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Author
Newman, John.

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University of California
Ernest O. Lawrence Radiation Laboratory

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John Newman

December, 1965
Retardation of Falling Drops

John Newman
Inorganic Materials Research Division
Lawrence Radiation Laboratory, and
Department of Chemical Engineering
University of California, Berkeley

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Abstract

A unified treatment of Levich's three mechanisms of retardation of drop motion by a surface-active agent is presented.

Levich\(^1,2\) has explained how the motion of a falling drop can be retarded by differences of surface tension between the front and the rear of the drop caused by differences in the surface concentration of a surface-active agent. The motion of the surface of the drop tends to increase the surface concentration at the rear of the drop. This effect is counterbalanced by surface diffusion and by exchange of surface-active agent between the interface and the bulk solution. This exchange involves an adsorption at the front of the drop and a desorption at the rear of the drop, and it may be opposed by slow diffusion into the bulk of the solution or by slow adsorption-desorption kinetics.

These three factors - surface diffusion, slow diffusion in the bulk, and slow adsorption kinetics - are treated separately by Levich. It is found here that the three effects can be treated simultaneously with no additional assumptions. The resulting retardation coefficient then reflects the relative importance of these three effects.
where the prime denotes differentiation with respect to \( r \). Substitution into the equations of motion (4) gives

\[
\begin{align*}
\frac{\partial \theta}{\partial r} - \rho g \cos \theta &= - \mu U \cos \theta \left[ F'' + 2F'/r + 4(G - F)/r^2 \right] \\
&= - \mu U \cos \theta \left( F'' + \frac{4F'}{r} \right),
\end{align*}
\]

and

\[
\begin{align*}
\frac{\partial \theta}{\partial \theta} + \rho g r \sin \theta &= \mu r U \sin \theta \left[ G'' + 2G'/r - 2(G - F)/r^2 \right] \\
&= \mu r U \sin \theta \left( \frac{3}{2} rF''' + 3F'' + 2F'/r \right).
\end{align*}
\]

By differentiating the first of equations (7) with respect to \( \theta \) and the second equation with respect to \( r \) and subtracting the resulting two equations we obtain

\[
\frac{1}{2} r^4 \frac{d}{dr} \frac{d^2}{dr^2} F + 4r^3 \frac{d^3}{dr^3} F + 4r^2 \frac{d^2}{dr^2} F - 4r \frac{dF}{dr} = 0. \tag{8}
\]

This is a form of Euler's equation and has the general solution

\[
F = A_1 + A_2 r^2 + A_3 r^{-1} + A_4 r^{-3}. \tag{9}
\]

From the general solution for \( F \) and the continuity equation (6), one can construct the velocity distribution outside the drop

\[
\begin{align*}
\nu_r &= - \left[ U - \left( \frac{3}{2} U - v_o \right) \frac{R}{r} + \left( \frac{1}{2} U - v_o \right) \frac{R^3}{r^3} \right] \cos \theta, \\
\nu_\theta &= \left[ U - (\frac{3}{4} U - \frac{1}{2} v_o) \frac{R}{r} - (\frac{1}{4} U - \frac{1}{2} v_o) \frac{R^3}{r^3} \right] \sin \theta,
\end{align*}
\]

so as to satisfy the conditions (1) at infinity and the condition (2) on the surface of the drop. Equations (7) can then be integrated to yield the pressure distribution.

\[
p - p_o = \rho g r \cos \theta + \mu \cos \theta \left( \frac{3}{2} U - v_o \right) \frac{R}{r^2}. \tag{11}
\]

In a similar fashion one can construct the velocity distribution inside the drop.
\[ v'_r = v_0 \left(1 - \frac{r^2}{R^2}\right) \cos \theta, \]
\[ v'_\theta = v_0 \left(-1 + \frac{2r^2}{R^2}\right) \sin \theta, \]

so as to satisfy the condition that the velocity should be finite at \( r = 0 \) and the conditions

\[ v'_r = v_r, \quad v'_\theta = v_\theta \quad \text{at } r = R \quad (13) \]
on the surface of the drop. Here primes refer to the fluid inside the drop.

The equations of motion then yield the pressure distribution.

\[ p' - p_0' = p'g_r \cos \theta - 10\mu'v_0 \cos \theta \frac{r}{R^2}. \quad (14) \]

The two constants \( U \) and \( v_0 \) are to be determined from the force balance at the interface, but this must be postponed until the surface tension and concentration distributions are known.

**Surface Concentration**

Conservation of surface-active agent in the interface is expressed by the equation

\[ j_n = \text{div}_s (v_t \Gamma) - \text{div}_s (D_s \text{grad}_s \Gamma) \quad (15) \]

where \( v_t = v_0 \sin \theta \).

Let \( \Gamma = \Gamma_o + \Gamma' \quad (16) \)

where \( \Gamma' \) is the deviation from the average surface concentration and is assumed to be small compared to \( \Gamma_o \). This assumption allows us to write

\[ \text{div}_s v_t \Gamma = (\Gamma_o + \Gamma') \text{div}_s v_t + v_t \text{grad}_s \Gamma' \]

\[ \approx \Gamma_o \text{div}_s v_t = (2v_0 \frac{\Gamma_o}{R}) \cos \theta \quad (17) \]

Rather than try to solve the equation of convective diffusion for the concentration of the surface-active agent in the bulk solution, we follow Levich and express the normal flux in terms of the thickness \( \delta \) of the Nernst diffusion
layer

\[ j_n = D(c_b - c_s) / \delta = (D/5)(\Gamma_o - \Gamma_s) / (\partial \Gamma / \partial c)_{eq}. \]  \hspace{1cm} (18)

For small deviations from equilibrium we can express the concentration difference in terms of the difference of surface concentrations and take \((\partial \Gamma / \partial c)_{eq}\) to be constant.

In series with the mass transfer resistance in the solution there may be a resistance at the interface associated with the kinetics of adsorption. For small deviations from equilibrium we take this to be a linear relationship

\[ j_n = -\alpha(\Gamma - \Gamma_s). \]  \hspace{1cm} (19)

These two expressions (18) and (19) can be combined to eliminate \(\Gamma_s\):

\[ j_n = -\alpha \partial \Gamma' / [D + \alpha \delta (\partial \Gamma / \partial c)_{eq}]. \]  \hspace{1cm} (20)

This equation (20) can be combined with the interfacial material balance (15) to yield a differential equation for \(\Gamma'\):

\[ -\frac{\partial \Gamma'}{\partial (\partial \Gamma / \partial c)_{eq}} = \frac{2v \Gamma_o}{\cos \theta} \] - \frac{D_s/R^2}{\sin \theta \partial \partial \theta} \left( \sin \theta \frac{\partial \Gamma'}{\partial \theta} \right) \]  \hspace{1cm} (21)

with the solution

\[ \Gamma' = -Kv_0 \cos \theta \]  \hspace{1cm} (22)

where

\[ K = \frac{2\Gamma_o R}{2D_s + \alpha \delta [D + \alpha \delta (\partial \Gamma / \partial c)_{eq}]} \]  \hspace{1cm} (23)

**Force Balance at the Interface**

The force balance at the interface can be expressed as

\[ \begin{align*}
  p' + \tau_{rr}' - p - \tau_{rr} = 2\sigma / R \\
  \tau_{r\theta}' - \tau_{r\theta} + \text{grad}_r \sigma = 0
\end{align*} \]  \hspace{1cm} at \( r = R \) \hspace{1cm} (24)

where

\[ \tau_{r\theta} = -\mu \left[ r \frac{\partial}{\partial r} \left( \frac{\Gamma}{r} \right) + \frac{1}{r} \frac{\partial \Gamma}{\partial \theta} \right] \text{ and } \tau_{rr} = -2\mu \frac{\partial \Gamma}{\partial r}. \]  \hspace{1cm} (25)
Substitution of the expressions for the velocity components and the pressure
and the expression
\[ \sigma = \sigma_0 + \frac{\partial \sigma}{\partial \Gamma} (\Gamma - \Gamma_o) \]  
(26)
with \( \frac{\partial \sigma}{\partial \Gamma} \) taken to be constant allows us to determine the constants:
\[ p_o' = p_o + 2\sigma_0 R, \]  
(27)
\[ u = \frac{\mu + \mu' + r}{2\mu + 3\mu' + 3\gamma} \frac{2(p' - \rho)gR^2}{3\mu}, \]  
(28)
\[ v_o = \frac{(p' - \rho)gR^2}{3(2\mu + 3\mu' + 3\gamma)} = \frac{1}{2} \frac{\rho U}{\mu + \mu' + r}, \]  
(29)
where
\[ r = -\frac{1}{3} K \frac{\partial \sigma}{\partial \Gamma}. \]  
(30)

The Retardation Coefficient

For large values of the retardation coefficient \( r \), equation (28) reduces
to Stokes law, and for small values it reduces to the Hadamard-Rybczynski formula.

When one of the three effects treated above predominates over the others,
the expression for \( r \) reduces to the appropriate formula of Levich. For large
values of the surface diffusion coefficient \( D_s \) or small values of the solubility
of the surface-active agent in the bulk solution, we have
\[ r_3 = -\frac{\Gamma_0 R}{3D_s} \frac{\partial \sigma}{\partial \Gamma}. \]  
(31)

Levich's value seems to be too large by a factor of 2 in this case. When surface
diffusion is negligible and the adsorption resistance is small compared to the
mass-transfer resistance in the solution we have
\[ r_2 = -\frac{2\Gamma_0 \delta}{3D_R} \left( \frac{\partial \Gamma}{\partial \Gamma} \right)_{eq} \frac{\partial \sigma}{\partial \Gamma}. \]  
(32)

When surface diffusion is negligible and the adsorption resistance is large
compared to the mass-transfer resistance in the solution we have

\[ \gamma_1 = \frac{2\Gamma_0}{3dR} \frac{\partial g}{\partial t} \tag{33} \]

Finally, we might notice that with the assumption of the Nernst diffusion layer it makes no difference whether the surface-active agent is soluble in the outer fluid or in the fluid inside the drop.

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Nomenclature

c_b - concentration in the bulk of the solution.
c_s - concentration in the solution near the interface.
D - diffusion coefficient in the bulk fluid.
D_s - diffusion coefficient for surface diffusion.
F - expresses radial dependence of \( v_r \).
g - gravitational acceleration.
G - expresses radial dependence of \( v_\theta \).
J_n - normal flux of surface-active agent into the interface.
K - constant (see equation (23)).
p - pressure.
r - radial coordinate measured from the center of the drop.
R - radius of the drop.
U - rate of fall of the drop.
v_o - tangential velocity at the equator of the drop.
v_r - radial velocity component.
v_\theta - velocity component in \( \theta \)-direction.
\alpha - coefficient in linear expression of adsorption kinetics.
γ - retardation coefficient.
Γ - surface concentration.
Γ₀ - average surface concentration.
Γᵣ - deviation from the average surface concentration.
Γₛ - surface concentration in equilibrium with cₛ.
δ - thickness of Nernst diffusion layer.
θ - angular coordinate measured from the front of the drop.
μ - viscosity of the outer fluid.
μᵣ - viscosity of fluid inside drop.
ρ - density of the outer fluid.
ρᵣ - density of fluid inside drop.
σ - surface tension.
τᵣᵣ - component of the viscous stress tensor.
τᵣθ - component of the viscous stress tensor.
divₛ - surface divergence.
gradₛ - surface gradient.

References


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