



Wave-scattering from a gently curved surface



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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 16 May 2016

Received in revised form 21 June 2016

Accepted 24 June 2016

Available online 29 June 2016

Editor: M. Cvetič

ABSTRACT

We study wave scattering from a gently curved surface. We show that the recursive relations, implied by shift invariance, among the coefficients of the perturbative series for the scattering amplitude allow to perform an infinite resummation of the perturbative series to all orders in the amplitude of the corrugation. The resummed series provides a derivative expansion of the scattering amplitude in powers of derivatives of the height profile, which is expected to become exact in the limit of quasi-specular scattering. We discuss the relation of our results with the so-called small-slope approximation introduced some time ago by Voronovich.

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1. Introduction

The problem of wave scattering at rough interfaces has always attracted much attention, due to its importance in diverse areas of physics ranging from optics, to acoustics, communications, geophysics, etc. Its difficulty is universally acknowledged, and even with presently available computers it represents a formidable challenge in realistic situations. Despite impressive progress made in numerical methods, approximate analytical approaches are still much valuable as the only ones capable of providing an insight into general physical features of wave scattering. It is not surprising then that a number of diverse approximation schemes, with different ranges of validity, have been developed over the years. For a review, we address the reader to the monograph [1] or to the recent review [2]. Historically, the first and perhaps most widely known approximate theory of scattering by rough surfaces is the *small perturbation method* (SPM) originally developed by Rayleigh to study scattering of sound waves by sinusoidally corrugated surfaces of small amplitude, and later generalized by several other authors to electromagnetic scattering. Another classic approximate scheme is the *Kirchhoff approximation* (KA), also known as the *tangent plane approximation* (TPA), which represents a valid approximation for locally smooth surfaces with large radii of curvature. A scheme aiming at reconciling SPM and KA was proposed twenty years ago by Voronovich [1,3], i.e. the *small-slope approximation* (SSA). It consists of an ingenious *ansatz* for the scattering ampli-

tude (SA), that manages to capture the leading curvature correction to the KA. The *ansatz* involves unknown coefficients that are determined *a posteriori* by matching the SSA with the SPM in their common region of validity. Numerical investigations revealed that within its domain of validity the SSA is indeed remarkably accurate [2]. Several authors have attempted to provide rigorous mathematical derivations of the SSA, utilizing the extinction theorem [4,5] or the Meecham–Lysanov method [6].

In recent years it has been shown [7–9] that curvature corrections to the Casimir interaction between two gently curved surfaces can be estimated using a derivative expansion (DE) of the Casimir-energy functional, in powers of derivatives of the height profiles of the surfaces. The DE has been later used to study curvature effects in the Casimir–Polder interaction of a particle with a gently curved surface [10,11]. The same method has been used very recently to estimate the shifts of the rotational levels of a diatomic molecule due to its van der Waals interaction with a curved dielectric surface [12]. An important insight into the nature of the DE was achieved in [13] (see also [10]) where it was shown that the derivative expansion amounts to an infinite resummation of the perturbative series for the Casimir energy to all orders in the amplitude of the corrugation, for *small* in-plane momenta of the electromagnetic field. These methods can indeed be adapted to the problem of wave scattering by a rough surface. In this letter we demonstrate that the infinite recursive relations among the coefficients of the perturbative series for the SA, engendered by its exact invariance under vertical and horizontal shifts of the surface, allow to perform an *infinite* resummation of the perturbative series, to all orders in the amplitude of the corrugation. The resummation procedure results into a DE of the SA in powers of derivatives of the

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height profile, which is expected to become exact in the limit of quasi-specular scattering. We show that our DE of the SA is indeed equivalent to Voronovich's SSA ansatz, thus providing a formal justification for it.

2. Perturbative expansion of the SA

We consider a surface Σ separating two media of different (optical or acoustical) properties. A cartesian coordinate system (x, y, z) is chosen such that the z -axis is directed upwards in the direction going from medium 2 towards medium 1, while (x, y) span a reference plane orthogonal to the z -axis. It is assumed that the surface Σ can be represented by a (single-valued) smooth height profile of equation $z = h(\mathbf{x}) = h(x, y)$. A downward propagating (electromagnetic or acoustic) wave $E_{\alpha_0}^{(\text{in})}(\mathbf{x}, z) = E_{\alpha_0}^{(0)}/\sqrt{q_0} \exp[i(\mathbf{k}_0 \cdot \mathbf{x} - q_0 z)]$ with wave vector $\mathbf{K}_0 = (\mathbf{k}_0, -q_0)$, wavenumber $K_0 = 2\pi/\lambda_0$ ¹ is incident on the surface. The index α_0 takes values in a discrete set consisting of one or two elements, depending on whether an acoustic or electromagnetic wave is considered. The scattered field $\mathbf{E}^{(\text{sc})}(\mathbf{r}, z)$ at points above and far from Σ can be expressed through the SA $S_{\alpha\alpha_0}(\mathbf{k}, \mathbf{k}_0)$ as a superpositions of upwards propagating waves with wave vector $\mathbf{K} = (\mathbf{k}, q)$ as:

$$E_{\alpha}^{(\text{sc})}(\mathbf{x}, z) = \int \frac{d^2 \mathbf{k}}{4\pi^2} \frac{1}{\sqrt{q}} e^{i(\mathbf{k} \cdot \mathbf{x} + qz)} S_{\alpha\alpha_0}(\mathbf{k}, \mathbf{k}_0) E_{\alpha_0}^{(0)}. \quad (1)$$

The SA satisfies two general properties. The first one is *reciprocity*:

$$S_{\alpha\alpha_0}(\mathbf{k}, \mathbf{k}_0) = S_{\alpha_0\alpha}(-\mathbf{k}_0, -\mathbf{k}), \quad (2)$$

which follows from microscopic reversibility [14]. The second general property satisfied by the SA is *shift invariance*, which amounts to the following transformation property of the SA under a horizontal and vertical displacement of the surface Σ :

$$S_{\alpha\alpha_0}(\mathbf{k}, \mathbf{k}_0)|_{h(\mathbf{x}-\mathbf{a})-b} = e^{i[(\mathbf{k}_0-\mathbf{k}) \cdot \mathbf{a} - (q_0+q)b]} S_{\alpha\alpha_0}(\mathbf{k}, \mathbf{k}_0)|_{h(\mathbf{x})}. \quad (3)$$

According to the SPM, we postulate that for sufficiently small height profiles h the SA can be expanded as a power series in the height profile:

$$S_{\alpha\alpha_0}(\mathbf{k}, \mathbf{k}_0) = \sum_{n \geq 0} \frac{1}{n!} \int d^2 \mathbf{x}_1 \cdots \int d^2 \mathbf{x}_n \times G_{\alpha\alpha_0}^{(n)}(\mathbf{x}_1, \dots, \mathbf{x}_n; \mathbf{k}, \mathbf{k}_0) h(\mathbf{x}_1) \dots h(\mathbf{x}_n), \quad (4)$$

where the kernels $G_{\mu\nu}^{(n)}(\mathbf{x}_1, \dots, \mathbf{x}_n; \mathbf{k}, \mathbf{k}_0)$ are symmetric functions of $(\mathbf{x}_1 \dots \mathbf{x}_n)$. In momentum space, the perturbative expansion of the SA reads:

$$S_{\alpha\alpha_0}(\mathbf{k}, \mathbf{k}_0) = \sum_{n \geq 0} \frac{1}{n!} \int \frac{d^2 \mathbf{k}_1}{(2\pi)^2} \cdots \int \frac{d^2 \mathbf{k}_n}{(2\pi)^2} \times \tilde{G}_{\alpha\alpha_0}^{(n)}(\mathbf{k}_1, \dots, \mathbf{k}_n; \mathbf{k}, \mathbf{k}_0) \tilde{h}(\mathbf{k}_1) \dots \tilde{h}(\mathbf{k}_n). \quad (5)$$

Shift invariance under a horizontal translation of the profile $h(\mathbf{x})$ implies that the kernels $\tilde{G}_{\alpha\alpha_0}^{(n)}(\mathbf{k}_1, \dots, \mathbf{k}_n; \mathbf{k}, \mathbf{k}_0)$ must be of the form:

$$\tilde{G}_{\alpha\alpha_0}^{(n)}(\mathbf{k}_1, \dots, \mathbf{k}_n; \mathbf{k}, \mathbf{k}_0) = (2\pi)^2 \delta^{(2)}(\mathbf{k}_1 + \dots + \mathbf{k}_n + \mathbf{k}_0 - \mathbf{k}) \times \tilde{G}_{\alpha\alpha_0}^{(n)}(\mathbf{k}_1, \dots, \mathbf{k}_n; \mathbf{k}, \mathbf{k}_0), \quad (6)$$

where $\tilde{G}_{\alpha\alpha_0}^{(n)}(\mathbf{k}_1, \dots, \mathbf{k}_n; \mathbf{k}, \mathbf{k}_0)$ are symmetric functions of the in-plane momenta $\mathbf{k}_1, \dots, \mathbf{k}_n$, which are defined only on the hyperplane $\mathcal{P}^{(n)} \equiv \{\mathbf{k}_1 + \dots + \mathbf{k}_n + \mathbf{k}_0 - \mathbf{k} = 0\}$. Of course

$$\tilde{G}_{\alpha\alpha_0}^{(0)}(\mathbf{k}, \mathbf{k}_0) = (2\pi)^2 \delta^{(2)}(\mathbf{k}_0 - \mathbf{k}) R_{\alpha\alpha_0}(\mathbf{k}_0), \quad (7)$$

where $R_{\alpha\alpha_0}(\mathbf{k}_0)$ are the familiar reflection coefficients for a planar surface. By inserting Eq. (6) into Eq. (5), the perturbative series can be rewritten as:

$$S_{\alpha\alpha_0}(\mathbf{k}, \mathbf{k}_0) = \sum_{n \geq 0} \frac{1}{n!} \int \frac{d^2 \mathbf{k}_1}{(2\pi)^2} \cdots \int \frac{d^2 \mathbf{k}_n}{(2\pi)^2} \tilde{h}(\mathbf{k}_1) \dots \tilde{h}(\mathbf{k}_n) \times (2\pi)^2 \delta^{(2)}(\mathbf{k}_1 + \dots + \mathbf{k}_n + \mathbf{k}_0 - \mathbf{k}) \tilde{G}_{\alpha\alpha_0}^{(n)}(\mathbf{k}_1, \dots, \mathbf{k}_n; \mathbf{k}, \mathbf{k}_0). \quad (8)$$

Next we show that the perturbative kernels have to satisfy an infinite set of relations, as a result of the shift invariance under a vertical shift of the profile. To derive these relations we note the identity that follows from Eq. (3):

$$e^{i(q_0+q)b} S_{\alpha\alpha_0}(\mathbf{k}, \mathbf{k}_0)|_{h(\mathbf{x})-b} = S_{\alpha\alpha_0}(\mathbf{k}, \mathbf{k}_0)|_{h(\mathbf{x})}. \quad (9)$$

Upon taking p derivatives of both sides of the above relation with respect to the shift b , we obtain the identities:

$$\left. \frac{d^p}{db^p} \left(e^{i(q_0+q)b} S_{\alpha\alpha_0}(\mathbf{k}, \mathbf{k}_0)|_{h(\mathbf{x})-b} \right) \right|_{b=0} \equiv A_{\alpha\alpha_0}^{(p)}(\mathbf{k}, \mathbf{k}_0)|_{h(\mathbf{x})} = 0 \quad (10)$$

that have to be satisfied for any profile h . By making use of the perturbative expansion of the SA Eq. (4) into the l.h.s. of the above identities, one obtains the following expansion for the kernels $A_{\alpha\alpha_0}^{(p)}(\mathbf{k}, \mathbf{k}_0)|_{h(\mathbf{x})}$:

$$A_{\alpha\alpha_0}^{(p)}(\mathbf{k}, \mathbf{k}_0)|_{h(\mathbf{x})} = \sum_{n \geq 0} \frac{1}{n!} \int d^2 \mathbf{x}_1 \cdots \int d^2 \mathbf{x}_n \times A_{\alpha\alpha_0}^{(p,n)}(\mathbf{x}_1, \dots, \mathbf{x}_n; \mathbf{k}, \mathbf{k}_0) h(\mathbf{x}_1) \dots h(\mathbf{x}_n) = 0, \quad (11)$$

with:

$$A_{\alpha\alpha_0}^{(p,n)}(\mathbf{x}_1, \dots, \mathbf{x}_n; \mathbf{k}, \mathbf{k}_0) = \sum_{k=0}^p (-1)^k \frac{p!}{k!(p-k)!} [i(q_0+q)]^{p-k} \times \int d^2 \mathbf{x}_{n+1} \cdots \int d^2 \mathbf{x}_{n+k} G_{\alpha\alpha_0}^{(n+k)}(\mathbf{x}_1, \dots, \mathbf{x}_{n+k}; \mathbf{k}, \mathbf{k}_0). \quad (12)$$

Since the identities in Eq. (10) must be satisfied for arbitrary profiles h , it follows that all the kernels $A_{\alpha\alpha_0}^{(p,n)}(\mathbf{x}_1, \dots, \mathbf{x}_n; \mathbf{k}, \mathbf{k}_0)$ must vanish identically:

$$A_{\alpha\alpha_0}^{(p,n)}(\mathbf{x}_1, \dots, \mathbf{x}_n; \mathbf{k}, \mathbf{k}_0) = 0, \quad \forall n \geq 0, p > 0. \quad (13)$$

When expressed in momentum space, these conditions read:

$$(2\pi)^2 \delta^{(2)}(\mathbf{k}_1 + \dots + \mathbf{k}_n + \mathbf{k}_0 - \mathbf{k}) \sum_{k=0}^p (-1)^k \frac{p!}{k!(p-k)!} \times [i(q_0+q)]^{p-k} \tilde{G}_{\alpha\alpha_0}^{(n+k)}(\mathbf{k}_1, \dots, \mathbf{k}_n, \mathbf{0}, \dots, \mathbf{0}) = 0. \quad (14)$$

For any fixed n , the above relations can be solved iteratively leading to:

$$\tilde{G}_{\alpha\alpha_0}^{(n+m)}(\mathbf{k}_1, \dots, \mathbf{k}_n, \mathbf{0}, \dots, \mathbf{0}; \mathbf{k}, \mathbf{k}_0) = [i(q_0+q)]^m \tilde{G}_{\alpha\alpha_0}^{(n)}(\mathbf{k}_1, \dots, \mathbf{k}_n; \mathbf{k}, \mathbf{k}_0). \quad (15)$$

We recall that these identities hold on $\mathcal{P}^{(n)}$. Equation (15) constitutes a very important result, and in next Section we show that with their help it is possible to perform an infinite re-summation of the perturbative series, order by order in a small \mathbf{k} expansion.

¹ We follow the normalization of waves adopted by Voronovich [3].

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