

Superelastic Electron Scattering from Caesium

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Summary	5
Declaration	7
Acknowledgements	8
1 Introduction.....	9
2 Electron-Atom Collisions	14
2.0 Introduction.....	14
2.1 The Density Matrix	15
2.2 Theoretical Approaches	21
2.3 Experimental Approaches.....	25
2.4 Coherence	28
3 Apparatus	30
3.0 Introduction.....	30
3.1 Scattering Chamber and Experimental Arrangement	30
3.1.1 Vacuum System	30
3.1.2 Turntables.....	31
3.1.3 Electromagnetic Fields and Shielding.....	31
3.1.4 Cleaning	34
3.2 Atomic Beam	34
3.2.1 Caesium Beam Source	34
3.2.2 Oven	36
3.2.3 Nozzle	38
3.2.4 Collimator and Atomic Beam Dump	40
3.2.5 The Interaction Region.....	43
3.2.6 Operation.....	44

3.3 Electron Gun and Spectrometer	47
3.3.1 Electron Gun	47
3.3.2 Electron Beam Characteristics	48
3.3.3 Scattered Electron Energy Analyser	49
3.3.4 Data Acquisition.....	51
3.3.5 Electron Beam Energy Calibration	51
3.4 Laser System and Optics.....	56
3.4.1 Diode Laser Source	56
3.4.2 Frequency Stabilisation.....	56
3.4.3 Polarising Optics	59
3.4.4 Fluorescence Detection	62
3.4.5 Additional Optical Components and Instrumentation.....	62
4 Optical Pumping	65
4.0 Introduction.....	65
4.1 Preparation of the Caesium Target	66
4.2 Theoretical Models of the Laser-Atom Interaction	69
4.3 Optical Pumping Coefficients.....	70
5 The Caesium Electron Scattering Experiments.....	74
5.0 Introduction.....	74
5.1 Experimental Geometry	74
5.2 Experimental Procedure.....	75
5.3 Statistical Uncertainties	80
5.4 Systematic Uncertainties.....	81
5.4.1 Scattering Angle.....	81
5.4.2 Angular Resolution	82
5.4.3 Laser Polarisation.....	86
5.4.4 Electron Energy.....	88
5.5 Summary of Experimental Uncertainties.....	89

6 Experimental Results and Discussions.....	91
6.0 Introduction.....	91
6.1 Results.....	91
7 Conclusions.....	101
Appendix.....	103
References.....	106

Summary

This thesis describes an experimental study of superelastic electron scattering from the $6^2P_{3/2}$ state of caesium. The present status of electron-atom collision studies is initially reviewed and the motivation behind the current work is then presented. A description of the theoretical framework is subsequently provided in the context of the present experimental study, followed by an overview of the several theoretical approaches for describing electron-atom interactions which are currently available.

The apparatus and experimental setup used throughout the project are also described in detail. Technical specifications and data are provided, including diagrams (where appropriate) for a laser frequency locking system, electron gun and spectrometer, atomic beam source and data acquisition system. The experimental procedures are explained and discussed, including a detailed analysis of the optical pumping process required to excite the atomic target. A substantial component of this project was to address several potential sources of systematic error and to reduce these wherever possible. All of the errors and uncertainties relevant to the experiment are discussed in chapter 5.

In chapter 6 the results of the present superelastic electron scattering experiments are reported for incident electron energies of 5.5eV, 8.5eV and 13.5eV, corresponding to superelastic electron energies of 7eV, 10eV and 15eV. These results are presented as three reduced Stokes parameters, \bar{P}_1 , \bar{P}_2 , \bar{P}_3 and a coherence parameter, P^+ . For comparison, predictions from a number of currently available theories are presented

alongside the experimental results. Finally, conclusions are drawn on this work in the context of the current status of electron-atom scattering from alkali-metals.

Declaration

I certify that this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university; and that to the best of my knowledge and belief it does not contain any material previously published or written by another author except where due reference is made in the text.

Daniel Stephen Slaughter

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