

Quantum Optics, Homework 2

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Details in the HBT experiment

Solution

Conditional generation of single photon pulses Many research and applications in quantum optics needs single photon pulses, that is, a wave packet of light that contains exactly one single photon. Such a single photon pulse can be generated in two ways: The deterministic approach via single atom emission, and the so-called heralded approach. This problem discusses a simplified version of the later. Consider a bi-photon generation process described by the Hamiltonian

$$H = \beta a_k^\dagger b_{k'}^\dagger + \text{h.c.} \quad (1)$$

Here $a_k^\dagger, b_{k'}^\dagger$ are creation operators of photons into the k, k' propagation modes respectively. Such process can be realized for example in a frequency down conversion experiment, where a single photon is “split” into two in a nonlinear optical crystal, or a 4-wave mixing experiment where two incoming photons are converted into two output photons in an atomic gas. (a) Consider initially light is in vacuum state $|\psi(0)\rangle = |V\rangle$. Consider that the bi-photon generation process is switched on for time τ and then off, with $\xi = \beta\tau \ll 1$. Integrate the Schrodinger equation to obtain $|\psi(\tau)\rangle$, that is, the photon state after the interaction. (b) Consider a photon detector positioned L meters away from the bi-photon generation device along the k' propagation pathway. The time interval that the detector can detect a $b_{k'}$ photon is $[L/c, L/c + \tau]$ (we ignore any change of light speed within the experiment). For an ideal photon detector, what is the probability of detecting 1 photon, and detecting 2 photons during this time interval? If one photon is detected along k' , what is the photon state in the k path? The strategy is the so called heralded single photon generation: a nearly perfect single photon pulse in the k mode is heralded by the detection of a single photon in the k' -mode.

Solution

(a) In the interaction picture, the time evolution of the state is given by

$$i \frac{d}{dt} |\psi(t)\rangle = H |\psi(t)\rangle = h(t) (\beta a_k^\dagger b_{k'}^\dagger + \text{h.c.}) |\psi(t)\rangle,$$

where $h(t)$ is one when $t \in [0, \tau]$ and zero otherwise. Formally we have

$$|\psi(t)\rangle = \mathcal{T} \exp\left(-i \int_0^t dt' h(t') (\beta a_k^\dagger b_{k'}^\dagger + \text{h.c.})\right) |\psi(0)\rangle.$$

Since $\xi \ll 1$, the operators approximately do not have time evolution, and thus we have

$$\begin{aligned} |\psi(\tau)\rangle &= \exp\left(-i\tau(\beta a_k^\dagger b_{k'}^\dagger + \text{h.c.})\right) |\psi(0)\rangle \\ &= e^{-i\xi(a_k^\dagger b_{k'}^\dagger + a_k b_{k'})} |0\rangle. \end{aligned} \quad (2)$$

(b) Since the time interval is very short, we can view the measurement as simply measuring the state (2) as the pulse comes across the detector. Expanding (2) we have

$$\begin{aligned} |\psi(\tau)\rangle &= |0\rangle - i\xi(a_k^\dagger b_{k'}^\dagger + \text{h.c.}) |0\rangle + \frac{1}{2}(-i\xi)^2(a_k^\dagger b_{k'}^\dagger + \text{h.c.})^2 |0\rangle + \dots \\ &= \left(1 - \frac{\xi^2}{2} + \dots\right) |0\rangle - (i\xi + \dots) |n_k = 1, n_{k'} = 1\rangle - \left(\frac{1}{2}\xi^2 + \dots\right) |n_k = 2, n_{k'} = 2\rangle + \dots \end{aligned}$$

Taking only the leading order terms, we have

$$P(n_k = 1) = \xi^2, \quad P(n_k = 2) = \frac{\xi^4}{4}. \quad (3)$$

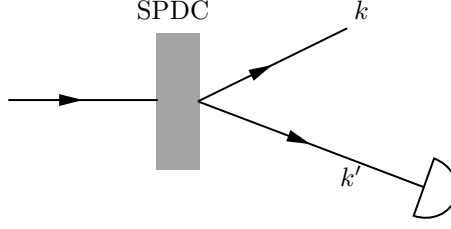


Figure 1: Light circuit in the heralded approach

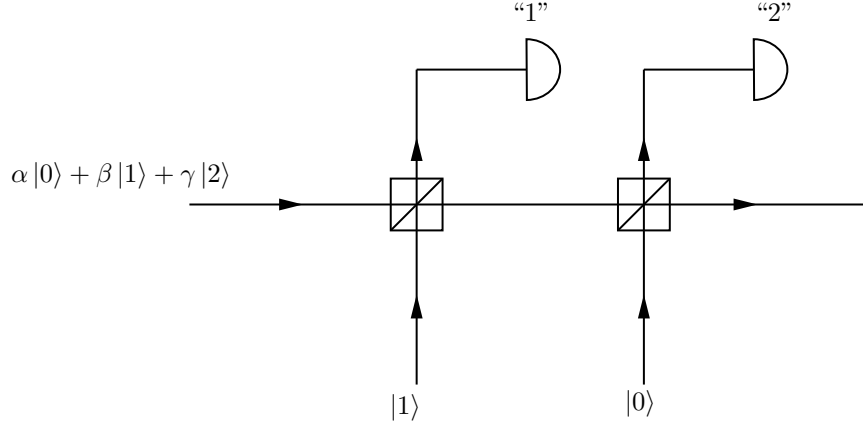


Figure 2: The NLS circuit

It can be seen that in $|\psi(\tau)\rangle$ we always have $n_k = n_{k'}$, and therefore if one photon is detected along k' , the photon state in the k path is $|n_k = 1\rangle$. Therefore if we placed a baffle in path k , which is removed when $n_{k'}$ is detected to be 1, whenever a pulse is generated, it is a single-photon one.

Details in the NLS process Analyze the NLS process in detail. The circuit is shown in Figure 2, and the two beam splitters are represented as

$$S_1 = \begin{pmatrix} \cos \theta & \sin \theta \\ -\sin \theta & \cos \theta \end{pmatrix}, \quad S_2 = \begin{pmatrix} \cos \sigma & \sin \sigma \\ -\sin \sigma & \cos \sigma \end{pmatrix} \quad (4)$$

(a) Derive the output quantum state before the measurement. (b) Find the conditional quantum state with the measurement results shown in Figure 2. (c) Find when the NLS process works in terms of θ and σ , and the probability of a successful NLS.

Solution

(a)

