

## EXPERIMENTAL DETECTION OF THE ETHER

### ERNEST WILBUR SILVERTOOTH

Star Route, Box 166, Olga, Washington 98279, USA

Received: May 1986

**Abstract** *Michelson-Morley type experiments are shown to be non-sequiturs because their logic fails to take into account the relationship between wavelength and propagation velocity. An experimental demonstration of anisotropy in wavelength is described.*

The experimental evidence cited to support the principle of relativity derives mainly from the Michelson-Morley experiment<sup>[1]</sup> and subsequent variants based on the same logic. That logic fails to take into account the relationship

$$c = \nu\lambda \quad (1)$$

If a source and receiver are comoving, and if  $c$  (the speed of light) changes, then  $\lambda$  (the wavelength) must also change. The frequency  $\nu$  cannot change as this would result in a continuous increase or diminution of the number of waves in the path, a circumstance in conflict with thermodynamics. It is, therefore, impossible to measure the one-way velocity of light by these means since, for example, if the velocity  $c$  were doubled, the wavelength  $\lambda$  would also be doubled, and some crest would pass two points with the same time lapse as if the two parameters were not doubled. Light pulses generated by choppers of one sort or another behave in the same manner because a pulse is an ensemble of sine waves as taught by Fourier. The methods of Roemer and Bradley to measure the one-way velocity, while valid, are inconvenient to laboratory implementation.

Taking either leg of the Michelson interferometer the round trip transit time may be written as

$$t = \frac{L}{c_1} + \frac{L}{c_2} = \frac{L}{\nu\lambda_1} + \frac{L}{\nu\lambda_2} \quad (2)$$

which for the case  $c_1 = c_2 = c$  sums to  $\frac{2L}{\nu\lambda}$ , which, because the experiment yields a null result, must hold for all values of  $c_1$  and  $c_2$  if these can be unequal as will be shown to be the case. The equation for either leg of a Michelson interferometer may thus be written as

$$\frac{L}{\lambda_1} + \frac{L}{\lambda_2} = \frac{2L}{\lambda} \quad (3)$$

and the experiment is not to be definitive as the single equation contains two unknowns. For the second equation it is necessary to turn to the experiment of Sagnac.<sup>[2]</sup>

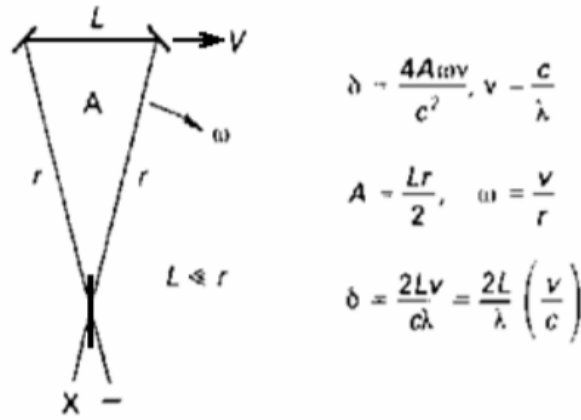


Figure 1: The Sagnac Interferometer.

A particular geometry of the Sagnac interferometer is shown in Figure 1, that is, the centre of rotation is chosen to coincide with the beam splitter location. The Sagnac phase shift is independent of the location of the centre of rotation and the shape of the area. The equations accompanying Figure 1 shows that the phase shift along  $L$  is independent of  $r$ , that is, the phase shift along  $L$  is preserved when  $L$  in pure translation. The difference in the number of wavelengths in reciprocal directions along path  $L$  may be written as

$$\frac{L}{\lambda_1} - \frac{L}{\lambda_2} = \frac{2L}{\lambda} \left( \frac{v}{c} \right) \tag{4}$$

Solving equations (3) and (4) for  $\lambda_1$  and  $\lambda_2$  we have

$$\lambda_1 = \frac{\lambda}{1 + \frac{v}{c}} \quad , \quad \lambda_2 = \frac{\lambda}{1 - \frac{v}{c}} \tag{5}$$

or

$$c_1 = \frac{c}{1 + \frac{v}{c}} \quad , \quad c_2 = \frac{c}{1 - \frac{v}{c}}$$

Equations (5) show that the number of wavelengths in the round trip becomes

$$n = \frac{L}{\lambda} \left( 1 + \frac{v}{c} \right) + \frac{L}{\lambda} \left( 1 - \frac{v}{c} \right) = \frac{2L}{\lambda} \tag{6}$$

and the round trip transit time becomes

$$t = \frac{L}{c} \left( 1 + \frac{v}{c} \right) + \frac{L}{c} \left( 1 - \frac{v}{c} \right) = \frac{2L}{c} \tag{7}$$

and both  $n$  and  $t$  are independent of  $v$ . Thus the Michelson-Morley experiment requires neither isotropy in  $c$  nor the Lorentz contraction to explain the null result.

Indeed, the Lorentz contraction, were it real, would yield a fringe shift. For completeness, it is noted that the Mössbauer experiment of Turner and Hill<sup>[3]</sup> and the deductions from pulsar observations by Cole<sup>[4]</sup> are defeated through the second order by the argument of Tyapkin.<sup>[5]</sup>

While a laboratory measurement of the one-way velocity of light has been shown not to be possible, it is feasible to measure the one-way wavelength of light, that is, the difference between the rest wavelength  $\lambda$  and the wavelength

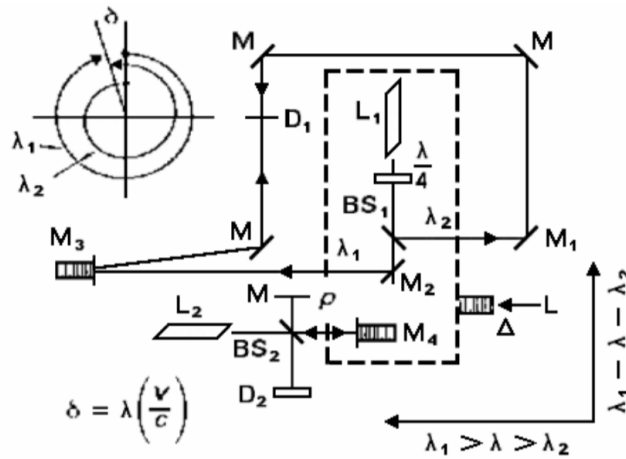


Figure 2: Measurement of the one-way wavelength of light.

$\lambda_1$  and  $\lambda_2$  as derived in equations (5). The ways to do this are shown in Figure 2. The parts within the dotted rectangle, laser  $L_1$ , quarter-wave plate, mirrors and beam splitter, are mounted on a linear slide such that the assembly can move in a direction parallel to the colinear beams  $M_2M_3$  and  $BS_1M_1$ . By this means one of the above beams increases in path length by just the amount that the other beam decreases. The amount of motion is controlled by a micrometer drive  $\Delta$  for coarse translation, and an associated piezo stack for fine translation. To ensure that an integral number of rest wavelengths  $\lambda$  are traversed by the slide, a second interferometer assembly  $L_2MM_4$  is used. The detector  $D_2$  reads a maximum each time  $\Delta$  changes  $\frac{\lambda}{2}$ , since the variable path  $p$  of that interferometer is round trip and, as seen from equation (6), is independent of any anisotropy in the wavelength along the direction  $p$ .

The first interferometer  $L_1M_2M_3M_1$  produces two beams oppositely directed each of which impinges on the detector<sup>[6]</sup>  $D_1$  which senses its position in the standing wave pattern between the mirrors  $MM$  as shown. Mirrors  $M_3$  and  $M_4$  are mounted on piezo stacks excited by a common sine wave source such that the outputs of detectors  $D_1$  and  $D_2$  are also sinusoidal. If then the translating member moves towards  $M_3$  an amount  $\lambda$ , then the wave impinging on  $D_1$  by the route  $M_3$  will advance less than a wave ( $\lambda_1 > \lambda$ ), and the wave impinging on  $D_1$  by the route  $M_1$  will retard more than a wave ( $\lambda > \lambda_2$ ). Thus, the two waves will remain in the

same realtive phase, but the standing wave pattern will have shifted with respect to the photocathode of the detector  $D_1$  by a first-order amount  $\delta = \lambda \frac{v}{c}$ . In the experiment the two detector outputs are first brought into phase. This is accomplished by setting the voltage on the  $\Delta$  piezo stack such that the output of  $D_1$  is a maximum in either of the two phases the detector output may take. The output of  $D_2$  is then also set to a maximum in the same phase as  $D_1$  by means of a tilting plate phase shifter (not shown) in the path  $BS_2M$ . The movable assembly is then shifted some nominal distance  $\Delta$  with the micrometer drive and the voltage on that piezo stack is readjusted to restore the  $D_1$  output to a maximum in the same phase as before. These adjustments are made visually from the  $D_1D_2$  outputs as displayed on a dual-gun oscilloscope. The voltage adjustment is by means of a 10-turn potentiometer which makes a precise setting easy to accomplish. If there is no anisotropy in  $\lambda$  in the direction  $M_2M_3$ , then the  $D_2$  output will again be in phase with  $D_1$  in the new  $\Delta$  location. If there is anisotropy in wavelength then, in general, the output of  $D_2$  will no longer be in phase with  $D_1$ . In this circumstance,  $\Delta$  is adjusted to such a position that when the output of  $D_1$  is set to the initial phase, the output of  $D_2$  is reversed in phase, an arbitrary choice of the experimenter. This situation is obtained without readjustment of the tilting plate phase shifter. The number of rest wavelengths  $n$  through which the linear slide is moved is  $\frac{\Delta}{\lambda}$ . For the phase reversal of  $D_2$ ,

$$n\delta = \frac{\lambda}{2} \quad (8)$$

and

$$\frac{v}{c} = \frac{\delta}{\lambda} \quad (9)$$

The apparatus is mounted on an optical table such that it may be rotated about a vertical axis. When the line of travel  $\Delta$  is oriented in an east-west (EW) direction at a time when the constellation Leo is on the horizon,  $\Delta$ , as previously defined, measures 0.25mm. With the apparatus rotated  $90^\circ$  (north-south) the outputs of the detectors remain in phase during an excursion of  $\Delta$ . The detectors also remained in phase in the EW direction when Leo was 6 or 18 hours from the horizon. With a wavelength of  $0.63\mu\text{m}$  (HeNe) the velocity, from equation (9) indicates a  $v$  of 378  $\text{km/s}$ . This value is in reasonable agreement with that of Muller<sup>[7]</sup> as deduced from the NASA-Ames U2 radiometer measurements.

Because the number of wavelengths in a path in a moving frame may vary as a function of the velocity of the frame, then the Doppler frequency may be altered. This circumstance provides a satisfactory explanation for such observed, but unexplained, phenomenae as the apparently accelerating universe,<sup>[8]</sup> the anomalous redshift of quasars, and the significant errors in GPS (Satellite Positioning System). As an interesting example the redshift equation contains an additional term, which, depending on the numbers, may dominate the situation

$$v_{obs} = v_{source} \left[ \frac{\sqrt{1 - \frac{v^2}{c^2}}}{\sqrt{1 + \frac{v^2}{c^2}}} + \frac{L\dot{v}}{c^2} \right]$$

if  $\dot{\nu}$  is not zero, because  $L$  may be of the order of  $10^{27}$  cm.

The described effort was sponsored in part by the Air Force Systems Command, Rome Air Development Center, Griffiss AFB, and the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency.

## REFERENCES

- [1] FEYNMAN, R. *Lecture on Physics Volume I*. Section 15-3. Addison-Wesley. New York, 1963.
- [2] SAGNAC, G. *Comptes rendus hebdomadaires des séances de l'Académie des sciences*. tome 157, page 708, 1913.
- [3] TURNER, K. C. and HILL, H. A. *New Experimental Limit on Velocity-Dependent Interactions of Clocks and Distant Matter*. Phys. Rev. 134, B252, 1964.
- [4] COLE, T. W. *Astronomical Tests for the Presence of an Ether*. Mon. Not. R. Astr. Soc. 175 93P, 1976.
- [5] TYAPKIN, A. A. *Lett. al Nuovo Cimento* 7. page 760, 1973.
- [6] SILVERTOOTH, E. W. and JACOBS, S. F. *Standing Wave Sensor*. Applied Optics, Vol. 22, Issue 9, pp. 1274-1275, 1983. DOI: 10.1364/AO.22.001274.
- [7] MULLER, R. A. *The Cosmic Background Radiation and the New Aether Drift*. Scientific American 238, pp. 64-74, 1978.
- [8] GUNN, J. E. and TINSLEY, B. M. *An accelerating Universe*. Nature 257, pp. 454-457, 1975.