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Electrochemistry in Near-Critical and Supercritical Fluids. 7. SO_2^-

By

C.R. Cabrera, E. Garcia, and A.J. Bard

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The University of Texas at Austin
Department of Chemistry
Austin, Texas 78712

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Electrochemistry in Near-Critical and Supercritical Fluids. 7. SO_2.

Carlos R. Cabrera, Edwin Garcia, and Allen J. Bard
Department of Chemistry
University of Texas at Austin
Austin, Texas 78712

We describe here the cyclic voltammetry (CV) and chronoamperometry of $Fe(bpy)_3^{+2}$ (bpy= 2,2'-bipyridine) in SO_2 at temperatures up to 174° C, above the critical point of SO_2 (T_c= 158° C, P_c=77.8 atm), and discuss the effect of temperature on the diffusion coefficient (D) and the electrochemical behavior. Near-critical and supercritical fluids are of interest because the solvent properties are very different than those of the liquid form and are adjustable over a wide range by variation of the temperature and pressure. Recent studies have demonstrated that electrochemical experiments can be carried out in supercritical H_2O [1], NH_3 [2], CO_2/H_2O [3] and MeCN [4]. Extension of this methodology to SO_2 is important because this solvent has been shown to be very valuable one for electrochemical studies [5]. It is an aprotic solvent with a reasonable dielectric constant that has a wide anodic potential window out to about +4.7V vs S.C.E. [6]. This allows the electrochemical generation and study of highly oxidizing species and thus provides a useful complement to NH_3, which has a large cathodic limit. Moreover, the relatively low critical temperature and pressure of SO_2 makes SO_2 a convenient high temperature solvent, compared, for example, to MeCN and H_2O.

All experiments were carried out with a cell constructed of Inconel 600 with a volume of 7.5 mL [2b]. The SO_2, purified by previously-described methods [6], was distilled into a stainless ampule connected to the electrochemical cell containing the supporting electrolyte, tetraethyl ammonium hexafluoroarsenate ($TEAAsF_6$), and the electroactive species. This cell and its contents had been previously placed under vacuum at 100° C overnight to dry. The electrochemical cell was connected to a pressure generator [2b] which could be used to adjust the pressure to the desired value at any temperature. The synthesis and purification of $TEAAsF_6$ and $Fe(bpy)_3(AsF_6)_2$ followed previous practice [6]. Either a 10 or 25 μm diameter platinum disk sealed-in-glass ultramicroelectrode was used as working electrode. The counter electrode was Pt gauze and the reference electrode was a silver wire quasi-reference electrode (AgQRE) immersed directly into the test solution.

The test compound, $Fe(bpy)_3^{2+}$, was selected because previous studies [5,6] indicated that the +2/+3 couple shows well-defined electrochemical behavior in SO_2 at its usual liquid temperature range (-70 to -15° C). Typical cyclic voltammograms of $Fe(bpy)_3^{2+}$ at a 25 μm Pt electrode over the temperature range 25° C to 174° C (supercritical) at a scan rate of 10 V/s are shown in Figure 1. The

waves at all temperatures, including supercritical conditions, are well-defined and nernstian, when compensation for the resistance drop between the working and reference electrode is applied. The apparent shifts in the absolute peak potentials of the waves are probably not meaningful under the conditions of these experiments, since a shift in the potential of the AgQRE could easily occur.

An interesting aspect of the CV waves is the clear change in shape from linear diffusion-controlled behavior at 25° C to a steady-state limited appearance as the temperature is increased, with the same electrode at a given scan rate, v. This change is a reflection of the large increase in the diffusion coefficient of $Fe(bpy)_3^{2+}$ with increasing temperature. As is well known for ultramicroelectrodes [7], the current (i)-time (t) or i-v behavior approximately follows that of a hemispherical electrode, where the ratio of the planar to the spherical components of i are given by [8]

$$\frac{i_{sphere}}{i_{plane}} = 1 + \left[\frac{(\pi D t)^{1/2}}{r}\right]$$

where r is the electrode radius. Such changes are usually reflections of changes in t (or v); here, they represent a change in D. To demonstrate this change in D/r, D was measured at each temperature by chronoamperometry at the 25 μm diameter electrode over a time range of 0 to 0.1s. A plot of D/r and D at different temperatures is given in Figure 2. The large value of D typically found under near-critical and supercritical conditions [1-4] implies that spherical diffusion effect will be important, even with electrodes of larger diameter, especially at lower scan rates.

The results given here demonstrate for the first time that electrochemical studies in SO_2 at high temperatures under near-critical and supercritical conditions are possible and that the metal apparatus previously used for studies in NH_3 and MeCN is apparently stable in SO_2 under these conditions. The application of SO_2 to studies of strongly oxidizing species under these conditions is still to be demonstrated, since preliminary studies suggest that the anodic range is greatly decreased at higher temperatures.

Acknowledgment.

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(1) W. M. Flarsheim, K. P. Johnston, A. J. Bard, J. Electrochem. Soc., 135. (1988) 1939 and references therein.

(2) (a) R. M. Crooks, F.-R. F. Fan, A. J. Bard, J. Am. Chem. Soc., 106 (1984) 6851; (b) R. M. Crooks and A. J. Bard, J. Phys. Chem., 91 (1987) 1274.

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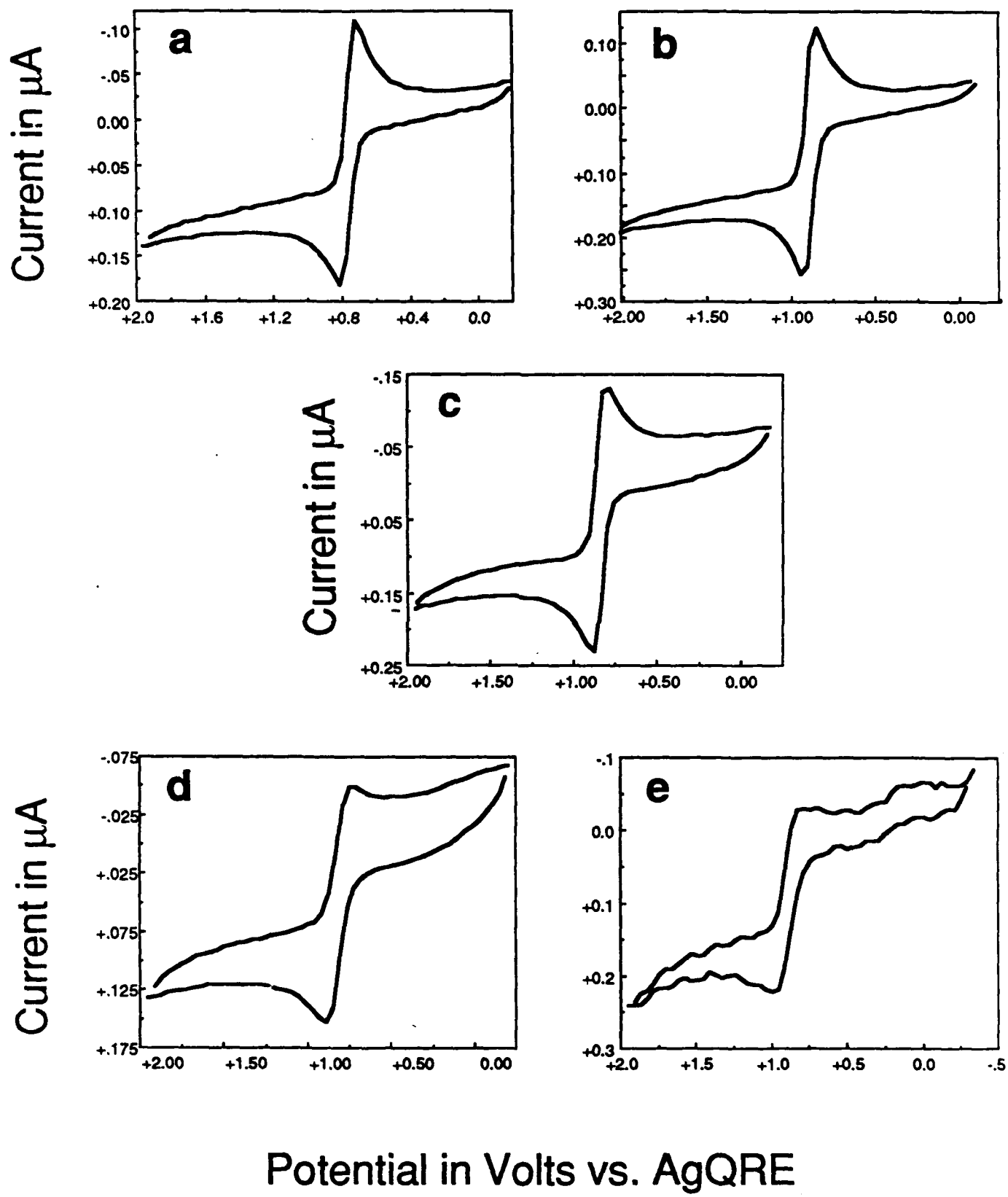(8) A. J. Bard and L. R. Faulkner, "Electrochemical Methods: Fundamentals and Applications" John Wiley, New York, 1980, Ch. 6.

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Figure 1: Cyclic voltammetry (10 V/s) of $Fe(bpy)_3^{+2}$ as a function of temperature and pressure: (a) T= 25° C, P= 13.2 Bars, $C\{Fe(bpy)_3(AsF_6)_2\}$=11mM, $C\{TEAAsF_6\}$= 0.2M; (b) T= 50° C, P= 25 Bars, $C\{Fe(bpy)_3(AsF_6)_2\}$=10.1mM, $C\{TEAAsF_6\}$= 0.19M; (c) T=100° C, P= 47 Bars $C\{Fe(bpy)_3(AsF_6)_2\}$=9.1mM, $C\{TEAAsF_6\}$= 0.17M; (d) T=138° C, P= 89 Bars, $C\{Fe(bpy)_3(AsF_6)_2\}$=7.6mM, $C\{TEAAsF_6\}$= 0..14M; (e) T= 174° C, P=112 Bars, $C\{Fe(bpy)_3(AsF_6)_2\}$=7.0mM, $C\{TEAAsF_6\}$= 0.13M. Potential scans start at 0 V and the initial potential sweeps are toward positive potentials.

Figure 2: Plot of D/r and D vs temperature.

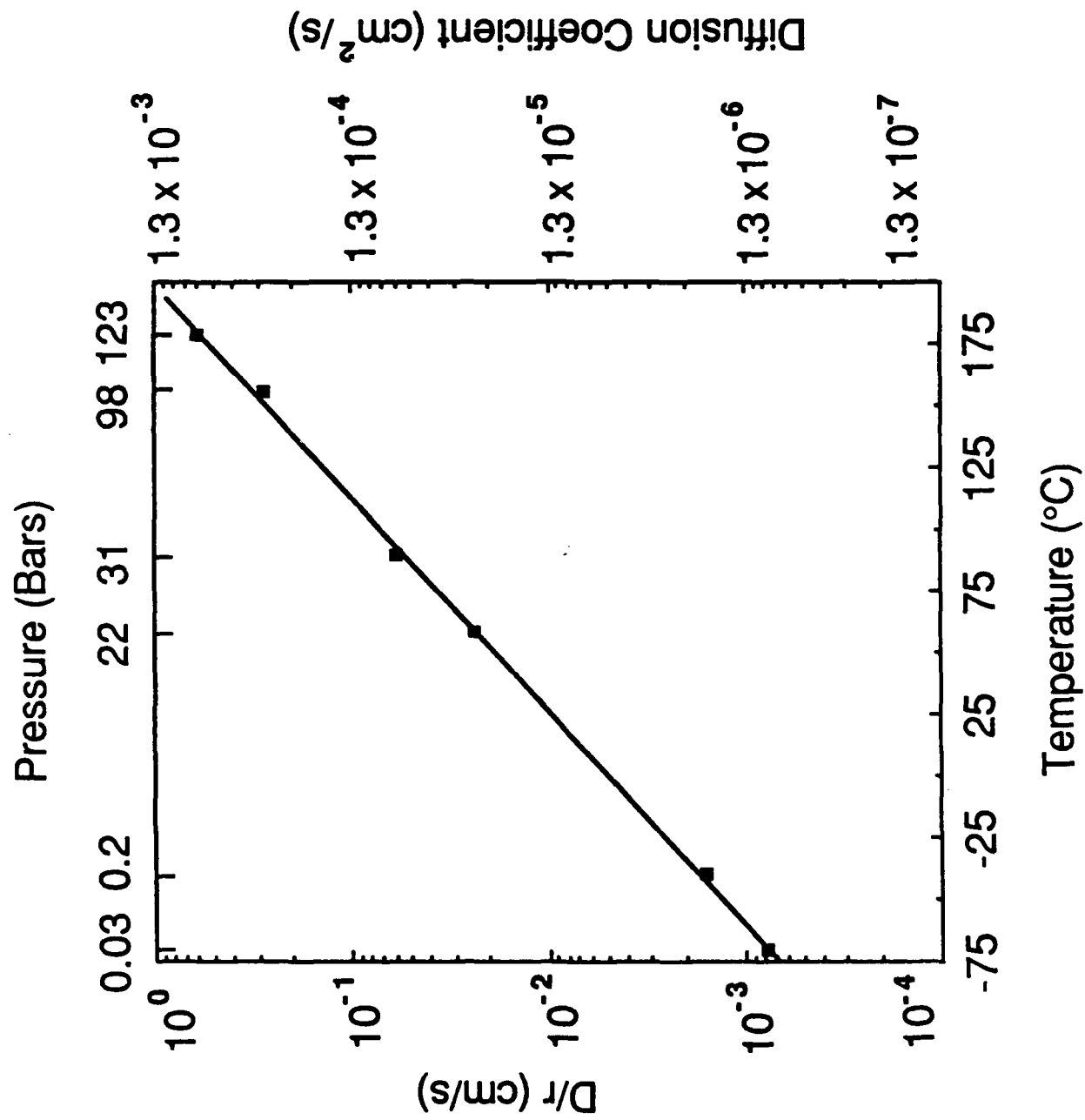Potential in Volts vs. AgQRE

Figure 1

Figure 2

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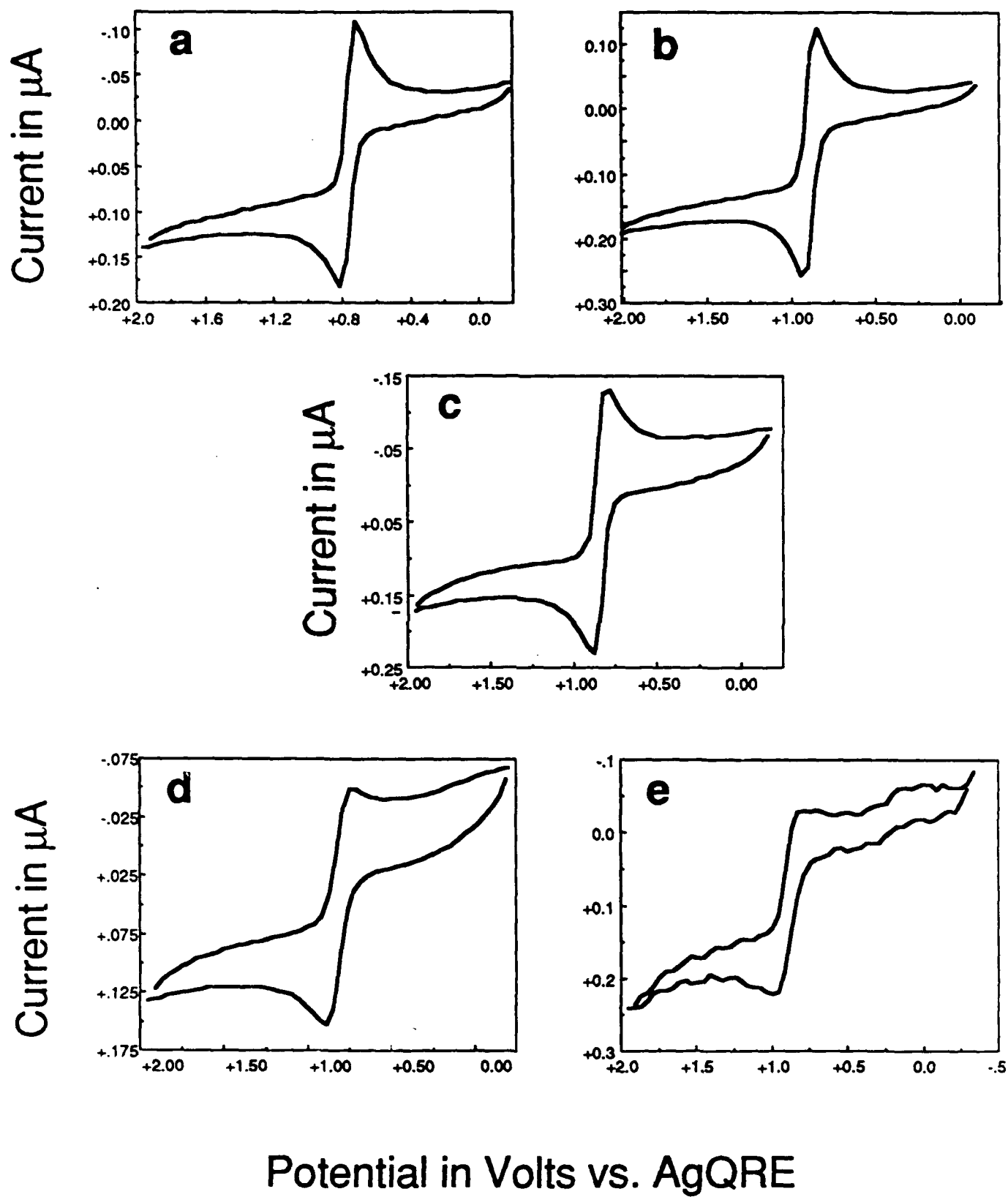
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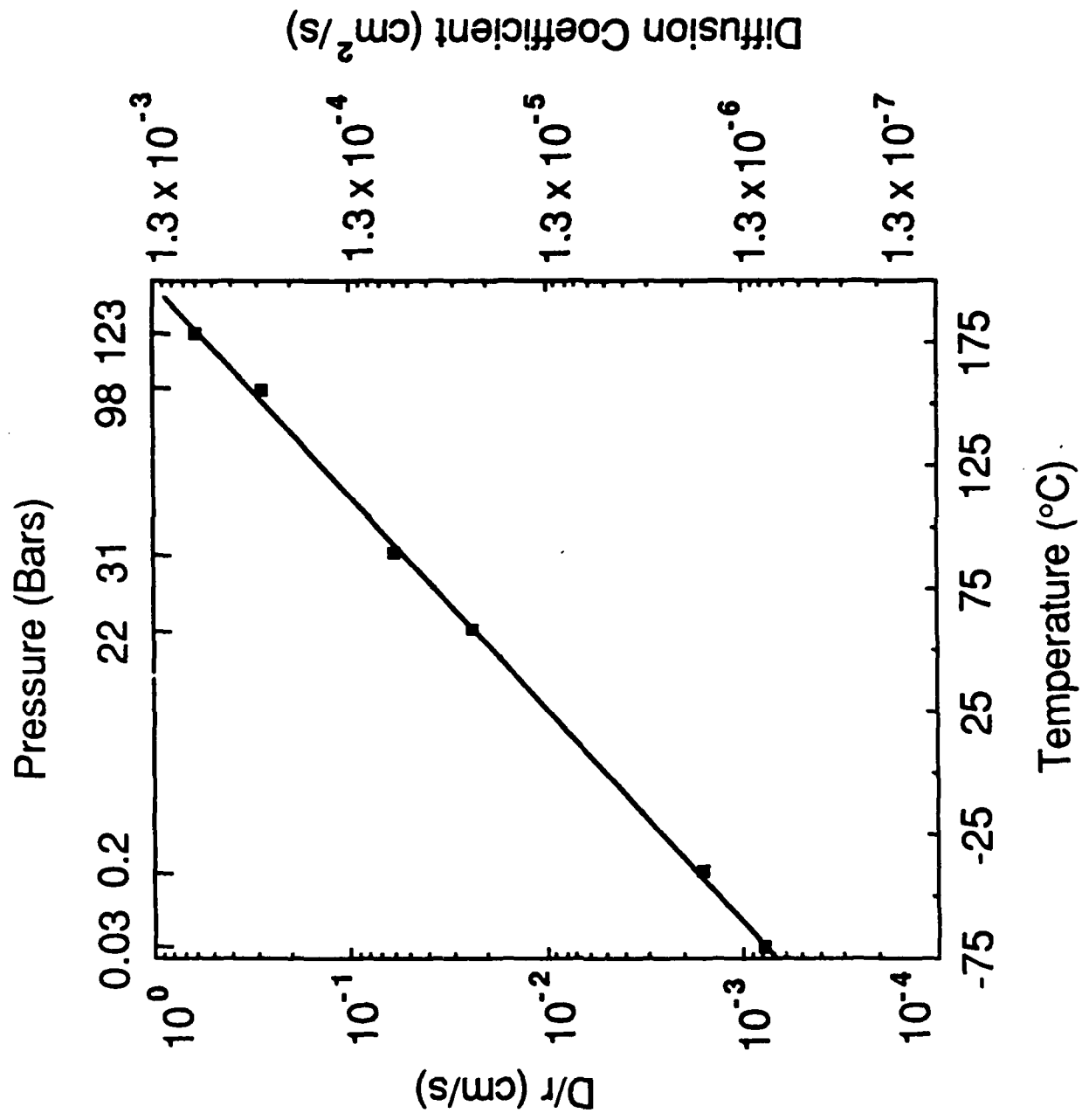
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