Angle resolved photon spectrum and quasiparticle excitation spectrum in an exciton superfluid

Jinwu Ye\textsuperscript{1}, T. Shi\textsuperscript{2} and Longhua Jiang \textsuperscript{1}

\textsuperscript{1}Department of Physics, The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA, 16802, USA
\textsuperscript{2}Institute of Theoretical Physics, Chinese Academy of Sciences, Beijing, 100080, China

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There have been extensive experimental search for possible exciton superfluid in semiconductor electron-hole bilayer systems below liquid Helium temperature. However, exciton superfluid are meta-stable and will eventually decay through emitting photons. Here we show that the light emitted from the excitonic superfluid has unique and unusual features not shared by any other atomic or condensed matter systems. We evaluate angle resolved photon spectrum, momentum distribution curve, energy distribution curve and quasiparticle excitation spectrum in the exciton superfluid and comment on relevant experimental data in both exciton and exciton-polariton systems.

1. Introduction. An exciton is a bound state of an electron and a hole. Exciton condensate was first proposed more than 3 decades ago as a possible ordered state in solids \cite{1,2,3}. But so far, no exciton superfluid phase has been observed in any bulk semi-conductors. Recently, degenerate exciton systems have been produced by different experimental groups with different methods in quasi-two-dimensional semiconductor \textit{GaAs/AlGaAs} coupled quantum wells structure \cite{4,5,6,7,8}. When the distance between the two quantum wells is sufficiently small, an electron in the conduction band in one quantum well and a hole in the valence band in the other quantum well could pair to form an indirect exciton which behaves as a boson in dilute exciton density limit. It was established that the indirect excitons in EHBL has at least the following advantages over the excitons in the bulk: (1) Due to the space separation of electrons and holes, the lifetime $\tau_{ex}$ of the indirect excitons is $10^3 \sim 10^4$ longer than that of direct ones, now it can be made as long as microsecond. (2) Due to the relaxation of the momentum conservation along the $\hat{z}$ direction, the thermal lattice relaxation time $\tau_L$ of the indirect excitons can be made as $10^{-3}$ that of bulk excitons, so $\tau_{ex} \gg \tau_L$ is well satisfied. (3) The repulsive dipole-dipole interaction is crucial to stabilize the excitonic superfluid against the competing phases such as bi-exciton formation and electron-hole plasma phase. So EHBL is a very promising system to observe BEC of in-direct excitons. The quantum degeneracy temperature of a two dimensional excitonic superfluid (ESF) can be estimated to be $T_{ex}^q \sim 3K$ for exciton density $n \sim 10^{16} cm^{-2}$ and effective exciton mass $m \sim 0.22m_0$ where $m_0$ is the bare mass of an electron, so it can be reached easily by {\it He} refrigerator. Indeed, as temperature is decreased from $\sim 20K$ to $\sim 1.7K$, the spatially and spectrally resolved PL peak density centering around the gap $E_g \sim 1.545eV$ increases \cite{4}, the exciton cloud size decreases to $L \sim 30\mu m$, the peak width shrinking to $\sim 1meV$ at the lowest temperature $\sim 1.7K$. All these facts indicate a possible formation of exciton condensate around $1.7K$.

In this paper, we will study quantum nature of photons emitted from the excitonic superfluid phase in semiconductor electron-hole bilayer systems. We comment on current PL experimental data and also propose possible future experiments such as angle resolved power spectrum to test the existence of exciton condensate in the EHBL system. The phase sensitive homodyne measurement to detect the two mode squeezing spectrum and HanburyBrown-Twiss type of experiments to detect two photon correlations and photon statistics will be presented in a separate publication \cite{11}. In this paper, for simplicity, we ignore the spins of excitons, the effects of a trap and disorders. Their effects are important and will be investigated in separate publications.

2. Exciton-Photon Hamiltonian. The total Hamiltonian in grand canonical ensemble is the sum of excitonic superfluid part, photon part and the coupling between the two parts $H_t = H - \mu \hat{N}_t = H_{sf} + H_{ph} + H_{int}$ where :

\begin{equation}
H_{sf} = \sum_k (E_{nk}^{ex} - \mu) b_k^{\dagger} b_k + \frac{1}{2A} \sum_{k\neq q} V_d(q) b_{k-q}^{\dagger} b_{k} b_{k-q} b_{k-q}^{\dagger} \\
H_{ph} = \sum_k \omega_d a_k^{\dagger} a_k \\
H_{int} = \sum_k [ig(k) a_k b_k^{\dagger} + h.c.].
\end{equation}

where $A$ is the area of the EHBL, the exciton energy $E_{nk}^{ex} = \frac{k^2}{2M} + E_g - E_b$, the photon frequency $\omega_d = v_g \sqrt{k_x^2 + k_y^2}$ where $v_g = c/\sqrt{\epsilon}$ with $c$ the light speed in the vacuum and $\epsilon \sim 12$ the dielectric constant of GaAl, $k = (k_x, k_y)$ is the 3 dimensional momentum, $V_d(q) = \frac{2\pi e^2}{\epsilon q^2}(1 - e^{-qd})$ is the dipole-dipole interaction between the excitons \cite{12}, $V_d(|\vec{r}| \gg d) = e^2 d^2 / |\vec{r}|^3$ and $V_d(q = 0) = \frac{2\pi e^2 d^2}{\epsilon}$ leads to a capacitive term for the density fluctuation \cite{13}. The $g(k) \sim \epsilon_{k_x} \cdot \vec{D}_k \times L_z^{-1/2}$ is the coupling between the exciton and the photons where
\[ \langle a_{k\gamma} \rangle = \frac{ig^* (k_{\gamma}) \sqrt{N}}{(\omega_{k_{\gamma}} - \mu - i\kappa/2)}. \]

which is the photon condensation induced by the exciton condensation at \( \vec{k} = 0 \).

The photon number distribution is
\[ n_{\omega_{k_{\gamma}}} = \frac{N_{\omega_{k_{\gamma}}} |(a_{k_{\gamma}})^2|}{\omega_{k_{\gamma}} - \mu + i\kappa/2} \]
where we have set \( g^*(k_{\gamma}) \) around \( \omega_{k_{\gamma}} = \mu \).

The total number of photons is
\[ N_{\text{ph}} = \sum_{k_{\gamma}} n_{\omega_{k_{\gamma}}} = N (g^2 D)/\kappa \]
where \( D = L_z/v_g \) is the photon density of states at \( \vec{k} = 0 \). Note that the exciton decay rate \( \gamma_0 = |g|^2 D \) at \( \vec{k} = 0 \) is independent of \( L_z \), so it is an experimentally measurable quantity.

The \( N_{\text{ph}} \) has to be proportional to \( L_z \) in order to get a finite photon density in a given volume \( L_z^2 \times L_z \) in a stationary state. This self-consistency condition sets \( \kappa = v_g/L_z \to 0 \) so that
\[ n_{\omega_{k_{\gamma}}} = N \gamma_0 \delta(\omega_{k_{\gamma}} - \mu), \quad N_{\text{ph}} = N \gamma_0 L_z/v_g \sim L_z \]
which is independent of \( L_z \) as required. We showed that the power spectrum emitted from the exciton condensate has zero width. This conclusion is robust and is independent of any macroscopic details such as how photons are coupled to reservoirs. We conclude that the coherent light emitted from the condensate has the following remarkable properties: (1) highly directional: along the normal direction (1) highly monochromatic: pinned at a single energy given by the chemical potential \( \mu \) (3) high power: proportional to the total number of excitons. These remarkable properties could be useful to build highly powerful opto-electronic device.

4. Input-Output formalism for a stationary state. Now we discuss the properties of emitted photons with non-zero in-plane momentum \( \vec{k} \neq 0 \). It is easy to see that due to the in-plane momentum conservation, the exciton with a fixed in-plane momentum \( \vec{k} \) coupled to 3 dimensional photons with the same \( \vec{k} \), but with different momenta \( k_z \) along the \( z \)-direction, so we can view these photon acting as the bath of the exciton by defining \( \Gamma_{\vec{k}} = \sum_{k_z} g(k) a_{k_{\gamma}} \). When using the standard input-output formalism which treats \( g(k) \) non-perturbatively under Markov approximation [12], we find it is convenient to define the input and output fields as:
\[ a_k^{\text{in}}(t) = \sum_{k_z} \frac{1}{\sqrt{D_{\vec{k}}(\omega_k)}} a_{k_{\gamma}}(t_0) e^{-i(\omega_{k_z} - \mu)(t-t_0)}, \]
\[ a_k^{\text{out}}(t) = -\sum_{k_z} \frac{1}{\sqrt{D_{\vec{k}}(\omega_k)}} a_{k_{\gamma}}(t_1) e^{-i(\omega_{k_z} - \mu)(t-t_1)}, \]
where \( t_0 \to -\infty \) and \( t_1 \to \infty \) are the initial and final time respectively, so \( t_0 < t < t_1 \). The density of states of the photon with a given in-plane momentum \( \vec{k} \) is
\[ D_{\vec{k}}(\omega_k) = \frac{\omega_k}{v_g \sqrt{\omega_k^2 - v_Z^2 |\vec{k}|}}. \]

It can be shown that the
input and output fields obey the Bose commutation relations \( [a^n_k(t), a^{in}_l(t')] = [a^{out}_k(t), a^{out}_l(t')] = \delta_{k,l}\delta(t-t') \).

By solving the Heisenberg equation of motion of Eqn 4 we find that the output field \( a^{out}_k(\omega) \) is related to the input field by:

\[
 a^{out}_k(\omega) = \left[ -1 + \gamma_k G_n(\bar{k}, \omega + \frac{\gamma_k}{2}) \right] a^{in}_k(\omega) + \gamma_k G_a(\bar{k}, \omega + \frac{\gamma_k}{2}) a^{in}_k(-\omega),
\]

(6)

where the normal Green function \( G_n(\bar{k}, \omega) = \frac{\omega + \gamma_k + \gamma V_0(\bar{k})}{\omega^2 - E^2(\bar{k})} \) and the anomalous Green function \( G_a(\bar{k}, \omega) = \frac{\gamma V_0(\bar{k})}{\omega^2 - E^2(\bar{k})} \). The excitation decay rate in the two Green functions are \( \gamma_k = D_k(\mu) |g_\mu(\omega_k = \mu)|^2 \) which is independent of \( L_z \), so it is an experimentally measurable quantity. Just from the rotational invariance, we can conclude that \( \gamma_k \sim \text{const.} + |\vec{k}|^2 \) as \( \bar{k} \to 0 \) as shown in Fig.1b and 1c. Note that the Fourier transformation of the Eq. leads to \( \omega = \omega_k - \mu \). Eqn 4 can be considered as a S matrix relating the input photon field at \( t_0 \to -\infty \) to the output photon field at \( t_1 \to \infty \).

5. Photon number spectrum at \( \bar{k} \neq 0 \). The angle resolved power spectrum (ARPS) of the output field is \( S(\bar{k}, \omega) = \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} dr e^{-i \omega r} \left[ a^{out}_k(t + \tau) a^{out}_k(\bar{k}, t) \right]_\text{in} \). By inserting Eqn 4 one obtains \( S(\bar{k}, \omega) = S(\bar{k}, \omega) \).

\[
 S(\bar{k}, \omega) = \frac{\gamma_k^2 n^2 V_0^2(\bar{k})}{\Omega^2(\omega) + \gamma_k^2 E^2(\bar{k})} \tag{7}
\]

where \( \Omega(\omega) = \omega^2 - E^2(\bar{k}) + \gamma_k^2/4 \). This is shown in Fig.2a with different \( \bar{k}(\omega) \) and \( \gamma_k \).

In the strong coupling case \( k < k^* \), \( E(\bar{k}) < \gamma_k/2 \), \( S(\bar{k}, \omega) \) reaches the maximum \( \gamma_k^2 n^2 V_0^2(\bar{k})/\gamma_k^2 + E^2(\bar{k}) \) at \( \omega_k = \mu \). As \( \bar{k} \to 0 \), \( E(\bar{k}) = u|\bar{k}| \to 0 \), then \( S(\bar{k}, \omega) \to \gamma_k^2 n^2 V_0^2(\bar{k})/\omega^2 + \gamma_k^2/4 \), so the curve has a half width \( \sim h \gamma_k \sim 10^{-4} \mu eV \). This is expected, because the quasiparticles are not well defined with the decay rate \( \gamma_0 \) much larger than its energy \( E(\bar{k}) \). In the weak coupling case \( E(\bar{k}) > \gamma_k/2 \), at the two resonance frequencies \( \omega_k = \mu \pm [E^2(\bar{k}) - \gamma_k^2/4]^{1/2} \), \( S(\bar{k}, \omega) \) reaches the maximum \( n^2 V_0^2(\bar{k})/E^2(\bar{k}) \). It can be shown that when \( E(\bar{k}) \gg \gamma_k/2 \), the width of the two peaks at the two resonance frequencies is \( \sim \gamma_k \), this is expected, because the quasi-particle is well defined with energy \( \mu \pm [E^2(\bar{k}) - \gamma_k^2/4]^{1/2} \) and the half-width \( \gamma_k \).

The Momentum Distribution Curve (MDC) \( S_1(\bar{k}, \omega) = \sum_k S(\bar{k}, \omega) \) is:

\[
 S_1(\bar{k}, \omega) = \frac{D_\mu n^2 V_0^2(\bar{k})\gamma_k}{2E^2(\bar{k}) + (\frac{\gamma_k}{2})^2} \tag{8}
\]

FIG. 2: (a) The angle resolved power spectrum (ARPS) of the emitted photon with in-plane momentum \( \bar{k} \). When \( E(\bar{k}) \leq h \gamma_k/2 \), there is only one peak with the width \( \gamma_k/2 \). When \( E(\bar{k}) > h \gamma_k/2 \), there are two peaks at the two resonance photon frequencies \( \omega_k = \mu \pm [E^2(\bar{k}) - \gamma_k^2/4]^{1/2} \) also with width \( \gamma_k/2 \). The \( S_1(\bar{k}, \omega) \) at \( E(\bar{k}) = 0.5\mu eV \) and \( E(\bar{k}) = 2\mu eV \) are multiplied by 50 and 500 in order to be seen in the figure.

(b) The zero temperature MDC has a bi-modal structure consisting of a sharp peak \( S(\bar{k} = 0)/L_z = N \gamma_0/v_g \) towards the condensate at \( \bar{k} = 0 \) superposing on a Lorentzian peak with a half width \( k^* \sim 10^2 cm^{-1} \) due to quasi-particle excitations at \( \bar{k} \neq 0 \).

(c) The zero temperature EDC has a bi-modal structure consisting of a sharp \( \delta \) function peak \( S(\omega)/N = \gamma_0(\omega - \mu) \) due to the condensate at \( \bar{k} = 0 \) superposing on a Lorentzian peak with the half envelope width \( \gamma_k/2 \sim 0.1 \mu eV \) due to quasi-particle excitations at \( \bar{k} \neq 0 \).

which is a Lorentzian with the half width at \( k^* \sim 10^{-2} cm^{-1} \) shown in Fig.2b. From Eqn 4 one can see the condensate contribution at \( \bar{k} = 0 \) is \( N \mu/\bar{k} = N \gamma_0/v_g \propto N \), while the contribution from the quasi-particle is \( S_1(\bar{k} = 0)/L_z = \frac{2\pi^2 V_0^2(0)}{90\gamma_0} \propto n^2/\gamma_0 \). We can also calculate the the one photon spacial correlation function:

\[
 G_1(r) \sim \int \frac{d^2\bar{k}}{(2\pi)^2} \frac{e^{i\bar{k} \cdot \bar{r}}}{k^2 + k^2} \sim e^{-k^* r} \tag{9}
\]

where we can identify the coherence length \( \xi \sim 1/k^* \sim 40\mu m \). This coherence length has been measured in 9 and will be discussed in section 7.

The Energy Distribution Curve (EDC) \( S_1(\omega) = \sum_\bar{k} S_1(\bar{k}, \omega) \) is:

\[
 S_1(\omega) = N \bar{n} \times \int d^2\bar{k} \frac{\gamma_k^2 n^2 V_0^2(\bar{k})}{(2\pi)^2 \Omega^2(\omega) + \gamma_k^2 E^2(\bar{k})} = \frac{N \bar{n} V_0^2(\bar{k})}{4\pi^2 \nu^2} \int \frac{d\omega}{\gamma_0(\omega)} \tag{10}
\]

where \( f(x) = \frac{1}{\pi} \left[ \frac{\pi}{x} - \arctg \frac{\pi}{x^2 - \pi^2} \right] \) where \( -\pi/2 < \arctg \theta < \pi/2 \). From Eqn 4 one can see the condensate contribution at \( \bar{k} = 0 \) is \( n \omega_k/\sqrt{N} = \gamma_0(\omega_k - \mu) \), while the contribution from the quasi-particle \( S_1(\omega = 0)/N = \frac{n \omega_k^2(\bar{k} = 0)}{\pi^2 \nu^2} \). Both are shown in the Fig.2c.

6. Quasi-particle spectrum of a non-equilibrium stationary exciton superfluid and its experimental
observation. It is important to compare the excitation spectra in Fig.1. Fig.1a is the well known quasi-particle excitations in an equilibrium superfluid. They are well defined quasi-particles with infinite lifetime. However, the quasi-particles in Fig.1c are not well defined in any length scales, because the decay rate is always much larger than the energy. Fig.1b is between the two extreme cases. When \( k < k^* \), the quasi-particle is not well defined, the ARPS is centered around \( \omega_k = \mu \) with the width \( \gamma_k \). The MDC has large values at \( k < k^* \). The EDC has large values at \( \omega < \gamma_k \). When \( k > k^* \), the quasi-particles are well defined, the ARPS has two well defined quasi-particles peaks at \( \omega_k = \mu \pm [E^2(k) - \gamma^2_k/4]^{1/2} \) with the width \( \gamma_k \). The MDC has very small values at \( k > k^* \). The EDC has very small values at \( \omega > \gamma_k \). So in the long wavelength \( \lambda > \xi \) (or small momentum \( k < k^* \)) limit and long time \( \tau > \tau_{ex} \sim 1/\gamma_k \) (or low energy limit \( \omega < \gamma_k \)) limit, there is not a well defined superfluid which is consistent with the results achieved in \[18\]. However, in the distance \( k \sim 1/k^* \) (or momentum \( k > k^* \)) limit and the time \( \tau < \tau_{ex} \sim 1/\gamma_k \) (or energy scale \( \omega > \gamma_k \)), there is still well defined superfluid and associated quasi-particle excitations. This is the main difference and analogy between the excitation spectrum in the equilibrium superfluid in Fig.1a and that in the non-equilibrium steady state superfluid in Fig.1b. Although we derived the Fig.1b from the specific Hamiltonian Eqn.1, we expect it is universal for any stationary pumping-decay system such as exciton-polariton systems. Very recently, the elementary excitation spectrum of exciton-polariton inside a micro-cavity was measured \[10\] and was found to be very similar to that in a helium 4 superfluid shown in Fig.1a except in a small regime near \( k = 0 \). We believe this observation is precisely due to the excitation spectrum in a non-equilibrium stationary superfluid shown in Fig.1b.

7. Comments on current experiment data and possible future experiments. In \[4, 5\], the spatially and spectrally resolved photoluminescence intensity has a sharp peak at the emitted photon energy \( E = 1.545eV \) with a width \( \sim 1meV \) at the lowest temperature \( \sim 1K \sim 0.1meV \). The energy conservation at \( k_z = 0 \) gives the maximum in-plane momentum \( k_{max} \sim 1.545eV/v_g \sim 4.3 \times 10^4cm^{-1} \) where we used the speed of the light \( v_g \sim 8.7 \times 10^6cm/s \) in GaAs \[4\]. Then the maximum exciton energy \( E_{max} = u_kE_{max} \sim 0.15meV \) where we used the spin wave velocity \( u_k \sim 5 \sim 10^5cm/s \). The average lifetime of the indirect excitons in the EHBL \[4, 5\] is \( \tau_{ex} \sim 40ns \), then we can estimate the exciton decay rate \( \gamma_k \sim \hbar/40ns \sim 10^{-4}meV \sim 0.1meV \). At the boundary of the two regimes in Fig.1b where \( E(k^*) = u_k \gamma_k^* \sim 0.1meV \), we can extract \( k^* \sim 2.4 \times 10^2cm^{-1} \ll k_{max} \). The typical exciton cloud size \( L \sim 30\mu m \[4\]. The number of excitons is \( N = NL^2 \sim 10^5 \), which is comparable to the number of cold atoms inside a trap in most cold atom experiments. The central peak due to the condensate in the MDC Fig.2b is broadened to \( k_0 \sim 1/L \sim 10^5cm^{-1} \) which is already larger than the half width due to the quasi-particle \( k^* \sim 10^2cm^{-1} \). So it is impossible to distinguish the bi-model structure in the MDC in Fig.2b at such a small exciton size. The coherence length was measured in \[9\]. From Eqn.1 we find the coherence \( \xi \sim 1/k^* \sim 40\mu m \) which is slightly larger than the exciton cloud size \( L \sim 30\mu m \). It is easy to see that the central peak due to the condensate in the EDC in the Fig.2a is broadened simply due to the change of the local chemical potential from the center to the edge of the trap \( \Delta \omega = u_0 L^2 \sim 0.1meV \) where \( u_0 \sim 10^{-12}eVnm^{-2} \[4, 5\]. This value is much larger than the half width due to the quasi-particle \( \gamma_k \sim 0.1meV \), so it is impossible to distinguish the bi-model structure in the EDC in Fig.2c either. In order to understand if the observed peak is indeed due to the exciton condensate, one has to study how the bi-model structures shown in Fig.2 will change inside a harmonic trap at a finite temperature \( \sim 1K \) and the effects of both dark and bright excitons. This will be discussed in a separate publication. The fine structures in the ARPS in the Fig.2a and phase sensitive homodyne measurement \[11\] are also needed to test any existence of the exciton condensate.

8. Conclusions We study the power spectrum of photons emitted from the exciton superfluid phase in semiconductor electron-hole bilayer systems. We find that the photons emitted along the direction perpendicular to the layer are in a coherent state which possesses several remarkable properties, while those along all tilted directions due to the quasi-particles above the condensate show very interesting structures. We determined the angle resolved power spectrum ( ARPS ), the line shapes of both the MDC and the EDC. We also pointed out the analogy and difference between the quasi-particles in an equilibrium superfluid and those in a non-equilibrium stationary superfluid. This difference precisely explained the recent experimental observation of excitation spectrum of exciton polariton in a planar microcavity. We commented on available experimental data both MDC and EDC and also suggested possible future ARPS experiment to test our theoretical predictions.

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