

Misuse of pre-exponential factor in the kinetic and thermodynamic studies using thermogravimetric analysis and its implications

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Abstract

This paper describes the misuse of Arrhenius pre-exponential factor in the kinetic and thermodynamic studies using thermogravimetry. Standard test method (ASTM E698) has been used recently by many researchers to calculate the pre-exponential factor. ASTM E698 is reserved for differential scanning calorimetry (DSC) and impose many restrictions which have being overlooked by many recently. The obtained pre-exponential factors have been used to describe the thermodynamic behavior during the course of thermal conversions. The objective of this paper is to inform the readers that the pre-exponential factor obtained from the restricted equation can mislead and generate some false thermodynamic data.

Theoretical Background

ASTM E698-16 describes the standard method to evaluate the kinetic parameters from Flynn/Wall/Ozawa method using Differential Scanning Calorimeter (DSC)(ASTM International, 2016). It is mentioned in the limitation section of the standard that this method can not be used for simultaneous and consecutive reaction steps. Besides this there are many other assumptions which are made to reach the final form of the equation and should be taken care off. To explain the limitations, let's consider the general rate equation with reaction model $f(\alpha)$ as

$$\frac{d\alpha}{dt} = A \cdot \exp\left(-\frac{E_\alpha}{RT}\right) \cdot f(\alpha) \quad (1)$$

Differentiating Eq. 1 with respect to time while considering A as constant

$$\frac{d^2\alpha}{dt^2} = A \cdot \frac{d}{dt} \left[\exp\left(-\frac{E_\alpha}{RT}\right) \cdot f(\alpha) \right] \quad (2)$$

Eq 2 can be expanded further as

$$\frac{d^2\alpha}{dt^2} = A \cdot \left\{ \exp\left(-\frac{E_\alpha}{RT}\right) \cdot \frac{d}{dt} [f(\alpha)] + f(\alpha) \cdot \frac{d}{dt} \left[\exp\left(-\frac{E_\alpha}{RT}\right) \right] \right\} \quad (3)$$

$\frac{d}{dt} [f(\alpha)] = \frac{d}{d\alpha} [f(\alpha)] \cdot \frac{d\alpha}{dt} = f'(\alpha) \cdot \frac{d\alpha}{dt}$ can be introduced in the equation to get

$$\frac{d^2\alpha}{dt^2} = A \cdot \exp\left(-\frac{E_\alpha}{RT}\right) \cdot f'(\alpha) \cdot \frac{d\alpha}{dt} + A \cdot f(\alpha) \cdot \exp\left(-\frac{E_\alpha}{RT}\right) \cdot \frac{E_\alpha}{RT^2} \frac{dT}{dt} \quad (4)$$

For constant heating rate $\beta = \frac{dT}{dt}$ experiment using Eq. 1, one obtains

$$\frac{d^2\alpha}{dt^2} = \left[A \cdot \exp\left(-\frac{E_\alpha}{RT}\right) \cdot f'(\alpha) + \frac{\beta E_\alpha}{RT^2} \right] \frac{d\alpha}{dt} \quad (5)$$

35 The reaction model $f(\alpha)$ and corresponding first derivative $f'(\alpha)$ can be used from Table 1.

36 Table 1 Common reaction model and corresponding derivatives

Reaction Model	Symbol	$f(\alpha)$	$f'(\alpha)$
Power law ($n = \frac{1}{4}$)	$P_{\frac{1}{4}}$	$4\alpha^{\frac{3}{4}}$	$3\alpha^{-\frac{1}{4}}$
Power law ($n = \frac{1}{3}$)	$P_{\frac{1}{3}}$	$3\alpha^{\frac{2}{3}}$	$2\alpha^{-\frac{1}{3}}$
Power law ($n = \frac{1}{2}$)	$P_{\frac{1}{2}}$	$2\alpha^{\frac{1}{2}}$	$\alpha^{-\frac{1}{2}}$
Power law ($n = \frac{3}{2}$)	$P_{\frac{3}{2}}$	$\frac{2}{3}\alpha^{-\frac{1}{2}}$	$-\frac{1}{3}\alpha^{-\frac{3}{2}}$
One-dimensional diffusion (Parabola law)	D_1	$\frac{1}{2}\alpha^{-1}$	$-\frac{1}{2}\alpha^{-2}$
Mampel ($n = 1$)	F_1	$1 - \alpha$	-1
Mampel (n^{th} order)	F_n	$(1 - \alpha)^n$	$-n(1 - \alpha)^{n-1}$
Avrami-Erofeev ($n = 4$)	A_4	$4(1 - \alpha)[- \ln(1 - \alpha)]^{\frac{3}{4}}$	$[4 \ln(1 - \alpha) + 3][- \ln(1 - \alpha)]^{-\frac{1}{4}}$
Avrami-Erofeev ($n = 3$)	A_3	$3(1 - \alpha)[- \ln(1 - \alpha)]^{\frac{2}{3}}$	$-[3 \ln(1 - \alpha) + 2][\ln(1 - \alpha)]^{-\frac{1}{3}}$

Avrami-Erofeev ($n = 2$)	A_2	$2(1 - \alpha)[- \ln(1 - \alpha)]^{\frac{1}{2}}$	$[2 \ln(1 - \alpha) + 1][- \ln(1 - \alpha)]^{-\frac{1}{2}}$
Three- dimensional diffusion (Jander model)	D_3	$\frac{3}{2}(1 - \alpha)^{\frac{2}{3}} \left[1 - (1 - \alpha)^{\frac{1}{3}} \right]^{-1}$	$\frac{1}{2} \left[(1 - \alpha)^{\frac{1}{3}} - 2 \right] \left[(1 - \alpha)^{\frac{1}{3}} - 1 \right]^{-2} (1 - \alpha)^{-\frac{1}{3}}$
Contracting sphere	R_3	$3(1 - \alpha)^{\frac{2}{3}}$	$-2(1 - \alpha)^{-\frac{1}{3}}$
Contracting cylinder	R_2	$2(1 - \alpha)^{\frac{1}{2}}$	$-(1 - \alpha)^{-\frac{1}{2}}$
Two- dimensional diffusion (Valensi model)	D_2	$[- \ln(1 - \alpha)]^{-1}$	$[- \ln(1 - \alpha)]^{-2} (\alpha - 1)^{-1}$
SB model	SB	$\alpha^m (1 - \alpha)^n [- \ln(1 - \alpha)]^p$	$\frac{[- \ln(1 - \alpha)]^p (1 - \alpha)^n \alpha^{m-1} \{ [(n + m) \ln(1 - \alpha) + p] \alpha - m \ln(1 - \alpha) \}}{(\alpha - 1) \ln(1 - \alpha)}$

37

38 At peak-maximum temperature $T = T_m$, $\alpha = \alpha_m$ and $\frac{d^2\alpha}{dt^2} = 0$

$$A \cdot \exp\left(-\frac{E_a}{RT_m}\right) \cdot f'(\alpha_m) + \frac{\beta E_a}{RT_m^2} = 0 \quad (6)$$

39 Rearranging equation 6, yields (Vyazovkin et al., 2011)

$$A = -\frac{\beta E_a}{RT_m^2 f'(\alpha_m)} \exp\left(\frac{E_a}{RT_m}\right) \quad (7)$$

40 Now for a first order reaction $f(\alpha) = 1 - \alpha$ and $f'(\alpha) = -1$

$$A = \frac{\beta E_a}{RT_m^2} \exp\left(\frac{E_a}{RT_m}\right) \quad (8)$$

41 This equation is exactly the same as Eq. 3 of ASTM E698-16. The widespread use of this
 42 method is due to the fact that pre-exponential factor is obtained directly from activation
 43 energy. It is clear from the derivation that the final form of the equation is based on certain
 44 assumptions which are as follows

- 45 1. A is constant
- 46 2. E_a is constant
- 47 3. $f(\alpha) = 1 - \alpha$, reaction follows 1st order kinetics
- 48 4. $T = T_m$, iterating that the DTG contains single peak for a specific β

49 Activation energy can be obtained if Eq. 4 is transformed at peak-maximum temperature

50 taking $\frac{d^2\alpha}{dt^2} = 0$ as

$$f'(\alpha_m) \cdot \frac{d\alpha}{dt}\bigg|_m = -f(\alpha_m) \cdot \frac{E_a}{RT_m^2} \cdot \beta \quad (9)$$

51 Rearranging Eq. 9, one can get

$$E_a = -\frac{RT_m^2 \cdot f'(\alpha_m)}{\beta \cdot f(\alpha_m)} \cdot \frac{d\alpha}{dt}\bigg|_m \quad (10)$$

52 For a first order reaction

$$E_a = \frac{RT_m^2}{\beta(1 - \alpha_m)} \cdot \frac{d\alpha}{dt} \Big|_m \quad (11)$$

53 E_a will be obtained for a peak-maximum conversion rate $\frac{d\alpha}{dt} \Big|_m$ for all the limitations
 54 mentioned above. Friedman obtained similar expression and mentioned it as second
 55 derivative method (Friedman, 1964).

56 Natural logarithm of Eq. 6 yields Kissinger's equation which is valid for a single peak,
 57 constant A and constant E_a for any reaction model

$$\ln\left(\frac{\beta}{T_m^2}\right) = \ln\left[\frac{-ARf'(\alpha_m)}{E_a}\right] - \frac{E_a}{RT_m} \quad (12)$$

58 Taking 1st order kinetics into consideration, Eq. 9 takes the widely used form of Kissinger's
 59 equation (Kissinger, 1957)

$$\ln\left(\frac{\beta}{T_m^2}\right) = \ln\left(\frac{AR}{E_a}\right) - \frac{E_a}{RT_m} \quad (13)$$

60 This equation has been used for the determination of E_a from the slope of the regression
 61 line fitted on $\ln\left(\frac{\beta}{T_m^2}\right)$ vs inverse T_m plot. Eq. 13 assumes the same limitations for the
 62 calculation of E_a as does Eq. 8 for the estimation of A .

63

64 **Discussions**

65 (Kim et al., 2010) estimated pre-exponential factor from Eq. 8 using thermogravimetric
 66 conversion data, it seems that the authors referred ASTM standard D 698 mistakenly
 67 instead of E 698. They used the equation without specifying reaction model, moreover the
 68 activation energy of their samples varied greatly with conversion. The criteria for the use of

69 this equation was therefore not fulfilled. Although it was a key mistake but they deduced a
70 single A value for each one of their samples. The real problem arose when (Maia and de
71 Morais, 2016) used this equation and varied the peak temperature (T_m) in their calculation
72 (cf. Table 2). Instead of obtaining a single value of A corresponding to T_m , they obtained
73 evolution of A with conversion. During the pyrolytic conversion of red pepper waste, the
74 variation of E_a was significant moreover reaction order was not specified or evaluated.

75 Table 2 Peak maximum temperature used by (Maia and de Morais, 2016)*

Conversion	$T_1, (K)$ 5 °C/min	$T_2, (K)$ 7.5 °C/min	$T_3, (K)$ 10 °C/min	$E_a, \left(\frac{kJ}{mol}\right)$	$T_m, (K)$ From eq. 8	$T_i = \frac{E_a - \Delta H}{R},$ (K)
0.10	460.13	463.17	471.62	97.04	409.96	465.48
0.15	491.28	496.79	499.52	123.88	446.97	497.96
0.20	508.40	515.20	519.41	107.99	455.47	517.20
0.25	524.68	533.32	537.44	108.48	468.87	534.04
0.30	536.83	545.75	551.59	96.93	473.00	547.27
0.35	551.02	559.93	565.54	97.16	483.62	560.50
0.40	562.83	571.32	578.38	96.35	491.73	571.33
0.45	575.82	583.04	591.93	79.31	489.29	588.16
0.50	590.26	601.48	613.07	147.25	542.84	606.21
0.55	617.81	627.64	644.39	47.83	477.16	637.48
0.60	648.46	662.96	676.26	71.77	539.65	673.56
0.65	675.65	689.04	700.84	92.17	577.29	695.21
0.70	690.78	704.29	712.76	104.51	596.37	706.04
0.75	699.39	711.74	722.21	110.67	607.66	714.46
0.80	704.86	720.17	728.20	67.73	564.83	721.67
0.85	710.24	724.96	735.38	101.33	609.54	728.89

0.90	717.59	731.53	740.77	29.49	470.04	736.11
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In following works, some of the authors kept T_m constant in Eq. 8 and obtained the evolution of A as a function of E_a (Yuan et al., 2017; Müsellim et al., 2018; Barbanera et al., 2018; Mallick et al., 2018; Özsın and Pütün, 2018; Rasool et al., 2018). Taking for example the recent work of (Mallick et al., 2018) on rice husk and saw-dust (RH+SD) blend pyrolysis. The variation of E_a was insignificant, hence peak- maximum $T_m = 351$ °C and $E_a = 158.12$ kJ/mol can be used to calculate A from Eq. 8 and corresponding thermodynamics parameters can be evaluated thereafter. *Table 3* summarizes the kinetic and thermodynamic parameters for the pyrolysis of RH+SD blend at 10 °C /min using E_a from Friedman method.

Table 3 Comparison of kinetic and thermodynamic for rice husk and saw-dust (RH+SD) blend pyrolysis at 10 °C /min using activation energy from Friedman method at any instant and peak-maximum (Mallick et al., 2018)*

Measure ment	Mech anism	$\alpha, (-)$	$E_a, \left(\frac{kJ}{mol}\right)$	$T, (K)$	$A, (s^{-1})$	$\Delta H, \left(\frac{kJ}{mol}\right)$	$\Delta G, \left(\frac{kJ}{mol}\right)$	$\Delta S, \left(\frac{kJ}{mol - K}\right)$
Instant	F1	0.2	152.57	598.99	4.63E+10	147.59	181.82	-54.85
		0.3	155.32	585.76	7.97E+10	150.45	181.73	-50.08
		0.4	163.86	558.10	4.38E+11	159.22	181.45	-35.64
		0.5	178.27	612.22	7.66E+12	173.18	181.01	-12.55
		0.6	164.52	625.45	4.97E+11	159.32	181.43	-35.43
		0.7	161.14	631.47	2.55E+11	155.89	181.54	-41.11

		0.8	166.55	645.90	7.47E+11	161.18	181.37	-32.34
Average			163.18		1.39E+12	158.12	181.48	-37.43
Peak-	F1	0.57	158.12	624.15	1.39E+11	152.93	181.66	-46.03
maximu	F2				1.63E+11		180.86	-44.74
m	F3				2.53E+11		178.56	-41.06

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92 It is clear from the comparison that the value of A depends on the reaction mechanism so
93 are the values of ΔG and ΔS . Therefore, it is necessary to establish reaction mechanism
94 using methods described elsewhere (Vyazovkin, 2018; Vyazovkin et al., 2011). Besides ΔG
95 for F1, average values of other parameters don't match with the peak-maximum results. A
96 single set of parameters exist for a single peak and that is for a particular reaction
97 mechanism only. The evolution of kinetic and thermodynamic parameters using Eq. 8 with
98 conversion is therefore nothing more than a misconception.

99 Ahmad et al. adopted slightly different methodology, they kept T_m constant (607.4K) for
100 estimation of both A and ΔH for Para grass pyrolysis (Ahmad et al., 2017a). Although the
101 degradation showed a multicomponent decomposition, they varied A using the changes in
102 E_a as a function of conversion without specifying reaction order. Same methodology was
103 adopted in many other studies (Khan et al., 2016; Mehmood et al., 2017; Ahmad et al.,
104 2017c, 2017b; Kaur et al., 2017; Afzal et al., 2018; Ye et al., 2018; Ahmad et al., 2018). In
105 case of complex degradations, components should be deconvoluted and dealt separately for
106 the kinetic analysis (Ali et al., 2018; Koga, 2018).

With all the limitation of the Eq. 8 manipulations such as described above may implicate further the kinetic and thermodynamic evaluations.

Conclusions

With mathematical derivation it is explained that use of second derivative method for the pre-exponential factor (A) impose certain restrictions. Strictly speaking, single value for a single component can be obtained. Equation. 8 does not allow evolution of A with conversion neither by replacing peak-maximum temperature (T_m) with conversion temperature (T_i) nor by keeping T_m constant with varying activation energy (E_a). Use of A without understanding the limitations of the Eq. 8 may end-up with misleading kinetic and thermodynamic data and interpretations.

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