

Pycnometry and Continuous Distillation of Ethanol-Water mixtures

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Abstract—In this paper, two experiments were conducted on ethanol-water mixtures. A pycnometer and quartz-tubed densitometer were used to determine liquid densities across a variety of compositions of ethanol and water. Alcohol-gauging tables from the US Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau (TTB) were used to correlate theoretical densities of various compositions of ethanol and water at various temperatures to apparent proofs at 60F and finally correct to true proof and mole fraction of ethanol. Densities, measured through the pycnometer and densitometer, were compared.

Index Terms—Article submission, IEEE, IEEEtran, journal, L^AT_EX, paper, template, typesetting.

I. INTRODUCTION

PYCNOMETRY is a fundamental laboratory technique used to determine the density of solid or liquid substances by measuring their mass and volume and comparing them to a known volume. A pycnometer—a calibrated glass flask with a defined volume—is filled with the sample, and its mass is compared to the mass of the same flask filled with a reference fluid (water in our case). Digital densitometers can also be used to determine the density of a solution. Our digital densitometer measures density through a vibrating "U-Tube". The sample is introduced into a U-shaped borosilicate glass tube that is being excited to vibrate at its characteristic frequency electronically. The characteristic frequency changes depending on the density of the sample. Through determination of the characteristic frequency the density of the sample can be calculated. In the first part of our experiment, we determined the densities of various compositions of ethanol-water through pycnometry and a digital densitometer. Alcohol-gauging tables from the US Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau (TTB) were used to correlate theoretical densities of various compositions ranging from pure ethanol to pure water at various temperatures to apparent proofs at 60F and finally correct to extract true proof and mole fraction of ethanol.

This theoretical array of densities and corresponding mole fractions were then used in the second part of the lab, where we performed a continuous distillation of an ethanol-water mixture at two different reflux ratios, 4 and 5 in our case.

II. THEORY

A. Pycnometry

The pycnometer used in our experiment was a Kimble KiMax pycnometer. By measuring the mass of the empty pycnometer, the mass of the pycnometer filled with water (our

reference fluid), the known density of water, and the mass of the pycnometer filled with the experimental solution, the density of the experimental solution can be determined by [1].

$$V = \frac{m_w - m_e}{\rho_{water}(t)} = \frac{m_{sample} - m_e}{\rho_{sample}} \quad (1)$$

where m_w is the mass of the pycnometer filled with water, m_e is the mass of the empty pycnometer, $\rho_{water}(t)$ is the density of water at temperature T, and ρ_{sample} is the density of the sample at T. This equation can be arranged to solve for ρ_{sample} .

$$\rho_{sample} = \frac{m_{sample} - m_{empty}}{m_{water} - m_{sample}} \cdot \rho_{water}(T) \quad (2)$$

B. Gauging alcohol with TTB tables

The Gruneisen parameter, γ , of a gas is a dimensionless quantity that relates volume changes of a gas to its thermal properties. For an ideal gas, it can be shown that

$$\gamma = \kappa - 1 \quad (3)$$

where κ is the ratio of constant pressure and constant volume heat capacities, $\frac{C_p}{C_v}$. From the equipartition theorem, every degree of freedom, except vibrational degrees of freedom, in a molecule contributes $\frac{NR}{2}$ to the molecule's heat capacity. Argon, a monatomic gas used in our experiment, has three translational degrees of freedom. CO₂, on the other hand, has three translational degrees of freedom and two rotational degrees of freedom. Kappa can also be related to the pressure of the harmonic oscillator in the Rüchardt Experiment:

$$\Delta P = C_e^{-kt/2} \cos(\omega t + \phi) \quad (4)$$

$$\omega = \sqrt{\frac{\kappa P A^2}{m V} - \left(\frac{k^2}{4}\right)} \quad (5)$$

where the gain/decay ratio, C [Pressure], the time constant, k [s-1], the angular frequency, ω [Rad/s], and the phase shift, ϕ [Rad], are nonlinear parameters determined experimentally through nonlinear curvefitting techniques. By rearranging to a form like :

$$\kappa = \left(\omega^2 + \frac{k}{4}\right) \frac{m v}{P_0 A^2} \quad (6)$$

Kappa can be determined experimentally.

C. Error Propagation

1) *Mass of weights added:* The 6 different masses added to the piston to perform the calibration and oscillations were taken as the average mass across three measurements. Uncertainty of the masses were computed through a 95% confidence interval, with N = 3.

2) *Applied Pressures*: Uncertainty in pressures were calculated according to the master equation for error propagation (lec 1.2). The diameter of the piston was given, so the only uncertainties that arose were propagated from uncertainties in mass measurements.

$$F = m \cdot g \quad (7)$$

$$P = \frac{F}{A} \Rightarrow \frac{4m \cdot g}{\pi \cdot D^2} \quad (8)$$

$$\delta P = \sqrt{\frac{\partial P^2}{\partial^2 m}} \cdot \delta m^2 \quad (9)$$

3) *Calibration Curve*: The uncertainty in the slope of the calibration curve was determined through the following uncertainty propagation equations for a linear regression.

$$\Delta \equiv N \left[\left(\sum_{i=1}^N P_i^2 \right) - \left(\sum_{i=1}^N P_i \right)^2 \right] \quad (10)$$

$$\delta \frac{mV}{9V} = \sqrt{\frac{1}{N-2} \sum_{i=1}^N \left(\frac{mV}{9V_i} - b - mP_i \right)^2} \quad (11)$$

$$\delta m = \delta \frac{mV}{9V} \sqrt{\frac{N}{\Delta}} \quad (12)$$

where δm is the uncertainty in the calibration curve, in dimensions comparable to PendoTec's specification sheet for this case.

4) *Kappa*:

$$\kappa = \left(\omega^2 + \frac{k}{4} \right) \frac{mv}{P_0 A^2} \quad (13)$$

$$\delta \kappa = \sqrt{\left(\frac{d\kappa}{dm} \right)^2 (\delta m)^2 + \left(\frac{d\kappa}{dA} \right)^2 (\delta A)^2} \quad (14)$$

III. EXPERIMENTAL METHODS

A. Calibration

The pressure sensor was calibrated using air as a fluid by taking multiple voltage measurements of static pressure with 6 combinations of weights (with one of them being the unweighted plunger) added to the piston. Voltage readouts were recorded for each weight. Voltage was then plotted over pressure, then the pressure sensor calibration was calculated in units of [mV/psi/9V] and compared to the manufacturer's stated value. The data acquisition system (DAS) was configured and tested to ensure proper operation.

B. Ruchardt Experiment

The Ruchardt experiment was first conducted with air as the internal fluid across 4 different initial pressures. The piston height was set to 60mm every trial to ensure that the volume remained constant between trials, although our apparatus had considerable leakage.

With the DAS running, oscillations were induced by pressing and abruptly releasing the piston. Oscillations containing 5 peaks or more were considered acceptable. Three acceptable trials were recorded for every weight value.

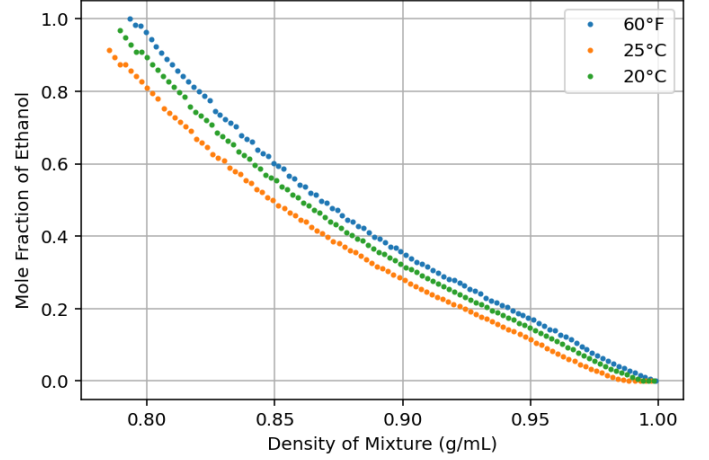


Fig. 1. Measured voltage readings from a PendoTec single-use pressure sensor recorded at various static pressures from a gas piston apparatus containing air. Static pressures were induced by adding weights of $[84.248 \pm 0.007\text{g}; 164.817 \pm 0.007\text{g}; 239.434 \pm 0.002\text{g}; 328.00 \pm 0.01\text{g}$ and $402.531 \pm 0.003\text{g}]$ to the apparatus and appear in the figure from left to right. Error bars were calculated based on a 95% confidence interval of recorded voltage readings in mV across three trials for each pressure ($N=2$). Uncertainty

The experiment was then repeated, using Argon and CO₂ instead of air. Before conducting the experiment, the air in the apparatus was purged twice with the respective gas. Three trials were conducted for each of the four weights tested, accepting oscillations with five peaks or more.

IV. RESULTS

A. Calibration

The calibration value was determined from the slope of the linear regression of recorded voltages, in mV, against varied pressures, in psi. This value was divided by 9V to match PendoTec specifications to be $0.270756 \pm 0.0000001 \frac{\text{mV}}{\text{psi} \cdot 9V}$. This value was used to determine the pressure in the apparatus from voltage readings in the following Ruchardt experiments

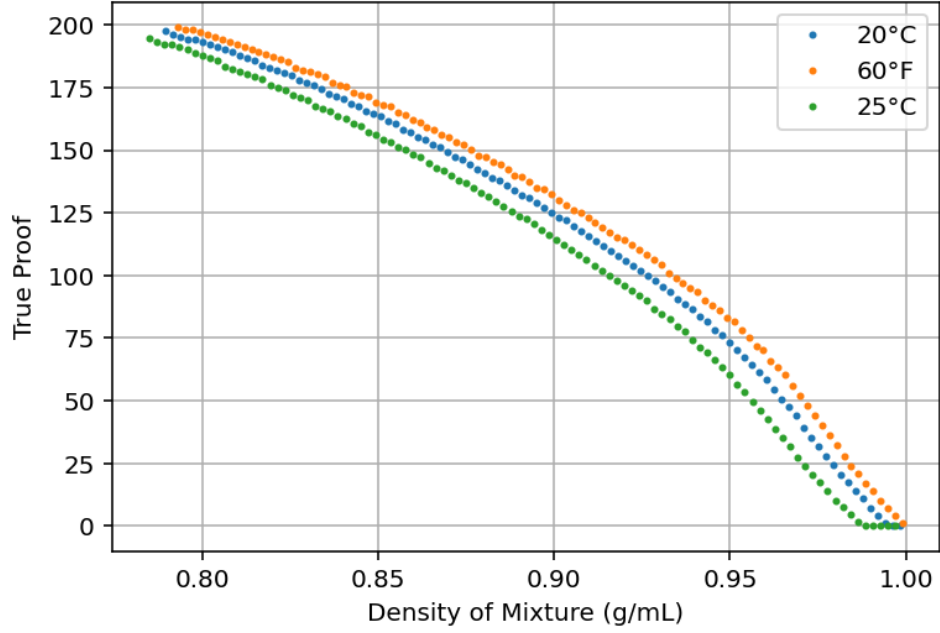
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V. DISCUSSION

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TABLE I
GAS PROPERTIES

Gas	Condition	P_0 (Pa)	C (Pa)	κ (s $^{-1}$)	ω (rad s $^{-1}$)	ϕ (rad)
Air	Empty	102171.80 \pm 7.20	4518.24 \pm 886.00	37.53 \pm 2.97	217.85 \pm 2.87	-9.62 \pm 3.02
	1 Weight	103076.35 \pm 2.59	2061.26 \pm 545.07	14.59 \pm 1.03	118.06 \pm 0.64	-10.88 \pm 7.99
	2 Weight	103389.06 \pm 1.81	4264.83 \pm 513.42	10.45 \pm 0.76	90.98 \pm 0.63	-8.53 \pm 6.94
	3 Weight	104821.81 \pm 12.52	-1212.16 \pm 513.84	10.03 \pm 0.56	79.06 \pm 0.73	-15.93 \pm 9.20
Argon	Empty	102269.40 \pm 4.39	-1487.97 \pm 3403.32	16.59 \pm 4.37	207.72 \pm 0.38	-12.77 \pm 6.63
	1 Weight	103093.24 \pm 3.53	23.81 \pm 945.56	15.69 \pm 0.08	120.07 \pm 0.51	-15.62 \pm 4.69
	2 Weight	104000.11 \pm 21.84	1201.48 \pm 2621.70	17.28 \pm 1.22	80.95 \pm 0.35	-31.05 \pm 8.21
	3 Weight	104882.66 \pm 36.64	349.51 \pm 7984.72	14.13 \pm 0.50	77.39 \pm 0.91	-15.90 \pm 11.16
CO $_2$	Empty	102304.81 \pm 15.52	882.70 \pm 1867.09	32.71 \pm 5.98	178.53 \pm 1.66	-22.61 \pm 15.44
	1 Weight	102216.12 \pm 3.98	890.54 \pm 3907.62	14.78 \pm 3.93	106.12 \pm 2.15	-22.41 \pm 23.91
	2 Weight	103976.97 \pm 3.03	-1087.62 \pm 2016.17	9.09 \pm 1.17	83.14 \pm 0.42	-25.64 \pm 13.47
	3 Weight	104000.26 \pm 14.20	-6199.73 \pm 518.83	6.59 \pm 1.27	68.67 \pm 0.14	-13.64 \pm 11.07



(a)

Fig. 2. Dae. Ad quatur autat ut porepel itemoles dolor autem fuga. Bus quia con nessunti as remo di quatus non perum que nimus. (a) Case I. (b) Case II.

TABLE II
 κ VALUES FOR AIR, ARGON, AND CO $_2$

Gas	κ_{Empty}	$\kappa_{\text{1 Weight}}$	$\kappa_{\text{2 Weight}}$	$\kappa_{\text{3 Weight}}$
Air	$1.37 \pm 4 \times 10^{-21}$	$0.95 \pm 3 \times 10^{-21}$	$1.10 \pm 3 \times 10^{-21}$	$1.20 \pm 3 \times 10^{-21}$
Argon	$1.74 \pm 3 \times 10^{-21}$	$1.61 \pm 4 \times 10^{-21}$	$1.53 \pm 2 \times 10^{-21}$	$1.64 \pm 3 \times 10^{-21}$
CO $_2$	$1.28 \pm 1 \times 10^{-21}$	$1.36 \pm 4 \times 10^{-21}$	$1.32 \pm 2 \times 10^{-21}$	$1.28 \pm 2 \times 10^{-21}$

VI. TECHNICAL ADVANCES

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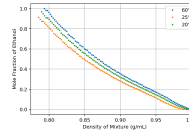
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