Joining as an Enabling Technology for Mainstream Vehicle Lightweighting

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Materials for Vehicle Body-in-White Lightweighting

- **Newer generation steels**
  - Advanced high strength steels
  - Generation III steels

- **Aluminum alloys**
  - Sheet grades (5XXX, 6XXX, 7XXX)
  - Alternate product forms
    - Castings
    - Extrusions

- **Dissimilar metals joining**
  - Aluminum to steel combinations
  - Aluminum to magnesium
  - Metallurgical interactions
  - Material properties considerations

- **Joint performance guidelines**
Implicit toughness of AHSS and Gen III spot welds

- High hardenability
- Rapid thermal cycles of spot welding
- Eutectic forming additions
- Interfacial failures on destructive testing

Use of in-situ tempering techniques

- Fully hardened weld zones
- Cooling ~1-sec
- Short time tempering to provide toughness
- Improvements in failure modes
- Implications for crash performance
Welding of Advanced High Strength and Generation III Steels – cont.

- **Advanced gas metal arc welding processes**
  - Reciprocating wire feed
  - Tandem processing
  - Flux core welding
  - Hybrid laser welding

- **Application to advanced high strength steels**
  - Heat affected zone softening
  - Reduced joint efficiencies
  - Fatigue performance
  - Stamping induced strain

- **Improvements in GMAW methods**
  - Cooling rate enhancement
  - Productivity (speed)
  - Filler metal development
Joining Methods for Aluminum Sheet – Resistance Spot Welding

- **Challenges with electrode wear**
  - Weld “drop-outs”
  - Intermittent interfacial failures

- **Additional challenges with newer power supplies**
  - MFDC vs AC
  - Accelerated electrode wear

- **Improved weld morphology through enhanced surface heating**
  - Profiled electrodes with dressers
  - Third body “strips”

- **Improvements in weld quality**
  - Enhancements in joint reliability
  - Frequent maintenance of electrode systems
Joining Methods for Aluminum Sheet – Refill Friction Stir Spot Welding

- **Solid-state variants of spot welding**
  - Friction stir spot
  - Swept spot
  - Friction stir stitch
  - Refill friction stir spot

- **Mechanisms of the process**
  - Shoulder plunge/pin retract
  - Pin advance/shoulder retract
  - Minimal penetration into lower sheet

- **Demonstrated characteristics**
  - Minimal thinning of the top sheet
  - Nominally flush top surfaces
  - Shear strengths equivalent to spot welding
Welding to Aluminum to Steel

- **Process challenged by metallurgical reactions**
  - Melting point suppression
  - Intermetallic formation

- **Friction welding methods**
  - Production technology
  - Driven by short cycle times
  - Kinetic suppression of intermetallics
  - Kinetics aluminum alloy dependent

- **Adaptation to other process technologies**
  - Resistance spot welding variants
    - Direct welding
    - Roll bonded transition materials
    - Braze assisted
  - Solid-state process variants
    - Matching thermal cycles demonstrated in friction welding
Thermally Assisted Mechanical Fastening

- Mechanical fastening widely considered for dissimilar material joints
- Challenges for low ductility materials
  - Magnesium alloys (3% - 10% elongation)
  - Aluminum castings (3% elongation)
  - 7XXX alloys
  - Cracking on forming during fastening
- Warm fastening to enable formability
- Application of a heated die
- Contact conduction for local metal heating
- Demonstrated for both magnesium and high strength aluminum sheet

Al to Mg – No die heating
Al to Mg – Die Preheating 5-s at 360°C
Al to Mg – Die Preheating 2-s at 360°C
7075 sheet – Die Preheating 5-s at 365°C
Performance Prediction of Assembled Structures

- Efforts to minimize physical crash testing
- Shell based modeling for crash prediction
- Spot welds in mild steels considered rigid lengths
- Challenged by advanced materials and joining processes
  - Non-button failure modes
  - Joint separation before extensive plasticity of the base metals
- Empirical methods for establishing joint failure criterion
  - Combined loading based criteria
  - Independent empirical testing to define all constants in the criterion
  - Closed form or look-up table for individual joint criteria
- Component testing for validation
- Full crash validation
Adhesives in Lightweighting

◆ Distribute stress over a larger joining surface area
◆ Enable non-weldable dissimilar materials joining
◆ Enhance galvanic corrosion protection
◆ Enable weldbonding and rivetbonding:
  — increases joint efficiency, fatigue performance, NVH.
  — Resistance, projection, FSSW, laser, ultrasonic weldbonding
Joining as an Enabling Technology for Mainstream Vehicle Lightweighting - Summary

- **New technology trends for automotive BIW components**
  - Advanced high strength and Generation III steels
  - Newer aluminum alloys and product forms
  - Dissimilar materials product forms
  - Assessment tools for advanced product performance

- **Joining of advanced high strength and Gen III steels**
  - Spot welding with in-situ tempering
  - Advanced gas metal arc techniques

- **Welding of aluminum sheet**
  - Advances in resistance spot welding
  - Friction stir spot welding methods

- **Dissimilar materials joining**
  - Welding aluminum to steel
  - Thermally assisted mechanical fastening

- **Performance prediction of welded structures**
  - Reduction in required crash testing
  - Shell models for structural analysis
  - Empirical failure criteria for specific joints
  - Adaptable to a range of materials and joining methods

- **Use of adhesives**
  - Joint designs for bonding
  - Hybrid joining with welds or fasteners
Questions?

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