



Faculty of Manufacturing Engineering

**EFFECT OF ZIRCONIA AND CHROMIA ON THE MECHANICAL
AND TRIBOLOGY PROPERTIES OF ALUMINA CUTTING TOOL**

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**EFFECT OF ZIRCONIA AND CHROMIA ON THE MECHANICAL AND
TRIBOLOGY PROPERTIES OF ALUMINA CUTTING TOOL**

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**A thesis submitted
in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science
in Manufacturing Engineering**


Faculty of Manufacturing Engineering

UNIVERSITI TEKNIKAL MALAYSIA MELAKA

2021

DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis entitled “Effect of Zirconia and Chromia on the Mechanical and Tribology Properties of Alumina Cutting Tool” is the result of my own research except as cited in the references. The thesis has not been accepted for any degree and is not concurrently submitted in candidature of any other degree.

Signature : 

Name : Muhamad Naim Fahmi bin Abdul Manap

Date : 9 July 2021

APPROVAL

I hereby declare that I have read this thesis and in my opinion this thesis is sufficient in terms of scope and quality for the award of Master of Science in Manufacturing Engineering.



Signature :

Supervisor Name : Associate Prof. Ir. Dr. Mohd Hadzlev bin Abu Bakar
:

Date : 9 July 2021
:

DEDICATION

To my beloved father, mother, my family, my supervisor and my supportive friends that
accompanying me along the difficult pathway in my university life.

ABSTRACT

Due to their excellent hardness, high abrasion resistance and chemical stability, alumina based cutting tools are suitable for the high speed machining, which contributed to the high productivity. The properties of high hot hardness play significant roles to perform in dry machining which further reduce operational cost. However, at some extent, alumina are prone to catastrophic failure, sudden breakage and thermal shocks due to brittle structure. Therefore, alteration of alumina composition with addition of Zirconia and Chromia is proposed to improve fracture toughness and wear resistance. In this research, the effect of Zirconia and Chromia addition on the dimension accuracy, mechanical properties, tribology and wear performance were investigated. The study started with the mixture of Alumina-Zirconia with up to 25 wt% Zirconia content. These compositions were blended using ball mill, compacted using hydraulic and Cold Isostatic Press (CIP) and sintered at constant parameters. The mechanical properties of sintered Alumina-Zirconia were evaluated based on the dimension accuracy, density and hardness. The composition with maximum hardness was selected to be further composed with Chromia in range of 0.2-0.8 wt%. The results show that the composition of Alumina-zirconia with a ratio of 80-20 wt% presented maximum hardness of 70.07 HRC. With the addition of 0.6 wt% Chromia, the hardness was increased to 71.03 HRC. Further, the composition that demonstrated highest hardness, which is Alumina-Zirconia-Chromia with the ratio of 80-20-0.6 wt% have been selected for machining tests. Machining trials with AISI 1045 carbon steel show that Alumina-Zirconia-Chromia demonstrated maximum 360s tool life, which is 33.33% better than Alumina-Zirconia cutting tool. Wear mechanisms for both cutting tools dominated by the chipping, abrasive, built-up edge and built-up layer. Analysis shows that the addition of Chromia expanded Alumina particles and changed the overall grains distribution into bimodal structure. This provided Zirconia particles that infiltrated between Alumina particles interlocked overall structure, which facilitated into higher deformation resistance into overall structure. As potential application, cutting tool of Alumina-Zirconia-Chromia developed in this study is suitable in machining low carbon steel up to 200 m/min cutting speed.

KESAN ZIRKONIA DAN KROMIA TERHADAP SIFAT-SIFAT MEKANIKAL DAN TRIBOLOGI UNTUK PERKAKAS PEMOTONG ALUMINA

ABSTRAK

Disebabkan sifat-sifatnya yang keras, rintangan abrasif tinggi dan stabil dalam kimia, perkakas pemotong berasaskan alumina sesuai digunakan dalam pemesinan berhalaju tinggi, yang mana memberi impak kepada produktiviti tinggi. Sifat-sifat seperti kekerasan panas tinggi memberi kesan signifikan dalam pemesinan kering, yang mana merendahkan lagi kos operasi. Walau bagaimanapun, pada keadaan tertentu, alumina cenderung untuk gagal secara katastropik, patah mengejut dan kejutan terma disebabkan strukturnya yang rapuh. Oleh yang demikian, perubahan komposisi alumina dengan penambahan Zirkonia dan Kromia dicadangkan untuk menambahbaik keliatan patah dan rintangan haus. Dalam kajian ini, kesan penambahan Zirkonia dan Kromia ke atas ketepatan dimensi, sifat-sifat mekanikal, tribologi dan prestrasi haus telah diselidik. Kajian bermula dengan pencampuran serbuk Alumina-Zirkonia sehingga 25 wt% kandungan Zirkonia. Komposisi ini dikisar menggunakan mesin Pengisar Bebola, dimampatkan menggunakan Mesin Penekan Hidraulik dan Mesin Penekan Isostatik Sejuk (CIP) dan disinter pada parameter yang malar. Sifat-sifat mekanikal untuk Alumina-Zirkonia yang disinter dinilai berasaskan ketepatan dimensi, ketumpatan dan kekerasan. Komposisi yang memiliki kekerasan maksimum dipilih untuk dicampur dengan Kromia pada kadar 0.2-0.8 wt%. Keputusan menunjukkan sampel Alumina-Zirkonia dengan nisbah 80-20 wt% menghasilkan kekerasan maksimum 70.07 HRC. Dengan penambahan 0.6 wt% Kromia, kekerasan meningkat kepada 71.03 HRC. Seterusnya, komposisi yang menunjukkan kekerasan tertinggi, iaitu Alumina-Zirkonia-Kromia dengan nisbah 80-20-0.6 wt% telahpun dipilih untuk ujian pemesinan. Percubaan pemesinan dengan AISI 1045 keluli karbon prestasi pemesinan bersama keluli karbon AISI 1045 menunjukkan Alumina-Zirkonia-Kromia menghasilkan 360s maksimum hayat perkakas, yang mana 33.33% lebih baik daripada perkakas pemotong Alumina-Zirkonia. Mekanisma haus pada kedua-dua perkakas pemotong didominasi oleh penyerpihan, haus abrasif, serpihan dengan pinggir terbina dan serpihan dengan lapisan terbina. Analisis mendapati penambahan Kromia mengembangkan partikel Alumina dan menjadikan keseluruhan taburan ira menjadi struktur dwi-modal. Ini membolehkan partikel Zirkonia yang menyelinap di celah-celah partikel Alumina bertindak mengunci ira yang membawa kepada peningkatan rintangan deformasi kepada keseluruhan struktur. Potensi aplikasi perkakas pemotong Alumina-Zirkonia-Kromia yang dibangunkan dalam kajian ini sesuai dalam pemesinan keluli rendah sehingga 200 m/min halaju pemesinan.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
DECLARATION	
APPROVAL	
DEDICATION	
ABSTRACT	i
ABSTRAK	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	iv
LIST OF TABLES	vii
LIST OF FIGURES	ix
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	xvi
LIST OF SYMBOLS	xviii
LIST OF PUBLICATIONS	xx
 CHAPTER	
1. INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Research background	1
1.2 Problem statement	3
1.3 Research objectives	5
1.4 Scope of research	5
1.5 Significant of research	6
1.6 Organization of thesis	7
 2. LITERATURE REVIEW	8
2.1 Introduction	8
2.2 Overview of cutting tools that currently applied in industry	8
2.3 Ceramic cutting tool	11
2.4 Properties of ceramic cutting tool	12
2.4.1 Hardness	13
2.4.2 Flexural Strength	14
2.4.3 Chemical Stability	15
2.4.4 Thermal Stability	15
2.5 Alumina	16
2.6 Zirconia	17
2.7 Fabrication process of ceramic cutting tool	18
2.7.1 Ball Milling	18
2.7.2 Cold isostatic press (CIP)	19
2.7.3 Sintering	22
2.8 Alumina-based ceramic cutting tool	24
2.9 Machining process	26
2.9.1 Feed rate	27
2.9.2 Cutting speed	28

2.9.3	Spindle speed	28
2.9.4	Depth of cut	28
2.10	Effect of cutting parameter on tool wear	29
2.11	Chip formation	30
2.12	Turning process	32
2.13	Cutting tool geometry	33
2.14	Insert shape and size	35
2.15	Tool life	36
2.16	Types of tool wear	37
2.17	AISI 1045-medium carbon steel	40
2.18	Current problem in steel machining	42
2.19	Summary of previous studies	44
2.20	Summary	46
3.	METHODOLOGY	48
3.1	Project flow chart	48
3.2	Materials	50
3.2.1	Alumina	50
3.2.2	Zirconia	51
3.2.3	Chromia	52
3.3	Powder metallurgy process	53
3.3.1	Composition	53
3.3.2	Mixing	54
3.3.3	Compaction Process	56
3.3.4	Sintering process	58
3.4	Characterization of alumina-zirconia-chromia cutting tool	60
3.4.1	Density and porosity analysis	60
3.4.2	Rockwell hardness analysis	62
3.5	Tribology: pin on disk	63
3.6	Machining test	65
3.6.1	Tool holder	65
3.6.2	Workpiece material	66
3.6.3	Machining operation	67
3.7	Concluding remarks	69
4.	RESULT AND DISCUSSION	70
4.1	Analysis on particle size of alumina, zirconia and chromia powders	70
4.2	Characterization of Alumina-Zirconia-Chromia cutting tool	77
4.2.1	Dimension accuracy for diameter	77
4.2.2	Dimension accuracy for thickness	80
4.2.3	Density	83
4.2.4	Hardness	85
4.3	Analysis of chromia content on density and hardness	87

4.4	Coefficient of friction	91
4.5	Comparison of machining performances between alumina-zirconia and alumina-zirconia-chromia	94
4.6	Summary	99
5.	CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION	100
5.1	Conclusion	100
5.2	Recommendation	102
	REFERENCES	104

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE	TITLE	PAGE
2.1	Advantages and disadvantages of ceramic material	11
2.2	Mechanical properties of ceramic materials	12
2.3	Properties of alumina at different percentage	16
2.4	Properties of zirconia at different percentage	17
2.5	Ranges of n value for various tool materials	37
2.6	Chemical composition of AISI 1045	42
2.7	Mechanical properties of AISI 1045	42
3.1	Specification of Al_2O_3 powder	50
3.2	Specification of ZrO_2 powder	51
3.3	Specification of Cr_2O_3 powder	52
3.4	Variant content of Cr_2O_3	53
3.5	Variant content of Al_2O_3 - ZrO_2	53
3.6	Parameter of mixing process	55
3.7	Parameter of compaction process	58
3.8	Specifications of tool holder	66
3.9	Properties of AISI 1045	66
3.10	Specifications of CNC lathe machine DMG Mori Seiki CTX 310 Ecoline	68
3.11	Parameter of machining operation	68

3.12	Specification of Optical Microscope	69
4.1	Diameter shrinkage by various compositions	77
4.2	Thickness shrinkage by various compositions	80
4.3	Relative density based on the specific composition of each cutting tool	84
4.4	The comparison between $\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3\text{-ZrO}_2$ and $\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3\text{-ZrO}_2\text{-Cr}_2\text{O}_3$ in terms of hardness based on the specific composition of each cutting tool	86
4.5	Effect of Cr_2O_3 wt% content on mechanical properties of $\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3\text{-ZrO}_2\text{-}$ Cr_2O_3	87

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE	TITLE	PAGE
2.1	Graph of sintering temperature versus flexural strength and fracture toughness of TiB ₂ /Al ₂ O ₃ composite (Gu et al, 2012).	14
2.2	Schematic drawing of pressure vessel during Cold Isostatic Press (Kanari et al., 2015)	20
2.3	Schematic of wet-bag isostatic pressing system	21
2.4	Schematic of dry-bag isostatic pressing system	21
2.5	Mechanism of sintering to achieve maximum density and strength	23
2.6	Microstructural changes in sintering process. (i) Powder compact, (ii) Initial stage, (iii) Intermediate stage, (iv) Final stage	23
2.7	Metal machining (a) A cross-sectional view of the cutting process. (b) Negative rake angle of the tool, compare to positive rake angle in (a).	26
2.8	Fundamental inputs and outputs involved in machining process	27
2.9	Chip formation (a) Discontinuous (b) Continuous (c) Continuous with built-up edge (d) Serrated (Groover, 2010)	32
2.10	Turning operations performed on lathe machine	33
2.11	The strength and tendency to break for various insert shapes	35
2.12	Natural log-log plot of cutting speed vs tool life	37
2.13	Comparison of wear for ceramic cutting tools that made from	38

	alumina, zirconia and chromia (a) Alumina-zirconia cutting tool and (b) Alumina-zirconia-chromia cutting tool	
2.14	Flank wear VB values of WC8 as a function of cutting time at different (a) feed rate (b) depth of cut and (c) cutting speed	39
3.1	Flowchart of the study	49
3.2	Al ₂ O ₃ powder	50
3.3	ZrO ₂ powder	51
3.4	Cr ₂ O ₃ powder	52
3.5	Ball mill machine	54
3.6	Polyethylene glycol (PEG)	55
3.7	The powder mixture after ball milling process	55
3.8	Round-shaped mould	56
3.9	Pre-compaction process using hydraulic hand press	57
3.10	Cold Isostatic Press (CIP) machine	58
3.11	Batch of green bodies inside heating furnace	59
3.12	Sintered cutting tools	59
3.13	Sintering profile	60
3.14	Aleamiracle MD-3005 electronic densimeters	62
3.15	Rockwell hardness set up	63
3.16	Micro Pin on Disk Tribotester	64
3.17	Friction test set up on ceramic cutting tool	64
3.18	Round-shaped ceramic cutting tools for machining operation	65
3.19	Ceramic cutting tool clamped onto tool holder CRDN N2525-4	66
3.20	AISI 1045	67
3.21	CNC lathe machine DMG Mori Seiki CTX 310 Ecoline	68

3.22	Optical Microscope	69
4.1	Particle size distribution of Al_2O_3 powder as determined via particle size analyser	71
4.2	Particle size distribution of ZrO_2 powder as determined via particle size analyser	71
4.3	Particle size distribution of Cr_2O_3 powder as determined via particle size analyser	72
4.4	Particle size distribution of Al_2O_3 - ZrO_2 powder mixture as determined via particle size analyser	73
4.5	Particle size of Al_2O_3 - ZrO_2 - Cr_2O_3 powder mixture as determined via particle size analyzer	73
4.6	Average particle size of individual powders and mixtures	74
4.7	Specific surface area of individual powders and mixtures	76
4.8	Comparison of diameter shrinkage	79
4.9	Comparison of thickness shrinkage	82
4.10	Comparison of Al_2O_3 - ZrO_2 and Al_2O_3 - ZrO_2 - Cr_2O_3 cutting tool in relative density	85
4.11	Comparison of Al_2O_3 - ZrO_2 and Al_2O_3 - ZrO_2 - Cr_2O_3 cutting tool in Vickers hardness	86
4.12	Effect of Cr_2O_3 content on the density	88
4.13	Effect of Cr_2O_3 content on the hardness	88
4.14	Illustrations of evaporation from green body to after sintering process	89
4.15	Cutting tool comparison between (a) Al_2O_3 - ZrO_2 and (b) Al_2O_3 - ZrO_2 - Cr_2O_3	91

4.16	Comparison of coefficient of friction (μ) of Al_2O_3 , Al_2O_3 - ZrO_2 and Al_2O_3 - ZrO_2 - Cr_2O_3	92
4.17	Cutting tool that has been cross in the middle	94
4.18	Grain illustration of single Al_2O_3 , Al_2O_3 - ZrO_2 and Al_2O_3 - ZrO_2 - Cr_2O_3	94
4.19	Tool life recorded when machining Al_2O_3 - ZrO_2 cutting tool with AISI 1045.	95
4.20	Tool life recorded when machining Al_2O_3 - ZrO_2 - Cr_2O_3 cutting tool with AISI 1045	96
4.21	The comparison of tool life of the cutting tools at 200 m/min and 250 m/min cutting speeds for Al_2O_3 - ZrO_2 and Al_2O_3 - ZrO_2 - Cr_2O_3	97

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AISI	-	American iron and steel institute
Al	-	Aluminium
Al ₂ O ₃	-	Aluminium oxide/ alumina
ASTM	-	American society for testing and materials
BUE	-	Built-up edge
CBN	-	Cubic boron nitride
CeO ₂	-	Cerium oxide
CIP	-	Cold isostatic press
CNC	-	Computer numerical control
CrN	-	Chromium nitride
EN	-	Euro norm
F	-	Feed rate
F _f	-	Load at fracture
HIP	-	Hot isostatic press
HSS	-	High speed steel
ISO	-	International standard organization
L	-	Distance
Mg	-	Magnesium
MgO	-	Magnesium oxide/ magnesia
O	-	Oxygen

R	-	Radius
S_3N_4	-	Silicon nitride
SEM	-	Scanning electron microscope
SiC	-	Silicon carbide
TiAlN	-	Titanium aluminium nitride
TiC	-	Titanium carbide
TiCN	-	Titanium carbon nitride
TiN	-	Titanium nitride
Vc	-	Cutting speed
W	-	Weight
Y_2O_3	-	Yttrium oxide
Zr	-	Zirconium
ZrN	-	Zirconium nitride

LIST OF SYMBOLS

m/min	-	Meter per minute
%	-	Percent
°C	-	Degree Celsius
mm	-	Millimeter
μm	-	Micrometer
K	-	Kelvin
kg/m ³	-	Kilogram per cubic meter
mm/rev	-	Millimeter per revolution
N	-	Newton
kW	-	Kilowatt
rpm	-	Revolution per minute
Nm	-	Newton meter
L/min	-	Liter per minute
HRC	-	Rockwell C hardness
HV	-	Vickers hardness
MPa	-	Megapascal
W/ m/K	-	Watts per meter per kelvin
J/ g.K	-	Joule per gram per kelvin

GPa	-	Gigapascal
Psi	-	Pound per square inch
s		second

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research background

Technology in ceramic processing has advanced to a level where ceramic is developed to enhance its properties so that it can perform very well. There are many applications that can be facilitated with the advancement of ceramic processing including insulators and structure in construction industries, thermal barriers and magnetic materials in electronic industries, high strength component in defence and manufacturing industries. The unique properties of advanced ceramic are high abrasive, high hardness, high toughness, low or non-thermal conductivity and chemical stability providing advantages to be applied for these applications (Abbas et al., 2015).

Some of the commonly used ceramic tool materials are polycrystalline diamond (PCD), cubic boron nitride (CBN) cemented carbide, silicon nitride and alumina. Each cutting tool have different characteristics, capability, suitable workpiece materials, cutting conditions and cost. These ceramic cutting tools have been widely used due because of the combination of the high fracture toughness, high hot hardness, oxidation resistance, chemical stability and good chipping resistance (Harrison and Lee, 2016). Some of the cutting tools such as diamond and CBN are suitable to machine high strength materials such as titanium and nickel alloys. Whereas some others such as carbide, silicon nitride and alumina mostly used to machine common materials in industry such as tool steel, carbon steel and aluminium.

In ceramic processing, the ceramic cutting tools are normally fabricated using the powder metallurgy process. This process involves which require many techniques such as ball milling, uniaxial pressing, cold isostatic pressing and sintering. During the process, the base material which is ceramic is mixed and milled with reinforced material with specific composition to produce refractory body for the tribological application. The behaviour and microstructure of ceramics are significantly affected by many factors such as ceramic processing, initial powder state, particle size and sintering process (Abu Bakar et al., 2018). A fine and uniform grain size of the powder during the ceramic cutting tool processing should produce denser ceramic products especially when the ceramic powders are engaged with other secondary material such as chromia and zirconia. Hence, this will provide additional advantages not only to achieve high hardness but also to resist wear from the heat and refractory condition during machining.

Alumina-based materials are amongst the popular choices of material to be used in machining operation due to its high abrasion resistance, high hardness and its excellent chemical inertness against the machining environment and workpiece (Lee et al., 2016). Years ago, due to the superior properties, alumina was only used as engineering materials to produce ball mills, seal rings, thread guides and grinders (Senthil et al., 2003). Nowadays, alumina has been applied in wide application that requires abrasive, wear and tribological performance varied through automotive, aerospace, oil and gas and medical industries. Several components that established require alumina as main material are piston rings, brake pad, bearing, artificial bones, etc.

One of the major advantages of alumina based cutting tool over carbide is the capability to be operated at dry condition. Machining with carbide is difficult in dry condition which coolant is compulsory to reduce the heat generated at the cutting zone. At some extent, machining with carbide increase the cost of production due to the requirement