



Science@ifpen

Issue 34 - October 2018

SPECIAL ISSUE
Applied Mechanics



Managing the energy transition requires the industrial roll-out of new technologies to harness renewable, low-carbon resources. For instance, offshore floating

platforms for wind turbines raise new scientific and technical challenges, due to extreme operating conditions. The sustainable exploitation of these energy resources, in a highly competitive environment, requires the combined implementation of expertise and innovative solutions founded on high-quality scientific research. This requirement is also relevant to IFPEN's long-standing fields, which have to address cost and environmental impact issues.

With this in mind, Applied Mechanics researchers are working to build on their knowledge — particularly in offshore oil and gas production — through scientific challenges whose resolution combines experimentation (including large-scale), modeling and numerical simulation in a number of fields: complex flows, hydrodynamics, aerodynamics, fluid-structure couplings, non-linear behavior of materials and structures.

In this issue, we look at examples of progress made in the field of computational mechanics serving new energy technologies. We hope that you enjoy this issue.

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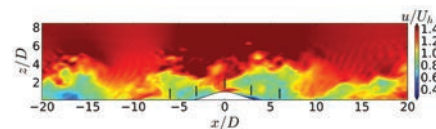
Wind farms – a more effective layout using modeling

The development of wind farms requires the optimal placement of wind turbines in relation to each other in order to maximize overall production. If the turbines are too close to each other, wake effects prevent maximum power output and can lead to mechanical fatigue issues caused by turbulence. Conversely, if they are too far apart, wind resources are not fully exploited.

Currently, offshore wake-related power loss can be as high as 40%. Consequently, optimizing the placement of wind turbines has become a major challenge, which can be addressed by precisely simulating wind flows through the farm. This is achieved by modeling the wake effects of the turbines in representative weather conditions, particularly from the point of view of the atmospheric boundary layer^a.

Such a model, created by IFPEN, was implemented in Meso-NH⁽¹⁾, the fine mesh weather model designed by the CNRM (French National Center for Meteorological Research, Météo France) and the Laboratoire d'aérodynamique (French Aerology Laboratory). In it, wind turbines are represented by the aerodynamic forces they generate (drag, lift), determined by simplified models. Hence, turbine wakes are defined thanks to the interaction of the aerodynamic forces with the wind, itself influenced by meteorological phenomena.

Validation studies were conducted using wind tunnel tests (model representing five



Wind fields calculated by Meso-NH on a configuration tested in a wind tunnel.

wind turbines on a hill). The calculation/experience comparison was conducted by studying the vertical profiles of wind speed and turbulence intensity, downstream of each of the wind turbines⁽¹⁾. It has thus been demonstrated that consideration of meteorological conditions offers a more accurate prediction of the wake generated by a wind farm.

This new tool will be employed to study the influence of atmospheric conditions specific to the offshore environment, in order to optimize the layout and productivity of wind farms and to study their potential environmental impact on local meteorology. ■

a - The part of the atmosphere directly influenced by the presence of the earth's surface (continental or oceanic).

(1) P-A. Joulin et al., EWEA PhD Seminar, 2018.

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IFP Energies nouvelles (IFPEN) is a major research and training player in the fields of energy, transport and the environment. From research to industry, technological innovation is central to all its activities.



Semi-crystalline polymers: clays that are ignored?

In the energy sector, semi-crystalline polymers^a are primarily used within structures located in aggressive environments, to form coatings (waterproofing, thermal or electric barriers). These materials possess an intrinsic flexibility exploited in some offshore applications, such as oil production pipelines, but they are also found in electric cables for the offshore wind energy sector.

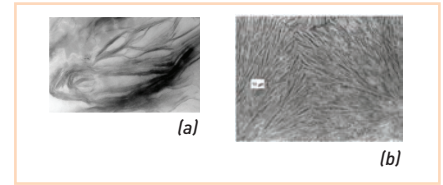
Through these various applications, the polymers can be exposed to a variety of extreme stresses: pressure (>1,000 bar), swell, high voltage, temperatures (from -20°C to 150°C), liquid and gas diffusion. In the latter case, the penetration of chemical species within the polymers can affect their mechanical behavior via multiphysical mechanisms that can cause damage: from the creation of microcavities to the appearance of cracks potentially leading to fracture.

Towards a poro-chemical-mechanical model

In order to describe the integrity of semi-crystalline polymers in harsh environments, a model inspired by natural porous and non-permeable materials, such as clays, was developed by IFPEN. The model makes it possible to consider multi-physical couplings from both a theoretical and numerical point of view.

The analogy with clays is based on the microstructural arrangement (figure) and viscoplastic mechanical behavior. But beyond this comparison, it is a phenomenological model capable of introducing couplings between deformation and diffusion of species that was introduced.

Hence, the parallel with natural porous media, combined with a rigorous theoretical framework, recently made it possible to treat complex phenomena, such as pressure-diffusion cavitation, hydrolytic weakening and competition between fracture mechanisms (brittle



Microstructure of a clay (a) and a polymer (b).

or with plasticity)^[1]. One potential avenue for enhancing this model is to describe damage by the diffusion of electric arcs, within coatings for immersed electric cables. ■

a - Comprising a crystalline phase and an amorphous phase.

[1] S. Maiza, X. Lefebvre, N. Brusselle, M-H. Klopffer, L. Cangemi, S. Castagnet, J-C. Grandidier. Submitted to the Journal of Applied Polymer Science.

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Improvement of hydrodynamic models for floating wind turbines

The development of floating platforms for offshore wind turbines, to replace fixed foundations, paves the way for the harnessing of wind reserves in ultra-deep offshore zones. The potential is promising, estimated to represent 16 GW in France by 2040^a.

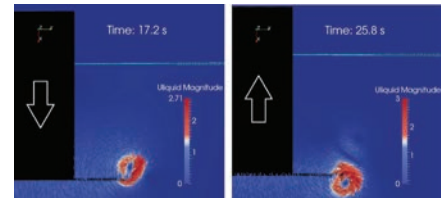
The design and dimensioning of these new structures are dependent on the calculation of the forces generated by swell and movements induced on the floater. These calculations are currently carried out using dedicated software, from the offshore oil industry^b, based on simplified hydrodynamic models. Moreover, the behavior of a floating wind turbine is relatively far-removed from that of an oil platform and both the economic stakes and the industrial risks also differ. With this in mind, IFPEN is re-evaluating current dimensioning methods and tools.

The methodology consists in comparing CFD^c simulations of a moving floating wind turbine, conducted using open source^d software with results obtained from conventional simplified models.

The objective is to evaluate the relevance of the latter and improve them where necessary, either by revising their formulation or by recalibrating them.

This approach was firstly employed on simple cases involving — a fixed floater with swell, on the one hand, and a moving floater without swell, on the other — thereby enabling comparison with experimental results. Deployed to evaluate movement damping systems (figure), it produced satisfactory results^[1-2].

The same approach, implemented for a floater developed jointly with SBM Offshore, delivered first promising results concerning the improvement of the hydrodynamic models used in IFPEN's design tools. ■



Visualization of the velocity field surrounding a damping plate, during vertical movement of the floater.

[1] P. Bozonnet, A. Emery, 25th International Ocean and Polar Engineering Conference, 21-26 June, Kona, Hawaii, USA.

[2] A. Emery, P. Bozonnet, Heave plate damping and added mass evaluation based on CFD simulations for floating wind turbine platforms. Submitted to Applied Ocean Research.

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a - Les Echos 02/19/2018

b - DeepLines Wind software developed with Principia

c - Computational Fluid Dynamics

d - OpenFOAM software

Stored heat

Energy storage, one of the major challenges within the context of the energy transition, can take a variety of forms. For heat storage, one of the solutions developed at IFPEN is based on a fixed particle bed. A fluid flows through the bed to store the heat in the particles or to recover it⁽¹⁾.

Due to the complexity of these storage systems (large number of particles and non-linearity of the regimes studied), the use of numerical calculation is essential for dimensioning purposes. To this end, a large number of calculations were performed to assess the impact of the variability of the different parameters (material, particle size and form, fluid type) on the overall performance of the solution.

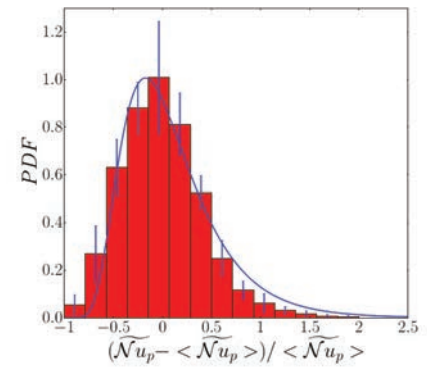
This work highlighted two fundamental results:

- heat transfers within the bed vary locally in quite a significant way (figure). Hence, conventional approaches based on average volume methods, need to be

enhanced to take into account these local fluctuations;

- the definition of the fluid reference temperature, necessary for assessment of fluid-particle heat transfers, is far from simple, due to the existence of a temperature distribution in the bed. Nevertheless, simulations confirmed its relevance when considered “ad infinitum”, i.e. far from the location of the bed where the calculation is performed.

The prospects for this research are numerous: in particular, the development of heat transfer laws, taking into account the effects of local heterogeneities, would pave the way for significant advances in the dimensioning of industrial beds. ■



Distribution of the Nusselt^a number within a fixed bed, calculated using the local approach.

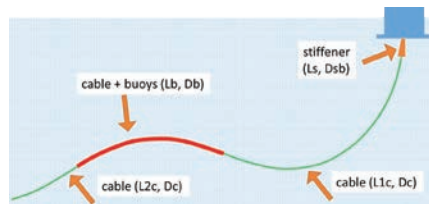
a - A dimensionless number describing the intensity of heat exchange.

(1) M. Bélot, T. Phan, F. Euzéat, J-L. Pierson, D. Teixeira G. Vinay, Q. Falcoz, A. Toutant, A. Wachs. *Turbulence, Heat and Mass Transfer 9. Brazil, 2018.*

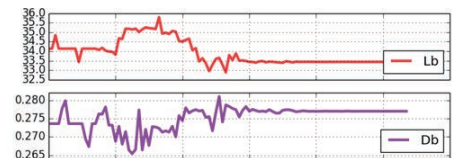
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Optimizing the electric cable of a floating wind turbine

Floating wind turbine technologies, such as those co-developed by SBM and IFPEN^a, are designed to optimize the recovery of offshore wind energy. Optimization solutions are currently being sought to minimize the costs of transporting the electricity produced, by adapting the configuration^b of cables, which are exposed to currents and movements of the floating platform (figure 1).



Cable parameters (lengths, diameters).



Evolution of two parameters during optimization with the SQA^d algorithm.

Calculating the response of a floating wind turbine to these aerodynamic and hydrodynamic loadings requires the use of complex numerical simulators but ones that do not provide the gradient of this response with respect to model input parameters. Similarly, publications on the subject refer to non-gradient optimization algorithms that may converge slowly or are difficult to configure.

IFPEN's Atout^c platform proposes the SQA^d algorithm, which is particularly effective in this context^{e(1)}. From a starting point, this algorithm rapidly finds the optimal configuration for an electric cable (figure 2) respecting force and displacement limits, for extreme loads⁽²⁾.

This original approach will form the basis of more effective research leading to the optimized configuration of electric cables, dimensioned for a variety of load conditions. ■

a - SBM offshore - Floating wind turbine concept development
 b - Various sections, each being characterized by its length, its diameter and its buoyancy (figure)
 c - Advanced Tools for Optimization and Uncertainty Treatment, the word "Atout" translates as "Asset"
 d - Sequential Quadratic Approximation
 e - With "black box" type simulators (only the result is known)

(1) H. Langouët, (2011), thesis Univ. Nice-Sophia Antipolis.

(2) Y. Poirrette, M. Guiton, G. Huwart, D. Sinoquet, J-M. Leroy (2017), OMAE 2017 61655.

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In silico design: digital materials here we come!

Proposing innovative technological products often requires recourse to simulation approaches in order to boost our capacity to evaluate original concepts. This is particularly true in the field of mechanics of materials, where one of the key challenges is to understand and exploit the relationship between a material's microstructure and its usage properties.

Research on this theme was initiated by IFPEN concerning the mechanical behavior of lamellar porous materials, such as some catalyst supports (and some polymers). The objective is to have a calculation tool ultimately making it possible to dimension and develop such materials, structured on several scales (from a nanometer to a tenth of a millimeter) and capable of withstanding mechanical stresses.

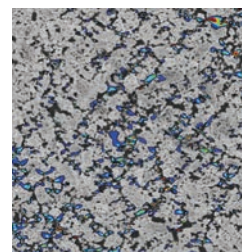
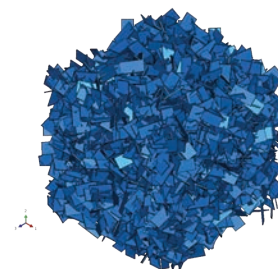
The approach was based on current structural calculation capacities, which were adapted to the calculation of microstructures with lamellar or granular stacking⁽¹⁾. A multi-scale workflow was established based on two tools: IFPEN's plug im!^a platform for microstructure generation, and the AbaqusTM commercial calculation code, capable of effectively dealing with non-linear mechanical behavior for large systems. The atomic

scale properties forming the basis for the model were themselves estimated using molecular dynamics calculations.

A sequence of numerical methods enables the various scales of the material's structure to be crossed. This In Silico^b approach was validated for the prediction of the linear behavior (elastic properties) of alumina supports.

Research is now focusing on plasticity and fracture, which governs the characteristics of interest concerning these materials in service. Within this context, a new milestone was recently reached for plasticity simulation using the finite element method, thanks to the improvement of local meshing methods.

The next step will be to introduce cohesion/fracture properties in the form of a local cohesive zone-based approach^c, coupled with molecular modeling techniques. ■



Modeling of a catalyst support at mesoporous and macroporous scale.

- a - <https://www.plugin.fr/>
- b - Using complex computer-based calculations.
- c - Method based on the mechanics of fracture by cracking and damage mechanics.

(1) V. Le Corre, N. Brusselle-Dupend, M. Moreaud, *Mechanics of Materials* 114 (2017) 161-171.

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News

• **Didier Houssin, Chairman of IFPEN, Khaled Bouabdallah, President of Lyon University, and Jean-François Pinton, President of ENS Lyon and Director of IDEXLYON, signed the agreement for the ROAD4CAT (RatiOnAl Design for CAlysis) Chair.** This first IDEXLYON chair will be at the heart of innovation for the energy transition through environmental and societal-oriented research, particularly linked to the improved eco-efficiency of catalytic processes. It is awarded to Pascal Raybaud, an IFPEN catalysis researcher.

• **Didier Houssin, Chairman of IFPEN, and Antoine Petit, CEO of the CNRS, signed a new five-year framework agreement between IFPEN and the CNRS.** This agreement consolidates a long lasting collaboration and reaffirms common scientific objectives for the achievement of the energy transition.

• *IFPEN has signed the "National Code of Ethics for Research Professions" and designated Elisabeth Merlen as scientific integrity officer.*

Awards

• **Olga Vizika-Kavvadias, Director of the Geosciences Division, won the 2018 Darcy prize, awarded by the Society of Core Analysts (SCA).** Each year, this award, the SCA's highest, is given to a person considered to have made an outstanding contribution in the field of petrophysics.

• **Best Paper Award of the OMAE « Riser and subsea systems » Symposium (Trondheim, Norway -2018), given to a publication co-authored by J. Kittel and R. Mingant with TechnipFMC and the French Corrosion Institute.**

• **Sophie Bernadet, from the Catalysis and Separation Division, received one of the two prizes awarded for the best oral papers at the 2018 annual meeting of the Catalysis Study Group (GECat).**

Scientific Visitor

• **Edson Soares, Associate Professor from the Universidade Federal do Espírito Santo (Brazil) and specialist in the field of "fluid mechanics and the rheological characterization of complex fluids", is being hosted by the Applied Physical Chemistry and Mechanics Division at the Lyon site for a one-year scientific visit.**

Upcoming scientific event

• **Scientific conference – Large-Eddy Simulation for Internal Combustion Engine Flows (LES4ICE) – 11 and 12 December 2018, Rueil-Malmaison – France**
www.rs-les4ice.com

Directeur de la publication : Marco De Michelis
Editor-in-chief : Éric Heintzé
Editorial committee: Xavier Longaygue, Laurent Forti, Catherine Ponsot-Jacquin
Graphic Design: Esquif
ISSN No. 1957-3537

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