

Interactive comment on “Evaluation of ARM Tethered Balloon System instrumentation for supercooled liquid water and distributed temperature sensing in mixed-phase Arctic clouds” by Darielle Dexheimer et al.

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We thank all of the reviewers for their valuable comments. Below, we have added some responses to the comments submitted.

Reviewer 1 General Comments: 1) The manuscript approaches the subject as if its TBS is a novel sampling technique that has never before been attempted, when in fact, the literature contains references to cloud sampling with tethered balloons for nearly the past 40 years. Kitchen and McClatchey (1981) flew an instrumented aerostat in

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cumulus clouds in the UK. Several investigators have followed suit, including measurements in the Arctic (Lawson et al. 2011) and at the South Pole (Lawson and Gettelman 2014). The manuscript needs to provide context for their research by discussing the previous efforts and explain why their current approach is an improvement, or how it differs.

Response 1) We thank the reviewer for their comments, but believe historical TBS flight activities are discussed significantly in the existing manuscript on pg. 2, lines 16-26. We did add a reference to the highly relevant work discussed in Lawson 2011 and have included a summary of that publication to the existing discussion on pg. 2. We agree that we should better explain why our current approach is an improvement or how it differs. Towards that end we have revised the following text to read: “The work discussed herein pertains to the new capability of using tethered balloon systems within restricted airspace for persistent, repeatable, interannual flights inside Arctic mixed phase clouds, with supercooled liquid water sondes and distributed temperature sensing optical fiber systems.”

2) The methodology used to process and present the measurements does not do justice to the larger variance in the different techniques being compared. While the variance can be seen in some of the measurements (e.g. time series in Fig. 3; scatterplots in Fig. 7), the overall message presented is that there is relatively good agreement in the measurements and that therefore they are useful. In fact, it is not at all clear that the vibrating wire technique is of any value in quantitatively measuring SLWC. The manuscript compares mean values of SLWC measured from the two vibrating wire techniques to validate the instruments when the variance in the measurements is larger than the mean; this is not an acceptable method for validating instrument performance. I agree that the technique may be useful as an SLWC detection method, and perhaps it can differentiate between low values i.e., < a few tenths g m⁻³ and high values (> ~ 1 g m⁻³), but even this cannot be validated since high SLWC measurements are not presented.

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Response 2) Again we thank the reviewer, but believe the discrepancies in the vibrating wire measurements are thoroughly discussed in the manuscript. In order to allow the reader to judge the efficacy of the vibrating wire SLWC measurements, comparisons between the SLWC measured by more than one vibrating wire instrument are shown, in addition to how the vibrating wire-measured SLWC compares with radiosonde-derived SLWC and MWR-derived SLWC. We admit we are unclear what the viewer is referring to by “The manuscript compares mean values of SLWC measured from the two vibrating wire techniques to validate the instruments . . . ” since no comparison of mean values of SLWC measured from the two vibrating wire techniques as a validation of the instruments is presented. The mean differences between the pairs of Anasphere sondes in Figure 3 is presented to depict the noise or relative uncertainty in the Anasphere sonde measurements. If the reviewer is referring to Figure 9, which depicts LWP measured by the two different vibrating wire sondes and the MWR, the closest relationship between the mean and variance of the SLWC values occurs for the Anasphere sonde during the first descent with values of 0.02 and 0.0007 g/m³ for the mean and variance, respectively.

3) I do feel that the DTS measurements are sufficiently accurate to be useful, but the validation is against a radiosonde. If the comparison is good, why not just use radiosonde data? Certainly it is more cost effective than the complexity involved with launching a tethered aerostat or helikite. One possible use of the DTS measurements is to better define low-level inversions, but I did not find a meteorological use for this presented in the paper.

Response 3) This is a good suggestion and the authors have added the following text to the Introduction in regard to the advantages of using tethered balloon DTS measurements compared to radiosonde data. “DTS provides greatly improved spatial and temporal resolution of temperature compared to radiosonde measurements and allows measurements to be collected continuously between the balloon and the surface for the duration of the tethered balloon flight.”

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4) Before the manuscript is fit for publication it should be modified considerably. The measurements are presented in a manner that embellishes their actual efficacy. The manuscript should present the data in an unbiased manner and focus on the ability of the TBS to make routine, long-term measurements, but eliminate the impression that the instruments themselves are useful for making quantitative measurements.

Response 4) We thank the reviewer for their comments but believe the ability of the TBS to make routine, long-term measurements is discussed significantly in the Introduction and sections 2.1.2, 3.1.4, 3.1.5, 3.2.2, and 3.2.4 of the manuscript. We also believe the comparisons of the SLWC vibrating wire sonde data between both sondes, the MWR, and simultaneous radiosonde data are fairly presented and the discrepancies associated with the vibrating wire sonde measurements are extensively discussed in sections 3.1.1 – 3.1.3.

Reviewer 1 Specific Comments:

1) Introduction: Add TBS background references and discuss.

Response 1) Please see response to Reviewer 1 General Comments.

2) Page 3, Lines 11 – 14: This is incorrect. There are much larger helikytes currently in service. For example, Bodenschatz, in Goettingen has deployed a 250 m³ helikyte from a ship in the Arctic.

Response 2) We are uncertain what the reviewer is referring to in this case, since pg 3, lines 11-14 of the manuscript discuss the MWR. Perhaps the reviewer is referring to pg 3, line 31 – 32: “Helikites are typically used for flights with desired altitudes to 700 m Above Ground Level (AGL), a maximum payload of less than 10 kg, and in surface wind speeds less than 11 m/s.” For clarity the authors have revised this line to begin with “In the ARM TBS, helikites . . . ”

3) Figure 3: The figure and text states that the difference in mean values of SLWC between the two Anasphere devices is 0.01, 0.02 and 0.06 g m⁻³. This is meaningless

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without also giving some measurement of the variance, standard deviation or show a scatterplot. Even two noise signals can have the same mean. The figure suggests that there is little correlation between the two devices.

Response 3) We thank the reviewer and have added pdfs of each sonde's measurements as suggested by Reviewer #2 to better illustrate the data collected by the two devices.

4) Figure 7: I applaud the authors for showing the scatterplots in this figure, but the interpretation of the results does not fit the data. I am not sure how an R2 value is even relevant. The scatterplot and time series tell the story. There is virtually no correlation in the measurements. The best that one can ascertain here is that the TBS is an SLWC detector.

Response 4) As discussed in pg 12, line 18 through pg 13, line 9 the authors view the timing of SLWC detection between the airborne SLWC sensor and the surface-based MWR as significant. This result is especially relevant considering the uncertainties associated with the ceilometer-reported cloud base, the GPS-reported altitude of the airborne SLWC sonde in relation to the cloud base, and the determination of the cloud top altitude from the KAZR data, in addition to the variation in the cloud base on 10/15/16, and the saturation of the vibrating wire on the sonde and resulting ice shedding events on 10/20/16. As the reviewer mentions, the authors have included scatter plots of the results so the reader can evaluate the relationship between the two measurements.

5) Figures 8 and 9: This is a good representation of the measurements, but again, the interpretation is off the mark. The statement on p. 16, "Overall, the two sensors seem to provide broadly similar SLWC profiles, but not without some discrepancies. This increases confidence in the use of each of them and provides independent verification of the measurements." grossly overstates the efficacy of the measurements. The profiles in Figure 9 often diverge and differ by factors of 2 to 3. The authors need to show measurements with better correlation over a much larger range of SLWC's,

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and the sensors need to agree with SLWCad to convince readers that the instruments can be used quantitatively. Several aircraft campaigns have shown that single-layer ice-free Arctic stratus clouds typically have adiabatic SLWC profiles up to 60 to 90% of the distance between cloud base and cloud top. Of course, this will be challenging if the balloons cannot achieve higher altitudes.

Response 5) The reviewer is correct in that there are differences in the magnitude of the SLWC detected by the various sensors, but this is to be expected for some of the reasons detailed on pg 16, lines 5-12. To this we have also added "The ice accumulation on the vibrating wire of each sonde may be dependent upon the upwind or downwind orientation of the sonde with respect to the balloon tether". The measurement of SLWC is a difficult one to make and these sensors are designed to be as inexpensive and lightweight as possible so as to be carried on disposable balloons, therefore the fact that the sensors roughly track each other and are generally within a factor of 2 is a reasonable achievement. If this was a comparison between aircraft instruments then we would expect better agreement, but one should not expect such accuracy from inexpensive disposable instruments.

6) Page 17, Lines 4 – 5: Equation 3 computes the adiabatic maximum SLWC. Since the vibrating wires measured a higher value than adiabatic, the measurements exceed the theoretical maximum. Also, once again, only reporting means does not show the variance in the measurements, which should also be reported, preferably by showing a scatterplot.

Response 6) The theoretical calculation of adiabatic SLWC results in mean SLWC values of < 0.05 g/m3 for 91% of 43 in-cloud TBS flights, which is inconsistent with in situ SLWC measurements within mixed-phase Arctic clouds from the literature. The in situ measurements collected by the TBS SLWC sondes exhibit better agreement with the literature values. This result depicts the value of the TBS to collect in situ atmospheric measurements and better refine cloud parameterization schemes used in climate models. A pdf and cdf of the SLWC data has also been added and the

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text updated to read “The probability density and cumulative distribution functions of all SLWC data collected with the Anasphere sondes on the TBS for the 43 flights are shown in Figure 12, and the probability density of SLWC values $< 0.05 \text{ g/m}^3$ was 34%.”

7) Page 17, Line 8: I have examined the Sand et al. (1984) article and I cannot find any text or figures that support the claim in the manuscript. Please show how 36% of the samples $< 0.05 \text{ g m}^{-3}$ was derived from the Sand paper. Also, the minimum measurement sensitivity of the J-W used in the Sand study was 0.1 g m^{-3} due to drift and noise affecting the baseline. The FSSP was used for lower values, but its fundamental measurement is drop size and raising drop size to the third power increases sizing errors commensurately. Thus, the FSSP is not a fundamental measurement of LWC. Reference to the Sand paper is a stretch and appears to be an unsubstantiated attempt to validate the vibrating wire measurements.

Response 7) We thank the reviewer for this close review. On closer inspection the results referred to were in fact modified from Sand et al. (1984) and are reported at www-das.uwyon.edu/~geerts/cwx/notes/chap08/moist_cloud.html. We have updated the text and references to refer to the University of Wyoming reference.

8) Conclusions: The conclusions are very misleading. The measurements are limited to very low values of SLWC, so the dynamic range over which the measurements are constrained is tiny. Means are compared within this very limited dynamic range, making the comparison look good (e.g., the means of the measurements compared within 0.1 g m^{-3}). This is a totally unacceptable methodology for presenting the measurements. Showing the time series comparisons and scatterplots is representative and these figures are the saving grace of this manuscript. The paper should focus on the mechanics of how the TBS systems are operated, and that they can be successfully operated for extended periods of time. The vibrating wire technology is used on commercial aircraft to detect icing conditions, not to quantify icing rate, even though there was an attempt in the 80's to do so (i.e., Baumgardner and Rodi 1989). While Baumgardner and Rodi reported that independent laboratory calibration of the Rosemount icing probe

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improved its performance, they also reported that each of the four instruments tested had different mass sensitivities. There has been virtually no quantitative reporting of SLWC from an airborne Rosemount Icing probe in the literature. In time perhaps better SLWC measurement techniques applicable to TBS will be developed, implemented and reported.

Response 8) As we have added the cdf and pdf of all SLWC values at the good suggestion of the reviewer, the reader can now observe that 40% of the SLWC data collected were $\geq 0.1 \text{ g/m}^3$. The text of the Conclusion has also been updated to refer to the SLWC data in the pdf/cdf figure.

Please also note the supplement to this comment:

<https://www.atmos-meas-tech-discuss.net/amt-2019-117/amt-2019-117-AC1-supplement.pdf>

Interactive comment on Atmos. Meas. Tech. Discuss., doi:10.5194/amt-2019-117, 2019.

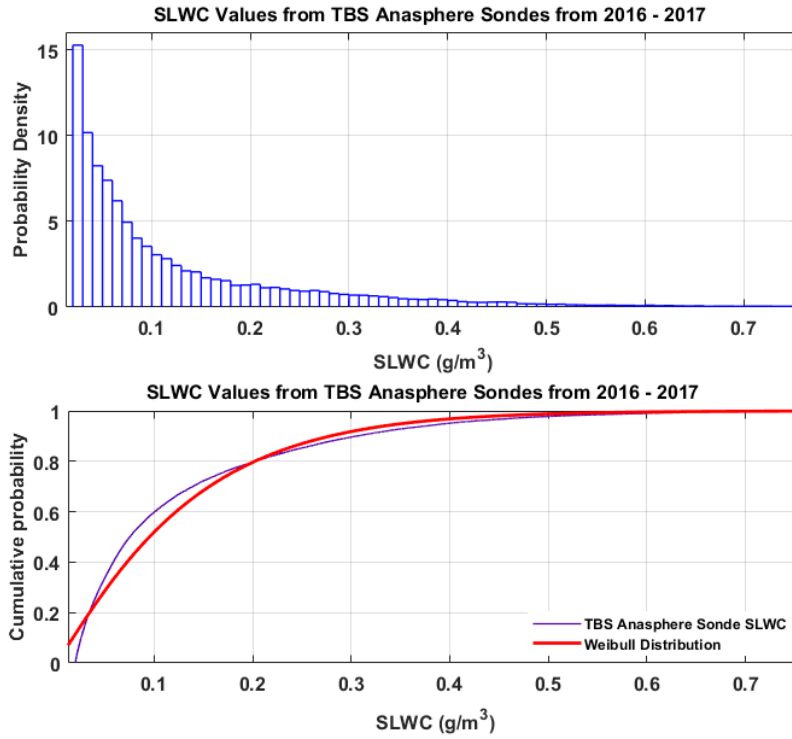


Fig. 1. Probability density and cumulative distribution functions of all SLWC data collected with the Anasphere sondes on the TBS for the 43 flights.

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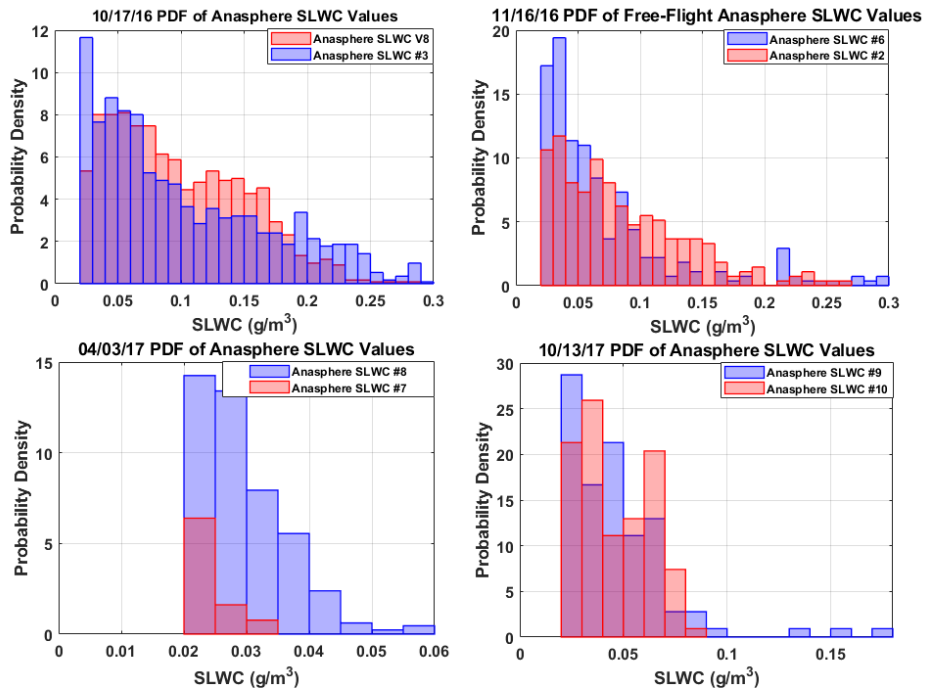


Fig. 2. PDFs of four side-by-side comparison flights of Anasphere SLWC sondes.

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