EFFECT OF TEMPERATURE ON GAS SEEPAGE CHARACTERISTIC BASED ON COAL-GAS INTERACTION MODEL

by

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The temperature has a significant impact on the coal seam gas extraction. A fully coupled model is established in this study, which takes into account the coal-gas interaction characteristic. The numerical result shows that the coalbed CH_4 migratio and transport evolution coal bed CH_4 reservoir is not only dependent on the coal matrix deformation, gas pressure and gas adsorption, but also closely related to temperature.

Key words*: gas extraction, thermo-hydro-mechanical model, temperature, partial differential equations*

Introduction

The main component of coal seam gas is CH_4, which is a potentially valuable energy resource, but also a potential coal mine disaster. Coal bed CH_4 extraction is an effective method to reduce the gas disaster. Besides, gas drainage can take advantage of this clean energy source [1-3]. The extraction process of coal bed CH_4 depends on our understanding of the CH_4 migratio and gas-coal interaction. Coal seam is the dual porous media reservoir, containing matrix and fracture network. Coal matrix is the main gas reservoir space, and the fracture network system can provide an effective gas-flow path [4-6].

This fluid-flow and solid deformation problem gets a lot of attention. Scholars have proposed many models to analyze the coal and CH_4 interaction [7-9]. In deep strata, temperature has a significant effect on coal seams. Temperature will affect the adsorption of coal seam and change the effective influence of coal, and then change the permeability of coal seam, affecting the flow of gas. On the whole, it is a complex coal-gas interaction process [10-12].

In this paper, a coupled model (gas-flow, solid deformation, and temperature change) is established. Through this finite element model, the effect of temperature on coal seams was quantitatively analyzed. The model and the simulation results can provide the scientific basic for the analysis of the gas-flow characteristic in extraction process.

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Equations of coupled model

Gas-flow in fractures

The non-Darcy is usually adopted in coal seam gas extraction and it can be expressed [13, 14]:

$$-\nabla p_f = \frac{\nu}{k_g}\vec{\mu} \tag{1}$$

where $\vec{\mu}$ is the velocity, ρ_g– the density, ν – the kinematic viscosity, and k_g – the permeability.

For the porous media, the flow equilibrium equation can be expressed:

$$\frac{\partial}{\partial t}(\phi_f \rho_g) + \nabla(\rho_g \vec{\mu}) = Q_s(1-\phi_f) \tag{2}$$

where Q_s is the gas source. The mass content, m, is calculated:

$$m = \rho_g \phi_f + \rho_{ga}\rho_c V_{sg} \tag{3}$$

where ρ_{ga} is the gas density at standard condition, ρ_c – the coal density, and V_{sg} – the content of absorbed gas.

The gas absorption volume can be expressed:

$$V_{sg} = \frac{V_L p_f}{p_f + P_L}\exp\left[-\frac{c_2}{1+c_1 p_f}(T_{ar} + T - T_t)\right] \tag{4}$$

where V_L and P_L are the Langmuir volume constant and Langmuir pressure constant, respectively, c_1 – the pressure coefficient, and c_2 – the temperature coefficient.

The sorption induced volumetric shrinkage strain, ε_s, is assumed:

$$\varepsilon_s = \alpha_{sg} V_{sg} \tag{5}$$

where V_{sg} is the content of absorbed gas, and α_{sg} – the sorption-induced strain coefficient.

The ideal gas law is described:

$$\rho_g = \frac{M_g}{\mathrm{R}(T_{ar} + T)} p \tag{6}$$

where ρ_g is the gas density, M_g – the molecular weight of the gas, T – the gas temperature, R – the universal gas constant, and p_a – the standard atmospheric pressure.

Then the gas-flow equation can be re-written [15]:

$$\frac{\rho_{ga}}{p_a}\frac{\partial(\phi_f p_f)}{\partial t} + \nabla\left(-\frac{k_g}{\mu}\rho_g \nabla p_f\right) = Q_s(1-\phi_f) \tag{7}$$

Mechanical equilibrium equation

For the dual porosity media, the effective stress can be expressed:

$$\sigma_{eij} = \sigma_{ij} - \alpha p_f \delta_{ij} \tag{8}$$

where σ_{eij} is the effective stress, δ_{ij} – the Kronecker delta tensor, and α – effective stress coefficients for coal fractures.

The strain-displacement relation of coal is expressed:

$$\varepsilon_{ij} = \frac{1}{2}(u_{i,j} + u_{j,i}) \tag{9}$$

The Navier-type equation is yielded:

$$Gu_{i,jj} + \frac{G}{1-2\mu} u_{j,ji} - \alpha p_{f,i} - K\alpha_T T_{,i} - K\varepsilon_{s,i} + f_i = 0 \tag{10}$$

Coal permeability

The general porosity model is defined [16]:

$$\Delta\phi_f = \frac{1}{K}(\beta_f - \phi_f)(\bar{\sigma} + p_f) \tag{11}$$

Then the porosity is expressed:

$$\phi_f = \alpha - (\alpha - \phi_0)\exp\left\{-\frac{1}{K}[(\bar{\sigma} - \bar{\sigma}_0) + (p_f - p_{f0})]\right\} \tag{12}$$

where subscript 0 denotes the initial state of variables.

Substituting the porosity can be re-written:

$$\phi_f = \alpha - (\alpha - \phi_{f0})\exp\left\{-\left[\left(\varepsilon_V + \frac{p_f}{K_s} - \varepsilon_s - \alpha_T T\right) - \left(\varepsilon_{V0} + \frac{p_{f0}}{K_s} - \varepsilon_{s0} - \alpha_T T_0\right)\right]\right\} \tag{13}$$

where p_0 is the initial pressure and ϕ_0 is the initial porosity.

The permeability is correlated to the porosity according to the following exponential function:

$$\frac{k_g}{k_{\infty 0}} = \frac{k_\infty}{k_{\infty 0}}\left(1 + \frac{b}{p_f}\right) = \left(\frac{\phi}{\phi_0}\right)^3 \left(1 + \frac{b}{p_f}\right) \tag{14}$$

Energy evolution

Neglecting the interconvertibility of thermal energy, the thermal balance is obtained:

$$\frac{\partial[(\rho C)_M (T_{ar} + T)]}{\partial t} + (T_{ar} + T)K_g \alpha_g \nabla\left(\frac{k_g}{\mu}\nabla p\right) + (T_{ar} + T)K\alpha_T \frac{\partial \varepsilon_V}{\partial t} = -\nabla q_T \tag{15}$$

where $(\rho C)_M$ is the specific heat capacity of solid medium, $(\rho C)_M = \phi_f(\rho_g C_g) + (1-\phi_f)(\rho_s C_s)$, and ρ_s the mass density of coal matrix.

The conservation of mass of the two-phases can be written:

$$\frac{\partial[(1-\phi_f)\rho_s]}{\partial t} = 0 \tag{16}$$

$$\frac{\partial(\phi_f \rho_g)}{\partial t} = -\nabla(\rho_g q_g) \tag{17}$$

Considering $(1-\phi)\lambda_s \gg \phi\lambda_s$ and $\lambda_M \approx (1-\phi_f)\lambda_s \approx \lambda_s$, then yields:

$$(\rho C)_M \frac{\partial T}{\partial t} - (T_{ar} + T)K_g \alpha_g \nabla\left(\frac{k_g}{\upsilon}\nabla p_f\right) + (T_{ar} + T)K\alpha_T \frac{\partial \varepsilon_V}{\partial t} = \lambda_M \nabla^2 T + \frac{\rho_{ga} p_f T_a C_g}{p_a (T_{ar} + T)} \frac{k_g}{\upsilon} \nabla p_f \nabla T \tag{18}$$

The full coupled model can be used to analyze the temperature process. The cross coupling variable (porosity and permeability) connects different physical fields.

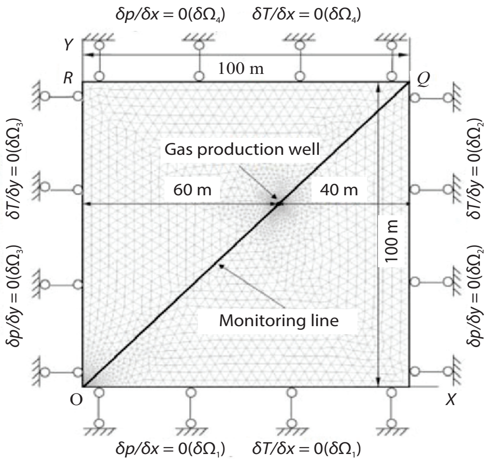

Figure 1. Computational model and schematic diagram

Model establishment and numerical simulation

Model establishment

In order to analyze the effect of temperature on the gas extraction, a calculation model is established as shown in fig. 1. The length is 100 m and width is 100 m. The four boundaries are restrained by normal displacement. The zero fluxes are applied to these boundaries. The initial pressure is 3 MPa, the initial temperature of the coal seam is 363 K. The drainage pressure is 0.1 MPa and the temperature is 303 K. A monitoring line is selected in diagonal line of coal mass to study the change law of coal permeability and gas pressure.

Temperature evolution law and gas pressure evolution law

Figure 2 shows the temperature distribution at different production times. The temperature gradually reduces gradually during the extraction process. The temperature maximum gradually decreases from 363 K to 319 K at production time from $1 \cdot 10^6$ seconds to $1 \cdot 10^8$ seconds. High temperature accelerate the gas-flow, which is beneficial to the extraction of coal seam. Figure 3 shows the evolution of gas pressure with the extraction time. With the increase of time, the gas pressure reduces. The gas pressure is affected by the gas content, temperature and the permeability of the coal seam. The pressure drop near the borehole is larger, and the gas pressure decreases slowly away from the well.

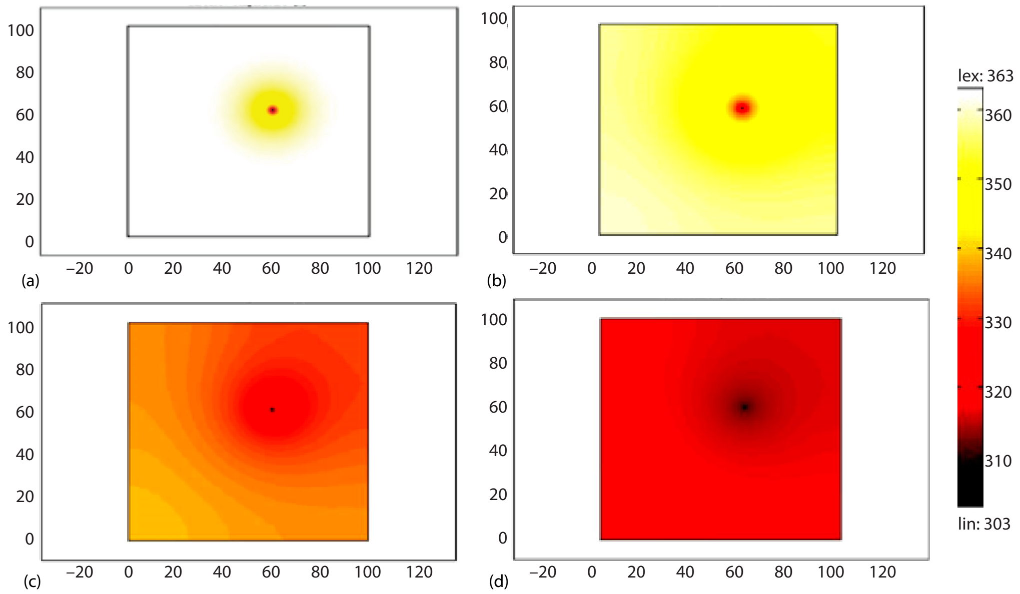

Figure 2. Distribution of temperature at different times; (a) t = 1e6 s, (b) t = 1e7 s, (c) t = 5e7 s, and (d) t = 1e8 s

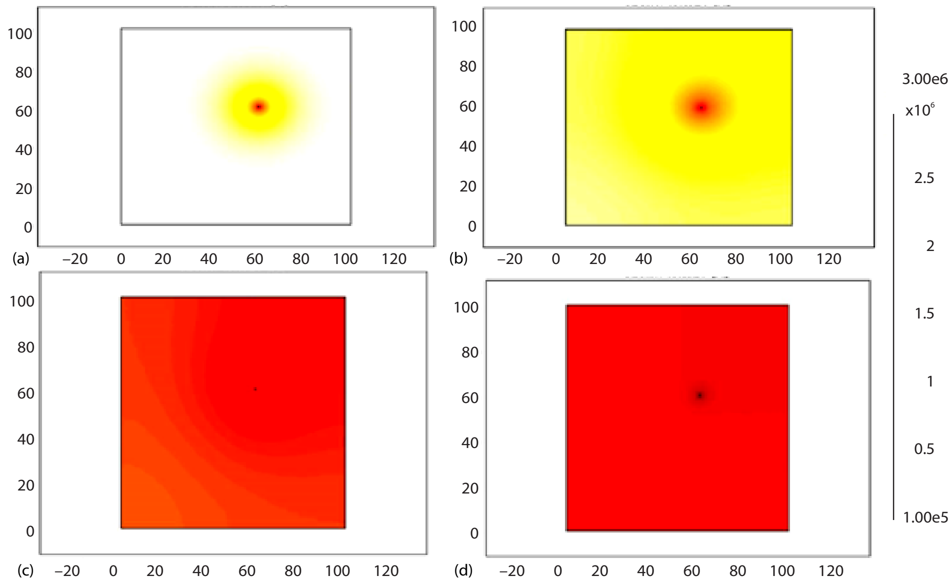

Figure 3. Distribution of gas pressure at different times; (a) t = 1e6 s, (b) t = 1e7 s, (c) t = 5e7 s, and (d) t = 1e8 s

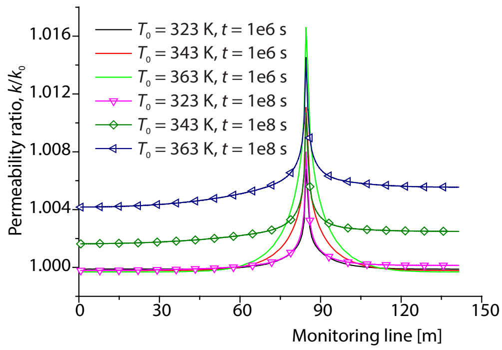

Figure 4. Distribution of permeability ratio at different cases

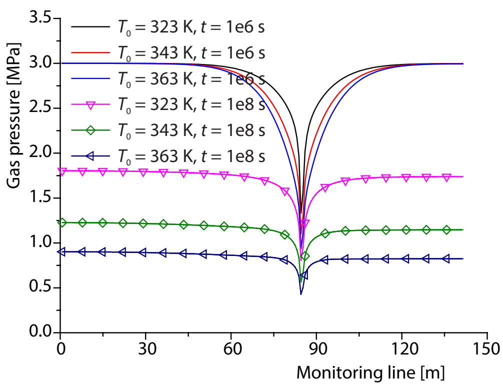

Figure 5. Distribution of gas pressure at different cases

Permeability evolution and gas pressure distribution

Temperature has a significant influence on the porosity and permeability. Figure 4 shows the evolution law of permeability under the condition of temperature. The initial permeability is $1 \cdot 10^{-18}$ m^2 before drilling. Due to pressure drop, the permeability around the borehole increased due to the gas desorption. The permeability of boreholes over 30 m changes slowly, which shows that borehole extraction has a limited effect on permeability evolution. When the temperature is higher, the permeability is higher. It indicates the high temperature is beneficial to gas extraction.

A bigger difference can be seen from the distribution of gas pressure. When $t = 1 \cdot 10^6$ seconds, the effect of temperature is more obvious around the borehole, but the difference of pressure distribution is not obvious when the distance is far. When $t = 1 \cdot 10^8$ seconds, the difference of pressure distribution is very obvious. Temperature affects the gas adsorption, and then affects the distribution of gas pressure. The gas pressure maximum is 1.8 MPa and 0.9 MPa when the temperature is 323 K and 363 K, respectively.

Conclusion

The temperature has a significant impact on the coal seam gas extraction. A fully coupled model is established in this study, which takes into account the coal-gas interaction characteristic. The numerical result shows that high temperature accelerates the gas-flow, which is beneficial to the extraction of coal seam. The temperature maximum gradually decreases from 363 K to 319 K at production time from $1 \cdot 10^6$ seconds to $1 \cdot 10^8$ seconds. Temperature affects the gas adsorption, and then affects the distribution of gas pressure. The gas pressure maximum is 1.8 MPa and 0.9 MPa when the temperature is 323 K and 363 K, respectively.

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Nomenclature

k_0 – initial permeability, [m^2]
P_L – Langmuir pressure constant, [MPa]
T – initial coal temperature, [K]
V_L – Langmuir volume constant, [m^{3}kg^{-1}]

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