

Prediction and Measurement of Thermal Exchanges within Pyranometers

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(ABSTRACT)

The Eppley Precision Spectral Pyranometer (PSP) is a shortwave radiometer that is widely used in global networks to monitor solar irradiances at the earth's surface. Within the instrument, a blackened surface is in intimate thermal contact with the hot junction of a thermopile. The cold junction of the thermopile communicates thermally with the large thermal capacitance of the instrument body, which acts as a heat sink. Radiation arrives at the blackened surface through one or two hemispherical dome-shaped filters that limit the instrument response to the solar spectrum. The voltage developed by the thermopile is then interpreted in terms of the incident irradiance.

Measurements taken with the pyranometer are compared with results from theoretical models. Discrepancies between model results and measurements are used to isolate inaccuracies in the optical properties of the atmosphere used in the models. As the accuracy of the models increases, the reliability of the measurements must be examined in order to assure that the models keep up with reality. The sources of error in the pyranometer are examined in order to determine the accuracy of the instrument.

Measurements obtained using the pyranometer are known to be influenced by environmental conditions such as ambient temperature, wind, and cloud cover [Bush, et al., 1998]. It is surmised that at least some of the observed environmental variability in these data is due to parasitic thermal exchanges within the instrument [Haeffelin et al., 1999]. Thermal radiation absorbed and emitted by the filters, as well as that reflected and re-reflected among the internal surfaces, influences the net radiation at the detector surface and produces an offset from the signal that would result from the incident shortwave radiation alone. Described is an ongoing effort to model these exchanges and to use experimental results to verify the model.

The ultimate goal of the work described is to provide reliable protocols, based on an appropriate instrument model, for correcting measured shortwave irradiance for a variable thermal radiation environment.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Tables

List of Figures

Nomenclature

Chapter 1. Background

1.1. Surface Radiation	1
1.2. The Pyranometer	2
1.3. Uncertainty in Pyranometer Measurement.....	6
1.4. Zero Offset Signal	7
1.5. Current Methods of Correction	8
1.6. State of Compensation Research to Date	8
1.7. Objectives for Investigation	9

Chapter 2. Analytical Models of Thermal Exchanges in the Pyranometer

2.1. Pyrgeometer Models.....	11
2.2. The Bush Model	13
2.3. The Haeffelin Model	14
2.4. Physics within the Haeffelin Model	14
2.5. Model Implications.....	16

Chapter 3. Finite Element Model

3.1. The Finite Element Method.....	18
3.2. ALGOR Software	20
3.3. Dome Glass Model.....	20
3.4. Mounted Dome Model	22
3.5. Model Boundary Conditions	23

Chapter 4. Experimental Measurements

4.1. Experimental Procedures.....	26
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4.2. Sensitivity of Experiment to Environment	27
4.3. Cooling Cases	28
4.4. Warming Cases	30
Chapter 5. Model Validation	
5.1. General Validation	32
5.2. Comparison of Warming Models with Experiment	34
5.3. Comparison of Cooling Models with Experiment	39
Chapter 6. Model Applications	
6.1. Steady State Performance	43
6.2. Transient Performance.....	44
6.3. Locating a Representative Temperature	53
Chapter 7. Conclusions and Recommendations	
7.1. Finite Element Modeling of the Pyranometer	58
7.2. Modifying the Pyranometer and Correcting Measurements	58
7.3. Recommendations for Model Development	59
7.4. Incorporation of a Monte Carlo Ray Trace Model.....	60
References	61
Vita.....	64

LIST OF TABLES

Table 6.1 Comparison of gradients and representative temperature locations	56
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LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1	The pyranometer	3
Figure 1.2	Filter function for Schott glass 2.0-mm dome filter	4
Figure 1.3	Cosine-law response of the sensor surface	5
Figure 2.1	Radiative heat transfer in pyranometer analytical model	15
Figure 3.1	Three-dimensional view of glass outer dome mesh.....	21
Figure 3.2	Dimensions of glass dome and steel rim	23
Figure 3.3	Representative data from cooling experiment	24
Figure 3.4	Refrigerator environmental conditions	25
Figure 4.1	Placement of thermistors on the dome glass.....	26
Figure 4.2	Transient cooling data with thermistors facing freezer compartment.....	28
Figure 4.3	Cooling data for 7/2/99	29
Figure 4.4	Cooling data for 7/7/99	29
Figure 4.5	Warming data for 6/30/99.....	30
Figure 4.6	Warming data for 7/6/99.....	31
Figure 5.1	ALGOR steady-state temperature results for nighttime conditions....	32
Figure 5.2	Effect of increased convection on the magnitude of the dome temperature spread for a 2-mm thick dome for a range of thermal conductivities.....	33
Figure 5.3	Effect of increased dome thickness on the magnitude of the dome temperature spread	34
Figure 5.4	Transient time history of steel rim thermistor (T4) subjected to warming conditions (model and 7/2/99 experiment)	35
Figure 5.5	Transient time history of dome base thermistor (T3) subjected to warming conditions (model and 7/2/99 experiment)	35
Figure 5.6	Transient time history of dome 45-deg thermistor (T2) subjected to warming conditions (model and 7/2/99 experiment)	36
Figure 5.7	Transient time history of dome vertex thermistor (T1) subjected to warming conditions (model and 7/2/99 experiment)	36

Figure 5.8 Transient time history of steel rim thermistor (T4) subjected to warming conditions (model and 7/7/99 experiment)	37
Figure 5.9 Transient time history of dome base thermistor (T3) subjected to warming conditions (model and 7/7/99 experiment)	37
Figure 5.10 Transient time history of dome 45-deg thermistor (T2) subjected to warming conditions (model and 7/7/99 experiment)	38
Figure 5.11 Transient time history of dome vertex thermistor (T1) subjected to warming conditions (model and 7/7/99 experiment)	38
Figure 5.12 Transient time history of steel rim thermistor (T4) subjected to cooling conditions (model and experiment).....	40
Figure 5.13 Transient time history of dome base thermistor (T3) subjected to cooling conditions (model and experiment).....	40
Figure 5.14 Transient time history of dome 45-deg thermistor (T2) subjected to cooling conditions (model and experiment).....	41
Figure 5.15 Transient time history of dome vertex thermistor (T1) subjected to cooling conditions (model and experiment).....	41
Figure 6.1 Predicted temperature gradient on glass dome exposed to nighttime conditions in still air	43
Figure 6.2 Comparison of gradients on the dome from base to vertex for varying convective conditions.....	44
Figure 6.3 Transient time history of steel rim thermistor (T4) subjected to warming conditions (model and experiment).....	45
Figure 6.4 Temperature difference between steel rim thermistor and warming model results	45
Figure 6.5 Transient time history of dome base thermistor (T3) subjected to warming conditions (model and experiment).....	46
Figure 6.6 Temperature difference between dome base thermistor and warming model results	46
Figure 6.7 Transient time history of dome 45-deg thermistor (T2) subjected to warming conditions (model and experiment).....	47

Figure 6.8 Temperature difference between dome 45-deg thermistor and warming model results	47
Figure 6.9 Transient time history of dome vertex thermistor (T1) subjected to warming conditions (model and experiment).....	48
Figure 6.10 Temperature difference between dome vertex thermistor and warming model results	48
Figure 6.11 Transient time history of steel rim thermistor (T4) subjected to cooling conditions (model and experiment).....	49
Figure 6.12 Temperature difference between steel rim thermistor and cooling model results.....	49
Figure 6.13 Transient time history of dome base thermistor (T3) subjected to cooling conditions (model and experiment).....	50
Figure 6.14 Temperature difference between dome base thermistor and cooling model results.....	50
Figure 6.15 Transient time history of dome 45-deg thermistor (T2) subjected to cooling conditions (model and experiment).....	51
Figure 6.16 Temperature difference between dome 45-deg thermistor and cooling model results.....	51
Figure 6.17 Transient time history of dome vertex thermistor (T1) subjected to cooling conditions (model and experiment).....	52
Figure 6.18 Temperature difference between dome vertex thermistor and cooling model results.....	52
Figure 6.19 Determinations of radiation configuration factor for individual rings to the sensor surface	54
Figure 6.20 Individual dome gradients and ideal locations to measure representative temperature	57
Figure 7.1 Coupling a radiation model with the finite element model	60

NOMENCLATURE

Symbols:

C	Instrument sensitivity ($V \cdot m^2 / W$)
c_1, c_2, k	Constants for the Albrecht and Cox pyrgeometer offset model
E	External shortwave irradiance of the instrument (W/m^2), Desired measurement quantity of the pyranometer
E_L	Corrective measurement offset for Philipona pyrgeometer model (W/m^2)
ΔF	Corrective measurement offset for Bush pyranometer model (W/m^2)
F	Corrected measurement for Albrecht and Cox pyranometer model (W/m^2)
k_1, k_2, k_3	Constants for the Bush pyranometer offset model
S	Seebeck coefficient of thermopile ($\mu V/K$)
T	Temperature (K)
U_{emf}	Thermopile signal (V)
$T_d(\phi)$	Temperature gradient represented by T_d (K)

Greek:

α	absorptivity
ε	emissivity
ρ	reflectivity
σ	Stefan-Boltzmann constant
τ	transmissivity

Subscripts:

b	Body, instrument heat sink
d	Dome, location to be determined
s	Sensor, location to be determined
net	Total
dome	Dome, as defined by Bush et al.
detector	Sensor, as defined by Bush et al.
0	Effective sensor properties, as defined by Albrecht and Cox

Superscripts:

L	Longwave, $>3.0 \mu\text{m}$ wavelength
S	Shortwave, $<3.0 \mu\text{m}$ wavelength