Binary Diffusion Coefficients of Arachidonic Acid Ethyl Esthers, *cis*-5,8,11,14,17-Eicosapentaenoic Acid Ethyl Esthers, and *cis*-4,7,10,13,16,19-Docosahexanenoic Acid Ethyl Esthers in Supercritical Carbon Dioxide

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The binary diffusion coefficients of arachidonic acid ethyl esthers (AA-EE), *cis*-5,8,11,14,17-eicosapentaenoic acid ethyl esters (EPA-EE), and *cis*-4,7,10,13,16,19-docosahexaenoic acid ethyl esthers (DHA-EE) in supercritical carbon dioxide were measured at temperatures from 308.15 K to 338.15 K and pressures from 8.42 MPa to 29.95 MPa by the Taylor-Aris capillary peak broadening method. The obtained diffusion coefficients are in the range of $(5.54 \times 10^{-5}) \text{ cm}^2 \cdot \text{s}^{-1}$ to $(13.8 \times 10^{-5}) \text{ cm}^2 \cdot \text{s}^{-1}$ with small differences between AA-EE, EPA-EE, and DHA-EE. The measured D_{12} values were fitted with absolute average deviations of less than 2 % by three predictive models: Scheibel, Catchpole-King, and He-Yu-Su.

Introduction

Supercritical fluids (SCFs) have been received wide attention because their density is as high as liquids and their viscosity is as low as gases. Moreover, it is easy to change the properties such as solubility and diffusion coefficients of solutes in them by adjusting the temperature and the pressure. Especially for supercritical carbon dioxide, it is nontoxic, nonflammable, moderate, and inexpensive. It has become the most widely used and safest SCF.

AA (arachidonic acid), EPA (*cis*-5,8,11,14,17-eicosapentaenoic acid), and DHA (*cis*-4,7,10,13,16,19-docosahexaenoic acid) are polyunsaturated fatty acids and are vital for health. AA is mainly purified from fermentation broth. EPA and DHA are mainly purified from marine species like tuna, sardine, and capelin. The conventional processes usually include vacuum distillation and HPLC. Because these three fatty acids are heatlabile and easily oxidized, processing under high temperature, coming into contact with tetrahydrofuran (which tends to produce peroxide), or being exposed to air will debase the quality of them. Applying supercritical carbon dioxide extraction or supercritical carbon dioxide chromatography^{1,2} to purify AA, EPA, and DHA can avoid these disadvantages.

The binary diffusion coefficient is one of the important physical properties for the engineering design of extraction and chromatography processes. Since the ethyl esters (EE) of AA, EPA, and DHA are of more benefit to the human body than their acid type, it will be more significant to measure the binary diffusion coefficients of AA-EE, EPA-EE, and DHA-EE in supercritical CO₂. Up to now, there have been some studies on the binary diffusion coefficients in supercritical CO₂. Funazukuri and co-workers³⁻⁶ have measured the binary diffusion coefficients of some solids or viscous liquids such as phenol, β -carotene, α -tocopherol, vitamin K₃, and ubiquinone CoQ10 in supercritical CO₂ by the CIR method.⁹ Higashi et al.⁸⁻¹⁰ studied the diffusion of naphthalene and dimethylnaphthalene isomers in supercritical CO₂ using a pseudo-steady-state solid

dissolution method. The Taylor–Aris capillary peak broadening (CPB) method^{11–13} has been claimed to be relatively accurate and less time-consuming.¹⁴ Some researchers have used this method to measure the binary diffusion coefficients of some liquids in supercritical CO₂ such as nC_5-nC_{14} alkanes,¹⁵ benzene and its derivatives,^{16–19} terpenes,^{20,21} and ketones.^{22–24}

Funazukuri et al.,^{26–29} Kong et al.,^{30,31} and Rezaei and Temelli³⁴ have measured the diffusivity of a series of longchain fatty acids and their esters in supercritical CO₂. However, as to the ethyl esters of AA-EE, EPA-EE, and DHA-EE, only the binary diffusion coefficients of DHA-EE under temperature from 308 K to 318 K and pressure from 96.7 MPa to 188.0 MPa were measured by Liong et al.³² This work intended to study the characteristics of the diffusion of the ethyl esters of AA-EE, EPA-EE ,and DHA-EE in supercritical CO₂ under a wide condition of temperatures (from 308.15 K to 338.15 K) and pressures (from 8.42 MPa to 29.95 MPa).

Fundamentals. In this work, the CPB method was used to determine the binary diffusion coefficients D_{12} . The D_{12} can be expressed as the function of residence time and peak width at half-height as follows:

$$D_{12} = \frac{L}{4t_{\rm r}} \left[H - \left(H^2 - \frac{r_0^2}{3} \right)^{1/2} \right] \tag{1}$$

$$H = \frac{LW_{1/2}^{2}}{5.54t_{r}^{2}}$$
(2)

where *H* is the theoretical plate height (cm); *L* is the dispersion column length (cm); r_0 is the inner radius of the dispersion column (cm); t_r is the residence time (s); $W_{1/2}$ is the half-height peak width (s).

To eliminate the error caused by the secondary-flow effect when the solvent flows too fast through the dispersion coiled column and to make the course resemble flowing in a straight tube, the criteria given in eq 3 should be satisfied:³⁵

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$$De(Sc)^{1/2} < 10$$
 (3)

where

$$De = \frac{\rho U_0 d_{\text{tube}}}{\eta} \left(\frac{d_{\text{tube}}}{d_{\text{coil}}} \right)^{1/2} \quad \text{(Dean number)} \tag{4}$$

$$Sc = \frac{\eta}{\rho D_{12}}$$
 (Schmidt number) (5)

 ρ is the density of CO₂ (g·cm⁻³); U_0 is the velocity of the mobile phase (cm·s⁻¹); η is the viscosity of CO₂ (P); d_{tube} is the inner diameter of the dispersion column (cm); d_{coil} is the diameter of the coil (cm). ρ and η were calculated by the Span and Wagner equation of state³⁶ and the Sovová–Procházka method,³⁷ respectively.

Experimental Section

The apparatus used was similar to Figure 1 of Funazukuri and Nishimoto.³⁸ The chromatographic pump (2J-X) with a cooling head was from Zhejiang Scientific Apparatus Ltd., Hangzhou, China. The dispersion column was a stainless steel coiled column (0.0762 cm i.d. \times 1300 cm), and the diameter of the coil was 24 cm. The column was connected to a UVvis detector (model 0200-000, AllTech) directly to eliminate the dead volume. The injector (model 7025, Rheodyne) was equipped with a 5- μ L sample loop. A restrictor tube (stainless steel tube of 50 cm \times 0.01 cm i.d.) was mounted between the outlet of the UV-vis detector and the back pressure valve (model 26-3220, Tescom) to stabilize the flow rate. The response curves were measured at a wavelength of 210 nm; 20 % (wt) solution of fatty acid ethyl esters in *n*-hexane was prepared for injection. Fatty acid EEs were from Sigma Chemical Co. (purity > 99 %), and *n*-hexane was from Hangzhou Solvent Ltd., Hangzhou, China (spectroscopic grade).

Laminar flow of supercritical CO_2 was maintained at a velocity of 0.02 cm·s⁻¹ to 0.05 cm·s⁻¹ where the effect of the velocity was negligible. At a definite temperature, pressure, and flow rate condition, the sample was injected through the injection loop. The binary diffusion coefficients of AA-EE, EPA-EE, and DHA-EE were measured one by one, with three parallel runs for each solute.

Results and Discussion

The D_{12} values of DHA-EE measured at (308.15 and 318.15) K were compared with those measured by Liong et al.³² (see Figure 1). The average deviation of seven D_{12} values obtained under the same experimental conditions in the two works was



Figure 1. Diffusion coefficients of DHA-EE in supercritical CO₂: \blacksquare , ref 32, 308.15 K; \bigcirc , ref 32, 318.15 K; \square , this work, 308.15 K; \bigcirc , this work, 318.15 K.



Figure 2. Relationship between diffusion coefficients of AA-EE and pressure: ■, 308.15 K; □, 318.15 K; ●, 328.15 K; ○, 338.15 K.



Figure 3. Relationship between $D_{12,AA-EE}/T$ and ρ : ■, 308.15 K; □, 318.15 K; ●, 328.15 K; ○, 338.15 K.

within 1 %. The $D_{12,AA-EE}$, $D_{12, EPA-EE}$, and $D_{12,DHA-EE}$ values listed in Table 1 were the average of three parallel runs, the average deviations of which were less than 1 %.

It can be seen from Table 1 that the D_{12} values of the three esters in supercritical carbon dioxide are as follows: at 308.15 K and 18.11 MPa D_{12} values of AA-EE, EPA-EE, and DHA-EE are 5.54×10^{-5} cm²·s⁻¹, 5.54×10^{-5} cm²·s⁻¹, and 5.40×10^{-5} cm²·s⁻¹, respectively. At 338.15 K and 13.88 MPa the corresponding values are 13.47×10^{-5} cm²·s⁻¹, 13.80×10^{-5} cm²·s⁻¹, and 12.80×10^{-5} cm²·s⁻¹, respectively. Under the same condition, the D_{12} values of AA-EE, EPA-EE, and DHA-EE are close to each other. The ratios $D_{12,AA-EE}/D_{12,EPA-EE}$ are between 0.97 and 1, and the ratios of $D_{12,AA-EE}/D_{12,DHA-EE}$ are between 1.003 and 1.05.

Figure 2 represents $D_{12,AA-EE}$ versus pressure at temperatures from 308.15 K to 338.15 K. It can be seen that $D_{12,AA-EE}$ decreases with pressure rapidly at lower pressures and then gradually levels off. This phenomenon is mainly due to the fact that the density and viscosity of carbon dioxide, two very important factors for diffusion, change sharply at lower pressures. In addition, it can be seen from Figure 2 also that D_{12} increases with temperature at a definite pressure. If D_{12}/T is plotted versus ρ (see Figure 3), it was found that curves at all temperatures almost coincide with each other. This indicates that the density of CO_2 is the essential factor that affects the diffusion. The same characters were obtained for EPA-EE and DHA-EE in this work. Treatment of the D_{12} values of fatty acids and their esters of Funazukuri et al,28,29 Kong et al.,30 and Liong et al.^{32,33} were as in Figure 3; the same results were obtained as well. On the basis of this method of treatment, when the D_{12}

Table 1. D_{12} of AA-EE (1)), EPA-EE (2), and	DHA-EE (3) in S	Supercritical CO
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T/	K = 308.15	T/	K = 318.15	T/	K = 328.15	T/	K = 338.15
P/MPa	$10^5 D_{12}^{a}/\mathrm{cm}^{2} \cdot \mathrm{s}^{-1}$	P/MPa	$10^5 D_{12}^{a/c} \text{m}^{2} \cdot \text{s}^{-1}$	P/MPa	$10^5 D_{12}^{a/c} \text{m}^{2} \cdot \text{s}^{-1}$	P/MPa	$10^5 D_{12}^{a/cm^2 \cdot s^{-1}}$
			AA	-EE			
8.42	9.71 (±0.06)	10.01	$12.72 (\pm 0.10)$	11.93	$13.09(\pm 0.14)$	13.88	$13.47 (\pm 0.07)$
8.59	9.12 (±0.05)	10.39	$11.21 (\pm 0.06)$	12.61	$11.46(\pm 0.04)$	14.86	$11.73 (\pm 0.07)$
8.84	8.69 (±0.05)	10.94	$10.13 (\pm 0.09)$	13.53	$10.32 (\pm 0.03)$	16.17	$10.61 (\pm 0.06)$
9.18	8.14 (±0.04)	11.32	9.49 (±0.05)	14.13	9.67 (±0.04)	16.99	9.87 (±0.02)
9.65	7.73 (±0.03)	11.80	8.88 (±0.04)	14.84	9.08 (±0.03)	17.95	9.30 (±0.04)
10.30	7.34 (±0.04)	12.40	8.36 (±0.02)	15.71	8.52 (±0.02)	19.08	8.87 (±0.01)
11.17	6.83 (±0.02)	13.17	7.91 (±0.02)	16.77	8.17 (±0.03)	20.43	8.35 (±0.03)
12.32	6.45 (±0.01)	14.14	7.50 (±0.03)	18.06	$7.61 (\pm 0.04)$	22.03	7.94 (±0.03)
13.81	6.15 (±0.01)	15.36	7.07 (±0.02)	19.63	7.23 (±0.02)	23.94	7.49 (±0.01)
15.71	5.78 (±0.04)	16.89	6.72 (±0.02)	21.53	6.85 (±0.02)	26.22	7.11 (±0.02)
18.11	5.54 (±0.01)	18.80	6.31 (±0.03)	23.84	6.51 (±0.02)	28.92	6.60 (±0.01)
		21.14	5.96 (±0.03)	26.62	6.07 (±0.02)		
		24.10	5.64 (±0.02)	29.95	5.87 (±0.02)		
			EPA	A-EE			
8.42	9.77 (±0.03)	10.01	13.00 (±0.12)	11.93	13.33 (±0.07)	13.88	13.80 (±0.04)
8.59	9.32 (±0.06)	10.39	11.57 (±0.07)	12.61	11.64 (±0.05)	14.86	11.90 (±0.07)
8.84	8.81 (±0.04)	10.94	10.30 (±0.03)	13.53	10.45 (±0.06)	16.17	10.69 (±0.04)
9.18	8.32 (±0.07)	11.32	9.62 (±0.03)	14.13	9.76 (±0.04)	16.99	9.92 (±0.03)
9.65	7.76 (±0.04)	11.80	8.96 (±0.04)	14.84	9.19 (±0.02)	17.95	9.34 (±0.01)
10.30	$7.39 (\pm 0.02)$	12.40	$8.42 (\pm 0.02)$	15.71	$8.55 (\pm 0.03)$	19.08	$8.97 (\pm 0.03)$
11.17	6.90 (±0.04)	13.17	7.96 (±0.06)	16.77	8.26 (±0.02)	20.43	8.44 (±0.04)
12.32	6.51 (±0.05)	14.14	7.54 (±0.02)	18.06	7.69 (±0.03)	22.03	8.00 (±0.03)
13.81	6.19 (±0.02)	15.36	7.13 (±0.02)	19.63	7.25 (±0.03)	23.94	7.51 (±0.01)
15.71	5.82 (±0.03)	16.89	6.76 (±0.04)	21.53	6.91 (±0.02)	26.22	7.11 (±0.01)
18.11	5.54 (±0.01)	18.80	6.34 (±0.02)	23.84	6.51 (±0.02)	28.92	6.64 (±0.02)
		21.14	$6.00(\pm 0.02)$	26.62	6.11 (±0.02)		
		24.10	5.66 (±0.01)	29.95	5.89 (±0.02)		
			DH	A-EE			
8.42	9.56 (±0.05)	10.01	$12.13 (\pm 0.01)$	11.93	$12.38 (\pm 0.07)$	13.88	$12.80 (\pm 0.08)$
8.59	$9.02(\pm 0.05)$	10.39	$10.87 (\pm 0.03)$	12.61	$11.07 (\pm 0.05)$	14.86	11.34 (±0.06)
8.84	8.51 (±0.06)	10.94	9.87 (±0.04)	13.53	$10.10(\pm 0.05)$	16.17	$10.32 (\pm 0.06)$
9.18	8.11 (±0.02)	11.32	9.24 (±0.04)	14.13	9.39 (±0.05)	16.99	9.75 (±0.03)
9.65	$7.61 (\pm 0.02).$	11.80	$8.65 (\pm 0.02)$	14.84	8.96 (±0.04)	17.95	9.13 (±0.04)
10.30	7.18 (±0.04)	12.40	8.19 (±0.04)	15.71	8.45 (±0.05)	19.08	8.64 (±0.05)
11.17	6.73 (±0.03)	13.17	$7.78(\pm 0.02)$	16.77	$8.04 (\pm 0.02)$	20.43	8.23 (±0.02)
12.32	6.32 (±0.04)	14.14	$7.34(\pm 0.02)$	18.06	$7.56(\pm 0.02)$	22.03	$7.78(\pm 0.03)$
13.81	6.07 (±0.03)	15.36	6.96 (±0.01)	19.63	$7.11 (\pm 0.02)$	23.94	7.34 (±0.04)
15.71	5.73 (±0.01)	16.89	$6.60(\pm 0.06)$	21.53	6.73 (±0.02)	26.22	6.92 (±0.01)
18.11	5.40 (±0.02)	18.80	6.28 (±0.04)	23.84	6.41 (±0.02)	28.92	6.54 (±0.01)
		21.14	5.87 (±0.02)	26.62	$6.01 (\pm 0.06)$		
		24.10	5.55 (±0.02)	29.95	5.69 (±0.07)		

^a The values in parentheses are the maximum deviation to the average value of the measured data, in percent of the average value.



Figure 4. Relationship between diffusion coefficient of AA-EE and T/η : solid line, y = -0.14348 + 1.45206x.

value of a fatty acid ester at a given temperature and density of carbon dioxide is known, the D_{12} value at other temperatures can be easily estimated.

Figure 4 shows the curve of $D_{12,AA-EE}$ plotted versus T/η . It points out that the relationship is linear and the intercept is -0.14348, a value almost equal to zero. This relationship is

similar to that of stearic acid EE by Liong et al.³² The curves of $D_{12,\text{EPA}-\text{EE}}$ and $D_{12,\text{DHA}-\text{EE}}$ versus T/η have the similar character.

 $D_{12,\text{EPA}}$, $D_{12,\text{EPA}-\text{EE}}$, and $D_{12,\text{EPA}-\text{ME}}$ are compared in Figure 5. $D_{12,\text{EPA}}$ and $D_{12,\text{EPA}-\text{ME}}$ are from Funazukuri et al.²⁹ and Liong et al.,³² respectively. Though the D_{12} resources of EPA and its ethyl or methyl esters (ME) are different, they are comparable by the following analysis: (i) the system errors between the apparatus of this work and Liong et al.³² are very small, which indicates that the differences between $D_{12,\text{EPA}-\text{EE}}$ and $D_{12,\text{EPA}-\text{ME}}$ are affected insignificantly by the system errors; (2) Funazukuri, Kong, and co-workers^{3,39} compared the CIR method with the CPB method and found that for weak-polar and non-viscous liquids the D_{12} values under the same conditions obtained by the above two methods agree with each other very well, whereas for polar or viscous ones the values by CIR method are relatively greater because symmetry of the peaks obtained by the CIR method is much closer to unit. Since EPA is a kind of viscous liquid, less D_{12} values would be obtained on the apparatus in this work. It can be seen from Figure 5 that the difference between D_{12} values of EPA and its esters are not significant in the range of T/η from $3.0 \times 10^{-5} \text{ K} \cdot \text{P}^{-1}$ to $5.5 \times 10^{-5} \text{ K} \cdot \text{P}^{-1}$. However, when T/η is greater than 5.5 \times 10⁻⁵ K·P⁻¹, the D_{12}



Figure 5. Relationship between D_{12} and T/η : \blacksquare , EPA in ref 29 by CIR method; \Box , EPA-ME in ref 32 by CPB method; \bigcirc , EPA-EE in this work by CPB method.

Table 2. Related Parameters for Modeling

parameters ^a	CO_2	AA-EE	EPA-EE	DHA-EE
$M/g\cdot mol^{-1}$	44.01	332.50	330.50	356.50
$V_{\rm b}/{\rm cm^{3} \cdot mol^{-1}}$	33.32	478.60^{b}	471.20^{b}	508.20^{b}
$V_{\rm c}/{\rm cm^{3} \cdot mol^{-1}}$	94	1195 ^c	1175^{c}	1265 ^c
Pc/MPa	7.383	11.638 ^c	11.834 ^c	11.038 ^c
$T_{\rm c}/{\rm K}$	304.2	840.3 ^c	833.8 ^c	867.1 ^c
$^{2}\chi$		8.339 ^d	8.339 ^d	9.047^{d}
$\dot{D}_{\rm c}/10^{-4}{\rm cm}^{-2}{\rm s}^{-1}$	4.94^{e}			

 ${}^{a}M$ = molecular weight; $P_{\rm c}$ = critical pressure; $T_{\rm c}$ = critical temperature; $V_{\rm c}$ = molar critical volumn; $V_{\rm b}$ = molar volume at normal boiling point; ${}^{2}\chi$ = second order of the molecular connectivity index; $D_{\rm c}$ = self-diffusion coefficient of CO₂ at the critical point. b Estimated by the Le Bas method.⁴⁸ c Estimated by Lydersen's method.⁴⁸ d Estimated according to Figure 20 of Liong et al.³³ e Estimated by eq 4 of Fuller et al.⁴⁹

values of EPA are apparently less than those of its esters, although the molecular weight and V_b of EPA are smaller than those of its esters. Similar phenomena are observed for the other two groups of fatty acids and their esters (AA, AA-EE) and (DHA, DHA-EE, and DHA-ME). Kong et al.³⁰ studied the binary diffusion coefficients of γ -linolenic acid and its EEs and MEs and found that the D_{12} values under the same condition were smaller than those of its EE or ME. Thus, it can be concluded that the functional group of a solute plays an important role in its binary diffusion coefficient.

Modeling of the Diffusion Data. The experimental data were correlated by 10 models: nine of them are purely predictive models including hydrodynamic equations (Wilke–Chang,⁴⁰ Lusis–Ratcliff,⁴¹ Scheibel,⁴² and Hayduck–Minhas⁴³), molecular connectivity equation (Wells⁴⁴), hard sphere equation (Catchpole–King⁴⁵), free volume equations (Funazukuri–Hachisu–Wakao,²⁶ Dymond–Liong,³² and He–Yu–Su⁴⁶); the other one is a free volume based equation with two adjustable parameters (Dymond⁴⁷). The parameters needed in the 10 models are listed in Table 2. The correlated results are listed in Table 3.

Average absolute deviations (AAD %) of the 10 models for all the fatty acid EEs in Table 3 indicate that three among the nine purely predictive models, Scheibel, Catchpole–King, and He–Yu–Su provide excellent prediction with the AAD less than 2 %. Wilke–Chang and Lusis–Ratchcliff equations are not satisfactory. In Dymond's model, $(V_2 - V_D)$ is defined as free volume, and V_D is taken as $0.308V_c$ for all solutes. It was found that the deviation of the predicted diffusion coefficients of the three esters is about 10 %. Better results were obtained if V_D is regarded as an adjustable parameter for each solute As shown in Figure 6, each of the obtained V_D are less than $0.308V_c$,



Figure 6. $D_{12}/T^{0.5}$ as a function of V_2 : V_2 , CO₂ molecular volume; dotted line, $D_{12}/T^{0.5} = 1.102 \times 10^{-3}(V_2 - 23.36)$ for AA-EE; solid line, $D_{12}/T^{0.5} = 1.165 \times 10^{-3}(V_2 - 24.33)$ for EPA-EE; dashed line, $D_{12}/T^{0.5} = 1.056 \times 10^{-3}(V_2 - 21.58)$ for DHA-EE; □, AA-EE; ○, EPA-EE; ■, DHA-EE.

Table 3. Average Absolute Deviation (AAD %) of Models

	AAD %		
model	AA-EE	EPA-EE	DHA-EE
Wilke-Chang ⁴⁰	15.18	15.16	16.44
Lusis-Ratcliff ⁴¹	19.78	19.41	19.36
Scheibel ⁴²	0.92	1.09	1.62
Hayduck-Minhas43	8.94	8.84	10.60
Wells ⁴⁴	2.49	2.68	3.85
Funazukuri-Hachisu-Wakao ²⁶	7.06	7.50	8.51
Catchpole-King45	1.06	1.03	1.33
Dymond ⁴⁷	1.14	1.02	1.29
Dymond-Liong ³²	3.76	3.21	3.98
He-Yu-Su ⁴⁶	0.79	0.78	1.54

and the AADs by the Dymond equation with the fitted $V_{\rm D}$ values are small enough.

Conclusion

The binary diffusion coefficients of AA-EE, EPA-EE, and DHA-EE measured at temperatures from 308.15 K to 338.15 K and pressures from 8.42 MPa to 29.95 MPa are (5.54 to 13.47) $\times 10^{-5}$ cm²·s⁻¹, (5.54 to 13.80) $\times 10^{-5}$ cm²·s⁻¹, and (5.40 to 12.80) $\times 10^{-5}$ cm²·s⁻¹, respectively. The Scheibel, Catchpole–King, and He–Yu–Su equations can predict the experimental data quite well.

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