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▶ **To cite this version:**

I.I. Lobanova, Stéphane Despréaux, Stéphane Labbé, Carola Celada-Casero, Frenk van den Berg. Micromagnetic modelling of magnetostriction under uniaxial stress. Journal of Magnetism and Magnetic Materials, 2022, 564, pp.170028. 10.1016/j.jmmm.2022.170028 . hal-03876130v2

HAL Id: hal-03876130
https://hal.science/hal-03876130v2

Submitted on 28 Nov 2022

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Micromagnetic modelling of magnetostriction under uniaxial stress

I.I. Lobanova[a,b,*], S. Despréaux[b], S. Labbé[c], C. Celada-Casero[d,e], F. van den Berg[d]

[a] *Université Grenoble Alpes, LJK, 38000 Grenoble, France*
[b] *Laboratoire Jean Kuntzmann, CNRS, 38000 Grenoble, France*
[c] *Sorbonne Université, CNRS, Université de Paris, Laboratoire Jacques-Louis Lions (LJLL), F-75005 Paris, France*
[d] *Tata Steel, 1970CA IJmuiden, The Netherlands*
[e] *National Centre for Metallurgical Research (CENIM-CSIC), E-28040 Madrid, Spain*

Abstract

In the current work we present the results of 3D micromagnetic modelling of magnetostrictive strain and magnetic hysteresis under uniaxial stress in ferrite. The simulations are performed on artificial microstructures with different grain orientations that allow to take into account the anisotropy of magnetic and mechanical properties of iron-based alloys. The obtained results are in reasonable agreement with experimental observations. The proposed method opens a path to predictive modelling of the magnetic properties of different textured steels in the context of in-line non-destructive testing.

1. Introduction

During the process of magnetization ferromagnetic materials undergo changes in their shape or dimensions due to the coupling of magnetic order and strain. In particular, as the magnetization goes up, the magnetostrictive strain increases with magnetic field before reaching a saturating value, λ [1]. This effect causes energy loss due to frictional heating in susceptible ferromagnetic cores. The effect is also responsible for the low-pitched humming sound that can be heard coming from transformers, where oscillating AC currents produce a changing magnetic field. The reciprocal effect, the change of the magnetic susceptibility in response to an applied field of a material when subjected to a mechanical stress, is called the Villari effect. Thus the mechanical stresses strongly influence the magnetic properties of ferromagnetic steel, affecting especially the hysteresis [2–5]. Therefore the development of appropriate simulation tools is of particular interest for industrials to optimize the material conception.

The micromagnetic theory [6] is a powerful tool to describe the non-linear behaviour of ferromagnetic media. Although the micromagnetic modelling of magnetization process and domain structure are now well mastered, the description of magnetostriction and associated magneto-mechanic interactions remains unachieved or badly implemented in the literature [7]. Indeed the modelling of the intrinsic stress due to a free strain like magnetostriction is rather complex and therefore the mechanical approach to this problem is relevant. In this paper, we will address the development of a 3D stress dependent micromagnetic model that takes into account the magneto-mechanical coupling. When the magnetic materials are subjected to an applied stress, the induced magneto-elastic energy must be taken into account in the Gibbs free energy. The modelling is therefore achieved by introducing elastic and magneto-elastic interactions depending on stress and magnetization in the free energy expression [8, 9].

The variation of magnetostrictive strain is linked to the domain wall movement and magnetization reversal process, which are usually complex phenomena that depend on the microstructure of magnetic material [2, 3, 10]. In the present simulations, we have considered the effect of uniaxial stress on the magnetic hysteresis in ferrite with different grain orientations. This ferromagnetic material displays anisotropy of magnetic, magnetostrictive and elastic properties, and therefore the modelling of magnetic properties of different microstructures can help to shed more light on the influence of applied stress and predict its effect on the magnetic properties of the material.

2. Method

Micromagnetics and domain theory are based on the same variational principle which is derived from thermodynamic principles, as established initially by Landau and Lifshitz in [11] and reviewed in [6] and [12]. According to this principle, the vector field of magnetization directions $\mathbf{m} = \mathbf{M}/M_s$ is chosen so that the total free energy reaches an absolute or relative minimum under the constraint $|\mathbf{m}| = 1$, where $\mathbf{M}$ is the magnetization vector and M_s is the value of magnetization at saturation. In the initial micromagnetic model, the Landau-Lifshitz (LL) equation allows to predict the evolution of magnetization

*Corresponding author
Email address: inna.lobanova@univ-grenoble-alpes.fr (I.I. Lobanova)

that depends on a combination of purely magnetic excitations by external magnetic, crystalline anisotropy, ferromagnetic exchange, and demagnetization fields [6]. In our model we have incorporated the internal elastic and magnetic stresses into the additional magnetostrictive excitation field and its contribution to the free energy [8]. The sum of all energies corresponding to these fields gives:

$$E_{tot}(\mathbf{M}) = E_{ex} + E_{ani} + E_{Zeeman} + E_{demag} + E_{m-el}. \quad (1)$$

The exchange energy term favours a homogeneous magnetic state such that any gradient of the local magnetization leads to an increase in E_{ex},

$$E_{ex} = A \int_V (\nabla \mathbf{M})^2 \, dV, \quad (2)$$

where A is the exchange stiffness constant.

The energy of a ferromagnet that depends on the direction of the magnetization relative to the structural axes of the material is expressed as

$$E_{ani} = \int_V \Phi(\mathbf{M}) dV, \quad (3)$$

where $\Phi(\mathbf{M})$ is the anisotropy energy density whose expression verifies $\Phi(\mathbf{M}) = K_1[(\mathbf{a_1} \cdot \mathbf{M})^2.(\mathbf{a_2} \cdot \mathbf{M})^2 + (\mathbf{a_1} \cdot \mathbf{M})^2.(\mathbf{a_3} \cdot \mathbf{M})^2 + (\mathbf{a_2} \cdot \mathbf{M})^2.(\mathbf{a_3} \cdot \mathbf{M})^2] + K_2(\mathbf{a_1} \cdot \mathbf{M})^2.(\mathbf{a_2} \cdot \mathbf{M})^2(\mathbf{a_3} \cdot \mathbf{M})^2$ in case of a cubic anisotropy. Here K_1, K_2 are the anisotropy constants, and $\mathbf{a_1}, \mathbf{a_2}, \mathbf{a_3}$ are the anisotropy directions.

The interaction energy of the magnetization vector field with an external field H_{ext} (so called Zeeman energy) is simply:

$$E_{Zeeman} = -\mu_0 \int_V \mathbf{H_{ext}} \cdot \mathbf{M} \, dV, \quad (4)$$

where $\mathbf{H_{ext}}$ is the external magnetic field.

The stray field magnetic energy tends to demagnetize the material and is expressed as

$$E_d = -\frac{\mu_0}{2} \int_V \mathbf{H_d} \cdot \mathbf{M} \, dV, \quad (5)$$

where $\mathbf{H_d}$ is the demagnetizing magnetic field.

And finally, the magneto-elastic energy is the sum of external and intrinsic stress contributions that depend on the magnetization M and the mechanical displacement field u:

$$E_{m-el} = \int_V \lambda^m : [\mathbb{C} : \varepsilon(\mathbf{u}) - \mathbb{C} : (\lambda^m : \mathbf{M} \otimes \mathbf{M})].\mathbf{M} dV, \quad (6)$$

where $\mathbb{C}$ is the elastic constants tensor, $\varepsilon(\mathbf{u})$ is the mechanical deformation as a function of the displacement field $\mathbf{u}$, λ^m is the magnetostriction constants tensor.

The basic problem consists in minimizing the total free energy (1) and finding the equilibrium magnetization at each value of the external magnetic field, which allows to derive the magnetic hysteretic behaviour [6]. The computation of the equilibrium magnetization state is based on solving the LL equation over time. The discretized time step is chosen in a way that minimizes the magnetic energy. The displacement field is computed by solving the mechanical equilibrium equation $\nabla(\mathbb{C} : u) = \nabla(\mathbb{C} : \lambda^m : M \otimes M)$ with given material parameters, external magnetic field and equilibrium magnetization [7, 9].

The micromagnetic model described above has been implemented in a self-written software EMicroM by using specific numerical methods [13–15]. The problem is discretized using a Finite Volume Approximation which preserves the main properties of the operator given in the continuous model, i.e. positivity and symmetry. Furthermore, the discretization of the demagnetized operator leads to a block-Toeplitz structure for regular 3D cubic grid, which allows to build fast solving method for cubic domains.

3. Materials

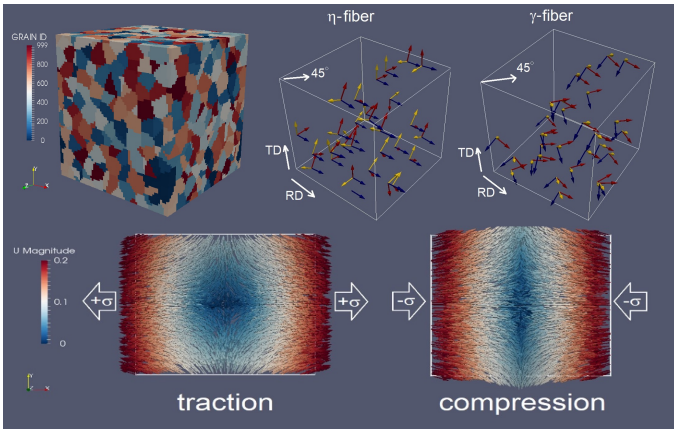


Figure 1: Top (from left to right): microstructure with 1000 grains, each grain has a different colour; crystallographic basic axis rotated in respect to RVE coordinate system for η-fiber and γ-fiber. Bottom: the displacement field distribution in case of tensile stress and compression.

The representative volume elements (RVE) in this study are cubes $100 \times 100 \times 100$ μm^3 with the resolution restricted to $64 \times 64 \times 64$ ($\sim$ 260 000) cubic cells, owing to the optimization of computing time. We performed computations on artificial 3D microstructures generated using multi-level Voronoi software developed by Tata Steel [16]. The material configuration files contain the information about Euler angles, that allows us to perform the rotation of crystals in reference to the RVE coordinate system. The material parameters used for simulations are given in the Table 1, where M_s is the magnetization at saturation, A is the exchange stiffness constant, K_1, K_2 are the cubic magneto-crystalline anisotropy constants, λ_{100}, λ_{111} are the magnetostriction constants along <100> and <111>

Table 1: Material parameters

$M_s = 1.7\ MA/m$	$A = 18\ pJ/m$	$K_1 = 48\ kJ/m^3$
$K_2 = 0$	$\lambda_{100} = 21 \cdot 10^{-6}$	$\lambda_{111} = -21 \cdot 10^{-6}$
$C_{11} = 228\ GPa$	$C_{12} = 132\ GPa$	$C_{44} = 116.5\ GPa$

directions, and C_{11}, C_{12}, C_{44} are the elastic stiffness tensor components in Voigt notation. The external magnetic field and the uniaxial stress are both applied parallel to RD direction. The example of microstructure and stress field distribution u are given in the Fig. 1.

We have computed hysteresis curves for selected microstructures: non-oriented (random) and oriented grains (η- and γ-fibers). There are two random structures: with 8 grains (grain size $\sim 50\mu m$) and 1000 grains (grain size $\sim 13\mu m$). The oriented microstructures both have 1910 grains (grain size $\sim 10\mu m$) but the grains are rotated differently: η-fiber is characterised by <100> || RD and γ-fiber is characterised by <111> || ND.

4. Results and Discussion

The computed hysteresis curves under compressive and tensile uniaxial stresses for randomly oriented grains are displayed in the Fig. 2

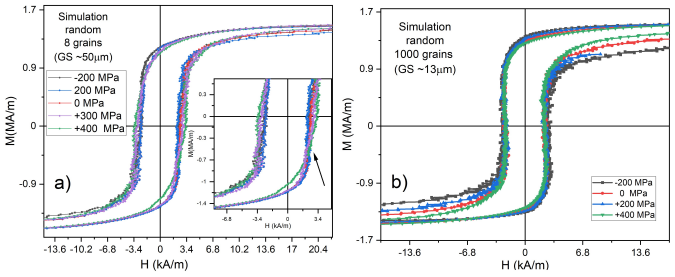


Figure 2: Hysteresis curves under uniaxial stress for random orientation of grains a) 8 grains; insert: zoom on the region where the curves cross; b) 1000 grains. The applied stress values are given in legend.

For 8 grains configuration the small number of grain orientation leads to a situation, where some of the grains has an easy-axis close to the applied field, and the tensile stress increases the anisotropy to favour the magnetisation vectors alignment with the external magnetic field. Therefore we observe that an increase of tensile stress leads to an increase of coercivity.

When we increase the number of grains to 1000, the dispersion of grain orientations becomes larger. The resulting hysteresis curve is given in the Fig. 2b. Here we do not observe any significant influence of the stress on coercivity, however we see an increase in permeability with the increasing tensile stress (blue and green curves in the Fig. 2b) and a decrease with the compressive uniaxial stress (black curve in Fig. 2b).

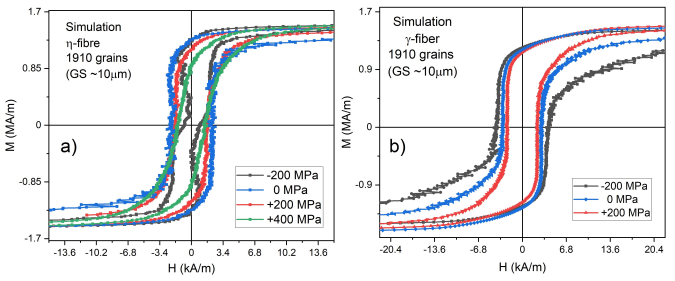


Figure 3: Hysteresis curves under uniaxial stress for a microstructure with 1910 grains (grain size ~10 μm) and a) η-fiber ; b) γ-fiber. The applied stress values are given in legend.

The results of hysteresis simulation for grain-oriented microstructures are given in the Fig. 3. We can see that the resulting hysteresis curves show a strong dependence of the properties on the texture. This confirms that our simulation software takes well into account the orientation of grains and the anisotropy of magnetic and elastic properties of the material.

For γ-fiber we observe a strong increase in coercivity with the compressive stress and an increase in permeability for the tensile stress that agrees well with predictions for this texture. For η-fiber increasing tensile stress leads to a decrease of coercive field, however it is still higher than in case of compression. This is due to the fact that for this virtual microstructure the <100> direction is strictly parallel to RD and therefore there is always one easy-axis

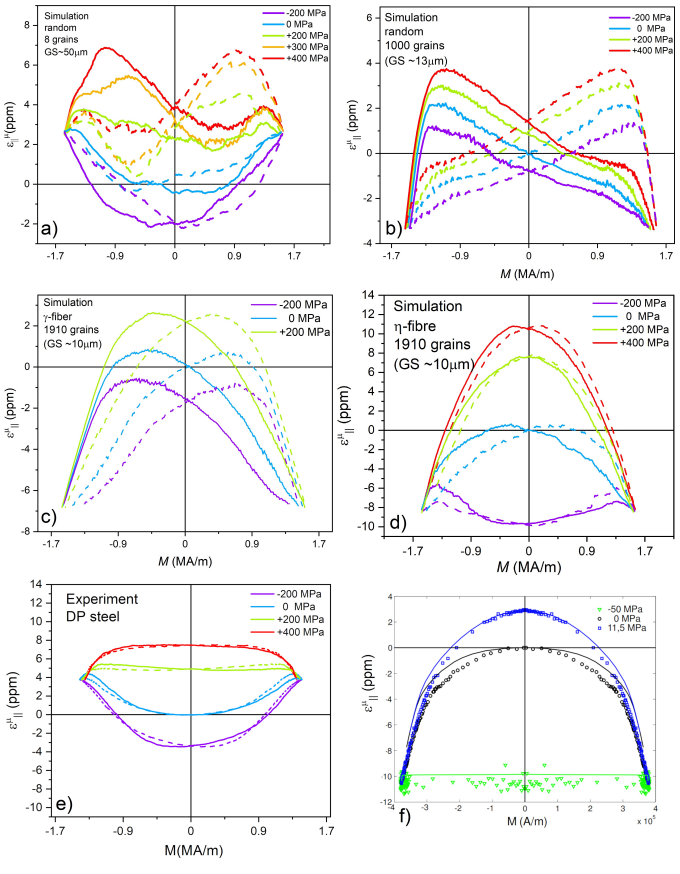


Figure 4: (a)-(d) Simulated longitudinal magnetostriction strain as a function of magnetization for a) randomly oriented 8 grains ; b) randomly oriented 1000 grains ; c) γ-fiber 1910 grains ; d) η-fiber 1910 grains. Solid lines correspond to the field sweep up, and dashed line - the field sweep down. (e)-(f) Experimentally measured longitudinal magnetostriction strain as a function of magnetization for e) DP steel ; f) ferrite NiZn (ahysteretic) [4]. Stress values are given in legends.

parallel to RD, and two easy axes in a plain perpendicular to RD. In this situation there are multiple possibilities to minimize the energy, which have an impact on the computed results. This obstacle can be overcome by averaging the calculation result over multiple microstructures.

The presented model allows to calculate the average magnetostrictive strain in the material as an equivalent elastic strain. The results for the longitudinal magnetostrictive strain $\varepsilon^{\mu}_{||}$ as a function of the magnetisation M are presented in the Fig. 4.

The behaviour of the magnetostriction corresponds well to that observed experimentally [4, 17]. The sign of the strain at the saturation is in coherence with crystallographic orientations of grains in the considered microstructures. The tensile stress increases the longitudinal magnetostrictive strain $\varepsilon^{\mu}_{||}$, and, in the case of the non-oriented grains, shifts the maximum to lower magnetization values, whereas the compressive stress decreases $\varepsilon^{\mu}_{||}$.

It is interesting that magnetostriction behaviour of simulated η-fiber shows similarity to the experimental measurements for DP steel. We also see the similarities in the hysteresis for tensile stress (see Fig.5). Even though, the reason for this similarity is not evident because of the different microstructures of the 2 steel grades, this shows that the modelling of magnetostriction under uniaxial stress reflects well the hysteresis behaviour and is very sensitive to the microstructure.

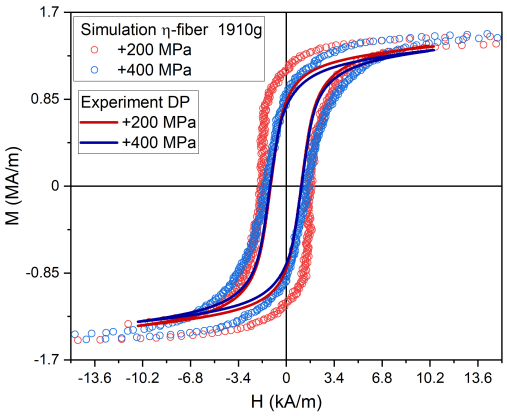


Figure 5: Comparison between the simulated hysteresis curves for η-fiber and the experimentally measured ones for DP steel [5]

5. Conclusions

The micromagnetic modelling of magnetostriction under uniaxial stress for different grain orientations has been carried out by including the magneto-elastic energy term in the Landau–Lifshitz equation. The computed magnetization curves display a change in the shape of hysteresis loops and the magnetic properties e.g., coercivity and remanence, under the applied stress in a manner which is in reasonable agreement with the reported experimental results of others. The magnetostriction as a function of magnetization follows well the characteristics of considered microstructures and applied uniaxial stress. The obtained results give a solid base for further development of the modelling algorithms as well as computational capacities.

6. Acknowledgements

The authors are grateful to Prof. O. Hubert from ENSPSay for provided experimental data of hysteresis and magnetostrictive strain in DP steel. The work described in the present paper has been developed within the project "Online Microstructure Analytics" (Ref. OMA, Grant Agreement No. 847296) that has received funding from the Research Fund for Coal and Steel of the European Union, which is gratefully acknowledged. This work was performed using HPC/AI resources from GENCI-IDRIS (Grant 2022-AD010913441) and HPC resources of Gricad. A part of the computations presented in this paper were performed using the GRICAD infrastructure, which is supported by Grenoble research communities.

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