

DETERMINATION OF ONE UNKNOWN THERMAL COEFFICIENT OF A SEMI-INFINITE POROUS MATERIAL THROUGH A DESUBLIMATION PROBLEM WITH COUPLED HEAT AND MOISTURE FLOWS

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Abstract

An analytical model of freezing (desublimation) of moisture in a porous medium with an overspecified condition at the fixed face is considered in order to determinate one unknown thermal coefficient of a semiinfinite phase-change material. It can be considered as a free boundary problem in which coupled heat and moisture flows (Luikov type equations) with eight heat parameters. We obtain the explicit expression of the temperature of the two phases, the mass-transfer

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E. A. SANTILLAN MARCUS and D. A. TARZIA

potential in the humid region and the phase-change interface, and we also give formulae for the unknown coefficients and the necessary and sufficient conditions for the existence of a solution.

1. Nomenclature

$a_i = \frac{k_i}{\rho c_i}$	thermal diffusivity of the phase- i
a_m	moisture diffusivity
c_i	specific heat capacity of the phase- i
k_i	thermal conductivity of the phase- i
$\mathcal{K}_0 = \frac{r u_0}{c_2 (t_0 - t_v)}$	Kossovitch number
$\mathcal{L}u = \frac{a_m}{a_2}$	Luikov number
$\mathcal{P}n = \frac{\delta(t_0 - t_v)}{u_0}$	Posnov number
q_0	coefficient that characterizes the heat flux at $x = 0$
r	latent heat
s(t)	position of the evaporation front
t	time
T_i	temperature of the phase- i
t_0	initial temperature
t_s	temperature at the fixed face $x = 0$
t_v	phase-change temperature $(t_s < t_v < t_0)$
u	mass-transfer potential
u_0	initial mass-transfer potential

252

Greek symbols

$$\begin{split} \beta_{1} &= \frac{\mathcal{P}n}{\frac{1}{\mathcal{L}u} - 1}, \quad \beta_{2} = \frac{\sqrt{\pi}q_{0}}{\sqrt{c_{2}k_{2}\rho}(t_{0} - t_{v})}, \quad \beta_{3} = \frac{\sqrt{\pi}q_{0}}{\sqrt{c_{1}k_{1}\rho}(t_{v} - t_{s})}, \\ \beta_{4} &= \sqrt{\frac{c_{1}k_{2}}{c_{2}k_{1}}}, \quad \beta_{5} = \frac{u_{0}}{t_{0} - t_{v}} \left(\frac{1}{\mathcal{L}u} - 1\right), \quad \beta_{6} = \frac{c_{2}(t_{0} - t_{v})}{u_{0}}, \\ \beta_{7} &= \frac{1}{\lambda\mathcal{K}_{0}\sqrt{\pi}} \left[\beta_{2}e^{-(\beta_{4}\lambda)^{2}} - F_{1}(\lambda)\right] - 1 \text{ with } \lambda = \frac{1}{\beta_{4}} \operatorname{erf}^{-1}(\beta_{3}), \\ \beta_{8} &= \frac{\pi q_{0}^{2}}{c_{1}k_{1}(t_{v} - t_{s})^{2}}, \quad \beta_{9} = \left(\frac{t_{v} - t_{s}}{t_{0} - t_{v}}\right) \frac{\sqrt{c_{1}k_{1}}}{\sqrt{c_{2}k_{2}}}, \quad \beta_{10} = \frac{1}{\beta_{3}\sqrt{\mathcal{L}u}}, \\ \beta_{11} &= \frac{q_{0}}{ru_{0}} \sqrt{\frac{c_{1}}{\rho k_{1}}}, \quad \beta_{12} = \sqrt{\frac{k_{1}}{\rho a_{m}c_{1}}} \\ \rho & \text{ mass density} \\ \delta & \text{ thermal gradient coefficient} \end{split}$$

 λ $\;$ constant which characterizes the evaporation front

Subscripts

i = 1 freezing region

i = 2 region in which there are coupled heat and moisture flows

2. Introduction

Heat and mass transfer with phase change problems, taking place in a porous medium, such as evaporation, condensation, freezing, melting, sublimation and desublimation, has wide applications in separation processes, food technology, heat and mixture migration in solids and grounds, etc. Due to the non-linearity of the problem, solutions usually involve mathematical difficulties. Only a few exact solutions have been found for idealized cases (see [2-5], [7] and [18] for example). A large bibliography on free and moving boundary problems for heat-diffusion equation was given in [20]. Mathematical formulation of the heat and mass transfer in capillary porous bodies has been established by Luikov [10, 11], and it was recently considered in [6], [8], [14], [15], [23] and [25]. Two different models were presented by Mikhailov [12] for solving the problem of evaporation of liquid moisture from a porous medium. For the problem of freezing (desublimation) of humid porous half-space, Mikhailov also presented an exact solution in [13]. In [16] an exact solution was presented for temperature and moisture distributions in a humid porous half-space with a heat flux condition on the fixed face

x = 0 of the type $\frac{q_0}{\sqrt{t}}$. Many experimental investigations have been conducted for determining the unknown physical coefficients of the materials (for example, [9], [22] and [24]). In this paper we consider the model developed in [13-16] with an overspecified condition on the fixed face. This allows us to consider some thermal coefficients as unknown and to calculate them, under certain specified restrictions upon data, following the idea of [19] for one phase and of [17] for two phases.

Let us consider the flow of heat and moisture through a porous halfspace during freezing. The position of phase change front at time t is given by x = s(t). It divides the porous body into two regions. In the freezing region, 0 < x < s(t), there is no moisture movement and the temperature distribution is described by the heat equation:

$$\frac{\partial T_1}{\partial t}(x, t) = a_1 \frac{\partial^2 T_1}{\partial x^2}(x, t), \quad 0 < x < s(t), t > 0, \quad a_1 = \frac{k_1}{\rho c_1}.$$
 (1)

The region $s(t) < x < +\infty$ is humid capillary porous body in which there are coupled heat and moisture flows. The process is described by the well-known Luikov's system [11] for the case $\varepsilon = 0$ (ε is the phase conversion factor of liquid into vapor) given by

$$\frac{\partial T_2}{\partial t}(x,t) = a_2 \frac{\partial^2 T_2}{\partial x^2}(x,t), \quad x > s(t), t > 0, \quad a_2 = \frac{k_2}{\rho c_2}, \tag{2}$$

$$\frac{\partial u}{\partial t}(x,t) = a_m \frac{\partial^2 u}{\partial x^2}(x,t), \quad x > s(t), t > 0.$$
(3)

The initial distributions of temperature and moisture are uniform

$$\begin{cases} T_2(x, 0) = T_2(+\infty, t) = t_0, \\ u(x, 0) = u(+\infty, t) = u_0. \end{cases}$$
(4)

It is assumed that on the surface of the half-space, the temperature is constant

$$T_1(0, t) = t_s, \quad \text{where } t_s < t_v. \tag{5}$$

On the freezing front, there exists the continuity of the temperatures:

$$T_1(s(t), t) = T_2(s(t), t) = t_v, \quad t > 0,$$
(6)

where $t_v < t_0$. Heat and moisture balance at the freezing front yields

$$k_1 \frac{\partial T_1}{\partial x}(s(t), t) - k_2 \frac{\partial T_2}{\partial x}(s(t), t) = \rho r u(s(t), t) \frac{ds}{dt}(t), \quad t > 0,$$
(7)

$$\frac{\partial u}{\partial x}(s(t), t) + \delta \frac{\partial T_2}{\partial x}(s(t), t) = 0, \quad t > 0.$$
(8)

We also consider an overspecified condition on the fixed face x = 0 [1], considering that the heat flux depends on the time, like in [18]

$$k_1 \frac{\partial T_1}{\partial x} (0, t) = \frac{q_0}{\sqrt{t}}, \qquad (9)$$

where $q_0 > 0$ is a coefficient which characterizes the heat flux at the fixed face x = 0. The set of equations and conditions (1)-(9) is called *problem P*.

The goal of this paper is to find formulae for the determination of an unknown thermal coefficient chosen among ρ (mass density), a_m (moisture diffusivity), c_1 (specific heat of the frozen region), c_2 (specific heat of the humid region), k_1 (thermal conductivity of the frozen region), k_2 (thermal conductivity of the humid region), δ (thermal gradient coefficient), r (latent heat) together with the free boundary s(t), the temperatures T_1 and T_2 , and the moisture u.

3. Unknown Thermal Coefficients Through a Free Boundary Problem

Following [16], for the general case $\mathcal{L}u = \frac{a_m}{a_2} = \frac{\rho a_m c_2}{k_2} \neq 1$ we have

$$T_1(x, t) = t_v - \frac{\sqrt{\pi a_1} q_0}{k_1} \left[\operatorname{erf}\left(\frac{\lambda}{\sqrt{a_{12}}}\right) - \operatorname{erf}\left(\frac{x}{2\sqrt{a_1 t}}\right) \right],$$

$$0 < x < s(t), t > 0,$$
(10)

$$T_2(x, t) = t_v + \frac{t_0 - t_v}{1 - \operatorname{erf}(\lambda)} \left[\operatorname{erf}\left(\frac{x}{2\sqrt{a_2 t}}\right) - \operatorname{erf}(\lambda) \right], \quad x > s(t), t > 0, \quad (11)$$

$$u(x, t) = u_0 - u_0 \beta_1 \left\{ \operatorname{erf}\left(\frac{x}{2\sqrt{a_2 t}}\right) - \frac{\operatorname{exp}\left(\left(\frac{1}{\mathcal{L}u} - 1\right)\lambda^2\right) \left(1 - \operatorname{erf}\left(\frac{x}{2\sqrt{a_m t}}\right)\right)}{\sqrt{\mathcal{L}u}} \right\},$$

$$x > s(t), t > 0,$$
 (12)

$$s(t) = 2\lambda \sqrt{a_2 t} \tag{13}$$

with

$$\beta_1 = \frac{\mathcal{P}n}{\frac{1}{\mathcal{L}u} - 1},\tag{14}$$

where λ (the parameter that characterizes the free boundary) and the unknown thermal coefficient must satisfy the following system of transcendental equations:

$$\beta_2 \exp(-(\beta_4 \lambda)^2) - F_1(\lambda) = \mathcal{K}_0 \lambda \sqrt{\pi} \left\{ 1 - \beta_1 \left(1 - \frac{Q\left(\frac{\lambda}{\sqrt{\mathcal{L}u}}\right)}{Q(\lambda)} \right) \right\},$$
(15)

$$\operatorname{erf}\left(\beta_{4}\lambda\right) = \frac{1}{\beta_{3}}\tag{16}$$

$$\beta_2 = \frac{\sqrt{\pi}q_0}{\sqrt{c_2k_2\rho}(t_0 - t_v)}, \quad \beta_3 = \frac{\sqrt{\pi}q_0}{\sqrt{c_1k_1\rho}(t_v - t_s)}, \quad \beta_4 = \sqrt{\frac{c_1k_2}{c_2k_1}}, \quad (17)$$

where real functions F_1 and Q are defined by

$$F_1(x) = \frac{\exp(-x^2)}{(1 - \operatorname{erf}(x))}, \quad Q(x) = \sqrt{\pi}x \exp(x^2)(1 - \operatorname{erf}(x))$$
(18)

with properties

$$F_1(0) = 1, \quad F_1(+\infty) = +\infty, \quad F_1'(x) > 0, \quad \forall x > 0,$$
 (19)

$$Q(0) = 0, \quad Q(+\infty) = 1, \quad Q'(x) > 0, \quad \forall x > 0.$$
 (20)

Now, we give necessary and sufficient conditions in order to obtain solution to above system (15)-(16) and we also give formulae for the parameter λ of the phase-change interface and the unknown thermal coefficient in the following eight cases:

Case 1. Determination of the unknown coefficient δ (c.f. Theorem 2).

Case 2. Determination of the unknown coefficient r (c.f. Theorem 3).

Case 3. Determination of the unknown coefficient a_m (c.f. Theorem 4).

Case 4. Determination of the unknown coefficient ρ (c.f. Theorem 5).

Case 5. Determination of the unknown coefficient k_1 (c.f. Theorem 6).

Case 6. Determination of the unknown coefficient k_2 (c.f. Theorem 7).

Case 7. Determination of the unknown coefficient c_1 (c.f. Theorem 8).

Case 8. Determination of the unknown coefficient c_2 (c.f. Theorem 9).

First, we have the following preliminary lemma:

Lemma 1. We have

$$E(x) = \frac{m^2 - 1}{1 - \frac{Q(mx)}{Q(x)}} < 0, \quad \forall x > 0, \ \forall m > 0, \ m \neq 1$$

Proof. By using the properties (20) of the function Q, if we consider m > 1, we have that $m^2 - 1 > 0$ and $\frac{Q(mx)}{Q(x)} > 1$, then we obtain E(x) < 0. On the other hand, if 0 < m < 1, it follows that $m^2 - 1 < 0$ and $\frac{Q(mx)}{Q(x)} < 1$. Then, we also obtain E(x) < 0.

Theorem 2 (Determination of the unknown coefficient δ). If

$$\max\left(\frac{1}{\beta_3 \operatorname{erf}\left(\beta_4 \lambda_1\right)}; \frac{1}{\beta_2}\right) < 1, \tag{21}$$

with β_2 and β_3 are defined in (17), where $\lambda_1 > 0$ is the unique solution to equation

$$g_1(x) = g_2(x), \quad x > 0$$
 (22)

with

258

$$g_1(x) = F_1(x) + \mathcal{K}_0 \sqrt{\pi} x, \quad g_2(x) = \beta_2 e^{-(\beta_4 x)^2}$$
 (23)

and β_2 and β_4 are defined in (17), then there exists a unique solution to problem P which is given by (10)-(13), where λ and δ are given by:

$$\lambda = \frac{1}{\beta_4} \operatorname{erf}^{-1}\left(\frac{1}{\beta_3}\right) > 0, \tag{24}$$

$$\delta = \frac{\beta_5}{1 - \frac{Q\left(\frac{\lambda}{\sqrt{\mathcal{L}u}}\right)}{Q(\lambda)}} \left\{ 1 - \frac{1}{\lambda \mathcal{K}_0 \sqrt{\pi}} \left(\beta_2 e^{-(\beta_4 \lambda)^2} - F_1(\lambda)\right) \right\} > 0$$
(25)

with

$$\beta_5 = \frac{u_0}{t_0 - t_v} \left(\frac{1}{\mathcal{L}u} - 1 \right).$$
(26)

Proof. Considering (21), it follows that

$$\frac{1}{\beta_3} < 1 \tag{27}$$

and it easily follows that there exists a unique $\lambda > 0$ solution to (16) given by (24). Then, we replace λ in (15) and after some calculations we have (25). So we have to show that $\delta > 0$. First, using Lemma 1, we see that if we impose that

$$1 - \frac{1}{\lambda \mathcal{K}_0 \sqrt{\pi}} \left(\beta_2 e^{-(\beta_4 \lambda)^2} - F_1(\lambda) \right) < 0$$

we have $\delta > 0$. That is to say $F_1(\lambda) + \lambda \mathcal{K}_0 \sqrt{\pi} < \beta_2 e^{-(\beta_4 \lambda)^2}$. According to (23) this can be written as

$$g_1(\lambda) < g_2(\lambda). \tag{28}$$

The functions g_1 and g_2 have the following properties:

$$g_1(0^+) = 1, \quad g_1(+\infty) = +\infty, \quad g_1'(x) > 0, \quad \forall x > 0,$$

 $g_2(0^+) = \beta_2, \quad g_2(+\infty) = 0, \quad g_2'(x) < 0, \quad \forall x > 0.$

We can conclude that if

$$\beta_2 > 1, \tag{29}$$

then there exists a unique $\lambda_1 > 0$ such that $g_1(\lambda_1) = g_2(\lambda_1)$. Then (28) holds when

$$0 < \lambda < \lambda_1. \tag{30}$$

To finish the proof, we see that the needed hypotheses (27), (29) and (30) could be written in the following way: erf is an increasing function, so (30) is equivalent to $\operatorname{erf}(\beta_4 \lambda) < \operatorname{erf}(\beta_4 \lambda_1)$. So (27) and (30) could be resumed as

$$\frac{1}{\beta_3} < \operatorname{erf}(\beta_4 \lambda_1). \tag{31}$$

Then, thanks to (29) and (31), we have

$$1>\frac{1}{\beta_3 erf\left(\beta_4\lambda_1\right)}, \ 1>\frac{1}{\beta_2}\,,$$

that is to say, (21) holds.

260

E. A. SANTILLAN MARCUS and D. A. TARZIA

Theorem 3 (Determination of the unknown coefficient r). If

$$\frac{1}{\beta_3 \text{erf}(\beta_4 \lambda_2)} < 1, \tag{32}$$

where $\lambda_2 > 0$ is the unique solution to equation

$$F_1(x) = g_2(x), \quad x > 0 \tag{33}$$

with F_1 and g_2 given by (18) and (23), respectively, and β_3 and β_4 are defined in (17), then there exists a unique solution to problem P which is given by (10)-(13), where λ is given by (24) and r is given by:

$$r = \frac{\beta_6}{\lambda\sqrt{\pi}} \frac{\beta_2 \exp(-(\beta_4\lambda)^2) - F_1(\lambda)}{1 - \beta_1 \left(1 - \frac{Q\left(\frac{\lambda}{\sqrt{\mathcal{L}u}}\right)}{Q(\lambda)}\right)}$$
(34)

with

$$\beta_6 = \frac{c_2(t_0 - t_v)}{u_0}.$$
(35)

Proof. It easily follows in the same way as Theorem 1.

Theorem 4 (Determination of the unknown coefficient a_m). If

$$\beta_3 > 1 \tag{36}$$

and

$$0 < \frac{1}{\lambda \mathcal{K}_0 \sqrt{\pi}} \left[\beta_2 e^{-(\beta_4 \lambda)^2} - F_1(\lambda) \right] - 1 < \mathcal{P}_n, \qquad (37)$$

and β_3 and β_4 are defined in (17), then there exists a solution to problem P which is given by (10)-(13), where λ and a_m are given by:

$$\lambda = \frac{1}{\beta_4} \operatorname{erf}^{-1}\left(\frac{1}{\beta_3}\right) \text{ and } a_m = \frac{k_2}{\rho c_2} \frac{1}{\xi^2},$$
(38)

where ξ is a solution to equation

$$\mathcal{P}n \ g_3(x) = \beta_7, \quad x > 0 \tag{39}$$

$$g_{3}(x) = \left(1 - \frac{Q(\lambda x)}{Q(\lambda)}\right) \frac{1}{1 - x^{2}}, \quad \beta_{7} = \frac{1}{\lambda \mathcal{K}_{0} \sqrt{\pi}} \left[\beta_{2} e^{-(\beta_{4} \lambda)^{2}} - F_{1}(\lambda)\right] - 1.$$
(40)

Proof. In the same way as we did in Theorem 1, we get λ given by (24) by using the hypothesis (36). Then, replacing λ into (15) and denoting $x = \frac{1}{\sqrt{\mathcal{L}u}} = \sqrt{\frac{k_2}{\rho a_m c_2}} \in (0, 1) \cup (1, +\infty)$, we have the following equation $\mathcal{P}n \, g_3(x) = \frac{1}{\lambda \mathcal{K}_0 \sqrt{\pi}} \Big[\beta_2 e^{-(\beta_4 \lambda)^2} - F_1(\lambda) \Big] - 1,$

that is (39), where β_7 is a constant with respect to *x*. The function g_3 is a differentiable and continuous function into \mathbb{R}^+ which has the following properties:

$$g_{3}(0^{+}) = 1, \quad g_{3}(+\infty) = 0, \quad g_{3}(1^{-}) = g_{3}(1^{+}) = \frac{\lambda Q'(\lambda)}{2Q(\lambda)},$$
$$g'_{3}(1^{-}) = g'_{3}(1^{+}) = \frac{\lambda}{4Q(\lambda)} [\lambda Q''(\lambda) - Q'(\lambda)].$$

So we can say that if $0 < \beta_7 < \mathcal{P}n$, then we have at least one solution of equation (39) and then the unknown coefficient a_m is given by (38).

Theorem 5 (Determination of the unknown coefficient ρ). For any data, there exists at least one solution to problem P which is given by (10)-(13), the coefficient ρ is given by

$$\rho = \beta_8 \mathrm{erf}^2(\beta_4 \lambda) \tag{41}$$

with β_4 defined in (17) and

$$\beta_8 = \frac{\pi q_0^2}{c_1 k_1 (t_v - t_s)^2}$$

and the parameter $\lambda \in (0, \lambda_5)$ is a solution to equation

$$g_4(x) = g_5(x), \quad x > 0$$
 (42)

with

$$g_{4}(x) = \mathcal{P}n \frac{1 - \frac{Q\left(\frac{\beta_{10}x}{\operatorname{erf}(\beta_{4}x)}\right)}{Q(x)}}{1 - \frac{\beta_{10}^{2}}{\operatorname{erf}^{2}(\beta_{4}x)}} x,$$
(43)

$$g_5(x) = \frac{1}{\mathcal{K}_0 \sqrt{\pi}} \left[\beta_9 F_2(\beta_4 x) - F_1(x) \right] - x \tag{44}$$

with

$$F_2(x) = \frac{\exp(-x^2)}{\operatorname{erf}(x)},$$
 (45)

$$\beta_9 = \frac{t_v - t_s}{t_0 - t_v} \frac{\sqrt{c_1 k_1}}{\sqrt{c_2 k_2}}, \quad \beta_{10} = \frac{1}{\beta_3 \sqrt{\mathcal{L}u}}$$
(46)

and $\lambda_5 > 0$ is the unique solution to equation $g_5(x) = 0, x > 0$.

Proof. From (16) we have ρ as a function of λ , given by (41). Replacing ρ into (15) we have

$$\beta_9 F_2(\beta_4 \lambda) - F_1(\lambda) = \lambda \mathcal{K}_0 \sqrt{\pi} \left\{ 1 - \beta_1 \left(1 - \frac{Q\left(\frac{\lambda}{\sqrt{\mathcal{L}u}}\right)}{Q(\lambda)} \right) \right\}.$$

Taking into account $\frac{1}{\sqrt{\mathcal{L}u}} = \sqrt{\frac{k_2}{\rho a_m c_2}} = \frac{\beta_{10}}{\operatorname{erf}(\beta_4 \lambda)}$, we have

$$\frac{1}{\mathcal{K}_0 \sqrt{\pi}} \left[\beta_9 F_2(\beta_4 \lambda) - F_1(\lambda) \right]$$
$$= \lambda \left\{ 1 + \mathcal{P}n \frac{1 - \frac{Q\left(\frac{\beta_{10}\lambda}{\operatorname{erf}(\beta_4 \lambda)}\right)}{Q(\lambda)}}{1 - \frac{\beta_{10}^2}{\operatorname{erf}^2(\beta_4 \lambda)}} \right\}.$$

262

That is to say,

$$g_4(\lambda) = g_5(\lambda), \quad \lambda > 0. \tag{47}$$

The function g_5 is a strictly decreasing function with $g_5(0^+) = +\infty$ and $g_5(+\infty) = -\infty$, then g_5 has a unique positive zero λ_5 . The function $g_4 = g_4(x)$ is a continuous differentiable function which starts at zero with value 0, and when x tends to $+\infty$, it goes to $+\infty$ or to a non negative value. So we have that both functions will meet each other in at least one $\lambda \in (0, \lambda_5)$, and then we find a solution for equation (47) or equivalently equation (42).

Theorem 6 (Determination of the unknown coefficient k_1). If (29) holds and $\lambda_6 > 0$ is the solution to equation

$$g_6(x) = 1, \quad x > 0$$
 (48)

with

$$g_6(x) = \frac{1}{\beta_2} \left\{ F_1(x) + \mathcal{K}_0 \sqrt{\pi} x \left(1 - \beta_1 \left(1 - \frac{Q\left(\frac{x}{\sqrt{\mathcal{L}u}}\right)}{Q(x)} \right) \right) \right\},\tag{49}$$

where β_1 is defined in (14) and β_2 is defined in (17), then there exists a unique solution to problem P which is given by (10)-(13), the thermal coefficient k_1 is given by

$$k_1 = \frac{c_1 k_2}{c_2} \frac{\lambda^2}{\log\left(\frac{1}{g_6(\lambda)}\right)},\tag{50}$$

where $\lambda \in (0, \lambda_6)$ is the unique solution to equation

$$g_8(g_7(x)) = \frac{\beta_4}{\beta_3} x, \quad 0 < x < \lambda_6$$
 (51)

with

$$g_7(x) = \sqrt{\log(\frac{1}{g_6(x)})}, \quad 0 < x < \lambda_6,$$
 (52)

$$g_8(x) = x \operatorname{erf}(x). \tag{53}$$

Proof. From (15) we have

$$\exp(-(\beta_4 \lambda)^2) = g_6(\lambda) \tag{54}$$

and easily follows (50). Note that $k_1 > 0$ if and only if $0 < g_6(\lambda) < 1$. The function g_6 has the following properties:

$$g_6(0^+) = \frac{1}{\beta_2}, \quad g_6(+\infty) = +\infty, \quad g'_6(x) > 0, \quad \forall x > 0.$$
 (55)

Therefore, if we first consider (29) and then we get $\lambda_6 > 0$ as the solution to (48) it naturally follows that $k_1 > 0$ if we take $\lambda \in (0, \lambda_6)$. Then, we replace k_1 in (16) and after some computations we have that λ must verify the equation $\sqrt{\log(\frac{1}{g_6(\lambda)})} \operatorname{erf}(\sqrt{\log(\frac{1}{g_6(\lambda)})}) = \frac{\beta_4}{\beta_3} \lambda$, that is to say, equation (51), which has a unique solution by considering the properties of functions g_6 , g_7 and g_8 .

Theorem 7 (Determination of the unknown coefficient k_2). If (36) holds, and

$$\beta_{11} \frac{\exp(-\gamma_0^2)}{\gamma_0} - \frac{1}{\mathcal{K}_0} - \mathcal{P}n(1 - Q(\beta_{12}\gamma_0)) > 1,$$
(56)

where

$$\beta_{11} = \frac{q_0}{ru_0} \sqrt{\frac{c_1}{\rho k_1}} \text{ and } \beta_{12} = \sqrt{\frac{k_1}{\rho a_m c_1}}$$
 (57)

with

$$\gamma_0 = \operatorname{erf}^{-1}\left(\frac{1}{\beta_3}\right) > 0, \tag{58}$$

then there exists a solution to problem P which is given by (10)-(13), the thermal coefficient k_2 is given by

$$k_2 = \frac{k_1 c_2}{c_1} \frac{\gamma_0^2}{\lambda^2}$$
(59)

264

and the parameter $\lambda \in (\lambda_5,\,+\infty)$ is a solution to equation

$$g_9(x) = g_{10}(x), \quad x > 0 \tag{60}$$

with

$$g_{9}(x) = 1 - \frac{\mathcal{P}n x^{2}}{\beta_{12}^{2} \gamma_{0}^{2} - x^{2}} \left(1 - \frac{Q(\beta_{12} \gamma_{0})}{Q(x)} \right),$$
$$g_{10}(x) = \beta_{11} \frac{\exp(-\gamma_{0}^{2})}{\gamma_{0}} - \frac{1}{\mathcal{K}_{0} Q(x)},$$
(61)

where λ_{10} is the unique positive zero of $g_{10}(x)$.

Proof. Considering (36), from (16) easily follows (59). Replacing it into (15) we get

$$\beta_{11} \frac{\exp(-\gamma_0^2)}{\gamma_0} - \frac{1}{\mathcal{K}_0 Q(x)} = 1 - \frac{\mathcal{P}nx^2}{\beta_{12}^2 \gamma_0^2 - x^2} \left(1 - \frac{Q(\beta_{12}\gamma_0)}{Q(x)}\right).$$

So we have for λ equation (60). The functions g_9 and g_{10} have the following properties:

$$g_9(0^+) = 1, \quad g_9(+\infty) = 1 + \mathcal{P}n(1 - Q(\beta_{12}\gamma_0)) > 1,$$
 (62)

$$g_{10}(0^+) = -\infty, \quad g_{10}(+\infty) = \beta_{11} \frac{\exp(-\gamma_0^2)}{\gamma_0} - \frac{1}{\mathcal{K}_0}, \quad g'_{10}(x) > 0, \quad \forall x > 0.$$
 (63)

Then, if we consider $\beta_{11} \frac{\exp(-\gamma_0^2)}{\gamma_0} - \frac{1}{\mathcal{K}_0} > 1 + \mathcal{P}n(1 - Q(\beta_{12}\gamma_0))$, we know that there exists at least one $\lambda > 0$ solution of equation (60). It is easy to see that $\lambda > \lambda_{10}$, where λ_{10} is the unique solution of

$$g_{10}(x) = 0, \quad x > 0.$$
 (64)

Theorem 8 (Determination of the unknown coefficient c_1). If

$$\max\left\{\frac{1}{\beta_2}; \frac{1}{2\beta_3\beta_4\lambda_6}\right\} < 1 \tag{65}$$

 β_2 , β_3 and β_4 are defined in (17) and λ_6 is the solution of equation (48), then there exists a unique solution to problem P which is given by (10)-(13), the thermal coefficient c_1 is given by

$$c_1 = \frac{k_1 c_2}{k_2} \frac{\log\left(\frac{1}{g_6(\lambda)}\right)}{\lambda^2},\tag{66}$$

where $\lambda \in (0, \lambda_6)$ is the unique solution to equation

$$g_{11}(g_7(x)) = \frac{1}{\beta_3 \beta_4 \sqrt{\pi x}}, \quad 0 < x < \lambda_6$$
(67)

with g_7 defined in (52), and g_{11} is defined by

$$g_{11}(x) = \frac{\operatorname{erf}(x)}{x}.$$
 (68)

Proof. As in Theorem 6, from (15) we have (54) and easily follows (66). Note that $c_1 > 0$ if and only if $0 < g_6(\lambda) < 1$. Therefore, if we first consider (65), condition (29) holds and then we get $\lambda_6 > 0$ as the solution to equation (48); it naturally follows that $c_1 > 0$ if we take $\lambda \in (0, \lambda_6)$. Replacing (66) into (16) we have

$$\frac{\mathrm{erf}\!\left(\!\sqrt{\mathrm{log}\!\left(\frac{1}{g_6(\lambda)}\right)}\right)}{\sqrt{\mathrm{log}\!\left(\frac{1}{g_6(\lambda)}\right)}} = \frac{1}{\beta_3\beta_4\sqrt{\pi\lambda}}\,,$$

that is, λ must verify equation (67). Considering (29) and λ_6 as before, the function g_7 , defined over the domain [0, λ_6), has the following properties:

$$g_7(0^+) = \sqrt{\log(\beta_2)}, \quad g_7(\lambda_6^-) = 0, \quad g_7'(x) < 0, \quad \forall x > 0.$$
 (69)

The function g_{11} has the following properties:

$$g_{11}(0^+) = \frac{2}{\sqrt{\pi}}, \quad g_{11}(+\infty) = 0, \quad g'_{11}(x) < 0, \quad \forall x > 0.$$
 (70)

Furthermore, the function $g_{11} \circ g_7$ is an increasing function. Then we can assure that if

$$g_{11}(g_7(\lambda_6)) = \frac{2}{\sqrt{\pi}} > \frac{1}{\beta_3 \beta_4 \sqrt{\pi} \lambda_6}$$

$$\tag{71}$$

which is included in hypothesis (65), then there exists a unique $\lambda \in (0, \lambda_6)$ such that (67) holds.

Theorem 9 (Determination of the unknown coefficient c_2). If

$$\max\left\{\frac{1}{\beta_3}; \frac{\gamma_0 \exp(\gamma_0^2)}{\beta_{11}}\right\} < 1, \tag{72}$$

where β_3 is defined in (17), β_{11} is defined in (57) and γ_0 is defined in (58), then there exists a solution to problem P which is given by (10)-(13), the thermal coefficient c_2 is given by

$$c_2 = \frac{c_1 k_2}{k_1} \frac{\lambda^2}{\gamma_0^2}$$
(73)

and the parameter $\lambda \in (0, \lambda_{12})$ is a solution to equation

$$g_9(x) = g_{12}(x), \quad x > 0 \tag{74}$$

with

$$g_{12}(x) = \beta_{11} \frac{\exp(-\gamma_0^2)}{\gamma_0} - \frac{\beta_4^2 \mathcal{K}_0}{\gamma_0^2 \sqrt{\pi}} x F_1(x), \tag{75}$$

 g_9 was defined in (61) and $\lambda_{12} > 0$ is the unique solution to equation

$$g_{12}(x) = 0, \quad x > 0.$$
 (76)

Proof. Considering (72), from (16) we have c_2 as function of λ given by (73). Replacing it into (15), after some computations we have that λ must verify equation (74). The function g_{12} has the following properties:

$$g_{12}(0^+) = \beta_{11} \frac{\exp(-\gamma_0^2)}{\gamma_0}, \quad g_{12}(+\infty) = -\infty, \quad g'_{12}(x) < 0.$$
 (77)

268

Then, taking into account (62), we have that if $\beta_{11} \frac{\exp(-\gamma_0^2)}{\gamma_0} > 1$ (which is verified thanks to (72)), there exists at least one $\lambda \in (0, \lambda_{12})$ that verifies equation (74), where $\lambda_7 > 0$ is the unique solution to equation (76).

4. Conclusions

We considered an analytical model of freezing (desublimation) of moisture in a porous medium with an overspecified condition at the fixed face in order to determinate one unknown thermal coefficient of a semiinfinite phase-change material. This model has Luikov type equations with eight heat parameters, and it can be considered as a free boundary problem in which coupled heat and moisture flows. We obtained the explicit expression of the temperature of the two phases T_1 and T_2 , the mass-transfer potential in the humid region u and the phase-change interface s(t), and we also gave formulae for the unknown thermal coefficients chosen among ρ (mass density), a_m (moisture diffusivity), c_1 (specific heat of the frozen region), c_2 (specific heat of the humid region), k_1 (thermal conductivity of the frozen region), k_2 (thermal conductivity of the humid region), δ (thermal gradient coefficient), r (latent heat), together with the necessary and sufficient conditions for the existence of such a solution.

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270 E. A. SANTILLAN MARCUS and D. A. TARZIA

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