



**Faculty of Mechanical Engineering**

**NUMERICAL INVESTIGATION OF FLOW CHARACTERISTICS  
OF AN OSCILLATORY FLOW ACROSS  
A THERMOACOUSTIC STACK**

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OF AN OSCILLATORY FLOW  
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**SITI HAJAR ADNI BINTI MUSTAFFA**

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in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science  
in Mechanical Engineering**

**Faculty of Mechanical Engineering**

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**2019**

## DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis entitled “Numerical Investigation of Flow Characteristics of an Oscillatory Flow Across a Thermoacoustic Stack” is the result of my own research except as cited in the references. The thesis has not been accepted for any degree and is not concurrently submitted in candidature of any other degree.

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Date : .....

## **APPROVAL**

I hereby declare that I have read this thesis and in my own opinion this thesis is sufficient in terms of scope and quality for the award of Master of Science in Mechanical Engineering.

Signature : .....

Supervisor Name : Dr. Fatimah Al-Zahrah binti Mohd Sa'at

Date : .....

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this thesis to my beloved parent and also my family, who have been my source of inspiration and gave me strength when I thought of giving up, who continually provide their moral, spiritual, emotional and financial support.

## ABSTRACT

Thermoacoustic system uses green technology to convert heat into electrical power or vice versa. The technology is attractive but the lack of understanding about fluid dynamics behavior of flow inside the system leads to the challenging issue in improving the system's performance. Therefore, fundamental study of fluid dynamics in the complex thermoacoustic flow condition is needed. In this study, fluid dynamics investigations of an oscillatory flow across internal structure of a thermoacoustic system were carried out. Two dimensional CFD models of flow across structure known as "stack" inside thermoacoustic systems were solved using ANSYS CFD. The models were solved using laminar, Transition SST and SST  $k-\omega$  turbulence models. The investigation covered drive ratios from 0.3 percent to 3.0 percent which corresponded to Stokes Reynolds number of 59 to 1722. A new investigation of the effect of flow frequency was also reported. The frequencies of flow was set at 13.1 Hz and 23.1 Hz. The CFD models were validated using experimental results. An experimental standing wave rig was developed and velocity data was measured and then used to validate the CFD models. The results of the CFD model agreed with experimental data with the errors ranging between 0.36 to 7.69 percent. Due to the limitation of the experimental rig, cases with drive ratio lower than 0.8 percent and higher than 1.6 percent were verified using theoretical solution. A good match was found between the CFD results and theoretical solution especially at low Reynolds number. Deviation between CFD results and theoretical predictions at high Reynolds number was discussed. Results were discussed based on velocity profiles and vorticity contour of flow within and around the "stack". At 13.1 Hz, turbulence was found to start at a Reynolds number as low as 163. The start of turbulence was delayed to a Reynolds number of 308 as the frequency was increased to 23.1 Hz. The investigation of vortex shedding flow phenomena revealed nine patterns of vortex shedding evolution for both flow frequencies. The vortex that sheds at the end of structure will come back into the channel of the structure as the flow reversed. As a result, the entry length for this oscillatory flow was found to be better predicted using the well-established entry length equation for turbulence one-dimensional flow condition even if the oscillatory flow was laminar. Comparison between the current study and published works regarding the ratio of the channel height to the boundary layer thickness ( $D/\delta_v$ ) was also presented to strengthen the validity of the results of current study. The comprehensive fluid dynamics analysis reported in this study are expected to be beneficial for system that works with oscillatory flow condition especially the thermoacoustic systems.

## ABSTRAK

*Sistem termoakustik menggunakan teknologi hijau untuk menukar haba kepada kuasa elektrik dan sebaliknya. Teknologi tersebut menarik tetapi pemahaman yang kurang terhadap kelakuan dinamik bendalir dalam aliran sistem mendorong kepada cabaran untuk menambahbaik prestasi sistem tersebut. Maka kajian asas terhadap dinamik aliran dalam keadaan aliran termoakustik yang kompleks diperlukan. Dalam kajian ini, model CFD dua dimensi untuk aliran merentasi struktur “stack” dalam sistem termoakustik telah diselesaikan menggunakan ANSYS CFD. Model tersebut telah diselesaikan menggunakan model laminar, model pergolakan Transition SST dan SST k- $\omega$ . Kajian ini merangkumi nisbah penggerak dalam julat 0.3 peratus sehingga 3.0 peratus yang bersamaan dengan nombor Stokes Reynolds 59 sehingga 1722. Kajian baru berkaitan frekuensi aliran telah dilaporkan. Frekuensi aliran adalah dari 13.1 Hz dan 23.1 Hz. Model CFD telah disahkan menggunakan data eksperimen. Sebuah rig eksperimen gelombang berdiri telah dibangunkan dan data halaju telah diukur dan digunakan untuk mengesahkan model CFD tersebut. Perbandingan keputusan CFD dan eksperimen adalah baik dengan peratus kesilapan 0.36 peratus sehingga 7.69 peratus. Disebabkan kekangan rig ujikaji, model dengan nisbah penggerak rendah daripada 0.8 peratus dan tinggi daripada 1.6 peratus hanya dapat disahkan menggunakan teori. Padanan yang baik telah diperolehi antara keputusan CFD dan penyelesaian teori pada nombor Reynolds yang rendah. Sisihan nilai di antara keputusan CFD dan penyelesaian teori pada nombor Reynolds yang tinggi turut dibincangkan. Data yang diperolehi telah dibincangkan dari segi profil halaju dan aliran kontur vortisiti di kawasan dalam dan sekitar “stack”. Pada 13.1 Hz, pergolakan telah dikesan bermula pada nombor Reynolds serendah 163. Permulaan pergolakan telah tertangguh ke nombor Reynolds 308 apabila frekuensi meningkat ke 23.1 Hz. Kajian terhadap fenomena aliran tumpahan vorteks telah menunjukkan sembilan corak evolusi tumpahan vorteks pada kedua-dua frekuensi. Vorteks yang tertumpah pada hujung struktur akan kembali ke dalam saluran apabila aliran berpatah balik. Sebagai hasilnya, panjang masukan aliran ayunan ditemui lebih sesuai diramalkan menggunakan persamaan panjang masukan sedia ada untuk keadaan pergolakan satu dimensi, walaupun aliran ayunan tersebut berada dalam keadaan laminar. Perbandingan antara nisbah ketinggian saluran kepada ketebalan lapisan sempadan ( $D/\delta v$ ) di antara kajian ini dan penerbitan lepas turut dipersembahkan untuk mengukuhkan lagi kesahihan data kajian ini. Analisis menyeluruh terhadap pemahaman dinamik aliran seperti yang dilaporkan dalam kajian ini dijangka akan memberi manfaat kepada sistem yang beroperasi dalam keadaan aliran ayunan terutamanya sistem termoakustik.*

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<b>PAGE</b>
<b>DECLARATION</b>	
<b>APPROVAL</b>	
<b>DEDICATION</b>	
<b>ABSTRACT</b>	<b>i</b>
<b>ABSTRAK</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>LIST OF TABLES</b>	<b>vi</b>
<b>LIST OF FIGURES</b>	<b>viii</b>
<b>LIST OF APPENDICES</b>	<b>xiv</b>
<b>LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS</b>	<b>xix</b>
<b>LIST OF PUBLICATIONS</b>	<b>xx</b>
<b>CHAPTER</b>	
<b>1. INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Background of study	1
1.2 Problem of statement	5
1.3 Objectives of study	6
1.4 Scope of study	6
1.5 Thesis structures	7
<b>2. LITERATURE REVIEW</b>	<b>8</b>
2.1 Thermoacoustic principles	8
2.2 Applications of the thermoacoustic system	10
2.3 Fluid flow phenomena in oscillatory flow	15
2.3.1 Transition to turbulence	17
2.3.2 Vortex shedding phenomenon	23
2.3.3 Entry length	30
2.4 Numerical modelling of thermoacoustic phenomena	34
2.5 Laminar model	35
2.6 Turbulence modelling	36
2.7 Current study in the context of the existing literatures	39
2.8 Summary	40
<b>3. METHODOLOGY</b>	<b>41</b>
3.1 Flowchart of methodology	41
3.2 Computational model of the stack	44
3.3 Grid independency test	51
3.4 Experimental test-rig	52
3.5 Method of data analysis	60
3.6 Model validation	64
3.7 Model verification	69
3.8 Summary	76

<b>4.</b>	<b>RESULT AND DISCUSSION</b>	<b>77</b>
4.1	Velocity profiles	77
	4.1.1 Flow frequency of 13.1 Hz	78
	4.1.2 Flow frequency of 23.1 Hz	85
4.2	Vortex shedding processes	91
	4.2.1 Flow frequency of 13.1 Hz	94
	4.2.2 Flow frequency of 23.1 Hz	106
4.3	Velocity profiles within channel	116
4.4	Entry length	124
4.5	Boundary layer thickness	132
4.6	Summary	136
<b>5.</b>	<b>CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH</b>	<b>137</b>
5.1	Conclusion	137
	5.1.1 Objective 1	137
	5.1.2 Objective 2	137
	5.1.3 Objective 3	138
5.2	Recommendations for future research	141
	<b>REFERENCES</b>	<b>142</b>
	<b>APPENDICES</b>	<b>156</b>

## LIST OF TABLES

<b>TABLE</b>	<b>TITLE</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
3.1	The boundary conditions for flow frequency of 13.1 Hz	48
3.2	The boundary conditions for flow frequency of 23.1 Hz	49
3.3	Specification of test section	57
3.4	List of devices with uncertainty values	60
3.5	Data validation of axial velocity amplitude between theoretical calculations, experimental results and CFD models	66
3.6	Comparison of axial velocity amplitude between theoretical and numerical models at flow frequency of 13.1 Hz	71
3.7	Comparison of axial velocity amplitude between theoretical and numerical models at flow frequency of 23.1 Hz	72 75
3.8	Comparison of percentage of deviation of axial velocity amplitude between theoretical and CFD models for flow frequency of 23.1 Hz	
4.1	Comparison of the percentage of deviation for all CFD models	83
4.2	Comparison of the location of the maximum velocity amplitude between numerical models	85
4.3	Comparison of the percentage of deviation for CFD models	87

4.4	Comparison of the location of the maximum velocity amplitude between numerical models	90
4.5	The description of the vortex wake patterns between Shi et al. (2010) and current findings	93
4.6	Summary of the entry length taken from CFD results and theoretical calculation based on phase $f_{20}$ of a flow cycle	131
4.7	Comparison of the values of the boundary layer thickness between Swift (2002) and CFD models for two flow frequencies	134
5.1	Summary of the findings of velocity profiles for flow frequencies of 13.1 Hz	138
5.2	Summary of the findings of velocity profiles for flow frequencies of 23.1 Hz	139
5.3	Vortex shedding pattern for flow frequency of 13.1 Hz and 23.1 Hz	139

## LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE	TITLE	PAGE
1.1	A schematic diagram of a simple standing waves thermoacoustic mechanism	2
1.2	An ice-cream cabinet powered by a travelling wave thermoacoustic refrigerator (Penn State University, 2005)	3
2.1	The working principle of a standing-wave thermoacoustic refrigerator (Saechan and Dhuchakallaya, 2015)	9
2.2	Schematic diagram of the illustration of (a) unidirectional flow and (b) oscillatory flow	16
2.3	Observation of transition at the location of $\hat{u}_{max}$ for different tube lengths and piston amplitude (Merkli and Thomann, 1975)	18
2.4	Stability diagrams, (a) $Re$ vs $\lambda$ and (b) $Re_{\delta}$ vs $\lambda$ (Hino et. al., 1976)	20
2.5	The locations between $y_p$ and the generation region of turbulence (Ohmi and Iguchi, 1982)	20
2.6	The regimes of laminar, transitional and turbulent flows (Ohmi et. al., 1984)	21
2.7	Correlation equation in terms of $A_0$ and $Re_{\omega}$ (Zhao and Cheng, 1996)	22
2.8	Illustration of the vortex formation in front of a circular cylinder	23

2.9	Instantaneous velocity and vorticity fields around the stack for thick-plate configuration, (a) experimental and (b) computational methods (Blanc-Benon et al., 2003)	25
2.10	Velocity and vorticity fields for thin-plate configuration, (a) computational and (b) experimental methods (Blanc-Benon et al., 2003)	26
2.11	The categories of vortex formation at the end of a stack plate (Aben et al., 2009)	27
2.12	The vortex shedding phenomena of different plate ends (Aben et al., 2009)	27
2.13	The vorticity contour of various vortex shedding patterns at the end of the parallel-plate stack (Mao et al., 2009)	28
2.14	The classification of four different flow pattern regions (Shi et al., 2010)	29
2.15	Velocity development at the entrance region of a circular pipe (Kanda and Shimomukai, 2009)	30
2.16	Normalized entrance length as a function of $Va$ (Tang et al., 2011)	33
2.17	Schematic diagram of the “entrance region” for an oscillating flow (Jaworski et al., 2009)	33
2.18	RANS-based turbulence models available in ANSYS FLUENT (ANSYS, 2013)	37
3.1	Flowchart describing the workflow of the turbulence study	42
3.2	Schematic diagram of the resonator (a) black dashed-box represents the computational domain of the stack and (b) enlarged view for only four plates shown	44

3.3	The time history of the area-weighted average of axial velocity for flow frequencies of, (a) 13.1 Hz and (b) 23.1 Hz	50
3.4	The meshing of the domain of 78780 cell count (red dash box represent the stack)	51
3.5	Grid independency test for velocity profiles within the flow channel	52
3.6	Schematic diagram of standing-wave thermoacoustic system for flow frequency of 13.1 Hz	53
3.7	The test rig. Parts A, B and C are related to Figure 3.8	54
3.8	Exploded view of the resonator	55
3.9	(a) Front view and (b) the technical drawing of the stack	56
3.10	Schematic diagram of the exploded view of components in the “test section I”	57
3.11	Configuration of an acoustic driver (loudspeaker) with rig	58
3.12	Schematic diagram of arrangement of instrumentation devices	59
3.13	(a) The schematic diagram of the computational domain, (b) the illustration of the geometry of the stack structure (only two plates shown), black dashed circle represents the location where velocity profile is measured, (c) the enlarged view of the meshing at the middle of the stack and (d) the oscillatory flow defined in twenty phases of a flow cycle	61
3.14	(a) The schematic diagram of the computational domain, (b) the location of data for model validation, and (c) the location of vortex shedding analysis (yellow dashed box)	62

3.15	The definition of the “ejection stage” and “suction stage”	63
3.16	(a) The schematic diagram of the location of data for entrance region analysis in the computational domain shown as yellow dashed box and  (b) the enlarged investigation area of entrance region analysis shown in black dashed circle	64
3.17	Validation of axial velocity amplitude against drive ratios between theoretical calculations, experimental results and numerical models	68
3.18	The model verification for flow frequency of 13.1 Hz	73
3.19	The model verification for flow frequency of 23.1 Hz	74
4.1	Oscillating velocity profiles for drive ratios of,  (a) 0.30%, (b) 0.45% and (c) 0.65%	79
4.2	Oscillating velocity profiles with turbulent kinetic energy profiles for drive ratios of, (a) 0.83% and (b) 1.0%	80
4.3	Oscillating velocity profiles with turbulent kinetic energy profiles for drive ratios of, (a) 1.2%, (b) 1.5%, (c) 2.0% and (d) 3.0%	82
4.4	Oscillating velocity profiles for drive ratios of,  (a) 0.45%, (b) 0.65%, (c) 0.83%, (d) 1.0%, (e) 1.2% and (f) 1.5%	86
4.5	Oscillating velocity profiles and turbulent kinetic energy profiles  (a) transition regime (DR = 2.0%) and (b) fully-turbulence regime (DR = 3.0%)	89
4.6	The definition of the phases and direction of the flow	91



4.7	Vorticity contour map for the flow around the end of stack during one acoustic cycle for drive ratios, (a) 0.30% ( $Re_D = 402.43$ ), (b) 0.45% ( $Re_D = 607.44$ ) and (c) 0.65% ( $Re_D = 888.38$ )	95
4.8	Vorticity contour map for the flow around the end of stack during one acoustic cycle for drive ratios of, (a) 0.83% ( $Re_D = 1116.17$ ) and (b) 1.0% ( $Re_D = 1347.76$ )	99
4.9	Vorticity contour map for the flow around the end of stack during one acoustic cycle for drive ratios of, (a) 1.2% ( $Re_D = 1697.04$ ) and (b) 1.5% ( $Re_D = 2137.43$ )	102
4.10	Vorticity contour map for the flow around the end of stack during one acoustic cycle for drive ratios of, (a) 2.0% ( $Re_D = 2885.35$ ) and (b) 3.0% ( $Re_D = 4362.19$ )	104
4.11	Vorticity contour map for the flow around the end of stack during one acoustic cycle for drive ratios of, (a) 0.45% ( $Re_D = 599.85$ ), (b) 0.65% ( $Re_D = 869.40$ ) and (c) 0.83% ( $Re_D = 1119.97$ )	107
4.12	Vorticity contour map for the flow around the end of stack during one acoustic cycle for drive ratios of, (a) 1.0% ( $Re_D = 1359.15$ ), (b) 1.2% ( $Re_D = 1628.70$ ) and (c) 1.5% ( $Re_D = 2042.52$ )	111
4.13	Vorticity contour map for the flow around the end of stack during one acoustic cycle for drive ratios of, (a) 2.0% ( $Re_D = 2684.13$ ) and (b) 3.0% ( $Re_D = 4198.94$ )	114
4.14	Axial velocity profiles at difference distances away from the channel entrance at drive ratio of 0.45%; (a) $f = 13.1$ Hz and (b) $f = 23.1$ Hz	117

4.15	The differences of velocity profiles within the channel for drive ratio of 0.45%, (a) $f = 13.1$ Hz and (b) $f = 23.1$ Hz	119
4.16	Axial velocity profiles at difference distances away from the channel entrance for flow frequency of 13.1 Hz; (a) DR = 0.83% and (b) DR = 1.0%	121
4.17	Axial velocity profiles at difference distances away from the channel entrance at drive ratio of 2.0% for flow frequency of 23.1 Hz	122
4.18	Axial velocity profiles at difference distances away from the channel entrance at drive ratio of 3.0%; (a) $f = 13.1$ Hz and (b) $f = 23.1$ Hz	123
4.19	Distribution of velocity amplitude at the centre of the channel for drive ratio of 0.65%, (a) $f = 13.1$ Hz, (b) $f = 23.1$ Hz	125
4.20	Distribution of velocity amplitude at the centre of the channel for flow frequency of 13.1 Hz; (a) DR = 0.83% and (b) DR = 1.0%	127
4.21	Distribution of velocity amplitude at the centre of the channel for flow frequency of 23.1 Hz for drive ratio of 2.0%	128
4.22	Distribution of velocity amplitude at the centre of the channel for drive ratio of 3.0%, (a) $f = 13.1$ Hz, (b) $f = 23.1$ Hz	129
4.23	The estimation of the boundary layer thickness of a velocity profile (Cengel, 2007)	133
4.24	Comparison of boundaries between regimes of oscillating flow between CFD results and Swift (2002)	135

## LIST OF APPENDICES

APPENDIX	TITLE	PAGE
A	User Defined Function Code	156

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS

AHX	-	Ambient Heat Exchanger
CFD	-	Computational Fluid Dynamics
CHX	-	Cold Heat Exchanger
DR	-	Drive ratio
PISO	-	Pressure-Implicit with Splitting Operators
PIV	-	Particle Image Velocimetry
SST	-	Shear-Stress Transport
TKE	-	Turbulent Kinetic Energy
UDF	-	User-Defined Function
UVP	-	Ultrasonic Velocity Profile
2D	-	Two-dimensional
T	-	Theoretical
E	-	Experiment
$\sigma$	-	Inertial number
$D$	-	Diameter of the pipe
$D_h$	-	Hydraulic diameter
$d$	-	Diameter of the pipe
$\rho$	-	Density of the fluid
$\omega$	-	Angular frequency
$\omega'$	-	Dimensionless frequency

$\mu$	-	Dynamics viscosity
$\nu$	-	Kinematic viscosity
$\delta$	-	Boundary layer thickness
$\delta_v$	-	Boundary layer thickness
$Re$	-	Reynolds number
$Re_\delta$	-	Reynolds number based on boundary layer thickness
$U$	-	Axial velocity amplitude
$u_m$	-	Velocity amplitude at the middle of the channel
$A$	-	Critical value of Reynolds number
$Re_{crit}$	-	Critical value of Reynolds number
$\lambda$	-	Stokes parameter
$y_p$	-	Distance from the wall to its position
$R$	-	Radius of the pipe
$\Lambda$	-	Stokes parameter
$Re_\omega$	-	Kinetic Reynolds number
$A_0$	-	Amplitude of the oscillation
$x_{max}$	-	Maximum fluid displacement
$\omega_z$	-	Vorticity
$L_h$	-	Characteristics length
$u_{max}$	-	Maximum velocity amplitude
$Re_{max}$	-	Maximum Reynolds number
$Va$	-	Valensi number
$L_d$	-	Entry length
$L_a$	-	Fluid displacement amplitude
$u_1$	-	Velocity

$h_{\kappa,1}$	-	Shape factor
$\rho_m$	-	Mean density
$c_p$	-	Specific heat capacity
$P_1$	-	Oscillating pressure
$T_m$	-	Mean temperature
$x$	-	Axial length
$U_1$	-	Volume flow rate
$\vec{v}$	-	Velocity vector
$t$	-	Time
$\tau$	-	Stress tensor
$p$	-	Pressure
$k$	-	Thermal conductivity
$T$	-	Temperature
$S_c$	-	User-defined function
$S_m$	-	User-defined function
$S_E$	-	User-defined function
$\mu_t$	-	Turbulent viscosity
$\gamma$	-	Intermittency
$\Gamma$	-	Effective diffusivity
$\delta_v$	-	Viscous penetration depth
$\delta_k$	-	Thermal penetration depth
$\lambda$	-	Wavelength
$c$	-	Speed of sound
$f$	-	Flow frequency
$k$	-	Wavenumber

$\pi$	-	Pi (3.14159)
$L$	-	Length of the resonator
$H$	-	Height of the resonator
$x_s$	-	Stack centre position
$x_1$	-	Inlet locations
$x_2$	-	Outlet locations
$l$	-	Length of the plate
$d$	-	Thickness of the plate
$D$	-	Channel's height
$P_a$	-	Acoustic pressure at the location of pressure antinode
$P_m$	-	Mean pressure
$m'_2$	-	Oscillating mass flux
$\theta$	-	Phase
$\ell$	-	Turbulent length scale
$TI$	-	Turbulent intensity
$y^+$	-	Location of the nearest node from the wall
$m$	-	Location at the middle of the stack
$y$	-	Distance from the wall
$\phi$	-	Phase
$\Phi$	-	Porosity
$\xi$	-	Displacement amplitude

## LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

Mustaffa, S. H. A., Mohd Saat, F. A. Z. and Mat Tokit, E. 2018. Turbulent vortex shedding across internal structure in thermoacoustics oscillatory flow. *Journal of Advanced Research in Fluid Mechanics and Thermal Sciences*, 46 (1), pp. 175-184.

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Mustaffa, S. H. A., Mohd Saat, F. A. Z. and Mat Tokit, E. 2016. Design of experimental test-rig to investigate turbulence in oscillatory flow used in thermoacoustics. *Postgraduate Symposium for Environmental Engineering Technology*.