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Vanadium carbide reinforced aluminum matrix composite prepared by conventional, microwave and spark plasma sintering

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Abstract

The effect of sintering method on the structure and mechanical properties of aluminum -10 wt% VC composite was investigated. Aluminum-VC metal matrix composite was prepared successfully by conventional (at 600°C), microwave (at 600°C) and spark plasma sintering (at 450°C). The obtained results indicate that the aluminum -10 wt% VC composite prepared by SPS had the highest relative density (99±0.6±%TD), bending strength (295±15 MPa) and microhardness (232 ± 16 Vickers). The XRD investigations showed the decomposition of VC phase and the formation of Al₃V intermetallic phase in the microwave-sintered samples. The SEM micrographs and EDS analyses revealed uniform distribution of reinforcement particles in SPS method and the formation of Al₃V phase in microwave-sintered sample.

Keyword: Aluminum, Vanadium carbide, Microwave, Spark Plasma Sintering.

1. Introduction

In the past few decades, aluminum matrix composites (AMCs) have been considered in aerospace projects, auto motive and military industries due to significant properties such as high specific strength, modules and toughness [1-4]. Particulate reinforcements which were used in aluminum (Al) composite significantly improved the properties of AMCs due to their high hardness and strength combined with ductile aluminum matrix [5-8]. Many factors such as uniform distribution of reinforcements, thermal expansion difference, production conditions and etc. that affect the mechanical properties have been investigated by numerous researchers. But the chemical compatibility between reinforcement and matrix is the most important of above-mentioned factors [9-11]. It is worth to mention that this compatibility has a complicated influence on the final properties. Some researchers believe that the reaction between reinforcement and matrix has destructive effect on the final properties [12, 13], while others have

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