Contact Problem for an Elastic Layered Composite Resting on Rigid Flat Supports

T. S. Ozsahin, V. Kahya, A. Birinci and A. O. Cakiroglu

Abstract—In this study, the contact problem of a layered composite which consists of two materials with different elastic constants and heights resting on two rigid flat supports with sharp edges is considered. The effect of gravity is neglected. While friction between the layers is taken into account, it is assumed that there is no friction between the supports and the layered composite so that only compressive tractions can be transmitted across the interface. The layered composite is subjected to a uniform clamping pressure over a finite portion of its top surface. The problem is reduced to a singular integral equation in which the contact pressure is the unknown function. The singular integral equation is evaluated numerically and the results for various dimensionless quantities are presented in graphical forms.

Keywords—Frictionless contact, Layered composite, Singular integral equation, The theory of elasticity.

I. INTRODUCTION

In engineering mechanics, the contact problems have different applications to a variety of structures of practical interest. Foundations, roads, railways, airfield pavements, rolling mills, ball and roller bearings are some application areas of the contact problems. Although developments in the contact problems did not appear in the literature until the beginning of this century, the studies are accelerated recently because of improvements in computer technology.

In previous studies, the elastic layer resting on an elastic half space or rigid foundation is considered. In these studies, the layer is subjected to uniform or concentrated loading conditions [1, 2]. The examples for the contact problems in which the load is transmitted to the elastic layer by the rigid stamp can be found in [3, 4]. While the effect of gravity in all these studies is taken into account, it is neglected in [5]. In [6], the load is transmitted to the layer by means of an elastic stamp instead of a rigid one. The examples for the works in which the elastic layer is resting on rigid supports can be found in [7, 8].

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In this study, the contact problem of the two elastic layers with different constant heights \( h_1 \) and \( h_2 \) resting on rigid flat supports is solved according to the theory of elasticity. The layered medium is subjected to a uniform clamping pressure over a portion of width \( 2a \) on its top surface as seen in Fig. 1. In solution, the effect of gravity is neglected. The friction between the layers is taken into account. However, it is assumed that there is no friction between the supports and the layered composite so that only compressive traction can be transmitted across the interface.

![Layered composite resting on rigid flat supports subjected to uniform clamping pressure](image)

II. FORMULATION OF THE PROBLEM

The Navier equations to be used in the solution of two-dimensional contact problem may be expressed as follows.

\[
\mu_i \nabla^2 u_i + (\lambda_i + \mu_i) \frac{\partial}{\partial x} \left( \frac{\partial u_i}{\partial x} + \frac{\partial v_i}{\partial y} \right) = 0, \quad (1a)
\]

\[
\mu_1 \nabla^2 v_1 + (\lambda_1 + \mu_1) \frac{\partial}{\partial y} \left( \frac{\partial u_1}{\partial x} + \frac{\partial v_1}{\partial y} \right) = 0, \quad (1b)
\]

where subscript \( i = 1, 2 \) indicates the layer number.

In these expressions, \( \lambda_i \) and \( \mu_i \) are the Lame constant and the shear modulus, \( u_i \) and \( v_i \) are the displacement components in \( x \) and \( y \)-directions, respectively. The problem is symmetrical according to the \( y \)-axis and the following conditions must also be satisfied.

\[
u_i(x, y) = -u_i(-x, y), \quad v_i(x, y) = v_i(-x, y). \quad (2)
\]

Due to symmetry, it is enough to consider the problem in the region \( 0 \leq x < \infty \). Displacements of each layer may be expressed as the Fourier sine and Fourier cosine transforms of the unknown functions \( \phi(\alpha, y) \) and \( \Psi(\alpha, y) \) as

\[
u_i(x, y) = \frac{2}{\pi} \int_0^\infty \phi(\alpha, y) \sin(\alpha x) d\alpha, \quad i = 1, 2, \quad (3a)
\]
\[ v_i(x,y) = \frac{2}{\pi} \int \Psi_i(\alpha,y) \cos(\alpha \alpha) d\alpha \, , \quad i=1,2. \]  

Substituting (3) into (1) and solving the resulting ordinary differential equation system, one may obtain the unknown functions \( \psi_i(\alpha,y) \) and \( \Psi_i(\alpha,y) \). Using these solutions into (3), the displacements \( u_i \) and \( v_i \) for each layer can be determined as

\[ u_i(x,y) = \frac{2}{\pi} \int \left[ (A_i + B_i) e^{i\alpha} + \left( C_i + D_i \right) e^{\alpha} \right] \sin(\alpha \alpha) d\alpha \, , \]

\[ v_i(x,y) = \frac{2}{\pi} \int \left[ \left( A_i + \frac{\kappa_i}{\alpha} x \right) + y \right] B_i e^{\alpha} + \left[ -C_i + \left( \frac{\kappa_i}{\alpha} y - D_i \right) \right] e^{\alpha} \cos(\alpha \alpha) d\alpha , \]  

where \( \kappa_i, \ i=1,2 \) is an elastic constant and \( \lambda_i = (3-4\nu_i) \) for plane strain, \( \kappa_i = (3-\nu_i)/(1+\nu_i) \) for plane stress. \( \alpha_i \) is the Poisson’s ratio. \( \sigma_{\alpha i}, \sigma_{\beta i} \) and \( \tau_{\omega i} \) stress components may be expressed in terms of \( u_i \) and \( v_i \) as follows.

\[ \sigma_{\alpha i} = (\lambda_i + 2\mu_i) \frac{\partial u_i}{\partial x} + \lambda_i \frac{\partial v_i}{\partial y} , \quad i=1,2 \]  

\[ \sigma_{\beta i} = (\lambda_i + 2\mu_i) \frac{\partial v_i}{\partial x} + \lambda_i \frac{\partial u_i}{\partial y} , \quad i=1,2 \]  

\[ \tau_{\omega i} = \mu_i \left( \frac{\partial u_i}{\partial x} + \frac{\partial v_i}{\partial y} \right) , \quad i=1,2 . \]  

Substituting (4) and (5) into equations from (6) to (8), the stress expressions for each layer may readily be obtained as follows.

\[ \sigma_{\alpha i}(x,y) = \frac{4\mu_i}{\pi} \int \left[ \left( A_i + B_i \right) e^{i\alpha} + \frac{3-\kappa_i}{2} B_i \right] e^{\alpha} \, \sin(\alpha \alpha) d\alpha , \]

\[ \sigma_{\beta i}(x,y) = \frac{4\mu_i}{\pi} \int \left[ -\left( A_i + B_i \right) e^{i\alpha} + \frac{3-\kappa_i}{2} B_i \right] e^{\alpha} \, \cos(\alpha \alpha) d\alpha , \]

\[ \tau_{\omega i}(x,y) = \frac{4\mu_i}{\pi} \int \left[ -\left( A_i + B_i \right) e^{i\alpha} + \frac{\kappa_i-1}{2} B_i \right] e^{\alpha} \, \sin(\alpha \alpha) d\alpha , \]

where \( A_i, B_i, C_i, D_i, \ i=1,2 \) are the unknown constants which are determined from the following boundary conditions.

\[ \tau_{\omega i}(x,0) = 0 , \quad -\infty < x < \infty , \]  

\[ \sigma_{\beta i}(x,0) = -p_i , \quad -a < x < a , \]

\[ u_i(x,h_i) = u_i(x,h_i) , \quad -\infty < x < \infty , \]  

\[ v_i(x,h_i) = v_i(x,h_i) , \quad -\infty < x < \infty , \]  

\[ \sigma_{\beta i}(x,h_i) = -p_i , \quad -a < x < a , \]  

\[ \tau_{\omega i}(x,h_i) = \tau_{\omega i}(x,h_i) , \quad -\infty < x < \infty , \]  

\[ \tau_{\omega i}(x,0) = 0 , \quad -\infty < x < \infty , \]

\[ \sigma_{\beta i}(x,0) = -q(x) , \quad b < x < c , \]

\[ \frac{\partial v_i(x,0)}{\partial x} = 0 , \quad b < x < c . \]

where \( q(x) \) in (12h) is the unknown contact pressure.

Applying the boundary conditions (12) to the displacement and the stress expressions given in (4), (5) and (9) to (11), one may obtain the coefficients \( A_i, B_i, C_i, D_i, \ i=1,2 \) in terms of the unknown contact pressure \( q(x) \). These coefficients are given in Appendix.

### 3. The Singular Integral Equation

The unknown contact pressure \( q(x) \) is determined by making use of the remaining boundary condition (13). If constants \( A_i, B_i, C_i, D_i \) are substituted into (13), after some routine manipulations, one may obtain the following singular integral equation.

\[ \int \left[ \frac{1}{t-x} - \frac{1}{t+x} + \frac{2}{(1+\kappa_i)} k(x,t) \right] q(t) dt = 0 , \]

where \( k(x,t) \) and \( l(x) \) are given in the Appendix. The equilibrium condition for the problem may be written as

\[ \int q(t) dt = ap_x . \]

The kernel, \( k(x,t) \) of the singular integral equation is bounded in closed interval \( b \leq x \leq c \).

To simplify the numerical analysis of the integral equation, the following dimensionless quantities can be introduced.

\[ \alpha = z/h , \quad x = \frac{c-b}{2} + \frac{c+b}{2}t , \quad t = \frac{c-b}{2} + \frac{c+b}{2} \]

\[ L(r) = \frac{L(\frac{c-b}{2} + \frac{c+b}{2})}{p_o} , \quad g(s) = \frac{g(\frac{c-b}{2} + \frac{c+b}{2})}{p_o} \]

\[ k(r,s) = k(\frac{c-b}{2} + \frac{c+b}{2}) \frac{c-b}{2} + \frac{c+b}{2} \frac{c-b}{s} + \frac{c+b}{2} \]

Substituting the dimensionless quantities given in (16) into (14) and (15), these equations may be written as follows.

\[ \int \left[ \frac{1}{s-r} - \frac{1}{(s+r)+2(c+b)/(c-b)} + \frac{(c-b)}{h(1+\kappa_i)} k(r,s) \right] g(s) ds = \frac{\mu_i}{\mu_o} \frac{2}{(1+\kappa_i)} L(r) , \]

\[ -1 < r < 1 . \]
\[ g(s)ds = \frac{2a}{c-b}, \quad (18) \]

The function \( g(s) \) has singularities at \( s = \pm 1 \) and thus the index of the integral equation is \( +1 \) [10]. Assuming the solution of integral equation as

\[ g(s) = G(s)/\sqrt{1-s^2}, \quad (-1 < s < 1), \quad (19) \]

and using the appropriate Gauss-Chebyshev integration formula [11], (17) and (18) may then be replaced by

\[ \sum_{i=1}^{n} W_i G(s_i) = \frac{2a}{c-b}, \quad (20) \]

\[ \sum_{i=1}^{n} W_i G(s_i) = 2\mu \frac{\mu}{\mu + 1} L(r_i), \quad (21) \]

where

\[ W_i = W = \frac{\pi}{2n-2}, \quad W = \frac{\pi}{n-1}, \quad i=2,\ldots,n-1, \]

\[ s_i = \cos \left( \frac{i-1}{n-1} \pi \right), \quad i=1,\ldots,n, \]

\[ r_j = \cos \left( \frac{2j-1}{2n-2} \pi \right), \quad j=1,\ldots,n-1. \quad (22) \]

Equations (20) and (21) constitute \( n \) linear algebraic equations for \( n \) unknowns, \( G(s_i), i=1,\ldots,n \). Solution of these algebraic equations and use of (19) yield the unknown contact pressure, \( q(x) \). Once the contact stress is obtained, the stress components at any point in the medium may be found easily by making use of (9) to (11).

4. RESULTS

Results for normalised contact pressure \( q(x)/p_o \) are shown in Figs. 2 to 5.

Fig. 2 shows the normalised contact pressure distribution with variation of load width. It should be mentioned that the calculated contact pressure distribution was found to depend essentially on \( a/h \) only, that is, the normalised contact pressure \( q(x)/p_o \) independent of the magnitude of the applied load. As expected, the contact pressure has singularities at the corners of the supports. The normalised contact pressure decreases with decreasing of \( a/h \). As \( a/h \) increases, the normalised contact pressure has more great values at where close to outer edge with respect to ones at where close to inner edge of the rigid stamp.

In Fig. 3, the normalised contact pressure distribution with variation of support width is given. As support width increases, it is observed that the normalised contact pressure decreases at where close to the outer edge of the rigid stamp. Also, as \( c/h \) increases, the normalised contact pressure gets smaller. Therefore, it shows the possibility of separation between the rigid stamp and layered composite.

As seen in Fig. 4, the normalised contact pressure decreases at where close to inner edge whereas increases at where close to outer edge of the rigid stamp with decreasing of \( h_2/h \).

As \( \mu_2/\mu_1 \) increases, the normalised contact pressure increases interior region of the rigid stamp while decreases in the region close to corners as seen in Fig. 5.

Results for \( \sigma_{x,0}(y)/p_o \) dimensionless stress are shown in Figs. 6 to 8.

In Fig. 6, it can be seen that the layer 2 has tensile stress distribution along the \( y \)-axis, although very small compressive stresses appear at the upper surface for small values of \( a/h \).

In the layer 1, compressive stress distribution is examined. On the contrary, stresses are tensile in the layer 1 and compressive in the layer 2 for larger values of \( a/h \), although small
compressive stresses appear close to the lower surface. For small values of $a/h$, the layered composite behaves like a simply supported beam whereas it behaves like an overhanging beam for larger values of $a/h$.

As the support width increases, the values of dimensionless stress $\sigma_y(0,y)/p_o$ increase as seen in Fig. 8. Although only compressive stresses are determined in the layer 1, both tensile and compressive stresses are observed in the layer 2.

Variation of $\sigma_y(0,y)/p_o$ dimensionless stress distribution with elastic constants is shown in Fig. 7. In the layer 2, for every $\mu_2/\mu_1$ ratio, tensile stress distribution is observed. As $\mu_2/\mu_1$ increases, the values of the tensile stresses increase at the lower surface of the layer 2. In the layer 1, both tensile and compressive stresses are determined. As $\mu_2/\mu_1$ ratio decreases, the region where the tensile stresses appear becomes closer to the middle of the layer 1.
Fig. 8 The axial stress distribution $\sigma (0, y)/p_0$ with variation of support width ($h_2/h = 0.3, \mu_2/\mu_1 = 6.48, a/h = 0.5$)
\[ l(s) = \int_{0}^{\infty} f(s) \cos(at) \, dt \]

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