Shear History Extensional Rheology Experiment II (SHERE II)
Microgravity Rheology with Non-Newtonian Polymeric Fluids

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Model Fluid and Experimental Hardware

- The SHERE II test fluid consists of a dilute solution (0.025 wt.%) of 2.25 \times 10^6 \text{ g/mol styrene} (narrow polydispersity) in oligomeric styrene mixed with 6 \text{ µm} poly (methyl methacrylate) microspheres.
- Test fluid preparation and its ground-based rheological characterization was performed at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) using a TA Instruments strain-controlled ARES rheometer. The onboard extensional rheometer and other allied hardware was manufactured by ZIN Technologies.

Sheet Fluid

- 6 micron PMMA beads (left) were used to simulate the lunar regolith (right).
- Test fluid preparation and its ground-based rheological characterization was performed at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) using a TA Instruments strain-controlled ARES rheometer. The onboard extensional rheometer and other allied hardware was manufactured by ZIN Technologies.

International Space Station (ISS) Onboard Experiments

- The onboard experiments consist of three distinct stages: Preshear, stretch, and capillary thickening.
- Each test point is uniquely determined through the preshear rate $\dot{\gamma}$ and the stretch rate $\dot{\varepsilon}$ (Preshear time = 30 s). 25 different test points were measured during SHERE II operations.

Results

Shear Rheology

- The shear viscosity of the filled suspension is higher than that of the pure Boger fluid alone and is Newtonian over two decades of shear rate.
- The shear thickening seen at higher shear rates is possibly due to improved hydrodynamic interparticle interactions (Scirocco et al. 2005).
- Small Amplitude Oscillatory Experiments show that the fluid is dominated by viscosity.
- Addition of the particles leaves linear rheology unchanged.

- The primary objective of SHERE II is to study the effect of torsional preshear on the subsequent extensional behavior of filled viscoelastic suspensions.
- Microgravity environment eliminates gravitational sagging that makes Earth-based experiments of extensional rheology challenging.
- Experiments may serve as an idealized model system to study the properties of lunar regolith-polymer binder based construction materials.
- Filled polymeric suspensions are ubiquitous in foods, cosmetics, detergents, biomedical materials, etc.

Conclusions

- Specialized algorithms were written to carry out the data analysis and calculation of the rheological parameters according to the flowchart above.
- From the elaasto-capillary regime of the filament thinning phase, the relaxation time as well as the extensional viscosity of test fluid can be obtained.
- The stretch phase yields the extensional viscosity of the test fluid as a function of nominal strain rate.

- In all experiments strain hardening was observed during the stretch phase as well as the capillary thinning phase; this strain hardening arises from the extension of the polymer chains under the action of the extensional flow field.
- For a strain rate of $\dot{\varepsilon} = 3 \text{ s}^{-1}$, it is observed that strain hardening in the stretch phase is decreased with increasing preshear rates (Figure a). This is in accordance with the literature (Anna and McKinley, 2008) and arises from the orthogonal alignment of polymer chains during preshear.
- This effect is not significant enough to manifest itself under the stronger extensional field of $\dot{\varepsilon} = 5 \text{ s}^{-1}$, and the extensional viscosity is not a function of preshear (Figure b).
- The Trouton ratio in the capillary thinning regime is independent of the preshear rate (Figure c), indicating that the alignment effect of the chains vanish upon completion of the stretch. The Trouton ratio averaged over preshear rates increases with increasing extensional strain rate (Figure d).

References