

Abstract

This work studies the behavior of gas species and the temperature distribution inside the flow channel of the solid oxide fuel cell. Fuel consisting of methane and steam is fed to the anode flow channel where steam reforming, water-gas shift and electrochemical reactions occur. Computational Fluid Dynamics (CFD) technique is used to model the two-dimensional model of this anode flow channel where fuel flow rate, fuel composition and fuel initial temperature are input data. From the results, it can be found that the kinetics simulated in this work agree well with the phenomena occurred inside the anode channel. The concentration of CH_4 drops dramatically near the inlet as CH_4 is completely converted, meaning that, at the inlet of a cell, the reforming rate dominates such that the inlet region cools below the feed temperature. The consumption of H_2O in the steam reforming and water-gas shift reactions leads to a decrease in H_2O concentration near the inlet. At the same time, CO , H_2 and CO_2 concentration gradually increases. As the reaction proceeds, CO_2 is increased with a gradual decrease of H_2 consumed by the electrochemical reaction and CO used in the water-gas shift reaction. H_2O produced by oxidation reaction is also increased because the electrochemical reaction eventually dominates over the steam reforming and water-gas shift reactions. The temperature is decreased dramatically near the inlet of the flow channel due to the highly endothermic steam reforming reaction. The steep temperature gradients that result from the localised cooling within the cell can lead to significant thermal stresses in the solid structure and potentially to a system failure from crack formation in the cell. Therefore, a cautious operation should be concerned in order to prevent cracking in the SOFC.

Keywords: Electrochemical Reaction, Internal Steam Reforming Reaction, Temperature distribution, Water-Gas Shift reaction