Finite element thermal stress simulation of nano-coated gas turbine blade samples under high temperature

Kadir, A, Beg, OA, Beg, TA and Jouri, WS

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<tr>
<td>Type</td>
<td>Conference or Workshop Item</td>
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<tr>
<td>Published Date</td>
<td>2019</td>
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### 1. INTRODUCTION

Several studies have been communicated in recent years concerning nano-coating protective layers for gas turbine environments. They have generally shown that improved protection is achieved compared with conventional thermal barrier coatings (TBCs) which are susceptible to various life limiting issues associated with their operating environment including erosion, corrosion, oxidation, sintering and foreign object damage (FOD) [1-3]. Nano-coatings engineered for high temperature applications have been investigated for surface roughness and topography, residual stress, adherence, damage tolerance and resistance, tribological properties, lubrication, coefficient of friction and hot hardness. Motivated by these developments, in this presentation we describe recent finite element thermal stress simulations of nano-coated (Aluminium Oxide/Titanium Oxide metallic nano-particles mix). The simulations demonstrate that largely due to the higher thermal conductivity and smaller size of nano-particles, they achieve improved bonding in coatings and dissipate heat better than conventional micro-coatings. Greater integrity of the coating is achieved and lower susceptibility to corrosion gas penetration is obtained with nano-coatings compared with micro-coatings. ANSYS Workbench version 19.1 [36] has been employed to simulate the thermal stress response of nano-coatings. Extensive visualisations of results is included. Important deductions on nano-coating performance are made. The study provides a useful compliment to experimental tests which are also being conducted.

### 2. NANO-COATING PROPERTIES

Since a continuum-based finite element approach is adopted, molecular variations in nano-particle dynamics in the coating cannot be simulated. Instead an average value of material properties is adopted for a 60:40 Alumina/Titanium oxide (TiO2:Al2O3) mixture nano-coating (powder). The table below summarises the key material properties (Young modulus, Poisson ratio, density and thermal conductivity) for the original nano-powders and the composite nano-coating:

<table>
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<th>Property</th>
<th>Nano-Powder</th>
<th>Nano-Coating</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Young modulus</td>
<td>180 GPa</td>
<td>160 GPa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poisson ratio</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Density</td>
<td>4000 kg/m³</td>
<td>3600 kg/m³</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thermal conductivity</td>
<td>15 W/mK</td>
<td>25 W/mK</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3. ANSYS THERMAL STRESS FORMULATION

In ANSYS to simulate coupled thermal stress analysis, the stresses are related to the strains as follows [37]:

\[
\epsilon = \frac{1}{E} \sigma + \frac{1}{E_y} \varepsilon
\]

where:
- \( \sigma \) = Stress Vector
- \( E \) = Elastic or elastic-plastic matrix
- \( \varepsilon \) = Elastic strain vector
- \( \varepsilon_y \) = Total strain vector
- \( E_y \) = Thermal strain vector

The layer integration point strains and stresses are computed by combining the following two equations:

\[
\sigma = E \epsilon + \frac{1}{2} \mu (\nabla \epsilon + (\nabla \epsilon)^T)
\]

\[
\epsilon = \nabla \epsilon + (\nabla \epsilon)^T
\]

### 4. ANSYS MESH AND THERMAL STRESS ANALYSIS

A three-dimensional model was created using the ANSYS static structural geometry modeller to represent a steel sample under high temperature corrosion. A two-layered domain in (x,y,z) space is created with the base layer representing the gas turbine blade substrate (AlSi 304 super alloy) and the upper layer simulating the Aluminium-Titanium oxide nano-coating, as shown below. Note the nano-coating completely engulfs the substrate specimen. The fixture (cylindrical hole) is also shown in order to compare simulations with future HYVOF experiments. Shows below the front (top) and 3-D rendition of the model. The clamping is achieved via the hole which penetrates the entire substrate and is filled with nano-material during the coating process. The nano coating thickness is 0.816 mm. The substrate sample dimensions are 10.988 mm (length) and 20.76 cm (width). The boundary conditions imposed on all six faces of the coated model is a thermal one due to the hot gas at an average temperature of 1000 °C. The structural boundary condition is the fixing hole where the model is constrained.

### 5. CONCLUSIONS

In all cases the nano-coating is found to provide superior thermal protection to the steel substrate (AlSi 304 super alloy). High stress zones are completely eliminated with nano-coating whereas they are prevalent with titanium micro-coating. Although titanium oxide has excellent thermal resistance properties, the alumina nano-powder when mixed with titania, produces an inert performance which is in contrast to inter-diffusion and this leads to stability during exposure to elevated temperatures for long periods of time, thus preserving the sharp interfaces and minimising thermal stresses which are necessary for good thermal barrier performance. The alumina material tends to form an amorphous structure which is deposited onto a substrate which is held at a relatively low temperature and in the alternative it tends to form a crystalline structure when applied by a super deposition to a substrate held at a relatively high temperature/ambient. Either case will result in a very resilient nano-coating which achieves excellent bonding to the super alloy substrate and prevents the penetration of hot gases as the necessary extent of nano-scale porosity are mitigated. This is not possible in the nano-coating which fails, permits hot gas penetration, has reduced rigidity and eventually cracks. Alumina being inert to the coating layer and in contact with the substrate has the desirable characteristics that can extend the life of the nano-coating which forms on the substrate due to oxidation of the substrate will be alumina, therefore having a nano-structured alumina layer in the coating adjacent to a naturally occurring alumina layer will probably provide the best coating adherence as noted in [19]. Overall much lower stresses and deformations are produced with nano-coatings compared with micro-coatings.

### REFERENCES