

Comments on the paper 'Synthesis and application of ion-imprinted resin based on modified melamine-thiourea for selective removal of Hg(II)'

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Keywords: adsorption; kinetics; pseudo second order model; pseudo-first order model

Recently, Monier *et al.* published the paper entitled 'Synthesis and application of ion-imprinted resin based on modified melamine-thiourea for selective removal of Hg(II)'.¹ In the section Adsorption kinetics, the authors noted: 'For better evaluation of the extraction mechanism and investigation of the rate-limiting step, the obtained kinetic results were treated by using both pseudo-first-order and pseudo-second-order kinetic models, which can be mathematically expressed as follows:

$$\frac{1}{q_t} = \frac{k_1}{q_e t} + \frac{1}{q_e} \quad (9)$$

$$\frac{t}{q_t} = \frac{1}{k_2 q_e^2} + \frac{1}{q_e} t \quad (10)$$

where k_1 and k_2 are the pseudo-first-order rate constant (min^{-1}) and pseudo-second-order rate constant of adsorption ($\text{g mg}^{-1} \text{min}^{-1}$) for adsorption, respectively, and q_e and q_t (mg g^{-1}) are the amounts of metal ion adsorbed at equilibrium and at time t (min), respectively.

In fact, Eqns (9) and (10) are the same. From Eqns (9) and (10), k_1 can be obtained as

$$k_1 = \frac{1}{k_2 q_e}$$

In addition, the pseudo-first-order model, Eqn (9), is not correct. The units of the parameters in Eqn (9) also cannot agree with each other. Thus means that 'Synthesis and application of ion-imprinted resin based on modified melamine-thiourea for selective removal of Hg(II)' might not be correct. The same mistake has been mass duplicated by Monier *et al.* in *Carbohydrate Polymers*,² the *Chemical Engineering Journal*,³ *Colloids and Surfaces B – Biointerfaces*,⁴ the *International Journal of Biological Macromolecules*,^{5–8} *Journal of Applied Polymer Science*,⁹ *Journal of Colloid and Interface Science*,^{10,11} *Journal of Hazardous Materials*,^{12–16} *Journal of Molecular Recognition*,¹⁷ *Polymer International*¹⁸ and *Reactive and Functional Polymers*.¹⁹

In 1898, Lagergren first presented the first-order rate equation for the adsorption of oxalic acid and malonic acid onto charcoal.²⁰ In order to distinguish the kinetics equation based on concentration of solution and adsorption capacity of solid, Lagergren's first-order rate equation has been called pseudo-first-order since

1998.^{21,22} Details of the Lagergren rate equation for adsorption reactions were published in 2004.²³ The most popular form used is

$$\log(q_e - q_t) = \log(q_e) - \frac{k}{2.303} t$$

q_e and q_t (mg g^{-1}) are the adsorption capacities at equilibrium and at time t respectively. k (min^{-1}) is the rate constant of pseudo-first-order adsorption. In recent years, the same mistake has been pointed out in *Food Chemistry*,²⁴ *Journal of Molecular Liquids*²⁵ and *Journal of Environmental Sciences – China*.²⁶

The pseudo-second-order kinetic expression for the adsorption systems of divalent metal ions using sphagnum moss peat was presented by Ho in 1995²⁷ and this expression was also published in 1996.²⁸ A modified equation was presented in 1998 to correct a mistake in the previous paper that was published in 1996.^{29,30} The pseudo-second-order kinetic model has a non-linear form

$$q_t = \frac{q_e^2 k t}{1 + q_e k t}$$

and four linear forms:³¹

$$\frac{t}{q_t} = \frac{1}{k q_e^2} + \frac{1}{q_e} t$$

$$\frac{1}{q_t} = \left(\frac{1}{k q_e^2} \right) \frac{1}{t} + \frac{1}{q_e}$$

$$q_t = q_e - \left(\frac{1}{k q_e} \right) \frac{q_t}{t}$$

and

$$\frac{q_t}{t} = k q_e^2 - k q_e q_t$$

The model has been used in numbers of adsorption systems in subsequent years.³² Furthermore an article entitled

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'Pseudo-second-order model for sorption processes' by Ho and McKay³³ has been ranked top in annual citations in the Web of Science category of chemical engineering since 2008.³⁴ A review of second-order models for adsorption systems gave more details.³⁵

In order to stop the proliferation of the mistake of the pseudo-first-order model a comment has been made.^{24–26} Citing the original paper not only respects the work of the authors who presented a novel research idea but also discussed this idea in detail in the body of their paper.³⁶ In my view, Monier *et al.* should have cited the original paper for the pseudo-first-order and pseudo-second-order kinetic models and thereby provided greater accuracy and information details about the kinetic expression they employed.

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