



## Mean velocity profiles of two-dimensional fully developed turbulent flows

### *Distribution de la vitesse moyenne dans un écoulement bidimensionnel turbulent*

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#### ABSTRACT

In the work presented in this Note, an Indirect Turbulence Model (ITM) is proposed to derive the mean velocity profiles in wall-bounded flows in hydraulically smooth channels having a very wide rectangular cross section. The analytical expression of the mean velocity distribution is given. The connection between the velocity distribution parameters and Reynolds' number is indicated. The thickness of the viscous sublayer is evaluated. The skin friction coefficient is computed, and the analytical expression of the turbulent viscosity coefficient is provided.

The validity of the proposed model is verified with reference to the velocity distributions, available in the literature, obtained with Direct Numerical Simulation (DNS) of Navier-Stokes' equations.

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#### R É S U M É

Un modèle de turbulence a été développé pour représenter la distribution de la vitesse moyenne locale dans un écoulements bidimensionnel turbulent. Le modèle proposé permet de décrire la distribution de la vitesse moyenne (en fonction du nombre de Reynolds) dans un canal lisse à section rectangulaire très large. Le modèle permet aussi d'évaluer l'épaisseur de la sous-couche visqueuse, la viscosité turbulente et le coefficient de frottement local.

Le modèle proposé a été vérifié avec succès en utilisant les distributions de la vitesse disponibles dans la littérature et obtenues par intégration numérique directe des équations de Navier-Stokes (DNS).

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## 1. Introduction

The mean velocity profile in wall-bounded turbulent uniform flows is usually divided into different regions: the layer close to the solid wall (viscous sublayer) is connected to the overlap layer through a buffer layer; the outer layer, located around the channel axis, finally characterizes the flow field in which the velocity distribution is mainly affected by the geometrical shape of the cross section (see, e.g., [1,2]).

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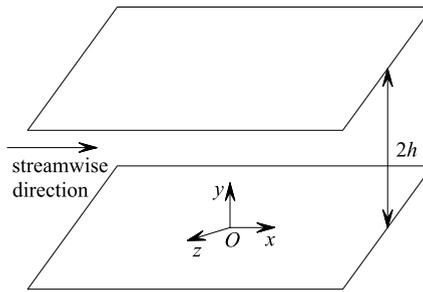


Fig. 1. Definition sketch of the flow configuration and coordinate system.

In the zones close to the solid walls of hydraulically smooth channels, some expressions have been proposed that are able to reproduce the mean velocity distribution for  $0 \leq y^+ \leq 20$  [3–5], where  $y^+ = yu_\tau\rho/\mu$  is the non-dimensional quantity introduced to represent the distance from the solid wall, which is defined by the distance from the wall  $y$ , the dynamic viscosity  $\mu$ , the density  $\rho$  and the friction velocity  $u_\tau$ ; this latter variable defined by the relationship  $u_\tau = (\tau_0/\rho)^{0.5}$  with  $\tau_0$  as the wall-shear stress.

The mean velocity distributions in the overlap layer are normally represented with Prandtl's logarithmic law  $u^+ = (\ln y^+)/k + b$  (see, e.g., [6–8]), or with power laws such as  $u^+ = cy^{+\alpha}$  (see, e.g., [9–11]), where  $u^+ = u/u_\tau$  is the non-dimensional velocity, which is defined by the mean velocity  $u$  and the friction velocity  $u_\tau$ ;  $k$  is the von Kármán constant, and  $b$ ,  $c$  and  $\alpha$  are parametric quantities.

However, in the overlap layer, the mean velocity distribution shows a trend that is not fully in line with the logarithmic law, nor with the power law [12,13]. This observation has persuaded some authors to propose expressions for the velocity profile that are more complex than the logarithmic and power laws and based on asymptotic expansions of suitable turbulent quantities [14–18].

The velocity distribution in the buffer layer defined by  $5 < y^+ < 70$  has been obtained by Gersten and Herwig [19] using an Indirect Turbulence Model (ITM) that assumes that the distribution of mean shear stresses (viscous or turbulent) in the cross section is known.

L'vov et al. [20] have proposed a turbulence model whose application makes it possible to deduce the mean velocity distribution in cross sections of smooth wall-bounded turbulent flows.

In the work presented in this Note, an Indirect Turbulence Model (ITM) is proposed to derive the mean velocity profiles in wall-bounded flows in hydraulically smooth channels having a very wide rectangular cross section. The analytical expression of the mean velocity distribution is given. The connection between the velocity distribution parameters and the Reynolds number is indicated. The thickness of the viscous sublayer is evaluated. The skin friction coefficient is computed, and the analytical expression of the turbulent viscosity coefficient is provided.

The validity of the proposed model is verified with reference to the velocity distributions, available in the literature, obtained with Direct Numerical Simulation (DNS) of Navier–Stokes' equations.

Comparisons with the turbulence model of L'vov et al. [20] and with the experimental correlations proposed by Dean [21] are finally performed.

## 2. Indirect turbulence model

Consider the uniform flow of a Newtonian viscous liquid in the space bounded by two horizontal and plane surfaces that are hydraulically smooth, indefinitely wide and located at a reciprocal distance  $2h$ . Take as the origin of an orthogonal Cartesian coordinate system  $x, y, z$  the generic point  $O$  of the surface, set at a conventional height zero. The horizontal axis  $x$  is turned in the streamwise direction, the vertical axis  $y$  is upwards, and the horizontal axis  $z$  is turned such that the triplet  $xyz$  is right-handed (Fig. 1).

With reference to the schematic situation of Fig. 1, the mean quantities are introduced: velocity  $u$ , shear stress  $\tau_v$  due to the dynamic viscosity  $\mu$ , total shear stress  $\tau$ , and shear stress  $\tau_t$  connected to the phenomenon of turbulence. The following relationships exist:

$$\mu \frac{\partial u}{\partial y} = \tau_v \quad (1)$$

$$\frac{\partial u}{\partial x} = 0 \quad (2)$$

$$\tau_v = \tau - \tau_t \quad (3)$$

$$\tau = \left(1 - \frac{y}{h}\right) \tau_0 \quad (4)$$

where  $\tau_0$  is the shear stress in  $y = 0$ .

As a consequence, the velocity distribution is then expressed by

$$u(y) = \int \frac{1}{\mu} \left[ \left( 1 - \frac{y}{h} \right) \tau_0 - \tau_t \right] dy + u_0 \tag{5}$$

where the integration constant  $u_0$  is determined by imposing the no-slip condition

$$u(0) = 0 \tag{6}$$

Eq. (5), the solution of the differential problem (1) and (2) completed with Eqs. (3) and (4), is physically legitimate if it makes it possible to reproduce the velocity mean values shown by experience or deduced through the numerical integration of fluid dynamics equations. This remark defines the posed problem in the inverse problems category and focuses it on the search for the turbulent shear stress distribution  $\tau_t$  able to reproduce the velocity mean values that characterize the flow of a viscous fluid in a given physical domain. In defining the values to give to the distribution  $\tau_t(y)$ , it is necessary to consider that the symmetry of the system leads to stress values  $\tau_t(h) = 0$  for the axis ( $y = h$ ). It is well known that for laminar flows ( $Re < Re_c$ , where  $Re$  is the Reynolds number and  $Re_c$  is the critical Reynolds number),  $\tau_t = 0$  in the domain  $[0, h]$  and that for the flows characterized by  $Re \rightarrow \infty$ ,  $\tau_t = \tau$  for  $y > 0$ . These two extreme distributions can be considered as degenerate forms of a second-order curve such as

$$\tau_t + 2B\tau_t y + Cy^2 + 2D\tau_t + 2Ey + F = 0 \tag{7}$$

where the coefficients  $B, C, D, E$ , and  $F$  depend on the flow Reynolds number. Such a dependence defines the validity limits of Eq. (7) in the finite values field  $Re > Re_c$ .

From the condition  $\tau_t(h) = 0$ , it follows that

$$F = -Ch^2 - 2Eh \tag{8}$$

### 3. System identification

The search for the turbulent shear stress distribution  $\tau_t$  can be obtained with the identification theory methods. Introduced the usual non-dimensional quantities  $u^+ = u/u_\tau$  and  $y^+ = y\rho u_\tau/\mu = \tilde{y} Re_\tau$ , where  $\tilde{y} = y/h$  and  $Re_\tau = y_{\max}^+ = h\rho u_\tau/\mu$  is Reynolds' friction number, Eqs. (1), (3) and (7) become

$$\frac{du^+}{d\tilde{y}} = \tilde{\tau}_v \tag{9}$$

$$\tilde{\tau}_v = Re_\tau(1 - \tilde{y}) - \tilde{\tau}_t \tag{10}$$

$$\tilde{\tau}_t^2 + 2\tilde{B}\tilde{\tau}_t\tilde{y} + \tilde{C}\tilde{y}^2 + 2\tilde{D}\tilde{\tau}_t + 2\tilde{E}\tilde{y} + \tilde{F} = 0 \tag{11}$$

where  $\tilde{\tau}_v = \tau_v \frac{h}{\mu u_\tau}$ ,  $\tilde{\tau}_t = \tau_t \frac{h}{\mu u_\tau}$ ,  $\tilde{B} = B \frac{h^2}{\mu u_\tau}$ ,  $\tilde{C} = Ch^2$ ,  $\tilde{D} = D \frac{h}{\mu u_\tau}$ ,  $\tilde{E} = Eh$ , and  $\tilde{F} = -\tilde{C} - 2\tilde{E}$ .

Put  $\lambda_1 = 2\tilde{B}\tilde{y} + 2\tilde{D}$  and  $\lambda_2 = \tilde{C}\tilde{y}^2 + 2\tilde{E}\tilde{y} + \tilde{F}$ , solving Eq. (11) for  $\tilde{\tau}_t$  (with the condition  $0 \leq \tilde{\tau}_t \leq Re_\tau$ ) yields the symbolic expression

$$\tilde{\tau}_t = -\frac{\lambda_1}{2} - \sqrt{\frac{\lambda_1^2}{4} - \lambda_2} = \mathfrak{S}(\tilde{B}, \tilde{C}, \tilde{D}, \tilde{E}, \tilde{y}) \tag{12}$$

With Eqs. (10) and (12), Eq. (9) becomes

$$\frac{du^+}{d\tilde{y}} = [(1 - \tilde{y})Re_\tau - \mathfrak{S}(\tilde{B}, \tilde{C}, \tilde{D}, \tilde{E}, \tilde{y})] \tag{13}$$

Integrating this equation with the no-slip condition (6) gives [22,23]

$$u^+ = (\varphi_1 + \psi_1/2)y^+/Re_\tau + \varphi_2(y^+/Re_\tau)^2 + \varphi_3\psi_3 + \varphi_4 \ln(\psi_2) \tag{14}$$

where

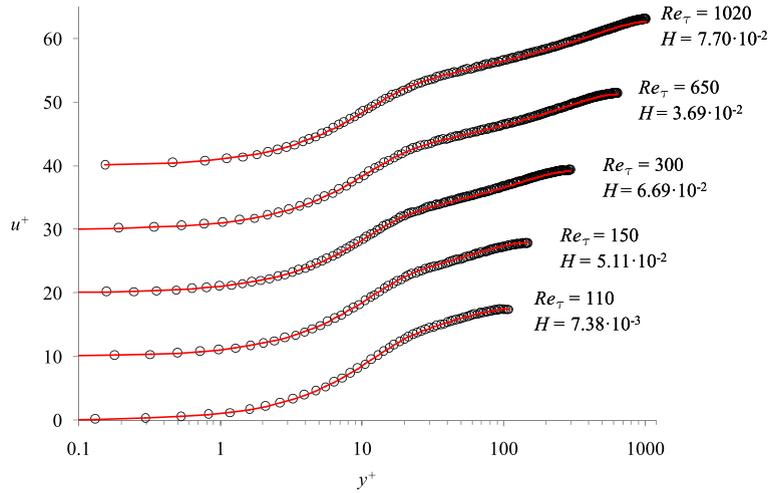
$$\psi_1 = \sqrt{P_1(y^+/Re_\tau)^2 + P_2y^+/Re_\tau + P_3} \tag{15}$$

$$\psi_2 = (P_2/\sqrt{P_1} + 2\sqrt{P_3}) / \{ (2P_1y^+/Re_\tau + P_2) / \sqrt{P_1} + 2\psi_1 \} \tag{16}$$

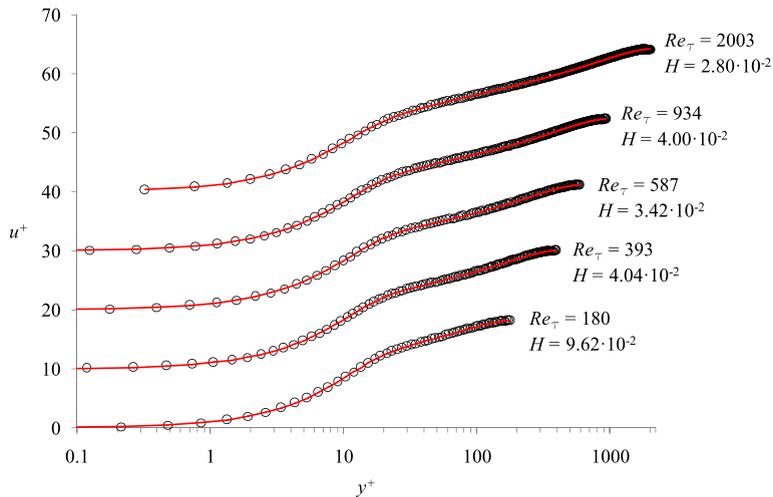
$$\psi_3 = \psi_1 - \sqrt{P_3} \tag{17}$$

$$\varphi_1 = Re_\tau + \tilde{D} \tag{18}$$

$$\varphi_2 = (\tilde{B} - Re_\tau)/2 \tag{19}$$



**Fig. 2.** Mean velocity profiles deduced with the proposed model (—); mean velocity obtained with the DNS technique (○) [25–27]. The plots are shifted vertically by 10 units. The symbol  $H$  indicates Hellinger's distance (see Section 4).



**Fig. 3.** Mean velocity profiles deduced with the proposed model (—); mean velocity obtained with the DNS technique (○) [28–30]. The plots are shifted vertically by 10 units.

$$\varphi_3 = (\sqrt{P_1 P_2}) / (4P_1^{3/2}) \tag{20}$$

$$\varphi_4 = (P_2^2 - 4P_1 P_3) / (8P_1^{3/2}) \tag{21}$$

$$P_1 = \tilde{B}^2 - \tilde{C} \tag{22}$$

$$P_2 = 2(\tilde{B}\tilde{D} - \tilde{E}) \tag{23}$$

$$P_3 = \tilde{D}^2 + \tilde{C} + 2\tilde{E} \tag{24}$$

The relationships between the coefficients that define the velocity distribution (14) and Reynolds' friction number are expressed as

$$\tilde{B} = Re_\tau (1 - f_1) \tag{25}$$

$$\tilde{C} = \frac{Re_\tau^2 - \tilde{B}Re_\tau}{f_2} - Re_\tau^2 + 2\tilde{B}Re_\tau \tag{26}$$

$$\tilde{D} = -\frac{1}{Re_\tau} \left( \frac{Re_\tau^2 - \tilde{B}Re_\tau}{f_3} + Re_\tau^2 \right) \tag{27}$$

$$\tilde{E} = \frac{Re_\tau^2 - \tilde{B}Re_\tau}{f_4} + Re_\tau^2 - \tilde{B}Re_\tau + \tilde{D}Re_\tau \tag{28}$$

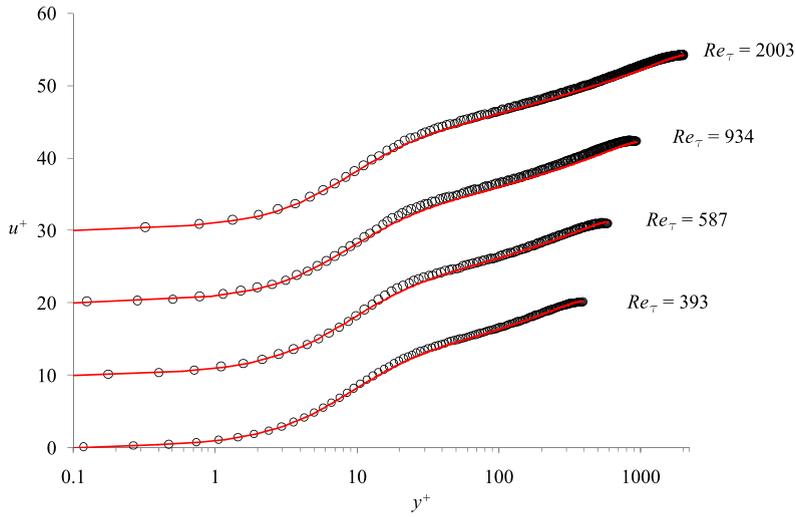


Fig. 4. Mean velocity profiles deduced with the proposed model (○); mean velocity obtained with the turbulence model of L'vov et al. [20] (—). The plots are shifted vertically by 10 units.

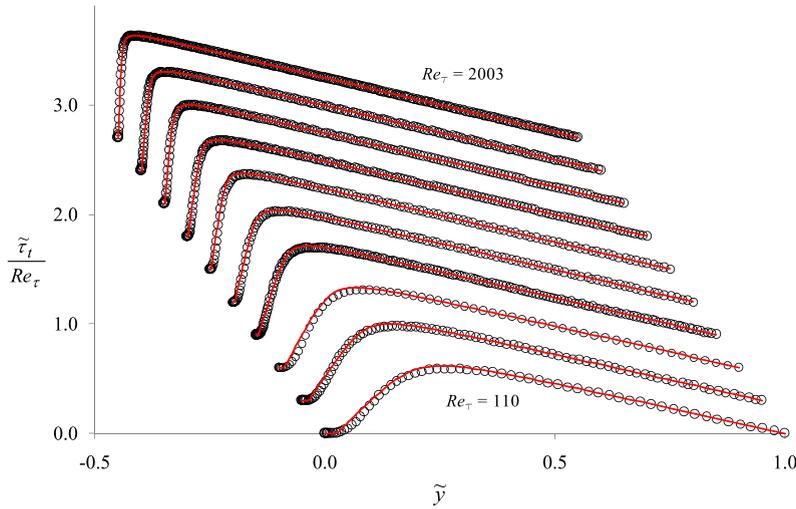


Fig. 5. Turbulent shear stresses deduced with the proposed model (—); turbulent shear stresses obtained using the DNS technique (○). The plots are shifted vertically by 0.3 units and horizontally by -0.05 units.  $Re_\tau = 110, 150, 180, 300, 393, 587, 650, 934, 1020, 2003$ .

with

$$f_1 = (3.655Re_\tau^2 + 25704.994Re_\tau - 55013.808) \cdot 10^{-6} \tag{29}$$

$$f_2 = (6.991Re_\tau^2 + 39476.172Re_\tau + 2873405.419) \cdot 10^{-6} \tag{30}$$

$$f_3 = (-7.490Re_\tau^2 - 49231.626Re_\tau + 556178.423) \cdot 10^{-6} \tag{31}$$

$$f_4 = (-23.766Re_\tau^2 - 82908.798Re_\tau - 4325049.776) \cdot 10^{-6} \tag{32}$$

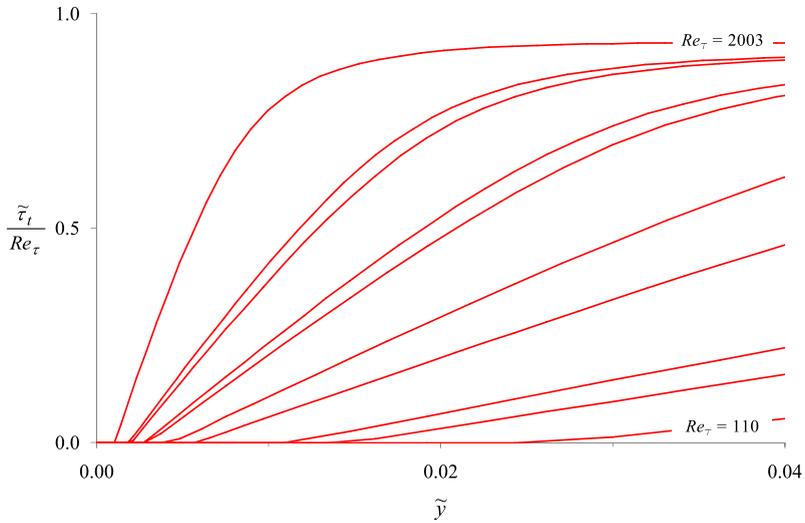
These results have been obtained with methods based on the theory of optimal control [24], using the velocity distribution available in the literature that has been deduced with the numerical procedure DNS for  $Re_\tau = 110, 150, 300, 650$ , and 1020 [25–27] (Fig. 2).

#### 4. Model validation and results analysis

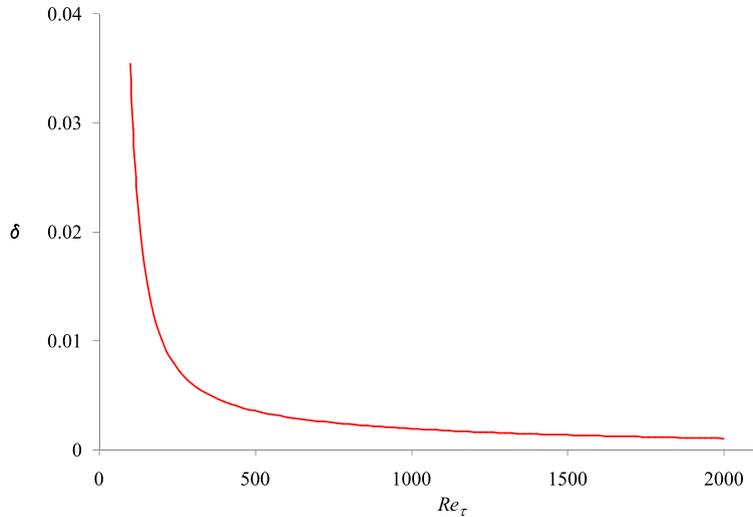
The validity of the proposed indirect turbulence model has been verified with reference to the numerical results deduced with the DNS technique for  $Re_\tau = 180, 393, 587, 934$ , and 2003 [28–30] (Fig. 3). The good agreement between the velocity

**Table 1**  
Hellinger's distance  $H(\tilde{\tau}_{tDNS}||\tilde{\tau}_{tTM})$  between the DNS and theoretical turbulent shear data.

$Re_\tau$	$H$
110	$5.50 \times 10^{-2}$
150	$8.91 \times 10^{-2}$
180	$1.35 \times 10^{-1}$
300	$1.50 \times 10^{-1}$
393	$1.33 \times 10^{-1}$
587	$1.35 \times 10^{-1}$
650	$1.23 \times 10^{-1}$
934	$1.08 \times 10^{-1}$
1020	$4.69 \times 10^{-2}$
2003	$1.21 \times 10^{-1}$



**Fig. 6.** Turbulent shear stresses deduced with the proposed model for  $Re_\tau = 110, 150, 180, 300, 393, 587, 650, 934, 1020, 2003$ .



**Fig. 7.** Thickness of the viscous sublayer  $\tilde{y} = \delta(Re_\tau)$  deduced with the proposed model.

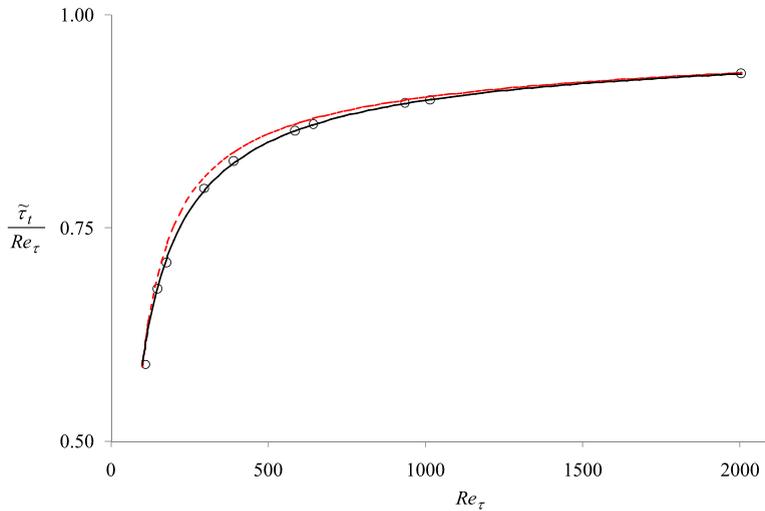
distribution deduced with the adopted approach and the one obtained with the DNS technique is testified to by the values taken from Hellinger's distance, defined as

$$H(u_{DNS}^+||u_{TM}^+) = \sum_{y^+=0}^{Re_\tau} \{ [u_{DNS}^+(y^+)]^{0.5} - [u_{TM}^+(y^+)]^{0.5} \}^2 \tag{33}$$

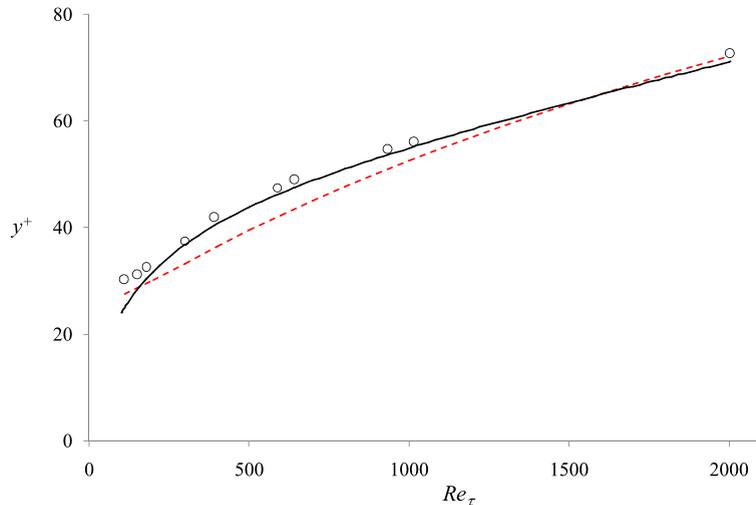
**Table 2**

The average and the maximum error between the DNS and theoretical mean velocity data in the range  $\delta < \bar{y} \leq 1$ .

$Re_\tau$	$\delta$	Maximum error	Average error
110	$2.91 \times 10^{-2}$	0.80%	0.49%
150	$1.60 \times 10^{-2}$	4.87%	1.14%
180	$1.21 \times 10^{-2}$	3.52%	0.46%
300	$6.05 \times 10^{-3}$	3.82%	0.88%
393	$4.51 \times 10^{-3}$	4.09%	0.83%
587	$3.08 \times 10^{-3}$	2.32%	0.67%
650	$2.84 \times 10^{-3}$	4.02%	0.56%
934	$2.05 \times 10^{-3}$	5.21%	0.58%
1020	$1.91 \times 10^{-3}$	4.79%	0.70%
2003	$1.04 \times 10^{-3}$	4.68%	0.33%



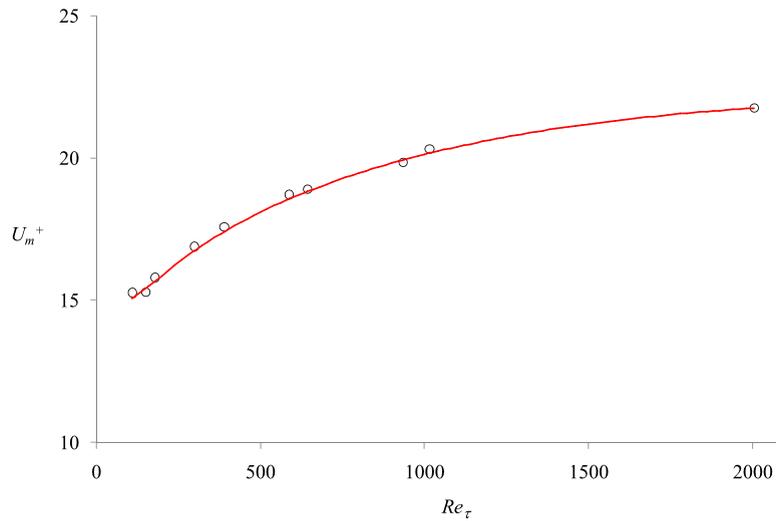
**Fig. 8.** Maximum turbulent shear stress deduced with: proposed model (---); turbulence model of L'vov et al. [20] (—); DNS technique (○) for  $Re_\tau = 110, 150, 180, 300, 393, 587, 650, 934, 1020, 2003$ .



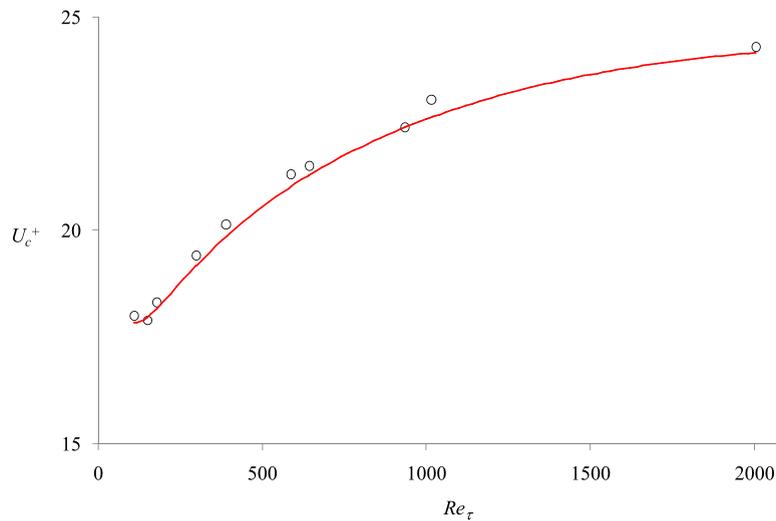
**Fig. 9.** Location of the maximum turbulent shear stress deduced with: proposed model (---); turbulence model of L'vov et al. [20] (—); DNS technique (○) for  $Re_\tau = 110, 150, 180, 300, 393, 587, 650, 934, 1020, 2003$ .

where  $u_{DNS}^+(y^+)$  is the velocity distribution computed with the DNS technique and  $u_{ITM}^+(y^+)$  is the velocity distribution obtained with the proposed indirect turbulence model. Hellinger's distance is a good indicator to evaluate how the two velocity distributions resemble each other [31–33].

Fig. 4 shows the comparison of the mean velocity profiles deduced with the adopted approach with the one obtained with the turbulence model of L'vov et al. [20] for  $Re_\tau = 393, 587, 934,$  and  $2003$ .



**Fig. 10.** Mean bulk velocity (normalized by friction velocity)  $U_m^+$  deduced with the proposed model (—) and with the DNS technique (○) for  $Re_\tau = 110, 150, 180, 300, 393, 587, 650, 934, 1020, 2003$ .



**Fig. 11.** Mean centerline velocity (normalized by friction velocity)  $U_c^+$  deduced with the proposed model (—) and with the DNS technique (○) for  $Re_\tau = 110, 150, 180, 300, 393, 587, 650, 934, 1020, 2003$ .

Fig. 5 shows the distribution of the stresses  $\tilde{\tau}_t(\tilde{y})$  deduced with the adopted approach and the one obtained with the DNS technique. The agreement between the DNS and theoretical turbulent shear data is testified to by the values taken from Hellinger's distance  $H(\tilde{\tau}_{tDNS} || \tilde{\tau}_{tTM})$  (Table 1). The analysis of Fig. 6 highlights the fact that the turbulent shear stress computed with the proposed model takes nil values near the wall in a region referred to as the viscous sublayer, whose thickness  $\tilde{y} = \delta$  is a function of  $Re_\tau$  (Fig. 7).

The average and the maximum error between the DNS and theoretical mean velocity data in the range  $\delta < \tilde{y} \leq 1$  are reported in Table 2.

The maximum turbulent shear stress, as well as the location of the maximum turbulent shear stress, deduced with the proposed model are in agreement with the one obtained using the DNS technique and the turbulence model of L'vov et al. [20] (Figs. 8 and 9).

The agreement between the DNS and theoretical data is also verified with reference to: mean bulk velocity, normalized by the friction velocity, defined as  $U_m^+ = \int_0^1 u^+ d\tilde{y}$  (Fig. 10); mean centerline velocity, normalized by the friction velocity,  $U_c^+$  (Fig. 11); skin friction coefficient based on mean bulk velocity  $U_m$ ,  $C_f(U_m) = \tau_0 / \frac{1}{2} \rho U_m^2$  (Fig. 12); skin friction coefficient based on the centerline velocity  $U_c$ ,  $C_f(U_c) = \tau_0 / \frac{1}{2} \rho U_c^2$  (Fig. 13); Reynolds' number based on the mean bulk velocity  $U_m$  and the full channel width,  $Re_m = 2hU_m\rho/\mu$  (Fig. 14).

The skin friction coefficient  $C_f(U_m)$  computed with the proposed model is also in agreement with Dean's suggested correlation of  $C_f = 0.073Re_m^{-0.25}$  [21] (Fig. 15).

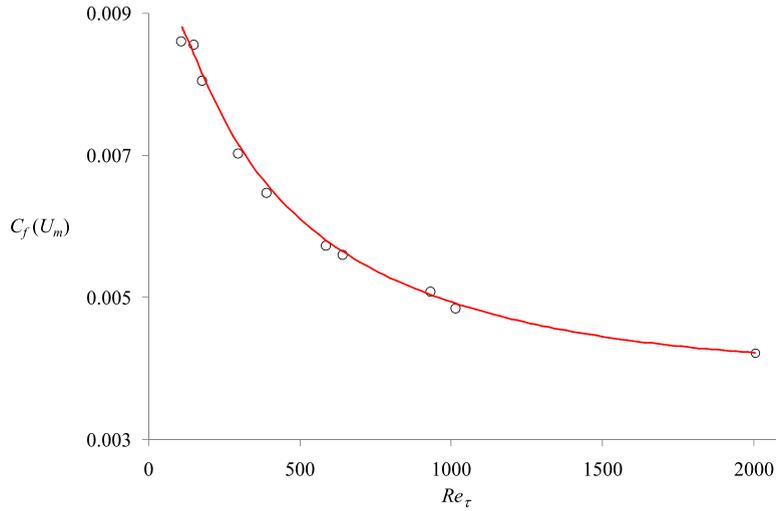


Fig. 12. Skin friction coefficient  $C_f(U_m)$  deduced with the proposed model (–) and with the DNS technique (○) for  $Re_\tau = 110, 150, 180, 300, 393, 587, 650, 934, 1020, 2003$ .

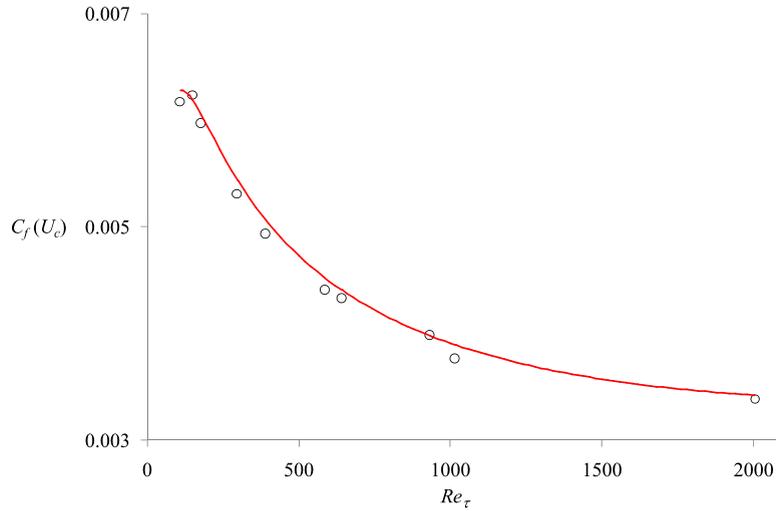


Fig. 13. Skin friction coefficient  $C_f(U_c)$  deduced with the proposed model (–) and with the DNS technique (○) for  $Re_\tau = 110, 150, 180, 300, 393, 587, 650, 934, 1020, 2003$ .

The application of the proposed model makes it possible to obtain the analytical expression of the turbulent viscosity coefficient  $\tilde{\mu}$  defined by the relationship

$$\tilde{\mu} \frac{du^+}{dy} = \tilde{\tau}_t \tag{34}$$

From Eqs. (12) and (13), it follows that

$$\tilde{\mu} = \frac{\mathfrak{S}(\tilde{B}, \tilde{C}, \tilde{D}, \tilde{E}, \tilde{y})}{(1 - \tilde{y})Re_\tau - \mathfrak{S}(\tilde{B}, \tilde{C}, \tilde{D}, \tilde{E}, \tilde{y})} \tag{35}$$

Fig. 16 shows the viscosity coefficient distributions  $\tilde{\mu}$  deduced with the proposed model.

The mean velocity distribution computed using the parametric equation (14) shows a trend that is not in line with the Prandtl’s logarithmic law, and consequently the proposed model does not allow to evaluate the von Kármán constant. In fact, contrary to the logarithmic law, the diagnostic function  $g(y^+) = y^+ du^+/dy^+$  [34] deduced using Eq. (13) does not assume constant values in significant portions of the flow field (Fig. 17). This result is in conformity with the observations of Zanoun et al. [35], according to which the logarithmic law is a good representation of the mean velocity distribution in the overlap layer for  $Re_\tau > 2000$ .

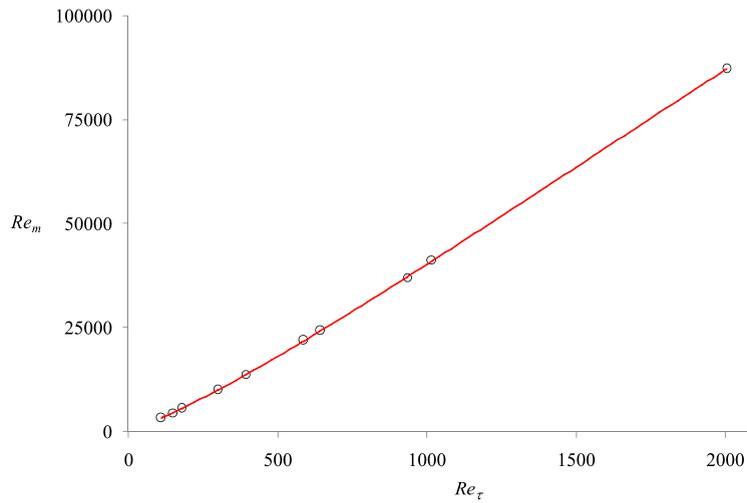


Fig. 14. Reynolds' number (based on the mean bulk velocity)  $Re_m$  deduced with the proposed model (—) and with the DNS technique (○) for  $Re_\tau = 110, 150, 180, 300, 393, 587, 650, 934, 1020, 2003$ .

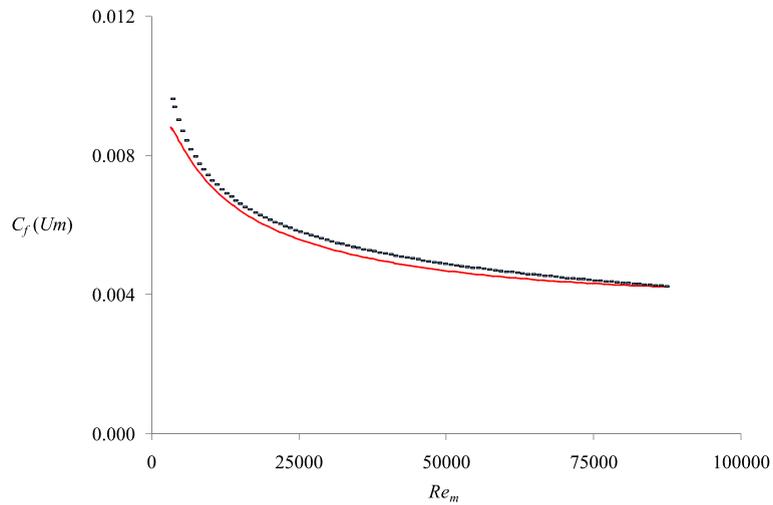


Fig. 15. Skin friction coefficient  $C_f(U_m)$  deduced with the proposed model (—) and with the Dean's correlation (--) [21].

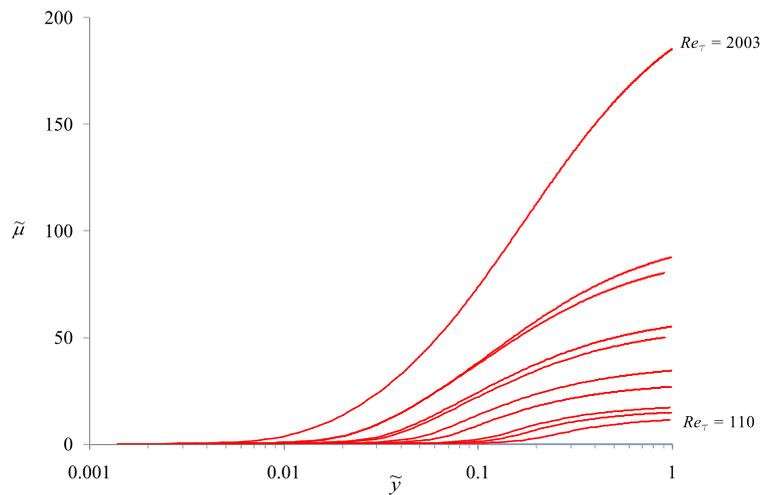
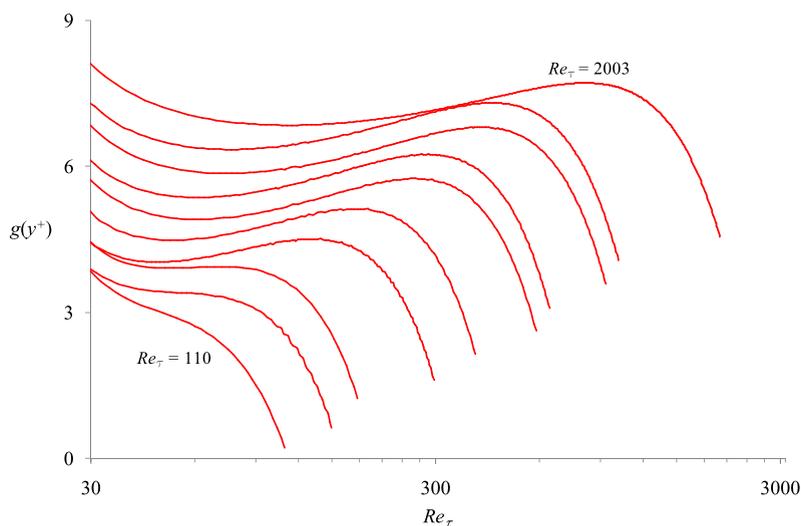


Fig. 16. Turbulent viscosity coefficient  $\tilde{\mu}$  deduced with the proposed model for  $Re_\tau = 110, 150, 180, 300, 393, 587, 650, 934, 1020, 2003$ .



**Fig. 17.** Diagnostic function  $g(y^+) = y' du^+ dy^+$  [34] deduced with the proposed model for  $Re_\tau = 110, 150, 180, 300, 393, 587, 650, 934, 1020, 2003$ . The plots are shifted vertically by 0.5 units.

## 5. Conclusions

This short Note is inspired by the works of Di Nucci et al. [22,23]. In these works, the parametric equation (14) has been proposed to represent the mean velocity distribution in wall-bounded flows in hydraulically smooth channels having a very wide rectangular cross section.

After giving a predictive character to Eq. (14) by specifying the connection between the velocity distribution parameters and the Reynolds number, this work evaluates the thickness of the viscous sublayer, provides the analytical expression of the turbulent viscosity coefficient, gives the skin friction coefficient.

In the range  $110 \leq Re_\tau \leq 2003$ , the validity of the proposed model has been verified with reference to the velocity distributions, available in the literature, obtained with Direct Numerical Simulation (DNS) of Navier–Stokes' equations.

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