IMPROVED HALF-LIVES OF 8+ AND 11− ISOMERIC STATES IN 202Po*

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Received 24 January 2024, accepted 6 February 2024,
published online 24 April 2024

The level-structure of 202Po was studied using the 195Pt(12C, 5n) reaction at a beam energy of 83 MeV. Improved lifetime measurements have been performed for the 8+ and 11− isomeric states by the decay slope method using high-purity germanium clover detectors. The half-lives of these isomeric states were found to be $T_{1/2}(8^+) = 114\pm 5$ ns and $T_{1/2}(11^-) = 83\pm 6$ ns. The variation of the reduced transition probabilities with neutron and proton number in the decay of these proton-dominated isomeric states is discussed.

DOI:10.5506/APhysPolBSupp.17.3-A10

1. Introduction

Nuclei close to the doubly-magic spherical shell closure at $Z = 82$ exhibit both single-particle excitations at low spins and a variety of collective

* Presented at the XXXVII Mazurian Lakes Conference on Physics, Piaski, Poland, 3–9 September, 2023.
rotational behavior [1] at high spins. In even–even $^{200-208}$Po isotopes with two protons above the $Z = 82$ shell closure, excited states are generated mainly by two quasi-protons and two quasi-neutrons [2, 3]. Many efforts have been made to understand the low-lying states in these isotopes [4, 5]. New measurements have also been performed at the CERN-ISOLDE facility using the in-source laser spectroscopy and multi-step Coulomb excitation. Their results served as a test for recent nuclear-structure calculations and hint towards an early departure of Po isotopes from sphericity when moving away from the $N = 126$ shell closure, as compared to the neighboring $Z \leq 82$ isotones (Refs. [6, 7] and references therein). An interesting feature is the existence of several isomeric states due to different neutron–proton configurations, well known among these being the $8^+$ isomers classified as fairly pure $\pi(h_{9/2})^2$ states [8, 9]. The yrast $11^-$ isomeric states are known to be dominated by the $\pi(h_{9/2}i_{13/2})$ orbitals in the $^{198,200}$Po isotopes [2, 3, 8]. A theoretical study on seniority isomers in Pb ($Z = 82$) and Hg ($Z = 80$, i.e. two-proton hole) isotopes [10] predicted seniority to be a nearly good quantum number in Po ($Z = 84$, i.e. two-proton particle) isotopes as well and suggested $N = 118$ to be a transition region which needs further investigations to understand the behaviour of these nuclei around the $Z = 82$ shell closure.

We investigate the $^{202}$Po ($N = 118$) nucleus to understand the two-particle case above $Z = 82$ shell closure at the $N = 118$ transition region. High-spin states of $^{202}$Po were last established by Fant et al. [2] with the highest tentatively assigned spin being $(22^+)$. The low-medium spin states up to $(9^-)$ were explored by Bijnens et al. [4] in 1998, via $\beta$-decay studies of $^{202}$At. The half-life of the yrast $11^-$ state in $^{202}$Po was measured as $85(10)$ ns by Häsüser et al. [8] in 1976, $100(50)$ ns by Beuscher et al. [3] in 1976, and $>200$ ns by Fant et al. [2] in 1990. The half-life of the $8^+$ isomeric state was reported as $110(15)$ ns by Häsüser et al. [8], $85(15)$ ns by Beuscher et al. [3], and $85(15)$ ns by Fant et al. [2]. The present work reports improved measurements of the half-lives for the $8^+$ and $11^-$ isomeric states in the $N = 118$ $^{202}$Po isotope, using the electronic timing of high-purity germanium (HPGe) detectors. Such measurements are crucial for getting the information on nuclear structural wavefunctions and corresponding neutron and proton pair break-ups.

2. Experimental details and data analysis

High-spin states of the $^{202}$Po nucleus were populated using $^{195}$Pt($^{12}$C, 5$n$) reaction. The $^{12}$C beam, accelerated to 83 MeV by the 14-UD Pelletron LINAC facility at the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, Mumbai, bombarded a 3.2 mg/cm$^2$ thick $^{195}$Pt target with a $^{197}$Au catcher foil. The
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deo-exciting γ rays were detected using an array of 16 Compton-suppressed HPGe clover detectors at 23°, 40°, 65°, and 90° with respect to the beam direction. Two- and higher-fold coincidence data were collected in a list-mode format using an XIA-based digital data-acquisition system [11, 12]. After the energy calibration of all the HPGe detectors, the time-stamped coincidence data were sorted using the Multi pARameter timestamped based COincidentSearch (MARCOS) code, developed at TIFR, Mumbai [11]. The γ−γ matrices and γ−γ−γ cubes were formed and analysed using DAMM [13] and RADWARE [14] software packages.

Lifetimes of the isomeric states were determined by the decay slope method using the electronic timing of the HPGe clovers. The decay half-lives ($T_{1/2}$) for the states were extracted using the time-difference spectrum between two transitions $E_{γ1}$ and $E_{γ2}$ in a cascade, feeding and de-exciting the state of interest, respectively. To obtain the time-difference spectrum, four conditional time spectra, $t_{p1,p2}$, $t_{p1,bg2}$, $t_{bg1,p2}$, and $t_{bg1,bg2}$, were generated from the time-stamped data. Here, $t_{p1,p2}$ represents the time-difference spectrum obtained with energy gates around the $E_{γ1}$ and $E_{γ2}$ peaks, while $t_{p1,bg2}$ represents the same for energy gates around the $E_{γ1}$ peak and background near the $E_{γ2}$ peak. Similarly, $t_{bg1,p2}$ and $t_{bg1,bg2}$ correspond to energy gates on $E_{γ1}$ background — $E_{γ2}$ peak and $E_{γ1}$ background — $E_{γ2}$ background, respectively. Then the final time-difference spectrum was generated as follows: $t = t_{p1,p2} - t_{p1,bg2} - t_{bg1,p2} + t_{bg1,bg2}$ [11, 15]. The half-lives of the states were extracted by fitting the time-difference spectra with a convoluted Gaussian and an exponential function considering the detector response function as explained in Ref. [15].

3. Results

The previously known level scheme of $^{202}$Po [2] has been confirmed and substantially extended up to $J^\pi = 27^+$; with the addition of 45 new transitions, a more elaborate article is in preparation [16]. The γ-ray energy spectrum obtained by gating on the 571+677 keV transitions in the HPGe clovers is shown in Fig. 1 (a). The gated γ-ray energy spectrum and the partial level scheme shown in Fig. 1 depict the transitions feeding and de-exciting the yrast $8^+$ and $11^−$ isomeric states.

The decay half-life ($T_{1/2}$) for the $8^+$ isomeric state was extracted using the time-difference spectrum between the two transitions $E_{γ1} = 526$ keV (feeding) and $E_{γ2} = 443$ keV (decaying) in the cascade. For the $11^−$ isomeric state, $T_{1/2}$ was extracted using the time-difference spectrum between the two transitions $E_{γ1} = 436$ keV and $E_{γ2} = 386$ keV in the cascade. To avoid contaminations, the time-difference spectra were obtained by gating the γ−γ matrix on the 677 keV transition. Figure 2 shows the time-difference spectra for the $8^+$ and $11^−$ states along with the fits of the data using a convoluted
Fig. 1. (a) Gamma-ray energy spectrum gated on the 571+677 keV transitions, showing the transitions feeding and de-exciting the 8\(^{+}\) and 11\(^{-}\) isomeric states. (b) Partial level scheme of \(^{202}\)Po showing the two isomeric states and their feeding and decaying transitions.

Gaussian and exponential function. The improved decay half-lives of the yrast 8\(^{+}\) and 11\(^{-}\) isomeric states have been found to be \(T_{1/2}(8^{+}) = 114 \pm 5\) ns and \(T_{1/2}(11^{-}) = 83 \pm 6\) ns. Since the decay from the 8\(^{+}\) isomeric state to the 6\(^{+}\) state could not be observed, the energy of the 8\(^{+}\) → 6\(^{+}\) transition

Fig. 2. (Colour on-line) Time-difference spectrum generated using (a) 526 and 443 keV transitions feeding and de-exciting the 8\(^{+}\) isomeric state, respectively (black). (b) 436 and 386 keV transitions feeding and de-exciting the 11\(^{-}\) isomeric state, respectively (black). The fits (solid blue) of the selected region by a convoluted Gaussian and exponential function provide the \(T_{1/2}\) of the two isomeric states.
was obtained to be 9.0(3) keV via a newly observed transition bypassing the $8^+$ isomeric state, which will be discussed in a forthcoming article [16]. The $B(E2; 8^+ \rightarrow 6^+)$ value in $^{202}$Po was calculated using this decay energy.

4. Discussion

We study the evolution of isomeric transition probabilities with respect to neutron (Figs. 3 (a), 4 (a)) and proton number (Figs. 3 (b), 4 (b)) to understand empirically the competition of single-particle nature and collectivity in $^{202}$Po. The $8^+$ isomeric states in even–even nuclei above the $Z = 82$ shell closure are mainly dominated by the $\pi(hg/2)$ orbital with a limited mixing of the neighboring $f_{7/2} \otimes i_{13/2}$ orbitals [17]. Figure 3 (a) shows the systematic behavior of the $B(E2)$ values for this proton isomer in even–even Po isotopes with $N = 114–128$. Since the isomeric configuration is dominated by protons, the $B(E2)$ values remain nearly constant with neutron number, with a slight increment when moving away from the $N = 126$ shell closure. This may be attributed to a stronger coupling between the two protons and a surface vibration in the Po isotopes [9]. We present the evolution of $B(E2)$ values in the decay of the proton-dominated $8^+$ isomeric states for various isotonic chains in Fig. 3 (b). The generalized seniority approach has recently been used to explain its parabolic behavior in $N = 124, 126$ chains [17]. One can see that the $B(E2; 8^+ \rightarrow 6^+)$ value for $^{202}$Po (present work) is very similar to the $B(E2; 8^+ \rightarrow 6^+)$ value for $^{208}$Po (with $N = 124$), while the $B(E2; 8^+ \rightarrow 6^+)$ value in $^{200}$Po (with $N = 116$) is higher. This suggests that the $8^+$ isomeric states have a predominantly single-particle nature and the one in $^{202}$Po can be referred to as a seniority isomer. However, there are
only lower limits of $B(E2; 8^+ \rightarrow 6^+)$ values known in $N = 118$ isotones with $Z = 86$ and $Z = 88$, making them good candidates for future measurements to decipher the evolution of these isomers in the $N = 118$ isotonic chain.

Figure 4 (a) shows the systematics of $B(E3)$ values in the decay of the $11^-$ isomeric states in even-even Po isotopes with $N = 112$–126. The $11^-$ state in $^{202}$Po is similar to the $11^-$ state in $^{208,210}$Po and can be interpreted as the $\pi (h_{9/2}i_{13/2})$ state [3]. The increasing trend in the $B(E3; 11^- \rightarrow 8^+)$ values when moving away from the $N = 126$ shell closure can be attributed to a weak-coupling to the core polarization and a wave function spread with the neighboring $h_{9/2}$ and $f_{7/2}$ orbitals. This can be taken as a signature of increased collectivity when going away from $N = 126$. We plot in Fig. 4 (b) the $B(E3; 11^- \rightarrow 8^+)$ evolution with proton number for the proton-dominated $11^-$ isomeric states in various isotonic chains above $Z = 82$. The measured $B(E3)$ value for the decay of this isomeric state at $Z = 84$, $N = 118$ overlaps, within the error bar, with the measurement for $Z = 84$, $N = 124$. This again points to a single-particle nature of this two-proton-dominated isomeric state, though $N = 118$ is quite far from the closed shell. Similar measurements looking for E3 isomers in the $N = 118$ isotonic chain at $Z = 86, 88$ would be interesting to understand the structural evolution.

Fig. 4. $B(E3)$ values for the decay of the $11^-$ isomeric states in (a) Po isotopes, (b) even–even $N = 118, 124, 126$ isotones above the $Z = 82$ shell closure. The $B(E3)$ value for $N = 118$, $Z = 84$ is from the present work. All other $B(E3)$ values are taken from Ref. [18].

5. Summary

Improved half-lives of the proton isomers $8^+$ and $11^-$ have been obtained by the decay slope method using HPGe clover detectors. A systematic study of the $B(E2; 8^+ \rightarrow 6^+)$ and $B(E3; 11^- \rightarrow 8^+)$ values in the decay of isomeric states in the even–even Po isotopes with $N = 112$–126 indicates a higher mixing of configurations when moving away from the $N = 126$ shell
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 closure and an increasing competition between the single-particle nature and collectivity. Systematics of the reduced transition probabilities in the decay of these isomeric states has also been presented for even–even $N = 116, 118, 124, 126$ isotonic chains to understand the evolution of these proton-dominated isomers.

The authors thank the staff of the TIFR-BARC Pelletron Linac Facility for the smooth operation of the accelerator during the experiment. Sahab Singh acknowledges the financial support from the Ministry of Human Resource Development (Government of India). D. Choudhury acknowledges the financial support from the Science and Engineering Research Board, Department of Science and Technology, Government of India, under Core Research Grant (grant No. CRG/2022/005439) for this work. This research is also funded by the Department of Atomic Energy, India, (Project Identification Codes: 12-R&D- TFR-5.02-0200 and RTI 4002) and the Department of Science and Technology, Government of India (grant No. IR/S2/PF-03/2003-II).

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