Nuclear Instruments and Methods in Physics Research A 656 (2011) 96–100

Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Nuclear Instruments and Methods in Physics Research A

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/nima

Modeling the transmission of curved neutron guides with non-perfect reflectivity

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:
Received 21 June 2011
Received in revised form
21 July 2011
Accepted 22 July 2011
Available online 29 July 2011

Keywords:
Curved guide analysis
Neutron transmission
Non-perfect reflectivity
Number of reflections
Reflection coefficient

ABSTRACT

Analytic expressions for the transmission of a curved neutron guide including reflection losses are contrasted. The expressions are derived by considering the distribution of the number of reflections as a function of grazing angle at the outer surface. The results of different analytic expressions are compared with simulation results to find the model that best fits the simulations.

Published by Elsevier B.V.

1. Introduction

Thermal and cold neutrons may be transported from their source to different instruments using long neutron guides applying the principle of the total reflection from the inside surface of the guide. Curved guides composed of short straight sections as a polygonal approximation to uniform curvature can remove the direct streaming of fast neutrons and gammas from the beam. Maier-Leibnitz and Springer [1] have given the exact expression for the transmission through a curved guide assuming continuous curvature and perfect reflectivity. It is also seen that various transmission properties of the curved guide may be derived from the acceptance diagram [2] that describes in (z,ψ) space the available positions and directions of successfully transmitted trajectories for a given wavelength, where z and ψ are the spatial and angular coordinates of the neutron trajectory relative to the guide axis at any plane normal to the axis, including the entrance. This method assumes that the guide is uniformly and completely illuminated, so that all possible successful trajectories are accounted, and that the curved guide is at least as long as the line-of-sight length. However there can be significant reductions in transmitted intensity when the reflectivity R of the guide surface is less than unity.

Although detailed design of neutron guides require computer simulation, initial estimates of the performance and parameter dependence are useful. By considering the number of reflections as a function of the grazing angle and the distribution of grazing angles, Mildner and Hammouda [3] have shown that the transmission of a neutron bender or curved guide with a given value of R can be determined exactly using exponential integral functions. They have derived various properties of the transmission as a function of wavelength λ. These expressions reduce correctly to those for the straight guide in the limit of large wavelengths. However, such special functions are less easy to apply than elementary functions. Consequently a suitable correction to the transmission for the perfect reflecting curved guide is sought [4,5] that can reasonably approximate that for non-perfect reflection.

The length of direct sight for the curved guide is given by $L_0 = 4W/\psi_c$, where W is the width of the guide, $\psi_c = \sqrt{(2W/\rho)}$ is the characteristic angle of the curved guide, and ρ is the radius of curvature of the guide. This defines a characteristic wavelength $\lambda_c = \psi_c/\gamma_c$, for the guide, where γ_c depends on the particular reflecting surface and ψ_c on the geometry of the curved guide. (For instance, $\gamma_c = 1.73$ mrad Å^{-1} for a nickel reflecting surface.) Assuming perfect reflectivity, the transmission in the plane of curvature (usually horizontal) relative to the straight guide is given [2,6]

$$T_0(x) = \begin{cases} (2/3)x^2 & x \le 1, \\ (2/3)x^2[1-(1-x^{-2})^{3/2}] & x > 1, \end{cases} \tag{1}$$

where $x = \lambda/\lambda_c$. In practice, the transmission is reduced by the reflectivity and the reduction is best determined by computer simulation assuming a model for this reflection coefficient R as a function of grazing angle χ and wavelength λ. However, it is also

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0168-9002/$ - see front matter Published by Elsevier B.V.
doi:10.1016/j.nima.2011.07.046

useful to find an approximate analytic expression for this correction.

The transmission for a given successful trajectory must be modified by a factor R^n, where n is the number of reflections that the trajectory undergoes throughout the length of the guide. We require an adequate estimate for the correction to account for the inability to determine an analytic expression for the computer simulation average $\langle R^n \rangle$, where $\langle \ldots \rangle$ indicates an average in (z,ψ) space over all *successful* trajectories at a given wavelength. The value of n depends not only on the guide geometric characteristics, but also on the coordinates (z,ψ) of the trajectories at the guide entrance. It is convenient to express the angular dependence in terms of χ at the surface of the outer guide wall. A larger grazing angle results not only in a greater number of reflections for zig-zag trajectories, but also in a lower value of the reflectivity, producing greater losses. However, in the following we assume that the reflectivity may be modeled by a constant value of R for χ less that the critical angle for the given wavelength, and zero above.

2. Analytic corrections

We seek a factor that modifies T_0, the transmission assuming perfect reflectivity, which accounts for the loss in transmission of the curve guide with non-unity reflection coefficients. A simple multiplicative factor $R^{\langle n \rangle}$, where $\langle n \rangle$ indicates an average in (z,ψ) space over *all* (rather than all *successful*) trajectories at a given λ, is only good for small losses in reflectivity and for wavelengths close to λ_c. Schirmer and Mildner [4] have shown that the average number of reflections for successful trajectories, $\langle n \rangle_R \approx \langle nR^n \rangle / \langle R^n \rangle$, can be approximated in terms of the variance of the number of reflections for the curved guide for perfect reflectivity, when the reflectivity R is unity. That is,

$$\langle n \rangle_R \approx \langle n \rangle - (1-R)(\langle n^2 \rangle - \langle n \rangle^2). \tag{2}$$

We can determine analytic values of $\langle n \rangle$ and $\langle n^2 \rangle$ in the horizontal plane for a curved guide of length L_0 equal to the line-of-sight. Note that $\langle n \rangle_R$ is less than $\langle n \rangle$, and $R^{\langle n \rangle_R}$ is a better approximation than $R^{\langle n \rangle}$ to the simulation result. This result is used to estimate the true transmission factor, assuming that the curved guide is continuous, but reasonable agreement is found with simulation results only over a restricted range of R and x. However, expanding R about unity to second order, we obtain an expression

$$T_{SM} = T_0[R^{\langle n \rangle} + (\langle n^2 \rangle - \langle n \rangle^2)(1-R)^2/2] \tag{3}$$

which is a better approximation to $\langle R^n \rangle$. This approximation has been shown [4] to be useful for describing the transmission through a neutron bender with low reflection losses (R close to unity).

A trajectory that has n reflections per length of direct sight has its transmission modified by a factor $R^{n(L/L_0)}$ for a guide of length L ($L > L_0$), assuming a constant loss at each reflection. This factor may be written as $\exp[n(L/L_0)\log R] = \exp(-\alpha n)$, where

$$\alpha = -(L/L_0)\log R = (L/L_0)|\log R|. \tag{4}$$

Mildner and Hammouda [3] have expressed their transmission results in terms of $|\log R|$. Using a different approach, Dubbers [5,7] has shown that the transmission of the curved guide with non-perfect reflectivity relative to the straight guide with perfect reflectivity is given by

$$T_D(x) = (1/x)\int_G^\infty (2/n^4)\,dn\exp(-\alpha n) + (1/x)\int_2^{2Z} (1/4 - 4/n^4)\,dn\exp(-\alpha n) \tag{5}$$

where for $x \le 1$ (garland reflections only) the limits of integration are $G = 1/x$ and $2Z = 2$, and for $x > 1$ (both garland and zig-zag reflections) the limits of integration are $G = 1$ and $2Z = 2[x + (x^2-1)^{1/2}]$. This exact result for the wavelength-dependent neutron transmission can be shown to be equivalent to the earlier results [3]. For a guide with perfect reflectivity, $\alpha = 0$, these reduce to Eq. (1) above. In practice for small reflectivity losses, the transmission may be estimated by expanding the $\exp(-\alpha n)$ factor to second order. For garland reflections only ($x \le 1$) and for both garland and zig-zag reflections ($x > 1$)

$$T_D(x) = \begin{cases} T_0(x) - \alpha x + \alpha^2, & x \le 1 \\ T_0(x) - [2x - x^{-1}]\alpha + [(4/3)x^2(1 + (1-x^{-2})^{3/2}) - 1/3x]\alpha^2, & x > 1. \end{cases} \tag{6}$$

The integrals in Eq. (5) are derived by expressing the number of reflections, n as a function of the coordinates (z,ψ) at the guide entrance. The loss in the transmission caused by non-perfect reflection becomes an integration of the distribution of the number of reflections per line-of-sight length. We have found a more convenient derivation of the integrals in Eq. (5) by expressing the transmission in terms of the spatial coordinate z and the grazing angle at the outer (concave) surface (see Appendix A). The evaluation of the distribution of the number of reflections is available from the curved guide analysis [2].

3. Comparison of results

Fig. 1 shows a comparison of the different approximations together with the results from computer simulations as a function of the reduced wavelength for various values of reflectivity. This indicates the region of (x,R) space where the agreement for each approximation breaks down and deviates from the simulation result. Neither model is exact, and disagreement becomes more marked as $x = \lambda/\lambda_c$ increases, and the reflectivity R decreases. In fact, both models produce transmissions that eventually diverge upwards relative to the true transmission factor defined by the simulation results. In each case an expansion to third order would

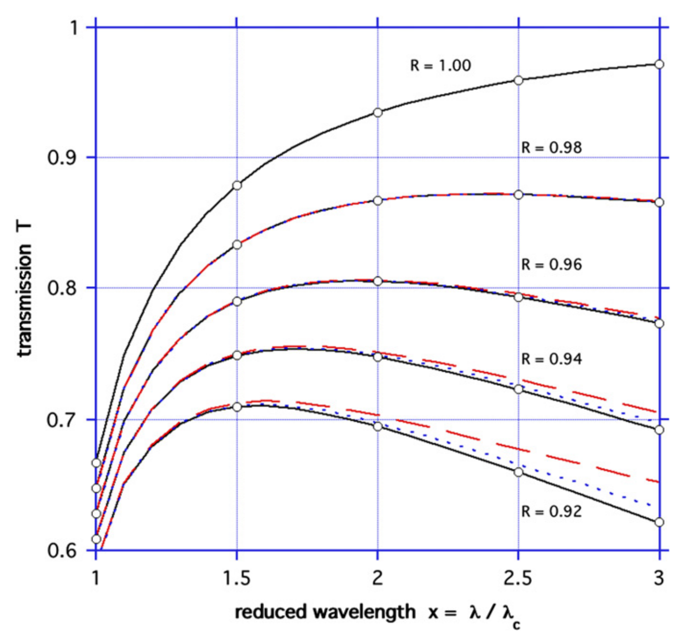

Fig. 1. The transmission of a fully illuminated curved guide of line-of-sight length for different values of the reflectivity R as a function of the reduced wavelength x. The open circles are the computer simulation results. The dotted curves are T_{SM}, the dashed curves are T_D, and the full curves are T_M.