

## ANALYTIC APPROXIMATION OF THE DEBYE FUNCTION

K. V. KHISHCHENKO<sup>1,2,3\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Joint Institute for High Temperatures of the Russian Academy of Sciences  
Izhorskaya 13 Bldg 2, 125412 Moscow, Russia

<sup>2</sup> Moscow Institute of Physics and Technology  
Institutskiy Pereulok 9, 141701 Dolgoprudny, Moscow Region, Russia

<sup>3</sup> South Ural State University  
Lenin Avenue 76, 454080 Chelyabinsk, Russia

\*Corresponding author. E-mail: konst@ihed.ras.ru

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**Summary.** An expression in a closed form is proposed for the approximation of the Debye function used in thermodynamic models of solids. This expression defines an analytic function that has the same limiting behavior as the Debye function at low and high temperatures. The approximation gives the maximum relative deviation from the value of the Debye function less than 0.001. The proposed expression can be useful in the equations of state of solids in a wide temperature range.

### 1 INTRODUCTION

The Debye model [1] was proposed for description of thermodynamic behavior of materials in a wide range of temperatures. It represents the phonon contribution to equations of state of solids as an interpolation between limiting cases of low and high temperatures [2–25]. Equations of state of matter are necessary for analysis and numerical simulation of physical phenomena under extreme conditions of high temperatures and high pressures [19, 26–40].

Analytic expressions of thermodynamic potentials within the Debye model contain the Debye function in a form of integral [1],

$$D(x) = \frac{3}{x^3} \int_0^x \frac{t^3 dt}{e^t - 1}, \quad (1)$$

$x > 0$ , which cannot be expressed in elementary functions. Despite of that this integral can be written as analytic expression with infinite series [1, 3, 41, 42] or special functions (polylogarithms and the Riemann zeta function) [43], closed-form expressions approximating the Debye function are interesting for practical use in thermodynamic calculations. Many works are devoted to elaboration of simple approximations of the Debye functions with different ac-

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curacy [14, 44–50]. All of such approximations can be sorted as piecewise continuously differentiable functions [44, 45, 47] and smooth (in particular, analytic) functions [14, 46, 48–50].

In the present work, an expression is proposed approximating the Debye function in a closed form of analytic function. Some results of calculations are presented illustrating the accuracy of this approximation.

## 2 MODEL OF THERMODYNAMIC PROPERTIES OF SOLIDS

Thermodynamic potential the Helmholtz free energy is traditionally taken as a basis of equation of state model. This potential can be presented as a sum of three parts:

$$F(V, T) = F_c(V) + F_a(V, T) + F_e(V, T), \quad (2)$$

those are a portion of energy corresponding to zero temperature  $T = 0$  ( $F_c$ ) and thermal contributions of ions and electrons ( $F_a$  and  $F_e$ , respectively). Here  $V$  is the specific volume;  $T$  is the temperature. Considering thermal contribution of ions in solids, one can take into account portions of energy of acoustical ( $F_{ac}$ ) and optical ( $F_{o\alpha}$ ) modes of ions vibrations. For the unit cell of the crystal structure with  $\nu$  particles, this contribution is as follows:

$$F_a(V, T) = F_{ac}(V, T) + \sum_{\alpha=1}^{3(\nu-1)} F_{o\alpha}(V, T). \quad (3)$$

The energy of acoustic vibration modes is usually considered within the framework of the Debye model [1]:

$$F_{ac}(V, T) = \frac{RT}{\nu} [3 \ln[1 - \exp(-\theta_{ac}/T)] - D(\theta_{ac}/T)]. \quad (4)$$

Optical mode contributions are commonly considered in terms of the Einstein model [51]:

$$F_{o\alpha}(V, T) = \frac{RT}{\nu} \ln[1 - \exp(-\theta_{o\alpha}/T)]. \quad (5)$$

Here,  $\theta_{ac}$  and  $\theta_{o\alpha}$  are the characteristic temperatures of the acoustical and optical modes of ions vibrations.

The first and second derivatives of the Helmholtz free energy with respect to temperature determine the entropy and isochoric heat capacity of a substance:

$$S = -(\partial F / \partial T)_V, \quad (6)$$

$$C_V = T(\partial S / \partial T)_V. \quad (7)$$

Consequently, the first and second derivatives of the Debye function appear in the entropy and the isochoric heat capacity of solids. In particular, if the characteristic temperature  $\theta_{ac}$  does not depend on temperature, one can obtain the following expressions for the contributions of acoustic modes:

$$S_{ac} = -\frac{R}{v} \left[ 3 \ln[1 - \exp(-x)] - \frac{3x}{e^x - 1} - D(x) + xD'(x) \right], \quad (8)$$

$$C_{Vac} = \frac{R}{v} \left[ \frac{3x^2 e^x}{(e^x - 1)^2} + x^2 D''(x) \right], \quad (9)$$

where  $x = \theta_{ac}/T$ .

Sometimes, it is convenient to take into account the properties of the Debye function:

$$D'(x) = \frac{3}{e^x - 1} - \frac{3}{x} D(x), \quad (10)$$

$$D''(x) = -\frac{3e^x}{(e^x - 1)^2} - \frac{3}{x} \left[ \frac{3}{e^x - 1} - \frac{4}{x} D(x) \right]. \quad (11)$$

Then the entropy and specific heat capacity are related to the value of the Debye function:

$$S_{ac} = -\frac{R}{v} [3 \ln[1 - \exp(-x)] - 4D(x)], \quad (12)$$

$$C_{Vac} = \frac{3R}{v} \left[ 4D(x) - \frac{3x}{e^x - 1} \right]. \quad (13)$$

However, relations (10) and (11) may not be valid for approximation functions used instead of the Debye function. Then using equations (12) and (13) will lead to some inaccuracy.

### 3 INFINITE-SERIES FORMS OF THE DEBYE FUNCTION

Following Debye [1], one can rewrite integral in equation (1) and obtain

$$D(x) = \frac{3}{x^3} \int_0^\infty \frac{t^3 dt}{e^t - 1} - \frac{3}{x^3} \int_x^\infty \frac{t^3 dt}{e^t - 1}. \quad (14)$$

The first integral in equation (14) has known value  $\pi^4/15$  [1, 52]; the last integral in equation (14) can be simplified using the Taylor series

$$\frac{1}{1-y} = \sum_{k=0}^{\infty} y^k, \quad (15)$$

which is convergent for  $|y| < 1$ , and integrated by parts:

$$\int_x^\infty \frac{t^3 dt}{e^t - 1} = \int_x^\infty t^3 e^{-t} \sum_{k=0}^\infty e^{-kt} dt = \sum_{k=1}^\infty \int_x^\infty t^3 e^{-kt} dt = \sum_{k=1}^\infty \left( \frac{x^3}{k} + \frac{3x^2}{k^2} + \frac{6x}{k^3} + \frac{6}{k^4} \right) e^{-kt}. \quad (16)$$

So, one obtains

$$D(x) = \frac{\pi^4}{5x^3} - 3 \sum_{k=1}^\infty \frac{1}{k} \left( 1 + \frac{3}{kx} + \frac{6}{k^2 x^2} + \frac{6}{k^3 x^3} \right) e^{-kt} \quad (17)$$

for  $x > 0$ .

At high temperatures, one can use the following relation [53]:

$$\frac{t}{e^t - 1} = \sum_{n=0}^\infty \frac{B_n}{n!} t^n, \quad (18)$$

which is convergent for  $|t| < 2\pi$ . Here,  $B_n$  are the Bernoulli numbers [53]. One obtains

$$\int_0^x \frac{t^3 dt}{e^t - 1} = \int_0^x t^2 \sum_{n=0}^\infty \frac{B_n}{n!} t^n dt = \sum_{n=0}^\infty \frac{B_n}{n!} \int_0^x t^{n+2} dt = \sum_{n=0}^\infty \frac{B_n}{n!} \frac{x^{n+3}}{n+3}. \quad (19)$$

So,

$$D(x) = \sum_{n=0}^\infty \frac{3B_n}{(n+3)n!} x^n \quad (20)$$

for  $|x| < 2\pi$ .

#### 4 APPROXIMATION FORM

Truncated series (17) is normally used as the basis of approximation of the Debye function at low temperatures.

In this work, a similar form of approximation function is proposed:

$$K_{LM}(x) = A_{03} x^{-3} - \sum_{l=1}^L (A_{l0} + A_{l1} x^{-1} + A_{l2} x^{-2} + A_{l3} x^{-3}) e^{-lx}. \quad (21)$$

Evidently, the value of first-term coefficient

$$A_{03} = \frac{\pi^4}{5} \quad (22)$$

secures the same limiting behavior of the function  $K_{LM}(x)$  and all its derivatives as the Debye function  $D(x)$  and its derivatives for  $x \rightarrow \infty$ .

Using the Taylor series

$$e^y = \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} \frac{1}{n!} y^n, \quad (23)$$

one can evaluate limiting behavior of the function  $K_{LM}(x)$  for  $x \rightarrow 0$ :

$$K_{LM}(x) = A_{03}x^{-3} - \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} \sum_{l=1}^L \frac{1}{n!} (-l)^n (A_{l0}x^n + A_{l1}x^{n-1} + A_{l2}x^{n-2} + A_{l3}x^{n-3}). \quad (24)$$

Representing series (24) in the form

$$K_{LM}(x) = \sum_{m=-3}^{\infty} C_m x^m, \quad (25)$$

one can easily obtain sequence of relations between coefficients of equations (24) and (25):

$$C_{-3} = A_{03} - \sum_{l=1}^L A_{l3}, \quad (26)$$

$$C_{-2} = - \sum_{l=1}^L (A_{l2} - lA_{l3}), \quad (27)$$

$$C_{-1} = -\frac{1}{2} \sum_{l=1}^L (2A_{l1} - 2lA_{l2} + l^2A_{l3}) \quad (28)$$

and

$$C_m = - \sum_{l=1}^L \frac{(-l)^m}{(m+3)!} ((m+1)(m+2)(m+3)A_{l0} - (m+2)(m+3)lA_{l1} + (m+3)l^2A_{l2} - l^3A_{l3}) \quad (29)$$

for  $m \geq 0$ .

Comparing form (25) with series (20), one can formulate conditions of coincidence of limit-

ing behavior of the function  $K_{LM}(x)$  and its derivatives up to order  $M \leq 4(L-1)$  for  $x \rightarrow 0$ :

$$A_{03} - \sum_{l=1}^L A_{l3} = 0, \quad (30)$$

$$- \sum_{l=1}^L (A_{l2} - lA_{l3}) = 0, \quad (31)$$

$$- \sum_{l=1}^L (2A_{l1} - 2lA_{l2} + l^2A_{l3}) = 0 \quad (32)$$

and

$$\begin{aligned} - \sum_{l=1}^L (-l)^m ((m+1)(m+2)(m+3)A_{l0} - (m+2)(m+3)lA_{l1} + (m+3)l^2A_{l2} - l^3A_{l3}) \\ = 3(m+1)(m+2)B_m \end{aligned} \quad (33)$$

for  $0 \leq m \leq M$ .

Solving this system of  $M+4$  equations, one obtains  $M+4$  coefficients ( $A_{L3}, A_{L2}, A_{L1}, A_{L0}, A_{(L-1)3}$  and so on, if any) of the function  $K_{LM}(x)$  (21) with the same limiting behavior as the Debye function  $D(x)$  for  $x \rightarrow 0$  up to order  $M$  of derivatives.

Values of the rest of coefficients  $A_{10}, A_{11}, A_{12}, A_{13}, A_{20}$  and so on (if any) can be naturally taken from series (17):

$$A_{10} = \frac{3}{l}, A_{11} = \frac{9}{l^2}, A_{12} = \frac{18}{l^3}, A_{13} = \frac{18}{l^4}. \quad (34)$$

## 5 APPROXIMATION WITH $L = 1$

For  $L = 1$ , the approximation function  $K_{LM}(x)$  has the only variant  $K_{10}(x)$  with 4 coefficients  $A_{li}$  with  $l = 1, i = 0, 1, 2$  and 3:

$$A_{10} = \frac{\pi^4}{30} - 1, A_{11} = \frac{\pi^4}{10}, A_{12} = \frac{\pi^4}{5}, A_{13} = \frac{\pi^4}{5}. \quad (35)$$

Calculated values of the function  $K_{10}(x)$  and its first and second derivatives  $K'_{10}(x)$  and  $K''_{10}(x)$  are shown in figures 1–3 in comparison with the values of the Debye function  $D(x)$  and its derivatives  $D'(x)$  and  $D''(x)$ . In addition, the relative deviations of the function  $K_{10}(x)$  and its derivatives  $K'_{10}(x)$  and  $K''_{10}(x)$  from the reference function  $D(x)$  and its derivatives  $D'(x)$  and  $D''(x)$  are presented in figures 1(b), 2(b) and 3(b), respectively. The reference values of  $D(x)$ ,  $D'(x)$  and  $D''(x)$  were calculated using truncated series (17) with  $k \leq 12$  for  $x > 3.34$  and (20) with  $n \leq 66$  for  $x \leq 3.34$ .

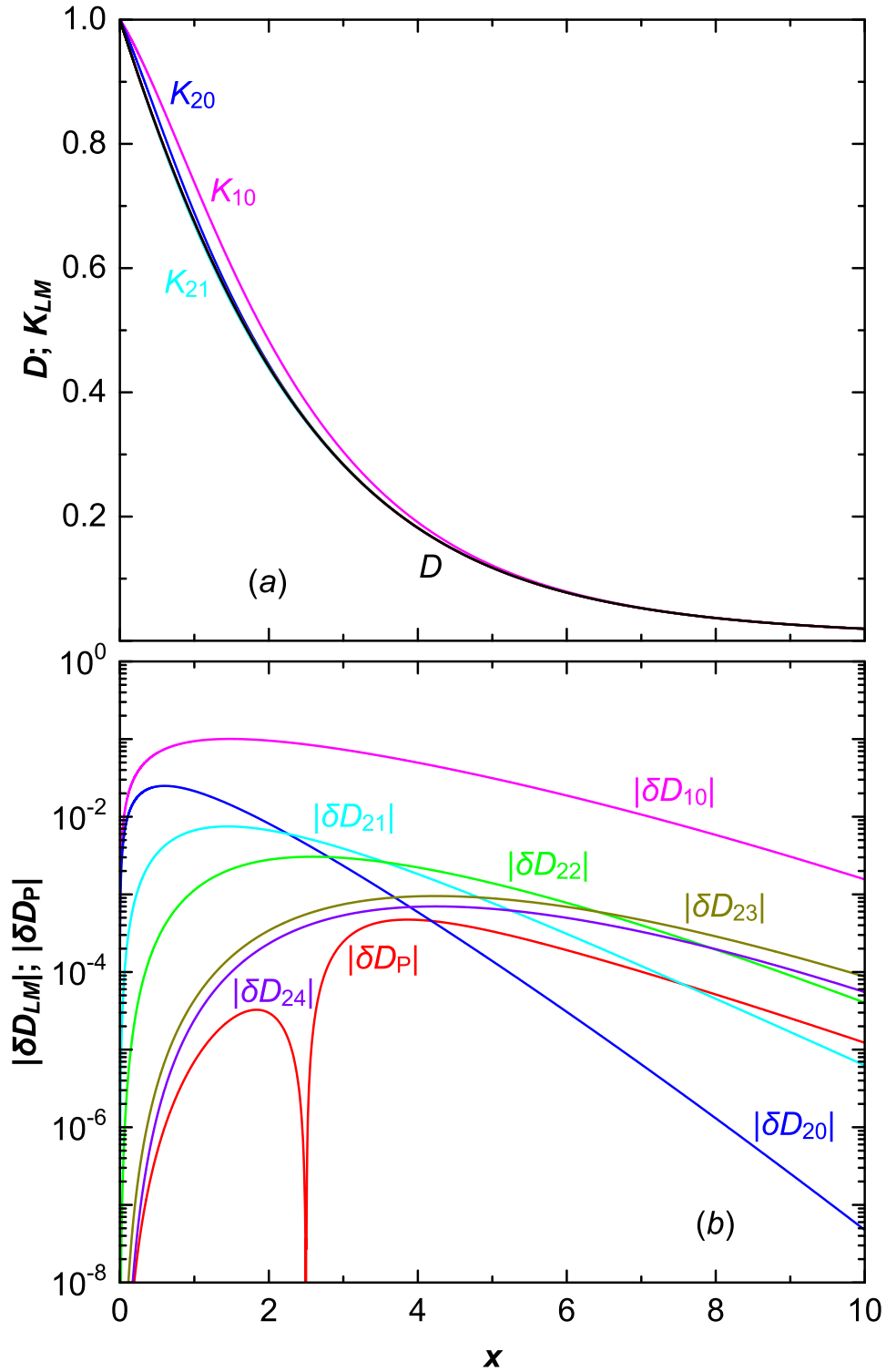


Figure 1: (a) The Debye function  $D(x)$  and the approximation functions  $K_{LM}(x)$ . (b) The absolute values of the relative deviations of the functions  $K_{LM}(x)$  from the reference function  $D(x)$ ,  $|\delta D_{LM}(x)| = |1 - K_{LM}(x)/D(x)|$ ;  $|\delta D_P(x)| = |1 - D_P(x)/D(x)|$ , where  $D_P(x)$  is the approximation function by Prut [47].

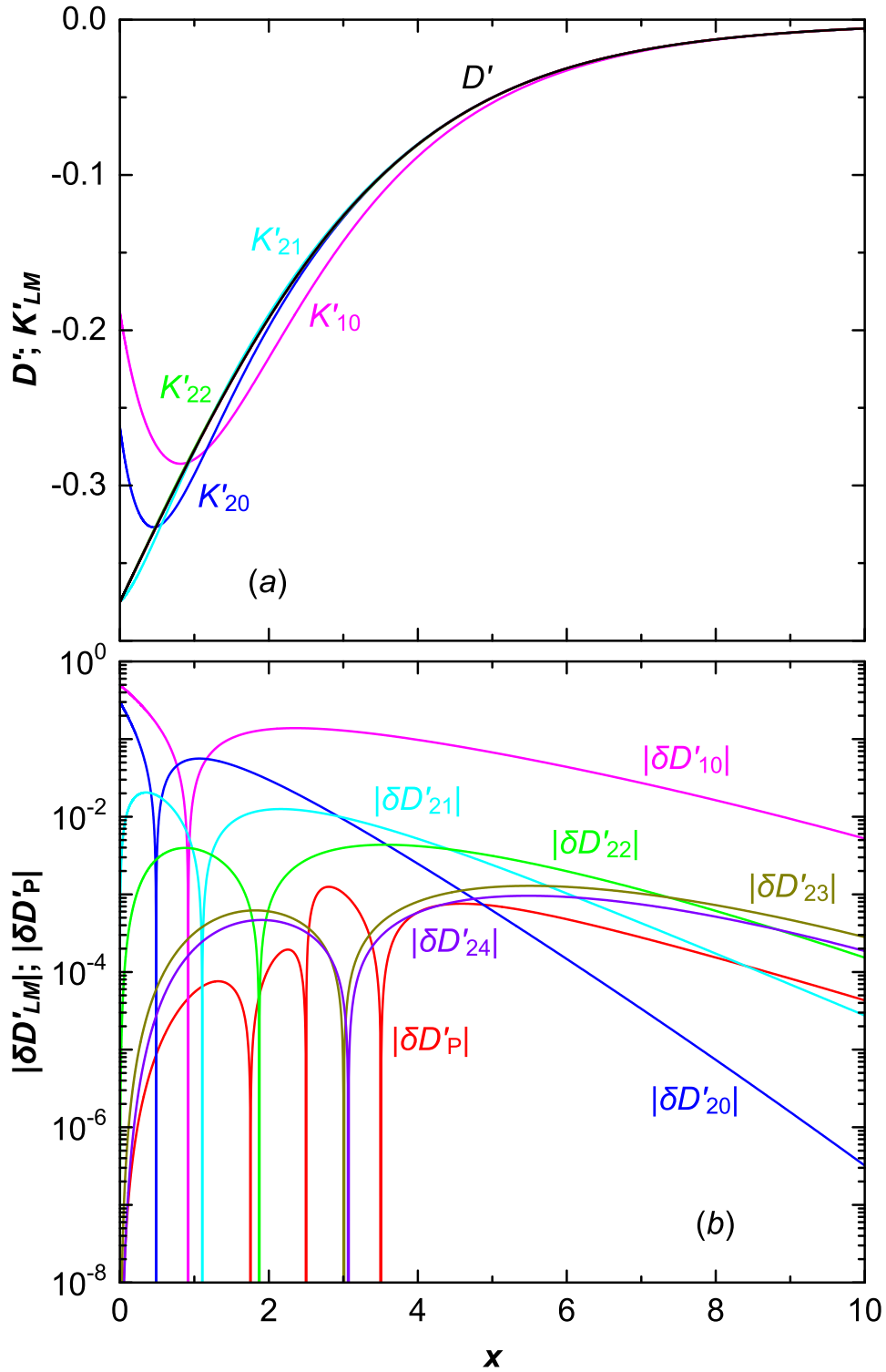


Figure 2: (a) The first derivative with respect to  $x$  of the Debye function,  $D'(x)$ , and the approximation functions,  $K'_{LM}(x)$ . (b) The absolute values of the relative deviations of the derivatives  $K'_{LM}(x)$  and  $D'_p(x)$  from the reference derivative  $D'(x)$ ,  $|\delta D'_{LM}(x)| = |1 - K'_{LM}(x)/D'(x)|$  and  $|\delta D'_p(x)| = |1 - D'_p(x)/D'(x)|$ .



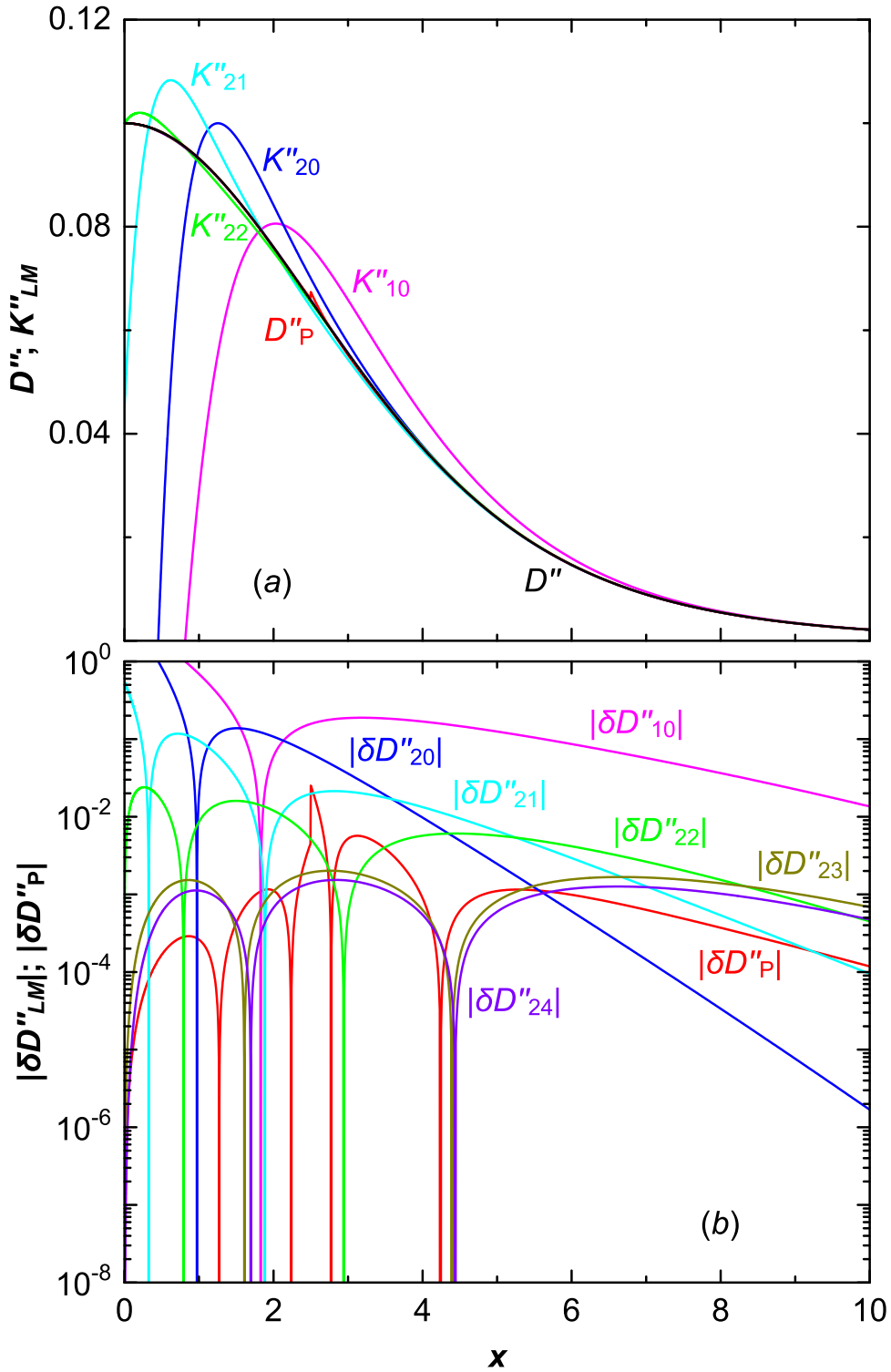


Figure 3: (a) The second derivative with respect to  $x$  of the Debye function,  $D''(x)$ , and the approximation functions,  $K''_{LM}(x)$  and  $D''_P(x)$ . (b) The absolute values of the relative deviations of the derivatives  $K''_{LM}(x)$  and  $D''_P(x)$  from the reference derivative  $D''(x)$ ,  $|\delta D''_{LM}(x)| = |1 - K''_{LM}(x)/D''(x)|$  and  $|\delta D''_P(x)| = |1 - D''_P(x)/D''(x)|$ .

The maximum absolute values of the relative deviations in the region  $x > 0$  are approximately 0.1 for  $K_{10}(x)$ , 0.5 for  $K'_{10}(x)$  and 4.0 for  $K''_{10}(x)$ . Note that the relative deviation of the third derivative  $K'''_{10}(x)$  from the reference  $D'''(x)$  grows at  $x \rightarrow 0$  in inverse proportion to  $x$ .

The ratios of the isochoric heat capacity  $C_V(x)$  to its value in the high-temperature limit ( $x \rightarrow 0$ ),  $C_h = 3R/\nu$ , from equation (9) with the approximation derivative  $K''_{10}(x)$  and from equation (13) with the approximation function  $K_{10}(x)$  are shown in figure 4 in comparison with the reference dependence  $C_V(x)/C_h$  that is obtained using equation (9) with the reference  $D''(x)$ .

The maximum absolute value of the relative deviation from the reference dependence  $C_V(x)$  is approximately 0.07 for the case of equation (9) with  $K''_{10}(x)$  and 0.3 for the case of equation (13) with  $K_{10}(x)$ , as one can see in figure 4(b).

## 6 APPROXIMATIONS WITH $L = 2$

For  $L = 2$ , the approximation function  $K_{LM}(x)$  has 5 variants  $K_{2M}(x)$  for  $M = 0, 1, 2, 3$  and 4 with 8 coefficients  $A_{li}$  at  $l = 1$  and 2,  $i = 0, 1, 2$  and 3:

$$A_{10} = 3 \text{ (for } M = 0, 1, 2 \text{ and } 3) \text{ or } A_{10} = \frac{8\pi^4}{15} - 49 \text{ (for } M = 4), \quad (36)$$

$$A_{11} = 9 \text{ (for } M = 0, 1 \text{ and } 2) \text{ or } A_{11} = \frac{8\pi^4}{5} - \frac{219}{2} - 12A_{10} \text{ (for } M = 3 \text{ and } 4), \quad (37)$$

$$A_{12} = 18 \text{ (for } M = 0 \text{ and } 1) \text{ or } A_{12} = \frac{16\pi^4}{5} - 117 - 36A_{10} - 8A_{11} \text{ (for } M = 2, 3 \text{ and } 4), \quad (38)$$

$$A_{13} = 18 \text{ (for } M = 0) \text{ or } A_{13} = \frac{16\pi^4}{5} - 39 - 24A_{10} - 12A_{11} - 4A_{12} \text{ (for } M = 1, 2, 3 \text{ and } 4), \quad (39)$$

$$A_{20} = \frac{4\pi^4}{15} - 1 - A_{10} - A_{11} - \frac{1}{2}A_{12} - \frac{1}{6}A_{13}, \quad (40)$$

$$A_{21} = \frac{2\pi^4}{5} - A_{11} - A_{12} - \frac{1}{2}A_{13}, \quad (41)$$

$$A_{22} = \frac{2\pi^4}{5} - A_{12} - A_{13}, \quad (42)$$

$$A_{23} = \frac{\pi^4}{5} - A_{13}. \quad (43)$$

Calculated values of the functions  $K_{2M}(x)$  and their first and second derivatives  $K'_{2M}(x)$  and  $K''_{2M}(x)$  are shown in figures 1–3. One can see that the functions  $K_{20}(x)$  and  $K_{21}(x)$ , as well as the function  $K_{10}(x)$ , are easily distinguishable from the reference function  $D(x)$  in figure 1(a).

The derivatives  $K'_{2M}(x)$  and  $K''_{2M}(x)$  with  $M = 0, 1$  and 2, as well as the derivatives  $K'_{10}(x)$  and  $K''_{10}(x)$ , are also easily distinguishable from the reference derivatives  $D'(x)$  and  $D''(x)$  in figures 2(a) and 3(a).

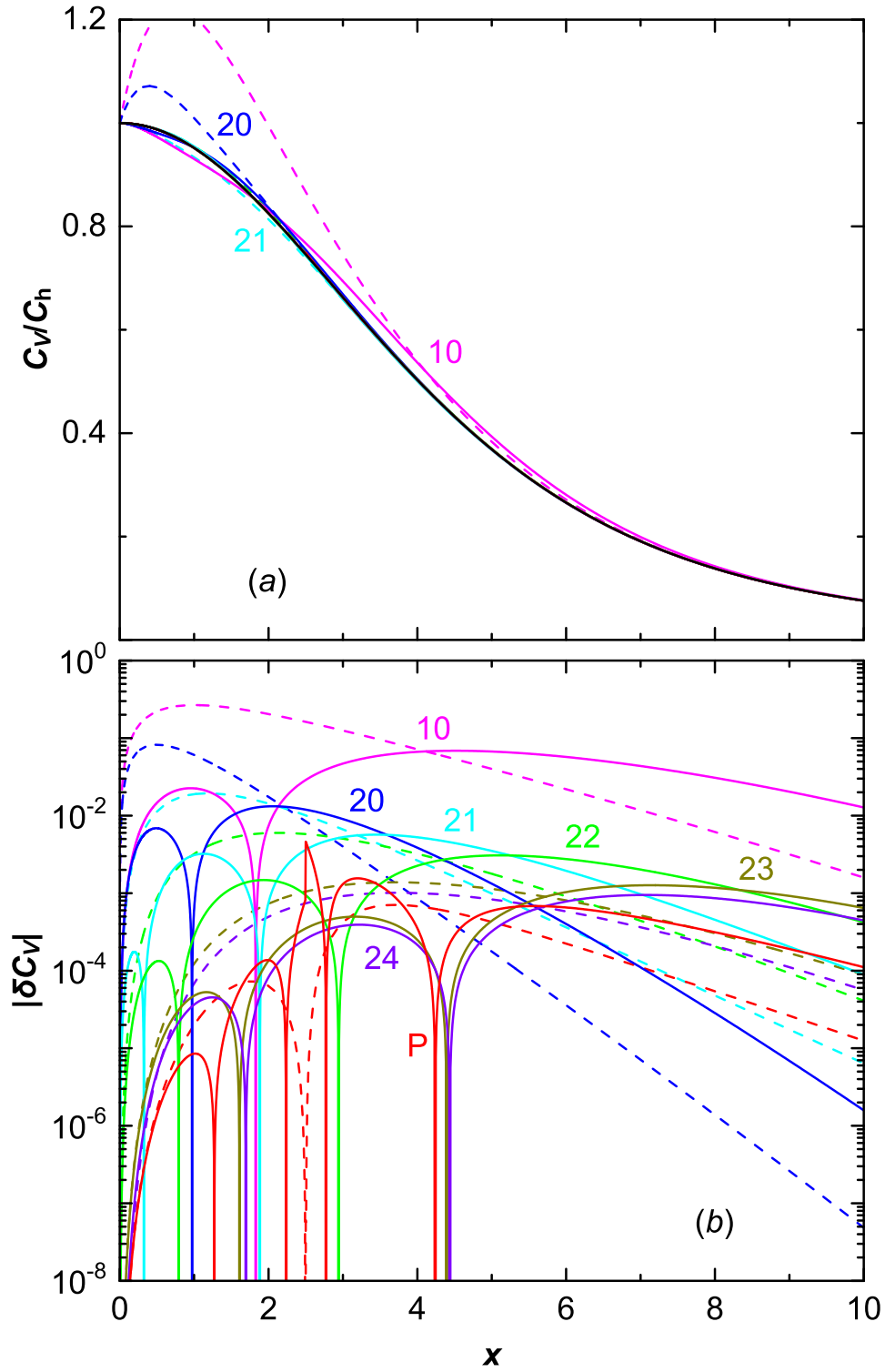


Figure 4: (a) The reference (black line) and approximation ratios  $C_V(x)/C_h$  (colored lines) and (b) the absolute values of the relative deviations  $|\delta C_{VA}(x)|$  of the approximation dependences ( $A = LM$  and P) from the reference  $C_V(x)$ : solid lines—equation (9) with  $K''_{LM}(x)$  and  $D''_P(x)$ ; dashed lines—equation (13) with  $K_{LM}(x)$  and  $D_P(x)$ .

A	$ \delta D_A _m$	$ \delta D'_A _m$	$ \delta D''_A _m$	$ \delta D'''_A _m$	$ \delta C_{VA(9)} _m$	$ \delta C_{VA(13)} _m$
10	$1.00 \times 10^{-1}$	$4.98 \times 10^{-1}$	$3.99 \times 10^{+0}$	$\infty$	$6.87 \times 10^{-2}$	$2.66 \times 10^{-1}$
20	$2.49 \times 10^{-2}$	$3.01 \times 10^{-1}$	$4.61 \times 10^{+0}$	$\infty$	$1.32 \times 10^{-2}$	$8.20 \times 10^{-2}$
21	$7.50 \times 10^{-3}$	$2.05 \times 10^{-2}$	$5.48 \times 10^{-1}$	$\infty$	$5.68 \times 10^{-3}$	$1.94 \times 10^{-2}$
22	$3.05 \times 10^{-3}$	$4.36 \times 10^{-3}$	$2.40 \times 10^{-2}$	$\infty$	$3.07 \times 10^{-3}$	$6.00 \times 10^{-3}$
23	$9.51 \times 10^{-4}$	$1.29 \times 10^{-3}$	$2.02 \times 10^{-3}$	$9.70 \times 10^{-2}$	$1.27 \times 10^{-3}$	$1.38 \times 10^{-3}$
24	$6.99 \times 10^{-4}$	$9.59 \times 10^{-4}$	$1.53 \times 10^{-3}$	$3.69 \times 10^{-2}$	$9.48 \times 10^{-4}$	$1.01 \times 10^{-3}$
P	$4.73 \times 10^{-4}$	$1.25 \times 10^{-3}$	$2.52 \times 10^{-2}$	$5.42 \times 10^{-1}$	$4.62 \times 10^{-3}$	$7.06 \times 10^{-4}$

Table 1: Maximum absolute values of the relative deviations  $\delta D_A(x)$ ,  $\delta D'_A(x)$ ,  $\delta D''_A(x)$ ,  $\delta D'''_A(x)$  and  $\delta C_{VA}(x)$  for  $x > 0$ , where the cases A = LM and P correspond to the approximation functions  $K_{LM}$  (21) and  $D_P$  [47]; the last two columns correspond to the use of equations (9) and (13), respectively.

The remaining functions  $K_{2M}(x)$  and derivatives  $K'_{2M}(x)$  and  $K''_{2M}(x)$  almost coincide with the reference dependences  $D(x)$ ,  $D'(x)$  and  $D''(x)$  in figures 1(a), 2(a) and 3(a).

The absolute values of the relative deviations of the function  $K_{2M}(x)$  and their derivatives  $K'_{2M}(x)$  and  $K''_{2M}(x)$  from the reference function  $D(x)$  and its derivatives  $D'(x)$  and  $D''(x)$  are presented in figures 1(b), 2(b) and 3(b), respectively. One can see that the maxima of these absolute values for  $L = 2$  are less than the corresponding maxima for  $K_{10}(x)$ ,  $K'_{10}(x)$  and  $K''_{10}(x)$ . These maxima at  $L = 2$  decrease monotonically with increasing  $M$  (table 1).

In the best case for  $L = 2$ , the maximum absolute values of the relative deviations for  $x > 0$  are approximately 0.0007 for  $K_{24}(x)$ , 0.001 for  $K'_{24}(x)$ , 0.002 for  $K''_{24}(x)$  and 0.04 for  $K'''_{24}(x)$ .

Note that, for  $L = 2$  and  $M = 0, 1$  and  $2$ , as well as for  $L = 1$ , the relative deviations of the third derivatives  $K'''_{2M}(x)$  from the reference derivative  $D'''(x)$  grow at  $x \rightarrow 0$  in inverse proportion to  $x$ .

The ratios of the isochoric heat capacity  $C_V(x)/C_h$  from equation (9) with the approximation derivatives  $K''_{2M}(x)$  and from equation (13) with the approximation functions  $K_{2M}(x)$  are shown in figure 4. One can see that, for  $L = 2$  and  $M = 0$  and  $1$ , as well as for  $L = 1$ , these ratios are easily distinguishable from the reference dependence  $C_V(x)/C_h$  in figure 4(a). For  $L = 2$  and  $M = 2$ , the dependence  $C_V(x)/C_h$  can be distinguished in the case of the use of equation (13) with the approximation function  $K_{22}(x)$ . The dependences  $C_V(x)/C_h$  for the remaining cases of  $L = 2$  and  $M = 2, 3$  and  $4$  almost coincide with the corresponding reference dependence in figure 4(a).

As one can see in figure 4(b) and table 1, the maximum absolute values of the relative deviations  $|\delta C_{VLM}|_m$  (for  $x > 0$ ) decrease monotonically with increasing  $L$  from 1 to 2 and with

increasing  $M$  from 0 to 4. Moreover, using equation (13) gives a higher relative deviation than using equation (9). In the best case for  $L = 2$  and  $M = 4$ , the maximum absolute value of the relative deviation  $|\delta C_{VLM}|_m$  in the region  $x > 0$  is approximately 0.0009 using equation (9).

For comparison, the results of using the piecewise continuously differentiable approximation function  $D_P(x)$  [47] are presented in figures 1–4 and table 1. Unlike analytic functions  $K_{LM}(x)$ , using equation (13) with  $D_P(x)$  gives a lower relative deviation than using equation (9) with discontinuous derivative  $D_P''(x)$ . Despite the slightly lower values of the maximum deviations  $|\delta D_P|_m \approx 0.0005$  and  $|\delta C_{VP(13)}|_m \approx 0.0007$ , the use of the analytic approximation function  $K_{24}(x)$  seems preferable in thermodynamic models.

## 7 CONCLUSIONS

Thus, a family of analytic functions  $K_{LM}(x)$  is proposed that approximates the Debye function  $D(x)$ ,  $x > 0$ , in closed form. Among these functions with  $L = 1$  and 2, the case of  $K_{24}(x)$  for  $x > 0$  gives the lowest maximum relative deviations of the function and its first and second derivatives from the reference function  $D(x)$  (less than 0.0007) and its derivatives  $D'(x)$  (less than 0.001) and  $D''(x)$  (less than 0.002), as well as the lowest maximum relative deviation for the value of the isochoric heat capacity (less than 0.001). The proposed expressions can be useful in modeling the equations of state for solids in a wide range of temperatures and densities.

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