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| Application of neural network to speed-up equilibrium calculations in compositional reservoir simulation |  |

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| A R T I C L E I N F O | A B S T R A C T |
| Keywords:  Neural network  Compositional simulation Artificial intelligence  Flash calculation  Reservoir engineering | Compositional reservoir simulation is an important tool to model fluid flow in oil and gas reservoirs. Important investment decisions regarding oil recovery methods are based on simulation results, where hundred or even thousand of different runs are performed. In this work, a new methodology using artificial intelligence to learn the thermodynamic equilibrium is proposed. This algorithm is used to replace the classical equilibrium workflow in reservoir simulation. The new method avoids the stability test for single-phase cells in most cases and provides an accurate two-phase flash initial estimate. The classical and the new workflow are compared for a gas-oil mixing |

case, showing a simulation time speed-up of approximately 50%. The new method can be used in compositional reservoir simulations.

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| 1. Introduction | approach is accurate, and does not cause numerical instability near the |

Compositional reservoir simulation is a numerical model used to solve the fluid transport in porous media coupled with thermodynamic phase equilibrium (Fussell and Fussell, 1979; Coats, 1980). To describe the reservoir accurately, numerical grid may be composed of millions of cells, and along a compositional simulation the phase equilibrium is solved for each cell every time-step. Thus, most part of computational effort is spent in flash calculations. There are cases where equilibrium calculations reach more than 50% of simulation time (Okuno et al., 2009;

critical point. However, 2Nc þ 1 equations for each grid cell must be solved every time step, where Nc is the number of components. Then, for large reservoir grids, computational cost becomes very expensive (Todd and Longstaff, 1972; Wong et al., 1987; El-Banbi et al., 2000). To over-come this limitation, lumping techniques may be used to reduce the number of components in fluid description (Joergensen and Stenby, 1995; Jessen and Moghadam, 2009; Alavian et al., 2014).

For every time-step, appearance and disappearance of a phase must be evaluated in all cells. The phase disappearance is a simple problem

Wang et al., 2019a,b). (Whitson and Michelsen, 1989; Li and Firoozabadi, 2012), but phase

Incipient compositional simulators used a K-value approach, where appearance check is not so trivial, and it is a computational

the thermodynamic equilibrium was calculated a priori and stored in time-consuming process.

tables or correlations of K-values, where Ki is the ratio between the mole fraction of component i in gas and in oil phases (Ki ¼ yi/xi) (Kniazeff and Naville, 1965; Price and Donohue, 1967; Culham et al., 1969; Roebuck et al., 1969). This approach does not require much memory or processing capacity. The main problem of such model is that K-values may lead to phase composition errors, specially near to critical points.

The increase of computers processing capacity allowed a new compositional simulation technique, based on equations of state (EOS). In this case, the phase equilibrium is solved rigorously, using cubic EOS (Fussell and Fussell, 1979; Coats, 1980; Thele et al., 1983; Okuno et al., 2009; Moortgat and Firoozabadi, 2013; Schmall et al., 2013). This

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In the phase appearance algorithm, the stability of a single-phase cell is checked. One technique compares the saturation pressure of the fluid in the cell with the cell pressure (Fussell and Yanosik, 1978; Fussell and Fussell, 1979; Coats, 1980). Modern simulators use the tangent plane stability test to determine if a given single-phase composition is stable (Baker et al., 1982; Michelsen, 1982a; Sun and Seider, 1995; Firoozabadi and Pan, 2000; Li and Firoozabadi, 2012). In both cases we must solve a system of non-linear equations by iterative methods. If the phase is not stable, a two-phase flash calculation is performed to determine the phase composition and saturations in each cell (Fussell and Yanosik, 1978; Boston and Britt, 1978; Hirose et al., 1978; Michelsen, 1982b; Abhvani

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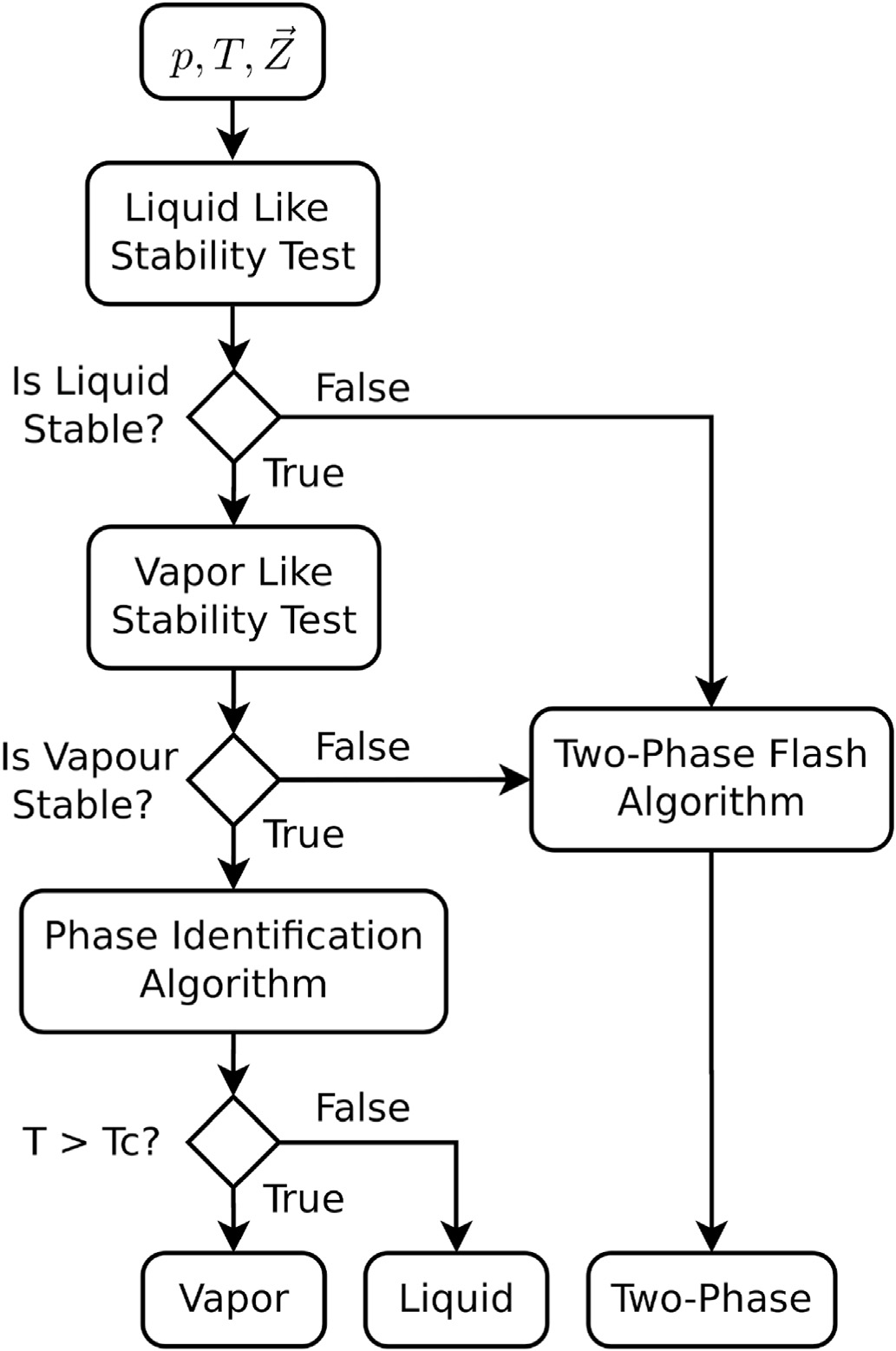


Fig. 1. Classical phase equilibrium workflow.

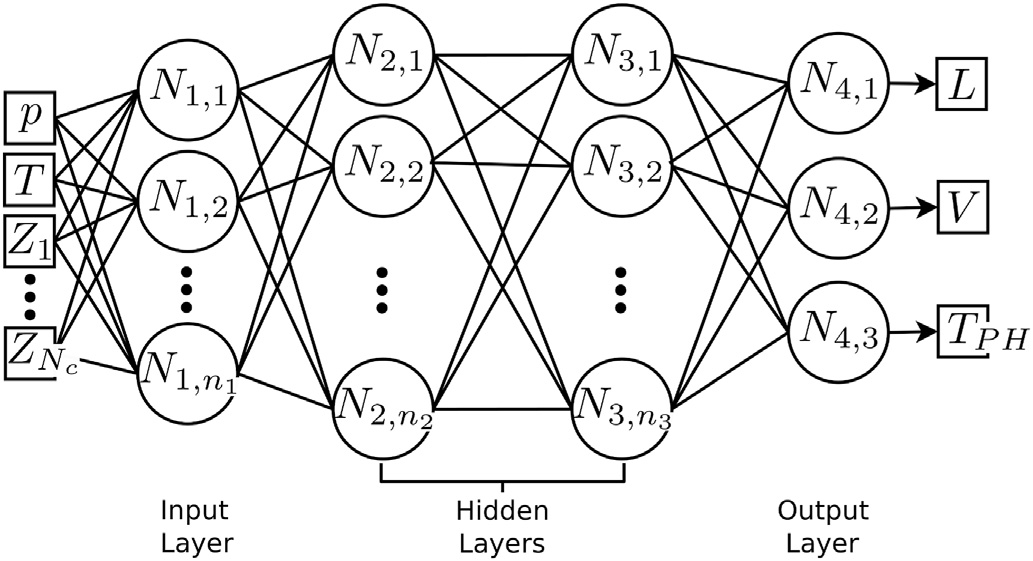


Fig. 2. Phase identification neural network with 4 layers, where n1, n2 and n3 are the number of neurons in layers 1, 2 and 3.

and Beaumont, 1987; Li and Johns, 2006).

A technique called Compositional Space Adaptive Tabulation (CSAT) was proposed to decrease the number of stability tests and two-phase flash calculations during reservoir simulations. In this approach, ther-modynamic equilibrium data is stored in tables. During the simulation, initial estimates for flash calculations are obtained interpolating the stored data (Voskov and Tchelepi, 2009b,a). This approach provides accurate initial estimates for flash algorithms, decreasing the number of iterations. However, the more components are used in fluid description,

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Table 1

SPE3 fluid characterization.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Z! | Mw | Pc | Tc | ω | kCO2 | kN2 | kC1 | kC2 | kC3 |
| CO2 | 0.0121 | (g/mol) | (atm) | (K) | 0.225 | �0.02000 0.10000 | 0.03600 | 0.00000 | 0.00000 | 0.00000 |
| 44.010 | 72.8 | 304.2 |
| N2 | 0.0194 | 28.013 | 33.5 | 126.2 | 0.040 |
| C1 | 0.6599 | 16.043 | 45.4 | 190.6 | 0.008 |
| C2 | 0.0869 | 30.070 | 48.2 | 305.4 | 0.098 | 0.13000 | 0.05000 |
| C3 | 0.0591 | 44.097 | 41.9 | 369.8 | 0.152 | 0.13500 | 0.08000 | 0.00000 |
| C4 | 0.0967 | 58.124 | 37.5 | 425.2 | 0.193 | 0.12770 | 0.10020 | 0.09281 | 0.00000 |
| C71 | 0.0472 | 110.900 | 25.6 | 572.5 | 0.332 | 0.10000 | 0.10000 | 0.00000 | 0.00385 | 0.00385 |
| C72 | 0.0153 | 170.900 | 16.7 | 630.2 | 0.495 | 0.10000 | 0.10000 | 0.00000 | 0.00630 | 0.00630 |
| C73 | 0.0034 | 282.100 | 8.5 | 862.6 | 0.833 | 0.10000 | 0.10000 | 0.13920 | 0.00600 | 0.00600 |



Fig. 5. SPE3 phase envelope filled with vapor phase molar fraction values.

in different scenarios. The enthalpy of vaporization of pure substances based on its boiling temperature, specific gravity and the molecular weight was also modeled using neural networks (Eghtedaei et al., 2019).

Artificial intelligence can be trained with a particular numerical reservoir model generating a proxy that is much faster to evaluate. This proxy model is used to optimize production alternatives and to evaluate uncertainty through Monte Carlo simulations, where thousands of runs are needed to achieve satisfactory results (Mohaghegh et al., 2012; Ala-keely and Horne, 2021b). Multiphase flow rate in producing wells can be estimated using deep learning techniques (Tian and Horne, 2017; Li et al., 2019; Alakeely and Horne, 2021a). These artificial intelligence

methods are trained using the production history, and are accurate enough to be used in real-time monitoring tools. A Physics-Informed Neural Network (PINN) can be used to create a meshless reservoir model that can provide accurate results in higher dimensional problems when compared to traditional simulation techniques (Cheung et al., 2018; Coutinho et al., 2021, 2022; Almajid and Abu-Alsaud, 2022).

Wang et al. (2019a,b) created a neural network model to predict the bubble point of hydrocarbon mixtures and provide an initial guess for the two-phase flash algorithm. The total reservoir simulation time was reduced in 30%, mainly because the stability test algorithm was replaced by the comparison between the cell pressure and the bubble point pre-dicted by the neural network.

In this work we present a neural network method to provide accurate initial estimates for flash calculations instead of the phase stability test. This procedure may be applied to compositional reservoir simulation saving computational time. The proposed method tests the phase stability and classifies it as a liquid or vapor in the single phase case. In Section 2 we discuss the thermodynamic equilibrium routines, and compare the classical simulation workflow with a new one, based on neural network. Then, in Section 3 the new technique is evaluated, checking the accuracy of the predicted thermodynamic calculations and comparing the computational time between the classical approach and the one proposed in this work. Finally, some conclusions are addressed in Section 4.

2. Two-phase equilibrium

This section presents the mathematical description of the flash equi-librium problem and describes how artificial intelligence can be used to improve these routines.

A closed system at constant pressure, temperature and global composition is at equilibrium if the total Gibbs free energy (G) is minimal:

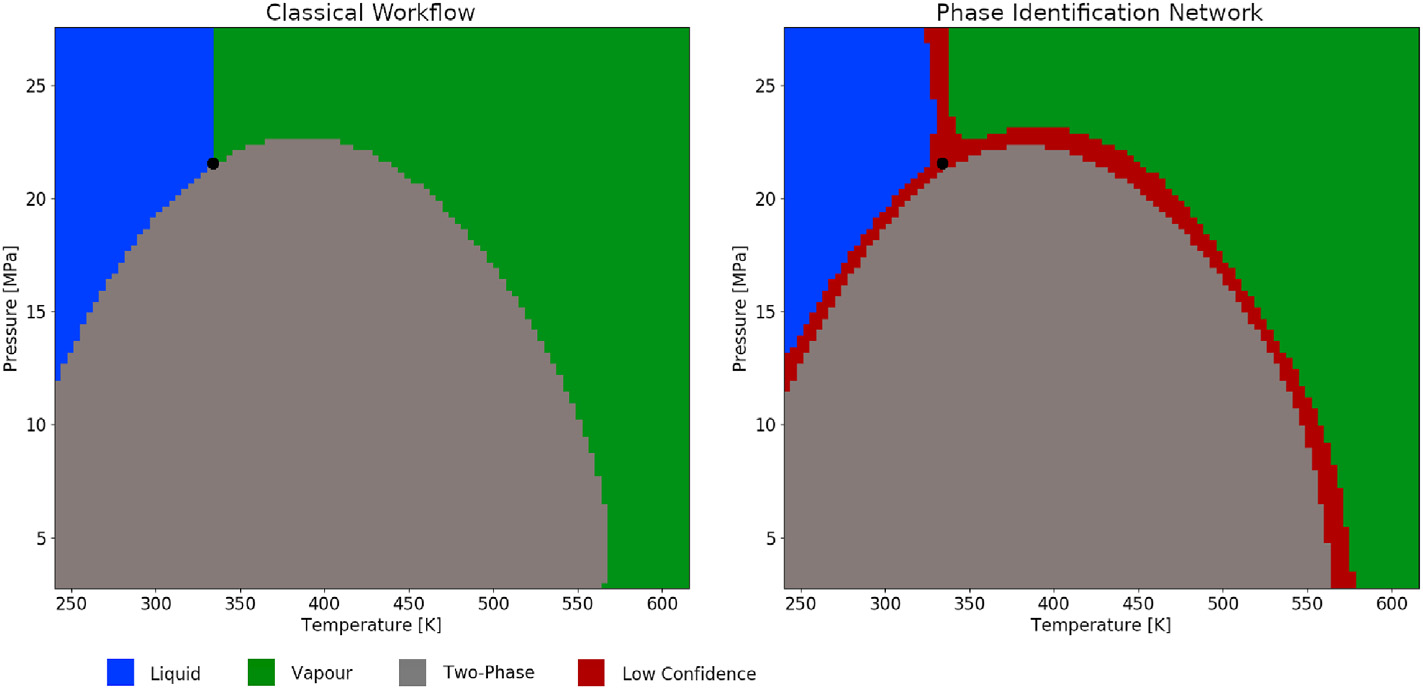


Fig. 6. SPE3 phase envelope with phase identification labels generated by the classical workflow and by the neural network workflow, where the black dot marks the critical point.

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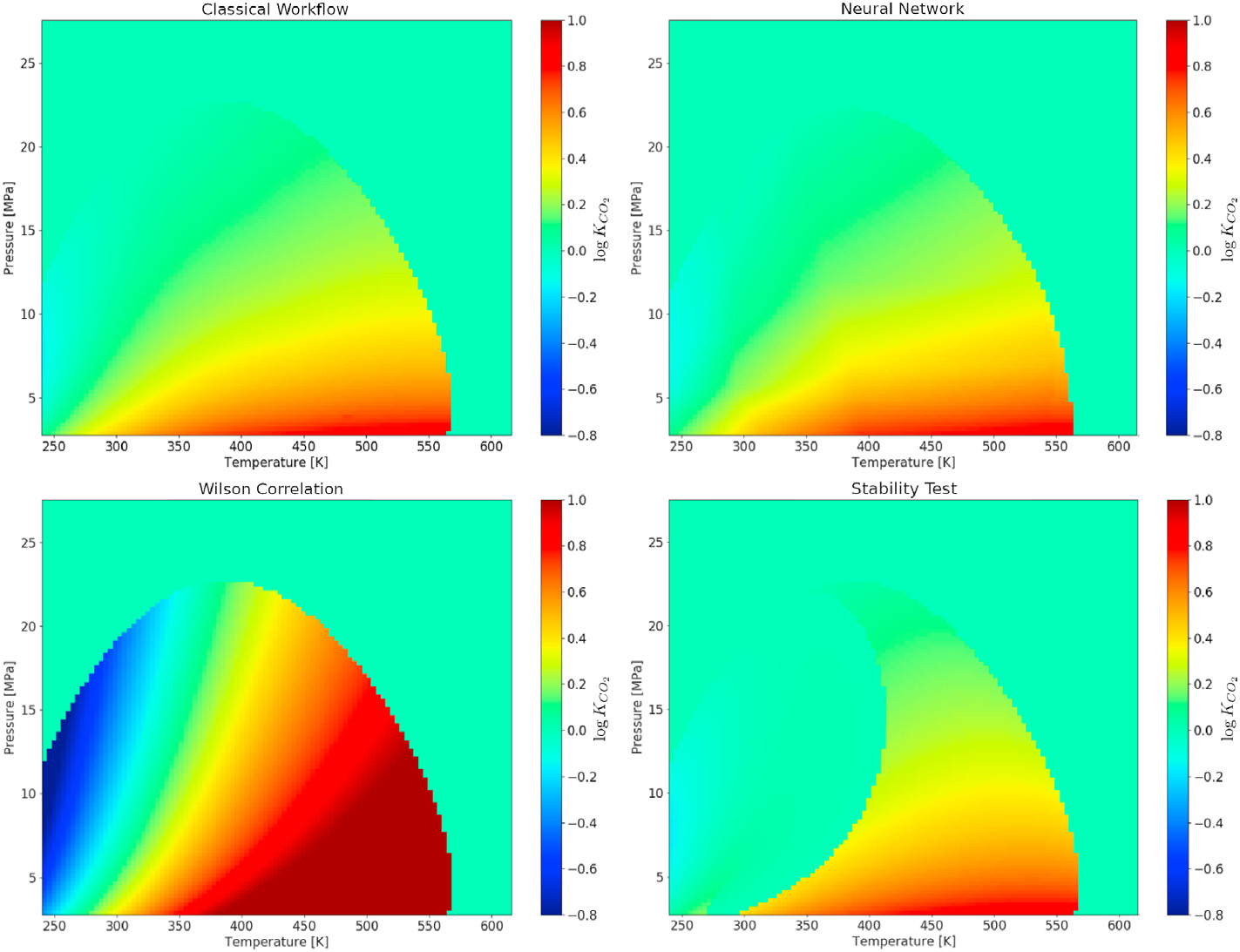


Fig. 7. Phase envelope with log KCO2 values: (a) equilibrium values, (b) estimated by the neural network, (c) estimated by Wilson correlation, (d) estimated by the stability test.

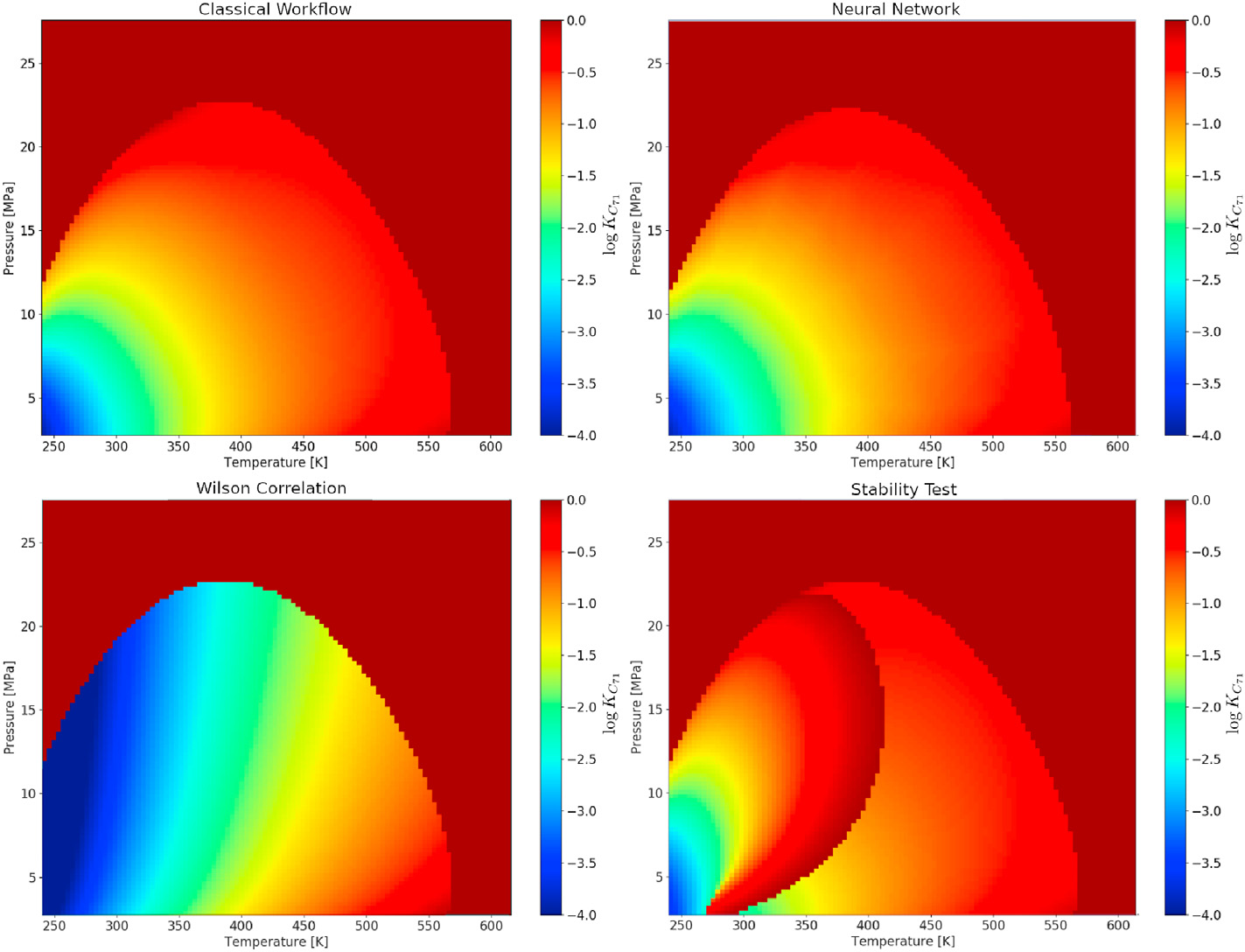


Fig. 8. Phase envelope with log KC71 values: (a) equilibrium values, (b) estimated by the neural network, (c) estimated by Wilson correlation, (d) estimated by the stability test.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| |  |  | | --- | --- | | dG | Nπ | | "�∂G� | dp | �∂G� | dT | Nc | � ∂G | � | dη | # | Nπ are the total number of components and phases. |
| ¼ X π¼1  ¼ 0 | T; ηc;π | þ | p; ηc;π | þ | X c¼1 | ∂ηc;π | T;p;ηj6¼c; π | c;π |  | 2.1. Phase identification workflow |
| (1) | In compositional reservoir simulation, the phase stability test |

where ηc,π is the number of moles of component c in phase π and Nc and

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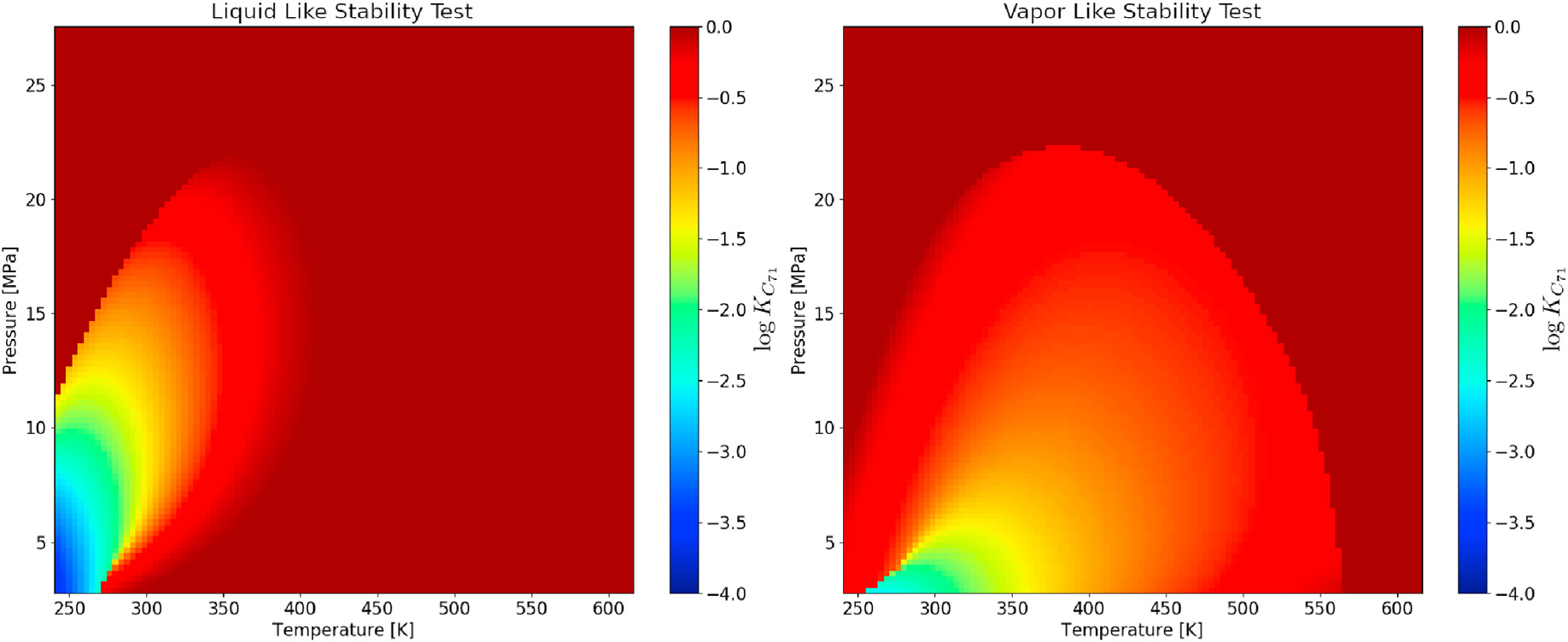


Fig. 9. Phase envelope filled with log KC71 values after convergence of stability test, where: (a) starting with liquid like composition and (b) starting with vapor like

composition.

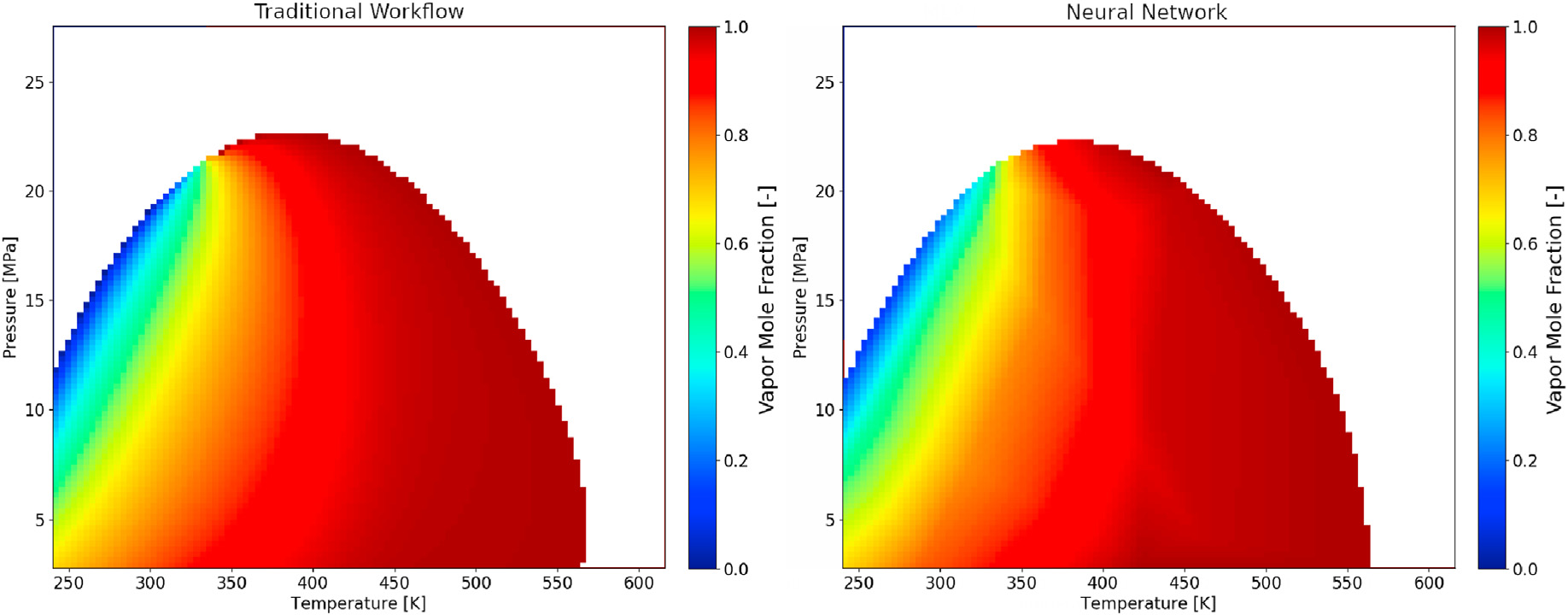


Fig. 10. Phase envelope with vapor phase mole fraction: (a) calculated by the EOS, (b) initial guess estimated by the neural network.

Table 2   
Swelling experiment composition of SPE3 oil and its gas.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Oil Mole Fraction | Gas Mole Fraction |
| CO2 | ð x!Þ | ð y!Þ |
| 0.0121 | 0.0129 |
| N2 | 0.0194 | 0.0206 |
| C1 | 0.6599 | 0.7016 |
| C2 | 0.0869 | 0.0922 |
| C3 | 0.0591 | 0.0623 |
| C4 | 0.0967 | 0.0993 |
| C71 | 0.0472 | 0.0110 |
| C72 | 0.0153 | 0.0001 |
| C73 | 0.0034 | 0.0000 |

energy is minimal (stable) or if the phase splits in two (unstable). The difference of the Gibbs free energy between a two phase system and a reference phase is given by:

ΔG ¼ ðGIþ GIIÞ � G0 (2)

where GIand GIIare the Gibbs free energy of phases I and II, and G0 is the Gibbs free energy of the reference phase with composition Z!. Consid-ering that the reference phase splits in two, where the new phase has an

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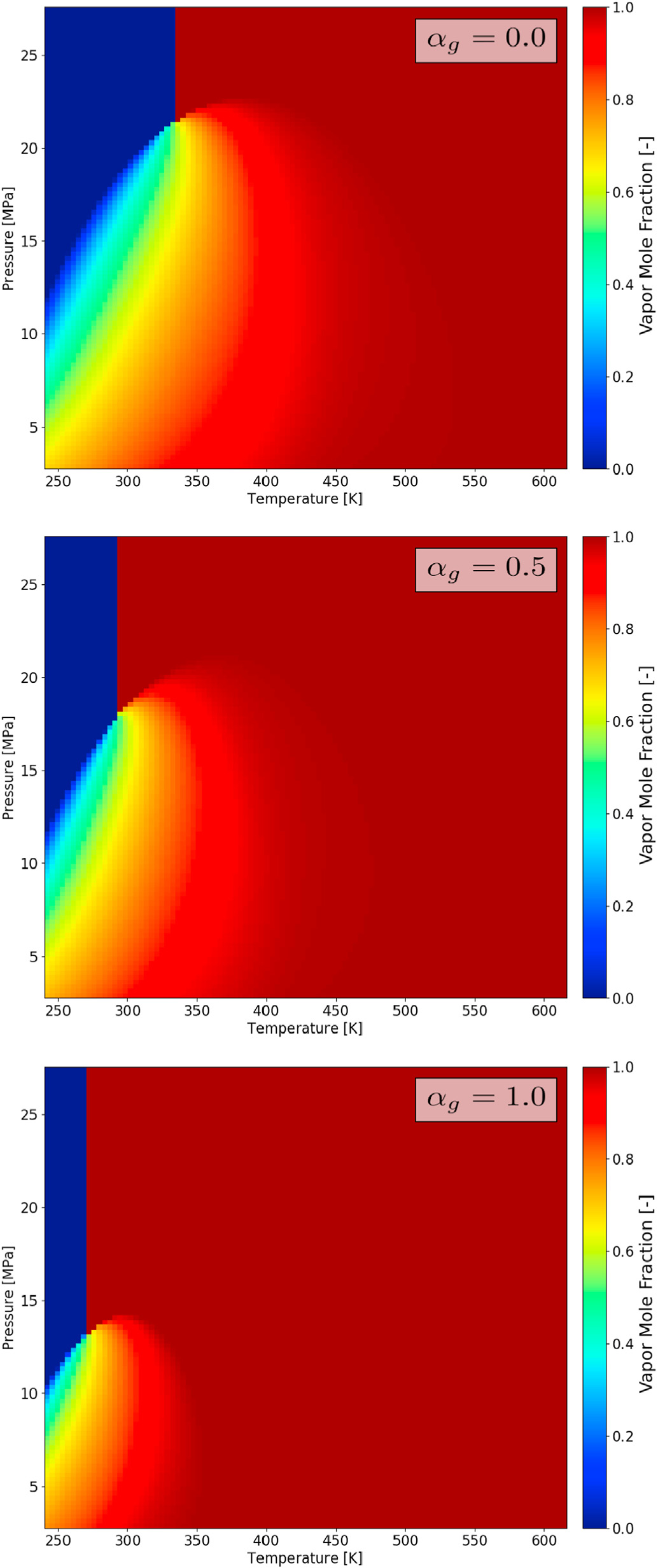


Fig. 11. Phase envelope for different gas fractions (αg).

|  |
| --- |
| Yi equation of state. The composition in step t þ 1 is found by ζtþ1  The initial iteration ζ!0 for hydrocarbons is usually calculated using ¼ PNc j¼0Yj. |

Wilson's correlation (Wilson, 1968):

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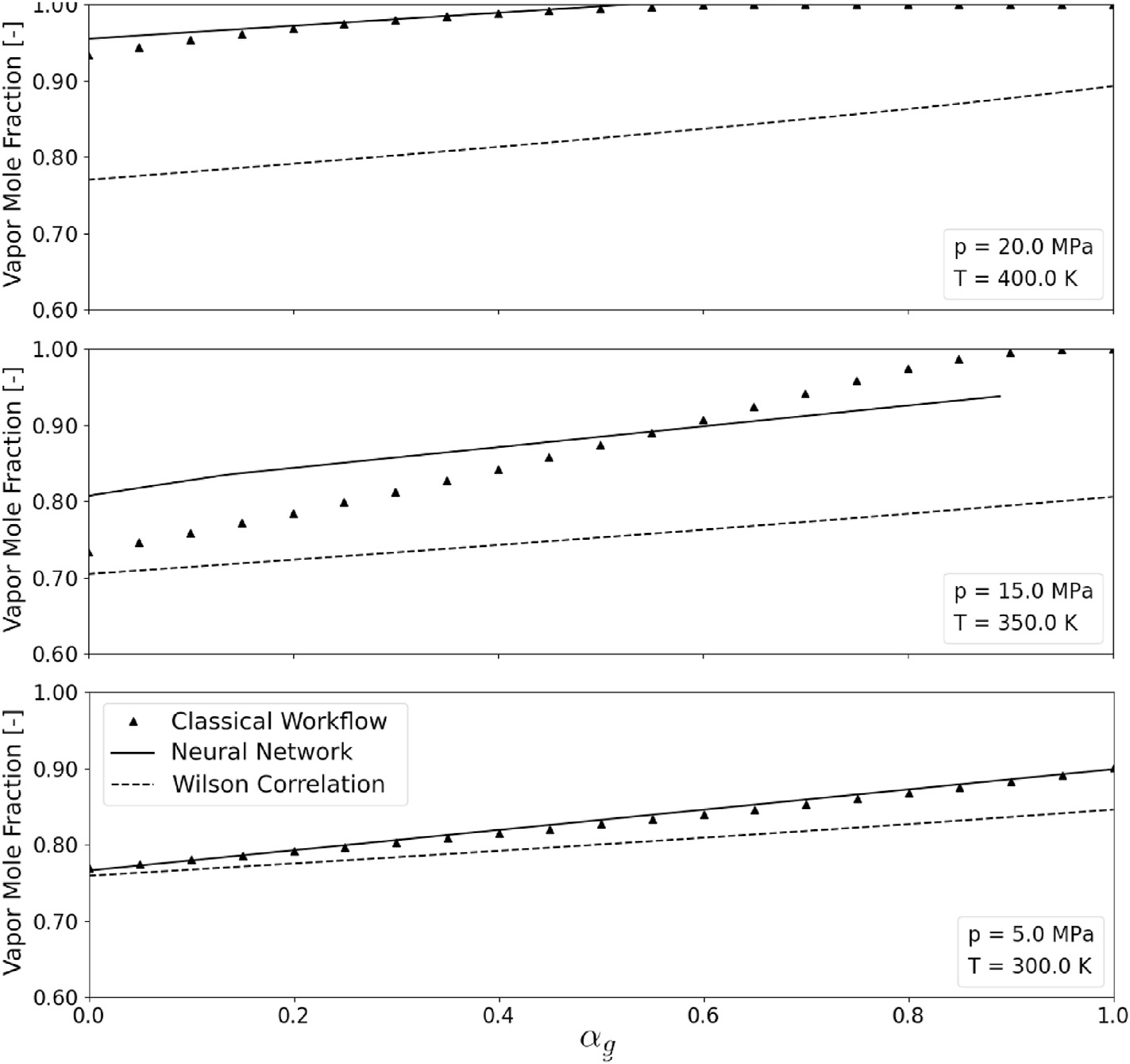


Fig. 12. Vapor mole fraction calculated by an EOS and estimated by the neural network and by Wilson correlation for three different (p, T) conditions and

gas fractions.

CðPhIDÞ ¼maxðL; V; TPHÞ ðL þ V þ TPHÞ (11)

The phase identified by the neural network is accepted if its confi-

dence is greater than 95%, otherwise the traditional phase identification

workflow is used (Section 2.1).

and solved using the Newton-Raphson's method. Usually the K-values obtained at the end of the phase stability test (Equation (5)) are used as the initial estimate. After convergence the vapor phase mole fraction (V) is determined solving the Rachford-Rice equation (Rachford and Rice, 1952):

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| The introduction of the confidence concept and labeling it as a liquid | XNc i¼1 | 1 þ ðKi � 1ÞV¼ 0 ZiðKi � 1Þ | (14) |
| or vapor in the single phase case are some improvements of the technique |
| presented in this work when compared with other methods reported in |
| literature (Wang et al., 2019a,b). Its importance raises when miscible |
| and the composition of each phase is calculated through: | |
| processes are simulated, because the fluid phase may change from liquid |
| to vapor without crossing the two phase boundary or even crossing the | 8 <  :   xi ¼  yi ¼   1 þ ðKi � 1ÞV  1 þ ðKi � 1ÞV   ZiKi ; i ¼ 1; …; Nc   Zi  2.4. Neural network to estimate initial flash calculations | | (15) |
| two-phase envelope. Thus, the use of the proposed method reduces the |
| number of stability tests calls. |
| 2.3. Two-phase flash algorithm |
| The phase equilibrium conditions for a two-phase system is given by |

(Prausnitz et al., 1998; Sandler, 2006):

8

< x1φ1ðp; T; x!Þ   
 Tl

pl

⋮  
 ¼

¼

¼⋮ y1φ1ðp; T; y!Þ   
 Tv

pv

⋮

(12)

: where φc is the fugacity coefficient of a component in a mixture, calcu- xNcφNcðp; T; x!Þ ¼ yNcφNcðp; T; y!Þ

lated using any equation of state and the superscripts l and v relate the

liquid and vapor phases. The fugacity condition equation for each

When the phase identification neural network is used to determine the number of phases in the system, the phase stability algorithm is not run and initial estimates for the two phase flash algorithm are not available (Equation (13)). To overcome this limitation, artificial intelli-gence is used to generate initial estimates to Equation (13).

For this problem, one MLP network is trained for each flash variable (V, logðK1Þ, …, logðKNcÞ) (Fig. 3). The input is the same of the stability each network. The output neuron uses the linear activation function: test and phase identification ðp; T; Z!Þ and there is one output neuron in

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| component can be rewritten in a residual form: | (13) | Nð x! ¼ x!� w ! � b | (16) |
| logðφiðp; T; y!Þ Þ � logðφiðp; T; x!Þ Þ þ logðKiÞ ¼ Ri; i ¼ 1; …; Nc |
| while all other neurons of the input and hidden layers use the rectified | |

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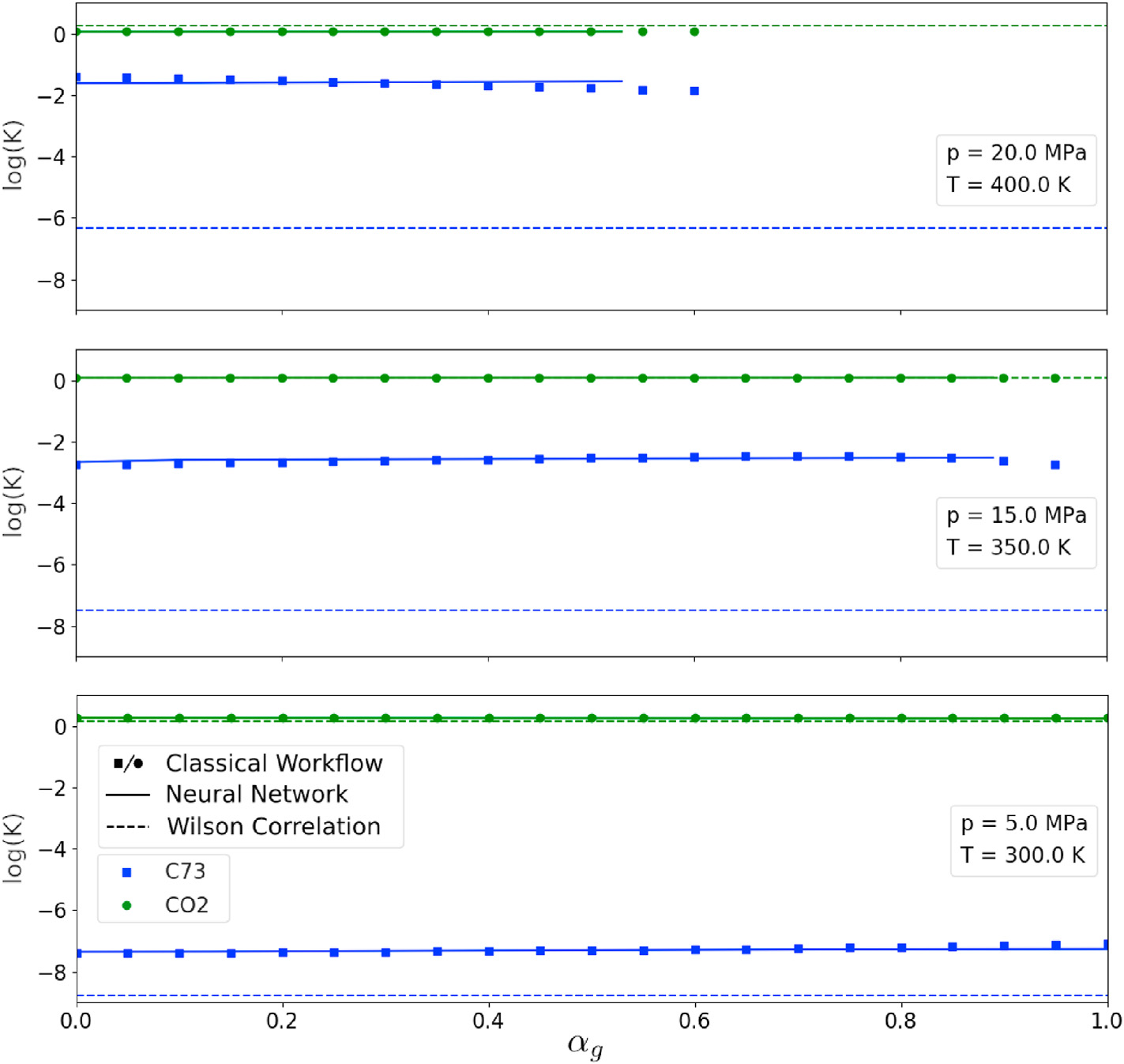


Fig. 13. logKCO2 and logKC73 calculated by an EOS and estimated by the neural network and by Wilson correlation for three different (p, T) conditions and

gas fractions.

linear activation function:

Nð x! ¼ maxð0; x!� w ! � bÞ (17)

It should be noted that a different neural network for each flash variable (V, logðK1Þ, …, logðKNcÞ) must be built. This architecture is based on the specialization concept, where the reduction of the number of output variables decreases the size of the optimization problem and in-creases its accuracy (Haykin, 1999).

characterization and Fig. 5 shows its phase envelope, simulated with the Peng-Robinson equation of state (Robinson and Peng, 1978). The ki value is the binary interaction coefficient between the row component and i component. This fluid can be characterized as a light oil with 51�API and 850 sm3/sm3solution gas-oil ratio.

This section is divided in three parts: in the first two sub-sections we check if the artificial intelligence algorithm learns two-phase thermo-dynamic equilibrium results from constant global composition calcula-tions and from a gasflooding recovery process. Last section compares the computational time between the proposed neural network workflow and

2.5. Improved two-phase equilibrium model the classical workflow.

Fig. 4 shows the proposed phase equilibrium workflow that uses artificial intelligence to replace part of the classical flash calculations (Fig. 1). The first step uses the phase identification network to generate an estimate of the confidence and identify the fluid phase (Equation (11)). If CðPhIDÞh95% the result is not considered and the usual stability test is performed. Otherwise, the flash parameters using the estimate network for the two-phase region are generated (Fig. 3).

The proposed methodology does not replace completely the flash calculation in compositional simulators. It avoids stability tests and provides initial estimates very close to the solution of the flash. As it will be discussed in the next section, the neural network workflow, combined with the confidence calculation, ensures that the exact solution of two-phase equilibrium will be found.

3. Results and discussion

The new phase equilibrium workflow (Fig. 4) was compared with the classical workflow (Fig. 1) for the SPE3 mixture (Kenyon and Behie, 1987; Haugen and Beckner, 2013). Table 1 presents the SPE3 fluid

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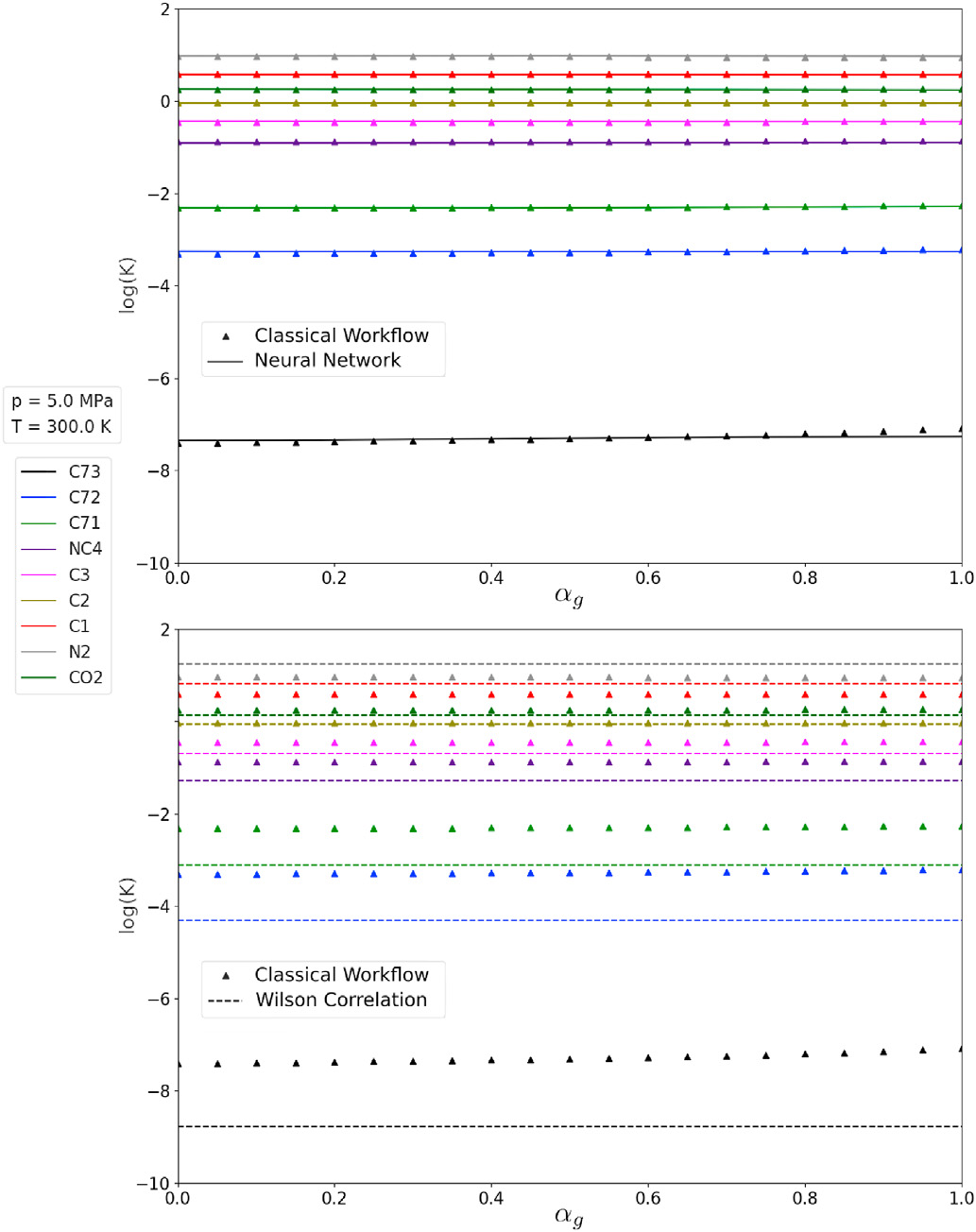


Fig. 14. logKi calculated by an EOS and estimated by the neural network and by Wilson correlation for p ¼ 5 MPa, T ¼ 300 K and several gas fractions.

3.1.2. Two-phase flash initial estimate network

The topology of the network that generates initial estimates for flash calculations is similar to the topology of the phase identification network, with 41 neurons distributed in 4 layers ð8; 16; 16; 1Þ. The Newton-Raphson method depends on the initial estimates. So, to reduce the number of iterations of the flash algorithm (Equation (13)), it is impor-tant to provide an estimate of logKi for each component as close as possible to the solution. As an example, we compare the logKCO2 and logKC71 obtained after equilibrium by the classical workflow, and esti-mated by the proposed neural network method, the stability test (Equation (5)), and the Wilson correlation (Equation (6)) (Figs. 7 and 8).

The neural network can learn the K-values of all components, generating initial estimates for the flash problem very close to the exact solution, and reducing the number of flash iterations. On the other hand Wilson correlation provides poor estimates at high pressures causing divergence when applied directly in the flash algorithm. Note that there is a discontinuity in the calculations using the stability test.

The discontinuous region in stability calculations is related with the local minima in Equation (4). Depending if the algorithm starts the tests with liquid like or vapor like composition ( Z! ¼ x!or Z! ¼ y!), the sta-bility algorithm may converge to different logKi (Fig. 9). Fig. 9 presents log KC71 after the convergence of liquid like and vapor like stability tests. Note that there is an area where both algorithms result in unstable phases with different compositions. Choice of vapor like composition in the region of high liquid fractions (low temperature) can result in poor initial estimates for Newton-Raphson algorithm. Note that the unstable region for either liquid or vapor like stability tests are always smaller than the phase envelope region, the main reason it is necessary to run both tests in the classical workflow (Fig. 1).

Finally, Fig. 10 compares the vapor mole fraction calculated by the EOS and the initial guess provided by the neural network. The initial

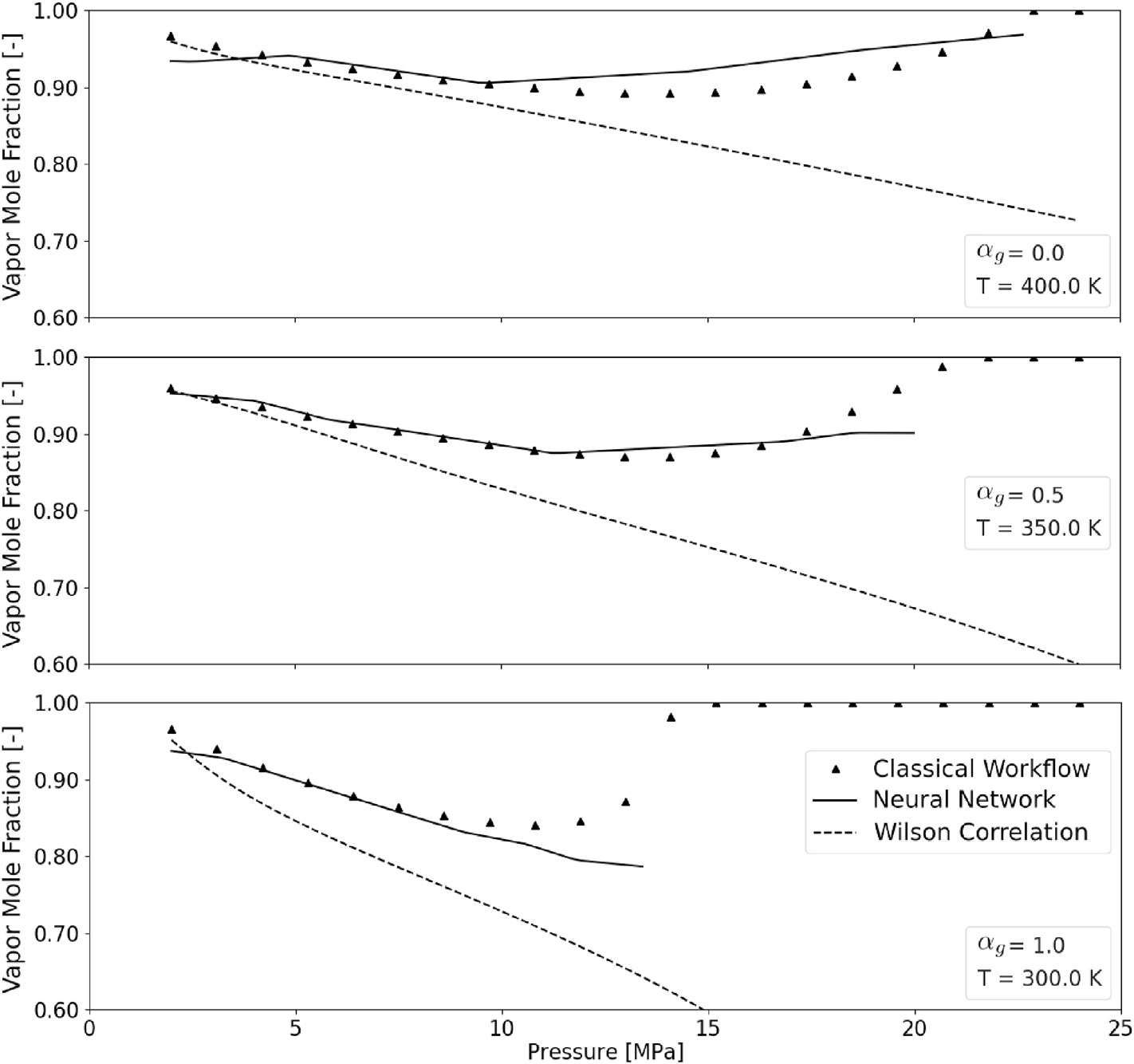


Fig. 15. Vapor mole fraction calculated by an EOS and estimated by the neural network and by Wilson correlation for three different (αg, T) conditions and different system pressures.

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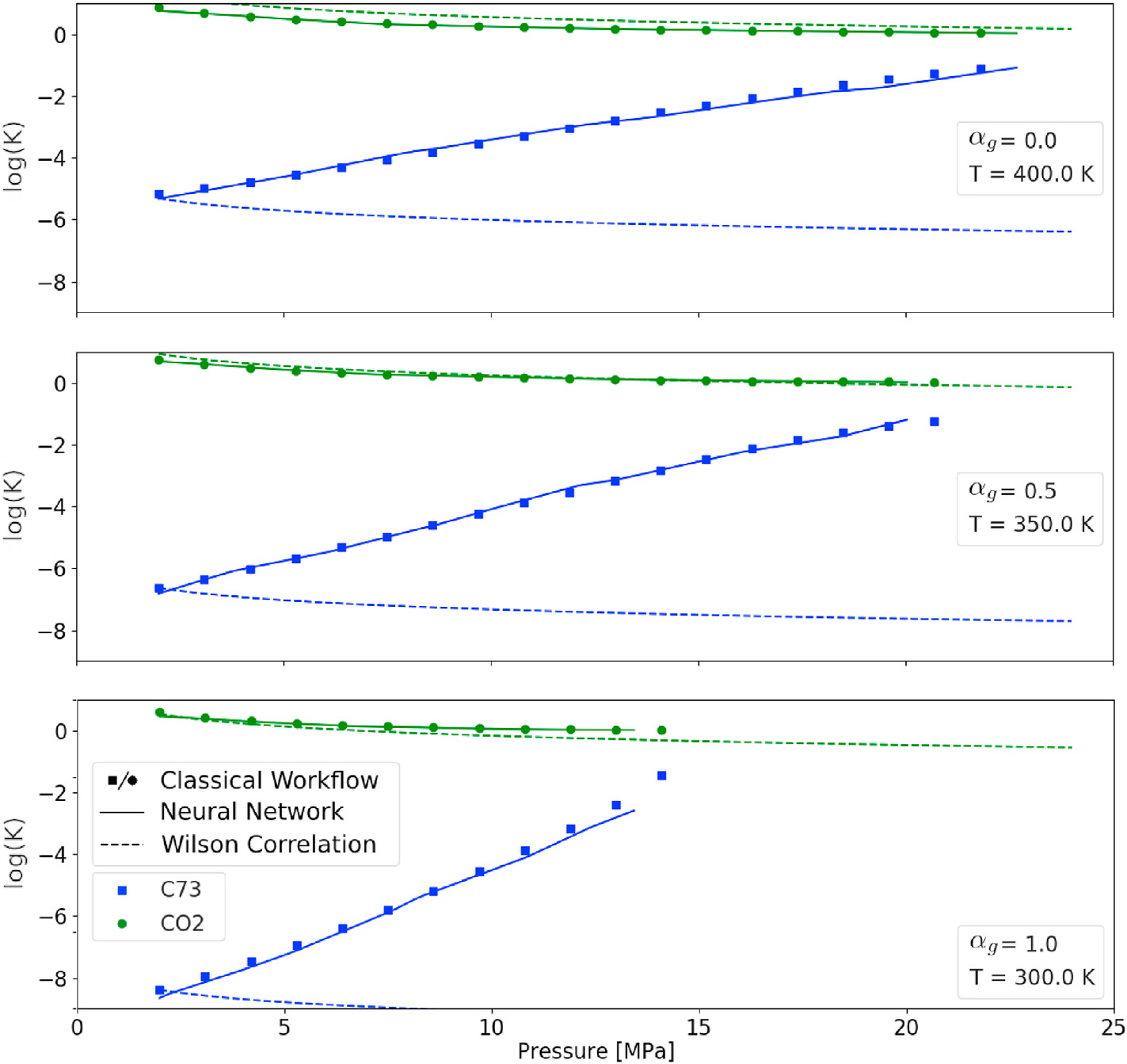


Fig. 16. logKCO2 and logKC73 calculated by an EOS and estimated by the neural network and by Wilson correlation for three different (αg, T) conditions and different

system pressures.

guess is close to the flash by the EOS, an excellent approximation for the flash calculation even in regions close to the critical point.

3.2. Variable composition

Gas injection is a recovery process of liquid hydrocarbons that changes the global composition of the reservoir fluid. It increases nu-merical simulation complexity because of the mass transfer. For example, the composition and pressure variation in small cells close to injection well may change the phase from oil to gas in one time step. So, it is necessary to perform the stability test every time step using liquid-like and vapor-like estimates.

To train the proposed neural network workflow for gasflooding simulations scenario a numerical swelling test was created. This test consists of mixing gas and oil at fixed ratios, and measuring the volume and composition of each phase after equilibrium.

The training data-set for the variable composition case was the mixture of SPE3 oil (Table 1) with its own dissolved gas after a flash separation at standard conditions (Table 2). We created 11 different gas fractions (αg), from pure oil (αg ¼ 0) to pure gas (αg ¼ 1) at constant steps of αg ¼ 0.1 (Fig. 11). The same pressure and temperature regions (p 2 ½2; 27� MPa and T 2 ½240; 620� K) were used for each mixture. Note that for a fixed gas fraction, the global composition is calculated by:

Z! ¼�1 � αg�x! þ αg y! (18)

where x!and y!are the liquid and gas compositions (Table 2). The best network topology for the swelling case is a ð9; 27; 27; 3Þ structure for the phase identification network and ð9; 27; 27; 1Þ for each initial estimate for flash calculation. These networks require more neurons when

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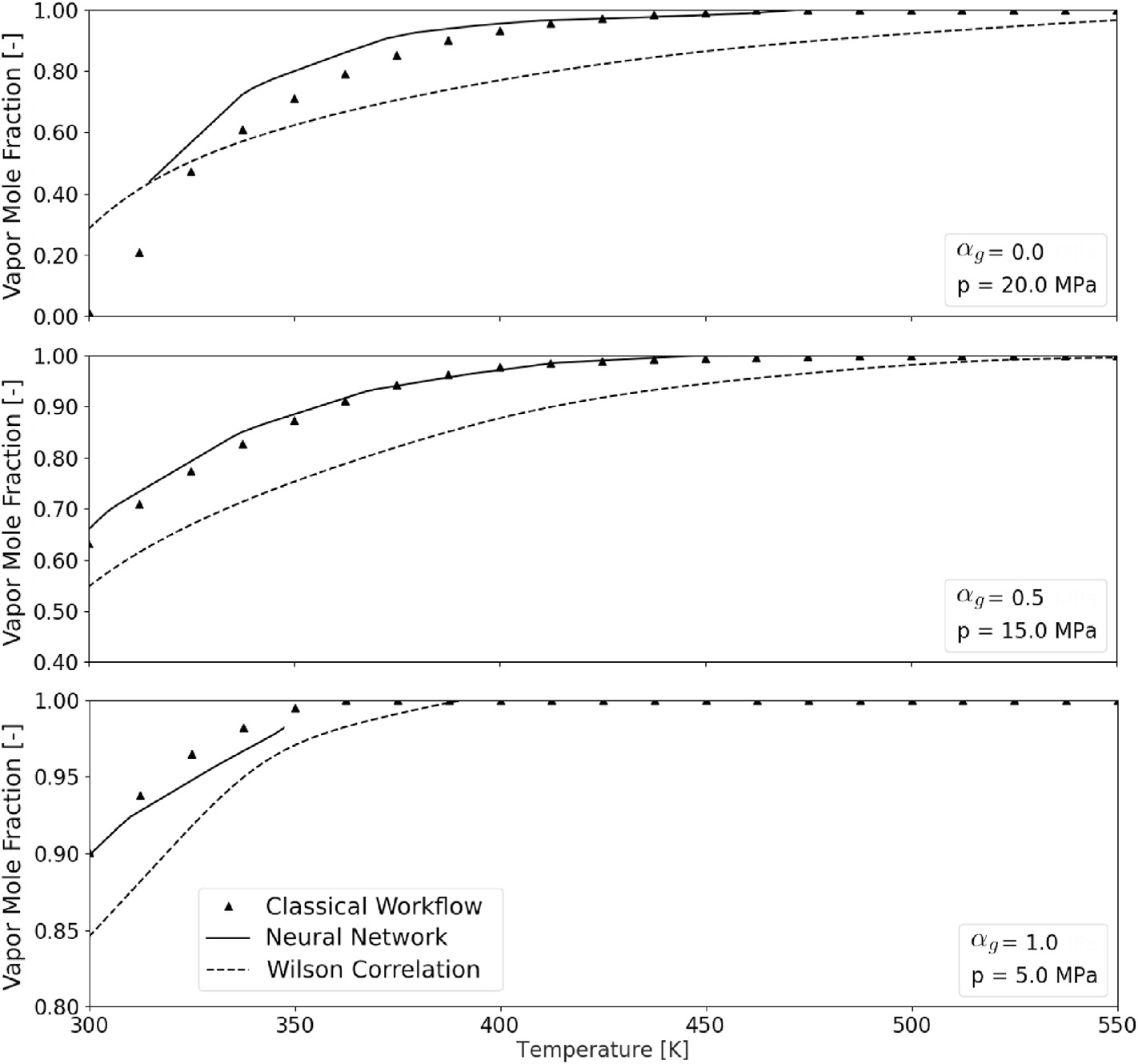


Fig. 17. Vapor mole fraction calculated by an EOS and estimated by the neural network and by Wilson correlation for three different (αg, p) conditions and different system temperatures.

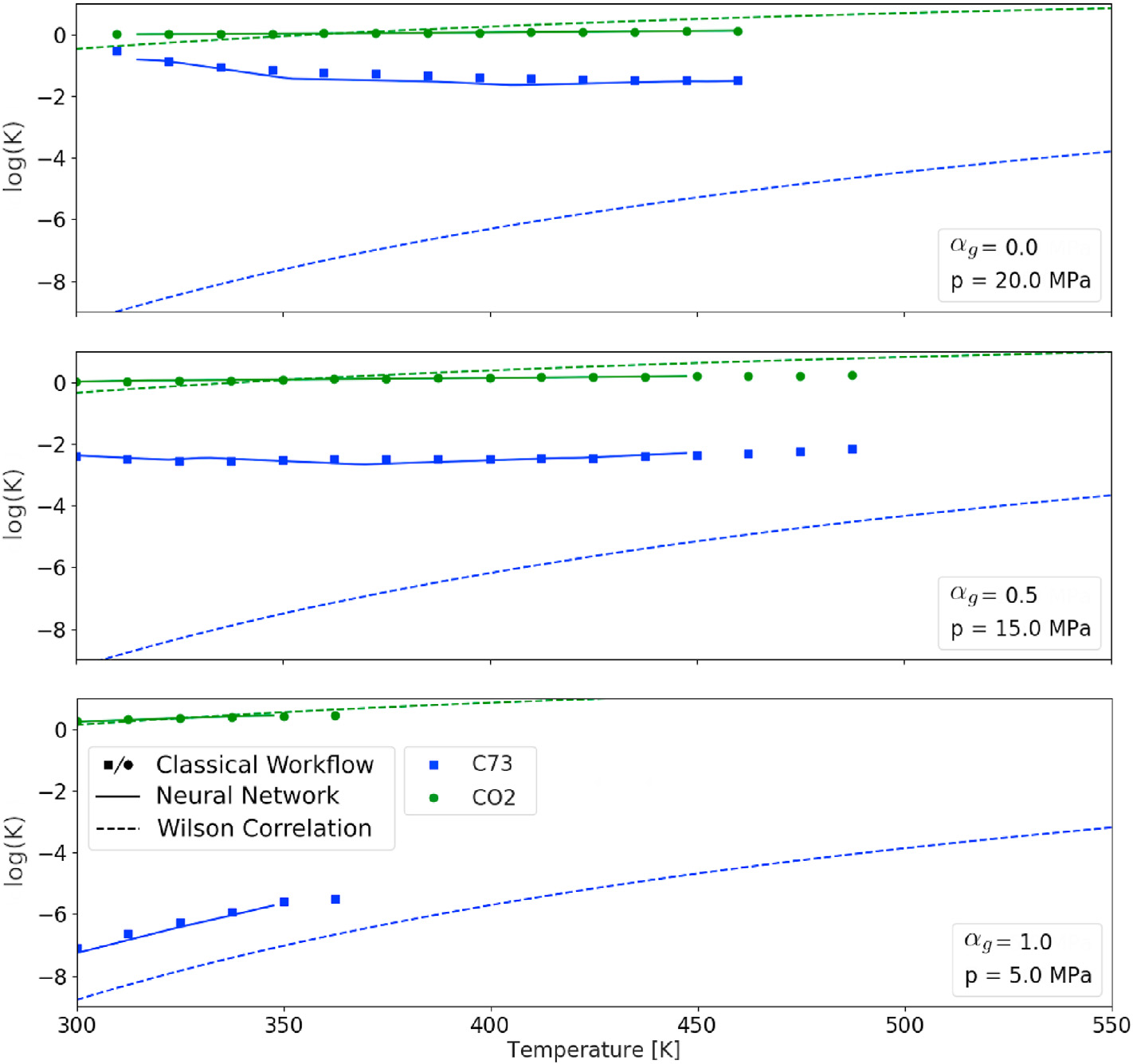


Fig. 18. logKCO2 and logKC73 calculated by an EOS and estimated by the neural network and by Wilson correlation for three different (αg, p) conditions and different system temperatures.

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Table 3

Number of iterations for stability test and flash algorithms for the classical and neural network workflows, and computational time decrease.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Grid | Vapor | Stability Iterations | Flash Iterations | | | Execution | | |
| Size | Fraction | EOS | NN þ EOS | | EOS | NN þ EOS | | Time (%) |
| 20x20 | αv ¼ 0.15 αv ¼ 0.75 αv ¼ 0.25 αv ¼ 0.55 αv ¼ 0.35 | 36,591 | 4922 | 4601 | | 1716 | �57.4% �49.8% �54.3% �48.7% �42.0% | |
| 40x40 | 105,356 | 24,796 | 21,532 | | 10,400 |
| 100x100 | 1,148,991 | 243,202 | 112,588 | | 43,375 |
| 200x200 | 3,581,620 | 927,840 | 421,225 | | 199,950 |
| 400x400 | 16,936,843 | 3,910,518 | 1,844,125 | | 786,628 |
| 3.3. Speed-up results |  |  |
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| multiphase flow rate in producing wells using surface measurements. J. Petrol. Sci. | | | | | |

The first two sections showed that it is possible to use artificial in-telligence to learn thermodynamic equilibrium variables. As discussed, the proposed equilibrium workflow avoids the stability test for most cases and provides initial estimates for the flash calculation very close to the solution. For the tested cases, the computational time spent in sta-bility test is reduced by approximately 75%, and in the flash algorithm by 50%.

Table 3 shows the number of iterations for some cases. These cases where generated changing system pressure and temperature (grid size) and calling both workflows for each one. The processing time reduction was greater than 40% in all cases. For the flash algorithm, the neural network generated initial estimates so close to the final result that in some cases the solution was obtained after one iteration.

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In this work we propose a new phase equilibrium workflow using artificial intelligence to decrease the number and in most cases avoid the stability test and speed-up the traditional flash algorithm. The developed technique generates initial estimates for the flash calculation close to the solution. This workflow may be applied in compositional reservoir sim-ulators, where the classical flash equilibrium calculations are performed for each cell every time-step.

It was shown that small neural networks are necessary to learn the phase equilibrium parameters, and the time spent to evaluate this network is much smaller than the reduction of the flash iterations and avoiding stability calls. The neural network and the final flash results are so close that in many cases the flash routine is not necessary. However, we built a robust workflow where the accuracy of equilibrium equations is achieved in every run, avoiding error propagation in reservoir simu-lation. We compared the processing time between the classical and the neural network workflows, the use of artificial intelligence decreased the time around 50%.

Declaration of interests

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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