Propulsion and Power Research 2015;4(2):84–90

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Propulsion and Power Research

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ORGINAL ARTICLE

Comparison between the volumetric flow rate and pressure distribution for different kinds of sliding thrust bearing

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Received 17 October 2014; accepted 21 January 2015

KEYWORDS

Non-parallel plate bearing;
Hydrodynamic sliding bearing;
Incompressible lubricant flow;
Volumetric flow rate;
Exponential geometry

Abstract In this paper a hydrodynamic journal sliding bearing, forming with two nonparallel surfaces that the lower surface moves with a unidirectional velocity and the upper surface is stationary shaped with exponential geometry is verified mathematically. The values of volumetric flow rate and distribution of pressure for incompressible lubricant flow between two supports in several conditions of velocity with different variables are determined. The results indicate that by increasing the amount of constant (m), the maximum oil pressure in the bearing will face an extreme decrease, and also by increasing the α coefficient, the rate of volumetric flow rate will decrease.

1. Introduction

Bearings allow smooth and low friction motion between two surfaces loaded against each other. The motion can be either rotary (such as a shaft turning within housing) or linear (one machine element moving back and forth across another). The most basic bearing is the plain type that has no moving parts and it supports loads through sliding motion. Conversely, rolling-element bearings are subjected to very little sliding and the load is supported by numerous rolling members inside the bearing. In either situation, proper lubrication is essential to long bearing life. Plain bearings generally cost less than similarly sized rolling-element bearings, but rolling-element bearings generally can tolerate heavier loads and higher speeds. Bearings that support loads perpendicular to their axis of rotation are

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Peer review under responsibility of National Laboratory for Aeronautics and Astronautics, China.

http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jppr.2015.05.002

Nomenclature

u	x velocity (unit: m/s)
v	y velocity (unit: m/s)
w	z velocity (unit: m/s)
b	width of bearing (unit: m)
D	shaft diameter of rolling bearing (unit: m)
L	length of bearing (unit: m)
U	circumferential velocity (unit: m/s)
Q	volumetric flow (unit: m^3/s)
P	film pressure (unit: N/m^2)
h_1	minimum gap between the surfaces (unit: m)
F	external load (unit: N)
h	gap between the surfaces (unit: m)
P_{atm}	atmospheric pressure (unit: Pa)

Greek letters

ρ	fluid density (unit: kg/m^3)
α,β,m	constant

called radial-type whereas bearings supporting loads parallel to their axis of rotation are termed thrust bearings. Thrust bearing, used to support thrust load in rotating machinery consist of multiple pads, either fixed or pivoted. Research on oil flow through a lubricating groove carried out by Ettles [1] showed that about 85% of hot oil leaving the gap enters the next oil gap in the case of laminar flow. Later in his subsequent papers [2,3], Ettles proposed an idea of the "hot oil carry-over factor". Values for this factor were assessed on an experimental basis as a function of the sliding speed and size of the gap between the bearing pads. Some principles of lubrication are presented in [4].

Other models of oil flow in the bearing groove were proposed by Vohr [5], who presented a model including a variety of heat exchange phenomena in the groove, and Heshmat and Pinkus [6] and Kicinski [7], who calculated both the flow of oil and heat balance. Some phenomena in the oil gap are described with increasing accuracy by these derived models. Various arrangements aimed at improving the scoring of hot oil layer moving with the runner have been proposed [8–16]. In this paper volumetric flow rate and distribution of pressure are presented for several conditions. The sliding bearing is presently widely used by industry in the form of thrust bearing [17]. Hydrodynamic thrust bearings are used mainly in large and heavy equipment such as: ships propeller shafts (tail shafts), fans and pumps, large steam and gas turbines engines [14], vertical axis machines such as coal crushers [15] and finally heat exchanger [16,18].

2. Hydrodynamic theory of lubrication

The hydrodynamic theory of lubrication of journal bearings is older than a century. In his famous experiment, Tower has shown the pressure distribution in the lubricating oil film in the clearance of journal bearings [15,19]. Also in this year Petroff measured the friction torque of oil lubricated sliding bearings and created a formula to calculate it. Knowing the results of experiments made by Tower and Petroff, Reynolds evolved the basic equation of hydrodynamic theory of lubrication of journal bearings from the Navier-Stokes equations using many assumptions. The Reynolds equation cannot be solved in full form therefore it is necessary to make some simplifications to get a simple solution. There are two general simplifications: the infinitely long bearing ($b/d=\infty$, b: width of the bearing and d: shaft diameter of rolling bearing) and the short bearing assumption ($\partial p/\partial z \gg \partial p/\partial z$) [1]. In 1902 Sommerfeld solved the Reynolds equation making special boundary conditions for pressure distribution in tangential direction which according to him is called Sommerfeld conditions resulting in a central symmetric solution. In the practice the often used boundary conditions are the following: the Sommerfeld conditions $p_{\varphi=\pi}=0$ and the Reynolds conditions $\left(\frac{\partial^2 p}{\partial \varphi^2}\right)_{\varphi=\pi}=0$ [15]. Using these assumptions many solutions were achieved during the last century for static and also dynamic operating conditions. Nowadays, numerical methods are often used for solving the Reynolds equation and can be seen in Kozma [20–28].

3. Description of the optimization problem

The sliding bearings consist of at least two contact surfaces. One of the surfaces is moving with a relative velocity U as it can be seen in Figure 1 gap between the sliding surfaces is filled with incompressible lubricant. Concerning the friction state in the sliding bearing, three cases are possible:

3.1. Dry friction

Where the surfaces are in full contact. Failure danger of the sliding surfaces is large, because of the roughness of the

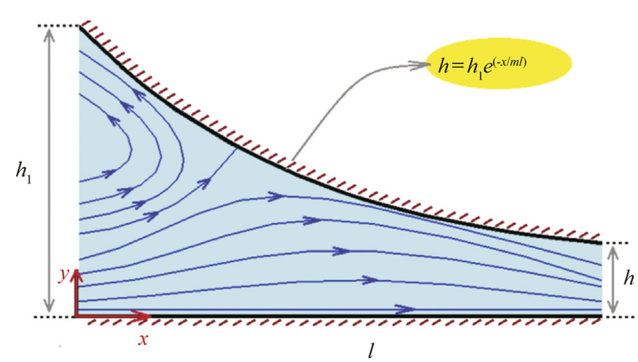

Figure 1 Geometry of physical model.