The physics behind subdiffusive transport across an externally imposed sheared flow in drift-wave turbulence

D.E. NEWMAN, Univ. of Alaska Fairbanks, R. SANCHEZ, Oak Ridge National Lab, DEBASMITA SAMADDAR, J.N. LEBOEUF, JNL Scientific — In recent gyrokinetic simulations of ITG turbulence it has been found that radial transport ceases to behave diffusively in the presence of a radially-sheared poloidal zonal flow [1]. We have observed a similar change in the character of transport across a shear flow in numerical simulations of 2D-turbulence in slab geometry using the BETA code, on which the sheared flow has been externally imposed [2]. The slab geometry and physics simplifies the search for the physics mechanism responsible for the onset of subdiffusion. The results suggest that subdiffusion is caused by the selection of a preferred sign for the vorticity carried out by the sheared flow throughout the 2D domain. This mechanism is likely to be important in a wide variety of turbulent systems.


Supported in part by HPC resources from ARSC at the UAF, and DOE’s NERSC and under DOE grants DE-AC05-00OR22725 and DE-FG02-04ER54741.

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Date submitted: 21 Jul 2009
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