Deeply Virtual Pseudoscalar Meson Production at Jefferson Lab and Transversity GPDs

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Published 29 February 2016

The cross section of the exclusive $\pi^0$ and $\eta$ electroproduction reaction $ep \rightarrow e'p'\pi^0/\eta$ was measured at Jefferson Lab with a 5.75-GeV electron beam and the CLAS detector. Differential cross sections $d^4\sigma/dtdQ^2dx_Bd\phi_\pi$ and structure functions $\sigma_T + \sigma_L, \sigma_{TT}$ and $\sigma_{LT}$ as functions of $t$ were obtained over a wide range of $Q^2$ and $x_B$. The data are compared with the GPD based theoretical models. Analyses find that a large dominance of transverse processes is necessary to explain the experimental results. Generalized form factors of the transversity GPDs $\langle \tilde{H}_T \rangle_{\pi, \eta}$ and $\langle \tilde{E}_T \rangle_{\pi, \eta}$ were directly extracted from the experimental observables for the first time. It was found that GPD $\tilde{E}_T$ dominates in pseudoscalar meson production. The combined $\pi^0$ and $\eta$ data opens the way for the flavor decomposition of the transversity GPDs. The first ever evaluation of this decomposition was demonstrated.

Keywords: Pseudoscalar; meson; electroproduction; Generalized Parton Distributions; Transversity.

PACS numbers: 13.60.Le, 14.20.Dh, 14.40.Be, 24.85.+p

1. Introduction

Understanding nucleon structure in terms of the fundamental degrees of freedom of Quantum Chromodynamics (QCD) is one of the main goals in the theory of strong interactions. In recent years it became clear that exclusive reactions may provide information about hadron structure encoded in so-called Generalized Parton Distributions (GPDs). For each quark flavor $q$ there are eight GPDs. Four correspond to parton helicity-conserving (chiral-even) processes, denoted by $H^q, \tilde{H}^q, E^q$ and $\tilde{E}^q$, and four correspond to parton helicity-flip (chiral-odd) processes, $H^q_T, \tilde{H}^q_T, H^q_L, \tilde{H}^q_L$.
The unpolarized reduced meson cross section is described by 4 structure functions $\sigma_T, \sigma_L, \sigma_{TT}$ and $\sigma_{LT}$.

$$2\pi \frac{d^2\sigma(\gamma^* p \to p\pi^0)}{dt d\phi} = \frac{d\sigma_T}{dt} + \epsilon \frac{d\sigma_L}{dt} \cos 2\phi + \epsilon \frac{d\sigma_{TT}}{dt} \cos \phi, $$

References\textsuperscript{9,10} obtain the following relations for unpolarized structure functions:

$$\frac{d\sigma_T}{dt} = \frac{4\pi\alpha}{k'Q^4} \left(1 - \xi^2 \right) \left|\langle H_T \rangle \right|^2 - 2\xi^2 \text{Re} \left[\langle H_T \rangle^* \langle E_T \rangle\right] - \frac{t'}{8m^2} \left|\langle E_T \rangle\right|^2,$$

$$\frac{d\sigma_L}{dt} = \frac{4\pi\alpha}{k'Q^4} \left(1 - \xi^2 \right) \left|\langle H_T \rangle \right|^2 - \frac{t'}{8m^2} \left|\langle E_T \rangle\right|^2,$$

$$\frac{d\sigma_{LT}}{dt} = \frac{4\pi\alpha}{\sqrt{2}k'Q^4} \xi \sqrt{1 - \xi^2} \frac{\sqrt{-t'}}{2m} \text{Re} \left[\langle H_T \rangle^* \langle E_T \rangle\right],$$

$$\frac{d\sigma_{TT}}{dt} = \frac{4\pi\alpha}{k'Q^4} \frac{t'}{16m^2} \left|\langle E_T \rangle\right|^2.$$

Here $m$ is the mass of the proton, $t' = t - t_{\text{min}}$, where $|t_{\text{min}}|$ is the minimum value of $|t|$ corresponding to $\theta_z = 0$. $k'(Q^2, x_B)$ is a phase space factor and $E_T = 2\bar{H}_T + E_T$. The brackets $\langle H_T \rangle$ and $\langle E_T \rangle$ denote the convolution of the elementary process $\gamma^* q \to q\pi^0$ with the GPDs $H_T$ and $E_T$. We call them generalized form factors.
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3. Experimental Data

Cross section of the reaction $e p \rightarrow e p \pi^0$ measured by the CLAS collaboration at Jlab at 1800 kinematic points in bins of $Q^2$, $x_B$, $t$ and $\phi$ were published in Refs. 5 and 6. Structure functions $\sigma_U = \sigma_T + \epsilon \sigma_L$, $\sigma_{LT}$ and $\sigma_{TT}$ have been obtained. These functions were compared with the predictions of the GPD models.\(^{9,10}\) CLAS confirmed that the measured unseparated cross sections are much larger than expected from leading-twist handbag calculations which are dominated by longitudinal photons. The same conclusion can be made in an almost model-independent way by noting that the structure functions $\sigma_U$ and $|\sigma_{TT}|$ are comparable to each other while $|\sigma_{LT}|$ is quite small (see Fig.1). Cross section and structure functions for $e p \rightarrow e \eta p$ were also obtained in parallel. The comparison of the $\pi^0$ and preliminary $\eta$ structure functions is shown in Fig. 1. $\sigma_U$ drops by a factor of 2.5 for $\eta$ in comparison with $\pi^0$ and $\sigma_{TT}$ drops by a factor of 10. The GK GPD model\(^9\) (curves) follows the experimental data. The inclusion of $\eta$ data into consideration strengthens the statement about the transversity GPD dominance in the pseudoscalar electroproduction process.

4. Generalized Form Factors

The squared magnitudes of the generalized form factors $|\langle H_T \rangle|^2$ and $|\langle \bar{E}_T \rangle|^2$ may be directly extracted from the experimental data (see Eqs. 2 and 4 ) in the framework of GPD models.

\[
|\langle \bar{E}_T \rangle_{\pi,\eta}^2| = \frac{k' Q^4}{4 \pi \alpha} \frac{16 m^2}{t'} \frac{d \sigma_{\pi,\eta}^{T,T}}{d t}
\]

\[
|\langle H_T \rangle_{\pi,\eta}^2| = \frac{2 k' Q^4}{4 \pi \alpha} \frac{1}{1 - \xi^2} \left[ \frac{d \sigma_{\pi,\eta}^{T}}{d t} + \frac{d \sigma_{\pi,\eta}^{T,T}}{d t} \right].
\]

Fig. 1. (Color online) Structure functions $\sigma_T + \epsilon \sigma_L$ (black), $\sigma_{TT}$ (blue) and $\sigma_{LT}$ (red) as a function of $-t$ for $\pi^0$ (left) and $\eta$ (right) exclusive electroproduction for kinematic point ($Q^2 = 2.2$ GeV$^2$, $x_B=0.28$). Data points: CLAS, preliminary. Curves: theoretical predictions produced with the GK handbag model.
Fig. 2. (Color online) Data points: CLAS, preliminary. Top left: $|\langle H_T \rangle^{\pi}|$, top right: $|\langle \bar{E}_T \rangle^{\pi}|$, bottom left: $|\langle H_T \rangle^{\eta}|$, bottom right: $|\langle \bar{E}_T \rangle^{\eta}|$ as a function of $-t$ for different values of $(Q^2, |x_B|)=(1.2, 0.15)$ black, $(1.8, 0.22)$ red, $(2.2, 0.27)$ blue, $(2.7, 0.34)$ magenta.

Fig. 2 presents the modules of the generalized form factors $|\langle H_T \rangle^{\pi}|$, $|\langle \bar{E}_T \rangle^{\pi}|$, $|\langle H_T \rangle^{\eta}|$, and $|\langle \bar{E}_T \rangle^{\eta}|$ for 4 different kinematics. Note the dominance of the $|\langle \bar{E}_T \rangle|$ over $|\langle H_T \rangle|$ for both $\pi^0$ and $\eta$ for all kinematics.

5. Flavor Decomposition

In electroproduction the GPDs $F_i$ appears in the following combinations

$$F_i^{\pi} = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} [e_u F_i^u - e_d F_i^d]$$

$$F_i^{\eta} = \frac{1}{\sqrt{6}} [e_u F_i^u + e_d F_i^d - 2e_s F_i^s]$$

The $q$ and $\bar{q}$ GPDs contribute in the quark combinations $F_i^q - F_i^{\bar{q}}$. Hence there is no contribution from the strange quarks if we assume that $F_i^s \simeq F_i^8$. For flavor decomposition we have to take into account the decay constants $f_\pi$ and $f_\eta$, the chiral condensate constants $\mu_{\pi^0} = 2.57$ GeV, $\mu_1 = 0.958$ GeV and $\mu_8 = 2.32$ GeV, and the contribution from singlet and octet $\eta$ states:

$$F_i^\eta = F_i^{\pi} \left( \cos \theta_8 - \sqrt{2} \frac{\mu_1}{\mu_8} \frac{f_1}{f_\pi} \sin \theta_1 \right) \frac{f_8}{f_\pi} \frac{\mu_8}{\mu_{\pi^0}} \frac{F_8}{k_\eta},$$

where the mixing angles are: $\theta_8 = -21.2^\circ$ and $\theta_1 = -9.2^\circ$. The octet and singlet wave functions are very similar and the decay constants are close as well $f_8 = 1.26 f_\pi$. 

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and $f_1 = 1.17 f_T$. The overall factor for the $\eta$ meson is $k_\eta = 0.863$. Using $e_u = \frac{2}{3}$ and $e_d = -\frac{1}{3}$ we will end up with equations

$$F_\pi^i = \frac{1}{3\sqrt{2}} [2 F_u^i + F_d^i],$$

$$k_\eta F_\eta^i = \frac{1}{3\sqrt{6}} [2 F_u^i - F_d^i].$$

Experimentally we have access only to the $|\langle F_\pi^\pi \rangle|^2$ and $|\langle F_\eta^\eta \rangle|^2$ (see Eq. 5). The final equation for the $\langle H_T \rangle$ convolution reads

$$\left\{ \begin{array}{l}
\frac{1}{18} |2(H_T)^u + (H_T)^d|^2 = |\langle H_T \rangle^\pi|^2 \\
\frac{1}{54} |2(H_T)^u - (H_T)^d|^2 = k_\eta^2 |\langle H_T \rangle^\eta|^2
\end{array} \right.$$

and similar equations for $\langle \bar{E}_T \rangle$.

The solution of these equations will lead to the flavor decomposition of the transversity GPDs $(H_T)^u$ and $(H_T)^d$ as well as $(\bar{E}_T)^u$ and $(\bar{E}_T)^d$. However the convolution integrals have real and imaginary parts. So it is impossible to solve these equations unambiguously with only two equations in hands. As a guidance we can estimate the form factors if we suppose that the relative phase $\Delta \phi$ between $(H_T)^u$ and $(H_T)^d$ equals 0 or 180 degrees. Ignoring an overall phase, the form factors are then real and we arbitrarily choose the solution with $(H_T)^u$ and $(\bar{E}_T)^u$ positive. Fig. 3 presents $(H_T)^u$, $(H_T)^d$, $(\bar{E}_T)^u$ and $(\bar{E}_T)^d$ for one kinematic point.

Fig. 3. (Color online) Preliminary. Top: Extracted $(H_T)^u$ (red) and $(H_T)^d$ (blue); Bottom: $(\bar{E}_T)^u$ (red) and $(\bar{E}_T)^d$ (blue), as a function of $-t$ for $Q^2 = 2.2$ GeV$^2$ and $x_B=0.27$. 

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\[ Q^2 = 2.2 \text{ GeV}^2, x_B = 0.27 \] calculated in this assumption. Note the different signs of \( \langle H_T \rangle^u \) and \( \langle H_T \rangle^d \) convolutions and the same sign of \( \langle \bar{E}_T \rangle^u \) and \( \langle \bar{E}_T \rangle^d \).

6. Conclusion

Differential cross sections of exclusive \( \pi^0 \) and \( \eta \) electroproduction have been obtained in the few-GeV region at more than 1800 kinematic points in bins of \( Q^2, x_B, t \) and \( \phi_\pi \). Virtual photon structure functions \( \sigma_U, \sigma_{TT} \) and \( d\sigma_{LT} \) have been obtained. It is found that \( \sigma_U \) and \( \sigma_{TT} \) are comparable in magnitude with each other, while \( \sigma_{LT} \) is very much smaller than either. Generalized form factors of the transversity GPDs \( \langle H_T \rangle^{\pi,\eta} \) and \( \langle \bar{E}_T \rangle^{\pi,\eta} \) were directly extracted from the experimental observables for the first time. It was found that the GPD \( \bar{E}_T \) dominates in pseudoscalar meson production. The combined \( \pi^0 \) and \( \eta \) data opens the way for the flavor decomposition of the transversity GPDs. Within some simplifying assumptions, the decomposition has been demonstrated for the first time.

Acknowledgments

The author thanks G. Goldstein, S. Goloskokov, P. Kroll, J. M. Laget, S. Liuti and A. Radyushkin for many informative discussions and making available the results of their calculations. This work was supported in part by the U.S. Department of Energy and National Science Foundation, The Jefferson Science Associates (JSA) operates the Thomas Jefferson National Accelerator Facility for the United States Department of Energy under contract DE-AC05-06OR23177.

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