

Global lightning characteristics deduced from ELF/VLF electromagnetic emissions observed by the DEMETER spacecraft

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綿引 俊¹, 芳原 容英^{1*}, 早川 正士¹, R. Holzworth², Parrot Michel³

S. Watahiki¹, HOBARA, Yasuhide^{1*}, HAYAKAWA, Masashi¹, R. Holzworth², PARROT, Michel³

¹ 電気通信大学情報理工学研究所 情報・通信工学専攻, 東京, 日本, ² ワシントン大学理学部, ³ フランス国立学術センター環境物理化学宇宙研究所

¹Graduate School of Informatics and Engineering, UEC, Tokyo, Japan, ²University of Washington Earth and Space Sciences, ³LPC2E/CNRS

The global distributions of the ELF/VLF electromagnetic waves originated from world-wide thunderstorm activities are derived based on six-year record of the low altitude spacecraft data. The lightning electromagnetic pulses in the troposphere are observed as lightning whistlers by both electric and magnetic instruments onboard the low Earth orbit DEMETER satellite. The location and source intensity of each lightning event is determined by calculating approximate Poynting flux based on the survey frequency spectrum at the satellite orbit together considering transmission loss of the ionosphere. As a result three major thunderstorm active regions are clearly identified by enhanced Poynting flux values both for ELF and VLF frequency ranges. The region of high lightning activities in ELF frequency range representing the proxy of lightning discharges with a large charge moment change are differ from those in the VLF frequency range indicating a large peak current. Spatial distribution of the global lightning with a different time scale such as day-night asymmetry, seasonal migration and yearly dependence are presented as well. Finally, the source locating accuracy and magnetic conjugate effect of the VLF propagation are examined by the aid of the World Wide Lightning Location Network (WWLLN) data.

Comparison of ELF Inversion Methods for Global Lightning Activity Comparison of ELF Inversion Methods for Global Lightning Activity

Earle Williams^{1*}, Vadim Mushtak¹, Alexander Shvets², Masashi Hayakawa³, Yasuhide Hobara³
WILLIAMS, Earle^{1*}, Vadim Mushtak¹, Alexander Shvets², Masashi Hayakawa³, Yasuhide Hobara³

¹Massachusetts Institute of Technology, ²Usikov Institute of Radiophysics and Electronics, ³University of Electrocommunications (Chofu)

¹Massachusetts Institute of Technology, ²Usikov Institute of Radiophysics and Electronics, ³University of Electrocommunications (Chofu)

The natural Earth-ionosphere waveguide provides a framework for global lightning detection at both ELF and VLF frequencies. Increased attention has been given recently to ELF methods, primarily because of the reduced attenuation and the smaller number of receiving stations required. In the inverse problem in the Schumann resonance band (4-40 Hz), measurements of background field spectra at multiple stations (giving a number of measured inputs N) are used to infer the global distribution of lightning sources (as a number M of unknown quantities). Two entirely independent approaches have been pursued over the last decade, and are to be compared in this study. The first inversion method (Shvets et al., 2010) involves a two-step process. The first step makes use of a forward model with a uniform Earth-ionosphere waveguide and lightning sources on each of 20 annuli ($M=20$) surrounding each receiving station but with spectral resolution of 0.1-0.2 Hz for a total $N=350$ inputs from field spectra over the Schumann band. The solution is overdetermined. The second step, a tomographic procedure, makes use of 3 receiving stations with 20 source points each, for a total $N=60-120$. Unknown sources are mapped on a grid with 50 resolution (0.5 Mm) from 60°N to 60°S for a total $M=61 \times 72=4392$, in an underdetermined calculation. The second inversion approach (Mushtak and Williams, 2011) employs a non-uniform (day/night asymmetry) model for the waveguide, and a forward model with three dominant chimney sources: the Americas, Africa and the Maritime Continent. The input quantities for the iterative inversion are the modal peak intensities and frequencies for 3-4 resonant modes for all measured fields (at most, two magnetic and one electric) at 5-6 receiving stations, for a total $N=50$ to 100. The unknown quantities are the source strengths and locations for each of three chimneys ($M=9$) in an overdetermined calculation. Key features targeted for comparison are the relative strengths of the three dominant chimneys, the comparative strengths of secondary sources, and the day-to-day stability of the lightning activity in absolute units ($C2km^2/sec$) on individual days in January 2009. Detailed results will be reported as they are available at conference time.

キーワード: Schumann resonances, inversion methods, global lightning, Earth-ionosphere cavity
Keywords: Schumann resonances, inversion methods, global lightning, Earth-ionosphere cavity

Discharge height of lightning narrow bipolar event and its relationship with thundercloud Discharge height of lightning narrow bipolar event and its relationship with thundercloud

Ting Wu^{1*}, Wansheng Dong², Yijun Zhang², Tsuyoshi Funaki¹, Satoru Yoshida¹, Takeshi Morimoto¹, Tomoo Ushio¹, ZenIchiro Kawasaki¹

WU, Ting^{1*}, Wansheng Dong², Yijun Zhang², Tsuyoshi Funaki¹, Satoru Yoshida¹, Takeshi Morimoto¹, Tomoo Ushio¹, ZenIchiro Kawasaki¹

¹Graduate School of Engineering, Osaka University, ²Chinese Academy of Meteorological Sciences

¹Graduate School of Engineering, Osaka University, ²Chinese Academy of Meteorological Sciences

Narrow bipolar event (NBE) is one of the most special types of lightning discharge events. In order to study the characteristics of NBE, two experiments using VLF/LF lightning location network in Guangzhou and Chongqing of China were carried out, and thousands of both polarities of NBEs were recorded.

In order to accurately determine the discharge height of NBE, we developed a method employing ionospheric reflection pair of NBE. The VLF/LF signal produced by NBE is reflected between the ionosphere and the ground, producing ionospheric reflection pulse and ground-ionospheric reflection pulse. With simultaneous observations of the NBE by multiple stations, 3-D location of the NBE can be determined by time delays between the original signal of the NBE and its ionospheric and ground-ionospheric reflection signals. This method proves to be much more accurate than traditional time-of-arrival (TOA) technique.

With this method, discharge heights of thousands of NBEs were calculated. In Guangzhou, there are a total of 1318 and 625 height results for +NBEs and -NBEs. The geometric means (GMs) of discharge height are 12.1 km and 17.3 km. In Chongqing, there are a total of 5489 and 1400 height results for +NBEs and -NBEs with GMs of 9.9 km and 17.5 km. An interesting result of our calculation is that very few NBEs are above 19 km. The highest results in Guangzhou and Chongqing are 19.6 km and 19.9 km, but there are only 0.31% of NBE in Guangzhou and 0.26% of NBE in Chongqing that are above 19 km, all of which are negative polarity.

Distribution of NBE discharge height shows that +NBEs and -NBEs occur in two different altitudes, with -NBEs mostly higher than +NBEs. Most +NBEs occur between 8 and 16 km while most -NBEs occur between 16 and 19 km. On the basis of such distribution and discharge polarities of positive and negative NBEs, we conclude that +NBEs are probably produced between the main negative charge layer and the upper positive charge layer while -NBEs are probably produced between the upper positive charge layer and the screening negative charge layer at the cloud top.

In order to further study the relationship between NBE and thundercloud, we utilized observations of two thunderstorms producing more -NBEs than +NBEs by conventional S-band Doppler weather radar. The result shows that bursts of -NBEs are clearly related with strong convection within the thunderstorm. When large number of -NBEs are produced, 30-dBZ reflectivity height is higher than 15 km, indicating the thundercloud top is even higher, probably comparable to the discharge height of -NBE.

キーワード: Narrow bipolar event, Intracloud lightning discharge, lightning discharge height, convective strength, lightning location network

Keywords: Narrow bipolar event, Intracloud lightning discharge, lightning discharge height, convective strength, lightning location network

VHF帯およびLF帯広帯域干渉計により構成された関西雷放電観測ネットワーク A Lightning observation network in Kansai using VHF and LF broadband digital interferometers

吉田 智^{1*}, 高柳 裕次¹, 森本 健志¹, 牛尾 知雄¹, 河崎善一郎², 中村 佳敬³

YOSHIDA, Satoru^{1*}, TAKAYANAGI, Yuji¹, MORIMOTO, Takeshi¹, USHIO, Tomoo¹, Zen Kawasaki², NAKAMURA, Yoshitaka³

¹ 大阪大学大学院工学研究科, ² エジプト日本科学技術大学, ³ 神戸市立工業高等専門学校電気工学科

¹Graduate School of Engineering, Osaka University, ²Egypt-Japan University of Science and Technology, ³Department of Electrical Engineering, Kobe City College of Technology

We have been designing and developing VHF and LF broadband digital interferometers (DITFs) that detect electromagnetic (EM) waves associated with cloud-to-ground and intracloud discharges, and locate the EM wave sources. We have been building up a lightning observation network consisting of VHF and LF DITFs around Osaka. The observation network covers the areas from Kobe to Nara. In this presentation we compare and discuss the observation results located by the observation network.

キーワード: 大気電気, 雷放電, リモートセンシング

Keywords: Atmospheric Electricity, lightning discharge, Remote sensing

Simultaneous Optical and Electrical Observations for One Downward Bipolar Flash Simultaneous Optical and Electrical Observations for One Downward Bipolar Flash

Weitao Lu^{1*}, Luwen Chen², Yijun Zhang¹, Daohong Wang³
LU, Weitao^{1*}, Luwen Chen², ZHANG, Yijun¹, WANG, Daohong³

¹Laboratory of Lightning Physics and Protection Engineering, Chinese Academy of Meteorological Science, ²Lightning Protection Center of Guangdong Province, Guangzhou 510080, Guangdong Province, P. R. China, ³Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering, Gifu University, Gifu 5011193, Japan

¹Laboratory of Lightning Physics and Protection Engineering, Chinese Academy of Meteorological Science, ²Lightning Protection Center of Guangdong Province, Guangzhou 510080, Guangdong Province, P. R. China, ³Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering, Gifu University, Gifu 5011193, Japan

A downward bipolar flash, containing a positive first return stroke and 5 negative subsequent return strokes, was simultaneously recorded by two high-speed cameras, two Lightning Attachment Process Observation Systems (LAPOS), one fast antenna and one slow antenna at 17:54:14, 29 July 2010 (local time) in Guangzhou, Guangdong, China. The analysis shows that:

(1) The overall flash duration is about 864 ms and all 6 strokes occur and propagate along a single channel. The interval between the first stroke (positive) and the first subsequent stroke (negative) is 279 ms, apparently bigger than those between the subsequent strokes, which are 76, 111, 78 and 149 ms. The average inter-stroke interval is about 138 ms. The peak current of the first positive stroke is 142.6 kA, much larger than those 5 negative ones, 4 of which are recorded by lightning location system with peak current values of from -22.9 kA to -32.0 kA.

(2) The downward positive leader exhibits quite smooth channel without any branch in the view range of high-speed camera. The 2D velocity of the positive leader ranges from 2.1 to 3.4×10^6 m/s, with a median value of about 2.5×10^6 m/s. The positive leader propagates downward with a rising velocity trend. The 1D velocity of the positive return stroke is estimated to be about 1.2×10^8 m/s. The 20% to 90% rising time of luminosity pulse of the positive stroke is about 2.5 us, and the duration from 20% front to 50% tail is about 55.4 us. The first positive stroke is followed by about 100 ms continuing current superposed with multiple pulse events.

(3) The 2D velocities of subsequent dart-leaders range from about 4.0×10^6 m/s to more than 12.4×10^6 m/s. The 1D velocities of the subsequent negative return strokes range from about 1.2 to 1.3×10^8 m/s. The 20% to 90% rising time values of luminosity pulses of the subsequent negative strokes range from 1.3 to 2.2 us, and the durations from 20% front to 50% tail range from 64.8 to 82.3 us. Continuing current process with duration ranging from 3 to 11 ms as well as 2 to 4 evident M-components is observed following each negative stroke.

キーワード: natural downward lightning, bipolar, optical pulse, return stroke, velocity

Keywords: natural downward lightning, bipolar, optical pulse, return stroke, velocity

Observation of lightning discharges using VHF broadband interferometers Observation of lightning discharges using VHF broadband interferometers

Wansheng Dong^{1*}, Yijun Zhang¹, Hengyi Liu¹
DONG, Wansheng^{1*}, Yijun Zhang¹, Hengyi Liu¹

¹Chinese Academy of Meteorological Sciences

¹Chinese Academy of Meteorological Sciences

Compact intracloud discharge (CID) is a distinct intracloud lightning discharge characterized by strong VHF emissions, and it is one of the most mysterious lightning events. The CID channel evolution images obtained by using VHF broadband interferometers are presented for the first time. Analysis of 11 CIDs shows that the channels of CIDs develop mainly in a vertical direction. The vertical scale of CIDs is in the range of 0.40~1.9 km. The average duration of VHF broadband emissions is 15 ms. The average apparent speed of CIDs is in a range of $0.44\sim 1.0\times 10^8$ m/s with a mean value of 0.61×10^8 m/s. The temporal-spatial evolution of the radiation sources of the CID shows an oscillation pattern, confirming the previous prediction that there is an oscillating current being reflected at the two ends of the CID channel. The estimated speed of the current wave in the CID channel is in a range of $0.56\sim 2.6\times 10^8$ m/s with a mean value of 1.4×10^8 m/s.

In this study, the spatial and temporal characteristic, power spectral density (PSD) in the 30MHz to 290MHz band and pulse train structure of 10 CPT records were analyzed. We found that the breakdown process associated with CPT is negative and similar with attempt leader or dart leader. The statistical result shows the average progression speeds of 10 CPT events are about 3.23×10^6 ms⁻¹ ~ 1.93×10^7 ms⁻¹ with the mean value being 1.02×10^7 ms⁻¹. The average PSD of the CPT in the 30MHz~290MHz band is 1.8~11.6dB and 2.4~12dB larger than that of the step leader and dart leader in the same negative cloud to ground lightning. The mean value and standard deviation of the pulse separations in these chaotic pulse trains are 5.3 ~ 9.0us and 2.7 ~ 4.9us.

キーワード: Compact Intracloud Discharges (CIDs), Pulse Burst, Lightning Locating, Broadband Interferometer
Keywords: Compact Intracloud Discharges (CIDs), Pulse Burst, Lightning Locating, Broadband Interferometer

レッドスプライトによる VLF 帯電波擾乱についての数値解析 Numerical simulations VLF signal perturbations due to red sprites

岩本 真彦^{1*}, 芳原 容英¹, 成毛亮介¹, 太田 健次², 廣木 一 亮³, 湊原 哲也³, 早川 正士¹

IWAMOTO, Masahiko^{1*}, HOBARA, Yasuhide¹, Ryosuke Naruke¹, Kenji Ohta², Kazuaki Hiroki³, Tetsuya Minatohara³, HAYAKAWA, Masashi¹

¹ 電気通信大学 情報理工学研究所 情報・通信工学専攻, 東京, 日本, ² 中部大学, 春日井, 日本, ³ 津山高専, 津山, 日本
¹Graduate School of Informatics and Engineering, UEC, Tokyo, Japan, ²Chubu Univ, Kasugai, Japan, ³Tsuyama National College of Technology, Tsuyama, Japan

In this paper we perform 3D finite-difference time-domain (FDTD) method to compute the subionospheric VLF signal perturbations due to the ionization from mesospheric transient event such as red sprites. Spatial scales of columns are determined by the sprite images obtained from our optical observations during winter lightning activities over the sea of Japan. Numerical results indicate that the multiple sprites generate the complicated scattering pattern of the VLF transmitter waves depending on special orientation and extent of sprite ionization columns. Spatial dependence of the scattered amplitude are compared with those from the experimental results of VLF observation network.

地球磁気圏内波動粒子相互作用による TLE 起源粒子降下の数値モデリング Numerical modeling of the TLE-related particle precipitations due to wave-particle interactions in the magnetosphere

向井 理人^{1*}, 芳原 容英¹, 早川 正士¹, 山岸 久雄², 岡田 雅樹²

MUKAI, Norihito^{1*}, HOBARA, Yasuhide¹, HAYAKAWA, Masashi¹, YAMAGISHI, Hisao², OKADA, Masaki²

¹ 電気通信大学 情報理工学研究科 情報・通信工学専攻, ² 国立極地研究所

¹Graduate School of Informatics and Engineering, UEC Tokyo, Japan, ²National Institute of Polar Research, Tokyo, Japan

It's well known that high energy particles precipitate into the ionosphere caused by interactions between lightning generated whistler waves in the atmosphere and the energetic particles in the magnetosphere. Perturbation of the lower ionosphere due to the precipitating particles are monitored by the ground-based VLF measurement as a space trimp event. In this study, the spatio-temporal dependence of precipitating particle energy flux were calculated by numerical simulations. In particular, we focus on the source spectrum of lightning discharges as one of the simulation inputs. The results from different types of source spectra such as TLE-producing and conventional discharges will be presented.

Lightning Applications in Severe Weather Research Lightning Applications in Severe Weather Research

Colin Price^{1*}

PRICE, Colin^{1*}

¹Department of Geophysical, Atmospheric and Planetary Sciences, Tel Aviv University, Israel

¹Department of Geophysical, Atmospheric and Planetary Sciences, Tel Aviv University, Israel

The study of lightning and thunderstorms is important for many practical and scientific reasons. Although lightning is a direct hazard to aviation, power companies, and the public, while igniting many forest fires around the globe, lightning activity within thunderstorms is also related to different types of severe weather. Due to the relationship between cloud electrification and the microphysical and dynamic structure of these storms, changes in lightning characteristics in storms can tell us a lot about the inner workings of thunderstorms. Lightning activity has been related to the likelihood that storms will produce hail, flash floods, tornadoes and other wind damage. In addition, it has been shown that lightning is related to the intensification of typhoons. With regional and global VLF lightning detection networks today supplying data in real time, while in the near future we will have real time lightning data from geostationary satellites, lightning observations provide a useful tool to help in the forecasting of severe weather, and the possibility to provide early warnings for the public in advance of these damaging storms.

キーワード: lightning, severe weather, natural hazard

Keywords: lightning, severe weather, natural hazard

空气中で生成するイオンの特性測定 Measurements of the properties of ions generated in ambient air

長門 研吉^{1*}

NAGATO, Kenkichi^{1*}

¹ 高知工業高等専門学校

¹ Kochi National College of Technology

Gaseous ions are ubiquitous in the lower atmosphere, mainly produced by galactic cosmic rays. Other ion sources such as radioactive decay, lightning, power transmission lines and combustion can enhance the ion concentration locally. Atmospheric ions are essentially important in Atmospheric Electricity because they provide electrical conductivity to the atmosphere.

Ions are involved in aerosol formation. Ions may grow sufficiently to become stable aerosol particles. Ion growth requires the presence of atmospheric trace gas molecules which have the ability to attach to ions. The ion growth speed which increases with the concentration of such trace gas molecules must be sufficiently large to allow ion growth within the relatively short ion lifetime. However such conditions are met only in certain atmospheric conditions. Whether ion induced aerosol formation makes a significant contribution to the atmospheric aerosol budget therefore remains an open question.

In addition, artificially produced ions have been reported to reduce the levels of particulates, air-borne microbes, odors and volatile organic compounds in indoor air. Because of these effects of ions, commercial electrical appliances with ionizers (mainly corona discharge type) are widely used in indoor environment. However, the detailed mechanisms by which the ions contribute to improving indoor air quality are not clearly understood.

To access the role of ions in atmospheric environment in more detail, obtaining information on ion properties such as composition and mobility (diameter) under variety conditions is important. In this paper, we present experimental results of measuring ions formed by corona discharge in ambient air using an ion mobility/mass spectrometer (IMS/MS).

福島原発事故時とグローバルサーキット Global electric circuit affected by Fukushima power plant accident

鴨川 仁^{1*}, 柿並 義宏², 高橋 幸弘³, 木村 嘉尚¹

KAMOGAWA, Masashi^{1*}, KAKINAMI, Yoshihiro², TAKAHASHI, Yukihiro³, KIMURA, Yoshihisa¹

¹ 東京学芸大学物理学科, ² 北海道大学大学院理学研究院附属地震火山研究観測センター, ³ 北海道大学・大学院理学院・宇宙理学専攻

¹Dpt. of Phys., Tokyo Gakugei Univ., ²Institute of Seismology and Volcanology, Hokkaido University, ³Department of Cosmo-science, Graduate School of Science, Hokkaido University

2011年3月11日東北地方太平洋沖地震(M9.0)において発生した津波で福島第一原子力発電所に水素爆発事故が生じ、放射性汚染が東日本を中心に広域に生じた。本研究では、放射性物質の発生による大気電気の変動を調べ、地球規模の電気回路(グローバルサーキット)への影響を調べた。その結果、放射線源の発生個所150km遠方では地表大気電場値は一桁以上の減衰し、その影響は地表沈着放射線線量とともに数カ月以上にもわたって存在しているが、数百km以上の観測地点では地表大気電場への影響がみられなかった。

キーワード: Global electric circuit, Fukushima nuclear power plant accident, Atmosphere

Keywords: Global electric circuit, Fukushima nuclear power plant accident, Atmosphere

地圏-大気圏-電離圏結合 (化学チャネル) に関する観測学的研究 Observational study of the Lithosphere-Atmosphere-Ionosphere Coupling (Chemical channel)

大山 佳織^{1*}, 服部 克巳¹, 市川 卓¹, 古屋 隆一²

OYAMA, Kaori^{1*}, HATTORI, Katsumi¹, ICHIKAWA, Takashi¹, FURUYA, Ryuichi²

¹ 千葉大学大学院理学研究科, ² コムシステム株式会社

¹Chiba Univ., ²COM SYSTEM, INC.

近年、地震に先行する電離圏擾乱が多数報告されている。この現象を説明するために、地圏で発生した地震と電離圏での異常をつなぐメカニズムの解明が求められており、その候補として提案されているのが地圏-大気圏-電離圏結合 (Lithosphere-Atmosphere-Ionosphere coupling ;LAI カップリング) である。LAI カップリングのモデルのひとつとして、地表からの放射性物質の放出に伴う大気電気学的変化がある。我々は、LAI カップリングを検証することを目的として東京と房総半島における大気電気学的パラメータ (大気イオン濃度、大気電場) の観測を行っている。

具体的には、大気イオン濃度を東京都昭島市、千葉県鴨川市清澄及び千葉県鴨川市内浦の3地点で、大気電場を千葉大学屋上及び清澄観測点で連続観測している。気象測器を併設している観測点もあり、それぞれの値の変動と気象状態の関係を解明すること、そして地震に関係した大気イオン濃度・大気電場の連動の観測が期待される。本研究では、気象状態や放射線量率、地震と大気電気学的パラメータとの関係を調査した。

当日は2011年3月11日に発生した東北地方太平洋沖地震の前後の変動について報告する。各観測点で有意な変動が確認され、特に地震後の値の変動が顕著であり、大気イオン濃度の有意な上昇、大気電場の有意な減少がそれぞれの観測点で観測された。これは福島第一原子力発電所の事故により大気中へ放出された放射性物質が増加したことが影響していると考えられる。この変動はLAIカップリングの大気圏内の結合を説明する観測例である。地震に係る放射性物質の放出があった際も、同様の変動が見られると仮定できることから、今後のLAIカップリング検証の手がかりとなると考えられる。

詳細な解析結果は当日の発表にて報告する。

Magnetic Storm Free ULF Analysis in Relation with Earthquakes in Taiwan Magnetic Storm Free ULF Analysis in Relation with Earthquakes in Taiwan

Chieh-Hung Chen^{1*}, Strong Wen², Horng-Yuan Yen³
CHEN, Chieh-Hung^{1*}, Strong Wen², Horng-Yuan Yen³

¹Institute of Earth Sciences, Academia Sinica, Taipei 115, Taiwan, ²Institute of Seismology, National Chung Cheng University, Chiayi 621, Taiwan, ³Institute of Geophysics, National Central University, Jhongli 320, Taiwan

¹Institute of Earth Sciences, Academia Sinica, Taipei 115, Taiwan, ²Institute of Seismology, National Chung Cheng University, Chiayi 621, Taiwan, ³Institute of Geophysics, National Central University, Jhongli 320, Taiwan

Despite early optimism, pre-earthquake anomalous phenomena can be determined by using enhanced amplitude at the ultra-low-frequency range from geomagnetic data via the Fourier transform. In reality, accuracy of the enhanced amplitude in relation to earthquakes deduced from time-varied geomagnetic data would be damaged by magnetic storms and/or other unwanted influence resulted from solar activity and/or variations in the ionosphere, respectively. We substitute values of the cross correlation between amplitudes summarized from the earthquake-related (0.1-0.01 Hz) and the comparable (0.01-0.001 Hz) frequency bands for amplitude enhancements as an index of determination associated with seismo-magnetic anomalies to mitigate disturbance caused by magnetic storms. A station located about 300 km away from the others is taken into account to further examine whether changes of the cross correlation values are caused by seismo-magnetic anomalies limited within local regions or not. Analytical results show that the values suddenly decrease near epicenters few days before and after 67% (=6/9) earthquakes ($M \geq 5$) in Taiwan between Sep. 2010 and March 2011. Seismo-magnetic signals determined by using the values of cross correlation methods partially improve results yielded from the Fourier transform alone and provide advantage information regarding forthcoming earthquakes in the time and spatial domains.

キーワード: Seismo-magnetic anomaly, Ultra low frequency
Keywords: Seismo-magnetic anomaly, Ultra low frequency

Is it possible to predict earthquakes? - There are reasons to believe Is it possible to predict earthquakes? - There are reasons to believe

O Molchanov¹, Schekotov Alexander^{1*}, E Fedorov¹, V Gladishev¹, 早川 正士², 芳原 容英²

O Molchanov¹, SCHEKOTOV, Alexander^{1*}, E Fedorov¹, V Gladishev¹, HAYAKAWA, Masashi², HOBARA, Yasuhide²

¹Schmidt Institute of Physics of the Earth, Russian Academy of Sciences, 123995, Bolshaya Gruzinskaya, ²The University of Electro-Communications, Tokyo, Japan

¹Schmidt Institute of Physics of the Earth, Russian Academy of Sciences, 123995, Bolshaya Gruzinskaya, ²The University of Electro-Communications, Tokyo, Japan

This report is dedicated to our friend and colleague Oleg Molchanov who passed away last year. During his last years the problem of earthquake forecast was the most important for Oleg and new approaches were developed and several interesting results were got under his leadership. Here we present only two of them, probably the most interesting and statistically significant. These seismo-electromagnetic effects due to their properties can be used for short-term earthquake prediction. The first one is the depression of the ULF magnetic field fluctuations 1-7 days before earthquakes. Contrary, the second effect is an additional emission in the atmosphere during the same time interval in the frequency range 1-50 Hz. The efficiency of both methods for the EQ forecast is verified at numerous earthquakes at Japan, Kuril Islands and Kamchatka. We also describe the measurement technique, the procedure for finding the precursors, and the methods of data processing.

Numerical modeling of seismo-ionospheric disturbances by FDTD method and comparison with experimental results from Japan Numerical modeling of seismo-ionospheric disturbances by FDTD method and comparison with experimental results from Japan

芳原 容英^{1*}, 岩本 真彦¹, 太田 健次², 早川 正士¹

HOBARA, Yasuhide^{1*}, IWAMOTO, Masahiko¹, Kenji Ohta², HAYAKAWA, Masashi¹

¹電気通信大学 情報理工学研究科 情報・通信工学専攻, ²中部大学

¹Graduate School of Informatics and Engineering, UEC, Tokyo, Japan, ²Chubu Univ., Kasugai, Japan

Recently many experimental results have been reported concerning the ionospheric perturbation associated with major earthquakes. VLF/LF transmitter signal received by network observations are used to detect seismo-ionospheric signatures such as amplitude and phase anomalies. These signatures are due to the ionospheric perturbation located around the transmitter and receivers. However the physical properties of the perturbation such as electron density, spatial scale, and location have not been understood well. In this paper we carried out the numerical simulation on the subionospheric VLF/LF signals including the various conditions of seismo-ionospheric perturbations by using a two-dimensional finite-difference time-domain (2D-FDTD) method to determine the perturbation properties. The amplitude and phase for the various cases of an ionospheric perturbation are calculated relative to the normal condition (without perturbation) as functions of distance from the transmitter and distance between the transmitter and perturbation. These numerical results are compared with our observation for several major earthquakes. As a result, we found that the received transmitter amplitude depends greatly on the distance between the transmitter and ionospheric perturbation, on the spatial scale and height of the perturbations. Moreover results of modeled ionospheric perturbation for the recent 2011 off the Pacific coast of Tohoku earthquake are compared with those from our VLF network experiment.

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Schekotov Alexander^{1*}, E Fedorov¹, 芳原 容英², 早川 正士², 中村 遼平², 塩川 和夫³, N Yagova¹

SCHEKOTOV, Alexander^{1*}, E Fedorov¹, HOBARA, Yasuhide², HAYAKAWA, Masashi², NAKAMURA, Ryohei², SHIOKAWA, Kazuo³, N Yagova¹

¹Schmidt Institute of Physics of the Earth, Russian Academy of Sciences, 123995, Bolshaya Gruzinskaya, ²The University of Electro-Communications, Tokyo, Japan, ³STEL, Nagoya University, Japan

¹Schmidt Institute of Physics of the Earth, Russian Academy of Sciences, 123995, Bolshaya Gruzinskaya, ²The University of Electro-Communications, Tokyo, Japan, ³STEL, Nagoya University, Japan

We analyze magnetograms for the time intervals with clear spectral resonant structures (SRS) at frequencies 0.1- 6 Hz. For this study we use the data of induction magnetometers from Moshiri (Japan) and Karimshino (Russia). The common view is that the SRS originate from excitation of the Ionospheric Alfvén Resonator (IAR) by lightning discharges. However, rather frequently the typical picture in time domain includes only two pulses: the main pulse caused by a lightning discharge, and a single echo pulse following with delay from several tenths of seconds to several seconds. The secondary pulse can be explained by partial reflection of an initial wave from the steep gradient of Alfvén velocity in the ionospheric F-layer. Thus, although a spectrum with the comb-shape structure is seen at IAR frequencies it can be sometimes successfully interpreted without resonance excitation.

2011年3月11日の東日本地震の前兆現象 (VLF/LF 伝搬異常と ULF 磁界強度低下) Possible precursors to the 2011 3/11 Japan earthquake: VLF/LF propagation anomaly and ULF depression anomaly

早川 正士^{1*}, 芳原容英², A. シェコトフ³, A. ロズノイ³, M. ソロビエバ³
HAYAKAWA, Masashi^{1*}, Yasuhide Hobara², A. Schekotov³, A. Rozhnoi³, M. Solovieva³

¹ 電気通信大学 AWCC, ² 電気通信大学, ³ ロシア科学アカデミー、地球物理研究所

¹University of Electro-Communications, AWCC, ²University of Electro-Communications, ³Institute of Physics of the Earth, Russian Academy of Sciences

The purpose of this paper is to present a possible precursor to the 2011 March 11 Japan earthquake. First of all, we present the results on subionospheric VLF/LF propagation anomaly (ionospheric perturbation) by means of Japan-Russia VLF network. It is found that the ionospheric perturbation is clearly detected on March 4, 5 and 6 on the propagation paths of NLK (Seattle, USA) to Japanese stations and on a path of JJI (Miyazaki, Kyushu) to Kamchatka. Next, we present the results on the ULF depression (horizontal component) on the same days, which is interpreted in terms of the absorption in the disturbed lower ionosphere of the downgoing magnetospheric Alfvén waves. These two precursors are considered to be due to the same effect of the lower ionospheric perturbation about one week before the earthquake.

キーワード: 地震電磁気, ULF 放射

Keywords: Seismo Electromagnetics, ULF emission