

Interactive comment on “Evaluation of OAFlux datasets based on in situ air-sea flux tower observations over the Yongxing Islands in 2016” by Fenghua Zhou et al.

Anonymous Referee #1

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General comments: In this paper, the authors did a nice job to design a high quality air-sea flux tower (YXASFT) in Yongxing Islands for air-sea boundary layer flux-related observations. The instrumentation and the real-time data acquisition system were well designed. Then the authors evaluated the widely used WHOI OAflux reanalysis datasets using in situ data observed from YXASFT. Seasonal comparisons were quantitatively analyzed between the OAflux and YXASFT observations by calculating the coefficient of determination, root-mean-square errors, and biases. Through seasonal comparison, the authors get innovative conclusions that the reliability of OAflux reanalysis datasets is associated with the monsoon system in SCS, which mainly manifested in the following aspects: 1. OAflux provides a better estimation of $U(Q_a)$ in the spring and winter

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characterized by a stronger (drier) northeast monsoon than in the summer-autumn characterized by a relatively weaker (wetter) southwest monsoon 2. The OAflux LHF performance is better during the spring and winter than in the summer-autumn, which is further associated with the monsoon climate in the SCS. The authors also quantified the biases in SHF and LHF of the OAflux datasets and investigated the reasons that may be responsible for the biases. They found that the bias in Q_a is the main source of error for the LHF in winter monsoon period. Meanwhile, both biased in Q_a and U are responsible for controlling the biases in LHF during summer monsoon period. Biases in T_s are responsible for controlling the biases in SHF, and the effects of biases in T_s on the biases in SHF during the spring and winter are much greater than that in the summer-autumn period. At last, the authors suggest that both T_s and SHF in OAflux are the most unreliable data which should be used with considerable cautions to drive ocean models. Additionally, U , Q_a and LHF should be used with proper consideration due to their seasonal reliability variations. Researchers should feel more at ease using these data during the winter monsoon than in the southwest monsoon. In general, the paper is well-written. Given the importance of the OAflux reanalysis products in the air-sea interaction community, it is worthwhile to systematically evaluate the accuracy of each variable. South China Sea is a region that is lack of sufficient air-sea interaction observations. The authors carried out in situ observations from air-sea tower in this region within relatively long periods, which is of great significance to improve the reliability of reanalysis datasets. The presentation of the results and conclusions are clear. Thus I recommend the paper to be accepted and published in AMT with minor to moderate revisions. I give the following suggestions to help the authors further improve the paper.

Specific comments: 1. In sec 2.1, the description of sensor wiring and data acquisition system is too simple, with only a single sentence “The sensor wiring and data acquisition diagram for the YXASFT is shown in Fig. 2.” in Page 3, line 19. Readers other than professional engineers are difficult to understand this observation system. What’s the meaning of SEx, VXx, Px, Ixx. . . , it’s a signal, or protocol standard, or sensor hardware interface? I suggest the authors to give more detailed description of the

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data acquisition system. For instance, Young-05106 wind sensor with impulse output signal is connected to CR3000 datalogger through Px (channel or protocol standard?). In addition, I pay more attention to the data sharing and data quality. Whether the data can be open access directly by contract the communication author after the publication of the paper? What is the data format? Whether the necessary data quality control is taken? I visited the data sharing website listed in Page 3, line 17 and found that the web is in Chinese, it's not convenient for non Chinese readers, also I could not find the data download link. 2. In sec 3.1, the authors did a nice job to validate COARE3.0 using the direct eddy covariance flux (ECF) measurements, the verifying results are convincing. However, they didn't give descriptions of the EC data processing steps and the algorithm taken by each step. As I know that the EC method is mathematically complex, and significant care is required to set up different processing steps for different sites, measurements and study purposes, the difference in the processing algorithm can result in the difference between the turbulent fluxes results. I suggest the authors to add a brief description on how the fluxes are parameterized and calculated for the ECF turbulent data. The authors can also add a figure to express the ECF data processing flow more clearly. For instance, which algorithms were adopted for coordinate rotation and WPL compensation? 3. According to the description of in situ data in the paper, I realized that the wind speed range in the YXASFT observed data covers typhoon force winds, as there were at least 2 strong typhoons (No.1603 "MARINAE" and No.1624 "SARIKA") passed through Xisha sea area. So I suggest the authors to add discussions on how COARE3.0 algorithm performs compared to observed exchange coefficients for high wind conditions.

Technical corrections: 1. Page 1, line 24, suggest changing "observed" to "calculated". 2. Page 1, line 25, suggest changing "product" to "dataset". 3. Page 1, line 28, delete "an". 4. Page 2, line 7, change "SHF" and "LHF" to "SHF" and "LHF". 5. Page 2, line 12-13, "uncertainties in the measured values of basic observational quantities involved in the calculation of fluxes" this sentence is not clear, suggests change to "uncertainties in the turbulent exchange coefficient were also involved in the fluxes

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calculations". 6. Page 2, line 15, change "a flux" to "fluxes". 7. Page 2, line 16, change "," to ",". 8. Page 2, line 27, change "a shore-based air-sea boundary flux tower" to "a shore-based boundary layer air-sea flux tower". 9. Page 3, line 3, change "SHF" and "LHF" to "SHF" and "LHF". 10. Page 3, line 27, suggest changing "The in situ datasets comprise observations from the YXASFT" to "The in situ observations obtained by YXASFT". 11. Page 4, line 12, suggest changing "parameters" to "variables". 12. Page 4, line 15, delete "variable". 13. Page 5, line 7, change "SHF" and "LHF" to "SHF" and "LHF". 14. Page 6, line 17,19,20,22, change "LHF" to "LHF". 15. Page 6, line 26, change "SHF" to "SHF". 16. Page 7, line 7, suggest adding "before further application" at the end of the sentence. 17. Page 9, line 19, change "SHF" and "LHF" to "SHF" and "LHF". 18. Page 10, line 5, change "the" to "the". 19. Page 10, line 6, change "or" to "and". 20. Page 11, line 9, "estimates of both Ts and SHF using OAF flux" it not clear, suggest changing to "Both Ts and SHF in OAF flux" 21. Page 11, line 9-10, suggest removing "including driving regional ocean models for the SCS" as OAF flux is not just used to drive ocean models. 22. Page 21-28, suggest adjusting the colour of the figures to make it unified. 23. Some parts of the text have repeated descriptions. For instance, in Page 2, line 15 "Thus, the appropriate evaluation of a flux dataset is necessary prior to use them in specified study area". In Page 7, line 6-7 "It is therefore necessary to evaluate the OAF flux dataset to assess its applicability in the SCS", these two sentences have almost the same meaning to this paper, no need to repeat in the paper. I suggest the authors to read the article carefully and polish the article to make it more smooth and clear.

Please also note the supplement to this comment:

<https://www.atmos-meas-tech-discuss.net/amt-2017-456/amt-2017-456-RC1-supplement.pdf>

Interactive comment on Atmos. Meas. Tech. Discuss., doi:10.5194/amt-2017-456, 2018.

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