

Noise sustained versus self-sustained structures in rotor-stator flow

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Rotor-stator flows are known to exhibit instabilities in the form of circular and spiral rolls. While the spirals are known to emanate from a supercritical Hopf bifurcation, the origin of the circular rolls is still unclear. A quantitative scenario for the circular rolls as a response of the system to external forcing is suggested. Two types of axisymmetric forcing are considered: bulk forcing (based on the resolvent analysis) and boundary forcing using direct numerical simulation. The linear gain curve shows strong amplification at non-zero frequencies following a pseudo-resonance mechanism. The optimal energy gain is found to grow rapidly with the Reynolds number (based on the rotation rate and interdisc spacing H) in connection with huge levels of non-normality. Presented results suggest that the circular rolls observed experimentally are the combined effect of the high forcing gain and the roll-like form of the leading response of the linearised operator. For sufficiently strong forcing amplitudes, the nonlinear response is consistent with the self-sustained states found recently for the unforced problem.

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