The TSL 6.4 GHz ECR ion source – status, improvements and measurements

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Abstract The TSL 6.4 GHz ECR ion source performs reliably and is well optimized for the various ion species that are routinely provided for experiments. Beam intensities are comparable with other similar sources but at the lower end of the spectrum. We are thus investigating a number of methods of improvement. The development of a micro-oven for low melting point materials was successfully concluded. Further development is needed to improve the consumption rate in order to enable more effective use of expensive isotopes. Measurements with operation of the source in the after-glow mode were successful but the pulse to pulse reproducibility should be further improved. Although the maximum gain compared to the CW mode is satisfactory, accomplishing a higher factor would be even more advantageous for beams delivered to CELSIUS. A systematic study of various parameters was started in order to find optimal operating conditions running in the after-glow mode.

Key words ECR • ion source • after-glow mode

Introduction

The TSL 6.4 GHz ECR ion source was constructed in a collaboration between TSL and JYFL (Jyväskylä) as a copy of the Michigan RT 6.4 GHz. The first beams were extracted in November 1990. Subsequently, a similar ECRIS was constructed for installation at JYFL. ECR beams are vertically injected into the cyclotron, which is a single pole machine with three sectors for vertical focussing. The maximum average field is 1.75 T at a maximum useful radius of 1.2 m. The bending limit is given by $K = 192 \frac{Q^2}{A} \text{MeV}$; the focussing limit (protons) of 100 MeV is circumvented by using frequency modulation up to 180 MeV. Refer to Refs. [3, 7] for more detailed descriptions of the characteristics of the cyclotron.

The ECRIS is routinely used for a number of periodically recurring experiments in various fields: physics (fusion reactions, CHICSI experiments in the CELSIUS storage ring); bio-medical research (DNA double-stranded break repair etc.); ion track micro-technology (nano-wires and GMR based magnetic field sensors). Beams most often extracted are: B, N, O, Ne, Mg, Ar, Xe.

Status and performance of the TSL ECR ion source

Considering the long and extensive use of the TSL ECR ion source, near optimal tuning conditions were established for the different ion species. It should be noted that the source operation proved to be very reliable and beam-time is very seldom lost due to breakdowns or insufficient intensity. In a comparison of similar sources, it is clear that the per-
formance of our source is comparable, but at the lower end of the spectrum (Fig. 1). In the recent two years it was again attempted to verify the nature of the difference between the JYFL and TSL ECR ion sources. Due to the many factors playing a role in the performance of an ECR – of which is not the least the previous ion history, even repeating previous performances are not always trivial. Nevertheless we are seriously embarking on (1) a study of possible explanations of these differences and (2) various actions that can be taken to improve its performance.

New beams

User interest was expressed for a sulphur [13] beam, which was satisfactorily developed but not accelerated. The developed (and accelerated) silicon beam was satisfactory with the intensity comparing reasonably well with reports from other laboratories. Beam currents were as in the Table 1.

Fe beam development using the MIVOC (Metal Ions from Volatile Organic Compounds) [1] method resulted in stable beams but with beam currents only on the verge of usable intensities. Beam intensities of up to a factor 2 higher could not be kept stable for reasonably long periods. Instead of implementing the micro-oven it is thus as yet not an option to rather use the MIVOC method for metallic beams of (relative) expensive isotopes.

Development of micro-oven

A micro-oven for low melting point solids was developed during 2000, with a first run with Mg\textsuperscript{25} and Mg\textsuperscript{26} in September 2000, and the oven further improved for a next run in February 2001. Details of the oven are shown in Figs. 2 and 3. A primary condition in the design was the essentiality to be able to refill the oven without disturbing the ECRIS vacuum. Although the oven is now functioning well, further optimization is necessary. Due to the limited space available with access via the radial ports (Fig. 4), the volume of the oven is severely restricted with the implication that the maximum mass is limited to ca. 230 mg Mg – thus limiting runs to ca. 90 hours before refilling is needed.

Consumption rate and ionization efficiency measurements were routinely done. Ionization efficiency is defined as, for example, the summed beam current for all Mg ions relative to the mass of Mg metal consumed.

Depending on the beam intensity needed, and thus the degree of heating, the consumption rate (Mg) is varying between 2.5 and 4.5 mg/h. The ionization efficiency of ca. 0.7% compares well with figures reported [2].

For the moment we are content with the oven performance as it is as yet not foreseen that beams from solids will become a strong component of our beam spectrum. Even though Mg\textsuperscript{25-26} is not so extremely expensive, it would be advantageous to prevent loosing large percentages of the material on colder inner surfaces. A heated inner structure

Table 1. Analyzed silicon, sulphur and iron beam intensities from the TSL 6.4 GHz ECR ion source.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ECRIS</th>
<th>Laboratory</th>
<th>Data source</th>
<th>Silicon</th>
<th>Sulphur</th>
<th>Iron</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>JYFL, 6.4 GHz</td>
<td>Jyväskylä, Finland</td>
<td>Web (before upgrade)</td>
<td>26.5</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAC, 10.1 GHz</td>
<td>Faure, South Africa</td>
<td>NAC beam records</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TSL, 6.4 GHz</td>
<td>Uppsala, Sweden</td>
<td>TSL beam records</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIL UW, 10 GHz</td>
<td>Warsaw, Poland</td>
<td>[10]</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\*Fe intensities of 2.5 to 3 µA could not be kept stable for longer periods than several hours.
The TSL 6.4 GHz ECR ion source – status, improvements and measurements

Concentric with the plasma chamber inner surface would be worthwhile to be developed. Increasing the volume in a new micro-oven design will also be a high priority. With even better optimization of the various source parameters it is believed that both the consumption rate and ionization efficiency could be further improved. As time allows we will thus proceed with these mentioned improvements.

Operation in pulsed mode

More often, at TSL as elsewhere, it is essential to have the maximum possible average beam available to users – which thus necessitates the use of DC ECR beams. This is not the case, for example, when heavy ions are produced for acceleration in CELSIUS.

At various laboratories it has been established that pulsing of the microwave power leads to a factor of 2 to 3 increase in the extracted beam intensity measured immediately after cut-off of the RF pulse. For high charge states increase factors of up to 10 were also reported [6].

Previous measurements with the TSL ECRIS operated in the so-called after-glow mode extracting lighter ions were not very encouraging due to plasma instabilities.

Ar^{11+} is of specific interest for acceleration in CELSIUS and running the ECRIS in pulsed mode optimized for this (heavier) ion was further investigated. With re-tuning of several of the source parameters, a stable condition of the plasma could be accomplished. The after-glow peak of 10 µA was repetitive with time and is thus an increase almost by a factor of 2 compared to the DC beam (Fig. 5). For this relatively low charge state this result was very satisfactory. For this test measurement the relevant parameters are presented in Table 2.

Conclusions from a preliminary systematic study are:
- increasing the pulsing frequency does not lead to a significant increase in beam intensity and leads to the plasma being more susceptible to instabilities;
- the RF_{on} pulse should be sufficiently long for the plasma to stabilize;
- tuning is simpler if the RF_{off} pulse is sufficiently long for the plasma to completely die away – but there seems to be an advantage in building up the plasma before it completely quenches.
Improvements and measurements

Biased disk

A small change to enable increased voltage deliverable to the biased disk led to an intensity increase of ca. 20% for higher charge states, i.e. Xe$^{27+}$, which made acceleration of these beams more comfortable.

History effects of Si and B

It could not statistically be indicated sufficiently well enough that a run with Si, and thus creating a SiO$_2$ layer on the plasma chamber inner surface, has a positive effect on subsequent beam intensities. One may conclude that the cold electron effect of the SiO$_2$ is not noticeable when superimposed on the effect of the biased disk. A positive effect that was indeed clear is that optimal tuned conditions for subsequent beams are reached with more ease.

Contrary to measurements performed at other laboratories (private communication – J. Arje, JYFL, Jyväskylä), a run with B seems to have a negative effect on subsequent beams. A possible explanation is that our observance applies only to high Q beams (for example: $^{129}$Xe$^{27+}$) where very high vacuum is essential and that B, using the MIVOC method with decaborane H$_{14}$B$_{10}$, is still outgassing from the inlet lines.

Magnetic field upgrade

The SC-ECRIS at NSCL/MSU is a very well performing 6.4 GHz ECR ion source. From a study of the magnetic field characteristics of the SC-ECRIS at NSCL/MSU it was concluded [9] that the magnetic field of the RT 6.4 GHz ECR’s can be adapted and the magnitude increased to such an extent to resemble the configuration of the SC-ECRIS (Fig. 6).

During 2001 the magnetic field configuration of the JYFL 6.4 GHz ECRIS was adapted to incorporate these calculations with very positive results as shown in Fig. 7.

In collaboration with JYFL, a similar reconstruction of the TSL ECRIS is scheduled to start in November 2002. Currently the 9 axial coils are symmetrically positioned in 3 groups of 3 each at injection, centre and extraction. A new yoke will be manufactured and the 9 coils regrouped in only an injection set (5 coils) and extraction group (4 coils). The new yoke will completely surround each set of coils enabling a further enhancement of the magnetic field. Additionally, the fields at the injection and extraction region will be strengthened by respectively adding a plug of high quality magnetic steel at injection and two rings in the vicinity of the plasma electrode. The strength of the hexapole magnetic field will also be increased. This will be accom-
weeks of pumping and outgassing which then provides a final 3 weeks for testing before the first experiments with heavy ions from the ECR ion source are scheduled for the beginning of April 2003.

All drawings are now finalized and we have received the first quotations for those yoke components whose dimensions are too large to be manufactured internally. The first of the necessary new components involved in the upgrade have also been manufactured and machining will continue dependent on available workshop time.

Future prospects

Apart from the magnetic field upgrade, further future prospects are:

Improving plasma characteristics

VECC, Calcutta reports [12] the very positive effect of plating the inner surface of the plasma chamber with Al and thereby increasing beam intensities with up to a factor of 2. This confirms the established belief that provision of secondary cold electrons (in this case from the oxidised Al) to the ECR plasma has a significant effect stabilizing the plasma, resulting also in significantly higher beam intensities extracted.

Using a biased disk positioned axially at injection is an alternative source of cold electrons, although new results seem to indicate that the effect of the biased disk is rather related to optimisation of the plasma potential or improved extraction conditions. Similar to the detailed study of various effects and operational modes of biased disks at RIKEN (Japan) [8] and ATOMKI (Hungary) [4], it should thus also be experimentally established what the optimal operational mode for the TSL ECR ion source is.

Improving MIVOC beams

The MIVOC method is known as a very convenient technique to produce metallic ions, especially as the use of an oven or any other heating or sputtering is avoided. The method does, on the other hand, require exact procedures and careful tuning of the source. Understanding of the MIVOC method and the related tuning of the ECRIS have been improved and valuable experience has been gained. It is believed that we can still further improve on reached intensities. Furthermore, this knowledge can now be extended to other elements (Ni, Co, Cu, Ge and also I₂).

Optimization of the extraction system

On a longer term it would be worthwhile to study the extraction system and verify whether possibilities exist to improve the current system. Additionally, the injection beam-line should be re-evaluated and the possibility of an updated emittance system investigated.

New inflector

To improve the acceptance and transmission of beams from the ECRIS into/through the cyclotron, a new inflector was designed [11]. The relevant parameters (e.g. k which is related to the direction of the electric field) are chosen to minimize the inflector fringe field. The electrode spacing at entrance, d₀, is 8 mm and the width of the electrode is 16 mm, thus improving the aspect ratio from 1 to 2. The off-centre distance between the centre of the cyclotron and the centre of the trajectory at the inflector exit was chosen as 11.7 mm. Calculations for the ion trajectories for 3 reference ions were done. These calculations indicated that the inflector exit parameters and the energy gain is sufficient to clear all the central region components. Construction of the inflector is nearly completed and the first tests are scheduled for October 2002.

Conclusion

The source is performing well and in a stable and dependable fashion. Extracted beam intensities can be improved. First tests for the operation of the ECRIS in the after-glow mode gave positive results. We have, with reference to various aspects, embarked on a programme to improve our ECRIS. In addition, we expect that the development and further optimization of the new inflector will improve intensities available from the cyclotron.

References


12. VECC Progress report (2000) VECC, Calcutta, India