

Among the wide range of intermetallic compounds, aluminides and especially iron, titanium and nickel aluminides have been the most widely regarded engineering materials. One of the important intermetallic compounds that is expected to be more applicable, due to low cost of raw materials, is the FeAl compound. Despite many desirable properties, the FeAl composition, like other intermetallic compounds, has several limitations, especially low temperature ductility and low creep strength at high temperature. Adding alloying elements, controlling the atmosphere, reducing grain size, controlling microstructures, controlling defects and impurities, adding second phase such as oxides and thermomechanical treatment have been introduced to increase ductility of FeAl. The aim of the present study was to improve ductility of FeAl based intermetallic compounds. In the first step, synthesized of FeAl, (Fe,Cr) Al intermetallic compounds and (Fe,Cr) Al-Al₂O₃ nanocomposites was performed by mechanical alloying (MA) method. For this purpose, iron, aluminum, chromium, iron oxide (or chromium oxide) powders were mixed with stoichiometric composition to produce FeAl, (Fe,Cr)Al and (Fe,Cr)Al-Al₂O₃ powders by mechanical alloying. The results showed that FeAl compound is formed after 30 h of MA time and by increasing the milling time to 100 h the grain size reached to 70 nm. In the next step, the (Fe, Cr) Al intermetallic composition was synthesized by stoichiometry of Fe₂Cr₃Al₅ after 30 h. In the third step, (Fe,Cr)Al metal matrix nanocomposite containing Al₂O₃ reinforcement phase was fabricated. For this purpose, two different approaches, reduction of chromite (Cr₂O₃) and hematite (Fe₂O₃) by Al were used. During the mechanical alloying of the Fe-Al-Cr₂O₃ powder mixture, aluminum and chromium oxide did not react and the alumina phase did not form, therefore the reduction of hematite was used. In Cr-Al-Fe₂O₃ system, the heat generated by Al-Fe₂O₃ reaction lead to formation of Al (Fe, Cr) phase with grain size about 70 nm and Al₂O₃ crystalline particles with grain size of 10 nm. Then the prepared powders were sintered by hot pressing at 1600°C, 0.05 GPa for 10 min. The properties of the bulk compound including the microstructure, mechanical properties, oxidation resistance and high temperature wear behavior were evaluated. The results illustrated that the presence of Cr and Al₂O₃ nanoparticles improved the FeAl properties. Also, transmission electron microscopy (TEM) studies showed that Al₂O₃ particles retained their nano dimensions and did not exhibit significant growth. The results of the nanoindentation test indicated a high hardness of 21 GPa, a Youngs modulus of 700 GPa and a fracture toughness of 19 MPa.m^{1/2} for (Fe, Cr) Al-10% volAl₂O₃ nanocomposite. Also the study of wear behavior at 400 °C showed a high wear resistance of this compound. Oxidation behavior of compounds accorded with the parabolic law. The (Fe,Cr)Al compound had the lowest weight gain among the other compounds, revealing the protection role of Cr. To improve surfaceproperties the bulk samples were subjected to the plasma oxidation process to create a thin oxide layer on the surface. The results of X-ray analysis (XRD) and electron backscatter diffraction analysis (EBSD) confirmed the formation of Al₂O₃. Creating a thin oxide layer on the surface while improving the mechanical properties and wear resistance can prevent atmospheric reaction with the

surface, leading to improved ductility and increased fracture toughness. Surface roughness and topography were investigated by atomic force microscopy (AFM) after plasma oxidation. Transmission electron microscopy images showed that the plasma oxidation surface layer had a thickness of about