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Key Points:

- The first evaluated zeta potential at supercritical CO₂-water interface is smaller than -14 mV
- The CO₂-water zeta potential reflects the wetting state and is impacted by divalent cations
- Normalized zeta potential correlates with CO₂ saturation and is a powerful tool to evaluate residual CO₂ trapping in aquifers

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Zeta Potential of Supercritical CO₂-Water-Sandstone Systems and Its Correlation With Wettability and Residual Subsurface Trapping of CO₂

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Abstract Although CO₂ geological storage (CGS) is thought to be one of the most promising technologies to sequester the anthropogenic CO₂ to mitigate the climate change, implementation of the method is still challenging due to lack of fundamental understanding of controls of wettability, which is responsible for residual trapping of the gas and its flow dynamics. One of the key parameters that controls the wetting state is the zeta potential, ζ , at rock-water and CO₂-water interfaces. ζ in systems comprising rocks, carbonated aqueous solutions and immiscible supercritical CO₂ have not been measured prior to this study, where we detail the experimental protocol that enables measuring ζ in such systems, and report novel experimental data on the multi-phase ζ . We also demonstrate for the first time that ζ of supercritical CO₂-water interface is negative with a magnitude greater that 14 mV. Moreover, our experimental results suggest that presence of multi-valent cations in tested solutions causes a shift of wettability toward intermediate-wet state. We introduce a new parameter that combines multi-phase ζ and relative permeability endpoints to characterize the wetting state and residual supercritical CO₂ saturation. Based on these results, we demonstrate that ζ measurements could serve as a powerful experimental method for predicting CGS efficiency and/or for designing injection of aqueous solutions with bespoke composition prior to implementing CGS to improve the residual CO₂ trapping in sandstone formations.

Plain Language Summary Extensive research has been conducted in the field of CO_2 geological storage (CGS). However, among a multitude of parameters that affect the efficiency of CGS, the system's wettability has been investigated empirically rather than from first principles. Fundamentally, wettability controls distribution of injected CO_2 and reservoir fluids in the pore space, as well as the flow dynamics of all fluids in target formations. One of the main forces controlling the wetting state is related to electrostatic interaction between rock-water and CO_2 -water interfaces, and the zeta potential is a property that describes these interactions. With the zeta potential dependence on the partial CO_2 pressure, water pH and chemical composition, and mineralogy, wettability can be characterized and/or modified prior to CO_2 injection using this interfacial property, thus enabling optimization of residual CO_2 trapping and significantly improving overall CGS efficiency. We have designed and for the first time carried out coreflooding experiments combined with single- and multi-phase zeta potential measurements at CGS conditions. We have introduced the normalized zeta potential which comprises two independent wettability indicators, and report a correlation between this property, the residual CO_2 saturation and wettability. Our results explain the underlying mechanisms of dependence of CO_2 saturation on experimental conditions.

1. Introduction

A major component in the transition toward net-zero energy involves the capture of CO_2 and its storage in geological formations termed CGS (Ali et al., 2022). To prevent CO_2 from leaking back to the surface, four

properly cited.





Writing – original draft: Jan Vinogradov Writing – review & editing: Jan Vinogradov, Miftah Hidayat, Mohammad Sarmadivaleh, Stefan Iglauer, Lijuan Zhang, Dajiang Mei, Jos Derksen trapping mechanisms are used: (a) structural trapping (a tight caprock acts as a barrier through which CO_2 cannot permeate), (b) residual trapping (CO₂ plume is split into many micrometer-sized bubbles which are immobilized by capillary forces in the pore network), (c) dissolution trapping (CO_2 dissolves in the formation brine), and (d) mineral trapping (CO₂ chemically reacts with the formation brine and/or reservoir rock to form solid precipitates). The two primary storage mechanisms during the first several hundreds of years are structural and residual trapping (Benson & Cole, 2008). The efficiency of these mechanisms is controlled by the CO₂-Brine-Rock (CO₂BR) wettability at equilibrium, which is established between the injected CO₂, initially CO₂-lean formation brines and minerals. Specifically, rock-wetting fluids tend to reside and flow in thin wetting layers along pore walls, which results in their lower residual saturation and lower relative permeability, thus affecting both, flow dynamics and trapped fluid volumes (Blunt et al., 2013; Collini & Jackson, 2022; Muggeridge et al., 2014). Thus, it is critically important to rigorously understand CO₂-wettability, in order to optimize CGS for higher residual trapping of CO₂. From a thermodynamics perspective, wettability is defined by stability of the wetting film at the solid surface, which is controlled by the total disjoining pressure, surface energy and capillary pressure. From first principles, the disjoining pressure comprises three main forces: structural (reflecting intermolecular structure of solvent), Van der Waals and electrostatic (Hirasaki, 1991). The former two are related to rock and fluid properties (topology of the pore space, refractive indices, permittivities, surface energy) as functions of reservoir conditions, have been routinely measured and, in general, are well known and characterized. The electrostatic force is also a function of reservoir conditions and rock mineralogy, but also depends on pH, composition and concentration of formation brines, all of which can theoretically be modified to yield optimal wettability (e.g., through injection of brines of specific chemical composition) thus enabling artificial control and/or improvement of CGS. The electrostatic force is characterized by a measurable interfacial quantity termed the zeta potential (ζ) , the current knowledge of which in CO₂BR systems is quite limited. Understanding ζ in addition to other wettability controls (i.e., interfacial tension, refractive indices, permittivities, capillary pressure) will provide the necessary, as of now missing, link between experiments, theory and numerical simulations. Moreover, it has been demonstrated that ζ measured in multi-phase experiments correlates with water saturation (Vinogradov & Jackson, 2011). Therefore, ζ is useful for characterizing CO₂ saturation during the CGS, thus enabling process optimization.

On the fundamental level, when electrolytic solutions come in contact with solids or other fluids, the respective interfaces often develop a non-zero electric charge. To balance this surface charge, ions of the opposite polarity (counter-ions) are attracted from the bulk electrolyte toward the interface, thus forming an electrical double layer. Counter-ions that directly adsorb onto the mineral surface are immobile and form the so-called Stern layer, while those that are electrostatically attracted populate the diffuse part of the electrical double layer and can be mobilized by pressure, concentration or temperature gradients. Therefore, recognizing the importance of mobile counter-ions, ζ is defined as the electric potential at the slip plane, which separates the immobile part of the electrical double layer are mobilized by a flow, the so-called streaming current is established resulting in a separation of charge along the mineral surface. To maintain the overall electroneutrality, the corresponding and directly measurable streaming potential arises, from which ζ can be interpreted and related to the wetting state.

An increasing number of studies have reported laboratory measurements of wettability characterized by directly measured contact angles (Iglauer et al., 2015), interpreted from volume-averaged rock properties (Krevor et al., 2012) or obtained from in situ X-ray micro-CT (Tudek et al., 2017). Other published studies have employed analytical methods (Tokunaga, 2012) or numerical models on multiple scales (Song et al., 2017; Yong et al., 2021) to evaluate the wetting state. However, many challenges still remain with respect to each method, reported data set or completeness of the investigated parameter space. At present, published laboratory experiments related to CGS cover a limited parameter space and do not look at cross-correlation of all fundamental parameters that define wettability. For instance, contact angle and interfacial tension measurements (Singh et al., 2016; Stevar et al., 2019) reported a limited number of values without providing fundamental explanation of observations, which would only be possible through inclusion of the critically important ζ measured at the same experimental conditions.

More specifically, contact angles measured on quartz in contact with various aqueous solutions and supercritical CO_2 investigated effects of composition, concentration, pore pressure and temperature. However, the reported results are inconsistent with some studies reporting the contact angle to be independent of the pore pressure and temperature (Chen et al., 2015) while others reported increasing contact angles with pore pressure and temperature (Alnili et al., 2018). Several studies reported contact angles to be identical for solutions containing mono-

versus divalent cations (Chen et al., 2015), when other studies demonstrated increase in contact angles with $CaCl_2$ and $MgCl_2$ solutions relative to NaCl (Al-Yaseri et al., 2016). The concentration dependence of contact angles measured in such systems is also inconsistent with some papers reporting increasing contact angles with increasing concentration (Jung & Wan, 2012) and other studies reporting the opposite trend (e.g., Sarmadivaleh et al., 2015). Finally, many papers reported contact angles measured in quartz- CO_2 -water systems at CGS conditions to range between 20° and 60°, corresponding to water-wet conditions (e.g., Chen et al., 2015) while some other studies reported contact angles in seemingly identical systems to be in the range of 75° to 95°, thus corresponding to intermediate conditions (Bikkina, 2011; Sutjiadi-Sia et al., 2008).

Very few analytical studies relevant to CGS employed Derjaguin-Landau-Verwey-Overbeek (DLVO) theory to model wettability (Tokunaga, 2012). However, in the absence of established experimental data, these studies assumed the zeta potential at rock-water (ζ_{r-w}) and CO₂-water (ζ_{c-w}) interfaces, thus although being useful and insightful, their results were quite speculative.

Various micro-scale numerical modeling methods have been used to simulate ζ and wettability of CGS systems, with two approaches considering the fundamental interfacial interactions: the molecular dynamics (MD) and surface complexation models (SCM). SCMs are effective in describing geochemical reactions and potentially are fully predictive (Vinogradov et al., 2022) for ζ_{r-w} but no such models have been tried for supercritical CO₂-water interface at CGS conditions. Classical MD models consider discrete molecules, ions and atoms, while explicitly simulating their interactions at supercritical CO₂-water interface on the atomic scale, which enables determination of contact angles, interfacial tension and/or other properties of interest (Silvestri et al., 2019). However, despite the merits of SCM and MD, both methods invoke multiple assumptions on still unavailable experimental values of ζ_{c-w} , thus rendering these approaches speculative and uncertain. Moreover, these studies have not investigated the effect of flow dynamics or used their results to provide reliable and scalable input parameters for reservoir-scale simulations, which are used to assess the process efficiency.

Prior to implementing CGS, it is a common practice to use large-scale aquifer/reservoir simulation to assess the process efficiency. However, the available reservoir simulators compute CO₂ saturation and flow dynamics using assumed sets of relative permeability functions, the shape of which strongly depends on the wetting state. At best, the relative permeability curves can be taken from a very limited set of laboratory experiments (Krevor et al., 2012), however the conditions of salinity, pore pressure, temperature, chemical composition, mineralogy and porous medium structure in the simulated formations are usually different from the respective laboratory studies and may be highly variable in space and time across the reservoir. Therefore, the physicochemical interactions at the CO₂-water and rock-water interfaces (which impact the wetting state through, in part, their effect on ζ_{c-w} , ζ_{r-w} , and multi-phase ζ_{m-p}) are not fully captured in simulations, and relative permeability curves are not constantly updated, all of which results in highly uncertain predictions. ζ_{m-p} obtained for rock samples saturated with both fluids is an effective property comprising contributions of individual water-CO₂ and rock-water interfaces with the corresponding ζ_{c-w} and ζ_{r-w} .

Several published studies investigated gas-water zeta potentials with air (Najafi et al., 2007) or CO_2 (Kim & Kwak, 2017), but none of these studies managed to obtain reliable measurements at elevated temperature, high pressure or ionic strengths above 10^{-2} M (M = mol · L⁻¹). Even at ambient conditions the reported zeta potentials of CO_2 -water interfaces varied between nearly zero (Najafi et al., 2007), approximately -18 mV (Kim & Kwak, 2017), and +10 mV (Zhou et al., 2021) with 10^{-3} M NaCl at the same pH value. One study (Moore et al., 2004) reported measurements of the zeta potential with intact rock samples saturated at high pressure with distilled water and liquid CO_2 at irreducible water saturation. However, these results were obtained at 20°C and the reported zeta potentials were likely misinterpreted as discussed in by Vinogradov et al. (2021).

There have been only two studies that reported ζ measurements at CGS conditions (Hidayat et al., 2022a, 2022b) but they were limited to a single-phase flow (rock saturated with fully carbonated solution at supercritical CO₂ (scCO₂) conditions, termed C_water), and none were complemented by relative permeability measurements, which relates to wettability, scCO₂ saturation and determines scCO₂ flow dynamics.

In summary, our predictive capabilities are currently limited: the experimental data are incomplete and cover a limited parameter space, the available data have not been interpreted in terms of the fundamental principles (i.e., various parameters were measured but not explained), the previously used analytical and numerical methods remain disconnected and are not based on verified evidence, and reservoir simulations are not coupled with





Figure 1. The experimental apparatus used in streaming potential measurements. The solid gray lines represent flowlines and the dashed gray lines represent electrical connections. (#1) heated 500D Hastelloy ISCO pumps to the left and to the right of the core holder; (#2) 500D is a stainless steel ISCO pump used to induce the confining pressure around the rock sample; (#3) data acquisition system; (#4) is the HPHT coreflooding cell (core holder); (#5) two high precision pressure transducers; (#6) high precision pressure transducer used to monitor the confining pressure; (#7) external electrodes to the left and to the right of the core holder; (#8) internal electrodes to the left and to the right of the core holder; (#9) are sampling tubes to the left and to the right of the core holder; (#11) 260D Stainless steel ISCO pump used for pumping CO₂ into the mixing reactor; (#12) heated Parr mixing reactor; (#13) high pressure in-line pH meter.

verified models or based on accurate experimental data and adequate assumptions. Therefore, although the subsurface formations suitable for implementation of CGS worldwide possess significant volumes to store large amounts of anthropogenic CO_2 , none of the current projects at their advanced development stages (apart from the Sleipner field in Norway, which is a depleted gas reservoir and outside of this study's scope) are operational. This is mainly due to poorly characterized dynamics of CO_2 saturation and flow, owing to inherently complex and heterogeneous geological constitution combined with a lack of understanding of highly complex physicochemical interactions between minerals and various fluids based on first principles.

In this study, we address the above shortcomings through pioneering targeted experiments that provide insights into controls of wettability and scCO₂ saturation. We report, for the first time, ζ_{m-p} measured with various aqueous solutions at conditions corresponding to scCO₂, and demonstrate the polarity and likely magnitude of ζ_{c-w} . Furthermore, we report endpoints of relative permeability to water under these conditions and interpret the effective wetting state of a rock sample using two independent properties.

2. Materials and Methods

The experimental apparatus (Figure 1), the intact Fontainebleau sandstone sample (>99%wt quartz, liquid permeability of 70 ± 5 mD, porosity of $9 \pm 2\%$, and intrinsic formation factor of 58 ± 2) and C_water solutions (all having the ionic strength of 0.05 M) used in this work (NaCl, NaC-10, CaCl₂, MgCl₂, Na₂SO₄) were identical to those reported in a previously published paper (Hidayat et al., 2022a; C_water is termed live water in the study). The solutions' ionic strength was selected to be high enough to make the surface conductivity negligible (refer to Supplementary data in Hidayat et al., 2022a) and sufficiently low to keep the streaming potential measurable. Furthermore, in this initial study we conducted experiments with single salts containing mono- and di-valent anions and cations to investigate the effect of C_water composition on ζ . Future work is planned to expand the parameter space to include higher ionic strength and complex composition C_water solutions.

The experimental protocol adopted in this study was modified from Hidayat et al. (2022a) to accommodate the multi-phase unsteady state displacement experiments, all of which were conducted at 40°C. Initial pressure

conditions for drainage (scCO₂ displaces C_water) were identical to the corresponding preceding single-phase C_water experiment (either 7.5 or 10 MPa). During the imbibition (C_water solution displaces scCO₂) stage, the same C_water produced during drainage was reinjected into the core to minimize any disturbance to the established thermodynamic and chemical equilibrium between the rock and pore fluids. Our experiments replicate subsurface conditions that are established between minerals, the injected scCO₂ and formation brines, which become fully saturated with the gas during the equilibration.

We used a constant injection rate of 1 mL/min during unsteady state drainage and imbibition, so that the corresponding capillary number of $Ca = 2.5 \times 10^{-8}$ was achieved at the end of drainage (when irreducible water saturation, S_{wirr} , was reached) and $Ca = 3.2 \times 10^{-7}$ –4.6 × 10^{-7} was achieved at the end of imbibition (when residual gas saturation, S_{gr} , was reached). The capillary number, defined as $Ca = \frac{u \times \mu}{\gamma}$ ($u = \frac{Q}{A}$ is the Darcy velocity determined from the flow rate, Q, and cross-sectional area to the flow, A; μ is the dynamic viscosity of the flowing fluid; γ is the CO₂-water interfacial tension) was evaluated at relevant experimental conditions to confirm the capillary dominated displacement.

The experimental protocol for measuring the streaming potential coupling coefficient as a function of C_water saturation, $C_{EK}(S_w)$, consisted of the following steps:

- 1. During drainage 40 mL (approximately five pore volumes, PV) of pure scCO₂ were repeatedly injected into the rock sample initially fully saturated with C_water. Between the injections the core holder (#4) was closed and disconnected from the rest of the setup to maintain the experimental temperature and pressure, the pumps (#1) were then used to flow C_water through the in-line pH meter (#13) to measure pH of the effluent C_water, the saturated rock conductivity (σ_{rw}) was measured using the internal electrodes (#8), and volume of produced C_water was measured in the depressurized receiving pump (assuming <1% change in density after reducing in-cylinder pressure to 100 kPa for the measurements (McBride-Wright et al., 2015). The injections were repeated until no more C_water was produced, hence S_{wirr} was reached.
- 2. After reaching the irreducible C_water saturation, $C_{EK}(S_{wirr})$ was obtained from measured stabilized pressure difference and voltage using the paired-stabilized method in one direction and the flow rate of 1 mL/min (Vinogradov & Jackson, 2011). In addition, one pressure-ramping experiment (Vinogradov & Jackson, 2011) with the maximum injection pressure of 20 kPa was conducted to confirm the value of $C_{EK}(S_{wirr})$. We limited the measurements to one flow rate and one pressure ramping test to maintain the water displacement in the capillary dominated regime.
- 3. Upon completion of $C_{EK}(S_{wirr})$ evaluation, the rock sample was allowed to age with scCO₂ for 7 days to allow wettability alteration to take place (with longer aging period the measuring electrodes (#8) were observed to become unstable, likely due to an impact of low pH on the electrode surface reactions, hence we limited the aging to 7 days for all experiments).
- 4. During subsequent imbibition 2.5 PV of C_water were injected into the sample saturated with C_water and immiscible scCO₂. The core holder was then closed, pH of the effluent C_water and saturated rock conductivity (σ_{rw}) were measured, the receiving pump was depressurized and volume of produced C_water was measured. The above injection steps were repeated until volume of produced C_water became equal to the volume of the injected C_water (volume of produced scCO₂ was calculated as a difference between the injected and produced C_water volumes), hence residual gas saturation, S_{er} ($S_w = 1 S_{er}$), was reached.
- 5. At this stage, $C_{EK}(1 S_{gr})$ for all tested solutions was obtained using the paired-stabilized method with the flow rate of 1 mL/min both directions to allow continuous monitoring of produced volumes of C_water and pH and to maintain the displacement within the capillary dominated regime. Furthermore, at least three pressure-ramping experiments with the maximum injection pressure of up to 20 kPa were also conducted at this stage to acquire independent evaluation of $C_{EK}(1 S_{gr})$. Note that there was no additional CO₂ production in the receiving pump at any point. Constant $S_w = 1 S_{gr}$ during the last step was also independently confirmed via regular measurements of relative permeability to C_water, σ_{rw} and C_{EK} , all of which remained constant.
- 6. Finally, we conducted additional paired-stabilized experiments using at least four different flow rates between 4 mL/min and 12 mL/min with an increment of 2 mL/min. The first of these multi-rate experiments was conducted at the highest rate of 12 mL/min (the so-called "high-rate bump") in the same flow direction as during step 4. This first high-rate bump was carried out to eliminate or reduce the capillary end effects (if there were any) while still enabling measuring volumes of produced C_water. Upon completion of the first high-rate bump, additional multi-rate paired-stabilized experiments were carried out in both directions to allow a more

accurate interpretation of $C_{EK}(1 - S_{gr})$ (Vinogradov et al., 2010). Due to technical restrictions of the experimental setup (e.g., requirement to disconnect the core holder from the rest of the setup after each pumping; necessity to depressurize the receiving pump to measure volumes of produced C_water with subsequent refilling of the pump with fresh C_water for the next experiment; extremely time consuming nature of each test resulting in a loos of the electrode stability) the final C_water saturations ($S_w = 1 - S_{gr}$) in multi-rate tests were updated from the values obtained during step 5 only once at the end the first paired-stabilized experiment conducted at the highest flow rate of 12 mL/min.

All experiments were carried out at chemical and thermal equilibrium between rock, C_water and scCO₂ to replicate reservoir conditions past CO₂ injection when the fluids and minerals are already at equilibrium. During the entire experiment the chemical equilibrium of the system was monitored by continuous measurements of pH, which remained constant and stable (2% tolerance) for the entire duration of drainage and/or imbibition (i.e., at least for 7–10 days). In addition, the equilibrium was also confirmed at S_{wirr} and $S_w = 1 - S_{gr}$ by measurements of C_{EK} and σ_{rw} as described above, both of which remained constant and stable (2% tolerance) over a period of at least 2 days.

All dead volumes (flowlines connecting pumps to the core holder, valves, etc.) were accurately measured prior to conducting the multi-phase experiments. Precisely measured volumes of injected and produced fluids combined with the measured dead volumes and sample porosity were used to compute the average water saturation at the end of each $scCO_2$ or C_water injection.

To calculate the zeta potential at $S_w = 1$ and residual gas saturation ($S_w = 1 - S_{gr}$) we used the classical Helmholtz-Smoluchowski (HS) equation

$$C_{EK} = \frac{\Delta V}{\Delta P} = \frac{\varepsilon \zeta}{\mu \sigma_w} \tag{1}$$

where ΔV is the measured voltage (i.e., the streaming potential) across the rock sample, ΔP is the pressure difference, ε is the dielectric constant of the C_water, μ is C_water dynamic viscosity, σ_w is the effective electrical conductivity of C_water, and ζ is the zeta potential.

In this study, ζ_{r-w} and ζ_{m-p} were interpreted from direct C_{EK} measurements (voltage and pressure difference) carried out on samples saturated with C_water, and C_water with residual scCO₂, respectively. Polarity and the likely magnitude of ζ_{c-w} were interpreted from the difference between ζ_{r-w} and ζ_{m-p} , as detailed in Sections 4.1 and 4.2.

3. Results

3.1. Multi-Phase Streaming Potential Coupling Coefficient, C_{EK} , at S_{wirr} and $S_w = 1 - S_{gr}$

We begin from reporting C_{EK} (Figure 2) interpreted from pressure difference and voltage measurements for single-(both, dead, i.e. saturated with CO₂ at atmospheric pressure and temperature in Figure 2a and C_water in Figure 2b solutions) and multi-phase (C_water in contact with rock and scCO₂) systems. Specifically, values of the stabilized voltage (e.g., voltage averaged between 1,500 and 2,100 s in Figure 2a) were plotted against the corresponding values of the stabilized pressure for all tested flow rates, so that the slope of a linear regression yielded C_{EK} . Note that single-phase experiments correspond to water saturation $S_w = 1$. The stability of the internal electrodes used in our multi-phase experiments was considerably poorer compared with the single-phase dead or live solution experiments. The poorer electrode stability, therefore, resulted in increased noise level relative to the measured signal and hence, increased experimental errors as demonstrated in Figure 2. The experimental uncertainties associated with a higher noise level and poorer stability of measured voltage are reflected in the cumulative errors in the streaming potential coupling coefficient, C_{EK} (and consequently ζ), which followed the high-to-low order: Na₂SO₄ \rightarrow NaCl-10 \rightarrow MgCl₂ \rightarrow CaCl₂ \rightarrow NaCl (NaCl-10 corresponds to the experiments carried out with live NaCl solution at the average pore pressure of 10 MPa, while the rest of the experiments were conducted at 7.5 MPa).

In multi-phase experiments a non-zero C_{EK} was recorded at residual gas saturation ($S_w = 1 - S_{gr}$) while zero C_{EK} was observed in all experiments at irreducible C_water or dead solution saturation ($C_{EK}(S_{wirr}) = 0 \text{ mV/MPa}$), Figures 2c and 2e. The zero $C_{EK}(S_{wirr})$ reported here is consistent with the hypothesis that the streaming current





Figure 2. Typical results of the paired-stabilized experiments carried out with: (a) single-phase experiment with dead NaCl solution pumped at 4 mL/min, pore pressure of 7.5 MPa and temperature of 23°C (all data for dead solutions is available in Hidayat et al. (2022a) and presented here only for comparison in the voltage noise level); (b) single-phase experiment with NaCl C_water solution pumped at 6 mL/min, pore pressure of 7.5 MPa and temperature of 40°C; (c) multi-phase paired-stabilized experiment with scCO₂ pumped at 1 mL/min in presence of NaCl C_water solution at irreducible S_{wirr} , pore pressure of 7.5 MPa and temperature of 40°C; (e) multi-phase paired-stabilized experiment with scCO₂ pumped at 1 mL/min in presence of NaCl C_water solution at irreducible S_{wirr} , pore pressure of 7.5 MPa and temperature of 40°C; (e) multi-phase paired-stabilized experiment with scCO₂ pumped in presence of NaCl C_water solution at irreducible saturation (S_{wirr}), pore pressure of 7.5 MPa and temperature of 40°C; (f) multi-phase pressure-ramping experiment with scCO₂ pumped in presence of NaCl C_water solution at irreducible saturation (S_{wirr}), pore pressure of 7.5 MPa and temperature of 40°C; (f) multi-phase pressure-ramping experiment with NaCl C_water solution pumped with maximum pressure of 20 kPa in presence of scCO₂ at $S_w = 1 - S_{gr}$, pore pressure of 7.5 MPa and temperature of 40°C; (f) multi-phase pressure-ramping experiment with NaCl C_water solution pumped with maximum pressure of 20 kPa in presence of scCO₂ at $S_w = 1 - S_{gr}$, pore pressure of 7.5 MPa and temperature of 40°C; (f) multi-phase pressure-ramping experiment with NaCl C_water solution pumped with maximum pressure of 20 kPa in presence of scCO₂ at $S_w = 1 - S_{gr}$, pore pressure of 7.5 MPa and temperature of 40°C. Slopes of the linear regressions, represented by the red dashed lines in panels (e) and (f) correspond to the respective values of C_{EK} .

should always be zero when C_water or dead solution is at irreducible saturation and therefore immobile, the hypothesis that was confirmed by an analytical model (Vinogradov et al., 2021). Moreover, another experimental study (Vinogradov & Jackson, 2011) came to the same conclusion and attributed their non-zero $C_{EK}(S_{wirr})$, measured in sandstone samples saturated with water and undecane, to the experimental artifact, when very small (hence, unmeasurable) volumes of water were still produced at the end of drainage, thus contributing to the non-



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zero flow of water and streaming current. For more detailed information on the interpretation of C_{EK} from measured pressure difference and voltage, please refer to Vinogradov et al. (2010) and Vinogradov and Jackson (2011).

3.2. Multi-phase Zeta Potential, ζ_{m-p} , at $S_w = 1 - S_{gr}$

In Equation 1 used to calculate ζ_{m-p} , C_{EK} was interpreted from directly measured response of voltage to applied pressure difference at the end of imbibition (Figures 2d and 2f), while viscosity, dielectric constant and C_water electrical conductivity (μ , ε and σ_w) were taken from the respective single-phase C_water experiments (Hidayat et al., 2022a). Note, that it was experimentally confirmed that surface electrical conductivity of all solutions was negligible at ionic strength of 0.05 M, thus allowing us to use σ_w as the effective water conductivity (refer to Supplementary data in Hidayat et al., 2022a).

All properties measured in the experiments along with cumulative experimental uncertainties for each property, both at the end of a single-rate imbibition experiment (step 5) and at the end of multi-rate tests (step 6), are reported in subsequent sections while Figure 3 shows ζ_{m-p} (at $S_w = 1 - S_{gr}$) of all tested systems along with their respective ζ_{r-w} (at $S_w = 1$) values.

The effective ζ_{m-p} (with both scCO₂ and C_water present in the pore space) of systems containing C_water solutions of NaCl and Na₂SO₄ at residual scCO₂ saturation (S_{gr}) were found to be identical to their respective ζ_{r-w} (only C_water occupies the pore space) values within the experimental uncertainty (Figure 3). However, ζ_{m-p} for NaCl-10, CaCl₂ and MgCl₂ solutions were significantly different from ζ_{r-w} , hence clearly indicating that ζ_{m-p} in these experiments were influenced by the scCO₂-C_water interfaces and the corresponding ζ_{c-w} . A more detailed analysis and interpretation of these results is provided in Sections 4.1 and 4.2.

Furthermore, the total change in S_w during the single-rate imbibition (step 5) ($\Delta S_w = 1 - S_{gr} - S_{wirr}$) was found to be different across tested salts and pore pressure values so that: $\Delta S_w(\text{NaCl} - 10)$ > $\Delta S_w(\text{NaCl}) > \Delta S_w(\text{Na}_2\text{SO}_4) > \Delta S_w(\text{MgCl}_2) > \Delta S_w(\text{CaCl}_2)$. As described in step 6 of the experimental protocol, at the end the first paired-stabilized experiment conducted at the highest flow rate of 12 mL/min S_{gr} was measured and did decrease compared to the values obtained from step 5 only for CaCl₂ and MgCl₂. The corresponding ζ_{m-p} obtained at the end of multi-rate tests however, remained equal to those from the single rate imbibition as shown in Figure 4a. The dashed lines in Figure 4a represent the variation of ζ_{m-p} that corresponds to the experimental sequence: (a) ζ_{r-w} was obtained for all systems when rock samples were fully saturated with C_water ($S_w = (a)$; (b) $\zeta_{m-p} = 0$ was recorded at the end of drainage ($S_w = S_{wirr}$); (c) ζ_{m-p} values at the end of single- (step 5) and multi-rate (step 6) imbibition experiments and equal to those shown in Figures 3a and 3b, respectively. Note, that a change in S_w after the high-rate bump (measured once, after completion of the first injection of C_water at the highest rate of 12 mL/min) was recorded to be outside of the experimental error only for



Figure 4. C_water saturation dependence of (a) ζ_{m-p} and (b) relative permeability to C_water for all CO₂BR systems. NaCl-10 corresponds to the experiments conducted at 10 MPa, while the rest of the data were obtained at 7.5 MPa of the pore pressure. The error bars for ζ_{m-p} are identical to those shown in Figure 3 while the error bars for S_w and k_{rw} represent the accuracy of respective measurements.

CaCl₂ and MgCl₂ solutions, while all values of ζ_{m-p} at $S_w = 1 - S_{gr}$ (measured at the end of paired-stabilized experiments) were found to be identical to the values recorded at the end of step 5.

Since S_{wirr} was slightly different in different tested systems, Figure 4b shows relative permeability to C_water as a function of S_w change (ΔS_w) from S_{wirr} to $1 - S_{gr}$ in all systems. It should be noted that the lower values of ΔS_w correspond to the single-rate imbibition (step 5), while the high-rate pumping induced changes in k_{rw} and $1 - S_{gr}$ beyond the experimental uncertainty were only observed with CaCl₂ and MgCl₂. These changes were also observed to a much lesser extent with NaCl-10, for which the change in k_{rw} was greater than the experimental error while the change in $1 - S_{gr}$ was within the experimental uncertainty.

We attribute the above observations to different wetting states and different S_w of the systems affected by salt type and experimental pressure, all of which will be discussed in more detail in the following sections.

3.3. Role of pH in Controlling ζ_{c-w} and ζ_{m-p}

To investigate the impact of pH on ζ_{m-p} all measured values were plotted against the corresponding pH of C_water solutions and compared with ζ_{r-w} values obtained under identical conditions in Figure 5.

It can be seen, that unlike the single-phase ζ_{r-w} , the respective ζ_{m-p} did not have any apparent dependence on pH. Specifically, ζ_{m-p} for CaCl₂, NaCl-10, NaCl and Na₂SO₄ were independent of pH, while the value for MgCl₂ was the only outlier with a more negative ζ_{m-p} compared with all other multi-phase values.



Figure 5. Multi- (colored symbols) and single-phase (black symbols) zeta potentials measured for C_water-CO₂-sandstone systems. The dashed line represents the pH dependence of single-phase C_water zeta potentials, which is identical to the one reported by Hidayat et al. (2022a).

The measured ζ_{m-p} reflects combined individual contributions of ζ_{r-w} and ζ_{c-w} , thus being dependent on the system's wetting state. At the same time, there have been no studies that reported directly measured ζ_{c-w} under CGS conditions, thus the effect of salt type and pore pressure on ζ_{c-w} is unknown. Hence, the pH dependence of ζ_{c-w} and/or ζ_{m-p} could not be assumed similar to that of ζ_{r-w} (given by Equation 5 in Hidayat et 1., 2022a) or to align with the empirical trend reported for CO₂ nanobubbles in water solutions at ambient conditions (Zhou et al., 2021).

Ultimately, ζ_{m-p} reflects which fluid (C_water or scCO₂) wets the pore wall thus determining with interfacial zeta potential (ζ_{c-w} or ζ_{r-w}) will have more significant contribution to the effective multi-phase ζ_{m-p} . On the other hand, ζ_{m-p} , as well as ζ_{c-w} or ζ_{r-w} , depend on the system's pH. While the pH dependence of ζ_{r-w} for CO₂BR systems has been investigated (Hidayat et al., 2022a), the dependence of ζ_{c-w} on pH at CGS conditions has not been reported. If the dependence of ζ_{c-w} on pH and salt type at scCO₂ conditions was similar to that at ambient pressure and temperature (Zhou et al., 2021), and of the same order as ζ_{r-w} (Hidayat et al., 2022a) (both studies suggest that zeta





Figure 6. Qualitative description of fluids distribution in the pore space by the end of the imbibition displacement for three distinct wetting states. The individual zeta potentials at C_water-rock (ζ_{r-w}) and scCO₂-C_water (ζ_{c-w}) interfaces are shown in black and red colors, respectively. The resulting multi-phase zeta potential (ζ_{m-p}) estimates are shown to the right, based on the experimentally confirmed conclusion that ζ_{c-w} is negative and larger in magnitude than ζ_{r-w} .

potentials become more positive with decreasing pH and with presence of divalent cations), the resulting dependence of ζ_{m-p} on pH would be comparable to respective pH dependence of ζ_{r-w} represented by the dashed line in Figure 5. That was not the case and therefore, we conclude that the measured ζ_{m-p} were more strongly impacted by the pore space occupancy by scCO₂ rather than the pH.

4. Discussion

4.1. Polarity and Magnitude of scCO₂-C_water Zeta Potential, ζ_{c-w}

The ζ_{m-p} at $S_w = 1 - S_{gr}$ results from the streaming current induced by a flow of C_water along surfaces with a non-zero electrical charge, which in the pore space can develop at either the C_water-rock or scCO₂-C_water interface. Therefore, ζ_{m-p} depends on: (a) polarity and magnitude of ζ_{r-w} (previously measured and reported for identical systems and conditions in Hidayat et al., 2022a) and ζ_{c-w} (unknown); (b) distribution of scCO₂ in the pore space as depicted in Figure 6.

Specifically, ζ_{c-w} is expected to have a stronger impact on ζ_{m-p} at $S_w = 1 - S_{gr}$ when C_water is flowing only along continuous scCO₂ wetting films, thus corresponding to CO₂-wet conditions. In this case, the only contribution to the measured multi-phase streaming potential, from which ζ_{m-p} is interpreted, should come exclusively from the excess counter-ions moving along the scCO₂-C_water interface. And therefore, ζ_{m-p} should be of the same polarity and magnitude as ζ_{c-w} . Conversely, when immobile scCO₂ is trapped in the middle of the pores (water-wet conditions), the resulting multi-phase streaming potential should not be significantly affected by the discontinuous scCO₂-C_water interfaces and the resulting ζ_{m-p} should be of order of ζ_{r-w} . Finally, for intermediate-wet systems, ζ_{m-p} should attain a value between ζ_{r-w} and ζ_{c-w} . These arguments were experimentally confirmed for crude oil-rock-brine systems (Collini & Jackson, 2022), so that a similar relationship between ζ_{m-p} , taken relative to the corresponding ζ_{r-w} , and the wetting state of CO₂BR systems could be identified.

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Many studies have measured contact angles in quartz-C_water-scCO₂ systems. However, there is no clear consistency between the reported results. Some papers reported contact angles below 60° regardless of pore pressure, C_water concentration or salt type (e.g., Sarmadivaleh et al., 2015). At the same time other papers showed that contact angles with scCO₂ and de-ionized water on quartz substrates varied between 45° and 95° corresponding to water-wet and intermediate-wet conditions, respectively (Bikkina, 2011). Chen et al. (2015) reported measurements with NaCl and CaCl₂ solutions and demonstrated that the contact angles remained below 30° and independent of salt type and pore pressure. In contrast, Al-Yaseri et al. (2016) reported larger contact angles for CaCl₂ and MgCl₂ relative to NaCl with all contact angles increasing with the pore pressure. Finally, Chiquet et al. (2007) reported a transition from water-wet to intermediate-wet conditions with NaCl solutions.

Considering the anticipated relationship between ζ_{m-p} and wettability, along with the results presented in Figure 3 and three distinct wetting states described in Figure 6, we could conclude that presence of $scCO_2$ in NaCl-10, $CaCl_2$ and $MgCl_2$ systems led to some wettability alteration, evidenced by a significant difference between ζ_{r-w} and ζ_{m-p} caused by a substantial contribution of ζ_{c-w} . Keeping in mind that ζ_{c-w} could not be directly inferred from our experiments and the complete wetting of rock by $scCO_2$ was unlikely (the maximum contact angles found in the literature are in the range 82°–95°; Bikkina, 2011), only the case where ζ_{r-w} and ζ_{c-w} had the same polarity and significantly different magnitudes allowed us to unambiguously interpret ζ_{c-w} from the difference between ζ_{m-p} and ζ_{r-w} . That is, if ζ_{m-p} was found to be of the same polarity and *larger* in magnitude compared with ζ_{r-w} (as was the case in our experiments), it would imply that ζ_{c-w} also possessed the same polarity and was larger in magnitude than ζ_{r-w} . In all other cases the interpretation of ζ_{c-w} polarity and magnitude would be ambiguous if not impossible. For instance, if ζ_{m-p} was of the same polarity but smaller in magnitude compared with ζ_{r-w} , it could be equally possible for ζ_{c-w} to be zero, negative and small, or positive.

Given that ζ_{r-w} for all tested solutions and conditions were negative, we assumed a decreasing water wetness with increased pore pressure (NaCl to NaCl-10) and with the presence of divalent cations (CaCl₂ and MgCl₂). Thus, following the above arguments, the effective ζ_{m-p} would be of the same magnitude and polarity as ζ_{c-w} in more scCO₂-wet systems, while in intermediate-wet systems ζ_{m-p} would gain the magnitude between ζ_{c-w} and ζ_{r-w} . Based on the results presented in Figure 3, both wetting states could correspond to NaCl-10, CaCl₂ and MgCl₂ experiments. In water-wet systems ζ_{m-p} would have the same polarity and magnitude as ζ_{r-w} , as was observed in our NaCl and Na₂SO₄ experiments. However, the polarity and magnitude of ζ_{c-w} could not be unambiguously inferred from these two experiments.

It is generally accepted that ζ_{c-w} is primarily controlled by pH (Kim & Kwak, 2017), and since acidity of all tested multi-phase systems remained nearly identical, it was concluded that ζ_{c-w} in NaCl and Na₂SO₄ were also negative. Combining the results presented in Figure 3, the interpretation of impact of the wetting state on ζ_{m-p} and reported measured contact angles, we concluded that the likely wetting state of NaCl-10, CaCl2 and MgCl2 systems corresponded to the weakly water-wet or intermediate-wet conditions. The wetting state of NaCl and Na₂SO₄ systems corresponded to either strongly water-wet or weakly water-wet conditions with negative ζ_{c-w} in all systems.

Considering the magnitude of ζ_{m-p} relative to ζ_{r-w} (Figure 3), showing that contribution of ζ_{c-w} resulted in a more negative value of ζ_{m-p} , we conclude that $\zeta_{c-w} \leq -14$ mV in our experiments. However, since ζ_{m-p} alone was insufficient to distinguish between the wetting states of different systems, further analysis was conducted to evaluate the wettability and other factors that affected ζ_{m-n} .

4.2. Normalized Zeta Potential, Wettability and Residual CO₂ Saturation

Due to high pressure and elevated temperature conditions of the experiments, it was impossible to directly measure the system's wettability using conventional methods that rely on spontaneous and forced imbibition cycles (Amott Wettability Index, or USBM). Therefore, to quantify the wettability we considered two independent parameters: the reciprocal scaled zeta potential, ζ_{RS} ; and the reciprocal relative permeability gradient, RRPG.

An experimental study reported measured water Amott wettability index (I_w) for their carbonate-water-oil systems and demonstrated that ζ_{m-p} became progressively more different from ζ_{r-w} as I_w became smaller, reflecting more oil-wet conditions (Jackson et al., 2016). Consistent with their results, we assumed that the change in the





Figure 7. Residual CO_2 saturation versus normalized zeta potential defined by Equation 4 after (a) single rate imbibition (step 5), and (b) multi-rate paired stabilized experiments (step 6).

zeta potential in our experiments, $(|\Delta \zeta_{wett}| = |\zeta_{r-w} - \zeta_{m-p}|)$, also increased with a transition toward more scCO₂-wet (less water-wet) state. Another study reported small $|\Delta \zeta_{wett}|$ for (near) intermediate wettability (Collini et al., 2020). Therefore, small values of $|\Delta \zeta_{wett}|$ in our experiments were expected to correspond to either strongly or weakly water-wet conditions.

On the other hand, small values of $|\Delta \zeta_{wett}|$ could be comparable with the measurement error, hence suggesting $|\Delta \zeta_{wett}|$ to be effectively zero. Therefore, we considered $|\Delta \zeta_{wett}|$ in comparison with the experimental uncertainty, and scaled $|\Delta \zeta_{wett}|$ by the reported errors in the respective multi-phase experiments, $|\delta \zeta_{1-S_{wett}}|$, to define ζ_{RS} .

$$\zeta_{RS} = \left(\frac{\left|\Delta\zeta_{wett}\right|}{\left|\delta\zeta_{1-S_{gr}}\right|}\right)^{-1} \tag{2}$$

In Equation 2, the experimental uncertainties caused by the noise level, repeatability and instrument accuracy were evaluated as: $\zeta_{1-S_{gr}} = \frac{\delta^+ + \delta^-}{2}$ with δ^+ and δ^- corresponding to positive and negative experimental errors in ζ_{m-p} .

Distinguishing between five different wetting states: strongly water-wet (SWW), weakly water-wet (WWW), intermediate-wet (IW), weakly CO₂-wet (WCW), and strongly CO₂-wet (SCW), this scaling resulted in the largest ζ_{RS} to correspond to SWW conditions and the smallest ζ_{RS} —the SCW state.

To allow a better distinction between WWW, IW and WCW conditions, we employed an additional independent wettability identifier, *RRPG*. Wettability is known to affect the shape of the relative permeability curves. Specifically, an increase in scCO₂ wetness results in an increase in the end-point relative permeability to water (k_{rw}^e) at $S_w = 1 - S_{gr}$ and a decrease in S_{gr} (Owens & Archer, 1971). Therefore, SWW systems should usually correspond to the lowest k_{rw}^e and highest S_{gr} , while IW, WCW and SCW systems should exhibit high k_{rw}^e and low S_{gr} (Heaviside et al., 1987). Thus, as a first order approach, the gradient of the relative permeability to water is expected to increase with increasing scCO₂ wetness, and the corresponding *RRPG*, defined by Equation 3, is expected to decrease.

$$RRPG = \left[\frac{k_{rw}^{e}}{(1 - S_{gr} - S_{wirr})}\right]^{-1}$$
(3)

The assumption was experimentally confirmed by the experimental data presented in Figure 3b, where the lowest *RRPG* was observed in CaCl₂ and MgCl₂ systems. Furthermore, it is generally agreed that maximum gas recovery (minimum S_{gr}) corresponds to IW state, when there is no specific affinity of the solid toward water or gas (Muggeridge et al., 2014). Therefore, we expect the lowest S_{gr} (largest $S_w = 1 - S_{gr}$) to be reached for such wetting conditions. For the five distinct wetting conditions defined above, and considering the experimental uncertainty in S_w of c.10%. Thus, combining *RRPG* and ζ_{RS} , each of which reflects wettability, allowed making a better distinction between different wetting states through the normalized zeta potential, ζ_N :



$$\zeta_N = \zeta_{RS} \times RRPG = \left(\frac{|\Delta\zeta_{wett}|}{|\delta\zeta_{1-S_{gr}}|} \times \frac{k_{rw}^e}{(1-S_{gr}-S_{wirr})}\right)^{-1}$$
(4)

The product of ζ_{RS} and *RRPG*, both of which are the smallest for SCW and largest for SWW states, enhanced the distinction between wetting conditions as demonstrated in Figure 7. Since both, *RRPG* and ζ_{RS} vary between zero and one with the smallest values of both properties corresponding to the least water-wet conditions, the expected correlation between the wetting state and ζ_N is:

- $\zeta_N \gg 1$ in SWW systems.
- $\zeta_N \cong 1$ in WWW, IW, WCW systems.
- $\zeta_N \ll 1$ in SCW systems.

As described above, the implementation of high-rate bumps followed by multi-rate paired-stabilized experiments to evaluate ζ_{m-p} resulted in additional production of scCO₂ in tested CaCl₂ and MgCl₂ systems (and to a lesser extent with NaCl-10) with the corresponding increase in k_{rw}^e (evaluated from the Darcy's law in our experiments), which indicated an existing capillary end effects, reduced or eliminated by high-rate injections. In Figure 7a, k_{rw}^e used in Equation 4 for CaCl₂ and MgCl₂ were computed using the data obtained from the single-rate injection corresponding $\Delta S_w \cong 0.3$ in Figure 4b. For CaCl₂, MgCl₂ and NaCl-10 data points in Figure 7b we used values of k_{rw}^e obtained at the end of all high-rate experiments (step 6) which correspond to $\Delta S_w \cong 0.5$ in Figure 4b, while ΔS_w was measured only after the first high-rate bump as detailed in the experimental protocol. Therefore, although the reported values in Figure 7b do not correspond to the same experimental conditions, the results are still valid as k_{rw}^e , which was continuously monitored throughout the entire step 6 of the experiment, did not vary beyond the experimental error. The overall *RRPG* in CaCl₂, MgCl₂ and NaCl-10 experiments slightly decreased after high-rate experiments, thus supporting our hypothesis of existing capillary end effects and therefore, wettability alteration toward less water-wet, caused by presence of scCO₂ in contact with solutions containing divalent cations and/or higher pore pressure. These results are consistent with the majority of reported contact angles measurement at CGS conditions (e.g., AL-Yaseri et al., 2016).

The effect of reduced or eliminated capillary end effect by high-ate bumps in NaCl-10, CaCl₂ and MgCl₂ experiments is reflected by the overall change the correlation between ζ_N and S_{gr} as demonstrated in Figure 7b. The lower values of S_{gr} , especially significant in CaCl₂ and MgCl₂ experiments, combined with the smallest $\zeta_N < 1$ suggests that these systems were the least water-wet, while $\zeta_N > 1$ for Na₂SO₄ experiments corresponding to WWW or SWW conditions. Furthermore, the lowest S_{gr} in Na₂SO₄ system observed in both after single-rate (Figure 7a) and high-rate (Figure 7b) experiments suggests small capillary end effects. At the same time the capillary end effects were significant in CaCl₂ and MgCl₂ systems, thus resulting in a substantial decrease in S_{gr} when transitioning from single-rate displacement (Figure 7a) to the high-rate bump (Figure 7b). Nonetheless, the final values of S_{gr} in CaCl₂, MgCl₂ and NaCl-10 were equal and the lowest, suggesting similar wetting conditions. Also, a small change in ζ_{m-p} (although within the experimental uncertainty) between the single-rate injection (Figure 7a) and high-rate bump (Figure 7b) carried out with NaCl solution resulted in a decrease in ζ_N from ~2.5 to ~1.5. All in all, considering the values of ζ_N in the range between ~0.5 and ~1.5 for NaCl, NaCl-10, CaCl₂ and MgCl₂ systems. Incorporating the above observations, we concluded:

1. CaCl₂, MgCl₂, and NaCl-10, all corresponded to IW conditions with the smallest $\zeta_N = 0.37$, $\zeta_N = 0.43$, and $\zeta_N = 0.93$, respectively. This conclusion is consistent with results reported by Bikkina (2011) who measured contact angles of approximately 82°–95° on quartz substrates in contact with water and scCO₂ at temperature of 40°C (104°F) and pressures between 7 MPa (1,000 psi) and 10 MPa (1,500 psi). The results also agree with the findings of Iglauer et al. (2012) who reported contact angles of 80° in quartz-scCO₂-water systems at 300K and pressures between 7.5 and 10 MPa. The conclusion is also consistent with contact angles of ~80° obtained on glass in contact with scCO₂ and de-ionized water at conditions of temperature and pressure similar to those in our experiments (Sutjiadi-Sia et al., 2008). Our experimental results were used in a recent analytical study which reported that the maximum contact angles of approximately 65° could be achieved with DLVO model for CaCl₂ and MgCl₂ solutions (Vinogradov, 2024), thus confirming our conclusions. Directly measured contact angles of quartz in contact with NaCl, CaCl₂, and MgCl₂ were reported to have larger values for CaCl₂ (c. 43°) and MgCl₂ (c. 45°) compared with a smaller value for NaCl (c. 36°) (Al-Yaseri et al., 2016). Although

these results are consistent with our interpretation of the shift toward more $scCO_2$ -wet conditions with $CaCl_2$ and $MgCl_2$, the contact angles reported by Al-Yaseri et al. (2016) suggest that their systems remained waterwet, and significantly larger contact angles were reported in other studies. Another study of quartz in contact with live NaCl solutions and immiscible $scCO_2$ indicated, that although the system remained water-wet across the range of tested pressures, the contact angles shifted from approximately 50° at 7.5 MPa to approximately 70° at 10 MPa (Iglauer et al., 2012). This observation is consistent with our hypothesis of the shift from WWW state obtained with NaCl at 7.5 MPa to IW condition with NaCl at 10 MPa (note, that the contact angle of 70° is close to the value of 80°–100°, typically assigned for IW rocks).

- 2. Na₂SO₄ corresponded to SWW conditions with the largest $\zeta_N = 2.48$, also confirmed by a significantly higher $S_{gr} = 26\%$. We could not find any measurements of contact angles on silica surfaces in contact with scCO₂ and Na₂SO₄ to confirm this hypothesis. However, in line with the DLVO theory applied to the stability of the water wetting film (Tokunaga, 2012), stronger repulsive electrostatic forces between scCO₂-C_water and C_water-quartz interfaces should result in a more water-wet conditions. Hence, the most negative ζ_{r-w} obtained with Na₂SO₄ in our work is consistent with our conclusion.
- 3. NaCl corresponded to WWW conditions with $\zeta_N = 1.56$ and $S_{gr} = 24\%$, both of which indicate a lesser affinity toward water compared to Na₂SO₄ results and higher water wetness compared with NaCl-10, CaCl₂, and MgCl₂. This conclusion is supported by numerous experimental studies that reported increasing contact angle with increasing pore pressure (e.g., Iglauer et al., 2012). Moreover, there have been many studies that also reported larger contact angles in quartz-scCO₂ with Ca/MgCl₂ solutions in comparison with NaCl solutions.

To validate our results and hypotheses, future work is planned to expand experiments toward higher salinity, mixed salts, direct measurements of ζ_{c-w} and accurate evaluation of residual CO₂ saturation using X-ray computer tomography.

5. Conclusions

- 1. First ever ζ_{m-p} measurements in scCO₂-C_water-silica systems were carried out following novel experimental protocols, the obtained results provided essential insights into controls on wettability and improved our understanding of previously unexplained differences in wetting states measured with different salts and experimental conditions.
- 2. For the first time ζ_{c-w} was interpreted from measured experimental parameters and found to be negative and of magnitude greater that 14 mV.
- 3. We reported k_{rw}^e and respective residual scCO₂ saturation values at two stages of the experiment: at the end of single-rate imbibition mimicking CO₂ injection under capillary dominated regime, and after implementation of high-rate bumps and multi-rate paired-stabilized experiments which reduced the capillary end effects and provided additional data on intermediate relative permeability values in NaCl-10, CaCl₂ and MgCl₂ systems.
- 4. Wettability interpreted from ζ_{r-w} , ζ_{m-p} , and k_{rw}^e measurements suggested IW conditions for NaCl-10, CaCl₂, and MgCl₂, SWW conditions for Na₂SO₄ and WWW conditions for NaCl.
- 5. The introduced ζ_N which comprises the scaled $|\Delta\zeta_{wett}|$ and relative permeability curve gradient, which are independent wettability indicators, has been proven as sufficient to distinguish between different wetting states without employing direct wettability measurements; ζ_N also correlates well with S_{gr} , thus providing a powerful experimental tool to evaluate residual CO₂ trapping in sandstone reservoirs prior to injection for CGS.
- 6. There has been only one study that reported contact angles >90° in quartz-scCO₂-C_water systems (Bikkina, 2011), thus reflecting WCW conditions. Nonetheless, we believe that presence of divalent cations in CaCl₂ and MgCl₂ experiments combined with the low ionic strength of 0.05 M might have created WCW conditions, consistent with $\zeta_N < 1$ and low S_{gr} .

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest relevant to this study.

Data Availability Statement

The underlying data are available at Vinogradov et al. (2024).



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