

Modelling of Mechanical Properties of Cord-rubber Composites

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Abstract: A phenomenological constitutive model that is capable of predicting the large deformations of cord composites with rubber matrix has been developed. The behavior of the isotropic rubber matrix was described by neo-Hookean, Mooney-Rivlin or Ogden models and the anisotropic influence of the cords was embodied by the exponential or polynomial functions of structural tensors depending on cord directions. Parameters of constitutive model were determined from experimental measurements. Different optical methods such as the image processing and the digital image correlation were used for the displacement measurements.

Keywords: Experimental, Composites, Elastomeric Matrix

1. Introduction

Our intensive experimental and theoretical research of cord-rubber composites is part of a broader program, which focuses on the behavior of air-springs. An air-spring shell is an example of layered multiphase flexible composite structure that consists of rubber matrix and stiff reinforcement made of textile cords. The high-modulus, low-elongation cords carry most of the load, and the low-modulus, high-elongation rubber matrix preserves the integrity of the composite and distributes the load. The primary objective of this type composite is to withstand large deformation and cyclic loading while providing high-load carrying capacity. The measurements of displacements and deformations have always been an important topic in the evaluation of material properties such as material strengths or fracture parameters as well as in experimental stress analysis. Optical techniques such as moiré interferometry, holography and speckle interferometry proved to be suitable techniques of deformation analysis and are used successfully in many different applications. However, each method has specific disadvantages that limit its use. In the last decade, a non-contacting optical technique, digital image correlation (DIC), has been introduced, whose basic principles are well described in previous papers. The DIC technique offers qualitative and quantitative information on the heterogeneous deformation of object. The displacements of the object under test are inferred by tracking changes of a random speckle pattern spread at the object surface. The displacements and strains at the object surface are calculated based on a comparison between subsequent digital images acquired during loading. The

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displacement resolution is typically of sub-pixel accuracy and the maximum strain accuracy is in the order of 0.02%. When installed perpendicular to a flat object, only one CCD camera is sufficient to determine in-plane deformations and strains. However, the obtained displacement field is only reliable under the assumption that out-of-plane deformation can be neglected. In order to measure three-dimensional displacements and deformations of arbitrary objects, a binocular stereo-correlation based technique has been developed. The simultaneous observation of the object from different directions allows the 3D movement of each object point to be determined. Image correlation techniques have proven to be a flexible and useful tool for deformation analysis and several complex measuring DIC systems are already commercially available.

2. Modelling of cord-rubber composites

The reinforcement of thin-walled "rubber bellows" of air-spring is made up of two families of textile cords distributed symmetrically with respect to the axis of air-spring, see Fig. 1. Owing to this configuration and to the manner of the loading by inner pressure, the material behaves like orthotropic with axes of symmetry in axial and circumferential directions respectively. We assume the isochoric deformation and neglect the dissipation due to irreversible effects. Thus the material is considered as hyperelastic incompressible locally-orthotropic composite.

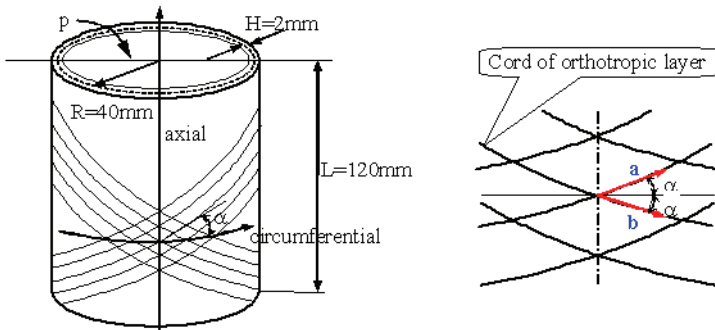


Fig. 1. Cord reinforcement distribution.

A phenomenological constitutive model that is capable of predicting the large deformations of composites with rubber matrix reinforced by cords has been presented by Marvalova et al [1, 2]. The behavior of the rubber matrix was described by Ogden model and the influence of the cords was embodied by the exponential function that was proposed by Holzapfel et al [3] and applied to the finite strain calculation of a fiber reinforced rubber tube. The strain energy function of the orthotropic hyperelastic material can be supposed as the sum of the energy stored in matrix material (isotropic part defined by Ogden model) and in cords (anisotropic part depending on the cord elongation)

$$\Psi(\lambda_1, \lambda_2) = \sum_{i=1}^3 \frac{\mu_i}{\alpha_i} (\lambda_1^{\alpha_i} + \lambda_2^{\alpha_i} + \lambda_1^{-\alpha_i} \lambda_2^{-\alpha_i} - 3) + \frac{k_1}{k_2} \{ \exp[k_2 (\lambda_2^2 \cos^2 \alpha + \lambda_1^2 \sin^2 \alpha - 1)^2] - 1 \}, \quad (1)$$

where λ_1 and λ_2 are the stretches in circumferential and axial directions, and α is the angle of the two families of reinforcing fibers. The parameters $\mu_i, \alpha_i, k_1, k_2$ have to be determined from experimental measurements.

3. Experimental

Experimental testing under biaxial loading is the appropriate approach for properly evaluating and understanding the material behavior under complex stress states. The 2-D state of stress rises in pneumatic membranes that are commonly used for biaxial or equibiaxial loading in material tests. Hence, our experimental measurements were conducted on the air-springs in situ and a testing methodology was developed allowing the stress–stretch behavior of inflated cylindrical air-spring shell to be defined for accurate prediction of material parameters. The process of determining the material properties involves:

- inflating a tubular specimen – a cylindrical air-spring,
- measuring the principal strains and the geometry of deformed specimen shape by digital image processing
- analytical determining values of stress components based on the theory of nonlinear membranes Green et al [4]
- determining of the material parameters by nonlinear optimization methods using computer simulation to verify and refine the determined values of material parameters

4. Determination of stress in cylindrical orthotropic membrane

The thin cylindrical membrane in Fig. 2 has the initial radius of mid-surface R , and length $2L$. Its initial wall thickness H is assumed to be uniform. The undeformed shape of membrane is described by the polar coordinate system, (X, Φ, R) . The cylindrical membrane is inflated by the internal pressure p . The deformed membrane is referred to the polar coordinate system (x, ϕ, r) . A material particle moves during the deformation from the position in the undeformed configuration, $C(X, \Phi, R)$ to the deformed one, $c(x, \phi, r)$, along its quasi-equilibrium path. We assume the axisymmetric deformation, e.g. $\phi \equiv \Phi$. We introduce an additional variable θ , the angle of the tangent line. The principal stretches λ_1 and λ_2 in axial and circumferential directions, principal curvatures κ_1 and κ_2 and geometric relations are

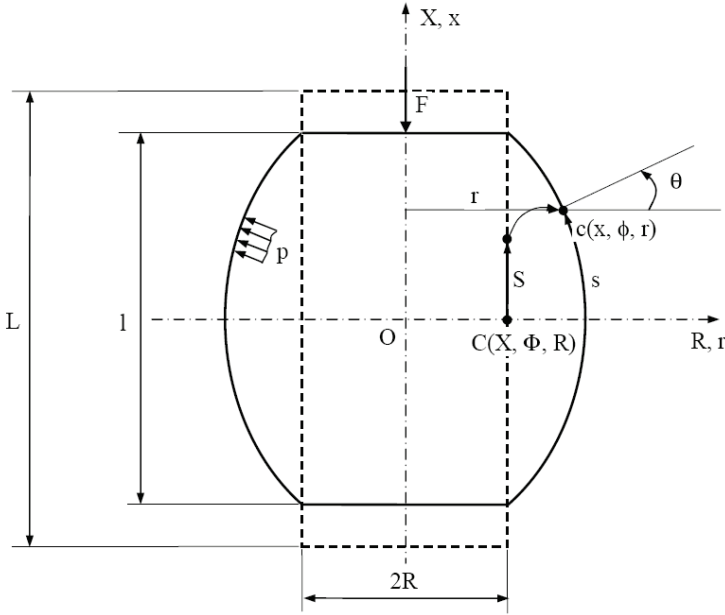


Fig. 2. Geometry of cylindrical membrane.

$$\lambda_1 = \frac{ds}{dS}, \lambda_2 = \frac{r}{R}, \frac{dr}{ds} = -\sin\theta, \frac{dx}{ds} = \cos\theta, \kappa_1 = \frac{d\theta}{ds}, \kappa_2 = \frac{\cos\theta}{r}, \quad (2)$$

where s is the arc length measured from pole ($x = 0$) to the particle $c(x, \phi, r)$ along the meridian of the deformed contour. S is the length corresponding to s on the undeformed contour. The radius r and the thickness h of the membrane are measured with respect to the deformed configuration. The radial stretch λ_3 is determined from the incompressibility constraint

$$\lambda_1 \lambda_2 \lambda_3 = 1, \quad (3)$$

then

$$h = \frac{H}{\lambda_1 \lambda_2}. \quad (1)$$

where R and H are the radius and the thickness respectively in the undeformed configuration. We carried out several series of experiments relating to inflation of cylindrical air-spring with the variable axial force F and the inner pressure. The Cauchy stress is determined based on the equilibrium condition

$$\sigma_1 = \frac{p\pi r^2 - F}{2\pi r h \cos \theta}. \quad (2)$$

Substituting $r = \lambda_2 R$ and (4) into (5) we obtain σ_1 as

$$\sigma_1 = A \frac{1}{\cos \theta} \lambda_1 (\lambda_2^2 - B), \quad (3)$$

where $A = \frac{pR}{2H}$, $B = \frac{F}{\pi p R^2}$. Values of λ_1 and λ_2 in axial and circumferential directions, the tangent angle θ , as well as principal curvatures κ_1 and κ_2 are determined from digital image records of deformed membrane. We can deduce σ_2 from the membrane equilibrium equation

$$\kappa_1 \sigma_1 + \kappa_2 \sigma_2 = \frac{p}{h}. \quad (4)$$

5. Constitutive relations – determination of material parameters

The Cauchy stresses are defined as the partial derivatives of appropriate strain energy function Ψ chosen in form (1) with respect to stretches. We have the following expressions:

$$\begin{aligned} \sigma_1 - \sigma_3 &= \lambda_1 \frac{\partial \Psi(\lambda_1, \lambda_2)}{\partial \lambda_1}, \\ \sigma_2 - \sigma_3 &= \lambda_2 \frac{\partial \Psi(\lambda_1, \lambda_2)}{\partial \lambda_2}, \end{aligned} \quad (5)$$

where $\sigma_3 = -p$. The experimentally measured values of λ_1 and λ_2 at several points of the central part of our cylindrical membrane and corresponding stresses were substituted into the equations (8). We get an overdetermined system of nonlinear equations for the parameters which were solved in Matlab by nonlinear optimization methods.

6. Experimental equipment and measurements

The loading of composite membranes and air-springs was realized by means a special loading device in Fig. 3 which enabled the inflation of membrane by pressurized water and in the same time the compression by the axial force. Several optical measuring systems were built up in our laboratory for an accurate measurement of surface deformations of inflated membranes.

In the system on Fig. 3 two digital cameras SONY SSC-M383CE are used to acquire digitized b/w images of 768 x 576 pixels. The cameras scanned the surface of

