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Measurement of the magnetic moment of the one-neutron halo nucleus ^{11}Be

W. Geithner, S. Kappertz, R. Neugart, S. Wilbert, V. Sebastian
Institut für Physik, Universität Mainz, D-55099 Mainz, Germany

M. Keim, the ISOLDE Collaboration
EP Division, CERN, CH-1211 Geneva 23, Switzerland.

P. Lievens,
Laboratorium voor Vaste-Stoffysica en Magnetisme, K.U. Leuven, B-3001 Leuven, Belgium

L. Vermeeren,
Instituut voor Kern- en Stralingsfysica, K.U. Leuven, B-3001 Leuven, Belgium

V.N. Fedoseyev, V.I. Mishin
Institute of Spectroscopy, Russian Academy of Sciences, RUS-142092 Troitsk, Russia

U. Köster
Physik-Department, Technische Universität München, D-85748 Garching, Germany

Abstract

The magnetic moment of ^{11}Be was measured by detecting nuclear magnetic resonance signals in a beryllium crystal lattice. The experimental technique applied to a ^{11}Be$^+$ ion beam from a laser ion source includes in-beam optical polarization, implantation into a metallic single crystal and observation of rf resonances in the asymmetric angular distribution of the β-decay (β-NMR). The nuclear magnetic moment $\mu(^{11}\mathrm{Be}) = -1.6816(8)\,\mu_N$ provides a stringent test for theoretical models describing the structure of the 1/2$^+$ neutron halo state.

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Halo nuclei are weakly bound nuclear systems with an extreme N/Z ratio, which have a neutron (or proton) density that extends far beyond the core of the nucleus. ^{11}Be is the best known case of a one-neutron halo nucleus and it has been studied quite extensively, mainly using reactions induced by radioactive ion beams.

From interaction cross-sections of $790 \cdot A$ MeV ^{11}Be nuclei with different targets a large rms matter radius for ^{11}Be was deduced using a Glauber-model calculation [1]. This was taken as an indication for either a neutron halo or a large deformation. Additional information from reaction studies of a $33 \cdot A$ MeV ^{11}Be beam yielded the density distribution of the ^{11}Be nucleus [2] showing an extended low-density tail which could not be explained by deformation, but clearly shows the existence of a neutron halo. Also the angular distribution of neutrons in dissociation reactions of ^{11}Be supports the assumption of a halo [3].

^{11}Be has two bound states ($1/2^+$ and $1/2^-$), both presenting a halo structure, which are connected by a very strong $E1$ transition [4]. Contrary to what one would expect from the standard shell model, the ground state is not $p_{1/2}$ but a $1/2^+$ intruder state from the sd shell. Various theoretical approaches have been proposed trying to reproduce these peculiar properties. Large-basis shell-model calculations [5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12] do not invariably reproduce the parity inversion ascribed to a combined effect of core excitation to the first 2^+ state, pairing blocking and proton-neutron monopole interaction [9]. Realistic spatially extended wave functions of both the $1/2^+$ and $1/2^-$ states are needed to explain the strong $E1$ transition [6]. The variational shell model [10], proposed to describe nuclei containing loosely bound nucleons, gives the correct level ordering and the halo structure, but fails to reproduce the $E1$ strength. A good description of all these aspects was recently obtained in a microscopic cluster model [13].

Concerning the structure of the lowered $1/2^+$ state all the model approaches have in common that the main component of the wave function is $|(^{10}\mathrm{Be})0^+ \times \nu 2s_{1/2}\rangle$, whereas the predicted admixture of the core excited $|(^{10}\mathrm{Be})2^+ \times \nu 1d_{5/2}\rangle$ state ranges from 10 % to 40 %. The magnetic moment should be particularly sensitive to the relative amplitudes of these two components. Thus, in combination with a theoretical analysis, a measurement of the magnetic moment of ^{11}Be would give detailed information about the wave function of the halo neutron.

In this letter we report on the measurement of the magnetic moment of ^{11}Be [*], performed by β-NMR spectroscopy on implanted polarized nuclei. The experimental technique is closely related to the one employed for measurements of the nuclear spin and electromagnetic moments of ^{11}Li [14, 15] and of the quadrupole moments of Na isotopes [16]. An isotope-separated 60 keV beam is polarized by optical pumping and implanted into a crystal lattice, where nuclear magnetic resonance signals are observed in the asymmetric angular distribution of the β-decay (β-NMR).

The present experiment involves some novel features. (*i*) An efficient source of radioactive Be$^+$ beams emerged from the development of laser ionization schemes [17] now being widely used at ISOLDE. (*ii*) The ^{11}Be case constitutes the first application of optical polarization to an *ion* beam instead of a neutralized beam, necessitating efficient optical pumping in the ultraviolet resonance line with the low output power of a frequency-doubled cw dye laser. In addition to that, the first-forbidden β-decay to ^{11}B allows no safe prediction of the asymmetry signal to be expected. (*iii*) The magnetic field at the site of the ^{11}Be sample may be calibrated by performing a similar experiment on a ^{8}Li beam obtained from the same target and surface-ionized at the hot walls of the ion source.

The experiment was performed at the ISOLDE facility at CERN. Beryllium isotopes were produced by fragmentation of uranium in a heated UC_2 target exposed to the pulsed 1 GeV proton beam from the PS-Booster synchrotron. They diffused into a tungsten cavity in which resonant laser ionization from the $2s^2\ ^1S_0$ atomic ground state via $2s2p\ ^1P_1$ to an auto-ionizing state took place [17]. The laser beams used for the two-step ionization process were obtained from copper-vapor-laser pumped dye lasers combined with respectively frequency tripling and frequency doubling. The ions were extracted electrostatically out of the cavity, accelerated to 60 keV, mass-separated and guided to the experiment.

For optical excitation the ion beam was propagating collinearly with a cw laser beam whose wavelength was tuned to the (Doppler-shifted) BeII transition $2s\ ^2S_{1/2} \rightarrow 2p\ ^2P_{1/2}$. About 1 mW of 313 nm laser light was obtained by intra-cavity frequency doubling of an Ar^+-laser pumped dye laser running on Sulforhodamine B dye. In a preparatory experiment, fluorescence detection of resonant optical excitation was used to measure the isotope shift and hyperfine structure (hfs) for ^{7,9,10}Be produced copiously from a carbon target. These measurements yield the previously unknown magnetic moment of ^{7}Be [18] and in particular the magnitude of the specific mass shift [18], facilitating considerably the search of ^{11}Be resonance frequencies. Beam intensities over 10^9 atoms per second were available for these long-lived or stable isotopes, whereas the ^{11}Be yield was only a few 10^6 atoms per second.

The half-life of 13.8 s is just sufficiently short for a β-NMR experiment which requires the decay of implanted polarized nuclei within the spin-lattice relaxation time. This technique is by far more sensitive than fluorescence detection of optical excitation. Furthermore, a direct NMR measurement of the nuclear g-factor is expected to be at least an order of magnitude more accurate than an optical hfs measurement.

Circularly polarized (σ^+) light was used to polarize the Be^+ beam, and a weak longitudinal magnetic field was applied to the optical pumping section of 1.5 m length, kept at a variable electrical potential for tuning the Doppler-shifted laser frequency into resonance. Polarization of the total (electronic and nuclear) spin system was created in several cycles of excitation and decay. A gradually increasing guiding field was used to rotate and then decouple the spins adiabatically while entering the transverse field of the NMR magnet (about 0.3 T). The ions were implanted into a beryllium single crystal placed in the center of this magnet. Electrostatic deflectors were used to compensate the magnetic force. The β-decay of the polarized nuclei was detected by two scintillation counter telescopes placed between the thin windows of the vacuum chamber and the magnet pole faces. The host crystal was cooled to about 50 K to slow down the relaxation ($T_1 = 2.5$ s at 300 K) by a factor of 5.

The β-decay asymmetry reached about 1 % for optical pumping in the strongest hfs component. In principle this scheme should provide complete nuclear polarization, but the power density of the ultraviolet laser beam was far below saturation. Taking this into account as well as the relaxation losses we estimate the β-decay asymmetry parameter (averaged over all decay channels and β-ray energies) to be at least 20 %.

Now the complete hfs pattern was recorded by applying a voltage sweep to the optical pumping section. The hfs splitting already gives a rough value for the magnetic moment, and in addition it gives the sign which of course is expected to be negative for the $1/2^+$ neutron state. With this preliminary information the frequency scanning range for detecting the Larmor resonance (around 7.5 MHz) could be restricted to about 5 %.

In the NMR experiment the β-decay asymmetry is destroyed by coupling the nuclear Zeeman levels through rf irradiation at the Larmor frequency. Well-saturated NMR signals were observed and finally narrowed to about 10 kHz by reducing the rf power (Fig. 1). The experimental line shapes are influenced by non-statistical fluctuations of the asymmetry signal mainly caused by power instabilities of the two laser systems: (*i*) Changes in the output of the frequency-doubled dye laser used for optical pumping directly translate into changes of nuclear polarization, whereas (*ii*) fluctuations in the ion source efficiency interfere with the timing of the scan (about one ^{11}Be half-life integration time per channel) via the exponential radioactive

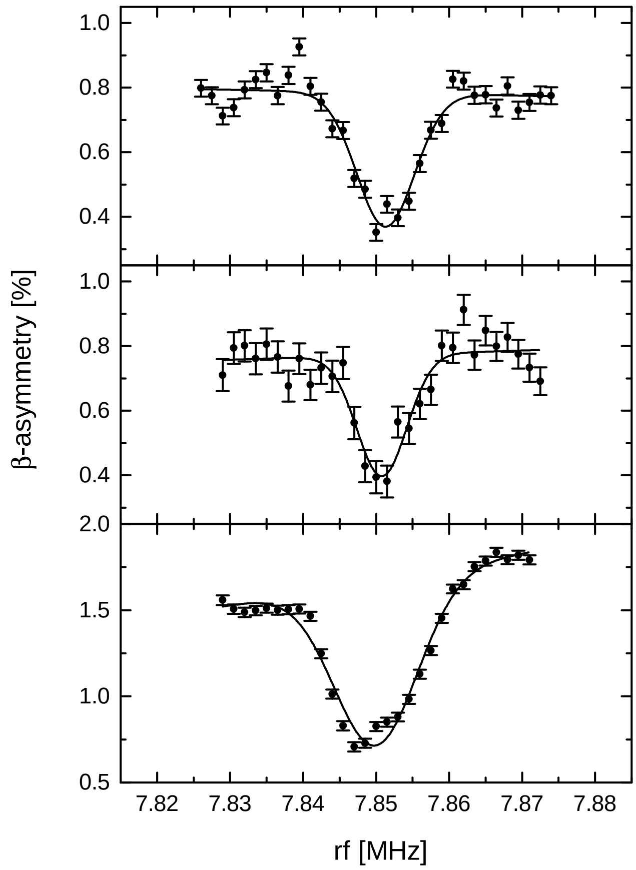

Figure 1: β-NMR signals of ^{11}Be nuclei in a beryllium host crystal.

decay and the relaxation. Apart from these fluctuations the NMR spectra at low rf power turned out to be well described by a single Gaussian. In order to avoid uncontrolled errors in the determination of the resonance frequency we took seven independent spectra and used the deviations from the mean value together with the fitting results for evaluating a realistic error. This analysis yields the Larmor frequency of 7.8508(6) MHz.

For an evaluation of the nuclear g-factor it is necessary to calibrate the magnetic field at the position of the implanted sample. This could be done in an elegant way by measuring the Larmor frequency of ^{8}Li [14] in the identical NMR setup, using a beam from the same target produced by surface ionization. The technique is similar to the one described for ^{11}Be, but optical pumping of lithium requires some modification of the apparatus, to be achieved within a few hours. A beam of neutral lithium atoms was obtained by charge exchange on sodium vapor produced in a heated cell to which the Doppler-tuning potential was applied. The laser (operated on DCM dye) was tuned to the $2s\ ^2S_{1/2} \rightarrow 2p\ ^2P_{1/2}$ resonance line at 671 nm. The ^{8}Li resonance (Fig. 2) was found to be essentially Gaussian with a width of 3 kHz. The deduced Larmor frequency of 1.9301(5) MHz includes an error accounting for possible shifts of the resonance center by the unknown quadrupole interaction of ^{8}Li in the beryllium lattice. This influence was estimated from simulations of the line shape in comparison with the experimental curve.

Different positions of the implanted spot on the crystal could involve slight differences between the magnetic fields used for ^{11}Be and for ^{8}Li. Field inhomogeneities over the 12 mm diameter of the crystal were measured with an NMR probe to be smaller than 10^{-4}. On-line

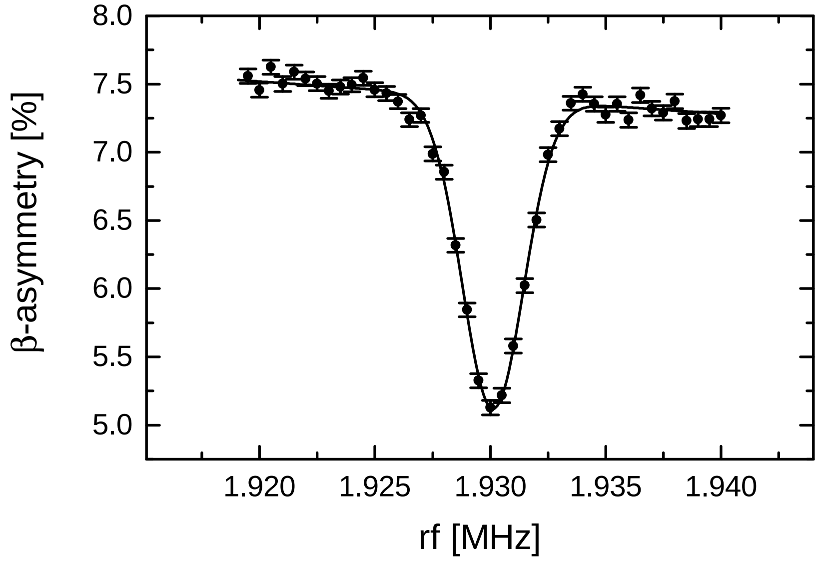

Figure 2: β-NMR signal of ^{8}Li nuclei in beryllium serving for calibration of the magnetic field.

checks were performed during the ^{11}Be experiment by moving the 5 mm ion beam spot over the crystal with no measurable effect on the Larmor frequency. Field drifts of the order 5×10^{-5} occurred during the two days of data taking. These drifts were monitored with a Hall probe. Apart from the time of changeover from the original to the calibration setup their influence on the resonance position is largely included already in the averaging over the results of the individual measurements.

Using the reference value for the magnetic moment of ^{8}Li [19], $\mu(^8\mathrm{Li}) = 1.653560(18)\,\mu_N$, we obtain the magnetic moment of ^{11}Be, $\mu(^{11}\mathrm{Be}) = -1.6816(8)\,\mu_N$. The difference in the diamagnetic corrections for Be and Li, though practically negligible, has been taken into account. The quoted error includes an uncertainty from the Knight shift. This shift is known to be very small for Be in beryllium [20], and it can be estimated for Li in beryllium to be less than 2×10^{-4} from the systematics of results for the ^{8}Li spin-lattice relaxation obtained in similar systems [21].

The magnetic moment should reflect the composition of the ^{11}Be ground-state wave function. Most experimental information [1, 2, 3, 22] has been found to be consistent with the assumption of a well developed one-neutron halo state of essentially $s_{1/2}$ nature. The large variation in theoretically calculated amplitudes of the $|(^{10}\mathrm{Be})2^+ \times \nu 1d_{5/2}\rangle$ admixture [5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12] must be due to particularities of the models, e. g. in the construction of a p-sd cross-shell interaction or in the ways of incorporating the features of weakly bound halo structures. Nevertheless, the predictions for the magnetic moment are generally close to $-1.5\,\mu_N$ [10, 11, 23].

Using recent empirical interactions for the p-sd region [8] and free-nucleon g-factors Brown [23] obtained $-1.58\mu_N$ with the WBP interaction and $-1.49\mu_N$ with the WBT interaction. In both calculations the $|2^+ \times d_{5/2}\rangle$ component contributes about 20 % to the ground-state wave function. The calculated moments, being already smaller than the experimental value, are further reduced to about $-1.2\mu_N$ by taking an effective value of $0.78 g_s{}^{\mathrm{free}}$ for the g_s-factor of the neutron as obtained from a fit to 13 magnetic moments of p-sd-shell nuclei [†]. In comparing this with the experimental value one may conclude that the $1/2^+$ halo state is of even purer $s_{1/2}$ character (with a Schmidt value of $-1.91\mu_N$) than the particular interactions predict. A previous shell-model calculation by Millener [24] based on the MK interaction [5, 6] and using the free-neutron g_s-factor gave $-1.71\mu_N$, a value which is very close to the experimental result. Compared to other calculations the enhanced value of the magnetic moment can be traced to a larger $|0^+ \times s_{1/2}\rangle$ parentage in the wave function. However, as long as the quenching of g_s for halo states cannot be calculated reliably (see below), the agreement may be regarded as fortuitous.

Suzuki et al. [25] based their prediction for the magnetic moment on variable relative amplitudes of the $|0^+ \times s_{1/2}\rangle$ and $|2^+ \times d_{5/2}\rangle$ components, and they included corrections for the influence of meson-exchange currents. By analyzing the situation in ^{15}C they assumed $g_s{}^{\rm eff} = 0.85\, g_s{}^{\rm free}$. The prediction of $-1.5\,\mu_N$ for a 40 % component of $|2^+ \times d_{5/2}\rangle$ is then consistent with the situation suggested by the variational shell model. However, the experimental value of $-1.68\,\mu_N$ is incompatible with the range of predictions reaching the maximum (negative) value of $-1.62\,\mu_N$ for a pure $s_{1/2}$ configuration. On the other hand, the variational-shell-model results [10] seem to be in accordance with recent preliminary data [26] on the transfer reaction p(^{11}Be, ^{10}Be)d. Spectroscopic factors for the reaction channels to the 0^+ ground state and the 2^+ excited state of ^{10}Be suggest a strong $|2^+ \times d_{5/2}\rangle$ component for ^{11}Be.

As we have shown, we may interpret the magnetic moment as compared to the shell-model calculations in support of a pronounced (and relatively pure $s_{1/2}$) halo state. The halo structure will reduce core polarization compared to equivalent configurations in other nuclei. This also means that shell-model calculations not accounting for the exotic spatial structure of the ^{11}Be wave function will implicitly overestimate the quenching of the g_s-factor. Presumably, the shell-model predictions of about $-1.5\,\mu_N$, compared to the experimental value of $-1.68\,\mu_N$, are influenced by this effect. Thus a coherent description of the ^{11}Be nucleus will depend on further theoretical investigations quantifying these arguments.

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