

Chemical Engineering

Mass Transfer

Comprehensive Theory

with Solved Examples and Practice Questions



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Mass Transfer

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Contents

Mass Transfer

Chapter 1

Introduction and Basic Concepts 1

1.1	Introduction	1
1.2	Classification of Mass Transfer	2
1.3	Mechanism of Mass Transfer	3
1.4	Driving Force for Mass Transfer	3
1.5	Concentrations, Diffusion Velocities and Fluxes	4
1.6	Dimensionless Numbers used in Mass Transfer	7
	<i>Student's Assignments</i>	8

Chapter 2

Diffusion 9

2.1	Molecular Diffusion	9
2.2	Fick's Law of Diffusion (Steady State) for a Binary System (A and B)	10
2.3	Diffusivity	10
2.4	Steady State Molecular Diffusion in Fluids under Stagnant and Laminar Flow Conditions	11
2.5	Multicomponent Diffusivity	19
2.6	Molecular Diffusion in Liquids	20
2.7	Molecular Diffusion in Solids	20
2.8	Prediction of Diffusivities	21
2.9	Mass Transfer Coefficients	22
2.10	Convective Mass Transfer	27
2.11	Boundary Layer Theory	28
2.12	Analogies between Heat, Mass and Momentum	31
2.13	Mass Transfer Theories	34

2.14	Turbulent Diffusion	37
2.15	Interphase Mass Transfer	38
	<i>Student's Assignments</i>	42

Chapter 3

Absorption and Stripping 46

3.1	Introduction	46
3.2	Equilibrium Solubility in a Gas-Liquid System	46
3.3	Selection of Solvent for Absorption and Stripping	46
3.4	Design of Packed and Tray Tower for Absorption	47
3.5	Gas Absorption Equipment	53
3.6	Comparison between Packed Tower and Tray Tower	57
3.7	Absorption with Chemical Reaction	57
	<i>Student's Assignments</i>	64

Chapter 4

Distillation 68

4.1	Introduction	68
4.2	Boiling Point Diagram/Phase Diagram	69
4.3	Relative Volatility	71
4.4	Fractional Distillation	72
4.5	McCabe-Thiele Method	72
4.6	Reflux Ratio	86
4.7	Fenske Equation	88
4.8	Use of Open Steam/Live Steam	89
4.9	Flash/Equilibrium Distillation	89
4.10	Differential/Batch Distillation	90
4.11	Steam Distillation	91

4.12 Vacuum Distillation	92
4.13 Calculation of Diameter of Distillation Column	93
4.14 Effect of Pressure on Dia of Column	93
4.15 Plate Efficiency	94
4.16 Relation between Murphree and Point Efficiency	95
4.17 Multicomponent Distillation	96
4.18 Azeotropes	98
4.19 Azeotropic and Extractive Distillation	100
<i>Student's Assignments</i>	108

Chapter 5

Liquid-Liquid Extraction, Leaching and Adsorption 113

5.1 Introduction	113
5.2 Types of System	114
5.3 Equilibrium Diagram in Liquid-Liquid Extraction	114
5.4 Effect of Temperature on Liquid-Liquid Equilibria	116
5.5 Batch/Single Stage Extraction Unit	117
5.6 Counter Current Extraction	117
5.7 Multistage Cross-Current Extraction	118
5.8 Selection of Solvent	119
5.9 Leaching	120
5.10 Adsorption	121
5.11 Applications of Adsorption Process	121
5.12 Classification of Adsorption	122
5.13 Types of Adsorbents and Their Characteristics	122
5.14 Adsorption Equilibria	123
5.15 Batch Adsorption	123
<i>Student's Assignments</i>	129

Chapter 6

Humidification 132

6.1 Introduction	132
6.2 Vapour-Gas Mixture	132
6.3 Important Terminology to Measure Humidity	133

6.4 Humid Volume	134
6.5 Humit Heat	134
6.6 Enthalpy	134
6.7 Dry Bulb Temperature	135
6.8 Wet Bulb Temperature	135
6.9 Dew Point Temperature	136
6.10 Adiabatic Saturation Temperature	137
<i>Student's Assignments</i>	142

Chapter 7

Drying 145

7.1 Introduction	145
7.2 Movement of Moisture within Solid	145
7.3 Drying Operations	146
7.4 Important Definitions	146
7.5 Rate of Drying Curve	147
7.6 Drying Rate in Constant Rate Period with Help of Heat Transfer Coefficient	151
7.7 Humid Volume	152
<i>Student's Assignments</i>	157

Chapter 8

Membrane Separation 162

8.1 Introduction	162
8.2 Types of Membrane	163
8.3 Some Basic Definition in Membrane Separation Process	164
8.4 Microfiltration Membrane Processes	164
8.5 Reverse-Osmosis Membrane Process	165
8.6 Ultrafiltration Membrane Processes	169
8.7 Nanofiltration	170
<i>Student's Assignments</i>	174



Introduction and Basic Concepts

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The reading of this chapter will enable the students

- To understand the classification of mass transfer
- To understand the mechanism of mass transfer
- To understand the concentrations, diffusion velocities and fluxes

1.1 Introduction

- The mass transfer is the net movement of a component in a mixture from one location to the another location in presence of a difference in concentration or partial pressure. So, when there is a driving force then mass transfer will occur. The driving force over here is the concentration or partial pressure difference. Let us consider one common example of mass transfer. Suppose, if you have taken a lump of sugar added to a cup of tea which dissolves and then diffuses throughout the tea cup uniformly.
- So, another examples are the deliberate use of agarbati, the fragrance generally spreads uniformly when we put agarbati at home.
- The other examples is drying of clothes under the sun. Here, the drying occurs because the moisture diffuses into the air. So, the diffusion or the mass transfer is basically occurs with a particular driving force. Like, if we want to consider a movement of solid through the conveyer belts or movement of liquid through a pipe is not the mass transfer operations because it is not based on the concentration or partial pressure driving force.



Examples on Industrial Processes

- Separation of CO_2 from flue gas : Absorption Process
- Separation of a mixture of Ethanol and Water into its components : Distillation Process
- Separation of mixtures of Toluene and Water using Benzene as solvent : Extraction Process
- Drying of wet solid such as wood with the help of air : Drying Process

1.2 Classification of Mass Transfer

1.2.1 Distillation

Distillation is a vapour-liquid operation in which the mixture components are separated by use of thermal energy. When liquid mixture is heated, different components exert different vapour pressure, expressed in terms of relative volatility. This pressure difference results in separation of components in such a way that the top product contains higher amount of light component and bottom products contains higher amounts of heavier components, as shown in figure. A distillation example is separation of crude petroleum into gasoline, kerosene, etc.

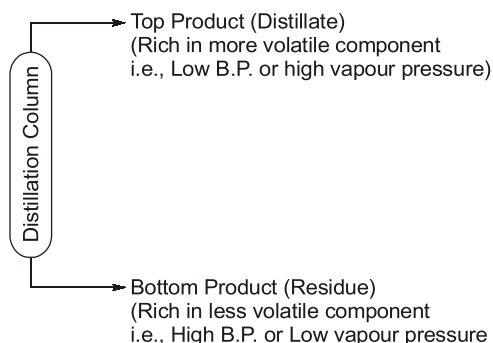


Fig. Schematic diagram of a distillation column

1.2.2 Absorption and Stripping

Gas absorption is a gas-liquid operation in which one or more constituents of a gas mixture are separated by using a suitable liquid solvent, i.e., component moves from gas phase to liquid phase as shown in figure. Example of gas absorption methods is ammonia washing from ammonia-air mixture by means of water. Stripping is opposite of absorption, i.e., a component moves from liquid phase to gas phase.

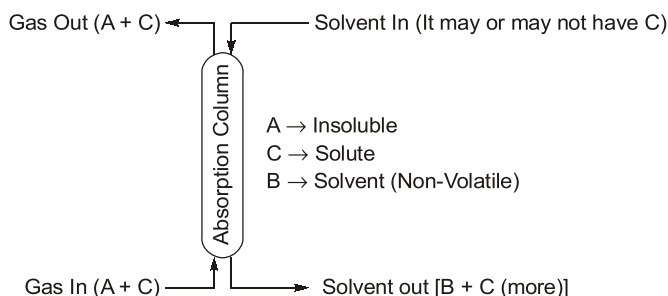


Fig. Schematic diagram of an absorption column

1.2.3 Liquid-Liquid Extraction

It is a liquid-liquid operation, also called as solvent extraction, in which components of a liquid mixture are separated by treating it with suitable solvent which dissolves one or more constituents of mixture more preferably. It is an efficient separation process in cases where separation is either not possible or not economical by using distillation. For example, separation of components of an azeotropic mixture.

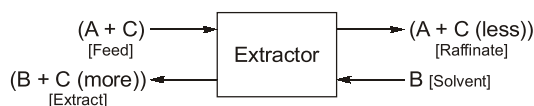


Fig. Schematic diagram of a Liquid-Liquid Extractor

1.2.4 Crystallization

It is liquid-solid operation in which we obtain uniform crystals of good purity. The saturated liquid is subjected to changes in temperature and pressure in such a way that crystals get separated from the feed liquor as shown in the figure.

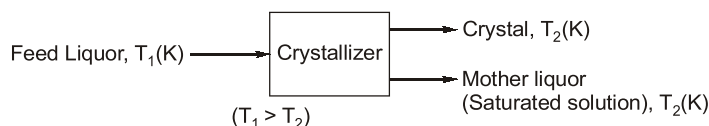


Fig. Schematic diagram of a crystallizer

1.2.5 Drying

Drying is gas-solid operation in which a relatively small amount of water is removed from solid material, by contacting it with a continuous stream of gas (air) as shown in figure.

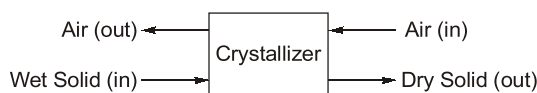
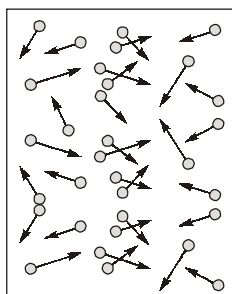


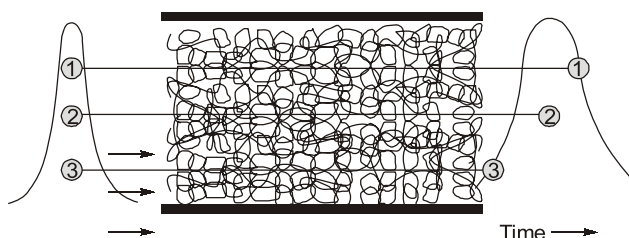
Fig. Schematic diagram of a dryer

1.3 Mechanism of Mass Transfer

Molecular Mass Transfer



Convective Mass Transfer



In this case, eddy diffusion by random macroscopic fluid motion is the responsible for the convective mass transfer.

1.4 Driving Force for Mass Transfer

1.4.1 Two-Phase System

- Spontaneous alteration through molecular diffusion occurs.
- Ultimately brings the entire system to a state of equilibrium whereupon alteration stops.

- For example, NH_3 concentration will be uniform in the liquid phase at a particular concentration. It will be constant at a different concentration in the gas phase.

1.4.2 Multiphase System

- Diffusional processes in each phase separately.
- Within one phase it is usually described in terms of concentration changes.

1.5 Concentrations, Diffusion Velocities and Fluxes

1.5.1 Concentrations

- Mass Concentrations :

- Mass concentration of component i

$$\rho_i = \frac{m_i}{V}$$

- Sum of mass fraction

$$\sum_{i=1}^n W_i = \sum_{i=1}^n \frac{\rho_i}{\rho} = 1$$

- Total mass concentration

$$\rho = \sum_{i=1}^n \rho_i$$

- Mass fraction

$$W_i = \frac{\rho_i}{\sum_i \rho_i} = \frac{\rho_i}{\rho}$$

- Molar Concentrations :

- Molar concentration of component i

$$C_i = \frac{p_i}{RT}$$

- Total molar concentration

$$C = \sum_{i=1}^n C_i$$

- Total molar concentration for ideal gas mixtures

$$C = \frac{1}{RT} \sum_{i=1}^n p_i = \frac{p_t}{RT}$$

- Mole fraction of component i (liquid or solid)

$$x_i = \frac{C_i}{C}$$

- Mole fraction of component i (ideal gas mixture)

$$y_i = \frac{p_i}{p_t}$$

- Mole fraction of component i (gases)

$$y_i = \frac{C_i}{C}$$

- Sum of mole fractions

$$\sum_i x_i = 1; \sum_i y_i = 1$$

1.5.2 Diffusion Velocities

- Mass Average Velocity :
 - Defined in terms of mass concentrations :

$$V_{\text{mass-avg}} = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n \rho_i v_i}{\sum_{i=1}^n \rho_i} = \sum_{i=1}^n \left(\frac{\rho_i}{\rho} \right) v_i = \sum_{i=1}^n \omega_i v_i$$

where,

v_i = absolute velocity of species i with respect to a fixed reference frame

ω_i = mass fraction of species i

- Molar Average Velocity :
 - Defined in terms of molar concentrations :

$$V_{\text{mol-avg}} = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n C_i \times v_i}{\sum_{i=1}^n C_i} = \sum_{i=1}^n \left(\frac{C_i}{C} \right) v_i = \sum_{i=1}^n x_i v_i$$

where,

x_i = mole fraction of species i

Example 1.1

A gas mixture containing ($\text{H}_2 = 15\%$, $\text{CO} = 30\%$, $\text{CO}_2 = 5\%$ and $\text{N}_2 = 50\%$) flows through a tube of 1 inch diameter, at 15 bar total pressure. If the velocities of the respective components are 0.05 m/s, 0.03 m/s, 0.02 m/s and 0.03 m/s. Calculate the mass average and molar average velocities of the mixture.

Solution :

Rename $\text{H}_2 = 1$, $\text{CO} = 2$, $\text{CO}_2 = 3$ and $\text{N}_2 = 4$.

The volume average velocity (= molar average velocity) given by

$$\begin{aligned} V_{\text{mol-avg}} &= \frac{1}{C} (C_1 v_1 + C_2 v_2 + C_3 v_3 + C_4 v_4) \\ &= y_1 v_1 + y_2 v_2 + y_3 v_3 + y_4 v_4 \end{aligned}$$

Here, y_i is the mole fraction of component i in the gas mixture.

Putting the values, we get $V_{\text{mol-avg}} = (0.15)(0.05) + (0.3)(0.03) + (0.05)(0.02) + (0.5)(0.03)$
 $= 0.0325 \text{ m/s}$

Now, $M_{\text{avg}} = y_1 M_1 + y_2 M_2 + y_3 M_3 + y_4 M_4$
 $= (0.15)(2) + (0.3)(28) + (0.05)(44) + (0.5)(28) = 24.9$

$$V_{\text{mass-avg}} = \frac{1}{M} \sum_{i=1}^{n=4} y_i M_i v_i$$

$$= \frac{1}{M_{\text{avg}}} (y_1 M_1 v_1 + y_2 M_2 v_2 + y_3 M_3 v_3 + y_4 M_4 v_4)$$

$$V_{\text{mass-avg}} = \frac{(0.15)(2)(0.05) + (0.3)(28)(0.03) + (0.05)(44)(0.02) + (0.5)(28)(0.03)}{24.9}$$

$$V_{\text{mass-avg}} = 0.014 \text{ m/s}$$

1.5.3 Fluxes

- Rate of transport of species i through unit area normal to the transport.
- Flux of a given species is a vector quantity.
- Flux may be calculated w.r.t. coordinates fixed in space and coordinates moving with the mass or molar average velocity.
- Mass Flux :
 - Calculated w.r.t. coordinates fixed in space or relative to stationary observer.
 - Mass Flux : $N_{i-\text{mass}} = \rho_i v_i$
 - Total Mass Flux : $N_{\text{mass}} = \rho V_{\text{mass-avg}}$
 - Calculated w.r.t. mass average velocity or relative to an observer moving with the mass average velocity.
 - Mass Flux : $\rho_{i-\text{mass}} = \rho_i (v_i - V_{\text{mass-avg}})$
- Molar Flux :
 - Calculated w.r.t. coordinates fixed in space or relative to stationary observer.
 - Molar Flux : $N_{i-\text{mol}} = C_i v_i$
 - Total Molar Flux : $N_{\text{mol}} = C V_{\text{mol-avg}}$
 - Calculated w.r.t. mass average velocity or relative to an observer moving with the mass average velocity.
 - Molar Flux : $J_{i-\text{mol}} = C_i (v_i - V_{\text{mol-avg}})$

1.5.4 Relation between Fluxes

$$J_{i-\text{mass}} = \rho_i (v_i - V_{\text{mass-avg}})$$

$$N_{i-\text{mass}} = \rho_i v_i$$

$$J_{i-\text{mass}} = \rho_i \times \frac{N_{i-\text{mass}}}{\rho_i} - \rho_i V_{\text{mass-avg}}$$

$$N_{i-\text{mass}} = J_{i-\text{mass}} + \rho_i V_{\text{mass-avg}}$$

$$= J_{i-\text{mass}} + \frac{\rho_i}{\rho} N_{\text{mass}}$$

Similarly,

$$\begin{aligned}N_{i-\text{mol}} &= J_{i-\text{mol}} + C_i V_{\text{mol-avg}} \\&= J_{i-\text{mol}} + \frac{C_i}{C} N_{\text{mol}}\end{aligned}$$

1.6 Dimensionless Numbers used in Mass Transfer

1. Sherwood Number (Sh)

$$\text{Sh} = \frac{k'L}{D_{AB}} = \frac{\text{Convective mass transport}}{\text{Molecular mass transport}},$$

k' = Mass transfer coefficient

where, L is the characteristics length.

2. Schmidt Number (Sc)

$$\text{Sc} = \frac{\nu}{D_{AB}} = \left(\frac{\mu}{\rho}\right)\left(\frac{1}{D_{AB}}\right) = \frac{\text{Momentum diffusivity}}{\text{Mass diffusivity}}$$

4. Lewis Number (Le)

$$\text{Le} = \frac{\text{Sc}}{\text{Pr}} = \frac{\alpha}{D_{AB}} = \left(\frac{K}{\rho C_p}\right)\left(\frac{1}{D_{AB}}\right) = \frac{\text{Thermal diffusivity}}{\text{Mass diffusivity}}$$

5. Reynolds Number (Re)

$$\text{Le} = \frac{\rho \nu D}{\mu} = \frac{\text{Inertial force}}{\text{Viscous force}}$$

6. Stanton Number (St)

$$\text{St} = \frac{k'}{\nu} = \frac{\text{Sh}}{\text{Re} \times \text{Sc}}$$

7. Peclet Number (Pe)

$$\text{Pe} = \text{Re} \times \text{Sc}$$

■■■■



Student's Assignments

- Q.1** Driving force for mass transfer in a binary system is
- Temperature difference
 - Chemical potential
 - Concentration difference
 - Pressure difference
- Q.2** Which of the following is/are a mechanism for mass transfer?
- Difference in pressure
 - Difference in solubility
 - Difference in volatility
 - Difference in viscosity
- Q.3** Which of the following is/are example of solid-liquid mass transfer operation?
- Crystallization
 - Adsorption
 - Leaching
 - Drying
- Q.4** Which of the following option(s) is/are example of gas-liquid operation?
- Absorption
 - Distillation
 - Drying
 - Humidification
- Q.5** Molecular mass transfer takes place either fluid is
- stagnant or in laminar flow
 - in turbulent flow
 - forced to flow in bulk with eddies
 - None of these
- Q.6** Molecular mass transfer (molecular diffusion) can be increased by
- Increasing temperature
 - Decreasing temperature
 - Increasing pressure
 - Decreasing pressure

ANSWERS

1. (b) 2. (b,c) 3. (a,b,c) 4. (a,b,d)
5. (a) 6. (a,d)

■ ■ ■ ■