

1 **Generation of turbulence in Kelvin-Helmholtz vortices at the Earth's magnetopause:**  
2 **Magnetospheric Multiscale observations**

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20 **Key Points:**

- 21 • The Kelvin-Helmholtz instability amplifies electromagnetic fluctuations in the  
22 magnetopause boundary layer
- 23 • The turbulent fluctuations in the vortices may not be due to propagating waves but to  
24 magnetic structures, i.e., interlaced flux tubes
- 25 • The turbulence at sub-ion scales in an early nonlinear phase of the instability is likely a  
26 consequence of vortex induced reconnection  
27

## 28 **Abstract**

29 The Kelvin-Helmholtz instability (KHI) at Earth's magnetopause and associated turbulence are  
30 suggested to play a role in the transport of mass and momentum from the solar wind into Earth's  
31 magnetosphere. We investigate electromagnetic turbulence observed in KH vortices encountered  
32 at the dusk flank magnetopause by the Magnetospheric Multiscale (MMS) spacecraft under  
33 northward interplanetary magnetic field (IMF) conditions in order to reveal its generation  
34 process, mode properties, and role. A comparison with another MMS event at the dayside  
35 magnetopause with reconnection but no KHI signatures under a similar IMF condition indicates  
36 that while high-latitude magnetopause reconnection excites a modest level of turbulence in the  
37 dayside low-latitude boundary layer, the KHI further amplifies the turbulence, leading to  
38 magnetic energy spectra with a power-law index  $-5/3$  at magnetohydrodynamic scales even in its  
39 early nonlinear phase. The mode of the electromagnetic turbulence is analyzed with a single-  
40 spacecraft method based on Ampère's law, developed by Bellan (2016), for estimating wave  
41 vectors as a function of spacecraft-frame frequency. The results suggest that the turbulence does  
42 not consist of propagating normal-mode waves, but is due to interlaced magnetic flux tubes  
43 advected by plasma flows in the vortices. The turbulence at sub-ion scales in the early nonlinear  
44 phase of the KHI may not be the cause of the plasma transport across the magnetopause, but  
45 rather a consequence of three-dimensional vortex induced reconnection, the process that can  
46 cause an efficient transport by producing tangled reconnected field lines.

## 47 **Plain Language Summary**

48 Turbulence is ubiquitous in nature and plays an important role in material mixing and energy  
49 transport. Turbulence in space plasmas is characterized by fluctuations of flow velocity and/or  
50 electromagnetic fields over a broad frequency range and/or length scales, and is believed to be  
51 the key to efficient plasma transport and heating. However, its generation mechanism is not fully  
52 understood because turbulence in space is often fully developed or already relaxed when  
53 observed. By analyzing high-resolution plasma and electromagnetic field data taken by the  
54 Magnetospheric Multiscale spacecraft, we study the generation process of electromagnetic  
55 turbulence at the outer boundary of Earth's magnetosphere, called the magnetopause, where  
56 either a flow shear-driven Kelvin-Helmholtz instability or magnetic reconnection or both could  
57 drive turbulence. It is shown that while dayside reconnection generates a modest level of  
58 turbulence at the magnetopause near noon, the flow shear instability further amplifies the  
59 turbulence at the flank magnetopause. Our analysis also suggests that the turbulence may not be  
60 the primary cause of plasma transport from solar wind into the magnetosphere, but rather a  
61 consequence of the flow shear-induced reconnection that is likely the primary cause of plasma  
62 transport at the dayside flank under northward solar wind magnetic field conditions.

## 63 **1 Introduction**

64 Turbulence is ubiquitous in nature, such as in ocean (Smyth & Moum, 2012), planetary  
65 atmospheres (Wyngaard, 1992; Vasavada & Showman, 2005), solar/stellar convection zones  
66 (Miesch et al., 2000), accretion disks (Balbus & Hawley, 1998), and interstellar gas (Gaensler et  
67 al., 2011), and is believed to play a key role in material mixing and energy transfer in both  
68 configuration and wave number space. Turbulence in plasmas is characterized by broadband  
69 fluctuations of not only flows but also electromagnetic fields, and has been extensively and  
70 intensively studied in the solar wind community (e.g., Bruno & Carbone, 2013; Chen, 2016).  
71 While the turbulent cascade and dissipation processes at kinetic scales have been the focus of

72 recent studies on space plasma turbulence (Alexandrova et al., 2009, 2013; Narita, Nakamura, et  
73 al., 2016; Sahraoui et al., 2009; Phan et al., 2018), its generation mechanism is not fully  
74 understood; the turbulent energy injection process remains an open issue. This is partly because  
75 turbulence observed in the solar wind near 1 AU is often fully developed or may already be  
76 relaxed, leaving no or little information on how it is generated, although Parker Solar Probe (Fox  
77 et al., 2016), launched in 2018 and making in-situ measurements of the inner heliosphere and  
78 solar corona, is going to reveal the generation, or at least evolution, process of solar wind  
79 turbulence.

80 Plasma turbulence is common in the geospace environment as well (Zimbardo et al., 2010;  
81 Karimabadi et al., 2014). The geospace may be an ideal natural laboratory to study the  
82 generation of turbulence in a collisionless plasma, because various regions (bow shock,  
83 magnetopause, tail plasma sheet) or processes occurring there (magnetic reconnection, Kelvin-  
84 Helmholtz instability (KHI), wave-particle interactions, mode conversion) can inject energy for  
85 turbulence. Electromagnetic turbulence has indeed been observed in the magnetopause (e.g.,  
86 LaBelle & Treumann, 1988; Rezeau & Belmont, 2001), and is suggested to be a key ingredient  
87 for diffusive particle transport across the magnetopause (e.g., Johnson & Cheng, 1997; Lin et al.,  
88 2012). However, the origin of electromagnetic fluctuations in the magnetopause and its boundary  
89 layers remains unclear, because various processes, such as magnetopause reconnection (Chaston  
90 et al., 2005), the KHI (Daughton et al., 2014; Nakamura, Hasegawa, et al., 2017), and mode  
91 conversion at the magnetopause of magnetosheath compressional fluctuations (Johnson &  
92 Cheng, 1997; Johnson et al., 2001), can inject energy for the magnetopause turbulence.

93 In the present study, we investigate the generation process of electromagnetic turbulence in  
94 magnetopause Kelvin-Helmholtz (KH) vortices by analyzing high-resolution plasma and  
95 electromagnetic field data taken in situ by the Magnetospheric Multiscale (MMS) spacecraft  
96 (Burch et al., 2016). For this purpose, we revisit a KH event observed by MMS on 8 September  
97 2015 under northward interplanetary magnetic field (IMF) conditions. Identified in this event are  
98 magnetic reconnection induced by the KHI growth because of the presence of weak but  
99 significant magnetic shears across the magnetopause (Eriksson et al., 2016; Li et al., 2016;  
100 Vernisse et al., 2016; Nakamura, Hasegawa, et al., 2017), turbulence in both flow and  
101 electromagnetic fields and its intermittent nature (Stawarz et al., 2016), and large-amplitude  
102 electrostatic waves (Wilder et al., 2016). Intermittency in the turbulence context means that  
103 energy transfer across length scales is spatially nonuniform, for example with localization in  
104 current sheets or filaments (e.g., Matthaeus et al., 2015). While the KHI itself could have  
105 injected most energy for the turbulence as observed, it is possible that magnetopause  
106 reconnection poleward of the cusp under northward IMF (e.g., Lavraud et al., 2006; Øieroset et  
107 al., 2008) also played some role in the turbulence generation (Chaston et al., 2005; Nykyri et al.,  
108 2006). Indeed, in the MMS KHI event, there is evidence that a prominent low-latitude boundary  
109 layer (LLBL) formed through magnetopause reconnection exists on the earthward side of the  
110 KH-active magnetopause (Nakamura, Eriksson, et al., 2017).

111 In this paper, the following questions are addressed. What are the relative contributions of  
112 high-latitude magnetopause reconnection and the KHI to the turbulence generation in the KH  
113 vortices? What is the mode of the observed electromagnetic fluctuations; are they of propagating  
114 normal mode waves or something else? Could the electromagnetic turbulence play a role in  
115 plasma transport across the magnetopause? Section 2 presents overviews of the MMS event on 8  
116 September 2015 with both KHI and reconnection signatures and of another magnetopause event

117 with reconnection but no KHI signatures. In section 3, magnetic energy spectra are compared  
 118 between the MMS observations with and without KHI signatures, and between the MMS  
 119 observations and fully kinetic simulations of the KHI, to answer the question of the relative  
 120 contributions. In section 4, a technique to estimate wave number vectors is used to analyze the  
 121 mode of the turbulent fluctuations. In section 5, a discussion is given on the generation process  
 122 of the turbulence and the causality between the turbulence and plasma transport across the  
 123 magnetopause. Conclusions are provided in section 6.

## 124 **2 Overview of Events with and without Kelvin-Helmholtz Signatures**

### 125 **2.1 Kelvin-Helmholtz event on 8 September 2015**

126 Figure 1 shows data of our interest, from the fluxgate magnetometer (FGM) (Russell et al.,  
 127 2016) and the Fast Plasma Investigation (FPI) instrument (Pollock et al., 2016) onboard the  
 128 MMS3 spacecraft for a 2.5-hour interval 0910–1140 UT on 8 September 2015, during which  
 129 MMS traversed the magnetopause boundary layers from the postnoon magnetosphere into the  
 130 duskside magnetosheath. On this day, an interplanetary magnetic flux rope was passing by the  
 131 Earth and brought about northward IMF conditions in front of the magnetosphere (Eriksson et  
 132 al., 2016). The average solar wind conditions for the interval 1030–1100 UT based on the  
 133 OMNIWeb data, which are time shifted to the bow shock nose, are: IMF  $(B_x, B_y, B_z) =$   
 134  $(13.2, 6.0, 14.9)$  in GSM, solar wind speed 506 km/s, solar wind density  $10.6 \text{ cm}^{-3}$ , plasma beta  
 135 0.15, and magnetosonic Mach number 3.7. See Figure S1 for the time history of the upstream  
 136 conditions over a long time period, showing that the solar wind parameters were stable for the  
 137 interval shown in Figure 1. MMS observed quasi-periodic fluctuations of the plasma bulk  
 138 parameters with a period  $\sim 1$  min (corresponding to the KHI wavelength  $\sim 10^4$  km), associated  
 139 with the KHI, during the interval enclosed by the red box in Figure 1 when the spacecraft were  
 140 located at or near the duskside magnetopause. Based on a detailed comparison between the MMS  
 141 observations and three-dimensional (3D), fully kinetic simulations of the KHI, Nakamura,  
 142 Hasegawa, et al. (2017) showed that the KHI at the MMS location was in an early nonlinear  
 143 phase when vortex induced reconnection (VIR) (Nakamura et al., 2011; 2013) forms jets and  
 144 vortices with filamentary density structures of ion scales.

145 A dense boundary layer existed for an interval 0930–1005 UT prior to the KH-active period  
 146 (Figure 1a,d). This boundary layer lacked hot magnetospheric electrons with energies  $\sim 5$  keV  
 147 and contained heated magnetosheath electrons with energies of a few hundred eV, and thus  
 148 likely formed through double high-latitude reconnection that can capture magnetosheath particles  
 149 onto the closed portion of the dayside magnetosphere (Song & Russell, 1992; Øieroset et al.,  
 150 2008). Northward increases of the boundary layer ion velocity relative to the magnetosheath  
 151 flow, seen during the KH-active interval (Figure 1c), are probably due to acceleration resulting  
 152 from magnetopause reconnection poleward of the southern cusp. Note that MMS was in the  
 153 southern hemisphere ( $z_{\text{GSM}} \sim -5 R_E$ ), closer to the southern than northern cusp. The presence of  
 154 the dense boundary layer lowers the threshold for the KHI, and most likely made the KHI onset  
 155 location closer to the subsolar point than in the case without boundary layer (Hasegawa, Retinò,  
 156 et al., 2009; Nakamura, Eriksson, et al., 2017). Hereafter, this event is referred to as the RX+KHI  
 157 event because both the poleward-of-the-cusp reconnection and KHI signatures were observed.

158 Low frequency fluctuations of the magnetic field were observed during the KH-active  
 159 interval (Figure 1f). Large-scale variations with a quasi-period  $\sim 1$  min ( $\sim 0.02$  Hz) are consistent

160 with 3D deformation of field lines expected at the MMS location in the southern hemisphere  
 161 through the KHI in the magnetospheric flank geometry (Hasegawa et al., 2004; Hasegawa,  
 162 Retinò, et al., 2009). This deformation probably allowed for KHI-induced mid-latitude  
 163 reconnection (Faganello et al., 2012; Fadanelli et al., 2018), whose particle signatures were  
 164 reported by Vernisse et al. (2016). Magnetic power spectra in Figure 1g,h show that the  
 165 fluctuations are seen in the frequency range from the KHI fundamental mode ( $\sim 0.02$  Hz) to  
 166 higher than the proton cyclotron frequency ( $\sim 1$  Hz). Obviously, the fluctuations during the KH-  
 167 active and preceding boundary layer intervals are more intense than in the surrounding  
 168 magnetosheath and magnetospheric regions, suggesting that they originated from the KHI. While  
 169 considerable compressional components are present (Figure 1g), the fluctuations are dominated  
 170 by the transverse components (Figure 1h).

171

## 172 2.2 Subsolar magnetopause event on 8 November 2015

173 Figure 2 shows an event on 8 November 2015 when MMS traversed the subsolar  
 174 magnetopause under northward IMF. The average solar wind conditions for the interval 0630–  
 175 0700 UT are: IMF  $(B_x, B_y, B_z) = (-8.6, 4.7, 6.0)$  in GSM, solar wind speed 478 km/s, solar  
 176 wind density  $2.6 \text{ cm}^{-3}$ , plasma beta 0.12, and magnetosonic Mach number 3.2. See Figure S2 for  
 177 the upstream conditions over a long time interval, showing that this event also occurred when an  
 178 interplanetary flux rope interacted with the magnetosphere. The external conditions are thus  
 179 similar to the case on 8 September 2015 in that IMF  $|B_z| > |B_y|$ , and the solar wind speed, beta,  
 180 and Mach number are all comparable. This event, with high-latitude reconnection but without  
 181 KHI signatures as demonstrated below, was selected to compare with the RX+KHI event  
 182 encountered farther from the subsolar point, and to differentiate the KHI and high-latitude  
 183 reconnection effects on the magnetic turbulence generation. During the interval shown in Figure  
 184 2, MMS moved from the magnetosheath into the LLBL with densities comparable to that in the  
 185 magnetosheath. Because of the strong northward IMF, the magnetopause current sheet cannot be  
 186 identified from the magnetic field data (Figure 2a,b) (Hasegawa, 2012). However, ion  
 187 temperature increase and anisotropy variation at  $\sim 0634$  UT from  $T_{i\perp} > T_{i\parallel}$  to  $T_{i\perp} \sim T_{i\parallel}$  (Figure  
 188 2c) indicate that a crossing from the magnetosheath to the LLBL occurred (Paschmann et al.,  
 189 1993). Contrary to observations as reported by Sahraoui et al. (2006), mirror-mode structures  
 190 were not observed on the magnetosheath side (not shown) likely because of the low beta  
 191 upstream conditions (Figure S2).

192 The observed magnetosheath boundary layer (MSBL) and LLBL had clear signatures of  
 193 reconnection poleward of the southern cusp. The northward component of the ion velocity  
 194 increased from near zero to  $\sim 100$  km/s at  $\sim 0634:20$  UT (Figure 2d), consistent with northward  
 195 acceleration of magnetosheath ions in downstream regions equatorward of the southern cusp  
 196 reconnection site. Ion velocity distributions observed in the LLBL (Figure 2h) show preexistent  
 197 magnetosheath populations with  $T_{i\perp} > T_{i\parallel}$  and D-shaped accelerated components with a  
 198 magnetic field-aligned cutoff velocity at 300–400 km/s (Fuselier, 1995). In addition, energy  
 199 dispersed ions consistent with the velocity filter effect (Figure 2e) and 0.2–2 keV electrons  
 200 streaming parallel to the magnetic field, consistent with heating of magnetosheath electrons in  
 201 regions southward of MMS (Figure 2g), were observed during the MSBL interval (before  
 202  $\sim 0634:20$  UT). While bidirectional electron populations in the LLBL (Figure 2g,i) suggest that  
 203 the magnetospheric side may be closed through double poleward-of-the-cusp reconnection

204 (Øieroset et al., 2008), particle signatures of southern, rather than northern, cusp reconnection  
 205 were prominent in the MSBL and at the magnetopause. This is probably because there was a  
 206 substantial geomagnetic dipole tilt on this day and thus MMS was closer to the southern cusp,  
 207 namely, the high-latitude reconnection site in the summer hemisphere (Hasegawa, McFadden, et  
 208 al., 2009). This event is referred to as the RX-only event because no KHI but only reconnection  
 209 signatures were identified. We note that MMS saw fluctuations of the ion velocity as well as the  
 210 magnetic field in the LLBL (Figure 2a,d), whose spectral properties and mode are analyzed in  
 211 sections 3 and 4.

212

### 213 3 Power Spectral Analysis

#### 214 3.1 Comparison between the dayside reconnection and KHI events

215 Magnetic power spectra in the LLBL are compared for the RX+KHI and RX-only events in  
 216 order to discuss the origin of the magnetic turbulence at magnetohydrodynamic (MHD) and ion  
 217 scales observed in KH vortices. Figure 3 shows the power spectral densities (PSDs) of the field  
 218 intensity  $|\mathbf{B}|$  and transverse component  $B_n$  normal to the magnetopause for the two events. For  
 219 the RX+KHI event, a total of 51 LLBL intervals during the KHI-active period were identified by  
 220 visual inspection (see Table S1 for the exact time intervals) and were used to produce the mean  
 221 PSDs, excluding the magnetosheath intervals and apparently reconnecting magnetopause current  
 222 sheets, as reported by Eriksson et al. (2016). Here, the normal  $\mathbf{n}$  is defined to be parallel to the  
 223 cross product of the mean ion velocity  $\langle \mathbf{v}_i \rangle$ , which is tailward roughly along the magnetopause  
 224 for KH events (Hasegawa et al., 2006), and mean magnetic field  $\langle \mathbf{B} \rangle$  for each interval. The  
 225 frequency can be converted to the perpendicular wave number and vice versa using the Taylor  
 226 hypothesis  $2\pi f_{sc} = \mathbf{k}_\perp \cdot \langle \mathbf{v}_{i\perp} \rangle$ , with the mean perpendicular ion velocity  $\langle \mathbf{v}_{i\perp} \rangle = 203$  km/s for the  
 227 RX+KHI event and  $\langle \mathbf{v}_{i\perp} \rangle = 76$  km/s for the RX-only event. We will confirm in sections 4.2 and  
 228 4.3 that the Taylor hypothesis is valid at frequencies  $< 10$  Hz for the two events under discussion.  
 229 With this conversion, Figure 3 also shows the spatial scales  $k_\perp \rho_p = 1$  and  $k_\perp d_p = 1$ ,  
 230 corresponding to the thermal proton gyroradius  $\rho_p \sim 45$  km and proton inertial length  $d_p \sim 65$  km,  
 231 respectively, averaged over the 51 intervals for the RX+KHI event, and  $\rho_p \sim 79$  km and  $d_p \sim 94$   
 232 km for the RX-only event.

233 The PSD levels for both  $|\mathbf{B}|$  and  $B_n$  are higher for the RX+KHI event than for the RX-only  
 234 event for almost the entire frequency range. For comparison, we take into account the fact that  
 235 the background field intensity for the RX+KHI case ( $\sim 70$  nT in Figure 1f) was about twice that  
 236 for the RX-only event ( $\sim 40$  nT in Figure 2a). If the turbulence field was quasi-2D and the flux  
 237 tubes in which the turbulence was embedded were advected and compressed from the subsolar  
 238 location of the RX-only event to that of the RX+KHI event, the expected PSD level would be  $\sim 4$   
 239 times that seen in Figure 3b. However, the PSD of  $B_n$  is about one order of magnitude, i.e., more  
 240 than four times, larger in Figure 3a than in Figure 3b. This suggests that while high-latitude  
 241 reconnection can inject a modest amount of energy into turbulence at low latitudes, the KHI  
 242 further amplifies the turbulence.

243 There are interesting differences in the spectral features between the RX+KHI and RX-only  
 244 events. While the PSDs of  $|\mathbf{B}|$  and  $B_n$  are comparable in the RX-only event, the  $B_n$  energy  
 245 density is significantly higher than that of  $|\mathbf{B}|$  in the RX+KHI event (Stawarz et al., 2016). At  
 246 lower (MHD-scale) frequencies, the spectral index  $-5/3$  for both  $|\mathbf{B}|$  and  $B_n$  for the RX+KHI

247 event is consistent with the Kolmogorov or Goldreich-Sridhar model (Goldreich & Sridhar,  
 248 1995). In the higher frequency range, the index for  $B_n$  gradually decreases with frequency and  
 249 becomes smaller than  $-3$ , while that for  $|\mathbf{B}|$  is in the range of  $-3$  to  $-8/3$ , similar to those reported  
 250 by Stawarz et al. (2016). For the RX-only event, while the fluctuations at frequencies higher than  
 251 the proton cyclotron frequency  $f_{cp}$  follows  $f_{sc}^{-8/3}$  for both  $|\mathbf{B}|$  and  $B_n$ , the  $B_n$  spectrum only has  
 252 a clear peak immediately below  $f_{cp}$ . In section 4.3, it is shown that this intense transverse  
 253 fluctuation is of electromagnetic ion-cyclotron (EMIC) waves.  
 254

### 255 3.2 Comparison between the KHI observation and simulation

256 3D fully kinetic simulations of the KHI conducted specifically for the RX+KHI event, as  
 257 reported by Nakamura, Hasegawa, et al. (2017), Nakamura, Eriksson, et al. (2017), and  
 258 Nakamura (2019), are compared with the MMS KHI observations in terms of spectral properties  
 259 of magnetic turbulence. The initial conditions of the simulations are set based on the parameters  
 260 observed in the magnetosheath- and LLBL-side regions of the KH-active magnetopause, with the  
 261 initial magnetic shear  $\sim 17^\circ$  and the LLBL to magnetosheath density ratio of 0.3 (see the Methods  
 262 section of Nakamura, Hasegawa, et al. (2017) for details), but no broadband magnetic field or  
 263 velocity fluctuations are imposed. This means that effects of turbulence that may exist in the  
 264 magnetosheath and/or LLBL before the KHI onset are not included in the simulations. Figure 4  
 265 shows energy spectra of  $|\mathbf{B}|$  and the field component  $B_y$  normal to the initial velocity shear layer,  
 266 corresponding to  $B_n$  in the MMS observations, in an early nonlinear phase ( $t = 500\Omega_i^{-1}$ ) and  
 267 more developed phase ( $t = 700\Omega_i^{-1}$ ) of the KHI. We point out that  $B_y$  at ion to sub-ion scales  
 268 roughly corresponds to reconnected field components generated by VIR (Nakamura et al., 2011;  
 269 2013), though  $B_y$  at MHD scales results from large-scale evolution of KH vortices.

270 Nakamura, Hasegawa, et al. (2017) showed that the KHI in the RX+KHI event was in an  
 271 early nonlinear phase, as shown in Figure 4a, when VIR was growing and formed ion-scale  
 272 vortices along the interface (magnetopause) between the dense (magnetosheath) and less dense  
 273 (LLBL) plasmas. At the MHD scales, the PSD of  $B_y$  is about one order of magnitude higher than  
 274 that of  $|\mathbf{B}|$ , in agreement with the MMS observations (Figure 3a). However, the spectral index at  
 275  $t = 500\Omega_i^{-1}$  is smaller than  $-5/3$  seen in the observations, suggesting that the turbulence is still  
 276 growing in the simulation. The observed spectral indices are rather similar to those in a more  
 277 developed phase of the simulation (Figure 4d) when the plasmas are vigorously mixed within the  
 278 MHD-scale vortex (Figure 4c) and the turbulence is matured. The comparison suggests that in  
 279 the observed KH vortices, turbulence matured faster than in the simulation. It may be that the  
 280 preexisting magnetosheath turbulence (Alexandrova et al., 2008) and/or turbulence in the LLBL  
 281 generated through magnetopause reconnection (Chaston et al., 2005) contributed to faster  
 282 maturation of turbulence in the observed KH vortices (Nakamura et al., 2019).  
 283

## 284 4 Dispersion Relation Analysis

### 285 4.1 Bellan's method to estimate wave vectors

286 A single-spacecraft method to estimate the wave vector of magnetic field fluctuations,  
 287 developed by Bellan (2012, 2016), is used to reveal the mode of the observed turbulence. The  
 288 technique is based on Ampère's law and makes use of the condition that the k-vector of low-

289 frequency waves should be parallel to  $\delta\mathbf{j} \times \delta\mathbf{B}$ , where  $\delta\mathbf{j}$  and  $\delta\mathbf{B}$  are the fluctuating components  
 290 of the current density and magnetic field. More exactly, wave vectors  $\mathbf{k}(\omega_{sc})$  as a function of  
 291 spacecraft frequency are given by

$$293 \quad \mathbf{k}(\omega_{sc}) = i\mu_0 \frac{\mathbf{j}(\omega_{sc}) \times \mathbf{B}^*(\omega_{sc})}{\mathbf{B}(\omega_{sc}) \cdot \mathbf{B}^*(\omega_{sc})}, \quad (1)$$

294  
 295 where  $\mathbf{j}(\omega_{sc})$  and  $\mathbf{B}(\omega_{sc})$  are the temporal Fourier transforms of the current density  $\mathbf{j}(t)$  and  
 296 magnetic field  $\mathbf{B}(t)$ , respectively, and  $\mathbf{B}^*(\omega_{sc})$  is the complex conjugate of  $\mathbf{B}(\omega_{sc})$  (see equation  
 297 (8) of Bellan, 2016). It assumes that the displacement current is negligible, i.e., the charge quasi-  
 298 neutrality is satisfied, and that there exists only one mode for a given frequency in the spacecraft  
 299 frame and the fluctuations or waves are planar. While the method was first applied to MMS  
 300 magnetometer measurements of  $\delta\mathbf{B}$  and  $\nabla \times \mathbf{B}/\mu_0$  in kinetic Alfvén waves (KAWs) propagating  
 301 in a magnetopause boundary layer (Gershman et al., 2017), it can also take advantage of  
 302 unprecedented high resolution ion and electron measurements by FPI that provide high cadence  
 303 (30 ms) data of the current density  $\mathbf{j} = ne(\mathbf{v}_i - \mathbf{v}_e)$ . Applications to particle current data were  
 304 made by Gershman et al. (2018) who analyzed kinetic scale turbulence in the magnetosheath.  
 305 Recently, Haw et al. (2019) applied this method to identify whistler waves in a laboratory  
 306 experiment of magnetic reconnection.

307 The method provides information similar to that obtained from the k-filtering method  
 308 (Pinçon & Lefeuvre, 1991) or equivalent wave telescope technique (Neubauer & Glassmeier,  
 309 1990; Narita, Plaschke, et al., 2016), making use of at least four point measurements of the  
 310 magnetic field. A key difference is that the k-filtering and wave telescope methods permit the  
 311 presence of more than one mode (k-vectors) for a given frequency in the spacecraft frame. In  
 312 theory, the assumption in Bellan's method of only one mode for a given frequency prohibits  
 313 application to isotropic or gyrotropic turbulence in which there would be many k-vectors with  
 314 different directions for a given frequency. Nonetheless, Gershman et al. (2018) demonstrated that  
 315 the Bellan and k-filtering methods provide roughly equal wave vectors for broadband low  
 316 frequency fluctuations (<3 Hz in the spacecraft frame) observed in the magnetosheath. For the  
 317 RX+KHI event, the MMS spacecraft separation was  $\sim 175$  km, much larger than the proton  
 318 gyroradius  $\sim 45$  km, so that the wave telescope or k-filtering technique could not be used to  
 319 analyze turbulence properties around ion scales, which are of our interest.

320 We emphasize that all the above methods do not necessarily provide wave vector(s) in the  
 321 plasma rest frame, but information on the direction in which the waves or structures are  
 322 propagating in the spacecraft frame. To derive the plasma-frame k-vector, the Doppler effect  
 323 must be taken into account. If  $\mathbf{k} \cdot \mathbf{u}_0 < 0$ , where  $\mathbf{k}$  is the k-vector derived from the above  
 324 methods and  $\mathbf{u}_0$  is the ambient plasma flow velocity,  $\mathbf{k}$  would be the true wave vector in the  
 325 plasma-rest frame. If  $\mathbf{k} \cdot \mathbf{u}_0 > 0$  and the plasma frame angular frequency  $\omega_{pl} = \omega_{sc} - \mathbf{k} \cdot \mathbf{u}_0 >$   
 326  $0$ , where  $\omega_{sc}$  is the frequency in the spacecraft frame, the wave should be propagating along  $\mathbf{u}_0$   
 327 and the derived k-vector  $\mathbf{k}$  would be the plasma-frame wave vector, while if  $\mathbf{k} \cdot \mathbf{u}_0 > 0$  and  
 328  $\omega_{pl} < 0$ , the true wave vector should have a component antiparallel to  $\mathbf{u}_0$  and thus the sign of  $\mathbf{k}$   
 329 should be reversed to derive the plasma-frame wave vector (Narita et al., 2011).

330

## 331 4.2 Wave vector properties

332 Figure 5 shows an example interval in the RX+KHI event to which Bellan's method is  
 333 applied. We apply the method to boundary layer intervals on the magnetospheric side of the  
 334 magnetopause, as marked by the red box in Figure 5, which exclude thin current sheets at the  
 335 trailing edges of the KHI surface waves (Eriksson et al., 2016; Stawarz et al., 2016) and can be  
 336 assumed to be of quasi-homogeneous plasma. Electric field data (Figure 5b) are from the spin-  
 337 plane and axial probes measurements (Ergun et al., 2016; Lindqvist et al., 2016), and Poynting  
 338 flux  $\mathbf{S} = \delta\mathbf{E} \times \delta\mathbf{B}/\mu_0$  (Figure 5h) is computed in the ion-rest frame where  $\delta\mathbf{E} = \mathbf{E} + \langle\mathbf{v}_i\rangle \times \langle\mathbf{B}\rangle$   
 339 and  $\delta\mathbf{B} = \mathbf{B} - \langle\mathbf{B}\rangle$ . Here  $\mathbf{E}$  is the electric field in the spacecraft frame, and  $\langle\mathbf{v}_i\rangle$  and  $\langle\mathbf{B}\rangle$  are 4-sec  
 340 running averages of the ion velocity and magnetic field, respectively. For the RX-only event,  
 341 Bellan's method is applied to the interval 0635:10–0635:40 UT on 8 November 2015, as marked  
 342 in Figure 2.

343 Figure 6 shows four-spacecraft averages of the k-vector directions and the k magnitude as a  
 344 function of the spacecraft frequency  $f_{sc}$  (up to 7 Hz), derived from Bellan's method, for the  
 345 RX+KHI and RX-only events. A Hanning window was used when performing Fast Fourier  
 346 Transforms (FFTs), following the procedure taken by Gershman et al. (2018). Figure 6 has gaps  
 347 in certain frequency ranges, because the results are restricted to cases when for a given spacecraft  
 348 frequency  $f_{sc}$ , the four k-vectors, derived individually for each spacecraft, all have angles less  
 349 than  $35^\circ$  with respect to the four-spacecraft average.

350 For both the RX+KHI and RX-only events, the estimated wave vectors are nearly  
 351 perpendicular to the background magnetic field (Figure 6b,f), mostly have a component along  
 352 the ambient ion flow (Figure 6c,g), and roughly satisfy the Taylor hypothesis  $2\pi f_{sc} =$   
 353  $k\langle v_i\rangle\cos(\theta_{kv})$  (Figure 6d,h). The last point indicates that the turbulence fields roughly convect at  
 354 the mean flow velocity, so that the spacecraft frequency  $f_{sc}$  may be converted to the wave  
 355 number using the linear relation. Here, the mean field in GSM is directed along  $\langle\hat{\mathbf{b}}\rangle =$   
 356  $(0.160, 0.581, 0.798)$  and the mean ion velocity  $\langle\mathbf{v}_i\rangle = (-132, 161, -26)$  km/s for the  
 357 RX+KHI event, and  $\langle\hat{\mathbf{b}}\rangle = (0.321, 0.272, 0.907)$  and  $\langle\mathbf{v}_i\rangle = (31, 109, 111)$  km/s for the RX-  
 358 only event. Similar features have been reported for turbulence in the solar wind (Narita et al.,  
 359 2011; Sahraoui et al., 2010) and in the magnetosheath (Gershman et al., 2018). One exception is  
 360 a few k-vectors at and below the proton cyclotron frequency  $f_{cp}$  for the RX-only event, which  
 361 have propagation angles  $\sim 45^\circ$  with respect to the magnetic field. Note that the transverse  
 362 magnetic field fluctuations had a significant power around  $f_{cp}$  (Figure 3b). In section 4.3, we  
 363 identify these fluctuations as of the slow (EMIC) mode.

364 To make sure that the results as shown in Figure 6 are reasonable, Bellan's method has also  
 365 been applied to synthetic data taken by a virtual spacecraft passing through a simulated 3D KH  
 366 vortex in a nonlinear phase, corresponding to the one shown in Figure 4c. It is found that the k-  
 367 vector properties derived from the simulated data are very similar to those seen in the RX+KHI  
 368 event, as shown in Figure 6a-d (see the Supporting Information). We also note that results  
 369 similar to those shown in Figure 6a-d were obtained for other LLBL intervals in the RX+KHI  
 370 event.

371

## 372 4.3 Dispersion relations

373 Using  $\mathbf{k}(\omega_{sc})$  estimated by Bellan's method, the dispersion relation  $\omega_{pl}(\mathbf{k})$  and parallel  
 374 phase velocity  $\omega_{pl}(\mathbf{k})/k_{\parallel}$  in the plasma-rest frame can be derived by taking the Doppler shift

375 into account,  $\omega_{\text{pl}} = \omega_{\text{sc}} - \mathbf{k} \cdot \mathbf{u}_0$ . Figure 7 shows the parallel phase velocities  $\omega_{\text{pl}}(\mathbf{k})/(k_{\parallel}v_A)$   
 376 normalized to the MHD Alfvén speed, and  $\omega_{\text{pl}} - k$  diagrams for the two intervals, derived from  
 377 the four-spacecraft averages as shown in Figure 6. Here,  $v_A = 477$  km/s,  $\Omega_p = eB/m_p = 7.61$   
 378 rad/s, proton gyroradius  $\rho_p = 44$  km, and plasma beta  $\beta = 0.46$  for the RX+KHI event, and  
 379  $v_A = 361$  km/s,  $\Omega_p = 3.86$  rad/s,  $\rho_p = 80$  km/s, and  $\beta = 0.72$  for the RX-only event. The error  
 380 bars in Figure 7b,d are based only on the standard deviations  $\sigma_v$  of the ion velocity component  
 381 along  $\mathbf{k}$  during the intervals, which are  $\sim 60$  km/s for the RX+KHI event and  $\sim 30$  km/s for the  
 382 RX-only event. Error magnitudes based only on the standard deviations of the component along  
 383 the average ion velocity ( $\langle \mathbf{v}_i \rangle = \mathbf{u}_0$ ) of the four  $\mathbf{k}$ -vectors (each from each spacecraft) are  
 384 comparable to those in Figure 7b,d.

385 Curves in Figure 7 show theoretical linear dispersion relations for the fast (magnetosonic-  
 386 whistler), kinetic Alfvén, and slow (EMIC) modes based on the two-fluid model, i.e., exact  
 387 solutions of equation (29) derived by Bellan (2012) (see section 5 of their paper), for three  
 388 propagation angles  $\theta = 49^\circ$ ,  $69^\circ$ , and  $89^\circ$  with respect to the magnetic field. For the RX+KHI  
 389 event, the data points are distributed around  $\omega_{\text{pl}} = 0$ , and do not appear to collectively satisfy  
 390 any of the theoretical dispersion relations. On the other hand, for the RX-only event many points  
 391 are near the slow-mode curve, especially at smaller  $k$  ( $k < 0.1$  rad/km), while other points are  
 392 distributed around  $\omega_{\text{pl}} = 0$ . It can be concluded that the magnetic turbulence in the RX+KHI  
 393 event is not made of propagating normal-mode waves, but fossil magnetic field structures with  
 394 transverse fluctuating components were advected by the background plasma flow. On the other  
 395 hand, the EMIC mode was an ingredient of the fluctuations in the RX-only event.

396 We do not discuss details of the excitation process of the EMIC waves in the RX-only event,  
 397 which is not the focus of our study. Since they were propagating northward along the magnetic  
 398 field (Figure 6e,f), it is possible that they were generated closer to the reconnection site near the  
 399 southern cusp. We note, however, that the ion beam streaming along the magnetic field, as seen  
 400 in Figure 2h, would not be the driver of the waves, because EMIC waves can grow when the ion  
 401 beam travels in the direction opposite to the wave propagation (Ahirwar et al., 2007).

402

## 403 5 Discussion

### 404 5.1 Generation process of the KHI driven turbulence

405 Our results suggest that while magnetic reconnection at the high-latitude magnetopause  
 406 excites a modest level of magnetic turbulence in the dayside low-latitude boundary layer (Figure  
 407 3b), the KHI further amplifies the turbulence with the transverse magnetic energy significantly  
 408 higher than the compressional energy (Figure 3a). Similar results have been obtained for  
 409 simultaneous observations on 20 November 2001 of the dayside magnetopause with  
 410 reconnection signatures and the dusk-flank magnetopause with active KHI signatures, reported  
 411 by Hasegawa, Retinò, et al. (2009). The spectral indices  $-5/3$  at MHD scales and about  $-3$  at sub-  
 412 ion scales have also been seen in other KHI events (Di Mare et al., 2019), and are consistent with  
 413 2D kinetic simulations of magnetic turbulence (Franci et al., 2017) as well as 3D kinetic  
 414 simulations of the KHI (Nakamura, Hasegawa, et al., 2017). The transverse components of sub-  
 415 ion-scale magnetic field fluctuations roughly corresponds to the reconnected field components  
 416 and, notably, both kinetic simulations and observations show that magnetic reconnection can

417 produce magnetic turbulence with the spectral index of about  $-8/3$  at sub-ion scales (Daughton et al., 2014; Eastwood et al., 2009), consistent with the present observations.

419 It should be stressed that power-law magnetic spectra with a spectral index  $-5/3$  in the MHD  
420 range, as expected for a quasi-steady turbulence, were observed even in the early nonlinear phase  
421 (at  $1-2$  eddy turnover time  $\pi\alpha^{-1} = \pi\lambda_{\text{KHI}}/V_0$ ) of the KHI, corresponding to the stage as shown  
422 in Figure 4a. What could be the process for such fast turbulence generation? Recent kinetic  
423 simulations of the KHI show that if modest magnetic field fluctuations, as seen in Figure 3b, are  
424 present in the magnetopause before the KHI onset, magnetic turbulence with a spectral index  $-$   
425  $5/3$  can be generated even in the early nonlinear stage (T. K. M. Nakamura, private  
426 communication, 2019).

427 We also note that energy cascade in KH vortices may be proceeding through the process, as  
428 suggested by Franci et al. (2017), in which magnetic reconnection may act as a rectifier to  
429 directly transfer energy from MHD scales to sub-ion scales, rapidly driving sub-ion-scale energy  
430 cascade. In such situations, energy injected at MHD scales can be transferred to smaller scales  
431 not only gradually via standard direct cascade but also rapidly via reconnection that occurs in  
432 sub-ion-scale current sheets. Their results are interesting in that cross-scale energy transfer in  
433 turbulence may occur via magnetic reconnection (see Figure 4 of Franci et al., 2017), while  
434 conventional wisdom is that energy cascade at MHD scales occurs via nonlinear interactions of  
435 vortices or counter-propagating Alfvén waves. In the case of the KHI with an initial magnetic  
436 shear or magnetic field deformation involved (Nakamura et al., 2006; Nykyri & Otto, 2001),  
437 MHD dynamics (vortical flow) produces thin current sheets subject to magnetic reconnection  
438 and, as a result of VIR, part of energy at MHD scales may be directly transferred to sub-ion  
439 scales, and forward and inverse cascades at kinetic scales may set in.

440 Both of the two MMS events studied in the present paper were observed when an  
441 interplanetary flux rope passed by the Earth, i.e., when the upstream plasma beta and Alfvén  
442 Mach number were both rather low (Figures S1 and S2). However, KH waves/vortices can be  
443 observed under other upstream conditions (Lin et al., 2014; Kavosi & Raeder, 2015) and the  
444 generation mechanism of turbulence may be different for different conditions. In particular, the  
445 magnetosheath is often turbulent with mirror-mode structures (e.g., Sahraoui et al., 2006) under  
446 high beta conditions and preferentially in the downstream of quasi-perpendicular shocks (Soucek  
447 et al., 2015), and with substantial velocity fluctuations under high Mach number conditions and  
448 preferentially in the downstream of quasi-parallel shocks (Nykyri et al., 2017). The effects of  
449 these magnetosheath structures and fluctuations on boundary layer turbulence are not fully  
450 understood and should be investigated in the future.

451

## 452 5.2 Mode of the KHI driven turbulence

453 The nature of electromagnetic field fluctuations in KH vortices is discussed in detail. The  
454 analysis in section 4 suggests that the magnetic turbulence in KH vortices does not satisfy any  
455 linear dispersion relation for propagating normal-mode waves, and thus consists of magnetic  
456 structures of various scales being advected by the background bulk flow ( $\omega_{\text{pl}} \sim 0$ ). The  $k$ -vectors  
457 roughly perpendicular to the background field (Figure 6b) indicates that the magnetic structures  
458 with transverse field fluctuations (Figure 3a) have boundaries or inhomogeneity roughly in the  
459 perpendicular direction, i.e., the turbulence consists of weakly curved magnetic flux tubes of  
460 various scales. We note that such flux tubes can be produced in KH vortices through multiple  
461 VIR and become interlaced in the nonlinear phase (see Figure 6 of Nakamura et al. (2013)). Such

462 a filamentary or “spaghetti-like” flux tubes picture has been suggested and demonstrated for  
 463 turbulence in the solar wind (Borovsky, 2008; Hu et al., 2018), at least part of which would be  
 464 driven by convective fluid motions on the photosphere.

465 A caveat is that the assumptions underlying Bellan’s method of plane waves or planar  
 466 structures and one mode for a given spacecraft frequency may well be violated in KH vortices.  
 467 Indeed, Figure 5h,i shows that both Poynting flux and the normalized cross helicity, the latter of  
 468 which can be used as a measure of Alfvénicity of MHD turbulence and to infer the propagation  
 469 direction in the plasma frame of Alfvén waves, intermittently have significant positive or  
 470 negative values during the analyzed and other intervals. It suggests that counter-propagating  
 471 Alfvén waves may be embedded in KH vortices. Here, the normalized ion cross helicity is  
 472 defined as  $\sigma_{ci} = H_{ci}/E_i$ , where the ion cross helicity  $H_{ci} = \langle \mathbf{v}_i \cdot \mathbf{b} \rangle$ , average energy  $E_i =$   
 473  $\langle v_i^2 + b^2 \rangle / 2$ , and the magnetic field  $\mathbf{b}$  is expressed in Alfvén units  $\mathbf{B} / \sqrt{\mu_0 \rho_p}$  (Bruno & Carbone,  
 474 2013).

475 With the possibility of counter-propagating waves in mind, we have analyzed energy spectra  
 476 of electric field fluctuations and the ratio between the normal component of the fluctuating  
 477 electric field and the tangential component of the fluctuating magnetic field, as shown in Figure  
 478 8. Here the normal is  $\mathbf{n} = (0.705, 0.499, -0.504)$  in GSM, and the tangential direction is  
 479 defined as  $\mathbf{t} = \langle \hat{\mathbf{b}} \rangle \times \mathbf{n} = (-0.691, 0.643, -0.330)$ . The ratio is equivalent to the parallel phase  
 480 velocity of the waves, when the wave vectors are in the plane containing  $\langle \hat{\mathbf{b}} \rangle$  and  $\mathbf{t}$ . This may  
 481 well be the case because the  $\mathbf{k}$ -vectors from Bellan’s method are roughly along the mean flow  
 482 velocity  $\mathbf{u}_0$  which is in the  $\langle \hat{\mathbf{b}} \rangle - \mathbf{t}$  plane (Figure 6b,c). Here, the measured electric field is  
 483 converted to that in the mean flow frame,  $\mathbf{E}' = \mathbf{E} + \mathbf{u}_0 \times \mathbf{B}$ . Figure 8b shows that the transverse  
 484 component of  $\mathbf{E}'$  is dominated by that  $-\delta \mathbf{v}_e \times \mathbf{B}_0$ , which is because the amplitude of the  
 485 magnetic field fluctuations  $\delta \mathbf{B}$  during the boundary layer interval is considerably smaller than  
 486  $|\mathbf{B}_0|$  (Figure 5a).

487 The amplitude of  $\delta E_n$  being larger than that of  $\delta E_t$  may be due to electron jets from VIR  
 488 being roughly directed in the tangential direction, i.e.,  $|\delta v_{et}|$  larger than  $|\delta v_{en}|$ . Interestingly,  
 489 Figure 8c shows that both  $\delta E_n / \delta B_t$  and  $\delta E_t / \delta B_n$  roughly satisfy the linear dispersion relation of  
 490 KAWs with  $\theta = 89^\circ$ , the propagation angle compatible with the observed  $\mathbf{k}$ -vector directions  
 491 (Figure 6b), and using the Taylor hypothesis. This may indicate that KAWs were a constituent of  
 492 the electromagnetic turbulence observed in the KH vortices. However,  $|\delta E_n| > |\delta E_t|$  (Figure 8b)  
 493 suggests that the wave vectors had larger normal, rather than tangential, components if KAWs  
 494 are involved (Hollweg, 1999; Bellan, 2012; Lin et al., 2012). In fact, if KAWs are emitted by  
 495 VIR, it is reasonable to suppose that the wave vectors point mostly in the normal, rather than  
 496 tangential, direction, as in the case of MHD Alfvén waves (rotational discontinuities) emitted  
 497 from reconnecting current sheets. We also point out that the KAW modes with wave vectors  
 498 mostly along the normal cannot simply result from mode conversion from the KH waves  
 499 (Chaston et al., 2007), because KH waves have wave vectors roughly in the tangential direction.

500 How could these seemingly contradictory results be reconciled? One possibility is that the  
 501 electromagnetic fluctuations in the KH vortices are in a strongly turbulent state, and thus do not  
 502 satisfy the properties of linear modes, such as linear dispersion relations. It is also possible that  
 503 since magnetic reconnection can excite KAWs in outflow regions (Chaston et al., 2005) and VIR  
 504 in 3D can occur at various latitudinal locations (Vernisse et al., 2016; Nakamura, Hasegawa, et  
 505 al., 2017; Nakamura, Eriksson, et al., 2017; Fadanelli et al., 2018), KAWs propagating in  
 506 opposite directions are embedded and interacting in the KH vortices. Indeed, magnetic flux ropes  
 507 observed in association with the KH-active magnetopause (Eriksson et al., 2009; Sturmer et al.,

508 2018) are signatures of such multiple reconnection in KH vortices, and may actually be  
 509 interlaced flux tubes in 3D. Notably, the interlaced field lines with filamentary currents in the  
 510 KH vortices may be the origin of intermittent features of the turbulence, as reported by Stawarz  
 511 et al. (2016). We also point out that the presence of positive and negative  $\omega_{pl}$  (Figure 7a,b) may  
 512 be interpreted as a signature of waves/structures having  $\mathbf{k}$ -vector components parallel and  
 513 antiparallel to  $\mathbf{u}_0$  in the plasma-rest frame. However, since the FFT-based Bellan method allows  
 514 only one mode for a given spacecraft frequency and selected interval, the turbulence as a whole  
 515 may manifest as magnetic structures advected by the bulk flow in the KH vortices. Future studies  
 516 using Bellan's method should probably use more advanced spectral analysis, such as wavelet  
 517 transforms, to derive instantaneous wave vectors.

518 The possibility that VIR could excite KAWs indicates that there may be a new path to locally  
 519 generate KAW turbulence in the magnetopause boundary layer, in addition to the paths through  
 520 dayside magnetopause reconnection (Chaston et al., 2005) and resonant mode conversion from  
 521 magnetopause surface or KH waves (Hasegawa, 1976; Chaston et al., 2007) or from  
 522 magnetosheath compressional waves (Johnson & Cheng, 1997; Lin et al., 2010). The role of such  
 523 VIR driven KAWs is unknown and needs to be explored in the future.

524 While the possible contribution of KAWs to turbulence in KH vortices was discussed here,  
 525 EMIC and/or magnetosonic waves may also be observed in other cases. Moore et al. (2016)  
 526 indeed identified magnetosonic waves inside KH vortices observed on the dawn side and  
 527 discussed their role in ion heating. Such waves may be excited in KH vortices when cool  
 528 magnetosheath and hot magnetospheric ions are spatially mixed, or when energetic ions of  
 529 plasma sheet origin drift into the boundary layer, forming a ring distribution. On the other hand,  
 530 ion velocity distributions in and around KH vortices would be stable for ion cyclotron anisotropy  
 531 instabilities, with the parallel temperature often higher than the perpendicular temperature  
 532 (Nishino et al., 2007). Thus, EMIC waves may be damped quickly in the flank boundary layer  
 533 even if they exist or are excited in the cusp (Nykyri et al., 2006) or in the dayside boundary layer  
 534 (section 4.3). Further study would be needed to reveal the contribution of these waves.  
 535

### 536 5.3 Role of the KHI driven turbulence

537 Earlier observations demonstrated that magnetic reconnection can be induced locally at the  
 538 KH-unstable magnetopause and remotely at mid-latitudes as a consequence of the KHI (Eriksson  
 539 et al., 2016; Nakamura, Hasegawa, et al., 2017; Vernisse et al., 2016). Simulation studies  
 540 (Nakamura, Hasegawa, et al., 2017; Nakamura, Eriksson, et al., 2017) also show that VIR in 3D  
 541 can cause an efficient plasma mixing and drive magnetic turbulence with a power-law index  $-8/3$   
 542 at sub-ion scales as observed. Combined with such results, our results suggest that the sub-ion-  
 543 scale turbulence in the early nonlinear phase of the KHI is a consequence of VIR, the primary  
 544 plasma transport process at this stage.

545 If KAW turbulence could be excited through VIR (Figure 8c), one may think that particle  
 546 diffusion induced by KAWs could play an additional role in the transport across the  
 547 magnetopause (Johnson & Cheng, 1997; Izutsu et al., 2012), in particular if the KAW turbulence  
 548 is further amplified in more downstream regions. However, the KAW mode with  $|\delta E_n| > |\delta E_t|$   
 549 (Figure 8b) does not significantly contribute to such transport, which may be observationally  
 550 confirmed by a methodology developed by Izutsu et al. (2012). Thus, the mode with  $|\delta E_n| >$   
 551  $|\delta E_t|$  first needs to be converted through a parametric decay instability to the one with  $|\delta E_n| \leq$   
 552  $|\delta E_t|$  for massive transport to be realized (Lin et al., 2012). Besides such a nonlinear mode

553 conversion and likely ongoing Landau and transit damping of KAWs, whereby ions and  
554 electrons may be heated and undergo cross-field diffusion (Johnson & Cheng, 2001; Chaston et  
555 al., 2008; Moore et al., 2017; Wang et al., 2019), there may be a competition between possible  
556 amplification of KAWs via an inverse cascade (vortex merging) (Miura, 1997) and damping by  
557 the resistive ionosphere (Borovsky & Funsten, 2003) to which LLBL field lines are connected.  
558 These processes expected farther down the tail should be investigated in the future both  
559 observationally and numerically, in addition to the effects of eddy diffusion associated with flow  
560 velocity fluctuations (Matsumoto & Hoshino, 2004; Wang et al., 2010), in order to understand  
561 the formation process of the dense plasma sheet observed under northward IMF conditions  
562 (Wing et al., 2005).

563

## 564 **6 Conclusions**

565 We have investigated the generation process and mode properties of electromagnetic  
566 turbulence observed in KH vortices encountered at the dusk-flank magnetopause by the MMS  
567 spacecraft on 8 September 2015 under northward IMF conditions. The event on this day was  
568 compared with another MMS event under a similar solar wind and IMF condition in which  
569 magnetopause reconnection signatures but no KHI signatures were observed at the dayside  
570 magnetopause. We found that while high-latitude reconnection can excite a modest level of  
571 turbulence in the dayside low-latitude boundary layer, the KHI significantly enhances the  
572 turbulence level even in its early nonlinear phase, leading to magnetic energy spectra with  
573 power-law indices of about  $-5/3$  at MHD scales and about  $-8/3$  at sub-ion scales. Our wave  
574 vector and dispersion relation analysis assuming negligible displacement current (charge quasi-  
575 neutrality), plane waves/structures, and single mode for a given spacecraft frequency suggests  
576 that the turbulence consists of interlaced magnetic flux tubes of various scales (excluding  
577 electron scales) advected by plasma flows in the KH vortices, rather than of propagating normal  
578 mode waves. Combined with the evidence reported earlier for vortex induced reconnection  
579 (VIR) in the present MMS event (Eriksson et al., 2016; Li et al., 2016; Vernisse et al., 2016) and  
580 the results from 3D fully kinetic simulations that VIR in 3D can produce interlaced reconnected  
581 field lines, cause an efficient plasma mixing, and generate power-law magnetic energy spectra  
582 with a spectral index  $-8/3$  at sub-ion scales (Nakamura, Hasegawa, et al., 2017; Nakamura,  
583 Eriksson, et al., 2017), we conclude that the sub-ion scale turbulence in the early nonlinear phase  
584 is not the primary cause of the plasma transport across the magnetopause, but a consequence of  
585 3D VIR.

586

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589 <https://lasp.colorado.edu/mms/sdc/public/>. The analyses presented used version 3.3 of the FPI  
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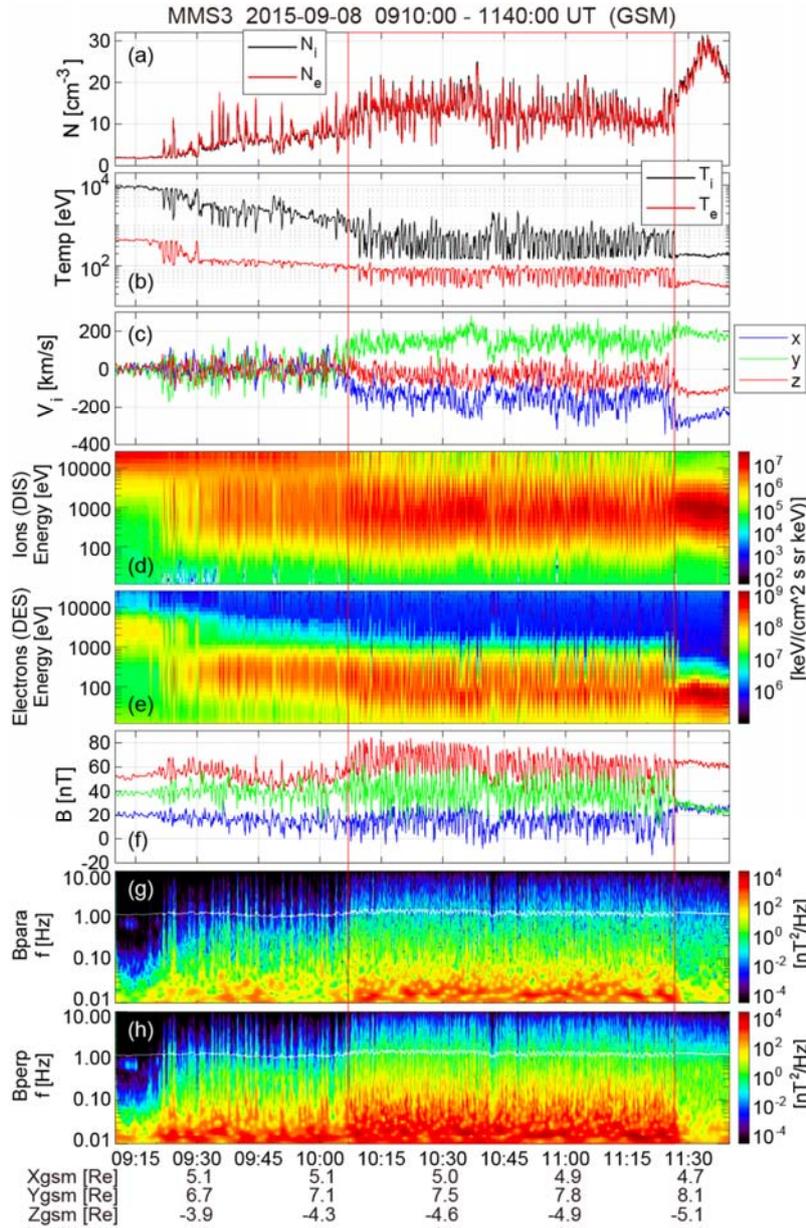
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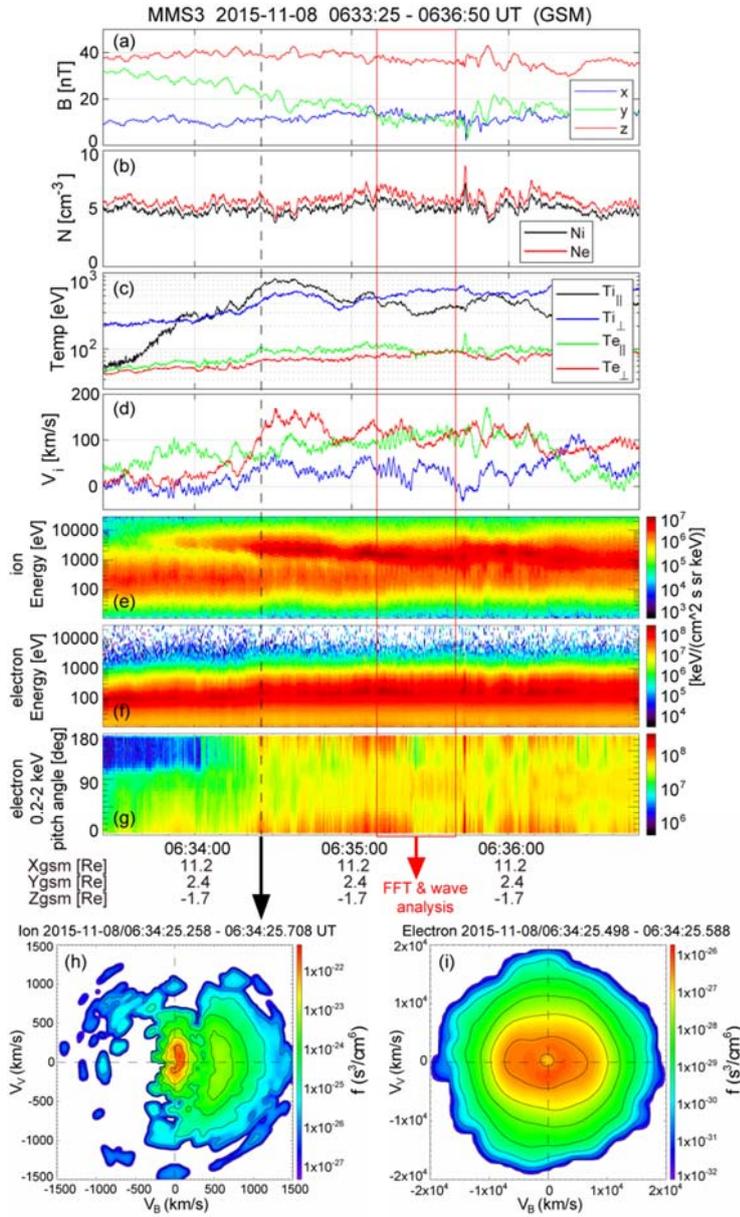
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893 **Figure 1.** MMS3 fast survey-mode observations of Kelvin-Helmholtz (KH) waves at the  
 894 postnoon magnetopause on 8 September 2015 for the interval 0910–1140 UT. (a) Ion and  
 895 electron densities, (b) ion and electron temperatures assuming isotropic velocity distributions, (c)  
 896 three GSM components of the ion velocity, (d,e) energy versus time spectrograms of  
 897 omnidirectional ions and electrons from the dual ion spectrometer (DIS) and dual electron  
 898 spectrometer (DES) parts, respectively, of the fast plasma investigation (FPI) instrument suite,  
 899 (f) GSM components of the magnetic field, and (g,h) Wavelet power spectra of the magnetic  
 900 field fluctuations parallel and perpendicular to the mean field, with the proton cyclotron  
 901 frequency marked by the white curve. The KH-active interval 1007–1127 UT between the two  
 902 vertical red lines is used to derive turbulent spectra in Figure 2.

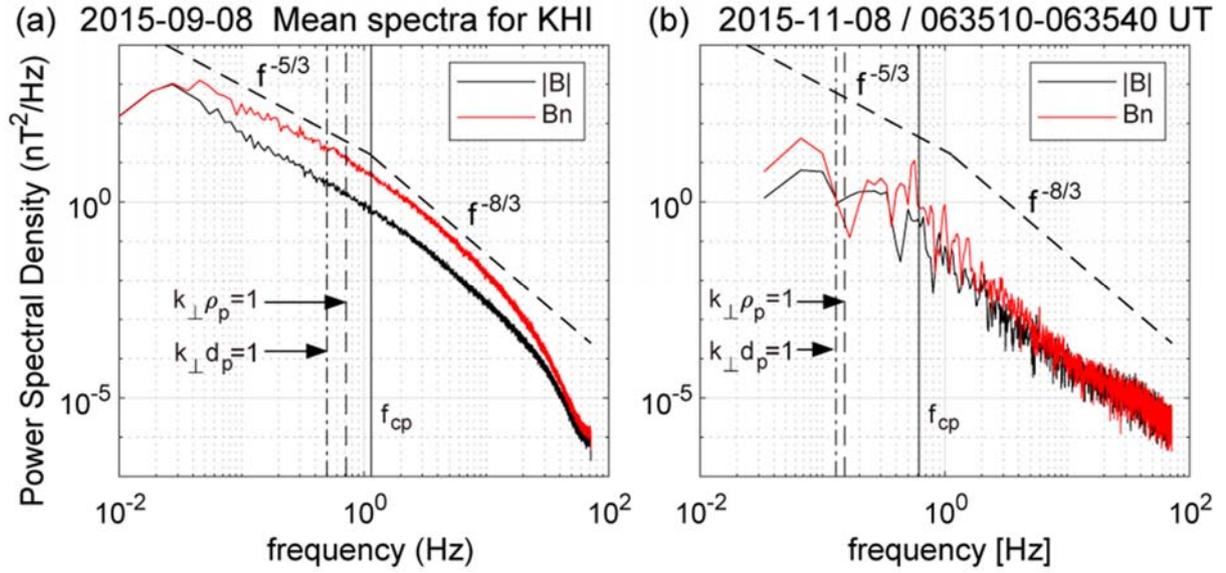
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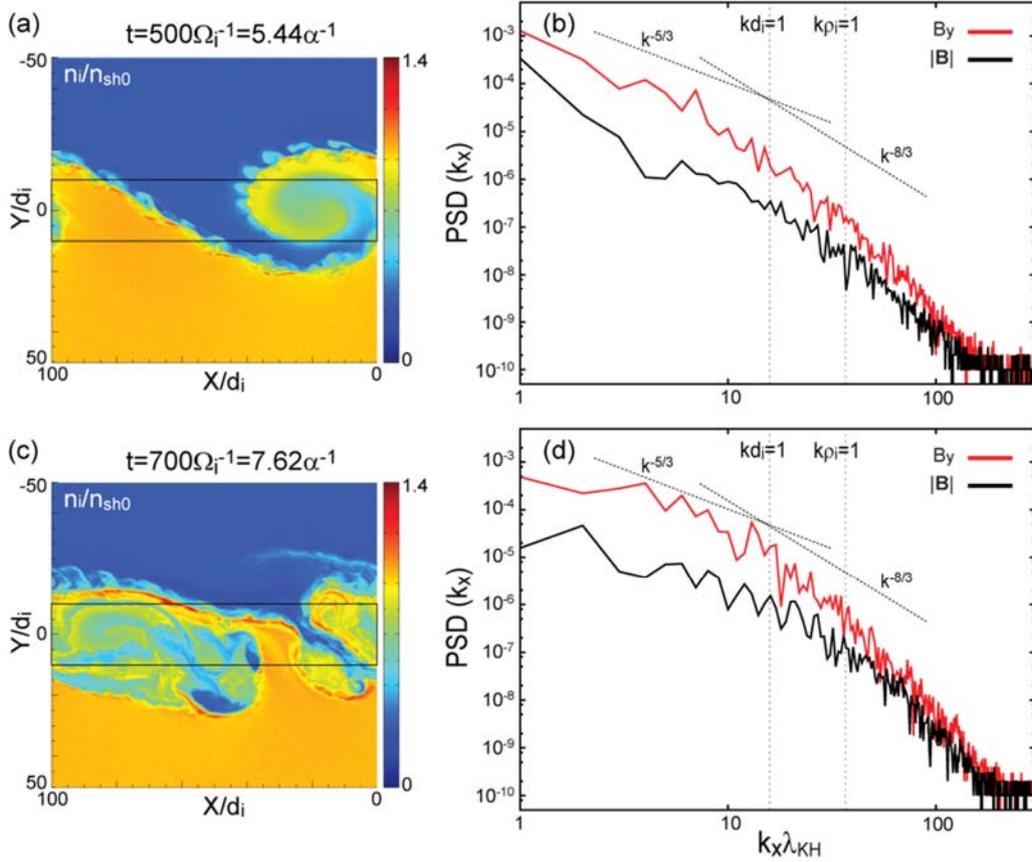
905 **Figure 2.** MMS3 burst-mode observations of a dayside, equatorial magnetopause crossing under  
 906 dominantly northward IMF on 8 November 2015, 0633:25–0636:50 UT. **(a)** GSM components  
 907 of the magnetic field, **(b)** ion and electron densities, **(c)** ion and electron temperatures in the  
 908 directions parallel and perpendicular to the magnetic field, **(d)** GSM components of the ion  
 909 velocity, **(e,f)** energy-time spectrograms of omnidirectional ions and electrons, **(g)** pitch-angle  
 910 distributions of 0.2–2 keV electrons, and **(h,i)** two-dimensional cuts of ion and electron velocity  
 911 distributions by the plane containing the magnetic field and velocity vectors at the time marked  
 912 by the vertical dashed line. The 30-sec interval enclosed by the red box is used for the spectral  
 913 and k-vector analyses as shown in Figures 3, 6, and 7.

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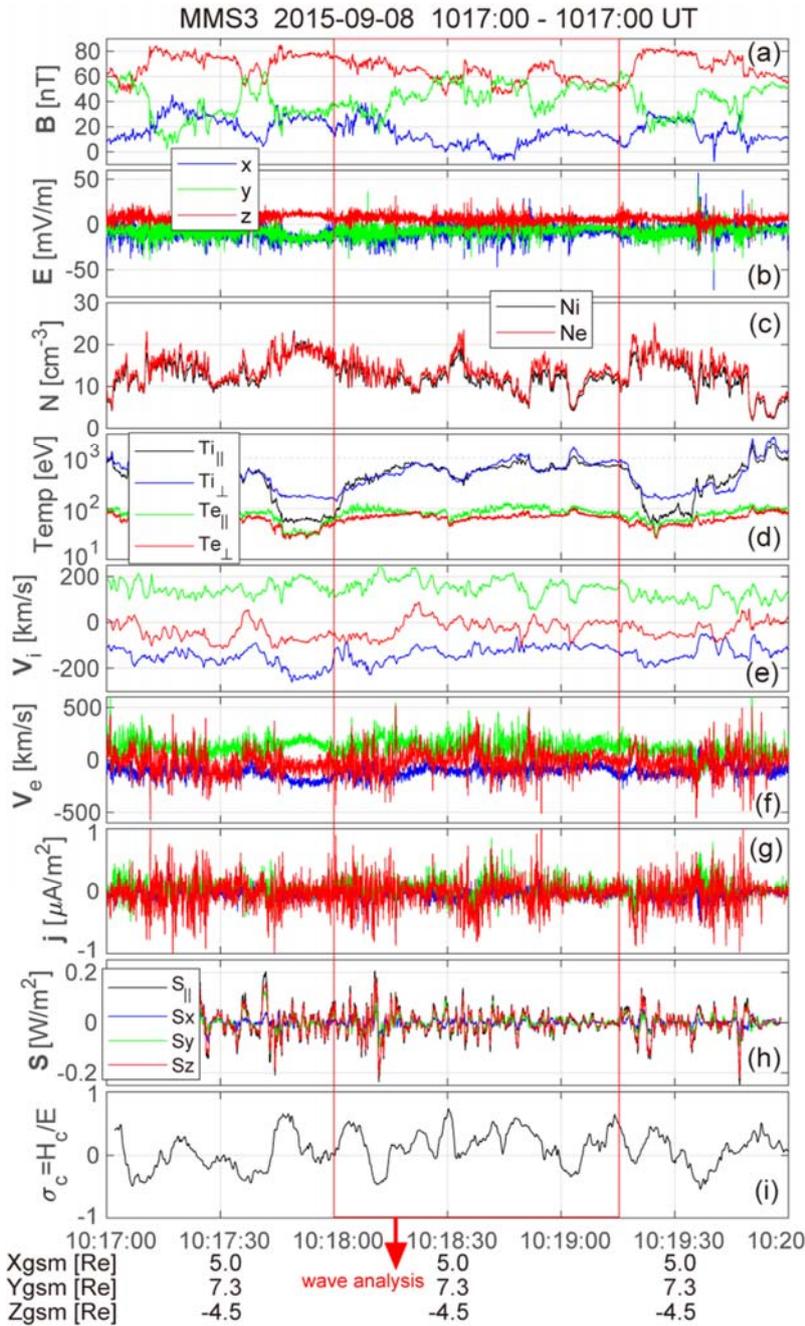
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**Figure 3.** (a) Average power spectra of the magnetic field intensity and field component perpendicular to the mean field and roughly normal to the nominal magnetopause for magnetosphere-side intervals of the KH-active period 1007–1127 UT in Figure 1. (b) Power spectra for the magnetopause boundary layer interval in Figure 2. Proton cyclotron frequency  $f_{cp}$ ,  $k_{\perp}\rho_p = 1$ , and  $k_{\perp}d_p = 1$  are shown assuming that the observed frequency spectra are equivalent to the wave number spectra in the perpendicular direction and the Taylor hypothesis  $\omega_{sc} = 2\pi f_{sc} = \mathbf{k}_{\perp} \cdot \langle \mathbf{v}_{i\perp} \rangle$  is satisfied, where  $\rho_p$  is proton gyroradius,  $d_p$  is proton inertial length, and  $\langle \mathbf{v}_{i\perp} \rangle$  is the perpendicular component of the ion bulk velocity.



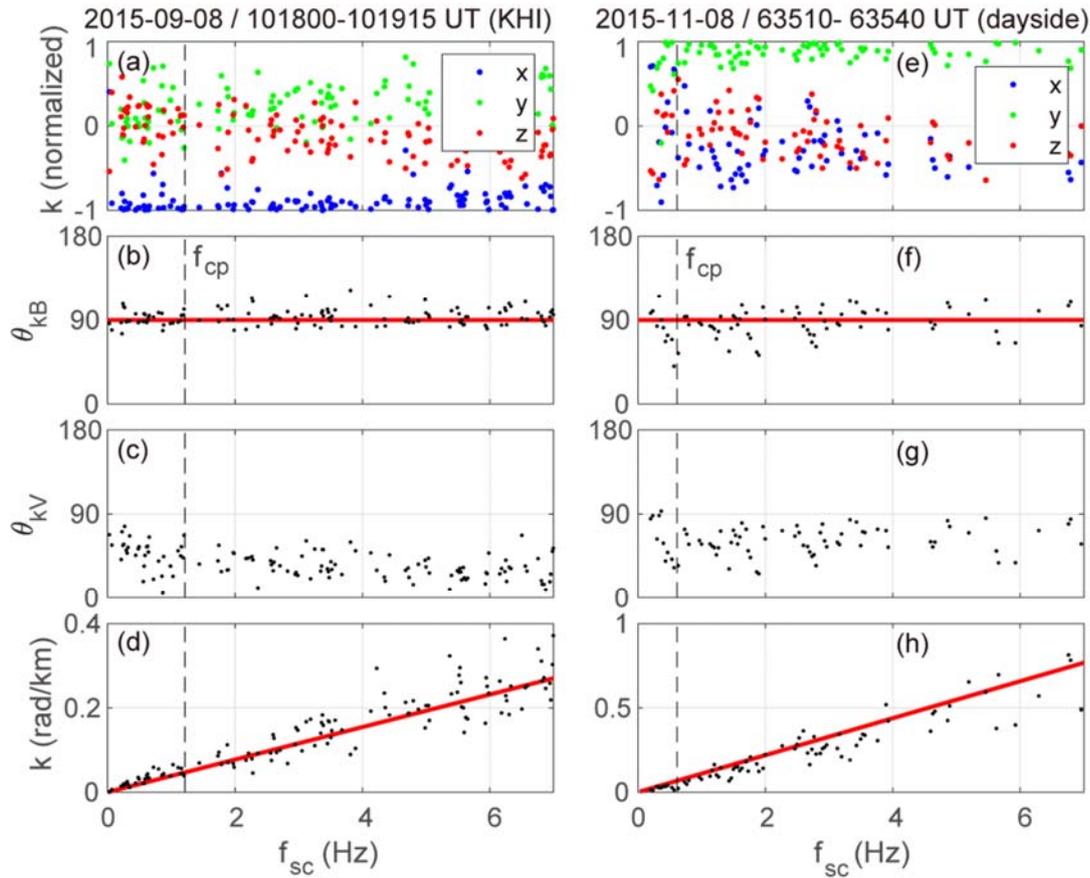
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**Figure 4.** (a,c) Density profiles in the XY plane at  $t = 500\Omega_i^{-1}$  and  $t = 700\Omega_i^{-1}$  from a 3D kinetic simulation of the KHI (Nakamura, 2020, where  $\Omega_i = eB_0/m_i$  and  $\alpha = V_0/\lambda_{KHI}$ , the total velocity jump across the initial shear layer divided by the most unstable KHI wavelength. The X axis is roughly antiparallel to the initial magnetosheath flow, and the Y axis is normal to the initial velocity shear and current layers. The average wave number spectra of the magnetic energy density in normalized unit (b,d) are computed by use of the simulation data in the domain enclosed by the black boxes.

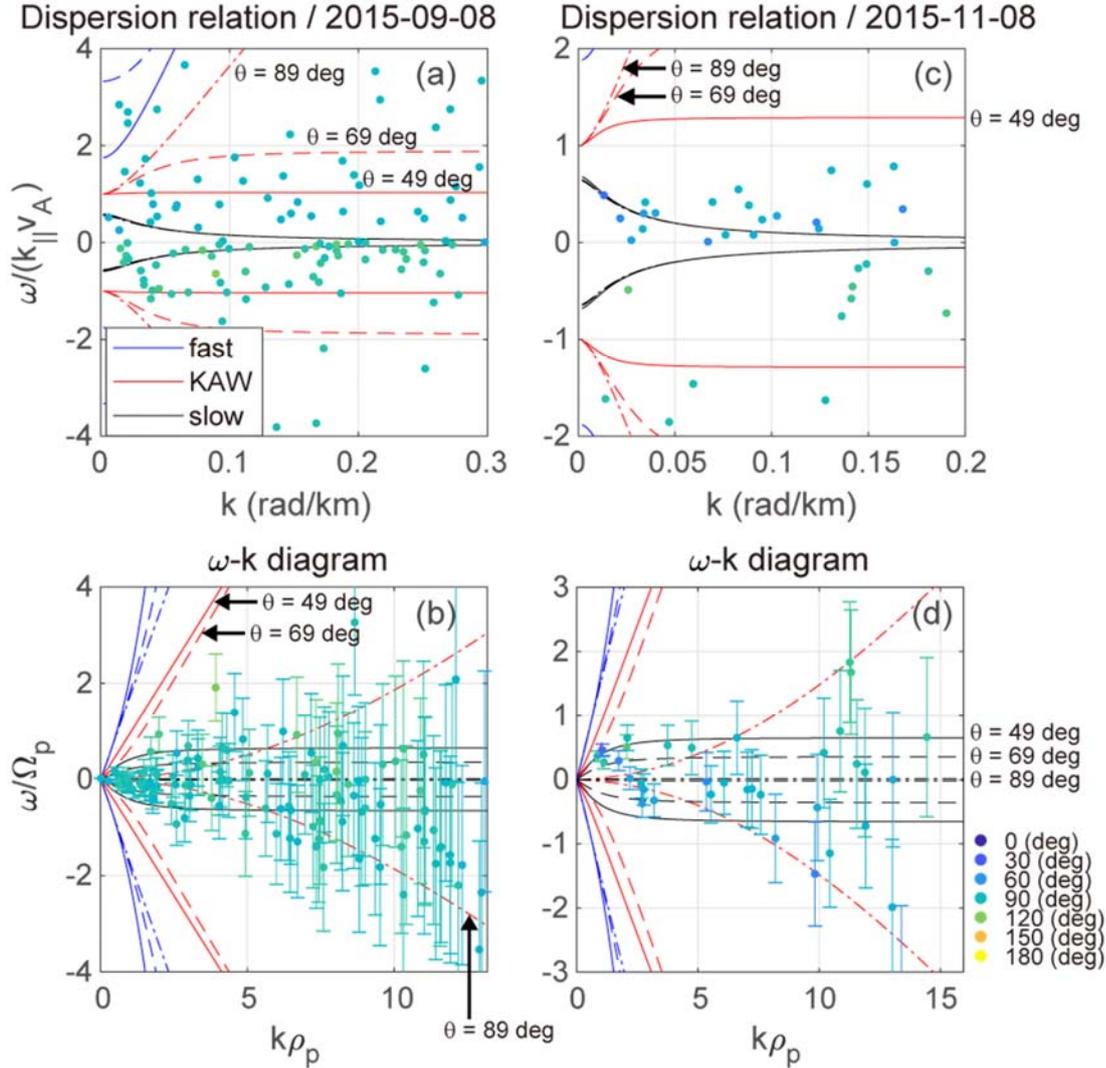


**Figure 5.** An example of the KH-active boundary layer intervals on 8 September 2015 used for the k-vector analysis. **(a,b)** GSM components of the magnetic and electric fields, **(c)** ion and electron densities, **(d)** ion and electron temperatures in both the parallel and perpendicular directions, **(e,f)** ion and electron velocities, and **(g)** current density based on the FPI measurements, **(h)** parallel and GSM components of Poynting flux,  $\mathbf{S} = \delta\mathbf{E} \times \delta\mathbf{B}/\mu_0$ , and **(i)** normalized ion cross helicities,  $\sigma_c = H_c/E$ , the ratio between the cross helicity and average energy (see text for details), all from the MMS3 spacecraft. The magnetosphere-side interval enclosed by the red box is used in the k-vector analysis.

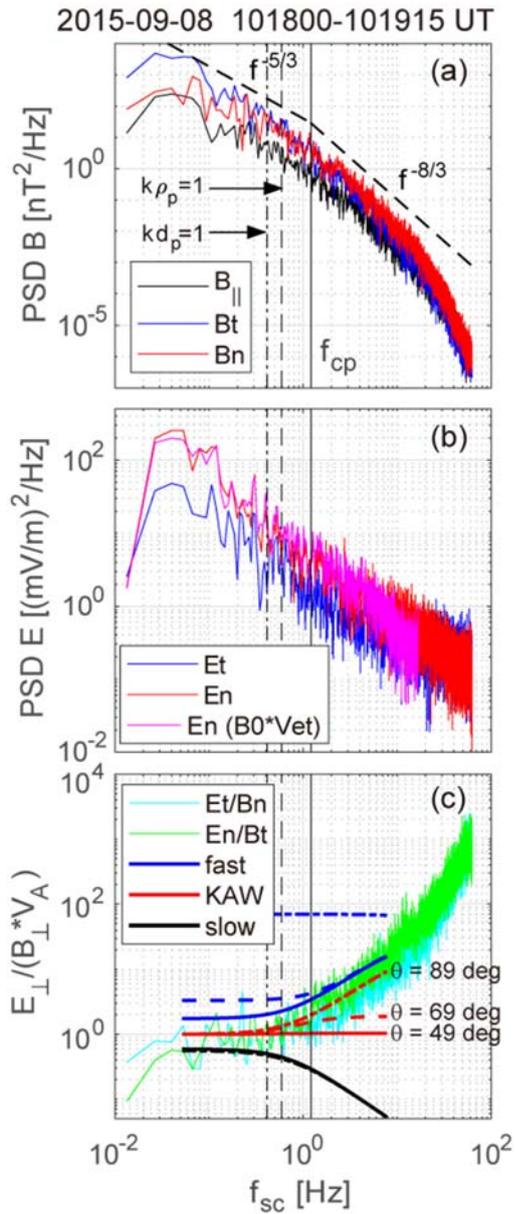
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 945 **Figure 6.** Wave vector properties derived from Bellan’s method for the KH-active boundary  
 946 layer interval (left: 1018:00–1019:15 UT) and dayside reconnection jet interval (right: 0635:10–  
 947 0635:40 UT). **(a,e)** GSM components of the orientations of the k-vectors, **(b,f)** angles between  
 948 the k-vectors and the mean magnetic field direction, **(c,g)** angles between the k-vectors and the  
 949 mean ion flow direction, and **(d,h)** the magnitude of the wave number, as a function of frequency  
 950  $f_{sc}$  in the spacecraft frame. The red line in panels (d,h) shows the Taylor condition  $2\pi f_{sc} =$   
 951  $k\langle v_i \rangle \cos\langle \theta_{kv} \rangle$ , where  $\langle v_i \rangle$  is the mean ion speed for the analysis interval and  $\langle \theta_{kv} \rangle$  is the average  
 952 angle between the k-vectors and  $\langle \mathbf{v}_i \rangle$ .  
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 955 **Figure 7.** Dispersion relations derived from Bellan's method in which the Doppler effect is  
 956 subtracted for the KHI (left) and dayside reconnection (right) events. **(a,c)** Parallel phase velocity  
 957  $\omega_{pl}/(k_{\parallel}v_A)$  normalized to the Alfvén speed versus wave number, and **(b,d)**  $\omega_{pl}$ - $k$  diagrams  
 958 normalized to proton cyclotron frequency and proton gyroradius, respectively. Colors of the  
 959 points denote the orientations of the  $k$ -vectors with respect to the magnetic field. Theoretical  
 960 linear dispersion relations for the fast (blue), intermediate (red), and slow (black) modes are  
 961 derived from equation (29) in Bellan (2012) based on the two-fluid model. Dispersion curves for  
 962 three propagation angles  $\theta = 49^\circ$  (solid),  $69^\circ$  (dashed), and  $89^\circ$  (dash-dot) with respect to the  
 963 magnetic field are shown here. Error bars in panels (b,d) correspond to the standard deviation  $\sigma_v$   
 964 of the ion flow velocity component along  $\mathbf{k}$  for the analysis interval, i.e.,  $k\sigma_v$ .  
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**Figure 8.** (a) Power spectra of the magnetic field components parallel and perpendicular to the mean magnetic field. The perpendicular components  $\delta B_n$  and  $\delta B_t$  are roughly normal and tangential, respectively, to the magnetopause. (b) Power spectra of the electric field components  $\delta E_n$  and  $\delta E_t$  perpendicular to the mean magnetic field in the mean flow frame. The magenta line shows the spectrum of the normal component of the convection electric field  $\mathbf{E}_c = -\mathbf{v}_{e\perp} \times \mathbf{B}_0$ . (c)  $\delta E_t/\delta B_n$  (cyan) and  $\delta E_n/\delta B_t$  (green), normalized to the Alfvén speed. The curves show linear dispersion relations based on the two-fluid model (Bellan, 2012) of fast, intermediate (KAW), and slow mode waves for three propagation angles  $\theta = 49^\circ$  (solid),  $69^\circ$  (dashed), and  $89^\circ$  (dash-dot) with respect to the background magnetic field.