



Contribution ID: 400

Type: Oral Presentation

Evaluation of Relative Diffusivity of Hydrogen-Methane System for Underground Hydrogen Storage in a Depleted Gas Reservoir Using a Novel Pore-Scale Reactive Transport Model

Thursday, 16 May 2024 09:50 (15 minutes)

The depleted gas reservoir is considered as one of attractive ways for underground hydrogen storage (UHS). However, due to the chemical reaction during UHS, the diffusion coefficient of the H₂-CH₄ binary system is more difficult to evaluate. The objective of this paper is to establish a novel pore network model merging H₂ reactive transport to evaluate the relative diffusivity of the H₂-CH₄ system for UHS in depleted gas reservoirs. Firstly, a stochastic pore network model was constructed based on the pore-throat diameter distribution of a depleted gas reservoir. Then, the concentration and rate functions were defined in the pore network model, in which the diffusion transport through porous media was expressed by the Fick's law. And a power-law chemical reaction equation for H₂-rock was added as the source term. Finally, the curve of the relative diffusion coefficient vs. hydrogen concentration of the H₂-CH₄ binary system was obtained by solving the governing equations, which could be used to determine the impacts of diffusion during UHS in depleted gas reservoirs. The results show that the diffusion coefficient of the H₂-CH₄ system is related to H₂ concentration, porosity, pressure, etc. The H₂ diffusion coefficient is proportional to H₂ concentration and pore-throat size but inversely proportional to pressure. The diffusion coefficient under low pressure is about 20 times that under high pressure. Under the temperature of 40°C and the porosity of 0.247, the effective diffusion coefficient decreases from 2.4×10⁻⁷m²/s to 6.03×10⁻⁸m²/s when the pressure increases from 5MPa to 20MPa. Under the temperature of 40 °C and the pressure of 10MPa, the effective diffusion coefficient increases from 3.7×10⁻⁸m²/s to 1.21×10⁻⁷m²/s when the porosity increases from 0.2 to 0.32. Furthermore, under the temperature of 40°C, the porosity of 0.247 and the pressure of 10MPa, the H₂ effective diffusion coefficient is about 5×10⁻⁹m²/s when the H₂ concentration is 0.4, while the effective diffusion coefficient increases to 4×10⁻⁸m²/s when the H₂ concentration is 0.6. In addition, considering the CH₄ creation by the chemical reaction of H₂, the H₂ effective diffusion coefficient decreased due to the decreasing of H₂ concentration and the increasing of CH₄ concentration.

A novel pore network model merging H₂ reactive transport was proposed in this paper to evaluate the relative diffusion coefficient of the H₂-CH₄ system during UHS in depleted gas reservoirs. The methodology could provide a reference for UHS in depleted gas reservoirs.

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Session Classification: MS12

Track Classification: (MS12) Advances in computational and experimental poromechanics