Synchrotron Radiation from Runaway Electrons in COMPASS Tokamak

M. Vlainic\textsuperscript{1,2}, P. Vondravec\textsuperscript{2,3}, J. Mlynar\textsuperscript{2}, V. Weinzettl\textsuperscript{2}, O. Ficker\textsuperscript{2,4}, M. Varavin\textsuperscript{2}, R. Paprok\textsuperscript{2,3}, M. Imrisek\textsuperscript{2,3}, J. Havlicek\textsuperscript{2,3}, R. Panek\textsuperscript{2}, J.-M. Noterdaeme\textsuperscript{1,5} and the COMPASS Team

\textsuperscript{1} Department of Applied Physics, Ghent University, Ghent, Belgium
\textsuperscript{2} Institute of Plasma Physics AS CR, Prague, Czech Republic
\textsuperscript{3} Charles University in Prague, Faculty of Mathematics and Physics, Prague, Czech Republic
\textsuperscript{4} Czech Technical University in Prague, Faculty of Nuclear Sciences and Physical Engineering, Prague, Czech Republic
\textsuperscript{5} Max Planck Institute for Plasma Physics, Garching, Germany

Introduction. Runaway electron (RE) experiments are an important part of the ongoing ITER-relevant studies on COMPASS, as the REs could severely damage the plasma facing components in the future fusion reactors. The electron is said to “run away” (in the velocity space), when the collisional drag force $F_{\text{coll}}$ acting on it becomes smaller than the accelerating force $F_{\text{acc}}$ due to the toroidal electric field $E_{\text{tor}}$. This net accelerating force comes from the fact that the $F_{\text{coll}}$ decreases with approximately quadratic dependence on the velocity. The theory made by Dreicer \cite{1,2} defines a critical velocity $v_c$ above which one an electron diffusing in the velocity space becomes the RE (primary/Dreicer mechanism). Beside diffusing, a thermal electron can escape to the runaway region if it collides with the primary generated RE and both the electrons remain in the runaway region (secondary/avalanche mechanism).

A relativistic accelerated charged particle in the presence of the magnetic field emits Synchrotron Radiation (SR). As SR is emitted preferentially in the direction parallel to the RE motion (the so-called headlight effect) it should be observed from a tangential view. Consequently, the SR offers a valuable opportunity for measuring parameters of the confined high-energy REs directly from the plasma core.

In this paper it is demonstrated that the relative intensity of the infrared (IR) radiation is correlated with the critical energy $W_c$ for production of REs. Furthermore, analysis of the first direct observation of the RE beam in the COMPASS tokamak with the calibrated camera is presented.

Experimental Setup. The COMPASS tokamak \cite{3} is a experimental fusion device with major radius $R_0 = 0.56 \text{ m}$ and minor radius $a = 0.23 \text{ m}$. Toroidal magnetic field $B_{\text{tor}}$ was $1.15 \text{ T}$ for all discharges reported in this paper, the typical pulse length is $0.4 \text{ s}$, although the low current circular discharge dominated by REs can last approximately $1 \text{ s}$. Furthermore, the SR was successfully measured at the low line-averaged density discharges ($\bar{n}_e \leq 2.5 \times 10^{19} \text{ m}^{-3}$) for the
wide range of the plasma current values 100 − 250 kA.

The SR falls in the mid-wavelength IR region for the REs generated in the COMPASS tokamak, therefore the bolometric IR camera with the wavelength range 7.5 − 13 µm was used. During these experiments, the IR camera was installed at a mid-plane tangential port. The diameter of the observed area of the plasma cross-section varied between the RE campaigns: 14.9, 16.9 and 15.5 cm for the first, the second and the third campaign, respectively. Fig. 1 shows the resulting differences in the observed picture.

**Results.** Even though the observed area was relatively large for monitoring of the plasma core in comparison to a, it seems that almost all of the recorded intensity is rather a reflection of SR from the vessel than a direct SR from the visible plasma volume. Nevertheless, it is possible to analyse the dependence of the relative synchrotron intensity as function of the critical energy $W_c$. Following the Dreicer runaway theory, the critical energy is given as [4]:

$$W_c = \frac{e^3 \ln \Lambda}{4 \pi \varepsilon_0^2} \frac{n_e}{E_{tor}} \sqrt{2 + Z_{eff}}, \quad (1)$$

where $Z_{eff}$ is the effective ion charge and $\ln \Lambda$ is the Coulomb logarithm. For the calculation given here $Z_{eff}$ is assumed to be constant and set to $Z_{eff} = 2$, therefore $W_c$ is proportional to the ratio between the electron density $n_e$ and the loop voltage $V_{loop}$, which are both measured quantities. In Fig. 2 the maximum of the relative intensity from the IR camera signal is plotted as a function of the averaged $W_c$ during the first 240 ms of the discharge. One can see that different set-ups have different maxima, but in general a margin around $\sim 40$ keV could be distinguished.

There are two main reasons why almost all discharges with the observation of the SR come from the reflection. First, the observed field of view is slightly farther from the region where the high-energy REs are presumably generated [5]. Moreover, even if the RE beam reaches proper radial position for the direct observation of the SR, the IR camera almost regularly disconnects. This is probably because the radiation is so strong that it saturates the camera’s electronics. The cases when the camera disconnects are separately grouped and plotted on Fig. 2 and one can see that they occur only when $W_c < 37$ keV.

The evolution of the RE beam for the discharge #9814 is showed in Fig 3. The SYnchrotron spectra from RUnaway Particles (SYRUP) code [6] is used for the theoretical estimation of the
synchrotron spectral power density \( dP/d\lambda \) per RE. The SYRUP requires the maximum RE energy \( W_{\text{max}} \) and the pitch angle \( \theta = \arctan \left( v_{\perp}/v_{||} \right) \) as inputs. The latter one can be measured from Fig. 3 [7], while \( W_{\text{max}} \) has been calculated using the 0D-model from [8] that takes into account a power gain by the electric field \( P_E \) and a power loss by the SR \( P_{\text{synch}} \) for the highly relativistic electrons:

\[
\frac{dW_{\text{max}}}{dt} = P_E - P_{\text{synch}}, \quad P_E = ecE_{\text{tor}} = \frac{ecV_{\text{loop}}}{2\pi R}, \quad P_{\text{synch}} = \frac{2m_e c^3 r_e \gamma^4}{3R_C^2} \tag{2}
\]

where \( r_e \) is the classical electron radius and \( R_C \) is the curvature radius of the RE. The plasma parameters are necessary for the quasi-steady-state RE distribution function calculation implemented in SYRUP. For purpose of this paper, the necessary plasma parameters are taken to be constant: \( \bar{n}_e = 1.6 \pm 0.2 \times 10^{19} \text{ m}^{-3}, T_e = 530 \pm 60 \text{ eV}, Z_{\text{eff}} = 2 \) and \( E_{\text{tor}} = 0.33 \pm 0.04 \text{ V/m} \). Furthermore, the calculation from Eq. 2 gives rising \( W_{\text{max}} \) from 20 to 30 MeV at time when the SR was observed (Fig. 3).

The derivative \( dP/d\lambda \) obtained from SYRUP should first be converted to an integral, measurable value such as brightness \( B \) [8]:

\[
B(\lambda, \theta, W_{\text{max}}) = \frac{dP}{d\lambda} \frac{2R}{\pi \theta} n_{\text{synch}}^{\text{re}}, \tag{3}
\]

where \( n_{\text{synch}}^{\text{re}} \) is the density of the observed REs. To get the comparable theoretical estimation
with the IR camera measurement, the brightness $B$ can be integrated over the camera wavelengths:

$$S(\theta, W_{\text{max}}) = \int B(\lambda, \theta, W_{\text{max}}) T(\lambda) d\lambda,$$

where $T(\lambda)$ is a transparency of the optical path between the plasma and the IR camera. The pitch angle $\theta$ in the IR camera measurements varied from 0.15 to 0.30 rad, which leads to the corresponding RE density $n_{\text{synch}}^{\text{re}}$ values $0.65 - 1.7 \times 10^{15} \text{ m}^{-3}$. Note that this evaluated $n_{\text{synch}}^{\text{re}}$ gives only density of the high-energetic REs contributing to the SR.

**Discussion.** A method of extracting the relevant information from the reflected SR using an appropriate analysis is presented. From here the threshold of the critical energy $W_c = 40 \text{ keV}$ during the discharge can be estimated. Note that the $W_c$ value is a dynamic quantity and that the value given is its average over the time range. Additionally, longer discharges have more intense synchrotron radiation, as expected due to the longer acceleration time.

One should note that SYRUP could be used to estimate the $W_{\text{max}}$ provided that the $n_{\text{synch}}^{\text{re}}$ is known, however calculation of $n_{\text{re}}$ is a demanding task by itself, which is out of the scope of this paper. Nevertheless, for the future work usage of the code name CODE [9] as an efficient numerical tool for approximation of the RE distribution function is planned for the $W_{\text{max}}$ estimation based on the observed SR.

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**References**


