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扫我试试?

## 体相纳米气泡及其研究进展

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**摘要** 纳米气泡是直径在 1  $\mu\text{m}$  以下的气泡,已被证明可以在固液界面、体相中长期稳定存在。基于跨越气液界面的拉普拉斯压强定理,气泡无法保持热力学稳定,将在微秒的尺度上消失。然而,大量试验报道,体相纳米气泡可以长时间稳定存在。目前,关于纳米气泡的产生技术、表征手段和相关的稳定机制已被世界各国的课题组竞相报道。该综述对现有纳米气泡的研究成果,尤其是体相纳米气泡的研究进行总结概述。首先,总结了体相纳米气泡产生和表征的主要方法;其次,介绍了体相纳米气泡的稳定机制;再次,概括了体相纳米气泡的试验应用情况;最后,对体相纳米气泡的进一步研究和应用作出展望。

**关键词** 体相纳米气泡 产生方法 表征技术 稳定机制 实践应用

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## Bulk Nanobubbles: Current Research and Outlook

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**Abstract** Nanobubbles are nanoscopic gas bubbles that form both on submerged surfaces and in bulk solutions. They are known as “surface nanobubbles” and “bulk nanobubbles”, respectively. Both are expected to be unstable to dissolution due to the high Laplace pressure inside nanoscopic objects. Instead, nanobubbles are observed to survive for days. So far, many papers have been published to describe various generation methods, different characterization ways and possible stability mechanism. In this topical review, an overview of current research state of nanobubbles, particularly bulk nanobubbles, and a brief description of their characteristics are given. A summary of generating and characterizing methods for bulk nanobubbles is presented, their hypothesized stabilization mechanisms are briefly discussed, and a brief review on experimental studies of applications with bulk nanobubbles is also given. The review ends with a future perspective on both fundamental research and potential applications of bulk nanobubbles.

**Keywords** bulk nanobubbles generation method characterization techniques stability mechanism applications

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纳米气泡是直径在  $1\ \mu\text{m}$  以下的气泡,可以在固液界面和体相中稳定存在,分别被称为“界面纳米气泡”和“体相纳米气泡”。其中,界面纳米气泡高度在  $10\sim 100\ \text{nm}$ ,表面接触半径为  $50\sim 500\ \text{nm}$ ;体相纳米气泡在液体溶液中形成,直径  $< 1\ \mu\text{m}$ <sup>[1-16]</sup>。纳米气泡首次被提出是在 1994 年,研究者在测量 2 个疏水性表面之间的表面力过程中,观察到台阶状不连续性力学特征<sup>[17]</sup>。2000 年, Ishida 等<sup>[18]</sup> 和 Lou 等<sup>[19]</sup> 获得了第一张纳米气泡的原子力显微镜 (AFM) 图像。纳米气泡之所以在科研界引起很大的关注,主要归因于它“超长”的寿命。根据 Epstein 和 Plesset 的经典预测,由于纳米气泡内部极大的 Laplace 压强,它们应该在  $\tau_{\text{dis}} \sim R^2/D \sim 10\ \mu\text{s}$  的扩散时间溶解(气泡半径  $R$  约  $100\ \text{nm}$ ,气体扩散系数  $D = 1 \times 10^{-9}\ \text{m}^2/\text{s}$ )<sup>[20-21]</sup>。然而,纳米气泡被观察到在数天内均一直稳定存在<sup>[9,22]</sup>。

图 1 总结了该领域一些代表性的研究成果。1950 年,根据 Epstein-Plesset 经典理论,预测了单个气泡的寿命,过饱和溶液中的纳米气泡应在微秒内溶解<sup>[20]</sup>。1954 年, Fox 等<sup>[23]</sup> 提出体相溶液中存在

尺寸小范围波动的微米气泡,这些气泡可以被表层有机物所稳定,并在气泡空化中起到空化核的作用。1994 年,提出了界面纳米气泡用来解释 2 个疏水表面之间的台阶状长程吸引力<sup>[17]</sup>。1997 年,进一步的理论计算分析,否定了 2 个疏水表面之间的长程吸引力是由于界面纳米气泡的存在<sup>[21]</sup>。2000 年,利用原子力显微镜 (AFM) 首次获得了界面纳米气泡的图像<sup>[18-19]</sup>。2003 年,首次报道了体相纳米气泡作为超声造影剂的应用<sup>[24]</sup>。2010 年和 2011 年,体相纳米气泡可以通过扫描电子显微镜和透射电子显微镜对冷冻样品的复制物进行成像<sup>[25]</sup>。2014 年,通过微谐振器,测量了纳米颗粒相对于溶剂的相对质量密度,结果表明,这些粒子是气态的<sup>[26]</sup>。2018 年, Nirmalkar 等<sup>[27]</sup> 通过纳米颗粒示踪分析仪,直观地论证了体相纳米气泡溶液是稳定存在的,且体相纳米气泡的浓度随溶液中溶解氧的升高而增加。2019 年和 2020 年,体相纳米气泡表面带负电的,随着 pH 的增加,表面负电性增强,计算模拟结果证明,体相纳米气泡的长期稳定性与其表面积攒的负电荷密度有关<sup>[11,28]</sup>。

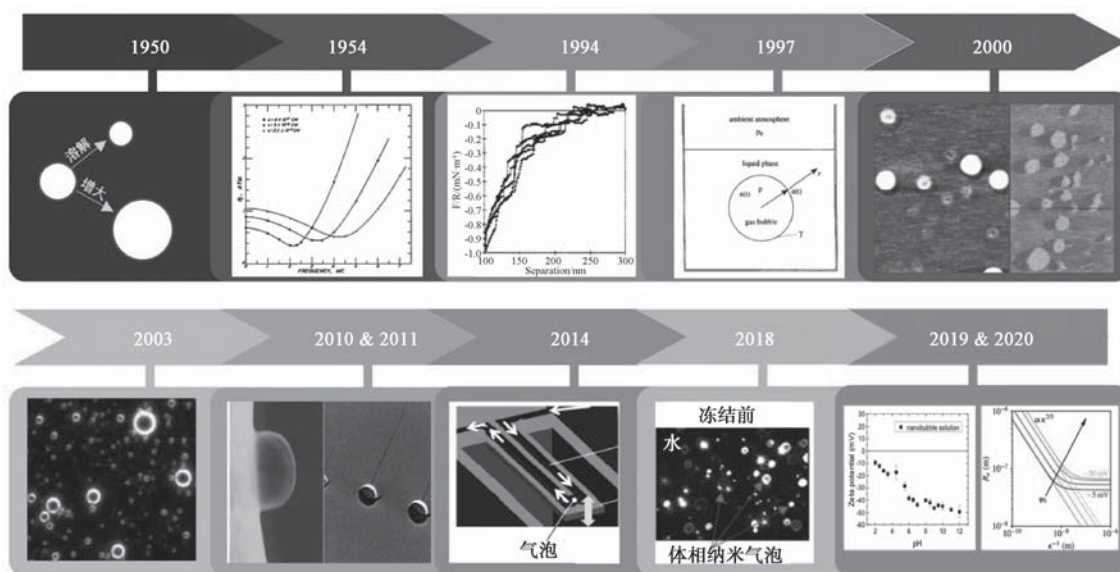


图 1 纳米气泡尤其是体相纳米气泡领域代表性成果时间轴

Fig. 1 Timeline of Some Landmark Publications in the Field of Nanobubbles Particularly Bulk Nanobubbles

本综述主要聚焦于体相纳米气泡,尤其是体相纳米气泡的性质和试验研究。为了避免“界面纳米气泡”和“体相纳米气泡”的混淆使用,本文中谈及界面纳米气泡时称呼其为“界面纳米气泡”,讨论与体相纳米气泡有关的内容时使用“体相纳米气泡”。

若去掉前缀,简称为“纳米气泡”或“气泡”时,指代“体相纳米气泡”。

### 1 体相纳米气泡的产生和表征

研究体相纳米气泡,并探索其潜在应用的先决条件,是开发一种产生纳米气泡的技术方

案<sup>[15,29-31]</sup>。电解水法、溶剂交换法、迅速升温法和超声法均能引发体相纳米气泡的形成<sup>[32-35]</sup>。这些方法本质上是气体过饱和导致的。为了证明成功产生纳米气泡,开发能够辨别气泡是否真的是由气体组成的表征技术手段显得尤为重要。

### 1.1 溶剂交换法和迅速升温法

溶剂(乙醇-水)交换法首先被用于产生界面纳米气泡,之后发现也可用来产生体相纳米气泡<sup>[33,36]</sup>。溶剂交换法首先在液池内注入乙醇,然后再用水去代替乙醇。由于乙醇和水是互溶的,且乙醇在标准大气压和室温下对空气有更大的溶解度,在第二步中,流体体系就会产生气体的局部过饱和,从而形成体相纳米气泡。溶剂交换法的进一步扩展即为迅速升温法<sup>[34]</sup>。温度升高引起溶液中气体过饱和,从而产生纳米气泡。Najafi等<sup>[34]</sup>通过控制温度的急速升高,在饱和溶液中成功产生了纳米气泡。这是因为气体的溶液平衡被温度的突然变化打破,有利于纳米气泡的成核。同时,升温处理的方法也为气/液界面的形成提供了足够的能量<sup>[37-38]</sup>。采用动态光散射(DLS)方法,发现该方法形成了直径为290 nm的纳米气泡。研究还发现,在10 mmol/L的NaCl溶液中产生的纳米气泡,其Zeta电位是负的,其等电点pH值为2.2~2.4,与其他的报道一致<sup>[39-40]</sup>。

### 1.2 电解水法

电解水法也被用来产生纳米气泡<sup>[41-44]</sup>。电解水法在电极阳极形成氧气过饱和溶液,阴极产生氢气过饱和溶液。随后,在过饱和溶液中,可以观察到稳定的纳米气泡胶体溶液。Takenouchi等<sup>[42]</sup>用铂修饰的电极,在碳酸钠的稀溶液中对水进行电解,在阴极观察到氢气纳米气泡的形成,电解质溶液转变为碱性。DLS结果显示,在封闭体系中,氢气纳米气泡在形成后24 h内直径维持在约128 nm;在敞开体系中,则观察到Ostwald熟化现象。一周后,这2个体系中均仍能观察到一些直径<300 nm的氢气纳米气泡。

### 1.3 超声波法和声波空化法

另外一种产生纳米气泡的方法是超声波法<sup>[35,45-46]</sup>。有关纳米气泡形成的报道,最早可以追溯到1962年<sup>[45]</sup>。Sette等<sup>[45]</sup>认为超声空化的成核受宇宙辐射的影响,认为低浓度体相纳米气泡的形

成可能与加热效应和辐射效应有关;因为热辐射将导致气体局部过热,即沿着辐射轨迹,形成氢气和氧气局部过饱和区域,从而在这些区域中形成体相纳米气泡;另外,所产生的体相纳米气泡会通过与试验过程相关的杂质结合而稳定下来。Kim等<sup>[35]</sup>用两面均为钽涂层的5 mm×10 mm电极在42 kHz下对溶液进行超声处理,成功制得体相纳米气泡溶液;DLS表征结果显示,所形成的纳米气泡的平均大小为300~500 nm;电泳光散射结果显示,所形成的纳米气泡在所有pH条件下Zeta电位为负。Nirmalkar等<sup>[27]</sup>利用声波空化法制备了稳定的体相纳米气泡溶液;DLS表征结果显示,制备的纳米气泡平均直径为173 nm;同时,对于同一样品,纳米颗粒示踪分析(NTA)测得的平均粒径为137 nm。迄今为止,利用超声波能量来产生纳米气泡的形成机理仍未完全了解。

### 1.4 加压法

加压法是近几年常用的另外一种产生体相纳米气泡的方法<sup>[16,47-49]</sup>。Olszok等<sup>[48]</sup>将过滤提纯过的空气压缩至0~200 kPa的超压状态,并将其充入预先已提纯的胶体颗粒悬浊液中,直至胶体溶液过饱和;发现,胶体颗粒的存在能够大幅提升纳米气泡的产生效率;粗糙亲水的铂纳米颗粒能够诱导产生体相纳米气泡,而对于光滑疏水的聚苯乙烯纳米颗粒,产生的气泡则依附在颗粒表面,形成聚苯乙烯纳米颗粒-纳米气泡复合体。Tuziuti等<sup>[16]</sup>研究了加压对预先形成的纳米气泡溶液的影响;发现加压后,形成了新的较大粒径的纳米气泡,且气泡的浓度降低了;提出了一种假说来解释此现象,加压以后,附着在纳米气泡表面的杂质颗粒间距缩小,并发生不可逆聚集,形成了新的、尺寸更大的成核体,当溶液压强恢复至正常大气压时,新的成核体诱导形成较大的纳米气泡。Ghaani等<sup>[49]</sup>近期的工作显示,在加压的基础上,如果对已经施加约9 000 kPa氧气或甲醇的气-液混合体系(温度保持在20℃)外加一个60 V的直流电场(相当于12 kV/m的电场强度),这个外加的电场能够大大提高气体在水中的溶解度,并促进纳米气泡的形成。

### 1.5 机械搅拌法

实验室中产生纳米气泡最简便的方法是机械搅拌法<sup>[14,50-51]</sup>,与上述纳米气泡产生方法相比,操作

上缺乏明确的界定。工业中,该方法常被用来产生磷脂膜包覆的微米气泡。Hernandez 等<sup>[51]</sup>利用涡旋机械振荡仪,来激活脂质体包覆的体相纳米气泡的形成。Jadhavd 等<sup>[50]</sup>使用一种连续高剪切转子装置产生体相纳米气泡,装置最大的转速可以达到 10 000 r/min。

### 1.6 其他体相纳米气泡表征技术

体相纳米气泡的成功观察很大程度上依赖于 DLS 技术和电泳光散射技术<sup>[46,52-54]</sup>。然而,许多其他技术对纳米气泡也做出了很大的贡献,例如,纳米颗粒示踪分析技术<sup>[33,41]</sup>、扫描(透射)电子显微成像技术<sup>[25,55]</sup>、简谐振动法质量检测技术等<sup>[56]</sup>。下面对每种技术进行简要介绍。

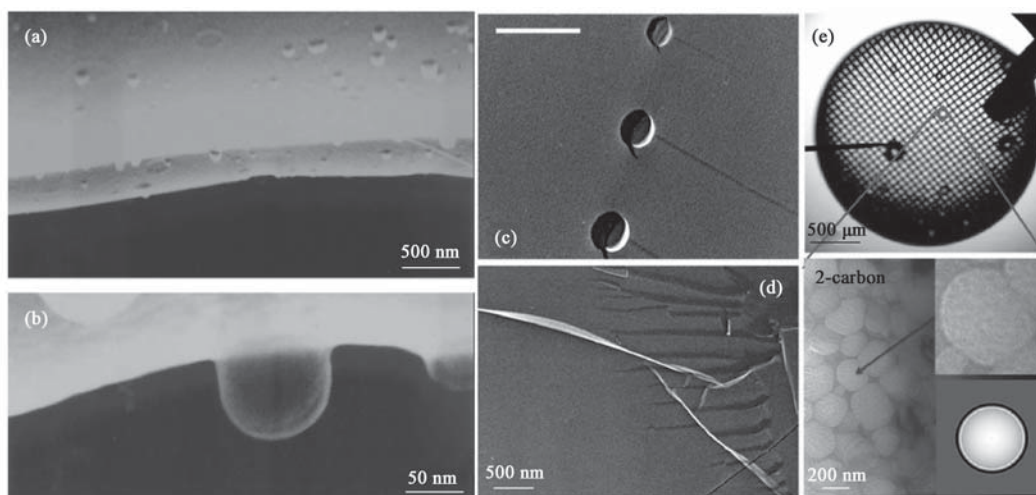
#### 1.6.1 纳米颗粒示踪分析技术

纳米颗粒示踪分析 (NTA) 是近年来发展起来并被广泛应用的一种新的体相纳米气泡可视化表征手段<sup>[33,41]</sup>。NTA 同时跟踪多个单一纳米颗粒的运动,从而得到每个纳米颗粒的扩散系数,推导计算出其粒径大小。与 DLS 相比,NTA 具有从单个纳米颗粒收集和分析尺寸信息的优点,而不是整体纳米颗粒的平均值。此外,DLS 通过被颗粒散射后的光强来计算粒径,溶液中大尺寸颗粒的散射光是最强的。因此,大颗粒的信号将会覆盖小颗粒目标的信号,最后导致 DLS 给予的粒径结果往往大于 NTA 给予的

粒径结果。而 NTA 跟踪每一个颗粒的布朗运动,是较 DLS 更为可靠的一种胶体颗粒粒径测量技术。而且,通过测量一定体积内粒子的准确数量,NTA 可以很容易地计算出粒子的数量密度(浓度)。Qui 等<sup>[33]</sup>用 NTA 技术,研究了体相纳米气泡的形成及其稳定性,测量了所产生的纳米气泡的浓度为  $10^8/\text{mL}$ ,比脱气时溶液的浓度约高 5 倍。

#### 1.6.2 复制物扫描(透射)电子显微成像技术

复制物扫描(透射)电子显微镜 (SEM) 成像技术是观察溶液中体相纳米气泡尺寸的另一可靠的方法<sup>[25,55]</sup>。在该方法中,通过将一小滴水溶液在 2-甲基丁烷溶液 (113 K) 中快速冷冻,可以保留体相纳米气泡的内部和界面结构;然后,使冷冻结构破裂暴露出剖面;随后,采用等离子体薄膜沉积方法,在截面上形成一层碳氢化合物薄膜,这样就成功复制了纳米气泡的横截面;最后,通过加热去除冷冻结构,并用扫描电镜观察复制物。如图 2(a) 和 2(b) 所示,Ohgaki 等<sup>[25]</sup>采用复制物扫描电子显微镜技术测量得到体相纳米气泡的平均直径为 100 nm。Uchida 等<sup>[55]</sup>扩展到利用透射电子显微镜 (TEM) 观察氧气纳米气泡复制物。如图 2(c) 和 2(d) 所示,水溶液中形成的纳米气泡是球形的或者椭圆形的,所得到的尺寸分布与 DLS 的结果相似。冷冻电子显微镜也被用来直接观察体相纳米气泡溶液。如图



注:(a) 氮气体相纳米气泡冷冻断裂所得复制物的 SEM 图像;(b) 直径为 100 nm 的氮气体相纳米气泡的放大图像<sup>[25]</sup>;(c) 直径为 200 nm 的纯氧气球形纳米气泡水中冻裂复制物的 TEM 图像;(d) TEM 图空白对照组:没有通气的样品<sup>[55]</sup>;(e) 冷冻电子显微镜 (Cryo-EM) 用来直接观察体相纳米气泡<sup>[57]</sup>

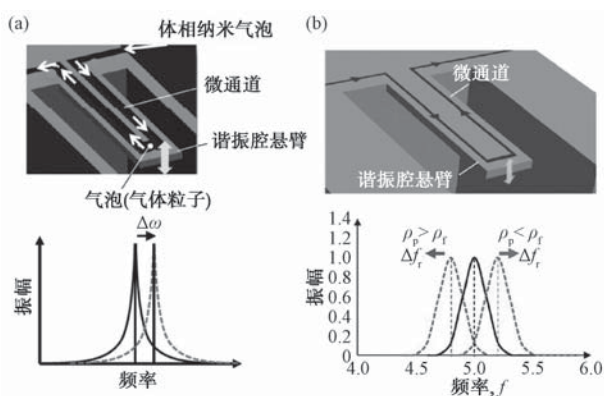
图 2 体相纳米气泡冷冻所得复制物的 SEM 图像、TEM 图像以及 Cryo-EM 图像

Fig. 2 SEM, TEM and Cryo-EM Images of Freeze-Fractured Replica of Bulk Nanobubbles in Water

2(e)所示, Li 等<sup>[57]</sup>利用化学反应在两片 TEM 网格之间产生氮气体相纳米气泡,接着用-183 °C 的液氮进行冷冻,在 200 kV 的冷冻电子显微镜下观察到直径为 200~300 nm 的纳米气泡,并计算得到这些气泡的扩散系数为 30~250 μm<sup>2</sup>/s。

### 1.6.3 简谐振动法质量测量技术

证明体相纳米气泡的确含有气体的最可靠的方法是 Kobayashi 等<sup>[56]</sup>提出的简谐振动法测量纳米气泡质量。如图 3 所示,它是一种能够测量颗粒粒径和质量的检测技术,当单个纳米颗粒通过微谐振腔时,通过测量谐振腔的振动频率,从而得到颗粒相对于溶剂的密度。当一个纳米颗粒通过谐振器时,谐振频率发生变化,对于密度小于溶剂密度的颗粒,谐振频率向高频移动,而对于密度大于溶剂的颗粒,谐振频率向低频移动。因此,利用简谐振动法测量颗粒质量的技术能够通过检测谐振频率的变化来区分正悬浮颗粒(气泡)和负悬浮颗粒(粉末颗粒)。利用该方法, Kobayashi<sup>[26]</sup>和 Hernandez 等<sup>[51]</sup>发现,体相纳米气泡具有正浮力, Kobayashi 等测量得到其平均直径为 112 nm, Hernandez 等测量得到的直径为 (280 ± 108) nm, 与前文 DLS 和 NTA 测量的结果一致。



注:(a)简谐振动法质量测量技术的检测原理<sup>[26]</sup>;

(b)利用简谐振动质量检测技术,检测到的体相纳米气泡的频率变化结果<sup>[51]</sup>

图3 简谐振动法质量检测技术以及对体相纳米气泡的检测  
Fig. 3 Principle of Resonant Mass Measurement System and Measurement of Bulk Nanobubbles

大量的试验数据以及上述多种各异的产生和表征方法证明了体相纳米气泡的确存在。但是,关于它们的稳定性仍然存在诸多问题。针对体相纳米气泡稳定性的讨论如下。

## 2 体相纳米气泡的稳定性

如上文所述,根据经典成核理论和生长理论,体相纳米气泡处于不平衡状态,根据气泡气液界面处溶液的饱和程度,体相气泡会溶解消失或变大。虽然如此,研究者在试验中发现,体相纳米气泡可以稳定存在数小时甚至数天<sup>[5,9,58]</sup>。

### 2.1 可忽略不计的上升浮力和双电层排斥力

#### 2.1.1 忽略不计的上升浮力

纳米气泡很小,它们受到的浮力也很小,与热能相比,浮力可以忽略不计<sup>[7]</sup>。对于球形体相纳米气泡,其在静止液体中上升的时间可以估算出来。当纳米气泡的浮力与流体阻力相平衡时,可以计算得到体相纳米气泡的终端上升速度。对于 no-slip 边界条件<sup>[59]</sup>,半径为  $r$  的气泡的终端上升速度  $v$  由 Stokes 定律给出,如式(1)。

$$v = \frac{2r^2 \Delta \rho g}{9\eta} \quad (1)$$

其中:  $\Delta \rho$ ——气泡和液体之间的密度差, g/cm<sup>3</sup>;  
 $g$ ——重力加速度, m/s<sup>2</sup>;  
 $\eta$ ——液体的黏度, Pa · s。

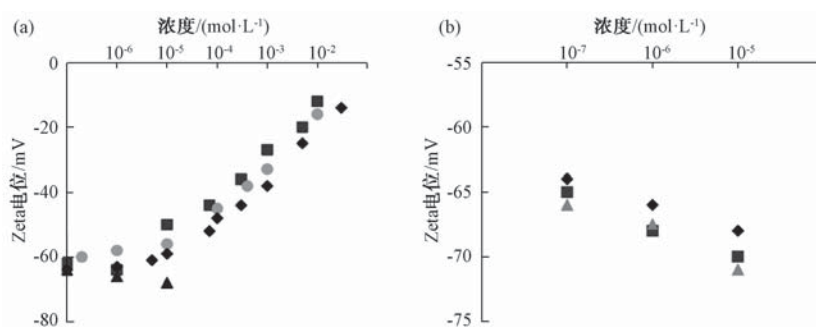
计算得到,半径为 100 nm 的气泡终端上升速度约 20 nm/s。假设储样容器高  $h = 1$  cm,那么估算可得纳米气泡在水溶液中的上升时间约为 5 d。这就意味着对于足够小的纳米气泡,上升浮力可忽略不计,布朗运动占主导,在试验时间尺度范围内是稳定的。

#### 2.1.2 双电层排斥力

其次,双电层排斥力对体相纳米气泡的稳定性也起到至关重要的作用<sup>[58,60-62]</sup>。双电层排斥力的存在主要是因为纳米气泡气液界面的负电性<sup>[61-66]</sup>。自 19 世纪以来,根据气泡在电泳测量中向正极移动的结果,研究人员就发现在 pH 为中性的溶液中,气泡表面自发性地带负电<sup>[67]</sup>。McTaggart 等<sup>[68]</sup>进一步证实了电泳的结果,用旋转圆筒槽来抵消气泡的浮力,推断出气泡表面的负电荷是选择性吸附氢氧根离子所致。随后,溶液 pH 对气泡 Zeta 电位影响的结果进一步证实了这一推断<sup>[62-64,69-70]</sup>。Takahashi 等<sup>[70]</sup>报道了,当 pH 值为 10 时,Zeta 电位为 -100 mV;当 pH 值减小至 5.8 时,Zeta 电位降至 -35 mV。

根据 Zeta 电位随着 pH 的变化情况,得到气泡等电点 pH 值为 3~4。Creux 等<sup>[64]</sup>利用鼓泡的方式向纯化过的水溶液中充入 4 种不同气体来产生纳米气泡,分别是氮气、氧气、氮气和工业空气纳米气泡。基于电泳技术,设计了一种旋转池 Zeta 计,能够去除电渗对测量结果的影响,并精确测定气泡的电泳淌度,从而得到纳米气泡的 Zeta 电位。结果发现,在中性水溶液中,4 种不同气体所形成的纳米气泡的 Zeta 电位在试验误差范围内是相同的,为

(-63±2) mV。图 4 为电解质浓度对 Zeta 电位的影响。当卤化钠盐浓度一旦增加到 10<sup>-5</sup> mol/L 时,纳米气泡 Zeta 电位开始变小,这是因为双电层厚度被高浓度电解质压缩。然而,纳米气泡的 Zeta 电位随着 NaOH 浓度的增加而变大,进一步表明纳米气泡的电负性源于氢氧根离子在气液界面的特异性吸附。Hamamoto 等<sup>[62]</sup>也发现,纳米气泡在较高 pH 环境下显示出更强的电负性,且在水溶液中表现出更强的稳定性。



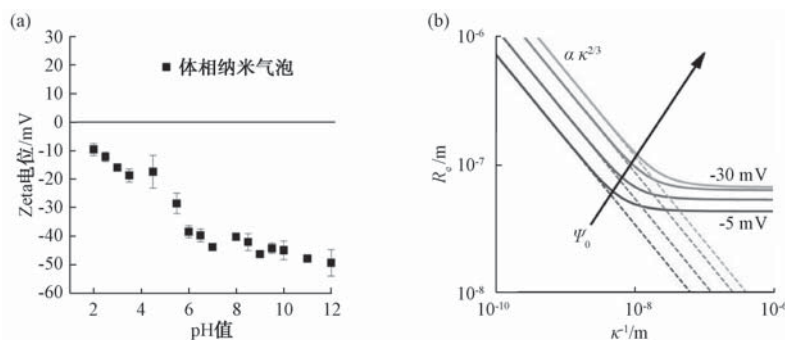
注:(a) 卤化钠(NaI、NaBr 和 NaCl)的浓度对 Zeta 电位的影响(正方形:NaI;圆形:NaBr;菱形:NaCl);(b) 碱(NaOH、LiOH 和 CsOH)浓度对 Zeta 电位的影响(菱形:NaOH;正方形:LiOH;圆形:CsOH)

图 4 纳米气泡 Zeta 电位随着盐浓度(a)和碱浓度(b)的变化情况<sup>[64]</sup>

Fig. 4 Zeta Potential of Nanobubble Solution as a Function of Sodium Halide Concentration (a) and Alkali Concentration (b)

为了进一步证实上述观点,课题组前期测量了解水产生纳米气泡的 Zeta 电位随 pH 变化的情况,结果如图 5(a)所示<sup>[11]</sup>。由图 5(a)可知,在 10 mmol/L NaCl 溶液中,纳米气泡的表面是带负电荷

的,与之前的报道结果相一致<sup>[60-61,70]</sup>。Tan 等<sup>[28]</sup>通过模拟计算得出,负电荷在气泡气-液界面聚集累积,能够使体相纳米气泡稳定存在,且其最终稳态直径保持在 200 nm,如图 5(b)所示。



注:(a) 试验在 25 °C、10 mmol/L NaCl 溶液中进行<sup>[11]</sup>; (b) Zeta 电位影响体相纳米气泡稳定性的计算结果<sup>[28]</sup>

图 5 纳米气泡 Zeta 电位受 pH 的影响以及 Zeta 电位对气泡稳定性的影响

Fig. 5 Zeta Potential of Nanobubble Solution as a Function of pH Value and Influence on Stability of Bulk Nanobubbles

由此可得出一个明确的结论,纳米气泡的气液界面是带负电的。氢氧根离子的吸附可能是引起其带负电荷的原因。纳米气泡表面氢氧根离子的负电荷被扩散层中的质子或盐离子中和,从而满足电中

性。因此,水本身在稳定气泡、防止其聚集方面起了很大的作用<sup>[63]</sup>。目前,研究者们提出了很多假设,试图从分子水平上解释气泡气液界面电负性。Ghaani 等<sup>[49]</sup>提出,体相纳米气泡的带负电的 Zeta

电位有可能是处于气-液界面的分子发生非线性极化(如水分子的极化)所至。然而,迄今为止,科学界没有统一得出一个令人信服的解释,有些甚至与观察到的试验结果相矛盾<sup>[71-75]</sup>。

## 2.2 表面张力的减小

纳米气泡的稳定性可以通过减小 Laplace 压强来实现。这一过程,可以通过减小气泡气液界面的表面张力来实现。那么,如何来减小气泡的表面张力呢?

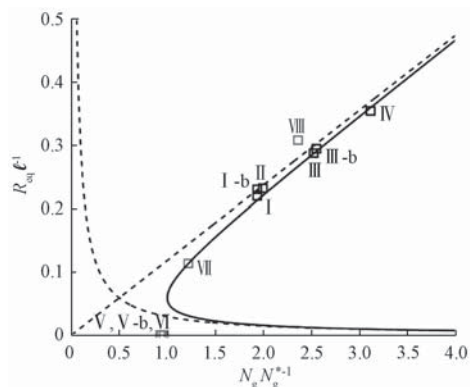
一种可能是杂质。样品制备不当、试验过程粗糙、溶剂中的一些有机杂质,均会降低气泡气液界面的表面张力<sup>[76-79]</sup>。Ducker 等<sup>[80]</sup>提出的有关有机物杂质稳定界面纳米气泡的理论也适用于体相纳米气泡。对于界面纳米气泡,有一层不溶于水的有机污染物覆盖在气泡的气液界面,从而降低气泡表面张力,进而进一步阻碍气体在纳米气泡中的扩散,大大延长了纳米气泡的寿命。众所周知,超纯的气/液界面极易受到空气中污染物分子的影响,同时一些试验仪器的包装材料(如 AFM 悬臂梁、塑料注射器等)也会对其产生污染<sup>[12,78,81]</sup>。这一观点已经被试验所证实:利用十二烷基硫酸钠(SDS)胶束,可以溶解气液界面上不溶于水的有机污染物,同时纳米气泡也能够被去除<sup>[80]</sup>。

另一种可能是离子在气液界面上的吸附。热解离产生的离子或某种程度上吸附在气液界面上的碳酸根阴离子也可以降低气泡的表面张力并有助于稳定纳米气泡<sup>[53,58,65,82-86]</sup>。例如,Bunkin 等<sup>[53,58]</sup>提出了一个基于离子吸附于气液界面而稳定纳米气泡的定量模型,当离子吸附于气泡气液界面时,赋予气泡表面特定带电性能,从而增加气泡的稳定性。

## 2.3 气体过饱和

在溶液过饱和的条件下,可以得到稳定的胶体纳米气泡溶液<sup>[8,87-89]</sup>,这时候往往伴随着大量气泡的同时存在。在这种情况下,周围气泡的溶解,溶液过饱和,抑制了纳米气泡内部气体向气泡外部扩散。Weijs 等<sup>[8]</sup>通过分子动力学计算模拟论证了这一理论。结果表明,在足够高的过饱和率下,气体在体相中成核生成纳米气泡,且形成的纳米气泡群由于外围纳米气泡的存在而变得更加稳定,这是因为外围的气泡群屏蔽了内部气体分子向外扩散。然而,当纳米气泡浓度降低时,即气泡-气泡之间的间距增

加时,纳米气泡的稳定性大大降低。模拟结果表明,体系的总气体含量与气泡半径  $R$  和气泡间距  $L$  之比( $R/L$ )存在重要的关系,即对于恒定的气体量, $R/L$  为常数(图 6)。这表明,一旦给定气体的含量,体系中的纳米气泡尺寸可以随着气泡-气泡间距的增大/减小而增大/减小。值得注意的是,该计算模拟在封闭体系中进行,在实际试验操作过程中,试验平台是开放体系或至少是半开放的。



注:  $l$  是相邻间的间距;  $N_g$  是气体总原子数,  $N_g^*$  是抑制纳米气泡溶解所需气体原子数的临界值

图 6 体相纳米气泡无量纲平衡半径  $R_{eq} l^{-1}$  随气体过饱和度的变化情况<sup>[8]</sup>

Fig. 6 Non-Dimensional Equilibrium Radii  $R_{eq} l^{-1}$  of Bulk Nanobubbles as a Function of Gas Supersaturation<sup>[8]</sup>

综上所述,截至目前,体相纳米气泡的稳定机制尚不清楚,它似乎超越了经典热力学的范畴,且没有一个独立的理论能够解释体相纳米气泡的稳定性。由于形成体系不同,体相纳米气泡的稳定性,很大可能是多种机理协同作用的结果,具体机制还有待进一步研究。

## 3 有关污染物的担忧

人们对纳米气泡一直有很多疑问<sup>[90-91]</sup>。最有争议的问题是“它们真的是气体形成的吗?”,除了纳米气泡是被不溶于水的有机污染物包裹的假设外,还有一种观点是它们是聚合物污染物组成的<sup>[12,79,81,91]</sup>。Berkelaar 等<sup>[79]</sup>将界面纳米气泡状的物体暴露在脱气的环境中,发现纳米气泡仍旧保持稳定。经过深入的研究,发现这些纳米气泡状的物体是使用一次性针头,针头内部的 PDMS 污染水溶液所致。Eklund 等<sup>[92]</sup>尝试用 3 种不同的方法,分别为水力空化法、机械振荡法和无机盐溶解法,来产生纳米气泡溶液,发现操作过程中的痕量污染物会严

重误导对结果的判断。动态光散射均能检测到颗粒信号,但这些颗粒并不受气压等外界条件的影响。DLS 检测到的并非纳米气泡本身,而是试验过程中混入的污染物杂质或是被污染物所稳定的纳米气泡颗粒。对于电解水产生的纳米气泡,有可能来源于电极退化产生的微小颗粒<sup>[10]</sup>。对于超声波法产生的纳米气泡溶液,Rak 等<sup>[93]</sup>论证发现,检测到的纳米物质来源于超声探针金属表面退化所产生的纳米颗粒。总而言之,纳米气泡产生过程中污染物的问题需要极其认真的对待,试验和工艺过程中的清洁技术必不可少。例如,试验过程中应当避免使用一次性注射针头。

## 4 体相纳米气泡的应用

目前,对体相纳米气泡特性的研究还存在很大的挑战性,另一方面,纳米气泡被证明有很大的应用价值。体相纳米气泡的存在对水的各种界面特性和行为均有影响。因此,与这些特性相关的应用,纳米气泡在其中都显得极为重要,如超声造影剂<sup>[24,94-95]</sup>、泡沫浮选<sup>[24,30-31,96-99]</sup>、废水处理<sup>[52,55,100-101]</sup>、清洁<sup>[41]</sup>、药物输送<sup>[94,102]</sup>、疾病诊断<sup>[103]</sup>等。下面主要介绍3种比较有价值的应用。

### 4.1 泡沫浮选和废水处理

泡沫浮选是一种基于颗粒表面疏水性质的分离方法,被广泛应用于工业生产过程,如采矿业中的泡沫浮选和废水处理等过程<sup>[30,52,55,104-114]</sup>。气体的固有特性是疏水的,在泡沫浮选过程中,首先,疏水颗粒与混合溶液中的体相纳米气泡相碰撞,并相互黏附形成疏水纳米颗粒-气泡复合物;接着,该复合物从收集区被转移到泡沫区,泡沫富集;最后,通过溢流从上层浮选回收,同时亲水性颗粒保留在底部,并作为残渣移除。Fan 等<sup>[30]</sup>发现,由于纳米气泡的存在,浮选矿浆中可回收颗粒尺寸范围变大,颗粒疏水性增强,大大提高了对煤和磷酸盐的浮选回收率。对于泡沫浮选,不同颗粒的自身粒径范围有要求,如煤炭的最适浮选粒径为 50~600  $\mu\text{m}$ ,矿物质的最适浮选粒径为 10~100  $\mu\text{m}$ <sup>[115]</sup>,这就要求纳米气泡能够同时转化为微观甚至宏观气泡。研究指出,纳米气泡依附在疏水颗粒表面后,能够相互融合,甚至生长为微米气泡,从而增加浮力,加速颗粒的收回<sup>[30,96-99,111,116]</sup>。Fan 等<sup>[30,96-99]</sup>在一系列工作中发现,在较低的起泡剂浓度下,添加纳米气泡可以

显著提高微米气泡悬浮液的稳定性。此外,体相纳米气泡的存在有助于减缓气泡上升的速度,为需要较长时间的难浮起的颗粒的泡沫浮选创造更有利的条件。

体相纳米气泡也被应用在废水处理中<sup>[52,55,104,107]</sup>。Uchida 等<sup>[55]</sup>将体相纳米气泡应用于污水处理厂的废水中,证明体相纳米气泡可以吸附溶液中的杂质且可将其聚集在气液界面,从而实现从溶液中分离杂质。由其 TEM 图像可知,体相纳米气泡的清扫面积是有限的,强烈依赖于体相纳米气泡的密度和寿命。在另一项研究中,Xiao 等<sup>[52]</sup>探讨了纳米气泡对人工废水中磷化氢回收率的影响,揭示了纳米气泡在颗粒沉淀和浮选中起不同的作用。纳米气泡抑制了粒径较小(约 1 nm)的苯乙烯基磷酸 SPA-Pb 颗粒的沉淀,然而当 SPA-Pb 粒径较大(约 2  $\mu\text{m}$ )时,纳米气泡能够促进 SPA-Pb 沉淀颗粒的浮选。此外,在 SPA-Pb 沉淀颗粒中加入纳米气泡,SPA-Pb 的浮选回收率可达 90%以上。

### 4.2 清洁

纳米气泡溶液已被报道用于清洁多种底物,如硅片、云母、镀镍表面、高定向热解石墨(HOPG)、金表面、不锈钢片和聚丙烯管等<sup>[41-42,100,106,117-120]</sup>。Burfoot 等<sup>[106]</sup>首次发现,在超声清洗过程中加入气泡,可以更容易地除去钢表面的生物膜、碳水化合物、脂肪和蛋白质沉淀物,认为清洗是由于气泡的作用而不是超声机的气穴空化作用。Takenouchi 等<sup>[42]</sup>论证了氢气纳米气泡在碱性电解质(AEW)中的清洗作用。结果表明,AEW 可以有效清洗和去除镍表面的硫酸盐离子,这是由于位于纳米气泡界面处的氢氧根离子与留在镍表面的硫酸盐离子之间发生了离子交换。Zhu 等<sup>[41]</sup>研究了在具有相反润湿性硅片上,体相纳米气泡去除模型污染物的效益(牛血清白蛋白和溶菌酶)。结果表明,体相纳米气泡可以同时防止不同润湿性表面被污染,且可以去除亲水表面的污染物,但不能去除疏水表面的污染物。后者归因于蛋白质分子与疏水性表面较强的黏附性。

### 4.3 超声造影剂

另一种用途是超声造影剂<sup>[24,95,121]</sup>。超声造影剂用来人为改变两组织间的反射系数,从而增强背向散射信号,提高图像对比度<sup>[122]</sup>。一般来说,超声



造影剂是稳定的微米级别的气泡,能够在静脉和动脉血管中成像<sup>[123-126]</sup>。为了能够穿透脉管系统以外的组织,如肿瘤组织和炎症组织,造影剂尺寸需要至少小1个以上数量级,即在纳米范围内<sup>[24,94-95,121]</sup>。Xing等<sup>[95]</sup>和Wheatley等<sup>[121]</sup>使用纳米气泡作为超声造影剂进行的初步研究显示,体相纳米气泡在兔子体内的肾成像中具有极佳的多普勒增强效果。Rapoport等<sup>[94]</sup>开发了一种结合聚合物胶束、纳米气泡和微米气泡的回声药物传递系统。结果表明,较小的纳米气泡能够渗透到肿瘤组织中,因为肿瘤具有脉管系统缺陷的特性,对750 nm及以下的纳米颗粒均有强的穿透性。随着纳米气泡在肿瘤组织中慢慢积累,由超声或热疗引起的纳米气泡会聚集成较大的具有高回声的微米气泡,从而在肿瘤超声检查中产生强烈的超声对比。同时,该系统中体相纳米气泡除了充当超声造影剂前驱体之外,还具有药物载体的作用。

## 5 结语与展望

体相纳米气泡的各种应用研究表明,其确实具有实际研究意义。然而,目前这方面的研究并不系统。课题组前期系统地研究了体相纳米气泡与不同体系的相互作用,包括无机金属纳米颗粒、高分子聚苯乙烯纳米颗粒、有机脂质体和有机病毒蛋白分子等。值得注意的是,迄今为止,体相纳米气泡能够稳定存在的各种物理解释并不令人信服;与此同时,纳米气泡的产生和表征方法也并不可靠。虽然目前大家对体相纳米气泡的理解还需进一步完善,但其在工业领域的应用却十分活跃,诸如用于泡沫浮选、清洁、超声造影剂等。综上,本综述简要概括了体相纳米气泡常用的产生和表征方式,讨论并概述了其稳定机制和试验应用研究。关于体相纳米气泡的研究不仅具有重要的科学意义,还具有深远的潜在应用价值。

随着体相纳米气泡在农业及工业界越来越广泛的应用,纳米气泡越来越受重视,但是纳米气泡的发展(尤其是在基础研究领域)还有很多问题亟需解决。因此,未来还应在以下几个方面继续发展研究。

(1)纳米气泡表征技术的研究。现阶段,针对体相纳米气泡溶液的表征技术并不能直接将纳米气泡和纳米颗粒区分开来。因此,开发新的纳米气泡的表征技术,尤其是体相纳米气泡的表征技术,是推

动纳米气泡领域发展的一个必不可少的方面。

(2)纳米气泡稳定性机理的研究。体相纳米气泡能够稳定存在的物理机理解释至今仍是一个黑洞,研究并阐明体相纳米气泡稳定存在的机理对推动纳米气泡的应用具有积极意义。

(3)纳米气泡应用领域的进一步探索。纳米气泡不仅在泡沫浮选、清洁、水净化等领域具有重大的应用价值,还在医疗领域尤其是肿瘤治疗领域也具有巨大的潜在应用价值。在国内,该领域的研究尚处于起步阶段,体相纳米气泡在生物医学领域的应用仍需要进一步探索。

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