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Agglomeration Process of Wet Granular Material: Effects of Size Distribution and Froude Number

THANH-TRUNG VO^{1,2}, SAEID NEZAMABADI¹, JEAN-YVES DELENNE³, FARHANG RADJAI^{1,4}

¹ Laboratoire de Mécanique et Génier Civil (LMGC), Université de Montpellier, CNRS, Montpellier, France.

² Bridge and Road Department, Danang Architecture University, 566 Nui Thanh St, Hai Chau Dist, Danang, Vietnam.

³ IATE, UMR1208 INRA - CIRAD - Université de Montpellier - SupAgro, 34060 Montpellier, France.

⁴ <MSE>, UMI 3466 CNRS-MIT, CEE, MIT, 77 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge 02139, USA.

OBJECTIVES & METHODOLOGY

We investigate the agglomeration process of solid particles in the presence of a viscous liquid. We are mostly interested in application to iron ore granulation in a horizontal rotating drum. In this work, we use Molecular Dynamics (MD) method to simulate the agglomeration process during the dense granular flows in the rotary drum. In which particles are distributed by a uniform distribution of particle volume fractions.

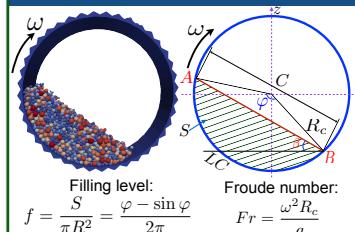
INDUSTRIAL PROCESS



Granulation (balling) Drum

Agglomeration is the process of particles size enlargement and most commonly refers to the upgrading of material fines into larger particles, such as pellets or granules. Iron ore granulation is an important stage in the steel making.

ROLLING - CASCADING MODEL



$$C = AB = 2R_c \sin \frac{\varphi}{2}$$

$$S = \frac{R_c^2}{2} (\varphi - \sin \varphi)$$

$$\omega \text{ Rotational speed (rad/s)}$$

$$\beta \text{ Free surface angle}$$

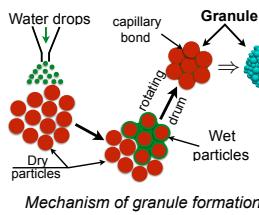
$$\varphi \text{ Filling angle (degree)}$$

$$\text{Packing fraction: } \Phi = \frac{V_s}{S \times L} = \frac{\sum (\frac{4}{3}\pi R_i^3)}{S \times L}$$

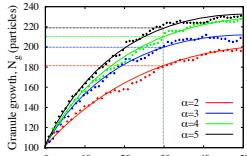
$$\text{Filling level: } f = \frac{S}{\pi R_c^2} = \frac{\varphi - \sin \varphi}{2\pi}$$

$$\text{Froude number: } Fr = \frac{\omega^2 R_c}{g}$$

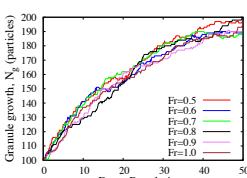
AGGLOMERATION RESULTS



Mechanism of granule formation



Exponential increase of granule for different size ratios



Exponential increase of granule for different Froude numbers.

Granular material flow & granule growth in the cascading regime

MOLECULAR DYNAMICS METHOD

$$m_i \frac{d^2 s_i}{dt^2} = \sum_i ((f_n + f_c + f_{vis}) \mathbf{n} + f_t \mathbf{t}) + m_i g$$

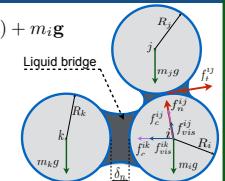
s_i position vector of particle i

\mathbf{g} vector gravity

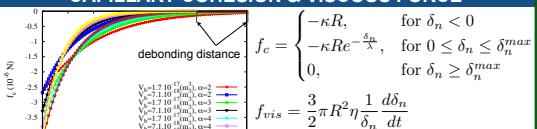
\mathbf{n} normal unit vector

\mathbf{t} tangential unit vector

m_i mass of particle i (kg)



CAPILLARY COHESION & VISCOUS FORCE



$$f_c = \begin{cases} -\kappa R, & \text{for } \delta_n < 0 \\ -\kappa R e^{-\frac{\delta_n}{\lambda}}, & \text{for } 0 \leq \delta_n \leq \delta_n^{max} \\ 0, & \text{for } \delta_n \geq \delta_n^{max} \end{cases}$$

$$f_{vis} = \frac{3}{2} \pi R^2 \eta \frac{1}{dt} \frac{d\delta_n}{\delta_n}$$

$$\kappa = 2\pi\gamma_s \cos\theta$$

$$\delta_n^{max} = (1 + \frac{1}{2}\theta) V_b^{1/3}$$

$$\alpha = \frac{R_{max}}{R_{min}}$$

$$\lambda = c h(\alpha) \left(\frac{V_b}{R'} \right)^{\frac{1}{2}}$$

$$R = \sqrt{R_i R_j}$$

Diagram of capillary bridge

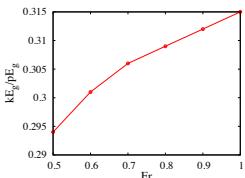
FURTHER RESEARCHES

- Investigation the agglomeration process of a huge number of particles.

- Comparison between experiment and simulation of agglomeration processes in rotating drum.

Conclusions

- The effect of size ratio on the granule growth is more crucial than that of rotational speed.
- Granule growth is an exponential function of size ratio and rotational speed of drum.
- Kinetic energy normalized by potential energy increases proportional to the rotational speed, but inversely proportional to the size ratio.
- The wet and contact coordination numbers of agglomerate grains are proportional to size ratio.



Exponential increase of kinetic energy normalized by potential energy of granule as function of Fr.