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A modelling study of eddy-splitting by an Island/Seamount

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Abstract. A mesoscale eddy's trajectory and its interaction with topography under the planetary β and nonlinear effects in the South China Sea are examined using the MITgcm. Warm eddies propagate to the southwest while cold eddies propagate to the northwest. The speed of both warm and cold eddies is about 2.4 km/day in the model. The eddy trajectory and its structure are affected by an island or a seamount, in particular, some eddies may split during the interaction with an island/seamount. Eddy-splitting is related to the size of the island and the submergence depth of the seamount. The results of sensitivity experiments of the interaction between an idealized eddy and an island/seamount indicate that the eddy would split in the qualitative range of $1/4<R<2$, $S<1/5$ (where R and S are two dimensionless parameters of the island size and submergence depth; R is the ratio of the island radius to the eddy radius, and S is the ratio of the seamount submergence depth to the eddy vertical length). And the scale of the secondary eddy split out decreases as the island diameter or the seamount depth increases. In the splitting process, integrated angular momentum (IAM) is transferred from water around the eddy to the eddy core. As a result, some filaments or eddies with opposite vorticity appear around the eddy. Eddy-splitting, therefore, is an important way to transform energy from mesoscale to sub-mesoscale in the ocean.

1 Introduction

Eddies are common in oceans, both in surface and deep layers, including mesoscale eddies (scale of 100 km) and sub-mesoscale eddies (scale of 10 km) (Itoh et al., 2011;Oey, 2008;Olson et al., 2007). In particular, mesoscale eddies occur frequently in the South China Sea (SCS) (Hwang and Chen, 2000;Chang et al., 2012;Zhang et al., 2013;Guihua et al., 2005;Nan et al., 2011). Eddies have gained much attention since they are an important form of material and energy transfer in the ocean (Zhang et al., 2013;Kersalé et al., 2013;Waite et al., 2007;Zhang et al., 2011;Jacob et al., 2002;Guihua et al., 2005). Although isolated eddies in open oceans are affected by different factors, many of them have similar kinematic characteristics in general. As many researchers have pointed out, an isolated warm eddy in open oceans moves southwestwards or moves northwards along the western boundary in the northern hemisphere under the planetary β and nonlinear effects (Chang et al., 2012;Wei and Wang, 2009;Nof, 1981;Itoh et al., 2011;Itoh and Sugimoto, 2001;Nan et al., 2011;Cushman-Roisin et al., 1990;Korotaev and Fedotov, 1994). Sutyrin (2003) came to conclusions that β-induced propagation of surface anticyclone drives lower-layer eddies which add a significant southerly component to surface eddy propagation.

The eddy propagation in the ocean is directly affected by topography. The eddy trajectory and structure would be changed due to the interaction with a continental slope, an island or a seamount. The interaction between a warm eddy and a continental shelf slope has been investigated by many researchers based on satellite observations, laboratory experiments and numerical models (Hyun and Hogan, 2008;Rennie et al., 2007;Sutyrin and Grimshaw, 2010;Wei and Wang, 2009;Herbette et al., 2003;Smith and O'Brien, 1983;Simmons and Nof, 2002;Dewar, 2002;Herbette et al., 2005;Luo and Liu, 2006;Itoh and Sugimoto, 2001;Cenedese, 2002). Studies on cold eddies are fewer than for warm eddies. The reason may be that warm eddies exist perennially in California Bay and Cape Basin which provide good opportunities to investigate the characters of warm eddies. In the SCS the number of cold eddies is similar to that of warm eddies. Therefore, it is of imprtance to find out the difference between the cold and warm eddies.

There are plenty of mesoscale and sub-mesoscale eddies existing in the northern SCS , and most of them propagate to the southwest (Chang et al., 2012;Nan et al., 2011). Furthermore, the SCS is populated with numerous islands and seamounts. Therefore, most eddies are affected by the topography variation in their movement. Chang et al. (Chang et al., 2012) found from satellite observations that an anticyclonic eddy (warm eddy) with a diameter of 120 km was split by the Dongsha Atoll situated on the slope in the northern SCS. In addition, eddies may split during interaction with a curved continental slope. Kersalé et al. (Kersalé et al., 2013) investigated a coastal anticyclonic eddy in the western part of the Gulf of Lion in the northwestern Mediterranean Sea, where eddies split in a similar pattern as in the case of Dongsha Atoll. This provides a wider application prospect for any eddy-splitting rule in the interaction with topography. Drijfhout (Drijfhout, 2003) discussed the eddy splitting mechanism, and (Simmons and Nof, 2000) obtained the essential conditions of eddy-splitting by a wall using a wall moving into the eddy. Using an isopycnal ocean circulation model Herbette (2003) analyzed the behavior of a surface-intensified anticyclonic eddy encountering an isolated seamount. However large differences have been found between an eddy colliding with an island and with a wall.

The change of eddy structure over topography has an important influence on its dynamics, while it is an important means of energy transfer among different scales and affects coastal ocean dynamics (Kersalé et al., 2013;Drijfhout, 2003;Dunphy and Lamb, 2014). Because of difficulties in catching the entire process of eddy splitting by both satellite observations and situ measurements, there are few cases of eddy-splitting found by satellite images so far. The special processes and characteristics of splitting have not been elucidated completely. Particularly, the phenomenon of eddy-splitting reported in Dongsha SCS lacks sufficient measured data to systematically describe the process in splitting (Chang et al., 2012).

In this study, we constructed an ideal eddy in a numerical model according to the features of the observed eddies in the SCS to examine its kinematic characters and test eddy splitting process using numerical simulations. Moreover, inspired by the eddy splitting near the Dongsha Island in the SCS, we vary the island size and seamount submergence depth to investigate the influence of the island on the eddy, and then to analysis the effect of the island and the seamount on the mesoscale eddy evolution (weakening and destruction) as the eddy approaches the obstacles.

This paper is organized as follows: Sect.2 describes the eddy structure used in the model and the method of eddy identification. Sect.3 introduces the model. The model results and discussions, including comparison of eddy trajectories between warm eddy and cool eddy, and the effect of an island and seamount on eddy deformation will be presented in Sect.4. A summary is given in Sect.5.

2 An idealized mesoscale eddy

2.1 The eddy structure

Many previous researches have explored the mesoscale eddy structure in the SCS, especially its three-dimensional density distribution (Guihua et al., 2005;Nan et al., 2011;Hwang and Chen, 2000). The idealized mesoscale eddy is initialized with an axisymmetric Gaussian-type profile based on long term moored observations (Zhang et al., 2013), Argo float data and the merged data products of satellite altimeters (Chen et al., 2010). Temperature profiles from observations are abstracted to the following Eq. (1).

$$\mathrm{T(z)} = \mathrm{T}_b(\mathrm{z}) + a_z e^{-\frac{x^2+y^2}{2L^2}} \tag{1}$$

Where $\mathrm{T}_b(\mathrm{z})$ is background temperature; a_z is a function parameter varying with depth (z) and L is constant 1.5×10^4 m; x, y and z are position coordinates.

The eddy's initial tangential velocity is calculated using the thermal wind balance with zero velocity at the ocean bottom. Fig.1 shows the temperature and azimuthal velocity distribution on the cross section through the eddy center. The initial eddy is 60 km in diameter and 500 m in depth with a total water depth of 2000 m, the maximum surface velocity about 0.9 m/s, and the maximum surface elevation being 0.5m.

2.2 Eddy identification and definition of the eddy boundary

There are different methods to identify an eddy and here we use the Okubo-Weiss method ((Okubo, 1970;Weiss, 1991) to identify the eddy which we constructed in the model and define the boundary of the eddy. The Okubo-Weiss parameter W is defined as Eq. (2), (3):

$$\mathrm{W} = {s_n}^2 + {s_s}^2 - \omega^2 \tag{2}$$

$$\omega = \frac{\partial v}{\partial x} - \frac{\partial u}{\partial y} \ ; \ s_n = \frac{\partial u}{\partial x} - \frac{\partial v}{\partial y} \ ; \ s_s = \frac{\partial v}{\partial x} + \frac{\partial u}{\partial y} \tag{3}$$

Where ω is the vertical compoment of relative vorticity, s_n and s_s represent the strain and shear deformation, and u and v are eastward and northward velocities respectively.

Because the velocity field within an eddy is dominated by its rotation, ocean eddies are generally characterized by negative values of W. In this study, we use $\mathrm{W} < -0.2\sigma_w$ to define the core region of the eddy, where σ_w is the standard deviation of W in the study region. This way to identify an eddy has a tendency toward excess of eddy detection (Doglioli et al., 2007), so we combine the potential vorticity distribution, velocity field and temperature anomaly to determine the main eddy which we focus on, and ignore the smaller circulations due to eddy-topography interaction.

3 Numerical model and initialization

The MITgcm (**MIT** **G**eneral **C**irculation **M**odel) (Adcroft et al., 2011) is used in this study. Its non-hydrostatic formulation enables us to simulate fluid phenomena over a wide range of scales. The model domain is $500 \times 450\ \mathrm{km}^2$, and the depth of the ocean used in the model is 2000 m. The horizontal resolution is 2.5 km; in the vertical, 28 levels are used with 50 m resolution in the upper 1000 m and the resolution gradually coarsens in the lower 1000m. The planetary parameter $\beta = 2 \times 10^{-11} m^{-1} s^{-1}$ and the Coriolis parameter $f = 9 \times 10^{-5} s^{-1}$, which are the typical values in the SCS, are used in model. The model boundaries all are open, and the Orlanski radiation condition is used. In the horizontal, we use Smagorinsky viscosity with a parameter of 0.2. The Laplacian diffusion of heat is used with a constant coefficient of $10^{-4} m^2/s$. In the vertical, the vertical eddy viscosity is $5.0 \times 10^{-4}\ m^2/s$.

In the model, both the warm eddy and the cold eddy are initialized with an axisymmetric Gaussian-type profile described in Sect.2. The temperature decreases with the depth in the upper 1000 m, and is set to a constant value of 4℃ below 1000 m.

The initial velocity field is in geostrophic balance and it is calculated from the density distribution which we obtain from a state equation according to Jacket and Mcdougall (Jackett and Mcdougall, 1995). For the model runs without topography the eddy is located at the center of the model domain to test the difference between warm- and cold-eddy trajectories. In the cases studying the interaction between an eddy and an island/seamount, the island/seamount with different sizes/depths is located in the central path of the eddy, and all islands and seamount are cylinder shaped. We run the model from the initial state for 50 days in order to compare different effects of obstacles on eddies.

4 Results and discussions

Our main attention has been put on the eddy-splitting due to the interaction between eddies and obstacles, and a series of experiments based on the idealized eddy structure in the SCS have been carried out (Table 1.). The Eddy diameter is 60 km, and the initial location of the eddy center is x=250 km, y=225 km.

We first examine the eddy trajectories and its characteristics without any island/seamount. Then we focus on the interaction between the eddy and island/seamount, and the sensitivity of eddy-splitting to the island size and seamount depth.

4.1 The trajectories of warm and cold eddies

In our first set of numerical experiments, both warm eddy and cold eddy are located at the center (x=250 km, y= 225 km) of the domain with open boundaries and a flat bottom (Fig.2).

When the eddy is a warm eddy (anticyclonic eddy in the northern hemisphere), it moves towards the southwest direction in a flat bottom ocean. At the beginning of the model integration, the eddy will adjust itself to a dynamic balance. As a result, the speed of the eddy movement is relatively small. After the model reaches its balance, the speed of the eddy increases, to a constant value of 2.4 km/day after 40 days. The speed of the warm eddy in the model is similar to that of the study of (Wei and Wang, 2009). The eddy speed is influenced by the eddy size and the β effect, which is a function of the local latitude. Therefore at different latitude, the eddy has different speed. Fig.3 shows that the average speed over 50 days of the warm eddy is 1.75 km/day which is smaller than the eddy speed in the natural conditions in the SCS region because of the adjustment in the early stage of the model run.

With a cold eddy (cyclonic eddy in the northern hemisphere) in the same situation, the movement direction is northwest under β and nonliear effects. The speed increases from the beginning of the model integration which is the same as for the warm eddy. The speed reaches a contant value of 2.3 km/day after 40 days. From the trajectory and speed variation during the eddy movement, we can see that the warm eddy and the cool eddy have similar kinematic characteristics. But the cold eddy moves to a higher latitude in the northern hemisphere while the warm eddy moves to a lower latitude because of their different spin directions.

When an isolated eddy propagates in open oceans with a flat bottom, it is known that the movement is governed by the planetary β and nonlinear effects (e.g. (Chang et al., 2012;Hyun and Hogan, 2008). While the β effect drifts the eddy westwards (Shi and Nof, 1994), nonlinearity provides the meridional component of movement. From the results of the model, the warm eddy generally moves in the southwest direction in the northern hemisphere which agrees with previous studies. The trajectory of the cold eddy is mirror symmetry with the warm eddy (Fig.2). Both eddies' propagation speed is about 2.4 km/day which is smaller than the value in previous numerical investigations which used mesoscale eddies with 100 km horizontal scale (Wei and Wang, 2009;Sutyrin et al., 2003). The eddy propagation speed associates with the eddy size, and the propagation speed increases with increasing eddy size but will be limited by the maximum Rossby wave phase speed.

4.2 Eddy-splitting

The influence of an island on the eddy deformation will be explored in this study. According to the eddy-splitting at Dongsha Island in the SCS (Chang et al., 2012), we set an island on the path of the warm eddy based on the first case we have examined. Diameter of the island is 20 km. At the beginning of the model integration, the eddy is not influenced by the island because the distance between the eddy and the island is not sufficiently close. As the eddy moves towards the island along its trajectory, the edge of the eddy begins to contact the solid boundary of the island; and it continues to push slowly against the island under the β effect and inertia. Due to the blocking by the island, the water body in outer edge of the eddy extends out along the island outline. This part of the water is gradually shed from the main body because of the conservation of angular momentum.

It is evident from Fig.4, when the eddy collides with the island, there is another weak warm eddy formed on the other side of island. The two eddies have similar diameters, but the secondary eddy is weaker than the main one which can be seen from SSH (Sea Surface Height), temperature, PV (Potential Vorticity), and O-W field (Fig.5). In eddy-splitting, temperature can be seen as a tracer. From the temperature distribution we can find that the water of the secondary eddy is derived from the original eddy, so we believe that the secondary eddy comes from eddy-splitting rather than being formed independently. After the eddy-splitting, the two eddies move away from the island along their own trajectories as independent eddies.

When the eddy encounters an obstacle, the trajectories and the speed are usually drastically altered. The results show that the speed of the eddy decreases significantly when the eddy interacts with the island. Shi and Nof (Shi and Nof, 1994) pointed out that the image effect of the eddy usually dominates when colliding with an obstacle, and the effect would inhibit the original movement trend. At the same time, generation of a weak cyclonic eddy during the interaction of warm eddies with an island/seamount adds a significant effect to eddy propagation. Fig.6 shows the cyclone inhibits the southward propagation of the eddies in eddy-splitting.

Actually, the warm eddies can never split on their own. Using an application of the conservation of integrated angular momentum (IAM) Nof (Nof, 1990) demonstrated this. As a result, when a warm eddy splits, the IAM has to increase as the newly formed eddies move away from their original center. When a warm eddy is forced by the solid boundary of an island or a seamount, in the lower layer there has to be a transfer of IAM from the surrounding fluid to the core region of the eddy (Drijfhout, 2003). We can see this from model results shown in Fig.6, in which positive vorticity has increased in both surface and lower layers.

On the sea surface, a cyclonic eddy is generated by a division of the warm eddy (anticyclonic eddy) due to the conservation of angular momentum. The cyclonic eddy is smaller than either of the two warm eddies, and the strength of the cyclonic eddy is weak. By comparison, in the deeper layer, there are only two circulations, one anticyclonic eddy which is the deeper part of the main body of the warm eddy, and the other cyclonic eddy beside the anticyclonic eddy. The strength of the secondary warm eddy is too weak to extend to the deep layer, so it does not show in this layer. Comparing PV (Potential Vorticity) on the surface and the deeper layer, we can find that the deeper part of the warm eddy moves southwards slightly faster than the upper part. The existence of the deep cyclonic eddy adds a southerly component to eddy propagation, and its influence is greater in the deep layer than on the surface. We speculate this is one reason for the vertical structure tilt of the warm eddy (Zhang et al., 2013).

4.3 The effect of the island sizes on eddy-splitting

The observational data, including satellite images and situ measurements, points out that when an eddy collides with a continental slope or a small island, there is no eddy-splitting, only changes of its trajectory (Jacob et al., 2002; Wei et al., 2009; Nan et al., 2011). In order to find out the parameter ranges of eddy-splitting, we set a series of islands with different diameters at the same location in the model. Before that, Different size islands and eddies interactions were checked. Let the island diameter being 120 km, and the eddy diameter being 90 km for example, which compared with the island with 90 km diameter and the eddy with 60 km diameter has the similar behavior (Fig.7). Though the islands and the eddies all are different in size in comparison, they have approximately same size ratio of the island radius to the eddy radius in each interaction.

In order to talk about the impact of different factors on eddy-splitting, in the study, we defined two dimensionless parameters R and S (Eq. (4), (5)) to represent the size and submergence depth of an obstacle.

$$\mathrm{R} = \frac{R_{ob}}{R_{ed}} \tag{4}$$

$$\mathrm{S} = \frac{D_{sb}}{D_{ed}} \tag{5}$$

Where R_{ob} is the radius of an obstacle and R_{ed} is the radius of an eddy; D_{sb} is the seamount submergence depth and D_{ed} is the vertical extent of an eddy.

The eddy collides with the islands in 20 days and interacts with them as we have described above. Fig.8 shows when the island is small enough, namely R < 1/4, where R is dimensionless parameter of the island size, the eddy does not split. Instead, the eddy will move through the obstacle, although the eddy structure deforms during the interaction process, and then recovers back after the interaction. As the island diameter increases, the ‘passing through’ eddy gradually turns to splitting as a result of the eddy-island interaction. The eddy-splitting happens in the parameter range of 1/4 <R< 2. As the island diameter increases to R>2, a filament splits out from the eddy. This phenomenon is not considered as eddy-splitting in this study. In the last example, when the eddy collides with a solid wall (which can be seen as a circle with infinite diameter), the eddy propagates to the higher latitude along the boundary which agrees with previous studies.

From the eddy-splitting processes with different sizes of islands, we can find that the locations of the secondary eddy split out are related to the island size. Fig.9 shows the position relationship of the two eddies and the island. The angle (θ) between the secondary eddy and the position of collisional origin varies with the different island sizes (R). The distribution of the angle (θ) and the island size (R) is shown in Fig.10. The fitting curve demonstrates that the empirical relation between the angle and the island size corresponds to the function:

$$\theta \sim f(R) = a * R^{b}; a = 2.6, b = -0.663.$$

f(R) is the angle (rad) between the two split eddies related to the island; R is dimensionless parameter of the island size; a and b are the function parameters.

4.4 Effect of the seamount on eddy-splitting

In natural oceans, islands are only part of topography and there are more seamounts which are submerged under the sea surface. The effect of seamounts on ocean dynamics is different from that of islands. The submergence depth and the size of a seamount are key factors in the eddy-splitting. During the interaction between an eddy and a seamount, the lower part of the eddy is affected directly by the solid seamount while the upper part is not, then the vertical structure of the eddy is deformed significantly. As a result, its trajectory and splitting process is different from that of the interaction between an eddy and an island.

4.4.1 The effect of the seamount submergence depth

Here we investigate the effect of the seamount submergence depth on eddy-splitting. The experiments were set up based on the cases of R=1/4, 1, 2, which have typical eddy splitting. Model results for the seamount with diameter of 60 km are presented in Fig.11. When the submergence depth is 50 m which is shallow, the interaction process between the eddy and the seamount is similar to that of the interaction between an eddy and an island. With the increase of depth, eddy-splitting becomes weaker and weaker. When the seamount submergence depth is 100 m, the upper layer of the eddy moves under the inertia effect while the lower part is hindered by the seamount; this leads to the change of eddy vertical structure and the upper water of the eddy is stranded by the seamount. At the same time, the filament which sheds from the eddy is closer to the main body of the eddy compared with the case of an island.

When the seamount submergence depth is 200 m, the effect of the seamount on the eddy structure has weakened greatly compared with the seamount submergence depth of 100 m. Apart from the filament shedding, there is no significant change in the main structure of the eddy. The result also shows that the seamount with S=2/5 cannot induce the eddy-splitting. When the submerged depth is 500 m (S ≈1), the seamount only affects the bottom of the eddy. The eddy trajectory changes under this circumstance. Fig.11 (e) shows that the eddy will bypass the obstacle from the left side under the effect of the secondary circulation in the deep layer. When the seamount submergence depth is 1000 m (S>1), the existence of the seamount does not impact the eddy motion, and the warm eddy moves toward southwest which is similar to the case with a flat bottom.

Above all, we find that eddy-splitting happens roughly in the range of S <1/5 when the seamount diameter is 60 km. Similarly, from the result of numerical experiments when the seamount is 10km in diameter, the eddy-splitting occurs at S <1/10. Actually, the range of eddy-splitting in the seamount cases is related with the seamount horizontal size as discussed in Sect. 4.4.2.

4.4.2 The effect of the seamount size

When an eddy collides with a seamount, the effect of the seamount on eddy-splitting is weaker than that of an island. The effect of the seamount on eddy-splitting not only determined by the submergence depth, but also influenced by the seamount horizontal scale. Here we test three different sized seamounts with the same submergence depth (Fig.12). During the interaction between the eddy and the seamount with 15 km diameter, the eddy does not split, and when the seamount diameter is 60 km, a small eddy is split out while the main eddy deforms. For the seamount with 120 km diameter, intense deformation occurs to the eddy without splitting.

For the seamount, the eddy-splitting happens in a narrower band of horizontal scale compared with island. And as the seamount submergence depth increases, the influence of the seamount on eddy deformation decreases. So the band of seamount horizontal scale for which the eddy-splitting occurs is narrower and narrower as the submergence depth increases. This is reason why the area where eddy-splitting occurs is triangle shaped.

Concerning eddy evolution in the ocean, we have explored the effect of topography such as islands and seamounts on eddy-splitting. According to the results we obtained, the dependence of eddy-splitting on the parameters R and S is summarized in Fig.13. This diagram illustrates main settings of experiments and the red area is where eddy-splitting occurs.

5 Summary

Motivated by the eddy-splitting near Dongsha Island in the SCS, we explored the eddy's trajectory and effect of topography on an idealized eddy evolution. MITgcm is used in the study of the effect of topography on the warm eddy evolution including eddy trajectory and its structure, particularly the eddy-splitting when the eddy collides with an island/seamount. The topography used in the numerical experiments includes a flat bottom, islands with different diameters and seamounts with different submergence depth. Eddies colliding with the topography all have the same initial structure. The simulation results of PV, SSH, temperature and O-W parameter are analyzed.

The model eddies (cold and warm) move at a speed of 2.4 km/day in open oceans under the planetary β and nonlinear effects. The warm (cold) eddy moves southwestward (northwestward). The eddy speed and trajectory are influenced by topography. Generally speaking, the effect of topography appears when the eddy is some distance away. It leads to the eddy's trajectory changing and slows down the speed of the eddy. Because of the inertia of the eddy movement, eddies interact with obstacles by collision. In this study we have investigated the interaction of eddies and islands/seamounts under the β and nonlinear effects. By defining two dimensionless parameters R and S representing the scale and submergence depth of an obstacle, we have shown the qualitative range of eddy-splitting using the results of model experiments. During the eddy-splitting, the location of a secondary eddy detached from the main eddy is related to the size of the island or seamount. Results of the model experiments show that the relationship between the angle of two eddy direction f(R) and dimensionless parameter R can be written as $\mathrm{f(R)} = \mathrm{a} * \mathrm{R}^{b}, where\ a = 2.6, b = -0.663$. Because observational data of eddy-splitting in oceans is scarce, further studies need to obtain more and comprehensive measurement data, and combine with numerical models to explore the dynamic mechanism of eddy-splitting. As Sheng and Tang (2003) pointed out the monthly varying wind stress and boundary flows also play an important role in simulating general circulation and variability in the region. Meanwhile, the length scale and the strength of the eddies depend on the stratification (Thiem et al., 2006). So investigation using more realistic model settings, such as real topography, distribution of density and forcing of the northern SCS is in progress.

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Tables

Table 1. List of different topography used in the experiments

Case	Type	Diameter	Submerge Depth	Center Location	Outcome
1	flat	-	-	-	No Splitting
2	Island	10 km	0	(213 km, 176 km)	No Splitting
3	Island	15 km	0	(211 km, 174 km)	Split
4	Island	25 km	0	(207 km, 170 km)	Split
5	Island	60 km	0	(195 km, 158 km)	Split
6	Island	90 km	0	(184 km, 147 km)	Weak Splitting
7	Island	120 km	0	(173 km, 136 km)	Weak Splitting
8	Island	150 km	0	(162 km, 125 km)	Weak Splitting
9	Island	300 km	0	(109 km, 72 km)	Filament
10	Island	infinite	0	-	Filament
11	Seamount	15 km	50 m	(211 km, 174 km)	No Splitting
12	Seamount	15 km	80 m	(211 km, 174 km)	No Splitting
13	Seamount	15 km	100 m	(211 km, 174 km)	No Splitting
14	Seamount	60 km	50 m	(195 km, 158 km)	split
15	Seamount	60 km	80 m	(195 km, 158 km)	split
16	Seamount	60 km	100 m	(195 km, 158 km)	Weak Splitting
17	Seamount	60 km	200 m	(195 km, 158 km)	Filament
18	Seamount	60 km	500 m	(195 km, 158 km)	No Splitting
19	Seamount	60 km	1000 m	(195 km, 158 km)	No Splitting
20	Seamount	90 km	50 m	(184 km, 147 km)	split
21	Seamount	120 km	100 m	(173 km, 136 km)	No Splitting
22	Seamount	120 km	150 m	(173 km, 136 km)	No Splitting
23	Seamount	150 km	100 m	(162 km, 125 km)	No Splitting

Figures

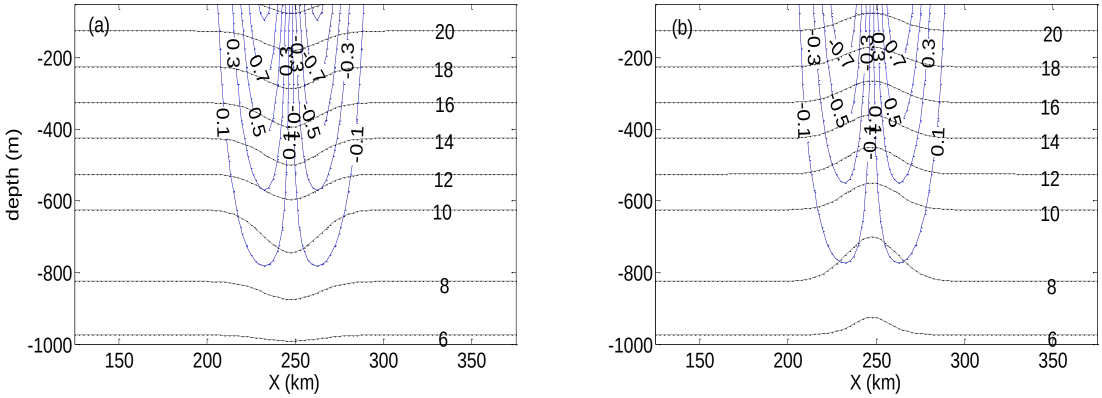

Figure 1. Initial velocity (m/s) and temperature (℃) profiles of the model warm eddy (a) and cold eddy (b).

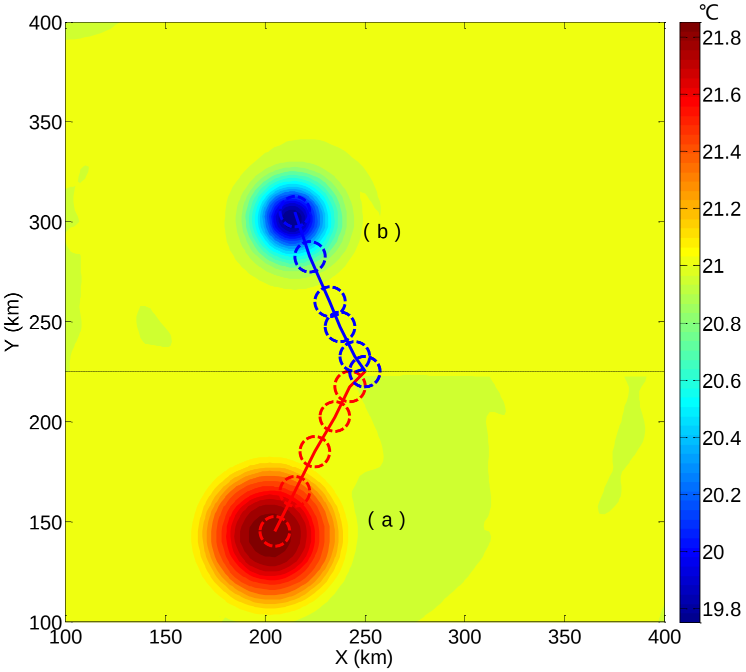

Figure 2. Eddy trajectory over a flat bottom: (a) warm eddy; (b) cold eddy) for 50 days. The trajectory of the eddy center is depicted by circles every 10 days. The temperature field is shown as color.

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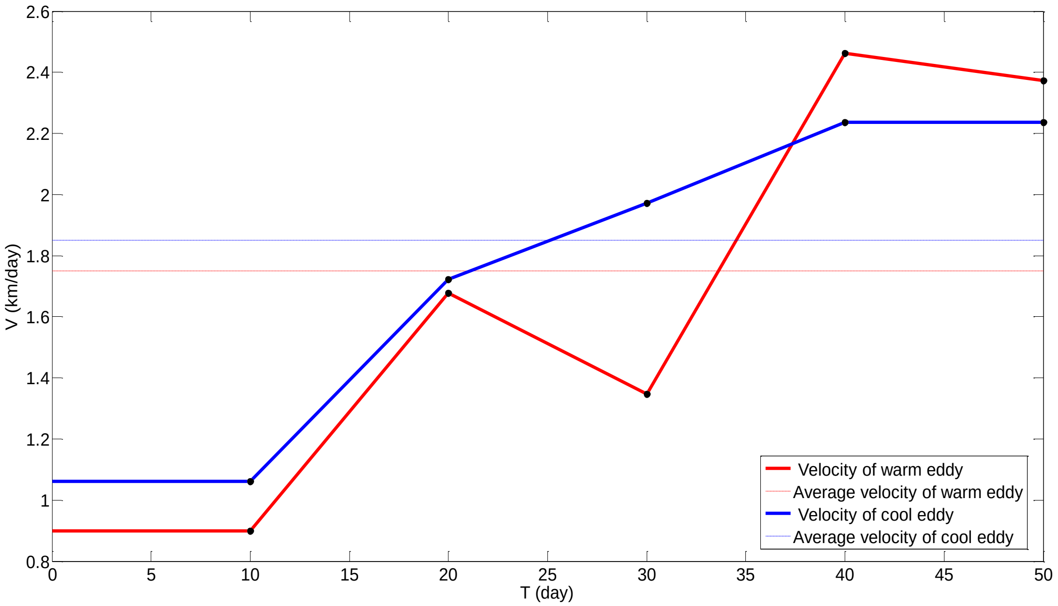

Figure 3. The speed of eddies over a flat bottom ocean. Solid line: time series of speed; dashed line: the speed averaged over 50 days.

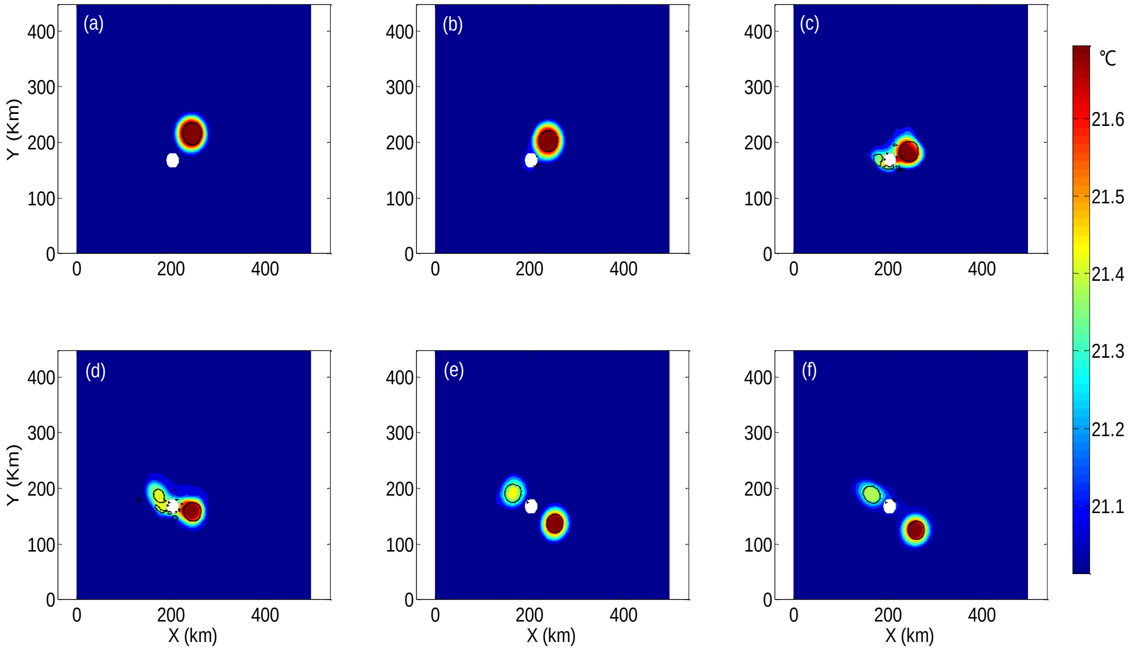

Figure 4. The process of eddy-splitting due to the interaction with an island of 20 km diameter over 50 days. (a): the initial state; (b): 10 days; (c): 20 days; (d): 30 days; (e): 40 days; (f):50 days. The color presents temperature and the black solid line is O-W parameter with value of $-0.2\sigma_w$.

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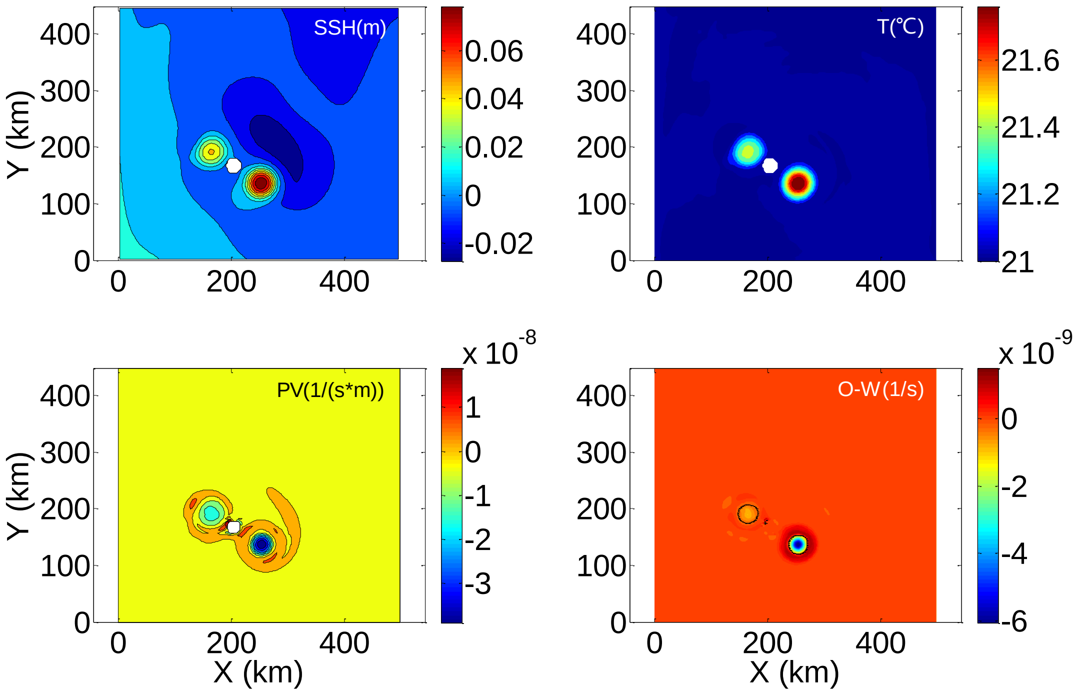

Figure 5. The warm eddy splits into two eddies during the interaction with an island of 20 km in diameter on day 50.

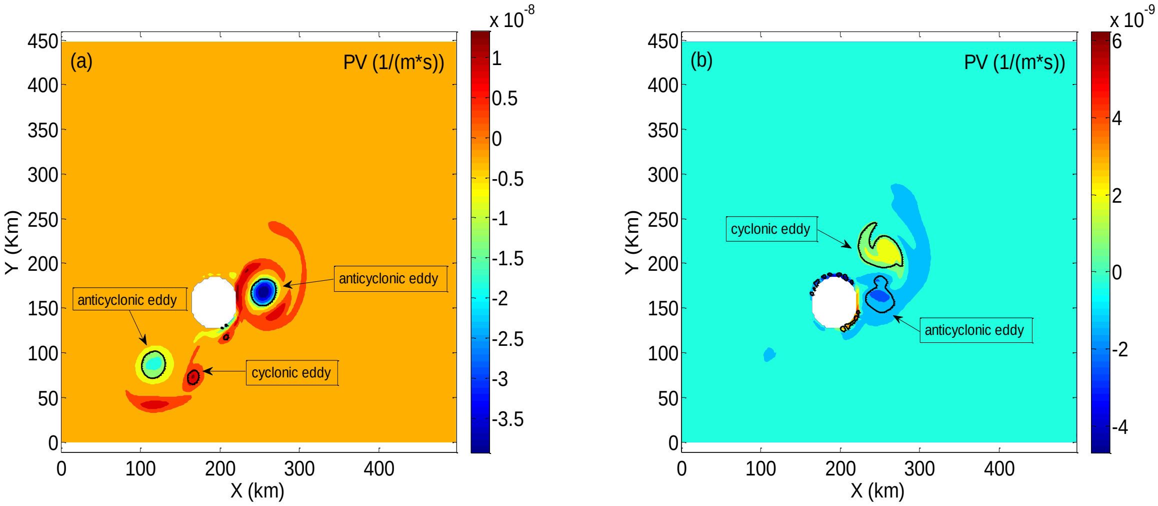

Figure 6. Potential vorticity distribution at day 50 of the interaction between warm eddy (anticyclonic eddy) and an island of 60 km in diameter on (a) surface layer; (b) 1000 m below the sea surface. The color represents PV and the black solid line is O-W parameter with value of $-0.2\sigma_w$.

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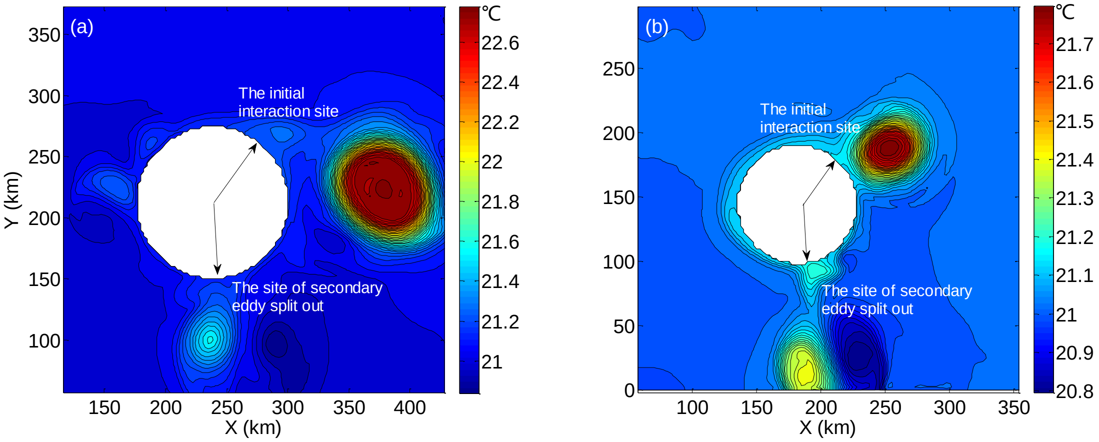

Figure 7. Comparison of interactions between different size islands and eddies (a) the island diameter is 120 km and the eddy diameter is 90 km; (b) the island diameter is 90 km and the eddy diameter is 60 km. the black arrows indicate the initial eddy-island interaction site and the site of secondary eddy split out.

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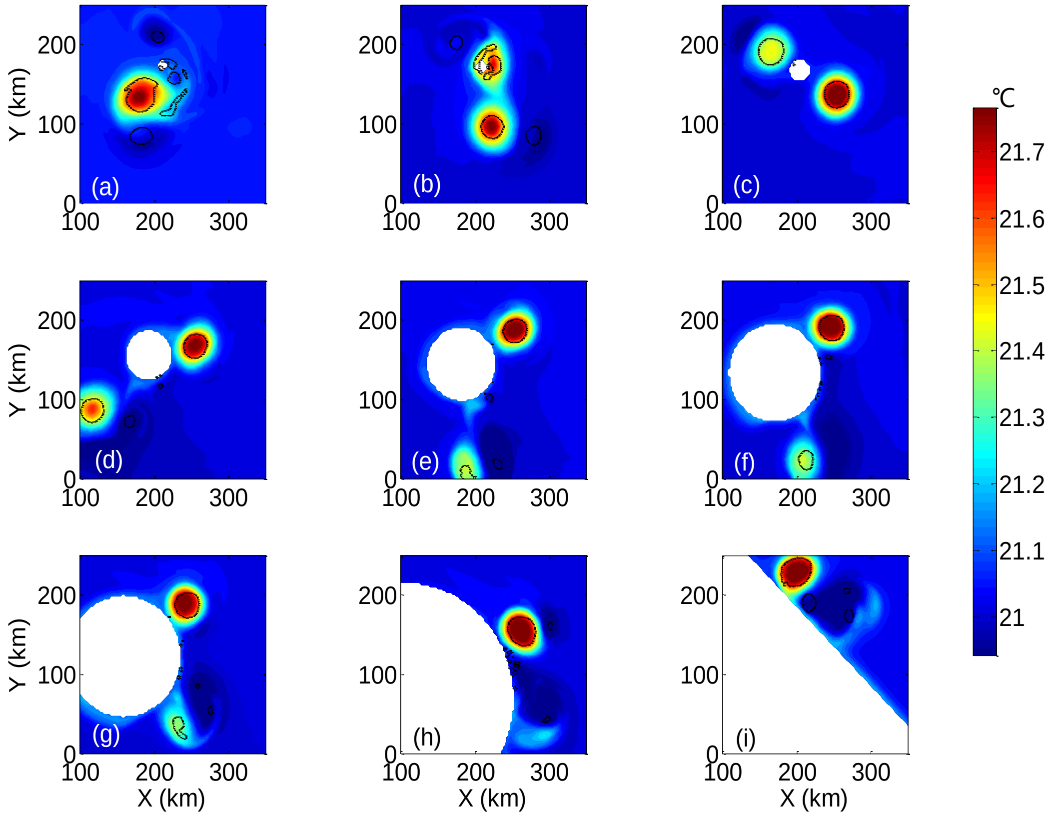

Figure 8. Eddy evolution after 50 days for islands with different diameter (a): 10 km; (b): 15 km; (c): 25 km; (d): 60 km; (e): 90 km; (f): 120 km; (g): 150 km; (h): 300 km; (a): infinite. The color represents temperature and the black solid line is O-W parameter with value of $-0.2\sigma_w$.

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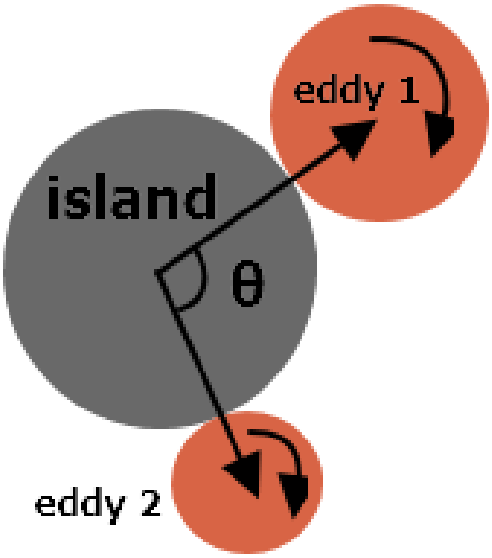

Figure 9. Sketch illustrating the position relationship of the two split eddies. When the eddy (eddy 1) encounters the island, the secondary eddy (eddy 2) splits out at angle θ during the splitting.

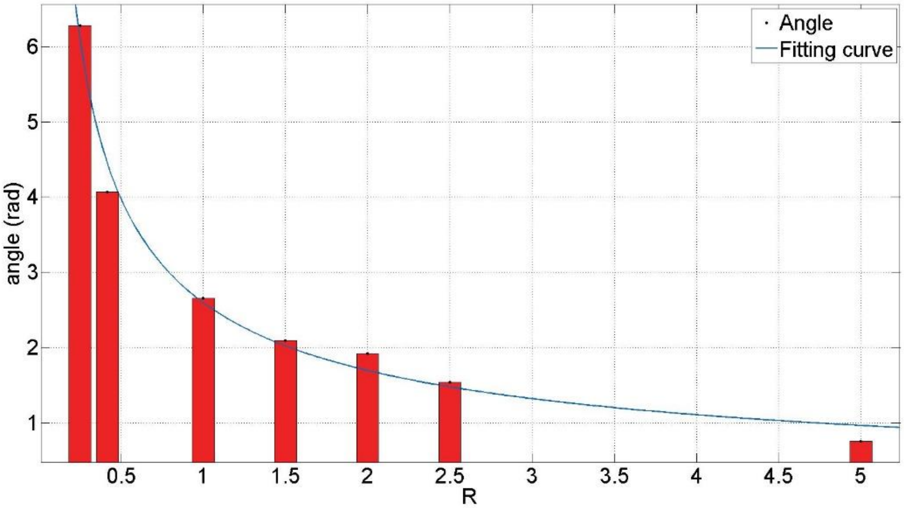

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Figure 10. Distribution of relative angle (rad) with island size (R). Blue line is the fitting curve.

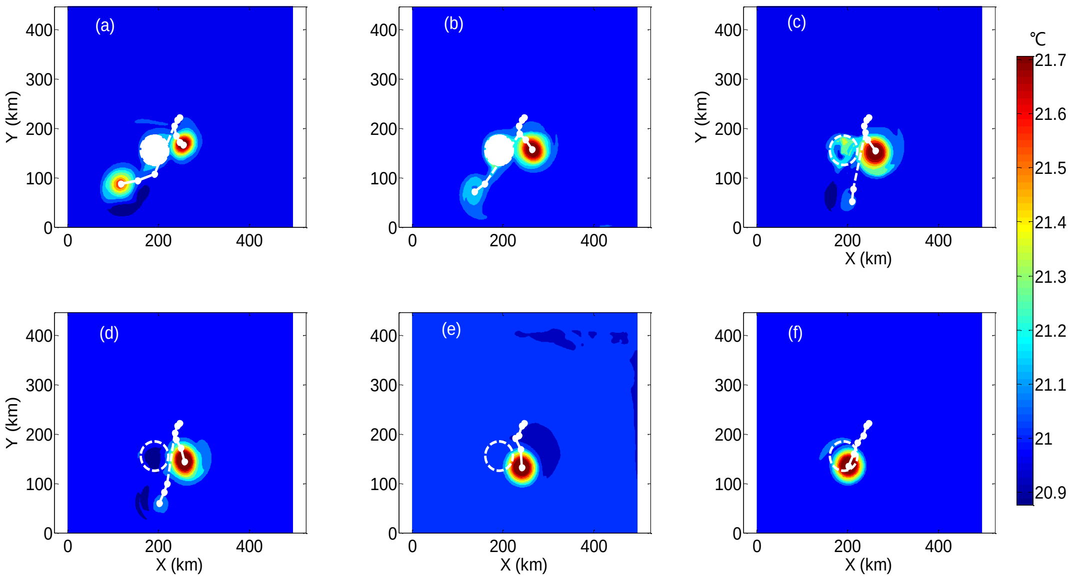

Figure 11. Eddy evolution in the case of the interaction with a seamount of 60 km diameter at different submergence depths (a): 10 m; (b): 50 m; (c): 100 m; (d): 200 m; (e): 500 m; (f):1000 m. The temperature is shown as color, and the trajectory of the center is shown as a white line with dots.

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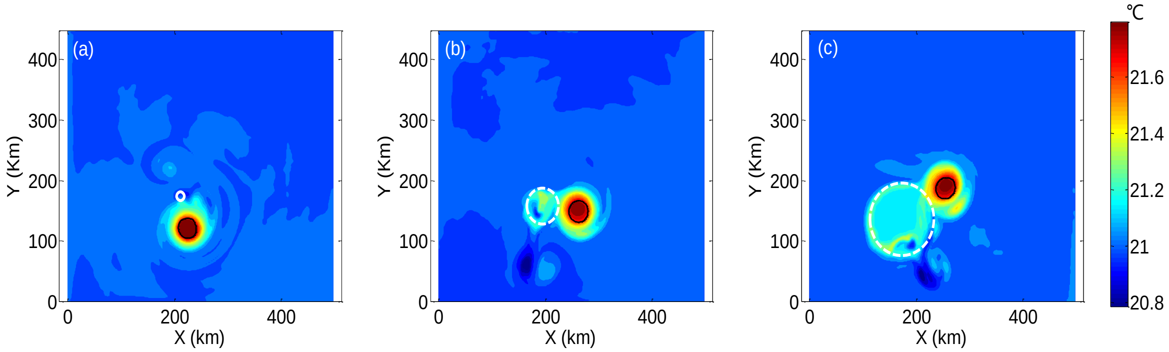

Figure 12. Eddy evolution during the interaction with different size seamounts with submergence depth 100 m. (a): 15 km; (b): 60 km; (c): 120 km. The temperature is shown as color, and the white dashed line is the position of seamount, the black solid line is O-W parameter with value of $-0.2\sigma_w$.

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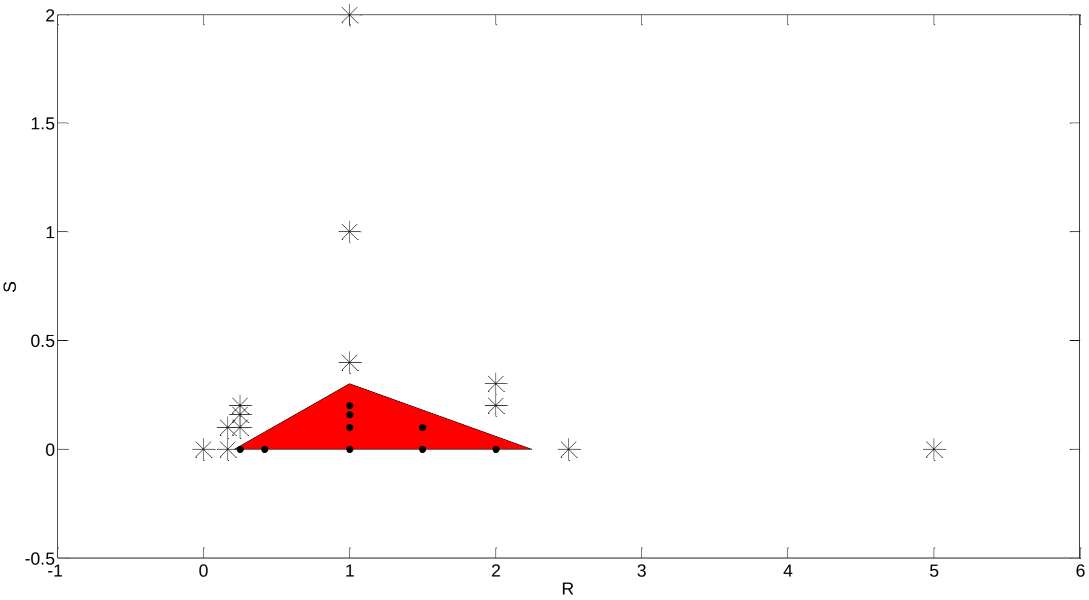

Figure 13. Range of parameters studied and dependence of qualitative features of the collision between eddies and obstacles on R and S. The star mark represents no eddy splitting in collision, and the solid dot represents eddy splitting. The red area is the range of eddy splitting.

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