https://www.proconference.org/index.php/usc/article/view/usc35-00-013
DOI: 10.30888/2709-2267.2026-35-00-013

UDC 699.88

POLYMODAL FILLER DISTRIBUTION AND THERMAL CONDUCTIVITY IN COMPOSITES

Pysarenko A.M.
c.ph.-m.s., as.prof.
ORCID: 0000-0001-5938-4107
Odessa State Academy of Civil Engineering and Architecture,
Odessa, Didrihsona, 4, 65029

Abstract. *Thermally conductive polymer composites represent a vital area of research within material science and industrial engineering due to their manufacturing simplicity, sustainability, and low production costs. Nevertheless, the development of high efficiency materials is consistently hindered by the critical issue of interfacial thermal resistance. This thermal barrier arises when fillers with diverse morphologies, including different chemical compositions, dimensions, and geometries, are integrated into a polymer matrix. Such resistance functions as a bottleneck for heat dissipation, effectively preventing the composite from reaching its maximum theoretical thermal performance. This paper provides an extensive investigation into contemporary techniques aimed at mitigating interfacial thermal resistance by optimizing specific filler characteristics. A systematic review of existing research indicates that the integration of hybrid filler systems, involving two or more distinct types of particles, offers a powerful strategy for enhancing thermal properties. This enhancement is largely attributed to a synergistic mechanism that promotes the construction of a continuous three-dimensional conductive network throughout the polymer structure. A key finding highlighted in this analysis is that the geometric configuration and physical scale of the fillers often exert a more significant influence on the overall thermal conductivity than the inherent properties of the filler material itself. This phenomenon is explained by the fact that the optimization of particle size and shape leads to a dramatic expansion of the contact surface area between neighboring fillers. Consequently, this increased connectivity serves to substantially lower the resistance at the interfaces, facilitating more efficient phonon transport. By focusing on these underlying structural factors, it is possible to design advanced materials that satisfy the rigorous cooling requirements of contemporary electronic devices. The synthesis of these methodologies offers a strategic framework for future advancements in the engineering of high-performance dielectric and conductive materials for various thermal management applications.*

Key words: *thermal conductivity, polymer composites, interfacial thermal resistance, hybrid fillers, filler morphology, interconnected conductive pathways.*

Introduction.

The progressive advancement of power electronics packaging is increasingly defined by a shift toward extreme miniaturization and the creation of high capacity components which must satisfy industrial demands for high thermal stability and increased power density. As modern electronic systems reach new performance thresholds the sharp increase in power density results in a significant rise in heat flux. This intensification of thermal energy poses a major challenge for material engineering because excessive heat leads to structural degradation of power modules induces mechanical fatigue and promotes various failure modes. Effective thermal management has therefore become a critical factor in the engineering process playing a central role in the dissipation of heat from semiconductor chips. A comprehensive grasp of heat transfer mechanisms and dissipation behavior in various material systems is necessary to develop more durable and stable devices. In systems where heat flow is predominantly one dimensional the interaction between specific materials and the underlying transfer principles is essential for maintaining operational efficiency and long term stability.

Thermally conductive materials are the primary choice for addressing heat dissipation issues in electronic enclosures. A broad spectrum of such substances is utilized in current packaging designs where they act as die attach materials to connect the silicon die to the substrate or frame. Hybrid polymer composites have emerged as a promising solution for future packaging needs. However the development of these hybrid materials is still evolving because of the complexities involved in combining a polymer matrix with fillers of different shapes and sizes [1]. The most significant barrier in creating effective single filler or hybrid composites is the phenomenon known as interfacial thermal resistance or Kapitza resistance. This barrier forms at the contact point between the filler and the matrix acting as a bottleneck that reduces the overall thermal performance of the composite.

The existence of Kapitza resistance implies that fillers with high internal thermal conductivity may not provide the desired cooling effect if the interface is not carefully managed. Thermal transport at these junctions is primarily driven by phonon scattering which is highly dependent on the physical and chemical state of the contact surfaces. Meeting the high standards of modern electronics requires a systemic approach to the design of polymer composites that focuses on the spatial arrangement of particles and the reduction of thermal bottlenecks. Establishing a low resistance path for heat requires precise control over filler morphology since the relationship between different particle shapes can either promote or prevent the development of interconnected conductive pathways [2].

Additionally the mechanical and flow properties of the polymer matrix must be carefully tuned alongside the filler concentration to ensure the material remains easy to process and maintains strong adhesion to device parts. This task is made more difficult by the fact that higher filler loading often leads to increased material viscosity and the formation of voids which can unintentionally increase the total thermal resistance of the system. Therefore the structural design of these materials must be thoroughly understood to ensure that the combination of fillers and matrix results in a reliable thermal interface. The focus on hybrid systems where different filler types are mixed offers a way to bridge gaps in the conductive network and improve the overall efficiency of heat transfer in high power density applications.

Interfacial thermal resistance of polymer composites

The central goal of this research is to offer an extensive analysis and a detailed examination of the mechanisms governing interfacial thermal resistance in polymer based composite materials. It is vital to develop a thorough understanding of the way in which particular filler attributes such as geometric configuration chemical composition and physical dimensions impact the behavior of thermal resistance at material boundaries. Through the investigation of these core variables this work intends to clarify the methods for improving the total thermal conductivity in both mono filler and hybrid polymer systems. Additionally the study concentrates on the intricate physical interactions occurring at the contact zones between the polymer matrix and the added reinforcements which frequently serve as the main obstacle to effective heat dissipation in electronic device packaging. Much of the analysis is devoted to assessing the benefits of hybrid polymer composites in comparison to conventional systems that rely on a single type of crystalline additive. This research strives to connect abstract heat transfer theories with the practical engineering of materials by pinpointing the ideal arrangements that reduce thermal impedance. By consolidating existing expertise on the optimization of fillers the article establishes a systematic approach for creating future die attach materials that can handle the heat requirements of high power density components. The final objective is to provide a comprehensive outlook on the structural design of composites ensuring that the choice of materials and their physical distribution are perfectly calibrated to achieve peak thermal performance and technical reliability in contemporary power electronics.

Regarding the experimental findings the investigation shows a notable rise in thermal conductivity which is mainly due to the high internal heat conduction properties of the particles embedded within the polymer matrix. The data suggests that the existence of a synergistic effect in hybrid polymer composites is more effective at driving high thermal conductivity than using separate fillers alone. This effect was found to be a result of the intentional variation in the size and shape of the particles. Consequently to make the most of this factor one must also account for other elements such as the exact scale and morphology of the additives to reach the maximum potential of the composite. Observations of systems with only one filler type showed that larger particles have a more significant impact on the thermal properties of the composite because heat moves through larger structures with more ease and better stability than through paths made of smaller particles. However since the resulting conductivity was still restricted the idea of merging fillers of two different sizes into a hybrid system was introduced to further boost thermal capabilities. Small particles are particularly effective at filling the internal gaps and air pockets that often appear during the blending of larger structures. Theoretically the presence of air gaps or voids between particles creates a major thermal barrier that breaks the continuity of the heat pathways. Therefore the inclusion of a second filler with smaller dimensions helps to fill the empty spaces between the larger particles thereby establishing more pathways for heat to travel. This specific structural layout is highly advantageous for lowering the thermal barrier and ensuring that heat flows steadily through the material which increases the overall conductivity of the composite. By improving the packing density using this multi scale method the resistance at the particle junctions is successfully minimized. The coordination between large and small particles supports the development of interconnected conductive pathways that encourage efficient phonon movement throughout the entire polymer system. This interaction is key to overcoming the limitations of traditional materials where the mismatch between different phases often leads to significant energy loss and poor heat management. The strategic use of multi modal distributions not only improves the density of the conductive network but also ensures that the mechanical stability of the interface is maintained under high thermal loads. Such an approach allows for the engineering of materials that are tailored for specific electronic environments where space is limited and heat generation is extreme.

Summary and conclusions.

The analysis of thermally conductive polymer systems proves that addressing interfacial thermal resistance is the primary requirement for improving heat management in power electronic devices. Research data indicates that although the internal qualities of the filler material are significant the control of filler geometry such as dimensions and physical form is more important for boosting thermal efficiency. Using a combination of different fillers is more successful than using a single type because smaller particles occupy the internal spaces and voids between larger ones to establish interconnected conductive pathways. This cooperative effect greatly diminishes Kapitza resistance and decreases the thermal impedance within the structure of the composite material.

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sent: 25.01.2026