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Spectroscopic Observation of 0-300 keV ^3He Ions
Produced by ICRF Heating in the TFTR Tokamak

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ABSTRACT

^3He ions with energies from thermal values up to 300 keV produced by ICRF heating have been spectroscopically observed by the α -CHERS diagnostic on TFTR. The shape of the spectrum and the temporal and spatial behavior of the energetic ^3He ion emission are consistent with expectations for this ICRF heating case. Because the ^3He ion density was similar to the alpha particle density predicted for D-T supershots on TFTR, these observations give confidence that confined alphas produced by D-T fusion reactions can be observed by α -CHERS during D-T operation of TFTR.

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A major goal of deuterium-tritium (D-T) operation of the Tokamak Fusion Test Reactor (TFTR) is to study the physics of confined nonthermal alpha particles produced by D-T fusion reactions. Measurements of the spatial and velocity distributions of alphas as they slow down from their birth energy of 3.5 MeV to thermal energies will be important to understanding alpha physics and, thus, to predicting alpha behavior in future devices such as ITER. To help achieve this goal, several confined alpha diagnostics have been implemented on the TFTR tokamak. One such diagnostic is the Alpha Charge Exchange Recombination Spectroscopy experiment (α -CHERS) [1,2], which will observe confined alphas with energies from thermal values to an upper limit of 0.5-1.0 MeV.

Because α -CHERS is the first implementation of a new measurement technique for D-T alphas, it was desirable to evaluate its capabilities prior to D-T operation of TFTR by performing an experiment to observe a simulated population of energetic alphas. This letter presents the results of such an experiment: ^3He ions with energies up to 300 keV produced by ICRF heating were observed by the prototype α -CHERS system. The ^3He ion density was similar to the alpha density expected for high- Q D-T discharges on TFTR, although the velocity distribution produced by RF heating is anisotropic, while that of the D-T alphas is expected to be close to isotropic. The time evolution and spatial profiles of the energetic ^3He ion emission are consistent with expectations for this ICRF heating case, and the shape of the observed spectrum is very similar to that predicted from a Fokker-Planck calculation of the ^3He ion distribution function for this case. Thus, this experiment provides confidence that the D-T alpha signal on TFTR can be observed. In a similar vein, ^3He ions from a 135 keV helium neutral beam have been observed on the JET tokamak by charge exchange recombination spectroscopy, albeit at a higher helium ion density [3].

The concepts of charge exchange recombination spectroscopy of alpha particles were originally discussed by Post, *et al.* [4], and most recently by von Hellermann, *et al.* [3]. Post *et al.* [5] proposed utilizing energetic ^3He ions produced by ICRF heating to simulate fusion alphas. The α -CHERS signal is due to reactions in which charge exchange takes place during a collision between an alpha and an energetic deuterium atom injected by a neutral beam, leaving a He^+ ion in an excited level with principal quantum number $n=4$, which then decays to level $n=3$ by emitting line radiation at 468.6 nm. α -CHERS views the deuterium heating neutral beams which are injected tangentially and operated at an energy of 95 keV in this experiment. The cross section for excitation of this line is strongly peaked at low relative velocity (approximately 30 keV/amu), and the observed emission is therefore primarily from ions with a narrow range of velocities near the beam velocity. As a result, the spectral line shape is determined by the angle between the beam and the spectrometer sightline, ϕ , and the emission from the nonthermal particles appears as broad wings on the thermal line emission. For $\phi \neq 90^\circ$, the wings are asymmetric around the thermal 468.6 nm line. The α -CHERS sightlines on TFTR were chosen to produce a red shift of the energetic alpha emission to avoid

strong lines of low ionization states of carbon present on the short wavelength side of the He^+ 468.6 nm line.

Predictions of the α -CHERS signal for D-T plasmas show that while the line wing is weak compared to the bremsstrahlung background, measurements with a useful signal-to-noise ratio can be obtained by a high throughput optical system in which the detector noise is dominated by photon statistics [1,2]. Thus, the prototype α -CHERS instrumentation consisted of high-throughput input optics and spectrometers coupled to low-noise charge-coupled-device (CCD) cameras. The instrumentation used in the present experiment is described only briefly here; details may be found in references 1 and 2. Following the completion of this work, the α -CHERS hardware was upgraded to allow simultaneous observation of six spatial points for D-T operation of TFTR.

A tangential array of sightlines in the torus midplane was used to view three co-injected neutral beams. This array has five spatial channels and radial resolution of 0.02 m, with $\phi=43.7^\circ$ for the sightline intersecting the beams at a major radius of 3.08 m. A schematic diagram of the sightlines and beams is shown in Fig. 1. Light from a selected spatial channel is coupled via optical fibers to a 0.275 m Czerny-Turner spectrometer with 1.0 nm spectral resolution. The spatial channel viewed by the spectrometer can be selected between shots; thus, a five point spatial scan can be performed by combining data from five reproducible shots. The detector is a low-noise, back-illuminated, 512×512 pixel CCD camera. The camera was not shuttered during readout, so the time resolution was determined by the readout time, which was 0.1 s in this experiment. Statistical analysis of the noise on the data demonstrates that it is very close to that predicted by photon statistics. To correct for pixel-to-pixel variations in the gain of the detector, a flat field correction was applied to the data. The background signal in the absence of light was measured before each shot and was subtracted from each readout of the camera (frame) of data taken during the discharge.

To produce a significant nonthermal ^3He ion distribution under conditions similar to those expected for D-T operation, a moderate density discharge with $\bar{n}_e = 2.6 \times 10^{19} \text{ m}^{-3}$ was used in this experiment. This was accomplished by injecting 3 co-directed neutral beams and 3 counter-beams (where co- and counter are defined as the directions parallel and anti-parallel to the plasma current), for a total beam power of 14 MW. The time evolutions of $\bar{n}_e$, the beam power, and the RF power are shown in Fig. 2 for a case with 4.0 MW RF power. The duration of the beam pulse was 2 s; the RF pulse was 1 s long, starting 0.5 s into the beam pulse and ending 0.5 s before the end of the beam pulse. This timing was chosen to allow $\bar{n}_e$ to reach a nearly steady state value before the start of the RF pulse and to allow the signal during the RF pulse to be compared with the signal following the RF pulse, with the beams on at both times. A ^3He puff of 0.1 s duration was introduced starting at 2.3 s; the ^3He concentration was measured from the n_e rise to be 1.5% of $n_e(0)$, equivalent to a density of $6.0 \times 10^{17} \text{ m}^{-3}$ on axis. Larger ^3He concentrations produce lower average ^3He ion energies for a given RF power, so it was not

possible to increase the α -CHERS signal by increasing the ^3He concentration. The plasma current in these discharges was 1.4 MA and the toroidal field was 4.8 T. The major and minor radii were $R=2.62$ m and $a=0.97$ m, respectively.

The α -CHERS spectrum from one frame of data near the end of the 4.0 MW RF pulse is shown in Fig. 3. This spectrum is from a sightline which intersects the neutral beams at $R=3.08$ m ($r/a=0.3$), the spatial location at which the largest signal was seen. The thermal He^+ 468.6 nm line is present along with a number of other impurity lines and the background bremsstrahlung continuum. The emission from energetic ^3He ions is present as a broad wing on the long wavelength side of the thermal He^+ line.

The line wing is more clearly seen in Fig. 4, which shows data from the same shot at three different times: immediately before the start of the RF pulse, at the beginning of the RF pulse, and near the end of the RF pulse. A constant value of the bremsstrahlung background evaluated at 476.4 nm (equivalent ^3He ion energy=390 keV) for each time point was subtracted, and the signals were normalized to each other at this wavelength to show more clearly the change in the shape of the line wing. To illustrate the range of ^3He ion energies observed, the spectra are plotted as a function of ^3He ion energy determined from the measured Doppler shift. (The energy is derived from the ^3He ion velocity along the sightline, which is close to the velocity along the field lines for this viewing geometry.) It is clear that emission from ^3He ions with energies up to 300 keV is present in the spectrum. The enhancement of the line wing at the start of the RF pulse is small because the population of energetic ^3He ions is not yet fully developed, while the line wing at the end of the RF pulse is much stronger because a steady state population of energetic ions has been established by this time.

Fig. 5 shows a predicted energetic ^3He ion spectrum compared with the measured spectrum at the end of the RF pulse. The predicted spectrum is based on the ^3He ion distribution function calculated for this discharge by the FPP/SPRUCE code [6,7], which solves the bounce-averaged Fokker-Planck equation to find the fast ion distribution function as a function of energy, pitch angle, and radius in the plasma midplane. FPP [6] includes the bounce-averaged quasilinear RF-heating operator and the collisional thermalization operator. SPRUCE [7] solves the 3-dimensional wave equation for the ICRF fast wave, incorporating propagation, focusing, diffraction, and damping. The effects of fundamental and second harmonic ion damping, electron damping, and mode conversion are included. The distribution function at the appropriate radius and pitch angle was normalized to the measured value of the ^3He density and was used to calculate the spectrum. The line excitation cross sections used were those of von Hellermann, *et al.* [8] with full l-mixing, and the beam atom density was calculated including the effects of excitation before ionization [9]. The shape of the thermal line wing is determined primarily by the instrument function; it was modeled by a Gaussian whose width and amplitude were adjusted to reproduce the line wing before the RF pulse (the spectrum at time T_1 in Fig. 4). This procedure is expected to accurately reproduce the thermal

line wing at the end of the RF pulse because T_i at $R=3.08$ m increased from 9 keV to 11 keV during the RF pulse, resulting in a small increase in the line width compared to the instrumental width. Comparison of the curves in Fig. 5 shows that the observed and calculated energetic ^3He ion spectra have a very similar shape. In future measurements of D-T alphas, absolute calibration of α -CHERS will make it possible to derive the absolute alpha density from the data.

Fig. 6 shows the time evolution of the energetic ^3He ion signal obtained by integrating the difference between the total signal and the bremsstrahlung contribution over the spectral range corresponding to the energy range 40-270 keV for each frame. The signal at lower energies was excluded to minimize the contribution of the thermal line. Also shown is the signal from a similar shot with $P_{\text{RF}}=0$. The increase in the signal at the onset of beam injection is due to the broadening of the line wing caused by the increase in T_i at $R=3.08$ m from 2 keV to 9 keV and is similar for the two cases. An increase in the signal is seen early in the RF pulse. The signal remains roughly constant until the end of the RF pulse, and then it decays to the pre-RF level in approximately 0.3 s. (In the $P_{\text{RF}}=0$ comparison shot, the beam pulse ended at 4.0 s, resulting in different time evolutions of the signals after this time.) Thus, the intensity of the energetic ^3He ion emission is well correlated in time with the RF pulse, and the finite time required for the signal to decay following the end of the RF pulse is comparable to the calculated slowing down time of 0.1 s in this discharge.

A five-point radial profile of the energetic ^3He ion emission is shown in Fig. 7. This scan was performed on a shot-to-shot basis at $P_{\text{RF}}=2.6$ MW, the highest power at which reliable RF operation could be obtained. For each spatial point, the signal was integrated over the ^3He ion energy range 40-270 keV and the bremsstrahlung background was subtracted. The signal was averaged over the later half of the RF pulse (3.5-4.0 s) and the signal following the RF pulse, but before the end of beam injection (4.4 s), was subtracted to remove the contributions of weak edge impurity lines. (The energetic ^3He ion line wing was not observable in the outermost spatial channel at $R=3.50$ m and the signal was dominated by edge lines, so the signal at this radius was set to zero in Fig. 7.) The signal was normalized to the calculated beam atom density, resulting in a quantity proportional to the total energetic ^3He ion density at a given radius. The magnetic axis in this discharge was located at $R=2.85$ m, and FPP/SPRUCE code [6,7] modeling for this case shows that the RF power deposition peaked at a minor radius of 0.15 m. As a result, the peak of the energetic ^3He ion density is expected to be at $R=3.00$ m. The energetic ion density was found to peak off-axis, as expected, but at a radius of $R=3.08$ m, which is somewhat larger than predicted. However, this is acceptable agreement given this relatively simple analysis and that the radial profile consists of only 5 widely-spaced points.

In addition to prompt charge exchange, a source of signal is the plume of recombined $^3\text{He}^+$ ions that drift out of the beam volume along field lines and are excited by electron, proton, or impurity ion impact, radiating in the spectrometer field of view [10]. A crude calculation

shows that the plume emission is approximately 50% of the prompt charge exchange emission for the α -CHERS sightline intersecting the beams at $R=3.08$ m. This has the effect of spatially delocalizing the signal to some extent and may affect the line shape, especially at low energies. It is clear that more detailed experimental studies and modeling of the plume will be needed for quantitative interpretation of α -CHERS data in these and D-T discharges.

Finally, it is worthwhile to compare the intensity of the predicted ^3He signal shown in Fig. 5 with the predicted alpha signal for a D-T supershot on TFTR. The D-T alpha spectrum was calculated assuming an alpha density of $2 \times 10^{17} \text{ m}^{-3}$, as predicted by TRANSP code simulations of the D-T performance of a supershot with $Q_{DT}=0.23$ at $I_p=1.6$ MA and 24 MW beam power [11]. This alpha density is smaller than the ^3He ion density observed in this experiment by approximately a factor of three. Classical slowing down of the alphas was assumed in the calculation of the spectrum, and the beam density was calculated from the parameters of the simulated D-T discharge. At an alpha energy of 300 keV, the predicted D-T alpha signal is smaller than the predicted RF ^3He ion signal shown in Fig. 5 by a factor of 5. Given planned improvements in the apparatus and the development of a full nonlinear modeling algorithm, it should be possible to extract nonthermal alpha signals considerably smaller than those observed here. This observation therefore provides confidence that the energetic alpha spectrum can be observed in D-T discharges on TFTR.

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FIGURE CAPTIONS

- Fig. 1: Schematic diagram of α -CHERS sightlines and neutral beam trajectories on TFTR.
- Fig. 2: Time evolution of $\bar{n}_e$, total beam power, and RF power for the shot shown in Figs. 3-6. The times shown in Fig. 4 are indicated by arrows.
- Fig. 3: α -CHERS spectrum at the end of the RF pulse ($T_3=3.9$ s in Fig. 2). The energetic ^3He ion emission is present as a broad wing on the long wavelength side of the thermal He^+ 468.6 nm line.
- Fig. 4: α -CHERS spectra at the times indicated in Fig. 2, with wavelength converted to alpha energy using the measured Doppler shift of the emission. The bremsstrahlung background has been subtracted and the spectra have been normalized at 476.4 nm (equivalent ^3He ion energy=390 keV).
- Fig. 5: α -CHERS spectrum predicted from the ^3He ion distribution function calculated by the FPP/SPRUCE code [6,7] compared with the measured spectrum at the end of the RF pulse.
- Fig. 6: Time evolution of the intensity of the energetic ^3He ion line wing integrated over wavelengths corresponding to alpha energies of 40-270 keV, with the bremsstrahlung background subtracted. The signal from a shot with $P_{\text{RF}}=0$ is shown for comparison.
- Fig. 7: Radial profile at $P_{\text{RF}}=2.6$ MW of the energetic ^3He ion emission integrated over the energy range 40-270 keV. The bremsstrahlung background and the signal following the RF pulse (4.4 s) have been subtracted. The signal has been normalized to the calculated beam atom density to yield a quantity proportional to the energetic ^3He ion density.

Fig. 1

Fig. 2

Fig. 3

Fig. 4

Fig. 5

Fig. 6

Fig. 7

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