Fast-ion energy loss during TAE avalanches in NSTX*

E. D. Fredrickson, N. A. Crocker[1], D. Darrow, N. N. Gorelenkov, G. Kramer, S. Kubota[1], M. Podesta, A. Bortolon[2], R. E. Bell, B. LeBlanc, A. Diallo, S. Gerhardt, F. M. Levinton[3], H. Yuh[3], R. White *and the NSTX Team*

PPPL, Princeton, NJ, [1]UCLA, Los Angeles, CA, [2]UCI, Irvine, CA, [3]Nova Photonics, Princeton, NJ

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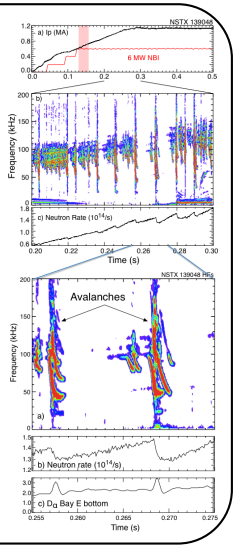
NSTX has low field, high density and current; perfect for study of fast ion-driven modes

- Low field, high density $V_{A0/0n} \approx 0.5 - 2.7 \times 10^6$ m/s.
- Beam injection energy 60 - 100 kV, $V_{fast} \approx 2.6 - 3.1 \times 10^6$ m/s
- Reactors would have higher field, fusion α's and $V_{fast}/V_{A0/0n} > 1$

$R_0 = 0.86$ m
$a = 0.68$ m
$B_0 = 0.3\text{-}0.55$ T
$I_p \leq 1.2$ MA
$\beta_{tor} \leq 40\%$
$n_e \leq 1 \times 10^{20}/m^3$

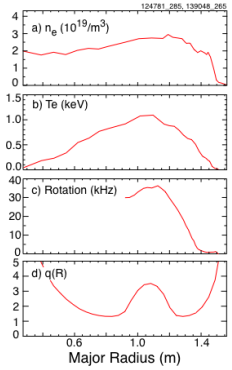


Simulations find neutron drop due to loss of energy from fast ions, not fast ion losses

- Drops in neutron rate of up to 15% are seen co-incident with TAE avalanche bursts, implying fast ion losses.
- Simulations of fast ion redistribution using NOVA for eigenmodes, experiment for mode amplitudes and frequency chirping, and ORBIT for particle redistribution found fast ion losses were small.
- At measured mode amplitudes there was a decrease in energy in the ORBIT sample fast ion population.
- This drop in fast ion energy, together with some internal redistribution, could account for the neutron rate drop.
- The estimated loss in fast ion energy is roughly comparable to estimates of energy transferred to thermal population through damping of the TAE.

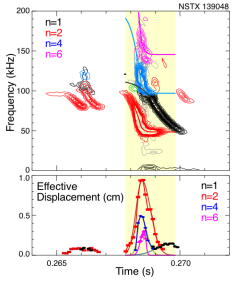
This analysis done on TAE avalanches in H-mode plasmas

- Analysis requires internal measurements of TAE amplitude, thus density profile must be peaked.
- Initial studies of TAE avalanche affect on fast ions used L-mode plasmas with peaked density profiles.
- Most H-mode density profiles flat in early phase, but some H-modes have some weak density peaking in core.
- Both H-mode and L-mode plasmas had strong, sheared toroidal rotation; mixes TAE frequency with core MHD frequency.
- TAE avalanches also seem correlated with shear reversal in core.
- H-mode avalanches seen with full energy beams (90 keV), but in L-mode needed lower energy beams (70 keV).



- Only H-mode data shown in this poster; re-analysis of L-mode data finds very similar story.

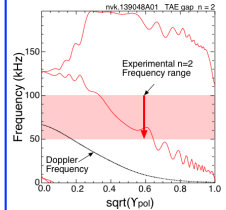
Four dominant modes present in TAE avalanche burst



- Analytic fits to the frequency and mode amplitude evolution are used in ORBIT
- Spectrogram of a Mirnov coil where contours are color-coded to indicate the toroidal mode numbers, as indicated in the legend
- the peak mode amplitude evolution for each mode from the reflectometer array.

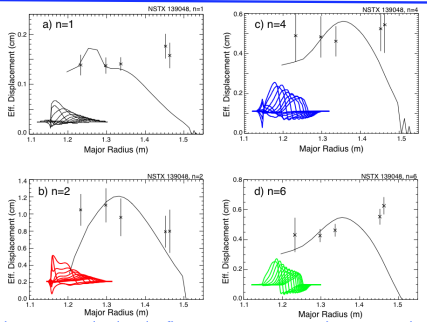
Strong sheared rotation typically closes TAE gaps

- TAE frequency close to kink frequency in core region – could lead to coupling between MHD and TAE.



- The continuum structure for the n=2 TAE is strongly distorted by the sheared rotation profile; first-order corrections introduced in NOVA (G. Kramer).
- Red band shows range of the n=2 TAE frequency chirp; radius of intersection with continuum moves out as frequency chirps down.

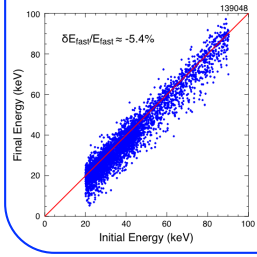
NOVA eigenmodes fit to mode amplitude measured with reflectometer array

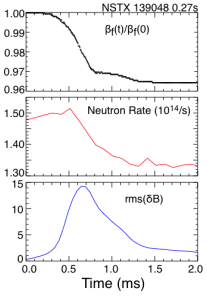


- Solid curves are simulated reflectometer response to be compared with reflectometer data.
- Black points are reflectometer data from five of the twelve channel array.
- Reflectometer measurement location mapped using Thomson scattering density profile (with some smoothing).
- Insets show NOVA poloidal harmonics for modes.

ORBIT simulations find 3% to 5% drop in energy of sample fast ion population

- Initial and final beam ion energies for an ORBIT simulation using measured mode amplitude and frequency evolutions.
- Change in energy appears diffusive, some up, but predominantly down, at all initial energies.
- This ORBIT simulation used nominal measured mode amplitudes.

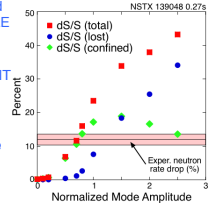




- Time dependence of change in β_{fast} in ORBIT simulation (mode amplitude scaled by 0.7) coincides with:
- drop in experimental neutron rate (middle panel).
- and growth of TAE (last panel).

Apparent stochastic transport onset seen in ORBIT simulations

- The red squares show the estimated total neutron rate drop vs. scaled TAE amplitude.
- Threshold is seen for onset of significant neutron rate drop in ORBIT simulations (at ≈ 0.3 of nominal measured mode amplitude).
- Neutron rate drop at low amplitude primarily from energy loss and some from redistribution.
- Neutron rate drop due to fast ion losses onsets at ≈0.7 of nominal mode amplitude (blue circles).



Simulations with NOVA and ORBIT capture some physics of TAE avalanche fast ion redistribution

- Amplitudes of Toroidal Alfvén Eigenmodes have been measured with reflectometer array
- Ideal mode structure is calculated with NOVA linear code.
- NOVA ideal modes, scaled to experimental amplitude, used in ORBIT to simulate affect on fast ion population.
- Up to the measured mode amplitude, dominant effect is a reduction in net energy of the sample fast ion population.
- Reduction in fast ion energy reduces fusion rate; drop is consistent with experimental drop in neutron rate.