Towards formal testing of jet engine Rolls-Royce BR725

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Abstract. The Rolls-Royce BR725 is a newly designed jet engine for ultra-long-range and high-speed business jets. In this paper we apply our theory of formal testing [5,6] to the starting system of the Rolls-Royce BR725 control software. To this end we model the system in CSP, evaluate test suites against the formal model, and finally execute test suites in an in-the-loop setting of the SUT. This case study demonstrates the applicability of our testing approach to industrial systems: it scales up to real world applications and it potentially fits into current verification and quality assurance processes, as e.g., in place at Rolls-Royce.

1 Introduction

Jet engines belong to the safety critical systems of an air plane. Their control software can be classified as a reactive system: it accepts commands from the pilot, receives status messages from the airframe and the engine sensors, and issues commands to the engine. Here, we report on the successful application of our theory of specification based testing [5,6] to the starting system of the Rolls-Royce BR725 control software. To this end we model the system in CSP, evaluate test suites against the formal model, and finally execute test suites in an in-the-loop setting of the SUT. This case study demonstrates the applicability of our testing approach to industrial systems: it scales up to real world applications and it potentially fits into current verification and quality assurance processes, as e.g., in place at Rolls-Royce.

Our testing theory has been developed for the formal specification language CSP-CASL [10]. CSP-CASL allows to formalize systems in a combined algebraic / process algebraic notation. To this end it uses as sub-languages the process algebra CSP [3,11] and the algebraic specification language CASL [8]. In the context of this paper we restrict CSP-CASL to (a sub-language of) CSP-M, the machine-readable version of CSP.

Figure 1 shows our testing approach in a nutshell. Specification, Implementation and Test Cases are mutually related artifacts. Specifications and Test Cases are written in CSP-CASL, the Implementation is treated as a black box. Test cases can be constructed either from the specification – as shown in the triangle – or independently from it. The specification determines the alphabet of the test suite, and the expected result of each test case. The expected result is coded in a colouring scheme of test cases. If a test case is constructed which checks for the presence of a required feature (according to the specification), we define its colour to be green. If a test case checks for the absence of some unwanted behaviour, we say that it has the colour red. If the specification does neither require nor disallow the behaviour tested by the test case, i.e., if a System Under Test (SUT) may or may not implement this behaviour, the colour of the test case is
Figure 1. Validation triangle

defined to be yellow. During the execution of a test on a particular SUT, the verdict is determined by comparing the colour of the test case with the actual behaviour. A test fails, if the colour of the test case is green but the SUT does not exhibit this behaviour, or if the colour is red but the behaviour can be observed in the SUT. The execution of a yellow test case yields an inconclusive verdict. Otherwise, the test passes.

Here, we apply our theory to the starting system of Rolls-Royce Br725 software control. The Br725 is a newly designed jet engine for ultra-long-range and high-speed business jets. It is part of the Br700 family. We model the starting system in CSP and validate our model using the CSP simulator ProBE. We then evaluate the test suites against the formal model. Such evaluation is done using the model checker FDR2. Part of the test suites is inspired by existing test cases of the Br700 family jet engines. We execute our test suite in an in-the-loop setting on the so-called “rig”. This puts the engine control system through test scenarios identical to those carried out in engine test stand testing, however with considerable lower cost, reduced risk, and less burden on human and mechanical resources.

Outline In Section 2 we give an overview of the test evaluation theory from [5] and a brief introduction to CSP_M and FDR2. In Section 3 we describe a control system of a jet engine in general and the starting system of the Rolls-Royce Br725 jet engine in particular. We also show how we model the latter in CSP_M. Subsequently, in Section 4 we show how we evaluate and execute test cases.

2 Testing in CSP-CASL

In this section we give an overview of the theory of specification-based testing presented in [5,6]. The theory is based on the specification language CSP-CASL [10] which allows to formalize computational system in a combined algebraic / process algebraic notation. CSP-CASL uses the process algebra CSP [3,11] for the modeling of reactive behaviour, whereas the properties of the communications are specified in CASL [8]. CSP-CASL has been deployed in the modeling [2] and verification [4] of an electronic payment system.

\[\text{In the rest of the paper we will refer to this engine type simply as Br725.}\]
In [5], a theory for the evaluation of test cases with respect to CSP-CASL specifications has been developed. In summary, the main benefits of this theory are as follows.

- Separation of test case construction from specification and implementation: A test case only refers to the signature of a specification. This allows to start the development of test suites as soon as an initial, abstract version of the specification is available, in parallel to the development of the actual implementation.

- Separation of the test oracle and the test evaluation problem: Test cases are constructed with respect to an (abstract) specification and executed on a (concrete) implementation. The specification determines the expected result of a test case, and the implementation the verdict. Therefore, the intrinsically hard test oracle problem can be solved before the actual execution, whereas test evaluation can be done online.

- Positive and negative test cases: The intention of a test case with respect to a specification is coded by a colouring scheme. It is possible to construct test cases for the intended behaviour (colour green) as well as for unwanted behaviour (colour red) of an implementation.

- Three-valued evaluation scheme for test cases: The colour of a test case as determined by a specification is either green, red or yellow; the test verdict is either pass, fail or inconclusive. The test verdict is obtained by comparing intended and actual behaviour of an SUT. Yellow test cases lead to inconclusive test verdicts, indicating that the specification is not complete in this point.

A specification with monomorphic data and no internal non-determinism in the process has resolved all design decisions. We show in [5] that such specifications have no yellow test cases.

A test case is executed on a particular SUT. In [5] we define a point of control and observation (PCO) in order to map the events of the SUT to the event names (concrete: CASL-terms) of the test case. We say that a test case $T$ is executable at a PCO with respect to a specification $Sp$, if this mapping covers all CASL terms occurring in the test and is injective.

We also define the execution of a test case on an SUT at a PCO. The test verdict is obtained algorithmically by comparing the actual behaviour of the SUT $a$ with the trace of the test case. The noncompliance to a green test case or compliance to a red one leads to test failure. The compliance to a green test case or noncompliance to a red one leads to passing the test.

### 2.1 CSP\_M and FDR2

CSP\_M [11][12] is the machine readable version of CSP, which also includes a simple functional programming language. Data in CSP\_M is monomorphic.

We choose CSP\_M instead of CSP-CASL due to the nature of the system specifications we formalize. These specifications do not require a specification language with loose semantics or complex data structures. Instead, they use simple data types only; mostly booleans and finite subranges of numbers. These data types are available in the type system of CSP\_M, and they can also be modelled within CASL. This justifies the use of CSP\_M instead of CSP-CASL.
Employing CSPM allows us to use the model checker FDR2 \cite{7,11} to prove the test colouring in an automatic way. While using CSP-CASL, the proof of colouring is done using the CSP-CASL-PROVER \cite{9}, which is an interactive theorem prover. FDR2 is a model checking tool developed by Formal Systems (Europe). It is founded on CSP and can be used to prove if certain properties of CSP specifications holds or not. The input language of FDR2 is CSPM. FDR2 offers, e.g., to check for trace refinement, or to check if a process is deterministic.

The following table collects the syntax of some CSP process constructs that we will be using in order to model the BR725 Starting System; for a complete description of CSPM see \cite{11}.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CSPM Process definition</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P /\ Q</td>
<td>Interrupt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P [&gt; Q</td>
<td>Untimed timed out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P [b</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>Q</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P [a&lt;-b]</td>
<td>Renaming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P \ a</td>
<td>Hiding</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3 Modelling the BR725 starting system in CSP

In this section we give a brief description of the control system of the jet engine in general, and the starting system functionality in particular. We also report how the modeling of the starting system in CSP has been carried out. We take here a black-box view, as it is also taken by the Rolls-Royce system verification team which tests the engine control system on system level.

The main component of the control system of a jet engine is the Electronic Engine Controller (EEC). A simplified view of the BR725 EEC architecture and its interfaces with the engine is shown in Figure 3. The EEC encapsulates all signalling aspects of the engine; it controls, protects, and monitors the engine. In order to provide fault-tolerance, the EEC is realised as a dual-channel system. Its control loop involves: reading data from sensors and other computer systems in the aircraft, receiving commands from the pilot, calculating new positions of the engine actuators, and issuing commands to the engine actuators. In its monitoring function it transmits data about the engine condition and information on any failures diagnosed on the electronics back to the aircraft. Here we focus on the Starting System, one of the many functionalities the EEC provides.

3.1 Starting System of BR725

The jet engine BR725 can be started in both, on-ground and in-flight situations. Furthermore, the pilot can select between Automatic or Manual starting mode. Moreover, the Starting System may be used to provide engine Cranking.

The detected situation (on-ground or in-flight) together with the selected starting mode (automatic or manual) results in four different control flows in which the EEC controls the engine. Cranking adds two further flows of the EEC, namely dry and wet cranking (i.e., without and with fuel on respectively). In the following we discuss the manual on-ground starting sequence. Starting the jet engine essentially involves three steps:
1. A motor – the so-called Starter – which is mechanically coupled to a shaft of the engine, starts to rotate the engine.
2. When the shaft has reached a sufficient rotational speed, fuel is allowed to flow to the combustion chamber and the engine lights up.
3. When the rotational speed of the engine reaches a threshold the engine start is complete.

Figure 3 shows an abstraction of the basic system architecture of a Rolls-Royce jet engine starting system. The main signals transmitted between the components are as follows. In the Cockpit the pilot has a start switch in order to initiate the starting sequence; the pilot also has a fuel switch. The Airframe informs the EEC if the plane is in-flight or on-ground. The EEC can switch the Starter On and Off, can Open and Close the fuel SOV (Shut-Off Valve), and can turn the Ignition On and Off. The engine reports back to the EEC information about the shaft speed and the TGT (Turbine Gas Temperature). For Br725 the Rolls-Royce Starting Subsystem Definition Document (SSDD)
makes the Starting System within the EEC specific to this engine. This document describes all aspects of the Starting System: it gives an overview of the Starting System in general, it presents so-called activity diagrams and explains them in plain English. In the following we give an example of such an activity diagram and its accompanying text.

Figure 4 shows the internal logic of the manual ground start in the form of an activity diagram. These activity diagrams are formulated in an informal, graphical specification language. This language was specifically developed by Rolls-Royce in order to describe engine controllers. An example of an accompanying text would be the following:

I3005/1 When NH reaches the required speed, the pilot switches the Fuel Control Switch to RUN.

Note that every specification line is identified with a unique number, in our example with I3005/1. Rolls-Royce makes use of this during the testing process as a coverage criterion: it is required that there is at least one test case for every line in the specification. Figure 4 shows the Manual Ground Start (MGS) functionality which allows the pilot to start the engine manually. The flow from the start point to the second transition shows that the MGS can only be initiated when the aircraft is on the ground and the engine is not running, starting or cranking. In this situation the pilot can initiate the MGS by selecting the following control switches: Master Crank to On, Continuous Ignitions to On, and Engine Start to On.

Upon switching the Engine Start to On, the EEC will command the Starter Air Valve (SAV) to be opened and the starter motor is activated. If the pilot now switches the Fuel Control Switch to Run the EEC commands the fuel to flow. If at this point the Continuous Ignitions is still On the EEC ignites the motor (not shown in the Figure) and begins to monitor the shaft speed of the engine. Should this speed reach a certain threshold the starting procedure is complete. While the starting procedure is active within the EEC, the pilot can abort it by switching the Master Crank or the Fuel Control to Off. If the pilot switches the Continuous Ignitions to Off the starting procedure ends in an error state.

3.2 Modelling of the starting system in CSP

Our main objective is to capture in a faithful way the original specification of the Starting System. To this end, we model the system in a way that a natural mapping can be drawn between the original specification (SSDD activity diagrams) and the CSP model. In the following we describe some aspects of the modeling in CSP of the manual on-ground starting procedure.

We have modeled the system in a two step approach: first we formalize the 'normal' execution pattern of the system. Only in a second step we add the handling of error cases such as interrupting the start by switching Continuous Ignitions to Off. CSP supports such a compositional approach of modelling via its interrupt operator.

In the following we describe some of the patterns which we have identified in the modeling process. We first describe some patterns and discuss then how their combination results in the overall control-flow.

Switch Buttons have two states: ON and OFF. Pressing a button in state OFF will turn it ON, releasing a button in state ON will turn it OFF.
Fig. 4. Activity diagram for manual ground start - Courtesy of Rolls-Royce

We instantiate ButtonON and ButtonOFF to form the different switch buttons available in the Cockpit for the Starting System. This is done by simply using the CSP renaming operator, e.g., for MasterCrank:

channel mc_press, mc_release
MasterCrank = ButtonOFF[[press <- mc_press, release <- mc_release]]
All button processes run in an interleaved way. This corresponds to arbitrary press / release operations in the Cockpit. Note how this specification covers in an obvious way part of the activity diagram in Figure 4.

**Buttons** = MasterCrank ||| MasterStart ||| EngineStartON ||| ||| FuelControl ||| ContIgnition

### Active waiting

The starting sequence can only proceed when the following events happen: (1) the checks for *Aircraft* and *Engine* condition has been successful, (2) the pilot has issued the necessary starting commands. This is captured in the CSP model in the following way:

\[
\text{InteractEEC} = \text{(CheckConditions \{synchStart\} \text{CrankAndIgnite})} \\
\quad \backslash \text{(synchStart)} \quad \text{FuelAndSAV} \quad \text{MasterIdle}
\]

where \text{CheckConditions} is the process that checks for the *Aircraft* and *Engine* condition. \text{CrankAndIgnite} is the process that handles the input of the pilot; namely the cranking and the ignition commands. \text{CheckConditions} and \text{CrankAndIgnite} synchronize on the \text{synchStart} event, only when the synchronization is successful the process \text{FuelAndSAV} takes over. The \text{FuelAndSAV} and \text{MasterIdle} processes capture the rest of the starting sequence.

### Interleaving of decisions

At different points of the activity diagram there are decisions that happen in an interleaved way. We model this scenario using the external choice operator in the following way:

\[
\text{CrankAndIgnite} = \text{mc_press} -> \text{ci_press} -> \text{InitStartOK} \\
\quad [\text{ci_press} -> \text{mc_press} -> \text{InitStartOK}]
\]

Here, the process \text{CrankAndIgnite} offers the to first switch MasterCrank or ContIgnition.

The whole manual on-ground start sequence is represented by the process \text{MGS}. The processes \text{InteractEEC} and \text{Buttons} runs in an alphabetized parallel. This corresponds to the interaction of the pilot (through the Cockpit switches) and the EEC.

\[
\text{MGS} = \text{InteractEEC} \backslash \{\text{mc_press, mc_release, ..., ci_release}\} \backslash \text{Buttons}
\]

In the second step of the modeling process we have identified and handled the error cases. Observing the activity diagrams, at different points of time during the starting sequence the pilot has the ability to abort the sequence by releasing the \text{FuelControl} or the \text{ContIgnition}. We model this procedure using the CSP interrupt operator \[ P \land Q \] – the progress of the process $P$ can be interrupted on occurrence of the first event of $Q$.

\[
\text{channel commandIgnOFF, abort, error} \\
\text{InterruptFC} = \text{fc_release} -> \text{abort} -> \text{SKIP} \\
\text{InterruptCI} = \text{ci_release} -> \text{commandIgnOFF} -> \text{Error} \\
\text{(InteractEEC} \backslash \text{InterruptFC}) \backslash \text{InterruptCI}
\]

---

5 We leave out the code of the EngineStartON which as a push button has no state.

6 In order to have state names available, we choose the semantically equivalent encoding of interleaving in terms of external choice and action prefix.
The abortion due to releasing of the MasterCrank is only available after the Command Fuel ON event has occurred and prior reaching the Starter Disengagement Speed. In a pictorial way in Figure 4 this is identified by the dotted box.

Simulations with the CSP animator ProBE, discussions with the Rolls-Royce verification team, and – last but not least – the structural correspondence with the activity diagram validate our formal model. Checking our model in FDR2 shows that it has the expected properties: it is deterministic, it is deadlock-free and it is livelock-free.

3.3 Questions on the activity diagram

Rolls-Royce uses activity diagrams as shown in Figure 4 merely as memos. The engineers share common knowledge on jet engines, the activity diagrams serve more to trigger ideas how the control software works. Here, we list some of the shortcomings that we encountered during the modeling and reading process of the SSDD specification document.

– Although the Engine Start is a momentary button and Master Crank is a push button with two states both are shown with the same symbol in the activity diagram. That the Engine Start is a momentary button becomes clear from the textual description of the activity diagram. This explains also why there is no interrupt related to this button.

– We identically modeled both boxes which monitor speed (Monitor Starter Disengagement Speed, Monitor Achieving of Idle) relatively to the signal NH, while in the activity diagram the first box has no self-loop and the second box has a self-loop.

– Although the commands Command IGN ON and Command IGN OFF appear at first sight to be related, they are not: the command Command IGN ON is given by the pilot in the cockpit while the command Command IGN OFF is sent by the EEC to the engine. Therefore, we model this commands as two different events.

– As there is a command Command FUEL ON one would expect command Command FUEL OFF to appear in the activity diagram, e.g., when aborting the start. However, this is not the case.

3.4 Modeling in CSP

Here we outline the pros and cons of modeling the system in CSP. On the positive side, the different CSP operator were very handy in the modeling process. The interleaving operator, the sequential composition, the hiding operator and the interrupt allowed us to capture in an elegant way certain aspects of the system in question. On the negative side, the global state approach of CSP forced us to explicitly have one process name per transition (arrow in the activity diagrams). Overall, however, CSP served well in modeling such a controller.

4 Testing the BR725 starting system

In this section we describe the evaluation of test cases, how we establish the PCO and execute the test cases in the HIL rig. Some test cases for the BR725 manual ground start have been inspired from previous projects concerning the BR700.
4.1 Test case evaluation

In [5] we present a syntactic characterization of the semantical notion of colouring a test case:

\[
\text{Check}_T = ((P \parallel T)[[R_{t_1}]][[R_{t_2}]][[\dots][[R_{t_n}]]] \\
[[\text{obs}]]\text{count}(n)) \setminus \{t_1, \ldots, t_n\}
\]

\[
\text{count}(n : \text{Nat}) = \begin{cases} \text{OK} & \text{if } n = 0 \\ \text{else } \text{count}(k - 1) \end{cases}
\]

The synchronous parallel operator \( \parallel \) forces \( P \) and \( T \) to agree on all communications. Should \( P \) agree to execute the communications \( t_1, \ldots, t_n \) of \( T \) in exactly this order, this results in a sequence of \( n \) communications. All these communications are renamed into \( \text{obs} \) via the predicates \( R_{t_i} \). The process \( \text{count} \) communicates \( \text{OK} \) after the execution of \( n \) \( \text{obs} \)'s. Hiding the communication \( \text{obs} \) makes only this \( \text{OK} \) visible. A test process is red, iff \( \text{Check}_T \neq \) \( \text{OK} \rightarrow \text{Stop} \). For a test process to be green, it is necessary that \( \text{Check}_T = \text{OK} \rightarrow \text{Stop} \). As our model is deterministic, this necessary condition becomes a sufficient one.

In the following we show how the test case \( T_1 \) is coloured green. \( T_1 \) experiment a successful on-ground manual start. The following is the input test script for FDR2:

```plaintext
channel OK, obs
GREEN = OK -> SKIP
CheckT = ( ( MGS [ {|aircraftCondition.true,...,started|} |] TC1 % Parallel \\
| [aircraftCondition.true <- obs,...,started <-obs} | % Renaming \\
| | | obs -> ... -> obs -> OK -> STOP | % Parallel \\
\} | {obs} % Hiding
assert CheckT [T= GREEN assert GREEN [T= CheckT % Verify the colour
```

In \( \text{Check}_T \) we encode the traces condition. Equality checking in FDR2 is done by refinement checking on both sides, i.e., \( \sqsubseteq_T \land \sqsupseteq_T \Rightarrow =_T \). Figure on the right shows a FDR2 screenshot of this proof.

For red test cases it is sufficient to show that the condition on the traces doesn’t hold. We simply negate the assertion of the traces condition \( \text{Check}_T \). For instance, \( T_2 \) experiment a manual on-ground start sequence, however the first NH value is less than the prescribed threshold (15). Therefore, \( T_2 \) is colored red.

```plaintext
assert not GREEN [T= CheckT assert not CheckT [T= GREEN
```

As the datatypes in Csp\_M are all monomorphic, and as our model of the starting system is deterministic, there are no yellow test cases (see Section 2).
4.2 Establishing a PCO

The test verdict is obtained during the execution of a test case in the HIL rig. Rolls-Royce uses a proprietary scripting language in order to write test scripts; a snippet of such script is shown below:

```plaintext
1. Set("MasterCrankCnd",1)
2. WaitTime(2)
3. Set("REngContinuousIGN",1)
4. WaitTime(2)
5. Set("REngStartCnd",1)
6. WaitTime(2)
7. Set("REngStartCnd",0)
8. WaitUntil("NHP>15")
9. Set("MasterLever",0)
10. WaitUntil("LIT==1")
11. Set("FlightStatus",1)
12. WaitUntil("NHP>65",60)
13. ...
```

For instance, line 1,3,5 are commands to switch the Master Crank, Continuous Ignition and Fuel Control switch to ON respectively. The time delay, in between commands, is necessary in order to capture the signal, and store it in a log for an offline analysis.

We now establish a PCO \( \mathcal{P} = (A, \|\|, D) \) in the following way:

- The alphabet of primitive events: \( A = \{ \text{MasterCrankCnd}, \ldots, \text{FlightStatus} \} \).
- We use ASN.1 (Abstract Syntax Notation One) to map the primitive events to CSP events.

```plaintext
MasterCrankCnd ::= ENUMERATED{
  mc_press (1)
  mc_release (0)
}
MasterLever ::= ENUMERATED{
  fc_press (1)
  fc_release (0)
}
```

For example, we describe MasterCrankCnd and MasterLever as the ASN.1 type \textit{ENUMERATED}; MasterCrankCnd can take only the values specified in the list, e.g. the value 0 stands for mc_press.

- The direction of primitive events are defined as follows: ts\textit{2RIG} stands for signals which are sent from the testing software to the HIL rig. For instance, \texttt{set(...)} in the test script are of type ts\textit{2RIG}. The other direction \textit{RIG2ts}, which stands for signals which are sent from the HIL rig to the testing software. Those are captured by different logging system; for instance \texttt{Log\_HST(...)}: logs primary variables of the EEC, \texttt{Log\_Mod(...)}: logs simulation parameters and \texttt{Log\_HST(...)}: logs aircraft discretes. The following are examples of such logging system:

```plaintext
Log\_HST("mstrstrtswtchnccckpt") ; Master Start Switch - EEC variable
Log\_Mod("P30") ; Engine pressure simulation parameters
Log\_ARINC("IL270_\_DAU2_\_LA_\_2_B20") ; SAV discretes
```

After running the test case in the HIL rig, the analysis of the test result is done “offline”, by analyzing the different logs.

5 Conclusions

In this paper we have applied the theory of formal testing based on CSP-CASL, to the starting system of Rolls-Royce BR725 control software. We have modeled the system
in CSP, evaluate test suites against the formal model using the model checker FDR2. We executed the test suites in an in-the-loop setting of the SUT. The SUT did not show any deviation from the intended behaviour, i.e., the testing process increased the trust in its correctness. The overall approach described in this paper is reported in Figure 5. This case study demonstrates the applicability of our testing approach to industrial systems: it scales up to real world applications and it potentially fits into current verification practice at Rolls-Royce.

References