Multiple Phase Flow

Burhan S Abdulrazak, Ph.D.
Chemical Engineering Department

Lecture Notes: Multiple Phase Flow

Introduction

Multiple-phase flow refers to the simultaneous flow of materials with different phases (gas, liquid, and solid) or immiscible substances in the same phase. It is a common phenomenon in industries such as petroleum engineering, chemical engineering, and environmental science.

1. Definition of Multiple Phase Flow

- **Single-phase flow**: Involves only one phase, e.g., water in a pipe.
- **Multiple-phase flow**: Involves two or more phases flowing simultaneously.

2. Importance of Studying Multiple Phase Flow

- **Industrial Applications**: Oil and gas extraction, chemical reactors, and cooling systems.
- **Natural Processes**: Lava flows, ocean currents, and groundwater flow.
- **Challenges**: Complex flow regimes, phase interactions, and varying properties.

3. Classification of Multiple Phase Flows

1. **Phase Combinations**:
   - Gas-liquid
   - Liquid-liquid
   - Gas-solid
   - Liquid-solid
   - Gas-liquid-solid
2. **Flow Regimes**:
   - **Bubbly flow**: Gas dispersed as bubbles in a liquid.
   - **Slug flow**: Alternating large bubbles and liquid slugs.
   - **Stratified flow**: Separate layers of fluids.
   - **Annular flow**: Liquid flows as a film on the wall with gas in the core.
   - **Dispersed flow**: One phase finely dispersed within another.

Governing Equations

1. Conservation Laws:

- **Mass Conservation:**

$$\frac{\partial}{\partial t}(\rho\alpha_k) + \nabla \cdot (\rho\alpha_k\mathbf{u}_k) = \dot{m}_k$$

Where ρ: density, α_k: volume fraction, $\mathbf{u}_k$: velocity, and $\dot{m}_k$: source term for mass transfer.

- **Momentum Conservation:**

$$\frac{\partial}{\partial t}(\rho\alpha_k\mathbf{u}_k) + \nabla \cdot (\rho\alpha_k\mathbf{u}_k\mathbf{u}_k) = \alpha_k\mathbf{F}_k - \nabla p_k$$

- **Energy Conservation:**

$$\frac{\partial}{\partial t}(\rho\alpha_k e_k) + \nabla \cdot (\rho\alpha_k e_k\mathbf{u}_k) = \mathbf{q}_k + \mathbf{w}_k$$

2. Interphase Interaction:

- Drag forces, heat transfer, and mass transfer across phases.

Analytical and Experimental Tools

1. **Analytical Models:**
   - Homogeneous flow model.
   - Drift-flux model.
   - Two-fluid model.
2. **Experimental Techniques:**
   - Particle image velocimetry (PIV).
   - X-ray computed tomography.
   - High-speed photography.

Applications

1. Oil and Gas Industry

- Transportation of oil, gas, and water through pipelines.
- Wellbore flows during extraction.

2. Chemical Engineering

- Bubble column reactors.
- Distillation and extraction processes.

3. Environmental Engineering

- Sediment transport in rivers.
- Erosion and deposition studies.

4. Power Generation

- Boiling in nuclear reactors.
- Condensation in heat exchangers.

Challenges in Multiple Phase Flow

1. Non-linear and coupled governing equations.
2. Measurement difficulties due to opacity of multiphase systems.
3. Scale-up from lab models to industrial applications.
4. Developing predictive models for complex flow regimes.

Conclusion

Understanding multiple-phase flow is critical for optimizing industrial processes, predicting natural phenomena, and advancing engineering solutions. Continuous research in modeling techniques, experimental validation, and computational fluid dynamics (CFD) contributes to advancements in this field.

References for Further Reading

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3. Brennen, C. E. (2005). *Fundamentals of Multiphase Flow*. Cambridge University Press.