

RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Behaviour of Bifilm Defects in Cast Al-7Si-Mg Alloy

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OPEN ACCESS

Citation: El-Sayed MA (2016) The Behaviour of Bifilm

Defects in Cast Al-7Si-Mg Alloy. PLoS ONE 11 (8):

e0160633. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0160633

Editor: Amitava Mukherjee, VIT University, INDIA

Received: March 11, 2016

Accepted: July 23, 2016

Published: August 16, 2016

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Data Availability Statement: All relevant data are within the paper and its Supporting Information files.

Funding: This work has been funded by The Arab Academy for Science and Technology and Maritime Transport, Egypt (www.aast.edu). The funder role

was the financial support of the research fellowship by the author (ME) at The University of Birmingham from June 1st 2015 to September 30th 2015. The funder had no role in study design, data collection and analysis, decision to publish, or preparation of the manuscript.

Competing Interests: The author has declared that no competing interests exist.

Abstract

Double oxide films (bifilms) are significant defects in the casting of light alloys, and have been shown to decrease tensile and fatigue properties, and also to increase their scatter, making casting properties unreproducible and unreliable. A bifilm consists of doubled-over oxide films containing a gas-filled crevice and is formed due to surface turbulence of the liquid metal during handling and/or pouring. Previous studies have shown that the nature of oxide film defects may change with time, as the atmosphere inside the bifilm could be consumed by reaction with the surrounding melt, which may enhance the mechanical properties of Al alloy castings. As a proxy for a bifilm, an air bubble was trapped within an Al-7wt.% Si-0.3wt.%Mg (2L99) alloy melt, subjected to stirring. The effect of different parameters such as the holding time, stirring velocity and melt temperature on the change in gas composition of the bubble was investigated, using a design of experiments (DoE) approach. Also, the solid species inside the bubbles solidified in the melt were examined using SEM. The results suggested that both oxygen and nitrogen inside the bifilm would be consumed by reaction with the surrounding melt producing $MgAl_2O_4$ and AlN , respectively. Also, hydrogen was suggested to consistently diffuse into the defect. The reaction rates and the rate of H diffusion were shown to increase upon increasing the holding time and temperature, and stirring velocity. Such significant effect of the process parameters studied on the gaseous content of the bubble suggesting that a careful control of such parameters might lead to the deactivation of bifilm defects, or at least elimination of their deteriorous effect in light alloy castings.