

Interactive comment on “Verification of the regional atmospheric model CCLM v5.0 with conventional data and Lidar measurements in Antarctica” by Rolf Zentek and Günther Heinemann

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Comment by referee #1

Response by authors

Changes in manuscript

This paper is a valid contribution to the scientific literature. It assesses the performance of the CCLM v5.0 for the Weddell Sea region. I have one general and a couple of

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specific concerns regarding the paper. I recommend the paper to be published only after these concerns have been adequately addressed.

Using Re-analyses data as reference in the validation is problematic. A recent paper by Gossart et al., (2019) for example shows strong warm biases in the interior of the continent in the different re-analyses products. It would be much better if only the observations were used for model validation. I recommend to remove the discussion of the re-analyses and remove fig 3, 4 and 5 from the paper. If the authors feel strongly about keeping the re-analyses in their paper, it needs to be framed differently than is done now. From a comparison with observations – it can be investigated whether there is an added value in CCLM compared to the (driving) re-analyses. This can – for example – be done by extending figure 7, 8 and 9 and include the re-analyses here – if you think plots become too busy, you can differentiate winter and summer.

We tried to take also comment 6 from referee #2 into account. We liked the idea of having Fig.3-5 at the beginning of the paper to give an impression of the performance of CCLM in comparison to AMPS and reanalyses. Because the later verifications are just single point observations that need to be seen in the right context. For example, the climatological difference of C15, T15, AMPS, ERA5/Interim are strongest over the east Antarctic plateau. But in this area we just have one station in the verifications shown later (surface and radio sounding).

We tried to address all raised concerns by moving the subsection 3.1 “Model and re-analyses” into another new section “Comparison” between the section “Data and Methods” and “Verification” and revising the section. It now states more clearly that AMPS and ERA5/Interim are not to be taken as verification data (we changed for example the phrasing “bias” to “difference” in the text and Fig. 3, 4 and 5).

We added “a short comparison to another model and reanalyses (section 3), then” to the introduction and renamed (and moved) the section to “Comparison with model and reanalyses”.

In this section we changed “bias” to “difference” added two paragraphs: “Although a verification with measurements is preferable, due to the small number of stations in polar regions this is not possible for the whole model domain. A comparison to other simulations is therefore an addition to the evaluation, although it has its limits. Gossart et al. (2019) found that in some respects different reanalyses (including ERA5 and ERA-Interim) differ greatly for Antarctica and thus comparisons of CCLM with simulations should not be seen as a validation.”

and “The study by Gossart et al. (2019) showed the largest differences in mean temperature between reanalyses over the interior Antarctica during winter (approx. 8 K) and that ERA and ERA-Interim are warmer than the observations. An evaluation of AMPS (Fig. A1 in Bromwich et al., 2005) showed only a small bias (down to -3 K) of AMPS in the interior Antarctica. Verifications using surface and radio sounding data (shown in section 4) confirm that C15 is too warm over the plateau and that this could be attributed to a too strong mixing in the surface boundary layer.”

Related to that, I recommend to restructure the paper: 1) statistical analysis with station data, 2) comparison with Halley, 3) comparison with AWS3 buoys, 4) comparison with radiosondes 5) comparison with lidar

We actually wanted the comparison with Halley (Fig.6) as a case study before the statistical analysis. We moved the reanalysis/model section as proposed. (see comment above).

The methodology describing the sea ice is not completely clear: Is a fractional sea ice cover used in the model? This is particularly relevant when studying atmosphere-iceocean interactions – a goal that the authors have in mind. Can one grid box have sea ice classes of different thickness? Please clarify and also state the limitation associated with the assumptions made in the model.

We revised the section concerning the sea ice also with respect to the referee's later comment about ice thickness and fractions and referee #2 comment 3.

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Concerning this comment we added to section 2.1: “A fractional sea ice cover is not used in the model, thus for each grid box there is only one value of sea ice thickness that is assumed to cover the whole grid box. Benefits of modelling a fractional sea ice cover are investigated in Gutjahr et al. (2016).”

The reduction of minimal diffusion coefficients for heat and momentum does indeed improve the performance in the interior, but deteriorates the performance on the ice shelves. Esp. in Fig 7 there is a strong increase in RMSE in winter over the east coast (and southern peninsula). This should be stated more clearly in the abstract and conclusions (in esp. the sentence ‘Differences in other regions were small’ is somewhat misleading). Do the authors have any idea how to improve the performance over the ice shelves? Is the albedo of the ice shelves correctly represented in the model and might deficiencies in albedo play a role?

The albedo of 0.8 is reasonable (see e.g. doi.org/10.1007/BF00120464), but most likely plays no role, as the RMSE is biggest in winter when no solar radiation is present. There is no general solution for improvement for the performance over ice shelves, since the Ronne-Filchner Ice Shelf (station 6) and Brunt Ice Shelf (station 4) show an increase in RMSE, but the Larsen Ice Shelf (station 12) shows a decrease for the new parameterization.

We removed the sentence “Differences in other regions were small.” From the abstract and conclusion and added in the abstract “, but resulted in a negative bias for some coastal regions.”

Related to the previous point: Some information on the snow module should be included in the paper. Are albedo variations taken into account? How is the snow profile initialized and is this realistic? Even though this is a run in forecast mode, I assume that the surface is freely evolving. Is that right? Are snow temperatures drifting away from the forcing or is this not the case.

We made revisions to include more details about this (we modified Table 2 accordingly).

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We added in section 2.1: “The snow temperature profile is initialized with the forcing data, then the snow temperatures freely evolve. The surface albedo for inland ice and ice shelves is kept constant and has no seasonal variations. The albedo of sea ice is parameterized as a function of ice thickness and temperature by a modified Køltzow scheme (Køltzow, 2007) as described in Gutjahr et al. (2016a).”

We also added in section 2.1.: “For grid points with a sea ice thickness of 0.1 m the modified Køltzow scheme yields an albedo of 0.07 and we assume no snow cover. For a thickness of 1 m the albedo is 0.84 (for temperatures lower than -2°C) and fixed snow layer of 10 cm snow cover (Schröder et al. 2011) is assumed.”

I am not sure if the forecast mode is the best when studying atmosphere ice ocean interactions – the sea ice cover in the driving re-analyses can be different than the observed cover and in that way processes related to atmosphere ice ocean interactions can be destroyed. A discussion on this topic in the conclusions / future work would be welcome. Moreover, it should be clearly indicated in abstract and conclusions that the model is used in forecast mode.

We use daily updated sea-ice concentrations from satellite data (6 km resolution) in the forecast mode, but we use a 6 hour spin up to allow for the atmosphere to adapt to the difference between the high-resolution sea ice data from satellite and the coarse-resolution temperatures from ERA-Interim.

We added “and used in forecast mode” in the abstract and “in forecast mode and” in the summary.

We added the sentence in section 2.1: “We used the first 6 hours as spin up to allow for the atmosphere to adapt to the difference between the high-resolution sea ice data from satellite and the coarse-resolution temperatures from ERA-Interim.”

At the end of page 3 you describe you have a sea ice thickness of 0 m when the sea ice cover is 0-15%. I am not sure what this means – does it means that sea ice is

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simply ignored for these small fractional coverages? Although I did not dive into the reference, the value of 0.1 m for fractions between 15-70% seems very low to me. Can you somehow extend the argumentation on these values in the paper. Again this is quite relevant for the application that the authors have in mind.

Yes, with an ice thickness 0 m we meant open water. We corrected it. The value of 0.1 m for fractions between 15-70% is justified by studies of sea ice thickness in polynyas (see e.g. <https://doi.org/10.5194/tc-10-2999-2016>). A threshold of 70% is a well-accepted value for the detection of polynyas. Many observational studies have shown that only a small area of wintertime polynyas is ice-free. We assume this for 0-15% sea ice concentration, as 15% is also a common threshold for the ice edge.

We changed the sentence to: “Grid points with a sea ice concentration of 0-15% are set to open water. For 15-70% a sea ice thickness of 0.1 m is assumed (see e.g. Gutjahr et al.,2016b). For 70-100% we assume a thickness of 1 m, which is a reasonable estimate for the Weddell Sea (see Kurtz and Markus, 2012).”

Page 5 line 27 – you compare hourly averaged observations with grid box average instantaneous model output. You have to motivate this better – what is the typical advection speed and to which horizontal length scale does a time period of one hour correspond? Is it still possible to compare models and re-analyses with different resolutions if an evaluation is performed in this way. This point definitely needs more attention and a solid methodology needs to be presented and executed.

This is a general question of comparison of model data with observations at a point.

As mentioned, model data represent volume averages over a grid box. If you only look at the advection speed, then a 10 m/s speed would correspond to a distance of 36 km, which is about two times the horizontal grid spacing for C15/T15 and seven times for C05/T05. On the other hand, the horizontal grid distance is not the resolution of the model in the sense of the representation of processes. Using spectral analysis methods for CCLM it was found that the effective model resolution is at least 5-7 times the

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horizontal grid spacing (Zentek et al. 2016, 10.1175/JCLI-D-15-0540.1). An instantaneous model output at a grid point is therefore always a smoothed value over a much larger scale than the grid distance. For the lidar data, it is the other way round. Here the sampling for a single measurement is a few seconds (and thus contains also turbulence), and a wind profile corresponds to a time scale of 1-2 minutes. Therefore, we averaged the profiles over time in order to remove some of the small-scale variability. The same problems occur when model data is compared e.g. to radio soundings. It is generally assumed that the time of the ascent is e.g. 1200 UTC, but in reality the ascent is over about two hours and the 1200 UTC sonde is launched much earlier. It is also not clear, if the synoptic observations and AWS data used for the comparison are really averages over an hour or if they are e.g. 10min averages every hour.

In summary, we follow the methodology of previous verification studies. We rephrased the sentence, on why we averaged the lidar data, but we will not discuss all other possible problems.

Before: “Further note that the lidar data is an average over one hour around every full hour, which smooths the data and makes it better comparable to the simulation data that represent the wind average over the whole model grid box.” Now:

“Further note that the lidar data is an average over one hour around every full hour, which removes small-scale variability as the single measurements were done approximately every 15 min for 1-2 min. This makes it better comparable to the simulation data, because although the output is instantaneous, it unlikely shows turbulence on such a small scale as it always represent the wind average over the whole model grid box.”

Figure 7, 8, and 9 are key figures to the paper, but difficult to interpret for the reader. Consider remaking them by plotting the box plots on a map, so that the reader directly knows to which station the comparison belong and is facilitated in the interpretation.

We adapted the map (Fig. 1) by replacing the symbols with the stations numbers used

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in Fig. 7, 8 and 9.

Consider switching Fig 11 with Fig 12.

We switched them.

Fig. 15 and 16: to facilitate the visual comparison, please remove the parts that are not measured with the lidar.

By removing these parts, some information would also be lost (e.g. the wind maxima around 11:00 UTC in 750 m height in Fig.15 that is present in ERA5 but not in ERA-Interim). We compromised by drawing a contour, thus enhancing the visual comparison.

For the last part with the lidar comparison, also an evaluation of higher resolution integrations is added. Since sensitivity to resolution is small, I recommend to leave out this comparison. It is sufficient to just make a note saying that decreasing the resolution to 5 or 1 km does not affect the wind patterns at the location of the lidar.

Generally we agree. On the other hand, not much space is gained by leaving that out these results and readers prefer to see the results directly, so we kept it.

I suggest to merge the summary and conclusion and outlook section as there is some redundancy.

The summary is more detailed while the conclusion and outlook section is more general (and very short). Thus we think it is justified to stay with the two separate sections.

Reference: Gossart, A., Helsen, S., Lenaerts, J.T M., Vanden Broucke, S., van Lipzig, N.P M., Souverijns, N. (2019). An Evaluation of Surface Climatology in State-of-the-Art Reanalyses over the Antarctic Ice Sheet. JOURNAL OF CLIMATE, 32 (20), 6899-6915. doi: 10.1175/JCLI-D-19-0030.1

Interactive comment on Geosci. Model Dev. Discuss., <https://doi.org/10.5194/gmd-2019-141>, 2019.

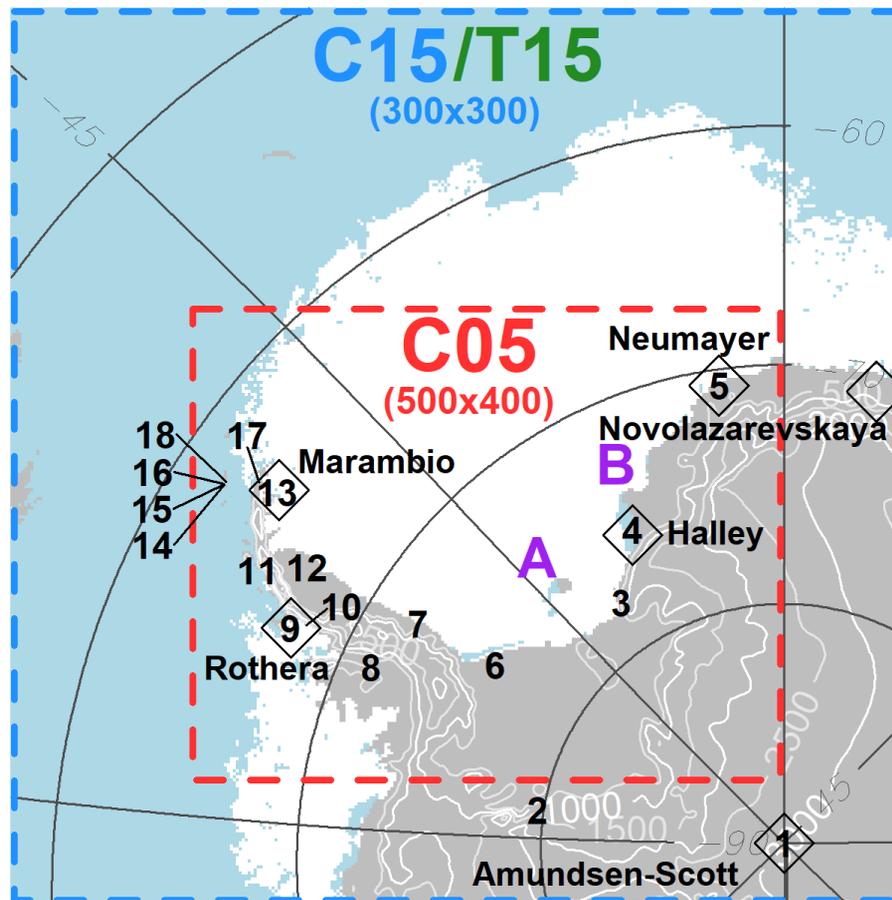


Fig. 1.

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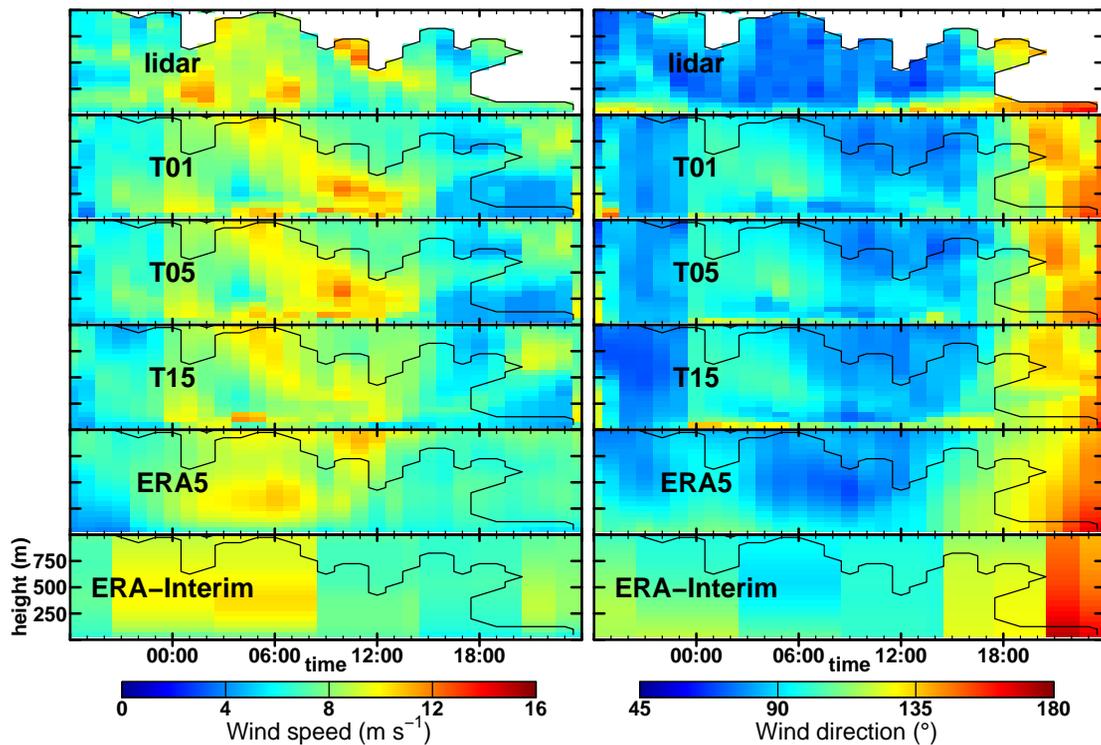


Fig. 2.

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