

Application of Coating on Carbide Insert

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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses application of coating on carbide insert to be used in the manufacturing industry as cutting tool. To achieve this in an efficient way, experiments on a variety of coatings are conducted on AISI 1018 steel, AISI M42 tool steel (58-63 HRC) and Titanium alloys (Ti64).

Design/methodology/approach: The conventional PVD and CVD methods have its limitations and that innovative processes are essential within the framework of an environmentally oriented quality management system. Meeting the requirements of ISO 9000 and ISO 14000 standards, the proposed model ensures the fulfilment of the basic requirements leading to the required quality of preparation processes and the quality of end products (hard coatings). In order to assess the impact of different coatings on the machining process, initial experiments simulate existing machining operations; this provides a standard for tool life and surface finish.

Findings: One of the main pre-requisites for successful industrial production is the use of quality coated cutting tools with defined mechanical and technological properties. Therefore, for the development and introduction of new coated cutting tool (new combination of cutting material and hard coatings), it is necessary to carry out a number of studies with the purpose to optimize the coatings composition and processing procedures, and also to test new tools in working conditions. The findings in the paper show that the Al₂O₃ coated tool perform better than uncoated in machining AISI 1018 steel, TiAlCrYN coated carbide insert in machining AISI M42 tool steel (58-63 HRC) and PVD –TiAlN&CVD –TiN-TiCN-Al₂O₃-TiN, in machining Titanium alloys (Ti64)

Research limitations/implications: The implications of the paper tend to indicate that machining AISI 1018 steels without lubricant can be optimized using coated cutting tools. The limitations of the paper include machining at one specific cutting speed and the employment of a short-time tool wear method. The requirements from industry: produce faster, better, safety and more ecologically, force us to develop new effective tools and innovative technologies. This provides a technological challenge to the scientists and engineers and increases the importance of knowing several scientific disciplines.

Practical implications: The quality of a company's product directly affects its competitive position, profitability and credibility in the market. Quality management system must undergo a process of continuous improvement, which extends from the deployment of preventive quality assurance methods to the application of closed loop quality circuits. The practical implications of the paper show that dry machining of steels can be achieved under certain circumstances. Further research is needed to explain how the wear mechanism changes with varying machining conditions.

Originality/value: The paper presents original information on the characteristics of dry machining of AISI 1018 steel under specific machining operations. The paper is of interest to manufacturing engineers and materials scientists.

Keywords: Machining; Steel AISI 1018, AISI M42 steel, Titanium alloys (Ti64) &Coatings.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The factors that lead to tool wear are mechanical, thermal, chemical, and abrasive [1-3]. Owing to chip formation a significant amount of heat is generated. Owing to the cyclic nature of the cutting operation these thermal loads pulsate leading to thermal fatigue of the cutting tool. The typical wear zones on the cutting tool edge are shown in Figure 1. The wear zones are characterized by the type of wear that occurs on the tip of the tool and around the cutting edge. As a result of load factors exerted on the cutting tool edge, a few basic mechanisms dominate metal machining

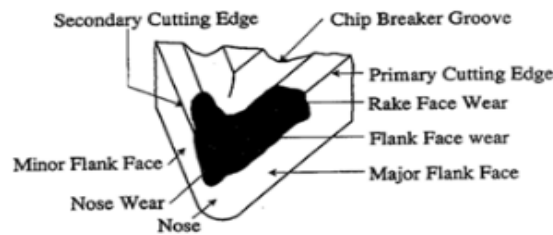


Fig. 1. Wear zones on the cutting tool caused by chip formation [3]

The use of coated cutting tools to machine various materials now represents state-of-the-art technology. Developments in coating equipment and processes now enable us to produce a wide range of different hard nitridic and oxidic films and to deposit them on various tool substrates as monolayer, multilayer, or composite coatings. Irrespective of whether cutting tool materials are being coated, the primary concern is to control and optimize properties such as coating adhesion, coating structure, coating thickness, etc., which determine the performance of the complex composite represented by a "coated cutting tool"[4,5]. The present studies are of importance from two viewpoints. On the one hand, it is considered that the substrate material is important for the production of highly effective cutting tool, on the other, the performance maximum of hard coating on the different substrate is depended to precisely of the interface characteristic. The interface is analyzed with regard to surface state, mechanical treatment and surface roughness [6,7]. The aim of this paper is to establish the general model of an environmentally oriented quality management in the field of development and introducing of new hard coatings on cutting tools. The important aspect that is being vigorously researched is the hard coating for cutting tools.

These mechanisms include:

1. Abrasive wear – affected by the hardness of the tool and is controlled by the carbide content of the cutting tool material.
2. Diffusion wear – affected by chemical loading on the tool and is controlled by the metallurgical composition of the tool and coating material.
3. Oxidation wear – causes gaps to occur in coated films and results in a loss of the coating at elevated temperatures.
4. Adhesion wear – occurs at low machining temperatures on the chip face of the tool and leads to the formation of a built-up-edge, and the continual breakdown of the built-up edge and the tool edge itself.
5. Fatigue wear (static or dynamic) – this is a thermo- mechanical effect and leads to the breakdown of the edges of the cutting tool.

II. EXPERIMENTAL PROCEDURES

Experiments were performed to assess the life of newly developed titanium based coated cutting tools. The assessment of machinability used in these experiments is related to the development of Taylor's tool life equations for uncoated and coated cutting tools. Taylor's tool life equation is stated as:

$$VT^{-1/k} = C \quad (1)$$

Where V is the cutting speed in meters per minute (m/min), T is the tool life in minutes (mins.), k is an exponent dependent upon the machining conditions and the tool and workpiece compositions, and C is a constant. For each tool life equation, a sample of the metal is turned at a specific cutting speed and the time it takes to wear 0.3mm of the flank face of the insert away from the cutting tool is measured and used in the calculation. For the machining of M42 tool steel, a computer numerically controlled lathe was used to vary the cutting speeds. An Emco Maier computer numerically controlled milling machine was used to mill bars of M42 tool steel that were one inch diameter bars with a measured surface roughness of 25 P m and a hardness of approximately 58-63 HRC. The type of machining regime used was a roughing cut using the parameters shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Cutting tool life experimental results for coated tools

Cutting Tool	Spindle speed (m/min)	Cutting tool life (minutes/seconds)
TiN coated WC-Co	30	91.2s
	50	16.54s
	70	6s
Ti _{0.46} Al _{0.54} N coated WC- Co	30	144s
	50	28s
	70	11.2s
Ti _{0.44} Al _{0.53} Cr _{0.03} N coated WC-Co	30	156s
	50	39s
	70	17s
Ti _{0.43} Al _{0.52} Cr _{0.03} Y _{0.02} N coated WC-Co	30	236.4s
	50	64.5s
	70	28.1s

A maximum depth of cut was used of 2.54mm in order to produce a thick chip. Water coolant was applied to the chips as they collected in the chip tray. This was conducted in order to machine the metal 'dry'. The uncoated cutting tool inserts were composed of 94wt. % tungsten carbide bonded with a 6wt.% cobalt binder. The coated cutting tools were supplied with a superlattice coating composed of up to 1000 deposited layers to form a coating thickness of 3-4 μ m. The maximum feed rate was used in these experiments was set at 0.2 mm per revolution of the machine tool spindle. The tools were initially sharp and were not previously used in any other applications. The coatings were developed for dry machining operations and research on the thin film coatings are described in references [8-9]. The initial cutting speed used for the experiments was set at 28 m/min.

The tool life was measured by inspecting the cutting tool until 0.3mm of the flank had worn away, which is in accordance with ISO 8688-3685 standard. Further increments of cutting speed were made until a maximum cutting speed of 70m/min had been achieved. The improvement in cutting ability of coated tools using nanostructured PVD and CVD coatings has recently been reported by Dobrzanski et al. [10-11], and the simulation of stresses in titanium based coatings has been demonstrated by Dobrzanski et al. [12]. Dobrzanski also comments on the effectiveness of using multilayer nanocrystalline coatings on cutting tools [13].

III. DEVELOPMENT OF HARD COATING

Since the beginning of the nineteen-eighties, PVD coating has been used for large scale industrial coating of geometrically complex tools such as twist drills, reamers, taps, end mills, form tools, etc. Hard coating led to a major advance in the performance of these tools. Modern design of coated cutting tools place such high demands on the materials specified that they can very often only be met by tailoring composite materials for these specific applications. In particular, the requirements for substrate (bulk) properties, on the one hand, and tool surface properties, on the other hand, differ so much that the surfaces have to be specially treated and modified to meet the particular demands [14]. The availability of new coating systems and sophisticated coating processes enables us to understand previously unexplained phenomena relating to the performance of coated cutting materials. It is increasingly apparent that thermo-physical properties of the coatings have a substantial effect on their performance and operating parameters. The quality of coated cutting tools often depends on three main parameters, which are shown in Fig. 2[15].

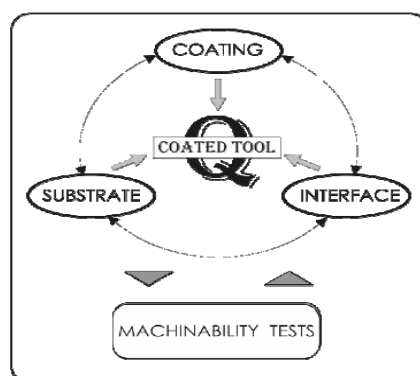


Fig. 2 The interaction of main parameters on the quality of coated cutting tools

3.1 Substrate (tool) material:-Unlike high speed steels, whose operating conditions are primarily restricted by their annealing resistance, hot hardness and hot wear resistance, cemented carbides, cermets or cutting ceramics are essentially limited by their toughness behavior and their resistance to abrasion, diffusion and oxidation. One key area of interdisciplinary development work, which cannot be discussed in greater detail here, is improvement of the substrate materials.

3.2 Coating: - A second key area of interdisciplinary work, which is very complex, is the sophistication of the coatings. There are a great many external and internal process variables involved. Determining the relationship between both process variables is needed in order to achieve reproducibility and high quality in coated tooling.

3.3 Interface: -The study of interface problems in coating advanced tool material included the following parameters [16]:

- the surface morphology and microstructure of the substrate and the hard coating;
- the distribution of the elements at the interface;
- Possible reactions between elements from the substrate and the coating.

3.3 Machinability Tests: - Despite great advanced in the analysis of thin films, machinability tests are still needed to demonstrate the performance potential of hard coatings on cutting tools. The following experiments are intended to help isolate and interpret the interface characteristics between hard coating and substrate and their influence on the parameters in the machining process, and resulting forms and causes of tool wear. For the characterization of these parameters modern analytical techniques are used.

3.4 Quality management in development of hard coatings:-The quality of product directly affects its competitive position, profitability and credibility in the market. Thus, the major objective of quality management becomes that of achieving and maintaining the leadership in product quality and reliability. Product quality requirements should be defined for each product based on factors related to satisfying the needs and expectations of those whom the product serves.

The concept of overall total quality control system should be encompassed all of the elements of quality assurance and quality control. Some problem-solving techniques on this area include the following [17]:

- Statistical process control,
- Root cause analysis,
- Quality control circles,
- Quality improvement techniques.

Quality assurance system must undergo a process of continuous improvement, which extends from the deployment of preventive quality assurance methods to the application of closed loop quality circuits. Quality assurance methods are thus frequently effective only when they are integrated into so-call “quality control circles”. Quality control circles are quality tools, which are used for achieving the above-mentioned aims and enable to transition from the quality of process to the quality of product throughout the active quality control. The principle behind systematic feedback into various levels of the “closed loop quality circuit” is that the use of historical data will prevent the same mistakes from being repeated, for example at the planning stage [18].

The basic elements by the establishment of the general model of quality management in the development and introducing of hard coatings on cutting tools are [19, 20]:

- Selection of the substrates and coatings,
- Preparation of hard coatings,
- Testing of hard coatings (in laboratory and workshop conditions),
- Industrial applications.

3.5 The first step of quality management The first step in our case of quality management is selection of appropriate hard coatings (monolayer, multilayer, gradient, nanolayer, nanocomposite, CLC, DLC-coatings...) and their characterization, which means the quantitative assessment of the relevant properties by means of physical, chemical, and technological effects. Here it is practical to distinguish between characterization with respect to structure and composition, and characterization with respect to the other properties. Obviously it is not sufficient to characterize only the function and structure of a few atomic layers; the entire modified zone has to be taken into account, and the problems of the interface also have to be dealt with. In these considerations the system involving substrate-bulk material (HSS, ASP-steels, cemented carbides, cermets, Al₂O₃-based ceramic, Si₃N₄-based ceramics, CBN...), interface, surface coating or modified surface layer, and also surface, is very complex and, together, yields the system's properties which are required by the tool designer, with every part playing an important role. The complexity of the system is shown in Fig.3 [21, 22-23].

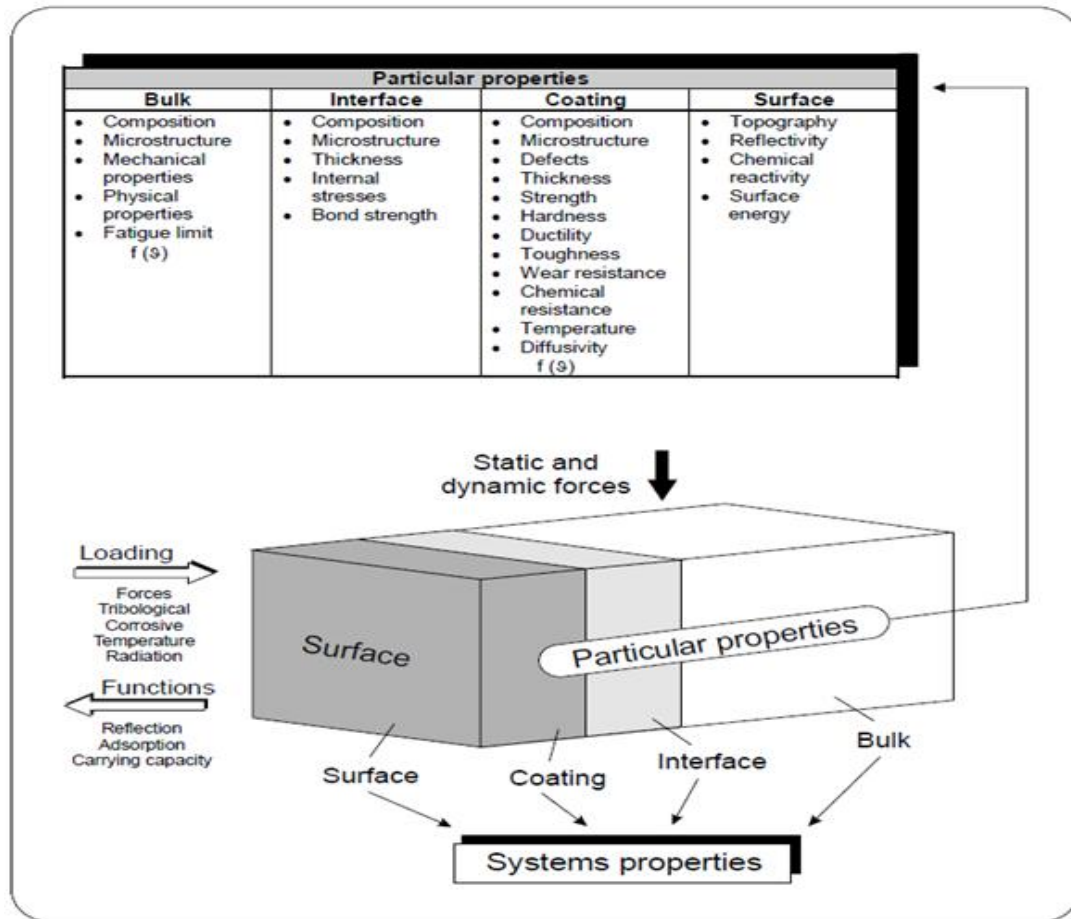


Fig. 3. System properties of a component as a result of interactions

IV. DISCUSSION

Coated cutting tools tend to retain a greater proportion of the bulk tool material. A possible reason for this could be due to the presence of the coating; at the tool-chip interface the coating suppresses high temperature generation, this leads to reductions in dissolution wear. As a result of machining, large portions of the tool are retained because there are mechanically robust regions. This is not the case for uncoated tools as noted in a previous study because high temperatures are generated that encourages dissolution wear. This leads to the formation of mechanically weaker regions, which become prone to chipping.

The incorporation of 3 mol% CrN in Ti_{1-x}Al_xN alloys did not change film hardness or microstructure [24]. The latter remained columnar with individual columns consisting of single grains over extended vertical distances. Adding an additional 2 mol% YN increased the film hardness by HK0.025 §300 kg mm⁻² while Y segregation during growth promoted continuous re-nucleation which resulted in a considerable grain refinement and a more equi-axed structure.

Thermo-gravimetric analysis in oxidizing ambient atmospheres has showed [24] that the start of rapid oxidation was increased from 600°C for TiN to 950°C for Ti_{0.43}Al_{0.52}Cr_{0.03}Y_{0.02}N, compared to 870°C for Ti_{0.46}Al_{0.54}N and 920°C for Ti_{0.44}Al_{0.53}Cr_{0.03}N. The initial oxidation reaction pathway was found to be similar for the three alloys with the formation of an Al-rich surface oxide and Ti-rich oxide under-layer. Annealing Ti_{0.44}Al_{0.53}Cr_{0.03}N layers on steel substrates for 1 h at 950°C results in oxidation with cation out-diffusion, giving rise to void formation and under-dense columnar boundaries extending nearly to the film-substrate interface. Voids are also observed on the substrate side of the film-substrate interface due to rapid out-diffusion of Cr, which is rejected by Ti-rich sub-layers in the oxidized film and accumulates at adjacent boundaries. In contrast, the addition of only 2 mol% YN to form Ti_{0.43}Al_{0.52}Cr_{0.03}Y_{0.02}N reduces the oxide thickness from >3 μm to 0.4 μm while significantly inhibiting outdiffusion of substrate species. STEM-EDX profiles, obtained after annealing, show that Y segregates to nitride grain boundaries.

This may explain the enhanced high-temperature oxidation resistance of Ti_{0.43}Al_{0.52}Cr_{0.03}Y_{0.02}N alloy as Y and YO_x inhibit grain-boundary diffusion of both cation species toward the free surface and oxygen penetration into the thin film. The machining characteristics of coated cutting tools did have some benefit to extending the life of the cutting tool when machining M42 tool steel. The benefits associated with using titanium based coated tools was further enhanced by using a superlattice layer thin film cutting tool. This ensured that thermal fatigue cracking of the coating did not interfere with the normal operation of the cutting insert when machining M42 tool steel.

V. CONCLUSION

During the machining of hardened M42 tool steel, TiAlCrYN coatings are effective at reducing tool wear due to chipping and tend to improve tool life. This was observed during rough machining operations and has not yet been observed in finish machining operations. One of the pre-requisites for successful production is the use of quality cutting tools with defined mechanical and technological properties. Therefore, for the development and introduction of new kind of cutting tool (cutting material or coating), it is necessary to carry out a number of studies with the purpose to optimize the substrate and coating composition, coating processing procedures, and the resulting workpiece material machinability. In this paper author try to show the importance of improvement of cutting tool performance by PVD or CVD coatings. An attempt is made to apply the general model of quality management system based on “closed loop quality circuits” in development and introducing of coated cutting tools in the practice, and determine the strategy of the machinability in finish machining, where the dimensional accuracy, surface roughness and tool life are the major aspects of interest. Stimulated by the many innovative surface technologies reaching commercial maturity last decade, the discipline of surface engineering has been seen to flourish. As a new area of engineering, its future development should be amenable to planning, through the adoption of a logical interdisciplinary approach. Such an approach will provide the manufacturing industry with many new opportunities in the design of effective cutting tools and production processes. It can be concluded that cutting tool surface and surface coatings characterization, as well as quality assurance, are very important parts of effective cutting tools development. A great variety of powerful testing methods exists both to characterize surface coatings and to ensure that the quality is adequate. Non-destructive coatings methods that can be used for 100 % testing are, however still in the development stage, and further work has to be done in this area.

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