Effect of multiple injection strategies on emissions and performance in the Wärtsilä 6L 46 marine engine. A numerical approach

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ABSTRACT

The present paper proposes a Computational Fluid Dynamics model to analyze the operation cycle and exhaust gas composition in a four-stroke marine diesel engine, the Wärtsilä 6L 46. Once validated, the numerical model was employed to study the influence of several pre-injection parameters such as pre-injection rate, duration, starting instant and number of pre-injections. The purpose is to reduce consumption and emissions, especially nitrogen oxides, due to the current increasingly restrictive legislation. It was found that the fuel injection is a critical factor influencing combustion and emission characteristics. Important nitrogen oxides emission reductions were obtained for the parameters analyzed. Particularly, a 31.9% nitrogen oxides reduction was obtained using 20% pilot injection, 65.7% advancing 4° the pre-injections. A slight increment of hydrocarbons, carbon monoxide and consumption was obtained, lower than 5% for almost all the cases analyzed, and a negligible effect on carbon dioxide emissions.

KEYWORDS

Diesel engine, emissions, injection, computational fluid dynamics (CFD).

1-INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, emission reduction in engines is one of the most important challenges that designers are facing, especially nitrogen oxides (NO_x) reduction. Many solutions have been developed in recent years to reduce NO_x emissions. Some methods directly improve combustion such as exhaust gas recirculation, water addition, modification of the injection process, etc. Other methods are based on exhaust gas after treatments, such as selective catalytic reduction systems. Among them, this paper focuses on multiple injection strategies. The first studies about multiple injections in engines appeared in the

nineties. One can refer to the work of Nehmer and Reitz (1998), who studied multiple injection strategies in a heavy duty direct injection diesel engine and obtained reductions in particulate and NO_x emissions, especially if multiple injections are combined with EGR (Exhaust Gas Recirculation). The same conclusion using the same engine was obtained by Han et al. (1996) through a numerical model. Using other engines, Ikegami et al. (1997) also obtained reductions in particulate and NO_x. Besides, they indicated that another advantage of pilot injections is the reduction of noise. Carlucci et al. (2003) analyzed the pilot injection timing and duration and found that NO_x emissions levels are mainly influenced by the pilot duration, whereas smoke emission is influenced by both variables. Mohan et al. (2013) reported that post/after injections must be immediately injected after main injection in order to avoid increments in smoke, hydrocarbons (HC) and consumption. Mathivanan et al. (2016) indicated that soot can increase because pilot injections aggravate spray characteristics and particulates can be formed at the rich region. Chen (2000) indicated that a high separation between pilot and main injection reduce NOx but long delays might lead to increment smoke, consumption and HC emissions. Minani et al. (1995) obtained NO_x reductions but recommended to employ a small amount of pilot quantity in order to maintain soot emissions. Awargal et al. (2013) analyzed the time and quantity of the pilot injection, obtaining important NO_x reductions but at expenses of smoke increments. Fang et al. (2015) analyzed the effect of the injection angle when using multiple injections, obtaining NO_x reductions but HC increments. Other authors recommend to combine multiple injections with other systems such as EGR, Chen et al. (2017), or high injection pressures, Cha et al. (2015).

Based on these aforementioned experimental works, it can be concluded that multiple injections are able to reduce emissions but many parameters must be optimized such as injection time, duration of injection, number of pre-injections, dwelling time, etc. In recent years, numerical procedures have become an interesting tool to study injection parameters in engines since it is possible to analyze many solutions avoiding complex and expensive experimental setups. Besides, a numerical model provides interesting information which helps to understand the combustion process and emissions formation. In this regard, Petranovic et al. (2015) highlighted the capabilities of CFD (Computational Fluid Dynamics) to decrease the time and cost of experimental researches. Soni et al. (2017) developed a numerical model to analyze the effect of the spray angle using two piston bowl geometries. Fajri et al. (2017) analyzed numerically the effect of start of combustion, combustion duration, and other parameters on the performance and NO_x emissions. In another numerical work, Nazemi and Shahbakhti (2016) studied the effect of the spray angle, SOI timing, injection pressure and pressure rise rate. Imram et al. (2014) analyzed the effect of pilot fuel injection and indicated that an important quantity of NO_x is formed in the region around the pilot spray, where high temperatures exist. Li et al. (2016) studied the effect of split injections coupled with swirl and obtained reductions in both consumption and soot emissions. Another numerical analysis was developed by Yu et al. (2017), who focused on the injection interval and fuel injection proportion.

This study aims to offer a validated CFD model to provide information about the injection system. Several injection parameters were analyzed such as pre-injection rate, duration, starting instant and number of pre-injections in the marine diesel engine Wärtsilä 6L 46. The goal is to reduce consumption and emissions and provide a cheap and fast tool for studying engines and developing new designs. This work provides a model than can be employed to reduce consumption and emissions in future engines.

2- DEVELOPMENT OF THE MODEL

2.1 Case studied

The engine studied in the present paper, the Wärtsilä 6L 46, is a four-stroke, mediumspeed, marine diesel engine with 6 cylinders in line. Each cylinder has two intake and two exhaust valves in the cylinder head. This is a direct injection engine, *i.e.*, the fuel is injected directly into the combustion chamber. A fuel injector is located near the outer edge of the combustion chamber. The nozzle has 10 holes of 0.65 mm diameter and 144° spray angle. Other data of the engine are indicated in Table 1.

Parameter	Value
Output (kW)	5430
Mean effective pressure (kPa)	2250
Speed (rpm)	500
Cylinder displacement volume (cm ³ /cyl)	96400
Bore (mm)	460
Stroke (mm)	580

Table 1. Specifications of the engine.

In the present work, an extensive analysis was performed in a Wärtsilä 6L 46 installed on a tuna fishing vessel. Many parameters were characterized at different loads such as incylinder pressure, consumption, power, scavenging air pressure and temperature, exhaust gas pressure and temperature, lubricating oil pressure and temperature, cooling water temperature, etc. Although this engine is designed to operate under heavy fuel oil, marine diesel oil operation is also possible. Since these data were taken on board and near the coast, marine diesel oil was employed. The viscosity and density of this fuel are 12.5 mm²/s and 885 kg/m³ at 15°C and its sulfur content 0.89%. The engine operated 2 hours at 25% load, 2 hours at 35%, 2 hours at 50%, 2 hours at 75% and 2 hours at 100% load. 8 tests were taken at each analyzed load and the average was taken. As the engine has 6 cylinders, one test per cylinder was carried out. The engine performance analyzer MALIN 6000 was employed, which is a portable instrument commonly used for preventive maintenance. The pressure transducer included in MALIN 6000 is piezoelectric with 1% accuracy. This is connected to the bleed valve, located at the engine head. The signal from the pressure transducer is processed by a computer. Concentrations of NO_x, CO (carbon monoxide), HC and CO₂ (carbon dioxide) were also analyzed at different loads using the Gasboard-3000 series (Wuhan Cubic) gas analyzers. The accuracy and measurement range of these composition analysis instruments are indicated in Table 2.

Gas	Accuracy	Range
NOx	3%	0-2000 ppm
СО	3%	0-5000 ppm
НС	2%	0-1000 ppm
CO ₂	2%	0-25%

Table 2. Accuracy and measurement range of the composition analysis instruments.

Some experimental data at different loads are indicated in Table 3. Particularly, the velocity (RPM, revolutions per minute), power, IMEP (indicated mean effective pressure), maximum pressure, SFC (specific fuel consumption) and fractions of NO_x , HC, CO and CO₂.

Load	d (%)	25	35	50	75	100
R	PM	500	500	500	500	500
Power	r (kW)	2047.6	2367.8	2923.6	4051.1	5430.1
IMEP	• (kPa)	810	1390	1760	2000	2250
Pmax	(kPa)	10270	13800	16040	17580	18630
SFC (§	g/kWh)	173.2	171.9	169.8	169.5	172.1
	NO _x (ppm)	1048	1092	1149	1167	1128
Fractions	HC (ppm)	510	485	448	466	515
Fractions	CO (ppm)	261	255	247	268	292
	CO ₂ (%)	3.5	4.6	6.9	7.9	8.3

Table 3. Experimental data.

2.2 Numerical procedure

The performance cycle of this engine was modeled and validated with experimental results in previous papers (Lamas et al., 2012; Lamas and Rodriguez, 2013; Lamas et al., 2013). The software SolidEdge was employed for the CAD 3D design and Gambit 2.4.6 for the generation of the mesh. The computational mesh is indicated in Fig. 1. As can be seen, the cylinder and valves were meshed. In order to implement the piston movement, a deforming mesh was used and the movement was imposed to the valves and piston surfaces. Particularly, Fig. 1 (a) represents the tridimensional mesh, Fig. 1 (b) a crosssection at BDC (bottom dead center), i.e., 180 or 540° and Fig. 1 (c) a cross-section at TDC (top dead center), *i.e.*, 0° or 360°. The number of elements varied from 50,125 at TDC to 802,527 at BDC. In order to minimize the number of cells and obtain good convergence, hexahedral elements were used to mesh the cylinder. On the other hand, the cylinder head and ducts were meshed using tetrahedrons. In this region the mesh was refined in order to adapt properly to the opening and closing of the valves. Several meshes with different elements were tested in order to verify that the results are independent of the mesh size. Table 4 indicates the error obtained between experimental and numerical results of pressure and fractions using a mesh with 501,769 elements at BDC (mesh 1), as well as 802,527 elements (mesh 2) and 1,264,873 (mesh 3). As can be seen, there is no

difference between the meshes 2 and 3, for this reason the mesh 2 was chosen for the present work.



Figure 1. (a) Tridimensional mesh at BDC; (b) Cross-section mesh at BDC; (c) Crosssection mesh at TDC.

	р	NOx	СО	НС	CO ₂
Mesh 1	4.2	5.1	8.1	6.5	4.7
Mesh 2	4.1	4.9	7.9	6.4	4.6
Mesh 3	4.1	4.9	7.9	6.4	4.6

Table 4. Error (%) at 100% load obtained using different mesh sizes.

Regarding the CFD analysis, the open software OpenFOAM was employed because it allows a complete access to the source code in order to modify and program new governing equations which are not implemented by default. A new solver was developed using C++ programming. The governing equations of the present work were programmed from an extension of the solver *dieselEngineFoam*, thereby developing a new CFD solver. A simple backward Euler scheme was used for the temporal treatment, with a constant time step equivalent to 0.1° crank angle. A second order scheme was chosen for discretization of the continuity, momentum, energy and mass fraction equations, and the PISO algorithm was employed for the pressure-velocity coupling.

Basically, the solver is based on the RANS equations of conservation of mass, momentum, and energy. The k- ε was employed as turbulence model. The Kelvin-Helmholtz and Rayleigh-Taylor breakup model was used to treat fuel droplet breakup, and the Dukowicz model was applied for the heat-up and evaporation of the droplets. It was assumed that the fuel enters the cylinder as droplets of 10 μ m diameter (Challen and Baranescu, 1999; García Oliver, 2006).

The model of Ra and Reitz (2008), based on 41 species and 130 reactions, was employed to characterize the combustion kinetics. The fuel was treated as n-heptane and air as O_2 + 3.76N₂. The effect of humidity was neglected.

Fig. 2 represents the CO and HC fractions experimentally and numerically obtained and Fig. 3 the consumption and CO_2 fraction. As can be seen, a reasonable agreement was obtained.



Figure 2. HC and CO fractions experimentally and numerically obtained.



Figure 3. SFC and CO₂ fraction experimentally and numerically obtained.

Concerning the kinetics of NO_x, in CFD analysis it is common to employ the extended Zeldovich mechanism, Zeldovich *et al.* (1947) and Lavoie *et al.* (1970), based on the following 3 reactions and 7 species.

$O+N_2 \leftrightarrow NO+N$	(1)
$N+O_2 \leftrightarrow NO+O$	(2)
$N+OH \leftrightarrow NO+H$	(3)

A literature review shows that the extended Zeldovich mechanism, also called thermal mechanism owing to its important temperature sensitivity, provides accurate results for spark ignition engines. Nevertheless, for compression ignition engines the extended Zeldovich mechanism provides a correct NO_x formation trend but it underpredicts NO_x (Aithal, 2010; Rao and Honnery, 2013; Goldsworthy, 2003). Contrary to spark ignition engines, compression ignition engines such diesel or natural gas ones operate under lean conditions, especially if these employ EGR dilution operation. Under lean combustion, the extended Zeldovich mechanism misses some aspects. For instance, N₂O and NNH are important species involved in lean combustion. The main reason is that N₂O and NNH constitute intermediate compounds in the NO formation at relatively low temperatures, while the NO thermal mechanism becomes significant at high temperatures usually higher than 1,400-1,600°C. Besides, N₂O yields in significant amounts in locally lean, lowtemperature regions (Loffler et al., 2006; Hernandez et al., 2006). According to this, a more appropriate chemical mechanism than the extended Zeldovich one is required to predict NO_x formation. Several extended NO_x formation mechanisms have been developed in the literature. For instance, those of Hernández et al. (2008), based on 83 reactions and 38 species; Zabetta et al. (2000), based on 353 reactions and 57 species; Miller et al. (1998), based on 67 reactions and 13 species, etc. Simplified kinetic schemes with less reactions and species can also be found in the literature. Mellor et al. (1998) developed a model based on 6 reactions and 8 species. Zabetta and Kilpinen (2001) simplified the previous model indicating that only 10 reactions and 11 species are important and the results remain practically inalterable. Yang et al. (2003) used 43 reactions and 20 species of a previous model, Miller et al. (1998), and also obtained reasonable results. Other NO_x sources are prompt and fuel. In diesel engines, prompt NO formation is negligible due to the very short residence times in the thin diffusion flames, Heiwood (1988). Fuel NO formation is also negligible due to the low proportion of nitrogen in the fuel.

In order to improve NO_x predictions, in the present paper the extended Zeldovich model was compared to those of Mellor *et al.* (1998), Zabetta and Kilpinen (2001) and Yang *et al.* (2003). The results are indicated in Fig. 4. As can be seen, all kinetic schemes provide a correct NO_x trend. The extended Zeldovich model underpredicts the results with a 16.5% error. The other mechanisms also underpredict the results, but provide an error 8.1% corresponding to Mellor *et al.* (1998), 7.2% Zabetta and Kilpinen (2001) and 4.9% Yang *et al.* (2003). For this reason, the model of Yang *et al.* (2003) was chosen for the simulations of the remained of the present paper.



Figure 4. NO_x fraction experimentally and numerically obtained.

Fig. 5 indicates a comparison between experimentally and numerically obtained incylinder pressure for the whole operating cycle at 100% load and the heat release rate from 0 to 180° . The heat release rate was calculated by the following expression, Heywood (1988):

$$\frac{dQ}{d\theta} = \frac{\gamma}{\gamma - 1} p \frac{dV}{d\theta} + \frac{1}{\gamma - 1} V \frac{dp}{d\theta}$$
(4)

where $dQ/d\theta$ is the heat release rate per crank angle, θ the crank angle, p the in-cylinder pressure, V the in-cylinder volume and γ the polytropic index.



Figure 5. In-cylinder pressure and heat release rate experimentally and numerically obtained at 100% load.

Fig. 6 indicates the experimental and numerical mean pressure between -30° and 120° crankshaft angles at 25%, 50% and 100% loads and Fig. 7 indicates the experimental and numerical mean pressure for -90°, -60°, -30°, 0°, 30°, 60° and 90° crankshaft angles and 25%, 35%, 50%, 75% and 100% loads. Regarding fractions, Table 5 indicates the error obtained at different loads. As can be seen, Figures 5-7 and Table 5 indicate that the numerical results are in satisfactory agreement with experimental ones. Several reasons are responsible for the discrepancies between numerical end experimental results. Both numerical techniques and experimental measurements introduce inevitable errors. Experimental errors are associated to the tolerance of the instruments employed and numerical errors are caused by the hypothesis assumed and the discretization processes.



Figure 6. In-cylinder pressure experimentally and numerically obtained at 25%, 50% and 100% loads.



Figure 7. Comparison between in-cylinder pressure experimentally and numerically obtained at different loads.

Load (%)		25	35	50	75	100
$\frac{NO_x}{HC}$	NOx	5.4	5.1	4.5	4.4	4.9
	HC	6.5	6.7	6.9	7.2	6.4
Error (%)	CO	8.1	8.3	8.5	8.2	7.9
	CO ₂	5.2	5.0	4.9	4.8	4.6

Table 5. Error (%) in the fractions at different loads.

3- RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Once it was validated, the numerical model was employed to study several injection parameters such as pre-injection rate, duration, starting instant and number of preinjections. The results are indicated below.

In the work of Lamas *et al.* (2012), injection takes place from -12° to -1° . In order to analyze the pre-injection effect, a portion of the combustible was pre-injected from -18° to -14° at 100% load using a constant amount of total fuel per cycle, 9.96 g. The incylinder pressure for 10% and 20% pre-injection rates is indicated in Fig. 8. As can be seen, a lower maximum pressure is reached using pre-injection. When pre-injection is employed the combustion process starts earlier and the burn duration increases when compared to the cases without pre-injection. The objective of pre-injection is to limit the initial rate of heat release to keep the maximum pressure at minimum. As lower pressures promote lower temperatures, the NO_x fractions are lower as pre-injection percentage is increased. In this regard, pre-injection is notably different than simply advancing the main injection timing since the former prepares the mixture for the main injection.



Figure 8. In-cylinder pressure numerically obtained, without pre-injection and with 10% and 20% pre-injection rates.

The average and maximum in-cylinder temperature using 10% and 20% pre-injection rates is indicated in Fig. 9. As can be seen, the temperature is lower using pre-injection. The reduction in NO_x fractions is shown in Fig. 10, which represents the average NO_x against the crankshaft angle using 10% and 20% pre-injection rates. Fig. 11 indicates the NO_x field in the middle cross-section without pilot injection and using 20% pilot injection for 10° and 15° crankshaft angles.



Figure 9. In-cylinder average temperature numerically obtained, without pre-injection and with 10% and 20% pre-injection rates.



Figure 10. NO_x fraction numerically obtained, without pilot injection and with 10% and 20% pilot injection.



Figure 11. NO_x field (ppm); (a) without pilot injection; (b) with 20% pilot injection.

It is interesting to analyze the effect of pre-injection more carefully. Fig. 12 indicates the influence of the pre-injection rate in emissions and consumption for a range between 0% and 20%. This figure indicates emissions in g/kWh. The relation between emissions and gas fractions is provided by the following expression:

$$E_i = 10^6 F_i \frac{M_i}{M_g} \frac{\dot{m}_g}{P}$$
⁽⁵⁾

where E_i is the emission of the component *i* in g/kWh, F_i the concentration in ppm, M_i the molar mass of the component *i*, M_g the molar mass of the exhaust gas, \dot{m}_g the exhaust mass flow and *P* the power.

As can be seen in Fig. 12, consumption increases with the pilot injection rate. The disadvantage of using pre-injection is that this induces lower pressures and thus lower indicated power. If the indicated power is reduced, the specific consumption is increased. This figure also indicates that NO_x emissions are notably reduced, up to 31.9% using 20% pilot injection. The reason is that lower pressures are associated to lower temperatures, and NO_x is mainly produced at high temperatures, Zare *et al.* (2017). Regarding HC and CO emissions, these pollutants are mainly associated to incomplete combustion. Lower temperatures promote slow combustion and partial burning, and thus promote HC and CO formation, Nabi *et al.* (2017). Nevertheless, the effect on HC and CO is practically negligible, less than 5%. Regarding CO₂, it remains practically constant since the CO₂ concentration in the exhaust gas is much higher than those of NO_x, HC and CO and small

modifications of these pollutants do not affect CO₂. In this case, carbon molecules form more HC and CO and thus less CO₂ but this decrement is practically negligible.



Figure 12. Effect of different pilot injection rates.

Another interesting parameter to study is the pre-injection start angle. Using 10% preinjection rate and 4° pre-injection duration, the results of different pre-injection start angles are indicated in Fig. 13. As can be seen, NO_x is noticeably reduced when the preinjection is advanced, up to 65.7% for -22°. Early pilot injections result in more residence time available for the pilot to mix with the surrounding fuel-air mixture, so combustion occurs at locally lean mixtures. Consequently, the local temperatures are lower and thus the tendency to form NO_x. It is important to notice that in practical applications an excessive pre-injection advancement damages the engine because the pressure increment due to combustion must be produced near TDC, when the piston is still moving upward in order to avoid knocking. Another disadvantage of advancing the pre-injection start angle is that lower temperatures promote lower pressures and thus power; consequently, the specific consumption experiments a notably increase. HC and CO are also incremented with pre-injection advancement because lower pressures and thus lower temperatures difficult combustion. CO₂ emissions experiment a practically negligible reduction for the same reason than the previous case.



Figure 13. Effect of the pre-injection start angle.

The pre-injection duration was also analyzed. Fig. 14 illustrates pre-injection durations between 1° and 5° for 10% pre-injection rate and -18° pre-injection start angle. As can be seen, longer pre-injections increase NO_x emission levels up to 20.1%. The reason is that longer pre-injections make combustion occur closer to TDC and thus produce higher combustion temperatures. Consumption is reduced with the pre-injection duration because higher temperatures are associated to higher pressures and thus higher power. CO and HC emissions decrease with pre-injection duration due to the complete combustion. Besides, large pre-injections involve to inject the combustible slowly and thus the probability to leave non-burnt combustible in form of CO and HC is lower. CO₂ emissions remain practically constant with a slightly increment with pre-injection duration duration because a more complete combustion promotes that more C is burnt to CO₂ instead CO and HC.



Figure 14. Effect of the pre-injection duration.

Finally, the number of pre-injections was analyzed. Several injections of 2° crankshaft angle duration were analyzed. The results are indicated in Fig. 15. As can be seen, as the number of pre-injections is increased NO_x emissions are reduced up to 36.7%. Pilot injections tend to decrease the size of high-temperature zones and, as a result, NO_x emissions. The specific fuel oil consumption increases with the number of pre-injections due to the lower pressures and thus power. Lower local temperatures promote higher HC and CO emissions, for this reason CO and HC emissions increase with the number of pre-injections remain practically constant with a slightly decrement with the number of pre-injections because more C is employed to form CO and HC instead CO₂.



Figure 15. Effect of the number of pre-injections.

Fig. 16 indicates the in-cylinder pressure without pilot injection, using 2 pre-injections and using 4 pre-injections. As can be seen, the maximum pressure is lower as the number of pre-injections is incremented.



Figure 16. In-cylinder pressure numerically obtained using 2 and 4 pre-injections.

4- CONCLUSIONS

Due to the current necessity to reduce emissions and consumption from engines, the present paper proposes a CFD model to analyze the influence of several injection parameters in a commercial marine diesel engine, the Wärtsilä 6L 46. Experimental measurements were carried out on a Wärtsilä 6L 46 installed on a tuna fishing vessel, and a good agreement between the model and experiments was obtained. NO_x, HC, CO and CO_2 emissions were validated, as well as pressure and consumption. This ensures the accuracy of the present investigation. An open source was employed, OpenFOAM, which is more useful to the scientific community than commercial softwares.

The influence of four injection parameters was analyzed: pre-injection rate, duration, starting instant and number of pre-injections. It was found that NO_x can be noticeably reduced, up to 31.9% if the pre-injection rate is increased to 20%, 65.7% if the pre-injection instant is advanced 4°, 20.1% if the pre-injection rate is shortened 4° and 36.7% if the number of pre-injection rates is increased to four. These measurements, nevertheless, increment CO and HC emissions but this increment resulted less than 5% in most of the cases analyzed. CO₂ emission levels experienced practically negligible modifications.

In future works, the purpose is to apply this model also on two-stroke marine engines used in larger vessels. Once validated, this model can be used to try more modifications and design low emission and consumption engines. This work offers a validated tool very useful to understand the injection parameters and their effect on the combustion and emission process, avoiding laborious and expensive experimental tests.

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NOMENCLATURE

- E_i Emission of the component *i* (g/kWh)
- F_i Concentration (ppm)
- γ Polytropic index (-)
- $\dot{m}_{\rm g}$ Exhaust mass flow (g/h)
- M_g Molar mass of the exhaust gas (g/mol)
- M_i Molar mass of the component *i* (g/mol)
- θ Crank angle (deg)
- *p* In-cylinder pressure (kPa)
- P Power (kW)
- *Q* Heat released (kJ)
- \tilde{V} In-cylinder volume (m³)

Abbreviations

BDC Bottom dead center

CO	Carbon monoxide
CO ₂	Carbon dioxide
EGR	Exhaust gas recirculation
HC	Hydrocarbons
IMEP	Indicated mean effective pressure
NO _x	Nitrogen oxides
SFC	Specific fuel consumption
TDC	Top dead center

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