

MOLECULAR DYNAMIC SIMULATION OF  
AMINE-BASED ABSORPTION PROCESS  
FOR CO<sub>2</sub> CAPTURE

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## ABSTRAK

Karbon dioksida (CO<sub>2</sub>) ialah salah satu komponen gas rumah hijau yang menyumbang kepada kesan pemanasan global. Penyerapan gas CO<sub>2</sub> penting bagi mengurangkan kepekatan CO<sub>2</sub> dalam atmosfera. Proses penyerapan menggunakan pelarut amina merupakan satu teknologi yang dipercayai keberkesanannya untuk menyerap gas CO<sub>2</sub>. Banyak kajian melibatkan pembangunan model dan simulasi proses pada skala makro telah dijalankan. Tujuan kajian ini dijalankan adalah untuk mengkaji proses penyerapan CO<sub>2</sub> menggunakan pelarut amina pada skala molekul bagi mengetahui interaksi antara molekul semasa proses penyerapan. Kajian interaksi antara molekul dalam proses penyerapan CO<sub>2</sub> dijalankan dengan menggunakan simulasi Molekul dinamik (MD) melalui perisian Material Studio (versi 7.0). Beberapa kajian kes telah dijalankan untuk mengkaji kesan suhu, kepekatan pelarut amina, kepelbagaian jenis pelarut amina, perbandingan antara amina tunggal dan campuran amina ke atas proses penyerapan. Kesan perbezaan molekul karbamat untuk proses penyahserapan turut dikaji. Simulasi MD dijalankan pada keadaan NVE (molekul, jisim, tenaga) (selama 200 ps) dan NVT (molekul, jisim, suhu) (selama 1 ns) *ensemble*. Model *COMPASS* digunakan untuk mengira medan daya manakala model *Ewald* digunakan sebagai kaedah penjumlahan pengiraan tenaga dalam kotak simulasi. Enam langkah telah dilaksanakan dalam metodologi kajian ini iaitu lakaran struktur molekul, pengoptimuman geometri, pembentukan kotak simulasi dan pengurangan tenaga didalam kotak simulasi, simulasi pada fasa keseimbangan dan fasa penghasilan struktur molekul untuk dianalisis, dan analisis RDF. Graf RDF yang diperolehi akan menunjukkan hubungkait antara  $r$  iaitu jarak antara satu atom dengan atom yang lain dan  $g(r)$  adalah kadar kebarangkalian untuk interaksi antara molekul berlaku. Perbincangan hasil kajian dibahagikan kepada enam bahagian. Parameter simulasi 1: hasil dari kajian menunjukkan bahawa, kekuatan interaksi antara molekul pelarut MEA dan CO<sub>2</sub> meningkat apabila meningkatnya suhu sistem penyerapan. Parameter simulasi 2: keputusan yang sama juga didapati dengan peningkatan kepekatan pelarut amina. Peningkatan kepekatan pelarut amina menyebabkan sifat alkali MEA meningkat. Oleh itu, kecenderungan untuk berlakunya daya tarikan dengan molekul berasid (CO<sub>2</sub>) juga bertambah. Parameter simulasi 3: hasil daripada kajian menunjukkan bahawa MEA merupakan pelarut yang mempunyai potensi paling tinggi untuk berinteraksi dengan gas CO<sub>2</sub> berbanding dengan DEA dan MDEA. Ini kerana MEA mempunyai keupayaan untuk bertindakbalas secara langsung dengan CO<sub>2</sub> dan membentuk ion karbamat. Amina pengaktif iaitu PZ dan *steric hindered* amina iaitu AMP juga menunjukkan kebarangkalian yang tinggi untuk berinteraksi dengan gas CO<sub>2</sub>. Disebabkan kekurangan ikatan nitrogen-hidrogen (-NH) pada MDEA menyebabkan pelarut ini kurang reaktif. Ketiadaan atom hydrogen yang terikat dengan tom nitrogen menyebabkan tidak berlaku pembentukan ion karbamat. MDEA tidak boleh berinteraksi secara langsung dengan CO<sub>2</sub>. Justeru, disarankan MDEA dicampurkan dengan pelarut lain yang lebih reaktif untuk meningkatkan kereaktifan MDEA terhadap CO<sub>2</sub>. Parameter simulasi 4: hasil daripada kajian ini menunjukkan bahawa campuran AMP dan PZ ke dalam larutan MDEA mampu meningkatkan kereaktifan MDEA dalam proses penyerapan gas CO<sub>2</sub>. Molekul AMP dan PZ berfungsi untuk membantu interaksi antara MDEA dan CO<sub>2</sub>. Parameter simulasi 5: interaksi *intra*- dan *inter*- molekul dalam proses penyahserapan CO<sub>2</sub> menunjukkan ion MEA karbamat sukar memutuskan ikatan molekul jika dibandingkan dengan AMP dan PZ amina. Kecenderungan tinggi untuk interaksi *intra*- dan *inter*- molekul bagi pelarut AMP dan PZ, membuatkan amina ini menjadi pilihan untuk dicampurkan dengan pelarut amina yang kurang reaktif. Hasil

kajian ini dapat memberi penjelasan asas kimia kepada keputusan eksperimen dan simulasi yang dilaporkan dalam kajian terdahulu. Aplikasi MD simulasi dalam proses penyerapan menggunakan pelarut amina mampu meningkatkan pemahaman mengenai proses ini pada peringkat molekul dengan mengkaji pengaruh interaksi fizikal antara molekul dalam proses penyerapan gas CO<sub>2</sub> menggunakan analisis RDF. Interaksi fizikal antara atom atau molekul akan berlaku sebelum berlakunya tindakbalas kimia. Kajian mengenai interaksi fizikal penting untuk lebih memahami mengenai proses penyerapan menggunakan pelarut amina.

## ABSTRACT

Carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) is a major greenhouse gas that causes global warming effect. It has to be captured to reduce its concentration in the atmosphere. Amine absorption process is a promising technology to be applied for CO<sub>2</sub> mitigation. Modeling and simulation of amine absorption process for CO<sub>2</sub> removal at macro-scale is well established. This study was aimed to investigate the amine-CO<sub>2</sub> absorption process at the molecular level and their intermolecular interaction during the absorption process. The study on the intermolecular interaction in amine absorption process for CO<sub>2</sub> capture was performed using molecular dynamic (MD) simulation via Material Studio (version 7.0) software. Several case studies were conducted to investigate the effect of temperature, amine concentration, different types of alkanolamines for CO<sub>2</sub> absorption process and comparison between single and blended amines for absorption process. Next, effect of different carbamate molecules for CO<sub>2</sub> desorption process were also performed. The MD simulation was carried out at NVE (moles, volume, energy) 200 ps (picosecond) and NVT (moles, volume, temperature) 1 ns (nanosecond) ensemble. COMPASS and Ewald models were used within simulation box for force field and summation method calculation. Six steps were performed to simulate the selected molecules representing the CO<sub>2</sub> absorption system which were molecular structure sketch, geometry optimisation, simulation box creation and energy minimization, simulation at equilibrium and production phase, and analysis of the last trajectory for output data for RDF (radial distribution function). RDF plot shows the relationship between  $r$  which is the distance between atom pairs in each of the trajectory distance of atom with other neighbouring atom and  $g(r)$  is the tendency of atom to interaction/probability to have interaction between atoms. The discussion of result was divided into six sections. For simulation parameter 1, the simulation results shows the strength of intermolecular interaction between MEA (monoethanolamine) solution-CO<sub>2</sub> was increased with the increased in temperature. For simulation parameter 2, the simulation results shows the similar behavior is observed as the amount of amine concentration is increased. Due to high concentration, high basicity of MEA was produced. Hence, it tended to have strong intermolecular attraction with acidic, CO<sub>2</sub>. For simulation parameter 3, the simulation results shows the MEA solvent showed the highest tendency to interact with CO<sub>2</sub> compared to DEA (diethanolamine) and MDEA (methyl diethanolamine) because it can directly react with CO<sub>2</sub> and easily form carbamate ions. A good performance of activator amine, PZ (piperazine) and steric hindered amine, AMP was observed in this study. Both showed high tendency to have intermolecular interaction with water and CO<sub>2</sub>. Due to the lack of -HN bond in MDEA, this solvent was determined to be less reactive. This is because MDEA has lack of hydrogen atom attached in amino group there will be no formation of carbamate ion. MDEA cannot directly absorb CO<sub>2</sub>. Therefore, it is suggested to be blended with other reactive amines in order to increase reactivity of MDEA with CO<sub>2</sub>. For simulation parameter 4, the simulation results shows the blended MDEA/AMP and MDEA/PZ improved the efficiency of MDEA in CO<sub>2</sub> absorption process. The addition of AMP and PZ assisted MDEA to have intermolecular interaction with CO<sub>2</sub>. For simulation parameter 5, the simulation results shows the inter- and intra-molecular interaction on stripping process showed that carbamate ions of MEA were difficult to break compared to AMP and PZ. The high tendency for inter and intra molecular interaction happened on AMP and PZ, making them a good choice to be blended with other amine solvent to overcome the limitation of other less reactive amines. The simulation results obtained from this study gave fundamental explanation on the

experimental and simulations results reported in the literature. The application of MD simulation in amine absorption process is capable to improve the understanding and give insight about this process at molecular level. The research gap in this study is to investigate the influence of physical interaction between molecules on CO<sub>2</sub> capture process by analysing system with RDF. Physical interaction between atoms or molecules will happen before chemical reaction occur. Learning about physical interaction was essential to understand the amine-based absorption process.