Global Radiation-Magnetohydrodynamic Simulations of Black Hole Accretion Flow and Outflow: Unified Model of Three States

Ken Ohsuga, Shin Mineshige, Masao Mori, and Yoshiaki Kato
1 National Astronomical Observatory of Japan, Osawa, Mitaka, Tokyo 181-8588
2 Institute of Physical and Chemical Research (RIKEN), Wako, Saitama 351-0198
3 Department of Astronomy, Graduate School of Science, Kyoto University, Kyoto 606-8502
4 Center for Computational Sciences, University of Tsukuba, Tsukuba, Ibaraki 305-8577
5 Institute of Space and Astronautical Science (JAXA), Sagamihara, Kanagawa 229-8510

Abstract

Black-hole accretion systems are known to possess several distinct modes (or spectral states), such as low/hard state, high/soft state, and so on. Since the dynamics of the corresponding flows is distinct, theoretical models were separately discussed for each state. We here propose a unified model based on our new, global, two-dimensional radiation-magnetohydrodynamic simulations. By controlling a density normalization we could for the first time reproduce three distinct modes of accretion flow and outflow with one numerical code. When the density is large (model A), a geometrically thick, very luminous disk forms, in which photon trapping takes place. When the density is moderate (model B), the accreting gas can effectively cool by emitting radiation, thus generating a thin disk, i.e., the soft-state disk. When the density is too low for radiative cooling to be important (model C), a disk becomes hot, thick, and faint; i.e., the hard-state disk. The magnetic energy is amplified within the disk up to about twice, 30%, and 20% of the gas energy in models A, B, and C, respectively. Notably, the disk outflows with helical magnetic fields, which are driven either by radiation pressure force or magnetic pressure force, are ubiquitous in any accretion modes. Finally, our simulations are consistent with the phenomenological α-viscosity prescription, that is, the disk viscosity is proportional to the pressure.

Key words: accretion, accretion disks — black hole physics — ISM: jets and outflows — magnetohydrodynamics: MHD — radiative transfer

1. Introduction

The extensive study of disk accretion flows started in the 1960’s. The standard disk model, and then the slim disk model and the radiatively inefficient accretion flow (RIAF) model were proposed for explaining a variety of accretion modes (Shakura & Sunyaev 1973; Ichimaru 1977; Rees et al. 1982; Abramowicz et al. 1988; Narayan & Yi 1994). These models are successful, but have some limitations. For example, the disk viscosity, the most important key ingredient for the accretion disk theory, is prescribed by a phenomenological α-viscosity model, whereby the viscous torque is proportional to the pressure (Kato et al. 2008), although its physical basis is not clear. They are (radially) one-dimensional models so that they cannot describe multi-dimensional motion, such as outflow and internal circulation. Complex coupling between radiation, magnetic fields, and matters is not accurately solved, either.

Since the disk viscosity is likely to be of magnetic origin (Balbus & Hawley 1991), multi-dimensional global magneto-hydrodynamics (MHD) simulations are being rather extensively performed recently as a model for the disks with low luminosities (Matsumoto 1999; Machida et al. 2000; Hawley & Krolik 2001; Koide et al. 2001; De Villiers et al. 2003; Hawley & Krolik 2006). Such non-radiative MHD simulations cannot explain higher luminosity states, however, since strong matter-radiation coupling is expected. As an independent approach several groups performed two-dimensional radiation-hydrodynamic (RHD) simulations of very luminous flow since the 1980’s (Eggum et al. 1988; Okuda & Fujita 2000; Ohsuga et al. 2005; Ohsuga 2006). Those simulations were, however, non-MHD simulations and so they were obliged to rely on the phenomenological α-viscosity model. Multi-dimensional radiation-MHD (RMHD) simulations are unavoidable. Such simulations were attempted in the past (e.g., Turner et al. 2003; Hirose et al. 2006), but these are restricted to local simulations performed under the shearing-box approximations and, hence, global coupling of magnetic fields was artificially quenched there.

We, here, report for the first time the results of global two-dimensional RMHD simulations with a motivation to establish a unified view of the accretion flow and outflow around the black holes.

2. Numerical Method

Our method of calculations is extension of that of MHD simulations (e.g., Kato et al. 2004). We use cylindrical coordinates (r, \( \varphi \), z), where r is the radial distance, \( \varphi \) is the azimuthal angle, and z is the vertical distance.
We assume that the flow is non-self-gravitating, reflection symmetric relative to equatorial plane, and axisymmetric with respect to the rotation axis. General relativistic effects are incorporated by the pseudo-Newtonian potential (Paczynsky & Wiita 1980). For the opacity, we consider the Thomson scattering, free-free absorption, and bound-free absorption (Rybicki & Lightman 1979; Hayashi et al. 1962). The energy equations of gas and radiation are given by

\[
\frac{\partial E_{\text{gas}}}{\partial t} + \nabla \cdot (E_{\text{gas}} \mathbf{v}) = -p_{\text{gas}} \nabla \cdot \mathbf{v} - 4\pi \kappa B + cE_{\text{rad}} + \frac{4\pi}{c^2} \eta J^2, \tag{1}
\]

and

\[
\frac{\partial E_{\text{rad}}}{\partial t} + \nabla \cdot (E_{\text{rad}} \mathbf{v}) = -\nabla \cdot \mathbf{F}_{\text{rad}} - \nabla \cdot \mathbf{P}_{\text{rad}} + 4\pi \kappa B - cE_{\text{rad}}, \tag{2}
\]

where \(E_{\text{gas}}\) is the internal energy density of the gas, \(\mathbf{v}\) is the velocity, \(p_{\text{gas}}\) is the gas pressure (\(\approx 2E_{\text{gas}}/3\)), \(B\) is the blackbody intensity, \(J\) is the electric current, \(E_{\text{rad}}\) is the radiation energy density, \(\mathbf{F}_{\text{rad}}\) is the radiative flux, \(\mathbf{P}_{\text{rad}}\) is the radiation pressure tensor, \(\kappa\) is the absorption opacity. We adopt the anomalous resistivity, \(\eta\), which is the same as that used in Kato et al. (2004);

\[
\eta = \begin{cases} 
0 & \text{for } \nu_d < \nu_{\text{crit}} \\
\eta_{\text{max}} \left( \frac{\nu_{\text{crit}}}{\nu_d} - 1 \right)^2 & \text{for } \nu_{\text{crit}} < \nu_d < 2\nu_{\text{crit}} \\
\eta_{\text{max}} & \text{for } \nu_d \geq 2\nu_{\text{crit}}
\end{cases}
\]

where \(\nu_d \equiv J/\rho\) is the electron drift velocity, \(\nu_{\text{crit}} \equiv 0.01c\) is the critical velocity, and \(\eta_{\text{max}} \equiv 10^{-3}cR_S\) is the maximum resistivity with \(R_S\) being the Schwarzschild radius. This form of the anomalous resistivity was proposed by Yokoyama & Shibata (1994) to account for the occurrence of fast reconnections in solar flares. The MHD related terms are solved by the modified Lax-Wendroff scheme (Rubin & Burstein 1967). We employ the flux-limited diffusion (FLD) approximation to solve the radiation energy equation (Levermore & Pomraning 1981). The radiation energy transport via the radiative flux is solved based on the implicit method, where we separately treat radiative fluxes in the radial and vertical directions with using Thomas method for a matrix inversion. The gas-radiation interaction is also solved with the implicit method, which is basically the same as that described by Turner & Stone (2001). An advection term in the energy equation of the radiation is solved with the explicit method, in which an integral formulation is used to generate a conservative differencing scheme. We performed the test of two-dimensional radiation propagation (Turner & Stone 2001), finding that the energy loss is less than 0.005% in 600 steps, from which we estimate the error in the energy conservation not to exceed 0.08% during the photon traveling timescale in our simulations.

The grid extends from \(3R_S\) to \(103R_S\) in the radial direction and from 0 to 91.6\(R_S\) in the vertical direction. The grid spacing is uniform, 0.2\(R_S\), in both directions. We adopt free boundary conditions for the matter and magnetic fields; i.e., the matter can freely go out but not to come in and the magnetic fields do not change across the boundary. We assume that radiation goes out with the radiation flux of \(cE_{\text{rad}}\), except at \(r = 3R_S\) and \(z > 3R_S\), through which no radiation goes out. We assume a black hole mass to be \(10M_{\odot}\). In future we will perform simulations, in which we will put the boundary condition at around \(R_S\) and to solve the both side of the midplane.

We start calculations with a rotating torus, in which the magnetic fields are purely poloidal (plasma-\(\beta = 100\)) and closed loops in the torus, being located at around \(40R_S\) embedded in non-rotating isothermal corona. Our initial conditions are the same as those of model B in Kato et al. (2004), except that the density of the corona is 0.05 times as large as that one. We evolve the initial torus by solving non-radiative MHD equations for 1 sec. We then assign the density normalization (\(\rho_0\)), density at the center of the initial torus, and turn on the radiation terms. We calculate three models in total, by setting \(\rho_0 = 1g cm^{-3}\) (model A), \(10^{-6}g cm^{-3}\) (model B), and \(10^{-8}g cm^{-3}\) (model C). Since radiation loss rate depends on the density, we can reproduce the three distinct regimes of accretion flow.

3. RESULTS

3.1. Accretion Flows

Figure 1 clearly visualizes that the flow patterns differ significantly among three models. The typical mass accretion rate (\(M_{\text{acc}}\)), the luminosity (\(L\)), and the density (\(\rho\)) and the temperature (\(T\)), as well as other important quantities, are summarized in Table 1.

In model A with a relatively large density normalization, the mass accretion rate exceeds the Eddington rate, \(L_E/c^2\), with \(L_E\) being the Eddington luminosity. The disk is optically thick and geometrically thick. Photons are not easy to go out from the surface due to a large optical depth so that radiative cooling is restricted. We confirm the photon-trapping effects. The disk is supported by radiation pressure. Circular motion appears in the disk region. Since \(L \lesssim L_E\), this model corresponds to the two-dimensional version of the slim disk model. The calculated temperature and density are also consistent.

In model B with a moderate density normalization, a geometrically thin disk forms because of efficient radiative cooling. The disk is optically thick and supported mainly by radiation pressure, which is slightly greater than the gas pressures. Such properties, as well as the temperature and density, agree with those of the standard disk model. It might be noted well that the flow in model B has not reached a quasi-steady state, since the viscous timescale is about 45 sec at \(r = 10R_S\), whereas the elapsed time is 8 sec. In a forthcoming paper we will present finer mesh calculations with adequate grid spacing, by which we will be able to investigate the detailed, internal structure of the thin disk.

In model C with a small density normalization, the density is too low for radiative cooling to be important. The disk is filled with hot rarefied plasmas and is geometrically
thick but optically thin. We find significant circular motion inside the disk. This model corresponds to the RIAF model.

3.2. Outflows

As shown in Figure 1, the disk outflows with helical magnetic fields are ubiquitous around the black holes. In models A and C the magnetic field lines stretch out vertically in the vicinity of the rotation axis. While, around the equatorial plane, the toroidal component of the magnetic fields is dominant over other components in all models, which are reminiscent of magnetic-tower jets (Lynden-Bell 1996; Kato et al. 2004).

In model A, the strong radiation pressure force is responsible for driving the quasi-steady outflows above and below the disk, whose velocity amounts to $\sim 0.25c$. We find that the radiation energy density ($E_{\text{rad}}$) is very large in the disk region, and the steep profile of $E_{\text{rad}}$ enhances the radiation force (radiative flux) (Ohsuga et al. 2005).

Remarkably, our simulation of model B shows the occurrence of magnetically powered disk wind, on the contrary to the usual belief regarding the standard disk model. Note, however, that the disk wind is not so strong in model B: $L_{\text{kin}} \ll L$, and $L_{\text{kin}}/L$ is the smallest among all models, where $L_{\text{kin}}$ is kinetic luminosity. It must be stressed that we have solved the entire inflow-outflow structure simultaneously unlike the previous simulations, in which the inflow (disk) structure was not solved but treated as the boundary condition (Proga & Kallman 2004).

Our RMHD simulations reveal $L_{\text{kin}}/L > 1$ in model C in contrast with models A and B, implying that the disks with $M_{\text{acc}} \ll L_{E}/c^2$ lose the energy via the jets rather
than via radiation. The outflow rate is 10% of the mass accretion rate, and the ratio is largest in three models. The photons freely escape from the disk, producing quasi-spherical distribution of $E_{\text{rad}}$, whereas the radiation energy is enhanced inside the disk in models A and B. The radiation force is negligible because of small radiative flux.

The FLD approximation is good for Models A and C, since the whole region (except for the very vicinity of the inner boundary) is optically thick for Thomson scattering in the former and radiative cooling is never important in the latter. It is known to be problematic to determine the direction of the radiation flux in regions where the optical depth is around unity (e.g., around the disk surface in model B). We, however, wish to stress that the outflow is accelerated by the magnetic pressure, and not by radiation force.

3.3. Amplification of magnetic fields and viscosity

We find that magnetic energy ($E_{\text{mag}}$) is amplified to be 30% and 20% of the gas energy ($E_{\text{gas}}$) in models B and C, respectively (see Table 1). In model A, surprisingly, $E_{\text{mag}}$ does exceed the gas energy, $E_{\text{mag}} \sim 2E_{\text{gas}}$. Its implication is enormous: the viscosity had better been scaled in terms of the total (or radiation) pressure and not of the gas pressure in radiation-pressure-supported disks (cf., Sakimoto & Coroniti 1981).

It is one of the most significant issues in astrophysics how to prescribe the disk viscosity. In Figure 2 we show how the magnetic torque, $\langle -B_r B_\phi/4\pi \rangle$, behaves as a function of the pressure in the region close to the black hole (at $r = 5R_g$). We can see that the torque is roughly proportional to the total pressure (with some scatter) in all the cases. If we define the viscosity parameter as $\alpha = \langle -B_r B_\phi/4\pi \rangle / \langle p_{\text{tot}} \rangle$ where total pressure ($p_{\text{tot}}$) is the sum of gas pressure and radiation energy density divided by 3, we estimate $\alpha \sim 0.004$, 0.006, and 0.002 for models A, B, and C, respectively.

Cautions should be taken to the point that the properties of magnetic fields in the two-dimensional simulations could be affected by artificial occurrence of channel modes of flow and the anti-dynamo theorem and thus deviate from those of the three-dimensional simulations. Hence, the three-dimensional study should be explored in future work.
4. Observational Implications

Outflows and jets are ubiquitous in any regimes of black-hole disk accretion flow. They seem to manifest themselves by warm absorptions features of active galactic nuclei and by blue-shifted absorption lines in the black hole binaries (BHBs) (Blustin et al. 2005; Cappi 2006; Kubota et al. 2007). The high-velocity outflows with velocity of $\sim 0.25c$ in model A will explain the X-ray observations of bright quasars exhibiting blue-shifted absorption lines, which are interpreted as the absorption by the outflow material moving with velocity on the order of $0.1c$ (Pounds et al. 2003; Reeves et al. 2003). Although no strong outflows were expected in the framework of the standard disk model, Miller et al. (2006) concluded by X-ray observations of BHB, GRO J1655-40, that the X-ray absorbing wind is ejected from the geometrically thin disk viewed at an inclination angle of $\sim 70^\circ$. The density and the velocity of the wind were reported to be $\sim 10^{-9}g\,cm^{-3}$ and $0.01c - 0.05c$. Such features are roughly consistent with our simulation (model B), in which the gas with $\rho = \text{several} \times 10^{-10}g\,cm^{-3}$ is blown away towards the diagonal direction (the polar angle of $\sim 45^\circ$) at the speed of $\sim 0.01c$. Our simulations show that the magnetic field lines are along the jet axis (models A and C). Such structure is revealed by the recent radio observations of polarized emission in BL Lac object, Markarian 501 (Giroletti et al. 2008). The detailed comparison with the observations is left as future work.

To summarize, our global RMHD simulations can open a new era of accretion disk research and provide a unified view of accretion flows in various contexts.

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