Neutrino oscillations in the early Universe

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We discuss the oscillations effects on neutrinos in the early Universe and update the cosmological constraints on the oscillation parameters. It is shown that sterile LOW solution to the solar neutrino problem is almost completely excluded from cosmological nucleosynthesis considerations. Two possibilities for the relaxation of this constraint are discussed: high primordial $^4\text{He}$ yield and a relic lepton asymmetry present at nucleosynthesis epoch. The numerical analysis proved that $Y_p = 0.25$ only relaxes the constraint on LOW solution, while $L \geq 10^{-5}$ is capable to remove it.

1. Neutrino oscillation effects

Neutrino oscillations may play a considerable role in the early Universe. Cosmological nucleosynthesis (CN), baryogenesis, microwave background radiation, large scale structure formation, dark matter, lepton asymmetry, etc. could be essentially influenced by nonstandard neutrino properties, like nonzero mass and oscillations, the presence of additional neutrino types, etc.

The oscillations effect depends on the type of oscillations: oscillation channels, resonant transitions, the degree of equilibrium of oscillating neutrinos. Neutrino oscillations are capable to

(i) bring additional light particles into equilibrium \[1\],
(ii) deplete the neutrino number density \[2\],
(iii) distort the neutrino energy spectrum \[3,4\] and
(iv) affect neutrino-antineutrino asymmetry \[4,5\].

The effects (i) and (iv) are typical for active-sterile oscillations, and (ii)–(iv) are most considerable for nonequilibrium active-sterile oscillations. All these play crucial role for neutrino involved processes in the early Universe.

2. Cosmological constraints on neutrino oscillation parameters

Special attention is due to cosmological nucleosynthesis, which provides the strongest constraints on neutrino oscillation parameters \[6–10\]. Primordial yield of $^4\text{He}$ can be calculated with great accuracy within the standard CN \[11\]. Helium-4 values, extracted from observation, although perhaps suffering from great systematic errors (of the order 0.05), are still the most reliable among the relic light element yields. Hence, the most reliable cosmological constraints are obtained in studies of that element.

First CN constraints, based on effect (i) were provided in refs. \[1,2\]. The best constraints available now on $\nu_{\mu,\tau} \leftrightarrow \nu_s$, accounting for (i) and partially for (ii), are provided in ref. \[6\]. They should be updated for the effects (iii) and (iv).\footnote{An attempt to account for (iii) was made in ref. \[12\], however, the work contains discontinuity in the results for the nonresonant and the resonant cases at maximal mixing, and hence is not reliable.}

The constraints on $\nu_e \leftrightarrow \nu_s$ have been recently updated. An analytical study of the nonresonant case, accounting for (iii) to some acceptable approximation was provided \[7\]. Precise numerical analysis of nonresonant \[8\] and resonant \[9\] cases were performed. Exact kinetic equations for neutrino density matrix in momentum space were used to describe oscillating neutrinos in the high temperature Universe. Precise account for
(i)–(iv) effects and selfconsistent analysis of neutrino and nucleons evolution during the CN epoch was made \[8–10\].

In fig. 1 the updated constraints on nonresonant and resonant $\nu_e \leftrightarrow \nu_s$ for different primordial $^4\text{He}$ values are plotted. The analytical fits to the exact constraints for primordial $^4\text{He} \ Y_p = 0.24$ are:

$$\delta m^2 (\sin^2 2\theta)^4 \leq 1.5 \times 10^{-9}\text{eV}^2 \quad \delta m^2 > 0,$$

and

$$|\delta m^2| < 8.2 \times 10^{-10}\text{eV}^2 \quad \delta m^2 < 0$$

at large mixing angles. These constraints are an order of magnitude stronger at large mixings than the previous due to the precise account of (ii) and (iii). In the resonant case they are less restrictive at small mixings, due to the account of (iv) - neutrino-antineutrino asymmetry generated in oscillations.

1. Higher $Y_p$. Having in mind the large systematic error of $Y_p$ extracted from observations, $Y_p > 0.24$ looks possible. Therefore, we have calculated iso-helium contours $Y_p = 0.245, 0.25$ and compared them with the LOW solution. CN constraints then are relaxed, however, even $Y_p = 0.25$ cannot remove completely the constraints on LOW solution (fig. 1).

2. Relic lepton asymmetry $L$, present before CN, could relax the bounds. We have studied small asymmetries $L << 0.01$ that do not effect directly CN kinetics. They influence CN indirectly via oscillations:
   (a) effecting neutrino number densities,
   (b) neutrino spectrum distortion and
   (c) neutrino oscillation pattern (suppressing or enhancing oscillations).

This reflects in underproduction or overproduction of $^4\text{He}$ in comparison with the case without $L$.

We have analyzed the effect of relic $L$ on CN with oscillations, providing a precise selfconsistent study of CN and oscillating neutrinos for each set $(\delta m^2, \sin^2 2\theta, L)$. The iso-helium contours $Y_p = 0.24$ for $L = 10^{-10}$ and $L = 10^{-6}$ are presented in fig. 2. Relic lepton asymme-

![Figure 1](image1.png)

Figure 1. Cosmological constraints for $\nu_e \rightarrow \nu_s$ are presented for $Y_p = 0.24, 0.245, 0.25$. The dotted curve shows solar neutrino LOW solution.

According to these constraints, besides active-sterile LMA solution also LOW solution to the solar neutrino problem is almost completely excluded. In fig. 1 the LOW region, plotted by a dotted curve, is taken from ref. [13].

3. Relaxation of CN constraints

We have studied two possibilities for relaxing the cosmological constraints:

- **Higher $Y_p$**: Having in mind the large systematic error of $Y_p$ extracted from observations, $Y_p > 0.24$ looks possible. Therefore, we have calculated iso-helium contours $Y_p = 0.245, 0.25$ and compared them with the LOW solution. CN constraints then are relaxed, however, even $Y_p = 0.25$ cannot remove completely the constraints on LOW solution (fig. 1). \[9\]

- **Relic lepton asymmetry $L$**: Present before CN, could relax the bounds. We have studied small asymmetries $L << 0.01$ that do not affect directly CN kinetics. They influence CN indirectly via oscillations:
  (a) effecting neutrino number densities,
  (b) neutrino spectrum distortion and
  (c) neutrino oscillation pattern (suppressing or enhancing oscillations).

This reflects in underproduction or overproduction of $^4\text{He}$ in comparison with the case without $L$.

We have analyzed the effect of relic $L$ on CN with oscillations, providing a precise selfconsistent study of CN and oscillating neutrinos for each set $(\delta m^2, \sin^2 2\theta, L)$. The iso-helium contours $Y_p = 0.24$ for $L = 10^{-10}$ and $L = 10^{-6}$ are presented in fig. 2. Relic lepton asymme-

![Figure 2](image2.png)

Figure 2. Iso-helium contours $Y_p = 0.24$ for $L = 10^{-6}$ (solid curve) and $L = 10^{-10}$ are shown.

\[3\] Mind that the account only of (i) does not constrain oscillations for high $Y_p$. To obtain the exact constraints the precise account of (ii)–(iv) and the selfconsistent study of oscillations and CN is obligatory.
tries strengthen the bound at small $\vartheta$ and relax
them at large mixings. The numerical analysis
for $L = 10^{-6}, 10^{-5.5}$ showed that such $L$ relax
the constraints, while $L = 10^{-5}$ can remove the
CN constraints on LOW solution.

**Oscillations generated asymmetry.** Lepton asymmetry can be dynamically generated due
to resonant oscillations. Oscillations generated asymmetry can suppress oscillations and alleviate
CN constraints [18,19]. We have several remarks concerning this possibility.

Often very rough estimation of asymmetry growth is provided, without a precise kinetic ac-
count of the indirect asymmetry effects on CN and without account for the neutrino spectrum
distortion [19]. Moreover, the asymmetry effect on CN is discussed separating artificially the pro-
cesses of asymmetry growth and the CN; discussing first asymmetry growth till big $L \geq 0.01$
and afterwards exploring kinetic effect of big $L$ on CN.

![Figure 3. Relative increase of $Y_p$ as a function of $\delta m^2$. The solid curve presents the precise results, the dashed one is from [19].](image)

We argue that the correct description of asymmetry evolution, its final value and sign, and its
effect on oscillations and on CN, is possible in selfconsistent study of asymmetry, neutrino evolution
and nucleosynthesis during asymmetry’s *whole* evolution. As an illustration in fig. 3 we
present (dashed curve) the calculations $\delta Y_p(\delta m^2)$
of ref. [19], and the precisely provided calculations
(solid curve). The calculations [19] underestimate
oscillation’s and asymmetry’s effects on $Y_p$ by sev-
eral orders of magnitude concerning $\delta m^2$.

4. Conclusions

Precise kinetic approach is obligatory for the study of neutrino oscillations in the early Uni-
verse, because neutrino depletion, spectrum distor-
tion and oscillations generated asymmetry effects may be considerable. Accounting for
all oscillations effects we have reanalyzed CN with $\nu_e \leftrightarrow \nu_s$ and updated CN constraints
on oscillation parameters. LOW sterile solution to the solar neutrino problem is almost
completely excluded. This result is consistent with the last analysis of the global data from
SuperKamiokande, GALLEX+GNO, SAGE and Chlorine experiments, which does not favour
$\nu_e \leftrightarrow \nu_s$ LOW solution [18,19].

Assumption of $Y_p = 0.25$ cannot remove CN bound on LOW solution, while small relic lepton
asymmetry $L > 10^{-5}$ can evade this bound.

We are glad to thank P. Krastev, P. Langacker, A. Masiero and Y. Suzuki for useful discussions
during the Workshop. D.K. thanks the Organiz-
ing Committee of NOW2000 for the financial sup-
port of her participation.

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