



Application of Concentrated Solar Radiation to Chemical Looping Combustion

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Table of contents

Abstract	v
Declaration	viii
Acknowledgments	ix
Chapter 1- Introduction	1
1.1. Background	2
1.2. Aims	6
1.3. Thesis outline	8
1.4. Publications and Patents arising from this thesis	11
1.5. Format	13
References	14
Chapter 2- Literature review	17
2.1. Concentrated solar thermal (CST)	18
2.2. Solar thermal energy storage (TES)	20
2.2.1. Sensible TES	21
2.2.2. Latent heat TES	23
2.2.3. Chemical TES	24
2.3. Hybrid solar power plants	25
2.3.1. Hybrid solar steam power plants	26
2.3.2. Hybrid Brayton cycles	30
2.3.3. Hybrid solar combined cycles	33
2.4. Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS)	37
2.4.1. Pre-combustion	37
2.4.2. Post combustion separation	38

2.4.3. Oxy-fuel combustion	39
2.5. Chemical looping combustion (CLC)	39
2.5.1. Thermal energy storage (TES) as an inherent part of chemical looping combustion (CLC)	42
2.5.2. Solar hybridisation of Chemical looping Combustion (CLC) systems	43
2.5.3. Oxygen carrier materials	49
2.5.3.1. Co-based oxygen carriers	51
2.5.3.2. Cu-based oxygen carriers	52
2.5.3.3. Fe-based oxygen carriers	52
2.5.3.4. Mn-based oxygen carriers	53
2.5.3.5. Nickel-based oxygen carriers	53
2.5.3.6. Complex metal oxides	55
2.6. Configuration of the CLC reactors	56
2.6.1. Interconnected fluidized bed reactors	57
2.6.2. Fixed bed reactors	62
2.7. Solar reactors	64
References	67
Chapter 3: A hybrid solar and chemical looping combustion system for solar thermal energy storage	84
Chapter 4: A hybrid solar chemical looping combustion system with a high solar share	94
Chapter 5: The energetic performance of a novel hybrid solar thermal & chemical looping combustion plant	105

Chapter 6: Influence of the type of oxygen carriers on the performance of a hybrid solar chemical looping combustion system	156
Chapter 7: The influence of high intensity solar radiation on the temperature and reduction of an oxygen carrier particle in hybrid chemical looping combustion	169
Chapter 8: Conclusions& Future works	183
8.1. Conclusions	184
8.1.1. Configuration of the hybrid Hy-Sol-CLC system	185
8.1.2. Hy-Sol-CLC power plant	187
8.1.3. Appropriate oxygen carriers for Hy-Sol-CLC	188
8.1.4. The appropriate solar fuel reactor for Hy-Sol-CLC	189
8.2. Recommendations for future works	190
8.2.1. Solar fuel reactor	190
8.2.2. Assessment of the potential benefit and/or applicability of other fuels and particles	190
8.2.3. Assessment of the Hy-Sol-CLC configurations and applicability to other chemical looping processes	191
References	192
A Australian provisional Patent Application	193

Abstract

The novel concept of the application of the Oxygen Carrier (OC) particles in a Chemical Looping Combustion (CLC) system for diurnal storage of the concentrated solar thermal energy is presented here. Two innovative configurations of Hybrid Solar CLC (Hy-Sol-CLC) systems for continuous base-load power generation are proposed and assessed. The systems seek to take the key features of a CLC system that are desirable for a hybrid solar GTCCs; notably the production of an industrially pure stream of CO₂, inherent chemical and sensible heat storage, relatively low temperature of the fuel reactor relative to that of the air reactor and the potential to operate the fuel and air reactors at different pressures.

In the first proposed configuration, three reservoirs have been added to a conventional CLC system to allow storage of the OC particles, while a cavity solar receiver has been chosen for the fuel reactor. In this Hy-Sol-CLC system the flow rates of the fuel and OC particles were considered to be constant. The calculations demonstrated that the solar thermal energy can be stored using CLC components. However, this configuration is limited to a low solar share of about 6.5% when averaged over the whole day. Besides, the variations in fuel reactor temperature, owing to the diurnal variations of the input concentrated solar thermal energy, might result in damage to the OC particles.

The second Hy-Sol-CLC system addresses the limitations associated with the first configuration. In this system, as for the first one, a cavity solar reactor has been chosen for the fuel reactor while two reservoirs have been added to a conventional CLC for the storage of OC particles. A direct air-particle heat

exchanger has been also proposed to provide independent control of the temperature of the OC particles in the air reactor from those stored in the storage reservoirs. In this process the operating temperature of the solar fuel reactor is controlled through varying the flow rates of fuel and OC particles proportional to the variations in the input concentrated solar thermal energy. This hybrid cycle is estimated to achieve a solar share of up to 60% when averaged over the whole day. The performance of this hybrid system in a GTCC cycle was evaluated with and without the application of an after-burner. The after-burner was added to further increase the gas turbine inlet temperature. The calculations predict a first law efficiency of 50.0% for the cycle employing the after-burner, compared with 44.0% for that without the after-burner. However, this higher thermal efficiency is achieved at the cost of decreasing the solar share from 60.0%, without the after-burner, to 41.4% with it.

Applicability of the combinations of natural gas, CO and H₂, as fuel with the oxides of Co, Cu, Fe, Mn and Ni, as oxygen carriers in the proposed Hy-Sol-CLC system was also evaluated. The calculations demonstrated that, from all of the assessed metal-based oxygen carriers, only the pairs of CoO/Co, NiO/Ni and Fe₂O₃/Fe₃O₄ are potentially suitable for use in a Hy-Sol-CLC system working with natural gas. However, none of these materials allow any significant chemical storage of solar energy for the oxidation of CO and H₂.

An unsteady-state model of an OC particle exposed to high intensity solar heat flux was also developed to provide the fundamental knowledge required for the selection of an efficient solar cavity reactor for the Hy-Sol-CLC systems. The model was validated against the available data in the literature. The numerical

analysis demonstrated that the application of direct heat transfer is desirable. However, it must be combined with a high convective cooling to avoid excessive heating rates, which would result in overheating of the particles.

Declaration

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