3-D Transient Heat Transfer Analysis of Slab Heating Characteristics in a Reheating Furnace in Hot Strip Mills

J. Y. Jang, Y. W. Lee, C. N. Lin, C. H. Wang

Abstract—The reheating furnace is used to reheat the steel slabs before the hot-rolling process. The supported system includes the stationary/moving beams, and the skid buttons which block some thermal radiation transmitted to the bottom of the slabs. Therefore, it is important to analyze the steel slab temperature distribution during the heating period. A three-dimensional mathematical transient heat transfer model for the prediction of temperature distribution within the slab has been developed. The effects of different skid button height (H=60mm, 90mm, and 120mm) and different gap distance between two slabs (S=50mm, 75mm, and 100mm) on the slab skid mark formation and temperature profiles are investigated. Comparison with the in-situ experimental data from Steel Company in Taiwan shows that the present heat transfer model works well for the prediction of thermal behavior of the slab in the reheating furnace. It is found that the skid mark severity decreases with an increase in the skid button height. The effect of gap distance is important only for the slab edge planes, while it is insignificant for the slab central planes.

Keywords—3-D, slab, transient heat conduction, reheating furnace, thermal radiation.

I. INTRODUCTION

In steel factories, the reheating furnace is used to reheat the steel slabs before the hot-rolling process. In the reheating process, the supported system includes the stationary beams, the moving beams, and the skid buttons which block some thermal radiation transmitted to the bottom of the slabs. Besides, heat may be conducted by the skid buttons from the steel slabs to the cooling water. Severely uneven temperature distribution of the steel slabs makes it difficult to produce superior steel product in the subsequent rolling process. In order to deal with the uneven temperature distributions at exit of the reheating furnace, therefore, it is important to develop an accurate numerical analysis model to analyze the steel slab temperature distribution during the heating period.

In recent years, the analysis of transient heat characteristics of the steel slabs in a reheating furnace has attracted considerable attention. Numerical heat transfer model has been developed by considering the thermal radiation in the furnace chamber and transient heat conduction in the slab [1]. Han et al. [2] studied the influence of the residence time of furnace chamber and transient heat conduction in the slab [1]. Han et al. [2] studied the influence of the residence time on the slab skid mark formation and temperature profiles.

Y. W. Lee and J. Y. Jang are with Department of Mechanical Engineering, National Cheng-Kung University, Tainan, Taiwan (phone: 886-6-2757575 ext. 62148, 886-6-2088573; e-mail: n16024161@mail.ncku.edu.tw, jangjim@mail.ncku.edu.tw).

C. N. Lin is with Department of Mechanical Engineering, Far East University, Tainan, Taiwan (phone: 886-6-5979566 ext. 5838, e-mail: lincc@cc.feu.edu.tw).

C. H. Wang is with China Steel Corporation, Kaohsiung, Taiwan (e-mail: 149922@mail.csc.com.tw).
dimensions and properties. The slab has 9 m in length, 1.25 m in width, and 0.25 m in height. A fresh slab is fed into the reheating furnace from the left side of the furnace.

The mixing of the coke oven gas (COG) as the fuel are injected into the furnace with air through the nozzles at the top and bottom of the furnace. The hot gas flows along with the reverse direction of the slab to exit at the left side of the furnace.

The slabs are supported by the stationary beams, and heated on the stationary skid buttons. The slab is moved to the next stationary beam by the moving beam within every heating period.

### III. THEORETICAL MODEL

The physical model for the steady state walking beam type reheating furnace is simplified as a 3-D transient radiation and conduction problem, as shown in Figs. 2 (a) and (b). The simplified model is symmetric along the z=0 plane. Fig. 2 (a), which contains only one slab, is used to analyze the effects of different skid button height (H=60 mm, 90 mm, and 120 mm) on the slab skid mark formation; while Fig. 2 (b), which contains 3 slabs, is used to exam the effects of different gap distance between two slabs (S=50mm, 75mm, and 100mm) on the temperature profiles.

#### A. Governing Equations

The three-dimensional transient heat conduction governing equation for the temperature field of the steel slab is as shown in (1):

\[
\rho C_p \frac{\partial T}{\partial t} = \frac{\partial}{\partial x} \left( k(T) \frac{\partial T}{\partial x} \right) + \frac{\partial}{\partial y} \left( k(T) \frac{\partial T}{\partial y} \right) + \frac{\partial}{\partial z} \left( k(T) \frac{\partial T}{\partial z} \right)
\]  

where \( \rho \), \( C_p \), and \( k \) are density, specific heat, and thermal conductivity of the steel slab, respectively. The density is specified as a constant of 7871 kg/m³; while the specific heat and the thermal conductivity of the slab are considered as functions of temperature.

The effective radiation heat flux on the slab surface is composed of directly emitted and reflected energy. The reflected radiative heat flux is dependent on the incident from the surroundings which can be expressed in terms of the flux leaving all other surfaces. As shown in (2)

\[
q_{out,j} = \varepsilon \sigma T_i^4 + \rho \sum_{j=1}^{N} F_{ij} q_{out,j}
\]

where \( q_{out} \) is the radiative heat flux leaving the surface, \( \varepsilon \) is the emissivity, \( \sigma \) is Boltzmann’s constant (\( \sigma = 5.67 \times 10^{-8} \) W/m²·K⁴).

The View factor \( F_{ij} \) between two finite surface i and j is given by (3):

\[
F_{ij} = \frac{1}{A_i} \int \int_{A_j} \frac{\cos \theta \cos \theta}{\pi r^2} \delta_{ij} dA_i dA_j
\]

where \( \delta_{ij} \) is determined by the visibility of \( dA_i \) to \( dA_j \), \( \delta_{ij} = 1 \) if \( dA_i \) is visible to \( dA_j \), and equals to 0 otherwise.

#### B. Boundary Conditions

The initial temperature of the slab, supported beams, and skid buttons at the entrance of the furnace is assumed to be uniform temperature at 300K. The slabs reside in the reheating furnace for 200 minutes. The wall temperature is a function of time shown in Fig. 4. The emissivity of the furnace wall is 0.9 while that of the beam is 0.6 and the skid button is 0.4. The density, thermal conductivity, and specific heat for the beam/ skid button are 3300/8100 kg/m³, 3.2/35 W/m·K, and 1170/980 J/kg·K, respectively. The temperature for the cooling water is assumed as \( T_\infty = 308 \) K and the convection heat transfer coefficient \( h = 1800 \) W/m²·K.
IV. NUMERICAL ANALYSIS

The governing equations and boundary conditions are solved using commercial software FLUENT. In this study, the governing equations are solved numerically using a control volume base on the finite difference method. The finite difference method incorporating a second order central difference and fully implicit schemes was adopted to simulate the heat transfer phenomenon of the slab with the time step of 30 seconds. Fig. 3 shows the computational grid which is composed of 1,544,164 cells. The resulting discretized system is then solved iteratively until the temperature field satisfies the following convergence criterion:

$$\max \left( \frac{T_{i,j,k}^{n} - T_{i,j,k}^{n-1}}{T_{i,j,k}^{n}} \right) \leq 10^{-3}$$

(4)

where $T_{i,j,k}^{n-1}$ is the previous value of $T_{i,j,k}^{n}$ at the same time level.

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Figs. 5 (a) and (b) illustrate the slab temperature distribution at the edge plane and the central plane, respectively, at the exit of the reheating furnace for three different skid button height (H=60 mm, 90 mm, and 120 mm). The dashed lines represent the upper surface temperatures, while the solid line denotes the lower surface temperatures. It is seen that the walking-beam system which blocks some thermal radiation transmitted to the bottom of steel slabs causes uneven temperature distributions across upper surface and lower surface of the slab. From Fig. 5 (a), at the edge plane, one can observe that, as the skid button height is increased from 60 mm to 120 mm, the skid mark severity, defined as the average temperature difference between the upper and lower surfaces, is decreased from 24 K down to 20K. For Fig. 5 (b), at the central plane, as the skid button height is increased from 60 mm to 120 mm, the skid mark severity is decreased from 49 K down to 39K. This is due to that fact that, the presence of the pillars at the center of the steel slab, it blocks more thermal radiation transmitted to the bottom of the slabs.

Fig. 6 shows the slab heating curves for the upper and lower surfaces for different H. The predicted temperature history in the slab is also compared with the data of in-situ measurement conducted by China Steel Corporation in Taiwan. It is seen that there exists a reasonable agreement between the predicted and measured temperature distribution.

Figs. 7 (a) and (b) show the slab temperature distribution at Z-axis( m)
the edge and central plane, respectively, at the exit of the reheating furnace for three different gap distance (S=50mm, 75mm, and 100mm). The dashed lines represent the upper surface temperatures, while the solid line denotes the lower surface temperatures. When the gap distance S is increased, less thermal radiation transmitted to the edge plane of the slab is blocked from the adjacent slabs. At the edge plane, one can observe that, as S is increased from 50 mm to 100 mm, the skid mark severity is decreased from 67 K down to 58K. While for the central plane, as S is increased from 50 mm to 100 mm, the skid mark severity is decreased from 77 K down to 76K. It is also observed that the effect of gap distance between two slabs is important only for the edge plane, while it is insignificant for the slab central plane.

Fig. 7 Temperature profile of the slab at exit of furnace (t=200 min) for different S

![Temperature profile of the slab at exit of furnace](image)

(a) edge

(b) center

Fig. 7 Temperature profile of the slab at exit of furnace (t=200 min) for different S

Fig. 8 The slab heating curves for the edge and the central planes for different S

![Slab heating curves for the edge and central planes](image)

Fig. 8 The slab heating curves for the edge and the central planes for different S

Fig. 9 The slab heating curves for the upper and lower surfaces for different S

![Slab heating curves for the upper and lower surfaces](image)

Fig. 9 The slab heating curves for the upper and lower surfaces for different S

III. CONCLUSION

A three-dimensional mathematical transient heat transfer model has been developed to predict the temperature uniformity within the slab. The present model mainly analyzes the radiation heat transfer among the slabs, the skids, the beams, and the furnace walls as well as the conduction in the slab and skid. The effects of different skid button height and different gap distance between two slabs on the slab skid mark formation and temperature profiles are investigated. The following conclusions are yielded based on the obtained results:

1) It is shown that the skid mark severity decreases with an increase in the skid button height.

2) For the edge plane, as the skid button height is increased from 60 mm to 120 mm, the skid mark severity can be reduced from 24 K down to 20K; while for the central plane, skid mark severity is less affected by gap distance.
plane, it can be decreased from 49 K down to 39 K.

3) The effect of gap distance between two slabs is important only for the edge planes, while it is insignificant for the central planes.

4) For the edge plane, as the gap between slabs is increased from 50 mm to 100 mm, the skid mark severity can be reduced from 67 K down to 58 K; while for the center plane, it can be decreased from 77 K down to 76 K.

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Jiin-Yuh Jang is a distinguished university professor of mechanical engineering at National Cheng-Kung University, Tainan, Taiwan. He is also an ASHRAE and ASME fellow, respectively.

Yang-Wu Lee is a M.S. graduate student (2015) in the Department of Mechanical Engineering, National Cheng-Kung University, Tainan, Taiwan.

Chien-Nan Lin is a professor of mechanical engineering at Far-East University, Tainan, Taiwan.

Chao-Hua Wang is a researcher at China Steel Corporation, Kaohsiung, Taiwan.