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Structure performance relationship of a foaming surfactant used as an oil displacement agent for enhanced oil recovery application

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CO₂ has the ability to produce foam when in contact with suitable surfactants. In the presence of an adequately stable foam CO₂ has more opportunity to invade by-passed oil and capillary trapped oil in the pores of an oil reservoir. As a result more oil can be recovered. It is essential that the foam possesses the endurance and resistance against oil. The performance of the CO₂ foam for oil displacement is influenced by rock and fluid properties and interactions, rock heterogeneity, injection strategy, and type and structure of the surfactant. A structure-performance relationship of the foaming surfactant is emphasized in this report. A review of the CO₂ foam performance and experiments conducted to identify key success factors of a superior CO₂ foam for enhanced oil recovery is elaborated. A surfactant which has an affinity for CO₂ and water and at the same time repels oil is desired. Knowledge of the CO₂- surfactant solution-oil interaction is essential to the design of a successful CO₂ foam surfactant.

Biography

I.M. Tan has completed his PhD in 1989 from Leeds University, England. He has served several PETRONAS outfit as a quality control engineer, technical service engineer and business planning and development capacities. After 13 years in PETRONAS, he joined the Universiti Teknologi PETRONAS, UTP. He has published over 60 journal papers and conference proceedings. He is a lead research in surfactants in UTP.

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