Accepted Manuscript

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To appear in: J. Anal. Appl. Pyrolysis

Received date:9-9-2016Revised date:2-5-2018Accepted date:8-5-2018

Please cite this article as: Abdul Salam Mohammad, Joseph J.Biernacki, Scott.Northrup, Michael Adenson, Diffusion of CO2 and Fractional Free Volume in Crystalline and Amorphous Cellulose, Journal of Analytical and Applied Pyrolysis https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jaap.2018.05.005

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Diffusion of CO₂ and Fractional Free Volume in Crystalline and Amorphous

Cellulose

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Highlights

- Diffusion of CO₂ in cellulose was estimated using molecular dynamic simulation
- Diffusion of CO₂ progresses by a jumping mechanism
- Estimated diffusivities compare favorably with comparable experimental results
- A Thiele Modulus analysis shows CO2 diffusion is relevant at pyrolysis conditions

Abstract

Molecular-scale modeling was used to estimate the diffusion coefficient for CO₂ in crystalline and amorphous cellulose. Using the molecular mechanics force field, PCFF, molecular dynamics simulations were performed on CO₂-cellulose systems at temperatures between 300 and 800 K using an NPT ensemble. The mean-square displacement for CO₂ molecules at each time step was measured, and the diffusivity of CO₂ in cellulose calculated. For temperatures between 300 and 800 k, the diffusivity of CO₂ through crystalline cellulose was estimated to be between 3.33×10^{-9} and 3.20×10^{-6} cm² s⁻¹, and between 2.33×10^{-8} and 9.44×10^{-6} cm² s⁻¹ for amorphous cellulose. The effect of temperature on the diffusivity of CO₂ is small with an activation energy of between 16.5 and 16.9 kJ/mol for crystalline cellulose and between 10.2 and 15.1 for amorphous cellulose.

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