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## A resorption cycle for the cogeneration of electricity and refrigeration



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#### HIGHLIGHTS

### G R A P H I C A L A B S T R A C T

- A resorption cogeneration cycle for electricity and refrigeration is proposed.
- ► The cycle improved refrigeration COP by 10 times compared with Goswami cycle.
- ► The highest exergy efficiency of the cogeneration cycle is as high as 0.9.
- The cycle also features in safety and simple structure.

A novel resorption cycle driven by low grade heat for cogeneration of electricity and refrigeration is studied. The cycle features in high exergy efficiency, very little or no ammonia liquid inside and simple structure.



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#### ABSTRACT

This paper describes a novel resorption cycle driven by the low grade heat for the cogeneration of electricity and refrigeration, which is based on ammonia adsorption refrigeration technology. The presented cycle features a variable endothermic process which stands for higher adaptability if compared with the traditional Rankine cycle, very little or no ammonia liquid in the system which is a safety feature, solid adsorbents inside the beds, and simple structure for the fact of no rectifying equipment and circulation pumps required by the working fluids. This cycle can be utilised for the heat source with the temperature higher than 100 °C, and it has an electricity generation exergy efficiency of up to 0.69 and a refrigeration coefficient of performance (COP) of up to 0.77. If compared with the Goswami cycle, which is established based on the absorption Kalina cycle for the cogeneration of electricity generation, meanwhile, it overcame the limitation of the low refrigeration coefficient of performance (COP) of up to 0.677. If compared for electricity generation, meanwhile, it overcame the limitation of the low refrigeration coefficient of performance (COP) of Goswami cycle, and improved the COP by 10 times. The optimum overall exergy efficiency is as high as 0.9, which is 40–60% improved compared with the Goswami cycle under the same working conditions.

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Nomencl	lature
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a, b, n, a	nd $k$ the stoichiometric factors of the reaction
С	specific heat (kJ/(kg K))
COP	coefficient of refrigeration performance
Н	enthalpy (kJ)
т	mass of ammoniate HTS (kg)
М	molar mass (mol)
Q	heat (kW)
t <sub>c</sub>	cycle time
Т	temperature (K)
W	electricity (kW)
$\Delta H$	enthalpy change (kJ)
$\Delta U$	internal energy change (kJ)
$\Delta S$	entropy change (kJ)
Ē	exergy (kW)
$\overline{m}$	mass flowrate (kg/s)
η	exergy efficiency

#### 1. Introduction

The utilisation of low grade heat is one of the main options to overcome the developing constraints which are related to the ever rising energy demand [1,2]. The conventional Rankine cycle is a well known power cycle for the utilisation of the low grade heat, and its primary challenge limiting performance is the isothermal endothermic and exothermic processes which often cannot match the temperature profiles of the heat source and sink perfectly. Using an ammonia-water mixture, as in the Kalina cycle [3], is attractive because it allows the exploitation of available exergy to be maximised due to the adjustable temperature variation during the liquid-vapour phase change by controlling the ammonia concentration. The Kalina cycle, under special circumstances [4], generally produces higher exergy efficiency when compared to the Rankine cycle [5.6]. A totally different approach for harvesting the waste heat for power production is the use of thermoelectric systems. This technology has great appeal in terms of its simplicity, but its energy efficiency is only about 0.1 for a heat source temperature lower than 350 °C [7].

Combining the electricity generation with refrigeration may improve the exergy efficiency. This is done in the so-called Goswami cycle [8], in which a heat exchanger (precooler) is added before the absorber in a Kalina cycle so as to recover the low temperature potential of the expanded cold gas stream for refrigeration. Of course, as this heat is only specific heat and not latent heat from a phase change, the Goswami cycle suffers from a fundamental limitation of a low refrigeration coefficient of performance (COP), which is only approximately 0.05 [9], although the exergy efficiency of the cogeneration cycle can reach 0.5 [10].

Chemisorption refrigeration technology is attractive because of the wide range of chloride salts that can absorb ammonia, which allows high flexibility in the application of different temperature heat sources. Cycles of this kind have been theoretical studied extensively by Alefeld and other researchers from the 1980s [11–13]. The working principle [14] is fundamentally the same as that of absorption refrigeration. Consequently, the cycle will have a comparable COP for refrigeration if it was used for the cogeneration cycle.

Resorption [15–19] is a form of absorption or chemisorption with the advantage of improved safety. It also utilises the heat of decomposition in the refrigerating process [20], which provides the potential for performance improvement for the energy conversion [21]. This paper proposes a novel resorption cogeneration cycle for electricity and refrigeration that has high refrigeration COP,

ad	adsorption	
am	ammonia	
с	cooling	
de	desorption	
el	electricity	
env	environmental	
ex	exergy	
h	heat, heating	
Н	high temperature salt	
hr	heat recovery	
L	low temperature salt	
Me	metal element	
ref	refrigeration	

has a reduced operating pressure, possesses little or no ammonia liquid in the system, and has a great potential for a very simplified system for the recovery of the low grade heat. In order to have an overall understanding of this new type of cycle, the different working pairs are compared by analysing energy and exergy efficiency, and the performance is compared with the Goswami cycle operating under the same working conditions.

# 2. Resorption cycle for the cogeneration of electricity and refrigeration

#### 2.1. The principle of the cycle

The resorption cogeneration cycle presented in Fig. 1 utilises a turbine located between the high temperature salt (HTS) and low temperature salt (LTS) beds to generate electrical power. A super-heater and a precooler are integrated in the system to optimise the performance, and two different working phases which take place one after the other are involved.

The first phase is the power generation phase. The thermodynamic diagram is shown in Fig. 2a. In this process the endothermic reaction of the ammoniate HTS at temperature  $T_{deH}$  with heat input  $Q_{\rm de}$  (Figs. 1 and 2a) adds an internal energy difference of  $\Delta U_{\rm bH}$  and provides the reaction enthalpy  $\Delta H_{deH}$  (for decomposition process) to the ammoniate HTS, as well generates ammonia vapour with the enthalpy of  $H_{am1}$ , which is superheated to temperature  $T_h$  by isobaric heat addition  $Q_{\rm h}$ . The ammonia vapour with the enthalpy of  $H_{\rm am2}$  is (in the ideal case) isentropically expanded to produce mechanical work W in the turbine. The expanded ammonia may additionally generate some refrigeration effect Q<sub>ref1</sub> in an isobaric process at temperature  $T_{ref}$  by the enthalpy difference in the precooler if the temperature after expansion  $T_{Lo}$  is lower than the refrigeration temperature  $T_{\rm ref}$ . This is comparable to the situation in the Goswami cycle. Finally the ammonia vapour with enthalpy of  $H_{am4}$  is adsorbed in Bed 1 by the LTS at temperature  $T_{adL}$  and releases heat  $Q_{adL}$  to the environment. Consequently, the internal energy and enthalpy of ammoniate LTS are decreased by  $\Delta U_{cL}$  and  $\Delta H_{adL}$ , respectively.

The second phase is the resorption refrigeration phase, and the thermodynamic diagram is shown in Fig. 2b. In this process the refrigeration  $Q_{ref2}$  (Figs. 1 and 2b) is generated due to the sum of the decomposition heat  $\Delta H_{deL}$  and internal energy difference  $\Delta U_{hL}$  of the ammoniate LTS in Bed 2. The generated vapour with the enthalpy of  $H_{am5}$  has to be adsorbed in Bed 2 by the HTS and the heat of adsorption  $Q_{adH}$  is rejected to the environment at the temperature of  $T_{adH}$ . Simultaneously, the internal energy and

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