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CUPRINS

SEC IUNEA I

ECHIPAMENTE / PROCESE INDUSTRIALE

1. *Gheorghe Zecheru, Florin Barsan, Costin Albulescu*, Practical considerations regarding the technical safety of pipelines designed for natural gas transportation.....13
2. *Bratu Polidor*, Influence of dynamic regime on inertial rotating systems bearings on vibrating screeners for rating the granular materials 19
3. *Vlad Ulmanu, Andrei Dumitrescu, Marius B. Dicioiu, Mihaela Claru*, Methodology and installation for researches regarding the performances of oil country tubular goods 25
4. *Doina Dimonie, Valeriu Jinescu, Marius Petrache, Liliana Anton*, Shear stress influence on the degradability of melted new materials based on starch designed for packages 31
5. *Najoua Mekaddem, Atef Mazioud, Samia Ben Ali, Magali Foi, Yossef Sfaxi*, Etude de stockage d'énergie dans une structure en nid d'abeille à base d'un matériau à changement de phase..... 34
6. *Alexandru Puzescu, Maria Zaharia*, Aspects of the buckling of powdery material storage silos..... 40
7. *Vasse Francis*, Normaliser la description du processus maintenance..... 44
8. *Mosnegutu E., Nedeff V., Ristea M., Ciobanu Elena*, A method for the study of the solid particles behavior in a vertical air flow 50
9. *Nicoleta Teodorescu, Mariana-Florentina Teodorescu, Elena Beatrice Tănase, Radu Andrei Dumitrescu*, Influența uzurii melcului asupra performanțelor agregatului de plastifiere a masei inițiale de extrudare cu un melc 56
10. *Gheorghe Zecheru, Andrei Dumitrescu*, Appropriate selection of the straightening machines for steel plates used in the petrochemical equipment manufacturing 62
11. *Sârbu Laurențiu*, Stress of the feeding vibrating machine structure – mineral aggregate transport working in mobile jaw crusher 68
12. *Bibire Lumina, Ghenadi Adrian Stelian, Nadabaica Dumitru Cristinel*, Practical aspects regarding maintenance management for a line of beer bottling 75
13. *Gheorghe I. Ene*, Unele considerații privind încercarea de corpuri de măcinare a morilor tubulare (I). Compensarea uzurii încercării de bile 81
14. *Gheorghe I. Ene*, Unele considerații privind încercarea de corpuri de măcinare a morilor tubulare (II). Aplicații privind compensarea uzurii încercării de bile 88
15. *Joseph Kessel Pombe*, Modele théorique de récepteur tubulaire dédiées aux petits systèmes LFR pour des applications de petites puissances 95
16. *Tac Constantin, Păunescu Mihaela, Teodorescu Mariana-Florentina, Spătaru Marian*, Studiu privind etanșeitatea dispozitivelor de etanșare cu inele de umplutură moale..... 101
17. *Sima Teodor, Gheorghe Valeriu*, Stabilirea parametrilor optimi ai regimurilor de sudare utilizate pentru reconducerea pieselor prin încercare prin sudare 107

18. <i>En chescu Lumini a Georgiana, Popescu C. Ionel, Iatan I. Radu</i> , Cercet ri experimentale privind transferul termic în compozite stratificate	114
19. <i>P unescu Mihaela, Tac Constantin, Stanca Gabriela, Vâlcu Carmen</i> , Mentenan a productiv total . Condi ii de aplicare i indicatori.	120
20. <i>Sima Teodor, Scarlat Daniel</i> , Determinarea grosimii la curbarea i calibrarea virolelor pe ma ini de curbat cu cilindri rotativi	126
21. <i>Ion Durbac , Adrian-Costin Durbac</i> , O nou strategie de evaluare a factorului critic de intensitate a tensiunii la vârful fisurii, specific unui bi-material compozit stratificat.....	130
22. <i>Gheorghe I. Ene</i> , Elemente de calcul privind aparatele pentru despruirea umed a gazelor, cu strat spumant.....	137
23. <i>Alessandrescu M. Aurel, Florea Mihai</i> , Cum se poate rezolva limitarea strict a încrcirilor unei îmbin ri sistem de conducte-echipament.....	143
24. <i>Ion Durbac</i> , Aspecte privind evaluarea deterior rii echipamentelor pentru procese industriale la estimarea factorilor de degradare, conform procedurii API RBI	149
25. <i>Tac Constantin, P unescu Mihaela, T mârjan Ion</i> , Studiu privind debitul amestec toarelor folosite pentru realizarea suspensiilor de particule solide	155
26. <i>Sporea Nicoleta, Barbu Gelu</i> , The importance of documents control procedure in the field of technical inspections of the mechanical installations under pressure	161
27. <i>P unescu Mihaela, Tac Constantin, tef nescu Mariana-Florentina, Stoica Silvia</i> , Considera ii privind durabilitatea asambl rilor cu flan e. Studiu de caz.....	167
28. <i>Iatan I. Radu, Salca Cristina</i> , Sarcini dezvoltate în echipamente tip coloan la ridicarea pe fundatie prin metoda rip rii (lunec rii) t lpii. Faza ini ial	174
29. <i>Ioan VasIU</i> , Îmbun t irea eficien ei centralelor termoeenergetice prin ridicarea temperaturii apei de alimentare a generatoarelor de abur	180
30. <i>P tuleanu Liliana, P tuleanu Tudor</i> , Mini and micro-channels inside the CPU'S cooling systems	186
31. <i>P unescu Mihaela, Tac Constantin, Sanda Ovidiu</i> , Studiu privind l imea optim a garniturilor asambl rilor cu flan e	192
32. <i>Prodea Iuliana – Marlana</i> , Aspecte privind optimizarea constructiv a amestec toarelor rotative	199
33. <i>Ion Durbac , Gheorghe-Cosmin Ciocoiu</i> , Evaluarea duratei reziduale de via pentru recipiente de medie i înalt presiune	205
34. <i>Pin oi Ramona</i> , Analysys of rheological behaviour of fresh concrete in vibrating compaction process.....	211
35. <i>Alexandru Carmen</i> , Dynamic response analyses for achieving technological performances for vibrations sorting and isolation in case of inertial vibrating screens.....	218
36. <i>Ion-Jan Necoiu, Adrian Sorin Popa, Alexandru Drago Trusca, Mircea Arsene</i> , Nivelul de performan tehnologic al instala iilor de procesare la cald a mixturilor asfaltice pentru structuri rutiere.....	225
37. <i>Constantin Decu, Adrian Sorin Popa, Virgil Enescu, Ramona Pintoi</i> , Niveluri de performan a echipamentelor de procesarea betonului proasp t pentru construc ii civile	230
38. <i>Ion-Jan Necsoiu, Constantin Decu, Marius Stefanescu, Mariana Stancu</i> , Nivelul de performan al echipamentelor de procesare a agregatelor minerale de carier i balastier	234

39. <i>Florescu Pavel, Dumitrescu D nu</i> , Unele particularit i privind mi carea fluidelor prin ejectoare	239
40. <i>Manolescu Florin – Lucian</i> , Rotor amestec tor multifunc ional de produse fibroase i granulare	245
41. <i>Ia nicu (Stamate) Iuliana</i> , Materiale textile acoperite cu elastomeri pentru protec ii i izola ii termice.....	250

SEC IUNEA II

PROTEC IA MEDIULUI

1. <i>Qahtan Adnan Abed, Viorel Badescu, Iuliana Soriga</i> , The performance of hybrid solar collector for water and air heating	259
2. <i>Udrea Ioana, Nicolae Rotar, Viorel B descu</i> , Preliminary results concerning the achievement of the german passivhaus concept in the southern hemisphere	265
3. <i>Fusu Ioan-Dorin</i> , Asigurarea calit ii echipamentelor care lucreaz în mediu de hidrogen sulfurat la uzina de ap grea ROMAG-PROD	271
4. <i>Mariana-Florentina tefanescu, Septimius Mara</i> , Solu ii de recuperare a metalelor grele din de eurile miniere din România – studiu de caz pentru minereuri polimetalice	277
5. <i>Cristina Luciana Dudici, Ghiorghe Ioni</i> , Monitorizarea factorilor de mediu în zonele de exploatare petrolier	283
6. <i>Durbac Ion, St nescu Dumitru Rodica</i> , Riscuri emergente pentru securitatea i s n tatea ocupa ional în industriile de proces	289
7. <i>Sporea Nicoleta, Barbu Gelu</i> , The importance of waste management in a public institution	295
8. <i>Sporea Nicoleta, Buchman Carmen</i> , Evaluarea impactului asupra mediului pentru proiectele publice i private	299
9. <i>Cristina Luciana Dudici, Ghiorghe Ioni</i> , Gas to power. Solu ie modern de eficientizare energetic i protec ia mediului.....	305
10. <i>Sorescu George, Dogaru Aurelia</i> , Incendiul – un risc frecvent în industrie. Studiu de caz – incendiu produs într-un obiectiv industrial	310
11. <i>Nica Veronica Adela</i> , Prevenirea i controlul integrat al polu rii într-o rafin rie de petrol i gaze.....	316
12. <i>Popa (Enache) Gabriela, Popa Florica</i> , Asigurarea calit ii în sistemul de educa ie i formare profesional ini ial	322
13. <i>B nic (Cicu) Marina-Eraclia</i> , Aspecte legislative privind informarea i eco-educarea consumatorilor poten iali	328
14. <i>Petri or Adelu a</i> , Principiile aplicabile în procesele de apreciere a riscului profesional ..	334
15. <i>ilic Daniela</i> , Modelare matematic a climatului stabil în vederea atenu rii schimb rilor climatice la nivel na ional	340
16. <i>Ionut Banu, Corina M. Manta, Georgeta Berbaru, Grigore Bozga</i> , Depollution of gaseous effluents by catalytic combustion.....	344

17. *Lucian Ionel Craciun, Alecsandru Pavel, Viorel Nicolae*, Managementul preveniei și prediciei situațiilor de urgență în mediul industrial al unui oraș metropolitan **347**
18. *Lucian Ionel Craciun, Dan Petrisor Dumitrescu, Alecsandru Pavel, Viorel Nicolae*, Filosofie de terorist atac în contextul strategiei securității interne..... **348**
19. *Florinel Lupu, Viorel Nicolae, Alecsandru Pavel*, Circumstanțele toxicologice privind rezervoarele industriale pentru stocarea de BTX..... **349**
20. *Stefan Titus, Nicolae Viorel, Pavel Alecsandru*, Aspecte teoretice privind modelarea și analiza ecosistemelor acvatice **350**
21. *Nicolae Iulian-Narcis, Nicolae Viorel, Pavel Alecsandru*, Modelarea, simularea și analiza numerică a evoluției unui eveniment criminologic în interiorul și exteriorul unei structuri industriale, cu accent pe interacțiunea cu mediul, precum și pe efectele nocive asupra oamenilor, bunurilor și mediului înconjurător **351**
22. *Nicolae Iulian-Narcis, Pavel Alecsandru*, Simularea numerică a efectului erorilor umane – sursă a evenimentelor criminologice industriale - în operarea instalațiilor tehnice/ tehnologice **352**
23. *Stefan Florin, Nicolae Viorel, Pavel Alecsandru*, Aspecte teoretice privind indicatorii de pericolozitate și pericolozitatea în situații de urgență la depozitele de hidrocarburi lichide ale rezervelor strategice **353**

POSTERE

1. *Institutul Național de Cercetare-Dezvoltare pentru Textile și Pielărie*, Fișă de prezentare. Sistem integrat pentru filarea gogoșilor de mătase naturală **357**

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EPI - 60
THE PERFORMANCE OF HYBRID SOLAR COLLECTOR FOR WATER AND AIR HEATING

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Abstract: This paper presents the performance of a hybrid solar collector for water and air heating. The effect of solar irradiation, ambient temperature and air inlet temperature on the useful energy collected by air and water has been investigated. Absorber plate temperature variation, water and air outlet temperatures and collector efficiency effects are presented. Moreover, the triangular fins in the used air channel increase the heat transfer area and then increase the useful heat gain.

Keywords: solar water heater; solar air heater, hybrid solar collector.

1. INTRODUCTION

Solar energy has become one of the best potentials for clean energy in the world. Solar water heating and air heating are widely used in most of the countries. Therefore, there are many studies about the hot water and air heated by solar radiation. Among these, we remind the analysis of the increase in heat delivery of thermosyphon systems and the performance of solar systems variation with the design variables [1]. The performance and cost benefit analysis of solar air collectors with and without fins have been conducted in [2]. Here, the authors concluded that the energy efficiency of collectors increases with the increase of Nusselt number. Energy and exergy analysis was performed on a dual-purpose system using the effectiveness-NTU method [3].

In this work we study the thermal performance of the hybrid solar collector for water and air heating, taking into consideration the physics of the whole process.

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2. COLLECTOR CONFIGURATION

The studied collector is a hybrid solar air-water collector (HSC). An advantage of this configuration is that the heat which would normally be lost through the bottom side in a single water flat-plate collector, is absorbed by air, thereby increasing the efficiency. Detailed description of HSC design and construction details are presented in Figure 1.

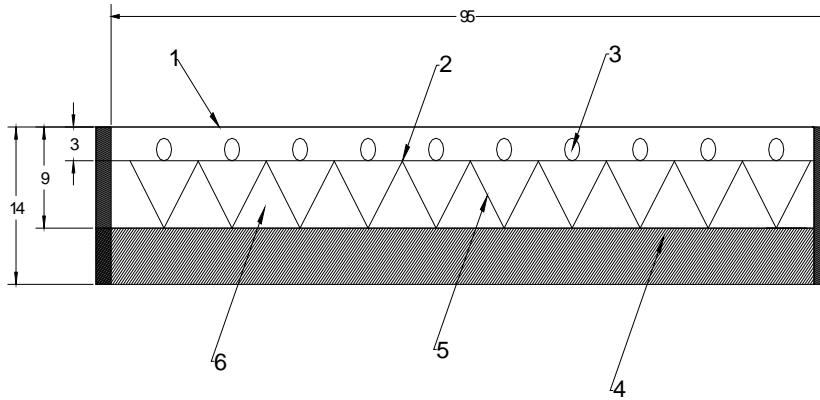


Fig. 1. Configuration of the HSC: 1 – glass cover; 2 – absorber plate; 3 – water pipes; 4 - Insulation; 5- triangular fins; 6- air channel. (All dimensions in cm).

The absorber plate covers the full aperture area of the collector, absorbs incident solar irradiance and conducts this heat to the working fluids. It can be observed that the absorber plate transfers heat both to the water through pipes located in the top, and to the air that flows through the bottom side. To enhance the heat transfer to the air, triangular fins were used. Due to the glass wool insulation, the amount of heat lost back to the surroundings is reduced to minimum. Table 1 illustrates the characteristics of the collector.

Tab.1. Characteristics of the HSC

HSC characteristics		
Water pipes	Number	10
	Diameter	7 mm
Absorber plate	Material	Aluminium
	Absorptivity	0.93
	Thickness	2 mm
Glass cover	Thickness	4 mm
Air side fins	Height	60 mm
	Angle	60 degrees
	Material	galvanized steel
	Thickness	1 mm
	Total air heat transfer area	8.16 m ²

3. THEORETICAL ANALYSIS

3.1. Thermal losses

When describing the actual heat loss at a certain temperature of the heat transfer media and at a certain ambient temperature, the overall top heat loss coefficient is [6]:

$$U_t = \left[\frac{N}{\left(\frac{c}{T_{pm}} \right) \left[\frac{T_{pm} - T_{amb}}{(N+f)} \right]^{0.33} + \frac{1}{h_\infty}} \right]^{-1} + \frac{\epsilon (T_{pm} + T_{amb}) (T_{pm}^2 + T_{amb}^2)}{\left[\nu_p + 0.05 N h_\infty (1 - \nu_p) \right]^{-1} + \left[\frac{2N+f-1}{\nu_c} \right]^{-N}} \quad (1)$$

where:

$$f = (1 + 0.04h_\infty + 0.0005h_\infty^2)(1 + 0.091N) \quad (2)$$

$$C = 365 (1 - 0.00883S + 0.0001298S^2) \quad (3)$$

- N Number of transparent covers.
 T_{pm} Mean absorber surface temperature (K).
 T_{amb} Temperature of ambient (K).
 h_∞ Wind heat transfer coefficient (W/ m² K).
 ν_p Emissivity of absorber surface for long wavelength radiation.
 ν_c Emissivity of cover for long wavelength radiation.
 S Slope or tilt angle.

The convection heat transfer coefficient from the glass cover to the ambient is calculated as a function of the wind speed and collector length [7]:

$$h_\infty = 8.6 \frac{V_\infty^{0.6}}{L_1^{0.4}} \quad (4)$$

where:

- V_∞ Free stream wind speed (m/s).
 L_1 Length of absorber plate (m).

The heat transfer coefficient for the heat loss from the bottom and edges of the collector can be obtained from [8]:

$$U_b = \frac{k_i}{u_b} \quad (5)$$

$$U_e = \frac{(L_1 + L_2)L_3k_i}{L_1L_2L_3u_e} \quad (6)$$

where:

- L_2 Width of absorber plate (m).
 L_3 Height of collector casing (m).
 k_i Insulation thermal conductivity (W/m K).
 u_b, u_e Thickness of bottom and edge insulation (m).

3.2. Heat transfer coefficient

The heat transfer coefficient between water and the tubes is calculated depending on the Nusselt number [9], with the following formula:

$$h_w = \frac{k_w}{d} Nu_w \quad (7)$$

where

k_w Thermal conductivity (W/m K).
 d Inner diameter of the tube (m).
 Nu_w Nusselt number.

$$Nu_w = 3.66 + \frac{0.0668 \left(\frac{d}{L_1}\right) Re_w \cdot Pr}{1 + 0.04 \left[\left(\frac{d}{L_1}\right) Re_w \cdot Pr\right]^{\frac{2}{3}}} \quad (8)$$

Also, the heat transfer coefficient in the air channel with triangular fins is [10]:

$$Nu_a = Nu_o + S \frac{b}{L_1} n, \left\{ \begin{array}{lll} Nu_o = 2.821 & S = 0.126 Re_a & Re_a < 2800 \\ Nu_o = 1.9 * 10^{-6} Re_a^{1.79} & S = 225 & 2800 < Re_a < 10^4 \\ Nu_o = 0.0302 Re_a^{0.74} & S = 0.242 Re_a^{0.74} & 10^4 < Re_a < 10^5 \end{array} \right\} \quad (9)$$

3.3. The useful heat gain

In steady state conditions, the performance of a hybrid flat-plate solar collector for water and air can be described by the useful heat gain from the collector, which is defined as the difference between the absorbed solar energy and the thermal loss of a collector. Finally the amount of useful heat gain (q_u) is calculated using the two following equations for water and air respectively [4]:

$$q_{u_w} = F_{R_w} A_p S - U_{L_w} A_p (T_{w_{in}} - T_{amb}) \quad (10)$$

$$q_{u_a} = F_{R_a} A_p S - U_{L_a} A_p (T_{a_{in}} - T_{amb}) \quad (11)$$

where:

q_{u_w} and q_{u_a} Rate of useful heat gain by water and air, respectively (W).
 F_{R_w} and F_{R_a} Collector heat removal factor for water and air, respectively.
 U_{L_w} and U_{L_a} Overall loss coefficient for water and air, respectively (W/ m²K).
 $T_{w_{in}}$ and $T_{a_{in}}$ Inlet water and air temperature, respectively (K).

The summation of the useful heat by air and water gives the total useful heat [11].

$$q_u = q_{u_w} + q_{u_a} \quad (12)$$

The prediction of collector performance requires knowledge of the absorbed solar energy by the collector absorber plate. The solar energy incident on a tilted collector consists of three different components: beam radiation, diffuse radiation, and ground-reflected radiation. The absorbed solar energy can be calculated from [7]:

$$S = I_T (\tau)_{av} \quad (13)$$

3.4. Collector efficiency

The thermal efficiency of the hybrid solar collector is defined as the ratio between the useful energy and the solar energy received by the collector. It can be obtained from the following equation [4]:

$$\eta = \frac{q_u}{A_p I_T} \quad (14)$$

4. Results and Discussions

In this study, the performance of HSC was investigated for the real conditions of operation in Timisoara, Romania (45° 44' 57" N / 21° 13' 38" E). The mathematical algorithm presented above was

implemented and solved in MATLAB. Fig. 2 shows the incoming irradiance and ambient temperature, used in the equations, whereas the collector inclination has been fixed at 35° in

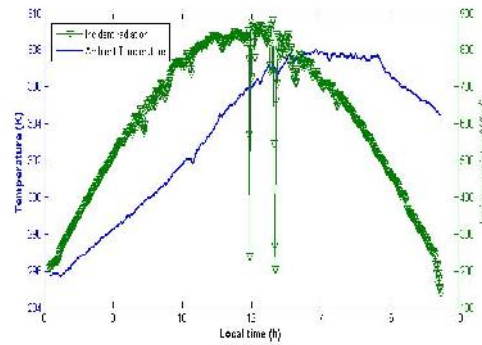


Fig. 2. Variation of ambient air temperature and solar radiation intensity on 01/July/ 2010.

The variation of water outlet, air outlet and plate mean temperatures, respectively, is shown in Fig. 3. The maximum water and air outlet temperature was 318 K and 311 K, respectively, results obtained for water inlet temperature fixed at 313 K.

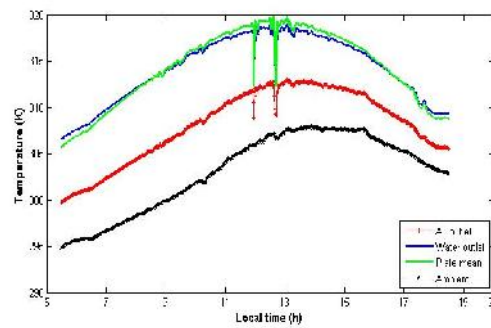


Fig. 3. Variation of working fluids outlet, plate mean and ambient air temperatures

Fig. 4 shows the useful heat gain for water and air during the day. It is noticeable that the heat gain for water is high when compared with the amount of heat gain in the air. Moreover, as the water heat delivery increases, heat delivery to the air decreases. The average value of the useful heat gain from sunrise to sunset is 420.3 W for water side and 110.4 W for air side.

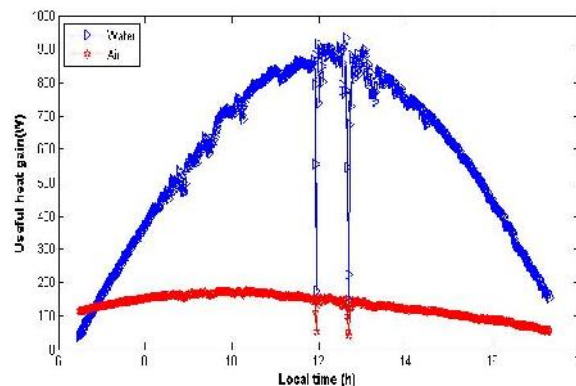


Fig.4. Useful heat gain for water and air

The collector efficiency follows the same trend as the useful heat flux. It increases until noon time and then decreases as shown in Fig. 5. The maximum efficiencies value equals 67.2 % and occurs at 12:48.

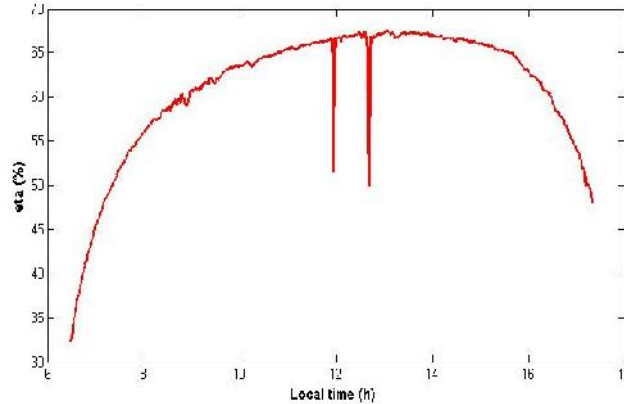


Fig.5. Collector efficiency variation with time.

5. CONCLUSION

Using hybrid solar collector for water and air heating increases system efficiency and decreases costs and required space. Average efficiency of the HSC is 57.4 %. It is more efficient than the single collector (single flow) mode due to the increased heat removal factor.

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