Estimation of the error on the calculation of the pressure-strain term: application in the terrestrial magnetosphere

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Abstract

Calculating the pressure-strain terms has recently been performed to quantify energy conversion between the bulk flow energy and the internal energy of plasmas. It has been applied to numerical simulations and satellite data from the Magnetospheric MultiScale Mission. The method requires spatial gradients of the velocity and the use of the full pressure tensor. Here we present a derivation of the errors associated with calculating the pressure-strain terms from multi-spacecraft measurements and apply it to previously studied examples of magnetic reconnection at the magnetopause and the magnetotail. The errors are small in a dense magnetosheath event but much larger in the more tenuous magnetotail. This is likely due to larger counting statistics in the dense plasma at the magnetopause than in the magnetotail. The propagated errors analyzed in this work are important to understand uncertainties of energy conversion measurements in space plasmas and have applications to current and future multi-spacecraft missions.

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Key Points:

21	•	We estimate the errors on the pressure strain terms calculated from the Magne-
22		tospheric MultiScale Mission
23	•	The errors are estimated using two methods, standard error propagation from the
24		velocity and temperature errors and a Monte Carlo method
25	•	Two applications are given using MMS data at the magnetopause and in the mag-
26		netotail of Earth

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27 Abstract

Calculating the pressure-strain terms has recently been performed to quantify energy con-28 version between the bulk flow energy and the internal energy of plasmas. It has been ap-29 plied to numerical simulations and satellite data from the Magnetospheric MultiScale 30 Mission. The method requires spatial gradients of the velocity and the use of the full pres-31 sure tensor. Here we present a derivation of the errors associated with calculating the 32 pressure-strain terms from multi-spacecraft measurements and apply it to previously stud-33 ied examples of magnetic reconnection at the magnetopause and the magnetotail. The 34 errors are small in a dense magnetosheath event but much larger in the more tenuous 35 magnetotail. This is likely due to larger counting statistics in the dense plasma at the 36 magnetopause than in the magnetotail. The propagated errors analyzed in this work are 37 important to understand uncertainties of energy conversion measurements in space plas-38 mas and have applications to current and future multi-spacecraft missions. 39

40 1 Introduction

Space plasma processes are often inherently three-dimensional, and single-point mea-41 surements cannot distinguish between spatial and temporal changes. Therefore, to bet-42 ter understand space plasma phenomena, multi-point missions such as Cluster (Escoubet 43 et al., 1997, 2001), the Time History of Events and Macroscale Interactions during Sub-44 storms (THEMIS) (Angelopoulos, 2008), Swarm (Friis-Christensen et al., 2008), the Mag-45 netospheric MultiScale Mission (MMS) (Burch et al., 2016), and HelioSwarm (Klein et 46 al., 2019) were conceived. Along with the missions, several multi-point methods were de-47 veloped (M. Dunlop et al., 1988; Paschmann, 1998; Paschmann & Daly, 2008). These 48 include multi spacecraft wave analysis methods (Pincon & Lefeuvre, 1991; Dudok de Wit 49 et al., 1995; Glassmeier et al., 2001; Constantinescu, 2007; Vogt, Narita, & Constanti-50 nescu, 2008; Narita et al., 2010; Motschmann et al., 1996; O. Roberts et al., 2014; O. W. Roberts 51 et al., 2017; Narita et al., 2011, 2021), multi-point structure functions (Chen et al., 2010; 52 O. W. Roberts et al., 2022; Pecora et al., 2023), multi-point correlation functions (Horbury, 53 2000; Matthaeus et al., 2005; K. T. Osman & Horbury, 2007; K. Osman & Horbury, 2009; 54 Bandyopadhyay, Matthaeus, Chasapis, et al., 2020), and magnetic field reconstruction 55 (Denton et al., 2020; Broeren et al., 2021; Denton et al., 2022). 56

Tetrahedral configurations used on Cluster and MMS allow the calculation of spa-57 tial gradients and curls in the plasma. The current density can be estimated by calcu-58 lating the curl of the magnetic field. This method is termed the curlometer method (M. Dun-59 lop et al., 1988; M. W. Dunlop et al., 2002; Perri et al., 2017; M. W. Dunlop et al., 2021). 60 The curlometer method has often been applied to Cluster magnetic field (M. W. Dun-61 lop et al., 2002; Perrone et al., 2016, 2017; M. W. Dunlop et al., 2021), and velocity data 62 (Kieokaew & Foullon, 2019) where some assumptions are required as ion data is not avail-63 able on all spacecraft. The curlometer method has also been applied to MMS magnetic 64 field data (Lavraud et al., 2016; Phan et al., 2016; Gershman et al., 2018; Wang et al., 65 2019). The MMS spacecraft provides multi-point magnetic field data and high-time res-66 olution plasma data, which allows comparison of the curlometer current to the current 67 measured from the plasma data (Lavraud et al., 2016; Phan et al., 2016; Gershman et 68 al., 2018). The multi-point high-time resolution of plasma data has also allowed calcu-69 lations of the vorticity using the full four spacecraft plasma data (Wang et al., 2019; Zhang 70 et al., 2020). 71

The plasma heating and energization mechanisms are crucial to understanding several processes, such as plasma turbulence and reconnection. Because of the spatiotemporal ambiguity, it is not always apparent whether temperature increases are due to changing environments, e.g., crossing into a hotter region rather than local heating. The pressurestrain methodology (Del Sarto et al., 2016; Yang, Matthaeus, Parashar, Haggerty, et al.,
2017; Yang, Matthaeus, Parashar, Wu, et al., 2017; Chasapis et al., 2018; Del Sarto &

Pegoraro, 2018; Wang et al., 2019; Pezzi et al., 2019; Bandyopadhyay, Matthaeus, Parashar, 78 et al., 2020; Matthaeus et al., 2020; Fadanelli et al., 2021; Matthaeus, 2021; Yang et al., 79 2022; Cassak & Barbhuiya, 2022) allows the quantification of energy conversion between 80 the internal energy of the plasma and the bulk flow. The calculation requires multi-spacecraft 81 velocity measurements so that the divergence and spatial gradients of the velocity field 82 can be calculated. The method also requires measurement of the full pressure tensor. The 83 plasma moments are derived from distribution functions comprising a finite number of 84 measured particles. This results in the moments being affected by Poisson noise. How-85 ever, an analysis of the errors associated with calculating the pressure-strain terms has 86 not been presented. 87

This brief report aims to derive the equations for the error propagation for the pressurestrain terms. In the following section, we will present the Pressure-Strain methodology. The derivation of the error terms follows, and example applications to reconnection events studied by Burch et al. (2020); Lu et al. (2020); Bandyopadhyay et al. (2021) are presented.

⁹³ 2 Pressure-Strain methodology

The system of equations governing energy conversion in plasmas is given below. These are obtained from manipulating the Maxwell-Vlasov equations (Birn & Hesse, 2005, 2010; Cerri et al., 2016; Yang, Matthaeus, Parashar, Wu, et al., 2017; Yang, Matthaeus, Parashar,

⁹⁷ Haggerty, et al., 2017; Chasapis et al., 2018; Bandyopadhyay et al., 2021; Fadanelli et

⁹⁸ al., 2021; Matthaeus, 2021).

$$\partial_t \mathcal{E}_s^f + \nabla \cdot \left(\mathcal{E}_s^f \mathbf{V}_s + \mathbf{P}_s \cdot \mathbf{V}_s \right) = (\mathbf{P}_s \cdot \nabla) \cdot \mathbf{V}_s + n_s q_s \mathbf{E} \cdot \mathbf{V}_s \tag{1}$$

$$\partial_t \mathcal{E}_s^{in} + \nabla \cdot \left(\mathcal{E}_s^{in} \mathbf{V}_s + \mathbf{h}_s \right) = - \left(\mathbf{P}_s \cdot \nabla \right) \cdot \mathbf{V}_s \tag{2}$$

$$\partial_t \mathcal{E}^m + \frac{c}{4\pi} \nabla \cdot (\mathbf{E} \times \mathbf{B}) = -\mathbf{J} \cdot \mathbf{E}$$
(3)

⁹⁹ Where, \mathcal{E}_s^f is the fluid flow energy of particle species s, \mathcal{E}^m is the electromagnetic ¹⁰⁰ energy and \mathcal{E}_s^{in} is the internal (or random energy). \mathbf{P}_s is the pressure tensor, \mathbf{h}_s is the ¹⁰¹ heat flux vector, \mathbf{V}_s is the velocity, n_s is the number density, and \mathbf{q} is the charge. Fi-¹⁰² nally, \mathbf{E} and \mathbf{B} denote the electric and magnetic fields, and $\mathbf{J} = \sum \mathbf{J}_s$ is the total cur-¹⁰³ rent density.

The divergence terms (on the left-hand side of Eqs. 1-3) are transport terms and move energy from one location to another. We see that the conversion of energy (righthand side of Eqs. 1-3) can occur through different channels. The $\mathbf{J} \cdot \mathbf{E}$ term converts electromagnetic energy into kinetic energy, and the pressure-strain term converts energy between the internal energy and the bulk flow (Birn & Hesse, 2010; Del Sarto et al., 2016; Yang, Matthaeus, Parashar, Haggerty, et al., 2017; Yang, Matthaeus, Parashar, Wu, et al., 2017; Del Sarto & Pegoraro, 2018; Fadanelli et al., 2021; Matthaeus, 2021).

Energy conversion into the plasma's internal energy can only be quantified from 111 the pressure-strain term. The pressure-strain term $(\mathbf{P}_s \cdot \nabla) \cdot \mathbf{V}_s$ therefore quantifies con-112 versions between internal and flow energies. Calculating this quantity (due to the need 113 for spatial gradients) requires velocity measurements at multiple points and the pressure 114 tensor. With its four spacecraft and exceptional plasma measurements, the MMS mis-115 sion is ideal for applying this methodology. The pressure-strain term can be further ex-116 pressed as follows (Del Sarto et al., 2016; Yang, Matthaeus, Parashar, Haggerty, et al., 117 2017; Del Sarto & Pegoraro, 2018; Chasapis et al., 2018; Bandyopadhyay et al., 2021) 118

$$-\left(\mathbf{P}_{s}\cdot\nabla\right)\cdot\mathbf{V}_{s}=-p\delta_{ij}\partial_{j}u_{i}-\left(P_{ij}-p\delta_{ij}\right)\partial_{j}u_{i}=-p\theta-\Pi_{i,j}:D_{i,j}$$
(4)

where $p = \frac{1}{3}P_{i,i}$, $\theta = \nabla \cdot \mathbf{V}_s$ and $\Pi_{i,j} = P_{i,j} - p\delta_{i,j}$ is the traceless pressure tensor and $D_{ij} = \frac{1}{2}(\partial_i u_j + \partial_j u_i) - \frac{1}{3}\theta\delta_{ij}$. The delta here is the Kroenecker delta. If a plasma is incompressible, $\theta = 0$ thus, $p\theta$ denotes compressible, and ΠD denotes incompressible channels for energy conversion. By measuring these quantities with MMS, we can identify regions where energy conversion occurs. However, at the MMS separations, the differences in velocity may be very small between the spacecraft. Therefore, estimating the propagation of the uncertainty in calculating velocity gradients and the error associated with the pressure tensor is prudent.

¹²⁷ **3 Error calculation**

Here we present a brief discussion of the errors in calculating the pressure-strain 128 terms. The primary uncertainty sources come from the plasma moments and the space-129 craft's positions. The spacecraft positions are known to a value < 100m, and timing ac-130 curacy across the spacecraft is < 1 ms (Toolev et al., 2016). The uncertainty from the 131 positional and timing accuracy is negligible compared to other sources of error. The cal-132 culation of gradients will be affected if the MMS tetrahedron is irregular. Testing of the 133 curlometer method for different constellation planarities P and elongations E (Robert, 134 Roux, et al., 1998) demonstrated that when $\sqrt{P^2 + E^2} < 0.6$ the error on the current 135 estimation was < 3% and $\sqrt{P^2 + E^2} \sim 0.9$ the error was of the order of 10% (Robert, 136 Dunlop, et al., 1998). However, suppose the tetrahedron is regular, and the positions are 137 138 well known. In that case, the uncertainty due to the spacecraft positions is expected to be small compared to the errors on the plasma moments. 130

The other source of error comes from the plasma moments themselves. Plasma in-140 struments count individual particles; consequently, there will be random errors due to 141 Poisson noise (i.e., related to the counting statistics). The statistical errors on the mo-142 ments from MMS are available in the Fast Plasma Investigation (FPI) (Pollock et al., 143 2016) level-2 moments. Note level-2 means the science quality, ground processed moments, 144 where corrections because of the spacecraft potential have been applied. Details of the 145 calculation of the statistical errors are available in Gershman et al. (2015). They are based 146 on error propagation and consider the counts in the instrument (instrument true response). 147 and the phase space density (calibrated instrument response). 148

The divergence uncertainty was investigated by Vogt and Paschmann (1998). The calculation of a divergence from four point measurements is given by;

$$\nabla \cdot \boldsymbol{V} \simeq \sum_{\alpha} \boldsymbol{k}_{\alpha} \cdot \boldsymbol{V}_{\alpha} \tag{5}$$

151

where
$$\alpha$$
 denotes the spacecraft \boldsymbol{k} is the reciprocal vector defined as;

$$\boldsymbol{k}_{\alpha} = \frac{\boldsymbol{r}_{\beta\gamma} \times \boldsymbol{r}_{\beta\lambda}}{\boldsymbol{r}_{\beta\alpha} \cdot (\boldsymbol{r}_{\beta\gamma} \times \boldsymbol{r}_{\beta\lambda})} \tag{6}$$

where $\mathbf{r}_{\alpha,\beta} = \mathbf{r}_{\beta} - \mathbf{r}_{\alpha}$ are the relative position vectors of the four spacecraft, where $(\alpha, \beta, \gamma, \lambda)$ must be a cyclic permutation of (1, 2, 3, 4) (Chanteur, 1998; Vogt, Paschmann, & Chanteur, 2008).

Suppose the tetrahedron is close to a regular and the spacecraft positions are well
 known. In that case, we can neglect the error on the reciprocal vectors and only consider
 the error on the plasma measurements. The error on the divergence of velocity derived
 in Vogt and Paschmann (1998) is then given by:

$$\sigma[\nabla \cdot \mathbf{V}] \simeq \sqrt{\sum_{\alpha} \left(\mathbf{k}_{\alpha}^{2} \cdot \sigma \left[\mathbf{V}_{\alpha} \right]^{2} \right)}.$$
(7)

¹⁵⁹ Here σ denotes the error of the quantity in the square brackets. Therefore the er-¹⁶⁰ ror on the compressive part of the pressure-strain term comes from a combination of the ¹⁶¹ error from Eq. 7 and the error on the pressure tensor $\mathbf{P}_{\text{Error}}$. We use the equations for ¹⁶² uncertainty propagation to estimate the combined error. We averaged the pressure ten-¹⁶³ sors from the four spacecraft

$$\mathbf{P}_{\rm av} = \frac{1}{4} \sum_{\alpha} \mathbf{P}_{\alpha},\tag{8}$$

the associated errors on the pressure tensor are propagated following;

$$\mathbf{P}_{\rm av,Error} = \frac{1}{4} \sqrt{\mathbf{P}_{1,\rm err}^2 + \mathbf{P}_{2,\rm err}^2 + \mathbf{P}_{3,\rm err}^2 + \mathbf{P}_{4,\rm err}^2},\tag{9}$$

the total pressure is given by:

$$p = \frac{1}{3} \sum_{i} \mathbf{P}_{\mathrm{av},ii},\tag{10}$$

and the corresponding error is:

$$\sigma[p] = \frac{1}{3}\sqrt{P_{\text{av,Error,11}}^2 + P_{\text{av,Error,22}}^2 + P_{\text{av,Error,33}}^2}.$$
 (11)

167 The final error on the $p\theta$ term is given by:

$$\sigma[p\theta] = |p\theta| \sqrt{\left(\frac{\sigma[\nabla \cdot \mathbf{V}]}{\nabla \cdot \mathbf{V}}\right)^2 + \left(\frac{\sigma[p]}{p}\right)^2}.$$
(12)

For the calculation of a directional derivative (in the direction x_i), the errors are given by:

$$\sigma \left[\frac{\partial V_j}{\partial x_i}\right] = \sqrt{\sum_{\alpha} \left(k_{\alpha i}^2 \sigma \left[V_{\alpha,j}\right]^2\right)}.$$
(13)

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The errors on the D term then become;

$$D_{ij,\text{Error}} = \frac{1}{2} \sqrt{\left(\sigma \left[\frac{\partial V_j}{\partial x_i}\right]^2 + \sigma \left[\frac{\partial V_i}{\partial x_j}\right]^2\right)}.$$
(14)

Note that D_{ij} is defined as ;

$$D_{ij} = \frac{1}{2} \left(\partial_i V_j + \partial_j V_i \right) - \frac{1}{3} \theta \delta_{ij} \tag{15}$$

therefore there would be some additional error due to the divergence term $\frac{1}{3}\theta\delta_{ij}$

¹⁷² for the diagonals. However, this contribution can be ignored as this matrix combines the

traceless pressure tensor $\Pi_{i,j}$ (where the diagonal elements are zero) through the tensor double contraction.

175 Combining the errors from the traceless pressure tensor and D we obtain a com-176 bined error tensor.

$$\sigma\left[D_{i,j}\Pi_{i,j}\right] = |D_{ij}\Pi_{ij}| \sqrt{\left(\frac{D_{i,j,Error}}{D_{i,j}}\right)^2 + \left(\frac{\Pi_{Error,i,j}}{\Pi_{i,j}}\right)^2} \tag{16}$$

Only three unique error terms exist in Eq 16 because the D and the Π tensors (and their errors) are symmetric i.e. $\sigma [D_{0,1}\Pi_{0,1}] = \sigma [D_{1,0}\Pi_{1,0}]$. This effectively means we must consider the error on a diagonal term, double it, and propagate it (as the error on an element appears twice in the double contraction). Thus, the final error on the ΠD term is then given by:

$$\sigma[\Pi D] = 2\sqrt{\sigma \left[D_{0,1}\Pi_{0,1}\right]^2 + \sigma \left[D_{0,2}\Pi_{0,2}\right]^2 + \sigma \left[D_{1,2}\Pi_{1,2}\right]^2}$$
(17)

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For completeness, the total pressure-strain term error is given in 18.

$$\sigma_{(\mathbf{P}_s \cdot \nabla) \cdot \mathbf{V}_s} = \sqrt{\sigma[p\theta]^2 + \sigma[\Pi D]^2} \tag{18}$$

¹⁸³ 4 Application to the Terrestrial magnetosphere

Two examples of the application of the method and the error calculation are now 184 presented. The data are from MMS when the spacecraft were in the burst telemetry mode; 185 magnetic field data are from the fluxgate magnetometers (Russell et al., 2016) with a 186 sampling rate of 128 Hz. The plasma data are from the FPI instrument (Pollock et al., 187 2016), where the sampling rates are 6.6 Hz for ions and 30.3 Hz for electrons. Figure 1 188 show an example of magnetic reconnection studied by Burch et al. (2020) and later us-189 ing the pressure-strain methodology by Bandyopadhyay et al. (2021). MMS was at the 190 magnetopause in this case, and the mean electron number density was moderate 7.19 cm^{-3} . 191 The spacecraft constellation $\sqrt{P^2 + E^2} = 0.62$ was not perfectly regular but was enough 192 that the error on the reciprocal vectors is expected to be small (less than 3% Robert, 193 Dunlop, et al. (1998)). To calculate the pressure-strain terms, we remove the spin effects 194 using the spin tone product in the FPI L2 data files before calculating the gradients. We 195 see that the errors are small, and the application of the method is justified. 196

Figure 2 presents a second magnetic reconnection case. This case studied previously by Lu et al. (2020) occurs in the magnetotail. Magnetotail plasma is typically much more tenuous compared to magnetosheath/magnetopause plasma. In this case, the mean electron number density is 0.58 cm⁻³; therefore, we expect the errors to be larger due to poor counting statistics. For this case the spacecraft constellation $\sqrt{P^2 + E^2} = 0.35$. The absolute errors for both cases are given in Tab 1. As expected, the absolute errors in the magnetotail are significantly larger than at the magnetopause.

We perform a statistical Monte Carlo test on the data to provide an additional es-204 timate of the error. We take the individual velocity and pressure tensor series and their 205 respective errors and compute 100 new time series. This is performed by adding a ran-206 dom (Gaussian distributed) error with a mean of zero and a standard deviation equal 207 to the statistical error to the measured velocity and pressure tensor components. We per-208 form this procedure one hundred times and calculate the pressure strain terms with each 209 of our realizations of the time series. We calculate the standard deviation from the 100 210 realizations for each point, yielding another error estimate. This analysis is presented 211 in Figs 3,4. The standard deviation of the one hundred time series agrees well with those 212



Figure 1. MMS measurements taken during the magnetopause magnetic reconnection event of Burch et al. (2020).(a) Magnetic field measurements from the fluxgate magnetometer in the Geocentric Solar Ecliptic coordinate system. (b) the compressive electron component of the pressure-strain term (c) the incompressible electron component of the pressure-strain term (d) the ion compressive component of the pressure-strain term, and (e) the ion incompressive component. In panels (b-e) blue denotes the measurement, and grey denotes three times the estimated error.



Figure 2. The same as Fig 1 but for the magnetotail event of (Lu et al., 2020).



Figure 3. The different electron and ion pressure strain terms for the magnetopause event. Blue denotes the pressure strain terms, and cyan denotes the analytical error. The pink lines denote 100 time series where a random error is introduced (see text), the maroon denotes the mean of these time series (almost identical to the blue curve). The red lines denote the standard deviation of these 100 time series giving an additional estimation of the error, which agrees well with the cyan curves.

estimated through the equations given in the previous section, giving further confidence in the error estimation and the technique itself.

To better understand the limitations of the method in different regions that MMS 215 surveys, we plot the electron number density (Figure 5a) and the relative errors on the 216 ion (Figure 5b) and electron bulk speeds (Figure 5c) as a function of the spacecraft po-217 sition in the xy GSE plane in the year 2018. Here we see that the errors are significantly 218 larger in the magnetotail where the density is lower. The relative errors on the electron 219 bulk velocities are also larger than those of the ions; this is possibly due to the effects 220 of photoelectrons (Lavraud & Larson, 2016; Gershman et al., 2017), which are removed 221 using a model from the L2 data, which may cause larger uncertainties, especially when 222 counts are already low. Therefore we would urge caution when using the method in low-223 density regions. 224



Figure 4. Same as Figure 3 but for the magnetotail case.

Table 1. Table of the absolute errors for both cases studied. Note that the $p\theta$ and ΠD fluctuate quantities around zero, so we do not state the relative error as this may be undefined when the measured quantity is zero.

	Electrons		Ions	
	$\sigma[p\theta] \ (nW/m^3)$	$\sigma[\Pi D] (\mathrm{nW/m^3})$	$\sigma[p\theta] \ (nW/m^3)$	$\sigma[\Pi D] (\mathrm{nW/m^3})$
Magnetopause ($n = 7.19 \text{ cm}^{-3}$)				
Analytical	0.087	0.004	0.089	0.017
Resampling method	0.087	0.004	0.089	0.017
Magnetotail $(n = 0.58 \text{ cm}^{-3})$				
Analytical	0.425	0.016	0.632	0.030
Resampling method	0.426	0.017	0.628	0.033



Figure 5. MMS fast survey mode data from 2018 as a function of the spacecraft position in the xy GSE plane. (a) shows the electron density measured by FPI. (b) and (c) show the relative error in the bulk velocity for ions and electrons, respectively.

225 5 Summary

To summarize, we have investigated the uncertainties in the pressure strain terms through error propagation and a statistical test. Both approaches yield almost identical results. Relations have been given to estimate the error. The error here is assumed mostly due to Poisson noise in the plasma moments. We did not investigate the uncertainty due to the spacecraft positions (which are expected to be small) or the uncertainty due to an inhomogeneous tetrahedron (which can be mitigated with appropriate event selection). Furthermore, there could be other errors, which we will briefly discuss.

Because of instrument design, there can be an offset in a velocity component be-233 tween spacecraft; for MMS, this most likely affects the V_z component. This systematic 234 error could cause an additional error in the gradient measurements. Another possible 235 source of error is related to the spacecraft separations; by calculating a gradient using 236 multiple spacecraft, we are looking at a spatial gradient accurate to a certain scale. Dif-237 ferent plasma species have different length scales, so spacecraft separations may be in-238 adequate for measuring the pressure strain interaction for a certain species. Numerical 239 simulations by Matthaeus et al. (2020) and Yang et al. (2022) show scale dependence 240 in the average value of the pressure strain term. At inertial scales, the average of the pres-241 sure strain term is small but increases at length scales below the ion inertial length. Thus 242 the relative error at different scales may differ even if the statistical errors on the mo-243 ments are equal. With MMS, we are limited to electron scale separations where the pres-244 sure strain terms are expected to be large. However, comparisons with numerical sim-245 ulations, or spacecraft data with multiple separations (relative to the ion/electron char-246 acteristic scales) would be useful to understand how the spacecraft separations may af-247 fect the result (Bandyopadhyay, Matthaeus, Parashar, et al., 2020). This would be es-248 pecially useful in preparation for HelioSwarm as the nine spacecraft allow multi-scale es-249 timations of the pressure strain terms. Other potential sources of error may come from 250 the calibration, penetrating radiation, spin tones, and effects due to spacecraft charg-251 ing. 252

Two examples in different plasma conditions were presented; the propagated er-253 rors at the magnetopause were smaller than the tail, as expected, due to lower count-254 ing statistics in the tail. While the errors are generally small, caution should be exer-255 cised in low plasma regions, where counting statistics are poor. However, we expect cal-256 culating the pressure strain terms in the magnetosheath (high density) to have an ex-257 cellent signal-to-noise ratio. It should, however, be noted that FPI is not designed for 258 the solar wind and is subject to substantial variations at the spacecraft spin frequency 259 (Bandyopadhyay et al., 2018; O. W. Roberts et al., 2021; Wilson III et al., 2022); this 260 method should not be used with MMS in the solar wind. 261

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Figure 1.



Figure 2.



Figure 3.



Figure 4.



Figure 5.





