

FINITE ELEMENT ANALYSIS OF A SUPERPLASTIC FORMING PROCESS, USING ANSYS SOFTWARE

Gavril GREBENISAN¹

¹University of Oradea, grebe@uoradea.ro

Abstract—Superplastic forming of metals and alloys is known as a technological process of deformation, of those materials which are characterized by a structure well defined and uniform as grain size around of 10 micrometers, at medium temperature, and with very low strain rate. All of these conditions makes the process unattractive, but the benefits are quite major and valuable. The complexity of shapes deformed and obtained, the large and uniform dimension of parts, are some of these major benefits of this kind of deformation process. Although of these benefits, the superplastic forming process are quite difficult for simulating and analysis process. The finite element method comes to facilitate the analysis and simulation of the flow and forming process. The present work is focused on this objective: to show a method for simulation and finite element analysis of superplastic forming, using the unconventional software ANSYS.

Keywords—Superplastic Forming(SPF), finite element analysis, strain rate sensitivity exponent, strain hardening exponent, constitutive material equations.

I. INTRODUCTION

SUPERPLASTICITY reflects a scientific recognized process that consists by a large deformation, almost exclusively plastic range of deformation, at very low deformation speed, at medium temperature, about 0.5 T_{melt} and a quite low pressure of forming process, [1], [4]- [6]. This is not a completely definition because any characteristics of material wasn't included, because of widely properties involved, and grains dimensions, as well. It is well known that a large deformation, these materials manage to undergo an elongation of 1000-2000%, and this was obtained on aluminum and zinc bronze. The requirements of superplastic behavior of materials are: first-grain size; the second- temperature and the third are the strain rate. These deformation conditions are associated with low flow stresses (the pressure of forming process, in term of technological parameter), generally <10 MPa and this, combined with the relatively high uniformity of plastic flow, has led to increasing commercial interest in superplastic forming (SPF) . Commonly the grain size should be less than 10 μm , the deformation speed should be on 0.001- 0.0001 s^{-1} , and the temperature should be less than half of melting

point, and the pressure of forming process to be into the range of 5- 20 Mpa.

II. MATERIAL AND CONSTITUTIVE MODEL

The specially processed superplastic FORMALL 545 aluminum sheet alloy used in this work was received from FormTech GmbH Company, Weyhe, Germany, with a nominal thickness of 1.22 mm. The constitutive model used to describe the flow stress–strain rate–strain relationship was the power law equation, [2]:

$$\sigma = k \cdot \dot{\epsilon}^m \cdot \epsilon^n \quad (1)$$

where σ is the solution of the equation (and the analysis, as well), and denotes the effective flow stress, k is a material constant, $\dot{\epsilon}$ is the effective strain- rate, m is the strain rate sensitivity coefficient, ϵ is the effective strain, and n is the strain hardening exponent. The most important parameter, the strain rate sensitivity exponent, m , is defined by the following equation, [3]:

$$m = \frac{d \log \sigma}{d \log \dot{\epsilon}} \quad (2)$$

This is the reason because the strain rate sensitivity is obtained determined from the slope of the double logarithmic plot of flow stress against strain rate. Although the strain-rate sensitivity (m) determines the ability of a material to resist necking during tensile straining. Based on the assumption that m is constant over a limited range of strain rates associated with a small diffuse neck, one can write by expressing stress and strain rate in terms of load and area, [1]:

$$\dot{A} = - \frac{m \sqrt{\frac{P \cdot A^{m-1}}{k}}}{k} \quad (3)$$

where \dot{A} is the change rate of cross section area A of the specimen subjected to the force P . Other coefficients are previously defined.

Rate dependent plasticity, the case of superplastic forming process, describes the flow rule of materials, which depends on time, such as the deformation of materials is assumed to develop as function of the strain

rate, which depends on time. On a logical rule, an important class of applications of this theory is high temperature creep. ANSYS provides several options to characterize the different types of rate-dependent material behaviors. The creep option is used for describing material creep over a relative long period or at low strain. This option should be very precisely defined, using Engineering Data Toolbox option, from Workbench Project. In crystalline materials, such as metals, creep mechanism is linked to diffusional flow of vacancies and dislocation movement. The creep deformation, and superplastic forming, as well, by an analogy of process occurs, depends on stress, strain, time, and temperature and is modeled with a form similar to the following:

$$\dot{\varepsilon} = f_1(\sigma) \cdot f_2(\varepsilon) \cdot f_3(t) \cdot f_4(T) \cdot f_5(d) \quad (4)$$

Where $f_3(t)$ means time dependency (not quite directly), $f_4(T)$ means temperature dependency (most of time this dependency is described by an Arrhenius law, $\dot{\varepsilon} \propto e^{-\frac{Q}{RT}}$, where Q is activation energy, R is the universal gas constant, and T is absolute temperature), and $f_5(d)$ denote the grain size dependency.

III. FINITE ELEMENT FORMULATION

In the finite element analysis of superplastic forming process inertia effects are usually neglected which permits to establish an equilibrium equations in a quasi-static framework. On the classical mechanics principle of virtual work established over a limited domain V with boundary surface A, it may be verified by equations, [3]:

$$\delta W(x, \delta v) = \delta W_{int}(x, \delta v) - \delta W_{ext}(x, \delta v) = 0 \quad (5)$$

In the incremental formulation, the rate of deformation based material law which describes the phenomenon of superplasticity is approximated by a geometry based constitutive equation. The traditional formulation of any deformation process consists on a cinematic variable such as velocity field, instead of superplasticity which is more reliable for using as primary variable the displacement field. In such idea, considering the initial domain V_0 at two consecutive time steps t_n and t_{n+1} are V_n , and V_{n+1} respectively, the incremental motion between two steps previously nominated, is represented by a general mapping law, to be Φ , with an associated deformation gradient tensor F, the formulation are:

$$x_{n+1} = \Phi(x_n); \quad F = \frac{\partial \Phi}{\partial x_n} = \nabla_n \Phi; \quad J = \det F \quad (6)$$

On the Fig. 1. Is represented a mapping law, on an initial stage, and on an intermediate stage of superplastic forming simulated on ANSYS.

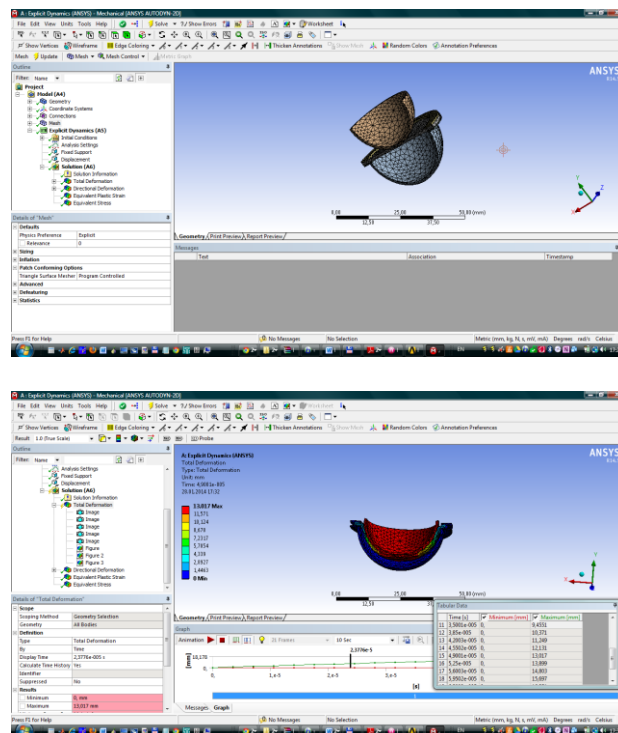


Fig. 1. – The mapping, Φ , on a superplastic forming process

The constant flow of deformation, on a superplastic forming process is attained by a detailed pressure of work cycle algorithm adopted. A numerical algorithm consists on a law of flow, written as mathematical model in which the pressure is treated as an unknown variable, included on an equation, a constraint equation, as well, with the target strain rate, for example. On an incremental flow formulation, tensorial written, one may formulate:

$$R(x_{n+1}^{k+1}, p_{n+1}^{k+1}) = T(x_{n+1}^{k+1}) - p_{n+1}^{k+1} \cdot G(x_{n+1}^{k+1}) = 0 \quad (7)$$

where the symbols are generally stated as: the assembled residual equilibrium equations \mathbf{R} ; the assembled equivalent internal force vector \mathbf{T} , and \mathbf{G} is the assembled external equivalent force vector corresponding to a normalized unit pressure. The spatial coordinates and forming pressure will be obtained iteratively updated as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} x_{n+1}^{k+1} &= x_{n+1}^k + \Delta u \\ \Delta u &= \Delta u_R - \Delta p \Delta u_G \\ p_{n+1}^{k+1} &= p_{n+1}^k + \Delta p \end{aligned} \quad (8)$$

Where the components Δu_R and, Δu_G of the incremental vector are formulated as:

$$\begin{aligned} \Delta u_R &= -[K]_{n+1}^k)^{-1} R]_{n+1}^k \\ \Delta u_G &= -[K]_{n+1}^k)^{-1} G]_{n+1}^k \end{aligned} \quad (9)$$

And the incremental pressure will be obtained by:

$$\Delta p = \frac{F|_{n+1}^k + \frac{\partial F}{\partial x}|_{n+1}^k \Delta u_R}{\frac{\partial F}{\partial x}|_{n+1}^k \Delta u_F - \frac{\partial F}{\partial p}|_{n+1}^k} \quad (10)$$

IV. RESULTS

A simple sheet metal is clamped on external diameter, around its periphery, and deformed superplastically into a spherical bulge. The die is closed and warmed at 510 °C, and maintained at this temperature in order to obtain an uniform structure of the material, [7]. After the regim temperature was obtained and the process can be stated, the procedure is numerical controlled. Forming temperature: 490 - 540 °C, logarithmic strain rate: 10^{-3} s^{-1} , mechanical properties: $R_{p0,2}=150 \text{ N/mm}^2$, $R_m=300 \text{ N/mm}^2$, $A_5=20 \%$. The pressure cycle is represented on Fig. 2.:

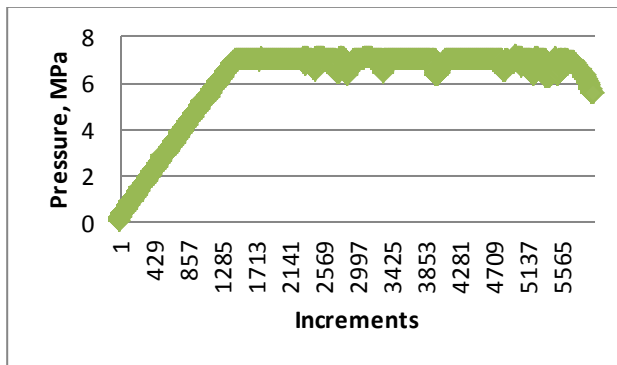


Fig. 2.- Pressure vs Time cycle (5565 increments)

The simulation results are presented in the next tables and figures:

TABLE I
Model (A4) > Geometry

Object Name	Geometry
State	Fully Defined
Definition	
Source	D:\ANSYS_Superplasticitate\Matrita_superpl\Poanson fara capac_b_files\dp0\SYS\DM\SYS.agdb
Type	DesignModeler
Length Unit	Millimeters
Display Style	Body Color
Bounding Box	
Length X	40, mm
Length Y	32,2 mm
Length Z	40, mm
Properties	
Volume	4989,6 mm ³
Mass	3,1456e-002 kg
Scale Factor Value	1,
Statistics	
Bodies	5
Active Bodies	5
Nodes	3865

Elements	10118
Mesh Metric	None
Basic Geometry Options	
Parameters	Yes
Parameter Key	DS
Attributes	No
Named Selections	No
Material Properties	No
Advanced Geometry Options	
Use Associativity	Yes
Coordinate Systems	No
Reader Mode Saves Updated File	No
Use Instances	Yes
Smart CAD Update	No
Attach File Via Temp File	Yes
Temporary Directory	C:\Users\admin\AppData\Local\Temp
Analysis Type	3-D
Decompose Disjoint Geometry	No
Enclosure and Symmetry Processing	Yes

TABLE II
Model (A4) > Geometry > Parts

Object Name	Epruveta	Matr_inf	Matr_sup	Suport_inf	Suport_sup
State	Meshed				
Graphics Properties					
Visible	Yes				
Transparency	1				
Definition					
Suppressed	No				
Stiffness Behavior	Flexible				
Coordinate System	Default Coordinate System				
Reference Temperature	By Environment				
Reference Frame	Lagrangian				
Material					
Assignment	AL5083H116	STNL.STEEL	STEEL 1006		
Bounding Box					
Length X	40, mm	33,978 mm	30, mm	39,778 mm	39,837 mm
Length Y	1,2 mm	16,424 mm	15, mm	0,49105 mm	0,63986 mm
Length Z	40, mm	33,978 mm	30, mm	39,778 mm	39,837 mm
Properties					
Volume	1508, mm ³	1649,5 mm ³	1321,6 mm ³	216,53 mm ³	294,04 mm ³

Mass	4,0715e-003 kg	1,2965 e-002 kg	1,0387 e-002 kg	1,7097e -003 kg	2,3217e-003 kg
Centroid X	4,7991e-016 mm	3,3437 e-005 mm	5,552e-009 mm	1,5206e -015 mm	-015 mm
Centroid Y	0,6 mm	-	7,9582 mm	-	1,5636 mm
Centroid Z	0, mm	-	-	-	-
		2,2631 e-004 mm	5,2676 e-004 mm	1,2204e -015 mm	9,7153e-017 mm
Moment of Inertia Ip1	0,40352 kg·mm ²	1,4191 kg·mm ²	0,9047 kg·mm ²	0,27538 kg·mm ²	0,37195 kg·mm ²
Moment of Inertia Ip2	0,80607 kg·mm ²	2,2931 kg·mm ²	1,4463 kg·mm ²	0,5507 kg·mm ²	0,74375 kg·mm ²
Moment of Inertia Ip3	0,40352 kg·mm ²	1,4191 kg·mm ²	0,9046 kg·mm ²	0,27538 kg·mm ²	0,37195 kg·mm ²
		Statistics			
Nodes	674	948	892	889	462
Elements	1831	2637	2552	2092	1006
Mesh Metric			None		

TABLE III
Model (A4) > Mesh

Object Name	Mesh
State	Solved
Defaults	
Physics Preference	Explicit
Relevance	0
Sizing	
Use Advanced Size Function	On: Proximity
Relevance Center	Medium
Initial Size Seed	Active Assembly
Smoothing	High
Transition	Slow
Span Angle Center	Coarse
Proximity Accuracy	0,5
Num Cells Across Gap	Default (3)
Proximity Min Size	Default (1,6222e-002 mm)
Max Face Size	Default (1,62220 mm)
Max Size	Default (3,24440 mm)
Growth Rate	Default (1,20)
Minimum Edge Length	87,9650 mm
Inflation	
Use Automatic Inflation	Program Controlled
Inflation Option	Smooth Transition
Transition Ratio	0,272
Maximum Layers	5
Growth Rate	1,2
Inflation Algorithm	Pre
View Advanced Options	No
Patch Conforming	Options
Triangle Surface Mesher	Program Controlled
Advanced	
Shape Checking	Explicit
Element Midside Nodes	Dropped
Straight Sided Elements	
Number of Retries	0
Extra Retries For Assembly	Yes
Rigid Body Behavior	Full Mesh
Mesh Morphing	Disabled
Defeaturing	
Pinch Tolerance	Default (1,46e-002 mm)
Generate Pinch on Refresh	No

Automatic Mesh Based Defeaturing	On
Defeaturing Tolerance	Default (8,111e-003 mm)
Statistics	
Nodes	3865
Elements	10118
Mesh Metric	None

TABLE IV
Model (A4) > Explicit Dynamics (A5) > Analysis Settings

Object Name	Analysis Settings
State	Fully Defined
Analysis Settings Preference	
Type	Custom
Step Controls	
Resume From Cycle	0
Maximum Number of Cycles	1e+07
End Time	7,e-005 s
Maximum Energy Error	0,1
Reference Energy Cycle	0
Initial Time Step	Program Controlled
Minimum Time Step	Program Controlled
Maximum Time Step	Program Controlled
Time Step Safety Factor	0,9
Characteristic Dimension	Diagonals
Automatic Mass Scaling	No
Solver Controls	
Precision	Single
Solve Units	mm, mg, ms
Beam Solution Type	Bending
Beam Time Step Safety Factor	0,5
Hex Integration Type	Exact
Shell Sublayers	3
Shell Shear Correction Factor	0,8333
Shell BWC Warp Correction	Yes
Shell Thickness Update	Nodal
Tet Integration	Average Nodal Pressure
Shell Inertia Update	Recompute
Density Update	Program Controlled
Minimum Velocity	1,e-003 mm s ⁻¹
Maximum Velocity	1,e+013 mm s ⁻¹
Radius Cutoff	1,e-003
Minimum Strain Rate Cutoff	1,e-010
Euler Domain Controls	
Domain Size Definition	Program Controlled
Display Euler Domain	Yes
Scope	All Bodies
X Scale factor	1,2
Y Scale factor	1,2
Z Scale factor	1,2
Domain Resolution Definition	Total Cells
Total Cells	2,5e+05
Lower X Face	Flow Out
Lower Y Face	Flow Out
Lower Z Face	Flow Out
Upper X Face	Flow Out
Upper Y Face	Flow Out
Upper Z Face	Flow Out
Euler Tracking	By Body
Damping Controls	
Linear Artificial Viscosity	0,2
Quadratic Artificial Viscosity	1,
Linear Viscosity in Expansion	No
Hourglass Damping	AUTODYN Standard
Viscous Coefficient	0,1
Static Damping	0,
Erosion Controls	
On Geometric Strain Limit	Yes
Geometric Strain Limit	1,5
On Material Failure	No
On Minimum Element Time Step	No
Retain Inertia of Eroded Material	Yes
Output Controls	
Save Results on	Equally Spaced Points

Number of points	20
Save Restart Files on Number of points	Equally Spaced Points 5
Save Result Tracker Data on Cycles	Cycles 1
Output Contact Forces	Off
Analysis Data Management	

Maximum Occurs On	Epruveta	Matr_sup	Matr_inf
Minimum Value Over Time			
Minimum	0, mm	-3,0236 mm	0, MPa
Maximum	0, mm	0, mm	0, MPa
Maximum Value Over Time			
Minimum	0, mm	0, mm	0, MPa
Maximum	18,178 mm	2,9879 mm	993,59 MPa
Information			
Time	4,9001e-005 s	7,0014e-006 s	1,0502e-005 s
Set	15	3	4
Integration Point Results			
Display Option	Averaged		

TABLE V
 Model (A4) > Explicit Dynamics (A5) > Solution (A6) > Total Deformation

Time [s]	Minimum [mm]	Maximum [mm]
0,	0,	0,
3,5012e-006		1,418
7,0014e-006		2,3713
1,0502e-005		3,253
1,4003e-005		4,1146
1,7503e-005		4,9663
2,1e-005		5,8441
2,4501e-005		6,7544
2,8001e-005		7,647
3,1502e-005		8,5487
3,5001e-005		9,4551
3,85e-005		10,371
4,2003e-005		11,249
4,5502e-005		12,131
4,9001e-005		13,017
5,25e-005		13,899
5,6003e-005		14,803
5,9502e-005		15,697
6,3002e-005		16,351
6,65e-005		17,266
7,0002e-005		18,178

TABLE VII
 Model (A4) > Explicit Dynamics (A5) > Solution (A6) > Directional Deformation

Time [s]	Minimum [mm]	Maximum [mm]
0,	0,	0,
3,5012e-006	-0,32611	0,34583
7,0014e-006	-0,47425	0,50097
1,0502e-005	-0,43384	0,455
1,4003e-005	-0,41249	0,50844
1,7503e-005	-0,42937	0,55574
2,1e-005	-0,52099	0,59426
2,4501e-005	-0,72485	0,78396
2,8001e-005	-1,0661	1,0581
3,1502e-005	-1,4011	1,4075
3,5001e-005	-1,6869	1,6874
3,85e-005	-2,0307	2,0273
4,2003e-005	-2,2388	2,3098
4,5502e-005	-2,543	2,4011
4,9001e-005	-2,6518	2,4375
5,25e-005	-2,8326	2,6639
5,6003e-005	-2,9139	2,8473
5,9502e-005	-2,9509	2,9501
6,3002e-005	-2,9747	2,9879
6,65e-005	-2,9928	2,9504
7,0002e-005	-3,0236	2,9597

TABLE VI
 Model (A4) > Explicit Dynamics (A5) > Solution (A6) > Results

Object Name	Total Deformation	Directional Deformation	Equivalent Plastic Strain	Equivalent Stress
State	Obsolete		Solved	
Scope				
Scoping Method	Geometry Selection		Geometry Selection	
Geometry	All Bodies		All Bodies	
Definition				
Type	Total Deformation	Directional Deformation	Equivalent Plastic Strain	Equivalent (von-Mises) Stress
By Display Time	Time 2,3776e-005 s	7,0014e-006 s	Time 1,0502e-005 s	7,e-005 s
Calculate Time History	Yes		Yes	
Identifier Suppressed Orientation	No	X Axis	No	
Coordinate System		Global Coordinate System		
Results				
Minimum	0, mm	-0,47425 mm	0, mm/mm	0, MPa
Maximum	13,017 mm	0,50097 mm	0,20377 mm/mm	993,59 MPa
Minimum Occurs On	Matr_inf	Matr_sup	Epruveta	Suport_inf

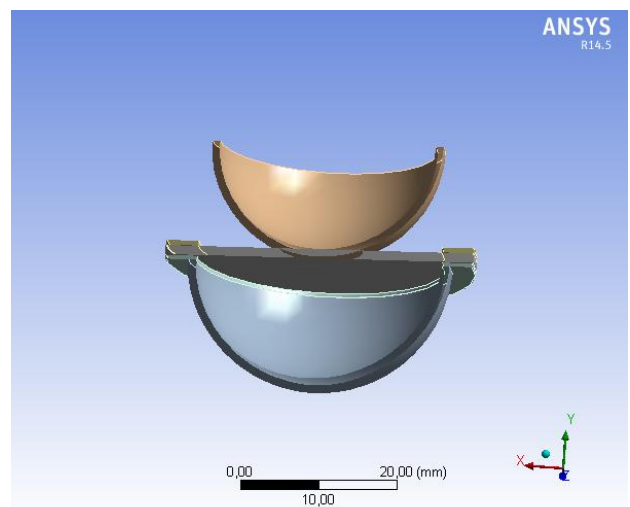


Fig. 3. –The starting gauge

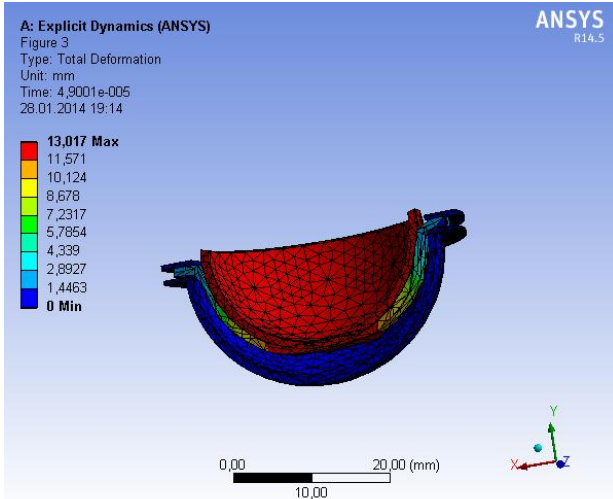


Fig. 4.- The final stage of finite element analysis

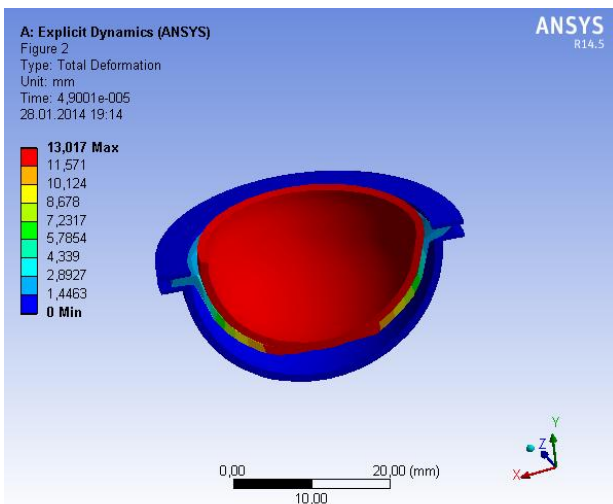


Fig. 5. – Total deformation of the part

V. CONCLUSION

The complexity of the materials superplastic forming is consists on the complexity of phenomenon which are a material's one, and a parameters of deformation, the second one. The material's behavior consists on the grain size stability, and on the uniformity of this. The parameters of deformation, as pressure, temperature and strain rate should be well constructed as mathematical model and equations. The constitutive equations of the superplastic forming are in continuous changing. Any of analysis results may be used for progress and develop the superplastic forming simulation.

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