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Quantum-limited absorption estimation with ring resonators

Alexandre Belsley,^{1,2,*} Euan J. Allen,³ Animesh Datta,⁴ Jonathan C. F. Matthews^{1,†}

1. Quantum Engineering Technology Labs, H. H. Wills Physics Laboratory and Department of Electrical & Electronic Engineering, University of Bristol, BS8 1FD, United Kingdom

2. Quantum Engineering Centre for Doctoral Training, H. H. Wills Physics Laboratory and Department of Electrical & Electronic Engineering, University of Bristol, BS8 1FD, United Kingdom

3. Centre for Photonics and Photonic Materials, Department of Physics, University of Bath, Bath, BA2 7AY, United Kingdom

4. Department of Physics, University of Warwick, Coventry CV4 7AL, United Kingdom

* alex.belsley@bristol.ac.uk

† jonathan.matthews@bristol.ac.uk

Abstract: Coherent-state probes in appropriately designed all-pass ring resonators outperform any quantum probe single-pass absorption estimation strategy, including those using Fock or bright squeezed states. © 2022 The Author(s)

Introduction

Numerous studies have leveraged non-classical probes such as Fock and squeezed states to enhance precision in parameter estimation over equally bright classical strategies [1]. Remarkably, we find coherent-state probes in all-pass ring resonators can estimate absorption more precisely than any quantum-probe single-pass strategy [2].

Results

The system we consider is an all-pass ring resonator comprised of a bus waveguide coupled to a ring resonator with length L . An analyte with an absorption coefficient α_A , which we seek to estimate, is evanescently coupled to the ring as shown in Fig. 1

According to the Beer-Lambert law, the attenuation coefficient of the ring resonator $a = e^{-\alpha_T L/2}$ where $\alpha_T = \alpha_I + \Gamma\alpha_A$ is the total linear absorption coefficient. Here Γ quantifies the fraction of guided light in the ring interacting with the analyte and α_I is the intrinsic absorption coefficient.

We quantify the performance of pure single-mode Gaussian probes in estimating α_A using the Quantum Fisher information (QFI) formalism. For an experimental strategy repeated ν times, the variance $\Delta^2\alpha_A$ is related to the QFI $\mathcal{Q}(\alpha_A)$ through the Quantum Cramér-Rao bound $\Delta^2\alpha_A \geq [\nu\mathcal{Q}(\alpha_A)]^{-1}$ [3]. We find that maximum information is obtained when the ring resonator is on resonance and critically coupled, yielding a QFI

$$Q_G = (|\beta|^2 + \sinh^2 s) \frac{L^2 \Gamma^2 B}{1 - e^{-\alpha_T L}}, \quad (1)$$

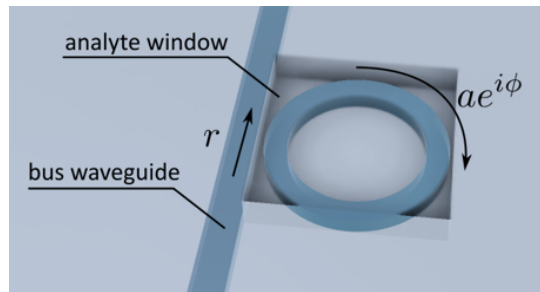


Fig. 1. All-pass ring resonator with self-coupling coefficient r , attenuation a , and round trip phase ϕ . We seek to estimate the absorption coefficient α_A of an analyte evanescently coupled to the light circulating in ring resonator.

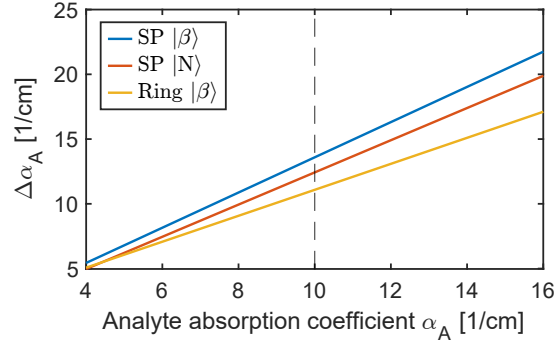


Fig. 2. Standard deviation $\Delta\alpha_A$ for an all-pass ring resonator probed by a coherent-state $|\beta\rangle$ (orange) and for single-pass (SP) strategies probed by coherent-state (blue) and Fock state $|N\rangle$ (red) probes. The latter two correspond to the classical and quantum limits for the SP strategies, respectively. At a target analyte $\alpha_A = 10\text{ cm}^{-1}$, the ring resonator is critically coupled and probing it with a classical coherent-state outperforms any single-pass strategy.

where B is the resonator's buildup factor. The performance of a coherent-state probe with mean photon number $|\beta|^2$ is readily obtained by setting the squeezing factor $s = 0$, resulting in a QFI

$$Q_{|\beta\rangle} = |\beta|^2 \frac{L^2 \Gamma^2 B}{1 - e^{-\alpha_r L}}. \quad (2)$$

The term in parenthesis in Eq. (1) is equal to the mean number of input photons in a bright single-mode squeezed state. As such, arbitrarily bright squeezed states provide no advantage over coherent-state probes.

Fock states have been shown to be optimal in estimating absorption in single-pass strategies [4]. For a probe photon number N_0 , they attain a QFI

$$Q_{\text{SP}, |N\rangle} = N_0 \frac{L^2}{e^{\alpha_A L} - 1}. \quad (3)$$

Coherent-state probes in single-pass strategies yield a QFI

$$Q_{\text{SP}, |\beta\rangle} = |\beta|^2 L^2 e^{-\alpha_A L}. \quad (4)$$

Comparing Eqs. (2) to (4), appropriately designed all-pass ring resonators with coherent-state probes are capable of estimating α_A with higher precision than any quantum-probe single-pass strategy, including those using optimal Fock state probes as depicted in Fig. 2.

Conclusion

By leveraging interference and resonant enhancement effects, photonic integrated ring resonator circuits with shot-noise limited classical coherent-state sources can surpass the precision attainable with any single-pass quantum probe absorption estimation strategy. Our findings are especially relevant for lab-on-chip sensors, which have important practical applications in environmental monitoring [5] and biochemical analysis [6].

References

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