TESTING SEAL CAPACITY FOR CARBON STORAGE - AN EXPERIMENTAL APPROACH – (YEAR 2)

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PROJECT OBJECTIVES

- Re-Design an experimental set-up that allows for CO_2-Brine saturation prior to CO_2 injection
- Evaluate how the pre saturated CO_2-Brine mixture alters the seal capacity of mixed carbonate-siliciclastic samples.
- Run experiments to assess the amount of dissolution and possible breach of samples.

PROJECT RATIONALE

Carbon Capture Utilization and Storage (CCUS) will be a crucial component in reducing global CO_2 emissions in the coming years. Although the utilization of the captured CO_2 is an important component, it is likely that carbon capture with permanent storage will play a more important role in achieving faster, large-scale reduction of CO_2 emissions. Permanent storage requires natural reservoirs with a seal that resists dissolution by CO_2 saturated fluids. Many theoretical modeling studies dealing with such rock-fluid interactions have been published in recent years (André et al., 2007; Gaus et al., 2005; Yuan et al. 2019; amongst many others) but actual laboratory experiments are rare. Luquot and Gouze (2009) have shown that CO_2 injection triggered dissolution increased permeability, while inducing only minimal modification of porosity.

Changes in elastic properties resulting from the removal of the smaller particles (i.e., those with highest surface area), the creation of pits of dissolution on the grain surfaces, and changes at grain contacts such as grain welding caused by injection of CO_2 saturated solution have been reported by Vialle and Vanorio (2011).

This project aims to contribute to the experimental side of rock fluid interaction for carbon storage by building on past precipitation/dissolution experiments that we conducted in carbonate rocks (Weger et al., 2012) addressing the potential changes in the seal rocks resulting from CO_2 injections.

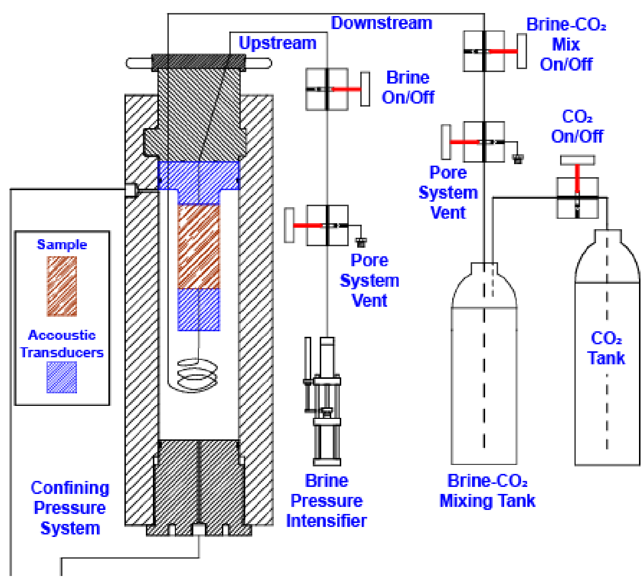

Figure 1: Set-up of proposed dissolution experiments using the Autolab 1000 which allows for pre-CO2-Brine saturation.

WORK PROPOSED

Phase 2 of the project is the design and testing of the experimental setup. The following workflow will be tested first on various rock samples in our New England Research Autolab 1000 system. We will be using a semi-closed system experimental design where pore fluid with predetermined geochemical composition is emplaced in the sample, CO_2 pressure is established, and only the existing fluid volume within the intensifiers (~5-10 pore volumes of the sample) will be used to create flow of fluid within the sample. This limited fluid injection will ensure that any chemical reaction of the fluid with the rock proceeds before the system reaches equilibrium with the host and the chemical reaction halts.

Monitoring of possible reactions that result in dissolution or mineralogy changes is a crucial element in the experiment. We plan to monitor physical changes with time series measurements of velocity. For this, the upstream pore fluid connection is closed. Five MPa pore pressure is installed at 60 MPa confining pressure, resulting in 55 MPa Ep. Time series measurement of VP and VS will be conducted for 72 hours (3 days) taking an acoustic measurement each hour.

After each three-day reaction time, the pore fluid will be extracted and chemically analyzed. In addition, all samples will be examined using SEM and CT scans before and after the experiment.

SIGNIFICANCE

This work will improve our understanding of how rock-fluid interaction changes microstructure and its elastic properties when CO_2 enriched fluids are injected in rocks with seal capacity. The proposed equipment re-design lis expected to produce better results as the previously used method. The quantification and high resolution image documentation of the resulting rock alterations will further enhance our understanding of the rate of changes resulting from CO_2 injection.

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