Acoustic CO₂ Gas Sensor Based on Phase Difference Measurement

Melany Febrina a,d, Eko Satria a,e, Mitra Djamal b, Wahyu Srigutomo c, Martin Liess d

a Department of Physics, Institut Teknologi Sumatera, Lampung, Indonesia
b Instrumentation Physics and Computation, Department of Physics, Institut Teknologi Bandung, Bandung, Indonesia
c Earth Physics and Complex System, Department of Physics, Institut Teknologi Bandung Bandung, Indonesia
d Department of Engineering, RheinMain University of Applied Sciences, Germany
e Research and Innovation Center for Advanced Materials, Institut Teknologi Sumatera, Lampung, Indonesia
f Research and Innovation Center for Disaster Mitigation and Early Detection of Forest Fires, Institut Teknologi Sumatera, Lampung, Indonesia

Abstract: In this research, an acoustic sensor has been successfully built to measure the concentration of CO₂ gas in a mixture of gases (N₂ and CO₂). The nitrogen and carbon dioxide gases used are ultra-high purity (UHP) gas. The measurement parameter used is the speed of sound by utilizing the phase shift between ultrasonic wave signals that are sent and received continuously. The acoustic method in this research is by using the speaker as an ultrasonic wave transmitter, and the microphone as an ultrasonic wave receiver emitted by the speaker on the gas medium. This acoustic phase shift method is very sensitive to be used to determine the speed of sound on a gas medium. From the sensor testing, the sensor has good linearity in detecting changes in CO₂ concentration in the gas mixture. The sensor test results have been validated theoretically and obtained an RMS error of 3.36 (3.36% with a maximum concentration of 100%), this proves that the work of the sensor is in accordance with the theory. In addition to theoretical validation, the work of the sensor has also been validated by looking at the direct relationship between sensor input and output through the inverse function, and an RMS error of 3.51 (3.51% with a maximum concentration of 100%) is obtained. From the overall results obtained, the acoustic CO₂ gas sensor that is built can detect changes in CO₂ concentrations in the gas mixture accurately, fabrication of the sensor is easy to do, and the costs required in the manufacturing process are cheap.

Keywords: Acoustic gas sensor, CO₂ concentration, phase difference

Introduction

CO₂ is a molecule consisting of two oxygen atoms bound to one carbon atom, which has a molecular weight of 44 grams/mol. CO₂ can be solid, liquid or gas depending on temperature [1]. Some CO₂-producing sources include natural sources such as respiration, the decay of animals and plants, fires, volcanic activity, while anthropogenic sources include burning fossil fuels, industrial activities such as the cement industry and the ammonia industry, natural gas processing, etc [2], and other sources are human who indirectly produces CO₂, where all human activities produce 70 million tons of CO₂ into the atmosphere each day [3].

CO₂ is a greenhouse gas whose concentration is the most after water vapor. From the pre-industrial era, CO₂ concentrations increased by 30% resulting in the average temperature of the earth increasing and affecting climate and ecosystems [4]. Data from the Mauna Loa Observatory of Hawaii (NOAA) reports that in July 2019, the concentration of CO₂ gas in the atmosphere approached 411.77 ppm [5].
The CO₂ gas is safe in low concentrations (usually <1,000 ppm), but prolonged exposure to moderate levels (>5,000 ppm) can cause various health problems such as sick building syndrome which causes symptoms such as fatigue [6].

CO₂ sensors are needed for optimal control of indoor air quality (IAQ) [7], [8] and CO₂ sensors are used to reduce energy use in heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems (HVAC) [9]. In addition, the measurement and monitoring of CO₂ concentrations are also important for various fields, including in the industrial sector, in the health sector, and in the chemical analysis [10].

Gas sensors used for CO₂ detection typically use various methods, including electrochemical (EC), infrared (IR), gas chromatographic (GC), and mass spectrometer (MS) methods [11]. At this time the detection of CO₂ by the acoustic method is also increasingly being used and developed. In addition, measurement methods by detecting thermal conductivity have also been tested for CO₂ detection [12]. In this study, acoustic methods are used to detect CO₂ concentrations in gas mixtures.

Acoustic methods can also be used as a solution to overcome the weakness of sensors with chemical methods including problems of short of lifetime [13], because the acoustic method has the advantages of long lifetime, easy manufacturing technology, and low production costs [14]. In this acoustic method, there are 3 categories of measurement parameters commonly used including sound speed, damping, and acoustic impedance. The sound velocity parameter can be used to determine a particular type of gas with a different sound speed than other gases in the gas mixture [15]. In addition to determining the type of gas, the sound speed parameter can be used to determine gas concentration based on mathematical calculations that are proportional to the difference in sound propagation time [16], and the speed of sound can also be used to calculate the molar mass composition of a gas in a gas mixture based on thermodynamic equations [17].

In this study, the parameter used as a reference for determining the concentration of CO₂ in a gas mixture is the speed of sound, by utilizing phase shifts between ultrasonic wave signals that are transmitted and received continuously. The phase difference between the sent and received ultrasonic wave signals is a function of the speed of sound [18]. In the gas mixture analysis, the sound velocity information obtained makes it possible to determine the percentage of gas composition in the gas mixture [19]. The acoustic method in this research is by using the speaker as an ultrasonic wave transmitter, and the microphone as an ultrasonic wave receiver emitted by the speaker on the gas medium. This acoustic phase shift method is very sensitive to be used to determine the speed of sound on a gas medium. This phase shift is obtained by measuring the phase difference between the transmitted and received waves, where the phase difference between waves is a function of the speed of sound [20].

Method

The design of the sensor can be seen in Figure 1, where the sensor consists of two aluminum tubes with a length of 40cm with a diameter of 2.5 cm, the two tubes are thermally connected. Detection of CO₂ gas in a gas mixture using two pairs of speakers and microphone, where a pair of speakers and a microphone function to detect carrier gas (N₂), and another pair of speakers and microphone function to detect mixed gas (N₂ and CO₂). The sensor is designed to work in the ultrasonic frequency area (25kHz) because at the 25kHz frequency the microphone can work optimally.

![Figure 1. The design of sensor](image-url)
As explained earlier, the phase difference between the signals sent and received is a function of the speed of sound. This method can be used to measure the speed of sound on the length of a small path that can have a length as short as one wavelength [18].

\[ \nu = \frac{2\pi f d}{\phi} \]  
Eq.(1)

where \( d \) is the distance between the speaker and the microphone, \( f \) is the ultrasonic frequency used and \( \phi \) is the phase difference of the wave emitted by the speaker and the wave received by the microphone.

In the experiments to be carried out, the phase difference obtained is the phase difference between the ultrasonic waves captured by microphone-1 (\( \phi_1 \)) and microphone-2 (\( \phi_2 \)). Based on the value of the phase difference, the ultrasonic wave velocity in the gas mixture can be determined assuming the ultrasonic wave velocity value of the reference gas is fixed. The ultrasonic wave velocity at the gas reference (N2) can be calculated using the following equation,

\[ v_{N2} = \frac{2\pi f d}{\phi_1} \]  
Eq.(2)

where \( \phi_1 \) is the phase difference between the speaker and microphone that detects the gas reference (N2).

In gas mixtures, ultrasonic wave velocity can be calculated using the following equation,

\[ v_{N2} = \frac{2\pi f d}{\phi_2} \]  
Eq.(3)

where \( \phi_2 \) is the phase difference between the speaker and the microphone that detects the mixture of gases.

Based on Eq.(2) and Eq. (3), the relationship between the microphone-1 and microphone-2 phase differences with the ultrasonic wave velocity in the gas mixture can be seen in the following equation,

\[ \phi_1 - \phi_2 = \frac{2\pi f d}{v_{N2}} - \frac{2\pi f d}{v_{mix}} \]  
Eq.(4)

Results And Discussion

Figure 3 shows the sensor response in phase difference due to changes in CO\(_2\) gas concentration. Experimental, phase difference can be obtained by measuring the phase difference between sound waves detected by the two microphones on an oscilloscope. Theoretically, the phase difference can be obtained by using equation Eq.(4).
In equation (4), the calculation requires the value of the ultrasonic wave velocity on the gas medium used. The ultrasonic wave velocity values in the gas mixture calculated based on equation (5) can be seen in Figure 4.

\[ \text{CO}_2 \text{Concentration} = 10.509 \Delta \phi + 8.0558 \]  
Eq.(6)

From Figure 6, it can get the equation of the relationship between the phase difference and the CO$_2$ concentration, can be written with the following equation:

The validation results obtained from equation (6) by comparing the value of the CO$_2$ concentration obtained from the test results with the actual value of the CO$_2$ concentration, obtained an error of RMS for the detection of CO$_2$ concentrations using acoustic method of 3.51. Based on the value of inaccuracies (errors) from sensor measurements with the relatively small acoustic method, it can be said that the sensors built can work well in detecting CO$_2$ gas concentration.

The stability of the sensor measurements by this acoustic method is determined from repeated experiments of five times with the same measurement conditions. From the five experiments that have been carried out, it can be seen in Table 1, that the maximum standard deviation of the sensor measurement is $3.82 \times 10^{-3}$ mV at 9.09% CO$_2$. With a standard deviation value of the sensor below $3.82 \times 10^{-3}$ mV, it can be said that the sensor has a good level of precision and stability.

**Table 1** Experimental data for five repetitions (testing using the acoustic method)

| CO$_2$ (%) | Exp. 1 | Exp. 2 | Exp. 3 | Exp. 4 | Exp. 5 | $\Delta \sigma$ ($\times 10^{-3}$) |
|------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|-------------------------------|
| 0.00       | -0.443 | -0.440 | -0.440 | -0.443 | -0.443 | 1.912                         |
| 9.09       | 0.227  | 0.234  | 0.227  | 0.234  | 0.234  | 3.824                         |
| 18.18      | 0.867  | 0.871  | 0.871  | 0.867  | 0.874  | 2.920                         |
| 27.27      | 1.415  | 1.417  | 1.415  | 1.419  | 1.417  | 1.460                         |
| 36.36      | 2.761  | 2.765  | 2.759  | 2.761  | 2.763  | 1.990                         |
| 54.55      | 3.800  | 3.803  | 3.798  | 3.800  | 3.794  | 3.171                         |
| 63.64      | 5.831  | 5.835  | 5.835  | 5.835  | 5.836  | 1.990                         |
| 72.73      | 6.479  | 6.477  | 6.480  | 6.477  | 6.484  | 2.589                         |
| 81.82      | 7.133  | 7.131  | 7.135  | 7.131  | 7.128  | 2.589                         |
| 90.91      | 7.847  | 7.842  | 7.847  | 7.849  | 7.847  | 2.647                         |
| 100.00     | 8.412  | 8.411  | 8.409  | 8.412  | 8.414  | 1.990                         |
Conclusions

The presented method of CO$_2$ concentration detection is based on the measurement of the phase difference between the sent and received ultrasonic waves continuously. The sensor has been successfully to measure the concentration of CO$_2$ gas in a mixture of gases (N$_2$ and CO$_2$). The nitrogen and carbon dioxide gases used are ultra-high purity (UHP) gas. In the measurement system, the sensor consists of the speaker transmits the ultrasonic wave, and the microphone receives that ultrasonic wave in gas. The sensor test results have been validated theoretically and obtained an RMS error of 3.36 (3.36% with a maximum concentration of 100%), this proves that the work of the sensor is in accordance with the theory. In addition to theoretical validation, the work of the sensor has also been validated by looking at the direct relationship between sensor input and output through the inverse function, and an RMS error of 3.51 (3.51% with a maximum concentration of 100%) is obtained. From the overall results obtained, the acoustic CO$_2$ gas sensor that is built can detect changes in CO$_2$ concentrations in the gas mixture accurately, fabrication of the sensor is easy to do, and the costs required in the manufacturing process are cheap.

Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts to declare.

Acknowledgements

The research was supported by “Hibah Smart ITERA (GBU-45) No. B/401/IT9.C1/PT.01.03/2020.

References

[1] M. Ansarizadeh et al., “Carbon Dioxide-Challenges and Opportunities,” 2015.
[2] O. US EPA, “Overview of Greenhouse Gases,” 2016.
[3] P. Driessen, “Carbon Dioxide: The Gas of Life Tiny amounts of this miracle molecule make life on Earth possible A Special Report for the Committee For A Constructive Tomorrow PROSPERING LIVES PROMOTING PROGRESS PROTECTING THE EARTH PROVIDING EDUCATION Carbon Diox,” 2013.
[4] O. Oter, K. Ertekin, D. Topkaya, and S. Alp, “Room temperature ionic liquids as optical sensor matrix materials for gaseous and dissolved CO2,” Sensors Actuators B Chem., vol. 117, no. 1, pp. 295–301, Sep. 2006.
[5] “Earth’s CO2 Home Page.” [Online]. Available: https://www.co2.earth/. [Accessed: 27-Aug-2019].
[6] D. Gibson and C. Macgregor, “A Novel Solid State Non-Dispersive Infrared CO2 Gas Sensor Compatible with Wireless and Portable Deployment,” Sensors, vol. 13, pp. 7079–7103, 2013.
[7] J. M. Daisey, W. J. Angell, and M. G. Apte, “Indoor air quality, ventilation and health symptoms in schools: an analysis of existing information.,” Indoor Air, vol. 13, no. 1, pp. 53–64, Mar. 2003.
[8] S.-F. Ferng and L.-W. Lee, “Indoor air quality assessment of daycare facilities with carbon dioxide, temperature, and humidity as indicators.,” J. Environ. Health, vol. 65, no. 4, pp. 14–18, 22, Nov. 2002.
[9] M. G. Apte, “A Review of Demand Control Ventilation,” 2006.
[10] G. Zhang, Y. Li, and Q. Li, “A miniaturized carbon dioxide gas sensor based on infrared absorption,” Opt. Lasers Eng., vol. 48, no. 12, pp. 1206–1212, 2010.
[11] M. Febrina, E. Satria, M. Djamal, W. Srigutomo, and M. Liess, “Development of a simple CO2 sensor based on the thermal conductivity detection by a thermopile,” Meas. J. Int. Meas. Confed., vol. 133, 2019.
[12] J. Zosel, W. Oelßner, M. Decker, G. Gerlach, and U.
Acoustic CO₂ Gas Sensor Based on Phase Difference Measurement

FEBRINA et al., Journal of Science and Applicative Technology vol. 5 (2), 2021, pp. 397-402

Original Article

FEBRINA et al., Journal of Science and Applicative Technology vol. 5 (2), 2021, pp. 397-402

Guth, “TOPICAL REVIEW: The measurement of dissolved and gaseous carbon dioxide concentration,” Meas. Sci. Technol., vol. 072001, no. 22, 2011.

[13] M. Febrina, M. Djamal, and M. Liess, “Design and Development of Gas Sensor Based On Acoustic Resonance,” in KnE Engineering, 2016, vol. 2016, no. 2015, pp. 1–6.

[14] X. Liu, S. Cheng, H. Liu, S. Hu, D. Zhang, and H. Ning, “A survey on gas sensing technology,” Sensors (Switzerland), vol. 12, no. 7, pp. 9635–9665, 2012.

[15] H. Bai and G. Shi, “Gas Sensors Based on Conducting Polymers,” Sensors, vol. 7, no. 3, pp. 267–307, Mar. 2007.

[16] M. Shan, X. Li, C. Zhu, and J. Zhang, “Gas concentration detection using ultrasonic based on wireless sensor networks,” in 2nd International Conference on Information Science and Engineering, ICISE2010 - Proceedings, 2010, vol. C, no. 1, pp. 2101–2106.

[17] S. Jacobson, “New developments in ultrasonic gas analysis and flowmetering,” in 2008 IEEE Ultrasonics Symposium, 2008, pp. 508–516.

[18] M. Suchenek and T. Borowski, “Measuring Sound Speed in Gas Mixtures Using a Photoacoustic Generator,” Int. J. Thermophys., vol. 39, no. 1, pp. 1–6, 2018.

[19] T. Löfqvist, K. Sokas, and J. Delsing, “Speed of sound measurements in gas-mixtures at varying composition using an ultrasonic gas flow meter with silicon based transducers,” FLOMEKO 2003 - 11th IMEKO TC9 Conf. Flow Meas., no. January, pp. 1–6, 2003.

[20] J. S. Olfert, M. D. Checkel, and C. R. Koch, “Acoustic method for measuring the sound speed of gases over small path lengths,” Rev. Sci. Instrum., vol. 78, no. 5, pp. 1–8, 2007.