

Solution for Problem 2

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If B is moving with speed v_B in the A' s frame and A is moving with speed v_A in the same direction as B in the frame 0, then the speed of A in the frame 0 is $v'_B = \frac{v_A + v_B}{1 + \frac{v_A v_B}{c^2}}$. Let

$v_A = c \tanh u_A$, $v_B = c \tanh u_B$ and $v'_B = c \tanh u'_B$. Then, $u'_B = u_A + u_B$ because of the addition theorem of hyperbolic tangent. I call u_A, u_B and u'_B rapidity. For example, u_A is the rapidity of A in the frame 0.

Let τ be the proper time of the spaceship and two missiles are launched at $\tau = 0$. Let 0 be the inertial frame that is moving at the same speed as the spaceship at $\tau = 0$. Let t be the time in the frame 0 and $t = 0$ at $\tau = 0$. Let v_s be the speed of the spaceship and u_s be the rapidity of the space ship in the frame 0. The spaceship catches the first and the second missile at $\tau = \tau_1, \tau_2$, respectively. $t = t_1, t_2$ at $\tau = \tau_1, \tau_2$, respectively.

If the speed v is small, the rapidity is $u \cong \frac{v}{c}$ because $v = c \tanh u \cong cu$. Therefore,

$$\frac{du_s}{d\tau} = \frac{g}{c}$$

At $\tau = 0$, the speed of the spaceship in the frame 0 is 0. Then,

$$u_s = \frac{g}{c} \tau$$

$$v_s = c \tanh u_s = c \tanh \frac{g}{c} \tau$$

Because the first missile is caught at $t = t_1$,

$$\int_0^{t_1} v_s dt = \int_0^{t_1} v dt$$

Substituting $dt = \frac{d\tau}{\sqrt{1 - (\frac{v_s}{c})^2}} = \cosh \frac{g}{c} \tau d\tau$ and $v_s = c \tanh \frac{g}{c} \tau$,

$$\int_0^{\tau_1} c \sinh \frac{g}{c} \tau d\tau = \int_0^{\tau_1} v \cosh \frac{g}{c} \tau d\tau$$

$$\frac{c^2}{g} \left(\cosh \frac{g}{c} \tau_1 - 1 \right) = \frac{cv}{g} \sinh \frac{g}{c} \tau_1$$

Let $\xi = \exp \frac{g}{c} \tau_1$, then,

$$c \left(\frac{\xi + \xi^{-1}}{2} - 1 \right) = v \frac{\xi - \xi^{-1}}{2}$$

$$(c - v)\xi^2 - 2c\xi + c + v = 0$$

$$\xi = \frac{c \pm v}{c - v}$$

Because $\tau_1 > 0$, $\xi > 1$. Then,

$$\xi = \frac{c + v}{c - v}$$

Therefore,

$$\tau_1 = \frac{c}{g} \log \frac{c + v}{c - v}$$

Similarly,

$$\tau_2 = \frac{c}{g} \log \frac{c + 2v}{c - 2v}$$

In conclusion, the proper time interval in the spaceship between catching the first missile and catching the second missile is

$$\tau_2 - \tau_1 = \frac{c}{g} \left(\log \frac{c + 2v}{c - 2v} - \log \frac{c + v}{c - v} \right)$$