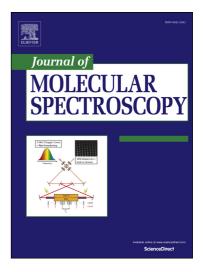
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ACCEPTED MANUSCRIPT

Infrared Emission Spectroscopy of Atmospheric-Pressure Ball Plasmoids

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Abstract

We report the first (to our knowledge) infrared emission spectra collected from water-based laboratory ball plasmoid discharges. A "ball plasmoid" results from a unique type of pulsed DC plasma discharge in which a sphere of plasma is seen to grow and eventually separate from a central electrode and last for a few hundred milliseconds without an external power source before dissipating. Typical recombination rates for plasmas at ambient conditions are on the order of a millisecond or less, however ball plasmoids have been observed to last a few hundred milliseconds, and there is no explanation in the literature that fully accounts for this large discrepancy in lifetime. The spectra are dominated by emission from water and from hydroxyl radical; PGOPHER was used to fit the experimental spectra to extract rotational temperatures for these molecules. The temperatures of the bending and stretching modes of H₂O were determined to be 1900±300 K and 2400±400 K, respectively and the rotational temperature of OH was found to be 9200±1500 K.

Keywords: Plasmoid, Plasma Diagnostics, Rotational Temperature, Infrared Emission Spectroscopy PGOPHER, Ball Lightning

1. Introduction

Low-temperature and atmospheric-pressure plasmas have developed as essential tools across several industries over the past few decades. The tunability of plasma discharge parameters allows for the selection of chemically and physically reactive components of the ionized medium, and operating a discharge at ambient pressures fosters numerous applications of plasmas in different settings.

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