Diurnal and Seasonal Thermocline and Shear Modulations from Internal Gravity Waves J. A. Christophersen¹, G. R. Foltz², R. C. Perez²



LABORATORY



Instability From TACOS and ATOMIC



The composited buoyancy ((a) - (b)), composited shear-squared ((c) – (d)), and percentage of positive marginal instability events ((e) – (f)) are shown over the course of a diurnal period for high and low SST_{da} events as observed from the TACOS mooring. Strong stability at the surface is seen during the afternoon for high SST_{da} (a). This corresponds to a shoaling of the composited mixed layer depth (blue line) and low percentage (< 10%) of positive marginal instability events (e).



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Seasonal composites of SST diurnal amplitudes (SST_{da}) constructed from linear regression analysis between incoming solar shortwave radiation (SARAH) and wind speeds (CCMP). Enhanced SST_{da} exists at 4°N, 23°W during DJF and MAM.

Thermodynamic and dynamic data from two deployments (March 2017 – March 2018 & May 2019 – May 2020) of the Tropical Atlantic Current Observation Study (TACOS; see Dr. Renellys Perez's poster for more details) is analyzed to determine how the thermocline and shear variance relate to mixing during high/low SST_{da} . It is found that on diurnal timescales the thermocline acts as a wave guide for internal tides that modulate shear variance, particularly during evening-early morning hours when the mixed-layer is deepest.

Diurnal composites of the shear-squared averaged over all Saildrones used during the ATOMIC field campaign from January 2020 – March 2020. Significantly enhanced shear-squared during the early morning hours at around 60 meters is similar to what is seen at TACOS at 30 meters.

The seasonally-averaged mixed layer depth (a) and the seasonal thermocline depth (b) from WOA18 for January – March 2020 are plotted for the tropical Atlantic Ocean. White lines with black dots indicate the latitude and longitude tracks taken by a Saildrone during the Atlantic Tradewind Ocean-Atmosphere Mesoscale Interaction Campaign (ATOMIC, 2020). All four of the Saildrones used during ATOMIC had similar paths.



Diurnal composites of the MLD, buoyancy (N²), shear-squared, and the percentage of marginal instability occurrences per hour are shown for high SST_{da} per each season. Both MAM and JJA feature strong shear variance above the thermocline, which is associated with higher occurrences of mixing.



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4. Seasonal Buoyancy, Shear-Squared,

5. Semi-diurnal Internal Tides

Spectral analyses were computed to further investigate the interplay between the buoyancy gradient and shear-squared at TACOS (a; c). Power spectra of the maximum buoyancy depth (a) shows significant peaks at the semi-diurnal period.

The power spectra of shear-squared was computed for the Saildrone observations (b) and the TACOS mooring observations (c). Relatively large power occurs at sub-inertial frequencies for Saildrones at 45 meters and at 35 meters for TACOS.



