Frictional effects in the flow of concentrated suspensions

Morton M. Denn Levich Institute and Department of Chemical Engineering City College of New York, CUNY

Concentrated suspensions are ubiquitous in applications, and these suspensions can flow in a way that is unusual in the context of classical fluid mechanics. In particular, suspensions of smooth non-colloidal spheres in a Newtonian suspending fluid will exhibit shear thickening (i.e., a viscosity that increases with shear rate), and in some cases discontinuous shear thickening, in which the viscosity jumps discontinuously at a critical shear rate or stress, followed by shear jamming. We describe here how particle-particle friction, which is excluded in classical fluid mechanics analyses, plays a central role in the flow behavior, with shear thickening the result of a transition between mostly lubricated contacts to predominantly frictional contacts as the stress increases. The full shear rheology for a given concentration can be described by two parameters: a characteristic interparticle repulsive force and a friction coefficient. The precise nature of the frictional interactions, as well as other surface force and particle size effects, remain open subjects.