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Dejan Brkić

► **To cite this version:**

Dejan Brkić. Can pipes be actually really that smooth?. International Journal of Refrigeration, 2012, 35 (1), pp.209-215. 10.1016/j.ijrefrig.2011.09.012 . hal-01586545

HAL Id: hal-01586545

<https://hal.science/hal-01586545>

Submitted on 13 Sep 2017

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Elsevier Editorial System(tm) for International Journal of Refrigeration
Manuscript Draft

Manuscript Number: IJIR-D-11-00162R2

Title: Can pipes be actually really that smooth?

Article Type: Short Report

Keywords: Accuracy; Comparison; Flow rate; Friction; Hydraulics; Piping

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Response to Reviewers: Dear Editor,

1. Only issue that I had to resolve was English expression. I appreciate your efforts to accept only the manuscripts with high quality of English. The main problem was in use of definite and indefinite article through my manuscript. My native language does not recognize articles and hence I obviously neglected use of them in English. I have consulted few colleagues and I hope that problem is now solved.

2. Also, I found that title "Can pipes be actually really that smooth?" are more attractive for my manuscript than "A note on some new explicit equations for friction factor calculation of hydraulically smooth pipes". If you feel that previous title is better, I will bring back it promptly.

These issues were only changed compared to the previous version.

Sincerely yours,

Dejan Brkic

Can pipes be actually really that smooth?

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Abstract: In some recent papers a few approximations to the implicit Nikuradse–Prandtl–Karman equation were shown. The Nikuradse–Prandtl–Karman equation for calculation of the hydraulic friction factor is valid for the hydraulically smooth regime of turbulence. Accuracy of these approximations for the friction factor in so called smooth pipes is checked and related problems from the hydraulics are analyzed in the spotlight of the recently developed equations. It can be concluded that pipes can be treated as smooth below certain value of the Reynolds number but after that even new polished pipes with a minor roughness follow the transitional and subsequently the rough law of flow at a higher values of the Reynolds number.

Keywords: Accuracy; Comparison; Flow rate; Friction; Hydraulics; Piping

Mots clés: Precision; Comparaison; Debit; Frottement; Hydraulique; Tuyauterie

Nomenclature:

λ Darcy (Darcy-Weisbach), i.e. Moody friction factor (-)

f Fanning friction factor (-)

Re Reynolds number (-)

ε average height of protrusion of inner pipe surface (m)

D inner diameter of pipe (m)

ε/D relative roughness (-)

A, B, Co, ξ auxiliary terms defined in the text

Abbreviations:

NPK Nikuradse–Prandtl–Karman

PNK Prandtl–Nikuradse–Karman

CPU Central Processor Unit

1. Introduction

Perfectly smooth surfaces do not exist (Taylor et al., 2006). Hydraulically smooth regime does not occur only in absence of the roughness (i.e. only when $\varepsilon/D=0$). This means that smooth regime can occur even if the relative roughness exists (if it is minor, i.e. if $\varepsilon/D \rightarrow 0$). This problem is shown in the spotlight of some recent new formulas.

2. Different hydraulic regimes

In their recent paper Li et al. (2011) analyze the flow friction factor with the special attention to so called “smooth” pipes. They note that the implicit equation developed by Colebrook (1939) is valid for rough pipes which should imply that its accuracy for “smooth” pipes can be disputed. The Colebrook equation is valid for the entire turbulent regime which includes the turbulent regime in the hydraulically smooth pipes, the transient (partially) turbulent regime and the fully turbulent regime in the hydraulically rough pipes. This is obvious from the title of the paper of Colebrook “Turbulent flow in pipes with particular reference to the transition region between the smooth and rough pipe laws”. The Colebrook equation is not valid for the laminar regime which occurs for approximately $Re < 2320$. It is valid for $2320 < Re < 10^8$ (the turbulent regime). It has to be noted that for the laminar regime, there are no smooth and rough pipes (Figure 1). Furthermore, in the laminar regime, all pipes are hydraulically smooth. If the pipe roughness (protrusions of inner pipe surface) is completely covered by the laminar sub-layer, the surface is smooth from the hydraulic point of view. In

1 the laminar flow there is no laminar sub-layer, or better to say the main and only layer of flow
2 is laminar, hence, the prefix ‘sub’ is sufficient (there is no turbulent layer). In other words, in
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4 the laminar regime, all pipes are “smooth” as mentioned before. With further increasing of the
5
6 Reynolds number, thickness of the laminar sub-layer decreases baring the protrusions and
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8 fluid flow through a pipe becomes consequently hydraulically smooth, and then gradually
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10 roughs, both from the hydraulic point of view (Figure 1). Hence the introductory turbulent
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12 flow through the rough pipes (because the perfectly smooth pipes do not exist) can be noted
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14 as the hydraulically smooth. In the turbulent regime a rough pipe can be treated as smooth or
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16 rough which depends on the circumstances (Figure 1).
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24 **Figure 1.** Different hydraulic regimes
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29 Accuracy of the Colebrook equation can perhaps be disputed, but up to date it has been an
30
31 accepted standard for the calculation of the friction factor in the turbulent flow both in,
32
33 “smooth” and rough pipes. The well known Rouse and Moody diagrams (or better to say,
34
35 their turbulent part) had been constructed using Colebrook’s formula (1):
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$$\frac{1}{\sqrt{\lambda}} = -2 \cdot \log_{10} \left(\frac{2.51}{\text{Re} \cdot \sqrt{\lambda}} + \frac{\epsilon}{3.71 \cdot D} \right)$$

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43 (1)

44 For flow of natural gas or other gaseous fluids the coefficient 2.51 should be replaced with
45
46 2.825 according to the recommendation by AGA (American Gas Association) and American
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48 Bureau of Mines.
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54 All equations in this short report are presented using the Darcy friction factor where the
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56 Darcy-Weisbach or the Moody friction factors are synonyms (here noted as λ). In the other
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58 hand, some researchers use the Fanning friction factor (f). This is also correct where the
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1 connection between these two factors is ($\lambda=4\cdot f$). The Fanning friction factor is C_f in Li et al.
2 (2011).
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7 **3. Determination of hydraulic regime**

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9 As noted before, the turbulent regime can be divided into the three sub-regimes; i.e. in the
10 “smooth” (introductory) turbulent regime, the partially (transient) turbulent regime and the
11 rough (fully) turbulent regime.
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19 The turbulent regime usually occurs when $Re>2300$ or slightly above. The Reynolds number
20 was introduced by Reynolds (1883a,b) first in the “Proceedings of the Royal Society”
21 followed by a longer paper in the “Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society”. Special
22 issue of the “Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society” dedicated to these papers was
23 published in 2008 with title “Turbulence transition in pipe flow: 125th anniversary of the
24 publication of Reynolds’ paper”. Further about the history of the Reynolds number can be
25 seen in Rott (1990).
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38 As shown in Brkić (2011a), the smooth regime of turbulence occurs only if $\xi<16$ and if
39 $Re>2320$ while the rough turbulent regime occurs if $\xi>200$. Between is the transient (partial)
40 turbulent regime ($16<\xi<200$). The Reynolds number (Re) is a well known parameter while a
41 parameter ξ is defined by (3):
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$$48 \xi = \frac{\varepsilon}{D} \cdot Re \cdot \sqrt{\lambda} \quad (3)$$

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55 The value of parameter ξ as defined is valid for the Darcy friction factor (regarding the value
56 of ξ for the Fanning friction factor readers can consult Abodolahi et al. (2007) where the
57 hydraulically smooth regime occurs if $\xi_f<8$ and if $Re>2320$).
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2 The NPK, i.e. the Nikuradse–Prandtl–Karman equation is Colebrook’s equation in the total
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4 absence of roughness (when $\varepsilon/D=0$). The implicit NPK equation (2) cannot be derived from
5
6 the Colebrook equation if the relative roughness is very small ($\varepsilon/D\rightarrow 0$). But hydraulically
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8 smooth regime also occurs in the technical systems when the relative roughness is
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10 significantly low ($\varepsilon/D\rightarrow 0$) and not only in the absence of roughness as can be seen from the
11
12 figure 2 (the hydraulically smooth regime exist not only when $\varepsilon/D=0$ and $Re>2300$, but also
13
14 when $\xi<16$ and $Re>2300$).

$$\frac{1}{\sqrt{\lambda}} = 2 \cdot \log_{10} \left(\frac{Re \cdot \sqrt{\lambda}}{2.51} \right) = 2 \cdot \log_{10} (Re \cdot \sqrt{\lambda}) - 0.8 \quad (2)$$

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23 The NPK equation is actually the PNK (Prandtl-Nikuradse-Karman) in Li et al. (2011).

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28 The Colebrook, as well as the NPK equation can be calculated only by using an iterative
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30 calculus or using approximate formulas. So, the main problem is not to find an approximate
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32 formula for the NPK equation which is valid only for the smooth part of turbulent regime, or
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34 better to say, for the turbulent regime in the absence of roughness (when $\varepsilon/D=0$). Problem is
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36 to find an approximate formula for the implicit Colebrook equation which is valid for the
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38 whole turbulent regime, including the smooth, transient and the rough portion of the turbulent
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40 regime.
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47 Today, the NPK equation can be used only as an approximation for the Colebrook equation
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49 valid only for the “smooth” portion of the turbulent regime when the roughness can be
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51 neglected entirely ($\varepsilon/D=0$). This is a standard since 1939 when the paper of Colebrook was
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53 published and especially since 1944 when the paper of Moody was published (Moody, 1944).
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60 **4. Turbulent smooth regime**

1 The NPK equation can be used only if $\xi < 16$, calculated using the Darcy friction factor (and
2 even then with disputed accuracy) and if $Re > 2300$. As can be seen from figure 2, for
3
4 $\varepsilon/D = 0.01$, the upper limit for “smooth” regime is for $Re \approx 6500$ (the lower is 2300). This
5
6 means that the NPK relation produces a relative error for this value of the relative roughness
7
8 compared to the standard Colebrook equation of up to 24% (δ_1 from figure 2 with additionally
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10 $\Delta\delta_1$ compared with the equation for the hydraulically smooth regime by Buzzelli). Similar, for
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12 e.g. $\varepsilon/D = 0.0005$, “smooth” regime is up to $Re \approx 2 \cdot 10^5$ (and not below 2300) where the relative
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14 error compared to Colebrook is up to 17% (δ_2 from the figure 2 with additionally $\Delta\delta_2$
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16 compared to the equation for the hydraulically smooth regime by Buzzelli). In theory, as
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18 relative roughness decreases ($\varepsilon/D \rightarrow 0$), the relative error also decreases rapidly ($\delta \rightarrow 0$).
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26 **Figure 2.** Examined hydraulic problem

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31 When the turbulent smooth regime is indicated, it is better to use an equation with the relative
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33 roughness included, such as those by Colebrook (1939) and Buzzelli (2008), and not those
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35 developed for use in the total absence of roughness. The bigger problem is how to measure or
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37 estimate the value of roughness accurately (Sletfjerding and Gudmundsson, 2003; Farshad et
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39 al., 2001).
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46 **4.1. Turbulent smooth regime in the absence of roughness**

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48 Li et al. (2011) have examined few equations valid for the “smooth” turbulent regime such as
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50 Blasius, Filonenko, etc (Table 1). Also, in their recent paper Danish et al. (2011) used the
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52 Adomian decomposition method (ADM) and the Restarted Adomian Decomposition Method
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54 (RADM) to develop their explicit approximation of the NPK equation (Table 1). Also Fang et
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1
2 al. (2011) have analyzed correlations of a single-phase friction factor for the turbulent pipe
3 flow, also with the special attention to so called “smooth” pipes (Table 1).
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7 **Table 1:** Equations for hydraulically smooth regime developed for the total absence of
8 roughness
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12 According to figure 2, equations proposed by Li et al. (2011), Danish et al. (2011), and Fang
13 et al. (2011) can be used to substitute the implicit NPK equation very accurately (these are
14 actually non-iterative explicit approximations to the implicit NPK equation). But also, they
15 are very complex, hence, the equation by Filonenko or even simple power-law equations such
16 Blasius can be used as an adequate and not that complex substitution to the implicit NPK
17 equation.
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29 Also as shown in Brkić (2011b), equations for the smooth regime in total absence of the
30 roughness can be used as the base for the new approximations to the Colebrook equation if
31 they are in suitable form for such transformation. Equations by Fang et al. (2011) and Li et al.
32 (2011) are in such suitable form.
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43 **4.2. Turbulent smooth regime with presence of roughness**

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45 The equations by Buzzelli (2008) are very accurate explicit approximation of the Colebrook
46 equation. Also, in addition, Buzzelli (2008) presented his equation specially developed for the
47 “smooth” conditions (3):
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$$\frac{1}{\sqrt{\lambda}} = A - \left(\frac{A + 2 \cdot \log_{10} \left(\frac{B}{\text{Re}} \right)}{1 + \frac{2.18}{B}} \right) \quad (3)$$

Where parameters A and B are defined as (3a,b):

$$A = (0.774 \cdot \ln(\text{Re})) - 1.41 \quad (3a)$$

$$B = \left(\frac{\text{Re}}{3.7} \cdot \frac{\varepsilon}{D} \right) + 2.51 \cdot A \quad (3b)$$

Approach by Buzzelli (2008) is good one because he uses the relative roughness even for the “smooth” regime of turbulence (Figure 2).

5. New equations developed at the Princeton and the Oregon University

According to Barenblatt et al. (1997) and Cipra (1996), the new reexaminations of classical and historically adopted relations for determination of hydraulic friction factor show that some of them are off by as much 65%. As noted in Cipra (1996), it seems that the many classical textbooks for hydraulics will have to be revised. For example, recent experiments at the Princeton University have revealed aspects of the smooth pipe flow behavior that suggest a more complex scaling than previously noted. The Princeton research shows that in the partially turbulent regime friction factor relationship follows an inflectional rather than the monotonic relationship given in the Moody diagram. Researchers from the Princeton concluded that friction factor behavior of a honed surface in the transitional regime does not follow Colebrook relationship and that for all conditions of roughness, logarithmic scaling was apparent at the higher Reynolds numbers with the same constants determined for smooth pipes. Another team at the Oregon University, working with a completely different type of facility have come to a similar conclusion. Note that the difference in scale of the Oregon and the Princeton devices is dramatic: for example, Princeton’s Superpipe weighs about 25 tons, whereas the Oregon tube weighs about 30 grams (McKeon et al., 2004). Another interesting conclusion from Cordero (2008) is that the power-law represents the velocity profile better than the logarithmic law for the Reynolds numbers below approximately 98 thousands.

1 Blasius's law (related to the power-law velocity profile) is considered more accurate than the
2 NPK log-law in that region. From a practical point of view, it is best to apply Blasius's law up
3
4 to $Re=66,964$ where it coincides with results by McKeon et al. (2004, 2005) thus providing a
5
6 continuous friction factor.
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11
12 McKeon et al. (2004) adjusted parameter in the NPK equation to fit the results obtained from
13
14 the Princeton and the Oregon pipe facility (4):
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$$\frac{1}{\sqrt{\lambda}} = 1.93 \cdot \log_{10}(\text{Re} \cdot \sqrt{\lambda}) - 0.537 \quad (4)$$

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25 The NPK equation with the coefficients adjusted by McKeon et al. (2004) is also implicit in
26
27 flow friction factor, hence the methodology proposed by Li et al. (2011) and Danish et al.
28
29 (2011) can be applied to it. The Princeton and the Oregon equations for the fully developed
30
31 pipe flow can be seen in McKeon et al. (2005). These equations for the fully developed pipe
32
33 flow can be used as an improved substitution for the Colebrook equation valid for the whole
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35 regime of turbulence.
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43 **6. Comparison of different formulas**

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45 From figure 3 and 4, it can be seen that different equations produce the different results. But
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47 from figure 2, it also can be seen that these differences have a minor or none influence on the
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49 calculation. From figure 2, it can be clearly seen that only the effect of roughness can make an
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51 influence on the final results (to increase the accuracy of the final results).
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57 **Figure 3.** Maximal relative error of presented equations for hydraulically smooth regime
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59 developed for the total absence of roughness
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2 **Figure 4.** Comparison of the most accurate explicit approximations of the NPK equation
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7 Same as the implicit Colebrook relation, its explicit approximations are valid for the whole
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9 turbulent regime. Up to date, only the approximation made by Churchill (1977) is valid for the
10
11 turbulent and even the laminar flow of the Newtonian fluid (including the zone between
12
13 them). According to the recent paper by Brkić (2011c), the approximations of the Colebrook
14
15 equation by Romeo et al. (2002), Buzzelli (2008), Serghides (1984), Zigrang and Sylvester
16
17 (1982) and Vatankhah and Kouchakzadeh (2008) are among the five most accurate up to date.
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19 Their relative error is no more than 0.15% compared to the iterative solution of the implicit
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21 Colebrook equation (for the whole turbulent regime). The other three approximations
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23 mentioned in the paper of Li et al. (2011) are not among the most accurate. These mentioned
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25 approximations are by Haaland (1983) with the relative error of no more than 1.5%, Swamee
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27 and Jain (1976) with the relative error of no more than 2.5% and Avci and Karagoz (2009)
28
29 with the relative error up to 5%.
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39 Measuring the CPU time is a good approach for a comparison of the formulas in hydraulics
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41 (Giustolisi et al., 2011; Danish et al., 2011; Li et al., 2011). Also, one has to be aware that
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43 computational speed does not depend only on the problem size but also on the computing
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45 environment (the type of CPU or other hardware components). Giustolisi et al. (2011) observe
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47 that the computation of logarithm in the computer languages is based on the series of
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49 expansions that require several powers of the argument to be computed and added to each
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51 other. Note that the explicit equations proposed by Danish et al. (2011) and Li et al. (2011)
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53 contain many logarithmic expressions. Approximations to the Colebrook equation examined
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1
2 by Brkić (2011c) are sorted based on their accuracy and the complexity as the criteria. The
3 measurement of the CPU time can be a further step forward.
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7 The Colebrook equation can also be transformed and approximately solved by using the
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9 Lambert W-function as shown in Brkić (2011d,e). The Lambert W function is also mentioned
10
11 in Li et al. (2011).
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14 15 16 **7. Conclusion**

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18 It can be concluded that pipes can be treated as the smooth below certain value of the
19
20 Reynolds number but after that even the new polished pipes with a minor roughness follow
21
22 the transitional and subsequently the rough law of flow at the higher values of the Reynolds
23
24 number. Today, the Colebrook equation is a standard for the calculation of flow friction factor
25
26 with the particular reference to the transition region between the smooth and the rough pipe
27
28 laws. It is implicit in the flow friction factor, but nowadays it can be solved easily using an
29
30 iterative procedure or some of the very accurate approximations.
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39 The Colebrook equation can be replaced with some of the new formulas like those developed
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41 from the data of the Princeton or Oregon pipe facility (Cordero, 2008), but the effect of the
42
43 roughness cannot be neglected. Unavoidable the effect of roughness is the main reason why
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45 the Colebrook equation is a standard even for the smooth portion of turbulence. The
46
47 roughness effect can be minor, but with slightly increased value of the Reynolds number, it
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49 will inevitable appear.
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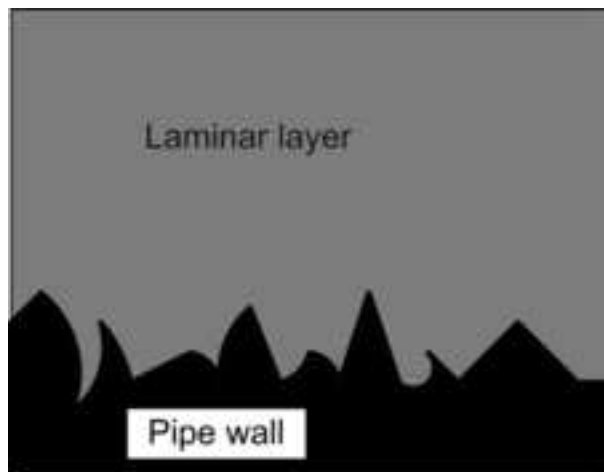
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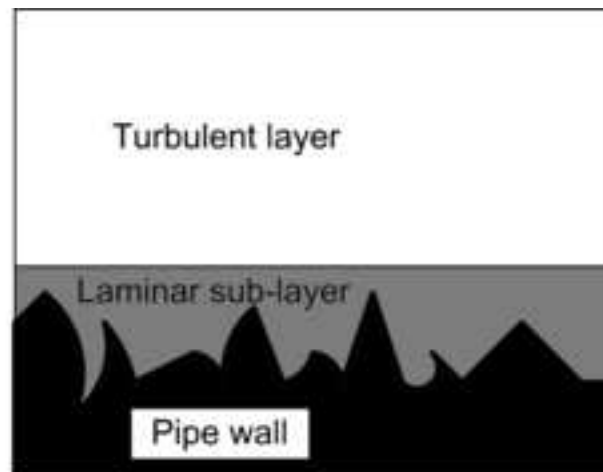
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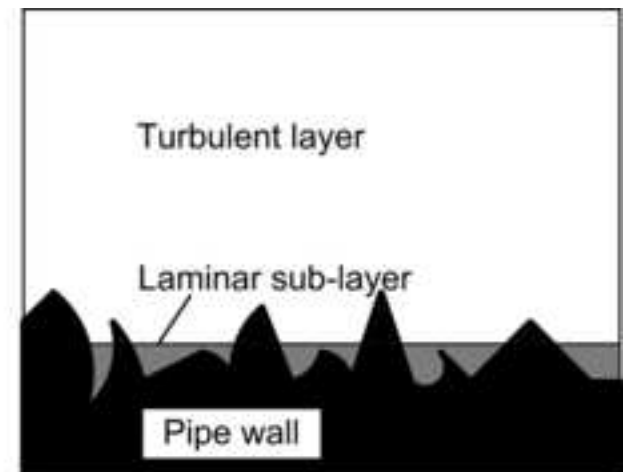
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a) Laminar flow (smooth pipe)



b) Hydraulically smooth pipe



c) Hydraulically rough pipe

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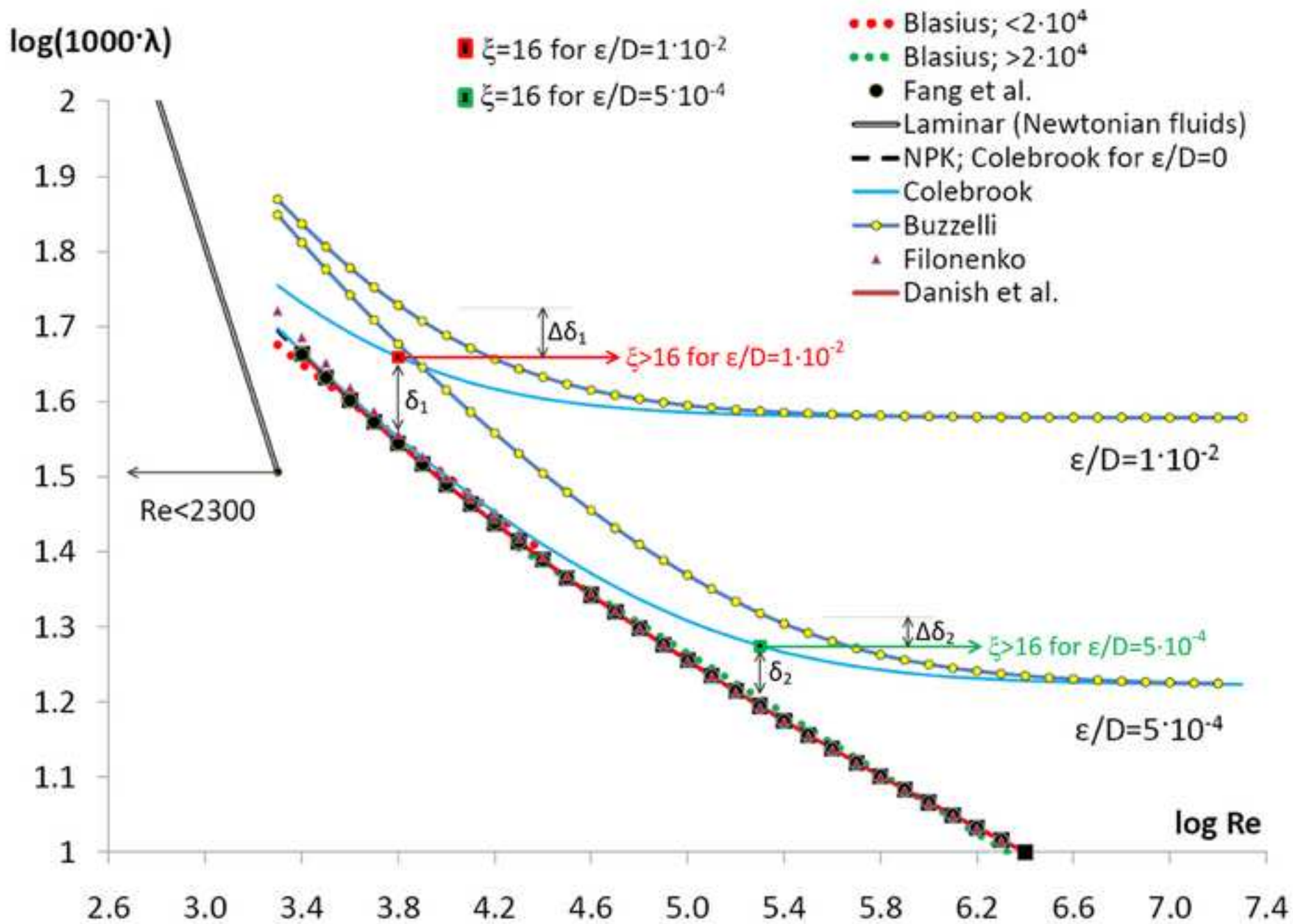


Figure 3 DB

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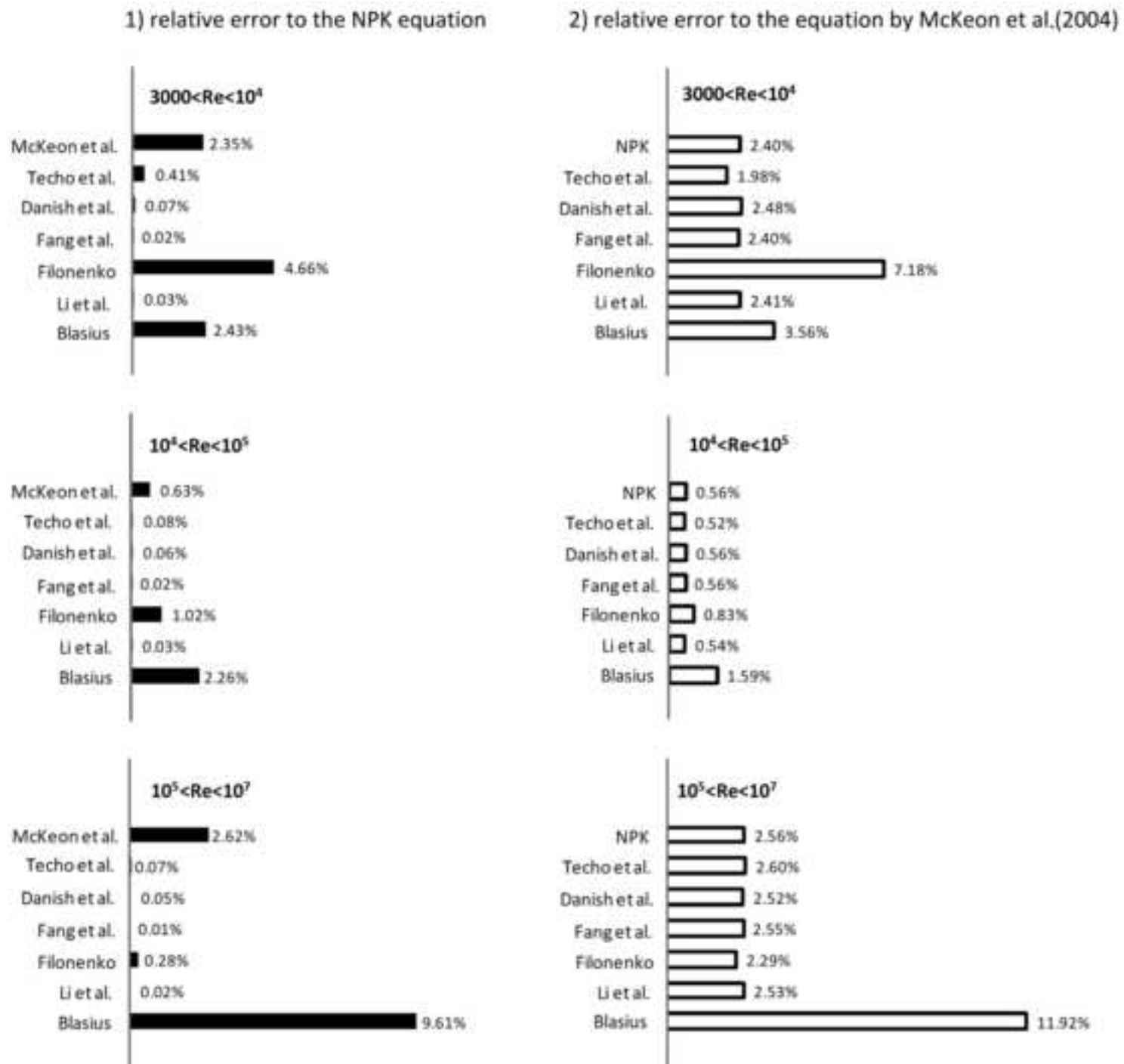


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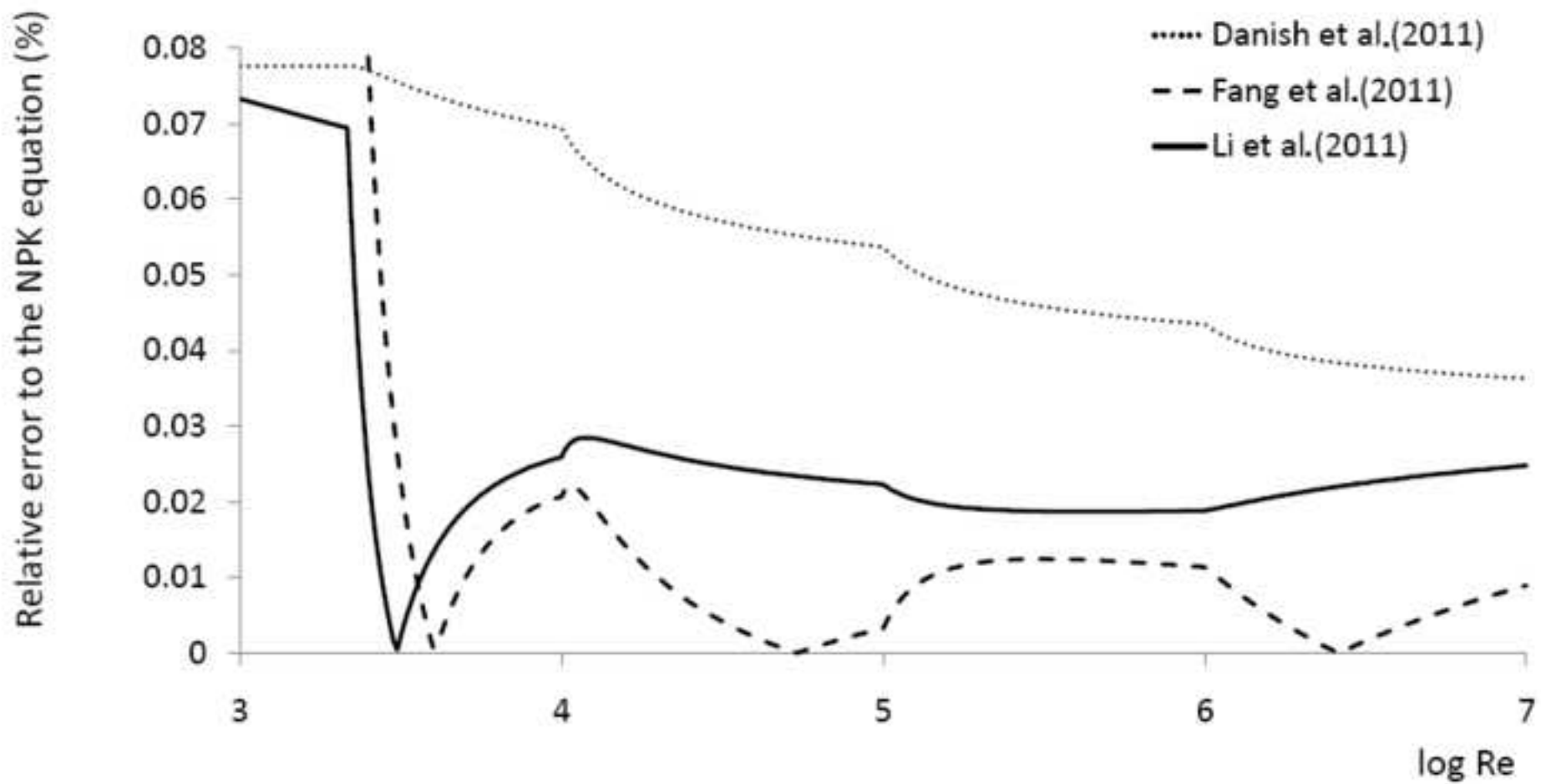


Table 1: Equations for hydraulically smooth regime developed for the total absence of roughness

Equation	Name
$\lambda = \frac{0.316}{\text{Re}^{0.25}}$	Blasius (for $\text{Re} < 2 \cdot 10^4$)
$\lambda = \frac{0.184}{\text{Re}^{0.2}}$	Blasius (for $\text{Re} > 2 \cdot 10^4$)
$\lambda = (0.79 \cdot \ln(\text{Re}) - 1.64)^{-2}$	Filonenko
$\frac{1}{\sqrt{\lambda}} = 0.8686 \cdot \ln\left(\frac{\text{Re} \cdot}{1.964 \cdot \ln(\text{Re}) - 3.8215}\right)$	Techo et al.
$\frac{1}{\sqrt{\lambda}} = \frac{1}{2} \cdot \left(C_o - \frac{1.73718 \cdot C_o \cdot \ln(C_o)}{1.73718 + C_o} + \frac{2.62122 \cdot C_o \cdot [\ln(C_o)]^2}{(1.73718 + C_o)^3} + \frac{3.03568 \cdot C_o \cdot [\ln(C_o)]^3}{(1.73718 + C_o)^4} \right)$	Danish et al. (2011)
$C_o = 4 \cdot \log_{10}(\text{Re}) - 0.4$	
$\lambda = 0.25 \cdot \left[\log_{10}\left(\frac{150.39}{\text{Re}^{0.98865}} - \frac{152.66}{\text{Re}}\right) \right]^{-2}$	Fang et al. (2011)
$\frac{1}{\sqrt{\lambda}} = 0.8685 \cdot \ln\left(\text{Re} \cdot \sqrt{\frac{-0.0015702}{\ln(\text{Re})} + \frac{0.3942031}{\ln^2(\text{Re})} + \frac{2.5341533}{\ln^3(\text{Re})}}\right) - 0.198$	Li et al. (2011) ^a

^aAlso note that $\ln(\text{Re})^2$ and $\ln(\text{Re})^3$ are actually $\ln^2(\text{Re})$ and $\ln^3(\text{Re})$, respectively, i.e. $(\ln(\text{Re}))^2$ and $(\ln(\text{Re}))^3$. According to equation 7 in Li et al. (2011), one can assume that using logarithmic rule, $\ln(\text{Re})^2$ and $\ln(\text{Re})^3$ can be rearranged to $2 \cdot \ln(\text{Re})$ and $3 \cdot \ln(\text{Re})$, respectively which produce error (because 2 and 3 are power of whole logarithm and not only of Re)

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