

Characteristics of the flow around a circular OWC-type wave energy converter supported by a bottom-sitting C-shaped structure

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Abstract

Flow characteristics in the vicinity of bottom-sitting wave energy converters are important for understanding the wave loading on and the local scour around the structure. Based on three-dimensional numerical simulation results, key features of the vortex flow in the vicinity of a circular oscillating water column (OWC) supported by a C-shaped structure are discussed, including vortices shed from the lower tip of the OWC chamber and the two edges of the C-shaped support structure. Numerical results reveal a time-mean flow pattern in the vicinity of the C-shaped structure. There is a strong connection between the near-field flow pattern and the local morphological change at the C-shaped support structure.

Keywords: Regular waves; Vortex; Scour; Mean flow; Wave power; Two-phase flow

¹ 1. Introduction

² Energy is fundamental for modern life. With the increase of global demand for
³ more electricity over the last decades, there is a rising concern of the environmental
⁴ consequences of fossil fuel based energy sources, and a rise of the global need for clean
⁵ and renewable energy over the last decades. For example, as a core strategic goal of
⁶ its energy policy, the state of Hawaii aims at achieving 100 percent renewable energy
⁷ generation by 2045 (Hawaii State Energy Office, 2007). Ocean wave energy is one
⁸ important source of renewable energy in the ocean, with the available ocean wave
⁹ energy being on the terawatt level (Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, 2017).
¹⁰ However, compared to other established renewable energy sources such as hydro-
¹¹ power, tidal power, wind power and solar power, electricity generation by wave power
¹² is still not a widely employed commercial technology presently. This is mainly because
¹³ of the low conversion efficiency of existing wave energy converters (WECs), the safety

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14 of wave energy devices, and the high initial investment in building wave-energy power
15 plants. The last two factors are related to certain extent. Therefore, more research
16 is needed on the safety of wave energy devices to make electricity generation by wave
17 power economically viable.

18 The operation principles of existing WECs can be broadly divided into three
19 groups: (1) Oscillating Water Columns (OWCs), which use an air turbine, driven
20 by wave-induced compression and expansion of the air inside a pneumatic chamber,
21 to produce electricity; (2) Wave Activated Bodies (WABs), which uses a hydraulic
22 system, driven by wave-induced oscillation of mechanical members, to generate elec-
23 tricity; (3) Over-topping Devices (OTDs), which use an underwater turbine, driven
24 by a water level difference caused by wave-induced over-topping into a reservoir, to
25 produce electricity. Each type of these WECs has its own pros and cons.

26 Bottom-sitting OWC-type WECs have the advantages of having the turbine above
27 water surface and less frictional loss caused by oscillatory motions of mechanical mem-
28 bers. Deng et al. (2013) proposed an OWC-type WEC, which integrates a circular
29 OWC into a bottom-sitting pile structure; a row of such OWC-type WECs can form
30 a dual functional wave-power plant for shore protection and wave energy extraction
31 (Xu and Huang, 2018).

32 Most existing studies of WECs have focused on wave energy extraction efficiency.
33 Other aspects such as characteristics of local flow field and the safety analysis of
34 WECs have seldom been found in the literature. Compared to floating OWCs, whose
35 safety is largely associated with the mooring line safety, the safety of a bottom-sitting
36 OWC is affected by the loading on and the wave-induced scour around the structure,
37 both are closely related to the characteristics of local flow field.

38 Only a limited number of studies on wave loads on WECs have been reported in
39 the literature. Representative studies are: an experimental study of wave forces on
40 a fixed 2-D OWC WEC (Ashlin et al., 2015); an experimental study of wave loading
41 on a point absorber (Jakobsen et al., 2016); a CFD simulation of the wave force on
42 a fixed 2-D rectangular OWC device (Elhanafi, 2016); a numerical simulation of the
43 wave forces on a 3-D floating WEC (Sjkvist et al., 2017); a theoretical analysis of
44 wave force on a 2-D heaving WEC (Tom et al., 2019). More recently, Huang et al.
45 (2019) performed a CFD simulation of the wave loading on a bottom-sitting OWC
46 pile (Deng et al., 2013; Xu et al., 2016; Xu and Huang, 2019).

47 In addition to wave loading on a bottom-sitting WEC structure, formation of
48 wave-induced scour may weaken the foundation of the WEC structure, potentially
49 compromising the safety of the structure. Near-field hydrodynamic features (flow
50 characteristics) are responsible for the local sediment transport and scour around a
51 bottom-sitting WEC, and are the focus of this study.

52 There is a rich literature in the near-field hydrodynamic features and the resulting
53 local scour around a vertical pile; however, the existing studies focuses mainly on local
54 scours caused by steady currents for the purpose of foundation safety of bridge piers
55 (see for example, Breusers et al., 1977; Chiew and Melville, 1987; Sheppard et al.,
56 2004). Studies of local scour around a standalone pile exposed to regular waves are

57 scarce and exiting studies (Kobayashi and Oda, 1994; Sumer and Fredsøe, 1997, 1998)
58 are guided largely by the knowledge derived from the literature in current-induced
59 scour. The main hydrodynamic features that are responsible for the current-induced
60 local scour around a vertical pile (see for example, Sumer et al., 1992a; Mattioli
61 et al., 2012; Manes and Brocchini, 2015; Xu et al., 2019) include: (1) horseshoe
62 vortex generated at the toe of the pile; (2) lee-wake vortex at the back of the pile; (3)
63 streamline contraction around the pile structure. The mechanisms of current-induced
64 scour are possibly still valid under oscillatory flows such as regular waves (Sumer
65 et al., 1992b). However, hydrodynamic features under an oscillatory flow differ from
66 those under a steady current (Sumer et al., 1992a), mainly due to the flow reversal
67 in oscillatory flows, which may strongly affect the size and stability of the horse-shoe
68 vortex and lee-wake vortex around a vertical pile exposed to waves.

69 In this study, air-water two-phase flow simulations are used to simulate interaction
70 of regular waves with a bottom-sitting OWC pile, focusing on key characteristics of
71 near-field flow field that affect local sediment transport, including vortex shedding
72 and mean velocity field. The numerical implementation is achieved by using the open
73 source software package OpenFOAM®. Section 2 describes the governing equations,
74 numerical setup and model verification. Section 3 describes the numerical results
75 of the velocity field in the vicinity of an OWC pile, and Section 4 presents a brief
76 discussion of the present numerical results. Major conclusions are summarized in
77 Section 5.

78 **2. Mathematical model, numerical setup and model verification**

79 An air-water two-phase flow model was used to simulate the interaction between
80 regular waves and a bottom-sitting OWC, which uses an orifice to simulate the power
81 take-off (PTO). The implementation of the two-phase flow model is based on the
82 open-source computational fluid dynamics library OpenFOAM®(Weller et al., 1998).
83 The version used in this study is OpenFOAM V1812 from ESI-OpenCFD. This section
84 describes the mathematical model, numerical setup and validation and verification of
85 the numerical model. The verified model will be used in Section 3 to study the near-
86 field hydrodynamic features responsible for the local sediment transport and scour
87 around a bottom-sitting OWC pile.

88 *2.1. Mathematical model*

89 The air-water two-phase flow model employs in-compressible Reynolds-Averaged
90 Navier-Stokes equations (RANS) for a water-air mixture. The saturation of water in
91 a particular volume is denoted by s : for the air above the air-water surface $s = 0$ and
92 for the water below the air-water surface $s = 1$. The air-water interface is treated as
93 a thin layer of the water-air mixture. In this thin layer, $0 < s < 1$ and the density ρ
94 and the dynamic viscosity μ of the water-air mixture are calculated by

$$\rho = s\rho_w + (1 - s)\rho_a, \quad (1)$$

$$\mu = s\mu_w + (1 - s)\mu_a, \quad (2)$$

96 where the subscripts w and a stand for water and air, respectively.

97 The water-air interface is tracked by a modified VOF method, which uses the
98 following phase equation governing the saturation of water s

$$\frac{\partial s}{\partial t} + \nabla \cdot [s\mathbf{u}] + \nabla \cdot [\mathbf{u}_r s(1 - s)] = 0, \quad (3)$$

99 where \mathbf{u} is the velocity of the air-water mixture and \mathbf{u}_r is an interface compression
100 velocity to suppress the diffusive behavior (Rusche, 2003).

101 The continuity equation for the water-air mixture is

$$\nabla \cdot \mathbf{u} = 0, \quad (4)$$

102 where \mathbf{u} is the velocity field of the water-air mixture. The momentum equation for
103 the air-water mixture is

$$\frac{\partial \rho \mathbf{u}}{\partial t} + \nabla \cdot [\rho \mathbf{u} \mathbf{u}^T] = \rho \mathbf{g} - \nabla p + \nabla \cdot [\mu \nabla \mathbf{u} + \rho \mathbf{T}], \quad (5)$$

104 where p is the pressure of the air-water mixture, \mathbf{g} is the gravitational acceleration,
105 and \mathbf{T} is the specific Reynolds stress tensor of the air-water mixture and calculated
106 by:

$$\mathbf{T} = \frac{2}{\rho} \mu_t \mathbf{S} - \frac{2}{3} k \mathbf{I}, \quad (6)$$

107 where k is the turbulent kinetic energy, μ_t the dynamic turbulent eddy viscosity, \mathbf{I}
108 the identity tensor, and \mathbf{S} the strain rate tensor expressed by

$$\mathbf{S} = \frac{1}{2} [\nabla \mathbf{u} + (\nabla \mathbf{u}^T)]. \quad (7)$$

109 The dynamic turbulent eddy viscosity μ_t is expressed as

$$\mu_t = \rho \frac{k}{\tilde{\omega}}, \quad (8)$$

110 with

$$\tilde{\omega} = \max \left\{ \omega, C_{lim} \sqrt{\frac{2\mathbf{S} : \mathbf{S}}{\beta^*}} \right\}, \quad (9)$$

111 where ω is a characteristic eddy frequency, and C_{lim} and β^* are model parameters.

112 The following $k - \omega$ SST turbulence model (Wilcox, 1993) is adopted to obtain
 113 the turbulent kinetic energy k and the characteristic eddy frequency ω :

$$\frac{\partial \rho \omega}{\partial t} + \nabla \cdot [\rho \mathbf{u} \omega] = \alpha p_\omega - \beta \rho \omega^2 + \frac{\sigma_d}{\omega} \rho \nabla k \cdot (\nabla \omega)^T + \nabla \cdot \left[\left(\mu + \sigma_\omega \rho \frac{k}{\omega} \right) \nabla \omega \right], \quad (10)$$

114 and

$$\frac{\partial \rho k}{\partial t} + \nabla \cdot [\rho \mathbf{u} k] = p_k - \beta^* \rho \omega k + \nabla \cdot [(\mu + \sigma^* \mu_t) \nabla k], \quad (11)$$

115 where p_k and p_ω are, respectively, the production terms of k and ω . The following
 116 expressions for p_k and p_ω are adopted in order to suppress the abnormal growth of
 117 the turbulent viscosity and turbulent kinetic energy across the interface in potential
 118 flows (Mayer and Madsen, 2000; Jacobsen et al., 2012):

$$p_k = \mu_t (\nabla \times \mathbf{u}) \cdot (\nabla \times \mathbf{u})^T, \quad p_\omega = \frac{\omega}{k} p_k. \quad (12)$$

119 The expressions given in Eq.(12) state that the production of turbulent kinetic energy
 120 is related to the vorticity of the fluid motion, instead of the shear rate of the fluid
 121 velocity. It is noted that expressions given in Eq.(12) are different from the original
 122 forms of the turbulence production terms suggested by (Wilcox, 1993, 2008).

123 We use the following values suggested by Wilcox (2008) for the model parameters
 124 in the $k - \omega$ model: $\alpha = 13/25$, $\beta = 0.072$, $\beta^* = 0.09$, $\sigma_\omega = 0.5$, $\sigma^* = 3/5$ and
 125 $C_{lim} = 7/8$.

126 2.2. Boundary conditions

127 To setup a numerical wave flume based on the mathematical model given in Section
 128 2.1, the following boundary conditions are used: (i) wave inlet boundary conditions
 129 at the inlet for wave generation; (ii) wall boundary conditions on the bottom, and
 130 two lateral boundaries, and at outlet boundary; (iii) atmospheric boundary condition
 131 at the top boundary of the computational domain; and (iv) wall boundary conditions
 132 on the surfaces of a physical model. Because the roughness of stainless steel surfaces
 133 is usually just a few micrometers, which is much less than the thickness of viscous
 134 sub-layer, all wall boundaries are assumed to be hydraulically smooth.

135 2.3. Numerical setup for an empty wave flume

136 A three-dimensional numerical wave flume of 24.00 m long and 0.50 m high was
 137 used to perform all numerical simulations reported in this study. As shown in Fig. 1,
 138 the numerical wave flume consists of two sections: the test section (from $x=0.00$ m
 139 to 10.00 m) and the wave absorbing section (from $x=10.00$ m to 24.00 m).

140 The width of the numerical wave flume changes depending on the problem to be
 141 simulated. The dimensions of the wave flume are described by a Cartesian coordinate
 142 system (x, y, z) , with x pointing in the direction of wave propagation, z vertical

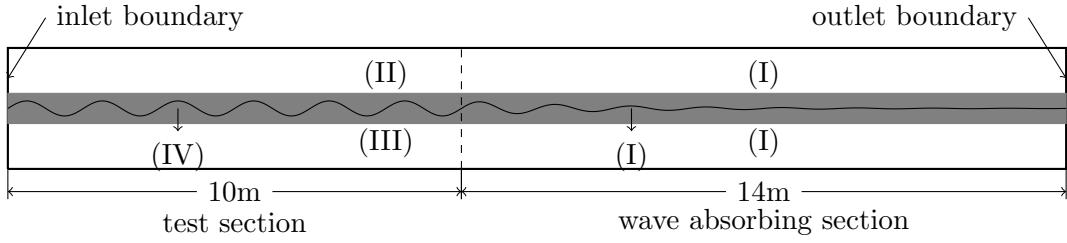


Fig. 1: A sketch of the side view of the numerical wave flume. Not drawn to scale

143 upward and y in the lateral direction. The origin of this coordinate system is at the
 144 inlet boundary where waves are generated. Regular waves are generated by specifying
 145 velocity and elevation at $x = 0$ m by using the second order Stokes wave theory (see
 146 Section Appendix A for details).

147 The empty wave flume is divided into four zones: (1) wave absorption zones; (2)
 148 air zone; (3) water zone; and (4) near air-water interface zone in which the wave crests
 149 and wave troughs lie. Nested grids are used in the computational domain, with each
 150 zone having a different grid. The information of the grid for each zone is summarized
 151 in Table 1.

152 Fig. 2 shows comparisons between the theoretical and simulated time series of
 153 surface displacements at two locations. In the simulation, the waves are generated
 154 using second order Stokes waves at the inlet boundary. The crest and trough given by
 155 the second-order Stokes wave theory are also included in the figure for comparison.
 156 The spatial attenuation between the two locations, which are 3.5 m apart, is negligible.
 157 The simulated crest and trough agree well with the theoretical values (the 1-mm
 158 difference in the wave crests at two locations is due to the adjustment of the second-
 159 order Stokes waves). At the end of the wave absorption zone, the surface displacement
 160 is expected to be zero for an adequate wave absorption zone; Fig. 2 shows that the
 161 simulated surface displacement at $x = 23.5$ is virtually zero, suggesting that the wave
 162 absorption used in the simulation is adequate. It can be concluded that the model and
 163 the numerical setup for the empty wave flume are suitable for simulating generation
 164 and propagation of second-order Stokes waves with adequate accuracy. Therefore,
 165 when an OWC model is installed in the numerical wave tank, the same numerical
 166 setup will be used for wave generation and propagation, except in the vicinity of
 167 the OWC model where another set of near-field nested grids are needed to resolve
 168 required flow features,

Table 1: Information of the grids for the empty wave flume

size/zone	Zone (I)	Zone (II)	Zone (III)	Zone (IV)
Δx (m)	0.02~0.12	0.02	0.02	0.02
Δy (m)	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05
Δz (m)	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.005

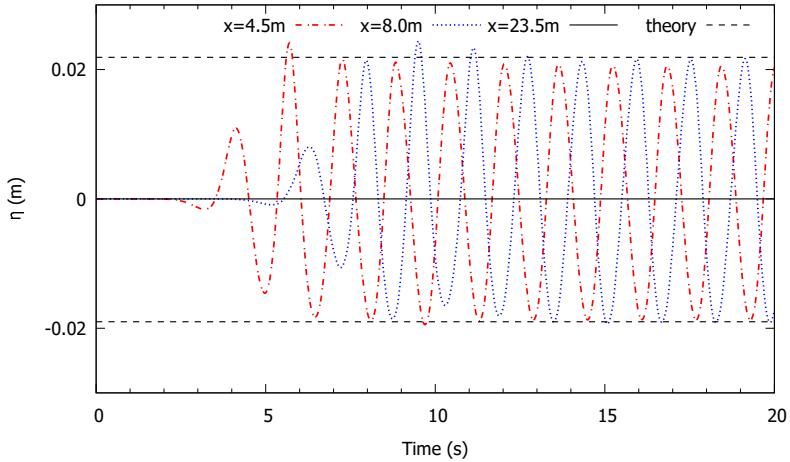


Fig. 2: The simulated and theoretical (2nd order Stokes wave theory) time series of surface displacements at two locations. The dashed lines indicate the crest and trough given by the second order Stokes wave theory.

169 *2.4. Model verification*

170 Lopez et al. (2015) reported a set of measured flow fields inside a 2D breakwater-
 171 integrated OWC. The measurement was done using a Particle Image Velocimetry
 172 (PIV). The validation and verification of the numerical model is done by comparing
 173 the flow fields simulated by the present model with those measured by PIV. The main
 174 purpose of the comparison is to make sure that our numerical simulation can capture
 175 the main features of the near-field flow field and the vortices shed from the lower tip
 176 of the rectangular OWC chamber.

177 In the experiment of Lopez et al. (2015), the water depth was kept at $d = 0.29$
 178 m, and the incident waves had a wave height of $H = 0.060$ m and a wave period of
 179 $T = 1.6$ s. The OWC model geometry and the near-field nested grids for modeling it
 180 are shown in Fig. 3. Grids finer than those used for the empty wave flume are needed
 181 to accurately simulate the wave-interaction with this OWC model. In particular,
 182 appropriate finer grids are needed to simulate the air flow through the orifice and
 183 the vortex shedding from the sharp edges of the model. The total number of mesh
 184 count used in the simulation is around 1.8 million. For numerical stability, the CFL
 185 numbers in the range of 0.4 and 0.6 have been used in the simulations. The bottleneck
 186 in this simulation is the high speed air flow through the orifice, which requires small
 187 grid size and very small time step. The code was run on a workstation with 18 cores,
 188 and about 200 wall-clock hours were needed to produce 20 s of real-time results.

189 To show that the mathematical model and the numerical setup, especially the
 190 grids used to resolve the vortices shed from the sharp edges of the OWC model, are
 191 suitable for the problem, the velocity fields measured using a PIV at three selected
 192 phase angles within one period are compared with the simulated in Fig. 4. Very
 193 good agreements between the measurement and simulation can be observed at these

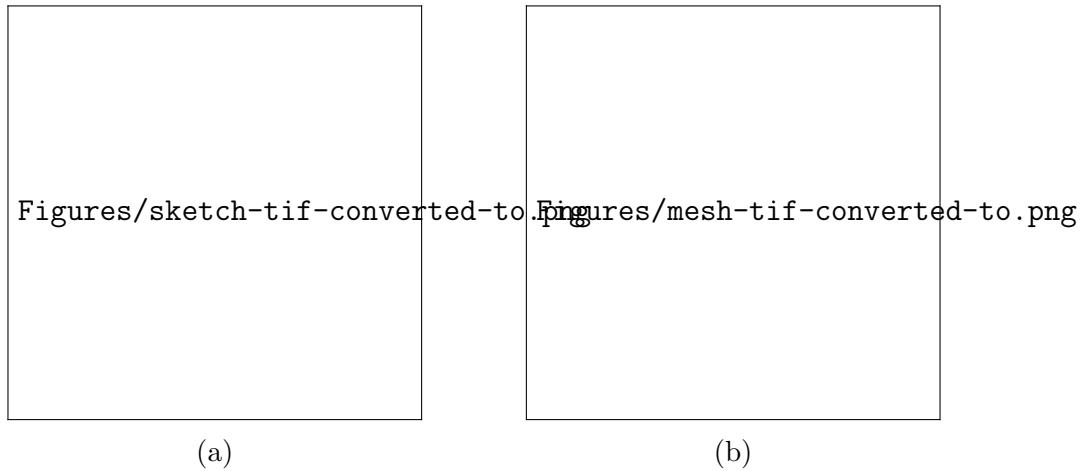


Fig. 3: Left: a 3D view of the rectangular OWC model studied by Lopez et al. (2015); Right: The two nested local grids used to simulate the OWC model

194 three phase angles¹. It is remarked that at the phase “g”, the simulation shows a
 195 counter-rotating vortex underneath the tip of the skirt. This is possibly because
 196 much higher spatial resolution is used in the numerical simulation than in the PIV
 197 measurement. Lopez et al. (2015) measured the velocity fields at eight phase angles
 198 within a period; the agreements between the measured and simulated velocity fields
 199 at other five phase angles (not shown here) are also reasonably good. Since the color
 200 scheme used to produce the color maps for the vorticity in the experimental results
 201 is not available, information on the vorticity is not included in the simulated results.
 202 It is concluded that the numerical model and the grids used here are capable of
 203 simulating the vortices shed from the vertical thin plate.

204 **3. Results for a bottom-sitting OWC pile**

205 The OWC model considered here is the one experimentally studied by Xu et al.
 206 (2016). The left panel of Fig. 5 shows the bottom-sitting OWC-type WEC considered
 207 in this study. This bottom-sitting OWC-type WEC consists of two sections: a circular
 208 OWC chamber section which is a circular tube section covered on the top by a plate
 209 with an orifice and a C-shaped support structure which joins to the lower end of OWC
 210 chamber section. The portion of the OWC chamber that is not joined to the C-shaped
 211 support structure is the skirt of the OWC chamber. Hereinafter, this bottom-sitting
 212 OWC-type WEC is referred to as “a bottom-sitting OWC pile” or “an OWC pile”
 213 for short, and the skirt of the OWC chamber is simply referred to as “the skirt” for

¹Lopez et al. (2015) states that the thickness of the vertical walls in their OWC model is 2.5 cm; but in the figures showing the measured velocity fields the thickness of vertical walls less than 2.5 cm can be observed. The velocity fields from the present numerical simulations are presented using a wall thickness of 2.5 cm, consistent with the dimension stated in Lopez et al. (2015).

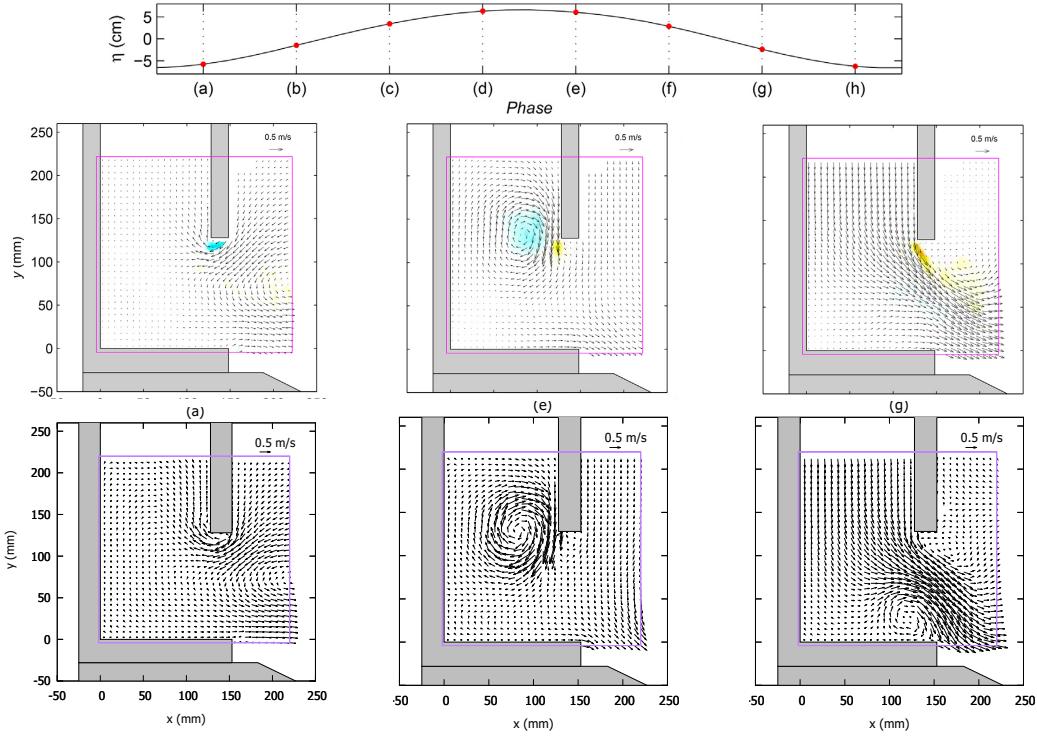


Fig. 4: Comparison of velocity fields between the measured (top row) and simulated (bottom row) velocity fields at three selected phase angles. The color maps in the top panels represent the corresponding vorticity fields derived from the measured velocity fields. Courtesy of Dr. Ivan Lopez at the University of Santiago de Compostela for providing the three high-resolution figures in the top row, which are the same as those in Figs. 11 and 12 in Lopez et al. (2015). To be consistent with the coordinate system used in Lopez et al. (2015), y coordinate in this figure points vertically upward.

214 short.

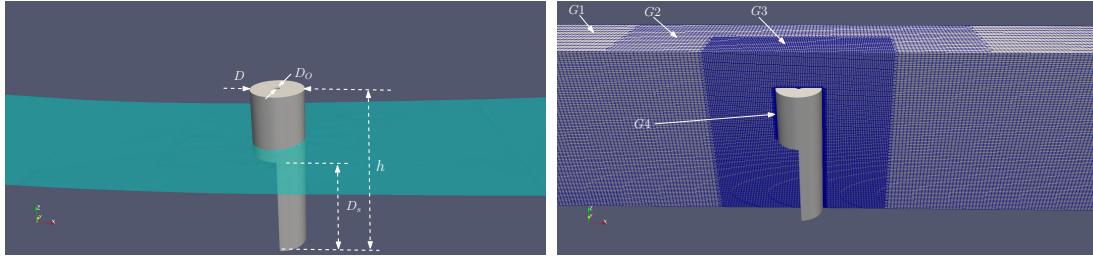


Fig. 5: Left: The bottom-sitting circular OWC-pile model; Right: the four nested local grids (G1 through G4) used to simulate the OWC-pile model.

215 A circular orifice is used to model a nonlinear PTO and its diameter D_o is 0.014 m.
 216 The OWC chamber is a partially submerged, forming an pneumatic chamber between
 217 the water surface and the top cover of the chamber. The overall height of the OWC
 218 pile h is 0.4 m, the height of the C-shaped support structure D_s is 0.25 m, the outer

219 diameter of the pneumatic chamber D is 0.125 m, which results in a 1.25% opening
 220 ratio for the orifice used in this study. All walls of the OWC pile model have the
 221 same thickness of 0.003 m. Same as that used in the experiment of Xu et al. (2016),
 222 the water depth is fixed at $d = 0.29$ m in the simulation. In the experiment, both
 223 the air pressure and surface displacement inside the OWC chamber were measured:
 224 a pressure sensor was used to measure the air pressure and a wave gauge was placed
 225 on the down-wave and at 3.7 cm away from the axis of symmetry. The experimental
 226 data provided by the pressure sensor and the wave gauge are used for further model
 227 verification in this section.

228 The bottleneck in the numerical simulation of wave-interaction with the OWC
 229 pile is the high-speed air flow through the orifice, which requires a much finer grid
 230 and very small time step. Referring to the right panel of Fig. 5, four nested local
 231 grids are introduced in the vicinity of the OWC pile: grids G1, G2, G3 and G4. The
 232 information of these four grids are summarized in Table 2. The total number of mesh
 233 count is around 3 million.

234 All simulations were performed on Stampede2 at TACC using 160 cores. CFL
 235 numbers in the range of 0.4 and 0.6 were used in the simulations. About 30 wall-
 236 clock hours were typically needed to produce 20 s of real-time results. One wave
 237 condition is considered in this study: wave periods $T = 1.0$ and wave height $H =$
 238 0.04 m.

239 3.1. Comparison with the experimental results of Xu et al. (2016)

240 The numerical model and setup for the OWC pile were further verified by com-
 241 paring with one set of experimental results reported in Xu et al. (2016). Fig. 6 show
 242 comparisons between the measured and simulated pressures and surface elevations. It
 243 can be seen that both the surface displacement and the air pressure inside the pneu-
 244 matic chamber can be captured well by the numerical model and grids, suggesting
 245 that the numerical model and setup, especially the grids used to simulate the air flow
 246 through the orifice, are suitable.

247 3.2. Oscillating motion of the water column inside the pneumatic chamber

248 For the purpose of later discussion, the oscillation of the water column is rep-
 249 resented by the mean motion of the water surface inside the OWC chamber, $\bar{\eta}(t)$,
 250 obtained by

$$\bar{\eta}(t) = \int_S \eta(x, y, t) dx dy \quad (13)$$

Table 2: Information of the grids for the circular OWC model

size/zone	G1	G2	G3	G4
Δx (m)	0.01	0.01	0.005	0.0025
Δy (m)	0.025	0.0125	0.006	0.003
Δz (m)	0.005	0.005	0.0025	0.00125

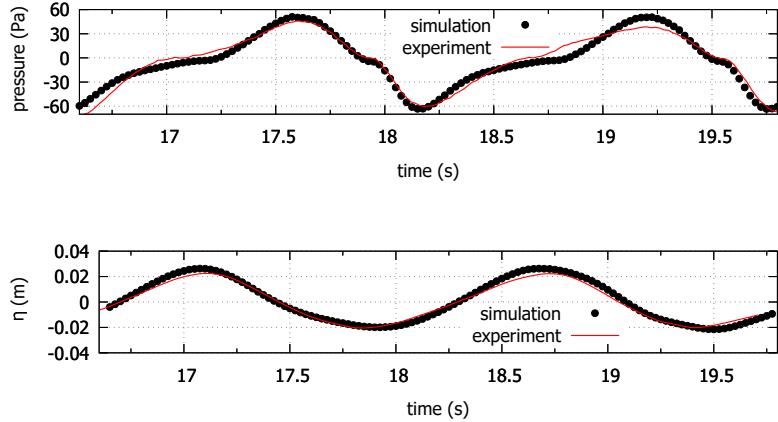


Fig. 6: Measured and simulated pressures and surface elevations. Top panel: pressure inside the OWC chamber; bottom: surface elevation measured inside the OWC chamber. Wave period=1.6 s and wave height=0.04 m.

251 where S and $\eta(x, y, t)$ are, respectively, the cross-sectional area of and the surface
 252 displacement inside the OWC chamber. The surface displacement measured at 1 cm
 253 away from the surface of the OWC pile and in the vertical plane of symmetry, the
 254 cross-sectional mean surface displacement $\bar{\eta}(t)$ (or “average surface displacement” for
 255 short), the surface displacement at the center of the OWC chamber are shown in
 256 Fig. 7. It can be seen that there is a slight difference between the average surface
 257 displacement and the displacement at the center due to the non-uniformity of the
 258 water surface inside the OWC chamber (Xu and Huang, 2019). Fig. 7) also include
 259 the surface displacement 5 mm away from the OWC chamber on the up-wave side in
 260 the vertical plane of the symmetry (referred to as “front” and the surface displace-
 261 ment 1 cm away from the OWC chamber on the down-wave side 45 degrees to the
 262 vertical plane of symmetry (referred to as “45° downwave”). The displacement at 45°
 263 downwave closely follows the average displacement; but there is a phase difference
 264 between the surface displacements in front of and that inside the OWC chamber.

265 As far as the oscillating water column is concerned, there are two stages: (1) the
 266 inhalation stage in which the average surface displacement rises and the pneumatic
 267 chamber contracts, causing the air to flow out of the pneumatic chamber stage in
 268 which the average surface displacement falls and the pneumatic chamber expands,
 269 causing the air to flow into the pneumatic chamber through the orifice. Referring to
 270 Fig.7, the inhalation process begins at the phase “o”, through the phases “a”, “b”,
 271 “c” and “d”, and ends at the phase “m”; the exhalation process begins at the phase
 272 “m”, through the phases “e”, “f”, “g” and “h”, and ends at the phase “q”. Between
 273 phases “a” through “d”, the elevation of the water surface just in front of the OWC
 274 chamber is higher than that of the average water surface inside the chamber, causing
 275 the water to flow into the OWC chamber. At phase “d”, the water surfaces on the two
 276 sides of the skirt have about the same elevation, and the continued rise of the average

277 water surface between the phase “d” and the phase “m” is purely due to the kinetic
 278 energy in the water column inside the chamber. At the phases “e”, “f”, and “g”, the
 279 elevation of the average water surface inside the OWC chamber is higher than that
 280 just in front of the OWC chamber, causing the water to flow out of the chamber.
 281 There is a phase between the phases “g” and “h” at which the water surfaces on the
 282 two sides of the skirt have the same elevation, and the continued fall of the average
 283 water surface between this phase and the phase “h”, again, is due to the kinetic
 284 energy in the water column inside the chamber.

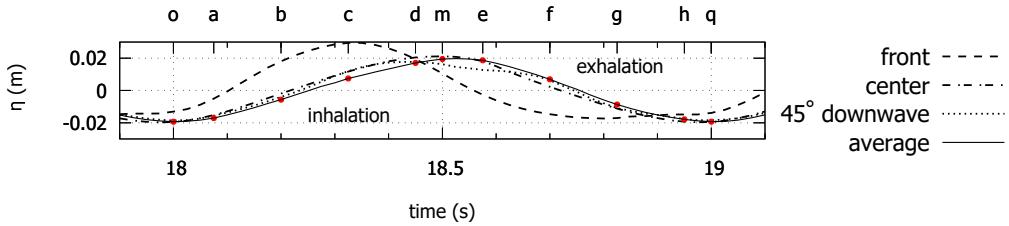


Fig. 7: Time series of surface displacements at three locations and the cross-sectional mean surface displacement inside the pneumatic chamber with PTO. Wave period=1.0 s.

285 The oscillating motion of the water column inside the OWC chamber affects the
 286 flow around the OWC pile.

287 3.3. Time series of horizontal velocity at selected locations

288 There are several physical processes involved in this problem, including wave scattering,
 289 wave radiation, vortex formation and shedding, as well as the transport, diffusion
 290 and dissipation of vorticity. The wave scattering and radiation processes can be
 291 stabilized quickly. One vortex is shed for the lower tip of skirt of the OWC chamber
 292 and the two vertical edges of the C-shaped structure during each half period. It may
 293 take more than 15 wave periods for the vortex shed from the lower tip of the skirt
 294 to reach the bed. A stabilized flow field is reached only when vorticity diffusion,
 295 transport and dissipation processes are stabilized. The vortices shed from different
 296 parts of the C-shaped structure may have slightly different frequencies; as a result of
 297 the interaction of these rotating flows, even a stabilized velocity field near the OWC
 298 pile model is reached, it can still be near-periodic in nature (Pier, 2013).

299 To verify that the velocity fields to be presented in the next section are stabilized
 300 results, we first examine time series of the magnitude and direction of the velocity
 301 in a horizontal plane. Fig. 8 shows the time series of the velocity magnitudes and
 302 directions at several chosen points: three points are on the horizontal plane located
 303 at 0.005 m above the bed and three points are on the horizontal plane located at 0.1
 304 m above the bed. The locations of these points relative to the C-shaped structure are
 305 indicated by the letters “A”, “B” and “C” next to the C-shaped cross section. After
 306 18 s, both the magnitudes and directions of the velocity at the same location relative

307 to the C-shaped cross-section but different elevations are similar, suggesting that the
 vorticity transport, diffusion and dissipation processes are stabilized.

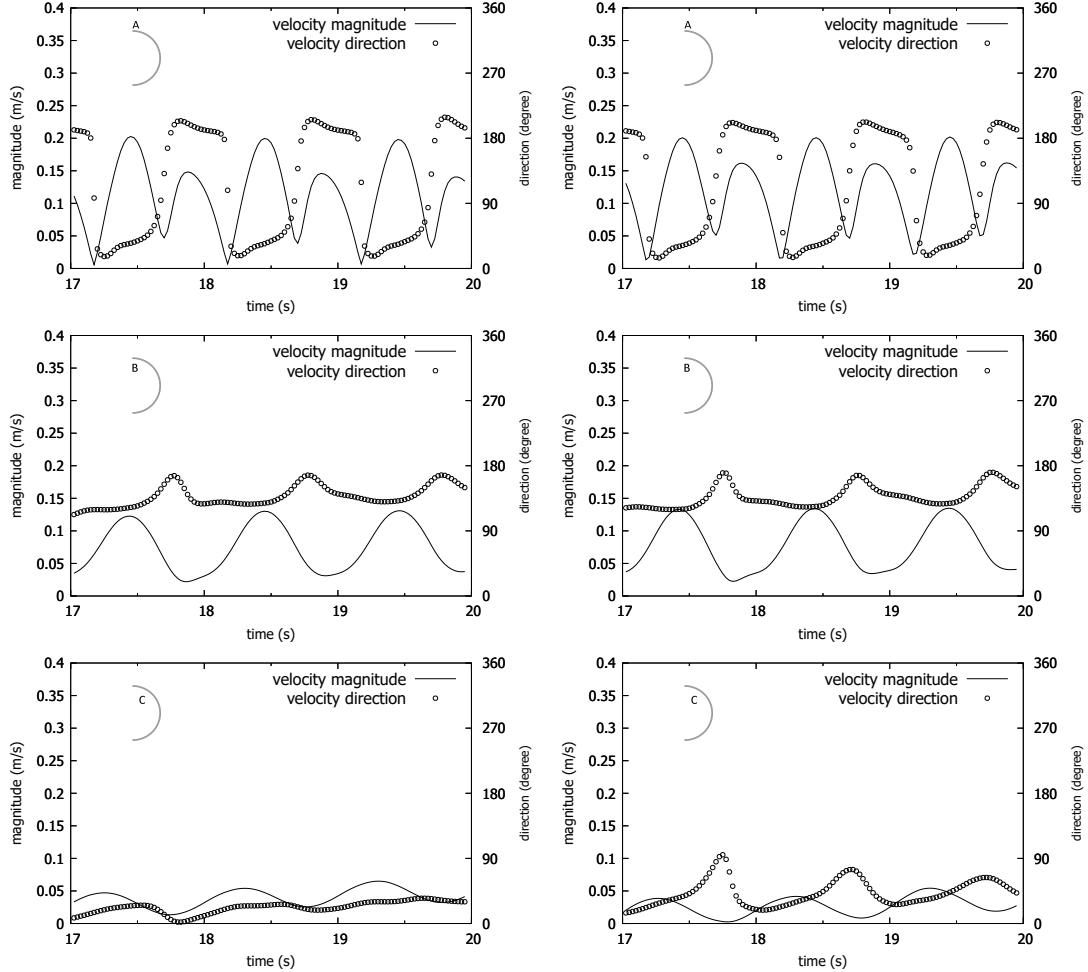


Fig. 8: Magnitude and direction of the velocity field in two horizontal planes at three representative points A, B and C. The coordinates of these three points are: point A is at (5,0.325), point B at (5,0.30), and point C at (5.015,0.2688). The center is at (5,0.25). Left column: the horizontal plane is at 0.005 m above the bottom; right column: the horizontal plane is at 0.1 m above the bottom.

308
 309 The stabilized velocity field may have a time-mean component. This can be
 310 learned from magnitude and direction of the time series of velocity at a point. Take the
 311 velocity field in a horizontal plane as example. In a horizontal plane, the two velocity
 312 components, after ignoring the higher order higher and lower harmonic components,
 313 can be approximated by

$$u = U + u_0 \cos(\omega t + \phi_u), \quad v = V + v_0 \cos(\omega t + \phi_v), \quad (14)$$

314 where the vector (U, V) is the velocity of the time-mean flow, the vector (u_0, v_0) is
 315 the amplitude vector of the oscillatory flow, and ϕ_u and ϕ_v are the phase angles of

316 the corresponding fluctuation components which are not important in the following
 317 analysis. The velocity magnitude $|\vec{u}|(t)$ and direction $\theta(t)$ are defined by

$$\begin{aligned} |\vec{u}|(t) &= \sqrt{[U + u_0 \cos(\omega t + \phi_u)]^2 + [V + v_0 \cos(\omega t + \phi_v)]^2} \\ \tan \theta(t) &= \frac{V + v_0 \cos(\omega t + \phi_v)}{U + u_0 \cos(\omega t + \phi_u)} \end{aligned} \quad (15)$$

318 The direction angle θ is relative to the positive x direction and increases anti-clockwise.
 319 If $v_0 \geq V$, $\theta(t)$ will contain instants of time at which $\theta = 0$; if $u_0 \geq U$, $\theta(t)$ will contain
 320 instants of time at which $\theta = 90$ or 270 degrees. If both $u_0 \gg U$ and $v_0 \gg V$, $|\vec{u}|$ will
 321 have two oscillations within one period of the fundamental waves. If the higher order
 322 fluctuations are included in Eq. (14), the conclusions drawn above still hold.

323 Referring to Fig. 8, the flows at these points are not pure sinusoidal, suggesting
 324 a strong influence of vortex shedding. At point “A” located at either 0.005 m or 0.1
 325 m above the bed, $\theta(t)$ contains two instants of time at which $\theta = 90$ degrees and $|u|(t)$
 326 oscillates twice within one period, suggesting that the time-mean velocity at this point
 327 is much weaker than the oscillatory velocity. At point “B”, the velocity direction
 328 changes between 110 degrees and 170 degrees within one period and $|u|(t)$ oscillates
 329 only once within one wave period; therefore, the oscillatory flow is weaker than the
 330 time-mean flow at this point. At point “C”, the velocity direction changes between
 331 5 degrees and 35 degrees and $|u|(t)$ oscillates only once within one period; therefore,
 332 the oscillatory flow is weaker than the time-mean flow at this point.

333 Since the flow is near-periodic and has a time-mean component, a meaningful
 334 mean can be defined over a time scale longer than, say one wave period, to reduce
 335 possible uncertainty in the calculated time-mean velocity.

336 Results of the time-mean velocity fields in two horizontal planes are presented
 337 later in Sections 3.6 and 3.7, where the time-mean velocity fields are defined over two
 338 wave periods.

339 3.4. Flow around the circular surface of the OWC chamber

340 The KC number defined by the diameter of the OWC chamber D and the orbital
 341 velocity of the incident waves (ωA), i.e., $KC = 2\pi A/D$, is 1, and the frequency
 342 number, i.e., $\beta = D^2/(\nu T)$, is 1.56×10^4 for wave period=1.0 s. For a circular
 343 cylinder of the same diameter in the same wave field, there is no flow separation
 344 from the cylinder surface for $KC < 3$ (Iwagaki and Ishida, 1976). By examining the
 345 simulated velocity field in a horizontal plane located at 0.01 m above the tip of the
 346 skirt, it is found that there is flow separation from the surface of the OWC-chamber
 347 section.

348 3.5. Vortices shed from the lower tip of the skirt

349 One way to show the vortices shed from the lower tip of the skirt is the velocity
 350 field in the vertical plane of symmetry. Fig. 9 shows eight snapshots of the velocity
 351 field in the vertical plane of symmetry and the corresponding phases at which these

352 eight snapshots are taken. Since nested grids are used in the vicinity of the OPW pile,
353 these velocity fields were prepared by using a uniform grid to interpolate the velocity
354 fields on the original nested grids. The key features of the velocity field in the vertical
355 plane of symmetry in both the inhalation and exhalation stages are similar to those for
356 a rectangular 2D OWC integrated with a breakwater studied by Lopez et al. (2015),
357 even though the OWC-pile structure considered here is 3D axis-symmetric. These
358 key features are: (1) one vortex is shed from the lower tip into the OWC in inhalation
359 stage, and (2) one vortex is shed from the lower tip out of the OWC chamber in the
360 exhalation stage. The accompanying counter-rotating vortices are not as obvious in
361 both stages, possibly because the thickness of the skirt is much smaller than other
362 dimensions of the OWC pile. It is interesting to note that in the exhalation stage the
363 outflow comes out of the OWC chamber predominantly at an angle about 45 degrees
364 to the horizontal. Because the vortices shed from the lower tip of the skirt are not
365 large enough to touch the bed and the accompanying counter-rotating vortices are
366 very weak, the vortices shedding at the lower tip are not expected to have a direct
367 influence on the near-bed velocity field: possible influence on near-bed flow field is
368 possible through the downward transport and diffusion of these vortices.

369 *3.6. Vortices shed from the two sharp edges of the C-shaped structure*

370 Around the C-shaped structure, the vortices shed from the two sharp edges can
371 be described by the velocity fields in horizontal planes at different elevations.

372 Fig. 10 shows eight snapshots of the velocity fields in a horizontal surface located
373 at 0.1 m above the bed, with the corresponding phases being marked on the plot of
374 $\bar{\eta}(t)$ as "a" through "h". Four phases are in the inhalation stage and the other four
375 in the exhalation stage. The wave period is 1.0 s. The velocity field of the time-mean
376 flow is also included in Fig. 10.

377 The velocity field in this horizontal plane is approximately symmetric about the
378 vertical plane of symmetry. This near-symmetric flow pattern might be lost in certain
379 ranges of KC and Reynolds numbers (Tong et al., 2017), especially when the KC
380 number is large. Unlike in the case of a circular cylinder in a steady current, there
381 is no lee-wake vortex formed on the lee side of the OWC pile because the flow is
382 oscillatory and the KC number defined by $KC = 2\pi A/D$ is just about 1, which is
383 much less than the minimum value of 7 required for the formation of lee-wake vortex
384 (Mei, 1992). Instead of lee-wake vortices, vortices are shed from the two sharp edges
385 of the C-shaped support structure. The formation and shedding of these vortices are
386 affected by both the incoming waves and the motion of the oscillating water column.
387 On the convex side of the C-shaped structure, one vortex is formed at each sharp edge
388 of the C-shaped structure and grow in size between phases "b" and "f". However,
389 flow separation does not occur because of the small KC number: the vortices on the
390 convex side gradually disappear from phases "g" to "a" due to transport, diffusion and
391 dissipation. On the concave side of the C-shaped structure, a vortex is formed close to
392 each edge in accompany with the vortex on the convex side ; therefore there are a pair
393 of counter-rotating vortices on the concave side of the C-shaped structure. These two

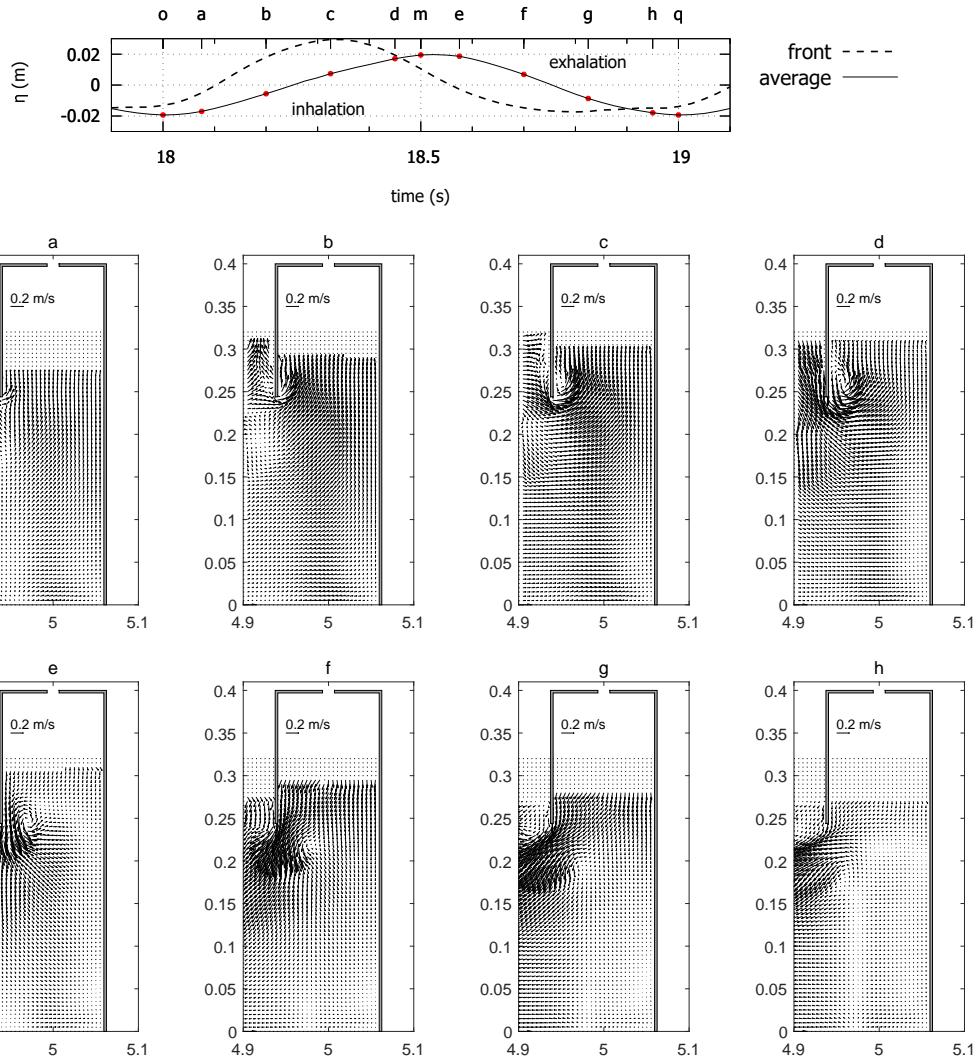


Fig. 9: Representative velocity fields in the vertical plane of symmetry: the top four panels are for the inhalation stage and the bottom four panels are for the exhalation. Wave period=1.0 s. Incident waves come from the left.

394 vortices are detached from the concave surface of the C-shaped structure and long-
 395 lasting, and there is no reversal of their directions of rotation during one wave period,
 396 indicating the existence of a time-mean flow field. The time-mean velocity field in the
 397 horizontal plane located at 0.1 m above the bed, obtained by averaging the velocity
 398 field over two wave periods, is shown in Fig. 10 as the last panel; the time-mean flow
 399 has a pair of counter-rotating vortices on the concave side of the C-shaped structure,
 400 with the maximum velocity being about 0.1 m/s.

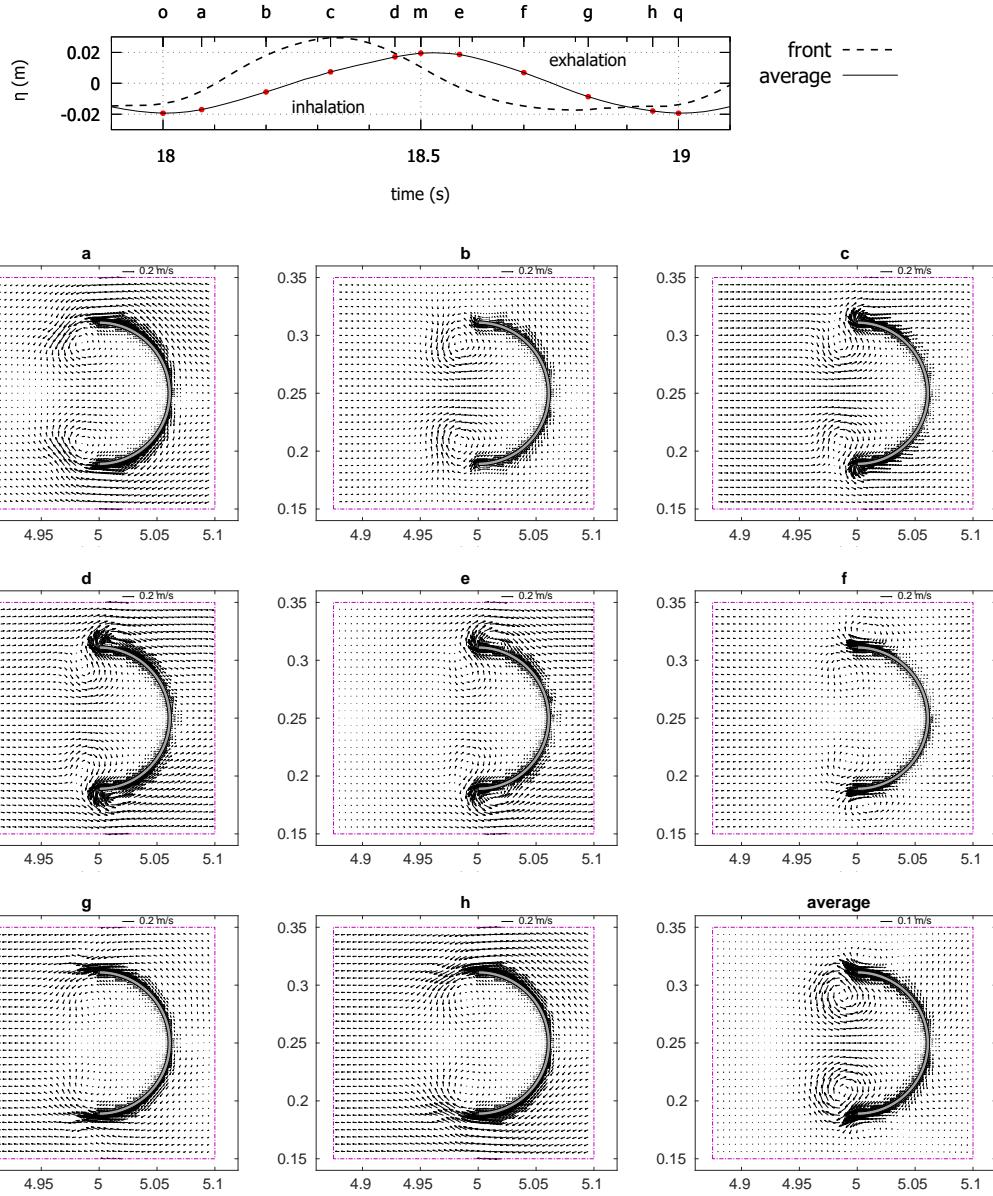


Fig. 10: Eight snapshots of the velocity field in a horizontal plane located at 0.1 m above the bed. The eight phases are indicated in the top panel. The last panel in the bottom row is the time-mean velocity field in the same horizontal plane. Incident waves come from the left.

401 **3.7. Near-bed flow characteristics**

402 For wave-induced sediment transport and local scour, the characteristics of the
 403 flow close to the bed are of interest. Fig. 11 shows eight snapshots of the velocity
 404 fields in a horizontal surface located at 0.005 m above the bed, with the corresponding
 405 phases being marked on the top panel. The wave period is 1.0 s. Comparing with
 406 Fig. 10, it can be concluded that both the instantaneous and time-mean velocity
 407 fields in horizontal planes at these two different elevations are similar, indicating that

408 the vorticity transport, diffusion and dissipation have been stabilized. The time-mean
409 flow has two counter-rotating vortices close to each edge of C-shaped structure, with
410 the size of the vortex on the concave side being larger than that on the convex side.
411 The maximum time-mean velocity is on the order of 0.1 m/s, which occurs in the
412 vicinity of the two edges of the C-shaped structure. These time-mean flows may
413 cause fine sand moving with them to leave the two edges and deposit in front of
414 the C-shaped structure. It is remarked that both the instantaneous and time mean
415 characteristics of the near-bed flow shown in Fig. 11 are important for understanding
416 near-field sediment transport and local scour around the OWC pile.

417 *3.8. Wave-induced morphological changes around an OWC pile*

418 The instantaneous and time-mean flow patterns suggest that once sediment grains
419 are mobilized (either rolling on the bed or suspended to a level close to the bed),
420 deposition may be expected on the inner side of the C-shaped structure, close to
421 the vertical plane of asymmetry, and erosion may be expected at two edges of the
422 C-shaped structure. This has been confirmed qualitatively by the results of a wave-
423 flume test reported in Zhang (2019), who experimentally measured wave-induced
424 morphological change in the vicinity of a OWC-pile with slightly different dimensions.
425 A summary of the wave-induced morphological changes in the vicinity of the OWC
426 pile reported in Zhang (2019) is sketched in Fig. 12

427 A clear correlation between the flow pattern and the morphological change can be
428 observed by comparing Fig. 11 and Fig. 12. The vortices on the convex side of the
429 C-shaped structure are responsibly for the maximum erosion in the vicinity of the
430 two edges; the time-mean flow seems to be responsible for the slight accretion on the
431 concave side right in front of the C-shaped structure.

432 **4. Discussion**

433 For current-induced local scour around a vertical pile, the flow is obstructed by
434 the pile, resulting in a stagnation line on the front side of the pier. As a result, the
435 stagnation pressure causes a downward hydraulic gradient to develop in front of the
436 pile, which drives a steady downflow directed towards the bed and forces the flow to
437 circulate near the bed (Roulund et al., 2005). At the same time, the development
438 of viscous boundary layer causes the flow to separate and shed vortices from the
439 surface of the pile. The combination of the vortex shedding and the stagnation-
440 caused downflow produces a vortex ring with its axis conform with the shape of the
441 convex side of the pile, resulting in the so-called horseshoe vortices wrapping around
442 the convex side of the base of the pile. Horseshoe vortices are responsible for the
443 current-induced local scour at piles (Roulund et al., 2005; Akan, 2006). The sizes of
444 the horseshoe vortices around a vertical pile are usually small, confined to a narrow
445 region close to the base of the pile.

446 Numerical results for an OWC pile in waves of wave period 1.0 s do not support
447 the existence of a steady downflow along the front side of the C-shaped structure and

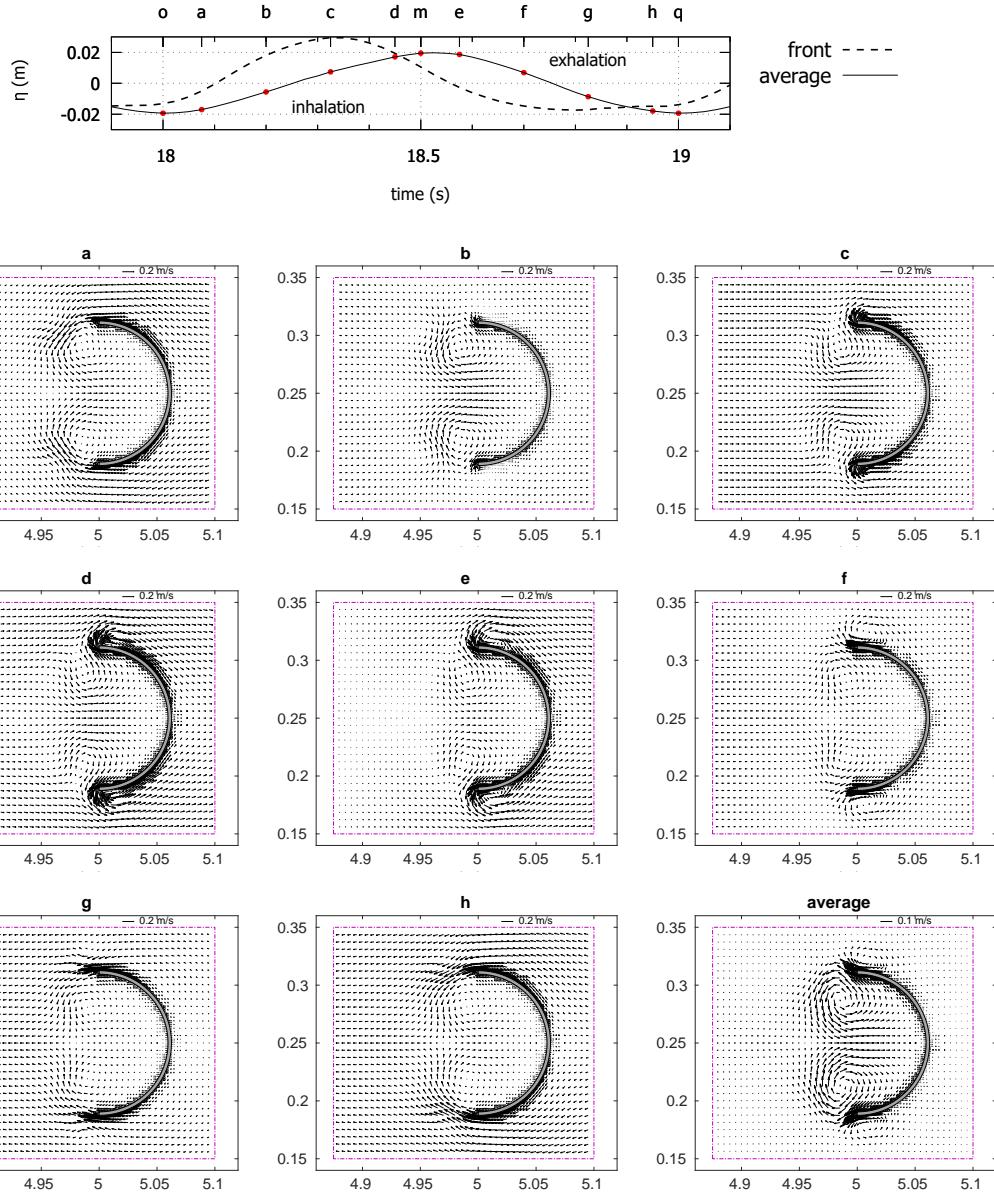


Fig. 11: Eight snapshots of the velocity field in a horizontal plane located at 0.005 m above the bed. The eight phases are indicated in the top panel. The last panel in the bottom row is the time-mean velocity field in the same horizontal plane. Wave period=1.0 s and the time range is 18 s to 19 s. Incident waves come from the left.

448 horse-shoe vortices on the concave side of the base of the C-shaped structure. This
 449 is possibly because of the following factors: (1) the geometric shape of an OWC pile
 450 is very different from that of a circular pile, which results in different wave scattering
 451 patterns. (2) the flow in the present problem is unsteady and spatially non-uniform;
 452 (3) there is a strong oscillatory motion of the water column inside the OWC chamber;
 453 and (4) the vortices shed into the interior of the C-shaped structure may strongly

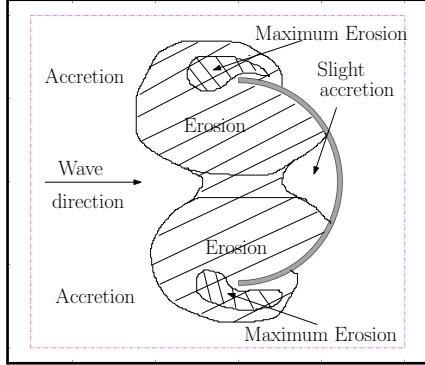


Fig. 12: A sketch of wave-induced morphological change in the vicinity of an OWC pile.

454 affect the local pressure distribution and thus local flow field.

455 Wave-induced streaming or wave-induced mass transport (Longuet-Higgins, 1953)
 456 is not a key flow characteristic for the present problem. Longuet-Higgins (1953)
 457 showed that wave-induced Eulerian streaming (or, wave-induced mass transport) as
 458 well as a steady vorticity exist inside the Stokes' boundary layer adjacent to the
 459 seabed. This mean vorticity may diffuse into the inviscid core region over a time scales
 460 several orders of magnitude longer than wave period. The ratio of the wave-induced
 461 streaming velocity to the wave orbital velocity is on the order of magnitude of the wave
 462 steepness. When a circular cylinder is placed vertically in regular waves, Lamoure
 463 and Mei (1977) found that due to wave-induced mass transport, fluid particles outside
 464 the wave boundary drift toward the convex side of and away from the convex side
 465 of the vertical cylinder, with the wave-induced mass transport in the vicinity of a
 466 structure being smaller than the wave orbital velocity by a factor scaled by the wave
 467 steepness. For the present problem, the wave-induced mass transport velocity should
 468 be on the order of 0.01 m/s, but the time-mean velocity found here is relatively
 469 strong, on the order of 0.1 m/s. The time required for the wave-induced streaming
 470 reach to an elevation d from the bed is about d^2/ν ; it needs at least 25 s to reach the
 471 level $d = 0.005$ m, and at least 10^4 s to reach to the level $d = 0.1$ m. However, the time-
 472 mean velocity field found here exists well before 20 s. Furthermore, the time-
 473 mean velocities are vertically similar at elevations 0.005 m and 0.1 m above the bed,
 474 excluding the effect of vorticity diffusion from the bed into the core region. Therefore,
 475 it is concluded that the mean velocity fields at elevations 0.005 m above the bed are
 476 not affected by the wave-induced streaming in any significant way.

477 Hongji instability (Honji, 1981) is not a flow phenomena in the present problem.
 478 For a circular cylinder in a spatial-uniform, oscillatory flows at low KC numbers
 479 ($KC < 15$), it has been known that mushroom-like flow structures exist around the
 480 cylinder due to Hongji instability. Hongji instability appears during the transition
 481 from two dimensional laminar flow to turbulent flow in a certain range of frequency
 482 number (< 160) defined by the ratio of the Reynolds number and the KC number
 483 (An et al., 2011; Zhao et al., 2011). Shao et al. (2016) studied a L-shaped structure

484 and Tong et al. (2017) studied a square cylinder in spatially-uniform, oscillatory flows
485 at KC numbers and the frequency numbers similar to those examined in An et al.
486 (2011); both did not report Hongjin instability, possibly because of the lack of the
487 transition from two-dimensional laminar flow to turbulent flow due to the sharp edges
488 in the structures. The OWC pile studied here has sharp edges at the lower tip of the
489 skirt and the two ends of the C-shaped support structure, and the unsteady flow
490 is three dimensional; therefore, mushroom-like streaks around the structure due to
491 Hongji instability are not expected.

492 5. Conclusions

493 A circular OWC supported by a bottom-sitting C-shaped structure (an OWC
494 pile) was studied using two-phase flow numerical simulations. The validation and
495 verification of the numerical model and the numerical setup were done by comparing
496 with the measured surface elevations, air pressure inside the pneumatic chamber and
497 instantaneous velocity fields reported by two published papers. Vortices are shed
498 from both the lower tip of the skirt of the OWC chamber and the two edges of the
499 C-shaped support structure, with the vortices on the convex side of the C-shaped
500 structure being smaller, stronger and short-lived and the vortices on the concave side
501 of the C-shaped structure being larger, weaker and long-lived. These vortices result
502 in a time-mean velocity field around the OWC pile, with two large counter-rotating
503 vortices on the concave side of the C-shaped structure. No horseshoe vortices are
504 found in the simulated velocity field. The morphological changes around the OWC
505 pile is strongly correlated to the vortices shed from the two edges of the C-shaped
506 structure.

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519 Appendix A. Wave generation and wave absorption methods

520 Waves are generated by specifying the velocity field according to a chosen wave
521 theory and the phase fraction field on the inlet boundary at each time step. As

522 second-order Stokes wave theory is employed here, the velocity profile on the inlet
 523 boundary $x = 0$ is specified by the two velocity components in the x and y directions.

$$u_x = \frac{\pi H}{T} \frac{\cosh k(z+d)}{\sinh kd} \cos(kx - \omega t + \phi) + \frac{3}{4} \frac{\pi H}{T} \frac{\pi H}{L} \frac{\cosh 2k(z+d)}{\sinh^4 kd} \cos 2(kx - \omega t + \phi) \quad (A.1)$$

524

$$u_y = \frac{\pi H}{T} \frac{\sinh k(z+d)}{\sinh kd} \sin(kx - \omega t + \phi) + \frac{3}{4} \frac{\pi H}{T} \frac{\pi H}{L} \frac{\sinh 2k(z+d)}{\sinh^4 kd} \sin 2(kx - \omega t + \phi) \quad (A.2)$$

525 and the corresponding free surface elevation η is

$$\eta = \frac{H}{2} \cos(kx - \omega t + \phi) + \frac{\pi H^2}{4L} \left(1 + \frac{3}{2 \sinh^2 kd}\right) \coth kd \cos 2(kx - \omega t + \phi), \quad (A.3)$$

526 where u_x and u_y are the velocity components in x and y directions respectively. H
 527 = wave height, k = wave number, ω = wave angular frequency, t = time, L =
 528 wavelength, d water depth. The shift angle ϕ is set to be 0 in this study.

529 In the wave absorbing section, a source term S_m is added to the momentum
 530 equation:

$$\frac{d\rho U}{dt} = \rho F + P + S_m \quad (A.4)$$

531 where F is the mass force per volume unit, P is pressure force and S_m is a sink term
 532 calculated by

$$S_m = -\mu D U \quad (A.5)$$

533 where D is the so-called Darcy coefficient to be specified by the user. The wave
 534 absorption performance is determined by wavelength, the value of D and the length
 535 of the absorption section. Based on numerical test results, a value of $D = 5 \times 10^5$ was
 536 selected in this study. With D being determined, the necessary length of absorbing
 537 section was carefully selected to make sure the wave energy at the end of the flume
 538 is almost zero. To reduce the total mesh count, the mesh is coarsened gradually
 539 in x direction from $\Delta x = 0.02m$ at the front side of the wave absorbing section to
 540 $\Delta x = 0.12m$ at the rear side of the wave absorbing section.

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