

LABORATORY DEVICE FOR SEDIMENTATION SEPARATION OF POWDERS

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A laboratory device has been designed for separation fractions of powder materials in liquid suspension. The device is working on the principle of Andreasens pipette and is scaled up for preparative separation of large volumes of liquid suspension (50 l). Each component of the device is controlled by an electronic unit according to preprogrammed parameters. Description of the device and technical details are given.

INTRODUCTION

One of the classical and simple methods of separating powder materials is their sedimentation in liquid suspensions. The method is suitable for separation of fractions in the range 1–80 µm and is frequently used for isolation of nearly pure samples of clay minerals (especially montmorillonite) assuming that density of impurities in the parent rock is higher than that of the separated mineral. Separating fractions with particle diameters below 2 µm from water suspension of bentonite it is possible to obtain monomineral montmorillonite – according to X-ray diffraction analysis – but often with a variable content of amorphous phase [1]. However, at fine dividing the share of desired fractions sometimes does not exceed 1% – thus the isolation of larger amounts of narrow fractions becomes very time consuming.

EXPERIMENTAL

A laboratory device has been designed working on the principle of Andreasens pipette, scaled up for sedimentation of large volumes of water suspensions, fully automated, programmable with digital control. Scheme of the device is shown in Fig. 1. Its main part is a 50 l sedimentation vessel (1) with stirrer (2) and a pneumatic control valve (5) in the bottom – connected to sewerage. Into the neck of the valve ends a tube connected with the water supply – through a peristaltic pump (10) for distilled water (18), or through an electromagnetic valve (14), filtration and ionex columns (15, 16) to the water pipe. In the upper part of the tube are holes for easy cleaning the sedimentation vessel by sprinkling. In the bottom of vessel is a sieve (12) with 5 mm size of meshes for preventing penetration of coarse particles into the valve seat. Three level-sensors (6, 7, 8) are in three adjustable positions for the lower, the upper and the safety level. The safety sensor (6) is installed for the defective case of increasing the liquid level above the position of the upper sensor (7). The separated fraction is sucked down through the pipe (17) with adjustable position. The pipe is equipped with a valve

(23) to prevent sucking air during decreasing the level of suspension below the mouth of the pipe. It is possible to adjust the flow rate of suspension with a glass stopcock (24).

Above the sedimentation vessel are two kinds of dosing devices. The first one – a belt conveyer (3) with tipping vessels for precise dosing of samples, the second – a screw feeder (4) for dosing of fine powders. The conveyer is operated by the control unit (20) through the position indicator (9), switched by

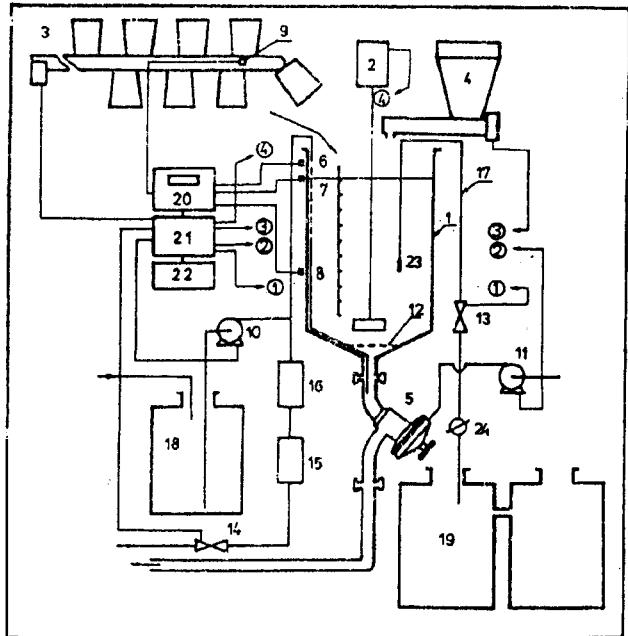


Fig. 1. The scheme of laboratory device for separation of powder materials: 1 – sedimentation vessel, 2 – stirrer, 3 – belt conveyer, 4 – screw feeder, 5 – pneumatic valve, 6, 7, 8 – level sensors, 9 – position indikator, 10 – pump for distilled water, 11 – air pump, 12 – sieve, 13, 14 – electromagnetic valves, 15 – filtration column, 16 – ionex column, 17 – tube for separated fraction, 18 – tank for distilled water, 19 – tank for separated fraction, 20 – control unit, 21 – power unit, 22 – regulated power supply, 23 – air valve, 24 – glass stopcock.

permanent magnets placed on the side of each vessel. The screw feeder is controlled by a time switch (20).

Function of device. Each component of the device is controlled by the electronic unit (20) according to pre-programmed parameters of the following cycle steps: – dosing the sample to be fractionated, simultaneously filling the sedimentation vessel with water and switching the stirrer. – stop stirring. Passed the set sedimentation time, the upper part of the suspension is sucked down into the settling tank. (The cycle can be repeated required times to get finely separated fraction). Then a new portion of sample is fed into the sedimentation vessel and the whole procedure repeated.

The control unit allows to preprogramate time of sedimentation, number of separations of the same fraction, time of desaggregation of the batch and the number of samples. Other functions are fixed set, or depend on the level of suspension. In case of breakdown – when sedimentation vessel is filled above the upper level set – the device is automatically switched off. During operation of the device it is possible to display the stage of the separation i.e. the topical cycle, number of repetition, number of sample etc.

CONCLUSION

The device was designed with respect to a compromise between the price and utility and enables precise separation of required fraction of powder samples on a preparative scale. Testing and use of the device proved its reliability. After installation a collector of fractions and modifying the control program it will be possible to use the device for complete fractional separation of powder samples.

References

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LABORATÓRNE ZARIADENIE PRE SEDIMENTAČNÚ SEPARÁCIU PRÁŠKOVÝCH MATERIÁLOV

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Jednou z klasických a nenáročných metod separácie práškových materiálov je ich sedimentačné delenie v kvapalných suspenziách. Metóda sa často používa na izoláciu viacmenej čistých vzoriek slivových minerálov (napr. montmorillonitu), kde sa využíva vyššia špecifická hmotnosť prínesí minerálu v materskej hornine. Pretože obsah požadovaných frakcií je často veľmi nízky izolácia ich väčších množstiev je časovo náročná.

Navrhlo sa zariadenie pracujúce na princípe Andreaseovej pipety, dimenzované na sedimentáciu väčších objemov vodných suspenzií a určené na preparatívnu izoláciu jemných frakcií práškových materiálov. Náčrt zariadenia je na obr. 1. Jeho hlavnú časť tvorí sedimentačná nádoba s objemom 50 litrov, opatrená miešadlom a v spodnej časti pneumatický ovládaným ventilom, ústiacim na výpustnej strane do kanalizačného potrubia laboratória. Do hrdla ventilu je zavedený prívod vody bud' cez peristaltické čerpadlo (napr. pre destilovanú vodu) alebo z vodovodného potrubia cez elektromagnetický ventil a filtračnú a ionexovú kolónu. V nádobe sú inštalované tri hladinové snímače; vrchný slúži ako poistný pre prípad havarijného presiahnutia hladiny suspenzie nad polohu stredného, snímača. Trubica pre odber separovanej suspenzie je vybavená ventilom zabranujúcim nasatiu vzduchu pri vyprázdnovaní nádoby. Nad sedimentačnou nádobou sú inštalované dva typy dávkovacích zariadení (pássový s výklopnými nádobami a špirálový) pre rôzne druhy separovaných vzoriek.

Všetky prvky zariadenia sú ovládané elektronickou jednotkou, ktorá riadi nasledovný sled krokov:

- plnenie nádoby vodou, zapnutie miešadla a dávkovanie vzorky počas plnenia nádoby.
- vypnutie miešadla, vypustenie vrchnej časti suspenzie po stanovenom čase (cyklus sa môže opakovať)
- vypustenie obsahu nádoby, jej vypláchnutie a dávkovanie novej vzorky.

Ovládacia jednotka dovolí, sedimentačný čas, počet separácií jednej vzorky, čas rozplavovania a počet spracovaných vzoriek. Ostatné funkcie sú zvolené fixne, alebo závisia na polohe hladiny suspenzie.

Zariadenie bolo konštruované s ohľadom na kompromis medzi jeho cenou a užitkovou hodnotou a jeho používanie pri separácii montmorillonitu z bentonitu ukázalo jeho spoločnosť. Zmenou ovládacieho programu a inštaláciou zberača frakcií je možné zariadenie použiť pre úplnú frakčnú separáciu práškových vzoriek.

Obr. 1. Schéma laboratórneho zariadenia na separáciu práškových materiálov: 1 – sedimentačná nádoba, 2 – miešadlo, 3 – dopravníkový dávkovač, 4 – špirálový dávkovač, 5 – pneumatický ventil, 6, 7, 8 – hladinové senzory, 9 – polohový snímač, 10 – čerpadlo pre destilovanú vodu, 11 – vzduchové čerpadlo, 12 – sito, 13, 14 – elektromagnetické ventily, 15 – filtračná kolóna, 16 – ionerová kolóna, 17 – trubica pre odber separovanej frakcie, 18 – nádoba pre destilovanú vodu, 19 – nádoba pre separovanú frakciu, 20 – ovládacia jednotka, 21 – výkonová časť ovládacej jednotky, 22 – vzduchový ventil, 24 – sklenený kohút.