A Brief Note on Ceramic Engineering

Guohao Wang*

Department of Applied Biochemistry, University of Eastern Finland, Kuopio, Finland

Commentary

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***For Correspondence:**

Guohao Wang, Department of Applied Biochemistry, University of Eastern Finland, Kuopio, Finland

E-mail: wangguo@gmail.com

DESCRIPTION

The science and technology of making items out of inorganic, non-metallic materials is known as ceramic engineering. This is accomplished either by the action of heat or through the use of precipitation processes from high-purity chemical solutions at lower temperatures. Purification of raw materials, study and manufacture of the chemical compounds in question, their formation into components, and the study of their structure, content, and properties are all covered by this phrase. Ceramic materials can have a crystalline or partially crystalline structure, as well as atomic-scale long-range order. Amorphous or glassy structures with minimal or short-range atomic organisation can be seen in glass ceramics. They are either created from a molten material that solidifies when cooled, formed and matured by heat, or chemically synthesised at low temperatures utilising, for example, hydrothermal reactions.

Ceramic materials have a wide range of applications in materials engineering, electrical engineering, chemical engineering, and mechanical engineering due to their unique properties. Because ceramics are heat resistant, they can be employed for a variety of activities where metals and polymers are ineffective. Mining, aerospace, medical, refining, food and chemical industries, packaging science, electronics, industrial and transmission power, and guided lightwave transmission are just a few of the industries that use ceramic materials. In 1709, Abraham Darby employed coke to boost the productivity of a smelting process in Shropshire, England. Coke is currently commonly employed in the manufacturing of carbide ceramics. Potter In 1759, Josiah Wedgwood established the world's first modern ceramics plant in Stoke-on-Trent, England. Carl Josef Bayer, an Austrian scientist working in Russia for the textile industry, discovered a procedure to separate alumina from bauxite ore in 1888. The Bayer process is still used in the ceramic and aluminium industries to purify alumina. Around the year 1880, brothers Pierre and Jacques Curie discovered piezoelectricity in Rochelle salt. One of the most important features of electroceramics is piezoelectricity. In 1893, E.G. Acheson created carborundum, or synthetic silicon carbide, by heating a mixture of coke and clay. Around the same time as Acheson, Henri Moissan created SiC and tungsten carbide in his electric arc furnace in Paris. In 1923, in Germany, Karl Schröter employed liquid-phase sintering to link or "cement" Moissan's tungsten carbide particles with cobalt. Hardened steel cutting tools with cemented (metal-bonded) carbide edges last much longer. In the 1920s, W.H. Nernst in Berlin created cubic-stabilized zirconia. In exhaust systems, this substance is employed as an oxygen sensor. The biggest drawback to using ceramics in engineering is their brittleness. The necessity for high-performance materials arose as a result of World War II's military requirements, which aided the advancement of ceramic research and engineering. New types of ceramics were produced in response to breakthroughs in atomic energy, electronics, communications, and space flight during the 1960s and 1970s. Since the discovery of ceramic superconductors in 1986, researchers have been working hard to produce superconducting ceramic parts for electronic devices, electric motors, and transportation vehicles. In the military, there is a growing demand for high-strength, durable materials that can transmit light in the visible (0.4–0.7 micrometres) and mid-infrared (1–5 micrometres) areas of the spectrum. These materials are required for transparent armour applications. Transparent armour is a substance or system of materials that is optically transparent while yet providing protection against fragmentation and ballistic impacts. The primary need for a transparent armour system is to be able to defeat the targeted threat while also providing a multi-hit capability with minimal distortion of the surrounding environment. Night vision equipment must be compatible with transparent armour windows. The search is on for new materials that are thinner, lighter, and have greater ballistic performance. Optical fibres for guided lightwave transmission, optical switches, laser amplifiers and lenses, hosts for solid-state lasers and optical window materials for gas lasers, and infrared (IR) heat seeking devices for missile guidance systems and IR night vision are just a few of the applications for solid-state components in the electro-optical field.

Ceramic engineering and research has established itself as a major branch of science, with a multibillion-dollar market. As researchers develop new types of ceramics for various applications, the number of applications continues to grow. Ceramics made of zirconium dioxide are used to make knives. The ceramic knife's blade will stay sharp for far longer than a steel knife, but it is more brittle and can be snapped if dropped on a hard surface.

Bulletproof vests made of ceramics like alumina, boron carbide, and silicon carbide have been used to deflect small arms rifle fire. Trauma plates are the most popular name for such plates. Because of its light weight, similar material is employed to shield the cockpits of some military aircraft. Ceramic ball bearings have silicon nitride components. Because of their enhanced hardness, they are less prone to wear and can last up to three times longer. They also deform less under load, allowing them to roll quicker by having less contact with the bearing retainer walls. Heat generated by friction during rolling can cause problems for metal bearings in high-speed applications, which can be mitigated by using ceramics. Ceramic bearings are also more chemically resistant than steel bearings, allowing them to be used in wet settings where steel bearings would corrode. The most important disadvantage of adopting ceramics is the much higher cost. Their electrically insulating qualities may be useful in bearings in many circumstances. Toyota investigated the production of an adiabatic ceramic engine capable of operating at temperatures of over 6000°F (3300°C) in the early 1980s. Ceramic engines do not require a cooling system, allowing for significant weight savings and improved fuel efficiency. According to Carnot's theorem, the engine's fuel efficiency is also higher at high temperatures.