Atlas of dynamic spectra of fast radio burst FRB 20201124A

Bo-Jun Wang^{1,2,3}, Heng Xu², Jin-Chen Jiang², Jiang-Wei Xu^{1,2,3}, Jia-Rui Niu^{2,4}, Ping
Chen^{1,3,5}, Ke-Jia Lee^{1,2}, Bing Zhang^{6,7}, Wei-Wei Zhu², Su-Bo Dong¹, Chun-Feng Zhang², Hai Fu⁸, De-Jiang Zhou^{2,4}, Yong-Kun Zhang^{2,4}, Pei Wang², Yi Feng^{2,9}, Ye Li¹⁰, Dong-Zi Li¹¹, Wen-Bin Lu¹², Yuan-Pei Yang¹³, R. N. Caballero^{1,3}, Ce Cai¹⁴, Mao-Zheng Chen¹⁵, Zi-Gao Dai¹⁶, A. Esamdin¹⁵, Heng-Qian Gan², Jin-Lin Han², Long-Fei Hao¹⁷, Yu-Xiang Huang¹⁷, Peng Jiang², Cheng-Kui Li¹⁴, Di Li^{2,18}, Hui Li², Xin-Qiao Li¹⁴, Zhi-Xuan Li¹⁷, Zhi-Yong Liu¹⁵, Rui Luo¹⁹, Yun-Peng Men²⁰, Chen-Hui Niu², Wen-Xi Peng¹⁴, Lei Qian², Li-Ming
Song¹⁴, Jing-Hai Sun², Fa-Yin Wang²¹, Min Wang¹⁷, Na Wang¹⁵, Wei-Yang Wang³, Xue-Feng Wu¹⁰, Shuo Xiao¹⁴, Shao-Lin Xiong¹⁴, Yong-Hua Xu¹⁷, Ren-Xin Xu^{1,3,22}, Jun Yang²¹, Xuan Yang¹⁰, Rui Yao², Qi-Bin Yi¹⁴, You-Ling Yue², Dong-Jun Yu², Wen-Fei Yu²³, Jian-Ping Yuan¹⁵, Bin-Bin Zhang^{21,24}, Song-Bo Zhang¹⁰, Shuang-Nan Zhang¹⁴, Yi Zhao¹⁴, Wei-Kang

Zheng¹², Yan Zhu², Jin-Hang Zou^{21,25}

¹ Kavli Institute for Astronomy and Astrophysics, Peking University, Beijing 100871, China,

² National Astronomical Observatories, Chinese Academy of Sciences, Beijing 100101, China,

³ Department of Astronomy, Peking University, Beijing 100871, China,

⁴ University of Chinese Academy of Sciences, Chinese Academy of Sciences, Beijing 100049, China,

⁵ Department of Particle Physics and Astrophysics, Weizmann Institute of Science, Rehovot 76100, Israel,

⁶ Nevada Center for Astrophysics, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, NV 89154, USA,

⁷ Department of Physics and Astronomy, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, NV 89154, USA,

⁸ Department of Physics & Astronomy, University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA 52242, USA,

⁹ Zhejiang Lab, Hangzhou, Zhejiang 311121, China,

¹⁰ Purple Mountain Observatory, Chinese Academy of Sciences, Nanjing 210008, China,

¹¹ TAPIR, Walter Burke Institute for Theoretical Physics, Mail Code 350-17, Caltech, Pasadena, CA 91125, USA,

¹² Department of Astronomy, University of California at Berkeley, Berkeley, CA 94720, USA,

¹³ South-Western Institute For Astronomy Research, Yunnan University, Yunnan 650504, China,

¹⁴ Key laboratory of Particle Astrophysics, Institute of High Energy Physics, Chinese Academy of Sciences, Beijing

100049, China,

¹⁵ Xinjiang Astronomical Observatory, Chinese Academy of Sciences, Urumqi 830011, China,

¹⁶ University of Science and Technology of China, Anhui 230026, China,

¹⁷ Yunnan Observatories, Chinese Academy of Sciences, Kunming 650216, China,

¹⁸ Guizhou Normal University, Guiyang 550001, China,

¹⁹ CSIRO Space and Astronomy, Epping, NSW 1710, Australia,

²⁰ Max-Planck institut für Radioastronomie, Auf Dem Hügel, Bonn, 53121, Germany,

²¹ School of Astronomy and Space Science, Nanjing University, Nanjing 210093, China,

²² State Key Laboratory of Nuclear Physics and Technology, School of Physics, Peking University, Beijing 100871, China,

²³Shanghai Astronomical Observatory, Chinese Academy of Sciences, Shanaghai 200030, China,

²⁴Key Laboratory of Modern Astronomy and Astrophysics (Nanjing University), Ministry of Education, China,
 ²⁵ College of Physics, Hebei Normal University, Shijiazhuang 050024, China,

January 5, 2023

Abstract

Fast radio bursts (FRBs) are highly dispersed millisecond-duration radio bursts [1,2], of which the physical origin is still not fully understood. FRB 20201124A is one of the most actively repeating FRBs. In this paper, we present the collection of 1863 burst dynamic spectra of FRB 20201124A measured with the Five-hundred-meter Aperture Spherical radio Telescope (FAST). The current collection, taken from the observation during the FRB active phase from April to June 2021, is the largest burst sample detected in any FRB so far. The standard PSRFITs format is adopted, including dynamic spectra of the burst, and the time information of the dynamic spectra, in addition, mask files help readers to identify the pulse positions are also provided. The dataset is available in Science Data Bank, with the link https://www.doi.org/10.57760/sciencedb.j00113.00076.

Keywords: Fast radio burst, FAST

1. Introduction

Fast radio bursts (FRBs) are bright, millisecond duration pulses with dispersion measures (DM) mostly well in excess of Galactic values, since first discovered in 2007 [1], more than 800 FRBs have been detected so far and 27 of them can emit repeating bursts [3,4] (https://www.herta-experiment.org/frbstats/catalogue). Currently, 19 FRBs have been localized to host galaxies (https://frbhosts.org/). Although the physical mechanism of FRBs still remains unknown, FRB 200428 [5–8] produced by Galactic magnetar SGR J1935+2154 suggests that some of the FRBs can be emitted by magnetars [2,9]. Among all the FRBs, FRB 20201124A, which was discovered by CHIME [10], has been frequently studied recently. Its radio bursts show rich pulse structures [11,12]. Through dynamic spectra, researchers investigated the scintillation time-scale of FRB 20201124A [13]. Efforts had also been made to localize its host galaxy [14–17].

Dynamic spectra record the FRB intensity as a function of time and frequency. Dynamic spectra contain information of FRB intrinsic emission properties as well as density fluctuation of interstellar and inter-galactic medium. We noted that there is lack of a systematic collection of dynamic spectra for FRBs. In this paper, we present the dynamic spectra data of FRB 20201124A which covers 1863 pulses detected by our team.

^{*}E-mail: kjlee@pku.edu.cn

 $^{^{\}dagger}\mathrm{Email:}$ bing.zhang@unlv.edu

[‡]Email: zhuww@nao.cas.cn

2. Observation, data acquisition, and analysis

We used the Five-hundred-meter Aperture Spherical radio Telescope (FAST) [18] to monitor FRB 20201124A from April to June in 2021. The FAST 19-beam Pulsar back-end covers 1.0-1.5 GHz in frequency band and has a system temperature about 20 to 25 K [19]. The data were recorded using the digital back-end based on the Re-configurable Open Architecture Computing Hardware-2 (ROACH2) board [20] with temporal resolution of 49.152 μ s or 196.608 μ s and frequency resolutions of 122.07 kHz.

Our data processing contains two major steps, searching for single pulses and post processing to form the dynamic spectra. Firstly, we searched for the FRB candidates offline with software package TRANSIENTX. Frequency channels affected by radio frequency interference (RFI) were removed. The data were de-dispersed in the dispersion measure (DM) range of $380-440 \text{ cm}^{-3} \text{ pc}$ with a step of $0.1 \text{ cm}^{-3} \text{ pc}$ since FRB 20201124A is a known repeater. The pulse width is searched from 0.1 ms to 100 ms in the box-car-shaped matched filter. 3364 candidates with a S/N threshold larger than 7 were plotted and visually inspected.

In the post processing phase, we used the software package DMPHASE to further refine the DM. The DMPHASE use the Fourier-domain method, where DM is found by maximising the time derivative of normalized "intensity". To measure the intensity, the polarisation calibration is then performed with software package PSRCHIVE [21]. We adopted the single axis model in polarisation calibration, where the differential gain and phase between the two polarisation channels are calibrated with the injected noise signal. To reduce the dynamic spectra to a manageable size, we integrate over time and frequency to reduce the resolution. The frequency and time resolutions of the final dynamic spectra are ≈ 1.0 MHz and ≈ 0.2 ms, respectively. We store the data in the PSRFITS [21] format, which is widely used in the community of pulsar astronomy.

3. Data format and contents of the library

The PSRFITS format is based on the Flexible Image Transport System (FITS)(https://fits.gsfc.nasa.gov/) [22]. According to FITS standards, a PSRFITS file consists of a primary header-data unit (HDU) followed by a series of extension HDUs [21]. As for our data, the primary HDU contains basic information such as telescope name and its location, source location, observation time and etc. Four extension HDUs, which are in a binary table format, contain specific information related to the observation: processing history, pulsar ephemeris, tempo2 predictor and the pulsar data. Notice that there are several PSRFITS files contain more than one burst because the interval between their TOAs (time of arrivals) is quiet small.

We associate each pulse with a mask file. The mask file, formatted in plain ascii file, contains two rows of data. The first row consists two integer numbers corresponding to the boundary of pulse on-phase in the profile. The second row of mask file shows where the baseline lies in. Figure 1 shows the dynamic spectrum of pulse No.12 as an example.

4. Statistics of data properties

Our detection threshold was a signal-to-noise ratio S/N > 7, and 1103 bright bursts reached S/N > 30among a total of 1863 detected bursts. The left panel of Figure 2 shows the S/N distribution of all detected



Figure 1: Example of pulse profile (upper panel) and dynamic spectra (lower panel). Purple box and blue area in the pulse profile show the baseline and pulse on-phase definition. White strips in the dynamical spectra indicate the removed channels due to the RFI.



Figure 2: Left: The S/N distribution of 1863 pulses. Right: The distribution of RFI zapping for all data.

bursts. The right panel of Figure 2 shows the distribution of removed channel in frequency band. Usually, a few percent frequency channels had been removed due to the RFI.

The sample completeness was determined with the following method. We simulated 10,000 mock bursts with Gaussian profile and bandpass matching the detected distributions. We then randomly injected the mock bursts into the original FAST data when no FRB was detected. The mock burst injected data are then fed to our burst-searching pipeline to compute the detection rate. The procedure shows that the fluence threshold achieving the 95% detection probability with $S/N \ge 7$ is 53 mJy ms [11].

Parameters of each burst (including burst MJD, S/N, DM, etc) are available in the section **Data avail**ability of Ref [11].

5. Conclusion

In this work, we present a collection of dynamic spectra for 1863 FAST-detected radio bursts of FRB 20201124A during April to June in 2021. This is the largest burst sample detected in any FRB so far.

The signal of FRB 20201124A is highly polarised [11]. Our dynamic spectra is polarisation calibrated. Previous study shows that 0.5% polarisation fidelity can be achieved with the current calibration method [3].

The current data set is of high S/N, where 5%, 30% and 67% data had S/N \geq 560.63, 116.02, and 23.85, respectively. Simulation is used to determine the completeness of burst detection, where 95% completeness fluence threshold is 53 mJy ms.

For each burst, we provide one PSRFITs file and one mask file. We provide the total intensity data in PSRFITs format, and mask file in ascii format which labels the burst.

6. Data availability and related softwares

The data that support the findings of this study are openly available in Science Data Bank at https: //www.doi.org/10.57760/sciencedb.j00113.00076. The related software can be found the corresponding repositories.

TRANSIENTX: https://github.com/ypmen/TransientX
DMPHASE: https://www.github.com/DanieleMichilli/DM_phase
PSRCHIVE: http://psrchive.sourceforge.net

Acknowledgments

This work made use of data from the FAST. FAST is a Chinesenational megascience facility, built and operated by the NationalAstronomical Observatories, Chinese Academy of Sciences. We acknowledge the use of public data from the Fermi Science Support Center (FSSC). This work is supported by National SKA Program of China (2020SKA0120100, 2020SKA0120200), Natural Science Foundation of China (12041304, 11873067, 11988101, 12041303, 11725313, 11725314, 11833003, 12003028, 12041306, 12103089, U2031209, U2038105, U1831207), National Program on Key Research and Development Project (2019YFA0405100, 2017YFA0402602, 2018YFA0404204, 2016YFA0400801), Key Research Program of the CAS (QYZDJ-SSW-SLH021), Natural Science Foundation of Jiangsu Province (BK20211000), Cultivation Project for FAST Scientific Payoff and Research Achievement of CAMS-CAS, the Strategic Priority Research Program on Space Science, the Western Light Youth Project of Chinese Academy of Sciences, the Chinese Academy of Sciences (grants XDA15360000, XDA15052700, XDB23040400), funding from the Max-Planck Partner Group, the science research grants from the China Manned Space Project (CMS-CSST-2021-B11,NO. CMS-CSST-2021-A11), and PKU development grant 7101502590. KJL acknowledge support from the XPLORER PRIZE. BBZ is supported by Fundamental Research Funds for the Central Universities (14380046), and the Program for Innovative Talents, Entrepreneur in Jiangsu.

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