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Impact in Adhesive Joints for the Automotive Industry at Low and High Temperatures

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Abstract

In recent years there has been an increasing interest in the automotive industry in applying adhesive bonding in structural components of vehicles. When adhesive joints are used in this area, some factors such as impact loading and temperature variation have a decisive role. Under these conditions, the joint must provide enough strength to transmit the load without fracturing, and thus assure the car's integrity. Although several studies have characterized adhesives under both situations separately, very few have considered them at the same time.

In this study the impact strength of single lap joints using a new crash resistant epoxy adhesive and ductile adherends was characterized as a function of temperature. Drop impact tests were successfully conducted at -20, 23 and 80 ºC by developing a cooling system and a heating system.

The results obtained were discussed and analysed, and a failure prediction was developed. At room temperature failure was dictated by the adherends yielding due to the high strength of the adhesive. At high and low temperatures, a high decrease in the strain to failure was found. Thus, in this case it was the adhesive which determined the joints strength.

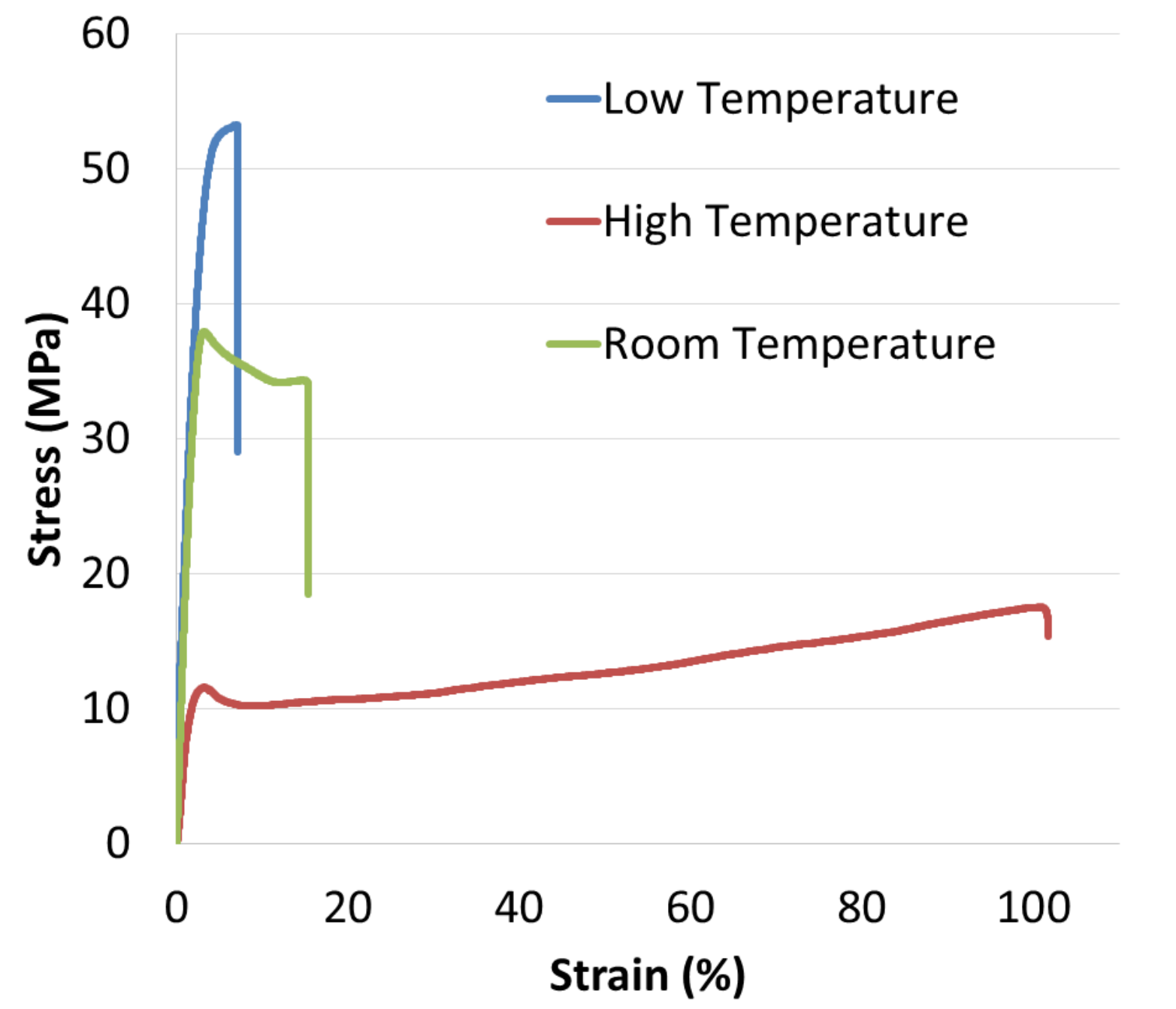
At +80 ºC the adhesive was much more sensitive to the high strain-rate, since the values obtained for the prediction using the static properties of the adhesive were far below the experimental results.

Specimen description

Adhesive

The characterized adhesive was XNR6852E-2, a prototype developed and supplied by NAGASE CHEMTEX® (Osaka, Japan). It is a new crash resistant epoxy adhesive with a one-part system that cures at 150 ºC for 3 h. Unlike the network structure of conventional epoxy adhesives, this adhesive has a particular linear structure that allows more freedom of movement to the chains.

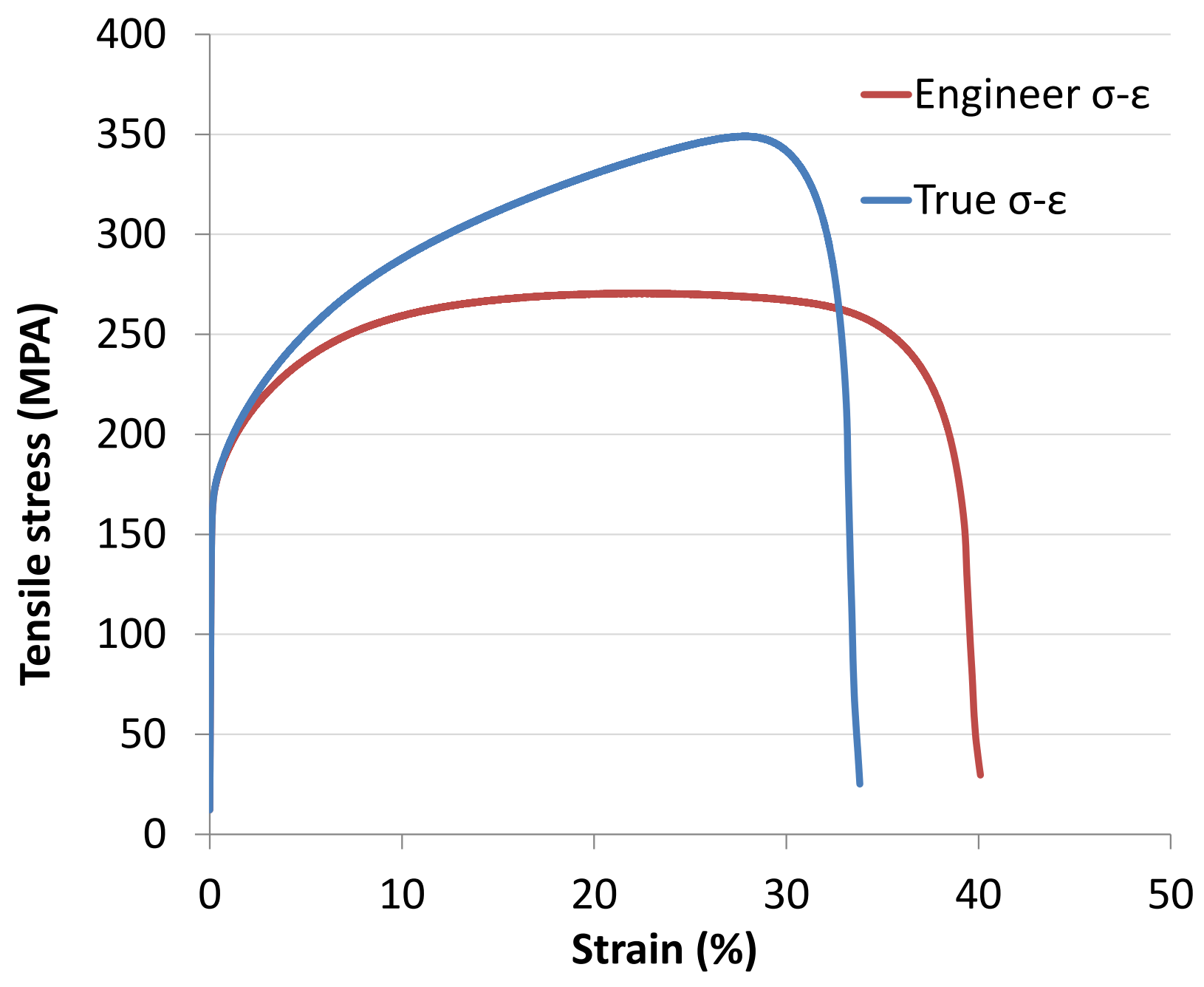
Static properties were obtained by performing adhesive bulk tests at room and high temperatures, showing the high effect of temperature variation in the adhesive's behaviour:



Steel adherends

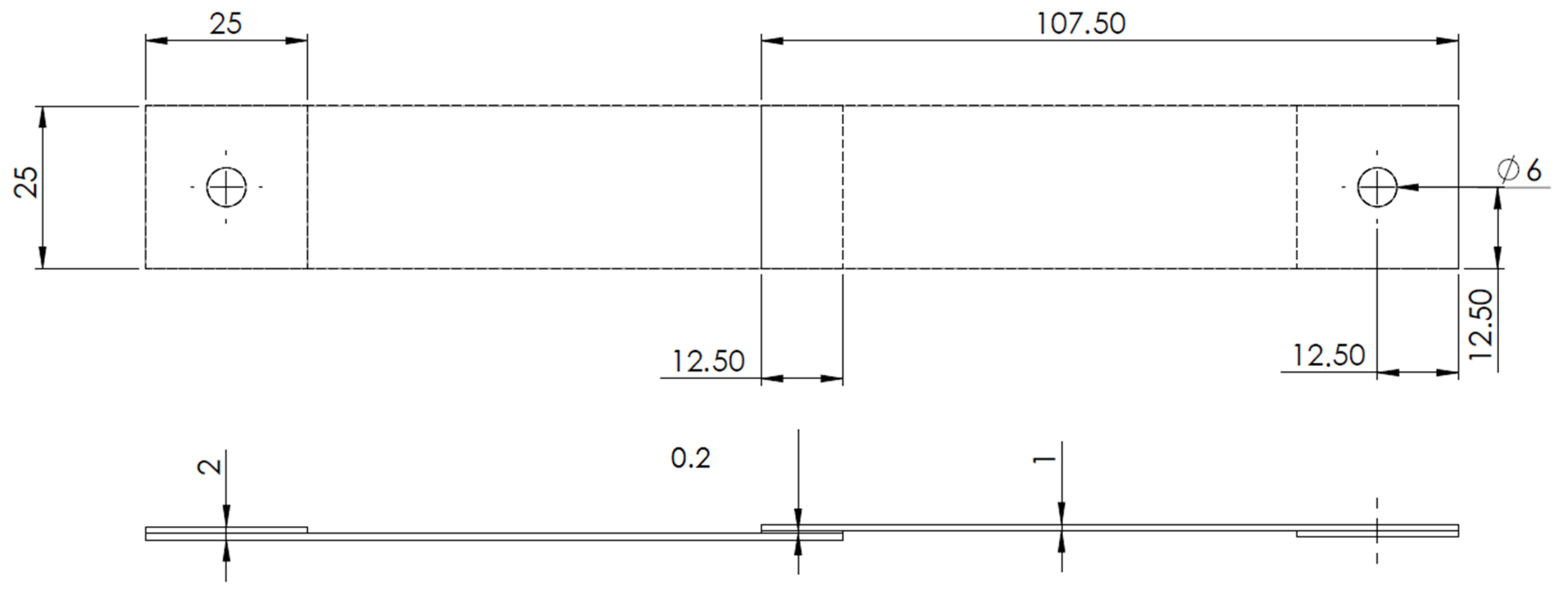
The adherends material used to manufacture the SLJ was mild steel (DIN St33) because of its strong presence in the automotive industry for car body shells.

Steel tensile strength value was necessary to predict failure strength at room temperature. Tensile tests were conducted to obtain this value, showing higher ductility than expected from catalogued properties (17.6 % strain at failure).



Geometry

Two groups of SLJs were used, with the only difference between them lying in the bondline thickness, which was 0.2 mm and 0.4 mm. This geometry was chosen because it is usually used in automotive industry and will therefore allow comparison with other academic work.



Impact tests procedure

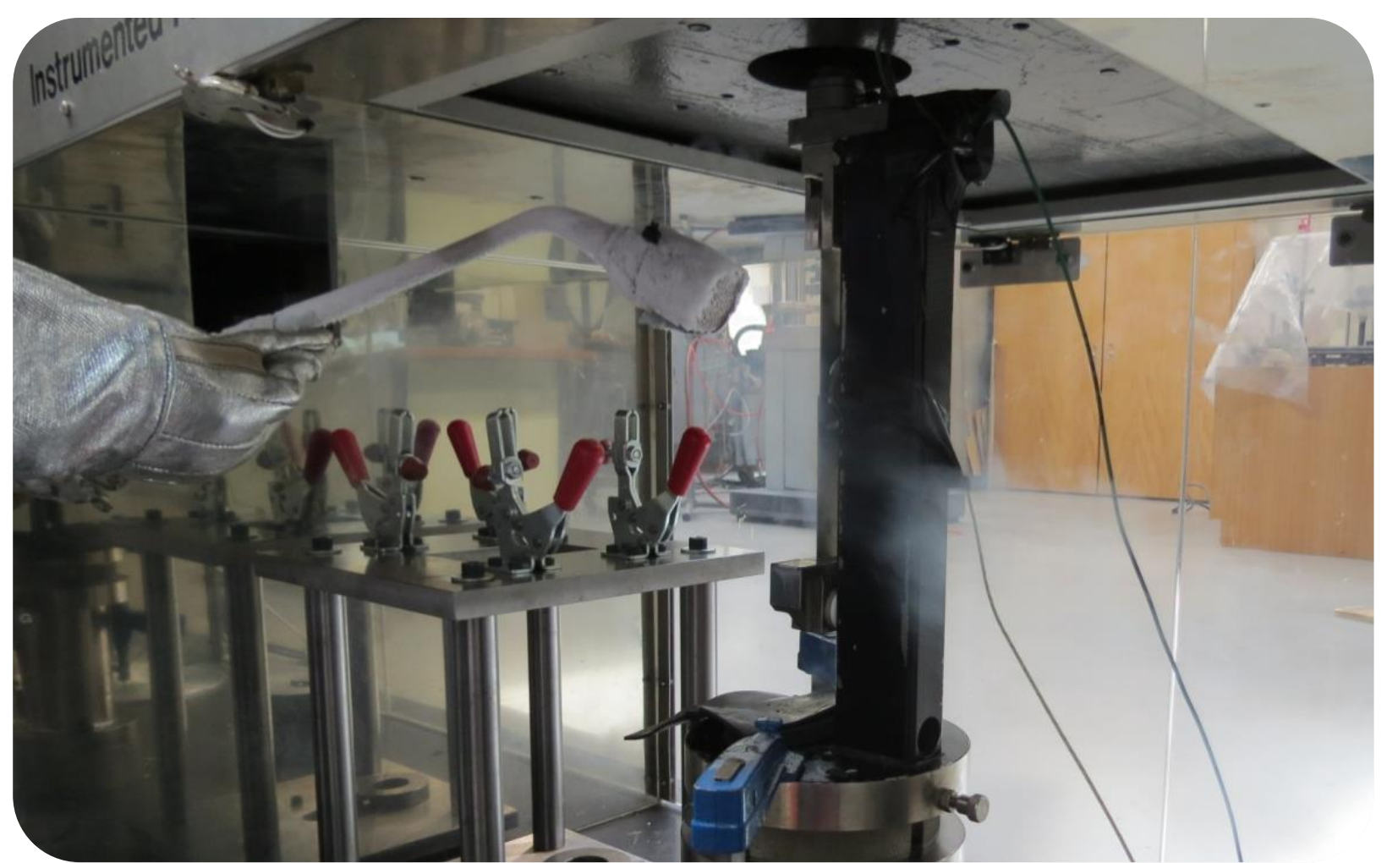
The impact tests were conducted in the machine Rosand® Instrumented Falling weight impact tester, type 5 H.V. (Stourbridge, West Midlands, U.K.). This machine drops a mass guided from certain high until it impacts on the device that holds the specimen. The energy applied in the impact (90J) is controlled by the weight of the falling mass (26Kg), and the speed can be set by the height.

Room temperature tests

The room temperature tests were performed following the procedure explained in the past section. The holding device was calibrated to make sure that the load was correctly aligned when applied. After fixing the specimen, the mass was set to provide an impact energy of 90 J.

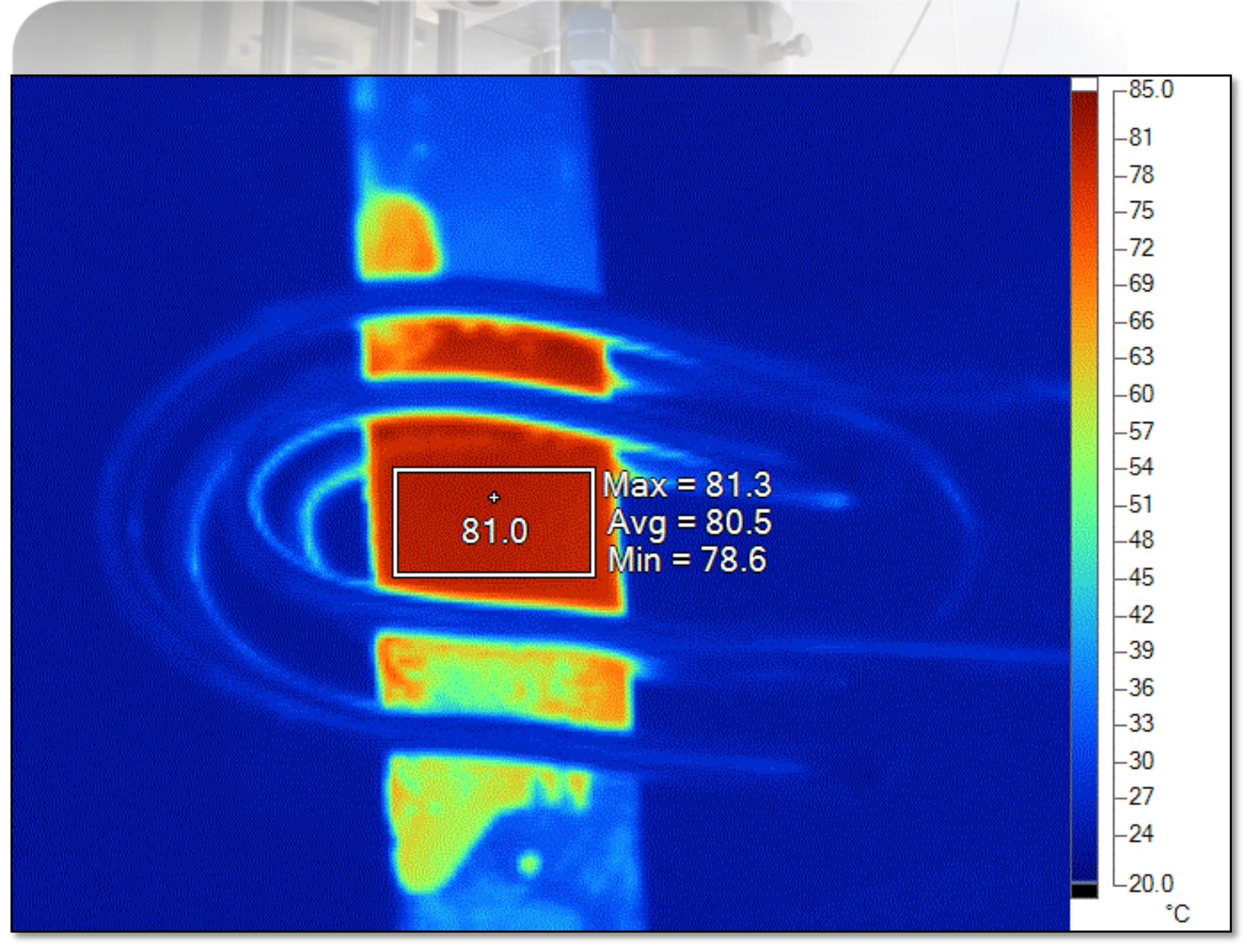
High temperature tests

Heating through electromagnetic induction was used to reach the temperature of +80 ºC in the SLJs overlap. The system implemented heated the specimen once it was assembled to the holding device. When the temperature was slightly above the +80 ºC, the system was removed and the mass was dropped.



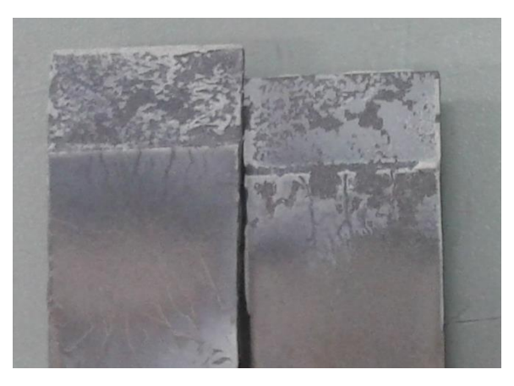
Low temperature tests

The solution found to reach the -20 ºC was to throw gas nitrogen directly to the specimen overlap. In order to measure the temperature of the specimens, a thermocouple was placed behind the specimens, so that it would not be in direct contact with the nitrogen gas.

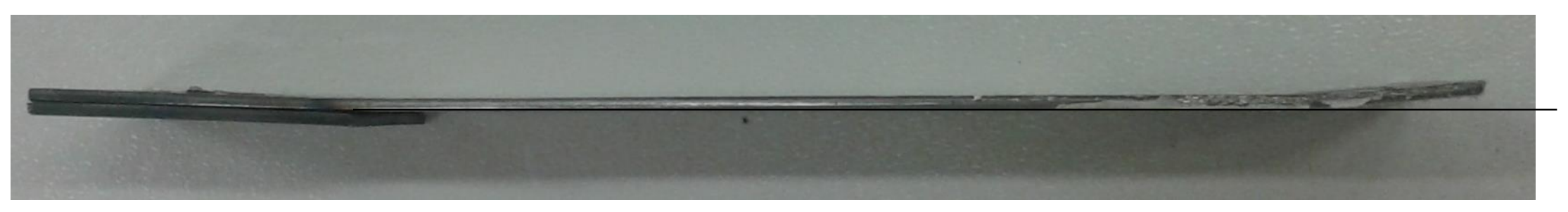


The fracture surface of the specimens tested at **low temperature** showed a **fragile** fracture →

The fracture surface of the specimens tested at **room temperature** showed a **ductile** fracture →

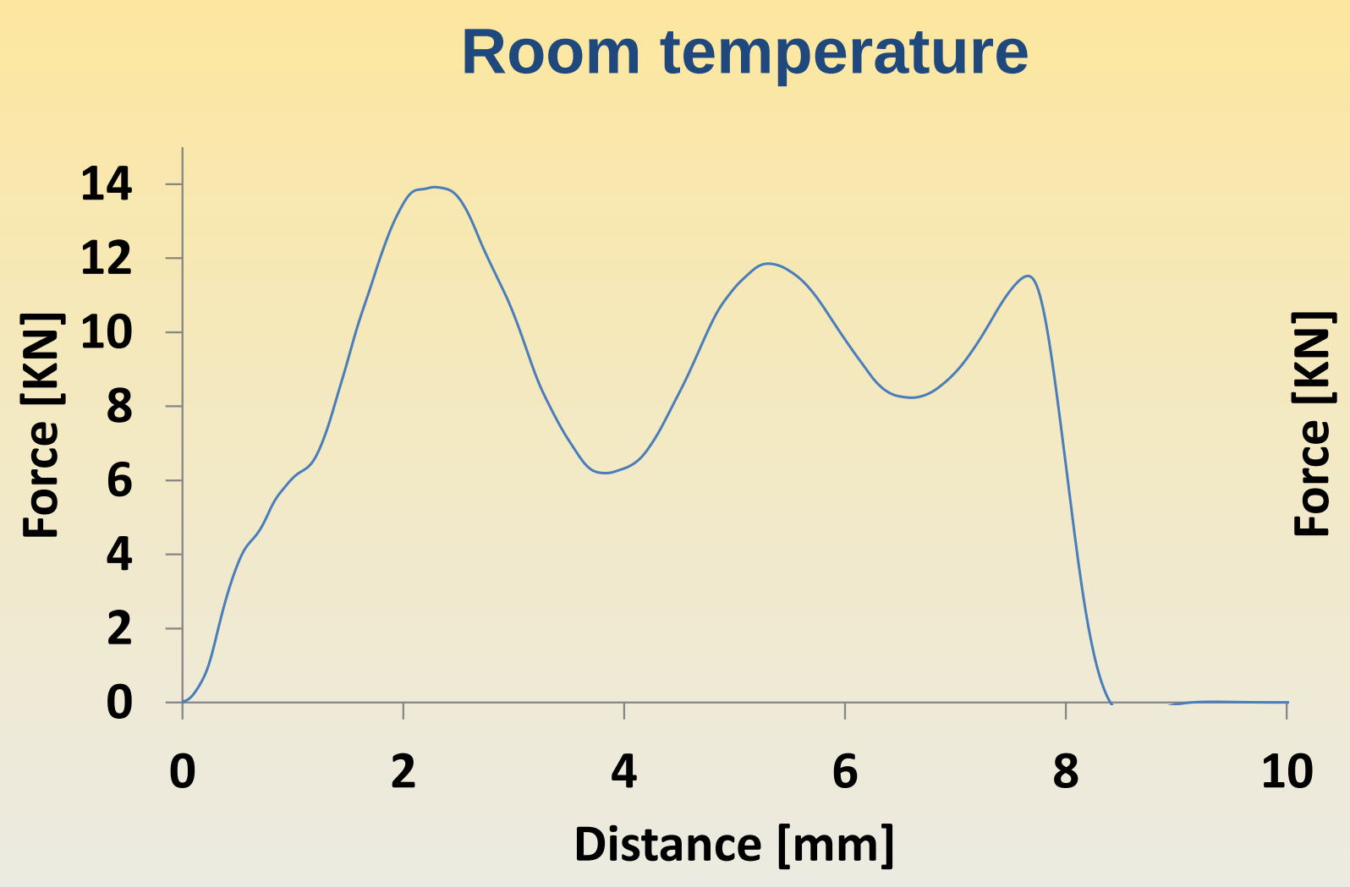


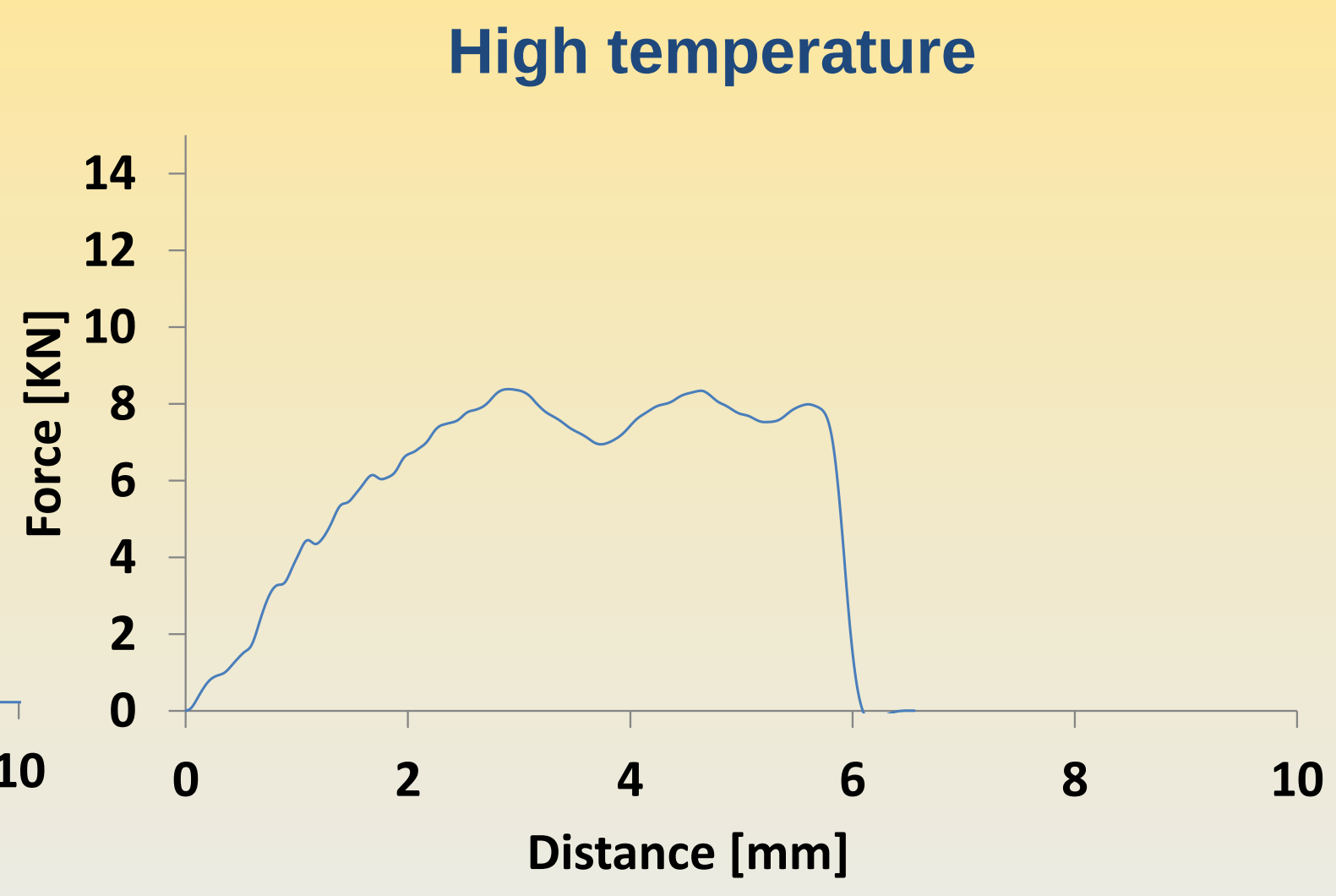
The fracture surface of the specimens tested at **high temperature** showed a **very ductile** fracture →

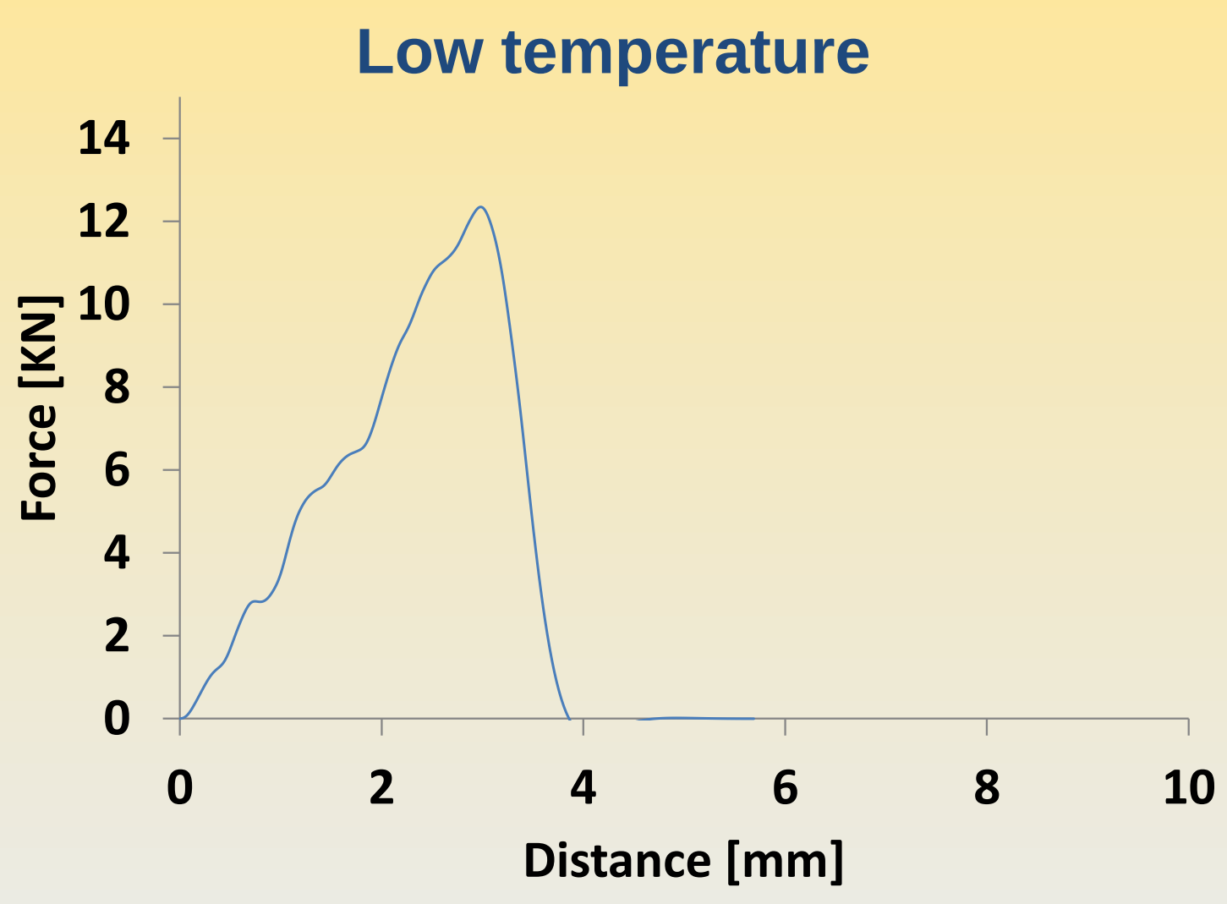


Deformation of a room temperature specimen after testing

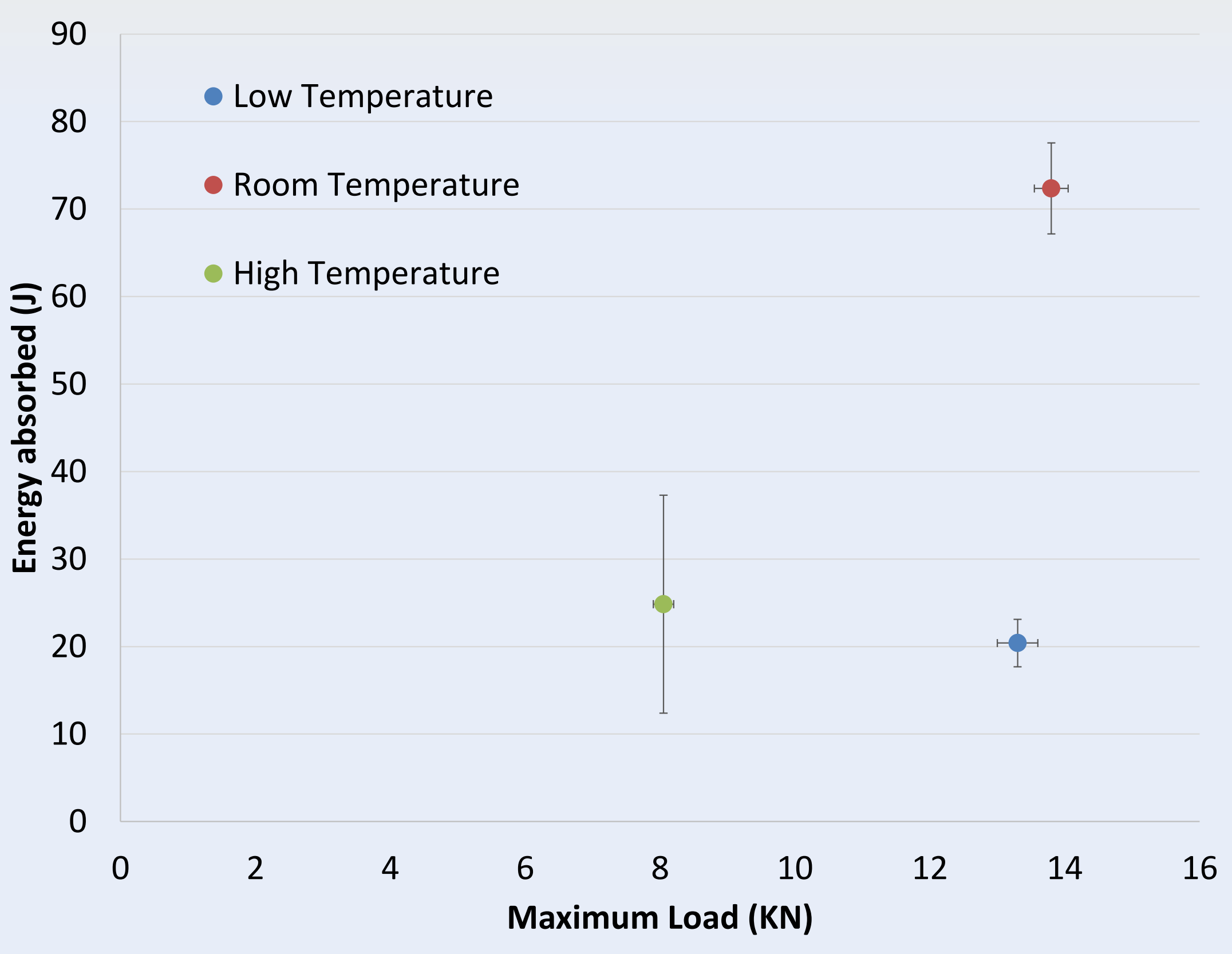
Experimental results



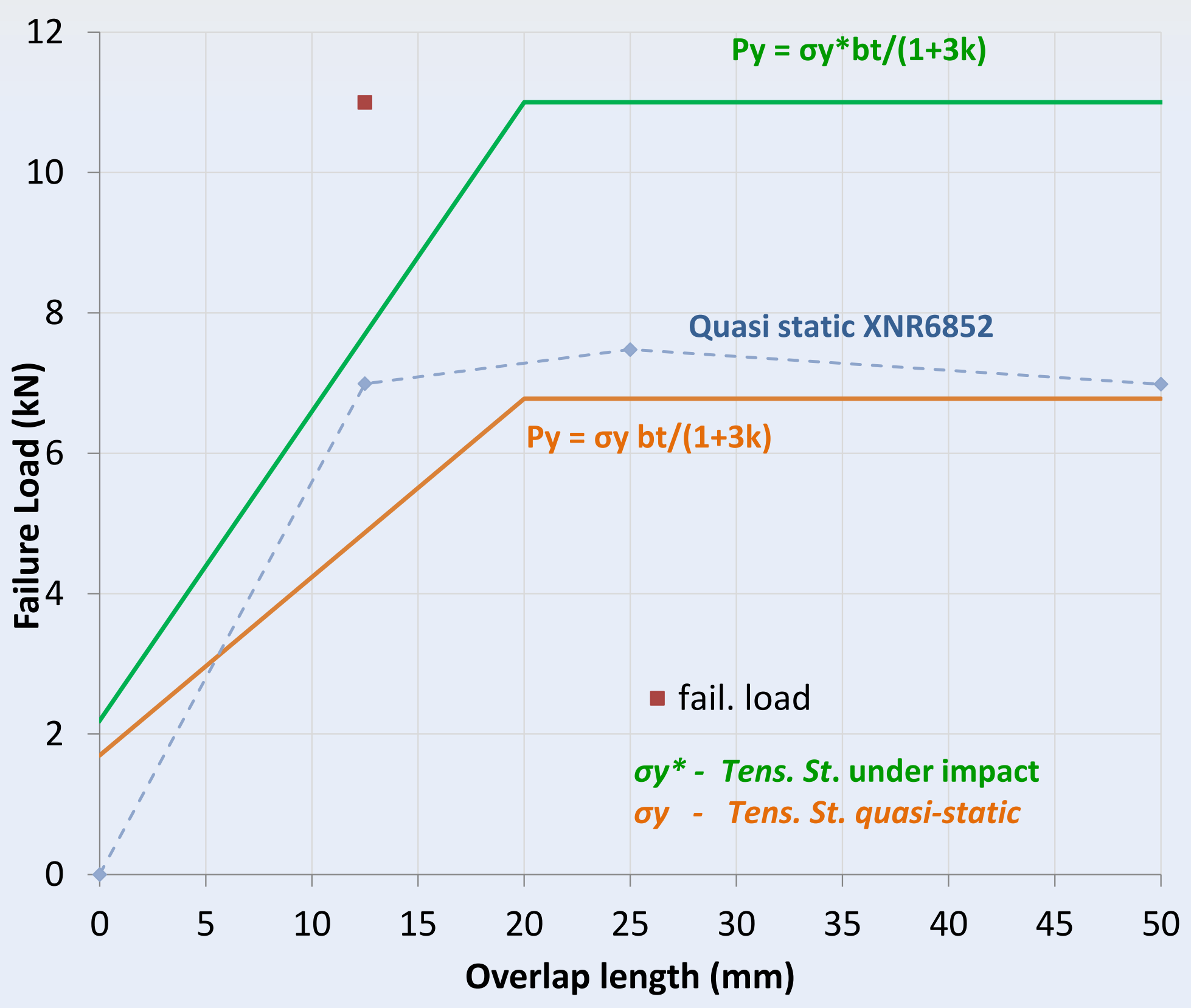




Temperature and adhesive thickness effect on impact strength



Failure prediction at +23 ºC using adherend yielding model [1]



Conclusions

- **At room temperature:**

The adhesive showed high resistance under impact load, withstanding deformation and damage without brittle behaviour. Failure was dictated by the adherend yielding (high energy absorption) and could be predicted accurately considering impact properties of the steel adherends.

- **At high temperature:**

The resistance of the adhesive is reduced, fracturing in a ductile manner before the steel adherends yield. The strong sensitivity of the adhesive to high strain-rate gives higher results for failure load than the prediction using static properties of the adhesive.

- **At low temperature:**

The adhesive shows higher resistance under impact load, although the maximum strain of the joint is strongly reduced.

References

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