AIRBORNE INVESTIGATIONS OF SUMMERTIME KARABATIC WINDS AND BOUNDARY LAYER STRUCTURES OVER THE NOW POLYNYA NEAR GREENLAND

T. Ernsdorf, G. Heinemann and C. Drue
Environmental Meteorology, University of Trier, Germany, ernsdorf@uni-trier.de

ABSTRACT

For different synoptic situations in June 2010, four flights over the NOW (North Water) Polynya and one flight each over the Humboldt and Steenstrup Glacier were performed using research aircraft POLAR 5 of Alfred Wegener Institute (AWI, Bremerhaven).

Over the glaciers, katabatic winds with up to 14 m/s wind speed were found during conditions of strong synoptic forcing. Over the NOW polynya, a stable and fully turbulent atmospheric boundary layer (ABL) was present. As a consequence of strong and relatively warm synoptically induced northerly winds, distinct temperature inversions in the lowest 100 m – 200 m were detected.

At Smith Sound channeling effects led to a well-pronounced low-level jet system with wind speed maxima of about 20 m/s.

INTRODUCTION

The experiment IKAPOS (Investigation of Katabatic winds and Polynyas during Summer, Heinemann et al., 2011) focuses on the summertime katabatic wind system and the ABL over the North Water (NOW) Polynya in northwestern Greenland (Figure 1).

Katabatic winds play a key role in exchange processes of energy and momentum between the atmosphere and the underlying surface over the ice sheet of Greenland (Heinemann, 1999). On the other hand, the NOW Polynya represents one of the largest polynyas of the Arctic, and the air-sea interaction over the polynya has a significant impact on ocean processes, ice formation, gas exchange and biology (Barber et al., 2001).

EXPERIMENTAL AREA

The experimental area is located in northwestern Greenland (Figure 1). Qaanaaq airport was the basis of the research flights.

METHODS AND MATERIALS

POLAR 5 (Figure 2) is a rebuilt DC-3 (Douglas Company) 1942 with two turboprop engines. In order to study the turbulence structure and 3D spatial structures of mean quantities, POLAR 5 was equipped with a turbulence measurement system collecting data on a nose boom sampling at a rate of 100 Hz, additional basic meteorological equipment, radiation and surface temperature sensors, laser altimeter, and photo and video cameras.

FIRST RESULTS

Over the glaciers, katabatic winds with up to 14 m/s wind speed were found from 40 m (lowest flight level) to 110 m (Figure 3, 4). By contrast, over sea-ice in front of the glacier the wind is relatively weak (about 2 m/s to 6 m/s) and its profile shows small gradients.

In Figure 5 three aircraft temps over the northern NOW show a stable, but fully turbulent ABL. Interaction processes of relatively warm northerly winds with cold water lead to a surface inversion of about 8 K/100 m. The boundary layer is considerably influenced by channeling effects at Smith Sound (for position see Figure 1). A well-developed low-level jet with wind speed maxima of about 20 m/s was detected (Figure 6).

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REFERENCES

