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An Experimental Study on Condensation of CO₂ in a Horizontal Micro-fin Tube

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ABSTRACT

This paper deals with an experimental study on condensing characteristics of almost pure CO₂ in a horizontal micro-fin copper tube, which has a 5.67 mm equivalent inner diameter. The inside heat transfer coefficient, pressure drop, and void fraction were measured in the mass velocity ranging from 200 to 350 kg m⁻²s⁻¹ and the heat flux of 10 to 20 kW m⁻² at saturation pressures of 5.0 and 6.0 MPa. The experimental results show that the HTC changes moderately with the changing in mass flux and heat flux; however, the HTC increases significantly with the decrease in saturation pressure. In terms of pressure drop, though the effect of heat flux was negligible; it slightly increased in accordance with a decrease in saturation pressure. Also, the increase in mass velocity caused a significant increase in pressure drop. In addition, the present data was compared with previous correlations. The present data were significantly higher in heat transfer coefficient than these correlations. Hence, based on the present void fraction data the correlation of Koyama *et al.* has been modified and the modified correlation fits present data well.

1. INTRODUCTION

Helical micro-fin tubes have been commonly used in air conditioners. Thus, many investigations have been carried out for the heat transfer and the pressure drop characteristics of many hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs) and hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) condensing in micro-fin tubes. For example, Koyama *et al.* (2006) have conducted an experimental investigation of R 22 and R 134a and proposed correlations for heat transfer coefficient (HTC), Goto *et al.* (2001) have measured the HTC and friction factor of R 410A, Cavallini *et al.* (2001) have investigated R 134a, R125a, R 32, R 410A and R 236ea, and Wang *et al.* (2002) have proposed a theoretical model on the condensation of R 11, R 123, R 134a, R 22 and R 410A in micro-fin tubes. However, from the viewpoint of the global environment protection, the natural refrigerant CO₂ has been recently applied to heat pump systems instead of HCFCs and HFCs. Also, it seems promising to utilize CO₂ in air conditioning and refrigeration systems. Therefore, it is valuable to confirm the condensation characteristics of CO₂ in a micro-fin tube.

In this work the condensation of CO₂ in a horizontal micro-fin tube is experimentally investigated, and the effects of mass velocity, heat flux and refrigerant saturation pressure on the heat transfer and pressure characteristics are discussed.

2. EXPERIMENTAL TECHNIQUE

2.1 Test loop and test section

Figure 1 shows a schematic diagram of the experimental refrigeration cycle. This cycle mainly consists of a compressor (1), an oil separator (2), a pre-cooler (3) a test section (4), an after-cooler (5), a receiver tank (6), an expansion valve (8) and electric heaters (9). Eight mixing chambers, for measuring refrigerant bulk temperature and pressure, are located next to each of the main elements in this cycle ; furthermore, the mass flow rate is measured with a Coriolis-type mass flow meter (7) located next to the receiver tank (6). The calibration accuracies of these sensors are listed in Table 1. Furthermore, the oil mass fraction was measured and found to be less than 0.1%.

Figure 2 shows a schematic view of the test section. The test section is made of two sections, one with water jackets for HTC and pressure drop measuring and the other for measuring the void fraction. The inside mean heat transfer coefficients in each water jacket segment, effective heat transfer length 520 mm and the pressure drop every 688 mm were measured. The vapor quality at the inlet of the test section was controlled by the pre-cooler. Furthermore, the mean void fraction in the 400 mm long adiabatic sampling section, next to condensing section, was measured using the quick closing valve method. Kondou *et al.* (2006) specifically described the procedures and data reductions of this method, thus they are omitted in this paper.

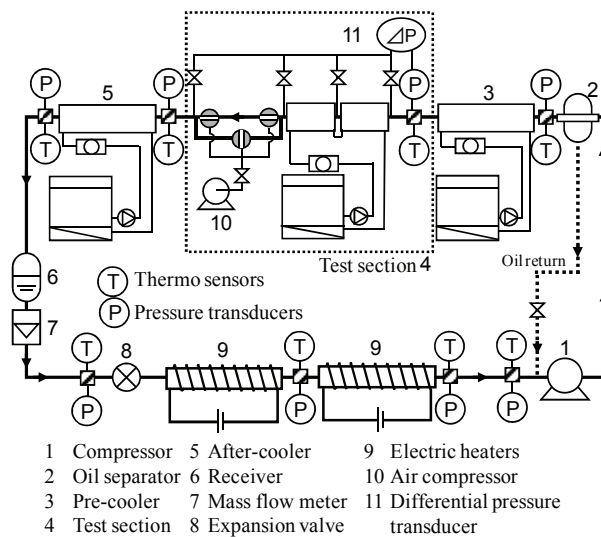


Figure 1: Schematic diagram of an experimental refrigeration cycle

Table 1: Calibration accuracies of sensors

Refrig. bulk temp.	± 0.05 K
Cooling water bulk temp.	± 0.03 K
Tube outer surface temp.	± 0.02 K
Refrig. pressure	± 4.0 kPa
Refrig. pressure drop	± 0.125 Pa
Refrig. mass flow rate after receiver	± 0.28 kg/h
Cooling water volume flow rate	± 1.0 l/h
Sampled refrigerant Mass	± 1.0mg

Table 2: Experimental conditions

No	Pressure	Mass flux	Heat flux
I	P=6.0 MPa	$G_r=200 \text{ kg m}^{-2} \text{ s}^{-1}$	$q=20 \text{ kW m}^{-2}$
II			$q=10 \text{ kW m}^{-2}$
III		$G_r=350 \text{ kg m}^{-2} \text{ s}^{-1}$	$q=20 \text{ kW m}^{-2}$
IV	$q=10 \text{ kW m}^{-2}$		
V	P=5.0MPa	$G_r=200 \text{ kg m}^{-2} \text{ s}^{-1}$	$q=20 \text{ kW m}^{-2}$

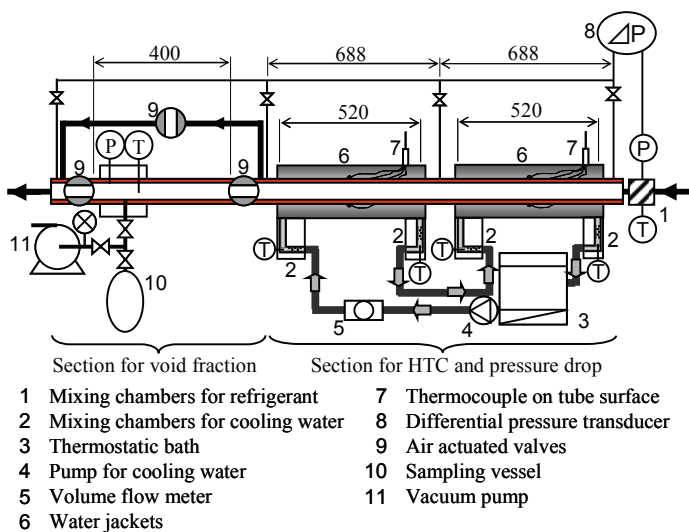


Figure 2: Schematic view of test section

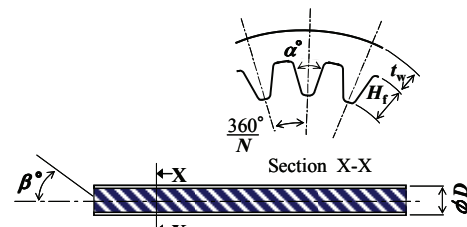


Figure 3: Dimensions of the test tube

Table 3: Dimensions of the test tube

O.D.	D	7.00 mm
Equivalent I. D.	d_i	5.67 mm
Thickness	t_w	0.60 mm
Fin height	H_f	0.23 mm
Number of fins	N	50 -
Apex angle	α	30 °
Helix angle	β	15 °
Area increase ratio	η	184 %

2.2 Experimental condition and test tube

As listed in Table 2, the experimental data was obtained in the mass velocity ranging from 200 to 300 kg m⁻² s⁻¹ at saturated pressures 5.0 and 6.0 MPa, in other words, the equally reduced pressure of 0.68 and 0.81. The averaged heat flux of both measurement sections (Section 1 and Section 2 in Fig. 4) was controlled at around 10 to 20 kW m⁻².

Table 3 lists the dimensions of this test tube, and Fig. 3 shows a schematic of these dimensions. Here, the equivalent I.D. signifies the inner diameter of an equivalent smooth tube with the same cross sectional area. The area increase ratio is the ratio of the extended heat transfer area inside the micro-fin tube to the inside heat transfer area of an equivalent smooth tube.

2.3 Data reduction method for central vapor quality and mean heat transfer coefficient

Figure 4 shows the estimation procedure of the central vapor qualities in each section. Specific enthalpy h_{M1} is obtained from the bulk temperature and pressure of the superheated vapor in the mixing chamber at the entrance of pre-cooler. At the same time, pressure differences $\Delta P_{\alpha 1}(=P_1 - P_2)$, $\Delta P_{\alpha 2}(=P_2 - P_3)$ and $\Delta P_{\text{void}}(=P_3 - P_4)$, heat transfer rates Q_{PC} , $Q_{\alpha 1}$ and $Q_{\alpha 2}$, and refrigerant mass flow rate W_r were measured. Here, these heat transfer rates of each section were obtained from the inlet and outlet bulk water temperature $T_{\text{H}_2\text{O},i}$ and $T_{\text{H}_2\text{O},o}$ as follows,

$$Q = \rho_{\text{H}_2\text{O}} C_{p_{\text{H}_2\text{O}}} V_{\text{H}_2\text{O}} |T_{\text{H}_2\text{O},o} - T_{\text{H}_2\text{O},i}| - Q_{\text{gain}} \quad (1)$$

where $\rho_{\text{H}_2\text{O}}$, $C_{p_{\text{H}_2\text{O}}}$, and $V_{\text{H}_2\text{O}}$ are density, specific heat, and volume flow rate of cooling water at an averaged temperature, respectively, and Q_{gain} is the heat gain through the adiabatic materials surrounding the water jackets. The inlet and outlet vapor qualities of each section were obtained from specific enthalpy h_1 to h_4 and pressure P_1 to P_4 as shown in Fig. 4. Hence, the central vapor qualities could be expressed as the arithmetic average of the inlet and outlet. The heat flux is defined based on the actual heat transfer surface area inside the micro-fin tube as,

$$q = Q / (\pi d_i \Delta Z \eta_A) \quad (2)$$

The inside wall temperature is estimated by the following equation,

$$T_{\text{wi}} = T_{\text{wo}} - [Q / (2\pi \lambda_{\text{tube}} \Delta Z)] \ln(D/d_i) \quad (3)$$

Then, the HTC based on actual heat transfer area is defined as,

$$\alpha = q / (T_{\text{sat}} - T_{\text{wi}}) = Q / [\pi d_i \Delta Z \eta_A (T_{\text{sat}} - T_{\text{wi}})] \quad (4)$$

where ΔZ is the active condensation length of 520 mm, λ_{tube} is the thermal conductivity of copper tube, T_{wi} is the tube temperature at d_i , T_{wo} is the tube temperature on the outer surface, and T_{sat} is the refrigerant saturation temperature obtained from the refrigerant pressure P_1 to P_3 .

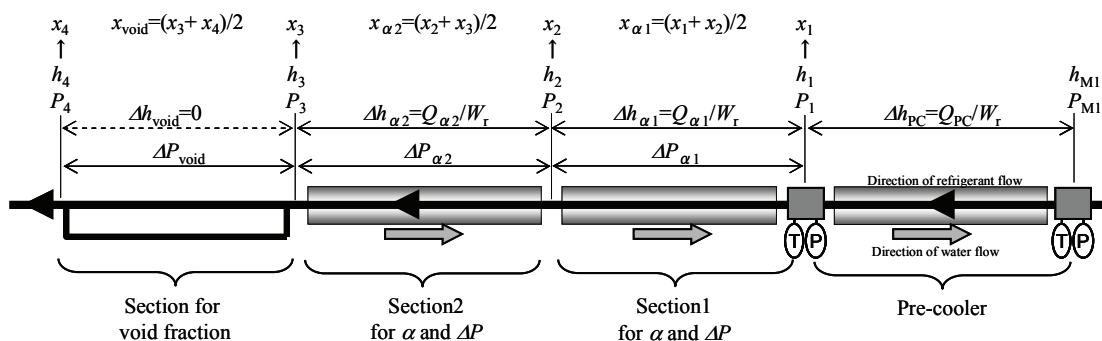


Figure 4: Estimation procedure for central vapor qualities in each section

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Experimental results on void fraction

Figure 5 shows the experimental results on void fraction with correlations at 5.0 and 6.0 MPa. Here the open symbols represent the void fraction and closed symbols represent the slip ratio found by the void fraction and density ratio of vapor to liquid. The solid lines are empirical correlations for boiling flow in micro-fin tubes proposed by Kondou *et al.* as given in Eqs. (4) to (6).

$$\xi = x / \left[x + (s_M + s_F)(1-x)(\rho_G / \rho_L) \right] \quad (4)$$

$$s_M = 0.4 + 0.6 \left[\frac{1 + 0.4 \left(\frac{1-x_v}{x_v} \right)}{\frac{\rho_G}{\rho_L} + 0.4 \left(\frac{1-x_v}{x_v} \right)} \right]^{\frac{1}{2}}, x_v = \frac{x}{x + (1-x)(\rho_G / \rho_L)} \quad (5)$$

$$s_F = 0.31 \left(\frac{1-x}{x} \right)^{-0.75} \left(\frac{\rho_G}{\rho_L} \right)^{-0.42} \left(\frac{\mu_L}{\mu_G} \right)^{0.35} \left(\frac{G_r}{\sqrt{g d_h \rho_G (\rho_L - \rho_G)}} \right)^{-0.78} \quad (6)$$

This correlation qualitatively agrees with the experimental results; however, the experimental slip ratio is lower than the correlation. For vapor quality below 0.2, the experimental slip ratio is lower than 1.0. This indicates that the vapor phase velocity is lower than that of the liquid phase and this feature on slip ratio causes increase of void fraction. Similar studies have been performed by Ahmed (1966) they use the term “wall void”. For accidents, such as a slight gradient of the test tube or a bump near the orifice of the valves, bubbles were captured or delayed. However, in the following subsections, for estimating HTC and pressure drop, these characteristics are assumed to be negligible, and this correlation is applied to modify the previous correlation proposed by Koyama *et al.* (2006).

3.2 Experimental results on pressure drop and heat transfer coefficient

Figure 6 shows experimental results on pressure drop and HTC at conditions listed in Table 2. Open symbols represent the experimental results in Section 1 shown in Fig. 4 and closed symbols represent the experimental results in Section 2. The solid lines and dashed lines denote correlations later provided in subsection 3.3 and 3.4. The top figures show the results of heat flux q and outside wall temperature T_{wo} , the middle figures are results of pressure drop gradient $\Delta P/\Delta Z$, and the bottom figures are results of mean HTC α . It is noted from the heat transfer diagram in Fig. 6 that the heat fluxes in both sections are not constant because the cooling water circuits are connected in series in the present study.

In terms of the pressure drop gradient, as shown in the comparison between Figs. 6 (a) and (c), the results at 6.0

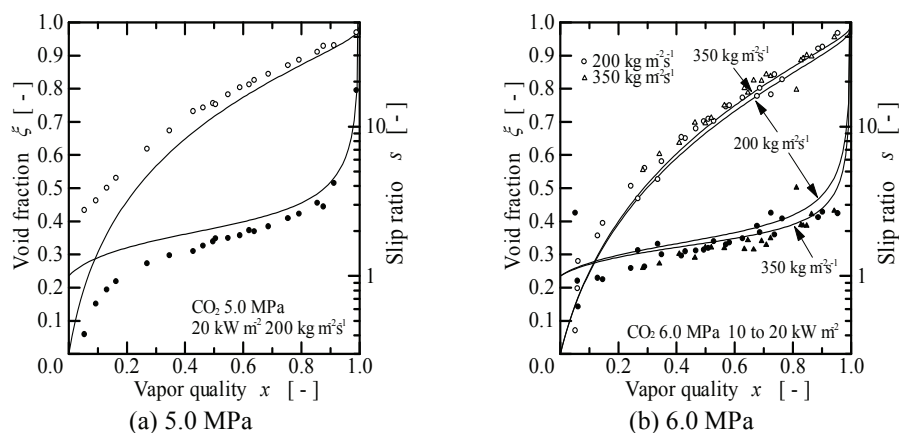


Figure 5: Experimental results on void fraction with present correlations

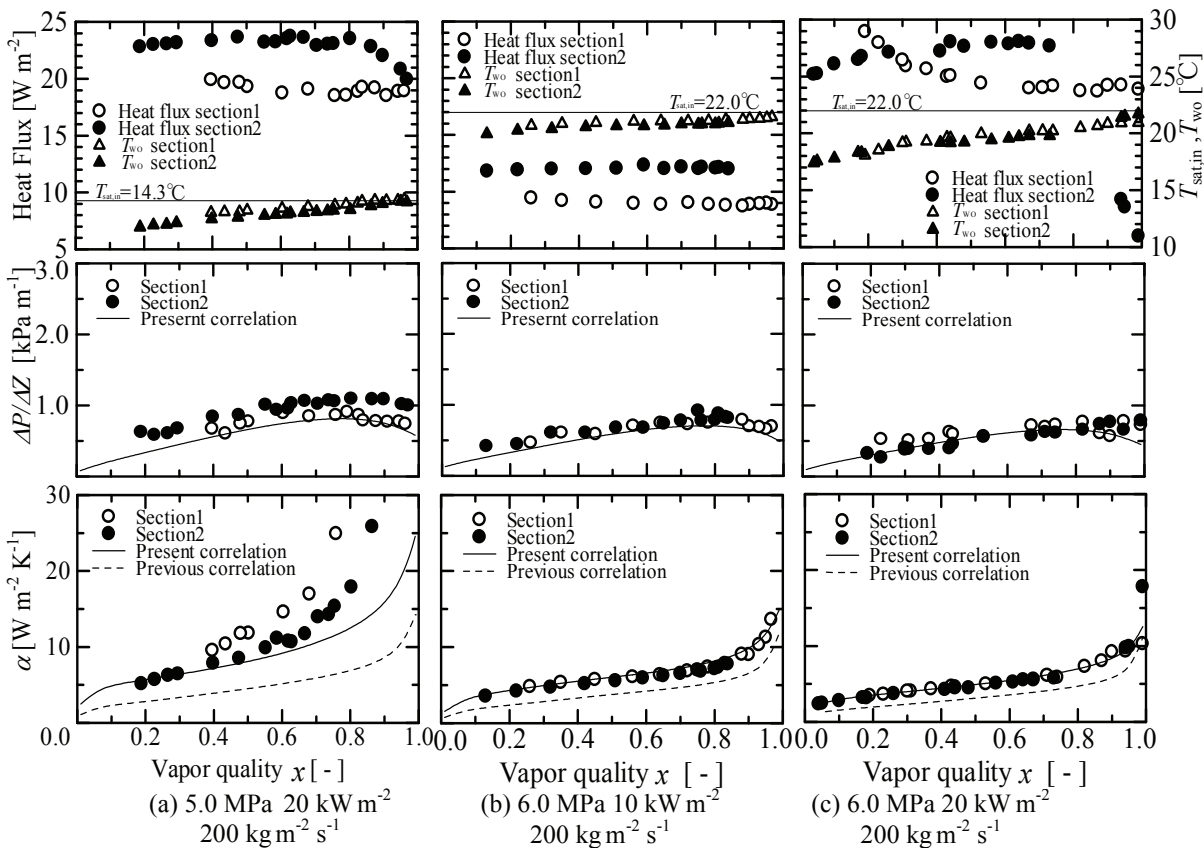


Figure 6: Experimental results on pressure drop and heat transfer coefficient with present correlations

MPa are lower than those at 5.0 MPa. This is mainly due to the difference in vapor density. As shown in the comparison between Figs. 6 (b) and (d) or (c) and (e), the pressure drop gradient significantly increases along with mass velocity. However, as shown in the comparison between Figs. 6 (b) and (c) or (d) and (e), the effect of heat flux is negligible.

In terms of HTC, as shown in the comparison between Figs. 6 (a) and (c), the results at 5.0 MPa are drastically higher than those at 6.0 MPa. This is mainly due to the difference in latent heat, that is, the latent heat at 5.0 MPa is larger than that at 6.0 MPa. In principle, Nusselt's filmwise condensation theory suggests that the value of HTC increases with the increase of latent heat. On the other hand, as shown in the comparison between Figs. 6 (b) and (d) or (c) and (e), the effect of mass velocity is negligible. This implies that the heat transfer characteristics are not dominated by the vapor shear stress near a critical point. As shown in the comparison between Figs. 6 (b) and (c) or (d) and (e), the effect of heat flux is also negligible.

3.3 Modified correlation for pressure drop

The static pressure drop can be expressed as a summation of momentum term and frictional term,

$$\Delta P = \Delta P_M + \Delta P_F \quad (7)$$

The pressure recovery due to momentum change ΔP_M is given by,

$$\Delta P_M = \left[\frac{G_r^2 x^2}{\xi \rho_G} + \frac{G_r^2 (1-x)^2}{(1-\xi) \rho_L} \right]_{\text{inlet}} - \left[\frac{G_r^2 x^2}{\xi \rho_G} + \frac{G_r^2 (1-x)^2}{(1-\xi) \rho_L} \right]_{\text{outlet}} \quad (8)$$

As a trial, an empirical correlation for frictional pressure drop ΔP_F is obtained from the present experimental results as,

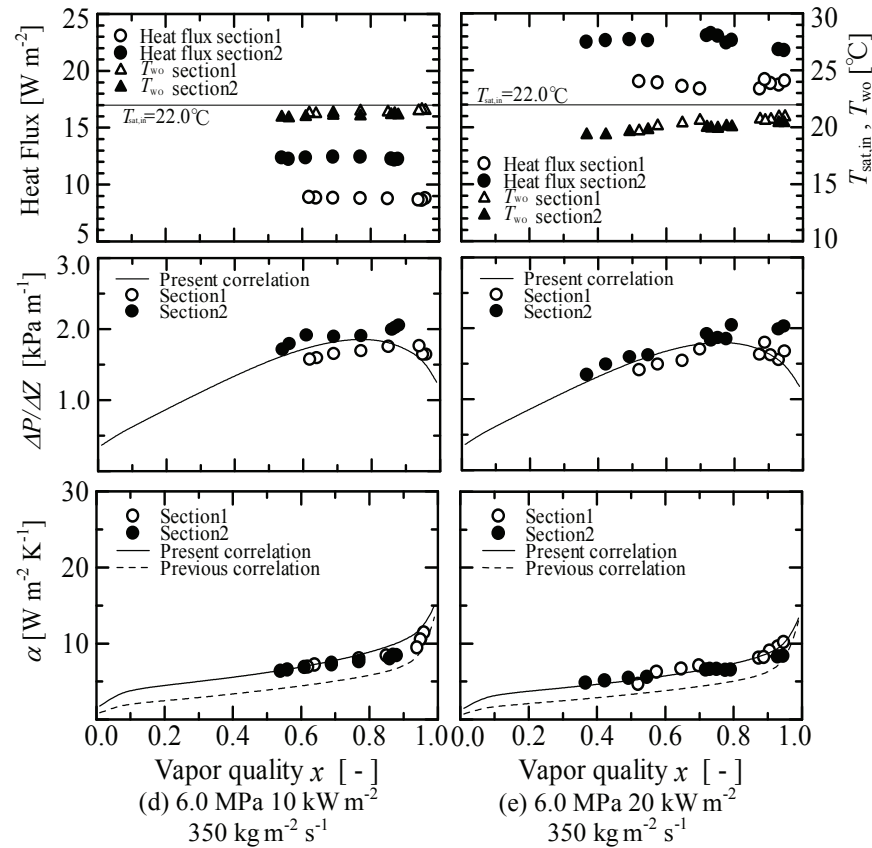


Figure 6: Continued

$$\frac{\Delta P_F}{\Delta Z} = (1-x)\Phi_L^2 \left(\frac{\Delta P_F}{\Delta Z} \right)_L + x\Phi_G^2 \left(\frac{\Delta P_F}{\Delta Z} \right)_G \quad (9)$$

where,

$$\Phi_L = 1.0 + 1.8Fr^{0.01} X_{tt}^{-0.88} \quad (10)$$

$$\left(\frac{\Delta P_F}{\Delta Z} \right)_L = 4f_L \frac{G_r^2 (1-x)^2}{2d_i \rho_L}, f_L = 0.046 Re_{L,d_h}^{-0.2} \left(\frac{A_{cross,a}}{A_{cross,n}} \right)^{-0.5} (\sec \beta)^{-0.75} \quad (11)$$

$$\Phi_G = 1.0 + 1.7Fr^{0.01} X_{tt}^{0.55} \quad (12)$$

$$\left(\frac{\Delta P_F}{\Delta Z} \right)_G = 4f_G \frac{G_r^2 x^2}{2d_i \rho_G}, f_G = 0.046 Re_{G,d_h}^{-0.2} \left(\frac{A_{cross,a}}{A_{cross,n}} \right)^{-0.5} (\sec \beta)^{-0.75} \quad (13)$$

Here, Φ_L and Φ_G are t Martinelli's two-phase multipliers, respectively, relative to liquid and vapor. Fr is Froude number and X_{tt} is the Martinelli parameter for both phases in the turbulent regime. f_L and f_G are friction factors based on the nominal cross section area proposed by Carnavos (1980). The results predicted by the correlation, Eqs. (7) to (13), are represented by solid lines in the center of Fig. 6. Predicted results agree well with experimental results.

3.4 Modified correlation for heat transfer coefficients

The correlation for HTC, which was proposed by Koyama *et al.* (2006), is modified just a little based on the present experimental data. The results are expressed as,

$$Nu = \alpha \lambda_L / d_i = (Nu_{FC}^2 + Nu_{BF}^2)^{1/2} \quad (14)$$

$$Nu_{FC} = 2.12 \left(\frac{\rho_L}{\rho_G} \right)^{0.1} \left(\frac{x}{1-x} \right) \Phi_G \cdot f_G^{0.5} Pr_L^{0.5} Re_{L,d_i}^{0.5} \quad (15)$$

$$Nu_{BF} = 3.12 H(\xi) \eta_A^{-0.5} Bo^{-0.1} (Ga \cdot Pr_L / Ph)^{0.25} \quad (16)$$

$$H(\xi) = \xi + [10.0(1-\xi)^{0.17} - 8.9] \xi^{0.5} (1-\xi^{0.5}) \quad (17)$$

Where, Nu_{FC} is the forced convective condensation term, Nu_{BF} is the body forced convective condensation term, and $H(\xi)$ is the function expressing the active condensation area along the tube interior. In the present correlation, the coefficient in Eq. (16) is changed from 1.98 to 3.12, and the Galileo number Ga is defined as,

$$Ga = \frac{g d_i^3}{\mu_L^2} \cdot \frac{(\rho_L - \rho_G)}{\rho_L} \quad (18)$$

Estimation results by the above correlation are shown at the bottom of Fig. 6. The solid lines represent the above modified correlation, and the dashed lines represent the previous correlation proposed by Koyama *et al.* (2006). From this figure, this modified correlation can be good for fitting to the experimental results. This modification is considered to be required because the density ratio of vapor to liquid increases under near-critical point conditions and the effect of body force relatively increase due to slowing vapor shear stress.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Experimental results on the heat transfer coefficient, pressure drop, and void fraction of CO₂ condensing flow in a horizontal micro-fin tube at 5.0 and 6.0 MPa were presented. The conclusions are as follows:

- Void fraction under near-critical point satisfactorily agreed with the correlation proposed by authors, even though bubble capture appeared similar to the wall void.
- The pressure drop obviously decreased with increase of refrigerant pressure, because the vapor shear stress decreased by the vapor density increasing.
- The condensing HTC decreased with increase of refrigerant pressure due to the change of latent heat.
- Prediction correlations for pressure drop and HTC, which are good for fitting this present data, have been proposed.

NOMENCLATURE

$A_{cross,a}$	actual cross sectional area	(m ²)	Subscripts
$A_{cross,n} = d_{i,n}^2 \pi / 4$	nominal cross sectional area	(m ²)	in inlet
$d_i = (4A_{cross,a}/\pi)^{0.5}$	equivalent tube inner diameter	(m)	out outlet
$d_{i,n} = D - 2t_w$	nominal tube inner diameter	(m)	H ₂ O cooling water
$d_h = (4A_{cross,a}) / (d_i \pi \eta_A)$	hydraulic diameter	(m)	wi equivalent inner diameter
β	helix angle of fin	(rad)	wo tube outside surface
η_A	heat transfer area enlargement	(-)	sat saturation
T	temperature	(K)	G vapor
P	pressure	(Pa)	L liquid
G_r	mass flux	(kg m ⁻² s ⁻¹)	a actual
h	bulk enthalpy	(J kg ⁻¹)	n nominal
ΔH	latent heat	(J kg ⁻¹)	T total
C_p	isobaric specific heat capacity	(J kg ⁻¹ K ⁻¹)	M momentum
$H(\xi)$	active condensing area ratio	(-)	F frictional
σ	surface tension	(N m ⁻¹)	FC forced convection
μ	viscosity	(Pa s)	BF body force
λ	thermal conductivity	(W m ⁻¹ K ⁻¹)	

ρ	density	(W m ⁻¹ K ⁻¹)
g	gravitational acceleration	(m s ⁻²)
α	mean heat transfer coefficient	(W m ⁻² K ⁻¹)
ΔP	pressure drop	(Pa)
$\Delta P / \Delta Z$	pressure drop gradient	(Pa m ⁻¹)
ξ	void fraction	(-)
s	slip ratio	(-)
f	friction factor	(-)
$Nu = \alpha \lambda_L / d_i$	Nusselt number	(-)
$Bo = [g d_i (\rho_L - \rho_G)] / \sigma$	Bond number	(-)
$Fr = G_r / [g d_i \rho_G (\rho_L - \rho_G)]^{0.5}$	Froude number	(-)
$Ph = [(T_{sat} - T_{wi}) C_{pL}] / \Delta H$	phase change number	(-)
$Pr_L = (C_{pL} \mu_L) / \lambda_L$	Prandtl number of Liquid phase	(-)
$Re_{L,d_i} = [G_r (1-x) d_i] / \mu_L$	liquid phase Reynolds number based on equivalent inner diameter	(-)
$Re_{L,d_h} = [G_r (1-x) d_h] / \mu_L$	liquid phase Reynolds number based on hydraulic diameter	(-)
$Re_{G,d_h} = (G_r x d_h) / \mu_G$	vapor phase Reynolds number based on hydraulic diameter	(-)
$\Phi_G = [(dP_F/dZ) / (dP/dZ)_G]^{0.5}$	Martinelli multiplier relative to vapor phase	(-)
$\Phi_L = [(dP_F/dZ) / (dP/dZ)_L]^{0.5}$	Martinelli multiplier relative to liquid phase	(-)
$X_{tt} = [(1-x) / x]^{0.9} (\rho_G / \rho_L)^{0.5} (\mu_L / \mu_G)^{0.1}$	Martinelli parameter relative to both phase	(-)

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