# LES Applications in Aerodynamics

Kyle D. Squires

School of Mechanical, Aerospace, Chemical and Materials Engineering Arizona State University Tempe, Arizona, USA

2010 Tutorial School on Fluid Dynamics: Topics in Turbulence Center for Scientific Computation and Mathematical Modeling University of Maryland May 27, 2010



## Outline

### Subgrid-scale models

- Length scales in LES subgrid models vs. length scales in RANS models
  - » Reminder of a key difference between the techniques
- Challenges for whole-domain LES in aerodynamics applications
  - Resolving the boundary layer at high Reynolds numbers

### Formulation of hybrid RANS-LES models

Detached Eddy Simulation

### Applications

• Massively separated flows - from simple geometries to complex geometries

### Improvements and newer developments



# Motivation for modeling...

 Engineering models are meant to bypass the complex details of turbulent flows and predict the statistical features

DNS at Re = 110,000

DES at Re = 110,000







# Modeling turbulent flows...



 By far the most widely used approach to model turbulent flows in applications is based on the introduction of an eddy viscosity...

$$\overline{u_i'u_j'} \approx \nu_t \Big[\frac{\partial U_i}{\partial x_j} + \frac{\partial U_j}{\partial x_i}\Big]$$

 $\nu_t = \text{turbulent eddy viscosity}$ 

Objective of vast majority of engineering models is to predict the eddy viscosity in order to integrate the RANS equations



# Eddy viscosity...



- Assumes that the turbulent eddies in a flow transfer momentum in much the same fashion as molecular interactions in a gas
  - Molecular interactions occur at much smaller scales as compared to the length scales over which flow properties are changing
  - Turbulent eddies have interactions at scales comparable to the length scales of the mean motion of the flow
- Mixing length characterizes (roughly) the distance traveled by an eddy before it gives up its momentum and loses identity



## A simple idea...

Assume equilibrium...



Combining the above relations...

$$\nu_t \varepsilon \approx \nu_t \left( -\overline{u'v'} \frac{dU}{dy} \right) = (\overline{u'v'})^2$$
$$\nu_t = \frac{(\overline{u'v'})^2}{\varepsilon}$$



## A simple idea...

- To go further we need some knowledge of the flow
  - Let's assume that the ratio of the shear stress to the kinetic energy takes a constant value

$$\frac{\overline{u'v'}}{\mathcal{K}} \approx C$$

• We had...

$$\nu_t = \frac{(\overline{u'v'})^2}{\varepsilon}$$

Now we have...





## Important parts of the previous exercise...

 Expressed the eddy viscosity in terms of a velocity scale and length scale as...

$$\nu_t = \mathcal{U} \, l_m$$

 $\mathcal{U} =$ velocity scale  $l_m =$ mixing length

- The eddy viscosity depends on a velocity and a length scale that are properties of the flow
- Popular RANS turbulence models solve transport equations for the velocity and length scales or other variables that can be used to form the eddy viscosity
  - Spalart-Allmaras (S-A) one-equation model
  - Menter's SST model (two-equation model)



## Spalart-Allmaras one-equation model

$$\frac{D\tilde{\nu}}{Dt} = c_{b1}(1 - f_{t2})\tilde{S}\tilde{\nu} + \frac{1}{\sigma} \Big[\nabla \cdot ((\nu + \tilde{\nu})\nabla\tilde{\nu}) + c_{b2}(\nabla\tilde{\nu})^2\Big] - \Big[c_{w1}f_w - \frac{c_{b1}}{\kappa^2}f_{t2}\Big]\Big[\frac{\tilde{\nu}}{d}\Big]^2 + f_{t1}\Delta U^2$$

Full model contains trip terms that enable activation of the model...

$$f_{t1} = c_{t1}g_t \exp\left(-c_{t2}\frac{\omega_t^2}{\Delta U^2} \left[d^2 + g_t^2 d_t^2\right]\right) \qquad g_t = \min\left(0.1, \frac{\Delta U}{\omega_t \Delta x_t}\right)$$
$$f_{t2} = c_{t3} \exp\left(-c_{t4}\chi^2\right)$$



## RANS models...

- Where are the problems?
  - Bluff bodies...
    - » Characterized by chaotic vortex shedding
    - » Unless the geometry has sharp edges, separation prediction can be difficult
      - Even two-dimensional bluff bodies are sufficient to cause simple models to fail, even configurations with sharp corners that set the separation location

Flow over a cylinder by Strelets group (laminar boundary layer separation) Drag coefficient is too low compared to measurements, S-A model





## URANS of a cylinder...

Re = 50k, laminar separation, S-A model (Strelets group)



Steady RANS Drag is too low URANS

Unsteady RANS Drag is too high



- Time dependent large scale motions are resolved on a grid
  - Small scale turbulence that cannot be resolved is modeled
- The governing equations are filtered...

$$\frac{\partial \overline{u}_i}{\partial t} + \frac{\partial}{\partial x_j} (\overline{u}_i \overline{u}_j) = -\frac{1}{\rho} \frac{\partial \overline{p}}{\partial x_i} + \nu \frac{\partial^2 \overline{u}_i}{\partial x_j \partial x_j} - \frac{\partial \tau_{ij}}{\partial x_j}$$
$$\tau_{ij} = \overline{u_i u_j} - \overline{u}_i \overline{u}_j$$
$$\tau_{ij} - \frac{\delta_{ij}}{3} \tau_{kk} = -2\nu_{sgs} \overline{S}_{ij} = -\nu_{sgs} \left( \frac{\partial \overline{u}_i}{\partial x_j} + \frac{\partial \overline{u}_j}{\partial x_i} \right)$$

- Looks like the RANS equations
  - But there are important differences...



Subgrid viscosity in LES...

$$\nu_{sgs} = (C_s \Delta)^2 |\overline{S}| \qquad |\overline{S}| = (2\overline{S}_{ij}\overline{S}_{ij})^{1/2}$$

Eddy viscosity in RANS...

$$\nu_t = 0.09 \frac{\kappa^2}{\varepsilon}$$
 $\mathcal{K} = \text{kinetic energy}$ 
 $\varepsilon = \text{dissipation rate}$ 

- Length scale in the LES subgrid model is typically coupled to the grid (through the filter width)
- Length scale in the RANS model is a property of the flow and computed from model equations

Role of grid refinement is different Grid convergence in RANS

More physics in LES



#### Re = 50k, laminar separation, S-A-based DES (Strelets group) SRANS DES ( coarse grid )





URANS





- Very powerful technique...
  - Access to three-dimensional time-dependent description of a flow
  - Relatively simple models possible
  - Predictions less sensitive to modeling errors than RANS
- How much does it cost?
  - (roughly) estimate the grid resolution need to apply LES to prediction of the flow over a section of a wing (Spalart et al. 1997)...
    - » Consider a section 1 m<sup>2</sup> (chord length of a 1 meter, spanwise section 1 meter)
      - > Objective is to estimate the number of cubes of size  $\delta$  (per side) needed to fill the boundary layer

$$N_{cubes} = \int \int \frac{1}{\delta^2} dA$$



$$N_{cubes} = \int \int \frac{1}{\delta^2} dA$$





 Rough estimate for N<sub>cubes</sub> obtained using a simple correlation for a flat plate boundary layer

$$\delta(x) = 0.37x \left(\frac{U_{\infty}x}{\nu}\right)^{-0.2}$$

Consider a chord-based Reynolds number of 2 x 10<sup>6</sup>

$$N_{cubes} = \int \int \frac{1}{\delta^2} dA \approx 9 \times 10^6$$



$$N_{cubes} = \int \int \frac{1}{\delta^2} dA \approx 9 \times 10^6$$

- Above estimate is the number of cubes of dimension δ needed to fill the boundary layer over the wing
- Number of grid points dictated by the resolution per boundary layer thickness
  - Assume the wall-layer is modeled (not resolved)
  - Let  $N_0$  be the number of grid points per boundary layer thickness
    - » N<sub>0</sub>: 10 points per boundary layer thickness is minimum
    - » N<sub>0</sub>: 15-20 points per boundary layer thickness desirable (Nikitin et al. 2000)

$$N_g = N_0^3 N_{cubes}$$



$$N_g = N_0^3 N_{cubes}$$

• For  $N_0 = 20...$ 

$$N_g = 7 \times 10^{10}$$

- Timestep that is required coupled to the grid spacing...(so we'll need a lot of timesteps)
- Above estimate assumes the wall-layer is modeled (hopefully accurately)
  - Direct resolution of the wall layer will make the cost higher



## Outline

### Subgrid-scale models

- Length scales in LES subgrid models vs. length scales in RANS models
  - » Reminder of a key difference between the techniques
- Challenges for whole-domain LES in aerodynamics applications
  - Resolving the boundary layer at high Reynolds numbers
- Formulation of hybrid RANS-LES models
  - Detached Eddy Simulation

### Applications

• Massively separated flows - from simple geometries to complex geometries

### Improvements and newer developments



# Detached Eddy Simulation (DES)

- Motivation...
  - Desire for a simulation strategy that combines the efficiency of RANS and the fidelity of LES
    - » Circumvent the modeling errors in RANS methods in massively separated flows
    - » Avoid the computational cost of whole-domain LES at high Reynolds numbers
- Proposed in 1997 by Spalart and colleagues
  - Develop a single simulation strategy that exhibits different ("hybrid") behavior

Definition: "A Detached-Eddy Simulation is three-dimensional numerical solution using a single turbulence model, which functions as a sub-grid-scale model in regions where the grid is fine enough for a Large-Eddy Simulation and as a Reynolds-averaged model in regions where it is not." (Travin et al. 2000)



# Formulation of S-A DES

S-A RANS model



Production and destruction terms...

$$P_{\nu} \propto \widetilde{S}\widetilde{
u} \qquad \epsilon_{
u} \propto \left[\frac{
u}{d}\right]^2$$

• Replace the length scale...

(wall distance)  $d \rightarrow \tilde{d}$ 



# Formulation of DES...

Balance the production and destruction terms...

$$P_{\nu} \approx \epsilon_{\nu} \longrightarrow \widetilde{S}\widetilde{\nu} = \left[\frac{\widetilde{\nu}}{\widetilde{d}}\right]^2$$

Leads to...

$$\widetilde{\nu} \propto \widetilde{d}^2 \widetilde{S}$$

Smagorinsky eddy viscosity...

$$\nu_{sgs} = (C_s \Delta)^2 |\overline{S}|$$

• Can obtain a Smagorinsky eddy viscosity if the length scale is made proportional to  $\Delta$ 



# Formulation of DES...

Prescription of the length scale...

$$\widetilde{d} \equiv min(d, C_{DES}\Delta)$$

- High cost of LES arises because of resolution requirements in the boundary layer
  - Prescribe  $\Delta$  such that RANS length scale maintained in the boundary layer

$$\Delta \equiv \max(\Delta x, \Delta y, \Delta z)$$

• Close to the wall  $\Delta$  is set by the wall parallel spacings

$$d \ll \Delta$$
,  $\widetilde{d} = d$ , RANS

Away from the wall...

$$C_{DES}\Delta < d\,, \quad \widetilde{d} = C_{DES}\Delta\,, \quad \text{LES}$$



## Calibration of the constant $C_{DES}$



# Decaying isotropic turbulence (Shur et al. 1999)

- Computations for various values of C<sub>DES</sub>
  - Examined the behavior of the kinetic energy and spectral shape near the cutoff
  - Found scaling of the average eddy viscosity close to  $\Delta^{4/3}$

$$C_{DES} = 0.65$$

## Aspects of the formulation...

$$\frac{D\tilde{\nu}}{Dt} = c_{b1}\tilde{S}\tilde{\nu} + \text{diffusion} - c_{w1}f_w \left[\frac{\tilde{\nu}}{\tilde{d}}\right]^2$$

$$production \qquad destruction$$

$$\tilde{d} = \min(d, C_{DES}\Delta) \qquad \Delta = \max(\Delta_x, \Delta_y, \Delta_z)$$

 $(\Delta_x, \Delta_y, \Delta_z) =$  grid spacings in each direction

- DES is a <u>3D unsteady numerical solution using a single turbulence model</u>
  - Non-zonal
    - » LES in regions where grid density is sufficient
    - » RANS model in other regions
  - Abrupt change in the length scale (discontinuity in the gradient)
  - "RANS Region" and "LES Region" separated by an interface dictated by the grid



## Outline

### Subgrid-scale models

- Length scales in LES subgrid models vs. length scales in RANS models
  - » Reminder of a key difference between the techniques
- Challenges for whole-domain LES in aerodynamics applications
  - Resolving the boundary layer at high Reynolds numbers
- Formulation of hybrid RANS-LES models
  - Detached Eddy Simulation

### Applications

• Massively separated flows - from simple geometries to complex geometries

### Improvements and newer developments



# Flow over an airfoil at high angle of attack

Shur et al. (1999)

- First application of DES following launch of the model in 1997
- Motivation
  - URANS errors of about 40% in drag and lift coefficients
- Flow configuration
  - NACA 0012 airfoil with spanwise extent equal to the chord length
  - Structured 'O' grid with 141 x 65 x 40 grid points in the streamwise, wall-normal and spanwise directions respectively.
  - Fully turbulent predictions
  - RANS-LES interface at 0.026C
    - » Set by the spanwise spacing
  - Reynolds number based on chord length =  $10^5$

## **Objectives: would it work?**



# 141 x 65 x 25 grid

### Shur et al. (1999)





## Pressure coefficient



## Travin et al. (1999)

- Comprehensive study and assessment of the technique
- Reynolds numbers...
  - $5x10^4$ , 1.4 $x10^5$  and  $3x10^6$
- Cylinder known for its drag crisis...
  - Disparity in laminar and turbulent boundary layer separation
    - » Laminar boundary layer separation: turbulence model should remain dormant (mimic'd using tripless approach)
    - » Turbulent boundary layer separation: turbulence model controls separation prediction
- Absence of sharp edges on the surface of the cylinder make it a good test to detect "grey area" failures

## Will the generation of three-dimensional structures occur rapidly?



## Domain



Multiblock grids (Inner block 150 x 36, wake block 74 x 36, outer block 59 x 30. The three blocks meet near x=1.06, y=1.03

- Grid refinement by a factor of  $\sqrt{2}$  in each direction
- Spanwise extent = 2D



## Laminar separation - vorticity isosurfaces





## Laminar separation – time dependent forces



## Turbulent separation - time dependent forces





## Laminar separation – pressure coefficient





# Aircraft forebody

- Rectangular ogive forebody
  - Aft section length = 4D
    - » Cross-section: square with rounded corners, corner radius = D/4
  - Forebody length = 2D
  - Angle of attack: 60° and 90°
- Simulation details (Viswanathan, Squires and Forsythe 2006)
  - Grid sizes from 2.1 x 10<sup>6</sup> cells to 8.75 x 10<sup>6</sup> cells
    - » Unstructured (generated using VGRIDns, Pirzadeh 1996)
  - Re = 2.21 x 10<sup>6</sup>, Mach number = 0.21

#### forebody cross section





## Role of grid refinement and turbulence model

#### vorticity contours in the wake, y/D = 1.0, $90^{\pm}$ angle of attack





 $DES-coarse grid (2.1 \times 10^6 cells)$ 

DES – fine grid (8.8x10<sup>6</sup> cells)









RANS – baseline grid (6.5x10<sup>6</sup> cells)

## Planar cuts of eddy viscosity, $\alpha = 90^{\circ}$







#### surface colored by pressure



## **Azimuthal Pressure Distribution**





## **Azimuthal Pressure Distribution**









## **Azimuthal Pressure Distribution**





# F-15E at 65 Degrees Angle of Attack

- Re = 13.6 x 10<sup>6</sup>, M = 0.3
- Stability and control database provided by Boeing Military Aircraft for assessing DES predictions
  - Data at 65° and 74° AOA
- Simulation details (Forsythe et al. 2003)
  - Unstructured grids
    - » 4 x 10<sup>6</sup>, 6 x 10<sup>6</sup>, 10 x 10<sup>6</sup> cells
    - » Resolved wall layer
  - Timestep variation of 0.01, 0.02, and 0.04 (dimensionless using chord and freestream speed)















Mechanical, Aerospace, Cnemical and Materials Engineering

## Surface grids



## Instantaneous vorticity field



F-15E at 65° angle of attack

Forsythe, Squires, Wurtzler and Spalart (2004)



## Influence of mesh and model on wing pressure coefficient





## Applications – F-18C at 30 Degrees Angle of Attack

- Re = 13.9 x 10<sup>6</sup>, M = 0.28
  - Leading Edge Extension used to increase lift, twin tails canted for increased maneuverability
    - Tail buffet at large incidence due to vortex breakdown
- Simulation details
  - Baseline mesh of 5.9 x 10<sup>6</sup> cells
  - Adaptive Mesh Refinement (Pirzadeh 2000)
    - » Solution-based adaption to 6.2 x 10<sup>6</sup> cells
  - Comparison of DES to S-A RANS/URANS

Morton, Steenman, Cummings and Forsythe (2003)







## Vorticity Isosurface



Morton, Steenman, Cummings and Forsythe (2004)

Baseline Grid, S-A DES

AMR Grid, S-A DES

School of Mechanical, Aerospace, Chemical and Materials Engineering

Schools g Engineering

## Instantaneous Vorticity Field



#### F-18C at 30° angle of attack

#### Morton, Steenman, Cummings and Forsythe (2004)



# Streamwise LEX vortex breakdown position

Schools of Engineering



Figure from NASATION AND Magarials Engineering

## Outline

### Subgrid-scale models

- Length scales in LES subgrid models vs. length scales in RANS models
  - » Reminder of a key difference between the techniques
- Challenges for whole-domain LES in aerodynamics applications
  - Resolving the boundary layer at high Reynolds numbers
- Formulation of hybrid RANS-LES models
  - Detached Eddy Simulation

## Applications

- Massively separated flows from simple geometries to complex geometries
- Improvements and newer developments



# Original formulation of DES ("DES97")

$$\frac{D\widetilde{\nu}}{Dt} = c_{b1}\widetilde{S}\widetilde{\nu} + \text{diffusion} - c_{w1}f_w \left[\frac{\widetilde{\nu}}{\widetilde{d}}\right]^2$$
production
destruction

 $\widetilde{d} = \min(d_w, C_{DES}\Delta)$ 

- Turbulent stress in the RANS region is completely modeled
- Modeled Reynolds stress decreases in the LES region
  - Resolved Reynolds stress (due to resolved velocity fluctuations) is intended to dominate the total stress in the LES Region
- Location where  $d_w = C_{DES} \Delta$  dictates the location of the interface



# Background...

- Reduction of model length scale lowers the eddy viscosity
  - Lowers modeled Reynolds stress
  - Requires an increase in <u>resolved</u> Reynolds stress
    - » Generation of three-dimensional structure ("eddy content") in a separating shear layer
      - > Straightforward in massive separations
      - > What about other flow regimes?
- Issues...
  - Grid spacing fine enough to reduce model length scale and identify "LES region" within the domain
    - » Resolved Reynolds stresses derived from 3D structure have not yet replaced modeled stress
      - > Results from insufficient grid resolution and/or
      - Delay in generation of resolved stress by instabilities in the flow
    - » Initiated in boundary layers



# Types of grids...



Type I grid - Typical of RANS and DES with a thin boundary layer

Wall-parallel grid spacings are comparable to the boundary layer thickness



**Type III** grid – capable of wallmodeled LES

Wall-parallel grid spacings are a fraction of the boundary layer thickness

# Types of grids...



#### Type II grid – Ambiguous

Wall-parallel grid spacings are fine enough to locate the RANS-LES interface within the boundary layer though insufficient to resolve turbulent fluctuations



# Role of the mesh

- Grid spacing fine enough to activate the "LES region" in the boundary layer
  - RANS eddy viscosity will be reduced, lower modeled stress
  - Resolved Reynolds stresses derived from 3D structure may not have yet replaced modeled stress
    - » Results from insufficient grid resolution and/or thickened boundary layer





## Need to address "ambiguous grids"

DES97 prediction of streamlines over an Aerospatiale-A airfoil at 13.3 degrees angle of attack,  $Re = 2 \times 10^6$ 



- Example of an "ambiguous grid"
  - · Can result in separation induced by the grid
- For applications in attached boundary layers
  - Preferable to over-ride length scale switch and maintain RANS behavior regardless the boundary layer grid density

### Objective is formulation of DES that is resistant to ambiguous grids



## Modification of the DES length scale

- Incorporation of information from the solution field into the length scale  $\widetilde{d}$ 
  - Similar idea to F<sub>2</sub> used by Menter and Kuntz (2004) in SST-DES

$$r_d = \frac{\nu_t + \nu}{S_d \kappa^2 d_w^2}$$

 $\nu_t = eddy viscosity$   $S_d = velocity gradients$   $d_w = wall distance$ 

• Use of r<sub>d</sub> in a function that "shields" the boundary layer:

 $f_d = 1 - \tanh\left[(Cr_d)^n\right]$ 

- "C" and "n" control thickness and sharpness of  $\rm f_a$ 

» Optimized values 
$$C = 8$$
,  $n = 3$ 

# DES formulation resistant to ambiguous grids

## **Delayed Detached Eddy Simulation**

$$\frac{D\tilde{\nu}}{Dt} = c_{b1}\tilde{S}\tilde{\nu} + \text{diffusion} - c_{w1}f_w \left[\frac{\tilde{\nu}}{\tilde{d}}\right]^2$$

$$\widetilde{d} = d_w - f_d \max\{d_w - C_{DES}\Delta, 0\}$$

Limits:

$$f_d = 0 \rightarrow \mathsf{RANS}$$
  $f_d = 1 \rightarrow \mathsf{DES97}$ 

 DDES obtained for most other RANS models by multiplying by f<sub>d</sub> the term that constitutes the difference between RANS and DES

Spalart, Deck, Shur, Squires, Strelets, Travin (2006)



# DDES response as wall-modeled LES

- Application to fully-developed channel flow
  - $\text{Re}_{\tau}$  = 5000, domain  $2\pi\delta \times 2\delta \times \pi\delta$ 
    - » Coarse grid...

$$\Delta_x = \Delta_z = 0.10\delta$$
,  $65 \times 75 \times 33$  points

» Fine grid...

$$\Delta_x = \Delta_z = 0.05\delta, \quad 129 \times 129 \times 65 \text{ points}$$

- Aims...
  - » Comparison to DES97
  - » Assess the response of the technique to the grid



# Mean velocity: DDES and DES97



#### Lower skin friction error than in DES97



## Length scale and eddy viscosity

#### DDES and DES97 on the coarse grid

 $\widetilde{d}/d$ 



 $\nu_t/\nu$ 





# Summary

- DDES version addresses interface errors
  - Incorporates information from the solution field into the length scale definition
    - » Solution field (eddy viscosity) determines the length scale along with the grid spacing and wall distance
  - DDES has become DES as the standard for natural applications and other applications where wall modeling is not the objective





