

Hydrodynamics of Vertical Semi-Immersed Slotted Barrier

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Abstract: In the present study, wave interaction with fixed, vertical, semi-immersed, slotted barriers is investigated numerically. Numerical results are obtained with the use of the COBRAS (Cornell breaking Wave and Structures) wave model for regular waves, revealing the effects of relative depth d/L (d : water depth, L : wave length) and the porosity of the barrier on the hydrodynamic characteristics (wave transmission, reflection, dissipation, velocity field, turbulence kinetic energy field). Numerical results concerning wave transmission, reflection, dissipation against the porosity of the structure, are well compared with experimental results by Isaacson et al. [13], revealing the credibility of the wave model. Detailed computed velocities and turbulence kinetic energy in the vicinity of the structure indicate the effects of the special breakwater on the flow pattern and the turbulence structure.

Key-Words: - Slotted barrier, Permeable barrier, Special breakwater

1 Introduction

Partially immersed breakwaters are among the environmentally friendly coastal structures which may be used for wave protection and restoration of semi-protected coastal regions. They have the advantages of allowing water circulation, fish passage and sediment transport beneath the breakwater. They also may be relatively economical by providing protection closer to the water surface where wave action is more pronounced. In certain situations, breakwaters in the form of thin, rigid, pile supported vertical barriers that extend some distance down from the water surface have been used or considered. Their performance is measured with the wave transmission coefficient C_t ($=H_t/H_i$, H_t =transmitted wave height, H_i = incident wave height) which depends on the ratio B/L (B =structure length, L =wave length) if the structures length B is considerable over the wave length L , the ratio d/L (d =water depth, L =wave length) when the structures length B is not considerable over the wave length L , the structure draught d_r to water depth d ratio (d_r/d , relative draught) and the wave steepness parameter (H_i/gT^2 , T =wave period).

The study of partially immersed breakwaters has been the focus of many coastal and ocean engineers over some decades. Various analytical, numerical

and experimental studies on the wave-structure interaction have been presented in the past.

The hydrodynamic characteristics of partially immersed breakwaters are similar to skirt breakwaters, fixed part-depth screens mounted on piles, Koutandos et al. [6], Koutandos [8]. Under the action of short-period wave trains the structure's draught is the main governing design parameter, leading to increased local turbulence and energy dissipation, Koutandos et al. [7]. Under the action of long period waves where the structure's width tends to be the most important parameter, Koutandos et al. [7], the hydrodynamic response of the two categories of surface piercing structures (fixed or floating) is different.

Analytical studies have been presented for a single thin barrier by Wiegel [23] and for twin thin barriers Wiegel [24]. Wave transmission was underestimated because the effects of wave reflection were neglected, Kriebel [15]. Liu and Abbaspour [16] used the boundary element method and Reddy and Neelamani [22] a physical model to study wave reflection and transmission characteristics in the vicinity of a rigid thin barrier.

Losada et al. [17] applied linear wave theory in order to examine linear waves impinging obliquely on fixed vertical thin barriers. Theoretical solutions are obtained by an eigenfunction expansion method

for the transmission and reflection coefficients. Losada et al. [18] examined modulated waves impinging obliquely on fixed vertical thin barriers. Theoretical solutions are obtained by an eigenfunction expansion method for the transmission and reflection coefficients. Losada et al. [19] applied linear wave theory in order to evaluate the scattering of irregular waves, described by a TMA directional wave spectrum, impinging on fixed vertical thin barriers. The dependence of the transmission and reflection coefficients on the directional spreading function and on the angle of wave incidence was analyzed.

Hagiwara [4] and Bennet et al. [1] presented mathematical models to study the interaction of water waves with a slotted wavescreeen breakwater, extending from the free surface to the sea bed. Comparisons with experimental results for transmission and reflection coefficients have been presented in both works.

Isaacson et al. [13] used the eigenfunction expansion method to study the hydrodynamics of a vertical slotted barrier and extended the method to study double slotted barriers, Isaacson et al. [14].

Neelamani & Vedagiri [21] examined experimentally wave interaction with rigid partially immersed twin vertical barriers. Regular and random waves of wide ranges of wave heights, periods and immersions of the structure were examined. Increased energy dissipation was observed in the random waves case.

Koutandos et al. [7] presented an experimental study of waves acting on partially immersed breakwater with four different configurations (single fixed-regular & irregular waves, heave motion free-regular & irregular waves, single fixed with attached front plate-regular waves and double fixed-regular waves) in shallow and intermediate waters. The results showed the effect of the various configurations on the transmission, reflection and energy dissipation coefficients.

Koutandos [9] presented a detailed numerical study on wave interaction with rigid partially immersed twin vertical barriers. The effects of the relative depth d/L and the relative distance S/L (S =the distance between the two barriers) were examined for a wide range of hydrodynamic conditions.

The purpose of this study is to investigate numerically in a 2-dimensional vertical plane (2DV) the hydrodynamic characteristics of a fixed, vertical, semi-immersed, slotted barrier and its performance in intermediate and shallow waters.

2 The numerical model

A brief summary of the governing equations, boundary conditions and solution procedure used in the COBRAS model are presented here, but more details can be found in Liu & Lin (1997).

The unsteady, incompressible RANS (Reynolds Averaged Navier Stokes) equations in a two dimensional vertical plane (2D-V) are solved in conjunction with transport equations for k and ϵ (Rodi [25]) for the calculation of the Reynolds stresses. The VOF (Volume of Fluid) method (Hirt and Nichols [5]) is used for "tracking" the free surface variation. For each computational cell, a fluid fraction function F is applied, representing the volume fraction of a cell occupied by a fluid. The values of F are in the range of $[0,1]$, with $F=1$ representing a cell full of fluid, and $F=0$ a void cell. An unsteady, advection-diffusion equation for a function F , representing the volume fraction of a cell occupied by the fluid, is solved together with the RANS and the k (turbulent kinetic energy) and ϵ (turbulent dissipation) equations. The donor-acceptor method is used for the free surface reconstruction. The partial cell treatment is used for representing solid objects of arbitrary shape. Similar to the F function, an openness function θ is applied representing the ratio of space not occupied by the solid object to the whole cell area. The values of θ are in the range of $[0, 1]$, with $\theta=0$ representing a solid object and $\theta=1$ an open to the fluid cell, and modified RANS equations are used by including θ in all of the terms.

The solution of the RANS equations is based on the two-step projection method (Chorin [2], [3]) with the use of the finite difference method. The convection terms in the momentum equations are discretized by a combination of the upwind and central difference scheme in order to produce stable and accurate results. The central difference method is used to express the stress gradient and the pressure gradient and the forward time-differencing method for the time derivatives. Similar expressions are used for the k - ϵ transport equations.

The incident regular wave was generated by the "source function" approach (Lin & Liu [12]) at a distance of $1.5 L$ from the left side of the domain. The mass source function is applied in a rectangular source region Ω in the continuity equation, as follows:

$$\frac{\partial U_i}{\partial x_i} = s(i, j, t) \text{ in } \Omega \quad (1)$$

For regular waves the source function is $s(t) = \frac{CH}{A} \sin(\sigma t)$, where C = phase velocity, H = wave height, A = area of the rectangular source region Ω , σ = the wave frequency and t = time. Also a low level of turbulent kinetic energy k is assumed as initial condition in order to maintain stability (Lin & Liu [11]).

The dynamic free surface boundary condition is applied for the mean flow velocities, which is equivalent to the zero stress free surface condition if no stresses are applied on the free surface. For the k and ϵ the zero normal gradient boundary condition is applied at the free surface, indicating that turbulence does not diffuse across the free surface. At the rigid boundaries (bed and breakwater walls) the no-slip condition is applied and the “wall function” approach is implemented at the first near-wall grid point. This avoids a refined modeling of the viscous sub-layer which would be computationally expensive. Radiation boundary conditions are set at both sides of the computational domain to allow outgoing waves, such as:

$$\frac{\partial R}{\partial t} + C \frac{\partial R}{\partial x} = 0 \quad (2)$$

where R is a wave variable, and C is the phase velocity of the incident regular wave. Additionally a sponge layer is imposed at the left boundary, next to the source function, in order to fully absorb the outgoing waves of different frequencies due to reflection. A sponge layer is an area where an additional friction term of the form $-f(x) \cdot U_i$ is added to the original momentum equation where $f(x)$ is a function of distance from the source function (figure 1).

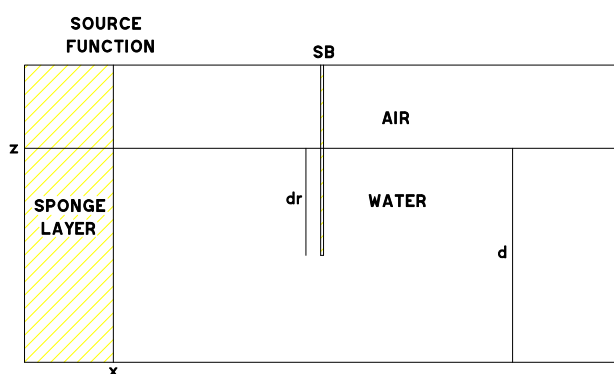


Figure 1. Numerical wave tank.

3 Validation of the numerical model Effect of barrier porosity

Numerical results concerning reflection and transmission characteristics obtained with the use of the COBRAS wave model for regular waves, are compared with experimental results for a fixed, vertical, semi-immersed, slotted barrier, Isaacson et al. [13]. The effects of the structure porosity on the hydrodynamic characteristics (wave transmission, reflection, dissipation) are investigated.

The physical experiments that are used for comparison purposes were conducted in the wave flume of the Hydraulics Laboratory of the Department of Civil Engineering at the University of British Columbia. The flume was 20 m long and 0.62 m wide. An artificial beach covered by a mat of synthetic hair was located at the downstream end of the flume in order to minimize wave reflection. The permeable wave barrier was constructed of panels of width $w=2$ cm and thickness $b=1.3$ cm such that the porosity of the barrier could vary by changing the dimension c of the slots between the panel member (figure 2). The barrier was placed 10 m from the wave generator. Half immersed barriers were tested with porosities 0, 0.05, 0.10, 0.20, 0.30, 0.40 and 0.50. The water depth was constant in all experiments equal to 0.45 m. Detailed description of the experiments can be found in Isaacson et al. [13].

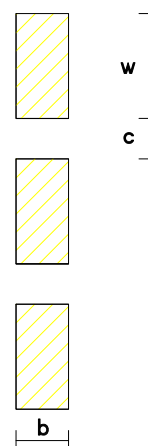


Figure 2. Geometry of the slotted barrier.

The set of the experimental results used for validation and in order to examine the effect of the porosity in the performance of the structure includes 7 tests with structure porosity 0, 0.05, 0.10, 0.20, 0.30, 0.40 and 0.50 under the hydrodynamic conditions described by Isaacson et al. [13], that is

$d_r/d=0.50$ (half immersed barrier), $d/L=0.30$ and $H_r/L=0.07$. All seven physical experiments are reproduced numerically with the use of the COBRAS wave model. A numerical wave tank, with dimensions 20 m x 0.625 m was used. A grid with $\Delta x=0.01$ m and $\Delta z=0.005$ m is employed resulting in a mesh of 2000x125 grid points. The barrier was located at $x=10$ m. The total computational time for these tests was taken 40T (T: wave period), and the results presented are from 30 T for which numerical stability is achieved, indicated by the total mass and energy in the domain.

The numerical wave reflection analysis is based on the method proposed by Mansard & Funke [20]. Energy dissipation in the region of the breakwater is also studied using the following equation proposed by Isaacson et al. [13]:

$$C_t^2 + C_r^2 + C_d = 1 \quad (3)$$

where C_t is the transmission coefficient (H_t/H_i), C_r is the reflection coefficient (H_r/H_i) and C_d is the energy dissipation coefficient (H_i the height of the transmitted wave, H_r the height of the reflected wave and H_i the height of the incident wave).

Results are presented in figure 3. The agreement between experimental and numerical results is satisfactory. In figure 3 (A) where C_t is presented it is revealed that wave transmission is proportional to the structure porosity starting from 50% transmission for an impermeable structure (porosity=0) and reaching 90% for porosity=0.5. Therefore it is deduced that the barrier porosity is a very important factor in design, influencing dramatically the efficiency of the structure. On the contrary in figure 3(B) where C_r is presented reflection decreases with the increase of porosity, a fact that contributes to reduce unwanted wave reflection on the upwave side of the barrier. For an impermeable structure (porosity=0) 55% reflection is observed and for porosity=0.5, 15%. In figure 3(C) the variation of C_d is presented. Higher values are observed for the impermeable barrier case, due to the stronger wave-structure interaction in the specific case. Dissipation is minimum for the highest porosity examined 0.5 since wave energy is easily allowed to be transmitted downwave the barrier.

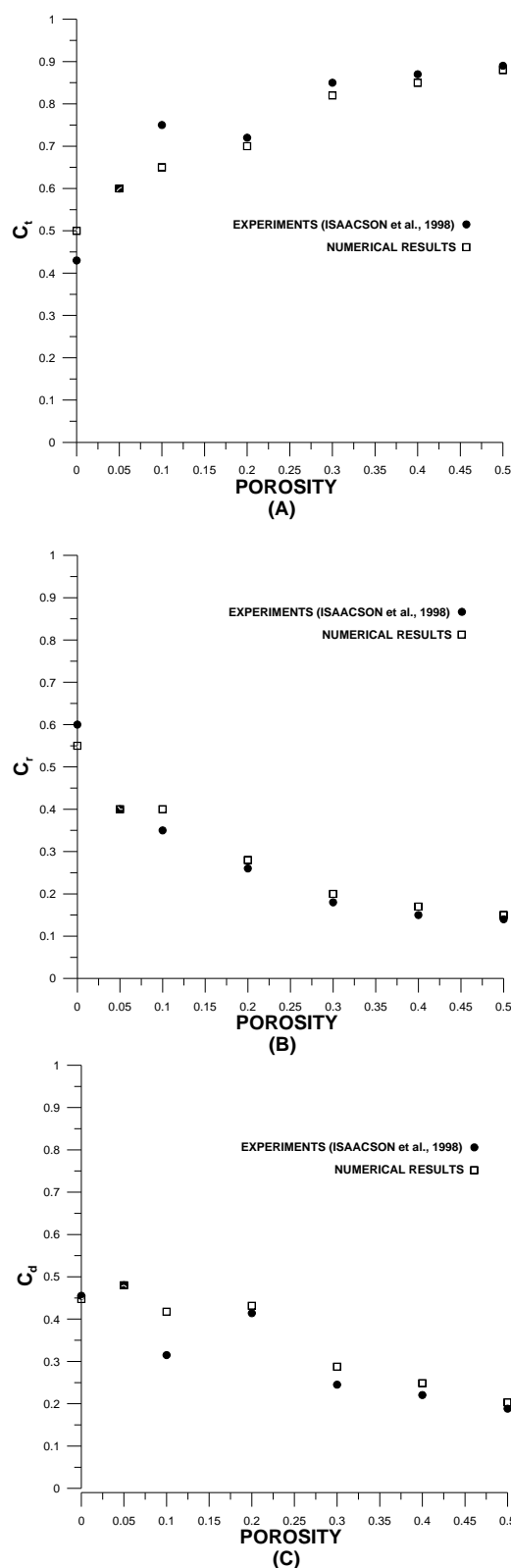


Figure 3. Comparison between experimental Isaacson et al. (1998), and numerical results for C_t , C_r and C_d against porosity of the slotted barrier.

4 Application of the numerical model Hydrodynamic characteristics

The numerical model is applied in 2 m water depth in order to study the effect of d/L on the efficiency on the structure (transmission, reflection, dissipation) and the hydrodynamic characteristics of the flow (mean velocity field, turbulence kinetic energy field). A numerical wave tank, with dimensions 80m x 2.5 m was used. A grid with $\Delta x=0.04$ m and $\Delta z=0.02$ m is employed resulting in a mesh of 2000x125 grid points. The width of barrier is taken one $\Delta x=0.04$ m in order to avoid influence of the structures width in the results, the draught $d_r=1.0$ m (half immersed barrier) and the total height 1.5 m. The barrier was located at $x=43$ m. The total computational time for these tests was taken 40T (T: wave period), and the results presented are from 30 T for which numerical stability is achieved, indicated by the total mass and energy in the domain. Six numerical experiments were performed with values of d/L , 0.05, 0.10, 0.15, 0.20, 0.25 and 0.30 for each examined porosity, 0.0, 0.20 and 0.40 leading to a total number of eighteen experiments. The wave height in all tests was constant 0.20 m. The permeable wave barrier was constructed of members of width 15 cm (figure 2) such that the porosity of the barrier could vary by changing the dimension c of the slots between the members.

In figure 4 numerical results for C_t (A), C_r (B) and C_d (C) for porosities 0 (impermeable barrier), 0.20 and 0.40, are presented against d/L . The influence of d/L (d =the water depth) on the performance of the structure is shown. The trend in the diagrams of figure 2 (A) for C_t is similar for all porosities examined. Transmission decreases with increase of d/L for all porosities examined revealing the fact that the structure is more efficient in deeper waters. Substantial protection is offered by the structure only in the impermeable barrier case for $d/L > 0.50$ where $C_t < 0.50$. For porosities 0.20 and 0.40 substantial protection is not offered since transmission lowest values are 0.70 and 0.85 accordingly. It is clear that, as it has been emphasized in the previous paragraph, the porous body of the structure allows wave energy transmission through the body of the structure increasing transmission. It is also expected that the efficiency of the structure will be greater in deeper waters.

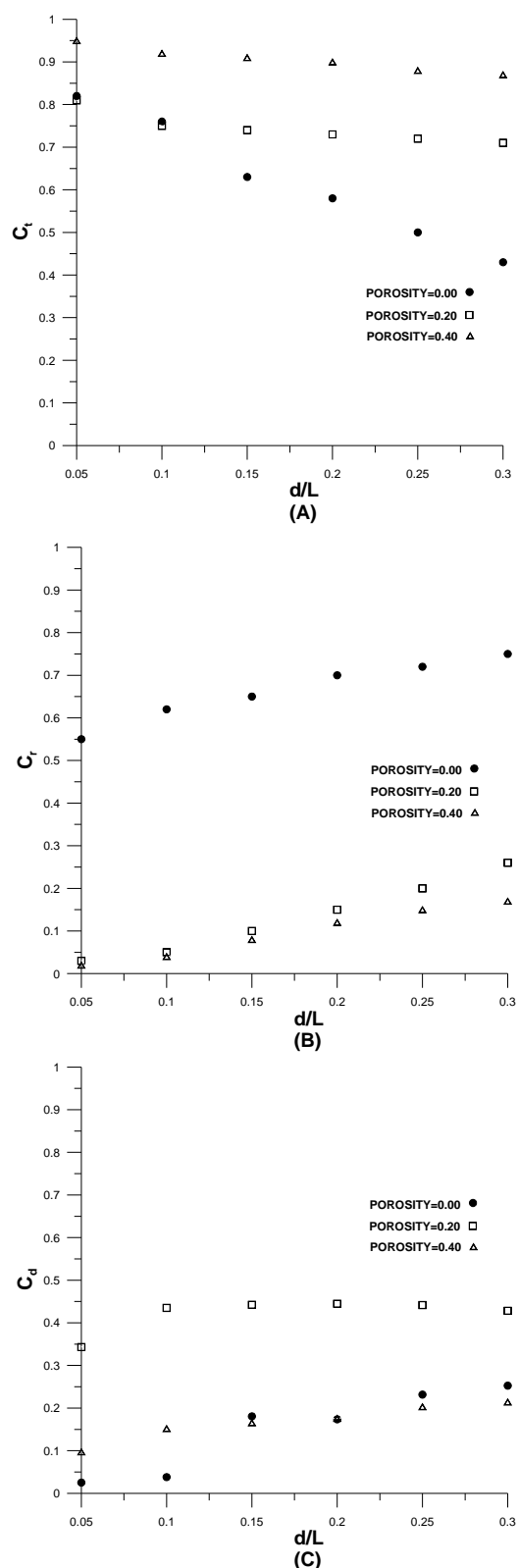


Figure 4. Numerical results for C_t , C_r and C_d against d/L .

The inverse variation is observed in reflection coefficient C_r case, in figure 4 (B). The reflection coefficient C_r increases with increase of d/L for all porosities examined. For the impermeable barrier case, reflection is generally high from 0.55 for $d/L=0.05$ to 0.75 for $d/L=0.30$. On the other hand for porosities 0.20 and 0.40, reflection is very low reaching at maximum 0.25 for $d/L=0.30$ and porosity=0.20. This fact can be considered as a significant advantage of the porous breakwater since reflected wave energy can be a serious problem for approaching ships. The energy dissipation coefficient C_d which is presented in figure 4 (C), follows the trend of the other two energy coefficients since it is provided using equation (3). Higher values are observed again for the impermeable barrier case, due to the stronger wave-structure interaction in the specific case. Dissipation is minimum for the highest porosity examined 0.4, since wave energy is easily allowed to be transmitted downwave the barrier.

5 Analysis of mean velocity and turbulence kinetic energy fields

The application of the model that was presented, is further analyzed in order to investigate the mean velocity and turbulence kinetic energy fields in the vicinity of the barrier.

The mean velocity field in the barrier area is presented in figures 5, 6, and 7 for porosity 0.00, 0.20 and 0.40 accordingly and for $H_i=0.2$ m- $T=2.60$ sec ($d/L=0.20$). Results are presented for $t/T=0.25$ -A $t/T=0.50$ -B and $t/T=0.75$ -C during the wave period from the 30th wave in the numerical simulation in which numerical stability is achieved, indicated by the total mass and energy in the domain. Maximum velocities 1.20 m/s are observed in the region of the impermeable barrier (figure 5) and mainly in the seaward side of the structures where the main structure-interaction takes place and intense vortices are observed. A recirculating region is observed in the region beneath the body of the structure. In figure 6 the mean velocity field for permeable barrier with porosity 0.20 is presented. Maximum velocities appear also in the region of the barrier but reach the value of 0.85 m/s lower than the maximum velocity observed in the impermeable barrier case under the same hydrodynamic conditions. Maximum velocities are even lower in the maximum porosity case examined 0.40 where they reach the value of 0.80 m/s. In the last two cases where the structure porosity was 0.20 and 0.40 no recirculation region was observed and the

penetration of the water mass through the porous body of the structure is presented.

In figure 8 the turbulence kinetic energy ($\sqrt{2k}$) field in the region of the impermeable barrier area is presented. Maximum values of turbulence kinetic energy ($\sqrt{2k}$) (0.27 m/s) are observed in the region of the barrier and mainly in the submerged edges of the structure where the main wave-structure interaction takes place and intense oscillating vortices around the submerged edges of the barrier are observed. The form and the area of these vortices are not constant in time but variable presenting nevertheless almost constant average maximum values of turbulence kinetic energy. Highest values are observed right beneath the submerged edges of the structure extending to a certain distance, forming cycles of lowering intensity as we move away from the barrier.

In figure 9 the turbulence kinetic energy ($\sqrt{2k}$) field in the region of the permeable barrier (porosity 0.20) area is presented. Maximum values of turbulence kinetic energy ($\sqrt{2k}$) reach the value of 0.20 m/s and are lower than the impermeable barrier case. This time maximum values are observed in the region of the main body of the barrier in the slots of the body of the breakwater and mainly in the upper part near the free surface where wave action is more pronounced.

In figure 10 the turbulence kinetic energy ($\sqrt{2k}$) field in the region of the permeable barrier (porosity 0.40) area is presented. Maximum values of turbulence kinetic energy ($\sqrt{2k}$) reach the value of 0.17 m/s and are lower than all the other cases examined. As in the previous case maximum values are observed in the region of the main body of the barrier and mainly in upper part near the free surface. Highest values are observed in the slots of the body of the breakwater and right in front of them, mainly again in the upper part near the free surface.

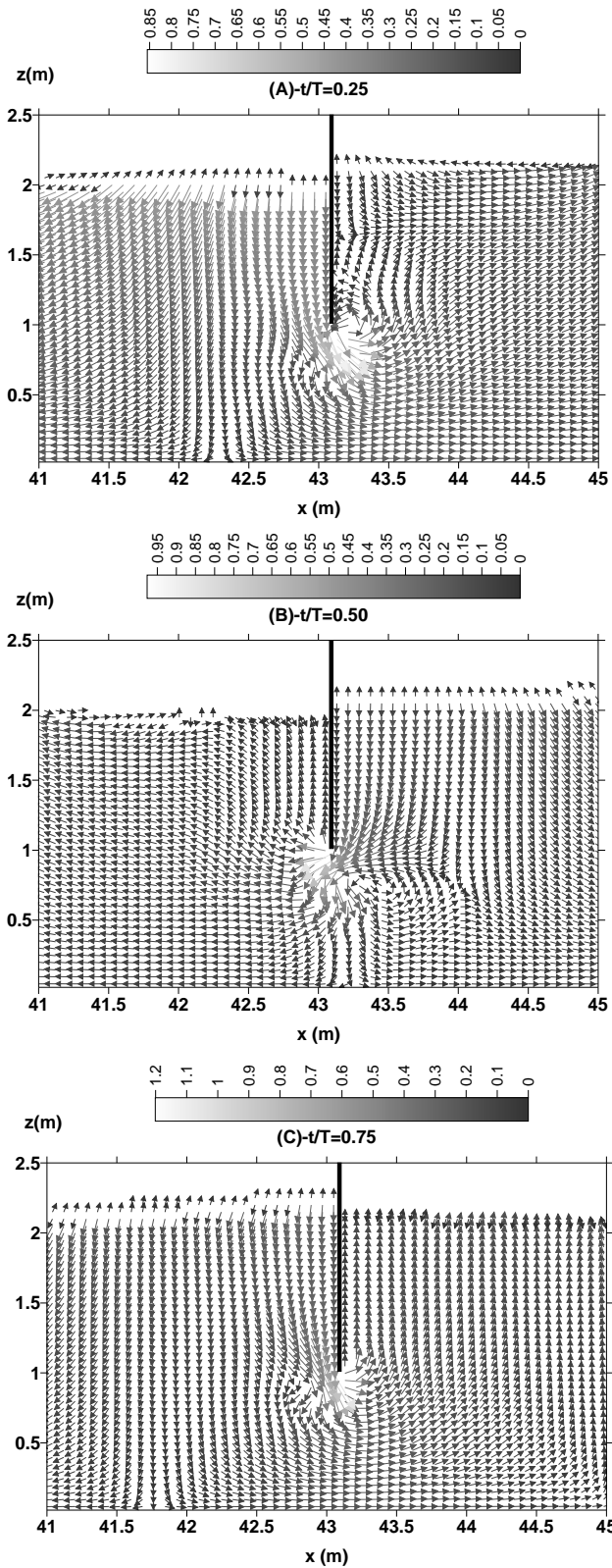


Figure 5. Velocity field in the region of the barrier for Porosity=0.00 ($H_i=0.2$ m- $T=2.60$ sec).

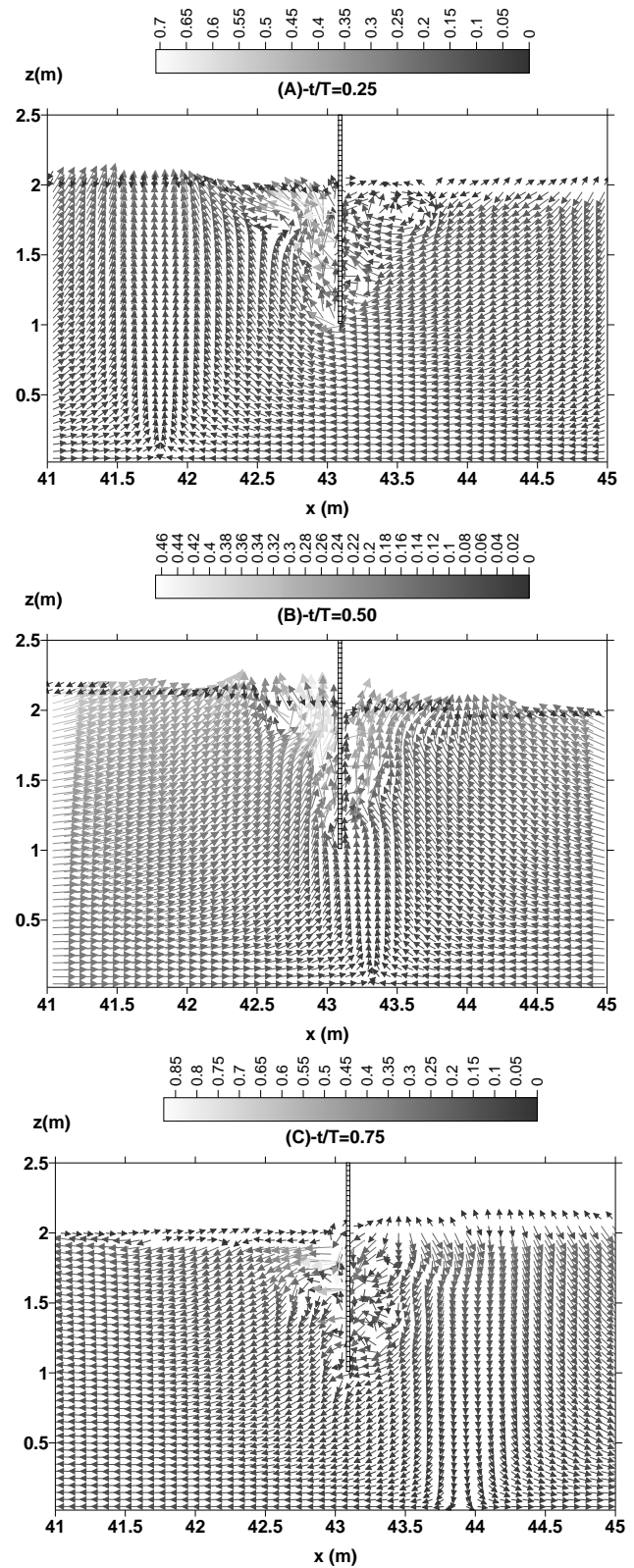


Figure 6. Velocity field in the region of the barrier for Porosity=0.20 ($H_i=0.2$ m- $T=2.60$ sec).

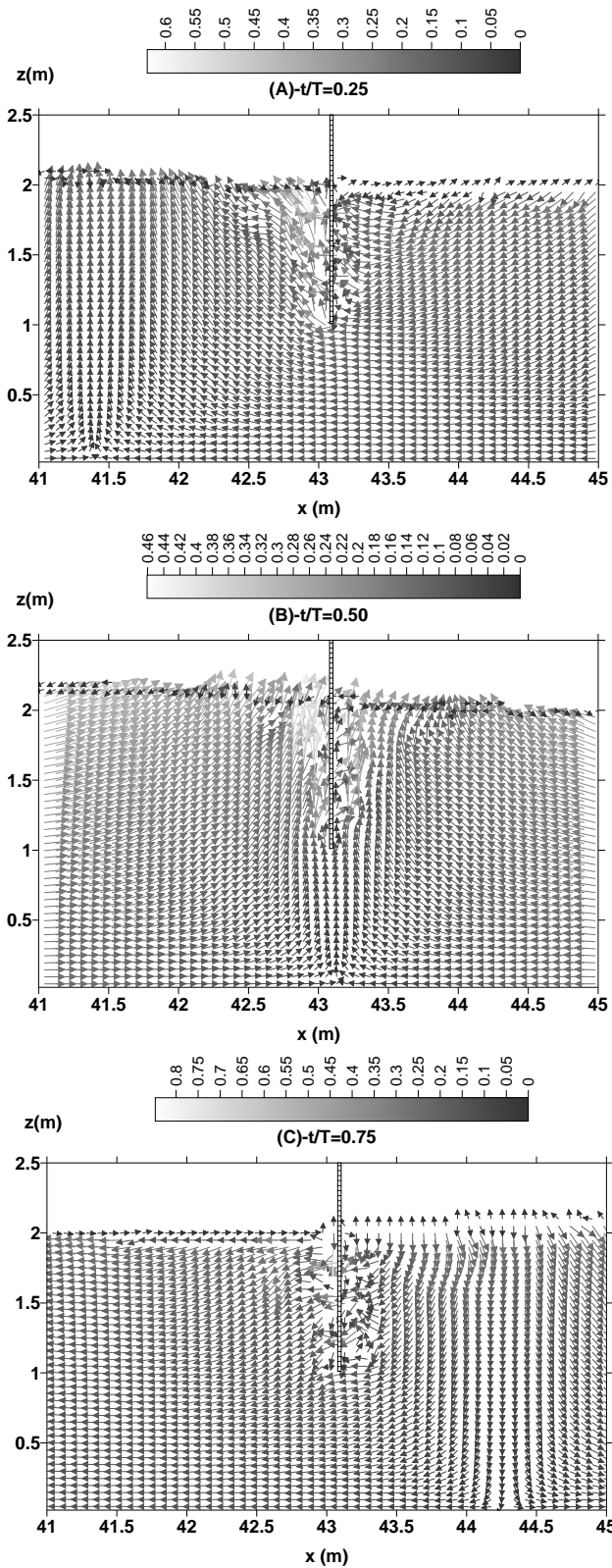


Figure 7. Velocity field in the region of the barrier for Porosity=0.40 ($H_i=0.2$ m- $T=2.60$ sec).

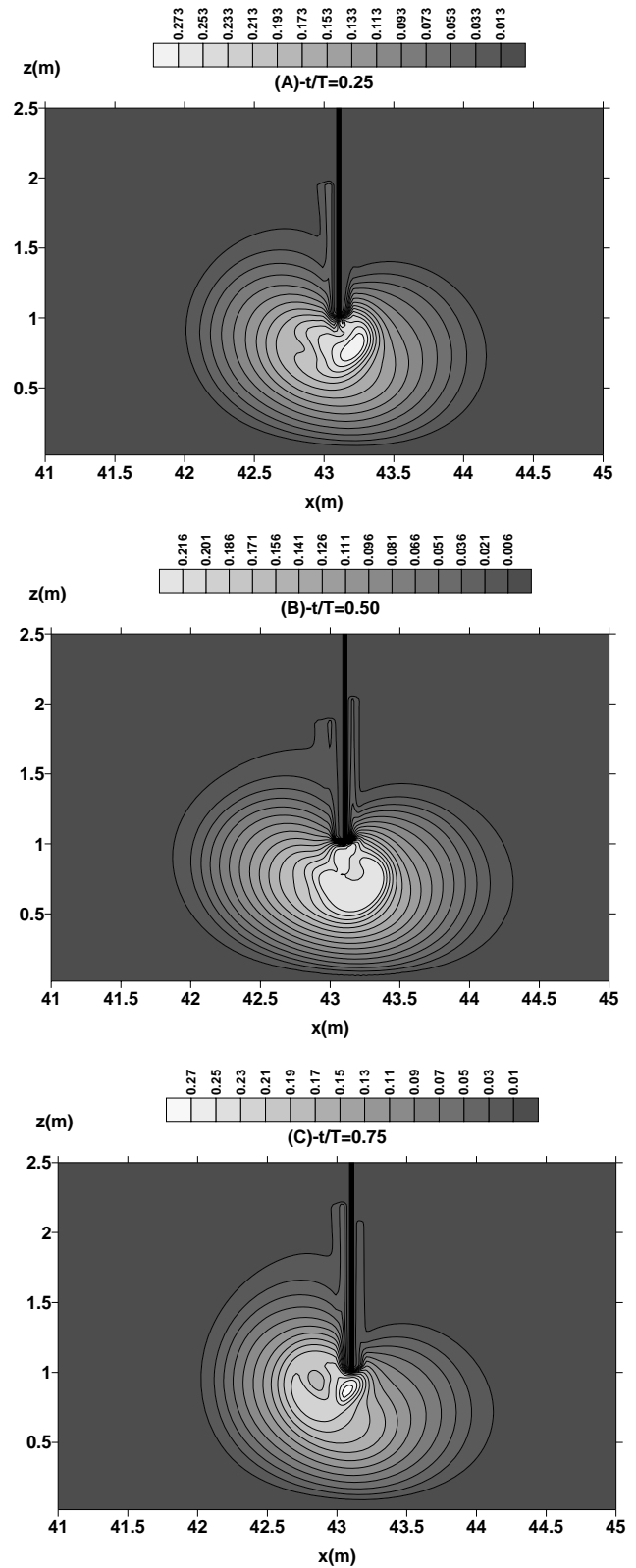


Figure 8. $\sqrt{2k}$ field in the region of the barrier for Porosity=0.00 ($H_i=0.2$ m- $T=2.60$ sec).

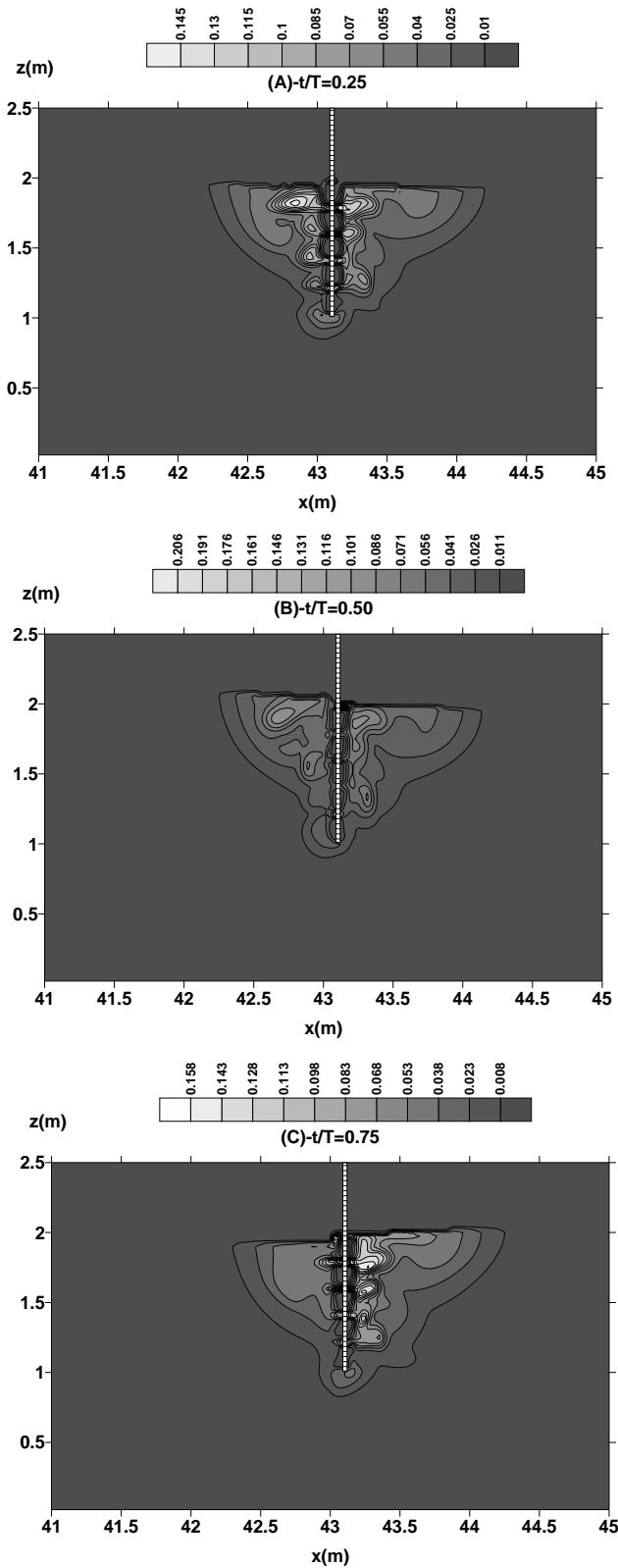


Figure 9. $\sqrt{2k}$ field in the region of the barrier for Porosity=0.20 ($H_i=0.2$ m- $T=2.60$ sec).

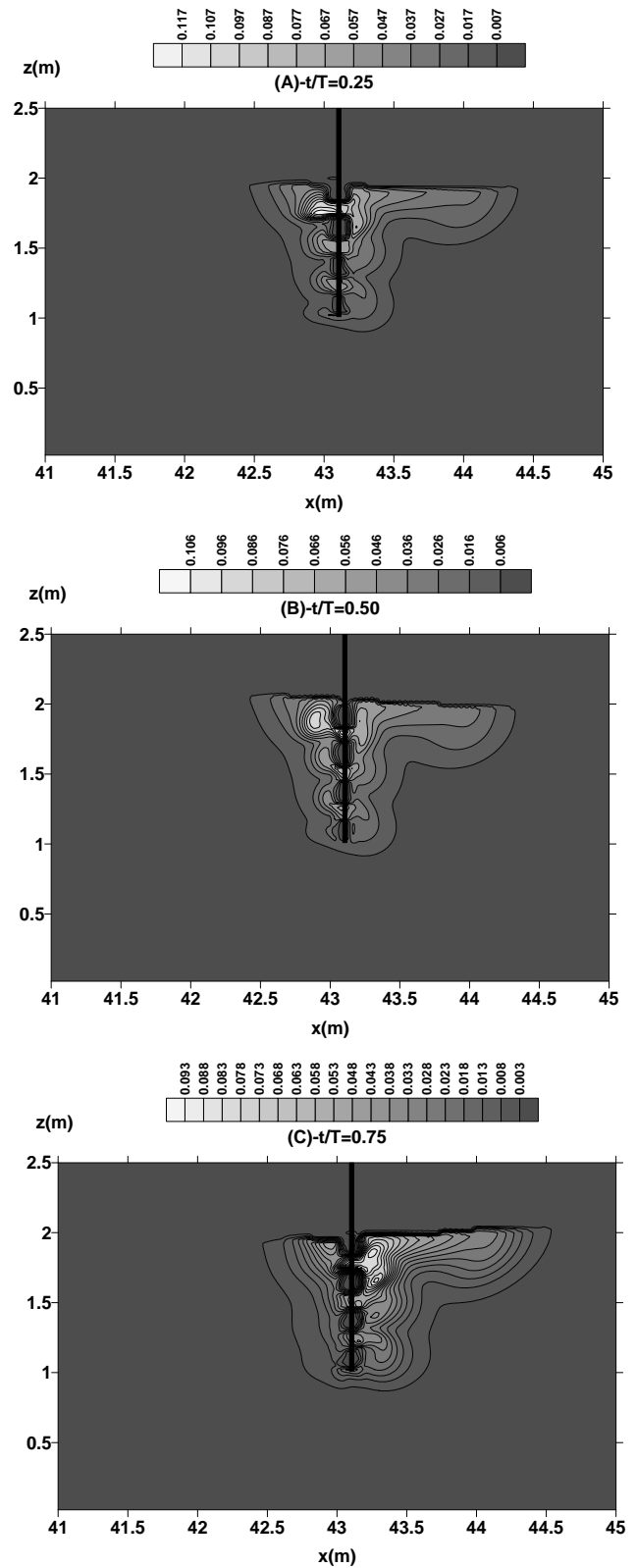


Figure 10. $\sqrt{2k}$ field in the region of the barrier for Porosity=0.40 ($H_i=0.2$ m- $T=2.60$ sec).

6 Conclusions

In the present study, wave interaction with fixed, vertical, semi-immersed, slotted barriers is investigated numerically. Numerical results concerning obtained with the use of the COBRAS (Cornell breaking Wave and Structures) wave model for regular waves reveal the effects of relative depth d/L (d : water depth, L : wave length) and the porosity of the barrier on the hydrodynamic characteristics (wave transmission, reflection, dissipation, velocity field, turbulence kinetic energy field). Numerical results concerning wave transmission, reflection, dissipation against the porosity of the structure, are well compared with experimental results (Isaacson et al. [13]). Detailed computed velocities and turbulence kinetic energy in the vicinity of the structure indicate the effects of the special breakwater on the flow pattern and the turbulence structure.

The following conclusions can be derived:

- Wave transmission is proportional to the structure porosity starting from 50% transmission for an impermeable structure (porosity=0) and reaching 90% for porosity=0.5 under certain hydrodynamic conditions. Therefore it is deduced that the barrier porosity is a very important factor in design influencing dramatically the efficiency of the structure.
- Wave reflection decreases with the increase of porosity, a fact that contributes to reduce unwanted wave reflection on the upwave side of the barrier. For an impermeable structure (porosity=0) 55% reflection is observed and for porosity=0.5, 15% under certain hydrodynamic conditions.
- The highest values of wave energy dissipation are observed for the impermeable barrier case, due to the stronger wave-structure interaction in the specific case. Dissipation is minimum for the highest porosity examined 0.5 since wave energy is easily allowed to be transmitted downwave the barrier.
- Transmission decreases with increase of d/L for all porosities examined revealing the fact that the structure is more efficient in deeper waters. Substantial protection is offered by the structure only in the impermeable barrier case for $d/L > 0.50$ where $C_t < 0.50$. For porosities 0.20 and 0.40 substantial protection is not offered since transmission lowest values are 0.70 and 0.85 accordingly. The porous body of the structure allows wave energy transmission through the body of the structure increasing transmission. It is also expected that the efficiency of the structure will be greater in deeper waters.
- Reflection increases with increase of d/L for all porosities examined. For the impermeable barrier case reflection is generally high from 0.55 for $d/L=0.05$ to 0.75 for $d/L=0.30$. On the other hand for porosities 0.20 and 0.40 reflection is very low reaching at maximum 0.25 for $d/L=0.30$ and porosity=0.20. This fact can be considered as a significant advantage of the porous breakwater since reflected wave energy can be a serious problem for approaching ships.
- Highest values for energy dissipation are observed for the impermeable barrier case, due to the stronger wave-structure interaction in the specific case. Dissipation is minimum for the highest porosity examined 0.4 since wave energy is easily allowed to be transmitted downwave the barrier.
- Maximum velocities are observed in the region of the impermeable barrier and mainly in the seaward side of the structures where the main structure-interaction takes place and intense vortices are observed. A recirculating region is observed in the region beneath the body of the structure. Maximum velocities for permeable barrier with porosity 0.20 appear also in the region of the barrier but reach lower values than the value of the maximum velocity observed in the impermeable barrier case under the same hydrodynamic conditions. Maximum velocities are even lower in the maximum porosity case examined 0.40. In the last two cases where the structure porosity was 0.20 and 0.40 no recirculation region was observed and the penetration of the water mass through the porous body of the structure is presented.
- Maximum values of turbulence kinetic energy ($\sqrt{2k}$) for the impermeable barrier case are observed in the region of the barrier and mainly in the submerged edges of the structure where the main wave-structure interaction takes place and intense oscillating vortices around the submerged edges of the barrier are observed. The form

and the area of these vortices are not constant in time but variable presenting nevertheless almost constant average maximum values of turbulence kinetic energy. Highest values are observed right beneath the submerged edges of the structure extending to a certain distance, forming cycles of lowering intensity as we move away from the barrier. Maximum values of turbulence kinetic energy ($\sqrt{2k}$) for the permeable barrier (porosity 0.20) are greater than the impermeable barrier case. This time maximum values are observed in the region of the main body of the barrier and mainly in upper part near the free surface. Highest values are observed in the slots of the body of the breakwater and mainly in the upper part near the free surface where wave action is more pronounced. Maximum values of turbulence kinetic energy ($\sqrt{2k}$) for the permeable barrier (porosity 0.40) are much lower than all the other cases examined. As in the previous case maximum values are observed in the region of the main body of the barrier and mainly in upper part near the free surface. Highest values are observed in the slots of the body of the breakwater and right in front of them, mainly again in the upper part near the free surface.

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