On the Stability of the Flow Close to One or Two Rotating Disks

*J. Pontes*¹, N. Mangiavacchi², G. Anjos³, G.C.P. Oliveira² and D. Ferreira⁴

¹Metallurgy and Materials Engineering Department, Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.
²Group of Environmental Studies for Water Reservoirs – GESAR, State University of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
³Nuclear Science Engineering Department, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Cambridge, USA
⁴Civil Engineering Department, Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

*Corresponding author: jopontes@metalmat.ufrj.br*

Polarization curves found in electrochemical cells with rotating disk electrodes present an instability in the region where the current depends exclusively on the angular velocity imposed to the rotating disk electrode. Dissolution of the iron electrode in the 1M H₂SO₄ electrolyte generates a mass concentration field close to the electrode, coupled through the viscosity, to the flow. We review key aspects of the linear stability of the coupled flow and show that coupling gives raise to a new family of unstable modes at Reynolds number much lower than the critical one for constant viscosity flows. These modes may be at the origin of the current instability observed in the setup (*Phys. Fluids, 16(3):707, 2004*, *Phys. Fluids 19:114109, 207*). Three-dimensional numerical simulations confirm the emergency of the instabilities. We address also the problem of multiple solutions in the between corotating disks.

**Keywords:** Rotating disk flow, rotating disk electrode, hydrodynamic stability, finite elements method