

# Solar Neutrinos and Reconstruction of the SNO+ Experiment

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# Abstract

This thesis presents a measurement of the Boron-8 ( ${}^8\text{B}$ ) solar neutrinos. The measurement is based on a dataset of 190.3 live days acquired during the SNO+ water physics commissioning. To analyze the data, an event reconstruction framework was developed to evaluate the event vertex and direction. A multivariate analysis was applied to reduce the background events in the dataset. By analyzing the data within an energy range from 5 to 15 MeV, an observed elastic scattering flux assuming no neutrino flavor transformation is obtained as  $\Phi_{\text{ES}} = (2.190 \pm 0.2183(\text{stats.})^{+0.12}_{-0.11}(\text{syst.})) \times 10^6 \text{ cm}^{-2}\text{s}^{-1}$  while the total  ${}^8\text{B}$  solar neutrino flux is evaluated as  $\Phi_{\text{S}_\text{B}} = (4.846 \pm 0.4823(\text{stats.})^{+0.13}_{-0.08}(\text{syst.})) \times 10^6 \text{ cm}^{-2}\text{s}^{-1}$ . These fluxes are consistent with the previous measurement done by SNO+[1], and from the other experiments, such as Super Kamiokande[2]. The systematics were obtained by reconstructing and analyzing the calibration datasets from an Nitrogen-16 calibration source.

Currently, the SNO+ experiment has completed the water phase commission and is filled with the liquid scintillator. It turns from a Water Cherenkov detector into a 780-tonne liquid scintillator detector. Tellurium-130 isotopes will be loaded into the detector to fulfill the ultimate physics goal of SNO+: to search for the neutrinoless double beta decay. The other parts of this thesis discuss the reconstruction framework for the partial-fill and scintillator phases. For the scintillator phase, the event reconstruction gives a high position resolution down to about 65 mm.

# Acknowledgements

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

Among state-of-the-art neutrino experiments, SNO+ aims to search for an extremely rare process called neutrinoless double-beta decay ( $0\nu\beta\beta$ ). This search will explore the unknown nature of neutrinos: whether they are Majorana or Dirac particles. A discovery of the  $0\nu\beta\beta$  process will unravel the masses of neutrinos and test the new physics theories.

Towards the physics target, the SNO+ experiment goes through three major stages, mainly determined by the working medium inside the SNO+ detector. First, the detector was filled with water and operated as a water Cherenkov detector. During this water phase stage, over 300 live days of data have been collected. Calibration sources were also deployed for measuring the detector properties. Based on the first 114.7 live days of data, SNO+ published a measurement of the Boron-8 fluxes of neutrinos from the Sun. The results are consistent with the other solar neutrino experiment and also demonstrate an extremely low background levels for the analysis[1].

Up until this thesis writing, the water phase stage is completed, and the liquid scintillator has replaced the water. During the scintillator filling, there were several long periods when the water level was stable at a fixed height inside the detector. These stable transition stages are called the “partial-fill phase”, which are used to analyze the properties and estimate the backgrounds of the liquid scintillator for the next two physics phases.

Once the detector is fully filled with the liquid scintillator, the detector will be op-

erated as the “scintillator phase”. A 6-month data-taking is planned to count the backgrounds of the liquid scintillator and measure solar neutrinos, reactor antineutrinos and geoneutrinos[7].

After the scintillator phase, tellurium isotopes will be loaded into the liquid scintillator. Once the mixtures are stable, the experiment will start searching for the  $0\nu\beta\beta$  signal.

Event reconstruction is crucial for the physics analysis. In this thesis, a framework of reconstruction algorithm, called the “multiple-path fitter” (**MP fitter**), was developed for multiple SNO+ physics phases. This framework was first developed by the author’s supervisor, Aksel Hallin, to reconstruct and investigate the data taken during the “partial-fill water”, which was an early stage of the experiment when the detector was partially filled with water in December, 2014[8]. Then Kalpana Singh and David Auty from the University of Alberta further developed it for investigating the wavelength shifter and water events[9, 10, 11, 12]. Jeff Tseng from the University of Oxford restructured the framework by using more flexible and efficient C++ code logic and then implemented it into the SNO+ software[13]. I was first involved in testing and optimizing the **MP fitter** on the simulations and data. Then I extended its usage by developing an **MP partial fitter** for the partial-fill phase and an **MP scint fitter** for both the scintillator phase and tellurium phase. With these extensions, the **MP fitter** framework is ready for multiple SNO+ physics phases. The principles, optimizations, and performances of these fitters are described in Chapter 4 and Appendix A.

In the **MP fitter** framework, the **MP water fitter** was applied on the calibration data during the SNO+ water phase and the 190.3 live days of water phase data. Based on these data, a measurement of Boron-8 solar neutrino flux was performed,

In Chapter 2, the basic neutrino properties and phenomena of neutrino flavor transformations and neutrinoless double beta decay are introduced, along with the relevant theories and experiments.

In Chapter 3, an overview of the SNO+ experiment is presented. This chapter explains how the SNO+ detector works and reads the physics data. The chapter also shows the

optical properties of liquid scintillators and the calibrations of the detector, which are crucial to the reconstruction. A bench-top light yield measurement for a tellurium-loaded liquid scintillator is also discussed in this chapter. This measurement shows a light yield shift due to the humidity exposure of the tellurium-loaded scintillator as well as a change of concentrations of tellurium. Since the light yield of the scintillator is crucial to the event reconstruction, this study is helpful for the detector running in realistic situations.

As mentioned previously, Chapter 4 describes the principle of event reconstruction and focuses on the **MP fitter**. The other reconstruction algorithms, for example the energy reconstruction, are also introduced.

Chapter 5 focuses on the calibration during the SNO+ water phase. The **MP water fitter** was applied to the calibration data and simulations. Among the reconstructed quantities, the position and direction results were from the MultiPath water fitter, while the energy and classifier results were from the SNO+ official algorithms. However, these results depend on the position and direction results. By comparing the simulations and data, I obtained the reconstruction resolutions and uncertainties, following the procedures suggested by the collaboration. These results were applied to the solar neutrino analysis in the next chapter. This chapter also discusses the calibration during the partial-fill phase. The **MP partial fitter** was applied. Based on the calibration data, analysis for extracting the Cherenkov signals from the scintillation lights is discussed.

In Chapter 6, I performed an analysis of solar neutrinos during the SNO+ water phase. The **MP water fitter** was applied to the water phase physics data and simulations. Based on the simulations, I applied a machine learning analysis to optimize the signal and background separation. Then the optimized separation parameters were applied to the data to extract the solar neutrinos from the backgrounds. I evaluated the solar neutrino rates and the background rates from the dataset. The systematics and uncertainties from Chapter 5 were evaluated and included in the results. Finally, a  ${}^8\text{B}$  solar neutrino flux was evaluated.

The last chapter summarizes the work and results of the thesis.

Unless being mentioned or cited in the text, the analyses on the simulations and data

from Chapter 4 to 6 are my own work under the supervision of Aksel Hallin, Juan Pablo Yanez Garza and Carsten Krauss.

## Chapter 2

# Neutrino physics

This Chapter introduces the properties of neutrinos and their interactions, focusing on the weak interactions, neutrino mass and flavor transformations.

Since the first discovery of the neutrinos in the 1950s, different types of neutrino experiments have measured and studied neutrinos produced from different sources, which are mainly: the core of the Sun, the Earth’s mantle and crust, the atmosphere, fission reactors, accelerator beams, and astrophysical objects, such as supernovae in space. These sources produce solar neutrinos, geoneutrinos, atmospheric neutrinos, reactor antineutrinos, accelerator neutrinos and supernova/astrophysical neutrinos respectively. Among them, the experiments measuring solar neutrinos have unraveled the phenomenon of neutrino flavor transformations in the matter. The solar neutrino experiments relevant to the analysis presented in Chapter 6 are introduced. The rest of the Chapter introduces the major physics target for SNO+: the neutrinoless double beta decay, and the relevant experiments.

### 2.1 Neutrinos

A neutrino is a spin-1/2 fermion with a neutral electric charge and only interacts via weak interaction and gravity. Its basic properties and interactions are described by the Standard Model (SM), a theory describing the properties of all elementary particles currently observed and their interactions based on the three fundamental forces: the strong, weak, and

electromagnetic forces. Notably, gravity as one of the fundamental forces is not included in the SM, and it still waits for a new theory.

The SM has successfully explained and predicted phenomena in particle physics since the latter half of the 20th century. An important triumph achieved by the SM is the discovery of the predicted Higgs bosons in 2012. However, there are still open issues in the SM. Besides the notable gravity issue, some of the unsolved questions are relating to the mystery properties and behaviors of neutrinos: What are the masses of neutrinos? How do neutrinos obtain their masses? Why are their masses so small compared to the other elementary particles? Are neutrinos their own antiparticles? And there might be more questions about neutrinos coming out. If any of these questions is answered, a door will be opened to the new physics theories beyond the SM.

Since neutrinos weakly interact with other particles and fields, they can penetrate through massive matter or travel a long way through space without being interrupted. Neutrinos produced in the core of the Sun, in Supernovae, or in the galactic core of the Milky Way can carry original information of these astrophysics objects and easily bring these information to the detectors on the Earth. This property enables neutrinos as a probe to study the status of astrophysics objects.

The interesting facts mentioned above put the researches of neutrinos under the spotlight.

The existence of neutrinos was first put forward by Wolfgang Pauli in the 1930s to solve the observed contradicts in  $\beta$ -decay process. In 1914, James Chadwick found that the electrons emitted in  $\beta$ -decay (called the “ $\beta$ -electrons”) have a continuous energy spectrum[14]. However, since nuclei have discrete energy levels, the energy spectrum of  $\beta$ -electrons should be discrete and equal to the difference between the final and initial states of nuclei. This indicates that the energy and momentum are not conserved if only nuclei and  $\beta$ -electrons present in the  $\beta$ -decay products. Pauli then introduced a charge-neutral, spin-1/2, and nearly massless particle to the  $\beta$ -decay products. This particle was later called “neutrino” (the small neutral one) by Enrico Fermi. The neutrinos take away a part of energies and

then cause the broad energy spectrum of  $\beta$ -electrons, thus the problem was solved.

In 1934, Fermi developed the four-fermion vertex interaction theory to describe the weak interactions relating to neutrinos. Soon after that, Bethe and Peierls suggested direct neutrino detection can be made via a neutrino-induced interaction, called the inverse beta decay (IBD):  $\bar{\nu}_e + p \rightarrow e^+ + n$ . Their calculation showed that the IBD cross-section was in the order of  $(10^{-44}) \text{ cm}^2$ , which was difficult for detection[15]. Though the task to detect neutrinos was difficult, in 1956, Fred Reines and Clyde Cowan made the first discovery of the antineutrinos from nuclear reactors. They measured the cross-section as  $6.3 \times 10^{-44} \text{ cm}^2$ , which was consistent with Bethe's calculation[16].

In 1962, Lederman, Schwartz, and Steinberger demonstrated that more than one type of neutrino exists by detecting the interactions of the muon neutrino ( $\nu_\mu$ )[17]. The tauon neutrino ( $\nu_\tau$ ) was proposed after the discovery of the  $\tau$  lepton and was observed in 2000 by the DONUT collaboration[18]. The decay width of the  $Z^0$  boson measured by the ALEPH collaboration implied that based on the SM, the number of light neutrino species is three[19].

Currently, we know that neutrinos have three leptonic flavors, and they only participate in the weak and gravitational interactions, while the latter can be neglected in the particle-scale. In the weak interactions, a neutrino  $\nu_\alpha$  is generated with a definite leptonic flavor, accompanied by one of the three charged leptons: electron ( $e$ ), muon ( $\mu$ ) or tauon ( $\tau$ ). It is identified as an electron neutrino ( $\nu_e$ ), a muon neutrino ( $\nu_\mu$ ), or a tauon neutrino ( $\nu_\tau$ ).

The weak interactions are described in the SM by fermions exchanging  $W^\pm$  and  $Z^0$  bosons known as weak force carriers.

In the SM, only the left-handed neutrino and right-handed antineutrino can take part in the weak interaction.

lepton number conservation

Neutrino interactions mainly include the neutrino-electron scatterings, hadron decays and neutrino-nucleon scatterings[3]. The next section mainly focuses on the low-energy ( $\mathcal{O}(\text{MeV})$ ) neutrino-electron ( $\nu + e^-$ ) elastic scattering, which plays an important role in the detection of solar neutrinos.

## 2.2 Neutrino-Electron Elastic Scattering

The  $\nu + e^-$  elastic scattering (ES):  $\nu_x + e^- \rightarrow \nu_x + e^-$  (also for  $\bar{\nu}_x$ ) is a pure leptonic process and can be precisely described by the electroweak theory in the SM. The amplitude for this process is contributed by both neutral current (NC) and charged current (CC) interactions. Fig. 2.1 shows the tree-level Feynman diagrams (without radiative corrections).

The  $\nu + e^-$  ES is sensitive to all neutrino flavors, but the  $\nu_e$  can undergo CC (exchanging W boson) (as shown in Fig. 2.1) and NC (exchanging  $Z^0$  boson) interactions, whereas  $\nu_\mu$  and  $\nu_\tau$  interact only through the NC.

for the neutrinos with  $\mathcal{O}(10 \text{ MeV})$  energy, especially the solar neutrinos (will be discussed in Sect. 2.3.3),

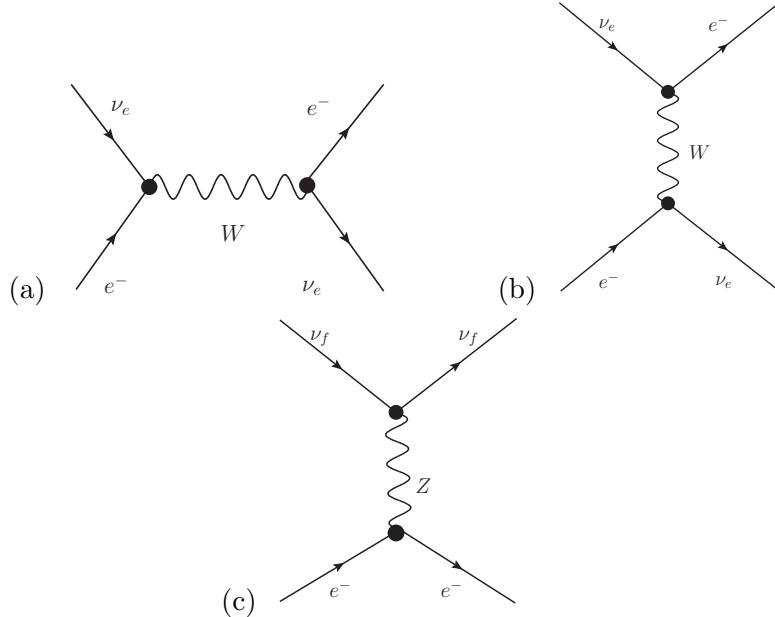


Figure 2.1: Feynman diagrams for the elastic scattering interaction in different channels at tree level. (a) and (b): CC for s and t channels, respectively; (c): NC.

In a particle detector, the electron is usually from the atom of detection medium. conservation of momentum. In the laboratory frame, the kinetic energy of a recoil electron from the  $\nu + e^-$  ES process is[3]:

$$T_e = \frac{2m_e E_\nu^2 \cos^2 \theta}{(m_e + E_\nu)^2 - E_\nu^2 \cos^2 \theta}, \quad (2.1)$$

where the scattering angle  $\theta$  is between the momentum directions of the incoming neutrino and the scattered or recoil electron, as shown in Fig. 2.2.

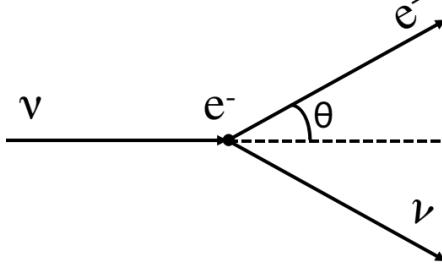


Figure 2.2: A diagram of the  $\nu e^-$  elastic scattering in the lab frame, modified from Ref. [3].

The direction of the scattered electron is strongly correlated with the direction of the incident neutrino. For solar neutrinos, the scattering angle is denoted as “solar angle” ( $\theta_{sun}$ ) in this thesis. It is one of the crucial parameters for measuring solar neutrinos, which will be discussed in Chapter 6 for analyzing solar neutrinos in the SNO+ water phase.

$$\cos \theta_{sun} = \sqrt{\frac{T_e(m_e + E_\nu)^2}{2m_e E_\nu^2 + T_e E_\nu^2}}, \quad (2.2)$$

The differential cross section of the  $\nu + e^-$  ES in the lab frame (without radiative corrections) is given by[20, 21, 3]:

$$\frac{d\sigma}{dT_e}(E_\nu, T_e) = \frac{G_F^2 m_e}{2\pi} \left[ (c_V + c_A) + (c_V - c_A)^2 \left( 1 - \frac{T_e}{E_\nu} \right)^2 - (c_V^2 - c_A^2) \frac{m_e T_e}{E_\nu^2} \right], \quad (2.3)$$

where the coupling parameters  $c_V = (2 \sin^2 \theta_W \pm \frac{1}{2})$ ,  $c_A = \pm \frac{1}{2}$ ,  $\sin^2 \theta_W = 0.23$ , and the “+” sign is for the  $\nu_e + e^-$  case while “−” sign is for the  $\nu_{\mu,\tau} + e^-$  case.

The maximum energy of the recoil electron is:  $T_{max} = \frac{2E_\nu^2}{2E_\nu + m_e c^2}$ , and the cross-section is  $\sigma^{ES}(\nu_e e^-) = 9.52 \times 10^{-44} (E_\nu / 10 \text{ MeV}) \text{ cm}^2$  the expected solar neutrino rate is  $R = A \int_{T_{thresh}}^{T_{max}} \frac{d\sigma}{dE} \frac{dN}{dE_\nu} dE_\nu$ .

The shape of the recoil electron energy spectrum and the directionality are utilized by the experiments to tag solar neutrinos in real-time[20]. These experiments will be introduced in Sect. 2.3.3.

For the solar neutrino case,  $E_\nu \gg m_e$ , the total cross section of  $\nu_e + e^-$  ES and  $\nu_x + e^-$  ES ( $x = \mu$  or  $\tau$ ) can safely approximate to[21]:

$$\begin{aligned}\sigma^{ES}(\nu_e + e^-) &= \frac{2G_F^2}{\pi} m_e E_\nu \left[ (1 + c_L)^2 + \frac{1}{3}(c_R)^2 \right], \\ \sigma^{ES}(\nu_x + e^-) &= \frac{2G_F^2}{\pi} m_e E_\nu \left[ (c_L)^2 + \frac{1}{3}(c_R)^2 \right].\end{aligned}\quad (2.4)$$

where  $x = \mu$  or  $\tau$ ,  $c_L = \frac{(c_V+c_A)}{2}$  and  $c_R = \frac{(c_V-c_A)}{2}$ .

Then the ratio of  $\sigma^{ES}(\nu_{\mu,\tau} + e^-)$  to  $\sigma^{ES}(\nu_e + e^-)$  is[21]:

$$\frac{\sigma^{ES}(\nu_x e^-)}{\sigma^{ES}(\nu_e e^-)} = \frac{3(c_L)^2 + (c_R)^2}{3(1 + c_L)^2 + (c_R)^2} \approx 0.155, \quad (2.5)$$

Or, the cross section of the CC ES is about 6.5 times larger than the NC ES.

## 2.3 Neutrino Flavor Transformation

Neutrino flavor transformation is a quantum mechanical interference phenomenon[22]. It was first discovered in 1998, based on the analysis of atmospheric neutrino fluxes measured by the Super-Kamiokande (Super-K) experiment to solve the “atmospheric neutrino anomaly”[23]. It is the first direct evidence showing that neutrinos have finite masses and the SM is incomplete.

### 2.3.1 Vacuum Oscillation

For neutrino flavor oscillation experiments, neutrinos are detected in certain flavor eigenstates via weak interaction. A neutrino flavor state vector can be taken as a linear superposition of the mass eigenstates. For three-flavor neutrino mixing, we have[24]:

$$|\nu_f\rangle = \sum_{i=1}^3 U_{fi}^* |\nu_i\rangle, \quad (2.6)$$

where  $f = e, \mu, \tau$  and  $k = 1, 2, 3$ . The unitary PMNS matrix,  $U_{PMNS}$ , can be parameterized as<sup>1</sup> :

$$U_{PMNS} = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & c_{23} & s_{23} \\ 0 & -s_{23} & c_{23} \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} c_{13} & 0 & e^{-i\delta_{CP}} s_{13} \\ 0 & 1 & 0 \\ e^{-i\delta_{CP}} s_{13} & 0 & c_{13} \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} c_{12} & s_{12} & 0 \\ -s_{12} & c_{12} & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix}, \quad (2.7)$$

where  $c_{ij} \equiv \cos \theta_{ij}$  and  $s_{ij} \equiv \sin \theta_{ij}$  ( $i, j = 1, 2, 3$ ) are shorthands. In the PMNS matrix, there are four parameters: the three mixing angles  $\theta_{12}$ ,  $\theta_{13}$ ,  $\theta_{23}$  and the charge-parity (CP) violation parameter of lepton sector,  $\delta_{CP}$ . The unknown value of  $\delta_{CP}$  is related to leptogenesis, the hypothetical physical process that produced an asymmetry between leptons and anti-leptons in the very early universe[25].

Now discuss the vacuum flavor oscillation: in the lab frame, assume a neutrino is generated at time  $t_0 = 0$  from a source with a certain flavor state  $|\nu_\alpha\rangle$ . It then propagates in vacuum with a speed close to the speed of light (ultra-relativistic) for a distance  $L$  and is finally detected at time  $t$  in a detector. The flavor eigenstate evolves in space-time is  $|\nu_\alpha\rangle = \sum_i U_{\alpha i}^* |\nu_i, p_i\rangle$ , where  $p_i$  is the 4-momentum of  $\nu_i$ . The momentum is assumed to be along the direction from the source to the detector and only in one dimension. Via the Schrödinger equation, the amplitude for the flavor eigenstate  $|\nu_\beta\rangle$  in the detector at  $(L, t)$  is (use the natural units:  $\hbar = c = 1$ ) [26]:

$$\mathcal{A}(\nu_\alpha \rightarrow \nu_\beta; L, E) = \sum_i U_{\alpha i}^* e^{-iE_i t + ip_i L} \langle \nu_\beta | \nu_i, p_i \rangle = \sum_i U_{\alpha i}^* U_{\beta i} e^{-iE_i t + ip_i L}, \quad (2.8)$$

Then the probability of  $\nu_\alpha$  at time  $t_0 = 0$  transforms into a  $\nu_\beta$  at time  $t$  is:

$$\begin{aligned} P(\nu_\alpha \rightarrow \nu_\beta; L, E) &= |\langle \mathcal{A}(\nu_\alpha \rightarrow \nu_\beta; L, E) | \mathcal{A}(\nu_\alpha \rightarrow \nu_\beta; L, E) \rangle|^2 = \\ &= (U_{\alpha 1}^* U_{\beta 1} e^{-iE_1 t + ip_1 L} + U_{\alpha 2}^* U_{\beta 2} e^{-iE_2 t + ip_2 L} + \dots) (U_{\alpha 1} U_{\beta 1}^* e^{+iE_1 t - ip_1 L} + U_{\alpha 2} U_{\beta 2}^* e^{+iE_2 t - ip_2 L} + \dots) = \\ &= \sum_i |U_{\alpha i}|^2 |U_{\beta i}|^2 + \sum_{i>j} (U_{\alpha i}^* U_{\beta i} U_{\alpha j} U_{\beta j}^*) \exp\{-i(E_i - E_j)t + i(p_i - p_j)L\} + (i \leftrightarrow j), \end{aligned} \quad (2.9)$$

where  $(i \leftrightarrow j)$  stands for the second term exchanging the  $i, j$  indices.

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<sup>1</sup>Here we ignore the Majorana CP violation phases, which are cancelled out when tackling with the flavor transformation probability. They will be introduced in Sect. 2.4.

For the second term in Eqn. 2.9, in the ultra-relativistic case,  $p_i \simeq p_j \equiv p \simeq E \gg m$ , where  $E$  is the average energy. Then  $E_i = \sqrt{p_i^2 + m_i^2} \simeq p + \frac{m_i^2}{2E}$  and thus  $E_i - E_j \simeq \frac{m_i^2 - m_j^2}{2E} \equiv \frac{\Delta m_{ij}^2}{2E}$  [24, 26]. Here  $\Delta m_{ij}^2$  is a set of parameters called mass square difference, popping out in the flavor transition probability. Along with  $L \simeq ct = t$  ( $c \equiv 1$ ), we have  $\exp\{-i(E_i - E_j)t + i(p_i - p_j)L\} \simeq \exp\{-i\frac{\Delta m_{ij}^2}{2E}\}$ . In addition,  $U_{\alpha i}^* U_{\beta i} U_{\alpha j} U_{\beta j}^* = |U_{\alpha i}^* U_{\beta i} U_{\alpha j} U_{\beta j}^*| \exp\{i\phi_{\alpha\beta;ij}\}$ , where  $\phi_{\alpha\beta;ij} = \text{Arg}(U_{\alpha i}^* U_{\beta i} U_{\alpha j} U_{\beta j}^*)$  and  $\phi_{\alpha\beta;ij} = -\phi_{\alpha\beta;ji}$ . Then combine the second term and the  $(i \leftrightarrow j)$  term, 2.9 can be written as[26]:

$$P_{\nu_\alpha \rightarrow \nu_\beta}(L, E) = \sum_i |U_{\alpha i}|^2 |U_{\beta i}|^2 + 2 \sum_{i>j} |U_{\alpha i}^* U_{\beta i} U_{\alpha j} U_{\beta j}^*| \cos\left(\frac{\Delta m_{ij}^2}{2E} L - \phi_{\alpha\beta;ij}\right). \quad (2.10)$$

Further expand the second term in Eqn. 2.10:

$$\begin{aligned} & |U_{\alpha i}^* U_{\beta i} U_{\alpha j} U_{\beta j}^*| \left\{ \cos(\phi_{\alpha\beta;ij}) \cos\left(\frac{\Delta m_{ij}^2}{2E} L\right) + \sin(\phi_{\alpha\beta;ij}) \sin\left(\frac{\Delta m_{ij}^2}{2E} L\right) \right\} = \\ & \Re(U_{\alpha i}^* U_{\beta i} U_{\alpha j} U_{\beta j}^*) \left(1 - 2 \sin^2 \frac{\Delta m_{ij}^2 L}{4E}\right) + \Im(U_{\alpha i}^* U_{\beta i} U_{\alpha j} U_{\beta j}^*) \sin \frac{\Delta m_{ij}^2 L}{2E}, \end{aligned} \quad (2.11)$$

since the matrix  $U$  is unitary and when  $t = 0$ ,

$$P_{\nu_\alpha \rightarrow \nu_\beta} = \delta_{\alpha\beta} = \sum_i |U_{\alpha i}|^2 |U_{\beta i}|^2 + 2 \sum_{i>j} \Re(U_{\alpha i}^* U_{\beta i} U_{\alpha j} U_{\beta j}^*), \quad (2.12)$$

finally it comes out the commonly used vacuum oscillation equation[24, 26]:

$$P_{\nu_\alpha \rightarrow \nu_\beta}(L, E) = \delta_{\alpha\beta} - 4 \sum_{i>j} \Re(U_{\beta i} U_{\alpha i}^* U_{\alpha j} U_{\beta j}^*) \sin^2 \frac{\Delta m_{ij}^2 L}{4E} + 2 \sum_{i>j} \Im(U_{\beta i} U_{\alpha i}^* U_{\alpha j} U_{\beta j}^*) \sin \frac{\Delta m_{ij}^2 L}{2E}. \quad (2.13)$$

Choosing a set of units commonly used by experiments and with dimensional transformation, we have[24]:

$$X_{ij} \equiv \frac{\Delta m_{ij}^2 L}{4E} = \frac{1.267 \Delta m_{ij}^2 [\text{eV}^2] L [\text{m}]}{E_\nu [\text{MeV}]} \quad (2.14)$$

Maximum oscillation occurs when  $X_{ij} \sim \pi$ , which gives an effective length  $L^{osc}(\Delta m_{ij}, E_\nu) = 4\pi E / |\Delta m_{ij}^2|$ .

Currently, the four parameters in the PMNS matrix, as well as the parameters of the  $\Delta m_{ij}$ , have been measured by neutrino oscillation experiments. These experiments can be classified by the neutrino sources they use. They are the solar, the reactor, the atmospheric,

Table 2.1: Neutrino experiments for studying flavor transformation.

type	source	$E_\nu$	example
solar	the Sun	MeV scale	SNO
reactor	reactor	MeV scale	DayaBay
atmospheric	cosmic-ray	GeV scale	SuperK
accelerator	$\nu$ beam from accelerator	GeV scale	T2K
astronomical	astronomical objects	GeV-EeV scale	IceCube

the accelerator, and the astronomical and cosmological neutrino experiments. Table 2.1 lists the energy scale of the neutrino source as well as the example experiments.

For the  $\Delta m_{21}^2$  and  $\theta_{12}$ , a combined analysis of the measurements from the reactor experiment KamLAND (Kamioka Liquid Scintillator Antineutrino Detector) and the solar neutrino experiment SNO (Sudbury Neutrino Observation) gave  $\Delta m_{21}^2 = 7.59_{-0.21}^{+0.21} \times 10^{-5} eV^2$  and  $\tan^2 \theta_{21} = 0.47_{-0.05}^{+0.06}$ [27]. Details will be discussed in Sect.2.3.3.

The accelerator neutrino experiments as well as the atmospheric neutrino experiments have measured  $\Delta m_{32}^2$  and  $\theta_{23}$ . The most recent results from Super-K show that in NH,  $\sin^2 \theta_{23} = 0.588_{-0.064}^{+0.031}$  and  $\Delta m_{32}^2 = 2.5_{-0.20}^{+0.13} \times 10^{-3} eV^2$ [28].

In 2012, the reactor neutrino experiment Daya Bay reported the discovery of non-zero  $\theta_{13}$  with a significance of  $5.2\sigma$ . In 2016, Daya Bay reported that  $\sin^2 2\theta_{13} = 0.0841 \pm 0.0027(stat.) \pm 0.0019(syst.)$ . This high-precision result makes  $\sin^2 2\theta_{13}$  the best measured mixing angle[29, 30].

In addition, there are two squared-mass differences,  $\Delta m_{21}^2 = m_2^2 - m_1^2$  and  $\Delta m_{32}^2 = |m_3^2 - m_2^2|$ . The sign of  $\Delta m_{32}^2$  is unknown and it indicates a mass hierarchy problem of whether neutrino mass is normal hierarchy (NH,  $m_3 > m_2 > m_1$ ) or inverted hierarchy (IH,  $m_3 < m_1 < m_2$ )[24].

In the case of antineutrino flavor oscillation, we have:  $|\bar{\nu}_\alpha\rangle = \sum_i U_{\alpha i} |\bar{\nu}_i, p_i\rangle$ , via the same calculation, a similar oscillation probability equation can be found but with the last term in 2.13 being negative[26]:

$$P_{\bar{\nu}_\alpha \rightarrow \bar{\nu}_\beta}(L, E) = \delta_{\alpha\beta} - 4 \sum_{i>j} \Re[U_{\beta i} U_{\alpha i}^* U_{\alpha j} U_{\beta j}^*] \sin^2 \frac{\Delta m_{ij}^2 L}{4E} - 2 \sum_{i>j} \Im(U_{\beta i} U_{\alpha i}^* U_{\alpha j} U_{\beta j}^*) \sin \frac{\Delta m_{ij}^2 L}{2E}. \quad (2.15)$$

This provides a measure of CP violation[26]:

$$\mathcal{A}_{CP} = P_{\nu_\alpha \rightarrow \nu_\beta}(L, E) - P_{\bar{\nu}_\alpha \rightarrow \bar{\nu}_\beta}(L, E) = 4 \sum_{i>j} \Im(U_{\beta i} U_{\alpha i}^* U_{\alpha j} U_{\beta j}^*) \sin \frac{\Delta m_{ij}^2 L}{2E}, \quad (2.16)$$

where the  $\delta_{CP}$  is examined by the experiments which measure the difference between neutrino and antineutrino oscillation probabilities  $P(\bar{\nu}_\alpha \rightarrow \bar{\nu}_\beta)$  and  $P(\nu_\alpha \rightarrow \nu_\beta)$ [21]. In 2019, the Tokai-to-Kamioka (T2K) experiment in Japan claimed confidence intervals for  $\delta_{CP}$  with three standard deviations ( $3\sigma$ ): [-3.41,-0.03] (NH) or [-2.54,-0.32] (IH). This result indicates that the CP violation exists in leptons[31].

### 2.3.2 Matter Effect

The matter effect is caused by neutrinos interacting with ambient electrons and nucleons in the matter such as the Sun or the Earth. As mentioned in Sect. 2.2,  $\nu_e$  interacts with electrons via both charged weak current and neutral weak current while  $\nu_\mu$  and  $\nu_\tau$  interact only by the neutral current. The  $\nu_e$  energy has an addition term,  $V_{CC} = \sqrt{2}G_F n_e$ , where  $n_e$  is the number density of the electrons in matter and  $G_F$  is the Fermi coupling constant for the weak interaction. This affects the oscillation probabilities for neutrinos propagating in matter compared to vacuum, which is called the Mikheyev-Smirnov-Wolfenstein (MSW) mechanism[32, 33].

In vacuum two-flavor mixing, the Schrödinger equation can be written (in natural units)[21]:

$$i \frac{d}{dt} \begin{pmatrix} \nu_e \\ \nu_\mu \end{pmatrix} = H_0^f \begin{pmatrix} \nu_e \\ \nu_\mu \end{pmatrix}, \quad (2.17)$$

$$H_0^f = \frac{1}{2E} \begin{pmatrix} m_1^2 \cos^2 \theta + m_2^2 \sin^2 \theta & (m_2^2 - m_1^2) \sin \theta \cos \theta \\ (m_2^2 - m_1^2) \sin \theta \cos \theta & m_1^2 \sin 2\theta + m_2^2 \cos^2 \theta \end{pmatrix} = \frac{\Delta m_{21}^2}{4E} \begin{pmatrix} -\cos 2\theta & \sin 2\theta \\ \sin 2\theta & \cos 2\theta \end{pmatrix} + \frac{(m_1^2 + m_2^2)}{4E} \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix}, \quad (2.18)$$

and  $\Delta m_{21}^2 = (m_2^2 - m_1^2)$ .

To simplify the calculation, we can drop the second unitary term of  $H_0^f$  that is irrelevant to the neutrino flavor transformation. Including the matter effect, it gives:

$$H_m = \begin{pmatrix} -\frac{\Delta m_{21}^2}{4E} \cos 2\theta + \sqrt{2}G_F n_e & \frac{\Delta m_{21}^2}{4E} \sin 2\theta \\ \frac{\Delta m_{21}^2}{4E} \sin 2\theta & \frac{\Delta m_{21}^2}{4E} \cos 2\theta \end{pmatrix} \quad (2.19)$$

A mixing angle in matter,  $\theta_m$  is defined as:

$$\tan 2\theta_m = \frac{\Delta m^2 \sin 2\theta}{\Delta m^2 \cos 2\theta - 2\sqrt{2}EG_F n_e}, \quad (2.20)$$

and define an effective squared-mass difference in matter  $\Delta m_m^2$  as:

$$\Delta m_m^2 = \sqrt{(\Delta m^2 \cos 2\theta - 2\sqrt{2}EG_F n_e)^2 + (\Delta m^2 \sin 2\theta)^2}. \quad (2.21)$$

In analogy with mixing in vacuum, we can write the mixing equation relating the energy eigenstates in matter ( $\nu_{1m}, \nu_{2m}$ ) to the flavor eigenstates with a diagonalized Hamiltonian:

$$\begin{pmatrix} \nu_e \\ \nu_\mu \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} \cos \theta_m & \sin \theta_m \\ -\sin \theta_m & \cos \theta_m \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} \nu_{1m} \\ \nu_{2m} \end{pmatrix}. \quad (2.22)$$

The probability of flavor transformation in matter is:

$$P_{\nu_e \rightarrow \nu_\mu} = \sin^2(2\theta_m) \sin^2\left(\frac{\Delta m_m^2 L}{4E}\right). \quad (2.23)$$

The denominator in equation (2.20) implies a resonance condition:

$$V(n_e) = \sqrt{2}G_F n_e = \frac{\Delta m^2 \cos 2\theta}{2E}. \quad (2.24)$$

From this condition, for a given  $E$ , there is a resonance density  $n_e^{reson}$  while for a given  $n_e$ , there is a resonance energy  $E^{reson}$ . When the resonance condition is satisfied,  $\theta_m = \frac{\pi}{4}$  and two flavor neutrinos are maximally mixed, even if the vacuum mixing angle  $\theta$  is small. This is called matter enhanced neutrino oscillation[32, 34]. Since the Sun is an object provides ambient electrons and nucleons, neutrinos coming from the Sun are traditionally used to investigate the matter effects. The matter effect was first observed by measuring the solar neutrino fluxes, which will be discussed in the next section.

### 2.3.3 Solar Neutrinos

In the 1930s, Hans Bethe et al. explained that the Sun's energy is driven by a series of nuclear reactions[35]. The current knowledge of the nuclear reactions has been summarized in the Standard Solar Model (SSM).

The SSM is a modern accepted theory for tracing the evolution of the Sun from its beginning, which is based on the contemporary data from theories and experimental measurements, such as an equation of state describing the balance between the gravitation force and pressure, the cross-sections of the nuclear reactions, the modern Sun's mass, age, radius, luminosity, etc[36]. According to the SSM, the energy in the Sun is mainly produced by two sets of reactions: the proton-proton (pp) chain, which is dominant and contributes to  $\sim 98.6\%$  of the energy release, and the Carbon-Nitrogen-Oxygen (CNO) cycle, which contributes  $\sim 1.4\%$ [37]. Fig. 2.3 shows all the reactions in the pp chain, and Fig. 2.4 shows the reactions in the CNO cycle.

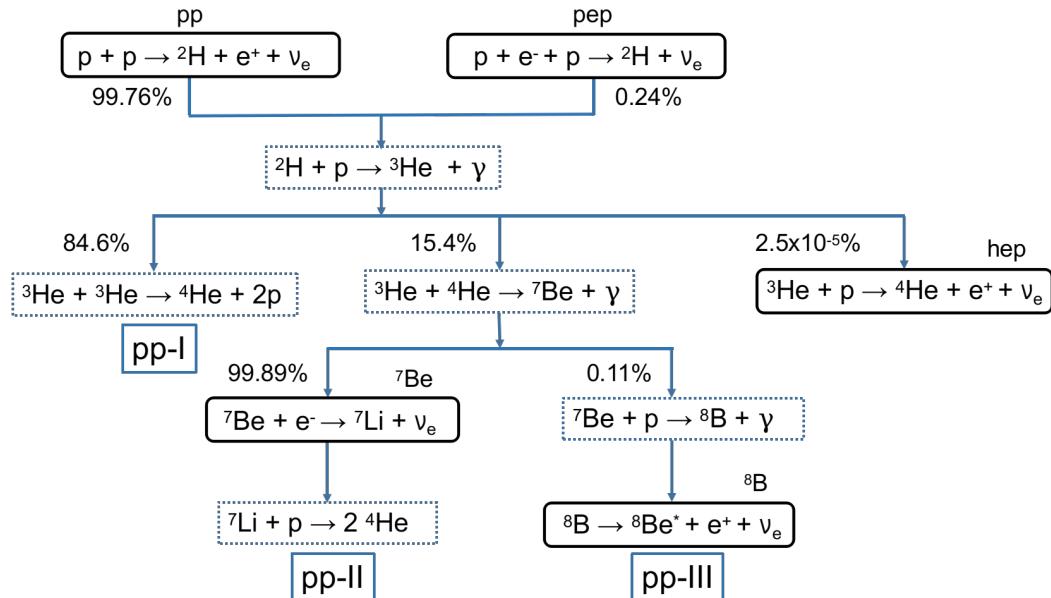


Figure 2.3: All reactions in the three PP chains: PP-I, PP-II, PP-III. The reactions producing neutrinos are labeled in the solid frames. Modified from [38].

Via these nuclear reactions, hydrogen is eventually fused into helium, and the net nuclear transformation is  $4p + 2e^- \rightarrow ⁴He + 2\nu_e + Q$ , where the released energy  $Q = 26.73$  MeV is

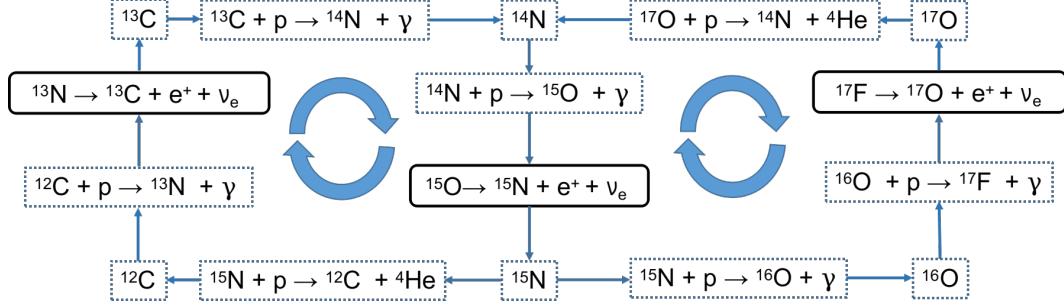


Figure 2.4: All reactions in the CNO bicycle. The reactions producing neutrinos are labeled in the solid frames. Modified from [38].

mostly in the form of the kinetic energy of the photons, with a small fraction carried by neutrinos[37, 39].

The electron neutrinos  $\nu_e$  produced in the solar nuclear reactions are called “solar neutrinos” and they can be detected on the Earth. Due to the branching ratios and unterminated chains in the pp chain and CNO cycle, the solar neutrinos come from different reactions, as shown in Fig. 2.3 and Fig. 2.4. They are named after the corresponding reactions, as shown in Table. 2.2.

Table 2.2: The main reactions produce solar neutrinos in pp chain (a) and CNO cycle (b).

(a) pp chain		(b) CNO cycle	
solar $\nu_e$	reaction	solar $\nu_e$	reaction
pp	$p + p \rightarrow {}^2\text{H} + e^+ + \nu_e$	CNO	${}^{13}\text{N} \rightarrow {}^{13}\text{C} + e^+ + \nu_e$
pep	$p + e^- + p \rightarrow {}^2\text{H} + \nu_e$		${}^{15}\text{O} \rightarrow {}^{15}\text{N} + e^+ + \nu_e$
hep	${}^3\text{He} + p \rightarrow {}^4\text{He} + e^+ + \nu_e$		${}^{17}\text{F} \rightarrow {}^{17}\text{O} + e^+ + \nu_e$
${}^7\text{Be}$	${}^7\text{Be} + e^- \rightarrow {}^7\text{Li} + \nu_e$		
${}^8\text{B}$	${}^8\text{B} \rightarrow {}^8\text{Be}^* + e^+ + \nu_e$		

The average energy of solar  $\nu_e$  is calculated by summing over the  $E_{\nu_e}$  from the  $i^{th}$  reaction chain with a flux of  $\Phi_{\nu_e}^i$  and divided by  $\Phi_{\nu_e}^{tot}$ [37]:

$$\langle E_{\nu_e} \rangle = \sum_i E_i \frac{\Phi_{\nu_e}^i}{\Phi_{\nu_e}^{tot}} \approx 0.265 \text{ MeV.} \quad (2.25)$$

For every released energy, there are about two  $\nu_e$  generated. Then the solar  $\nu_e$  flux at the Earth surface can be estimated via the measured solar radiation energy on the Earth

surface:

$$\Phi_{\nu_e} \simeq \frac{\mathcal{L}_\odot}{4\pi D_\odot^2} \frac{2}{Q - 2\langle E_{\nu_e} \rangle} \simeq 6.40 \times 10^{10} \text{ } \nu_e/\text{cm}^2/\text{s}, \quad (2.26)$$

where the solar constants  $G_{sc} = \mathcal{L}_\odot/(4\pi D_\odot^2) \simeq 0.136 \text{ W/cm}^2$  [40].

The SSM can predict the fluxes and energies of the solar neutrinos coming from different reactions, as shown in Fig. 2.5[36].

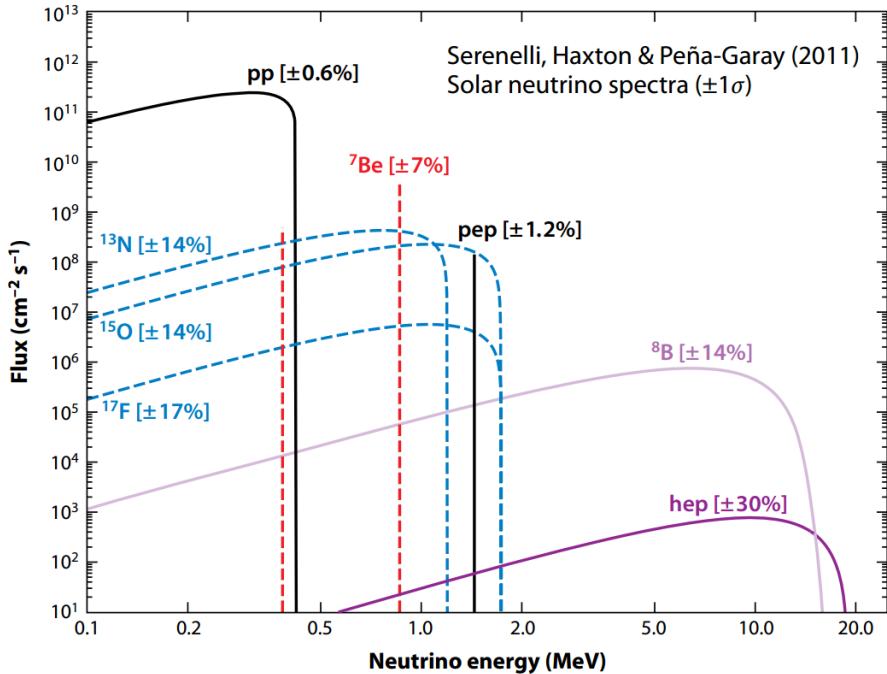


Figure 2.5: Solar neutrino energy spectrum ( $E_\nu$  vs. flux) along with the SSM uncertainties, from Ref. [36].

In 1964, John Bahcall and Raymond Davis proposed the first experiment to detect solar neutrinos[41, 42]. Raymond Davis designed an experiment that used a  $380 \text{ m}^3$  tank filled with Perchloroethylene ( $\text{C}_2\text{Cl}_4$ ), a dry-cleaning fluid rich in chlorine. Solar neutrinos were expected to change  $^{37}\text{Cl}$  to  $^{37}\text{Ar}$  via the endothermic reaction:  $\nu_e + ^{37}\text{Cl} \rightarrow ^{37}\text{Ar} + e^-$ , and the produced  $^{37}\text{Ar}$  were extracted and counted, which is called the radiochemical method. The neutrino energy threshold ( $E_{\text{thresh}}$ ) of the experiment was 0.814 MeV, which allowed a measurement mostly of the  $^8\text{B}$  solar  $\nu_e$  flux but also including some lower energy neutrinos[42]. Their first results, announced in 1968, showed that only about one-third of the predicted

radioactive argon atoms were measured[43]. This pioneering experiment raised a problem of missing solar neutrinos, which is denoted as the solar neutrino problem.

### 2.3.4 Kamiokande and Super-Kamiokande

The solar neutrino problem was later confirmed by the Kamiokande-II experiment in 1988[44]. As the successor of the Kamiokande, Super-K uses a 50-kilotonne water Cherenkov detector to measure the solar neutrinos via the  $\nu - e^-$  elastic scattering. By utilizing the patterns of the Cherenkov lights produced by the recoil electrons (see Sect. 3.3.1, Chapter 3), the direction of the incoming neutrino can be traced and thus the neutrinos from the Sun can be selected. Unlike the radiochemical method, this enables real-time measurements of the solar neutrinos.

In 2000, Super-K reported the observed solar neutrino flux was about 45% of the expected flux in SSM with more than 99.9% confidence level, suggesting the flavor transformation of solar neutrinos and limiting the oscillation parameters ( $\Delta m_{21}^2$ ,  $\theta_{12}$ )[44].

Super-K continues to measure solar neutrinos with more precision and high statistical accuracy and it is able to lower down the energy threshold to 3.5 MeV to search for the  ${}^8\text{B}$  solar neutrinos. By utilizing the data from 2008 to 2014 (1664 live days), and combined with the three phases, it reported a measurement of the elastic scattering flux  $\Phi_{ES} = (2.345 \pm 0.014(\text{stat.}) \pm 0.036(\text{syst.})) \times 10^6 \text{ cm}^{-2}\text{s}^{-1}$ [2].

### 2.3.5 SNO

It was the Sudbury Neutrino Observatory (SNO) experiment finally resolved the solar neutrino problem and first confirmed that the missing solar neutrinos are due to the neutrino flavor transformation  $\nu_e \rightarrow \nu_{\mu,\tau}$ , along with the matter effect mentioned in Sect. 2.3.2.

SNO used a 1-kilotonne heavy water ( $\text{D}_2\text{O}$ ) Cherenkov detector to distinguish the flavors of solar neutrinos. The SNO detector was sensitive to the  ${}^8\text{B}$  solar neutrinos via three interactions: (1) the charged current (CC) on deuteron ( $d$ ):  $\nu_e + d \rightarrow p + p + e^-$ , (2) the neutral current (NC):  $\nu_x + d \rightarrow p + n + \nu_x$ , and (3) the elastic scattering (ES):  $\nu_x + e^- \rightarrow$

$\nu_x + e^-$ . The CC channel was only sensitive to  $\nu_e$  while the NC channel was independent of the neutrino type (“flavor-blind”), which provided a measurement of the total solar neutrino flux regardless of neutrino flavors. The ES channel was also sensitive to all flavors but with reduced sensitivities to  $\nu_\mu$  and  $\nu_\tau$ [45]. As mentioned in Sect. 2.2, the ES cross-section of  $\nu_e$  is 6.5 times larger than the  $\nu_{\mu,\tau}$ .

In 2002, SNO reported that the measured total  ${}^8\text{B}$  solar neutrino flux via the NC channel ( $\Phi_{NC}$ ) was consistent with the SSM while the  $\nu_e$  component of the flux ( $\Phi_e$ ) was about one-third of the total flux[45]:

$$R = \Phi_{CC}/\Phi_{NC} = \Phi_e/\Phi_{tot} = 0.34 \pm 0.04. \quad (2.27)$$

A combined analysis of SNO data acquired from 1999 to 2006 gave the measured total flux of  ${}^8\text{B}$  solar neutrinos by  $\Phi_{{}^8\text{B}} = 5.25 \pm 0.16(\text{stat.})^{+0.11}_{-0.13}(\text{syst.}) \text{ cm}^{-2}\text{s}^{-1}$ . Based on a two-flavor neutrino oscillation analysis,  $\Delta m_{21}^2 = (5.6^{+1.9}_{-1.4}) \times 10^{-5} \text{ eV}^2$  and  $\tan^2 \theta_{12} = 0.427^{+0.033}_{-0.029}$  [46].

### 2.3.6 Combined Analysis of Solar and Reactor Measurements

As mentioned in Sect. 2.3.1, the reactor antineutrino experiments study the neutrino flavor transformation by measuring  $\mathcal{O}(\text{MeV}) \bar{\nu}_e$  produced from reactors. If the distance between the reactor and the detector is long enough (according to Eqn. 2.14,  $L \sim \mathcal{O}(100 \text{ km})$ ), such experiments can probe the  $\Delta m_{12}^2$  and  $\theta_{12}$  parameters, or the flavor transformation parameters in the solar sector. KamLAND is able to study the solar sector due to its long baseline of 180 kilometers (the average value of the distances to the various reactors). It is a 1-kilotonne liquid scintillator detector, located in Gifu Prefecture, Japan, under Mount Ikenoyama at a depth of about 2700 *m.w.e*[27].

Assuming the CPT invariance, the KamLAND and solar neutrino data can be combined by including solar  $\nu_e$  and reactor  $\bar{\nu}_e$  data to obtain the oscillation parameters.  $\Delta m_{21}^2$

A global analysis including solar and reactor data gives (1 –  $\sigma$  limits)[38]:  $0.291 < \sin^2 \theta_{12} < 0.318$ ,  $7.20 \times 10^{-5} \text{ eV}^2 < \Delta m_{12}^2 < 7.51 \times 10^{-5} \text{ eV}^2$ .

### 2.3.7 Borexino

Borexino is a liquid scintillator neutrino detector with a target mass about 300 tonne. It is located at the Gran Sasso National Laboratory (LNGS) in central Italy, under an overburden of rock with 3800 water equivalent meter (m.w.e) to suppress the cosmogenic backgrounds. It is the first experiment that made real-time measurements of the low energy ( $< 1$  MeV) solar neutrinos, thanks to the high light yield of the liquid scintillator.

Unlike the water Cherenkov detector, though liquid scintillator can provide more photons per deposit energies, it cannot be used to measure the event direction (see Sect. 3.3.2, Chapter 3). Borexino mainly measures the energy spectrum of the recoil electrons from the  $\nu + e^-$  ES, which is called spectroscopic measurement[47].

Borexino has measured  $^7\text{Be}$ , pep, pp and  $^8\text{B}$  solar neutrino fluxes[48].

In 2020, Borexino reported the first observation of CNO neutrino[49]. interaction rate is  $7.2^{+3.0}_{-1.7}$  counts per day per 100 tonnes of target at 68% C.L. This result gives a flux on Earth of  $7.0^{+3.0}_{-2.0} \times 10^8 \text{ cm}^{-2}\text{s}^{-1}$ .

### 2.3.8 More Studies on Solar Neutrino and Future Experiments

Precise measurements of low energy solar neutrinos can probe the details of the matter effects,

- Tensions between the reactor and solar experiments
- Solar metallicity problem.

The SSM predictions are agreed with the helioseismological measurements[50, 38].

the speed of sound with helioseismological measurements.

- Day/night effect
- Non-standard neutrino interaction
- Dark matter in the Sun

There are a few new experiments being planned to precisely measure the solar neutrinos in the near future. These experiments include large water Cherenkov detector like Hyper-Kamiokande (Hyper-K), large liquid scintillator detectors like JUNO, Jinping and ASDC-THEIA and ton-scale dark matter direct search detectors.

New techniques of liquid scintillator,

Hyper-Kamiokande (Hyper-K) is the successor of Kamiokande and Super-K. As a water Cherenkov detector with a fiducial mass of 187 kilotonne, which is about 8 times larger than the Super-K and expects to observe  $130 \nu + e^-$  elastic scattering events per day. It is aimed for a detection of *hep* solar neutrino flux, which has not been detected yet. Also, the expected large statistics ob

can resolve the  $2 - \sigma$  discrepancy of neutrino mass squared difference between the solar and reactor experiments.

ASDC-THEIA and Jinping Neutrino Experiment (Jinping)[51]

water-based liquid scintillator doping

Sect. 3.3.4.

is planned to build a 4-kilotonne liquid scintillator or water-based liquid scintillator detector at China Jinping Underground Laboratory (CJPL), where the overburden of rock is 2400 m (6720 m.w.e) and the cosmic-ray muon flux there is measured as  $(2.0 \pm 0.4) \times 10^{-10} (cm^{-2}s^{-1})$ [51], which is about 1/170 times the Borexino[52].

Its fiducial mass for the  $\nu - e^-$  scattering events is proposed to be 2 kiloton, which is 20 times larger than the Borexino target mass. With the advantages of low cosmogenic backgrounds and large fiducial mass target, Jinping is featured to measure pp neutrinos in the range of 0.2-0.3 MeV,  $^7\text{Be}$ , pep and CNO neutrinos can for a 5-year run[51].

With the improving sensitivities, ton-scale dark matter direct search experiments, such as the DARWIN experiment (DARk matter WImp search with liquid xenoN), will be able to detect neutrino interactions[53]. With energy threshold down to several keV and ultra-low background level, DARWIN will have the potential to measure low-energy solar neutrinos via  $\nu - e^-$  elastic scattering, especially for the pp and  $^7\text{Be}$  solar neutrinos. 1 keV with 1%

precision[54, 55].

Among these experiments, SNO+ has measured  $^8\text{B}$  solar neutrino flux in its initial water phase. In the next scintillator phase, SNO+ is able to measure low energy solar neutrinos ( $E_\nu < 2$  MeV), especially for the CNO and *pep* neutrinos. Due to the depth of SNOLAB (will be discussed in Sect. 3.1, Chapter 3), SNO+ is expected to have much lower cosmogenic backgrounds than the Borexino, and thus may obtain more precise measurements[7].

## 2.4 Neutrinoless Double Beta Decay

The neutrino flavor transformation experiments proved that neutrinos are not massless and have finite masses. However, in these experiments, the mass differences, rather than the absolute mass values are measured so we can not know the absolute scale of neutrino masses from these results. Currently, there are mainly three approaches to probe the neutrino masses[39]: (1) Cosmological measurements[56, 57, 58]; (2) Direct measurements of the  $\beta$ -decay spectrum; and (3) A search for the neutrinoless double beta decay ( $0\nu\beta\beta$ ) process, which will be discussed below.

For heavy radioactive isotopes ( $A > 70$ ) with nuclei of even neutron number and even proton number (called the even-even nucleus), beta decay will lead to an odd-odd nucleus which is less stable. Thus for such isotopes, the  $\beta$ -decay is energetically forbidden. In 1935, Maria Goeppert-Mayer pointed out that these isotopes can still decay through a double beta decay process:  $(Z, A) \rightarrow (Z + 2, A) + 2e^- + 2\bar{\nu}_e + Q_{\beta\beta}$ , where  $Q_{\beta\beta}$  is the released energy. This is called ordinary double beta decay or  $2\nu\beta\beta$ , which is allowed by the SM and with a typical half-life  $T_{1/2} > 10^{19}$  years (yr)[59, 60].

In the SM, neutrinos are fermions without carrying electrical charges. A conjecture raised up is that they could be “truly neutral”, i.e., no charge-like quantum number can be used to distinguish a neutrino and an antineutrino[61]. Such a neutral fermion that is its own antiparticle, is called Majorana particle, which was proposed by Ettore Majorana based on a mathematical modification of the Dirac equation[62].

Proposed by W.H.Furry in 1939[63], if neutrinos are Majorana particles (Majorana

neutrinos), a process called neutrinoless double beta decay ( $0\nu\beta\beta$ ) will also be expected:  $(Z, A) \rightarrow (Z + 2, A) + 2e^- + Q_{\beta\beta}$ . In this process, the lepton number is violated by 2, which is not allowed in the SM and New Physics interpretations are required. The Feynman diagrams of  $2\nu\beta\beta$  and  $0\nu\beta\beta$  are illustrated in Fig. 2.6.

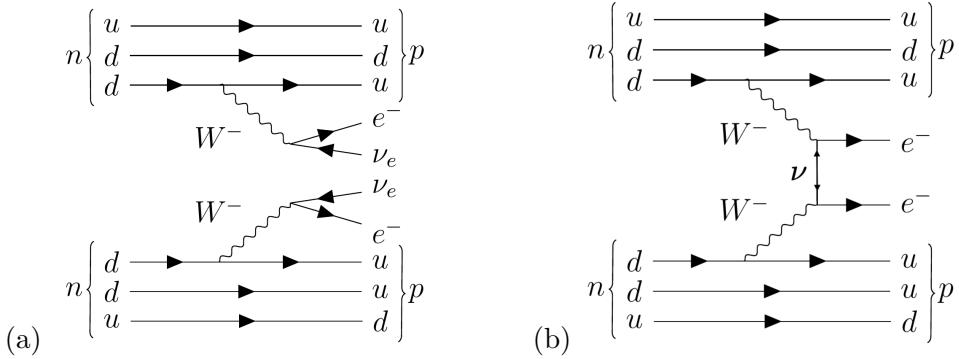


Figure 2.6: Feynman diagrams for  $2\nu\beta\beta$  (a) and  $0\nu\beta\beta$  (b).

For the Majorana neutrino, an effective Majorana mass  $\langle m_{ee} \rangle$  is defined as[40, 64]:

$$\langle m_{ee} \rangle = \left| \sum_{i=1}^3 U_{ei}^2 m_i \right| = |c_{13}^2 c_{12}^2 m_1 + c_{13}^2 s_{12}^2 e^{i\alpha_1} m_2 + s_{13}^2 e^{i\alpha_2} m_3|, \quad (2.28)$$

where the values of  $U_{ei}$  are the elements of the neutrino mixing matrix for the flavor state  $\nu_e$ , and  $m_i$  are the mass eigenvalues of the mass eigenstates, according to Enq. 2.6;  $\alpha_1, \alpha_2$  are two Majorana CP-violation phase factors ranging from 0 to  $\pi$ , and  $\alpha_2$  can also be taken as  $\alpha_2 - \delta_{CP}$ .

The neutrino mass eigenvalues  $m_i$  can be expressed as the lightest neutrino mass  $m_{lightest}$  and mass square differences  $\Delta m_{ij}^2$ [40]:

$$\text{for the NH, } m_{lightest} = m_1, \text{ and } m_2 = \sqrt{m_{lightest}^2 + \Delta m_{21}^2}, m_3 = \sqrt{m_{lightest}^2 + |\Delta m_{31}^2|}; \\ \text{for the IH, } m_{lightest} = m_3, m_1 = \sqrt{m_{lightest}^2 + |\Delta m_{31}^2|}, m_2 = \sqrt{m_{lightest}^2 + |\Delta m_{31}^2| + \Delta m_{21}^2}.$$

In this case, the effective Majorana mass can be expressed as the  $m_{lightest}$  and neutrino flavor transformation parameters  $\theta_{ij}$  and  $\Delta m_{ij}^2$ . A probe of the  $\langle m_{ee} \rangle$  can thus determine the  $m_{lightest}$  and then determine the absolute neutrino masses.

The decay width and the half-life of the  $0\nu\beta\beta$  process are calculated as[40, 64]:

$$\Gamma = (T_{1/2}^{0\nu})^{-1} = G_{PS}(Q, Z)|M_{Nuclear}|^2 \langle m_{ee} \rangle^2, \quad (2.29)$$

where  $G_{PS}(Q, Z)$  is a phase space corresponding to the effective coupling constant, which depends on the endpoint energy  $Q$  and the atomic number  $Z$ ;  $|M_{Nuclear}|$  is the nuclear matrix element describing the nuclear transition and it can only be calculated theoretically from approximate methods based on many-body nuclear models, such as the Nuclear Shell Model (NSM), interacting Boson Model (IBM), etc. Since the  $G_{PS}$  and  $|M_{Nuclear}|^2$  can be calculated theoretically, an  $0\nu\beta\beta$  experiment measures the  $T^{0\nu}$  to quantify the  $\langle m_{ee} \rangle$ .

Similar to the  $\beta$ -decay case, the  $2\nu\beta\beta$  process will cause a continuous spectrum in the detector while the  $0\nu\beta\beta$  process only has two electrons in the final state. These electrons take away the total energy (the energy from the nuclear recoil is negligible here), and their energy spectra sum up to give a distinct energy peak at the Q-value ( $Q_{\beta\beta}$ ). Taking the isotope  $^{130}\text{Te}$  as an example, Fig. 2.7 illustrates the shapes of the energy spectrum from the  $2\nu\beta\beta$  and the  $0\nu\beta\beta$  decay processes.

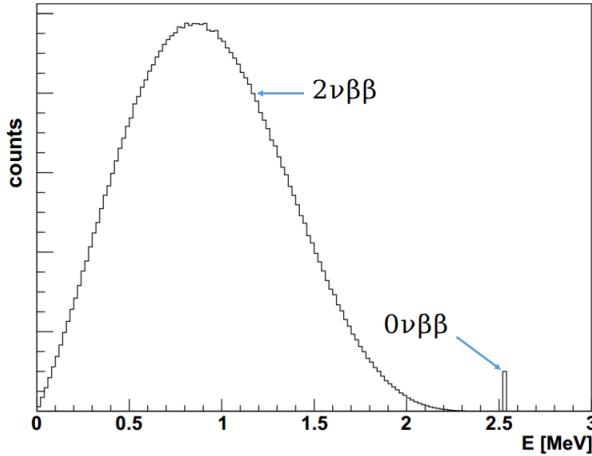


Figure 2.7: Energy spectrum of the  $^{130}\text{Te}$   $2\nu\beta\beta$  decay and the hypothetical  $0\nu\beta\beta$  decay. The SNO+ software package (RAT) was used to produce the simulations for the plot. The package is described in Sect. 3.6.

To determine the  $T_{1/2}^{0\nu}$ , experiments search for events appearing around the  $Q_{\beta\beta}$ . For a candidate isotope, the observed number of events in expectation is:

$$N_{event} = \ln 2 \frac{N_A}{M_A} \frac{\alpha \cdot \epsilon \cdot m \cdot t}{T_{1/2}^{0\nu}}, \quad (2.30)$$

where  $N_A$  is the Avogadro's number,  $\alpha$  is the abundance of the isotope in the element,  $M_A$

is the molar mass of the isotope,  $m$  is the target isotope mass in the detector, and  $t$  is the measurement time of total exposure.

There are 35 candidate isotopes can undergo the  $2\nu\beta\beta$  decay process, but only a few of them are suitable for the application in direct  $0\nu\beta\beta$  search experiments[3]. From the experimental view, the candidate isotopes are expected to have relatively high natural abundances and high Q-values, be deployed in a large amount with low costs, be atoxic and unharful to the environment, etc. However, in a realistic situation, no isotope fulfills all these criteria, and trade-offs have to be made for the current experiments[65]. Fig. 2.8 shows the Q-values and natural abundances of the candidate isotopes currently selected by the  $0\nu\beta\beta$  experiments.

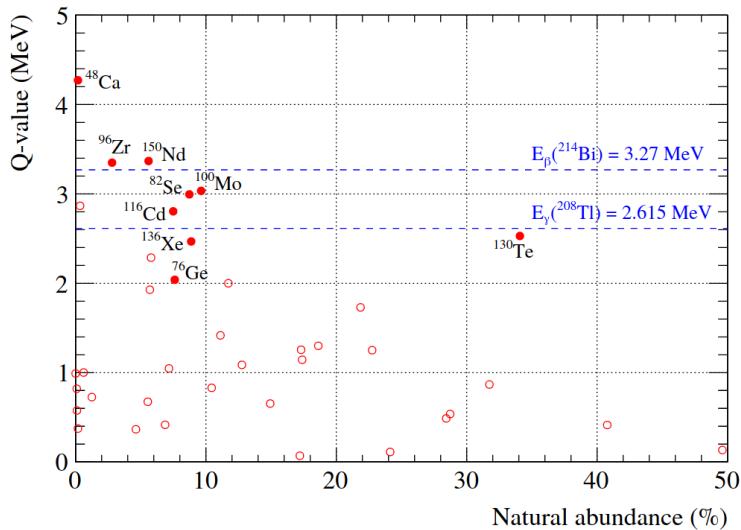


Figure 2.8: Natural abundance vs. Q-values for different  $2\nu\beta\beta$  isotopes, from Ref. [4].

Among these isotopes,  $^{130}\text{Te}$  has the highest natural abundance of 34% and thus can provide a higher target isotope mass. SNO+ will use Te-loaded liquid scintillator to search for  $0\nu\beta\beta$ , which will be discussed in Chapter 3.

At the time of this writing, no experiment has found the signal of  $0\nu\beta\beta$ , while limits on  $T_{1/2}^{0\nu}$  and  $\langle m_{ee} \rangle$  for various candidate isotopes have been setting. Currently, the best limit of  $T_{1/2}^{0\nu}$  reported by the experiments is obtained from the KamLAND-Zen (ZEroNeutrino) Experiment, searching for the signal from the  $^{136}\text{Xe}$ . Their 2016 results gave a lower limit

of  $T_{1/2}^{0\nu}(^{136}\text{Xe}) > 1.07 \times 10^{26}$  yr at 90% C.L., and the corresponding upper limits on the effective Majorana mass:  $\langle m_{ee} \rangle < (61 - 165)$  meV[66].

For  $^{130}\text{Te}$ , the current best limit is from the CUORE experiment (Cryogenic Underground Observatory for Rare Events). In 2018, CUORE placed a lower limit of  $T_{1/2}^{0\nu}(^{130}\text{Te}) > 1.5 \times 10^{25}$  yr at 90% C.L., and  $\langle m_{ee} \rangle < (110 - 520)$  meV[67].

For  $^{76}\text{Ge}$ , the current best limit is from the GERDA experiment (GERmanium Detector Array). In 2019, GERDA reported a lower limit half-life of  $T_{1/2}^{0\nu}(^{76}\text{Ge}) > 1.8 \times 10^{26}$  years at 90% C.L. with  $\langle m_{ee} \rangle < (79 - 180)$  meV[68].

Future experiments in a decade, such as the KamLAND2-Zen, LEGEND-1000, nEXO, are expected to reach  $T_{1/2}^{0\nu}$  at  $\mathcal{O}(10^{27} - 10^{28})$  years[65].

## Chapter 3

# The SNO+ Experiment

### 3.1 Overview

The SNO+ experiment is located at SNOLAB. This deep underground facility sits at Vale’s Creighton mine in Sudbury, Ontario, Canada (coordinate:  $46^{\circ}28'19.6''\text{N}$ ,  $81^{\circ}11'12.4''\text{W}$ ). It provides an environment with extremely low cosmic ray backgrounds. At sea level, an average cosmic muon ( $\mu$ ) flux rate is about  $1.44 \times 10^7 \mu/\text{m}^2/\text{day}$ [69]. Cosmic muons with high energies (mostly  $\mathcal{O}(\text{GeV})$ ) can induce spallation backgrounds, such as fast neutrons and lasting isotopes, which are harmful to the low background counting experiments[51]. The SNOLAB has a  $2092 \pm 6$  m flat overburden of rock and it ensures that cosmic muon ( $\mu$ ) flux rate is as low as  $0.286 \pm 0.009 \mu/\text{m}^2/\text{day}$ , corresponding to 6010 water equivalent meter (m.w.e)[70], which means that every hour only about 1  $\mu$  passes through the SNO+ detector.

The SNO+ detector is a refurbishment of the SNO detector. The SNO+ collaboration makes use of the SNO infrastructure and upgraded it to be a liquid scintillator detector. As shown in Fig. 3.1, the detector is inside a barrel-like rock cavity with a diameter of 22 m at its waist and a height of 34 m. The cavity is filled with 7000 tonnes of ultrapure water (UPW) to provide buoyancy for the vessel, and shield radiation backgrounds from the environment, such as the cosmic rays and isotope decays from the rock.

The detector consists of an acrylic vessel (AV) sphere of 12.01 m in diameter and 5.5 cm in thickness. The AV contains detection media (or called target materials) and is held in place by a rope net system including hold-up and hold-down Tensylon ropes. This spherical structure is simple in geometry and reduces the complexities of simulation and event reconstruction. Furthermore, this geometry allows for spherical fiducial volume cuts from the center of the AV to further get rid of external backgrounds, which makes the SNO+ as a graded-shield type detector[71]. On the top of the AV sphere, there is an acrylic neck cylinder with 6.8 m high and 1.46 m inner diameter. The neck connects the AV sphere to the facilities on the deck above the detector. Through the neck, pipes can fill the detection media into the AV and recirculate as well. Calibration sources for internal scans can also be lowered down into the AV through the neck.

The AV sphere is concentric within a stainless steel geodesic dome with an average radius of 8.4 m, which is called the photomultiplier support structure (PSUP). 9394 Hamamatsu 8-inch R1408 photomultipliers (PMTs) were mounted on the PSUP, looking inward to the AV. To increase the light collection efficiency of these PMTs and thus to obtain an extensive photocathode coverage of the detector, each of these PMTs was fitted into a 27 cm diameter reflective bucket (called “concentrator”), which consists of reflective pedals coated with aluminum. The effective photocathode coverage of the detector reaches about 54%[72]. Besides the inward-looking PMTs, 90 PMTs look outward, serving as muon vetos. Furthermore, 4 Hamamatsu R5912 High Quantum Efficiency (HQE) PMTs were also installed for testing the performance of potential SNO+ phases-II[73].

### 3.2 SNO+ Physics Phases

The SNO+ experiment is designed for multi-purpose measurements of neutrino physics. The detector has been running since December 2016. There are three physics phases of the experiment and each phase has different detection media inside the AV: the water phase, the scintillator phase, and the tellurium phase[72].

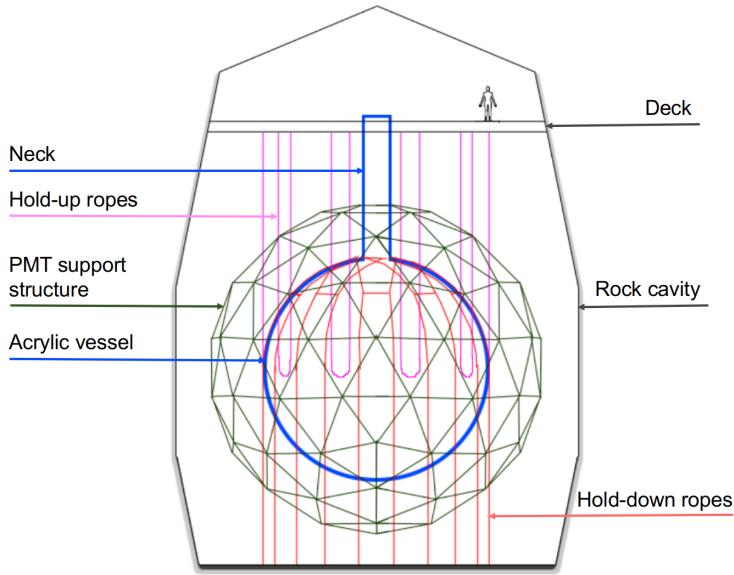


Figure 3.1: The SNO+ detector labeled with main structures, modified from Ref. [74].

### 3.2.1 Water Phase

In this initial phase, about 905 tonnes of ultrapure water was filled into the AV. The detector collected water physics data from May 2017 to July 2019.

During the data-taking, different types of calibration runs have been taken. The detector timing and energy response, systematics, and backgrounds are studied. Multiple physics analyses of invisible nucleon decay, solar neutrinos, and reactor antineutrinos are ongoing, and relating results have been published[75, 1, 76, 77]. The external backgrounds are also measured, which will be the same as the following two phases.

In this phase, the main physics goal is to search for the invisible nucleon decay, which violates the baryon number and predicts Grand Unified Theory (GUT). A proton or a bound neutron decays away without releasing charged particles in the invisible decay mode, compared to the “visible” decay channels of  $p \rightarrow e\pi$  and  $p \rightarrow \nu K$ , which has been searched and set limits by the Super-K experiment. In the SNO+ water detector,  $^{16}\text{O}$  may decay into  $^{15}\text{O}^*$  (bound neutron invisible decay) or  $^{15}\text{N}^*$  (proton invisible decay) excited state. The  $^{15}\text{O}^*$  has 44% chance to deexcite to produce 6.18 MeV  $\gamma$  ray and 2% chance to produce

7.03 MeV  $\gamma$ ; while  $^{15}\text{N}^*$  has 41% to release 6.32 MeV  $\gamma$  and 7.01, 7.03 and 9.93 MeV  $\gamma$  with chances of 2%, 2% and 3% respectively. The experiment has searched for these  $\gamma$  signals and the first publication sets world-leading limits of  $\mathcal{O}(10^{29})$  years for both the proton and neutron invisible decay lifetime at 90% Bayesian credibility level[75].

The  $^8\text{B}$  solar neutrinos were measured with a 69.2 kilo-tonnes·day dataset. By analyzing the solar neutrino elastic scattering events based on the dataset (Chapter 6 will discuss the method in detail), the number of the solar neutrino events were counted in different energy regions. In the first publication[1], by fitting to the non-oscillation solar neutrino model, an observed flux was obtained from the dataset to be  $2.53_{-0.28}^{+0.31}(\text{stat.})_{-0.10}^{+0.13}(\text{syst.}) \times 10^6 \text{ cm}^{-2}\text{s}^{-1}$  for the  $^8\text{B}$  solar neutrinos with energies larger than 5 MeV. In the energy region larger than 6 MeV, the dataset has a background rate of  $0.25_{-0.07}^{+0.09}$  events/kilo-tonne·day, which is extremely pure with solar neutrinos. Currently, this background rate is the lowest one compared to the other water Cherenkov detectors[1].

Reactor antineutrinos can be captured by the SNO+ detector and get measured. 40% of these antineutrinos are from one nearby reactor complex in Canada at a 240-km baseline; 20% are from two Canadian complexes at around 350 km; the rest are from the USA and elsewhere with longer baselines[72]. Though the antineutrino event rate in pure water is much lower than in the scintillator, during the water phase, SNO+ still has the potentials to detect reactor antineutrinos due to the low background dataset and relatively high detection efficiency. An Americium-Beryllium (AmBe) calibration source was deployed during the water phase to evaluate the sensitivity for detecting reactor antineutrinos. This source provides neutrons along with 4.4-MeV  $\gamma$ s. Neutrons are captured by hydrogen, and 2.2-MeV  $\gamma$ s are released. An analysis of delayed coincidence between 4.4-MeV and 2.2-MeV  $\gamma$ s can help tag neutrons, which is crucial for tagging the reactor antineutrinos since they are measured by the inverse  $\beta$ -decay process, which produces neutrons with a similar energy scale. In the first publication for the SNO+ water phase, a neutron detection efficiency of 50% was obtained when the AmBe source was deployed at the center of the detector; the neutron-hydrogen capture time constant  $\tau$  was measured to be  $202.35_{-0.76}^{+0.87} \mu\text{s}$ , and from  $\tau$ ,

a thermal capture cross-section was calculated to be  $336.3^{+1.2}_{-1.5}$  milli-barn (mb)[76].

### 3.2.2 Partial-fill Phase

### 3.2.3 Scintillator Phase

In this phase, the AV will be filled with 780 tonnes of liquid scintillator, which is a mixture of linear alkylbenzene (LAB) as a solvent and 2 g/L of 2,5-diphenyloxazole (PPO) as a fluor. This LAB-based organic liquid scintillator is referred to as the “unloaded” liquid scintillator (Sect. 3.3.4.1 will discuss more details).

The main physics goal of the scintillator phase is to measure low energy solar neutrinos: the CNO, pep, and low energy  ${}^8\text{B}$  neutrinos. The pep neutrinos are mono-energetic, with  $E_\nu=1.442$  MeV and their flux is well predicted by the Standard Solar Model[?]. A measurement of the pep neutrinos will give more information on the matter effects in neutrino oscillations.

The solar metallicity is the abundance of elements heavier than  ${}^4\text{He}$  (called “metal” elements in the context of astronomy). It is poorly constrained and the predictions from different solar models disagree with each other. A measurement of the CNO neutrinos can give the abundance of  ${}^{12}\text{C}$ ,  ${}^{13}\text{N}$  and  ${}^{15}\text{O}$  and can thus resolve the metallicity problem[?].

Three kinds of antineutrinos will also be measured: reactor antineutrinos as mentioned before; geoneutrinos from natural radioactivity in the Earth; and the supernova neutrinos. SNO+ is planned to join the SuperNova Early Warning System (SNEWS), which is an international network of experiments with abilities to provide an early warning of a galactic supernova[70].

#### 3.2.3.1 Tellurium Phase

In this final phase, 0.5% natural Tellurium (Te) by mass (with 1.3 kilo-tonnes of  ${}^{130}\text{Te}$ ) will be loaded into the scintillator, which is referred to as the “Te-loaded” scintillator (Sect. 3.3.4.2 will discuss more details). Higher loading concentrations would be possible for a further loading plan[5]. The main purpose of this phase is to search for the  $0\nu\beta\beta$

signals in  $^{130}\text{Te}$ .

### 3.3 Detection Media

In the SNO+ detector, charged particles are expected to interact with the detection media and create Cherenkov lights and scintillation lights.

#### 3.3.1 Cherenkov Radiation

For any charged particle traveling in a transparent medium at an ultra-relativistic speed (a speed greater than the local phase speed of light in the medium), a kind of electromagnetic radiation, called Cherenkov radiation, can be emitted from the coherent response of the medium under the action of the field of the moving particle[78, 79].

Suppose a charged particle moves in a transparent, isotropic, and non-magnetic medium and creates an electromagnetic wave. The electromagnetic wave propagates with a wavenumber  $k = n \cdot \omega/c$ , where  $c$  is the speed of light in vacuum,  $n$  is the real-valued refractive index and  $\omega$  is the frequency. If the particle travels uniformly along x-axis with a velocity of  $v$ , the x-component of the wave vector is  $k_x = \omega/v$ . For a freely propagating wave,  $k > k_x$ , therefore  $v > v_p = c/n(\omega)$ , where  $v_p$  is the phase velocity in the medium. Under this condition that the speed of the charged particle is greater than the  $v_p$ , the Cherenkov radiation is emitted with a frequency of  $\omega$ [79].

The Cherenkov angle,  $\theta_c$  is the angle between the direction of the particle and the direction of Cherenkov emission and it is well-defined by  $\cos \theta_c(\omega) = \frac{c}{n(\omega)v}$ . The radiation is distributed over a surface of a cone with the half-opening angle  $\theta_c$ .

Consider the condition  $v > v_p = c/n(\omega)$ , for the case of  $e^-$  traveling in a water detector, if neglecting the dependency on  $\omega$ ,  $n_{\text{water}} \simeq 1.33$  [24], then  $\theta_c \simeq 41.25^\circ$  and  $v_p \simeq 2.254 \times 10^8 \text{ m/s}$ , which corresponds to a kinetic energy  $E_k = (\gamma - 1)mc^2 = 0.264 \text{ MeV}$  for  $e^-$ , where  $\gamma = 1/\sqrt{1 - v_p^2/c^2}$ . This is the lowest kinetic energy to create Cherenkov radiation, which is referred to the Cherenkov threshold ( $E_{\text{thresh}}$ ). In the case that the LAB-PPO liquid scintillator is the medium,  $n \simeq 1.50$ [80],  $\theta_c \simeq 48.19^\circ$  and for  $e^-$ ,  $E_{\text{thresh}} \simeq 0.175 \text{ MeV}$ .

For a particle with a charge of  $ze$ , the number of photons produced by Cherenkov radiation per unit path length and per unit frequency of the photons is given by[81]:

$$\frac{d^2N}{d\omega dx} = \frac{\alpha^2(ze)^2}{c} \sin^2 \theta_c = \frac{z^2\alpha}{c} \left(1 - \frac{1}{\beta^2 n^2(\omega)}\right),$$

where  $\alpha$  is the fine structure constant.

Transforming the frequency into the wavelength ( $\lambda = 2\pi\omega$ ) and integrating over the wavelength, the number of photons along the particle track projected on the x-axis is[81]:

$$\frac{dN}{dx} = 2\pi(ze)^2 \alpha \sin \theta_c \int_{\lambda_1}^{\lambda_2} \frac{d\lambda}{\lambda^2},$$

For optical photons with wavelengths ranging from 350 to 550 nm (typical PMT detection sensitive range), the above formula can be calculate into[81]:

$$\frac{dN}{dx} = 476(ze)^2 \sin^2 \theta_c \text{ photons/cm.}$$

For the Cherenkov radiation caused by  $e^-$  in a water detector,  $dN/dx \simeq 207 \text{ photons/cm}$ ; while in the LAB-PPO case,  $dN/dx \simeq 264 \text{ photons/cm}$ . In a realistic measurement, the detection efficiency and the coverage of photon sensors are also required to be taken into account.

### 3.3.2 Scintillation from Organic Scintillator

Besides the Cherenkov photons described in the previous section, the majority of lights emitted from the organic scintillator are scintillation photons.

The organic liquid scintillator can convert the kinetic energy of charged particles into scintillation photons with wavelengths in the sensitive detection region of PMTs. They are aromatic hydrocarbon compounds with benzene-ring structures. When ionizing radiation happens in the scintillator, the free valence electrons of the molecules are excited and transit to occupy the  $\pi$ -molecular orbitals with the benzene rings. These highly delocalized electrons are called  $\pi$ -electrons, which can occupy a series of energy levels. A Jablonski diagram, invented by Polish physicist Aleksander Jabłoński, is generally used to describe

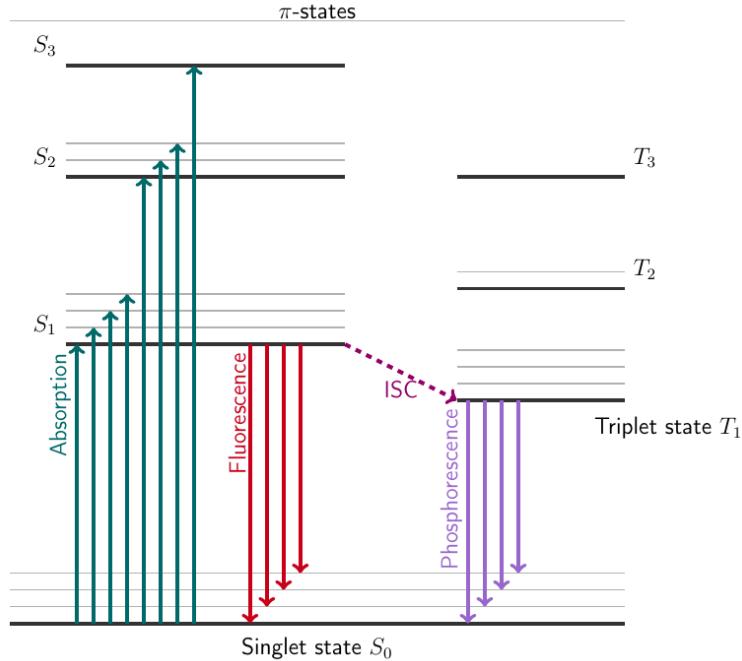


Figure 3.2: A Jablonski diagram for the organic scintillator, modified from Refs. [83, 82].

molecular absorbance and emission of light. In Fig. 3.2, the Jablonski diagram illustrates the  $\pi$ -electronic energy levels of an organic scintillator molecule[82, 81].

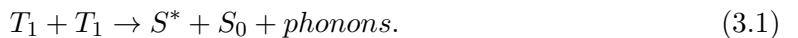
In the diagram,  $S_{0,1,2,3,\dots}$  are the energy levels of the spin-0 singlet states, where  $S_0$  is the ground state and  $S^* = S_{1,2,3,\dots}$  are the excited singlet states. Above the ground state  $S_0$ , there is also a set of spin-1 triplet states  $T_{1,2,3,\dots}$ , where  $T_1$  is the lowest triplet state. These electron energy levels are labeled with thick black lines. The energy spacings between these levels are  $\mathcal{O}(\text{eV})$ . In each level, there are also fine structure levels that correspond to excited vibration modes of the molecule (labeled with gray lines and can be marked as  $S_{10}, S_{11}, \dots, S_{20}, S_{21}, \dots$ ). The energy spacing between these fine levels are  $\mathcal{O}(0.15)$  eV[81, 82].

The ionization radiation transfers the energy to the molecules and excites the electron levels as well as the vibrational levels, labeled as the absorption lines (in green). The decays between the excited singlet states (not to the ground state) are almost immediate ( $\leq 10\text{ ps}$ ) without the emission of light. This process is called internal degradation. The decays from the excited singlet state  $S_1$  (as well as the vibrational states  $S_{10}, S_{11}, S_{12}, \dots$ ) to the ground

state (as well as the vibration states  $S_{01}, S_{02}, \dots$ ) happen promptly ( $\mathcal{O}(\text{ns})$ ) and emit lights (labelled as red lines). This process is called fluorescence which contributes to the prompt component of the emission of scintillation light. The probability of  $S_1$  decays into the vibrational states  $S_1 \rightarrow S_{01}, S_{02}, \dots$  among the ground state is more than  $S_1 \rightarrow S_0$ . Since the absorbed energy of  $S_0 \rightarrow S_1$  is larger than the emitted energy of  $S_1 \rightarrow S_{01}, S_{02}, \dots$ , the scintillators have very little self-absorption of the fluorescence and are transparent to their own radiation. The effect of Stokes shift, which refers to the overlap between the optical absorption and emission spectra, is small for the organic scintillator[81, 82].

The transitions between the singlet and triplet states are highly forbidden due to the electron spin-flip is involved[84, 85]. There also exists a relatively rare process called inter-system crossing (ISC), which converts excited singlet states into triplet states. Besides this, 75% of triplet states can be produced by ionization-recombination[84, 86].

For the de-excitation, the similar processes of internal degradation occur among  $T_{2,3,\dots} \rightarrow T_1$ .  $T_1$  is a relatively stable state and the lifetime of the molecule in the triplet state is in  $\mathcal{O}(10^{-4} - 10)$  s[87].  $T_1 \rightarrow S_0$  is highly forbidden. However, the  $T_1$  state can go through an indirect decay process by interacting with another excited  $T_1$  molecule and forms an excited singlet state:



The  $S^*$  will de-excite and emit delayed scintillation light. The process for emitting this delayed scintillation light is called delayed fluorescence or phosphorescence[81]. This process contributes to the delayed component of scintillation light.

For a typical scintillator detector, the time scale of detector response is  $\mathcal{O}(1 - 100)$  ns. In this time region, the emission of the scintillation light contains the primary fluorescence from the de-excitation of the singlet states (prompt component) and the delayed fluorescence from the de-excitation of the indirect triplet states (delayed component)[86]. The time profile of the scintillation light emission is a mixture of prompt and delayed components.

Different charged particles can cause different ionization densities when they deposit energies to the scintillator molecules. The ionization density affects the relative population

of the excited singlet and triplet states. Compared to an  $e^-$ , an  $\alpha$ -particle can cause a high ionization density, which produces a higher ratio of triplet states. Therefore, the time profile for the  $\alpha$ -particle has more delayed components or longer tails than the  $e^-$ . This enables the organic scintillator to distinguish  $\alpha$  with  $e^-$  or other lighter charged particles[86, 88].

An empirical formula, called follows Birk's law[89, 83], describes the photon yield along with unit distance by the incident particle:

$$\frac{dY}{dx} = A \frac{dE/dx}{1 + k_B \cdot dE/dx}, \quad (3.2)$$

where  $A$  is a normalization constant,  $k_B$  is the Birks' constant of the scintillator, which in practice is obtained by fitting the formula to the measured data.

### 3.3.3 Liquid Scintillator for SNO+

Organic scintillators can release a large number of photons with wavelengths in the sensitive regions of the PMTs and have abilities for particle identification. In addition, since organic liquids are non-polar media, it is hard for ionic impurities to dissolve in. This leads to the lower contamination levels of uranium (U), thorium (Th), and potassium (K) in the organic liquid scintillators. Among the organic scintillators, aromatic organic liquid scintillators have high electron densities and thus they can provide sufficient targets for particle interactions[90]. Due to these advantages, aromatic organic liquid scintillators have been extensively developed as detection media for large particle detectors, especially for neutrino experiments, such as KamLAND, Borexino, Day Bay, and JUNO[88].

SNO+ has developed such kind of liquid scintillators that are compatible with the detector components, especially with the acrylic materials, like the AV sphere. Two kinds of SNO+ liquid scintillators are discussed in the following sub-sections: the unloaded liquid scintillator for the scintillator phase and the Tellurium-loaded liquid scintillator (TeLS) for the tellurium phase.

### 3.3.4 Water-based Wavelength Shifter (Proposal)

X. Dai et al.[91] made a proposal for adding wavelength shifters (WLS) into a water Cherenkov detector like SNO. Compared to the water Cherenkov detector, a water-based wavelength shifter (wbWLS) detector has a higher light yield (about threefold higher than SNO[91]) and thus lowers down the energy threshold and opens opportunity to detect low energy events. At the meantime, it will still keep the directionality from Cherenkov signals compared to a loss of the directionality for the liquid scintillator detector, which can be used to suppress the backgrounds when analyzing directional signals, such as solar neutrinos. This technology is being studied by future neutrino experiments, such as the Advanced Scintillation Detector Concept (ASDC)[92], WATCHMAN experiment[93] and Jinping experiment[51].

There was a proposal of adding wavelength shifter (WLS) into the SNO+ detector in the middle of the water phase, made by the University of Alberta group. The specific wavelength shifter we considered is PPO, which is a well-studied ingredient of the liquid scintillator used in the SNO+ scintillator phase and Te-loaded phase. Although this proposal was not adopted due to the experiment schedule, it is still worthwhile for a conceptual study of a SNO+-like detector that uses water-based wavelength shifter (wbWLS) as the detection medium. In Chapter 4, an event reconstruction algorithm based on the wbWLS is discussed. Based on the algorithm, it shows that comparing the wbWLS to the water, the energy threshold can be pushed down and the event position resolutions can be improved, while the directionality is still kept.

#### 3.3.4.1 Unloaded Liquid Scintillator

SNO+ adopts a liquid scintillator cocktail contains two primary components: LAB as solvent and PPO as solute. LAB is doped with PPO to a concentration of 2 g/L. Fig. 3.3 shows the chemical structural formulae of LAB and PPO[88].

LAB is a family of alkylated aromatic organic compounds with a phenyl group attached to a long carbon chain varying from 9 to 14 carbons[94, 88]. It has been used as a biodegrad-

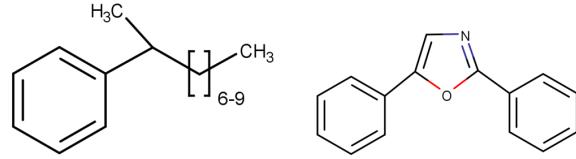


Figure 3.3: Structural formulae of LAB (left) and PPO (right).

able detergent since the 1960s and it is proved to be relatively non-toxic and bring very low risks for the environment or human health[94]. Due to the long carbon chain, LAB is an effective energy absorber to transfer the deposit energy to lights. It also has a long attenuation length of  $(72 \pm 14)$  m at 546 nm and thus [70].

As a wavelength shifter, PPO is usually added and dissolved into the LAB [95]. This wavelength shifter is used as a fluor. Energies are transferred from LAB to PPO via non-radiative Förster resonant energy transfer. It can shift the wavelengths of the scintillation photons to a range of 300-550 nm, which is in the sensitive range of the PMT detection and can also reduce the probability of being the self-absorption of LAB.

A 2 g/L PPO concentration in LAB is optimized by SNO+[72]. The absolute light yield of the LAB-PPO liquid scintillator has been well-measured from large particle physics experiments [96, 48], as well as bench-top measurements[96, 97, 98]. This mixture of the LAB and PPO is denoted as the unloaded liquid scintillator in the text. The absolute light yield of the unloaded liquid scintillator determined by SNO+ is  $11900 \pm 60$  photons/MeV, and it is expected to be increased by over 15% after extensive purification process[70, 99].

The unloaded liquid scintillator has fast timing response different timing spectrum for  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$  events, which enables an  $\alpha/\beta$  discrimination. It has very low levels of natural radioactive contaminants such as U, Th and K.

The LAB and the PPO used by SNO+ are of ultra purity.

The target background levels for the SNO+ LAB are expected to be  $\mathcal{O}(10^{-17})$  gram of <sup>238</sup>U in per gram LAB (g<sup>238</sup>U/gLAB), which is equal to be thousands of events per year; The <sup>232</sup>Th and <sup>40</sup>K levels are  $\mathcal{O}(10^{-17})$  g/gLAB, which is equal to be hundreds of events per year[70, 100]. purification plant is designed to maintain the optical clarity and radiopurity

of the scintillator through solvent-solvent extraction with ultrapure water, steam stripping, and the use of metal scavengers. ultra high purity.

good optical transparency attenuation length At the target PPO concentration of 2 g/L, the emission decay time will be 5 ns. This is fast enough to prevent the decay time from adversely effecting position reconstruction, provided there is a sufficiently high light yield.

At higher PPO concentrations, the scintillation timing can be slightly faster, but this is offset by an increase in self-absorption.

an effect on the reconstruction is described in Sect. 4.4.3.1, Chapter 4.

Fig. 3.4 shows absorption lengths.

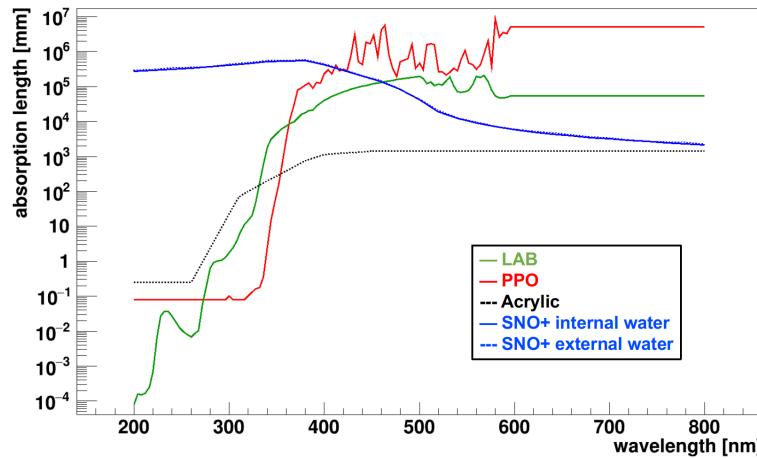


Figure 3.4: Absorption length of SNO+ optical components. The internal (solid blue line) and external water (dashed blue line) absorption curves are based on the measurements of the laserball scans in July 2018 during the SNO+ water phase. The horizontal lines are due to absence of the measurements and they are conservative assumptions.

This transfer efficiency ( $\epsilon_{transfer}$ ) increases as the PPO concentration increasing, as shown in the Table. Above the 2 g/L concentration, the light yield reaches a plateau due to self-absorption effects[88].

for the partial-fill phase, 0.5 g/L PPO gives Measurements in 0.5 g/L showed a light yield of 52% of 2 g/L, 6190 photons/MeV[101, 102].

The time profiles of scintillator were obtained from bench-top measurement. An empirical model consists  $n$  ( $n=3$  or 4) exponential decays with a common rise time is used to

describe the time profiles[103].

A default time profile function is:

$$\sum_{i=1}^n A_i \cdot \frac{e^{-\frac{t}{\tau_i}} - e^{-\frac{t}{\tau_{rise}}}}{\tau_i - \tau_{rise}}, \quad (3.3)$$

where the rise time ( $\tau_{rise}$ ), timing parameters  $t_i$ , and amplitude  $a_i$  of a certain liquid scintillator are determined by the measurement results. Fig. 3.5 plots the time profiles based on the measured parameters from the collaboration[104, 101, 105, 102]. It shows the time profiles of 4 different liquid scintillators planned for SNO+, including the LAB + 0.5g/L PPO for the partial-fill phase, which will be discussed in Chapter 4; the LAB + 2g/L PPO for the scintillator phase; the LAB + 2g/L PPO + 0.5% molar concentrations DDA, which will be a transit state before loading the Te; and the LAB + 2g/L PPO + 0.5% molar concentrations Te+0.5% molar DDA for the tellurium phase. For each liquid scintillator, their timing responses to the  $\beta^-$  (solid lines) and  $\alpha$ -particles (dashed lines) are also shown. It shows that for the liquid scintillators with 2 g/L PPO, there are obvious differences between the  $\alpha$  and  $\beta^-$  timing, while for the 0.5 g/L PPO, it is not. So for the partial-fill phase, it is difficult to distinguish the  $\alpha/\beta^-$  by time profiles.

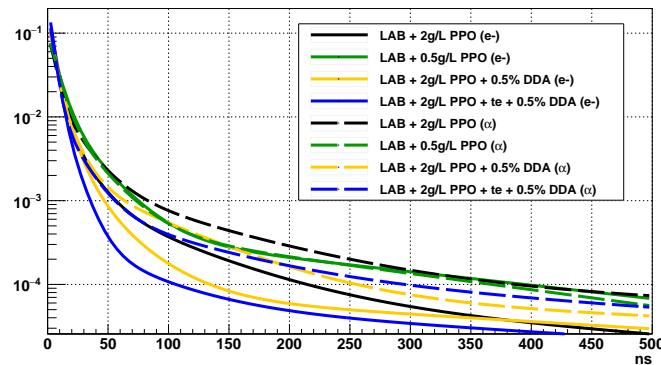


Figure 3.5: Time profiles for liquid scintillators in different SNO+ phases.

### 3.3.4.2 Tellurium-loaded Liquid Scintillator

To load the  $^{130}\text{Te}$  into the liquid scintillator, an organo-metallic compound, called the “Tellurium Butanediol (TeBD)”, is formed by condensation (or called “diolization”) reactions between telluric acid (TeA) and 1,2-butanediol (BD)[5]. A tertiary amine: N, N-Dimethyldodecylamine (DDA) is added during the reaction to stabilize TeBD compounds and avoid any phase separation[106]. Fig. 3.6 shows initial stages of the process. This compound is then loaded into the liquid scintillator.

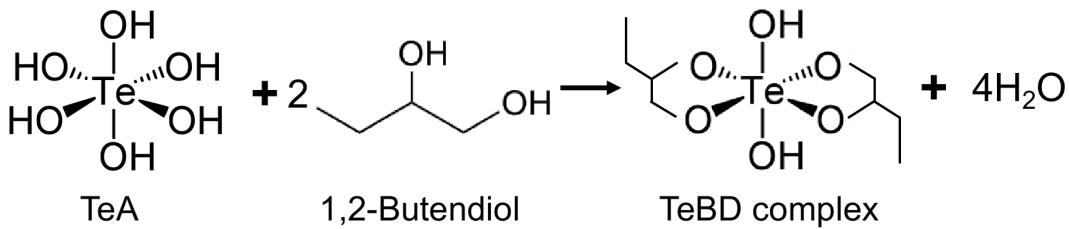


Figure 3.6: Initial stages of the TeBD compound formation, modified from Ref. [5].

Two synthesis procedures, the DDA and SOP procedures, are being developed by the SNO+ Tellurium-loading (Te-loading) working groups[107, 108, 109]. These methods can keep the optical transparency of the unloaded scintillator after the Te-loading and the mixture can have a long-term material stability. The total light yield of the full cocktail is expected to be 400 NHits/MeV, which is about 65% of the unloaded scintillator light yield.

Tellurium-loaded

time profile, the intensity of scintillation light as a function of time

For the  $^{130}\text{Te}$   $0\nu\beta\beta$ -decay process, the signature energy peak is at 2.5 MeV[72]. This peak is relatively small and can be immersed in the ubiquitous radioactive decays from natural sources, such as the natural Uranium and thorium decay chains existing in the materials[72]. Therefore, the  $0\nu\beta\beta$ -decay experiments require a very high energy resolution to distinguish the signal from the backgrounds. For the liquid scintillator, it is expected to create as large amount of light caused by a particle interaction as possible. A quantity of light yield, defined as the number of photons for per MeV energy deposit (photons/MeV) by a particle interaction, is used for describing the detection property of the liquid scintillator.

To meet the low background requirement of the  $0\nu\beta\beta$  analysis, the purity of the TeLS cocktail is aimed to  $\mathcal{O}(10^{-15})$  g/g level for U and Th.

### 3.3.5 Relative Light Yield Measurements of the Te-loaded Liquid Scintillators

As mentioned in the previous section, the  $0\nu\beta\beta$  analysis requires high purity and a good light yield of the TeLS.

Here I measured the light yield of 0.5% Te-loaded LAB (TeLS) samples relative to the LAB-PPO scintillator (called “relative light yield”, RLT). With tellurium being loaded into the LAB, the light yield of the liquid scintillator will go down since the tellurium atoms can block the photon transmissions to the photosensors. The light yield of the TeLS is crucial for the  $0\nu\beta\beta$ -decay experiments since it determines the energy resolution of the detector and sensitivity for studying the  $0\nu\beta\beta$  process from the  $^{130}\text{Te}$ . A few efforts are aimed to develop high light yield Tellurium-loaded scintillators[107].

#### 3.3.5.1 Measurement Setup and Data Acquisition

We first prepared LAB+2 g/L PPO by dissolving PPO into the pure LAB. The LAB-PPO mixture was distilled by heating and flowing with liquid nitrogen to remove humidity and oxygen, affecting the light yield for 48 hours. The distilled LAB-PPO was added into the original 16.5% weight Te-butanediol samples to dilute into the 0.5% TeLS samples. Two Te-butanediol samples synthesized from the DDA and SOP synthesis procedures (described in Ref. [106]) were prepared and were tagged as the TeDDA and TeSOP samples, respectively. These samples were further transferred into scintillation vials for the measurement, as shown in the left picture of Fig. 3.7. The vials have PTFE caps sealed on the top of the glass cylinders to prevent the humidity exposure from the air. The liquid level for each sample was kept at 30 mm to avoid air bubbles and contamination created by squeezing the vial cap into the liquid.

Two Hamamatsu R580 PMTs (described by Ref. [110]) were used for detecting the

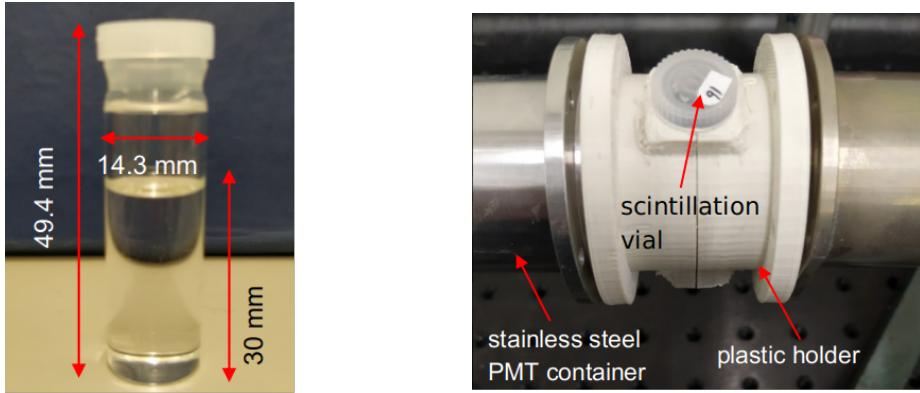


Figure 3.7: A vial of the test sample (left) and the measurement setup (right). Left: The samples were filled into scintillation vials. The dimensions are shown in the picture. Right: two PMTs were aligned to face to the scintillation vial from each side.

light. The diameter of the PMT round surface is 38.71 mm. These PMTs were housed in stainless steel cylinders (PMT holders), set face to face, looking at the scintillation vial from each side. The PMTs and the vial were aligned by a plastic piece, as shown in the right picture in Fig. 3.7. The plastic piece is cylindrical with a hole on the top to plug in the scintillation vial and a slot at the bottom to attach a radioactive source. Inside the cylinder, there is a button-shaped groove at the bottom to fix the vial plugged in and keep the vial upright. Also, a 2-mm-diameter hole was drilled at the bottom of the piece to allow the radiation rays to pass through the vial from the bottom. The surface inside was polished to reduce the absorption of the material to the photons. The piece is made of plant-based and biodegradable polylactide (PLA) filament and was machined by a 3D printing facility at the University of Alberta<sup>1</sup>.

Fig. 3.8 shows a diagram of the whole measurement setup. The plastic piece held the radioactive source and the scintillation vial. It also aligned two PMTs to face the scintillation vial from each side. The piece can shield lights from outside as well. These setups were placed in a dark box to prevent the lights from the lab. Two RG59/U-type high voltage (HV) cables connected the PMTs to an HV supply outside the dark box. The HV cables were connected to two signal/HV split boxes to separate the HV current and

<sup>1</sup>Shengzhao Yu helped with the machining.

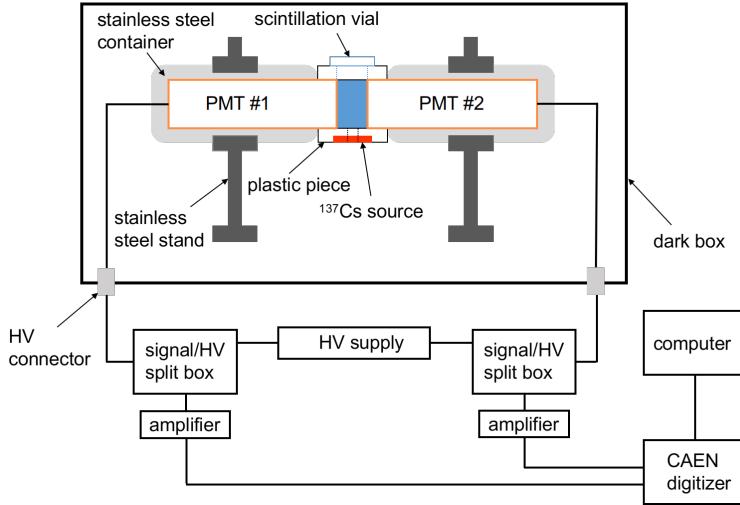


Figure 3.8: A diagram shows the light yield measurement setup. See the text for details.

electrical signals. Due to the resistor of the split box, the HV supply was set to 2200 Volts (V) for the PMT operation, while the operation voltage suggested by the Hamamatsu is 1800 V.

The signal cables from the split box were connected to a two-channel Hewlett Packard (HP) amplifier. This amplifier inverted the signals and amplified them by 26 dB. The amplified signals were then input into a two-channel digitizer. The digitizer recorded the data and sent them to a desktop computer.

To obtain and analyze the data, we used a desktop Waveform Digitizer, the DT5751 module provided by the Costruzioni Apparecchiature Elettroniche Nucleari (CAEN). Running at a digital pulse processing mode, the module records the digitized PMT waveforms with a data-taking rate of 1 GHz for each channel[111].

This module was controlled by the CoMPASS software provided by CAEN. The software set up the threshold and trigger parameters. Once the triggered event passed the threshold, the software recorded event time, trigger flag, and waveform histograms from the two channels. By integrating the waveforms, the energy of a triggered event was calculated[112].

Each channel recorded the signals from each PMT individually. With the two-PMT setup, we applied coincidence time mode measurements. In the coincidence mode, a coinci-

dence time window between two channels was set to 48 ns. For a certain event, the CoMPASS software compares the event time difference between two channels and only records it if the event time difference is less than 48 ns. A smaller window of 10 ns was further applied for analysis.

### 3.3.5.2 Measurement

The liquid scintillator samples we have measured are LAB-PPO, TeDDA, and TeSOP. The unloaded LAB-PPO sample served as a standard candle.

A Cesium-137 ( $^{137}\text{Cs}$ ) radioactive source was always placed at the bottom of the scintillation vials. The source was made by Radiochemical Centre Amersham. The radioactivity measured on 1st April 1974 was 11.09  $\mu\text{Ci}$ , with an accuracy of 3.7%. The activity was expected to be  $11.09 \times (\frac{1}{2})^{\frac{46}{30.08}} = 3.84 \mu\text{Ci}$  in 2020, considering a half-life of 30.08 years for the  $^{137}\text{Cs}$ [113].

The  $^{137}\text{Cs}$  isotope has a 85.10% chance to emit 0.661 MeV  $\gamma$ -particles[113]. These  $\gamma$ -particles can travel into the liquid scintillator samples in the vial, interact with the samples and create scintillation photon.

For each sample, measurements were taken for a one-minute time duration. Waveforms from the PMT photo-current signals were digitized in a 252 ns time window. Shown in Fig. 3.9 is a typical waveform caused by  $\gamma$ -particles interacting with the LAB-PPO sample. The p.e. signals triggered PMT pulses, and the pulses were digitized as waveforms. For each waveform, the digitizer firmware dynamically calculated the baseline as the mean value of 256 data points inside a moving time window of 252 ns. A threshold was set as 100 units above the baseline. The data point on the 90% leading edge of the pulse was taken as the trigger time ( $t_{trigger}$ ) tag. From this  $t_{trigger}$  tag, in the following 80-ns window, the digitizer did not calculate another trigger to avoid introducing another pulse (trigger hold-off). Also, from the  $t_{trigger}$  tag, a pre-gate of 8 ns was set. The waveform was integrated into the time gate of  $[t_{trigger} - 8, t_{trigger} + 72]$  ns. This gives the integrated charge, which was calculated as an A/D converter (ADC) channel number. If the measurement system

can be calibrated, the ADC channel number can be exactly converted into the energy of the particle interaction. Since here we only interested in the photon numbers, we used the ADC channel as the energy. Once the pulse in the waveform passed the threshold and a triggered time tag can be found, the digitizer considered it as a triggered event. A time flow started when the measurement began. Timestamps were recorded as event time when the triggered event happened. The waveform was recorded, and the ADC channel number (energy) of this event was calculated.

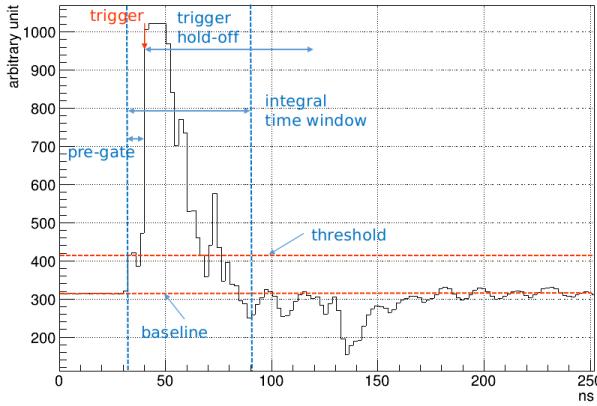


Figure 3.9: A typical waveform triggered by scintillation photons from  $^{137}\text{Cs}$   $\gamma$ -particles interacting with LAB-PPO sample.

In a coincidence time measurement, the event times of the events recorded by each of the two PMTs were compared. If the event time differences between two events from each PMTs were too long, these events were considered random noises rather than the physics events and were not recorded. We optimized a coincidence time cut as 40 ns and set that cut during the digitizer data-taking.

Fig. 3.10 shows the measured LAB-PPO energy spectrum with and without coincidence time cut (10 ns) on the ADC channel 0. Without the coincidence time cut, there is a zero peak caused by the pulses from random electronic noises or fluctuations of the digitized waveforms. The peak on the left is the single p.e. peak. It is mainly caused by some light sources which are weak enough that the photons only strike out at most one single p.e. inside the PMT[81]. The peak on the right is the multiple p.e. peak, in our case, which is mainly

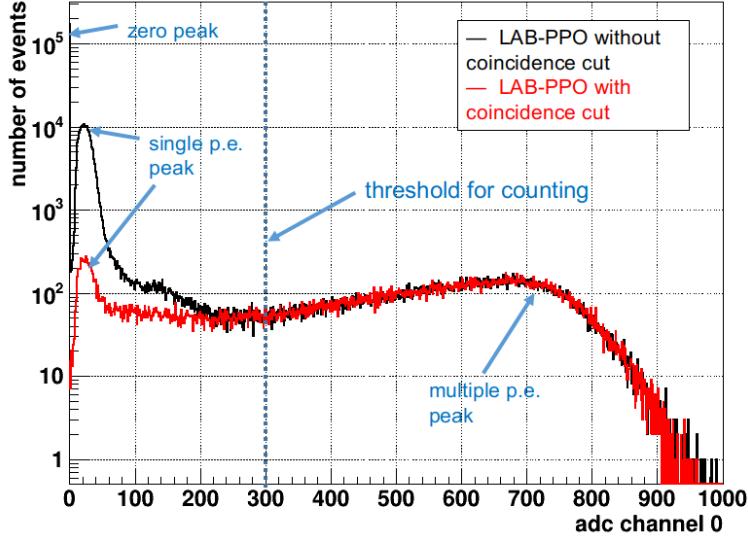


Figure 3.10: Measured LAB-PPO energy spectrum with and without coincidence cut on the ADC channel 0. A threshold for counting is set by comparing the two spectrum.

caused by some scintillation photons produced by the  $\gamma$ -ray interacting with the LAB-PPO. In the coincidence time measurement mode, it only records the photons detected by the two PMTs almost simultaneously. Therefore, the zero peaks are removed while the single p.e. peak is suppressed. The multiple p.e. peak is consistent with the non-coincidence measurement. A threshold in energy can be set to count only the scintillation photons emitted from LAB-PPO.

Fig. 3.11 (a) shows the result of a one-minute measurement for the LAB-PPO sample. The data points in the 2D plot represent the triggered event fall in certain ADC channel numbers in each channel. A 10 ns coincidence window cut was applied to cut down noise, single p.e., and background events. The events in the 0 ADC channel, which represent noises, were totally cut off after applying the coincidence. Fig. 3.11 (b) and (c) show the results of the TeSOP and TeDDA samples respectively. Compared to the LAB-PPO sample, a shift of the multiple p.e. peak due to the different light yields can be observed clearly.

The 2D plots were projected onto a single channel, as shown in Fig. 3.11 (d). We used an empty vial and let  $\gamma$ -particles from  $^{137}\text{Cs}$  source passed through it as a background run (without the coincidence cut). This is to verify the single p.e. peak and noise region, shown

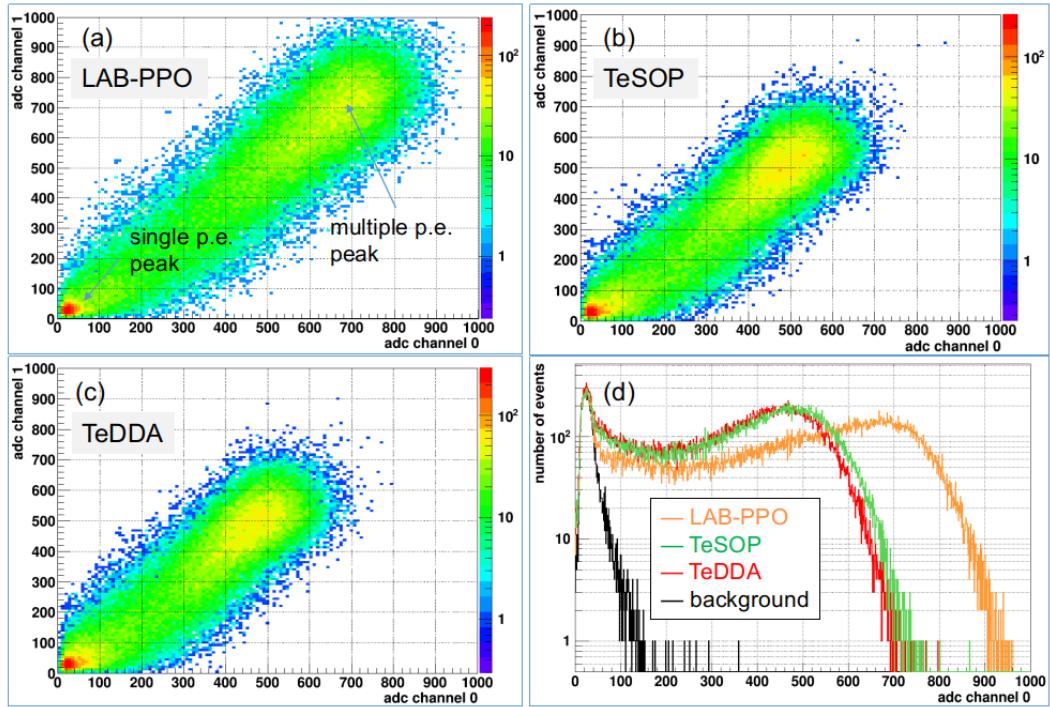


Figure 3.11: The 2D energy spectrum of the counting measurements of LAB-PPO (a), TeSOP (b), and TeDDA (c) samples, projected the 2D plots into one channel (d). The single photo-electron (p.e.) peak is mainly caused by backgrounds while the multiple p.e. peak is from scintillation photons.

as the black background spectrum.

From this plot, the single p.e. peaks for all the samples and the background match together. The multiple p.e. peaks indicate the different light yields of the scintillator samples. Here we can see the multiple p.e. peak of the LAB-PPO occupies the largest ADC channel number, while the channels of TeSOP are slightly larger than the TeDDA.

To quantify the light yield differences between different samples, an analysis method of charge weighted photon number has been applied as the following:

First, from the energy spectrum, the single p.e. peak was fitted with an asymmetric Gaussian function (as  $f_{asym}$  in 3.4), as shown in Fig. 3.12. The mean value of the asymmetric Gaussian ( $p_0$ ) represents the ADC channel number corresponding to the single p.e. peak for the weighting.

$$f_{asym} = c \cdot e^{-\frac{1}{2}(\frac{x-\mu}{\sigma})^2} \cdot \text{Erfc}(\xi), \quad (3.4)$$

where  $\xi = -\frac{\alpha(x-\mu)}{\sqrt{2}\sigma}$ ,  $p_0 = \mu$ ,  $p_1 = \sigma$ ,  $p_2 = \alpha$ ,  $p_3 = c$ .

Then for the multiple p.e. region, weighting (dividing) the counts of the event in each channel with the single p.e. ADC channel number to calculate the total number of the photons.

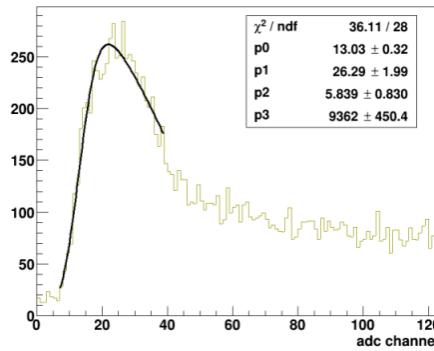


Figure 3.12: The single p.e. peak is fitted with an asymmetric Gaussian function ( $f_{asym}$ ) to obtain the ADC channel for weighting. The mean value of  $p_0$  is used as the adc channel relative to a single p.e. peak.

To define the multiple p.e. region for the counting, the spectrum projected on each channel with and without coincidence cut are compared to define a threshold of the ADC

channel for counting. By integrating from this threshold, the total numbers of events between two spectrum are close to each other. From two channels, we get two thresholds and then define a box cut in the 2D coincidence plot. We weights the events in the box to obtain the total number of photons. Fig. 16 and Fig. 19 show the case of the LAB-PPO sample.

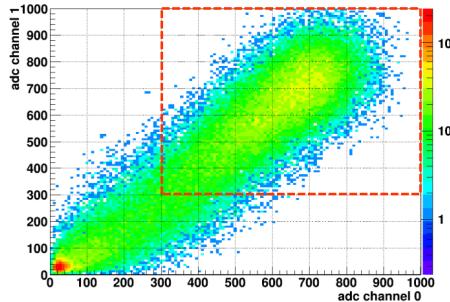


Figure 3.13: Two dimensional spectrum of LAB-PPO sample with coincidence cut. A box cut is defined for multiple PE counting.

Two dimensional (2D) spectrum of LAB-PPO with coincidence cut is shown in Fig. 3.13. A box cut is defined for multiple PE counting.

Once the total number of photons for a certain sample is counted, we can calculate its ratio to the LAB-PPO sample to obtain the relative light yield.

### 3.3.5.3 Results

Table 3.1: Number of photons calculated by Charge weighted photon number method.

Sample	Number of photons ( $\times 10^6$ )	RLY
LAB-PPO	2.0811	1
TeDDA	1.2652	0.61
TeSOP	1.3976	0.67

Table. 3.1 shows the number of photons calculated by the charge weighted photon number method. Here we quantify the relative light yields of our samples. The light yield of the 0.5% Te by SOP synthesis procedure (TeSOP) is 0.61 and the one of the 0.5% Te by DDA procedure is 0.67. The light yield of TeSOP is slightly larger than the TeDDA. In [107], a

relative light yield of  $\sim 0.65$  was reported.

### 3.4 Electronics

In this section, the SNO+ electronics system is introduced. The system includes the trigger and readout systems. As mentioned in 3.1, the PMTs as photon sensors are the basic detection elements for the SNO+ detector. The signals from the PMTs are sent to the SNO+ electronics system, which records the PMT time and charges information and then transfers the digitized data to offsite computing systems for data analysis. These steps are detailed in the following.

The photons created from particle interactions in the detector propagate to the PMT sphere and may hit a certain PMT and strike on its photo-cathode, which is a thin cesium bialkali film coated on the inner surface of PMT glass. The photocathode then produces a photo-electron (p.e.) through a photoelectric effect. The photocathode is set at ground voltage while the anode is at a high voltage ranging from +1700 to +2100 V [114, 86]. This forms electric fields inside the PMT. The p.e. is accelerated and focused by the electric field in the PMT and goes through the volume which is under vacuum until it reaches the region of a series of secondary emission electrodes, called dynodes. When the p.e. transfers its energy to the materials in dynodes, a number of secondary electrons escape and form a measurable current which is collected by a custom-made operating circuit (called “PMT base”) at the anode[115].

The anode pulse produced from the PMT travels along 35-m-long RG59/U type coaxial cable (with a resistance of  $75 \Omega$ ) to the front-end electronics which are set up on the deck above the detector. The coaxial cable also carries the high-voltage[114].

To tackle with more than 9000 PMTs in the SNO+ detector, the coaxial cables connected to each PMTs are grouped into bundles. Each bundle is connected to a Paddle Card, which are linked to a PMT Interface Card (PMTIC). The PMTIC supplies high voltages and receives signals from the PMTs. 32 channels (for 32 PMTs) in the PMTIC are plugged into a Front End Card (FEC) that processes, digitizes, and stores PMT signals. 19 crates tackle

9728 PMT channels in total, of which 32 channels are reserved for calibration inputs and labeled as FEC Diagnose (FECD) channels. These FECD channels are mainly used to tag calibration events. The triggered PMTs can be labeled by the logical channel number (*lcn*) using the map of the PMT to the crates and cards[70, 73]:

$$lcn = 512 \times \text{crate} + 32 \times \text{FEC} + \text{channel}. \quad (3.5)$$

A 10-MHz and a 50-MHz clocks are used to record the time of the triggered event. The universal time of the triggered event is calculated as the time elapsed from a predefined  $T_{zero}$ , the midnight of January 1, 2010 (GMT) to the moment when the event happens. A 10-MHz clock used for counting the absolute time started at  $T_{zero}$ . It has a 53 bit register and can run for 28.5 years. Its accuracy is maintained by a GPS system. The 50 MHz clock gives more accurate timing. It limits the best time resolution of the GT to 20 ns. This clock has a 43 bit register and rolls over every 2.04 days. The relative time between the events can be used for analyzing specific physics processes, such as radioactive decays[116, 73].

The recorded hit information of the triggered event, including the time and charge information of hit PMTs and the trigger settings, are sent to a Crate Controller Card (XL3) in each crate. These cards were installed for SNO+ to handle higher data transfer rates compared to SNO, with a max rate of 14 MB/s, which is equivalent to approximately 2 million hits per second[117]. They read out the recorded data and wrap them as ethernet packets and send them to the Data Acquisition System (DAQ) and Event Builder system[118]. The Event Builder system writes information into event records based on their GT identification number (GTID) and saves them on storage disk[70]. These raw data are written to the disc and are further processed into ROOT format by high-performance computing clusters.

As a summary, the SNO+ electronic system can measure signals with a nanosecond-level timing resolution and a single-photon level charge resolution. It can handle an event rate of several kHz and even much higher rates for cases such as the burst events from a galactic supernova[70].

### 3.5 Calibration

Calibration sources with known physics parameters are applied to understand the detector response to the events and thus to make accurate measurements.

Two kinds of calibration sources are used by SNO+: (1) the optical sources to measure the *in-situ* optical properties of the detector media and to calibrate the PMT responses[70, 77]; and (2) the radioactive sources to test the detector energy responses, check the performance of event reconstruction algorithms for reconstructing event position, direction and energy and then determine reconstruction systematic uncertainties. Various types of radioactive sources designed for SNO+ cover the energy range from 0.1 MeV to about 10 MeV, as listed in Table. 3.2[70]. All the calibration sources have been designed to meet the radiopurity required by SNO+ and their materials are compatible with the detection media[70].

Table 3.2: A list of SNO+ radioactive sources. The main energy is given as the total  $\gamma$  energy, modified from Ref. [70].

source	total $\gamma$ energy [MeV]
$^{16}\text{N}$	6.1
AmBe	4.4
$^{46}\text{Sc}$	2.0
$^{48}\text{Sc}$	3.3
$^{137}\text{Cs}$	0.66
$^{57}\text{Co}$	0.14

Among these radioactive sources, the Nitrogen-16 ( $^{16}\text{N}$ ) calibration source and the Americium Beryllium (AmBe) source have been deployed in the water phase and the partial-fill phase. The  $^{16}\text{N}$  source was used to test and optimize the reconstruction algorithm discussed in Chapter 4. It was also used to obtain the reconstruction uncertainties in the water phase, which is the topic of Chapter 5. A detailed description of  $^{16}\text{N}$  source is given in Sect. 3.5.1.

The  $^{46}\text{Sc}$ ,  $^{48}\text{Sc}$ ,  $^{137}\text{Cs}$  and  $^{57}\text{Co}$  sources are newly designed by SNO+ to calibrate the energy scale in the scintillator and tellurium-loading phases, especially for the energy region

of interest (ROI) in the  $0\nu\beta\beta$  study[70].

The detector geometry is not perfectly symmetric due to the presence of the AV neck, ropes, gaps between the PMTs, and the difference in individual PMTs[70]. The deployment of calibration sources at different positions in the detector can help to understand the asymmetries in the detector responses. To realize this, a few fixed optical sources were mounted at different positions on the PSUP. Besides that, a source manipulator system (SMS) was installed, as shown in Fig. ???. The sources are attached or detached to the SMS via the Universal Interface (UI), which is a sealed cylinder-shaped glove box on the top of the AV to prevent the air in the lab leaking into the detector. The motion of the deployed sources along the central vertical axis inside the AV is controlled by the Umbilical Retrieval Mechanism (URM) through an umbilical and a central rope, and the off-axis motion is controlled by the side rope manipulator system. The motion of the sources in the external water region between the AV and PSUP is along the calibration guide tubes[70].

The position of the deployed source in the detector can be evaluated by the manipulator system. In addition, a camera system with six underwater cameras already mounted on the PSUP can take photographs of the source and then triangulate its position. An accuracy of several centimeters is achieved. This system is also used to monitor the physical state of the detector, such as the offset of the AV center with respect to the PSUP, the movement of the rope net, the height of the water-scintillator interface during the partial-fill, etc[119, 70].

### 3.5.1 The $^{16}\text{N}$ Calibration Source

The  $^{16}\text{N}$  calibration source is inherit from the SNO experiment and has been well-understood[120, 121, 122]. Fig. 3.15 shows the geometry of the  $^{16}\text{N}$  source chamber. The chamber is a stainless steel cylinder mainly containing a small PMT and a gas decay chamber. The chamber was designed to confine the electrons from  $^{16}\text{N}$  decay within the chamber and let them be detected by the PMT inside[120].

Since the  $^{16}\text{N}$  isotope has a short half-life of 7.13 s, it must be produced on-site during the calibration runs. A commercial deuterium-tritium (DT) generator was installed in

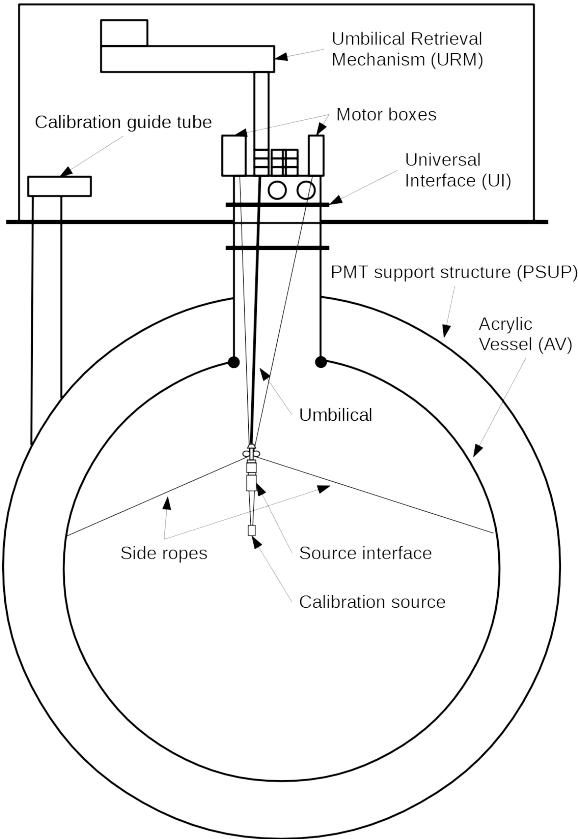


Figure 3.14: The SNO+ Source Manipulator System, from Ref. [70].

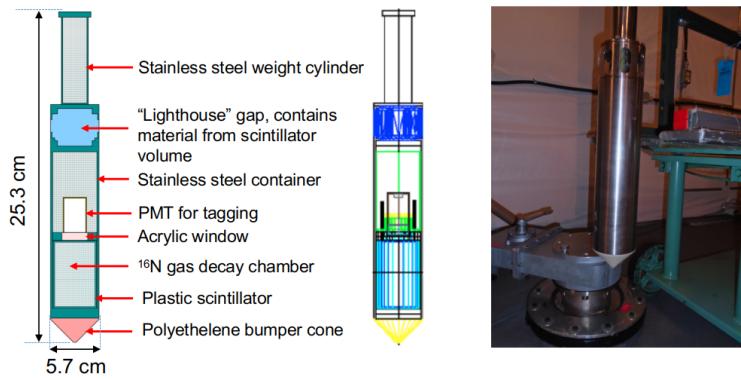


Figure 3.15:  $^{16}\text{N}$  calibration source geometry. Left: a detailed diagram of  $^{16}\text{N}$  source geometry, modified from Refs. [123, 124]; middle: source geometry implemented in RAT, modified from Ref. [125]; right: a picture of the  $^{16}\text{N}$  source, taken from [126].

SNOLAB to produce neutrons through the reaction:  $D + T \rightarrow n + ^4\text{He}$ ; then the produced 14-MeV neutrons interact with the CO<sub>2</sub> gas streaming through the small diameter capillary

tubing and produce the  $^{16}\text{N}$  isotopes via the  $(n, p)$  reaction:  $n + ^{16}\text{O} \rightarrow ^{16}\text{N} + p$ . These  $^{16}\text{N}$  isotopes are transferred into the cavity or the detector by the  $\text{CO}_2$  gas tubing[121].

The  $^{16}\text{N}$  isotope mainly decays through  $\beta$ -decay process:  $^{16}\text{N} \rightarrow ^{16}\text{O} + e^- + \bar{\nu}_e$ . It has a 66.2% chance to emit an electron with  $E_{end\ point} = 4.29$  MeV and a 22.8% chance to an electron with  $E_{end\ point} = 10.42$  MeV; while the resulting  $^{16}\text{O}$  deexcites and produces a cascade of  $\gamma$ -particles. There are mainly 6.13-MeV  $\gamma$  with an intensity of 67.0% and 7.12-MeV  $\gamma$  with an intensity of 4.9%. The intensities of the  $\gamma$ -particles with other energies are all below 1%[113]. A simplified decay scheme is shown in Fig. 3.16.

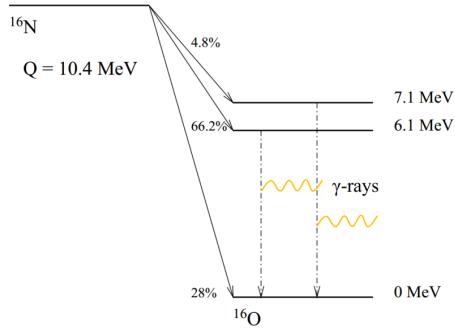


Figure 3.16:  $^{16}\text{N}$  main decay scheme, modified from Ref. [121].

Studies of using the  $^{16}\text{N}$  source for testing, optimizing and estimating the reconstructions will be shown in Chapter 4 and 5.

### 3.6 Monte Carlo Simulation and RAT Software

The SNO+ collaboration uses a software package called the Reactor Analysis Tool (**RAT**) for Monte Carlo simulation as well as event-based analysis offline and online. To accomplish these two tasks, **RAT** integrates the **Geant4** simulation toolkit[127] and ROOT data analysis framework[128] for processing and analyzing data. This feature makes it easy to analyze Monte Carlo-generated events and real data in a same framework and data structure.

The software was originally developed by Stan Seibert from the Braidwood Collaboration to simulate a generic KamLAND-like detector[129]. A simulation package called Generic Liquid Scintillator **Geant4** simulation (**GLG4sim**) was developed and implemented

in **RAT**[130]. It simulates the scintillation physics processes, the generations of scintillation photons and also the propagation, reflections, refraction, scattering and absorption of optical photons[86].

The SNO+ version of **RAT** links the existing **ROOT**, **Geant4** and **GLG4sim** packages to minimize the code duplication. The SNO+ **RAT** is being developed by the whole collaboration and evolves with the experiment progress to precisely simulate the SNO+ detector in different physics phases as well as applying multiple analysis tasks. The relative flexible code structure of **RAT** allows the user to introduce their own code into the simulation or analysis process[129]. It can be updated and optimized with the measured parameters from detector calibration; it can be added with more precise descriptions of the physics processes in the detector; it can also be introduced with more advanced analysis tools. The users can apply different analysis tasks, such as different reconstruction algorithms on the same events[129]. Therefore, different versions of **RAT** serving to different SNO+ physics phases may give different outputs. For the work in this thesis, multiple **RAT** versions were used, mainly the versions for the water phase and partial-fill phase. In this case, I will specify the **RAT** version when I discuss a specific analysis.

**RAT** is also used by other astroparticle physics experiments, such as the dark matter experiment DEAP/CLEAN[131].

# Chapter 4

## Event Reconstruction

### 4.1 An Overview of the Reconstruction Algorithms in SNO+

A particle interaction that happens in the SNO+ detector can produce Cherenkov or scintillation photons. These photons propagate through the detector, and they can trigger PMTs when they reach the PSUP. As described in the last chapter, if there are enough PMTs triggered within a defined time window, an event is determined by the trigger system, and for the event, the time and charge information measured by the hit PMTs are recorded.

By utilizing the recorded time and charge information, reconstruction algorithms attempt to calculate the physics quantities of an event, including its vertex (position and time), direction, and energy. A few sets of reconstruction algorithms (called “fitters”) have been implemented in the SNO+ RAT software or are still being developed. These fitters are based on different methods and can be coordinated and optimized for the different detector situations or physics phases.

According to the physics quantities, the SNO+ fitters can be generally classified as:

- Vertex fitter. A vertex fitter reconstructs the event position and time by utilizing the positions and timing information of the hit PMTs. Currently, vertex fitters have been used to process the data and simulations for the water and partial-fill phases. They are also ready for the scintillator and tellurium-loading phases.

On the other hand, some particular events, such as radioactive background events emitting  $\gamma$ -particles, can create multiple correlated vertices. A multi-site or multi-vertex fitter will be helpful in tagging and removing these events during the  $0\nu\beta\beta$  search. This kind of fitter is being developed.

- Direction fitter. A direction fitter reconstructs the event direction by using the directional information from the Cherenkov photons, which cause ring-like patterns formed by the hit PMT positions. The direction fitter has been used in the water phase analysis. For the scintillator and tellurium-loading phases, since the Cherenkov patterns will be submerged in the scintillation photons, it requires other efforts for the direction reconstruction, which is being developed currently.
- Energy fitter. An energy fitter translates the number of photons created from an event to kinetic energy. Similar to the vertex fitters, the energy fitters currently have been used in the water and partial-fill phases, and they are ready for the scintillator and tellurium-loading phases.
- Muon track fitter. This fitter is used to reconstruct the tracks of cosmic muons. It treats a muon track as a straight line, and by dividing the SNO+ detector into several XY-slices along z, it reconstructs the intersection points for each slice by utilizing the positions and timing information of the hit PMTs[132]. It is currently being developed for the scintillator and tellurium-loading phases. It will help to tag and reduce the cosmogenic backgrounds, especially the  $^{11}\text{C}$  backgrounds induced by the muon spallation on the liquid scintillators[85].

For a fitter, its performance is first tested on the Monte Carlo simulations of specific physics processes. Then it is tested on both the simulations and data of the calibration runs. Once the algorithm gives good results and is approved by the SNO+ collaboration, it is implemented into the SNO+ RAT software to process the SNO+ simulations and data files.

For a specific SNO+ physics phase, the fitters for reconstructing different physics quan-

tities of an event are integrated. Currently, there are three integrated fitters: the **Water Fitter** for the water phase, the **Partial Fitter** for the partial-fill phase, and the **Scint Fitter** for the scintillator phase and the tellurium loading phase. The fitter parameters, such as the optical parameters, fitter iterations, are coordinated and optimized based on simulations and calibration data from that specific physics phase. In addition, PMT selectors and classifiers are also included in the integrated fitters. The PMT selectors are used to remove the outliers of the hit PMTs for a specific fitter, such as the hit PMT probably triggered by the noises. These selectors can help to make the fitter more accurate or to boost up the fitter speed. The classifiers mainly use the reconstructed results to calculate specific quantities which describe the probability of determining an event as an expected signal or background.

In this chapter, a Multi-path (MP) reconstruction framework and its principles are discussed. It was developed by the University of Alberta group as an additional fitter to provide event vertex and direction reconstructions. In this framework, the fitters can be adapted for all the SNO+ physics phases by switching light path calculations, input parameters such as the optical parameters and the detector state. That is the reason why it is called "multiple paths". It was applied in the water phase to provide alternative information of the event position and direction; it also works as the vertex reconstruction algorithm for the **Partial Fitter**. After re-coordination for the scintillator and tellurium loading phases, I also show the potentials of the vertex fitter being applied in these two future phases.

In addition, the potentials of extracting the directional information from the scintillator phase are also discussed in this chapter.

## 4.2 Multi-path Vertex and Direction Reconstructions for the Water Phase

In the SNO+ water phase, both the cavity and the AV were filled with ultra-pure water. In this case, the detector geometry is simple since everything inside the PSUP sphere can be simplified as water if omitting the AV shell. Therefore, to explain the reconstruction concepts, I will start with the **MP water fitter** (the **MPW fitter**).

The **MPW fitter** fits for the vertex and direction of a triggered event in the SNO+ water phase. It first fits for the event vertex and then takes the results of the reconstructed position to fit for the event direction.

### 4.2.1 Vertex Reconstruction

To fit for the vertex with four parameters:  $x, y, z$  and  $t$ , first the fitter creates a random position inside a sphere with a radius of 10 m (larger than the actual PSUP radius  $r_{PSUP} = 8.39$  m). Meanwhile, a random event time is also generated from a uniform distribution in the range of [100, 300 ns]. The Class Library for High Energy Physics (CLHEP) is used for creating pseudo-random numbers. The random position and the random time are combined to form a random event vertex as the trial event vertex  $\vec{X}_0$ . Details are given in the Appendix. A.1.

For a triggered event, photons are created around the event position and propagate to the hit PMTs. In a simplified detector geometry model that neglects the effects of scattering, reflection, and refraction, these photons are considered as propagating along straight lines connecting the trial event vertex to the hit PMTs. Then the fitter evaluates a timing parameter, called the time residual ( $t_{res}$ ), which is defined as:

$$t_{res} = t_{PMT} - t_{transit} - t_{event}, \quad (4.1)$$

where  $t_{PMT}$  is the PMT trigger time recorded by the detector,  $t_{event}$  is the time when an event occurs (event time), and  $t_{transit}$  is the total transit time (or time of flight,  $TOF$ )

taken by a photon traveling from the event position ( $\vec{X}_{event}$ ) to the hit PMT ( $\vec{X}_{PMT}$ ) and crossing different materials in the detector.

To calculate the  $t_{transit}$ , the fitter uses Cherenkov photons in a prompt time window (called “prompt light”), set as  $-10 < t_{res} < 10 \text{ ns}$  for the MPW fitter and the photons are assumed to propagate in straight lines (straight light paths). By assuming straight light paths, complicated situations of the photon propagation are neglected, including the refraction and reflection when the lights cross boundaries between different detector materials, absorption and scattering from the materials, and the lensing effects caused by the spherical structure of the acrylic vessel. In this case, the *TOF* can be simply calculated as  $t_{transit} = |\vec{X}_{event} - \vec{X}_{PMT}|/v_{water}$ , where  $v_{water}$  is an average photon group velocity and it is an effective value obtained by tuning on the Monte Carlo simulations. Section 4.2.3 will show the details about the tuning. Based on the reconstruction experiences from the SNO experiment, it found that without these details, the fitter can still produce decent results that are consistent with the case using detailed calculations[133, 74]. Fig. 4.1 shows the straight light paths from the event position to the hit PMT positions.

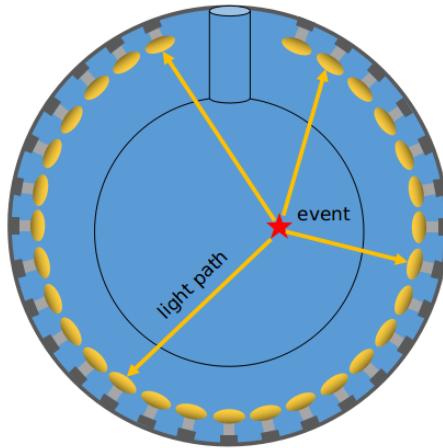


Figure 4.1: A diagram of straight light path for event position reconstruction in the SNO+ water phase geometry.

An one-dimensional (1D) probability density function (*PDF*) is used for fitting the timing model, as shown in Fig. 4.2. This *PDF* serves as a model of the timing responses of the triggered PMTs to an event to be fit. It was taken from the bench-top measurement

of the individual PMT time profile from SNO[134] and was further tuned according to the measured *in-situ* SNO+ detector responses to the calibration sources[77].

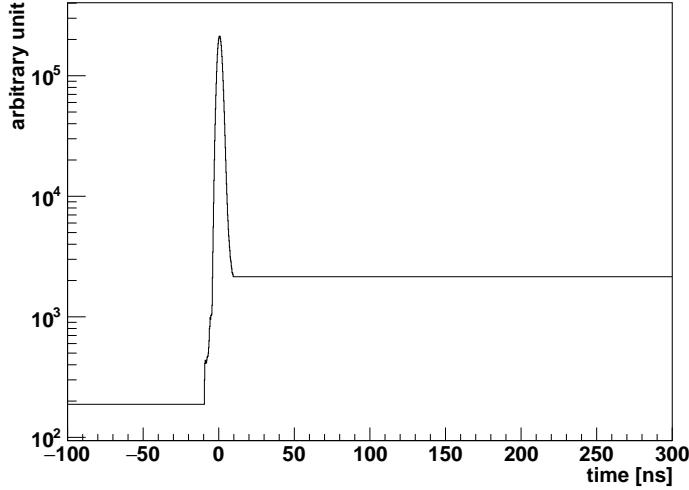


Figure 4.2: The PMT response time profile as the timing *PDF* for the vertex reconstruction.

For a trial vertex  $(\vec{X}_0, t_0)$ , the fitter calculates a  $t_{res}$  value with respect to each hit PMT. Looping over all the hit PMTs, a likelihood function is built as:

$$\ln \mathcal{L}(\vec{X}_0, t_0) = \sum_{i=1}^{\text{NHits}} \ln P(t_{res}^i), \quad (4.2)$$

where  $t_{res}^i$  is the time residual calculated from the  $i^{th}$  hit PMT; NHits is the total number of the hit PMTs triggered by an event and  $P(t_{res}^i)$  is the probability returned by reading the *PDF* when given a  $t_{res}^i$  for the  $i^{th}$  hit PMT.

Therefore, the likelihood function starts with a random  $(\vec{X}_0, t_0)$  as a seed and calculates the likelihoods and their derivatives for various paths assuming straight-line paths of the prompt Cherenkov light from the trial vertex  $(\vec{X}_0, t_0)$  to each of the hit PMTs. The trial vertex is varied until the likelihood function reaches the global maximum when the best-fit vertex is found.

This fitting scheme is tackled by the Levenberg-Marquardt (MRQ) method, which is commonly used for fitting the nonlinear model with multiple parameters. This method is described in detail in the Sect. A.2 and its applications for the MP **fitter** framework are

also described. Also see Refs. [135, 136] for details.

As will be shown in the following sections, one of the main tasks for the fitter is to calculate the  $t_{transit}$  by evaluating light paths. As mentioned at the beginning, the water phase geometry is the simplest situation. While in the other situations, the AV is filled with the wavelength shifter or scintillator. They are different materials with cavity water, making the light path calculations complicated.

#### 4.2.2 Direction Reconstruction

A direction vector  $\vec{u}$  can be determined by two parameters: the zenith angle  $\theta$  and the azimuth angle  $\phi$ . Then in the Cartesian coordinate system, it can be written as:

$$\vec{u} = (\cos \phi \sin \theta, \sin \phi \sin \theta, \cos \theta). \quad (4.3)$$

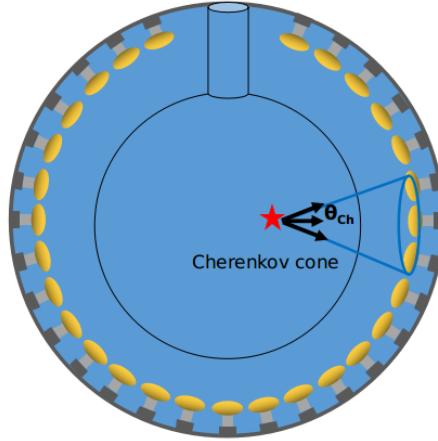


Figure 4.3: Diagrams of position in the SNO+ water phase geometry.

To fit for the direction with 2 parameters:  $\theta$  and  $\phi$ , similar to the vertex reconstruction, a random trial direction  $\vec{u}_0(\phi_0, \theta_0)$  is generated by using CLHEP, see Sect. A.1. The direction fitter then evaluates an angular parameter,  $\cos \theta_{Ch}$ , which is the angle between  $\vec{u}_0$  and  $\vec{X}_{\text{diff}} \equiv \vec{X}_{\text{event}} - \vec{X}_{\text{PMT}}$ . Therefore, the direction fitter requires an event position as the input, and it goes after the vertex fitter<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup>It has been discussed that, instead of fitting in two steps, the vertex and direction can be fit simultaneously by utilizing the MRQ algorithm for fitting six parameters ( $x, y, z, t, \theta, \phi$ ). However, it shows that the results were worse by using this method.

An 1D *PDF* is used for fitting the angular model, as shown in Fig. 4.4. This *PDF* serves as a model of the angular distributions of the triggered PMTs to an event. It was obtained from 10000 MC simulations of 5-MeV  $e^-$  events generated at the detector center ( $\vec{X}_{MC} = (0, 0, 0)$ ), and traveling along the positive side of the x axis, i.e., the direction of the momentum is  $\vec{u}_{MC} = (1, 0, 0)$ <sup>2</sup>.

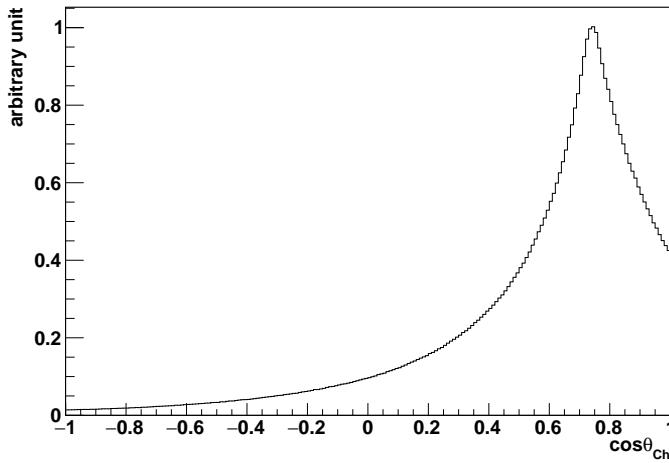


Figure 4.4: PMT angular distribution as the angular response *PDF* for direction reconstruction.

For the  $i^{th}$  hit PMT,  $\cos \theta_{Ch}^i = \vec{u}_0 \cdot \frac{\vec{X}_{diff}^i}{|\vec{X}_{diff}^i|}$ , then the likelihood function is built as:

$$\ln L(\vec{u}_0) = \sum_{i=1}^{N_{\text{hits}}} L_i(\cos \theta_{Ch}^i), \quad (4.4)$$

Finally, the fitter fits for the angular *PDF* by using the MRQ method to obtain the best-fit direction. There are a few optimizations for improving the fitter performances. First, the group velocity used in the  $t_{transit}$  calculation is tuned, as shown in Sect. 4.2.3. In Sect. 4.2.4, a drive correction for compensating the pulls in the reconstructed position is discussed. In Sect. 4.2.5, PMT selectors for sending proper PMT information to the fitter are discussed.

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<sup>2</sup>Here 5 MeV is a typical energy for the SNO+ water phase analysis. It shows that using the *PDFs* generated by the other  $e^-$  energies does a minor effect on the reconstruction results.

### 4.2.3 Effective Group Velocity

When photons travel through the detector, their group velocities ( $v_{gr}$ ) change with different refractive indices of different detector materials. The group velocities also depend on the wavelengths of the photons:  $v_{gr} = c/n(\lambda)$ . Fig .4.5 shows the measured refractive index ( $n$ ) as a function of wavelength, obtained from the measurements of the laserball scans in the SNO+ water phase[137]. Furthermore, the  $v_{gr}$  can change when the photons are scattered, absorbed, refracted and reflected in the detector.

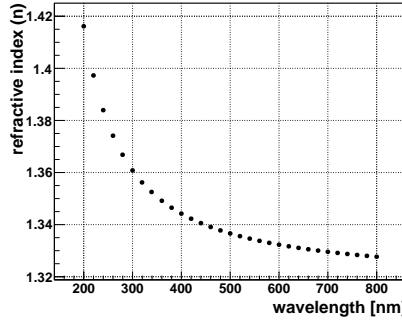


Figure 4.5: Refractive index vs wavelength, reproduced from RAT. These values are based on the measurements from laserball calibration scans in the SNO+ water phase[137].

To simplify these complicated situations of  $v_{gr}$  for the reconstruction, a tuned value of the  $v_{gr}$  is used in the straight line light path calculation. As mentioned in Sect. 4.2, the water vertex fitter calculates the  $t_{transit}$  by evaluating the distances from the trial vertex to the hit PMTs:  $t_{transit} = |\vec{x}_{event} - \vec{x}_{PMT}|/v_{gr,eff}$ , where the  $v_{water}$  is replaced by the effective group velocity  $v_{gr,eff}$ . The value of the  $v_{gr,eff}$  set in the fitter can introduce biases in the reconstructed position, which is mainly due to a “complementary” effect of the fitter. Setting a large value of  $v_{gr,eff}$  (a fast effective group velocity) will decrease the  $t_{transit}$ , while according to Eqn. 4.1, the  $t_{res}$  will increase. During the reconstruction, when the fitter compares the large  $t_{res}$  with the timing *PDF*, it will attempt to place the trial vertex away from the hit PMTs to increase the  $t_{transit}$  and then decrease the  $t_{res}$ , as illustrated in Fig. 4.6. On the other hand, if the  $v_{gr,eff}$  is set too small (or too slow), the  $t_{transit}$  will increase while the  $t_{res}$  will decrease, and the fitter will place the trial vertex closer towards

the hit PMTs to increase the  $t_{res}$ . These effects can be quantified as radial bias ( $r_{bias}$ ), which is the difference between the reconstructed and true (MC) positions ( $\vec{X}_{fit} - \vec{X}_{MC}$ ), projected along the radial component of the true position (the unit vector  $\hat{X}_{MC}$ ) [138]:

$$r_{bias} \equiv (\vec{X}_{fit} - \vec{X}_{MC}) \cdot \hat{X}_{MC}, \quad (4.5)$$

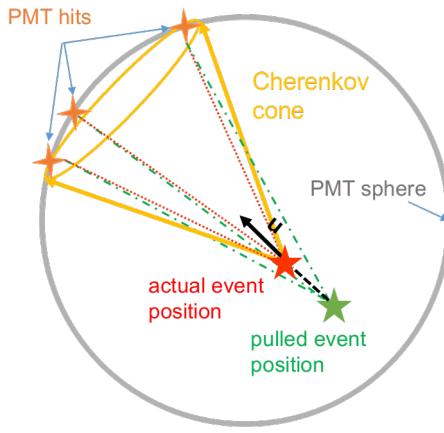


Figure 4.6: A cartoon shows effects of tuning the effective group velocity. In this case, the effective group velocity is faster than expected, the fitted position is dragged back along the direction to increase the  $t_{transit}$ .

It shows that an overestimated  $v_{gr,eff}$  (too fast) brings a positive radial bias to the true event position while an underestimated one (too slow) brings a negative radial bias.

In practice, the  $v_{gr,eff}$  is calculated by an effective refractive index  $n_{eff}$  (or called *RI* value):  $v_{gr,eff} = c/n_{eff}$ . To obtain a reasonable  $v_{gr,eff}$  for the water-phase vertex fitter, my first attempt is to obtain the value from linear interpolation based on the MC simulations. First, 500 simulations of 5-MeV  $e^-$  were generated uniformly inside the AV and with isotropic momentum directions. Then the **MPW fitter** reconstructed the same MC simulations by using 7 different values of  $v_{gr}$ , from 200 to 230 mm/ns (the  $n_{eff}$  is from 1.50 to 1.30), with a step of 5 mm/ns. The distributions of radial bias from each reconstruction results were calculated and fitted with Gaussian functions. The mean values of these Gaussian fits were taken as the values of the  $r_{bias}$ , and they were plotted against the  $v_{gr}$ , as shown in Fig. 4.7. A linear fit was applied on these points and it gives  $v_{gr,eff} =$

$215.868 \pm 5.585$  mm/ns ( $n_{eff} = 1.3888$ ) at the point where  $r_{bias} = 0$ .

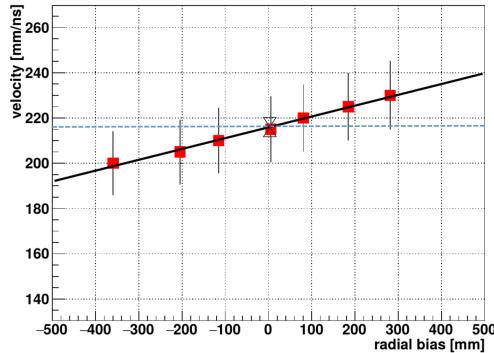


Figure 4.7: Group velocity vs. radial bias for the MPW fitter.

Later I turned to a more data-driven approach rather than tuning from the simulations. This approach is to extract an average group velocity by analyzing the  $^{16}\text{N}$  calibration source data. As shown in Fig. ??, for the  $^{16}\text{N}$  central run-100934 and run-107055, the source was deployed almost at the PSUP center where the optical photons were created and propagated to reach the PMTs on the PSUP.

For each event, it supposes that the triggered PMTs were found within a solid angle  $\Omega = \pi(L/2)^2/r_{PSUP}^2$ , where  $L$  is the line segment and  $r_{PSUP} = 8390$  mm is the radius of the PSUP, as shown in Fig. 4.8. Since the diameter of the PMT concentrator is 27 cm, the line segment is chosen as  $L = 50$  cm ( $\theta = \arcsin(\frac{1}{2}L/r_{PSUP}) \approx 0.17^\circ$ ) to let roughly 2 PMTs be within the  $\Omega$ . Then the arrival time  $T_1$  was found by calculating  $|\vec{X}_{source} - \vec{X}_{PMTin\Omega}|/v_{water}$ , where  $v_{water} = 217.554$  mm/ns is an effective velocity obtained by the SNO+ for light water[138].

On the other hand, a solid angle  $\Omega'$  is calculated as opposed to the  $\Omega$  from the source position. Similarly, the triggered PMTs within the  $\Omega'$  were found and then the arrival time  $T_2$  is calculated. Thus the average group velocity was calculated as:

$$v_{gr} = \frac{2r_{PSUP}}{(T_1 + T_2)}. \quad (4.6)$$

The final number of the  $v_{gr}$  was calculated by averaging the  $v_{gr}$  obtained from all the events and triggered PMTs in both the run-100934 and 107055. It finds the  $v_{gr} = c/n_{water,eff} = 216.478$  mm/ns, where  $n_{water,eff} = 1.38486$ .

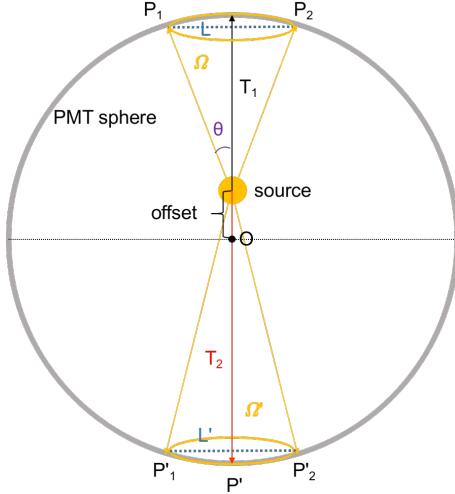


Figure 4.8:  $^{16}\text{N}$  central run for evaluating the average group velocity.

The SNO+ collaboration used a more complicated approach to measure actual group velocities in the SNO+ water detector by analyzing a set of laserball calibration runs[139, 77]. This analysis can give a more accurate  $v_{gr}$ , while it was not applied here.

For the vertex fitters used in the partial-fill and scintillator phases, since no internal calibration was performed, I adopt the linear interpolation method. It will be discussed in Sect. 4.5.

#### 4.2.4 Fitter Pull and Drive Correction

An effect of “fitter pull” in the event vertex reconstruction utilizing the Cherenkov light was observed in the SNO experiment. The distribution of  $(\vec{X}_{fit} - \vec{X}_{MC})/|\vec{X}_{fit} - \vec{X}_{MC}| \cdot \vec{u}_{fit}$  shows a large peak at +1, which indicates that the fitted position  $\vec{X}_{fit}$  is prone to be pulled forward from the true position systematically along the event direction  $\vec{u}$ [140, 141, 138].

Similar to the SNO heavy water case, in the SNO+ ultrapure water, Cherenkov photons created by an event trigger most of the PMT-hits with early timing and these hits are located within the Cherenkov cone; for the same event, there are also a few PMT-hits with later timing. These PMT hits can be caused by the scattered or reflected photons and they are located throughout the detector. For a random PMT hit, it is more probable to be

placed outside the Cherenkov cone due to the geometry: consider an event happens at the center of the PSUP, the Cherenkov cone it produced will intersect the PSUP by an area of  $2\pi R_{PSUP}^2(1 - \cos 41^\circ)$ , which occupies about 12% of the total area of the PSUP sphere. Therefore, for a random PMT-hit on the PSUP sphere, it has more than 88% of chance to be placed outside the Cherenkov cone.

For these later timing PMT hits, a similar “complementary” effect mentioned in Sect. 4.2.3 can also happen. When the fitter fits with  $t_{res}$ , for the large  $t_{res}$  values caused by the later timing hits, it pulls the trial position away from the later timing hits to increase  $t_{transit}$  and decrease  $t_{res}$ , as illustrated in Fig. 4.9. This effect was also explained as “straighten out delayed photons” by the timing fitter in [140]. Furthermore, the major early hits can also cause small  $t_{res}$  values and thus the fitter pulls the trial position closer towards the early hits to decrease  $t_{transit}$  and increase  $t_{res}$ . Recall that the early hits are located on or around the Cherenkov cone, therefore an overall effect of this “fitter pull” is that the fitted position will be pulled along the axis of the Cherenkov cone and towards the PSUP sphere. This pull direction is coincident with the event direction.

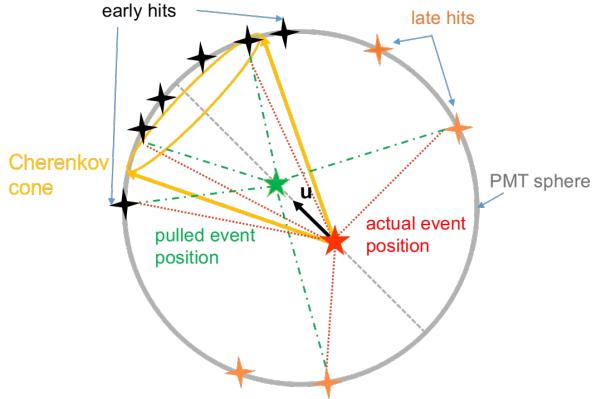


Figure 4.9: A cartoon shows fitter pull effect, modified from Fig. C.2 in Ref. [141] and Fig. 2,3,4 in Ref. [140].

A simple way to eliminate this “fitter pull” effect is to pull back the fitted event position against the event direction. This is called “drive correction”.

Once the MPW fitter obtains both of the fitted position and direction, the drive cor-

rection is applied on the fitted position by  $\vec{X}_{\text{corrected}} = p_0 \vec{X}_{\text{fit}} + p_1 \vec{u}_{\text{fit}}$ , where  $p_0$  and  $p_1$  are the correction parameters, as shown in Fig. 4.10.

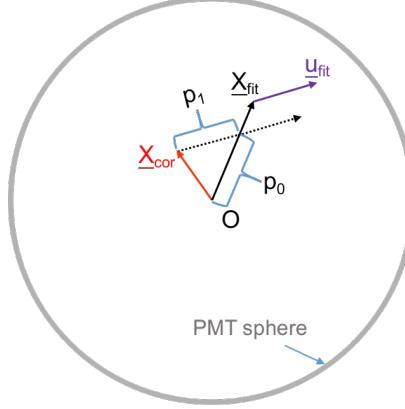


Figure 4.10: A diagram illustrates the drive correction.

To obtain the values of  $p_0$  and  $p_1$ , I generated  $e^-$  events distributed isotropically inside the AV. The simulations with various  $e^-$  energies from 2 to 10MeV by an 1MeV step were produced. Then the **MPW fitter** was applied on each simulations and returned the results of  $\vec{X}_{\text{fit}}$  and  $\vec{u}_{\text{fit}}$ . Taking the Monte Carlo generated positions  $\vec{X}_{MC}$  as the true positions, for all the fitted events, a  $\chi^2$  function is calculated by:

$$\chi^2 = \sum_{i=1}^{N_{\text{events}}} [\vec{X}_{MC}^i - (p_0 \vec{X}_{\text{fit}}^i + p_1 \vec{u}_{\text{fit}}^i)]^2, \quad (4.7)$$

The  $p_0$  and  $p_1$  are obtained by minimizing the  $\chi^2$  function. When calculating the  $\chi^2$ , the fitted events of  $|\vec{X}_{\text{fit}} - \vec{X}_{MC}| > 3 \text{ m}$  are thrown away to improve the  $\chi^2$  minimization results.

For the 2 to 10-MeV  $e^-$  event simulations (using **RAT** version 6.17.6), the obtained values of  $p_0$  and  $p_1$  are energy or NHit dependent. However, it does not improve the results if using the NHits dependent functions  $p_0(\text{NHit})$  and  $p_1(\text{NHit})$  as drive corrections. Finally we take the average values from the 5 to 10 MeV electrons simulations and the drive correction is set as:

$$\vec{X}_{\text{corrected}} = 0.9868 \vec{X}_{\text{fit}} + (-78.417) \vec{u}_{\text{fit}}. \quad (4.8)$$

Note that these drive correction parameters were obtained from simulations and changes

of the simulation model, especially the optical model of the detector, can affect the  $n_{gr,eff}$ , mode cut and time residual cut, and then affect the drive correction parameters. However, the drive correction parameters can be re-coordinated with the changes in the simulation.

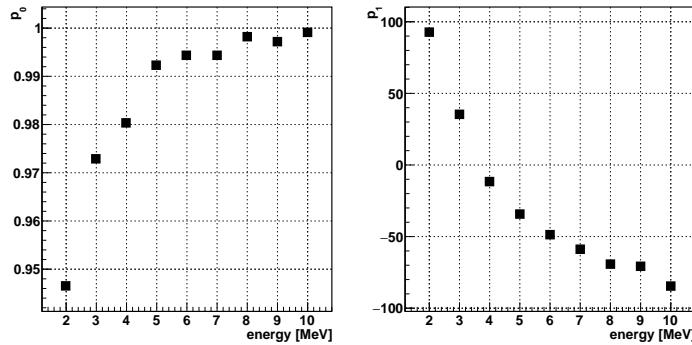


Figure 4.11: Drive correction parameter  $p_0$  (left) and  $p_1$  (right) as a function of energy.

To check the effects of the drive correction, 1000 simulations of the 5-MeV  $e^-$  were generated at the detector center with momentum direction at (1,0,0). It shows that the drive effect in the reconstruction causes a +50 mm bias from the detector center in the x axis (i.e., the pull in +x). The drive correction reduces this pull down to  $\sim+0.2$  mm in the x axis. The resolution of the  $r_{bias}$  distribution is also improved by  $\sim20$  mm. With the same simulation settings, various energies of  $e^-$  from 2 to 10 MeV (with a 1-MeV step) were generated to check the effects before and after the drive correction, as shown in Fig. 4.12. The pull is quantified by the radial bias mentioned in Sect. 4.2.3. The distributions of the  $r_{bias}$  in each simulation were fitted with Gaussian functions, and the Gaussian means were used as the pull. It shows that, with higher energy, the pull effect is larger. The drive corrections correct the radial biases by about 55 mm. The drive correction is also applied in the `Rat water fitter`, and their results are also shown.

#### 4.2.5 PMT Selectors for the Reconstruction

PMT selectors were developed to selecting proper PMTs for the reconstruction algorithm from all the recorded PMTs triggered by an event. The purpose is to optimize the fitter

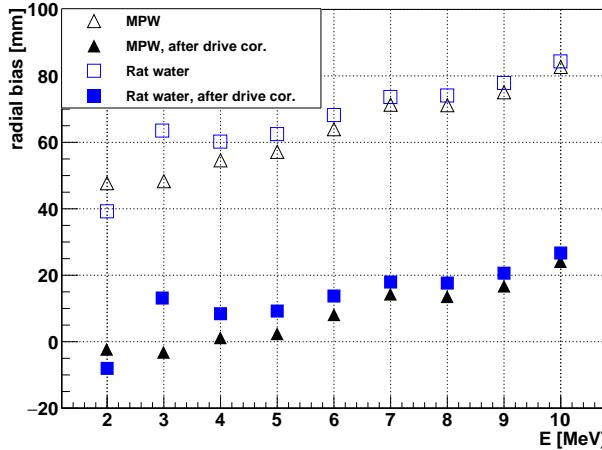


Figure 4.12: Radial biases of the simulated  $e^-$  events before (unfilled triangles) and after the drive correction (filled triangles), as a function of energy. The results from the official **RAT water fitter** are also shown here, with the unfilled blue squares for biases before the correction and filled ones after the correction.

results and boosting up the fit speed. The PMT selectors used by the **MP fitter** are:

- Straight Light Path Time Residual Cut Selector

This selector is used for the direction reconstruction for the SNO+ water phase. It was first developed by Kalpana Singh[12]. In the selector, the value of time residual ( $t_{res}$ ) is calculated for each hit PMTs from an event and the PMT returning a  $t_{res}$  value within the prompt time window of  $[-10.0, 120.0] \text{ ns}$  is selected for the fitter. The selector calculates the  $t_{res}$  by using straight line light paths, which is the same as the **MPW fitter**. The selector mostly removes the PMTs triggered by late timing photons, such as the photons reflected off the detector elements (called “late light”), and then keeps the possible Cherenkov ring hit pattern clear for the direction reconstruction. Removing the irrelevant PMTs can potentially boost up the fit speed.

- Mode Cut Selector

This selector was developed by the SNO+ collaboration for all fitters. It checks the hit time ( $t_{PMT}$ ) distributions of all the hit PMTs and finds a mode value of the hit time ( $t_{mode}$ ). If  $t_{mode}$  fails to be found, it calculates a median value ( $t_{median}$ ) instead[142].

Then it selects the PMT with  $t_{\text{PMT}} \in [t_{\text{mode}} + t_{\text{low}}, t_{\text{mode}} + t_{\text{high}}] \text{ ns}$ . This selector is used to remove the PMTs triggered by noise and light from reflection. The values of  $t_{\text{low}}$ ,  $t_{\text{high}}$  are optimized for different scintillators. For the **MPW fitter**, I found that the optimized window is  $[t_{\text{mode}} - 50, t_{\text{mode}} + 100] \text{ ns}$  by checking with the fit biases and resolutions for the  $^{16}\text{N}$  central run data in the water phase, while for the **MP partial fitter** and **MP scint fitter** the optimized window is  $[t_{\text{mode}} - 100, t_{\text{mode}} + 100] \text{ ns}$  based on checking with the simulations.

- Uniform PMT Selector

I implemented this selector and the Earliest Hit Selector mentioned below for the partial-fill and scintillator phases when a single event can trigger many PMTs due to high light yields of the liquid scintillator. In this case, the fit speed for each event becomes slow, which can challenge the data processing. These selectors can reduce the number of the hit PMTs to a designated number ( $n_{\text{select}}$ ) to boost up the fit speed while still keep acceptable results of the fit bias and resolution.

For the Uniform PMT Selector, when an event triggers  $N$  calibrated PMTs, the selector goes through these recorded PMTs and uniformly picks up one PMT by an interval of  $\lceil N/n_{\text{select}} \rceil$ . If  $N \leq n_{\text{select}}$ , the selector does nothing. By doing this, the selector uniformly reduces the number of the PMTs for the fitter without an obvious bias.

- Earliest Hit PMT Selector

This selector first groups the PMTs by their positions in the PSUP sphere. Taking the centre of the sphere as the origin of the coordinate, the sphere is divided by the azimuth angle  $\phi$  (as longitude) and zenith angle  $\theta$  (as latitude). The PMT positions are projected to  $\phi \in [-\pi, \pi]$  and  $\cos \theta \in [-1, 1]$  on the sphere, each is uniformly divided into  $n$  intervals. Thus, the PMTs are grouped into  $n \times n$  panels by  $\phi$  and  $\cos \theta$ :  $\text{PMT}(\phi_i, \cos \theta_j) \in [i \cdot \phi/n, j \cdot \cos \theta/n], (i, j = 1, 2, \dots, n)$ , see Fig. 4.13.

In each panel, the selector first removes the hit PMTs which are triggered too early

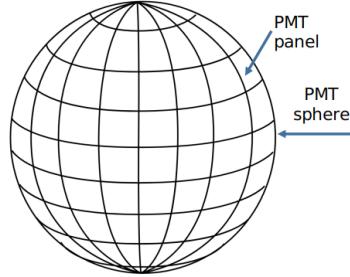


Figure 4.13: The PMTs are grouped by dividing the PSUP sphere with latitudes and longitudes.

( $t_{\text{PMT}} < 100 \text{ ns}$ , where  $100 \text{ ns}$  is set as a default threshold). These PMTs could be triggered by noises, such as the pre-pulsing from thermal noises. Then in the rest of the hit PMTs, the selector picks up one PMT which has the earliest  $t_{\text{PMT}}$  in the panel. Thus the number of the hit PMTs is reduced to  $n \times n$  for the fitter, i.e.,  $n_{\text{select}} = n \times n$ . If  $\text{NHits} \leq n_{\text{select}}$ , the selector does nothing.

The other timing parameters can also be used for selecting the PMT in each panel, such as the  $t_{\text{mode}}$  or the  $t_{\text{median}}$ . However, tests on the simulations for the scintillator phase show that using the earliest hit time  $t_{\text{PMT}}$  gives fewer fit biases and better fit resolutions.

Tests on the 10-MeV  $e^-$  simulations in the scintillator phase show that applying this selector with  $n_{\text{select}} = 16 \times 16$ , the fit speed was reduced from 1.2 s/event to 0.4 s/event.

#### 4.2.6 Position Figure of Merit

A quantity called scaled log  $L$  ( $\text{scaleLogL}$ ) is used as the position reconstruction FoM ( $\text{posFoM}$ ):  $\text{scaleLogL} = \ln L / \text{NHit}_{\text{selected}}$ . This quantity utilizes the best log-likelihood returned by the MP **fitter** for a successfully reconstructed event vertex, and then it is scaled by the “selected” NHit ( $\text{NHit}_{\text{selected}}$ ), which is the number of the PMTs actually used by the fitter for the event vertex reconstruction, after the PMT selections mentioned in Sect. 4.2.5. This  $\text{posFoM}$  quantity can remove a few mis-reconstruct events and then

improve the results of the reconstruction.

#### 4.2.7 Performances of the Water Vertex Reconstruction

By using the `RAT` (version 6.17.6) package, simulations of 10000  $e^-$  events were generated at the detector center (in the PSUP coordination) with isotropic directions, i.e., the event momentum directions were generated randomly and uniformly over all directions. Default detector trigger settings in the SNO+ water phase were used (`N100Hi=21.0`, `N100Med=16.0` and `N100Lo=11.0`). With these settings, some events may fail to trigger the detector, especially those with lower energies ( $E < 3$  MeV), and thus the number of the reconstructed events can be lower than the simulated events.

The average fit speed of the event vertex reconstruction for the 5-MeV  $e^-$  simulations is 0.005 second/event and the direction reconstruction is 0.002 second/event, which are very fast and acceptable for the data processing in the SNO+ water phase. Fig. 4.2.7 shows the position reconstruction results and performances for the 5-MeV  $e^-$  events. The biases between the fitted and MC positions:  $\vec{X}_{fit} - \vec{X}_{mc} = (x_{fit} - x_{MC}, y_{fit} - y_{MC}, z_{fit} - z_{MC})$ , were projected on the x, y, and z axes respectively and their distributions were fitted with Gaussian functions. The mean of the fitted Gaussian ( $\mu$ ) is taken as the fit position bias while the Gaussian sigma ( $\sigma$ ) is taken as the fit position resolution.

In Fig. 4.2.7, there are a few events with position biases larger than 2000 mm, which are considered as mis-reconstruct events. Some of these events are due to relatively lower log-likelihood values and can be tagged by the *posFoM* mentioned in Sect. 4.2.6. As shown in Fig. 4.2.7, a cut of  $scaleLogL > 10$  can remove a few mis-reconstructed events. The rest of them can be caused by the straight light path calculation in the `MP fitter`, since this calculation omits the complicated situations with the refraction and reflection light paths, as mentioned in Sect. 4.2.1. However, the fraction of these mis-reconstruct events is low, about 0.1% and thus it is acceptable.

A more generic situation is that the events happen everywhere inside the AV. To simulate this,  $e^-$  events were generated at random positions uniformly distributed inside the AV

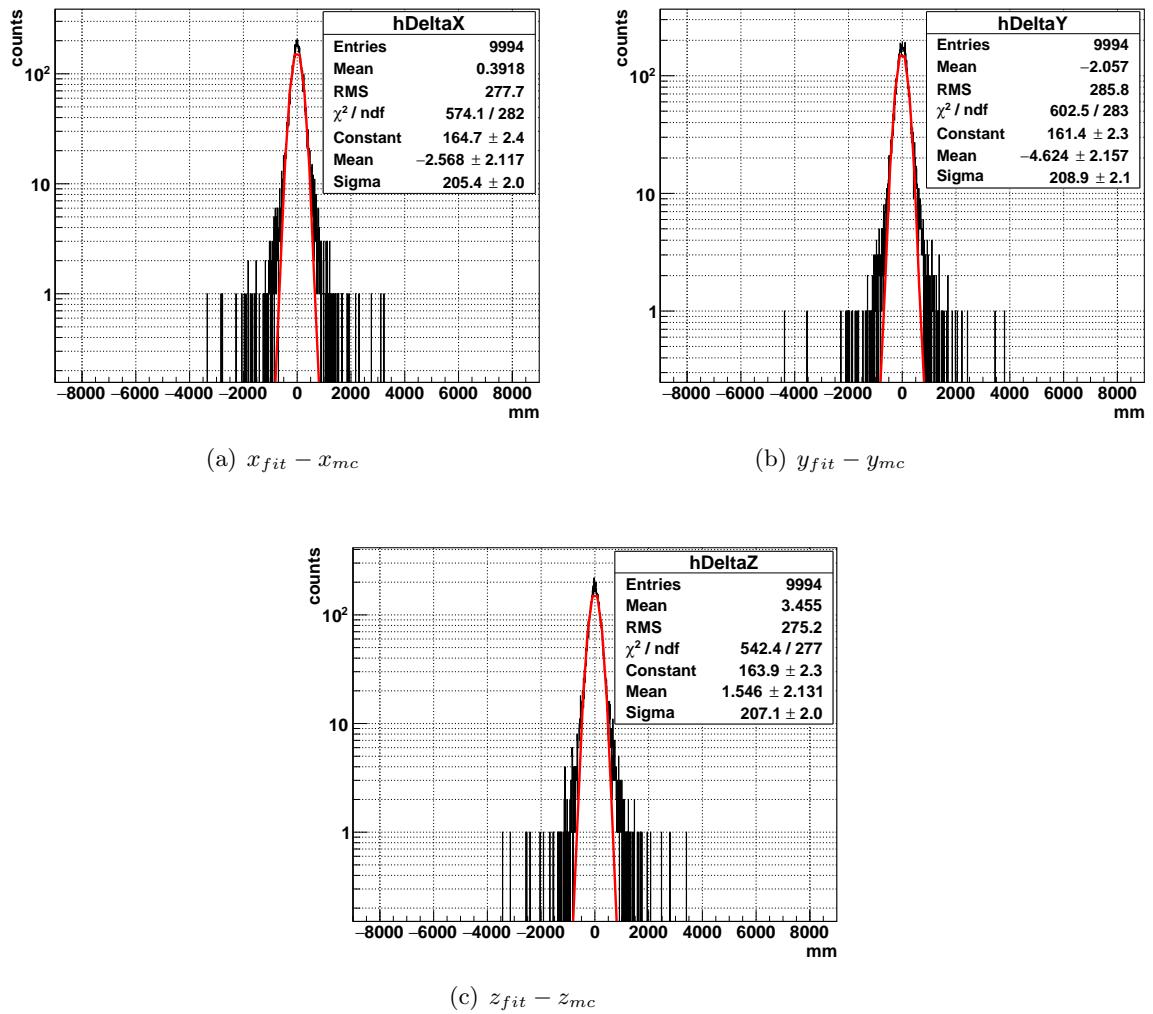


Figure 4.14: The position biases projected on the x, y and z axes. The distributions were fitted with Gaussian functions. The MC generated 10000 5-MeV  $e^-$  particles at the detector center with isotropic directions.

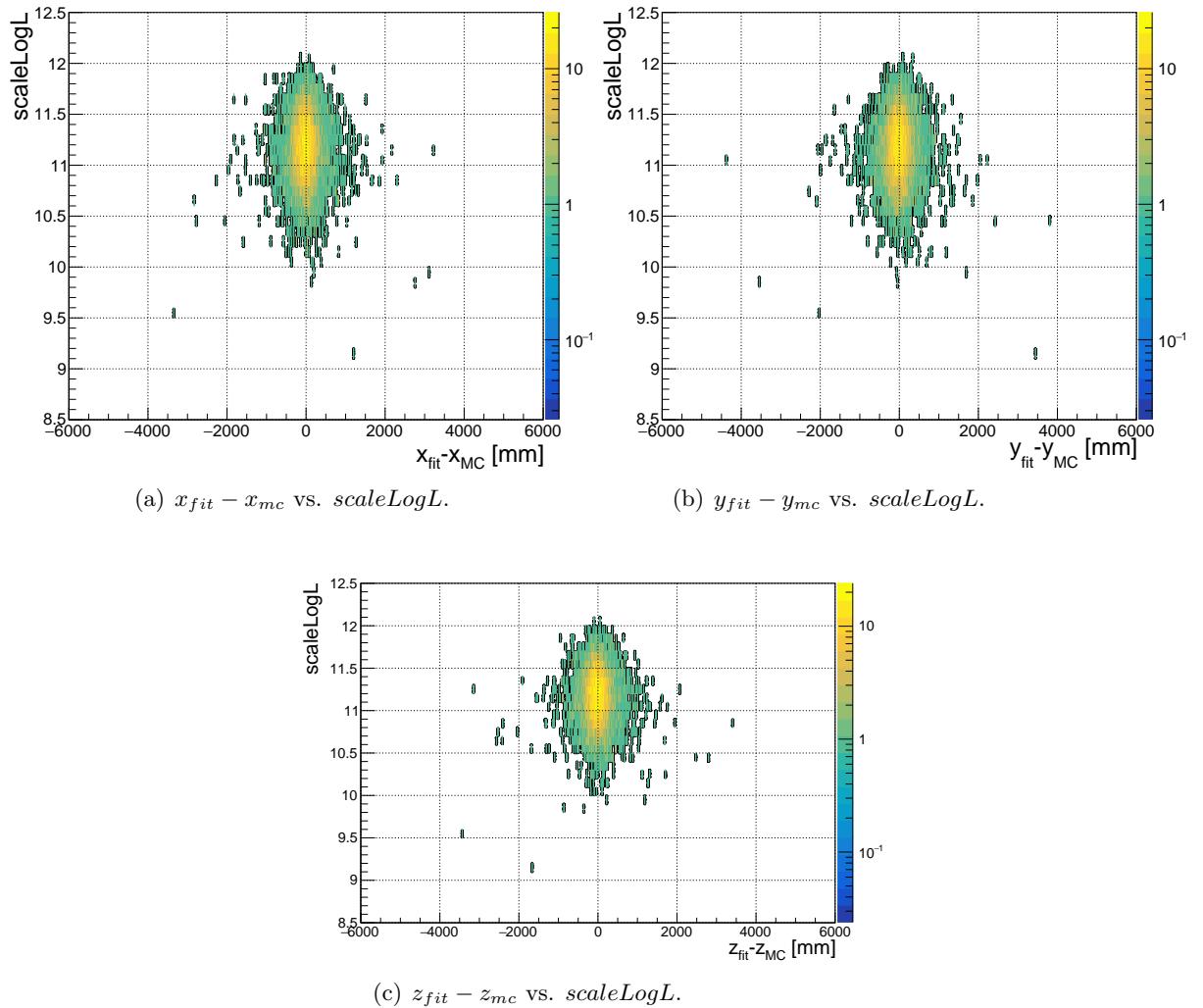


Figure 4.15: The position biases against the position FoMs. The MC generated 10000 5-MeV  $e^-$  particles at the detector center with isotropic directions.

volume and with isotropic directions. Various  $e^-$  energies were also simulated, from 2 to 15 MeV with a 1-MeV step. Fig. 4.16 and Fig. 4.17 show the fit position biases ( $\mu_{x,y,z}$ ) and resolutions ( $\sigma_{x,y,z}$ ) respectively.

These results show that the fit position biases  $\mu_{x,y,z}$  are stable across different energies and for  $E \leq 5$  MeV, the biases are within 10 mm. The resolutions  $\sigma_{x,y,z}$  decrease from about 350 mm to 120 mm and the average is 180 mm. More photons are produced by the  $e^-$  events with higher energy, thus triggering more PMTs. With a larger NHits value, more information is provided for the fitter, and it can return better position resolutions. As I will show in the following section, the position resolution can also be improved by using a decent detection medium that can produce more photons for the same event..

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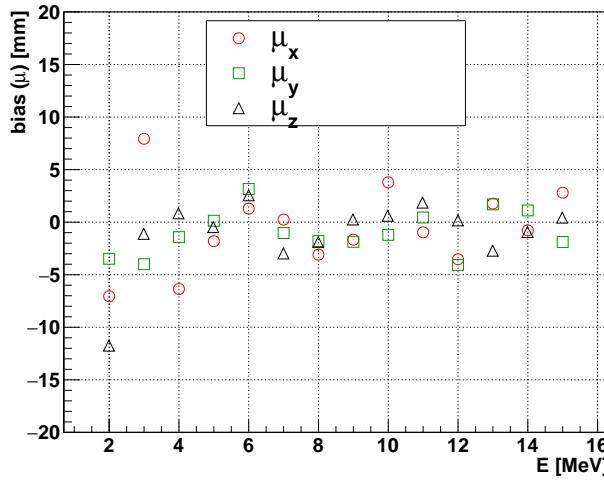


Figure 4.16: The MPW fitter fit position biases in x(red circle), y (green square), and z (black triangle) axes as a function of energy.

To check the radial dependence of the reconstruction performance, simulations of the 5-MeV  $e^-$  were generated in 11 thin shells, with isotropic directions. The centers of these

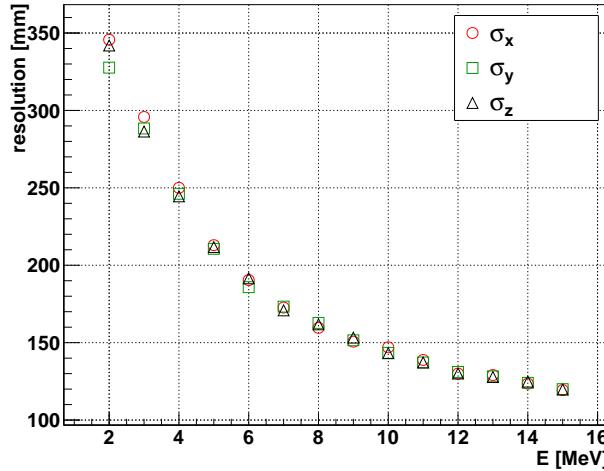


Figure 4.17: The MPW fitter fit position resolutions in x (red circle), y (green square), and z (black triangle) axes as a function of energy.

shells are at the AV center, and their radii are at  $r$  m and  $r + 0.001$  m, where  $r$  is from 0.5 m to 5.5 m, with a step of 0.5 m. Fig. 4.18 and Fig. 4.19 show the fit position biases and resolutions respectively. The results show that the fit position biases are stable across the different radii of the AV, while the resolutions become worse when the events are close to the AV, or  $R > 5$  m. This is called the “near AV effect”, which was observed in SNO. For the position close to the AV, the AV can serve as a lens and distort the light path[141]. A few complicated calculations to tackle this effect and the technique called “Near AV cut” were discussed in Refs. [138, 74], but they are not applied in this thesis.

#### 4.2.8 Performances of the Water Direction Reconstruction

The bias between the true event direction  $\vec{u}_{MC}$  and the reconstructed direction  $\vec{u}_{fit}$  is described by the angle  $\theta_e$ , and  $\cos \theta_e \equiv \vec{u}_{fit} \cdot \vec{u}_{MC}$ .

To describe the distribution of  $\cos \theta_e$ , an empirical function for the angular resolution was adopted by SNO[133] and it is defined as a combination of two exponential components:

$$P(\cos \theta_e) = \alpha_M \frac{\beta_M \exp[-\beta_M(1 - \cos \theta_e)]}{1 - \exp(-2\beta_M)} + (1 - \alpha_M) \frac{\beta_s \exp[-\beta_s(1 - \cos \theta_e)]}{1 - \exp(-2\beta_s)}, \quad (4.9)$$

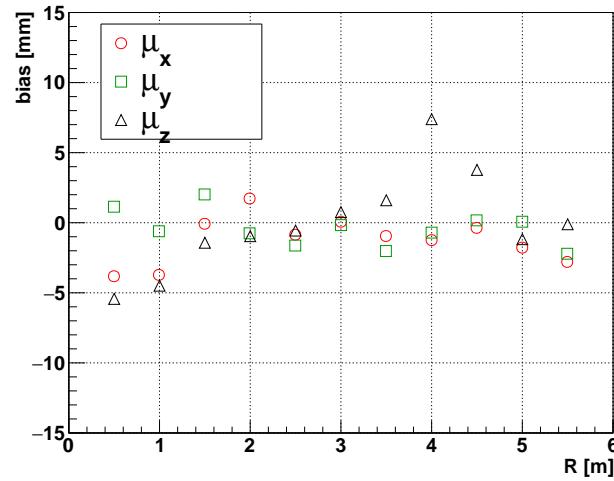


Figure 4.18: The MPW fitter fit position biases of x (red circle), y (green square), and z (black triangle) axes as a function of radius.

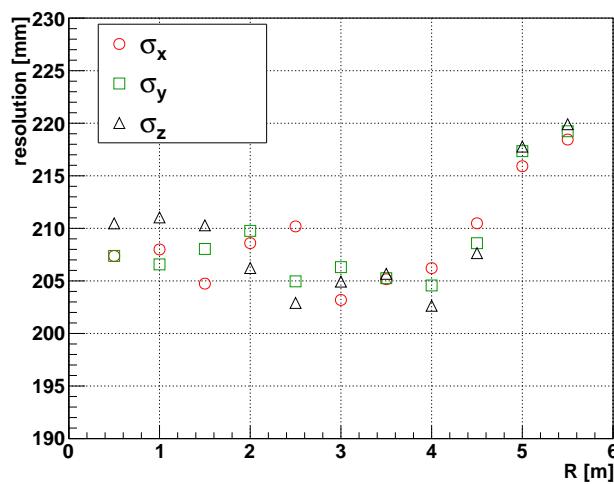


Figure 4.19: The MPW fitter position resolutions of x (red circle), y (green square), and z (black triangle) axes as a function of radius.

where the parameters:  $\beta_M$  and  $\beta_S$  are the “decay” constants or the “slopes” of the two exponential components;  $\alpha_M$  is the fraction between two exponential components. The first component, the main peak is due to the single scattering of the electrons and is the true angular resolution of the detector, while the second component which has a broad tail is mainly due to the multiple scattering of electrons; there are also back scattering electrons on the detector components and the poorly reconstructed events in the tails[133]. Fig. 4.2.8 shows the  $\cos \theta_e$  distribution of the 5-MeV  $e^-$  particles generated at the detector center and with isotropic directions.

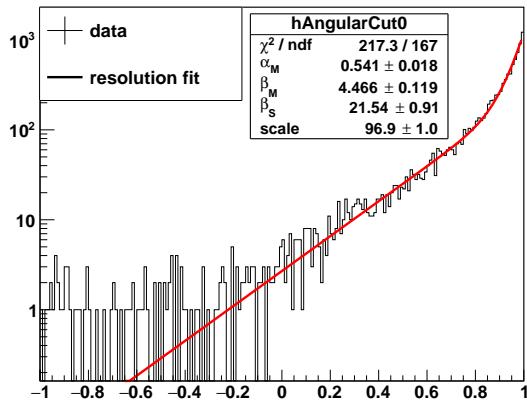


Figure 4.20: The biases between the fitted and MC directions, fitted with the resolution function  $P(\cos \theta_e)$  (plotted in red). The MC generated  $10^4$  5-MeV  $e^-$  at the detector center.

Another way to quantify the reconstruction performance based on the  $\cos \theta_e$  distribution is to calculate the angles that contain 50%, 80% or 90% of the reconstructed events, denoted by  $\cos \theta_{0.5}$ ,  $\cos \theta_{0.8}$  and  $\cos \theta_{0.9}$  respectively[138]. Their values are solved numerically from the Eqn. 4.10:

$$\frac{\int_{\cos \theta_a}^1 P(\cos \theta_e) d \cos \theta_e}{\int_{-1}^1 P(\cos \theta_e) d \cos \theta_e} = a \times 100\%, \quad (4.10)$$

where  $P(\cos \theta_e)$  is the direction resolution function with the best fitted parameters. A larger  $\cos \theta_a$  means the  $\cos \theta_e$  distribution is more peaked around +1 and a better direction reconstruction. The results of the direction resolutions are listed in Table. 4.1.

These results are slightly better than the SNO fitter results for the 5-MeV  $e^-$  in the

Table 4.1: Direction resolutions for the reconstruction of the 5-MeV  $e^-$  events.

$\beta_M$	$\beta_S$	$\cos \theta_{0.5}$	$\cos \theta_{0.8}$	$\cos \theta_{0.9}$
$4.47 \pm 0.12$	$21.54 \pm 0.91$	0.978	0.777	0.624

heavy water, with  $\beta_M = 3.348 \pm 0.08119$ ,  $\beta_S = 19.3 \pm 0.6929$ [133].

To check the radial dependence of the direction reconstruction performance, the similar tests in Sect. 4.2.7 Fig. 4.21 shows the direction resolutions  $\beta_M$  and  $\beta_S$  as a function of the radius.

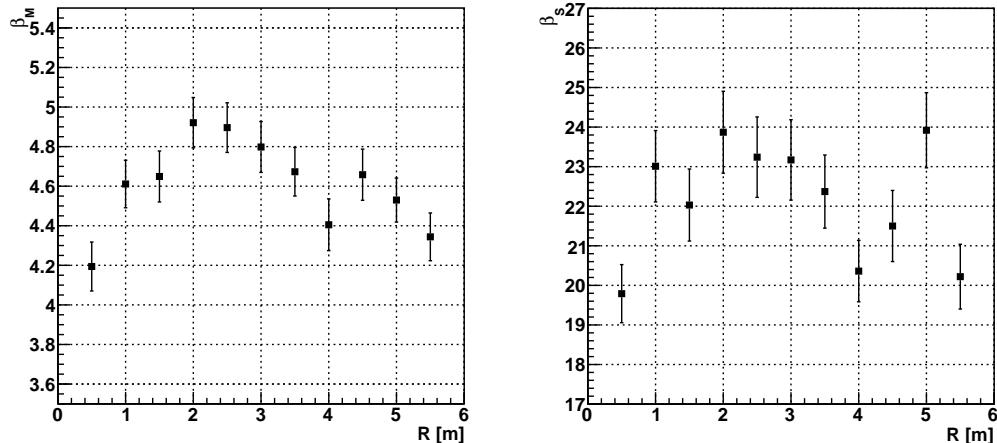


Figure 4.21: Direction resolutions as a function of radius. The MC generated 10000 5-MeV  $e^-$  inside the AV with isotropic directions.

#### 4.2.9 Test on Gamma Events

The  $\gamma$ -events with energies of 2.2 MeV and 4.4 MeV are crucial for analyzing the AmBe calibration data. A realistic trigger setting for the antineutrino analysis (run-106904) was also simulated. With this trigger setting in simulations, about 53% of the low energy 2.2-MeV  $\gamma$  events were triggered. So I doubled the simulations to  $2 \times 10^4$ .

Table. 4.2 shows the reconstruction performances.

Table 4.2: Reconstruction performances for the 2.2-MeV and 4.4-MeV  $\gamma$  events.

simulation	$\Delta x \pm \sigma_x$ [mm]	$\Delta y \pm \sigma_y$ [mm]	$\Delta z \pm \sigma_z$ [mm]
2.2-MeV	$2.278 \pm 626.927$	$-5.663 \pm 608.182$	$-10.523 \pm 626.034$
4.4-MeV	$-6.964 \pm 364.725$	$-2.804 \pm 368.752$	$-1.342 \pm 368.398$

#### 4.2.9.1 Test on $^{16}\text{N}$ Calibration Source Events

In a more realistic situation, the data collected from the runs of the calibration sources were used to evaluate the fitter performances as well as the reconstruction uncertainties. Chapter 5 will discuss the analyses of the  $^{16}\text{N}$  calibration source in detail. For these tests, a position resolution function including the distributions of the initial interaction positions, rather than the Gaussian function was used, while the same direction resolution function was used.

### 4.3 Vertex and Direction Reconstruction for the Water-based Wavelength-shifter

A reconstruction algorithm was developed to investigate the proposal for the water-based wavelength-shifter, as mentioned in 3.3.4.

Figure 4.22 shows the position distributions of hit PMTs for MC simulated 5 MeV electrons traveling along  $+x$  direction in the AV. The left panel shows the case when the detector is filled with pure water while the right panel is for water plus 0.1 ppm PPO. For the same electrons, the number of hit PMTs (NHits) in wbWLS is about 2.4 times greater than the pure water one. Although there is extra isotropic light emitted, the Cherenkov ring can still be seen clearly, allowing reconstruction of the directionality.

Figure 4.23 shows the energies of simulated electrons as a function of the mean value of the NHit distribution (mean NHits). In pure water, a 1 MeV electron simulation does not trigger any PMTs while in wbWLS case we have a mean NHits of 20.

In the wbWLS case, since the WLS absorbs and re-emits photons, the reconstruction mentioned in section 4.2 is slightly modified to build the MP WLS Fitter. According to

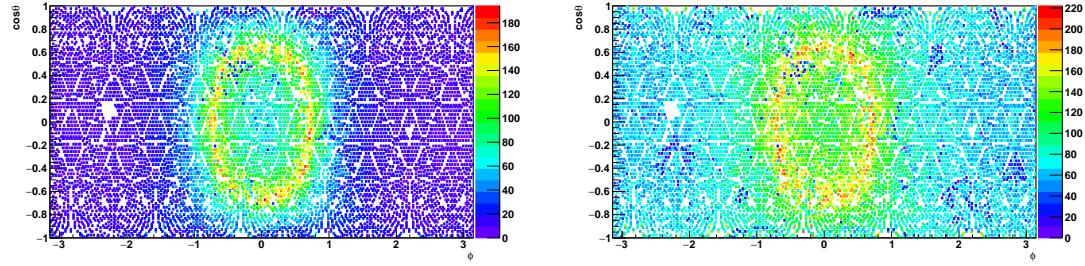


Figure 4.22: Position distributions of hit PMTs (in zenith and azimuth angles) for 5 MeV electrons traveling along  $+x$  direction in the pure water (left) and the water plus 0.1 ppm PPO (right).

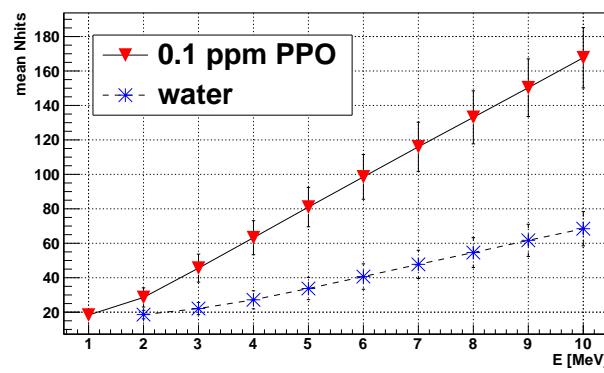


Figure 4.23: The energies of simulated electrons as a function of mean NHits. The values in the 0.1 ppm PPO (solid line with inverted triangle) are compared with the water (dashed line with star).

the optical property of PPO, the prompt light emitted from an event has a probability of  $\sim 0.6$  to be absorbed by the WLS and then re-emitted at a shifted vertex along the particle direction  $\hat{n}$ . Then the fitter returns a shifted vertex,  $\vec{X}_{0,\text{shifted}} = \vec{X}_0 + \text{offset} \cdot \hat{n}$ . The offset we set in the fitter is 100 mm obtained from simulations. Figure 4.24 shows the timing *PDF* for the wbWLS, which is the PMT response time modified to photon propagation time in the wbWLS.

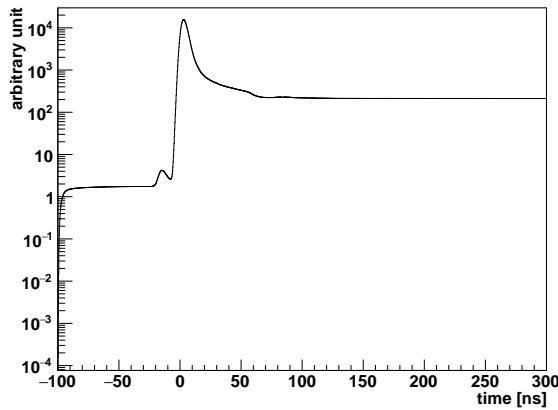


Figure 4.24: The timing *PDF* for the wbWLS.

To reconstruct the direction, besides the angular distribution of Cherenkov photons,  $\cos \theta_{Ch}$ , we also consider the fraction of the re-emitted and wavelength shifted photons that cause a flat angular distribution.

To test the performance of the MP WLS Fitter, 5 MeV  $e^-$  were simulated at the center of the AV filled with wbWLS and traveling along  $+x$  direction. As a comparison, the same simulation was done for the AV filled with pure water and the simulated events were reconstructed by the water fitter.

Fig. 4.3 shows the performance of the WLS fitter reconstructed positions of the MC simulations compared to the pure water case. For the fit position distribution of 5-MeV  $e^-$  in the wbWLS, we get a root mean square (RMS) of 201 mm and a bias to the center (the mean of histogram) of 29 mm. Compared to the pure water case, the fit bias is about 19 mm better and the RMS is 188 mm better.

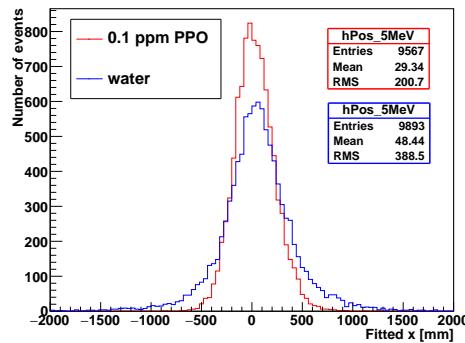


Figure 4.25: Fitted x position. The `MP_WLS_fitter` reconstructed  $x$  positions of the 5-MeV  $e^-$  events in the wbWLS (red) are compared to the ones in the water (blue).

Similar to Sect. 4.2.8,  $\cos \theta_a$  in Eqn. 4.10 is used to quantify the performances in direction reconstruction. Table. 4.3 shows the results of  $\cos \theta_a$  for SNO heavy water data[133] and simulations for SNO+ pure water and wbWLS. It shows that the SNO+ pure water gives the best direction reconstruction, while the wbWLS is about 30% off in  $\cos \theta_{0.9}$  compared to the SNO+ pure water.

Table 4.3: A comparison of quantitative estimates for the angular resolution for the SNO heavy water, SNO+ wbWLS and the SNO+ pure water cases.

medium	$\cos \theta_{0.9}$	$\cos \theta_{0.8}$	$\cos \theta_{0.5}$
SNO heavy water	0.50	0.71	0.92
SNO+ water	0.62	0.78	0.98
wbWLS	0.37	0.63	0.90

Comparing a pure water SNO+ detector and the wbWLS one, using the `MP_WLS_fitter` for physics events gives a better position resolution without a significant loss in the performance of the direction reconstruction. This `MP_WLS_fitter` was also applied in a study of the potential for measuring the reactor antineutrinos in the wbWLS-filled SNO+ detector, see Ref. [143] for details.

## 4.4 Vertex Reconstruction for the Partial-fill

The following two sections discuss about the vertex reconstruction relating to the liquid scintillator. The vertex reconstructions for the partial-fill and scintillator phases are very similar. Both of them tackle with two detection media: the water and the scintillator, and calculate the light paths in these two regions. I will first describe the calculations in the partial-fill case, since its geometry is more complicated while the full scintillator case can be considered as a simplified version.

### 4.4.1 Partial-fill

In the partial-fill geometry, the SNO+ detector can be described as a composition of three parts: the neck cylinder filled with the scintillator; the AV sphere, which is split by a water-scintillator interface (plane) inside, and above this plane is the scintillator and below is the water; and the PSUP sphere outside the neck and the AV, filled with the water.

Omitting the acrylic and other detector materials, photons mainly pass through two different media: the water and the scintillator. As shown in Fig. 4.26, assuming a straight light path from a vertex to a hit PMT position, its total length is  $|\vec{l}_p| = |\vec{X}_{\text{PMT}} - \vec{X}_0|$ . The **MP scint-water fitter fitter** evaluates the length of the  $|\vec{l}_p|$  in the scintillator:  $d_{sp}$  and then the length in the water is  $|\vec{l}_p| - d_{sp}$ . Since photons travel at different speeds in these two media:  $v_{gr,scint}$  and  $v_{gr,water}$ , the **MP scint-water fitter fitter** evaluates the time of flight,  $t_{transit}$  by:

$$t_{transit} = \frac{|\vec{l}_p| - d_{sp}}{v_{gr,water}} + \frac{d_{sp}}{v_{gr,scint}}, \quad (4.11)$$

and thus the time residual,  $t_{res}$  is calculated. Once the  $t_{res}$  is obtained, the following fitting procedure is the same to the **MP water fitter**.

Therefore, the crucial part here is to calculate the  $d_{sp}$ . The light path  $\vec{l}_p$  is considered as a ray with a direction (rather than a line without direction). The ray intersects with three geometry objects: the neck cylinder, the AV sphere and the water-scintillator interface plane. As illustrated in Fig. 4.26, a detailed calculation of  $d_{sp}$  includes the evaluations of (1)  $\vec{l}_p$  and neck (ray-cylinder) intersection; (2)  $\vec{l}_p$  and the AV (ray-sphere) intersection and (3)

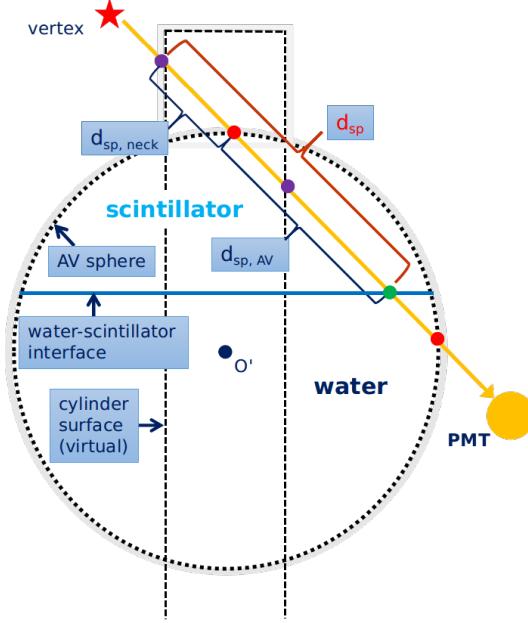


Figure 4.26: Light path calculation for the MP scint-watter fitter. In the figure, a light path intersects with the neck cylinder surface, the AV sphere as well as the water-scintillator interface. The total length of the path in the scintillator region (scintillator path,  $d_{sp}$ ) includes the paths in the neck ( $d_{sp,neck}$ ) and in the AV ( $d_{sp,AV}$ ). Calculations of the ray-cylinder, ray-plane and ray-sphere intersections are applied.

$\vec{l}_p$  and the water-scintillator interface (ray-plane) intersection. The  $d_{sp}$  is further separated into the path lengths in the neck ( $d_{sp,neck}$ ) and in the AV ( $d_{sp,AV}$ ).

For a trial position  $\vec{X}_0 = (x_0, y_0, z_0)$  and a hit PMT position  $\vec{X}_{pmt} = (x_{pmt}, y_{pmt}, z_{pmt})$ , define the ray vector as  $\vec{l}_0 \equiv \vec{X}_0 + a \cdot \vec{u}$ , where  $a$  is the distance between vertex and intersection point and it is the parameter to be determined;  $\vec{u} = \frac{\vec{X}_{pmt} - \vec{X}_0}{|\vec{X}_{pmt} - \vec{X}_0|}$  is the direction of the ray vector. It is a unit vector pointing from the  $\vec{X}_0$  to the  $\vec{X}_{pmt}$ . The following goes through the three intersection cases:

- Ray-sphere intersection

In the ray-sphere intersection case (ray vector passes through the AV sphere), the intersection points on the  $\vec{l}_0$  satisfy the sphere equation  $(\vec{X} - \vec{O}_{av})^2 = r_{AV}^2$ , where  $\vec{O}_{AV}$  is the origin of the AV sphere and  $\vec{O}_{AV} = (0, 0, 108)$  mm in the PSUP coordinate;  $r_{av} = 6005$  mm. Thus the intersection equation is:  $(\vec{l}_0 - \vec{O}_{av})^2 = r_{AV}^2$ .

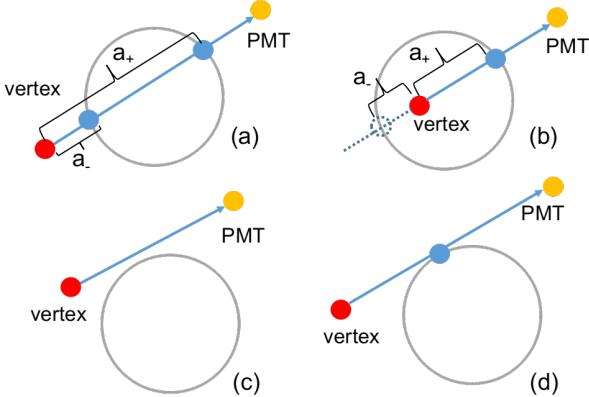


Figure 4.27: Line-sphere intersections. (a) the ray vector intersects the sphere with 2 points; (b) the ray vector intersects the sphere with 1 point; (c) and (d): the ray vector never passes through the sphere.

Let  $\Delta \equiv [(\vec{X}_0 - \vec{O}_{av}) \cdot \vec{u}]^2 - (\vec{X}_0 - \vec{O}_{av})^2 + r_{av}^2$ , if  $\Delta > 0$ , solve the equation and get:

$$a_{\pm} = -(\vec{X}_0 - \vec{O}_{av}) \cdot \vec{u} \pm \sqrt{\Delta}, \text{ if } \Delta > 0. \quad (4.12)$$

In this case, both  $a_+$  and  $a_-$  exist and their values are different. If  $a_+ > a_- > 0$ , the length of the path inside the sphere is  $a_+ - a_-$ , as illustrated in Fig. 4.27 (a). Due to this geometry, the event position should be outside the AV, the condition  $|\vec{X}_0| \geq r_{AV}$  is automatically met. If  $a_+ > 0 > a_-$ ,  $a_-$  determines the intersection point along the opposite direction of the ray vector. Thus the ray vector actually does not pass that point (different to the line intersection with no direction). Thus the length of the path inside the sphere is  $a_+$ , as illustrated in Fig. 4.27 (b). Also, the condition  $|\vec{X}_0| < r_{AV}$  is automatically met.

If  $\Delta \leq 0$ , there is no intersection point or only one intersection point (when  $\Delta = 0$ ) at the AV, the ray vector never passes through the AV sphere, as illustrated in Fig. 4.27 (c) and (d).

- Ray-plane intersection

For the ray-plane intersection, the z components of the intersection points on  $\vec{l}_0$  satisfy the plane equation  $z = Z_{split}$ , where  $Z_{split}$  is the water level, i.e., the z position of the

water-scintillator intersection. Thus the intersection equation is:  $l_{0,z} = Z_{split}$ , where  $l_{0,z} = z_0 + a \cdot u_z$ .

If  $u_z = z_{pmt} - z_0 = 0$ , the ray is parallel to the plane and never intersects the plane.

If  $u_z \neq 0$ , solve the equation, we have:  $a = (Z_{split} - z_0)/u_z = (Z_{split} - z_0)$ . Let:

$$a_3 \equiv a = \frac{(Z_{split} - z_0)|\vec{X}_{pmt} - \vec{X}_0|}{z_{pmt} - z_0} \quad (\text{if } z_{pmt} - z_0 \neq 0), \quad (4.13)$$

Similar to the case of ray-sphere intersection, if  $a_3 < 0$ , the ray-plane intersection point is on the extended line along the opposite direction to the ray;  $a_3 \geq 0$  ensures the ray hits the interface. Note that here we consider the plane is infinitely large. Later we will combine with the calculations of the other geometries to cut it off.

- Ray-cylinder intersection

For the ray-cylinder intersection, the x and y components of the intersection points on the  $\vec{l}_0$  satisfy the intersection equation:  $l_{0,x}^2 + l_{0,y}^2 = r_{neck}^2$ , where  $r_{neck}$  is the radius of the neck cylinder ( $r_{neck} = 785 \text{ mm}$ ).

To solve the equation, let:  $\Delta' \equiv [x_0 \cdot (x_{PMT} - x_0) + y_0 \cdot (y_{PMT} - y_0)]^2 - (x_0^2 + y_0^2 - r_{neck}^2) \cdot [(x_{PMT} - x_0)^2 + (y_{PMT} - y_0)^2]$ , and then we get:

$$a'_\pm = |\vec{X}_{PMT} - \vec{X}_0| \cdot \frac{-[x_0 \cdot (x_{PMT} - x_0) + y_0 \cdot (y_{PMT} - y_0)] \pm \sqrt{\Delta'}}{(x_{PMT} - x_0)^2 + (y_{PMT} - y_0)^2}, \quad \text{if } \Delta' > 0, \quad (4.14)$$

Similar to the ray-sphere case, if  $a'_+ > a'_- > 0$ , the length of the path inside the cylinder is  $a'_+ - a'_-$ . Due to this geometry, the event position should be outside the cylinder, the condition  $(x_0^2 + y_0^2) \geq r_{neck}^2$  is automatically met. If  $a'_+ > 0 > a'_-$ , the event position should be inside the cylinder and the ray-vector intersects the cylinder with one point (while the other point is along the opposite direction). Thus the length of the path inside the cylinder is  $a'_+$ . If  $\Delta' \leq 0$ , the ray vector never passes through the neck cylinder. Also note that here we consider the cylinder is infinitely long. This will also be cut off by the combined calculations of the other geometries. In addition,

since only the neck region inside the PSUP is valid for the fitter, we should also ensure  $z < 8390 \text{ mm}$  (in the PSUP coordination).

To evaluate the length of the  $|\vec{l}_p|$  in the scintillator region ( $d_{sp}$ ), the above three geometries needs to be combined carefully. The following two procedures go through all the possible situations. First combine the evaluations of the ray-sphere and the ray-plane intersections to calculate the light path in the AV scintillator region ( $d_{sp,AV}$ ). Then combine the evaluations of the ray-sphere and the ray-cylinder intersections to calculate the light path in the neck scintillator region ( $d_{sp,neck}$ ). Detailed algorithms are shown in Appendix. A.6.

Since the valid fit requires the events inside the PSUP sphere, only the neck region inside the PSUP sphere (with  $6108 < z_{neck} < 8390 \text{ mm}$ ) needs to be considered. The neck path calculation is also allowed to be turned off, while a worse fit result is expected. Detailed calculations are shown in Appendix. A.6.

If  $d_{sp} = 0$ , the light path is always in the water. In this case, the fitter is the same to the **MP water fitter**. It fits the vertex with the **MP water fitter PDF**. Once the light path passes through the scintillator region, the fitter fits with a scintillator timing **PDF**, in which the PMT time response was modified to photon propagation time in scintillator, as shown in Fig. 4.28.

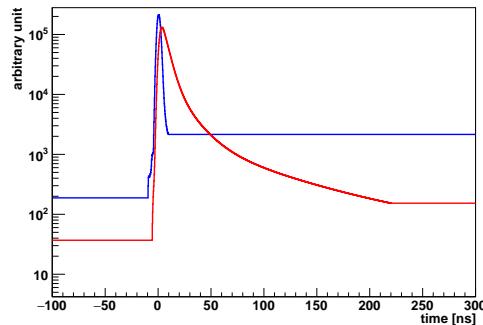


Figure 4.28: Timing **PDFs** used by the **MP scint-water fitter fitter**. Blue: the timing **PDF** used by the **MPW fitter**; red: the scintillator timing **PDF**.

The next section will discuss the timing **PDFs** used by the fitter.

## 4.4.2 Making Timing *PDFs*

### 4.4.2.1 Different PPO Concentrations during the Filling

During the partial-fill phase, the water level and the concentration of the PPO were changing. The PPO was gradually added into and mixed with the LAB, and for the relative stable partial-fill stages which were used for taking and analyzing data, the PPO concentrations dissolved in the LAB were 0.25 g/L (earlier stage from 2019 to 2020) or 0.5 g/L (later stage from 2020 to 2021). The planned concentration of the PPO in the scintillator phase is 2 g/L.

An understanding of the characteristic photon emission response is crucial for building the timing *PDF* for the reconstruction. The Oxford group from the SNO+ collaboration did several bench-top measurements to obtain the time constants and relative light yields of the LAB sample dissolved with the following PPO concentrations: 0.25, 0.5, 1.0, 2.0 and 6.0 g/L[144, 6].

The emission time profile model used by the Oxford group is[6]:

$$f_{optics}(t) = \sum_{i=1}^3 \left( A_i \frac{e^{-\frac{t}{\tau_i}} - e^{-\frac{t}{\tau_{rise}}}}{\tau_i - \tau_{rise}} \right) + A' \frac{e^{-\frac{t}{\tau_{rise}}}}{\tau_{rise}}, \quad (4.15)$$

where  $A_i$  is the fraction of scintillation light emitted in the  $i^{th}$  component,  $\tau_i$  is the decay constant in the  $i^{th}$  component,  $\tau_{rise}$  is the rise time of scintillator.

The measured parameters are listed in Table. 4.4.2.1 and Table. 4.4.2.1.

Table 4.4: Time constants and amplitudes measured by Ref. [6]. Here the relative light yield is with respect to the LAB+2 g/L PPO case (11900 photons/MeV).

PPO [g/L]	$\tau_{rise}$ [ns]	$\tau_1$ [ns]	$\tau_2$ [ns]	$\tau_3$ [ns]	$A_1$ [%]	$A_2$ [%]	$A_3$ [%]	$A'$ [%]
0.25	1.25	8.1	25.0	68.2	29.2	53.1	13.9	3.8
0.5	1.12	7.2	18.7	49.1	43.5	40.4	12.6	3.5
1.0	1.18	5.5	13.3	40.9	45.6	37.5	13.3	3.6
2.0	1.06	4.2	11.7	48.9	57.9	27.8	8.9	5.4
6.0	0.94	2.5	9.3	46.0	63.7	17.0	8.6	10.7

These Oxford-measured time profiles were convolved with the PMT time response profile mentioned in Sect. 4.2.1, Fig. 4.2, to make the timing *PDF* for the partial-fill vertex

Table 4.5: Relative light yield (RLY) measured by Ref. [6].

PPO [g/L]	RLY
0.25	0.57
0.5	0.65
1.0	0.9
2.0	1.0
6.0	0.93

reconstruction.

$$f(t)_{PDF} = f_{optics}(t) \otimes f_{PMT\ response}(t - t'), \quad (4.16)$$

I wrote a python tool to create the timing *PDFs* to re-coordinate the partial fitter for the different PPO concentration cases[145], as shown in Fig. 4.29.

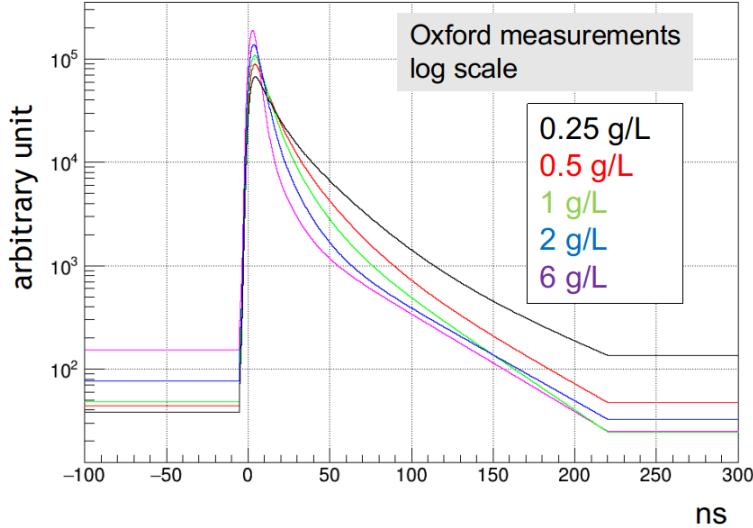


Figure 4.29: Timing *PDFs* built for various PPO concentrations based on the Oxford bench-top measurements.

*PDFs* for all timing Sect. 3.3.4.1.

Following the same method of tuning the  $v_{gr,eff}$  in Sect. 4.2.3, the effective group velocity in the scintillator ( $v_{gr,scint}$ ) is obtained based on the simulations of 500 3-MeV  $e^-$  generated uniformly and with isotropic directions in the full scintillator geometry. The **MP scint fitter**, which will be discussed in Sect. 4.5, was used to reconstruct the same simulation data with different values of  $v_{gr}$ . Once the  $v_{gr,scint}$  was obtained, it was fixed in the **MP**

**scint-water fitter fitter.** Then the  $v_{gr,water}$  was tuned by simulating 500 3-MeV  $e^-$  in the water region of the partial-fill geometry with the water level set at  $z = 3000$  mm in the AV coordination. Fig. 4.30 shows the  $v_{gr,scint}$  (a) and the  $v_{gr,water}$  (b) obtained from the linear interpolation in the LAB+0.5 g/L PPO scintillator case. Table. 4.6 lists the effective group velocities and  $n_{eff}$  values for the liquid scintillator with different PPO concentrations.

Figure 4.30: Tuning the effective group velocities in the scintillator (a) and water (b).

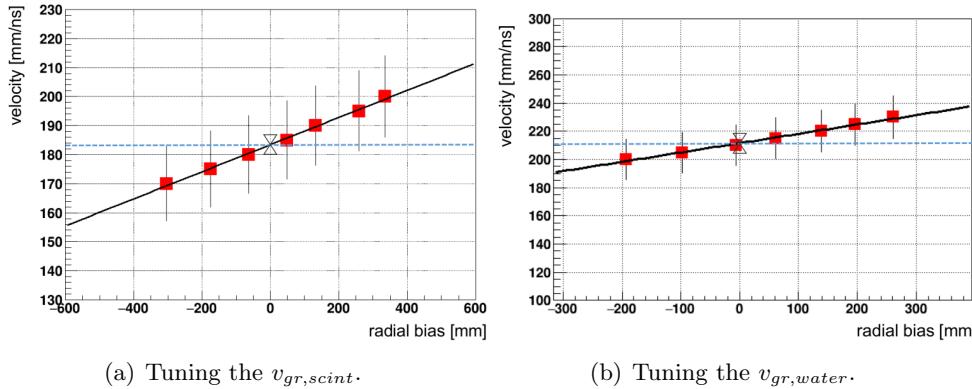


Table 4.6: Tuned effective group velocities for different PPO concentrations.

PPO [g/L]	$V_{gr,scint}$ [mm/ns]	$n_{eff,scint}$	$V_{gr,water}$ [mm/ns]	$n_{eff,water}$
0.25	$184.068 \pm 5.153$	1.629	$211.871 \pm 5.731$	1.415
0.5	$183.467 \pm 5.159$	1.634	$211.587 \pm 5.773$	1.417
1.0	$182.93 \pm 5.193$	1.639	$211.393 \pm 5.805$	1.418
2.0	$183.045 \pm 5.184$	1.638	$211.629 \pm 5.767$	1.417
6.0	$184.218 \pm 5.135$	1.627	$211.173 \pm 5.843$	1.420

#### 4.4.3 Partial Fitter Performances

The performance of the MP scint-water fitter fitter was studied with MC simulations. During the partial-fill phase, the filling and mixing of the liquid scintillator was stable at several water levels for data taking and data analysis. A typical water level is at 3 m in the AV coordination and a typical PPO concentration is 0.5 g/L. With these two settings in the partial-fill geometry, 5000 3-MeV  $e^-$  were simulated inside the scintillator region and

the water region respectively to test the partial fitter performances.

The average fit speed of the vertex reconstruction of the events in the scintillator region is 0.2 second/event, which is acceptable for the data processing during the partial-fill phase. For the events in the water region, the average fit speed is 0.05 s/event, which is similar to the MPW fitter. Fig. 4.31 and Fig. 4.33 show the results of the MP scint-water fitter fitter reconstructed positions in the scintillator and water regions respectively. The subfigures (a) are the reconstructed positions projected on  $\rho = \sqrt{x^2 + y^2}$  and  $z$  while the subfigures (b), (c) and (d) are the position biases between the reconstruction and MC, projected on x, y and z axes respectively. The distributions of the position biases were fitted with Gaussian functions and the values of the Gaussian mean ( $\mu_{x,y,z}$ ) and sigma ( $\sigma_{x,y,z}$ ) are used to quantify the fit biases and resolutions.

For the events in the scintillator region, it shows that the resolutions  $\sigma_{x,y,z}$  reach about 150 mm, and the biases in x and y axes:  $\mu_{x,y}$  are within 1.5 mm while the  $\mu_z$  is about -29 mm. The larger bias in z is mostly caused by the events mis-reconstruct in the water region. The main reason for the mis-reconstruction is caused by the fitter omitting the calculations relating to the reflection and refraction light paths happen in the water-scintillator interface or boundaries, as mentioned before. Since the refraction index of the liquid scintillator is larger than the water, there are some chances that the light is reflected off the water-scintillator interface. The additional reflection light path will cause the event with a longer  $t_{transit}$ , but the event is still created in the scintillator region. While the fitter does not tackle with the reflection light path, it will pull the event into the water region a little far away from the actual position to get the longer  $t_{transit}$ , which causes the event to be mis-reconstruct in the water region. This explains the mis-reconstruct events with  $z_{fit} - z_{MC} < 0$  in Fig. 4.31 (d). A discussion for improving the fitter will be shown in Sect.4.4.5. Some of these mis-reconstruct events can be removed by applying the *posFoM* cut.

Fig. 4.32 (a) shows the  $z_{fit} - z_{MC}$  against the *posFoM* quantity *scaleLogL* mentioned in Sect. 4.2.6. It shows that applying a  $scaleLogL > 9.8$  cut can remove more than 1/3 of the mis-reconstructed events with  $|\vec{X}_{fit} - \vec{X}_{MC}| > 1000$  mm. In Fig. 4.32 (b), the fit position

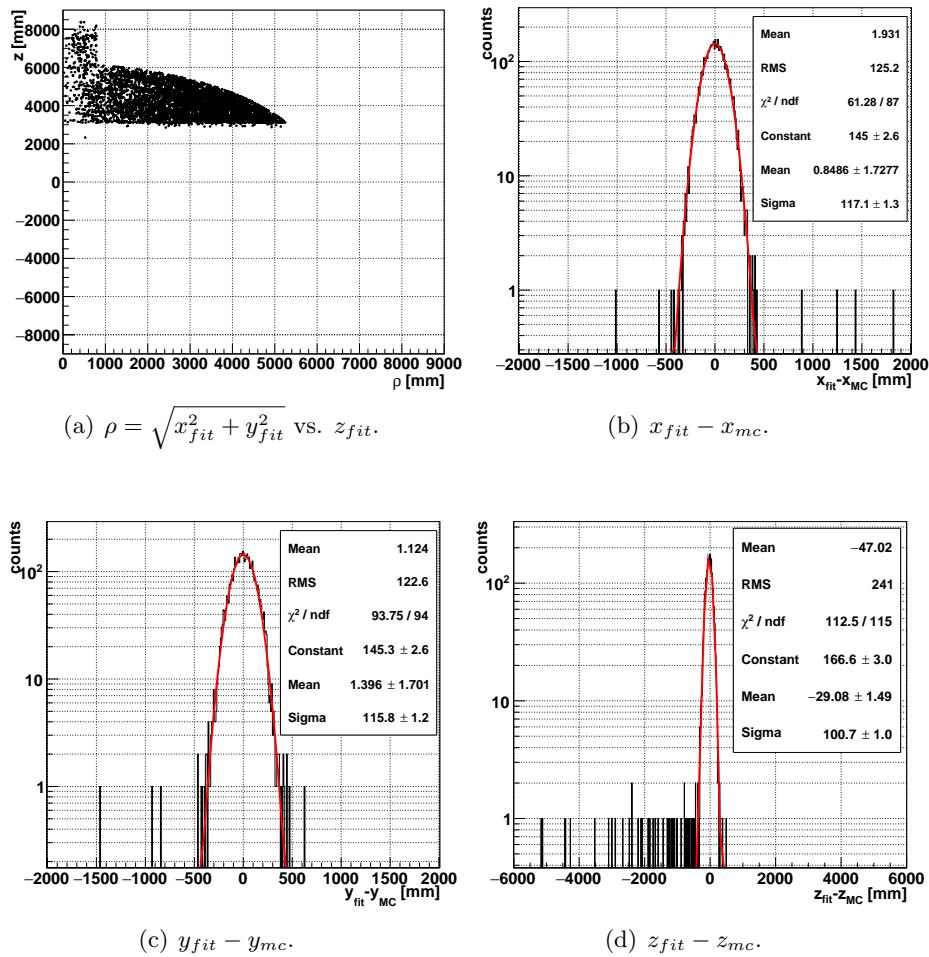


Figure 4.31: Reconstructed positions and fit biases of the 3-MeV  $e^-$  events in the scintillator region.

bias in  $z$  ( $z_{fit} - z_{MC}$ ) after the cut is plotted in red, overlaid with the distribution before the cut in black. By fitting with the Gaussian function, it shows that the cut removes a few mis-reconstruct events in the tail of the distribution, and then improves the resolution by about 1.5 mm and reduces the bias in  $z$  by about 1.9 mm, compared to the plot in Fig. 4.31 (d). As shown in Fig. 4.32 (c), this cut removes most of the outliers observed in the  $\rho$  vs  $z$  plot in Fig. 4.31 (a).

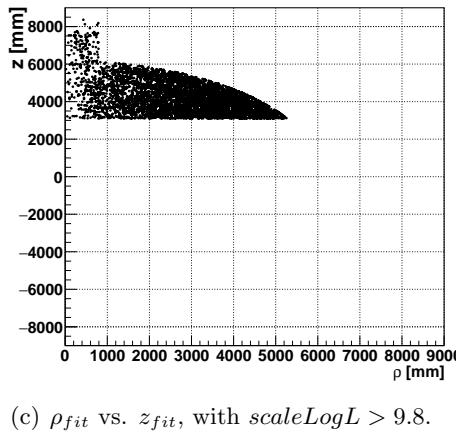
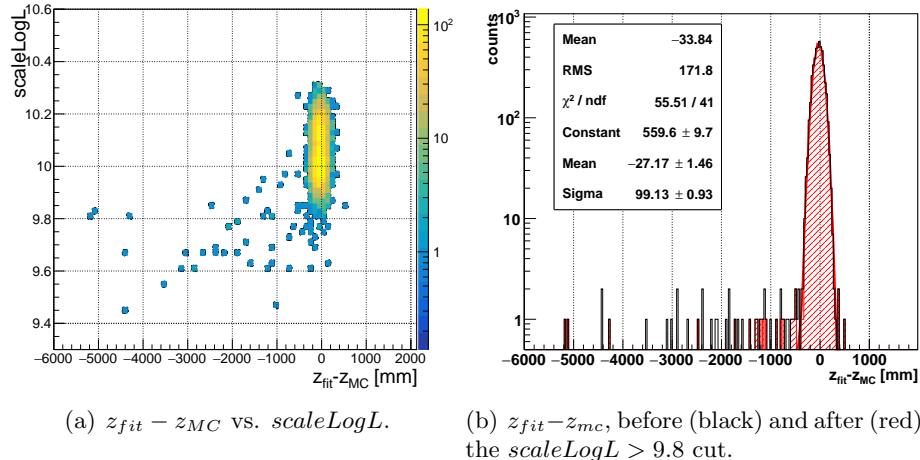


Figure 4.32: Effects of the  $scaleLogL$  cut on the reconstructed positions and fit biases.

For the events in the water region, the fit position biases in  $x$  and  $y$  ( $\mu_{x,y}$ ) are comparable to the results of the MPW fitter shown in Sect. 4.2.7, while the  $\mu_z$  is about 50 mm worse and the resolutions  $\sigma_{x,y,z}$  are about 100 mm worse. This is due to the same effects from the

water-scintillator interface and boundaries mentioned previously. These boundary effects are more obvious and worse compared to the scintillator region, as shown in the  $\rho$  vs.  $z$  plot in Fig. 4.33 (a). This is due to the lower NHits in the water, or less information of triggered PMTs is provided for the fitter. However, the relatively worse reconstruction performance for the water events is insignificant for the partial-fill analysis, since the analysis is focused on studying the liquid scintillator, the events in the water region are less interested and they are mostly removed by the NHits cut ( $\text{NHits} > 40$  was applied on the data processing during the partial-fill) and fiducial volume cut in the analyses.

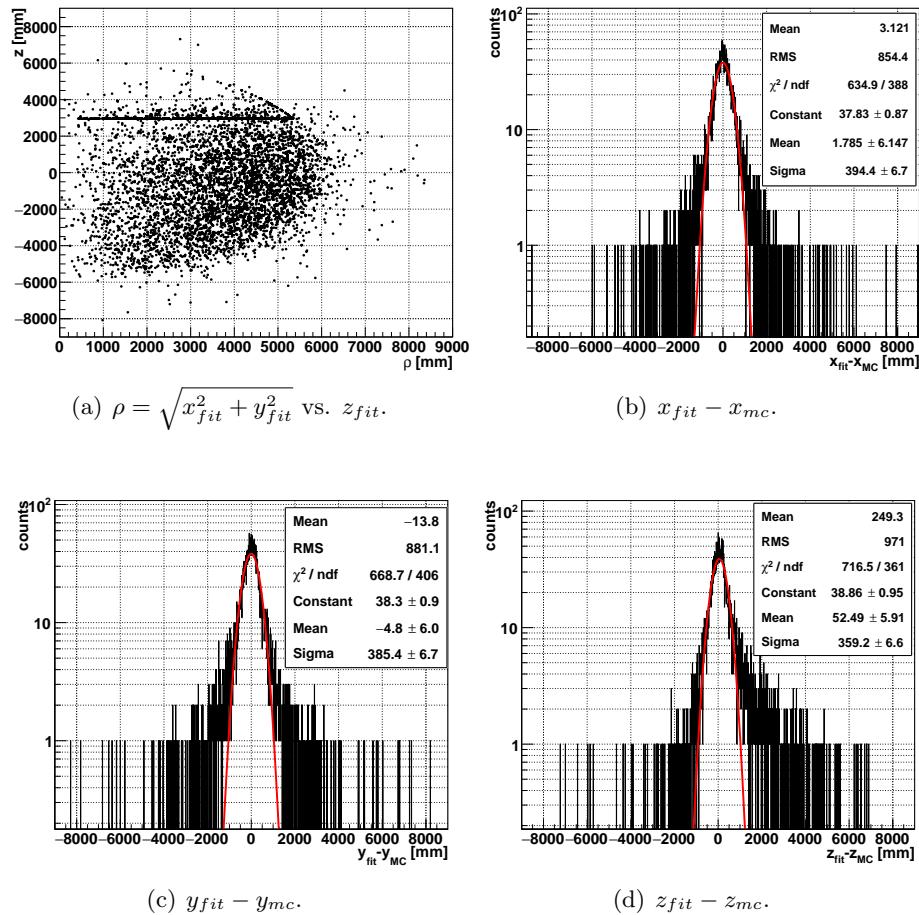


Figure 4.33: Reconstructed positions and fit biases of the 3-MeV  $e^-$  events in the water region.

#### 4.4.3.1 Test on Different PPO Concentrations

To study the effects of different PPO concentrations, in the partial-fill geometry, the water level was set at 3 m, and the PPO concentrations were set to 0.25, 0.5, 1, 2, and 6 g/L respectively. Simulations of 5000 3-MeV  $e^-$  were generated in the scintillator region with uniformly distributed positions and isotropic directions. The MP `scint-water fitter fitter` uses the effective velocities and *PDFs* re-coordinated to the simulation geometries with corresponding PPO concentrations. The distributions of the position biases between the reconstruction and MC in x, y, and z axes were fitted with Gaussians to obtain the fit position biases ( $\mu_{x,y,z}$ ) and resolutions ( $\sigma_{x,y,z}$ ).

Fig. 4.34 and Fig. 4.35 show the  $\mu_{x,y,z}$  and  $\sigma_{x,y,z}$  against PPO concentrations. It shows that the values of  $\mu_{x,y,z}$  are stable in the [-15,15] mm region, while the values of  $\sigma_{x,y,z}$  decrease from about 150 mm to about 60 mm as the concentration increases. The light yield of the liquid scintillator goes up as the PPO concentration increases, which gives larger NHits and more PMT information for the fitter. However, the differences between the 2 g/L and 6 g/L cases are small, which indicates a saturation effect for the PPO concentration above 2 g/L.

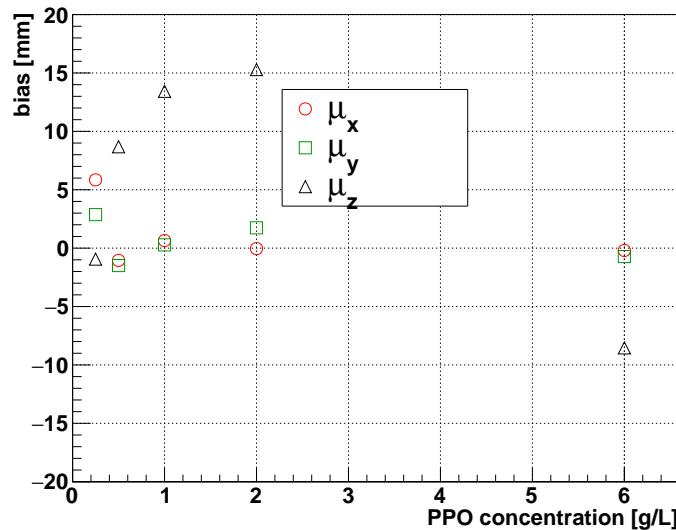


Figure 4.34: Fit position biases against the PPO concentrations.

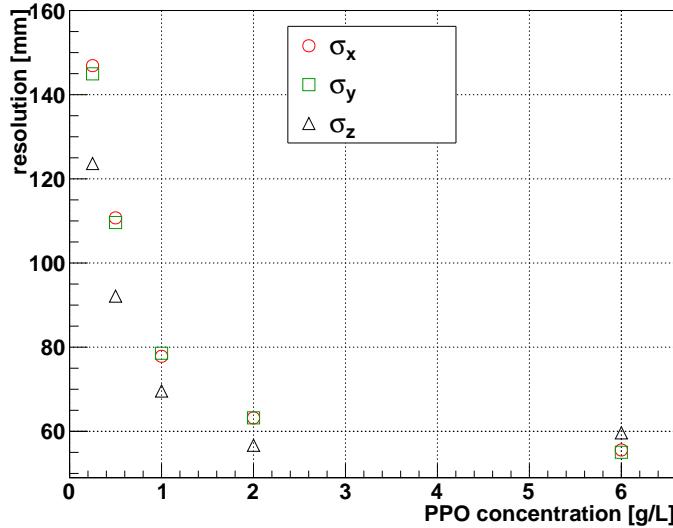


Figure 4.35: Fit position resolutions against the PPO concentrations.

If using a timing *PDF* with the wrong PPO concentration for the reconstruction, the effect on reconstruction is small[146]. I simulated 3-MeV  $e^-$  uniformly distributed in the LAB+0.25 g/L PPO scintillator with isotropic directions, and then reconstructed the events by using the timing *PDF* of 0.5, 1 and 2 g/L PPO (higher concentrations) respectively. All of these reconstructions give the fitted positions closed to the correct reconstruction using the 0.25 g/L timing *PDF*, with fit biases about 5 mm in the three axes. On the other hand, I did the same simulations in the LAB+2 g/L PPO and then reconstructed by using the timing *PDFs* of 0.25, 0.5 and 1 g/L PPO (lower concentrations) respectively. The fit biases are also about 5 mm. It shows that the **MP scint-water fitter** is invulnerable to the changes caused by different PPO concentrations. Therefore, if the actual PPO concentration in the detector is slightly different to the nominal value, the effect on the reconstruction is not significant.

#### 4.4.4 Test on Bi-Po Simulations

Thorium-232 ( $^{232}\text{Th}$ ) and Uranium-238 ( $^{238}\text{U}$ ) are the two major internal backgrounds in the liquid scintillator. The amounts of these two backgrounds can be evaluated by a technique

called “Bi-Po analysis”, which refers to tag the  $^{212}\text{Bi}$ - $^{212}\text{Po}$  event pairs from the  $^{232}\text{Th}$  decay chain and to the  $^{214}\text{Bi}$ - $^{214}\text{Po}$  event pairs from the  $^{238}\text{U}$  decay chain. This analysis is one of the crucial physics studies during the partial-fill phase. Here I tested the **MP scint-water fitter fitter** on the simulations of  $^{214}\text{Bi}$ - $^{214}\text{Po}$  in the detector with the LAB+0.5 g/L PPO and water level at 4.5 m. In the  $^{238}\text{U}$  decay chain,  $^{214}\text{Bi}$  goes through  $\beta^-$  decay, which can trigger a prompt event[113]; its daughter  $^{214}\text{Po}$ , with a half-life of 164.3  $\mu\text{s}$ , goes through  $\alpha$  decay, and it can trigger a delayed event. Applying proper cuts of the position and time differences between the prompt and delayed events can tag these  $\beta - \alpha$  event pairs from the  $^{214}\text{Bi}$ - $^{214}\text{Po}$  and then evaluate the  $^{238}\text{U}$  level. The optimized algorithm was developed by the collaboration[102], and a flowchart for picking up the event pairs is shown in Fig. C.1 in Appendix. C.1. The tagging algorithm was applied to the reconstructed event vertices. Fig. 4.36 shows the distributions of NHits for the tagged  $^{214}\text{Po}$  and  $^{214}\text{Bi}$  events. A clear single peak shows the  $\alpha$  events from the  $^{214}\text{Po}$ , and a continuous spectrum shows the  $e^-$  events from the  $^{214}\text{Bi}$ . Fig. 4.37 shows the biases between the MC and the reconstructed positions, projected in the z-axis. The biases in the three axes were fitted with Gaussian to obtain the biases and resolutions, which are listed in Table. 4.7. These results indicate that the fitter performance is acceptable for the Bi-Po analysis in the partial-fill.

Table 4.7: Fit position biases and resolutions for the  $^{214}\text{Bi}$ - $^{214}\text{Po}$  tagging.

Tagged isotope	$\mu_x \pm \sigma_x$	$\mu_y \pm \sigma_y$	$\mu_z \pm \sigma_z$
$^{214}\text{Bi}$	$-7.657 \pm 127.2$	$-2.071 \pm 129.6$	$2.041 \pm 114.5$
$^{214}\text{Po}$	$-0.695 \pm 128.5$	$-0.1355 \pm 129.3$	$-22.21 \pm 103.0$

#### 4.4.5 Discussions for the Partial Fitter

Suggested by the SNO+ collaboration, I attempted to use the **MP scint-water fitter fitter** to fit the water level[147]. In this case, the water level ( $Z_{\text{water}}$ ) is considered as a fit parameter and the **MP fitter** fits for 5 parameters:  $(x, y, z, t, Z_{\text{water}})$ . The bias between the true  $Z_{\text{water}}$  and the reconstructed one is fitted with a Gaussian, which gives a bias of 40 mm and a resolution of 492 mm. The fit resolution is much larger than the event position

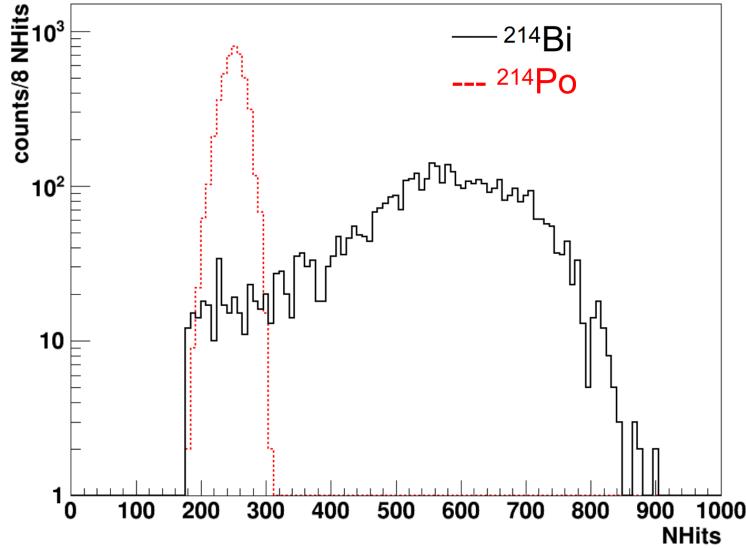


Figure 4.36: Distributions of NHits for the tagged  $^{214}\text{Po}$  (dashed red line) and  $^{214}\text{Bi}$  (solid black line) events.

resolution, so this method is not good enough to be applied on the analysis.

The reconstructed vertices of certain events, such as the  $^{214}\text{Bi}^{214}\text{Po}$  event pairs, can be used to calculate the time residual distribution, which is taken as the time profile caused by the  $e^-$  or  $\alpha$  particles in the liquid scintillator. By extracting the time constants from the time profile, the quality and optical properties of the liquid scintillator can be obtained. This analysis has been applied by the collaboration on the partial-fill data[148, 149].

To process the partial-fill data, the water level set in the **MP scint-water fitter** is intentionally moved down by 150 mm (a few centimeter larger than the resolution at 3-MeV) from the nominal water level. This is to include some events mis-reconstructed in the water region, and then to include more events for a conservative background estimation for the liquid scintillator.

To improve the performance of the **MP scint-water fitter**, two points have been suggested by the collaboration. These implements are not applied and tested in this thesis, but they are worthwhile to be checked in the future:

- The timing *PDF*s used by the **MP scint-water fitter** is obtained from the bench-top measurement and is always calculated numerically. However, the *PDF*s

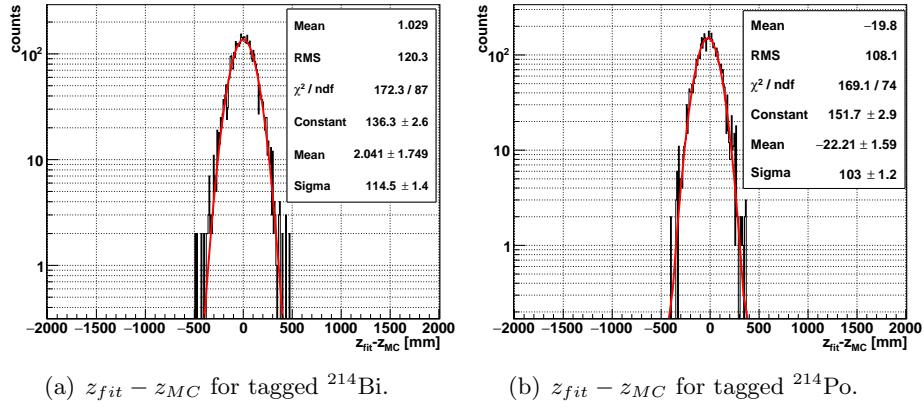


Figure 4.37: Fit position biases for tagged  $^{214}\text{Bi}$  (left) and  $^{214}\text{Po}$  (right).

can be expanded and fitted with Chebyshev polynomials to obtain an analytic approximation function to describe the *PDF*[136]. Then the analytical function can give proper and smooth analytical derivatives, which may reduce the time cost of calculating the likelihoods using the numerical methods.

- To implement the refraction and reflection calculations. To simplify the calculations, the MP `scint-water fitter fitter` assumes straight light paths from the event position to the hit PMTs and neglects all the possibilities of the refraction and reflection light paths. It is more realistic to count for these light paths since the interface between the two different optical media: the water and the liquid scintillator can cause the reflection and refraction. The Fresnel equations can be used for calculating the possibilities of these light paths[8], while the calculations are complicated. Also, the 5-cm thick AV was totally omitted. To take this into account, the calculations of the refraction and reflection light paths will become more complicated. A trade-off between the accuracy & precision of the reconstruction and the CPU time complexity may be considered. This implementation can also help for the MP `scint fitter` discussed in the next section.

## 4.5 Vertex Reconstruction for the Scintillator Phase

As mentioned in the previous section, the vertex reconstruction for the scintillator phase is similar to the partial-fill case, while no water-scintillator interface is considered here since the AV is fully filled with liquid scintillator. Only the ray-sphere and ray-cylinder intersections are calculated and thus the major code of the MP `scint fitter` was modified directly from the MP `scint-water fitter` by removing the ray-plane intersection calculations.

### 4.5.1 Performance of the Vertex Reconstruction

Since the 2.5-MeV event is the major interested signal in the scintillator and tellurium-loading phases, a few tests were focused on this energy. Simulations of 10000 2.5-MeV  $e^-$  events were generated at random positions inside the AV and with isotropic directions. Fig. 4.38 shows the distributions of the position biases between the reconstruction and MC. These distributions were fitted with Gaussians to obtain the mean ( $\mu$ ) and resolution ( $\sigma$ ). It shows that the fit position biases are within  $[-2, 2]$  mm region and the resolutions are less than 70 mm in x, y and z axes ( $\mu_{x,y,z} \in (-2, 2)$  mm and  $\sigma_{x,y,z} < 70$  mm).

A radial dependence test was performed, similar to the tests in the Sect. 4.2.7. Simulations of 2.5-MeV  $e^-$  were generated in 11 thin shells. Fig. 4.39 and Fig. 4.40 show the biases ( $\mu$ ) and resolutions ( $\sigma$ ) as a function of radius respectively.

For other energies (from 1 to 10 MeV), the Gaussian means and resolutions of the fit position biases were shown in Fig. 4.41 and Fig. 4.42. For the 1 MeV  $e^-$  event, the  $\sigma_{x,y,z}$  are below 85 mm. These resolutions are slightly better than the Borexino spatial resolution of  $\sigma_{x,y,z} \sim 110$  mm for the 1 MeV  $e^-$  at the detector center[49].

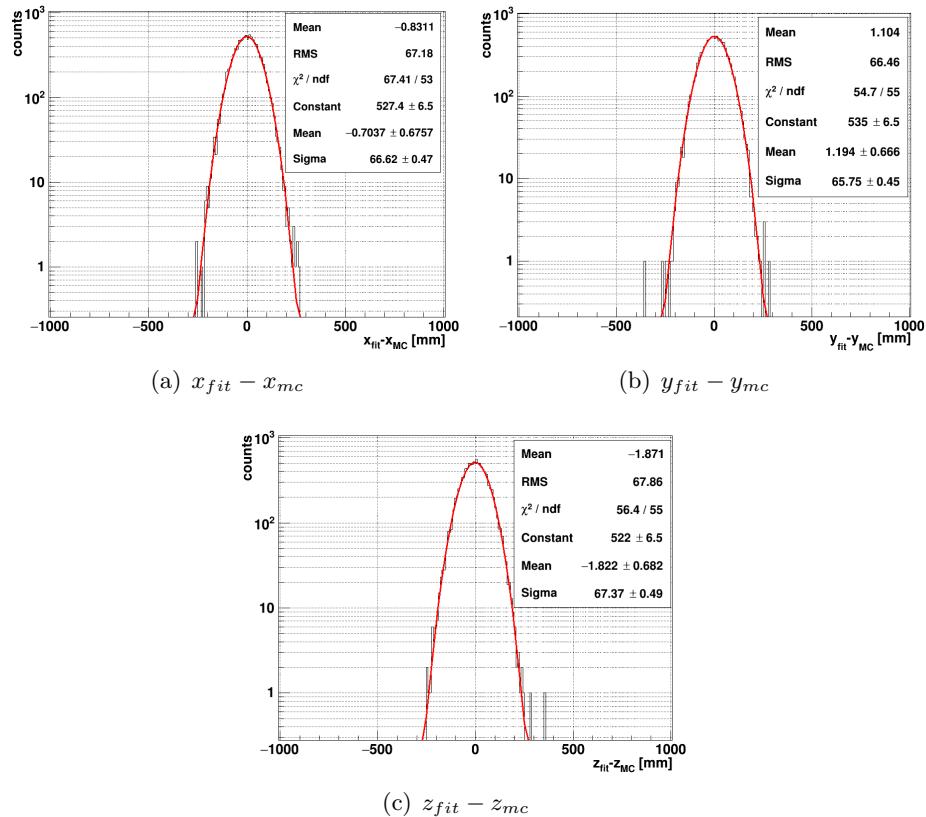


Figure 4.38: The fit position biases projected on the x, y and z axes, for 2.5-MeV  $e^-$  in full scintillator simulations. The distributions were fitted with Gaussian functions.

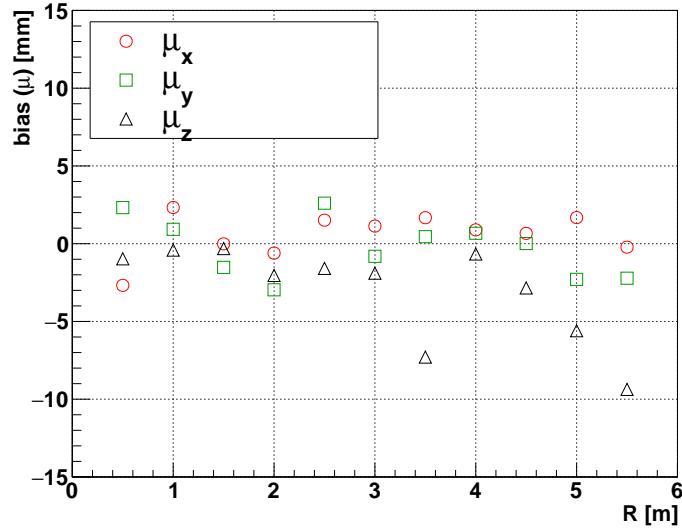


Figure 4.39: The Gaussian biases ( $\mu$ ) of the fit position biases as a function of radius, for the x (red circle), y (green square), and z (black triangle) axes.

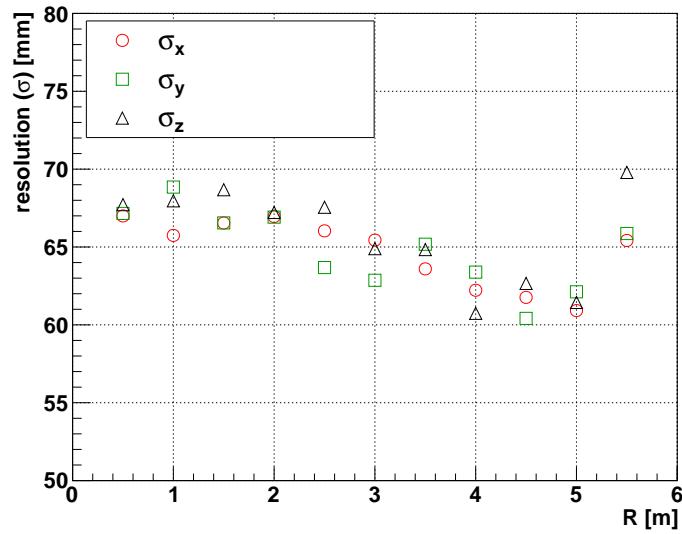


Figure 4.40: The Gaussian resolutions ( $\sigma$ ) of the fit position biases as a function of radius, for the x (red circle), y (green square), and z (black triangle) axes.

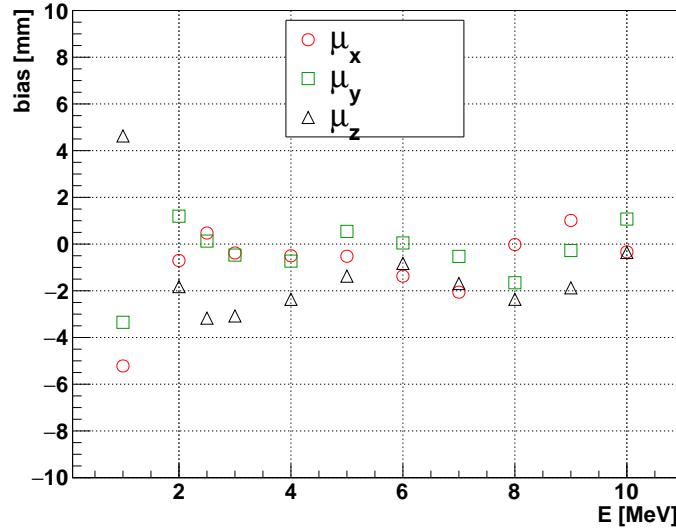


Figure 4.41: The Gaussian resolutions ( $\mu$ ) of the fit position biases as a function of energy, for the x (red circle), y (green square), and z (black triangle) axes.

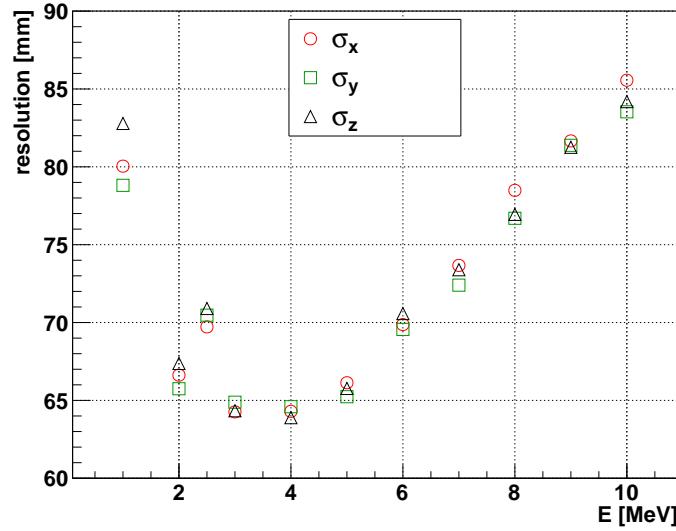


Figure 4.42: The Gaussian resolutions ( $\sigma$ ) of the fit position biases as a function of energy, for the x (red circle), y (green square), and z (black triangle) axes.

## 4.6 Multi-path Fitter Structure for Multiple SNO+ Physics Phases

The MP fitter has already been implemented into the RAT software for data processing and analyzing. Following the RAT event reconstruction structure, the MP fitter is feasible

to tackle with multiple SNO+ physics phases.

The **MP fitter** first loads the fitter database. The database contains the parameters used by the fitter, including the physics constants (e.g., speed of light), detector geometry parameters (e.g.,  $r_{PSUP}$ , length of neck, water level), fitter setting parameters (e.g., the effective group velocity, fitter iteration number, etc.) and *PDFs*. It is included in the **RAT** database (`ratdb`) in a **JSON** format[150] and contains tables which are tagged by different indices to indicate specific physics phases or detection medium. For example, for the partial-fill phase with a PPO concentration of 0.5 g/L, the fitter extracts the *PDFs* and fitter setting parameters under the index of “`labppo_0p5_scintillator`”. These fitter setting parameters and *PDFs* were optimized for the 0.5 g/L PPO partial-fill geometry.

Then the **MP fitter** goes through the event-by-event reconstruction. For a triggered event, it calls PMT selectors and sends the information of the selected PMTs to a **Likelihood Calculation Class**. Section 4.2.5 will give the details about the PMT selectors. In the **Likelihood Calculation Class**, there are mainly 4 likelihood calculation functions<sup>3</sup> : the **WaterVertex** and **WaterDirection** for the event vertex and direction reconstruction in the water phase; the **ScintWaterVertex** for the vertex reconstruction in the partial-fill phase; and the **ScintVertex** for the vertex reconstruction in scintillator and tellurium-loading phases.

Reading the detector geometry settings and the assigned index of detection medium, the fitter selects proper likelihood functions to construct the likelihood functions and to calculate the likelihoods and their derivatives by evaluating fit parameters based on different light path calculations in different detector geometries. The calculated likelihoods and derivatives are sent to the **MRQ** method class to maximize the likelihood and find the best-fit values. The **MRQ** method class does not care about how the likelihood functions are constructed and how the likelihoods and derivatives are calculated.

A **Dump Likelihood Class** stores the trial fit parameters with respect to their likeli-

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<sup>3</sup>The **AirWaterVertex** for the early partial water fill test in 2014 and the **WavelengthShifterVertex** for the conceptual wavelength-shifter test, as mentioned in the previous sections, were not included in the current version of **RAT** since they are not used in actual physics phases.

hoods and derivatives for events interested by designating their event GTIDs in the database. By looking at the likelihood surfaces and derivatives of the event interested, the fit performance of that event can be checked to see whether the fitter finds the global or local maximum. Sect. A.5 shows an example of the dumped likelihood surfaces and derivatives for an  $^{16}\text{N}$  event vertex reconstruction.

Once the reconstructed results are obtained, the fitter will send them to the classifiers for further analysis calculations.

## 4.7 Energy Reconstruction

The SNO+ energy reconstruction algorithms (energy fitters) were based on SNO[133, 151] and has been further developed and optimized[74, 118, 152].

The energy fitters mainly use lookup tables to convert the NHits of a triggered event into reconstructed energy. The energy fitters used in the water phase are mainly the energy response processor (**EnergyRSP fitter**)[133, 151, 118] and the energy Lookup fitter (**EnergyLookup fitter**)[74, 153]. The **EnergyRSP fitter** is used to reconstruct the events inside the AV (internal events). It considers the detailed detector effects, such as the asymmetric geometry of the detector, the optical response of each PMT (including the PMT detection efficiency, transmission probability, attenuation, etc.). It utilizes the reconstructed event positions, directions, and time residuals as inputs to convert the corresponding value of NHits to estimated energy based on simulation models and calibration data. The **EnergyLookup fitter** is simpler and is mainly used to reconstruct the events in the cavity water (external events). It mainly uses the lookup table of the NHits dependence on the event reconstructed position from simulations to calculate the energy of the event[74]. For the scintillator phase, a method using functional form based on simulations was developed by Ref. [153, 154] and is currently used in the **EnergyRThetaFunctional fitter**. All these fitters correct the actual number of online PMTs for a realistic physics run (or called “channel efficiency”).

The resolutions and scales of the reconstructed energies in the water phase were derived

from the  $^{16}\text{N}$  calibration scans at certain detector points, which is shown in Chapter 5.

### 4.7.1 Energy Figure of Merit

The SNO+ Antineutrino working group developed three figure of merit (FOM) quantities for the energy fitters in the water phase to identify the poor reconstructed results which have significant biases to the truth energy values, especially for the low energy regions around 2.2 MeV, which helps the analysis of neutron capture[155, 156]. The following energy FOMs were applied to the energy reconstruction results during the water phase, discussed in the next chapter.

- $U$ -test ( $U_{test}$ ): A Mann-Whitney quantity uses the channel hit probabilities by `EnergyRSP` which are ordered and ranked. The rank of the channels with hits are summed.

$$U_{test} \equiv \frac{S - N(N + 1)/2}{N(N_{active} - N)}, \quad (4.17)$$

where  $S \equiv \sum_i^N \text{rank}_i$ .

- $G$ -test ( $G_{test}$ ): A quantity uses the hit probabilities by `EnergyRSP` ( $E_i$ ), which are normalized to the number of observed hits ( $N$ ):

$$G_{test} \equiv \frac{1}{N} \sum_{i=1}^N \log\left(\frac{1}{E_i}\right), \quad (4.18)$$

- $Z$ -factor ( $Z_{factor}$ ): A quantity uses the medians and median absolute deviations of hit probabilities by `EnergyRSP`:

$$Z' \equiv 1 - \frac{3(\sigma_p + \sigma_n)}{\mu_p - \mu_n}. \quad (4.19)$$

### 4.7.2 Energy Reconstruction in Partial-fill Phase

Up till this thesis writing, there is no proper energy fitter for the partial-fill phase. I attempted two methods for energy reconstruction in the partial-fill phase: the NHits-scale method, based on Ref. [157] and the NHits-ratio method, based on Ref. [158]. Both of them use look up tables produced by simulations of  $e^-$  events in the partial-fill geometry, then

compare with the case in the full-fill geometry and scale the energy. Both of these methods need further efforts to produce well-defined results[159, 160].

In the NHits-scale method, for an  $e^-$  event at  $(0,0,z)$  with a fixed energy (the 1 MeV and 2.5 MeV were tested), a scaling factor between its NHits value in the partial-fill ( $\text{NHits}_{\text{partial}}$ ) with a water level  $Z_{\text{water}}$  set in the simulation and the NHits value in the full-fill ( $\text{NHits}_{\text{full}}$ ) is found by  $\text{scale} = (\text{NHits}_{\text{partial}} - \text{NHits}_{\text{full}})/\text{NHits}_{\text{full}} = 0.33 \cdot a_0 \cdot (Z_{\text{water}} + 6005)^{2.76}$ , where the last term is an empirical function and the fit parameter  $a_0$  depends on the different event z positions in the simulations. Then the energy in the partial-fill is found by  $E_{\text{partial}} = E/(1 + \text{scaling})$ [157, 159].

In the NHits-ratio method, the NHits of an  $e^-$  event at  $(0,0,0)$  mm in the full scintillator geometry was used as a reference ( $\text{NHits}_{\text{ref}}$ ). By simulating 1 to 10-MeV (with a 1-MeV step)  $e^-$  events in the full-fill geometry with 0.5 g/L PPO, and fitting the NHits to the energies, a converting function between the energy and NHits is found by:  $E_{\text{full}} = f(\text{NHits}) = 0.051 + 0.003 \cdot \text{NHits} + 2.49 \times 10^{-7} \cdot \text{NHits}$ [160].

Then for the partial-fill geometry with a fixed  $Z_{\text{water}}$ , the  $e^-$  events were simulated at different  $(\rho = \sqrt{x^2 + y^2}, z)$  positions in the AV, where  $\rho$  goes from 0 to 5500 mm by a step of 500 mm and  $z$  goes from -5500 to 5500 by a step of 500 mm to cover all the interested AV volume. The value of scaled NHits for an event at  $(\rho_0, z_0)$  is found by:  $\text{NHits}' = \text{NHits}_{\text{partial}} / (\text{NHits}(\rho_0, z_0) / \text{NHits}_{\text{ref}})$ . Finally, the partial energy is found by  $E_{\text{partial}} = f(\text{NHits}')$ [160].

## 4.8 Deep Learning

Nowadays, the vast amount of data available to particle experiments make it feasible to implement machine learning and deep learning methods for data analysis. At the time of this writing, a deep learning framework is being developed[161, 162, 163]. This method investigates the relation between the hit PMT distributions and the event reconstruction, currently for the position and direction. It trains neural networks based on the MC simulation datasets (with  $\mathcal{O}(10^6)$  events) as well as the calibration datasets to predict the event

position and direction[162]. A few physics-based loss functions, such as the loss function checking the  $t_{res}$ , can be further included to improve the reconstruction performance[162].

Once the neural networks are trained, the reconstruction speed is expected to be 100 to 1000 times quicker than the traditional likelihood-fit method running on the CPU (Central Processing Unit). Since the deep learning method can also utilize the computing power of the GPU (Graphics Processing Unit), it is expected to be  $10^4$  times quicker[162, 163]. Such a fast speed reconstruction will be promising to be applied in the scintillator phase, where it is time-consuming for reconstructing the higher NHits events. The deep learning framework is also expected to aid the data analysis.

## 4.9 Conclusion

The Multi-path Fitter framework of event vertex reconstruction was developed for multiple SNO+ physics phases. Under this framework, the MP `water fitter` works as an alternative fitter to provide additional reconstruction information for the water data, and it gives proper position and direction resolutions for the water analysis. The MP `scint-water fitter` works as the prime fitter for the SNO+ partial-fill phase.

# Chapter 5

## Calibration

A detailed description of the SNO+ detector has been implemented in the `RAT` software package for Monte Carlo (MC) simulations, as mentioned in Chapter 3. However, when the simulations are compared to the real world, there always exist discrepancies. To make precise measurements, calibration sources were implemented in the SNO+ detector during the water phase and the partial-fill phase. During the water phase, the  $^{16}\text{N}$  source (described in Sect. 3.5.1, Chapter 3) was used for the primary detector calibration. The  $^{16}\text{N}$  calibration data ( $^{16}\text{N}$  runs) were mainly used for checking the performances of the reconstruction of the event position, direction, and energy.

In this chapter, the `MPW fitter` (described in Sect. 4.2, Chapter 4) was applied on both the data and simulations of the  $^{16}\text{N}$  runs in the water phase. By comparing the differences between the data and MC, systematics of the position and direction reconstruction were extracted. The event energy was reconstructed by the SNO+ energy fitter for the water phase (described in Sect. 4.7, Chapter 4), which utilizes the `MPW fitter` fitted event vertex and direction. Also, based on the `MPW fitter` reconstructed vertex and direction results, the other parameters, such as the in-time-ratio (*ITR*) and the isotropic parameter ( $\beta_{14}$ ) were calculated. By comparing the  $^{16}\text{N}$  data and the MC simulations, the relevant systematics were also evaluated. These systematic results were used in the solar neutrino analysis in Chapter 6.

## 5.1 $^{16}\text{N}$ Calibration Scans in the Water Phase

During the water phase, the  $^{16}\text{N}$  source was deployed at different positions inside the AV in June and in November 2017 to perform internal calibration scans. It was also deployed at different positions in the external water region between the AV and the PSUP in March 2018 to perform external scans. For each  $^{16}\text{N}$  run, the source was placed at a fixed position, and the data were taken for about 20 minutes (for the central run-107055, it took 1 hour). The source was inside the AV for the internal scans, moving along x, y, and z-axes (called “X, Y, Z scans” in this thesis). It was also moved diagonally across the AV and was placed at the corners of the inner AV (“corner scans”). For the external scans, the source was placed in the external water region but outside the AV. The source was moved along the z-axis with a fixed ( $x, y$ ) position close to the AV at (-5861.0,-2524.0) mm. Fig. 5.1 shows the different positions of the source deployment. In this thesis, 79 internal scan runs were used. Details of the calibration runs are listed in the tables in Appendix. B.1.

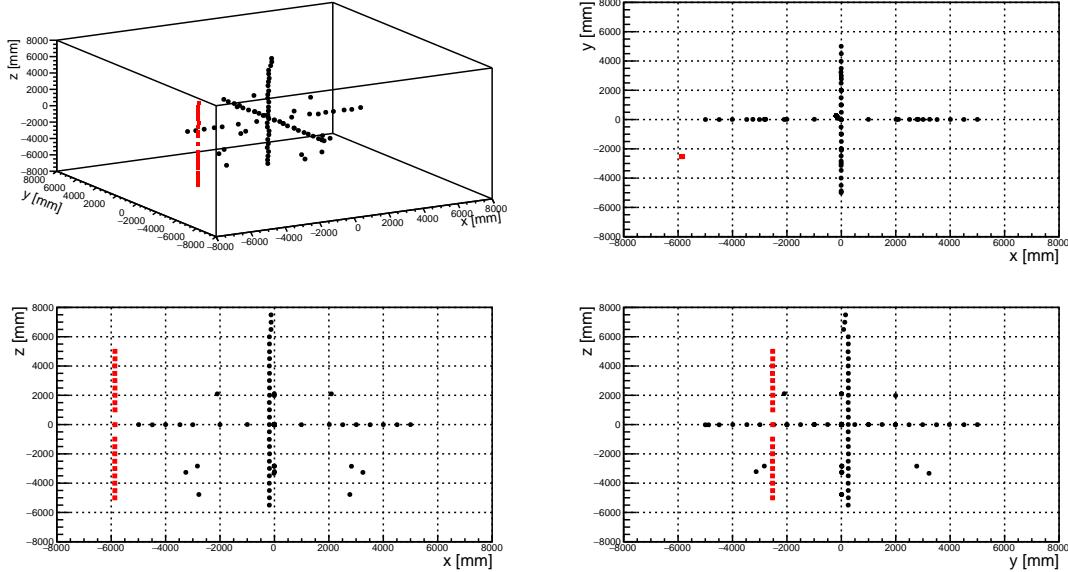


Figure 5.1: The deployed source positions of the  $^{16}\text{N}$  scan runs used by this thesis. The black dots are internal runs while the red squares are external runs.

The  $^{16}\text{N}$  calibration runs provide ideal tests for the fitter performance. From a com-

parison of reconstructions for data and MC, we can also extract the resolution and bias of the fitter. Here I worked out the vertex and the direction reconstruction performances for both of the **RAT water fitter** and the **MPW fitter**. The vertex shifts as well as the uncertainties were evaluated.

To tackle with the  $^{16}\text{N}$  run data and simulations, an FECD tag cut ( $\text{FECD} == 9188$ ) was applied during the data processing, to save the events only when the source trigger fired. A reconstruction threshold on  $\text{NHits} \geq 6$  was applied to the MC and data. Besides these cuts, high-level cuts based on classifiers were used.

## 5.2 High Level Cuts for the Water Phase

A set of classifiers were developed by SNO analysis and been optimized for the SNO+ water analysis[164]. These classifiers utilized the reconstructed quantities, so they always require valid reconstructions.

- In time ratio ( $ITR$ ) classifier

For each event, this classifier loops the triggered PMTs (hits), calculates the  $t_{res}$ , and then finds the ratio of the number of hits in an optimized prompt time window. In the water phase, the time window was  $[-2.5, 5.0]$  ns. If the  $ITR$  ratio is too low for an event, it indicates that most of the triggered PMTs are not caused by the prompt lights and thus the event probably does not originate from Cherenkov lights; it can be an instrumental noise, or caused by a large amount of lights reflecting off the detector components (called “late lights”).

- $\beta_{14}$  isotropy classifier

This classifier uses Legendre polynomials to return the first ( $\beta_1$ ) and the fourth ( $\beta_4$ ) spherical harmonics of an event, where:

$$\beta_l = \frac{2}{N(N-1)} \sum_{i=1}^{N-1} \sum_{j=i+1}^N P_l(\cos \theta_{ij}), \quad (5.1)$$

and  $P_l(\cos \theta_{ij})$  are Legendre polynomials.

A combination of two  $\beta_l$  terms was chosen by the SNO collaboration to be:  $\beta_{14} = \beta_1 + 4\beta_4$ . This quantity gives a gaussian-like distribution for Cherenkov events[165]. In principle, any deviation from zero suggests some polarity or a deviation from a totally isotropic pattern.

- $\theta_{ij}$  isotropy classifier

This classifier describes the angle subtended at an event vertex by PMT #i and PMT #j, which is calculated as:

$$\cos \theta_{ij} = \frac{(\vec{X}_{PMT\#i} - \vec{X}_{event}) \cdot (\vec{X}_{PMT\#j} - \vec{X}_{event})}{|\vec{X}_{PMT\#i} - \vec{X}_{event}| |\vec{X}_{PMT\#j} - \vec{X}_{event}|}. \quad (5.2)$$

### 5.2.1 Effects of the High-level Cuts

As described above, the classifiers can help to distinguish the signals from Cherenkov events and backgrounds from non-Cherenkov events. To remove the non-Cherenkov backgrounds, cuts of  $ITR > 0.55$  and  $-0.12 < \beta_{14} < 0.95$  (called “high-level cuts”) were suggested by the collaboration[156]. These cuts are based on the analyses of data cleaning, simulated physics events as well as the SNO experience[156, 166, 165].

The  $^{16}\text{N}$  central run-107055 data and MC were used to check the effects of the high-level cuts. For the MC (data), the cut of  $ITR > 0.55$  removed 0.69% (0.79%) of the total events;  $-0.12 < \beta_{14} < 0.95$  removes 1.11% (0.93%) of the total events. Combining the  $ITR$  and  $\beta_{14}$  cuts, 1.69% (1.62%) of the total events were removed.

The poorly reconstructed events with large position biases ( $> 6000\text{ mm}$ ) were counted. For the MC case, the position biases were taken as the distance between the reconstructed positions and the true positions generated by the MC:  $|\vec{X}_{fit} - \vec{X}_{MC}|$ ; while for the data case, the biases were between the reconstructed positions and the source manipulation position:  $|\vec{X}_{fit} - \vec{X}_{src}|$ . The large biased events are 0.13% of the total events in both the MC and data. The high-level cuts removed 73.12% (66.82%) of them for the MC (data).

Fig. 5.2 shows the relations between the position biases and the  $ITR$ ,  $\beta_{14}$  respectively, for the data and MC.

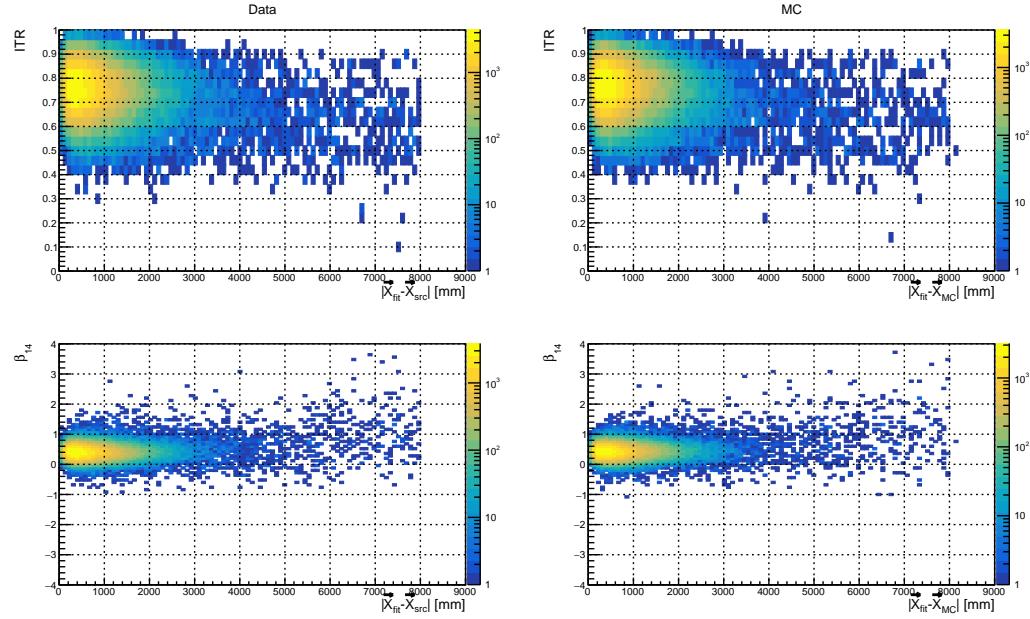


Figure 5.2: Position biases vs  $ITR$  (top) and  $\beta_{14}$  (bottom) for the  $^{16}\text{N}$  central run-107055. Left is MC and right is data. For the data, the source position ( $\vec{X}_{src}$ ) was compared.

As a summary, the high-level cuts remove more than half of the events with large position biases while removes about 1.6% of the total events.

### 5.3 Reconstruction Evaluations from $^{16}\text{N}$ Calibration Scans in the Water Phase

In this section, by analyzing the  $^{16}\text{N}$  data and MC in the water phase, I extracted the reconstruction resolutions of the event position, direction, and energy respectively. Then by comparing the data with the MC, the reconstruction systematics were evaluated.

To do these evaluations, a few cuts were applied to both the data and MC. Firstly, the level cuts ( $ITR > 0.55$ ,  $-0.12 < \beta_{14} < 0.95$ ) were applied. For events with the position, direction and energy successfully reconstructed (i.e., the event has valid position, direction and energy reconstructions), further cuts on the reconstruction figure of merit (FoM) and source geometry (will be described in detail) were applied to ensure that the analyzed events were nicely reconstructed physics events caused by the source  $\gamma$  particles interacting with

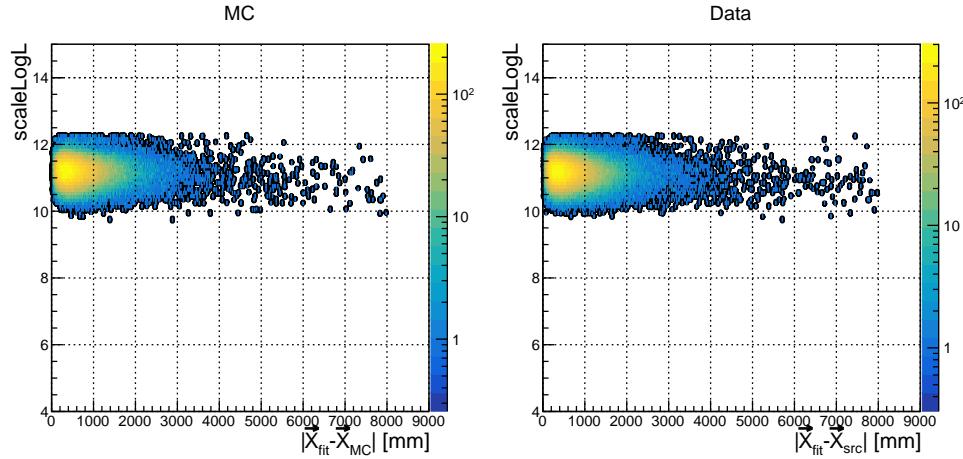


Figure 5.3: Position biases ( $|\vec{X}_{fit} - \vec{X}_{MC}|$ ) vs  $scaleLogL$  for the  $^{16}\text{N}$  central run-107055. Left is MC and right is data. For the data, the source position ( $\vec{X}_{src}$ ) was compared.

the detector water.

### 5.3.1 Position Reconstruction Evaluation

The position figure of merit (posFoM) cuts mentioned in Sect. ?? were applied on the reconstruction results. Fig. 5.3 shows the  $scaleLogL$  with the position biases for the reconstructed events in  $^{16}\text{N}$  central calibration run-107055. Both of the data and the MC simulations are shown. For the MC case, the position biases are between the reconstructed positions and the true positions generated by the MC:  $|\vec{X}_{fit} - \vec{X}_{MC}|$ ; while for the data case, the biases are between the reconstructed positions and the source manipulation position:  $|\vec{X}_{fit} - \vec{X}_{src}|$ .

For the MC (data) case, about 0.035% (0.043%) of the total reconstructed events have large biases ( $|\vec{X}_{fit} - \vec{X}_{MC}| > 6000$  mm). A cut of  $scaleLogL > 10$  removes 96.0% (97.3%) of the events which have biases over 6000 mm, with a sacrifice of removing 0.012% (0.016%) of the total events.

Fig. 5.4 shows a relation between the  $scaleLogL$  and the reconstructed energy ( $E_{fit}$ ).

For the events with reconstructed energies below the water solar neutrino analysis threshold 3.5 MeV ( $E_{fit} < 3.5$  MeV), they are mostly coming from the U/Th isotopes, decays

of Potassium as well as instrumental noises[156]. Their lower energies or  $NHits$  can affect the position reconstruction since there are fewer PMTs to be used, and thus their  $posFoM$  can be worse. In the MC (data) case, there are about 13.04 % (12.89%) of the events with  $E_{fit} < 3.5 \text{ MeV}$ . By applying the cut of  $scaleLogL > 10$ , 0.10% (0.09%) of such events were removed.

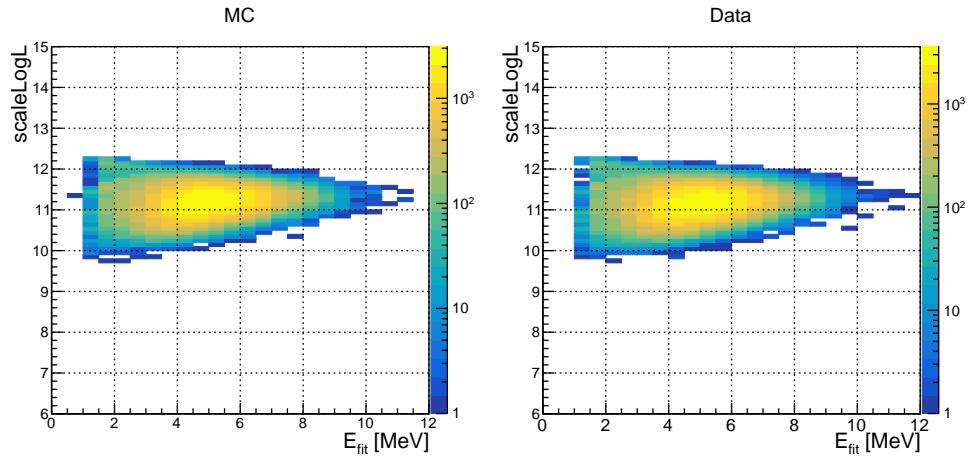


Figure 5.4: Reconstructed energy vs  $scaleLogL$  for the  $^{16}\text{N}$  central run-107055. Left is MC and right is data.

As a summary, there are about 0.04% of the reconstructed events which were poorly reconstructed (mis-reconstructed) by the MPW fitter with position biases over 6 meters. Applying a cut in  $posFoM$  with  $scaleLogL > 10$  can remove over 96% mis-reconstructed events. This  $posFoM$  cut was used in the following direction and energy reconstruction evaluations.

### 5.3.1.1 Position Resolution

A position resolution function is defined for the reconstructed electron position distribution[133]:

$$R(x) = \frac{1 - \alpha_e}{\sqrt{2\pi}\sigma_p} \exp\left[-\frac{1}{2}\left(\frac{x - \mu_p}{\sigma_p}\right)^2\right] + \frac{\alpha_e}{2\tau_p} \exp\left[\frac{-|x - \mu_p|}{\tau_p}\right], \quad (5.3)$$

where  $\alpha_e$  is the fractional exponential component,  $\sigma_p$  is the Gaussian width (corresponding to the position resolution),  $\mu_p$  is the Gaussian shift (corresponding to the position bias) and

$\tau_p$  is the exponential slope (corresponding to the position distributions in tails).

The  $\gamma$ -rays emitted from the  $^{16}\text{N}$  source interact with the water in the detector mainly via Compton scattering, as shown in Fig. 5.5. The position distribution of the  $\gamma$  interaction vertices is peaked around the source container, spreading to about 2 meters.

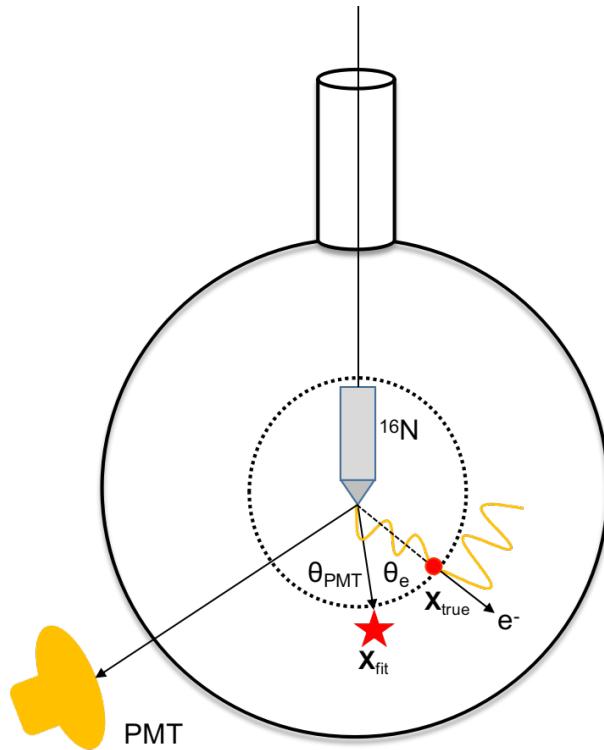


Figure 5.5: A cartoon shows the  $^{16}\text{N}$  source.

Fig. 5.6 shows the spatial distributions  $S(x)$  of the first  $\gamma$ -ray interaction positions projected on the x-axis obtained from MC simulation. Therefore, the  $^{16}\text{N}$  source is considered as an electron source with a known spatial distribution[133]. For simplicity, in the following, we always discuss the  $x$  component of the position vector  $\vec{X}$ .

For electrons from the  $^{16}\text{N}$  calibration source, their spatial distribution function  $N_R(x)$  can be described by the position resolution function smeared by the convolution of  $S(x)$  as[133]:

$$N_R(x) = \int_{-\infty}^{+\infty} S(x) R(x_{fit} - x) dx, \quad (5.4)$$

The values of  $N_R(x)$  can be calculated bin by bin from the histograms of  $S(x)$  and  $R(x)$

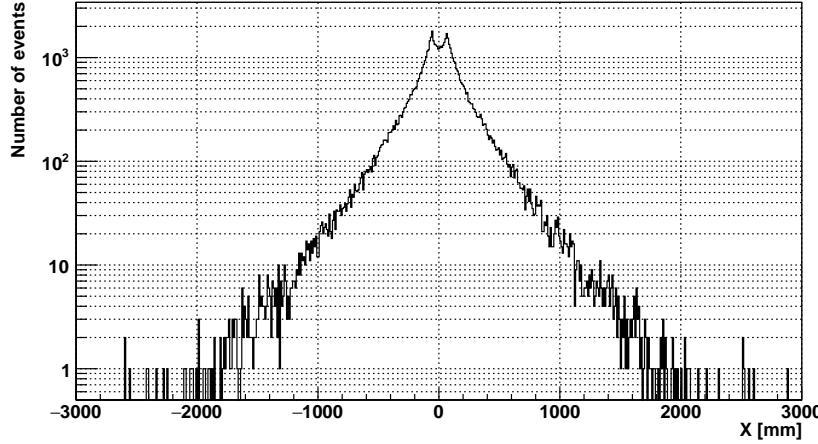


Figure 5.6: Spatial distributions of  $^{16}\text{N}$  first  $\gamma$ -rays interaction position projected on x axis, obtained from the RAT simulations. The double-peak structure is due to the wall of the stainless steel container of the  $^{16}\text{N}$  source.

extracted from the MC or data:

$$N_R(x_i) = \sum_{x_i=-\infty}^{+\infty} S(x_i) R(x_{fit}^i - x_i), \quad (5.5)$$

Then the  $\chi^2$  is calculated by:

$$\chi^2 = \sum_{i=0}^{N_{bins}} \left[ \frac{N_R(x_{fit}^i) - N_R^{fit}(x_{fit}^i)}{\sigma_i} \right]^2, \quad (5.6)$$

where  $N_R^{fit}$  is a trial fit to the  $N_R$  by tuning the  $\{\alpha_e, \mu_p, \sigma_p, \tau_p\}$  and  $\sigma_i$  is taken as the bin width of the histograms.

By minimizing the  $\chi^2$ , the parameters of the resolution function,  $\{\alpha_e, \mu_p, \sigma_p, \tau_p\}$  and a best  $N_R^{fit}$  were obtained.

Fig. 5.7 shows a comparison of the reconstructed x position of  $^{16}\text{N}$  events between data and MC. The reconstructed position distributions were fitted with  $N_R^{fit}$ .

Table. 5.1 summarizes the values of position resolution parameters (for x-axis) obtained from data and MC of  $^{16}\text{N}$  calibration runs at the detector center.

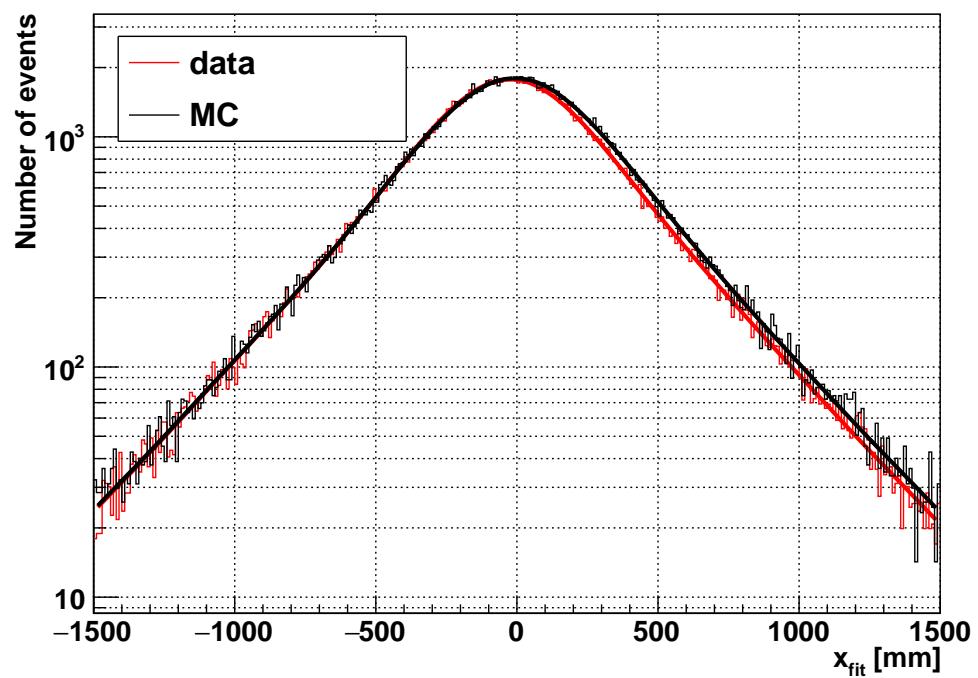


Figure 5.7: Distributions of the reconstructed position projected on x axis, obtained from SNO+  $^{16}\text{N}$  central run data (red) and MC (black). The distributions are fitted with  $N_R^{fit}$  (red and black lines).

Table 5.1: Position resolution parameters for the MPW fitter (x-axis).

MPW fitter	$\alpha_e$	$\sigma_P$ (mm)	$\tau_p$ (mm)	$\mu_p$ (mm)
data	$0.58 \pm 0.04$	$175.8 \pm 3.8$	$288.0 \pm 5.7$	$-28.8 \pm 1.0$
MC	$0.51 \pm 0.05$	$195.2 \pm 3.3$	$298.4 \pm 6.1$	$-10.9 \pm 1.0$

### 5.3.1.2 Position Systematics

To evaluate the position uncertainties, the MC and data runs of the  $^{16}\text{N}$  internal scans along x, y, z axes were taken to evaluate the x, y, z position uncertainties respectively (the runs are listed in Table. B.1 to B.3. Three neck runs in z-scan were not used). The high-level cuts as well as the  $E_{fit} > 3.5\text{ MeV}$  and  $scaleLogL > 10$  cuts were applied. fit range was set as  $[-2000, +2000]\text{ mm}$ . If the lower range was smaller than -6000 mm, it was set to -6000 mm; if the upper range was larger than 6000 mm, it was set to +6000 mm. This was used to remove the effects caused by the AV.

The position resolution function was first fitted with 4 free parameters:  $\alpha_e$ ,  $\mu_p$ ,  $\sigma_p$  and  $\tau_p$ . The average values of the  $\alpha_e$  and  $\tau_p$  were calculated from all the scan runs used here. To simplify the calculation in propagating systematics, the  $\alpha_e$  and the  $\tau_p$  were fixed to the average value:  $\alpha_e = 0.5288$  (0.5375) for the MC (data);  $\tau_p = 271.738$  (263.735) for the MC (data). With the fixed values of  $\alpha_e$  and  $\tau_p$ , both the data and the MC were refit with  $\mu_p$  and  $\sigma_p$  only. Using the fixed values of  $\alpha_e$  and the  $\tau_p$  is based on the reasons that these parameters in principle can be viewed as corrections to the  $\gamma$  distribution ( $S(x)$ ) and they can be absorbed, which would not depend on position[156].

Fig. 5.8 shows the fitted results of  $\mu_p$  and  $\sigma_p$  along the x, y, z-axes scans respectively. For the sake of simplicity, for the x-scan case, only the x-axis results ( $\mu_{P,x}$ ,  $\sigma_{P,x}$ ) are shown here. Similarly, only the  $\mu_{P,y}$  and  $\sigma_{P,y}$  ( $\mu_{P,z}$  and  $\sigma_{P,z}$ ) are shown for the y-scan (z-scan). The relative differences discussed later consider all the three axes.

It shows that the position resolutions of the MC are mostly better than the data, which is expected since the non-uniformities of the detector in realistic situations can cause a broader resolution in the data[156]. Also, when the source is close to the AV or at the edges of the axes, the Gaussian shift  $\mu_p$  becomes large and the resolution worsens. Also,

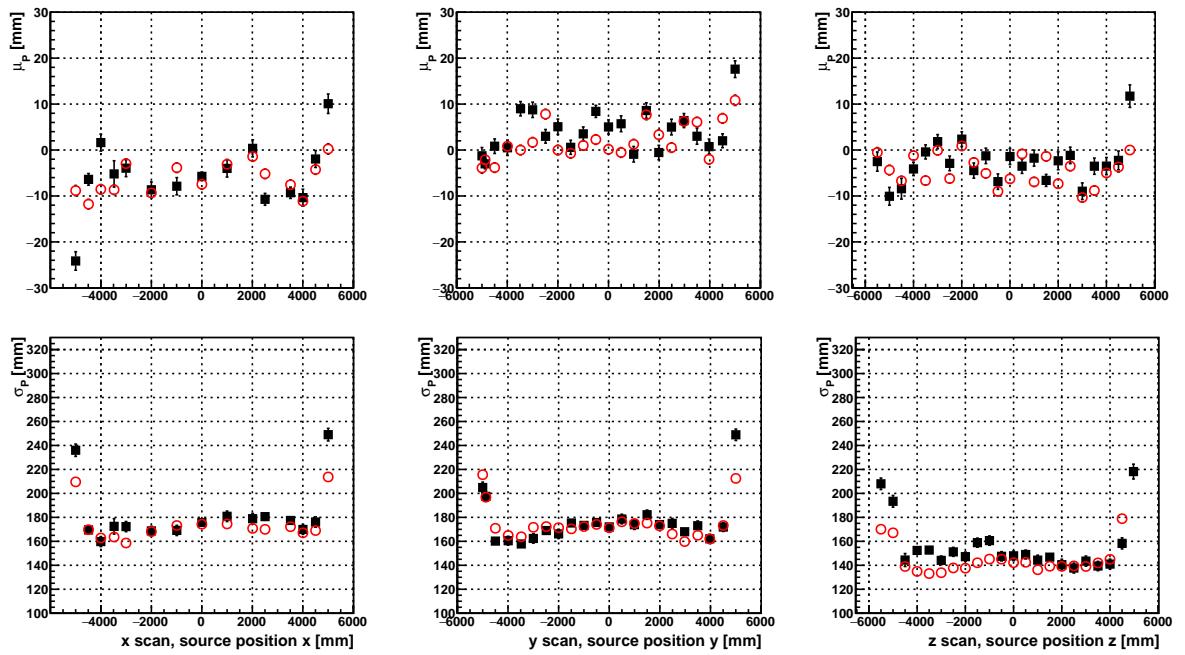


Figure 5.8: The fitted values of  $\mu_P$  (top) and  $\sigma_P$  (bottom) along x (left), y (middle) and z (right) scans. The source positions in each set of scans are projected onto x, y and z axes respectively. The MC results (red circles) are compared with the data (black boxes).

the difference between the MC and data becomes large.

To quantify the discrepancies between the MC and data, a relative difference of  $\sigma_p$  between the MC and data is defined as[156]:

$$\sigma_{p,\delta} \equiv \sqrt{\sum_i |(\sigma_{P,i}^{data})^2 - (\sigma_{P,i}^{MC})^2|} \quad (i = x, y, z), \quad (5.7)$$

Fig. 5.9 shows the  $\sigma_{p,\delta}$  changing along the internal x, y and z-axes scans respectively. All the differences are below 190 mm except the run-106979 with the source at  $z = 4973.567$  mm. The neck effects can cause this worst resolution.

It goes worse when the source is close to the AV or at the edges of the axes. When the source is close to the AV center, the differences are below 100 mm.

The values of  $\sigma_{p,\delta}$  were taken to represent the position resolution systematics.

As listed in Table. 5.2, the averages and the standard deviations of the  $\sigma_{p,\delta}$  were taken as the resolution systematics for x, y and z-axes respectively. To smear the position results, a Gaussian distribution  $\mathcal{N}(0, \delta)$  was convolved with positions. The upper values  $\delta$  were used to smear the positions.

Table 5.2: The MPW fitter position resolution systematic uncertainties in x, y and z axes. Unit: mm.

axis	systematic uncertainties	systematic to be applied ( $\delta$ )	smearing
x	$73.89 \pm 39.71$	113.6	$x + \mathcal{N}(0, \delta)$
y	$56.03 \pm 34.96$	90.99	$y + \mathcal{N}(0, \delta)$
z	$75.47 \pm 70.09$	145.56	$z + \mathcal{N}(0, \delta)$

To quantify the vertex shifts between the MC and data, values of vertex shifts:  $\mu_{P,\delta} \equiv \mu_P(data) - \mu_P(MC)$  were calculated for the x, y and z scans respectively. Fig. 5.10 shows these results.

In Table. 5.3, the averages and the standard deviations of the  $\mu_{P,\delta}$  were taken as the vertex shifts for x, y and z-axes respectively. To smear the position results, the positions were simply shifted by the upper values  $\delta$  were used to smear the positions.

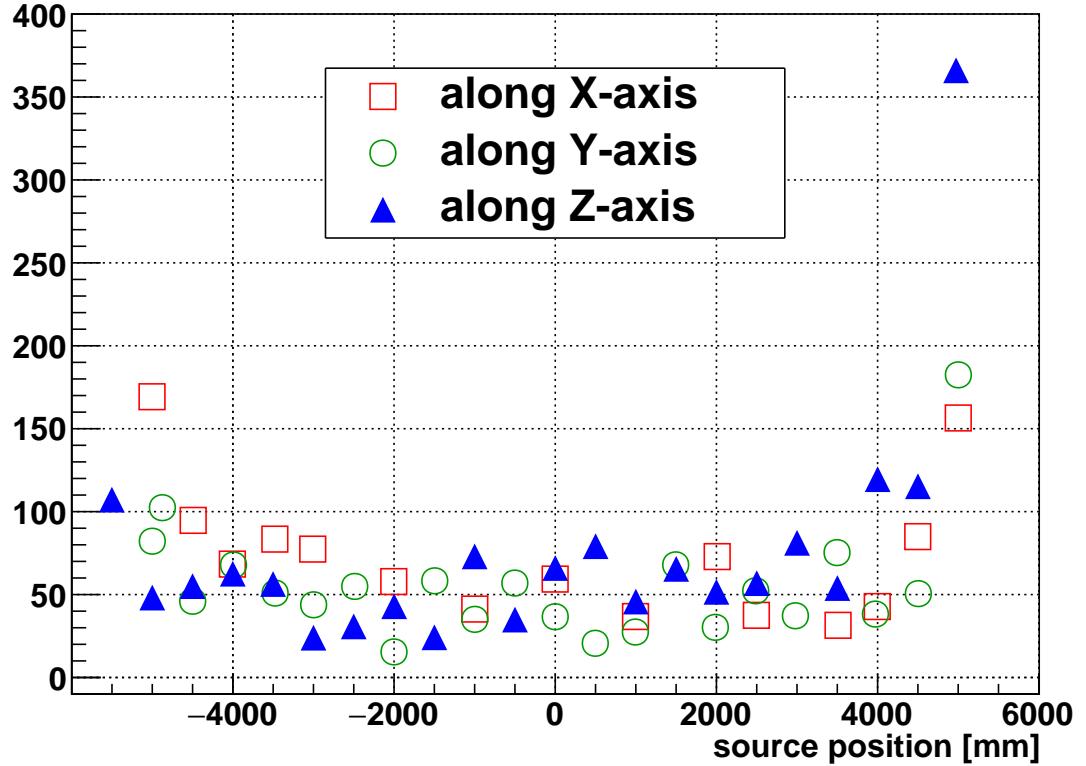


Figure 5.9: Relative differences of  $\sigma_P$  ( $\sigma_{p,\delta}$ ) as a function of the  $^{16}\text{N}$  source position. For simplicity, the corner scans are not shown in this figure. The red squares represent the results from the x-scan runs; green circles represent the y-scan runs and the blue triangles represent the z-scan runs.

### 5.3.1.3 Vertex Scale Uncertainties

In addition to the vertex shifts mentioned previously, the vertex scale is defined as a linear scale factor between the fitted positions of the data and the MC:  $x_{fit}^{data} - x_{fit}^{MC} = \mu_{P,x}^{data} - \mu_{P,x}^{MC} = \Delta + \beta \cdot x_{fit}^{MC}$ .

Since  $x_{fit}^{data} = \Delta + (1 + \beta) \cdot x_{fit}^{MC}$ , if the vertex scale factor is defined as:  $\alpha \equiv 1 + \beta$ , then  $x_{data} = \alpha x_{MC}$ .

To obtain the  $\alpha$ , the results in Fig. 5.10 were fitted with linear functions:  $shifts = p_0 + p_1 \cdot x_{src}$  (where  $x_{src}$  is the source position), as shown in Fig. 5.11.

From the linear fits, the values of vertex shifts were obtained and listed in Table. 5.4.

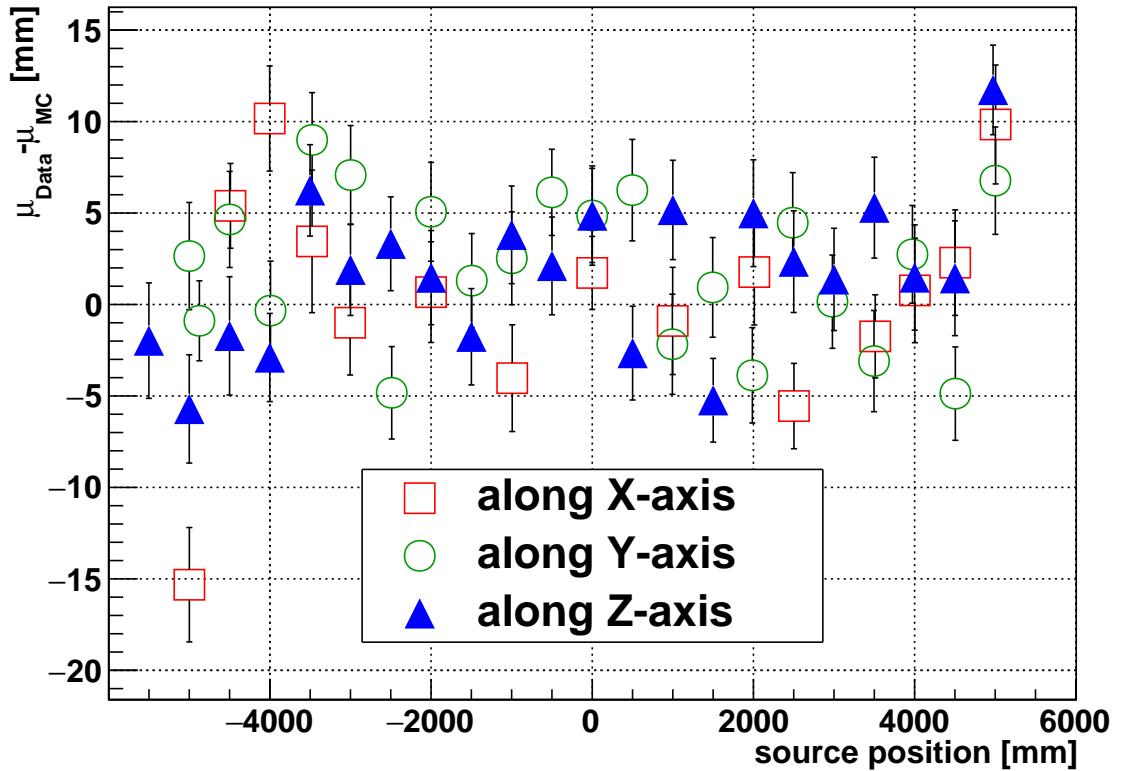


Figure 5.10: Vertex shifts of  $\mu_P$  ( $\mu_{p,\delta}$ ) as a function of the  $^{16}\text{N}$  source position. For simplicity, the corner scans are not shown in this figure. The red squares represent the results from the x-scan runs; green circles represent the y-scan runs and the blue triangles represent the z-scan runs.

Since the  $\chi^2/ndf$  values here were large, according to Refs. [156, 24], inflated errors were calculated as  $S \times (\text{slope errors})$ , where the error scale factor  $S = \sqrt{\chi^2/(ndf - 1)}$ . The downward systematic was calculated as the slope minus the slope error as well as the inflated error. In contrast, the upward systematic was taken as the positive inflated error, as suggested by [156]. For the z scan, the position at  $(-185.037, 247.24, 4973.567)$  mm pulls the slope results to the positive due to the possible biases in simulation for the neck geometry effects and makes the slope positive. So this point was not used in the linear fit.

The vertex scale systematics is then transformed by:  $x' = (1 + \delta_x/100)x$ , the same for  $y, z$ .

Table 5.3: Vertex shifts for the reconstructed positions in x, y and z axes. Unit: mm.

axis	vertex shift	systematic to be applied ( $\delta$ )	smearing
x shift	$0.50 \pm 5.98$	$+6.48/-5.98$	$x + \delta$
y shift	$2.02 \pm 4.11$	$+6.13/-4.11$	$y + \delta$
z shift	$1.89 \pm 4.82$	$+6.71/-4.82$	$z + \delta$

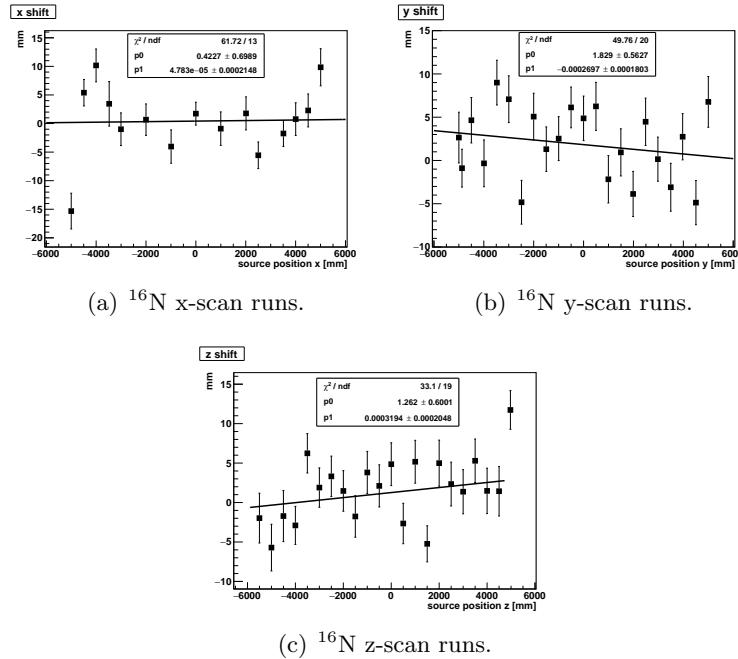


Figure 5.11: Vertex shifts along x, y, z axes and fitted with linear functions.

The scale systematics also depends on the radius  $r = \sqrt{x^2 + y^2 + z^2}$ [156]. By the error propagation, for an event position  $(x,y,z)$ ,  $\delta_r$  is calculated as[156]:

$$\delta_r = \sqrt{\sum_{i=1}^3 \left(\frac{\partial r}{\partial x_i}\right)^2 \delta_{x_i}^2} = \sqrt{\frac{x^2 \delta_x^2 + y^2 \delta_y^2 + z^2 \delta_z^2}{r^2}}, \quad (5.8)$$

where the  $\delta_r^+$  and  $\delta_r^-$  are calculated by  $\delta^+$  and  $\delta^-$  respectively.

Then the two-sided bounds of the radial  $r$  are calculated by:  $r^+ = (1 + \delta_r^+/100) \cdot r$  and  $r^- = (1 + \delta_r^-/100) \cdot r$ .

Table 5.4: Vertex shifts for the reconstructed positions in x, y and z axes. Unit: mm.

axis	fitted slope (%)	inflated error	systematic ( $\delta^+/\delta^-$ ) (%)
x scale	$0.005 \pm 0.021$	0.048	+0.07/-0.06
y scale	$-0.027 \pm 0.018$	0.030	+0.02/-0.07
z scale	$0.032 \pm 0.020$	0.027	+0.08/-0.01

### 5.3.2 Direction Reconstruction Evaluation

#### 5.3.2.1 Direction Resolution

For the reconstructed events in the  $^{16}\text{N}$  calibration, assuming a  $\gamma$  particle emitted from the source and interacts with  $e^-$  at the reconstructed position, the “true” direction of an event is defined as the direction pointing from the source manipulation position to the reconstructed position:  $\vec{u}_{true} = (\vec{X}_{fit} - \vec{X}_{src}) / |\vec{X}_{fit} - \vec{X}_{src}|$ . The angle  $\theta$  is the displacement between the “true” and the reconstructed directions and  $\cos \theta = \vec{u}_{true} \cdot \vec{u}_{fit}$ .

The distribution of the  $\cos \theta$  was fitted with the direction resolution function (Eqn. 4.9) mentioned in Sect. 4.2.8, Chapter 4. Before the fitting, a few cuts relating to the position and energy reconstruction were applied to the data or simulation results. As mentioned in Chapter 4, the direction reconstruction relies on the position. Therefore, the *posFoM* cut:  $scaleLogL > 10$  was applied before evaluating the direction reconstruction. Other cuts were suggested by the SNO+ analysis to remove the instrumental backgrounds and poor reconstructions for the events close to the source container or far away from the source. To remove the instrumental backgrounds, the cuts of  $E_{fit} > 3.5$  MeV,  $ITR > 0.55$  and  $-0.12 < \beta_{14} < 0.95$  were used. To remove poorly reconstructed events which were close to the source container due to its shadow effect, and also the events far away from the source, a distance cut of  $1000 < |\vec{X}_{fit} - \vec{X}_{src}| < 2300$  mm was applied. For the internal scans, a radius cut  $R' < 5850$  mm was also applied. This radial cut was not applied on the external and neck scans[156].

Fig. 5.12 shows the fitted results of the angular distributions in a fit range of [0.3,1] after the cuts mentioned.

The resolution parameters are shown in Table. 5.3.2.1. It shows that the direction

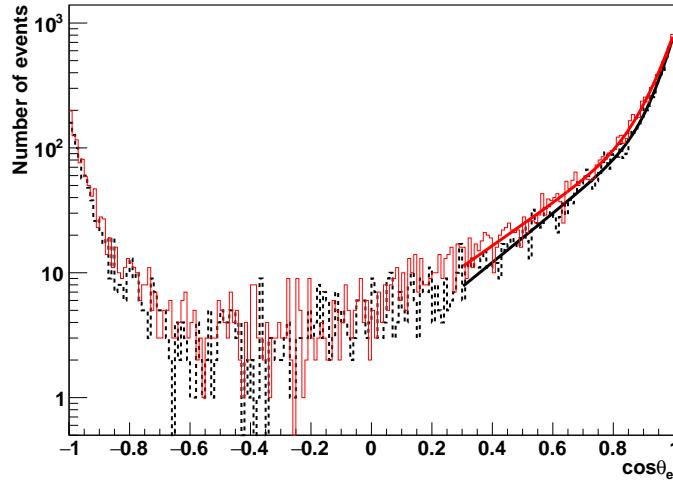


Figure 5.12: Angular distributions extracted from the data (red solid line) and MC (black dashed line); both are reconstructed by the `MPW fitter`. These distributions are fitted with the angular resolution functions ranging from 0.3 to 1.

107055	$\beta_M$	$\beta_S$	$\alpha_M$	$\chi^2/\text{ndf}$	$\cos \theta_{0.5}$	$\cos \theta_{0.8}$	$\cos \theta_{0.9}$
MPW data	$4.15 \pm 0.18$	$19.08 \pm 0.94$	$0.58 \pm 0.02$	$77.1/66$	0.964	0.744	0.410
MPW MC	$4.42 \pm 0.19$	$20.41 \pm 1.01$	$0.56 \pm 0.02$	$83.8/66$	0.974	0.768	0.454
RAT data	$3.76 \pm 0.18$	$17.90 \pm 0.82$	$0.55 \pm 0.02$	$70.5/66$	0.974	0.731	0.364
RAT MC	$4.02 \pm 0.18$	$20.89 \pm 0.92$	$0.54 \pm 0.03$	$94.9/66$	0.979	0.753	0.409

resolutions of the MC are always better than the data due to the ideal situations in the simulations. The reconstruction performance of the `MPW fitter` and the `RAT water fitter` are similar, while the  $\beta_M$  values of the MPW are about 10% higher than the RAT in both of the data and the MC. This indicates the direction resolution of the MPW is slightly better than the RAT.

### 5.3.2.2 Direction Systematics

For all the internal  $^{16}\text{N}$  scans, the cuts mentioned in the last section were applied on both the data and simulations. Similar to the evaluation of the position uncertainties, the angular resolution function was first fitted with three free parameters:  $\alpha_M$ ,  $\beta_S$ , and  $\beta_M$ . To simplify the calculation in propagating systematics, an average value of the fitted  $\alpha_M$  was calculated from all the internal scans (except the three neck scans), as 0.613 for data and 0.585 for

MC. With the fixed values of  $\alpha_M$ , both the data and the MC were refit with  $\beta_S$  and  $\beta_M$  only. The default fit range is [0.3,1], while for some scans close to the AV, the events can be few after the cuts. For these situations, to ensure more than 5000 events were fitted, the fit range was enlarged by moving a 0.1 step to the left until the left value reaches -0.5:  $[0.3 - 0.1 \cdot step, 1]$ .

Fig. 5.13 shows the results of the fitted  $\beta_M$  and  $\beta_S$  values for the internal  $^{16}\text{N}$  x, y and z-axes scans. It shows that for most of the scans, the MC results are better than the data. The three Z scans in the neck have the worst direction resolutions due to the asymmetry of the detector geometry.

The relative difference between data and MC of a fitted resolution quantity  $q \pm \delta_q$  is defined as:

$$(\Delta q)_{rel} = \frac{q_{data} - q_{MC}}{q_{MC}} \times 100\%. \quad (5.9)$$

The error of the relative difference is defined as:

$$\delta_{(\Delta q)_{rel}} = \sqrt{\left(\frac{\delta_{q_{data}}}{q_{data}}\right)^2 + \left(\frac{\delta_{q_{MC}}}{q_{MC}}\right)^2} \times 100\%. \quad (5.10)$$

Fig. 5.14 shows the relative differences for the internal x, y, z scans (not using the neck scans).

Taking the internal scans except the neck scans (77 runs in total), the means and standard deviations of the relative differences are:

$$\Delta(\beta_M)_{rel} = (-6.09 \pm 4.01)\%, \text{ and } \Delta(\beta_S)_{rel} = (-3.09 \pm 4.39)\%.$$

To be conservative, taking the largest and smallest values of the  $\Delta(\beta_M)_{rel}$  and  $\Delta(\beta_S)_{rel}$ , the negative and positive values of the direction systematic ( $\delta_\theta$ ) are obtained as  $\delta_\theta = +0.013 / -0.101$ .

To propagate the uncertainties of  $\beta$  to the direction resolution, a first-order approximation function was derived by the SNO collaboration[167]:

$$\cos \theta' = 1 + (\cos \theta - 1)(1 + \delta_\theta). \quad (5.11)$$

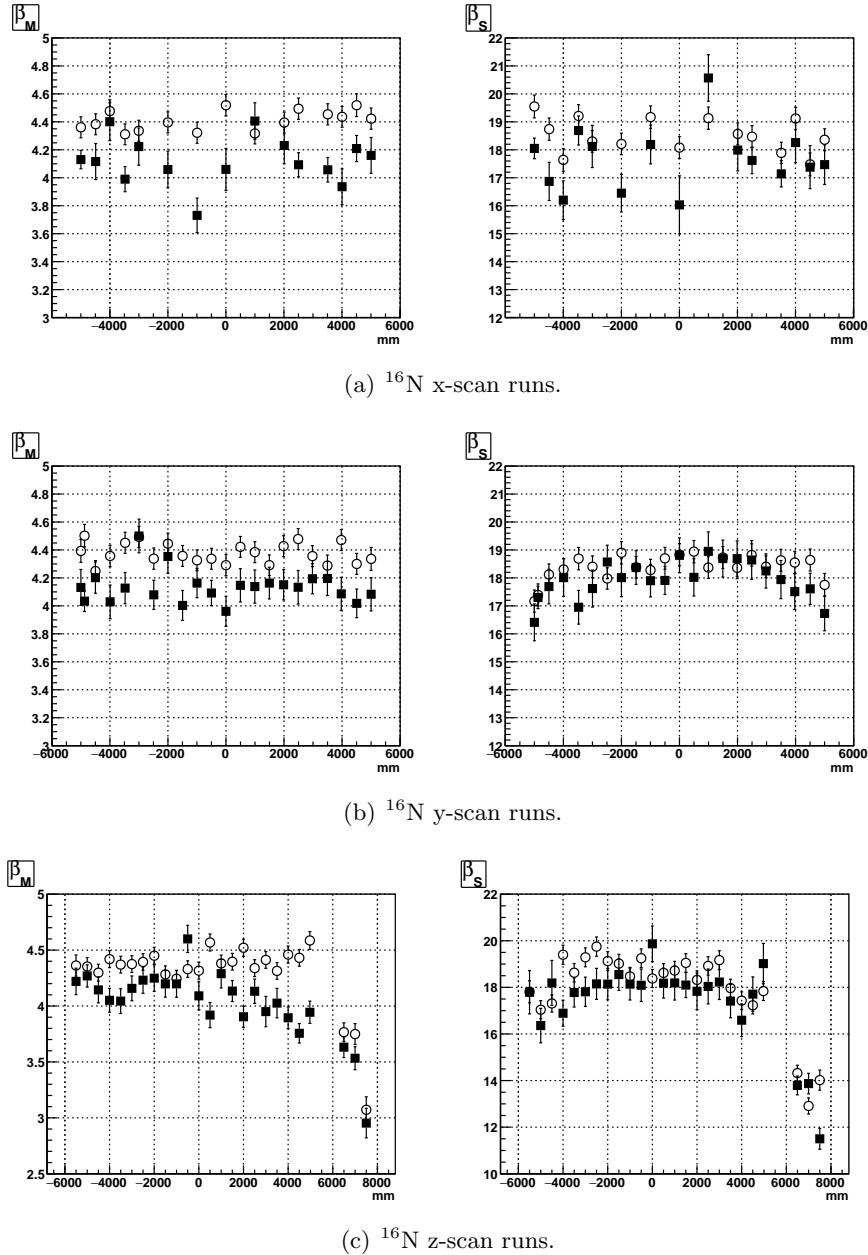


Figure 5.13: Fitted direction resolution parameters  $\beta_M$ ,  $\beta_S$  for the source scans in x, y, z-axes respectively.

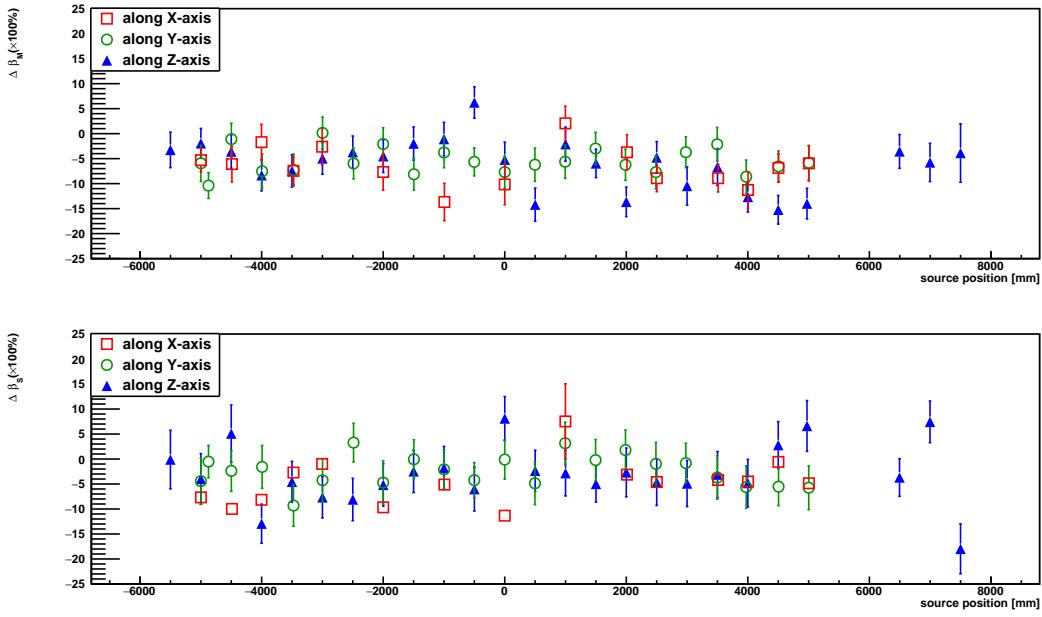


Figure 5.14: Relative differences of  $\beta_M$  and  $\beta_S$  as a function of the  $^{16}\text{N}$  source position. For simplicity, the corner scans are not shown in this figure. The red squares represent the results from the x-scan runs; green circles represent the y-scan runs and the blue triangles represent the z-scan runs.

This angular remapping function is used to smear the angular distributions for systematic studies. In the next chapter, it will be applied on the angular distribution of solar neutrino data.

### 5.3.3 $\beta_{14}$ and Its Systematic

Since  $\beta_{14}$  itself is used as the high-level cut, only the cuts of  $ITR > 0.55$  and  $N\text{Hits} > 5$  were applied on the data and MC to extract the  $\beta_{14}$  distributions. Fig. 5.15 shows the  $\beta_{14}$  distributions of the central run-107055 data and MC, reconstructed by the **MPW fitter** and the official **RAT** fitter respectively. The  $\beta_{14}$  is calculated based on the reconstructed position, time, and direction of an event while the  $\beta_{14}$  distributions from the **MPW** and the **RAT** results are consistent. However, both of the two fitters show a discrepancy between the data and the MC. This discrepancy can be caused by inaccurate modeling of the Cherenkov process

in the Geant4 simulation[165, 168]. Fig. 5.16 shows a comparison of the  $\beta_{14}$  for the data and the MC in run-107055. Both of the distributions are the MPW processed results and are fitted with Gaussian distributions in a region of  $[-0.5, 1.5]$ . The data shows a smaller Gaussian mean value,  $\mu_{data} = 0.4157$ , compared to the  $\mu_{MC} = 0.4388$ .

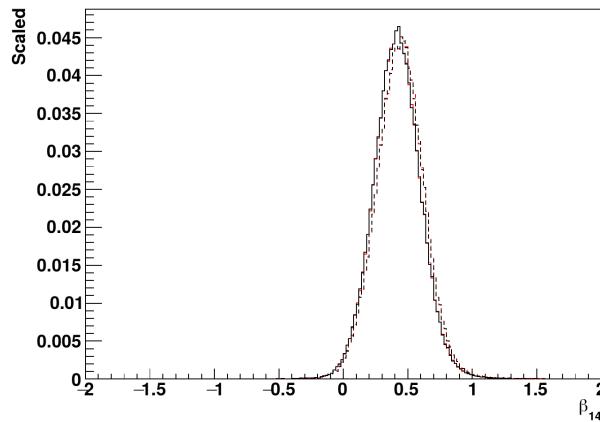


Figure 5.15: Distributions of  $\beta_{14}$  for the  $^{16}\text{N}$  central run-107055. Dashed lines for the MC and solid lines for data; red for the **MPW fitter** processed results and black for the **RAT** results.

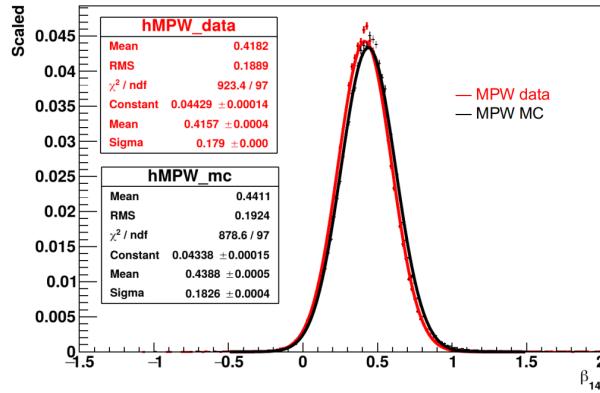


Figure 5.16: A comparison of the  $\beta_{14}$  for the data and the MC in run-107055.

Fig. 5.17 shows effects when the source moving along x, y and z axes. Taking all the 80 internal runs mentioned before, I calculated the  $\Delta\beta_{14} \equiv \mu_{data} - \mu_{MC}$  for each run. The mean and standard deviation of these  $\Delta\beta_{14}$  values were taken as the shift in  $\beta_{14}$ :  $-0.026 \pm 0.010$ . Following the suggestion in Ref. [156], an asymmetric uncertain was taken: the upward shift was taken as  $+0.010$  while the downward was taken as  $-0.026 - 0.01 = -0.036$ . Thus the

shifts:  $+0.010 / -0.036$  was taken as the  $\beta_{14}$  systematics. It will be applied to the solar neutrino analysis in the next chapter.

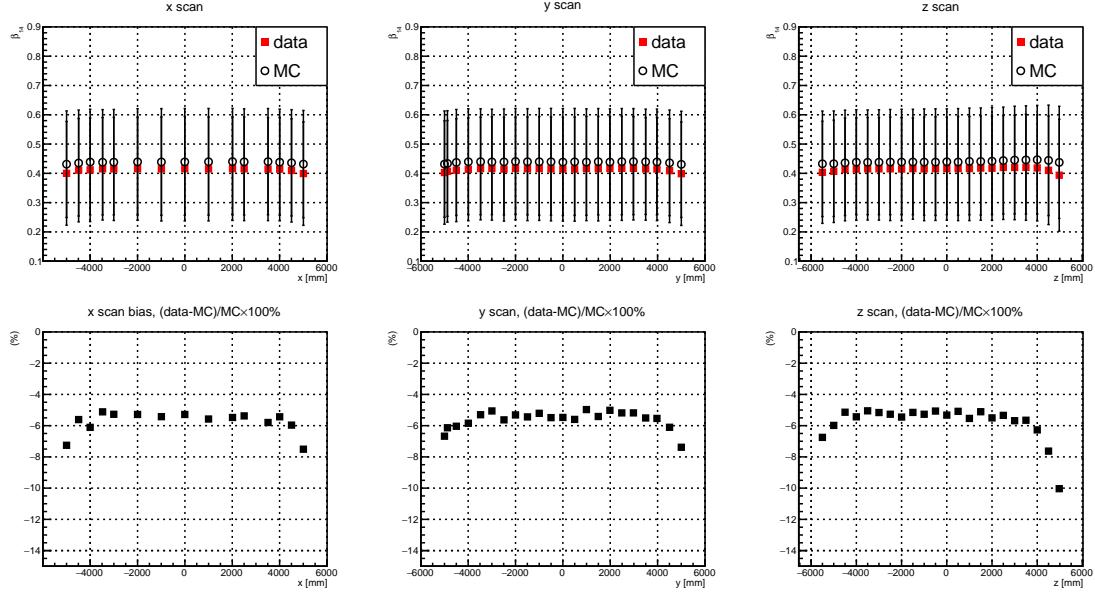


Figure 5.17:  $\beta_{14}$  systematic along x, y, z scans.

### 5.3.4 Energy Reconstruction Evaluation

#### 5.3.4.1 Energy Figure of Merits

Three energy FoM quantities:  $G_{test}$ ,  $U_{test}$  and  $Z_{factor}$  were introduced in Sect. 4.7.1. Here I used the MC simulations as well as the data of the  $^{16}\text{N}$  central run-107055 to check the effects of the cuts on FoM quantities to reduce the energy biases. The sacrifices of the events were calculated.

- $U_{test}$ : Fig. 5.18 shows  $U_{test}$  vs. energy biases. A cut of  $0.61 < U_{test} < 0.95$  was suggested by the collaboration, to remove the events were mostly caused by the source encapsulation. This cut removes 0.38% of MC events and 0.34% of data events.
- $G_{test}$ : Fig. 5.19 shows  $G_{test}$  vs. energy biases. A cut of  $0 < G_{test} < 1.9$  was suggested by the collaboration, which removes 0.01% events for both MC and data.

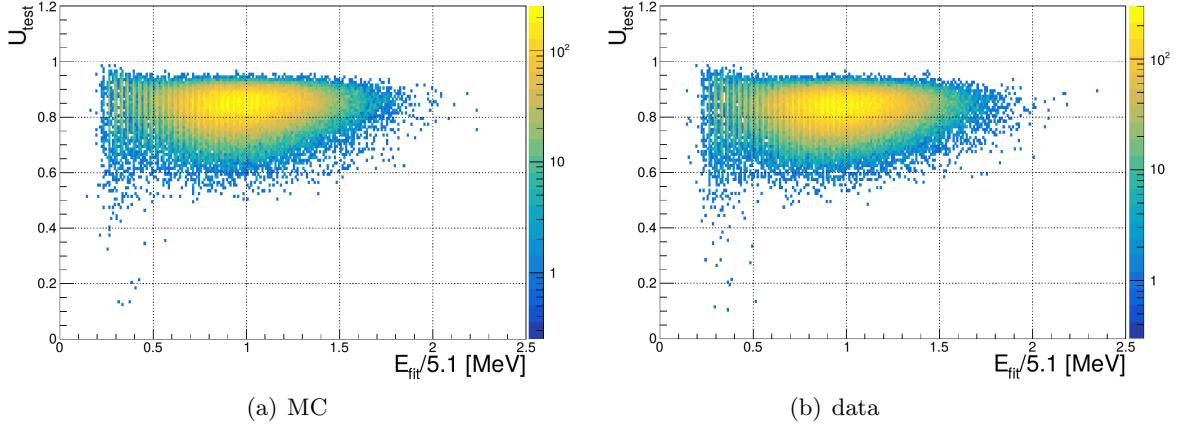


Figure 5.18:  $^{16}\text{N}$  central-run 107055,  $U_{test}$  vs.  $E_{fit}/5.1$  MeV.

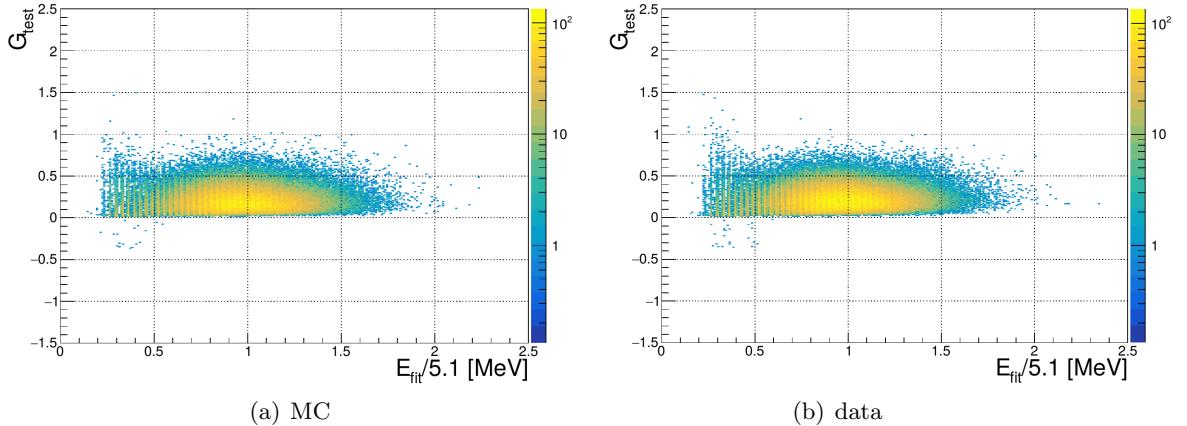


Figure 5.19:  $^{16}\text{N}$  central-run 107055,  $G_{test}$  vs.  $E_{fit}/5.1$  MeV.

- $Z_{factor}$ : Fig. 5.20 shows  $Z_{factor}$  vs. energy biases. A cut of  $-11 < Z_{factor} < 1$  was suggested by the collaboration, which removes 0.13% events for both MC and data.

All the cuts on the three energy FoM quantities remove 0.40% events from MC and 0.37% events from data. These cuts were also used in the water phase analysis in Chapter 6.

### 5.3.4.2 Energy Resolution and Systematics

The energy reconstruction algorithms for the water phase (mentioned in Sect. 4.7, Chapter 4) was applied on the  $^{16}\text{N}$  MC simulations and data. The reconstructed energy of the  $^{16}\text{N}$

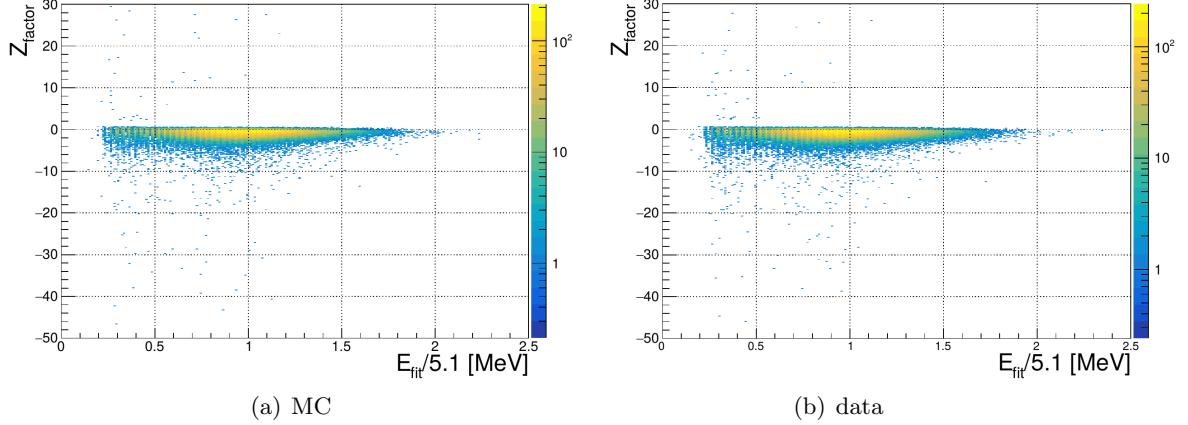


Figure 5.20:  $^{16}\text{N}$  central-run 107055,  $Z_{\text{factor}}$  vs.  $E_{\text{fit}}/5.1$  MeV.

events are shown in Fig. 5.21. The results from the MC and the data are compared.

### 5.3.4.3 Energy Resolutions

Following the methods described in Ref. [93, 156], a map that relates the number of Cherenkov photons to the electron energy is created by simulating mono-energetic electrons events with different energies at the detector center, as shown in Fig. 5.25 (a). By looking up the map and applying linear interpolation, the number of the photons created from the  $^{16}\text{N}$  source is converted into an effective or apparent electron energy spectrum ( $P_{\text{source}}(T_e)$ )[156]. Fig. 5.25 (b) shows the effective electron spectrum of the  $^{16}\text{N}$  central run-107055.

To obtain the energy reconstruction resolutions, the reconstructed energy spectrum  $P(T_{eff})$  is fitted with the energy resolution function defined as[156]:

$$P(T_{eff}) = N \int P_{source}(T_e) \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi}\sigma_E} \exp\left\{-\frac{[(1+\delta_E)T_{eff} - T_e]^2}{2\sigma_E^2}\right\}, \quad (5.12)$$

where the predicted apparent energy spectrum,  $P_{source}(T_e)$ , is convolved with a Gaussian resolution function. In the Gaussian function,  $\sigma_E$  is the detector resolution and  $\sigma_E = b\sqrt{T_{eff}}$ , where  $b$  is the energy resolution parameter and  $\delta_E$  is the energy scale parameter. The  $P_{source}(T_e)$  is the apparent energy spectrum.

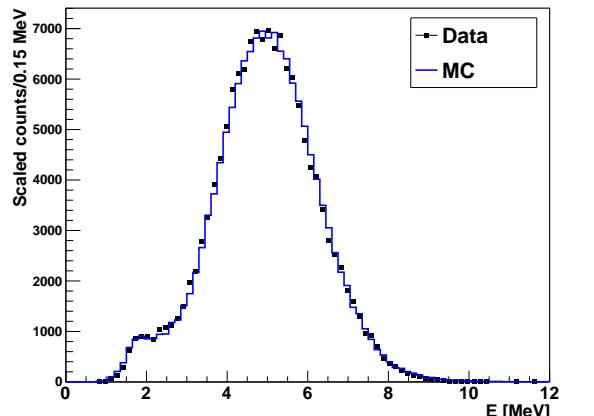
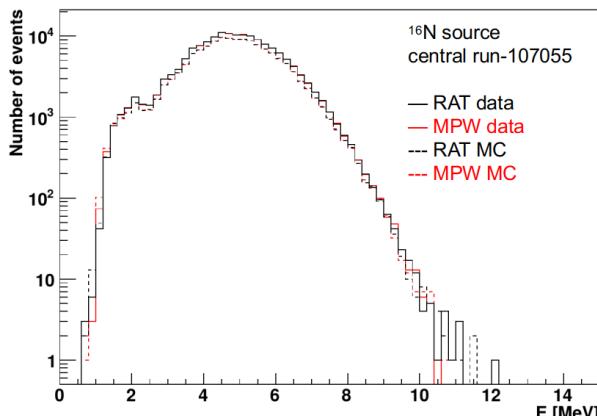
(a)  $^{16}\text{N}$  run-106925(b)  $^{16}\text{N}$  run-107055

Figure 5.21: Reconstructed energy spectrum from the  $^{16}\text{N}$  central run-106925 (top) and 107055 (bottom). For the run-106925 (top), the reconstructed data (black dots) are compared to the MC (blue line), both are MPW **fitter** results; for the run-107055 (bottom), the MPW **fitter** results and the RAT results are also compared. Dashed lines for the MC and solid lines for data; red for the MPW **fitter** results and black for the RAT results.

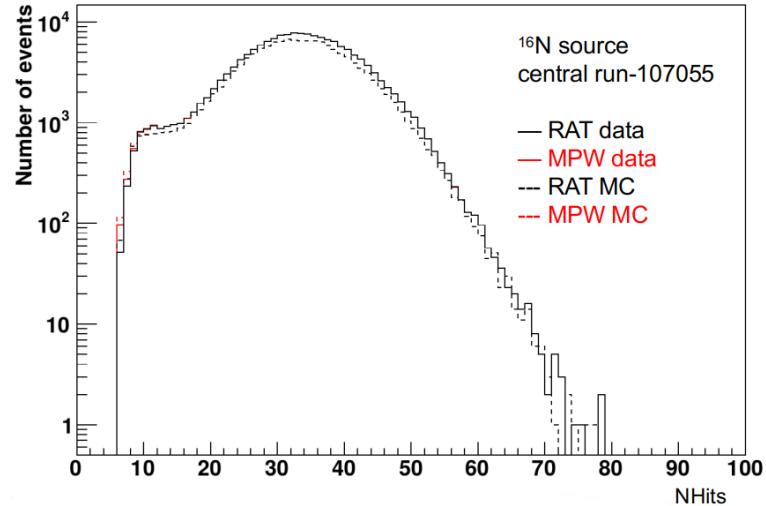


Figure 5.22: NHit spectrum for the  $^{16}\text{N}$  central run-107055. Dashed lines for the MC and solid lines for data; red for the MPW fitter results and black for the RAT results.

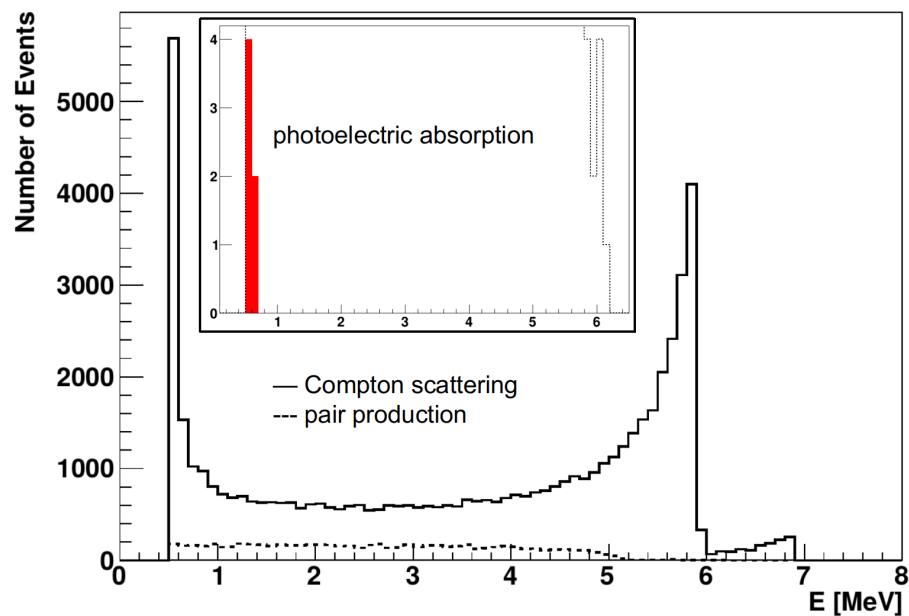


Figure 5.23: Simulated  $^{16}\text{N}$  energy spectrum for different processes, extracted from  $10^5$  MC simulations.

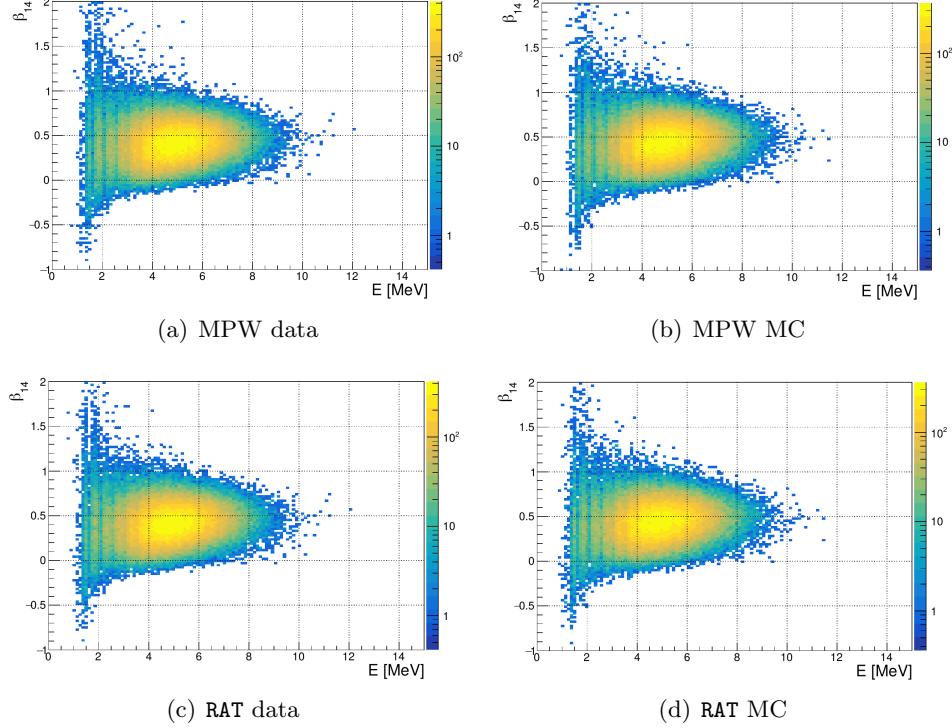


Figure 5.24:  $E_{fit}$  vs  $\beta_{14}$  for the data and MC. Both the RAT and the MPW results are shown.

Before fitting the reconstructed energy spectrum with the energy resolution function, a few cuts were applied on both the data and MC: the position FoM cut  $scaleLogL > 10$  and the energy FoM cuts:  $0 < G_{test} < 1.9$ ,  $U_{test} < 0.95$  and  $-11 < Z_{factor} < 1$  mentioned in the previous sections were used; the cuts of  $NHit > 5$ ,  $ITR > 0.55$  and  $-0.12 < \beta_{14} < 0.95$  were used to remove instrumental backgrounds; a distance cut:  $|\vec{X}_{fit} - \vec{X}_{src}| > 700$  mm was suggested by Refs. [169, 156] to remove the shadow effects when the events are close to the source container; for the event reconstructed within the 700 mm distance, if its direction  $\vec{u}_{fit}$  is within  $45^\circ$  of the vector from the source to its vertex, i.e., if  $\sqrt{2}/2 < \vec{u}_{true} \cdot \vec{u}_{fit} < 1$ , its energy will also be kept.

A fit range of [3.5, 6.0] MeV was suggested by Ref. [156] to remove poorly reconstructed events due to the trigger inefficiency. Fig. 5.26 shows the energy resolution function fitted with the reconstructed energy spectrum of the  $^{16}\text{N}$  central run-107055 data, after applying the cuts mentioned above.

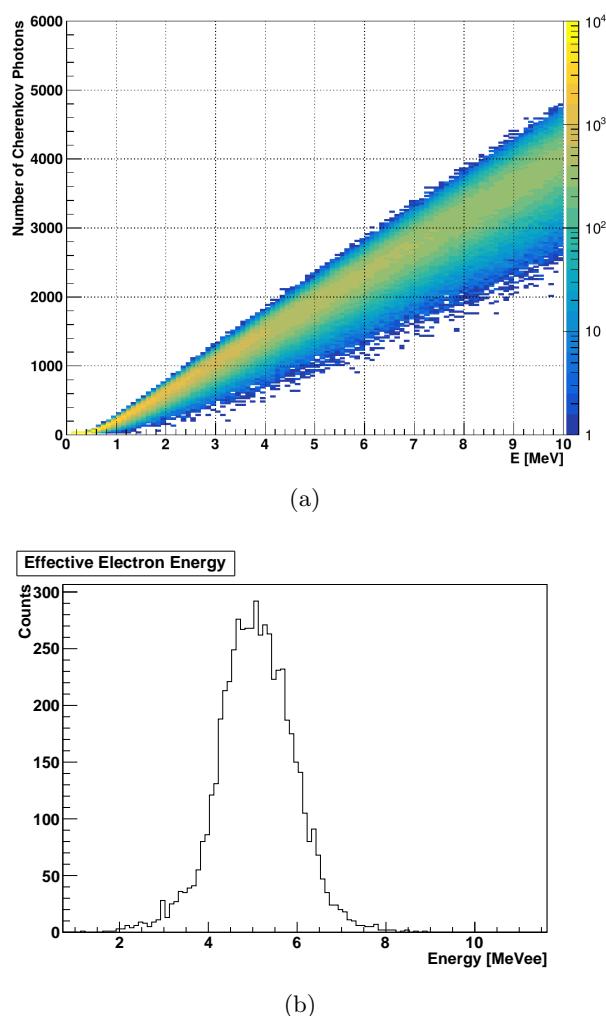


Figure 5.25: Converting number of photons to effective electron spectrum. (a): A 2D map of Electron energy vs number of Cherenkov photons. (b): Effective electron spectrum of  $^{16}\text{N}$  central run-107055.

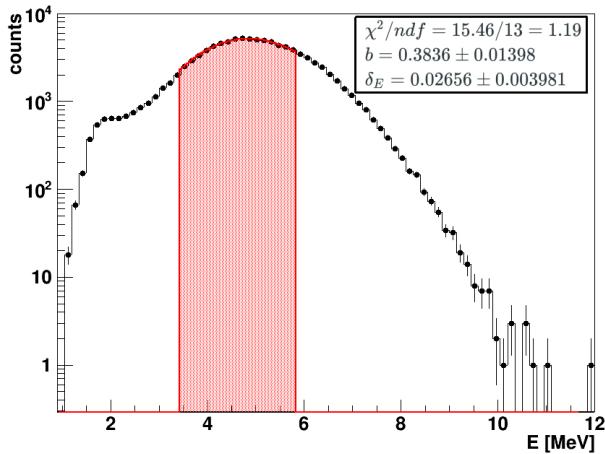


Figure 5.26: The reconstructed energy spectrum of central run-107055 data, fitted with the resolution function (red).

For all the internal scans, Fig. 5.27 and Fig. 5.28 show the energy scale ( $\delta_E$ ) and energy resolution ( $b$ ) as a function of the radius of the source manipulation positions. Both the data and MC are shown.

#### 5.3.4.4 Energy Uncertainties

By comparing the differences between data and MC, the uncertainties of the energy scale  $\delta_E$  and resolution  $b$  are calculated as:

$$\Delta_\delta^2 = (\delta_{data} - \delta_{MC})^2 + \text{Error}_{\delta,data}^2 + \text{Error}_{\delta,MC}^2, \quad (5.13)$$

where  $\delta = b$  or  $\delta_E$ , and  $\Delta_b = \sqrt{\Delta_b^2}$  since the resolution is always positive; while  $\Delta_{\delta_E} = \pm \sqrt{\Delta_{\delta_E}^2}$ . The fit errors in data and MC were also included in the uncertainties.

Taking the  $^{16}\text{N}$  scan runs within  $r < 6 \text{ m}$ , the averaged uncertainties are:  $\overline{\Delta_{\delta_E}} = 0.0107$  and  $\overline{\Delta_b} = 0.0369$ . For the  $^{16}\text{N}$  scan runs within  $r < 5.5 \text{ m}$ , which is the fiducial volume of the solar neutrino analysis mentioned in Chapter 6,  $\overline{\Delta_{\delta_E}} = 0.0100$  and  $\overline{\Delta_b} = 0.0320$ .

To apply the energy scale systematics, the reconstructed energy  $E_{fit}$  is smeared by  $E'_{fit} = (1 \pm \Delta_{\delta_E}) \cdot E_{fit}$ , where the “+” sign is for scaling up the energy while “-” for scaling down. Fig. 5.29 shows the effects of smearing the energy scales on the reconstructed energy spectrum of the  $^{16}\text{N}$  central run-107055. It is obvious that scaling up the  $E_{fit}$  widen the

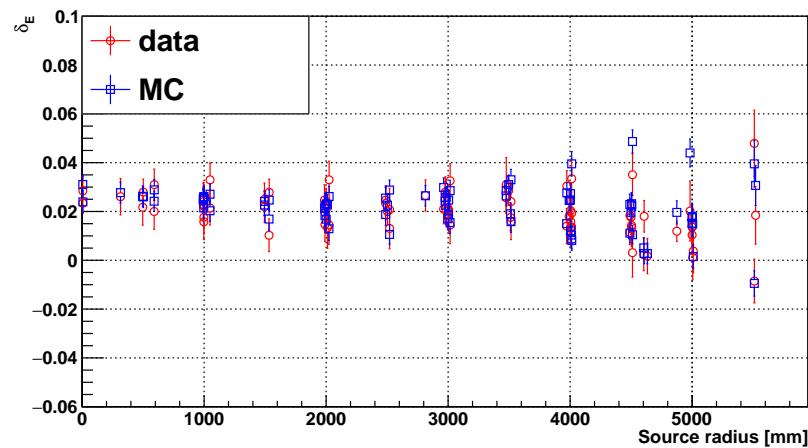


Figure 5.27: Fitted energy scales ( $\delta_E$ ) as a function of the source radial manipulation position. Red circles for data and blue squares for the MC.

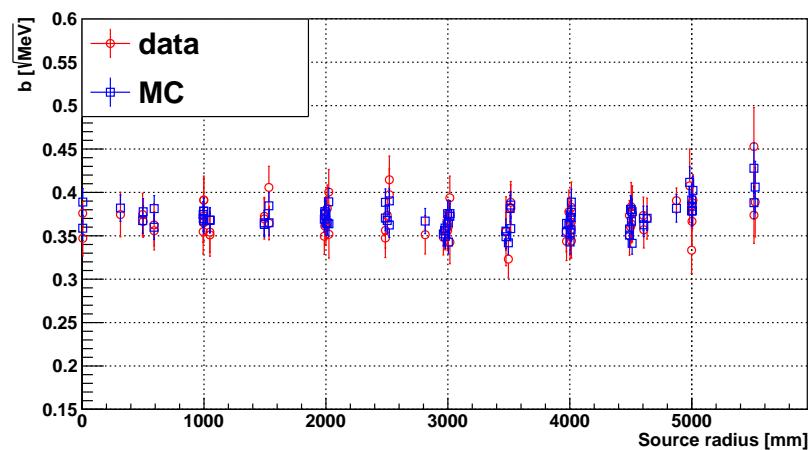


Figure 5.28: Fitted energy resolutions ( $b$ ) as a function of the source radial manipulation position. Red circles for data and blue squares for the MC.

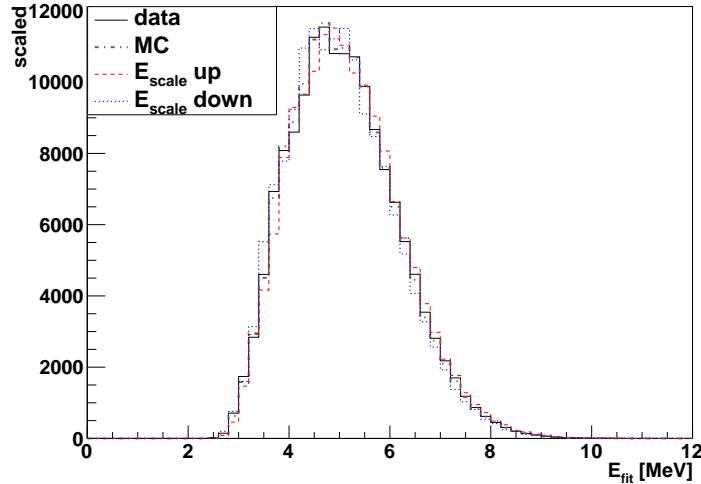


Figure 5.29: Smeared reconstructed energy spectrum of  $^{16}\text{N}$  central run-107055. The solid black line is for data and the gray dash-dot line is for unsmeared MC; the red dash line is for scaling up the  $E_{fit}$  in MC; the blue dot line is for scaling down the  $E_{fit}$  in MC. Histograms are normalized to the total counts of the data.

$E_{fit}$  spectrum while scaling down the  $E_{fit}$  narrows the spectrum.

To apply the energy resolution systematics, the spectrum of the reconstructed energy  $E_{fit}$  is convolved with an additional Gaussian resolution function  $Gaus(0, \sigma_{smear})$ , where  $\sigma_{smear} = \sqrt{E_{fit}} \cdot \sqrt{(1 + \Delta_b)^2 - 1}$ . To smear the  $E_{fit}$  event by event,  $E_{smear}$  is randomly sampled from  $Gaus(0, \sigma_{smear})$ , and then  $E'_{fit} = E_{fit} + E_{smear}$ . Fig. 5.30 shows the effects of smearing the energy resolution on the  $E_{fit}$  spectrum of the  $^{16}\text{N}$  central run-107055. It is obvious that smearing with the additional resolution coming from the uncertainties in  $b$  widen the  $E_{fit}$  spectrum. Because there is no unfolding procedure to improve or narrow the energy resolution, this energy resolution systematic is one-sided[166]. Therefore, in the analysis in Chapter 6, I simply took symmetric uncertainties with different signs.

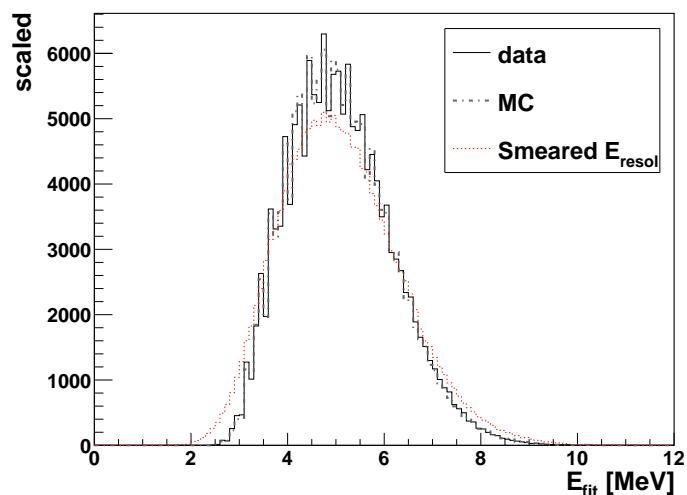


Figure 5.30: Smeared reconstructed energy spectrum of  $^{16}\text{N}$  central run-107055. The red dash line is for smearing the  $E_{fit}$  with  $\text{Gaus}(E_{fit}, \sigma)$ . Histograms are normalized to the total counts of the data.

## Chapter 6

# Solar Neutrino Analysis in the SNO+ Water Phase

The SNO+ water phase data were taken from May 2017 to September 2018. The period from May 2017 to October 2018 is the first stage of the water phase. During this stage, several calibration runs were taken, including the  $^{16}\text{N}$  calibration scans and the laserball scans. During the period from October 2018 to July 2019, over 20 tonnes of LAB (without PPO) was filled into the detector and the LAB mostly occupied the neck volume, slightly below the neck bottom. With the nitrogen cover gas on the top of the AV, the dataset taken during this period is called “low background dataset”. In this study, 4838 runs of data were used, which summed up a total live time of 190.31 days after the data cleaning process.

In this chapter, I applied the MPW reconstruction algorithm described in Chapter 4 as a position and direction fitter to the raw dataset as well as the run-by-run MC simulations. The fitted event vertex was used by the energy fitter developed by the SNO+ collaboration.

First, the open dataset taken in 2017 was used to test the MPW results, compared to the official RAT results. A quantity called “KullbackLeibler Divergence” was developed to evaluate the Cherenkov signals. After that, I mainly analyzed the low background dataset. I used sub-datasets of the run-by-run MC simulations to evaluate the ability of separating

the solar  $\nu_e$  signals from the backgrounds. The Toolkit for Multivariate Data Analysis with ROOT (TMVA) package[170, 171] was used to train and test on the MC simulations to obtain optimized discriminants. These optimized discriminants were applied on the whole dataset to remove the backgrounds.

The outputs from the data were fitted to obtain the number of signal events and the background events. Ensemble tests were performed on fake datasets to check the fit pull and bias. The systematics obtained from the  $^{16}\text{N}$  calibration in Chapter 5 were applied on the results. Finally, the solar  $\nu_e$  interaction rates and the  $^8\text{B}$  solar neutrino flux were evaluated.

## 6.1 Backgrounds

### 6.1.1 Physics Backgrounds

- Internal backgrounds:

Most backgrounds come from natural radioactive isotopes inside or around the detector, such as the isotopes in the detection medium, detector materials and the PMTs. The major isotopes in the water phase are:  $^{238}\text{U}$ ,  $^{232}\text{Th}$ ,  $^{40}\text{K}$ , and  $^{222}\text{Rn}$ . These have been monitored by *in-situ* and *ex-situ* measurements and analyses.

The ubiquitous  $^{238}\text{U}$  and  $^{232}\text{Th}$  isotopes decay sequentially and form decay chains. The target level in the SNO+ water phase is  $3.5 \times 10^{-14}$  gram  $^{238}\text{U}$  in per gram water (gU/gH<sub>2</sub>O) and  $3.5 \times 10^{-14}$  gTh/gH<sub>2</sub>O[156]. The rates of the background events caused by the decays from specific isotopes, especially the  $\beta$ -decays of  $^{214}\text{Bi}$  (from the  $^{238}\text{U}$  decay chain) and  $^{208}\text{Tl}$  (from the  $^{232}\text{Th}$  decay chain), were carefully calculated and were put into the simulations. In this chapter, the simulated background events from the  $^{214}\text{Bi}$  and the  $^{208}\text{Tl}$   $\beta$ -decays were used to develop the multi-variable analysis to select solar neutrino events from the background events.

- External backgrounds:

As mentioned in Chapter 3, Sect. 3.1, since the depth of the SNO+, the cosmogenic backgrounds induced by the cosmic muons are very few. The instrumental backgrounds, such as the flashers from the PMTs, can be removed by the data-cleaning approaches. Here the data-cleaning masks were applied.

## 6.2 KullbackLeibler (KL) Divergence for High Level Cuts

The KullbackLeibler (KL) divergence (also called “relative entropy”) is used to measure the dissimilarity of two probability distributions[172]. I used this quantity to compare the reconstructed angular distribution of an event,  $\vec{u}_{fit} \cdot (\vec{X}_{PMT} - \vec{X}_{fit}) / |\vec{X}_{PMT} - \vec{X}_{fit}|$ , with the angular distribution of solar  $\nu_e$  events extracted from the MC (expected as a Cherenkov distribution) to check the dissimilarity of the event compared with the solar  $\nu_e$  event. The quantity  $D_{KL}(p||q)$  is calculated as:

$$klDiv(p||q) \equiv \sum_i^N p(x_i) \log \frac{p(x_i)}{q(x_i)}, \quad (6.1)$$

where  $p(x_i)$  is the angular distribution after a time residual window cut:  $-5 < t_{Res} < 1\text{ ns}$ , to extract prompt Cherenkov lights. Both of the event and the MC distributions were filled into a histogram with 40 bins ranging from [-1,1] and the  $klDiv$  values were calculated bin by bin except the empty bins (zero count). A small  $klDiv$  value indicates a small dissimilarity.

These values were used for distinguishing the signal from backgrounds, which will be discussed in the Sect. 6.3.2. Fig. 6.1 shows an example of the  $klDiv$  calculation. Two events are compared here. One is a randomly selected event from the solar  $\nu_e$  run-by-run MC ( $E = 4.78\text{ MeV}$ ), the other is from the  $^{214}\text{Bi}$  MC ( $E = 2.18\text{ MeV}$ ), with the same event GTID. It can be seen that the background event with lower energy is more dispersive while the signal event has a peak around the Cherenkov angle ( $\sim 0.75$ ) and thus its shape is more close to the  $PDF$ . The calculation of 6.1 gives  $klDiv(\text{solar } \nu_e) = 11.78$  and  $klDiv(^{214}\text{Bi}) = 22.69$ , which verifies the observation.

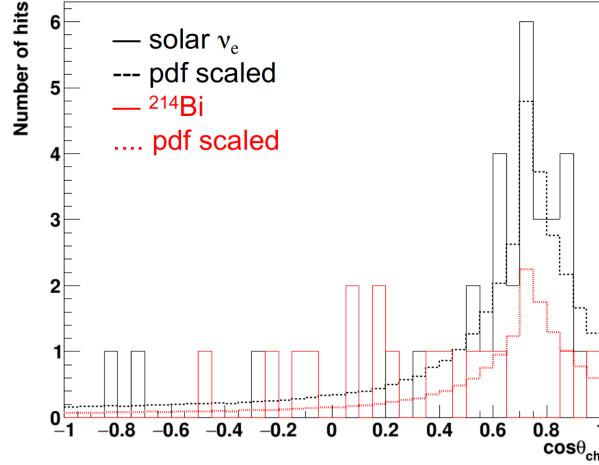


Figure 6.1: Angular distributions of the MC events in run-by-run simulations of run-206391, with the same event GTID = 7. The black line is the MC solar  $\nu_e$  distribution, while the red line is the MC  $^{214}\text{Bi}$  distribution. The *PDF* is scaled to the number of the hits in solar  $\nu_e$  event (black dashed line) and the  $^{214}\text{Bi}$  event (red dotted line) respectively.

A symmetrical form of  $klDiv$  can be taken as:

$$klDiv(p, q) \equiv \frac{1}{2} \sum_i^N (p \log \frac{p}{q} + q \log \frac{q}{p}), \quad (6.2)$$

Since  $klDiv(p, q) = klDiv(q, p)$ , it has a meaning of distance. This quantity is used in the TMVA method in Sect. 6.3.2.

## 6.3 Solar $\nu_e$ Analysis and Background Separation in Water Phase

### 6.3.1 Open Dataset Analysis

This open dataset was used to compare the reconstructed events by the **MPW fitter** and the **RAT water fitter**.

In SNO+ water phase, solar  $\nu_e$ s are measured via elastic scattering  $\nu_e + e^- \rightarrow \nu_e + e^-$  ( $\nu + e^-$  ES) (was discussed in Sect. 2.2). The observable quantity is the solar angle  $\theta_{sun}$ , the direction of the event relative to the Sun's location, which is defined as:

$$\cos \theta_{sun} \equiv \vec{u}_{event} \cdot \frac{\vec{X}_{event} - \vec{X}_{sun}}{|\vec{X}_{event} - \vec{X}_{sun}|}, \quad (6.3)$$

where  $\vec{X}_{sun}$  is taken as the Sun’s location relative to the SNOLAB location since the whole lab can be treated as a point regarding the long distance to the Sun.

High level cuts mentioned in 5.2 were applied.

Table 6.1: Candidate events in the open dataset. Compared the fit results of the candidate events with different fitters.

Fitter	Run	GTID	$z - 0.108(m)$	$R(m)$	$(R/R_{av})^3$	$\cos \theta_{sun}$	SNO+ Day
Rat	100093	11108354	3.49	3.57	0.21	-0.954	2683.92
MPW	–	–	3.43	3.52	0.20	-0.906	–
Rat	100207	5079885	-2.61	4.60	0.45	0.816	2687.04
MPW	–	–	-3.63	<b>7.61</b>	2.03	<b>0.656</b>	–
Rat	100632	7882360	1.77	3.19	0.15	0.937	2696.93
MPW	–	–	1.67	3.11	0.14	0.911	–
Rat	100663	15767175	-4.33	4.96	0.56	0.978	2698.18
MPW	–	–	-4.45	5.07	0.60	0.980	–
Rat	100915	169700	-1.00	5.10	0.61	0.341	2701.23
MPW	–	–	-1.08	5.08	0.61	0.337	–

Table 6.2: Candidate events in the open dataset searched by the MPW fitter.

Run	GTID	energy	$z - 0.108$	$R$	$(R/R_{av})^3$	$\cos \theta_{sun}$
100093	11108354	5.827	3.43	3.52	0.20	-0.907005
100632	7882360	6.183	1.67	3.11	0.14	0.914612
100663	15767175	6.182	-4.45	5.07	0.60	0.9807349
100915	169700	5.684	-1.07	5.08	0.61	0.338534
100984	8621621	5.701	0.76	4.75	0.502	-0.647735
101075	11673714	5.667	4.43	5.18	0.64	0.587303

A plot of refitting the candidate solar events from the Rat water fitter with the MPW fitter on open dataset.

### 6.3.2 Signal-background Discrimination Based on TMVA

This section describes a signal-background discrimination analysis based on the TMVA method. Here the run-by-run simulations that simulated the full detector conditions for a specific run were used. The MC dataset includes the run-by-run simulations from the run-200004 to 203602, which has a live time of 92.54 days and is about a half of the whole “low background dataset”. Thus it is denoted as the “half dataset”. This half dataset was

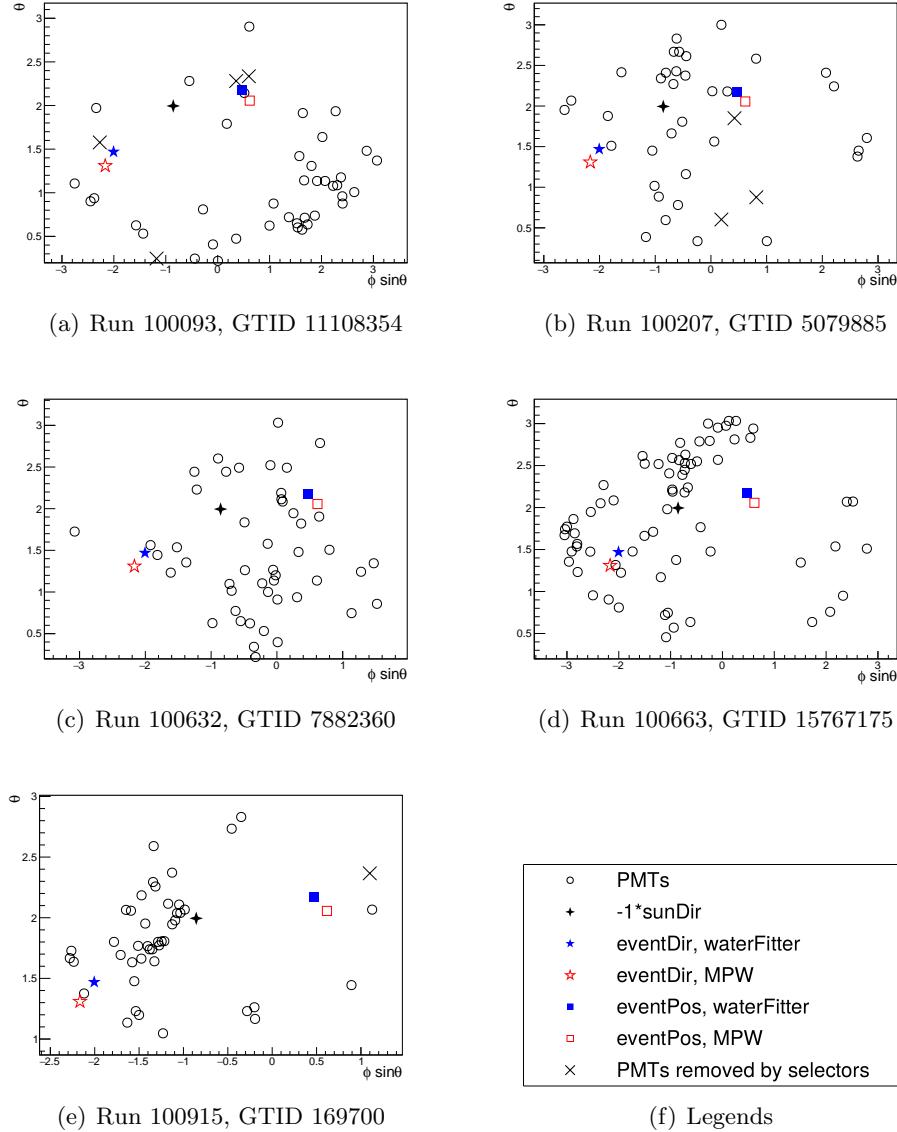


Figure 6.2: Reconstruction results for the candidate events, projected onto PMT sinusoidal maps. Black circles stand for the hit PMTs used by the fitter; crosses stand for the hit PMTs removed by the selectors; blue full star stands for the event direction fitted by the **Rat water fitter**; red open star stands for the direction fitted by the **MPW fitter**; full double diamond stands for the solar direction $*-1$ ; blue full square stands for the event position fitted by the **Rat water fitter**; open square stands for the position fitted by the **MPW fitter**.

used for testing the analyses in this section and the next.

For the MC dataset, two types of background isotopes,  $^{208}\text{Tl}$  and  $^{214}\text{Bi}$  were simulated in different detector regions. In this study, the background events simulated in the inner AV (internal backgrounds) , in the AV and in the external water region were checked. The solar  $\nu_e$  events simulated in the inner AV were used as signals. Table. 6.3 summarizes the types of simulations used in this study.

**Table 6.3: Datasets of MC simulations.**

Simulations	Simulated positions in the detector
$^{208}\text{Tl}$	inner AV (internal $^{208}\text{Tl}$ )
–	AV
–	external water (external $^{208}\text{Tl}$ )
$^{214}\text{Bi}$	inner AV (internal $^{214}\text{Bi}$ )
–	AV
–	external water (external $^{214}\text{Bi}$ )
Solar $\nu_e$	inner AV (internal $\nu_e$ )
–	AV
–	external water (external $\nu_e$ )

Different types of the simulations were merged into a mixed dataset. The simulated solar  $\nu_e$  events are tagged as signals and mixed with  $^{214}\text{Bi}$  and  $^{208}\text{Tl}$  background events. The total dataset was divided into training and testing sets.

Fig. 6.3 shows the energy spectrum of simulated internal events with their fitted positions inside the 5.5-m fiducial volume, i.e., with a radial cut of  $R'_{fit} < 5.5$  m, where the  $R'_{fit}$  is the magnitude of the reconstructed event position  $\vec{X}_{fit}$  after the AV coordinate correction:  $R'_{fit} \equiv \sqrt{x_{fit}^2 + y_{fit}^2 + (z_{fit} - 108)^2}$ . The 108 mm offset in  $z$  was discussed in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4.

In the MC dataset, runs from run-200004 to 202516 were taken as the training set (about 67 live days and 72.4% of the half dataset), and the rest 27.6% were taken as testing set<sup>1</sup> . Once the weights of the variables were obtained by the TMVA training, the weights were applied to the actual data.

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<sup>1</sup>For a more unbiased analysis, a bootstrap method[172] that randomly separates the training and testing datasets can be used, but it is not applied here.

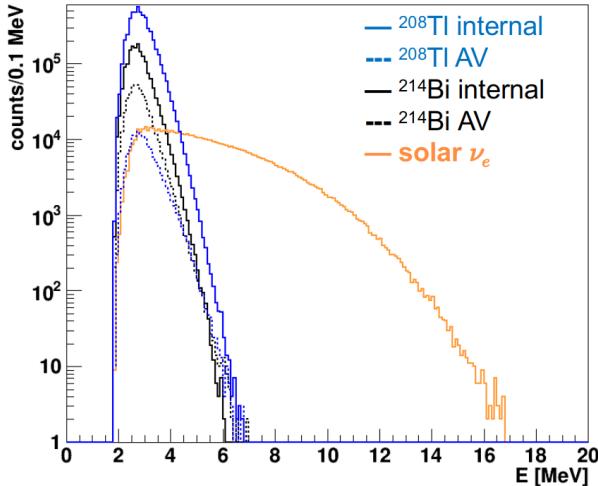


Figure 6.3: Energy spectrum of events from different simulations in the half dataset:  $^{214}\text{Bi}$  (black),  $^{208}\text{Tl}$  (blue) and solar  $\nu_e$  (orange). Solid lines show the internal events and dotted lines show the AV events.

Before the analysis, a few “beforehand cuts” were applied:  $\text{NHits} > 20$ ,  $R'_{fit} < 5500 \text{ mm}$ ,  $ITR > 0.55$ , and  $-0.12 < \beta_{14} < 0.95$ . Here  $\text{NHits} > 20$  is a reconstruction threshold set for the solar neutrino analysis, which means that only the events with  $\text{NHits} > 20$  were reconstructed by the **MPW fitter**; the default fiducial volume is 5500 mm; the  $ITR$  and  $\beta_{14}$  cuts were suggested by the collaboration, which were mostly based on the experiences for removing the instrumental backgrounds[156].

Two other ranges of  $E_{fit}$  were also tested:  $4 < E_{fit} < 5 \text{ MeV}$  (low energy region) and  $5 < E_{fit} < 15 \text{ MeV}$  ( $E > 5 \text{ MeV}$  region).

After applying these beforehand cuts, for the different energy regions, the ratios of the signal event numbers ( $N_{sig}$ ) to the background event numbers ( $N_{bkg}$ ) are listed in Table. 6.4. It shows that, in the low energy region  $4 < E_{fit} < 5 \text{ MeV}$ , the background events are dominant, while for the  $E_{fit} > 5 \text{ MeV}$ , the background events are significantly reduced.

Three classification methods implemented in the TMVA package were applied to the training and testing datasets: the Fisher discriminants/linear discriminant analysis (Fisher/LD), the Boosted Decision Tree (BDT), and the Artificial Neural Networks Multilayer Perceptron (ANN-MLP, or MLP in short)[171].

Table 6.4: Ratios of the signal event numbers to the background event numbers.

energy region (MeV)	$N_{sig}$	$N_{bkg}$	$N_{sig}/N_{bkg}$
$4 < E_{fit} < 15$	434830	166280	2.6
$5 < E_{fit} < 15$	317205	6359	49.9
$4 < E_{fit} < 5$	117625	159921	0.73

The Fisher discriminant  $y_{F_i}(i)$  for classifying event  $i$  is defined by [170]:

$$y_{F_i}(i) = F_0 + \sum_{k=1}^{n_{params}} F_k x_k(i), \quad (6.4)$$

where  $n_{params}$  is the number of input variables; the Fisher coefficients,  $F_k$  is given by:

$$F_k = \frac{\sqrt{N_S N_B}}{N_S + N_B} \sum_{l=1}^{n_{params}} 1/W_{kl}(\bar{x}_{S,l} - \bar{x}_{B,l}), \quad (6.5)$$

where  $N_{S(B)}$  are the number of signal (background) events in the training sample;  $\bar{x}_{S(B),l}$  are the means of input variables for signal (background);  $W_{kl}$  is the covariance matrix[170].

For the settings in the TMVA, the BDT method was set with: (1) using the adaptive boosting (AdaBoost) algorithm; (2) training 400 trees with a maximum depth of 3; and (3) using gini index for the decision tree.

The MLP method was set with: (1) using sigmoid function as the activate function; and (2) using neural networks with 4 hidden layers and 200 training cycles.

There are 9 variables used as the TMVA inputs:  $ITR$ ,  $\beta_{14}$ ,  $E_{fit}$ ,  $G_{test}$ ,  $U_{test}$ ,  $scaleLogL$ ,  $Z_{factor}$ ,  $\vec{u} \cdot \vec{R}'$  and  $klDiv$  (in the symmetrical form: Eqn. 6.2). Among them, the beforehand cuts had been applied to the  $ITR$  and  $\beta_{14}$ , and the  $E_{fit}$  had been selected for different regions, as mentioned previously. Here the NHits and  $\theta_{ij}$  were not used, since the NHits is correlated to the energy while the  $\theta_{ij}$  is anticorrelated to the  $\beta_{14}$ .

The distributions of these variables are shown in Fig. 6.4. The differences between the signal (black solid lines) and background (red dotted lines) distributions can be observed.

The MLP method gave the best results, while it was the most CPU-consuming method.

The output signal/background distributions on the test sub-dataset are shown in Fig. 6.5.

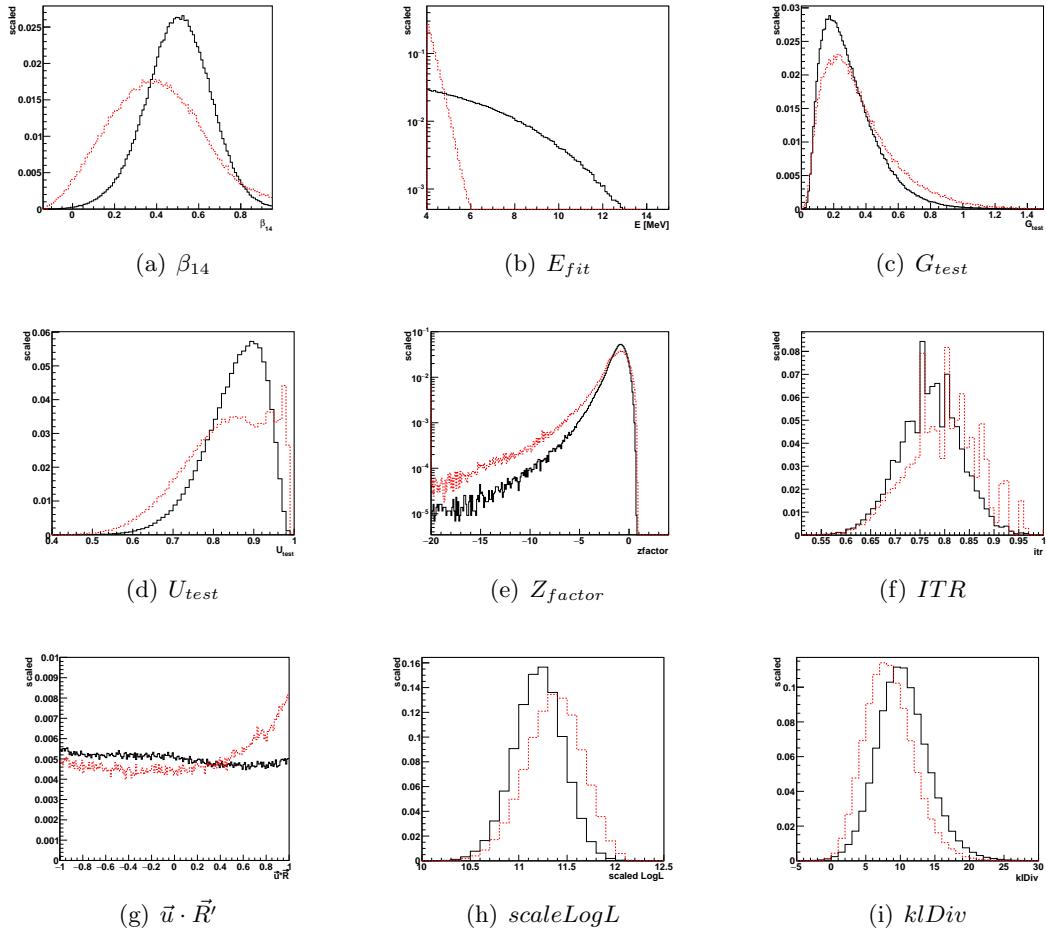


Figure 6.4: Multiple variables as the inputs for the TMVA analysis. The distributions of the backgrounds are shown in dotted red lines while the signals are shown in solid black lines. The distributions are normalized to their integrals.

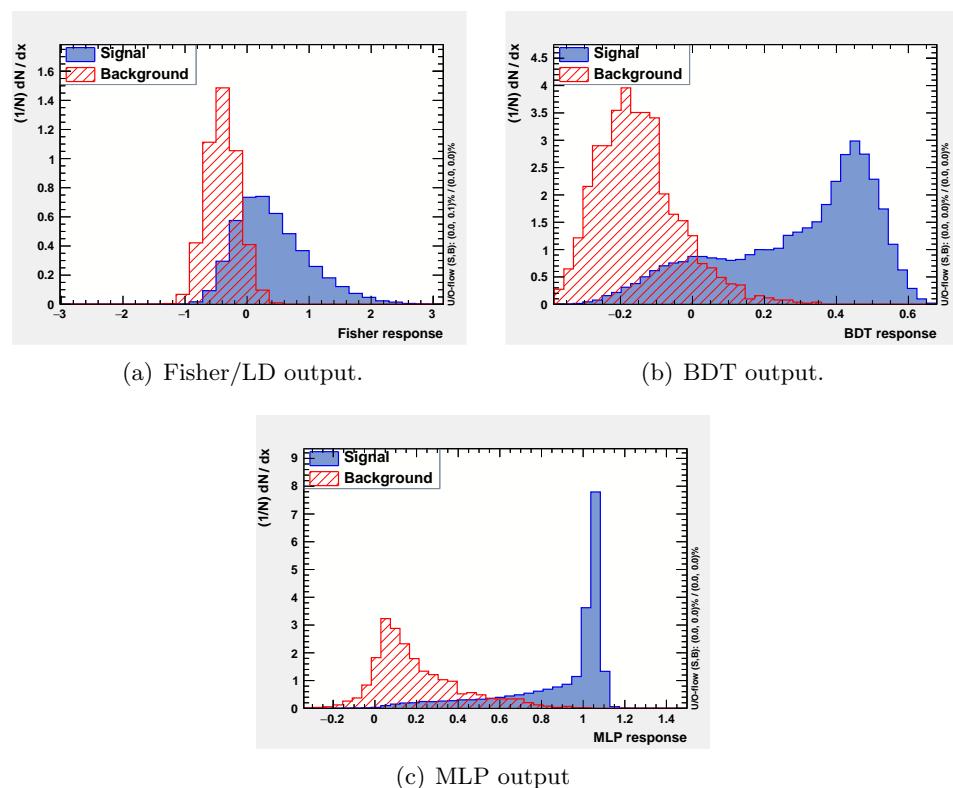


Figure 6.5: TMVA outputs for signal/background separations by different methods.

As one of the essential TMVA output, the background rejection versus signal efficiency curve is denoted as a receiver operating characteristic (ROC) curve, which is usually used to test the performance of machine learning classifier. A quantity taking the integrals of the ROC curve: called the “area under the curve” (AUC) is often used to summarize the quality of a ROC curve[172]. Fig. 6.6 shows the ROC curves for different methods: where

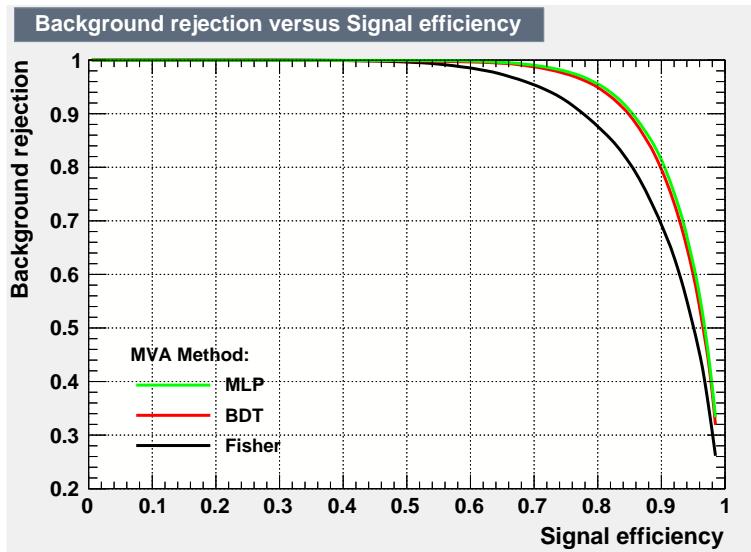


Figure 6.6: ROC curves from TMVA output, for event with  $4 < E_{fit} < 15$  MeV.

the Fisher/LD is the worst case; the BDT and MLP outputs are close to each other while the MLP gives the largest AUC values.

A typical CPU time ( $t_{CPU}$ ) for a certain method to train the dataset with different energy regions is listed in Table. 6.5.

It shows that, when the energy goes lower, it is more difficult to separate the signals from the backgrounds.

The distributions of the “solar angle”,  $\cos \theta_{sun}$  were used to show the performance of the solar  $\nu_e$  event selection and background event discrimination. It is also used to extract the number of signal and background events, which will be discussed in the following sections. Here I applied the BDT and the MLP method on the test sub-dataset. For the real dataset from run-200004 to 207718, the trained weights and variables from the BDT and the MLP methods were applied event by event and the discriminator responses,  $D_{BDT}$  and  $D_{MLP}$

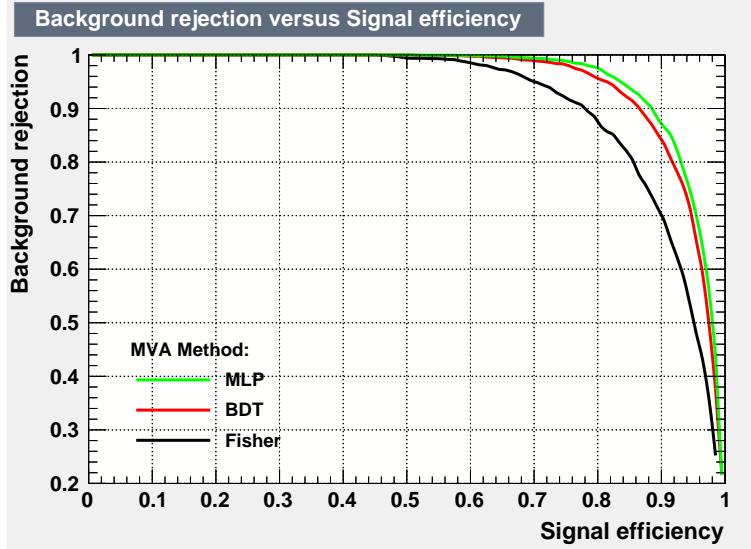


Figure 6.7: ROC curves from TMVA output, for event with  $5 < E_{fit} < 15$  MeV (energy above 5 MeV).

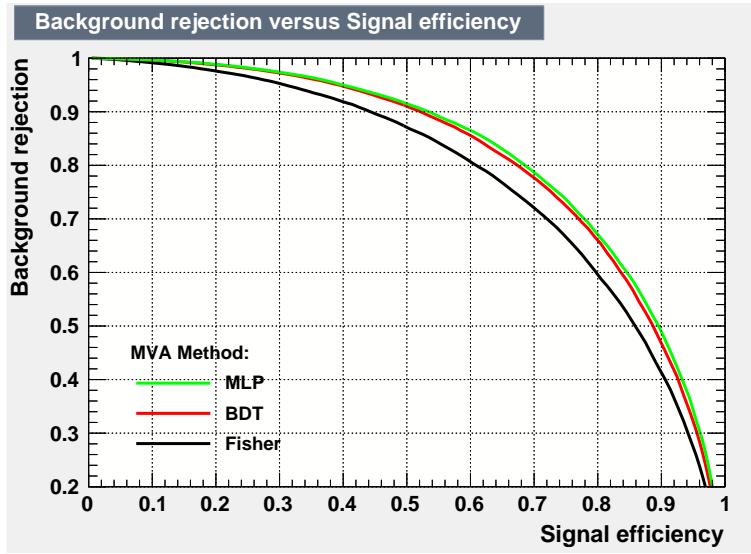


Figure 6.8: ROC curves from TMVA output, for event with  $4 < E_{fit} < 5$  MeV (low energy region).

were calculated respectively. Cuts of  $D_{BDT} > 0.0$  and  $D_{MLP} > 0.5$  were applied to extract the solar  $\nu_e$  signals from backgrounds.

Table 6.5: Testing results from different TMVA methods.

Method	AUC	$t_{CPU}$ (second/ $10^6$ events)
$4 < E_{fit} < 15$ MeV		
Fisher/LD	0.915	0.81
BDT	0.940	249.53
MLP	0.944	1370.02
$5 < E_{fit} < 15$ MeV		
Fisher/LD	0.915	0.93
BDT	0.950	269.71
MLP	0.958	1450.90
$4 < E_{fit} < 5$ MeV		
Fisher/LD	0.782	0.84
BDT	0.816	280.1
MLP	0.823	1337.9

### 6.3.2.1 TMVA Outputs for Data

Fig. 6.9 and Fig. 6.11 show the BDT selection outputs from the 190.33-day dataset. Fig. 6.10 and Fig. 6.12 show the MLP outputs.

Cuts on the position and energy FoMs suggested by the collaboration[173] are:  $-11 < Z_{factor} < 1$ ,  $scaleLogL > 10.85$ ,  $0 < G_{test} < 1.9$ ,  $U_{test} < 0.95$ ,  $ITR > 0.55$ ,  $-0.12 < \beta_{14} < 0.95$ <sup>2</sup>. Combined with the “beforehand cuts”, the whole set of cuts is considered as “default cuts” here and is compared with the TMVA outputs.

The main analysis of this thesis is focused on the [5,15] MeV energy region. A comparison of the outputs of  $5 < E_{fit} < 15$  MeV from the BDT, MLP and the default cuts is shown in Fig. 6.13.

### 6.3.3 Discussions on the TMVA Results

A more stringent radial cut (or tighter FV) can be applied on lower energy region  $4 < E_{fit} < 5$  MeV to further remove the background events which are dominant in lower energy region. However, this tighter cut can also reduce the signal events.

Other packages developed for high energy particle physics, such as `StatPatternRecognition`

<sup>2</sup>There is also a suggested cut on the quantity of  $position_{error}$  ( $position_{error} < 525$  mm). However, since this quantity was not calculated by the `MPW fitter`, it was not included here.

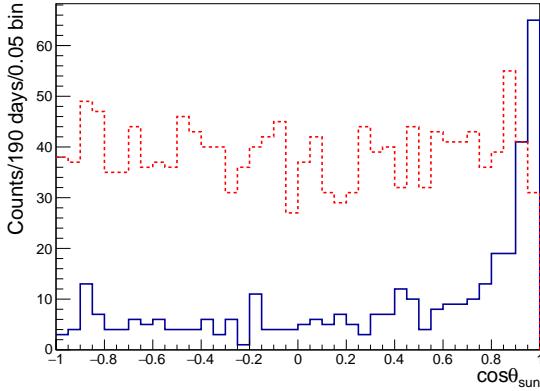


Figure 6.9: BDT output for  $\cos \theta_{\text{sun}}$ , with  $4 < E_{\text{fit}} < 15$  MeV. The solid blue line shows the selected candidate solar  $\nu_e$  events while the dotted red line shows the selected background events.

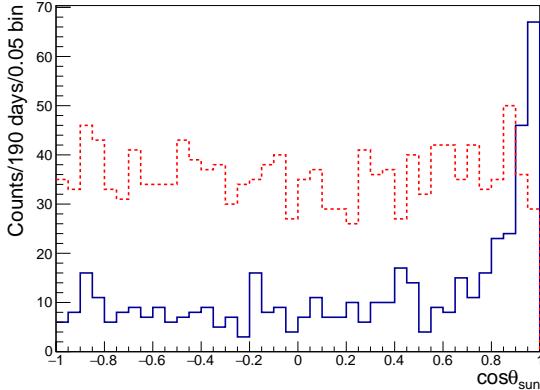


Figure 6.10: MLP output for  $\cos \theta_{\text{sun}}$ , with  $4 < E_{\text{fit}} < 15$  MeV. The solid blue line shows the selected candidate solar  $\nu_e$  events while the dotted red line shows the selected background events.

(SPR)[174], can also be considered as an alternative tool or as a reference for results comparisons.

### 6.3.4 Likelihood Fits for Solar Neutrino Candidate Events

In the previous section, the optimized cuts obtained from the TMVA analysis were applied on the dataset.

After the event selections, a distribution of  $\cos \theta_{\text{sun}}$  extracted from the solar  $\nu_e$  candidate

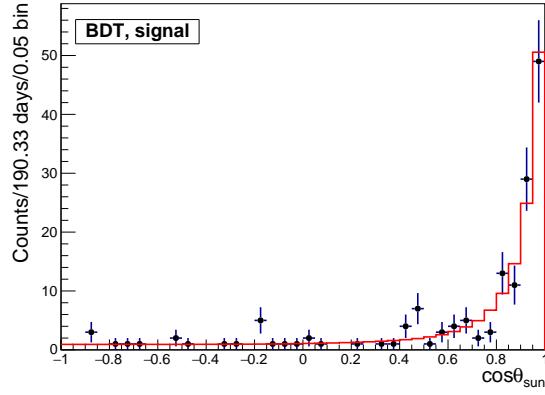


Figure 6.11: BDT output for  $\cos \theta_{\text{sun}}$ , with  $4 < E_{\text{fit}} < 15$  MeV. The solid blue line shows the selected candidate solar  $\nu_e$  events while the dotted red line shows the selected background events.

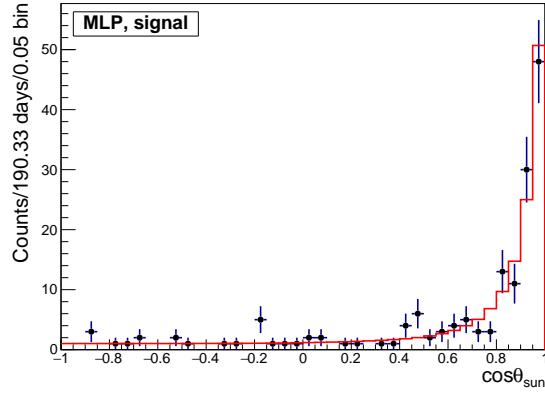


Figure 6.12: MLP output for  $\cos \theta_{\text{sun}}$ , with  $5 < E_{\text{fit}} < 15$  MeV. The solid blue line shows the selected candidate solar  $\nu_e$  events while the dotted red line shows the selected background events.

events was obtained.

#### 6.3.4.1 Maximum Likelihood Fit

A maximum likelihood method was applied on the distribution to extract the number of the solar  $\nu_e$  interaction events ( $N_{\text{sig}}$ ) as well as the number of the background events ( $N_{\text{bkg}}$ ).

The values of  $\cos \theta_{\text{sun}}$  from the selected events were filled into a histogram divided into bins. For each bin, the observed event number ( $n_{\text{obs}}$ ) was considered as a sum of

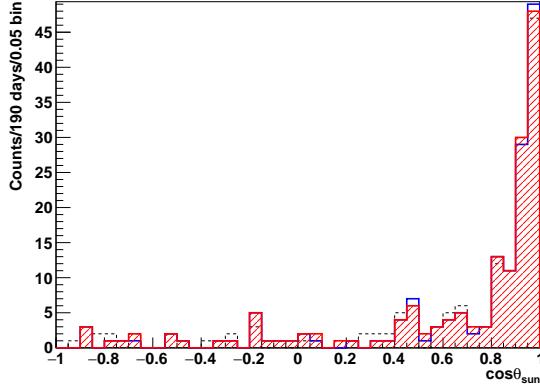


Figure 6.13: A comparison of the outputs of the BDT, MLP and the default cuts for the  $5 < E_{fit} < 15$  MeV. The solid blue line shows the BDT results; the red slashes show the MLP results and the dotted black line shows the default cut results.

solar  $\nu_e$  and background events. The  $n_{obs}$  in each bin was assumed to follow a Poisson distribution:  $Poisson(n_{obs}, N_{bkg} \cdot P_{bkg} + N_{sig} \cdot P_{ES}(E))$ , where  $P_{bkg}$  and  $P_{ES}(E)$  are the assumed distribution of backgrounds and solar  $\nu_e$  events respectively.

For the background events, a uniform distribution of  $\cos \theta_{sun}$  was assumed. On the other hand, the  $\cos \theta_{sun}$  distributions of solar  $\nu_e$  were extracted from the realistic run simulations after applying the optimized cuts, as shown in Fig. 6.14.

Adding up each bin  $i$  and taking  $N_{bkg}$  and  $N_{sig}$  as the free parameters for fitting, the maximum likelihood function was built as[24]:

$$-2 \ln \lambda(N_{sig}, N_{bkg}) = 2 \sum_{i=0}^{N_{bins}} [\mu_i(N_{sig}, N_{bkg}) - n_i + n_i \ln \frac{n_i}{\mu_i(N_{sig}, N_{bkg})}], \quad (6.6)$$

where  $\mu_i(N_{sig}, N_{bkg})$  is the expected number of events in each bin:  $\mu_i(N_{sig}, N_{bkg}) = N_{sig} \cdot P_{ES}^i(E^i) + N_{bkg} \cdot 1/N_{bins}$ ;  $N_{bins}$  is the total number of the bins, usually taken as 40 (per 0.05 bins). This quantity also includes the cases when the bin contains zero ( $n_i = 0$ ).

Fitting the data with  $(N_{bkg}, N_{sig})$  by maximizing the quantity 6.6,  $N_{bkg}$  and  $N_{sig}$  were obtained. In the next section, an ensemble test based on fake datasets was used for testing the fit results.

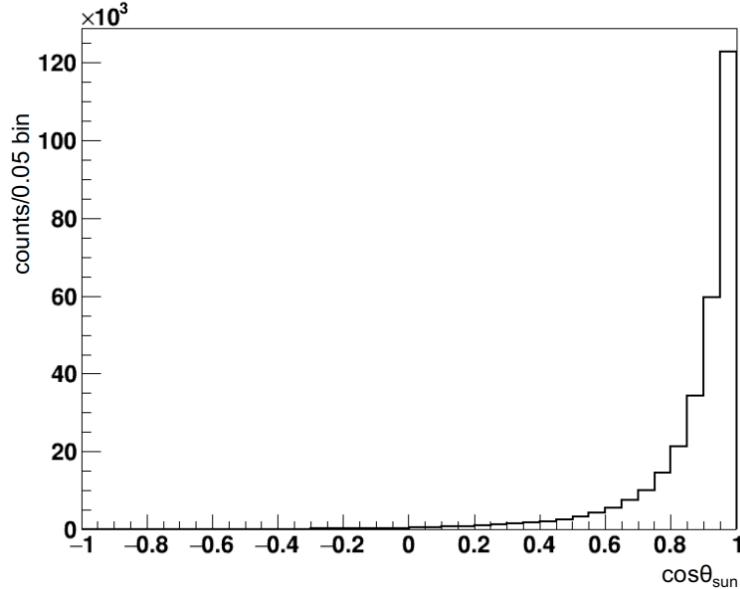


Figure 6.14: The  $\cos \theta_{\text{sun}}$  distribution of solar  $\nu_e$  extracted from the simulations, which was used as a *PDF* function.

#### 6.3.4.2 Ensemble Test

To check the uncertainty of the Poisson fit, 5000 fake datasets were generated. Here I used the method similar to the Ref. [169]. The fake data were taken from the run-by-run MC simulations of the run-200004 to 203602, which has 92.54 live days. The default cuts mentioned in the last section were applied on these simulations.

The number of backgrounds in a fake dataset,  $N_{\text{bkg}}^f$ , was assumed to be two times of the event number in the  $-1 < \cos \theta_{\text{sun}} < 0$  region while the number of signals  $N_{\text{sig}}^f = N_{\text{total}}^f - N_{\text{bkg}}^f$ . Reading from the sub-dataset of run-200004 to 203602, it found  $N_{\text{bkg}}^f = 38$  and then  $N_{\text{sig}}^f = 109 - N_{\text{bkg}}^f = 71$ , as shown in Fig. 6.15. To do the ensemble test, for each fake dataset, two random numbers:  $N_{\text{sig}}^r$  and  $N_{\text{bkg}}^r$  were generated by the `ROOT TRandom3` random number generator class. Each of the two random numbers followed the random Poisson distribution:  $e^{-\mu} \mu^{N^r} / N^r!$ , where  $\mu = 71$  or  $38$ , and thus they fluctuated around  $N_{\text{sig}}^f$  or  $N_{\text{bkg}}^f$ .

To create the fake datasets,  $N_{\text{sig}}^r$  ( $N_{\text{bkg}}^r$ ) events after the cuts were randomly and uniformly selected from the solar  $\nu_e$  (merged backgrounds) MC simulations. For each randomly

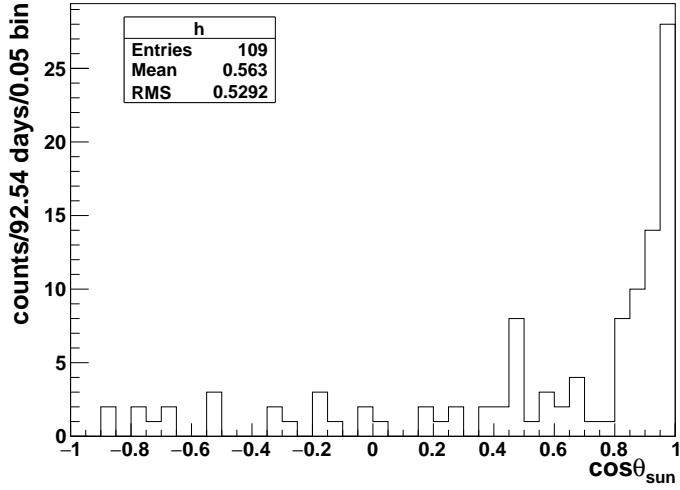


Figure 6.15: Real data from run-200004 to 203602 (half dataset), after the default cuts. The number of counts in  $-1 < \cos \theta_{\text{sun}} < 0$  region is 19.

selected event, the values of  $E_{\text{fit}}$  and  $\cos \theta_{\text{sun}}$  were recorded. Each dataset was fitted with the maximum likelihood function described in Sect. 6.3.4.1. Fig. 6.16 shows an example of the fit results.

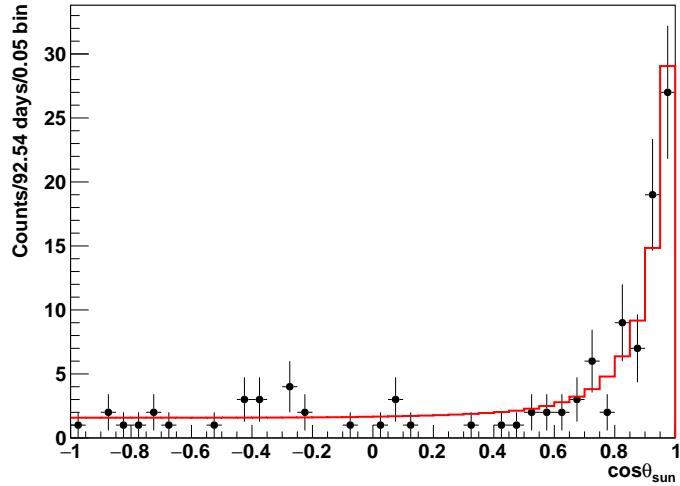


Figure 6.16: An example of the randomly generated  $\cos \theta_{\text{sun}}$  fitted with  $(N_{\text{sig}}, N_{\text{bkg}})$ . The black dots are data points and the red line shows the fit. For  $N_{\text{sig}}^r = 73$  and  $N_{\text{bkg}}^r = 44$ , the fit results are  $N_{\text{sig}} = 73.42 \pm 9.42$  and  $N_{\text{bkg}} = 43.58 \pm 7.73$ , with a  $\chi^2/\text{ndf} = 60.19/40 = 1.50$ .

The fit pull and the fit bias were defined by [169]:

$$bias = \frac{N_{sig} - N_{sig}^r}{N_{sig}}, \quad (6.7)$$

$$pull = \frac{N_{sig} - N_{sig}^r}{\sigma_{sig}}, \quad (6.8)$$

where  $N_{sig}$  is the fitted number of signal events,  $\sigma_{sig}$  is the statistical uncertainty of  $N_{sig}$ ;  $N_{sig}^r$  is used as the true number of signal events in the fake dataset.

Fig. 6.18 and Fig. 6.17 show the fit pull and biases respectively. The histograms were fitted with Gaussians. For the fitted number of signal events, the Gaussian mean of the fit biases is  $-0.0044 \pm 0.0008$  for 5000 fake datasets while the Gaussian mean of the fit pulls is  $-0.026 \pm 0.006$ . These pulls and biases will be applied on the data. Fig. 6.19 shows the distributions of the  $-2 \ln L$  returned by the best fit result ( $-2 \ln L_{best}$ ) for each fake dataset. The distribution,  $f(-2 \ln L_{best})$ , follows the asymptotic  $\chi^2$  PDF with a degree of 40 and is used to compute the  $p$ -values[24]. For a best-fit set  $(N_{sig}^i, N_{bkg}^i)$  with a value of  $-2 \ln L_{best}^i$ , the  $p$ -value is calculated as  $p = \int_{-2 \ln L_{best}^i}^{-2 \ln L_{best}^{max}} f(-2 \ln L_{best}) d(-2 \ln L_{best})$ .

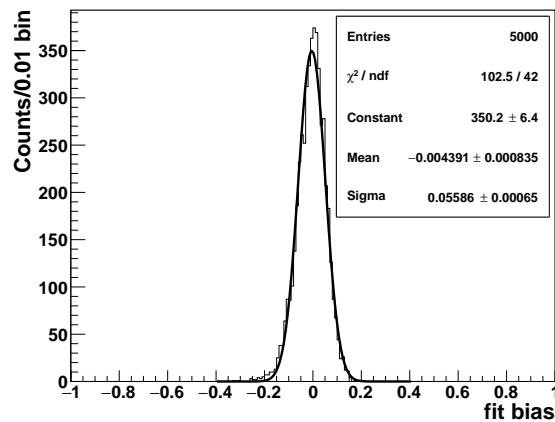


Figure 6.17:  $N_{sig}$  fit biases for 5000 fake datasets.

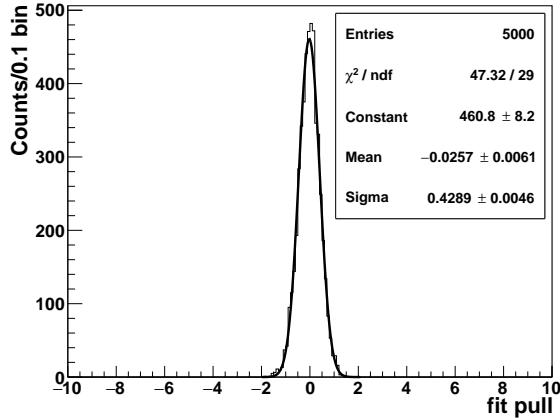


Figure 6.18:  $N_{sig}$  fit pulls for 5000 fake datasets.

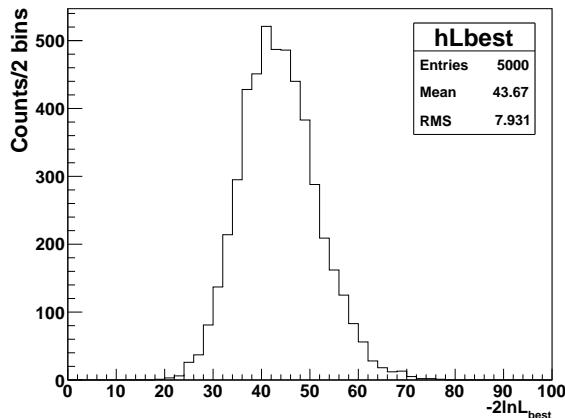


Figure 6.19: The  $-2 \ln L$  distribution of the best fit results from the 5000 fake datasets.

#### 6.3.4.3 Fitting on the Whole Dataset (run-200004 to 207718)

The whole dataset started from run-200004 (on 24 Oct, 2018) to run-207718 (on 10 July, 2019). This dataset has a live time of 190.33 days. The TMAV method was applied to the whole MC datasets of the solar  $\nu_e$  simulations as well as the background simulations<sup>3</sup>. The trained BDT and MLP weights were applied to this whole dataset.

In the region of  $5 < E_{fit} < 15$  MeV, the outputs from the BDT and MLP were fitted to obtain the  $N_{sig}$  and  $N_{bkg}$ . Fig. 6.20 and Fig. 6.21 show their results respectively. The fit

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<sup>3</sup>the solar  $\nu_m u$  was also trained with the background simulations to calculate the solar neutrino flux mentioned in next section

results are also summarized in Table. 6.6.

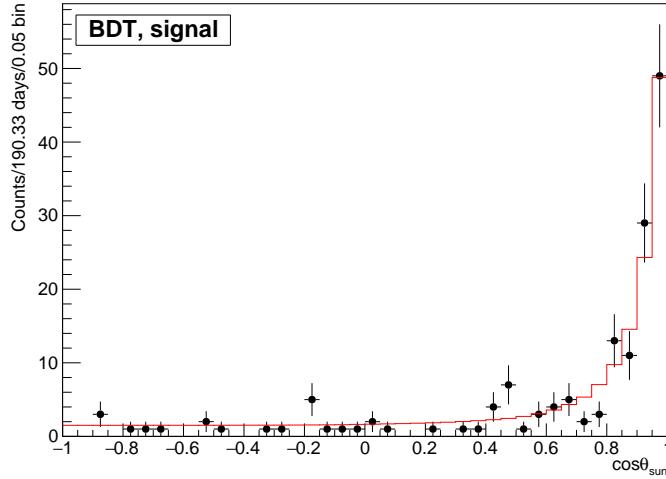


Figure 6.20: Fit results for the  $5 < E_{fit} < 15$  MeV, from BDT outputs.

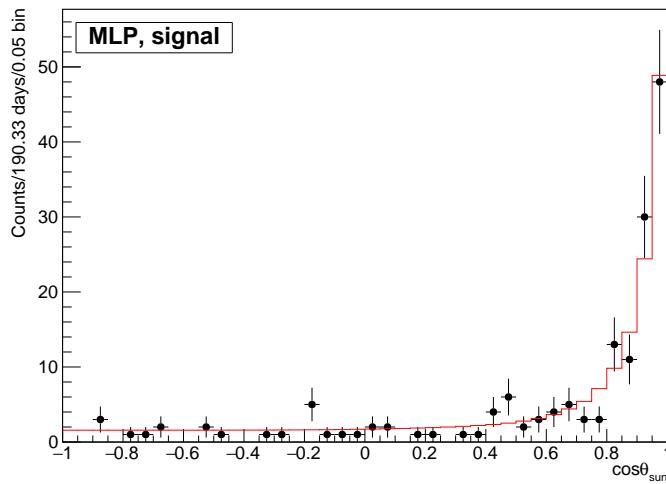


Figure 6.21: Fit results for the  $5 < E_{fit} < 15$  MeV, from MLP outputs.

It can be concluded here that the BDT results are consistent with the MLP results. The estimated background rate in the [5,15] MeV energy region is about  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the signal rate, which indicates that a low background measurement is achieved for the solar neutrino analysis with the energy down to 5 MeV. For the sake of simplicity, since the output from

Table 6.6: Fit results for the whole dataset ( $5 < E < 15$  MeV).

Methods	$N_{sig}$	$N_{bkg}$	$R_{sig}$	$R_{bkg}$	$p - value$
BDT	$119.57 \pm 11.88$	$38.42 \pm 7.75$	$0.90 \pm 0.09$	$0.29 \pm 0.06$	0.14
MLP	$118.77 \pm 11.84$	$40.22 \pm 7.85$	$0.90 \pm 0.09$	$0.30 \pm 0.06$	0.18

the BDT selection gives a better  $p - value$ , the following analysis will just use the BDT output.

#### 6.3.4.4 Evaluating $^8\text{B}$ Solar Neutrino Flux

A software called **PSelmaa** (Physics interpretation Sun-Earth Large Mixing Angle Adiabatic Approximation) was implemented in **RAT**[175]. The software uses the BS05(OP) SSM model. It assumes the normal mass hierarchy. It also applies the MSW effects from the Sun (see Chapter 2) but neglects the MSW effects from the Earth (i.e., the regeneration of coherence in the Earth). Fig. 6.22 shows the survival probability curve as a function of energies (in 0.1 MeV intervals) taken from the **PSelmaa**.

Since SNO+ can not discriminate  $\nu_\mu$  and  $\nu_\tau$ , only the  $\nu_\mu$  MC is included in the  $P_{e\alpha}$ .

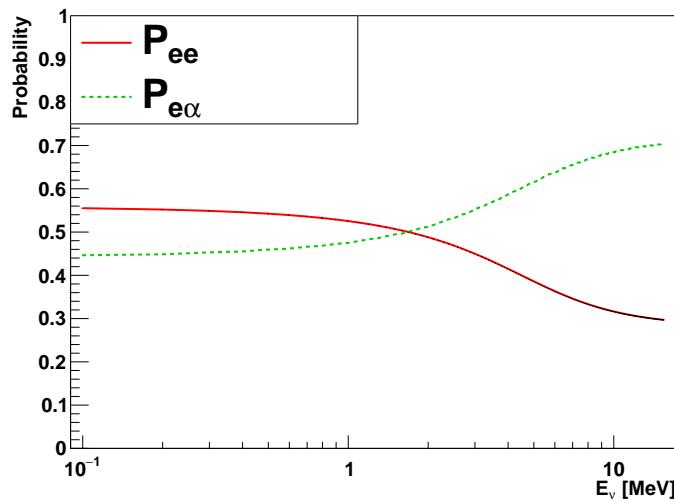


Figure 6.22: The MSW survival probability curves as functions of MC energies. The  $P_{ee}$  is in solid red line and  $P_{e\alpha}(= 1 - P_{ee})$  is in green dashed line.

To gain more statistics of the MC simulations, the number of the simulated  $\nu_e$

events is 1700 times the nominal ( $flux\ scale = \frac{1}{1700}$ ); while the number of the solar  $\nu_\mu$  events is 9600 times the nominal ( $flux\ scale = \frac{1}{9600}$ ). Since it is impossible for the SNO+ detector to discriminate between  $\nu_\mu$  and  $\nu_\tau$  via detecting the elastic scattering events,  $\nu_\tau$  is not generated separately[166]. Therefore, the generated solar  $\nu_\mu$  events are considered as a combination of  $\nu_\mu$  and  $\nu_\tau$  ( $\nu_\mu \approx \nu_{\mu,\tau}$ ) in the solar neutrino flux. In addition, due to the data cleaning procedure, the actual live time of the data is slightly shorter than the raw live time used by the MC simulations. To compare the MC with the data, a live time fraction was applied to the MC:  $f_{live\ time} = \frac{t_{data\ live\ time}}{t_{MC\ run\ time}} = \frac{190.33\ days}{198.17\ days} = 0.96$ . Also, assuming a sacrifice of 1.7% from the data cleaning cuts on the data, a scale factor of  $f_{dataClean} = (1 - \frac{1.7}{100})$  was applied to the MC simulations.

Therefore, the numbers of the MC generated  $\nu_e$  and  $\nu_\mu$  events are scaled by the  $t_{frac}$  and  $flux\ scale$ , and then weighted by the oscillation probability  $P_{ee}$  and  $P_{e\alpha} = 1 - P_{ee}$ . Applying these weighting parameters as well as the BDT cuts to the MC histograms, the MC  $\cos\theta_{sun}$  distributions in the energy region  $5 < E_{fit} < 15$  MeV with and without oscillations are shown in Fig. 6.23.

Reading from the above histograms, the expected event number for  $\nu_e$  without the oscillation is  $N_{\nu_e} = 322.69$  while including the oscillations, the expected event number for  $\nu_e$  and  $\nu_\mu$  are  $N_{\nu_e}^{osci} = 113.58$  and  $N_{\nu_\mu}^{osci} = 32.64$  respectively, and the combined event number is  $N_{\nu_e+\nu_\mu}^{osci} = 146.22$ .

To fit for the total  $^8\text{B}$  neutrino flux, the fit parameter used here is the flux scale  $f_s^{tot}$ , which is interpreted as the fraction of the observed  $^8\text{B}$  flux to the expected flux. Using the same method in Sect. 6.3.4.1, and in the Eqn. 6.6, replacing the  $N_{sig}$  with  $N_{sig} = f_s^{tot} \cdot N_{\nu_e+\nu_\mu}^{osci}$  (where the estimated  $N_{\nu_e+\nu_\mu}^{osci} = 141.57$ ), and then fitting the  $f_s^{tot}$  and the  $N_{bkg}$  with the  $pdf(\nu_e + \nu_\mu, oscillated)$ . The fit results are  $f_s^{tot} = 0.8462 \pm 0.08398$  (corresponding to  $N_{sig} = 119.8 \pm 11.89$  events) and  $N_{bkg} = 38.20 \pm 7.731$  events, with a p-value of 0.1470. Fig. 6.24 show the fit spectrum.

To fit for the  $^8\text{B}$  flux corresponding to an observed flux of ES interactions, the same procedure was used, while the fit parameter was changed to  $N_{sig} = f_s \cdot N_{\nu_e} (= 314.68)$  and

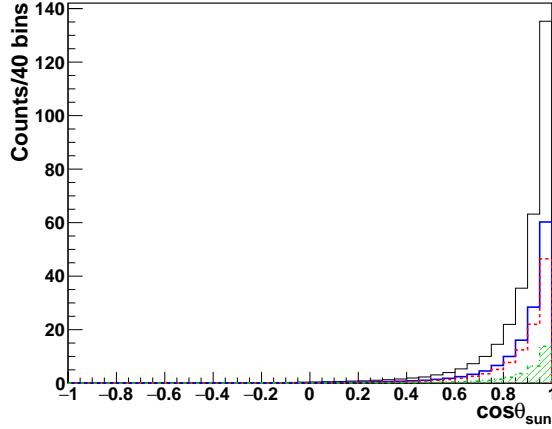


Figure 6.23: The MC  $\cos \theta_{\text{sun}}$  distributions used as *PDFs* for the flux calculations, for  $5 < E_{\text{fit}} < 15$  MeV after the TMVA BDT selections. The histogram in think black line is the  $\nu_e$  flux without oscillation, denoted as  $PDF(\nu_e, \text{without oscillation})$ . This histogram is used for fitting the elastic scattering flux. The histogram in dashed red line is the  $\nu_e$  flux and the green shaded histogram is the  $\nu_\mu$  flux, both including the oscillation. These two histograms were combined to form the total flux including the oscillation, which is in blue line and is denoted by  $PDF(\nu_e + \nu_\mu, \text{oscillated})$ . This histogram is used for fitting the total flux.

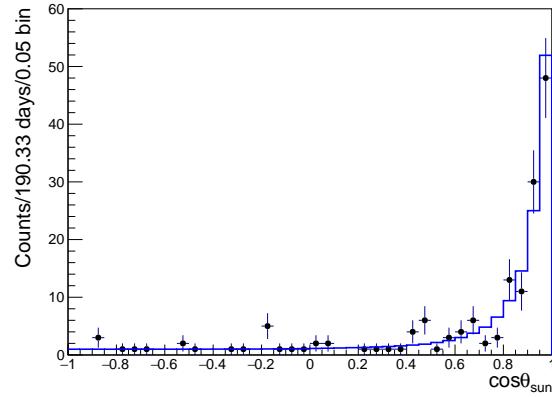


Figure 6.24: A fit on the total  ${}^8\text{B}$  flux. The black dots are the data points and the blue histogram is the fitted total flux.

the *PDF* was changed to  $PDF(\nu_e, \text{without oscillation})$ . As shown in Fig. 6.25, the fit results are  $f_s^{ES} = 0.3798 \pm 0.03772$  (corresponding to  $N_{\text{sig}} = 119.5 \pm 11.62$  events) and  $N_{\text{bkg}} = 38.48 \pm 7.751$  events, with a p-value = 0.140.

The  $N_{\text{sig}}$  and  $N_{\text{bkg}}$  results obtained by fitting flux fractions are consistent with

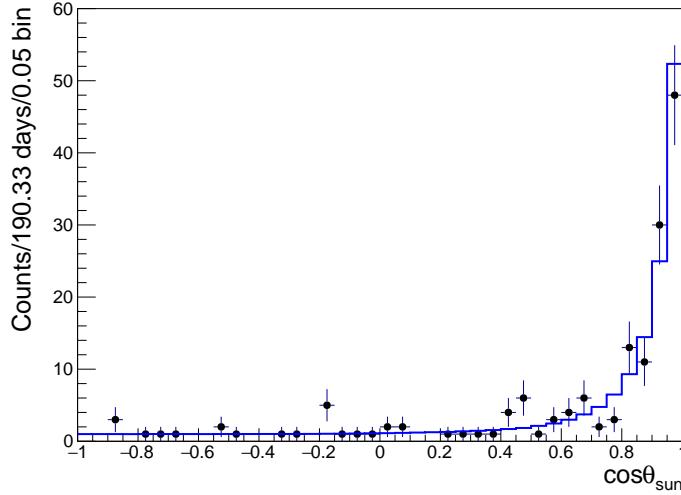


Figure 6.25: Fitting with the spectrum of elastic scattering. The black dots are the data points and the blue histogram is the fitted ES flux.

The  $N_{sig}$  and  $N_{bkg}$  values obtained here by fitting the flux fractions are consistent with the values obtained in Sect. 6.3.4.3.

Thus, with the nominal  ${}^8\text{B}$  solar neutrino flux  $\Phi_{MC}^{total} = 5.46 \times 10^6 \text{ cm}^{-2}\text{s}^{-1}$ , the estimated total flux is:

$$\Phi^{total}({}^8\text{B}) = f_s^{tot} \cdot \Phi_{MC}^{total} = (4.62 \pm 0.459(\text{stats.})) \times 10^6 \text{ cm}^{-2}\text{s}^{-1}, \quad (6.9)$$

and the estimated elastic scattering flux is:

$$\Phi^{ES} = f_s^{ES} \cdot \Phi_{MC}^{total} = (2.074 \pm 0.2061(\text{stat.})) \times 10^6 \text{ cm}^{-2}\text{s}^{-1}. \quad (6.10)$$

The next section will evaluate the systematic uncertainties of the flux fractions.

#### 6.3.4.5 Systematics Evaluation

In Chapter 5, the reconstruction systematics of the event position, direction and energy were obtained. The quantities of position scale, position shifts, direction resolution,  $\beta_{14}$  shifts, energy scale ( $E_{scale}$ ) and energy resolution ( $E_{resol}$ ) were used to evaluate the systematic uncertainties of the solar neutrino analysis. Table. 6.7 summarizes these systematics

and their applications to transform the reconstructed results. In this thesis, only the systematics mentioned below were taken into account, and these systematics are considered uncorrelated.

Table 6.7: Systematics for the solar  $\nu_e$  analysis in the water phase.

Systematics	values (positive/negative)	transformation
x shift ( $\Delta x$ )	+6.48/-5.98 mm	$x_{fit} \pm \Delta x$
y shift ( $\Delta y$ )	+6.13/-4.11 mm	$y_{fit} \pm \Delta y$
z shift ( $\Delta z$ )	+6.71/-4.82 mm	$z_{fit} \pm \Delta z$
x scale ( $\Delta s_x$ )	+0.07%/-0.06%	$(1 \pm \Delta s_x)x_{fit}$
y scale ( $\Delta s_y$ )	+0.02%/-0.07%	$(1 \pm \Delta s_y)y_{fit}$
z scale ( $\Delta s_z$ )	+0.08%/-0.01%	$(1 \pm \Delta s_z)z_{fit}$
direction $\delta_\theta$	+0.013/-0.101	$1 + \frac{\cos \theta_{sun} - 1}{1 \pm \delta_\theta}$
$E_{scale}$ ( $\Delta_{\delta_E}$ )	1.0%	$(1 \pm \Delta_{\delta_E})E_{fit}$
$E_{resol}$ ( $\Delta_b$ )	$0.037 \sqrt{\text{MeV}}$	$E_{fit} + Gaus(0, \sigma_{smear}),$ $\sigma_{smear} = \sqrt{E_{fit}} \sqrt{(1 + \Delta_b)^2 - 1}$
$\beta_{14}$ shift ( $\Delta \beta_{14}$ )	+0.010/-0.036	$\beta_{14} \pm \Delta \beta_{14}$

Note that the position shifts were applied to the  $x_{fit}$ ,  $y_{fit}$ , and  $z_{fit}$  respectively, while the position scales were applied simultaneously to the position vector:

$$\vec{X}'_{fit} = ((1 \pm \Delta s_x)x_{fit}, (1 \pm \Delta s_y)y_{fit}, (1 \pm \Delta s_z)z_{fit}).$$

For the  $\delta_\theta$ , since there is no physics meanings for the case when  $\cos \theta_{sun} > 1$  or  $< -1$ , if the transformation causes  $\cos \theta_{sun} > 1$ , the smeared value is reset to 0.999; on the other hand, the  $\cos \theta_{sun} < -1$  case happens more frequent and it is considered as mis-reconstruction. In this case, a random value is chosen by uniformly sampling in the [-1,1]. This procedure follows Ref. [156].

To evaluate the systematics of the solar neutrino analysis, the systematic transformations in Table. 6.7 were applied to the reconstructed quantities in MC simulations independently. The reconstructed quantities after the transformations are called “smeared” values. The smeared values of an event can affect whether the event will pass the cuts: the smeared positions of an event affect whether the event can pass the fiducial volume cut and then affect the results after the position cuts; the smeared energies affect the results after the energy cuts and the smeared  $\beta_{14}$  affect the results after the  $\beta_{14}$  cuts. Thus, for the solar  $\nu_e$

and  $\nu_\mu$  simulations, the shape of the  $\cos \theta_{\text{sun}}$  distribution used as the *PDF* will be changed by the smeared values. In addition, the  $\delta_\theta$  transformation changes the *PDF* shape directly. Finally, the spectrum of the data was re-fit with the smeared *PDFs* to obtain the smeared physics quantity (specifically, the flux ratio  $f_s$  mentioned in the previous section), and the differences between the original value and the smeared value are used as the systematics of the physics quantity.

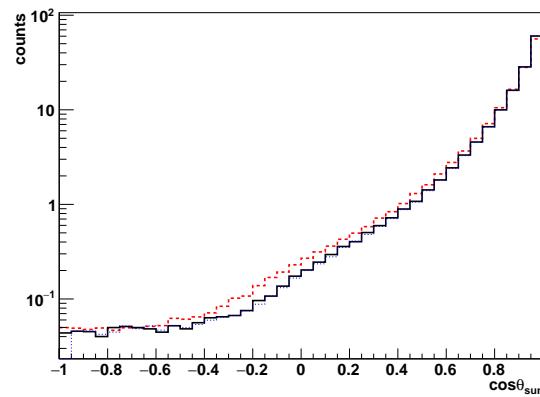
To obtain the smeared *PDFs*, first, the “beforehand cut” mentioned before was loosen by removing the cuts on  $\beta_{14}$  and  $R'_{fit}$  (fiducial volume), and only the cuts  $\text{NHit} > 20$  (reconstruction threshold) and  $ITR > 0.55$  (determined from the instrumental noises and its systematic uncertainty was not considered) were applied to the MC simulations of the solar  $\nu_e$  and  $\nu_\mu$ . Then the systematic transformations were applied one by one and event by event. The positive (“smearing up”) and negative (“smearing down”) values were also applied, respectively. After the transformation, the whole “beforehand cut” was applied. At last, the TMVA BDT selection was applied. For a specific smeared quantity, the final output of the MC  $\cos \theta_{\text{sun}}$  spectrum was used as the smeared *PDF* for that quantity. For example, if the  $E_{fit}$  is smeared by scaling up:  $E'_{fit} = (1 + \Delta_{\delta_E})E_{fit}$ , then the outputs of the  $\cos \theta_{\text{sun}}$  after the “beforehand cut” and TMVA BDT selection is used as the “energy scale-up *PDF*”.

Fig. 6.26 shows the effects of smearing the energy resolution and direction on the MC *PDF*. The original MC *PDF* is shown as black solid line histograms, overlaid by the smeared histograms.

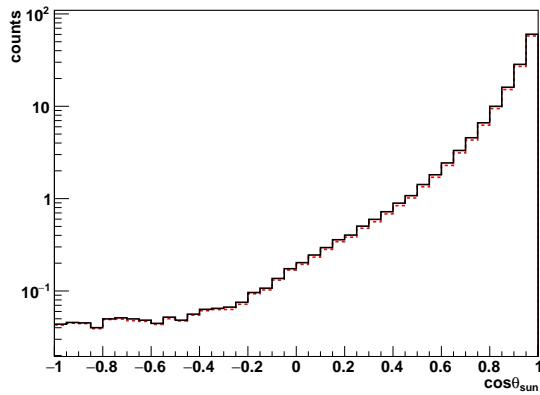
Applying the systematic transformation in Table. 6.7 to the MC ES *PDF*, and then refit the data with the smeared *PDFs* one by one, the smeared values of the flux ratio ( $f'_s$ ) were found. The systematics of the  $f_s$  are calculated by  $\Delta f_s = f'_s - f_s$ . These results are listed in Table. 6.8.

It finds that the systematic uncertainties from the smeared position and  $\beta_{14}$  are negligible, while the direction and energy smearing give more significant uncertainties.

Using the quadrature sum ( $\sigma_{\text{tot}}^2 = \sum_i \sigma_i^2$ ) which assumes that all the systematic variables



(a) Smearing direction parameter  $\delta_\theta$ . The histogram with black solid line is the original. The blue dotted histogram is for smearing down and the red dashed is for smearing up.



(b) Smearing energy resolution. Red dashed line for smearing down the  $E_{\text{resol}}$ .

Figure 6.26: Smearing effects on the  $\cos \theta_{\text{sun}}$ .

Table 6.8: Systematics for the fitted flux scale  $f_s$ .

Systematics	$\Delta f_s (+/-)$
x shift	+0.001891 / -0.001962
y shift	+0.001888 / -0.001955
z shift	+0.002071 / -0.001818
position scale	+0.000583 / -0.00306
$\delta_\theta$	+0.01676 / -0.004034
$E_{scale} (\Delta_{\delta_E})$	+0.01456 / -0.01752
$E_{resol} (\Delta_b)$	+0.003363 / -0.003363
$\beta_{14}$ shifts	+0.003968 / -0.003285

are independent, the total systematic uncertainty of the total flux fraction  $f_s^{tot}$  is expected to be:  $f_s^{tot+0.02306}_{-0.01912}$ .

By using the same procedure to evaluate the systematics of the elastic scattering flux fraction ( $f_s^{ES}$ ), it gives  $f_s^{ES+0.009655}_{-0.008305}$ .

#### 6.3.4.6 A Summary of the Results

With the systematic uncertainties of the flux fractions obtained from the previous section, the total flux is:

$$\Phi_{fit}^{total}(^8\text{B}) = f_s \cdot \Phi_{MC}^{total} = (4.48 \pm 0.44(stat.)^{+0.13}_{-0.10}(syst.)) \times 10^6 \text{ cm}^{-2}\text{s}^{-1}. \quad (6.11)$$

And the ES flux is:

$$\Phi_{ES} = f_s \cdot \Phi_{MC}^{total} = (2.07 \pm 0.206(stat.)^{+0.0527}_{-0.0454}(syst.)) \times 10^6 \text{ cm}^{-2}\text{s}^{-1}. \quad (6.12)$$

2.07383 +/- 0.206117

Fig. 6.27 shows a comparison of the  $\Phi_{ES}$  results given here to the recent measurements from the other experiments, including the SNO+ 2018 published water phase data[1], Super-K[2], and Borexino[47] measurements.

To combine these measurements, the unconstrained average value  $\hat{\theta}$  and uncertainty  $\sigma_{\hat{\theta}}$  from independent experiments are calculated by[24, 176]:

$$\hat{\theta} = \sum_{i=1}^N \left( \frac{x_i}{\sigma_i^2} \right) \Bigg/ \sum_{i=1}^N \left( \frac{1}{\sigma_i^2} \right), \quad (6.13)$$

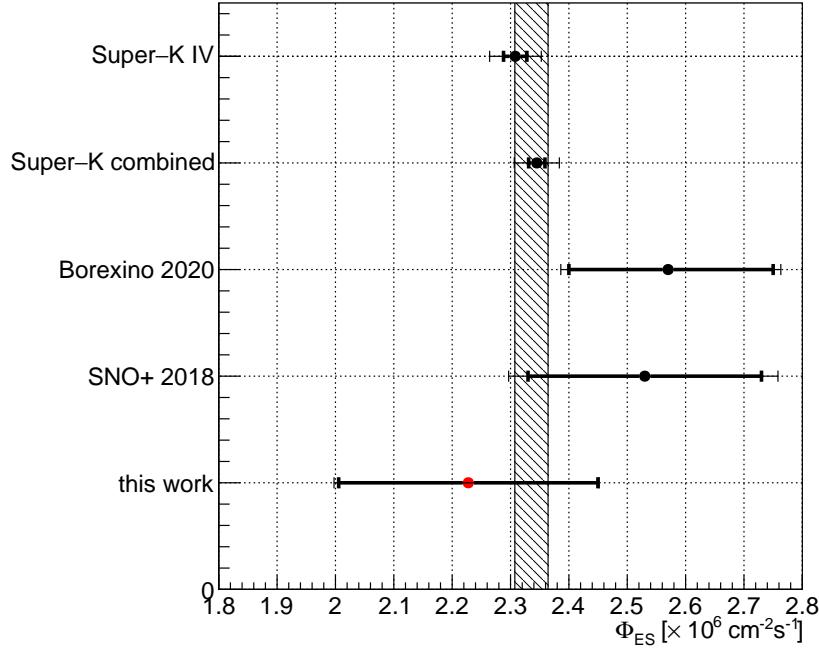


Figure 6.27: A comparison of the ES fluxes measured recently by three independent experiments (after BDT selection). The thick error bars include the statistical errors and the thin ones are quadratic errors including both the statistical and systematical errors. The shaded area is for the unconstrained average value and uncertainty:  $\hat{\theta} \pm \sigma_{\hat{\theta}}$ .

$$\sigma_{\hat{\theta}} = \sqrt{\sum_{i=1}^N \left( \frac{1}{\sigma_i^2} \right)}, \quad (6.14)$$

where  $x_i$  is the measured  $\Phi_{ES}$  value from each experiment, and the quadratic error  $\sigma_i$  is calculated by using the larger uncertainties from each experiment:  $\sigma_{tot}^i = \sqrt{\sigma_{stat,larger}^2 + \sigma_{sys,larger}^2}$ .

If not including the value from this work, the average result is  $(2.338 \pm 0.02868) \times 10^6 \text{ cm}^{-2}\text{s}^{-1}$ . After including this work, the average result is  $(2.333 \pm 0.02843) \times 10^6 \text{ cm}^{-2}\text{s}^{-1}$ . The region of  $\hat{\theta} \pm \sigma_{\hat{\theta},tot}$  is plotted as the shaded area in Fig. 6.27.

#### 6.3.4.7 Limitations of this Study

Here I used the background simulations described in the Table. 6.3, which were not complete. There were a few other backgrounds, such as the backgrounds from the AV ropes, the PMTs

and the cosmic muon induced isotopes. A more comprehensive study requires to include all possible backgrounds.

For the background events, I assumed a flat distribution of  $\cos \theta_{sun}$ . A more realistic shape of the distribution can be investigated to describe the backgrounds more properly.

For the whole period of data, I used the same cuts to remove the backgrounds, while the background level can vary over time and thus it may require different cuts for different time periods. A more detailed analysis including the changes of backgrounds over time can make the results more accurate.

Since the dataset used here has a very low background level, it is also possible to probe the energy region down to 3.5 MeV and then enable the study of the solar neutrinos in a lower energy region. This part is not included in the thesis while it is worthwhile to be investigated, especially to check the TMVA method for reducing the backgrounds in the lower energy region.

# Chapter 7

## Conclusions

In this thesis, a reconstruction algorithm framework was developed for multiple SNO+ physics phases. For the SNO+ detector with a diameter of 12 m, it achieves position resolutions of 300 mm for the water phase and 70 mm for scintillator phase. The position biases are within 100 mm for both phases. This framework has been applied to the SNO+ water phase and partial-fill phase analysis.

By utilizing the water phase reconstruction, this thesis provides an alternative analysis for the  ${}^8\text{B}$  solar neutrino measurement during the SNO+ water phase. By looking at the low background dataset for 190.33 live days, a  ${}^8\text{B}$  solar neutrino rate of  $\pm \text{events}/(kt \cdot \text{day})$  with a background rate of  $\pm \text{events}/(kt \cdot \text{day})$  in the energy region [5,15] MeV were obtained. For the energy threshold down to 5 MeV, this background rate is significantly low for the water Cherenkov detector.

The result also gives an estimated  ${}^8\text{B}$  solar neutrino flux as:  $\Phi_{8\text{B}} = (4.48 \pm 0.44(\text{stats.})^{+0.13}_{-0.08}(\text{syst.})) \times 10^6 \text{ cm}^{-2}\text{s}^{-1}$ , while the elastic scattering is measured as:  $\Phi_{\text{ES}} = (2.07 \pm 0.20(\text{stats.})^{+0.12}_{-0.11}(\text{syst.})) \times 10^6 \text{ cm}^{-2}\text{s}^{-1}$ .

These results are consistent with the SNO+ 2018 measurement[1] and the Super-K 2016 measurement[2].

## Appendix A

# Details for the MultiPath Fitter

### A.1 Create a Random Vertex

Four random seeds are generated from the uniform distribution function: `RandFlat` in Class Library for High Energy Physics library (`CLHEP`).

One random seed is used for generating the time of the vertex:  $t$  is a random variable following a uniform distribution in a range of [100, 300] ns, say,  $t \sim U(100, 300)$ .

Three random seeds are used for generating the position of the trial vertex: `ran0`  $\sim U(0, 1)$ , `ran1`  $\sim U(-1, 1)$  and `ran2Pi`  $\sim U(0, 2\pi)$ .

Let  $r = \sqrt[3]{\text{ran0}} * 10000$  mm,  $\phi = \text{ran2Pi}$ ,  $\cos \theta = \text{ran1}$  and  $\sin \theta = \sqrt{1 - \cos^2 \theta}$ , then the trial position can be built in Cartesian coordinate system:  $\vec{x}_{trial} = (r \sin \theta \cos \phi, r \sin \theta \sin \phi, r \cos \theta)$ . This procedure ensures that a proper random position is generated inside a sphere with a radius of 10 m.

For the trial direction, two random seeds are used. Each follows a uniform distribution: `ranPi`  $\sim U(0, \pi)$  and `ran2Pi`  $\sim U(0, 2\pi)$ . Then the trial direction is built as:  $\vec{u}_0 = (\cos \phi \sin \theta, \sin \phi \sin \theta, \cos \theta)$ , with zenith angle  $\theta = \text{ranPi}$  and azimuth angle  $\phi = \text{ran2Pi}$ .

Note that here the `ranPi` and `ran2Pi` are generated independently for the trial direction and they are not related to the vertex case.

## A.2 Levenberg-Marquardt Method

This section is derived from Ref. [136]. Levenberg-Marquardt (MRQ) method is a common routine for non-linear fitting. Let  $\mathbf{a} = [a_0, a_1, \dots, a_{M-1}]^T$  be an  $M$ -dimensional vector with  $M$  unknown parameters to be fit, for example,  $\mathbf{a}$  is an event vertex with 4 parameters:  $\mathbf{a} = [x, y, z, t]^T$ .

A  $\chi^2$  merit function with the unknown parameter vector  $\mathbf{a}$  can be built and by minimizing the function, the best-fit  $\mathbf{a}$  can be found.

The  $\chi^2(\mathbf{a})$  can be approximately expanded into a quadratic form of Taylor-series:

$$\chi^2(\mathbf{a}) \simeq \gamma - \mathbf{d} \cdot \mathbf{a} + \frac{1}{2} \mathbf{a} \cdot \mathbf{D} \cdot \mathbf{a}, \quad (\text{A.1})$$

where  $\gamma$  is a  $M$ -dimension constant vector around  $\mathbf{a}$ ,  $\mathbf{d}$  is a  $M$ -dimension vector and  $\mathbf{D}$  is a  $M \times M$  Hessian matrix.

To find a  $\mathbf{a}_{min}$  so that a  $\min \chi^2(\mathbf{a}_{min})$  is reached, in computing science we usually use iteration steps:

$$\mathbf{a}_{min} = \mathbf{a}_{cur} + D^{-1}[-\nabla \chi^2(\mathbf{a}_{cur})], \quad (\text{A.2})$$

where  $\mathbf{a}_{cur}$  is the current trial value of  $\mathbf{a}$  and we assume matrix  $\mathbf{D}$  is invertible. The  $\mathbf{a}_{cur}$  thus jumps onto  $\mathbf{a}_{min}$ .

According to the definition of a  $\chi^2$  merit function, it can be written out explicitly as:

$$\chi^2(\mathbf{a}) = \sum_{i=0}^{N-1} \left[ \frac{y_i - y(x_i|\mathbf{a})}{\sigma_i} \right]^2, \quad (\text{A.3})$$

and with the same Taylor expansion, the quadratic form is written as:

$$\chi^2(\mathbf{a}) \approx \chi^2(\mathbf{a}_{cur}) + \sum_k \frac{\partial \chi^2(\mathbf{a}_{cur})}{\partial a_k} \delta a_k + \frac{1}{2} \sum_{kl} \frac{\partial^2 \chi^2(\mathbf{a}_{cur})}{\partial a_k \partial a_l} \delta a_k \delta a_l, \quad (\text{A.4})$$

where the first derivatives are:

$$\frac{\partial \chi^2}{\partial a_k} = -2 \sum_{i=0}^{N-1} \left[ \frac{y_i - y(x_i|\mathbf{a})}{\sigma_i} \right] \frac{\partial y(x_i|\mathbf{a})}{\partial a_k}, k = 0, 1, \dots, M-1, \quad (\text{A.5})$$

and the second derivatives are:

$$\frac{\partial^2 \chi^2}{\partial a_k \partial a_l} = 2 \sum_{i=0}^{N-1} \left\{ \frac{\partial y(x_i|\mathbf{a})}{\partial a_k} \frac{\partial y(x_i|\mathbf{a})}{\partial a_l} - [y_i - y(x_i|\mathbf{a})] \frac{\partial^2 y(x_i|\mathbf{a})}{\partial a_k \partial a_l} \right\}, k = 0, 1, \dots, M-1. \quad (\text{A.6})$$

Let  $\beta_k \equiv -\frac{1}{2} \frac{\partial \chi^2}{\partial a_k}$ ,  $\alpha_{kl} \equiv \frac{1}{2} \frac{\partial^2 \chi^2}{\partial a_k \partial a_l}$ , then the factor of 2 is removed. The  $\alpha_{kl}$  is defined as the curvature matrix and  $\alpha = \frac{1}{2} \mathbf{D}$ , which implies that it is the half of the Hessian matrix.

From A.2, we have:  $D(\mathbf{a}_{min} - \mathbf{a}_{cur}) = [-\nabla \chi^2(\mathbf{a}_{cur})] \implies 2\alpha \delta \mathbf{a} = 2\beta$ . The A.2 is now transformed into a systems of linear equations:

$$\sum_{l=0}^{M-1} \alpha_{kl} \delta a_l = \beta_k, \quad (\text{A.7})$$

where  $\delta a_l$  is a varying amount added to the current value of parameter for the next iteration.

The main task now is to calculate  $\alpha_{kl}$  and  $\beta_k$  and then solve for  $\delta a_l$  in A.7. Once  $\delta a_l$  is solved, we can vary the current trial or approximate values of  $\mathbf{a}_{cur}$  and let it go close to or reach the  $\mathbf{a}_{min}$ .

If we consider the method of steepest descent:  $\mathbf{a}_{next} = \mathbf{a}_{cur} - \text{const} \cdot \nabla \chi^2(\mathbf{a}_{cur})$ , where const is a constant, then the  $\delta a_l$  is solved by:

$$\delta a_l = \text{const} \cdot \beta_l, \quad (\text{A.8})$$

where no Hessian matrix is needed.

In the MRQ method, in order to solve for  $\delta a_l$ , the detailed calculation of  $\mathbf{D}^{-1}$  in A.2 and the simplified calculation of steepest descent in A.8 are combined and a smooth transition between A.2 and A.8 is considered.

In A.8, the const describes the distance or magnitude of how far the parameter should go along the gradient  $\beta_l$ . From dimensional analysis, since  $\beta_k \equiv -\frac{1}{2} \frac{\partial \chi^2}{\partial a_k}$  and  $\chi^2$  is a non-dimensional number,  $[\beta_l] = [1/a_l]$ . Then from A.8,  $[\text{const}] = [a_l^2]$ . The const has the same dimension to the term  $1/\alpha_{ll} = 1/(\frac{1}{2} \frac{\partial^2 \chi^2}{\partial a_l \partial a_l})$ , i.e., the diagonal elements in the curvature matrix. A bridge between A.2 and A.8 is thus built. The diagonal elements in the curvature matrix can control the magnitude of the const, tells how far the parameter should go along the gradient.

Then A.8 can be written as:

$$\delta a_l = \frac{1}{\lambda \alpha_{ll}} \beta_l \text{ or } \lambda \alpha_{ll} \delta a_l = \beta_l, \quad (\text{A.9})$$

where  $\alpha_{ll}$  is written in a form of  $\alpha_{ll} = \sum_{i=0}^{N-1} \frac{1}{\sigma_i^2} \left[ \frac{\partial y(x_i | \mathbf{a})}{\partial a_l} \frac{\partial y(x_i | \mathbf{a})}{\partial a_l} \right]$  to ensure that  $\alpha_{ll}$  is always positive; a fudge factor  $\lambda$  can be set to  $\lambda \gg 1$  to avoid the case when the value of const is taken too large.

Compare A.7 and A.9, if define a new curvature matrix  $\alpha'$  as  $\alpha'_{jj} \equiv (1 + \lambda)\alpha_{jj}$  (for diagonal elements) and  $\alpha'_{jk} \equiv \alpha_{jk}$  ( $j \neq k$ ) (for non-diagonal elements), these two equations can be combined into one:

$$\sum_{l=0}^{M-1} \alpha'_{kl} \delta a_l = \beta_k \quad (\text{A.10})$$

From the definition of  $\alpha'$ , if  $\lambda$  takes a large value,  $\alpha'$  is dominated by diagonal elements, then A.10 is close to A.9; while if  $\lambda \rightarrow 0$ , A.10 is close to A.7.

The algorithm of the MRQ method requires a reasonable start value (first guess) of the fitting parameter  $\mathbf{a}$  and a reasonable preset value of  $\lambda$  (usually take  $\lambda = 0.001$ ). The iteration loop of the algorithm is: calculate the value of  $\chi^2(\mathbf{a})$ , solve for  $\delta \mathbf{a}$  from A.10 and then calculate  $\chi^2(\mathbf{a} + \delta \mathbf{a})$ . During this loop, the algorithm checks whether  $\chi^2(\mathbf{a} + \delta \mathbf{a}) \geq \chi^2(\mathbf{a})$ , if it is,  $\lambda$  is increased by  $\lambda = 10 \cdot \lambda$ ; if not,  $\lambda$  is decreased by  $\lambda = 0.1 \cdot \lambda$ .

The iteration loop is terminated when the change amount of the  $\chi^2$  is negligible: if the loop calculates several  $\chi^2$  values which are close to each other within a fit tolerance (**fTolerance**):  $|\chi^2_{current} - \chi^2_{previous}| < \text{fTolerance}$ , the algorithm will consider the  $\chi^2$  is minimized with a set of best-fit parameters. Here the termination condition of iterating the  $\chi^2$  value to convergence to the machine accuracy or to the roundoff limit is not used, since  $\chi^2$  is a statistical quantity rather than a solution of an equation. It is not statistical meaningful to vary the value of  $\mathbf{a}$  to vary  $\chi^2$  by a small amount  $\ll 1$ .

Once the minimum is reached,  $\lambda$  is set to 0 and then the estimated covariance matrix of the standard errors in the fitted  $\mathbf{a}$  can be calculated as:  $C \equiv \alpha^{-1}$ .

The MRQ method is the core algorithm in the MP **fitter** framework for likelihood fitting. A few fitter setting parameters relating to the method can be optimized in practice. These parameters are:

- **fTolerance**: the fit tolerance, which is set as  $|\chi^2_{current} - \chi^2_{previous}| < \text{fTolerance}$ .

- **nGood**: the number of good fits. The maximum number of the “good fits” required to be a valid result. This is to avoid the case when the MRQ minimizer finds a local minima instead of a global minima.
- **fMaxIter**: the maximum iteration. The allowed maximum number for looping the MRQ minimizer.
- **nStart**: the maximum number of start positions. If the start value does not give a valid result, the fitter will try another random start value. **nStart** is the maximum number of the start value the fitter is allowed to try.

Table. A.1 shows the optimized values of the fitter setting parameters for different phases.

Table A.1: Optimized fitter setting parameters for different physics phases.

SNO+ phase	fTolerance	nGood	fMaxIter	nStart
water phase	0.001	6	500	250
partial-fill phase	0.001	4	100	250
scintillator phase	0.001	4	100	250

A trade-off between the accuracy & precision of the reconstructed results and the CPU time is considered. If increasing the **fTolerance** while decreasing the number of **nGood**, **fMaxIter** and **nStart**, the CPU time will decrease at costs of the fitter accuracy & precision, and vice versa.

### A.3 Calculations of Derivatives of Likelihood Functions

The MRQ method requires the derivatives of the likelihood function. These derivatives can be calculated analytically in explicit mathematical forms.

The position difference is defined as  $\vec{X}_{\text{diffCh}} = \vec{X}_0 - \vec{X}_{\text{pmt}}$ . Then the *TOF* for the prompt Cherenkov light is  $t_{\text{Ch}} = |\vec{X}_{\text{diffCh}}|/v_g$  and  $L_{\text{Ch}} = L(t_{\text{Ch}})$ .

Then it comes out for the water vertex case,

$$\frac{\partial L}{\partial t_0} = \frac{dL_{\text{Ch}}}{dt_{\text{Ch}}}, \quad (\text{A.11})$$

$$\frac{\partial L}{\partial x} = \frac{\partial L_{\text{Ch}}}{\partial t_{\text{Ch}}} \frac{dt_{\text{Ch}}}{\partial x} = -\frac{dL_{\text{Ch}}}{dt_{\text{Ch}}} \frac{X_{\text{diffCh}}}{|\vec{X}_{\text{diffCh}}| \cdot v_g}, \quad (\text{A.12})$$

$$\frac{\partial L}{\partial y} = -\frac{dL_{\text{Ch}}}{dt_{\text{Ch}}} \frac{Y_{\text{diffCh}}}{|\vec{X}_{\text{diffCh}}| \cdot v_g}, \quad (\text{A.13})$$

$$\frac{\partial L}{\partial z} = -\frac{dL_{\text{Ch}}}{dt_{\text{Ch}}} \frac{Z_{\text{diffCh}}}{|\vec{X}_{\text{diffCh}}| \cdot v_g}, \quad (\text{A.14})$$

where the derivative  $\frac{dL_{\text{Ch}}}{dt_{\text{Ch}}}$  can be calculated numerically from the timing *pdf* saved as a binned histogram.

For the water direction case,

$$\frac{\partial L}{\partial \theta} = \frac{dL_{\text{Ch}}}{d \cos \theta_{\text{Ch}}} \frac{d \cos \theta_{\text{Ch}}}{\partial \theta} = \frac{dL_{\text{Ch}}}{d \cos \theta_{\text{Ch}}} \frac{d \vec{u}_0}{d \theta} \cdot \frac{\vec{X}_{\text{diffCh}}}{|\vec{X}_{\text{diffCh}}|}, \quad (\text{A.15})$$

where  $d \vec{u}_0/d\theta = (\cos \phi \cos \theta, \sin \phi \cos \theta, -\sin \theta)$  and

$$\frac{\partial L}{\partial \phi} = \frac{dL_{\text{Ch}}}{d \cos \theta_{\text{Ch}}} \frac{d \cos \theta_{\text{Ch}}}{d \phi} = \frac{dL_{\text{Ch}}}{d \cos \theta_{\text{Ch}}} \frac{d \vec{u}_0}{d \phi} \cdot \frac{\vec{X}_{\text{diffCh}}}{|\vec{X}_{\text{diffCh}}|}, \quad (\text{A.16})$$

where  $d \vec{u}_0/d\phi = (-\sin \phi \sin \theta, \cos \phi \sin \theta, 0)$ . The derivative  $\frac{dL_{\text{Ch}}}{d \cos \theta_{\text{Ch}}}$  can be calculated numerically from the PMT angular response *pdf* saved as a binned histogram.

## A.4 Inversion of Hessian Matrix

Matrix inversion is a frequent calculation when applying the MRQ method. In the **MP fitter**, the inversion of a  $2 \times 2$  Hessian matrix (usually used for direction reconstruction with two parameters) is calculated directly. For the higher dimension matrix, usually the  $4 \times 4$  matrix for vertex reconstruction, a **SDecompQRH** class is called for calculating the inversion matrix by using QR decomposition method[136]. This class was introduced by Jeff Tseng and it was modified from the **ROOT TDecompQRH** class[177]. Compared to the ROOT version, its **Solve()** function was slightly modified for solving the matrix equation  $Ax = b$ , where  $A = QR$  is composed of an orthogonal matrix  $Q$  and an upper triangular matrix  $R$ . If the diagonal element in  $R$  is too small, instead of returning failure, the modified

algorithm simply sets the corresponding x component to be 0. This allows an optimization for the MRQ method to continue in frequent cases when the matrix is singular.

## A.5 Likelihood Surfaces

Fig. A.1 shows vertex likelihood surfaces produced by the MRQ method in the MP `water fitter`, for a typical  $^{16}\text{N}$  event (central run-100934, event GTID = 61836), projected on  $X - Y$ ,  $X - Z$  and  $Y - Z$  planes. A clear global maxima gives the reconstructed vertex:  $\vec{X}_{fit} = (-211.958, 503.399, 275.990)$  mm and  $t_{fit} = 217.039$  ns.

## A.6 Detailed Light Path Calculations in the MP Partial Fitter

The following algorithm shows the detailed calculations for evaluating the light path in the scintillator regions. Each check steps are marked by number and if-conditions are marked by Latin letters (a, b or c).

---

First check the ray-sphere intersection (Eqn. 4.14):

If  $\Delta > 0$ ,

(step. 1a) if  $|\vec{x}_0| < r_{AV}$  (and  $a_+ > 0 > a_-$ ), check the ray-plane intersection:

(2a-a) if  $a_3 > 0$ , the ray-vector hits the interface plane:

(3a-a-a) if  $z_0 < Z_{split}$  and  $a_3 < a_+$ :  $d_{sp,AV} = a_+ - a_3$ , see Fig. A.4 (a).

(3a-a-b) if  $z_0 \geq Z_{split}$ :

(4a-a-b-a) if  $a_3 < a_+$ :  $d_{sp,AV} = a_3$ , see Fig. A.4 (b).

(4a-a-b-b) if  $a_3 \geq a_+$ :  $d_{sp,AV} = a_+$ , see Fig. A.4 (c).

(2a-b) if  $a_3 \leq 0$ :

(3a-b) if  $z_0 > Z_{split}$ :  $d_{sp,AV} = a_+$ , see Fig. A.4 (d).

(step. 1b) if  $|\vec{x}_0| \geq r_{AV}$  (and  $a_+ > a_- > 0$ ), calculate the z position of the intersection point:  $z_{\pm} = z_0 + a_{\pm} \cdot (z_{PMT} - z_0) / |\vec{X}_{PMT} - \vec{X}_0|$ :

(1-b-a) if  $z_- \geq Z_{split}$  and  $z_+ \geq Z_{split}$ :  $d_{sp,AV} = a_+ - a_-$ , see Fig. A.4 (e).

(1-b-b) if  $z_- < Z_{split}$  and  $z_+ > Z_{split}$  and  $a_3 > 0$ :  $d_{sp,AV} = a_+ - a_3$ , see Fig. A.4 (f).

(1-b-c) if  $z_- > Z_{split}$  and  $z_+ < Z_{split}$  and  $a_3 > 0$ :  $d_{sp,AV} = a_3 - a_-$ , see Fig. A.4 (g).

---

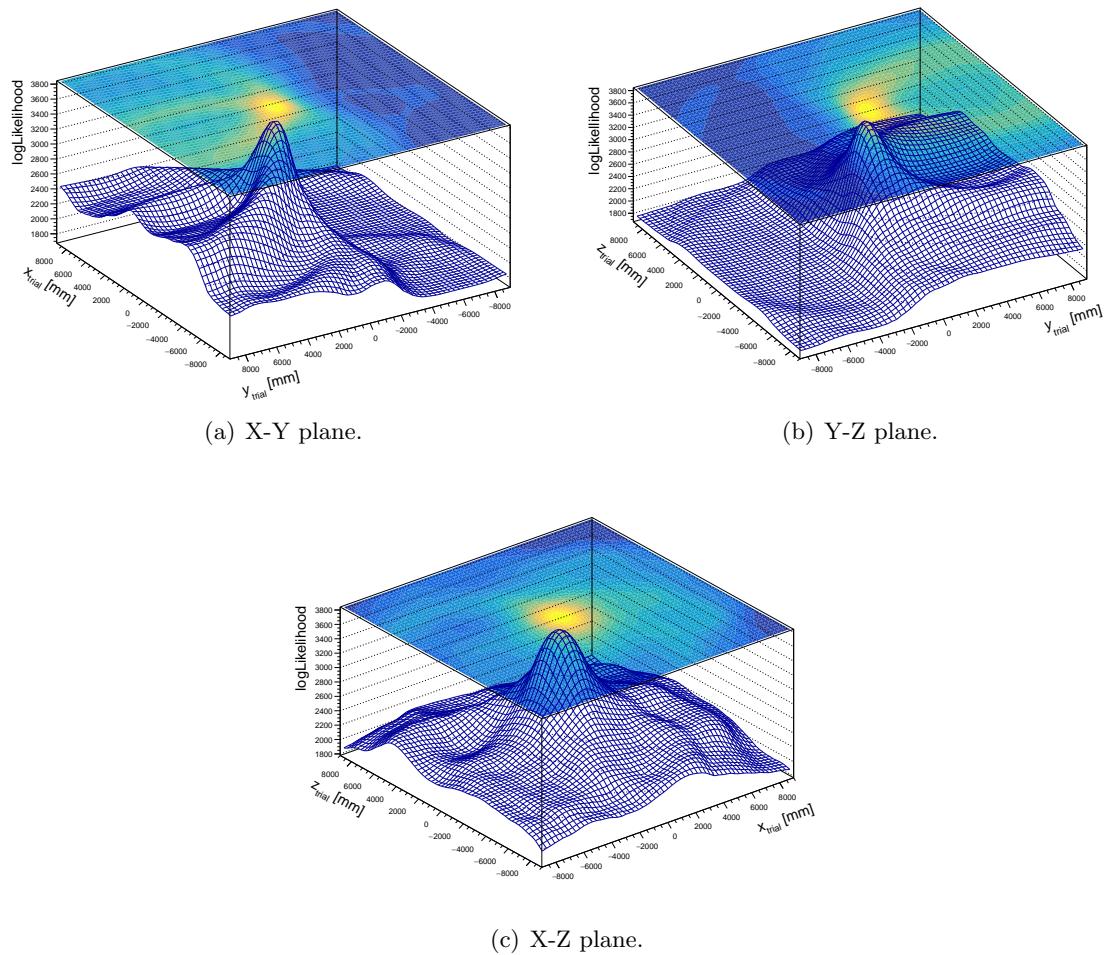


Figure A.1: Likelihood surface of an  $^{16}\text{N}$  event projected on X-Y, Y-Z, X-Z planes. A clear global maxima is reached for the fitted vertex.

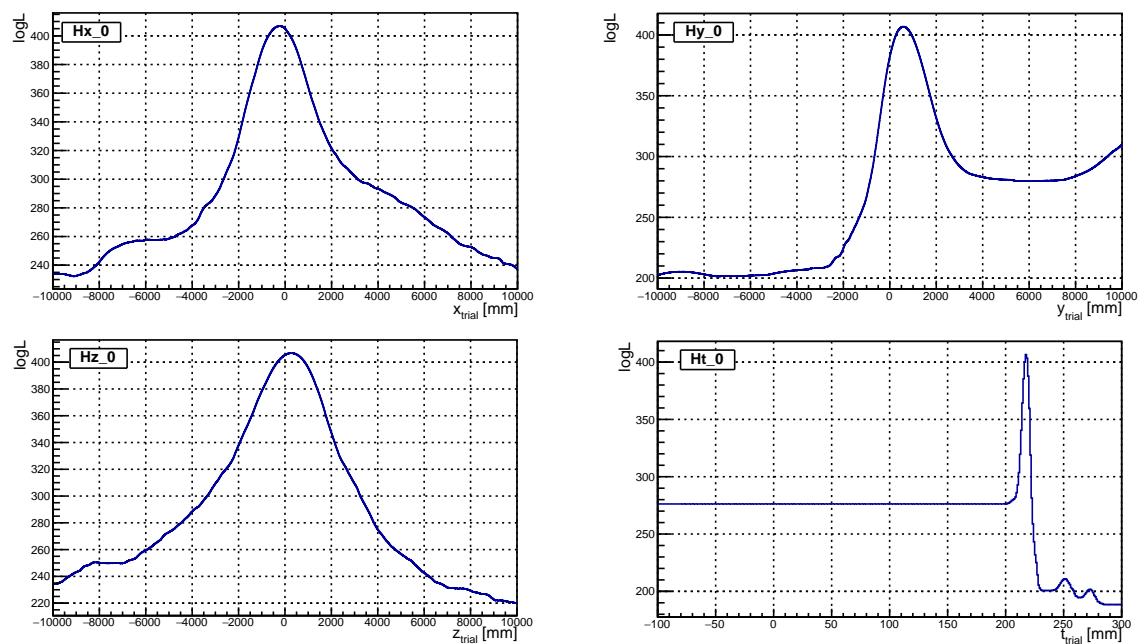


Figure A.2: Likelihood surface of an  $^{16}\text{N}$  event projected on x, y, z, t-axis respectively.

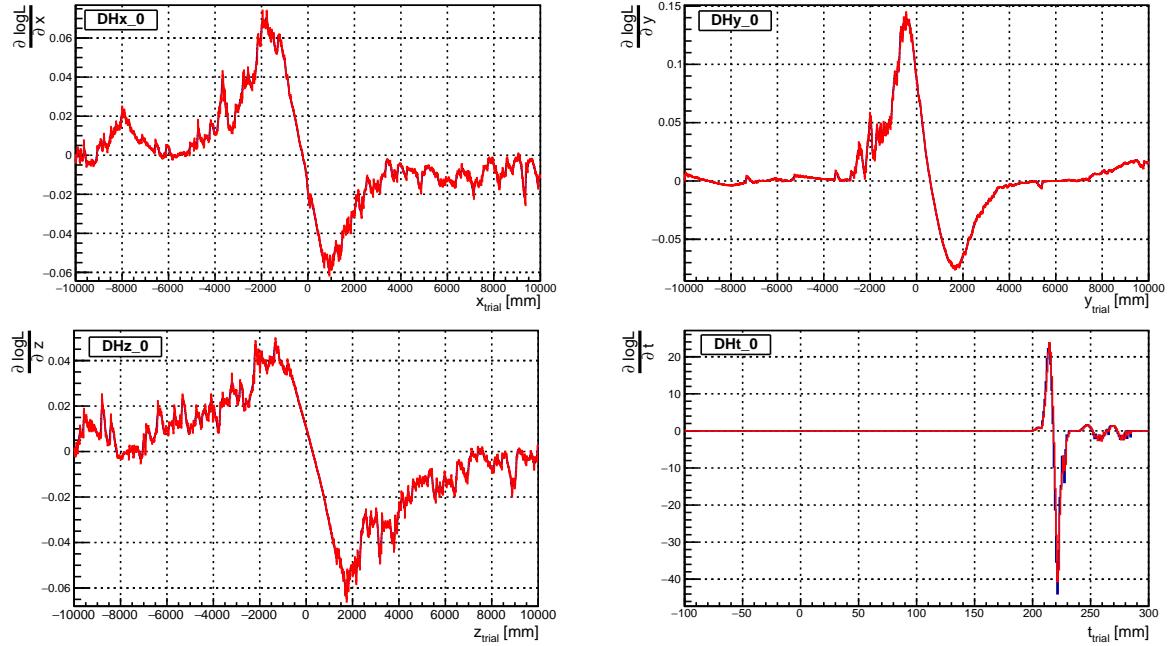


Figure A.3: Derivatives of  $\ln L$  of an  $^{16}\text{N}$  event projected on x, y, z, t-axis respectively. The analytical derivatives (blue) are overlaid with numerical derivatives (red). They basically match with each other.

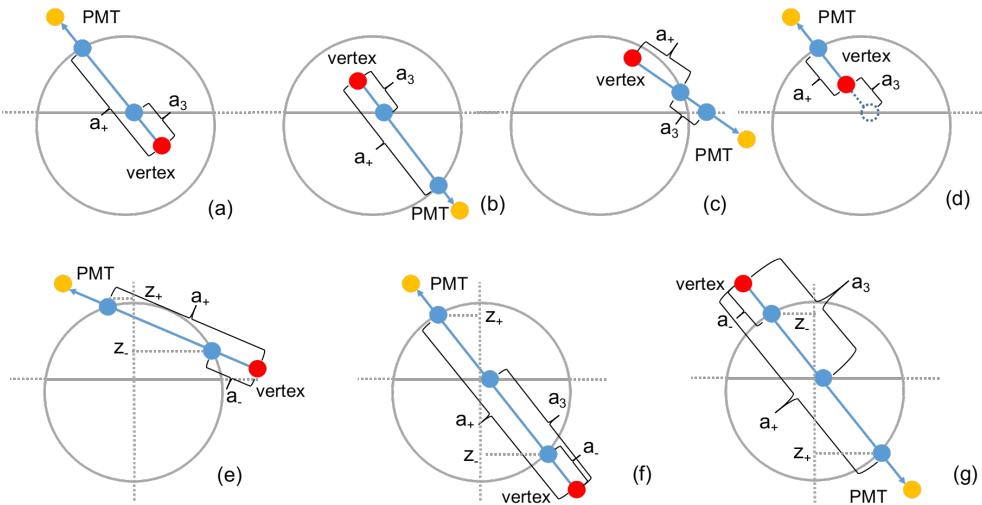


Figure A.4: Layouts for the scintillator light paths inside the AV sphere.

First check the ray-cylinder intersection (Eqn. 4.14):

If  $\Delta_{neck} > 0$ ,

(step. 1a) if  $a'_+ a'_- < 0$  (event position is inside the cylinder), check the z position of the intersection point on neck,  $z_+ = z_0 + a'_+ u_z$ :

(2a-a) if  $6108 < z_+ < 8390 \text{ mm}$  (in the valid neck region), then check the AV sphere:

(3a-a-a) if  $|\vec{X}_0| \geq r_{AV}$ :  $d_{sp,neck} = a'_+$ , see Fig. A.5 (a).

(3a-a-b) if  $|\vec{X}_0| < r_{AV}$  and  $a_+ a_- < 0$ :  $d_{sp,neck} = a'_+ - a_+$ , the light ray first hits the sphere inside the cylinder and then hits the cylinder, see Fig. A.5 (b).

(2a-b) if  $z_+ < 6108 \text{ mm}$ :

(3a-b) if  $|\vec{X}_0| \geq r_{AV}$  and  $6108 < z_0 < 8390 \text{ mm}$ :

(4a-b) if  $a_+ > a_- > 0$ :  $d_{sp,neck} = a_-$ , see Fig. A.5 (c).

(step. 1b) if  $a'_+ > a'_- > 0$  (event position is outside the cylinder), check the z position of the intersection point on neck,  $z'_\pm = z_0 + a'_\pm \cdot u_z$ :

(2b-a) if  $6108 < z'_\pm < 8390 \text{ mm}$ , check the AV intersection:

(3b-a-a) if  $a_\pm$  do not exit (never passes through AV),  $d_{sp,neck} = a'_+ - a'_-$ , see Fig. A.5 (d).

(3b-a-b) if  $a_+ > a_- > 0$ , evaluate the z positions of the ray-sphere intersection points  $z_\pm = z_0 + a_\pm \cdot u_z$ :

(4b-a-a) if  $z_\pm \geq 6108 \text{ mm}$ :  $d_{sp,neck} = a'_+ - a'_- - (a_+ - a_-)$ , see Fig. A.5 (e). The path inside the sphere is subtracted to avoid duplicated calculation.

(4b-a-b) if  $z_+ < 6108$  and  $6108 < z_- < 8390 \text{ mm}$ :

(5b-a-b-a) if  $a_+ > a_- > 0$ :  $d_{sp,neck} = a_- - a'_-$ , see Fig. A.5 (f).

(5b-a-b-b) if  $z_- < 6108$  and  $6108 < z_+ < 8390 \text{ mm}$ :

in this case, either the event position is inside the sphere ( $a_+ a_- < 0$ ), shown in Fig. A.5 (g), or outside the sphere ( $a_+ a_- < 0$ ), shown in Fig. A.5 (h)), the path in neck is same:  $d_{sp,neck} = a'_+ - a_+$ .

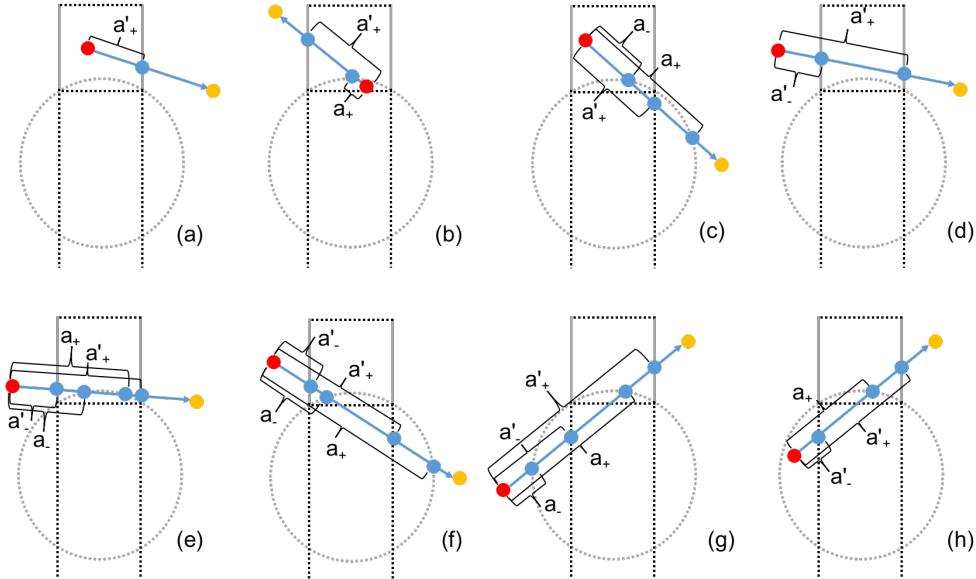


Figure A.5: Layouts of the scintillator light paths inside the neck cylinder.

## **Appendix B**

# **Information for $^{16}\text{N}$ Scan Runs**

### **B.1 Information for $^{16}\text{N}$ Scan Runs**

The tables below show the  $^{16}\text{N}$  runs used in this thesis. Table. B.1 to B.3 are the internal scans inside the AV along the detector z-axis, y-axis and x-axis respectively. Table. B.4 shows the runs when the source was at the detector corner. Table. B.5 shows the external scans.

Table B.1:  $^{16}\text{N}$  internal z-axis scan runs. The last 3 scans were inside the AV neck (neck runs).

run number	nominal source position [mm]		
	x	y	z
100934	-186.0	256.0	1.0
106923	-186.0	254.0	-5501.2
106925	-186.0	254.0	-4999.899
106930	-186.0	254.0	-4500.2
106942	-186.0	254.0	-4001.0
106944	-186.0	254.0	-3501.399
106946	-186.0	254.0	-2999.7
106948	-186.0	254.0	-2500.399
106950	-186.0	254.0	-1998.499
106952	-186.0	254.0	-1499.5
106954	-186.0	254.0	-1000.099
106956	-186.0	254.0	-499.6
106958	-186.0	254.0	0.401
106960	-186.0	254.0	500.8
106962	-186.0	254.0	1000.3
106964	-186.0	254.0	1500.9
106967	-186.0	254.0	2000.001
106969	-186.0	254.0	2500.3
106971	-186.0	254.0	3000.3
106973	-186.0	254.0	3500.9
106975	-186.0	254.0	4000.5
106977	-186.0	254.0	4500.4
106979	-185.037	247.24	4973.567
107049	-121.599	81.021	6496.04
107051	-123.099	126.177	6997.52
107053	-124.4	153.386	7499.79

Table B.2:  $^{16}\text{N}$  internal y-axis scan runs.

run number	nominal source position [mm]		
	x	y	z
106992	-5.995	-0.201	-1.107
106994	-7.761	-998.068	0.159
106996	-7.084	-2000.578	-0.716
106998	-5.491	-2998.017	-4.196
107000	-3.774	-3992.167	-7.374
107002	-1.624	-4999.882	-12.012
107004	-1.745	5002.057	-9.897
107006	-3.967	3973.021	-7.359
107008	-5.984	2980.035	-3.441
107010	-7.952	1986.669	-1.714
107012	-9.242	994.183	0.553
107014	-9.867	496.858	0.269
107016	-8.414	1494.71	0.634
107018	-6.835	2487.539	-1.126
107026	-4.949	3496.338	-5.971
107028	-2.539	4505.371	-7.453
107030	-7.711	-501.268	0.126
107033	-7.534	-1494.927	-0.096
107035	-6.349	-2487.912	-1.434
107043	-4.366	-3475.769	-6.019
107045	-2.799	-4498.62	-10.213
107047	-1.898	-4874.53	-11.077

Table B.3:  $^{16}\text{N}$  internal x-axis scan runs.

run number	nominal source position [mm]		
	x	y	z
107055	-5.283	-0.209	-1.057
107075	-4999.043	2.46	-9.899
107077	-4002.525	5.269	-7.364
107079	-3004.229	8.101	-2.54
107081	-2000.155	10.637	-0.361
107083	-992.994	11.641	0.024
107085	998.133	10.897	-0.044
107087	2011.103	9.874	0.057
107091	4003.323	4.378	-5.974
107093	5004.868	2.262	-7.547
107095	4503.445	3.278	-7.0
107110	-4489.301	3.918	-10.545
107116	3511.147	5.742	-2.578
107118	2502.805	8.681	-2.803
107120	-3476.709	6.643	-4.886

Table B.4:  $^{16}\text{N}$  corner scan runs.

run number	nominal source position [mm]		
	x	y	z
106981	-186.0	254.0	5500.9
106985	-186.0	254.0	5999.8
107058	-8.765	996.891	0.172
107060	-7.518	1990.663	-0.445
107062	-7.794	-997.865	0.155
107064	-7.083	-1990.651	-0.744
107089	3003.718	7.258	-0.69
107098	2091.016	6.312	2099.444
107020	-5.399	1991.04	1988.97
107022	-9.92	2776.47	-2839.41
107024	-10.44	3227.32	-3324.9
107037	-8.377	-2832.33	-2839.69
107039	-9.284	-3137.21	-3212.18
107041	-4.719	-2099.25	2110.71
107100	2824.56	13.507	-2840.13
107102	3245.74	13.681	-3264.76
107104	-3250.29	13.438	-3264.7
107106	-2834.05	13.893	-2839.43
107108	-2109.28	6.613	2098.57
107112	-2771.9	16.196	-4773.96
107114	2771.1	15.596	-4773.27

**Table B.5:**  $^{16}\text{N}$  external scan runs.

run number	nominal source position [mm]		
	x	y	z
111211	-5861.0	-2524.0	-1.62
111213	-5861.0	-2524.0	-5000.525
111215	-5861.0	-2524.0	-4000.021
111217	-5861.0	-2524.0	-3000.151
111219	-5861.0	-2524.0	-1999.248
111221	-5861.0	-2524.0	-998.923
111223	-5861.0	-2524.0	1000.798
111225	-5861.0	-2524.0	2000.597
111228	-5861.0	-2524.0	3000.734
111230	-5861.0	-2524.0	4000.977
111232	-5861.0	-2524.0	5000.86
111234	-5861.0	-2524.0	4498.167
111236	-5861.0	-2524.0	3498.838
111238	-5861.0	-2524.0	2498.641
111240	-5861.0	-2524.0	1498.713
111242	-5861.0	-2524.0	-1501.717
111244	-5861.0	-2524.0	-2500.89
111246	-5861.0	-2524.0	-3500.764
111248	-5861.0	-2524.0	-4500.812

## **Appendix C**

# **Bi-Po Analysis**

### **C.1 Uranium chain and Bi-Po Analysis**

A flowchart for picking up the Bi-Po event pairs is listed in Fig. C.1. The algorithm is based on Ref. [102].

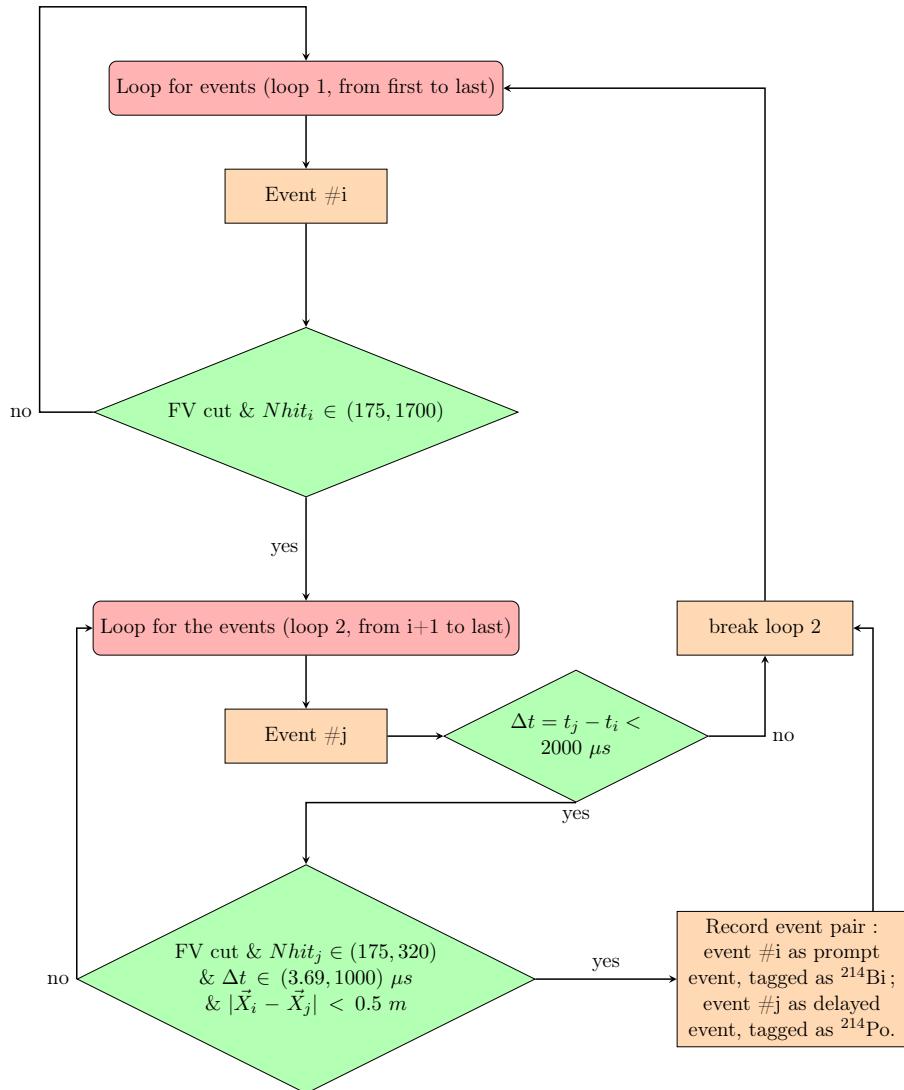


Figure C.1: A flow chart for Bi-Po tagging.

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