3.9 New-Newtonian Flows

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Introduction

An important class of fluids exists which differ from Newtonian fluids in that the relationship between the shear stress and the flow field is more complicated. Such fluids are called non-Newtonian or rheological fluids. Examples include various suspensions such as coal–water or coal–oil slurries, food products, inks, glues, soaps, polymer solutions, etc.

An interesting characteristic of rheological fluids is their large "apparent viscosities". This results in laminar flow situations in many applications, and consequently the engineering literature is concentrated on laminar rather than turbulent flows. It should also be mentioned that knowledge of non-Newtonian fluid mechanics and heat transfer is still in an early stage and many aspects of the field remain to be clarified.

In the following sections, we will discuss the definition and classification of non-Newtonian fluids, the special problems of thermophysical properties, and the prediction of pressure drops in both laminar and turbulent flow in ducts of various cross-sectional shapes for different classes of non-Newtonian fluids.

Classification of Non-Newtonian Fluids

It is useful to first define a Newtonian fluid since all other fluids are non-Newtonian. Newtonian fluids possess a property called viscosity and follow a law analogous to the Hookian relation between the stress applied to a solid and its strain. For a one-dimensional Newtonian fluid flow, the shear stress at a point is proportional to the rate of strain (called in the literature the *shear rate*) which is the velocity gradient at that point. The constant of proportionality is the dynamic viscosity, i.e.,

$$\tau_{y,x} = \mu \frac{du}{dy} = \mu \dot{\gamma} \tag{3.9.1}$$

where x refers to the direction of the shear stress y the direction of the velocity gradient, and $\dot{\gamma}$ is the shear rate. The important characteristic of a Newtonian fluid is that the dynamic viscosity is independent of the shear rate.

Equation (3.9.1) is called a constitutive equation, and if $\tau_{x,y}$ is plotted against $\dot{\gamma}$, the result is a linear relation whose slope is the dynamic viscosity. Such a graph is called a *flow curve* and is a convenient way to illustrate the viscous properties of various types of fluids.

Fluids which do not obey Equation (3.9.1) are called non-Newtonian. Their classifications are illustrated in Figure 3.9.1 where they are separated into various categories of purely viscous time-independent or time-dependent fluids and viscoelastic fluids. Viscoelastic fluids, which from their name possess both viscous and elastic properties (as well as memory), have received considerable attention because of their ability to reduce both drag and heat transfer in channel flows. They will be discussed in a later subsection.

Purely viscous time-dependent fluids are those in which the shear stress in a function only of the shear rate but in a more complicated manner than that described in Equation (3.9.1). Figure 3.9.2 illustrates the characteristics of purely viscous time-independent fluids. In the figure, (a) and (b) are fluids where the shear stress depends only on the shear rate but in a nonlinear way. Fluid (a) is called pseudoplastic (or shear thinning), and fluid (b) is called dilatant (or shear thickening). Curve (c) is one which has an initial yield stress after which it acts as a Newtonian fluid, called Buckingham plastic, and curve (d), called Hershel-Buckley, also has a yield stress after which it becomes pseudoplastic. Curve (e) depicts a Newtonian fluid.

Figure 3.9.3 shows flow curves for two common classes of purely viscous time-dependent non-Newtonian fluids. It is seen that such fluids have a hysteresis loop or memory whose shape depends

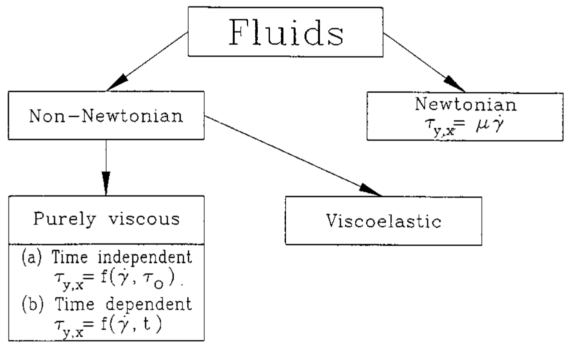

FIGURE 3.9.1 Classification of fluids.

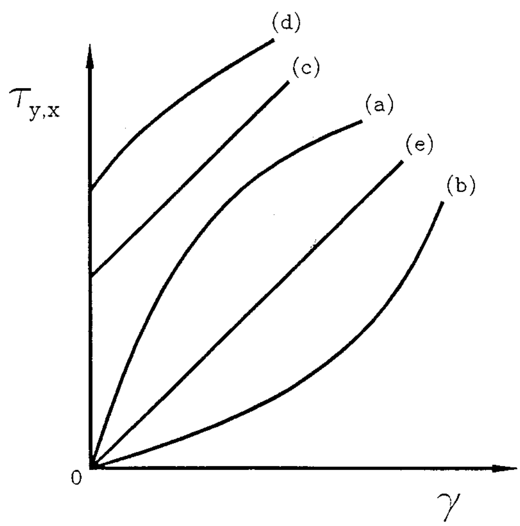

FIGURE 3.9.2 Flow curves of purely viscous, time-independent fluids: (a) pseudoplastic; (b) dilatant; (c) Bingham plastic; (d) Hershel–Buckley; (e) Newtonian.

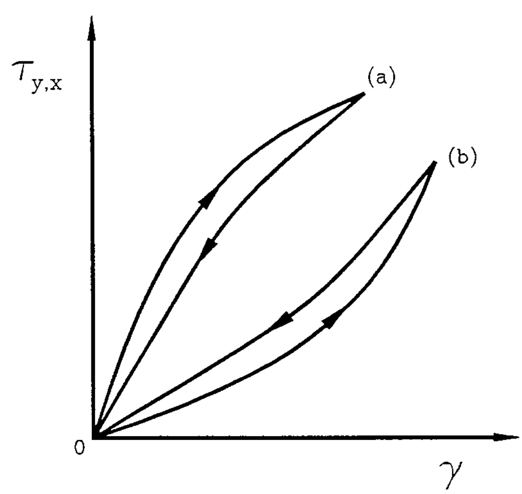

FIGURE 3.9.3 Flow curves for purely viscous, time-dependent fluids: (a) thixotropic; (b) rheopectic.

upon the time-dependent rate at which the shear stress is applied. Curve (a) illustrates a pseudoplastic time-dependent fluid and curve (b) a dilatant time-dependent fluid. They are called, respectively, thixotropic and rheopectic fluids and are complicated by the fact that their flow curves are difficult to characterize for any particular application.

Apparent Viscosity

Although non-Newtonian fluids do not have the property of viscosity, in the Newtonian fluid sense, it is convenient to define an apparent viscosity which is the ratio of the local shear stress to the shear rate at that point.

$$\mu_a = \frac{\tau}{\dot{\gamma}} \tag{3.9.2}$$

The apparent viscosity is not a true property for non-Newtonian fluids because its value depends upon the flow field, or shear rate. Nevertheless, it is a useful quantity and flow curves are often constructed with the apparent viscosity as the ordinate and shear rate as the abscissa. Such a flow curve will be illustrated in a later subsection.

Constitutive Equations

A constitutive equation is one that expresses the relation between the shear stress or apparent viscosity and the shear rate through the rheological properties of the fluid. For example, Equation (3.9.1) is the constitutive equation for a Newtonian fluid.

Many constitutive equations have been developed for non-Newtonian fluids with some of them having as many as five rheological properties. For engineering purposes, simpler equations are normally satisfactory and two of the most popular will be considered here.

Since many of the non-Newtonian fluids in engineering applications are pseudoplastic, such fluids will be used in the following to illustrate typical flow curves and constitutive equations. Figure 3.9.4 is a qualitative flow curve for a typical pseudoplastic fluid plotted with logarithmic coordinates. It is seen in the figure that at low shear rates, region (a), the fluid is Newtonian with a constant apparent viscosity of μ_o (called the *zero shear rate viscosity*). At higher shear rates, region (b), the apparent viscosity begins to decrease until it becomes a straight line, region (c). This region (c) is called the power law region and is an important region in fluid mechanics and heat transfer. At higher shear rates than the power law region, there is another transition region (d) until again the fluid becomes Newtonian in region (e). As discussed below, regions (a), (b), and (c) are where most of the engineering applications occur.

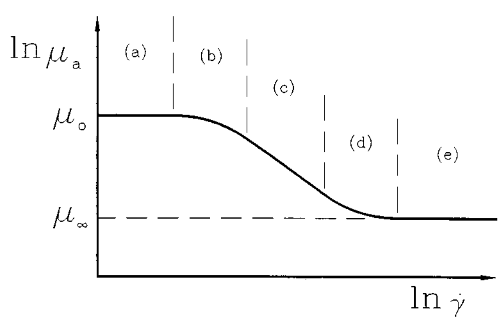

FIGURE 3.9.4 Illustrative flow curve for a pseudoplastic fluid (a) Newtonian region; (b) transition region I: (c) power law region; (d) transition region II; (e) high-shear-rate Newtonian region.

Power Law Constitutive Equation

Region (c) in Figure 3.9.4, which was defined above as the power law region, has a simple constitutive equation:

$$\tau = K\dot{\gamma}^n \tag{3.9.3}$$

or, from Equation (3.9.2):

$$\mu_a = K\dot{\gamma}^{n-1} \tag{3.9.4}$$

Here, K is called the fluid consistency and n the flow index. Note that if $n = 1$, the fluid becomes Newtonian and K becomes the dynamic viscosity. Because of its simplicity, the power law constitutive equation has been most often used in rheological studies, but at times it is inappropriate because it has several inherent flaws and anomalies. For example, if one considers the flow of a pseudoplastic fluid ($n < 1$) through a circular duct, because of symmetry at the center of the duct the shear rate (velocity gradient) becomes zero and thus the apparent viscosity from Equation (3.9.4) becomes infinite. This poses conceptual difficulties especially when performing numerical analyses on such systems. Another difficulty arises when the flow field under consideration is not operating in region (c) of Figure 3.9.4 but may have shear rates in region (a) and (b). In this case, the power law equation is not applicable and a more general constitutive equation is needed.

Modified Power Law Constitutive Equation

A generalization of the power law equation which extends the shear rate range to regions (a) and (b) is given by

$$\mu_a = \frac{\mu_o}{1 + \frac{\mu_o}{K}\dot{\gamma}^{1-n}} \tag{3.9.5}$$

Examination of Equation (3.9.5) reveals that at low shear rates, the second term in the denominator becomes small compared with unity and the apparent viscosity becomes a constant equal to μ_O. This represents the Newtonian region in Figure 3.9.4. On the other hand, as the second term in the denominator becomes large compared with unity, Equation (3.9.5) becomes Equation (3.9.4) and represents region (c), the power law region. When both denominator terms must be considered, Equation (3.9.5) represents region (b) in Figure 3.9.4.

An important advantage of the modified power law equation is that it retains the rheological properties K and n of the power law model plus the additional property μ_o. Thus, as will be shown later, in the flow and heat transfer equations, the same dimensionless groups as in the power law model will appear plus an additional dimensionless parameter which describes in which of the regions (a), (b), or (c) a particular system is operating. Also, solutions using the modified power law model will have Newtonian and power law solutions as asymptotes.

Equation (3.9.5) describes the flow curve for a pseudoplastic fluid ($n < 1$). For a dilatant fluid, ($n > 1$), an appropriate modified power law model is given by

$$\mu_a = \mu_o\left[1 + \frac{K}{\mu_o}\dot{\gamma}^{n-1}\right] \tag{3.9.6}$$

Many other constitutive equations have been proposed in the literature (Skelland, 1967; Cho and Hartnett, 1982; Irvine and Karni, 1987), but the ones discussed above are sufficient for a large number of engineering applications and agree well with the experimental determinations of rheological properties.