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1 **Development and validation of a comprehensive 1-D model to simulate gas hold-up** 2 **and gas–liquid transfer in deep air-water bubble columns**

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9

10 **Abstract**

11 This study proposed to develop a model coupling hydrodynamics and mass transfer in order to gain
12 an understanding of measurements taken on air-water bubble columns with low gas hold-up. Three
13 experimental datasets with various operating conditions (water quality, liquid height, air flow range)
14 were chosen. The model analyzes and interprets the significant impact of the local hydrostatic
15 pressure and the effects of contamination on hydrodynamic and mass transfer parameters. The
16 oxygen concentration in gas significantly depletes with the distance from diffusers, which explains
17 the difference between the calculated mean of the local $\langle k_L a \rangle$ and global $K_L a$ coefficients. This
18 difference is highly significant for a high bubble column and/or systems with a low mean bubble size.
19 The impact of water quality on mass transfer can be characterized by the contamination angle using
20 comprehensive 1-D modeling and highlights a differentiated impact on the hydrodynamic or mass
21 transfer parameters.

22

23 **Keywords**

24 1D Model, Oxygen mass transfer, Aeration, Wastewater treatment, Bubble column

25

26 **1. Introduction**

27 In the domain of water and wastewater treatment and recovery, gas–liquid reactors are often used
28 to perform gas–liquid oxygen mass transfer. In particular, air bubbles are injected in aeration tanks to
29 provide microorganisms with the oxygen they require for their growth. Aeration systems in these
30 processes must be efficient in terms of mass transfer coefficients, easy to construct, with no moving
31 parts and a low pressure drop through the air diffusers (Manjrekar 2016). In this study, an analogy is
32 made between bubble columns and wastewater aeration tanks, since they can both operate in the
33 bubbly flow regime with similar heights and gas hold-up ranges. Indeed, using a deep bubble column
34 allows one to reproduce the water heights and gas–liquid contact times encountered in aeration
35 tanks (Gillot and Héduit 2008, Duran et al. 2016, Baeten et al. 2020). Similarly, air flowrates can be
36 set to obtain gas superficial velocities and gas hold-ups ranges used in aeration tanks (Shah et al.
37 1982, Duran et al. 2016, Amaral et al. 2018). This analogy aims at helping reach a better
38 understanding of fundamental phenomena that affects gas–liquid mass transfer in the bubbly flow
39 regime, in order to optimize the aeration systems that remain the main energy consumer in water
40 resource recovery facilities (Rosso and Stenstrom 2005, Longo et al. 2016).

41 For systems with low gas hold-ups (< 5%) and fine bubble diffusers, air bubbles are spherical or
42 ellipsoidal with few coalescence and break-up phenomena (Talvy et al. 2007a, Colombet et al. 2015).
43 However, bubble coalescence is more likely to occur in systems with denser bubble swarms and
44 higher gas hold-ups and bubble diameters. In an air–water bubble column with fine bubble diffusers,
45 the homogeneous flow regime without coalescence can be maintained under a transitional gas
46 superficial velocity between 0.04 and 0.08 m/s (Mudde et al. 2009). In Besagni et al. (2016), the
47 coarse gas sparger used led to an early disruption of the bubbly flow due to both non-uniform
48 distribution and changes in bubble size generation. Loubière et al. (2003) also pointed out that
49 bubble size variation depended upon the type of diffuser with a flexible porous membrane, the initial
50 bubble size increases as the superficial gas velocity rises, whereas when using a rigid orifice, bubble
51 size varies slightly depending on superficial gas velocity.

52 In air-water systems, the effect of bubble contamination on mass transfer is another frequently
53 observed process and is mainly due to surfactants (Pöpel and Wagner 1994; Capela et al. 2002;
54 Sardeing et al. 2006, Rosso et al. 2006, Jimenez et al. 2014) as well as aqueous salt solutions such as
55 in biological media (Zlokarnik 2005). Contaminated bubbles yield lower mass transfer coefficients
56 than perfectly clean bubbles, even though the level of bubble contamination may be difficult to
57 quantify (Sardeing et al. 2006, Xu et al. 2018).

58 Water height also has an impact on overall mass transfer (Deckwer et al. 1974, Giovannettone and
59 Gulliver 2008) since the gradients of the gas-phase composition and pressure appear to have highly
60 interactive non-linear effects (Baeten et al. 2020). First, bubble diameter varies with hydrostatic
61 pressure (Capela et al. 2002, Giovanettonne et al. 2009, Fayolle et al. 2010, Amaral et al. 2018),
62 which has an influence on the gas-liquid interfacial area. In addition, the oxygen saturation
63 concentration varies depending upon column height (Rubio et al. 1999) and the dissolved oxygen
64 concentration profile at steady state can be very pronounced, suggesting local variation of the
65 transfer rate even if the overall net transfer of oxygen is close to zero (Giovannettone and Gulliver
66 2008). The combination of these phenomena induce oxygen depletion in air bubbles, essentially
67 explained by competition between the transfer rate and bubble convection (Talvy et al. 2007a,
68 Giovanettonne and Gulliver 2008, Baeten et al. 2020).

69 To provide a comprehensive description of gas transfer inside deep air-water bubble columns, the
70 classical one-dimensional two-fluid model (Wallis 1969, Cockx et al. 1997, Camacho-Rubio et al.
71 2001, Vitankar and Joshi 2002) developed in previous studies for airlift reactors, aeration tanks or
72 bubble columns has been extended (Talvy et al. 2007a, Talvy et al. 2007b, Colombet et al. 2013).
73 Since the transfer rate gradient increases with the height of the bubble column via the various well-
74 identified mechanisms discussed above, all these phenomena need to be combined in a new model
75 structure where both hydrodynamics and mass transfer are solved together to consider the effect of
76 pressure and gas depletion.

77 One-dimensional (1-D) models are simple but rigorous and appear to be relevant when applied to
78 bubble columns since gas flows are mainly in the vertical axis. Most existing models consider a
79 constant superficial gas velocity since they apply to low height columns (Talvy 2007b, Colombet et al.
80 2013) and thus the pressure effect can be ignored. However, this may not be the case for columns
81 with a high liquid height, as shown in studies taking the effect of pressure on gas solubility into
82 account (Dhaoudi et al. 2008), or both gas solubility and gas flowrate (Giovanettone and Gulliver
83 2008, Baeten et al., 2020). In these investigations, the overall mass transfer coefficient $K_L a$ was
84 considered, even though representing hydrodynamic variations together with changes in mass
85 transfer (separating k_L from a) would be more useful to better interpret experimental results. In this
86 context, the aim of this study was to develop a model that couples hydrodynamics and mass transfer
87 in order to gain an understanding of measurement results obtained on systems with low gas hold-up
88 under different configurations. Based on a literature review, the correlations that can be used to
89 represent hydrodynamic and mass transfer phenomena (drag coefficient, mass transfer coefficient,
90 collective bubble effects due to high gas hold-up) were identified. The simulation results were
91 compared to observed data obtained in three experimental setups showing contrasting operating
92 conditions (in terms of water height, gas hold-up, bubble diameter and interface contamination).
93 Their specific relevant hydrodynamic and oxygen transfer phenomena were analyzed by modeling
94 and simulation. To begin, after presenting the experimental datasets, the different processes
95 considered in the comprehensive model are described. Subsequently, the simulated results are
96 compared with the experimental data to choose between the different options concerning the model
97 structure (closure relations) and to interpret the experimental results obtained under varied
98 operating conditions.

99

100 **2. Material and methods**

101 The proposed 1-D model is used to investigate the results extracted from three experimental
102 datasets obtained in clear water (Colombet et al. 2015, Duran et al. 2016, Amaral et al. 2018).

103 2.1 Experimental datasets

104 The database is composed of three experimental datasets obtained in bubble columns showing a low
 105 gas hold-up (less than 6%). They were selected because of their wide range of operating conditions
 106 (superficial gas velocity and gas hold-up) and the availability of data. Table 1 presents the main
 107 operating conditions for the three experimental datasets.

108

109 **Table 1. Experimental conditions for the bubble column datasets**

Dataset	Continuous fluid phase	Bubble sparger type	H_L (m)	d_B expressed at P_{atm} ($\times 10^{-3}m$)	j_g at P_{atm} ($\times 10^{-3}m/s$)	ϵ_g (%)	Reference
D1	Tap water	EPDM membrane	1.30	1.5 - 1.8	0.3 - 1.2	0.1 - 0.4	Amaral et al. (2018)
D2	Tap water	EPDM membrane	4.40	3.0 - 4.0	2.0 - 4.5	0.5 - 1.5	Duran et al. (2016)
D3	Filtered tap water	Capillaries	0.76	2.3 - 3.4	2.0 - 15.5	0.5 - 6.0	Colombet et al. (2015)

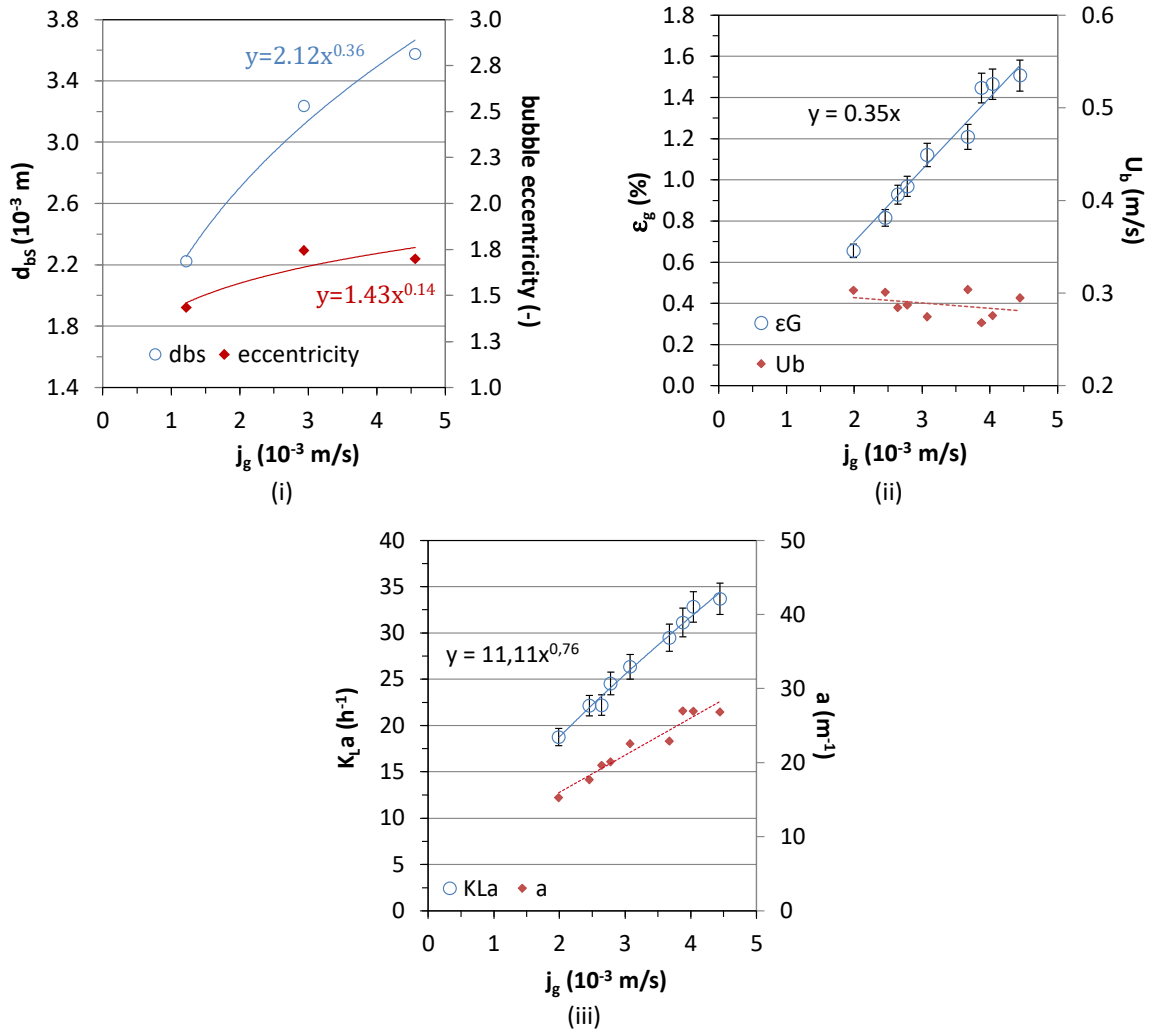
110 With : d_B mean bubble diameter, P_{atm} standard atmospheric pressure (1013 hPa), j_g superficial gas velocity, ϵ_g
 111 overall gas hold-up, H_L liquid height.

112

113 The water quality slightly differed from one dataset to another. In particular, the liquid used in
 114 Dataset D3 was filtered tap water (15 μm cutoff threshold) and tap water for D1 and D2.

115 Datasets D1 and D2 were obtained in bubble columns equipped with EPDM membrane diffusers,
 116 similar to the ones installed in full-scale aeration tanks. For Dataset D1, the water height was quite
 117 low (1.30 m). The superficial gas velocity and associated mean bubble size and gas hold-up were
 118 significantly lower in comparison to the other datasets. Dataset D2 corresponds to the experimental
 119 bubble column with the highest liquid height (4.5 m) in the lower range of liquid heights found in
 120 industrial aeration tanks, which allows for the study of the impact of hydrostatic pressure on
 121 hydrodynamics and mass transfer phenomena. A more complete description of this experimental
 122 dataset is provided in the following section, given that clear water results are not fully described in
 123 the published article (Duran et al. 2016).

124 Figure 1 presents hydrodynamic and mass transfer characteristics as a function of the superficial gas
 125 velocity for Dataset D2.
 126



127 **Figure 1.** (i) Mean bubble Sauter diameter and mean bubble eccentricity measured at 1 m in height from the
 128 diffuser, (ii) overall gas hold-up (ϵ_g) and mean bubble rise velocity (U_b) at 20°C, (iii) overall oxygen transfer
 129 coefficient K_La expressed at 20°C and gas–liquid interfacial area (a) as a function of the superficial gas velocity –
 130 dataset D2

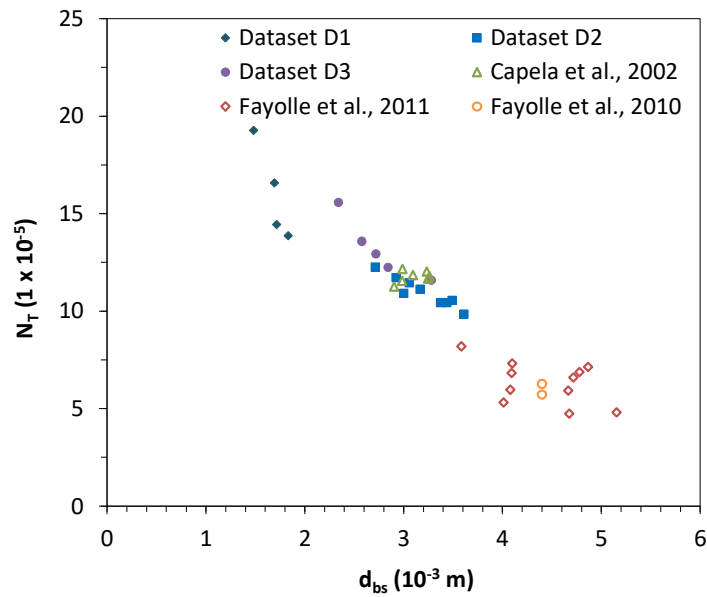
131
 132 The mean bubble Sauter diameter increased from 2.2 to 3.6 mm with an increase in the superficial
 133 gas velocity (j_g) from 1.2 to 4.6 mm/s. The effect of the airflow rate on bubble size was more
 134 significant at lower superficial gas velocities because the membrane stretches and the pore size
 135 increases under the effect of the pressure associated with the airflow rate. Concerning the bubbles'

136 shape, their eccentricity slightly increased from 1.4 to 1.7 with the increase of the superficial gas
137 velocity. Classically, the overall gas hold-up is a linear function of the superficial gas velocity, whereas
138 the oxygen transfer coefficient follows a power law. The mean bubble rise velocity deduced ($U_b=j_g/\epsilon_g$,
139 for homogeneous distribution of gas along the column's surface) slightly decreased as the superficial
140 air velocity increased. The reduction of U_b can be attributed to the collective effects (the interaction
141 between bubbles) that ended up with higher bubble drag coefficients, as explained by Colombet et
142 al. (2011). Since the estimated K_L coefficient ($K_L=K_La/a$) remains almost constant within the range of
143 the j_g studied, the increase in the overall oxygen transfer coefficient (K_La) is mainly related to the
144 increase in the interfacial area (estimated from d_{bs} , ϵ_g and bubble eccentricity; see Eq. 30 below).

145 Dataset D3 includes a wide range of superficial gas velocities and gas hold-up, even though the water
146 height is lower in comparison with the other datasets. The bubble injection system consists of a
147 network of stainless steel capillaries (with an inner diameter of 0.2 mm), that makes it possible to
148 obtain a homogeneous bubble swarm. In contrast, the diffuser of the two other datasets, a porous
149 EPDM membrane, provides a more heterogeneous initial bubble size distribution as commonly found
150 in water treatment. In order to focus on low gas hold-up systems, the data considered were limited
151 to gas hold-up lower than 6%, despite the wider range in the complete study (Colombet et al. 2013).

152

153 On the basis of transfer numbers (N_T), these datasets were compared with different previous
154 databases from lab-scale (Capela et al., 2002) to full-scale aeration tanks (Fayolle et al. 2010, Fayolle
155 et al. 2011). This dimensionless group ($N_T = \frac{K_L a_{20}}{j_g} \left(\frac{\mu_L^2}{\rho_L^2 g} \right)^{1/3}$) defined by Zlokarnik (1979) and
156 Roustan (1996) has the same physical meaning as the specific standard oxygen transfer efficiency
157 (SSOTE in %) per meter of diffuser submergence for clear water operating conditions (Gillot et al.
158 2005). Figure 2 presents the transfer number as a function of the mean Sauter bubble diameter for
159 the different databases selected and datasets D1–D3.



160

161 **Figure 2.** Transfer number (N_T) versus bubble Sauter diameter for selected databases (lab-scale [Capela et al.,
162 2002] and full-scale [Fayolle et al., 2010 and 2011]) and datasets 1–3.

163 For reactors with different configurations (from pilot scale to full-scale reactors), the transfer number
164 (N_T) seemed to be determined by the Sauter diameter, which fixes the bubble surface mobility and
165 the G-L interfacial area by controlling the overall gas hold-up. The results also clearly demonstrate
166 that the transfer number is an adequate scale-up factor for systems equipped with fine bubble
167 diffusers. Likewise, through the comparison with data obtained at full-scale, these results validate
168 the representativeness of the three datasets in terms of mass transfer mechanisms.

169

170 2.2. Two-Phase One-Dimensional Model

171 The proposed model is a 1-D model derived for low soluble gas mass transfer into a liquid in deep
172 bubble columns, applied to an air–water system (O_2 is considered to be the only gas transferred).
173 Since the calculated variables are homogenous and evenly distributed along the cross section, a 1-D
174 approach can be considered. The model first calculates hydrodynamic variables (gas hold-up,
175 changes in bubble diameter, gas velocity) considering steady-state conditions. Then, hydrodynamic
176 results are used as input values to calculate the transient oxygen mass transfer from the gas phase to

177 the liquid phase. The impact of the oxygen transfer on the bubble size and associated hydrodynamics
178 is ignored.

179 Contrary to other existing 1-D models (Giovannetonne and Gulliver, 2008, Baeten et al. 2020), the
180 impact of pressure on gas superficial velocity and bubble diameter is taken into account and its
181 impact on gas hold-up and mass transfer is fully considered and analyzed. The model is based on a
182 simplified Eulerian two-fluid model such as reported in Talvy et al. (2007a,b), where mass balance for
183 the gas and liquid phases and momentum interactions between the two phases are considered. The
184 proposed model implies different hypotheses related to the considered system (oxygen transfer in
185 batch air-water bubble column with low gas hold-up): (i) the impact of the mass transfer on the
186 bubble size and associated hydrodynamics is neglected, (ii) no vertical liquid flow is considered, (iii)
187 the bubbly flow is homogeneously distributed along the cross-section of the bubble column and (iv)
188 coalescence is neglected. The column is discretized along its height (50 layers along z), so the
189 variables are calculated locally at each discretization point.

190 Table 2 summarizes the values considered for the fluid properties and the main parameters of the
191 model ($T = 20^\circ\text{C}$ and $P_{\text{ref}} = 1 \text{ atm}$).

192

193 **Table 2. Physico-chemical properties of the system ($T = 20^\circ\text{C}$ and $P_{\text{ref}} = 1 \text{ atm}$)**

Parameter	Value	Unit
Water density, ρ_L	998.2	kg/m^3
Water dynamic viscosity, μ_L	$1 \cdot 10^{-3}$	$\text{Pa}\cdot\text{s}$
Water surface tension, σ	73	mN/m
Air density, ρ_G	1.2	kg/m^3
Oxygen diffusivity in water, D	$2 \cdot 10^{-9}$	m^2/s
Gravity constant, g	9.81	m/s^2
Temperature, T	20	$^\circ\text{C}$
Atmospheric pressure, (P_{ref})	1	atm

194

195 2.2.1. Equation of the 1-D model

196 All variables were averaged along each cross section of the column in order to provide a simple 1-D
197 model. As an example, the local gas hold-up in a cross-section S is given in Eq.1 (Talvy et al., 2007b).

$$\varepsilon_k = \langle \alpha_k \rangle = \frac{1}{S} \iint_A \alpha_k dS \quad (\text{Eq. 1})$$

198 where ε_k is the mean gas hold-up in the section, and α_k is the local gas hold-up at a specific point in
 199 the section. For the velocities, only the averaged axial components are different from zero and
 200 velocity vectors are thus reduced to scalars in the following.

201

202 2.2.2. Model structure: steady state hydrodynamic calculation

203 The hydrodynamic equations solved in the model are presented in the following sections.

204

205 2.2.2.1 Mass and flow rate conservation equation

206 The mass balance equation in a diphasic system is written as follows (Talvy et al. 2007a):

$$\frac{\partial \alpha_k \rho_k}{\partial t} + \nabla \alpha_k \rho_k \overline{U}_k = \overline{m}_K \quad (\text{Eq. 2})$$

207 where α_k is the volume fraction, ρ_k the density and \overline{U}_k the average velocity of phase k, which stands
 208 for gas (g) or liquid (l). The first term on the left side corresponds to mass variation over time in
 209 phase k, the second to mass transport by advection in the phase k, and the term on the right side
 210 (\overline{m}_K) corresponds to a statistical average mass transfer between the two phases.

211 In a 1-D system, Eq.2 becomes:

$$\frac{\partial(\varepsilon_k \rho_k)}{\partial t} + \frac{\partial}{\partial z}(\varepsilon_k \rho_k U_{kz}) = \langle m_k \rangle \quad (\text{Eq. 3})$$

212 With a steady state flow and assuming that average mass transfer between phases implied in the
 213 mass balance is ignored, the equation becomes for the liquid and the gas, respectively:

$$\varepsilon_l \rho_l U_l = Cst = \rho_l \frac{Q_l}{S} = \rho_l j_l \quad (\text{Eq. 4})$$

$$\varepsilon_g \rho_g U_g = Cst = \rho_g \frac{Q_g}{S} = \rho_g j_g \quad (\text{Eq. 5})$$

214 where Q_k and j_k are the flow rate and the superficial velocity (m/s), respectively, of phase k.

215 If it is considered that there is no liquid flow ($j_l = 0$, as in a batch bubble column), only the equation
 216 for the gas phase remains and the previous equation becomes:

$$\varepsilon_g = \frac{j_g}{U_g} \quad (\text{Eq. 6})$$

217 since the sum of the different phase volume fractions is equal to unity:

$$\varepsilon_l = 1 - \varepsilon_g \quad (\text{Eq. 7})$$

218

219 2.2.2.2 Gas velocity equation: the Zuber and Findlay drift flux model

220 Zuber and Findlay (1965) proposed the following interfacial momentum transfer model:

$$U_g = C_0 j + G = C_0(j_g + j_l) + G \quad (\text{Eq. 8})$$

221 Gas velocity (U_g) has two components, the first one corresponds to the gas transport resulting from
 222 mixing (induced by mixture velocity j composed of gas and liquid superficial velocity, j_g and j_l
 223 respectively) and the second one is gas slip velocity G , which corresponds to gas transport due to
 224 buoyancy. The latter will be further developed below. The drift-flux coefficient (C_0) is related to the
 225 non-uniformity of the gas-liquid flow field in the cross section and can be estimated from
 226 computational fluid dynamics (CFD) simulations, as in Talvy et al. (2005). However in the case of a
 227 homogeneous flow it can be considered close to 1. On the other hand, its extreme value would be
 228 1.5 in the case of a spatially heterogeneous bubbly flow (Talvy et al. 2005).

229 With a homogeneous flow ($C_0 = 1$) and without the liquid flow rate ($j_l = 0$), the previous equation
 230 becomes:

$$U_g = j_g + G \quad (\text{Eq. 9})$$

231 For homogeneous bubble columns at a low gas flow rate, $j_g \ll G$ and then the gas velocity U_g is finally
 232 assumed equal to the bubble slip velocity G .

233 Note that when the drift flux coefficient C_0 is equal to 1, radial gas fraction profiles are not considered
 234 and thus radial interfacial forces as lift and turbulent dispersion are neglected for the axial resolution
 235 (Talvy et al., 2007a, b).

236

237 2.2.2.3 Gas slip velocity equation

238 A force balance applied to a rising gas bubble in a quiescent liquid and at steady state where the
239 bubble has reached its terminal rising velocity consists in equilibrium between buoyancy and drag
240 forces. The added mass force can be neglected in 1D models after a very short distance from the
241 bubble sparger, when the fully developed gas velocity is established (Talvy et al., 2007a, Colombet et
242 al., 2013). Thus, after simplification, the slip velocity G between the two phases can be calculated
243 using Eq. 10 (Talvy et al. 2007b):

$$G = \sqrt{\frac{4}{3} \frac{d_v^3 (\rho_l - \rho_g) g}{d_p^2 \rho_l C_D}} \quad (\text{Eq. 10})$$

244 with g the gravity constant (9.81 m/s^2), d_v the volume equivalent bubble diameter (m), C_D the drag
245 coefficient (-), and d_p the surface equivalent bubble diameter (m).

246

247 Furthermore, if the two equivalent diameters are considered equals ($d_v = d_p = d_B$, for a spherical
248 bubble, for example) and if gas density is ignored in comparison with liquid density, the following
249 simplified equation is obtained:

$$G = \sqrt{\frac{4}{3} d_B \frac{g}{C_D}} \quad (\text{Eq. 11})$$

250

251 2.2.2.4 Drag coefficient equation

252 Several correlations to calculate the drag coefficient exist in the literature, mostly expressed through
253 dimensionless numbers. In the case of a single rigid particle, the following law involving the Reynolds
254 number can be applied (Schiller and Naumann 1938):

$$C_D = \begin{cases} \frac{24}{Re} * (1 + 0.15 Re^{0.687}) & \text{for } Re < 1000 \\ 0.44 & \text{for } Re > 1000 \end{cases} \quad (\text{Eq. 12})$$

255 However, even though this correlation is often used for rigid spherical bubbles, it is not suitable for
 256 oblate ellipsoidal bubbles where the eccentricity effect drastically affects the drag coefficient (Talvy
 257 et al. 2007b).

258 With ellipsoidal bubbles, when the surface tension effects are significant, drag laws based on the
 259 Eötvös number are more relevant (Tomiya et al. 1998, Dijkhuizen et al. 2010). The Eötvös number
 260 (E_o), the ratio of buoyancy to surface tension, is defined as follows:

$$E_o = \frac{(\rho_l - \rho_g) g d_B^2}{\sigma} \quad (\text{Eq. 13})$$

261 where d_B is the bubble diameter (m) and σ is the liquid surface tension (N/m).

262

263 To analyze the impact of the effects of contamination on hydrodynamics, two drag laws depending
 264 on the Eötvös number were selected. On one hand, the drag law proposed by Dijkhuizen et al.
 265 (2010), developed using direct numerical simulation (DNS) and without contamination effects, is
 266 considered as representative of a perfectly clean bubble surface (Eq. 14).

$$C_{D0} = \frac{8}{3} \frac{E_o}{\frac{19}{3} + \frac{2}{3} E_o} \quad (\text{Eq. 14})$$

267 On the other hand, the drag law proposed by Tomiyama et al. (1998), based on experimental results,
 268 is considered as representative of classical experimental conditions with a slightly contaminated
 269 system (Eq. 15).

$$C_D = \max \left\{ \min \left\{ \frac{24}{Re} (1 + 0.15 Re^{0.687}), \frac{72}{Re} \right\}, \frac{8}{3} \frac{E_o}{(4 + E_o)} \right\} \quad (\text{Eq. 15})$$

270 These drag laws are based on single bubbles rising in liquid. For bubble swarms, a corrective factor,
 271 depending on gas hold-up, can be taken into account to consider a hindered slipping gas velocity
 272 (Eq.16; Wallis 1961):

$$C_D = C_{D0} (1 - \varepsilon_g)^{-2} \quad (\text{Eq. 16})$$

273

274 2.2.2.5 Hydrostatic pressure equation and impact on gas superficial velocity and bubble diameter

275 Hydrostatic pressure at a height z in a deep bubble column is given by Eq. 17.

$$P(z) = P_0 + \rho_m g (H - z) \quad (\text{Eq. 17})$$

276 where P_0 is the atmospheric pressure (Pa), g the gravity constant (m/s^2), H the column height (m),

277 and ρ_m the mix density (or apparent density), defined as:

$$\rho_m = \rho_l (1 - \varepsilon_g) + \rho_g \varepsilon_g \quad (\text{Eq. 18})$$

278 Where ρ_l and ρ_g are the liquid and gas densities, respectively (kg/m^3).

279

280 Moreover, bubble diameter evolves with pressure according to the following equation (Pöpel and

281 Wagner 1994; Fayolle et al. 2010), derived from the ideal gas equation when the mass transfer can

282 be ignored in the mass balance (Eq. 19):

$$d_B = d_{B0} \sqrt[3]{\frac{P_0}{P}} \quad (\text{Eq. 19})$$

283 where d_{B0} is the bubble diameter at atmospheric pressure P_0 (m), and d_B the bubble diameter at

284 pressure $P(z)$. The bubble diameter at atmospheric pressure is an input datum that must be

285 measured or estimated since it depends on the gas sparger and water properties.

286

287 Gas superficial velocity j_{g0} at atmospheric pressure P_0 and superficial gas velocity j_g at pressure $P(z)$

288 are bound through the following equation, which is also derived from the ideal gas equation:

$$j_g(z) = j_{g0} * \frac{P_0}{P(z)} \quad (\text{Eq. 20})$$

289

290 2.2.3. Mass transfer calculation

291 Even though the hydrodynamic phenomena can be considered to reach a steady state, mass transfer

292 is fundamentally a transient phenomenon, using as input the hydrodynamic variables previously

293 calculated (gas hold-up, gas velocity, pressure, and bubble diameter along the column height). To

294 simulate oxygenation dynamics measured via reaeration tests (see 3.2), species transport equations
 295 are presented for oxygen in a two-phase flow as in Talvy et al. (2007a) and further modified in order
 296 to integrate the pressure effect for deep bubble columns.

297 When considering a perfectly mixed liquid without a liquid flow rate (batch bubble column), the
 298 oxygen concentration equation in the liquid is written as follows for a 1-D system:

$$\frac{\partial C_l(t)}{\partial t} = < \frac{k_L a(z)}{1 - \varepsilon_g(z)} (C_l^*(z, t) - C_l(t)) > \quad (\text{Eq. 21})$$

$$C_l^*(z, t) = He_{O_2}(T) M(O_2) x_g(z, t) P(z) \quad (\text{Eq. 22})$$

299 The oxygen concentration in the liquid (C_l) is expressed as a mass concentration and C_l^* is the
 300 saturation concentration at equilibrium. The variation of oxygen concentration in the liquid phase
 301 over time results from a transfer term from the gas to the liquid. The parameters $k_L a$ and ε_g are the
 302 mass transfer coefficient and gas hold-up, respectively, $He_{O_2}(T)$ the Henry law coefficient at
 303 temperature T for oxygen solubility in water (1.24×10^{-5} mol/m³/Pa at 25°C), $M(O_2)$ the oxygen molar
 304 mass (32 g/mol), $x_g(z)$ the local oxygen molar fraction in the gas phase at height z and $P(z)$ the local
 305 hydrostatic pressure.

306

307 Because of the perfectly mixed liquid assumption, only one equation for the whole liquid volume is
 308 considered, and the parameters $k_L a$, ε_g and C_l are taken as their average value in the column for the
 309 calculation. The oxygen concentration in the gas phase $C_g(z)$ can be calculated by the ideal gas
 310 equation from the oxygen molar fraction $x_g(z)$. As for the liquid, the oxygen concentration in the gas
 311 phase changes over time, although it is difficult to measure.

312 Thus, for low soluble gases, the 1-D transfer equation in the gas phase gives (Talvy et al., 2007):

$$\frac{\partial \varepsilon_g C_g(z, t)}{\partial t} + \nabla \varepsilon_g(z) C_g(z, t) U_g(z) = -k_L a(z) (C_l^*(z, t) - C_l(t)) \quad (\text{Eq. 23})$$

313 The first term on the left side corresponds to the evolution over time and the height of the oxygen
 314 concentration in the gas phase, the second to the transport term of oxygen by the gas velocity and

315 the term on the right side is the oxygen transfer term from the gas to the liquid. In the gas phase,
 316 neither diffusion nor reaction is considered, since the model applies for homogeneously dispersed
 317 bubbly flow where no coalescence between bubbles occurs.

318 When solving the equation of the oxygen molar fraction in the gas phase, it gives an expression with
 319 a first order discretization for the gas phase convective transport:

$$\frac{\partial x_g(z, t)}{\partial t} = - \frac{k_L a(z)}{\varepsilon_g(z) * \frac{M(O_2)}{RT} (P(z) - P_{vap})} (C_l^*(z, t) - C_l(t)) - \frac{U_g(z)}{\Delta z} \Delta C_g(z, t) \quad (\text{Eq. 24})$$

320 where $k_L a(z)$ is the local mass transfer coefficient, R the ideal gas constant (8.314 J/mol/K), and $U_g(z)$
 321 the local bubble velocity. The gas concentration variation over time therefore results from a negative
 322 transfer term from the gas to the liquid, and from a transport term related to the gas phase velocity.

323 Equation 24 is solved for each z -position in the column following the z -axis: the oxygen molar fraction
 324 in the gas $x_g(z)$ is then calculated for each height over time with the local hydrodynamic parameters
 325 solved from the equations provided in section 2.2.2. In this model, the hydrodynamic parameters
 326 have a local impact on local mass transfer, but the reverse is not considered given that the oxygen
 327 depletion in the gas phase can be ignored for the gas flow rate (Talvy et al. 2007a, Baeten et al.
 328 2020).

329

330 2.2.4. Models for mass transfer coefficients

331 The mass transfer coefficient $k_L a$ could be expressed in terms of the interfacial area a and the liquid-
 332 side mass transfer velocity k_L (m/s). To estimate the latter, there are several existing models and, as
 333 for the drag coefficient, they depend on whether or not the bubble interface is contaminated (Dani
 334 et al. 2007, Xu et al. 2018).

335 On one hand, the Higbie model is very commonly used and corresponds to the ideal case of perfectly
 336 clean (non-contaminated) bubbles, which have a renewable interface: the diffusional oxygen transfer
 337 in the liquid film surrounding gas bubbles occurs when the liquid elements reach the gas-liquid

338 interface and during a short contact time (t_c) they attain the concentration equilibrium with the
339 interface. Under these conditions, the mass transfer coefficient is written as (Higbie 1935):

$$k_L = 2 \sqrt{\frac{D}{\pi t_c}} = 2 \sqrt{\frac{D G}{\pi d_B}} \quad (\text{Eq. 25})$$

340 where k_L is the liquid side mass transfer coefficient (m/s), D the diffusion coefficient of oxygen in
341 water (m^2/s), t_c the contact time (s), G the gas slip velocity (m/s) and d_B the bubble diameter (m).

342 On the other hand, the case of completely contaminated bubbles is described by the Frössling model,
343 which assumes that bubbles have a rigid, non-renewable interface. The mass transfer coefficient is
344 then expressed as (Frössling 1938):

$$k_L = \frac{D}{d_B} * (2 + 0.6 * Re^{0.5} * Sc^{0.33}) \quad (\text{Eq. 26})$$

345 where the Reynolds and Schmidt dimensionless numbers are defined as:

$$Re = \frac{\rho_l d_B G}{\mu_l} \quad (\text{Eq. 27})$$

$$Sc = \frac{\mu_l}{\rho_l D} \quad (\text{Eq. 28})$$

346 where ρ_l and μ_l are respectively density (kg/m^3) and the dynamic viscosity (Pa.s) of the liquid.

347

348 In practice, the k_L coefficients calculated with the Frössling correlation are much lower than with the
349 Higbie model, i.e., that bubbles are contaminated and thus mass transfer is hindered due to the
350 impurity molecules (e.g., surfactants) adsorbed at the bubble surface. The k_L coefficients measured
351 are thus always between these two asymptotic and ideal cases (Xu et al. 2018).

352

353 2.2.5 Volumetric bubble interfacial area a

354 The interfacial area of spherical bubbles is given by (Eq. 29):

$$a = \frac{6}{d_B} \varepsilon_g \quad (\text{Eq. 29})$$

355 where a is the bubble's interfacial area (m^2/m^3), d_B the bubble's diameter (m), and ε_g the gas hold-up
356 (-).

357 If the bubbles are ellipsoidal, a correction factor that includes bubble eccentricity K (the ratio of
358 major axis to minor axis) is taken into account (Cockx et al. 1997, Colombet et al. 2011):

$$a = \frac{6}{d_B} \varepsilon_g f(K) \quad (\text{Eq. 30})$$

$$f(K) = \frac{1}{2 K^{1/3}} * \left(K + \frac{\ln(K + \sqrt{K^2 - 1})}{\sqrt{K^2 - 1}} \right) \quad (\text{Eq. 31})$$

359 Ellipsoidal bubbles have a higher interfacial area than spherical ones, thus $f(K)$ is always higher than
360 1.

361

362 2.2.6 Numerical method, boundary and initial conditions.

363 First, the 1D steady state model runs using Matlab® for a fully developed bubbly flow (equations 5 to
364 20 with the algebraic solver function `fsolve`) in order to obtain axial profiles of the gas fraction, the
365 gas velocity, the pressure and the bubble diameter along the column height (50 layers along z) as a
366 function of the input parameters (inlet bubble diameter, gas flow rate, column height). Then, mass
367 transfer between the gas and the liquid phase are calculated from hydrodynamics results with a
368 transient solver (`ode23t` function for equations 21 to 24 with closure relations 25 to 31). This one-
369 way coupling hydrodynamics and mass transfer is only valid with the assumptions that the mass
370 transfer does not modify hydrodynamic parameters (i.e. similar molar flow rates in the gas phase).

371 For all the simulations presented hereafter, the initial molar fraction of oxygen in the gas was set to
372 the inlet atmospheric condition at the bottom of the column ($x_g(z) = 0.21$) for all discretization layers
373 along column height, physically corresponding to the fact that fresh air is continuously supplied in
374 the column from the bottom, so that the oxygen molar concentration in the gas at the inlet does not
375 vary. The initial dissolved concentration in the liquid phase was considered as an initial condition:
376 depending on the simulated experiments, its value was set to the initial experimental dissolved
377 oxygen concentration (mostly equal to zero). Finally, the simulated length of time is also adjustable,

378 and it has to be long enough to allow the system to reach an equilibrium state, i.e. when the oxygen
 379 concentration in liquid is equal to the saturation value. The time to reach steady state conditions
 380 depends on the mass transfer from bubbles and on experimental conditions. For the bubble columns
 381 considered, the simulated time period lies between 500 and 20,000 s.

382

383 3. Results and discussion

384 3.1 Hydrodynamic characterization of the datasets studied

385 A pragmatic approach is applied to select the combinations of correlations and closure laws that
 386 make it possible to obtain a reliable description of the three experimental datasets with the 1-D
 387 model, in terms of global gas hold-up changes with the superficial gas velocity. The combinations of
 388 the closure laws considered are presented in Table 3.

389

390 **Table 3.** Selected combinations of closure laws for appropriated modelling of each datasets.

Dataset	Pressure effects on bubble size and gas superficial velocity	Contamination effects regarding hydrodynamics (via the drag law considered)	Collective effects (via Eq. 16)
D1	Included	Contaminated (Tomiyama drag law)	Included
D2	Included	Contaminated (Tomiyama drag law)	Included
D3	Included	No contamination (Dijkhuizen drag law)	Included

391

392 The selected model structures include pressure and collective effects for all datasets. The drag law
 393 correlation of Tomiyama et al. (1998) is used for the datasets obtained with unfiltered tap water (D1
 394 and D2), whereas the correlation proposed by Dijkhuizen et al. (2010) is used to simulate the
 395 hydrodynamics for the dataset obtained with filtered tap water (D3). For each dataset, the model
 396 including the closure laws presented in Table 3 is called the “base model” in the following.

397 Figure 3 presents the simulated and experimental gas hold-up as a function of the superficial gas
 398 velocity.

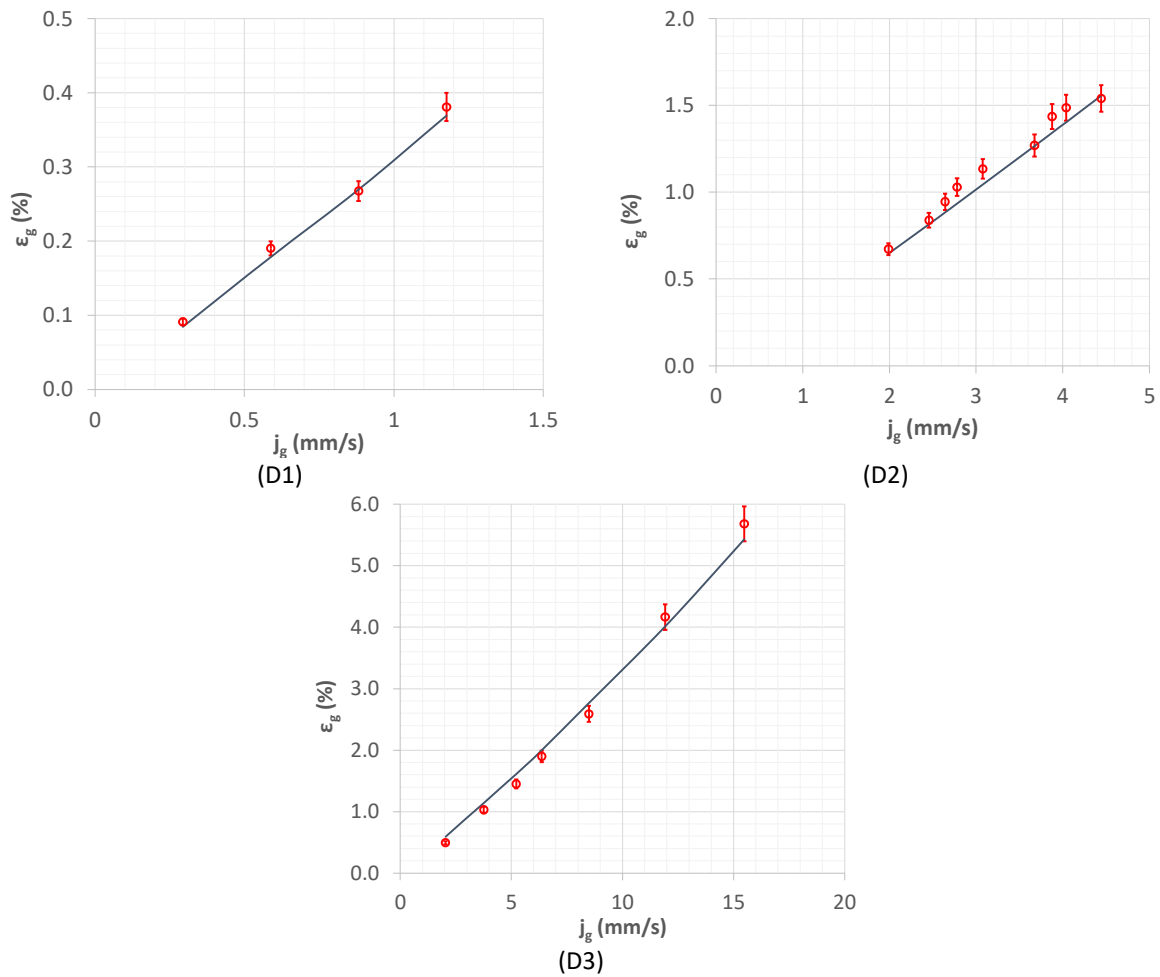


Figure 3. Global gas hold-up for different superficial gas velocities and for each dataset – Base models (○: Experimental data / — : Base model / Error bars: $\pm 5\%$)

399

400 Good accuracy is obtained comparing simulated and experimental values (with an average difference
 401 between the experimental and simulated values of 4.6, 5.1 and 8.0 % for D1, D2 and D3 respectively).

402 These results highlight that the 1-D model, considering appropriate closure laws, is relevant to model
 403 steady-state hydrodynamics of the bubble column along the vertical direction. The model is used in

404 the following section in order to analyze the impact of selected closure laws and physics and to
 405 propose a deeper analysis of the different datasets on the basis of the effects considered (pressure,

406 contamination effects and collective effects). The impact of the effects considered is analyzed per
 407 dataset by modifying the associated closure law in the model presented in Table 3.

408

409 *3.1.1. Analysis of the pressure impact on hydrodynamics*

410 The pressure effects on hydrodynamics is integrated into the model via bubble diameter (Eq. 19) and
 411 gas superficial velocity (Eq. 20), in order to take into account gas volume expansion (and associated
 412 bubble size) with variation in the local hydrostatic pressure. Since the mean bubble diameter varies
 413 with pressure following a cubic root law, the impact of pressure on this parameter is not as high as
 414 for gas superficial velocity.

415 Figure 4 presents the changes in the overall hold-up as a function of the superficial gas velocity for
 416 the modified model (i.e. without considering the pressure effect on bubble size and superficial gas
 417 velocity along z), the base model (Table 3) and the experimental data for each dataset.

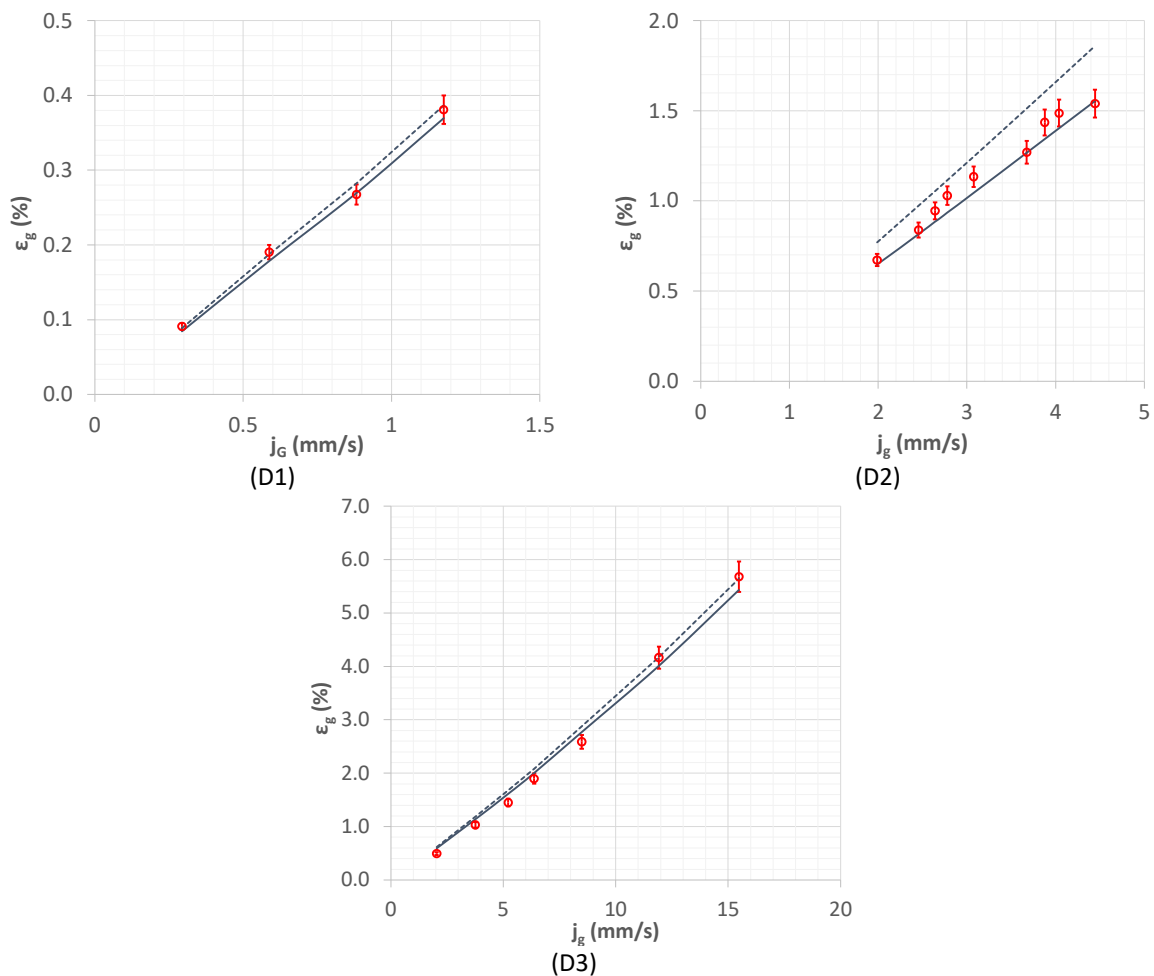


Figure 4. Overall gas hold-up for different superficial gas velocities and for each dataset. Impact of the pressure effects (○: Experimental data / —: Base model (with pressure effects) / - - - :Modified model (without pressure effects) / Error bars: $\pm 5\%$)

418

419 As expected, the deviation due to the pressure effects is the most significant for dataset D2, because
 420 the water height is highest (4.5 m). The simulated gas hold-up is lower when the pressure effects are
 421 considered (28 % of the overall gas hold-up overestimation when the pressure impact is not
 422 accounted for), and experimental points are better described in that case. For datasets D1 and D3,
 423 since the water height is low (1.3 and 0.8 m, respectively), the simulation results are less affected.
 424 For deep bubble columns, the impact of hydrostatic pressure on the gas-liquid hydrodynamics (i.e. ϵ_g)
 425 along the column height are significant mainly due to its influence on gas superficial velocity (and to
 426 a lesser extent due to its influence on bubble size) and must be taken into account to appropriately
 427 model gas hold-up. For low soluble gases and a bubble size between 3 and 5 mm, the slip velocity is
 428 almost constant and the effect of local pressure on gas hold-up can be estimated considering a linear
 429 correlation, deduced from the ideal gas law:

$$\frac{\epsilon_g}{\epsilon_{g0}} = \frac{1}{2} \left(1 + \frac{P}{P_0} \right) \approx 1 - \frac{\rho_m g H}{2P_0} \approx 1 - \frac{H}{20} \quad (\text{Eq. 32})$$

430 Using Eq. 32, the reduction of the overall gas hold-up over the column height can be roughly
 431 estimated at 5% per meter (1/20).

432

433 *3.1.2. Analysis of contamination effects on hydrodynamics*

434 The impact of contamination effects is then analyzed via the drag law considered included in the
 435 model.

436 Since the bubbles are ellipsoidal, drag laws applied to the three datasets are focused on correlations
 437 depending on the Eötvös number (see Table 3). Since different water qualities could be considered in
 438 regards to experimental conditions (clean water [filtered water] for D3 and contaminated water [tap
 439 water] for D1 and D2), consistent drag correlations were selected to analyze their impact on
 440 hydrodynamics. As indicated in section 2.2.2.4, Dijkhuizen's drag correlation was selected for clean
 441 bubble surfaces, whereas Tomiyama's was considered for contaminated bubbles. Please note that
 442 the base model for D3 included Dijkhuizen's drag law, whereas the base model for D1 and D2 included
 443 Tomiyama's drag law.

444 Figure 5 presents the overall hold-up as a function of the superficial gas velocity for models including
 445 Dijkhuizen's or Tomiyama's drag correlations and the experimental data for each dataset. The other
 446 closed laws considered in the respective models remain similar to Table 3.

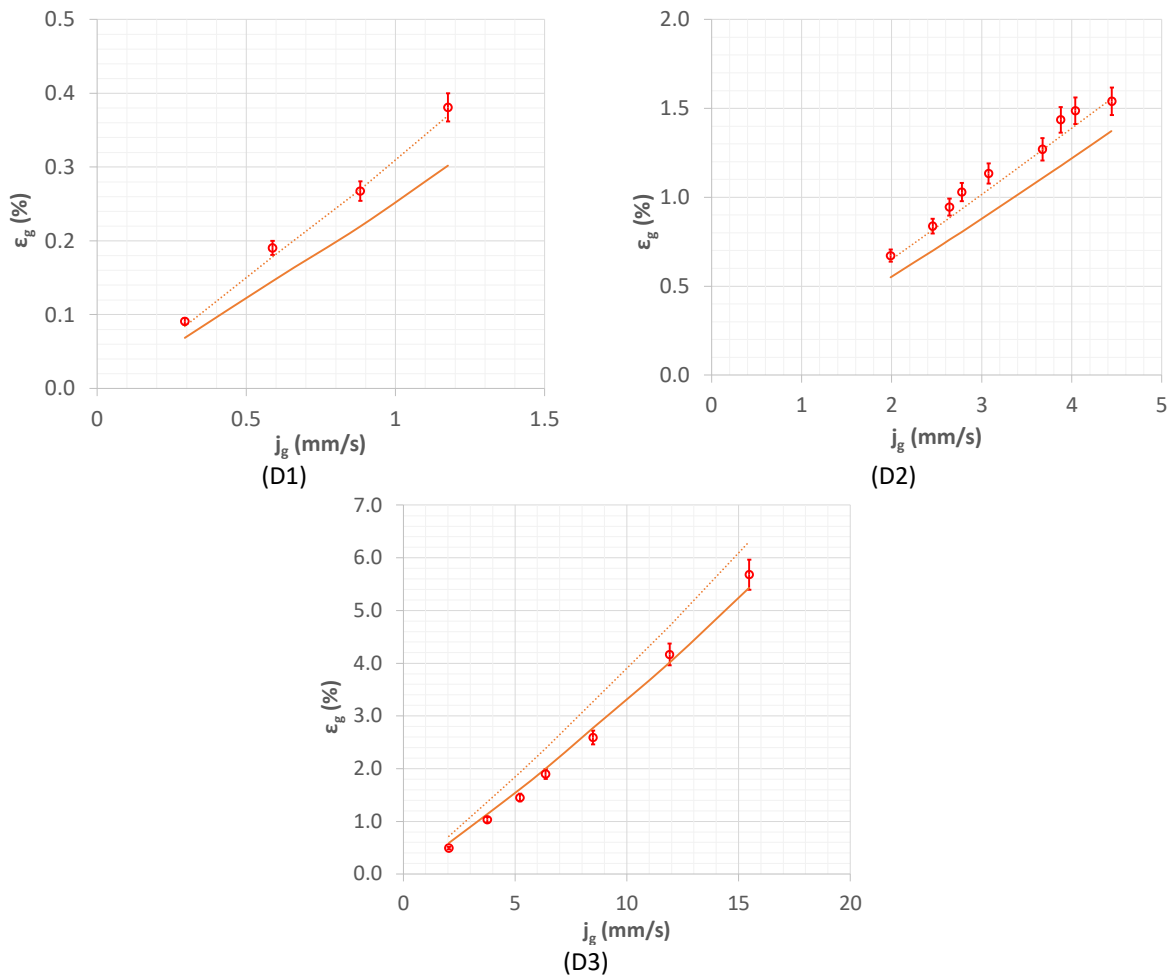


Figure 5. Overall gas hold-up for different superficial gas velocities and for each dataset (○: Experimental data / —: Dijkhuizen's drag correlation / ···: Tomiyama's drag correlation / Error bars: $\pm 5\%$)

447 The gas hold-up modeled was significantly impacted by the modification of the drag law considered,
 448 related to the contamination effects. The mean modeled values considering Tomiyama's drag
 449 correlation are from 15 to 22 % higher in comparison with modelled results obtained with
 450 Dijkhuizen's drag law, depending on the dataset considered and on the gas flow rate. The results
 451 obtained with the model that included Dijkhuizen's drag law fit the experimental points of dataset D3
 452 better. This is a reasonable result related to the water quality of this dataset, which could be
 453 considered close to clear water (filtered water) and to the air diffuser (capillaries): the high air flow
 454 rate applied induces a lower contact time between nascent bubbles and liquid during bubble

455 formation along the capillary (Loubière et al. 2003). In the case of datasets D1 and D2, the
456 experimental data are better described by the model integrating Tomiyama's drag correlation. This is
457 in accordance with the water quality during these experiments (tap water). Considering
458 hydrodynamics, the bubble surface for datasets D1 and D2 must be considered as contaminated,
459 whereas it must be considered as clean for dataset D3. These results highlight that drag laws must be
460 selected in accordance with actual operating conditions in order to consider bubble interface
461 contamination by real water.

462 Due to the narrow gas hold-up range in the datasets selected, the deviation in the simulation
463 hydrodynamics results related to the collective effects are less significant than for the effects
464 discussed above. The mean deviation is lower than 5%, with the highest values observed for dataset
465 D3 due to the wider range studied in terms of gas hold-up. From the model (using Eq. 16), we can
466 estimate, by limited development of Eq. 12, that the gas fraction increase is around 2% of relative
467 deviation per percentage of gas hold-up. Therefore, the collective effect cannot be ignored for gas
468 hold-up from 3% (deviation greater than 6%, the data are given in supplementary material – Figure
469 S1).

470

471 3.2 Mass transfer results

472 The simulated time variation of the dissolved oxygen concentration in liquid $C_l(t)$ allows one to
473 calculate an overall K_La coefficient for the entire bubble column (Cockx et al. 2001) through the
474 following classical equation:

$$C_l(t) = C_l^* - (C_l^* - C_{l0}) e^{-K_La \cdot t} \quad (\text{Eq. 33})$$

475 where C_{l0} is the dissolved oxygen concentration at $t=0$ (mg/L) and K_La is the overall mass transfer
476 coefficient (h^{-1}). For example, the experimental dissolved oxygen over time obtained by Duran et al.
477 (2016) was compared with simulated dissolved oxygen (cf. supplementary materials – Figure S2).

478 K_La is also called the apparent mass transfer coefficient, since it assumes a constant equilibrium
479 oxygen concentration C_l^* , although it actually varies with the oxygen concentration in gas during

480 reoxygenation (see Eq.22). Furthermore, the K_La coefficient is considered as a whole, with no
481 distinction between K_L and a . This overall apparent K_La coefficient differs from the local k_La
482 coefficient, which results from the multiplication of the local liquid-side mass transfer coefficient k_L
483 (for example modeled with the Higbie penetration model) and the local interfacial area a . This local
484 k_La coefficient varies locally essentially with z in a bubble column and can be averaged in the whole
485 liquid volume. Moreover, it is quite difficult to determine experimentally k_L and a separately in a real
486 bubble column (Colombet et al. 2011, 2015).

487 In the following section, global K_La values determined experimentally are compared with simulated
488 global K_La coefficients with the Higbie and Frössling models for k_L , in order to see which transfer
489 model fits the experimental points better when contamination of the bubbles is not fully controlled
490 (real water).

491

492 3.2.1 Comparison of the Higbie and Frössling transfer models

493 Figure 6 presents the overall K_La versus the superficial gas velocity for the three experimental
494 datasets and associated modelling results.

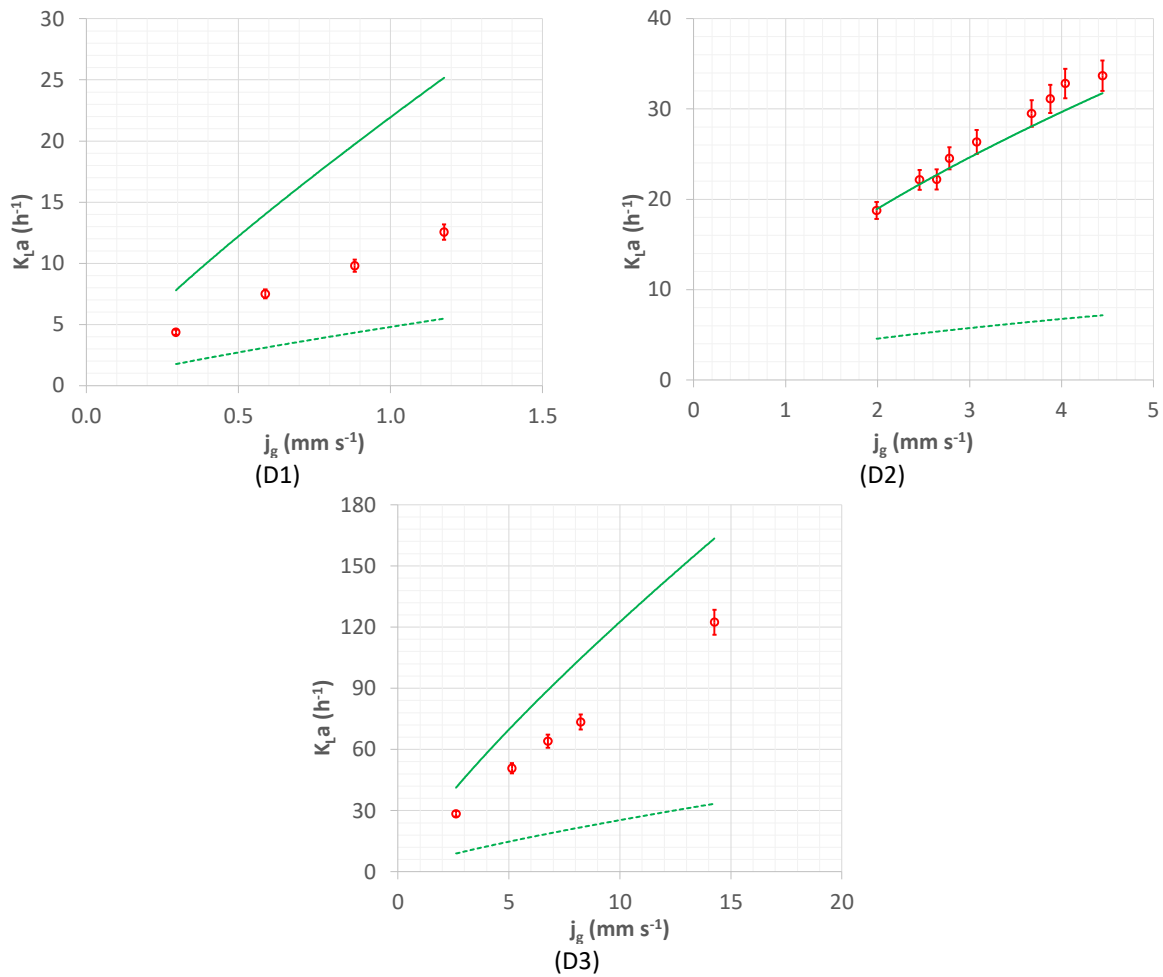


Figure 6. Overall K_{La} transfer coefficients for different superficial gas velocities and for datasets D1–D3 (○: Experimental data / —: Modelled global K_{La} with Higbie model / - - -: Modelled global K_{La} with the Frössling model / Error bars: $\pm 5\%$)

495

496 For dataset D3, the mass transfer is closer to the Higbie model (clean bubble surface) than to the
 497 Frössling model (contaminated bubble surface). From the 1-D transient simulation, it can be deduced
 498 that the transfer interface is slightly contaminated (bubble size between 2.3 and 3.4 mm) even if the
 499 hydrodynamic simulation results show that filtered water does not reduce the bubble velocity
 500 (apparent clean interface for the drag force).

501 For dataset D2, the water quality is lower (tap water) and consequently induces contamination of the
 502 bubble surface, affecting the drag coefficient, which is confirmed by the hydrodynamics results (see
 503 section 3.1.2). However, Figure 6 highlights that the overall mass transfer is not really impacted
 504 because the transfer simulation shows that the non-contaminated Higbie model (clean bubbles)

505 works better than the Frössling model (fully contaminated bubbles). This apparent contradiction can
506 be explained by the fact that for dataset D2, the bubbles are larger and ellipsoidal, between 3 and 4
507 mm. In this case, the contaminants at the bubble interface are transported to the rear of the bubble
508 where local mass transfer is drastically lower than at the front where interface renewal is greater
509 (Dani et al. 2007, Figueroa and Legendre 2010). For this reason, the bubble slip velocity could be
510 reduced for large bubbles in tap water as observed in Figure 5, but not the mass transfer velocity
511 (Figure 6).

512 For dataset D1, experimental $K_L a$ values are much lower compared to D2 and D3 and seem slightly
513 closer to the Frössling model. This can be related to the fact that bubbles in these experiments are
514 significantly smaller and spherical (below 1.8 mm) and more likely to be contaminated, with a more
515 rigid and less renewable bubble interface. In this case, the slip velocity behaves like a completely
516 contaminated bubble and the mass transfer velocity is clearly lower than for larger bubbles also with
517 tap water (as observed for dataset D2).

518 These results confirm that when tap water is used, the Higbie transfer model is the most accurate for
519 large bubbles (dataset D2, bubble size, 3.0–4.0 mm) and less relevant for small ones (dataset D1,
520 bubble size, 1.5–1.8 mm), with significant contamination effects. For filtered water, the Higbie model
521 is also the most suitable, although the presence of small contaminants could have slightly reduced
522 the mass transfer velocity for intermediate bubble size (2.3–3.4 mm) because the water could not be
523 considered as really pure (Colombet et al. 2015) except when rigorous experimental conditions are
524 maintained with ultra-pure water. A complementary discussion on transfer contamination is detailed
525 in section 3.2.3 after analysis of the depletion effect which can imply bias in transfer velocity
526 estimation.

527

528 3.2.2 Comparison of mean local $k_L a$ and overall $K_L a$: the oxygen depletion effect

529 In the previous discussion, the apparent $K_L a$ is compared to the simulation results with two
530 asymptotic models for clean bubble interfaces (Higbie model) and fully contaminated ones (Frössling

531 model). During this comparison, the pressure effect on the gas fraction, the bubble diameter and the
 532 oxygen saturation was modeled to take into account all the relevant physical phenomena that
 533 modify hydrodynamic and mass transfer parameters. With the “base model” (Table 3), it is also
 534 possible to clarify the effect of pressure and height on the mass transfer. In Figure 8, experimental
 535 overall K_{La} values are compared to both simulated overall K_{La} coefficients and to mean local values
 536 (spatial average $\langle k_{La} \rangle$) calculated using the Higbie transfer model for simplicity.

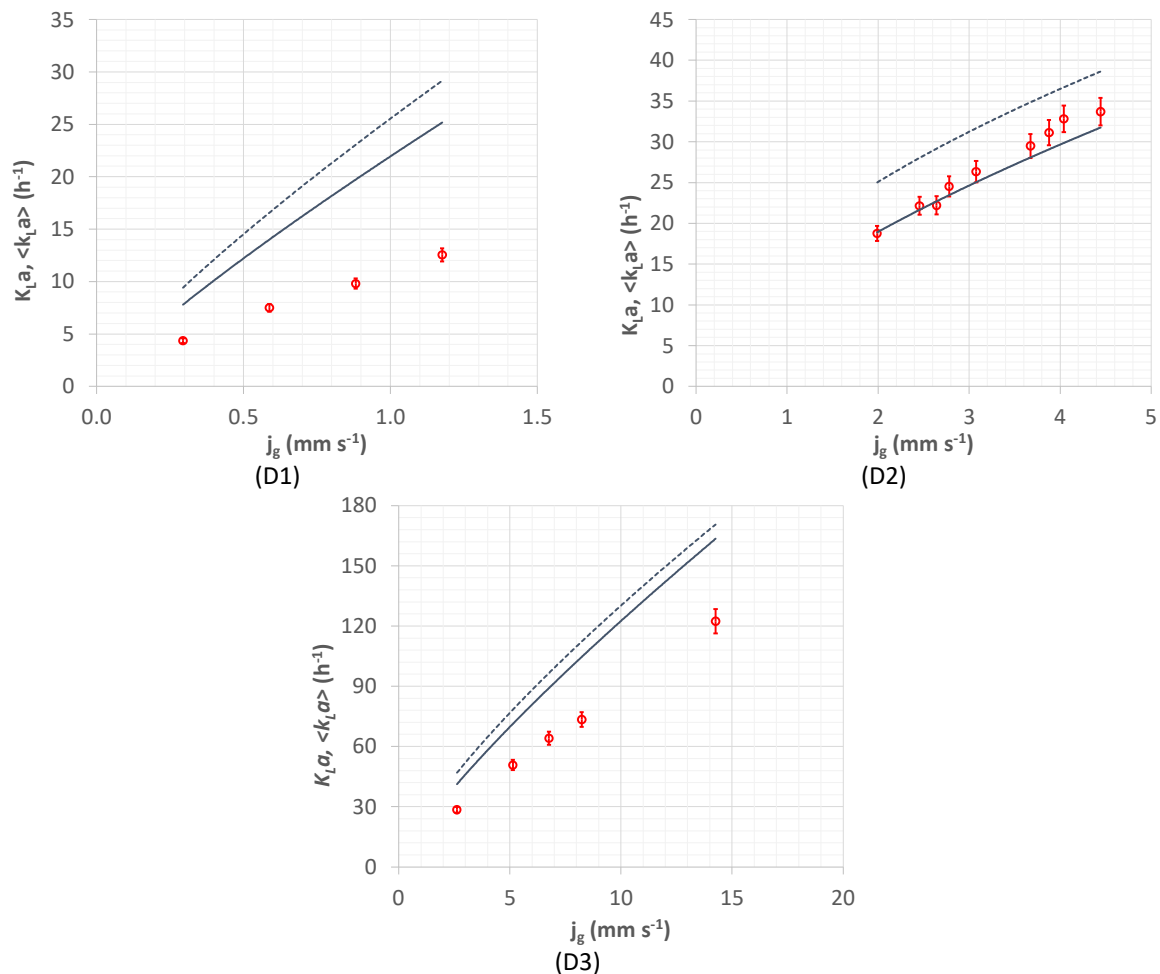


Figure 7. Experimental and modeled overall K_{La} and mean local $\langle k_{La} \rangle$ for different superficial gas velocities and for datasets D1–D3 (○ : Experimental global K_{La} / — : Simulated global K_{La} with the Higbie model / - - - : Simulated spatial average $\langle k_{La} \rangle$ with the Higbie model / Error bars: $\pm 5\%$)

537
 538 The simulated global K_{La} coefficients are systematically lower than the simulated mean local $\langle k_{La} \rangle$
 539 coefficients, the difference stemming from the oxygen depletion in the gas (due to the column
 540 height) and thus a decrease of the equilibrium concentration C_i^* (Eq.24). Simulated global K_{La}

541 coefficients describe the experimental points more accurately since this parameter is deduced from
 542 reoxygenation curves versus time as for the experimental data, especially for dataset D2. Indeed,
 543 oxygen depletion in the gas is significant due to the high column height (4.5 m of water). For the
 544 other datasets, given the high superficial gas velocity and the low column height in the case of D3
 545 (0.76 m), the difference between mean local and global $K_L a$ is the least significant. Surprisingly for
 546 dataset D1, since the column height is relatively low (1.3 m) and the superficial gas velocity is very
 547 low, the difference between the two $K_L a$ coefficients modeled is also relatively substantial (mean
 548 difference, 55%)

549 To understand and model this depletion effect in the gas, a simplified analysis is proposed in the
 550 following section.

551

552 3.2.3. When mean local $\langle k_L a \rangle$ differs from overall $K_L a$: modeling the depletion effect

553 The following development aims at explaining more deeply the effect of superficial gas velocity,
 554 column height and other process parameters on oxygen depletion. Compared to the mass transfer
 555 time ($1/K_L a$), the bubble convection time or residence times (H/U_g) are smaller. The convection time
 556 and mass transfer time values are provided in the supplementary materials for the three datasets
 557 (Table S1).

558 Moreover, oxygen depletion in the gas occurs essentially at the beginning of the reoxygenation
 559 process, during a transient period ($t \ll 1/K_L a$) when the oxygen concentration in the liquid $C_l(t)$ is
 560 close to 0 mg/L. During this transient period, Eq. 23 becomes:

$$\nabla \varepsilon_g C_g(z) U_g = -k_L a (C_l^*(z) - 0) \quad (\text{Eq. 34})$$

561 It appears that the depletion in the gas is given by the mass transferred. By estimating the oxygen
 562 saturation with the Henry' law (Eq. 22) and the interfacial area (Eq. 29), with the exchange coefficient
 563 m (Talvy, 2007), Eq. 34 becomes:

$$\nabla \varepsilon_g C_g(z) U_g = -k_L \frac{6. \varepsilon_g}{d_B} . m . C_g(z) \quad (\text{Eq. 35})$$

564 with $m = He_{O_2} \cdot RT$.

565 Assuming that the gas velocity is kept constant along the height of the bubble column, the
566 integration gives the following variation in the concentration along z:

$$\varepsilon_g C_g(z) = \varepsilon_{g0} C_{g0} \cdot e^{-k_L \frac{6}{d_B} \cdot m \cdot \frac{z}{U_g}} \quad (\text{Eq. 36})$$

567 The depletion in the gas (C_g/C_{g0}) decreases exponentially with (i) the mass transfer velocity k_L , (ii) the
568 solubility m (iii) the distance from the diffuser z , and (iv) the inverse of bubble size and the associated
569 slip velocity.

570 In this equation, $\varepsilon_g C_g$ is the mass of soluble gas per unit of volume (m_g) by introducing a depletion
571 factor (DF) for the whole column as:

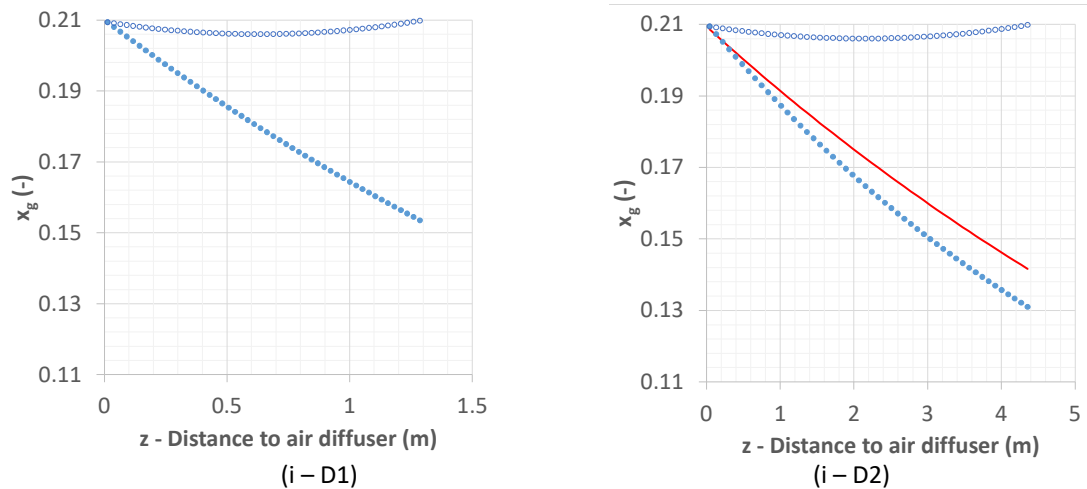
$$DF = k_L \frac{6}{d_B} \cdot m \cdot \frac{H}{U_g} \quad (\text{Eq. 38})$$

572 It is possible to estimate the decreasing ratio of mass in the gas along the height the bubble column
573 using Eq. 39:

$$\frac{m_g}{m_{g0}} = \frac{\varepsilon_g C_g}{\varepsilon_{g0} C_{g0}} = e^{-DF \cdot \frac{z}{H}} \quad (\text{Eq. 39})$$

574

575 For example, the depletion factor for D1 and D2 are close to 0.3 and 0.4, respectively, which
576 corresponds to depletion loss in the gas of 26% and 33 % using Eq. 38 at the top of the bubble
577 column. For dataset D3, the depletion factor is close to 0.05 and the decrease in the oxygen molar
578 fraction in the gas is lower than 5%. In our study, as the solubility is constant and the mass transfer
579 velocity k_L is quite constant for millimetric bubbles for oxygen, the substantial variation in the
580 depletion factor is mainly related to the length ratio H/d_b , which is about 800, 1200 and 200 for
581 datasets D1, D2 and D3, respectively. To illustrate the accuracy of the depletion model (Eq. 39), Figure
582 10 presents the oxygen molar fraction in the gas as a function of the distance from the diffusers at
583 the initial time ($t=0$) and in the stationary state ($t \gg 1/K_L a$) for D1 and D2 when the depletion effect is
584 significant (Figure 7).



585 **Figure 10.** x_g as a function of z (distance from the diffuser) – Modelled for $C_i = 0$ mg/L (●) / Depletion law for C_i
 586 $= 0$ mg/L (—) / Modelled (○) for $Cl = Cl^* - j_g = 1.2$ and 4.4 mm/s for D1 and D2 respectively

587

588 The oxygen depletion estimated with the relation (Eq. 39) is in good accordance with the
 589 comprehensive 1D model. The depletion factor (Eq. 38) can then be used to identify the
 590 experimental conditions inducing a significant impact of the gas depletion effects on the global mass
 591 transfer coefficient K_{La} .

592 This depletion effect is clearly increased by (i) a long bubble residence time ($H/U_g=4.3$ s and 18.3 s for
 593 D1 and D2, respectively), (ii) the high solubility of the gas considered passing into the liquid phase
 594 (here $m = 0.0034$ is relatively low for oxygen in water) and (iii) the low transfer time at the bubble
 595 scale ($d_B/k_L=2.8$ s and 9.4 s for D1 and D2, respectively).

596 In comparison with the relative simplicity of the estimation of the mean bubble residence time (H/U_g)
 597 in a bubble column, it is much more difficult to determine the bubble transfer time (d_B/k_L) precisely,
 598 which can vary along the column height due to substantial bubble size changes with increasing
 599 hydrostatic pressure. However, this bubble transfer time could be estimated through the inverse
 600 ratio of the global volumetric transfer coefficient to the global gas fraction (K_{La}/ϵ_g). This last
 601 parameter is also close to the transfer number N_T (Figure 2) but both approximations imply a certain
 602 bias because all the nonlinearity effects on average values are ignored.

603

604 3.2.4 Mass transfer and bubble contamination angle

605 In this section, the level of bubble contamination is studied through their contamination angle,
606 according to the theory developed by Sadhal and Johnson (1983). The level of bubble contamination
607 is characterized through a contamination angle, corresponding to the contaminated interface
608 occupied by the adsorbed contaminants at the bubble surface, expressed as the angle between the
609 rear of the bubble and the limit of the contaminated surface. The contamination angle varies
610 between 0° and 180°, depending on whether the bubble surface is completely clean or completely
611 contaminated, respectively. For all experimental data, the experimental global $K_L a$ coefficients lie
612 between the ideal $K_L a$ coefficients obtained with the Higbie and Frössling mass transfer models
613 (Figure 6). The contamination angle is obtained from the dimensionless drag coefficient with the
614 following correlation (Sadhal and Johnson 1983; Dani 2007):

$$C_D^*(\theta_{cap}) = \frac{1}{2\pi} (2\theta_{cap} + \sin(\theta_{cap}) - \sin(2\theta_{cap}) - \frac{1}{3}\sin(3\theta_{cap})) \quad (\text{Eq. 38})$$

615 with θ_{cap} the drag contamination stagnant cap angle (in radian).

616 On the other hand, the dimensionless drag coefficient $C_D^*(\theta_{cap})$ is related to the Sherwood numbers
617 of the bubble (experimental), of a completely clean bubble (Higbie correlation) and of a completely
618 contaminated bubble (Frössling correlation) as follows (Takemura and Yabe 1999, Dani 2007, Xu et
619 al. 2018):

$$C_D^*(\theta_{cap}) = 1 - \left(1 - \frac{Sh - Sh_{Higbie}}{Sh_{Frössling} - Sh_{Higbie}} \right)^2 \quad (\text{Eq. 39})$$

620 with Sh the experimental Sherwood number, Sh_{Higbie} the Sherwood number of a completely clean
621 bubble and $Sh_{Frössling}$ the Sherwood number of a completely contaminated bubble.

622

623 The Sherwood number is defined as follows:

$$Sh = \frac{k_L * d_B}{D} \quad (\text{Eq. 40})$$

624 with k_L the experimental mass transfer velocity estimated from the experimental reoxygenation
 625 curves using the 1-D model (via iterative calculation).

626

627 Table 4 presents the Sherwood numbers of the real bubbles calculated from the comprehensive
 628 model of a completely clean and a completely contaminated equivalent bubble. The transfer
 629 contamination angle is then deduced from Eq. 38 for datasets D1 and D3.

630 **Table 4.** Sherwood numbers and contamination angle and for the experimental dataset D1 and D3

Dataset	j_g expressed at P_{atm} (mm/s)	d_b expressed at P_{atm} ($\times 10^{-3}$ m)	k_L ($\times 10^{-4}$ m/s)	Sh_{exp} (-)	Sh_{Higbie} (-)	$Sh_{Frössling}$ (-)	Θ_{cap} (°)
D1	0.29	1.48	3.80	313	625	120	105
	0.59	1.69	3.47	286	568	109	105
	0.88	1.71	3.01	248	562	108	113
	1.18	1.83	3.00	247	536	103	110
D3	2.62	2.34	3.85	450	699	134	88
	5.14	2.58	3.65	471	716	138	86
	6.76	2.72	3.58	487	723	140	84
	8.23	2.84	3.42	486	729	141	85
	14.26	3.28	3.47	569	749	147	73

631

632 For each dataset, the contamination angles vary slightly with superficial gas velocity and the water
 633 quality appears to be specific for each dataset.

634 For dataset D1, the transfer contamination angle lies between 105 and 113°, which indicates a high
 635 level of bubble contamination that substantially reduces the mass transfer compared to an
 636 equivalent clean bubble (around 50%). This angle designation is consistent with the fact that the
 637 experimental hydrodynamics (i.e. ϵ_g) of dataset D1 was adequately reproduced using a drag
 638 coefficient set for contaminated bubbles (Figure 5).

639 For dataset D3, lower transfer contamination angle values were obtained in comparison with dataset
 640 D1. Even if the water is very clean (filtered tap water), the mass transfer is still hindered compared to
 641 a clean equivalent bubble (between 24 and 36%), but the decrease of the drag coefficient due to the
 642 water contamination remains negligible (Figure 5).

643 For dataset D2, since experimental global K_{La} values fit well with the Higbie model (see Figure 6), it
644 can be deduced that bubbles have transfer contamination angles close to zero and are equivalent to
645 completely clean bubbles. This means that the greater the bubble size, the less the drag
646 contamination impact has an effect on mass transfer: 1.5-, 2.5- and 3.5-mm bubbles correspond to
647 105° , 88° and 0° contamination angles, respectively. This means that when the bubble size increases,
648 it becomes ellipsoidal and the mass transfer occurs intensively at the front of the bubble where the
649 transfer contamination tends to become negligible (Dani et al., 2021).

650

651 3.2.5 Discussion on mass transfer modeling

652 Hydrodynamic parameters calculated with the 1D model in steady state conditions (bubble
653 diameters, gas hold-up and gas velocity) were validated and then used in order to calculate
654 reoxygenation and global K_{La} mass transfer coefficients. A distinction was made between mean local
655 $\langle k_{La} \rangle$ and apparent global K_{La} . The latter is calculated from simulated curves of dissolved oxygen
656 concentration over time, and takes into account oxygen depletion in the gas phase and therefore the
657 variation in the equilibrium concentration versus time. A comparison with the experimental data of
658 global K_{La} therefore provides accurate results, especially for deep bubble columns and/or a low gas
659 flowrate when oxygen depletion in the gas increases (Eq. 36). The depletion factor (Eq. 37) is adapted
660 to characterize and interpret situations where the effects of oxygen depletion influence the gas-
661 liquid transfer due to gradient in the gas phase composition.

662 Moreover, for the three experimental datasets, the Higbie and Frössling mass transfer models were
663 used to interpret mass transfer results with no bias related to the quality of the liquid phase
664 composition (Baeten et al. 2020). When tap water was used for experiments (D1 and D2), the smaller
665 the bubbles, the more they were contaminated. Consequently, the global mass transfer coefficient
666 could be drastically reduced (up to 50% by model comparison with clean bubbles with dataset D1).
667 Surprisingly, even if contamination reduces the slip velocity in dataset D2, mass transfer is not
668 affected by the contamination because the bubbles are big enough to be ellipsoidal: in this case the

669 transfer occurs mainly at the front of the bubble interface (Dani et al. 2006). For dataset D3 obtained
670 using filtered water, the mean slip velocity of bubbles corresponds to that obtained for pure water.
671 However, for this relatively clean water, the bubble surface was still characterized as partially
672 contaminated (contamination angle estimated at 100°).

673 In the context of oxygen transfer in aeration processes, it is then possible to ignore the effect of
674 contamination with tap water for ellipsoidal bubbles greater than 3 mm (as for dataset D2).
675 However, for small bubble sizes (under 2 mm), the quality of the tap water can drastically reduce the
676 mass transfer (more than 50% compared to clean bubbles). In both situations, depletion effects are
677 substantial in deep bubble columns but must also be taken into account for relatively low column
678 height and specific studies (low mean bubble size or high solubility of the component studied).

679 In addition, the impact of eccentricity on the modeled mass transfer coefficient is given in
680 supplementary information (Figure S3). For datasets D2 and D3, the mean local $\langle k_{L,a} \rangle$ values modeled
681 are slightly higher when eccentricity is taken into account. To remain physically consistent,
682 eccentricity must be systematically considered to calculate the interfacial area of ellipsoidal bubbles.

683

684 **4. Conclusions**

685 The main conclusions of this study are:

- 686 • The proposed 1-D model is able to reproduce experimental hydrodynamic (global gas hold-
687 up) for three different experimental datasets in bubble columns with an air/clear water
688 system. The closure laws considered must be rigorously selected in order to integrate the
689 impact of contamination, collective and pressure effects on hydrodynamics, and the mass
690 transfer parameters. Depending on the experimental water height, hydrostatic pressure
691 influences on the hydrodynamic parameters plays a major role and must be considered in
692 the model (an approximately 5% decrease on gas hold-up per meter of depth). The
693 importance of the drag law choice is also highlighted, depending on the water quality and its
694 influence on bubble contamination.

- 695 • The gas oxygen concentration significantly depletes due to the transfer to liquid and thus the
696 equilibrium concentration varies, which explains the difference between the mean local
697 $\langle k_{La} \rangle$ and global K_{La} coefficients. This difference becomes substantial for high soluble gas
698 with high transfer rate and/or a high bubble column and/or low mean bubble size d_b . A
699 depletion factor is proposed in order to warn of situations in which the experimental
700 determination of the overall mass transfer coefficient must be conducted rigorously by
701 considering this depletion effect through an estimation from the reoxygenation curves. The
702 substantial impact of the depletion in the gas phase composition is drastically increasing with
703 the length ratio H/d_b .
- 704 • The suitability of the Higbie k_L model for clean water transfer modelling is demonstrated,
705 especially for ellipsoidal bubbles over 3 mm in full-scale aeration processes. For smaller
706 bubbles or millimetric bubbles, mass transfer is more sensitive to water contamination and
707 water quality remains the most important factor.
- 708 • The impact of water quality on oxygen transfer can be estimated by the contamination angle
709 using comprehensive 1D modeling as developed in this study. This will make it possible to
710 provide a more in-depth understanding of the impact of water quality and the main
711 operating parameters on mass transfer in industrial tanks where the liquid phase is a
712 complex matrix.

713

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717

718 **6. References**

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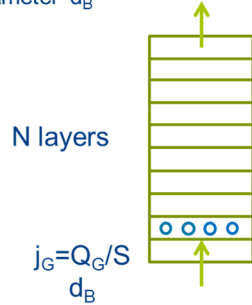
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Input data

- Physico-chemical parameters
- Column height
- Gas superficial velocity j_G
- Bubble diameter d_B



Hydrodynamic calculation (steady state/input for mass transfer)

- Gas hold-up ϵ_G
- Slip velocity/gas velocity
- Hydrostatic pressure
- Bubble diameter variation

Mass transfer (dynamic)

- $C_L = f(t)$ (perfectly mixed liquid)
- $C_G = f(t)$ for each height z