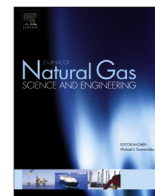




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Invited review

Modeling of uniform CO<sub>2</sub> corrosion of mild steel in gas transportation systems: A review

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## ABSTRACT

The state of the art with regards the mechanistic understanding of uniform carbon dioxide corrosion of mild steel is reviewed and the corresponding mathematical models are presented. The existing predictive models are categorized into three groups, termed: empirical/semi-empirical, elementary mechanistic, and comprehensive mechanistic. With emphasis on mechanistic models, selected key publications are reviewed and the limits and advantages of each group of models are discussed. Furthermore, the ability of the existing models to be extended and account for more complex corrosion scenarios is discussed.

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## 1. Introduction

Reliable estimation of corrosion rate is one of the key considerations for design of transmission pipelines and related infrastructure for natural gas production and processing. Predicted corrosion rates directly affect major design decisions, such as material selection, pipe wall thickness allowance, pipe diameter and hence velocity, etc. as well as operational planning such as need for corrosion mitigation, inspection and monitoring. Underestimation of corrosion rates may therefore lead to failure, with health, safety and environmental hazards as well as significant financial losses due to production interruption, equipment replacement, etc. On the other hand, gross overestimation can have a strong impact on the economic aspects of a project.

In natural gas extraction, carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) is almost always present as a byproduct, and in its hydrated form (H<sub>2</sub>CO<sub>3</sub>), it is a well-known corrosive species. Mild steel uniform corrosion rate estimations associated with CO<sub>2</sub> in wet natural gas systems has historically been done by “worst case” empirical/semi-empirical models developed in the 1980s and 1990s (de Waard et al., 1991; Dugstad et al., 1994; Olsen et al., 2005). Whilst these models have been extensively used, primarily due to their simplicity, their application is limited by the narrow range of conditions they cover. On the other hand, increasing interest for exploration and gas production in harsher, more corrosive environments pushes the applications of these models beyond the point where they can be confidently used. Even though improving the models to address the ever more challenging industrial demands has been slow, advancements in the mechanistic understanding of the underlying processes in CO<sub>2</sub> corrosion has provided new opportunities for development of more robust mechanistic models, with the ability to perform well beyond the scope covered by the previous empirical/semi-empirical models. Having strong roots in the physicochemical theory underlying the corrosion process, the mechanistic models introduced over the past two decades have provided the flexibility required to cover various conditions and include new processes in corrosion rate calculations.

Uniform CO<sub>2</sub> corrosion of mild steel can be considered as one of the most studied and well understood corrosion systems. In addition to numerous studies covering specific aspects of this corrosion

system, several holistic reviews of the underlying physicochemical processes (Nešić and Sun, 2010; Nešić, 2011, 2007; Revie, 2011; Richardson, 2009) as well as reviews of uniform corrosion rate prediction models (Kapusta et al., 2004; Nešić et al., 1997; Nyborg, 2006, 2002; Olsen, 2003) are available in the literature.

The present review is primarily focused on progress in development of mechanistic mathematical models of aqueous CO<sub>2</sub> corrosion of mild steel and describes the state of the art. In this context, the fundamental physicochemical processes underlying uniform CO<sub>2</sub> corrosion are discussed and the corresponding mathematical relationships are presented. The mechanistic aspects of the chemical and electrochemical reactions, as well as mass transfer processes are covered in some detail.

The mathematical models developed to date are here categorized into three main groups: (i) empirical/semi-empirical, (ii) elementary mechanistic, and (iii) comprehensive mechanistic models. As the focus is on the mechanistic models, the empirical and semi-empirical models are only briefly discussed as background/historical information. In the discussion of the mechanistic models, selected key studies are reviewed and the strength and limitations of the various modeling approaches are presented. Furthermore, the ability of the various types of models to be adapted to more complex conditions and be extended to include additional phenomena such as those seen in the presence of additional corrosive species (e.g. H<sub>2</sub>S, organic acids, etc.), corrosion product layer formation, and top of the line corrosion (TLC) is discussed.

## 2. Review of the fundamentals

### 2.1. Water chemistry in CO<sub>2</sub> corrosion

A comprehensive knowledge of the water composition is essential for accurate calculations of corrosion rates. Chemical equilibria relating to dissolved CO<sub>2</sub> and its carbonate derivatives in the bulk solution has been extensively studied (Butler, 1991; Stumm and Morgan, 1995; Zeebe and Wolf-Gladrow, 2001). However, reaction kinetics relating to these equilibria, particularly at the interface between the bulk fluid and the metal surface have only been accounted for in the more recent mechanistic studies (Nordsveen et al., 2003; Pots, 1995; Remita et al., 2008; Turgoose et al., 1992).

The main chemical reactions in CO<sub>2</sub> aqueous solutions, their corresponding chemical equilibria, and kinetic rate constants are presented in Table 1 and Table 2. The water speciation in the bulk solution can be readily calculated by simultaneous solution of equilibrium expressions for all species along with the electro-neutrality constraint (Nešić and Sun, 2010). An example of the results of such calculations for an open system with constant partial pressure of 1 bar CO<sub>2</sub> at various pH values is shown in Fig. 1. The effect of reaction kinetics on surface concentrations needs to be accounted for differently, as discussed in detail in section 2.3. It should be noted that here it was assumed that the infinite dilution theory is valid, i.e. the activity coefficients for all the chemical species are assumed to be unity. This assumption is consistent with the literature considered in the present review. While it provides a reasonable estimation of speciation for majority of aqueous CO<sub>2</sub> systems seen in gas transportation applications, it also greatly simplifies the resulting mathematical expressions. The effect of non-ideal behavior seen at high pressures and concentrations is discussed elsewhere: for water chemistry (Duan and Li, 2008; Duan and Sun, 2003; Duan et al., 2006; Li and Duan, 2007; Mohamed et al., 2011), and for the mass transfer (Fosbøl et al., 2009; Newman and Thomas-Alyea, 2004). It is important to note that the modifications required to cover this non-ideal behavior can be

**Table 1**  
Homogeneous chemical reactions in water/CO<sub>2</sub> environment.

Reaction	Equilibrium equation
CO <sub>2(g)</sub> ⇌ CO <sub>2(aq)</sub>	$H_{CO_2} = \frac{[CO_{2(aq)}]}{pCO_{2(g)}} \quad (1)$
CO <sub>2(aq)</sub> + H <sub>2</sub> O <sub>(l)</sub> ⇌ H <sub>2</sub> CO <sub>3(aq)</sub>	$K_{hyd} = \frac{k_{f,hyd}}{k_{b,hyd}} = \frac{[H_2CO_3]}{[CO_{2(aq)}]} \quad (2)$
H <sub>2</sub> CO <sub>3(aq)</sub> ⇌ HCO <sub>3(aq)</sub> <sup>-</sup> + H <sub>(aq)</sub> <sup>+</sup>	$K_{ca} = \frac{k_{f,ca}}{k_{b,ca}} = \frac{[HCO_3^-][H^+]}{[H_2CO_3]} \quad (3)$
HCO <sub>3(aq)</sub> <sup>-</sup> ⇌ CO <sub>3(aq)</sub> <sup>2-</sup> + H <sub>(aq)</sub> <sup>+</sup>	$K_{bi} = \frac{k_{f,bi}}{k_{b,bi}} = \frac{[CO_3^{2-}][H^+]}{[HCO_3^-]} \quad (4)$
H <sub>2</sub> O <sub>(l)</sub> ⇌ OH <sub>(aq)</sub> <sup>-</sup> + H <sub>(aq)</sub> <sup>+</sup>	$K_w = \frac{k_{f,w}}{k_{b,w}} = [OH^-][H^+] \quad (5)$

**Table 2**  
Equilibrium and reaction rate constants for chemical reactions shown in Table 1.

Constant	Units	Reference
$H_{CO_2} = \frac{1}{1.00258} \exp\left(93.4517 \left(\frac{100}{T}\right) - 60.2409 + 23.3585 \ln\left(\frac{T}{100}\right) + \left(0.023517 - 0.023656 \left(\frac{T}{100}\right) + 0.0047036 \left(\frac{T}{100}\right)^2\right) S_{\%o}\right)$	M.bar <sup>-1</sup>	(Dickson and Goyet, 1994; Weiss, 1974; Zeebe and Wolf-Gladrow, 2001)
$K_{w} = \exp\left(\frac{-13847.26}{T} + 148.9652 - 23.6521 \ln T + \left(\frac{118.67}{T} - 5.977 + 1.0495 \ln T\right) S_{\%o}^{0.5} + 0.01615 S_{\%o}\right)$	M <sup>2</sup>	(Dickson and Goyet, 1994; Millero, 1995; Zeebe and Wolf-Gladrow, 2001)
$k_{b,w} = 7.8 \times 10^{10}$	M <sup>-1</sup> s <sup>-1</sup>	(Delahay, 1952)
$K_{hyd} = 2.85 \times 10^{-3}$	–	(Palmer and Eldik, 1983)
$k_{f,hyd} = 10^{\left(\frac{329.85 - 110.541 \times \log T - 1285.4}{T}\right)}$	s <sup>-1</sup>	(Palmer and Eldik, 1983)
$K_{ca} = 378.6 \exp\left(\frac{-2307.1266}{T} + 2.83655 - 1.5529413 \ln T + \left(\frac{-4.0484}{T} - 0.2076084\right) S_{\%o}^{0.5} + 0.08468345 S_{\%o} - 0.00654208 S_{\%o}^{1.5} + \ln(1 - 0.001005 S_{\%o})\right)$	M	(Dickson and Goyet, 1994; Roy et al., 1993; Zeebe and Wolf-Gladrow, 2001)
$k_{f,ca} = 10^{(5.71 + 0.0526 \times T - 2.94 \times 10^{-4} \times T^2 + 7.91 \times 10^{-7} \times T^3)}$	s <sup>-1</sup>	(Green, 1972)
$K_{bi} = \exp\left(\frac{-3351.6106}{T} - 9.226508 - 0.2005743 \ln T + \left(\frac{-23.9722}{T} - 0.106901773\right) S_{\%o}^{0.5} + 0.1130822 S_{\%o} - 0.00846934 S_{\%o}^{1.5} + \ln(1 - 0.001005 S_{\%o})\right)$	M	(Dickson and Goyet, 1994; Roy et al., 1993; Zeebe and Wolf-Gladrow, 2001)
$k_{f,bi} = 10^9$	s <sup>-1</sup>	(Nordsveen et al., 2003) <sup>a</sup>

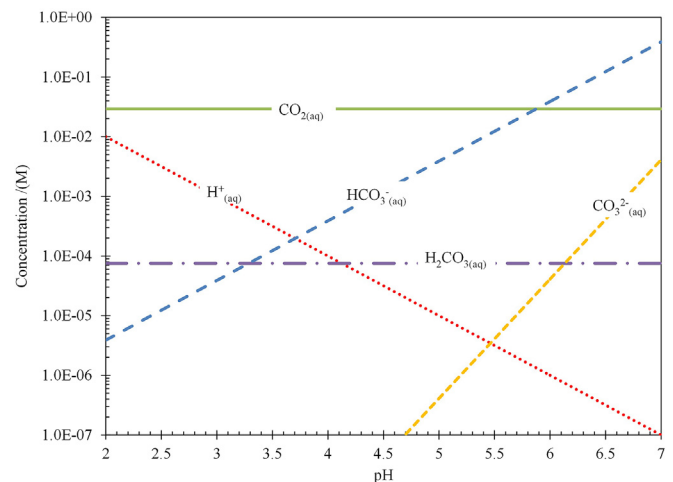
<sup>a</sup> The value of  $k_{f,bi}$  is estimated and it is not based on experimental measurements.

readily included into the general framework of the mechanistic models discussed in the following chapters.

## 2.2. Electrochemical reactions in CO<sub>2</sub> corrosion

The cathodic and the anodic reactions on the metal surface are what define the corrosion process as a heterogeneous phenomenon. Despite long-term research focused on the electrochemical reactions involved in CO<sub>2</sub> corrosion, the predictive models rely on best assumptions about the exact reaction mechanisms.

Table 3 summarizes the key electrochemical reactions associated with the species commonly considered electroactive in aqueous CO<sub>2</sub> corrosion of mild steel. Each reaction shown is an overall reaction and usually consists of a few elementary steps which are discussed in the following sections. Reaction 1 to Reaction 4 are the possible cathodic reactions in a CO<sub>2</sub> containing aqueous environment. Reaction 1 and Reaction 2 are the well-known hydrogen evolution reactions from hydrogen ion and water, common for all aqueous acidic systems. Reaction 3 is the so called “direct” reduction of carbonic acid (H<sub>2</sub>CO<sub>3</sub>), which has been identified by numerous authors as the main contribution of CO<sub>2</sub> to the enhancement of corrosion rate, when compared to strong acids (de Waard and Williams, 1975a; Gray et al., 1989; Nešić et al., 1996a; Nordsveen et al., 2003). Similarly, Reaction 4 is the reduction of bicarbonate ion which is believed to be significant at near-neutral and alkaline pH values due to high bicarbonate ion concentration, as depicted in Fig. 1 (Gray et al., 1990; Han et al., 2011c; Ogundele and White, 1987, 1986). In the literature, both the reduction of carbonic acid and bicarbonate ion are known as “direct reduction” mechanism, meaning that the undissociated acid is adsorbed and directly reduced at the metal surface during the corrosion process, to evolve hydrogen. An alternative mechanism known as “buffering effect” is also proposed in the literature. This mechanism suggests that the dissociation of the carbonic acid in the vicinity of the metal/solution interface replenishes the hydrogen ion concentration at the metal surface as it is consumed by the corrosion process (Remita et al., 2008; Tran et al., 2015). It should be noted that the “direct reduction” mechanism allows for the possibility for carbonic acid (or any other weak acid) to also act as a buffer (Nešić et al., 2001; Nordsveen et al., 2003; Pots, 1995), while this is not considered to be the dominant effect. On the other hand, the “buffering effect”



**Fig. 1.** Concentration of different species in CO<sub>2</sub>/water equilibrium at various pH values, pCO<sub>2</sub> = 1 bar, T = 298 K, and 0.5 M NaCl in an open system with a constant CO<sub>2</sub> partial pressure.

**Table 3**  
Possible electrochemical reactions in CO<sub>2</sub> corrosion of mild steel.

Reaction number	Electrochemical reaction	Dominant reaction type
Reaction 1	$H_{(aq)}^+ + e^- \rightleftharpoons \frac{1}{2}H_{2(g)}$	Cathodic
Reaction 2	$H_2O_{(l)} + e^- \rightleftharpoons OH_{(aq)}^- + \frac{1}{2}H_{2(g)}$	Cathodic
Reaction 3	$H_2CO_{3(aq)} + e^- \rightleftharpoons HCO_3^-(aq) + \frac{1}{2}H_{2(g)}$	Cathodic
Reaction 4	$HCO_3^-(aq) + e^- \rightleftharpoons CO_3^{2-}(aq) + \frac{1}{2}H_{2(g)}$	Cathodic
Reaction 5	$Fe_{(aq)}^{2+} + 2e^- \rightleftharpoons Fe_{(s)}$	Anodic

mechanism excludes the possibility of “direct reduction” of weak acids. Therefore the divergence of the two mechanisms, “buffering effect” and “direct reduction”, is in the assumed electro-activity of the undissociated weak acid.

Similar mechanistic arguments are frequent in corrosion studies. For example, the direct reduction of water is common knowledge; it has been recently proven that another weak acid – hydrogen sulfide is also directly reduced (Kittel et al., 2013; Zheng et al., 2014). However, the arguments on the reduction mechanism of carbonic as well as organic acids are still unsettled, although now it appears that “direct reduction” mechanism is not significant (Amri et al., 2011; Hurlen et al., 1984; Remita et al., 2008; Tran et al., 2015, 2013).

### 2.2.1. Cathodic reactions

The exact mechanism of cathodic reactions in the presence of weak acids in general, and carbonic acid in particular, remains open to debate. The major controversy is related to the role of undissociated carbonic acid. This protracted controversy remains unsolved due to the intrinsic complexity of the system, especially as the weak acids are at equilibrium with the hydrogen ion at all times, making it hard to distinguish the two. In aqueous solutions, based on the definition of reversible potential, it can be shown that weak acids such as carbonic acid and bicarbonate ion, are thermodynamically identical (Gray et al., 1989). Furthermore, the fast kinetics of coupled homogeneous chemical reactions (see Table 2), makes it difficult to deploy the majority of standard electroanalytical techniques in order to resolve this issue. Therefore, the main method used to study this system was through the quantitative analysis of charge transfer rates.

In the last four decades, the mechanistic understanding of CO<sub>2</sub> corrosion and the development of more inclusive mathematical descriptions of this system has been undergoing concurrent evolution. De Waard and Milliams were amongst the first researchers attempting to elucidate the mechanism of CO<sub>2</sub> corrosion (de Waard and Milliams, 1975a, 1975b). Based on a quantitative analysis, De Waard and Milliams proposed a mechanism for CO<sub>2</sub> corrosion where the dominant cathodic reaction is the “direct reduction” of the undissociated carbonic acid. This mechanism was further supported by Wieckowski et al. based on their studies with cyclic voltammetry (Więckowski et al., 1983a).

In 1977, Schmitt and Rothmann (Schmitt and Rothmann, 1977) proposed a mechanism for the cathodic reaction in aqueous CO<sub>2</sub> environments based on their study of the limiting current response to flow velocity and partial pressure of CO<sub>2</sub>. Schmitt and Rothman reported that the limiting current consists of both flow dependent and flow independent components. It was shown that the flow dependent part of the limiting current was governed by transfer of hydrogen ion and undissociated carbonic acid, while the flow independent part was suggested to be limited by the slow reaction rate of adsorbed CO<sub>2</sub> to give carbonic acid, in the so called hydration step. The relevance of the adsorption in hydration of CO<sub>2</sub> was later challenged by Wieckowski et al. in their radiotracer study of the iron/CO<sub>2</sub> system (Więckowski et al., 1983b).

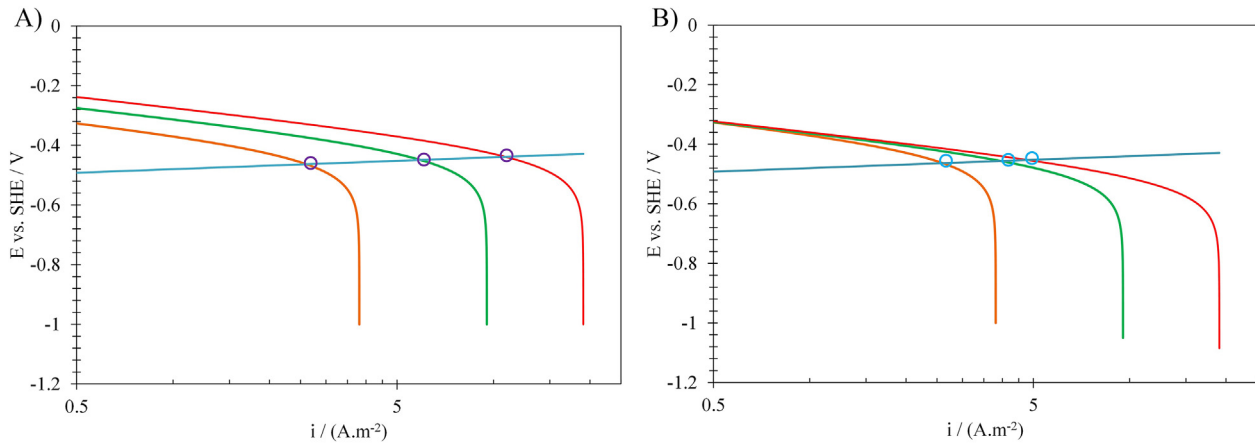
The mechanism of cathodic reactions in CO<sub>2</sub> environment was

further discussed by Gray et al. (Gray et al., 1990, 1989) by introducing a mathematical model for CO<sub>2</sub> corrosion of mild steel. Using the proposed mechanism of Schmitt and Rothmann as the basis of their model while considering the radiotracer study of Wieckowski et al. (1983b), Gray et al. suggested that the adsorption step of CO<sub>2</sub> introduced by Schmitt and Rothmann (1977) was unnecessary to explain the limiting currents observed in CO<sub>2</sub> environments. This model is based on concurrent reduction of hydrogen ions and carbonic acid, while the effect of slow hydration of carbonic acid in the bulk solution was also included. This mechanism has become the most commonly accepted mechanism of CO<sub>2</sub> corrosion ever since.

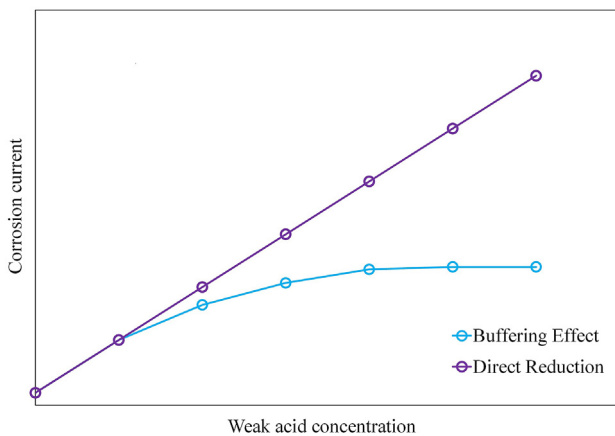
In more recent studies, a few attempts have been made in order to quantitatively describe the increased corrosion rates in CO<sub>2</sub> systems solely through the buffering effect of carbonic acid on hydrogen ion concentration. Remita et al. (2008) reported a quantitative analysis of cathodic currents in CO<sub>2</sub> saturated solutions. The authors claimed that they could predict the cathodic currents without considering direct reduction of carbonic acid. Their model is based on the reaction rate constant of the hydrogen ion reduction obtained from experimental data in deaerated acidic solutions and the homogeneous reactions related to CO<sub>2</sub> equilibria. Based on the good agreement between the predicted voltammograms and the experimental data, the authors concluded that the direct carbonic acid reduction reaction is not necessary to quantitatively explain the higher cathodic current densities observed in CO<sub>2</sub> systems.

Considering the limited experimental scope of Remita et al. study (only pH4 and 1 bar CO<sub>2</sub>), their conclusion about the insignificant contribution of carbonic acid reduction to the cathodic current may not be readily extrapolated to conditions where carbonic acid concentration is many orders of magnitude higher than the hydrogen ion concentration (see Fig. 1 at pH 6 as an example). Additionally, Remita et al. compared the surface pH measurements in unbuffered acidic solution with solutions buffered with carbonic acid. The lower surface pH values obtained in carbonic acid environment was considered as additional proof for the buffering effect mechanism. However, this decreasing trend of surface pH would be expected for both mechanisms. Therefore, surface pH measurements are not able to provide conclusive arguments on the mechanism of cathodic reaction.

In a more experimentally extensive approach, Tran et al. (2015) aimed to distinguish between the direct reduction and buffering effect mechanism by studying the sensitivity of the pure charge transfer controlled cathodic currents to the concentration of undissociated acid, a similar approach as that previously used for acetic acid (Hurlen et al., 1984; Tran et al., 2013). This is depicted in Fig. 2 by comparison of the hypothetical voltammograms of these two reaction mechanisms. Fig. 2A represents the direct reduction mechanism where the net cathodic current is the summation of the current from both hydrogen ion and the undissociated weak acid (H<sub>2</sub>CO<sub>3</sub>) reduction. Fig. 2B shows the expected behavior of the buffering effect mechanism where the cathodic currents are only defined by hydrogen ion reduction and the weak acid is only an additional source of hydrogen ions. Here both mechanisms show



**Fig. 2.** An illustration of hypothetical polarization curves expected at a constant pH; cathodic lines for three concentrations of a weak acid (red > green > orange). Blue line represents the anodic reaction. A) direct reduction mechanism (de Waard and Milliams, 1975a, 1975b) B) buffering effect mechanism. (Tran et al., 2013).<sup>1</sup>



**Fig. 3.** Illustration of the corrosion current/rate behavior for the different cathodic reaction mechanisms shown in Fig. 2 (Tran et al., 2013).<sup>1</sup>

identical limiting current behavior with increasing concentration of the weak acid. For the case of carbonic acid, this behavior can be explained by considering that the limiting current is the superposition of mass transfer limiting current of hydrogen ions and chemical reaction limiting current of  $\text{CO}_2$  hydration as the rate determining steps. Therefore, the associated faster electrochemical reactions, whether in form of direct reduction of carbonic acid, or via the buffering effect mechanism, cannot be distinguished in the potential range governed by the limiting currents.

However, at charge transfer controlled current conditions (at higher potentials), a distinctive behavior is expected. In direct reduction mechanism (Fig. 2A), both hydrogen ions and carbonic acid are reactive, therefore, at a constant pH the net current increases by rising concentrations of the weak acid. At similar conditions, in the buffering effect mechanism, when the undissociated weak acid is not reduced (Fig. 2B), the charge transfer controlled current remains unchanged. Therefore these two mechanisms can be distinguished by studying the behavior of the charge transfer controlled currents at various weak acid concentrations (carbonic acid in this case).

The significance of this mechanistic discussion in corrosion rate predictive models is illustrated in Fig. 3. This graph shows that predicted corrosion rates at higher partial pressures of  $\text{CO}_2$  (high concentrations of carbonic acid) can be vastly different, depending on the adopted mechanism in the model. If carbonic acid is not considered as an electro-active species (as in buffering effect mechanism), a maximum charge transfer controlled corrosion current will be reached at some high partial pressure of  $\text{CO}_2$ . If it is adopted that carbonic acid is directly reduced, the predicted corrosion current would be steadily increasing with increasing  $\text{CO}_2$  partial pressure.

The main difficulty in testing such a hypothesis in  $\text{CO}_2$  environments is the lack of ability to observe the pure charge transfer cathodic current on mild steel at typical experimental conditions, due to the interference by the anodic iron dissolution reaction. Therefore, Tran et al. suggested using stainless steel, being a more noble metal, where the interference by the anodic reaction is negligible for a wide range of cathodic potentials. The polarization data reported in their work clearly show a Tafel behavior (pure charge transfer controlled current), which appears not to respond to the change in partial pressure of  $\text{CO}_2$ , up to 10 bar. This observation is in agreement with the behavior expected in the buffering effect mechanism (see Fig. 2B). However, the author's suggestion that the same cathodic reaction mechanism detected on stainless steel is valid for mild steel as well, needs to be further investigated, as the effect of alloying compounds (~20 wt. % Cr, and 10 wt. % Ni) and their corresponding oxide films on the electro-activity of the metal surface could be significant. As discussed in the following chapter, the sensitivity of the hydrogen evolution reactions to the state of the metal surface is well known, which suggests that this assumption may not be acceptable without proof.

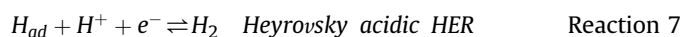
**2.2.1.1. Hydrogen evolution reaction.** The hydrogen evolution reaction is one of the most widely studied electrochemical reactions. Volmer, Heyrovsky, and Tafel steps (Reaction 6, Reaction 7, and Reaction 8, respectively) are the most commonly accepted steps in the hydrogen evolution mechanism (Bockris and Reddy, 1973; Conway and Tilak, 2002), while alternative mechanisms such as the one involving molecular hydrogen ion ( $\text{H}_2^+$ ) is also proposed (Juodkazis et al., 2014, 2011). A wealth of information is available in the literature on the mechanistic behavior and kinetic parameters for hydrogen evolution reaction, based on experimental results (Bockris and Koch, 1961; Brug et al., 1984; Sheng et al., 2010; Stern, 1955), as well as theoretical analyses (Bockris and Potter, 1952;

<sup>1</sup> Reproduced with permission from NACE International, Houston, TX. All rights reserved. T. Tran, B. Bruce, S. Nešić, B Tribollet, Investigation of the electrochemical mechanisms for acetic acid corrosion of mild steel, Corrosion, 70, 3, 2013. ©NACE International 1945.

**Table 4**  
Kinetic parameters of hydrogen ion reduction on iron.

Reference	Electrolyte	b [mV]	m vs. pH
(Bockris et al., 1962)	1 N [SO <sub>4</sub> <sup>2-</sup> ], 0.5 N [Fe <sup>2+</sup> ], pH: 2.0–4.0	116 ± 7	–1
(Bockris and Koch, 1961)	0.5 N HCl	133 ± 4	NA
(McCafferty and Hackerman, 1972)	1 N [Cl <sup>-</sup> ], [H <sup>+</sup> ]: 0.2–2.96	120 ± 10	–1
(Hurlen, 1960)	1 N [Cl <sup>-</sup> ], 0.1 < pH < 3	117	–1
(Chin and Nobe, 1972)	1 N [Cl <sup>-</sup> ], 0.0 < pH < 1.8	115	–1
(Felloni, 1968)	1 N [Cl <sup>-</sup> ], 0.07 < pH < 2.92	123–155	–0.5
	1 N [SO <sub>4</sub> <sup>2-</sup> ], 0.30 < pH < 3.74	120–190	–0.5
(Stern, 1955)	4 wt. % NaCl, 1.42 < pH < 5.26	100	–0.5

Conway and Salomon, 1964; Gennero de Chialvo and Chialvo, 2001, 2000, 1999, 1998; Tavares et al., 2001; Tilak and Chen, 1993). A quick review of the literature readily indicates the complex nature of this reaction, where a significant change in the kinetics may occur with variation of the electrode material (Bockris and Koch, 1961; Bockris et al., 1957; Schuldiner, 1961; Thomas and Nobe, 1970), surface preparation and crystal structure (Bockris et al., 1957; Brug et al., 1984), pH (Schuldiner, 1954a; Sheng et al., 2010), overpotential (Schuldiner, 1961, 1954b), adsorbed species, and trace impurities (Bockris et al., 1965, 1957; Qian et al., 1999, 1998). This suggests that seeking universal kinetic mechanism and parameters for the hydrogen evolution reactions is neither reasonable nor possible.

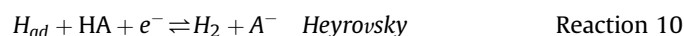


For the case of hydrogen ion reduction on iron, it is commonly considered that the reduction reaction occurs with the Volmer reaction being the rate determining step (Kittel et al., 2013; Nešić et al., 1996b; Remita et al., 2008; Tran et al., 2013; Tribollet et al., 2014; Zheng et al., 2014), generally based on the findings of Bockris et al. (Bockris and Koch, 1961; Bockris et al., 1965; Delahay, 1970; Pentland et al., 1957). This mechanism has a theoretical value of 0.5 for the transfer coefficient (Tafel slope of  $b = 118$  mV at 25 °C), and reaction order of  $m = -1$  with respect to pH (Conway and Salomon, 1964). These parameters have been to some extent experimentally verified, with some deviations from expected theoretical values also reported in the literature (see Table 4). As shown in Table 4 most studies cover very acidic solutions while in less acidic solutions, i.e. pH 3 and higher, the experimental verification of these parameters is limited by interference from the iron oxidation reaction.

For hydrogen evolution from water the similar elementary steps are suggested (Safizadeh et al., 2015). Assuming the Volmer step to be rate determining, Tafel slope of 118 mV and reaction order of  $-0.5$  vs. pH is expected. The reported data in literature are generally in agreement with the expected reaction order of  $-0.5$ , while the reported Tafel slopes are significantly deviating from the theoretical value of 118 mV (Bockris et al., 1962; Gray et al., 1990, 1989; Hurlen, 1960; Stern, 1955).

The mechanism of hydrogen evolution from other weak acids can be described by an analogy with that of the hydrogen ion reduction described above. Using a general formulation the elementary steps of hydrogen evolution reaction are shown below by Reaction 9 to Reaction 11, where HA denotes any weak acid such as water, carbonic acid, acetic acid, hydrogen sulfide, etc. (Amri et al., 2011; Mishra et al., 1997; Ogundele and White, 1987; Tran et al., 2013; Więckowski et al., 1983b). The rate determining step

in the weak acid reduction mechanisms is rarely discussed in the literature, e.g. (Ogundele and White, 1987). However, the commonly used expressions for exchange current density (Han et al., 2011c; Nešić et al., 1996a; Nordsveen et al., 2003; Zheng et al., 2014) need to assume the Volmer step being rate determining, in order to be consistent with theory.



### 2.2.2. Anodic reactions

The most accepted mechanism for iron dissolution in acidic media, which is the main anodic reaction in mild steel corrosion, has been proposed by Bockris et al. (1961) (BDD mechanism) as shown by Reaction 12 to Reaction 14. In the original study the authors compared the theoretically calculated parameters from a series of possible mechanisms with their own experimentally obtained values. For their proposed mechanism, the measured Tafel slope of 40 mV agreed well with the theoretical value. The experimentally determined reaction order vs. pH of  $0.9 \pm 0.05$  was close to the theoretical value of 1. The reaction order of ferrous ion concentration of 0.8, obtained experimentally, was also close to the theoretical value of 0.75. The authors also noted that the reaction order versus pH decreases from 1 to  $\beta/2$  at pH values above 4, where  $\beta$  is the transfer coefficient of Reaction 13 (Bockris et al., 1961). However, in other studies a rather broad variation of these parameters has been measured (see Table 5) indicating the possibility of alternative mechanisms.



Table 5 summarizes some of the reported kinetic parameters for iron dissolution in acidic solutions.

Nevertheless, the BDD mechanism has been directly used in the mathematical models of CO<sub>2</sub> corrosion for many years (de Waard and Milliams, 1975a; Gray et al., 1990; Nešić et al., 1996a), while dissolved CO<sub>2</sub> and its associated carbonic species were shown to directly affect the anodic dissolution reaction (Davies and Burstein, 1980; Nešić et al., 1996b; Videm, 1993). Davis and Burstein (1980) proposed an analogous reaction mechanism to the BDD mechanism by including the effect of bicarbonate ion on iron dissolution. They suggest that bicarbonate ion can act as an intermediate in the iron dissolution process in a similar way as hydroxide ion does in

**Table 5**  
Kinetic parameters of iron dissolution in acidic media.

Reference Fe	Electrolyte	b [mV]	m vs. pH	m vs. pFe
(Bockris et al., 1962)	1 N [SO <sub>4</sub> <sup>2-</sup> ], 0.5 N [Fe <sup>2+</sup> ] pH: 1.2–4.9	40	0.9 ± 0.05	–0.8
(McCafferty and Hackerman, 1972)	1 N [Cl <sup>-</sup> ], 0.2 < [H <sup>+</sup> ] < 2.96	65–70	0.7	NA
(Hurlen, 1960)	1 N [Cl <sup>-</sup> ], 0.1 < pH < 3	29	1	–2
(Chin and Nobe, 1972)	1 N [Cl <sup>-</sup> ], 0.0 < pH < 1.8	70	0.6	NA
(Felloni, 1968)	1 N [Cl <sup>-</sup> ], 0.07 < pH < 2.92	70–44	0.83–1.52	NA
	1 N [SO <sub>4</sub> <sup>2-</sup> ], 0.30 < pH < 3.74	32–25	1.52–1.43	

**Table 6**  
Electrochemical parameters for exchange current density calculation based on Equation 10.<sup>a</sup>

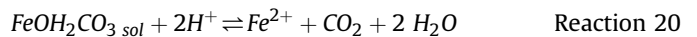
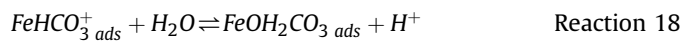
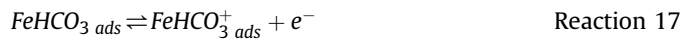
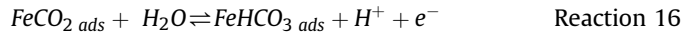
Reaction	Exchange current density
Reaction 1	$i_{0,H} = i_{0,H,ref} \left( \frac{C_{H^+}^b}{C_{H^+,ref}^b} \right)^{(1-\alpha_H)} e^{-\frac{E_a}{RT}} \left( \frac{1}{1+ref} \right)$
Reaction 2	$i_{0,H_2O} = i_{0,W,ref} \left( \frac{C_{H^+}^b}{C_{H^+,ref}^b} \right)^{-\alpha_W} e^{-\frac{E_a}{RT}} \left( \frac{1}{1+ref} \right)$
Reaction 3	$i_{0,CA} = i_{0,CA,ref} \left( \frac{C_{H^+}^b}{C_{H^+,ref}^b} \right)^{-\alpha_{CA}} \left( \frac{C_{H_2CO_3}^b}{C_{H_2CO_3,ref}^b} \right)^1 e^{-\frac{E_a}{RT}} \left( \frac{1}{1+ref} \right)$
Reaction 4	$i_{0,BC} = i_{0,BC,ref} \left( \frac{C_{H^+}^b}{C_{H^+,ref}^b} \right)^{-(1+\alpha_{BC})} \left( \frac{C_{H_2CO_3}^b}{C_{H_2CO_3,ref}^b} \right)^1 e^{-\frac{E_a}{RT}} \left( \frac{1}{1+ref} \right)$
Reaction 5 <sup>b</sup>	$i_{0,Fe} = i_{0,Fe,ref} \left( \frac{C_{H^+}^b}{10^{-4}} \right)^{a_1} \left( \frac{C_{CO_2}^b}{0.0366} \right)^{a_2} e^{-\frac{E_a}{RT}} \left( \frac{1}{1+298/15} \right)$ <p><math>pH &lt; 4 : a_1 = -2, n\alpha_{a,Fe} = 2</math>  <math>pH &gt; 5 : a_1 = 0, n\alpha_{a,Fe} = 0.5</math>  <math>pCO_2 &lt; 1 : a_2 = 1</math>  <math>pCO_2 \geq 1 : a_2 = 0</math></p>

<sup>a</sup> The values for activation energies, reference concentrations and exchange current densities of Reaction 1 to Reaction 3 is listed in (Nesic et al., 1996a) and for Reaction 4 in (Han et al., 2011c). Note that the exchange current density expressions presented here are based on Equation (10) and are not necessarily similar to those shown in the references provided.

<sup>b</sup> The expression of exchange current density of iron dissolution reaction is the semi-empirical expression from (Nesic et al., 1996b).

strong acid solutions. The direct involvement of bicarbonate ion on iron dissolution is also supported by other studies (e.g. (Ogundele and White, 1986)).

Nesic et al. (1996b) conducted a study of iron dissolution in CO<sub>2</sub> environments, illustrating the sensitivity of this reaction to pH and CO<sub>2</sub> partial pressure. Using potentiodynamic sweeps and galvanostatic measurements, Nesic et al. (1996b) suggested iron dissolution in CO<sub>2</sub> system has a generally different mechanism compared to the well-known BDD mechanism. In a similar fashion as Davis and Burstein (1980), Nesic et al. assumed that the effect of carbonic species on iron dissolution is through formation of a chemical ligand acting as a catalyst, involving CO<sub>2</sub> due to its high and constant concentration at all pH values. Reaction 15 to Reaction 20 show the proposed mechanism where CO<sub>2</sub> and its derivatives serve as intermediate species, in a similar role as hydroxide ion has in the BDD mechanism. Here the rate determining step changes from Reaction 19 at pH values below 4 to Reaction 17 at pH values of 5 and higher. Quantitatively, the authors suggest that the effect of CO<sub>2</sub> is proportional to surface coverage, so that when pCO<sub>2</sub> < 0.1 bar – the coverage is very small and the presence of dissolved CO<sub>2</sub> has an insignificant effect on the anodic dissolution rate, the effect then increases with increasing pCO<sub>2</sub> and at pCO<sub>2</sub> > 1 bar the metal surface coverage reaches saturation, and the effect vanishes. The mathematical expression corresponding to this mechanism is shown in Table 6.



The abovementioned mechanisms proposed by Davis and Burstein (1980) and also Nesic et al. (1996b) are in conflict with the findings of Wiekowski et al. (1983b) where their radiotracer study in CO<sub>2</sub> saturated solution showed no detectable adsorption of labeled carbon on the metal surface. Additionally, in a more recent study by Almedia et al. (2015) it was shown that the electrochemical impedance spectrum of iron in hydrochloric acid and saturated CO<sub>2</sub> solution have identical characteristic loops, suggesting that the mechanism of iron dissolution is similar in both cases and does not include any significant adsorption of CO<sub>2</sub> and/or its derivatives.

### 2.2.3. Charge transfer rate calculations

For an elementary electrochemical reaction (Reaction 21) the rate, expressed in terms of current density, can be calculated using Equation (6) (Anderko, 2010; Bard and Faulkner, 2001).



$$i = -i_0 \left[ \frac{C_O^s}{C_O^b} e^{-\frac{\alpha F \eta}{RT}} - \frac{C_R^s}{C_R^b} e^{\frac{(1-\alpha)F \eta}{RT}} \right] \quad (6)$$

where overpotential ( $\eta$ ) and exchange current density ( $i_0$ ) are defined as follows:

$$\eta = E - E_{rev} \quad (7)$$

$$i_0 = nFK_0 C_O^{b1-\alpha} C_R^{b\alpha} \quad (8)$$

Considering a known exchange current density,  $i_0^{ref}$ , at reference conditions ( $C_{O,ref}^b, C_{R,ref}^b, T_{ref}$ ), one can use an Arrhenius type equation for the standard reaction rate constant,  $K_0 = k_0 e^{-E_a/RT}$ , where the pre-exponential parameter ( $k_0$ ) can be obtained from Equation (8) as:

$$k_0 = \frac{i_0^{ref}}{nFC_{O,ref}^b C_{R,ref}^{b1-\alpha} C_{R,ref}^{b\alpha} e^{-\frac{E_a}{RT_{ref}}}} \quad (9)$$

Using Equation (8) and Equation (9), as well as Arrhenius'

equation for standard reaction rate constant, the exchange current density at a different temperature and bulk concentration of species can be found via Equation (10).

$$i_0 = i_0^{ref} \left( \frac{C_O^b}{C_{O,ref}^b} \right)^{1-\alpha} \left( \frac{C_R^b}{C_{R,ref}^b} \right)^\alpha e^{-\frac{E_0}{R} \left( \frac{1}{T} - \frac{1}{T_{ref}} \right)} \quad (10)$$

At high values of overpotential and pure charge transfer control, Equation (6) is simplified to the so called Tafel approximation. For example, for cathodic current it is:

$$i = -i_0 10^{-\frac{\eta}{b}} \quad (11)$$

where Tafel slope ( $b$ ) is defined as:

$$b = -\frac{RT}{\alpha nF}$$

Assuming the rate determining (slow) step being the Volmer step for all hydrogen evolution reactions discussed previously, the exchange current densities in both Equation (6) and Equation (11) could be calculated as shown in Table 6.

### 2.3. Mass transfer in corroding systems

Considering the heterogeneity of the corrosion process, mass transfer calculations are required to define the concentration of electroactive species at the reaction site which is the metal surface. It has been shown that neglecting the mass transfer limitation in CO<sub>2</sub> corrosion rate calculation leads to significant overestimation of the corrosion rate (de Waard et al., 1995; Nyborg et al., 2000).

In a general form, Equation (12) describes the current density of an electrochemical reaction based on the mass transfer of the reactant from the bulk solution, at steady state.

$$i = nFk_m(C^b - C^s) \quad (12)$$

where  $k_m$  is the mass transfer coefficient:

$$k_m = \frac{Sh D}{L} \quad (13)$$

and  $C^b$  and  $C^s$  are the concentrations of the reactant in the bulk solution and at the metal surface, respectively. The value of  $C^s$  in Equation (12) is generally unknown and defined by the kinetics of the charge transfer reaction. However, in pure mass transfer limiting conditions the surface concentration of the reactant approaches zero. Therefore, Equation (12) can be used to calculate the mass transfer limiting current density as described by Equation (14).

$$i_{lim} = nFk_m C^b \quad (14)$$

The mass transfer coefficient for variety of flow conditions has been the subject of numerous studies. For example, the mass transfer limiting current for a rotating disc electrode can be derived theoretically due to laminar flow conditions, and is known as the Levich equation. For a rotating cylinder electrode, the turbulent flow correlation of Eisenberg et al. (1954) is often used. The mass transfer correlation in fully developed turbulent flow through smooth, straight pipes was defined by Berger and Hau (1977), where the Sherwood number ( $Sh$ ) is correlated to the Reynolds number ( $Re$ ) and the Schmidt number ( $Sc$ ), as in Equation (15).

$$Sh = 0.0165 Re^{0.86} Sc^{0.33} \quad (15)$$

$$8 \times 10^3 < Re < 2 \times 10^5, 1000 < Sc < 6000$$

For various other flow regimes and geometries such as multi-phase flow, U-bends, elbows, etc., similar correlations exist in the literature (Coney and Board, 1981; Cussler, 1997; Poulson, 1991; Wang and Shirazi, 2001; Wang et al., 1998).

In case of mixed mass transfer and charge transfer control of the cathodic reaction rate, the effect of mass transfer on net current ( $i_{net}$ ) of an elementary electron transfer reaction can be theoretically derived, as shown by Equation (16), where the  $i_{ct}$  is the charge transfer controlled current and  $i_{lim}$  is the mass transfer limiting current defined by Equation (14).

$$\frac{1}{i_{net}} = \frac{1}{i_{ct}} + \frac{1}{i_{lim}} \quad (16)$$

Equation (16) has been commonly used in elementary mechanistic models of CO<sub>2</sub> corrosion (Gray et al., 1990, 1989; Nešić et al., 1996a), as well as in semi-empirical models (de Waard et al., 1995). This approach only considers the mass transfer of an individual species based on molecular diffusion and convection, independently from other species in the solution. In a system with multiple electro-active species that are involved in chemical reactions with each other, Equation (14) to Equation (16) fail to properly describe the mass transfer process, as discussed in chapter 3.2. In that case, the mass transfer of the chemical species needs to be described by the so called Nernst–Planck equation. This is a mass conservation equation that accounts for the effect of molecular diffusion and convection as well as simultaneous interaction between different species via homogeneous chemical reactions and through forming of an electrical potential field (often referred to as electromigration, or simply migration). For an incompressible fluid and dilute solutions, the flux of species can be written as (Newman and Thomas-Alyea, 2004):

$$N_i = -z_i u_i F C_i \nabla \phi - D_i \nabla C_i + v C_i \quad (17)$$

The Nernst–Planck equation describing mass conservation of species  $i$  in the presence of homogenous chemical reactions ( $R_i$ ) is then:

$$\frac{\partial C_i}{\partial t} = -\nabla \cdot N_i + R_i \quad (18)$$

Using the Einstein-Smoluchowski estimation for mobility of ions for one-dimensional calculations, Equation (17) and Equation (18) yield Equation (19) and Equation (20) respectively, which are the building blocks of any comprehensive mechanistic model of multicomponent mass transport in reacting ionic solutions (Newman and Thomas-Alyea, 2004).

$$N_i = -D_i \frac{\partial C_i}{\partial x} - \frac{z_i D_i F C_i}{RT} \frac{\partial \phi}{\partial x} + v_x C_i \quad (19)$$

$$\frac{\partial C_i}{\partial t} = -D_i \frac{\partial}{\partial x} \left( \frac{\partial C_i}{\partial x} - \frac{z_i D_i F C_i}{RT} \frac{\partial \phi}{\partial x} \right) + v_x \frac{\partial C_i}{\partial x} + R_i \quad (20)$$

Unlike in the simple version of the mass transfer model (Equation (14) to Equation (16)), using the Nernst–Planck equation requires knowledge of the velocity field in the fluid near the metal surface. For the case of rotating disc electrodes, an analytical solution for the velocity profile in the form of a power series is known (Newman and Thomas-Alyea, 2004). Neglecting the higher order terms of this power series, Equation (21) describes the velocity profile in the solution near the electrode where  $a = 0.510$ , and Equation (22) provides the diffusion layer thickness (Newman and



Thomas-Alyea, 2004).

$$v_x = -a\Omega \left(\frac{\Omega}{v}\right)^{1/2} x^2 \quad (21)$$

$$\delta = \left(\frac{3D_{lim}}{av}\right)^{1/3} \left(\frac{\Omega}{v}\right)^{-1/2} \quad (22)$$

However, for practical applications such as flow in transmission gas pipelines, conditions are very different from the laminar flow case described above, primarily due to turbulent mixing. In turbulent flow, one has to rely on empirical expressions describing the level of mixing in the mass transfer boundary layer, usually through an eddy diffusivity profile (Aravinth, 2000; Davies, 1972).

### 3. The mathematical models of CO<sub>2</sub> corrosion

Mathematical models of CO<sub>2</sub> corrosion can be categorized into three main groups, based on how much they rely on theoretical foundations described above:

*Empirical/semi-empirical models* are based on fitting of pre-selected mathematical functions to experimentally obtained corrosion rate data. In purely empirical models these functions have no real meaning and are arbitrarily chosen, while with semi-empirical models these functions are at least partially rooted in the theoretical foundations of the corrosion phenomena. These types of models are strictly limited to the experimental conditions used in their calibration, with little or no extrapolation capability.

*Elementary mechanistic models* are also based on mathematical functions, but in this case they are rooted in physicochemical theory of the corrosion process. However, in order to maintain simplicity, these models resort to simplification and decoupling of the various processes, e.g. mass transfer, chemical reactions and charge transfer phenomena. These models can be used to extrapolate predictions outside the range of experimental data used in their development, as long as the governing physicochemical processes are valid.

*Comprehensive mechanistic models* are deeply rooted in fundamental physicochemical laws, such as the ones described above. The underlying charge transfer, chemical and mass transfer processes are described comprehensively and are coupled with each other. While these models are computationally and mathematically more demanding, they enable more accurate predictions, they are easier to extend by adding new physics and their extrapolation capability is superior.

#### 3.1. Empirical/semi-empirical models

Generally, empirical/semi-empirical models are simple predictive tools developed when limited fundamental understanding is available. In some cases, the basic mathematical functions used in these models may originate from rudimentary approximations of the fundamental physicochemical processes underlying the corrosion phenomena, however, the more elaborate aspects are accounted for by introducing correction factors in the model (Nešić et al., 1997; Nyborg, 2002). In most cases these factors are best-fit functions based on limited experimental data with no theoretical significance. This lack of theoretical meaning makes any combination of these empirical correction factors (required to cover more complex conditions) – dubious, to say the least. More importantly, due to this general lack of theoretical underpinning, these models cannot be reliably extrapolated outside the conditions used for their development. For the same reason these models have very limited flexibility needed for further extensions to account for new

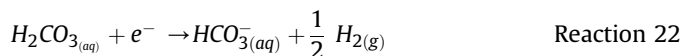
data and require recalibration of the model with the entire dataset to accommodate any such extension. To date, many variations of empirical/semi-empirical models are found that address a particular application (de Waard and Lotz, 1993; de Waard and Milliams, 1975b; de Waard et al., 1995, 1991; Dugstad et al., 1994; Jangama and Srinivasan, 1997; Olsen et al., 2005; Pots et al., 2002).

In an attempt to focus this review on the more recent mechanistic developments in CO<sub>2</sub> corrosion modeling, the discussion of empirical/semi-empirical models is limited to a brief review of the work by de Waard et al. due to its significance in shaping the understanding of CO<sub>2</sub> corrosion as we know it today. However, numerous reviews on empirical and semi-empirical models are available in the literature for further reference (Kapusta et al., 2004; Nešić, 2007; Nešić et al., 1997; Nyborg, 2006, 2002; Nyborg et al., 2000; Olsen, 2003).

de Waard and Milliams based their original model on a linear pH dependence of the corrosion current obtained from equating a simple charge transfer rate expression of anodic and cathodic currents at the corrosion potential, shown as Equation (23).

$$\log i_{corr} = -A \text{ pH} + B \quad (23)$$

By correlating this equation with their experimental data, the constant *A* was obtained (*A* = 1.3). de Waard and Milliams then attempted to develop a mechanistic explanation of CO<sub>2</sub> corrosion by comparing the empirical value for *A* with the ones obtained based on a few different hypothetical mechanisms. Finally the following “catalytic” mechanism for the cathodic reaction was proposed.



This enabled them to derive a simple expression for the corrosion rate as a function of temperature and partial pressure of CO<sub>2</sub>, which remained the most popular way to predict corrosion rates for decades, and is still in use today. However simplistic and questionable, this was a first attempt at modeling of CO<sub>2</sub> corrosion in a mechanistic way, using theoretical considerations. The important effects of pH, flow, and slow CO<sub>2</sub> hydration, on the cathodic reaction were not considered in this first attempt and were added later.

A number of new effects such as: pH, flow rate, non-ideal solutions, protective scales, glycol, top of line corrosion and steel microstructure are amongst those covered in the subsequent publications of de Waard et al. (de Waard and Lotz, 1993; de Waard and Milliams, 1975a, 1975b; de Waard et al., 1995, 1991). These new effects were accounted for by simply introducing additional empirical correction factors as multipliers in the original de Waard and Milliams correlation. This transformed the original mechanistic approach of de Waard and Milliams into a semi-empirical model with all the disadvantages discussed above.

#### 3.2. Elementary mechanistic models

The elementary mechanistic models were developed in attempt to address the shortcomings of empirical and semi-empirical corrosion rate prediction models and to bring the well-established general understanding of electrochemistry, chemistry and mass transfer into modeling. These models also formed the necessary platform required to further improve the mechanistic modeling of CO<sub>2</sub> corrosion. The elementary mechanistic models are based on a decoupled description of the main physicochemical phenomena involved in the corrosion processes, i.e. mass transfer,

charge transfer, and chemical reactions. These models derive their strength by relying on more descriptive electroanalytical data in their development (particularly steady state voltammograms), rather than the corrosion rate data alone. With this approach, the physicochemical parameters involved in various processes could be systematically studied. Unlike the correction factors used in empirical/semi-empirical models, the parameters used in elementary mechanistic models have a true theoretical meaning. Hence, the different elements of the model can be confidently combined in order to develop a model for more complex conditions.

The quantitative analysis of experimental results based on elementary mechanistic models provided the opportunity for deeper understanding of the underlying mechanisms. Additionally, such models for corrosion rate prediction offered flexibility for expansion to include more corrosive species, additional reactions and new physics, as well as allowing for more reliable extrapolation beyond the experimental conditions used in their development.

Gray et al. introduced one of the first and most comprehensive quantitative analyses of aqueous CO<sub>2</sub> corrosion of mild steel to date, by implementing an elementary mechanistic model for charge transfer rate calculations (Gray et al., 1990, 1989). Two consecutive studies were published by the authors in 1989 and 1990. The first article (Gray et al., 1989) focused on pH 4 in CO<sub>2</sub> saturated aqueous solution and the model is based on the direct carbonic acid reduction mechanism of de Waard and Milliams as discussed above. The model developed by Gray et al. uses Equation (11) for charge transfer calculations, and Equation (16) to account for the mass transfer limitation. The effect of the slow preceding CO<sub>2</sub> hydration reaction on direct carbonic acid reduction is included with an analogy to Equation (16) where the mass transfer limiting current is replaced with chemical reaction limiting current on rotating disk electrodes (Bard and Faulkner, 2001).

In their second publication (Gray et al., 1990), the test conditions were expanded toward more alkaline environments and higher temperatures. In that work, it was suggested that at pH values between 6 and 10 the bicarbonate ion reacts at the metal surface, similarly as carbonic acid does at lower pH values. In order to extend their mathematical model to higher temperature and pH values, including the bicarbonate reduction reaction, a similar approach as in their previous study (Gray et al., 1989) was used. However, the effects of additional physicochemical processes involved in these new conditions, such as formation of protective corrosion product layers (see chapter 4.2) were not considered in their second study.

Dayalan et al. (1995) took a slightly different approach in their calculation sequence compared to Grey et al., by implicitly equating the mass transfer and charge transfer rates (Equation (12)) at the metal surface in order to estimate the surface concentration of species. However, the model proposed in that study (Dayalan et al., 1995) does not include any temperature or CO<sub>2</sub> hydration reaction effects, and additionally, suffers from miscalculations in charge transfer rates. Despite these drawbacks, their approach was unique in the sense that it provides the first insight into the water chemistry at the corroding metal surface which is of significance for protective iron carbonate deposit formation calculations (Dayalan et al., 1998).

Another elementary mechanistic model of CO<sub>2</sub> corrosion was developed in a study published by Nesic et al. (1996a). In that work the authors developed a predictive mechanistic model based on the same elements introduced previously by Gray et al. (1990, 1989), while having a more practical implementation of the model for corrosion rate prediction in practical systems. Charge transfer rates are calculated based on Equation (11), mass transfer effect is based on Equation (14) to Equation (16), and the CO<sub>2</sub> hydration reaction

was accounted for similarly to Gray et al. (1990, 1989). A different relationship for chemical reaction limiting current was used to accommodate for the effect of flow. Mass transfer correlations for different flow geometries were used, covering turbulent rotating cylinder flow and straight pipe flow (Nesic et al., 1995). The comparison of the results based on their model with linear sweep voltammograms, weight loss experiments was done to adjust the physicochemical parameters in the model. Additionally, a comparison of the performance of their model with the empirical/semi-empirical models of De Waard and Lotz (1993) as well as Dugstad et al. (1994) is provided by the authors.

Overall, the elementary mechanistic models gained general acceptance ever since, and have been widely used as the basis of mechanistic studies by many in the corrosion engineering field (Han et al., 2011a, 2011b, 2011c; Rajappa et al., 1998; Sundaram et al., 1996). However, the simple approach to implementation of physicochemical theory in the elementary mechanistic models discussed here suffers from one fundamentally flawed assumption. In these models it is assumed that species are transferred from the bulk fluid toward the metal surface and back independently from each other. In other words, the well-defined homogeneous chemical reactions as well as the ionic interaction (electromigration) between species inside the diffusion layer are ignored. While it can be argued that the latter effect can be insignificant in high conductivity solutions (aqueous brines), neglecting the chemical reactions disregards a significant process in these models. As an example, the limiting current in aqueous CO<sub>2</sub> environments was found to consist of two essential components: hydrogen ion mass transfer limiting current and CO<sub>2</sub> hydration reaction limiting current, which are considered to be additive in these models. While this results in a reasonable prediction of the corrosion rate as well as plausible voltammograms, it leads to inconsistent and in some cases flawed prediction of surface water chemistry. This is a crucial problem when trying to model important surface phenomena, such as adsorption of species and protective corrosion product formation or when trying to make more elaborate arguments about electrochemical corrosion mechanisms.

### 3.3. Comprehensive mechanistic models

Comprehensive mechanistic models were developed to be more true to the fundamental physicochemical laws that describe major processes involved in a corroding system in order to address some of the shortcomings of the elementary mechanistic models mentioned above. Additionally, these models bring significant advantages such as the unique insight into the possible reaction pathways and accurate estimation of species concentration at the metal surface.

This group of models refers to the mathematical models based on the solution of mass conservation equation in the diffusion layer (the Nernst–Planck equation). This approach has been introduced in CO<sub>2</sub> corrosion studies in the 1990s, while such calculations have been well established in the electrochemical engineering field in prior decades (Newman, 1973). Despite that the modeling approach is not novel by itself, the case of CO<sub>2</sub> corrosion can be considered as a rather complex application of such calculations.

The first mathematical model with this general approach was developed by Turgoose et al. (1992). In that study the authors developed a mathematical model based on the solution of the mass transfer equations and separately the homogeneous reaction equilibria of carbonate species in the diffusion layer. The potential of this type of modeling to provide detailed information about concentrations of species in the diffusion layer was demonstrated. It was shown that the various corrosion mechanisms proposed previously (de Waard and Milliams, 1975b; Schmitt and Rothmann,

1977; Więckowski et al., 1983a) are only limited interpretations of all the possible reaction pathways in aqueous CO<sub>2</sub> corrosion. However, the authors ignored the charge transfer kinetics of electroactive species and the model was only used to calculate the current response at mass transfer limiting condition.

A further improvement in comprehensive mechanistic modeling was introduced by Pots (1995). The model developed by Pots is based on Equation (18) where the convective mass transfer was calculated through empirical correlation for eddy diffusivity (Davies, 1972). In that work, charge transfer rates are assumed to follow the Tafel equation (Equation (11)) while the details of the parameters used in Tafel equation was not discussed. Pots also notes the significance of homogeneous reactions on the current response, suggesting that eliminating the direct reduction reaction of carbonic acid does not significantly alter the corrosion rates estimated by the model due to the parallel dissociation reaction.

In more extensive studies, Nesic et al. (2001) and Nordsveen et al. (2003) developed their model by implementing the Nernst–Planck (Equation (18)) to describe the mass transfer of species in the solution. The scope of the model was expanded beyond what was discussed in earlier works (Pots, 1995; Turgoose et al., 1992) by emphasis on the charge transfer rates calculations.

In charge transfer rate calculations used in comprehensive mechanistic models, Equation (16) is no longer valid and the mass transfer limitation effect is accounted for directly by calculating the surface concentration of species used in charge transfer rate expression. In order to accommodate this, Nesic et al. (2001) and Nordsveen et al. (2003) described the charge transfer kinetics through the Tafel equation (Equation (11)) while the bulk concentrations in exchange current densities (Equation (10) and Table 6) were replaced with surface concentrations. However, for this group of models, the proper charge transfer rate calculation should be based on Equation (6) where the surface concentrations are included in the ratio before the exponential term and the exchange current density is separately corrected for the variation in bulk concentration of active species (Table 6). For example, for the case of hydrogen ion reduction, the equation used by Nesic et al. (2001) and Nordsveen et al. (2003) shows a factor of  $([H^+]_s/[H^+]_b)^{0.5}$  difference from what is given here by Equation (6) and in Table 6. Fig. 4 shows the ratio of hydrogen ion reduction current calculated by Nordsveen et al. (2003) and the one introduced here, versus the ratio  $[H^+]_s/[H^+]_b$ . Here, the  $[H^+]_s/[H^+]_b$  ratio of unity corresponds to pure charge transfer controlled conditions where both

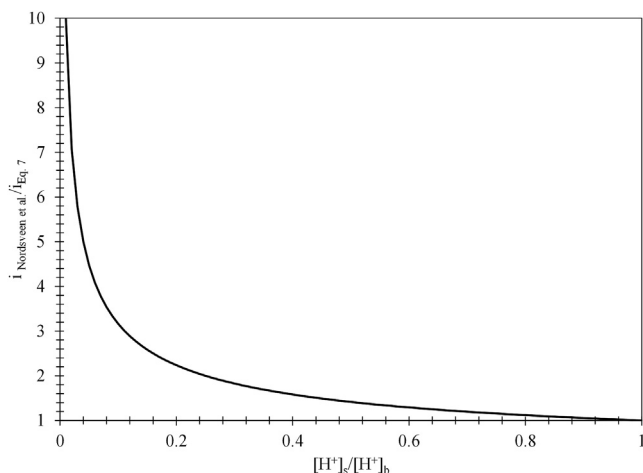


Fig. 4. Comparison of the current calculated from the charge transfer expression used by Nordsveen et al. (2003) for hydrogen ions reduction and the relationships provided as Equation (6) and Table 6 at 298 K and pH 4. The vertical axis represents normalized surface concentration of hydrogen ions.

relationships predict the same current. However,  $[H^+]_s/[H^+]_b$  deviates from unity as the mass transfer limiting conditions becomes significant. Consequently, the charge transfer rates calculated by the two relationships deviate notably. On the other hand, at pure mass transfer limiting conditions, where the kinetics of charge transfer is insignificant in the observed current densities, a similar limiting current would be obtained but corresponding to different surface concentrations. The deviation showed in Fig. 4 is therefore only significant in the mixed control region.

The charge transfer rate calculation expressions similar to those by Nordsveen et al. (2003), were also used later in several subsequent studies (Choi et al., 2013; Kittel et al., 2013; Remita et al., 2008; Song, 2010; Song et al., 2004; Tribollet et al., 2014).

In a more recent study, Remita et al. (2008) revisited the mechanism of CO<sub>2</sub> corrosion, using a similar approach to quantify their experimental data. The model used in that work is the simplified steady state form of the model proposed by Nordsveen et al. (2003), i. e., the left hand side of Equation (20) was taken to be zero. Using a steady state form of the models discussed above may be sufficient for practical purposes of corrosion rate estimation and also to compare with steady state voltammograms. This approach benefits from the comprehensive treatment of the homogeneous chemical reactions in the diffusion boundary layer and is computationally more affordable. However, the charge transfer rates in the work of Remita et al. (2008) are calculated similar to Nesic et al. (2001) and Nordsveen et al. (2003) suffering from the same issue as described above.

The comprehensive mechanistic models discussed here have demonstrated their strength by depicting a more detailed and accurate picture of the processes involved in corrosion of steel in CO<sub>2</sub> environments. Such models are better suited to serve as a basis for further studies and a more appropriate platform for description of more complex systems and inclusion of new processes (some examples described in the section below). On the other hand, they are significantly more complicated to construct and use. Therefore, the much simpler elementary mechanistic models are still more popular with the corrosion engineers and even within the academic community, despite the known shortcomings.

#### 4. Extension beyond basic calculations

One of the main qualities of any given corrosion modeling approach is its ability to be extended to cover more complex conditions and to have additional species and processes incorporated into the base model. The flexibility of models to include *additional corrosive species* is discussed below using the examples of acetic acid and hydrogen sulfide. The ability of the models to incorporate additional physicochemical phenomena is discussed below by using the example of *protective corrosion product film formation*. Finally, *top of the line corrosion* (TLC) encountered in wet gas pipelines is used to illustrate the flexibility of the models to be adapted for an application with very different geometry, environment, and physical and chemical conditions.

##### 4.1. Additional corrosive species

The ability of a corrosion rate predictive model to incorporate new species is of great interest for practical applications where the water chemistry is more complex compared to laboratory experiments. Hydrogen sulfide and organic acids are two main additional corrosive species commonly found in the aqueous solution alongside carbonic acid. The water chemistry associated with these weak acids can be accounted for in a similar way to what was discussed earlier for CO<sub>2</sub>.

Reports on the significant effect of acetic acid in pipeline

corrosion in oil and gas industry are found as early as 1940s, where it was shown that even in concentrations as low as 300 ppm, acetic acid can cause severe corrosion of pipeline steel (Menaul, 1944). Similar to the carbonic acid corrosion, the mechanism of acetic acid corrosion has been intensely debated in the last two decades. While many studies suggest that the increased corrosion rates in the presence of acetic acid is due to its direct reduction at the metal surface (Fajardo et al., 2007; Garsany et al., 2002; George and Nešić, 2007; Gulbrandsen and Bilkova, 2006; Matos et al., 2010; Okafor et al., 2009; Sun et al., 2003), others suggest that acetic acid corrosion follows the buffering effect mechanism (Amri et al., 2011, 2009; George et al., 2004; Hurlen et al., 1984; Pots et al., 2002; Tran et al., 2013).

Corrosion of mild steel by aqueous hydrogen sulfide has also been extensively investigated in the last few decades. It was recently confirmed that hydrogen sulfide follows the direct reduction mechanism based on clear observation of a distinct additional wave in cathodic sweeps (Kittel et al., 2013; Tribollet et al., 2014; Zheng et al., 2014).

In order to include the effect of additional corrosive species in empirical/semi-empirical models, extensive experimental and computational work is required, with no clear prospects of success. In order to maintain the same level of performance, the data pool on which the model was previously built needs to be extended to cover the effect of new species on the corrosion rates over the whole range of physical conditions such as temperature, flow conditions, CO<sub>2</sub> partial pressures, etc. This is usually a very difficult if not an impossible task. Additionally, the model itself and the correction factors have to be redefined to accommodate for such an expansion, without any proper theoretical guidance.

On the other hand, the elementary mechanistic models as well as the comprehensive mechanistic models easily cope with such expansions. New species are included by introducing additional charge transfer, chemical and mass transfer equations into the core model, describing the new species and processes, as appropriate. The corresponding physicochemical parameters are obtainable with a relatively small number of additional targeted experiments. In elementary mechanistic models, for each additional electroactive species, one extra equation (Equation (16)) is added to the model and solved simultaneously with the existing equations. An example of such an extension for an elementary mechanistic model is provided in Fig. 5 by introducing acetic acid effect into the existing CO<sub>2</sub> corrosion model.

In the comprehensive mechanistic models, each new species is

included by adding its corresponding Nernst–Planck equation (Equation (20)) into the model. If those species are involved in chemical reactions with any of the other species, this is defined via the chemical reaction term in the Nernst–Planck equation. Similar to elementary mechanistic models, additional physicochemical constants in comprehensive mechanistic models can also be defined by a limited number of targeted experiments. As an example, Fig. 6 shows the normalized concentration profiles of the active species within the diffusion layer at the corrosion potential, demonstrating the effect of acetic acid, as the additional corrosive species, when added to a comprehensive mechanistic CO<sub>2</sub> model.

#### 4.2. Effect of corrosion product layer

The corrosion process is often accompanied by corrosion product layer formation at the metal surface. The protectiveness, chemical composition, as well as mechanical and physical properties of this precipitated layer are greatly affected by water chemistry, environmental conditions such as temperature and fluid flow, steel composition and microstructure, etc. (Crolet et al., 1999; Davies and Burstein, 1980; Dugstad, 1998; Gulbrandsen, 2007; Johnson and Tomson, 1991; Kermani and Morshed, 2003; Ruzic et al., 2007; Sun et al., 2009; van Hunnik et al., 1996). This may lead to complex, multi-layer corrosion product precipitates (Choi et al., 2014; Farelas et al., 2014; Pfennig and Bäßler, 2009; Pfennig and Kranzmann, 2011, 2009). By limiting the discussion to CO<sub>2</sub> corrosion of carbon steel at conditions typical for transmission lines, one only encounters a porous iron carbonate corrosion product layer. This scenario has been incorporated in the mechanistic models (Anderko, 2000; Dayalan et al., 1998; Nešić and Lee, 2003; Nordsveen et al., 2003; Rajappa et al., 1998; Sundaram et al., 1996). It is worth noting that the models listed above neglect the effect of steel microstructure resulting in the formation of an iron carbide network, although it has been shown that it may affect the formation of iron carbonate (Farelas et al., 2010).

The precipitation/dissolution of iron carbonate is described through the following heterogeneous chemical equilibrium:



If the product of the concentration of species on the left hand side exceeds the saturation limit, the formation of iron carbonate deposit by precipitation is favored. The formation of porous corrosion product layer on the metal surface affects the corrosion

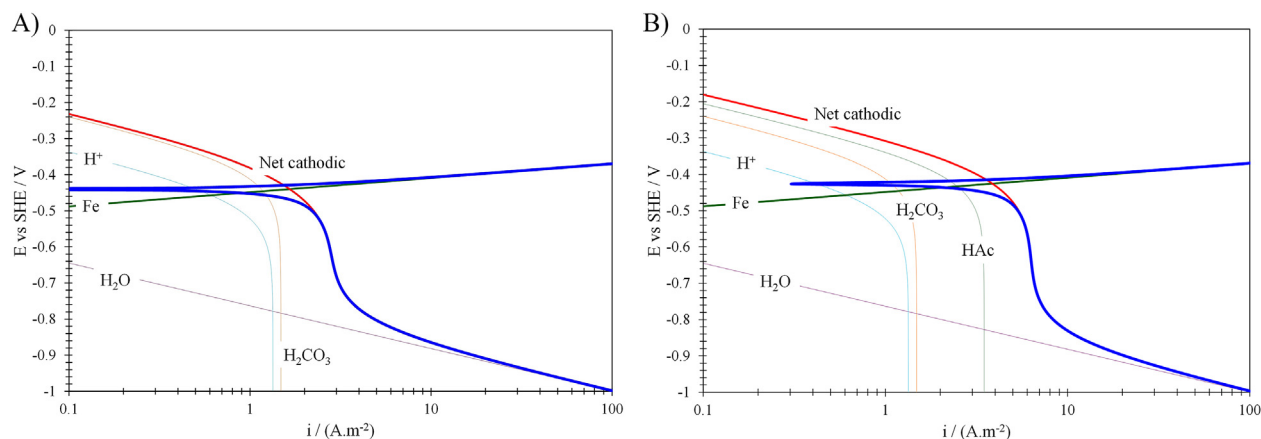


Fig. 5. Predicted voltammograms (solid blue line) by FRECORP (Nešić et al., 2009) at pH4, 25 °C, 1 bar CO<sub>2</sub>, and 1 m/s flow velocity. A) 0 ppm acetic acid and B) 100 ppm acetic acid (HAc).

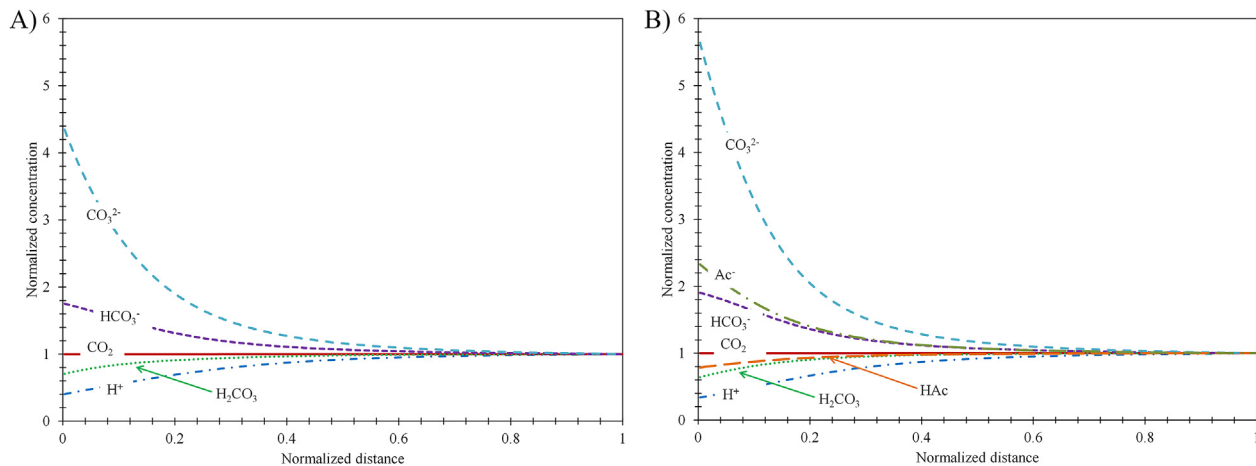


Fig. 6. Predicted concentration profile by MULTICORP™ at pH4, 25 °C, 1 bar CO<sub>2</sub>, and 1 m/s flow velocity. A) 0 ppm acetic acid and B) 100 ppm acetic acid (HAc).

process through two main mechanisms:

- The porous iron carbonate layer acts as a barrier against transport of chemical species toward and away from the metal surface.
- The porous iron carbonate corrosion product layer blocks portions of the metal surface, making them unavailable as reaction sites.

Formation of a protective iron carbonate layer in CO<sub>2</sub> corrosion of steel is best discussed in the context of two general criteria, one thermodynamic, the other kinetic (van Hunnik et al., 1996).

A thermodynamic indicator for the precipitation process is described by the extent of departure from equilibrium (Reaction 24), termed here: the saturation value ( $S_{FeCO_3}$ ):

$$S_{FeCO_3} = \frac{C_{Fe^{2+}} C_{CO_3^{2-}}}{K_{sp}} \quad (24)$$

where  $K_{sp}$  is iron carbonate dissolution equilibrium constant (Sun et al., 2009) for Reaction 24. A high saturation value is not the only factor leading to protective layer formation, because properties of an iron carbonate layer such as density, porosity, and adherence to the metal surface are greatly affected by kinetics of iron carbonate precipitation (Dugstad, 1998; van Hunnik et al., 1996). Additionally, the protectiveness of the corrosion product layer can be influenced by various chemical and mechanical removal processes (Ruzic et al., 2007, 2006a, 2006b). However, the formation of the iron carbonate layer does not completely stop the corrosion process, this causes the existing corrosion product layer to detach from the metal surface (Pots and Hendriksen, 2000; van Hunnik et al., 1996). This process, known as “film undermining” (Nešić and Lee, 2003), affects the adherence, density and porosity of the corrosion product layer and ultimately its protectiveness. The role of undermining was quantified by van Hunnik et al. (1996) through the introduction of a kinematic parameter called “scaling tendency” as described by Equation (25). Scaling tendency can also be seen as a practical measure to assess the protectiveness and the ability to repair a damaged iron carbonate layer (Gulbrandsen, 2007; Sun and Nestic, 2006; van Hunnik et al., 1996).

$$ST = \frac{R_{FeCO_3(s)}}{CR} \quad (25)$$

A scaling tendency of  $ST \ll 1$  represents the case where the undermining is much faster than the formation of the corrosion

product layer, therefore, a porous, often thick and non-protective layer forms, even at high saturation values. On the other hand a scaling tendency of  $ST \gg 1$  suggests that the undermining is overpowered by the rapidly forming iron carbonate precipitate, creating a dense protective layer (Nešić and Lee, 2003; Sun and Nestic, 2006).

As for any crystalline deposits, the formation of iron carbonate should be discussed in the context of crystal nucleation and crystal growth (Lasaga, 1998). Johnson and Tomson (1991) studied the rate of iron carbonate formation using the iron count method to evaluate the iron carbonate growth rate on seed particles dispersed in the bulk solution. Based on their experimental approach of using seed particles at low saturation values ( $<2$ ), authors bypassed the nucleation step and proposed a precipitation rate purely based on the crystal growth kinetics. Van Hunnik et al. (1996) argued that the saturation values considered in Johnson and Tomson (1991) precipitation rate expression does not cover an adequate range for CO<sub>2</sub> corrosion applications and may result in significant over estimation of precipitation rates. Van Hunnik et al. therefore used experimental data with saturation values as high as 1000, while the same indirect measurements method as Johnson and Tomson (1991) was utilized to calculate the precipitation rates. In this study authors investigated the precipitation of iron carbonate on a corroding metal surface rather than iron carbonate seeds, thus both nucleation and crystal growth step were involved. However, authors suggested that the crystal growth is the dominant process controlling the net precipitation rate. The ability of the expression they proposed to predict the precipitation rate, regardless of the steel microstructure, was considered as the proof of such an argument. This subject was also revisited by Sun and Nešić (2008), where the previous expressions (Johnson and Tomson, 1991; van Hunnik et al., 1996) were shown to over-predict the precipitation rate. The authors implemented a direct measurement of FeCO<sub>3</sub> precipitation rates through mass gain on steel samples. Similar to van Hunnik et al. (1996), this experimental approach included both nucleation and growth mechanisms. However, authors suggest that in the case of iron carbonate formation on a heterogeneous mild steel substrate, the net precipitation rate is governed by crystal growth mechanism as the rate determining step. Despite the arguments provided by various authors (Johnson and Tomson, 1991; Sun and Nešić, 2008; van Hunnik et al., 1996), concerns related to change in saturation level over the duration of the experiments, effect of mass transfer, the mechanism of the precipitation/dissolution reaction, and disregarding the kinetics of nucleation step, demand further investigations.

**Table 7**  
Summary of the precipitation rate expressions.

Reference	$f(T)$	$g(S_{FeCO_3})$	$K_{sp}$
Johnson and Tomson (1991)	$\exp(54.8 - \frac{-123000}{RT})$	$K_{sp}(S_{FeCO_3}^{0.5} - 1)^2$	$\exp(-36.22 - \frac{-30140}{RT})$
van Hunnik et al. (1996)	$\exp(52.4 - \frac{-119800}{RT})$	$K_{sp}(S_{FeCO_3} - 1)(1 - S_{FeCO_3}^{-1})$	Not specified
Sun and Nescic (2008)	$\exp(21.3 - \frac{-64851.4}{RT})$	$K_{sp}(S_{FeCO_3} - 1)$	(Sun et al., 2009)

The precipitation rate of iron carbonate in Equation (25) can be described by an expression in general form of Equation (26) (Lasaga, 1998).

$$R_{FeCO_3(s)} = \frac{A}{V} f(T) g(S_{FeCO_3}) \quad (26)$$

where

$$f(T) = e^{\left(A - \frac{B}{RT}\right)} \quad (27)$$

represents the rate constant as a function of temperature based on Arrhenius' equation where constants  $A$  and  $B$  are determined empirically. The precipitation rate dependence on saturation value is accounted for by the  $g(S_{FeCO_3})$  function that is defined by the mechanism of the precipitation/dissolution reaction. For an elementary reaction this function can be theoretically expressed as Equation (28) (Lasaga, 1998).

$$g(S_{FeCO_3}) = K_{sp}(S_{FeCO_3} - 1) \quad (28)$$

This equation is similar to what was proposed by Sun and Nescic (2008) indicating that the precipitation reaction follows a first order reaction kinetics. The more elaborate forms of the function  $g(S_{FeCO_3})$ , such as the ones introduced by van Hunnik et al. (1996) and Johnson and Tomson (1991) may suggest a more complex mechanism for this reaction (Table 7). The lack of mechanistic discussions categorizes these two precipitation rate equations as semi-empirical expressions with all of their intrinsic limits. A summary of the expressions for precipitation rate proposed by the abovementioned references is provided in Table 7.

In the case of elementary mechanistic models, the effect of a protective iron carbonate layer was accounted for by introducing an additional mass transfer resistance layer (Dayalan et al., 1998; Rajappa et al., 1998; Sundaram et al., 1996), without accounting for the surface blocking effect. A composite mass transfer resistance at quasi steady state condition as well the interfacial concentrations of species can be obtained in order to calculate the corrosion rate. However, considering the aforementioned issue of the elementary mechanistic models which disregard the chemical reactions in the diffusion layer, the accuracy of this approach is questionable. Additionally, while being simple to implement, this approach further suffers from the fact that the thickness and porosity of a protective iron carbonate layer must be specified in advance of any corrosion rate calculation. As this is usually not known, an additional empirical correlation is needed, relating the properties (protectiveness) of a protective iron carbonated layer to environmental conditions.

The comprehensive mechanistic models can also be readily adapted to account for the effect of a precipitated corrosion product layer. In this case, the Nernst Planck equation is rewritten as (Nešić et al., 2001; Nordsveen et al., 2003):

$$\frac{\partial(\varepsilon C_i)}{\partial t} = -\nabla \cdot (\varepsilon^{3/2} N_i) + \varepsilon R_i \quad (29)$$

in order to account for mass transfer through a porous media, with

a porosity  $\varepsilon$ . In the portion of the boundary layer away from the steel surface where there is no iron carbonate layer the porosity  $\varepsilon$  is equal to one. Furthermore, all electrochemical rate expressions (current densities) are modified by multiplying with surface porosity  $\varepsilon$ , in order to account for the surface blocking effect. While these models benefit from accurate surface concentration calculations, the distribution of porosity in the precipitating iron carbonate layer still needs to be defined properly. In a simplistic approach it could be described by an empirical function in the same way as it is done for the elementary models (Nešić et al., 2001).

In a more comprehensive approach, Nescic et al. presented a model for calculation of porosity distribution in the iron carbonate layer (Nešić et al., 2003, 2002). The authors proposed that the porosity can be calculated by writing a mass balance for the solid iron carbonate precipitate as:

$$\frac{\partial \varepsilon}{\partial t} = -\frac{M_{FeCO_3}}{\rho_{FeCO_3}} R_{FeCO_3} - CR \frac{\partial \varepsilon}{\partial x} \quad (30)$$

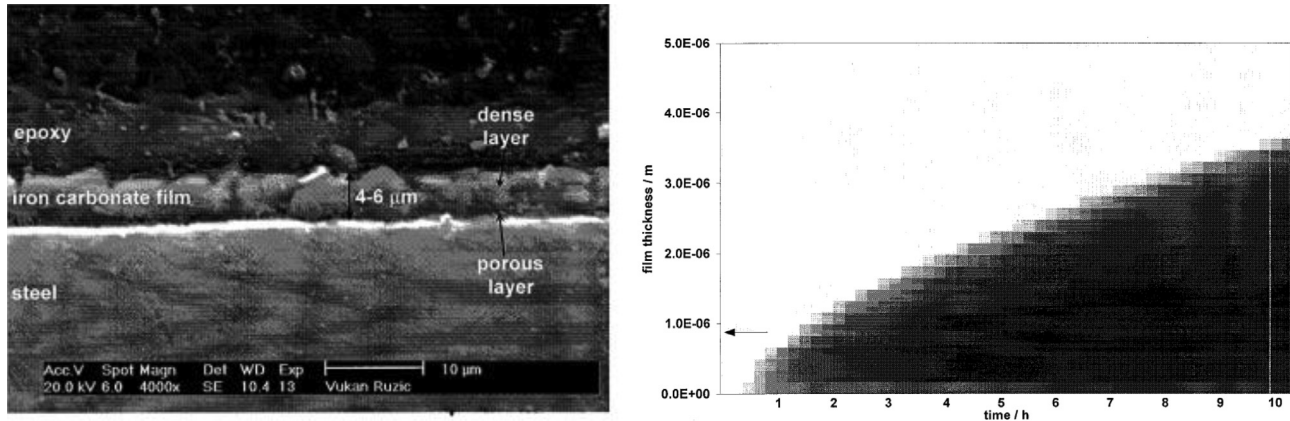
where the first term is related to precipitation kinetics (Equation (26)) and the second (convective-like) term arises from the undermining effect, described above. This approach is equivalent to using the concept of scaling tendency, but one that is based on local concentrations at the steel surface and in the porous iron carbonate layer, rather than basing it on bulk concentrations. This equation needs to be solved simultaneously with Equation (29) for all the other species in order to provide an estimate of the porosity distribution within the corrosion product layer, and account for the effect it has on concentrations and fluxes of all other species and ultimately on the corrosion rate.

Fig. 7 shows the comparison of the calculated results with the experimental data from (Nešić and Lee, 2003). The estimated profile of corrosion product layer porosity shows good qualitative agreement with the SEM image, where a dense precipitate is found with the part closer to the metal surface appearing to be more porous. However, as discussed by the authors, the estimated corrosion product layer thickness lacks accuracy at some of the conditions, which could be due to imprecise kinetics or due to a removal processes via mechanical destruction as well as chemical dissolution (Ruzic et al., 2007, 2006a, 2006b), which are not considered in the model.

#### 4.3. Top of the line corrosion

An example that illustrates the ability of comprehensive models to be extended relatively easily to cover quite different corrosion scenarios is the implementation for Top of the Line Corrosion (TLC) prediction.

TLC is a corrosion phenomenon occurring in pipeline transportation of wet gas when there is a significant difference of temperature between the produced fluids and the surrounding environment. If the gas/liquid flow is stratified, warm saturated water vapor condenses on the inside walls of the pipeline and forms small water droplets which become saturated with acid gases, thus leading to severe corrosion issues (Ruhl and Kranzmann, 2013, 2012; Singer et al., 2013). There is no simple mitigation method available, especially considering that the use of



**Fig. 7.** SEM image of the corrosion product layer cross section formed after 10 h at  $T = 80\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$ ,  $\text{pH} = 6.6$ ,  $P_{\text{CO}_2} = 0.54\text{ bar}$ , ferrous ion concentration of 250 ppm, and  $v = 1\text{ m/s}$ . The graph at right shows the calculated porosity profile along the film thickness of the iron carbonate layer depicted in different shades of gray in similar conditions where white corresponds to  $\epsilon = 1$  and black is  $\epsilon = 0$  (Nešić and Lee, 2003).<sup>2</sup>

standard corrosion inhibitors is not feasible as they cannot readily reach the top portions of the pipeline.

TLC is very dependent on the rate of water condensation, temperature, and the solubility of corrosion products but is also linked to the presence of  $\text{CO}_2$  and organic acids. Only a limited number of sour TLC cases have also been reported (Bich and Szklarz, 1988; Joosten et al., 2010; Paillassa et al., 1963), and will not be discussed here. A key aspect of understanding the TLC mechanism is the interaction between condensation, corrosion, the evolution of the chemistry in the condensed water and formation of the corrosion product layers (iron carbonate). The size of the water droplet is controlled by the condensation rate (leading to an increase in droplet size) and by gravity and drag forces (leading to removal of droplets from the pipe wall). Corrosion products can accumulate rather quickly in the water phase leading to supersaturation with regard to iron carbonate. The formed corrosion product layer tends to block the steel surface and act as a mass transfer barrier and thus decrease the corrosion rate. However, the water in the droplet is constantly re-supplied by pure condensed water, which tends to dilute the corrosion products and decrease the saturation value. The understanding of TLC mechanisms, lies in the balance between the corrosion process, which leads to supersaturation and precipitation of iron carbonate, and the condensation process, which tends to decrease the iron carbonate saturation level and lead to dissolution of the corrosion product layer (Nyborg and Dugstad, 2007; Pots and Hendriksen, 2000).

The example of TLC is interesting for the present discussion, since there are actually no new physicochemical processes involved when compared to standard “bottom of the line” corrosion described above, other than water condensation and droplet formation. The same chemical and electrochemical processes discussed previously are valid. This is also true for the mechanism of iron carbonate precipitation. Therefore, adapting the existing mechanistic  $\text{CO}_2$  corrosion models to the TLC environments is relatively straightforward, while this would not be the case for empirical or semi-empirical models.

Several empirical/semi-empirical approaches have been proposed to model TLC. De Waard et al. (1991) were the first to propose

a model for TLC based on a correction for his widely used semi-empirical corrosion prediction equation. De Waard et al. introduced a correction factor:  $F_{\text{cond}} = 0.1$  in order to adapt his model to condensation conditions which was to be valid for condensation rates below an experimentally determined “critical” rate of  $0.25\text{ mL m}^{-2}\text{ s}^{-1}$ .

In 2000, a different model was proposed by Pots and Hendriksen (2000) which aimed at accounting for the competition between the iron carbonate layer precipitation rate and the condensation rate. The so called “supersaturation model” is based on the calculation of ferrous ion concentration at saturation under precipitating conditions. The steady state corrosion rate was described based on the flux of ferrous ion required to keep the condensed water supersaturated, shown by Equation (31). The ferrous ion concentration used in Equation (31) was obtained by calculating the saturation value from equating corrosion rate (CR) with the precipitation rate (Table 7).

$$CR = 10^6 \times 24 \times 3600 \times 365 \frac{M_{\text{Fe}}}{\rho_{\text{Carbonsteel}}} C_{\text{Fe}^{2+},\text{sat}} \frac{WCR}{\rho_{\text{H}_2\text{O}}} \quad (31)$$

Pots and Hendriksen emphasized the importance of correctly evaluating the condensation rate and characterizing the chemistry of the aqueous phase in order to accurately predict the corrosion rate.

More recently, Nyborg and Dugstad (2007) developed another semi-empirical equation for TLC prediction based on their own experimental work. It is hinged on the concept that TLC is limited by the amount of iron which can be dissolved in the thin film of condensing water. According to Nyborg and Dugstad, the TLC rate can be modeled as being proportional to the water condensation rate, the iron carbonate solubility, and supersaturation value. Although no detail are provided on how the condensation rate is calculated, authors stressed the importance of predicting an accurate condensation rate, as it will have a much more pronounced effect on TLC than, for example, the  $\text{CO}_2$  partial pressure. The semi-empirical equation of Nyborg and Dugstad is shown below and is valid only for low acetic acid content ( $<0.001\text{ M}$ ), low to medium  $\text{CO}_2$  partial pressure ( $<3\text{ bars}$ ) and no  $\text{H}_2\text{S}$ :

$$CR = 0.004 \times 10^9 \times C_{\text{Fe}^{2+},\text{sat}} M_{\text{Fe}} WCR (12.5 - 0.09(T - 273.15)) \quad (32)$$

Still, all these attempts suffer from the usual shortcomings

<sup>2</sup> Reproduced with permission from NACE International, Houston, TX. All rights reserved. S. Nešić, K.L.J. Lee, A mechanistic model for carbon dioxide corrosion of mild steel in the presence of protective iron carbonate films-Part 3: Film growth model, Corrosion, 59, 7, 2003. ©NACE International 1945.

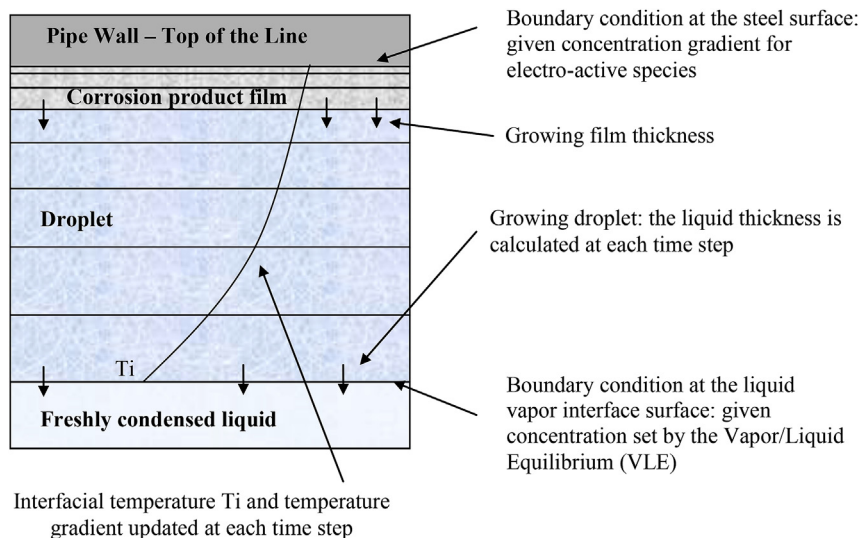


Fig. 8. Schematic of the corrosion calculations in a growing droplet simulated as a one-dimensional film (Singer, 2013).

associated with empirical and semi-empirical models, *i.e.* they have limited ability to extrapolate beyond the range of parameters they have been developed for and cannot be easily adapted to take into account additional influencing parameters such as, new species or additional types of corrosion products.

Zhang et al. (2007) published the first fully comprehensive mechanistic approach to TLC modeling. The key point for this discussion is that this model was directly adapted from the mechanistic  $\text{CO}_2$  corrosion approach developed by Nordsveen (2003) and Nesic et al. (Nešić and Lee, 2003; Nešić et al., 2003, 2001). As mentioned before, the underlying mechanisms of corrosion (chemistry in the condensed water and the corrosion at the steel surface) have not been changed when adapting them to TLC. The only real change was the implementation of dropwise condensation rate prediction, based on the heat and mass transfer theory (Zhang et al., 2007). The boundary conditions specific to TLC scenario have also to be implemented. Zhang et al. stated that, from a statistical point of view, every point on the metal surface has the same probability of being covered by liquid droplets and, consequently, it can be assumed that the entire surface is subject to uniform corrosion. This simplifies the mathematical approach from a three-dimensional situation (with semi-hemispherical droplet) to a one-dimensional geometry (in the shape of a finite liquid film), as shown in Fig. 8. The droplet growth and loss is simulated by an increase in the liquid film with time until it reaches a calculated maximum size where the droplet disappears (falls or slides). The calculation then restarts with a minimum water film thickness (corresponding to the minimum droplet size), and the cycle is repeated, until the corrosion process reaches a steady state. Another easy adjustment of the standard “bottom of the line” corrosion model was the absence of the supporting electrolyte (salt) and ignoring the effect of flow on mass transfer within the water film.

Zhang’s approach is a good example showing the adaptability of comprehensive models. The model validity range is extended by improving the physical representations of the relevant physico-chemical phenomena. Other extension can be readily made by for example broadening the temperature and pressure validity ranges for kinetics or equilibrium constants, etc. New species and additional corrosion products can be easily added as the knowledge of the underlying corrosion mechanism matures.

## 5. Conclusions

Corrosion rate predictive models of mild steel in the presence of dissolved  $\text{CO}_2$  have improved significantly since initial studies appeared in the mid 1970s. Driven by economical, safety and environmental concerns, numerous studies and mathematical models are now available pertaining to this system. In this review, mathematical models have been categorized into three main groups: empirical/semi-empirical, elementary mechanistic, and comprehensive mechanistic models. The mechanistic models show a much better potential for further development to cover more complex conditions; they offer transparency, flexibility, and extrapolation capabilities in a way that empirical/semi-empirical models cannot.

The state of the art models in  $\text{CO}_2$  corrosion are comprehensive mechanistic models which benefit from an inclusive theoretical treatment. These models offer greatest flexibility to be adopted to cover various conditions and corrosion scenarios by adding new physics, as the knowledge of the underlying mechanisms becomes mature. Nevertheless, many challenges persist, such as improved kinetics of underlying electrochemical reactions, better understanding of protective corrosion product layer growth, extension to sour conditions, etc., which are all subject of current research efforts.

In spite of that, comprehensive mechanistic models offer the most flexible platform for inclusion of new and more complex phenomena encountered in practical applications, such as the effect of steel microstructure, effect of alloying compounds, application of inhibitors, modeling of localized attacks, etc.

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## Nomenclature

$A$	Active surface area of the deposit, $m^2$
$\alpha_j$	Transfer coefficient of electrochemical reaction $j$ , –
$b$	Tafel slope, $V$
$CR$	Corrosion rate, $mm\ yr^{-1}$
$C_i$	Concentration of species $i$ , $M$
$C_i^s$	Concentration of species $i$ at the electrode surface, $M$
$C_i^b$	Concentration of species $i$ in the bulk solution, $M$
$C_{i,ref}^b$	Concentration of species $i$ in the bulk solution at reference conditions, $M$
$C_{Fe^{2+},sat}$	Concentration of $Fe^{2+}$ in the bulk solution at saturation with regard to $FeCO_3$ , $M$
$D$	Pipe/sample diameter, $m$
$D_i$	Diffusion coefficient of species $i$ , $m^2\ s^{-1}$
$D_{i,lim}$	Diffusion coefficient of the limiting species, $m^2\ s^{-1}$
$\delta$	Diffusion layer thickness, $m$
$E$	Electrode potential, $V$
$E^0$	Standard potential, $V$
$E_{rev}$	Reversible potential, $V$
$E_a$	Activation energy, $J\ mol^{-1}$
$\epsilon$	Porosity, –
$\eta$	Over potential, $V$
$F$	Faraday's constant, $C\ mol^{-1}$
$H_{CO_2}$	Henry's constant of $CO_2$ , $M\ bar^{-1}$
$i$	Current density, $A\ m^{-2}$
$i_{0,j}$	Exchange current density of reaction $j$ , $A\ m^{-2}$
$i_{0,j,ref}$	Exchange current density of reaction $j$ at reference conditions, $A\ m^{-2}$
$i_{lim}$	Mass transfer limiting current density, $A\ m^{-2}$
$i_{ct}$	Charge transfer controlled current density, $A\ m^{-2}$
$i_{net}$	Net current density, $A\ m^{-2}$
$i_{corr}$	Corrosion current density, $A\ m^{-2}$
$K_j$	Equilibrium constant of reaction $j$ , Varies
$K_{sp}$	Dissolution equilibrium constant, Varies
$K_{0,j}$	Standard reaction rate constant of electrochemical reaction $j$ , Varies
$k_0$	Pre-exponent term in Arrhenius' equation, Varies
$k_j$	Reaction rate constant of reaction $j$ , Varies
$k_m$	Mass transfer coefficient, $m\ s^{-1}$
$L$	Characteristic length, $m$
$m$	Reaction order, –
$M_i$	Molecular weight of species $i$ , $g\ mol^{-1}$
$\mu$	Viscosity, $N\ s\ m^{-2}$
$n$	Number of electrons transferred, –
$N_i$	Flux of species $i$ , $mol\ m^{-2}\ s^{-1}$
$\nu$	Kinematic viscosity, $M^2\ s^{-1}$
$\Omega$	Rotation speed, $Rad\ s^{-1}$
$p_i$	Partial pressure of species $i$ , $bar$
$\phi$	Potential in the solution, $V$
$R$	Universal gas constant, $J\ mol^{-1}\ K^{-1}$
$Re$	Reynolds number, –
$R_i$	Rate of chemical reaction of species $i$ , $M\ s^{-1}$
$\rho_i$	Density of species $i$ , $kg\ m^{-3}$
$S\%$	Salinity, $g(\text{salt})\ kg^{-1}(\text{solution})$
$S_{FeCO_3}$	Saturation value of $FeCO_3$ , –
$Sh$	Sherwood number, –
$Sc$	Schmitt number, –
$ST$	Scaling tendency, –
$T$	Temperature in kelvin, $K$
$T_{ref}$	Temperature in kelvin at reference conditions, $K$
$T_c$	Temperature in centigrade, $C$
$t$	Time, $s$
$u_i$	Mobility of species $i$ , $m^2\ V\ s^{-1}$
$V$	Volume of the deposit, $m^3$

$v_x$	Fluid velocity along $x$ axis, $m\ s^{-1}$
$WCR$	Water condensation rate, $kg\ m^{-2}\ s^{-1}$
$x$	Normal distance from electrode surface, $m$
$z_i$	Electrostatic charge of species $i$ , –

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