

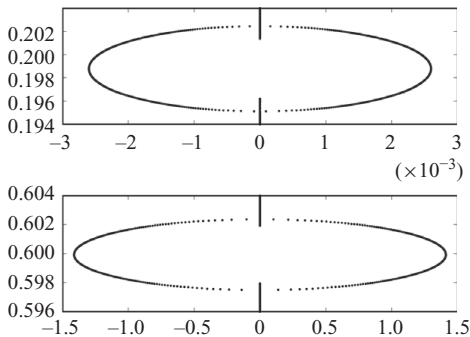
# Unstable Stokes waves: A new periodic Evans function approach

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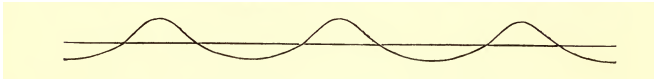
based on arXiv:2010.10766



Stokes in his 1847 paper made significant contributions to

- periodic traveling waves
- at the *free* surface
- two dimensional and irrotational flow
- acted on by gravity, no surface tension

e.g., the 'Stokes expansion'



(Figure from [Stokes; 1847])

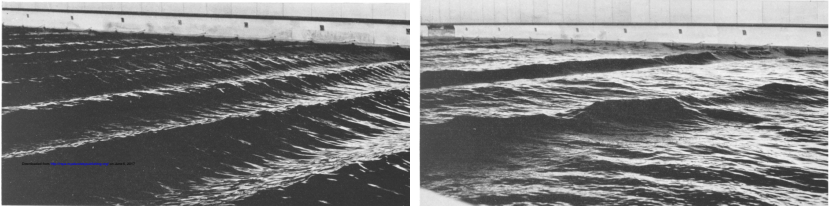
Existence theory (=rigorous proofs) of Stokes waves

- [Nekrasov; 1921], [Levi-Civita; 1925] in the infinite depth, and [Struik; 1926] in the finite depth, for small amplitude
- [Krasovskii; 1960, 1961],... for large amplitude

and many more.

“For a long time no doubt has remained, therefore, that [Stokes waves] are theoretically possible as states of perfect dynamic equilibrium.” ([Benjamin and Feir; 1967])

[Benjamin; 1967] experimentally found



The original caption reads: "Photographs of a progressive at two stations, illustrating disintegration due to instability: (left) view near to wavemaker; (right) view at 200ft. farther from wavemaker. Fundamental wavelength, 7.2ft."

[Benjamin; 1967] and [Whitham; 1967] predicted that a Stokes wave of *small* amplitude is unstable in *deep* water, so that

$$\boxed{(\text{the wave number}) \times (\text{the fluid depth}) > 1.3627 \dots,}$$

namely, the Benjamin-Feir or modulational instability.

Corroborating results arrived the same time, but independently, by Lighthill, Zakharov, Ostrovsky, Benney, Newell, . . . .

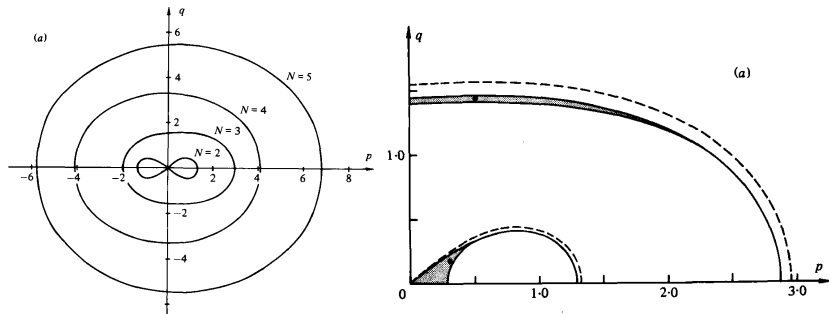
“The idea was emerging when the time was indeed ripe.”  
([Zakharov and Ostrovsky; 2008])

[Bridges and Mielke; 1995] proved spectral instability, rigorously justifying the formal arguments in the 1960s.

But some fundamental issues remained open, e.g.,  
the spectrum away from  $0 \in \mathbb{C}$ .

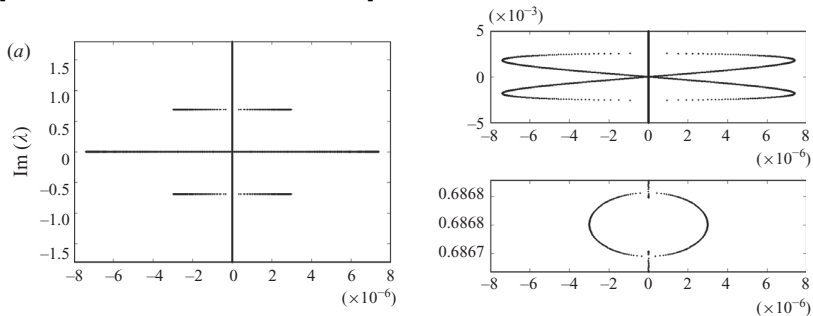
[McLean; 1982] numerically found instability when the unperturbed wave is 'resonant' with two infinitesimal perturbations:

$$k(\lambda) - k'(\lambda) = n\kappa, \quad n \neq 0, \in \mathbb{Z}.$$



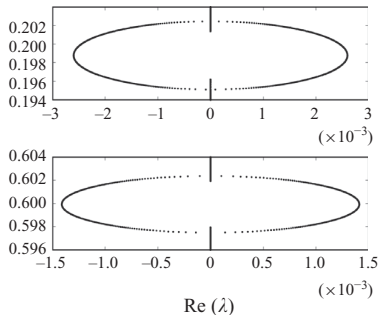
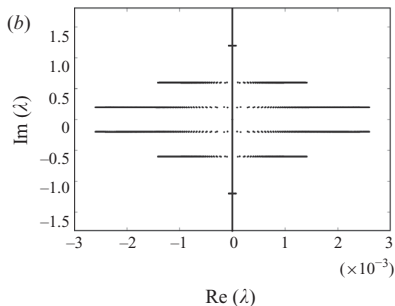
$h = 2.0$  and  $a = 0.2$ . resonances (a) and instability (b)

[Deconinck and Oliveras; 2009] numerically found



The original caption reads: Spectrum for  $h = 1.5$  and  $a = 0.01$  (left). Enlargements are shown (right) for the region near the origin (top) and on the imaginary axis near  $0.68i$  (bottom).

Also,



The original caption reads: Spectrum for  $h = 0.5$  and  $a = 0.01$  (left). Enlargements are shown (right) for the region near  $0.1489i$  (top) and  $0.5212i$  (bottom).

This talk: the first proof of [spectral instability](#) away from  $0 \in \mathbb{C}$ .



What [Bridges and Mielke; 1995] did:

- 1 Locate the spectrum of  $\mathcal{L}(\varepsilon, 0)$  at  $0 \in \mathbb{C}$ , explicitly for  $|\varepsilon| \ll 1$ .  
 $\varepsilon =$  the amplitude parameter,  $k =$  the Floquet exponent
- 2 Track the eigenvalues of  $\mathcal{L}(\varepsilon, k)$  near  $0 \in \mathbb{C}$  for  $k \ll 1$ .

What we do:

- 1 Locate the *full* spectrum of  $\mathcal{L}(0, k)$  for all  $k \in \mathbb{R}$ .
- 2 Track the spectrum of  $\mathcal{L}(\varepsilon, k)$  for  $|\varepsilon| \ll 1$ .

Also, do *not* resort to nonlocal operators, and use a [periodic Evans function](#) for cylindrical domains, and other ODE techniques.

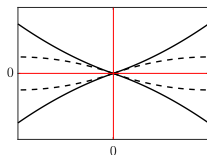
## Result 1. The Benjamin–Feir instability

A small amplitude and  $2\pi/\kappa$  periodic Stokes wave in water of depth = 1 is spectrally unstable if

$$\begin{aligned} \text{ind}(\kappa) = & -\mu_0(\kappa)^{-2}(\cosh(2\kappa) + 1)^2(10 \cosh(2\kappa)^2 + 8 \cosh(2\kappa) - 9) \\ & + \mu_0(\kappa)^{-1}(8 \cosh(2\kappa)^4 + 8 \cosh(2\kappa)^3 + 4 \cosh(2\kappa)^2 + 28 \cosh(2\kappa) + 24) \\ & - 4 \cosh(4\kappa) - 32 > 0 \end{aligned}$$

or, equivalently,  $\kappa > \kappa_c \approx 1.362782756726421$ .

An update on the spectral curves:



spectral curves

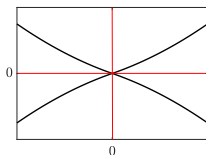


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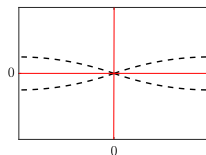


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## Result 2. High-frequency instability, or the lack thereof

Spectral instability near  $\lambda \in i\mathbb{R}$ , for which  $k(\lambda) - k'(\lambda) = 2\kappa$   
if  $0.86430\dots < \kappa < 1.00804\dots$

No spectral instability for  $k(\lambda) - k'(\lambda) = n\kappa$ ,  $n \geq 3$   
at the order of  $\varepsilon^2$ .

Elucidates some numerical findings but not all.

Because *infinitesimally small amplitude*  $\lll$  *small amplitude*

## Step 1. Reformulate the water wave problem

Let  $u = \phi_x$  and  $y \mapsto \frac{y}{1 + \eta(x, t)}$  (“flattening” coordinates).

The water wave problem becomes

$$\phi_x - \frac{y\eta_x\phi_y}{1+\eta} - u = 0, \quad 0 < y < 1$$

$$u_x - \frac{y\eta_x u_y}{1+\eta} + \frac{\phi_{yy}}{(1+\eta)^2} = 0, \quad 0 < y < 1$$

$$\eta_t + (u - 1)\eta_x - \frac{\phi_y}{1+\eta} = 0, \quad y = 1$$

$$\phi_t - u + \frac{(u-1)\eta_x\phi_y}{1+\eta} + \frac{u^2}{2} - \frac{\phi_y^2}{2(1+\eta)^2} + \mu\eta = 0, \quad y = 1$$

$$\phi_y = 0, \quad y = 0$$

## Step 2. Linearize about a Stokes wave of small amplitude

$$\begin{aligned}\phi_x - u - \frac{y\eta_x(\varepsilon)}{1+\eta(\varepsilon)}\phi_y - (\dots)\eta_x + (\dots)\eta &= 0, & 0 < y < 1 \\ u_x + \frac{\phi_{yy}}{(1+\eta(\varepsilon))^2} - (\dots)u_y - (\dots)\eta_x + (\dots)\eta &= 0, & 0 < y < 1 \\ \lambda\eta + (u(\varepsilon)-1)\eta_x - \frac{\phi_y}{1+\eta(\varepsilon)} + \eta_x(\varepsilon)u + (\dots)\eta &= 0, & y = 1 \\ \zeta - u &= 0, & y = 1 \\ \phi_y &= 0, & y = 0\end{aligned}$$

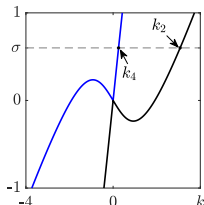
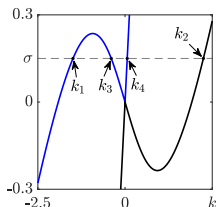
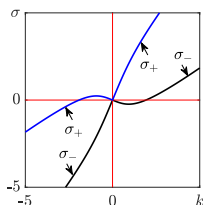
where  $\eta = \eta(\phi_y(\cdot, 1), \phi(\cdot, 1), \zeta)$ .

Abstractly,  $\mathbf{u}_x = \mathbf{L}(\lambda)\mathbf{u} + \mathbf{B}(x; \lambda, \varepsilon)\mathbf{u}$

where  $\mathbf{L}(\lambda)\mathbf{u} = \begin{pmatrix} u \\ -\phi_{yy} \\ [-\mu_0\phi_y - \lambda^2\phi + 2\lambda\zeta]_{y=1} \end{pmatrix}$ .

### Step 3. The spectrum for $\varepsilon = 0$

$$\lambda = i\sigma, \sigma = \boxed{k \pm \sqrt{\mu_0 k \tanh(k)}}, k \in \mathbb{R}.$$



For  $\lambda = 0$ , the eigenspace =  $\text{span}\{\phi_j(0)\}$ ,  $j = 1, \dots, 4$ .

For  $\lambda = i\sigma$ ,  $\sigma > \sigma_{crit}$ , the eigenspace =  $\text{span}\{\phi_j(\sigma)\}$ ,  $j = 2, 4$ .

## Step 4. Reduce to finite dimensions

Let  $\lambda = i\sigma + \delta$ ,  $\delta \in \mathbb{C}$  and  $|\delta| \ll 1$ , and

$$\mathbf{u}_x = \mathbf{L}(i\sigma)\mathbf{u} + \mathbf{B}(x; \sigma, \delta, \varepsilon)\mathbf{u}.$$

Let  $\mathbf{v} = \Pi(\sigma)\mathbf{u}$  and  $\mathbf{w} = (\mathbf{1} - \Pi(\sigma))\mathbf{u}$

$\Pi(\sigma)$  = the projection onto the eigenspace, and

$$\mathbf{v}_x = \mathbf{L}(i\sigma)\mathbf{v} + \Pi(\sigma)\mathbf{B}(x; \sigma, \delta, \varepsilon)(\mathbf{v} + \mathbf{w}(x, \mathbf{v}; \sigma, \delta, \varepsilon))$$

Let  $\mathbf{v}(x; \sigma, \delta, \varepsilon) = \sum_j a_j(x; \sigma, \delta, \varepsilon)\phi_j(\sigma)$ ,  $\mathbf{a} = (a_j)$

The **periodic Evans function** is

$$\Delta(\lambda, k; \varepsilon) = \det(\mathbf{a}(T; \sigma, \delta, \varepsilon) - e^{ikT}\mathbf{I}), \quad T = 2\pi/\kappa \text{ the period.}$$

$$\text{spec} = \{\lambda \in \mathbb{C} : \Delta(\lambda, k, \varepsilon) = 0 \text{ for some } k \in \mathbb{R}\}$$

## Step 5. Expand the Evans function. The Benjamin–Feir instability

For  $\delta = i0 + \delta$ ,  $|\delta| \ll 1$  for  $\varepsilon \in \mathbb{R}$ ,  $|\varepsilon| \ll 1$ ,

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbf{a}(T) = & \begin{pmatrix} e^{-i\kappa T} & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & e^{i\kappa T} & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & T & 1 \end{pmatrix} \\ & + \delta \begin{pmatrix} a_{11}^{(1,0)} & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & a_{11}^{(1,0)} & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & a_{33}^{(1,0)} & 0 \\ a_{41}^{(1,0)} & a_{41}^{(1,0)} & \frac{T}{2} a_{33}^{(1,0)} & 0 \end{pmatrix} + \varepsilon \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 0 & a_{13}^{(0,1)} & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & a_{13}^{(0,1)} & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ a_{41}^{(0,1)} & -a_{41}^{(0,1)} & a_{43}^{(0,1)} & 0 \end{pmatrix} \\ & + \delta^2 \begin{pmatrix} a_{11}^{(2,0)} & 0 & * & 0 \\ 0 & (a_{11}^{(2,0)})^* & * & 0 \\ a_{31}^{(2,0)} & a_{31}^{(2,0)} & * & a_{34}^{(2,0)} \\ * & * & * & a_{44}^{(2,0)} \end{pmatrix} + \delta\varepsilon \begin{pmatrix} a_{11}^{(1,1)} & a_{11}^{(1,1)} & * & a_{14}^{(1,1)} \\ a_{11}^{(1,1)} & a_{11}^{(1,1)} & * & a_{14}^{(1,1)} \\ a_{31}^{(1,1)} & * & * & 0 \\ * & * & * & 0 \end{pmatrix} + \dots \end{aligned}$$



$$\sum_{j=1}^4 \left( \frac{d}{dx} a_{jk}^{(m,n)} \right) \phi_j(0) = -i\kappa a_{1k}^{(m,n)} \phi_1(0) + i\kappa a_{2k}^{(m,n)} \phi_2(0) \\ + a_{3k}^{(m,n)} \phi_4(0) + \mathbf{\Pi}(0) \mathbf{f}_k^{(m,n)}(x;0),$$

$$\mathbf{f}_k^{(m,n)}(x;0) = \sum_{m',n'} \mathbf{B}^{(m',n')}(x;0) \left( \mathbf{w}_k^{(m-m',n-n')}(x;0) + \sum a_{jk}^{(m-m',n-n')} \phi_j(0) \right),$$

and  $\mathbf{w}_k^{(m,n)}$  solves

$$\begin{aligned} \phi_{xx} + \phi_{yy} &= ((\mathbf{1} - \mathbf{\Pi}(0)) \mathbf{f}_k^{(m,n)}(x;0))_{1x} + ((\mathbf{1} - \mathbf{\Pi}(0)) \mathbf{f}_k^{(m,n)}(x;0))_2 & 0 < y < 1 \\ u = \phi_x - ((\mathbf{1} - \mathbf{\Pi}(0)) \mathbf{f}_k^{(m,n)}(x;0))_1 & & 0 < y < 1 \\ \zeta_x = -\mu_0 \phi_y + ((\mathbf{1} - \mathbf{\Pi}(0)) \mathbf{f}_k^{(m,n)}(x;0))_3 & & y = 1 \\ \zeta = u & & y = 1 \\ \phi_y = 0 & & y = 0. \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned}
\Delta(\lambda, n\kappa + \gamma; \varepsilon) &= \det(\mathbf{a}(T; 0, \lambda, \varepsilon) - e^{i\gamma T} \mathbf{I}) \\
&= d^{(4,0,0)} \lambda^4 + d^{(3,1,0)} \lambda^3 \gamma + d^{(2,2,0)} \lambda^2 \gamma^2 + d^{(1,3,0)} \lambda \gamma^3 + d^{(0,4,0)} \gamma^4 + \dots \\
&\quad + o((|\lambda| + |\gamma|)^4 + |\lambda|^3 |\varepsilon|^2 + |\lambda|^2 |\varepsilon|^3 + |\gamma|^3 |\varepsilon|^2 + |\gamma|^2 |\varepsilon|^3 \\
&\quad + |\lambda \gamma| |\varepsilon|^2 (|\lambda| + |\gamma| + |\varepsilon|) + |\lambda| |\varepsilon|^5 + |\gamma| |\varepsilon|^5)
\end{aligned}$$

Let

$$\lambda_j(k_j(0) + \gamma, \varepsilon) = \alpha_j^{(1,0)} \gamma + \alpha_j^{(2,0)} \gamma^2 + \alpha_j^{(1,1)} \gamma \varepsilon + o(|\gamma|^2 + |\gamma| |\varepsilon|),$$

and solve  $\Delta(\lambda_j(k_j(0) + \gamma, \varepsilon), k_j(0) + \gamma; \varepsilon) = 0$ .

## High frequency instability. Why resonance?

$$a_{jk}^{(m,n)}(x) = e^{ik_{2j}x} \left\langle \sum \int_0^x e^{-ik_{2j}x'} \mathbf{B}^{(m',n')}(x') \right. \\ \left. (\mathbf{w}_k^{(m-m',n-n')}(x') + \sum a_{j'k}^{(m-m',n-n')}(x') \phi_{2j'}) dx', \psi_{2j} \right\rangle,$$

involving, e.g.,

$$\int_0^x e^{i(k_{2j}-k_{2j'})x'} \sin(p\kappa x') dx' \\ = \begin{cases} \frac{p\kappa - p\kappa \cos(p\kappa x) e^{i(k_{2j}-k_{2j'})x}}{p^2\kappa^2 - (k_{2j}-k_{2j'})^2} + \dots & |k_{2j}-k_{2j'}| \neq p\kappa, \\ \pm \frac{i}{2}x + \frac{1 - e^{\pm 2ip\kappa x}}{4p\kappa} & k_{2j}-k_{2j'} = \pm p\kappa, \end{cases}$$



**Pros:** can accommodate surface tension, vorticity, . . .  
infinite depth?

$$\phi_{xx} + \phi_{yy} = 0 \text{ (vorticity)}$$

$$\phi_y = 0 \text{ (infinite depth)}$$

$$\eta_t - \eta_x + \eta_x \phi_x = \phi_y$$

$$\phi_t - \phi_x + \frac{1}{2}(\phi_x^2 + \phi_y^2) + \mu\eta = 0 \text{ (surface tension)}$$

$$0 < y < 1 + \eta(x, t)$$

$$y = 0$$

$$y = 1 + \eta(x, t)$$

$$y = 1 + \eta(x, t)$$

**Cons:** stability.

$$\Delta(\lambda, p\kappa + \gamma; \varepsilon) = W(\lambda, \gamma, \varepsilon)h(\lambda, \gamma, \varepsilon),$$

and roots of  $W(\lambda, \gamma, \varepsilon) = \lambda^4 + g_3(\gamma, \varepsilon)\lambda^3 + g_2(\gamma, \varepsilon)\lambda^2 + g_1(\gamma, \varepsilon)\lambda + g_0(\gamma, \varepsilon)$ ?