

The twin 'paradox' calculated by Doppler shift

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The scenario

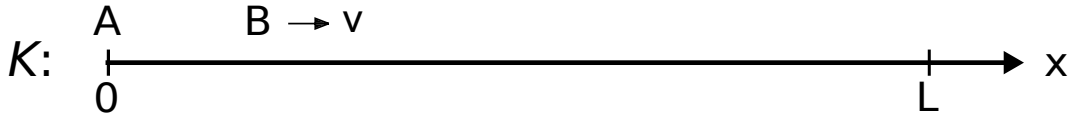


Figure 1: *Frame K*

Twin *A* stays stationary at $x = 0$ in an inertial frame *K*, while twin *B* travels at the speed v to $x = L$, where she turns around and travels back to *A* at the speed v . Both *A* and *B* emit EM-pulses (or light flashes) with the pulse repetition frequency f , and both count the received pulses. When they are back together, both must have counted all the pulses emitted by the other twin.

Observations made by *A*:

When *B* is going out, *A* will receive the pulses with the Doppler shifted frequency $f_1 = f \sqrt{\frac{c-v}{c+v}}$. She will observe this frequency for the time it takes *B* to reach the turning point at some distance L , plus the time it takes for the light to reach her from the turning point: $t_{a1} = \frac{L}{v} + \frac{L}{c}$. Thereafter, *A* will observe the Doppler shifted frequency $f_2 = f \sqrt{\frac{c+v}{c-v}}$ for the time $t_{a2} = \frac{L}{v} - \frac{L}{c}$.

A will receive the total number of pulses:

$$\begin{aligned} N_A &= (f_1 \cdot t_{a1}) + (f_2 \cdot t_{a2}) \\ &= f \sqrt{\frac{c-v}{c+v}} \left(\frac{L}{v} + \frac{L}{c} \right) + f \sqrt{\frac{c+v}{c-v}} \left(\frac{L}{v} - \frac{L}{c} \right) \\ &= f \frac{L}{vc} \sqrt{(c-v)(c+v)} + f \frac{L}{vc} \sqrt{(c+v)(c-v)} \\ &= \frac{2L}{v} \sqrt{1 - \frac{v^2}{c^2}} \cdot f \end{aligned}$$

Measured on twin A 's clock the duration of the journey will be $T_A = \frac{2L}{v}$, thus:

$$N_A = T_A \sqrt{1 - \frac{v^2}{c^2}} \cdot f \quad (1)$$

Let T_B be the proper time shown by B 's clock when she returns. The number of pulses received by A must obviously be equal to the number of pulses emitted by B , and since B emits $T_B \cdot f$ pulses, B 's clock when she returns must show:

$$T_B = T_A \sqrt{1 - \frac{v^2}{c^2}} \quad (2)$$

Observations made by B :

Let T_B be the proper time measured by B 's clock when she returns. B will obviously use the same time on the journey out and the journey back. When going out B will receive the pulses from A with the Doppler shifted frequency $f_1 = f \sqrt{\frac{c-v}{c+v}}$ for the time $t_{b1} = \frac{T_B}{2}$. When B turns around, she will immediately receive the pulses from A with the frequency $f_2 = f \sqrt{\frac{c+v}{c-v}}$ for the time $t_{b2} = \frac{T_B}{2}$.

B will receive the total number of pulses:

$$\begin{aligned} N_B &= (f_1 \cdot t_{b1}) + (f_2 \cdot t_{b2}) \\ &= f \sqrt{\frac{c-v}{c+v}} \cdot \frac{T_B}{2} + f \sqrt{\frac{c+v}{c-v}} \cdot \frac{T_B}{2} \\ &= f \frac{T_B (c-v)}{2\sqrt{c^2-v^2}} + f \frac{T_B (c+v)}{2\sqrt{c^2-v^2}} = \frac{T_B}{\sqrt{1-\frac{v^2}{c^2}}} f \\ N_B &= \frac{T_B}{\sqrt{1-\frac{v^2}{c^2}}} f \end{aligned} \quad (3)$$

The number of pulses received by B must obviously be equal to the number of pulses emitted by A , and since A has emitted $T_A \cdot f$ pulses, A 's clock when B returns must show:

$$T_A = \frac{T_B}{\sqrt{1-\frac{v^2}{c^2}}} \quad (4)$$

Conclusion

A and B will, based on their own observation, agree that $T_A = \frac{T_B}{\sqrt{1-\frac{v^2}{c^2}}}$.

Twin A ages more than twin B .