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EFFECT OF WIRE FEED RATE AND WIRE TENSION DURING MACHINING OF PR-AL-SiC-MMC,s BY WEDM

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ABSTRACT

The widespread adoption of particulate metal matrix composites for engineering applications has been hindered by the high cost of producing components. Although several technical challenges exist with casting technology yet it can be used to overcome this problem. Achieving a uniform distribution of reinforcement within the matrix is one such challenge, which affects directly on the properties and quality of composite material. In this study aluminium (Al-6063)/ Silicon carbide (SiC) reinforced particles metal-matrix composites (MMCs) are fabricated by melt-stirring technique. The MMCs bars and circular plates are prepared with the reinforced particles of SiC by weight fraction 15% and average reinforced particles sizes of SiC are 300 mesh. The stirring process is carried out at 200 rev/min rotating speed by graphite impeller for 15 min. The series of machining tests are performed on CNC Wire cut EDM. Prepared specimens of Al/SiC MMCs are used as work piece (anode), brass wire of diameter 0.25 mm is used as wire electrode and water is used as the dielectric fluid. The parameters are investigated Cutting Speed Vc mm/min, Width of cut b mm, Spark Gap Wg mm, Metal Removal Rate MMR mm^3 /min, Surface roughness Ra (µm), Peak Roughness Rz(µm) for each experiment by varying Wire Feed Rate W_F (4 m/mim, 5 m/mim,6 m/mim,7 m/mim,) and Wire Tension W_T (780 gms, 900 gms, 1020 gms, 1140 gms,). The investigations of results are done graphically.

Keywords: Particulate Reinforced Al/SiC Metal Matrix Composites (PRALSICMMC), Silicon Carbide (SiC), Spark Gap Wg mm, Cutting Speed (Vc), Metal Removal Rate (MMR), Surface roughness (Ra), Peak Roughness (Rz).

INTRODUCTION

Manufacturing conditions is one of the most important aspects to take into consideration in the majority of manufacturing processes and, particularly, selection of parameters related to CNC Wire cut Electrical Discharge Machining (EDM). Metal Matrix Composites (MMC's) have very light weight, high strength, and stiffness and exhibit greater resistance to corrosion, oxidation and wear. Fatigue resistance is an especially important property of Al-MMC, which is essential for automotive application. These properties are not achievable with lightweight monolithic titanium, magnesium, and aluminumalloys. Particulate metal matrix composites have nearly isotropic properties when compared to long fiber reinforced composite. Metal MatrixComposite (MMC) is engineered combination of metal (Matrix) and hard particles (Reinforcement) to tailored properties. Stir casting is accepted as a particularly promising route, currently can be practiced commercially. Its advantages lie in its simplicity, flexibility and applicability to large quantity production. This liquid metallurgy technique is the most economical of all the available routes for metal matrix composite production and allows very large sized components to be fabricated. Surappa et al [1997] The cost of preparing composites material using a casting method is about one-third to half that of competitive methods, and for high volume production, Skibo et al [1998] it is projected that the cost will fall to one-tenth. Dauwet. al [1994] Among the non-conventional methods, Wire Electrical

Discharge Machining (WEDM) is most widely and successfully applied process in machining of hard metals or those that would be very difficult to machine with traditional techniques. Prediction and proper control of WEDM parameters during actual machining is of immense important, which may increase the machining efficiency and as well as can improve the quality of machining product. Ozdemir et.al [2006] Variation of geometric inaccuracy due to wire lag against parametric settings was investigated. George et. al [2004] and Mahdavinejad et. al [2009] from the past literature survey, work has been done on WEDM parameters using Taguchi methodology. Rao et al [2010] predictions for wire rupture prevention during WEDM operation. Parametric Study of Electrical Discharge Machining of ALSI 304 Stainless steel but no exhaustive work has been carried out to study the effects of various setting parameters.

Rozeneketal. [2001] investigated the effect of machining parameters(discharge current, pulse-on time, pulse off time, voltage) on the machining feed rate and surface roughness during WEDM of metal matrix composite AlSi7Mg/SiCandAlSi7Mg/Al_2O_3. Generally, the machining characteristics of WEDM metal matrix composites are similar to those which occur in the base material (AlSi7Mgaluminumalloy). The machining feed rate of WEDM cutting composites significantly depends on the kind of reinforcement. Yan et al. [2005] comprehensively investigated into the locations of the broken wire and the reason of wire breaking in machining Al_2O_3p/6061Alcomposite using WEDM.

In this study aluminium (Al-6063) /SiC Silicon carbide reinforced particles metal-matrix composites (MMCs) are fabricated by melt-stirring technique. The MMCs bars and circular plates are prepared with the reinforced particles of SiC by weight fraction 15% and average reinforced particles sizes of SiC are 300 mesh. The stirring process is carried out at 200 rev/min rotating speed by graphite impeller for 15 min. The series of machining tests are performed on CNC Wire cut EDM. Prepared specimens of Al/SiC MMCs are used as work piece (anode), brass wire of diameter 0.25 mm is used as wire electrode and water is used as the dielectric fluid. The parameters are investigated Cutting Speed Vc mm/min, Width of cut b mm, Spark Gap Wg mm, Metal Removal Rate MMR mm^3 /min, Surface roughness Ra (µm), Peak Roughness Rz(µm) for each experiment by varying Wire Feed Rate W_F (4 m/mim, 5 m/mim,6 m/mim,7 m/mim,) and Wire Tension W_T(780 gms, 900 gms, 1020 gms, 1140 gms,). The investigations of results are done graphically.

EXPERIMENTATION

Fabrication of Al/SiCMetal Matrix Composites

Reinforced particles of Silicon Carbide (SiC) weight fraction 15% and mesh size 300 was used for casting of Al-MMC,s by melt-stir technique. Table I represents the chemical composition of commercially available Al-matrix used for manufacturing of MMC.

Table I. Chemical composition of matrix Al 6063 alloy.

Elements of Al 6063	Si	Mn	Mg	Cu	Fe	Ti	Al
%	0.44	0.07	0.6	0.018	0.2	0.008	98.664

Experiments are carried out on commercially available aluminium (Al6063) as matrix and reinforced with Silicon Carbide (SiC) particulates. An induction resistance furnace with temperature regulator cum indicator is utilized for melting of Al/SiC-MMCs “Fig. 1(a)” shows designed and developed stirring setup of induction resistance furnace along with

Fig. 1(a) Designed and developed stirring setup Fig.1 (b) Pouring mixture of molten Al and SiC particles Fig.1 (c) Prepared workpieces of Al/SiC-MMCs

temperature regulator cum indicator. Aluminium alloy (Al 6063) was first preheated at 450^0C for 2 hr before melting and SiC particulates were preheated at 1100^0C for 1 hr 30 min to improve the wetting properties by removing the absorbed hydroxide and other gases. The furnace temperature was first raised above the liquid state temperature, cooled down to just below the liquid state temperature to keep the slurry in a semi-solid state. At this stage the preheated SiC particles were added and mixed mechanically. The composite slurry was then reheated to a fully liquid state and mechanical mixing was carried out for 20 min at 200 rpm average stirring speed. In the final stage of mixing, the furnace temperature was controlled within 760 ± 10^0C and the temperature was controlled at 740^0C. Moulds (size 40mm diameter ×170 mm long) made of IS-1079/3.15mm thick steel sheet were preheated to 350^0C for 2 h before pouring the molten Al/SiC -MMC.

Fig.1 (b) shows pouring mixture of molten Al and SiC particles. The fabrication of composite was done by gravity casting. Fig.1 (c) shows prepared work piece of Al/SiC-MMCs weight fraction 15% and mesh size 300.

Experimental Techniques

The different sets of experiment work performed on an ELECTRONICA SPRINTCUT WEDM machine, Manufactured by Electronica Machine Tools Ltd. Pune, Pulse Generator :EPULSE- 40A. Technical Specifications and Features are as follows:-

- 4 axes CNC
- Precision LM guide ways for all axes
- Max. cutting speed : 160 mm^2/min
- 0.25Ø special soft brass wire on 50 mm thick HCHCr (steel) workpiece)
- Best surface finish : 0.8 µ Ra
- Taper : ± 30°/ 50 mm
- E-pulse technology
- Elcam - Powerful part programming software
- Table size - 440 X 650 mm
- Surface finish: 0.8 µ Ra.
- Complex profile cutting
- Auto job setting parameters

Fig.2 Machining number of Cubes by WEDM

A number of *Cubes (size 5mmX5mmX6mm)* were cut as shown in "fig. 2" The mean cutting speed data (Vc, mm/min) is calculated from the available direct data displayed in the computer monitor of the sprintcut wire cut EDM machine and the data recorded from the actual length of cutting during various settings of experimental machining operation. Surface roughness (R_a and R_z) µm is measured using a Surfcom 120A-TSK, a roughness measuring instrument and the width of cuts (b, mm) are measured using a Digimatic Caliper Mitutoyo. Gap current (Ig amp) is directly recorded from the ammeter of the Elektra Opticut – 434 CNC wire cut-EDM machines. The spark gap (W_g, µm) is calculated from the relation as follows.

$2 W_g + d = b$ (1)

Where, W_g is the spark gap or gap width, µm; d, diameter of electrode wire (250 µm Φ, brass wire); and b is the width of cut, µm. The metal removed rate (MRR) is calculated as followed

$Y_{MRR} = V_c\, b\, h \ \ mm^3/min$ (2)

Where, V_c is the cutting speed, mm/min; b, width of cut, mm; and h is the height of the work piece, mm. It is a powerful work tool which allows us to model and analyse the influence of designed variant parameters and designed constant parameters over the measured parameters. These measured parameters were unknown functions of the former designed parameters. The following designed experimental settings were done.

(1) Variant parameter was Wire Feed Rate W_F (4 m/mim, 5 m/mim,6 m/mim,7 m/mim,) and Constant parameters were Mesh size of SiC =300, Wt. % of Sic= 15%, pulse peak current I_p=210 amp, pulse peak voltage V_p=100 Volts, pulse on time T_{on} =120 µ sec, pulse off time T_{off}= 48 µ sec, Spark gap set voltage S_V = 25 volts and Wire Tension W_T = 1020, Machining was done and parameters were measured Cutting Speed Vc mm/min, Width of cut b mm, Spark Gap Wg mm, Metal Removal Rate mm^3 /min, Surface Roughness Ra(µm) and Peak Surface Roughness Rz(µm). The investigations of results are done graphically.

(2) Variant parameter was Wire Tension W_T(780 gms, 900 gms, 1020 gms, 1140 gms,) and Constant parameters were Mesh size of SiC =300, Wt. % of Sic= 15%, pulse peak current I_p=210 amp, pulse on time T_{on} =120 µ sec, pulse off time T_{off}= 48 µ sec, pulse peak voltage V_p=100 Volts, Wire Feed Rate W_F = 6 . Machining was done and parameters were measured Cutting Speed Vc mm/min, Width of cut b mm, Spark Gap Wg mm, Metal Removal Rate mm^3 /min, Surface roughness Ra (µm) and Peak Surface roughness Rz (µm).The investigations of results are done graphically.

RESULTS

Results Graph

All the experimental results are presented on graphs [from "fig.3 to 14"] as shown hereunder. In these graphs all measured parameters Cutting Speed Vc mm/min, Width of cut b mm, Spark Gap Wg mm, Metal Removal Rate mm^3 /min, Surface Roughness Ra (µm) and Peak

Surface Roughness Rz (µm) are taken on vertical axes, variant parameters Wire Feed Rate W_F (4 m/mim, 5 m/mim,6 m/mim,7 m/mim,) Wire Tension W_T(780 gms, 900 gms, 1020 gms, 1140 gms,) are on horizontal axes and constant parameters are shown in box.

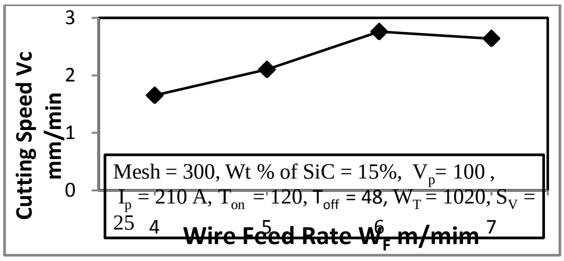

Fig. 3 Cutting Speed Vc mm/min VsWire Feed Rate W_F m/mim

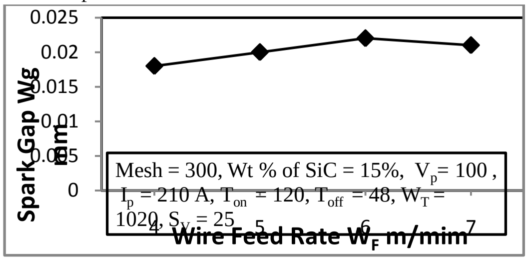

Fig. 4. Spark Gap Wg mm VsWire Feed Rate W_F m/mim

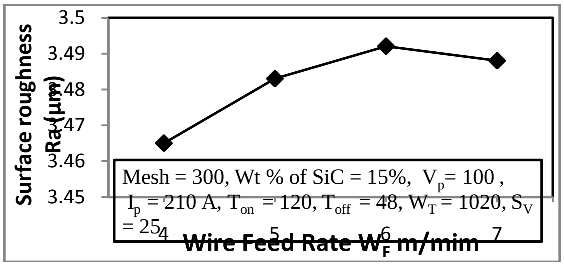

Fig.5. Surface roughness Ra (µm) VsWire Feed Rate W_F m/mim

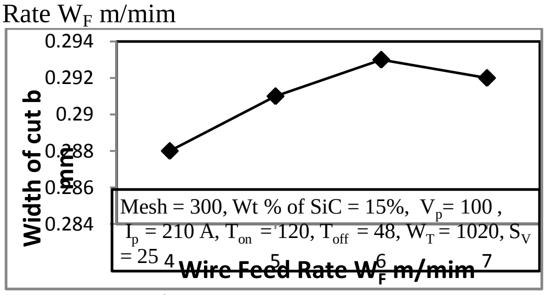

Fig.6. Width of cut b mm Vs Wire Feed Rate W_F m/mim

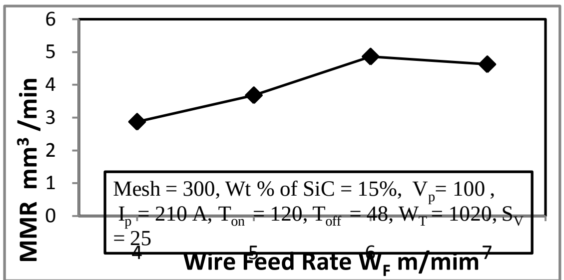

Fig.7. MMR mm^3 /min Vs Wire Feed Rate W_F m/mim

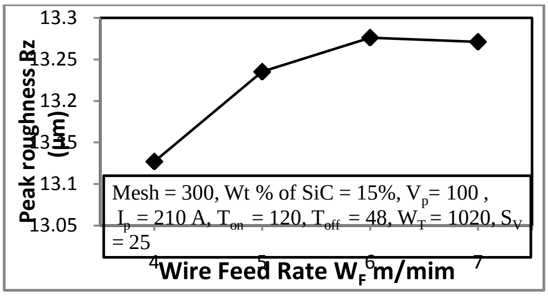

Fig.8. Peak Roughness Rz(µm)VsWire Feed Rate W_F m/mim

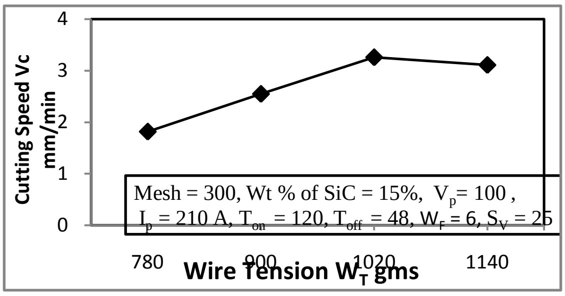

Fig.9. Cutting Speed Vc mm/min VsWire Tension $W_T$gms

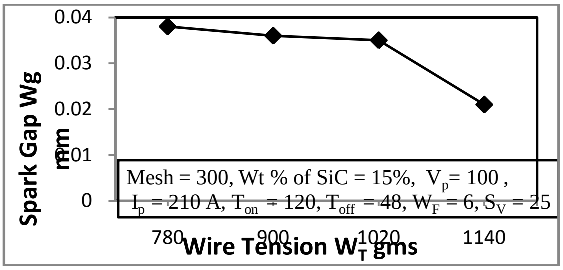

Fig.10. Spark Gap Wg mm VsWire Tension $W_T$gms

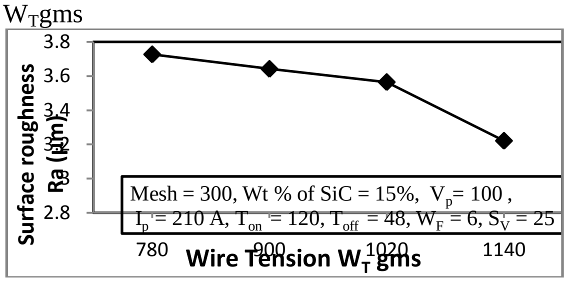

Fig.11. Surface roughness Ra (µm) VsWire Tension $W_T$gms

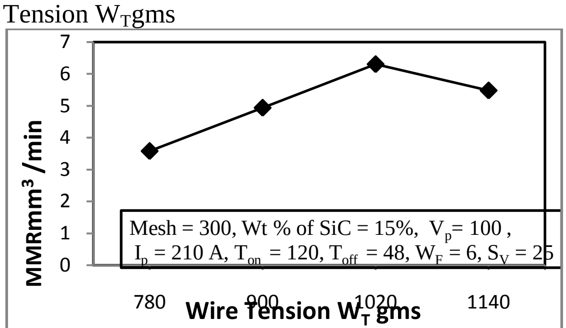

Fig. 13. MMR mm^3 /min Vs Wire Tension $W_T$gms

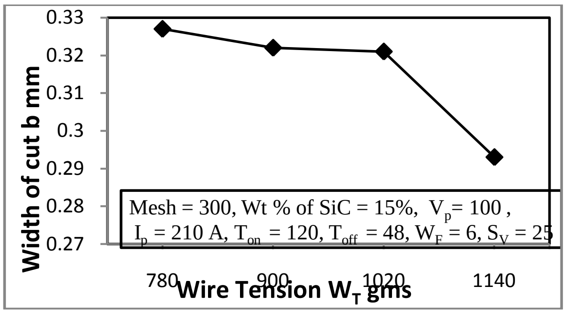

Fig.12. Width of cut b mm Vs Wire Tension $W_T$gms

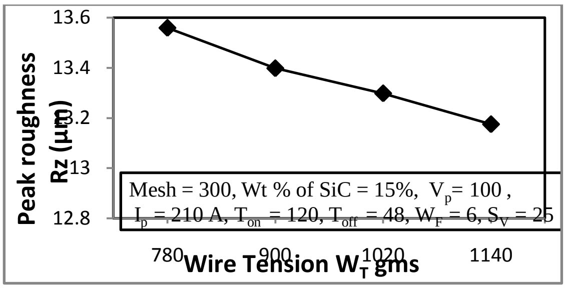

Fig.14. Peak Roughness Rz(µm) VsWire Tension $W_T$gms

DISCUSSION

Effect of Wire Feed Rate W_F (m/min)

From "fig.3 to 8" shows the effect of Wire Feed Rate W_F (m/min) on Cutting Speed Vc mm/min, Spark Gap Wg mm, Width of cut b mm, Metal Removal Rate MRR mm^3/min, Peak Surface Roughness Rz(µm) and Surface Roughness Ra(µm). With increase of Wire Feed Rate W_F (4 m/min, 5 m/min, 6 m/min,7 m/min,) Cutting Speed Vc mm/min, Metal Removal Rate mm^3/min, Spark Gap Wg mm, Width of cut b mm, Peak Surface Roughness Rz (µm) and Surface Roughness Ra (µm) firstly increases and afterwards decreases.

Effect of Wire Tension W_T (gms)

From "fig.9 to 14" shows the effect of Wire Tension W_T (gms) on Cutting Speed Vc mm/min, Spark Gap Wg mm, Width of cut b mm, Metal Removal Rate mm^3/min, Peak Surface Roughness Rz(µm) and Surface Roughness Ra(µm). With increase of Wire Tension W_T (780 gms, 900 gms, 1020 gms, 1140 gms,) Cutting Speed Vc mm/min, Metal Removal Rate mm^3/min firstly increases and afterwards decreases and Spark Gap Wg mm, Width of cut b mm, Peak Surface Roughness Rz (µm), Surface Roughness Ra(µm) decreases.

CONCLUSION

Maximum cutting speed and MRR can be achieved at Wire Feed Rate W_F (6 m/min) and Wire Tension W_T (1020 gms.). Smooth machining can be achieved Wire Feed Rate W_F(4 m/min) and Wire Tension W_T (780 gms.).

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