Design and Optimization of a Molten Metal Loop Driven by an Electromagnetic Pump

Eric Mallon  
Virginia Commonwealth University

Miguel Bustamante Perez  
Virginia Commonwealth University

Joseph Keegan  
Virginia Commonwealth University

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Introduction
- Liquid Metal Fast Reactor (LMFR) utilizing liquid metal as a coolant is being considered for future nuclear energy.
- In this senior design project, the team is working on design and optimization of a molten metal by using an electromagnetic pump.
- There are several challenges in this study:
  - Operate at temperatures above 250 °C;
  - Control of system at relatively high pumping velocities;
  - Efficiently fill and drain metal from the system; and
  - Accurately collect pressure and flow data.

Proposed Designs

- Determining Pressure Drop
  - An orifice flow meter manufactured by the previous group would be used to introduced a known pressure drop.
  - Another pressure measurement would be taken across the pump itself.
  - Three designs had been considered:
    - The first method uses a differential pressure gauge because it is easy to install and accurately obtain data and this type of gauge can be used to introduce gas into the system.
    - The second method utilizes a U-tube manometer because it has a visible pressure difference, this can be calculated easily, and gases such as air, helium, and argon can be used as they are relatively safe to use and handle.
    - The third method is using a single manometer per pressure tap. Each manometer will be filled with argon gas and will provide visible pressure differences.

- Heating and Insulation
  - Heating tape would provide high, controllable temperatures but could be unreliable and would require long repair times.
  - Heating Caranister are more reliable and easier to repair with equal temperature ranges but would not provide uniform heating.
  - Insulation would need to accommodate quick repair of heating elements as well as sustain desired temperatures.
  - Rigid ceramic insulation would provide structure to the system as well as a location to secure the heating elements.
  - Sheet insulation may provide easier access to component.

Current Design
- The current system includes the electromagnetic pump and a flowmeter attached as a closed loop system with four pressure taps.
- The pressure differences will be visually observed and can be calculated through four Pyrex tubes, acting as manometers, affixed to four risers filled with argon gas.
- Additionally, the risers for the manometer tubes have been equipped with union fittings that allow pressure gauges to be attached for better pressure measurements.
- A pressurizer was implemented to prevent over and under pressurization of the system with the Pyrex tubes, as well as the pressurizer system, serve as a visual aid to prevent this cavitation.
- Argon was chosen over air as it does not interact with the tin.
- This would allow for instrumentation to be inserted directly into the fluid flow.
- Adding a quartz windows would allow the use of Laser Induced Breakdown Spectroscopy (LIBS) for near real time chemical analysis of the flow.
- This could expand the scope of the project into detection of impurities and contaminants in the molten metal flow.
- Such research could be used to determine the usability of LIBS in molten metal flows, including nuclear applications.

Future Considerations
- The current system is designed such that the return loop may be fitted with a manifold.
- This would allow for instrumentation to be inserted directly into the fluid flow.
- Adding a quartz windows would allow the use of Laser Induced Breakdown Spectroscopy (LIBS) for near real time chemical analysis of the flow.
- This could expand the scope of the project into detection of impurities and contaminants in the molten metal flow.
- Such research could be used to determine the usability of LIBS in molten metal flows, including nuclear applications.

Acknowledgements
We would like to thank Dr. Phongikaroon and Ammon Williams for their support and dedication to the success of this project.