The Wave-Like Properties of Particles

Michael Brodskiy
Professor: Q. Yan

February 27, 2023

Contents

1 De Broglie's Hypothesis

- After Einstein's theory, it was determined that light has dual particle-wave nature
- In 1924, Louis de Broglie proposes a hypothesis:
  - Any object moving with a momentum p is associated with a wave of wavelength λ, where:

$$\boxed{\lambda = \frac{h}{p}}$$

  - λ refers to the "De Broglie" wavelength, h is the Planck constant, and p is the momentum
  - For experimental measurement of the wave–like behavior of particles, the double and single-slit experiments were performed

2 Experimental Evidence for De Broglie Waves

- Particle Diffraction Experiment
  - For light of wavelength λ incident on a slit of width a, the diffraction pattern has a minimum at angles:

$$\boxed{a\sin(\theta) = n\lambda, \qquad n = 1, 2, 3, \cdots}$$

  - Each of the atoms acts as a scatter
  - The scattered electron waves interfere
  - The crystal serves as a diffraction grating
  - The maxima occurs at angle:

$$\boxed{d\sin(\phi) = n\lambda}$$

  - Where λ is the de Broglie wavelength

2.1 Double-Slit Experiment

- Question: Through which slit does the particle pass?
- Result: No diffraction pattern on the screen
- if we check which slit the particle passes through:
  - Particle behavior is measured

- We can not observe its wave nature simultaneously! (Principle of complementarity)

- Conclusion:
  - The electron will behave as a wave or a particle

3 Heisenberg Uncertainty Relationships

- Applying the uncertainty relationship to de Broglie waves:

$$p = \frac{h}{\lambda} \Rightarrow dp = -\frac{h}{\lambda^2}\, d\lambda \Rightarrow \Delta p = \frac{h}{\lambda^2}\Delta\lambda$$

- Finally, this yields:

$$\Delta x \Delta p \approx \varepsilon h$$

- From quantum mechanics:

$$\Delta x \Delta p \geq \frac{h}{4\pi}$$

$$\varepsilon = \frac{1}{4\pi}$$

$$\Delta x \Delta p \geq \frac{1}{2}\hbar$$

- Where $\hbar = \dfrac{h}{2\pi}$
- When a coin is flipped, or a dice is rolled:
  - No way to predict a single flip/roll
  - But, we can predict the distribution of the results from a large # of flips or rolls
  - Quantum Theory allows for the same behavior

- Wave Function
  - What is the amplitude of the de Broglie wave?
  - Checking classical waves:
    * Waves in the ocean: Height of water level
    * Sound wave: Volume density of molecules

* Light waves: $\overrightarrow{E}, \overrightarrow{B}$ field
* de Broglie waves: The probability of finding a particle at a given (x, t)
  · This is known as ψ, the wave function
  · In n-dimensional space, it becomes $\psi(x_1, x_2, \cdots, x_n, t)$
  · In classical physics, the intensity (I) of any wave is proportional to $|A|$
  · For quantum mechanics, we have the probability of final particle $P \propto |\psi|^2$
* The requirement for wave function ψ is that $|\psi|^2 \geq 0$
* Any physical measurement is related to $P \propto |\psi|^2$
* ψ are generally complex #'s
* Properties of Complex Numbers
  · $\psi = Re(\psi) + iIm(\psi)$
  · The complex conjugate is: $\psi^* = Re(\psi) - iIm(\psi)$

- In the complex plane:
  - The phase factor is $\boxed{z = |z|e^{i\theta}}$
  - The wave function of a free particle is $Ae^{i(kx-\omega t)}$ or $A[\cos(kx - \omega t) + i]sin(kx - \omega t)]$