Surface-Flow Patterns in Oscillating-Triangular-Jet Nozzles

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Abstract
A triangular-jet nozzle which usually produces an oscillating-jet flow can, for a narrow range of geometric parameters, produce a stationary deflected jet which reattaches to the internal surface of the nozzle. Surface-flow-visualisation images and surface-pressure maps from the stationary deflected jet contain a wealth of detail not available from similar experiments with the oscillating-jet flow. In the topological model constructed from this data, the most significant feature is a strong sink focus. The model suggests that most of the reverse flow through exit plane of the nozzle is attracted towards this sink focus before it is entrained by the jet flow and ejected from the nozzle.

Introduction
Nathan et al. [5] have shown that a nozzle consisting of a circular inlet orifice and a chamber with an exit lip can produce a naturally oscillating jet flow. This device is known as the “fluidic-precessing-jet” (FPJ) nozzle because flow from the inlet orifice reattaches asymmetrically to the wall of the chamber. In the absence of a preferred azimuthal orientation, the reattaching flow “precesses” around the wall (Figure 1).

At an early stage, the FPJ nozzle was developed as an industrial natural-gas burner because the flame is shorter, more luminous and more resistant to “blow-off” than equivalent simple-turbulent-jet or “axial-jet” nozzles [6]. The higher luminosity can lead to a decrease of up to about 40% in nitrogen-oxide (NOₓ) emissions [7].

Nathan et al. [5] have also shown that, for reliable oscillation of the jet flow, the expansion ratio of the inlet orifice (D/d₁) must be larger than 5.0, and length-to-diameter ratio of the chamber (L/D) must be in the range 2.60 < L/D < 2.80. Of these geometric criteria, the requirement for a small inlet orifice (D/d₁ ≥ 5.0) makes the fuel supply pressure much higher than for an axial-jet burner of the same outer diameter and (heat) capacity. This can be a costly problem if the supply pressure is inadequate; either the pressure must be increased or the burner must be larger.

Mi et al. [4] found that, if the inlet-orifice shape is changed from circular to triangular, jet oscillation occurs at orifice area expansion ratios as low as 4.0. For a fixed burner capacity, this allows either a reduction in supply pressure by an order of magnitude or a reduction of the nozzle diameter by a factor of about two.

Lee et al. [3] have performed a parametric study of the “oscillating-triangular-jet” (OTJ) nozzles. Their results verify that oscillations occur at much smaller expansion ratios than in the FPJ and that, unlike an FPJ, oscillation is continuous rather than intermittent. In comparison with the FPJ, the jet spreading angle is smaller and varies more gradually over a wide range of L/D ratios and inlet-expansion ratios. This provides a capacity, by selecting appropriate L/D and inlet-expansion ratio, to design a nozzle with not only a much lower supply pressure than the FPJ nozzle, but also with a selectable jet spreading angle.

This paper reports the results of surface-flow-visualisation experiments. These are the first investigations of large-scale flow structure inside the OTJ nozzles.

Experimental Technique
Figure 2 shows the oscillating-jet nozzle used for this investigation. Flow enters the nozzle chamber, which has an internal diameter D, through an equilateral triangular inlet-orifice plate and it leaves the chamber through an exit lip of diameter d₂ = 0.9D. There are four available inlet orifices with area expansion ratios of \((D/d_{e1})^2 = 2.1^2, 2.5^2, 3.0^2\) and \(3.5^2\), where \(d_{e1}\) is the “equivalent diameter” of the triangular orifice. The length of the chamber can be adjusted to any value within the range \(0.00 \leq L/D \leq 3.00\). To permit visualisation of the internal flow, the chamber is made of Perspex tube.

The nozzle is connected to a compressed-air supply through a straight tube of diameter \(D_0 = 0.763D\) and length \(50D_0\). At the
upstream end of the tube is a flow conditioner consisting of a “honeycomb” (of plastic drinking straws) followed by a wire-mesh screen. Further details of the flow conditioning and of the ancillary equipment are provided by Lee et al. [3].

The method of flow visualisation is similar to the “china-clay” technique described by Bradshaw [1] and adopted by Nathan et al. [5] for investigating the surface-flow patterns in the FPJ nozzle. A transparent A4-size plastic sheet, 0.1 mm thick, is cut to the internal length and circumference of the nozzle chamber, and is then inserted so that it forms a new inner surface of the chamber. A viscous mixture of white toothpaste, cornflour and water is then painted uniformly onto the plastic sheet and is immediately exposed to the flow until the water evaporates (which takes about 12 minutes). To record the “streakline” pattern produced by the flow, the plastic sheet is removed from the nozzle and unrolled. Four “streakline” images were obtained for each flow condition. While the flow is producing a pattern on the plastic sheet, it also spreads paste over the back face of the chamber. The pattern thus formed on the inlet-orifice plate is also recorded as an image.

The flow visualisation is supplemented by measurements of static pressure from a row of six pressure tappings through the wall of the chamber (Figure 2). The distance between tappings is \( D/4 \). An azimuthal increment of 30° is obtained by rotating the chamber about its axis. For each measurement the signal from the pressure transducer was time averaged for 100 seconds on a digital oscilloscope.

**Oscillating-Jet Flows**

The flow-visualisation patterns and corresponding surface-streakline interpretations for the OTJ nozzle are shown in Figure 3. The expansion ratio is \( D/d_1 = 3.5 \) and the chamber length is \( L = 2.5D \). The other expansion ratios (2.1, 2.5 and 3.0) produce similar flow patterns.

The spiral pattern in Figure 3(a), which indicates a radially inward swirling flow at the inlet plane, is similar to that observed by Nathan et al. [5] in the FPJ nozzle (Figure 4(a)). In the interpretation of the flow field, this swirling flow (Figure 3(b)) is entrained into the flow from the inlet orifice.

In the OTJ nozzle, flow from the inlet orifice is deflected asymmetrically and reattaches to the cylindrical surface of the chamber. Azimuthal (or tangential) motion of the reattachment point appears as oscillation of the jet. Lee et al. [3] have shown that the preferred locations for the reattachment point are aligned azimuthally at midway between corners of the orifice. In Figures 3(c) and 3(d), these preferred locations are shown as nodes \( N_1, N_2 \) and \( N_3 \). In surface-flow visualisation of the FPJ nozzle [5], the moving reattachment point has no preferred direction and appears as a positive bifurcation, line PB in Figure 4(b).

The strongest feature in the OTJ flow-visualisation pattern (Figure 3(c)) is a circumferential “ring” \((NB_1)\) where converging flow has caused a build-up or thickening of the paste. Nathan et al. [5] interpreted a similar feature in flow-visualisation patterns (Figure 4(b)) from the FPJ nozzle as a negative-bifurcation line. Surface-flow streaklines consistent with the flow-visualisation pattern of Figure 3(c) are drawn in Figure 3(d). These streaklines may approximate a time-averaged flow in the OTJ nozzle but, like Figure 4(b), they do not provide much insight into the mechanism of the flow.

**Stationary-Deflected-Jet Flow**

The behaviour of the flow in the OTJ nozzle and the behaviour of the jet emerging from the exit plane depend on expansion ratio \((D/d_1)\), length \((L/D)\), and Reynolds number \((Re_1)\). In a detailed parametric study, Lee et al. [3] found that, with \( L/D \leq 1 \), the flow from the inlet orifice remains axisymmetric, and there is no large-scale oscillation. For \( L/D \) between 1.25 and 3.00, the jet oscillates in a manner which produces the flow-visualisation pattern of Figure 3(c).

However, these are not the only flow regimes of the OTJ. For a very narrow range of “critical” values near \( L/D = 1.25 \), Lee et al. [3] have observed that the jet from the “\( D/d_1 = 3.5 \)” orifice is deflected towards the wall, but does not oscillate. Increasing chamber length beyond this narrow but critical \( L/D \) range causes the deflected jet to oscillate. We would therefore expect a flow pattern produced by the stationary (or non-oscillating) jet to be related to the phase-averaged flow of an oscillating jet. Figure 5 shows that the surface-flow visualisation pattern for the stationary deflected jet is significantly different from the visualisation pattern for the oscillating jet. The most striking difference between Figure 5(c) and Figure 3(c) is that the built-
The reattachment "point" of the deflected jet. In Figure 5(e), clearly observed rotation of the larger "blob" simulations (or "blobs") of paste in the flow-visualisation image this is the "source" node pressure on the internal cylindrical surface of the nozzle. This is the mean dynamic pressure of flow through the inlet orifice. The location of maximum pressure, shown as the is the reattachment “point” of the deflected jet. In Figure 5(e), this is the “source” node . Closer to the inlet plane and to each side of the pressure maximum, there is a region of minimum pressure ( ). These coincide with large accumulations (or “blobs”) of paste in the flow-visualisation image (Figure 5(c)). Clearly observed rotation of the larger “blob” implies that there is a “sink” focus at each pressure minimum. These are shown as and in Figure 5(e). The existence of saddles and is deduced from the rules of topology.

In the experiment (Figure 5(c)), paste spreads to the left and to the right of the reattachment node, . Flow spreading to the left of is drawn into focus and flow spreading to the right is drawn into the negative-bifurcation line . Features and are strong sinks where flow separates from the surface and they also induce a reversed flow through the exit plane (Figure 5(e)). Since the surface is cylindrical, and is continuous along the left and right edges of the diagram, flow which spreads circumferentially away from must also converge towards a negative bifurcation which extends from the exit plane and into focus . This negative bifurcation is shown in Figure 5(e) as the line . The complementary positive-bifurcation line extends from node to the exit plane.

The strongly swirling surface flow between the inlet plane and (Figure 5(e)) is directed away from the edge . The inward-spiral flow-visualisation pattern in Figure 5(b) also indicates flow directed away from the perimeter BAB, and so continuity requires a positive-bifurcation line between the inward-spiral flow and the flow on the cylindrical surface. The positive bifurcation is shown in Figure 6(a) as the closed loop . In the side view, Figure 6(b), the positive bifurcation ( ) is visible as saddles and . A topologically consistent side-view flow pattern (Figure 6(b)) is obtained by placing foci and in the swirling near-surface flow, and in the recirculation region between the reattachment point and the inlet plane.

**Flow at the Exit Plane**

There are two regions of flow at the exit plane, the emerging-jet flow region, and the induced-reverse-flow region. The contour plots in Figure 7 are of the time-averaged signal from a total-pressure tube (i.e. Pitot probe) placed sequentially at each of 241 points distributed over the exit plane of the nozzle. The results are plotted as a pressure coefficient based on , the dynamic pressure at the inlet orifice. The Pitot probe is aligned parallel to the axis so that, when placed in the emerging jet flow, it provides an approximate measurement of jet-flow speed. When the probe is placed in the induced-reverse-flow region, the recorded pressure is negative.
Conclusions

From flow visualisation and static-pressure measurements at the internal surface of the OTJ nozzle, the authors have identified a number of bifurcation lines and critical points in the stationary-deflected-jet flow observed by Lee et al. [3]. These are shown in Figures 5(e), 6 and 8(b). Although deflection of the jet centreline is only about $D/9$, there is a clearly observed reattachment node downstream of the inlet plane (or backward-facing step). Closer to the inlet plane and to each side of the reattachment node, flow separates from the surface at a strong sink focus, $F_1$, and a much weaker focus $F_2$. The surface-flow pattern indicates that much, and perhaps most of the reverse flow through the exit plane of the nozzle is attracted towards $F_1$. A rather distorted circumferential negative bifurcation $NB_1$ also flows into $F_1$.

A topologically consistent model of flow between $NB_1$ and the inlet plane is obtained by placing a positive-bifurcation loop on the back face of the nozzle. In this model, each focus $F_1$ and $F_2$ terminates a separation vortex, and a horseshoe vortex is held between the reattaching jet and the back face of the nozzle. These three vortices are stretched and convected through the exit plane as a pair of counter-rotating longitudinal vortices.

References


