Plasma Potential in Toroidal Devices: T-10, TJ-II, CHS and LHD

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Direct measurements of the electric potential \( \varphi \), using the Heavy Ion Beam Probing, have been undertaken in the T-10 tokamak, and in the helical devices with various magnetic topology: TJ-II, CHS and LHD. L-mode plasmas were considered. Despite the large differences in machine sizes, heating methods and the topology of the magnetic field, the observed \( \varphi \) shows the striking similarities: (i) Similar magnitudes of \( E_r \); (ii) For low densities, \( n_e < 0.5 \times 10^{19} \text{m}^{-3} \), \( \varphi \) is positive, and an increase in \( n_e \) is associated with the decrease of positive \( \varphi \) and formation of a negative \( E_r \); (iii) For higher densities, \( n_e > (0.5-1) \times 10^{19} \text{m}^{-3} \), both \( \varphi \) and \( E_r \) tends to be negative despite the use of different heating methods: Ohmic and ECR heating in T-10, ECRH and/or NBI in TJ-II, CHS and LHD; (iv) Application of ECRH, causing a rise in \( T_e \), results in more positive values for \( \varphi \) and \( E_r \). The analysis show that the main features of the \( \varphi \) dependences on the \( n_e \) and \( T_e \) agree with neoclassical predictions on the four devices within experimental and simulation precisions.

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1. Introduction

The direct measurement of the average electric potential in the core plasma is of primary importance for the understanding of the role of the radial electric field \( E_r \) in confinement improvement mechanisms [1]. The Heavy Ion Beam Probe (HIBP) is a unique diagnostic to study directly the electric potential and turbulence characteristics in toroidal plasmas from the core to the edge [2, 3]. The HIBP was used in the T-10 circular tokamak [4], in TJ-II, a four-period flexible heliac with helical plasma axis [5] and in the stellarators CHS [6] and LHD [7] to study the potential with high spatial (< 1 cm) and temporal (1 \( \mu \)s) resolution in plasmas with comparable parameters, but in different magnetic configurations. Comparison for Ohmic (OH) and Electron Cyclotron Resonance Heating (ECRH) plasmas in the two machines, T-10 and TJ-II reveals similar tendencies of the potential profiles [8, 9]. The paper reports the results of the comparative studies of plasma potential in all four machines, including CHS and LHD with the same diagnostics. Although the HIBP was used during scans in the main plasma parameters on T-10, TJ-II, CHS and LHD [9–12], and all data obtained in this way were considered in this study. This paper shows only the results obtained on a limited number of interesting discharges in four machines, illustrating our main conclusions. Main engineering parameters for the machines considered are summarized in Table 1.

### Table 1: Main parameters of machines under study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parameter</th>
<th>T-10</th>
<th>TJ-II</th>
<th>CHS</th>
<th>LHD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>( R ) (m)</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>3.5 - 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( a_{\text{in}} ) (m)</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>0.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( B_t ) (T)</td>
<td>1.5 - 2.5</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.0 - 2.0</td>
<td>0.5 - 2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( n_e (10^{19} \text{m}^{-3}) )</td>
<td>1 - 4</td>
<td>0.2 - 6</td>
<td>0.3 - 3</td>
<td>0.1 - 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( P_{\text{ECRH}} ) (MW) ( \leq 2 )</td>
<td>( \leq 0.6 )</td>
<td>( \leq 0.3 )</td>
<td>( \leq 3 )</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( P_{\text{NBI}} ) (MW)</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>( \leq 0.9 )</td>
<td>( \leq 1.5 )</td>
<td>( \leq 25 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( E_{\text{HIBP}} ) (keV)</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>6000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIBP ions</td>
<td>( T^+ )</td>
<td>Cs(^+)</td>
<td>Cs(^+), Rb(^+)</td>
<td>Au(^+)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>observation</td>
<td>+0.2&lt;( \rho &lt;1 )</td>
<td>(-1&lt;\rho&lt;1 )</td>
<td>(-1&lt;\rho&lt;1 )</td>
<td>(-1&lt;\rho&lt;1 )</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Electric Potential Profile Evolution in OH, ECR and NBI Heated Plasmas

2.1 Density dependence

Observations with the HIBP diagnostic were undertaken in a large range of OH and ECR heated plasmas in T-10 and in a large range of ECR and NBI heated plasmas in stellarators. Plasma parameters of the discharges studied are shown in Table 1. Ohmic and ECR heated deuterium plasmas with line-averaged density \( \bar{n}_e = (1.0-4.1) \times 10^{19} \text{m}^{-3} \) on T-10 are characterized by a negative po-
Ohmic discharge in T-10 with low $B_t$ and rising density $n_e$. The radial profiles of plasma potential obtained by a set of radial scans with different $E_{HIBP} = (90-190)$ keV for three values of line-averaged central density.

**Fig. 1**

Evolution of the electric potential profiles with the raise of the line averaged density in plasmas with ECRH and NBI heating on CHS. Arrow denotes direction of time evolution.

**Fig. 2**

Evolution of the electric potential profiles with the raise of the line averaged density in plasmas with ECRH and NBI heating on TJ-II. Arrow denotes direction of time evolution.

Evolution of the electric potential profiles with the raise of the line averaged density $n_e$ (in brackets, $\times 10^{19}$ m$^{-3}$) in plasmas with ECRH and NBI heating on LHD, # 81079.

**Fig. 3**

**Fig. 4**

**2.2 Electron temperature dependence**

On the other hand, a rise in $T_e$ due to an increase in the Ohmic or additional ECR heating (Fig. 2) leads to a decrease in the absolute value of the negative potential in T-10, as shown in Fig. 5. It leads to the increase of the positive potential in TJ-II, CHS and LHD, as presented in Figs. 6, 7 and 8. Generally, the rise in $T_e$ leads to the changes in plasma potential into the positive direction despite the initial value, which was negative in T-10 or positive in CHS, TJ-II and LHD. One should note that the higher density of the target plasmas is associated with lower potential reaction after the ECRH application.

**3. Neoclassical Modeling of the Electric Potential Profiles**

The neoclassical (NC) modelling was performed for T-10 with Venus +df code [13], for TJ-II with MOCA code [14], for CHS with Hastings model [6], for LHD with GSRAKE code [15]. The main features of the potential...
Fig. 5  Time evolution of the plasma potential and $T_e$ in a gradient area at $\rho = 0.63$ for two values of $P_{\text{EC}}$ in T-10, $B_t = 2.3 \, \text{T}$, $n_e = 2.2 \times 10^{19} \, \text{m}^{-3}$, $I_p = 185 \, \text{kA}$ (a) and in the central area at $\rho = 0.3$ in TJ-II, $B_t = 1 \, \text{T}$, $n_e = 0.4 \times 10^{19} \, \text{m}^{-3}$ (b).

Fig. 6  Time evolution of the plasma potential due to the ECR auxiliary heating in CHS ($B_t = 2 \, \text{T}$, $P_{\text{EC}} = 0.2 \, \text{MW}$). (a) line-averaged central density for three cases; (b) central plasma potential. The higher density is associated with lower potential.

Fig. 7  Time evolution of the potential due to the ECR auxiliary heating in NBI sustained plasma at LHD ($B_t = 1.5 \, \text{T}$, $P_{\text{EC}} = 0.88 \, \text{MW}$). (a) line-averaged central density; (b) central plasma potential. The higher density is associated with lower potential response to ECRH, similar to the CHS case.

Fig. 8  The radial electric field (a) and potential (b) measured and calculated for the high-density regime with dominated ion losses ($n_e = 3 \times 10^{19} \, \text{m}^{-3}$) in TJ-II. Based on the tailored long mean free path (lmfp) [17] and plateau [18–20] collisional regimes for the ion and electron fluxes like

$$I_{i,e} = I_{i,e}^{\text{lmfp}} + \phi_{i,e} I_{i,e}^{\text{pl}},$$

profiles behavior show quite satisfactory agreement with experimental one [9–11].

Here we show the results of the NC simulations for four machines with simple analytical model [16]. It is

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4. Modeling Results

The modeling with the described procedure (1)-(4) was performed for TJ-II and LHD devices for wide range of the collisionality from lmfp to plateau. Figures 8 and 9 show the examples of the $E_r$ and $\varphi$ modeling compared to experimental data from TJ-II and LHD for the case of the dominant ion losses, which is more relevant to the future fusion devices. Results show that the model qualitatively agrees with experimental $\varphi$ and $E_i$ profiles.

5. Conclusions

Despite the large differences in machine sizes, heating methods and the topology of the magnetic field, the observed $\varphi$ shows the striking similarities:

(i) Similar magnitudes of $E_i$;
(ii) For low densities, $\bar{n}_e < 0.5 \times 10^{19} \text{ m}^{-3}$ (unattainable in T-10), $\varphi$ is positive, and an increase in $n_e$ is associated with the decrease of positive $\varphi$ and formation of a negative $E_i$;
(iii) For higher densities, $\bar{n}_e > (0.5-1) \times 10^{19} \text{ m}^{-3}$, both $\varphi$ and $E_i$ tends to be negative despite the use of different heating methods: OH and ECRH in T-10, ECRH and/or NBI in TJ-II, CHS and LHD;
(iv) Application of ECRH, causing a rise in $T_e$, results in more positive $\varphi$ and $E_i$.
(v) The analysis show that for four machines considered the main features of the $\varphi$ dependences on the $n_e$ and $T_e$ qualitatively agree with neoclassical predictions.

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