

Review Article

Wear Behaviour of Aluminium Matrix Hybrid Composites: A Review

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.24321/2454.8650.201903>

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How to cite this article:

Singh S, Gupta A, Sharma. Wear Behaviour of Aluminium Matrix Hybrid Composites: A Review. *J Adv Res Mech Engi Tech* 2019; 6(1&2): 13-22.

Date of Submission: 2019-09-09

Date of Acceptance: 2019-09-16

A B S T R A C T

This review focus on the effect of reinforcement and different manufacturing techniques on wear and mechanical properties aluminium matrix composites and hybrid composites. These materials have capacity to satisfying the demands of advanced engineering materials applications. These difficulties are satisfied due to improved mechanical properties, conventional processing technique and reducing fabrication cost of aluminium composites. In powder metallurgy, the crucial issue is the selection of sizes of the matrix and reinforcement powders, whereas a major challenge in liquid metallurgy is wettability between the reinforcement particles and molten alloy. The addition of Al_2O_3 particles in matrix increases the mechanical strength and wear resistance of composites. However, incorporation of these particles can reduce the wear performance of Al composites under severe conditions. The addition of graphite particles helps in the formation of a thick layer on the wear surface. It was found that the mechanical and wear properties of the single reinforcement composites are better as compared to pure aluminium and aluminium alloys regardless of the aluminium matrix composites fabrication technique. Further, it was also established that most of the hybrid composites demonstrate better mechanical and tribological properties as compared to single reinforcement composites.

Keywords: Aluminium, Metal Matrix Composites, Hybrid Metal Matrix Composites, Graphite, Alumina, Friction Stir Processing

Introduction

The composite material is a mixture of two or more materials unsolvable in each another and retain properties which are better to any of the constituent materials. The matrix materials are categorized as Metal Matrix Composites (MMCs), Ceramic Matrix Composites (CMCs), Polymer Matrix Composites (PMCs) and Carbon Matrix composites.¹ Metal matrix composites are commonly used due to high temperature resistance, moisture, radiation, thermal and electrical conductivities.² The most popular reinforcement

materials are Al, Mg, Ti, Cu etc. Particulate reinforced aluminium composites are suitable for tribological applications due to low cost and better plastic forming capability than fiber/ whisker composites.³ There are different reinforcement materials are Fly ash⁴, Al_2O_3 , 5SiC , 6B_4C ,⁷ solid lubricants such as graphite⁸ and MoS_2 .⁹ In the automobile, cycle and aerospace industries, many of the components are being switched to the composite materials from steel due to more strong and lighter weight. This helps to reduce the weight of components of different industries.¹⁰ The particulate like alumina and graphite was

incorporated in the Aluminium Matrix Composites (AMCs), these materials enhanced strength and wear resistance as compared to aluminium. AMCs combined the properties of matrix materials (ductility and toughness)¹¹ with ceramic properties of reinforcements (high hardness and high modulus),¹² to generate a new material with combination of properties of both matrix and reinforcement.¹³ In the last two decades, because of their better properties particulate AMCs were used widely in automotive industries and in specialized areas such as in aeroplane and defence industry¹⁴ and are also used as tribological parts in some vehicles due to their light weight and better wear properties.¹⁵ AMCs have been revealed a considerable advancement in tribological properties, such as sliding and abrasive wear resistance and seizure resistance.¹⁶ These were also applied in electronic packaging industry due to their low coefficient of thermal expansion.¹⁷ AMCs were known as the most important material in the current time because of their enhanced engineering properties, such as their better wear resistance, low density, specific strength and stiffness, as compared to aluminium alloy.¹⁸ The single reinforced materials improved hardness, strength of the composites but at the same time wear resistance was low.

Hybrid aluminium matrix composites are composites in which two or more than two reinforcements is used in a single matrix. It improved the mechanical properties and wear resistance of materials.¹⁹ Now a days, the cylinder liners, brake drums, crank-shafts of automotive and the aerospace industries were manufactured by HAMCs, because of their high strength, light weight and thermal stability.²⁰ This paper presents a detailed review of alumina and graphite reinforced in aluminium matrix composites and also discussed hybrid aluminium matrix composites of different reinforcement with different manufacturing method regarding their improved mechanical and tribological properties.

Review on Aluminium Matrix Composites and Hybrid Aluminium Matrix Composites with their Wear Behavior

While aluminium is matrix material, the composites fabricated are known as aluminium matrix composites (AMCs). The composites obtained by incorporation of two or more than two reinforcements in aluminium matrix are called aluminium matrix hybrid composites (HAMCs). The direct and indirect strengthening are two strengthening mechanism for AMCs. The matrix transfers their load-bearing capacity to reinforcement is known as direct strengthening mechanism. There are several theories which explain the load transfer effects like shear lag theory²¹ and homogenization method.²² In shear lag theory, the transfer of load is due to shear stress established at particle matrix boundary and particles bear some portion of load. In

homogenization method, it maybe due to stress distribution between reinforcement and matrix in a volume average sense. In indirect strengthening mechanism, reinforcement transfers their load-bearing capacity on the matrix. It can be understood by changes in microstructure or deformation mode. The indirect mechanism is better in terms of improving the properties due to reinforcement particles transfer their load to matrix, which causes refinement of microstructure and improved the mechanical as well as wear properties.²³

Fabrication Methods

The fabrication processes for AMCs can be categorized based on primary methods such as treating the metal matrix in a liquid or a solid form. The fabrication methods have a significant impact on the mechanical properties as well as the cost of production. Particulate-reinforced AMCs materials may be fabricated by bulk processing or applied as coatings. This section aims to discuss AMCs materials produced only through bulk processing. This section contributes an outline of the different methods available for the fabrication of AMCs.

Solid State Processing

Solid state production of AMCs is the process of bonding matrix and reinforcements materials because of mutual diffusion arising between them in solid phase at a higher temperature and under pressure. The main processes under this type are as follows:

- Friction Stir Processing:

In this method, the composites are fabricated when the matrix is in solid state condition. This is done using the same methodology as Friction Stir Welding (FSW). In FSP, a cylindrical rotating tool with a concentric pin and shoulder is plunged into the material surface. Localized heating is produced by friction between the rotating tool and the work piece to raise the local temperature of the material to the hot working range is produced due to friction between rotating tool and work piece, where plastic deformation can be done easily. When the appropriate working temperature is reached, the tool is traversed along the line of interest. It is extruded/ forged, consolidated and cooled under hydrostatic pressure conditions. It is effective and efficient technique which can be used to refine microstructure and to fabricate MMCs.²⁴

- Ball Milling:

In this process, a homogeneous material is obtained by blending the powder in a vial with balls made up of hardened steel or zirconia (so called ball milling in which high energy collision of balls and vial leads to the repeated cold welding and fracturing of powder and finally preparation of alloyed powder).²⁵

- Powder Metallurgy:

It allows uniform dispersion of hybrid particulates²⁶, duly admixed and pressed together to desired shapes. On sintering elemental powders bond to give desired properties. Powder metallurgy composites can be produced exactly as net shaped components finished to high accuracy²⁷. Though compacted powders allow relatively higher quantity of dispersed material, yet they remain obsessed with extra porosity in the final composite.²⁸

Liquid Metallurgy Techniques

In this process, the discontinuous phase (reinforcement) is incorporated into continuous phase (metal matrix). The molten metal is poured into various mould of desired shapes by conventional casting. The main processes under this category are as follows:

- Stir Casting:

The process of stir casting came into existence in 1968 through S. Ray. Stir casting is a procedure of mixing dispersed phase ceramic particles or short fibres with a molten matrix metal using mechanical stirring. It is most cost effective method for bulk production and intricate shapes.²⁹

- Compo Casting:

Compo casting is the process in which when the melt is solidifying, it is dynamically unsettled and reinforcement particles are added to this solidifying melt. The primary solid particles which are formed in the semi solid melt causes the entrapment of reinforcement particles. It reduces their segregation and agglomeration due to gravity which resulted into better wettability of reinforcement particles with the matrix.³⁰

- Squeeze Casting:

Squeeze casting technique is a combination of gravity die casting and closed die forging. In this methods, molten composite is transferred into the preheated die and exposed under a fixed pressure during solidification of casting.³¹

- Spray Deposition Methods:

In this method, atomized molten material droplets with a very high velocity are impressed on a preheated substrate, the reinforcing particles are also co-impacted with the melt spray allowing reinforcement particles engulfment in the molten or partially molten metal droplets to form a composite. AMCs processed by spray deposition technique is relatively inexpensive with cost that is usually intermediate between stir cast and PM processes.³²

Out of these two methods liquid phase process is more effective and efficient than solid state because solid state

process is time consuming and costly³³, but stir casting is very simple, most cost effective method and its cost is very low as compared to other method in case of mass production.³⁴ Consequently, in the present time, stir casting is the greatest feasible and predominant method for the fabrication of the particulate-reinforced AMCs.

Comparison of mechanical and wear properties of aluminium alloy against AMCs (Table 1), shows the overall details of composites in comparison of aluminium matrix. From this table, it is clear that mechanical and wear properties of single reinforced composites are superior than that of monolithic materials in all composites irrespective of manufacturing process.

Comparison of mechanical and wear properties of aluminium alloy/ composites/ hybrid AMCs (Table 2), shows overall properties of hybrid composites as compared to matrix and composites. From this table, it is clear that both the mechanical and wear properties of the hybrid composites were enhanced than that of matrix alloy and in most of the cases the wear resistance of hybrid composites amplified due to addition of other reinforcement.

Conclusion

The mechanical and wear properties of composites and hybrid composites are discussed in this review article.

- It has been reviewed from the state of art that the aluminium matrix composites and hybrid composites are mostly fabricated by solid state and liquid metallurgy process.
- It follows while Powder Metallurgy (P/M) is significant technique for processing of these aluminium matrix composites, wherein it is easy to design uniform distribution of reinforcement particles²⁸. However, because of component's shape limitations the die development is a costly process and the process is still obsessed with porosity in the composite.
- It was noted that for the fabrication of aluminium matrix composites and hybrid composites, stir casting is recommended by the researcher due to its simplicity, cost effective and suitable for mass production as compared to other fabrication process.
- The hybrid aluminium matrix composites can be fabricated with different combinations of reinforcements to achieve desirable mechanical properties not available in single reinforced composites.
- It is evident that hybrid composites possessed superior mechanical properties with ceramic reinforcement and also wear properties are enhanced due to presence of solid lubricants as compared to composites and pure aluminium materials.

Table I.Composites Properties

Matrix	Reinforcement	Fabrication process	Mechanical properties	Wear properties	Result	Ref.
AA6061	Gr	Powder metallurgy	-	Wear	Wear resistance was improved than that of unreinforced aluminium matrix	35
Al2024	Gr	In situ powder metallurgy	-	Wear and Friction	Wear and friction was showed downward trends when the percentage of graphite particles reached up-to half weight percentage	36
Al-Sialloy	Gr	Laser Sintered	-	Wear	The formationof lubricating film by graphite particles improved wear resistance	37
Al-Mg-Si alloy	Al ₂ O ₃	Stir casting	Hardness, tensile strength	Wear	Mechanical and wear properties were enhanced as compared to matrix. The mechanical properties were increased with increased reinforcement content	38
Al6061	SiC, Al ₂ O ₃ and CeO ₂	Liquid metallurgy	Micro-hardness	Wear	Micro-hardness and tribological properties of all composites were enhanced as compared to matrix. Wear resistance improved with increase in reinforcement in all composites	39
Al2024	Al ₂ O ₃	Stir casting	-	Wear	Wear resistance was superior than that of matrix and amplified with increased content of reinforcement	40
Al2024	Gr	Powder metallurgy	-	Wear	Wear resistance was enhanced than that of monolithic material. It was improved with increased reinforcement	41
A356	Al ₂ O ₃	Stir casting, compo casting	UTS, yield strength, Hardness compression strength	-	The mechanical properties were improved with reinforcement content irrespective of manufacturing process as compared to matrix material	42
A359	Al ₂ O ₃	Electromagnetic stir	Hardness, tensile strength	-	Hardness and tensile strength was enhanced with increased reinforcement content	43
Al2024	Al ₂ O ₃	Stir casting method and applied pressure	Hardness, tensile strength	-	The mechanical properties were enhanced with increased reinforcement content	44
AAA7075	Al ₂ O ₃	Conventional liquid casting	-	Wear	Wear resistance and coefficient of friction was enhanced than the matrix. These were increased with increase in reinforcement content	45

AA7075	Gr	Liquid casting	Tensile strength, hardness	Wear	Wear resistance enlarged by addition of graphite (Gr) as reinforcement but mechanical properties declined with increased Gr content	46
Al 7075	Nano-silicon carbide (SiC)	Stir casting	Nano-silicon carbide (SiC)	Wear	Wear resistance of composites were higher than the matrix material, wear rate was reduced with enhancing weight % of SiC	47
Al 6061, Al 7075	B ₄ C Al ₂ O ₃ , Gr and SiC	Liquid metallurgy	Yield strength	-	Better yield strength graphite particles reduced tensile strength, compression strength and hardness	48
(AA7075)	Graphite	Stir Casting	Hardness, tensile strength	Wear	The hardness and tensile strength decreased with an increased weight percentage graphite. Wear resistance was improved up to certain limit	49
Al-356	Copper coated -Al ₂ O ₃	Vortex method	Hardness, compressive strength, yield stress, tensile strength	-	The hardness, compressive strength, yield stress, tensile strength and elongation of the composites were enhanced	50
AA7075	Alumina nano particles	Stir casting	Hardness, tensile strength	-	The mechanical properties were enhanced as compared to matrix material	51
Al-16Si-5Ni-	Graphite 5%	Stir casting	-	Wear	The composite shown better tribological due to presence of graphite particles in the composites	52
Al6082	1% Al ₂ O ₃ and 3% SiC and 0 to 6% graphite particles by weight	Stir casting	Hardness, tensile strength stiffness	Wear	The hardness, tensile strength and stiffness was enhanced. The coefficient of friction and wear rate of PAMC decreased with graphite contents	53

Table 2. Hybrid Composite Properties

Matrix	Reinforcement	Fabrication process	Mechanical properties	Wear properties	Result	Ref.
AA6061	Al ₂ O ₃ +SiC	Stir casting	-	Wear	Dry sliding wear was improved as compared to aluminium matrix	54
Al 7075	SiCwt% 7 (27-33 µm) Gr 3% (20-25 µm) with	Vortex method	-	Wear rate	Specific wear rate of hybrid composites was improved	55
AA6061	SiC+Gr	Semi solid powder	Fracture toughness, hardness	Wear	Fracture toughness and hardness declined with rise in graphite content while the wear rate of composites improved as the graphite content increased up to 5% and then reduced to a lower value for an 8% addition of graphite reinforcement	56
AA 7075	SiC, alumina, fly ash (3,6,9 wt%)	Stir casting	Tensile strength, hardness	-	The tensile strength and hardness of Aluminium hybrid metal matrix showed upward trend with the increased weight percentage of hybrid reinforced particles	57
AA7075,	nano composite (% alumina) and hybrid composites	Squeeze casting	Hardness, tensile strength	-	The hardness and tensile strength was more than the base metal for both composites and hybrid composites	58
AluminiumSiC	Silicon carbide, graphite and alumina	Stir casting	Hardness	-	The hardness was increased with weight fraction of reinforcement material	59
Al-Mgalloy	SiC+Al ₂ O ₃	Pressure infiltration	Hardness, compression strength, impact toughness	Wear	Dry sliding wear enhanced with increased amount of silicon carbide and alumina. It was also resulted in increased mechanical properties	60
Al2219	SiC+Gr	Stircasting	-	Wear	Wear resistance was superior than unreinforced materials	61
Al-Si-10Mg	Al ₂ O ₃ +Gr	Stircasting	-	Wear	Dry sliding wear was increased with increased graphite contents	62
Al2024	SiC+Gr	Powder metallurgy	-	Wear	Wear resistance was enlarged than monolithic materials	63
Al2024	SiC+Gr	Powder metallurgy	-	wear	Wear resistance was better than the matrix materials	64

Al (99% Pure)	Al ₂ O ₃ +SiC	Stir casting	Hardness	Wear	Both the hardness and wear resistance were upgraded as compared to pure aluminium matrix. The wear resistance of hybrid composite was improved than the composites	65
LM-25	SiC+Gr	Stir casting	Hardness	Wear	The hardness ductility and wear resistance were superior than aluminium matrix. The wear resistance of hybrid composite was increased than the composites	66
LM-25	SiC + Gr, SiC+ FA	Stir casting	Tensile strength, hardness	Wear	Tensile strength, hardness and wear resistance was superior than that of pure aluminium	67
A332	SiC+Al ₂ O ₃	Stir casting	Tensile strength	-	Tensile strength of hybrid composite amplified than pure matrix	68
AA6061	SiC + Al ₂ O ₃	FSP	-	Wear	Wear resistance of hybrid composites were improved as compared to alloy and composites composite increased	69
Al-Mg-Si	RHA + Al ₂ O ₃	Double stir casting	-	Wear	Wear resistance of Al ₂ O ₃ -reinforced composite increased with increase in rice husk ash	70
AA6351	SiC+Al ₂ O ₃ ,	Stir casting	Tensile strength, ductility	-	Both tensile strength and ductility hybrid composite were enhanced than that of matrix but improved result obtained in SiC + TiC-reinforced composites-82	71
AA6061	SiC + Al ₂ O ₃ ,	FSP	Hardness	Wear	Hardness, ductility and wear resistance of hybrid composites were recovered than that of base matrix but better result attained in SiC + Al ₂ O ₃ -reinforced hybrid composites	72
AA6061 and AA7075	B ₄ C + Gr	Stir casting	Hardness	Wear	Hardness and wear resistance was amplified than that of pure metal in both hybrid composite, but hardness and ductility was improved in case of AA7075 while wear resistance was enhanced in AA6061 case	73
AA7075	Al ₂ O ₃ +Gr	Liquid metallurgy	Hardness, tensile and compressive strength	Wear	The mechanical properties were enhanced than that of pure aluminium matrix and increased with increasing the volume fraction of reinforcement while the wear resistance of hybrid composite increased due to presence of Gr particles which acts as a self- lubricating material	74

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