Dynamic responses of railway ballasted track considering rail pad deterioration

Chayut Ngamkhanong\textsuperscript{1,2}, Keiichi Goto\textsuperscript{2,3} and Sakdirat Kaewunruen\textsuperscript{1,2}

\textsuperscript{1}Department of Civil Engineering, School of Engineering, University of Birmingham, Birmingham B152TT, United Kingdom
\textsuperscript{2}Birmingham Centre for Railway Research and Education, School of Engineering, University of Birmingham, Birmingham B152TT, United Kingdom
\textsuperscript{3}Railway Dynamics Division, Railway Technical Research Institute, Japan

cxn649@student.bham.ac.uk

Abstract. Rail pads, which can be made of polymeric compound, rubber, composite materials etc., are resilient components installed on rail seats between the rail and sleeper in order to attenuate the impact loads and moderate track stiffness at the special locations. Based on literature, rail pad can be deteriorated over time. This can change the dynamic characteristics of rail pads: stiffness and damping. This paper presents the dynamic responses of railway track with new rail pads and aged rail pads. It should be noted that the parameters used of rail pads were analysed using impact excitation technique and then adapted for this study. To study the dynamic responses, D-track software is used based on Winkler foundation principle. Wheel flat is considered as imperfect wheel for impact case. The results obtained show that rail pads deteriorations seem to have significant effects on the increasing of rail/sleeper contact force rather than wheel/rail contact force. It is known that softer pads normally have a better performance on reducing dynamic responses. Although, the stiffness of rail pads reduce over time, damping coefficient also decrease. These lead to a poor performance of rail pad resulting in the reducing of rail/sleeper contact force.

1. Introduction

Rail pads are resilient elastic pads installed on rail seats between the rail and sleeper. It is noticeable that rail pads, which can be commonly made of polymeric compound, rubber, composite materials etc., are the important component of railway track. The main duties of rail pads are to adjust the track stiffness at the differential track stiffness locations such as bridge transitions\textsuperscript{[1-2]}, switches and crossings \textsuperscript{[3]} etc. It should be noted that these areas are prone to dynamic loading. This is used to reduce the differential track stiffness. In the stiffer portion of transition zone or bridge end, rail pads were used to reduce track stiffness \textsuperscript{[4]}.

In fact, railway track often experience high intensity impact load due to the irregularities of wheel or rail \textsuperscript{[5-6]}. This is a high shock load applied in short duration with the frequency range between 0Hz and 2000Hz depending on vehicle velocities, types of wheel or rail defects etc \textsuperscript{[5]}. While, the impact capacity of track components can be reduced due to material degradations and long term behaviour \textsuperscript{[7-13]}.

Another main duty of rail pads is attenuate the dynamic responses induced by wheel impacts \textsuperscript{[14]}.

The use of softer pad provided a better damping effects resulting in the reductions of forces acting and dynamic responses. As shown in previous study, the use of stiffer rail pad can induce cracking in concrete sleepers as the stress on sleeper was increased. It was clearly seen that the replacement of
stiffer pads by softer pads indicated a reduction of sleeper loads resulting in better ride comfort [1]. Thus, it should be noted that the performance of rail pads depends on the properties of rail pads used in those particular areas. Hence, it is important to consider the pad stiffness when selecting and applying pads [15].

According to previous studies, it is evident that deterioration rate has significant influence on the dynamic rail pad properties that affect the dynamic responses of railway tracks [16-17]. The experimental techniques using instrumented hammer coupled with modal analysis have been developed in order to extract the dynamic characteristics of rail pad [18-19]. In this study, it should be noted that the material properties of aged rail pad have been collected and extracted from previous studies at different years in service [20-22].

This paper presents the dynamic responses at the contact between rail and sleeper with rail pads. The study case of worn wheel flat was considered as an impact case to compare with the perfect wheel/rail contact. The material degradations of rail pads were taken into account based on previous experiments. The dynamic amplification factors are highlighted. The outcome of this study will help railway engineer in improving the predictive maintenance and inspection regimes.

2. Methodology

2.1. Simulation scenarios

D-Track software was used to simulate the static and dynamic responses of railway track based on Winkler foundation principal which cross section of track dynamic responses was considered symmetrically. It should be noted that Timoshenko beams were used to model the rails and sleepers as this take into account shear characteristics which have a significant effects on results [23]. The Timoshenko coefficients used for rails and sleepers were 0.833 and 0.34, respectively [24]. The numerical simulations were carried out using 106t freight wagon with wheel radius of 0.46m and Hertzian spring constant of $0.87 \times 10^{11} \text{ N/m}^{3/2}$.

Simulation scenarios and vehicle/track types are presented in table 1. It should be noted that worn wheel flat is considered as wheel/rail contact irregularity case. This causes high frequency impact force on railway track. It is noted that wheel flat is the most common local surface defect of wheels [5, 25-27].

| Vehicle type | Track type | Train speed | Wheel/rail contact condition |
|--------------|------------|-------------|------------------------------|
| 106t Coal Wagon | Standard Gauge 1435mm, 60kg/m rail, Prestressed concrete sleepers | 20-100 | No irregularity Worn wheel flat (Length = 75 mm, Depth = 1 mm) |

2.2. Rail pad properties

An alternative rail pad tester based on the SDOF vibration response measurement for determining the dynamic properties of rail pads has been devised, as well as the state-dependent model of rail pads [19]. Total pad stiffness including both frequency-dependent stiffness and frequency-independent stiffness has been calculated based on modal testing with the consideration of state dependent model. HDPE (High Density Polyethylene) pads were used. The new rail pad and worn rail pads in the years in services of 18 and 20 were taken into account [19]. The damping coefficient and stiffness of rail pad are shown in figure 1. It was assumed that the deterioration rate was linear. The degradation equation of both damping and stiffness are noted in the Figure.
3. Results and Discussions

Figures 2-3 show the time histories of wheel/rail and rail/sleeper contact forces subjected to the train speed of 100 km/h. It should be noted that the analysis positions were at rail seat. The pulse durations were about 0.7 s. It can be seen from both figures that wheel flat defect play a role on the increasing of dynamic force. It is observed that railway track with new and aged rail pads have the same magnitude of wheel/rail contact forces. However, aged rail pads have significant effects on the rail/sleeper contact force in comparison with new rail pads, as seen in figure 3.

Figure 1. Dynamic properties of rail pad.

Figure 2. Wheel/rail contact force.
Wheel/rail contact force at different train velocities and years in service of rail pads are presented in figure 4a. It should be noted that for the perfect wheel/rail interaction, wheel/rail contact forces are about 140 kN. As for worn wheel flat case, contact forces increase nonlinearly with the increase of vehicle velocity. It is noted that rail pad deterioration does not play a role on wheel/rail contact force. It should be noted that wheel flats would create the forces varying from 0 to 2000 Hz, depending on the train speeds [5].

Figure 4b presents the rail/sleeper contact forces considering worn wheel flat. As for static case (no irregularity), the contact forces slightly linearly increase with the increasing of velocity and years in service. However, the increases are less than 5%. In case of worn wheel flat, the contact forces significantly increase with the increasing of train velocity. It is also noted that aged rail pad play a role in rail/sleeper contact force reduction especially at the higher speed.

The dynamic factor can be evaluated from rail/sleeper dynamic over static forces ratio, as illustrated in figure 5. Dynamic factors are in the range between 1.3 and 3.6 at year 0 and between 1.7 and 3.9 at year 20. Interestingly, rail pad degradations does not seem to play a role on wheel/rail
contact force as they show quite the same dynamic factor at different ages of rail pads. Nevertheless, they instead play a significant role on rail/sleeper contact force.

Figure 5. Dynamic factor.

4. Conclusions
This paper presents the dynamic response between vehicle and track considering degradations of rail pads. It is well known that rail pads are generally used in railway track in order to attenuate the dynamic load and adapt the overall track stiffness. The new and aged HDPE pads have been previously studied in terms of properties and then used in this study. It was noted that the dynamic stiffness and damping coefficient tended to reduce over the time. The results show that rail pads deteriorations seem to have significant effects on the increasing of rail/sleeper contact force rather than wheel/rail contact force. The increases of dynamic factor of rail/sleeper force of about 25% are noted. Although, the softer rail pads can significantly make benefit to railway track as seen in previous studies, damping properties, which are observed over time, reduce the damping performance which induce the higher rail/sleeper contact force.

5. Acknowledgements
The authors are sincerely grateful to the European Commission for the financial sponsorship of the H2020-RISE Project No. 691135 “RISEN: Rail Infrastructure Systems Engineering Network”, which enables a global research network that tackles the grand challenge of railway infrastructure resilience and advanced sensing in extreme environments (www.risen2rail.eu) [28].

6. References
[1] Miguel Sol-Sánchez F M N G 2015 The use of elastic elements in railway tracks: a state of the art review Constr. Build. Mater. 75 293–305
[2] Setsobhonkul S, Kaewunruen and Sussman J M 2017 Lifecycle Assessments of Railway Bridge Transitions Exposed to Extreme Climate Events Frontiers in Built Environment 3 2017
[3] Palsson B and Nielsen J 2015 Dynamic vehicle-track interaction in switches and crossings and the influence of rail pad stiffness field measurements and validation of a simulation model Veh. Syst. Dyn. 53 734–755
[4] Lund H and Åswärdh A 2014 Transition Zones between Ballasted and Ballast less Tracks. Lund: LTH School of Engineering at Campus Helsingborg, Department of Technology and Society, Lund University.
[5] Remennikov A M and Kaewunruen S 2008 A review on loading conditions for railway track structures due to wheel and rail vertical interactions Structural Control and Health Monitoring, 15 207-34
[6] Ngamkhanong C, Kaewunruen S and Costa B J A 2018 State-of-the-Art Review of Railway Track Resilience Monitoring Infrastructures 3
[7] Ngamkhanong C, Li D and Kaewunruen S 2017 Impact capacity reduction in railway prestressed concrete sleepers with vertical holes IOP Conference Series: Materials Science and Engineering 236

[8] Ngamkhanong C, Kaewunruen S and Remennikov A M 2017 Static and dynamic behaviours of railway prestressed concrete sleepers with longitudinal through hole IOP Conference Series: Materials Science and Engineering 251

[9] Ngamkhanong C, Li D and Kaewunruen S 2017 Impact capacity reduction in railway prestressed concrete sleepers with surface abrasions IOP Conference Series: Materials Science and Engineering 245

[10] Ngamkhanong C, Li D, Kaewunruen S 2017 and Remennikov A M Capacity Reduction in Railway Prestressed Concrete Sleepers due to Dynamic Abrasions International Journal of Structural Stability and Dynamics (Accepted)

[11] Li D, Ngamkhanong C and Kaewunruen S 2017 Influence of vertical holes on creep and shrinkage of railway prestressed concrete sleepers IOP Conference Series: Materials Science and Engineering 236

[12] Li D, Ngamkhanong C and Kaewunruen S 2017 Time-dependent topology of railway prestressed concrete sleepers IOP Conference Series: Materials Science and Engineering 245

[13] Li D, Ngamkhanong C and Kaewunruen S 2017 Influence of Surface Abrasion on Creep and Shrinkage of Railway Prestressed Concrete Sleepers. IOP Conference Series: Materials Science and Engineering 245

[14] Nyström P and Prokopov A 2011 Spårkonstruktioner för 320 km/h – Övergångskonstruktioner. Borlänge, Stockholm: Trafikverket.

[15] Jenks C W 2006 Design of Track Transitions. (Washington DC, USA: Transportation Research Board).

[16] Grassie S L and Cox S J 1984 The dynamic response of railway track with flexible sleepers to high frequency vertical excitation Proceedings of Institute of Mechanical Engineering Part D 24 77-90

[17] Wu T X and Thompson D J 1999 The effects of local preload on the foundation stiffness and vertical vibration of railway track Journal of Sound and Vibration 215 881-904

[18] Kaewunruen S and Remennikov A M 2005 Monitoring structural degradation of rail bearing pads in laboratory using impact excitation technique 1st International Conference on Structural Condition Assessment, Monitoring, and Improvement Perth Australia December 14-12 .394-389.

[19] Kaewunruen S and Remennikov A M 2009 State dependent properties of rail pads Transport Engineering in Australia 12 17-24

[20] Kaewunruen S and Remennikov A M 2006 Sensitivity analysis of free vibration characteristics of an in situ railway concrete sleeper to variations of rail pad parameters Journal of Sound and Vibration 298 453-461

[21] Remennikov A M and Kaewunruen S 2006 Laboratory measurements of dynamic properties of rail pads subjected to incremental preloads 19th Australasian Conference on the Mechanics of Structures and Materials 29 Nov 29 – 1 Dec Christchurch New Zealand 319-324

[22] Oregi M, Nunez A, Dollevoet R and Li Z 2017 Sensitivity Analysis of Railpad Parameteors on Vertical Railway Track Dynamics J. Eng. Mech. 143 04017011

[23] Steffens D M 2005 Identification and development of a model of railway track dynamic behaviour Master thesis Queensland University of Technology Australia

[24] Cai Z 1992 Modelling of rail track dynamics and wheel/rail interaction PhD Thesis Department of Civil Engineering Queen’s University Ontario Canada

[25] Kanoje N K, Sharma S C, and Harsha S P 2014 Wheel-rail and wheel-flat as a coupled system: Contact dynamics modeling with finite element analysis J. Coupled Syst. Multiscale Dyn. 2 20-27
[26] Knothe K L and Grassie S L 1993 Modelling of railway track and vehicle/track interaction at high frequencies *Vehicle System Dynamics* **22** 209–262

[27] Sadeghi J 1997 Investigation of characteristics and modelling of railway track system PhD Thesis School of Civil, Mining, and Environmental Engineering University of Wollongong Australia

[28] Kaewunruen S, Sussman J M and Matsumoto A 2016 Grand challenges in transportation and transit systems *Frontiers in Built Environment* **2**