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Alpha particle effects on the internal kink mode

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Abstract

The α -particle effects on the internal kink mode stability are studied. Finite Grad-Shafranov Shift, plasma β , and plasma shape can significantly enhance the trapped particle drift reversal domain in pitch angle space and reduce average magnetic drift frequency. The drift reversal effect on the ideal kink mode is small, but the β_α threshold for the fishbone mode can be much lower than previously predicted.¹ In addition, the ion diamagnetic drift has a stronger destabilizing effect.

The effects of energetic particles on the internal kink modes in tokamaks have been studied extensively.¹⁻⁵ Most of the previous works were focused on circular cross section systems and assumed a narrow hot particle pitch angle distribution. When the frequency ω is well below the energetic particle magnetic drift frequency ω_d and diamagnetic drift frequency ω_* , the sign of the trapped hot particle potential energy is proportional to ω_*/ω_d , and the energetic trapped particles have a stabilizing effect if $\omega_*/\omega_d > 0$, and vice versa. As the hot particle beta β_h is larger than a critical value, the fishbone mode appears with $\omega \sim \omega_d$. For fusion α -particles, however, due to their uniform pitch angle distribution, ω_*/ω_d may change from being positive to negative as the pitch angle changes from a deeply trapped state to a barely trapped state. The finite inverse aspect ratio ε_a , plasma β , and plasma shaping effects can enlarge the drift reversal domain. Thus, the net effect of trapped α -particles must be integrated over entire trapped pitch angle domain. In this paper, we investigate α -particle effects on the internal kink mode due to the magnetic drift reversal effect and the core ion finite Larmor radius effect through diamagnetic drift frequency. Although a particular Solovév equilibrium is used, we believe that the result from the study is qualitatively valid for general equilibria.

Consider an axisymmetric toroidal plasma, consisting of a core isotropic component and α -particles with $n_\alpha \ll n_c$ and $T_\alpha \gg T_c$ but $\beta_\alpha \ll \beta_c$. The magnetic field for an axisymmetric toroidal system takes the form $\vec{B} = \nabla\phi \times \nabla\psi + I(\psi)\nabla\phi$, where ψ is the poloidal flux and ϕ is the toroidal angle. We choose pressure p and $I(\psi)$ as $p = p_0 - p'\psi$ and $I^2 = I_0^2 + 2\delta R_0^2 p'\psi/(1 + \kappa^2)$, where p_0, p', R_0, κ and I_0 are positive constants, the prime refers to the ψ derivative, and δ is a real constant. Here κ describes the ellipticity, δ is the triangularity of the plasma shape, and $\kappa = 1$ and $\delta = 0$ represents a circular flux surface in the large aspect ratio limit. The exact solution of the Grad-Shafranov equation had been obtained by Solovév and is given by

$$\psi = [Z^2(R^2 - R_0^2\delta) + \frac{\kappa^2}{4}(R^2 - R_0^2)^2] \frac{p'}{2(1 + \kappa^2)}. \quad (1)$$

Changing the coordinate system from (R, Z, ϕ) to (χ, θ, ϕ) by letting

$$\chi = \frac{1}{\kappa} \sqrt{Z^2(R^2 - R_0^2\delta) + \frac{\kappa^2}{4}(R^2 - R_0^2)^2}, \quad \theta = \tan^{-1}\left(\frac{2Z\sqrt{R^2 - R_0^2\delta}}{R^2 - R_0^2}\right)$$

we have

$$\psi = \frac{\kappa^2 p'}{2(1 + \kappa^2)} \chi^2, \quad R = \sqrt{R_0^2 + 2\chi \cos \theta}, \quad Z = \frac{\kappa \chi}{\sqrt{R^2 - R_0^2\delta}} \sin \theta.$$

The toroidal precessional drift frequency of a trapped particle can be expressed as⁶ $\omega_d = \partial_\Psi J / \partial_E J$, where the longitudinal invariant $J = \oint v_\parallel d\ell$ involves an integral over the bounce orbit of a trapped particle, $v_\parallel = \sqrt{2(E - \mu B)}$ is the parallel velocity, $E = v^2/2$ is the energy, and μ is the magnetic moment. To the first order in inverse aspect ratio the trapped particle toroidal precessional drift frequency is

$$\omega_d = (1 + \kappa^2) \omega_{d0} g \chi_s / (\kappa^2 \chi), \quad (2)$$

where $\omega_{d0} = 2E/(p' R_0^2 \chi_s)$, χ_s is the χ value at the $q = 1$ surface,

$$g = \frac{G_1 + \hat{s} G_2 - (\frac{4\kappa^2\delta}{(1+\kappa^2)^2} \bar{\beta}_p G_0 + 4G_3 - 5G_4)\varepsilon}{G_0 - 2\varepsilon G_1} \quad (3)$$

the average plasma poloidal beta is $\bar{\beta}_p = R_0^4 p' / (4B_0^2)$, $G_0 = K$, $G_1 = 2E - K$, $G_2 = 2E(k^2) - 2(1 - k^2)K$, $G_3 = 2[(1 - k^2)E(k^2) - (1 - 2k^2)K]/3$, $G_4 = [4(1 - k^2)E + (4k^2 - 1)K]/3$, $K(k^2)$ and $E(k^2)$ are the complete elliptic integrals, $k^2 = (1 + \varepsilon - \lambda)/(2\varepsilon)$, $\lambda = \mu B_0/E$, $\hat{s} = (\chi/I)\partial_\chi I$, and $\varepsilon = \chi/R_0^2$ is the local inverse aspect ratio or the derivative of the Grad-Shafranov Shift ($\Delta' = \varepsilon$). For trapped particles we have $k^2 \leq 1$. The effect of ellipticity is mainly to reduce the magnitude of precessional drift frequency. Since $(3 - 4k^2 G_1)$ is positive for all pitch angle value, the finite Grad-Shafranov Shift, shaping factors κ and δ , and plasma β will reduce the precessional drift frequency and broaden the drift reversal domain in the pitch angle space. The destabilizing effect of the finite Grad-Shafranov Shift can be understood as particles spend longer time in the bad curvature region. The above

result is very similar to that of Connor et al.⁷ Note that in the previous calculation of α -particle effect on internal kink mode,¹ the effects due to finite β , plasma shaping, and inverse aspect ratio corrections were not included, and $\omega_d = \omega_{d0} G_1 \chi_s / \chi$ was used.

Figure 1 plots trapped particle domain in (ε, λ) space and the $\omega_d = 0$ curve (Solid curve). For a given radial location, ω_d changes from being positive to negative as pitch λ decreases, which means that ω_*/ω_d also varies from being positive to negative. If the trapped particles are destabilizing to a certain MHD mode for $\omega_*/\omega_d > 0$ in certain pitch angle region, the trapped particles in the pitch angle region with $\omega_*/\omega_d < 0$ would be stabilizing. Thus, the net effect of trapped α -particles must be integrated over the entire trapped α -particle population. If the drift reversal domain is large enough so that the net contribution from the term ω_*/ω_d is negative, then the ideal MHD stable kink mode can be destabilized by the α -particles. Also shown in Fig. 1 is the $\omega_d = 0$ curve (Dashed line) without the finite inverse aspect ratio ε , shaping factors κ and δ , and plasma β effects. It is clear that the drift reversal domain increases due to these corrections.

Assuming a slowing-down distribution function with uniform pitch angle, the dispersion relation for the $n = 1$ internal kink mode is given by^{1,2,8}

$$D(\omega) = -i\sqrt{\omega(\omega - \omega_{*i})} + \gamma_b + \tilde{\omega}_A \delta \hat{W}_k = 0 \quad (4)$$

where ω_{*i} is the ion diamagnetic drift frequency, $\tilde{\omega}_A$ is the shear Alfvén frequency, and γ_b is the ideal kink mode growth rate. Including the shaping effect γ_b takes the form^{9,10} $\gamma_b = 3\pi\tilde{\omega}_A(1 - q_0)[\beta_p^2 - 0.09/(1 - \delta)^2]r_s^2/R^2$, with $\beta_p = -(R^2/r_s^4) \int_0^{r_s} r^2 \beta' dr$.

The normalized kinetic potential energy $\delta \hat{W}_k$ is mainly contributed by the trapped α -particles and is given by

$$\delta \hat{W}_k = \frac{3}{4r_s^2} \int_0^{r_s} r \beta_\alpha(r) dr \int_{1-r}^{1+r} d\lambda \frac{k_2^2}{k_b} \left\{ \frac{\omega_*}{\omega_d} + \frac{\omega}{\omega_d} \left(\frac{\omega_*}{\omega_d} - 1 \right) S\left(\frac{\omega_d}{\omega}\right) \right\},$$

where $r = \chi/R$, $k_b = \sqrt{2/r} K(k^2)/\pi$, $k_2 = \langle \cos(q\theta) \rangle$ which is a bounce-averaged quantity, and $S(\omega_d/\omega) = \ln(1 - \omega_d/\omega) + 2\pi i$ if $\gamma < 0$ and $0 < \omega_r/\omega_d \leq 1$, otherwise, $S(\omega_d/\omega) =$

Figure 1: The $\omega_d = 0$ curves in the trapped particle (r, λ) domain. Curve (a) uses the present $\omega_d = \omega_{d0}g$ with $\kappa = 1.5$, $\delta = 0.3$ and $\alpha = 0.5$, and curve (b) uses $\omega_d = \omega_{d0} \frac{\rho_z}{\rho} G_1$.

$\ln(1 - \omega_d/\omega)$.

The marginal stability condition can be understood by assuming a mean value $\bar{\omega}_d$ to approximate the pitch angle integral effect on ω_d . The effect of magnetic drift reversal is to reduce the average precessional drift frequency $\bar{\omega}_d$. The marginal stability conditions for both the ideal kink and the fishbone modes are determined by $\omega(1 - \beta_\alpha^2 \sigma(\omega)^2 / \beta_0^2) = \omega_{*i}$ and $\gamma_b = \beta_\alpha / (\pi \beta_0) (\bar{\omega}_d + \omega \ln |1 - \bar{\omega}_d/\omega|)$, where $\beta_0 = 4\bar{\omega}_d^2 / (3\pi\omega_*\bar{\omega}_A)$. Since the number of trapped alpha particles satisfying resonance condition depends on ω , $\sigma(\omega)$ represents the fraction of trapped alpha particles satisfying resonance condition and is less than one. Note that at $\beta_\alpha = 0$, the marginal stability for ideal kink is possible for $\omega_{*i}/2 \leq \omega_r \leq \omega_{*i}$ and $\gamma_b \leq \omega_{*i}/2$.

At marginal stability, the real frequency of the ideal kink mode is given by $\omega = \omega_{*i}/(1 -$

$\beta_\alpha^2 \sigma(\omega)^2 / \beta_0^2$), and the stability boundary is given by

$$\gamma_b = \frac{3\omega_* \tilde{\omega}_A \beta_\alpha}{4\tilde{\omega}_d} \left(1 + \frac{\omega_{*i}}{\tilde{\omega}_d} \ln \left| 1 - \frac{\tilde{\omega}_d}{\omega_{*i}} \right| \right). \quad (5)$$

As $\tilde{\omega}_d$ decreases, the marginal stability boundary curve for the ideal kink mode has a steeper slope in the (β_α, γ_b) space. On the other hand, the contribution of ω_{*i} is to reduce γ_b if $|1 - \tilde{\omega}_d/\omega_{*i}| < 1$, and vice versa.

At marginal stability the real frequency of the fishbone mode is much larger than ω_{*i} , but smaller than $\tilde{\omega}_d$, and is roughly given by $\omega = 0.78\tilde{\omega}_d[1 - 0.3\gamma_b\tilde{\omega}_d/(\beta_\alpha\omega_*\tilde{\omega}_A)]$ for $4\gamma_b\tilde{\omega}_d/(3\beta_\alpha\omega_*\tilde{\omega}_A) \ll 1$. The marginal stability boundary is given by

$$\beta_\alpha \sigma(\omega) = \frac{4\tilde{\omega}_d^2}{3\pi\omega_*\tilde{\omega}_A} \sqrt{1 - \frac{1.28\omega_{*i}}{\tilde{\omega}_d} \left(1 + \frac{0.3\gamma_b\tilde{\omega}_d}{\beta_\alpha\omega_*\tilde{\omega}_A} \right)}. \quad (6)$$

Thus, for the fishbone branch, the effect of reducing $\tilde{\omega}_d$ or increasing ω_{*i} is to reduce the critical β_α , and vice versa.

Figure 2: Marginal stability curves in the (β_α, γ_b) plane for $\omega_{*i} = 0$ and $\kappa = 1$. Curve (a) uses $\omega_d = \omega_{d0} g r_s / r$ with $\delta = 0.3$, and curve (b) uses $\omega_d = \omega_{d0} G_1 r_s / r$.

In the following we present numerical solutions of the dispersion relation, Eq. (4). With the fixed parameters $E_\alpha = 3.5 \text{ MeV}$, $\omega_*/\omega_{d0} = \tilde{\omega}_A/\omega_{d0} = 10$, $r_s/R = 0.1$, $q_0 = 0.8$, Fig. 2 shows the marginal stability curves in (β_α, γ_b) space for $\omega_{*i} = 0$. In the domain under the curves, the plasma is stable; the left boundary is for the ideal kink mode, and the right boundary is for the fishbone mode. The solid curve is obtained by using $\omega_d = \omega_{d0} g r_s/r$, the dotted curve is obtained by using $\omega_d = \omega_{d0} G_1 r_s/r$ (plasma beta and inverse aspect ratio effects are neglected), and the dashed line uses $\omega_d = \omega_{d0} r_s/r$ which represents the deeply trapped limit. Here $g < G_1 \leq 1$. It is clear that the drift reversal effect is reducing the average $\bar{\omega}_d$, and thus the critical β_α for both the ideal kink and the fishbone modes. The drift reversal has a small stabilizing effect on the ideal kink branch; the slope of the curve is proportional to $1/\bar{\omega}_d$ near $\beta_\alpha = 0$. However, the drift reversal has a large destabilizing effect on the fishbone mode; the threshold for the fishbone is substantially lowered since the critical $\beta_\alpha \sim \bar{\omega}_d^2$. We note that even when the total plasma β is below the ideal internal kink threshold, the fishbone mode can be excited with large β_α . The result for deeply trapped limit [(curve (c))] is presented for comparison purpose.

Figure 3 plots the marginal stability boundaries in the (β_α, γ_b) space for ellipticity κ and triangularity δ dependences. The fixed parameters are the same as in Fig. 2. In general, as κ or δ increases, the field line curvature and thus ω_d will decrease, which can be seen from Eq. (2). It is clear that as κ or δ gets larger, the stable domain becomes narrower mainly due to the destabilizing effect on the fishbone mode. The β_α threshold for the stabilization of ideal kink mode is only slightly decreased by κ and δ . But, the threshold for the fishbone mode excitation can be significantly reduced by κ and δ . As pointed out by Kerner⁹ and Connor,¹⁰ the ideal magnetohydrodynamic (MHD) critical β_{pc} and thus γ_b depend weakly on the ellipticity κ , but strongly depend on the triangularity δ . For Solovév equilibrium⁹ β_{pc} is proportional to $(1 - \delta)^{-1}$, and δ reduces γ_b . Since the marginal stability boundary for the ideal kink mode is only weakly modified by δ , the effect of δ through γ_b

Figure 3: The ellipticity κ and trangularity δ dependence of the marginal stability curves in the (β_α, γ_b) plane for $\omega_{*i} = 0$.

has a strong stabilizing effect on the ideal kink mode. On the other hand, the effect of δ through γ_b competes with its destabilizing effect on the fishbone mode.

Figure 4 shows the core ion finite Larmor radius effect (finite ω_{*i}) on the stability boundary in the (β_α, γ_b) space for $\kappa = 1.5$ and $\delta = 0.3$. For typical tokamak parameters we expect $\omega_{*i}/\omega_{d0} \leq 0.1$. As ω_{*i} increases the γ_b threshold decreases for the ideal kink mode, but decreases much more for the fishbone mode. We note that the threshold for the ideal kink mode is reduced by ω_{*i} . This is due to the increase of frequency and the decrease of ω_d so that there are more particles with $\omega_d \sim \omega_{*i}$ and $|1 - \omega_d/\omega_{*i}| < 1$. Then, from our analytical theory [(Eq. (5))] the γ_b threshold for the ideal kink mode is reduced by ω_{*i} . For the fishbone mode the β_α threshold is further reduced by ω_{*i} as predicted from our analytical analysis. The results show that due to the magnetic drift reversal effect ω_{*i} reduces the stable domain much more than the previous calculation indicated.¹

In summary, the effects of trapped fusion α -particles on internal kink modes have

Figure 4: The diamagnetic drift frequency $\zeta(=\omega_{*i}/\omega_{d0})$ -dependence of the marginal stability curves in the (β_α, γ_b) plane for $\kappa = 1.5$ and $\delta = 0.3$.

been investigated. Finite Grad-Shafranov Shift, plasma β , and plasma shaping effects can significantly enhance the trapped particle drift reversal domain in the pitch angle space and reduce the magnitude of the precessional drift frequency. The stable domain for both the ideal kink and the fishbone modes can be significantly reduced. For typical tokamak parameters, the core ion diamagnetic drift effect can narrow the stable domain in the presence of alpha particles, even though it has a stabilizing effect in the ideal MHD limit.

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