

Next-Generation Polarized ^3He Targets for Electron Scattering Experiments

by

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Abstract

Historically, ^3He targets for electron scattering experiments have been polarized through spin-exchange optical pumping (SEOP). Polarized laser light passes its circular polarization to alkali metal vapor, which then transfers its polarization to ^3He through spin-exchange collisions.

This thesis discusses the basics of SEOP and the polarimetry techniques used in our lab. Narrowband laser and alkali-hybrid SEOP have improved the performance of targets significantly. In alkali-hybrid SEOP, potassium is used together with rubidium for transferring polarization to ^3He nuclei. We discussed the data collected over many pure-rubidium targets and alkali-hybrid targets. In the course of analyzing the data, we also studied the “X factor” which limits the highest achievable polarization of ^3He .

Because the experiments planned for the 12GeV era in Jefferson National Laboratory (JLAB) will use much higher electron beam current, we are exploring the possibility of using metal (instead of glass) as the entry points (commonly referred to as “end windows”) for future targets. We established the metal composition and developed the techniques to incorporate metal to targets without introducing significant spin-relaxation rates. We have successfully demonstrated that future targets can be constructed with metal end windows and are very close to making such targets.

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Chapter 1

Conclusions

This thesis first discusses the basics of Spin-Exchange Optical Pumping (SEOP) and the polarimetry used to characterize ^3He targets. The combination of Spin-Exchange Optical Pumping with hybrid mixture and narrowband laser has improved the polarization of ^3He targets from 37% to 70% and significantly reduced the time constant of ^3He polarization build-up process. Chapter 4 of the thesis has discussed this development and put extra focus on the measurement of K- ^3He spin-exchange rate constant and the analysis of the X factor. However, after the 12 GeV upgrade in JLab, the maximum electron beam current is planned to increase to 60 μA , which is 4 times as much as the maximum that was used prior to the upgrade. It is not likely for the traditional pure-glass target design to survive the much higher beam current. Chapter 5 discusses the effort our group made to explore targets incorporating metal and proposes that replacing glass end windows with metal windows will solve the problem without introducing significant spin relaxation. Fig. 1.1 shows the current design of next-generation target for upcoming Super Bigbite G_E^n experiments.

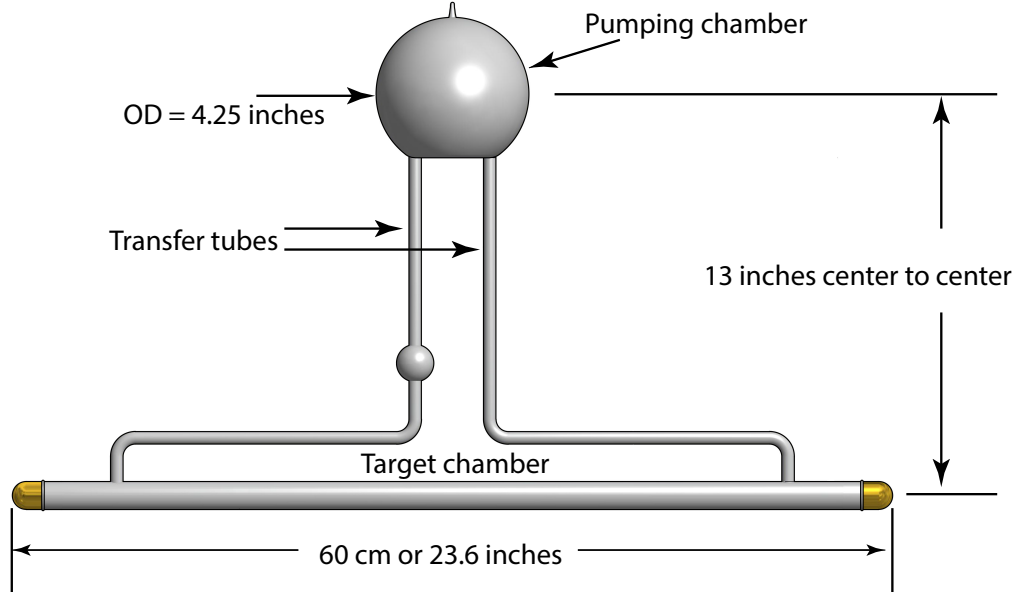


Figure 1.1: Design of next-generation target for upcoming SBS G_E^n experiments.

1.1 Spin Relaxation Introduced by Metal End Windows

Relaxation times measured by pure GE180 target cells and GE180 test cells with metal provide enough data for us extract spin-relaxation rates due to metal surface and calculate the additional relaxation rates that will be introduced by metal end windows. The measured lifetime of ProtovecI, a pure GE180 cell, was 26.52 hr and the measured lifetime of Goldfinger180, a vertical GE180 test cell with gold-coated OFHC copper tube, was 12.4 hr. With the equation $\Gamma_{wall} = \rho S/V$ and the geometric properties of cells, the relaxivity ρ of GE180 and gold surface can be calculated. Assuming the metal end windows have 1" diameter and 1 cm length and using the same value of volume as that of ProtovecI, we can estimate the relaxation rate due

to the addition of metal end windows will be $1/98 \text{ hr}^{-1}$. If we double the volume for the upcoming SBS G_E^n experiments to compensate for the higher relaxation rate due to higher electron beam current, the relaxation rate introduced by metal will further drop to $1/196 \text{ hr}^{-1}$. Thus, metal end windows are likely to only cause negligible spin-relaxation rate for the purpose of the experiments planned.

1.2 Structural Strength of Metal End Windows

Glass end windows are not likely to be strong enough to survive the much higher electron beam current. During the 6 GeV era where only 10-15 μA was used, glass windows were already running into risk of blowing up after 4-6 weeks of being exposed to electron beam. If it was solely due to radiation damage, one can expect the glass windows to explode after roughly a week of being used in electron beam of 60 μA , which will be far from enough for the experiments to complete. On the other hand, experience at JLab suggests that even very thin metal windows should still be able to survive the electron beams. Aluminum as thin as 2 mils has been routinely used in JLab without failing. The fact that metal end windows will conduct heat better further suggests that they will be more suitable for experiments planned for the 12 GeV era.

1.3 Overall Design of Future Targets

In addition to the use of metal end windows, the overall design of future targets also differs from that of the previous targets. As shown in Fig. 1.1, the new design uses two

transfer tubes for enabling convection as the mechanism to transfer ^3He polarization from pumping chamber (PC) to target chamber (TC). Although convection style cell was not discussed in detail in this thesis, it is still worth mentioning again in the conclusion. The higher electron beam current will induce higher spin relaxation which results in higher polarization gradient between PC and TC. By heating one of the transfer tubes, we can drive convection that will replenish ^3He polarization in TC at a much higher rate. The convection style cell was already tested to great success in our lab. Together with what we learned from results shown in chapter 4, we will be able to design targets that are well-suited for the upcoming experiments.

1.4 Summary

We have confidence that convection style targets with metal end windows will not only give high ^3He polarization in both PC and TC, but also survive the high electron beam currents planned for the future experiments. We are already close to making a target of the final design, tests involving incorporating actual metal windows to targets should still be carried out. Aluminum and Cartridge glass are also potentially good substrates for replacing the OFHC copper used in our tests due to either higher yield strength or higher radiation length, and should also be investigated.

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