

ELECTRIC SUBMERSIBLE PUMPING SYSTEM WITH SUBMERSIBLE MOTOR HAVING SEALED STATOR

BACKGROUND

[0001] Following discovery of a desired subterranean resource, e.g. oil, natural gas, or other desired subterranean resources, well drilling and production systems often are employed to access and extract the resource or resources. For example, a wellbore may be drilled into a hydrocarbon bearing reservoir and then a pumping system may be deployed downhole. The pumping system is operated to pump oil and/or other fluids to the surface for collection when the natural drive energy of the reservoir is not strong enough to lift the well fluids to the surface. The pumping system may comprise an electric submersible pumping system having a submersible centrifugal pump powered by a separate submersible electric motor.

SUMMARY

[0002] In general, the present disclosure provides a system and methodology for pumping fluids. According to an embodiment, an electric submersible pumping system is constructed with an outer housing which contains an integrated pump and motor. For example, the pump may comprise an impeller disposed within a stator of the motor. A tube is disposed along an interior of the stator, e.g. along the interior of stator laminations, to define a passage extending longitudinally through the stator. The tube may be sealed with respect to the stator to prevent contact between the stator and a fluid moving along the passage. The integration of the pump and the motor enables elimination of various components of traditional electric submersible pumping systems to thus provide a simpler, protected, and more compact system for pumping fluids.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0003] Certain embodiments will hereafter be described with reference to the accompanying drawings, wherein like reference numerals denote like elements. It should be understood, however, that the accompanying figures illustrate various implementations described herein and are not meant to limit the scope of various technologies described herein, and:

[0004] Figure 1 is a schematic illustration of an example of a well system including an electric submersible pumping (ESP) system having a tube protecting a submersible motor, according to an embodiment of the disclosure;

[0005] Figure 2 is a cross-sectional illustration of an example of a portion of an integrated pump and motor of the ESP system in which a tube is positioned along the stator to protect and seal the stator, according to an embodiment of the disclosure;

[0006] Figure 3 is a cross-sectional illustration of another example of an integrated pump and motor of the ESP system having a protective tube, according to an embodiment of the disclosure;

[0007] Figure 4 is a cross-sectional illustration of another example of an integrated pump and motor of the ESP system having a protective tube, according to an embodiment of the disclosure;

[0008] Figure 5 is a cross-sectional illustration of another example of an integrated pump and motor of the ESP system having a protective tube, according to an embodiment of the disclosure;

[0009] Figure 6 is a cross-sectional illustration of another example of an integrated pump and motor of the ESP system having a protective tube, according to an embodiment of the disclosure;

[0010] Figure 7 is a cross-sectional illustration of another example of an integrated pump and motor of the ESP system having a protective tube, according to an embodiment of the disclosure;

[0011] Figure 8 is a cross-sectional illustration taken through an axis of an embodiment of the integrated pump and motor to illustrate magnetic lines, according to an embodiment of the disclosure;

[0012] Figure 9 is a cross-sectional illustration of another example of an integrated pump and motor of the ESP system having a protective tube, according to an embodiment of the disclosure;

[0013] Figure 10 is a cross-sectional illustration of another example of an integrated pump and motor of the ESP system having a protective tube, according to an embodiment of the disclosure;

[0014] Figure 11 is a cross-sectional illustration taken through an axis of another embodiment of the integrated pump and motor to illustrate magnetic lines, according to an embodiment of the disclosure; and

[0015] Figure 12 is a cross-sectional illustration taken through an axis of another embodiment of the integrated pump and motor to illustrate magnetic lines, according to an embodiment of the disclosure.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0016] In the following description, numerous details are set forth to provide an understanding of some illustrative embodiments of the present disclosure. However, it will be understood by those of ordinary skill in the art that the system and/or methodology may be practiced without these details and that numerous variations or modifications from the described embodiments may be possible.

[0017] The disclosure herein generally relates to a system and methodology for pumping fluids, e.g. well fluids. According to an embodiment, an electric submersible pumping system is constructed for deployment in a borehole or other suitable location to pump desired fluids. The electric submersible pumping system may be constructed with an outer housing containing an integrated pump and motor. For example, the pump may comprise an impeller disposed within a stator of the motor. The integration of the pump and the motor enables elimination of various components of traditional electric submersible pumping systems to thus provide a simpler and more compact system for pumping fluids.

[0018] According to an embodiment of the integrated pump and motor, the stator is disposed within the outer housing and comprises a stack of stator laminations having an open interior extending longitudinally through the stack. The stator, e.g. the stack of stator laminations, is protected by a tube deployed along its interior and having an internal passage. The tube may be constructed to provide a sealed stator environment to prevent exposure of the stator laminations to undesirable fluids, e.g. pumped well fluids, which could otherwise contact the stator and cause failures. The tube may be employed as a sealing mechanism for use with a variety of motors, including integrated motors, traditional induction motors, permanent magnet motors, or other suitable motors to increase system reliability. The stator may further comprise a plurality of slots disposed externally of the tube to receive maintenance wire.

[0019] An impeller is disposed within the stator and may comprise an impeller body combined with a magnet. For example, the impeller may comprise the impeller body combined with a magnetic component positioned about the impeller body and a permanent magnet. By way of example, the permanent magnet may be mounted about the magnetic component. In this embodiment, the impeller is positioned within the passage extending through the tube located within the stack of stator laminations. In various embodiments, the integrated pump and motor comprises a stack of impellers and corresponding diffusers located within the stator.

[0020] For well applications, the electric submersible pumping system may be used for lifting well fluids to, for example, a surface location. Embodiments of the electric submersible pumping system integrate an electrical motor with a pump to provide a simple pumping system of convenient size. In some embodiments, the electrical motor may be constructed with a stator having a magnetic core and a winding sealed from the ambient environment or made of materials which are not susceptible to the ambient environment. In various embodiments, centrifugal pump stages may be installed within an inside diameter of the stator.

[0021] By way of example, the centrifugal pump stages may comprise stationary diffusers which may be fixed to the stator and/or tube and located within the inner passage of the tube and stator. In some embodiments, the stationary diffusers may be positioned within the stator and fixed along a stationary shaft. The impellers may be equipped with components that generate torque while being exposed to a rotating magnetic field resulting by applying electric power to the stator. Examples of components that generate torque include permanent magnets, squirrel cage rotors, switched reluctance or synchronous reluctance rotors, or other suitable torque generating components. In some embodiments, the impellers may be installed on a rotating shaft in packs and the packs may be radially stabilized by radial fluid film bearings installed in corresponding, stationary diffusers.

[0022] The stator may be constructed with multi-phase winding and may be fed with AC voltage to generate a rotational magnetic field within the stator inner diameter. The rotating magnetic field interacts with the torque generating components of the impellers, thus causing the impellers to rotate and to thus pump fluid through the integrated pump and motor.

[0023] Referring generally to Figure 1, an embodiment of an electric submersible pumping system 20 is illustrated as deployed downhole into a borehole 22, e.g. a wellbore, for production of desired fluids, e.g. oil. Electric submersible pumping system 20 may comprise a variety of components depending on the particular application or environment in which it is used. By way of example, the electric submersible pumping system 20 may comprise a pumping section 24 having an outer housing 26 containing an integrated pump and motor 28. The integrated pump and motor 28 effectively combines a pump 30 and a motor 32 within the outer housing 26 to provide a simple, compact structure for pumping fluids, e.g. well fluids. The pump 30 of integrated pump and motor 28 may comprise floater stages, compression stages, or modular compression with impeller flow passages oriented to provide radial flow, mixed flow, axial flow, or other desired flow patterns through the integrated pump and motor 28.

[0024] In the illustrated example, components of the motor 32, e.g. the stator, may be protected by a tube 33. As described in greater detail below, the tube 33 may be positioned along an interior of the stator of motor 32 to protect stator laminations from exposure to well fluids being pumped through the integrated pump and motor 28. The tube 33 may be constructed as a sealing mechanism to provide a sealed environment for the stator.

[0025] Depending on the type of motor 32 or integrated pump and motor 28, the tube 33 may have a variety of structures and shapes which provide a conduit surrounding the region of fluid flow through the integrated pump and motor 28. By way of example, the tube 33 may be cylindrical in shape or it may have a variety of other cross-sectional shapes, e.g. rectangular shapes or custom shapes to accommodate various motor

components. The tube 33 also may be a thin, single long cylindrical section or a plurality of short sections joined together (and/or joined to other system components) via welding or other sealing techniques, e.g. O-rings. The ends of the tube 33 also may be sealed to components of the integrated pump and motor 28 via welding, O-ring seals, or other suitable sealing techniques. In some embodiments, the tube 33 may be sealed to the head and the base of the corresponding equipment section.

[0026] In the embodiment illustrated, the borehole 22 is in the form of a wellbore drilled into a geological formation 34 which contains a desirable fluid 36, e.g. a production fluid such as oil. The borehole 22 may be lined with a tubular casing 38 and perforations 40 may be formed through casing 38 to enable flow of fluids between the surrounding formation 34 and the borehole/wellbore 22. The electric submersible pumping system 20 may be deployed down into borehole 22 via a conveyance system 42. By way of example, the conveyance system 42 may comprise tubing 44 (e.g. coiled tubing, production tubing) or cable coupled with pumping section 24 via a connector 46.

[0027] Electric power may be provided to the motor 32 of pumping section 24 via a power cable 48. This allows the motor 32 to power pump 30, as described in greater detail below, so as to draw in fluid 36 through a suitable pump intake 50. The pump 30 may comprise an impeller or impellers which are rotated by an electromagnetic interaction with a rotating magnetic field generated by motor 32 to produce the fluid 36 through the integrated pump and motor 28. In well applications, the fluid 36 may be produced up through tubing 44 (or along an annulus surrounding tubing 44) to a desired collection location which may be at a surface 52 of the earth.

[0028] According to an embodiment, the pump 30 may be a multi-stage centrifugal pump. Each stage may comprise an impeller working in cooperation with a stationary diffuser. The impellers are driven by the magnetic field of the motor 32 such that vanes of the rotating impellers convert the driver/motor energy to kinetic energy which is applied to the fluid. The fluid is thus thrown outward by the impeller vanes in a direction away from the center of the impeller. The fluid discharged from the impeller

may first contact the inner wall of the adjacent, cooperating diffuser. In some embodiments, the impeller may be rotatably mounted within the cooperating diffuser. The cooperating diffusers direct the flowing fluid from one impeller to the next until the flowing fluid is discharged from the pumping section 24. In some downhole centrifugal pumping systems, the number of pump stages may be determined by the total dynamic head (TDH), stage type performance characteristics, and desired flow rate. For deep wells where high TDH is desired, the overall pumping system may comprise a plurality of the pumping sections 24 connected in tandem hydraulically and electrically.

[0029] In embodiments of the disclosure, a motor stator and hydraulic centrifugal pump are combined in a single assembly. The stator may be represented by a laminated magnetic core with multi-phase winding distributed in slots. The winding may be fed by multi-phase AC voltage creating a rotating magnetic field over the space within the stator inner diameter (ID). The stator ID may be sealed from the ambient environment by a corrosion and erosion resistant material of cylindrical shape (e.g. a “can”). In some embodiments of the disclosure, the stator may be constructed from materials resistant to the ambient environment or from a stack of lamination packs individually sealed from the ambient environment by isolating material, e.g. plastic. According to an arrangement, magnetic lamination packs may alternate with non-magnetic packs located adjacent to non-torque producing components of the pump, e.g. diffusers, to reduce power loss in the magnetic core of the stator.

[0030] According to an embodiment, non-magnetic stationary diffusers may be installed inside the stator ID. The non-magnetic diffusers may be fixed at desired positions within the stator. For example, the non-magnetic diffusers may be fixed tangentially by, for example, engagement of locking keys with corresponding key grooves located along the stator ID. In some applications, the stack of diffusers may be compressed from the ends of the stack. Furthermore, some embodiments may lock the non-magnetic diffusers along a stationary shaft via keys or other locking mechanisms. In some embodiments, each diffuser may have a two-piece construction in which one part has vanes made of magnetic material and the other part, adjacent to the torque producing

impeller, is made of a non-magnetic material, e.g. ceramic or other erosion and corrosion resistant material.

[0031] Each impeller installed inside the stator ID may be constructed of magnetic or non-magnetic material. Torque generating components or subassemblies such as permanent magnets, squirrel cage rotors, switched reluctance or synchronous reluctance rotors, or other torque generating components may be fixed on the impeller or formed as integral parts of the impeller. For example, permanent magnets or other torque generating components may be fixed in the front seal area (front skirt) or in the balance ring area of each impeller. The torque generating components are positioned to interact with the rotating magnetic field of the stator and to generate torque for driving the impellers. Rotating impellers and stationary diffusors are able to transform rotational kinetic energy into the hydrodynamic energy of the fluid flow.

[0032] In some embodiments of the disclosure, the entire impeller or the vanes of the impeller may be made of a magnetic material. By way of example, the entire impeller or portions of the impeller may be constructed from magnetic steel or other suitable magnetic material. The magnetic impeller is thus able to interact electromagnetically with a rotating magnetic field of the stator such that the impeller functions simultaneously as the impeller of centrifugal pump and the rotor of the motor.

[0033] Each impeller may have its own axial and radial support in the form of a bearing made of wear resistant material, e.g., a ceramic or carbide material. The plurality of impellers may be assembled collectively or in separate packs. Additionally, the entire group of impellers or packs of the impellers may be assembled in a floater configuration or in compression. In some applications, the impellers may be rotated about or with a corresponding central shaft. At least some of these configurations may allow for increases in rotating torque within pump stages to prevent the pump from getting stuck due to abrasives.

[0034] Embodiments of the disclosure allow for the elimination of traditional ESP components such as the motor protector, intake, separate pump and motor sections, shafts, couplings, and the motor lead extension. It should be noted, however, the sealing mechanism, e.g. tube, may be used with various traditional induction motors, permanent magnet motors, or other traditional ESP motors to provide a sealed environment which protects the stator.

[0035] Embodiments of the disclosure also may allow for the overall system efficiency to remain at, or be higher than, the level of conventional ESP system efficiency due to the use of high efficiency electrical machine design with high-efficiency hydraulic pump design without compromising either electromagnetic or hydraulic design. Shaft-less design configurations may allow for pump stages with the head of, and higher efficiency than, a conventional centrifugal pump stage due to an increased working area. Pump and motor integration into a single section may reduce the number of parts and shorten the total length of the ESP. A reduction in the number of sections also may minimize installation time at the wellsite and reduce the probability of failure caused by human error, thus increasing reliability. Elimination of torque transmission components such as shafts and couplings may allow flexible connections between integrated pumping sections which, in turn, can facilitate use of the electric submersible pumping system 20 in wells having high dogleg severity.

[0036] Referring generally to the embodiments of Figures 2 and 3, at least a portion of electric submersible pumping system 20 is illustrated. In this example, the pumping section 24 comprises integrated pump and motor 28 disposed within outer housing 26. The integrated pump and motor 28 comprises pump 30 which may be in the form of a centrifugal pump having at least one impeller 54 and at least one diffuser 56. In these types of embodiments, the at least one impeller 54 may comprise various styles of impeller vanes for moving fluid upon impeller rotation. However, pump 30 and impeller 54 may be constructed in various other types of configurations. In the illustrated embodiment, the pump 30 comprises a plurality of impellers 54 positioned in cooperation with corresponding diffusers 56 to create pump stages which are surrounded by tube 33.

As described in greater detail below, the impellers 54 may be magnetic impellers and the diffusers 56 may be non-magnetic diffusers.

[0037] During operation, the plurality of impellers 54 receives fluid, e.g. well fluid through an intake region 58 (which receives fluid from system pump intake 50) and directs the fluid to the next sequential diffuser 56 which, in turn, directs the fluid to the next sequential impeller 54. The fluid flows within tube 33 along a flow path 60 through sequential impellers 54 and diffusers 56 until being discharged through a discharge head 62. The flow path 60 may be in the form of a fluid conduit for transporting fluid from a first side to a second side of each impeller 54 and from a first side to a second side of each diffuser 56 sequentially. In this example, each impeller 54 further comprises a magnetic component 64 which may be disposed at various positions within the impeller 54 or along the exterior of impeller 54. By way of example, each magnetic component 64 may be annular in shape and have the form of a ring or cylinder disposed about a body 66 of the impeller 54.

[0038] As illustrated, each impeller 54 also may comprise a magnet 68, e.g. a permanent magnet, positioned at an external location with respect to the impeller body 66. In the embodiment of Figure 2, the magnet 68 is configured as a rotor magnet mounted along each or at least some of the impellers 54. The rotor magnet 68 may have a variety of ring configurations or other configurations selected to accommodate a given integrated pump and motor construction. By way of further example, each magnet 68 may be annular in shape and in the form of a ring or cylinder positioned around the corresponding magnetic component 64, as illustrated in the embodiment of Figure 3.

[0039] Functionally, the magnetic component 64 and magnet 68 may be considered part of the motor 32. Because the magnetic components 64 and magnets 68 of impellers 54 are fixed to the impeller bodies 66, motor 32 is able to rotate the impellers 54 so as to pump fluid from intake 58 and out through discharge head 62. It should be noted the magnetic component 64 and magnet 68 may be combined with the

corresponding impeller body 66 on an individual impeller 54 or on groups of impellers 54 selected from the overall group of impellers 54.

[0040] In this example, the motor 32 comprises a stator 70 disposed along the interior of outer housing 26. The tube 33 is disposed along an interior of the stator 70 and serves to provide a sealing mechanism which protects the stator 70 against entry of well fluids which could otherwise cause damage to the stator 70. In this example, the tube 33 defines a central passage 71, e.g. a bore, located within tube 33 and thus within stator 70. The stator 70 may be annular in form and may be constructed with a magnetic core and/or with materials having desired magnetic or electric anisotropy.

[0041] In some embodiments, the stator 70 is constructed with a plurality of stacked stator laminations 72. The tube 33 may be disposed along an interior of the plurality of laminations 72 to similarly define passage 71 extending longitudinally through the stator 70. The tube 33 may be sealed with respect to the stator laminations 72 to prevent contact between the stator laminations 72 and a fluid, e.g. well fluid, moving along the passage 71.

[0042] A magnet wire 74 (or magnet wires) may extend through the stator 70 in a generally lengthwise direction. By way of example, magnet wire passages, e.g. slots, may be formed longitudinally through the stator 70, e.g. through the stack of stator laminations 72, and the magnet wire 74 may be fed through the magnet wire passages to form a stator coil. Longitudinal ends of the magnet wire may be contained by coil end encapsulations 76, e.g. by a coil end encapsulation 76 located at each end of the stacked stator laminations 72. In some embodiments, the ends of tube 33 may be connected and sealed to the coil end encapsulations 76 to enclose the stator in a sealed environment between tube 33 and outer housing 26. By way of example the ends of tube 33 may be sealed via O-rings, welded, or otherwise sealably attached to encapsulations 76 or other suitable structures to form the sealed environment for protecting stator 70.

[0043] The non-magnetic diffusers 56 may be held in stationary positions with respect to stator 70. By way of example, each diffuser 56 may be locked to the surrounding stator 70 via a key or other protuberance 78 of each diffuser 56 engaging a corresponding recess 80 located along an inside diameter of the stator 70. Consequently, the non-magnetic diffusers 56 are prevented from rotating during rotation of impellers 54 while operating the integrated pump and motor 28.

[0044] To cause operation of motor 32 and pumping of fluid via pump 30, electricity is supplied to magnet wire 74 via an electric cable 82 coupled with magnet wire 74 via a cable connector 84. Electric cable 82 may be the same as or part of overall power cable 48. The rotating magnetic field created by electricity flowing along the winding created by coiled magnet wire 74 extends to the inside diameter of stator 70 and interacts with magnetic impellers 54, e.g. with magnetic components 64 and corresponding magnets 68.

[0045] For example, the magnets 68 may be oriented to provide appropriately positioned polarity along the outer surface of the impellers 54. In this manner, the stator 70, magnetic components 64, and corresponding magnets 68 function as an electric motor and cause rotation of the impellers 54. The structure of impellers 54 enables the impellers 54 to function as a rotor of the motor 32 while also facilitating pumping of fluid along pump 30 within tube 33. According to at least some embodiments described herein, the magnetic gap between the stator 70 and the magnets 68 is constant and continuous. In the example illustrated in Figure 3, the impellers 54 may rotate independently with respect to each other.

[0046] Referring generally to Figure 4, another embodiment of pumping section 24 is illustrated. In this example, the integrated pump and motor 28 comprises a stationary shaft 86 extending generally along a central axis of the pumping section 24. The shaft 86 is fixed in a stationary position within housing 26 via shaft fixators 88 coupled between, for example, the shaft 86 and housing 26 (or between the shaft 86 and stator 70). In this example, the stationary, non-magnetic diffusers 56 are locked to

stationary shaft 86. However, the impellers 54 may freely rotate about the shaft 86. In some embodiments, the impellers 54 may rotate about shaft 86 independently with respect to each other or in desired groups.

[0047] In this embodiment, stator 70 may again be protected by tube 33 and may comprise a winding of magnet wire 74 which is supplied with electricity via electric cable 82. The resulting magnetic field is used to rotate impellers 54 which cause the inflow of fluid through intake 58 and the discharge of fluid through discharge head 62. The flowing fluid, e.g. well fluid, passes through the plurality of non-magnetic diffusers 56 and magnetic impellers 54 before being discharged through discharge head 62.

[0048] Referring generally to Figure 5, another embodiment of pumping section 24 is illustrated. In this example, the non-magnetic diffusers 56 include flanges 90 which extend to an inside surface of outer housing 26. The flanges 90 extend through tube 33 and stator 70, thus interrupting the continuity of the stator laminations 72. In this type of embodiment, the tube 33 may be formed in sections sealed between flanges 90. The magnet wire 74 extends through both the stator laminations 72 and the flanges 90 to provide a suitable winding for enabling rotation of impellers 54 when electric power is supplied via electric cable 82 and a rotating magnetic field is established via stator 70. In this embodiment, the diffusers 56 and the stator laminations 72 may be compressed together to provide higher down-thrust capability of the stages. It should be noted stages, as used herein, means adjacent pairings of impeller 54 and diffuser 56. Depending on the pumping capacity desired, different numbers of stages (pairs of impellers 54 and diffusers 56) may be assembled to form the integrated pump and motor 28. The embodiment illustrated in Figure 5 also may help reduce core loss which otherwise may result from unused stator laminations where there is no corresponding rotor magnet zone.

[0049] Referring generally to Figure 6, another embodiment of pumping section 24 is illustrated. In this example, the non-magnetic diffusers 56 are again locked in a stationary position with respect to stator 70 by, for example, protuberances 78 and corresponding recesses 80. However, a shaft 92, e.g. a rotatable shaft, is disposed

through magnetic impellers 54 and non-magnetic diffusers 56. The shaft 92 may be supported by at least one shaft thrust bearing 94. For example, the shaft 92 may be supported on both ends by corresponding thrust bearings 94. In this embodiment, the magnetic impellers 54 may be rotationally constrained on shaft 92 by, for example, keys and a corresponding keyway or other suitable locking mechanisms. By locking the magnetic impellers 54 on shaft 92, the total load torque transmission is shared by each impeller/stage during torque generation, e.g. during operation of motor 32. Thus, if a stage/impeller becomes stuck the accumulation of stage torque on the shaft 92 may aid in freeing the stuck stage/impeller.

[0050] Referring generally to Figure 7, another embodiment of pumping section 24 is illustrated. In this example, a hollow shaft 96 is disposed through magnetic impellers 54 and non-magnetic diffusers 56. The hollow shaft 96 comprises an internal passage 98 sized for receiving a tool 100 therethrough. By way of example, the tool 100 may be in the form of a wireline logging tool 102 coupled with a logging tool cable 104 and passed through hollow shaft 96 via passage 98. The tool 100 may be deployed through the hollow shaft 96 to, for example, a position below the electric submersible pumping system 20.

[0051] The hollow shaft 96 may be used with a variety of embodiments. For example, the shaft 86 or the shaft 92, described above, may be constructed as hollow shaft 96. In some embodiments, a valve 106 may be mounted at the top of pumping section 24 or at another suitable location. The valve 106 may be in the form of a check valve or other suitable valve which is closed to block passage 98 when the pumping system is activated. However, the valve 106 may be moved to an open position to allow tool 100 to be passed through the hollow shaft 96.

[0052] In Figure 8, a cross-sectional illustration of the integrated pump and motor 28, taken perpendicularly through the axis of the integrated pump and motor 28, is provided to show an example of an arrangement of magnetic lines 108. In this example, the motor 28 comprises stator 70 and is arranged in the form of a 3-phase, 4-pole, 24-slot

configuration. Additionally, the impellers 54 are each arranged to have magnet 68 in the form of a permanent magnet ring 110 and magnetic component 64 in the form of a magnetic steel hub 112. Thus, each impeller 54 includes impeller body 66, magnetic steel hub 112, and permanent magnet ring 110. The impellers 54 are disposed within the passage/bore 71 formed by the tube 33 which is again sealed to protect stator 70. For example, the tube 33 may be positioned to seal off and thus protect stator laminations 72 located between tube 33 and outer housing 26.

[0053] Referring generally to Figure 9, another embodiment of pumping section 24 is illustrated. In this example, a pin 116 or a plurality of pins 116 may be used to connect sequential magnetic impellers 54. By way of example, the pin(s) 116 may be located along an axis of the pumping section 24. In this embodiment, the pin or pins 116 are constructed for providing radial and/or axial stability rather than for transferring torque as with certain types of shafts. As with other embodiments, the magnet wire 74 may extend through the stator laminations 72 to enable rotation of impellers 54 within tube 33 when electric power is supplied via electric cable 82.

[0054] Depending on the parameters of a given application, the torque producing component, e.g. impeller 54, may be constructed in a variety of forms. In embodiments described above, for example, a torque producing component or components may be created using an impeller body 66 combined with a magnetic component 64 and an annular permanent magnet 68. However, the torque producing component, e.g. magnetic components of impeller 54, may be constructed in various other configurations. Examples of such configurations include an induction cage, a reluctance rotor, or another suitable component able to generate torque when electricity is applied via cable 82.

[0055] Referring generally to Figure 10, another embodiment of pumping section 24 is illustrated. In this example, impellers 54 are constructed from a magnetic material which electromagnetically interacts with stator magnetic poles of stator 70 through tube 33. As with other embodiments described herein, the impellers 54 are constructed to function as a rotor of motor 32 for interaction with the stator magnetic poles.

Simultaneously, the impellers 54 function as conventional pump impellers of pump 30 so as to move fluid, e.g. well fluid, generally in an axial direction along flow channel 60.

[0056] In Figure 11, a cross-sectional illustration of the integrated pump and motor 28, taken perpendicularly through the axis of the integrated pump and motor 28, is provided to show another example of an arrangement of magnetic lines 108. In this example, the impellers 54 each comprise impeller vanes 118 which are made of magnetic material. The magnetic material allows the impellers 54 to function as both a motor rotor and a pump impeller simultaneously. In this example, the impellers 54 are constructed such that the motor 32 operates as a reluctance motor.

[0057] In Figure 12, a cross-sectional illustration of the integrated pump and motor 28, taken perpendicularly through the axis of the integrated pump and motor 28, is provided to show another example of an arrangement of magnetic lines 108. In this example, the impellers 54 each comprise permanent magnets 120 embedded into impeller vanes 118 which again allows the impellers 54 to function as both a motor rotor and a pump impeller simultaneously.

[0058] With respect to embodiments described herein, the stator 70/laminations 72 may be protected by various configurations of tube 33. The tube 33 may be constructed as a sealing mechanism to provide a sealed environment for the stator 70 as well fluids are pumped through integrated pump and motor 28. Depending on the type of motor 32, the tube 33 may have a variety of structures and shapes which provide a conduit surrounding the region of fluid flow. For example, the tube 33 may be cylindrical in shape or it may have a variety of other cross-sectional shapes, e.g. rectangular shapes or custom shapes to accommodate various motor components.

[0059] The tube 33 also may be a thin, single long cylindrical section or a plurality of short sections joined together and/or joined with other system components via welding or other sealing techniques, e.g. O-rings. The ends of the tube 33 also may be sealed to components, e.g. coil end encapsulations 76, of the integrated pump and motor

28 via welding, O-ring seals, or other suitable sealing techniques. In some embodiments, the tube 33 may be sealed to the head and the base of the corresponding equipment section.

[0060] Additionally, the torque generating components (e.g. combined impeller body 66, magnetic components 64, and permanent magnet 68) may or may not be constructed to provide hydrodynamic functions of pump stage components such as impeller vanes. For example, permanent magnets 68 of impellers 54 may be constructed in the form of impeller vanes 118, may be mounted along the impeller vanes 118, or may be mounted at other suitable locations of the impellers 54 that do not participate in fluid pumping. In some embodiments, the impellers 54 may be constructed from a magnetic steel and function as a rotor of a synchronous reluctance motor. In this type of embodiment, the impellers 54 again generate torque when being exposed to a rotating magnetic field of the stator 70.

[0061] Various embodiments described herein enable the elimination of traditional ESP components such as motor protector (seal), traditional motor, traditional pump shafts, couplings, motor lead extensions, and/or other components. The integrated pump and motor 28 may be constructed to provide a combined section having a reduced number of component parts combined with a shortening of the overall length of the ESP system 20 relative to a traditional ESP system. However, multiple combined sections may be connected in tandem to provide sufficient head desired for a given pumping system.

[0062] Additionally, the integrated pump and motor 28 may be constructed with different types of fluid pumping structures, e.g. different types of impellers. For example, the fluid pumping structure 54 may be in the form of a helical rotor in a progressive cavity pump. In this type of embodiment, the helical rotor is equipped with a torque producing element, e.g. a permanent magnet element or a magnetic steel element, and surrounded by tube 33 and stator 70. The stator 70 may utilize a winding of magnet wire 74 to produce a rotating magnetic field.

[0063] By eliminating certain traditional components, e.g. shafts, as described above, embodiments of ESP system 20 allow for the flexible connection of pumping section 24 with other components of a well string. This ability negates application restraints related to trajectory of the wellbore in three-dimensional space and facilitates use of the pumping system in wellbores with greater dogleg severity. A flexible connection between sections of the well string may be achieved by a variety of methods including use of materials which allow a certain level of deformation and flexibility, articulating joints which permit relative angular movement between connected sections, or other suitable flexible connections.

[0064] The various components of pumping system 20 may be constructed from a variety of materials. For example, the impeller body 66 may be constructed from steel, aluminum, plastic, ceramic, or other suitable materials for a given application. In some embodiments, the impellers 54 may be constructed with suitable types of magnetic material. For example, the impeller body 66 may be constructed from the same material as magnetic component 64. The magnetic components 64 also may be formed from various magnetic materials, such as magnetic steel. Similarly, the stator 70 may be constructed in various configurations using laminations 72 or other suitable structures. The electric cable 82 may have various materials and configurations and may be coupled with magnet wire 74 via various types of connectors 84, e.g. motor lead extensions. Additionally, the pumping section 24 may be combined with many other types of components in the overall pumping system.

[0065] Although a few embodiments of the system and methodology have been described in detail above, those of ordinary skill in the art will readily appreciate that many modifications are possible without materially departing from the teachings of this disclosure. Accordingly, such modifications are intended to be included within the scope of this disclosure as defined in the claims.

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. An electric submersible pump, comprising:
 - a stator having a plurality of stator laminations having slots for receiving magnet wire to form a stator coil;
 - a tube disposed along an interior of the plurality of laminations to define a passage extending longitudinally through the stator, the tube being sealed with respect to the stator laminations to prevent contact between the stator laminations and a fluid moving along the passage; and
 - an impeller disposed within the passage to pump the fluid along the passage when rotated, the impeller comprising:
 - an impeller body; and
 - a magnet coupled with the impeller body for interaction with a magnetic field created by the stator to power rotation of the impeller.
2. The electric submersible pump according to claim 1, wherein the impeller further comprises a fluid conduit for transporting a fluid from a first side of the impeller to a second side of the impeller.
3. The electric submersible pump according to claim 1, further comprising a non-magnetic diffuser associated with the impeller.
4. The electric submersible pump according to claim 3, wherein the diffuser comprises a fluid conduit for transporting a fluid from a first side of the diffuser to a second side of the diffuser.
5. The electric submersible pump according to claim 1, wherein the magnet comprises a magnetic component and a permanent magnet.

6. The electric submersible pump according to claim 5, wherein the magnetic component comprises magnetic steel and has an annular shape.
7. The electric submersible pump according to claim 1, further comprising a hollow shaft extending longitudinally through the center of the electric submersible pump and through the impeller.
8. The electric submersible pump according to claim 1, wherein the impeller comprises a plurality of impellers connected by a plurality of pins.
9. The electric submersible pump according to claim 1, wherein the impeller body comprises a magnetic material.
10. The electric submersible pump according to claim 5, wherein the permanent magnet has an annular shape.
11. The electric submersible pump according to claim 1, wherein the tube is formed as a single cylindrical section.
12. The electric submersible pump according to claim 1, further comprising a shaft extending through the impeller, wherein the impeller rotates about the shaft.
13. The electric submersible pump according to claim 1, wherein the impeller rotates in response to a flow of electricity through the magnet wire.
14. A system, comprising:
 - an electric submersible pumping system having a fluid intake and a fluid discharge, the electric submersible pumping system comprising:
 - a housing;
 - a stator disposed within the housing;

a plurality of non-magnetic diffusers disposed within the housing in a locked position with respect to the stator;

a plurality of magnetic impellers disposed within the housing in cooperation with the plurality of non-magnetic diffusers such that application of electric power to the stator causes rotation of the plurality of magnetic impellers; and

a tube disposed between the plurality of magnetic impellers and the stator to isolate the stator from fluid pumped via the plurality of magnetic impellers.

15. The system according to claim 14, wherein each magnetic impeller of the plurality of magnetic impellers comprises a body, a magnetic component disposed about the body, and a permanent magnet.

16. The system according to claim 14, wherein the plurality of magnetic impellers is mounted along a shaft.

17. The system according to claim 14, wherein the stator comprises laminations sealed between the housing and the tube.

18. A method, comprising:

providing an electric submersible pumping system with an outer housing containing an integrated pump and motor within the outer housing;

conveying the electric submersible pumping system downhole into a borehole;

using a tubing to sealingly isolate a stator of a motor of the integrated pump and motor;

applying electrical power to the motor of the integrated pump and motor to establish a fluid pumping motion; and

pumping a fluid through the integrated pump and motor within the outer housing without exposing the stator to the fluid.

19. The method as recited in claim 18, wherein providing comprises forming the integrated pump and motor with a plurality of non-magnetic diffusers mounted within the stator and a plurality of magnetic impellers rotatably mounted within the stator in cooperation with the plurality of non-magnetic diffusers.
20. The method as recited in claim 19, further comprising mounting the plurality of magnetic impellers along a shaft.