

激光粉末床熔融TC4钛合金熔道形貌及气孔形成机理研究

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摘要 研究激光粉末床熔融工艺参数与熔道形貌、气孔缺陷的关联是优化工艺参数、提升成形效率的基础。使用不同激光功率成形 TC4 钛合金单条熔道,并建立基于流体体积法的气-液两相流三维细观熔池模型,对激光粉末床熔融增材制造过程中熔池内的传热、熔化、气-液两相流动等物理行为进行仿真分析。实验研究结果表明,随着激光功率由 100 W增加至 400 W,熔道深度大幅度增加,而熔道宽度只在较小功率(100~150 W)下随激光功率的增加而明显增大,此后(150~400 W)不再随功率变化而明显变化。同时,在大激光功率下(400 W)下,部分熔道底部可以发现不规则的气孔缺陷。熔池形貌的预测结果与实验结果的对比验证了仿真模型的有效性。仿真结果表明,随着激光功率增加,熔池底部在反冲力作用下形成匙孔,激光直接照射在熔池底部并使能量向下传递,表现为熔道深度明显增加,熔道宽度变化不明显。在高激光功率下,较深匙孔的底部呈"J"字形,其尾部不能直接受到激光作用,能量不足,易坍塌形成气泡,随后气泡滞留凝固形成气孔缺陷。

关键词 激光技术;激光粉末床熔融;熔道形貌;工艺参数;数值模拟;气孔缺陷

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1 引 言

激光粉末床熔融(LPBF)增材制造技术利用高能激光束熔化处于松散状态的粉末薄层,基于粉床逐层精细铺粉、逐层熔凝堆积,在制备精细复杂的高性能结构件方面具有低成本、短周期、净成形等独特技术优势,有着广阔的应用发展前景,是当前快速成型领域的研究热点[1-3]。提高成形效率和内部质量是提升LPBF制造产品性能、降低生产成本、扩大其工程应用的关键[4-5]。

在LPBF工艺中,扫描速度、搭接率等工艺参数与制造效率关联密切,这些工艺参数主要受到构件成形精度和内部质量的限制[6-8]。孙婷婷等[9]经实验研究发现,过高的扫描速率会明显降低增材制造结构的致密度,其力学性能也因而受到影响;梁平华等[10]尝试增大熔道间距以提升增材制造效率,发现较大的熔道间距会使搭接区域出现未熔合的粉末颗粒,且激光功率越低,对搭接率的要求也越高。深入研究LPBF制造关键工艺参数与熔道形貌、内

部缺陷之间的关联,揭示工艺参数对成形质量的影响机制,是优化工艺参数、提升增材制造效率的重要基础。

向羽等[11]建立了LPBF制造细观熔池模型,利 用该模型研究了不同激光线能量密度作用下熔道 的宽度及深度并对工艺参数进行了优化。Li等[12-14] 也建立了类似的模型,仿真分析了熔池内熔化、流 动、凝固的过程,但模型本身并未考虑气相-液相物 质之间的相互作用。此类模型难以深入分析熔池 内部气泡产生及气泡运动行为。任治好等[15]建立 了气-液耦合作用模型,分析了气相-液相物质相互 作用过程中熔道表面的球化效应,但并未深入探究 熔池内部气孔缺陷产生机理。Cunningham 等[16]采用 X射线在线监测方法对不同激光功率、扫描速率下 LPBF 熔池形貌进行了分析,研究表明,随着激光能 量密度的增加,熔池形貌发生了极为明显的变化, 其底部出现了窄而深的匙孔,整个熔池内的传热传 质行为由"热传导模式"变为"匙孔模式"。Zhao 等[17-18]的进一步在线监测实验研究结果表明,"匙孔

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模式"下深而窄的匙孔容易发生坍塌,形成气泡,且此类气泡产生后往往难以顺利逸出,会滞留在结构中成为形状不规则的气孔缺陷。Khairallah等^[19]采用光线追踪热源气-液耦合熔池模型探究了"匙孔模式"下匙孔的坍塌卷气行为,此类模型考虑了激光束在粉末缝隙内的反射行为,计算量较大,在修改工艺参数、探究不同工艺参数下气泡生成行为时计算成本较高。能否利用计算成本相对较低的直接辐射热源模型来分析匙孔坍塌卷气问题也是本文要研究的问题。

为了研究激光功率增加带来的熔道形貌变化以及 匙孔塌陷导致的内部缺陷,本文使用不同的激光功率 成形 TC4 钛合金单条熔道并对熔道截面形貌进行观 测分析,建立了基于流体体积法(VOF)的气-液两相流 直接辐射高斯热源细观熔池模型,采用实验和数值模 拟相结合的方法对不同激光功率下熔道形貌变化的原 因进行了分析,研究了大功率激光作用下"匙孔模式"的熔池运动行为以及匙孔坍塌导致内部缺陷形成的机制。

2 实验研究

2.1 材料及实验方法

本文开展的TC4钛合金熔道形貌实验采用了粒径范围为15~53 µm的粉末,粒径分布符合正态分布。选取的成形工艺参数如表1所示,激光光斑直径为100 µm,扫描速度为1200 mm/s,铺粉厚度为40 µm,激光功率分别为100、150、200、250、300、350、400 W,实验中氧气体积分数控制在0.2%以下,预热成形腔及基板至温度达到200℃后开展实验。在每组参数下制备3条熔道。成形件经线切割、打磨、腐蚀后,将其置于光学显微镜下观察单道界面形貌。

表1 TC4钛合金熔道形貌成形工艺参数

Table 1 Process parameters applied during manufacturing TC4 titanium alloy tracks

Laser beam diameter $D_1/\mu m$	Laser power P /W	Scanning speed v /(mm/s)	Powder bed thickness $D_{\scriptscriptstyle \rm p}$ / $\mu {\rm m}$
100	100,150,200,250,300,350,400	1200	40

2.2 实验结果

在 LPBF 工艺中,熔道宽度和深度影响扫描间距、铺粉厚度,孔隙率等参数,与制造效率和成形后结构的内部质量[10-11.18]关系密切。因此,本文对不同工

艺参数下熔道的宽度 (d_w) 、深度 (d_d) 进行统计,并分析了工艺参数与熔道形貌的关联。图 1 为不同激光功率下熔道形貌的照片。

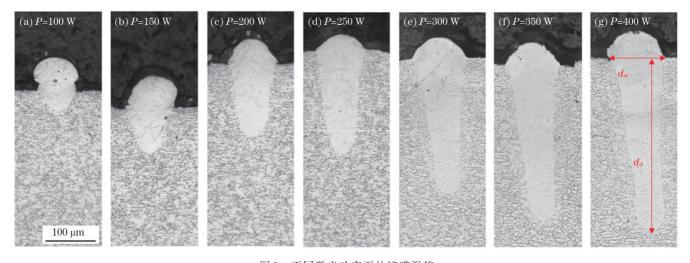


图1 不同激光功率下的熔道形貌

Fig. 1 Track morphologies under different laser powers

熔道深度随激光功率的变化曲线如图 2 所示。随着激光功率由 100 W 增加至 400 W,熔道的深度由 40 μm 单调增加至 348 μm。熔道宽度随激光功率的变化如图 3 所示,当激光功率由 100 W 增加到 150 W 时,熔道宽度变化较明显(由 82 μm 增加至 97 μm);当激

光功率继续增加至 400 W,熔道宽度缓慢增加至 109 μm。值得注意的是,激光功率较小(P=100 W)时,在部分熔道上观测到明显的未熔合现象(图 3),而激光功率较大(P=400 W)时,部分熔道底部出现了形状不规则的气孔缺陷(图 2)。

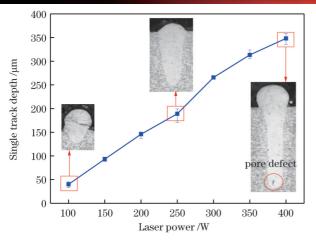


图 2 熔道深度随激光功率的变化

Fig. 2 Influence of laser power on track depth

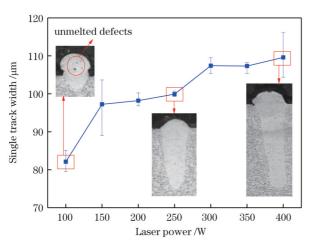


图 3 熔道宽度随激光功率的变化

Fig. 3 Influence of laser power on track width

3 仿真研究

3.1 模型建立

本文建立了基于流体体积法的气-液两相流细观粉末床模型,求解LPBF工艺中熔池内粉末传热传质行为并追踪流体自由液面。基于离散元素法(DEM),利用EDEM Creator软件建立粉末填充密度为0.52的三维粉末床模型,粉末层厚度为 $40~\mu m$,粉末颗粒均假设为球体,粒径服从正态分布,粉末床及基板以外区域填充氩气。计算空间的其余各参数如图4所示,图中 $x=0~\mu m$ 位置为激光光源起点。本文采用此模型,对激光开启后 $1000~\mu s$ 内的熔池运动行为进行了计算,设置计算时间最大步长为 $1\times10^{-6}~s$,最小步长为 $1\times10^{-10}~s$ 。

实验中采用的热源符合高斯分布并以面热源形式 照射在粉末层的上表面,其分布公式为

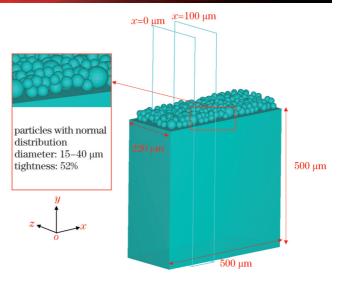


图 4 粉末位置随机分布的 TC4 粉床模型

Fig. 4 TC4 powder bed model with randomly distributed powder position

$$q(r) = \frac{2\alpha P}{\pi \omega^2} \exp\left(-2\frac{r^2}{\omega^2}\right),\tag{1}$$

式中:q(r)为空间内一点的热流密度;r为该点与热源中心之间的距离; α 为激光吸收率; ω 为激光束半径。

液体/固体与氩气之间的界面存在复杂的能量交换,本文考虑热传导、热辐射、气化散热三个最主要的传热行为,热边界条件为

$$q_{\rm in} = q - h_{\rm c}(T - T_{\rm 0}) - \varepsilon_{\rm r} \sigma_{\rm s}(T^{\rm 4} - T_{\rm 0}^{\rm 4}) - q_{\rm ev},$$
 (2)

$$q_{\rm ev} = 0.82 \frac{L_{\rm lv}}{\sqrt{2\pi MRT}} P_0 \exp\left(L_{\rm lv} \frac{T - T_{\rm lv}}{RTT_{\rm lv}}\right),$$
 (3)

式中: q_{in} 为熔池自由界面上的热流变化; h_{c} 为热对流传 热系数; ϵ_{r} 为热辐射系数; σ_{s} 为 Stefan-Boltzmann常数; T为温度; T_{o} 为环境温度; q_{ev} 为熔液气化所吸收的热 量;M为摩尔质量;R为理想气体常数; P_{o} 为环境压力; T_{Iv} 为金属沸点; L_{Iv} 为汽化热。

LPBF 成形过程中,金属蒸气作用于熔池表面,产生向下的蒸汽反冲力。蒸汽反冲力是熔池形成匙孔的关键,对熔池的运动行为具有显著影响 $^{[20]}$ 。反冲压力 P_r 是温度的函数:

$$P_{\rm r} = 0.54 P_0 \exp\left(L_{\rm lv} \frac{T - T_{\rm lv}}{RTT_{\rm lv}}\right)_{\circ} \tag{4}$$

本文模型采用计算流体动力学(CFD)软件FLOW3D进行计算,单个网格尺寸为6μm。热传导求解器、压力求解器采用隐式求解,表面张力求解器采用显式求解,热源模型及反冲力模型通过自编程二次开发导入。仿真中所需的热物性参数引自文献[10,21-22],如表2所示。

表2 不同温度下材料热物性参数

Table 2 Material thermophysical parameters under different temperatures

Temperature /K	Density ρ /(kg/m ³)	Surface tension σ / (m·N/m)	Thermal conductivity γ / [W/(m·K)]	Specific heat $c / [J/(g \cdot K)]$
300	4540	1.53	10.6	600
750	4460	1.50	16.1	700
1877	4300	1.45	19.6	1100
1923	4130	1.39	130	1850
3000	3900	1.09	130	1850

3.2 仿真结果验证

图 5 所示为激光功率为 100~400 W 时实验熔道 形貌与仿真熔池形貌的对比图。可以发现,仿真结果 与实验结果较为吻合,其中,熔道宽度的仿真误差最高为5.8%,熔池深度的仿真误差最高为12.2%。熔池形貌的模拟结果证明了模型的准确性。

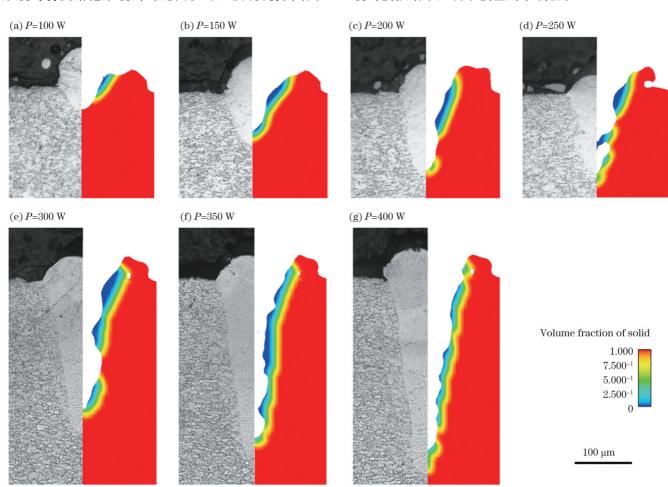


图 5 不同激光功率下实验熔道与仿真熔池的形貌对比

Fig. 5 Comparison of morphologies between experimental tracks and simulated molten pools under different laser powers

4 分析与讨论

4.1 激光功率对熔道形貌的影响机制

为了揭示激光功率对熔道形貌的影响机理,本文采用经验证的气-液两相流细观模型对 LPBF 过程中的熔池内部传热传质行为进行深入分析。图 6 所示为 P=100 W 时,x=100 μ m 截面处的熔池熔化及演

变过程。本节分析中,以光源中心到达截面的时刻为t=0时刻,到达前的时间为负,到达后的时间为正。如图 6(a) 所示,当 t=-25 μs 即光源中心距截面 30 μm 时,光斑的边缘已作用在截面区域,此时粉末床开始熔化。随着光源中心的接近,熔化区域增大,熔液表面出现反冲力,熔液向下流动,如图 6(b) 所示。在图 6(c)中,光源中心到达截面,由于熔池中心

的温度高于熔池边缘区域的温度,熔池中心与边缘出现了表面张力差,熔液由中心向边缘流动。在图 6(d)中,光源中心已经经过了截面并继续前进了13 μs,此时截面仍在光源范围内,熔池的深度继续增加。在图 6(e)中,光源中心经过截面后前进了37 μs,此时光源离开了截面所在区域,区域温度降低,反冲力减小,可以观察到非常明显的 Marangoni流运动:在熔池中心上表面,熔液向熔池边缘流动,并在熔池

边缘处下沉回流到熔池底部。随着光源逐渐远离,熔池温度降低,流动变缓,直至光源中心经过截面 97 μs后,熔池凝固,如图 6(f)所示。由于激光功率较低,能量不足,在整个熔池熔化、运动、凝固过程中,熔池两侧存在始终未完全熔合的缺陷,此类未熔合缺陷在图 3 所示的小功率激光下的熔道照片中同样可以观测到。熔池运动过程中未出现匙孔坍塌现象,熔池底部也没有卷入气泡。

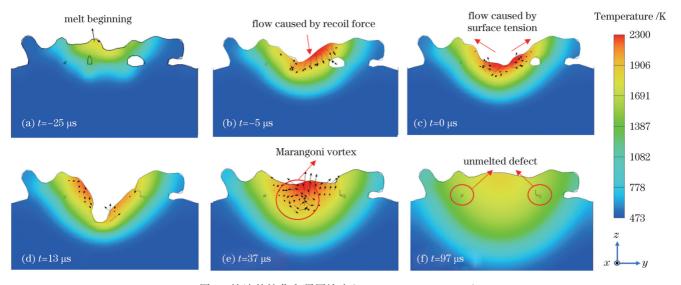


图 6 熔池的熔化和凝固演变(P=100 W,x=100 μ m)

Fig. 6 Evolution of melting and solidification of molten pool (P=100 W, $x=100 \mu\text{m}$)

图 7 所示为 P=400 W 时, x=100 μ m 截面处的 熔池熔化及演变过程。以光源到达截面正上方的 时刻为t=0时刻,光源到达前的时间为负,光源经 过后的时间为正。如图 7(a) 所示, 在光源中心到达 截面前53 us,受光斑边缘作用的影响,粉末床开始 熔化。如图 7(b) 所示,随着光斑中心的接近,熔化 区域增大,且熔液由温度较高、表面张力较低的中 心区域向温度较低、表面张力较高的边缘区域流 动,即形成 Marangoni流。如图 7(c)所示,由于激光 功率较高,在光源中心到达截面前9μs时刻,粉末 床熔化区域已经较大,熔池表面形成了较大的反冲 力,并在反冲力的作用下形成明显的匙孔。匙孔形 成后,激光光源直接照射在熔池底部,并使匙孔不 断加深。相比之下,能量在熔池横向上的传递只能 靠热传导作用,如图 7(d)所示,熔池的温度场在横 向上有着较大的梯度,这表明了单纯热传导作用下 能量沿横向的传递效率较低。以上解释了本文图 2、3所示的实验现象,即随着激光功率的增加,熔道 深度的增加较为明显,而熔道宽度在超过激光直径 后增长速度明显变缓。由于激光功率较高,熔液流 动剧烈,此时还可以看到明显的飞溅现象。光源经 过截面 124 μs 后,熔池温度已明显下降,反冲力降 低,匙孔已被回流的熔液填满并且出现了较明显的 Marangoni流,如图7(e)所示。在图7(e)中,熔池的

底部出现较小的气泡,但气泡的位置距 Marangoni 流较远,不能随 Marangoni 流运动并逸出。随着熔池凝固,气泡滞留在熔池底部并形成图 7(f)所示的小气孔缺陷,气孔的位置与图 2中所示的实验结果相近。

4.2 匙孔坍塌过程和气孔缺陷形成机制分析

4.1节对大功率激光作用下熔池 x 截面仿真结果(图7)进行分析时,发现仿真中获得了与实验结果相近的、不能顺利逸出的熔道底部的气孔缺陷。如图 8 所示,针对不同功率下匙孔的稳定性进行了仿真研究,结果表明:在350 W或400 W激光功率下,匙孔容易发生坍塌,产生气泡;而在300 W及以下的激光功率下,匙孔不易坍塌形成气泡。为更好地展示气孔缺陷产生的机理,本节以 P=400 W 为例,针对匙孔坍塌卷气并形成气孔的过程进行分析。

如图 $9(a)\sim(c)$ 所示,以激光开始作用时刻为 t'=0时刻,随着激光的持续作用,匙孔深度逐渐增加,其形状也发生了变化。在图 9(d)所示时刻,匙孔底部呈较明显的"J"字形,其尾部区域上方被熔液遮挡,不能直接接受光源照射,导致尾部区域局部温度下降,反冲力降低,局部稳定性变差,容易发生塌陷。在图 9(e)所示时刻,"J"字形匙孔的尾部表面反冲力不足,匙孔尾部在表面张力的作用下开始坍塌,形成气泡。气泡产生后在熔液表面张力的作用下被压



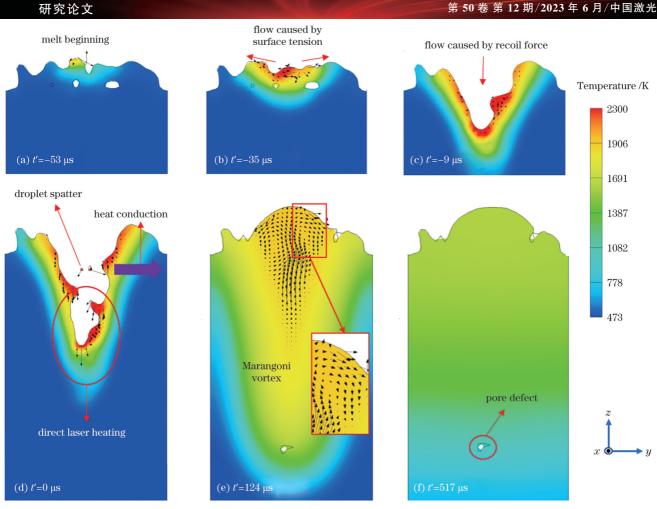


图 7 熔池的熔化和凝固演变(P=400 W,x=100 μm)

Fig. 7 Evolution of melting and solidification of molten pool (P=400 W,x=100 μ m)

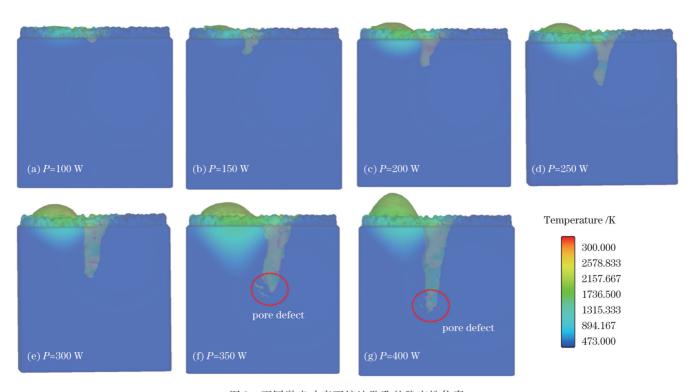


图 8 不同激光功率下熔池匙孔的稳定性仿真

Fig. 8 Simulated keyhole stability under different laser powers

缩,随着周围熔液的迅速凝固,形成图9(f)所示的形状不规则的气孔缺陷。结合实验及仿真结果可以得知,在大激光功率下,熔池底部会形成较深的匙孔,

此类匙孔容易发生坍塌,且坍塌后形成的气泡来不及上浮逸出就会凝固,成为熔道底部形状不规则的气孔缺陷。

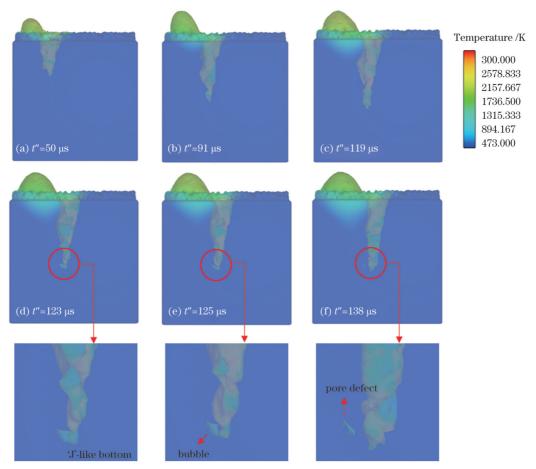


图 9 匙孔坍塌及气孔产生过程(P=400 W)

Fig. 9 Process of key-hole collapse and pore defect formation (P=400 W)

5 结 论

对 LPBF 成形 TC4 钛合金单道扫描件进行截面 形貌观测,建立细观两相流熔池模型对 LPBF 工艺中 熔池内热物理行为进行仿真,分析了激光功率与熔道 形貌、内部缺陷之间的关联,得到的主要结论如下。

- 1) 在所提工艺参数条件下,当激光功率由100 W增加到150 W时,熔道宽度显著增加;当激光功率由150 W增加至400 W时,熔道宽度的增加幅度较小。熔道深度受激光功率的影响较为明显,随激光功率的增加呈单调增加趋势。
- 2) 小功率(100 W)激光作用下粉末床不能完全熔化,熔道宽度也较窄,此时增加激光功率可以有效提升熔道宽度;在大功率激光作用下,熔池表面的反冲力更强,产生较深的匙孔,激光直接作用在熔池的底部,继续增加激光功率会使匙孔继续加深,明显增大熔道深度,但不会明显影响能量横向的热传导,熔道宽度也不会大幅度增加。
 - 3) 在较高的激光功率(400 W)作用下,熔池底部

形成窄而深的匙孔,匙孔随激光光源的运动出现"J"字形的形貌。"J"字形的匙孔的尾部没有受到激光直接照射,能量不足,容易发生坍塌并形成气泡。该气泡距熔池内的 Marangoni流较远,难以随 Marangoni流顺利逸出,在熔液表面张力的作用下被压缩,并迅速凝固,成为熔道底部形状不规则的气孔缺陷。

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TC4 Titanium Alloy Track Morphology and Pore Formation Mechanism in Laser Powder Bed Fusion Process

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Abstract

Objective Compared with conventional fabrication methods, such as casting and forging, additive manufacturing (AM) presents high material utilization, outstanding mechanical behaviors, and near-net-shape fabrication; therefore, it has garnered considerable popularity in recent years. Laser powder bed fusion (LPBF) is common in metal AM and utilizes a scanning laser to melt parallel lines in each successive layer of powder, developing fine 3D structures with excellent material properties. The LPBF process exhibits a

clear shortage in manufacturing efficiency, and numerous studies have been conducted to improve manufacturing efficiency by optimizing the process parameters. However, the design space of process parameters is limited because unreasonable parameters may lead to a lack of dimensional accuracy or internal defects. Therefore, studying the relationship between the process parameters and the quality of the formed parts is crucial. Most of the published studies focus on molten pools in "conduction mode". The motion of "keyhole" mode molten pools, during which keyhole collapse may appear and lead to pore defects, still lacks sufficient investigation. In this study, experiments are performed to build the relationship between laser power and single-track morphology, thereby revealing the boundary of the parameter design space during the LPBF process. Furthermore, the keyhole motion behavior is exhibited with a finely built numerical model, and the formation mechanism of pore defects is analyzed. We hope this study will help in the optimization of LPBF process parameters and provide an academic reference for the analysis of pore defects.

Methods TC4 powder was used as a starting material. First, single tracks were fabricated using the LPBF method at various laser powers. Then, the samples were sliced and polished, and the cross sections of the single tracks were characterized using an optical microscope (OM). Subsequently, the depth and width of the single tracks were measured, and the relationship between these dimensions and process parameters was analyzed. Next, a finely built powder bed model was established to simulate the physical behavior within the molten pool. The accuracy of the numerical model was verified by comparing the dimensions of the molten pool acquired by simulation with the experimental results. In addition, the morphology of the molten pool was analyzed using a numerical model, and the development of pore defects was investigated.

Results and Discussions When the laser power grows from 100 W to 400 W, the depth of the single-track increases from 40 μ m to 348 μ m (Fig. 2). The width of a single-track grows from 82 μ m to 97 μ m when the laser power increases from 100 W to 150 W; however, when the laser power continues to increase to 400 W, the width increases slowly from 97 μ m to 109 μ m (Fig. 3). The simulation result is consistent with the experiment result, as the width acquired by the simulation shows a 5.8% deviation, while the simulated depth shows a 12.2% deviation. The simulation shows that as the laser power increases, the key-hole becomes deeper because of the stronger recoil force, which explains the reason for the sharp increase in single-track depth with the increase in the laser power. However, the energy travels slowly in the horizontal direction by heat conduction, and the single-track width shows no notable change when the laser power increases (Fig. 5). When the high laser power is adopted, a "J" shaped key-hole appears, and the collapse may occur at the bottom of the key-hole, with bubbles formed during the collapse persisting around the bottom of the key-hole and transforming into pore defects as the pool solidifies (Figs. 8 and 9).

Conclusions In this study, single tracks are fabricated by the LPBF method using various laser powers and powder bed thicknesses, and a novel fine numerical model is established to analyze the physical phenomena within the molten pool. The width of a single-track shows no discernible change when the laser power increases from 150 W to 400 W, implying that the increase in hatch spacing is not feasible by continually increasing the laser power. Moreover, both the experimental and simulation results indicate that the depth of a single-track is sensitive to the laser power. When a low laser power (100-150 W) is used, the powder bed cannot fully melt, which may lead to unexpected unmelted regions in the fabricated structures. However, if the laser power is exceedingly high (350 W or more), the key-hole beneath the molten pool will be narrow and deep; this type of key-hole can easily collapse, and the air captured during the collapse may finally generate pore defects. Therefore, in this LPBF process (scanning speed is 1200 mm/s and laser diameter is $100 \, \mu\text{m}$), $200-300 \, \text{W}$ is considered a reasonable design range for laser power. This study provides an academic reference for the design of parameters in the LPBF process.

Key words laser technique; laser powder bed fusion; track morphology; process parameters; numerical simulation; pore defect