Is cold fusion becoming a new technology?

M. Pitkänen
Email: matpitka6@gmail.com.
http://tgdtheory.com/public_html/.

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Abstract

The progress in cold fusion research has been rapid during last years and the most recent news about the work of Prof. Holmlid and his student might well mean the final breakthrough concerning practical applications, which would include not only wasteless energy production but maybe also the production of elements such as metals. In this article I discuss the model of Holmlid and point out its problems and discuss TGD inspired model relying crucially on TGD based view about dark matter solving these problems. A new element is an explanation for the mysterious looking production of mesons of hadron physics, which in light of text book wisdom looks even more non-feasible than cold fusion.

1 Introduction

The progress in cold fusion research has been really fast during last years and the most recent news might well mean the final breakthrough concerning practical applications which would include not only wasteless energy production but maybe also the production of elements such as metals. The popular article titled "Cold Fusion Real, Revolutionary, and Ready Says Leading Scandinavian Newspaper" (see http://tinyurl.com/huqc34y) tells about the work of Prof. Leif Holmlid and his student Sinder-Zeiner Gundersen. For more details about the work of Holmlid et al see http://tinyurl.com/nbephxb and http://tempid.altervista.org/SRI.pdf, http://tinyurl.com/pm56kk3 and [C1].

Gundersen revealed the details of an operating cold fusion reactor in Norway reported to generate 20 times more energy than required to activate it. The estimate of Holmlid is that Norway would need 100 kg of deuterium per year to satisfy its energy needs (this would suggest that the amount of fusion products is rather small to be practical except in situations, where the amounts needed are really small). The amusing co-incidence is that I constructed towards the end of the last year a detailed TGD based model of cold fusion and the findings of Leif Holmlid already discussed served as an important guideline although the proposed mechanism is different.

Histories are cruel, and the cruel history of cold fusion begins in 1989, when Pons and Fleichmann reported anomalous heat production involving palladiums target and electrolysis in heavy water (deuterium replacing hydrogen). The reaction is impossible in the world governed by text book physics since Coulomb barrier makes it impossible for positively charged nuclei to get close enough. If ordinary fusion is in question, reaction products should involve gamma rays and neutrons and these have not been observed.

The community preferred text books over observations and labelled Pons and Fleichman and their followers as crackpots and it became impossible to publish anything in so called respected journals. The pioneers have however continued to work with cold fusion and for few years ago American Chemical Society had to admit that there might be something in it and cold fusion researchers got a status of respectable researcher. There have been several proposals for working reactors such as Rossi's E-Cat and NASA is performing research in cold fusion. In countries like Finland cold fusion is still a cursed subject and will probably remain so until cold fusion becomes the main energy source in heating of also physics department.

1.1 The model of Holmlid for cold fusion

Leif Holmlid is a professor emeritus in chemistry at the University of Gothemburg. He has quite recently published a work on Rydberg matter in the prestigious journals of APS and is now invited to tell about his work on cold fusion to a meeting of American Physical Society.

1. Holmlid regards Rydberg matter (see `https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rydberg_matter`) as a probable precursor of cold fusion. Rydberg atoms have some electrons at very high orbitals with large radius. Therefore the nuclei plus core electrons look for them like a point nucleus, which charge equal to nuclear charge plus that of core electrons. Rydberg matter forms layer-like structures with hexagonal lattice structure.

2. Cold fusion would involve the formation of what Holmlid calls ultra-dense deuterium having Rydberg matter as precursor. If I have understood correctly, the laser pulse hitting Rydberg matter would induce the formation of the ultra-dense phase of deuterium by contracting it strongly in the direction of the pulse. The ultra-dense phase would then suffer Coulomb explosion. The compression seems to be assumed to happen in all directions. To me the natural assumption would be that it occurs only in the direction of laser pulse defining the direction of force acting on the system.

3. The ultra-dense deuterium would have density about $.13 \times 10^6 kg/m^3$, which is 1.3×10^3 times that of ordinary water. The nuclei would be so close to each other that only a small perturbation would make possible to overcome the Coulomb wall and cold fusion can proceed. Critical system would be in question. It would be hard to predict the outcome of individual experiment. This would explain why the cold fusion experiments have been so hard to replicate. The existence of ultra-dense deuterium has not been proven but cold fusion seems takes place.

   Rydberg matter, which should not be confused with the ultra-dense phase would be the precursor of the process. I am not sure whether Rydberg matter exists before the process or whether it would be created by the laser pulse. Cold fusion would occur in the observed microscopic fracture zones of solid metal substances.

1.2 Issues not so well-understood

The process has some poorly understood aspects.

1. Muons as also of mesons like pion and kaon are detected in the outgoing beam generated by the laser pulse. Muons with mass about 106 MeV could be decay products of pions with mass of 140 MeV and kaons but how these particles with masses much larger than scale of nuclear binding energy per nucleon of about 7-8 MeV for ligher nuclei could be produced even if low energy nuclear reactions are involved? Pions appear as mediators of strong interaction in the old-fashioned model of nuclear interactions but the production on mass shell pions seems very implausible in low energy nuclear collisions. Something very strange seems to be occurring.

2. What is even stranger that muons produced even when laser pulse is not used to initiate the reaction. Holmlid suggests that there are two reaction pathways for cold fusion: with and without the laser pulse. This forces to ask whether the creation of Rydberg matter or something analogous to it is alone enough to induce cold fusion and whether the laser beam actually provides the energy needed for this so that ultra-dense phase of deuterium would not be needed at all. Coulomb wall problem would be solve in some other manner.

3. The amount of gamma radiation and neurons is small so that ordinary cold fusion does not seem to be in question as would be implied by the proposed mechanism of overcoming the Coulomb wall. Muon production would suggest muon catalyzed fusion as a mechanism of cold fusion but also this mechanism should produce gammas and neutrons.

2 TGD inspired model of cold fusion

It seems that Holmlid's experiments realize cold fusion and that cold fusion might be soon a well-established technology. A real theoretical understanding is however missing. New physics is definitely required and TGD could provide it [**?**] (for background see [K2, K4]).

1. TGD based model of cold fusion relies on TGD based view about dark matter [K1, K3]. Dark matter would correspond to phases of ordinary matter with non-standard value of Planck constant $h_{eff} = n \times h$ implying that the Compton sizes of elementary particles and atomic nuclei are scaled up by n and can be rather large - of atomic size or even larger.

   Also weak interactions can become dark: this means that weak boson Compton lengths are scaled up so that they are effectively massless below Compton length and weak interactions become as strong as electromagnetic interactions. If this happens, then weak interactions can lead to rapid beta decay of dark protons transforming them to neutrons (or effectively neutrons as it turns out). For instance, one can imagine that proton or deuteron approaching nucleus transforms rapidly to neutral state by exchange of dark W bosons and can overcome the Coulomb wall in this manner: this was my original proposal for the mechanism of cold fusion.

2. The model assumes that electrolysis leads to a formation of so called fourth phase of water discovered by Pollack [I1]. For instance, irradiation by infrared light can induce the formation of negatively charged exclusion zones (EZs) of Pollack. Maybe also the laser beam used in the experiments of Holmlid could do this so that compression to ultra-dense phase would not be needed. The fourth phase of water forms layered structures consisting of 2-D hexagonal lattices with stoichiometry $H_{1.5}O$ and carrying therefore a strong electric charge. Also Rydberg matter forms this kind of lattices, which suggests a connection with the experiments of Holmlid.

   Protons must go somewhere from the EZ and the interpretation is that one proton per hydrogen bonded pair of water molecules goes to a flux tube of the magnetic body of the system as dark proton with non-standard value of Planck constant $h_{eff} = n \times h$ and forms sequence of dark protons forming dark nucleus. If the binding energy of dark nucleus scales like $1/h_{eff}$ (1/size) the binding energy of dark nucleus is much smaller than that for ordinary nucleus. The liberated dark nuclear binding energy in the formation would generate further EZs and one would have a kind of chain reaction.

   In fact, this picture leads to the proposal that even old and boring ordinary electrolysis involves new physics. Hard to confess, but I have had grave difficulties in understanding why ionization should occur at all in electrolysis! The external electric field between the electrodes is extremely weak in atomic scales and it is difficult to understand how it induce ionization needed to load the electric battery!

3. The dark proton sequences need not be stable - the TGD counterpart for the Coulomb barrier problem. More than half of the nucleons of ordinary nuclei are neutrons and similar situation is the first expectation now. Dark weak boson (W) emission could lead to dark beta decay transforming proton to neutron or what looks like neutron (what this cryptic statement means would requires explanation about nuclear string model [K2]). This would stabilize the dark nuclei.

   An important prediction is that dark nuclei are beta stable since dark weak interactions are so fast. This is one of the predictions of the theory. Second important prediction is that gamma rays and neutrons are not produced at this stage. The analogs of gamma rays would have energies of order dark nuclear binding energy, which is ordinary nuclear energy scale scaled down by $1/n$. Radiation at lower energies would be produced. I have a vague memory that X rays in keV range have been detected in cold fusion experiments. This would correspond to atomic size scale for dark nuclei.

4. How the ordinary nuclei are then produced? The dark nuclei could return back to negatively charged EZ (Coulomb attraction) or leave the system along magnetic flux tubes and collide with some target and transform to ordinary nuclei by phase transition reducing the value of

h_{eff}. It would seem that metallic targets such as Pd are favorites in this respect. A possible reason is that metallic target can have negative surface charge densities (electron charge density waves are believed by some workers in the field to be important for cold fusion) and attract the positively charged dark nuclei at magnetic flux tubes.

Essentially all of the nuclear binding energy would be liberated - not only the difference of binding energies for the reacting nuclei as in hot fusion. At this stage also ultra-dense regions of deuterium might be created since huge binding energy is liberated and could induce also ordinary fusion reactions. This process would create fractures in the metal target.

This would also explain the claimed strange effects of so called Brown's gas generated in electrolysis on metals: it is claimed that Brown's gas (one piece of physics, which serious academic physicists enjoying monthly salary refuse to consider seriously, see `https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oxyhydrogen`) can melt metals although its temperature is not much more than 100 degrees Celsius.

5. This model would predict the formation of beta stable nuclei as dark proton sequences transform to ordinary nuclei. This process would be analogous to that believed to occur in super-nova explosions and used to explain the synthesis of nuclei heavier than iron. This process could also replace the hypothesis about super-nova nucleosynthesis: indeed, SN1987A did not provide support for this hypothesis.

   The reactor of Rossi is reported to produce heavier isotopes of Ni and of Copper. This would strongly suggest that protons also fuse with Ni nuclei. Also heavier nuclei could enter to the magnetic flux tubes and form dark nuclei with dark protons transformed partially to neutral nucleons. Also the transformation of dark nuclei to ordinary nuclei could generate so high densities that ordinary nuclear reactions become possible.

6. What about the mysterious production of pions and mesons producing in turn muons?

   (a) Could the transformation of nuclei to ordinary nuclei generate so high a local temperature that hadron physics would provide an appropriate description of the situation. Pion mass corresponds to 140 MeV energy and huge temperature about .14 GeV. This is much higher than solar temperature and looks totally implausible.

   (b) The total binding energy of nucleus with 70 nucleons (average binding energy per nucleon around 7 MeV) as single meson would generate energy of the order of magnitude of kaon mass. Dark nuclei are quantum coherent structures: could this make possible this kind of "holistic" process in the transformation to ordinary nucleus. This might be part of the story.

   (c) How the mesons are created? The first option is that the transformation of dark nucleus to ordinary one creates few mesons: the binding energy of the ordinary nucleus would be liberated as meson. This would conform with the holistic nature of the process occurring as phase transition rather than as transformation of individual dark nucleons to ordinary ones. The completely mysterious looking emission of mesons from usually detected in hadronic reactions in much higher energy scale would be a direct signature of the process.

   Or could the transformation to ordinary nucleus involve the emission of dark W boson with mass about 80 GeV decaying to dark quark pairs binding to dark mesons transforming eventually to ordinary mesons? Could dark W boson emission occur quantum coherently so that the amplitude would be sum over the emission amplitudes, and one would have an amplification of the decay rate so that it would be proportional to the square of dark nuclear charge? The effective masslessness below atomic scale would make the rate for this process high. The emission would lead directly to the final state nucleus by emission of on mass shell mesons.

   (d) One objection against the proposed model of cold fusion is that the energy liberated in the transformation of dark nuclei to ordinary ones is so large that it should have been detected. A possible explanation is that most of the energy is liberated as mesons and leaks out of the system. Fusion products would be however detected.

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