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Effects of Zonal Fields on Energetic-  
Particle Excitations of Reversed Shear Alfvén  
Eigenmodes : Simulation and Theory†

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(I) Introduction

(II) GTC Simulations

(III) Theoretical Analyses

⊙ Beat-driven zonal fields

⊙ EP instability drive and phase-  
space zonal structures

(IV) Summary & Discussions

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Zonca. [NF 2025]



## (I) Introduction

Energetic-  
Particle

① EP  $\Rightarrow$  RSAE (AE's)  $\Rightarrow$  Zonal e.m.

fields (ZFs) and Zonal phase-space structures  
(PSZS)  $\Rightarrow$  suppress RSAE  $\Rightarrow$  NL saturation <sup>Lower level</sup>

Well established (mainly via GK simulations)

?? How do ZFs/PSZS suppress RSAE?

No definitive/quantitative analysis

② Two possible routes:

(i) Via thermal plasmas  $\Rightarrow$  modification  
in mode structures, NL frequency shift, etc.  
 $\Rightarrow$  enhanced damping?  $\Rightarrow \gamma_{NL} = \gamma_{NL}(ZFs)??$

\* (ii) Via EPs  $\Rightarrow$  ZFs shearing  $\Rightarrow$   
reduces EP drive ??

③ Focus of the work: Investigate route (ii) via



Combining simulations + analytical theory  
{ computer experiments to gain/  
improve analytical theory/physics insights }

① Highlights of results (Simulation + Theory)

⇒ ZFs do NOT suppress EP's drive  
of RSAE !!

⇒ ZFs enhances EP's instability  
drive via the destabilizing ZFs-induced  
PSZS.

⇒ ZFs suppress/saturate RSAE via  
NL mechanisms in thermal plasmas  
: How?? under investigation



## (II) GTC Simulations

$$\textcircled{1} \quad f = \left(\frac{q}{m}\right) \frac{\partial f_0}{\partial \Sigma} (1 - e^{-\frac{p \cdot \nabla}{J_0}}) \delta \phi + e^{-\frac{p \cdot \nabla}{J_0}} f_g$$

polarization

$\textcircled{2}$   $f_g$ : gyro-center distribution function

$$(\underbrace{L_g + \delta L_x + \delta L_E}_{\delta L}) f_g(\epsilon, \mu, \lambda, t) = 0$$

g-c  
NLGKE

$$\textcircled{3} \quad L_g = \partial_t + v_{||} \underline{b}_0 \cdot \nabla + \underline{v}_d \cdot \nabla$$

$\bullet$   $\underline{v}_d$ :  $\nabla B_0$  + Curvature drift

$$\textcircled{4} \quad \delta L_x = \langle \delta \underline{u}_g \rangle \cdot \nabla$$

$$\bullet \quad \langle \delta \underline{u}_g \rangle = \frac{c}{B_0} \underline{b}_0 \times \langle \left( \delta \phi - \frac{v_{||} \delta A_{||}}{c} \right)_g \rangle = \langle \delta \underline{U}_E \rangle + v_{||} \langle \delta \underline{B}_z \rangle / B_0$$

$$\textcircled{5} \quad \delta L_E = \delta \dot{\epsilon} \frac{\partial}{\partial \epsilon}$$

$$\bullet \quad \delta \dot{\epsilon} = \left(\frac{q}{m}\right) \left[ v_{||} \left( \underline{b}_0 + \frac{\langle \delta \underline{B}_z \rangle}{B_0} \right) \cdot \langle \delta \underline{E} \rangle + \underline{v}_d \cdot \langle \delta \underline{E} \rangle \right]$$



① keeping only a single- $n_0$  RSAE + the zonal components of fluctuations

$$\Rightarrow \delta L_x + \delta L_z \triangleq \delta L = \delta L_0 + \delta L_z$$

$$\Rightarrow F_g = F_{g0} + \delta F_g$$

$$= [L_g + \delta L_0 + \delta L_z] \delta F_g = - [\delta L_0 + \delta L_z] F_{g0} \quad (*)$$

② Three cases of study on EP physics

• Case A: No ZFs  $\Rightarrow \delta L_z = 0$  in (\*) EP

$$[L_g + \delta L_0] \delta F_g = - \delta L_0 F_{g0}$$

• Case B: Full ZFs  $\Rightarrow$  Eq. (\*)

• Case C: Partial ZFs  $\Rightarrow \delta L_z = 0$  in the <sup>LHS of (\*)</sup> g.c.

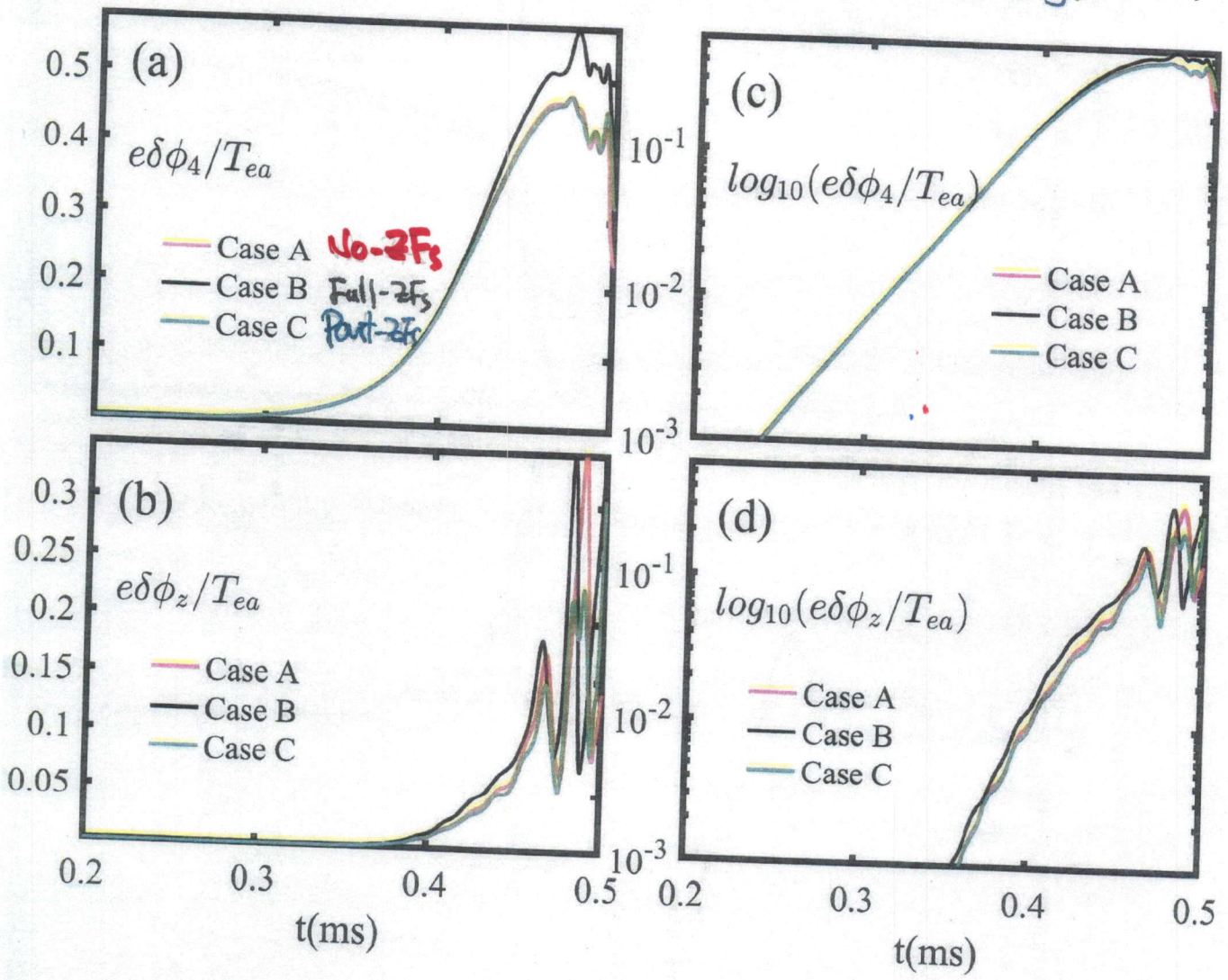
$$[L_g + \delta L_0] \delta F_g = - [\delta L_0 + \delta L_z] F_{g0}$$

Propagator  
suppress  
shocks

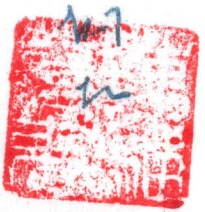
(II) GTC Simulations of RSAE :  $(\delta\phi_r, \delta\phi_z)$



- Case A : No  $ZF_s$  on EP DIII-D case
- Case B : Full  $ZF_s$  on EP
- Case C : Partial  $ZF_s$  (No zonal drift/shearing) on EP



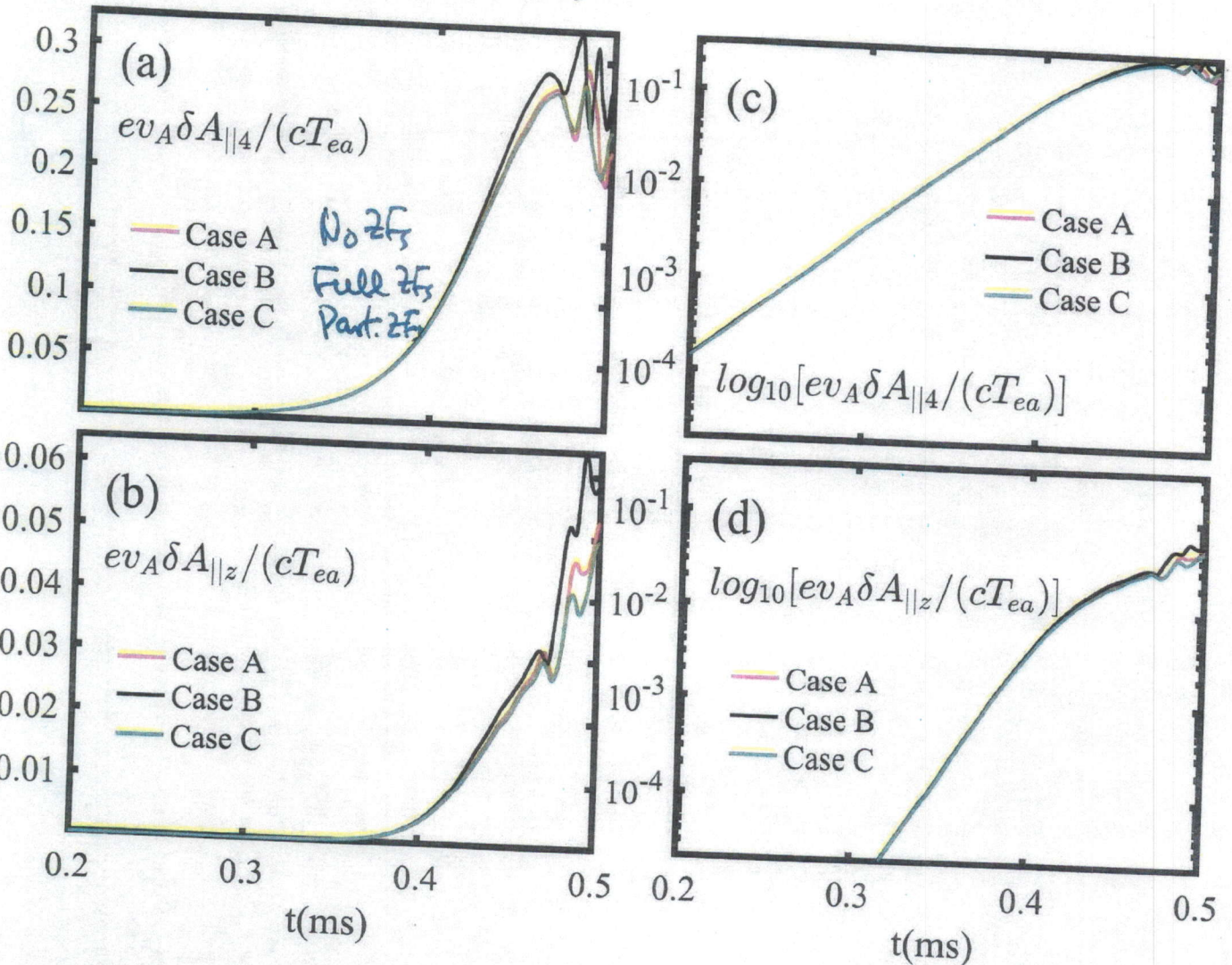
# GTC Simulations of RSAE: $(\delta A_{||4}, \delta A_{||z})$



Case A: No- $zF_s$  on EP

Case B: Full- $zF_s$  on EP

Case C: Partial- $zF_s$  on EP





### (III) Theoretical Analyses

#### (III.a) Beet-driven ZFs by RSAE

##### ⊙ Governing eqns

- NLGKE ( $\partial F_0 / \partial \mu = 0$ ) (F-C, 1982)  $\Rightarrow$  g-c NLGKE + OLP(R) Parallel M

$$\textcircled{\circ} f = F_0 + \left(\frac{q}{m}\right) \frac{\partial F_0}{\partial \varepsilon} \delta \phi + e^{-\frac{F_0}{T_e}} \delta g$$

$$\textcircled{\circ} (\mathcal{L}_j + \mathcal{L}_x) \delta g = -\frac{q}{m} \frac{\partial F_0}{\partial \varepsilon} \frac{\partial}{\partial t} \left\langle \left( \delta \phi - \frac{v_{\parallel} \delta A_{\parallel}}{c} \right) \right\rangle_x$$

$$- \mathcal{L}_x F_0 \equiv -\frac{q}{m} q F_0 \left( \delta \phi - \frac{v_{\parallel} \delta A_{\parallel}}{c} \right)_x$$

- Quasi-neutrality condition

$$\textcircled{\circ} q F_0 = \left[ \left( \frac{\partial F_0}{\partial \varepsilon} \right) (i \partial_t) + \left( \mathbf{b} \times \mathbf{b}_0 / \Omega \right) \cdot \nabla F_0 \right]$$

$$\frac{N_0 e^2}{T_e} (1 + \tau) \delta \phi = \sum_{j=e,i} e_j \langle J_0 \delta g_j \rangle_v$$

- Parallel Ampere's Law

$$\nabla_{\perp}^2 \delta A_{\parallel} = \frac{4\pi}{c} \delta J_{\parallel} = \frac{4\pi}{c} \sum_j e_j \langle J_0 v_{\parallel} \delta g_j \rangle_v$$

##### ⊙ Calculate

g-c NLGKE  $\Rightarrow$

$$\begin{cases} \delta g_{z,j} = \delta g_{z,j}^{(1)} + \delta g_{z,j}^{(2)} \\ \delta g_{z,j}^{(1)} = \delta g_{z,j}^{(1)} [\delta \phi_z, \delta A_{\parallel z}] \\ \delta g_{z,j}^{(2)} = \delta g_{z,j}^{(2)} [\delta \phi_0, \delta A_{\parallel 0}] \end{cases}$$





$$\textcircled{1} \begin{pmatrix} \delta\phi_0 \\ \delta A_{110} \end{pmatrix} = e^{-i\omega_{or}t + in_0\zeta} \sum_m \begin{pmatrix} \Phi_m(r,t) \\ A_m(r,t) \end{pmatrix} e^{-im\theta} + c.c.$$

• RSAE fluctuations

•  $\delta E_{110} \approx 0 \Rightarrow \frac{\omega_0 \delta A_{110}}{c k_{110}} = \delta\phi_0$

② Beat-driven ZFs

$$\bullet \delta\phi_z = \frac{c}{B_0 \omega_{or}^2} (1 + C_0 \gamma_i) \frac{\partial}{\partial r} \left[ \sum_m \left( \frac{n_0 q}{r} \right) \omega_{*in} |\Phi_m|^2 \right]$$

•  $C_0 \approx 1$  for  $(k_z r_{bil})^2 \ll 1$

$$\bullet \frac{\delta A_z}{c} = \frac{c}{B_0 \omega_{or}^2} \frac{\partial}{\partial r} \left[ \frac{1}{k_{110}} \frac{\omega_0 \delta A_{110}}{c k_{110}} \right]$$

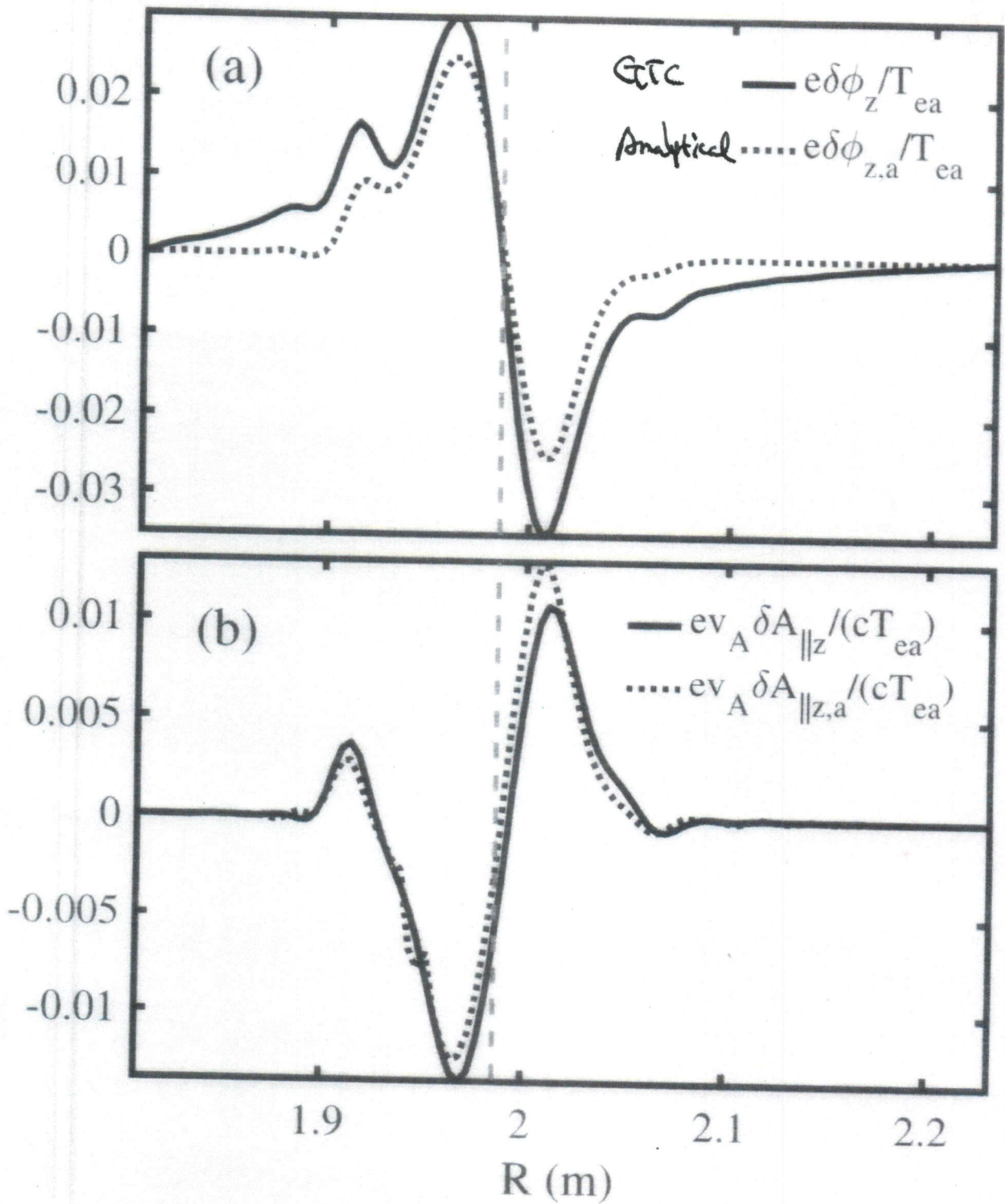
•  $|\delta\phi_z|, |\delta A_z| \propto \frac{\partial}{\partial r} |\delta\phi_0|^2, \frac{\partial}{\partial r} |\delta A_{110}|^2$

$\Rightarrow$  ponderomotive force of RSAE

Valid for high-frequency AE's: TAE etc.




$$\delta\phi_2 = \frac{c}{B_0} \frac{1}{\omega_{or}^2} (1+\eta_i) \partial_r [k_{\theta 0} \omega_{*in} |\delta\phi_0|^2]$$



$$\frac{\delta A_2}{c} = \frac{c}{B_0 \omega_{or}^2} \frac{\partial}{\partial r} \left[ k_{\theta 0} k_{||0} \left| \frac{\omega_0 \delta A_{||}}{c k_{||0}} \right|^2 \right]$$

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### (III.b) AE stability & phase-space zonal structure

⊙ General fishbone-like dispersion relation (GFLDR)

⇒ EP contribution to the RSAE (AE) drive [Z&C, Pop, 2014 a, b]

$$\text{Im } \delta W_{k_0} = e_E \text{Im} \int d^3x \delta \phi_0^\dagger \langle (J_0 \omega_z + \omega_d J_0) \delta k_0 \rangle_v$$

W-P resonance

•  $\omega_z = -i \langle \delta u_z \rangle_z \cdot \nabla_\perp$ , •  $\omega_d = -i \nabla_d \cdot \nabla_\perp$

$$(L_{g_0} + i\omega_z) \delta k_0 = i \left(\frac{e}{m}\right) J_0 \frac{(\omega_d + \omega_z)}{\omega_{or}} \delta \phi_0 Q (F_0 + \delta g_z)$$

•  $Q F_0 = (i \frac{\partial F_0}{\partial z} \frac{\partial}{\partial t} + \hat{\omega}_\perp F_0)$

•  $L_g \delta g_z = - [ \delta \phi_0 \times \delta g_0 ]_z - \left(\frac{e}{m}\right) \frac{\partial F_{g_0} \times J_z}{\partial z (\delta \phi - v_{th} \delta n / c)}_z$

•  $\delta k_0$ : compressional component of  $\delta f_0$

containing W-P resonance [C+H, JGR, 1991]

$$\Rightarrow \text{Im } \delta W_{k_0} > 0 \Rightarrow \text{instability drive}$$

•  $|\omega_{or}| \ll |\omega_{*E}|$

⇒  $Q \approx \hat{\omega}_\perp = (\mathbf{k} \times \mathbf{b}_0 / \Omega) \cdot \hat{r} \partial / \partial r$

⇒  $Q F_0|_{r_m} > 0$  for  $(\partial F_0 / \partial r)_{r_m} < 0$ : linear

instability drive ( $|\delta \phi_0|$  peaks at  $r(r_m) = r_{inj}$ )

??  $(\partial \delta g_z / \partial r)_{r_m}$  ??



① Connection between simulation  $\delta F_g$  and analytical  $\delta g$ :

analytical • 
$$f = F_0 + \left(\frac{e}{m}\right) \frac{\partial F_0}{\partial \varepsilon} + e^{-\tilde{p} \cdot \tilde{\nabla}} \delta g$$

simulation • 
$$f = \left(\frac{e}{m}\right) \frac{\partial F_0}{\partial \varepsilon} (1 - e^{-\tilde{p} \cdot \tilde{\nabla}} J_0) \delta \phi + e^{-\tilde{p} \cdot \tilde{\nabla}} f_g$$

•  $f_g = F_{g0} + \delta F_g$

$$\Rightarrow \delta g = \delta F_g - \left(\frac{e}{m}\right) \frac{\partial F_{g0}}{\partial \varepsilon} J_0 \delta \phi$$

(i) Case A: No ZFs in EP ( $\delta \phi_z = 0 = \delta A_{Hz}$ )

② 
$$\text{Im } \delta W_{KOA} = \left(\frac{e^2}{m}\right) \frac{1}{E} \left(\frac{\pi}{\omega_{or}}\right) \int d^3x \left\langle J_0^2 \frac{\partial^2}{\partial \varepsilon^2} |\delta \phi_0|^2 \bar{\omega}_g^{-2} \right. \\ \left. \times \delta(\bar{\omega}_g - \omega_0) Q(F_0 + \delta F_{ZA})_E \right\rangle_V$$

• Assuming trapped EPs •  $\delta \varepsilon_0$ : finite banana-width ( $k_x, k_y$ )

③ 
$$\mathcal{L}_g \delta g_{ZA} = - [\langle \delta U_g \rangle_0 \cdot \tilde{\nabla} \delta g_{0A}]_z$$

• PSZS due to symmetry-breaking RSAE only!  $\Rightarrow$  "clump-hole" ps structures!

• O'Neil's single-wave model



$$\delta g_{2A} \approx \partial_{zE}^2 \int_{\mathcal{E}_0}^2 \left| \frac{c}{B_0} \frac{n_0 q}{r} \frac{\bar{\omega}_d}{\omega_{or}} \right|^2 \frac{\partial}{\partial r} \left[ \frac{|\delta \Phi_0|^2}{(\bar{\omega}_d - \omega_{or})^2 + \delta_z^2} \cdot \frac{\partial F_0}{\partial r} \right]$$

$$\Rightarrow \delta g_{2A}: \left( \begin{array}{l} \underline{r > r_m} \Rightarrow > 0 \quad \underline{\text{clump}} \\ \underline{r < r_m} \Rightarrow < 0 \quad \underline{\text{hole}} \end{array} \right)$$

$$\Rightarrow \frac{\partial}{\partial r} \delta g_{2A} > 0 \quad \text{at } r_m$$

$\Rightarrow$  stabilizing

(ii) Case B: Full zFs in EP dynamics

$$\textcircled{\ast} \underline{\text{Im} \delta W_{\text{KOB}}} = \left( \frac{e^2}{m} \right) \frac{\pi}{E \omega_{or}} \int d^3x \langle J_0^2 \partial_{\mathcal{E}_0}^2 |\delta \Phi_0|^2$$

$$(\bar{\omega}_d + \omega_{zE})^2 \delta(\bar{\omega}_d + \omega_{zE} - \omega_o) Q(F_0 + \delta g_{2B} E_r)$$

$$\delta g_{2B} = \delta g_{2A} + \delta g_2^{(1)}$$

$$\delta g_2^{(1)} \approx - \left( \frac{e}{m} \frac{\partial F_0}{\partial \mathcal{E}} \right) J_z \partial_{\mathcal{E}_3}^2 \delta \Phi_z$$

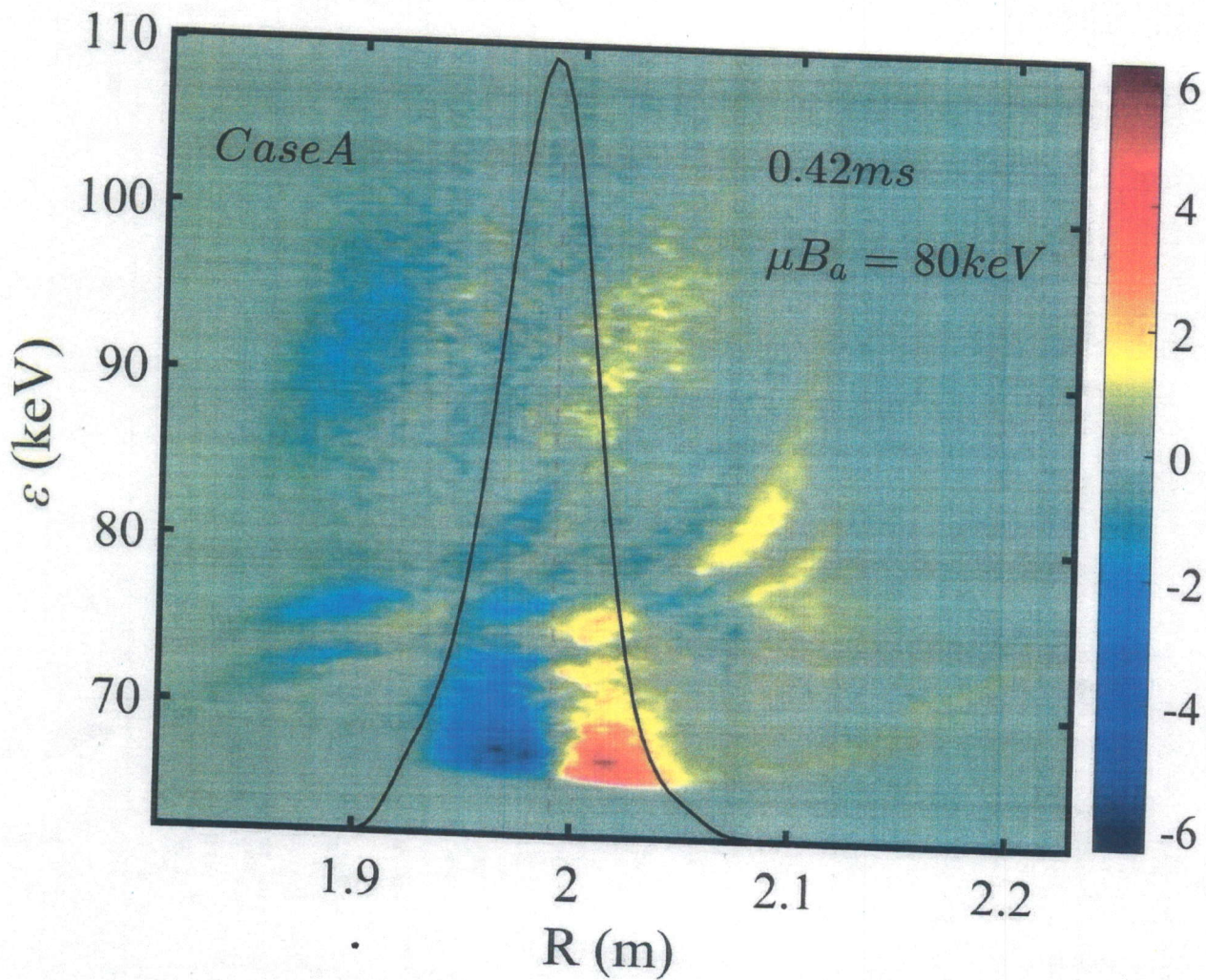
$$\omega_{zE} = \frac{r_0}{r} \langle \delta u_{gr} \rangle \sim O(\alpha_L) \ll |\omega_o|, |\bar{\omega}_d|$$

$\Rightarrow$  Negligible shift in W-P resonance

$$\delta F_z(\mu, \varepsilon, R)$$

Case A : No- $zF_s$  in EP

hole-clump due to  $(\delta\phi_r, \delta A_{||x})$  only



↑  
hole

↑  
clump



$$\Rightarrow \bullet \left( \frac{\partial}{\partial r} \delta g_{z\epsilon}'' \right) \Big|_{r_m} \approx - \left( \frac{e}{m} \frac{\partial F_0}{\partial \epsilon} \right) \frac{c}{B_0} \frac{(1+C_0 \gamma)}{\omega_{or}^2} k_{\perp 0}$$

$$\omega_{\sin} \frac{\partial^2}{\partial r^2} |\delta \phi_0|^2 \Big|_{r_m} < 0$$

$\Rightarrow$  destablizing!

(iii) Case (c): Partial ZFs in EP dynamics

$\Rightarrow$  turning off ZF shearing/drift term

$$\textcircled{\bullet} \text{Im} \delta W_{KOC} = \left( \frac{e^2}{m} \right) \frac{\pi}{E \omega_{or}} \int d^3x \langle J_0^2 \partial_{E_0}^2 |\delta \phi_0|^2 \bar{\omega}_d^2$$

$$\delta(\bar{\omega}_d - \omega_0) Q (F_{g0} + \delta F_{gz\epsilon}) \rangle$$

$$\bullet \delta F_{gz\epsilon} = \left( \frac{e}{m} \right) \frac{\partial F_0}{\partial \epsilon} J_0 \delta \phi_z + \delta g_{zB}$$

$$= \underbrace{\delta g_{zA}}_{\delta g_{zB}} + \left\{ \delta g_z'' + \left( \frac{e}{m} \right) \frac{\partial F_0}{\partial \epsilon} J_0 \delta \phi_z \right\}$$

$$\bullet \{ \dots \} = \left( \frac{e}{m} \right) \frac{\partial F_0}{\partial \epsilon} J_z (1 - \partial_{E_0}^2) \delta \phi_z$$

$\frac{\partial}{\partial r} > 0$   
stabilizing w.r.t. Case B: Full ZFs

$$\Rightarrow |1 - \partial_{E_0}^2| \ll 1, |k_z r_{De}| \ll 1$$

$$\Rightarrow \frac{\partial}{\partial r} \{ \dots \} < 0 \Rightarrow \text{weakly stabilizing w.r.t. Case (A)}$$



## (IV) Summary & Discussions

① NL gyrokinetic simulation & theory

⇒ ZFs heat driven by RSAE in good agreement.

② ZFs ⇒ EP phase-space zonal structures ⇒ enhance the EP instability drive !!

③ ZFs suppress RSAE via nonlinear physics of thermal plasmas

⇒ How?? Under investigation.

④ What about TAE??





## Appendix

### (I) In simulations

$$\textcircled{1} \quad (L_g + \delta L_0 + \delta L_z) \delta F_g = - (L_0 + \delta L_z) F_{g0}$$

$$\textcircled{2} \quad \delta F_g = \delta F_{g0} + \delta F_{gz}$$

$$\delta L_R = \delta L_{RX} + \delta L_{RE}$$

$n_0 \Rightarrow$

$$(L_g + \delta L_z) \delta F_{g0} = - L_0 (F_{g0} + \delta F_{gz})$$

$z \Rightarrow$

$$L_g \delta F_{gz} \approx - \delta L_z F_{g0} - [\delta L_0 \delta F_{g0}]_z$$

$$\textcircled{3} \quad \delta g = \delta F_g - (e/m) (\partial F_{g0} / \partial \epsilon) J_0 \delta \phi$$

(II) Case A:  $\delta L_z = 0$       No  $zF_s \Rightarrow \delta F_{gzA} = \delta g_{zA}$

$$\textcircled{1} \quad L_g \delta F_{g0A} = - L_0 (F_{g0} + \delta g_{zA})$$

$$\Rightarrow L_g \delta g_{0A} \approx i \left( \frac{e}{m} \right) Q (F_{g0} + \delta g_{zA}) J_0 \left( \delta \phi - v_{||} \frac{\delta A_{||}}{c} \right)_0$$

$$\bullet \quad Q = [i(\partial/\partial t)(\partial/\partial \epsilon) + \hat{\omega}_z] \approx \hat{\omega}_z = (\underline{R} \times \underline{b}_0 / \Omega) \cdot \underline{\nabla}$$

$$\textcircled{2} \quad L_g \delta g_{zA} \approx - [(\delta u_{zg})_0 \cdot \underline{\nabla} \delta g_{0A}]_z$$

Extracting the compressional component

$$\delta g_{0A} = - \left( \frac{e}{m} \right) \left( \frac{Q}{\omega_{or}} \right) (F_0 + \delta g_{zA}) J_0 \delta \psi_0 + \delta K_{0A}$$





(III) Case B :  $\delta L_2 \neq 0$  Full  $\delta F_S$  [ F-C NLQKE ]

①  $(L_g + \delta L_2) \delta g_{0B} = i \left( \frac{e}{m} \right) Q (F_{g0} + \delta g_{2B}) J_0 \left( \delta \phi - \frac{v_{||} \delta A_{||}}{c} \right)_0$

②  $\delta g_{2B} = \delta g_{2A} + \delta g_2^{(1)}$   $\Leftarrow \delta g_{2B} = i \left( \frac{e}{m} \right) Q F_0 J_2 \left( \delta \phi - \frac{v_{||} \delta A_{||}}{c} \right)_2 - [\delta g_0 \cdot \nabla \delta g_{0B}]_2$

•  $L_g \delta g_2^{(1)} = - \left( \frac{e}{m} \right) \frac{\partial F_{g0}}{\partial \epsilon} \frac{\partial}{\partial t} J_2 \left( \delta \phi - \frac{v_{||} \delta A_{||}}{c} \right)_2$

(IV) Case C : Partial  $\delta F_S \Rightarrow \delta L_2 = 0$  in the g.c. propagator

①  $L_g \delta F_{g0c} = - \delta L_0 (F_{g0} + \delta F_{g2c})$

$\Rightarrow L_g \delta g_{0c} = i \left( \frac{e}{m} \right) Q (F_{g0} + \delta F_{g2c}) J_0 \left( \delta \phi - \frac{v_{||} \delta A_{||}}{c} \right)_0$

②  $\delta F_{g2c} = \delta g_{2c} + \left( \frac{e}{m} \right) \frac{\partial F_{g0}}{\partial \epsilon} J_2 \delta \phi$

•  $\delta g_{2c} = \delta g_{2B}$

