

Modeling water waves and internal waves

Lecture 4 : internal waves

Vincent Duchêne

Ravello School of Mathematical Physics

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Outline

Well-posedness?

The initial-value problem for the hydrostatic Euler equations in finite-regularity spaces is ill-posed in general, and open otherwise.

- 1 Vorticity
- 2 Density stratification
- 3 Non-hydrostatic pressure

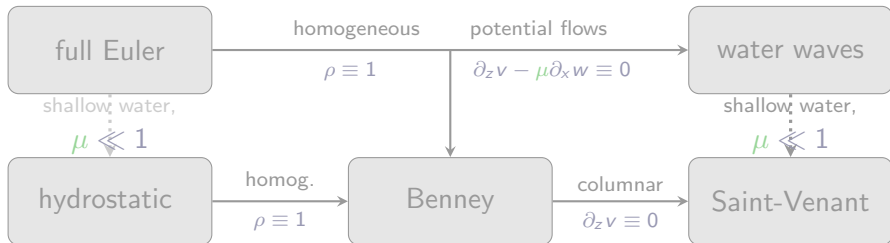
Meet Benney

The **hydrostatic, homogeneous** Euler equation with free surface (*a.k.a.* Benney system) reads in semi-Lagrangian coordinates ($d = 1, \epsilon = 1$)

$$\begin{cases} \partial_t h + v \partial_x h + h \partial_x v = 0 & \text{in } \mathbb{R} \times [0, 1], \\ \partial_t v + \int_0^1 (\partial_x h)(\cdot, r) dr + v \partial_x v = 0 & \text{in } \mathbb{R} \times [0, 1]. \end{cases} \quad (\text{Benney})$$

Notice if $h(\cdot, r) \equiv 1 + \zeta(\cdot)$ and $v(\cdot, r) \equiv u(\cdot)$ then (Benney) reduces to

$$\begin{cases} \partial_t \zeta + u \partial_x \zeta + (1 + \zeta) \partial_x u = 0 & \text{in } \mathbb{R}, \\ \partial_t u + \partial_x \zeta + u \partial_x u = 0 & \text{in } \mathbb{R}. \end{cases} \quad (\text{S.-V.})$$



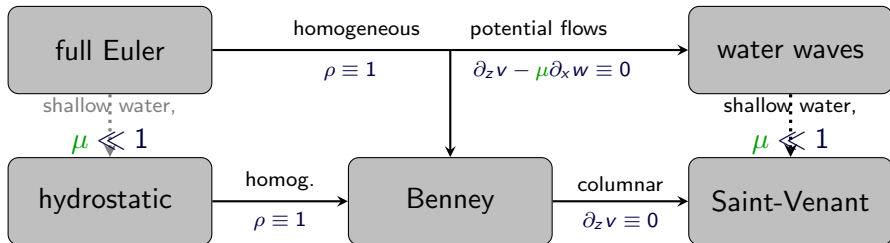
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The energy method generally fails on (Benney) **Qn** : Why?

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The energy method generally fails on (Benney) because for given $(h, v)(r)$ the operator $L_{v,h} := \begin{pmatrix} v & h \\ \int_0^1 \bullet & v \end{pmatrix}$ cannot be “symmetrized”.

↪ There are deep connections between well-posedness/ill-posedness issues and the spectral stability of shear velocity solutions, *i.e.* $\text{Spec}(L_{v,h}) \subset \mathbb{R}$.

Spectral stability

[Di Martino, El Hassanieh, Godlewski, Guillod & Sainte-Marie (2025)]

Under some regularity assumptions on v one has

① $\text{Spec} \left(\begin{pmatrix} v & 1 \\ \int_0^1 \bullet & v \end{pmatrix} \right) = v([0, 1]) \cup \text{Spec}_d$, where

$$\text{Spec}_d = \left\{ c \in \mathbb{C} \setminus v([0, 1]) : \int_0^1 (c - v(r))^{-2} dr = 1 \right\}.$$

② $\text{Spec}_d \cap \mathbb{R} = \{c_-, c_+\}$ where
 $c_- \in [\inf(v) - 1, \inf(v)]$ and $c_+ \in [\sup(v), \sup(v) + 1]$.

③ $\text{Spec}_d \subset \mathbb{R}$ if
(i) for all $r \in [0, 1]$ $v'(r) \neq 0$ and $v''(r) \neq 0$ [Rayleigh]; or
(ii) for all $r \neq r_*$, $v'(r) < 0$ and $v''(r)(r - r_*) \leq 0$ [Fjørtoft]

④ $\text{Spec}_d \not\subset \mathbb{R}$ if $v(r_*) = 0$ and v^{-2} is integrable. [Renardy (2009)]

Qn : Do spectral stability imply well-posedness, and conversely?

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Spectral stability vs well-posedness

Spectral stability does not imply well-posedness (in general) but

- [Teshukov (1992)] formally argues that (if $v' \neq 0$) spectral stability implies that (Benney) is diagonalizable and hence well-posed.
- [Grenier (1999), Brenier (1999), Masmoudi&Wong (2012)] proved well-posedness (in the rigid-lid framework) under Rayleigh criterion.

Spectral instability implies ill-posedness¹ for (Benney) [Han-Kwan&Nguyen (2016)]

Formal argument. Notice that $(h, v)(t, x, r) = (1, \underline{v}(r)) + \varepsilon(\tilde{h}, \tilde{v})(t, x, r)$ with $(\tilde{h}, \tilde{v})$ solution to

$$\partial_t \begin{pmatrix} \tilde{h} \\ \tilde{v} \end{pmatrix} + L_{\underline{v}} \partial_x \begin{pmatrix} \tilde{h} \\ \tilde{v} \end{pmatrix} = 0. \quad (\text{lin-Benney})$$

satisfies (Benney) up to $\mathcal{O}(\varepsilon^2)$ terms.

If there exists $(\dot{h}, \dot{v})$ and $c \in \mathbb{C} \setminus \mathbb{R}$ such that $L_{\underline{v}} \begin{pmatrix} \dot{h} \\ \dot{v} \end{pmatrix} = c \begin{pmatrix} \dot{h} \\ \dot{v} \end{pmatrix}$, then for all $k \in \mathbb{R}$, $(\tilde{h}, \tilde{v})(t, x, r) := (\dot{h}, \dot{v})(r) e^{ik(x-ct)} + \text{c.c.}$ satisfies (lin-Benney) and

$$\|(\tilde{h}, \tilde{v})\|_{L^\infty} \approx e^{k|\text{Im}(c)|t}.$$

¹the solution map is not (Hölder) continuous with respect to initial data.

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The initial-value problem for the hydrostatic Euler equations in finite-regularity spaces is ill-posed in general, and open otherwise.

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Meet density stratification

The **hydrostatic, density-stratified** Euler equation with free surface reads in semi-Lagrangian coordinates ($d = 1, \epsilon = 1$)

$$\begin{cases} \partial_t h + v \partial_x h + h \partial_x v = 0 & \text{in } \mathbb{R} \times [0, 1], \\ \partial_t v + \frac{1}{\varrho} M \partial_x h + v \partial_x v = 0 & \text{in } \mathbb{R} \times [0, 1]. \end{cases} \quad (\text{hydro})$$

where $(M\eta)(\cdot, r) := \rho(0) \int_0^1 \eta(\cdot, r') dr' + \int_0^r \varrho'(r') \int_r^1 \eta(\cdot, r'') dr'' dr'$.

Qn : What does “density stratification” means?

Well-posedness?

The initial-value problem for (hydro) in finite-regularity spaces is open.

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Spectral analysis

Given $(h(r), \varrho(r), v(r))$ we seek information on $\text{Spec} \left(\begin{pmatrix} v & h \\ \frac{1}{\varrho} M & v \end{pmatrix} \right)$ where
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which is (equivalent to) the **Taylor–Goldstein equation**.

Qn : What physical quantity does ζ represent?

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Special situations

① Homogeneous case

If $\varrho \equiv 1$ we recover the condition $\int_0^1 h(r)(c - v(r))^{-2} dr = \int_0^1 h(r) dr.$

② No-shear case

If $v \equiv 0$ and $\varrho' < 0$ then we have a **Sturm–Liouville problem**.
 $\rightsquigarrow$ there exists solutions $c_n^2 \approx \frac{1}{n^2}$ ($n \in \mathbb{N}$) and ζ_n with n nodes.

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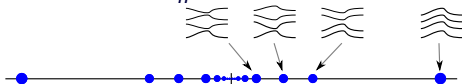
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Under some regularity assumptions on (h, ϱ, v) one has

- ① Assuming that for all $r \in [0, 1]$, $\varrho(r) > 0$, $\varrho'(r) > 0$ and $\frac{1}{4}v'(r)^2 \leq \frac{h(r)\varrho'(r)}{\varrho(r)}$ there is no solution $c \in \mathbb{C} \setminus \mathbb{R}$. [Miles, Howard (1961)]
- ② In this case, there exists solutions $c_n \notin v([0, 1])$ ($n \in \mathbb{N}$) which are approximated as $c_n \sim \{\inf v, \sup v\}$ by solutions to

$$\tan\left(\int_0^1 \frac{I(r)}{v(r)-c} dr\right) = \frac{-(v(0)-c)I(0)}{h(0)-(v(0)-c)v'(0)/2}$$

where $I(r) = \sqrt{\frac{h(r)\varrho'(r)}{\varrho(r)} - \frac{v'(r)^2}{4}}$.

- ③ If in addition $v'(r) \neq 0$ for all $r \in [0, 1]$, this yields

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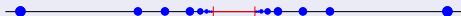
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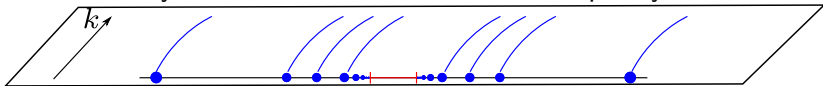
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Removing the hydrostatic assumption

If we re-introduce the non-hydrostatic contributions then an additional term adds to the **Taylor–Goldstein equation**.

Some consequences are:

- Branches $c_n(k_x)$ emerge from eigenvalues of the hydrostatic problems for sufficiently small values of the horizontal frequency k_x .



Qn : Are you surprised?

- For sufficiently large values of the horizontal frequency k_x , $c_n(k_x) \in \mathbb{R}$.

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- If $v' \equiv 0$ and $\frac{hg'}{\rho} \equiv N^2$ (N is the Brunt–Väisälä frequency) and in the rigid-lid framework then

$$\omega_n^2(k_x) := k_x^2 c_n(k_x)^2 = \frac{N^2 k_x^2}{k_z^2 + \mu^2 k_x^2}, \quad k_z = n\pi, \quad n \in \mathbb{N}.$$

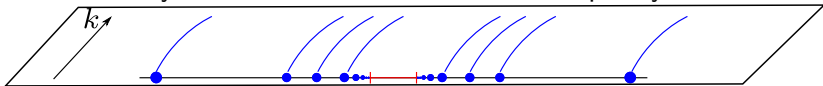
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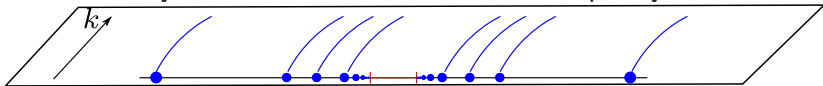
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Some consequences are:

- Branches $c_n(k_x)$ emerge from eigenvalues of the hydrostatic problems for sufficiently small values of the horizontal frequency k_x .



Qn : Are you surprised?

- For sufficiently large values of the horizontal frequency k_x , $c_n(k_x) \in \mathbb{R}$.

Qn : Are you surprised?

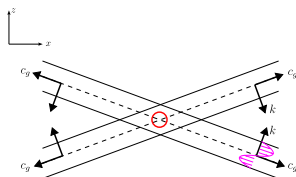
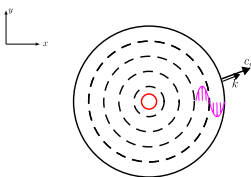
- If $v' \equiv 0$ and $\frac{hg'}{\rho} \equiv N^2$ (N is the Brunt-Väisälä frequency) and in the rigid-lid framework then

$$\omega_n^2(k_x) := k_x^2 c_n(k_x)^2 = \frac{N^2 k_x^2}{k_z^2 + \mu^2 k_x^2}, \quad k_z = n\pi, \quad n \in \mathbb{N}.$$

Qn : Are you surprised?

Internal waves vs surface waves

	(x, y) Surface waves	(x, z) Internal waves
Dispersion relation	$\omega((k_x, k_y)) = \tilde{\omega}((k_x, k_y))$	$\omega((k_x, k_z)) = \tilde{\omega}(k_x/k_z)$
For given pulsation	Fixed wavevector length	Fixed wavevector direction
Group velocity $\nabla_{\mathbf{k}}\omega(\mathbf{k})$	Parallel to wavevector	Orthogonal to wavevector



Partially based on [\[Beckebanze, Raja & Maas \(2019\)\]](#)

Thoughts to go

- The situation with shear velocities and density variations is much richer than the irrotational, homogeneous (water-wave) case.
- As a rule of thumb, in our problems, shear velocity had a destabilizing effect and increasing-with-depth density a stabilizing effect.
- Internal waves are quite different from surface (or acoustic) waves.
- From a mathematical viewpoint, spectral stability and well-posedness are connected, but not equivalent.

Bibliography

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Next (and final) talk

V. Interfacial waves vs internal waves (and discussion)