

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT OF MEDIUM-CARBON FERROMANGANESE TECHNOLOGY

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Abstract. This article presents the results of medium-carbon ferromanganese smelting from domestic manganese ores under large-scale laboratory conditions. Data on the production and demand for refined ferromanganese produced during the last successful year are provided. Since 2020, refined ferromanganese production has decreased by approximately 1,2 million tons, which is 18% lower than in 2019. This decline was caused by the outbreak of the coronavirus (COVID-19), which began in China in 2019, and the subsequent worldwide pandemic, as well as geopolitical conflicts (Russia — Ukraine), which started in 2021. Kazakhstan has significant reserves of manganese ores, which are in ferrous-manganese and carbonate states. X-ray phase analysis showed that manganese in the ores is represented by hydroxide, pyrolusite, and iron oxide. Medium-carbon ferromanganese was smelted in an electric furnace with a transformer power of 0.1 MVA. The chemical composition of the resulting alloy is as follows, %: Mn – 80-85; Si – 0,05-0,25; Fe – 1,8-3,0; P – 0,05-0,09; C – 1,5-2,0; MnO – 20-25; SiO₂ – 13,94-14,5; CaO – 23,35-24,85; MgO – 12,5-14,0. Thus, an optimal technological scheme for the production of a wide range of manganese ferroalloys was developed.

Key words: Medium-carbon ferromanganese, electric arc furnace, manganese, metal, slag.

Introduction. Manganese is a traditional alternative deoxidizer and alloying metal. Manganese ferroalloys (ferromanganese and silicomanganese) are used in cast iron production, with 90% of the ore applied in the steel industry as a deoxidizer.

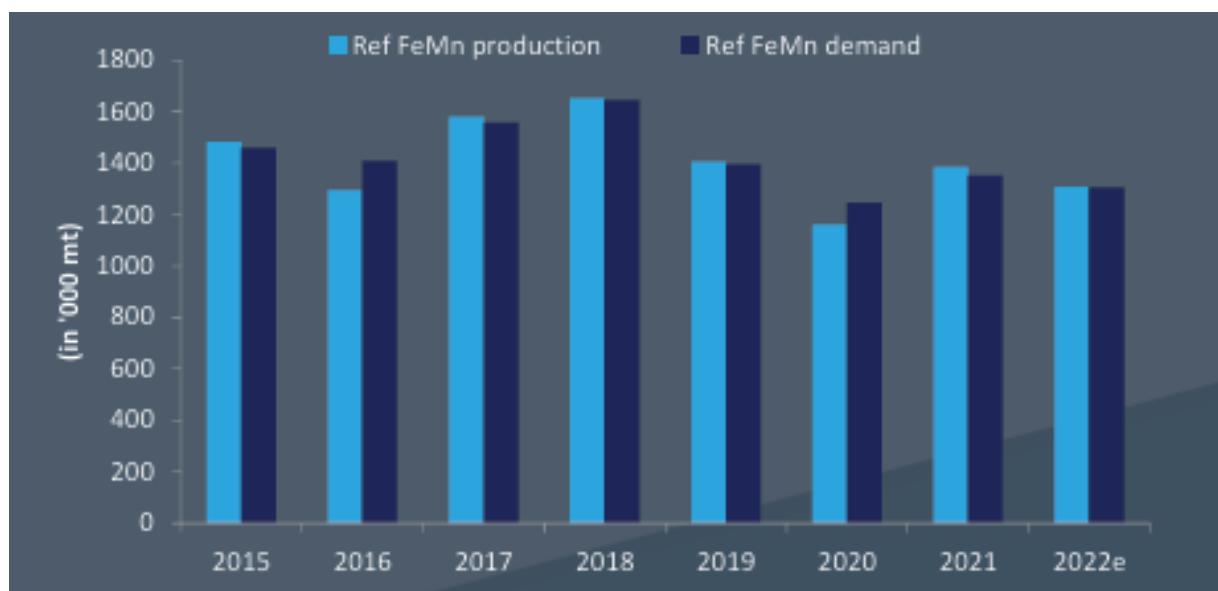


Figure 1 - Production and demand for refined ferromanganese (2015-2022).

The production volume and demand for refined ferromanganese from 2015 to 2022 are presented in Figure 1. Since 2020, the production of refined ferromanganese has decreased by approximately 1.2 million tons, which is an 18% reduction compared to 2019. This decline was caused by the outbreak of the coronavirus (COVID-19), which began in China in 2019, the global pandemic, and the geopolitical conflicts (Russia-Ukraine) that started in 2021 [1, 2].

As of 2022, manganese reserves were estimated at approximately 1.7 billion tons, which is three times more than in 2010 [3]. The largest manganese reserves in the world are found in South Africa, Ukraine, Brazil, and Australia. In Kazakhstan, there are more than 5 thousand tons of manganese concentrate reserves.

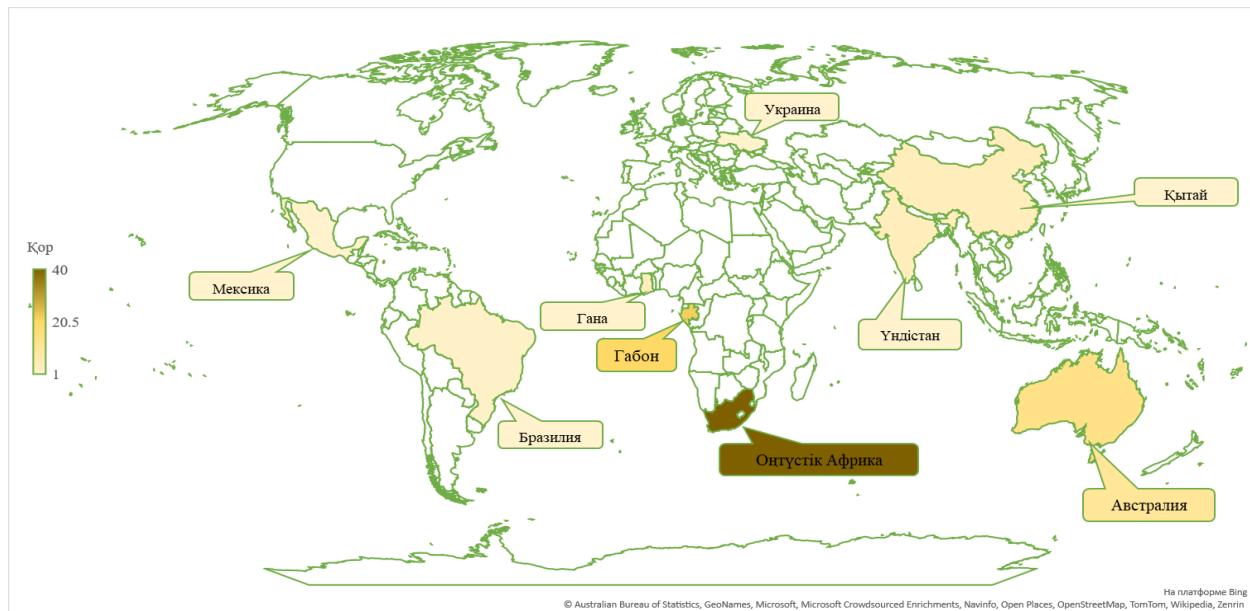


Figure 2 - Manganese Ore Reserves as of 2022

Global production of manganese ores decreased by 3% in 2022 compared to the previous year, totaling 21.1 million tons. The movable reserves of medium- and low-grade ores (-5% and -1% respectively) are declining due to rising energy costs, while the production of higher-grade ores increased by 1% since the extraction of manganese alloys requires less energy when using higher-grade ores. The extraction of high-grade manganese ore (>44% Mn) currently accounts for 40% of total production, while medium-grade ore (>30% and <44% Mn) constitutes 50%, and low-grade ore (<30% Mn) makes up the remaining 10%. In 2022, production volumes decreased in South Africa, Australia, China, Ghana, Brazil, Côte d'Ivoire, and Mexico, while they increased in Gabon and India. Currently, South Africa accounts for 40% of global production, followed by Gabon (22%) and Australia (14%) (Figure 2) [3,4].

Kazakhstan's manganese raw materials are preferred by Russia due to the relative cheapness of the supplied products, the absence of import duties (as part of the Customs Union), and low transportation costs to the place of consumption [5].

Based on the information provided above, the technology for smelting medium-carbon ferromanganese from domestic ores was considered prior to the work.

Materials and Methods

The initial charge consisted of the following components: ferrosilicomanganese produced by the Aksu Ferroalloy Plant (JSC TNK "Kazchrome," Kazakhstan); aluminosilicomanganese developed at the Zhezkazgan Chemical and Metallurgical Institute named after Zh. Abishev (Karaganda, Kazakhstan); lime from the Zharminsky deposit (Abay Region, Kazakhstan); and manganese ore from the Zhezdinsky deposit (Kazmanganets Holding, Kazakhstan) [6].

The components of the charge and the obtained ferromanganese samples were studied using X-ray structural phase analysis (XRD) with a D8 Advance diffractometer (Bruker, USA) using Cu-K α

radiation and EVA software, and the chemical composition was analyzed using "wet chemistry" methods and energy-dispersive X-ray spectroscopy (EDS) on a scanning electron microscope Jeol JSM-7001F (Jeol, Japan) [7].

The results of the X-ray structural phase analysis (XRD) of the manganese ore are presented in Figure 3 and Table 1.

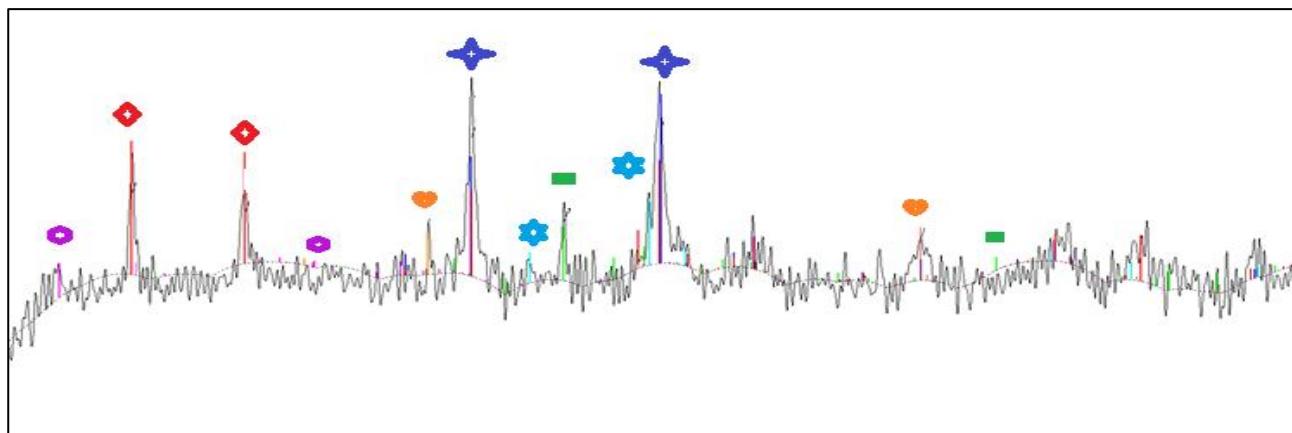


Figure 3 - X-ray Manganese ore

◆ - $\text{Ca}_2\text{Mn}_8\text{O}_{16}$, ♦ - $\text{MnO}_2(\text{H}_2\text{O})_{0.15}$, ▲ - Fe_2O_3 , ● - $\text{CaAl}_2\text{Si}_4\text{O}_{12}(\text{H}_2\text{O})_2$,
★ - Al_2Ca , ■ - SiO_2

Table 1 Phase composition of the manganese ore sample.

Phase	S-Q
$\text{Ca}_2\text{Mn}_8\text{O}_{16}$	31,2%
$\text{MnO}_2(\text{H}_2\text{O})_{0.15}$	30,5%
Fe_2O_3	14,9%
$\text{CaAl}_2\text{Si}_4\text{O}_{12}(\text{H}_2\text{O})_2$	8,5%
Al_2Ca	8,1%
SiO_2	6,9%

It is evident that the main metal in the composition of the manganese ore is represented by complex compounds $\text{Ca}_2\text{Mn}_8\text{O}_{16}$ and $\text{MnO}_2(\text{H}_2\text{O})_{0.15}$; iron oxide Fe_2O_3 ; lomontite $\text{CaAl}_2\text{Si}_4\text{O}_{12}(\text{H}_2\text{O})_2$; aluminum and calcium compound Al_2Ca and quartz SiO_2 .

Tables 2-4 present the results of the chemical composition determination of the charge components.

Table 2 Chemical composition of manganese ore, %.

Mn _{general}	Fe _{general}	SiO ₂	Al ₂ O ₃	CaO	MgO	S	LOI
53,54	0,47	2,25	2,76	1,28	1,45	0,01	15,1

It is evident that, in addition to the phases identified through X-ray structural phase analysis (XRD), the composition of the manganese ore also contains impurities of other components.

Table 3 Chemical composition of ferrosilicomanganese, %.

Mn	Si	C	P	Fe
68	17	0,3	0,10	oth.

Table 4 Chemical Composition of Lime, %.

CaO	MgO	SiO ₂	Al ₂ O ₃	FeO
90	1	2	1	oth.

Lime complies with the CaO content according to GOST 9179-2018.

The smelting of medium-carbon ferromanganese was conducted at the Chemical-Metallurgy Institute using an electric arc furnace with a transformer capacity of 0.1 MVA (figure 4).

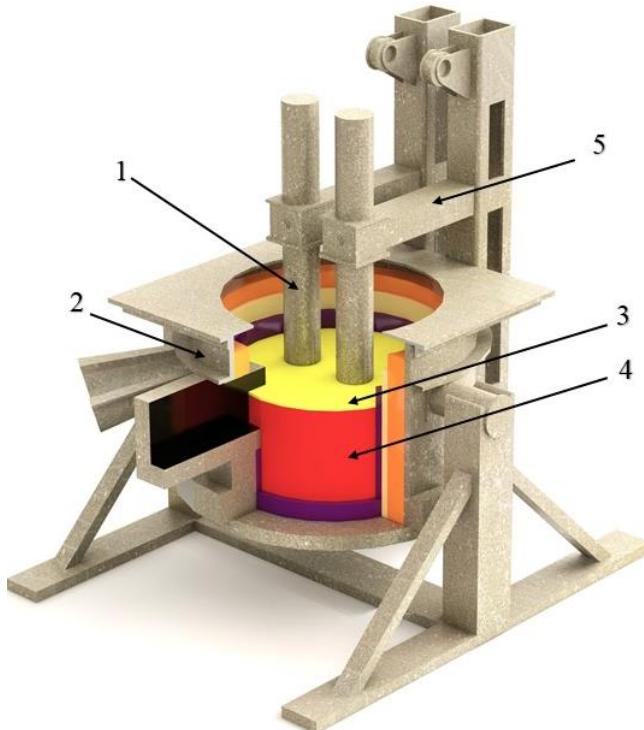


Figure 4 - Graphical structure of the electric arc furnace with a transformer capacity of 0.1 MVA
 1 - electrodes, 2 - furnace body, 3 - slag, 4 - metal, 5 - electro holder

Results and Discussion.

During the smelting of ferromanganese, the operating voltage of the transformer was 49 V. The electric furnace was heated for 8 hours using coke dust as the electrical current conductor. At the end of the heating process, the furnace bath was completely cleaned of coke dust residues for the subsequent loading of the main charge. The electrical parameters during the heating period were: voltage 49 V, current strength at the electrodes 145-165 A.

In the process of smelting medium-carbon ferromanganese, a batch method was used, with the charge being loaded in small portions as the furnace top settled. The metal was periodically tapped every 2 hours, creating conditions for effective monitoring and ensuring optimal production parameters within the framework of this furnace unit. The pouring of metal and slag was carried out into cast iron molds (figure 5).



Figure 5 - Metal and slag discharge from the furnace

During the work, ferromanganese was smelted from a charge composed of three different combinations. The composition of the obtained alloys is presented in Table 5.

Table 5 Chemical composition of metal and slag, %

№	Mn	Si	C	P	Fe	MnO	CaO	SiO ₂	Al ₂ O ₃
1	81,55	2,0	1,69	0,01	ост.	13,85	59,81	29,95	1,45
2	81,21	4,6	1,56	0,01	ост.	14,56	41,98	26,69	10,5
3	85,82	2,0	1,55	0,01	ост.	10,92	40,43	25,25	7,2

Conclusion.

In the process of smelting medium-carbon ferromanganese, an intermittent method was used, loading the charge in small portions as the furnace top settled. The metal was periodically tapped every 2 hours, creating conditions for effective monitoring and ensuring optimal production parameters within the framework of this furnace unit [8-10].

The experimental study focused on obtaining distilled grades of ferromanganese using a mixture of manganese ore and silicon-aluminum reducers. As a result of the smelting, a high recovery of manganese from the ore (60%) was achieved, and the slags did not decompose.

Thus, the optimal solution is the use of ferrosilicomanganese and aluminum for the smelting of medium-carbon ferromanganese.

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ИССЛЕДОВАНИЕ И РАЗРАБОТКА ТЕХНОЛОГИИ СРЕДНЕУГЛЕРОДИСТОГО ФЕРРОМАРГАНЦА

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Аннотация. В данной статье представлены результаты выплавки среднеуглеродистого ферромарганца из отечественных марганцевых руд в крупно-лабораторных условиях. Приведены данные о производстве и спросе на очищенный ферромарганец, произведенный за последний успешный год. С 2020 года производство очищенного ферромарганца сократилось примерно на 1,2 млн тонн, что на 18% меньше, чем в 2019 году. Это было вызвано вспышкой коронавируса (COVID-19), начавшейся в Китае в 2019 году, и последующей всемирной пандемией, а также геополитическими конфликтами (Россия — Украина), начавшимися в 2021 году. В Казахстане имеются значительные запасы марганцевых руд, которые находятся в железисто-марганцевом и карбонатном состояниях. Рентгенофазный анализ показал, что марганец в рудах представлен гидроокисью, пиролюзитом и оксидом железа. В электропечи с трансформатором мощностью 0,1 МВА был выплавлен среднеуглеродистый ферромарганец. Химический состав полученного сплава следующий, %: Mn – 80-85; Si – 0,05-0,25; Fe – 1,8-3,0; P – 0,05-0,09; C – 1,5-2,0; MnO – 20-25; SiO₂ – 13,94-14,5; CaO – 23,35-24,85; MgO – 12,5-14,0. Таким образом, была разработана оптимальная технологическая схема производства широкого спектра марганцевых ферросплавов.

Ключевые слова: среднеуглеродистый ферромарганец, электродуговая печь, марганец, металл, шлак.

ОРТА КӨМІРТЕКТІ ФЕРРОМАРГАНЕЦ ТЕХНОЛОГИЯСЫН ЗЕРТТЕУ ЖӘНЕ ӘЗІРЛЕУ

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Андатпа. Бұл мақалада отандық маргнаец кендерінен орта көміртекті ферромарганец ірі-зертханалық жағдайда балқыту бойынша нәтижелері көлтірілген. Тазартылған ферромарганецтің соңғы он жылда өндірілген өндіріс көлемі мен сұранысы көлтірілді. 2020 жылдан бастап тазартылған ферромарганецті өндіру шамамен 1,2 миллион тоннаға дейн қысқарды, бұл 2019 жылмен салыстырғанда 18%-га қысқарды. Ол 2019 жылы Қытайда басталған коронавирус ауруы (COVID - 19) және бұқіл әлемдік пандемия және 2021 жылы басталған геосаяси қақтығыстар (Ресей - Украина) мәселеңдердің туындауы есериалы болды. Қазақстанда марганец кендерінің қоры оразан зор. Марганец кендері темірлі - марганец және корбонатты күйде кездеседі. Марганец кендерінің рентгендік – фазалық талдауы нәтижесінде марганец гидрототығы, пиролюзит және темір тотығы күйінде кездесті. Трансформатор қуаттылығы 0,1 МВА электрдоғалы пешінде орта көміртекті ферромарганец балқытылды. Балқытылған орта көміртекті ферромарганецтің химиялық құрамы келесідей, % : Mn – 80 – 85; Si – 0,05 – 0,25; Fe – 1,8 – 3,0; P – 0,05 – 0,09; C – 1,5 – 2,0; MnO – 20-25; SiO₂ – 13,94-14,5; CaO – 23,35 – 24,85; MgO – 12,5-14,0. Осылайша, марганец ферроқорытпаларының кең спектрін өндірудің онтайлы технологиялық схемасы жасалды.

Түйін сөздер: орта көміртекті ферромарганец, электрдоғалы пеш, марганец, металл, қож.