

24.536 Reactor Experiments 407.403 Advanced Nuclear Lab

Reactivity Feedback Effects – Part II: Prediction, Measurement, & Interpretation

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24.536 Reactor Experiments
Reactivity Feedback Effects: Prediction, Measurement, & Interpretation

(April 2018)

Topic Overview

In the Part I Lecture on **temperature feedback effects**, we ended by distinguishing between **constant power** and **variable power** reactor sequences.

For **constant power runs**, $\Delta T_f = \Delta T_c$ is a good assumption, and $\Delta \rho_{temp}$ is given by

$$\Delta \rho_{temp} = \alpha_{T_f} \Delta T_f + \alpha_{T_c} \Delta T_c = (\alpha_{T_f} + \alpha_{T_c}) \Delta T = \alpha_{ITC} \Delta T$$

isothermal
temperature coefficient
and
 ΔT is related to the
measured plenum
temperatures

However, for **variable power cases**, $\Delta T_f \neq \Delta T_c$, so we **need a mathematical model** to estimate these quantities, since there are **no direct measurements for T_f and T_c** within a UMLRR fuel assembly.

For this case, an **estimate of $\Delta \rho_{temp}$** is given by

$$\Delta \rho_{temp} = \alpha_{T_f} \Delta T_f + \alpha_{T_c} \Delta T_c$$

need estimates of the individual fuel
and coolant temperature coefficients
and
a dynamic model for $T_f(t)$ and $T_c(t)$

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The Feedback Model

For the **feedback reactivity**, we have

$$\Delta\rho_f(t) = \alpha_{T_f} \Delta T_f(t) + \alpha_{T_c}(t) \Delta T_c(t) + \Delta\rho_{Xe}(t)$$

Recall that $c_f = 0.88$
for the xenon
reactivity model

where the **reference values for the temperature coefficients of reactivity** are:

$$\alpha_{ITC} = 5.9e-5 \Delta k/k\text{-}^\circ\text{C} \quad (\text{from pool cooldown run in Jan. 2013})$$

$$\alpha_{Tfref} = 1.7e-5 \Delta k/k\text{-}^\circ\text{C} \quad (\text{from Michael Pike's MS Thesis in June 2013})$$

$$\alpha_{Tcref} = \alpha_{ITC} - \alpha_{Tfref} = 4.2e-5 \Delta k/k\text{-}^\circ\text{C}$$

$$\alpha_{Tcref}(T) = 2.88e-6 * T - (1.23e-5 + 1.7e-5) \Delta k/k\text{-}^\circ\text{C} \quad (\text{from Jan. 2013 data})$$

Note: Positive values are listed for convenience but, of course, **all the reactivity feedbacks are negative!!!**

Note that we will change
the value of α_{Tf} shortly...

Two Global Energy Balances

The development of the **dynamics model for $T_f(t)$ and $T_c(t)$** is based on **two global energy balances** -- one for the **fuel** and one for the **coolant**.

For the **fuel**, we have

$$m_f c_f \frac{d}{dt} T_f = P - U_{fc} (T_f - T_c)$$

U_{fc} is the overall HT
coefficient between
the fuel and coolant

where U_{fc} is the overall HT coefficient between the fuel and coolant, P is the reactor power, m_f is the mass of the fuel, c_f is the heat capacity of the fuel, and T_f and T_c are the **average fuel and coolant temperatures**, respectively.

Similarly, **for the coolant**, we have

$$m_c c_c \frac{d}{dt} T_c = U_{fc} (T_f - T_c) + \dot{m} c_c (T_{in} - T_{out})$$

where \dot{m} is the **coolant mass flow rate**.

Two Global Energy Balances (cont.)

As a **simple approximation**, we say that the **average coolant temperature** is roughly the **average of the inlet and outlet temperatures**,

$$T_c = \frac{T_{in} + T_{out}}{2} \quad \text{or} \quad T_{out} = 2T_c - T_{in}$$

and, upon substitution, we have

$$m_c c_c \frac{d}{dt} T_c = U_{fc} (T_f - T_c) + 2m_c c_c (T_{in} - T_c)$$

or

$$m_c c_c \frac{d}{dt} T_c = U_{fc} (T_f - T_c) + U_{cc} (T_{in} - T_c)$$

Recall that

$$U = \frac{1}{R_{th}} \quad \text{or} \quad R_{th} = \frac{1}{U}$$

U_{cc} is like an overall HT coefficient related to the thermal resistance of the flowing fluid

Transient Thermal Model

To summarize, we simply perform an **overall energy balance** on a **single fuel node** and **single coolant node**.

Doing this gives the following **dynamic equations** for T_f and T_c :

Fuel Node

$$C_f \frac{d}{dt} T_f = P - U_{fc} (T_f - T_c)$$

Coolant Node

$$m_c c_c \frac{d}{dt} T_c = U_{fc} (T_f - T_c) + m_c c_c (T_{in} - T_{out})$$

These coupled equations represent a simple transient **Thermal Model for the UMLRR**

$C_f = m_f c_f$ & $C_c = m_c c_c$ are the **thermal capacitances** and

U_{fc} and U_{cc} are the fuel-coolant and coolant-flow **overall heat transfer coefficients** for the model

$$T_c = \frac{T_{in} + T_{out}}{2} \quad \text{or} \quad T_{out} = 2T_c - T_{in}$$

$$m_c c_c \frac{d}{dt} T_c = U_{fc} (T_f - T_c) + 2m_c c_c (T_{in} - T_c)$$

$$C_c \frac{d}{dt} T_c = U_{fc} (T_f - T_c) + U_{cc} (T_{in} - T_c)$$

An 11-Equation Dynamics Model

A 1-node **kinetics model**, **thermal model**, and **I-Xe model**, when coupled together, give a complete **11-equation dynamics model for the UMLRR**.

Kinetics Model

$$\frac{d}{dt} P(t) = \frac{(\rho - \beta)}{\Lambda} P(t) + \sum_i \lambda_i c_i(t) + \frac{\kappa}{v} \frac{1}{\Lambda} \langle Q(t) \rangle$$

$$\frac{d}{dt} c_i(t) = \frac{\beta_i}{\Lambda} P(t) - \lambda_i c_i(t) \quad \text{for } i = 1, 2, \dots, 6$$

Thermal Model

$$C_f \frac{d}{dt} T_f = P - U_{fc} (T_f - T_c)$$

$$C_c \frac{d}{dt} T_c = U_{fc} (T_f - T_c) + U_{cc} (T_{in} - T_c)$$

also need a HT coefficient model

Coupling Equations

$$\phi = \frac{cf \times P(t)}{\kappa \Sigma_f V_{core}} \quad \rho_{T_f} = \alpha_{T_f} (T_f(t) - T_{f,ref})$$

$$\rho_{T_c} = \alpha_{T_c} (T_c(t) - T_{c,ref})$$

$$\rho_{Xe}(t) = \frac{X(t) \sigma_{aX} / \Sigma_{f2}}{v \rho \Sigma_f P_f}$$

$$\rho = \rho_{RB} + \rho_{T_f} + \rho_{T_c} + \rho_{Xe}$$

I - Xe Model

$$\frac{d}{dt} I = \gamma_I \Sigma_f \phi - \lambda_I I$$

$$\frac{d}{dt} X = \lambda_I I + \gamma_X \Sigma_f \phi - (\lambda_X + \sigma_{aX} \phi) X$$

Coupling through the HT Coeffs.

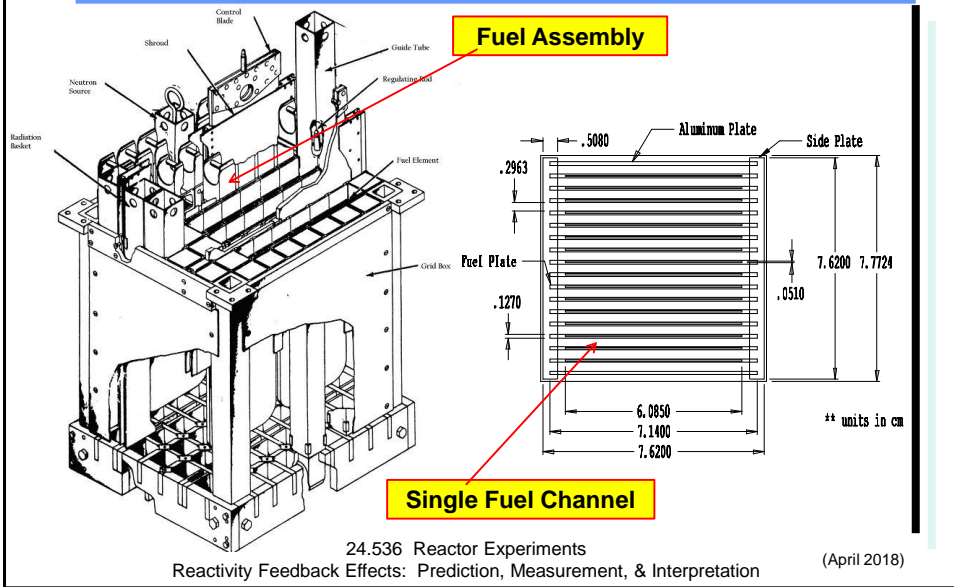
Since the HT coefficients, U_{fc} and U_{cc} , are functions of the fuel, clad, and coolant temperatures and the flow conditions -- these quantities are also directly coupled to the 11-equation dynamics model.

The HT coefficient model within the **sstemp_umlrr** GUI will be incorporated directly into the 11-equation model to compute $U_{fc}(t)$ and $U_{cc}(t)$ as an integral part of the full simulation model.

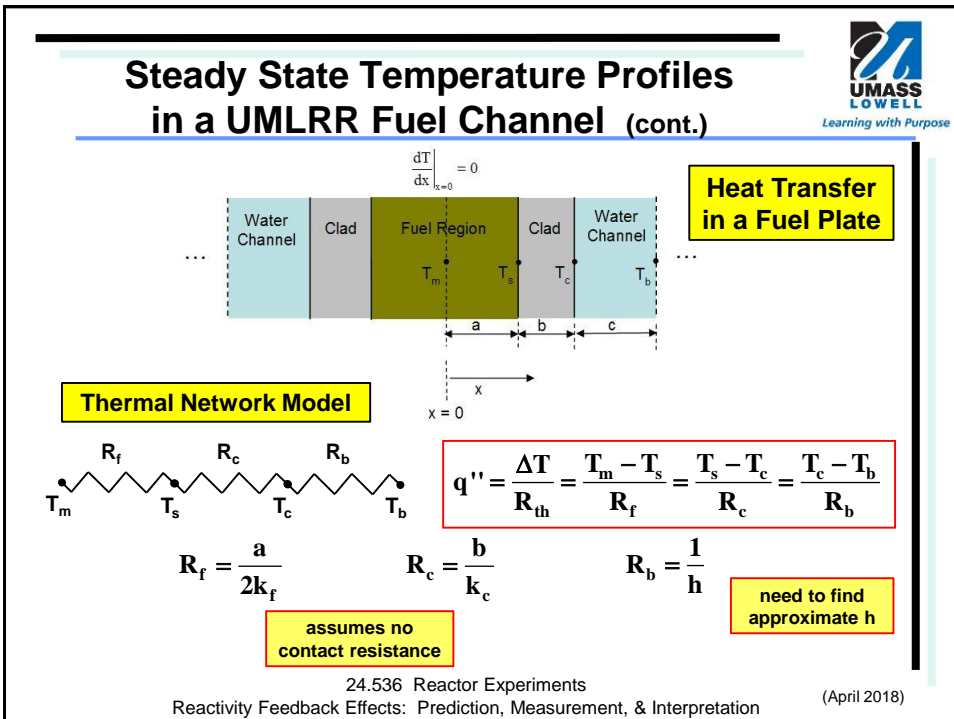
So now, let's discuss a mathematical model to estimate the

**Steady State Temperature Profiles
in a UMLRR Fuel Channel**

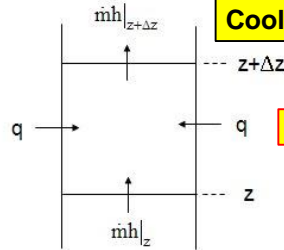
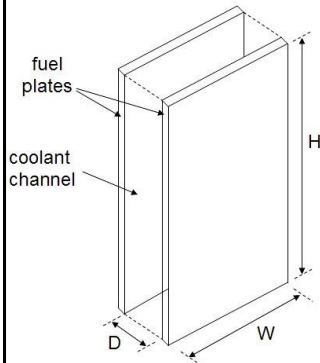
Steady State Temperature Profiles in a UMLRR Fuel Channel



Steady State Temperature Profiles in a UMLRR Fuel Channel (cont.)



Steady State Temperature Profiles in a UMLRR Fuel Channel (cont.)



Heat Transfer
to the
Coolant Channel

$$q = q'' \cdot 2W\Delta z$$

$$\text{rate of energy into node with flow} - \text{rate of energy out of node with flow} + \text{rate of energy transferred from fuel to coolant} = 0$$

$$\frac{dT_b(z)}{dz} = \frac{2W}{\dot{m}c_p} q''(z) \quad \text{with } T_b(0) = T_{in}$$

Steady State Temperature Profiles in a UMLRR Fuel Channel (cont.)

assume axial symmetry
with a simple chopped
sinusoidal heat flux profile

$$q''(z) = q''_{max} \sin\left(\frac{\pi(z + \delta)}{H_e}\right)$$

Axial Profile
of the
Surface Heat Flux

where q''_{max} = peak heat flux (W/m^2) within an average plate

H_e = effective neutronic height of the core (m)

δ = reflector savings (m)

$$H_e = H + 2\delta$$

The **peak heat flux**, q''_{max} , is related to the **plate power** as follows:

$$P_{plate} = 2 \int_0^W \int_0^H q''_{max} \sin\left(\frac{\pi(z + \delta)}{H_e}\right) dy dz = 2W q''_{max} \int_0^H \sin\left(\frac{\pi(z + \delta)}{H_e}\right) dz$$

or

$$q''_{max} = \frac{P_{plate}}{2W \int_0^H \sin\left(\frac{\pi(z + \delta)}{H_e}\right) dz}$$

Steady State Temperature Profiles in a UMLRR Fuel Channel (cont.)

Performing the operations indicated in the previous equation gives

Coolant Temperature Axial Profile

$$q''_{\max} = \frac{\pi P_{\text{plate}}}{2WH_e} \frac{1}{\cos\left(\frac{\pi\delta}{H_e}\right) - \cos\left(\frac{\pi(H+\delta)}{H_e}\right)}$$

Now, with this result, putting the expression for $q''(z)$ into the balance equation and solving the 1st order ODE leads to

$$T_b(z) = T_{\text{in}} + \frac{P_{\text{plate}}}{\dot{m}c_p} \left[\frac{\cos\left(\frac{\pi\delta}{H_e}\right) - \cos\left(\frac{\pi(z+\delta)}{H_e}\right)}{\cos\left(\frac{\pi\delta}{H_e}\right) - \cos\left(\frac{\pi(H+\delta)}{H_e}\right)} \right]$$

Thus, with data specific to the UMLRR (P_{plate} , H , W , δ , \dot{m} , T_{in} , etc.), we can obtain the desired coolant temperature profile.

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Steady State Temperature Profiles in a UMLRR Fuel Channel (cont.)

Even with a known $T_b(z)$, one still needs a reasonable estimate of the heat transfer coefficient, h , to compute the plate surface temperature profile, $T_c(z)$.

The Heat Transfer Coefficient

This parameter, however, is usually obtained from empirical correlations that are given in terms of the local fluid properties, the type of flow, and the geometry of the system.

Dittus Boelter: $Nu = 0.023 Re^{0.8} Pr^{0.4}$

Sieder-Tate: $Nu = 0.027 Re^{0.8} Pr^{1/3} \left(\frac{\mu}{\mu_s}\right)^{0.14}$

Turbulent Flow

Analytical Result: $Nu = \text{constant} \approx 7.9$

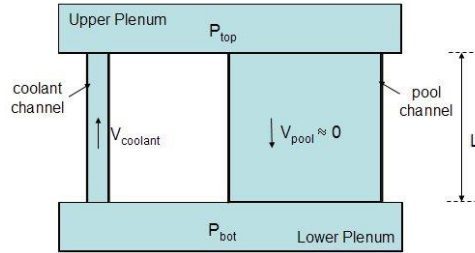
Laminar Flow

where $Nu = \frac{hD_h}{k}$ or $h = \frac{Nu k}{D_h}$ and $Re = \frac{\rho V D_w}{\mu}$ $Pr = \frac{\mu c_p}{k}$

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Steady State Temperature Profiles in a UMLRR Fuel Channel (cont.)



Natural Convection Considerations

$$h_L = f \frac{L}{D_h} \frac{V^2}{2g} + \left(\sum_i K_i \right) \frac{V^2}{2g}$$

Channel ΔP : $\Delta P = P_{bot} - P_{top} = \rho_{coolant} g L + \rho_{coolant} g h_L$

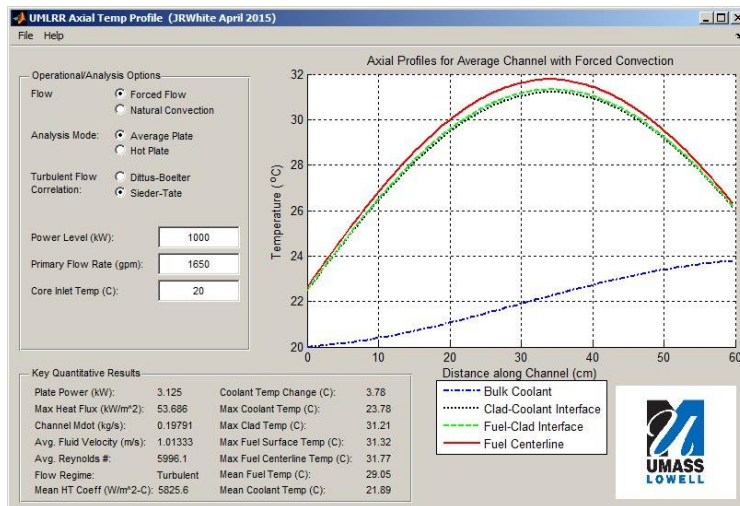
Pool ΔP : $\Delta P = P_{bot} - P_{top} = \rho_{pool} g L$

These need to match

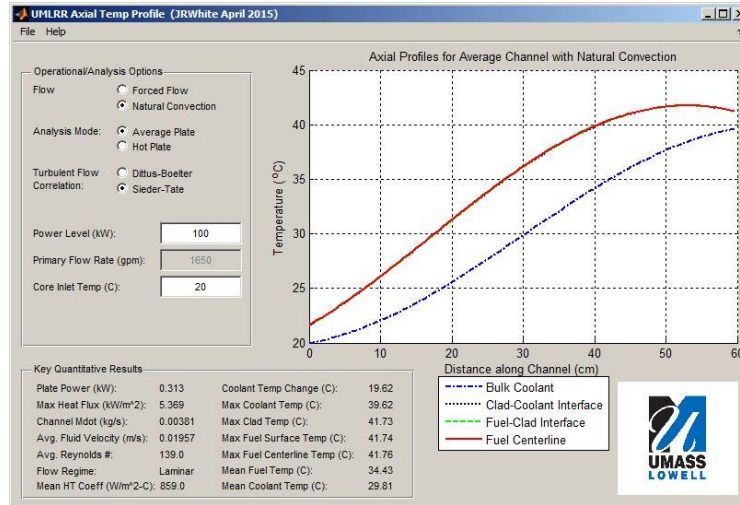
$$\Delta P_{buoyancy} = (\rho_{pool} - \rho_{coolant}) g L = \Delta \rho g L = \rho_{coolant} g h_L = \Delta P_{friction}$$

The velocity that develops in natural convection flow will increase until the friction loss in the channel exactly balances the buoyant forces on the channel.

sstemp_umlrr GUI (1 MW Forced Flow)



sstemp_umlrr GUI (100 kW Natural Convection Flow)



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Solution of the 11-Equation Model

A 1-node **kinetics model**, **thermal model**, and **I-Xe model**, when coupled together, give a complete **11-equation dynamics model for the UMLRR**.

Kinetics Model

$$\frac{d}{dt} P(t) = \frac{(\rho - \beta)}{\Lambda} P(t) + \sum_i \lambda_i c_i(t) + \frac{\kappa}{v} \frac{1}{\Lambda} \langle Q(t) \rangle$$

$$\frac{d}{dt} c_i(t) = \frac{\beta_i}{\Lambda} P(t) - \lambda_i c_i(t) \quad \text{for } i = 1, 2, \dots, 6$$

Thermal Model

$$C_f \frac{d}{dt} T_f = P - U_{fc}(T_f - T_c)$$

$$C_c \frac{d}{dt} T_c = U_{fc}(T_f - T_c) + U_{cc}(T_{in} - T_c)$$

also need a HT coefficient model

Coupling Equations

$$\phi = \frac{cf \times P(t)}{\kappa \Sigma_f V_{core}} \quad \rho_r = \alpha_r (T_f(t) - T_{ref})$$

$$\rho_c = \alpha_c (T_c(t) - T_{ref})$$

$$\rho_{Xe}(t) = \frac{X(t) \sigma_{aX} / \Sigma_{f2}}{v \rho \Sigma_f P_T}$$

$$\rho = \rho_{RB} + \rho_r + \rho_c + \rho_{Xe}$$

I - Xe Model

$$\frac{d}{dt} I = \gamma_I \Sigma_f \phi - \lambda_I I$$

$$\frac{d}{dt} X = \lambda_I I + \gamma_X \Sigma_f \phi - (\lambda_X + \sigma_{aX} \phi) X$$

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Overall Solution Logic



In the function file for the ODE solver, we perform the following tasks (recall that the **state vector**, \underline{x} , is known at time t):

1. Determine the RegBlade position and **compute ρ_{RB}** .
2. Use the **interp1** function to **find T_{in}** for the current time.
3. Knowing the current values of T_f and T_c , **compute ρ_{Tf} and ρ_{Tc}** .
4. Knowing the current Xe concentration, **compute ρ_{Xe}** .
5. Determine **total reactivity, ρ** , at the current time.
6. Determine **U_{fc} and U_{cc}** via a call to function **htcoeff_umlrr.m**
7. Compute the **thermal flux, ϕ** , for the given power.
8. Finally, **compute the derivative of the state vector** and pass this back to the ODE solver (**ode15s**).

$\underline{x} =$

P
C_1
C_2
C_3
C_4
C_5
C_6
T_f
T_c
I
Xe

Let's look at the actual Matlab m-files...

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Feedback Model Validation

(forced flow case from Aug. 20, 2012)



A **forced flow validation experiment** was performed on Aug. 20, 2012. The **initial reactor power** was about 5 kW.

The **goal** of the test was to **validate the combined temperature and xenon feedback model** for a **variable power run**.

An initial **positive reactivity perturbation** was made by moving the RegBlade outward from 7.88 inches out to 9.45 inches withdrawn.

The **core inlet temperature** was kept nearly constant so that subsequent analyses would be more tractable.

However, the **core average temperatures increased** due to the **increasing power caused by the reactivity addition**.

Xenon also started to build up as the power increased.

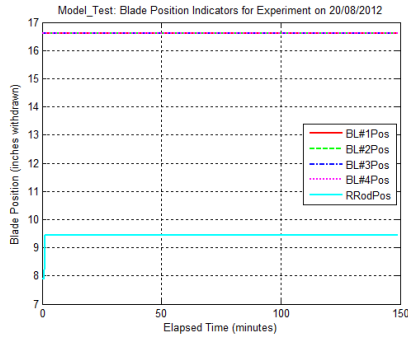
These two effects induced a negative feedback reactivity which eventually **stabilized the system** and, **with xenon buildup, even started to shut itself down**.

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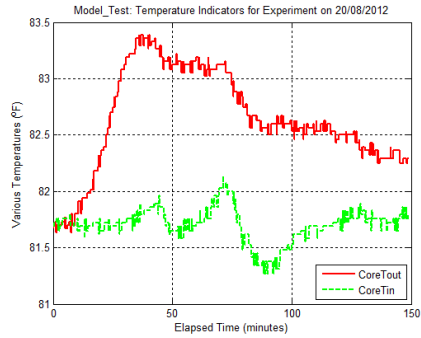
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Feedback Model Validation (cont.)

(forced flow case from Aug. 20, 2012)



blade positions vs. time



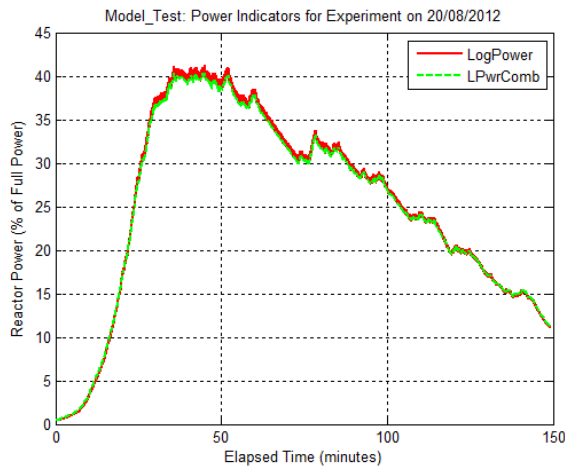
core temperatures vs. time

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Feedback Model Validation (cont.)

(forced flow case from Aug. 20, 2012)



reactor power vs. time

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Feedback Model Validation (cont.)

(forced flow case from Aug. 20, 2012)

Now, the **goal of the test is to compare** the **predicted P(t) profile** and **feedback reactivity model** with the **measured P(t)** using the **combined Linear 1 and 2 channels** and the **feedback reactivity found via inverse kinetics**.

Two cases were studied:

- Used the reference fuel temperature coefficient **calculated** by Michael Pike as part of his MS Thesis:

$$\alpha_{\text{fref}} = 1.7\text{e-}5 \Delta\text{k/k per } ^\circ\text{C}$$

This gave very poor results!!!

- Used the **“optimum”** fuel temperature coefficient determined in an (undocumented) study in summer 2007:

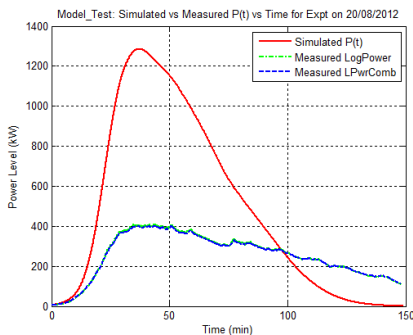
$$\alpha_{\text{fopt}} = 7.7\text{e-}5 \Delta\text{k/k per } ^\circ\text{C}$$

The results here were much more reasonable!!!

These differ by a factor of about 4.5 !!!

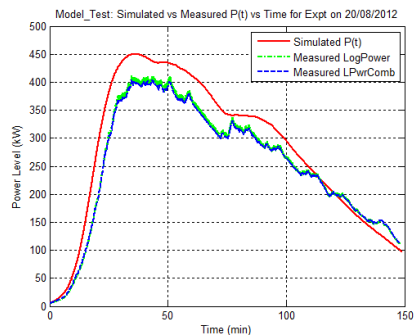
Feedback Model Validation (cont.)

(forced flow case from Aug. 20, 2012)



As apparent, our **first try** for the feedback reactivity model is **horrible!!!**

This case used $\alpha_{\text{fref}} = 1.7\text{e-}5 \Delta\text{k/k-}^\circ\text{C}$



Now this is **much better!!!**

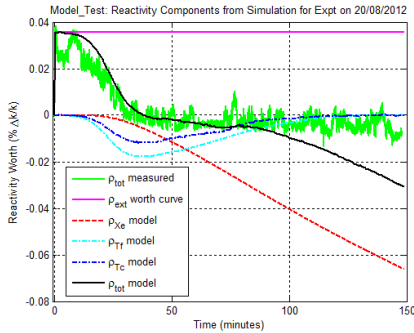
This case used $\alpha_{\text{fopt}} = 7.7\text{e-}5 \Delta\text{k/k-}^\circ\text{C}$

Feedback Model Validation (cont.)

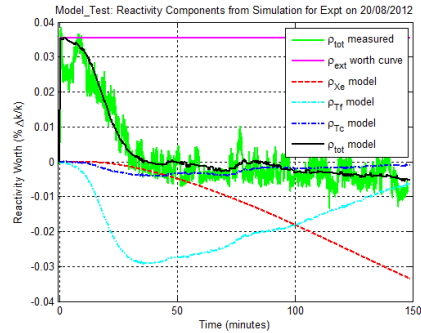
(forced flow case from Aug. 20, 2012)



Learning with Purpose



This case used
 $\alpha_{fref} = 1.7e-5 \Delta k/k-^{\circ}C$



This case used
 $\alpha_{fopt} = 7.7e-5 \Delta k/k-^{\circ}C$

Note: This result suggests that the fuel temperature feedback dominates much of the early part of the transient and that our prediction of the fuel temperature change may be too low???

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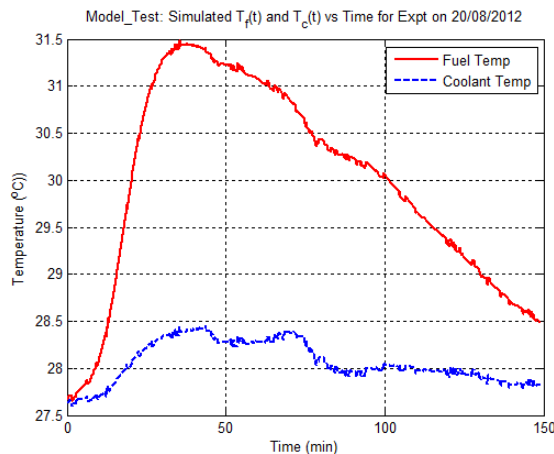
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Feedback Model Validation (cont.)

(forced flow case from Aug. 20, 2012)



Learning with Purpose



This is the current predicted $T_f(t)$ and $T_c(t)$.

However, since we have no measurements of T_f or T_c , we have no information about the accuracy of these results.

Without further information, all we know is that the $\alpha_f \Delta T_f$ product needs to be increased to match the experimental results -- this could be due to poor values of one or both terms!!!

For now, our solution will be to use

$\alpha_{fopt} = 7.7e-5 \Delta k/k-^{\circ}C$
 in all subsequent analyses...

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Feedback Model Validation

(natural convection flow case from Aug. 20, 2007)



A natural convection flow validation experiment was performed on Aug. 20, 2007. The initial reactor power was about 5 kW.

The goal of the test was to validate the combined temperature and xenon feedback model for a variable power run, with the coolant temperature having a more dominant role.

An initial positive reactivity perturbation was made by moving the RegBlade outward about 2.2 inches.

The core average temperatures increased due to the increasing power caused by the reactivity addition.

However, since the power level remained relatively low throughout the run, the xenon effect was negligible.

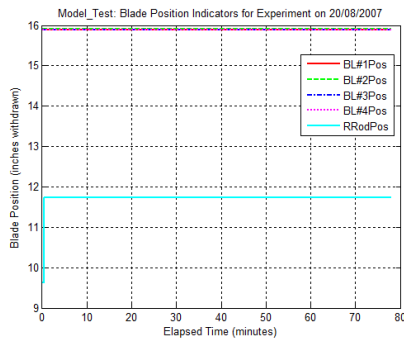
Thus, the negative temperature feedback reactivity eventually stabilized the system at a new steady state power of 26 kW.

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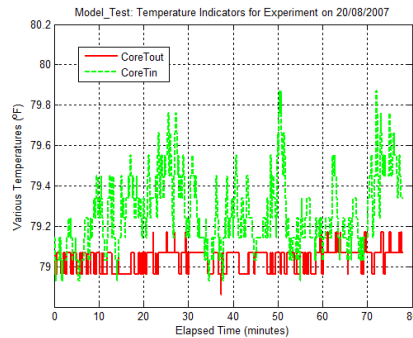
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Feedback Model Validation (cont.)

(natural convection flow from Aug. 20, 2007)



blade positions vs. time



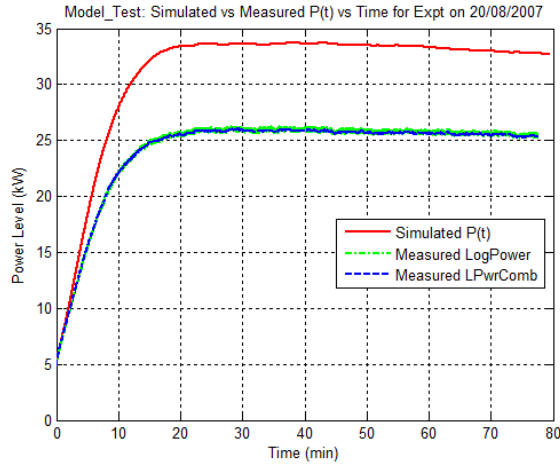
core temperatures vs. time

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Feedback Model Validation (cont.)

(natural convection case from Aug. 20, 2007)



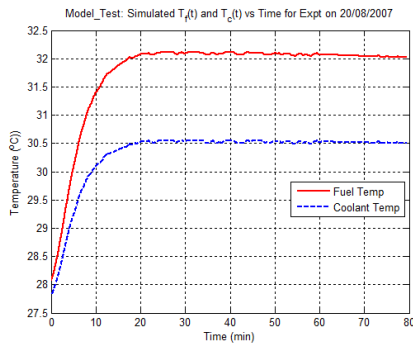
reactor power vs. time

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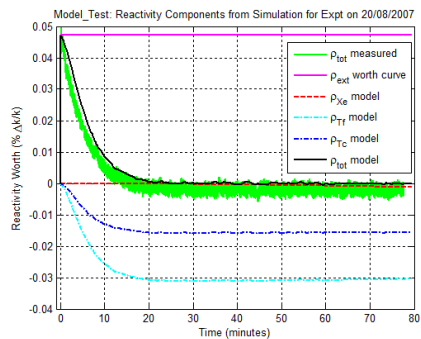
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Feedback Model Validation (cont.)

(natural convection case from Aug. 20, 2007)



predicted core temperatures



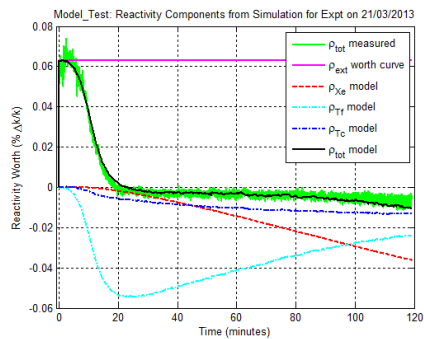
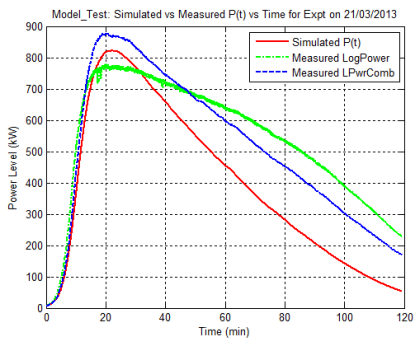
predicted vs. measured feedbacks

Here, both the fuel and coolant temperatures have an important role, and the predicted total feedback reactivity is quite reasonable...

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Two More Tests...

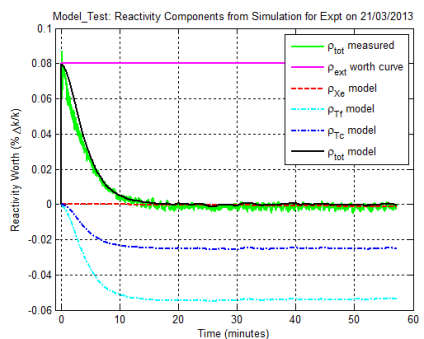
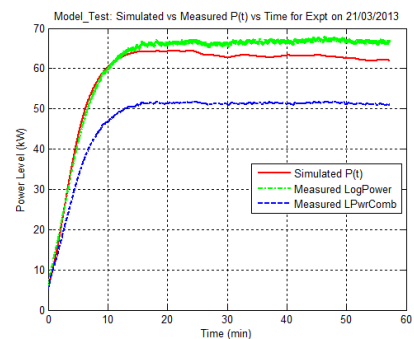


Forced Flow model validation test from March 21, 2013

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Reactivity Feedback Effects: Prediction, Measurement, & Interpretation

(April 2018)

Two More Tests...



Natural Convection model validation test from March 21, 2013

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Summary and Take-Aways



Our **study of reactivity feedback effects** within the UMLRR has accomplished the following:

1. Established the importance of the **inherent negative feedback mechanisms** in real systems.
2. Showed that the **xenon effect** and the **fuel and coolant temperature feedbacks can all be important**, and that their **relative contributions can be significantly different** under a variety of diverse conditions.
3. Developed and validated a **“semi-empirical” Feedback Model for the UMLRR** that gives **“reasonable” results relative to measured data**.

Summary and Take-Aways (cont.)



4. Identified that our existing **thermal model for the fuel temperature may need some improvements** (however, **where?** and **how?** are the difficult questions yet to be answered).
5. Developed and validated an **11-equation dynamic model** that can handle **both forced and natural convection modes**.

We now have a UMLRR simulator that can predict dynamic behavior under a variety of transient scenarios...

However, there are a number of situations that the model cannot handle -- such as the **transition from forced to natural convection flow** -- so there is still lots of room for improvement (as well as resolving some issues with the thermal model for the fuel)

Next Week's Lab



Now we need to show that our simulator **works for additional cases and more challenging transient situations...**

1. Perform **the appropriate simulations and compare to the measured data** from the **two simple reactor sequences** from **July 17, 2013**.
2. Design two new reactor sequences: one for **natural convection** and one for **force convection flow** -- we will run these sequences during the next lab as a test of our new simulation capability...

Rough Lab Procedure/Constraints:

Make a few RegBlade movements while in natural convection mode with the reactor initially at about 5 kW and keep $P(t) < 80$ kW while in this mode (this will keep the Xe at negligible levels).

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Next Week's Lab (cont.)



Rough Lab Procedure/Constraints (cont.):

Ask the reactor staff to transition to forced flow mode at about 5 kW .

In forced flow mode, make some additional RegBlade movements keeping $P(t) < 800$ kW.

The overall reactor run (for both sequences) should be about 2.5 – 3.0 hours (also be sure to keep the reactor period well above 60 sec for both sequences)...

HW #10 asks you to review the theory discussed here and answer a few questions, to do a few additional test comparisons, and to design the proposed sequences to be used in both the natural and forced flow portions of our next lab on Feedback Effects in the UMLRR. (see details in [rexpts_hw10sp18.pdf](#))

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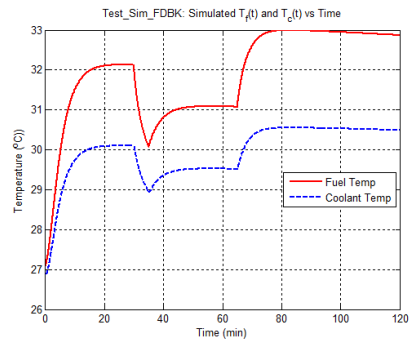
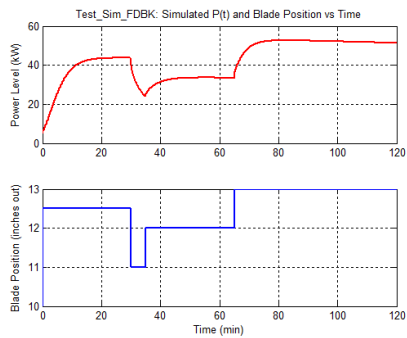
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Some sample simulations...

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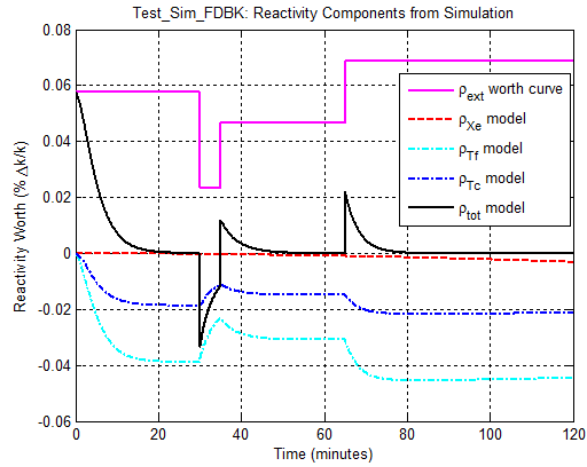
Natural Convection Flow Simulation



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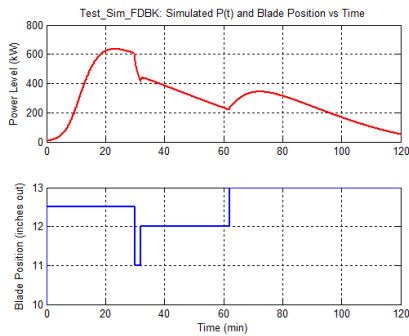
Natural Convection Flow Simulation



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Forced Flow Simulation



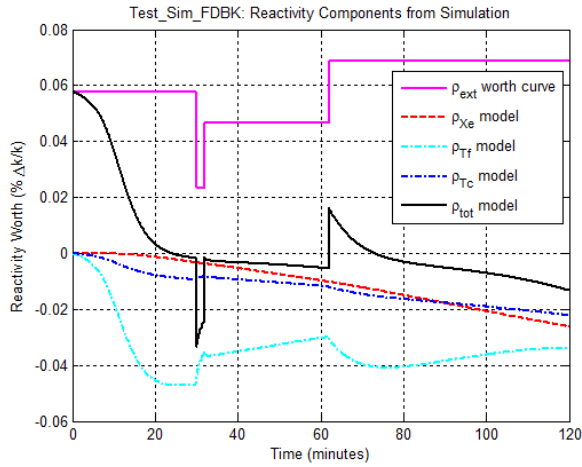
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Forced Flow Simulation (cont.)



Learning with Purpose



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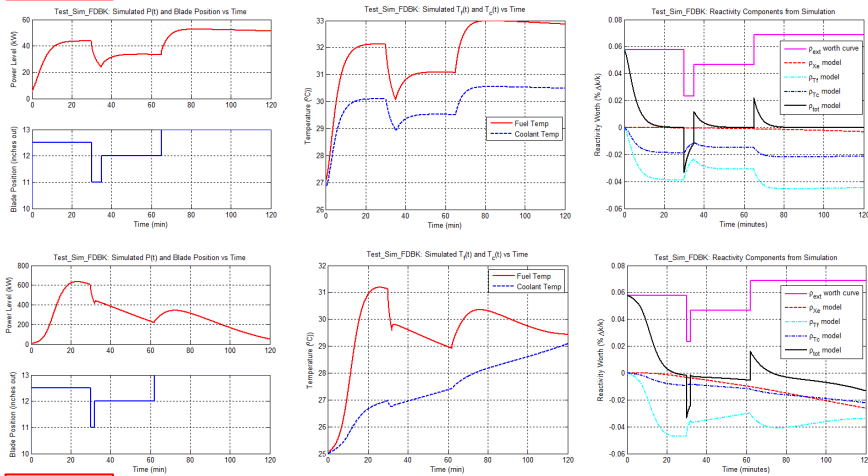
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Comparison of Forced and Free Flow



Learning with Purpose

free flow



forced flow

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