

Non-Thermal Plasma Technology for the Abatement of NO_x and SO_x from the Exhaust of Marine Diesel Engine

N. Manivannan, W. Balachandran, R. Beleca, and M. Abbod

Abstract—Non-thermal plasma based technology is proposed to the abatement of NO_x and SO_x of the exhaust gas from marine diesel engine. Proposed technology uses electron gun and microwave energy to generate the plasma. Fundamentals of non-thermal plasma and chemistry are presented with a set of simulation results of the reduction of NO_x and SO₂ for a typical two stroke marine diesel exhaust engine which is supported by an experimental results obtained with microwave plasma. A new scheme is also proposed in this paper to generate required plasma for the treatment of NO_x and SO_x form high exhaust flow rate.

Index Terms—Abatement of NO_x and SO_x, non-thermal plasma, marine diesel emission control, electron beam plasma and Microwave plasma.

I. INTRODUCTION

Non-thermal plasma technology for the abatement of NO_x (NO + NO₂) and SO_x from marine diesel engine exhaust gas is addressed in this paper. The toxic gases (NO_x and SO_x) are harmful to human health (cancer, respiratory irritation, nervous system problems, and birth defects) and environment (acid rain, ozone production, eutrophication, acidification of lakes and streams, accelerated corrosion of buildings and monuments, and reduced visibility) [1], [2]. IMO's MARPOL Annex VI, regulation 13 and regulation 14 defines the emission limits of NO_x and SO_x from marine exhaust [3], [4].

There are number of technologies those have been implemented on board to reduce the level of NO_x and SO_x from marine diesel engine [5]. Though these technologies can remove 99% of SO_x and 90% of NO_x, they possess number of drawbacks; two separate technologies for removal of NO_x and SO_x, requires high installation cost as well as maintenance cost, the installation takes large space on the ship and requires large storage of ammonia is required for the removal of NO_x [5], [6]. On other hand, it has been proved and utilized that Non-Thermal Plasma (NTP) technology has number advantages in depollution in power plant such as simultaneous removal of NO_x and SO_x and reduced energy requirements [7].

There are a number of ways non-thermal plasma can be generated; Dielectric Barrier Discharge (DBD), Corona Discharge (CD), Electron Beam Generated Plasma (EBGP)

and Microwave Plasma (MP). Out of these ENGP has been implemented for high throughput applications such as power plants to control the pollutions [8]. Electron beam can generate high density of electrons with high energy as required to generate high energy plasma. However non-of these NTP technologies have been studied or used in the marine industry in any form to remove NO_x and SO_x.

In this paper, we propose Electron Beam (EB) + Microwave Wave (MW) based NTP scheme to reduce NO_x and SO_x from the marine diesel engine. The major idea behind the combination of EB and MW is that, while EB can produce enough electrons to generate plasma, MW would maintain the energy of those electrons by re-energizing them. This combination would reduce the energy requirements that of using EB alone to generate same energy of plasma. Furthermore, since EB+MW plasma is electrode-less system, it avoids the problem of contamination.

The paper is structured in the following ways; Section I presents the basics of physics and chemistry NTP, in particular, for the typical gas composition of marine exhaust and Section II presents a set-of simulation result of reduction efficiency of NO_x and SO_x for a typical two-stroke marine diesel engine along with experimental results obtained with MP. The proposed new scheme, combination of MW and EB, is presented in the section III and finally conclusions are drawn in the Section IV.

II. NON-THERMAL PLASMA CHEMISTRY AND PHYSICS

The basic principle of non-thermal plasma is that electron temperature (T_e) and gas temperature (T_g) is greatly differ such that $T_e \gg T_g$. High energy electrons impact with gas molecules and produce various radicals and ions. In the case of exhaust gas of marine diesel engine which composes of high concentration of CO₂, H₂O, N₂ and low concentrations of NO_x, and SO₂, particulate matters (PM), hydro carbon(HC), volatile organic compounds (VOC) and soot particles, the major radicals produced will be OH·, O·, N· and H·. When these radicals interact with NO_x and SO_x, they will be turned into H₂SO₄ and HNO₃ respectively. These acids can be dissolved into sea water after adjusting the pH levels.

Radical formations and radical + molecule reactions are very fast and highly depend on the reaction rates. While reaction rate of electron impact depends on the electron energy and cross-section of impact, reaction rate of radical + molecules depend on the chemistry and temperature of the gas. The reactions given Table I play dominant role in the formation of radicals and conversion of NO_x and SO_x into H₂SO₄ and HNO₃;

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The authors are with CESR of School of Engineering and Design, Brunel University, Uxbridge, UB8 3PH, UK (e-mail: Nadarajah.Manivannan@brunel.ac.uk).

TABLE I: PLASMA CHEMISTRY AND ASSOCIATED REACTIONS RATE CONSTANTS OF THE CONVERSION OF NO_x AND SO₂ INTO H₂SO₄ AND HNO₃. T REPRESENTS TEMPERATURE OF GAS.

Reactions	Reaction Rate [9], [10]		Index
	Symbols	Value (cm ³ molecule ⁻¹ s ⁻¹)	
e + H ₂ O → OH [·] + H [·] + e	k _{d1}	See Fig. 1	(R1)
e + O ₂ → O [·] + O [·] + e	k _{d2}		(R2)
e + O ₂ → O + O* + e	k _{d3}		(R3)
e + N ₂ → N [·] + N [·] + e	k _{d4}		(R4)
O* + H ₂ O → OH [·] + OH [·]	k _{e1}	2.2×10 ⁻¹⁰	(R5)
NO + O [·] + M → NO ₂ + M	k ₁	3.0×10 ⁻¹¹ (T/300) ^{0.3}	(R6)
NO + OH [·] + M → HNO ₂ + M	k ₂	2.5×10 ⁻¹² exp(260/T)	(R7)
HNO ₂ + OH [·] → NO ₂ + H ₂ O	k ₃	3.3×10 ⁻¹¹ (T/300) ^{-0.3}	(R8)
NO ₂ + OH [·] + M → HNO ₃ + M	k ₄	4.1×10 ⁻¹¹	(R9)
SO ₂ + OH [·] + M → HSO ₃ + M	k ₅	1.3×10 ⁻¹² (T/300) ^{-0.7}	(R10)
HSO ₃ + O ₂ → SO ₃ + HO ₂	k ₆	1.1×10 ⁻¹³ exp(-1200/T)	(R11)
SO ₃ + H ₂ O → H ₂ SO ₄	k ₇	3.9×10 ⁻⁴¹ exp(6830/T)[H ₂ O] ²	(R12)
N [·] + OH [·] → NO [·] + H [·]	k ₈	3.8×10 ⁻¹¹ exp(85/T)	(R13)
N [·] + NO → N ₂ + O [·]	k ₉	3.1×10 ⁻¹¹	(R14)
N [·] + NO ₂ → N ₂ O + O [·]	k ₁₀	3.0×10 ⁻¹²	(R15)

Table I also gives associated reaction rate constants of the radical + gas reactions and reactions rate constants of the electron impact reactions (k_{d1} , k_{d2} , k_{d3} and k_{d4}) are calculated using the following equations (1) and (2);

$$k_{dj} = \sqrt{\frac{2q}{m_e}} \int_0^\infty \varepsilon \sigma_j(\varepsilon) f(\varepsilon) d\varepsilon \quad (1)$$

where, q - charge of the electron, e ; m_e - mass of the electron; ε - electron energy (V), σ_j collision cross section area (m²) of j^{th} electron impact reaction; $f(\varepsilon)$ = electron energy distribution function (EEDF) and $j \in (1, 2, 3, 4)$.

In many cases, either the Maxwellian EEDF (MEEDF) or the Druyvestein EEDF have been used; for low mean electron energy (<16.6eV) there is no significant difference between these two distributions [11]. In this work, the Maxwellian EEDF is used since the mean electron energy in the plasma is expected to be low [12]. The Maxwellian EEDF can be expressed as;

$$f(\varepsilon) = \gamma^{-1.5} b_1 e^{\left(\frac{-\varepsilon b_2}{\gamma}\right)} \quad (2)$$

where γ - mean electron energy of a single electron

$$b_1 = G(2.5)^{1.5} G(1.5)^{-2.5}$$

$$b_2 = G(1.25)G(0.75)^{-1}$$

and $G(x)$ is known as Gamma function and given by the following integral;

$$G(x) = \int_0^\infty e^{-v} v^{x-1} dv \quad (3)$$

where v is a dummy variable and used to evaluate the integral.

The calculated rate constants of electron impacts are shown in Fig. 1. The cross-section data for the electron impact reactions {(1) to (4)} was obtained from [13], [14]. As can be seen there is a significant variation in the way electron impact rate constant varies against the mean

electron energy of the plasma. This variation plays a vital role in the NO_x and SO_x conversion.

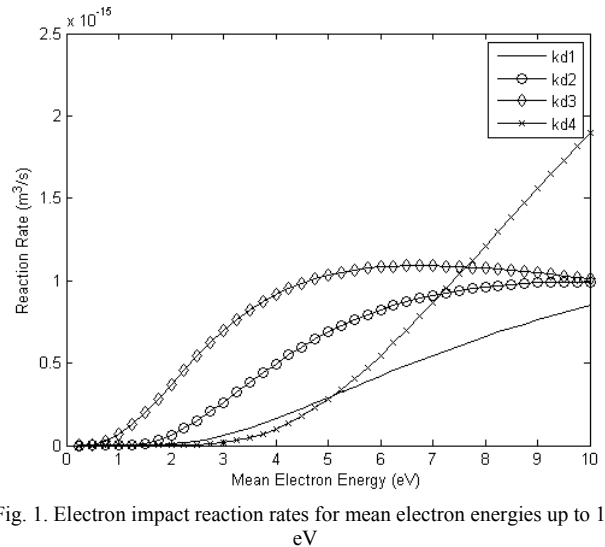


Fig. 1. Electron impact reaction rates for mean electron energies up to 10 eV

III. RESULTS

The differential equations of concentration change of each species involved in the reactions (Table I) is derived using mass balanced equations and solved using MATLAB solver ode15s. The key results are shown in Fig. 2. These results were obtained for a typical exhaust composition of a two stroke marine diesel engine; O₂ (13.0%), N₂ (75.8%), CO₂ (5.2%), H₂O (5.35%), NO_x (1500 vppm) SO_x (600 vppm) and CO (60 ppm) and HC (180ppm).

One of our initial experimental results suggests that MP alone can abate NO_x and SO_x by 60% and 80% respectively from the exhaust of a diesel car engine. The improved MP (so to generate high and more uniform electron density and high dosage of microwave energy) and pre-processed

exhaust gas (i.e.: temperature controlled and oil particles removed) can increase the abatement proportion greatly.

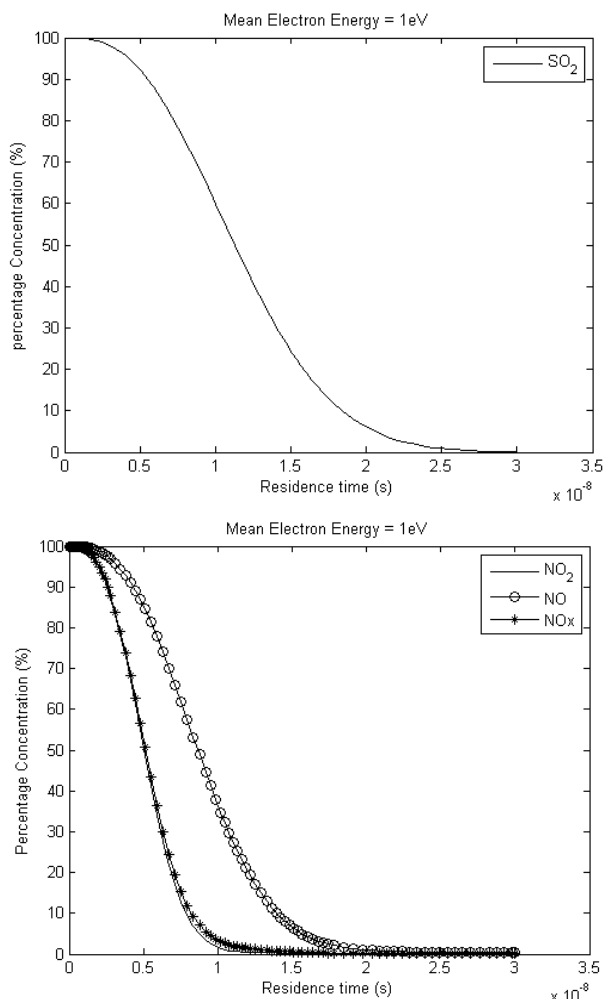
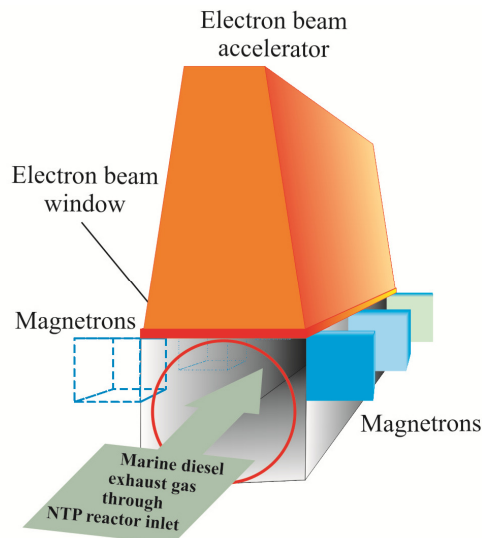


Fig. 2. Abatement of SO₂ (top) and NO_x (bottom) with NTP : mean electron energy is 1eV

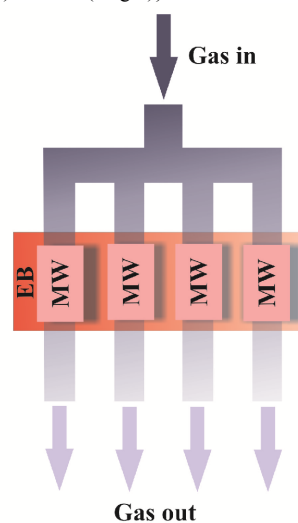
IV. PROPOSED ELECTRON BEAM + MICROWAVE INTEGRATED NTP

In addition to MWP, use of electron beam can give a great deal of flexibility in both of the plasma parameters (electron density and mean electron energy) and ability to generate high dosage of plasma energy (i.e.: 9kGy) [8]; making it possible to approach results obtained our numerical prediction. The proposed MP and EB integrated NTPR is shown in Fig. 3. As shown in this figure, single unit NTPR contains a multiple set of magnetrons and a single electron beam for lab scale testing, where flow rate of exhaust gas is very low (up to 200 l/s) and the second figure shows the multiple parallel arrange of a single units to handle large flow rates (up to 800 l/s).

The Non-thermal plasma based power plant deNO_x and deSO₂ uses energy dosage of up to 9kGy [8]. Based on this dosage, the power required for various exhaust flow rate of marine diesel engine is calculated and plotted in Fig. 4. There will be a significant power difference at high flow rates between low dosage and high dosage; this implies huge energy saving can be achieved when NTP efficient enough to uses low dosage. This will be the focus of our next stage of research.



(a) Single unit of NTPR for labs scale testing {Typical size - 0.5m (length) × 0.5m (width) × 1.5m (height)}



(b) Multiple unit NTPR for the pilot scale testing
Fig. 3. Proposed integrated (MWI and EB) NTPR

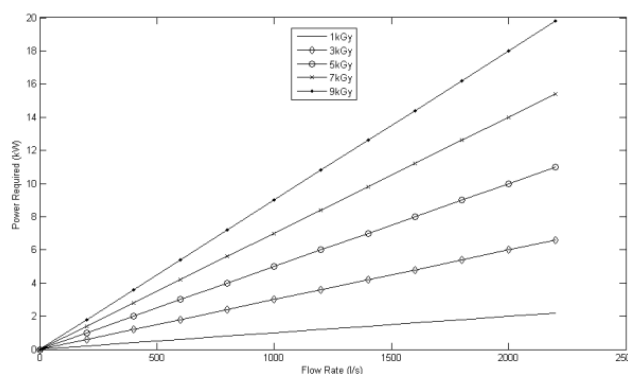


Fig. 4. Power requirement for various exhaust flow rate

V. CONCLUSIONS

Abatement of NO_x and SO_x from exhaust gas of marine engine can be performed with the use of non-thermal plasma. The numerical studies predict that 100 % removal of NO_x and SO_x is possible. Our initial non-thermal plasma, which was generated by microwave radiation, shows very promising results with 60% reduction of NO_x

and 80% SO_x. We propose a scheme based on microwave-electron beam integrated non-thermal plasma to generate required electron energy density and electron energy for both lab-scale testing and pilot scale testing.

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Nada Manivannan is currently working as a research fellow at Centre for Systems Engineering, School of Engineering and Design, Brunel University, London, UK. He previously worked for Motorola, Symbian and Open trade technologies Ltd as an Electronic Engineer for many years. He completed DPhil in Optical Pattern Recognition from University of Oxford, UK in 1997 and BEng (First class Hons) degree in Electrical and Electronic Engineering from City University, UK in

1993. His research interests are Plasma Engineering, Pattern Recognition, Biometrics, Optical Correlators, Mathematical Modelling and Micro-engineered devices for POCT.

Dr Manivannan is a senior member of IEEE and member of Electrostatics Society of America, USA and member of Oxford university alumni.



Wamadeva Balachandran is a professor of Electronic Systems and Director of Centre for Electronic Systems Research (CESR) at Brunel University, UK. He served as Head of Department of Systems Engineering at Brunel University from 1999 to 2004. His research interest spans several different disciplines: Electrostatics & Charge Particle Dynamics, Electrohydrodynamics, Micro/Nano Technologies, Micro-engineered devices for POCT, Biosensors, Optoelectronics, Fingerprint Biometrics, Plasma Engineering and Global Positioning Satellite System for Blind Navigation and Medical Electronics. He has actively pursued research in these interdisciplinary fields for more than 30 years and published over 350 papers to date and filed 15 patent applications. Prof. Balachandran’s research has been featured on BBC World Service and TV Broadcasts. He was a Visiting Professor in the Driftmier Engineering Centre at University of Georgia in 1993 and 1996. He is a Visiting Professor at the University of Mansoura, Egypt and Dongguan University, China since 1993 and 1996 respectively. In 2004 he was a Visiting Scholar in the School of Engineering & Applied Science at University of California, Los Angeles. Prof. Balachandran is a member of the Editorial Board of the Journal of Atomization and Sprays, and the International Journal of Particle Science and Technology. He has served as a paper review manager of IEEE Transactions of Industrial Application Society and a Guest Editor for the Journal of Measurement & Control. He has a long experience of acting as a consultant in the fields of his research to over 30 companies worldwide.

Prof Balachandran is a Fellow of IEEE, IET, InstPhy, InstMC and RSA.



Radu Beleca received the BSc. Eng. degree (1st class, Hons.) from the Faculty of Electrical Engineering, Technical University of Cluj-Napoca, Cluj-Napoca, Romania, in 2007, where he specialized in medical engineering, the MSc. (by research) degree in electrical engineering and fluid mechanics from the University of Poitiers, Poitiers, France, in 2008 and his PhD at Brunel University, Uxbridge, UK in 2012. His research interests focus on Non-thermal plasma applications, Aerosol Physics, Electrostatics and applied Electrostatics.

Dr Beleca is member of the IEEE Industry Application Society, the Institution of Engineering and Technology, Institute of Physics, UK and Electrostatics Society of America, USA.



Maysam F. Abbod received the BSc degree in electrical engineering from the Baghdad University of Technology, Baghdad, Iraq, in 1987, and the PhD degree in control engineering from the University of Sheffield, Sheffield, UK in 1992. He is currently a senior lecture in Intelligent Systems at the School of Engineering and Design, Brunel University, Uxbridge, London UK. His main research interests are in intelligent systems for modelling, control and optimization.

Dr Abbod is a member of IET and a UK Chartered Engineer.