Constructive solutions for the achievement of fine bubble generators based on micro-drilling technologies

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Abstract
The paper presents three types of air fine bubble generators and the micro-drilling technologies experimental studied in the Department of Thermotechnics, Engines, Thermic and Refrigeration Plants from Politehnica University of Bucharest. The purpose of this paper is to study the constructive factors of fine bubble generators that influence the transfer of oxygen from air to water. Fine bubble generators (FBG) were executed on micro-processing numerically controlled specialized machines: it was subjected to experimental researches; the advantages of these new types of fine bubble generators compared to the existing solutions-porous diffusers are revealed.

Keywords: Micro-drilling, micro processing, fine bubble generators, water oxygenation, dissolved oxygen.

1. Introduction
Water aeration represents the enrichment of it with dissolved oxygen naturally or artificially through its transfer from air to water. Water enrichment with dissolved oxygen is possible by introducing pure oxygen or ozone, in which case, the water is not subjected to aeration process, but ozonization process. These can only occur artificially by human intervention.

The dissolved oxygen, along with other factors that influence the aeration process [1] [2], temperature, atmospheric pressure and salinity, are the main drivers on the aquatic ecosystem functions development.

The oxygen is considered a gas with a relatively low solubility in water, solubility strongly influenced by the factors listed above, namely temperature, salinity and atmospheric pressure.

Taking into account the many types and forms of bubble generators, the numerous factors that influence their efficient functioning, there is a need of some theoretical and experimental research to study the water oxygenation processes.

The research purpose of this paper aims to achieve some water oxygenation plants that can produce air bubble with a diameter as small as possible which accelerates the increase of the dissolved oxygen concentration of in water.

The issue presented in this paper is completed with a series of experimental measurements and original contributions.

2. The design and the construction of new types of fine bubble generators
In the case of pneumatic aeration equipment’s, oxygen transfer rate to water is given by [3] [4]:

$$\frac{dC}{dt} = a \cdot k_l \cdot (C_s - C) \left[ \frac{\text{kg}}{\text{m}^3 \cdot \text{s}} \right]$$

where: $a$ – volumetric mass transfer coefficient [s⁻¹]; $C_s$ – mass concentration of oxygen in water at saturation [kg/m³]; $C$ – current mass concentration of oxygen in water [kg/m³].

From the specialty literature [3] [4], it is known that the specific interfacial area (a) significantly decreases as the gas bubbles diameter grow.

As a result, there is a need to create a network of air dispersion in water through bubbles with small diameter. Considering the previous research [3] [4] [5] and the existing FBG test stand architecture in the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering and Mechatronics from Politehnica University of Bucharest were chosen three versions:

Version I: FBG where the perforated plate has 152 orifices Ø 0.1 mm;
Version II: FBG where the perforated plate has 17 orifices Ø 0.3 mm;
Version III: FBG where the perforated plate has 6 orifices Ø 0.5 mm.

Version I presentation
Figure 1 presents the FBG perforated plate with 152 orifices Ø 0.1 mm.
With the notations in Figure 1, on the FBG design, the following conditions must be complied [6] [7]:

1) $\frac{s}{d_0} > 3$; 2) $\frac{d}{d_0} > 8$

In the case of version I it becomes:

$$\frac{s}{d_0} = \frac{2}{0.1} = 20; \quad \frac{d}{d_0} = \frac{2}{0.1} = 20$$

Figure 2 shows the assembly of FBG in version I.

This type of FBG (Figure 3) was subjected to tests in an experimental installation built in the laboratories of Politehnica University of Bucharest. Other FBG with perforated plate by spark-erosion are presented in [8] [9].

The fine bubble generator is made of an aluminum plate with a thickness of 5 mm, in order to ensure a correct fastening and sealing in the aeration device, the micro-orifice of 0.1 mm required a milling of a 3 mm technological channel. The orifice in the plate with $d_0 = 0.1$ mm were performed using a specialized CNC precision machine for micro-processing (Figure 4).

This machine has an accuracy of ± 0.5 μm and can process parts with a height of 220 mm and 350 mm diameter.

**Version II presentation**

Figure 5 shows the perforated plate with 17 orifices of Ø 0.3 mm and in Figure 6, the FBG is presented. As a constructive form, a rectangular shape plate was chosen. A sketch of this plate is shown in Figure 5:

For this plate, a new constructive form of fine bubble generator was developed. This shape can be observed in Figure 6.
Version III presentation

In Figure 7 is observed the perforated plate with 6 orifices of Ø 0.5 mm, and Figure 8 shows the FBG in the third version. As a constructive form, a rectangular shape for the orifice plate was selected. A sketch of this plate is shown in Figure 7:

![Perforated plate with orifices of Ø 0.5 mm.](image)

Fig. 7 Perforated plate with orifices of Ø 0.5 mm.

For this plate, a rectangular fine bubble generator body was designed. Figure 8 shows the three-dimensional image of it:

![Fine air bubble generator, version III.](image)

Fig. 8 Fine air bubble generator, version III.

For the versions II and III, the orifice in the perforated plates were performed by a micro processing machine, Micromat type 6A (Figure 9) using a drill of Ø 0.3 mm and 0.5 mm.

![Micro processing machine, Micromat type 6A.](image)

Fig. 9 Micro processing machine, Micromat type 6A.

This machine has a performing three-dimensional positioning system, having a positioning error up to 10 micrometers and a workbench in length L_{max} = 800 mm, width l_{max} = 550 mm and a height of H_{max} = 500 mm.

3. The experimental plant presentation

The research aim is to determine the dissolved oxygen concentration variation in water for the 3 versions of FBG. The experimental stand consists of [10] [11]:

- Compressor (1), to produce compressed air with the following operating parameters: maximum discharge pressure p = 8 bar, aspirated flow rate = 200 dm³/min, electric motor power P = 1.1 kW at rpm n = 2850 rpm/min, tank volume (V = 24 dm³). The compressor is equipped with a manometer 0-16 bar to show the pressure in the compressor tank and a pressure reducing valve for the establishment of the pressure in the piping system.

- Air pipes for the delivery of the compressed air, made of plastic, with the inner diameter of Ø15 mm and a wall thickness of 2 mm; its supplies the fine bubble generator with air and ensures the evacuation of the excess air supplied by the compressor to the atmosphere.

- The aeration tank constructed of Plexiglas plates with thickness of 5 mm, having the dimension, 0.5×0.5×1.5 (W × L × h).

- Fine bubble generator.

The sketch of the stand used for the experimental researches is presented in Figure 10:

![Sketch of the experimental plant for researches regarding water oxygenation](image)

Fig. 10 Sketch of the experimental plant for researches regarding water oxygenation

1-elec compressor with air tank; 2– pressure reducer; 3– manometer; 4– connector for air exhaustion in the atmosphere; 5– T-joint; 6– rotameter; 7– pipe for the transport of the compressed air to the FBG; 8– digital manometer; 9– oxygen meter; 10– digital thermometer; 11– water tank; 12– mechanism for the probe actuation; 13– oxygen meter probe; 14– FBG; 15– electronics control: a– supply unit, b- switch, c- control element.
4. Experimental research methodology

During the experimental researches the following parameters were kept constant:
- The pressure inside the FBG, \( p = 1290 \text{ mm H}_2\text{O} \);
- The height of the water layer above the FBG, \( H = 500 \text{ mm H}_2\text{O} \);
- Water temperature \( t \approx 24 \degree \text{C} \) and air temperature \( t \approx 25 \degree \text{C} \);
- Air input section in the water mass;

Based on previous research [1] [3] this section of was chosen equal to: \( A = 1.20 \cdot 10^{-6} \text{ m}^2 \).

The experimental researches were conducted as follows:
1. The water tank is filled: \( H = 500 \text{ mm} \);
2. The water temperature in the tank and the initial dissolved \( \text{O}_2 \) concentration in the water are measured.
3. The compressor is turned on and the compressed air temperature is measured.
4. The FBG is inserted in the tank and the time (\( \tau = 0 \)) is noted.
5. Every 15 minutes, the dissolved oxygen concentration in water is measured.
6. The duration of the experiments is 120 minutes, ie eight measurements set are performed.

5. Experimental obtained results

For the three versions of the FBG, common elements were:
- Air input section in the water: \( A = 1.20 \cdot 10^{-6} \text{ m}^2 \);
- The water temperature in the tank: \( t = 24 \degree \text{C} \);
- Compressed air temperature: \( t = 25 \degree \text{C} \);
- The initial \( \text{O}_2 \) concentration in water: \( C_0 = 5.48 \text{ mg/l} \);
- The duration of the experiments, \( \tau = 120 \text{ minutes} \).

As a result of the measurements the data shown in Table 1 were obtained.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>( \Delta \tau )</th>
<th>( C_{\text{O}_2}(0.1) )</th>
<th>( C_{\text{O}_2}(0.3) )</th>
<th>( C_{\text{O}_2}(0.5) )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0'</td>
<td>5.48</td>
<td>5.46</td>
<td>5.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15'</td>
<td>7.39</td>
<td>7.03</td>
<td>6.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30'</td>
<td>7.85</td>
<td>7.73</td>
<td>7.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45'</td>
<td>8.01</td>
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<td>7.85</td>
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<td>60'</td>
<td>8.26</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>75'</td>
<td>8.30</td>
<td>8.24</td>
<td>8.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90'</td>
<td>8.35</td>
<td>8.29</td>
<td>8.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>105'</td>
<td>8.37</td>
<td>8.30</td>
<td>8.20</td>
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<tr>
<td>120'</td>
<td>8.39</td>
<td>8.31</td>
<td>8.23</td>
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Based on the results in Table 1, the graphs in Figure 11 were plotted.

From Figure 11, it is noted that the FBG in version I is the most efficient.

6. Conclusions

The oxygenation process efficiency is influenced by the following factors:
- Water depth at which the air is introduced;
- The size of the air bubbles introduced into the water;
- The flow regime obtained by introducing compressed air into the water mass.

2. The advantages of fine bubble aeration systems are:
- Are simple in terms of construction;
- The operational life is high;
- Does not require periodical maintenance;
- Particularly low resistance; particularly low resistance generates low pressure loss, leading to energy savings in air compression station [12].

3. After the experimental measurements the followings were found:
- The dissolved oxygen concentration in water increases faster when using small orifice plate;
- From Figure 11 it is observed that the most advantageous is to work with a FBG at which the plate has 0.1 mm orifices;
- Creating a FBG at which the plate has 0.1 mm orifices, the experimental plant, the research methodology and the obtained results represents an original contribution of the authors.

References

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