



IAEA FEC 201

Contribution ID: 835

Type: Poster

Magnetic shear effects on plasma transport and turbulence at high electron to ion temperature ratio in DIII-D and JT-60U plasmas

Friday, 21 October 2016 14:00 (4h 45m)

Negative magnetic shear has been demonstrated to mitigate the confinement degradation typically observed with increasing the electron to ion temperature ratio (T_e/T_i), and the mechanisms are now understood in terms of fluctuation measurements and gyrokinetic (GK) simulations in DIII-D steady-state plasmas. The impact of T_e/T_i on plasma transport and confinement is a critical issue for ITER and DEMO, where electron heating by alpha particles will be dominant. In the new experiments in DIII-D negative magnetic shear (NS) discharges, the T_i profile was maintained as T_e/T_i increased through electron cyclotron range of frequency (ECRF) heating, while in positive magnetic shear (PS) plasmas, a large reduction in T_i was observed at increased T_e/T_i . The different transport behavior has been explained by the turbulence measurements and GK simulations; the increase in T_e/T_i had less impact on broadband turbulent fluctuations in the NS plasmas compared with that in the PS plasmas. The difference reflects changes in thermal energy confinement; the ion thermal diffusivity remained constant in the NS plasma but increased in the PS plasma when ECRF was applied. The reduced confinement degradation at high T_e/T_i with NS has been commonly observed in DIII-D and JT-60U.

Paper Number

EX/8-1

Country or International Organization

Japan

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Session Classification: Poster EX/7, EX/8, TH/5, TH/6, EX/11, TH/9, FIP/3, FIP/4, PD

Track Classification: EXC - Magnetic Confinement Experiments: Confinement