

# Observing the Normal Zeeman Effect and Estimating e/m for Orbital Electrons

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## 1 Introduction

The Zeeman effect was first observed in 1896 by the Dutch physicist Pieter Zeeman. Although at first there was no clear explanation for the results, the experiment was a cornerstone in proving the existence of electron Spin and magnetic moments.

The Zeeman effect is the splitting of spectral lines in the presence of a magnetic field. The effect is caused by the interaction of the magnetic field with the magnetic moment of the electron.

It is important to point out that the Zeeman effect does not occur in all cases. For example, a simple case where it does not occur is in the ground state of the Helium atom, where the electrons are paired and the total magnetic moment is zero, as both atoms occupy the 1s orbital, and have opposite spin (remember also that the s orbitals do not have any orbital angular momentum, because the only possible l quantum number is l=0).

In this experiment, we will be using a Hg-Cd lamp to observe the Zeeman effect. The electron for Mercury (Hg) is given by:  $[Xe]4f^{14}5d^{10}6s^2$ , and the configuration for Cadmium (Cd) is given by:  $[Kr]4d^{10}5s^2$ .

All of the orbitals of these are filled, the spin magnetic moments inside the orbitals will cancel out, and we can safely ignore the effect of spin in spectral line separation. The report will then be scoped to the **Normal Zeeman Effect**.

In order to set the foundation for the experiment, we will have to go back to electromagnetism. We can consider the electron as a point charge, with a charge of  $-e$ , and a mass of  $m_e$  travelling around the charged nucleus.

A torque given by  $\tau = \vec{\mu} \times \vec{B}$  will be applied to the electron, where  $\vec{\mu}$  is the magnetic moment of the electron, and is given by  $\vec{\mu} = \gamma \vec{L}$ , where  $\gamma = -\frac{e}{2m_e}$  is the gyromagnetic ratio, and  $\vec{L}$  is the orbital angular momentum of the electron.

Given this information, we can now calculate the energy shift of the electron in the presence of a magnetic field.

$$\Delta E = -\vec{\mu} \cdot \vec{B} = -\gamma \vec{L} \cdot \vec{B} = -\gamma L_z B \quad (1)$$

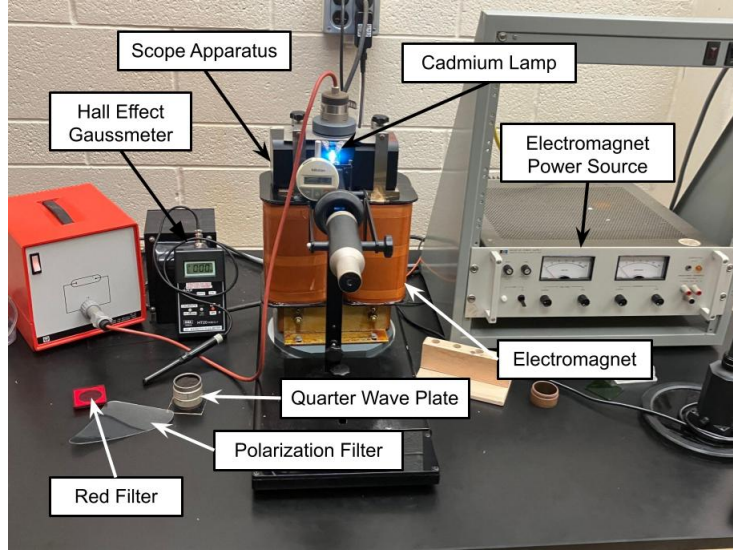


Figure 1: Diagram of Experimental Setup

Where  $L_z$  is the z component of the orbital angular momentum (assuming the field  $B$  is applied in the z direction). We also know that  $L_z = m_l \hbar$ , where  $m_l$  is the magnetic quantum number, and  $\hbar$  is the reduced Planck constant. We can rewrite the above expression as:

$$\Delta y = -\gamma m_l \hbar B \quad (2)$$

According to this, and keeping in mind that  $m_l$  can take integer values from  $-l$  to  $l$ , we can see that the energy levels of the electron are spaced by  $\Delta E = \gamma \hbar B$ . This is the energy difference between the Zeeman levels.

## 2 Method

The experiment is divided into three sections:

### 2.1 Part 1: Magnetic field strength and current

In the first part of the experiment, we measure the magnetic field strength as a function of the current supplied to the electromagnet. We do this by measuring the magnetic field strength at the center of the electromagnet using a Hall probe and the current as the current from the power source. We measure the magnetic field strength at 10 different current values, and then fit the data to a linear model to determine the relationship between the current and the magnetic field strength.

|                     |                |                |                |                |                |
|---------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| <b>Trial:</b>       | <u>Trial 1</u> | <u>Trial 2</u> | <u>Trial 3</u> | <u>Trial 4</u> | <u>Trial 4</u> |
| <b>Field Value:</b> | $595 \pm 0.5$  | $604 \pm 0.5$  | $600 \pm 0.5$  | $588 \pm 0.5$  | $601 \pm 0.5$  |

Table 1: Magnetic Field Intensity in mT

|              |                      |                            |                            |
|--------------|----------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
|              | Without Field        | With Field                 |                            |
| <u>Trial</u> | <u>Line Position</u> | <u>Upper edge position</u> | <u>Lower edge position</u> |
| <u>1</u>     | $3.61 \pm 0.05$      | $3.67 \pm 0.05$            | $3.60 \pm 0.05$            |
| <u>2</u>     | $3.44 \pm 0.05$      | $3.55 \pm 0.05$            | $3.46 \pm 0.05$            |
| <u>3</u>     | $3.29 \pm 0.05$      | $3.40 \pm 0.05$            | $3.34 \pm 0.05$            |
| <u>4</u>     | $3.15 \pm 0.05$      | $3.27 \pm 0.05$            | $3.18 \pm 0.05$            |
| <u>5</u>     | $3.03 \pm 0.05$      | $3.14 \pm 0.05$            | $3.06 \pm 0.05$            |
| <u>6</u>     | $2.90 \pm 0.05$      | $3.00 \pm 0.05$            | $2.94 \pm 0.05$            |

Table 2: Raw Data for Part 1

## 2.2 Part 2: Observing the Zeeman split perpendicularly to the magnetic field with different field values

In the first part of the experiment we measure how the Zeeman split changes with different magnetic field values. We do this by measuring the width of the spectral lines of the mercury lamp with and without a magnetic field. We then calculate the Zeeman shift for each trial.

First, without the field turned on, we measure the position given by the dial gauge for a number of lines. Then, we turn on the magnetic field and measure the upper and lower bounds of each line. Because the lines do not appear to perfectly separate, and only a widening of the lines can be observed, we measure the top most and bottom most points of the line, and calculate the width of the line as the difference between the two.

The expected result is that the shift will be proportional to the field.

## 3 Results

After adjusting the magnet poles, several measurements of the magnetic field intensity were taken using the Gauss meter. The results are shown in the table below.

These measurements result in an average value of:  $B = 598 \pm 0.22$  mT.

The field current and pole positions were not changed throughout the experiment, so we assume the magnetic field intensity to be constant.

### 3.1 Part 1: Observing the Zeeman split perpendicularly to the magnetic field

Now, for each trial we calculate the Zeeman shift, and the average value of the shift.

| <u>Trial</u> | $\Delta$ width  | Zeeman Shift     |
|--------------|-----------------|------------------|
| <u>1</u>     | $0.07 \pm 0.05$ | $0.035 \pm 0.05$ |
| <u>2</u>     | $0.09 \pm 0.05$ | $0.045 \pm 0.05$ |
| <u>3</u>     | $0.06 \pm 0.05$ | $0.03 \pm 0.05$  |
| <u>4</u>     | $0.09 \pm 0.05$ | $0.045 \pm 0.05$ |
| <u>5</u>     | $0.08 \pm 0.05$ | $0.04 \pm 0.05$  |
| <u>6</u>     | $0.06 \pm 0.05$ | $0.03 \pm 0.05$  |

Table 3: Zeeman shift

## 4 Conclusion

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