

基于功能化碳纳米管混合基质膜分离CO₂的研究进展及产业化应用趋势

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摘要: 二氧化碳(CO₂)的排放,是导致全球气候变暖的主要原因之一。CO₂的捕集、利用与封存技术(CCUS),被认为是减少温室气体的有效方式。膜分离技术作为一种高选择性和低能耗,以及具有较强的可扩展性的碳捕集方法,受到越来越多研究学者的青睐。综述了近年来功能化碳纳米管复合气体分离膜的主要研究进展,详细讨论了碳纳米管的特性、功能化改性、分散形态以及外场辅助对分离膜的影响机制,总结了不同功能化碳纳米管气体分离膜的特性。功能化复合分离膜是以高分子聚合物为基体,加入功能性填料形成的混合基质膜(MMMs),而碳纳米管(CNTs)相较于其他功能性填料,在分离膜的改性强化方面具有很大优势。研究结果表明:对CNTs进行功能基团接枝,有助于提高CO₂在MMMs中的扩散速度;CNTs的聚合物的改性,可加速CO₂在膜中的传输,提高MMMs对CO₂的选择性及渗透性;CNTs的均匀分散,可提高MMMs对CO₂的分离效率;外场(磁场和静电场)可使CNTs在聚合物基体中有序排列,为CO₂提供有序、长程、易传递的通道,进一步提高MMMs的渗透性。本研究总结了不同形态的CNTs对分离膜的影响,对碳纳米管复合气体分离膜,特别是碳纳米管混合基质膜的未来发展趋势提出了观点;并为以CO₂气体分离为重点的工业化应用指明了方向。

关键词: 功能化碳纳米管;二氧化碳;气体分离膜;混合基质膜;产业化应用;功能化改性;分散形态;外场辅助

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0 引言

工业革命极大地提升了人们的生活水平和质量,同时也向地球的大气层排放了巨量的CO₂。表1列出了主要的CO₂排放源^[1]。由表1可知,用石化燃

料为主体的发电与供热排出的混合气体-烟气对CO₂排放贡献超过25%。大气层中逐渐升高的CO₂浓度致使大气的温度正在逐年上升^[2],已经给人类造成巨大灾难,从源头减少CO₂排放已经是全球的共识。

CO₂的捕集、利用与封存(Carbon Capture Utilization & Sequestration, CCUS)技术被认为是减少温室气体的有效方式,其包括膜分离技术^[3]、化学吸收技术^[4]、物理吸附技术^[5]、低温分离技术^[6]等。传统的化学吸收技术、物理吸附技术和低温分离技术,均以热导分离为主体,导致能耗较高和二次污染,而高能耗又是导致CO₂排放的主要因素。由于膜分离技术可减少约90%的能耗且投资成本低,以

表1 CO₂主要排放源

Table 1 The main source of CO₂ emissions

排放源	排放量占比/%
发电与供热	大于25
农业和林业	约24
运输业	约14
建筑相关	约6
工业	约21
其它	约10

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及能够减轻对环境的二次污染^[7]。因此,膜分离技术已成为CCUS的重要技术之一,被认为是从源头减少温室气体的主要手段。膜分离技术成功应用的案例很多如海水淡化、超滤、电渗析、脱除水气及VOCs等,近来也被广泛应用于各种气体分离^[8]。

碳纳米管(Carbon Nanotubes, CNTs)作为新型纳米材料,具有较高的长径比、高弹性模量和机械强度、热电导率等优势^[9-11],近年来,常被应用于分离膜的改性强化。本文针对功能化复合分离膜对气体分离,尤其是在CO₂混合气体分离领域的最新研究进行了综述,并指明了膜技术在工业应用方面的研究需求和发展方向。

1 气体分离膜的种类

分离技术是利用膜对各种气体渗透率的不同,实现对气体(如CO₂)的分离和捕集的方法^[12]。在膜分离技术中,膜的种类和材料对其应用及分离性能具有决定性的作用。在工业应用中,膜的种类有平板膜、中空纤维膜、螺旋缠绕膜等,膜材料的种类又可分为无机膜、有机高分子膜和混合基质膜,重点对膜分离材料的研究进展进行分析。

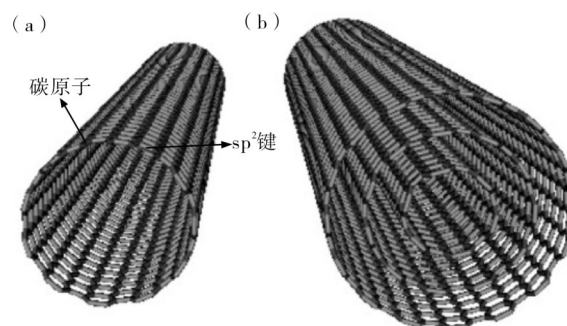
根据不同的工业应用,分离膜材料的种类分为3大类,即无机膜、有机高分子膜和混合基质膜。一般来说,无机膜耐用且在某些领域中具有良好的分离性能,但其成本高且加工性较差^[13];高分子膜具有价格低廉、工业化制膜技术成熟,以及可改性优化等优势,高分子基质通常分为玻璃态聚合物(如聚砜、聚醚砜、聚酰亚胺等)、橡胶态聚合物(如聚二甲基硅氧烷等)及嵌段共聚物(如Pebax系列),其中玻璃态聚合物的渗透性较低但选择性较高,而橡胶态聚合物的渗透性较高但选择性较低^[14-16],这是单一聚合物材料受制于Robeson上限的表现^[17-18]。为了突破Robeson上限实现选择性与渗透性之间的高效平衡,以高分子聚合物为基体加入相应的功能性填料而形成的混合基质膜(Mixed-Matrix Membranes, MMMs)成为了近期研究的重点^[19]。

2 功能性填料及CNTs的特性

功能性填料可改进和增强MMMs的选择性及渗透性能,根据其形态和特性,可分为无孔型与多孔型填料。无孔型填料包括二氧化硅(SiO₂)^[20-21]、氧化铝(Al₂O₃)^[22]、石墨烯及氧化石墨烯^[23-27]等,多孔型填料包括沸石^[28-29]、金属有机骨架(MOF)^[30-32]、沸石咪唑酯骨架(ZIF)^[33-35]、碳纳米管^[36-42]等。由于功能性填料在不同程度上可改进MMMs的渗透性或其他性能,通常多孔型填料优于无孔型填料。

碳纳米管于1991年首次被研究人员发现以

来^[43-44],其类一维的特性及出色的机械性能和表面结构,吸引了全球研究者的重视。图1为CNTs的3D结构图^[45]。从图1可见:在原子层结构方面,CNTs可定义为一个由石墨烯网平面卷曲形成的圆筒,其每层结构与石墨烯的结构相似,即碳原子由C=C双键号C共价键结合,主要以sp²杂化为主,与金刚石中sp³杂化的碳键相比强度更大,这些特征使其具有高长径比的同时还具有良好的物理(弹性模量、气体传道系数及热电导率)性能及突出的机械性能^[46],在许多领域中都得到了应用;从立体结构来看,CNTs的管身由六边形碳环组成,可构成层间距固定的一层到数十层的同轴圆管,单层的称为单壁碳纳米管(SWCNTs)、多层的称为多壁碳纳米管(MWCNTs),而五边形或七边形的碳环可构成端帽部分^[47]。



(a)—SWCNTs; (b)—MWCNTs。

图1 CNTs的3D结构图^[45]

Figure 1 3D structure diagram of CNTs

碳纳米管CNTs独特的原子结构和立体结构,使其具有高机械强度、高比表面积、多种长径比和平滑通道等特性,这些特性使得CNTs作为功能性填料具有许多不可替代的特点,如平滑的间隙通道和高孔隙率、超大的比表面积,以及气体分子长程路径的有序传导、表面可固定高密度官能团等^[48]。CNTs的高机械强度主要体现在拉伸强度和弹性模量方面,SWCNTs密度为1.3—1.5 g·cm⁻³、拉伸强度大于300 GPa、弹性模量大于1 000 GPa,而MWCNTs的密度为1.8—2.0 g·cm⁻³、拉伸强度及弹性模量分别为1—63 GPa和270—950 GPa。Skoulidas^[49]等研究发现,气体在CNTs中的扩散速度比在微孔吸附剂中的扩散速度要快得多,其扩散系数范围与液体中的气体扩散系数相似,这是由于气体分子与CNTs壁之间弹性碰撞时,管壁的平滑性使气体分子沿壁的动力受到极小的干扰^[50-51]。Deng^[52]等通过对比CNTs对不同尺寸和形状特征的大肠杆菌和金黄色葡萄球菌的吸附发现,较小尺寸的金黄色葡萄球菌的扩散速率比大肠杆菌快5—

10倍,可见CNTs固有的平滑性使得相对小分子获得高的传输速率,明显增强气体分离膜的渗透性和选择性。Kim^[53]在聚磺酸基质中加入功能化的CNTs后,发现CNTs的加入可有效地提升MMM的渗透性。Kumar^[54]将MWCNTs分散在聚甲基丙烯酸甲酯(PMMA)的复合膜中,结果表明MWCNTs为H₂的传输提供了排列整齐的快速通道,有效地提升了MMM对于H₂的选择性。Liao^[55]将经HNO₃和NH₃处理过的MWCNTs用于CPs的吸附,结果证明NH₃-MWCNTs对CPs具有选择性的吸附能力,这是由于MWCNTs纳米级孔体积增大, π - π 分散力和疏水相互作用增强共同导致的。因此,CNTs作为功能性填料具有许多不可替代的特点,使其在气体分离复合膜MMM中表现出巨大的应用潜力。

3 CNTs的功能化改性

碳纳米管混合基质膜(CNTs-MMMs)自身虽

有一定的独特优势,但还不能完全满足工业化对气体分离膜的要求,特别是对CO₂等气体分离的选择性和渗透性。为实现CNT-MMM关键性能的强化,近年来许多研究者对CNTs本身进行各种功能化改性^[56-60],其中包括物理改性、化学改性、增加功能基团等。本文主要针对化学改性和增加功能基团方面进行阐述。

化学改性主要有共价和非共价两类,前者会对CNTs原子结构特征造成不同程度的改变,而后者对CNTs的结构特点没有任何损伤性的改变^[61-64]。增加功能基团主要通过CNTs内外表面或内腔增加目标功能基团,以有效地改变CNTs的目标性能及其对气体(特别是CO₂)的分离性能^[65-67];同时,在CNTs表面新增的官能团可有效地改善两相界面粘附,促进其在聚合物基质中均匀分散^[68-71],进而提高复合膜的气体分离性能。表2列举了不同功能化基团改性CNTs制备的MMM膜对CO₂的分离效果及其分离特性。

表2 功能化基团改性CNTs制备的MMM膜的分选特性

Table 2 Separation characteristics of MMMs membranes prepared from CNTs modified with functional groups

填料	功能化基团	气体种类	CO ₂ 渗透率/ ($\times 10^4 \text{ m}^2 \cdot \text{s}^{-1}$)	CO ₂ 选择性	功能化特性	参考文献
SWCNT	-COOH	CO ₂ /N ₂	25.4	22.6	较高的气体传递效率,优秀的机械性能	[72]
MWCNT	聚甲基丙烯酸甲酯	CO ₂ /N ₂	75	45	聚甲基丙烯酸甲酯接枝的MWNTs与聚酰胺具有良好的相容性,可轻松合成,方法环保	[73]
MWCNT	-NH ₂	CO ₂ /N ₂	957	384	亲水性高,优异的CO ₂ 选择性和渗透性,提高膜稳定性	[74]
SWCNT	-COOH	CO ₂ /N ₂	4.45	22.1	气体传输阻力小	[75]
	-Ru		3.56	26.5	气体传输阻力小,提高渗透率	
	-Fe		4.23	12.9	与聚合物结合不紧密,不利于CO ₂ 选择	
MWCNT	聚乙二醇	CO ₂ /N ₂	133	23.9	促进分散,提高填料与聚合物表面相互作用	[76]

3.1 CNTs的化学改性

CNTs化学改性中的酸化处理,属于共价类功能化处理。CNTs的功能化改性最常见且实用的方法是利用强酸进行处理,通过使用强酸(如硝酸、硫酸、强氧化剂或活性等离子体)氧化CNTs,使其表面形成一些目标功能团。在CNTs表面的立体结构引入-COOH和-OH基团,CNT-COOH和CNT-OH属于亲水性基团,可以提高功能化CNTs的亲水性,进而提高CNTs与亲水性聚合物基质的亲和力,使CNTs能够更好地分散在聚合物中,有助于提高气体(如CO₂气体)分子在MMM膜内的扩散速度^[77]。

由于CNT-COOH和CNT-OH基团对CO₂有

特定的亲和力,他们不仅能增强CNTs的渗透性,而且还可以明显地强化CNTs的选择性,从而增强MMM膜对CO₂的选择性和渗透性。苗世举^[78]使用热致相分离法制备了酸化MWCNTs/聚酰亚胺(MWCNTs-COOH/PI)型MMM,研究发现:酸化后CNTs的类一维光滑孔道结构与聚合物间形成的非贯穿孔状结构可显著增强气体的渗透性;相比于纯聚酰亚胺膜,当MWCNTs-COOH的质量分数为2.0%时,MMM对CO₂渗透率为 $88.28 \times 10^4 \text{ m}^2 \cdot \text{s}^{-1}$ 、CO₂/CH₄选择性为52.45、CO₂/N₂选择性为28.64,分别提高了128.08%、43.65%和35.58%。郭瑞乾^[79]制备了酸化的MWCNTs,并以其作为无机添加颗粒,用含氟聚砜膜作为母体膜,制备了质量分数为0%—4%的复合膜,当酸化MWCNTs质量分数

为2%时复合膜的气体渗透性及选择性最优,其中CO₂的渗透率为 $14.27 \times 10^4 \text{ m}^2 \cdot \text{s}^{-1}$ 、CO₂/CH₄的选择性为28.9,与普通的参照膜相比分别增加了19%和5%。因此,化学改性CNTs是一种可以提高复合膜对CO₂捕集效率的有效方式。

对于CO₂的分离而言,除了通过酸化引入—COOH基团外,还可以进一步引入其他相对简单的基团以进一步强化CNTs的性能,这些基团在微观上与CO₂分子更加亲和,可有效地提高CNTs对CO₂的选择性。Lourenco^[80]用N1-(3-三甲氧基硅丙基)二乙烯三胺(DETASi)对MWCNTs进行化学修饰,以增强其对CO₂吸附/分离性能,结果发现DETASi接枝反应后CO₂/N₂的选择性提高了1.89%。Zhang^[81]用—OH和—NH₂对MWCNTs表面进行改性,并将其作为纳米填料复合在聚乙烯醇-乙烯胺共聚物基质中制备了MMMs,表明CNTs的加入能有效地限制聚合物链的堆积,降低结晶度,并且气体能够快速通过CNTs进行扩散。当MWCNT-NH₂的质量分数为2.0%时,MMMs的CO₂渗透率提升至 $132 \times 10^4 \text{ m}^2 \cdot \text{s}^{-1}$ 、CO₂/N₂的选择性提升至74。Amooghin^[82]为了消除不同添加剂的分子间作用力,在MWCNTs表面接枝了官能团(如—COOH、—NCO和—NH₂),然后将其作为填料加入聚醚嵌段酰胺(PEBA)聚合物基质中,表明所添加的3种官能团均能提高MMMs的CO₂渗透率及CO₂/N₂和CO₂/CH₄选择性。其中,P8CNT-NCO的性能成功地突破了CO₂/N₂的传统Robeson上限,CO₂渗透率超过 $100 \times 10^4 \text{ m}^2 \cdot \text{s}^{-1}$ 、CO₂/N₂选择性达到100。

3.2 CNTs的聚合物改性

理想复合膜中CNTs应是开口的,CNTs之间的空间会被连续的聚合物膜所填充,并且聚合物必须与CNTs具有高的润湿性,从而使两相之间具有良好的相互作用。但在实际应用中,由于不同两相(CNTs与聚合物)之间的粘附性差异,导致纳米管附近存在相间聚合物层,该聚合物层的性质与主体聚合物截然不同。同时,由于很强的范德华力的存在,CNTs固有性质倾向于形成相对稳定的束,这也是阻碍CNTs在聚合物基体中良好分散的因素^[83]。聚合物改性时应使用更有针对性的功能团对CNTs进行修饰,以改善CNTs界面相互作用,促进CNTs的分散以便均匀分布在聚合物基体内,提高MMMs的综合分离性能。Singh^[84]通过溶剂浇铸法将聚乙二醇接枝的碳纳米管(PEG-g-CNTs)加入聚合物基质,制备出了基于聚砜(PSF)的MMMs,该MMMs

对CO₂的渗透性、选择性和膜的机械性能均得到了提升,其中PEG-g-CNT质量分数为5%的MMMs在 $1.5 \times 10^5 \text{ N} \cdot \text{m}^{-2}$ 压力下的CO₂渗透率提高了52.4%,以及CO₂/N₂、CO₂/CH₄的选择性分别提高了81%和74%,而拉伸模量、拉伸强度分别提高了43.4%和12.5%。Ahmad^[85]使用湿相反转技术,将聚醚砜(PES)、β-环糊精(β-CD)和改性的MWCNTs混合制备了MMMs,发现功能化的f-MWCNTs能够提高MMMs的气体分离性能。当PEG质量分数为30%、β-CD质量分数为10%、f-MWCNTs质量分数为0.02%时,制成的MMMs在CO₂/N₂选择性方面的性能最佳,与传统的PES膜相比提高了15.38%。Zhang等^[86]合成了涂有N-isopropylacrylamide水凝胶的CNTs复合材料(NIPAM-CNTs),并将其加入聚醚-炔-酰胺(Pebax MH 1657)基质中制备了MMMs,表明含有NIPAM-CNTs(质量分数为5%)的MMMs的CO₂渗透率达到 $567 \times 10^4 \text{ m}^2 \cdot \text{s}^{-1}$ 、CO₂/CH₄选择性为35%、CO₂/N₂选择性为70,突破了Robeson上限。综上所述可知,MMMs综合性能的改进归功于聚合物改性的CNTs,CNTs加速了CO₂在膜中的传输、提高了CO₂的选择性及渗透性。

4 CNTs分散形态对分离膜的影响

4.1 CNTs的均匀分散

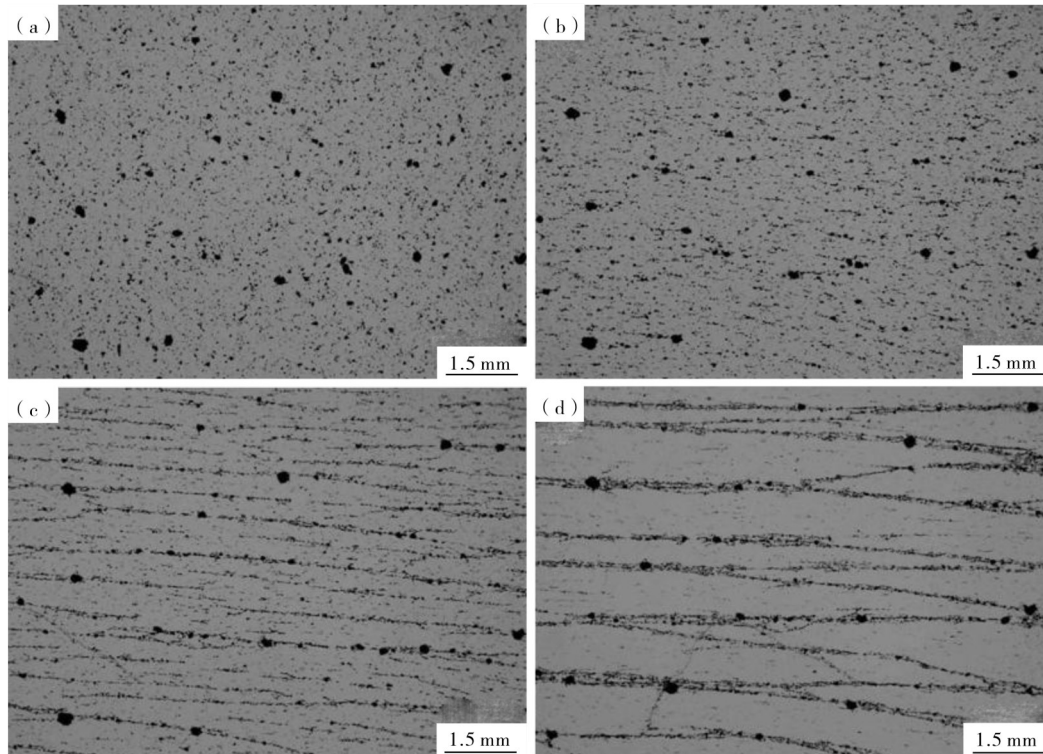
CNTs的分散形态是影响分离膜对气体分离综合性能的重要因素之一,与膜的综合性能(如机械强度、热化学稳定性、气体选择性和渗透性等)直接相关。在CO₂分离方面,要提高MMMs对气体的分离效率,强化CNTs在聚合物基质中均匀分散是非常重要的环节。Li^[87]将氧化石墨烯(GO)和CNTs共同添加到聚酰亚胺中,以克服CNTs在高负载时经常面临的团聚。结果表明:GO纳米片的存在产生了立体效应,阻止了CNTs的聚集,从而使CNTs更均匀地分散在聚合物基质中;当聚合物基质中嵌入质量分数为5%的GO/CNT时,CNTs分离性能达到最佳,膜的CO₂渗透率提高到 $38.87 \times 10^4 \text{ m}^2 \cdot \text{s}^{-1}$,而CO₂/N₂、CO₂/CH₄选择性分别提高到81.0和84.6。Zhang^[88]通过酸处理A-SWCNT,可使其表面的界面亲和力得到改善,使SWCNTs具有较好的界面形貌和分散性。当A-SWCNT填料质量分数为2%时,MMMs对CO₂的渗透率提高到 $81 \times 10^4 \text{ m}^2 \cdot \text{s}^{-1}$ 、CO₂/N₂选择性提高到23。

4.2 CNTs的有序排列

CNTs的有序排列对提升分离膜的综合性能,特别是选择性和渗透性至关重要。通过对CNTs进

行取向,可以使气体分子(如 CO_2)合理地传输到聚合物-填料界面,提高纳米复合材料的性能^[89]。Kumar^[90]报告了静电场下排列的MWCNTs和PMMA组成的MMMs在选择性分离 H_2 方面的表现,发现CNTs有序排列的MMM膜的 H_2 分离性能比随机排列的高2倍。结果表明,表面静电场有助

于将PMMA中的纳米管相互连接起来,从而为气体的渗透提供了一个简易的过渡点,通过诱导组装或Langmuir-Blodgett(LB)法可使CNTs有序排列,如静电场可以使CNTs进行排列取向。图2为CNTs链在电场中形成的过程。



(a)—CNTs粒子;(b)—CNTs链的形成;(c)—CNTs链的生长;(d)—CNTs链的增长。
(a)—CNTs particles;(b)—CNTs chain formation;(c)—CNTs chain growth;(d)—CNTs chain growth long.

图2 超景深显微镜下CNTs链在电场中形成的过程^[91]

Figure 2 The process of CNTs chain formation in an electric field under ultra-depth-of-field microscopy

除了静电场外,磁场也可以使CNTs进行取向,磁场中碳纳米管取向示意图如图3所示。Makarova^[93]和Sharma^[94]对磁性排列的CNTs/PC纳米复合膜的结构及复合膜的气体渗透性进行了比较,发现磁性排列的SWCNT/PC和MWCNT/PC的渗透性和选择性都好于CNTs随机排列的MMMs膜。MMMs膜性能的提高是由于PC中的CNTs有序排列,增强了过渡通道平滑性和通透性。通过对CNTs施加磁场,使CNTs形成相互连接的链状,从而改善了气体分子传递路径,提高膜的气体扩散性。综上所述可知,通过磁场和电场可使CNTs在聚合物基质中有序排列,从而为气体提供更加有序、长程、易传递的通道,进一步提高MMMs膜的气体渗透性。

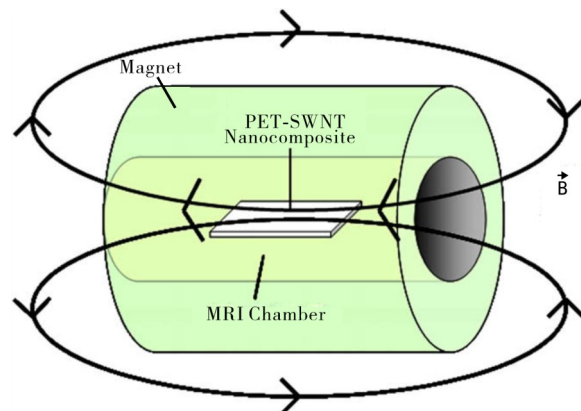


图3 碳纳米管磁共振成像示意图^[92]

Figure 3 Schematic diagram of magnetic resonance imaging of carbon nanotubes^[92]

5 结语

SWCNTs和MWCNTs经过几十年的研究和发 展,已经形成一类多功能的具有高选择性的新材料。该材料不仅可以批量生产,而且还可以按需求对CNTs进行一系列的功能化改性。相对于传统的SiO₂、TiO₂等功能填料,功能化的CNTs具有许多独特优势,如良好的气体传递效率、高选择性、优秀的机械性能等。在多种功能化的方法中,化学法和聚合物法是进一步深入研究的重要方向,二者进行有机结合是经济的工业化应用的可行路径,是将来进一步进行应用性研究开发的着重点。

CNTs在膜内的均匀分布,可以进一步发挥CNTs的气体传递作用,增强分离膜的渗透性。在此基础上,对CNTs的空间排布进行统一性的定向,更有利于改善气体(特别是CO₂)分离膜的渗透性和选择性。但是,这些研究还处于实验室探索阶段,要进行工业化应用还有相当大的挑战。因此,仍然需要加强对CNTs功能化的深入研究,找到与聚合物相容性更好、选择性更好的官能团或有效的组合,改善CNTs界面的相容性,并且使其均匀的、有序定向的分散在MMMs复合膜中,以利于目标气体组份(特别是CO₂)合理地传输到聚合物-填料界面,将复合膜对目标气体CO₂的选择性和渗透率进一步提高,以便更好的工业化应用。由于CNTs可以进入人体细胞中而引发病症,同时对环境水质造成一定污染,因此还应加强混合基质膜中CNTs脱离率及从环境中回收的研究,从源头治理可能产生的环境问题,促进功能化碳纳米管复合膜在气体分离领域中的进一步发展。

目前,分离膜的种类繁多。当MMMs应用于气体分离时,因其多种可选择的膜基质可与功能填料相结合,使膜的许多分离性能得到明显地增强。特别是将功能化的CNTs与高分子基体结合,形成的CNTs-MMMs膜有望克服Robeson上限,使其在气体分离,尤其是CO₂分离领域展现出广阔的应用前景。

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Recent Advances on Functionalized Carbon Nanotube Composite Membranes in CO₂ Gas Separation

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Abstract: Carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions are one of the main causes of global warming, and CO₂ capture, utilization and sequestration (CCUS) technology is considered to be an effective way to reduce greenhouse gases, in which the membrane separation technology, as a highly selective, low-energy, and highly scalable carbon capture method, has been favored by more and more researchers and scholars. This paper reviews the main progress of functionalized carbon nanotube composite gas separation membranes in recent years, discusses in detail the mechanism of carbon nanotube properties, functionalization modification and dispersion morphology on the separation membrane, and summarizes the properties of different functionalized carbon nanotube gas separation membranes. Functionalized composite separation membranes are mixed matrix membranes (MMMs) formed by adding functional fillers to a polymer matrix, while carbon nanotubes (CNTs) have done a better job of modifying and strengthening separation membranes. It was shown that grafting CNTs with functional groups helps to increase the diffusion rate of CO₂ in MMMs; modification of polymers with CNTs improves the selectivity and permeability of MMMs to CO₂; uniform dispersion of CNTs improves the separation efficiency of MMMs to CO₂; and the external field can lead to the orderly arrangement of CNTs in the polymer matrix, which provides orderly, long-range, and easy CO₂ transmission channels to further improve the permeability of MMMs. This paper points out the direction for the future research trend of carbon nanotube composite gas separation membranes and the industrialized application focusing on CO₂ gas separation.

Keywords: functionalized carbon nanotubes; carbon dioxide; gas separation membranes; hybrid matrix membranes; industrial applications; functionalized modifications; dispersion morphology; external field assisted

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