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Correction: Behavior, mechanisms, and applications of low-concentration CO₂ in energy media

Minghai Shen,^{ac} Wei Guo,^a Lige Tong,^{*a} Li Wang,^a Paul K. Chu,^b Sibudjing Kawi^c and Yulong Ding^d

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The authors regret that there was an error in one of the affiliations in the original article. The correct affiliations are as shown here. The Royal Society of Chemistry apologises for these errors and any consequent inconvenience to authors and readers.

^a Beijing Key Laboratory of Energy Saving and Emission Reduction for Metallurgical Industry, School of Energy and Environmental Engineering, University of Science and Technology Beijing, China. E-mail: tonglige@me.ustb.edu.cn

^b Department of Physics, Department of Materials Science and Engineering, and Department of Biomedical Engineering, City University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong

^c Department of Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering, National University of Singapore, Singapore. E-mail: chekawis@nus.edu.sg

^d Birmingham Centre for Energy Storage & School of Chemical Engineering, University of Birmingham, UK. E-mail: Y.Ding@bham.ac.uk



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Behavior, mechanisms, and applications of low-concentration CO₂ in energy media

Minghai Shen,^{†a,c} Wei Guo,^{†a} Lige Tong,^{*a} Li Wang,^a Paul K. Chu,^{†b} Sibudjing Kawi^{†c} and Yulong Ding^d

This review explores the behavior of low-concentration CO₂ (LCC) in various energy media, such as solid adsorbents, liquid absorbents, and catalytic surfaces. It delves into the mechanisms of diffusion, adsorption, and catalytic reactions, while analyzing the potential applications and challenges of these properties in technologies like air separation, compressed gas energy storage, and CO₂ catalytic conversion. Given the current lack of comprehensive analyses, especially those encompassing multiscale studies of LCC behavior, this review aims to provide a theoretical foundation and data support for optimizing CO₂ capture, storage, and conversion technologies, as well as guidance for the development and application of new materials. By summarizing recent advancements in LCC separation techniques (e.g., cryogenic air separation and direct air carbon capture) and catalytic conversion technologies (including thermal catalysis, electrochemical catalysis, photocatalysis, plasma catalysis, and biocatalysis), this review highlights their importance in achieving carbon neutrality. It also discusses the challenges and future directions of these technologies. The findings emphasize that advancing the efficient utilization of LCC not only enhances CO₂ reduction and resource utilization efficiency, promoting the development of clean energy technologies, but also provides an economically and environmentally viable solution for addressing global climate change.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Sources of LCC

Fossil fuels such as coal, oil, and natural gas have supported the development of human society, but excessive reliance on these energy sources has led to numerous challenges.¹ With the rapid advancement of modern society, issues such as population growth, energy crises, and environmental pollution have become increasingly severe. CO₂ emissions from the burning of large amounts of fossil fuels are considered to be the main factor causing global warming.² According to the Fifth Assessment Report published by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), global atmospheric CO₂ concentration has risen from pre-industrial levels of 280 ppm to over 400 ppm today. The U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) reported in June 2023 that global CO₂ concentration has now

reached 421 ppm,³ marking a 50% increase since pre-industrial times.⁴ Projections suggest that CO₂ concentrations could reach 500 ppm by 2050 and exceed 900 ppm by the end of the century.⁵

Since the Industrial Revolution (*circa* 1750), the rise in CO₂ concentration has led to an increase in global average surface temperatures by approximately 1.5–2 °C.⁶ This warming trend triggers catastrophic events such as glacier melt and sea-level rise, posing a threat of submersion to coastal regions and island nations. Climate change also intensifies extreme weather events and disrupts ecosystems, jeopardizing the survival of humans and other species.^{7,8} The 2015 Paris Agreement proposed to limit the global temperature rise to well below 2 °C above pre-industrial levels and to strive to limit it to 1.5 °C.⁹

Recent data (Fig. 1) shows that the primary sources of LCC include industrial emissions, transportation, and natural sources.¹⁰ Industrial emissions constitute the largest share, accounting for approximately 50–60% and involving activities such as cement production, steel manufacturing, and fossil fuel combustion. LCC has different definitions and application ranges in different fields. Generally speaking, in atmospheric and environmental sciences, LCC usually refers to the natural atmospheric concentration of about 400–500 ppm. In industrial tail gas treatment and post-combustion flue gas capture, LCC refers to 1–15%, which is waste gas from combustion or industrial processes. In addition, in greenhouse gas emission reduction, carbon capture and catalytic conversion research,

^a Beijing Key Laboratory of Energy Saving and Emission Reduction for Metallurgical Industry, School of Energy and Environmental Engineering, China.

E-mail: tonglige@me.ustb.edu.cn

^b Department of Physics, Department of Materials Science and Engineering, and Department of Biomedical Engineering, City University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong

^c Department of Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering, National University of Singapore, Singapore. E-mail: chekawis@nus.edu.sg

^d Birmingham Centre for Energy Storage & School of Chemical Engineering, University of Birmingham, UK. E-mail: Y.Ding@bham.ac.uk

[†] These authors contributed equally to this work.

the concentration of LCC can be as low as 1%. Emissions from transportation, including vehicles, airplanes, and ships, account for about 20–30%. Natural sources, such as biological respiration and soil decomposition, contribute 10–20%. Although both anthropogenic and natural environments produce CO₂, plants and other organisms also play a role in carbon sequestration, offsetting emissions.¹¹ CO₂ emission control measures include improving energy efficiency, adjusting energy structures, increasing the proportion of renewable energy, and employing various methods to capture and utilize emitted CO₂.¹²

To mitigate global warming, the primary strategy has been to implement carbon pricing for CO₂ emissions from energy production.¹³ However, due to technological limitations, the transition from fossil fuels to clean energy remains a work in progress.¹⁴ Some countries and sectors still face challenges in

fully eliminating LCC emissions, leading to the release of CO₂ at various concentrations into the atmosphere.

1.2 Scope of the review

To achieve negative carbon emissions, direct capture of industrial stationary emission sources such as thermal power, steel, cement, and chemicals is an effective way and can save transportation costs. Current capture methods include pre-combustion capture, oxygen-enriched combustion, and post-combustion capture.^{15,16} Pre-combustion capture converts the carbon-containing components in the fuel into water gas and then separates CO₂, which is suitable for integrated coal gasification combined cycle power plants.^{17,18} Oxygen-enriched combustion can capture high-purity CO₂ by introducing pure oxygen into the combustion system and coordinating flue gas circulation, but the investment cost is high.^{19,20} Post-combustion capture separates CO₂ from flue gas.



Minghai Shen

Minghai Shen obtained his Master's degree in Inorganic Chemistry from China University of Mining and Technology (Beijing) in 2020, and is currently a PhD candidate in Power Engineering and Engineering Thermophysics at Beijing University of Science and Technology, as well as a visiting PhD student at the National University of Singapore. His research focuses on CO₂ capture and comprehensive utilization, direct air carbon capture, and cold plasma methane dry reforming technology.



Wei Guo

Wei Guo received the PhD degrees in power engineering and engineering thermophysics from University of Science and Technology Beijing, Beijing, China. He is currently a lecturer in the School of Energy and Environmental Engineering at the School of University of Science and Technology Beijing. He was selected for the Beijing Science and Technology Association's Young Talent Nurturing Program. His research interests include heat and mass transfer in multiphase flows, phase changes, and energy conversion and utilization. He has published ~30 international peer-reviewed journal papers in the last five years.



Lige Tong

Lige Tong is a professor at the School of Energy and Environmental Engineering at the University of Science and Technology Beijing. She mainly studies energy conversion and efficient utilization; energy storage; high-temperature flue gas dust removal and waste energy recovery and utilization; energy management and energy-saving strategies; refrigeration and low-temperature engineering; and industrial equipment service safety evaluation. She has published more

than 160 papers, more than 10 authorized patents at home and abroad, participated in the compilation of 6 Chinese and English textbooks/books, and won many awards from Beijing, China Iron and Steel Association, and the Ministry of Education.



Li Wang

Li Wang received the PhD degree in metallurgical engineering from University of Science and Technology Beijing, Beijing, China, in 1990. Since 1996, he has been a Professor of Thermal Power Engineering in University of Science and Technology Beijing. His research interests include the energy storage, conversion and utilization, refrigeration/cryogenics, and gas separation. He has published 8 books, more than 330 international peer-reviewed journal papers, and more than 30 national patents. He has won eight scientific and technological progress awards at the provincial and ministerial levels.

Although the energy consumption is high, the original system is less modified and is widely used.^{21,22} In addition, for low-concentration carbon sources dispersed in the atmosphere, in addition to source control, negative emissions¹² can also be achieved through coastal blue carbon,²³ terrestrial carbon plant removal,²⁴ biomass capture and storage technology,²⁵ direct air capture technology,²⁶ and carbon mineralization technology²⁷ (Fig. 2).

LCC is a component of greenhouse gas emissions, and its effective capture and conversion are crucial for mitigating climate change.^{28,29} However,³⁰ the enrichment cost of LCC is high, and the efficiency of direct adsorption or conversion is low.³¹ Therefore, studying the behavior of LCC in different energy media is crucial to the development of efficient capture and conversion technologies to reduce the CO₂ content in the atmosphere and reduce the greenhouse effect. At present, the scale of clean energy supply cannot meet the needs of human



Paul K. Chu

Paul K. Chu is Chair Professor of Materials Engineering in the Department of Physics, Department of Materials Science and Engineering, and Department of Biomedical Engineering at City University of Hong Kong. He obtained his PhD in chemistry from Cornell University in 1982. He is fellow of the APS, AVS, IEEE, MRS, Hong Kong Institution of Engineers, and the Hong Kong Academy of Engineering Sciences. His research interests are quite diverse spanning

plasma surface engineering, materials science and engineering, surface science, and functional materials. He is a highly cited researcher and his papers have been cited more than 100 000 times.

activities, and a long transition period is still needed. The capture, storage and utilization of the generated CO₂ are also crucial. For high-concentration CO₂ tail gas, such as CO₂ generated during coal-fired power generation, the capture difficulty is relatively low and the cost is relatively low.³² For low-concentration tail gas, such as coal-fired power plant flue gas and lime kiln gas, the separation and enrichment of CO₂ is difficult and the capture cost is high.³³ Table 1 shows that when using 30 wt% monoethanolamine (MEA) aqueous solution as the capture medium, the capture cost is closely related to the operating cost and capital cost of the plant, and the CO₂ concentration and scale have an important impact on the cost.^{34,35}

LCC have had a major influence on the collection and conversion process during the development of CCUS (carbon collection, utilization and storage) technologies.^{36–38} LCC undergoes complex behaviors such as diffusion,^{39,40} adsorption^{41,42} and catalysis^{43–45} on the surface of solid adsorbents, liquid absorbents and catalysts. These behaviors are directly related to the optimization of material structure and performance, and affect capture efficiency. In the transport process of LCC, physical processes such as diffusion and scattering play a key role. The performance of these processes in different media and conditions affects the distribution and migration efficiency of CO₂. Molecular diffusion and convective diffusion are the two main transport mechanisms. Molecular diffusion is based on the thermal motion of molecules and enables gas transport through concentration gradients. Convective diffusion relies on medium flow, allowing CO₂ to migrate with the fluid. In addition to the conventional molecular diffusion mechanism, Knudsen diffusion is particularly significant in porous materials whose pore size is close to or smaller than the molecular free path. Under such conditions, the collision of CO₂ molecules with the pore wall is better than the collision between molecules, thus affecting the transmission rate and direction. Moreover, during the transmission of CO₂ in porous materials



Sibudjing Kawi

Professor Sibudjing Kawi is a productive researcher and has published more than 285 international peer-reviewed journal articles. He obtained his PhD in Delaware and has been attached to the Department of Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering at the National University of Singapore since 1994. In the past decade, his research has focused on the design and synthesis of nano-catalysts for green and sustainable development, such as CO₂ reforming with

methane to bio-syngas and hydrogen, CO₂ hydrogenation, biomass gasification, and the water gas shift reactions. His expertise also includes the synthesis of novel inorganic membranes, as well as catalytic membrane reactors.



Yulong Ding

Professor Yulong Ding, founder of the Birmingham Energy Storage Centre and Professor of the School of Chemical Engineering at the University of Birmingham. His invention of liquid air energy storage technology won the 2011 'The Engineer' Energy and Environment Award and Comprehensive Award; his medium and high temperature composite phase change materials and heat storage technology won the 2019 IChemE Research Project Award, Global Energy Award and

(the highest award) Outstanding Contribution Award. His main research is the span-scale multiphase transport phenomenon and its application in energy power, chemical metallurgy, building energy conservation, cold chain transportation and other fields.

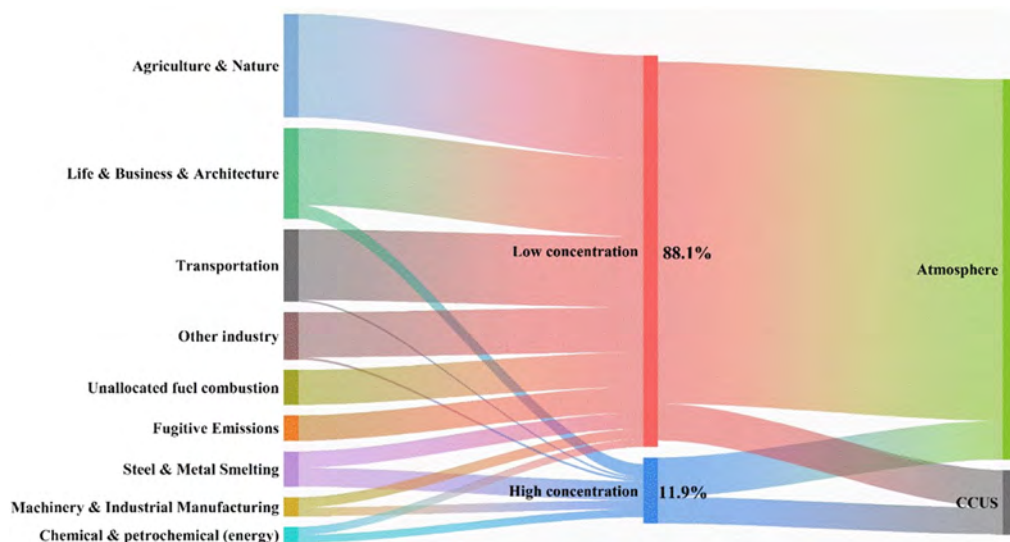


Fig. 1 Distribution of global greenhouse gas emissions by industry source. (Data from ref. 10 with permission from Our World in Data, copyright 2020.)

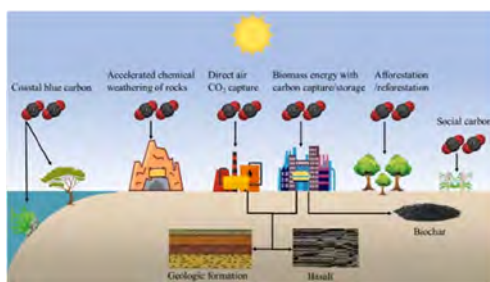


Fig. 2 Negative CO₂ emissions technology (adapted with permission from ref. 27 with permission from Springer Nature, copyright 2023).

and granular media, the scattering effect will change its movement path, thereby affecting the overall diffusion behavior.

The performance of these diffusion and scattering processes is affected by factors such as pressure, temperature and CO₂ concentration. Under high-pressure conditions, molecular diffusion is relatively rapid. Under low pressure conditions, Knudsen diffusion gradually dominates. The increase in temperature will enhance the thermal motion of molecules, thereby accelerating the rate of molecular diffusion and Knudsen

diffusion. The diffusion behavior of CO₂ at low concentrations is relatively slow and susceptible to scattering. One of the main goals of current research is to determine how to harness these behavioral traits to efficiently capture LCC from industrial emission sources and so reduce its emissions.^{26,31,46,47} By regulating the catalytic reaction characteristics of LCC on the catalyst surface, it can be converted into valuable chemicals and fuels, realizing the resource utilization of CO₂.^{48–50}

Photocatalysis, as a green technology that utilizes renewable light energy to drive CO₂ reduction, has shown great potential. By gradually improving the efficiency and stability of photocatalysts, the photocatalytic reduction reaction of LCC has become more efficient.^{51,52} The advantage of photocatalysis is to directly utilize solar energy for fuel production, which not only reduces the dependence on fossil energy but also provides a sustainable solution for CO₂ resource utilization.^{53,54} And electrocatalytic technology has also received widespread attention. By regulating electrochemical reaction conditions, the selective reduction of LCC was achieved, and a variety of carbon-based fuels were successfully prepared.^{55,56} Research focuses include catalyst selection, diffusion layer design and electrolyzer optimization, and breakthroughs have been

Table 1 Effects of CO₂ partial pressure and scale on carbon capture costs (reproduced from ref. 34 and 35 with permission from the International Energy Agency and Global CCS institute, copyright 2021)

Scenario	CO ₂ partial pressure (kPa)	Capture cost (USD per t)	Scale (Mtpa)
DAC	0.04	134–342	1
Aluminum smelting	1.00	180–290	0.02–0.2
Steel plant dust removal chimney	2.00	110–180	0.04–0.4
Natural gas combined power plant/steel sintering plant	4.00	75–125	0.07–0.66
Petroleum coke/natural gas power plant	8.00	60–85	0.12–1.2
Biomass power plant	12.00	58–75	0.13–1.3
Coal-fired power plant	14.00	54–70	0.15–1.5
Cement kiln	18.00	50–60	0.18–1.8
Steel metallurgy	26.00	49–52	0.2–2
Steel rotary kiln	35.00	48–51	0.2–2

made in improving energy efficiency and reducing reaction overpotential.^{57,58}

In terms of thermocatalysis, by developing new catalytic materials and optimizing reaction conditions, researchers have significantly improved CO₂ reduction efficiency, enabling LCC to be effectively converted into fuels such as methane and methanol.^{59–61} Plasma catalysis generates high-energy electrons by stimulating low-temperature plasma, which activates and decomposes CO₂ molecules under non-equilibrium conditions. It can drive CO₂ reduction at lower temperatures and significantly reduce energy consumption.^{62,63} In addition, the combination of plasma and catalyst further enhances the selectivity and efficiency of CO₂ reduction.⁶⁴ This technology has made significant progress in the preparation of fuels such as methane and ethylene, providing a new way for efficient utilization of CO₂. Biocatalysis uses microorganisms or enzymes as catalysts to convert LCC into organic compounds. With the development of synthetic biology, the modification of microbial metabolic pathways has improved CO₂ conversion efficiency.^{65,66} Engineered strains designed through gene editing have achieved efficient conversion of CO₂ into chemicals such as methanol and ethanol under mild conditions.^{67,68}

LCC can also be efficiently used by physical energy storage in addition to direct conversion.^{69–71} CO₂ has high compressibility and can store a large amount of energy in a small volume. Its thermodynamic properties,⁷² such as a higher critical point and lower compression power requirements, give it advantages in medium and high temperature energy storage and release processes.^{73–77} By utilizing and recycling CO₂, compressed air energy storage (CAES) and compressed CO₂ energy storage (CCES) designs can reduce greenhouse gas emissions and help achieve carbon neutrality goals.⁷⁸ In CAES/CCES systems, the phase change process of CO₂ can effectively manage thermal energy and optimize system performance.⁷⁹ The phase change process involves a large amount of latent heat absorption or release, which can help manage thermal energy more effectively in CAES systems, thereby improving overall efficiency.⁸⁰ The phase change of CO₂ can also be used to cool compressed air or preheat expanded air to further optimize system performance.⁸¹

The presence of CO₂ has a significant impact on the efficiency and stability of compressed gas energy storage systems such as CAES/CCES. When moisture in compressed gases combines with CO₂, carbonic acid (H₂CO₃) may be formed.⁸² Carbonic acid is corrosive, especially to iron, steel, aluminum and other metal materials. This corrosion can weaken the structural integrity of equipment, leading to increased wear on pipes, tanks, heat exchangers, and other equipment.⁸³ CO₂ is more corrosive and has a greater corrosion rate in high-temperature, high-pressure environments. This may lead to lower equipment life expectancy, more frequent equipment replacement and maintenance requirements, and higher operating expenses.⁸⁴ The presence and concentration changes of CO₂ in CAES systems may affect the efficiency of the compression and expansion processes and equipment operating time, and lead to thermal management complications.⁸⁵ Therefore, CO₂ may need to be processed or separated in the design of

high-pressure and high-temperature CAES systems to ensure efficient and safe operation of the system.⁸⁶

In the past few decades, CCUS technology for high-concentration CO₂ has been widely studied.^{87–89} Although some reviews involve the direct capture and conversion of LCC, most of these reviews focus on purifying LCC to obtain high-purity CO₂ for industrial applications, or investigating single catalytic technologies (such as photocatalysis or electrocatalysis) to convert CO₂ into specific chemical products. Although valuable, these approaches often fail to address the comprehensive challenges of capturing LCC and converting it efficiently into useful products.^{90–93} Yao *et al.*⁹³ reviewed the application of LCC in adsorption capture from the perspective of porous materials and discussed the chemical transformation of LCC diameter on porous catalysts. Yasuomi *et al.*⁹¹ summarized the reported catalytic systems for the reduction of LCC. The system first performs a CO₂ capture reaction (or CO₂ adsorption) and then catalyzes CO₂ reduction. Hu *et al.*⁹⁴ reviewed LCC gas purification technology and analyzed methods for low-cost capture and electrocatalytic reduction using carbon-based materials.

To our knowledge, there is no comprehensive analysis of LCC, especially a cross-scale discussion of its behavioral characteristics. This review first analyzes the behavioral characteristics of LCC in different energy media, aiming to deeply understand its diffusion, adsorption and catalytic reaction mechanisms, so as to optimize CO₂ capture, storage and conversion technologies. It can provide theoretical basis and data support for scientific research in related fields and provide guidance for the development and application of new materials. This has important scientific value and practical significance for promoting the development and industrialization of related technologies. This will not only help improve the efficiency of CO₂ emission reduction and resource utilization, and promote the realization of carbon neutrality goals. It can also promote the development of clean energy technologies, provide economically and environmentally feasible solutions, and ultimately address global climate change. The separation technologies of LCC are summarized, including cryogenic air separation and direct air carbon capture. The research progress of LCC direct conversion technology in different catalytic fields is introduced, including thermal catalysis, electrochemical catalysis, photocatalysis, plasma catalysis and biocatalysis. In addition, the impact of low-concentration and pure CO₂ in compressed energy storage is also discussed. Finally, we emphasize the difficulties of these research directions and look forward to their development direction. The ultimate goal is to promote the efficient resource utilization of LCC through interdisciplinary and cross-industry forms to achieve the goal of carbon neutrality.

2. Behavior of LCC in different energy media

2.1 Diffusion characteristics

The diffusion characteristics of LCC in different energy media vary depending on factors such as temperature,^{95,96}

pressure,^{97,98} medium viscosity^{99,100} and composition.^{101,102} Increased temperature and pressure generally increase the diffusion coefficient of CO₂, while higher medium viscosity reduces the diffusion rate. Changes in medium composition affect the solubility and diffusion path of CO₂. In liquid phases, such as liquid fuels and electrolytes, the diffusion of CO₂ is affected by fluid dynamics and the diffusion rate is relatively fast. In solid phases, such as porous materials and solid adsorbents, the diffusion is affected by pore structure and surface interactions, and the diffusion rate is relatively slow.

Numerous sectors find considerable value and relevance in the study of LCC diffusion properties in liquid and solid phases. Recognizing the diffusion behavior of CO₂ in various mediums can help with carbon capture and storage (CCS) by increasing storage safety and capture efficiency.^{39,40} Optimizing CO₂ diffusion properties in fuel cells can enhance battery stability and performance.^{103,104} Determining the CO₂ diffusion properties in porous medium during enhanced oil and gas recovery (EOR/EGR) will assist increase oil and gas recovery.^{105,106} In gas separation technology, studying the diffusion characteristics of CO₂ can help develop more efficient separation materials.^{107,108} These studies can not only improve energy utilization efficiency, but also reduce carbon emissions and promote the development of sustainable energy, and have important scientific and practical application value.

2.1.1 Diffusion in the liquid phase. Reactive electrolytes and liquid adsorbents are frequently utilized in the conversion and adsorption of CO₂.^{109–111} Compared with the diffusion mass transfer of high-purity CO₂ and pure CO₂, the diffusion mass transfer process of LCC is more complicated. Similar to molecular diffusion in the gas phase, CO₂ molecules in the liquid phase diffuse from high-concentration areas to low-concentration areas through random thermal motion.¹¹² Since the density and viscosity of liquids are greater than those of gases, the molecular diffusion rate is lower.¹¹³ In liquids, liquid movement caused by density differences or external stirring (such as natural convection and forced convection) accelerates the diffusion of CO₂.^{114,115}

In the process of CO₂ sequestration or enhanced oil recovery, its diffusion behavior will be affected by various factors in the actual reservoir.^{116,117} In addition, existing research results have recognized that the process of CO₂ geological sequestration and CO₂ flooding is a process in which diffusion and dispersion occur simultaneously.^{118,119} Convection diffusion is a combination of molecular diffusion and dispersion between particles of a substance in different phases of motion (or between phases). Molecular diffusion is the mass transfer between substances due to concentration differences, while dispersion is the mixing phenomenon caused by changes in velocity in or between flow channels.¹²⁰ In the continuous liquid phase of a porous medium, when the flow velocity is very small, molecular diffusion is usually the main mass transfer mechanism, while when the flow velocity increases to a certain value, hydraulic dispersion becomes the main mass transfer mechanism.⁹⁹

For the diffusion of LCC in solution, when CO₂ gas comes into contact with the solution, mass transfer occurs between

the gas and liquid, causing the composition of the fluid phase to change^{121,122} (Fig. 3a). Due to the lower CO₂ concentration, the rate of diffusion may be slower and more susceptible to solution properties, solubility, and interfacial reaction kinetics.^{113,123,124} In this case, the gas–liquid transition zone may be narrower and less miscible.¹²⁵ However, the composition of the solution will still gradually change due to factors such as molecular diffusion, viscosity, capillary forces, and gravity.^{126,127} The injection of LCC drives the flow of the gas–liquid transition zone and liquid phase, and the diffusion process may show more obvious nonlinear characteristics¹²⁸ (Fig. 3b).

When multi-component fluids seep through porous media, the concentration changes of LCC usually do not completely follow Darcy's law (Fig. 3c). The velocity of fluid flow is not proportional to the pressure gradient of the fluid in the porous medium and is also significantly affected by dispersion phenomena.¹²⁹ In addition to the main molecular diffusion in the diffusion phenomenon, LCC may also produce convective diffusion or mechanical diffusion under changes in diffusion conditions.^{130,131} Molecular diffusion is caused by the random motion of molecules, resulting in low concentrations of CO₂ tending to be evenly distributed in the solution.¹³² Convective diffusion is mainly driven by the density difference caused by the inhomogeneity of the pore microstructure and the difference in CO₂ concentration at different locations in the solution, which accelerates the dissolution rate of LCC in the liquid phase.^{114,133,134}

The diffusion coefficient is the most important parameter in the reaction–diffusion process. If the diffusion coefficient of CO₂ in the liquid phase is known, the various diffusion behaviors of CO₂ in the liquid phase can be obtained.^{135–137} At present, there are two methods to determine the diffusion coefficient of CO₂ in the liquid phase, namely the direct method based on determining the concentration distribution and the indirect method based on measuring parameter changes. Among them, the most realistic diffusion coefficient value is obtained by the concentration of CO₂ in the liquid phase during the diffusion process, that is, the diffusion coefficient is calculated by the direct method.^{138,139} However, how to measure the CO₂ concentration contained in different positions of the liquid phase during the diffusion process through indoor experiments is currently a difficulty. The advantages of the direct method for obtaining the diffusion coefficient are its simple theory and high experimental accuracy. However, its disadvantages are that the sampling operation will interrupt the continuity of the system diffusion process, affect the concentration distribution of CO₂ in the diffusion system, cause experimental errors, and its operation is relatively complicated and time-consuming, and requires component analysis instruments, resulting in high costs.^{140,141} As a result, the direct approach is rarely employed during the actual measuring procedure.

The primary indirect technique used to determine the concentration of CO₂ in the liquid phase at the moment is Raman spectroscopy.^{142–144} Because different substances correspond to a specific Raman peak, the concentration of CO₂ in the liquid phase can be indirectly calculated by

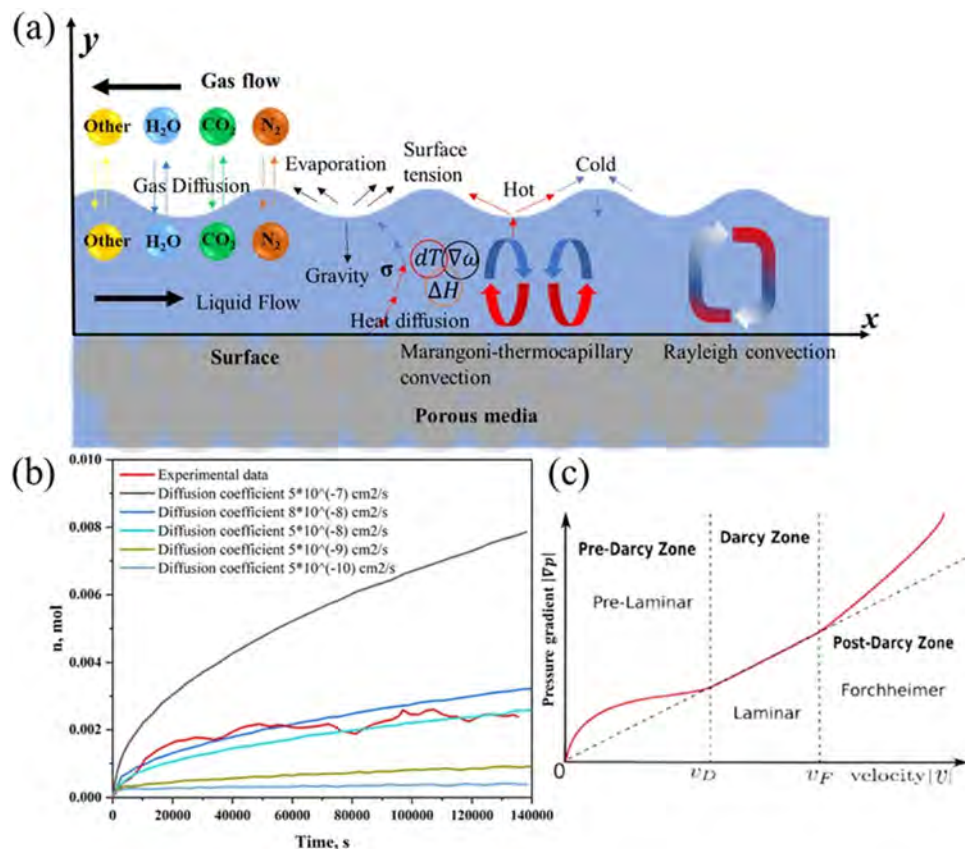


Fig. 3 (a) Diffusion model of CO₂-containing gas flow on the liquid surface; (b) change in mass of CO₂ during the diffusion process under different diffusion coefficients (reproduced with permission from ref. 128. Copyright 2022 Elsevier); (c) diffusion model of linear Darcy's law (reproduced with permission from ref. 129. Copyright 2017 Elsevier).

combining the Raman intensity. However, it is difficult for ordinary laboratories to carry out diffusion experiments using Raman spectrometers. On the one hand, the equipment is expensive, and on the other hand, professional technicians are required to operate it. Moreover, Raman spectroscopy can only measure the liquid phase in a transparent tube, and porous media conditions cannot be measured.^{145,146} Computed tomography (CT) scanning calculations are similar to Raman spectroscopy measurement methods. Numerous approximations are utilized in the indirect calculation of the CO₂ concentration, and the measurement data is not as precise as that of Raman spectroscopy.^{128,147,148} Another, more conventional approach is to estimate the CO₂ content in the liquid phase by measuring the pH of the liquid phase with a high-precision pH meter.^{40,143,149} The method of measuring the pH value of the solution is relatively simple, but this method has a large error. A change in pH value will result in a change in CO₂ concentration by an order of magnitude, and it is impossible to determine whether all CO₂ exists in the pH standard solution in the form of ions.^{110,150,151}

Combining theoretical computations with indoor tests is another way to get the CO₂ diffusion coefficient in liquid phase.^{152–154} The correlation equation for the diffusion coefficient is then computed by combining the relevant diffusion mathematical model with the experimentally determined

changes in pressure, liquid volume, and gas–liquid interface (Fig. 4a–c). This method's straightforward operation and inexpensive experimental equipment have made it a more popular way to compute the diffusion coefficient of CO₂, even if there is a slight discrepancy between the estimated and real diffusion.¹⁰⁰

It is evident that gas flooding to improve oil recovery and the decrease of greenhouse gas emissions depend heavily on CO₂ diffusion. The average diffusion coefficient determined just by the change law of indirect physical variables in the diffusion process is insufficient to define the diffusion capacity of the entire process, since other factors will disrupt its real diffusion behavior.^{155,156} The diffusion of LCC in the liquid phase is affected by factors such as temperature, liquid viscosity, stirring rate, solution composition, gas–liquid interface area and gas partial pressure. Increased temperature usually increases the diffusion coefficient, higher viscosity reduces the diffusion rate, stirring reduces the thickness of the boundary layer, and solution components such as ion concentration and other gas solubility also affect the diffusion behavior.^{157–159} Compared with high-concentration CO₂, LCC has a smaller diffusion driving force, a relatively stable diffusion coefficient, a solution that has not reached a saturated state, weak intermolecular interactions, and less influence on the physical and chemical properties of the liquid phase.^{160,161} High-concentration CO₂ has a larger concentration gradient, the diffusion coefficient

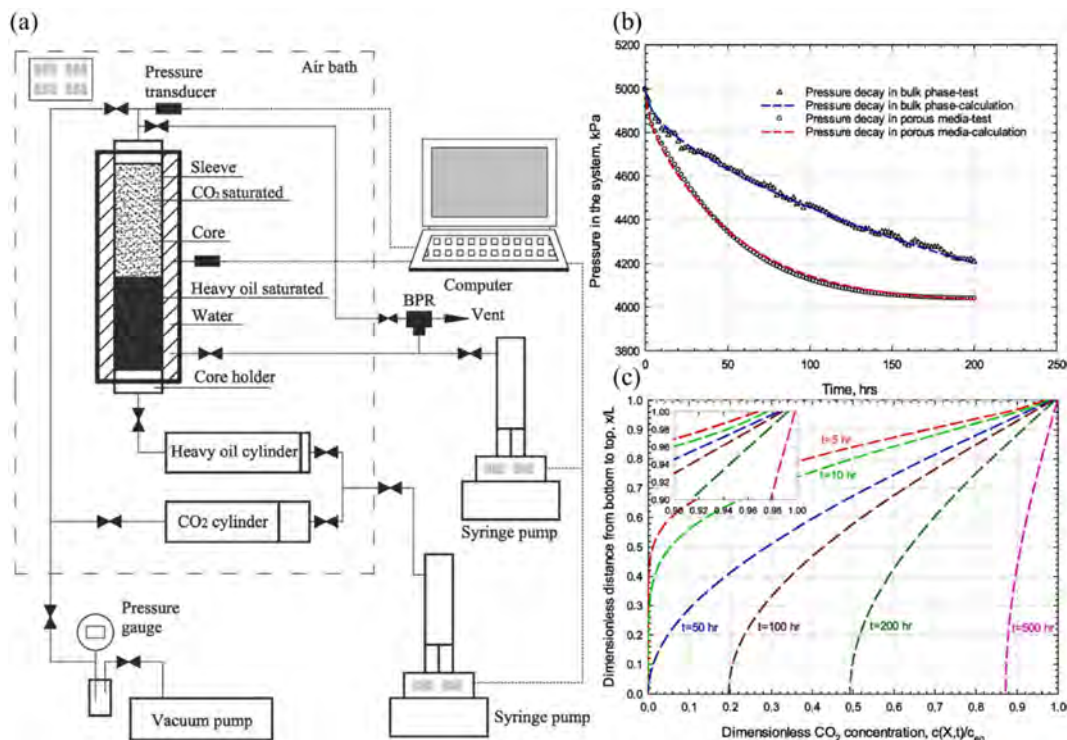


Fig. 4 (a) CO_2 gas–liquid diffusion coefficient test system in heavy oil; (b) pressure decay diagram of CO_2 diffusion coefficient in bulk phase and porous media in heavy oil under test and simulation comparison; (c) dimensionless CO_2 concentration distribution in bulk phase at different test times (reproduced with permission from ref. 100. Copyright 2020 Elsevier).

may show a nonlinear effect, and the solution is closer to a saturated state.^{99,162,163} Enhanced intermolecular interactions may change the physicochemical properties of the liquid phase, such as pH^{164,165} and viscosity,^{166,167} thereby affecting the diffusion process.

In liquid fuels, CO_2 diffusion research mainly revolves around the determination of diffusion coefficient,^{168,169} solubility,^{170,171} study of dissolution mechanism^{172,173} and kinetic simulation.^{174,175} Experimental and simulation methods show that temperature, pressure and fuel composition significantly affect the diffusion behavior of CO_2 , with higher temperatures and pressures generally increasing the diffusion coefficient.^{176–178} Solubility studies have found that the chemical properties of different liquid systems will affect the dissolution and diffusion paths of CO_2 .^{179–181} Jeon *et al.*¹⁸² studied the effect of surfactants (alkyl olefin sulfonates and cetyltrimethylammonium bromide) on CO_2 -brine-clay under subcritical to supercritical CO_2 conditions (10–150 bar, 45 °C). Influence of chemical reactions of mineral systems (montmorillonite and sepiolite). Compared with the CO_2 -brine-clay mineral system without surfactant, the introduction of surfactant increases the solubility of CO_2 . Molecular dynamics simulation and computational fluid dynamics (CFD) methods reveal the microscopic diffusion process and molecular mechanism of CO_2 in liquid fuel.^{183–185} Morgan *et al.*¹⁸⁶ analyzed in detail the catalytic mechanism of the gas–liquid–solid interface, especially the interaction between the electrolyte in the liquid phase and the CO_2 molecules in the gas phase. Through reasonable catalyst assembly, the researchers were able to achieve higher CO_2 adsorption and

reduction efficiency at the interface, thereby increasing the methane yield. The gas–solid–liquid interface plays a vital role in electroreduction, accelerating the transfer of reactants and reducing the generation of side reactants. Marilia *et al.*¹⁸⁷ discussed the importance of the gas–liquid interface in the CO_2 capture process, especially in the application of MEA absorbents. The adsorption and reaction of MEA molecules at the gas–liquid interface not only increased the solubility of CO_2 , but also accelerated the conversion process of CO_2 . The study proposed that the reaction characteristics of MEA at the gas–liquid interface are closely related to the interface structure and surface properties, which provides a new direction for the optimization of gas–liquid interface catalysis. Lei *et al.*¹⁸⁸ proposed a CO_2 -responsive gas valve. In the CO_2 -responsive gas valve, the diameter of the liquid gating mechanism is associated with the gas–liquid interface. The introduction of CO_2 changes the physical state of the liquid by reacting with functional groups in the liquid phase, thereby affecting the opening and closing of the gas channel. By utilizing the interaction of the gas–liquid interface, the system can effectively respond to changes in CO_2 concentration in the gas environment. These studies provide important data support for optimizing CCS technology.

Optimizing CO_2 diffusion in fuel cells can raise stability and performance levels.^{189–191} In electrolytes, CO_2 diffusion research mainly focuses on the determination of diffusion coefficient^{192,193} and electrochemical properties,^{194,195} the study of interfacial mass transfer processes^{196,197} and the development of new electrolytes.^{98,198} Studies have shown that electrolyte

composition and temperature have a significant impact on the CO₂ diffusion coefficient. Kenis *et al.*¹⁹² found that carbonates formed in K⁺-containing electrolytes formed concentrated deposition regions of different morphologies on the GDE surface. On the other hand, carbonates formed in Cs⁺-containing electrolytes appear as small crystals dispersed on the electrode surface. The deposits blocking the surface of the catalyst layer and the deposits in the electrode microporous layer and carbon fiber substrate will reduce the diffusion of CO₂ and the performance of electroreduction reaction. Interfacial mass transfer rate has an important impact on battery electrochemical performance.¹⁹⁹ Lu *et al.*¹¹⁰ found that the reduction in nominal overpotential caused by the use of alkaline electrolytes originated from the Nernst potential of the pH gradient layer at the cathode/electrolyte interface. The diffusion transport of CO₂ is greatly enhanced by forming a gas-liquid-solid three-phase interface, thereby significantly increasing the diffusion-limited current density. This has optimized the application of CO₂ electroreduction reaction (CO₂RR) by developing a variety of new electrolytes with high CO₂ solubility and good mass transfer properties.^{200,201} These studies provide theoretical basis and technical support for improving energy conversion efficiency, reducing carbon emissions and developing efficient separation materials.

2.1.2 Diffusion in the solid phase. Surface diffusion and pore diffusion are the primary methods used in the solid phase to diffuse LCC.²⁰²⁻²⁰⁴ Surface diffusion is the term used to describe the passage of CO₂ molecules over the solid surface on the surface of porous materials (such adsorbents).^{97,205} The rate of surface diffusion is affected by surface energy, temperature and adsorbent properties.^{206,207} In the internal pores of porous materials, CO₂ molecules are transported by diffusion through the pores.^{208,209} The efficiency of pore diffusion depends on factors such as pore size, pore structure and molecular size.²¹⁰⁻²¹² Depending on the difference in pore size relative to molecular size, pore diffusion can be divided into two types: Knudsen diffusion^{213,214} and ordinary diffusion.^{215,216} When the pore size is close to or smaller than the mean free path of gas molecules, the frequency of collisions between molecules and pore walls is higher than the frequency of collisions between molecules. This diffusion mode is called Knudsen diffusion. When the pore size is larger, the frequency of intermolecular collisions is higher. The normal diffusion behavior at this time is similar to the molecular diffusion in the gas phase.

The diffusion law of LCC in the solid phase is mainly affected by the microstructure, porosity, temperature, pressure and surface interaction of the solid material. High temperature increases the molecular motion energy in the solid material, thereby accelerating the diffusion rate.²¹⁷ The surface energy and chemical properties of the solid material affect the surface diffusion rate.²¹⁸ High surface energy helps to increase the diffusion rate. The higher the density and crystallinity of the material, the more complex the molecular diffusion path and the lower the diffusion rate.^{102,219} The adsorption capacity of the solid material for CO₂ affects its movement rate and diffusion efficiency on the material surface. Materials with stronger adsorption may slow down the diffusion of CO₂.^{42,93}

In the solid-phase diffusion process of LCC, the classical diffusion model, molecular diffusion model, pore diffusion model and macroscopic mass transfer model each play an important role. The following are their applications and roles in the process:

2.1.2.1 Classical diffusion model. Adolf Fick established the diffusion equation to describe the migration of substances from high to low concentration areas, indicating that the flux of substances through a unit cross-sectional area is proportional to the concentration gradient. This is known as Fick's first law, expressed as:²²⁰

$$J = -D \frac{\partial C}{\partial x} \quad (1)$$

where J is the diffusion flux (kg (m² s)⁻¹), D is the diffusion coefficient (m² s⁻¹), and C is the concentration (kg m⁻³). For a three-dimensional diffusion system, eqn (2) becomes:²²⁰

$$J = -D \left(i \frac{\partial C}{\partial x} + j \frac{\partial C}{\partial y} + k \frac{\partial C}{\partial z} \right) = -D \nabla C \quad (2)$$

where i, j, k are unit vectors in the x, y, z directions, and ∇ is the gradient operator. Fick's first law is applicable to steady-state diffusion, where the concentration gradient remains constant over time. However, in most diffusion processes, the concentration changes with time, and conservation of mass gives:²²⁰

$$\frac{\partial C}{\partial t} = \frac{\partial J}{\partial x} \quad (3)$$

Substituting eqn (1) into this, we obtain:²²⁰

$$\frac{\partial C}{\partial t} = \frac{\partial}{\partial x} \left(D \frac{\partial C}{\partial x} \right) = D \frac{\partial^2 C}{\partial x^2} + \frac{\partial D}{\partial x} \cdot \frac{\partial C}{\partial x} \quad (4)$$

If the diffusion coefficient D is assumed constant with respect to x , the equation simplifies to:²²¹

$$\frac{\partial C}{\partial t} = D \frac{\partial^2 C}{\partial x^2} \quad (5)$$

Eqn (5) is known as Fick's second law, describing the rate of change of concentration over time in non-steady-state diffusion.

In one-dimensional non-steady-state diffusion, we can use the Gaussian solution of eqn (4) to calculate the proportion $P(x, t)$ of diffusing species at any position x and time t , assuming all molecules start at position $x = 0$ at $t = 0$.²²¹

$$P(x, t) = \frac{e^{-\frac{x^2}{4Dt}}}{\sqrt{4\pi Dt}} \quad (6)$$

The mean square displacement (MSD) at time t is given by:²²²

$$\overline{x^2}(t) = \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} x^2 P(x, t) dx = \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} x^2 \frac{e^{-\frac{x^2}{4Dt}}}{\sqrt{4\pi Dt}} dx = 2Dt \quad (7)$$

This relationship between MSD, diffusion coefficient, and time is known as Einstein's diffusion equation. From this, we can derive the self-diffusion coefficient D_s in three

dimensions as:²²²

$$D_s = \frac{\text{MSD}}{6t} \quad (8)$$

In larger spaces, molecular collisions dominate the diffusion coefficient, but as the pore size decreases, collisions between gas molecules and pore walls become more frequent, altering the diffusion mechanism. The average free path $\bar{\lambda}$ between two collisions is related to the gas molecular diameter d , temperature T , and pressure p by:²²³

$$\bar{\lambda} = \frac{k_B T}{\sqrt{2} p \pi d^2} \quad (9)$$

Knudsen introduced a dimensionless number, the Knudsen number K_n , which compares the average free path to the pore size to assess the effect of pore dimensions on diffusion:²²⁴

$$K_n = \frac{\bar{\lambda}}{d_{\text{pore}}} \quad (10)$$

For $K_n \rightarrow 0$, diffusion is a free molecular flow, described by Euler's equations. For $K_n < 0.01$, it follows a viscous flow, described by the Navier–Stokes (N–S) equations. In the range $0.01 < K_n < 0.1$, boundary slip is considered in the N–S equations, and for $0.1 < K_n < 10$, the flow is in a transition region, no longer considered continuous. When $K_n > 10$, the Boltzmann equation governs molecular diffusion.

For small K_n , molecular diffusion is dominant, and the diffusion coefficient D_{AB} for species A in background gas B can be estimated using Fuller's equation:²²⁴

$$D_{AB} = \frac{0.001858 T^{3/2} \left(\frac{1}{M_A} + \frac{1}{M_B} \right)^{1/2}}{p \sigma_{AB}^2 \Omega_D} \quad (11)$$

where T is temperature (K), M_A and M_B are the molecular weights of A and B (kg kmol^{-1}), p is pressure (atm), σ_{AB} is the average collision diameter, and Ω_D is the molecular collision integral based on the Lennard-Jones potential.

For larger Knudsen numbers, Knudsen diffusion, governed by collisions between molecules and pore walls, can be modeled using the elastic ball model:²²⁴

$$D_{AK} = \frac{d_{\text{pore}}}{3} \sqrt{\frac{8RT}{\pi M_A}} \quad (12)$$

where d_{pore} is the pore diameter (m), R is the ideal gas constant ($8.314 \text{ J (mol K)}^{-1}$), T is temperature (K), and M_A is the molecular weight of species A (kg kmol^{-1}).

For the transition region, where both molecular and Knudsen diffusion contribute, the effective diffusion coefficient D_{AE} is given by:²²⁵

$$D_{AE} = \frac{1}{\frac{1}{D_{AB}} + \frac{1}{D_{AK}}} \quad (13)$$

This formulation covers both molecular and Knudsen diffusion and provides a comprehensive approach to understanding LCC diffusion in various media.

2.1.2.2 Molecular diffusion model. The diffusion coefficient obtained from Knudsen diffusion considers only collisions between gas molecules and pore walls, neglecting intermolecular interactions and forces such as van der Waals forces and electrostatic interactions.²²⁶ This simplification is insufficient to fully reflect the effects of the physical and chemical properties of gas molecules and nanoporous materials on mass transfer.²²⁷

Recently, with advancements in computational power, molecular dynamics (MD) simulations have become an effective tool for predicting mass transfer properties in nanoporous materials.^{97,228} MD simulates the motion of atoms or molecules under long-range and short-range interactions, and it serves as an important complement to experimental techniques, especially in cases where experiments at the nanoscale are difficult.²²⁹

In MD simulations, the position and velocity of each particle are governed by Newton's equations of motion.²³⁰ Particles' initial velocities are typically assigned randomly according to the Maxwell–Boltzmann distribution.²³¹ The acceleration of each particle is determined by its mass and the net force applied to it, making the identification of the forces acting on particles critical for MD simulations.

The force field in MD simulations uses potential energy functions to describe interactions between particles, including bond stretching, bond angle bending, torsion, van der Waals forces, and electrostatic interactions.^{232,233} A classical potential function used in MD simulations is the Lennard-Jones potential, proposed by John Lennard-Jones in 1924, which is still widely used today. The expression is:²³⁴

$$V(r_{ij}) = 4\epsilon \left[\left(\frac{\sigma}{r_{ij}} \right)^{12} + \left(\frac{\sigma}{r_{ij}} \right)^6 \right], \quad r_{ij} \leq R_c \quad (14)$$

where V is the potential energy between particles i and j , r_{ij} is the distance between them, ϵ is the depth of the potential well, σ is the particle diameter, and R_c is the cutoff radius beyond which interactions are negligible. The Lennard-Jones potential demonstrates that the repulsive force between two particles decays as the 12th power of the inverse distance, while the attractive force decays as the 6th power. This results in repulsion at short distances and attraction at longer distances, with both forces rapidly decreasing as the distance increases.

With the advancement of MD force fields, more accurate and specialized force fields have been developed, such as the CVFF force field for inorganic systems,²³⁵ the COMPASS force field for polymer systems,²³⁶ and the ReaxFF force field, which can model bond-breaking processes.²³⁷

2.1.2.3 Pore diffusion model. In porous media, mass transfer is also influenced by the complex pore structure. While pore dimensions, shape, and connectivity can be directly modeled based on structural images, this approach often results in large computational demands and is not practical for systems with many pores.^{238,239} A common simplification is to replace the complex-shaped pores with a network of interconnected pore elements, creating a pore network model (PNM).²⁴⁰

In this model, the elements include pore bodies and the throats connecting them. The geometric shapes of the pores

and throats are idealized, but the model preserves important characteristics of the original porous medium, such as topology, pore position, spatial correlations, and pore volume.²⁴¹ This simplification significantly improves computational efficiency in large-scale pore flow calculations.

2.1.2.4 Macroscopic mass transfer model. In practical engineering applications, external mass transfer effects on adsorption and reaction processes in porous media often need to be considered. The governing equations used in computational fluid dynamics (CFD) simulations vary depending on the specific needs of the model.²⁴² For example, in the case of incompressible viscous flow without external forces, the governing equations are as follows:

Continuity equation:²⁴³

$$\frac{\partial \rho}{\partial t} + \rho \nabla \cdot V = 0 \quad (15)$$

Momentum conservation equation:²⁴⁴

$$\rho \frac{\partial V}{\partial t} + \rho (V \cdot \nabla) V = -\nabla p + \mu \nabla^2 V \quad (16)$$

Energy conservation equation:²⁴⁵

$$\frac{\partial \rho e}{\partial t} + \nabla \cdot (\rho V e) + p \nabla \cdot V - \nabla \cdot (K \nabla T) = 0 \quad (17)$$

where ρ is fluid density, V is the velocity vector, μ is fluid viscosity, e is the internal energy per unit mass, K is the thermal conductivity, and T is temperature.

In macroscopic mass transfer modeling, it is also necessary to consider the effects of chemical reactions, in addition to simulating flow, mixing, and heat transfer processes. By introducing source terms related to chemical reactions into the governing equations, the concentration changes caused by chemical reactions can be accounted for in the transport equations for each species.^{246,247}

For chemical reactions with clear mechanisms and fewer intermediate steps, the reaction rate can be computed using the overall reaction kinetics equation.²⁴⁸ For reaction j involving species i , the reaction rate can be expressed as:²⁴⁹

$$r_j = k_j \prod_{i=1}^P C_i^{n_{ij}} \quad (18)$$

where k_j is the reaction rate constant for reaction j , C_i is the concentration of species i , and n_{ij} is the reaction order of species i in reaction j .

The source terms in the mass and energy conservation equations are then given by:²⁵⁰

$$S_i = \sum_{j=1}^Q a_{ij} r_j \quad (19)$$

$$S_H = \sum_{j=1}^Q -\Delta H_j r_j \quad (20)$$

where a_{ij} is the stoichiometric coefficient of species i in reaction j , and ΔH_j is the reaction heat for reaction j .

When a chemical mechanism involves many elementary reactions and species, directly coupling the reactions into fluid calculations can be resource-intensive and time-consuming.²⁵¹ In such cases, it is important to treat reactions and components based on their time scales. Similar reaction paths can be combined, and reactions that can be neglected should be removed, leaving only the core reactions to simplify the mechanism.

In the solid-phase diffusion process of LCC, various models provide a deep understanding of the diffusion mechanism from different levels. The classical diffusion model is mainly used to describe the diffusion process under steady-state conditions and calculate the diffusion rate.²⁵² The molecular diffusion model focuses on the interaction between molecules at the microscopic scale, and is particularly suitable for the diffusion of CO₂ in nanopores.²¹⁸ The pore diffusion model takes into account the influence of pore structure on diffusion and is suitable for transport behavior in porous media.²⁵³ The macroscopic mass transfer model combines fluid dynamics and chemical reaction processes to simulate large-scale mass transfer phenomena, and is particularly suitable for reactive diffusion.²⁵⁴ In practical applications, these models complement each other and jointly reveal the diffusion mechanism of LCC in the solid phase, providing an important theoretical basis for the optimization of CO₂ capture, storage and conversion technologies.

The pore structure of solid materials plays a key role in the diffusion of CO₂.^{255–257} The pore size, pore distribution and pore connectivity affect the diffusion path and rate of CO₂. Smaller pore sizes lead to Knudsen diffusion, while larger pore sizes lead to ordinary diffusion.²⁵⁸ Smaller pore sizes and complex pore structures increase diffusion resistance and reduce diffusion rate.²⁵⁹ Different types of solid materials, such as porous carbon materials, metal organic frameworks (MOFs) and zeolites, have different pore characteristics and surface properties, so the diffusion behavior of CO₂ in them is different.^{260–263} The adsorption process in porous media adsorbents includes the steps of molecules diffusing from the gas phase to the outer surface of the adsorbent, diffusing from the outer surface of the adsorbent through the internal pores to the inner surface of the adsorbent, and adsorption on the inner surface or site of the adsorbent, as shown in Fig. 5.

To effectively control and optimize this process, inorganic porous membranes have become an ideal choice. Their unique microscopic pore structure can not only significantly improve the diffusion efficiency of gases, but also achieve selective separation of specific gases.^{264–267} Traditional inorganic porous membranes

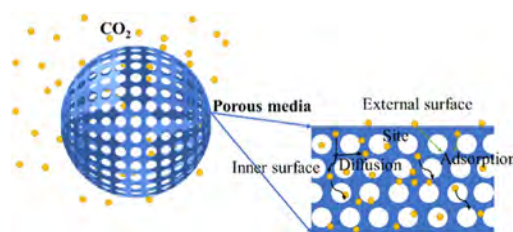


Fig. 5 Mass transfer and adsorption process of CO₂ molecules in porous media adsorbent.

mainly include ceramics,²⁶⁸ zeolites,^{269,270} carbon,^{266,271} metal-organic framework materials (MOFs),^{272,273} metal oxides^{274,275} or metal inorganic membranes,^{276,277} etc.

There is a regular pore structure inside the inorganic porous membrane, so it has a large specific surface area and forms a continuous gas transfer channel within the membrane. Inorganic membranes have acid, alkali, high temperature resistance and chemical stability that are unmatched by organic polymer membranes, ensuring their use under extreme working condition.^{46,278} Although inorganic porous membranes have the advantages of high gas permeation flux and high gas separation selectivity,^{279,280} However, its poor mechanical properties, technical problems with scale-up production, and its high cost have hindered the industrial production of inorganic porous membranes.^{281,282}

The mechanism of gas permeation membranes can be roughly divided into several categories based on the differences in properties of the membrane materials. For inorganic membranes, the main mechanisms of micropore diffusion include Knudsen diffusion,^{213,283} surface diffusion,^{284,285} molecular sieving^{286,287} and capillary condensation.^{288,289} Knudsen diffusion dominates when the pore size is very small, and gas molecules mainly collide with the pore walls (Fig. 6a). Surface diffusion is the movement of molecules adsorbed on the pore wall along the surface, which is affected by the interaction between the molecules and the surface (Fig. 6b). Molecular sieving performs selective adsorption based on molecular size or shape (Fig. 6c), while capillary condensation is the condensation of gas in micropores under lower pressure due to capillary action to form a liquid phase (Fig. 6d). These mechanisms jointly determine the diffusion behavior of gas molecules in microporous materials.

For dense polymer membranes, the membrane surface is dense. Unlike porous membranes, there is no wide pore structure. Instead, the separation effect is achieved by relying on the gaps formed by the connection between polymer molecular chains and the difference in mass transfer rate of raw gas molecules in the membrane.^{277,290,291} Therefore, the factors limiting the mass transfer rate are mainly the affinity of the molecular chain to the gas and its internal microporous structure. In contrast, the permeation mechanism of organic polymer membranes is usually a dissolution-diffusion mechanism^{292,293} or a double adsorption model.^{294,295}

The establishment of the dissolution-diffusion model is based on the mass transfer diffusion theory. The movement

direction of gas molecules in the transmission process is random, but when there is a certain concentration gradient in the medium, the molecules show a macroscopic movement from the high concentration area to the low concentration area. This phenomenon is Fick's law of diffusion.²⁹⁶ The dissolution-diffusion mechanism can be divided into three main processes:^{220,224,297} (1) the raw gas to be tested passes from the feed side to the membrane surface, where it slowly dissolves and exerts a certain pressure on it. (2) The concentration pressure difference acts as a driving force, causing the gas to diffuse from the high concentration upstream to the low concentration downstream inside the membrane. (3) When the gas diffuses to the other surface of the membrane, the gas begins to desorb. The test gas molecules have different solubility and diffusivity during the process of transferring from the high concentration upstream to the low concentration downstream, thus forming different permeation fluxes.

The dual adsorption migration mechanism divides the transport of molecules in organic polymer membranes into two different adsorption types. One is that the gas molecules dissolve in the homogeneous structural region of the polymer,²⁹⁸⁻³⁰⁰ and the other is that the gas molecules adsorb in the microcavities of the polymer membrane.^{301,302} The two adsorption modes are based on Herry's law and Langmuir's law, respectively. The total adsorption of gas molecules is the sum of Herry dissolved C_D and Langmuir adsorbed C_H , as shown in the following formula:³⁰³

$$C = C_D + C_H = k_D p + \frac{C_H b p}{1 + b p} \quad (21)$$

where C_D is the Herry solubility concentration; C_H is the Langmuir adsorption concentration; k_D is the Henry coefficient; p is the gas permeation pressure; b is the Langmuir affinity parameter.

Evaluating the diffusion regulation of CO₂ at low concentrations in the solid phase has significant practical implications overall. Enhancement of industrial gas separation efficiency, optimization of gas separation and purification technology, and advancement of carbon capture and storage technology are all dependent on it. Optimizing the material performance of catalytic processes and energy storage (such as batteries and supercapacitors) also depends heavily on the investigation of these principles. In the SCR denitrification process, the diffusion behavior of CO₂ may affect the transmission efficiency of reactants and products on the catalyst surface.^{304,305} Based on the diffusion law of LCC, it can help design more effective catalysts, optimize reaction conditions, improve the conversion efficiency of NO_x, and thus reduce pollution emissions.^{306,307}

In reactions such as synthesis gas preparation and carbon dioxide hydrogenation, the diffusion characteristics of CO₂ directly affect the selection and optimization of catalysts.³⁰⁸⁻³¹⁰ The diffusion law of LCC can help researchers design catalysts with optimized pore size and surface properties to enhance CO₂ adsorption and reaction rate.^{311,312}

In lithium-ion batteries, the performance of electrode materials is closely related to the diffusion of CO₂.³¹³⁻³¹⁵ CO₂ may

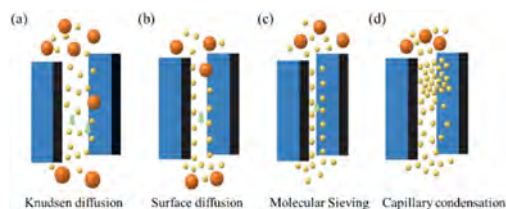


Fig. 6 Transfer mechanism of porous membranes: (a) Knudsen diffusion; (b) surface diffusion; (c) molecular sieving; (d) capillary condensation.

form in graphite electrodes, and controlling its diffusion behavior can help prevent the degradation of electrode materials and extend battery life.^{316–318} In supercapacitors, the microporous structure of electrode materials has a significant impact on gas diffusion. The diffusion rules of LCC in these materials can help optimize electrode design and improve capacitance and cycle stability.^{319–321} In solid-state batteries, CO₂ may diffuse through the solid electrolyte. Exploration through their diffusion mechanisms can help develop more stable and efficient electrolyte materials, preventing gas-induced material degradation and performance loss.^{322,323}

Some hydrogen storage materials may release CO₂ during storage or desorption. Carbon-based materials such as activated carbon and carbon nanotubes may adsorb CO₂ from the air while adsorbing hydrogen, and may also release CO₂ when releasing hydrogen.^{324–326} MOFs may undergo hydrolysis during hydrogen storage, especially in the presence of water, resulting in decomposition of organic ligands and the production of CO₂.^{327–329} Chemical hydrogen storage materials such as sodium borohydride (NaBH₄) may release byproducts such as sodium carbonate when reacting with water to produce hydrogen, which may decompose to produce CO₂ under certain conditions.^{330,331} Formate compounds such as sodium formate also release CO₂ when catalytically decomposed to produce hydrogen.^{332–334} Complex hydrides such as LiBH₄ and Mg(BH₄)₂ may react with CO₂ in the environment during hydrogen storage and desorption to produce carbonates and release some CO₂.^{335–337} These phenomena are of great significance for material design, optimization of hydrogen storage efficiency and service life.

A variety of characterization and testing methods have been developed for the pore structure of CO₂ in porous media and the diffusion process therein.^{338,339} These methods have different scopes of application, spatiotemporal resolution, and

revelation of diffusion mechanisms, as shown in Table 2. Early porous media diffusion characterization methods mainly calculated the diffusion coefficient by measuring the rate of gas adsorption or desorption by porous media particles, usually under the condition of controlling the initial value and change rate of gas partial pressure.^{340,341} This method is suitable for systems with slow adsorption and desorption rates and has high reliability. However, when the CO₂ adsorption and desorption rates are fast, the measurement results are easily affected by the external mass transfer rate and cannot accurately reflect the true situation of the diffusion process. With the deepening of research, new methods such as the zero-length column method have been proposed and widely used.^{342,343} The zero-length column method can obtain key parameters such as the limiting diffusion rate, Henry constant, and surface resistance in one experiment by adjusting the CO₂ gas flow rate. Its advantage is that it can quickly obtain the mass transfer characteristics of porous media, especially suitable for large-scale screening of the diffusion properties of different materials. However, this method still conducts experiments at a macroscopic scale, and the overall diffusion coefficient of the gas in the porous medium particles is obtained, which cannot deeply study the local non-uniform pore structure or microscopic diffusion mechanism.^{99,344}

To solve this problem, microscopic imaging techniques such as interference microscopy (IFM) and infrared microscopy (IRM) have been applied. These methods have become powerful tools for capturing the evolution of gas concentration during transient adsorption and desorption of porous media due to their high temporal and spatial resolution. IRM measures gas concentration by analyzing the infrared absorption spectrum at a specific position, with a spatial resolution of usually 5–10 μm and a minimum of 2.7 μm.^{347,348} IFM determines gas concentration by the interference image of light transmitted through

Table 2 Comparison of the application scope, principle and technical characteristics of different gas–solid diffusion characterization methods

Experimental methods	Scope of application	Principle	Technical features	Ref.
Frequency response method	Macro method	Impose disturbances on the diffusion system and characterize the diffusion by collecting response signals	Can simultaneously measure multiple kinetic processes in diffusion	338 and 339
Chromatography method		Let the fluid flow through the chromatographic column containing the sample and characterize the diffusion by the change in the chromatographic signal	Applicable to diffusion tests of complex fluid components	340 and 341
Zero length column method		Characterize the diffusion by the adsorption/desorption process of the gas in the sample	Applicable to tests of diffusion within sample lattices	342 and 343
Diffusion cell method		Characterize the diffusion by measuring the change in concentration on both sides of the membrane	Applicable to tests of membrane diffusion	99 and 344
IFM	> 0.5 μm	Characterize the structure and diffusion by the interference pattern generated by the coherent light beam in the sample	Track transient concentration change curves and lattice changes	345 and 346
IRM	> 2.7 μm	Illuminate the sample with infrared light and characterize the diffusion by the spectral information	Simultaneously measure self-diffusion coefficients and transport diffusion coefficients	347 and 348
PFG-NMR	100 nm–100 μm	Characterize the diffusion by the attenuation of the echo amplitude of the atom within the pulse time interval	Determine the diffusion coefficients of molecules in confined spaces	349 and 350
QENS	> 10 nm	Characterize the diffusion by the small change in neutron energy before and after scattering	Measure molecular displacements in shorter times and smaller spaces	351 and 352

the porous medium lattice and non-transmitted light, with a spatial resolution of up to 0.5 μm .^{345,346} The combined use of IRM and IFM can directly observe the gas diffusion process at the micrometer scale, which is particularly suitable for studying the diffusion behavior of gas in molecular sieves or metal organic frameworks. However, the high cost of these technologies and the complexity of the equipment limit their popularity. At the nanoscale, pulsed gradient field nuclear magnetic resonance (PGF-NMR) technology has also been widely used.^{349,350} This technology can track the self-diffusion coefficient of gas molecules in porous media through the attenuation of spin echo signals, and can track the smallest molecular displacement (as low as 100 nm). Quasi-elastic neutron scattering (QENS) technology has a high sensitivity to molecular nanoscale displacement and can accurately measure the diffusion coefficient in nanopores, which is particularly suitable for gas transport research in nanopores.^{351,352} However, the experimental conditions of these technologies are harsh, high-end equipment is required, and sample preparation and data analysis are relatively complicated.

Compared with the diffusion test method in the solid phase, the diffusion study of CO_2 in the liquid phase focuses on the gas dissolution and diffusion process.^{109,353} The diffusion coefficient in the liquid phase often depends on the properties of the liquid (such as viscosity, temperature, solubility, *etc.*) and the pore structure of the liquid.^{137,354} The test methods for liquid phase diffusion include dew point method, dynamic light scattering (DLS) and conductivity method. The dew point method calculates the diffusion coefficient by measuring the concentration change of CO_2 dissolved in the liquid.³⁵⁵ It is easy to operate, but it is only applicable to the study of low-concentration CO_2 , and cannot directly obtain the microscopic distribution information of the diffusion coefficient.³⁵⁶ DLS technology calculates the diffusion coefficient of CO_2 by analyzing the diffusion rate of particles in the liquid.¹⁴⁴ It can provide a higher spatiotemporal resolution, but the measurement of high-concentration CO_2 solutions may be interfered.³⁵⁷ The conductivity method uses the change of liquid conductivity to measure the dissolution process of CO_2 . It has the advantages of simplicity and low cost.³⁵⁸ It is suitable for large-scale monitoring of CO_2 dissolution behavior, but the change of conductivity is more complicated and may be affected by other ions or dissolved substances in the solution.³⁵⁹

In the solid phase and liquid phase, the diffusion test methods of CO_2 have their own advantages and disadvantages. Methods in the solid phase, such as the zero-length column method and PGF-NMR technology, can analyze the diffusion behavior of gases in porous media at the macro and micro scales, but often cannot go deep into the details of the local pore structure.^{149,360} Liquid phase methods, such as the dew point method and DLS, focus on the dissolution and diffusion processes, and can provide more direct dissolution rate and diffusion coefficient data, but are greatly affected by the properties of the liquid and cannot fully reveal the subtle diffusion process of gas molecules in the liquid phase.^{100,361} The selection of an appropriate test method needs to be determined based on the

research objectives, experimental environment, and the required spatiotemporal resolution. Usually in practical applications, a combination of different methods can provide more comprehensive diffusion characteristics information.

2.2 Adsorption characteristics

There are significant differences in the adsorption characteristics of LCC and high-concentration CO_2 . The adsorption of LCC is usually dominated by weak interactions on the material surface, and the adsorption process is relatively mild.^{41,42} This process generally relies on physical adsorption mechanisms such as van der Waals forces. In this case, the adsorption capacity and rate of CO_2 are low, but the requirements on the pore structure and surface properties of the material are relatively loose.^{362,363} In contrast, the adsorption of high-concentration CO_2 may involve stronger chemical interactions or more complex adsorption mechanisms, such as chemical adsorption or multi-layer adsorption. At high concentrations, the adsorption capacity of CO_2 is usually larger because the concentration gradient is significant and saturation may occur on the material surface, resulting in accelerated adsorption rates and possibly stronger surface interactions.^{218,259}

2.2.1 Adsorption isotherm. The adsorption isotherm describes the relationship between the amount of adsorbate (such as CO_2) adsorbed on the adsorbent surface and the equilibrium gas phase concentration under constant temperature conditions.^{364–366} Researchers have widely used classic isotherm models such as Langmuir, Freundlich and Temkin to describe the adsorption characteristics of LCC (Table 3). These models help determine the adsorption capacity, adsorption energy and adsorption uniformity of CO_2 on the material surface. Among them, the Langmuir model is suitable for describing monolayer adsorption, indicating that CO_2 molecules form a monolayer adsorption on the material surface, which is suitable for descriptions under medium and low concentration conditions.^{367–369} The Freundlich model is suitable for describing multilayer adsorption and heterogeneous surfaces, and is suitable for adsorption behavior under low concentration conditions.^{370,371} The Temkin model takes into account the change in surface energy and is suitable for describing adsorption behavior under medium concentrations.^{372,373}

The porosity and pore size of the material have a significant impact on the adsorption isotherm of LCC.^{379,380} Materials with large pore sizes usually have higher adsorption capacity but exhibit slower adsorption rates at low concentrations. Wang *et al.*³⁸¹ found porous carbons with a bimodal pore size distribution of well-separated mesopores (3–7 nm) and micropores (<2 nm) to be most promising. The functional groups and chemical activity on the material surface significantly affect the shape of the adsorption isotherm and the adsorption capacity. Materials with higher surface affinity generally exhibit higher initial adsorption rates at low concentrations of CO_2 . In the study of amine functionalized inorganic materials, focus is placed on the selection of organic amine species and the characteristics of inorganic carriers. According to the type and synthesis method of organic amines, this type of materials is roughly divided into three categories, as shown in Fig. 7.

Table 3 Common linear and nonlinear isotherm models applicable to low CO₂ concentrations

Isothermal model	Linear	Nonlinear	CO ₂ concentration range	Ref.
Langmuir	$\frac{C_e}{q_e} = Q_0 - \frac{q_e}{bC_e}$ $q_e = Q_0 - \frac{q_e}{bC_e}$ $\frac{1}{q_e} = \frac{1}{Q_0} + \frac{1}{bQ_0C_e}$ $\frac{q_e}{C_e} = bQ_0 - bq_e$	$q_e = \frac{bQ_0C_e}{1 + bC_e}$	0–1000 ppm	374
Henry	$q_e = K_{HE}C_e$	—	0–100 ppm	375
Freundlich	$\log q_e = \log K_F + \frac{1}{n} \log C_e$	$q_e = K_F C_e^{\frac{1}{n}}$	100 ppm to several thousand ppm	376
Temkin	$q_e = \frac{RT}{b_T} \ln A_T + \frac{RT}{b_T} \ln C_e$	$q_e = \frac{RT}{b_T} \ln A_T C_e$	100 ppm to several thousand ppm	377
Toth	$\ln \left(\frac{q_e}{K_T} \right) = \ln C_e - \frac{1}{t} \ln(a_T + C_e)$	$q_e = \frac{K_T C_e}{(a_T + C_e)^{\frac{1}{t}}}$	0 to several thousand ppm	378

Studies have shown that primary amines have higher heat of adsorption than secondary and tertiary amines, and therefore exhibit higher CO₂ capture efficiency. Further research revealed that this phenomenon is mainly driven by entropy effects.

Temperature has a significant effect on the adsorption isotherm of LCC.^{382,383} In general, higher temperatures reduce the adsorption capacity of CO₂. High temperatures increase the kinetic energy of CO₂ molecules and reduce their residence time on the surface of the material. At low concentrations, pressure has little effect on the adsorption isotherm. However, as pressure increases, the adsorption capacity of CO₂ gradually increases, which is reflected in the nonlinear change of the isotherm.^{384,385}

2.2.2 Adsorption kinetics. Adsorption kinetics describes the changes in the adsorption process over time, and mainly studies the mass transfer process of the adsorbate from the gas phase or liquid phase to the surface of the solid phase adsorbent.^{386–388} Pseudo-first-order, pseudo-second-order, and intraparticle diffusion models are examples of frequently used kinetic models. The adsorption rate, mechanism, and influencing variables are the primary components of the LCC adsorption kinetics. The adsorption of LCC is usually carried out through physical adsorption mechanisms, such as van der Waals force and hydrogen bonding, and the adsorption rate is slow.^{389,390} Kinetic models such as pseudo-first-order and pseudo-second-order models are widely used to describe the adsorption process of CO₂ on solid materials.^{42,391} Surface diffusion dominates the diffusion behavior of CO₂ under low concentration conditions because the coverage of CO₂ on the material surface is low. The increase in temperature affects the molecular motion energy of CO₂, thereby changing the adsorption rate. The pore structure and surface chemical properties of the material also have an important influence on the adsorption kinetics.^{218,258,392,393}

When the adsorption rate of gas molecules on the inner surface or site of the adsorbent is fast, the internal and external diffusion steps of the molecules are the rate-controlling steps in the adsorption process. The adsorption rate under diffusion

control can be described by the pseudo-first-order adsorption kinetic equation:^{394,395}

$$\frac{dq_t}{dt} = k_1(q_e - q_t) \quad (22)$$

where t is time; q_t is the adsorption amount per unit mass of adsorbent; q_e is the adsorption amount per unit mass of adsorbent at equilibrium; k_1 is the pseudo-first-order rate constant.

For the diffusion-controlled adsorption process, the adsorption rate can be increased and the adsorbent performance can be improved by strengthening the transmission of gas molecules in the adsorbent. Cao *et al.*³⁹⁶ prepared CHA molecular sieves with a multi-level pore structure by combining the template method with the directional induced crystallization method. The rich pore structure improves the diffusion rate of CO₂ molecules in the molecular sieve, improves the adsorption and separation efficiency of CO₂, and reduces the regeneration energy consumption. Chen *et al.*³⁹⁷ prepared carbon materials with multi-level pores for CO₂ adsorption. It was found that the introduction of macropores and mesopores ensures the rapid diffusion of CO₂ in the material, so that the adsorption rate of CO₂ reaches 0.5 mmol g⁻¹ min⁻¹. Liu *et al.*³⁹⁸ synthesized nitrogen-doped multi-level porous carbon materials by a one-step method. It was found that the presence of mesopores can enhance diffusion and improve the accessibility of the inner surface of the material, so that the CO₂ adsorption capacity of the material reached 5.56 mmol g⁻¹, which is better than the same type of non-multi-level porous adsorbents.

When there are many adsorption sites on the surface of porous media, gas molecules are mainly adsorbed by chemical adsorption. The reaction between molecules and sites may become the rate-determining step of the adsorption process. In this case, a pseudo-second-order adsorption kinetic equation is needed to describe the adsorption rate under reaction control.^{399,400}

$$\frac{dq_t}{dt} = k_2(q_e - q_t)^2 \quad (23)$$

where k_2 is the pseudo-second-order rate constant.

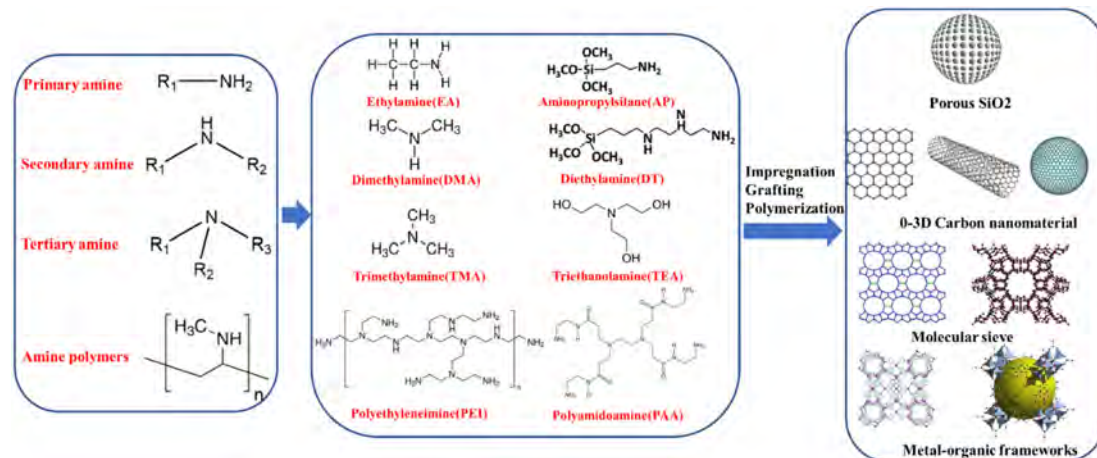


Fig. 7 Common amine-functionalized inorganic materials and their synthesis methods.

By introducing sites into the adsorbent material, the selectivity and adsorption capacity of the adsorbent material can be effectively improved. For example, amino-functionalized materials have become one of the research focuses of CO₂ adsorbent materials. Ma *et al.*⁴⁰¹ introduced PEI modification into the mesoporous molecular sieve and achieved an adsorption capacity of 140 mg CO₂ per g at a CO₂ partial pressure of 15 kPa. Martinez *et al.*⁴⁰² introduced TEPA modification into the ZIF-8 adsorbent material, so that its CO₂ adsorption capacity in the post-combustion water-containing flue gas reached 104 mg CO₂ per g. Lin *et al.*⁴⁰³ prepared a 50%-PEI-modified SBA-15 adsorbent, which achieved large-capacity and rapid adsorption of CO₂, with an adsorption capacity of 182.1 mg CO₂ per g and an adsorption rate peak of 350 mg g⁻¹ min⁻¹ (Fig. 8a and b). Although the diffusion process is not the key step in determining the adsorption rate in the above materials, it still has an important influence on the adsorption performance of the material. Wu *et al.*⁴⁰⁴ studied the mass transfer and adsorption process of CO₂ in amino-modified carbon materials. It was found that after the introduction of amino groups, a thin layer of about 23.7 nm was formed on the micropores and mesopores of the material, which reduced the specific surface area from 223 m² g⁻¹ to 21 m² g⁻¹. The diffusion of CO₂ was also reduced due to the reduction in pore size. In addition, the capillary condensation of H₂O in the micropores increased the mass

transfer resistance of CO₂. Goeppert *et al.*⁴⁰⁵ found that under a relative humidity of 67%, a 33% PEI loading increased the CO₂ adsorption capacity of mesoporous silica by 50%. However, when the PEI loading was increased to 50%, the CO₂ adsorption capacity decreased due to the condensation of H₂O and pore blockage.

Although the capacity and selectivity of porous media adsorption materials can be improved by introducing adsorption sites, the loading amount and loading method of the sites need to be reasonably selected. Otherwise, it will cause clogging of the pore channels, hinder gas diffusion, and significantly reduce the adsorption efficiency.^{406–408}

Compared with LCC, the adsorption kinetics of high-concentration CO₂ show significant differences. The adsorption process of high-concentration CO₂ involves more chemical adsorption and multi-layer adsorption mechanisms, the adsorption rate is usually faster, and saturation may occur on the material surface.^{409,410} Pseudo-first-order and pseudo-second-order kinetic models may no longer be applicable under high concentration conditions, and more nonlinear models are needed to describe the complex adsorption process.^{411–413} Temperature and pressure have a greater effect on the adsorption rate at high CO₂ concentrations. The rate and adsorption capacity of CO₂ will both be greatly increased by an increase in pressure.

The difference in adsorption kinetics between low and high concentrations of CO₂ is critical for optimizing gas separation, purification technology and CCS technology. The adsorption mechanism of LCC helps to improve the efficiency of low-concentration gas treatment,^{92,389,414,415} while the adsorption mechanism of high-concentration CO₂ is of great significance in improving the efficiency of carbon capture, storage stability, and catalytic reaction processes.^{387,416–418}

2.2.3 LCC adsorption. Current carbon capture technologies cover a variety of methods, each with its own unique advantages and limitations, as shown in Fig. 9. Chemical absorption (such as amines) is widely used in the industrial field due to its high adsorption performance and technical maturity.^{418,419} However,

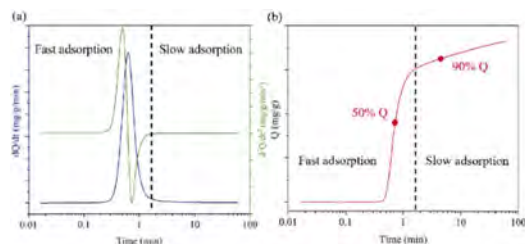


Fig. 8 (a) First-order (blue line) and second-order derivative (green line) curves and adsorption curve (b) of 50%-PEI-modified SBA-15 adsorbent (adapted with permission from ref. 403. Copyright 2023 Elsevier).

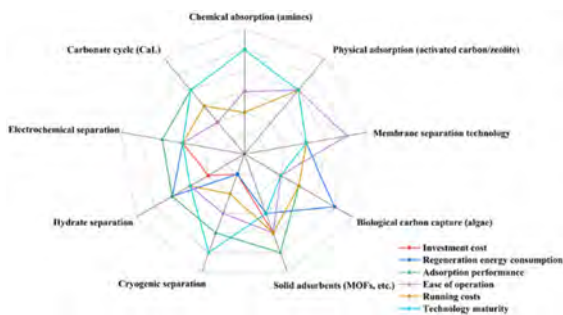


Fig. 9 Key indicator evaluation of carbon capture technology.

its regeneration energy consumption and operating costs are high. Physical adsorption (activated carbon, zeolite) and solid adsorbents (such as MOFs) are relatively superior in investment cost and energy consumption, and are suitable for the capture of medium and low concentrations of CO_2 .^{259,420,421} Membrane separation technology has attracted much attention due to its ease of operation and flexibility, but the separation efficiency and economy still need to be optimized.^{46,291} Hydrate separation has certain advantages in energy consumption, but its high pressure and low temperature conditions limit its industrial application.^{422,423} Electrochemical separation technology has shown good potential in LCC capture, but its current maturity needs to be improved.^{424,425} Cryogenic separation technology is suitable for the separation of high-concentration CO_2 , but its high energy consumption limits its scope of application.^{36,426} Carbonate cycle (CaL) has outstanding performance in carbon capture capacity and long-term stability, but its operation complexity is relatively high.⁴²⁷ In general, different technologies need to be selected in combination with application scenarios, and continuous improvement is needed to improve economic efficiency and feasibility, so as to achieve widespread promotion and application.

The adsorption technique makes advantage of a solid surface's ability to adsorb liquid or gas molecules. In carbon capture, high-concentration CO_2 is produced by desorption after directed CO_2 adsorption is achieved using porous solid adsorbents. It may be separated into pressure swing, electric swing, and temperature swing adsorption based on the variations in the adsorption process.^{36–38} Commonly used adsorbents include carbon-based materials (activated carbon, activated carbon fiber, carbon nanotubes, *etc.*),^{428,429} alkali metal-based materials^{430,431} and solid amine materials.^{432,433}

For LCC, it is necessary to improve the selectivity of the adsorbent to achieve directional adsorption of CO_2 in mixed gases.^{419,434,435} In addition to selectivity, adsorption capacity, adsorption rate, desorption rate and regeneration performance are all important indicators for evaluating the quality of adsorbents.^{21,406,436,437} Physical adsorbents have the advantages of fast adsorption and desorption rates, large adsorption capacity, and good recycling performance in capturing LCC, and are therefore considered a research hotspot.^{92,259,408,438}

The above carbon capture methods have different scopes of application according to their own characteristics. For

high-concentration CO_2 , separation and purification are relatively easy.^{87–89} However, for LCC, it is necessary to comprehensively consider factors such as gas composition, CO_2 concentration, operating conditions, operating costs, and material and energy consumption to determine the optimal carbon capture method.^{26,31,46,47} Among them, the adsorption method is widely considered to be one of the most suitable technologies for LCC capture due to its advantages such as simple equipment, high degree of automation, many types of adsorbents, long service life and easy regeneration, no by-products, and low operating costs.^{31,90,439}

2.2.3.1 Common adsorbents based on LCC. Chemical and physical adsorption are the two categories of adsorption techniques. Compared to chemical adsorption, physical adsorption is easier to implement. The adsorbent is extensively utilized, has a low energy consumption, and performs well in regeneration.^{440–442} However, for the adsorption method, the core is the selection of adsorbents. High-efficiency and high-quality adsorbents need to have the advantages of large gas adsorption capacity, good selectivity, fast adsorption and desorption rate, and low preparation and regeneration cost.^{443,444} The research and development of adsorbents has always been the focus of CO_2 capture using the adsorption method. At the moment, graphene, carbon nanotubes, zeolite molecular sieves, activated carbon, and activated carbon fibers are the most widely utilized adsorbents (Table 4).

Zeolites usually have a high specific surface area and pore volume, can provide a large number of adsorption sites, and have a certain selectivity for CO_2 .^{445–447} However, compared with MOFs and carbon-based materials, their selectivity is lower. Zeolites usually have good thermal stability and mechanical strength and are easy to regenerate.^{448–450} Zeolites, as natural minerals or synthetic materials, have certain advantages in cost and preparability. X-type, A-type, Y-type, ZSM-type and some natural molecular sieves all have good CO_2 adsorption performance.^{451,452} Harlick⁴⁵³ studied the removal performance of 13 different types of zeolite molecular sieves for CO_2 in flue gas. The results showed that the low silicon–aluminum ratio of 13X molecular sieves led to its strong alkalinity, which enhanced the interaction with CO_2 and thus had the best adsorption performance. Another commonly used A (LTA) type molecular sieve in industry, such as 4A molecular sieve and 5A molecular sieve, has a larger cavity and a narrower pore. Because it contains a large amount of balanced charge, the pore size can be regulated by exchanging it with ions of larger radius. For example, the opening of NaA molecular sieve can be adjusted from 0.2 nm to 0.5 nm by using Ca^{2+} exchange. A study reported⁴⁵⁴ that NaKA molecular sieve after K^+ exchange can obtain an adsorption amount of 1.0 mmol g^{-1} and a selectivity of nearly 1000 under the condition of about 400 mg per l CO_2 . The adsorbed carbon dioxide presents two states: linear and curved. The curved one is carbonate, which is believed to be formed by the interaction between oxidizing ions next to the surface K^+ site and carbon dioxide (Fig. 10).

Currently, research on zeolite molecular sieves for CO_2 adsorption focuses on modifying them by adjusting the

Table 4 Comparison of properties of common adsorbents

Adsorbent types	Performance characteristics	Advantages	Limitations
Activated carbon	High specific surface area (500–2000 m ² g ⁻¹), good thermal stability and mechanical properties	Low cost, adjustable pore structure, easy regeneration	Weak adsorption of polar water molecules, easily affected by moisture
Carbon nanomaterials	High conductivity, large specific surface area, good thermal stability	High conductivity suitable for electrochemical applications, can be combined with a variety of functional materials to improve adsorption performance	Expensive, low adsorption selectivity, high requirements for preparation and modification technology
Zeolite molecular sieves	High specific surface area (600–1200 m ² g ⁻¹), regular pore structure, strong polarity, good thermal stability	High selectivity for polar gases (such as CO ₂ , H ₂ O), good cycle stability	Low adsorption capacity for non-polar molecules, harsh synthesis conditions, some zeolites may be sensitive to water
Metal organic frameworks (MOFs)	Ultra-high specific surface area (1000–7000 m ² g ⁻¹), adjustable pore size and surface chemical properties	High selectivity, high specific surface area, strong design flexibility	Poor water and chemical stability, high synthesis cost, some materials are easily degraded at high temperature or in acidic environment
Covalent organic frameworks (COFs)	Ordered pore structure, high chemical stability, flexible functional design	High chemical stability, adjustable pore size and chemical properties, suitable for selective adsorption of specific target molecules	Complex synthesis process, low yield, some materials have weak mechanical properties
Polymer adsorbents	Usually hydrophobic or hydrophilic, molecular recognition can be achieved through functionalization	Low cost, flexible functional design, suitable for selective separation of specific molecules	Poor thermal stability and mechanical properties, adsorption capacity is usually lower than inorganic adsorbents
Silica gel	Medium specific surface area (300–800 m ² g ⁻¹), strong hydrophilicity, high thermal stability	Low cost, suitable for adsorption of water vapor and polar molecules	Easy to emit adsorption saturation under high temperature conditions, limited adsorption capacity
Alumina	Medium specific surface area (200–400 m ² g ⁻¹), high thermal stability	Low cost, suitable for adsorption of acidic gases (such as H ₂ S, CO ₂)	Specific surface area and adsorption capacity are lower than activated carbon and MOFs
Biomass-based adsorbents	Renewable, environmentally friendly, high specific surface area and porous structure	Low cost, high sustainability, easy functionalization	Low mechanical strength, thermal stability and regeneration ability are usually insufficient
Ion exchange resins	Based on ion exchange mechanism, selective adsorption of specific ions	Good regeneration, high selectivity for ionic pollutants (such as heavy metals)	Usually only effective for specific molecules, limited adsorption range, poor mechanical properties

silicon–aluminum ratio and exchanging cations in the molecular sieve structure.^{382,455,456} However, zeolite molecular sieves are particularly sensitive to water vapor (strong water absorption and low selectivity). They are only suitable for carbon capture under anhydrous conditions, which limits their application areas.^{457,458} In addition, zeolite molecular sieves have poor regeneration performance after adsorbing CO₂, high production costs and high energy consumption. Based on this, enhancing water resistance, broadening application areas and optimizing regeneration performance are the future development directions of zeolite molecular sieve adsorbents for carbon capture.^{459,460}

MOFs are a type of crystalline porous coordination polymer formed by the self-assembly of metal ions or metal clusters and organic ligands. Their specific surface area can reach 1×10^3 – 1×10^4 m² g⁻¹ and their adsorption capacity is strong.^{420,461,462} The pore structure of MOFs is flexible in design, with adjustable pore size and pore capacity, so the adsorption capacity is usually high. Due to their adjustable pore structure and chemical functional groups, MOFs can achieve highly selective adsorption of CO₂.^{463–465} The regeneration of MOFs depends on the stability of their structure and their stability to heat/humid environments. Millward *et al.*⁴⁶⁶ studied the adsorption performance of 9 MOFs on CO₂. The results showed that the adsorption capacity of most MOFs materials for CO₂ is better than that of commonly used activated carbon and zeolite molecular sieves. Furukawa *et al.*⁴⁶⁷ prepared

MOF-210 materials with ultra-high porosity, and their CO₂ adsorption capacity can reach 54.5 mmol g⁻¹. MOF-177 has a CO₂ adsorption capacity of 1470 mg g⁻¹, which is twice that of 13X zeolite.⁴⁶⁸ However, most studies have shown that MOF only exhibits high CO₂ adsorption capacity under high pressure conditions.^{469,470} In addition, it has defects such as high production cost and poor chemical and hydrothermal stability.^{471,472} The technology for industrial application is not yet mature. The adsorption performance can be further improved by loading functional groups, doping metal ions, *etc.*^{402,473,474}

Carbon-based materials have rich pore structures and high surface areas, so they can also provide higher adsorption capacity.^{475,476} Carbon-based materials usually have good chemical stability and selectivity, and can be designed as highly selective CO₂ adsorbents.⁴⁷⁷ Carbon-based materials usually have good heat resistance and chemical stability and are easy to regenerate. Carbon-based materials are usually widely available, with relatively simple preparation processes and low costs.^{478–480} As traditional adsorbents, carbon materials also have great development potential in CO₂ capture. For lower CO₂ concentrations, Coromina *et al.*⁴⁸¹ prepared activated carbon with high micropore content (84% of the pore volume comes from 5–7 Å) using giant fungus grass and camellia as raw materials, and the adsorption capacity can reach 1.5 mmol g⁻¹ at 298 K and 0.15 bar. In addition, relevant theoretical studies have shown that fulleric carbon also has good prospects for CO₂ capture.^{482,483} However, it should be noted that a

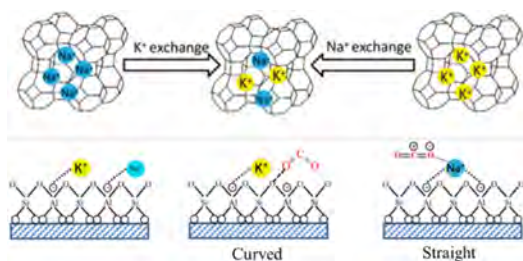


Fig. 10 Surface CO₂ adsorption form of NaKA molecular sieve after K⁺ exchange (reproduced with permission from ref. 454. Copyright 1963 American Chemical Society).

considerable part of the current research on carbon material adsorption is focused on CO₂ capture at 1 bar pressure, while at low concentrations, it is mainly aimed at flue gas-like CO₂ conditions of 0.1–0.15 bar. There is a lack of systematic research on direct air capture (DAC) at lower concentrations, and some carbon materials have poor thermal stability.^{484,485} Therefore, for the adsorption of lower concentrations of CO₂, in order to avoid the problem of low selectivity for CO₂ due to the non-polarity of carbon materials, it is a promising research direction to combine carbon materials with porous materials such as zeolites^{486–488} and MOFs.^{489–491}

Zeolites, MOFs and carbon-based materials each have their own advantages. The selection of a suitable adsorbent depends on the specific application requirements. When selecting an adsorbent, it is necessary to comprehensively consider factors such as its adsorption capacity, selectivity, regeneration, cost and preparability, and make a reasonable selection based on the actual situation.^{47,492} The performance of the adsorbent can be further optimized to improve its adsorption efficiency and selectivity for LCC.

2.2.3.2 Selective adsorption of LCC. Selective adsorption of LCC refers to the adsorption priority of the adsorbent for CO₂ in a mixed gas with multiple gas components.^{92,493,494} Selective adsorption is crucial in the process of CO₂ capture and separation. Because it can achieve high-efficiency CO₂ separation, reduce capture costs, and reduce energy consumption.^{495,496}

Zeolites generally have pore sizes and surface chemistry that make their adsorption selectivity for CO₂ relatively low.

The actual mechanism of CO₂ selective adsorption by medium-pore zeolites can change from cation-gated to cooperative cation-gated respiration to respiration, depending on the combination of their topological and compositional flexibility.⁴⁹⁶ Decasilicon 3 R (DD3R) zeolites' flexibility was tuned *via* a template-regulated crystal transformation (TMCT) method by Du *et al.*,⁴⁹⁷ who created superselective membranes with CO₂/CH₄ selectivities ranging from 157 to 1172. In addition to optimization through synthetic design of zeolites, their adsorption selectivity for CO₂ can also be enhanced through surface modification or modification. CO₂ molecules are generally highly polar and interact strongly with some adsorbents with hydrophilic or polar functional groups, resulting in highly selective adsorption. Kim *et al.*⁴⁹⁸ improved CO₂ selectivity in low-CO₂ indoor environments by producing moisture resistance using a hydrophobic covering. Hydrophobic-coated zeolites showed a 4.1-fold improvement in CO₂ gas selectivity. With the use of this enhanced synthesis technique, there are more opportunities for utilizing adsorbents to absorb carbon dioxide inside. Shen *et al.*⁴⁹⁹ found that the zeolite structure and cation distribution are related to the adsorption sites of CO₂ and H₂O, and the inhibition or co-capture of CO₂ and H₂O can be achieved by regulating the pore structure. Subsequently, they proposed a simple and efficient technology,⁵⁰⁰ which only requires 60 minutes of post-treatment to increase the adsorption capacity of commercial NaX zeolite by 11.5%. Through the synergistic effect of cold plasma and *in situ* CO₂, the co-regulation of cation distribution and pore structure is achieved (Fig. 11).

The flexibility in designing the pore structure and chemical functional groups of MOFs enables them to have good CO₂ selectivity. By adjusting the pore size and chemical structure of MOFs, highly selective adsorption of CO₂ can be achieved while excluding other gas components.^{465,501,502} Qin *et al.*⁵⁰³ prepared a new type of microporous two-dimensional cobalt-based MOF. It showed a more ideal selectivity for CO₂ adsorption than C₂H₂, CH₄, CO and N₂ at 298 K (1 bar) due to the pyridyl sites on the ligands and the open metal sites on the framework nodes. Cai *et al.*⁵⁰⁴ developed an efficient photoinduced electron transfer (PIET) strategy to achieve efficient separation of C₂H₂, which is similar to CO₂ in size, shape and physical properties. Shi *et al.*⁵⁰⁵ developed an ultramicroporous metal–organic framework

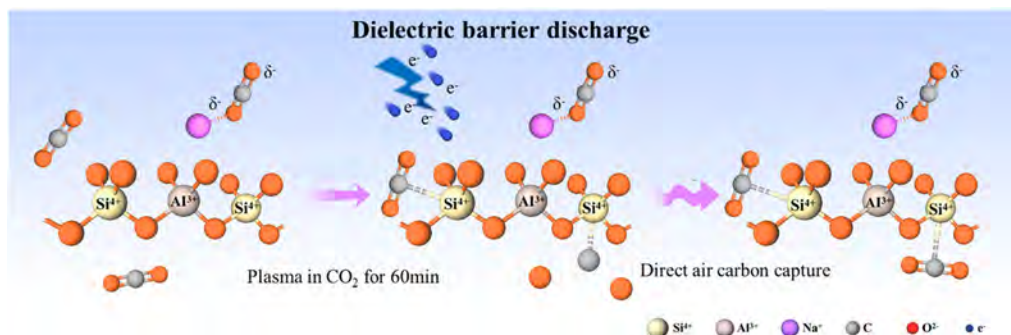


Fig. 11 Regulation of NaX based on the synergistic effect of cold plasma and *in situ* CO₂ (adapted with permission from ref. 500. Copyright 2024 John Wiley & Sons).

(Cu-F-pymo) composed of copper(II) and 5-fluoropyrimidine-2-olate and used it for the reverse separation of CO₂ from C₂H₂. Partially desolvated Cu-F-pymo can specifically capture CO₂ instead of C₂H₂. The separation ratio of over 105 is the highest value reported so far. The molecular sieving effect is attributed to the residual water molecules blocking the preferential sites of C₂H₂, thereby inhibiting the adsorption of C₂H₂.

Carbon-based materials usually have rich pore structures and surface functional groups, which can achieve selective adsorption of CO₂ by regulating pore size and surface chemical properties.^{506,507} Some specific carbon-based materials have high CO₂ adsorption selectivity, such as graphene oxide and nitrogen-doped carbon nanotubes. Jin *et al.*⁵⁰⁸ found that after Fe was inserted into rGO membrane, the increase in transmembrane pressure caused the N₂ diffusion mode to change from Maxwell-Stefan type to Knudsen type. It showed excellent and reproducible N₂/CO₂ selectivity (≈ 97) at 110 mbar, which is an unprecedented value for graphene-based membranes. Guo *et al.*⁵⁰⁹ enhanced the interaction with GO through silanol (Si-OH)-rich amorphous precursor particles, thereby forming a highly adhesive and stable SOD/GO membrane through strong bonds. It showed stable separation performance under water vapor (4 mol%) at high temperature (200 °C). The H₂ permeance was about 4900 GPU and the H₂/CO₂ selectivity was 56. The chemical functional groups on the adsorbent surface can interact specifically with CO₂ molecules, thereby achieving highly selective adsorption. Through surface modification or modification, the surface chemical properties of the adsorbent can be regulated to achieve selective adsorption of CO₂. Nitrogen and oxygen doped porous carbon have a significant impact on CO₂/N₂ selectivity due to the enhanced electrostatic interaction between the carbon surface and CO₂ molecules.⁵¹⁰ The contribution of N doping to CO₂ adsorption is often greater than the extremely high surface area value.⁵¹¹

Selective adsorption of LCC is a key link in CO₂ capture and separation technology. Adsorbents such as zeolites, MOFs and carbon-based materials achieve highly selective adsorption of CO₂ by regulating pore size, surface chemical properties and functional group design. The design and preparation of adsorbents can be further optimized to improve their selective adsorption performance to meet the needs of different CO₂ capture and separation applications.

2.3 Catalytic reaction characteristics

During the catalytic reaction, the characteristics of CO₂ molecules may change. This depends on the properties of the catalyst, the reaction conditions, and the interaction with other reactants.^{512–514} CO₂ molecules may be adsorbed on the catalyst surface, and specific sites on the catalyst can adsorb CO₂ molecules and interact with other reactants.^{515,516} The adsorption process may change the charge distribution and configuration of CO₂ molecules, affecting their activity and selectivity. Catalysts can reduce the activation energy required for CO₂ molecules to participate in the reaction, making it easier to react with other reactants.^{43–45} Through the action of catalysts, the bond energy of CO₂ molecules may change, thereby lowering the energy threshold

for CO₂ molecules to participate in the reaction. CO₂ molecules may form coordination bonds with catalysts on the catalyst surface to form CO₂-catalyst complexes. This change in coordination environment may affect the binding of CO₂ molecules with other reactants and the reaction path.^{517,518}

In some catalytic reactions, CO₂ molecules may undergo redox reactions, thereby changing their oxidation state.^{519–522} Catalysts can promote the redox reactions of CO₂ molecules, converting them into other hydrocarbons or oxides. Catalysts can adjust the selectivity of CO₂ molecules so that they react selectively with specific reactants to produce desired products.^{523,524} By adjusting the structure and composition of the catalyst, the reaction path of CO₂ molecules can be controlled.^{525–527} In summary, the characteristics of CO₂ molecules during catalytic reactions may undergo various changes, which are affected by catalysts. By adjusting the activity, selectivity and mechanism of participation of CO₂ molecules in the reaction, effective utilization and conversion of CO₂ can be achieved.

2.3.1 Mechanism of CO₂ reduction reaction. The key to CO₂ reduction reaction is that CO₂ molecules undergo chemical reactions to generate new compounds by accepting electrons and protons.^{528,529} Since CO₂ has a low solubility in water, its adsorption state on the catalyst surface determines whether CO₂ reduction reaction (CO₂RR) or hydrogen evolution reaction (HER) will occur. Generally, CO₂ adsorption can be divided into physical adsorption and chemical adsorption, the latter of which is accompanied by electron transfer.⁵³⁰ Typical surface coordination modes include: CO₂ provides electrons to the catalyst through the lone pair of electrons of oxygen atoms, carbon atoms accept electrons from the catalyst surface as electron acceptors, and oxygen and carbon act as electron donors and acceptors, respectively, to form a mixed coordination structure.⁵³¹ These adsorption modes can change the linear structure of the CO₂ molecule and bend it, thereby reducing the symmetry of the molecule and the LUMO (lowest unoccupied molecular orbital) energy level, making CO₂ more likely to accept electrons and form reactive species^{532,533} (Fig. 12).

During the CO₂ reduction process, the reaction usually involves the stepwise transfer of multiple electrons, and the types of intermediates and final products generated vary depending on the catalyst surface properties and reaction conditions.⁵³⁴ Common single-carbon products include carbon monoxide, formic acid, formaldehyde, methane, and methanol. Formic acid can be generated through various pathways, including the formation of coordinated intermediates on hydrogen-rich surfaces, or through the reaction of free radical CO₂ with external H⁺, or through conversion after forming a carbonate configuration with surface OH groups.⁵³⁵ CO can be generated by hydrogenation of COOH intermediates followed by the removal of water molecules, while formaldehyde, methanol, and methane are formed by the stepwise hydrogenation of CO* intermediates.⁵³⁶ The pathways to CH₄ are also diverse, of which two are common: one is the breaking of the C–O bond through hydrogenation of CH₃O intermediates, and the other is the stepwise hydrogenation and dehydration of CO on the surface to finally generate CH₄.^{537,538} In addition, there is a more complex pathway that generates glyoxal intermediates

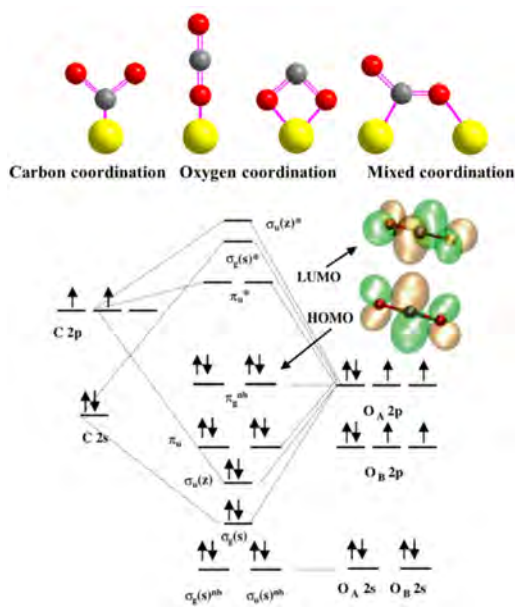


Fig. 12 Different coordination forms formed by CO₂ reduction and their LUMO energy level reduction process (reproduced with permission from ref. 533. Copyright 2022 Springer Nature).

through C–C coupling, which is then converted into CH₄ and acetaldehyde through multiple steps.⁵³⁹

For C₂₊ products, such as ethylene and ethanol, CO is considered to be a key intermediate.^{540,541} CO undergoes hydrogenation and C–C coupling on the catalyst surface to generate CHO* and COCHO*, and its subsequent reaction pathway determines the type of final product. In addition, COCHO* intermediates can also be hydrogenated to generate glyoxal, which is further converted into ethanol, ethylene glycol, or acetaldehyde.^{542,543} Another pathway is to form acetaldehyde, acetic acid, or ethylene through the formation of COCHOH* intermediates.^{544,545} Since the generation process of C₂₊ products is relatively complex and involves multiple key intermediates, understanding the formation and conversion of these intermediates is crucial for regulating product selectivity and improving reaction efficiency. By precisely controlling these reaction pathways, the efficiency and selectivity of CO₂ reduction reactions can be achieved, thereby promoting the practical application and commercialization of CO₂ emission reduction.

2.3.2 Effect of catalyst type and structure on the reaction.

In the CO₂ catalytic reaction, the type and structure of the catalyst have a crucial effect on the reaction.^{546–548} First, different types of catalysts have different active centers and surface properties, which will affect the selectivity and activity of the reaction. For example, transition metal catalysts can usually promote the hydrogenation and reduction reactions of CO₂.^{549,550} Acidic catalysts are more suitable for the carbonylation and cyclization reactions of CO₂.^{551,552} Secondly, the crystal structure, pore size and surface chemical properties of the catalyst will also affect the reaction.^{548,553,554} Catalysts with highly ordered crystal structures usually have better reaction selectivity.^{555,556} Catalysts with large pore sizes and high specific

surface areas are conducive to improving reaction activity and catalyst stability.^{557,558} In addition, the carrier and support material of the catalyst may also be crucial to the reaction because they can regulate the dispersion and surface activity of the catalyst.^{559,560} Therefore, designing and optimizing the type and structure of catalysts is an important research direction in the field of CO₂ catalytic conversion. Efficient and highly selective CO₂ conversion reactions can be achieved by rationally designing the structure and composition of the catalyst. Andreas *et al.*⁵⁶¹ reviewed examples of local chemical environmental effects in CO₂RR and classified them according to their potential physicochemical effects on reactivity and control of local concentrations of solution components. According to the classification shown in the figure, multiple effects may be present in real systems, which provides the opportunity to embed multiple functionalities into a single catalyst material.

When CO₂ is catalyzed at low concentrations as opposed to high concentrations, the reaction properties change significantly. The choice of catalyst is essential for CO₂ catalysis at low concentrations. In order to accelerate the pace of reaction, catalysts with increased surface activity and active sites are required since the supply of CO₂ is constrained under low concentration circumstances.^{93,562} Catalyst design should focus on enhancing the adsorption capacity and activation efficiency for LCC, while maintaining high selectivity to increase the yield of target products.^{563,564} Takuya *et al.*⁵¹ developed a new molecular photocatalytic system using Ru(II)–Re(I) binuclear complex as a photocatalyst (Fig. 13a). This system not only has high CO₂ reduction capacity, but also has high CO₂ capture capacity. Using this photocatalytic system, 10% concentration of CO₂ can be selectively converted into CO, and its photocatalytic effect is almost the same as that in a pure CO₂ atmosphere (TONCO > 1000, ΦCO > 0.4) (Fig. 13b). The reaction rate is sluggish at low concentration settings, thus it must be increased by improving the catalyst's efficiency or modifying the reaction environment.^{48,49,565}

Due to the increased CO₂ concentration and enough reactant supply in high-concentration CO₂ catalysis, the reaction rate is often quicker than in LCC catalysis.^{566,567} The catalyst is more active under high-concentration conditions, but attention should be paid to the selectivity of the catalyst to prevent the catalyst surface from being overloaded and causing an increase in side reactions.^{568,569} The catalyst design for high-concentration CO₂ catalysis can focus more on improving the reaction rate and

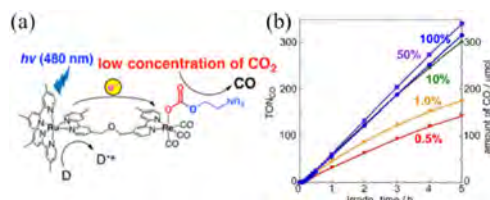


Fig. 13 (a) Photocatalyst based on Ru(II)–Re(I) binuclear complex; (b) photocatalytic CO production under different CO₂ concentrations (0.5–100%) (reproduced with permission from ref. 51. Copyright 2016 American Chemical Society).

optimizing the catalyst structure to cope with the needs of higher CO₂ concentrations and rapid reactions.^{570,571}

In general, low-concentration and high-concentration CO₂ catalysis have different requirements in catalyst selection, reaction rate, selectivity, and reaction mechanism. Based on these differences, it is helpful to develop efficient catalysts for different CO₂ concentration conditions, optimize the catalytic reaction process, and improve the performance of catalytic technology in practical applications.

2.3.3 Effect of reaction conditions on product distribution.

The effect of reaction conditions on product distribution is crucial, mainly including factors such as temperature, pressure, catalyst type, and reactant molar ratio.^{572,573} Temperature is an important parameter in catalytic reactions and can affect reaction rate and product distribution. Generally, higher temperatures are beneficial to increase the reaction rate, but too high a temperature may lead to reduced product selectivity.⁵⁷⁴ In the CO₂ hydrogenation reaction, higher temperatures are conducive to the production of hydrocarbon products such as methane, while lower temperatures may be more conducive to the production of liquid products such as methanol.^{556,575,576} Pressure can affect the interaction and reaction rate of CO₂ with other reactants. Higher pressure often helps to boost product selectivity and reaction rate in the CO₂ hydrogenation reaction because it can make CO₂ and hydrogen more soluble and encourage their interaction with the catalyst surface.^{577,578}

Different types of catalysts have different activities and selectivities, which will affect the distribution of products. For CO₂ hydrogenation reactions, transition metal catalysts such as

nickel and iron are generally more inclined to produce hydrocarbon products such as methane.^{578–580} Precious metal catalysts such as rhodium and ruthenium are more inclined to produce liquid products such as methanol.^{581,582} The molar ratio of the reactants directly affects the distribution of products.^{583,584} During the CO₂ hydrogenation reaction, the molar ratio of CO₂ and hydrogen affects the amount of methane and methanol produced because they are competing reactions for CO₂ and H₂.^{585,586}

The mass transfer and reaction coupling in porous media has an important influence on the regulation mechanism of the catalytic process, especially when designing the catalyst pore structure and optimizing its performance, the influence of CO₂ concentration cannot be ignored. However, to deeply understand this process, it is necessary to consider the following key factors:

(a) The scale span is large. The mass transfer process of CO₂ spans different scales. From the macroscopic scale in which CO₂ diffuses to the catalyst surface through the gas phase in the reactor, to the mesoscopic scale in which CO₂ diffuses on the catalyst surface/interface and in the bulk phase micro-nano channels, and then to the CO₂ diffused to the active site where adsorption, reaction and desorption occur of microscopic scale^{587–589} (Fig. 14a). When the CO₂ concentration changes, the Knudsen number may change from 0.01 to more than 10.^{590,591} This makes it difficult to comprehensively study CO₂ mass transfer and reaction processes at different concentrations using a single method.

(b) Complex pore structure. Catalysts usually have complex multi-level pore systems (Fig. 14b). Factors such as the

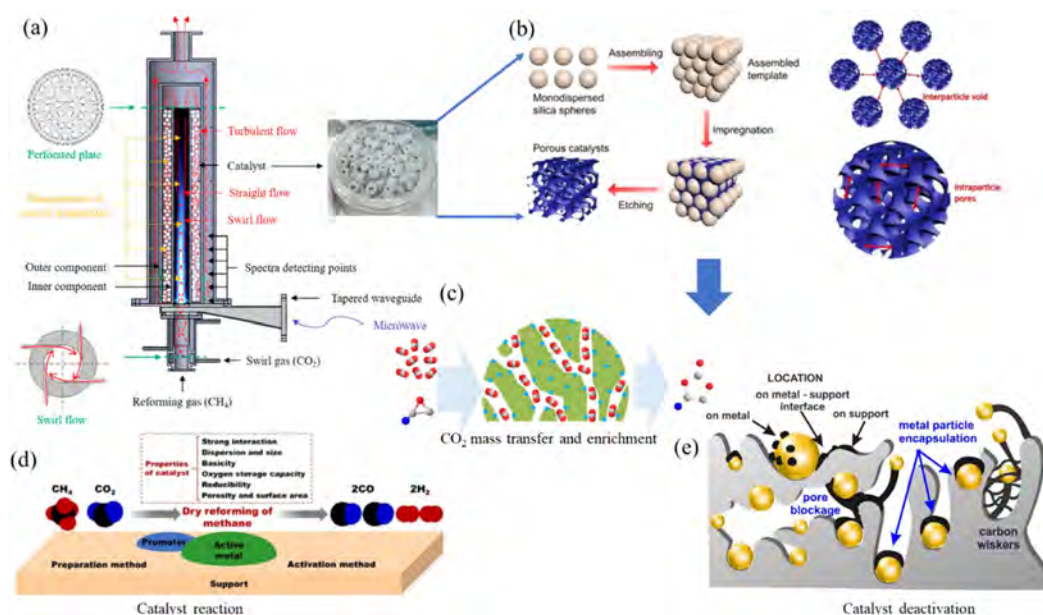


Fig. 14 Challenges faced by LCC catalytic processes: (a) the transfer process of gas flow in the reactor taking CO₂ methane dry reforming as an example (reproduced with permission from ref. 589. Copyright 2019 MDPI); (b) the porous structure of the catalyst (reproduced with permission from ref. 592. Copyright 2023 Elsevier); (c) diffusion mass transfer and enrichment of CO₂ in the pore structure of the catalyst (reproduced with permission from ref. 593. Copyright 2020 Elsevier); (d) the adsorption and reaction process of CO₂ at the active site (reproduced with permission from ref. 594. Copyright 2019 Elsevier); (e) after a long reaction time, the catalyst pores may experience structural collapse, sintering, product deposition or micropore blockage (reproduced with permission from ref. 595. Copyright 2021 MDPI).

connectivity, porosity, channel shape, tortuosity, and surface active sites of these pores will affect the diffusion and reaction efficiency of CO₂ molecules in them.^{177,200,596} Especially when CO₂ concentration is high, these structural characteristics may significantly change the mass transfer path and reaction rate^{592,597,598} (Fig. 14c). Therefore, it is necessary to study the behavior of CO₂ during the mass transfer process for catalyst pores with different structures, and to quantify the specific impact of these factors on the reaction.

(c) Dynamic coupling of mass transfer and reaction. Changes in CO₂ concentration have a significant impact on mass transfer and reaction coupling in catalytic reactions. As the CO₂ concentration increases, the spatiotemporal distribution, concentration gradient and reaction rate inside the catalyst will dynamically change⁵⁹⁹ (Fig. 14d). During the reaction process, the concentration of CO₂ directly determines the rate of reaction and diffusion, and these processes in turn change the local concentration distribution of CO₂. High concentrations of CO₂ may lead to local accumulation of reactants, creating more pronounced concentration gradients, while diffusion processes attempt to balance these gradients.^{593,594,600} Therefore, understanding the impact of CO₂ concentration on mass transfer and reaction coupling is crucial to optimizing catalytic effects.

(d) Pore channel changes caused by reaction. Although it is generally assumed that the pore structure of the catalyst remains stable during the reaction process, under high CO₂ concentrations, the catalyst pores may undergo changes such as structural collapse, sintering, product deposition, or micropore blocking^{557,601,602} (Fig. 14e). For example, in denitration of coal-fired power plants, higher CO₂ concentrations may exacerbate ammonium bisulfate deposition.⁶⁰³ In industrial catalytic dehydrogenation, CO₂ may promote carbon deposition.^{595,604} These structural changes significantly affect the stability and durability of the catalyst. Therefore, when studying mass transfer and reaction in the actual catalytic process, the potential impact of CO₂ concentration on the catalyst pores must be considered.

3. LCC separation technology

3.1 Overview of air separation technology

Air separation technology refers to the technology of separating various gas components in the air, usually including oxygen, nitrogen, argon, *etc.* The main air separation technologies are divided into normal temperature separation and low temperature separation according to the reaction temperature.^{605,606} Among them, normal vacuum adsorption (PSA), which is frequently used to create high-purity nitrogen and hydrogen,⁶⁰⁷ is the method that separates gases in normal temperature separation primarily by the difference in adsorption properties of solid adsorbents. Membrane separation is often used to create high-purity oxygen or nitrogen.⁶⁰⁸ It works by using the selective permeability of the membrane to separate various gases. Air separation, the primary technique for producing large-scale, high-purity oxygen, nitrogen, and argon, employs the liquefaction properties of gases at low temperatures for separation

(cryogenic distillation). High-purity oxygen and nitrogen are frequently produced using cryogenic adsorption separation, which makes use of the differences in the adsorption properties of solid adsorbents for gas separation at low temperatures.^{609,610}

These air separation technologies may be applied in producing high-purity products of different gases to fulfill the demands of diverse areas. They are extensively employed in scientific research as well as industrial production.^{611,612} With the continuous development and innovation of technology, the efficiency and energy consumption of air separation technology are constantly improving, and it is becoming more and more important for applications in energy, chemical industry, medical and other fields. The presence of LCC will change the condensation temperature of various gases in the air, resulting in changes in the component distribution of the mixed gas during the condensation process.^{36,613} In the low-temperature air separation process, the condensation temperature needs to be adjusted according to the CO₂ content in the mixed gas to ensure that high-purity oxygen, nitrogen and argon are effectively separated.

The energy consumption of low-temperature air separation equipment is huge. A typical 60 000 N m³ h⁻¹ air separation equipment can consume up to 40 000 kW h h⁻¹.⁶¹⁴ In the coal chemical industry, the energy consumption of air separation equipment accounts for about 10% to 15% of the total energy consumption. In the metallurgical industry, the energy consumption required for air separation equipment accounts for about 15% to 20% of the total energy consumption.⁶¹⁵ A typical air separation equipment is shown in Fig. 15, and the purification system is the core component. According to statistics, the energy consumption of the air separation purification system accounts for about 11% of the total energy consumption of the air separation unit.⁶¹⁶

Temperature swing adsorption towers frequently get employed by large air separation equipment to pre-purify air. Two or three mutually switchable adsorbents must be included in the TSA purification system in order to guarantee continuous purification of the processed air. The purifier is equipped with two layers of adsorbents, NaX 13X and activated alumina. The primary use of activated alumina is the adsorption of high-concentration water vapor due to its substantial equilibrium adsorption capacity and ability to be regenerated using waste heat. The NaX 13X is mainly utilized to adsorb and remove low-concentration water vapor, CO₂, and some hydrocarbons. It can also cause the processed air to reach an exceptionally low dew point. During the adsorption process, the air is cooled in the air humidification pressurized spray tower, the temperature reaches 12 °C, the humidity reaches saturation, and the pressure reaches 0.6 MPa, and then it enters the adsorption bed vertically. After the air enters the adsorption bed, moisture, CO₂ and sulfur-containing organic matter are basically removed, and then it enters the distillation tower for experimental oxygen and nitrogen separation.^{617,618}

The regeneration operation is achieved by the dirty nitrogen gas from the low-pressure plate heat exchanger. These gases are heated to 175 °C in the steam heater and then enter the molecular sieve purifier to desorb under high temperature and low-pressure conditions to restore the adsorption capacity.

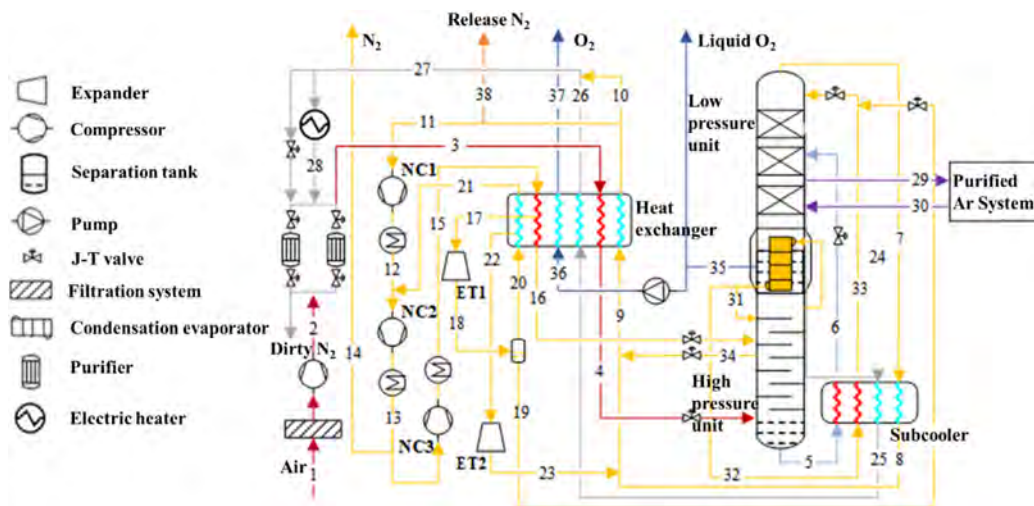


Fig. 15 Schematic diagram of the process flow of the cryogenic air separation and molecular sieve purification system.

The regeneration gas first enters the left heat exchange tube of the steam heater to exchange heat with condensed water, and then enters the right heat exchange tube to exchange heat with steam to heat the regeneration gas to the required temperature. Through the gas–liquid separator, the 80 °C condensed water produced by the process enters the condensed water network and is sent to the downstream process for recycling.^{619,620}

When the CO₂ content in the air at the outlet of the molecular sieve purifier exceeds the standard (greater than 0.1–1 ppm), carbon dioxide plays a key negative role in the system, which directly reflects that the adsorption performance of the molecular sieve has dropped significantly.^{621,622} This phenomenon indicates that carbon dioxide has broken through the adsorption capacity of the molecular sieve bed and began to enter the downstream plate-fin heat exchanger and distillation tower system in large quantities. Since these systems usually operate at extremely low temperatures (below –100 °C), carbon dioxide is very easy to freeze in these low-temperature equipment and form solids in the channels of the plate-fin heat exchanger.^{623,624} Frozen carbon dioxide not only causes blockage of the channels of the heat exchanger, but also seriously affects the heat transfer efficiency of the equipment, and may eventually force the system to shut down and heat to clear the blockage, resulting in production interruption and overall efficiency reduction.⁶²⁵

Even more serious is the safety hazard caused by excessive carbon dioxide content. As carbon dioxide and hydrocarbons continue to accumulate in the main cooling system, especially under low temperature conditions, these accumulated substances have the potential risk of causing main cooling explosions, posing a great safety threat.^{626,627} In addition, carbon dioxide freezes into solid on the liquid air side of the crude argon condenser, further blocking the heat exchange channel, resulting in a reduction in heat exchange area and reducing the load handling capacity of the argon tower.⁶²⁸ This not only weakens the operating efficiency of the system, but also increases the safety risk of equipment operation, indicating that effective control of carbon dioxide is crucial to the safety and efficiency of the entire system.

Song *et al.*⁶²⁹ studied the flue gas containing 13 vol% CO₂ at low temperature. The results showed that the frosted carbon dioxide layer significantly affected the heat transfer between the airflow and the cooling fins (Fig. 16). Over time (from 0 to 60 minutes), the frost layer thickness increased from 0 to 3.0 mm. The thermal conductivity increased from 0 to 0.4 W (m K)^{–1}. When the flow rate was 1 L min^{–1}, the SC cold head temperature changed from –105.2 °C to –102.1 °C; when the flow rate was 3 L min^{–1}, the temperature increased from –106.3 °C to –98.0 °C.

CO₂ is more soluble in liquid oxygen and liquid nitrogen at low temperatures.⁶³¹ Therefore, in the air separation process, the effect of CO₂ solubility on separation efficiency needs to be considered. It is usually necessary to reduce the dissolution of CO₂ by adjusting process parameters or adopting appropriate separation methods to improve the efficiency and purity of air separation.⁶³² For air separation technology based on the principle of adsorption separation, the presence of low concentrations of CO₂ may affect the selection and performance of adsorbents.⁶³³ Some solid adsorbents, such as zeolites, activated carbons, and MOFs, have high selectivity for CO₂. This is because CO₂ molecules have a large adsorption capacity on the adsorbent due to their high polarity and ease of interaction with active sites on the adsorbent surface. These adsorbents' high selectivity

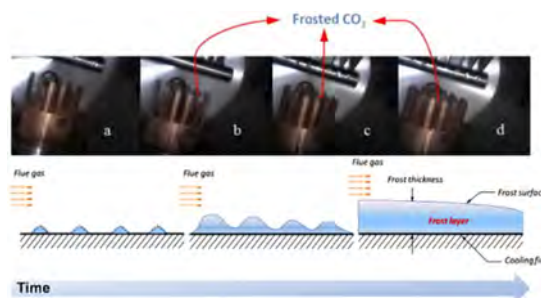


Fig. 16 CO₂ freezing process on the heat exchanger surface (reproduced from ref. 630 with permission from Elsevier, copyright 2013).

makes it possible for them to efficiently extract CO₂ from the air and separate it, increasing the effectiveness of the separation process.

In the separation process of oxygen or nitrogen, the presence of CO₂ may interfere with the separation of other target gases. CO₂ readily occupies adsorption sites due to its strong contact with the adsorbent surface, which reduces the target gas's adsorption capability. In this instance, the separation efficiency of other gases will be lowered if the adsorbent is overly selective for CO₂. Therefore, the adsorbent needs to be selected carefully to avoid excessive impact of CO₂ on the separation process.^{621,630} Therefore, it is necessary to select the right adsorbent to achieve effective separation. In the air separation process, the choice of adsorbent needs to be weighed according to the specific application scenario. If the goal is to separate CO₂ efficiently, it is reasonable to choose an adsorbent with high selectivity for CO₂. However, if the main goal is to separate other gases, it may be necessary to choose an adsorbent with lower selectivity for CO₂ or higher selectivity for the target gas.

Since the presence of LCC will increase the process complexity and energy consumption in the separation process, it may increase the separation cost. Therefore, when designing the air separation process, it is necessary to comprehensively consider the impact of LCC on the process in order to achieve an efficient and economical air separation process.⁶³⁴

3.2 Capture and separation of LCC

The separation and capture of LCC in air separation mainly involves chemical absorption, adsorption, membrane separation and cryogenic separation. CO₂ is separated and taken in through membrane separation technology, which takes use of the varying permeabilities of gas molecules on the membrane.^{635,636} For the separation of LCC in air, membrane materials with higher selectivity can be designed to more effectively separate CO₂ from the air. This technology is generally suitable for small-scale CO₂ capture and enrichment.⁶³⁷ To separate CO₂ from other gases, adsorption separation technology employs solid adsorbents to selectively absorb CO₂. The separation and collection of LCC from the air can be accomplished by using adsorbents that are capable of adsorbing CO₂,^{638–640} such as activated carbon, metal organic frameworks (MOFs), *etc.* CO₂ is adsorbed from the air and then desorbed, regenerated or converted. Chemical absorbents react with CO₂ to absorb CO₂ from the air *via* chemical absorption technology. There are typically two types of this technology: solid absorption and solution absorption. By choosing the right absorbents and modifying the reaction conditions, it can absorb and separate LCC.^{641,642} Cryogenic technology condenses CO₂ in the air into liquid or solid by adjusting temperature and pressure conditions to achieve CO₂ separation and capture.⁶⁴³ This technology is usually suitable for large-scale CO₂ capture and separation, including liquid air separation, cryogenic adsorption and other means.^{644,645}

To combat climate change and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, LCC in the atmosphere may be captured, enhanced, and transformed into valuable products using these separation and capture methods. These technologies will become more

significant in the areas of carbon use, carbon capture, and carbon neutrality as long as technology continues to advance. The following are the primary obstacles and bottlenecks that the LCC separation and capture technology must overcome, along with potential solutions.

3.2.1 Separation efficiency of LCC. The concentration of CO₂ in air is relatively low, usually about 0.04%, which increases the difficulty and energy consumption of the separation process.^{646,647} This inefficient separation not only leads to higher energy consumption, but also directly drives up the capture cost, limiting the feasibility of this technology in large-scale commercial applications.⁴⁷ Therefore, improving the separation efficiency of LCC is crucial for the development of DAC technology.

To meet this challenge, researchers are working on developing a variety of solutions. First, by improving the CO₂ adsorption selectivity of adsorbents or membrane materials, CO₂ can be captured more efficiently under low-concentration conditions and reduce energy consumption.⁶⁴⁸ Second, optimizing separation process parameters, such as operating temperature, pressure, and gas flow rate, can further improve separation efficiency.⁶⁴⁹ In addition, the introduction of new and efficient separation technologies, such as the application of high-performance catalysts or innovative membrane separation technologies, also provides a new path to solve the problem of LCC separation.^{650,651} Chae *et al.*⁶⁵² reported the combined DAC and methanation of CO₂ using a dual-functional material (DFM) consisting of an alkaline adsorbent and a catalytic metal. The feasibility of successful cyclic capture and methanation of 400 ppm CO₂ under isothermal conditions (320 °C) was demonstrated. Liu *et al.*⁶⁵³ proposed an electrochemical process for the electrocatalytic regeneration of a hydroxide absorbent by circulating viologen, using renewable electricity to capture and convert CO₂ from air through an energy-efficient organic redox reaction. High-performance materials that take both thermodynamics and kinetics into account can also be designed and developed to increase adsorption capacity while enhancing mass transfer processes, which will facilitate low-cost, efficient and rapid capture.^{654,655} These technical improvements can not only improve separation efficiency but also reduce operating costs.

3.2.2 Energy consumption and cost. Conventional air separation technologies usually require a lot of energy and cost.³¹ The market demand for CO₂ is expected to grow exponentially to 6.1 Gt by 2050, while the cost of implementing DAC technology is expected to drop to less than \$125 per t CO₂ by 2030.⁶⁵⁶ For example, low-temperature refrigeration and high-pressure compression in the air separation process consume a lot of energy. The creation of new, energy-efficient capture technologies, enhancements to current systems' processes to lower energy consumption, and the deployment of renewable energy sources to supply the energy needed for the separation process are among potential solutions.⁶⁵⁷ The implementation of DAC technology relies on several key devices, including capture devices, adsorption or absorption devices, and desorption or regeneration devices. In terms of capture devices, the CO₂ concentration of stationary emission sources such as coal-fired power plants is

usually between 10% and 20%, while the CO₂ concentration in the atmosphere is much lower than this. The development of DAC in the industrial field is still in its early stages.

When there was no industrial data to support DAC, some researchers calculated the CO₂ capture efficiency based on the second law of thermodynamics and estimated that the cost of capturing 1 t of CO₂ was about \$1000.⁶⁵⁸ The American Physical Society's 2011 technical report estimated that DAC would cost \$610 per ton of CO₂ captured. The largest DAC project is Climeworks' "Mammoth" plant in Iceland, which can capture up to 36 000 tons of CO₂ per year.⁶⁵⁹ It is currently the largest operating DAC facility and has completed the demonstration phase, aiming to significantly scale up the technology. Clime-works is also involved in other large projects,^{660,661} including upcoming DAC centers in the United States, such as the South Texas DAC Center and the Cypress Project in Louisiana, each of which aims to capture more than 1 million tons of CO₂ per year after it is put into operation. Jennifer *et al.*⁶⁶² evaluated the theoretical minimum work of separation under different concentrations of CO₂ sources. In the region where outlet CO₂ purity is less than 10% and capture efficiency is less than 60%, the minimum work of the DAC is 8–10 kJ mol⁻¹ CO₂. This is just the minimum work required to separate CO₂ from natural gas power plant exhaust to achieve a capture efficiency of 90% to a final CO₂ purity greater than 95% (Fig. 17).

Therefore, improving the CO₂ capture rate of air capture devices is a key link in reducing the cost of DAC. Efficient capture devices need to be able to effectively extract CO₂ from a rarefied gas environment, thereby improving the economic feasibility of the overall technology at the source.^{664,665} The source of driving energy is very important. Combined with long-term life assessment, new technologies and new ways to couple DAC with renewable energy are sought and developed at different time and space scales. For example, new processes

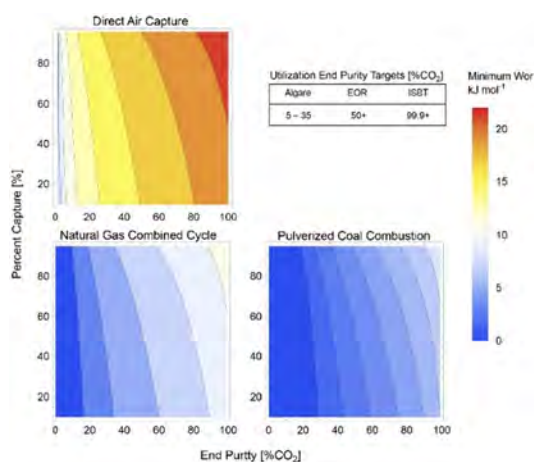


Fig. 17 Theoretical minimum work for separation under different CO₂ source concentrations. Ambient air (top), natural gas combined cycle (NGCC) flue gas (lower left) and pulverized coal combustion (PCC) flue gas (lower right). Ambient air is 0.04%, 4 mol% CO₂ (NGCC) and 12 mol% CO₂ (PCC) (adapted with permission from ref. 663 with permission from IOP Publishing Ltd, copyright 2017).

to drive adsorbent regeneration such as solar energy and wind energy are developed. Li *et al.*⁶⁶³ extended the power-to-gas (P2G) and carbon capture and storage (CCS) technologies to a hybrid concentrated solar power and combined heat and power integrated energy system (IES). The proposed model reduced the total cost by 57.80%, achieved a carbon utilization rate of 24.38% and full wind energy absorption. Tom *et al.*⁶⁶⁶ conducted a comprehensive life cycle assessment of different DACCS systems. The largest potential for removing greenhouse gases (up to 97%) is found in nations which generate waste heat and have low-carbon electrical supplies. Removing material with a high solar radiation efficiency ranges from 79% to 91%. It is possible to avoid consuming grid energy and heat that is derived from fossil fuels.

The design and optimization of adsorption and desorption devices are also crucial to the success of DAC technology. However, the research on DAC technology in industrial applications is still in its early stages, and there are relatively few reports on the corresponding equipment development and improvement.^{31,440} Therefore, future development should focus on improving the overall efficiency of the system through process intensification and further reducing operating costs through integrated optimization of process systems.⁶⁶⁷ In this way, DAC technology can not only become more economically viable, but also be more widely used in large-scale CO₂ capture and recycling.

3.2.3 CO₂ capture and post-processing. In the DAC process, the separation and capture of CO₂ is only the first step. The captured CO₂ often needs further post-processing to adapt to different application requirements.⁶⁶⁸ The captured CO₂ needs to be separated from the impurities, filtered, and given additional necessary treatments since it typically includes impurities or does not match the purity criteria of some applications. Ensuring that CO₂ can be utilized for certain tasks, such as the manufacture of chemicals, the storage of CO₂, or industrial raw materials, depends on this process.^{669–671} To guarantee stable long-term storage and efficient injection, CO₂ in geological storage typically has to be compressed to a supercritical level and be more than 95% pure.⁶⁷² Takeshi *et al.*⁶⁷³ simulated the density of CO₂-N₂-O₂ mixtures and evaluated the cost of low-purity CO₂ storage. The evaluation shows that storing low-purity CO₂ in geological formations is environmentally acceptable. Low-purity carbon dioxide captured by advanced membrane-based DAC technology and appropriately stored in the geological state is also economically feasible (Fig. 18a–f). In the food and beverage industry, CO₂ purity requirements are higher, usually above 99.9%, to ensure the taste and safety of the product.⁶⁷⁴ Different applications have different requirements for the state of CO₂. For example, geological storage and EOR usually require a supercritical state,⁶⁷⁵ while chemical synthesis may use gaseous or supercritical CO₂.⁶⁷⁶ As part of the CCS plan, the composition and transportation of CO₂ streams are also key. According to analysis, the relative cost/km of the pipeline network (in terms of pipeline inner diameter and length) will remain unchanged provided impurity addition is kept below 2 mol% when compared to the pure CO₂ equivalent.

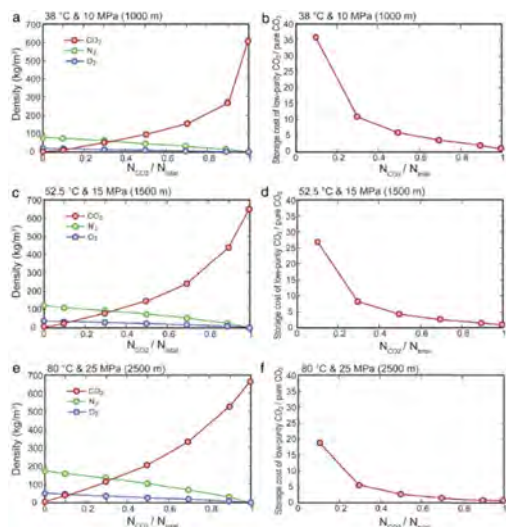


Fig. 18 Efficiency and cost of low-purity CO₂ storage. Geological storage density and storage cost of different proportions of CO₂, N₂, and O₂ at (a) 38 °C temperature and 10 MPa pressure (about 1000 m depth) (b); (c) 52.5 °C temperature and 15 MPa pressure (about 1500 m depth) (d); (e) 80 °C temperature and 25 MPa pressure (about 2500 m depth) (f) (adapted from ref. 676 with permission from John Wiley & Sons, copyright 2021).

These different purity and state requirements directly affect the choice of post-processing technology in DAC systems. To meet these requirements, DAC systems may need to be purified using technologies such as amine scrubbing⁸⁹ and PSA⁶⁷⁷ to remove impurities and achieve the required purity. To meet state requirements, such as reaching a supercritical state, CO₂ must undergo energy-intensive compression and cooling processes.^{678,679} These processes involve multiple areas such as power, operation scheduling, thermal management, and energy recovery.

Meanwhile, it is becoming increasingly important to integrate capture and post-processing processes for optimization. Through this systematic integration, the efficiency of the entire process chain can be improved, energy consumption and costs can be reduced, thereby promoting the widespread promotion and economic feasibility of DAC technology in practical applications.^{680,681} Cheng *et al.*⁶⁸² proposed a design for the transformation of an existing NGCC to achieve negative CO₂ emissions power generation by utilizing post-combustion carbon capture and DAC. The DAC unit captures CO₂ directly from the atmosphere through low-grade heat from the NGCC. Adding flexibility to the NGCC system through heat integration and modular DAC design can still significantly extend the dispatch time and improve system profitability.

3.2.4 Efficient, low-cost sustainable materials. The core of DAC technology lies in the development of efficient, low-cost absorption/adsorption materials. Current research mainly focuses on the two mechanisms of physical adsorption and chemical adsorption,⁴⁴³ as shown in Fig. 19. Physical adsorption relies on intermolecular van der Waals forces for CO₂ capture, usually occurring on the surface of the adsorbent. Therefore, material design needs to have high porosity or

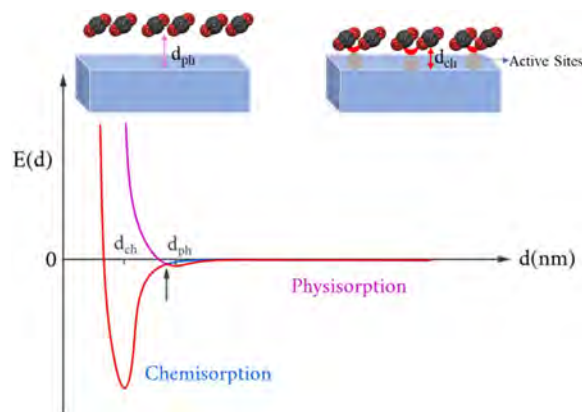


Fig. 19 Mechanisms of physical and chemical adsorption of CO₂ on the adsorbent surface.

nano-sized structure to maximize surface area and enhance CO₂ capture capability.⁶⁸³ Common physical and chemical adsorption solid adsorbents used for LCC capture are shown in Table 5. Lee *et al.*⁶⁸⁴ prepared adsorbent-coated carbon fibers *via* a roll-to-roll process, which exhibited a 400 ppm CO₂ adsorption capacity of approximately 1.2 mmol g⁻¹ fiber. The advantage of physical adsorbents is that they are easy to regenerate and can maintain high efficiency over multiple cycles. However, since its adsorption performance and selectivity are usually low at room temperature, its application in LCC capture in the air is limited.⁶⁸⁵

Chemical adsorption, on the other hand, greatly improves both the adsorption capacity and selectivity by capturing CO₂ molecules through stronger chemical bonding forces.⁶⁹⁵ Amine-functionalized metal-organic frameworks exhibit lower energy requirements,⁶⁴⁹ with a minimum of 1000 kW h t CO₂⁻¹ and a minimum known cost of 60\$\$ t CO₂⁻¹. Liu *et al.*⁶⁹⁶ found that the grafting process is a reaction between metal sites and secondary amines in AEEA, and MOFs with high specific surface area and low acidity can effectively promote amine grafting without destroying the active sites. In addition, the CO₂ adsorption capacity of MIL-100 (Cr) functionalized with *N*-(2-aminoethyl)-ethanolamine (AEEA) at 400 ppm was 1.91 mmol g⁻¹ at -25 °C and 2.42 mmol g⁻¹ at 0 °C, respectively. *g.* The structural decomposition temperature exceeds 400 °C, showing excellent thermal and cold stability. However, the high energy consumption and complex process steps of its desorption process limit the overall absorption efficiency.⁶⁹⁷ Therefore, balancing adsorption intensity and desorption energy consumption is one of the key challenges facing DAC technology.

Future business applications of DAC technology will be contingent upon the creation of adsorbent materials possessing high selectivity and high adsorption capacity. To lower total energy consumption, these materials must have an effective and low-energy desorption mechanism in addition to demonstrating great capture capability at low CO₂ concentrations.^{698,699} Based on the life cycle of the entire system, safe and scalable monolithic functionalized materials such as granular,⁷⁰⁰ fiber,⁷⁰¹ film⁷⁰² or monolithic column⁷⁰³ structures are developed to increase the number of sites per unit volume. Ali *et al.*⁷⁰⁴ reported that the maximum adsorption

Table 5 Comparison of adsorption performance of solid materials for physical adsorption and chemical adsorption of LCC

Solid adsorbent	Adsorption type/load	Ambience	Temperature (°C)	Desorption conditions	Adsorption capacity (mmol g ⁻¹)	Ref.
Zeolite 13X	Physisorption	Dry CO ₂ (0.15 atm CO ₂ , 0.85 atm N ₂)	30	200	0.034	686
NaX	Physisorption	400 ppm CO ₂ /N ₂	25	200	0.41	687
	Physisorption	400 ppm CO ₂ /N ₂			5.49	
Mg-MOF-74	Physisorption	Dry CO ₂ (0.15 atm CO ₂ , 0.85 atm N ₂)	30	200	0.14	686
HKUST-1	Physisorption	Dry CO ₂ (0.15 atm CO ₂ , 0.85 atm N ₂)	30	200	0.05	686
Li-LSX	Physisorption	400 ppm CO ₂ /N ₂	25	200	1.34	687
Na-LSX	Physisorption	400 ppm CO ₂ /N ₂	25	200	0.84	687
SIFSIX-3-Cu	Physisorption	400 ppm CO ₂ /N ₂	25	200	1.24	688
SiO ₂	Physisorption	400 ppm CO ₂ /N ₂	25	110	2.36	689
Mesoporous silica foam	Chemisorption/PEI ^a	400 ppm CO ₂ /N ₂	25	110	1.74	690
Silica	Chemisorption/PEI ^a	400 ppm CO ₂ /N ₂	25	100	2.34	691
HP20/PEI-50	Chemisorption/PEI ^a	400 ppm CO ₂ /N ₂	25	100	2.26	692
SBA-15	Chemisorption/APS ^a	400 ppm CO ₂ /N ₂	25	110	1.72	691
MCM-41	Chemisorption/DT ^a	400 ppm CO ₂ /N ₂	25	75	1.4	691
TEPA-Mg _{0.55} Al-O	Chemisorption/TEPA ^a	400 ppm CO ₂ /N ₂	25	120	3.0	693
TREN-MIL-101(Cr)	Chemisorption/TREN ^a	400 ppm CO ₂ /N ₂	25	110	2.76	694

^a PEI: polyethyleneimine; APS: aminopropyltriethoxysilane; DT: diethylenetriamine; TEPA: tetraethylenepentamine; TREN: tris(2-aminoethyl)amine.

capacity of modified nanofibers with an ethanolamine grafting degree of 172.26% at a CO₂ concentration of 5% was 2.84 mmol g⁻¹. Sun *et al.*⁷⁰⁵ studied the feasibility of ceramic membrane contactors for membrane absorption to remove CO₂ from the atmosphere. When NaOH was used as the absorbent, the NaOH utilization rate reached 75%, and it still had good absorption performance. In addition, the appropriate gas-liquid operating parameters in this study were 1000 mL min⁻¹ and 1 mL min⁻¹, respectively, and the corresponding mass transfer coefficient and CO₂ absorption flux were 2.6 mm s⁻¹ and 0.096 mol m⁻² h⁻¹, respectively. The good absorption stability indicates that ceramic membrane contactors have great potential in direct air capture applications. In addition, the stability and recycling performance of adsorbent materials are also key factors determining their economic feasibility.^{461,706} Materials that continue to function well after several adsorption-desorption cycles can boost the effectiveness of DAC technology, encourage its widespread adoption, and guarantee the long-term financial gains.

3.2.5 Coupling for industrial applications. The deep integration of carbon dioxide removal and air separation technology can not only improve the overall efficiency of industrial processes, but also provide innovative and practical value in multiple fields. In the steel and cement industries, air separation technology is used to provide high-purity oxygen to support the oxygen-enriched combustion process. At the same time, combined with carbon dioxide capture devices, the low-concentration CO₂ in the exhaust gas is efficiently purified and reused, which can significantly reduce carbon emissions. In addition, combined with data-driven technology, artificial intelligence is used to optimize separation and capture process parameters and dynamically regulate the gas separation path, which can further improve the energy utilization efficiency of oxygen-rich combustion and CO₂ capture.

In the petrochemical and chemical industries, air separation devices can be used to supply oxygen-rich gas for hydrogen production. Through linkage with CO₂ capture devices, they can optimize the purification, storage or resource utilization of by-product CO₂. This technology integration can also achieve

efficient separation of complex gas components through multi-functional adsorbents or selective separation membranes, and combine with intelligent control systems to adjust the process in real time to achieve collaborative production of nitrogen, oxygen, hydrogen and CO₂, improving Resource utilization efficiency and economy.

The synergy of carbon dioxide removal with air separation shows significant potential in energy systems. For example, using the cold energy of liquefied natural gas (LNG) to drive a low-temperature air separation device can not only improve the separation efficiency of oxygen and nitrogen, but also efficiently capture CO₂ through low-temperature condensation. Combined with membrane catalytic separation technology, the captured CO₂ can also be directly converted into high value-added chemicals such as methane or methanol. At the same time, recycling the captured CO₂ through supercritical CO₂ power generation can effectively expand the energy cycle path. Further innovation directions also include the development of non-equilibrium plasma coupling technology to achieve activation and conversion of CO₂ during separation, assisting technological upgrades in industrial emission reduction and resource utilization.

In summary, in response to the challenges faced by the separation and capture technology of LCC in air separation, solutions need to be sought through technological innovation, process optimization and material improvement, so as to improve separation efficiency, reduce energy consumption and cost, and achieve efficient capture and utilization of CO₂.

4. LCC direct conversion technology

4.1 Overview of CO₂ catalytic conversion technology

The chemical utilization of CO₂ as a carbon resource, especially the simultaneous utilization of carbon and oxygen resources, is one of the most promising and widely concerned directions in current large-scale applications. As a non-toxic, cheap and abundant raw material, CO₂ shows great industrial application prospects in the synthesis of high-value-added chemicals.⁷⁰⁷

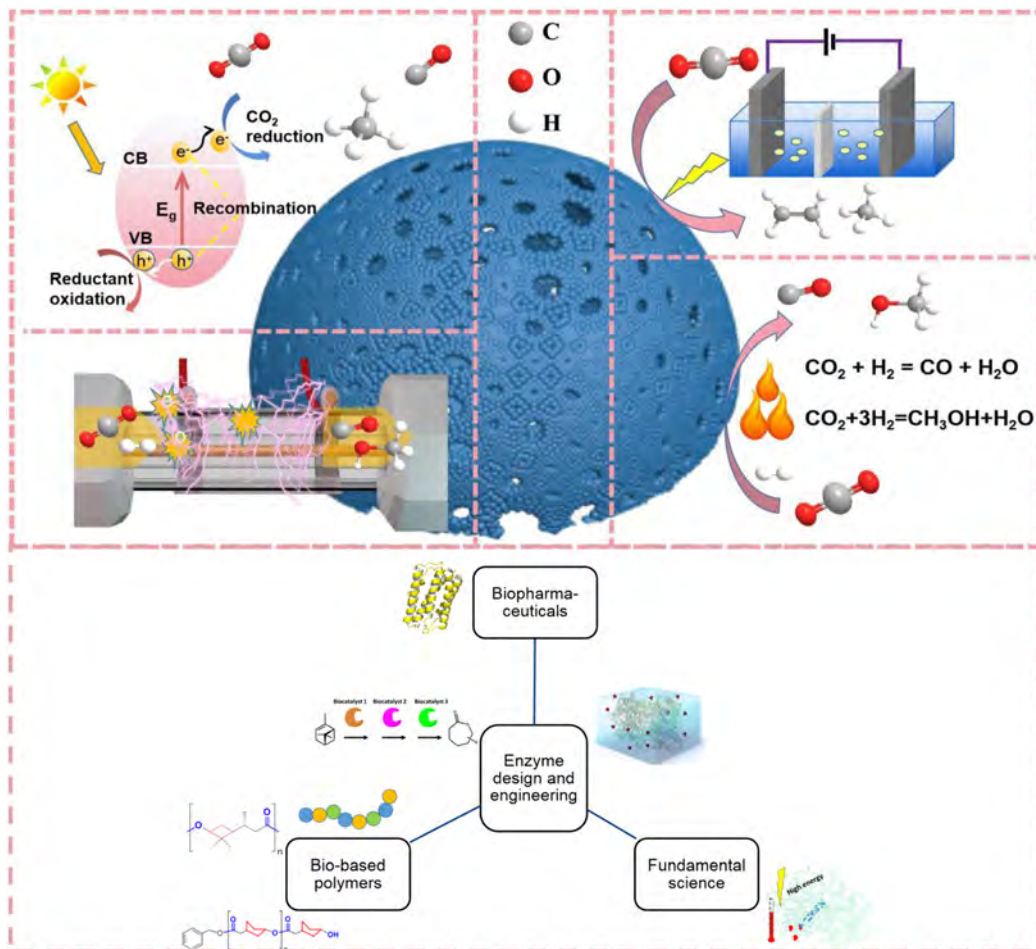


Fig. 20 Different utilization and conversion pathways of CO₂ through chemical technologies (reproduced from ref. 714 with permission from Elsevier, copyright 2023).

In order to prevent CO₂ formation in the atmosphere and to create fuels and industrial chemicals in place of conventional fossil resources, it is therefore possible to convert CO₂ into useful fuels or chemicals and thereby lessen reliance on fossil fuels. Through renewable energy to transform atmospheric CO₂ into tiny molecules with high energy density, such as methane, methanol, carbon monoxide, and formic acid, is the best course of action.^{708,709} To date, the main pathways for converting CO₂ into carbon-containing fuels include thermochemical, photochemical, biochemical and electrochemical catalytic conversions, as shown in Fig. 20.^{710–713}

4.2 Potential application of LCC in new catalytic reactions

With the help of catalysts, LCC in the environment may be directly converted into beneficial chemicals or fuels *via* LCC direct catalytic conversion technology. Both economically and environmentally, this technology is significant. It can both actualize the resource utilization of CO₂ and lower greenhouse gas emissions.

4.2.1 Photocatalytic CO₂ conversion. Photocatalytic technology converts light energy into chemical energy through photocatalysts to drive the reduction reaction of CO₂. However,

due to the chemical inertness of CO₂ molecules themselves, especially the difficulty of activation at room temperature, and the low concentration of CO₂ further reduces the probability of contact with the catalyst, the efficiency of photocatalytic reactions faces severe challenges.^{51,52} Therefore, the photocatalytic conversion of LCC has extremely high requirements for photocatalysts. The catalyst not only needs to efficiently excite electron-hole pairs under visible light or sunlight, but also must have sufficient energy to drive the CO₂ reduction reaction.

The photocatalyst's quantum efficiency is crucial in LCC settings since without it, the reaction won't be able to efficiently use a significant quantity of light energy. Furthermore, the catalyst's effectiveness in transferring energy and absorbing light are also critical. One big difficulty is figuring out how to increase the light capturing capacity to speed up the reaction pace. Huang *et al.*⁷¹⁵ enhanced charge separation and transfer through the close interaction between 2D Bi₂Se₃ and 2D g-C₃N₄. In the 2D/2D Bi₂Se₃/g-C₃N₄ composite material, Bi₂Se₃ not only acts as a co-catalyst, but also provides additional heat energy for the photocatalytic reaction through photothermal conversion. The catalytic system generates CO with almost 100% selectivity, and the selectivity for CO is higher than 90%,

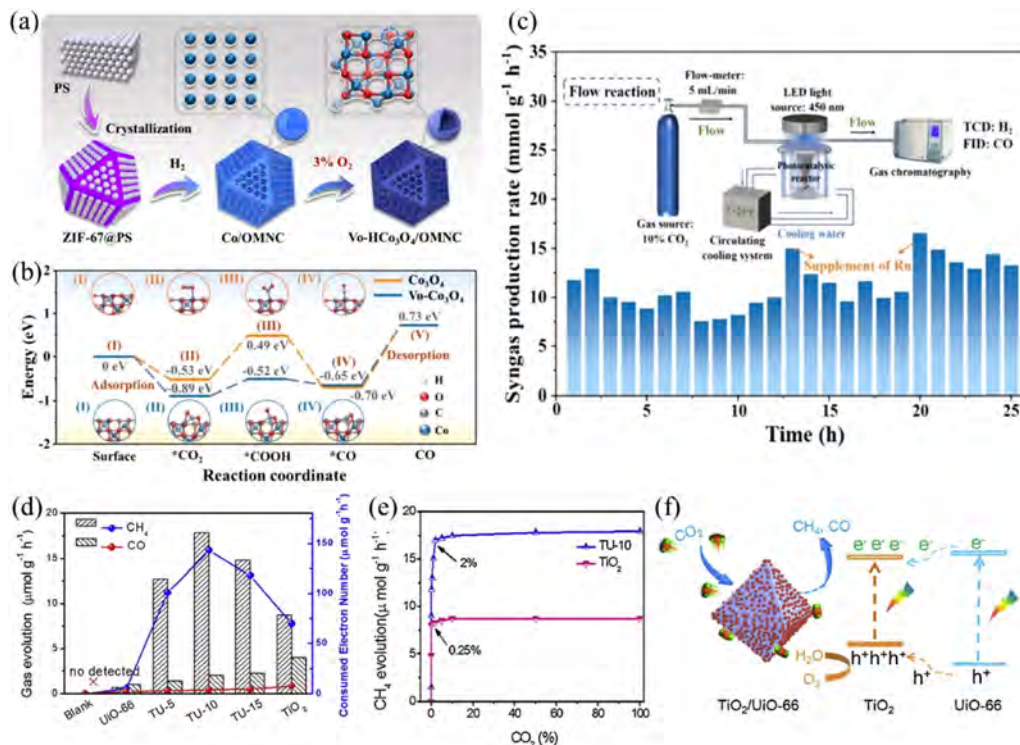


Fig. 21 (a) Preparation process of Co_3O_4 hollow nanoparticles containing oxygen vacancies; (b) Co_3O_4 hollow nanoparticles containing oxygen vacancies show lower surface adsorption energy and excellent photocatalytic performance (c) (reproduced from ref. 718 with permission from John Wiley & Sons, copyright 2023); (d) CH_4/CO generation rate of $\text{TiO}_2/\text{UiO-66}$ composites; (e) photocatalytic performance of $\text{TiO}_2/\text{UiO-66}$ composites in different CO_2 concentrations and their enrichment strategy (f) (reproduced from ref. 719 with permission from Elsevier, copyright 2020).

without the production of other carbon-based products. Huang *et al.*⁷¹⁶ developed a three-phase photocatalytic CO_2 reduction reaction system by loading Ag-modified TiO_2 nanoparticles on the gas–water interface to achieve efficient CO_2 conversion. The system exploits the wetting properties of the hydrophobic–hydrophilic interface to accelerate the transport of gas-phase CO_2 to the photocatalyst surface while maintaining water supply and open active sites. The CO_2 reduction rate of the three-phase system reached $305.7 \mu\text{mol g}^{-1} \text{h}^{-1}$ in a 10% CO_2 environment, which is about 8 times that of the traditional liquid-phase system without the use of hole scavengers. Lyu *et al.*⁷¹⁴ designed Co_3O_4 hollow nanoparticles with oxygen vacancies on an ordered macroporous N-doped carbon framework (Vo- HCo_3O_4 /OMNC) for the photoreduction reaction of LCC. The catalyst showed unprecedented activity for the photocatalytic conversion of 10% CO_2/Ar under laboratory light source and natural light, with syngas production reaching 337.8 and $95.2 \text{ mmol g}^{-1} \text{h}^{-1}$, respectively, and an apparent quantum yield of up to 4.2% (see Fig. 21a–c). Enhancing the separation of photogenerated charges, surface adsorption and catalytic processes is a key factor in overcoming the mass transfer limitations in the conversion of LCC. Guo *et al.*⁷¹⁷ prepared a highly crystalline $\text{Ag}_x\text{Na}_{1-x}\text{TaO}_3$ -AgCl heterostructure composite material by a one-step flux method. A tight heterojunction was formed between $\text{Ag}_x\text{Na}_{1-x}\text{TaO}_3$ -AgCl and AgCl in the catalyst, which effectively promoted the separation and transfer of photogenerated charges. In addition, the

introduction of Ag cations and AgCl significantly enhanced the adsorption and activation of CO_2 on the catalyst surface.

There are several compounds produced during the photocatalytic reduction of CO_2 , including methanol, carbon monoxide, formic acid, *etc.* One of the technological challenges is managing the selectivity of their products. Side reactions (such as water photolysis) are frequently competitive when CO_2 concentrations are low, leading to complicated products that are challenging to precisely manage. Ma *et al.*⁷²⁰ designed a $\text{TiO}_2/\text{UiO-66}$ composite material with a hierarchical porous structure through a two-step strategy, which effectively enhanced the enrichment ability of CO_2 on exposed active sites (Fig. 21d–f). The composite material demonstrated a high rate of CH_4 production ($17.9 \mu\text{mol g}^{-1} \text{h}^{-1}$) and a high selectivity of 90.4% under CO_2 concentrations <2%. In addition, Wang *et al.*⁷¹⁸ showed that basic OH groups and divalent cobalt play a key role in the generation of CH_4 in low-concentration atmospheric CO_2 and water environments. This result highlights even more how crucial it is to create sensible catalysts in order to increase LCC conversion efficiency.

Compared with traditional thermal catalysis technology, photocatalysis faces greater challenges in large-scale applications, especially when the CO_2 concentration is low, the reaction rate is slow, resulting in the photocatalytic system requiring a larger illumination area and longer reaction time.^{53,54} And the long-term stability of the catalyst is also a key issue, especially in the continuous reaction process of LCC,

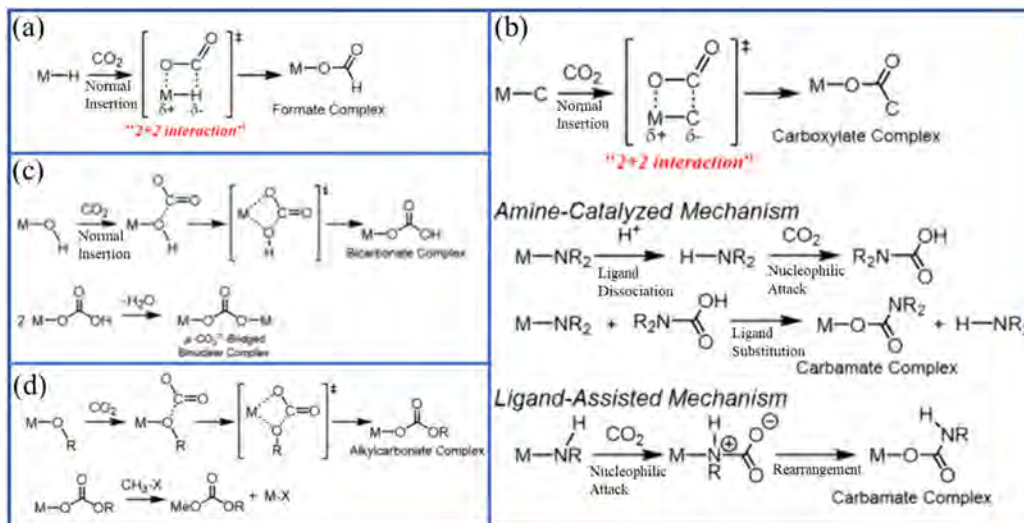


Fig. 22 M–X typing forms: (a) normal CO₂-Ins forms M–H bonds; (b) normal CO₂-Ins forms M–C bonds and M–N bonds; (c) normal CO₂-Ins forms M–OH bonds and subsequent possible dimerization reactions; (d) normal CO₂-Ins forms M–OR bonds and subsequent possible methylation reactions (reproduced from ref. 91 with permission from the Royal Society of Chemistry 2022).

the catalyst may fail due to photocorrosion or poisoning. Yamazaki *et al.*⁹¹ summarized catalytic systems for LCC reduction (Fig. 22). These systems combine CO₂ reduction and capture reactions (or CO₂ adsorption), allowing CO₂ to significantly increase the binding rate constant and/or equilibrium constant of CO₂ to the catalyst by forming M–X bonds with the catalyst. In addition, these systems further stabilize the CO₂-bound catalyst by creating a second coordination layer. The unique properties of the photocatalytic reaction medium can also increase the concentration of CO₂ around the catalyst, thereby further improving reaction efficiency.

4.2.2 Electrocatalytic CO₂ reduction. The electrochemical reaction drives the electrocatalytic reduction reaction of CO₂ by converting electrical energy into chemical energy. This process is usually through the adsorption of CO₂ molecules on the electrode surface and their reduction to organic compounds or other hydrocarbons through electron transfer.^{711,719,721} Nevertheless, the electrocatalytic reaction's kinetic rate is greatly slowed down under low CO₂ concentration circumstances. Due to the low contact probability between CO₂ molecules and the catalyst surface, electrochemical reactions often require higher overpotentials to drive, which not only increases energy consumption but also reduces conversion efficiency. In addition, low concentrations of CO₂ limit the supply of reactants, thereby reducing the overall reaction rate and product formation rate.⁷²² Samuel *et al.*⁷²³ proposed a strategy to mimic cyanobacterial carboxysomes by utilizing microcompartments with nanozymes in porous electrodes. Carbonic anhydrase makes all dissolved carbon available and minimizes substrate consumption by accelerating CO₂ hydration kinetics, while efficient formate dehydrogenase reduces CO₂ to formate. The porous electrode structure helps facilitate rapid gas transport across the electrode–electrolyte interface at high current densities.⁷²⁴

Selectivity of the final product is impacted by the electrocatalytic process's increased susceptibility to side reactions

(such the creation of hydrogen) at low concentrations. In the electrocatalytic CO₂ reduction process, for instance, the water electrolysis side reaction may speed up the synthesis of hydrogen rather than the CO₂ reduction product. To achieve this, extremely selective catalysts that can decrease CO₂ preferentially over water at low CO₂ concentrations must be developed. However, this goal is difficult to achieve. Masahiko *et al.*⁷²⁵ found that early formation of carbonate complexes is crucial for efficient electrocatalytic reduction of LCC in ethanol. When the water concentration in the solution is as high as 2.8 M (5 vol%), it can still maintain high CO selectivity, faradaic efficiency and durability under 10% CO₂ conditions. By adjusting the hydrophobicity of the electrocatalyst using a polymer binder, the electrochemical reaction performance at the gas–solid–liquid interface can be optimized. The hydrophobic (aerophilic) nature of the polymer binder reduces the local concentration of HO and increases the concentration of reactants (CO₂) and reaction intermediates (CO).⁵⁵

The electrochemical process is limited in low CO₂ conditions because it is more difficult for protons and electrons to transfer effectively. Therefore, the reaction is more dependent on the properties of the catalyst active sites and the optimization of the surface structure.⁵⁶ Hiromu *et al.*⁷²² achieved 94% CO selectivity and 85% faradaic efficiency at 1% CO₂ concentration by effectively inserting CO₂ into the Re(I)–O bond in 4,4'-dimethyl-2,2'-bipyridine (dmb), and the CO formation rate reached 67% (Fig. 23a and b). In addition, the low solubility of CO₂ leads to increased mass transfer resistance, further reducing the CO₂ concentration on the electrode surface and affecting the reaction efficiency (Fig. 23c). Due to the large intrinsic activation energy of the hydrogen evolution reaction (HER), the Ni single atom catalyst (Ni–N/C) shows high tolerance to low CO₂ partial pressure.⁵⁷

The design of the electrode contact and the choice of electrolyte are especially important when the CO₂ concentration is low.

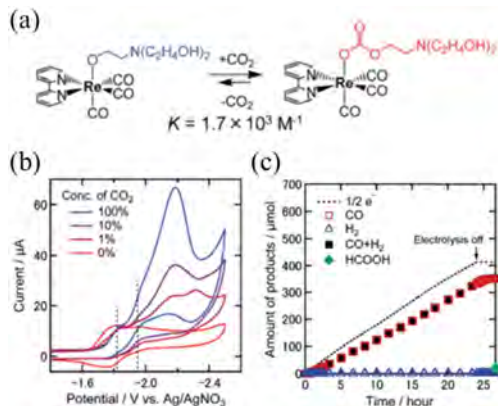


Fig. 23 (a) CO_2 capture pathway of Re(I) complex; (b) cyclic voltammograms (CVs) at different CO_2 concentrations; (c) yield at 1% CO_2 concentration (reproduced with permission from ref. 722. Copyright 2019 the Royal Society of Chemistry).

To enhance CO_2 enrichment on the electrode surface and for effective electrochemical reactions, certain electrolytes and electrode materials are needed.^{726,727} However, optimizing these parameters to adapt to low concentration conditions is a complex process involving the balance of multiple factors such as conductivity, ionic conductivity and electrolyte stability. Kim *et al.*⁵⁷ studied the CO_2 reduction reaction at different CO_2 concentrations in a zero-gap membrane electrode assembly (MEA) electrolyzer and found that suppressing the hydrogen evolution reaction (HER) became more critical at low CO_2 concentrations (Fig. 24a). The electrocatalytic conversion of LCC usually requires higher electrical energy input (Fig. 24b and c), resulting in reduced energy efficiency.⁵⁸ This makes large-scale applications face cost challenges. In addition, how to combine the electrocatalytic process with renewable energy electricity to further improve the energy efficiency of the entire system is also an important direction of current research.^{728,729}

4.2.3 Thermal catalytic CO_2 conversion. The thermal catalytic conversion technique for CO_2 is fueled by a thermal

catalyst, which transforms thermal energy into chemical energy. To produce organic molecules or other chemicals, this process typically entails the adsorption and dissociation of CO_2 on the catalyst surface, followed by a reaction with other reactants.^{730,731} Due to the chemical inertness of LCC, the thermal catalytic reduction process usually needs to be carried out at high temperatures above 600 °C, which not only increases the energy consumption of the system but also poses challenges to energy efficiency optimization.^{732,733} In contrast, electrocatalysis and photocatalysis technologies drive reactions through electric fields or light energy and can proceed at lower temperatures, thus reducing reliance on high temperatures.⁷³⁴

The selectivity of the CO_2 reduction process can be greatly impacted by the easy induction of a number of side reactions by thermal catalysis, including carbon deposition and catalyst sintering, at high temperatures.⁷³⁵ The low concentration of CO_2 further reduces the frequency of contact between reactants and catalysts, thereby exacerbating the occurrence of side reactions.⁷³⁶ This is in contrast to electrocatalytic technologies, which can precisely control reaction pathways and product selectivity by regulating potential.⁷³⁷

Thermal catalytic reduction of CO_2 requires extremely high catalyst activity, especially under LCC conditions. Catalysts need to remain active for long periods at high temperatures and prevent sintering or deactivation.⁷³⁸ However, high temperatures can aggravate catalyst degradation, such as aggregation of metal particles and phase change of the support, leading to shortened catalyst life.^{739,740} This situation occurs less frequently in low-temperature electrocatalysis and photocatalysis because these technologies operate at lower temperatures and have lower requirements for the thermal stability of the catalyst. Jiang *et al.*⁷⁴¹ synthesized a unique $\text{Cu}^{\text{I}}/\text{Cu}^{\text{II}}$ mixed valence copper-based framework with good solvent stability and thermal stability, as well as high density of uncoordinated amino groups evenly distributed in large nanopores. The triple synergistic catalytic effect between $\text{Cu}^{\text{I}}/\text{Cu}^{\text{II}}$ and uncoordinated amino groups significantly improves the green conversion efficiency of CO_2 (Fig. 25a and b). The yield can approach 99% at normal pressure, low temperature, and flue gas with a 25% CO_2 content.

Conditions with low CO_2 concentrations highlight mass transfer constraints in particular. Effective conversion is challenging because of the low concentration of CO_2 in the reactor, which limits its adsorption and reaction rate on the catalyst surface. One of the key strategies to increase the accessibility of catalyst active sites is to build multi-level catalyst pores.^{742–744} The large pore structure helps the reactant molecules to diffuse more easily into the catalyst, while the small pores provide abundant specific surface area to accommodate more active sites.⁷⁴⁵ In addition, the effect of mass transfer on the catalytic reaction is also reflected in the shape selectivity effect brought about by the matching relationship between the reactant molecules and the catalyst pore size.^{746,747} Many researchers have improved catalyst performance by encapsulating active components in molecular sieve micropores to control the diffusion of reactant and product molecules.^{59,60} Innovative

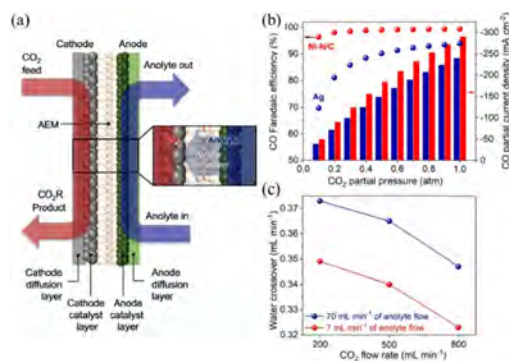


Fig. 24 (a) Schematic diagram of the MEA system and water crossover across the membrane shown in the inset; (b) simulated CO faradaic efficiency and CO partial current density at different CO_2 partial pressures; (c) plot of water crossover versus CO_2 feed rate for two anode electrolyte flow rates calculated by CFD simulation (reproduced with permission from ref. 57. Copyright 2021 American Chemical Society).

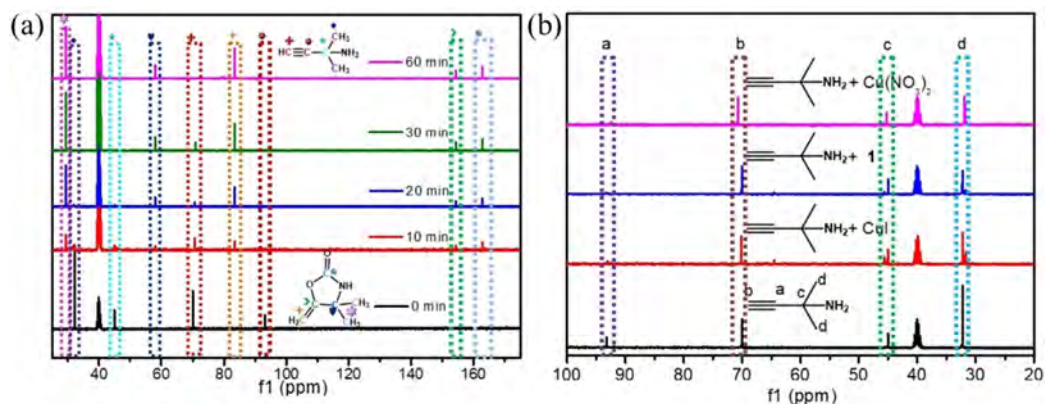


Fig. 25 (a) ^{13}C NMR ($\text{D}_6\text{-DMSO}$) monitoring of the cyclization reaction of $\text{Cu}^{\text{I}}/\text{Cu}^{\text{II}}$ mixed-valence copper-based framework and CO_2 ; (b) activation of propargylamine by different systems (reproduced with permission from ref. 742. Copyright 2021 John Wiley & Sons).

reactor design has also further improved the efficiency and rate of the reaction. GAO *et al.*⁶¹ summarized the application of molecular sieve membrane catalytic reactors in methane/ CO_2 dry catalytic reforming and achieved remarkable results, breaking through the limitations of thermodynamic equilibrium. The conversion rates of CO_2 and methane in the reaction can reach more than 70%.

Thermal catalytic reduction of LCC has low energy efficiency and requires a large amount of heat energy to maintain the reaction temperature, which makes large-scale application economically challenging. Even an ideal catalytic process requires electricity that emits less than 0.2 kg of CO_2 per kilowatt-hour to achieve a net reduction in CO_2 .⁷⁴⁸

On the other hand, energy consumption can be better managed by electrocatalysis and photocatalysis, which employ electrical or light energy, particularly when powered by renewable energy. To increase the thermal conversion efficiency of LCC, it is now normal practice to combine photocatalysis with electrocatalysis.^{749,750} Photothermal catalysis drives catalytic reactions through light energy, converts light energy into heat energy, and then enhances the catalytic reaction rate. Researchers have developed nanomaterials with broad spectrum absorption capabilities, such as metal nanoparticles and metal oxides,^{751,752} which can efficiently absorb sunlight and convert it into heat energy, and show high conversion efficiency under low CO_2 concentration conditions. Photothermal catalysis can enhance the activation of CO_2 molecules through local thermal effects, thereby promoting its reaction efficiency at lower concentrations.^{753,754} Combining the photothermal effect and the active sites on the catalyst surface can significantly improve the CO_2 conversion rate.

In photothermal catalysis, by optimizing reaction temperature, light intensity, and reaction time, higher product selectivity and yield can be achieved under LCC conditions.^{755,756} Electrothermal catalysis combines electric field and thermal energy to promote catalytic reactions and is suitable for research on the conversion of LCC. Electrothermal catalytic materials usually have high electrical conductivity and high thermal stability, such as MOFs, metal oxides, and conductive polymers.⁷⁵⁰ These materials can effectively promote the

adsorption and conversion of LCC under the combined action of electric field and thermal energy.^{757,758} Through the utilization of an external electric field to polarize CO_2 , electrothermal catalysis also raises the temperature of the reaction and increases the surface reactivity of the catalyst *via* the Joule heat produced by an electric current.⁷⁵⁹ This synergistic action can greatly increase conversion efficiency when CO_2 concentration is low. At low concentrations of CO_2 , effective reaction kinetics may be accomplished while regulating the formation of byproducts by adjusting factors including current intensity, reaction temperature, and duration.⁷⁶⁰ Catalytically activated open-cell foam was applied by Zheng *et al.*⁷⁶¹ It has the best mass transport and heat properties and acts as a Joule heating substrate for the catalytic conversion of CO_2 through interaction with hydrogen or methane (Fig. 26a). The proposed $\text{Rh}/\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3$ -coated foam reactor system with Joule heating exhibits excellent catalytic and electrical stability with a duration of more than 75 hours and an operating temperature as high as $800\text{ }^\circ\text{C}$. Near equilibrium conversion at high space speeds, the volumetric space velocities of reverse water gas shift and electrified methane CO_2 reforming are 600 and $100\text{ kN l kgcat}^{-1}\text{ h}^{-1}$ respectively (Fig. 26b–d). This reactor concept has the potential to significantly reduce the specific energy requirements required for CO_2 valorization. The energy consumption of reverse water gas shift is approximately $0.7\text{ kW h N}^{-1}\text{ m}^{-3}\text{ CO}_2$.

4.2.4 Plasma-catalyzed CO_2 conversion. High-energy electrons in plasma serve in plasma catalysis to activate and excite CO_2 molecules, changing them into other chemicals or organic compounds.^{762,763} In situations when CO_2 concentrations are minimal, the high-energy electrons in the plasma may not be sufficient to effectively and selectively activate CO_2 . Further byproducts and non-selective side reactions, like carbon deposition, result.^{764,765} In this instance, there is a hurdle in efficiently utilizing energy and maintaining product selectivity due to the vast and unpredictable energy distribution of the plasma.

The plasma environment has extremely high inhomogeneity, and the temperature, electron density and reactant

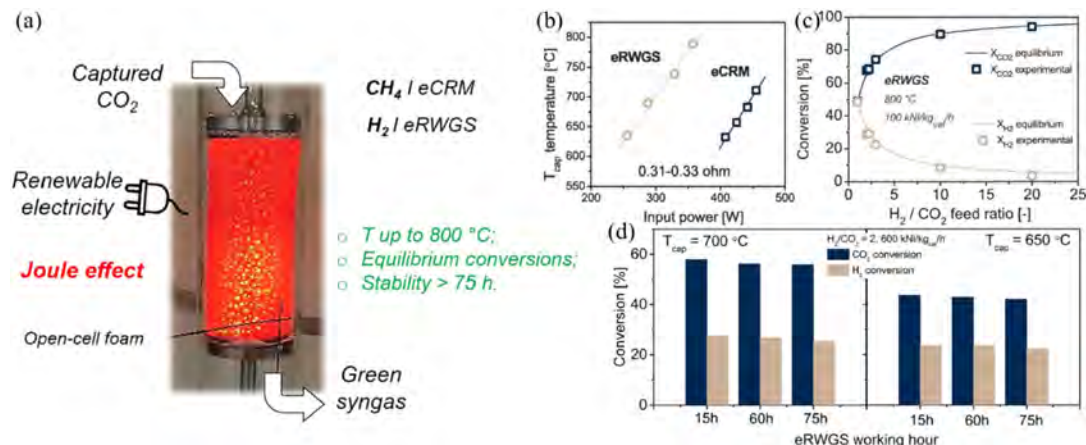


Fig. 26 (a) Electrothermal catalytic reaction system based on Joule heating; (b) T_{cap} temperature versus input power measured during CO₂ methane reforming (eCRM) and reverse water gas shift (eRWGS) operations; (c) CO₂ and H₂ conversion during eRWGS operation at different H₂/CO₂ feed ratios; (d) stability of coated SiSiC foam in eRWGS experiments (reproduced with permission from ref. 761. Copyright 2023 Elsevier).

concentration are unevenly distributed in the reactor, making the reaction process difficult to accurately control.⁷⁶⁶ This inhomogeneity is more pronounced at low CO₂ concentrations, which makes it more challenging to guarantee enough CO₂ molecule activation and consistent reduction processes.⁷⁶⁷ In contrast, thermal catalysis and electrocatalysis reactions proceed under more uniform conditions, making the reaction process easier to control and optimize.^{768,769}

The synergistic synergy between catalyst and plasma is crucial in plasma catalysis.⁷⁷⁰ Nevertheless, the number of active species stimulated by the plasma is decreased at low CO₂ concentrations, which may lessen this synergistic impact and lower the reaction efficiency as a whole.⁶³ Brock *et al.*⁶⁴ found that low-concentration (2.5%) CO₂ dissociated in a helium flow, generating vibrationally excited CO₂⁺ intermediates through charge and energy transfer from excited helium species. The reactivity order of different metal catalyst coatings is Rh > Pt ≈ Cu > Pd > Au/Rh ≈ Rh/Au ≈ Au. When using a Rh-coated reactor, the CO₂ conversion rate can be as high as

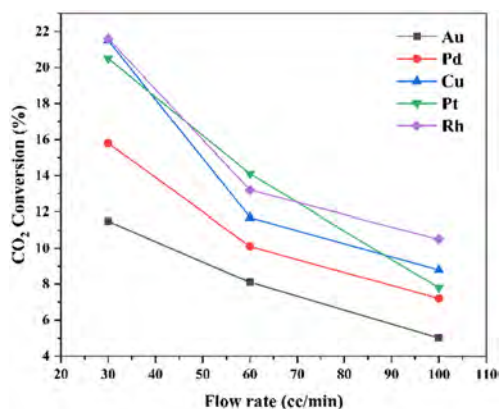


Fig. 27 CO₂ conversion of a 2.5% CO₂/He mixture as a function of reactant gas flow rate for various metal catalysts at 711 V rms (root-mean-square) input voltage (reproduced with permission from ref. 64. Copyright 1998 Elsevier).

30.5%, the reaction rate is $8.07 \times 10^{-4} \text{ mol h}^{-1}$, and the energy efficiency is 3.55% (Fig. 27). At low CO₂ concentrations, electrocatalysis and photocatalysis can enhance the interaction between reactants and catalysts by regulating electric fields or light fields, making it relatively easy to achieve efficient conversion.^{771,772}

Plasma environments place higher demands on the stability of catalyst materials, mainly because the bombardment of high-energy particles can cause damage to the catalyst surface, structural changes, or metal migration.^{773,774} This impact can accelerate the failure of the catalyst, especially at low CO₂ concentrations, where the catalyst is more vulnerable to damage when exposed to the plasma environment for a long time due to the low reaction rate.⁷⁷⁵ According to Młotek *et al.*,⁶² soot would develop after performing plasma-catalyzed biogas processes for an extended period of time. This might cause catalyst poisoning, which would hinder the reaction's ability to proceed, as well as discharge failure. Mohamed *et al.*'s⁷⁷⁶ strategy for producing ethylene from CO₂ and CH₄ included direct current glow discharge; however, the process created carbon filaments, which led to electrical short circuits and plasma failures (Fig. 28). These carbon filaments not only affect the selectivity of C₂₊ products, but also reduce the conversion of CO₂ and CH₄. In contrast, thermal catalysis and electrocatalysis have accumulated more experience in catalyst selection, stability optimization, *etc.*, and have better stability.^{777,778} Therefore, in

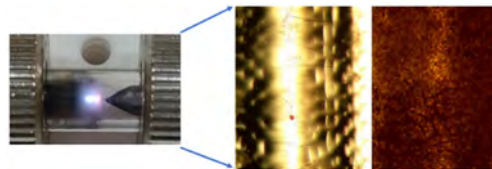


Fig. 28 Formation of a carbon filament between the electrodes of a plasma discharge. This filament short-circuits the reactive plasma, stopping all potential reactions and causing a critical reactor failure (reproduced with permission from ref. 776. Copyright 2021 Mohamed O M. All rights reserved).

plasma catalysis, the selection of highly durable catalyst materials and the development of strategies to reduce carbon deposition and structural degradation are key to improving the efficiency of catalytic reactions. In contrast, electrocatalysis and thermal catalysis technologies are more reliable in terms of material stability and long-term use.

The design of plasma catalytic reactors is relatively complex and requires the optimization of multiple parameters, such as plasma generation, maintenance, and contact between plasma and catalyst.^{779,780} The design becomes more challenging when the CO₂ concentration is low because it must be made sure that the few CO₂ molecules can get enough plasma energy for a productive reaction. As a result, the reactor has to have a high energy density while minimizing unnecessary energy loss.

On the other hand, the design of reactors for thermal and electrocatalysis is more advanced, and these technologies have also operated on an industrial scale for a longer period of time.^{781,782} Thermal catalysis usually relies on high temperature conditions, and high reaction efficiency can be achieved by optimizing the thermal management of the reactor and the distribution of the catalyst. Electrocatalysis controls the reaction by regulating the electric field and electrode materials, which allows it to operate effectively under low temperature conditions and is easier to combine with renewable energy to further improve energy efficiency. Therefore, although plasma catalysis has unique advantages in some cases, its complex reactor design and low energy efficiency limit its feasibility for large-scale application. Thermal catalysis and electrocatalysis have greater potential in industrial applications due to their more mature reactor design and easier large-scale operation.

4.2.5 Biocatalytic CO₂ conversion. Biocatalytic CO₂ conversion relies on specific enzymes or metabolic pathways, through which biological systems convert CO₂ into target compounds.^{783,784} Multiple natural CO₂ fixation pathways have been discovered in nature, and there are currently 7 major CO₂ fixation pathways.⁷⁸⁵ The response rate of biocatalysis is greatly

decreased in low CO₂ concentration environments, which presents a considerable difficulty. Because biocatalysis often occurs in mild environments, biological systems find it challenging to sustain enough reactivity at low CO₂ concentrations.^{786,787} In contrast, technologies such as photocatalysis or thermocatalysis can enhance the reaction rate through external energy fields, which is especially advantageous when the CO₂ concentration is low.

The effectiveness of biocatalysts is highly dependent on the capture and delivery of CO₂, but it is difficult for biological systems to achieve efficient CO₂ capture and delivery to reaction centers under low CO₂ concentration conditions.^{788,789} This is in contrast to other catalytic technologies such as plasma catalysis, which can effectively improve the efficiency of CO₂ capture and reaction through the excitation of high-energy electrons.⁷⁹⁰ Ismael *et al.*⁶⁵ compared the CO₂ capture capacity of porous zeolite adsorption and microalgae biomass and found that after numerical simulation, zeolite could capture 8 kg CO₂ per cubic meter of bed per hour with an energy consumption of 0.987 MJ kg⁻¹ CO₂. *Scenedesmus almeriensis* microalgae performed best in wastewater, with a capture rate of 0.1 kg m⁻³ h⁻¹ and an energy consumption of 0.48 MJ kg⁻¹ CO₂, which is better than zeolite adsorption. Combining high specific surface area materials for CO₂ adsorption and bioconversion is an effective strategy. Li *et al.*⁶⁶ went on to show how MOFs may be utilized as CO₂ adsorbents and carriers of enzyme immobilization. They also showed how to accomplish effective CO₂ adsorption and conversion *via* a layer-by-layer self-assembly technique (Fig. 29a). In order to accomplish the conversion of CO₂ to formate, they employed amine-functionalized MIL-101(Cr) for initial CO₂ adsorption and built two layers of HKUST-1 on its surface, immobilizing carbonic anhydrase and formate dehydrogenase, respectively (Fig. 29b–e). The immobilized enzyme exhibited remarkable reusability and operational stability. 10 cycles of implementation resulted in a cumulative formate output of 1077.7%. The effective conversion

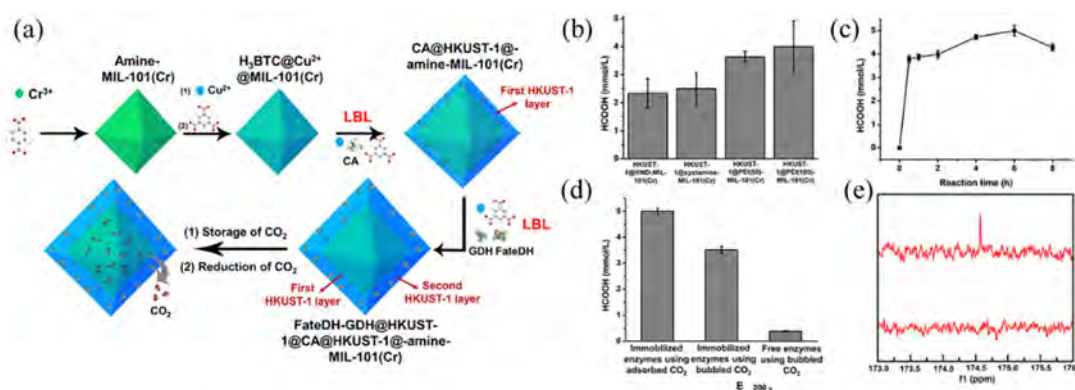


Fig. 29 (a) Amine-functionalized MIL-101(Cr) immobilized enzyme for CO₂ adsorption; (b) HCOOH production catalyzed by HKUST-1@HMD-MIL-101(Cr), HKUST-1@cystamine-MIL-101(Cr), HKUST-1@PEI(50)-MIL-101(Cr), and HKUST-1@PEI(100)-MIL-101(Cr) immobilized enzyme systems; (c) formic acid production at different reaction times; (d) HCOOH production catalyzed by HKUST-1@PEI(100)-MIL-101(Cr) immobilized enzyme with adsorbed CO₂ as substrate, HKUST-1@PEI(100)-MIL-101(Cr) immobilized enzyme with bubbled CO₂ as substrate, and free enzyme with bubbled CO₂ as substrate; (e) ¹³C NMR spectrum of formic acid produced by HKUST-1@PEI(100)-MIL-101(Cr) immobilized enzyme using CO₂ as substrate (reproduced with permission from ref. 66. Copyright 2019, Frontiers Media S.A).

of LCC is made possible by this approach, which combines adsorption with biocatalysis.

The activity of biocatalysts is indeed severely limited by environmental conditions, such as temperature, pH, pressure, *etc.*⁶⁸ At low concentrations of CO₂, these limitations become more significant because subtle changes in reaction conditions can affect catalytic efficiency. Different microalgae species have different tolerances to CO₂. Some microalgae can maintain normal growth under low concentrations of CO₂, while other microalgae require high concentrations of CO₂ to achieve higher growth rates. Studies have shown that extremely high concentrations of CO₂ have an anesthetic effect on microalgae, inhibiting their cell growth and photosynthesis, resulting in a “lag phase” in growth.⁶⁷ The mass transfer process of CO₂ and O₂ is a key factor affecting the growth of microalgae and its carbon fixation efficiency. Due to the low mass transfer coefficient, the transfer rate of CO₂ required by microalgae at the air–liquid interface is limited.⁷⁹¹ O₂ produced by photosynthesis will inhibit the growth of microalgae as it accumulates.⁷⁹² To solve this problem, increasing the gas supply flow rate or creating turbulence is usually used to improve the gas mass transfer rate and liquid mixing efficiency. However, excessive turbulence and shear effects may damage microalgae cells, thereby affecting their normal growth.⁷⁹³ To increase the CO₂ dissolution rate and extend the gas–liquid contact time, Xu *et al.*⁷⁹⁴ designed a spiral CO₂ dissolver, aiming to enhance the CO₂ mass transfer efficiency in the horizontal tubular photobioreactor (Fig. 30a). By using spiral baffles, this dissolver shortens the bubble generation time by 30.6% and reduces the bubble diameter by 23.4%, thereby increasing the mass transfer coefficient by 69.2%. At the same time, the residence time of the bubbles increased by 190.2%, significantly extending the contact time between CO₂ and the liquid phase, thereby increasing the dissolved concentration of CO₂ (Fig. 30b and c). This optimization

resulted in a 40.8% increase in the biomass accumulation of microalgae in the horizontal tubular photobioreactor under 15% CO₂ concentration.

However, biocatalysts are susceptible to deactivation in LCC environments, particularly when operating for an extended period of time. The catalyst's sustainability and stability present significant obstacles. Because they are more vulnerable to changes in the environment and byproducts than inorganic catalysts, biocatalysts have a shorter service life and are less reusable.

In addition to natural carbon sequestration pathways, various efficient artificial carbon sequestration methods have also been rapidly developed in recent years. For example, the Max Planck Institute of Terrestrial Microbiology in Germany developed the crotonyl-coenzyme A (CoA)/ethylmalonyl-CoA/hydroxybutyryl-CoA (CETCH) cycle, which converts CO₂ into glyoxylic acid through an enzymatic reaction, achieving CO₂ regeneration. Fixation and transformation.⁷⁹⁵ The artificial starch anabolic pathway (ASAP) designed by the Tianjin Institute of Industrial Biotechnology, Chinese Academy of Sciences, can convert CO₂ into starch and hexoses, which provides a new strategy for sustainable biomass production.^{796,797} In addition, the Institute of Microbiology of the Chinese Academy of Sciences created a POAP cycle by combining multiple enzymes (such as pyruvate carboxylase, oxaloacetate acetyl hydrolase, *etc.*) to convert CO₂ into oxalic acid through a four-step reaction.⁷⁹⁸ Westlake University has also developed a chemical enzyme system that does not require ATP and NAD(P)H, and achieves carbon fixation by combining biological and chemical catalysis, using only dithiothreitol as a reducing agent.⁷⁹⁹ Although these artificial carbon fixation pathways have shown significant potential *in vitro*, the large-scale application of biocatalysis under LCC conditions still faces many challenges. This includes

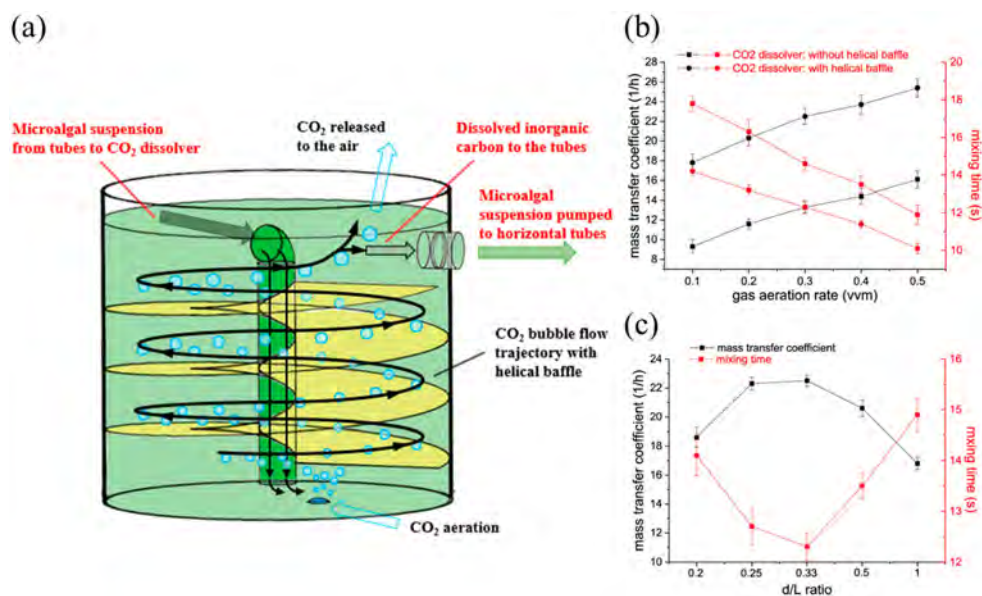


Fig. 30 (a) Schematic diagram of the CO₂ dissolver with spiral baffles; (b) mass transfer coefficient and mixing time with and without spiral baffles; (c) effect of the ratio of spiral baffle pitch to length (d/L) (reproduced with permission from ref. 794. Copyright 2020, American Chemical Society).

optimization of reaction conditions, system design complexity, and overall process scalability.^{800,801}

It is currently challenging for biocatalysis technology to attain the industrial maturity of electrocatalysis and thermocatalysis. High manufacturing costs and low process energy efficiency are the key obstacles. These issues impede biocatalytic technology's progress toward industrialization. Despite this, biological carbon sequestration technology still has a lot of promise, particularly for the manufacture of protein meals and biofuels. It is also anticipated to make significant advancements in the future in the synthesis of fine compounds with high added value.

5. Application of CO₂ in compressed gas energy storage technology

Compressed gas energy storage (CGES) is an energy storage system with significant development potential, gaining attention for its efficiency and flexibility. The basic principle of CGES involves using surplus or low-cost electricity during off-peak periods to compress gas (typically air, CO₂, or other CO₂-based mixture) and store it in suitable storage media, such as natural salt caverns, underground rock formations, or man-made storage tanks. During peak demand periods, the high-pressure gas is released to drive an expander, generating electricity. This method allows for timely power adjustment and balancing, providing effective support for peak and frequency regulation in power systems.^{802–804}

CGES not only alleviates the stress on the grid caused by the imbalance between power supply and demand but also addresses the intermittency and variability issues associated with renewable energy sources like wind and solar power. This enhances the stability and reliability of the power system, making CGES an innovative solution and a promising avenue for global energy transition, energy crisis mitigation, and environmental pollution reduction.

In this context, the application of CO₂ as a potential compressed medium in CGES has gained widespread attention. Unlike traditional air compression systems, CO₂ exhibits higher compressibility and a lower critical temperature under specific conditions, giving it unique thermodynamic properties during energy storage and release.^{805,806} Exploring and utilizing these properties of CO₂ in CGES can not only improve the efficiency of storage systems but also integrate with LCC capture and conversion technologies. This integration forms a comprehensive carbon recycling system, achieving both energy and environmental benefits.

5.1 Application of CO₂ in compressed air energy storage

In CGES technology, air is a common working medium, and the corresponding system is usually called compressed air energy storage (CAES).^{807,808} The corresponding schematic diagram is shown in Fig. 31.

Compressed air energy storage (CAES) is a well-established energy storage technology with a 50-year development

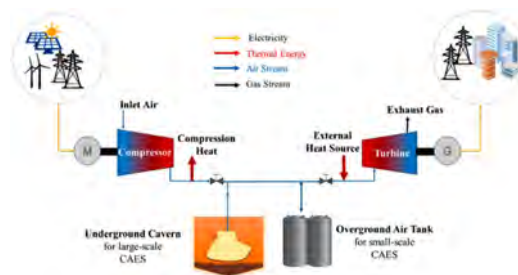


Fig. 31 Schematics of the operating principle of the CAES plant (reproduced with permission from ref. 808. Copyright 2022 Elsevier).

history.^{69–71} Early CAES systems mainly relied on fossil fuels, using high-pressure air directed into combustion chambers to drive turbines for power generation, which resulted in low efficiency. To enhance efficiency, researchers developed various CAES systems based on the traditional combustion-assisted CAES, including adiabatic CAES (A-CAES),⁸⁰⁹ isothermal CAES (I-CAES),⁸¹⁰ liquid air energy storage (LA-CAES),⁸¹¹ supercritical compressed air energy storage (SC-CAES), underwater CAES (UW-CAES),⁸¹² compressed air energy storage in aquifers (CAESA),⁸¹³ and other second-generation technologies.^{814,815} These advanced systems reduce reliance on fossil fuels and, under certain conditions, overcome geographical limitations.

CAES stores energy by manipulating air states, as shown in the air phase diagram (Fig. 32),⁸⁰⁵ with pressure and temperature ranges indicated for engineering applications. Due to atmospheric constraints, the pressure varies between 0.1 MPa and 20 MPa, while the temperature ranges from 273 K to 600 K. Additionally, for L-CAES and S-CAES, air is stored in liquid form, significantly reducing storage volume due to the high density of liquid air. During the charging process, air is typically compressed to a lower pressure before throttling and liquefaction, with liquid air pressure ranging from 0.5 to 4.5 MPa. In the discharge process, stored liquid air is first pressurized and then evaporated, absorbing heat to convert it into gaseous form, reaching up to 20 MPa to drive the expander for power generation.⁸⁰⁵

CAES can also be integrated with other power cycles, such as gas turbines,⁸¹⁶ coal-fired power plants,⁸¹⁷ and renewable

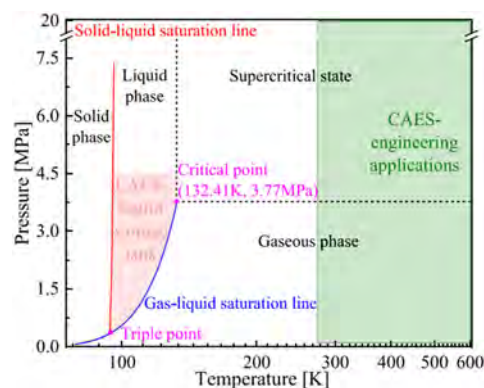


Fig. 32 Three-phase diagram of air (adapted with permission from ref. 805. Copyright 2024 Elsevier).



Fig. 33 The regional distribution and capacity of CAES projects (reproduced with permission from ref. 805. Copyright 2024 Elsevier).

energy sources. When combined with other power cycles, waste heat from these processes can be recovered through the CAES cycle to improve overall efficiency. When integrated with renewable energy sources like wind,⁸¹⁸ solar,⁸¹⁹ and biomass,⁸²⁰ CAES enhances their availability and flexibility.⁸²¹

In addition to theoretical work on A-CAES, demonstration systems have been established to verify its feasibility and promote the development of the CAES industry. With the widespread availability of air, as well as the advanced development of compressors and turbines, CAES technology has reached the stage of large-scale process validation and engineering demonstration worldwide. The regional distribution and scale of these systems are shown in Fig. 33.⁸⁰⁵

Currently, there are two operational CAES systems globally: the 290 MW Huntorf power station in Germany,⁸²² which was commissioned in 1978, and the 110 MW McIntosh power station in the United States, the second commercial CAES facility, which has been in operation since 1991. In China, there is a 1.5 MW A-CAES project in Langfang⁸²³ and a 10 MW A-CAES project in Beijing.⁸¹⁵ In 2021, Chen *et al.*⁸²⁴ built a 100 MW \times 4 h A-CAES system in Zhangjiakou, Hebei Province. This system successfully integrated into the grid and began generating power in September 2022, achieving a round-trip efficiency (RTE) of 70.2%.

CAES offers large capacity, flexibility, high efficiency, long lifespan, and environmental benefits, providing a reliable and efficient energy storage and dispatch solution for power systems. It balances the difference in power supply and demand, enhancing the flexibility and stability of the grid.⁸²⁵ Currently, CAES is mainly used for peak shaving, backup power, frequency regulation, and the storage and dispatch of renewable energy. Studies predict that CAES, with its substantial potential, is among the most economical alternatives for large-scale power plants.⁸²⁶

The way LCC behaves in CAES systems can have a big effect on how well the system works. CO₂ is compressed together with

other gases during the air compression process and kept in the storage reservoir, despite the fact that the concentration of CO₂ in the air is normally low, at around 0.04%. Low concentrations of CO₂ in this atmosphere combine with other gases, including nitrogen (N₂) and oxygen (O₂), changing the compressed air's characteristics.⁸²⁷ Especially in SC-CAES and LAES systems, where CO₂ may be compressed into a liquid state or even partially solidified, its presence might affect air stability. Additionally, CO₂ is somewhat soluble and can react with water molecules to create compounds like bicarbonates, which might result in solid CO₂ deposits that obstruct equipment and pipes.⁸⁰²

CO₂ can be utilized by CAES systems to assist in regulating the pressure inside storage chambers (Fig. 34). For CAES with artificial caverns, conventional salt caverns are no longer needed, and the site constraints of salt caverns can be lessened.⁸²⁸ Since December 21, 2022, two 300 MW artificial CAES caverns are under construction in Chaoyang, Liaoning Province, and Jiuquan, Gansu Province, China, and their volume are approximately 210 000 cubic meters. However, the average construction cost for artificial caverns is around \$500 per cubic meter, compared to just \$100 per cubic meter for excavating salt caverns.⁸²⁹ This high cost presents a significant challenge for artificial CAES caverns.⁸³⁰ Within

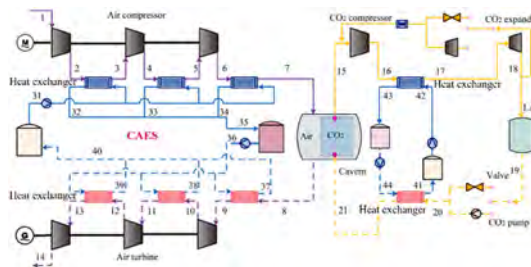


Fig. 34 Schematic diagram of isobaric CAES with artificial cavern (reproduced with permission from ref. 829. Copyright 2024 Elsevier).

artificial caverns, the pressure load is cyclic during the CAES charging and discharging operation. The expansion pressure must be less than the storage pressure during discharge process, and the air below expansion pressure does not do any work.

Maintaining isobaric conditions during discharge process not only reduces the amount of caverns needed and construction costs, but also improves cavern safety and reliability. Zhang *et al.*⁸²⁹ designed a pressure-stabilizing unit utilizing the phase change of CO₂ to create an isobaric system. CO₂ balloons placed in storage caverns help balance the pressure, and their thermodynamic and economic performance was assessed numerically. The optimal design conditions were found to be 6.5 MPa for air storage, 6 MPa for CO₂ storage, and 9 MPa for CO₂ liquefaction, resulting in a system efficiency of 69.92%, a balanced storage cost of \$0.1332 per kW h, a dynamic payback period of 7.26 years, and a return on investment of 1.58.⁸²⁹ Compared to an isochoric system with equivalent efficiency, the storage pressure was reduced to 65% of its original value, and the system maintained constant pressure during operation, significantly improving reliability and safety of the system. Furthermore, the specific volume of saturated liquid is an order of magnitude smaller than that of saturated gas, enabling a 31.86% reduction in cavern scale.⁸²⁹

CO₂ can also be utilized as a cushion gas in CAES systems. Conventional CAES relies caverns to store compressed air, however aquifers, which are widely dispersed, are thought to be efficient storage reservoirs for CAES in order to get over geological constraints. Reducing negative impacts on the reservoir during storage, such as oxygen loss from mineral oxidation, is essential to improve the reliability and effectiveness of energy recovery in CAES systems.^{831,832} One way to lessen these problems is to use CO₂ as the cushion gas in CAES (Fig. 35).⁸¹³

CO₂ offers higher compressibility than air, making it an effective cushion gas for CAES. For a CAES using CO₂ as the cushion gas, the efficiency of gas storage operations can be improved, and the air storage capacity at the same reservoir pressure is enhanced.⁸³³ Additionally, this approach provides a new carbon sequestration option, reducing the release of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere.⁸¹³ However, further research and experimentation are needed to evaluate the actual performance of CAES systems using CO₂ as a cushion gas, as well as to assess the economic and environmental costs and benefits of this approach.

Furthermore, the majority of the waste gases generated by CAES power plants are nitrogen oxides and carbon dioxide, both of which have an adverse effect on the environment and

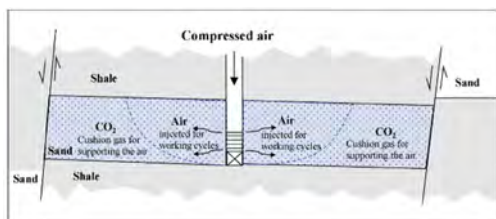


Fig. 35 An idealized single-well CAES reservoir using CO₂ as cushion gas (adapted with permission from ref. 813. Copyright 2021 Elsevier).

human health.⁸⁰⁸ Moreover, noise levels during operation are also an issue, and prolonged operation of CAES would negatively impact the nearby residents. Nonetheless, CAES outperforms conventional energy technologies in terms of environmental preservation and is anticipated to emerge as a significant global energy alternative.⁷⁷

5.2 Chemical effects of CO₂ in compressed CO₂ energy storage

5.2.1 Technical overview. The AA-CAES system relies on high-pressure containers or underground storage reservoirs, resulting in a relatively low energy storage density (typically ranging from 1.5 to 10 kW h m⁻³) and large equipment size. SC-CAES and LAES systems involve the cryogenic liquefaction of supercritical air,⁸⁰⁵ with the liquefaction temperature generally being -196 °C, leading to significant cold exergy losses that limit further performance improvements. Additionally, traditional CAES operates based on the Brayton cycle, but using a non-ideal gas (such as CO₂) instead of an ideal gas in the Brayton cycle can achieve better performance.⁸¹⁹ Utilizing the properties of non-ideal gases is a well-known method to enhance cycle efficiency.⁸³⁴

To further increase energy efficiency and energy density in storage systems, researchers have proposed a compressed carbon dioxide energy storage (CCES) system based on CAES technology, and CO₂ is used as the working fluid.⁸³⁵ The layout of the CCES system (Fig. 36) is similar to that of CAES, with the primary difference being that CCES operates in a closed-loop configuration. Since CO₂ cannot be directly sourced from the environment, an additional low-pressure storage unit is required in the CCES system to store low-pressure CO₂.⁶⁹ By using CO₂, the CCES system can potentially achieve higher energy density and efficiency due to the favorable thermodynamic properties of CO₂, such as its high compressibility and lower liquefaction temperature compared to air. These characteristics allow for more efficient energy recovery and storage operations, making CCES a promising advancement in the field of energy storage technology.⁸²⁹

The superior thermophysical properties of CO₂ make it highly effective in energy storage systems.^{836,837} As shown in the CO₂ phase diagram (Fig. 37a), its critical point is at 7.38 MPa and 31.3 °C, which is significantly easier to achieve

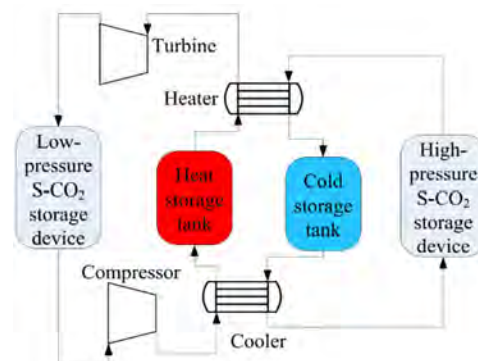


Fig. 36 The schematic diagram of SC-CCES system (adapted with permission from ref. 805. Copyright 2024 Elsevier).

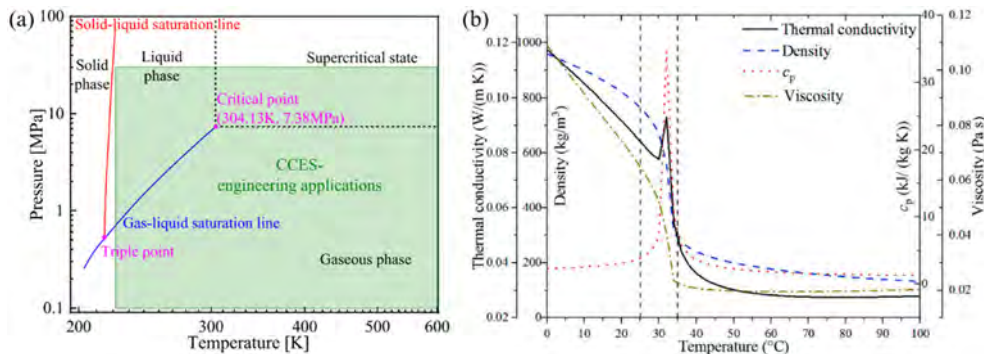


Fig. 37 (a) Three-phase diagram of CO₂ (adapted with permission from ref. 805. Copyright 2024 Elsevier); (b) rapid physical properties changes around the critical area of CO₂ (adapted with permission from ref. 806. Copyright 2022 Elsevier).

compared to air, with a critical point of 3.77 MPa and -140.5 °C.⁸⁰⁵ This makes CO₂ more readily attainable in a supercritical state. Supercritical CO₂ (sCO₂) has low viscosity, high density, and excellent thermal conductivity,^{806,838} which enhances efficient heat storage and heat exchange during system operations. As a result, compressed CO₂ energy storage systems are more compact than compressed air energy storage (CAES) systems at equivalent power levels.⁸³⁹

To increase the energy density of compressed gas storage technologies, the working fluid is often stored in a liquefied state. CO₂, with its higher dew point, liquefies more easily than air.⁸⁴⁰ Unlike CAES, CCES operates as a closed-loop system, offering a scalable solution for CO₂ utilization,⁸⁴¹ which also contributes to reducing CO₂ emissions.⁸⁴² CCES technology offers several advantages: high cycle efficiency, lower construction complexity, long operational life, low system costs, and independence from geographical constraints. These features make it a promising option for large-scale energy storage and sustainable energy management.

The potential of CCES technology has been thoroughly investigated by researchers worldwide due to its many benefits. Depending on the temperature and pressure, CO₂ can exist in supercritical, liquid, gaseous, and solid forms. Fig. 37a also shows the usual working temperature and pressure ranges of CCES systems in engineering applications.⁸⁰⁵ Presently, CCES systems operate in temperatures ranging from 220 K to 600 K and pressures between 0.1 MPa and 30 MPa. When CO₂ in the storage tank is in a supercritical state, the pressure and temperature must be above the critical point. If liquid CO₂ is present, the tank contains a two-phase state (liquid-gas), and the pressure corresponds to the saturation pressure at the given temperature. When CO₂ is in a gaseous state, the tank pressure must be lower than the saturation pressure corresponding to the storage temperature.

Despite the advantages of CCES, there are challenges due to CO₂'s properties. The significant variation in specific heat near the critical point (Fig. 37b) can worsen heat transfer processes, increasing exergy destruction in heat exchangers. Additionally, when a cold source at ambient temperature is used, the proximity of CO₂'s critical temperature to ambient conditions may lead to condensation issues.⁸⁴³

Up to now, various CCES systems have been developed. Based on the state of CO₂ in the low/high-pressure storage tanks, storage schemes can be categorized as follows: transcritical CCES (TC-CCES),⁸⁴⁴ supercritical CCES (SC-CCES),⁸⁴⁵ liquid CCES (L-CCES),⁸⁴⁶ and vapor-liquid CCES (VL-CCES).⁸⁴⁷ Moreover, CCES systems have been proposed for integration with other systems, such as Organic Rankine Cycle (ORC),⁸⁴⁸ solar power,⁸⁴⁹ Kalina cycle,⁸⁵⁰ and wind turbine.^{851,852}

Supercritical CO₂ (sCO₂) is kept in a high-pressure tank in TC-CCES, whilst liquid CO₂ is kept in a low-pressure tank. SC-CCES contains sCO₂ in both high-pressure and low-pressure tanks.⁸⁵³ Both high-pressure and low-pressure tanks contain liquid CO₂ for L-CCES. CO₂ is normally stored in VL-CCES systems as a gas on the low-pressure side and as a liquid on the high-pressure side. The functioning of crucial components and the dynamic behavior of the system are greatly impacted by the dynamic changes in thermodynamic characteristics caused by the transformation of CO₂ between the states of gas, liquid, and supercritical during storage and discharge procedures.⁸⁵⁴ VL-CCES is generally regarded as the best cost-effective and performance-balanced choice among these systems for engineering validation.⁸⁵⁵ Zhang *et al.*⁸⁵⁶ designed two energy storage systems to compare the performance differences between a transcritical CO₂ Brayton cycle and a supercritical CO₂ Brayton cycle. Their findings showed that the round-trip efficiency of the TC-CCES system is 11% lower than that of the SC-CCES system. Supercritical CO₂ (sCO₂), with its high fluid density and heat capacity, is an excellent working fluid for closed-loop power generation, allowing for highly compact turbine designs.⁸³⁷ The compressibility factor of sCO₂ is lower than that of ideal gases, significantly reducing compression work. Compared to CAES, SC-CCES exhibits superior thermodynamic performance.⁸⁵³

Considering the above advantages of sCO₂, adopting sCO₂ instead of air as working medium in compressed gas energy storage systems reduces storage capacity and improves thermal efficiency. Despite being a relatively new technology, SC-CCES has drawn the interest of several academics worldwide because of its high efficiency and tiny footprint.⁸⁵⁷ However, many aspects, including thermodynamic performance, system integration, and economic feasibility, need to be improved, making SC-CCES technology still in its infancy.⁸⁵³

For L-CCES, Zheng *et al.*⁸⁵⁸ examined four different CO₂ storage configurations: low-pressure gas to high-pressure liquid, low-pressure gas to low-pressure liquid, low-pressure liquid to high-pressure liquid, and low-pressure liquid to low-pressure liquid. They conducted a detailed thermodynamic and economic performance comparison, showing that the low-pressure gas to high-pressure liquid configuration achieved storage efficiency above 68%. The low-pressure liquid to high-pressure liquid configuration demonstrated the best overall performance, indicating it as a key development direction for the future.

Currently, research on compressed CO₂ energy storage (CCES) technology mainly focuses on theoretical exploration,⁸³⁵ and only a few demonstration projects are implemented, such as those by Dongfang Electric Corporation in China.⁸⁰⁵ There are still significant challenges in developing key components for CCES systems, and their engineering applications remain in the early stages. The use of relatively high-pressure CO₂ poses safety and cost challenges regarding pressure capacity.⁸⁵⁹

Future efforts should aim to enhance theoretical research on CO₂ energy storage and strengthen experimental validation.⁸⁶⁰ Additionally, exploring more system optimization strategies is essential.⁸⁶¹ The goal is to realize the transition from theoretical concepts to practical applications, and from concept development to project demonstration, ultimately promoting the widespread adoption of compressed CO₂ energy storage technology.

5.2.2 CO₂ metal corrosion. The corrosion problems brought on by CO₂ in CCES systems require particular consideration. A common electrochemical process is CO₂ corrosion, in which CO₂ dissolves in water to make carbonic acid that then splits into H⁺, HCO₃³⁻, and CO₃³⁻ ions in two stages. By providing more H⁺ ions, CO₂ speeds up the hydrogen evolution process, which in turn speeds up metal corrosion.⁸⁶² In this procedure, water is essential. According to studies, metal pipes do not corrode when supercritical CO₂ transport is conducted in completely dry or low-humidity (below the crucial moisture threshold) conditions.^{863,864} However, under actual operating conditions, corrosion can happen quickly if the CO₂ gas is not completely dried and the moisture content becomes close to or over the critical threshold.⁸⁶⁵

Supercritical or dense-phase CO₂ has higher compressibility, diffusivity, and solubility, which can lead to corrosion rates in pipelines reaching up to 10 mm per year under certain conditions.⁸⁶⁶ Hua *et al.*⁸⁶⁷ studied the corrosion of X65 carbon steel at 50 °C and 8 MPa transport pressure under varying moisture levels in supercritical CO₂. They found that the corrosion rates of X65 steel in CO₂-saturated water, water-saturated CO₂, and partially water-saturated CO₂ were 10.0 mm per year, 1.4 mm per year, and 0.2 mm per year, respectively. In conditions where the water content was below 1600 μL L⁻¹ in partially saturated CO₂, no significant corrosion was observed.

Sun *et al.*⁸⁶⁸ reported that the general corrosion rate was only 0.014 mm per year under 10 MPa and 50 °C after 120 hours. The corrosion process under these conditions is illustrated in Fig. 37.⁸⁴ Initially, water droplets condense locally as CO₂ saturates the droplets, forming H₂CO₃, which leads to localized corrosion of the steel. As the concentration of Fe²⁺ increases in the water film, FeCO₃ forms, as shown in Fig. 38(a). With continued condensation, small water droplets merge, eventually forming a continuous water film that promotes uniform corrosion. This process leads to the development of a thick and protective FeCO₃ film on the steel surface (Fig. 38(b)). Notably, when the moisture content is low and exposure time is short, areas without water condensation do not experience corrosion.

Supercritical CO₂ may contain various impurity gases, such as O₂, SO₂, and H₂S. In the corrosion process of supercritical CO₂, O₂ can transform the corrosion product FeCO₃ into Fe₂O₃. The impact of SO₂ on pipeline corrosion is mainly due to its interaction with water and O₂, which promotes the formation of acidic media, lowering the system's pH and accelerating pipeline corrosion.⁸⁶⁹ Research has shown that the corrosive effect of SO₂ on pipeline steel is more severe than that of O₂.^{870,871} Moreover, when both SO₂ and O₂ are present, the corrosion rate of pipeline steel is higher than that under either gas alone.⁸⁷⁰ H₂S increases the pipeline's water adsorption capacity, and the amount of water condensing on the pipe walls is raised, which accelerates the formation of a thin liquid film on the surface and, consequently, speeds up the corrosion process. Wei *et al.*⁸⁷² found that

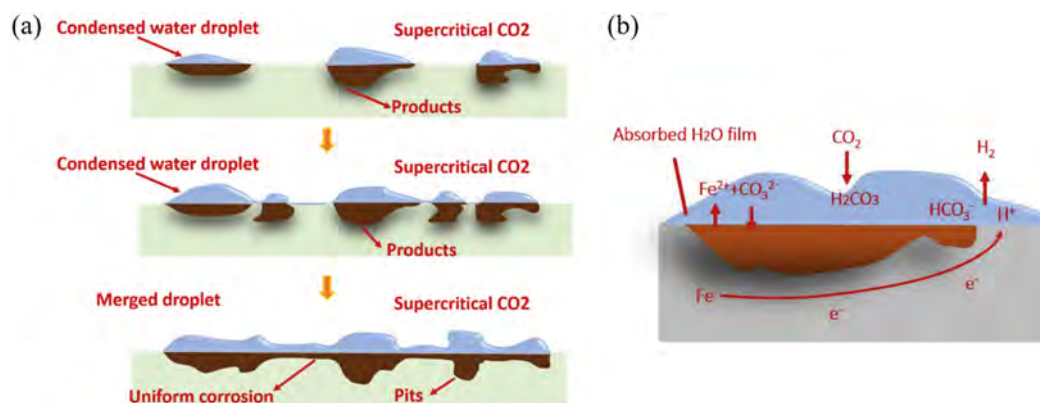


Fig. 38 (a) Corrosion process diagram under the water-saturated CO₂ phase; (b) corrosion mechanism diagram under the water-saturated CO₂ phase (reproduced with permission from ref. 84. Copyright 2019 Elsevier).

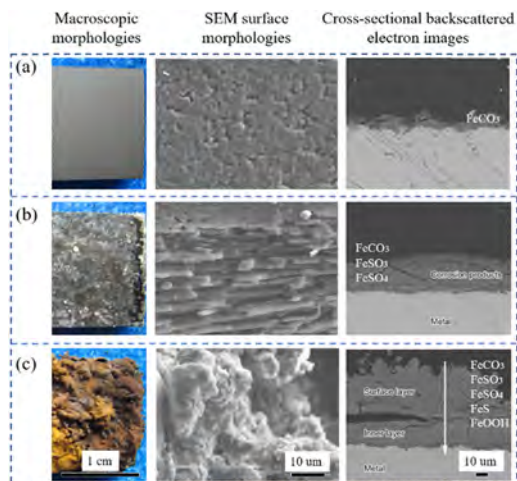


Fig. 39 Corrosion scales exposed to water-saturated supercritical CO₂ system containing (a) CO₂; (b) CO₂ + 1000 ppmv SO₂; (c) CO₂ + 1000 ppmv O₂ + 1000 ppmv H₂S + 1000 ppmv SO₂ for 120 h at 10 MPa and 50 °C (reproduced with permission from ref. 870. Copyright 2016 Elsevier).

adding just 0.005% H₂S to water-saturated supercritical CO₂ resulted in an increase of 40% in the average corrosion rate and 65% in the localized corrosion rate for X65 pipeline steel.

Sun *et al.*⁸⁷⁰ investigated the effects of O₂, H₂S, and SO₂ impurities on the corrosion behavior of X65 steel in a water-saturated supercritical CO₂ system. Using SEM, EDS, and XRD to characterize the corrosion scale (Fig. 39), they found that even low concentrations of impurities significantly altered the characteristics of the corrosion scale. The interactions between O₂, H₂S, and SO₂ led to additional reactions, forming elemental sulfur, sulfuric acid, and water, thereby accelerating the corrosion of the steel.

In addition, strict control of temperature and pressure is required during the transportation of supercritical CO₂. At low temperatures and high pressures, CO₂ may solidify, causing pipeline blockages. In dense or supercritical states, the transportation temperature and pressure of CO₂ also influence pipeline corrosion. Hua *et al.*⁸⁷³ compared the corrosion behavior of pipeline steel in dense-phase CO₂ (at 35 °C and 8 MPa) and supercritical CO₂ (at 50 °C and 8 MPa). Their results showed significant corrosion in the dense-phase CO₂, while no corrosion was observed in the supercritical state. Wei *et al.*⁸⁷⁴ investigated the corrosion behavior of X70 steel in gaseous (1 MPa) and supercritical CO₂ (9.5 MPa) at 80 °C. The results indicated that the average corrosion rate of X70 steel in supercritical CO₂ was higher than in gaseous CO₂. The authors attributed this to the rapid formation of a dense FeCO₃ corrosion layer on the sample's surface in gaseous CO₂, which slows down the base material's corrosion. In contrast, in supercritical CO₂, an amorphous corrosion layer forms initially, which then gradually transforms into a dense FeCO₃ layer.

During the initial construction phase of salt caverns for compressed gas energy storage (CAES), water injection for cavity dissolution and gas injection for brine displacement are required to prevent impurities from accelerating CO₂ corrosion.^{875,876} This process involves the injection and

extraction of water containing high concentrations of halides and oxygen.

5.2.3 CO₂ mineral reactions. Storing compressed gas in porous formations, in addition to salt caverns, is a promising method for large-scale, long-term energy storage. Porous formations are widespread and offer high storage capacity.^{877,878} However, due to their great depth, variable pressure, and brine saturation, the water-rock-CO₂ interactions during CO₂ injection must be carefully considered. In compressed energy storage in porous formations, CO₂ is injected into aquifers, where a portion dissolves into the formation's brine, lowering the pH and promoting the dissolution of carbonate and aluminosilicate minerals.⁸⁷⁹ As these primary minerals dissolve, the pH is buffered, which facilitates the precipitation of carbonate minerals.^{880–883}

These reactions lead to complex changes in the porosity and permeability of the formation, making predictions challenging. Black *et al.*⁸⁸⁴ noted that mineral reaction rates vary with pH and CO₂ concentration, and impurities in the CO₂ or gas mixture can change the reaction extent and affect the properties of the resulting products. In recent studies, geochemical reactions, such as mineral replacement⁸⁸⁵ and salt precipitation, have been observed in CO₂-saturated regions. Salt precipitation can occur near the wellbore area or in dry regions where the formation brine evaporates into the gas phase (Fig. 40). This may result in salt crystals precipitating within the formation^{886–889} or in caprock fractures,⁸⁹⁰ blocking or reducing flow pathways.⁸⁹¹ In water-bearing formations, residual water films may form on particle surfaces within CO₂-saturated regions.⁸⁹² These water films are reactive, causing mineral dissolution and precipitation reactions that often occur preferentially within small pores and pore throats where water films dominate.⁸⁹²

For the CGES system where CO₂ is stored in the formation, the reaction between CO₂ and minerals and the corresponding

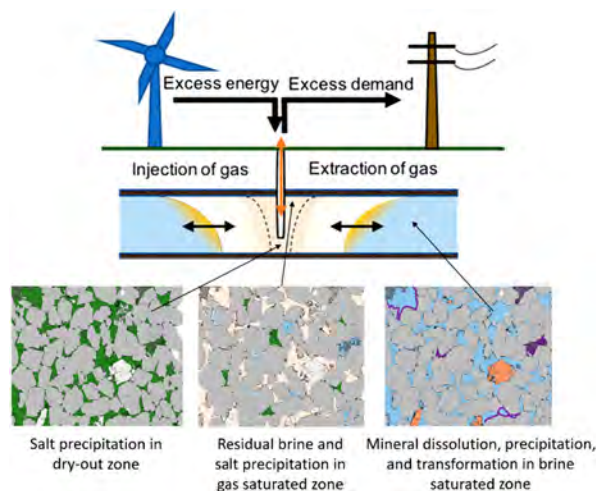


Fig. 40 Anticipated mineral reactions in reservoir formations including salt precipitation (green), mineral precipitation (purple), and mineral transformation (orange) (reproduced with permission from ref. 879. Copyright 2020 American Chemical Society).

negative consequences (flow blockages) should be noted and minimized.

5.3 Effect of CO₂ proportion on the performance of CGES

In order to improve the performance of the energy storage system, a binary mixture of CO₂ other than air and CO₂ can also be used as the working medium of CGES,⁸⁹³ such as CO₂/CH₄, CO₂/O₂, CO₂/N₂,⁸⁹⁴ CO₂/H₂, CO₂/R32,⁸⁹⁵ CO₂/R161.⁸⁹⁶ The molar fraction of CO₂ affects the thermophysical properties of the mixture, the compressor work input, the turbine output work, the storage density and round-trip efficiency, which are specifically stated below. This section focuses on the effect of the proportion of CO₂ in a binary mixture on a CGES system, and the molar fraction rather than the concentration is used to indicate the amount of CO₂.

5.3.1 Thermophysical properties of the mixture. The thermophysical properties of the gas affect the overall performance of the CGES system.⁸⁹³ Thermophysical properties include thermodynamic properties (vapor–liquid equilibrium behavior and specific heat capacity) as well as transport properties (viscosity, thermal conductivity, and diffusion coefficient). The thermodynamic properties of the system can be significantly affected by the addition of other gases to the CO₂.^{897,898}

The molar fraction of CO₂ affects the vapor–liquid equilibrium behavior, and critical point of the mixtures.^{899–901} Li *et al.*⁸⁹⁹ surveyed the available experimental data related to the vapor–liquid equilibrium properties of CO₂ mixtures as shown in Fig. 41. For CO₂/CH₄, CO₂/O₂, CO₂/N₂, and CO₂/H₂, the

molar fraction of CO₂ affects the bubble point, dew point of the mixed gas. As the molar fraction of CO₂ increases, the bubble point pressure of the mixed gas gradually decreases, and the dew point pressure also shows a decreasing trend.⁸⁹⁹ Therefore, a large mole fraction of CO₂ in the mixed gas is prone to gas–liquid phase change at lower pressure. The phase change point of the mixed gas is a parameter that needs to be focused on in the design of the CGES process.

Similarly, the critical point of the CO₂-based mixture depends on the type and ratio of the added gases.^{71,895} Jeong *et al.*⁹⁰² and Wang *et al.*⁸⁰⁶ investigated the critical temperatures and critical pressures of CO₂-based nonorganics (Fig. 42(a)) such as CO₂/Kr, CO₂/O₂, CO₂/H₂S, CO₂/CO, CO₂/SO₂, CO₂/CH₄. The critical temperature of the mixture becomes larger because of the addition of SO₂ and increases with its mole fraction, while the opposite is true for the addition of the other gases.⁸⁰⁶ The critical pressure of the mixture increases and then decreases with the increase of the CO₂ mole fraction, except for CO₂/Kr (Fig. 42b).

In addition, organics such as R32, R161, and Propylene have also been used to form binary mixtures with CO₂ as the working medium of CGES. The results of Liu *et al.*,^{895,903} Tang *et al.*⁹⁰⁰ and Liu *et al.*⁹⁰³ indicate that the critical temperatures of the CO₂-based binary mixtures are higher than that of pure CO₂, and generally increase monotonically with decreasing molar fraction of CO₂ (Fig. 42(c)). Therefore, mixing organics with suitable physical properties into CO₂ can increase the critical temperature, and the conventional cooling source in the energy

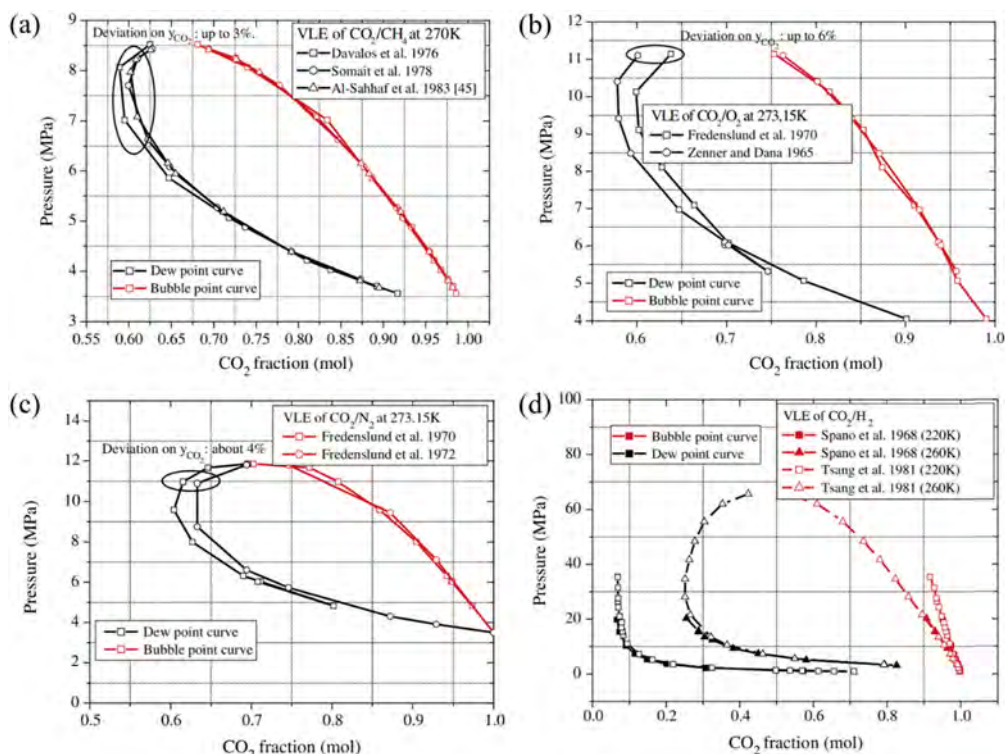


Fig. 41 Effect of CO₂ mole fraction on the vapor–liquid equilibrium behavior of mixtures: (a) CO₂/CH₄ mixture; (b) CO₂/O₂ mixture; (c) CO₂/N₂ mixture; (d) CO₂/H₂ mixture (reproduced with permission from ref. 899. Copyright 2011 Elsevier).

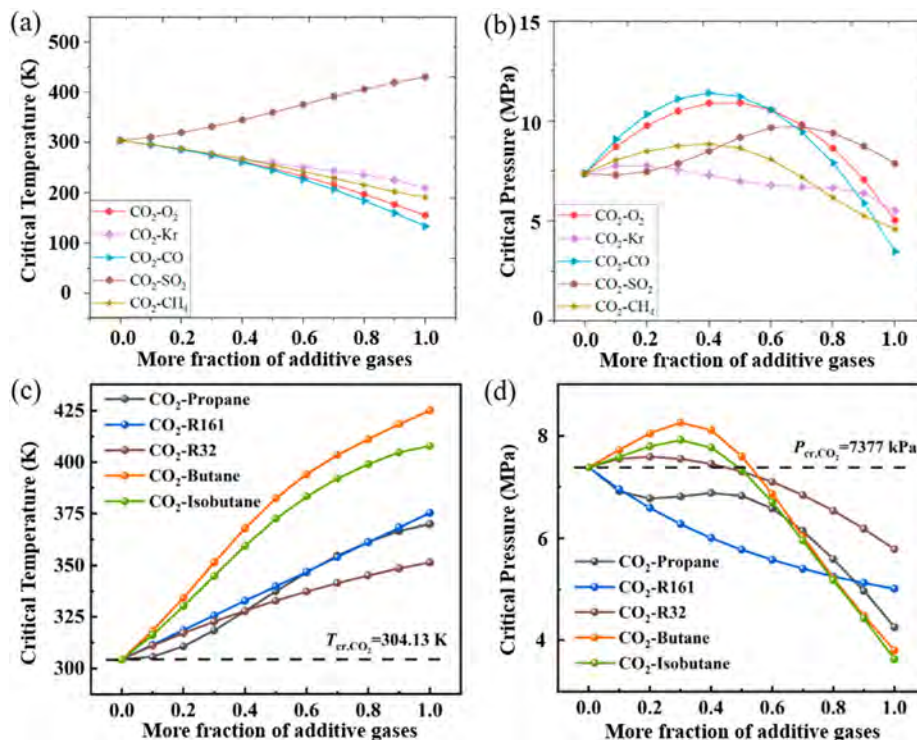


Fig. 42 The effects of addition gas molar fraction on (a) and (c) critical temperature and (b) and (d) critical pressure. (a) and (b) Reproduced with permission from ref. 806 and 902. Copyright 2022 Elsevier; (c) and (d) Reproduced with permission from ref. 900. Copyright 2012 Elsevier.

storage system can be effectively utilized to solve the problem of condensation of subcritical CO₂. Meanwhile, the CO₂ molar fraction affects the critical pressure of CO₂-based mixtures (Fig. 42(d)). The critical pressure of mixtures can be less than that of pure CO₂ by selecting a suitable additive gas,⁹⁰⁰ which contributes to the reduction of operating pressure and equipment cost. Ma *et al.*⁸⁹⁶ attempted to reduce the difficulty of liquefaction in a CGES system by using the CO₂ binary working fluids, and CO₂/R161 (0.7/0.3) and CO₂/R1270 (0.82/0.18) mixtures were found to have better system performance. Moreover, the flammability of the gas should be noted when considering the addition of organic gases. Propane, butane and isobutane are flammable, and CO₂ is an inert gas. The addition of 30% CO₂ can bring C3–C5 alkanes out of the flammability range.^{904,905} Therefore, the mole fraction of the added organic gases should be lower than 70%.

For the CGES system, it is thermodynamically clear that the closer the main compressor inlet state is to the critical point, the better the performance. A lower compressor inlet temperature will allow the mass to be more easily compressed to the rated pressure level, while a lower compressor inlet pressure allows for higher compression ratios.⁷¹

Meanwhile, the critical line (*i.e.*, the trajectory of the critical point) is continuous or discontinuous between each critical point of the pure component.⁹⁰⁶ In practice, for discontinuous critical lines, phase separations (gas–gas immiscibility, vapor–liquid equilibrium, and liquid–liquid equilibrium) can lead to instability of the working fluid.⁹⁰² However, it is almost impossible for a compressor to use mixtures with discontinuous

critical lines as a working fluid near the critical point conditions of the fluid. Therefore, the critical phenomena of CO₂-based binary mixtures should be carefully considered.

The effect of the specific heat of the working medium on the CGES is mainly reflected in the energy consumption and efficiency of the compression process. The specific heat of gases increases with the increase of temperature, and CO₂ has a smaller specific heat capacity relative to CO, H₂, and H₂O (Fig. 43(a)).⁹⁰⁷ For CO₂-based mixtures, the results of Ning *et al.*⁹⁰⁸ show that the specific heat of CO₂/CH₄ mixture is significantly affected by temperature. It increases with increasing temperature and is less affected by pressure. A large CO₂ mole fraction in the CO₂/CH₄ mixture corresponds to a small specific heat of the mixture.⁹⁰⁸ Changes in the specific enthalpy and specific heat affect the performance of the system.⁹⁰⁹ Zhang *et al.*⁹¹⁰ studied the specific heat of pure CO₂ and CO₂/propylene at different temperatures (Fig. 43(b)), and they pointed out that the specific heat of CO₂/Propylene mixture showed a decreasing trend with increasing temperature or decreasing CO₂ mole fraction. Meanwhile, the change in the specific heat of the mixtures became more drastic with increasing propylene content.⁹¹⁰ Moreover, as a working fluid with a small specific heat always carries less heat, the change in specific heat in turn affects the heat transfer of the CO₂ binary mixture: when the propylene mole fraction is high, the temperature difference is also high, and the heat exchanger performance deteriorates in the CGES system.⁹¹⁰

The magnitude of the specific heat of a gas directly affects the amount of energy required for the compression process. Specific heat is the ability of a substance to absorb or release

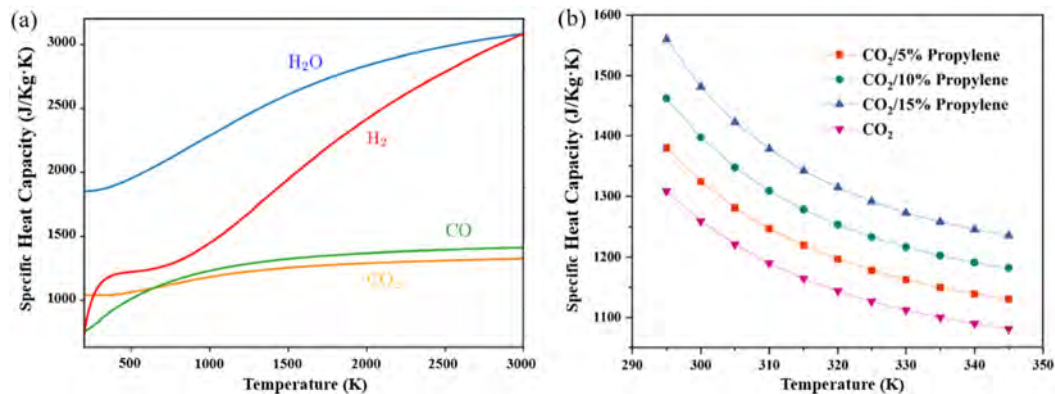


Fig. 43 (a) Variation of specific heat of different gases with increasing temperature (adapted with permission from ref. 907. Copyright 2020 EDP Sciences); (b) specific heat of CO₂ and CO₂/propylene mixture at different temperatures (reproduced with permission from ref. 910. Copyright 2023 Elsevier).

heat, and gases with a smaller specific heat require less energy input for compression, which is favorable to the efficiency of compression energy storage systems. However, this advantage may not be obvious in the practical application of energy storage systems, because the efficiency of compression energy storage systems is also affected by a variety of factors, including the performance of the compressor, the efficiency loss in the energy storage and release processes.

The molar fraction of CO₂ also affects the viscosity, thermal conductivity, and thermal diffusion coefficient of the mixtures. Li *et al.*¹⁴¹ mathematically analyzed the viscosity, thermal conductivity, and diffusion coefficient of the CO₂ mixtures based on experimental data and theoretical modelling in the literature (Fig. 44). For mixtures composed of CO₂/N₂, CO₂/CH₄, CO₂/H₂, and CO₂/SO₂, the viscosity of the CO₂-based mixture all increases with the increase of the molar fraction of CO₂. However, for CO₂/O₂ mixture, the viscosity exhibits an downward trend with the increasing molar fraction of CO₂. Meanwhile, an increase in the molar fraction of CO₂ causes a decrease in the thermal conductivity of the CO₂/H₂ mixture, whereas for the CO₂/H₂O mixture, the thermal conductivity increases and then decreases, with a maximum at a molar fraction of CO₂ of about 40%.¹⁴¹ The viscosity of the working fluid directly affects the internal fluid flow in the compressor and the heat exchange process. Low viscosity helps to reduce friction losses inside the compressor and increase the energy conversion efficiency. In addition, the thermal conductivity of the working fluid affects the heat transfer process inside the storage tank, which in turn affects the temperature distribution and pressure changes inside the tank. Optimizing the gas thermal conductivity can better manage the heat transfer in the energy storage process and reduce the heat loss. Moreover, good thermal conductivity can help to control the temperature change in the energy storage process and avoid overheating or overcooling phenomenon, thus improving the safety and reliability of the energy storage system.

In summary, the thermophysical properties and transport properties of working fluid affect the along-track resistance loss in the pipeline, heat exchanger efficiency, and turbine efficiency, thus affecting the overall efficiency and economic

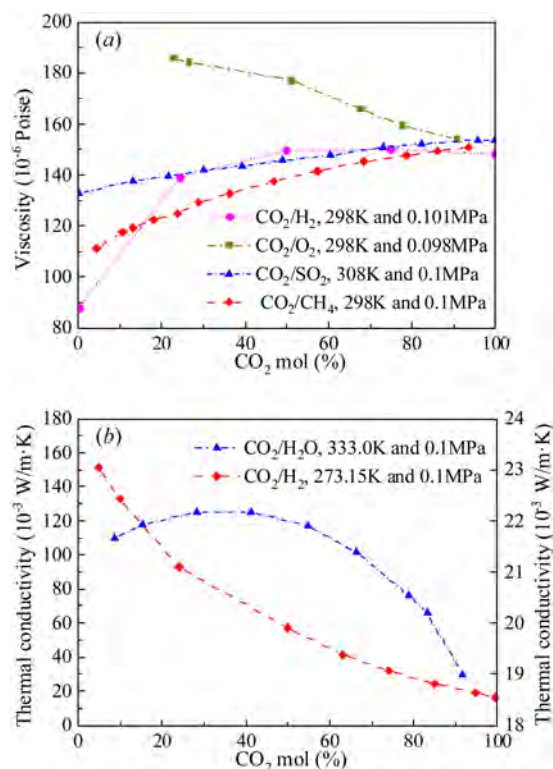


Fig. 44 Effect of CO₂ molar fraction on (a) viscosities and (b) thermal conductivities of binary gas mixtures. (Data extracted with permission from ref. 141. Copyright 2011 Elsevier.)

benefits of the CGES system. Therefore, the performance and efficiency of the compression energy storage system can be effectively improved by selecting a CO₂-based mixture with large specific heat, small viscosity, large thermal conductivity, and suitable dew point/bubble point/critical point.

5.3.2 Compression power consumption and expansion power. The increase in machine efficiency contributes to the improvement of CGES system efficiency, thus, attention should be paid to compressors and expanders.

The content of CO₂ in binary mixtures affects the power consumption of the compressor. For organics such as CO₂/R161, CO₂/R32, CO₂/propane, CO₂/propylene, and CO₂/DME, the compression ratios of the CO₂-based mixture are all less than that of pure CO₂, and the average isentropic efficiencies are all greater than that of pure CO₂ (86.20%), shown as Fig. 45(a).⁹¹⁰ The compression ratio decreases with the increase in the mass fraction of the added organic gas. Meanwhile, the isentropic efficiency of the compressor decreases with the increase of compression ratio, and the average isentropic efficiency of the compressor is high when the compression ratio is small. Therefore, the isentropic efficiency of the compressor increases with the increase in the mass fraction of the added organic gas (Fig. 45(b)).⁹¹⁰ At the same time, corresponding the power consumption of the compressor decreases, that is, the power consumption of the compressor decreases with the increasing mass fraction of the added organic gas.

The content of CO₂ in binary mixtures affects the expander output work. As shown in Fig. 45(c), the variation in the expansion ratio of the CO₂-based mixtures is always less than that of pure CO₂, and the average efficiency is always less than that of pure CO₂ (79.88%).⁹¹⁰ For the CGES system, the turbine pressure ratio at the beginning of the discharge process is determined by the pressure of the tank at the end of the charging process, thus, the initial turbine expansion ratio decreases with the increase in the mass fraction of the added R161 and R32. The uncertainty of the turbine performance increases because of the different initial expansion ratios at the beginning of the discharge process. The turbine output work

and the average isentropic efficiency decrease with increasing mass fractions of DME, R161, R32, and propylene,^{843,910} while the turbine isentropic efficiency of propylene decreases and then increases.⁹¹⁰ Moreover, the turbine output work decreases with increasing mass fraction of the added organic gas. The reason for this is similar to that of the compressor.

The exergy destruction of the system is mainly in the turbine and compressor, accounting for nearly 80% of the total exergy destruction.⁹¹⁰ The compression ratio should be maintained at no more than 1 : 3 during compression to prevent an increase in process irreversibility due to excessive energy consumption.⁹¹¹ The system efficiency can also be effectively improved by reducing the temperature during compression or increasing the inlet temperature during expansion, shown as Fig. 45(d).

In addition, CO₂ has a large potential for phase change at high pressures. The gas temperature of gas may reduce to near the liquefaction point of CO₂ in the expansion progress in some CGES power generation systems. Even if the CO₂ content is low, this phase change can lead to condensation and phase separation. The phase change of CO₂ triggers additional energy loss, which affects the expansion work of the gas and reduces the efficiency of power generation. Moreover, CO₂ may be converted to dry ice in cryogenic equipment, and CO₂ freezing increases the pressure difference in the pipeline and even forces the turboexpander to stop working, which poses a significant threat to the safety, reliability, continuity, and stability of the system. Li *et al.*⁹¹² investigated the expansion process of a turbine for recovering light hydrocarbons from natural gas, and simulated the freezing of CO₂ in a

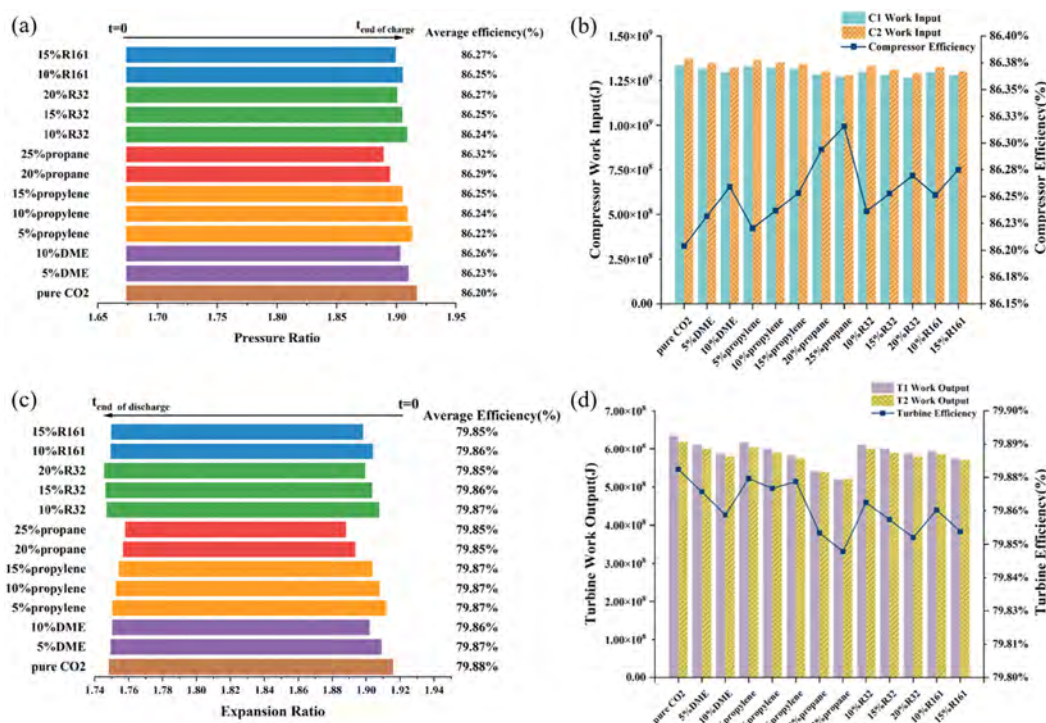


Fig. 45 (a) compression ratio variation, (b) compressor work input and isentropic efficiency, (c) expansion ratio change, (d) turbine output work and efficiency under different mixture pairs and mass fractions (reproduced with permission from ref. 910. Copyright 2023 Elsevier).

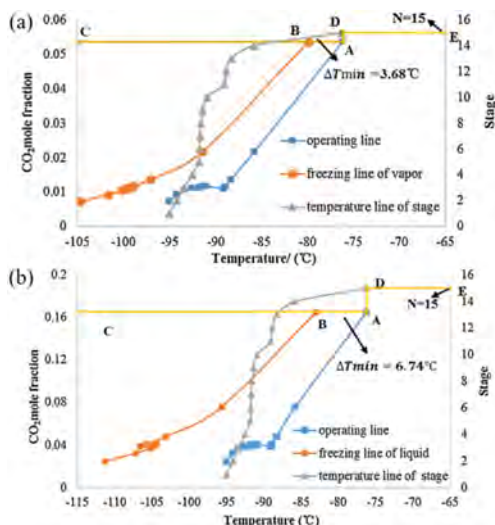


Fig. 46 (a) CO₂ freezing in vapor in demethanizer; (b) CO₂ freezing in liquid in demethanizer (reproduced with permission from ref. 912. Copyright 2017 Elsevier).

demethanizer using Aspen plus. The operating line of demethanizer, the freezing line of vapor and liquid phase (Fig. 46) were drawn based on the concentration and freezing temperature of CO₂ in the vapor and liquid phases. During operation process, it must be ensured that there is a safe boundary of at least 3–5 K in the vapor and liquid.⁹¹³

In summary, the proportion of CO₂ in the binary mixture affects the thermal physical properties of working fluid, the power consumption of the compressor, the output work of the turbine, and the efficiency, and this need to be considered and adjusted in the design and operation of the CGES system. Meanwhile, attention should also be paid to preventing localized freezing of CO₂ in the operation process.

5.3.3 Energy density and round-trip efficiency. Low energy density is a common problem for all types of CGES that store air or CO₂ in gaseous form, and huge underground caverns are an indispensable. Geographic constraints have prompted researchers to use artificial tanks to store the working medium. As a result, the energy density of the system must be greatly improved to significantly reduce the volume of medium required for storage.⁸⁹⁵ Energy density (EVR) is used to indicate the compactness characteristics of an energy storage system, and it is equal to the amount of energy that can be released per unit of storage volume in the energy storage system.

The molar fraction of CO₂ affects the energy density (EVR) of a CGES system. The composition of the gas in a compressed gas storage chamber is a key parameter to maximize the energy density, which can be increased by varying the type and proportion of the working medium in the energy storage system. Abuheiba *et al.*⁸⁹⁴ proposed a new method to increase EVR of a compressed gas by adding a condensable component to it (Fig. 47). A mixture of CO₂ and N₂ is used as the working medium of the CGES. A liquid mineral oil, in which both N₂ and CO₂ are insoluble, is pumped into the vessel at a constant flow rate to compress the gas mixture, and the CO₂ begins to

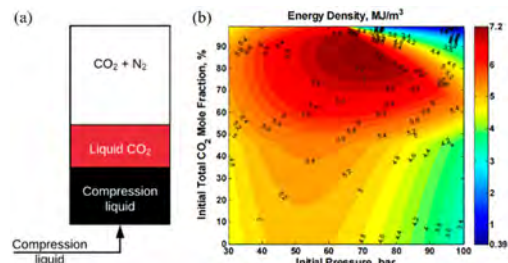


Fig. 47 (a) Schematic of the modeled system; (b) Contour plot of energy density vs. initial total pressure and initial total CO₂ mole fraction for CO₂/N₂ mixture (reproduced with permission from ref. 894. Copyright 2020 MDPI).

condense when its partial pressure exceeds the saturation pressure.⁸⁹⁴ The compression process is stopped when the volume of the gas mixture is less than 5% of the total volume of the vessel or until the pressure reaches 140 bar.

As shown in Fig. 46,⁸⁹⁴ for the case at any initial pressure, EVR gradually increases to a maximum value as the molar fraction of CO₂ increases and then decreases. A similar trend is observed for increasing initial pressure at any initial total molar fraction of CO₂. This is a manifestation of the competitive effect of higher pressure with larger utilized volume.⁸⁹⁴ The storage density using a mixture of 88% CO₂ and 12% N₂ can be 7.33 MJ m⁻³, that is, a 57% increase in energy storage density, compared to 4.67 MJ m⁻³ using pure N₂.⁸⁹⁴

In addition to mixing with gases such as N₂, binary mixtures of CO₂ with organic fluids have recently been used as working medium for CGES to increase the energy density (EVR) and round-trip efficiency (RTE) of the system.^{843,895,896,910,914} RTE, EVR, and charge pressure (P_c) of the system are closely related to the CO₂ mole fraction. RTE is a significant criterion for evaluating the efficiency of the energy conversion from energy input to energy output in the discharge process,^{846,915} and is equal to the ratio of the system benefit (turbine power) to the cost (power consumption of the compressor and pumps).⁸⁴³

Liu *et al.*⁸⁹⁵ mixed CO₂ with organic materials R32, propylene, R1234yf, DME, R1234ze, R161, R152a, isobutene and butane to form a binary mixture as the working fluid of the CGES, and investigated the RTE and EVR of the system with different CO₂ mass fractions. Zhang *et al.*^{843,910} simulated the operating characteristics of a two-stage CGES system under dynamic operating conditions using a binary mixture of CO₂ as the working fluid. Energy and exergy methods were employed to analyze the effects of the type and mass fraction of added organics (CO₂/propane, CO₂/propylene, CO₂/R161, CO₂/R32, and CO₂/DME) to evaluate the RTE, EVR, and other performance parameters. Ma *et al.*⁸⁹⁶ designed an energy storage system with high energy density and low-pressure storage by cycling a binary mixture of CO₂, and analyzed the thermodynamic performance of the system. In all of the above research, EVR always tends to increase with the increase of CO₂ molar fraction. In particular, the results of Liu *et al.*⁸⁹⁵ are shown in Fig. 48(a)–(c): the EVR of CO₂/R32 is the largest among the various CO₂ binary mixtures (Fig. 48(a)). The system RTE and EVR can be significantly improved by increasing

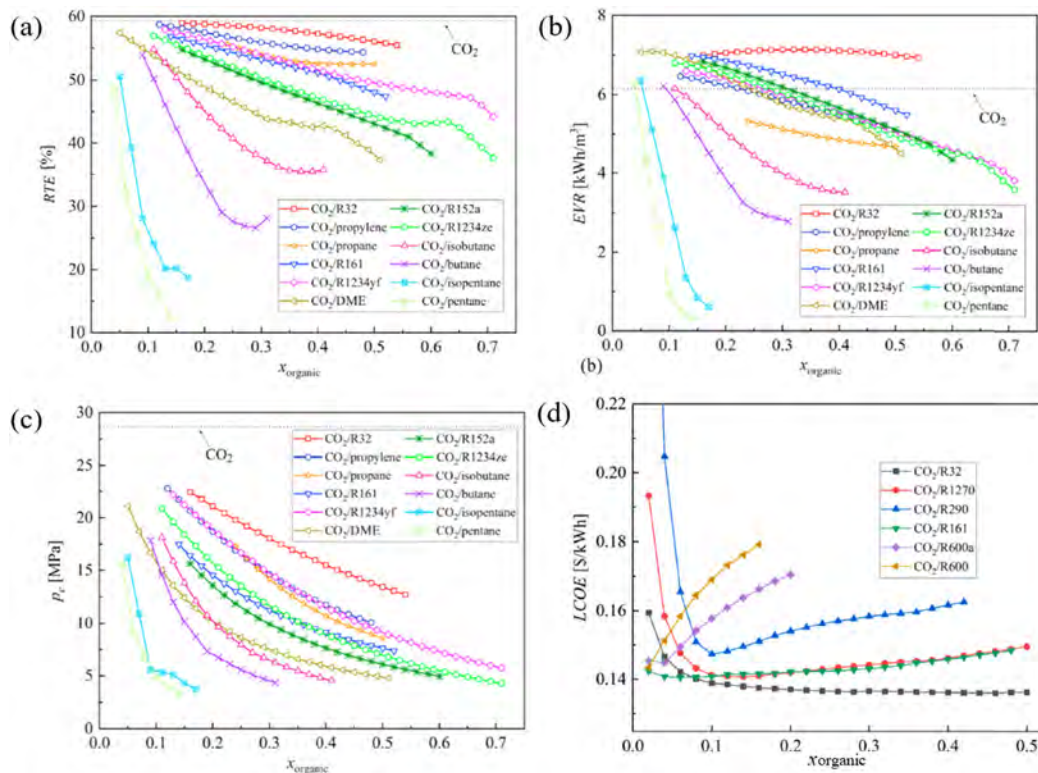


Fig. 48 Effect of organic fluid composition on: (a) round trip efficiency (RTE); (b) energy density (EVR); (c) charge pressure (P_c) (adapted with permission from ref. 895. Copyright 2022 Elsevier); (d) levelized cost of electricity (LCOE) (adapted with permission from ref. 914. Copyright 2023 Elsevier).

the CO₂ content of the CO₂-based mixtures, but at the cost of increasing the system charge pressure (Fig. 48(c)). The maximum EVR of the energy storage system can be higher than that of the pure CO₂ system, except for the system using CO₂/propane. For the CO₂/R32 system, the EVR is 16.16% higher than that of the CO₂ system, and at the same time the charge pressure is reduced from 28.65 MPa to 12.72 MPa,⁸⁹⁵ which is beneficial to the safety and sealing performance of the system.

Meanwhile, Fu *et al.*⁹¹⁴ analyzed the effect of the mass fraction of organics added to CO₂ on levelized cost of electricity (LCOE) in addition to the effect of CO₂ mass fraction on system round trip efficiency (RTE). The LCOE curve for CO₂/R32 increases with increasing R32 mass fraction, while the corresponding curve for CO₂/R600 shows a decreasing trend (Fig. 47(d)). The addition of organic fluids to CO₂ reduces the corresponding critical pressure, and the more that is added, the lower the critical pressure of the mixture.⁸⁹⁵ The corresponding operating pressure and the storage pressure in the tanks decrease, thus, the investment cost of the tanks tends to decrease. However, the required mass flow rate of the working fluid and the investment cost simultaneously increase with the increase of the mass fraction of additive organics.

In addition, for the system under the CO₂/R32 cycle, the compressor accounts for almost a quarter of the total exergy destruction according to the distribution of exergy destruction analyzed by Zhang *et al.*⁸⁴³ (Fig. 49). As the mass fraction of R32 increases, the turbine's share of total exergy destruction decreases due to the decrease in turbine power generation,

while the opposite trend is observed for the heat exchanger, preheater, and throttle shares.⁸⁴³ In general, the increase in system exergy destruction is primarily a result of increased irreversibility of heat exchangers and preheaters, as well as increased differential pressures at throttling valves. Therefore, an increase in the performance of the heat exchanger needs to be considered when using working fluids with a high mass fraction of added organic fluids.

In summary, the behavior of CO₂ in the CGES system and its proportion have an significant impact on the stability,

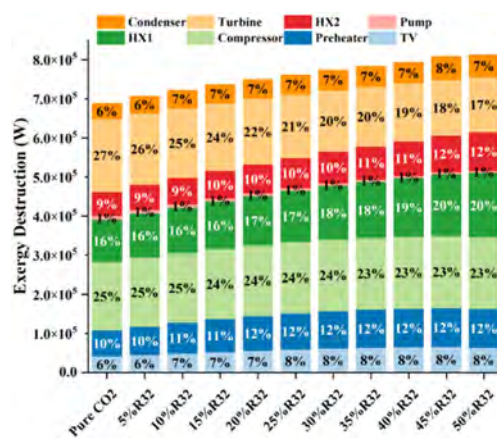


Fig. 49 Exergy destruction of CO₂/R32 mixture with varying mass fractions (adapted with permission from ref. 843. Copyright 2023 Elsevier).

operational efficiency, and safety of the system, which needs to be considered and dealt with in the system design, operation and management to ensure the safety and efficiency of the CGES system.

6. Outlook and summary

With the continuous development of CCUS technology and applications of high-concentration CO₂, the efficient recovery and direct conversion of LCC has become a key challenge in current research. LCC is widely present in various life and industrial scenarios. In-depth research on its behavior characteristics in different energy media will help improve its recovery and utilization efficiency and provide scientific basis and guidance for related production enterprises.

Compared to high-concentration CO₂, LCC faces greater resistance in diffusion, adsorption, dissolution, and catalytic processes on material surfaces. Changes in the composition of the medium can influence CO₂ solubility and diffusion paths. During liquid-phase diffusion, accurately determining the diffusion coefficient and understanding the dissolution-diffusion path are essential for optimizing solvent characteristics to drive the diffusion of LCC. This is important not only for solvent absorption-based DAC but also for applications in gas-liquid multiphase catalysis and gas-liquid conversion energy storage. CO₂ gas-solid diffusion is fundamental in carbon capture and multiphase catalysis. Adsorbents and catalysts for LCC should fully consider the relationships between pore structure, diffusion, transport, and active site distribution in solid materials to achieve efficient adsorption and conversion through effective CO₂ enrichment. Thus, selecting suitable adsorbent materials or carriers is necessary for the selective capture of CO₂ in low-concentration environments.

In the catalytic reduction process, CO₂ exhibits complex primary and side reactions depending on the products, pathways, and conditions. Even for high-concentration CO₂, there are still areas to explore, such as selectivity, catalytic efficiency, and catalyst selection. The direct conversion of LCC is even more challenging. Current strategies mainly focus on adjusting catalyst structure, environment, and active sites to enrich and convert CO₂, addressing issues like low reaction rates, poor selectivity, catalyst instability, and low energy efficiency. This includes using photocatalysis, electrocatalysis, thermocatalysis, plasma catalysis, biocatalysis, and various coupling methods.

In chemical production and energy storage, LCC can impact efficiency, safety, and overall performance. CO₂ is not typically targeted as a product in air separation processes, but due to its similar physicochemical properties to other air components, significant effort and cost are needed for its complete removal. In low-temperature air separation, residual CO₂ can reduce the lifespan of expensive projects. DAC technology targeting LCC still faces challenges in balancing cost, energy consumption, and efficiency. Therefore, researching both solid-phase and liquid-phase adsorption/absorption of LCC holds value for the development of air separation and DAC.

By reviewing the progress of LCC in catalytic reduction, different catalytic technologies' synergistic effects on CO₂ adsorption and conversion under low-concentration conditions are compared. Photocatalysis, electrocatalysis, and thermocatalysis theoretically have high potential for CO₂ conversion but often face issues like low reaction rates, poor selectivity, and catalyst deactivation under low-concentration conditions. Emerging technologies like plasma catalysis and adsorption-enhanced catalysis provide new approaches but also encounter bottlenecks such as low energy efficiency and difficulties in adsorbent regeneration. Biocatalysis, with its mild reaction conditions and high selectivity, has attracted attention, but improving stability and conversion efficiency remains challenging. Overall, future research should focus on innovative catalyst design and reaction condition optimization to overcome technological bottlenecks and achieve efficient, cost-effective CO₂ conversion.

In compressed gas energy storage (CGES) systems, using gas mixtures with different CO₂ concentrations/mole fraction as working media offers potential technical advantages and challenges. The molar fraction of CO₂ affects the thermophysical properties of the working medium, the compressor work input, the turbine output work, and the storage density and round-trip efficiency of the CGES system. Low molar fraction CO₂ can have high critical temperature and specific heat, low critical pressure and viscosity force, which is beneficial for CGES systems. The performance and efficiency of the CGES system can be effectively improved by selecting a suitable CO₂-based binary mixture. Meanwhile, attention should be paid to the corrosion of the pipeline and the mineral reaction with the subsurface reservoir of the CO₂ in the CGES system. CGES is attractive, especially when integrated with renewable energy generation and existing storage infrastructure. Additionally, achieving sustainability requires addressing the techno-economic challenges of CO₂ capture, separation, and reuse. Future development will depend on the advancement of new materials, optimization technologies, and integration with other energy storage systems. Therefore, developing high-efficiency catalytic technologies and new energy conversion and storage methods for LCC in energy media remains essential.

According to the technology maturity and the largest scale of industrial application, cryogenic air separation and thermal catalysis technologies are the most mature in the existing industry and suitable for large-scale applications, as shown in Table 6. In contrast, DAC, electrochemical catalysis, photocatalysis, plasma catalysis and biocatalysis technologies are at different stages of development. They are currently mainly used in small-scale demonstration and research projects. With the continuous development of technology, these technologies are expected to be more widely used in the future.

6.1 Efficient catalytic conversion technologies

For the catalytic reduction of LCC, the design of active sites is crucial. Low CO₂ concentrations mean that the collision frequency of molecules on the catalyst surface is low, requiring catalysts with highly efficient active sites to enhance CO₂

Table 6 Comparison of LCC capture and conversion technologies: technical characteristics, maturity and application scale

Technology	Advantages	Limitations	Application adaptability	Technology maturity	Current largest scale of industrial applications
Cryogenic air separation	Can effectively treat LCC gas; mature technology; stable operation.	Low energy efficiency and high cost; requires lower temperature, increasing energy consumption.	Applicable to large-scale CO ₂ capture, especially in industrial emissions.	Mature	Industrial emission sources, millions of tons of CO ₂ per year.
DAC	Can capture CO ₂ directly from the atmosphere; suitable for LCC sources.	High energy consumption; high equipment investment and operation and maintenance costs.	Applicable to the treatment of LCC from dispersed sources, especially the removal of atmospheric CO ₂ .	Developing	Demonstration projects, thousands of tons of CO ₂ per year.
Thermal catalysis	Mature technology, widely used in industry; high reaction rate.	Requires higher temperature and energy input; may have catalyst deactivation problems.	Applicable to high-concentration CO ₂ conversion in industrial processes.	Mature	Industrial scale, millions of tons of CO ₂ per year.
Electrochemical catalysis	High energy efficiency, suitable for LCC conversion; can work at normal temperature and pressure.	Expensive electrode materials and poor stability; limited conversion efficiency.	Applicable to dispersed CO ₂ sources, such as small-scale and local applications, such as homes or small factories.	Research stage/early development	Small demonstration facilities, several tons of CO ₂ per year.
Photocatalysis	Can use solar energy to drive CO ₂ conversion; environmentally friendly, low energy consumption.	Slow conversion efficiency; dependent on light source, large fluctuations in conversion efficiency.	Applicable to small-scale, LCC conversion, especially in areas with sufficient sunlight.	Research stage/early development	Laboratory/demonstration scale, thousands of tons of CO ₂ per year.
Plasma catalysis	Can carry out CO ₂ conversion at normal temperature and pressure; suitable for low-concentration CO ₂ conversion.	Low energy efficiency, large energy loss during catalysis; complex process.	Applicable to small, efficient conversion systems, such as household equipment or precision process applications.	Developing	Small demonstration facilities, several tons of CO ₂ per year.
Biocatalysis	Carry out CO ₂ conversion under mild conditions; can use the high selectivity of microorganisms or enzymes.	Slow conversion rate; poor stability of biocatalysts, may be affected by environmental changes.	Applicable to LCC conversion, especially in mild environments, such as agriculture and wastewater treatment.	Research stage/early development	Small-scale applications, hundreds of tons of CO ₂ per year.

adsorption and conversion. Increasing the surface area of the catalyst and optimizing its surface chemistry can improve CO₂ adsorption energy at active sites, promoting the reaction.^{466,548,553,554} Utilizing materials like MOFs, porous carbon materials, or oxide composites, which offer high surface areas and multifunctional active sites, is a current research focus.^{638–640} These materials can enhance CO₂ activation and reduction efficiency by tuning their electronic structure and surface energy states.

Effective diffusion and enrichment of CO₂ under low concentrations are key to ensuring reaction rates. Since gas-phase CO₂ is prone to mass transfer resistance during diffusion, designing an efficient gas diffusion layer (GDL) and enrichment strategy is essential.^{101,102} In a gas diffusion electrode (GDE), the GDL must not only provide sufficient porosity and surface area but also be optimized for hydrophobicity to prevent electrolyte penetration while allowing gas-phase CO₂ to reach the catalyst surface. Additionally, using porous materials or designing nanostructured catalyst supports can enhance local CO₂ concentration, increasing enrichment on the catalyst surface and thereby improving reaction efficiency.⁹¹⁶

In order to achieve efficient capture and conversion of LCC, future research should focus on the multifunctional design of catalysts, optimize gas diffusion and enrichment strategies, and explore effective integration with renewable energy. However, there are still many unresolved adjustments in these aspects of current research, and these gaps need to be filled through specific technical improvements and in-depth mechanism research.

First, the multifunctional design of catalysts is the key to improving the conversion efficiency of LCC. Although some progress has been made in catalyst optimization, most of the research focuses on the improvement of a single function, such as by outlining the adsorption performance of the catalyst or enhancing the activity of the reduction reaction. However, in the process of LCC conversion, the catalyst not only needs to efficiently adsorb CO₂, but also should have the ability to enhance the reaction rate and improve the product selectivity. To this end, further catalyst design strategies should integrate multiple functions. For example, designing a catalyst support material with a gradient pore structure can enrich and diffuse CO₂ step by step at different pore levels. Similar designs have been preliminarily applied in MOFs materials, where MOFs materials with different pore sizes can effectively enhance the diffusion and adsorption of gas molecules and improve the efficiency of catalytic reactions. However, further exploration of the synergistic effects between different catalytic components and structures is needed to improve the overall efficiency of the catalytic reaction.

Secondly, the optimization of gas diffusion and enrichment strategies is also another important direction to improve the conversion efficiency of LCC. During the conversion of LCC, the diffusion of gas and the contact efficiency of the reaction active sites directly determine the efficiency of the reaction. Current research often ignores the role of catalyst carriers in gas diffusion, resulting in limitations in catalyst performance.

How to integrate and optimize gas diffusion paths in the design of catalysts is the key. The use of microstructured catalyst carrier materials, such as nanoporous materials, carbon materials with multi-level pore structures, *etc.*, can promote the rapid diffusion and effective enrichment of CO₂ by adjusting the pore size and pore structure. This type of structure exhibits lower gas diffusion resistance and higher reaction efficiency in catalytic reactors. Similar design strategies have been successfully applied in catalytic combustion and hydrogen conversion reactions.⁹¹⁷

However, single catalyst optimization and gas diffusion strategies are not sufficient to meet the needs of LCC conversion. In order to improve the energy efficiency of the reaction and achieve sustainable development, the integration of renewable energy and CO₂ conversion technology should be further explored. Renewable energy (such as solar energy and wind energy) can be used as input energy to power the CO₂ conversion process through electrochemistry or photocatalysis, which can not only reduce energy consumption but also promote energy self-sufficiency in the CO₂ conversion process. In the photocatalytic CO₂ reduction reaction, the light provided by solar energy can drive the electron transfer of the catalyst and reduce the demand for energy input. With the advancement of solar cells and photocatalytic technology, the LCC conversion process based on renewable energy is expected to be realized in the future. However, the volatility and intermittency of solar energy and wind energy make energy integration face great challenges. How to effectively regulate the CO₂ conversion efficiency under different time and space and conditions and reduce dependence on traditional energy is a task worth thinking about.^{45,918}

Inevitably, the catalyst will also face the problem of deactivation and deactivation during the LCC conversion process. The stability and long-term durability of the catalyst are key factors determining its commercial application. During long-term use, the catalyst may lose active sites due to poisoning, sintering, surface structure changes, *etc.*, which in turn affects the reaction efficiency. To address this issue, the deactivation mechanism of the catalyst should be explored in depth. In the CO₂ reduction reaction, the metal active sites on the catalyst surface may sinter and oxidize due to long-term high-temperature reactions, resulting in a reduction in active sites. In order to improve the catalyst's ability to resist deactivation, it is necessary to develop catalytic materials with self-repairing functions or use high-temperature resistant and anti-poisoning materials. For example, doping with precious metals or using more stable solid acid catalysts can extend the service life of the catalyst.

6.2 Novel energy conversion and storage technologies

Utilizing LCC for novel energy conversion and storage can promote efficient energy use and sustainable development. This includes developing photocatalytic, electrocatalytic, and thermocatalytic technologies to convert LCC into high-energy-density chemicals or fuels, as well as exploring new energy storage technologies like CO₂ electrochemical storage and underground CO₂ sequestration.^{710–713}

For LCC conversion, chemical carbon capture is currently a cost-effective option due to its high efficiency and energy conversion rate. However, because chemical carbon capture typically relies on non-renewable energy sources, integrating it with biological conversion offers an innovative approach for the high-value utilization of LCC.^{799,919} For instance, converting LCC into methanol, formic acid, or acetic acid through electrochemical methods and further transforming these products into complex chemicals *via* biological pathways is a viable strategy.^{711,719,721} Nevertheless, the energy efficiency of these inorganic–organic systems remains low due to limitations such as gas–liquid mass transfer and electrode–biointerface compatibility.^{726,727} Future research should focus on designing efficient carbon capture components suitable for LCC and overcoming bottlenecks in the conversion of chemical, light, and electrical energy. Optimizing photo-enzyme and electro-enzyme synergistic catalysis can also help build more efficient photoelectrochemical-biochemical hybrid systems.⁹²⁰ Moreover, developing three-phase mixed fermentation processes for LCC can enable artificial synthesis routes to high-value products, facilitating large-scale utilization and supporting global carbon neutrality goals.

To improve the energy conversion efficiency of LCC, exploring the conversion mechanisms and kinetics of LCC in multiphase reaction systems is essential. Understanding CO₂ interactions and conversion pathways in various media is necessary to optimize the conditions and characteristics that affect catalytic reaction efficiency and selectivity, enabling the engineering application of multiphase reactions.^{512,921,922} Artificial intelligence, machine learning, and high-throughput experimental techniques can be used to accelerate the design and optimization of catalysts, improving efficiency, selectivity, and stability in catalytic reactions.^{923,924}

In CCS, the long-term sequestration of CO₂ poses potential environmental risks. Improper handling of diffusion or dissolution behaviors may lead to CO₂ leakage, threatening the surface environment. Additionally, under high-pressure conditions, interactions between CO₂ and reservoir materials can cause unpredictable physical or chemical changes.^{176–178} Addressing these risks requires integrating environmental science and engineering technology to establish comprehensive environmental impact assessment and monitoring systems, ensuring the long-term safety and sustainability of CO₂ storage.

Promoting the resource utilization of LCC and the carbon circular economy can ensure the effective use and recycling of carbon resources. This includes developing efficient capture, conversion, and utilization technologies for LCC, creating new carbon-neutral and carbon-negative technologies, and balancing carbon emissions and absorption.^{925,926} DAC technology, as a method for recovering CO₂ from distributed sources such as transportation, agriculture, forestry, and construction, can handle various LCC emissions. Although DAC's feasibility remains debated, it can relieve the pressure on point-source carbon capture and reduce the costs associated with carbon storage transportation. The captured carbon can serve as an industrial feedstock or be used for soil enhancement, closing

the carbon cycle loop. DAC can generate negative carbon effects, effectively lowering atmospheric CO₂ levels.^{664,665}

Data-driven technology is a key means to improve the efficiency of air separation and CO₂ capture. Optimizing process parameters through artificial intelligence (AI) can achieve dynamic control of separation paths, significantly reduce energy consumption and improve operating efficiency. For example, an intelligent optimization system based on machine learning algorithms can analyze gas components and equipment operating status in real time, and dynamically adjust process conditions such as adsorbent switching, pressure control, and flow rate distribution.

In addition, the development of real-time monitoring and adaptive control systems, through the integration of advanced sensor technology, can achieve seamless coupling of air separation and CO₂ capture processes, and accurately separate target gases. The system can also adjust separation ratios and gas purity according to industrial needs, optimizing overall process performance. This intelligent process management not only improves energy efficiency, but also enhances the flexibility and adaptability of the technology.

Energy consumption and cost are the main obstacles to the commercialization of air separation and CO₂ capture technologies. Research on low-energy-driven separation technologies, such as electrically driven gas separation based on electrochemical processes, can achieve selective migration of target molecules through potential gradients, thereby reducing the energy consumption of traditional thermodynamically driven separation processes.

And the development of modular integrated devices can meet the needs of large-scale deployment in different industrial scenarios. For example, the air separation and CO₂ capture unit is designed as an independent module and can be flexibly expanded through modular splicing to adapt to diverse industrial gas processing needs. This modular design not only reduces installation and maintenance costs, but also improves the scalability of the equipment and provides support for the application of distributed energy systems.

Material innovation is an important direction to improve air separation and CO₂ capture performance. For different gas component ratios in industrial processes, the development of intelligent adsorbents and functional separation membranes can adapt to complex gas conditions. For example, porous MOFs (metal organic frameworks) and modified zeolites enable efficient and selective separations based on different molecular sizes and polarities. At the same time, surface functionalization design is introduced to enable the adsorbent to maintain efficient performance under different temperature, humidity and pressure conditions.

Exploring new non-equilibrium plasma coupling technology provides new ways for process innovation. While air is separated, non-equilibrium plasma can effectively promote the activation and conversion of CO₂, converting it into high value-added chemicals such as methane and synthesis gas. This technology can be integrated with the traditional physical separation process to build a separation-conversion integrated

system, greatly improving the comprehensive economic benefits of the technology.

To advance CGES technologies, understanding CO₂ diffusion, dissolution, corrosion, phase change, and expansion behaviors under varying conditions, including temperature, pressure, and storage medium properties like porosity and chemical composition, is critical. Researching these behaviors requires high-precision experimental equipment and powerful computational resources for numerical simulation. Accurately simulating and predicting these processes demands complex fluid dynamics models, necessitating the development of precise simulation tools and experimental methods to better understand and forecast behaviors such as diffusion, dissolution, and expansion of CO₂ under different conditions.^{183–185} This will help optimize the design of the storage system and the CGES operation strategy to improve the system efficiency.

Future research could explore the development of advanced storage media with tailored properties, such as high porosity and chemical stability, to minimize corrosion and improve CO₂ retention and phase behavior management. Additionally, the integration of AI-driven predictive models and real-time monitoring systems could provide more accurate control over storage conditions, ensuring optimal energy storage and release cycles. By combining experimental insights with advanced simulation techniques, researchers can refine CGES designs and operational strategies, paving the way for more efficient and sustainable energy storage solutions that effectively utilize CO₂ under various conditions.

In summary, the frontier of LCC research spans multiple fields, including efficient catalytic conversion technologies, novel energy conversion and storage technologies, carbon resource utilization and circular economy, intelligent catalysis and reaction engineering, and multidisciplinary research and collaboration. Research in these areas will provide essential support for addressing climate change, promoting sustainable development, and building a carbon-neutral society.

Author contributions

Writing – original draft: M. H. S. and W. G. Writing – review & editing: M. H. S, W. G., L. G. T., S. K. and Y. L. D. Conceptualization: P. K. C. and Y. L. D. Project administration: L. G. T. and S. K. Funding acquisition: L. G. T. and Y. L. D.

Data availability

This review article contains no new data. All presented data are reproduced from other published sources, which are cited within the article.

Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts to declare.

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