

Theoretical approaches to study reactions with light exotic nuclei

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The discovery of halo nuclei in the middle eighties marked the beginning of a series of nuclear and theoretical studies aimed at understanding their peculiar properties, the most remarkable being the presence of one or two weakly-bound nucleons with a high probability of exploring distances well beyond the range of the binding potentials. This gives rise to a dilute density distribution which extends much further than the radius expected for a stable nucleus of the same mass. The loosely bound nature of these nuclei has also sizeable effects in the scattering observables. For example, the elastic scattering of halo nuclei on a heavy target at Coulomb barrier energies was long ago predicted [1] to depart significantly from the Rutherford formula, due to the polarization effect caused by the strong dipole Coulomb interaction. This effect is accompanied by a large breakup probability.

In this presentation, we discuss some recent experiments for several reactions induced by the halo nuclei ^6He [2], ^{11}Be [3] and ^{11}Li measured at Louvain-la-Neuve, ISOLDE and TRIUMF, respectively, with emphasis on the theoretical approaches developed to interpret these results. In particular, we discuss recent advances in the Continuum-Discretized Coupled-Channels (CDCC) method required to describe the three-body structure of the ^6He and ^{11}Li nuclei and to include the effect of core excitation in the scattering of two-body halo nuclei with well deformed cores, such as ^{11}Be .

We present also the data and theoretical analysis of several transfer reactions triggered by the collisions of ^9Li [5] and ^8Li [6] on a deuteron target, measured at ISOLDE.

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