

Particle-level dynamics of clusters: Experiments in a gas-fluidized bed

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Abstract

The clustering is critical to understanding the multiscale behavior of fluidization. However, its time-resolved evolution on the particle level is seldom touched. Here, we explore both the time-averaged and time-resolved dynamics of clusters in a quasi-2D fluidized bed. Particle tracking velocimetry is adopted and then clusters are identified by using the Voronoi analysis. The time-averaged results show that the cluster hydrodynamic parameters depend highly on the cluster size and the distance from the wall. The number distribution of the cluster size follows a power law ($\sim n_c^{-2.2}$) of the percolation theory except for large clusters ($n_c > 100$). The time-resolved analysis shows that the cluster coalescence can be simplified as a collision between two inelastic clusters, during which the net external force is roughly zero, and a snowplow model is proposed to predict its energy loss, $\Delta E \sim t^{3/2}$. The cluster rupture is suggested to be caused by increasing torque.

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