

## Efficient Universal Leakage Elimination for Physical and Encoded Qubits

L.-A. Wu, M. S. Byrd, and D. A. Lidar

*Chemical Physics Theory Group, University of Toronto, 80 St. George Street, Toronto, Ontario M5S 3H6, Canada*

(Received 27 February 2002; published 27 August 2002)

Decoherence-induced leakage errors can couple a physical or encoded qubit to other levels, thus potentially damaging the qubit. They can therefore be very detrimental in quantum information processing and require special attention. Here we present a general method for removing such errors by using simple decoupling and recoupling pulse sequences. The proposed gates are experimentally accessible in a variety of promising quantum-computing proposals.

DOI: 10.1103/PhysRevLett.89.127901

PACS numbers: 03.67.Lx, 03.65.Yz

The unit of quantum information is the qubit: an idealized two-level system consisting of a pair of orthonormal quantum states. However, this idealization neglects other levels which are typically present and can mix with those defining the qubit. Such mixing, the prevention of which is the subject of this work, is known as “leakage.” Leakage may be the result of the application of logical operations, or induced by system-bath coupling. In the former case, a rather general solution was proposed in [1]. Here we are interested in decoherence-induced leakage. This is part of a more general problem: quantum computation (QC) depends on reliable components and a high degree of isolation from a noisy environment. When these conditions are satisfied, it is known that it is possible to stabilize a quantum computer using an encoding of a “logical qubit” into several physical qubits. Methods which profitably exploit such an encoding are, e.g., (closed-loop) quantum error correcting codes (QECC) [2,3] and (open-loop) decoherence-free subspaces or subsystems (DFS) [4–6]. The logical qubits of these codes can also undergo leakage errors, which are particularly serious: by mixing states from within the code and outside the code space, leakage completely invalidates the encoding. A simple procedure to detect and correct leakage, which can be incorporated into a fault-tolerant QECC circuit, was given in [2]. This scheme is, however, not necessarily compatible with all encodings [7]. Here we present a *universal*, open-loop solution to leakage elimination, which makes use of fast and strong “bang-bang” (BB) pulses [8,9]. We first give a general scheme for protecting qubits (whether encoded or physical) from leakage errors using an efficient pulse-sequence. Then we illustrate the general result with examples taken from a variety of promising QC proposals. Particularly important is the fact that our scheme is experimentally feasible in these examples, in the sense that we only make use of the naturally available interactions.

*Universal leakage-elimination operator.*—Here we give a general, existential argument for eliminating all leakage errors on encoded or physical qubits. We general-

ize previous results on leakage elimination via symmetrization [10] to a multi-qubit setting. Suppose that  $n$  two-level systems (e.g., electron spins in quantum dots [11]) are used to encode one logical qubit, or that an  $N$ -level Hilbert space  $\mathcal{H}_N$  supports a two-dimensional physical qubit subspace (e.g., hyperfine energy levels of an ion). Let us arrange the basis vectors  $\{|j\rangle\}_{j=0}^{N-1}$  of  $\mathcal{H}_N$  so that  $|0\rangle$  and  $|1\rangle$  represent the (physical or encoded) qubit states ( $N = 2^n$  for the encoded case). In this ordered basis we can classify all system operators as follows:

$$E = \begin{pmatrix} B & 0 \\ 0 & 0 \end{pmatrix} \quad E^\perp = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 0 \\ 0 & C \end{pmatrix} \quad L = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & D \\ F & 0 \end{pmatrix}, \quad (1)$$

where  $B$  and  $C$  are  $2 \times 2$  and  $(N-2) \times (N-2)$  blocks, respectively, and  $D, F$  are  $2 \times (N-2)$ ,  $(N-2) \times 2$  blocks. Operators of type  $E$  represent logical operations, i.e., they act entirely within the qubit subspace.  $E^\perp$  operators, on the other hand, have no effect on the qubit as they act entirely outside the qubit subspace. Finally,  $L$  represents the leakage operators. The total system-bath Hamiltonian can be written as  $H_{SB} = H_E + H_{E^\perp} + H_L$ , where  $H_E$  ( $H_{E^\perp}, H_L$ ) is a linear combination of elements of the set  $E$  ( $E^\perp, L$ ), tensored with bath operators. Now consider

$$R_L = e^{i\phi} \begin{pmatrix} -I & 0 \\ 0 & I \end{pmatrix}, \quad (2)$$

where the blocks have the same dimensions as in Eq. (1) and  $\phi$  is an overall phase. This operator satisfies  $\{R_L, L\} = 0$ , while  $[R_L, E] = [R_L, E^\perp] = 0$ . Using a BB parity-kick sequence [8] it follows that  $R_L$  is a *leakage-elimination operator* (LEO):

$$\lim_{m \rightarrow \infty} (e^{-iH_{SB}t/m} R_L^\dagger e^{-iH_{SB}t/m} R_L)^m = e^{-iH_E t} e^{-iH_{E^\perp} t}. \quad (3)$$

In practice one takes  $m = 1$  and makes  $t \ll 1/\omega_c$ , where  $\omega_c$  is the bath high-frequency cutoff (e.g., the Debye frequency for a bath of harmonic oscillators) [8]. Equation (3) then holds to order  $t^2$ , and implies that one intersperses periods of free evolution for time  $t$  with

$R_L, R_L^\dagger$  pulses which are so strong that  $H_{SB}$  is negligible during these BB pulses. This combination of fast and strong pulses is why the procedure is termed bang-bang [8]. The term  $e^{-iH_{E\perp t}}$  in Eq. (3) has no effect on the qubit subspace. The term  $e^{-iH_E t}$  may result in logical errors, which will have to be treated by other methods, e.g., concatenation with a QECC [2,3,12], or additional BB pulses [13]. Note that since  $R_L$  commutes with the logical operations, they can be performed at the same time, i.e., *our leakage-elimination procedure is fully compatible with universal QC*. We now give a procedure for generating LEOs from a controllable system Hamiltonian  $H_S$  acting for a time  $\tau$ , i.e.,  $R_L = \exp(-iH_S \tau)$ . From Eq. (2) it follows that  $H_S$  must act as a projection operator  $P$  onto the qubit subspace. Furthermore,  $\tau$  must be chosen so that  $R_L$  acts as  $-I$  in the qubit subspace. A general choice is

$$R_L^{E(1)} = \exp(\pm i\pi \hat{n} \cdot \vec{\sigma} P), \quad (4)$$

where  $\vec{\sigma}$  denotes the vector of Pauli matrices, which we refer to as logical  $X, Y, Z$  operations, and  $\hat{n}$  is a real unit vector. This is a valid LEO since  $\exp(-i\pi \hat{n} \cdot \vec{\sigma})$  expresses a  $2\pi$  rotation about the axis  $\hat{n}$  on the qubit Bloch sphere, upon which the qubit state acquires a minus sign. A useful example is  $\tau = \pi$  and  $H_S = |0\rangle\langle 0| + |1\rangle\langle 1|$ , which is a projector onto the qubit subspace and acts as identity there. This example generalizes immediately to  $d$ -dimensional qudits [10]:

$$R_L^{\text{id}(d)} = \exp\left(\pm i\pi \sum_{k=0}^{d-1} |k\rangle\langle k|\right). \quad (5)$$

Now let us consider leakage prevention on a code subspace of  $K$  logical qubits, each supported by  $n$  physical qubits. In analogy to  $R_L^{E(1)}$  we can construct a general LEO as follows. Let  $S_i$  be a single-qubit logical (unitary) operation on the  $i$ th (encoded or physical) qubit, and let  $P_i$  be a projection onto the code subspace of that qubit. Then

$$R_L^{E(K)} = \exp(\pm i\pi \otimes_{i=1}^K S_i P_i) \quad (6)$$

is a valid LEO.

*Proof:* We can always rotate the Bloch sphere of a qubit so that each  $S_i$  is independently transformed into  $Z_i$ :  $S_i = U_i Z_i U_i^\dagger$  (where  $U_i$  is an appropriate single-qubit unitary);  $\otimes_{i=1}^K Z_i$  is a diagonal matrix of  $\pm 1$ , so  $\exp(-i\pi \otimes_{i=1}^K Z_i) = -I$ . Thus  $R_L^{E(K)} = \exp(-i\pi \otimes_{i=1}^K U_i Z_i U_i^\dagger P_i) = (\otimes_{i=1}^K U_i) \exp(-i\pi \otimes_{i=1}^K Z_i P_i) (\otimes_{i=1}^K U_i^\dagger) = -I$  on the code subspace, and (because of the  $P_i$ )  $= I$  on the orthogonal complement. QED.

In all examples considered below, we are able to construct single-qubit logical operators which are automatically projectors on that qubit's subspace. We refer to such operators as "canonical." We are now ready to apply these considerations to a number of promising QC proposals.

*Example 1.*—As a simple first example, consider physical qubits, such as electrons on liquid helium [14], or an electron-spin qubit in quantum dots [11,15], or a nuclear- or electron-spin qubit in donor atoms in silicon [16]. In those cases, a potential well at each site traps one fermion. Usually, the ground and first excited state are taken as a qubit for a given site:  $|k\rangle = c_k^\dagger |\text{vac}\rangle$ , where  $c_k^\dagger$  is a fermionic creation operator for level  $k = 0, 1$ . Let  $n_k = c_k^\dagger c_k$  be the fermion number operator. The logical operations for this qubit are  $E = \{X = c_0^\dagger c_1 + c_0^\dagger c_1, Y = i(c_1^\dagger c_0 - c_0^\dagger c_1), Z = n_0 - n_1\}$  whose elements satisfy  $su(2)$  commutation relations. In this case, a general linear Hamiltonian which includes hopping terms,  $H_{SB} = \sum_{k,l=0}^{N-1} a_{kl} c_k^\dagger c_l$ , where  $a_{kl}$  includes parameters and bath operators, and  $k, l$  denote all electron states, can leak the qubit states  $k = 0, 1$  into any of the other states. Using parity kicks, we can eliminate this leakage in terms of the LEO:  $R_L^{\text{id}(1)} = \exp[\pm i\pi(n_0 + n_1)]$ . This LEO is implemented by controlling on-site energies.

Let us now generalize this to  $K$  qubits. The states of the  $i$ th qubit are  $|k\rangle_i = c_k^\dagger(i) |\text{vac}\rangle$ . States outside of the code subspace contain at least one creation operator  $c_k^\dagger(i)$  with  $k \geq 2$ . A logical  $Z$  operator on the  $i$ th qubit is  $Z_i = n_0(i) - n_1(i)$ , which is canonical. It follows from Eq. (6) that an LEO is

$$(R_L^{E(K)})_{\text{ferm}} = \exp[\pm i\pi(Z_1 Z_2 \cdots Z_K)]. \quad (7)$$

The term  $\otimes_{i=1}^K Z_i$  involves a many-body interaction which is not naturally available. However, it can be constructed from available interactions as follows: Let us assume that the interaction between neighboring sites  $i, j$  contains a controllable  $Z_i Z_j$  term (in reality such control may have to be obtained indirectly, e.g., by controlling an  $X_i X_j + Y_i Y_j$  term, as shown in [17], and as discussed in more detail below). We note the following useful "conjugation by  $\pi/4$ " formula:

$$T_A \circ e^{i\theta B} \equiv e^{i(\pi/4)A} e^{i\theta B} e^{-i(\pi/4)A} = e^{i\theta(iAB)}, \quad (8)$$

which holds if  $\{A, B\} = 0$  and  $A^2 = B^2 = I$ . Using this we can efficiently generate long-range interactions by alternately switching interactions  $A, B$  on/off. E.g.,

$$T_{Y_2} \circ [T_{Z_2 Z_3} \circ (T_{X_2} \circ e^{i\theta Z_1 Z_2})] = e^{i\theta Z_1 Z_2 Z_3}, \quad (9)$$

which can, in turn, be used to generate  $e^{i\theta Z_1 Z_2 Z_3 Z_4}$ , etc. Using this recursive process, the implementation of the LEO  $(R_L^{E(K)})_{\text{ferm}}$  takes  $O(K)$  steps. Figure 1 shows a circuit for the 4-qubit case.

We conclude Example 1 with an estimate of its feasibility in the case of electrons on helium. There the major source of decoherence is the ripplon bath, with  $\omega_c = 0.1$  GHz, while all operations needed to implement  $(R_L^{E(K)})_{\text{ferm}}$  can be performed at several GHz [14]. The BB time-scale condition is thus satisfied.

*Example 2.*—Similarly to the fermionic case, we can also treat bosonic systems, such as the linear optical QC



encoding is into the degeneracy of the two  $S = 1/2$  subspaces [6,20]. Collective errors can change the  $\alpha, \beta$  coefficients, but have the same effect on the  $|0_L\rangle, |1_L\rangle$  states, which is why this encoding is a DFS. If, however, we also consider bilinear system-bath coupling  $H_{SB}^{(2)} = \sum_{i < j} \sum_{\alpha, \beta = \{x, y, z\}} g_{ij}^{\alpha\beta} \sigma_i^\alpha \sigma_j^\beta \otimes B_{ij}^{\alpha\beta}$ , then the symmetrization procedure of [21], that prepares collective decoherence conditions, will not work. In this case we must consider the possibility of leakage. The bilinear term  $g_{ij}^{\alpha\beta} \sigma_i^\alpha \sigma_j^\beta$  can be decomposed into (i) a scalar  $g \vec{\sigma}_i \cdot \vec{\sigma}_j$ , which has the effect of logical errors  $E$ ; (ii) two operators  $\vec{\beta} \cdot (\vec{\sigma}_i \times \vec{\sigma}_j)$  and  $(\vec{\sigma}_i \cdot \vec{\gamma})(\vec{\sigma}_j \cdot \vec{\gamma})$ , which can couple between  $S = 1/2$  states, and can couple them to  $S = 3/2$  states. Note that this also applies to *imperfect symmetrization* at the level of a *linear* system-bath Hamiltonian  $H_{SB}^{(1)}$ . Thus we see that the  $S = 3/2$  subspace acts as a source for leakage, and that there is also the possibility of (noncollective) errors [both from (ii)] which do not have the same effect on the  $|0_L\rangle, |1_L\rangle$  states. We defer an analysis of the latter “ $S = 1/2 \rightarrow 1/2$ ” errors to a separate publication, but we note that they can be suppressed using techniques similar to those we discuss next.

An open-loop leakage correction circuit for this DFS, that once more uses only the Heisenberg interaction, was given in [7]. There the DFS qubit was defined to be  $|0_L\rangle = |0, 1/2\rangle, |1_L\rangle = |1, 1/2\rangle$  and transitions to any of the other six states were considered as leakage (this includes errors caused by collective decoherence, which are normally avoided by a DFS encoding). As stressed in [21], *the Heisenberg interaction can act as a generator of universal, fault-tolerant QC*. Here we add another element to this picture by showing that it can also provide an LEO. The importance of Heisenberg-only QC is in the relative ease of manipulating this interaction in a number of the most promising solid-state QC proposals [11,16]. Now, as shown in [20],  $\bar{X} = (1/4\sqrt{3})(\vec{\sigma}_1 \cdot \vec{\sigma}_3 - \vec{\sigma}_2 \cdot \vec{\sigma}_3)$  acts as a logical  $X$  on the DFS qubit defined above, and annihilates the  $S = 3/2$  states (i.e., it is canonical). Therefore, using Eq. (4),  $(R_L^{E(1)})_{3\text{-DFS}} = \exp(\pm i\pi\bar{X})$  is a Heisenberg-only LEO for a single 3-qubit DFS which eliminates transitions to the  $S = 3/2$  subspace. An LEO for the  $K$ -qubit case is then, from Eq. (6):

$$(R_L^{E(K)})_{3\text{-DFS}} = \exp[\pm i\pi(\bar{X}_1\bar{X}_2 \cdots \bar{X}_K)]. \quad (13)$$

To generate this LEO from available interactions we use a procedure similar to Eq. (9). First, note that  $T_{\bar{Y}_2} \circ T_{\bar{Z}_1} \circ T_{\bar{Z}_1\bar{Z}_2} \circ e^{i\theta\bar{X}_1} = e^{i\theta\bar{X}_1\bar{X}_2}$ . Efficient schemes for generating  $\bar{Z}_i\bar{Z}_j$  were given in [22], while  $\bar{Z}_i, \bar{Y}_i$  are directly obtainable from the Heisenberg interaction [20]. The recursive construction of  $(R_L^{E(K)})_{3\text{-DFS}}$  then proceeds using  $T_{\bar{Y}_3} \circ T_{\bar{Z}_2} \circ T_{\bar{Z}_2\bar{Z}_3} \circ e^{i\theta\bar{X}_1\bar{X}_2} = e^{i\theta\bar{X}_1\bar{X}_2\bar{X}_3}$ , etc., which again is a procedure that scales as  $O(K)$ .

*Conclusions.*—Decoherence-induced leakage from the logical space of (physical or encoded) qubits is a severe source of errors for quantum computation. We have shown how to efficiently and universally eliminate such errors using sequences of strong and fast pulses. These pulses can be applied at the same time as logical operations, so that leakage elimination can be performed in conjunction with universal quantum computation. Applications to a variety of promising quantum-computing proposals were discussed, and leakage-elimination methods were presented that are directly applicable using only experimentally available interactions. In the case of electrons on helium we were able to confirm the feasibility of the proposed methods based on a time-scale analysis.

The present study was sponsored by the DARPA-QuIST program (managed by AFOSR under agreement No. F49620-01-1-0468). We thank Professor M. Dykman and Dr. S. Schneider for very helpful discussions.

- 
- [1] L. Tian and S. Lloyd, Phys. Rev. A **62**, 050301 (2000); J. P. Palao and R. Kosloff, quant-ph/0204101.
  - [2] J. Preskill, Proc. R. Soc. London A **454**, 385 (1998).
  - [3] E. Knill *et al.*, Science **279**, 342 (1998); A. M. Steane, Nature (London) **399**, 124 (1999).
  - [4] L.-M. Duan and G.-C. Guo, Phys. Rev. A **57**, 737 (1998).
  - [5] P. Zanardi and M. Rasetti, Phys. Rev. Lett. **79**, 3306 (1997); D. A. Lidar *et al.*, Phys. Rev. Lett. **81**, 2594 (1998).
  - [6] E. Knill *et al.*, Phys. Rev. Lett. **84**, 2525 (2000).
  - [7] J. Kempe *et al.*, Quant. Inf. Comp. **1**, 33 (2001).
  - [8] L. Viola and S. Lloyd, Phys. Rev. A **58**, 2733 (1998); D. Vitali and P. Tombesi, Phys. Rev. A **59**, 4178 (1999); P. Zanardi, Phys. Rev. A **63**, 012301 (2001).
  - [9] L. Viola *et al.*, Phys. Rev. Lett. **82**, 2417 (1999).
  - [10] P. Zanardi, Phys. Lett. A **258**, 77 (1999).
  - [11] D. Loss and D. P. DiVincenzo, Phys. Rev. A **57**, 120 (1998); J. Levy, Phys. Rev. A **64**, 052306 (2001).
  - [12] D. A. Lidar *et al.*, Phys. Rev. Lett. **82**, 4556 (1999).
  - [13] M. S. Byrd and D. A. Lidar, Phys. Rev. Lett. **89**, 047901 (2002).
  - [14] P. M. Platzman and M. I. Dykman, Science **284**, 1967 (1999); Fortschr. Phys. **48**, 1095 (2000).
  - [15] A. Imamoglu *et al.*, Phys. Rev. Lett. **83**, 4204 (1999); E. Pazy *et al.*, e-print cond-mat/0109337.
  - [16] B. E. Kane, Nature (London) **393**, 133 (1998); R. Vrijen *et al.*, Phys. Rev. A **62**, 012306 (2000).
  - [17] D. A. Lidar and L.-A. Wu, Phys. Rev. Lett. **88**, 017905 (2002).
  - [18] E. Knill *et al.*, Nature (London) **409**, 46 (2001).
  - [19] D. Mozysky *et al.*, Phys. Rev. Lett. **86**, 5112 (2001).
  - [20] J. Kempe *et al.*, Phys. Rev. A **63**, 042307 (2001).
  - [21] L.-A. Wu and D. A. Lidar, Phys. Rev. Lett. **88**, 207902 (2002).
  - [22] D. P. DiVincenzo *et al.*, Nature (London) **408**, 339 (2000).