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Electron temperature analysis of two-gas-species inductively coupled plasma

K. H. Bai and H. Y. Chang
Department of Physics, Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology, Taejon 305-701, South Korea

H. S. Uhm
Department of Molecular Science and Technology, Ajou University, Suwon 442-749, South Korea

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The electron energy distribution functions and electron temperatures are measured in Ar/He and Ar/Xe inductively coupled plasma with various mixing ratios. The electron temperature does not change linearly with the mixing ratios; instead it increases abruptly near $P_{\text{He}}/P_{\text{Ar}+\text{He}}=1$ and decreases rapidly near $P_{\text{Xe}}/P_{\text{Ar}+\text{Xe}}=0$. A simple model using a two-ion-species fluid model is suggested to explain the electron temperature variations, and it agrees well with the experimental results. © 2001 American Institute of Physics. [DOI: 10.1063/1.1404135]

Usually processes are done using two or more gas species simultaneously. For example, in the silicon dioxide etching process, Ar, Xe, or H2 are added to various fluorocarbon gases to increase the etching selectivity to Si underlayer,1 and a Ne and Xe mixture is used in plasma display panel (PDP) cells for easy breakdown and high lighting intensity. Another example of gas mixture is the addition of rare gases as a trace rare gas (TRG) to determine plasma properties such as the electron energy distribution function (EEDF) of a high energy tail.2 Studies on gas mixture effects have been done by a number of researchers. Ishikawa et al. have reported the ionic species intensity variation in CF4/Ar plasmas as a function of the Ar mixing ratio.3 Kobayashi et al. have reported the variation of discharge-sustaining voltage (DSV), the phase angle $\phi$ of the discharge current to the applied voltage and the electron temperature ($T_e$) with various gas mixing ratios in CF4/N2 plasma.4

Electron temperature is one of the most interesting plasma parameters because it is believed to be related to undesirable effects like notching, charge buildup, and radical composition.5–7 It is well known that the electron temperature increases and the electron density decreases when a gas of higher ionization threshold energy is added, and vice versa. The electron temperature and other plasma parameters do not change linearly with the mixing ratio, especially when the mixed gas has a very different threshold ionization energy or mass. Consequently it is difficult to predict the values of the electron temperature and other plasma parameters versus the gas mixing ratio. However, obtaining plasma parameters in a single gas system is not so difficult. They can be obtained from a simple experiment or from the wealth of published data.

This letter assumes that we know the electron temperature when plasma is discharged by a single gas, i.e., the mixing ratio is 0% or 100%, and we try to analyze the electron temperature when the mixing ratio is between 0% and 100%. We propose a two-ion-species fluid model in comparison with the experimental results. The EEDFs are measured to calculate effective electron temperatures using a rf-compensated Langmuir probe in Ar/He 20 mTorr and Ar/Xe 10 mTorr ICP at various mixing ratios.

The ICP reactor used in this study has been described in a previous paper.8 The discharge chamber consists of two regions: one has a Pyrex cylinder 15 cm in diameter, 12 cm long, and a grounded stainless steel cylinder 22 cm in diameter, 10 cm long; the other region is for another purpose and has no effects on the first region.8 For precise pressure measurement, a capacitive manometer (MKS, 127AA-00001B) is used. 600 W, 13.56 MHz rf power is coupled to a single-turn copper coil. A rf-compensated Langmuir probe, set at the center of the reactive chamber, measures the EEDFs $F(\epsilon)$, effective electron temperatures ($T_{\text{eff}}=2/3(\epsilon)$), electron densities $n_\text{e}=f F(\epsilon) d\epsilon$, and plasma potentials. To reduce the rf distortion of the probe characteristics, a probe system consisting of a small measurement probe and a floating-loop reference probe with a resonant filtering technique is used.9 The ac measurement technique with a lock-in amplifier is used, because it has the advantage of low output noise.9–11 The energy difference $\Delta$ between the zero crossing point and the peak point of the EEDFs indicates signal quality and reliability.9,12 In this experiment, the energy difference $\Delta$ is less than 1 eV even in the worst case, which demonstrates the accuracy of the measurement.

Figure 1 shows the experimental results of the electron energy probability functions (EEPFs) change with various He mixing ratios in Ar/Hr plasma. The EEPFs show two temperature structures due to inelastic collisions and fast electron escape to the chamber wall. This two temperature structure is shown in other experiments.8,12,13

Though this non-Maxwellian EEPF structure may cause problems, EEPF is assumed to be Maxwellian generally in fluid modeling for simple calculation.14–18 In this letter we also assume Maxwellian EEPF with effective electron temperature $T_e$. Note that the effective electron temperature increases with the He mixing ratio, but it does not increase linearly with the He mixing ratio; instead, it varies abruptly near $\kappa=P_{\text{He}}/P_{\text{He}+\text{Ar}}=1$. We use a fluid model to analyze this electron temperature variation. Electron temperatures are
determined by equating the total particle loss to the total ionization rate as follows:

\[
\frac{K_{i;}(T_e)}{u_B(T_e)} = \frac{1}{n_g d_{\text{eff}}}, \quad d_{\text{eff}} = \frac{1}{2} \frac{Rl}{h_{l} + h_{R}},
\]

(1)

where \(K_{i;}\) is an ionization rate constant, \(u_B\) is the Bohm velocity of ion, \(n_g\) is the neutral density, \(Rl\) are the chamber radius and length, respectively, and \(h_{l}, h_{R}\) are the ratios of electron density at edge to electron density at center, and \(d_{\text{eff}}\) is an effective plasma size which is a function of the ion-atom scattering cross section \(\sigma_i\), and \(\sigma_f\) is determined by equating the total particle loss to the total excitation threshold energy (\(\epsilon_{i;e}\)) and excitation threshold energy (\(\epsilon_{e;i}\)) of the neutral, it is possible to approximate \(K_{i;e}\) as

\[
K_{i;}(T_e) = \frac{\sigma_0}{\epsilon_{i;e}} \left( 1 + \frac{2 e}{\epsilon_{i;e}} \right) e^{-\frac{\epsilon_{i;e}}{T_e}},
\]

(3)

where \(\sigma_0\) is the atom scattering cross section, \(\epsilon_{i;e}\) is an ionization rate constant, \(\epsilon_{e;i}\) is a function of \(\sigma_{i;e}\), and \(\sigma_{e;i}\), and \(\sigma_{e;i}\) are \(\sigma\) values of \(\alpha\) and \(\beta\).

If \(\alpha^+\) and \(\beta^+\) are the main ion species and the two ion species have their own Bohm velocities \(u_{B,\alpha} = \sqrt{T_e/M_{\alpha}}, u_{B,\beta} = \sqrt{T_e/M_{\beta}}\), then we can define average Bohm velocity \(u_{B,\text{avg}}\) as

\[
\Gamma = n_{\alpha} u_{B,\alpha} + n_{\beta} u_{B,\beta} = n_{B,\text{avg}}
\]

(5)

where \(\Gamma\), is the total ion loss rate to walls. \(n_{\alpha}, n_{\beta}, n_{\text{avg}}\) are the ion densities of \(\alpha^+, \beta^+\), and the sum of them at the sheath edge, respectively.

Each ion density is proportional to its ionization rate constant and its mixing ratio, then Eq. (5) can be reduced as

\[
u_{B,\text{avg}} = \frac{(1 - \kappa)K_{a}}{(1 - \kappa)K_{a} + \kappa K_{b}} u_{B,\alpha} + \frac{\kappa K_{b}}{(1 - \kappa)K_{a} + \kappa K_{b}} u_{B,\beta}.
\]

(6)

Inserting Eqs. (4) and (6) into Eq. (1), we obtain

\[
\frac{[(1 - \kappa)\sigma_{i;e}(1 + 2 T_e)/\epsilon_{i;e})e^{-\epsilon_{i;e}/T_e} + \kappa \sigma_{e;i}(1 + 2 T_e)/\epsilon_{e;i})e^{-\epsilon_{e;i}/T_e}]}{(1 - \kappa)(1 + 2 T_e)/\epsilon_{i;e})e^{-\epsilon_{i;e}/T_e} + \kappa \sigma_{e;i}(1 + 2 T_e)/\epsilon_{e;i})e^{-\epsilon_{e;i}/T_e}} = \frac{1}{n_g d_{\text{eff}}} \left( \frac{8}{\pi m} \right)^{-1/2}.
\]

(7)

The rhs of Eq. (7) is constant, and after inserting \(\kappa = 0\), Eq. (7) can be reduced as

\[
\frac{[(1 - \kappa)(1 + 2 T_e)/\epsilon_{i;e})e^{-\epsilon_{i;e}/T_e} + \kappa \sigma_{e;i}(1 + 2 T_e)/\epsilon_{e;i})e^{-\epsilon_{e;i}/T_e}]}{(1 - \kappa)(1 + 2 T_e)/\epsilon_{i;e})e^{-\epsilon_{i;e}/T_e} + \kappa \sigma_{e;i}(1 + 2 T_e)/\epsilon_{e;i})e^{-\epsilon_{e;i}/T_e}} = \frac{1}{1 + \epsilon_{e;i}/T_{0,a}} e^{\epsilon_{i;e}/T_{0,a}}.
\]

(8)

where \(T_{0,a}\) is the electron temperature when \(\kappa = 0\) or \(P_{He}/P_{Ar+He} = 0\%\). Inserting \(\kappa = 0\) in Eq. (8), \(T_e\) becomes \(T_{0,a}\), since \(\sigma_{\beta}/\sigma_{a} = (\epsilon_{\beta}/\epsilon_{a})^{2}\); but we can obtain the value also using Eq. (3) and \(K_{\alpha}/u_{\alpha} = K_{\beta}/u_{\beta}\) as

\[
\frac{\epsilon_{0}}{\epsilon_{a}} = \sqrt{\frac{M_{a}}{M_{\beta}}} \left[ 1 + \frac{2 T_{0,a}/\epsilon_{a}}{1 + 2 T_{0,a}/\epsilon_{e;i})e^{-\epsilon_{i;e}/T_{0,a} - \epsilon_{0}/T_{0,b}}} \right]^{1/2} e^{-\epsilon_{e;i}/T_{0,a}}.
\]

(9)

where \(T_{0,b}\) is the electron temperature when \(\kappa = 1\) or \(P_{He}/P_{Ar+He} = 100\%\). Using Eq. (9), \(T_{e}\) becomes \(T_{0,b}\) when \(\kappa = 1\). Finally, it is possible to obtain electron temperature as a function of \(\kappa\) by using Eqs. (8) and (9). Figure 2 shows the electron temperature variation as a function of the He ratio in the Ar/He mixture plasma with a total pressure of 20 mTorr and 600 W, where the solid line represents the calculated...
The EEDFs and electron temperatures as a function of the mixing ratios in Ar/He at 20 mTorr and Ar/Xe at 10 mTorr are measured using a compensated Langmuir probe. The electron temperatures do not change linearly with the He and Xe mixing ratios, but electron temperature increases abruptly at $\kappa = 1$ in Ar/He plasma and it decreases rapidly near $\kappa = 0$ in Ar/Xe plasma. It may be possible to say that electron temperature changes more effectively when the mixed gas has a large ionization cross section and large mass due to its high ionization rate and slow Bohm velocity. Using a two-ion-species fluid model, electron temperature variation as a function of the mixing ratio can be calculated, which agrees well with the experimental results. In this model we assume EEDFs are Maxwellian and $d_{\text{eff}}$ is constant. We think such assumptions cause the difference between calculated and measured electron temperature because measured EEDFs show they are non-Maxwellian, and $d_{\text{eff}}$ varies with mixing ratio. We also neglect reactions between different ion species which may be another reason for the discrepancy. This model may be used in a system with other gas mixtures.

Electron density and plasma potential are also important plasma parameters for plasma processes. Though not shown in this letter, the measured plasma potentials show similar trends with electron temperatures, but electron densities show different trends and consequently more study is needed to analyze these trends.

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