

ON CONSTANCY OF LIGHT VELOCITY IN ALL SUBSTANCES

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ABSTRACT

Review of Foucault experiment of 1850 shows that it not probes value of velocity of light in water. Review of experimental facts until now does plausible that velocity of light transmiión were the same in all material media, same like in vacuum. This supposition is in better agreement with current matter standard model.

INTRODUCTION

Later than the atom model of Rutherford we know that all the substances are mostly empty space and that the matter, the atoms, occupies a very small part of the space. And the logical deduction would have to be that any ray of light that crosses it has moved in the vacuum between atoms. Therefore the light must move in any substance at the same speed that in the vacuum.

On the other hand the standard model says that the light velocity in the matter is smaller than its velocity in the vacuum. These velocities are related to the refractive index of these substances. Model affirms that this is based on experimental evidences and point to the experiment of Foucault in 1850 comparing the speed of the light travelling in the air and in the water.

In this paper we examine this issue. In first section we compare the differences in the standard models about the matter in XIX century and XXI century, and the predictions on the consequent behavior of the light in those models. In the second section we review the experiment of Foucault (1850) habitually mentioned as evidence of lights speed in water, and the validity of declared conclusions. In a third section we look for other experiments that can serve as evidences about this issue. In the last section we present the conclusions that we can deduce about all it.

LIGHT VELOCITY IN MATTER

Towards 1850 it was considered that the matter had porous character, with great hollows between its smallest particles, with one distinction according to model of light used, there was ether fulling pores according to the undulatory model but they were empty space according to the model of light like particles.

The model of the light with particles denominated then theory of emission is described in Opticks by Isaac Newton. It considers that in any substance there is much more empty space that space occupied by particles of that substance. Which allows that the smallest particles that form the ray of light can move from the source to the eye crossing idle space in vacuum or transparent matter. And it proposes that the refraction of the light between two different substances is caused by changes in velocity of light due not identified interaction at distance that gives additional impulse to light particles and it supposes is approximately proportional to the density of the matter, reason why it considers that the light moves faster when substance

is more dense, and that light velocity is faster moving in any substance than crossing the vacuum.

The undulatory model of the light described in Treatise of light by Christian Huygens and at that time it was better accepted by the majority after its defense, and attacks to model of emission, by Thomas Young in the early century by lectures in the Royal Society of London. In this case it is not contemplated to the material displacement from light source to eye but the transport of energy by a wave. Since it were known that the waves are not transmitted without an substance that it support wave by the proven example of the sound, that is not transmitted in the vacuum, was necessary to postulate that the vacuum was full of a strange matter that interact strong with the light waves but interact much lesser with the common matter, to which was denominated ether. In this case it is considered that in all substances the light moves more slowly than through ether because the particles of the matter impede by some indetermine process the movement ability of ether particles that would slow down the displacement speed of the light waves. In fact it is the difference of speed of transmission of the light in two different matters the cause of refraction, changing direction of the ray of light when pass from a substance to another. It supposes that refraction index depends of the ratio of different velocities of the light in an matter and in the other.

In century XXI the model for the matter is already similar to noted above but with more extreme ratio between empty space and space occupied by matter particles. But it has changed in many senses in the characteristics of the light. The character of the light is considered dual, as much wave as particle. The movement of the light across empty space is accepted denying the necessity of ether. Specially it is considered that the speed of the light is constant without influence of the character or frequency of light, of the character or conditions of movement or not of the emitter or the receiver, or gravitational or expansive conditions of the space that crosses, existing an only exception. By some mechanism unknown that I can not to find candidates postulated in literature, the existence of matter in the proximities of the trajectory of the light beam causes that it changes its speed of propagation drastically in dependence with type and amount of matter present. This affirmation of the standard model is due to the experimental evidence and recalls as initial evidence to the experiment of 1850 of Foucault of measurement of the speed of the light in the air and the water.

It seems important to determine what can cause that effect. It cannot be direct interaction between photons and atoms, in which case happens the capture of the photon and its energy or its dispersion in other direction. Since a light beam is a great set of independent photon that they have in common his successive or synchronized step over small area of the space with the same direction, these photons that react cannot be in the salient beam. The light ray that leaves a section of certain transparent matter is the portion of the photons of the incoming light ray that have crossed this matter continuously by vacuum and which we can suppose successive or simultaneous due all they travel with the same speed, that is to say, the speed of the light in the vacuum, whatever be that matter. And an indirect and common interaction of atoms of the matter with all photons so that they move synchronous with some different speed is hard to imagine. It is easier to imagine refraction of the light caused by the shape of the space in a certain place and independent of the speed of photons.

The greater change of the model of the universe with the mentioned above is the character of space, that instead of being exclusively three-dimensional now is considered with four dimensions. This fourth dimension is deformed by influence of the present matter and, as well, this shape changes the direction of matter motion initially straight, being that we call gravity. In the matter in motion that can be scattered we must include photons, specially when are crossing from space containing an material to space containing other substance, from space of shape caused by determined conditions of matter present to space shaped by others conditions, amount and type of matter. This space is continuous and it must change from a shape to other in a very short length in the space of three dimensions, which predicts in the fourth dimension a step or deformation with few height but, able to deflect the photons that cross it. It will suffered more or less scattering depending deformation slope, that must depends of present matter density and/or another feature. Scattering that will be greater whichever greater is the angle of the trajectory with respect to the normal to the surface between both matter.

But although it is possible to search for modern explanations, does not have sense to try it if the evidences already prove the mechanisms today proposed, even tough so paradoxical than they can be. For that reason we must first to compile and to review those evidences

FOUCAULT'S EXPERIMENT OF 1850

The evidence that is first mentioned on this question is the experiment of Foucault of 1850 comparing the velocity of the light through air, on the one hand, and with part of its trajectory across the water, by another one. This experiment is detailed in doctoral thesis that Foucault presented in 1853, see for to know aim, performance and results.

That paper shows that experiment aim is to determine which is the return images more deviated from both, for wich it does not need to measure the absolute deviation of each one of them with respect to the theoretical value for light across vacuum. I believe that we would have to affirm that is totally motiveless the affirmation "the deviations are sensibly proportional to the refractive index" due by Foucault in this paper when it is clear that it has not measured the absolute value of those deviations, by design and performance of experiment.

Figure 1 shows with black lines the assembly of cited experiment with the same denomination for all its parts. Thus we can see that the author has neglected an important difference between both path for the light that he considers. The lens L' is only in the path to M' mirror that has part of the way through water, and is not in the way to M mirror. We know that a lens changes the size of the image, and even can change its position in the visor, then we cannot to compare two images that are not similar. This puts in doubt all the conclusions that Foucault had expose in cited paper.

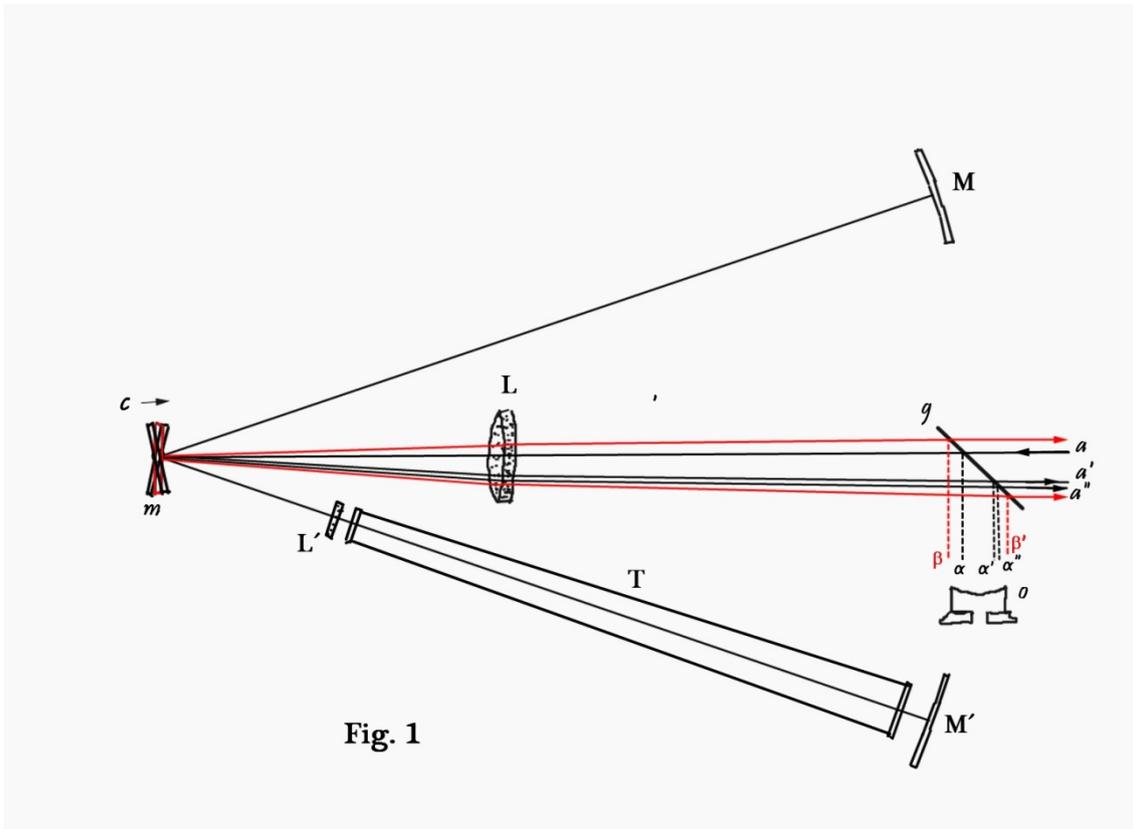


Fig. 1

We must add that he neglected a route in which the light is reflected direct from rotatory mirror to visor, to objective. That position is showed in figure 1 in red, and is near around the perpendicular to the ray of incident light. This reflection is not a fixed image like when a fixed mirror is add in the route. The image is a continuous slide in full wide of the objective. And it allows us to understand the function of the lenses L and L', selected probably empirically and without clear understanding of its influence. Lens L with the indicated focal length concentrates all the reflection of total weight of rotatory mirror in one thin trace at center of objective, is the narrow shining strip that Foucault describes in his paper, that will occupy all wide of the visor and in which we cannot see the shade marking center of light emitter due image is not fixed and move this shade across full visor for each mirror turn. This added to image size change that causes L' lense, allows to see the fixed image that return from M' up and down from centered narrow shining strip. But the light that arrives from fixed mirror M at the rotatory mirror, very debilitated by the great masked surface and without L' lense effect is concentrated in centered shining strip by lens L, and it cannot be distinguished of "the direct" reflection "contamination", which prevents any comparison between images and disqualifies all Foucault's conclusions.

It seems evident that Foucault did not get to see where was the problem because a simple solution is evident with a small modification of the assembly. It is to maintain objective L, for reduce the area "contaminated" in the objective by the direct reflection, including also a lens like L' and in same position in way from M, for recovery symmetry that allows the comparison of the images of both "fixed" trajectories, and same time modifies the size of the image that comes from M and it extends it outside "the contaminated" area. We can then mask different zones in the mirrors M and M', superior half in one and inferior half in another and then we

can see two “gray images” in the objective (following Foucault’s description in cited paper) that we can compare, one over the shining strip and another one below it.

But the experiment performance imply that exposed conclusions are not, nor they can be, proven and they are simple speculation.

SEARCHING FOR ANOTHERS EXPERIMENTS

We try search for other experiments that can be evidence on this question. In Literature we find many measurements of the speed of the light but all they have in common that they have been made in routes of the light across air or across vacuum. Their results are very near in both cases and in any case the difference between values in both media is quantified. They do not probe nothing on this question.

Has not been finded any report in Literature of another experiment measuring the absolute value of the speed of the light in the water or in another substances different of air. The only one aplicable is the experiment of Foucault criticized above.

CONCLUSIONS

Briefly the conclusions that we can extract are the following ones.

The performance of Foucault of 1850 experiment can not measure the velocity of light across water. It is not either able to discriminate if this velocity is equal or different of the light velocity in the air.

We did not find report of other experiments that to be aplicable on this question.

We do not know the speed the light in the matter experimentally. The values that the standard model gives are estimated from the not proved supposition that are relation between the light velocity in two different media and the refractive index.

That supposed relation does not have any mechanism of performance if we consider the description of the matter that makes the actual standard model now. And the deductible possibility of deformations of the space point to more logical mechanism for refraction fact.

Therefore is necessary a crucial experiment that measures the speed of the light in the water (or another appropriate substance) due there is not it today. And we will have to consider its results for following research.

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