

Measurement and Correlation of Liquid–Liquid Equilibrium Data for Water + Acetic Acid + Methyl *tert*-Butyl Ether + NaCl

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Liquid–liquid equilibrium data of the quaternary system of water + acetic acid + methyl *tert*-butyl ether (MTBE) + NaCl at 298.15 K have been measured under atmospheric pressure. The liquid-phase splitting of the water + acetic acid + MTBE can be enhanced by the addition of salt NaCl. Selectivity of MTBE at different NaCl concentrations was calculated and compared. In addition, the experimental data were correlated with the NRTL and electrolyte–NRTL model. Also, parameters of these two models were regressed.

Introduction

The recovery of acetic acid from aqueous solutions is industrially and environmentally significant. There have been many various reports about the recovery of acetic acid, for example, distillation, extraction, neutralization, adsorption, membrane separation, and the integration of these methods.^{1–5} The integration of extraction and azeotropic distillation is considered to be a comparatively effective method because of its lower energy cost. The key to its efficiency depends on extraction solvent selection. Kürüm et al.⁶ evaluated 34 types of possible entrainers for acetic acid purification with extraction followed by azeotropic distillation in terms of selectivity, distribution coefficient, recoverability, density, chemical reactivity, viscosity, vapor pressure and freezing point, toxicity, cost, and so on, and concluded that ethyl acetate, diisopropyl ether, and methyl *tert*-butyl ether (MTBE) are the most promising entrainers. Among them, MTBE is the best because of its better selectivity, lesser density, lower vaporization enthalpy, and lower price. We measured the liquid–liquid equilibrium (LLE) data of the ternary system of water + acetic acid + MTBE experimentally and confirmed that MTBE is indeed an effective solvent for acetic acid extraction.¹ Because of this, salt-containing extraction has received a great deal of attention in recent years^{7–9} and some practical purposes;¹⁰ we investigated the effect of salt on the LLE of the system of water + acetic acid + MTBE in this work.

Experimental Section

Chemicals. MTBE with a purity of 99.9 % was purchased from Fisher. Acetic acid with a purity of 99.5 % and sodium chloride with analytical purity were purchased from Shanghai Chemical Reagent. Double-distilled water was prepared in our laboratory. The salt compounds were dried in an oven until the weight remained constant before being used. All liquid chemicals were checked with chromatographic analysis and used without further purification.

Apparatus and Procedure. All LLE data for the systems of interest were measured under atmospheric pressure. The experimental apparatus included a jacketed glass cell (internal volume about 50 cm³), a thermostatically controlled bath, and a magnetic agitator. The circulating water from the thermostati-

Table 1. Mass Fraction LLE Data for Water (1) + Acetic Acid (2) + MTBE (3) + NaCl (4) at Different Mass Fractions of NaCl (w_s) and $T = 298.15$ K

solvent-rich phase				water-rich phase			
w_1^I	w_2^I	w_3^I	w_4^I	w_1^{II}	w_2^{II}	w_3^{II}	w_4^{II}
$w_s = 0$							
0.0116	0.0000	0.9884		0.9548	0.0000	0.0452	
0.0259	0.0464	0.9277		0.9062	0.0476	0.0462	
0.0393	0.1122	0.8485		0.8384	0.1071	0.0545	
0.0721	0.1793	0.7486		0.7899	0.1525	0.0576	
0.1068	0.2554	0.6378		0.6950	0.2251	0.0799	
0.1620	0.2937	0.5443		0.6253	0.2686	0.1061	
0.2357	0.3300	0.4343		0.5302	0.3175	0.1523	
0.3065	0.3343	0.3592		0.4505	0.3248	0.2247	
0.3341	0.3372	0.3287		0.4247	0.3281	0.2472	
$w_s = 0.01$							
0.0188	0.0000	0.9800	0.0012	0.9740	0.0000	0.0207	0.0053
0.0414	0.1186	0.8383	0.0017	0.8579	0.0987	0.0373	0.0061
0.0743	0.2112	0.7109	0.0036	0.7729	0.1619	0.0545	0.0107
0.1004	0.2624	0.6325	0.0047	0.7250	0.1967	0.0662	0.0121
0.1305	0.3079	0.5558	0.0058	0.6757	0.2312	0.0800	0.0131
0.1933	0.3712	0.4274	0.0081	0.5732	0.2967	0.1160	0.0141
0.2153	0.3848	0.3906	0.0093	0.5289	0.3206	0.1358	0.0147
0.2730	0.4100	0.3120	0.0050	0.4423	0.3720	0.1792	0.0065
$w_s = 0.05$							
0.0152	0.0000	0.9775	0.0073	0.9509	0.0000	0.0171	0.0320
0.0411	0.1430	0.8041	0.0118	0.8439	0.0880	0.0338	0.0343
0.0778	0.2379	0.6665	0.0178	0.7448	0.1551	0.0561	0.0440
0.1097	0.3018	0.5687	0.0198	0.6880	0.1906	0.0739	0.0475
0.1541	0.3772	0.4434	0.0253	0.6013	0.2551	0.0896	0.0540
0.1842	0.4147	0.3732	0.0279	0.5316	0.3120	0.1081	0.0483
0.2035	0.4383	0.3290	0.0292	0.4801	0.3492	0.1220	0.0487
0.2477	0.4449	0.2755	0.0319	0.3857	0.3978	0.1641	0.0524
$w_s = 0.1$							
0.0031	0.0000	0.9909	0.0060	0.9613	0.0000	0.0104	0.0283
0.0398	0.1993	0.7467	0.0142	0.8761	0.0738	0.0151	0.0350
0.0647	0.3264	0.5778	0.0311	0.7700	0.1151	0.0251	0.0898
0.0823	0.3878	0.4914	0.0385	0.7005	0.1701	0.0316	0.0978
0.0933	0.4240	0.4412	0.0415	0.6569	0.2100	0.0357	0.0974
0.1052	0.4401	0.4046	0.0501	0.6125	0.2368	0.0423	0.1084
0.1378	0.4662	0.3265	0.0695	0.5194	0.2970	0.0583	0.1253
0.2254	0.4553	0.2092	0.1101	0.3917	0.3721	0.0940	0.1422

cally controlled bath was introduced to the jacket to keep the temperature of the liquid mixture essentially constant. The temperature fluctuation was controlled within ± 0.05 K. At the beginning of the experiments, water, acetic acid, MTBE, and NaCl were added to the cell by mass at known ratios. The weights of these reagents were determined by an electronic

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$$\sum x_i^{\text{II}} = 1 \quad (6)$$

where x_i^{I} and x_i^{II} are the mole fractions of component i in phases I and II, and r_i^{I} and r_i^{II} are the activity coefficients of component i in phases I and II. The key to solving the set of equations is to calculate the activity coefficients. The activity coefficients of the quaternary system above were calculated with the electrolyte–NRTL model by Aspen Plus, and the activity coefficients of the ternary system were calculated with the NRTL model.

The electrolyte–NRTL model was originally proposed by Chen et al. for aqueous electrolyte systems.¹⁶ It was later extended to mixed solvent electrolyte systems.¹⁷ When binary and pair parameters are employed, the model can represent aqueous electrolyte systems as well as mixed-solvent electrolyte systems over the entire range of electrolyte concentrations. The model reduces to the well-known NRTL model when electrolyte concentrations become zero.¹⁸ Chen proposed an excess Gibbs energy expression that contains two contributions: one contribution for the long-range ion–ion interactions that exist beyond the immediate neighborhood of a central ionic species, and the other related to the local interactions that exist at the immediate neighborhood of any central species. The unsymmetrical Pitzer–Debye–Hückel model and the Born equation are used to represent the contribution of the long-range ion–ion interactions, and the NRTL theory is used to represent the local interactions. This NRTL expression for the local interactions, the Pitzer–Debye–Hückel expression, and the Born equation are added to give eq 7 for the excess Gibbs energy

$$\frac{G_m^{\text{E}}}{RT} = \frac{G_m^{\text{E,PDH}}}{RT} + \frac{G_m^{\text{E,Born}}}{RT} + \frac{G_m^{\text{E,lc}}}{RT} \quad (7)$$

This leads to

$$\ln \gamma_i^* = \ln \gamma_i^{\text{PDH}} + \ln \gamma_i^{\text{Born}} + \ln \gamma_i^{\text{lc}} \quad (8)$$

where γ_i^{PDH} is the long-range interaction contribution term (the Pitzer–Debye–Hückel equation), γ_i^{Born} is the Born term that transfers the reference state of ions from the infinitely dilute state in a mixed solvent to an aqueous infinitely dilute state, and γ_i^{lc} is the short-range interaction contribution term (based on the local composition concept of the original NRTL model).

Each type of electrolyte–NRTL parameter consists of both the nonrandomness factor, α , and energy parameters, τ . The detailed temperature dependency relations of the electrolyte–NRTL parameters for each term have been given elsewhere.^{16–18}

The significant derived parameters obtained in this work were regressed and listed in Tables 4 and 5. The LLE diagrams under atmospheric pressure for water + acetic acid + MTBE + NaCl at different NaCl concentrations are shown in Figures 3, 4, 5, and 6. These LLE diagrams compare the experimental results with the calculated binodal locus and tie lines from the NRTL and electrolyte–NRTL models.

The root-mean-square deviations (RMSD) of the correlations with different models were calculated according to the following

Table 4. Calculated Results from the NRTL Model for Water (1) + Acetic Acid (2) + MTBE (3) at $T = 298.15$ K

$i-j$	α_{ij}^a	τ_{ij}^a	τ_{ji}^a
1-2	0.47	0.3540	-1.2151
1-3	0.20	3.9737	1.2998
2-3	0.37	-0.2774	-2.8068

^a α_{ij} is the nonrandomness factor of the NRTL model, and τ_{ij} and τ_{ji} are interaction energy parameters of the NRTL model.

Table 5. Calculated Results from the Electrolyte–NRTL Model for Water (1) + Acetic acid (2) + MTBE (3) + NaCl (4) at $T = 298.15$ K

$i-j$	α_{ij}^a	τ_{ij}^a	τ_{ji}^a
1-4	0.20	8.9012	-4.5721
2-4	0.10	15.0335	-8.0067
3-4	0.10	10.0335	-2.0067

^a α_{ij} is the nonrandomness factor of the electrolyte–NRTL model, and τ_{ij} and τ_{ji} are the interaction energy parameters of the electrolyte–NRTL model. The values of the nonrandomness parameters (α and τ) for (1-2), (1-3), and (2-3) pairs are the same as those in Table 4.

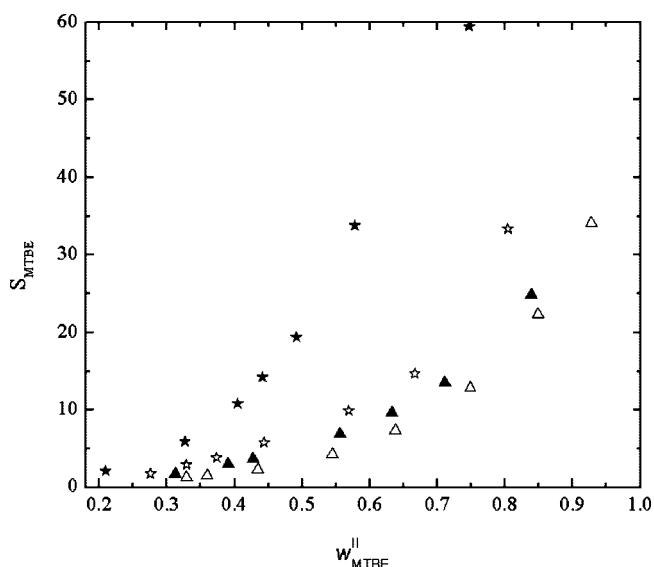


Figure 2. Selectivity of MTBE in two liquid phases at different mass fractions of NaCl (w_s) and $T = 298.15$ K: Δ , $w_s = 0$ (salt free); \blacktriangle , $w_s = 0.01$; \star , $w_s = 0.05$; \star , $w_s = 0.1$.

Table 3. Results of Correlation of the LLE Data Correlation for Water (1) + Acetic acid (2) + MTBE (3) + NaCl (4) at Different Mass Fractions of NaCl (w_s) and $T = 298.15$ K

w_s	a	b	c	d	R^a	SD^a
0	0.1389		1.1173		0.9992	0.0196
0.01		0.1026		0.0146	0.9972	0.0276
0.05		0.0229		-0.0242	0.9943	0.0403
0.1		0.0237		-0.0293	0.9911	0.0427

^a Where R is the linear correlation coefficient and SD is the standard deviation.

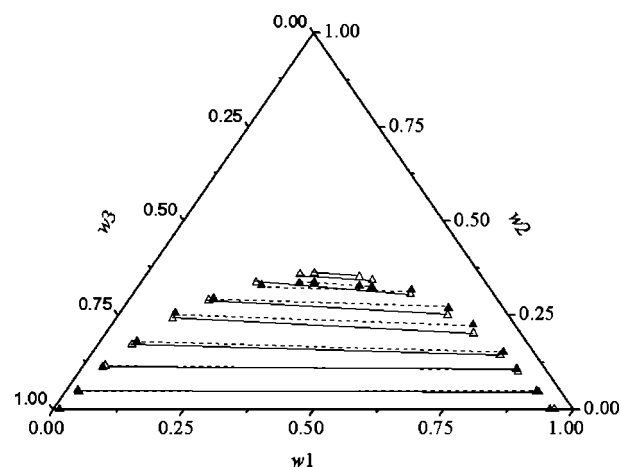


Figure 3. LLE phase diagram for water (1) + acetic acid (2) + MTBE (3) at $T = 298.15$ K: Δ , exptl data; \blacktriangle , NRTL correlation; —, exptl tie line; ---, NRTL tie line.

Table 6. Root-Mean-Square Deviations Obtained from NRTL and Electrolyte–NRTL Models at Different Mass Fractions of NaCl (w_s) and $T = 298.15$ K

w_s	NRTL	electrolyte–NRTL
0	0.0108	
0.01		0.0033
0.05		0.0129
0.1		0.0091
av		0.0084

equation. Equation 9 is applicable to the ternary system of water + acetic acid + MTBE, and eq 10 is applicable to the quaternary system of water + acetic acid + MTBE + NaCl

$$\text{RMSD} = \left(\sum_{k=1}^n \sum_{j=1}^2 \sum_{i=1}^3 \left(\frac{w_{ijk}^{\text{calcd}} - w_{ijk}^{\text{obsd}}}{6n} \right)^2 \right)^{1/2} \quad (9)$$

$$\text{RMSD} = \left(\sum_{k=1}^n \sum_{j=1}^2 \sum_{i=1}^3 \left(\frac{w_{ijk}^{\text{calcd}} - w_{ijk}^{\text{obsd}}}{8n} \right)^2 \right)^{1/2} \quad (10)$$

where w_{ijk}^{calcd} and w_{ijk}^{obsd} are the calculated and the observed mass fractions of component i in phase j on tie line k , and n is the number of tie lines.

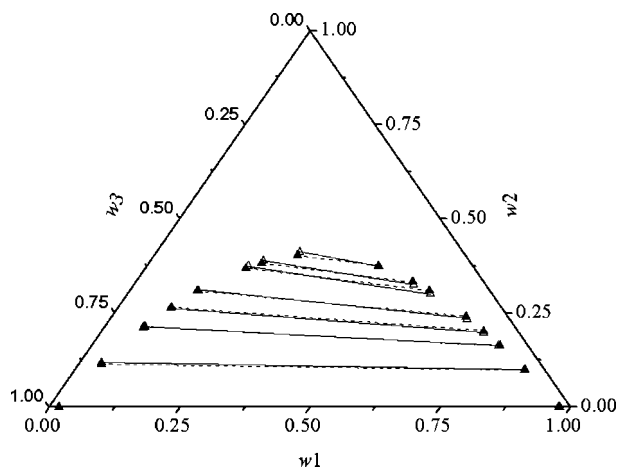


Figure 4. LLE phase diagram for water (1) + acetic acid (2) + MTBE (3) + NaCl (4) at mass fraction of NaCl $w_s = 0.01$ and $T = 298.15$ K. Each coordinate variable is on a salt-free basis: Δ , exptl data; \blacktriangle , electrolyte–NRTL correlation; —, exptl tie line; ---, electrolyte–NRTL tie line.

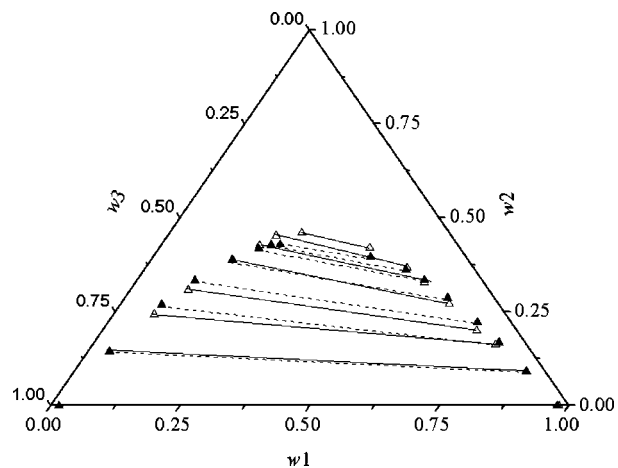


Figure 5. LLE phase diagram for water (1) + acetic acid (2) + MTBE (3) + NaCl (4) at mass fraction of NaCl $w_s = 0.05$ and $T = 298.15$ K. Each coordinate variable is on a salt-free basis: Δ , exptl data; \blacktriangle , electrolyte–NRTL correlation; —, exptl tie line; ---, electrolyte–NRTL tie line.

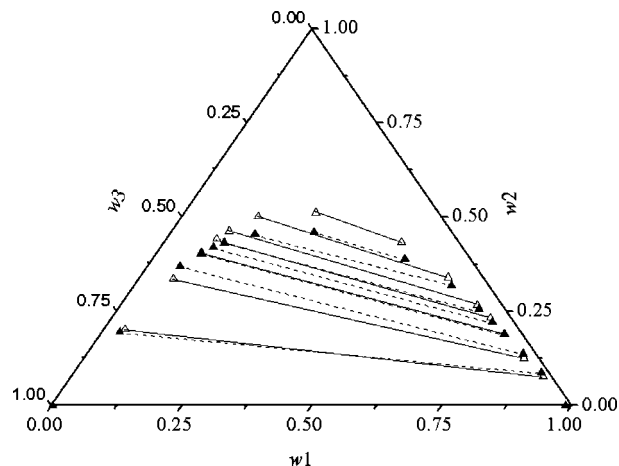


Figure 6. LLE phase diagram for water (1) + acetic acid (2) + MTBE (3) + NaCl (4) at mass fraction of NaCl $w_s = 0.1$ and $T = 298.15$ K. Each coordinate variable is on a salt-free basis: Δ , exptl data; \blacktriangle , electrolyte–NRTL correlation; —, exptl tie line; ---, electrolyte–NRTL tie line.

Table 6 gives the RMSD values for the two models at different salt concentrations. As seen from Table 6 and Figures 3, 4, 5, and 6, good agreements between the calculated values and experimental results have been obtained for the two systems.

Conclusions

LLE data for the quaternary system of water + acetic acid + MTBE + NaCl at 298.15 K under atmospheric pressure were determined at different sodium chloride concentrations. The two-phase region increased with increasing concentrations of sodium chloride. In addition, parameters of NRTL and electrolyte–NRTL models for the investigated systems were regressed. A comparison between experimental data and calculated values was drawn. The results show that the LLE of the investigated systems could be well correlated with electrolyte–NRTL.

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