Combustion Dynamics and Control for Ultra Low Emissions in Aircraft Gas-Turbine Engines

Future aircraft engines must provide ultra-low emissions and high efficiency at low cost while maintaining the reliability and operability of present day engines. The demands for increased performance and decreased emissions have resulted in advanced combustor designs that are critically dependent on efficient fuel/air mixing and lean operation. However, all combustors, but most notably lean-burning low-emissions combustors, are susceptible to combustion instabilities. These instabilities are typically caused by the interaction of the fluctuating heat release of the combustion process with naturally occurring acoustic resonances. These interactions can produce large pressure oscillations within the combustor and can reduce component life and potentially lead to premature mechanical failures.

Active Combustion Control which consists of feedback-based control of the fuel-air mixing process can provide an approach to achieving acceptable combustor dynamic behavior while minimizing emissions, and thus can provide flexibility during the combustor design process. The NASA Glenn Active Combustion Control Technology activity aims to demonstrate active control in a realistic environment relevant to aircraft engines by providing experiments tied to aircraft gas turbine combustors. The intent is to allow the technology maturity of active combustion control to advance to eventual demonstration in an engine environment. Work at NASA Glenn has shown that active combustion control, utilizing advanced algorithms working through high frequency fuel actuation, can effectively suppress instabilities in a combustor which emulates the instabilities found in an aircraft gas turbine engine. Current efforts are aimed at extending these active control technologies to advanced ultra-low-emissions combustors such as those employing multi-point lean direct injection.
Combustion Dynamics and Control for Ultra Low Emissions in Aircraft Gas-Turbine Engines

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Outline

• NASA’s Active Combustion Control interests
• Motivation: Ultra-low emissions, lean-burning, Multi-point Lean Direct Injection combustors
  – More susceptible to instability
• Possible approaches for dealing with combustor thermo-acoustic instabilities
• Active Combustion Control as an enabling technology
• Approach and outcomes of instability control experiments
• Future plans
Effect of Fuel Injection Schemes on NOx Emission

ConventionalCombustion:
Single-Point RichFront End Injection

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Courtesy of Bob Tacina at Lewis Field, Glenn Research Center
Lean-Burning, Ultra-Low-Emissions Combustion: Multi-Point Lean Direct Injection

1. Energetic quick-mixing before auto ignition at high power condition
2. Lean and uniform front end makes less CO and NOx initially
3. Less CO initially, shorter combustor needed
4. Shorter combustor, shorter residence time, less additional NOx

Lean-Burning, Ultra-Low-Emissions Combustors Are More Susceptible to Thermoacoustic Instabilities

1. Higher performance fuel injectors => more turbulence
2. No dilution air => reduced flame holding
3. Reduced film cooling => reduced damping
4. More uniform temperature distribution => acoustically homogeneous
5. Shorter combustor => higher frequency instabilities
How do we deal with combustor instabilities?

1. Smart design
2. Modulate air to get out-of-phase cancellation
3. Fuel-modulation to get out-of-phase cancellation

Method 1 is preferred, but we’re not sure it’s enough
Method 2 requires lots of actuation power input and bulk
  Method 2 also may induce diffuser flow separation due to flow perturbation.
Method 3 requires the least actuation power and bulk and produces the most energy change

Synergistic Technologies to Enable Ultra-Low Emissions Combustion

- Fuel
- Manufacturing Processes
- Materials
- Active Combustion Control Methods
- Fuel Actuators
- Feedback Sensors
- Combustor and Fuel System Dynamics
- Fuel Injection Dynamics and Flameholding
- Facilities for Realistic Test Conditions

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Combustion Instability

Objective: Suppress combustion thermo-acoustic instabilities when they occur

Closed-Loop Self-Excited System

Combustion Process \( \Phi' \) Combustor Acoustics

Fuel-air Mixture system Natural feed-back process

Artificial control process

Actuator Controller Sensor

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Why is instability control so difficult?

Phase inversion

Time delay & phase shift

Low signal-to-noise ratio – What frequency? What phase?

Our Technical Challenges

• Control methods required to:
  – identify instability
  – suppress instability in presence of large time delay, substantial noise

• Combustor dynamics largely unmodeled

• Liquid fuel – introduces additional unmodeled dynamics including time delay (atomization, vaporization, …)

• Actuation system – enough bandwidth and authority, not just valve (also feedline, injection, …)

• Experimental testbed for actuation, feedline dynamics required

• Simplified models needed for control design evaluation
Active Combustion Instability Control Via Fuel Modulation

High-frequency fuel delivery system and models

Advanced control methods

High-temperature sensors and electronics

Physics-based instability models

Realistic combustors, rigs for research

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Team Members - from Multiple Disciplines

- Controls and Dynamics Branch
  - Dan Paxson: Dynamic Models
  - George Kopasakis: Control Methods
  - Joe Saus: Actuators
- Combustion Branch
  - Clarence Chang: Combustion Science
- Sensors and Electronics Branch
  - Robert Okojie: Harsh Environments Pressure Sensors
- Engineering Directorate
  - Dan Vrnak: Control Software
- Supersonics Project
  - Dan Bulzan – Supersonics (and Subsonics) Combustion API
- Other NASA Participants
  - Materials, Combustion and Flow Diagnostics, Experimental Staff,…
- NRA Participants
  - Georgia Tech, Penn State, Virginia Tech
  - Other NRA's associated with Combustion Science

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Control Strategies to Deal with Combustion Instability

• Objective
  – Perturb the fuel with the right amplitude and at the right phase to cancel the instability

• Challenges
  – Control action delay, noise, unknown disturbances

• Approach
  – Use reduced-order models for development
  – Use simplified physics-based model for validation before test

• Control methods
  – Empirical: Adaptive phase shifting based on achieved cancellation
  – Model-based: Set the proper phase for cancellation based on a model of the predicted instability and disturbances

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Adaptive phase shifting control:
“Adaptive Sliding Phasor Averaged Control” – G. Kopasakis

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Motivation for Combustion Instability Simulation

- Successful active control design requires accurate modeling and simulation.
  - The essential physical phenomena should be correctly captured (e.g. self-excitation).
  - Characterization and control design necessitate rapid simulation (i.e. relative simplicity).
  - Simulation must lend itself to implementing a variety of sensing and actuation strategies.

- The developed simulation method must achieve these goals for combustor configurations:
  - in which the potential instabilities propagate axially
  - that contain abrupt changes in cross sectional area

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Combustion Dynamics Modeling

- Reduced-order oscillator models
  Run fast to allow parametric studies in support of control system development

- Simplified Quasi-1D dynamic models
  Allow physics-based control method validation

- Detailed, physics-based dynamic models
  Fundamental understanding of combustor dynamics to aid passive, active instability suppression

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Combustion Instability Simulation Features

- Time-accurate
- Physics-based, Sectored 1-D, Reacting
- Computationally efficient area transitions
- Upstream and Downstream boundary conditions modeled to match rig

![Diagram of simulation layout]

Low Emissions Combustor Instability Model Development

![Diagram of simulation layout]

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Combustion Instability Simulation Results Match Experimental Results for Multiple Operating Conditions

- Frequency trend replicated
- Amplitude trend replicated

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Fuel Delivery System Dynamic Response

Primary Fuel

Secondary Fuel

Stroboscopic Image of Dynamic Fuel Injection (courtesy UTRC)
High-Bandwidth Fuel Actuator Characterization Testing

Valve, Feed-system Characterization Rig at NASA GRC

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High-Bandwidth Fuel Actuator

Steady-State Operational Data

GaTech high-response fuel valve in characterization rig in CE7A

Frequency Response Dynamic Characterization Data

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High-Bandwidth Fuel Actuator

Combustor Pressure Response to Fuel Modulation

300Hz  
600Hz

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High Temperature Dynamic Pressure Sensors and Electronics

Newly developed 800°C sealing glass demonstrated on a dummy sensor and AlN package header.

Modified MEMS-DCA package to support 800°C pressure sensor operation.

Differential amplifier circuit using two SiC transistors.

Diff amp test waveforms showing <5% change despite 6500 hrs at 500 °C.

Design of SiC amplifier for dynamic pressure sensor.

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Combustion Instability Control Test Implementation

- Control methods implemented in real-time computer
- Rig operated at nominal engine temperature and pressure

Active Combustion Instability Control
Demonstrated Experimentally for Conventional Combustor

Large amplitude, low-frequency instability suppressed by 90%

Liquid-fueled combustor rig emulates engine observed instability behavior at engine pressures, temperatures, flows

High-frequency, low-amplitude instability is identified, while still small, and suppressed almost to the noise floor.

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Low-Emissions Combustor Prototype with Observed Instability

- Range of Combustor Operating Conditions
  - Inlet Pressure (psia) 65 – 250
  - Inlet Temperature, °F 400 – 1000
  - Air Flow, lbm/s 0.9 – 4.0
  - Fuel Flow, lbm/hr approx. 100 – approx. 400

Instability Amplitude Observed to Increase with Increasing Fuel/Air Ratio

- Max=0.1 @ 525Hz
- Time RMS=0.59, Mean=-0.52

- Max=0.12 @ 525Hz
- Time RMS=0.58, Mean=-0.32

- Max=0.63 @ 536Hz
- Time RMS=1.08, Mean=-0.14

- Max=1.05 @ 540Hz
- Time RMS=1.52, Mean=-0.29

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Low-Emissions Combustor Prototype Instability Amplitude Observed to Increase with Increasing Fuel/Air Ratio

- Increasing FAR
  - 0.025
  - 0.0252
  - 0.0281
  - 0.029

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Trend in Instability Amplitude vs. FAR for Multiple Test Runs

- Run 905 - 135 psia, 1000 degF, 1.84 pps, 10/90
- Run 905 - 151 psia, 1000 degF, 2.05 pps, 10/90
- Run 901 - 166 psia, 1000 degF, 2.26 pps, 10/90
- Run 906 - 166 psia, 1000 degF, 2.26 pps, 10/90
- Run 901 - 192 psia, 950 degF, 2.66 pps, 10/90
- Run 906 - 192 psia, 950 degF, 2.66 pps, 10/90
- Run 901 - 250 psia, 1000 degF, 3.4 pps, 10/90
- Run 905 - 250 psia, 1000 degF, 3.4 pps, 10/90
- Run 905 - 250 psia, 1000 degF, 3.4 pps, 20/80

Suspect Data Point

0.8 at Instability Freq., psi

Trend in Instability Frequency vs. FAR for Multiple Test Runs

- Run 905 - 135 psia, 1000 degF, 1.84 pps, 10/90
- Run 905 - 151 psia, 1000 degF, 2.05 pps, 10/90
- Run 901 - 166 psia, 1000 degF, 2.26 pps, 10/90
- Run 906 - 166 psia, 1000 degF, 2.26 pps, 10/90
- Run 901 - 192 psia, 950 degF, 2.66 pps, 10/90
- Run 906 - 192 psia, 950 degF, 2.66 pps, 10/90
- Run 901 - 250 psia, 1000 degF, 3.4 pps, 10/90
- Run 905 - 250 psia, 1000 degF, 3.4 pps, 10/90
- Run 905 - 250 psia, 1000 degF, 3.4 pps, 20/80

Suspect Data Point

0.6 at Instability Frequency, Hz
Low-Emissions Combustor Prototype with Observed Instability as installed in CE5B-Stand 1

Low-Emissions Combustor - Instability Control Results

Adaptive Sliding Phasor Averaged Control (ASPAC) able to suppress combustion instability

Uncontrolled

Controlled

Adaptive Sliding Phasor Averaged Control (ASPAC) able to prevent combustion instability
**Future Plans**

**Mature and demonstrate active combustion control technologies**
- High temperature sensors, high-frequency fuel actuators and feed system models, combustion dynamics models, control methods
- Utilize Fundamentals rig in CE13C (5 atm) and medium/high pressure testing in CE5 (30 atm) and ASCR (60 atm)

- **Future platform(s)** - LDI Multi-point injection and/or Industry advanced concepts
  - Instability control demonstration(s) – 2012+

- **Other potential advanced technologies**
  - Control methods that exploit multipoint injection
  - Multidimensional models
  - Incorporate technologies from Fundamental Aeronautics NRA’s
    - Harmonic, sub-harmonic models and control
    - Flame Transfer Function models
    - Dynamic stability margin management
    - Static instability (LBO) detection and control
Long Term Goal for Active Combustion Control

- Improve fundamental understanding of the combustor processes

in order to...

- More effectively integrate multi-point combustor design, controls, sensor, and actuator technologies

to provide...

- An intelligent fuel/air management system with temporal and spatial fuel modulation for
  - Instability avoidance/suppression
  - Thermoacoustics, blowout
  - Pattern factor control
  - Emissions minimization

to enable...

- Combustors with extremely low emissions throughout the engine operating envelope

References


Questions?

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