Coincidence Efficiency Measurement Using 11B(p,n)11C

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Abstract
An attempt to measure the 12C(n,2n)11C cross section for high energy neutrons in the range of 20-30 MeV was conducted using Ohio University’s accelerator facility as a fast neutron source. The neutrons were incident on a graphite target and the β+ decay of the activated carbon-11 nuclei were observed in an on-axis gamma ray detector pair. To predetermine the efficiency of this gamma ray detector system, a boron-11 activation experiment was performed. Using SUNY Geneseo’s 1.7 MV tandem pelletron accelerator, 3.1 MeV protons were incident upon the 11B foil inducing the 11B(p,n)11C reaction to occur at a high rate of activation. The 11C decays via β+ emission, then upon annihilation with an electron creates characteristic 511-511 keV photon pairs which were counted using coincidence methods. Since the 11B(p,n) cross section is well defined, a calculation was performed to determine the expected number of activations and later compared to the total number of decays observed in the counting system. Funded in part by a grant from the DOE through the Laboratory for Laser Energetics.

12C(n,2n)11C Cross Section Data
11B(p,n)11C Cross Section Data

Geometric Efficiency Measurement

Counting Station Detector Setup

The coincident detector system consists of 2 on axis NaI detectors which were placed on either side of the activated 11B sample. The experiment successfully demonstrated that large numbers of 11C could be produced and counted using the 11B(p,n)11C reaction.

11C Decay Data

The most prominent peak in the single spectra data are the 511 keV positron annihilation gamma from the decay of 11C. Two single spectra were taken from each of the two NaI detectors, and two regions of the coincident plot shown in the spectra were used for 11C decay analysis.

Beam Current Correction

To attain a more accurate beam current a surface barrier detector was placed at 165 degrees in the vacuum chamber. A gold foil was placed over the boron foil. Scattered protons seen in the surface barrier detector were used to measure Rutherford backscattering. A time projection of the proton peak served as a proportional monitor of the beam current.

Normalized 11C Decay Data

This plot shows the 11C data normalized to the simulated data at 3000s.

Dead Time Investigation

Run 1 to Run 2 Efficiency

Dead Time Corrected 11C Decay

After making dead time corrections, we calculated the efficiency of our NaI(Tl) detector to be ___%.