Time-evolution of electron emission from a metal surface

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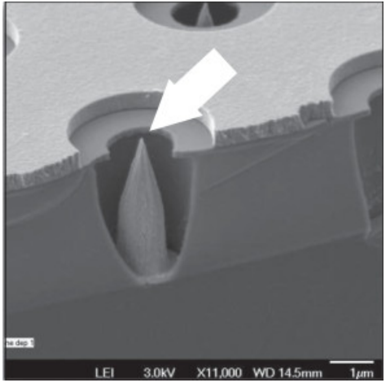
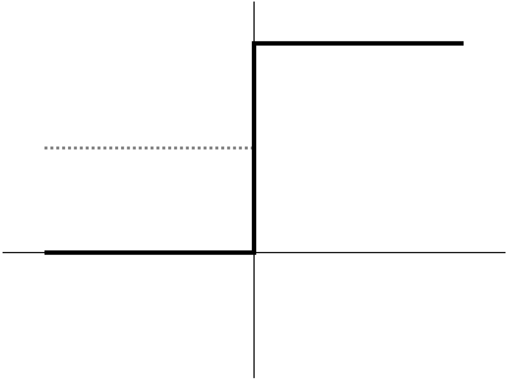
Field emission



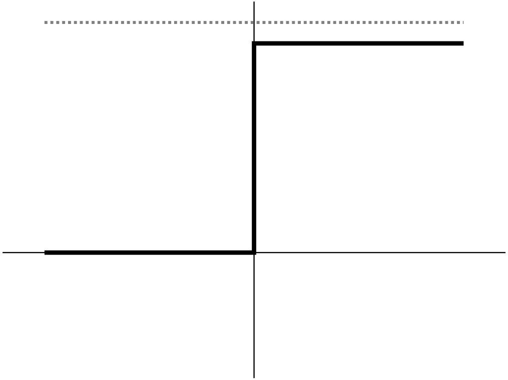
Field emission

$$V(x) = U\Theta(x), \quad E_{\mathrm{F}} = k_{\mathrm{F}}^2 < U$$



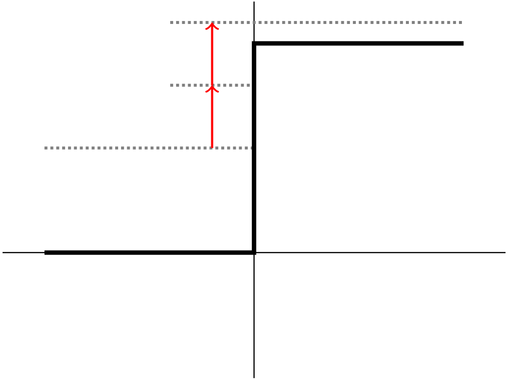
Thermal emission

$$V(x) = U\Theta(x), \quad k^2 > U$$



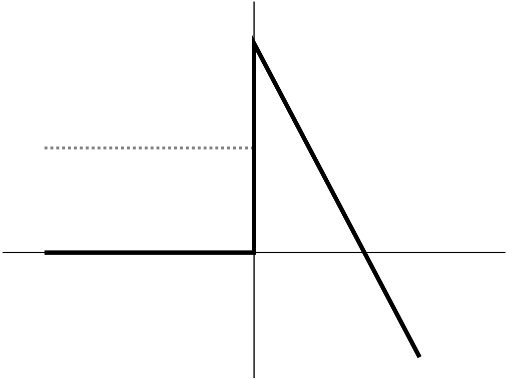
Photonic emission

$$V_t(x) = \Theta(x)(U - E_t x), \quad E_t = 2\epsilon\omega\cos(\omega t)$$



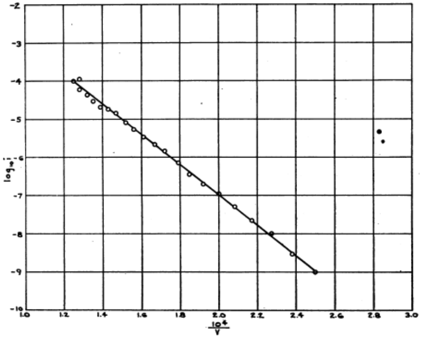
Field emission

$$V(x) = \Theta(x)(U - Ex)$$



Field emission

- [Millikan, Lauritsen, 1928]: experimental plot of the logarithm of the current against $1/E$



Field emission through a triangular barrier

- [Fowler, Nordheim, 1928]: predicted that the current is, for small E,

$$J \approx CE^2 e^{-\frac{a}{E}}$$

- ([Rokhlenko, 2011]: studied the range of applicability of the approximation, and found more accurate approximations for larger fields.)

Fowler-Nordheim equation

- Schrödinger equation

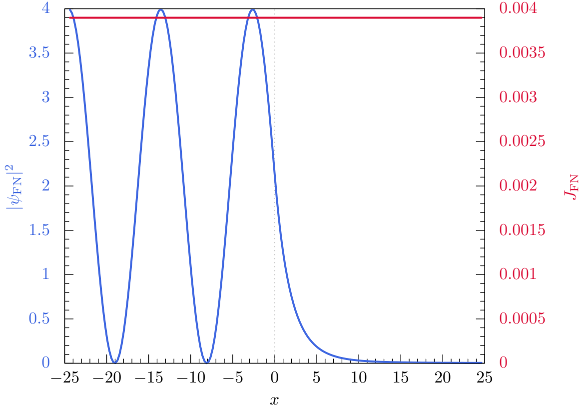
$$i\partial_t \psi = -\Delta\psi + \Theta(x)(U - Ex)\psi$$

- Fowler-Nordheim: stationary solution: $\psi_{\mathrm{FN}}(x,t) = e^{-ik^2 t}\varphi_{\mathrm{FN}}(x)$

$$\varphi_{\mathrm{FN}}(x) = \begin{cases} e^{ikx} + R_E e^{-ikx} & x < 0 \\ T_E \mathrm{Ai}(e^{-\frac{i\pi}{3}}(E^{\frac{1}{3}}x - E^{-\frac{2}{3}}(U - k^2)) & x > 0 \end{cases}$$

R_E and T_E are chosen so that φ_{FN} and $\partial\varphi_{\mathrm{FN}}$ are continuous at $x = 0$.

Fowler-Nordheim equation



Initial value problem

- Initial condition:

$$\psi(x,0) = \begin{cases} e^{ikx} + R_0 e^{-ikx} & x < 0 \\ T_0 e^{-\sqrt{U-k^2}x} & x > 0 \end{cases}$$

  R_0 and T_0 ensure that ψ and $\partial\psi$ are continuous.

- **Theorem**: $\psi(x,t)$ behaves asymptotically like ψ_{FN}:

$$\psi(x,t) = \psi_{\mathrm{FN}}(x,t) + \left(\frac{t}{\tau_E(x)}\right)^{-\frac{3}{2}} + O(t^{-\frac{5}{2}}).$$

Photoemission

- Photoelectric effect: early observations: [Hertz, 1887], [Hallwachs, 1888], [Lenard, 1900].
- When a metal is irradiated with ultra-violet light, electrons are ionized, with kinetic energies at integer multiples of $\hbar\omega$.
- [Einstein, 1905]: interpretation: quanta of light (*photons*) of energy $\hbar\omega$ are absorbed by the electrons, whose kinetic energy is raised by $n\hbar\omega$, and can escape the metal.

Photoemission

- Time dependent potential:

$$V_t(x) = \Theta(x)(U - 2\epsilon\omega \cos(\omega t)x)$$

- Magnetic gauge:

$$\Psi(x,t) := \psi(x,t)e^{-ix\Theta(x)A(t)}, \quad A(t) := \int_0^t ds\ 2\epsilon\omega \cos(\omega s) = 2\epsilon \sin(\omega t)$$

satisfies

$$i\partial_t \Psi(x,t) = \left((-i\nabla + \Theta(x)A(t))^2 + \Theta(x)U\right)\Psi(x,t)$$

Periodic solution

- [Faisal, Kamiński, Saczuk, 2005]

$$\Psi_{\mathrm{FKS}}(x,t) = \begin{cases} e^{ikx} \exp\left(-ik^2 t\right) + \Psi_R(x,t) & \text{if } x < 0 \\ \Psi_T(x,t) & \text{if } x > 0 \end{cases}$$

$$\Psi_R(x,t) = \sum_{M \in \mathbb{Z}} R_M e^{-iq_M x} \exp\left(-iq_M^2 t\right), \quad q_M = \sqrt{k^2 + M\omega}$$

$$\Psi_T(x,t) = \sum_{M \in \mathbb{Z}} T_M e^{ip_M x} \exp\left(-iUt - i \int_0^t d\tau \, \left(p_M - A(\tau)\right)^2\right)$$

$$p_M = \sqrt{k^2 - U + M\omega - 2\epsilon^2}$$

- $\Psi(x,t)$, $(-i\nabla + \Theta(x)A(t))\Psi(x,t)$ are continuous.

Initial value problem

- Initial condition:

$$\Psi(x,0) = \begin{cases} e^{ikx} + R_0 e^{-ikx} & x < 0 \\ T_0 e^{-\sqrt{U-k^2}x} & x > 0 \end{cases}$$

  R_0 and T_0 ensure that Ψ and $\partial\Psi$ are continuous.

- **Conjecture** (in progress): $\Psi(x,t)$ behaves asymptotically like Ψ_{FKS}:

$$\psi(x,t) = \psi_{\mathrm{FKS}}(x,t) + \left(\frac{t}{\tau_{\mathrm{FKS}}(x)}\right)^{-\frac{3}{2}} + O(t^{-\frac{5}{2}}).$$

Idea of the proof: field emission

- Laplace transform:

$$\hat{\psi}_p(x) := \int_0^\infty dt\ e^{-pt}\psi(x,t)$$

- Schrödinger equation:

$$(-\Delta + \Theta(x)V(x) - ip)\psi_p(x) = -i\psi(x,0), \quad V(x) := U - Ex$$

Solution in Laplace space

- For simplicity, $R_0 \equiv T_0 \equiv 0$.
- Solution:

$$\hat{\psi}_p(x) = \begin{cases} c(p)e^{\sqrt{-ip}x} - \dfrac{ie^{ikx}}{-ip+k^2} & \text{if } x < 0 \\ \\ d(p)\varphi_p(x) & \text{if } x > 0 \end{cases}$$

with

$$(-\Delta + V(x) - ip)\varphi_p(x) = 0$$

$$\varphi_p(x) = \mathrm{Ai}\left(e^{-\frac{i\pi}{3}}\left(E^{\frac{1}{3}}x - E^{-\frac{2}{3}}(U - ip)\right)\right)$$

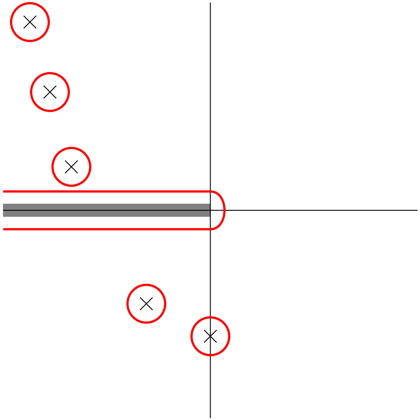
Solution in Laplace space

- c and d ensure that $\hat{\psi}_p(x)$ and $\partial\hat{\psi}_p(x)$ are continuous at $x = 0$:

$$c(p) = \frac{i(ik\varphi_p(0) - \partial\varphi_p(0))}{(-ip + k^2)(\sqrt{-ip}\varphi_p(0) - \partial\varphi_p(0))}$$

$$d(p) = -\frac{i}{(\sqrt{-ip} + ik)(\sqrt{-ip}\varphi_p(0) - \partial\varphi_p(0))}.$$

Poles in Laplace plane



Asymptotic behavior

- As $t \to \infty$:

$$\psi(x,t) = \psi_{\mathrm{FN}}(x,t) + \left(\frac{t}{\tau_E(x)}\right)^{-\frac{3}{2}} + O(t^{-\frac{5}{2}}).$$

- If $k < 0$ (reflected wave), then there is no pole on the imaginary axis, so there is no contribution as $t \to \infty$.
- Similarly, the transmitted wave in the initial condition does not contribute.