

Hot stamping of thin-walled steel components

Zur Erlangung des akademischen Grades eines

Dr.-Ing.

von der Fakultät Maschinenbau
der Technischen Universität Dortmund
genehmigte Dissertation

vorgelegt von

Dipl.-Ing. Georgios Georgiadis

aus

Athen

Dortmund, 2017

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Mitberichter: Jun.-Prof. Dr.-Ing. S. Klinge

Tag der mündlichen Prüfung: 19. Mai 2017

Dortmunder Umformtechnik

Band 93

Georgios Georgiadis

Hot stamping of thin-walled steel components

D 290 (Diss. Technische Universität Dortmund)

Shaker Verlag
Aachen 2017

Bibliographic information published by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek

The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data are available in the Internet at <http://dnb.d-nb.de>.

Zugl.: Dortmund, Technische Univ., Diss., 2017

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Printed in Germany.

ISBN 978-3-8440-5435-4

ISSN 1619-6317

Shaker Verlag GmbH • P.O. BOX 101818 • D-52018 Aachen

Phone: 0049/2407/9596-0 • Telefax: 0049/2407/9596-9

Internet: www.shaker.de • e-mail: info@shaker.de

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Acknowledgement

This dissertation presents the findings of my PhD research work hosted by Volkswagen AG, first by the Technology Planning and Development Department and subsequently by the Toolmaking Division of Volkswagen Brand. During this time I was enrolled at the Institute of Forming Technology and Lightweight Construction (IUL) of the Technical University of Dortmund. Here, I would like to thank all those who have contributed to the completion of this dissertation.

First and foremost, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my thesis advisor, Prof. Dr.-Ing. Dr.-Ing. E.h. A. Erman Tekkaya, for the exceptional opportunity to conduct the current research work under his academic supervision. Our intensive and inspiring discussions constituted a decisive impulse for defining the thesis scope and paved the way for its successful completion. His crucial support, great trust and motivation, enabled me not only to widen my scientific horizons, but also to further develop my personal competences. I would also like to kindly thank Prof. Dr.-Ing. Werner Homberg from the Department of Forming and Machining Technology of the University of Paderborn for his constructive suggestions with respect to my research work as well as for revising my thesis. Furthermore, I would like to thank Prof. Dr.-Ing. habil. Frank Walther and Jun.-Prof. Dr.-Ing. Sandra Klinge for investing valuable time and participating in the advisory committee of this thesis.

To my supervisor at Volkswagen AG, Dr.-Ing. Philipp Weigert, I owe very special thanks for his invaluable support, utter trust and strategic guidance. His methodical approach in terms of the interface between scientific theory and industrial practice as well as his elaborate advice were a substantial help, playing a significant role in structuring this dissertation. A cordial thank you to Dipl.-Ing. (FH) Sören Horneber and Dr.-Ing. Hansjörg Kurz from Volkswagen AG for giving me the opportunity to work in their departments and supporting this research work.

Additional thanks are directed to all of my colleagues both at Volkswagen AG and IUL for the outstanding assistance and collaborative partnership. Especially, the scientific and technical collaboration with Dr. rer. nat. Michael Alsmann, Dipl.-Ing. Arne Goldau, M.Sc. Sina Samadi and Dr.-Ing. Alper Güner is highly appreciated.

This dissertation is dedicated to my family. Without their powerful encouragement, unlimited patience and faith in me, I would not be able to successfully complete this thesis. I would sincerely like to thank them for their unconditional support during all stages of my life.

Georgios Georgiadis

Dortmund, June 2017

Abstract

In recent years, hot stamping has been established as a standard process for mass manufacturing of various crash-relevant body-in-white components, as a result of the rising demand for car body's weight reduction and crashworthiness increase. To further exploit the lightweight potential of this forming technology, investigations on the hot stamping of thin-walled boron-manganese steel components are conducted.

A sensitivity analysis of the entire process chain towards the sheets thickness is carried out to examine the impact of thickness-dependent parameters on the process cycle and the phase transformation kinetics as well as on the final component properties and microstructure. The flow behavior is analyzed under both isothermal and non-isothermal conditions and the effect of diverse influential parameters is evaluated. For this purpose, a novel experimental method is introduced, able to mimic industrial conditions, where the specimens are simultaneously formed and quenched. Similarly, the impact of sheet thickness on formability is studied under different thermal conditions. A comprehensive comparison between the isothermal and the non-isothermal forming limit curves is performed. Finally, the research results and outcomes are validated by manufacturing and analyzing two thin hot stamped components, a demonstrator and a real-life automotive component.

In this thesis it is demonstrated that hot stamping of thin-walled boron-manganese steel components is feasible if the process chain is optimally designed and the process parameters properly adjusted. It is further concluded that even though stress-strain behavior is not significantly affected by different thermal conditions, formability is. An increase of formability is generally notable under isothermal conditions. Moreover, an opposite impact of thickness on formability under isothermal and non-isothermal conditions is identified, resulting from the counteracting effects of temperature and work hardening. Aiming at formability enhancement, the forming step should be thus conducted following a thermal cycle that enables attaining the optimum balance between these competing effects. By validating the determined forming limit curves it is shown that in the case of thin sheets the isothermal curves constitute a more conservative approach, while the non-isothermal ones reach the actual forming limits with higher precision by reproducing direct hot stamping conditions.

Zusammenfassung

In den letzten Jahren hat sich die Warmumformung als Standardprozess für die Serienfertigung von crashrelevanten Blechteilen im Karosseriebau etabliert. Hauptgrund hierfür ist die wachsende Nachfrage nach Gewichtsreduzierung von Automobilen bei gleichzeitiger Erhöhung der Crashesicherheit. Zur Erweiterung des nachgewiesenen Leichtbaupotentials dieser Umformtechnologie wird die Warmumformung dünnwandiger Bor-Mangan-Stahlbauteile umfassend untersucht.

Die Sensitivität des gesamten Fertigungsprozesses hinsichtlich der Blechstärke wird analysiert. Der Einfluss unterschiedlicher blechdickenabhängiger Prozessparameter auf den Prozesszyklus und die Phasenumwandlungskinetik sowie auf die Bauteileigenschaften und den Gefügestand wird ermittelt. Das Fließverhalten wird sowohl unter isothermen als auch unter nicht-isothermen Bedingungen untersucht und die Einflüsse diverser Parameter werden dabei evaluiert. Hierfür wird eine neue experimentelle Methode eingeführt, die mittels der gleichzeitig ablaufenden Umform- und Abschreckprozesse die Serienbedingungen gänzlich nachbilden kann. Eine ähnliche experimentelle Vorgehensweise wird bei der Untersuchung des Einflusses der Blechdicke auf die Umformbarkeit unter verschiedenen thermischen Bedingungen angewandt. Ein umfassender Vergleich zwischen den isothermen und den nicht-isothermen Grenzformänderungskurven wird durchgeführt. Die Erkenntnisse und Ergebnisse aus den durchgeführten Untersuchungen werden durch zwei dünnwandigen warmumgeformten Komponenten, einen Demonstrator und einen praxisrelevanten Automobilbauteil, validiert.

Im Rahmen dieser Arbeit wird bewiesen, dass die Warmumformung dünnwandiger Bor-Mangan-Stahlbauteile bei optimaler Auslegung der gesamten Prozesskette und bei entsprechender Anpassung der Prozessparameter technisch realisierbar ist. Es wird weiterhin festgestellt, dass im Gegensatz zum Spannungs-Dehnungs-Verhalten, die Umformbarkeit von den unterschiedlichen thermischen Bedingungen signifikant beeinflusst wird. Eine Erhöhung der Umformbarkeit wird im Allgemeinen unter isothermen Bedingungen nachgewiesen. Eine gegensätzliche Auswirkung der Blechdicke auf die Umformbarkeit bei isothermen und nicht-isothermen Bedingungen wird festgestellt, resultierend aus den entgegenwirkenden Effekten der Temperatur und der Verfestigung. Zur Verbesserung der Umformbarkeit sollte der Umformprozess mit einem vorgegebenen thermischen Zyklus durchgeführt werden. Dieser Zyklus sollte das optimale Gleichgewicht zwischen den vorgenannten konkurrierenden Effekten herstellen. Durch die Validierung der ermittelten Grenzformänderungskurven wird abschließend unter Beweis gestellt, dass im Falle von dünnen Blechen die isothermen Kurven eher einen konservativen Ansatz darstellen, während die nicht-isothermen Kurven die tatsächlichen Umformgrenzen mit höher Genauigkeit erreichen, indem sie realitätsnahe Warmumformprozessbedingungen reproduzieren.

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