

On the asymptotic nature of neutrinos: the proton testimony

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- M. Blasone, G. Lambiase and **G. L.**, Phys. Rev. D **96**, 025023 (2017)
- M. Blasone, G. Lambiase, **G. L.** and L. Petruzziello, Phys. Rev. D **97**, 105008 (2018)
- M. Blasone, G. Lambiase, **G. L.** and L. Petruzziello, Phys. Lett. B **800**, 135083 (2020)
- M. Blasone, G. Lambiase, **G. L.** and L. Petruzziello, Eur. Phys. J. C **80**, 130 (2020)

- 1 *Motivations and tools*
- 2 *The Unruh effect and the inverse β -decay of protons*
- 3 *Neutrino mixing: flavor or mass states?*
- 4 *Conclusions*

1 *Motivations and tools*

2 *The Unruh effect and the inverse β -decay of protons*

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4 *Conclusions*

“... the behavior of particle detectors under acceleration a is investigated where it is shown that an accelerated detector even in flat spacetime will detect particles in the vacuum....

... This result is exactly what one would expect of a detector immersed in a thermal bath of temperature [Unruh (1976)]

$$T_U = a/2\pi \text{ ”}$$



The “magic” of neutrinos



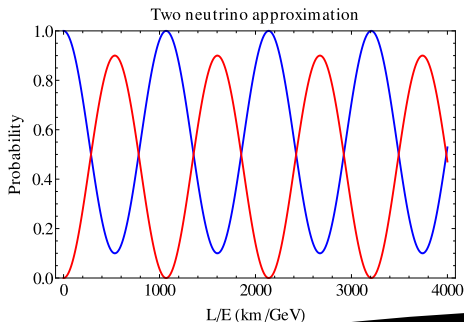
Quantum Mechanics [*Pontecorvo et al. (1978)*]

$$|\nu_e\rangle = |\nu_1\rangle \cos \theta + |\nu_2\rangle \sin \theta$$

$$|\nu_\mu\rangle = -|\nu_1\rangle \sin \theta + |\nu_2\rangle \cos \theta$$



Flavor and mass representations are **unitarily equivalent**.



■ Quantum Field Theory [*Blasone and Vitiello (1995)*]

$$\nu_e(x) = \nu_1(x) \cos \theta + \nu_2(x) \sin \theta$$

$$\nu_\mu(x) = -\nu_1(x) \sin \theta + \nu_2(x) \cos \theta$$

■ Mass and flavor field expansions

$$\nu_i(x) = \sum_{\mathbf{k}, \sigma} \left[\alpha_{\mathbf{k}, i}^\sigma u_{\mathbf{k}, i}^\sigma e^{-ik \cdot x} + \beta_{\mathbf{k}, i}^{\sigma \dagger} v_{\mathbf{k}, i}^\sigma e^{+ik \cdot x} \right], \quad i = 1, 2$$

$$\nu_\chi(x) = \sum_{\mathbf{k}, \sigma} \left[\alpha_{\mathbf{k}, \chi}^\sigma(t) u_{\mathbf{k}, j}^\sigma e^{-ik \cdot x} + \beta_{\mathbf{k}, \chi}^{\sigma \dagger}(t) v_{\mathbf{k}, j}^\sigma e^{+ik \cdot x} \right], \quad (\chi, j) = (e, 1), (\mu, 2)$$

■ Flavor vacuum annihilator

$$\alpha_{\mathbf{k},e}^{\sigma}(t) = \underbrace{\cos \theta \alpha_{\mathbf{k},1}^{\sigma}}_{\text{Pontecorvo rotation}} + \underbrace{\sin \theta \left(\rho_{12}^{\mathbf{k}*}(t) \alpha_{\mathbf{k},2}^{\sigma} + \varepsilon^{\sigma} \lambda_{12}^{\mathbf{k}}(t) \beta_{-\mathbf{k},2}^{\sigma\dagger} \right)}_{\text{Bogoliubov transformation}}$$

■ Bogoliubov coefficients

$$\rho_{12}^{\mathbf{k}}(t) \equiv u_{\mathbf{k},2}^{\sigma\dagger}(t) u_{\mathbf{k},1}^{\sigma}(t) = v_{-\mathbf{k},1}^{\sigma\dagger}(t) v_{-\mathbf{k},2}^{\sigma}(t)$$

$$\lambda_{12}^{\mathbf{k}}(t) \equiv \varepsilon^{\sigma} u_{\mathbf{k},1}^{\sigma\dagger}(t) v_{-\mathbf{k},2}^{\sigma}(t) = -\varepsilon^{\sigma} u_{\mathbf{k},2}^{\sigma\dagger}(t) v_{-\mathbf{k},1}^{\sigma}(t)$$

■ Inequivalent Fock spaces $\implies$ Inequivalent representations

$$\lim_{V \rightarrow \infty} {}_{1,2} \langle 0 | 0(\theta, t) \rangle_{e,\mu} = 0$$

The Standard Model is based on QFT...

$$\begin{aligned}
 \mathcal{L} = & -\frac{1}{4} F_{\mu\nu} F^{\mu\nu} \\
 & + i \bar{\psi} \not{D} \psi + \text{h.c.} \\
 & + \chi_i y_{ij} \chi_j \phi + \text{h.c.} \\
 & + |D_\mu \phi|^2 - V(\phi)
 \end{aligned}$$

...so the QFT viewpoint is more fundamental than the QM one.

Under the magnifying glass

Asymptotic neutrino states: flavor or mass?

$$\mathcal{A} \simeq_{\text{out}} \langle \bar{\ell}, \textcircled{\nu}, \dots | \hat{S}_I | \dots \rangle_{\text{in}}$$



$$\textcircled{|\nu_{e,\mu}\rangle \text{ or } |\nu_{1,2}\rangle ?}$$



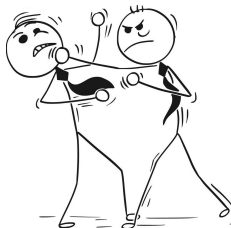
Flavor states

M. Blasone, G. Vitiello (1995)

C. Ji et al. (2002)

C. Lee (2017)

⋮



Mass states

R. E. Shrock (1980)

C. Giunti (2005)

C. Kim et al. (2007)

⋮

Neutrinos as **virtual states**? $\implies$ Divergent decay rates [*Cardall (1999)*]

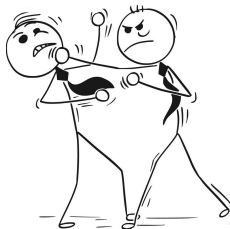
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~~Neutrinos as **virtual states**? $\Rightarrow$ Divergent decay rates [Cardall (1999)]~~

A mathematical curiosity? NO

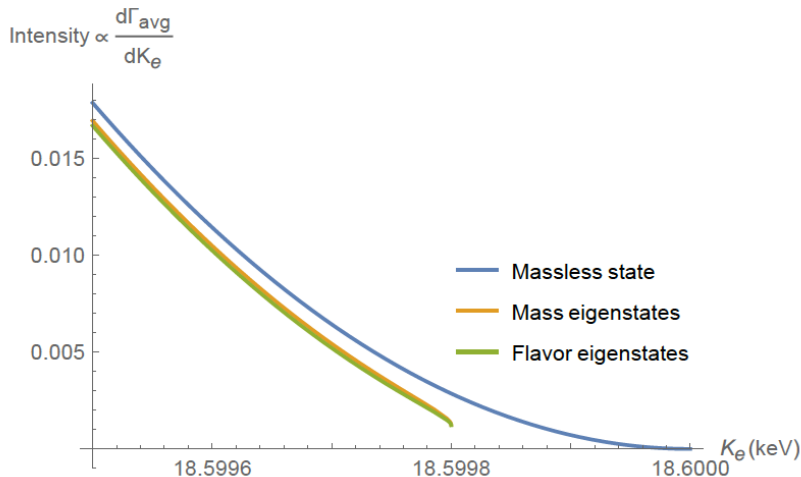


Fig.: Intensity of Tritium β -decay spectrum versus the electron kinetic energy near the end point energy (from arXiv:1709.06306 [hep-ph])

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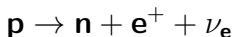
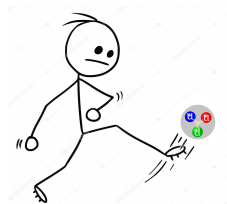
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Decay properties are not universal [*Ginzburg (1965), Muller (1997)*]

$$\tau_{\text{proton}} \gg \tau_{\text{universe}} \sim 10^{10} \text{ yr} \implies \text{protons are } \mathbf{stable!}$$

However, if we “kick” the proton...



acceleration	lifetime
a_{LHC}	$\tau_p \sim 10^{3 \times 10^8} \text{ yr}$
a_{pulsar}	$\tau_p \sim 10^{-1} \text{ s}$

Laboratory frame

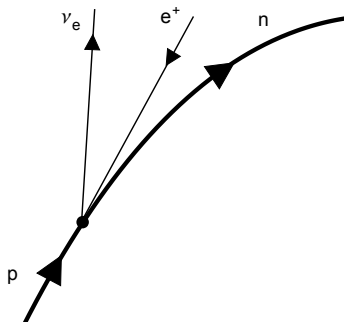
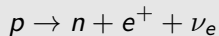


Fig.: The accelerating field provides the proton with the missing energy to decay

Comoving frame

$$p + e \rightarrow n + \nu_e$$

$$p + \bar{\nu}_e \rightarrow n + e^+$$

$$p + e + \bar{\nu}_e \rightarrow n$$

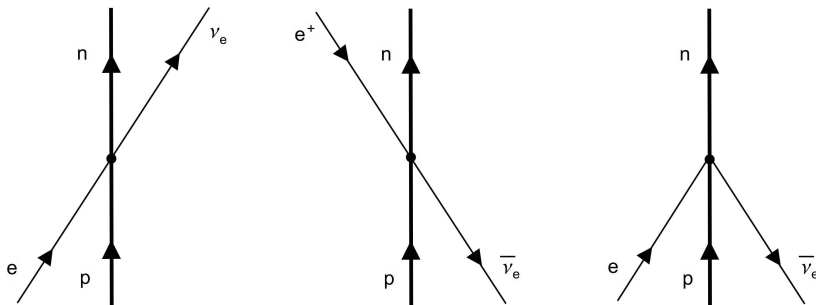


Fig.: The decay is allowed to occur due to the Unruh effect

Basic assumptions [*Matsas et al. (1999)*]:

- Massless neutrino
- $|\mathbf{k}_e| \sim |\mathbf{k}_{\nu_e}| \ll M_{p,n}$ (*no-recoil approximation*)
- Current-current Fermi theory (*semiclassical description*)

$$\hat{S}_I = \int d^4x \sqrt{-g} \hat{j}_\mu \left(\hat{\bar{\Psi}}_\nu \gamma^\mu \hat{\Psi}_e + \hat{\bar{\Psi}}_e \gamma^\mu \hat{\Psi}_\nu \right)$$

$$\hat{j}^\mu = \hat{q}(\tau) u^\mu \delta(u - a^{-1}), \quad \hat{q}(\tau) = e^{i\hat{H}\tau} \hat{q}_0 e^{-i\hat{H}\tau}$$

$$\hat{H}|n\rangle = m_n|n\rangle, \quad \hat{H}|p\rangle = m_p|p\rangle, \quad G_F = |\langle p|\hat{q}_0|n\rangle|$$

■ Tree-level transition amplitude

$$\mathcal{A}^{p \rightarrow n} = \langle n | \otimes \langle e_{k_e \sigma_e}^+, \nu_{k_\nu \sigma_\nu} | \hat{S}_I | 0 \rangle \otimes | p \rangle$$

■ Differential transition rate

$$\frac{d^2 \mathcal{P}_{in}^{p \rightarrow n}}{dk_e dk_\nu} = \frac{1}{2} \sum_{\sigma_e = \pm} \sum_{\sigma_\nu = \pm} |\mathcal{A}^{p \rightarrow n}|^2$$

■ Scalar decay rate

$$\Gamma_{in}^{p \rightarrow n} \equiv \frac{\mathcal{P}_{in}^{p \rightarrow n}}{T} = \frac{4G_F^2 a}{\pi^2 e^{\pi \Delta m/a}} \int_0^\infty d\tilde{k}_e \int_0^\infty d\tilde{k}_\nu K_{2i\Delta m/a} [2(\tilde{\omega}_e + \tilde{\omega}_\nu)]$$

$$\Gamma_{com}^{p \rightarrow n} = \frac{G_F^2 m_e}{a \pi^2 e^{\pi \Delta m/a}} \int_{-\infty}^{+\infty} d\omega \frac{K_{i\omega/a+1/2}(m_e/a) K_{i\omega/a-1/2}(m_e/a)}{\cosh[\pi(\omega - \Delta m)/a]}$$

Result

$$\Gamma_{in}^{p \rightarrow n} = \Gamma_{com}^{p \rightarrow n}$$

Remark

The Unruh effect is **mandatory** for the General Covariance of QFT

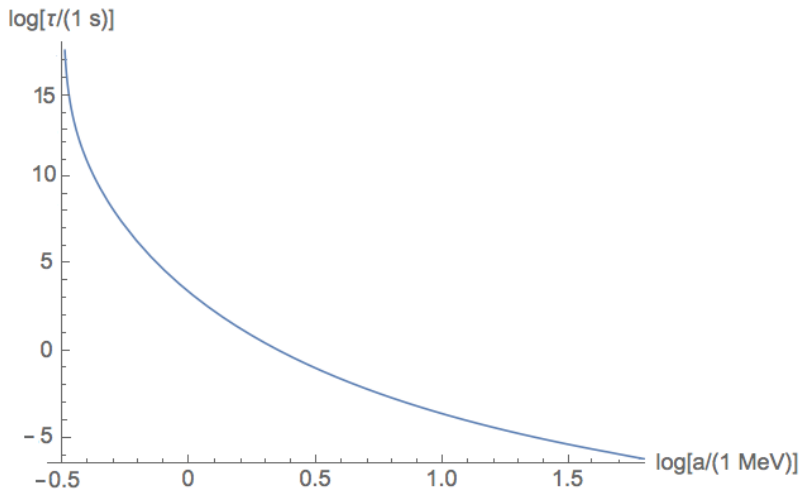


Fig.: The mean proper lifetime τ of the proton versus its proper acceleration a .

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Neutrino mixing in the inverse β -decay [Ahluwalia et al. (2016)]

*“In the **laboratory frame**, the interaction is the electroweak vertex, hence neutrinos are **flavor eigenstates**.*

*In the **comoving frame**, the proton interacts with neutrinos in Rindler states, which display a thermal weight and are **mass eigenstates**”.*

*“...if flavor eigenstates were the asymptotic states also in the accelerating frame, the **thermality** of the Unruh effect would be **violated**”.*

*“...we conclude that the rates in the two frames **disagree** when taking into account neutrino mixings”.*



The “paladins” of General Covariance of QFT

Unruh spectrum for **mixed neutrinos** [G.L. (2017)]

$$\begin{aligned} {}_{\text{M}}\langle 0 | \mathcal{N}(\theta, \omega) | 0 \rangle_{\text{M}} = & \underbrace{\frac{1}{e^{a\omega/T_{\text{U}}} + 1}}_{\text{Thermal spectrum}} + \underbrace{\sin^2 \theta \left\{ \mathcal{O} \left(\frac{\delta m}{m} \right)^2 \right\}}_{\text{Non-thermal corrections}} \end{aligned}$$

Remark

The Unruh effect for mixed fields is **non-thermal**

Neutrino mixing in the inverse β -decay [Ahluwalia et al. (2016)]

*“In the laboratory frame, the interaction is the electroweak vertex, hence neutrinos are in **flavor eigenstates**.*

~~*In the comoving frame, the proton interacts with neutrinos in Rindler states, which display an effective thermal weight and are **mass eigenstates**”.*~~

$$\mathcal{A}^{p \rightarrow n} = \langle n | \otimes \langle e_{k_e \sigma_e}^+, \nu_{k_\nu \sigma_\nu} | \hat{S}_I | 0 \rangle \otimes | p \rangle$$

$$\begin{aligned} |\nu_e\rangle &= |\nu_1\rangle \cos \theta + |\nu_2\rangle \sin \theta \\ |\nu_\mu\rangle &= -|\nu_1\rangle \sin \theta + |\nu_2\rangle \cos \theta \end{aligned}$$

Using asymptotic **flavor neutrinos**, we get in the *laboratory frame*

$$\Gamma_{in}^{p \rightarrow n} = \cos^4 \theta \Gamma_1^{p \rightarrow n} + \sin^4 \theta \Gamma_2^{p \rightarrow n} + \cos^2 \theta \sin^2 \theta \Gamma_{12}^{p \rightarrow n}$$

$$\Gamma_i^{p \rightarrow n} \equiv \frac{1}{T} \sum_{\sigma_\nu, \sigma_e} G_F^2 \int d^3 k_\nu \int d^3 k_e |\mathcal{I}_{\sigma_\nu \sigma_e}(\omega_{\nu_i}, \omega_e)|^2, \quad i = 1, 2,$$

$$\Gamma_{12}^{p \rightarrow n} \equiv \frac{1}{T} \sum_{\sigma_\nu, \sigma_e} G_F^2 \int d^3 k_\nu \int d^3 k_e \left[\mathcal{I}_{\sigma_\nu \sigma_e}(\omega_{\nu_1}, \omega_e) \mathcal{I}_{\sigma_\nu \sigma_e}^*(\omega_{\nu_2}, \omega_e) + \text{c.c.} \right]$$

... and in the *comoving frame*

$$\Gamma_{com}^{p \rightarrow n} = \cos^4 \theta \tilde{\Gamma}_1^{p \rightarrow n} + \sin^4 \theta \tilde{\Gamma}_2^{p \rightarrow n} + \cos^2 \theta \sin^2 \theta \tilde{\Gamma}_{12}^{p \rightarrow n}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \tilde{\Gamma}_{12}^{p \rightarrow n} = & \frac{2 G_F^2}{a^2 \pi^7 \sqrt{l_{\nu 1} l_{\nu 2}} e^{\pi \Delta m / a}} \int_{-\infty}^{+\infty} d\omega \left\{ \int d^2 k_e l_e \left| K_{i\omega/a+1/2} \left(\frac{l_e}{a} \right) \right|^2 \right. \\ & \times \int d^2 k_\nu (\kappa_\nu^2 + m_{\nu 1} m_{\nu 2} + l_{\nu 1} l_{\nu 2}) \\ & \times \operatorname{Re} \left\{ K_{i(\omega-\Delta m)/a+1/2} \left(\frac{l_{\nu 1}}{a} \right) K_{i(\omega-\Delta m)/a-1/2} \left(\frac{l_{\nu 2}}{a} \right) \right\} \\ & + m_e \int d^2 k_e \int d^2 k_\nu (l_{\nu 1} m_{\nu 2} + l_{\nu 2} m_{\nu 1}) \\ & \times \operatorname{Re} \left\{ K_{i\omega/a+1/2}^2 \left(\frac{l_e}{a} \right) K_{i(\omega-\Delta m)/a-1/2} \left(\frac{l_{\nu 1}}{a} \right) \right. \\ & \left. \left. \times K_{i(\omega-\Delta m)/a-1/2} \left(\frac{l_{\nu 2}}{a} \right) \right\} \right\}, \quad \kappa_\nu \equiv (k_\nu^x, k_\nu^y) \end{aligned}$$

Laboratory vs comoving decay rates

$$\Gamma_{in}^{p \rightarrow n} = \cos^4 \theta \Gamma_1^{p \rightarrow n} + \sin^4 \theta \Gamma_2^{p \rightarrow n} + \cos^2 \theta \sin^2 \theta \Gamma_{12}^{p \rightarrow n},$$

$$\Gamma_{com}^{p \rightarrow n} = \cos^4 \theta \tilde{\Gamma}_1^{p \rightarrow n} + \sin^4 \theta \tilde{\Gamma}_2^{p \rightarrow n} + \cos^2 \theta \sin^2 \theta \tilde{\Gamma}_{12}^{p \rightarrow n}$$

$$\Gamma_i^{p \rightarrow n} = \tilde{\Gamma}_i^{p \rightarrow n}, \quad i = 1, 2$$

What about the “off-diagonal” terms?

$$\Gamma_{12}^{p \rightarrow n} \stackrel{?}{=} \tilde{\Gamma}_{12}^{p \rightarrow n}$$

Laboratory vs comoving decay rates

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$$\Gamma_i^{p \rightarrow n} = \tilde{\Gamma}_i^{p \rightarrow n}, \quad i = 1, 2$$

What about the “off-diagonal” terms?

$$\Gamma_{12}^{p \rightarrow n} \stackrel{?}{=} \tilde{\Gamma}_{12}^{p \rightarrow n}$$

Comparing the decay rates



Non-trivial analytic calculations...



... but, for $\frac{\delta m}{m} \ll 1$

$$\Gamma_{12}^{p \rightarrow n} = \tilde{\Gamma}_{12}^{p \rightarrow n} \quad \text{up to } \mathcal{O}\left(\frac{\delta m}{m}\right)$$

Result

$$\Gamma_{in}^{p \rightarrow n} = \Gamma_{com}^{p \rightarrow n} \quad \text{up to } \mathcal{O}\left(\frac{\delta m}{m}\right)$$

Non-trivial analytic calculations...



...but, for $\frac{\delta m}{m} \ll 1$

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Result

$$\Gamma_{in}^{p \rightarrow n} = \Gamma_{com}^{p \rightarrow n} \quad \text{up to } \mathcal{O}\left(\frac{\delta m}{m}\right)$$



Solving the controversy with **mass eigenstates** [Matsas et al. (2018)]?

“[...] a physical Fock space for flavor neutrinos cannot be constructed. **Flavor states are only phenomenological** since their definition depends on the specific process.”

“ We should view the **neutrino states with well defined mass as the fundamental ones**. [...] The decay rates calculated in this way are perfectly in agreement”.

- A physical Fock space for flavor neutrinos can be rigorously defined [*Blasone and Vitiello (1995)*]
- Mass eigenstates *wipe mixing out* of calculations

$$\Gamma_{p \rightarrow n + \bar{\ell}_\alpha + \nu_i} = |U_{\alpha,i}|^2 \Gamma_i, \quad i = 1, 2$$

- They are inconsistent with the description of *neutrino oscillations*

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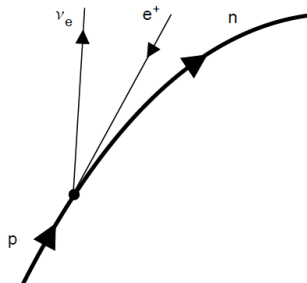
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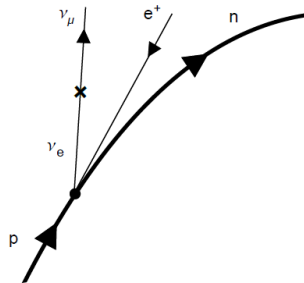
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Neutrino oscillations (inertial frame)



a) Without oscillations

$$\Gamma_{in}^{(\nu_e)} = c_\theta^4 \Gamma_1^{p \rightarrow n} + s_\theta^4 \Gamma_2^{p \rightarrow n} + c_\theta^2 s_\theta^2 \Gamma_{12}^{p \rightarrow n}$$



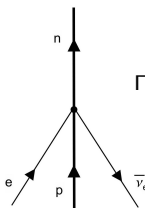
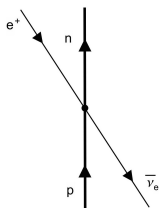
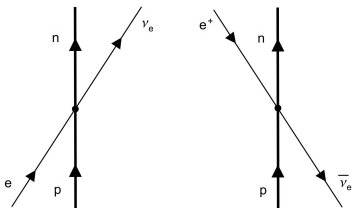
b) With oscillations

$$\Gamma_{in}^{(\nu_\mu)} = c_\theta^2 s_\theta^2 (\Gamma_1^{p \rightarrow n} + \Gamma_2^{p \rightarrow n} - \Gamma_{12}^{p \rightarrow n})$$

Total decay rate

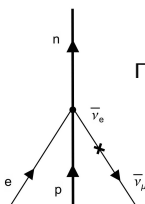
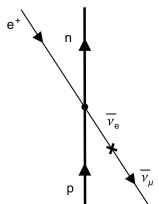
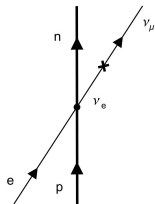
$$\Gamma_{in}^{tot} \equiv \Gamma_{in}^{(\nu_e)} + \Gamma_{in}^{(\nu_\mu)} = \cos^2 \theta \Gamma_1^{p \rightarrow n} + \sin^2 \theta \Gamma_2^{p \rightarrow n}$$

Neutrino oscillations (comoving frame)



a) Without oscillations

$$\Gamma_{acc}^{(\nu_e)} = c_\theta^4 \tilde{\Gamma}_1^{p \rightarrow n} + s_\theta^4 \tilde{\Gamma}_2^{p \rightarrow n} + c_\theta^2 s_\theta^2 \tilde{\Gamma}_{12}^{p \rightarrow n}$$



b) With oscillations

$$\Gamma_{acc}^{(\nu_\mu)} = c_\theta^2 s_\theta^2 \left(\tilde{\Gamma}_1^{p \rightarrow n} + \tilde{\Gamma}_2^{p \rightarrow n} - \tilde{\Gamma}_{12}^{p \rightarrow n} \right)$$

Total decay rate

$$\Gamma_{acc}^{tot} = \cos^2 \theta \tilde{\Gamma}_1^{p \rightarrow n} + \sin^2 \theta \tilde{\Gamma}_2^{p \rightarrow n} = \Gamma_{in}^{tot}$$

- PMNS matrix

$$U = \begin{pmatrix} c_{12} c_{13} & s_{12} c_{13} & s_{13} e^{-i\delta} \\ -s_{12} c_{23} - c_{12} s_{23} s_{13} e^{i\delta} & c_{12} c_{23} - s_{12} s_{23} s_{13} e^{i\delta} & s_{23} c_{13} \\ s_{12} s_{23} - c_{12} c_{23} s_{13} e^{i\delta} & -c_{12} s_{23} - s_{12} c_{23} s_{13} e^{i\delta} & c_{23} c_{13} \end{pmatrix}$$

- Jarlskog invariant (phase-independent parameter)

$$\text{Im} [U_{\delta i} U_{\gamma i}^* U_{\delta j}^* U_{\gamma j}] \equiv J \sum_{\lambda, k} \varepsilon_{\delta \gamma \lambda} \varepsilon_{ijk}$$

$$\delta, \gamma, \lambda = \{e, \mu, \tau\}, \quad i, j, k = \{1, 2, 3\}$$

- Physics cannot depend on the PMNS matrix parameterization
 $\implies$ **CP-violation observables** must depend on J solely

- **Mass states** are inconsistent with CP-violation in neutrino oscillations

$$A_{CP}^{(e,j)} = \Gamma_{\nu_e, \nu_j} - \Gamma_{\bar{\nu}_e, \bar{\nu}_j} = |U_{ej}|^2 |\mathcal{A}_j|^2 - |U_{ej}^*|^2 |\mathcal{A}_j|^2 = 0, \quad j = 1, 2, 3$$

- By contrast, **flavor states** correctly predict CP-violation effects

$$\mathcal{A}_{CP}^{(e,\mu)} \equiv \Gamma_{\nu_e, \nu_\mu} - \Gamma_{\bar{\nu}_e, \bar{\nu}_\mu} = 4J \left\{ -\text{Im} [\mathcal{A}_1 \mathcal{A}_2^*] + \text{Im} [\mathcal{A}_1 \mathcal{A}_3^*] - \text{Im} [\mathcal{A}_2 \mathcal{A}_3^*] \right\}$$

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Take-home message



	Ahluwalia's approach	Matsas's approach	Our approach
Asympt. neutrinos in the laboratory frame	Flavor	Mass	Flavor
Asympt. neutrinos in the comoving frame	Mass	Mass	Flavor
Agreement between the decay rates	✗	✓	✓
Consistency with neutrino oscillations	✗	✗	✓
Consistency with CP-violation	✗	✗	✓

- **Beyond** the l.o. approximation

$$\Gamma_{in}^{p \rightarrow n} = \Gamma_{com}^{p \rightarrow n}$$



The paradox would be definitively solved

$$\Gamma_{in}^{p \rightarrow n} \neq \Gamma_{com}^{p \rightarrow n}$$



- Unruh effect for mixed fields is to be revised
- Pontecorvo treatment of mixing is not consistent with QFT

- Extension to **curved background** (gravity effects)
- Application to condensed matter systems (BdG equation for superconductors)



41 of 41