

# An Alternative Method of Cleaning the Air Mixed With Acid Gases around Copper Smelters

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**Abstract:** *The article considers the study of the absorption of sulfur dioxide with an aqueous solution of sodium and calcium hydroxides. To absorb sulfur dioxide, the strongest auditory medium of the solution was chosen, during which a decrease in the moisture content of the solution was detected during sulfur dioxide. It has been found that the degree of absorption of sulfur dioxide depends on the size of the gas bubbles passing through the mucous solution. Based on the information presented in the research work, it was proposed to process the technological gases with an acidic environment, which are collected in the territory of non-ferrous metallurgical plants, using the absorption method. According to this, technological gases spreading throughout the territory of the metallurgical plant do not require excessive cooling. Process gases are sent directly to the gas purification department.*

**Keywords—** acid process gases, environmental problem, sulfur dioxide, absorption, alkaline solution, bubble diameter, absorption rate of gases in liquid.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, cleaning and processing of technological waste gases and creation of environmentally friendly technology is the demand of the time all over the world [1-3]. Metallurgical plants, in addition to the production of metals or products based on them, which are necessary for technology with a high production capacity, cause a large amount of damage to the environment and ecology due to the release of a large amount of technological toxic gases into the atmosphere [4-9]. In particular, releasing process gases from metallurgical furnaces directly into the air without processing has bad consequences. For example, the smoke from the furnace in the copper smelter is partially cleaned of dust [10-13]. Unfortunately, the technological gases of the furnace are released directly into the atmosphere. However, in the composition of these waste gases, about 4% by volume is SO<sub>2</sub> gas, and the rest is nitrogen, water vapor and carbon dioxide gases. Due to the fact that the sulfur dioxide coming out of the furnace is not captured, its amount in the atmosphere of the area near the factory exceeds the maximum allowed amount [14-20]. From an environmental point of view, the maximum amount of sulfur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>) allowed in atmospheric air is determined by air quality standards and regulations set by national or international bodies. These standards are aimed at protecting human health and the environment from the harmful effects of air pollution. Specific allowable levels may vary between countries and regions, but they are generally based on scientific studies and assessments of the effects of SO<sub>2</sub> on human health, ecosystems and air quality [21-25].

In the process of production of zinc and copper metals at “Almalik Mining and Metallurgical Combine” JSC (“AMMC” JSC), a large amount of technological gases containing sulfur dioxide are released [26-27]. Nowadays,

production of sulfuric acid from these gases has been started. In the metallurgical shop of “AMMC” JSC copper smelting plant, due to the non-hermetic nature of the gas moving systems and the fact that the process gases from the metallurgical aggregates do not reach the full degassing department, environmental norms of the metallurgical shop area are being violated [28-30]. Today, the composition of the process gases coming to the gas treatment department consists of approximately 6-7% SO<sub>2</sub>, 0.2-0.3% SO<sub>3</sub> and other gases. Before receiving sulfuric acid from these gases, they are treated with 8% sulfuric acid according to the opposite scheme. is given [31-33]. The purpose of this is, firstly, to reduce the temperature of outgoing gases, and secondly, to be free of volatile components such as As, F, Se [34-35]. As a result of the research, it was found that the amount of SO<sub>2</sub> in the process gases released in the area of the workshop was ineffective for the production of sulfuric acid [36]. A number of scientific studies have been carried out on the production of other types of products in cases where the outgoing technological gases are low in sulfur dioxide and thereby prevent the release of harmful gases into the environment [37-42].

In many industrialized countries, including the USA, Germany, and various enterprises of Japan, the purification of technological gases with low sulfur dioxide content and the production of other types of products have been launched [43-47].

SO<sub>2</sub> gas is found in the production of sulfuric acid, ammonium sulfate, solid fuel processing, metallurgy, thermal power plant, kapron, linoleum, ruberoid, penoplast, textile, paper, and food industries. SO<sub>2</sub> gas is included in the group of poisonous gases, under its influence it suffocates the respiratory tract, inflames the eyes, causes coughing, tears, headaches, shortness of breath, dries up the bronchi, and so on as well as corrodes metal equipment, corrodes building

materials, falls on agricultural land in the form of “Acid rain”, makes it unusable and causes serious damage to the national economy [48]. The permissible limit concentration of SO<sub>2</sub> gas is PLC - 0.5 mg/m<sup>3</sup> [49].

Internationally, the World Health Organization (WHO) provides air quality guidelines for various pollutants, including sulfur dioxide. The WHO guideline for SO<sub>2</sub> is an annual average of 20 µg/m<sup>3</sup> (micrograms per cubic metre) and a 10-minute average of 500 µg/m<sup>3</sup> [50].

It should be noted that the permissible limit concentration of SO<sub>2</sub> is set in order to minimize the negative impact of SO<sub>2</sub> on human health, ecosystems and the environment. These levels are periodically reviewed and updated based on new scientific knowledge and advances in understanding the effects of air pollution.

Based on the above-mentioned ecological situation, it can be noted that the development of an effective method of purifying industrial waste gases from sulfur dioxide is an urgent issue. The use of absorption methods for cleaning the atmosphere near the factory from sulfur dioxide is considered a promising method for cleaning the air from sulfur gases. However, the low efficiency and complexity of disposal of the resulting product requires further improvement of these methods on an industrial scale.

The purpose of this study is to study some technological parameters of absorption of sulfur dioxide into a solution consisting of a mixture of calcium and sodium hydroxides.

## 2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

A mixture of SO<sub>2</sub> and air obtained by oxidation of technical sulfur was chosen as the research object. In order to absorb SO<sub>2</sub> gas in this mixture, a solution consisting of a mixture of calcium and sodium alkali was used as an absorber. The study of the process of absorption of sulfur dioxide using a solution consisting of a mixture of calcium and sodium hydroxides was carried out under the following conditions:

**Table 1.** Required parameters for the study of absorption of sulfur dioxide

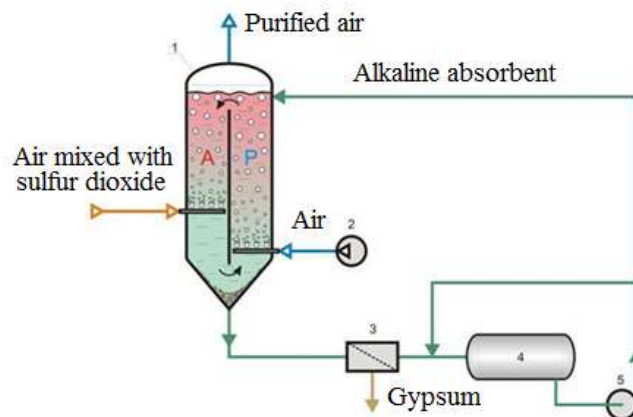
№	The main parameters of the research work	Quantitative indicators
1	Sulfur dioxide concentration in air	1,0 – 5,0 g/m <sup>3</sup>
2	The temperature of the gas-air mixture	30 °C
3	Initial alkalinity of the environment	pH = 14
4	The concentration of NaOH in the solution	0,4 mol/l
5	Concentration of Ca(OH) <sub>2</sub> in solution	0,3 mol/l

In the study, a strong alkaline solution was prepared as an absorber. The amounts of sodium and calcium hydroxides were taken in such a molar ratio that the hydrogen index of

the resulting solution was strongly alkaline (pH=14). The absorption of sulfur dioxide into the alkaline solution was carried out in an aspirator at a gas flow rate of 1 l/min. The concentration of sulfur dioxide in the gas was determined by the photocolometric method. The change of the solution medium was controlled by a pH-meter.

Tools and equipment necessary for the implementation of the research work were collected. The scheme of the hardware chain proposed in the research work is depicted in Figure 1.

According to the scheme shown in Fig. 1, after preparing an alkaline solution with a specified pH value, the solution is fed to the absorber. Air containing a mixture of sulfur dioxide is sprayed into the solution from the lower side of the absorber. For better mixing of solution components, air is supplied from the other side of the absorber under pressure. In this case, the solution is mixed with air. Mixing with air increases the reaction yield.



**Fig.1.** Apparatus chain diagram of sulfur dioxide absorption process in alkaline solution: 1-absorber, 2-compressor, 3-filter, 4-capacity, 5-pump, A-absorption zone, P-mixing zone

After the reaction, solid residues are removed from the bottom of the absorber and filtered. The composition of the solid residue (gypsum) is analyzed, and if it is suitable, it is sent to the preparation of building material, and the purified solution is sent to a special machine to create a re-alkaline solution. In the experiment, 1 m<sup>3</sup> of air mixed with sulfur dioxide and an absorbent solution with a volume of one liter were used.

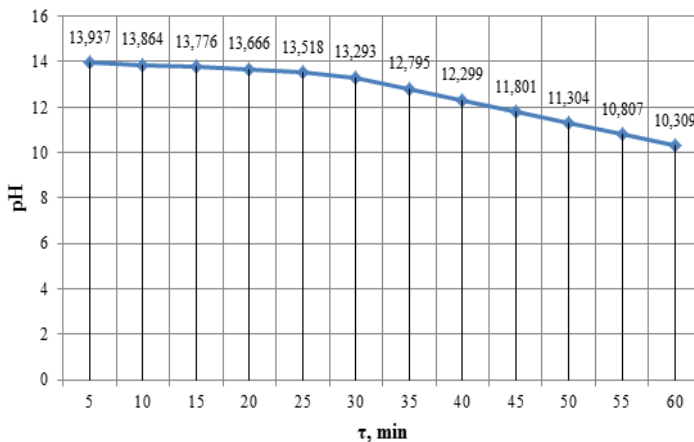
## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the experimental work, the degree of absorption of sulfur dioxide into the solution was determined depending on the change in the alkalinity of the solution over time. The results obtained in the experiment are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Changes in solution alkalinity with increasing duration of sulfur dioxide absorption

№	Time, min	The medium of the solution, pH
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1	5	13,937
2	10	13,864
3	15	13,776
4	20	13,666
5	25	13,518
6	30	13,293
7	35	12,795
8	40	12,299
9	45	11,801
10	50	11,304
11	55	10,807
12	60	10,309



**Fig.2.** Changes in the solution medium per unit of time during the absorption of sulfur dioxide in an alkaline solution

The results in Figure 2 and Table 2 show that the alkalinity of the absorbent solution decreased with increasing duration of sulfur dioxide supply from the solution. This situation indicates that sulfur dioxide has gone into solution. Calculations showed that 30% of the total SO<sub>2</sub> gas passed through the absorbent solution was absorbed into the solution. In order to completely absorb sulfur dioxide in the air and obtain clean air, it was required to pass the mixture of air and SO<sub>2</sub> through the solution four times at the given speed. An hour was spent passing the mixture of air and SO<sub>2</sub> through the absorbent solution four times. When the experiment was continued again, it was observed that the hydrogen index of the solution did not change. This indicates that SO<sub>2</sub> gas is not left in the mixture of gases passing through the absorbent solution after one hour. By controlling the composition and alkalinity of the absorbent solution obtained for complete purification of the air mixed with sulfur dioxide of the given concentration from SO<sub>2</sub> gas, when it was used for the second time, results similar to the previous results were obtained.

The study of the kinetics of the process showed that the absorption of SO<sub>2</sub> gas into the solution is intrinsically dependent on the size of the gas bubbles passing through the solution, and the smaller the size of the SO<sub>2</sub> gas bubbles, the smaller the size of the SO<sub>2</sub> gas bubbles with the absorbent

solution. The larger the glazing surface and the better absorption into the solution.

The law related to the size of gas bubbles during the absorption of SO<sub>2</sub> gas in water is called Hige-Romijn equation. This equation describes the relationship between the size of a gas bubble and the rate of mass transfer or absorption.

The mathematical formula of the Hige-Romijn equation is as follows:

$$d = 1,4 \cdot \sqrt[3]{\sigma \cdot g \cdot \frac{\rho L}{\rho G}} \quad (1)$$

Where:

d - average diameter of gas bubbles;

σ - interfacial tension between gas and liquid phases;

g - acceleration due to gravity;

ρL - density of the liquid phase (water in this case);

ρG - density of the gas phase (in this case SO<sub>2</sub> gas).

It should be noted that the Hige-Romijn equation provides an approximation for the bubble size and assumes certain conditions. Other factors such as gas flow rate, fluid properties, and equipment design can also affect bubble size in gas absorption processes.

When SO<sub>2</sub> gas is absorbed in water, the interphase tension between gas and liquid phases is 0.02 N/m. If the acceleration under the influence of gravity (g) is 9.8 m/s<sup>2</sup>, the density of water (ρL) is 1000 kg/m<sup>3</sup>, and the density of the gas phase (ρG) is 2 kg/m<sup>3</sup>, then in the process of absorption of SO<sub>2</sub> gas, the average diameter (d) of the total gas bubbles can be calculated as follows:

$$d = 1,4 \cdot \sqrt[3]{0,02 \cdot 9,8 \cdot \frac{1000}{2}} = 6,45 \text{ m} \quad (2)$$

The average diameter of the gas bubbles formed in the process of absorption of SO<sub>2</sub> gas transferred through the solution is approximately 6.45 meters (or the average radius r = 3.227 m). Since the surface of the gas bubbles passing through the solution with a total diameter of 6.45 m, that is, the gas-liquid contact boundary is affected by the components of the solution, it is important to determine the total surface of these bubbles. Considering that the gas bubbles are spherical, the surface of these bubbles is found as follows:

$$S = 4\pi r^2 \quad (3)$$

In this case, the total surface of the gases obtained in the experiment is  $S=4 \cdot 3.14 \cdot (3.227)^2 = 130.82 \text{ m}^2$ .

The absorption of SO<sub>2</sub> gas into a solution really depends on various factors, including the size of the gas bubbles passing through the solution. When the gas bubbles come into contact with the solution, they provide an interface for transferring the gaseous component (SO<sub>2</sub>) to the liquid phase. The speed and efficiency of this assimilation process depends on several factors, and the size of the bubble is one of them.

Smaller gas bubbles have a greater total surface area for a given volume of gas than larger bubbles. As a result, more surface area is available for the gas-liquid interface, allowing for higher absorption rates. This increased surface area allows for more interactions between the gas molecules and the liquid and facilitates the transition of SO<sub>2</sub> from the gas phase to the solution.

In addition, smaller bubbles have a tendency to disperse and disperse throughout the solution. This dispersion ensures that the gas has an equal effect on the liquid and enhances the absorption process. Larger bubbles quickly rise to the surface, limiting contact time with the liquid and reducing overall absorption efficiency.

It should be noted that the size of gas bubbles passing through the solution can be affected by various factors, for example, the method of gas introduction (e.g., diffuser, sparger) and the properties of the solution (e.g., viscosity, surface tension). Bubble size control can be critical in optimizing the absorption process, as it directly affects the rate and efficiency of SO<sub>2</sub> absorption.

In the absorption of SO<sub>2</sub> gas in water, the gas dissolves and forms gas bubbles when it comes into contact with water. According to Henry's law, the size of gas bubbles depends on the partial pressure of SO<sub>2</sub> gas over water.

If the partial pressure of SO<sub>2</sub> gas is high, more gas molecules will dissolve in the water, resulting in smaller bubbles. Conversely, if the partial pressure of SO<sub>2</sub> gas is low, fewer gas molecules will dissolve, resulting in larger bubbles.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The amount of absorbed sulfur dioxide and the speed of its processing with an aqueous solution of sodium and calcium alkalis was 1 l/min, and when the temperature of the solution was 30°C, the degree of absorption of SO<sub>2</sub> gas into the alkaline solution was 30% compared to the initial volume of the gas. In this case, a conclusion was drawn about the results depending on the change in the pH indicator of the solution. The obtained results show that for complete absorption of sulfur dioxide in 1m<sup>3</sup> gas mixture when the concentration of sulfur dioxide in the air is 1.0-5.0 g/m<sup>3</sup>, a mixture of air and sulfur dioxide must be taken for one hour from one liter of the absorbent solution obtained for the experiment was requested to transfer. It was found that the absorbent solution can be used twice in the process. Saturated absorbent solution is fed to the crystallization process. In this case, the sodium sulfate salts in the solution are crystallized and the remaining aqueous part is returned to the process to form a re-absorbent solution.

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