FIRST DISRUPTION MITIGATION EXPERIMENTS ON DIII-D USING THE NEW SHOTGUN PELLET INJECTOR (SPI)

Presented by
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Presented at
APS-DPP Conference 2009
Atlanta, GA

November 2–6, 2009
High electron density is predicted to suppress runaway electrons in disruptions

- Runaway electrons can be a major issue for ITER

- Runaway electrons in ITER are expected to be generated by an avalanche process

- At high densities (~5x10^{16} cm^{-3}), this mechanism would be compensated by collisional losses.

- Maximum densities achieved using massive gas injection is ~10 times too low

\[ E_c = \frac{q_e^3 (n_e + n_{tot})}{4\pi \varepsilon_0 m_e c^2} \ln\Lambda \Rightarrow n_e \text{Rosenbluth} \approx 1 \times 10^{21} E_c \]

Record gas injection on DIII-D

NB: invited talk by E. Hollmann
Post deadline invited XI3.00004
A new method has been designed to increase the density

- A cryogenic pneumatic pellet injector shooting large pellets (15mm x 20mm cylinders) in DIII-D: the Shotgun Pellet Injector (SPI)

- The pellets are shattered before entering the plasma by bouncing on 2 plates to protect the PFCs and increase the surface area for more efficient ablation

NB: description of the SPI by T. Jernigan (JP8.00090)
SPI was installed and tested on DIII-D in 2009

- 1 run day obtained 7 shots ending with a SPI injection of deuterium pellets
- Very fast density increase (too fast for interferometry: no reliable data)
- Preliminary scans:
  - Quantity:
    - 2500 torr.L
    - 3000 torr.L
    - 3500 torr.L
  - injected power
    - 2.3 MW
    - 4.5 MW
    - 6.5 MW
Fast visible camera shows the pellet cloud penetrating deeper than Massive Gas Injection (MGI)
Bolometry shows evidence for deeper impurity penetration for SPI

- Bolometer tomography gives indication about particle deposition
- The deposition pattern is different between SPI and MGI
- The deposition appears much deeper for the pellet case

NB: shattered pellet ablation model by P. Parks (TP8.00036)
SPI reliably produced high local densities

- The spectral analysis provided the only available density measurements during the pellet injection and the disruption

- The local densities reached during the injection are very high (up to $8 \times 10^{15}$ cm$^{-3}$)

- Every shot but one reached local densities $> 4 \times 10^{21}$ m$^{-3}$ (good reliability)
Strong toroidal density asymmetry is observed during the Thermal Quench

- Spectroscopic measurements are available in several toroidal angles in DIII-D
- After the TQ, strong toroidal density asymmetry is observed
- During the CQ, the density measurements show that the toroidal symmetry is achieved when $n_e \sim 2 \times 10^{15}$ cm$^{-3}$
- The assimilation efficiency is $\sim 17\%$ (lower bound)
Density perturbation is a function of the size of the first large pellet piece

- In several cases, the pellet broke in the barrel in 2 pieces: 2 clouds of fragments hit the plasma several ms apart

- Density perturbation due to SPI increases with:
  - The thermal energy of the plasma
  - The amount of mass injected

- The density perturbation appears to be a function of $W_{th} \times$ size of the first fragment hitting the plasma

- The second piece appears to arrive “too late”: not enough energy left to ionize the particles

- Similar effects are also observed with MGI
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There is no significant contribution of the bound electrons to the runaway mitigation.

- Neutral particles are also important for runaway mitigation: free and bound electrons mitigate the runaways.
- Measuring the neutral gas pressure during the disruption is challenging.
- Spectra acquired during the current quench give some information through the electron temperature.
- The different methods yield $T_e \sim$ few eV: the ionization fraction should be close to 1.
Summary

- The first 1.5cm x 2cm shattered deuterium pellet were injected in DIII-D
- Fast camera data show deeper penetration with shattered pellet than with massive gas
- Local electron densities observed appear to be very high (~18x10^{15} cm^{-3})
- Cases with a pellet broken in the barrel show that only the first “cloud” impacting the plasma contributes to the density increase
- These preliminary promising results motivate proposed 2010 experiments on DIII-D with higher power, higher Z material, improved diagnostics...
For more information

- Invited talk summarizing the disruption mitigation experiments on DIII-D by E. Hollmann (Post deadline invited XI3.00004) Friday morning

- Description of the SPI by T. Jernigan (JP8.00090) Tuesday afternoon

- Shattered pellet ablation model by P. Parks (TP8.00036) Thursday morning
Prospects

• A new run day is scheduled during the next campaign of DIII-D in order to test Neon pellets (which would contain enough electrons to reach an average density higher than the Rosenbluth density)
  – assimilation (as good as for D₂?)
  – The energy losses due to impurity radiation

• The assimilation of the particles injected through several pellets or pellet+MGI is important to be addressed:
  – for ITER, 1 pellet containing enough electrons would be the size of a grapefruit
  – Is it possible to use several pellets injected with several injectors?

• The possibility of “killing” an existing runaway beam has also to be addressed (SPI, MGI, magnetic control...)

DIII-D
NATIONAL FUSION FACILITY
The Disruptions on ITER

- ITER will contain ~350 MJ of thermal energy and ~1 GJ of poloidal magnetic energy.

- ITER can sustain important damage due to disruptions during high performance discharges.

- The hazardous effects of the disruptions on ITER are:
  - High heat fluxes on plasma facing components less susceptible to tolerate such effects (metal walls).
  - High halo currents generating strong mechanical stress in the structures.
  - "runaway" electrons.

(DIII-D National Fusion Facility San Diego)
Mitigation of Vessel forces and currents

- The halo currents and displacements generated by a MGI triggered disruption are 2 to 3 times smaller than the one occurring during unmitigated disruption.

- The SPI mitigation allows the same level of mitigation on DIII-D in terms of vertical displacements (~vertical forces) and halo currents.

- The horizontal forces are not (yet) monitored during these experiments.
The “bump” on the current decay: a runaway beam?

- Almost all the disruptions triggered by an SPI injection exhibit 2 plasma current bumps during the current decay.

- The first bump is well documented (very common feature: magnetic reconnection (kink mode ?) dropping the plasma inductance.

- The second bump is rare during unmitigated and/or MGI disruptions. Not runaway electrons (no plastic scintillator signal).

- Hypothesis: while the plasma shrinks, $q_{\text{edge}}$ drops and crosses an integral value (2 ?) triggering another kink mode.
The “bump” on the current decay

- The images of the UCSD fast camera show a bright spot before the second bump that could be a confined plasma.

- When the bump occurs, the bright spot warps and gets larger (MHD mode destroying the flux surfaces?)

Confined plasma?
Secondary disruption?
Detailed theory (1)

- **Assume: Identical** initial pellet radii \( r_{p0} \) and **uniform** concentration \( n_c \), low enough to ensure that each pellet within a given slice of flux surface receives nearly the same electron heat flux.

- **INSERT** a sketch of the stream showing \( x = \) distance from plasma boundary and stream length, radius, velocity \( L_c, R_c, V_c \) respectively.

\[
\frac{\partial r_p}{\partial t} + V_c \frac{\partial r_p}{\partial x} = -C_n e^{1/3} T_e^{5/3} r_p^{-2/3} / (4\pi n_s)
\]

\[
\frac{\partial n_e}{\partial x} = C_n e^{1/3} T_e^{5/3} r_p^{4/3} n_c R_c^2 / (4\pi r R)
\]

- Assume dilution cooling during penetration:

\[
n_e(r,t) T_e(r,t) = n_e(r,0) T_e(r,0) = w(r) n_e 0 T_e 0
\]

- Transform to 2 coupled universal ODES

\[
dY / d\xi = (4/7)\xi Z^{-4/7}, \quad dZ / d\xi = Y^{4/5}, \quad \text{where:} \quad \xi = (t/t_* - x/V_c t_*) [(a/V_c t_*) F(\rho)]^{-7/4}, \quad Y = (r_p / r_{p0})^{5/3}
\]

\[
Z = \rho w^{-5/3} (n_e / n_*)^{7/3} [(a/V_c t_*) F(\rho)]^{-7/4}, \quad F(\chi) = \int_\chi^1 w(\rho)^{5/7} \rho^{4/7} d\rho, \quad \rho = r/a
\]

- **Boundary Conditions:**

**Entrance:** \( \xi = \infty, \quad Y = 1, \quad Z = \infty \) **Stream Front:** \( \xi = \xi_0, \quad Y = 0, \quad Z \approx 0 \)
Detailed theory (2)

• Solve ODEs to find $\xi_0 = 6.5$. Then Stream front trajectory $\rho_{\text{front}}$ is given implicitly:

$$\rho_{\text{front}} = 1 - V_c t / a + \left( \frac{a \xi_0}{V_c t^*} \right)^{3/4} F(\rho_{\text{front}})^{7/4}$$

• Optimal case: want pellet stream **completely burned up**, “back” reaches “front” at moment $t = t_{\text{burn}} = L_c / V_c + a / V_c$, when $\rho_{\text{front}} = 0$

$$V_c = \frac{5^{7/3} \xi_0^{4/3} C_{sph} a F(0)^{7/3} \left( T_e_0 n_e_0 \right)^{5/3}}{2^{2/3} 3^{7/3} \pi n_s (\Delta n_e)^{4/3} \left( r_p_0 \right)} \text{ (cm/s)}$$

• Compare with range of DIII-D experimental values $V_{c,\text{exp}} \sim 200 - 400$ m/s

$T_{e_0} = 2.8 \text{ keV}, \ n_{e_0} = 9 \times 10^{13} \text{ cm}^{-3}, \ a = 66 \text{ cm, } r_{p_0} = 0.09 \text{ cm, } F(0) = 0.34, \ \Delta n_e = 5 \times 10^{15} \text{ cm}^{-3}$

$V_c = 322 \text{ m/s, consistent with experiment!}$

• Prediction for ITER with $\Delta n_e = n_{crit} \sim 2 \times 10^{16} \text{ cm}^{-3}$ requires higher velocity

$T_{e_0} = 20 \text{ keV}, \ n_{e_0} = 10^{14} \text{ cm}^{-3}, \ a = 200 \text{ cm, } r_{p_0} = 0.35 \text{ cm, } F(0) = 0.34$

$V_c = 505 \text{ m/s}$

$$\rho_{\text{front}} \sim (1/4)n_{crit}$$
Pellet cluster stream penetration theory: the assumptions

- 1D model assuming a cylindrical homogeneous cloud of small identical pellets (pellets density $n_c$ and radius $r_0$)

- Assume dilution cooling during the penetration of the cloud (adiabatic ablation)

- Ablation model for each individual pellet similar to the NGS fueling pellet ablation model

$$\frac{\partial r_p}{\partial t} + V_c \frac{\partial r_p}{\partial x} = -Cn_e^{1/3}T_e^{5/3}r_p^{-2/3}/(4\pi n_s)$$

$$\frac{\partial n_e}{\partial x} = Cn_e^{1/3}T_e^{5/3}r_p^{4/3}n_c R_c^2/(4\pi r R)$$

- Goal: calculate the speed of cloud in order to get a full ablation when the cloud reaches the center of the plasma (ideal scenario)
Results: the SPI is in the right ball park for DIII-D

\[ V_c = \frac{5^{7/3} \xi_0^{4/3} C_{sph} a F(0)^{7/3}}{2^{2/3} 3^{7/3} \pi r_s (\Delta n_e)^{4/3}} \left( \frac{T_{e0} n_{e0}}{r_{p0}} \right)^{5/3} \text{(cm/s)} \]

For DIII-D: \( T_{e0} = 2.8 \text{keV} ; n_{e0} = 9 \times 10^{13} \text{cm}^{-3} ; a = 66 \text{cm} ; r_{p0} = 0.9 \text{ mm} ; \Delta n_e = 5 \times 10^{15} \text{cm}^{-3} \)

The speed should be 322 m/s (speed of the fragments evaluated between 200 and 400 m/s)

For ITER: \( T_{e0} = 20 \text{keV} ; n_{e0} = 1 \times 10^{14} \text{cm}^{-3} ; a = 2 \text{ m} ; r_{p0} = 3.5 \text{ mm} ; \Delta n_e = 1 \times 10^{16} \text{cm}^{-3} \)

The speed should be 505 m/s (realistic value)
Measuring the density: a real challenge

- The interferometers are too slow for the density perturbation induced by the SPI: fringe skipping
- The only available density measurements are through spectrum analysis

Shot 138212

\[ B \times 10^{13} \text{ph/s/cm}^2\text{sr} \]

Shot 138212

\[ N_0 \times 10^{21} \text{m}^{-2} \]

Shot 138212

\[ t = 2995 \text{ ms} \]
Several mitigation systems are available

Massive Gas Injection (MGI)
- Reduces both halo currents and heat loads
- **BUT**: weak assimilation (~15% on DIII-D) and penetration of the particles

Impurity pellet injection (“killer pellet”)
- Reduces both halo currents and heat loads
- **BUT**: generates runaway electrons

Magnetic perturbation (RMP):
- Intended to de-confine the runaways before they reach dangerous energy levels

Shell pellet (plastic shell filled with impurity powder)
- Intended to disperse its payload in the core

**Shattered pellet**
- Expected to improve the assimilation to damp the avalanche multiplication of the runaways by reaching the Rosenbluth density
Implementation of the SPI on DIII-D
Fast visible camera shows the pellet cloud penetrating deeper than Massive Gas Injection (MGI)