Anonymous Referee #1

General comments:

- ***The significance as addressed by "Impact of topography on black carbon transport to the southern Tibetan Plateau during pre-monsoon season and its climatic implication" is backed here. Understanding the sources and transport of aerosols becomes a hot topic in regional environmental studies because of their serious influence on the environment, climate, and (more vitally, human health). This could be very interesting and important coming to the Tibetan Plateau, an elevated region with relative few human activities which seems to be isolated from the world, considering its role in global atmospheric circulations and water resources feeding billions of people. Simulating the transport is one of the most powerful approaches, but becomes very challenging to this region due to the complex topography. However, I concern about the quality in science as well as presentation, as explained below.***

We thank the reviewer for the detailed and constructive comments. They are very helpful for improving the quality of the manuscript.

In the revised manuscript, we added a few new figures in the supporting material to support some statements in the text and to address the review comments. The main text is revised substantially. Specifically, upon the comments provided by the reviewers, we realized that the comparison of the simulations at 20 km and 4 km resolutions may complicate the analysis and deviate the readers from the focus of this study about the impacts of topography. Although our results show that the difference between the simulations at two resolutions is largely contributed by the impacts of different topography, we agree that the resolution itself can introduce difference in simulated results in many aspects. Therefore, now the manuscript is revised to focus on the analysis of the difference between the two experiments at 4 km with different topography representations. Some discussions about the related work are added. A lot more details about the experiment design are added. Other text and figures have also been revised as the reviewer suggested.

- ***Of firstly questioned about the scientific quality is the application of nudging, which dumps the physics of model leading to energy unbalanced. As the authors intended to investigate the impact of topography, the experiments should then be precisely controlled as the difference comes from the representation of topography. Obviously, the nudging violates the control, bringing varying information from the forcing reanalysis data. This means that the difference between simulations may also be contributed by, in addition to resolutions, the reanalysis data via nudging.***

The nudging method was widely used for studying the regional and small-scale feature. We intend to have the large-scale circulation reasonably simulated and focus on the small-scale feature that could be significantly affected by the complex topography. Therefore, we applied the spectral nudging over the outer domain covering a relatively large region and above the PBL. For the inner domain, the nudging was not applied. Now, the manuscript is revised to focus on the analysis of the difference between two nested 4-km experiments over the inner domain, which should not be affected by the nudging. Now it is clarified in the revised manuscript as "The modeled u and v component wind, atmospheric temperature, and geopotential height over the outer domain are nudged towards the reanalysis data with a nudging timescale of 6 h following previous studies (e.g., Stauffer and Seaman, 1990; Seaman et al., 1995; Liu et al., 2012; Zhao et al., 2014; Karki et al., 2017; Hu et al., 2016, 2020). Spectral nudging method is applied to balance the performance of simulation at the large and small scales (Liu et al., 2012), and only to the layers above the planetary boundary layer (PBL) with nudging coefficients of 3×10^{-4} s^{-1}. A wave number of three is selected for both south-north and west-east directions. Please note that the choices of nudging coefficients and wave numbers for spectral nudging in this study are empirical. The purpose of nudging is to simulate reasonably large-scale feature so that small-scale impacts from the complex topography can be focused. Therefore, the modeling sensitivity to these choices is not tested in this study. The results show that the simulations with nudging method can reproduce the large-scale circulation at 700 hPa and higher over the outer domain compared to the reanalysis dataset with the spatial correlation coefficient of 0.96-0.98."

- ***Of second questioned is the conclusion from their results; it is unclear that if it is because of the more valleys resolved, though the 4-km simulation yields larger BC flux which is somehow associated with the valleys resolved by the 4-km resolution (NOTE: not the valleys resolved by 20-km). Fine resolution may result to more valleys, but these valleys meanwhile become small and irregular shaped. Moreover, complex terrain tends to yield weak near-surface wind speed due to the stronger orographic drag in both forms of gravity wave and turbulence.***

We agree that the complex topography could increase the surface roughness and reduce the near-surface wind speed. However, our simulations show evident increase of lower-level wind in some valleys resolved across the Himalayas with more complex topography. This is consistent with previous studies based on observations and numerical simulations that found the role of valley channel could increase the wind through the valley over the Himalayas region (e.g., Egger et al., 2000; Zängl et al., 2001; Carrera et al., 2009; Karki et al., 2017; Lin et al., 2018). Obviously, the enhancement function of channel overcomes its impact on surface roughness at some valleys. Now we clarify it in the revised manuscript as "The enhanced valley wind across the Himalayas has also been found by previous studies with observations and numerical simulations (Egger et al., 2000; Zängl et al., 2001; Carrera et al., 2009; Karki et al., 2017; Lin et al., 2018)."

In addition, now, we attribute the difference between the simulations with different topography to a few influential factors. The enhanced valley wind is one of them. The other primary two are resolved deeper channel and induced change of small-scale circulation. Now, the discussion is added in the revised manuscript as "One reason for the enhanced transport across the Himalayas with the original topography is the resolved deeper valleys that lead to the increased valley wind. The wind across the valleys can be significantly larger with the original topography than the smooth one (Fig. S4). The enhanced valley wind across the Himalayas has also been found by previous studies with observations and numerical simulations (Egger et al., 2000; Zängl et al., 2001; Carrera et al., 2009; Karki et al., 2017; Lin et al., 2018). The second impact of resolved complex topography on the BC transport is that more BC masses can be transported with the deeper valley channels (Fig. S5a, b). With deeper valley, the column of high-concentration BC is deeper. Even with similar wind velocity, the transport flux can be larger. The third impact is through changing the small-scale circulations around the Himalayas due to the increase of topography complexity of Himalayas. The simulation with original topography produces more near-surface winds following the direction towards the TP compared to the one with smooth topography (Fig. S6), which favors the BC transport across the Himalayas. Lastly, the simulated PBL heights from the two experiments are a little different (Fig. 9), which may also contribute partly to the different transport flux. The sensitivity of PBL height and structure to topography complexity that can result in different surface heat has been studied before (e.g., Wagner et al., 2014)."

- ***Of third questioned is that some regional modeling studies (not CHEM-focused) over this region were ignored by the authors, but these studies are close related to the concerned topic. These studies generally found that fine-resolution simulations yield weaker surface wind speed compared to coarse-resolution, which is opposite to this study. This deserves a further check or discussion.***

As we respond to your comment above, we agree that the complex topography could increase the surface roughness and reduce the near-surface wind speed. However, the increase of lower-level wind in some valleys resolved across the Himalayas is consistent with previous studies based on observations and numerical simulations (e.g., Egger et al., 2000; Zängl et al., 2001; Carrera et al., 2009; Karki et al., 2017; Lin et al., 2018). Now we clarify it in the revised manuscript as "The enhanced valley wind across the Himalayas has also been found by previous studies with observations and numerical simulations (Egger et al., 2000; Zängl et al., 2001; Carrera et al., 2009; Karki et al., 2017; Lin et al., 2018)."

In the revised manuscript, we also cite more related references focusing on the meteorological fields over the region and discuss about them, as "Previous studies also found the induced change of circulation and transport due to the complex topography at convection-permitting scales with the focus on the meteorological fields (e.g., Karki et al., 2017; Lin et al., 2018). However, most of them conducted the sub-10 km simulations over a much smaller region (e.g., 101×96 grids at 5 km in Karki et al., 2017, and 181×121 grids at 2 km in Lin et al., 2018) compared to this study (400×300 grids at 4km). Karki et al. (2017) found that the complex topography resolving more valleys and mountain ridges yielded more realistic strong and narrower winds and also small-scale mountain-valley circulations over the Himalayas region compared to the smoother topography. Lin et al. (2018) analyzed the simulations over the region situated in the central Himalayas (87°E-89°E) with very complex terrain including several high mountains and low valleys, e.g., Mt. Everest, Mt. Kanchenjunga, and the Yadong Valley. Although Lin et al. (2018) simulated enhanced moisture flux along the valley, the overall moisture transported was lower with the complex topography (10 km resolution) compared to that with the smooth topography (30 km resolution). The difference between their study and this study could be due to several factors. First, Lin et al. (2018) focused on a relatively small region of Himalayas (87°E-89°E) compared to that in this study (75°E-92°E). The lower-lever transport flux simulated in this study also exhibits weaker wind with complex topography between 87°E and 89°E (Fig. 9 and 12), maybe due to several very high mountains such as Mt. Everest and Mt. Kanchenjunga over this area. Second, the spatial (horizontal and vertical) distributions between air pollutants and moisture are also different and may contribute partly to the different impacts of topography on the overall transport flux across the Himalayas."

- ***Of final questioned is the balance between their short-period simulations (focusing on a special case) and their climatic implication.***

Yes, we agree that the short-period simulation cannot be used to access the climate impact. That's why we didn't discuss much about climatic impact in the manuscript. Instead, we estimate the impacts on radiative forcing in the atmosphere and snow. This study focuses on raising the potential issue of using smooth topography on modeling BC transport and radiative forcing over the TP, and can be treated as the implication for future study about climatic impact with high-resolution simulations. As we acknowledged in the manuscript that long-term climatic impact deserves further investigation.

"Since this study only demonstrates the potential impacts for a relatively short period, a longer-term study should be conducted to examine the impacts of topography on aerosol climatic effect over the TP."

"These potential impacts of aerosols on regional hydro-climate around the TP and over Asia using high-resolution model that can resolve the complex topography of Himalayas and TP deserve further investigation."

- ***With regards to the presentation quality, there are too many stuffs (especially in sections of Introduction and Methodology) that are not directly related to the main topic presented but some vital information missing. The latter is fatal because it led to the lack of reasonability of their design of the model experiment. In particular, I would not to say that the authors presented Methodology correctly, which is expected to state how to deal with the question argued in the Introduction and why the approach(es) can be appropriate to resolve the question. To be more detailed, I found no text addressed why the authors chose WRF-CHEM, why did nudging, why***

selected those parametrization schemes, and how these approaches are related to their goal (to answer how the representation of topography impacts on simulation of BC transport).

A lot more details about the experiment design are added into the Introduction and Methodology sections in the revised manuscript, particularly responding to the comments here about the reason to choose the model and parameterizations. For example,

"In order to examine the potential impacts of complex topography on pollutant transport across the Himalayas over the TP, this study conducts multiple experiments with the Weather Research and Forecasting Model coupled with chemistry (WRF-Chem, Grell et al., 2005; Skamarock et al., 2008). The WRF-Chem model is selected because it includes the interaction between meteorology and aerosol and is widely used for regional modeling of aerosol and its climatic impact (e.g., Cao et al., 2010; Zhao et al., 2010, 2011, 2012, 2014; Wu et al., 2013; Gao et al., 2014; Huang et al., 2015; Fan et al., 2015; Feng et al., 2016; Zhong et al., 2017; Sarangi et al., 2019; Liu et al., 2020). The model has also been used to investigate the aerosol transport and climatic impact over the Himalayas region (e.g., Feng et al., 2016; Cao et al., 2010; Sarangi et al., 2019). The model is suitable for simulations at hydrostatic and non-hydrostatic scales and thus can be used for investigating the impacts of resolution-dependent feature, such as topography, on modeling results. In particular, the meteorological part of the model (WRF) has been systematically evaluated and used to investigate the impacts of resolutions on simulations of moisture transport and climate over the Himalayas region (e.g., Shi et al., 2008; Karki et al., 2017; Lin et al., 2018). All of these previous studies with the model lay the foundation for this modeling study."

"The goal of this study is to investigate the impacts of different representations of topography on the transport of BC across the Himalayas. Therefore, besides this control experiment, one sensitivity experiment is also conducted with the same configuration as the control one except that the topography of the inner domain at 4 km resolution is prescribed to follow that at 20 km resolution similar as previous studies (e.g., Shi et al., 2008; Wu et al., 2012; Lin et al., 2018). More specifically, the sensitivity experiment applies a single value for each nested 5×5 grids over the inner domain as the corresponding grid of 20 km from the outer domain. The two experiments are referred to the simulations with original and smooth topography, respectively, hereafter."

"The difference of results from the two experiments over the inner domain is analyzed as the impacts of topography representations. Therefore, all the results shown below are from the simulations of the inner domain at 4 km resolution with different topography if not otherwise stated."

"The detailed configuration of WRF-Chem experiments is summarized in Table 1. Due to the lack of publicly available in-situ observations, this study does not tend to evaluate systematically the simulated meteorological fields over the Himalayas region. However, as shown in Table 1, the choice of physical parameterizations in this study follows that of one previous study (Karki et al., 2017) that evaluated systematically the WRF simulation for one entire year over the Himalayas region. Their results showed that the WRF simulation at convection-permitting scale could generally capture the essential features of meteorological fields such as precipitation, temperature, and wind over the Himalayas region. Therefore, the WRF-Chem simulations in this study are reliable to investigate the impacts of topography over the Himalayas region."

- ***Moreover, descriptions of some analyses were also missing: 1) how the flux was calculated? based on model levels or interpolated pressure levels? 2) If it is the latter, how the influence of interpolation was considered? 3) Have the u and v been rotated? 4) How was the difference between different resolutions (grid spacing) calculated? regrided? and how? 5) and so on.***

Now the analysis focuses on the two experiments at 4 km with different topography, therefore, the interpolation between the resolutions is not needed. A lot more details about the analysis method are added into the Methodology and Result sections in the revised manuscript, particularly responding to the comments here about the flux calculation. For example,

"The transport flux is calculated by projecting the wind field perpendicularly to the cross line and then multiplying the BC mass concentration along the cross line. More specifically, the transport flux are calculated as following:

$$\mathrm{TF} = C * (u * \sin\alpha + v * \sin\beta) \quad (1)$$

Where α is the angle between east-west wind component and the cross line, β is the angle between south-north wind component and the cross line, and C is the BC mass concentration at the grid along the cross line. The flux is estimated at each model level. Positive values represent the transport towards the TP, while negative values represent the transport away from the TP."

"The total mass flux is calculated by integrating the right-hand term of equation (1) as following:

$$\mathrm{ITF} = \int_{z=z_{sfc}}^{z=z_{top}} \delta z * C * (u * \sin\alpha + v * \sin\beta) \quad (2)$$

Where δz is the thickness of each vertical model level. Similarly, positive values represent the transport towards the TP, while negative values represent the transport away from the TP."

- ***The language may also required to be polished by a native speaker. The problem is not much with the grammar but the lack of logic in the context, which could be due to inappropriate usage of some words.***

Thanks for your suggestion. The language is polished in the revised manuscript.

Specific comments:

- ***Section 2.1.1: Most of the model description are not related to and cannot assist to resolve the main issue. However, specific description of some diagnosis used in the analyses were not presented.***

Thanks for your suggestion. Now this part of the manuscript is revised substantially.

- ***L199-200: Does the model use z vertical coordination as revealed by fig2?***

The WRF simulations conducted in this study used the terrain following coordinate (Skamarock et al., 2008). We showed an average vertical distribution of model layer thickness over a region selected within the simulation domain in Fig. 2. Now we clarify this in the revised manuscript as "The WRF simulations conducted in this study use the terrain following coordinate (Skamarock et al., 2008). To resolve the vertical structure of transport across the Himalayas, the simulations are configured with 54 vertical layers and denser layers near the surface. For example, averaged over a region (26N-28°N, 76E-80°E) near the southern Himalayas, there are about 17 layers below 2 km above the ground (Fig. 2)."

- ***L205-207: Why 'probability distribution'(actually not pdf but normalized histogram as presented by Fig S1) to reveal the difference in topography?***

This figure is used to demonstrate better the difference between two topography over the Himalayas mountainous region. The similar figure was also used in previous studies, for example, Rhoades et al. (2018).

- ***L208-209: Why the simulation period and analysis period?***

In fact, we included the reason in the introduction section as "The simulations are conducted for April 2016 in pre-monsoon season, because South Asia is seriously polluted during this period and the pollutants transported to the TP during the period may have significant impacts on Asian monsoon system (e.g., Lau et al., 2006a, b; Ding et al., 2009; Kuhlmann and Quaas, 2010; Qian et al., 2011, 2015). In addition, the observed concentration of BC at the observation station besides Mt. Everest shows an evident pollution episode from April 5th to 16th of 2016, deserving the investigation of the transport mechanisms."

Now, we clarify the sentences in the Methodology part of revised manuscript as "The simulations are conducted for March 29th-April 20 of 2016 for the reason as discussed in the introduction. The results of April 1th-20th are analyzed for the observed pollution episode to allow a few days spin-up for chemical initial condition."

- ***L210-211: ECMWF has many products of reanalysis data; which?***

We use the ERA-Interim product. Now it is clarified in the revised manuscript as "The meteorological initial and lateral boundary conditions are derived from the European

Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts (ECMWF) reanalysis data at 0.5°×0.66° horizontal resolution and 6 h temporal intervals (ERA-Interim dataset)."

- ***L212: Why u, v, T but not PHI?***

We selected these variables for nudging to make sure the large-scale feature can be simulated reasonably following previous studies (e.g., Liu et al., 2012; Zhao et al., 2014; Karki et al., 2017; Hu et al., 2016, 2020). We did nudge geopotential height as well during the simulations. We correct this in the revised manuscript.

- ***L213-214: Citation here refers to?***

The citations here refer to the details about describing the nudging method in the model and also some previous related studies. Now the sentence is revised as "The modeled u and v component wind, atmospheric temperature, and geopotential height over the outer domain are nudged towards the reanalysis data with a nudging timescale of 6 h following previous studies (e.g., Stauffer and Seaman, 1990; Seaman et al., 1995; Liu et al., 2012; Zhao et al., 2014; Karki et al., 2017; Hu et al., 2016, 2020)."

- ***L216: Identical wave number for both domains? If so, why?***

The choice of wave number is empirical. The purpose of this study is not to investigate the modeling sensitivity to this parameter. However, we checked that the simulated large-scale circulations at 700 hPa and above over the outer domain are consistent with the reanalysis dataset with the spatial coefficients of ~0.98. Now we add the clarification in the revised manuscript as "Please note that the choices of nudging coefficients and wave numbers for spectral nudging in this study are empirical. The purpose of nudging is to simulate reasonably large-scale feature so that small-scale impacts from the complex topography can be focused. Therefore, the modeling sensitivity to these choices is not tested in this study. The results show that the simulations with nudging method can reproduce the large-scale circulation at 700 hPa and higher over the outer domain compared to the reanalysis dataset with the spatial correlation coefficient of 0.96-0.98."

- ***L221-227: Simulation period is 2016 but the quasi-global simulation that provide chemical initial and boundary conditions is done before 2013, considering the reference cited herein?***

Chemical initial and boundary conditions are from the quasi-global simulation for the same period in 2016. Now, we clarify it in the revised manuscript as "The chemical initial and boundary conditions are provided by a quasi-global WRF-Chem simulation for the same time period to include long-range transported chemical species. The quasi-global WRF-Chem simulation is performed at 1°×1° horizontal resolution using a quasi-global channel configuration with 360×130 grid cells (180°W-180°E, 60°S-70°N). More details about the general configuration of quasi-global WRF-Chem simulation can be found in Zhao et al. (2013b) and Hu et al. (2016)."

- ***Section 2.1.2: A completed table of model configuration here could be better***

Thanks for the suggestion. Now, we add a table to summarize the model configuration in the revised manuscript.

- ***Section 2.1.3: Emissions data described seem older that 2016?***

For anthropogenic emissions, the latest inventory publicly available for South Asia is from the Hemispheric Transport of Air Pollution version-2 (HTAPv2) inventory for year 2010 (Janssens-Maenhout et al., 2015). It is quite common to use the latest anthropogenic emission inventory for modeling in a different year. Therefore, it is used in this study. The biomass burning emission is from the inventory for the simulation period of 2016. As we discussed in the manuscript, the biomass burning emission is the dominant source near the southern Himalayas in the simulation period. Now we clarify it in the revised manuscript as "Biomass burning emissions are obtained from the Fire Inventory from National Center for Atmospheric Research (FINN) with hourly temporal resolution and 1 km horizontal resolution (Wiedinmyer et al., 2011) for the simulation period, and are vertically distributed following the injection heights suggested by Dentener et al. (2006) from the Aerosol Comparison between Observations and Models (AeroCom) project."

- ***L247: Biomass burning emission not of anthropogenic?***

Yes, biomass burning emission is often treated differently from the anthropogenic fossil fuel emissions such as from transport, power plant, and industry. In WRF-Chem, we separate anthropogenic fossil fuel and biomass burning emissions as two sources.

- ***L262: 'nadir'?***

The scanning angle of MODIS is ±55°, the resolution of scanning facing directly below is 10km (nadir, i.e., 0°). When the scanning angle is deviated from 0°, the resolution will be distorted.

- ***L265: 'identical'?***

We tend to mean that all radiometers are the similar instruments. We revise it to "similar".

- ***L269: Why 'AOD at 600 nm', while MODIS AOD at 550 nm?***

The model estimates AOD at the wavelengths of 300 nm, 400 nm, 600 nm, and 999 nm to reduce the computational cost. Now, we use the Angström exponent to interpolate the AOD at 600 nm to 550 nm from the simulations and revise the figures. The difference is quite small.

- ***L273-277: BC measurement: when? how? uncertainty?***

The BC measurement is collected for April 4-20 of 2016 at the Qomolangma (Mt. Everest) Station for Atmospheric and Environmental Observation and Research (QOMS, 86.94°E, 28.36°N) located at the northern slope of Himalayas, about 4276 meters above sea level. The BC mass concentrations are measured with the widely-used instrument Aethalometer (AE-33) that can provide real-time BC mass concentration measurements. The calibration of air flow is routinely conducted to maintain the data quality. Now, more details about the measurement and its uncertainty are provided in the revised manuscript as "The third one is the measurement of surface BC mass concentration collected during the simulation period for April 4-20 of 2016 at the Qomolangma (Mt. Everest) Station for Atmospheric and Environmental Observation and Research, Chinese Academy of Sciences (QOMS, 86.94°E, 28.36°N) which is located at the northern slope of the Himalayas, about 4276 meters above sea level. The BC mass concentration is measured with the widely-used instrument Aethalometer (AE-33) that can provide real-time BC mass concentration measurements. The calibration of air flow is routinely conducted to maintain the data quality. The instrument estimates the BC mass concentration based on the optical method through measuring the reduction in light intensity induced by BC. The method assumes that the relationship between attenuation and BC surface loading is linear for low attenuation values. However, this relationship becomes nonlinear when the attenuation values are high due to a filter saturation effect, which may lead to underestimation of the high BC concentration. The detection limit of AE-33 instrument is 5 ng/m^3, and the uncertainty is estimated to be within 10% (e.g., Chen et al., 2018; Bansal et al., 2019; Kant et al., 2019). The dataset of BC mass concentration used in this study was reported by Chen et al., (2018), where more details about the measurements can be found."

- ***Section 3.1: The initial chemical condition and the emission at the two resolutions of the simulation should be presented so as to discuss simulated transport of BC; moreover, the difference of terrain height (similar to fig5c) could reveal something.***

The initial chemical conditions of simulations at different resolutions are interpolated from the same global dataset, so that they are similar. In addition, as we mentioned in the manuscript, the simulations are conducted for March 29th-April 20 of 2016 but only the results of April 1th-20th are analyzed to allow a few days spin-up to avoid the impacts from the chemical initial conditions. Therefore, we do not think the initial chemical condition matters. In addition, now the manuscript is revised to focus on the analysis of the difference between the two experiments at 4 km with different topography representations instead of between the simulations at two resolutions.

Upon your suggestion, the difference of the terrain height is added in Fig. 3 of the revised manuscript.

Although the analysis of revised manuscript does not focus on the simulations at two resolutions any more, we calculate the emissions over the two resolutions, and the amounts are conservative with the difference less than 0.1% in the inner domain across different resolutions.

- ***L302-304: Why? Because of convergence? Or just because of the direction towards the TP?***

Yes, it is just because that the direction is toward the TP. It has been discussed in previous studies using back-trajectory models (e.g., Dumka et al., 2010; Kang et al., 2015; Cong et al., 2015a).

- ***L317-318: Meaningless to compare column and surface BC (fig5 vs fig8)***

Fig. 8 is deleted following your suggestion.

- ***L321-322: Something represents local circulation thanks to the difference to that of upper-air?***

This sentence is deleted in the revised manuscript.

- ***L333-336: Reasonably? No, the transport is not related to the concentration change, but the divergence is.***

Yes, we agree that the concentration is not directly linked with transport flux, instead is determined by divergence. The text is revised substantially, and this part is deleted. But, now we add some discussions about the contribution from different model processes including transport to the change of BC concentrations over the TP based on the processing analysis method introduced in Du et al., (2020). The discussion is added as "All the analysis above focuses on investigating the BC transport flux across the Himalayas. Although the inflow can reflect the impact of transport on the BC mass over the TP to some extent, the change of BC mass concentration is eventually determined by the convergence of transport. Therefore, the contribution of each model process (transport, dry-deposition, emission, PBL mixing, and wet deposition) to the increase of BC column mass averaged over the TP (with elevation > 4 km) during this episode is analyzed for both simulations following the methodology introduced by Du et al. (2020). The results show that the two main processes affecting the BC column mass over the TP during the period are transport and dry deposition. The transport is the dominant process that increases the BC column mass over the TP, while the dry deposition reduces it. The contribution of transport to the increase of BC column mass over the TP during the episode from the simulation with the original topography is significantly larger than that with the smooth topography, which is consistent with the results shown by analyzing the transport flux across the Himalayas."

- ***Section 3.2: A) I would rather expect two separated parts of flux, height-crossline plot of BC concentration and wind speed, so that we can diagnose the difference is due to either overall more column BC or wind speed, or both of them.***

Upon your suggestion, the cross sections of BC mass concentration and wind speed are added as Fig. S5a and b in the supporting material. The discussion about the reasons for the difference resulted from the complex topography is also added in the revised manuscript as "One reason for the enhanced transport across the Himalayas with the original topography is the resolved deeper valleys that lead to the increased valley wind. The wind across the valleys can be significantly larger with the original topography than the smooth one (Fig. S4). The enhanced valley wind across the Himalayas has also been found by previous studies with observations and numerical simulations (Egger et al., 2000; Zängl et al., 2001; Carrera et al., 2009; Karki et al., 2017; Lin et al., 2018). The second impact of resolved complex topography on the BC transport is that more BC masses can be transported with the deeper valley channels (Fig. S5a, b). With deeper valleys, the column of high-concentration BC is deeper. Even with similar wind velocity, the transport flux can be larger. The third impact is through changing the small-scale circulations around the Himalayas due to the increase of topography complexity of Himalayas. The simulation with original topography produces more near-surface winds following the direction towards the TP compared to the one with smooth topography (Fig. S6), which favors the BC transport across the Himalayas. Lastly, the simulated PBL heights from the two experiments are a little different (Fig. 9), which may also contribute partly to the different transport flux. The sensitivity of PBL height and structure to topography complexity that can result in different surface heat has been studied before (e.g., Wagner et al., 2014)."

- ***B) I would also expect spatial pattern of column (or lower model levels) BC transport.***

Now we show the spatial distribution of lower-level wind (below 500 m above the ground) in Fig. S6 in the supporting material. The discussion about the difference between the two experiments is also added in the revised manuscript as shown in the response to the comment above.

- ***L346-347: A) Prevailing westerlies, but 'northward' or 'southward' accounted here?***

Thanks for your checking. Now we clarify it in the revised sentence as "Positive values represent the transport towards the TP, while negative values represent the transport away from the TP."

- ***B) Can it be sensitive to the cross-line defined? How will the result be move the crossline towards or backwards the TP? See fig11, lower daytime transport towards TP than nighttime at north to ~29.5 deg N.***

Thanks for your suggestion. We move the cross line towards and away from the TP by about 50 km and re-calculate the flux (Fig. R1, R2, R3, R4, R5, and R6). Although the topography and strength of flux change, the key information about the cross-Himalayas transport is still evident. The transport in daytime is also stronger than in the nighttime. The results are generally consistent with that shown in Fig. 10. Now, we add this clarification in the revised manuscript as "The sensitivity analysis by moving the cross line (cross-section of the analysis in Fig. 9, 12, 13) towards or away from the TP within a certain distance and re-calculating the flux indicates that the impacts of topography on the simulated results do not change significantly."

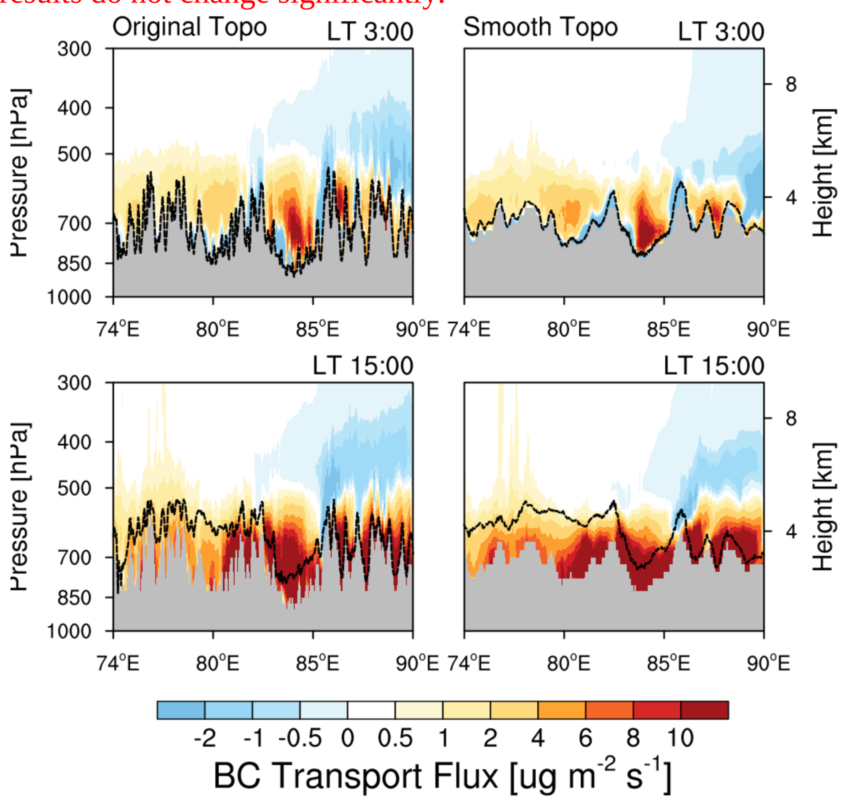

Figure R1. Longitude-height cross section of BC transport flux along the cross line about 50 km away from TP compared to the black dash line shown in Fig. 3 from the simulations at original and smooth topography at local time (LT) 03:00 and 15:00 averaged for April 1-20. The PBL height along the cross section is shown here as the black dash line.

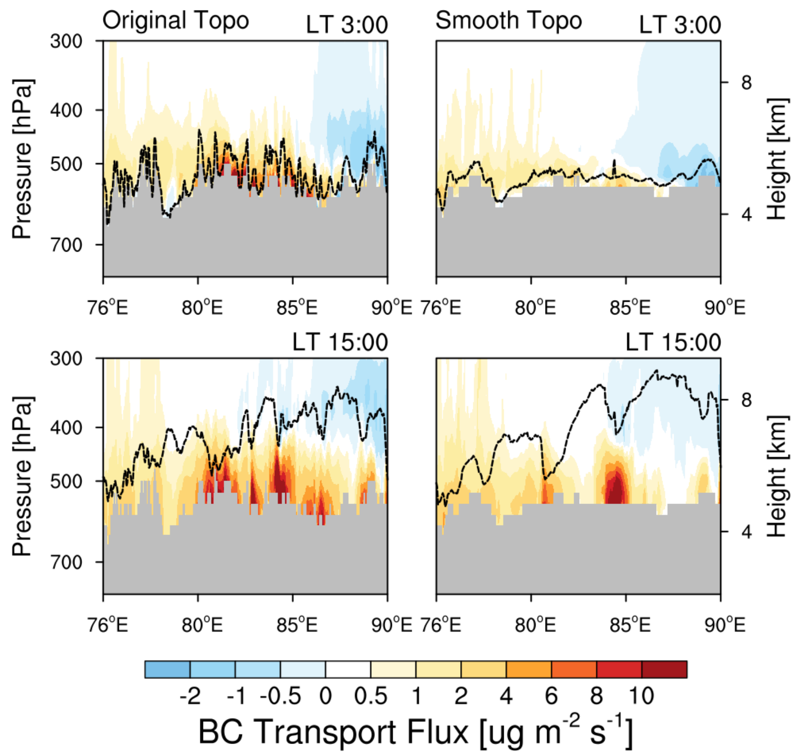

Figure R2. Longitude-height cross section of BC transport flux along the cross line about 50 km towards TP compared to the black dash line shown in Fig. 3 from the simulations at original and smooth topography at local time (LT) 03:00 and 15:00 averaged for April 1-20. The PBL height along the cross section is shown here as the black dash line.

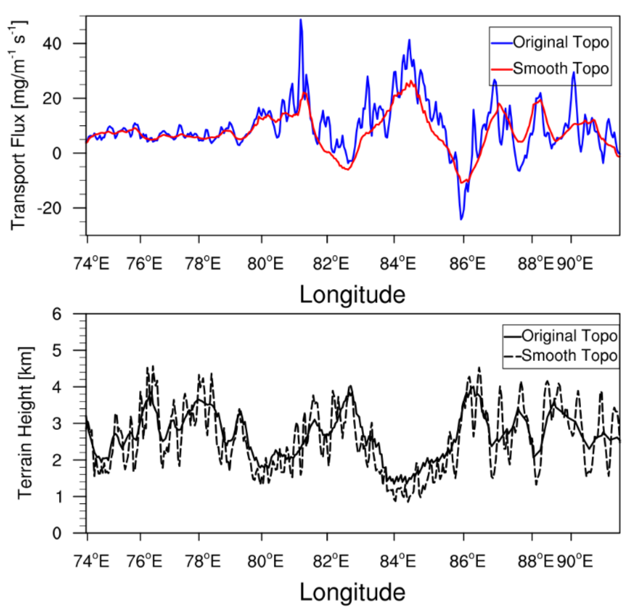

Figure R3. Longitudinal distribution of integrated BC mass flux along the cross section about 50 km away from TP compared to the black dash line shown in Fig. 3 from the simulations with original and smooth topography. The black lines represent the terrain heights with different topography.

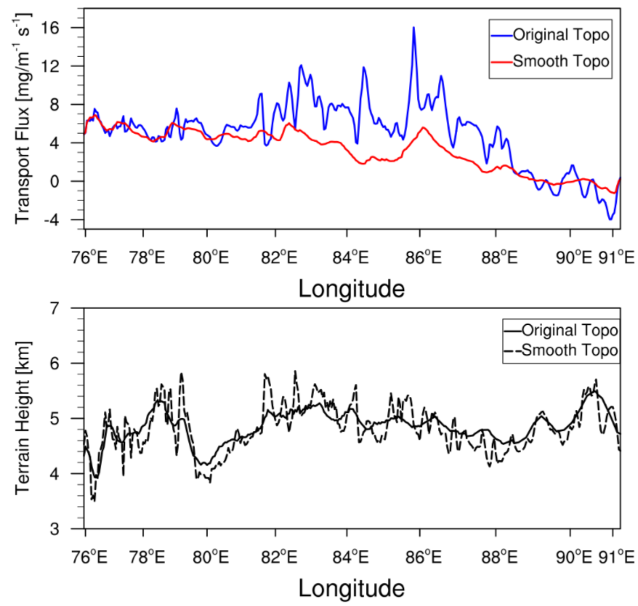

Figure R4. Longitudinal distribution of integrated BC mass flux along the cross section about 50 km towards TP compared to the black dash line shown in Fig. 3 from the simulations with original and smooth topography. The black lines represent the terrain heights with different topography.

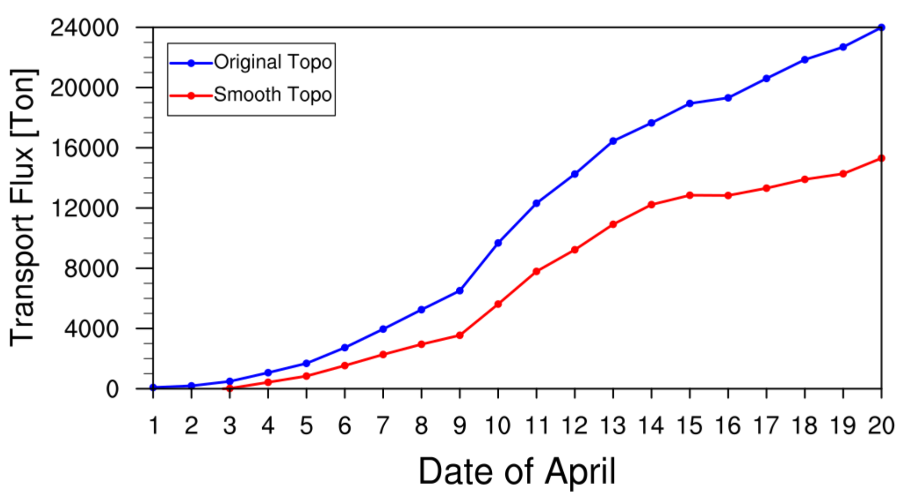

Figure R5. Accumulated integrated total transport flux of BC across the Himalayas along the cross section about 50 km away from the TP compared to the black dash line shown in Fig. 3 from the simulations at original and smooth topography during April 1-20, 2016.

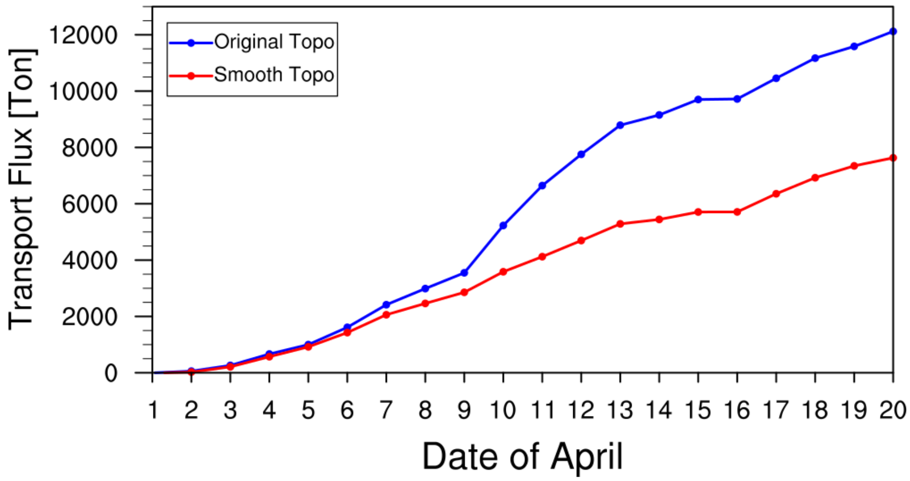

Figure R6. Accumulated integrated total transport flux of BC across the Himalayas along the cross section about 50 km towards the TP compared to the black dash line shown in Fig. 3 from the simulations at original and smooth topography during April 1-20, 2016.

- ***L353-357: Again, why diurnal cycle of local circulation while daily mean of large scale circulation?***

Sorry for the confusion. Here, we named "mean flux" as large-scale and "anomalies" as local-scale. Now, we remove these names and clarify the sentences in the revised manuscript as "If removing the mean flux during the simulation period, the transport flux anomalies show evident diurnal variation between the day and night (Fig. S3 in the supporting material). This suggests that on average, the large-scale westerly is one of the key mechanisms transporting BC across the Himalayas into the TP, while the circulation anomalies strengthen the prevailing import transport during the daytime and weakens the import during the night, particularly on the west of ~85°E."

- ***L359-360: It seems to be true to explain the diurnal cycle. But, 4-km simulation seems has shallower PBL compared to 20-km while larger BC transport than 20-km? Explanation?***

The sensitivity of simulated PBL height to model horizontal resolution has been found in previous studies. Now we add the discussion and references in the revised manuscript as "Lastly, the simulated PBL heights from the two experiments are a little different (Fig. 9), which may also contribute partly to the different transport flux. The sensitivity of PBL height and structure to topography complexity that can result in different surface heat has been studied before (e.g., Wagner et al., 2014)."

- ***L368-390: A) Two slices can serve as an example but cannot be used to draw a general conclusion; B) If BC transport can or not overcome ridges more depends on the height of the ridge and the vertical profile of BC concentration, as well as wind direction; as A), only two slices are insufficient to draw a general conclusion that***

BC transport can overcome ridges, and this conclusion is lack of a certain context (how high the ridges are).

Yes, we agree that the two slices can only serve as examples to demonstrate the general picture. We did check more slices and the results are consistent. In fact, the conclusion of that transport can overcome mountain ridges are drawn from Fig. 9. Fig. 9 shows that although in the simulation with the original topography, the mountain ridges resolved weaken the crossing-Himalayas transport compared to the simulation with smooth topography, the overall positive values near the surface indicate that the transport can overcome most mountain ridges along the Himalayas. The transport fluxesflux near the surface from the simulation with the original topography become close-to-zero only at a few mountain ridges that are 6.5 km or higher. Now we add the discussion in the revised manuscript as

"The simulation with smooth topography produces overwhelming crossing-Himalayas transport towards the TP within the PBL, in particular during the daytime. Although, in the simulation with the original topography, the mountain ridges resolved weaken the crossing-Himalayas transport compared to the simulation with smooth topography, the overall positive values near the surface indicate that the transport can overcome most mountain ridges along the Himalayas. The transport fluxes near the surface from the simulation with the original topography become close-to-zero only at a few mountain ridges that are 6.5 km or higher."

"To better demonstrate the transport pathway across mountain ridges, one cross-section across the mountain ridge as shown as one black solid line in Fig. 3 is taken as one example. Figure 10 shows the latitude-height cross section of BC mass concentrations and transport flux across one mountain ridge from the simulations with the original and smooth topography at local time (LT) 03:00 and 15:00 averaged for April 1-20, 2016. Near the southern part of mountain, the elevated concentrations of BC mass accumulate and can mix up reaching as high as 5 km with the much stronger transport during the daytime It is obvious that the mountain ridge in the simulation with smooth topography is quite low. With the high mountain ridge resolved by the original topography, the simulated BC transport flux can still cross the mountain. Analysis of transport flux across a few more mountain ridges indicates similar results (not shown). The results above indicate that the transport of pollutants can cross a majority of mountain ridges of Himalayas, which is consistent with the observation-based estimate by Gong et al. (2019) that also found pollutants could overcome the blocking effect of mountain ridges of Himalayas as a transport pathway. On the other hand, the resolved deeper valleys in the simulation with the original topography enhanced the transport flux compared to the simulation with the smooth topography. Similarly, Figure 11 shows one example of latitude-height cross section of BC mass concentrations and transport flux across one valley from the simulations with the original and smooth topography at local time (LT) 03:00 and 15:00 averaged for April 1-20, 2016. The transport is much stronger and deeper along the valley from the simulation with original topography than the one with smooth topography. Again, analysis of transport flux across a few more valleys does not show different results (not shown)."

- ***L391-392: Can the result shown in fig13 be sensitive to the location of the cross-line? It needs a check.***

Thanks for your suggestion. See our response to the comment above. We did the test and the key information about the cross-Himalayas transport is still evident, and the clarification is added in the revised manuscript.

- ***L410-421: It is unclear how the authors applied the 20-km resolution topography to the 4-km simulation. Does it mean that 5 by 5 grids at 4-km resolution have identical terrain height as the corresponding grid of 20-km resolution? If it is of this case (I guess it is), does it really represent a 20-km resolution topography? Thinking about the slope of neighbouring grids (0, 0, 0, 0, a huge value, 0, 0 ...)? ... NO, this check (if it is topographical impact) makes no sense.***

In the sensitivity experiment at 4 km resolution with smooth topography, we applied a single value for each nested 5×5 grids as the corresponding grid of 20 km. In this way, the simulation at 4 km will have almost identical topography as that at 20 km. It is quite common in the modeling community to check the impact of topography through conducting the sensitivity experiment through prescribing different topography during the simulation (e.g., Shi et al., 2008; Wu et al., 2012; Lin et al., 2018). Here, when we talk about topography impact, we mean the difference between the complex and smooth topography, i.e., the impact due to the difference between the topography at 20 km and 4 km resolutions.

We would argue that it is a valid way to investigate the impacts of different topography on modeling results. Now we add the clarification in the revised manuscript as "The goal of this study is to investigate the impacts of different representations of topography on the transport of BC across the Himalayas. Therefore, besides this control experiment, one sensitivity experiment is also conducted with the same configuration as the control one except that the topography of the inner domain at 4 km resolution is prescribed to follow that at 20 km resolution similar as previous studies (e.g., Shi et al., 2008; Wu et al., 2012; Lin et al., 2018). More specifically, the sensitivity experiment applies a single value for each nested 5×5 grids over the inner domain as the corresponding grid of 20 km over the outer domain. The two experiments are referred to the simulations with original and smooth topography, respectively, hereafter."

- ***L428: fig15: How about the region other than the TP, especially the south? (For fig5, 8, 16, 17, why the region other than the TP is masked? Without this part as well***

as boundary conditions, it is not able to check the mass balance, which is however fatal for understand transport)

Since our focus is about the BC impacts over the TP, we decided to only show the values over the Himalayas and TP. Now we show the spatial distribution over the entire inner domain in Fig. 5, 15, and 16, although the Fig. 15 and Fig. 16 are similar to previous ones because there is no snow in the inner domain except the regions of Himalayas and TP.

- ***Section 3.3: The snow difference between different resolutions further indicates that not only topography play a role in the model experiments. For example, the adaptation of physical schemes to different resolution may also play a role.***

Yes, we agree that the resolution itself can introduce difference in simulated results in many aspects, and the comparison of the simulations at 20 km and 4 km resolutions may complicate the analysis and deviate the readers from the focus of this study about the impacts of topography. Therefore, now the manuscript is revised to focus on the analysis of the difference between the two experiments at 4 km with different topography representations. See our response to other comments as well.

Technical comments:

- ***L259: Abbreviation without the full name that it stands for. Here 'MODIS' as an example. Please recheck.***

Thanks for checking. Now the full names are provided for all abbreviations.

Anonymous Referee #2

General comments:

- ***This study uses WRF-Chem at two horizontal resolutions to investigate the impacts of topography on the transport and distribution of BC over the TP during the pre-monsoon season. A sensitivity test that the inner domain at 4 km resolution applies the 20 km-resolution topography is also conducted to confirm the importance of topography complexity. It is found that the prevailing up-flow across the Himalayas driven by the large-scale circulation is the dominant transport mechanism of South Asian BC into the TP in the simulations at both resolutions, and the simulation at the finer resolution (4 km) resolves more valleys and thus transport BC more efficiently. This is an interesting and important work in understanding BC contamination over the TP and its radiative impact. However, a number of caveats leave the conclusions unconvincing. The smooth 4 km sensitivity test has different results from the 20 km simulation, indicating the effects of other factors. It is necessary to discuss or quantify: 1) how wind field changes under different resolutions and whether/how much it is related to the representation of topography, 2) the impact of resolution on PBL and vertical mixing, 3) the influences of resolution on emissions, and 4) other possible parameters that could lead to the differences in BC transport over the TP. This paper still requires additional work.***

We thank the reviewer for the detailed and constructive comments. They are very helpful for improving the quality of the manuscript.

In the revised manuscript, the main text is revised substantially to make the conclusion more convincing. Specifically, upon the comments provided by the reviewers, we realized that the comparison of the simulations at 20 km and 4 km resolutions may complicate the analysis and deviate the readers from the focus of this study about the impacts of topography. Although our results show that the difference between the simulations at two resolutions is significantly contributed by the impacts of different topography, we agree that the resolution itself can introduce difference in simulated results in many aspects, such as wind circulation and PBL mixing. Therefore, now the manuscript is revised to focus on the analysis of the difference between the two experiments at 4 km with different topography representations. The emissions are checked to be conservative between the two resolutions. Some discussions about the related work are added. A lot more details about the experiment design are added. Other text and figures have also been revised as the reviewer suggested.

Major issues:

- ***1. This study only emphasizes the importance of topography, but according to the comparisons of the 20 km simulation and the smooth 4 km simulation in Figure 13, 15, 16, 17, and Figure S5, there could be other factors contributing to the differences in the transport of BC over the TP in the simulations at the two resolutions. The***

manuscript attempts to provide some interpretations, but many of them do not seem appropriate (e.g., L445-448). In particular, under the two resolutions, wind vectors show different patterns. A detailed examination on the interactions of modeling resolution, wind speed, and topography is required.

Yes, we agree that the resolution itself can introduce difference in simulated results in many aspects, because the development of scale-aware physics, such as PBL and cloud physics, is still a challenging work in the modeling community. The comparison of the simulations at 20 km and 4 km resolutions may complicate the analysis and deviate the readers from the focus of this study about the impacts of topography. Although the impact of resolution on modeling the crossing-Himalayas transport is also interesting, it is beyond the scope of this study. Therefore, now the manuscript is revised to focus on the analysis of the difference between the two experiments at 4 km with different topography representations. The corresponding text is revised substantially in the revised manuscript.

- ***2. The study uses the MYNN planetary boundary layer scheme. This local PBL scheme may not be able to account for deeper vertical mixing. The study does not comment on the impact of cloud convection in vertical mixing, which could also contribute to the differences in BC transport flux. Does the simulation period include cloudy days? Does the study account for cloud layers, which normally serves as an extension of PBL?***

Yes, the MYNN PBL scheme does not include the non-local mixing term. However, both the local MY schemes (such as MYJ and MYNN) and non-local YSU scheme were used intensively. Especially, a recent study found that MYNN and YSU produced similar results in the tropical region (Hariprasad et al, 2014). Further, in India region, it showed that MYNN outperformed YSU regarding the boundary layer structure simulation (Gunwani and Mohan, 2017). In fact, one previous study (Karki et al., 2017) evaluated systematically the WRF simulation with the MYNN PBL scheme for one entire year over the Himalayas region. Their results showed that the WRF simulation at convection-permitting scale could generally capture the essential features of meteorological fields such as precipitation, temperature, and wind over the Himalayas region. Therefore, in our simulation, the MYNN scheme is selected as the PBL scheme.

Although the convective transport is accounted in this study, we did not discuss much about it because convection is not very active during the pre-monsoon season. Convective transport may play an important role during the monsoon season, and deserves further investigation. Now we acknowledge this in the discussion section of the revised manuscript as "In addition, the active convection during the monsoon season may also play an important role on pollutant transport across the Himalayas, which deserves further investigation."

- ***3. For emission, there are two main concerns: 1) The study uses a combined emission from two emission inventories for different years. Since emissions change dramatically in recent years, using different emissions over distinct regions could cause bias and also lead to inconsistency near the boundaries.***

For anthropogenic emissions, the latest inventory publicly available for South Asia is from the Hemispheric Transport of Air Pollution version-2 (HTAPv2) inventory for year 2010 (Janssens-Maenhout et al., 2015). It is quite common to use the latest anthropogenic emission inventory for modeling at a different year. Therefore, it is used for the inner domain and the regions of outer domain except East Asia in this study. Since this study does not focus on estimating the relative contributions from different regions to pollutants over the TP, we do not think this inconsistency will affect our results. In addition, as we discussed in the manuscript, the biomass burning emission is the dominant source near the southern Himalayas in the simulation period. The biomass burning emission is from the inventory for the simulation period of 2016. Now we clarify it in the revised manuscript as "Biomass burning emissions are obtained from the Fire Inventory from National Center for Atmospheric Research (FINN) with hourly temporal resolution and 1 km horizontal resolution (Wiedinmyer et al., 2011) for the simulation period, and are vertically distributed following the injection heights suggested by Dentener et al. (2006) from the Aerosol Comparison between Observations and Models (AeroCom) project."

- ***2) Are emissions conservative in the inner domain across different resolutions? This is crucial to understand the differences in BC transport at the two resolutions.***

The emissions for different resolutions are regrided from the same dataset. Although the analysis of revised manuscript does not focus on the simulations at two resolutions any more, we calculate the emissions at the two resolutions, and the amounts are conservative with the difference less than 0.1% in the inner domain across different resolutions.

- ***4. Figure 7: Although the magnitudes are similar, R values of the comparisons are actually quite low and there is no obvious improvement when using 4 km resolution. This indicates large uncertainties which could be due to model setup, such as emission and/or PBL scheme selection.***

We calculated the correlation coefficient between the simulations and the observations at the two sites. Although the values are similar between the two experiments at the NAM site (~0.2), but increase from 0.37 (smooth topography) to 0.53 (original topography) at the QOMS site. We agree that there may be other factors affecting the modeling results, including emission uncertainties. It deserves further investigation. As our response to the comment above, PBL mixing is important but the modeling biases are not necessary to be due to PBL scheme. We have selected the scheme commonly used over this region. Further investigation about the impact of PBL mixing on modeling pollutants over the TP may be interesting. Now, we add the discussion in the revised manuscript as "Although the correlation coefficient between the simulations and observation increases from 0.37 (smooth topography) to 0.53 (original topography) at the QOMS site, it is similar (~0.2) between the two simulations at the NAM site. The correlation coefficient is higher at the QOMS site near the source region than the NAM site farther away, which may indicate the model processes affecting the transport over the TP still need examination with more observations. The NAM site over the eastern TP may also be affected by other sources that are not counted in this study. The modeling of temporal variations of pollutants over the TP deserves further investigation with more observations."

- ***5. L480-483: The distribution of resolution-induced differences in BC forcing in snow do not follow that for snow water equivalent.***

Sorry for the confusion due to mixing up the effects of topography and resolution. As we respond to the comments above, now the manuscript is revised to focus on the analysis of the difference between the two experiments at 4 km with different topography representations.

- ***More information about SNICAR and how it represents snow processes are needed. The influences of fresh snow cover, BC caused snow melt runoff should all be investigated to understand BC forcing in snow.***

We agree that the snow processes are important for assessing the impacts of aerosols on snow. However, the purpose of this study is not to study the impacts of topography on aerosol climatic effects. As we respond to the comment of one reviewer, we agree that the short-period simulation cannot be used to access the climate impact. That's why we didn't discuss much about climatic impact in the manuscript. Instead, we estimate the impacts on radiative forcing in the atmosphere and snow for this short period. This study focuses on raising the potential issue of using smoothing topography on modeling BC transport and radiative forcing over the TP, and can be treated as the implication for future study about climatic impact with high-resolution simulations. We acknowledged in the revised manuscript as

"Since this study only demonstrates the potential impacts for a relatively short period, a longer-term study should be conducted to examine the impacts of topography on aerosol climatic effect over the TP."

And "These potential impacts of aerosols on regional hydro-climate around the TP and over Asia using high-resolution model that can resolve the complex topography of Himalayas and TP deserve further investigation."

Therefore, the details of modeling BC impacts on snow are not appropriate to be included in the manuscript. Instead, we refer the readers who are interested to find the details in our previous publication Zhao et al. (2014) as we clarified in the manuscript as "The radiative forcing of light absorbing aerosol in surface snow is estimated with the Snow, Ice, and Aerosol Radiative model (SNICAR) (Flanner and Zender, 2005) in the land surface scheme as introduced by Zhao et al. (2014). More details about the coupling between WRF-Chem and SNICAR models can be found in Zhao et al. (2014)."

Specific comments:

- ***L187-188: Please complete the sentence.***

Corrected.

- ***Figure 4: Why are averaged fire emissions calculated over the region between 26-29N instead the whole inner domain?***

The region selected is South Himalayas where the elevated pollutants can be transport to the TP efficiently. The average over the entire inner domain does not change the pattern. Now, we add the clarification in the revised manuscript as "The fossil fuel BC emissions over Nepal, the country nearby the southern Himalayas, are relatively low. Instead, biomass burning emissions of BC are extremely high in Nepal and Northwest India (South Himalayas, 26°N-29°N). Averaged over the South Himalayas of inner domain that may significantly affect the pollutant transport into the TP, the biomass burning emissions of BC are much higher than its anthropogenic fossil fuel emissions, particularly for the pollution episode (Fig. 4)."

- ***Additionally, the manuscript includes a lot of duplicate information, which need to be removed to make the writing more concise.***

Thanks for your suggestion. The language is polished in the revised manuscript.

Anonymous Referee #3

General Comments：

- ***Major issues, 1. This study only emphasizes the importance of topography, but didn't compare with different land use data. The manuscript attempts to provide some interpretations, but many of them do not seem appropriate. In particular, under the two resolutions, wind vectors show different patterns. A detailed examination on the interactions of modeling resolution, wind speed, and topography is required.***

We agree that there are many factors that may affect the cross-Himalayas transport. Topography and land use may be two of them. As we stated in the title, the focus of this study is about the impact of topography.

In addition, we agree that the resolution itself can introduce difference in simulated results in many aspects, because the development of scale-ware physics, such as PBL and cloud physics, is still a challenging work in the modeling community. The comparison of the simulations at 20 km and 4 km resolutions may complicate the analysis and deviate the readers from the focus of this study about the impacts of topography. Although the impact of resolution on modeling the crossing-Himalayas transport is also interesting, it is beyond the scope of this study. Therefore, now the manuscript is revised to focus on the analysis of the difference between the two experiments at 4 km with different topography representations.

- ***2. The study compare with only one station data and conclude that surface BC concentrations correlates highly with that of biomass burning emissions near the southern Himalayas, indicating the significant impacts of biomass burning on the pollutants over the TP. The authors need more station data comparisons with model simulation.***

We agree that it may be uncertain to analyze the source of pollutants based on one station data. However, the dataset we used is sampled at the Qomolangma Station (QOMS, 86.94°E, 28.36°N, 4276 m above sea level) near Mt. Everest. Given the remote location and very sparse local population, QOMS is an ideal place to monitor the atmospheric environment in the Himalayas. The dataset collected at this station has been used by previous studies (e.g., Cong et al., 2015a, b) to demonstrate the influence of biomass burning emissions from South Asia on North Himalayas. The in-situ observations over the study region are normally difficult to obtained, particularly the observations from multiple stations at the same time period. It is not uncommon to use one available site observation to compare with simulations and analyze the characteristics of pollutants over the region (e.g., Cao et al., 2010; Dumka et al., 2010). The comparison with this one station data is to show that the model captures the pollution episode. More observations, if available, will be used to further evaluate the model and investigate the transport mechanism in future.

The comparison between the observation site and the simulation results is to show that the simulation can accurately reproduce the concentration distribution on the plateau during this time period, and the sites where the black carbon data are available at the same time are particularly scarce over the TP.

Furthermore, one sensitivity experiment without biomass burning emission shows that the simulated BC concentration at QOMS will be significantly reduced without the peak, which further proves that the BC concentration over the northern Himalayas can be largely influenced by the pollution episode near the southern Himalayas. Now it is clarified in the manuscript as "One sensitivity experiment without biomass burning emissions shows that the simulated BC concentration at QOMS will be significantly reduced without the peak (not shown), which further proves that the BC concentration over the northern Himalayas can be largely influenced by the pollution episode near the southern Himalayas."

- ***3. The study didn't compare with meteorological variables like PBLH, wind etc. which play importance rule of BC transport.***

Yes, wind circulation is quite important. We applied the spectral nudging method to improve the simulated large-scale circulation that is important for pollutant transport. Now, we add the comparison of the simulated wind circulation with the reanalysis data at 700 hPa and above, and add the discussion in the revised manuscript as "The simulations with nudging method can reproduce the large-scale circulation at 700 hPa and higher over the outer domain compared to the reanalysis dataset with the spatial correlation coefficient of 0.96-0.98."

The publicly available in-situ measurements of wind and PBLH over the study region are scarce, particularly for Himalayas. It is difficult to evaluate the model performance at the small-scale. However, the configuration of WRF used in this study has also been used by previous study and was systematically evaluated over the Himalayas regions. The WRF simulated meteorology was proved with reasonable performance. We add the clarification in the revised manuscript as "The detailed configuration of WRF-Chem experiments is summarized in Table 1. Due to the lack of publicly available in-situ observations, this study does not tend to evaluate systematically the simulated meteorological fields over the Himalayas region. However, as shown in Table 1, the choice of physical parameterizations in this study follows that of one previous study (Karki et al., 2017) that evaluated systematically the WRF simulation for one entire year over the Himalayas region. Their results showed that the WRF simulation at convection-permitting scale could generally capture the essential features of meteorological fields such as precipitation, temperature, and wind over the Himalayas region. Therefore, the WRF-Chem simulations in this study are reliable to investigate the impacts of topography over the Himalayas region."

- ***4. The distribution of resolution-induced differences in BC forcing in snow do not follow that for snow water equivalent. More information about SNICAR and how it represents snow processes are needed. The influences of fresh snow cover, BC caused snow melt runoff should all be investigated to understand BC forcing in snow.***

As we respond to the comment above, we agree that the resolution itself can introduce difference in simulated results in many aspects. The comparison of the simulations at 20 km and 4 km resolutions may complicate the analysis and deviate the readers from the focus of this study about the impacts of topography. Now the manuscript is revised to focus on the analysis of the difference between the two experiments at 4 km with different topography representations. The topography-induced difference in BC forcing in snow follows that in snow water equivalent.

We also agree that the snow processes are important for assessing the impacts of aerosols on snow. However, the purpose of this study is not to study the impacts of topography on aerosol climatic effects. This study focuses on raising the potential issue of using smoothing topography on modeling BC transport and radiative forcing over the TP, and can be treated as the implication for future study about climatic impact with high-resolution simulations. We acknowledged in the revised manuscript as

"Since this study only demonstrates the potential impacts for a relatively short period, a longer-term study should be conducted to examine the impacts of topography on aerosol climatic effect over the TP."

And "These potential impacts of aerosols on regional hydro-climate around the TP and over Asia using high-resolution model that can resolve the complex topography of Himalayas and TP deserve further investigation."

Therefore, the details of modeling BC impacts on snow are not appropriate to be included in the manuscript. Instead, we refer the readers who are interested to find the details in our previous publication Zhao et al. (2014) as we clarified in the manuscript as "The radiative forcing of light absorbing aerosol in surface snow is estimated with the Snow, Ice, and Aerosol Radiative model (SNICAR) (Flanner and Zender, 2005) in the land surface scheme as introduced by Zhao et al. (2014). More details about the coupling between WRF-Chem and SNICAR models can be found in Zhao et al. (2014)."

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