



CHARGING MODEL AND DUST ATOMS & MOLECULES

Zahida Ehsan (1,2), Nodar Tsintsadze (3,4), and Stefaan Poedts (1)

(1) K. U. Leuven Center for Plasma Astrophysics, Celestijnenlaan 200B, 3001 Leuven, Belgium, (2) Blackett Laboratory, Imperial College London, London SW7 2AZ, United Kingdom, (3) Salam Chair in Physics Department, Government College University, Lahore 54000, Pakistan, (4) Department of Plasma Physics, E. Andronikashvili Institute of Physics, Tbilisi 0171, Georgia

The condition for the validity of the orbital motion limited (OML) theory is reviewed with reference to the calculation of the floating potential attained by a spherical body immersed in a plasma. It is shown that the OML theory is never satisfied for some cases. Then a new approach of obtaining floating potential which in a way answers the questions raised is presented.

Further assuming conservation of entropy, an important relation is obtained between the maximum potential and therefore the charge of the dust grain and the temperature of the electrons. The Thomas-Fermi equation is derived for the potential of a dust grain in a nondegenerate plasma suggesting the existence of dust atom with a well defined atomic radius. Furthermore, based on the

Born-Oppenheimer approximation, the notion of a dust-grain molecule is introduced in which the protons act like a kind of “glue” which binds two negatively charged dust grains together, and the motion of the grains have little influence on that binding force. Finally, considering the weak interaction between the proton clouds of two dust grains, an expression of exchange energy is obtained. You are responsible for and will need to convert your document to PDF. Check the final version (including content, special characters, fonts etc.) to ensure that everything is correct before accepting the final submission.