

# Low-Volatility Polar Organic Solvents for Sulfur Dioxide, Hydrogen Sulfide, and Carbonyl Sulfide

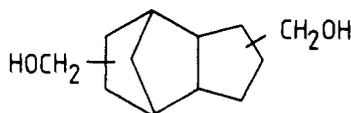
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**The solubility of SO<sub>2</sub>, H<sub>2</sub>S, and COS in several phosphoric and phthalic acid esters, poly(ethylene glycols), and poly(ethylene glycol) dialkyl ethers was measured at temperatures between 20 and 100 °C and pressures between 0.01 and 1 bar. Henry's and equilibrium constants were determined from experimental solubility data as a function of temperature. Furthermore, selection criteria for the tested organic liquids, like viscosity and vapor pressure data, are also reported.**

## Introduction

Knowing the solubility of gases in absorbents as a function of temperature, pressure, and composition is an important basis for the design of absorption processes, used for the removal of components from process or waste gases. Recently the use of organic solvents for the gases considered here—sulfur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>), hydrogen sulfide (H<sub>2</sub>S), and carbonyl sulfide (COS)—has been increased (1-3). Proper solvents are the esters of phosphoric or phthalic acid (2, 4, 5), poly(ethylene glycols) (6-8), and the dialkyl ethers of poly(ethylene glycols) (1, 4) as well as tricyclodecane derivatives



in mixtures with the mentioned compounds (4). The practical value of these solvents is due to their high reversible dissolving capacity and their low vapor pressure, so that, for example, flue gases can be treated, also at elevated temperatures. The published solubility data of SO<sub>2</sub>, H<sub>2</sub>S, and COS in the solvents are however mostly incomplete and limited to room temperature and atmospheric pressure. In a comparison of organic solvents, vapor pressure, viscosity, and physiological compatibility must be considered beside the solubility of the pollutants. The residual loading of the absorbent in the purified gas stream is limited by commercial considerations and governmental emission regulations. Increasing viscosity leads to increasing mass- and heat-transfer resistance in the liquid phase. A decrease in the plate efficiency, and consequently an increase in the HTU number of packed columns, follows. Therefore, the viscosity of the solvent should not exceed 10 mPa·s.

## Selection of the Solvent

Figure 1 shows the loading of the exhaust gas with some absorbents in the equilibrium state at 1-bar overall pressure. In exhaust gas streams greater than 20 000 m<sup>3</sup>/h the mass concentration has to be kept below 300 mg/m<sup>3</sup> due to national regulations for the purity of the air in the Federal Republic of Germany (9, 10). As can be seen, the residual loading caused by the partial pressure is below the emission limit for several solvents, e.g., glycols from the triethylene glycol, phosphates from the tri-*n*-butyl phosphate, and phthalates from the diethyl phthalate, if the absorption process is operated under atmospheric pressure below 40 °C (4, 11). However, a residual loading of 300 mg/m<sup>3</sup> in an exhaust gas quantity of 2 × 10<sup>6</sup>

m<sup>3</sup>/h for a 750-MW power plant results in a loss of 0.6 t of solvent. This is highly uneconomic. To decrease the emission the absorption temperature can be lowered, but there is a limitation caused by the increase in viscosity. Solvents having a low vapor pressure (Tables I and II and Figure 2) have a high viscosity on the other hand. So glycols within the interesting range of molecular weight have higher viscosities than esters and ethers. Because of their lower vapor pressure they can be used at higher absorption temperatures however. Also there commercial considerations require a solvent recovery, for which the water solubility of glycols or glycol ethers may be advantageous.

## Equipment and Operation Procedure

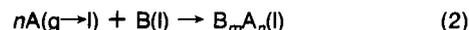
To measure the gas solubility a known mass of degassed solvent is brought in contact with a known volume of gas at a constant temperature. Then the system is well stirred. The dissolution of the gas (Matheson, Heusenstamm, FRG; SO<sub>2</sub>, anhydrous, minimum 99.98%; H<sub>2</sub>S, c.p., minimum 99.5%; COS, minimum 97.5%) is noted by the decrease in the pressure of the system until equilibrium is reached. The equipment used is schematically represented in Figure 3. The pressure was measured by means of gauge 2 (CMR 100—measuring transducer with Barton-Cell TDZ 224, Schöppe-Faesser GmbH, Minden, FRG). The range of the measured pressure different is from 0 to 250 mbar. When one adjusts the reference pressure with a mercury manometer (0-1067 mbar, degree of accuracy ±0.2 mbar), a survey over the whole range from 0 to 1 bar is possible. The calibration showed that the complete arrangement was accurate to ±0.25 mbar. Constant temperature is provided by an air thermostat.

## Phase Equilibrium

At low pressures for the physical solution of a supercritical gas in a liquid the partial pressure  $p_i$  of the component  $i$  is proportional to the Henry coefficient  $H$  and the mole fraction  $x_i$ .

$$p_i = Hx_i \quad (1)$$

As proved in IR-spectroscopical investigations (4, 5) strong interacting forces between polar gases, for example, SO<sub>2</sub>, and polar organic solvents lead to the formation of associates.



This reaction is incomplete although B is stoichiometrically in excess. Therefore, a measurable partial pressure of A, according to Henry's law, results from the part of A physically dissolved. The part of the gas there in the form of an associate is given by the law of mass action. Following Dolezalek's (12) assumption that the three species form an ideal solution and therefore the activity of each species is equal to its true mole fraction  $Z_i$  and assuming that the ratio of the activity coefficients is constant, the liquid-phase equilibrium constant  $K$  is given by

$$K = Z_{B_m A_n} / (Z_A^n Z_B^m) \quad (3)$$

Equation 1 becomes for chemical absorption

$$p_A = HZ_A \quad (4)$$

Table I. Properties of Selected Solvents

compd	formula	mol wt, g/mol	$\rho_{20}^a$ , g/cm <sup>3</sup>	$(10^4)(d\rho/dt)$ , g/(cm <sup>3</sup> °C)	bp <sub>bar</sub> , °C	$\eta^b$ , mPa·s		
						40 °C	60 °C	80 °C
triethylene glycol	HO(C <sub>2</sub> H <sub>4</sub> O) <sub>3</sub> H	150	1.119	7.666	276	19.8	9.6	5.6
poly(ethylene glycol) 400	HO(C <sub>2</sub> H <sub>4</sub> O) <sub>x</sub> H	400	1.128	7.666	300	50.7	23.1	12.4
triethylene glycol dimethyl ether	CH <sub>3</sub> (OCH <sub>2</sub> CH <sub>2</sub> ) <sub>3</sub> OCH <sub>3</sub>	178	0.986	11.050	216	1.5	1.1	0.89
Selexol <sup>c</sup>	O((CH <sub>2</sub> CH <sub>2</sub> O) <sub>2</sub> CH <sub>3</sub> ) <sub>2</sub>	222	1.009	8.667	176 <sub>0.05</sub>	2.5	1.8	1.36
Sepasolv MPE <sup>d</sup>	CH <sub>3</sub> O(CH <sub>2</sub> CH <sub>2</sub> O) <sub>x</sub> CHCH <sub>3</sub> CH <sub>3</sub>	316	1.003	8.333	90 <sub>10<sup>-4</sup></sub>	4.9	3.2	2.31
triethyl phosphate	O:P(OC <sub>2</sub> H <sub>5</sub> ) <sub>3</sub>	182	1.070	9.480	216	1.7	1.3	1.06
triisopropyl phosphate	O:P(OC <sub>3</sub> H <sub>7</sub> ) <sub>3</sub>	214	0.969	8.120	64 <sub>0.01</sub>	1.7	1.3	1.02
tri- <i>n</i> -butyl phosphate	O:P(O(CH <sub>2</sub> ) <sub>3</sub> CH <sub>3</sub> ) <sub>3</sub>	266	0.977	8.900	180 <sub>0.03</sub>	2.5	1.8	1.35
triisobutyl phosphate	O:P(OCH <sub>2</sub> CH(CH <sub>3</sub> ) <sub>2</sub> ) <sub>3</sub>	266	0.964	8.425	115 <sub>0.03</sub>	3.0	2.0	1.44
bis(2-ethylhexyl) phosphate	O:P(O(CH <sub>2</sub> ) <sub>6</sub> CH <sub>2</sub> CH <sub>3</sub> ) <sub>2</sub> OH	323	1.022	6.250	209 <sub>0.01</sub>	124.1	56.8	29.21
tris(2-ethylhexyl) phosphate	O:P(O(CH <sub>2</sub> ) <sub>6</sub> CH <sub>2</sub> CH <sub>3</sub> ) <sub>3</sub>	435	0.920	7.075	220 <sub>0.07</sub>	7.9	4.2	2.51
tricresyl phosphate	O:P(OC <sub>6</sub> H <sub>4</sub> CH <sub>3</sub> ) <sub>3</sub>	368	1.172	8.125	410	29.3	13.6	7.00
benzyl butyl phthalate	(C <sub>6</sub> H <sub>4</sub> CO <sub>2</sub> )(C <sub>6</sub> H <sub>4</sub> C <sub>4</sub> H <sub>9</sub> )	312	1.118	7.833	250 <sub>0.03</sub>	25.4	12.0	6.42
dibutyl phthalate	(C <sub>6</sub> H <sub>4</sub> CO <sub>2</sub> )(C <sub>4</sub> H <sub>9</sub> ) <sub>2</sub>	278	1.045	7.875	206 <sub>0.03</sub>	9.4	5.1	2.82
diisobutyl phthalate	(C <sub>6</sub> H <sub>4</sub> CO <sub>2</sub> )(CH <sub>2</sub> CH(CH <sub>3</sub> ) <sub>2</sub> ) <sub>2</sub>	278	1.036	7.975	320	16.8	7.8	2.08
diisodecyl phthalate	(C <sub>6</sub> H <sub>4</sub> CO <sub>2</sub> )(C <sub>10</sub> H <sub>11</sub> ) <sub>2</sub>	447	0.963	6.775	257 <sub>0.01</sub>	40.0	19.0	8.98
dibutyl glycol phthalate	(C <sub>6</sub> H <sub>4</sub> CO <sub>2</sub> )(C <sub>2</sub> H <sub>4</sub> OC <sub>4</sub> H <sub>9</sub> ) <sub>2</sub>	366	1.057	7.950	270 <sub>0.03</sub>	15.8	8.7	5.30
dimethyl glycol phthalate	(C <sub>6</sub> H <sub>4</sub> CO <sub>2</sub> )(C <sub>2</sub> H <sub>4</sub> OCH <sub>3</sub> ) <sub>2</sub>	282	1.174	8.500	230 <sub>0.03</sub>	21.7	12.4	6.53

<sup>a</sup> Density. <sup>b</sup> Viscosity. <sup>c</sup> Registered trademark of Allied Chemical Corp. for tetraethylene glycol dimethyl ether. <sup>d</sup> Registered trademark of BASF for pentaethylene glycol methyl isopropyl ether.

Table II. Properties of Selected Solvent Mixtures

compd	$\rho_{20}$ , g/cm <sup>3</sup>	$(10^4)(d\rho/dt)$ , g/(cm <sup>3</sup> °C)	$\eta$ , mPa·s		
			40 °C	60 °C	80 °C
15 wt % TCD alcohol DM <sup>a</sup> in poly(ethylene glycol) 400	1.119	6.950	66.4	26.3	10.18
15 wt % TCD alcohol DM in Selexol	1.028	8.592	3.9	2.6	1.86
15 wt % TCD alcohol DM in Sepasolv MPE	1.024	8.333	7.6	4.7	3.19

<sup>a</sup> Tricyclodecanedimethanol.

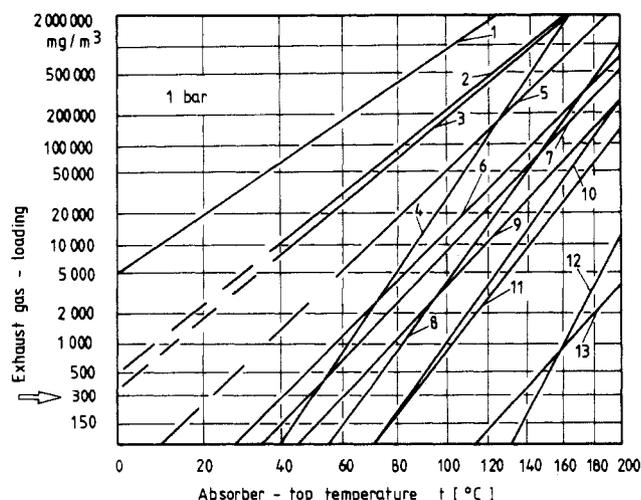


Figure 1. Equilibrium loading of the exhaust gas with organic solvent as a function of the temperature: (1) cyclohexanone, (2) triethyl phosphate, (3) *N*-methylpyrrolidone, (4) poly(ethylene glycol) dimethyl ether ( $M = 280$ ), (5) ethylene glycol, (6) tri-*n*-butyl phosphate, (7) diethyl phthalate, (8) oligoethylene glycol methyl isopropyl ether ( $M = 316$ ), (9) triethylene glycol, (10) tricresyl phosphate, (11) dibutyl phthalate, (12) dioctyl sebacinate, (13) dioctyl phthalate.

Assuming the solution consisting of  $N_2$  mol of A and  $N_1$  mol of B, and also the formation of  $N_3$  mol of the complex B-A in the state of equilibrium, the gas partial pressure over the

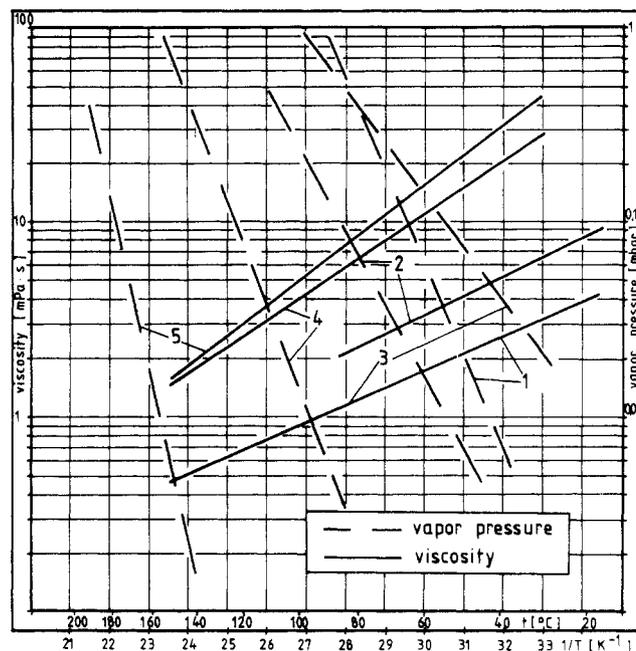


Figure 2. Vapor pressure and viscosity of selected organic solvents as a function of temperature: (1) tetraethylene glycol dimethyl ether, (2) pentaethylene glycol methyl isopropyl ether, (3) tri-*n*-butyl phosphate, (4) dimethyl glycol phthalate, (5) pentaethylene glycol ( $M = 250$ ).

chemically absorbing solution results, by use of the true mole fraction

$$Z_A = \frac{N_2 - N_3}{N_1 + N_2 - N_3} \quad (5)$$

and the method suggested by Prausnitz (13) as

$$p_A = H \frac{N_2 - N_1 + \left[ (N_1 + N_2)^2 - 4 \frac{KN_1N_2}{K+1} \right]^{1/2}}{N_1 + N_2 + \left[ (N_1 + N_2)^2 - 4 \frac{KN_1N_2}{K+1} \right]^{1/2}} \quad (6)$$

For the correlation of the experimental data a least-squares

**Table III. Results of the Regression for the System Poly(ethylene glycol)/Sulfur Dioxide and Calculated Enthalpy of Solution**

	temp, °C					C	D	E	F	$-\Delta H_s$ , kJ/mol
	20	40	60	80	100					
Poly(ethylene glycols) 200 and 400/SO <sub>2</sub> (15)										
H	1275	2001	3225	5209	8249	2557	15.8	2519	6.8	21.3
K	7.93	2.65	1.66	1.33	1.19					
Poly(ethylene glycol) 400/SO <sub>2</sub> (This Work)										
H	1368	2036	2890	3941	5935	1826	13.5	4118	10.9	15.2
K	23.5	9.1	4.1	2.1	1.5					

**Table IV. Results of the Regression for the System Phosphoric Acid Ester/Sulfur Dioxide and Calculated Enthalpy of Solution**

phosphate	C	D	E	F	$-\Delta H_s$ , kJ/mol
triethyl	2451	16.8	3947	9.3	20.4
triisopropyl	2200	16.0	2333	4.2	18.3
tri-n-butyl	3127	18.4	1184	1.4	26.0
triisobutyl	1396	14.1	3751	8.0	11.6
bis(2-ethylhexyl)	3978	20.9	617	1.9	33.1
tris(2-ethylhexyl)	3994	20.9	1456	1.2	33.2
tricresyl	1714	13.8	3688	7.5	14.3

**Table V. Results of the Regression for the System Phthalic Acid Ester/Sulfur Dioxide and Calculated Enthalpy of Solution**

solvent	C	D	E	F	$-\Delta H_s$ , kJ/mol
benzyl butyl phthalate	900	11.9	3636	9.6	7.5
dibutyl phthalate	2300	15.6	4946	14.7	19.1
diisobutyl phthalate	1760	14.6	2817	7.4	14.6
diisodecyl phthalate	2240	15.5	1580	4.5	18.6
dibutyl glycol phthalate	2580	16.0	1499	4.2	21.5
dimethyl glycol phthalate	2420	16.1	3902	10.8	20.1

**Table VI. Results of the Regression for the Systems Polyethylene Glycol Dialkyl Ether/Sulfur Dioxide and Calculated Enthalpy of Solution**

solvent	C	D	E	F	$-\Delta H_s$ , kJ/mol
triethylene glycol dimethyl ether	2025	15.7	1456	2.1	16.8
tetraethylene glycol dimethyl ether	2241	14.8	1461	2.7	18.6
pentaethylene glycol methyl isopropyl ether	2622	15.8	3434	9.3	21.8
tetraethylene glycol dimethyl ether/tricyclodecane-dimethanol (85/15 wt %)	4779	23.1	4852	14.5	39.7

**Table VII. Henry Coefficient H (mbar/Mole Fraction) as a Function of Temperature and Calculated Enthalpy of Solution for the Systems Poly(ethylene glycol)/Hydrogen Sulfide**

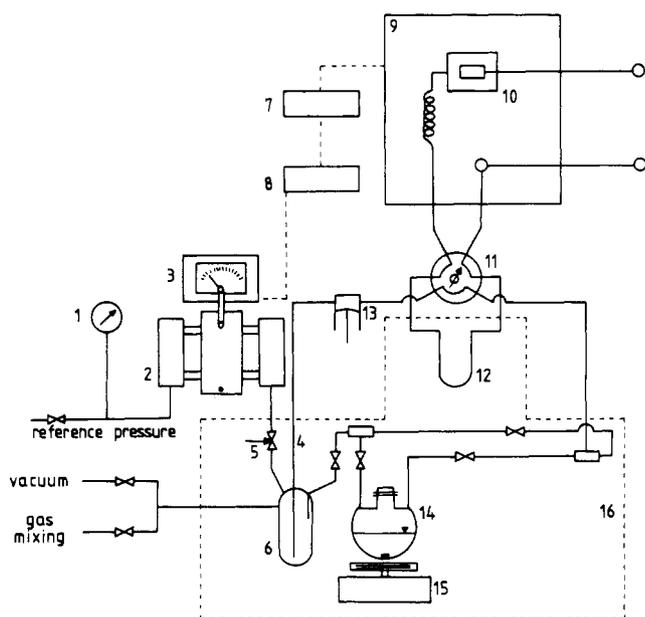
H		C	D	$-\Delta H_s$ , kJ/mol
60 °C	80 °C			
Poly(ethylene glycol) 200/H <sub>2</sub> S				
23 958	5169	12 097	12 097	15 464
21 989	33 121	44 812	2 218	16.7
				18.4 (this work)
Poly(ethylene glycol) 400/H <sub>2</sub> S				
11 378	2804	4 859	6 667	11 739
9 498	15 023	20 598	2 412	16.4
				20.1 (this work)

of solution  $\Delta H_s$  given in Tables III–VIII are determined by this equation, where the apparent mole fraction  $x_A$  is given by

$$x_A = N_2 / (N_1 + N_2) \quad (10)$$

### Experimental Results and Discussion

In Figures 4 and 5 the experimental data for the systems SO<sub>2</sub>/tri-n-butyl phosphate and SO<sub>2</sub>/tetraethylene glycol dimethyl ether are presented. The solid lines are calculated from the experimental data of this work, by using eq 6–8 with parameters listed in Tables IV and VI. As can be seen from Figures 4 and 5 the experimental results of Cooper (5) and Albright (7) can also be represented by the same coefficients. On the other hand, the results of Gestrich and Reinke (15) for the SO<sub>2</sub>/poly(ethylene glycol) 400 system are only reproduced with moderate agreement (Tables III and IX). For the H<sub>2</sub>S/poly(ethylene glycol) systems (Table VII) the measured data fit, within the experimental error, the data of the named authors.



**Figure 3.** Determination of the absorption coefficient using the vapor pressure method—scheme of the experimental apparatus: (1) manometer, (2) Barton cell, (3) transmitter, (4) valve, (5) evacuation screw, (6) gas tank, (7) integrator, (8) plotter, (9) gas chromatograph, (10) detector, (11) six-way valve, (12) measuring loop, (13) membrane pump, (14) saturation tank, (15) stirrer motor, (16) air thermostat.

estimation of nonlinear parameters according to Marquardt (14) was used. The Henry coefficient  $H$  and the equilibrium constant  $K$  fit the model equations

$$H = H_0 \exp(-C/T) \quad (7)$$

$$K = K_0 \exp(E/T) \quad (8)$$

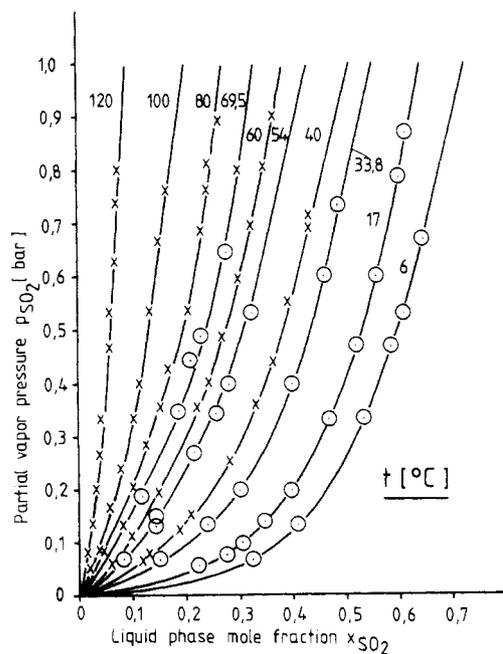
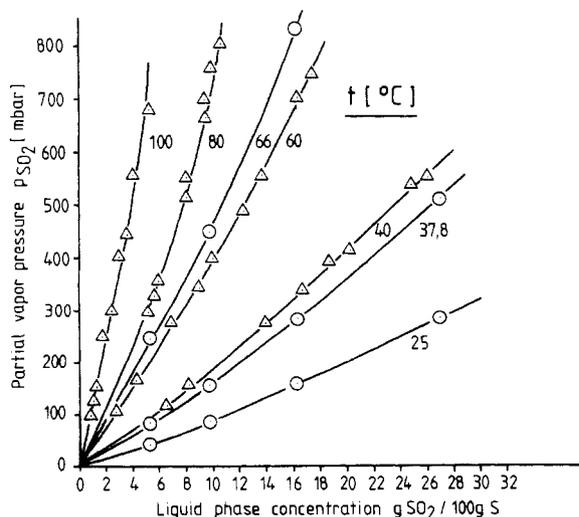
for which  $H_0$  and  $K_0$  are denoted as  $\exp D$  and  $\exp(-F)$ , respectively, for better handling.

With some simplifying assumptions the temperature function of the solubility is given by eq 9. The values for the enthalpy

$$(\delta \ln x_A / \delta(1/T))_p = -\overline{\Delta H_s} / R \quad (9)$$

**Table VIII. Henry Coefficient H (mbar/Mole Fraction) as a Function of Temperature and Calculated Enthalpy of Solution for Hydrogen Sulfide and Carbonyl Sulfide over Various Solvents**

gas	H					C	D	-ΔH <sub>st</sub> , kJ/mol
	20 °C	40 °C	60 °C	80 °C	100 °C			
Tri- <i>n</i> -butyl Phosphate								
H <sub>2</sub> S	3540	5 429	8 571	10 084	16 304	2000	15.0	16.7
COS	7672	11 725	15 080	24 819	33 691	2023	15.8	16.8
Tetraethylene Glycol Dimethyl Ether								
H <sub>2</sub> S	3390	6 179	8 310	11 321	16 901	2016	15.2	17.2
COS	9643	15 392	21 231	32 762	41 976	2027	16.1	16.9
Pentaethylene Glycol Methyl Isopropyl Ether								
H <sub>2</sub> S	2804	4 859	6 667	11 739	17 921	2500	16.4	20.7
COS	8521	13 017	13 838	27 063	43 640	2170	16.4	18.0
Tetraethylene Glycol Dimethyl Ether/Tricyclodecanedimethanol (85/15 wt %)								
H <sub>2</sub> S	5169	8 487	12 097	15 464	21 551	1910	15.3	16.0
COS	13610	21 731	31 847	37 401	44 088	1606	15.1	13.3

**Figure 4.** Absorption isotherms for sulfur dioxide in tri-*n*-butyl phosphate: (○) Cooper (5), (×) this work, (—) calculated.**Figure 5.** Solubility isotherms of sulfur dioxide in tetraethylene glycol dimethyl ether: (○) Albright (7), (Δ) this work, (—) calculated.

The results of the other H<sub>2</sub>S and COS systems can be represented by eq 6–8 with correlation coefficients better than 0.99. The parameters which were evaluated from the experimental

**Table IX. Technical Absorption Coefficient at Partial Pressure of 0.98 bar in N m<sup>3</sup>/(t • bar)**

gas	temp, °C				
	20	40	60	80	100
Poly(ethylene glycol) 400					
H <sub>2</sub> S			5.2	3.8	2.8
(15)					
H <sub>2</sub> S	15.7	9.4	6.0	3.9	2.8
SO <sub>2</sub>	170	81	42	24	14
(15)					
SO <sub>2</sub>	190	95	69	32	20
Tri- <i>n</i> -butyl Phosphate					
COS	11.7	7.7	5.9	3.7	2.7
H <sub>2</sub> S	18.9	15.7	12.3	8.8	6.4
SO <sub>2</sub>	86.4	47.1	27.5	18.4	13.2
Tetraethylene Glycol Dimethyl Ether					
COS	11.0	6.7	5.0	3.3	2.6
H <sub>2</sub> S	23.7	12.9	10.4	8.0	5.8
SO <sub>2</sub>	246	153		50.3	30.0
Pentaethylene Glycol Methyl Isopropyl Ether					
COS	9.1	6.0	4.6	2.8	1.8
H <sub>2</sub> S	28.9	17.9	10.1	7.3	5.1
SO <sub>2</sub>	237	118		36.0	22.0
15 wt % TCD Alcohol DM in Tetraethylene Glycol Dimethyl Ether					
COS	7.9	5.1	3.3	2.9	2.6
H <sub>2</sub> S	22.7	12.8	9.2	6.6	5.1
SO <sub>2</sub>	273	114		48.0	30.7

data are listed in Tables IV–IX. In these tables the enthalpy of solution determined by using eq 9 is also reported.

#### Solubility of Sulfur Dioxide

It is known from the literature that phosphoric acid esters dimerize at moderate temperatures (16), and the ester oxygen atoms P–OR form complexes with the SO<sub>2</sub> beside the phosphoryl oxygen atoms —P=O, at higher SO<sub>2</sub> partial pressure (17). Nevertheless, the assumed model of the temperature dependence of the Henry coefficient H and the equilibrium constant K describes the experimental phase equilibrium data with an average deviation of ±4.2%, also at low temperatures.

The investigated phthalic acid esters show good solubility properties for sulfur dioxide. Though the IR analysis of the SO<sub>2</sub>-saturated phthalic acid esters shows only a slight change of the —(C=O)—O— stretch oscillation at 1285 and 1220 cm<sup>-1</sup>, the experimental results follow eq 6. The average deviation of the calculated partial pressures from the experimental values is ±3.9%.

The polyethylene dialkyl ethers show essentially higher solubilities for sulfur dioxide (Tables VI and IX). The IR spectrum gives a hint of the interaction between the SO<sub>2</sub> and the eth-

