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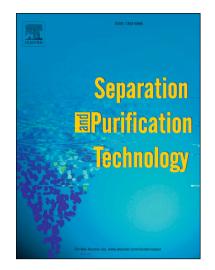
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Control of extractive distillation process for separating heterogenerous ternary

azeotropic mixture via adjusting the solvent content

Yong Wang^a, Xia Zhang^a, Xiaobin Liu^a, Wenting Bai^a, Zhaoyou Zhu^a, Yinglong Wang^{a*}, Jun Gao^b

^aCollege of Chemical Engineering, Qingdao University of Science and Technology, Qingdao

266042, China

^bCollege of Chemical and Environmental Engineering, Shandong University of Science and

Technology, Qingdao, 266590, China

Corresponding Author

*E-mail: yinglongw@126.com.

Abstract

The existence of heterogeneous azeotrope of toluene-water and homogenous azeotrope of

toluene-methanol makes it difficult to separate the toluene-methanol-water mixture. Two methods

of three column extractive distillation and two column extractive distillation using decanter were

explored to separate the ternary azeotrope. Diethylene glycol and N-methyl-2-pyrrolidone were

used as heavy solvent in the two processes, respectively. The UNIQUAC physical model was used

in both simulations. Based on the minimum total annual cost, variables of the two processes were

optimized and the results indicated the two column extractive distillation using decanter can save

51.4 % of total annual cost than three column extractive distillation. The dynamics of two column

extractive distillation using decanter was studied due to its superiority of economics. Several

common control schemes were used to investigate the controllability of two column extractive

distillation using decanter and all schemes showed poor controllability on feed composition

disturbances. An improved control structure was designed to achieve better control of the process.

In the improved control scheme, the temperature controller of column C1 was replaced by a

proportional controller, and a certain amount of solvent flow rate was increased. The integral

squared error was calculated to compare the dynamic performances of the improved control

structure with different solvent flow rate, and a suitable amount of solvent was found in view of

the controllability and economy.

Keywords: Ternary azeotrope; Extractive Distillation; Controllability; Process evaluation

1. Introduction

Toluene and methanol are both widely used as solvents and raw materials in chemical industry.

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