

ORIGINAL

REPORT SUMMARY

SUBJECTS	Coal-derived liquids / Gasification power plants	
TOPICS	Methanol Synthetic fuels	Cogeneration Gasification—combined cycles
AUDIENCE	Fuels and generation planners	

EPRI-AP--4430

DE86 006782

Liquid-Phase Methanol (LPMeOH™) Process Development Unit (PDU)—40-Day Run at LaPorte, Texas (1984)

Sustained catalyst life is a key to improved methanol synthesis from coal gasification products. A demonstration of scaled-up PDU operation—first using a large-particle catalyst and then a liquid-entrained slurry in a single run—produced a significant amount of crude methanol.

BACKGROUND	Methanol synthesis in a gasification-combined-cycle (GCC) power plant offers utilities greater flexibility in handling variable load requirements. Approximately 10 years of research jointly supported by EPRI and DOE culminated in a methanol synthesis proof run at the LaPorte pilot plant. In previous plant demonstrations and laboratory research, investigators did not fully understand the conditions for maintaining catalyst life.
OBJECTIVES	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To test short-term catalyst activity with carbon monoxide-rich synthesis gas at a 5-t/d scale.• To demonstrate methanol production in an ebullated-bed reactor containing catalyst particles fluidized by gas and liquid flow.
APPROACH	A previous bench-scale PDU, autoclave tests, and model predictions indicated that liquid-phase methanol was in an excellent position for scale-up. The LaPorte methanol synthesis run was scaled up by a factor of 100. Investigators expected to demonstrate unit performance and catalyst stability using a large-particle catalyst. However, they performed most of the run in a slurry mode because of the rapid attrition rates with the large-particle catalyst. They analyzed catalyst activity with both conventional (balanced) and once-through synthesis (unbalanced) gas flows.
RESULTS	Scale-up of methanol synthesis and PDU performance proved successful. The project team reported the following findings: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Initial catalyst performance in the fluidized mode equaled that of corresponding smaller-scale tests and predictions, but catalyst activity declined more rapidly than predicted. The attrition rates showed that the catalyst was not suitable for this mode.

- Use of an attrited catalyst in the slurry mode worked reliably, even though the catalyst was intended for the fluidized mode.
 - Smooth transition from fluidized to slurry modes of operation allowed a comparison of the catalyst with both modes. The project investigator also recommended future tests to demonstrate the adequacy of catalyst activity for commercial applications.
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EPRI PERSPECTIVE

Successful operation of the 5-t/d LaPorte PDU was a major milestone toward development of methanol-from-coal-gas technology. This project involved scale-up of earlier work described in EPRI report AP-1291. In another report (AP-3749), researchers assessed the economic feasibility for coproduction of electricity and methanol in an integrated coal GCC power plant. Successful development of the LPMeOH process would enhance the economic incentive for methanol synthesis in GCC plants.

PROJECT

RP317-3

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Liquid-Phase Methanol (LPMeOH™) Process
Development Unit (PDU)—40-Day Run at
LaPorte, Texas (1984)

AP-4430
Research Project 317-3
DOE Contract DE-AC22-81PC30019

Final Report, January 1986

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CONTENTS

<u>Section</u>		<u>Page</u>
1	EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1-1
	Introduction	1-1
	Run Summary	1-2
	Discussion and Conclusions	1-6
	Recommendations	1-8
2	LAPORTE PDU DESCRIPTION	2-1
	Process Description	2-1
	Data Acquisition System Description	2-5
3	RUN DESCRIPTION	3-1
	Background	3-1
	Test Objectives	3-5
	Operating History	3-7
4	DATA SUMMARIES	4-1
	Results for April-May 1984	4-1
	Reduction Data	4-5
	Catalyst Inventory	4-8
	Analytical Results	4-12
	Slurry Concentration Measurements	4-12
	Gas Trace Contaminant Analyses	4-12
	Catalyst Analyses	4-13
	Carbonyl Survey	4-15
	Freezene-100 Boiling Points	4-15
	Methanol Product Analyses	4-15
5	ENGINEERING ANALYSIS	5-1
	Reduction	5-1
	Catalyst Performance	5-2
	Attrition Resistance Analysis	5-2

Section

Page

Activity Maintenance with Unbalanced Gas

5-13

Process Variables Scans with R71/OF12-26 Catalyst

5-28

6 REFERENCES

6-1

ILLUSTRATIONS

<u>Figure</u>	<u>Page</u>
2-1 Simplified Process Flowsheet for LaPorte LPMEOH PDU	2-2
2-2 Location of Sensors LaPorte LPMEOH PDU Reactor	2-4
2-3 Analytical System Structure	2-9
3-1 Transition to Entrained Mode - Slurry Concentration	3-15
3-2 Diagnosis of Fouling Problem	3-16
4-1 Boiling Point Distribution of Fresh & Used Process Oil	4-19
5-1 LaPorte PDU Reduction Data	5-4
5-2 Sensitivity Analysis in Transition to Entrained Operation Period	5-7
5-3 Operation in Transition to Entrained Mode for Balanced Gas	5-11
5-4 Effect of Catalyst Fines on Reactor Performance	5-12
5-5 Carbonyl Survey: Latter Half of 40-Day Run 630-960 Hours on Stream	5-15
5-6 Activity Maintenance in LaPorte PDU, MeOH Productivity vs. Time on Synthesis Gas	5-19
5-7 Activity Maintenance in LaPorte PDU, MeOH Productivity vs. Cumulative MeOH Production	5-20
5-8 Activity Maintenance in LaPorte PDU, MeOH Productivity vs. Cumulative Gas Flow	5-22
5-9 Activity Maintenance in LaPorte PDU, MeOH Productivity vs. Nickel in Catalyst	5-23
5-10 Activity Maintenance in LaPorte PDU, MeOH Equilibrium vs. Cumulative Space Velocity	5-24
5-11 Activity Maintenance in LaPorte PDU, MeOH Equilibrium vs. Nickel in Catalyst	5-25
5-12 Activity Maintenance in LaPorte PDU, Cumulative MeOH Productivity vs. Cumulative Space Velocity	5-26
5-13 Process Variables Scans, CO Conversion vs. Space Velocity	5-30

<u>Figure</u>	<u>Page</u>
5-14 Process Variables Scans, Approach to Equilibrium vs. Space Velocity (Balanced Gas)	5-31
5-15 Process Variables Scans, MeOH Productivity vs. Space Velocity	5-32
5-16 Process Variables Scans, CO Conversion vs. Space Velocity	5-33
5-17 Process Variables Scans, Approach to Equilibrium vs. Space Velocity (Unbalanced Gas)	5-34
5-18 Process Variables Scans, MeOH Productivity vs. Space Velocity	5-35

TABLES

<u>Table</u>		<u>Page</u>
1-1	40-Day LaPorte Run Major Event Summary	1-3
1-2	LaPorte PDU Averaged Data Summary for 40-Day Run	1-4
1-3	Process Variable Scan Summary	1-5
1-4	Summary of Catalyst Analyses and Cumulative Flows	1-7
2-1	Principal Reactor Feed Gas Compositions and General Composition Range of Interest	2-1
2-2	LaPorte LP Methanol Process Average Report Entrained Mode Process Variables & Analytical Summary	2-10
3-1	PDU Tests with Liquid-Fluidized Catalysts and Synthesis Gas	3-2
3-2	Selected Tests with Liquid-Entrained Catalysts and Synthesis Gas	3-3
3-3	Early Liquid-Entrained Catalyst Screening, Summary of Averaged Synthesis Results for Catalyst Candidates	3-4
3-4	Liquid-Entrained Run Planned Operating Conditions	3-6
3-5	Second LaPorte PDU Run, Major Event Summary	3-7
3-6	Data Acquisition System Event Summary	3-18
3-7	LaPorte Inventory Summary - Catalyst "Loss" Estimates	3-23
4-1	LaPorte PDU Averaged Data Summary with R71/OF12-26 Catalyst and Freezene Oil, Results for April-May 1984	4-2
4-2	Corrections to Raw Data During Selected Periods at Initiation of Operations	4-4
4-3	LaPorte PDU Reduction Data -- R71/OF12-26 Catalyst, 1200 kPa (170 psia)	4-6
4-4	LaPorte Oil & Catalyst Balance Sheet	4-9
4-5	LaPorte PDU Catalyst Inventory	4-11
4-6	Slurry Concentration Measurements for LaPorte 40-Day Run Samples From Slurry Loop	4-12

<u>Table</u>		<u>Page</u>
4-7	Trace Gas Contaminant Analyses	4-13
4-8	LaPorte 40-Day Run Catalyst Analyses	4-14
4-9	First Carbonyl Survey - 40-Day Run	4-16
4-10	Second Carbonyl Survey - 40-Day Run	4-17
4-11	Third Carbonyl Survey - 40-Day Run	4-18
4-12	Methanol Product Analyses	4-19
5-1	Principal Operations During Reduction	5-3
5-2	Bed Profile Determinations	5-6
5-3	Voltage Readings During the Transition to Entrained Operation	5-9
5-4	Transition to Entrained Operation Period, Summary of Inventory Calculations	5-10
5-5	Transition to Entrained Operation Period, Process Averaged Data	5-14
5-6	LaPorte PDU Activity Maintenance Data with R71/OF12-26 Catalyst - Unbalanced Gas	5-17
5-7	R71/OF12-26 Catalyst Activity Data, Summary for Shakedown and 40-Day Runs	5-29

ABSTRACT

Air Products and Chemicals, Inc. and Chem Systems Inc. have completed a 40-day run in the LaPorte LPMEOH™ PDU with R71/OF12-26 catalyst. The primary purpose of this test was to demonstrate short-term activity maintenance with CO-rich synthesis gas at the five metric ton per day scale of operation.

The catalyst was reduced and then brought on stream in the liquid-fluidized mode with balanced synthesis gas on April 11, 1984. Within 30 hours the liquid-fluidized catalyst had attrited to form the expected 29 weight percent slurry. The first 102.5 hours of operation were dedicated to process variable scans with space velocities ranging from 2,400 to 14,400 liters per hour per kilogram of catalyst.

For the remaining 862 hours on stream, the following relatively constant conditions were maintained with CO-rich synthesis gas:

Reactor temperature, °C	250
Reactor pressure, kPa	5,400
Catalyst concentration, weight percent	27.5-23.3
Space velocity, liters/hr-kg catalyst	10,000-12,500

During this period, CO conversion declined slowly from about 10 to 4.8 percent and methanol productivity decreased slowly from about 23 to 14.3 g mol/hr-kg catalyst. Trace poisons were at least partly responsible for this activity decline.

The run was voluntarily terminated on May 21, 1984 after accumulating 964.5 hours on synthesis gas. A major achievement of this test was the demonstration of sustained PDU operation in the liquid-entrained mode with relatively high slurry concentrations. The run produced 151 metric tons of crude methanol.