized in Table S1 show, the *Cinchona* alkaloid-based anion-exchangers practically did not show enantiorecognition capability in the case of the studied compounds. Either enhancing the MeCN or reducing the salt (formed from the added acid and base) content of the mobile phase, higher retentions were obtained for all studied β -phenylalanines without achieving any enantioresolution.

Due to the presence of the amino group in the SAs, stronger interactions and higher enantioselectivities were expected when employing zwitterionic CSPs. Therefore the ZWIX (+) and ZWIX(-) columns were studied with varying mobile phase compositions. At first, reversed-phase (RP) conditions were tested applying MeOH/H₂O mobile phase systems with different compositions using constant concentrations of acid (FA, 50 mM) and base (DEA, 25 mM) additives. Unfortunately, under all studied RP conditions poor peak shapes and no or only small enantioselectivities were obtained (data not shown).

As expected, much better performance was achieved using PI mode. In these experiments, the MeOH/MeCN ratio was varied from 100/0 to 10/90 (v/v), while the base (DEA) and acid (FA) modifiers were added at constant concentrations (25 and 50 mM, respectively). The chromatographic parameters (k_1 , α , R_s) showing the most important results of these experiments are depicted in Fig. 2. As a result of the increase in MeCN content in the mobile phase, increased retention factors were obtained for all analytes, similar to the case of anion-exchangers discussed above. In most cases selectivity increased up to a MeOH/MeCN composition of 25/75 (v/v), then it decreased slightly or leveled off. Resolution values developed similarly in terms of the trend. Namely, they changed according to a maximum curve on both columns, usually reaching a maximum at a composition of MeOH/MeCN 25/75 (v/v) on the ZWIX(–), and 50/50 (v/v) on the ZWIX(+) column.

These results indicate both the similarities and differences between the separation mechanisms of the applied zwitterionic and single ion-exchanger CSPs. The increased retentions observed with higher MeCN ratios can be explained by the increased electrostatic interactions due to the decreased solvation shell of the ionized SAs and SO. In contrast, MeOH a better solvent of SAs, can decrease the accessibility of SAs to the Cinchona alkaloid-based CSPs resulting in lower retentions. Besides solvation-related issues, it is worth mentioning that further solvent effects might be expected since MeOH may suppress hydrogen bonding, while MeCN may interfere with aromatic π – π interactions. In the case of zwitterionic CSPs, the increase in selectivity (Fig. 2) with decreasing MeOH content suggests that hydrogen bonding interactions play a notable role in enantioselective interactions. Based on these results, most further experiments were carried out using an eluent composition of MeOH/MeCN 100/0 or 50/50 (v/v) containing acid and base additives in a ratio of two. Earlier results have shown that the acid-to-base ratio of 2:1 provides generally optimal ionization conditions and retention characteristics for the zwitterionic CSPs [29,30].

3.2. Effects of the nature of base additive and counterion concentration

In addition to the eluent composition discussed above, both the quality and the amount of acid and base added to the mobile phase may significantly influence chromatographic properties, since the acid and the base affect both the solvation conditions and the ionization of SAs and SO. In the case of ion-exchangers dissolving acid and base in the mobile phase, counterions are formed *in situ*, and they act as competitors for the SA and SO ionic functional groups. In the case of zwitterionic SOs, both the cations and the anions can be considered as counterions. In this way, counterions interfere with ionic interactions between SO and SA, and retention can be controlled [31]. Therefore, the effects of the quality and quantity of the counterions are worth exploring.

Our previous experience has shown that the quality of the acid has no marked effect on the chromatographic parameters when using the same base [23,32]. As a consequence, for these experiments, FA was applied as the acid component (50 mM), and organic amines EA, DEA, and TEA (25 mM) were applied as bases. Under these conditions, the acid excess used in the mobile phase ensured that the amines were present in their protonated forms. The results obtained with the ZWIX(-) column with two different eluent systems [100/0 and 50/50 (v/v) MeOH/MeCN] are shown in Fig. 3 and Table S2. It can be established that k_1 values differ very slightly in pure MeOH, but to a greater extent when MeOH/MeCN 50/50 (v/v) was used. It is important to point out, that the trend of elution strength in all cases was TEA < DEA < EA. Since the basicity of these amines is rather similar (EA, DEA, TEA has pK_a values of 10.70, 10.84, 10.75, respectively [33]), it can be stated that the number of ethyl substituents of the amine can significantly affect the retentive properties through the size and shape of the alkylamine ions. Note, however, that this property depends strongly on the eluent composition, too. The changes in α and *Rs*, in turn, were much less marked. Again, they were slightly higher in MeOH/MeCN 50/50 (v/v) than in pure MeOH. In MeOH/MeCN 50/50 (v/v) both enantioselectivity and resolution decreased slightly with the more alkylated base.

For the quantitative description of the chromatographic ionexchange process, the simple stoichiometric displacement model is applied in most cases [34,35]. The model assumes a linear relationship between the logarithm of the retention factor and the logarithm of counterion concentration, where the plot of log k vs. log c provides the slope. This is related to the effective charge (ratio of the charge number of the SA and the counterion), whereas the intercept is related to the ion-exchange equilibrium constant. To gain a deeper insight into the details of the retention mechanism, the effects of counterion concentration on the chromatographic properties were examined with both zwitterionic CSPs, applying 100% MeOH with FA and DEA. In these experiments, the acid-to-base molar ratio was kept constant of two, with varying concentrations of both the acid (12.5-200 mM) and the base (6.25-100 mM). As Fig. 4 shows, linear fittings could be achieved with $R^2 > 0.97$ in all cases, supporting the validity of the model in the studied systems. The slopes of the log k vs. log c plots varied in a narrow range, between 0.21 and 0.25 for the ZWIX(-), and between 0.31 and 0.34 for the ZWIX(+) column. These are in accordance with earlier results obtained with zwitterionic CSPs [24,36]. As data summarized in Table S3 show, reduced retentions are obtained with increasing counterion concentration. At the same time, however, enantioselectivity is nearly unchanged, highlighting an advantageous property of the studied zwitterionic CSPs, *i.e.* the retention can be tuned by



Fig. 2. Effects of the mobile phase composition on the chromatographic parameters in the separation of fluorinated β -phenylalanine derivatives on zwitterionic CSPs. Chromatographic conditions: columns, ZWIX(-) and ZWIX(+); mobile phase, MeOH/MeCN (100/0 – 10/90 v/v) all containing 25 mM DEA and 50 mM FA; flow rate, 0.6 ml min⁻¹; detection, 262 nm; temperature, 25°C; symbols, analyte 1, \blacksquare , 2, \bigcirc , 3, \blacktriangle , 4, \Box , 5, \bigcirc and 6, \triangle .

varying the concentration of the counterions without having a significant loss of enantioselectivity.

3.3. Structure-retention (enantioselectivity) relationships and elution order

Fluoro substitution can lead to modified chemical and biological properties, where the substitution may significantly affect the interactions formed between the SA and the SO. Generally, it can be stated that all SAs, both the fluorinated and the non-fluorinated studied here, behaved in a rather uniform way, *i.e.*, no vital differences in the chromatographic properties could be observed (see, *e.g.*, Fig. 2). This observation suggests that the main interactions responsible for retention and enantiorecognition were not radically modified by the structural changes related to the fluoro substitution of the SAs. However, some important distinctions still can be made.

Comparing the chromatographic properties of analyte **2** *vs.* **1**, it can be noted, that retentions were lower for the non-fluorinated **1**, while no significant differences in enantioselectivities could be detected. That is, the fluorination on the aromatic ring in *para* position resulted in considerable changes only in non-selective interactions, leading to enhanced retention. Further increase in reten-

tion can be observed with an additional fluorine substitution of the aromatic ring (**3** *vs.* **2**), without significantly perturbing the enantiorecognition ability of the zwitterionic CSPs. Examining the chromatographic properties of analyte **3** *vs.* **4**, shorter retentions can be seen without noticeable changes in enantioselectivities. It means that the relative position of the fluorine atoms in the case of the double fluorine substituted SAs had a noticeable effect only on the retentive properties of the zwitterionic CSPs.

Under all applied conditions (except mobile phases containing 90 v% of MeCN) analyte **5** eluted with the lowest retention. Interestingly, these lowest retentions were accompanied by the highest enantioselectivities in most of the cases, suggesting that methyl substitution together with the fluorination of the aromatic ring results in such a favorable structure, where the non-selective interactions formed between the SA and SO can markedly be reduced. In the case of analyte **6**, exchanging all H atoms of the methyl group for F atoms resulted in higher *k*, but lower α values compared to those of **5**. No matter how different is the structure of analytes **3** and **6**, they showed a quite similar retention behaviour. In most cases, one of these SAs possessed the longest retention times independently from the applied conditions. Some marked differences between the enantioselectivities were also observed. Namely, the lowest α values were obtained in the case of **6**, suggesting that



Fig. 3. Effects of base additives on the chromatographic parameters in the separation of fluorinated β -phenylalanine derivatives on zwitterionic CSPs. Chromatographic conditions: column, Chiralpak ZWIX(–); mobile phase, **A**) MeOH and **B**) MeOH/MeCN (50/50, ν/ν), both containing 25 mM base additive and 50 mM FA; flow rate, 0.6 ml min⁻¹; detection, 262 nm; temperature, 25°C; symbols EA, $\boxed{222}$, DEA, $\boxed{222}$, and TEA, $\boxed{222}$.



Fig. 4. Influence of the counterion concentration on the retention factor of the first-eluting enantiomer (k_1). Chromatographic conditions: columns, ZWIX(+) and ZWIX(-); mobile phase, MeOH containing DEA/FA (mM/mM), 6.25/12.5, 12.5/25, 50/100 and 100/200 (in all cases the acid-to-base ratio being kept at 2:1); flow rate, 0.6 ml min⁻¹; detection, 262 nm; temperature, 25°C; symbols, analyte **1**, **1**, **2**, **•**, **3**, **•**, **4**, \Box , **5**, \bigcirc and **6**, \triangle .

the structural changes can affect the enantiorecognition markedly without strongly affecting retention.

As a summary, concerning the structural variations generated by the fluorination of β -phenylalanine derivatives, it can be concluded that relatively moderate changes were observed. The fluoro substitution may have effects on both the retention and the enantiorecognition depending on the position and degree of substitution.

ZWIX(+) and ZWIX(-) are based respectively on quinine (QN) and quinidine (QD) alkaloids modified with (R,R)- or (S,S)-trans-2-aminocyclohexanesulfonic acid group (Figure S1). These SOs are often referred to as pseudoenantiomers because they behave as quasi-enantiomers; in fact, however, they are diastereomers. Elution orders were determined in all cases and they were found to be opposite on the studied zwitterionic CSPs without any exception (Table S4). That is, the elution order can easily be reversed by switching from ZWIX(-) to ZWIX(+) or vice versa. Selected chromatograms for the enantioseparation of the studied SAs are depicted in Fig. 5.

3.4. Thermodynamic characterization

In the field of liquid chromatographic enantioselective separations based on the application of different types of CSPs, despite the huge amount of experimental data generated in the last two decades, there still exists a few possibilities for the quantitative or at least semi-quantitative description of the processes affording chiral recognition. Whereas there are computer-based calculations utilizing different models in this area, their applicability is rather limited [37–39].

For the thermodynamic characterization of chiral recognition, the most frequently applied approach is the van't Hoff analysis. Its popularity originates from its simplicity, as it derives from Eq. (1),

$$\ln \alpha = -\Delta(\Delta H^{\circ})/RT + \Delta(\Delta S^{\circ})/R \tag{1}$$

where *R* is the universal gas constant, *T* is the temperature in Kelvin, and α is the selectivity factor. The difference in the change in standard enthalpy $\Delta(\Delta H^{\circ})$ and entropy $\Delta(\Delta S^{\circ})$ for enantiomers can be obtained by plotting ln α against T^{-1} . In an outstanding review article Asnin and Stepanova enlightened all the pitfalls of this simplified approach [40]. Here, let us draw attention to only one important fact. In linear chromatography, it is impossible to separate selective and non-selective interactions; consequently, only apparent thermodynamic values can be calculated.

Besides theoretical limitations discussed comprehensively by Asnin and Stepanova [40], the correctness of van't Hoff plots was examined focusing on instrumental and experimental conditions by Felinger et al. [41]. In their study, the heterogeneous surface of a CSP was simulated by the serial connection of two reversed-phase achiral columns, and both interaction sites were evaluated individually by using van't Hoff analysis. Flow rate (pressure drop across the column) was found to affect the calculated thermodynamic parameters. However, it is important to see, that in this study achiral conditions were applied, and ΔH° and ΔS° values were calculated. Inspired by the work of Felinger et al., we designed a systematic study to reveal further details of the applicability of the van't Hoff approach in enantioselective chromatography, where the effect of temperature was investigated between 5 and 50°C (5°C, 10°C, then with 10°C increments up to 50°C) on the ZWIX(-) and ZWIX(+)CSPs.

3.4.1. Effect of the flow rate on the thermodynamic parameters

Evaluation of the effects of flow rate on the thermodynamic parameters was performed setting 0.3, 0.6, or 0.9 ml min⁻¹ flow rate and employing constant mobile phase composition [MeOH/MeCN 50/50 (ν/ν) with FA (50 mM) and DEA (25 mM)] with the ZWIX(–) column. Experimental data obtained for the six studied SAs using van't Hoff analysis are summarized in Table 1.

Most frequently, the least negative $\Delta(\Delta H^\circ)$ and $\Delta(\Delta S^\circ)$ values were obtained at the highest flow rate, but changes were rather small, and no monotonous change could be discovered in the thermodynamic parameters with increasing flow rate. It can clearly be



Fig. 5. Selected chromatograms of analytes 1-6. Chromatographic conditions: columns, Chiralpak ZWIX(–) and ZWIX(+); mobile phase, for ZWIX(–)100 v^{*} MeOH and for ZWIX(+) MeOH/MeCN (75/25, v/v) all containing 25 mM DEA and 50 mM FA; flow rate, 0.6 ml min⁻¹; detection, 262 nm; temperature, 25°C.

Table 1
Effects of flow rate on the thermodynamic parameters of fluorinated β -phenylalanine derivatives on ZWIX(–) column

Analyte	$-\Delta(\Delta H^0)$ (kJ mol ⁻¹)			$-\Delta(\Delta S^0)$ (J mo	ol ⁻¹ K ⁻¹)		$-\Delta(\Delta G^0)_{298\mathrm{K}} \ (\mathrm{kJ} \ \mathrm{mol}^{-1})$				
	a	b	с	a	b	c	a	b	c		
1 2 3 4	$\begin{array}{c} 5.43 \pm 0.13 \\ 5.85 \pm 0.14 \\ 5.46 \pm 0.16 \\ 5.36 \pm 0.17 \end{array}$	$\begin{array}{l} 5.00 \pm 0.13 \\ 5.14 \pm 0.16 \\ 5.21 \pm 0.16 \\ 5.60 \pm 0.14 \end{array}$	$\begin{array}{l} 4.84 \pm 0.11 \\ 5.18 \pm 0.10 \\ 5.09 \pm 0.10 \\ 5.28 \pm 0.16 \end{array}$	$\begin{array}{l} 12.35 \pm 0.44 \\ 13.72 \pm 0.48 \\ 12.42 \pm 0.54 \\ 11.84 \pm 0.55 \end{array}$	$\begin{array}{l} 10.87 \pm 0.42 \\ 11.29 \pm 0.54 \\ 11.60 \pm 0.52 \\ 12.62 \pm 0.47 \end{array}$	$\begin{array}{l} 10.34 \pm 0.37 \\ 11.46 \pm 0.34 \\ 11.16 \pm 0.35 \\ 11.54 \pm 0.54 \end{array}$	$\begin{array}{c} 1.75 \pm 0.19 \\ 1.76 \pm 0.20 \\ 1.75 \pm 0.23 \\ 1.83 \pm 0.23 \end{array}$	$\begin{array}{c} 1.76 \pm 0.18 \\ 1.77 \pm 0.23 \\ 1.75 \pm 0.22 \\ 1.83 \pm 0.20 \end{array}$	$\begin{array}{c} 1.76 \pm 0.16 \\ 1.76 \pm 0.14 \\ 1.76 \pm 0.15 \\ 1.84 \pm 0.23 \end{array}$		
5 6	$\begin{array}{c} 4.37 \pm 0.13 \\ 3.77 \pm 0.15 \end{array}$	$\begin{array}{l} 4.40 \pm 0.16 \\ 3.56 \pm 0.11 \end{array}$	$\begin{array}{r} 3.92 \pm 0.08 \\ 2.98 \pm 0.13 \end{array}$	$\begin{array}{l} 8.59 \pm 0.44 \\ 7.85 \pm 0.49 \end{array}$	$\begin{array}{l} 8.68 \pm 0.53 \\ 7.18 \pm 0.37 \end{array}$	$\begin{array}{c} 7.17 \pm 0.25 \\ 5.27 \pm 0.43 \end{array}$	$\begin{array}{c} 1.81 \pm 0.16 \\ 1.43 \pm 0.21 \end{array}$	$\begin{array}{c} 1.81 \pm 0.22 \\ 1.42 \pm 0.16 \end{array}$	$\begin{array}{c} 1.79 \pm 0.11 \\ 1.40 \pm 0.18 \end{array}$		

Chromatographic conditions: column, ZWIX(-); mobile phase, MeOH/MeCN (50/50 ν/ν) containing 25 mM DEA and 50 mM FA, flow rate, **a**) 0.3 ml min⁻¹, **b**) 0.6 ml min⁻¹, **c**) 0.9 ml min⁻¹; detection, 262 nm. Confidence intervals were calculated as described in Section 2.3.

stated that the thermodynamic parameters of the studied SAs are affected in different ways by the flow rate, but these slight changes do not follow a trend. In a limited set of experiments, the effect of flow rate on the thermodynamic parameters was also studied with the ZWIX(+) column. In this case, no significant changes in $\Delta(\Delta H^{\circ})$ and $\Delta(\Delta S^{\circ})$ values were observed applying a flow rate of 0.6 or 0.9 ml min⁻¹ (Table S5). Consequently, the only reliable conclusion that can be drawn is that using typical operational conditions (i.e., flow rate is around the optimal value corresponding to the dimensions of the column) the $\Delta(\Delta H^{\circ})$ and $\Delta(\Delta S^{\circ})$ values are influenced more significantly by the structural peculiarities of the SAs than by the flow rate, even if the analytes are structurally closely related. With respect to the thermodynamic parameters calculated for the zwitterionic CSPs, it is interesting to note that each thermodynamic parameter varied in a fairly narrow range. Furthermore, markedly more negative $\Delta(\Delta H^{\circ})$, $\Delta(\Delta S^{\circ})$, and $\Delta(\Delta G^{\circ})$ values were obtained with the ZWIX(-) column, showing its superiority over the ZWIX(+) column in the enantioselective separation of fluorinated *β*-phenylalanines.

As an extension of data evaluation, we also explored the effects of flow rate on the change in standard enthalpy (ΔH°), entropy (ΔS°), and free energy (ΔG°) by the evaluation of the ln *k* vs T^{-1} plots (data not shown). In this case ΔS° contains the product of *R x* ln φ , where φ is the reversal of the phase ratio unless the latter is determined independently [42]. Most frequently, the least negative ΔH° , ΔS° , and ΔG° values were obtained at 0.9 ml min⁻¹, and about the same values were obtained at flow rates of 0.3 and 0.6 ml min⁻¹ in the case of the ZWIX(–) column. In the case of the ZWIX(+) column, no significant difference could be found between the thermodynamic data obtained at 0.6 and 0.9 ml min⁻¹. This shows that if the flow rate has any effect on the thermodynamic parameters, both enantiomers are affected in the same way.

3.4.2. Effect of the mobile phase composition on the thermodynamic parameters

The adsorption in chromatography (defined as the transfer of a solute from the mobile to the stationary phase) is a complex process involving five steps: 1) desolvation of the solute in the liquid phase (desolv), 2) desorption of the solvent from the surface of the stationary phase (desorp), 3) formation of a transient complex on the surface (netads), 4) resolvation of the transient complex (resolv), and, finally, 5) dilution of the liquid phase by the solvent molecules desorbed from the surface (dil), as it is described in Eq. (2),

$$\Delta X^{0} = \Delta X^{0}_{desolv} + \Delta X^{0}_{desorp} + \Delta X^{0}_{netads} + \Delta X^{0}_{resolv} + \Delta X^{0}_{dil}$$
(2)

where ΔX^0 is the change in the thermodynamic quantity (*H*, *S*, or *G*) [40]. Desolvation, occurring in the liquid phase is a non-

Table 2

Effects of	f eluent	composition	on the	thermody	namic	parameters	of f	luorinated	ß-p	ohenyl	alanine	derivatives	on	ZWIX(-) col	umn
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Analyte	$-\Delta(\Delta H^0)$ (kJ mol ⁻¹)			$-\Delta(\Delta S^0)$ (J m	ol ⁻¹ K ⁻¹)		$-\Delta(\Delta G^0)_{298\rm K}$ (kJ mol ⁻¹)				
	a	b	c	a	b	c	a	b	c		
1 2 3 4 5	$\begin{array}{c} 3.43 \pm 0.14 \\ 3.32 \pm 0.15 \\ 3.84 \pm 0.11 \\ 3.93 \pm 0.12 \\ 3.33 \pm 0.11 \end{array}$	$\begin{array}{l} 4.27 \pm 0.07 \\ 4.43 \pm 0.10 \\ 4.52 \pm 0.12 \\ 4.69 \pm 0.14 \\ 3.87 \pm 0.14 \end{array}$	$\begin{array}{c} 5.00 \pm 0.13 \\ 5.14 \pm 0.16 \\ 5.21 \pm 0.16 \\ 5.60 \pm 0.14 \\ 4.40 \pm 0.16 \end{array}$	$\begin{array}{l} 8.10 \pm 0.45 \\ 7.94 \pm 0.50 \\ 9.36 \pm 0.36 \\ 9.66 \pm 0.40 \\ 7.01 \pm 0.38 \end{array}$	$\begin{array}{l} 9.63 \pm 0.24 \\ 10.11 \pm 0.33 \\ 10.40 \pm 0.41 \\ 10.77 \pm 0.47 \\ 7.82 \pm 0.47 \end{array}$	$\begin{array}{c} 10.87 \pm 0.42 \\ 11.29 \pm 0.54 \\ 11.60 \pm 0.52 \\ 12.62 \pm 0.47 \\ 8.68 \pm 0.53 \end{array}$	$\begin{array}{c} 1.01 \pm 0.19 \\ 0.95 \pm 0.21 \\ 1.05 \pm 0.15 \\ 1.05 \pm 0.17 \\ 1.24 \pm 0.16 \end{array}$	$\begin{array}{c} 1.40 \pm 0.10 \\ 1.42 \pm 0.14 \\ 1.42 \pm 0.17 \\ 1.48 \pm 0.20 \\ 1.54 \pm 0.20 \end{array}$	$\begin{array}{c} 1.76 \pm 0.18 \\ 1.77 \pm 0.23 \\ 1.75 \pm 0.22 \\ 1.83 \pm 0.20 \\ 1.81 \pm 0.22 \end{array}$		
6	2.40 ± 0.13	2.87 ± 0.10	3.56 ± 0.11	4.89 ± 0.42	5.67 ± 0.32	7.18 ± 0.37	0.94 ± 0.18	1.18 ± 0.13	1.42 ± 0.16		

Chromatographic conditions: column, ZWIX(-); mobile phase, **a)** MeOH; **b)** MeOH/MeCN (75/25 ν/ν); **c)** MeOH/MeCN (50/50 ν/ν), all containing 25 mM DEA and 50 mM FA; flow rate, 0.6 ml min⁻¹; detection, 262 nm. Confidence intervals were calculated as described in Section 2.3.

enantioselective process, while all other components of equation 2 depend on chirality. Enantiomers may replace a different number of solvent molecules when linked to the CSP, and, as a consequence, both desorption and dilution may depend on stereochemical properties. Since the contribution of the dilution step is low, it can be neglected, and for a pair of enantiomers, $\Delta(\Delta X^0)$ can be calculated according to Eq. (3).

$$\Delta(\Delta X^{0}) = \Delta X_{2}^{0} - \Delta X_{1}^{0} = \Delta \left(\Delta X_{desorp}^{0}\right) + \Delta \left(\Delta X_{netads}^{0}\right) + \Delta \left(\Delta X_{resolv}^{0}\right)$$
(3)

Obviously, the measured $\Delta(\Delta X^0)$ values are still lumped values, characterizing a seemingly homogeneous surface [40].

Systematic studies on the effect of mobile phase composition on thermodynamics can hardly be found in the field of chiral separations. Asnin *et al.* studied the enantioselective separation of dipeptides on antibiotic-based CSPs and found a correlation between the mobile phase pH and ΔH° and ΔS° values, but only for Chirobiotic T, not for Chirobiotic R [43]. As an explanation, it was suggested that the acidity of the mobile phase affects the binding affinity of the teicoplanin-based CSP due to its ionic character. In a subsequent publication, the effect of MeOH content was studied on a Chirobiotic R column applying MeOH/H₂O-based eluents, where diverged correlations were found between the MeOH content and the thermodynamic parameters for the studied dipeptides [44].

A study of the possible effects of mobile phase composition on the thermodynamic parameters was performed with different eluent compositions of MeOH/MeCN with FA (50 mM) and DEA (25 mM) using 0.6 ml min⁻¹ flow rate. In the case of the ZWIX(-) column MeOH/MeCN 100/0, 75/25, and 50/50 (v/v), while in case of the ZWIX(+) column 100/0, and 50/50 (v/v) eluent compositions were applied. The thermodynamic parameters calculated as discussed above, summarized in Table 2 and Table S6, show a clear tendency. Namely, the higher the MeCN content of the eluent the more negative the $\Delta(\Delta H^\circ)$, $\Delta(\Delta S^\circ)$, and $\Delta(\Delta G^\circ)$ values obtained on both zwitterionic CSPs. It is important to note that all $\Delta(\Delta H^{\circ}), \Delta(\Delta S^{\circ}), \text{ and } \Delta(\Delta G^{\circ})$ values were negative, indicating that enthalpy-controlled enantiorecognition takes place on the studied CSPs. All calculated thermodynamic parameters changed with similar tendencies for all studied SAs in support of the earlier finding that enantiorecognition is not seriously affected by the structural changes related to the fluoro substitution of the SAs. To reveal the contribution of the enthalpy and entropy terms to theenantioseparation, $Q = \Delta(\Delta H^{\circ})/[T^*\Delta(\Delta S^{\circ}); T = 298 \text{ K}]$ values were also calculated (Table 3). The changes in Q values did not exceed the experimental error, which suggests that $\Delta(\Delta H^{\circ})$ and $\Delta(\Delta S^{\circ})$ are affected to a similar extent with higher MeCN ratios.

In an earlier paper, we emphasized the importance of solvation of the SA and SO in the case of ion-exchanger-based CSPs [19]. The electrostatic forces formed between SO and SA were found to be strongly affected by the thickness of solvation spheres developed around the charged species. Since MeCN possesses lower solvation power of the chargeable sites of SA and SO, increasing its ratio in

Table 3

Effects of eluent composition on the $\Delta(\Delta H^0)/[Tx\Delta(\Delta S^0)]$ ra-
tio of fluorinated ß-phenylalanine derivatives on ZWIX(-) col-
umn.

Analyte	$Q = \Delta(\Delta H^0) / [Tx\Delta(\Delta S^0)]$									
	a	b	с							
1	1.42 ± 0.10	1.49 ± 0.04	1.54 ± 0.07							
2	1.40 ± 0.11	1.47 ± 0.06	1.53 ± 0.09							
3	1.38 ± 0.07	1.46 ± 0.07	1.51 ± 0.08							
4	1.36 ± 0.07	1.46 ± 0.08	1.49 ± 0.07							
5	1.59 ± 0.10	1.66 ± 0.12	1.70 ± 0.12							
6	1.65 ± 0.17	1.70 ± 0.11	1.66 ± 0.10							

Chromatographic conditions: column, ZWIX(-); mobile phase, **a)** MeOH; **b)** MeOH/MeCN (75/25 v/v); **c)** MeOH/MeCN (50/50 v/v), all containing 25 mM DEA and 50 mM FA; flow rate, 0.6 ml min⁻¹; detection, 262 nm. Confidence intervals were calculated as described in Section 2.3.

the mobile phase results in an enhanced Coulomb attraction. In the case of the zwitterionic CSPs, adsorption relates to electrostatic forces which, in turn, is affected by the solvation shells. Therefore, the solvent can influence the adsorption and trigger the overall stereorecognition, as observed in the present study.

4. Conclusions

In the current work, excellent enantioseparations were achieved for newly synthesized, fluorine-containing β -phenylalanine derivatives applying *Cinchona* alkaloid-based zwitterionic ion-exchangers in the polar ionic mode. Effects of mobile phase compositions were investigated to gain insights into the enantiorecognition processes. Acidic and basic additives served as effective counterions resulting in easily tunable retention properties without significant loss in enantioselectivity. The nature of the base was found to affect retention properties, while it has only slight effects on the observed enantioselectivities. The main interactions responsible for retention and enantiorecognition were not radically modified by the structural changes of the analytes; however, important structureretention and enantioselectivity relationships could be revealed.

A detailed temperature study ensured a possibility for the thermodynamic characterization of the *Cinchona* alkaloid-based CSPs, not ignoring the limitations of the employed van't Hoff analysis. Assuming that the separation of the two enantiomers takes place essentially by the same SO-SA interaction mechanism, which seems to be the case in this study, based on the change in standard enthalpy and entropy values clear evidence could be provided how the eluent composition affects the difference in the change in standard enthalpy and entropy. Increase in the eluent MeCN content favored the adsorption process without significantly affecting the enthalpy and entropy contributions. Applying typical operational conditions no strong evidence could be found for the effect of flow rate on the calculated thermodynamic parameters. That is, the $\Delta(\Delta H^{\circ})$ and $\Delta(\Delta S^{\circ})$ values were found to be influenced more significantly by the structural peculiarities of the studied analytes than the flow rate.

CRediT authorship contribution statement

Gábor Németi: Investigation, Writing – Original Draft, Visualization, Review & Editing; Róbert Berkecz: Conceptualization, Writing– Original Draft, Review & Editing; Sayeh Shahmohammadi: Resources, Writing – Original Draft; Enikő Forró: Resources,Writing – Original Draft, Wolfgang Lindner: Conceptualization, Writing– Original Draft, Review & Editing; Antal Péter: Conceptualization, Writing– Original Draft, Review & Editing; István Ilisz: Conceptualization, Writing– Original Draft, Review & Editing; Supervision, Project Administration, Funding Acquasition.

Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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Supplementary materials

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