Low-level Arctic clouds: A blind zone in our knowledge of the radiation budget

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Abstract. Quantifying the role of clouds in the Earth radiation budget is essential for improving our understanding of the drivers and feedbacks of climate change. This holds in particular for the Arctic, the region currently undergoing the most rapid changes. This region, however, also poses significant challenges to remote-sensing retrievals of clouds and radiative fluxes, introducing large uncertainties in current climate data records. In particular, low-level stratiform clouds are common in the Arctic but are, due to their low altitude, challenging to observe and characterize with remote-sensing techniques. The availability of reliable ground-based observations as reference is thus of high importance. In the present study, radiative transfer simulations based on state-of-the-art ground-based remote sensing of clouds are contrasted to surface radiative flux measurements to assess their ability to constrain the cloud radiative effect. Cloud radar, lidar, and microwave radiometer observations from the PS106 cruise in the Arctic marginal sea ice zone in summer 2017 were used to derive cloud micro- and macrophysical properties by means of the instrument synergy approach of Cloudnet. Closure of surface radiative fluxes can only be achieved by a realistic representation of the low-level liquid-containing clouds in the radiative transfer simulations. The original, likely erroneous, representation of these low-level clouds in the radiative transfer simulations let to errors in the cloud radiative effect of 43 W m^{-2}. The present study highlights the importance of jointly improving retrievals for low-level liquid-containing clouds which are frequently encountered in the high Arctic, together with observational capabilities both in terms of cloud remote sensing and radiative flux observations. Concrete suggestions for achieving these goals are provided.

1 Introduction

In the past 30 years the surface temperature in the Arctic has increased by more than twice the globally averaged increase. In addition, the differential temperature rise has intensified over the same period (Chylek et al., 2022). This phenomenon of the increased warming in the Arctic is know as Arctic amplification, and is attributed to several feedback mechanisms (Wendisch et al., 2017; Goosse et al., 2018). Clouds play a complex role in the context of Arctic amplification. On the one hand, clouds influence other processes and feedback mechanisms driving the rapid changes in the Arctic, such as the ice-albedo feedback (He et al., 2019; Kay et al., 2016). On the other hand, clouds directly impact the atmospheric radiative fluxes.

One measure of the impact of clouds on the radiation budget is the cloud radiative effect (CRE). The macro- and microphysical properties of clouds (e.g., phase, particle shape and size, vertical extent) strongly influence the magnitude of the CRE, as

25 well as the interaction of radiative fluxes with surface properties (e.g., surface albedo, skin temperature). A way to determine
    the CRE is to measure the radiative fluxes below and above the cloud, as it can be done, for example, with tethered balloon
    platforms (Egerer et al., 2019; Lonardi et al., 2022) or aircrafts (Becker et al., 2023) and determine the CRE by comparing the
    different profiles. Here the temporal difference between the measurements due to the ascend or descend time of the platform
    needs to be considered. A more common approach to study the CRE is the utilization of radiative transfer simulations (e.g.,
30 Kay and L'Ecuyer, 2013; Shupe et al., 2015; Ebell et al., 2020; Barrientos-Velasco et al., 2022). Such simulations are based
    on input of cloud properties and provide vertically resolved radiative fluxes for the same period for both cloudy and cloud-free
    conditions. The simulated fluxes can be evaluated, e.g., against surface measurements. By contrasting the cloudy and cloud-free
    scenario, the radiative effect of clouds can be determined.

    Satellite products of radiative fluxes are available for the entire Arctic, and can be compared to radiative transfer simulations,
35 as for example in Kay and L'Ecuyer (2013). The authors found an annual-mean surface net warming effect of clouds over the
    Arctic Ocean between 2000 and 2011 by $10\,\mathrm{W\,m^{-2}}$. Yet, the investigation of small-scale processes need the application of
    models and measurements with a smaller foot print, as ground-based remote-sensing approaches offer. Shupe et al. (2015) and
    Ebell et al. (2020), for instance, each have investigated 2 years of ground-based remote sensing and radiative transfer sim-
    ulations at the land-based sites in Utqiaġvik, USA, and Ny-Ålesund, Svalbard, respectively. Barrientos-Velasco et al. (2022)
40 studied radiative fluxes observed during the Polarstern cruise PS106 (Wendisch et al., 2019) performed in May - July 2017
    in the marginal sea-ice zone, north and north-east of Svalbard, of the Arctic ocean and contrasted them to radiative transfer
    simulations as well as satellite observations. The surface flux differences reported in these studies, averaged over the investi-
    gated period, between simulations and observations were within a range of $\pm 23\,\mathrm{W\,m^{-2}}$ for the solar and $\pm 7\,\mathrm{W\,m^{-2}}$ for the
    terrestrial radiative fluxes. Shupe et al. (2015) reported that the largest biases were found for clear-sky and ice cloud situations.
45 In Ebell et al. (2020) a large difference between the observed and simulated fluxes were found during the summer months,
    which was attributed to clouds missed by the observations. Barrientos-Velasco et al. (2022) reported similar challenges for the
    ground-based observations for low-level mixed-phase clouds and ice clouds.

    The dominant contribution to the Arctic surface CRE is caused by low-level mixed-phase clouds (Shupe and Intrieri, 2004).
    In modelling studies, it has been shown that these clouds can provide a critical contribution to extreme melting events of the
50 Greenland ice sheet (Bennartz et al., 2013) and have increased the surface downward terrestrial radiative fluxes during this event
    by $100\,\mathrm{W\,m^{-2}}$ (Solomon et al., 2017). Additionally, Turner et al. (2007) showed the necessity of an accurate representation of
    low-level liquid-containing clouds with a liquid-water path (LWP) below $0.1\,\mathrm{kg\,m^{-2}}$ in radiative transfer studies. The authors
    used remote sensing and models to highlight the sensitivity of the radiative effect of these clouds to small LWP perturbations
    and the challenge to accurately derive their cloud microphysical properties. Yet, due to their very low altitude, these clouds
55 still pose challenges to state-of-the-art remote-sensing approaches. An Arctic wide quantification of these clouds and their
    radiative effects is still missing. By means of lidar observations performed during the PS106 cruise an occurrence of clouds
    located below an altitude of $165\,\mathrm{m}$, i.e., below the lowest detection range of most remote-sensing techniques, during 25% of
    the observational time was determined (Griesche et al., 2020). Griesche et al. (2020) elaborated that these low-level clouds
    with occurrence heights between around 20 and $150\,\mathrm{m}$ above ground are located in the blind zones of many ground-based,

60 spaceborne and airborne remote-sensing techniques. Hence, their spatial extent was to date not quantifiable. It is likely that they cover large portions of the marginal sea ice zone where humid marine air masses pass over the cold sea ice.

In this manuscript, we will demonstrate the relevance of the low-level clouds on the CRE by means of a selected case study. We propose a method to reduce downward radiative flux biases of low-level stratus clouds (LLS) by evaluating the flux differences between 1-D radiative transfer simulations and observations collected during the PS106 cruise. The simulations

65 were performed with the TROPOS (Leibniz Institute of Tropospheric Research) Cloud and Aerosol Radiative effect Simulator (T-CARS) (Barlakas et al., 2020; Witthuhn et al., 2021; Barrientos-Velasco et al., 2022). Cloud properties derived by the instrument synergy approach Cloudnet (Illingworth et al., 2007; Tukiainen et al., 2020) served as realistic input parameters for the radiative transfer simulations and the surface radiation measurements of the OCEANET-Atmosphere facility (hereafter referred to as OCEANET) as true validation data. Cloudnet combines active and passive remote-sensing observations to derive

70 macro- and microphysical cloud properties. To address the challenges of Arctic clouds, especially the frequent occurrence of optically-thick, low-level clouds, the standard Cloudnet output had to be adjusted. Therefore, new approaches to derive the ice-crystal effective radius ($r_{eff,ice}$) and for the detection of LLS were introduced in Griesche et al. (2020) and were added to the Cloudnet processing chain. While using Cloudnet products in the radiative transfer model led to cases with good agreement between simulated and observed radiative fluxes at the surface during the PS106 cruise, there were other cases

75 where the biases were larger than the radiometer instrumental uncertainties. Here, we quantify the contribution of low-level liquid-containing clouds to the observed differences between simulated and observed surface radiative fluxes. Therefore, an effective improvement of the Cloudnet cloud properties used to simulate radiative fluxes during the PS106 cruise by applying the additional information on LLS clouds presented in Griesche et al. (2020) to T-CARS. These model results are compared to a control simulation without the improved low-level cloud treatment. This approach allows us to determine the surface CRE

80 caused by low-level mixed-phase clouds.

Section 2 gives a brief introduction into the applied observations, the radiative transfer simulations, and the treatment of the low-level stratus clouds is given. In Sect. 3 the resulting surface CRE is presented by means of a case study obtained during the PS106 cruise. First, the detection of liquid clouds and the quantification of their properties is introduced. In a next step, their relevance for the radiative transfer simulations is evaluated. A discussion of the results and general conclusions are given

85 in Sect. 4.

2   Methods

2.1   OCEANET observations

In this study, the required cloud properties were derived based on the instrument synergy approach of Cloudnet. During the PS106 cruise, the mobile remote-sensing supersite OCEANET from TROPOS performed continuous observations of the at-

90 mospheric structure (Griesche et al., 2020). By default, OCEANET is equipped with a multiwavelength Raman lidar Polly[XT] (Engelmann et al., 2016), a microwave radiometer HATPRO (Rose et al., 2005), and broadband pyranometer and pyrgeometer. For the PS106 cruise, OCEANET was complemented for the first time with a cloud radar MIRA-35 (Görsdorf et al., 2015;

Griesche et al., 2020). This data was processed by Cloudnet in order to derive cloud macro- and microphysical properties, such as the liquid-water content (LWC) and the ice-water content (IWC), and the liquid-droplet effective radius ($r_{eff,liq}$), and $r_{eff,ice}$.

2.2 T-CARS simulations

T-CARS is a Python-based environment for simulating vertically resolved broadband radiative fluxes and heating rates for cloudy and cloud-free conditions from the surface to the top of the atmosphere. The radiative transfer simulations were performed by means of the 1-D Rapid Radiative Transfer Model for General Circulation Model applications (RRTMG, Barker et al., 2003; Clough et al., 2005; Mlawer et al., 1997) which has been implemented into T-CARS. For this study, near-surface temperature and pressure measured aboard Polarstern, extrapolated atmospheric properties of humidity, temperature and pressure from the radiosondes launched every 6 hours throughout the whole cruise from Polarstern, and atmospheric trace-gases profiles (i.e., Anderson et al., 1986) were used as input to T-CARS. The input parameter for the surface albedo is based on the collocated data to the ship location of CERES Synoptic 1-degree Ed. 4.1 products (Minnis et al., 2021). Additionally, cloud properties like LWC, IWC, $r_{eff,liq}$, and $r_{eff,ice}$ are necessary to perform the simulations. Here, the cloud properties derived by Cloudnet, based on the remote-sensing observations were applied. The method implemented in this analysis first compares the simulated radiative fluxes with observed values of downward solar (SD) and terrestrial radiative fluxes (TD) and then derives the CRE at the surface, following Barrientos-Velasco et al. (2022). The current study defines the CRE as the difference between an all-sky and a clear-sky atmosphere.

2.3 Improved low-level stratus liquid microphysical properties for radiative transfer simulations

For the realization of reliable radiative transfer simulations, an accurate representation of the atmospheric state in the model is necessary. The nature of Arctic clouds, especially the optically thick, low-altitude clouds, poses challenges on the task to derive the cloud microphysical properties for the entire tropospheric column. Strong lidar signal attenuation inside the LLS makes the continuous application of existing $r_{eff,ice}$ retrievals which apply lidar-radar instrument synergy, as used, e.g., for the DARDAR-CLOUD algorithm (Cazenave et al., 2019), impossible. Hence, $r_{eff,ice}$ was derived based on cloud radar measurements alone, as proposed by Griesche et al. (2020). This method ensures the continuous identification of microphysical properties up to cloud top. The low altitude of the clouds, which was frequently below the lowest range gate of the cloud radar, was addressed using the near-range capabilities of the lidar Polly^{XT}. The near-range channel allowed a cloud detection down to a height of 50 m above the instrument and to adjust the cloud base height accordingly (Griesche et al., 2020).

The liquid phase detection in Cloudnet is based on the lidar attenuated backscatter, but the retrievals for LWC and $r_{eff,liq}$ rely on the cloud radar reflectivity. The cloud radar measurements, however, are limited to altitudes above 165 m above the ground. In addition, in the case of a complete lidar signal attenuation below the lowest cloud radar range gate no liquid phase is identified by Cloudnet in the whole column, as it is the case in Fig. 1 around 05:00 UTC and often between 07:50 – 09:30 UTC. Consequently, no liquid-water cloud microphysical properties were derived. Therefore, the LLS cloud mask was used to identify the presence of a liquid-water cloud below the lowest range gate of the cloud radar. In the case of a detected LLS, the column integrated LWC (hereafter denoted as LWP_{LWC}) was compared to the LWP derived by the MWR HATPRO.
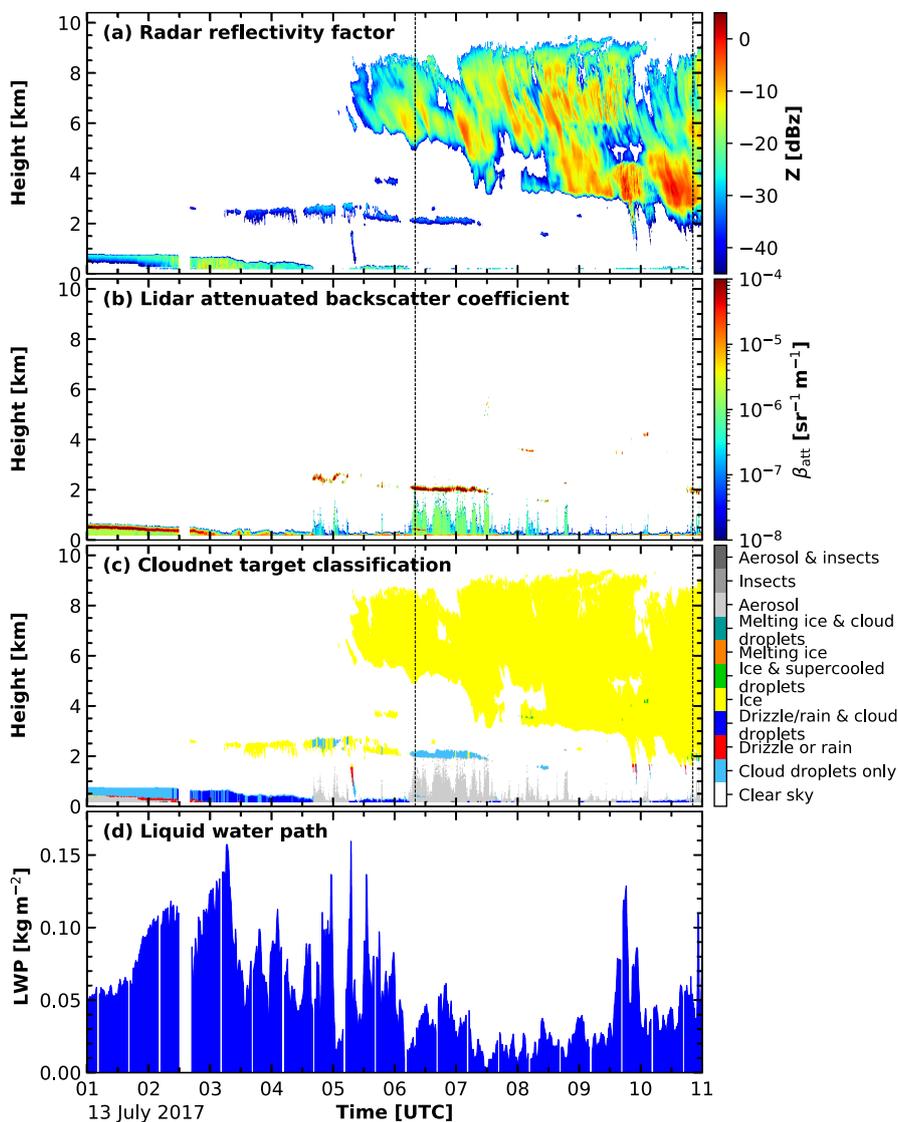
Figure 1. Profiles of cloud radar reflectivity (a), lidar attenuated backscatter (b), and Cloudnet target classification (c) between 0 and 10 km height and LWP (d) for 13 July 2017 01:00 UTC to 11:00 UTC. The two dashed lines mark the time of the radiosonde launches for the profiles shown in Fig. 3 (b) and (c).

The LWC derived by Cloudnet is scaled to the LWP from HATPRO. Hence, both quantities are identical if Cloudnet had identified a liquid-water cloud. If no liquid-water cloud was identified, no LWC was derived by Cloudnet and the values for the HATPRO LWP and LWP_{LWC} differ. Yet, such a strong lidar signal attenuation can only be caused by the presence of a liquid-dominated cloud layer. In this case, $r_{eff,liq}$ was estimated using the difference between the LWP from HATPRO and

130   LWP_{LWC} (denoted as ΔLWP).

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To determine a representative LWP-$r_{\text{eff,liq}}$ relationship, the $r_{\text{eff,liq}}$ product as derived by Cloudnet for surface-coupled low-level stratus clouds during the PS106 cruise was analyzed. Surface-coupled clouds were defined as clouds with a quasi-constant potential temperature θ profile below the liquid-dominated cloud layer, following Gierens et al. (2020). The potential temperature profile was calculated from the temporal closest radiosonde, which were launched every 6 hours. A surface-coupled cloud was identified if the difference between cumulative mean of θ and θ did not exceed 0.5 K between the surface and the liquid-dominated cloud base. In addition, only clouds with a liquid-dominated layer less than 200 m thick were analyzed. In Fig. 2 the resulting distribution of $r_{\text{eff,liq}}$ for LWP between 0 and 0.3 kg m^{-2} is shown. Based on these results, a linear LWP-$r_{\text{eff,liq}}$ relationship for ΔLWP below 0.15 kg m^{-2} was applied and values between 5 and 15 μm were used for $r_{\text{eff,liq}}$. For ΔLWP larger than 0.15 kg m^{-2} a constant $r_{\text{eff,liq}}$ of 15 μm was utilized. Finally, the liquid cloud microphysical properties for the radiative transfer simulations were estimated as follows. For each time step a height-constant $r_{\text{eff,liq}}$ derived by the LWP-$r_{\text{eff,liq}}$ relationship was applied to the layer determined by the LLS identification and the LWC was determined by an adiabatic scaling of ΔLWP inside the LLS boundaries.

3 Results

3.1 Case study: 13 July 2017 - Signal attenuation by LLS

To evaluate the improved procedure for improved CRE retrieval, and to highlight the benefits of the introduced low-level mixed-phase cloud detection and the estimation of the microphysical properties, its application is presented here for a case study from 13 July 2017. In Fig. 1 an overview of the cloud observations between 01:00 UTC and 11:00 UTC is presented. The
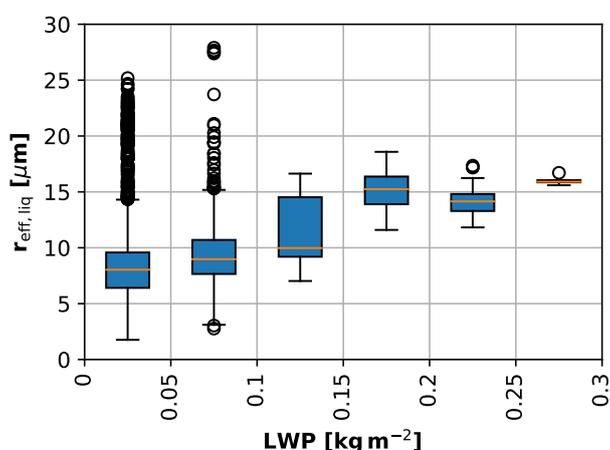
Figure 2. Box plot depicting the $r_{\text{eff,liq}}$ distribution from optically thick surface-coupled low-level clouds during the PS106 cruise, for different LWP. The median value is represented by the orange bar. The blue boxes show the 25 and 75 percentile and the caps mark the minimum and maximum values (circles show outliers).

6

corresponding radiosonde profiles up to 4 km height are given in Fig. 3. Figure 4 shows the derived Cloudnet liquid and ice microphysical products.

150   The period started with a liquid-water-dominated stratus cloud layer, which was located between 0.5 km and 1 km height and slowly descended towards lower altitudes. At the beginning of this period, the layer was thermodynamically decoupled from the surface, as can be seen by the θ profile in Fig. 3 (a). With decreasing cloud base height, this layer became coupled to the surface (Fig. 3 (b)), and precipitation formed after 02:00 UTC. Between 04:30 UTC and 05:30 UTC and after 06:30 UTC the entire cloud layer was below the lowest detection limit of the cloud radar, and hence of Cloudnet, and was therefore
155   not identified by the original classification. Above this layer, at 2.5 km height and between 03:00 UTC and 08:00 UTC an altocumulus cloud was observed. This cloud was only classified as 'mixed-phase' (green) or 'liquid' (blue) when the lidar was able to penetrate this layer. In the case of complete lidar signal attenuation in the layer below, the altocumulus layer was classified as 'ice' cloud (yellow). The missing liquid-water identification is reflected in the Cloudnet products as presented in Fig. 4. After 04:30 UTC LWC (Fig. 4 (a)) and $r_{\mathrm{eff,liq}}$ (Fig. 4 (b)) of the altocumulus layer as well as of the LLS cloud deck was
160   only occasionally determined.

In Fig. 5 (a) the simplified Cloudnet classification mask (above 165 m) combined with the LLS cloud classification mask (below 165 m) is shown. This mask revealed the presence of an LLS cloud almost continuously during the entire period after 02:00 UTC. Only during a short situation of very few or no low clouds from 06:30 UTC to 07:30 UTC no LLS was identified. Figure 5 (b) depicts the LWP derived by HATPRO in blue and the difference ΔLWP which is shown in orange. Two periods with increased ΔLWP can be identified. The first period was observed between 04:30 UTC and 05:30 UTC with ΔLWP up to
165   0.15 kg m^{-2}. During this period the altocumulus layer was present above the LLS at 2.5 km height. Between 07:30 UTC and 11:00 UTC ΔLWP was again elevated, with values between between 0.03 kg m^{-2} and 0.08 kg m^{-2}.

The increased values of ΔLWP verified the presence of liquid-water clouds as already indicated by the LLS mask. These clouds were not identified by the standard Cloudnet classification. Thus, using the standard Cloudnet classification, the radia-
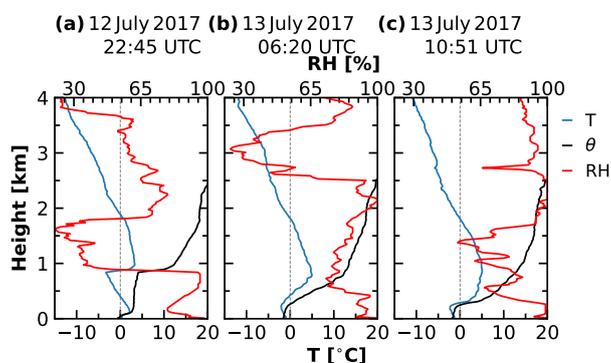
Figure 3. Thermodynamic profiles of temperature (blue), potential temperature (black), and relative humidity (red) up to 4 km height for three radiosonde launches relevant for the analyzed period. The start time and date are given above the respective profiles.
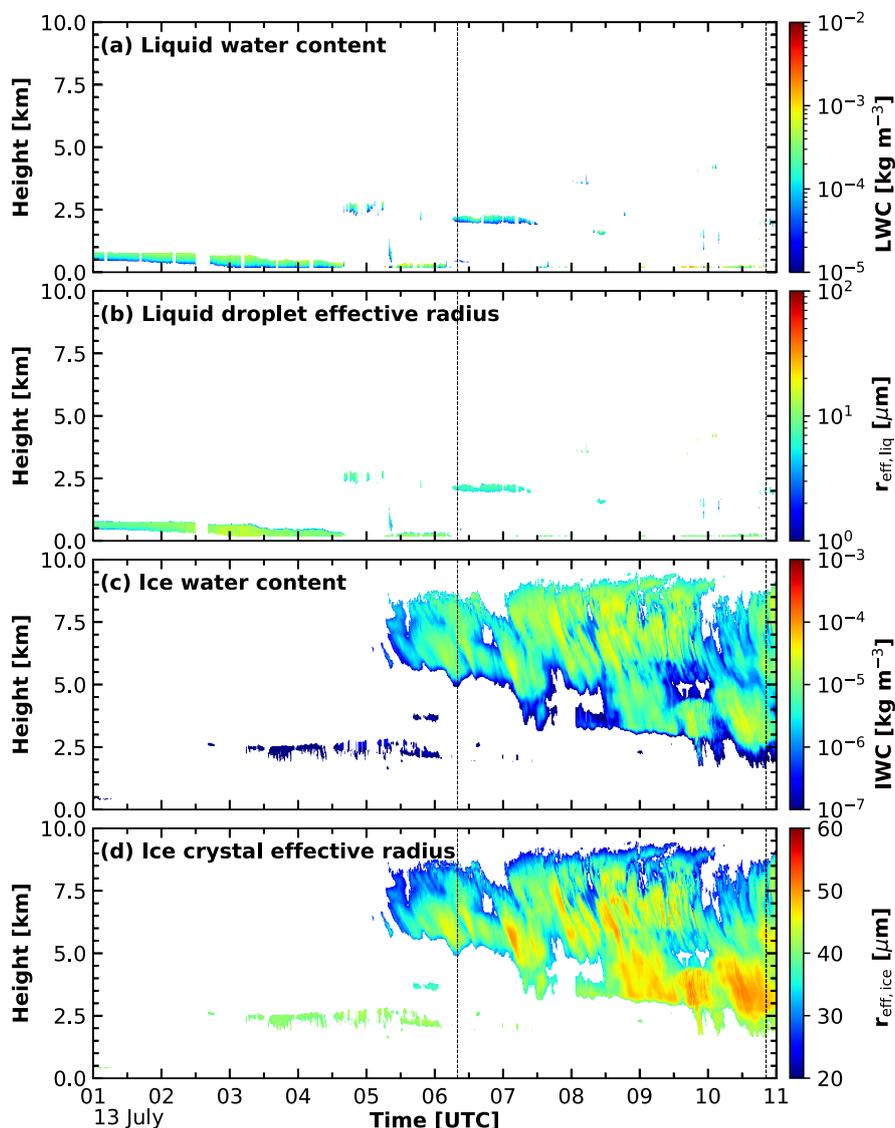
Figure 4. Profiles of microphysical cloud products for the same period as shown in Fig. 1 derived by Cloudnet. Panel (a) shows LWC, (b) $r_{eff,liq}$, (c) IWC, and (d) $r_{eff,ice}$. The two dashed lines mark the radiosonde launches for the profiles shown in Fig. 3 (b) and (c).

tive effect of these clouds would be calculated solely based on their ice macro and microphysical properties, leading to an underestimation of the TD and an overestimation of the SD at the surface. In the following, the effect of incorporating the identified liquid-water clouds into the radiative transfer simulations of T-CARS is evaluated.

Three sets of radiative transfer simulations were performed to investigate the effect of the improved low-level stratus quantification. The control run, applying the default Cloudnet cloud properties. In addition, a radiative simulation using the improved
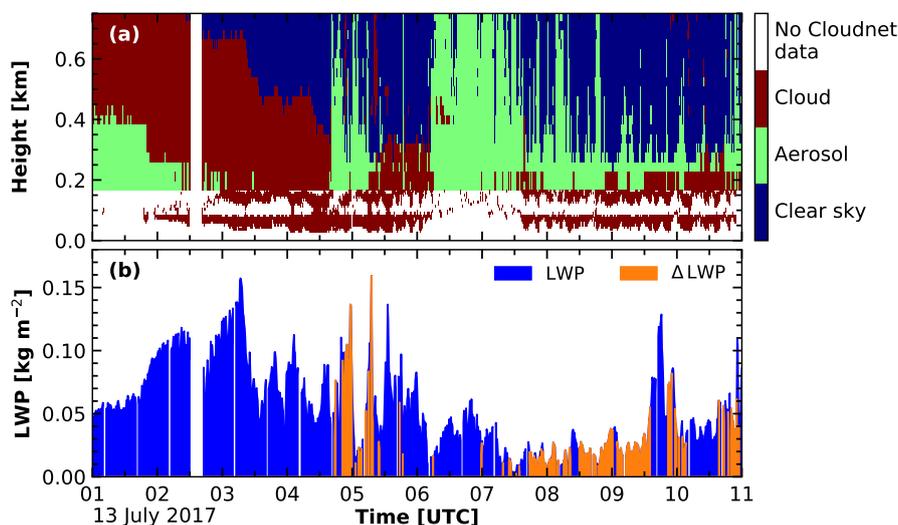
Figure 5. Panel (a) shows the low-level cloud mask for the same period as shown in Fig. 1 derived from the Polly$^{\text{XT}}$ near range signal (below 165 m) combined with a simplified Cloudnet classification mask (above 165 m). All clouds are shown in brown, aerosol in green and clear sky in blue. White areas denote situations where no Cloudnet data is available. In panel (b) LWP determined by the MWR HATPRO is depicted in blue. Additionally, the deviation between LWP derived by HATPRO and by the integration of LWC, ΔLWP, is shown in orange.

175   Cloudnet input based on the approach described in Sect. 2.3 was realized. This simulation, called scaled run, consisted of first identifying missed liquid-water clouds and then deriving their cloud droplet effective radius. Finally, also a simulation assuming clear-sky was performed. The results for SD and TD at the surface are shown in Fig. 6 (a) and (c) (for clarity reasons a running mean of 5 minutes was applied). In green, the radiative fluxes from the scaled run, in dashed blue from the control run, in light blue from the clear-sky simulation, and in orange the measurements are presented. The observed SD in Fig. 6 (a)

180   are on the first order driven by the solar zenith angle and thus follow a diurnal circle. Variations from this distribution can be caused by the presence of clouds, especially liquid-water-containing clouds. Under these cloudy conditions, the SD fluctuated from about 90 W m^{-2} at 01:00 UTC to a maximum of more than 500 W m^{-2} at around 09:10 UTC. The peaks in the SD at approximately 07:20, 09:05 and 10:00 UTC were caused by a broken cloud situation at the horizon during low solar elevation angles, identified by observations of an all-sky camera (not shown). With the appearance of LLS shortly after 04:30 UTC the

185   simulated SD from the control run deviated considerably from the observations. Between 04:30 and 05:30 UTC the simulated SD from the control run reached values above 350 W m^{-2} and were similar to the clear-sky fluxes, while the observations were below 200 W m^{-2}. The derived SD based on the scaled run showed a much better agreement with the observations.

   The observed TD at the surface are driven by the optical thickness of clouds and the temperature of the cloud base, which defines the respective terrestrial emission of the cloud. The stratus cloud that was present below 1 km height almost during the

190   entire period with rather high temperatures of above -5 °C caused the observed TD up to 320 W m^{-2}. Smaller deviations were observed when the LLS cloud deck was broken, at around 05:00 UTC and after 06:00 UTC (see Fig. 6 (c)). The presence of

the stratocumulus at 2.5 km height with roughly the same temperature produced comparable TD. With the disappearance of the stratocumulus and still a broken cloud situation of the LLS deck at 07:30 UTC (see Fig. 1 (e)) TD was reduced to 285 W m^{-2}. Same as for the SD, a clear improvement of the simulated TD using the scaled run can be seen.

195   In Fig. 6 (b) and (d) the histogram of the differences in the SD and TD (simulations minus measurements) for the scaled run (green) and the control run (blue) are shown. Good performances of T-CARS based on the default Cloudnet classification
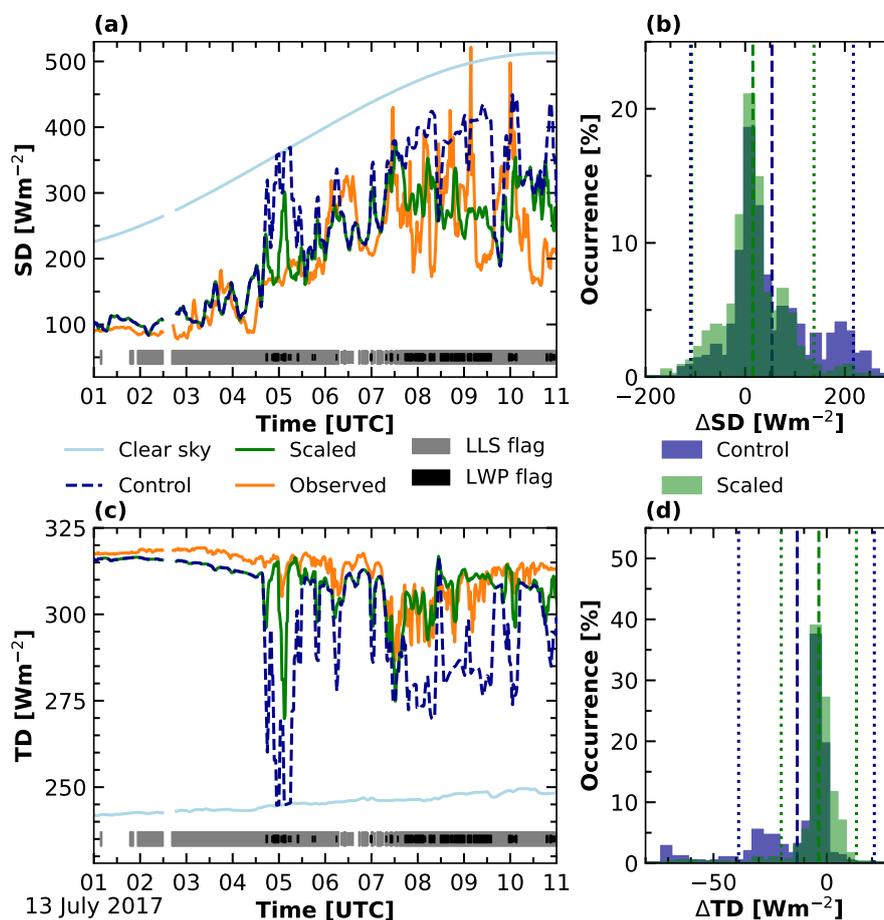
Figure 6. Results of the T-CARS simulations for the downward solar (SD) (a) and terrestrial radiative fluxes (TD) (c) at the surface for the same period as shown in Fig. 1. In blue, the radiative fluxes derived for the control run and in green for the scaled run are shown together with the respective measured values from the OCEANET pyranometer or pyrgeometer in orange. In light blue, the clear sky results from the T-CARS simulations are depicted. Additionally, the occurrence of LLS clouds is indicated by the gray LLS flag at the bottom of panels (a) and (c). The black LWP flag indicates periods with ΔLWP > 0.05 kg m^{-2}. A histogram of the respective differences (simulations minus observations) is given in panels (b) and (d). The dashed lines in (b) and (d) depict the corresponding mean values and the dotted lines show the two-σ standard deviation. The gap at 02:40 UTC is due to missing Cloudnet data.

mask applied in the control run were derived during situations when liquid-water was identified inside the clouds, e.g., until 04:30 UTC. After 04:30 UTC the differences between the measurements and the control run were up to $+200\,\mathrm{W\,m^{-2}}$ for the SD and $-75\,\mathrm{W\,m^{-2}}$ for the TD during periods when Cloudnet failed to identify liquid and classified the clouds as pure ice. The

200   mean downward flux difference and the respective standard deviation for the control run during the complete period analyzed was $(54\pm82)\,\mathrm{W\,m^{-2}}$ for SD and $(-13\pm17)\,\mathrm{W\,m^{-2}}$ for TD (blue dotted and dashed lines in Fig 6 (b) and (d), respectively) suggesting an underestimation of the opacity of the simulated cloud. As already indicated by the time series, applying the approach with a more realistic LLS representation used in the scaled run, the average differences were much smaller. In this case, the mean downward flux difference and the standard deviation for SD was $(15\pm61)\,\mathrm{W\,m^{-2}}$, and for TD $(-3\pm8)\,\mathrm{W\,m^{-2}}$

205   (green dashed and dotted lines in Fig 6 (b) and (d), respectively).

The resulting CRE at the surface can be derived based on the upwelling and downwelling radiative fluxes from the T-CARS simulations for all-sky and clear-sky conditions. Figure 7 (a) shows the net surface CRE for the scaled run in green and for the control run in dashed-blue. Diurnal variations are one of the main drivers of the atmospheric CRE during the presented period. At the beginning of the period, a slightly positive CRE was found due to the lower solar elevation angle, which turned

210   negative at around 01:30 UTC. However, the deviations based on the adjustments in the cloud classification as already apparent in Fig. 6 (a) and (c) propagate and arise also in the net atmospheric CRE. The resulting differences in the determined CRE, control run minus scaled run, are shown in Fig. 7 (b). Differences between the results based on the two approaches of up to $90\,\mathrm{W\,m^{-2}}$ were calculated, e.g., around 10:00 and 11:00 UTC. On average, the CRE based on the control run was $-22\,\mathrm{W\,m^{-2}}$, and the CRE based on the scaled run was $-65\,\mathrm{W\,m^{-2}}$ during the presented period. Hence, when applying the adjusted Cloudnet

215   classification scheme compared to the default one, the net surface CRE decreased on average by $43\,\mathrm{W\,m^{-2}}$, as the cooling effect induced by the clouds in the solar range dominated over the cloud terrestrial warming in this situation.

4   Discussion and conclusion

The presented case study shows the potential of obtaining more realistic radiative fluxes by using an improved liquid-water cloud detection in the input to the radiative transfer simulations. In case of a failed liquid-cloud detection, large discrepancies

220   between the simulated and observed radiative fluxes were observed. As reason for a such a failed cloud detection, the complete attenuation of the lidar signal at height levels below the lowest detected range gate of the cloud radar (i.e., 165 meters) was identified. Clouds at such low altitudes are frequently observed in the high Arctic but are less common in lower latitudes. The properties of these clouds are subject to boundary-layer processes (Griesche et al., 2021; Yu et al., 2019), and their presence is critical to atmospheric stability (Sedlar, 2014), surface conditions (Solomon et al., 2017), as well as large-scale processes

225   (Huang et al., 2021). Only a few ship-based studies have been performed in the Arctic Ocean with the ability to continuously derive height-resolved cloud microphysical properties, i.e., were equipped with a collocated cloud radar and lidar. The instrument limitations presented in this manuscript apply also to satellite and airborne observations (Mech et al., 2019; Mioche et al., 2015; Papakonstantinou-Presvelou et al., 2022) and were an issue that was also reported in previous ground-based remote-sensing studies. So far, no qualitative assessment of the microphysical properties of these low-level clouds has been conducted.
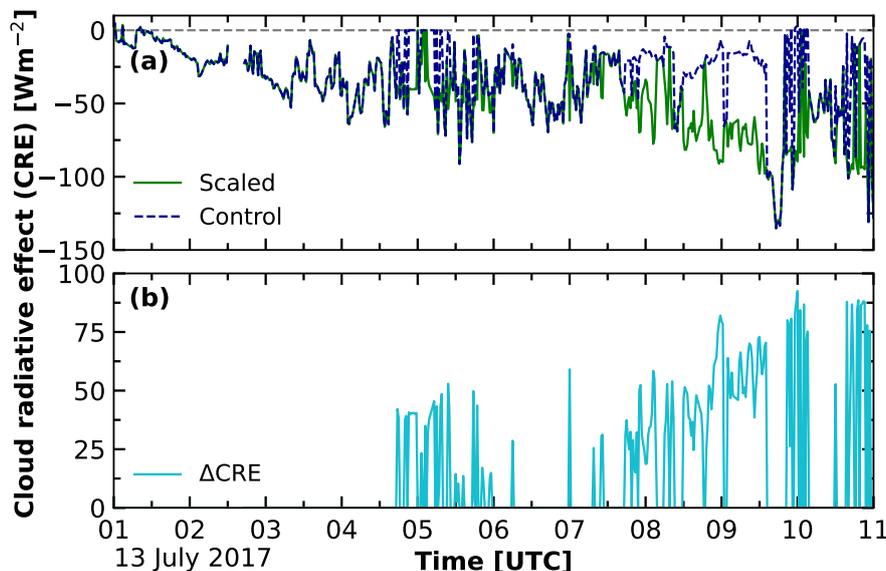
Figure 7. Time series of net surface CRE derived by T-CARS for the same period as shown in Fig. 1. In panel (a) the CRE derived based on the original Cloudnet classification applied in the control run (dashed blue) and the adjusted approach used in the scaled run (green) are depicted. In panel (b) the respective difference (control minus scaled) is shown.

230   Low-level clouds in the Arctic have been observed during the aircraft campaign ACLOUD (Arctic CLoud Observations Using airborne measurements during polar Day, Wendisch et al., 2019) which was performed simultaneously to the first month of the PS106 cruise (Mech et al., 2019). Even though, also limited to clouds above 150 m, during ACLOUD a peak of low-level clouds just above the lowest detection range of the applied cloud radar was observed. Shupe et al. (2005) reported for the year-long Arctic ice drift SHEBA (Surface Heat Budget of the Arctic Ocean, Uttal et al., 2002) performed in 1997 and 1998

235   that the lowest detectable cloud base was at 105 m. For similar, but shorter campaigns, as the Arctic Summer Cloud Ocean Study (ASCOS, Tjernström et al., 2014) and the Arctic Ocean expedition (AO2018, Vüllers et al., 2021) performed in 2008 and 2018, respectively, the lowest detected range gate was around 150 m, with no height resolved microphysical properties derived for clouds below that height (Shupe et al., 2013; Vüllers et al., 2021). During the ACSE (Arctic Clouds in Summer Experiment, Tjernström et al., 2015) campaign conducted in 2014, a cloud radar was operated, which had its lowest range

240   gate at 80 m and maximum height of 5980 m (Achtert et al., 2020). Based on the measurements taken during this campaign Cloudnet had identified an unusual high frequency of aerosol and insect occurrence (for the Arctic), despite the rather low cloud radar detection limit. This has been attributed to missing cloud identification (Achtert et al., 2020). To account for these miss classifications the occurrence of fog was identified by an in-situ visibility sensor on the ship.

    A key challenge encountered in this study is the complete lidar signal attenuation just above the surface and the resulting

245   failed liquid-water detection. One potential solution would be the application of a cloud radar multipeak analysis as proposed, e.g., by Radenz et al. (2019) (peakTree), or the application of artificial neural networks (Kalesse-Los et al., 2022; Schimmel

et al., 2022). These techniques, however, make use of cloud radar measurements, and are therefore only applicable for higher-reaching clouds. For low-level clouds with a cloud top below the lowest range gate of the cloud radar these radar-based approaches are of limited use. Single-layer LLS, i.e., LLS without another cloud layer above 165 m, have been observed for

250   about 5 % of the entire PS106 cruise, and with daily maximum occurrence up to 40 % (Griesche et al., 2020). Together with overlaying clouds, LLS have been observed for 25 % of the cruise. The horizontal visibility sensor aboard Polarstern frequently missed these clouds as well, because the LLS base was frequently too high. Hence, the Polly^{XT} near-field capabilities turned out to be crucial to detect these low-level clouds.

Besides the detection of the LLS, also the determination of the cloud microphysics for these clouds poses a challenge.

255   Approaches for LWC and $r_{eff,liq}$, as they are, for example, implemented in Cloudnet, often rely on cloud radar reflectivity (e.g., Frisch et al., 2002; O'Connor et al., 2005). Additional approaches using lidar Raman dual-field-of-view capabilities exist meanwhile (Jimenez et al., 2020, this technique did not yet exist for the PS106 cruise). However, to apply these techniques a complete overlap between the laser pulse footprint and the receiving field-of-view is mandatory. Thus, these methods are not applicable for the low-level clouds. Approaches based on active remote sensing from satellites, as for example the DARDAR-

260   CLOUD algorithm (Cazenave et al., 2019), or aircrafts, such as the observations from Ehrlich et al. (2019), suffer from ground clutter in the lower altitudes and hence also struggle to observe the low-level clouds (Mioche et al., 2015). Passive satellite products, such as the SYN1deg from Clouds and the Earth's Radiant Energy System (CERES) often have significant error in their retrieved parameters and the vertical structure of multilayer cloud conditions (Rutan et al., 2015; Minnis et al., 2019).

Hence, in here the liquid-water cloud microphysical properties were derived by an effective analysis of the LWP for surface-

265   coupled, single-layer liquid clouds and a statistical analysis of $r_{eff,liq}$ determined during the PS106 cruise. The calculated values of the radiative fluxes suggest that by applying the adjusted method radiative closure is determined for the analyzed period. The mean flux differences (SD: 15 W m^{-2}, TD: -3 W m^{-2}) were below the instrumental uncertainties (i.e., $\pm$20 W m^{-2} pyranometer (SD) and $\pm$10 W m^{-2} for pyrgeometer (TD), (Lanconelli et al., 2011)). Due to the short period analyzed, the presented case can not be seen as representative for the Arctic other than for the specific time and location. The results still fit

270   into previous studies on the broader picture of the CRE in the Arctic, as for example reported by Shupe et al. (2015), Ebell et al. (2020) and Barrientos-Velasco et al. (2022).

The presented findings demonstrate that a detailed characterization of the low-level clouds can significantly improve the quality of radiative transfer simulations. In the standard configuration of processing schemes for cloud microphysical products, such as Cloudnet, these low-level clouds are often underrepresented. Unless otherwise considered, this lack of low-level clouds

275   eventually leads to large differences in the calculated CRE. A difference in the derived surface CRE of up to 90 W m^{-2} was calculated in the presented case study, when these low-level clouds were considered in T-CARS input compared to the application of the standard Cloudnet products. Comparing the control and the scaled simulation, a positive contribution of the low-level liquid-containing cloud to the surface net CRE of 43 W m^{-2} was found. The results underlines the findings of previous radiative studies, which have shown that low-level clouds are of great importance for the Arctic radiation budget. An

280   accurate representation of these clouds in radiative simulations is hence a prerequisite for the understanding of a piece of the puzzle of Arctic amplification. The presented case also highlights the importance for accurate radiative flux measurements.

The approach to consider the missed liquid-containing clouds in the radiative transfer simulations by constant values of the droplet effective radius already reduced the mean difference between the modeled and measured radiative fluxes below the measurement uncertainty.

285   To challenge the remaining deviations of the observed and simulated radiative fluxes, future studies should, for example, also consider the spatial cloud homogeneity. Especially when analyzing mobile observations in the Arctic, where the complexity among the interaction of variable low sun angles, multiple reflections due to cloud inhomogeneities and variable surface conditions (i.e., open ocean, marginal ice zone, ice surfaces) increases. Therefore, extending the analysis to improve the understanding of 3-D radiative effects is also recommended. The difference between 3-D and 1-D simulations has been assessed

290   by, e.g., Barker et al. (2012). In their study, the authors compared the results of the two different simulations based on satellite cloud observations. Incorporating 3-D effects into radiative transfer simulations, they found differences for the solar surface radiative fluxes of up to $30 \, \mathrm{W \, m^{-2}}$, compared to simulations which only apply 1-D effects. Additionally, ground-based remote sensing is frequently performed in a vertical or almost vertical direction. Hence, the divergence of the viewing angle of ground-based remote-sensing instruments and the solar zenith angle can cause differences in the cloud properties applied in

295   the radiative transfer simulations and the cloud situation influencing the measured radiative fluxes. Accordingly, 3-D scanning remote sensing with lidar and radar can be expected to provide improvements in both, the detection of cloud inhomogeneities as well as in the detection of LLS.

In conclusion, the following key statements from our study remain. As we showed in a literature review, the abundance and properties of the lowest-level Arctic clouds at heights between just above the surface and about $150 \, \mathrm{m}$ is still unknown. Main

300   reason for this gap is, that current remote-sensing techniques, or their implementation, prohibit the characterization of these clouds. When such clouds are missed from the analysis, considerable biases in the determination of CRE occur. During the summer months over the marginal sea ice zone, such clouds were, e.g., found to be present during 25% of the observation time. LWP-thresholding and incorporation of optimized near-range lidar data are promising approaches to enable a thorough representation of LLS. Further improvement can be expected by using enhanced observational capabilities such as scanning

305   radar or lidar, as well as by a transition from 1-D to 3-D radiative transfer modeling for capturing cloud inhomogeneities.

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