## Physics of Radiofrequency Capacitive Discharge

For decades, researchers have been paying much attention to radiofrequency capacitive discharge (RFCD). Recent practical applications include plasma technologies for surface modification (etching, deposition of thin films), nanotechnology, gas lasers, plasma chemistry, plasma displays, exhaust gas purification systems for internal combustion engines, switches of powerful power–electric systems, and ionic motors for space research. Research continues at a rapid pace and the next wave of innovations awaits us.

This book describes the physical mechanism of RFCD of low and medium pressure and the properties of discharge plasma in detail. Largely based on the author's experimental research, particular attention is paid to the observed physical phenomenon of the appearance of high-energy near-electrode electron beams in the RFCD. This book examines the main properties and characteristics of RFCD, the properties of near-electrode layers of a spatial charge, the nature of the electric field in them, and the processes of charge transport to electrodes.

Physics of Radiofrequency Capacitive Discharge is a valuable reference for scientists engaged in gas discharge physics and low-temperature plasmas, as well as graduate students and students of physics, physical chemistry, and relevant specialties.









## Contents Contents

| Foreword<br>Introduction |   |          |
|--------------------------|---|----------|
|                          |   |          |
| 110010                   | viations  | XX       |
| 1.                       | Main physical properties and characteristics of                         |          |
|                          | radiofrequency capacitive discharge                                     | 1        |
| 1.1.                     | General electromagnetic properties and classification                   |          |
|                          | of radiofrequency discharge   | 1        |
| 1.2.                     | The main differences in the physical properties of RFCD and             | 010      |
|                          | DC discharges   | 8        |
| 1.3.                     | Electrical breakdown of gas in the RF field                             | 10       |
| 1.4.                     | Power transmission processes in the RFCD network                        | 20       |
| 1.5.                     | Current-voltage characteristic of the RFCD                              | 23       |
| 1.6.                     | Modern ideas about the classification of RFCD by types                  | 37       |
| 1.7.                     | Anharmonicity of the discharge current of the RFCD                      | 44       |
| 1.8.                     | Spatial structure of RFCD   | 49       |
| 1.9.                     | Dependence of the physical properties of RFCD on the                    |          |
|                          | configuration of the discharge gap                                      | 58       |
| 1.10.                    | Dynamics of physical processes in the RFCD                              | 72       |
| 1.11.                    | The frequency of the RF field – a fundamental parameter                 |          |
|                          | of the RFCD   | 77       |
| DOM:                     | The edge resonance effect in the RICO                                   |          |
| 2.                       | Physical properties of near-electrode layers of space                   |          |
| 2.1                      | charge of RF capacitive discharge                                       | 82       |
| 2.1.                     | The specificity of the NESCL of RFCD in comparison                      |          |
| 2.2                      | with DC discharge   | 82       |
| 2.2.                     | The functional role of near-electrode and wall layers of                |          |
| 2.3.                     | space charge in the RFCD  | 84       |
| 2.3.                     | The mechanism of the conductivity of discharge current in the NESCL     | 0.5      |
| 2.4.                     | The phenomenon of RF detection in the NESCL                             | 85       |
| 2.5.                     | Dependence of the quasi-stationary jump in the potential $U_{\epsilon}$ | 89       |
| 2.0                      | in the NESCL on the parameters of the RFCD                              | 02       |
| 2.5.1.                   | The patterns of $U_s$ versus the amplitude of the RF voltage $V_s$      | 92<br>92 |
| 2.5.2.                   | Dependence of $U_s$ on gas pressure                                     | 96       |
| 2.5.3.                   | Dependence of $U_s$ on the material of the electrode and                | 70       |
|                          | the kind of gas   | 96       |

| 2.5.4.  | The frequency dependence U <sub>s</sub> (f)  | 99  |
|---------|--|-----|
| 2.6.    | The near-electrode jump in the potential $U_s$ in RFCD with  |     |
|         | external electrodes  | 105 |
| 2.7.    | The nature of the resulting electric field in the NESCL  |     |
|         | of RFCD  | 107 |
| 2.8.    | Features of the properties of NESCL in asymmetric RFCD.  |     |
|         | The effect of 'self-displacement'. 'Battery' effect  | 110 |
| 2.9.    | Transport of ions of gas-discharge plasma to electrodes  | 112 |
| 2.10.   | Transport of electrons in the NESCL  | 117 |
| 2.10.1. | On the presence of electrons in the NESCL  | 117 |
| 2.10.2. | Experimental study of near-electrode electron fluxes from  |     |
|         | electrodes to plasma   | 119 |
| 2.10.3. | Transfer of electrons from the plasma to the electrodes  | 126 |
| 2.11.   | Electron-emission processes at electrodes  | 138 |
| 2.11.1. | Dependence of the concentration of emitted electrons   |     |
|         | n on RF voltage V and current I of the discharge   | 144 |
| 2.12.   | Contactless method for diagnostics of parameters   | 152 |
|         | regredate oct  |     |
| 3.      | Edge effects in the RF capacitive discharge  | 165 |
| 3.1.    | The near-electrode space charge layer as a source of the   |     |
|         | edge effects of the RF capacitive discharge  | 165 |
| 3.2.    | Influence of the NESCL on the transport of charged   |     |
|         | particles in the near-electrode plasma   | 166 |
| 3.3.    | Stochastic heating of electrons of near-electrode plasma   |     |
|         | by an oscillating boundary of a NESCL  | 174 |
| 3.4.    | Specific properties of the 'NESCL-plasma' boundary   |     |
|         | in the RFCD  | 176 |
| 3.5.    | The possibility of a discrete mechanism for transport  |     |
|         | of plasma electrons to the electrodes of the RFCD  | 179 |
| 3.6.    | The edge resonance effect in the RFCD  | 180 |
| 3.7.    | The edge effect of the RF field in the RFCD  | 183 |
| 3.8.    | Features of the skinning of an alternating electric field by   |     |
|         | the near-electrode plasma of the RFCD  | 184 |
|         | the second of th |     |
| 4.      | Near-electrode electron beams in RF capacitive   |     |
|         | discharge discharge  | 186 |
| 4.1.    | The phenomenon of the appearance of boundary electron  |     |
|         | beams in RFCD  | 187 |
| 4.1.1.  | Near-electrode electron beams  | 187 |
| 4.1.2.  | Wall electron beams  | 198 |
| 4.2.    | Methods for diagnosing electron beams in the RFCD  | 204 |
| 4.3.    | Parameters of electron beams of low-pressure RFCD  | 209 |
| 4.4.    | The processes of spatial and temporal relaxation of near-  |     |
|         | electrode electron beams   | 215 |

| 5.         | Physical properties of RF gas discharge plasma            | 225 |
|------------|---|-----|
| 5.1.       | Features of the properties of RFCD plasma                 | 225 |
| 5.2.       | The nature of motion of charged particles in the RFCD     | 227 |
| 5.3.       | Types of low-pressure RFCD plasma                         | 229 |
| 5.4.       | Electronic energy spectrum of plasma of symmetrical       |     |
|            | RFCD  | 230 |
| 5.4.1.     | A review of the literature data                           | 231 |
| 5.4.2.     | Statement of the problem of our research                  | 249 |
| 5.4.3.     | Electronic energy spectrum of RFCD plasma when the        |     |
|            | condition $\omega_{e0} \leq v_{en}$ is satisfied          | 251 |
| 5.4.4.     | EES plasma of RFCD in the case of $\omega_{0e} >> v_{en}$ | 256 |
| 5.5.       | EES of the plasma of asymmetric RFCD                      | 272 |
| 5.6.       | The time course of physical processes in the RFCD and     |     |
|            | its effect on the electronic energy spectrum on near-     |     |
|            | electrode plasma  | 276 |
| 5.7.       | Influence of the transverse magnetic field on the time    |     |
|            | course of the EES of the near-electrode plasma of ARFCD   | 283 |
| 5.8.       | The role of beam electrons in the balance of charged      |     |
|            | particles of near-electrode plasma                        | 285 |
| 5.9.       | Beam-plasma instabilities in the RFCD                     | 289 |
| 5.9.1.     | Experimental data on the presence of beam instability     |     |
|            | in the examined RFCD                                      | 289 |
| 5.9.2.     | Analysis of the characteristics of beam instability       | 293 |
| 5.9.3.     | Parameters of the beam-plasma instability in a            |     |
|            | symmetric RFCD  | 295 |
| 5.9.4.     | The manifestation of BPI in asymmetric RFCD               | 300 |
| 5.9.5.     | RFCD with secondary 'microwave breakdown'                 | 302 |
|            | 100 Mills), light somety by the a flat appendent for some |     |
| References |   | 310 |
| Index      |   | 319 |
|            |   |     |