

**Jooss, Yannick; Li, Leon; Bracchi, Tania; Hearst, R. Jason**

**Spatial development of a turbulent boundary layer subjected to freestream turbulence.**  
(English) [Zbl 07319125](#)

*J. Fluid Mech.* 911, Paper No. A4, 28 p. (2021).

**Summary:** The spatial development of a turbulent boundary layer (TBL) subjected to freestream turbulence (FST) is investigated experimentally in a water channel for friction Reynolds numbers up to  $Re_\tau = 5060$ . Four different FST intensities are generated with an active grid, ranging from a low-turbulence reference case to  $u'_\infty/U_\infty = 12.5\%$ . Wall-normal velocity scans are performed with laser doppler velocimetry at three positions downstream of the grid. There are two combating influences as the flow develops: the TBL grows while the FST decays. Whilst previous studies have shown the wake region of the TBL is suppressed by FST, the present measurements demonstrate that the wake recovers sufficiently far downstream. For low levels of FST, the near-wall variance peak grows as one moves downstream, whereas high FST results in an initially high variance peak that decays with streamwise position. These results are mirrored in the evolution of the spectrograms, where low FST results in the emergence of an outer spectral peak as the flow evolves, while high FST sees an initially high outer spectral peak decay in space. This finding is significant as it suggests the FST does not permanently mature the TBL ahead of its natural evolution. Finally, it is explicitly demonstrated that it is not sufficient to characterize the TBL solely by conventional parameters such as  $Re_\tau$ , but that the level of FST and the evolution of the two flows must also be considered.

**MSC:**

[76F05](#) Isotropic turbulence; homogeneous turbulence

[76F40](#) Turbulent boundary layers

**Keywords:**

[homogeneous turbulence](#); [turbulent boundary layers](#)

**Full Text:** [DOI](#)

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