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Abstract

Cu-Al-Ni and Cu-Al-Ni-Mn shape memory alloys are deposited on Kapton polyimide sheets by a physical evaporation technique. Detailed investigations on the morphological, structural and thermal behaviour of the ternary and quaternary alloys are conducted. The developed samples exhibit an increase in martensite structures and decrease in transformation temperatures after Mn additions. Furthermore, the suppression of Cu₃Al precipitates was evident from XRD analysis. The thermomechanical behaviour was analysed by actuating the bimorphs through Joule heating under varying mechanical loads. Fatigue analysis of the bimorphs reveals a superior performance for Cu-Al-Ni-Mn, exhibiting less than 30% loss in displacement after 15,000 cycles.

Keywords: Shape memory alloys, Cu-Al-Ni, Thin film, Thermomechanical, Life Cycle, Actuation, Bimorph.

1. Introduction

Flexible substrates are beneficial for depositing shape memory alloy (SMA) thin films, as they can act along with the material deposited on them. Substrates such as polyethylene terephthalate and polyimide have been utilised in developing flexible actuators [1–3]. Kapton polyimide substrates are more suitable for developing copper-based SMAs as they can withstand high temperatures up to 500 °C. Recently, the development of Cu-Al-Ni/polyimide SMA

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