

On-Shell Methods for Tree-Level Amplitudes in (De)Constructed Gauge Theory

Author:
Su Yingze

Affiliation:
Department of Physics, Faculty of Science
Nagoya University

Major:
Theoretical Physics

Degree:
Master of Science

Submitted on:
June 2025

Abstract

This paper mainly show the computation for scattering amplitudes in a kind of (De)Constructed gauge theory, by using the so called on shell method. As we have known, under the conventional quantum field theory frame, Feynman proposed a brilliant method – Feynman diagrams, to help us perturbatively compute scattering amplitude by a diagrammatic method. However, this method faces many challenges during the improvements of physical theory and complexity of construction for model building, there are many amplitudes hard to compute by hand or even impossible to compute. Hence, it is quite necessary to introduce a new method.

Contents

1 Introduction

As we have known, under the conventional quantum field theory frame, Richard Feynman proposed a brilliant method – Feynman diagrams, to help us perturbatively compute scattering amplitude by a diagrammatic method. However, this method faces many challenges during the improvements of physical theory and complexity of construction for model building, there are many amplitudes hard to compute by hand or even impossible to compute. In gauge theory, there are huge number of gauge redundancies, making the computation quite complicated. We need to address with this kind of unphysical degree of freedom, otherwise we can not obtain the correct physical quantities. Also, we have to address with kinematic factor and color factor simultaneously in the nonabelian gauge theory. And it has been known that the amplitudes in $\mathcal{N} = 4$ super Yang-Mills theory obtain the symmetry – dual superconformal symmetry [?], which is not reflected in conventional Feynman diagram method.

Hence, all of these factors impetus physicists to propose something new, then the BCFW recursion relation is the first product as a new method to compute amplitudes. Historically, the original recursion relation is for gluon scattering amplitudes, coming from Britto, Cachazo and Feng [?], and it can be seen as the first breakthrough for modern amplitude method. They explored the analytic properties of amplitudes when extended into complex momentum space. In particular, they considered deforming two external momenta by a complex parameter z , in such a way that the on-shell conditions and momentum conservation are preserved. Through this deformation, they observed that tree-level amplitudes exhibit simple pole structures in the complex z -plane, corresponding to internal propagators going on-shell. This analytic structure allowed them to derive a recursion relation that expresses an n -point amplitude in terms of lower-point amplitudes. Edward Witten subsequently noticed that his Twistor String Theory [?], which reveals the hidden symmetry and geometry structure of amplitude, implied that the scattering amplitudes has stronger analytic property. Their collaboration led to a general formulation of the recursion relations, now known as the BCFW recursion relations [?], named after Ruth Britto, Freddy Cachazo, Bo Feng, and Edward Witten. In particular, Witten helped clarify the large $-z$ behavior of the amplitudes under complex momentum shifts — a crucial condition ensuring the validity of the recursion.

The starting point comes from the precise cancellation in scattering for longitudinal modes of massive spin-2 Kaluza-Klein(KK) states. While individual contributions grow as $\mathcal{O}(s^5)$, $\mathcal{O}(s^4)$, $\mathcal{O}(s^3)$ and $\mathcal{O}(s^2)$, it has been proved that these contributions are cancelled with each other in a quite intricate way [?], and the final results only grow as $\mathcal{O}(s)$. But it is quite difficult to compute this kind of scattering amplitudes, so if we can obtain some clues for this KK scattering amplitudes from other aspects, it may help us to understand this cancellation in another way. This paper is motivated by a kind of (De)constructed gauge theory, proposed by Nima, Cohen and Georgi [?]. They constructed a renormalizable, asymptotically free, four dimension gauge theories that dynamically generate a fifth dimension. In this paper, the authors proposed

that the “ Condensed ” theory actually discretized a five dimension gauge theory with gauge group $SU(m)$. After higgsing, the Kaluza-Klein spectrum for S^1 compactification appears. It encourages to compute scattering amplitudes in this model. This paper mainly contributes to the computation for scattering amplitudes in the simplest 2-site model by utilizing BCFW recursion relation and other related method, such as color-ordered amplitudes, spinor-helicity formalism, etc.

2 Review of BCFW recursion relation and others

Traditionally, one relies on Feynman diagrams to calculate scattering amplitudes. Feynman diagrams provide a clear picture of physics and a systematic procedure of calculations. They are in textbooks and widely used. But Feynman diagrams are not efficient in complicated calculations for high energy physics. Increasing the number of particles in a scattering, the number of Feynman diagrams increase exponentially. If gauge fields are involved, one easily encounters thousands of diagrams. For example, for pure gluon case, the number of Feynman diagrams for n-gluons at tree-level is given by

n=	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	4	25	220	2485	34300	559405	10525900

(These numbers are counted with the inclusion of 4 point interaction.)

Not only with huge number of diagrams, the expression for a single Feynman diagram can also be very complicated. For example, the three-graviton vertex has almost 100 terms. It is almost impossible to calculate scattering amplitudes of gravitons directly from Feynman diagrams. For gauge theories, single Feynman diagram usually depends on the gauge. Many terms cancel with each other at the end of process of calculation. In practice, one does not even know where to start most times.

BCFW are devised to solve some of these problems. So in the following part, I will give a systematic introduction to BCFW recursion relation and other necessary tools. This section is mainly based on the excellent review by Elvang and Huang [?].

2.1 Spinor-Helicity Formalisim for Massless Particles

2.1.1 Brief introduction of spinor-helicity formalism

The spinor-helicity formalism just told us that a light-like Lorentz 4-vector can be decomposed to the product of two Weyl spinor. It is quite natural to see it from the representation of Lorentz group. A Lorentz 4-vector lives in $(\frac{1}{2}, \frac{1}{2})$ representation, which can be decomposed to $(\frac{1}{2}, 0) \oplus (0, \frac{1}{2})$. We have known that the $(\frac{1}{2}, 0)$ and $(0, \frac{1}{2})$ correspond to left handed Weyl spinor and right handed Weyl spinor respectively.

Given a null momentum p_μ in four dimension spacetime, we can define a 2×2 matrix by sigma matrix

$$p_{\alpha\dot{\alpha}} = p_\mu \sigma^\mu = \begin{pmatrix} p^0 - p^3 & -p^1 + ip^2 \\ -p^1 - ip^2 & p^0 + p^3 \end{pmatrix}$$

note that $\det p_{\alpha\dot{\alpha}} = 0$ for massless particles, so it is always possible find two Weyl spinor (two components quantity) satisfying the following equation

$$p_\mu \sigma^\mu = p_{\alpha\dot{\alpha}} = \lambda_\alpha \tilde{\lambda}_{\dot{\alpha}} = |\lambda\rangle[\lambda] \quad (2.1)$$

and similarly we can obtain define

$$p_\mu \bar{\sigma}^\mu = p^{\dot{\alpha}\alpha} = \tilde{\lambda}^{\dot{\alpha}} \lambda^\alpha = |\lambda]\langle\lambda|, \quad (2.2)$$

For general complex momenta, the λ_α and $\tilde{\lambda}_{\dot{\alpha}}$ are independent two dimensional complex vectors. For real momenta, the matrix is Hermitian and so we have $\tilde{\lambda}_{\dot{\alpha}} = (\pm)(\lambda_\alpha)^*$.

They satisfy the following Weyl equation

$$p_{\alpha\dot{\alpha}}|p]^{\dot{\alpha}} = 0, \quad [p]_{\dot{\alpha}} p^{\dot{\alpha}\alpha} = 0, \quad p^{\dot{\alpha}\alpha}|p\rangle_\alpha = 0, \quad \langle p|^\alpha p_{\alpha\dot{\alpha}} = 0 \quad (2.3)$$

and we can use two-dimension antisymmetric tensor to raise or lower the indices

$$[p]_{\dot{\alpha}} = \varepsilon_{\dot{\alpha}\dot{\beta}}[p]^{\dot{\beta}}, \quad \langle p|^\alpha = \varepsilon^{\alpha\beta}|p\rangle_\beta \quad (2.4)$$

Then,

The angle and square spinors are the core of **spinor-helicity formalism**.

Here, it is also necessary to introduce the **angle spinor bracket** $\langle pq \rangle$ and **square spinor bracket** $[pq]$, it is the key ingredient for writing amplitudes in terms of spinor-helicity variable.

$$\langle pq \rangle = \langle p|^\alpha |q\rangle_\alpha, \quad [pq] = [p]_{\dot{\alpha}} [q]^{\dot{\alpha}}. \quad (2.5)$$

Since the indices are raised and lowered by antisymmetric tensor, so the brackets are antisymmetric:

$$\langle pq \rangle = -\langle qp \rangle, \quad [pq] = -[qp]. \quad (2.6)$$

There are no $\langle pq \rangle$ brackets, because the indices cannot contract with each other to form a Lorentz scalar.

It is very easy to derive the following important relation:

$$\langle pq \rangle [pq] = 2p \cdot q = (p + q)^2 \quad (2.7)$$

by using (??) and

$$\text{Tr}(\sigma^\mu \bar{\sigma}^\nu) = 2\eta^{\mu\nu}.$$

Here, we list other identities without any provement

$$[k|\gamma^\mu|p\rangle = \langle p|\gamma^\mu|k], \quad (2.8)$$

$$[k|\gamma^\mu|p\rangle^* = [p|\gamma^\mu|k\rangle \quad (\text{for real moemnta}). \quad (2.9)$$

and **Fierz identity**

$$\langle 1|\gamma^\mu|2\rangle\langle 3|\gamma_\mu|4\rangle = 2\langle 13\rangle[24] \quad (2.10)$$

will be used in several times. In amplitude calculations, **momentum conservation** is imposed on n particles as $\sum_{i=1}^n p_i^\mu = 0$ (here we consider all particles ingoing). Translating by spinor-helicity variable, it becomes

$$\sum_{i=1}^n |i\rangle[i] = 0, \quad \text{i.e.} \quad \sum_{i=1}^n \langle qi\rangle[ik] = 0, \quad (2.11)$$

here q and k are arbitrary light-like vectors.

We end this subsection by introducing one more identity: **Schouten Identity**. It comes from a rather trivial fact: there are no three independent 2-dimensional vectors. So if we have three 2 components angle spinors $|i\rangle$, $|j\rangle$ and $|k\rangle$, we can write one of them as a linear combination of two others

$$|k\rangle = a|i\rangle + b|j\rangle, \quad \text{for complex a and b.} \quad (2.12)$$

One can contract a $|i\rangle$ and a $|b\rangle$ with the both sides, then a,b can be solved. (??) can be cast to the form

$$|i\rangle\langle jk\rangle + |k\rangle\langle ij\rangle + |j\rangle\langle ki\rangle = 0, \quad (2.13)$$

This is Schouten identity and often written with a fourth spinor $\langle r|$

$$\langle ri\rangle[jk] + \langle rk\rangle[ij] + \langle rk\rangle\langle ki\rangle = 0. \quad (2.14)$$

We have a similar Schouten identity holding for square spinors

$$[ri][jk] + [rk][ij] + [rj][ki] = 0. \quad (2.15)$$

There is also a important result can be obtained, the **3-particle soecial kinematics**. If we have three light-like vectors satisfying momentum conservation $p_1^\mu + p_2^\mu + p_3^\mu = 0$. Then

$$\langle 12\rangle\langle 21\rangle = 2p_1 \cdot p_2 = (p_1 + p_2)^2 = p_3^2 = 0, \quad (2.16)$$

so either $\langle 12 \rangle$ or $[12]$ equals to 0. If we suppose $\langle 12 \rangle \neq 0$, then from $\langle 12 \rangle [23] = \langle 1 | p_2 | 3 \rangle = -\langle 1 | p_1 + p_3 | 3 \rangle = 0$, we can conclude that $[23] = 0$. Similarly, we can also obtain $[31] = 0$. Thus, $[12] = [23] = [31] = 0$, which means that the three square spinors are proportional with each other

$$[1] \propto [2] \propto [3] \quad (2.17)$$

or another possibility

$$|1\rangle \propto |2\rangle \propto |3\rangle. \quad (2.18)$$

As a consequence,

1. A non-vanishing on-shell 3-particle amplitude depends only on square brackets or angle brackets.
2. Since for real momenta, angle brackets are complex conjugated with square brackets, so *on-shell 3 point amplitudes are only meanful for complex momenta* (unless it is a constant, like ϕ^3 theory).

2.1.2 Yang-Mills and Color-ordering

Let us consider the Yang-Mills lagrangian

$$\mathcal{L} = -\frac{1}{4} F_{\mu\nu} F^{\mu\nu}, \quad (2.19)$$

with field strength $F_{\mu\nu} = \partial_\mu A_\nu - \partial_\nu A_\mu - \frac{ig}{\sqrt{2}} [A_\mu, A_\nu]$, and $A_\mu = A_\mu^a T^a$. Gauge fields belong to adjoint representation, so the index a runs over $1, 2 \dots N^2 - 1$ in $SU(N)$ case. The generators are normalized like $\text{Tr}[T^a T^b] = \delta^{ab}$ and $[T^a, T^b] = i\tilde{f}^{abc} T^c$.

The amplitude-friendly gauge choice is *Gervais-Neveu gauge* with gauge fixing term $\mathcal{L}_{gf} = -\frac{1}{2} \text{Tr}(H_\mu^2) = 0$, here $H_{\mu\nu} = \partial_\mu A_\nu - \partial_\nu A_\mu - \frac{ig}{\sqrt{2}} A_\mu A_\nu$. After gauge fixing, the lagrangian becomes

$$\mathcal{L} = \text{Tr} \left(-\frac{1}{2} \partial_\mu A_\nu \partial^\mu A^\nu - i\sqrt{2}g \partial^\mu A^\nu A_\nu A_\mu + \frac{g^2}{4} A^\mu A^\nu A_\mu A_\nu \right) \quad (2.20)$$

The 3- and 4-gluon vertices involve \tilde{f}^{abc} and $\tilde{f}^{abi}\tilde{f}^{icd}$ +permutations, respectively, each dressed up with kinematic factors. The amplitudes constructed from these rules can be organized into different group theory structures. For example, the color factors of the s-, t-, and u-channel diagram of the 4-gluon tree amplitude are

$$c_s = \tilde{f}^{a_1 a_2 b} \tilde{f}^{b a_3 a_4}, \quad c_t = \tilde{f}^{a_4 a_1 b} \tilde{f}^{b a_2 a_3}, \quad c_u = \tilde{f}^{a_1 a_3 b} \tilde{f}^{b a_2 a_4} \quad (2.21)$$

and the four point interaction just gives a sum of contributions from c_s , c_t and c_u . And because

¹In the usual QFT textbook, $\text{Tr}[T^a T^b] = \frac{1}{2}\delta^{ab}$ and $[T^a, T^b] = if^{abc}T^c$, with $\tilde{f}^{abc} = \sqrt{2}f^{abc}$ are common choice.

of the Jacobi identity, we have

$$c_s = c_t + c_u. \quad (2.22)$$

And the color factor can be written by the trace of product of generators

$$i\tilde{f}^{abc} = \text{Tr}([T^a, T^b]T^c), \quad (2.23)$$

where T^a are generators of fundamental representation. Moreover, in $SU(N)$, we have a Fierz identity

$$\sum_a T_{ij}^a T_{kl}^a = \delta_{il}\delta_{kj} - \frac{1}{N}\delta_{ij}\delta_{kl}. \quad (2.24)$$

This identity is easier understood as matrix form like

$$\text{Tr}\{T^a A\}\text{Tr}\{T^a B\} = \text{Tr}\{AB\} - \frac{1}{N}\{A\}\text{Tr}\{B\}, \quad (2.25)$$

and

$$\text{Tr}\{AT^a BT^a\} = \text{Tr}\{A\}\text{Tr}\{B\} - \frac{1}{N}\text{Tr}\{AB\}. \quad (2.26)$$

Then it can be used to simplify the calculation.

For example, the 4 gluon s-channel gives us

$$\tilde{f}^{a_1 a_2 b} \tilde{f}^{b a_3 a_4} = \text{Tr}(T^{a_1} T^{a_2} T^{a_3} T^{a_4}) - \text{Tr}(T^{a_2} T^{a_1} T^{a_3} T^{a_4}) - \text{Tr}(T^{a_1} T^{a_2} T^{a_4} T^{a_3}) + \text{Tr}(T^{a_2} T^{a_1} T^{a_4} T^{a_3}). \quad (2.27)$$

Similarly, three other diagrams can also be written in terms of single trace. Therefore, the full 4-point amplitude can be rewritten like

$$\mathcal{A}_{4,\text{tree}} = g^2(A_4[1234]\text{Tr}(T^{a_1} T^{a_2} T^{a_3} T^{a_4}) + \text{perms of } (234)) \quad (2.28)$$

here the subamplitudes $A_4[1234]$, $A_4[1243]$, etc. are called **color-ordered amplitudes**. This concept can be easily generalized to tree-level n-point case

$$\mathcal{A}_{n,\text{tree}} = g^{n-2} \sum_{\sigma} A_n[1, \sigma(2, 3 \dots n)] \text{Tr}(T^{a_1} T^{\sigma(a_2 \dots a_n)}) \quad (2.29)$$

where the sum is taken over the $(n-1)!$ trace basis (considering the cyclic property of trace). Actually, the number of independent basis can be reduced to $(n-3)!$, called Del Duca-Dixon-Maltoni (DDM) color decomposition [?]. But it has no tight relation with this paper, so here we do not offer more detailed explanation for it.

The color-ordered amplitude $A_n[1, 2 \dots n]$ is calculated in terms of diagrams with no lines crossing(planar diagrams) and the ordering of the external lines fixed as given 1, 2, 3,..., n. Here, we directly give the final result for 3-point color-ordered amplitudes without any intermediate calculating process. And in this full paper, we mainly consider the helicity amplitudes which will be explained later, so we need to clarify the helicity configuration.

For 3-point, there are only two non-vanishing configurations

$$A_3[1^-, 2^-, 3^+] = \frac{\langle 12 \rangle^3}{\langle 23 \rangle \langle 31 \rangle} \quad (2.30)$$

and

$$A_3[1^+, 2^+, 3^-] = \frac{[12]^3}{[23][31]}. \quad (2.31)$$

It has been known that there is a compact formula for n-point gluon color-ordered amplitudes — ***Parke - Talyor Formula***

$$A_n[1^+ \dots i^- \dots j^- \dots n^+] = \frac{\langle ij \rangle^4}{\langle 12 \rangle \langle 23 \rangle \dots \langle n1 \rangle}. \quad (2.32)$$

We will prove this formula in the next subsection.

The color-ordered amplitudes have a number of properties

1. *Cyclic*: It follows from the cyclic property for trace that $A_n[12 \dots n] = A_n[2n \dots 1]$
2. *Reflection*: $A_n[12 \dots n] = (-1)^n A_n[n \dots 21]$
3. The $U(1)$ *decoupling identity*:

$$A_n[123 \dots n] + A_n[213 \dots n] + A_n[231 \dots n] + \dots + A_n[23 \dots 1n] = 0 \quad (2.33)$$

The trace basis (??) is overcomplete implies that there are further linear relations among these subamplitudes, which are called ***Kleiss - Kuiff(KK) relations***

$$A_n[1, \{\alpha\}, n, \{\beta\}] = (-1)^{|\beta|} \sum_{\sigma \in \text{OP}(\{\alpha\}, \{\beta^T\})} A_n[1, \sigma, n] \quad (2.34)$$

where β^T denotes the reverse ordering of the labels $\{\beta\}$ and the sum is over ordered permutations “OP”, means permutations of the labels in the joined set $\{\alpha\} \cup \{\beta^T\}$ in which the ordering within $\{\alpha\}$ and $\{\beta\}^T$ is preserved.

Consider a 5-point case as an example. Taking the LHS to be $A_5[1, \{2\}, 5, \{3, 4\}]$, we have $\{\alpha\} \cup \{\beta^T\} = \{2\} \cup \{4, 3\}$, so the ordered permutations σ refers to $\{243\}, \{423\}, \{432\}$. Thus the KK relation reads

$$A_5[12534] = A_5[12435] + A_5[14235] + A_5[114325]. \quad (2.35)$$

The KK relations combine with cyclic, reflection, and $U(1)$ decoupling identities reduce the number of independent basis to $(n-2)!$. However, there are further linear relations called ***BCJ relations*** – named after Bern, Carrasco and Johansson, which further reduce the number to $(n-3)!$.

Although I will not show the derivation of BCJ relations, I would like to give some examples

$$s_{14}A_4[1234] - s_{13}A_4[1243] = 0, \quad (2.36)$$

$$s_{12}A_5[21345]s_{23}A_5[13245] - (s_{23} + s_{24})A_5[13425] = 0. \quad (2.37)$$

2.2 Little group scalling

The rich structure of scattering amplitudes can be originated from a fundamental question — “What is a particle?” — which relates directly to Wigner’s Little group notation, characterizing how particles transform under Lorentz symmetry. Following this thought, we think particle as a unitary representation of Poincaré group, which is the symmetry group of our spacetime. We use two labels to denote a one-particle state, one is the momentum p^μ , another is σ representing other labels the particle can carry.

We start from a one-particle state $|k; \sigma\rangle$ with reference momentum k . Another momentum p is related by the Lorentz transformation $L(p; k)$, $p = L(p; k)k$. Obviously, this Lorentz transformation is not unique because there exist Lorentz transformations keeping p invariant, called “Little group transformation”. We assume that there exist a unitary representation for the Lorentz group, the operator in Hilbert space are denoted like $U(\Lambda)$.

Then we simply *define* the one-particle state with momentum p as

$$|p; \sigma\rangle = U(L(p; k))|k; \sigma\rangle. \quad (2.38)$$

Having made this definition, we can compute how the state transformed under a general Lorentz transformation

$$U(\Lambda)|p, \sigma\rangle = U(\Lambda)U(L(p; k))|k, \sigma\rangle = U(L(\Lambda p; k))U(L^{-1}(\Lambda p; k)\Lambda L(p; k))|k, \sigma\rangle. \quad (2.39)$$

here we use the fact $U(\Lambda_1\Lambda_2) = U(\Lambda_1)U(\Lambda_2)$. Notice that $W(\Lambda, p, k)$ is not a general transformation but keep the momentum k invariant $Wk = k$. This subgroup of Lorentz group is called little group. Thus we must have

$$U(W(\Lambda, p, k))|k; \sigma\rangle = D_{\sigma\sigma'}(W(\Lambda, p, k))|k, \sigma'\rangle, \quad (2.40)$$

where $D_{\sigma\sigma'}$ is the representation for little group. Then, p should transformed like

$$U(\Lambda)|p, \sigma\rangle = D_{\sigma\sigma'}(W(\Lambda, p, k))|\Lambda p, \sigma'\rangle \quad (2.41)$$

The scattering amplitudes for n particle should keep invariant under Poincaré transforma-

tion – translation invariance and Lorentz invariance

$$\mathcal{M}(p_a, \sigma_a) = \delta^D(p_1^\mu + \cdots + p_n^\mu) \mathcal{M}(p_a, \sigma_a) \quad (2.42)$$

$$\mathcal{M}^\Lambda(p_a, \sigma_a) = \prod_a (D_{\sigma\sigma'}) \mathcal{M}((\Lambda p)_a, \sigma'_a) \quad (2.43)$$

In D spacetime dimensions, the little group for massive particles is $SO(D-1)$. For massless particles the little group is the the group of Euclidean symmetries in $(D-2)$ dimensions, which is $SO(D-2)$. In this article, we mainly discuss massless particles scattering in 4 dimension spacetime, so the little group is $SO(2) \simeq U(1)$.

Then from the definition of spinor-helicity variable(??), we can notice that there is an ambiguity here. The momentum is invariant under the following redefinition

$$\lambda \rightarrow t^{-1}\lambda, \quad \tilde{\lambda} \rightarrow t\tilde{\lambda}, \quad t \in \mathbb{C} \quad (2.44)$$

same for

$$|\lambda\rangle \rightarrow t^{-1}|\lambda\rangle, \quad |\lambda] \rightarrow t|\lambda] \quad (2.45)$$

. This scale perfectly matches the $U(1)$ little group transformation, so we can identify this rescale as the little group transformation. The scattering amplitudes should transform **covariantly** under little group scaling like (??), so

$$\mathcal{A}_n(\{|1\rangle, |1], h_1\}, \dots \{t_i^{-1}|i\rangle, t_i|i], h_i\}, \dots) = t_i^{2h_i} \mathcal{A}_n \quad (2.46)$$

where h_i refers to the helicity of particles. As an example, consider the QED amplitude, $A_3(f^- \bar{f}^+ \gamma^-) = e \frac{\langle 13 \rangle^2}{\langle 12 \rangle}$. For the negative helicity photon (particle 3), we obtain $t_3^{-2} = t_3^{2(-1)}$. We will see that little group scaling plays a significant role in 3-particle amplitudes.

3-particle amplitudes

By 3-particle special kinematics, we have known that on-shell 3-point amplitudes depends on either square brackets or angle brackets. We suppose that it only depends on angle brackets. We can write down the general ansatz

$$A_3(1^{h_1}, 2^{h_2}, 3^{h_3}) = c \langle 12 \rangle^{x_{12}} \langle 13 \rangle^{x_{13}} \langle 23 \rangle^{x_{23}}, \quad (2.47)$$

where c is just a constant. Little group scaling (??) tell us that

$$t_1^{2h_1} A_3(1^{h_1}, 2^{h_2}, 3^{h_3}) = c t_1^{-x_{12}} t_1^{-x_{13}} \langle 12 \rangle^{x_{12}} \langle 13 \rangle^{x_{13}} \langle 23 \rangle^{x_{23}}. \quad (2.48)$$

We can obtain

$$2h_1 = -x_{12} - x_{13} \quad (2.49)$$

Similarly, we can also obtain

$$2h_2 = -x_{12} - x_{23}, \quad 2h_3 = -x_{13} - x_{23}. \quad (2.50)$$

Then all index can be solved from this system of equations, so that

$$A_3^{h_1 h_2 h_3} = c \langle 12 \rangle^{h_3 - h_1 - h_2} \langle 31 \rangle^{h_2 - h_1 - h_3} \langle 23 \rangle^{h_1 - h_2 - h_3} \quad h_1 + h_2 + h_3 < 0 \quad (2.51)$$

$$A_3^{h_1 h_2 h_3} = c' [12]^{h_1 + h_2 - h_3} [23]^{h_2 + h_3 - h_1} [31]^{h_3 + h_1 - h_2} \quad h_1 + h_2 + h_3 > 0 \quad (2.52)$$

This means that ***all massless 3-point amplitudes are completely fixed by little group scaling!***

We have shown the 3-point QED amplitudes. So now we can consider something different – 3-point gluon amplitudes with 2 same helicities and 1 different helicity. Then we can determine the amplitudes from (??) (??)

$$A_3(g_1^-, g_2^-, g_3^+) = g \frac{\langle 12 \rangle^3}{\langle 23 \rangle \langle 31 \rangle}, \quad A_3(g_1^+, g_2^+, g_3^-) = g \frac{[12]^3}{[23][31]} \quad (2.53)$$

Here it need some efforts to explain about the condition after equation (??) and (??). If we assume the amplitude $A_3(g_1^-, g_2^-, g_3^+)$ depending on square brackets, so can obtain a different expression

$$A_3(g_1^-, g_2^-, g_3^+) = g' \frac{[31][23]}{[12]^3}, \quad (2.54)$$

to distinguish these two possibilities, we need to use **dimension analysis**. From (??), we can know that both square brackets and angle brackets have mass-dimension 1. Thus the kinematic factor of amplitude (??) has mass-dimension 1, compatible with the interaction term $AA\partial A$ in $\text{Tr} F_{\mu\nu} F^{\mu\nu}$. But the mass-dimension of kinematic factor in (??) is (-1), so it should come from the interaction term like $g' AA \frac{1}{\square} A$. Here, we only consider the local field theory, so this kind of interaction should be discarded.

The combination of ***little group scaling*** and ***locality*** uniquely fixes the massless 3-point amplitudes. In general,

$$\text{An } n\text{-point amplitude in } D=4 \text{ spacetime have mass-dimension } 4 - n. \quad (2.55)$$

Although we discard the amplitude (??), the coupling s\forall constant g' have mass-dimension 2, so (??) has the correct mass-dimension as (??).

How about the gluon amplitude with all minus helicities? The formula (??) immediately tells that it should equal to

$$A_3(g_1^-, g_2^-, g_3^-) = g'' \langle 12 \rangle \langle 23 \rangle \langle 31 \rangle. \quad (2.56)$$

The kinematic part has mass-dimension 3 and reveals that:

1. The coupling constant g'' must have mass-dimension -2.
2. This must come from an interaction term with 3 derivatives like $(\partial A)^3$.

Furthermore, kinematic part has the antisymmetry under the exchange of gluon momenta, so the coupling constant should also have this antisymmetry in order to satisfy the Bose statistics as is of course the pure Yang-Mills case. The natural candidate of this amplitude is a dimension 6 operator $\text{Tr} F_\nu^\mu F_\lambda^\nu F_\mu^\lambda$.

2.3 MHV Classification

It has been well known that the all-plus tree-level gluon amplitudes vanish

$$\text{tree-level gluon amplitudes : } A_n[1^+, 2^+, \dots, n^+] = 0 \quad \text{and} \quad A_n[1^+, 2^+, \dots, n^-] = 0 \quad (2.57)$$

This conclusion holds for the case with all helicities flipped:

$$\text{tree-level gluon amplitudes : } A_n[1^-, 2^-, \dots, n^-] = 0 \quad \text{and} \quad A_n[1^-, 2^-, \dots, n^+] = 0 \quad (2.58)$$

In supersymmetric Yang-Mills theories, these results hold for all loop order, so actually it is a special case for SYM.

If we flip one more helicity, the situation becomes quite different. Amplitudes $A_n[1^-, 2^-, 3^+, \dots, n^+]$ does not equal to 0 and is quite important called **MHV amplitudes**. The gluon amplitudes with two negative helicities and $n - 2$ positive helicities are called *maximally helicity violating* – or simply **MHV** for short. The concept “maximally helicity violating” comes from thinking a $2 \rightarrow n - 2$ scattering process. Because of crossing symmetry, the outgoing particle with positive(negative) helicity is equivalent with an ingoing particle with negative(positive) helicity. So if we consider the process $A_n[1^+, 2^+, \dots, n^+]$ with all particle ingoing. It crosses over to $1^+ 2^+ \rightarrow 3^- \dots n^-$ with two ingoing particles and $n-2$ outgoing particles, that’s the reason we call it “helicity violating”. We have known that the process in which the most we can violate helicity is $1^+ 2^+ \rightarrow 3^+ 4^+ 5^- \dots n^-$, which is equivalent to amplitudes $A_n[1^+ 2^+ 3^- 4^- 5^+ \dots n^+]$, therefore it is the *maximally helicity violating* process.

As we have shown in the last subsection, the MHV gluon tree amplitudes are given by Parke - Talyor formula

$$A_n[1^+ \dots i^- \dots j^- \dots n^+] = \frac{\langle ij \rangle^4}{\langle 12 \rangle \langle 23 \rangle \dots \langle n1 \rangle} \quad (2.59)$$

The MHV amplitudes are the important blocks for scattering amplitudes in (super)Yang-Mills theory. They are simplest amplitudes, and the next-to simplest are called **Next-to-MHV** amplitudes, or just **NMHV**. This refers to scattering process for which two 2 positive gluons

scatter into 3 positive gluons and $n-5$ negative gluons. Similarly, we can define $N^k \mathbf{MHV}$ amplitudes. For anti-MHV amplitudes with all helicities flipping, we have a formula

$$A_n[1^- \dots i^+ \dots j^+ \dots n^-] = \frac{[ij]^4}{[12][23] \dots [n1]}. \quad (2.60)$$

2.4 BCFW recursion relation

The BCFW recursion relation was introduced in 2005 by Britto, Cachazo, and Feng, and later extended with Witten. It provided a novel way to compute tree-level scattering amplitudes by analytically continuing external momenta into the complex plane and expressing higher-point amplitudes recursively in terms of lower-point ones. This on-shell approach uncovered surprising simplicity in gauge theory amplitudes and offered an alternative to the traditional Feynman diagram expansion. The method was inspired in part by Witten's twistor string theory and the MHV diagram program. In parallel, off-shell recursion relations were also being explored, especially in background field methods and Berends-Giele recursion, which organize amplitudes based on off-shell currents. While off-shell methods remain useful in certain computational frameworks, the BCFW recursion highlighted the power of staying strictly on-shell, leading to a deeper understanding of symmetry, analyticity, and the geometry of scattering processes. It has since become a cornerstone of modern amplitude research.

Beyond BCFW, other on-shell recursion relations have also emerged—for instance, the KLT relations linking gauge and gravity amplitudes, and the double copy structure as well as recursion for theories with special helicity configurations or massive particles. Together, these developments form the foundation of modern amplitude methods, emphasizing physical principles like unitarity, analyticity, and factorization over traditional Lagrangian-based techniques.

2.4.1 Complex shift and Relation from Simple Cauchy's Theorem

An on-shell amplitude (each external leg satisfies on-shell condition) is labeled by their external momentum p_μ and helicity h_i . Here we only consider the massless particles $p_i^2 = 0$, for $i = 1, 2, \dots, n$. And momentum conservation $\sum_{i=1}^n p_i^\mu = 0$ should hold.

First, let us consider the most general case. We need to introduce n complex-valued vectors r_i^μ such that

- $\sum_{i=1}^n r_i^\mu = 0$,
- $r_i \cdot r_j = 0$ for all $i, j = 1, 2, \dots, n$. In particular, $r_i^2 = 0$,
- $p_i \cdot r_i = 0$ for each i (no sum).

These vectors r_i are used to define n shifted momentum

$$\hat{p}_i^\mu \equiv p_i^\mu + z r_i^\mu \quad \text{with} \quad z \in \mathcal{C} \quad (2.61)$$

References

- [1] J. M. Drummond, J. Henn, G. P. Korchemsky, and E. Sokatchev. Dual superconformal symmetry of scattering amplitudes in N=4 super-Yang-Mills theory. *Nucl. Phys. B*, 828:317–374, 2010.
- [2] Ruth Britto, Freddy Cachazo, and Bo Feng. New recursion relations for tree amplitudes of gluons. *Nucl. Phys. B*, 715:499–522, 2005.
- [3] Edward Witten. Perturbative gauge theory as a string theory in twistor space. *Commun. Math. Phys.*, 252:189–258, 2004.
- [4] Ruth Britto, Freddy Cachazo, Bo Feng, and Edward Witten. Direct proof of tree-level recursion relation in Yang-Mills theory. *Phys. Rev. Lett.*, 94:181602, 2005.
- [5] R. Sekhar Chivukula, Dennis Foren, Kirtimaan A. Mohan, Dipan Sengupta, and Elizabeth H. Simmons. Scattering amplitudes of massive spin-2 Kaluza-Klein states grow only as $\mathcal{O}(s)$. *Phys. Rev. D*, 101(5):055013, 2020.
- [6] Nima Arkani-Hamed, Andrew G. Cohen, and Howard Georgi. (De)constructing dimensions. *Phys. Rev. Lett.*, 86:4757–4761, 2001.
- [7] Henriette Elvang and Yu-tin Huang. Scattering Amplitudes. 8 2013.
- [8] Vittorio Del Duca, Lance J. Dixon, and Fabio Maltoni. New color decompositions for gauge amplitudes at tree and loop level. *Nucl. Phys. B*, 571:51–70, 2000.