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Title: Nonlinear Evolution of Buneman Instability

Abstract:

The Buneman instability takes place in a current driven system where electron and ion beams drift at different velocities. The Buneman instability is one of the most fundamental instabilities in the magnetosphere, because electrons and ions are accelerated in the opposite direction by inductive electric field due to the dynamic variation of the magnetosphere associated with substorms. We performed a complete survey of linear properties of the Buneman instability over the whole parameter space of electron and ion thermal velocities normalized by the relative drift velocity between the electron and ion beams. We categorized the unstable parameter space into three regions depending on the characteristics of the linear properties: the original Buneman instability region with relatively cold electrons and ions, the ion acoustic wave instability region, and Langmuir wave instability region. We performed electrostatic particle simulations of these instabilities for different sets of electron and ion thermal velocities with the real density ratio. We traced the instabilities for a long period of time well beyond the linear growth and saturation stage. In the nonlinear stage, we found different types of potential structures, i.e., isolated electron holes, isolated ion holes, double layers, and electron acoustic solitons. Nonlinear evolution of ion acoustic waves results in formation of ion holes and double layers. Unlike the ion holes, a double layer forms a distinct potential gap that accelerates electrons which generate a series of small scale electron holes. The electron holes correspond to positive isolated potentials, while the electron acoustic solitons show negative isolated potentials. The electron holes are generated through repeated coalescence of continuous potentials that trap part of electron velocity distribution. On the other hand the electron acoustic solitons appear only rarely when a special condition is satisfied. Nonlinear kinetic processes leading to formation of the electron acoustic solitons will be discussed in detail.

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Co-Authors