

**Scale growth study in a concentric reducer:
Measurement of instantaneous velocity using
Particle Image Velocimetry**

By

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To my parents with respect

Table of Contents

Abstract	(i)
List of figures	(ii)
List of tables	(iii)
List of acronyms	(iv)
List of Publications	(v)
Acknowledgement	(vi)
Declaration	(vii)
	Page numbers
Chapter 1 Introduction and Background	1
1.1 An introduction to the background	1
1.2 Main Hypotheses behind More Scale Growth in a Concentric Reducer	6
1.2.1 Localized velocity effects	7
1.3 Turbulent bursting phenomenon	8
1.4 Aims and objectives of present research	8
Chapter 2 Theory and Literature Review	9
2.1 Introduction	9
2.2 Mechanism of scale growth and types of scale	9
2.2.1 Growth scales	13
2.2.2 Settled scales	13
2.3 Review of fluid flow in an axisymmetric contraction	14
2.4 Phenomenon of Turbulent Bursting	16
2.5 Mechanism of Particle attachment, Particle detachment and turbulent bursting in relation to the scale growth	18
2.6 Flow visualization and Particle Image Velocimetry	24
2.6.1 Principle of Particle Image Velocimetry (PIV)	25
2.7 Review of PIV experimental method	27

2.8 Conclusion	30
Chapter 3 Experimental Procedure	32
3.1 Introduction to PIV	33
3.1.1 Main Features of PIV	33
3.2 TSI's PIV 200 experimental setup	34
3.2.1 Nd:YAG laser source	34
3.2.2 CCD camera	35
3.2.3 Personal computer and PIV post processing software	37
3.2.4 Seeding system	38
3.2.5 Delay generator, power supply and chiller	39
3.3 Flow visualization test rig	40
3.3.1 Water tank	41
3.3.2 VFD motor – pump assembly	41
3.3.3 Magnetic flow meter	41
3.3.4 Tube bundle flow straightener	41
3.3.5 Acrylic block with concentric reducer	41
3.4 Measurement sections	45
3.4.1 Full view of the reducer	45
3.4.2 Close to the wall view of the reducer	48
3.5 Sources of error in PIV	50
3.6 Estimation of experimental error	51
3.6.1 Rotating disc experiment	51
3.6.2 Centre-line velocity check at Laminar flow	55
3.6.3 PIV accuracy check using instantaneous velocity and flow meter	58
3.7 Conclusion	61

Chapter 4	Results	
4.1	Full view of the reducer	62
4.2	Results and discussion for $Re = 27000$ and $Re = 41500$	67
4.3	Results and discussion for $Re = 44000$ and $Re = 66000$	72
4.4	Results for close to the wall PIV measurements	78
4.5	Results and discussion for the section AA at $Re = 27000$	80
4.6	Results and discussion for the section BB at $Re = 27000$ and $Re = 41500$	82
4.7	Results for the remaining sections	83
4.8	Concluding remarks	84
Chapter 5	Conclusion	86
5.1	Recommendations for further work	89
Chapter 6	References	91
Appendix A		100
Appendix B		102
Appendix “C” and Appendix “C” Data		103
Appendix “A” Data		106

Abstract

Gibbsite scale growth in pipe fittings is a major problem for an alumina refinery. A recent investigation into the scale growth mechanism at an alumina refinery found almost 60 % more scale growth in a reducer when compared with the connecting straight pipe sections for similar flow conditions.

Scale growth occurs where liquor (supersaturated solutions) come in contact with solid surfaces and it is affected by the liquor flow velocity besides other physical and chemical parameters. The present work is dedicated to study the hydro-dynamical aspects of the mechanism of scale growth. In particular, the role of the phenomenon of turbulent bursting, stream wise and cross stream fluctuating velocity components (U_x and U_y) was investigated as the flow moves through the reducer. Particle Image Velocimetry (PIV) technique was used to get a full view of the reducer and the readings close-to-the-wall of the reducer at Reynolds number of 27,000 and 44,000 upstream which corresponds to Reynolds number of 41,500 and 66,000 downstream of the reducer respectively.

The results showed an increase in cross stream and a decrease in magnitude of stream wise fluctuating velocity components, whereby we presume that the increased cross stream fluctuating velocity component increases the frequency of impacts of the scaling particles on the wall thus initiating excessive scale growth in the reducer when compared with the connecting straight pipe sections, for similar flow conditions.

List of figures

		Page nos.
Figure 1.1	A generalized process schematic of a typical Bayer plant	2
Figure 2.1	A typical pattern of Gibbsite scale growth in reducer	11
Figure 2.2	A lay-out of a PIV system, where “ U_x ” is the stream wise fluctuating velocity component and “ U_y ” is the cross stream fluctuating velocity component.	26
Figure 3.1	Nd-YAG laser system layout and acrylic model of a concentric reducer	35
Figure 3.2	Nd-YAG laser and CCD camera timing diagram for the TSI’s PIV 200 set-up	36
Figure 3.3	Water flow path through flow visualization test rig	40
Figure 3.4	Photograph of Acrylic Block mounted on the test rig and its dimensions in mm	43
Figure 3.5	Flow Visualization test rig in a PIV laboratory at Process Engineering and Light Metals (PELM) Centre	44
Figure 3.6	Seven measurement sections for full view of the reducer. Distances between sections are A to B is 8 mm, B to F is 8mm, C to G is 8mm, G to D is 8 mm and D to E is 28 mm	47

Figure 3.7	Measurement sections for close to the wall readings (all readings are in mm)	48
		(ii)
Figure 3.8	PIV image of disc rotating at 550 rpm with velocity vectors and their numbers	52
Figure 3.9	PIV calibration set-up for rotating disc experiment	52
Figure 3.10	Centre-line velocity check at Laminar flow in the reducer	56
Figure 3.11	PIV accuracy measurement using instantaneous velocity and flow meter reading	59
Figure 4.1	Sections A and B	63
Figure 4.2	Sections F and C	64
Figure 4.3	Sections G and D	65
Figure 4.4	Section E	66
Figure 4.5	Variation of stream wise components (U_x) at $Re = 27000$ upstream of the reducer and $Re = 41500$ downstream of the reducer through sections, A, B, F, C, G, D and E	68
Figure 4.6	Variation of cross stream component (U_y) at $Re = 27000$ upstream of the reducer and $Re = 41500$ downstream of the reducer through sections, A, B, F, C, G, D and E	71
Figure 4.7	Variation of stream wise components (U_x) at $Re = 44000$ upstream of the reducer and $Re = 66000$ downstream of	

the reducer through sections, A, B, F, C, G, D and E 73

(ii)

Figure 4.8 Variation of cross stream components (U_y) at $Re = 44000$ upstream of the reducer and $Re = 66000$ downstream of the reducer through sections, A, B, F, C, G, D and E 74

Figure 4.9 Overall changes in U and V fluctuating components at $Re = 27000$ upstream of the reducer and $Re = 41500$ downstream of the reducer along axial length of the reducer 75

Figure 4.10 Overall changes in U and V fluctuating components at $Re = 44000$ upstream of the reducer and $Re = 66000$ downstream of the reducer along axial length of reducer 76

Figure 4.11 Diagram illustrating the magnitude and directions of the fluctuating components (U_x' and U_y') for table 4.1 showing random occurrence of TB at $Re = 27000$ (vectors magnitude and directions are approximated) 80

Figure 4.13 Diagram illustrating the magnitude and directions of the fluctuating components (U_x' and U_y') for table 4.2 showing random occurrence of TB at $Re = 27000$ upstream of contraction and $Re = 41500$ downstream of the contraction, (vectors magnitude and directions are approximated) 82

Figure Appendix "B" 110

List of tables

		Page nos.
Tables 3.1 and 3.2	A comparison of velocities measured by the PIV System with calculated linear velocities shown below separately for the ” Outer and inner circle of vectors” in figure 3.8	53
Table 3.3	A comparison of flow meter based measured velocities and PIV Insight softwares based velocities along with x and y locations	56
Table 3.4	Percentage error using instantaneous velocity and flow meter	60
Table 4.1	Values of the velocity fluctuations and their magnitude at $Re = 27000$ and the associated angle. Values in italics represent TB	81
Table 4.2	Values of the velocity fluctuations and their magnitude in the contraction at $Re = 27000$ upstream of the contraction and $Re = 41500$ downstream of the contraction and their associated angles. Values in italics represent TB	81
Table 4.3	Relationship between Turbulent bursting and Re numbers in section AA, BB and CC of the reducer	83

List of acronyms

2D	Two dimensional
3D	Three dimensional
A/C ratio	Alumina to Caustic ratio
AIA	Analogue interface adapter
°C	Degrees Centigrade
CCD	Charge-Coupled Device
CCI	Charge Contrast Imaging
CFD	Computational Fluid Dynamics
CQU	Central Queensland University
DC	Direct Current
ρ_p	Density of Particle
ρ_f	Density of fluid
DNS	Direct Numerical Simulation
d_p	Diameter of particle
dt	Time separation between 2 pulses
e_r	Percentage error
FFT	Fast Fourier Transformation
g	Acceleration due to gravity
g/dm^3	Grams per decimetres
gpl	Grams per litre

HFA	Hot Film Anemometry
HWA	Hot Wire Anemometry
Hz	Hertz
kPa	Kilopascal
kW	Kilowatt
LDA	Laser Doppler Anemometry
LIF	Laser Induced Fluorescence
m/sec	Metre per second
mJ	Millijoule
mm	Millimetre
mm/sec	Millimetre per second
MQD	Mean Quadratic Difference
msec	Millisecond
NaI	Sodium Iodide
Nd:YAG	Neodymium: Yttrium Aluminium Garnet
nm	Nanometre
PELM	Process Engineering and Light Metals Centre
PIP	Pattern Image Matching
PIV	Particle Image Velocimetry
PLIF	Planner Laser Induced Fluorescence
POD	Proper Orthogonal Decomposition
ps	Pico second
QAL	Queensland Alumina Limited.

r	Radius at a certain distance “x” from the centre in a section
R	Full radius of the section
Re	Reynolds number
RPM	Revolution per minute
SEM	Scanning Electron Microscope
TB	Turbulent Bursting
TKE	Total Kinetic Energy
TPD	Transfer Pulse Delay
u	Velocity of fluid at a certain distance “y” from centre of section
U	Centre-line velocity
μm	Micrometer
μsec	Microsecond
U_0^2	Average velocity
U_x'	Fluctuating velocity component in x – direction (stream-wise)
U_y'	Fluctuating velocity component in y – direction (cross-stream)
ν	Kinematic viscosity of fluid
VFD	Variable frequency drive
V_s	Sedimentation velocity
δ	Boundary layer thickness

List of Publication

Following conference papers were published as a result of this Masters in Mechanical Engineering,

- 1) *Energy saving potentials in an Alumina refinery : A review***
Central Region Engineering Conference” 5-6 Sept. 2003, Rockhampton.
- 2) *Viability of steam injection in gas turbines (co-authored)***
BSME-ASME,
International conference on Thermal Engineering, 2-4th January 2004, Dhaka, Bangladesh.
- 3) *Scale growth study in a concentric reducer: Measurements of instantaneous velocity using Particle image velocimetry***
VSJ – SPIE
International conference on advanced optical diagnostics in fluids, solids and combustion, 4-6 December 2004, University of Tokyo, Tokyo, Japan.

A journal publication is in progress to be published in a major fluid mechanics journal such as Journal of Fluid Mechanics, or Experiments in Fluids or Journal of Turbulence etc.

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