

**Process Modelling
and Simulation in
Chemical, Biochemical
and Environmental
Engineering**

Process Modelling and Simulation in Chemical, Biochemical and Environmental Engineering

Ashok Kumar Verma



CRC Press

Taylor & Francis Group

Boca Raton London New York

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CRC Press
Taylor & Francis Group
6000 Broken Sound Parkway NW, Suite 300
Boca Raton, FL 33487-2742

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Version Date: 20141002

International Standard Book Number-13: 978-1-4822-0593-0 (eBook - PDF)

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*Dedicated to my wife, Geeta Verma,
and sons, Anurag Srivastava and Anupam Srivastava.*

Contents

Preface.....	xvii
Acknowledgements	xxi
Author.....	xxiii
Nomenclature.....	xxv
1. Introduction to Modelling and Simulation.....	1
1.1 Chemical Processes.....	1
1.1.1 Unit Process: Fixed Bed.....	2
1.1.2 Sulphuric Acid Plant.....	4
1.1.3 Complex Nature of Chemical Processes.....	5
1.2 What Is Simulation?.....	6
1.2.1 Types of Simulation	7
1.2.1.1 Steady-State Simulation.....	7
1.2.1.2 Dynamic Simulation.....	7
1.2.1.3 Stochastic Simulation (Monte Carlo Simulation)	7
1.2.1.4 Discrete-Event Simulation	8
1.2.1.5 Molecular Simulation	8
1.2.2 Applications of Simulation in Chemical Engineering.....	8
1.2.2.1 Process Synthesis.....	9
1.2.2.2 Equipment Design.....	9
1.2.2.3 Retrofitting	9
1.2.2.4 Process Design.....	10
1.2.2.5 Process Operation	10
1.2.2.6 Process Control.....	11
1.2.2.7 Process Safety	11
1.2.2.8 Personnel Training.....	11
1.3 Modelling.....	12
1.3.1 What Is a Model?.....	12
1.3.2 Role of Modelling in Simulation.....	14
1.3.3 Limitations of Models	14
1.4 Summary.....	15
References	15
2. An Overview of Modelling and Simulation.....	17
2.1 Strategy for Simulation	18
2.1.1 Problem Definition	18
2.1.2 Understanding the Process	18
2.1.3 Process Modelling	19

2.1.4	Software Selection: Factors Affecting the Selection	20
2.1.4.1	Availability	20
2.1.4.2	Cost.....	20
2.1.4.3	Trained Personnel	20
2.1.4.4	Suitability	20
2.1.5	Solution of Model Equations	24
2.1.6	Model Validation.....	24
2.1.7	Simulation Study.....	24
2.2	Approaches for Model Development	25
2.3	Types of Models	27
2.3.1	Deterministic Models.....	28
2.3.2	Lumped Parameter Models.....	28
2.3.3	Distributed Parameter Models.....	29
2.3.4	Steady-State Models.....	31
2.3.5	Dynamic Models.....	31
2.3.6	Stochastic Models	31
2.3.7	Population Balance Models	32
2.3.8	Agent-Based Models.....	32
2.3.9	Discrete-Event Models	32
2.3.10	Artificial Neural Network–Based Models.....	33
2.3.11	Fuzzy Models	34
2.4	Types of Equations in a Model and Solution Strategy.....	35
2.4.1	Algebraic Equations	36
2.4.2	Differential Equations.....	37
2.4.3	Differential–Algebraic Equations.....	39
2.5	Sources of Equations.....	39
2.5.1	Empirical Equations	40
2.5.2	Equations Based on Theoretical Concepts	40
2.5.3	Consistency Equations	41
2.5.4	Differential Equations Using Laws of Conservation.....	41
2.5.5	Integration over Area, Volume and Time.....	42
2.5.6	Population Balance	42
2.6	Simplifying Concepts.....	42
2.6.1	Continuum.....	43
2.6.2	Combination of Simple and Rigorous Models	44
2.6.3	Uniform Probability Distribution.....	45
2.6.4	Parallel Mechanisms	45
2.6.5	Analogy to Electrical Circuits.....	46
2.6.6	Film Model.....	47
2.6.7	Boundary Layer Approximation	48
2.6.8	Order of Magnitude Approximation	49
2.6.9	Quasi–Steady State	49
2.6.10	Finite and Infinite Dimensions	50
2.7	Summary.....	50
	References	51

3. Models Based on Simple Laws	53
3.1 Equation of State.....	53
3.1.1 Ideal Gas Law	53
3.1.2 Cubic Equations of State	54
3.2 Henry’s Law	56
3.3 Newton’s Law of Viscosity.....	57
3.4 Fourier’s Law of Heat Conduction.....	59
3.5 Fick’s First Law	60
3.6 Fick’s Second Law	61
3.7 Film Model.....	62
3.8 Two-Film Theory.....	65
3.9 Arrhenius’ Law.....	68
3.10 Adsorption Isotherms	68
3.11 Examples	69
3.11.1 Overall Heat Transfer Coefficient in a Composite Cylindrical Wall	69
3.11.2 Cooling of a Small Sphere in a Stagnant Fluid.....	70
3.11.3 Diffusion in a Stagnant Gas Film	71
3.11.4 Diffusion–Reaction Systems.....	73
3.11.5 Gas–Liquid Solid–Catalysed Reactions.....	75
3.12 Summary.....	76
References	77
4. Models Based on Laws of Conservation	79
4.1 Laws of Conservation of Momentum, Mass and Energy.....	79
4.1.1 Equation of Continuity.....	80
4.1.2 Laws of Conservation of Momentum, Mass and Energy	84
4.1.3 Boundary Conditions.....	86
4.1.3.1 Boundary Conditions of the First Kind	86
4.1.3.2 Boundary Conditions of the Second Kind	88
4.1.3.3 Boundary Conditions of the Third Kind	88
4.2 Laminar Flow	89
4.2.1 Velocity Field in Laminar Flow	89
4.2.2 Velocity Profile in Simple Geometries	89
4.2.3 Convective Heat and Mass Transfer in Simple Geometries.....	92
4.3 Boundary Layers: Momentum, Thermal and Diffusional.....	95
4.4 Turbulence Models.....	98
4.4.1 What Is Turbulence?	98
4.4.2 Eddy Viscosity, Eddy Diffusivity and Eddy Thermal Conductivity	102
4.4.3 Prandtl Mixing Length	103
4.4.4 Turbulence Kinetic Energy and Length and Time Scale.....	104

4.5	Surface Renewal Models at High Flux of Momentum, Mass or Heat	104
4.5.1	Penetration Model (Higbie’s Surface Renewal)	104
4.5.2	Surface Renewal Model for Other Residence Time Distributions.....	106
4.5.2.1	Danckwerts’ Surface Renewal Model	106
4.5.3	Surface Renewal Model with a Packet of Finite Length.....	106
4.5.4	Coexistence of Surface Renewal and Film	109
4.5.5	Surface Renewal with Laminar Flow in Eddies.....	109
4.6	Analogy between Momentum, Mass and Heat Transfer.....	110
4.6.1	Universal Velocity Profile	111
4.6.2	The Reynolds Analogy.....	112
4.6.3	Prandtl’s Analogy	113
4.6.4	Karman’s Analogy.....	114
4.6.5	Lin–Moultan–Putnam’s Analogy Based on an Eddyng Sub-Layer	115
4.6.6	Chilton–Colburn Analogy: j Factors.....	116
4.6.7	Heat and Mass Transfer Analogy in Bubble Columns.....	116
4.6.8	Limitations of Analogies	118
4.7	Simple Models for Reactors and Bioreactors.....	118
4.7.1	Stirred-Tank Reactors	118
4.7.2	Batch and Semi-Batch Reactors.....	120
4.7.3	Axial Dispersion Model.....	121
4.7.4	Tank in Series Model.....	123
4.7.5	Modelling of Residence Time Distribution.....	124
4.8	Summary	126
	References	127
5.	Multiphase Systems without Reaction.....	129
5.1	Consideration of a Continuous-Phase Axial Solid Profile in a Slurry Bubble Column	130
5.2	Single Interface: The Wetted Wall Column.....	133
5.3	Stationary Dispersed-Phase Systems (Gas–Solid Systems)	137
5.3.1	Heat Transfer in Packed Beds	137
5.3.2	Mass Transfer in Packed Beds	141
5.4	Moving Dispersed Systems (Gas–Solid Systems): Wall-to-Bed Heat Transfer in a Fluidised Bed	143
5.4.1	Models Based on Film Theory	147
5.4.2	Models Based on the Surface Renewal Concept	148
5.5	Moving Dispersed Systems (Gas–Liquid Systems): Transfer Processes in Bubble Columns.....	153
5.5.1	Models Based on the Boundary Layer Concept.....	153
5.5.2	Models Based on the Surface Renewal Concept	154

5.5.3	A Unified Approach Based on Liquid Circulation Velocity	156
5.5.4	Modified Boundary-Layer Model.....	157
5.5.5	Surface Renewal with an Adjacent Liquid Layer	157
5.6	Regions of Interest Adjacent to the Interface	158
5.6.1	Terminal Velocity of Bubbles	159
5.6.1.1	Terminal Velocity in a Viscosity-Dominated Regime	159
5.6.2	Gas-Liquid Mass Transfer Coefficient.....	160
5.6.3	Mass Transfer over a Flat Plate: Boundary Layer.....	162
5.6.4	Simultaneous Heat and Mass Transfer: Drying of Solids	164
5.6.5	Membrane Processes: Model for Pervaporation.....	166
5.7	More Than One Mechanism of Heat Transfer: Flat-Plate Solar Collector	169
5.8	Introducing Other Effects in Laws of Conservation.....	173
5.8.1	Reactions	173
5.8.2	Electrokinetic Phenomena: Flow in Microchannels	174
5.9	Summary	175
	References	176
6.	Multiphase Systems with Reaction	179
6.1	Development of a Model for Multiphase Reactors: Common Assumptions and Methodology.....	180
6.1.1	One-Dimensional and Two-Dimensional Models	180
6.1.2	Homogeneous and Heterogeneous Models.....	181
6.1.3	Two- and Three-Fluid Models	181
6.1.4	Thermodynamics, Kinetics, Hydrodynamics and Reactor Model.....	183
6.1.5	Methodology for Model Development for Multiphase Systems	184
6.2	Packed Bed Reactors	185
6.2.1	Isothermal Bioreactor	185
6.2.2	The Solids as Reactant-Kinetic Models.....	187
6.2.3	Catalytic Packed Bed Reactors: Reactor Models.....	190
6.2.3.1	1D Pseudo-Homogeneous Model	191
6.2.3.2	1D Heterogeneous Model.....	192
6.2.3.3	2D Pseudo-Homogeneous Model	193
6.2.3.4	2D Heterogeneous Model	194
6.2.3.5	Unsteady-State or Dynamic Models.....	195
6.3	Trickle Bed Reactors	196
6.4	Slurry Reactors	199
6.4.1	Mechanically Agitated Slurry Reactors.....	200
6.4.2	Slurry Bubble Columns.....	201

6.5	Fluidised Bed Reactors.....	205
6.5.1	Minimum Fluidisation Velocity	205
6.5.2	Bed Expansion.....	206
6.5.3	Flow Regimes	207
6.5.4	Two-Phase Fluidised Bed Reactors	208
6.5.5	Fluidised Bed Bioreactors	210
6.5.6	Two-Fluid Models.....	211
6.5.7	Three-Phase Fluidised Bed Bioreactors.....	213
6.5.8	Dynamic Model for Three-Phase Fluidised Bed Bioreactors.....	215
6.6	Summary.....	219
	References	220
7.	Population Balance Models and Discrete-Event Models	221
7.1	Stochastic Models.....	222
7.2	The Complex Nature of the Dispersed Phase.....	223
7.2.1	Size Variation of the Dispersed Phase	224
7.2.2	Movement of the Dispersed Phase.....	225
7.2.3	Discrete Nature of Time.....	225
7.3	Population Balance Equation	226
7.4	Probability Distribution Functions	228
7.4.1	Normal or Gaussian Distribution.....	229
7.4.2	Logarithmic Normal Distribution.....	229
7.4.3	Poisson Distribution	229
7.4.4	Gamma Distribution	230
7.4.5	Beta Distribution.....	230
7.4.6	Exponential Distribution	231
7.5	Population Balance Models: Simulation Methodology	231
7.5.1	Discrete Form of the Population Balance Equation.....	232
7.5.2	Bubble Coalescence and Breakup.....	234
7.5.2.1	Bubble Coalescence due to Turbulent Eddies.....	234
7.5.2.2	Bubble Coalescence for Small Bubbles	235
7.5.2.3	Bubble Coalescence due to the Relative Velocity of Bubbles	236
7.5.2.4	Film Drainage and Bubble Coalescence.....	236
7.5.3	Bubble Breakup	238
7.5.4	Monte Carlo Simulation	239
7.5.5	Stochastic Simulation	240
7.5.6	Crystallisation	241
7.5.7	Analytical Solution of Population Balance Models	242
7.5.8	Polymerisation.....	243
7.6	Summary.....	244
	References	244

8. Artificial Neural Network–Based Models	247
8.1 Artificial Neural Networks.....	247
8.1.1 Information Processing through Neurons.....	248
8.1.2 Radial Basis Function Networks	250
8.2 Development of ANN-Based Models.....	251
8.2.1 Architecture.....	251
8.2.2 Identification of Inputs.....	252
8.2.3 Choice of the Architecture.....	254
8.2.4 Training the ANNs.....	255
8.2.5 Performance of ANN Model	257
8.2.6 Learning Methods	257
8.2.7 Over-Fitting and Under-Fitting	258
8.3 Applications of ANNs in Chemical Engineering.....	260
8.3.1 ANN-Based Correlations.....	260
8.3.2 Process Modelling and Monitoring	262
8.3.3 Pattern Recognition	264
8.3.4 Fault Diagnosis.....	264
8.3.5 Process Control	265
8.4 Advantages of ANN-Based Models	266
8.5 Limitations of ANN-Based Models.....	267
8.6 Hybrid Neural Networks.....	268
8.6.1 Application of Hybrid Neural Networks	269
8.6.1.1 A Hybrid ANN Model for a Bioreactor.....	270
8.6.1.2 Other Applications.....	271
8.7 Summary.....	274
References	274
9. Model Validation and Sensitivity Analysis	277
9.1 Model Validation: Objective	278
9.1.1 Model Output.....	278
9.1.2 Assumptions.....	279
9.1.3 Model Inputs	279
9.2 Model Validation Methodology	280
9.2.1 Validating Dynamic Models	283
9.2.2 Statistical Analysis of the Model	284
9.2.3 Analysis of Variance.....	285
9.3 Sensitivity Analysis	285
9.3.1 Direct Differential Method.....	285
9.4 Global Sensitivity Measures.....	289
9.4.1 Gradient-Based Global Sensitivity Measures	289
9.4.2 Variance-Based Global Sensitivity Measures	289
9.4.3 Determination of Variance-Based Sensitivity Indices.....	292
9.4.3.1 Sobol’s Method	292
9.4.3.2 Fourier Amplitude Sensitivity Test	292

9.5	Role of Sensitivity Analysis	293
9.5.1	Process Design	293
9.5.2	Process Operations	294
9.5.3	Model Development	296
9.6	Summary	297
	References	297
10.	Case Studies	299
10.1	Axial Distribution of Solids in Slurry Bubble Columns: Analytical Deterministic Models	300
10.1.1	Validation of the Model.....	304
10.1.2	Simulation Studies.....	306
10.2	Conversion for a Gas–Liquid Reaction in a Shallow Bed: A Numerical Model	307
10.2.1	Size of the Bubble Formed at the Distributor Plate.....	311
10.2.2	Hydrodynamic Model.....	312
10.2.3	Mass Transfer and Reactor Models	314
10.2.4	Model Validation.....	314
10.2.5	Simulation Studies	317
10.2.5.1	Effects of Column Diameters	317
10.2.5.2	Effect of Nozzle Diameter	317
10.2.5.3	Effect of Viscosity on Gas Holdup	318
10.2.5.4	Surface Tension on Gas Holdup	319
10.3	Stochastic Model to Predict Wall-to-Bed Mass Transfer in Packed and Fluidised Beds	320
10.3.1	Improvement in Mass Transfer due to Translation of Particles.....	321
10.3.2	Model for Wall-to-Bed Mass Transfer in Packed and Fluidised Beds	323
10.3.3	Relationship between Mass Transfer Coefficient and Improvement Coefficient	324
10.3.4	Evaluation of $I_{j,F}(I_{j,b}, t)$ and K_{av}	325
10.3.5	Validation of the Model for Fluidised Beds	326
10.3.5.1	Particle Velocities	327
10.3.5.2	Distance of the Particle from the Wall	328
10.3.5.3	Time Interval.....	328
10.3.6	Algorithm for Estimation of Mass Transfer Coefficient....	329
10.3.7	Model Validation.....	329
10.4	Artificial Neural Network Model: Heat Transfer in Bubble Columns	331
10.4.1	Selection of Inputs	332
10.4.2	Obtaining Experimental Data.....	332
10.4.3	Architecture of ANNs.....	333
10.5	Summary	335
	References	336

11. Simulation of Large Plants	339
11.1 Interconnecting Sub-Models	341
11.2 Simulation Study	342
11.3 Flowsheeting and Continuous Processes	343
11.3.1 Data Input and Verification	343
11.3.2 Thermodynamic Properties and Unit Operations Libraries	348
11.3.3 Calculation Phase	350
11.3.3.1 Sequential Approach	350
11.3.3.2 Tearing of Streams	351
11.3.3.3 Order of Calculation	351
11.3.3.4 Simultaneous or Equation-Solving Approach	353
11.3.4 Modular Approach	354
11.3.4.1 Choosing Modules	354
11.3.4.2 Sequential Modular Approach	355
11.3.4.3 Simultaneous Modular Approach	356
11.3.5 Output Phase	356
11.3.6 Simulation Study Using a Flowsheeting Programme	356
11.4 Short-Cut Methods and Rigorous Methods	357
11.5 Dynamic Simulation	358
11.5.1 Data Input and Verification	359
11.5.2 Calculation Phase	359
11.5.3 Data Output	360
11.6 Batch Processes	360
11.6.1 Simulation Methodology	360
11.6.2 Scheduling of Batch Processes	361
11.6.2.1 Standard Recipe Approach	361
11.6.2.2 Overall Optimisation Approach	362
11.6.3 Representation of Batch Processes	362
11.6.3.1 State-Task Network	362
11.6.3.2 Resource-Task Network	362
11.6.4 Discrete Time Formulation	363
11.6.5 Types of Constraints	364
11.7 Summary	365
References	365
Appendix A	367
Appendix B	371
Index	377

Preface

The quest for understanding various phenomena is human nature, and the development of science and engineering is based on it. Observation, searching for a trend in it, is followed by invention. Theoretical knowledge helps in predicting possible phenomena without carrying out an experiment. Chemical engineers are involved in the safe and economic design and operation of process plants and in increasing the productivity of existing process plants.

Today, simulation is an accepted way of studying various process industries. It may be carried out to study the behaviour of unit operations or a plant without fabricating any equipment, or to study the entire plant without any real loss or damage to the real equipment or environment. However, simulation requires a process model, which is a mathematical representation of a simplified picture of the process. Simulation studies are carried out by experimenting with the model. Thus, modelling and simulation both exist together.

The engineering of process systems was initially qualitative in nature. At present, it is founded on engineering sciences, computer-aided tools and the system-theoretical methodologies. The use of simulation has helped in developing an integrated approach to process design. The effects of environmental issues, choice of the controller, process safety and so forth on the economic design of the process plant can now be considered.

Earlier modelling efforts focused on developing analytical models. Various mathematical techniques were applied to obtain analytical solutions of various chemical engineering problems. Later, various numerical techniques were also applied to solve more rigorous problems. The books on modelling during those days covered these topics comprehensively. At present, many of these techniques such as estimation of the inverse of a matrix, solution of non-linear equations, numerical integration and so on are available with many types of software. The focus on modelling is now to understand the process in more detail and represent it in mathematical form. This book is written with this aim. It attempts to explain the simplification of a complicated process at various levels with the help of a 'model sketch' and to proceed in a systematic manner.

The models have been divided into four categories. The simple models are those which are based on simple laws such as Fick's law. The next category of models consists of generalised equations such as equations of motion. These deterministic models do not have any random phenomena and consider all variables as continuous variables. The next category covers discrete-event models and stochastic models which consider at least one variable as a discrete variable. The models based on population balance have also been

covered with it. The boundary between these models is not sharp; however, they certainly reflect increasing levels of difficulty and require different approaches.

The dynamic models have no separate treatment as many good books on dynamic modelling and process control are already available. Computational fluid dynamics has been purposefully left out due to the different nature of the modelling. It is not possible to cover everything related to modelling and simulation in this volume. The field of modelling and simulation is rapidly advancing. However, I hope that the concepts discussed here will be useful in future also.

Most of the software have their own syntax and semantics. Therefore, choosing a software was not an easy task. Finally, it was decided that the examples will be solved in MATLAB[®]. The code is short, and more attention can be given to the representation of process in mathematical form. The code also runs on open-source SCILAB, with minor modifications if no specific toolbox was used.

The vector notation of laws of conservation has been avoided because it is not intended to illustrate the derivation of the analytical solution. The Nomenclature does not provide unit as empirical correlations are not used in this book. The model equations are independent of units.

Chapter 1 introduces the complex nature of chemical processes and an introduction to the terms 'modelling' and 'simulation'. The advantages of simulation and the role of modelling in simulation have been studied.

Chapter 2 describes steps in simulation, various types of models, the approach to modelling, types of model equations, solution strategies, sources of equations and some of the common assumptions that are made to simplify the complexity of the process.

The few simple models that are still useful have been described in Chapter 3. The equation of state, Newton's law, Fourier's law, Ficks' law, Henry's law, Arrhenius law and adsorption isotherms, film model were discussed and their application was illustrated in few simple problems. In Chapter 4, the models based on laws of conservation of momentum, mass and heat transfer have been described. These models are applicable to systems involving a single phase only. Chapters 5 and 6 cover the models based on laws of conservation in multiphase systems without and with chemical reactions. The examples include the stationary dispersed phase (packed beds) and moving dispersed phase (fluidised beds and bubble columns).

Models based on population balance, discrete-event models and stochastic models have been covered in Chapter 7. These models generally involve random variables to describe discrete or even continuous variables. The simulation strategy is different in the sense that no analytical or numerical solution is sought as in the case of deterministic models.

The artificial neural network (ANN)-based models follow a black-box approach. They relate the data through a network of nodes and have a different nature. Feedforward-type ANNs and hybrid-type ANNs, which

combine the advantage of the first principle model, have been described in Chapter 8.

A model has to be validated for either experimental observations or benchmark problems. After validation, the model is acceptable for simulation purposes. The procedures for model validation and parametric sensitivity analysis have been presented in Chapter 9.

To illustrate the model development methodology, four case studies have been presented in Chapter 10: an analytical model, a numerical model, a stochastic model and an ANN-based model. The detailed reasoning while making assumptions, the development of model equations and simulation methodology are discussed. The second example of a numerical model, the breaking of a model into several sub-models during model development, was discussed. The complete MATLAB code is given in Appendix B.

The last chapter, Chapter 11, discusses the various approaches used for simulation of a large plant. The methodology needed to break down a large problem into sub-problems, the handling of recycle streams and other topics are discussed. A brief discussion on the nature of the problem related to batch process scheduling is included.

The techniques for solving model equations are outside of the scope of the book. Hence, various topics on solving differential equations, optimisation, genetic algorithms and so on have not been included.

It was not possible to include every good model in this book. Only those models were chosen which I could access and for which I found a fit at a right place in the manuscript.

I hope that this book will be helpful to senior undergraduate and post-graduate students and fulfil the expectations of its readers.

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