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Comment

Interactive comment on “Assimilation of GNSS radio occultation observations in GRAPES” by Y. Liu and J. Xue

Y. Liu and J. Xue

liuyan@cma.gov.cn

Received and published: 21 September 2014

We are grateful for the reviewer’s valuable comments and suggestions, which help us to improve the quality of the paper and our knowledge. Following are our replies.

1) Overall the results show a stable NWP model coupled to the GRAPES 3D-Var assimilation system. It should be stated that most of this work is not unique, and the differences from previous research highlighted which are predominantly the configuration of the system (the low model top and the choice to assimilate just conventional and GNSS-RO observations), the vertical thinning of the data to the nearest model level, and presumably the observation error. However, even though the abstract teases the reader that the “tuning of the observation error” will be included this is never pre-

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sented. The specification of the observation error is obviously of great importance to a variational assimilation system so more details on this and the “tuning” done would be helpful, as well as make this work distinctive. I realize this may be redundant with the paper “in press” but since this is unattainable at present it leaves one unsatisfied. The quality of the results suggest there may be some merit in the way the observation error was tuned which could be of benefit to the larger community.

Answer: This paper is a summary of the use of radio occultation (RO) data in GRAPES. The development of RO assimilation in GRAPES-VAR has experienced three stages since 2008: the assimilation of retrievals and refractivity in a pressure coordinator version, and the assimilation of refractivity in a height coordinator version. One of our aims is to show that RO has great values, especially in an assimilation system without a number of satellite radiance data.

Thank you for reminder. We forget to mention the tuning of observation error. For the refractivity observation error, we firstly refer to the error of Met. Office, then tune it based on the method proposed by Desroziers et al. (2005). We have not mentioned the tuning of observation in our another paper, because what we have done is limited. Maybe we cannot organize the structure of the paper well, so the referee thinks it is redundant with the paper “in press”. We have supplied this content in the revision.

2) Along with the other reviewer I was confused as to the potential temperature not being listed with the state variables, as it is needed in subsequent calculations. I am not sure what is trying to be said on page 7617, around line 20 about the potential temperature. What is required for the temperature computation in Eq. 13 is the Exner pressure and the potential temperature.

Answer: GRAPES is a non-hydrostatic model, its forecast variables are Exner pressure, potential temperature, three components of wind field, and humidity variables. But the current GRAPES-VAR is a hydrostatic system. We choose the Exner pressure π as the control variable. Therefore, to keep the hydrostatic balance relationship, we

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use the derivate potential temperature from Exner rather than the actual model potential temperature.

3) The bi-weight method used in the QC, would seem to reject data near the surface due to the large variability in the signal near the surface. However, I would be cautious about saying blankly that the quality of the RO data is not good. Due to the considerations that the RO signal covers a large horizontal extent and that it becomes ambiguous in the presence of horizontal moisture gradients which are common in the lower atmosphere. This can cause a great variability in the RO near the surface. So something more long-winded and more specific could be useful.

Answer: Thank you for suggestions. At present, our scheme is simple. From the research, we can find the assimilation of RO in the low troposphere and up the height of 20hPa is not good. Good quality control may improve the results. We will strengthen data quality control work in the future.

4) A bit of an aside but it is with regard to the quite striking improvement shown for Figure 2 (and note that the text on page 7624 never states what level this RMSE is from, though the figure caption does). I wonder since what was assimilated were temperature and moisture profiles from a 1D-Var retrieval using ECMWF a priori. Would the results be drastically different if ECMWF profiles were assimilated at the occultation locations? A better proxy for GRAPES-Var may be to do a 1D-Var retrieval with the NWP model in GRAPES as a priori instead. This is out of the context of the study, but I just think since the a priori is from a different model, many will consider that there is a lot of information coming from that external model into GRAPES, and less from the GNSS-RO which was really the point.

Answer: The level is 500 hPa for ACC and RMSE in Figure 2. We have supplied the explanation in the revision. I think that there is no obvious difference to assimilate the RO data of ECMWF profiles as proxy at the occultation locations, because the results in Figure 2 are very early results in 2008. At that time the global GRAPES-Var was just

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developed, the performance was bad, and the data assimilated were very limited, which could assimilate conventional observations and NOAA-15 & -16 AMSU-A radiance. The system not only had big bias, but also often interrupted. I think it is related to the data shortage. Only if more data were available in the southern hemisphere and upper levels, the bias would be reduced. It is none of the information from external model or RO data. Due to its advantages, RO data has more effects than other observations.

5) I was also surprised to see in Figure 3 that the observation counts in the vertical (which are not labeled or referred to), dropped in the region of greatest sensitivity 10km-24km. Is this due to the observation error specification, which is then causing rejects due to the innovation vector exceeding four times the observation error? This is a very peculiar behavior as I believe most systems show the peak in the observation counts in this area.

Answer: Thank you for your attention to the details. We have seldom noticed the data used in our system. Since the reviewer asked me to supply the number in the y-axis, we know that we have not done the quality control well, and tuned the observation well. I think the observation counts in the vertical levels between 10 and 24 km dropped, which is related to the specified observation error. Recently, GRAPES forecast model and data assimilation system updated, we have not re-estimated these parameters. We will strengthen these works in the future.

6) Lastly, in the second paragraph of the Summary section on page 7628, it was a bit ambiguous what was meant by the “sparseness” of radiance data. Do you mean the radiance data have broad vertical sensitivities as compared to GPS-RO? Because the hyperspectral IR sounders do have sensitivity through the depth of the GNSS-RO vertical coverage, and the MW sounders also cover this area and have sensitivity much higher, with some with sensitivity up to 90km. What has been shown and is critical is the complementary nature of the GNSS-RO and the radiance observations. As radiances require bias correction, GNSS-RO can help to “anchor” these biases. Further these radiance observations now “anchored” by GNSS-RO indirectly spread this information

with better horizontal resolution. Lastly, radiance observations are not blind to model temperature biases which lie along an atmosphere in which the mass is exponentially decaying.

Answer: My original meaning is to express that MW sounders have less data due to less channels, and have broad vertical sensitivities as compared to GPS-RO. Thank you for providing these knowledges. We have modified the introduction and summary parts according to your suggestions.

7) Some suggestions for corrections and typos:

Page 7616, line 16: system with an emphasis on the direct

Page 7616, line 17: semi-implicit semi-Lagrangian grid point model

Page 7616, line 20: in a high performance

Page 7616, line 21: The development of GRAPES system (referred to

Page 7617, line 26: is a three dimensional variational assimilation four dimensional variational system

Page 7618 line 7: The RO measurements undergo stages when moving from the....., to bending angle, to refractivity and to the retrieval....., any of which can then be assimilated.

Page 7618 line 17: However, these assimilated data..... and due to the longer processing path contain the most approximation

Page 7618 line 19: propagation of the observation error is more complex when using the retrievals.

Page 7625 line 16: is significantly reduced from that of the.....

Page 7626 line 9: tropical region, an observation providing information on the mass fields will not

Page 7626 line 12: available, the reduction of model bias and the

Page 7627 line 1: rather we would like to test the

Page 7627 line 2: cycling system can run stably without

Page 7627 line 11: The RMSE of geopotential height increases 10 times from 30 meters to 300 meters

Page 7628 line 2: and the GPS, GLONASS and Galileo navigation satellite systems

Page 7633 Fig 2 caption: GRAPES and NCEP analyses

Page 7634 Fig 3 caption: The observation counts are now in the figure but are not labeled or mentioned in the caption or the text.

Page 7637 Fig 6 caption: RMSE of geopotential

Answer: We have corrected all sentences and words you suggested, except for “Page 7627 line 11: The RMSE of geopotential height increases 10 times from 30 meters to 300 meters”, we think the unit is geopotential meters not meters.

Interactive comment on Atmos. Meas. Tech. Discuss., 7, 7613, 2014.

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