Mold Surface Analysis after Injection Molding of Highly Filled Polymeric Compounds

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This work deals with an impact of abrasive particles used in powder injection molding (PIM) on a surface roughness of the tool. For this purpose, the surface of new mold cavity was compared with the same mold cavity after 2 000 injection molding cycles. Processed PIM compounds contained polymeric binder with around 60 vol. % of metal or ceramic particles (0.1 up to 20 µm). Surface analysis was performed on cavity impressions prepared from a special silicone imprinting substance in two directions by a 3D surface scanner. Investigated parameters were surface roughness (Ra) and roughness depth (Rz) which have an influence on flow instabilities of highly filled compounds such as wall slip affecting the final product quality. Obtained results showed a significant wear of the mold cavity which was statistically confirmed by t-test and F-test parametric methods. A greater part of the mold cavity was smoothed during injection of PIM compounds, while the surface roughness increased near the point gate (runner system) probably due to a high injection pressure in this part of the mold.

Keywords: PIM, Cavity, Surface, Roughness, Wear

Acknowledgement

This work was supported by the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports of the Czech Republic - Program NPU I (LO1504). This study was also supported by the internal grant of TBU in Zlin IGA/FT/2016/002 funded from the resources of the specific university research. The authors would like also to thank Lenka Chovanova for her help with special imprints and contactless analysis.

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