Robert B. Heimann

Plasma-Spray Coating

Principles and Applications

Weinheim • New York • Basel • Cambridge • Tokyo

Contents

List of Symbols and Abbreviations xiii

1 Introduction 1

1.1 Coatings in the Industrial Environment 2

1.2 Surface Coating Techniques 3

1.3 Brief History of Thermal Spraying 8

1.4 Synergistic Nature of Coatings. 13

1.5 Applications of Thermally Sprayed Coatings 14

References 15

2 Principles of Thermal Spraying. 17

2.1 Characterization of Flame versus Plasma Spraying. 21

2.2 Concept of Energy Transfer Processes 22

2.3 Unique Features of the Plasma Spray Process 22

References 25

3 The First Energy Transfer Process: Electron–Gas Interactions 27

3.1 The Plasma State 27

3.1.1 Characteristic Plasma Parameters 28

3.1.1.1 Langmuir Plasma Frequency 28

3.1.1.2 Debye Screening Length 29

3.1.1.3 Landau Length 29

3.1.1.4 Collision Path Length 30

3.1.1.5 Collision Frequency 31

3.1.2 Classification of Plasmas 31

3.1.2.1 Low Density Plasmas. 32

3.1.2.2 Medium Density Plasmas 32

3.1.2.3 High Density Plasmas . . . 35
3.1.3 Equilibrium and Nonequilibrium Plasmas . . . 35
3.1.4 Maxwellian Distribution of Plasma Energies . . . 37
3.1.5 Equilibrium Compositions of Plasma Gases (Phase Diagrams) . . . 38
3.2 Plasma Generation . . . 38
3.2.1 Plasma Generation through Application of Heat . . . 40
3.2.2 Plasma Generation through Compression . . . 43
3.2.3 Plasma Generation by Radiation . . . 43
3.2.4 Plasma Generation by Electric Currents (Gas Discharges) . . . 44
3.2.4.1 Glow Discharges . . . 45
3.2.4.2 Arc Discharges . . . 46
3.2.4.3 Modeling of the Arc Column . . . 48
3.2.4.4 Structure of the Arc Column . . . 50
3.3 Design of Plasmatrons . . . 55
3.3.1 Arc Discharge Generators and their Applications . . . 57
3.3.1.1 Electrode-supported Plasmas . . . 59
3.3.1.2 Electrodeless Plasmas . . . 63
3.3.1.3 Hybrid Devices . . . 66
3.3.2 Stabilization of Plasma Arcs . . . 68
3.3.2.1 Wall-stabilized Arcs . . . 68
3.3.2.2 Convection-stabilized Arcs . . . 68
3.3.2.3 Electrode-stabilized Arcs . . . 69
3.3.2.4 Other Stabilization Methods . . . 69
3.3.3 Temperature and Velocity Distribution in a Plasma Jet . . . 70
3.3.3.1 Turbulent Jets . . . 70
3.3.3.2 Quasi-laminar Jets . . . 74
3.4 Plasma Diagnostics: Temperature, Enthalpy, and Velocity Measurements . . . 77
3.4.1 Temperature Measurements . . . 77
3.4.1.1 Spectroscopic Methods . . . 77
3.4.1.2 Two-wavelength Pyrometry . . . 80
3.4.2 Velocity Measurements . . . 81
3.4.2.1 Enthalpy Probe and Pitot Tube Techniques . . . 81
3.4.2.2 Laser Doppler Anemometry (LDA) . . . 83
3.4.2.3 Other Methods . . . 88
References . . . 88

4 The Second Energy Transfer Process: Plasma–Particle Interactions . . . 91
4.1 Injection of Powders . . . 91
4.2 Feed Material Characteristics . . . 91