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FILAMENTATION INSTABILITY IN A LIGHT ION BEAM-PLASMA SYSTEM
WITH EXTERNAL MAGNETIC FIELD

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Abstract

The filamentation instability for a light ion beam (LIB) penetrating plasma is investigated. For the stabilization of the filamentation instability, an external magnetic field which is parallel to the direction of the light ion beam propagation is applied. From a dispersion relation, linear growth rates of filamentation instabilities are obtained in a light ion beam-plasma system with an external magnetic field. Numerical simulations are carried out using a particle-in-cell (PIC) method. The stabilizing mechanism of the filamentation instability is described. The theory and simulation comparisons illustrate the results.

Keywords: Filamentation Instability, Inertial Confinement Fusion, Light Ion Beam
(LIB) Propagation, Particle-in-cell (PIC) Simulation

In the investigation of the inertial confinement fusion by LIB [1-3], it is the central problem to propagate the beam stably through the plasma. There are many investigations of numerous instabilities in relativistic electron beam [4], heavy ion beam [5] and light ion beam [6,7] propagations. Filamentation instability [8] is one of the instabilities which is deleterious in the stable propagation of the beam through the plasma. The rotating light ion beam scheme [9] has been proposed for the stable propagation of the beam. We have theoretically reported the stability of the filamentation instability by the application of the external magnetic field which is induced by the rotating ion beams [10]. In this paper, we report on numerical studies of the stabilization of filamentation instability in a light ion beam-plasma system with an external magnetic field. In this paper, we only consider the model of spatially infinite collisionless, charge, and current neutral system with light ion beam propagation velocity \mathbf{V}_{zb} and background plasma at \mathbf{V}_{zs} of species $s = e$ (plasma electrons) or i (plasma ions) along \mathbf{B}_0^z which is an external magnetic field in the z-direction. We only consider electromagnetic modes with \mathbf{k}_\perp normal to \mathbf{V}_{zb} , induced electric fields $\delta\mathbf{E}$ parallel to \mathbf{V}_{zb} and induced magnetic fields $\delta\mathbf{B}$ normal to both \mathbf{V}_{zb} and $\delta\mathbf{E}$. The dispersion relation for the filamentation instability has been investigated for a beam-plasma system with external magnetic field. For a monoenergetic beam with Maxwellian thermal spread v_{Tb} of transverse velocities, and a background plasma with a Maxwellian thermal spread v_{Ts} ($s=e,i$), assuming that the ion beam density n_b is smaller than the background electron density n_e , the relativistic linear dispersion relation is given by [11]

$$\omega^2 = c^2 k_\perp^2 + \sum_{j=b,e,i} \omega_{pj}^2 + \sum_{j=b,e,i} \omega_{pj}^2 \frac{\beta_j^2 c^2 k_\perp^2}{\omega^2 - \omega_{cj}^2}. \quad (1)$$

where $\omega_{pj}^2 = 4\pi n_j e_j^2 / m_j$, $\omega_{cj} = |\epsilon_j| B_0^z / m_j c$ and $\beta_j c = V_{zj}$.

From Eq.(1), we expect that the maximum growth rate of the filamentation instability is stabilized by the external magnetic field and the beams can propagate without triggering the filamentation instability or with having sufficiently slow filamentation growth.

In order to simulate a filamentation instability, we perform a numerical calculation using an electromagnetic particle in-cell code [12] for the beam-plasma system. The code is two-dimensional in space and velocity, respectively. The external magnetic field B_0^z is in the z -direction and the induced electric and magnetic fields are respectively indicated by $E = (0, 0, E_z)$ and $B = (B_x, B_y, 0)$. The simulation is performed under the conditions that the grid spacing is $0.2c/\omega_{pe}$, the time step is $0.1\omega_{pe}^{-1}$, the length of simulation range is $3.2c/\omega_{pe}$, the number of ion beam simulation particles is 2500, the number of plasma electron simulation particles is 7500, and the number of plasma ion simulation particles is 5000. We choose the following parameters (ensuring current neutrality); $v_{Tb} = \sqrt{T_b/m_b} = 0.001c$, $v_{Tj} = \sqrt{T_j/m_j} = 0.01c$ ($j = e, i$), $V_{zb} = 0.1c$ and $V_{ze} = 1/30c, V_{zi} = 0$. The induced magnetic fields for $B_0^z/(4\pi n_e m_e c^2)^{1/2} = 0$ are plotted in Fig.1, from which we can estimate that the maximum growth rate γ_S is about $7.1 \times 10^{-3} \omega_{pe}$. This growth rate is fairly consistent with $(Im \omega)_{max} \approx 6.4 \times 10^{-3} \omega_{pe}$ which is solved in Eq.(1). The induced magnetic fields for $B_0^z/(4\pi n_e m_e c^2)^{1/2} = 0.02$ are plotted in Fig.1, from which we can estimate that the maximum growth rate γ_S is about $5.6 \times 10^{-3} \omega_{pe}$. This growth rate is fairly consistent with $(Im \omega)_{max} \approx 2.4 \times 10^{-3} \omega_{pe}$ which is solved in Eq.(1). The induced magnetic fields for $B_0^z/(4\pi n_e m_e c^2)^{1/2} = 0.2$ are plotted in Fig.1, from which we can estimate that the maximum growth rate γ_S is about $8.0 \times 10^{-6} \omega_{pe}$. We obtain the growth rate $(Im \omega)_{max} \approx 1.2 \times 10^{-4} \omega_{pe}$ from Eq.(1). There is a disagreement between the growth rates in the theory and simulations because the theory is in cylindrical symmetric coordinates and simulation is in cartesian coordinates. In Fig.2, the maximum growth rates, which are obtained by using the PIC code are plotted versus the external magnetic field B_0^z . In Fig.3, the beam kinetic energies are plotted versus the time, being separated for external magnetic fields. From these results, the filamentation instability is stabilized by the external magnetic fields. The three dimensional PIC simulations will be reported in a future work.

We will discuss the results for an expected experiment, i.e. for a typical beam of 5MeV ($V_b=0.1c$) protons, well-pinchd ion current of 0.5MA ($n_b = 10^{15} cm^{-3}$) and

40nsec beam duration τ . If we apply an external magnetic field $B_0=0.2(4\pi n_e m_e c^2)^{1/2} \approx 3.5$ tesla ($n_e=3\times 10^{15}cm^{-3}$) to the beam-plasma system, the maximum growth rates of the filamentation instability become $\gamma_S=8.0\times 10^{-6}\omega_{pe} \approx 2.5\times 10^7sec^{-1}$ as seen in Fig.2. The largest growth will appear at the tailend of the beam, we estimate the effect at the tailend to be the value of $\gamma_S\tau$. Consequently, the beams can propagate stably through the plasma by the external magnetic fields with a small growth rate since $\gamma_S\tau=0.98$ which is small e -foldings.

To simplify the stabilization mechanism of the filamentation instability by applying the external magnetic field, we limit ourselves to a one-dimensional configuration. The beam is in the z -direction. If there is no external magnetic field, the induced magnetic field bends the orbits of beam ions, and collects ions in its neutral points. The perturbed current amplifies the induced magnetic field. On the other hand, the external magnetic field parallel to the beam direction prevents bending the orbits of beam ions. Consequently, the filamentation instability may be stabilized by the external magnetic field.

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Figure Captions

FIG. 1. Energies of induced magnetic fields at the linear stage with (a) $B_0^z/(4\pi n_e m_e c^2)^{1/2} = 0$, (b) $B_0^z/(4\pi n_e m_e c^2)^{1/2} = 0.02$ and (c) $B_0^z/(4\pi n_e m_e c^2)^{1/2} = 0.2$.

FIG. 2. Maximum growth rates of the filamentation instability versus the external magnetic fields. Circles represent results as obtained by using PIC simulation code.

FIG. 3. Beam kinetic energies with (a) $B_0^z/(4\pi n_e m_e c^2)^{1/2} = 0$, (b) $B_0^z/(4\pi n_e m_e c^2)^{1/2} = 0.02$ and (c) $B_0^z/(4\pi n_e m_e c^2)^{1/2} = 0.2$.

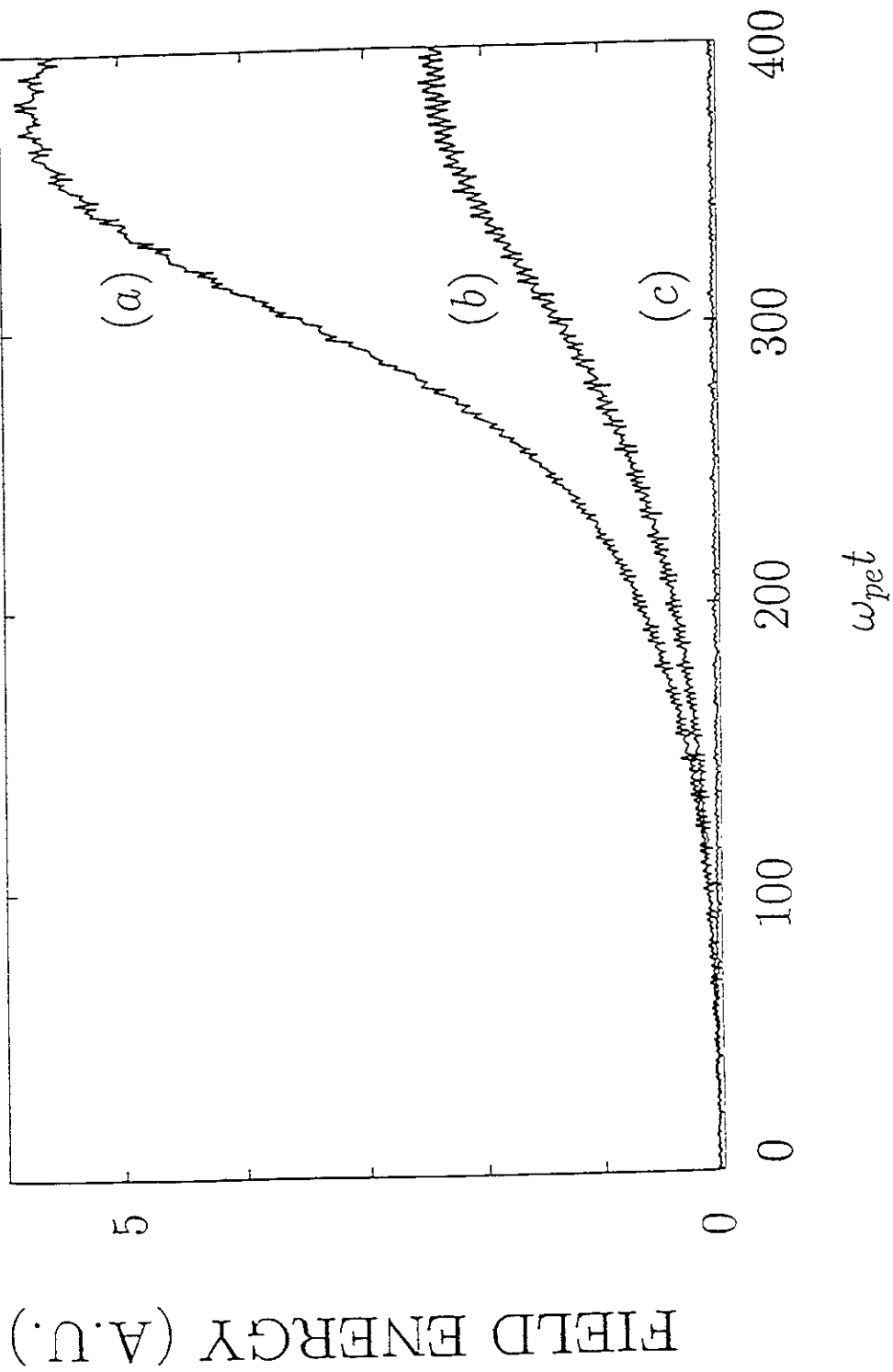


Fig.1

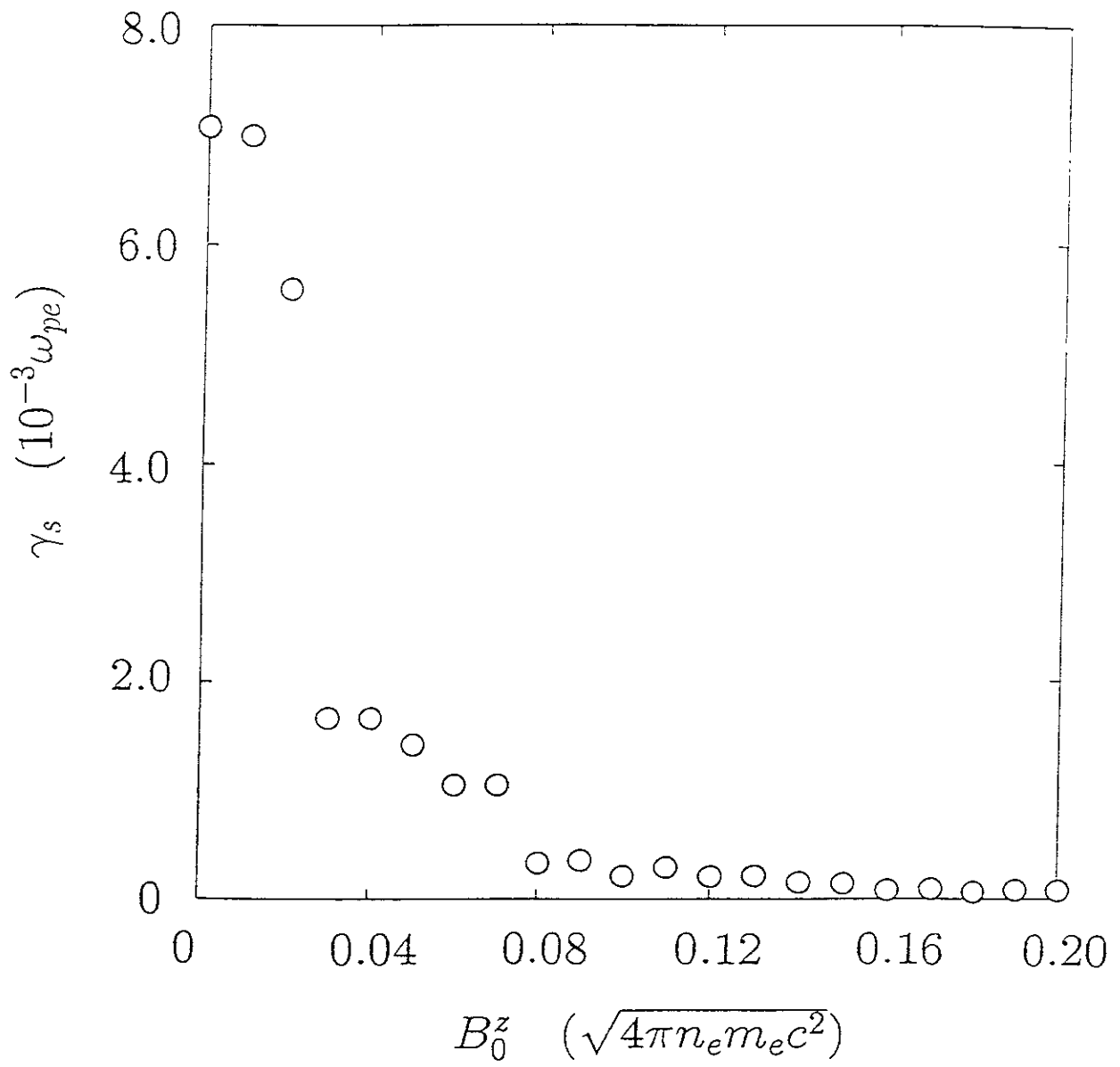


Fig.2

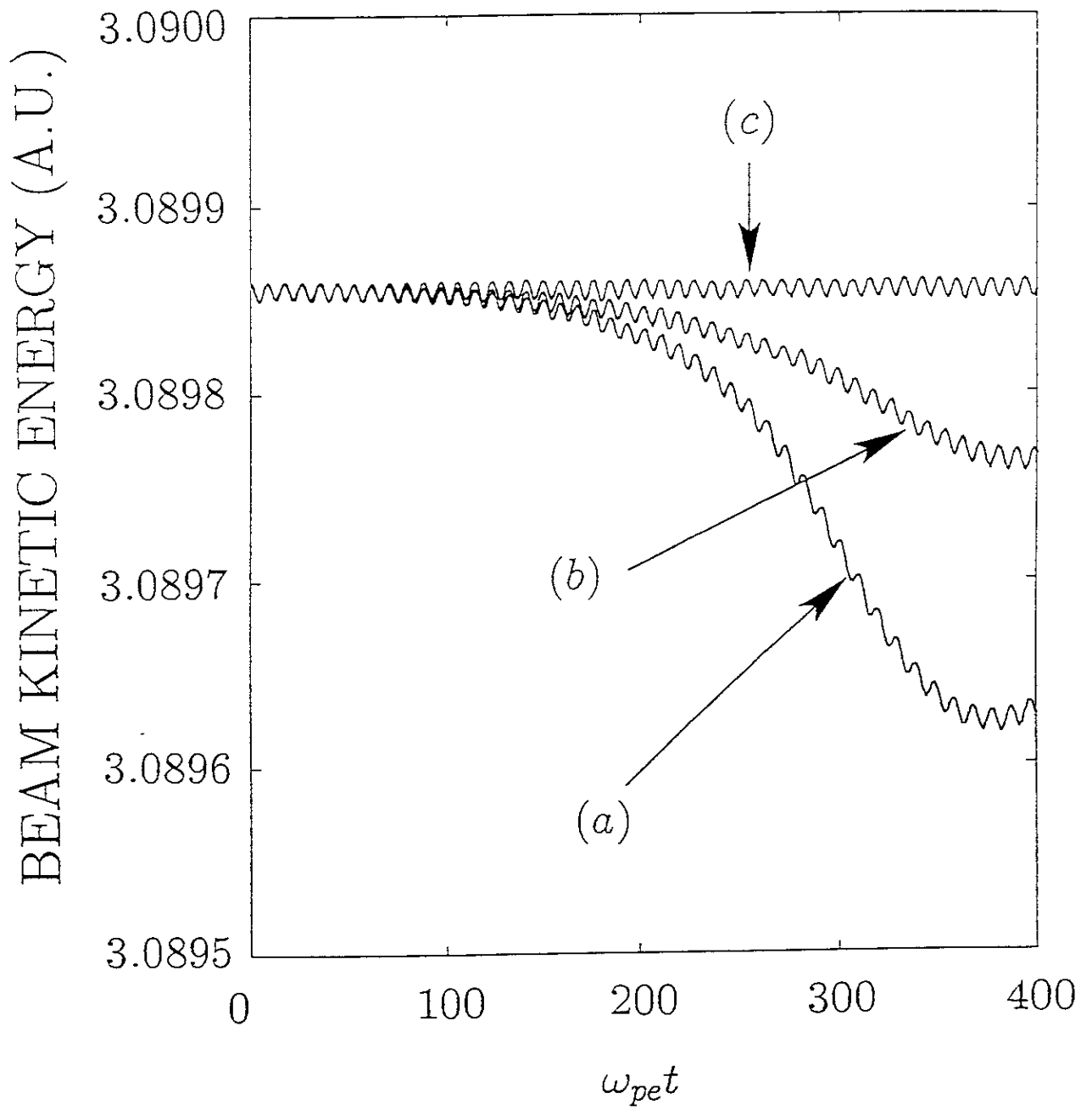


Fig.3

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