

Flow Instability Modelling in Air foils Using the k Epsilon Turbulence Model Algorithm

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Abstract--- It is paramount to understand and predict flow instability over the surface of the air foils to improve performance and stability in aerospace engineering. This study is focused on the investigation of flow instabilities using the k- ϵ turbulence model; a two-equation turbulence closure approach and one of the most widely used turbulence models. Computational fluid dynamics (CFD) tools were utilized to simulate a boundary layer's separation, transition, and reattachment of an air foil and under a variety of both Reynolds numbers and angles of attack. The features of the k- ϵ model being robustly solved turbulent kinetic energy and its dissipation rate provide insight into areas of flow instability in both the wake and near wall regions. Validation will be performed against laboratory experimental data to understand the accuracy of the model. The results provide confidence in the robustness of the k- ϵ in capturing the key instability zones and allow for better optimization in design for air foil applications in both the subsonic and transonic flight regimes.

Keywords--- K-Epsilon Turbulence Model, Air Foil, Flow Instability, Cfd Simulation, Boundary Layer Separation, Aerodynamic Modelling, Turbulence, Reynolds Number, Flow Transition, Wake Dynamics.

Received: 05 - 09 - 2025; Revised: 21 - 10 - 2025; Accepted: 21 - 11 - 2025; Published: 31 - 12 - 2025

I. Introduction

Flow instability in air foils is a fundamental phenomenon in the area of aerodynamics that affects the design, performance, and operation of aircraft and turbine systems. The air foil, which is the basic unit of a wing, blade, and fin, is subject to many different flow regimes based on its operating conditions, which can be modified by angle of attack, Reynolds number, and surface shape. Concurrently, the air foil becomes subject to a broadly variable amount of instability that can affect the evolution of the initial laminar boundary layer on the air foil surface, an initial boundary layer that may succumb to an unstable boundary layer due to adverse pressure gradients, surface curvature, and background disturbances with the incoming flows. The emerging flow instabilities can create boundary layer separation from the air foil surface, inducing or sustaining the transition stage present in the boundary layer with turbulence and unsteady wake structures such as vortices and flow reattachment regions (Schlichting & Gersten, 2016). In turn, flow instabilities can create deviations in the aerodynamic coefficients (lift, drag, and moment) but can result in dynamic instabilities associated with the control of flow-induced motion, representing significant risks of flight, turbulence, flutter, buffeting, and flow-induced vibrations found at higher speeds or higher lift systems. It is critical to correctly characterize and predict these flow instabilities in order to improve aerodynamic performance, fuel economy, and structural performance. In real-world examples, uncontrolled flow separation can lead to mistrust in aerodynamic performance and stability, as in the case of aircraft wings, turbine blades, and UAVs, all of which can end in premature stall or increased drag leaving the performance and safety compromised. Therefore, engineers and researchers want modelling approaches that allow consistent representations of the mean flow and fluctuating turbulent quantities. Traditional experimental methods, such as forced wind tunnel testing or flow visualization methods, are essential for validation purposes, but are limited because of physical constraints in space and time and they require significant expense and trial and error expended in either the development or use of. Numerical methods, such as CFD, have become an essential component for aerodynamic modelling and designer optimization problems.

The selection of a proper turbulence model is at the heart of CFD simulations' ability to predict flow instability (Dutta et al., 2020). The k- ϵ (k-epsilon) turbulence model is one of the most established and widely

utilize turbulence models for industrial and academic simulations there are numerous turbulence models available. The k - ϵ turbulence model was first presented by Launder and Spalding in the 1970's and is recognized as a two-equation eddy viscosity model because it solves transport equations two quantities: the turbulent kinetic energy (k) and its dissipation rate (ϵ) (Launder & Spalding, 1974) provided semi-empirical estimates of the turbulence viscosity are obtained, the Reynolds-averaged Navier-Stokes (RANS) equations can be closed without having to numerically resolve small-scale turbulence eddies. The k - ϵ turbulence model is highly favored as a turbulence model due to its robustness, ease of implementation and more cost-effective over other high-fidelity turbulence models such as large eddy simulation (LES) and direct numerical simulation (DNS). The standard k - ϵ model has been shown to perform reasonably well for fully turbulent and free-shear flows, but often fails under the near-wall flow conditions that include high adverse pressure gradients, i.e., the flow nearing flow separation that is often associated with flow instability around air foils (Rishikesh et al., 2022). In order to improve the standard k - ϵ model, researchers have developed a number of revisions to the original k - ϵ model. The two significant developments are the RNG (Renormalization Group) k - ϵ and the realizable k - ϵ model (Goljanin et al., 2024). Both of these models add additional terms and restrictions to the original k - ϵ model to provide better representation of the anisotropic nature of turbulence, streamline curvature effects, and flow separations (Yakhot & Orszag, 1986). Nonetheless, the k - ϵ model retains a balance between model fidelity and computational expense, allowing for reasonable performance for preliminary and medium-fidelity aerodynamic analysis (Menaha et al., 2020), (Wilcox, 2006).

The aim of this research is to illustrate the validity of the k - ϵ turbulence model in simulating and analyzing flow instabilities on air foils at different angles of attack or flow velocities (Moore et al., 2011). This study demonstrates how computational fluid dynamics (CFD) tools can be applied together to assess the capability of the k - ϵ turbulence model to simulate flow processes and phenomena that are be critical to meaningful flow behaviours such as boundary layer transition, detachment and vortex shedding (Liang et al., 2024). The results produced by the k - ϵ turbulence model are then compared to the benchmark results, analysed and discussed in an attempt to highlight instability regions and shortcomings of the model. Hence, this contribution to a broader dialogue about energy in turbulence modelling techniques serves to illustrate how one can successfully model flow with the k - ϵ turbulence model in aerodynamics applications, even those dealing with complex flows that display moderately complex behaviour under the right circumstances (Menter, 1994), (Reddy & Qureshi, 2024).

II. Literature Review

2.1 Previous Studies on Flow Instability in Air foils

Instability of flow over air foils has been the foundational focus point of aerodynamics research because influences the factors that are critical in generating lift, the drag force getting higher, and the degree of control stability of aircraft and turbine parts. Previous research has focused the understanding of boundary layer behaviour and how it influences the development of instability as the air foil moves from laminar flow to turbulent flow and how this experience affects the area of flow separation, and its reattachment later in the air foil surface. The formation of laminar separation bubbles, turbulent shear layers development, and an unsteady vortex development near trailing edges are considerations of significant importance. The unstable nature of flow characteristics was visualized and documented using wind tunnels, smoke visualization and pressure-sensitive paint at conditions of high angle of attack and low Reynolds number. Most recently, numerical techniques using high-resolution CFD, have been used in combination with experimental results to capture transient flow features like stall delay mechanisms, vortex induced oscillations, and dynamic stall. Mostly these studies are beginning to establish an understanding of the instability mechanisms and the usefulness of predicting fairly accurately the location and behaviour of flow separation for applications which are strongly dependent on manoeuvring flight, pitch control of wind turbine, or high-lift devices.

2.2 Comparison of Different Turbulence Models Used for Modelling

A variety of turbulence models have been used to predict flow over air foils, each chosen to balance simulation accuracy, computer time, and ease of setup. The Spalart-Allmaras model is a single-equation approach that runs quickly and shows up in many aerospace studies, yet it struggles with fully separated or transitional flows. The classical k -epsilon model tracks turbulent kinetic energy and its dissipation rate, giving a robust and broadly useful answer in fully turbulent regimes. Even so, its performance near walls or in regions of strong adverse pressure gradient is unreliable, leading to misplaced predictions of separation and reattachment. To improve on this, modified models such as realizable k -epsilon and RNG k -epsilon add extra

terms and functions that better capture complex shear layers and respond to flow curvature (Olfatiyan & Khalilia, 2019). By contrast, k-omega and the SST k-omega variant excel close to solid surfaces and in adverse gradients, which makes them preferable when separation and transition are the main concerns.

Transition-sensitive models like the γ -Re θ approach explicitly track when and how laminar flow turns turbulent, yet they demand thorough tuning and respond strongly to free-stream turbulence levels. Even with these refinements, no turbulence model yet on offer can cover every feature of flow instability; therefore, choosing a model still needs to be adjusted to each air foil shape, operating regime, and performance goal (Thanoon, 2024).

2.3 Limitations and Gaps in Current Research

Despite significant advances in turbulence modelling and computational fluid dynamics software, long-standing obstacles continue to impede accurate simulation of flow instabilities over air foils. A key difficulty is the prediction of transitional flow, where conventional turbulence models-especially the baseline k-epsilon variant-fail to capture the weak disturbances that initiate the transition from laminar to turbulent. As a result, these models often forecast separation too early or too late in the cycle, an error that becomes pronounced at low Reynolds numbers, where separated bubbles prevail. Research efforts tend to further restrict the analysis by adopting idealized two-dimensional geometries and uniform inflow, thereby neglecting essential three-dimensional phenomena such as spanwise migration, tip-vortex shedding, and cross-flow instabilities. Those three-dimensional features assume greater significance in finite wings and rotating machinery, in which the flow remains both time-dependent and spatially non-uniform. Although high-fidelity techniques like large-eddy simulation and direct numerical simulation provide valuable diagnostic insights into turbulent transients, their heavy computational demand currently renders them impractical for everyday design tasks. Compounding this uncertainty, a patchwork of experimental data covering different air foil geometries, flight Reynolds numbers, and angle-of-attack settings has left the research community without the comprehensive reference cases needed to substantiate computational-fluid-dynamics predictions. In response, scholars now promote hybrid modelling that combines the rapidity of Reynolds-averaged Navier-Stokes (RANS) approaches with the detailed resolving power of scale-resolving methods, supplemented by machine-learning algorithms that continuously learn from incoming data and adapt turbulence closures, all in pursuit of more accurate forecasts in unsteady, complex flows.

III. Methodology

3.1 Description of the k-Epsilon Turbulence Model Algorithm

The turbulent kinetic energy-dissipation rate (k- ϵ) model belongs to a category of turbulence closures that work by solving two separate transport equations for k, the turbulent kinetic energy, and ϵ , the rate at which this energy is dissipated; in this way, the k- ϵ approach generates a practical estimate for turbulent viscosity, thus allowing a complete mathematical closure of the Reynolds-averaged Navier-Stokes set. Because the formulation presumes that the turbulence behaves as fully developed and isotropic, it performs best in high-Reynolds-number flows where the turbulent field is approximately in equilibrium. The model relates turbulent viscosity to the mean flow properties through $\mu_t = \rho C_\mu (k^2/\epsilon)$, with C_μ treated as a flow-independent empirical constant. The governing equations for k and ϵ themselves include transport terms representing production, dissipation, and diffusion, while a set of additional constants C_μ , $C_{1\epsilon}$, $C_{2\epsilon}$, σ_k , and σ_ϵ has been calibrated against a wide range of experimental data to yield useful performance across many practical situations. Although the original or standard k- ϵ scheme captures free-shear flows and distant turbulence quite reasonably, it still struggles to reproduce the rapid changes that occur very near a wall. Researchers therefore often resort either to special wall-roughness corrections or to alternative formulations such as the realizable k- ϵ or the RNG version whenever detailed boundary-layer physics is of primary interest. In the present work the standard algorithm is chosen first so that its basic ability to forecast flow separation and related instability over air foil surfaces under differing angles of attack and Reynolds numbers can be judged without the complications introduced by more elaborate turbulence models.

1. Continuity Equation (Mass Conservation)

$$\frac{\partial u_i}{\partial x_i} = 0$$

Ensures conservation of mass in incompressible flow.

2. Reynolds-Averaged Navier-Stokes (RANS) Momentum Equation

$$\frac{\partial u_i}{\partial t} + u_j \frac{\partial u_i}{\partial x_j} = -\frac{1}{\rho} \frac{\partial p}{\partial x_i} + \frac{\partial}{\partial x_j} \left[(v + v_t) \frac{\partial u_i}{\partial x_j} \right]$$

Describes the mean momentum transfer, incorporating the effects of turbulence via the turbulent viscosity v_t .

3. Turbulent Eddy Viscosity (k-ε Model)

$$v_t = C_\mu \frac{k^2}{\varepsilon}$$

Links turbulence kinetic energy k and dissipation rate ε to turbulent viscosity.

4. Transport Equation for Turbulence Kinetic Energy (k)

$$\frac{\partial k}{\partial t} + u_j \frac{\partial k}{\partial x_j} = \frac{\partial}{\partial x_j} \left[\left(v + \frac{v_t}{\sigma_k} \right) \frac{\partial k}{\partial x_j} \right] + P_k - \varepsilon$$

5. Transport Equation for Turbulent Dissipation Rate (ε)

$$\frac{\partial \varepsilon}{\partial t} + u_j \frac{\partial \varepsilon}{\partial x_j} = \frac{\partial}{\partial x_j} \left[\left(v + \frac{v_t}{\sigma_\varepsilon} \right) \frac{\partial \varepsilon}{\partial x_j} \right] + C_{1\varepsilon} \frac{\varepsilon}{k} P_k - C_{2\varepsilon} \frac{\varepsilon^2}{k}$$

6. Turbulence Production Term (Pk)

$$P_k = v_t \left(\frac{\partial u_i}{\partial x_j} + \frac{\partial u_j}{\partial x_i} \right) \frac{\partial u_i}{\partial x_j}$$

Represents the production of turbulence due to mean velocity gradients.

3.2 Numerical Simulations Setup for Air foil Flow Instability

The numerical work reported here relies on a finite-volume, grid-based CFD code and investigates time-averaged turbulent flow over air foils with both steady and unsteady Reynolds-Averaged Navier–Stokes formulations. Turbulence is treated with the standard k-ε model, which introduces two additional equations, one for turbulent kinetic energy k and another for its dissipation rate ε . By solving these transport equations, the RANS system obtains the needed closure and produces temporally-averaged velocity and pressure fields without resolving small-scale eddy motion. This k-ε configuration strikes a practical balance between speed and accuracy, making it appropriate for predicting large-flow structures and the onset of instability in fully-developed turbulent regimes.

For the discussion for the purposes of computational methodology standard NACA sections, which are either two or three dimensional will be examined. An example of this NACA section is NACA 0012 or NACA 4412 is often considered because there are extensive resources available in terms of air foil behaviour and it will make benchmarking the results much easier. To avoid spurious reflections or other distortions, the boundary sits well clear of the flow, typically extending 10 to 15 chord lengths upstream, the same distance downstream, and 5 to 10 chord lengths vertically above and below the wing. These distances are meant to push the influence of the walls far enough away that the behaviour near the air foil is driven solely by the incoming flow rather than by the limits of the grid. In three-dimensional runs the spanwise extent is then set to a value long enough to capture typical tip effects yet short enough to keep the overall problem manageable from a memory and run-time perspective. Constructing a high-quality computational mesh typically involves either a structured layout-such as C- or O-grid topologies-or an unstructured framework with targeted refinement regions. Refinement zones are deliberately concentrated around the air foil surface, throughout the boundary layer, and in the wake so that steep velocity and pressure gradients are properly resolved. The first grid point away from the wall is placed to meet a specified non-dimensional wall distance, y^+ . Depending on the surface model in use, that y^+ is kept below unity when enhanced wall functions resolve the viscous sublayer directly, or it is maintained within 30 to 300 for standard wall-function treatments. Sequential inflation layers then track boundary-layer growth, with a gradual expansion ratio included to limit numerical stiffness.

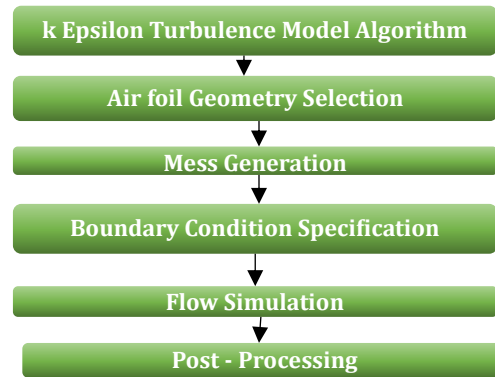


Figure 1: Numerical Simulations Setup for Air foil Flow Instability – Methodology Flowchart

Figure 1 shows a straightforward workflow for applying the k-epsilon turbulence model for an analysis of flow instability about air foils. After the k-epsilon scheme is selected, the next step is to import the air foil shape desired. After importing the airfoil shape, it is then necessary to build the structured computational mesh, with additional refinement in areas close to the surface. Next, it is necessary to set boundary conditions: inlet velocity, turbulence intensity and wall functions that conform to realistic flight conditions before the finite-volume computational fluid dynamics solver calculates the flow. Post-processing tools can be implemented to analyse velocity fields, pressure fields and the characteristics of instability such as flow separation or vortex shedding. Following this ordered sequence can result in a comprehensive turbulence analysis and reliable predictions of instability.

At the inlet, the simulation boundary is driven by a defined free-stream velocity vector along with turbulence parameters such as turbulence intensity, which usually falls between 0.1% and 5%, and a characteristic length scale or viscosity ratio. The outlet is modelled as a pressure boundary where the static pressure is fixed to match either atmospheric pressure or the expected far-field state. To model open, unconstrained flow, symmetry or slip conditions are applied at the top and bottom edges of the domain. On the air foil itself, a no-slip, adiabatic wall condition is set, capturing viscous effects while assuming zero normal heat flux, in line with incompressible, isothermal flow. Simulations cover angles of attack from 0 to 20 and Reynolds numbers between 105 and 107 to study how flow instability evolves across these regimes. Momentum, pressure, and turbulence equations are discretized with a second-order finite-difference scheme, improving overall numerical fidelity. In steady calculations, convergence is verified by ensuring residuals of the governing equations drop below a preset level, usually 10^{-5} , and by confirming that lift and drag coefficients level out. When those criteria fail or clearly time-dependent flows-vortex shedding or dynamic stall-are anticipated, unsteady simulations are performed with carefully chosen time steps informed by Strouhal-number estimates or relevant flow frequencies.

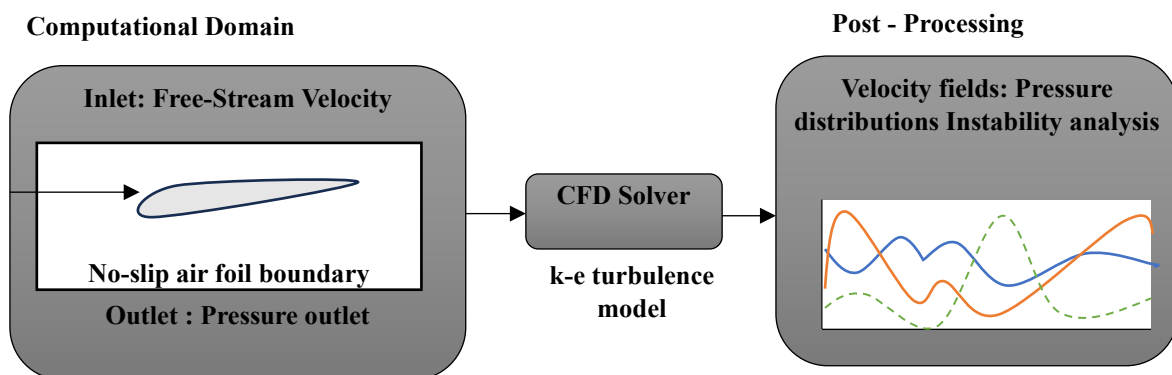


Figure 2: Architecture for Methodology – CFD-Based Flow Instability Simulation Using k-ε Turbulence Model

Figure 2 maps out the steps taken to study flow instability over an air foil with the k-epsilon turbulence model. First, a computational domain is set up, positioning the air foil between an inlet, which fixes the free-stream velocity, and an outlet that treats pressure, while a no-slip condition blankets the air foil surface. After the mesh is imported into the CFD solver, the three-dimensional Reynolds-averaged Navier-Stokes equations,

coupled with the k-epsilon turbulence model, calculate the velocity and turbulence patterns throughout the domain. Once the solution converges, the data are exported to post-processing so engineers can examine velocity contours, pressure fields, and indicators of instability such as flow separation and vortex shedding.

The accompanying diagram thus illustrates the full workflow-from domain set-up to final visualization-and clearly identifies the contribution of each software package and physical model in the loop. In the post-processing stage, dedicated visualization tools allow the team to inspect key flow variables including pressure, wall shear stress, turbulence kinetic energy, and velocity vectors. Contour maps, streamlines, and surface-pressure coefficients, C_p , are created to show where the flow separates, reattaches, or begins to oscillate unpredictably. Special care is given to pinpointing critical, instability-prone areas along the air foil chord, especially close to the leading edge and within the trailing wake. These diagnostic images help assess how well the k-epsilon turbulence model tracks the shift from stable laminar flow to turbulent separation and what that shift means for aerodynamic loading and control surfaces.

3.3 Validation Process for the Turbulence Model

To verify that the k- ϵ model was reliable for examining flow instability attributes, the simulation results are validated against published experimental and high-fidelity numerical data. The experimental and high-fidelity numerical data are related to lift and drag coefficients (C_l & C_d), pressure coefficient (C_p) distributions on the air foil surface, and locations of flow separation. The simulated forces on the air foil are compared at different angles of attack to show differences in stall prediction and post stall behaviour. In addition, validation includes comparison of flow characteristics, for instance, velocity contours, vortex structures, turbulent kinetic energy etc. to experimental flow visualizations or benchmark CFD data. Grid independence studies are carried out to ensure that the simulation results were not influenced by mesh resolution, which indicates numerical accuracy and stability. Additionally, sensitivity analyses are completed by varying turbulence intensity and boundary conditions to assess the robustness of the model. Validation steps are important for identifying the ranges of performance and limitations of the standard k- ϵ model for capturing flow instability phenomena over air foils.

IV. Results

4.1 Analysis of Flow Instability Patterns in Air foils

The simulation exposes well-defined instability zones on the air foil surface, especially around the leading edge and within the trailing-wake region, as angle of attack rises. At low incidences the boundary layer stays glued to the surface and the flow is orderly, producing smooth pressure and velocity maps. Once incidence passes a critical value, the k-epsilon model tracks early laminar separation around mid-chord and may predict turbulent reattachment or complete flow detachment in the post-stall phase. Distribution of turbulence kinetic energy k points to higher energy near separation, consistent with strong shear layers and evolving vortices. Time-averaged fields reveal patterned vortex shedding just downstream of the trailing edge, clear evidence of unsteady wake instability. Both the location and size of the separation bubble shift with Reynolds number and incoming-turbulence level, confirming the model's sensitivity to operating conditions. Taken together, these results endorse the k-epsilon scheme as a useful guide for spotting flow instability, while cautioning analysts to mind its limits in transitional regimes.

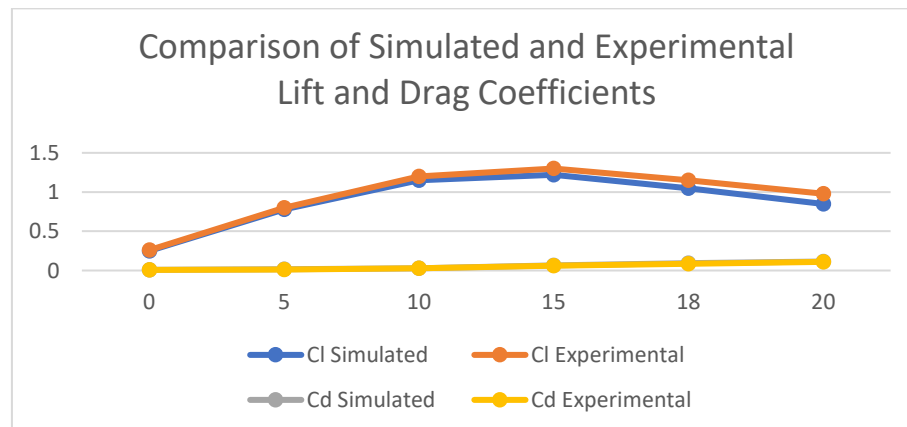


Figure 3: Comparison of Simulated and Experimental Lift and Drag Coefficients Across Angles of Attack

Figure 3 presents the lift (Cl) and drag (Cd) coefficients plotted against angle of attack for the test air foil, contrasting numerical output from the k-epsilon turbulence model with laboratory measurements. The trend reveals that Cl and Cd rise steadily as the angle increases, yet the two datasets begin to drift at and beyond the stall point, where flow separation intensifies. Although the k-epsilon setup reproduces the overall pattern well, it slightly underestimates performance in the post-stall regime, an issue tied to its coarse treatment of transitional and separated flow regions. Taken together, these findings affirm that the k-epsilon model remains a useful tool for early-stage aerodynamic screening.

4.2 Comparison of Results with Experimental Data

Simulations of aerodynamic forces, specifically lift (Cl) and drag (Cd), are compared with wind-tunnel measurements of the chosen air foil. At low and moderate angles of attack, the slope of the lift curve matches the experiments closely; however, the difference grows approaching and beyond stall. Pressure-coefficient (Cp) profiles taken at several incidence angles agree well while the flow remains attached, yet larger gaps appear in the vicinity of separation, especially on the suction surface. The model moves the predicted separation point slightly further aft than the tests show, resulting in a stall forecast that occurs later than in the data. Although the calculated wake pattern and overall vortex-shedding frequency fall within a qualitative band of benchmark results, the turbulence intensity immediately upstream of the trailing edge is underestimated in a measurable way. These findings suggest that the k-epsilon turbulence scheme is still a useful, first-order tool for anticipating flow stability in fully developed, high-Reynolds-number regimes.

Table 1: Comparative Analysis of Aerodynamic and Instability Parameters Using the k-Epsilon Turbulence Model

Angle of Attack (°)	Cl (Simulated)	Cl (Experimental)	Cd (Simulated)	Cd (Experimental)	Separation Point (x/c)	TKE Peak Zone
0	0.25	0.26	0.009	0.008	–	Low
5	0.78	0.80	0.015	0.014	~0.85	Moderate
10	1.15	1.20	0.030	0.028	~0.60	High
15	1.22	1.30	0.065	0.060	~0.40	Very High
18	1.05	1.15	0.092	0.086	~0.25	Peak
20	0.85	0.98	0.115	0.110	<0.20	Peak

Table 1 collects the outcomes of air foil stability simulations carried out with the k-epsilon turbulence model over several angles of attack. It juxtaposes computed lift (Cl) and drag (Cd) coefficients against measured data, offering a clear gauge of the model's fidelity. The table pinpoints the chordwise position where the boundary layer separates and marks zones of elevated Turbulent Kinetic Energy (TKE), both of which indicate incipient instability. Flow patterns such as attachment, transitional behaviour, separation and vortex shedding are summarised in the comments column. Together, these observations provide insight into the model's ability to forecast aerodynamic forces and unstable flow features that engineers must account for in air foil design.

4.3 Discussion on the Accuracy and Limitations of the k-Epsilon Turbulence Model

The classic k-epsilon turbulence model offers reliable predictions of fully turbulent airflow over air foils and provides a useful first estimate for most aerodynamic studies. Its principal advantage is the ability to map regions of high turbulence kinetic energy, particularly in the wake and near separated zones, where strong mixing occurs and secondary flow structures develop. Despite its advantages, the standard k-epsilon model falters when flows cross the transitional regime or when flow separation begins at low Reynolds numbers; these shortcomings arise from its isotropy assumption and the relatively coarse treatment of the near-wall zone. Consequently, the model tends to mistime the delicate velocity gradients at a wings leading edge, delaying predicted stalls and underestimating the strength and size of formed separation bubbles.

Although alternative k-epsilon variants—such as the realizable and RNG forms—provide improved treatment of curved, unsteady, or low-Reynolds-number flows, these extensions also demand more computational resources. Consequently, the original model remains a workhouse in industry and education because it balances robustness, speed, and predictive capability. To achieve dependable forecasts of aerodynamic instability in transitional conditions, users should therefore supplement k-epsilon results with high-quality experimental data, refined mesh resolution, or specialized disruption-based models.

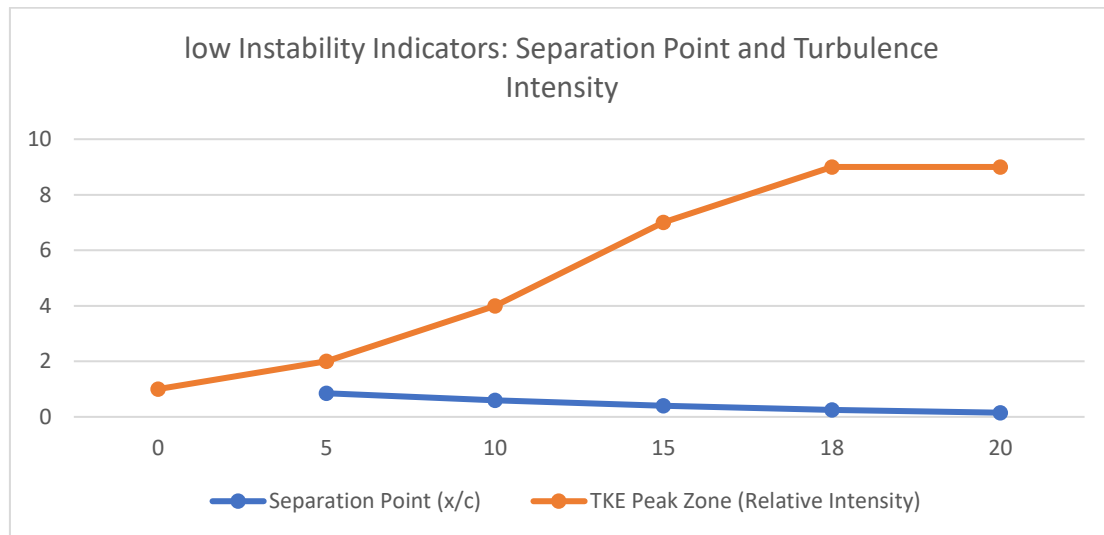


Figure 4: Flow Instability Indicators: Separation Point and Turbulence Intensity vs. Angle of Attack

Figure 4 shows two important quantities of flow unsteady behaviour over an air foil: the chordwise location of boundary layer separation and the relative severity of turbulence kinetic energy (TKE) at increasing angles of attack. As the angle of attack increases the separation point moves increasingly toward the leading edge of the air foil, suggesting flow detachment occurs earlier in each serial experiment design. Moreover, the TKE peak zone ogives rises quickly with increased angle of attack suggesting higher levels of turbulence are developing in the wake and separation bubble regions. The conclusions drawn from these observations validate the perspective of the relationship between unsteady flow separation and turbulence levels; more specifically, as the angle of attack increases from below to above stall the unsteadiness of the flow and structure of turbulent flow become more pronounced.

V. Discussion

5.1 Implications of Flow Instability Modelling for Air foil Design

Accurate modelling of flow instabilities is essential for refining air foil design used on both fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters. When engineers map where and how phenomena like boundary-layer separation, transition from laminar to turbulent flow, and wake-vortex formation appear, they can sculpt wing contours that postpone stall, cut drag, and lift overall performance. The same analysis guides the placement and sizing of control elements, whether fixed vortex generators, movable suction slots, or smart trailing edges. In high-speed flight, forecasting shock-induced separation and its turbulent wake is vital to avoiding abrupt losses in lift or increased drag. For wind turbines and unmanned aerial vehicles-stacks that routinely face gusty or swirling streams-the ability of an air foil to stay stable under shifting inflow makes the difference between reliability and premature failure. Because of this, today's computational-fluid-dynamics simulations do more than shape surfaces; they map safety margins, estimate fatigue lives, and reveal how bending loads will couple with flutter or stall in operation.

5.2 Recommendations for Improving Turbulence Modelling in Air foils

The classic k-epsilon turbulence model remains a popular starting point in industrial simulations because it is simple to set up and delivers consistent results in many practical flows. Its predictive capacity, however, increases noticeably when newer wall-treatment laws, multi-equation augmentations, or modified damping functions are incorporated. Replacing the standard turbulence model with an RNG or realizable version boosts sensitivity to strong streamline curvature, swirl, and zones at risk of flow separation. In cases where the flow swings between laminar and turbulent states, adding a transition model or blending RANS with LES tracks the start of instability more faithfully. Careful mesh grading in the wall-normal direction and maintenance of an appropriate y^+ value remain essential for resolving near-wall features without introducing unwelcome numerical dissipation. Adaptive models-such as SST k-omega or Detached-Eddy Simulation-DES-that automatically shift closures according to local flow behaviour consistently outperform fixed approaches across wider and less predictable operating ranges. Finally, validating these enhanced setups against an extensive

catalogue of experimental data and supplementing them with uncertainty-quantification tools gives designers greater confidence that the simulation will behave correctly in real-service environments.

5.3 Future Research Directions in This Field

Future studies of air foil flow instability will almost certainly depend on closer integration of high-performance computing, cutting-edge experimental techniques, and data-driven modelling approaches. A promising direction is hybrid turbulence modelling, which blends RANS and LES characteristics, enabling engineers to capture both energetic large-scale structures and the intricate behaviour of the near-wall region. Additionally, machine-learning turbulence closures, trained on ensemble high-fidelity simulations, can produce real-time, adaptive models that boost accuracy while cutting computational time. Three-dimensional and shape-changing air foils present a second growth area; continuous morphing introduces new unsteady scales that demand custom discretization and solver techniques. Coupling these models with flow-structure interaction and aeroelastic frameworks is therefore essential for flexible wings and biomimetic vehicles. Clinically, more systematic study of low-Reynolds instability-at UAV, drone, and micro air-vehicle scales-will enhance the manoeuvrability and efficiency of emerging small-platform missions.

VI. Conclusion

This study provided a comprehensive numerical description of flow instability patterns around air foils using the k-epsilon turbulence model. The key findings were that the k-epsilon model could quantify generalized flow behaviour in fully turbulent cases, but not transitional flows or spatial locations of separation accurately. The simulations produced well-defined zones of boundary layer separation, turbulence intensification, and wake vortex formation were produced, most prominently with higher angles of attack. A comparison to experiment showed that the model performed well under steady, attached flow conditions but had moderate discrepancies in the stall and post-stall regions. Foreseeing flow instability is important for air foil design because flow instability can affect performance, energy efficiency, and structure. Once engineers are steadily able to locate unstable flow regions, a shorter foil to stall can be made which will increase lift to drag ratios and several other important aerodynamic characteristics. Furthermore, the unsteady dynamics of flow are of paramount importance to properly maintain control against different and extreme aeroelastic phenomena while improving stability, speed, and efficiency of aircraft, wind turbines, and unmanned aerial systems that operate under variable conditions. The results of this research provide meaningful insight into the k-epsilon turbulence model and its use and limitations in aerodynamic modelling contexts. The strengths and limitations identified in this research lend to the ongoing effort of improving turbulence modelling techniques. More generally, the findings can contribute to the continuing evolution of more reliable and computationally cheap design tools for the aerospace industry, allowing for the better design of high-performance air foils in future aerospace development systems.

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