Dynamics of Surfactant Adsorption and Film Stability

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Example: Dynamic surface tension measured by maximum bubble pressure method (MBPM)



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The dynamics of surface tension correlates to the foam capacity and foamability (Examples)



The initial decrease, do/dt, of surface tension (Na-cas, natural pH) [5]. Foam capacity and foamability of Na-cas and WPC solutions vs. d*d*dt [5].

The dynamics of surface tension is related to the film lifetime and foam viscous friction (Examples)



Surface (total) and adsorption layer (local) deformations



The surface element with an area *A* is extended to a new area $A + \delta A$ for a time interval from *t* to $t + \delta t$. The surface dilatation, α , and the rate of surface dilatation are defined as [4]:

$$\dot{\alpha} \equiv \frac{1}{A} \frac{\delta A}{\delta t} \qquad \qquad \alpha \equiv \int_{0}^{\delta t} \dot{\alpha} \, \mathrm{d}t$$

The adsorption changes from Γ to $\Gamma + \delta\Gamma$ and the area per molecule in the adsorption layer – from *a* to $a + \delta a$. The adsorption layer deformation and its rate [4]:

For insoluble surfactants the both deformations α and ε are equal.

For soluble surfactants always the adsorption layer deformation is smaller than the surface dilatation, $\alpha > \varepsilon$, because of the bulk diffusion of surfactants.

Surfactant mass balance equations in the bulk phase





The diffusion flux is proportional to the gradient of chemical potential. Thus, for ionic surfactants [7]:

$$\mathbf{j}_i = -D_i (\nabla c_i + \frac{Z_i e c_i}{kT} \nabla \psi)$$

where kT is the thermal energy, Z_i is the valency of the respective ion, ψ is the electric potential.

At equilibrium the diffusion flux is equal to zero and the Boltzmann distribution takes place [7]:

$$c_i = c_{i\infty} \exp(-\frac{Z_i e}{kT} \psi)$$

Surfactant mass balance equations at surfaces

$$\frac{\partial \Gamma}{\partial t} + \nabla_{s} \cdot (\Gamma \mathbf{v}_{s}) + \nabla_{s} \cdot \mathbf{j}_{s} = r_{s} + \langle \mathbf{j} \cdot \mathbf{n} \rangle$$
in the possible chemical reactions [1,2].
Surface convective flux surface diffusion flux surfactants bulk fluxes to the surface
The Fick law of diffusion: $\mathbf{j}_{s} = -D_{s}\nabla\Gamma$ where D_{s} is the surface diffusion coefficient.
Generally, the surface diffusion flux is proportional to the gradient of the surface
chemical potential.
For simplest surface reaction $\Gamma_{1} \leftrightarrow \Gamma_{2}$ one has [8]: $n = -r_{2} = -k_{+}\Gamma_{1} + k_{-}\Gamma_{2}$
For surface association reaction $\Gamma_{1} + \Gamma_{2} \leftrightarrow \Gamma_{3}$ we have [8]: $n = r_{2} = -r_{3} = -k_{+}\Gamma_{1}\Gamma_{2} + k_{-}\Gamma_{3}$

The rate constant of forward reaction is k_{+} and that of the reverse reaction is k_{-} .

Solution of diffusion equation for simple surfactant

For simple surfactant solution below the CMC when the surface layer is in quasiequilibrium with the contiguous bulk phase (diffusion-controlled adsorption processes):

$$\Gamma(t) = \Gamma(0) + 2c_{b}\sqrt{\frac{Dt}{\pi}} - \sqrt{\frac{D}{\pi}} \int_{0}^{t} \frac{c_{s}(\tau)}{\sqrt{t-\tau}} d\tau \quad \text{and} \quad \Gamma(t) = \Gamma(c_{s}) \quad \text{(Ward and Tordai [4,9])}$$

where c_b is the input concentration, c_s is the subsurface concentration, and $\Gamma(c_s)$ is the adsorption isotherm.

General asymptotic expression for the short times reads:
$$\Gamma(t) = \Gamma(0) + 2[c_b - c_s(0)] \sqrt{\frac{Dt}{\pi}}$$

Analogous asymptotic expression for the long times is:

$$c_{\rm s}(t) = c_{\rm b} - \frac{\Gamma_{\rm e} - \Gamma(0)}{\sqrt{\pi Dt}}$$

where $\Gamma_{\rm e}$ is the equilibrium value of the surfactant adsorption, that is $\Gamma_{\rm e} = \Gamma(c_{\rm b})$.

For both asymptotic solutions the two-dimensional equation of state, $\gamma = \gamma(\Gamma)$ or $\gamma = \gamma(c_s)$, relates the measured surface tension and time.

Diffusion-controlled adsorption (experimental examples)



Surface tension vs. time for 6 different bubbles formed in 0.05 mM Brij-58 solution. The bubbles are formed very fast and after their formation the bubble volumes are kept constant. From the linear plot of the surface tension vs. $t^{1/2}$ we can obtain the equilibrium surface tension (the intercept is 41.34 mN/m) and the slope, which is related to the adsorption at equilibrium.



Diffusion-controlled adsorption (experimental examples)



From the linear plot of the surface tension vs. t^{1/2} one checks the mechanism of adsorption processes.
The linear plot shows that we start from a clean surface – the intercept is 72.18 mN/m, which corresponds to zero initial adsorption.
From the slope one can calculate the value of the diffusion coefficient.

$$\gamma(t) = \gamma(0) - 2kTc_{\rm b}\sqrt{\frac{Dt}{\pi}}$$

The calculated diffusion coefficient from the slope is 2.6x10⁻⁹ m²/s, which 6 times greater than the diffusion coefficient of the individual molecule.

Conclusion: For some surfactant systems the mechanism of adsorption above the CMC is diffusion-controlled but with effective diffusion coefficient larger than the diffusion coefficient of the individual molecule (see below).

Barrier-controlled adsorption (experimental examples)



The adsorption is under barrier control when the stage of surfactant transfer from the subsurface to the surface is much slower than the diffusion stage. In this case the change of adsorption is controlled by the rate of adsorption, r_{ads} , and the rate of desorption, r_{des} [1,3]:

$$\frac{\mathrm{d}\Gamma}{\mathrm{d}t} = r_{\mathrm{ads}}(\Gamma, c_{\mathrm{s}}) - r_{\mathrm{des}}(\Gamma)$$

 $\gamma(t) = \gamma(0) -$

The solution of the diffusion equation for this regime is:

$$\gamma(t) = \gamma_{\rm e} + [\gamma(0) - \gamma_{\rm e}] \exp(-t/t_{\rm b})$$

The asymptotic expression for the short times is:

Conclusion: For barrier-controlled regime of adsorption from the initial slope of the surface tension vs. time one obtains the relaxation time of surfactant, t_b .

Dynamics of adsorption from micellar surfactant solutions



The micelles release monomers to restore the equilibrium concentrations of surfactant monomers at the surface and in the bulk. The concentration gradients give rise to diffusion of both monomers and micelles. The adsorbing component are the surfactant monomers, whereas the micelles do not adsorb.



Typical distribution of micellar aggregates: m– the mean aggregation number; σ – the polydispersity of micelles; c_1 – concentration of monomers [11,12] (Aniansson and Wall).

Fast process: exchange monomers between micelles and surrounding solution.

Slow process: decomposition of micelles with critical micellar sizes.

Maximum bubble pressure method



Consecutive photographs of a bubble growing at the tip of a capillary hydrophobized by treatment with silicon oil.

One measures the maximum of pressure difference inside the bubble, which is directly related to the dynamic surface tension through the Laplace equation.

The experimental curve, *A*(*t*), is known [3,13].

Maximum bubble pressure method (universal time age)

Bulk diffusion of simple surfactant

$$\frac{\partial c}{\partial t} - \dot{\alpha} z \frac{\partial c}{\partial z} = D \frac{\partial^2 c}{\partial z^2} + \dots$$

$$\frac{\mathrm{d}\Gamma}{\mathrm{d}t} + \dot{\alpha}\Gamma = D\frac{\partial c}{\partial z} + \dots$$

Mass balance at the interface

c – bulk concentration; Γ – adsorption; *t* – time; *z* – space coordinate; $d\alpha/dt$ – rate of surface dilatation; A(t) – area of the surface

Time and space transformation [3,13,14]

$$y \equiv \frac{A(t)}{A(0)}z \qquad \tau \equiv \int_{0}^{t} \frac{A^{2}(\tilde{t})}{A^{2}(0)} d\tilde{t}$$

 $\frac{\partial c}{\partial \tau} = D \frac{\partial^2 c}{\partial v^2} + \dots$

$$\frac{\mathrm{d}}{\mathrm{d}\,\tau} \left[\frac{A(\tau)}{A(0)}\Gamma\right] = D\frac{\partial c}{\partial y} + \dots$$

Bulk diffusion (classical problem)

Mass balance (classical problem)

Maximum bubble pressure method (universal time age)



Apparent surface age: t_{age}

Real (universal) surface age $t_{real} < t_{age}$ [13]:

$$t_{\text{real}} \equiv t_{\text{age}} / \int_{0}^{1} \frac{A^2(\xi)}{A^2(0)} \mathrm{d}\xi$$



Maximum bubble pressure method (universal time age)



From s_{γ} we calculate the value of the effective diffusion coefficient.

where $D_{\rm m}$ is the diffusion coefficient of micelles.

Effective diffusion coefficient of ionic surfactants



In the case of ionic surfactants the dynamics of surface tension obeys the same rules as for nonionic surfactants but with an effective diffusion coefficients, D_{eff} [15]:

 $D_{\text{eff}} = D_{\text{eff}}(D_1, D_2, D_3, \text{concentrations})$

where D_1 is the diffusion coefficient of surface active ion, D_2 of counterions, and D_3 of coions.

Typical consecutive stages of evolution of thin liquid films [4,16]



a) mutual approach of slightly deformed surfaces

b) the curvature at the film center inverts its sign and a "dimple" arises

c) the dimple disappears and an almost plane-parallel film forms

d) due to thermal fluctuations or other disturbances the film either ruptures or transforms into a thinner Newton black film

e) Newton black film expands

f) the final equilibrium state of the Newton black film is reached

DLVO Theory: Equilibrium states of free liquid films



Role of surfactants on the surface mobility [1,2,16,17]



Fluid motion in the film and droplet phases.

The flow in the film phase is superposition of the Poiseuille flow and a flow of constant surface velocity u_s .

Due to the nonuniform interfacial surfactant distribution surface diffusion and convective fluxes appear.

The bulk viscous stresses are balanced with the surface stresses.

The gradient of surface tension (Marangoni effect) and the surface viscosity (Boussinesq-Scriven effect) suppress the interfacial mobility. Both effects characterize the interfacial rheology! (Interfacial rheology measurements) The bulk and surface diffusion suppress the gradient of surface tension and increase the mobility of interfaces! (Dynamics surface tension measurements)

The mobility of film surfaces is important for a film (foam) drainage and foam rheology!

As a rule the film stability is controlled by the disjoining pressure (small effect of the surface mobility is measured)!

Stability film thickness (example for foam films – surface fluctuations)



The film thickness, h, is presented as a superposition of equilibrium thickness, h_{e} , and fluctuations, h_{f} :

$$h = h_{\rm e} + h_{\rm f}$$
 and $h_{\rm f} \propto \exp(\omega t) J_0(k \frac{r}{R})$

k is the dimensionless Fourier-Bessel wave number. For positive (negative) ω the disturbances will grow (decay).

From mass and momentum balance equations one derives the dispersion relationship [2]:

$$\Omega^2 = \frac{\gamma h_e^3}{48\eta DR^2} \left[\frac{2R^2}{\gamma} \frac{\partial \Pi}{\partial h} - k^2\right] (1 + F_s) \text{ and } \Omega^2 = \frac{\omega h_e^2}{4D} \text{ for squeezing modes}$$

 $F_{\rm s}$ – mobility function; D, $D_{\rm s}$ – bulk and surface diffusivity; η , $\eta_{\rm s}$ – bulk and surface viscosity; $h_{\rm s}$, $E_{\rm G}$ – adsorption thickness and Gibbs elasticity; R – film radius:

$$d_{\rm s} = \frac{12\eta D}{h_{\rm e}E_{\rm G}}, \quad B_{\rm s} = \Omega^2 + \frac{h_{\rm e}}{2h_{\rm s}}\Omega \tanh \Omega + \frac{D_{\rm s}k^2h_{\rm e}^2}{4DR^2}, \quad F_{\rm s} = d_{\rm s}B_{\rm s}(1 + \frac{\eta_{\rm s}}{3\eta h_{\rm e}})^{-1}$$

The stability film thickness, h_{st} , is defined as a thickness at which $\omega = 0$:

$$\frac{\partial \Pi}{\partial h} = \frac{\gamma k^2}{2R^2}$$

Stability film thickness (example for foam films – surface fluctuations)

$$\Omega^{2} = \frac{\gamma h_{\rm e}^{3}}{48\eta DR^{2}} \left[\frac{2R^{2}}{\gamma} \frac{\partial \Pi}{\partial h} - k^{2}\right](1+F_{\rm s})$$

General conclusions:

∂П

 ∂h

stable fluctuations. The surfactants influence the decrement of surface waves!



Two possible cases: a) unbounded films; b) bounded films.

 $\partial \Pi$ stable fluctuations $2R^2$ ∂h **Unbounded films** ∂П the stability depends on the wave number: unstable fluctuations ∂h $2R^{2}$ $\left|\frac{2R^2}{\gamma}\frac{\partial\Pi}{\partial h} = j_1^2 \approx 5.783\right|$ where j_1 is the first root of the Stability limit of bounded films: Bessel function, J_0 . For example: $h_{\rm st} = (\frac{A_{\rm H}R^2}{\pi i^2 \gamma})^{1/4} \approx 0.4844 (\frac{A_{\rm H}R^2}{\gamma})^{1/4}$ $\Pi = \Pi_{\rm vw} = -\frac{A_{\rm H}}{6\pi h^3}$ and $\frac{\partial \Pi}{\partial h} = \frac{A_{\rm H}}{2\pi h^4}$

Stability, transitional and critical film thicknesses [2,18]

$$\left| \Omega^2 = \frac{\gamma h_e^3}{48\eta DR^2} \left[\frac{2R^2}{\gamma} \frac{\partial \Pi}{\partial h} - k^2 \right] (1 + F_s) \right|$$
 Stability thickness – the first unstable mode appears.

Generally, with the decrease of the film thickness, d*I*/dh increases and the region of unstable modes becomes wider.

Finally, the film breaks at a given critical film thickness, h_{cr} , with the most dangerous wave number, k_{cr} .

The film thickness at which the most dangerous mode appears, $\Omega(k_{cr}) = 0$, is called transitional film thickness, h_{tr} .

Critical thickness of foam films stabilized with 0.4 mM SDS in the presence of NaCl.



Other possibilities for bubble (drop) coalescence (numerical results)



Evolution of film profile in the presence of different components of disjoining pressure [19].

Example: For raising bubble under the action of buoyancy force, the thickness at which the pimple appears, h_p , is calculated from [2,20]:

$$h_{\rm p} = \left(\frac{A_{\rm H}R}{12F_{\rm b}}\right)^{1/2}$$
 where $F_{\rm b} = \frac{4}{3}\pi R^3 g \Delta \rho$

Bubbles in the AFM [21]



Microscopy photographs of bubbles in the AFM with schematics of the two interacting bubbles and the water film between them:

(A) Side view of the bubble anchored on the tip of the cantilever. (B) Plan view of the custom-made cantilever with the hydrophobized circular anchor. (C) Side perspective of the bubble on the substrate. (D) Bottom view of the bubble showing the dark circular contact zone of radius, a (in focus) on the substrate and the bubble of radius, R_{s} . (E) Schematic of the bubble geometry.



Evolution of film profiles and rim rupture effect.

Waves at a single interface [2,22]	
Capillary waves:	$\rho\omega^2 = \gamma k^3 + \rho g k$ for non - damped waves
	$\rho\omega^2 = 2i\eta k^2\omega + \gamma k^3 + \rho gk$ for damped waves
Non-damped waves a	t the surface between two liquids: $(\rho_A + \rho_B)\omega^2 = \gamma k^3 - (\rho_A - \rho_B)gk$
Pure longitudinal wave	es (longitudinal wave techniques): $i\eta(k^2 + n^2)\omega = nk^2(E_* - i\omega\eta_8)$

Dispersion relationship for simple surfactant solution:

$$\begin{vmatrix} (-i\rho\omega^2 - 2\eta k^2\omega + i\gamma k^3 + i\rho gk)[i\eta(n^2 + k^2)\omega - nk^2(E_* - i\omega\eta_s)] \\ + (2i\omega\eta kn + \gamma k^3 + \rho gk)[2\eta k^2\omega + ik^3(E_* - i\omega\eta_s)] = 0 \end{vmatrix}$$

k is the wave number; ω is the frequency; η_s is the sum of dilatational and shear surface viscosity; *g* is the gravity acceleration; ρ is the bulk density; *n* is the vertical complex wave number and *E*_{*} is the complex surface elasticity.

$$n^{2} = k^{2} - i\omega\rho/\eta, \quad E_{*} = E_{G} \frac{1 + \sqrt{q} - i\sqrt{q}}{1 + 2\sqrt{q} + 2q}, \quad q = \frac{D}{2\omega h_{s}} \quad \text{(Lucassen and van den Tempel [23,24])}$$



For linear systems: $E_r(\omega) = G_r(\omega)/\alpha_0(\omega)$ and $E_i(\omega) = G_i(\omega)/\alpha_0(\omega)$

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