

# 中国激光

## 光纤激光中光纤熔丝损伤研究进展

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**摘要** 光纤熔丝损伤是一种发生在正在传光的光纤中的链式损伤效应, 从 1987 年首次被发现至今, 已在几乎所有类型的光纤中被观察到。它具有类似燃烧的导火索的外观, 可以在条件合适时自发发生, 并沿着光纤正在传光的反方向快速传播至整个系统, 不可逆地毁坏其经过的光纤组件, 因而对光纤系统, 特别是高功率光纤激光器, 构成严重威胁。本文结合作者团队对于光纤熔丝损伤效应十余年的观测和研究, 全面回顾了有关光纤熔丝损伤效应的历史和最新研究进展, 介绍了目前已知的光纤熔丝损伤关键物理过程、预防和阻断方法, 以及光纤熔丝损伤本身的应用, 并展望了未来相关研究的热点方向和重点问题。

**关键词** 激光光学; 光纤熔丝损伤; 高功率光纤激光; 损伤预防监测和阻断传播; 光纤内微腔; 光纤传感

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### 1 引言

光纤承载着现代生活许多至关重要的应用, 例如高功率光纤激光器, 在精密加工制造以及国防装备领域具有重要应用价值, 其技术水平在过去十余年内得到长足的发展进步。光纤还被广泛应用于通信、传感和生物医疗领域, 并伴随着持续的功率提升, 创造了巨大的经济社会价值。然而, 随着功率的不断增长, 所有的光纤系统都面临着不容忽视的损伤问题, 对于各种损伤的研究也受到了广泛关注。其中典型的、极具破坏力的损伤就是光纤熔丝(fiber fuse)效应。

光纤熔丝是一种连锁损伤效应, 它发生于正在传光的光纤中, 沿着光传播的反方向快速传播。这种效应由当时正在英国电信研究实验室工作的 Kashyap 等于 1987 年 7 月 14 日首次观察到<sup>[1]</sup>。当时, Kashyap 等正用一台平均功率为 1~2 W 的掺钇铝石榴石(Nd: YAG)激光器产生调 Q 激光, 观察光纤中的电场诱导二阶谐波产生(SHG)效应, 一团蓝白色的、“等离子体状”(plasma-like)的光点意外出现, 并在 1 s 内沿着光纤传播了 1 m<sup>[2]</sup>, 传播之后

的光纤外观上没有异常, 却无法传光; 经显微镜检查, 发现光纤的纤芯中产生了一串规则的空洞。Kashyap 等认为, 光纤中产生的空洞预示了损伤时发生了某种持续的光场聚焦<sup>[3]</sup>, 从而导致材料被聚焦光场损坏, 且这一损伤效应可以持续链式传播, 在外观上非常接近于点燃的火药导火索(fuse), 因此将这一现象称为“灾难性的自推进自聚焦”(catastrophic self-propelled self-focusing)<sup>[2,4]</sup>。随后在 1988 年, 英国南安普顿大学光纤组的 Hand 等<sup>[5]</sup>用了更简短和形象的“光纤熔丝”来称呼这种现象, 这一名称后来被广泛使用。2006 年, “光纤熔丝”的译名开始被南京邮电大学的沈建华等<sup>[6]</sup>使用。由于光纤熔丝的功能性后果是光纤损伤, 因此本文用“光纤熔丝损伤”来描述, 以便理解与检索。

光纤熔丝损伤一旦发生, 就会向系统中所有正在传输激光的光纤部位快速传播, 因而会造成不可逆的全局性灾难, 这一点与大多数的偶发性局部物理损伤效应不同。图 1 展示了典型的光纤熔丝损伤的宏观状态, 损伤位置发出明亮的光, 并沿着光纤快速移动。当时光纤熔丝损伤效应一经发现就引起了业界巨大轰动, 因为正值激光技术和光纤技术蓬勃

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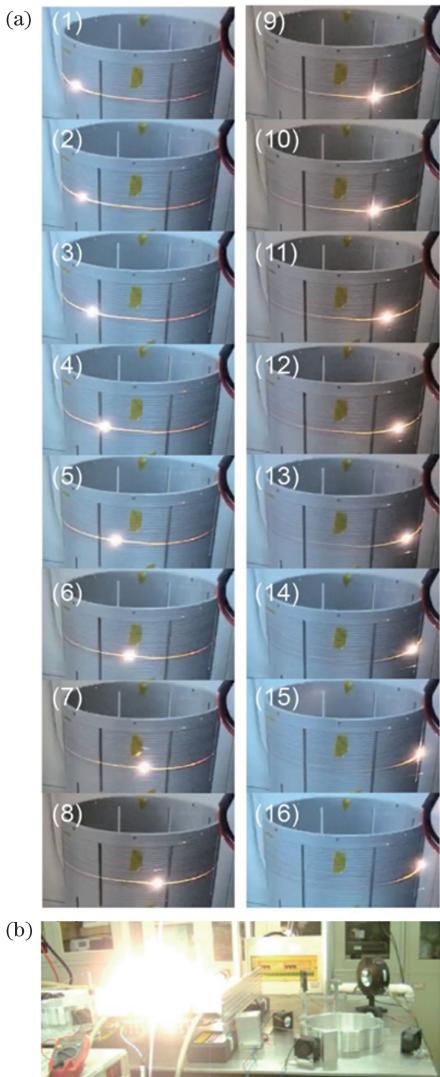


图 1 光纤熔丝损伤的宏观表象。(a)用每秒 240 帧的摄影机记录下光纤熔丝损伤在缠绕在圆柱筒上的光纤中传播的实时过程,括号中的数字依次是相邻的帧;(b)光纤熔丝损伤自发发生在 3 kW 高功率光纤激光器系统中

Fig. 1 Pictures of the fiber fuse phenomenon. (a) The real-time fiber fuse propagation through a fiber coiled on a cylinder, recorded by a 240-frame-per-second camera, and the numbers in brackets are consecutive frames; (b) ongoing fiber fuse in a 3-kW fiber laser system

发展,而这一损伤效应竟发生在如此低的激光功率下,发生在之前被认为是几乎绝对安全的石英光纤中,这对光纤技术的发展造成了巨大的威胁(例如光纤连接端子中可能自发发生光纤熔丝损伤<sup>[7-8]</sup>)。尤其是近十年来,光纤熔丝损伤引起了激光产业<sup>[9-14]</sup>与通信产业<sup>[8,15-21]</sup>甚至量子保密通信领域<sup>[22]</sup>的高度重视与激烈探讨,在几乎所有类型的光纤中都可以观察到这一现象。研究者对光纤熔丝损伤的表象有

了更丰富的认识,提出了不同的理论和模型来解释看到的现象,甚至提出了针对部分应用场景可及时发现或阻断光纤熔丝损伤传播的方法。此外,一些研究已经从另一个角度看待光纤熔丝损伤,利用这种可以产生光纤内空洞的破坏性效应,创造出独特的光纤内微腔结构,并演示了多种潜在的传感应用。

本文首先结合所在团队持续多年的对于光纤熔丝损伤的研究经历,全面回顾了有关光纤熔丝损伤的历史和最新研究进展,介绍了光纤熔丝损伤现象以及相关的研究动态。其次,介绍光纤熔丝损伤机理的有关研究,总结过往研究对于光纤熔丝损伤的传播特性、物理过程和触发条件的主流认识和观点,以及它们的形成发展过程。再次,介绍控制光纤熔丝损伤效应对现有光纤激光系统应用的有关研究,包括阻断光纤熔丝损伤在光纤中的传播、监测光纤熔丝损伤的产生以及抑制光纤熔丝损伤自发发生的方法。然后,介绍有关光纤熔丝损伤加以转化利用的研究,主要是利用光纤熔丝损伤作为光纤内微结构制造手段的相关研究,以及他们的优势。最后,总结过往研究,展望未来光纤熔丝损伤研究的相关重点和潜在方向。

## 2 光纤熔丝损伤物理

### 2.1 物理相关研究概述

光纤熔丝损伤的理论研究目标是揭示光纤熔丝损伤的微观层面物理作用机制,并发现潜在的物理现象。时至今日,仍有许多研究者在这条路上探索,试图克服各种实验技术和理论分析上的挑战。一方面,光纤熔丝损伤会沿着光纤快速传播,而不会停留在固定位置,这使得目前多数微观测量设备——需要待测对象持续位于微米级尺度的特定空间区域内——还难以用于实时观测这一效应。另一方面,光纤熔丝损伤完全发生在光纤内部,难以进行侵入式观测(如插入探针等),而非侵入式观测手段,例如光学影像、光谱等,难以收集微观局部区域的瞬时信息(光纤熔丝损伤必然伴随高度各向异性的激烈化学反应)。这些都使得提取和还原光纤熔丝损伤的微观物理过程异常困难。因此,在过往近三十四年的研究中,光纤熔丝损伤的物理研究一直受到很大限制:在实验上,大都只能观察光纤熔丝损伤的宏观过程,并测量经历了光纤熔丝损伤之后的光纤样本;在理论上,基于一些重要的假设,提出包含或能够通过仿真计算得出一部分前述实验参数的模型,并验

证模型的合理性。

接下来的三个小节,首先介绍光纤熔丝损伤的传播特性,总结过往研究观测光纤熔丝损伤的主要实验结果和结论,包括本课题组在高功率光纤激光器中获得的实验数据。然后,介绍有关光纤熔丝损伤触发条件的研究,该研究包括本文作者团队在此方面的探索,对于预防、阻断或转化利用光纤熔丝损伤均有重要作用。最后,介绍过往研究中提出的用于解释光纤熔丝损伤的理论模型。

## 2.2 光纤熔丝损伤的传播特性

光纤熔丝损伤已经在几乎所有类型的光纤中被观察到:单模光纤或多模光纤<sup>[5,23-25]</sup>;阶跃折射率光纤或梯度折射率光纤<sup>[26-27]</sup>;实心光纤或微结构空心光纤<sup>[28-32]</sup>、光子晶体光纤<sup>[33-35]</sup>;掺镱光纤或掺铒<sup>[14,23-24,36-38]</sup>、铒<sup>[14,39]</sup>、铥<sup>[10,12]</sup>光纤,掺铝或掺磷<sup>[23-24]</sup>、氟<sup>[40-42]</sup>、硫<sup>[34,43]</sup>、铈<sup>[23-24]</sup>、硒或砷<sup>[35]</sup>等成分的光纤;以石英为基质材料的传统光纤,或以有机聚合物为基质材料的塑料光纤等<sup>[27,44-45]</sup>。在这些多种多样的光纤中,光纤熔丝损伤特性不尽相同,但是其特性在过去三十四年中被持续关注,因为这些特性可能提示了光纤熔丝损伤的物理机制。由于历史上大多数用于光纤熔丝损伤实验的光纤都是以石英为基质材料的,以下所指的特性,在不加说明的情况下,均指石英基质光纤中的特性。

### 2.2.1 光纤熔丝损伤的发光

肉眼看到的光纤熔丝损伤是一个光纤上的耀眼光点沿着光纤、朝着激光传来的方向快速移动,而且整个过程通常没有任何声音。有研究发现,在不同空间角度观察到的发光强度是有区别的,说明发光受到光纤熔丝损伤造成的光纤内部物理结构变化的影响<sup>[46]</sup>。光点的颜色被描述为“蓝白色”<sup>[2]</sup>或者白色<sup>[47]</sup>;而在本课题组近年的实验中,主要为白色泛黄。

不同的发光颜色——或者说光谱——与光纤的材料成分有关。由于熔丝损伤沿着光纤快速移动,难以在光纤外侧用固定仪器完成测量。实际上,光纤熔丝损伤的发光会有一部分能够耦合进尚未遭到损伤的光纤中,并到达光纤的后向端(即激光注入端)。已经遭受熔丝损伤的光纤段无法传光,因此在前向端(即熔丝损伤发生之前的激光出射端)几乎接收不到发光信号。早期研究中,由于激光功率很低,常用一个四端口的光纤耦合器来完成光纤熔丝损伤发光光谱的测量,熔丝损伤发出的光沿着原光路返回(朝着激光源的方向),从耦合器的闲置端口射出,

从而被光谱仪接收。一些过往研究记录的光纤熔丝损伤的发光光谱如图2所示。光谱携带着熔丝损伤物理过程的信息,但是对这些信息的解读难度较大。一个非常著名的假说是光纤熔丝损伤的发光来自黑体辐射,但这一假说面临一些无法化解的难题。不支持这一假说的如Hand等<sup>[5]</sup>认为光纤熔丝损伤的发光光谱明显偏离黑体辐射[图2(a)],日本国立材料研究所的Todoroki<sup>[48]</sup>认为光纤熔丝损伤的发光光谱[图2(b)]不仅包含难以用黑体辐射解释的特殊峰值,而且缺少黑体辐射必然包含的800 nm关键波段光谱成分。但在后来的研究中,支持这一假说的Dianov等<sup>[49-50]</sup>[图2(c)]、日本电信公司光学实验室的Shuto等<sup>[26,51]</sup>,认为黑体辐射理论曲线与实验光谱吻合得很好,拟合曲线所得的温度在1300~17500 °C范围内,可认为反映了熔丝损伤过程的温度。

本课题组通常直接在高功率光纤激光器泵浦合束器的泵浦臂上测量光纤熔丝损伤的发光光谱,所得光谱如图2(g)、(h)所示,可见差值后的光纤熔丝损伤真实光谱与理想的光滑的黑体辐射曲线存在很大差异。实际上,黑体辐射假设忽略了许多其他可能的发光机制,如化学反应能级跃迁以及轫致辐射等,可能不足以完整反映光纤熔丝损伤丰富而活跃的内部物理过程。光纤熔丝损伤的发光光谱可能包含了更多有关物理过程的潜在信息,还有待深入挖掘。

### 2.2.2 光纤熔丝损伤的传播速度

近年来发现光纤熔丝损伤在微观上可能是以阶跃变速的状态传播的<sup>[52-53]</sup>。不过对一般应用而言,最关注的是损伤传播的宏观速度。早期,Kashyap等<sup>[2]</sup>注意光纤熔丝损伤沿着光纤的传播速度大约是1 m/s,而激光在光纤中的原始功率密度仅为10 MW/cm<sup>2</sup>。他们认为注入激光的能量正比于发生光纤熔丝损伤区域的体积,即光纤熔丝损伤的传播速度正比于光纤中传输激光的功率(功率密度)。然而,Hand等<sup>[3,5]</sup>很快提出一个更详细的模型,预测随着光纤中传输激光功率的上升,光纤熔丝损伤的传播速度并非线性增加,而是增速逐渐放缓。在此后的15年中,这些结论一直未得到充分验证,因为受限于激光光源的技术水平,多数实验的激光功率在4 W以下,因而观察到的光纤熔丝损伤传播速度仅为数米每秒[图3(a)],传播速度与激光功率的非线性增长并不明显。直到2005年,俄罗斯科学院普通物理所光纤光学研究中心的Dianov等<sup>[49]</sup>使用

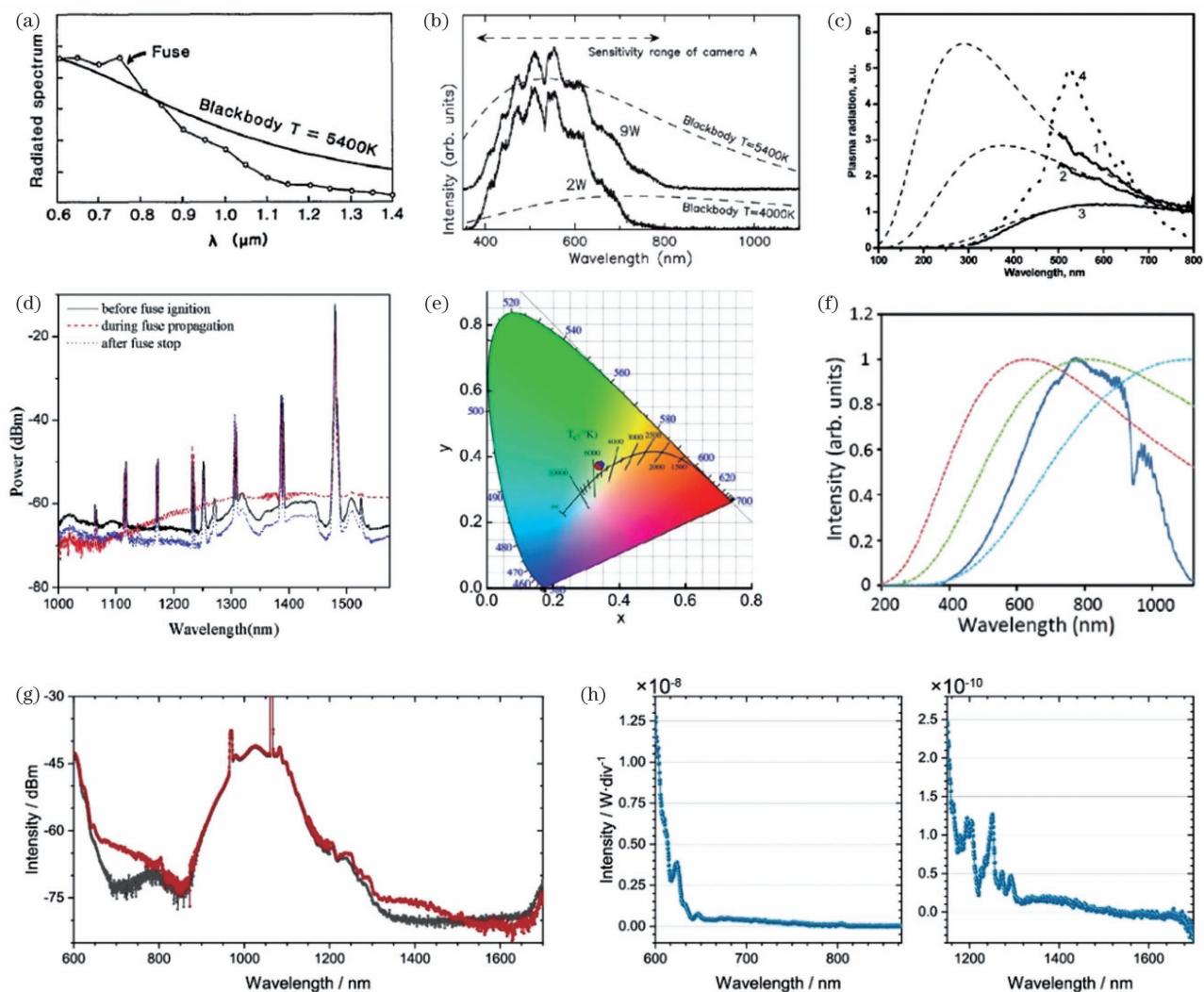


图 2 光纤熔丝损伤发光的光谱。(a)Hand 等的光谱及与黑体辐射理论光谱对比<sup>[5]</sup>;(b)Todoroki 的光谱及与黑体辐射理论光谱对比<sup>[48]</sup>;(c)Dianov 等的光谱及 10500 K、7900 K、4700 K 黑体辐射理论光谱<sup>[50]</sup>;(d)葡萄牙阿维罗大学团队的光谱<sup>[54]</sup>;(e)葡萄牙阿维罗大学团队用色域标记寻找光纤熔丝损伤的温度<sup>[54-55]</sup>;(f)Mizuno 等的塑料光纤中的光纤熔丝损伤光谱, 及与 4600 K、3600 K 和 2600 K 黑体辐射理论光谱对比<sup>[44]</sup>;(g)本课题组测得的光纤熔丝损伤前后的光谱对比;(h)用图 2(g)的数据相减得到的光纤熔丝损伤本身的发光光谱

Fig. 2 Optical spectra of fiber fuse. (a) Data by D. P. Hand, et al.<sup>[5]</sup>, which compares their measured spectra with theoretically derived blackbody spectra; (b) data by S. Todoroki<sup>[48]</sup> in similar comparison; (c) data by E. M. Dianov, et al.<sup>[50]</sup> comparing the measured spectra with theoretical blackbody spectra of 10500 K, 7900 K, and 4700 K; (d) data by F. Domingues, et al.<sup>[54]</sup>; (e) the color coordination by F. Domingues, et al.<sup>[54-55]</sup>, which uses a color gamut to show the temperature of fiber fuse; (f) data by Y. Mizuno, et al.<sup>[44]</sup> obtained in polymer optical fibers and comparison with theoretical blackbody spectra of 4600 K, 3600 K, and 2600 K; (g) spectra measured before and during the fiber fuse, by the authors of this paper; (h) the spectrum obtained by using the data in Fig. 2(g)

了功率可达 40 W 的连续光掺镱光纤激光器, 才揭示出随着光纤中传输激光功率(功率密度)提升, 光纤熔丝损伤传播速度的增长开始放缓[图 3(b)]。同年,Dianov 团队用 250 ns 脉宽、5 kHz 重复频率、峰值功率可达 3 kW 的 Nd:YAG 调 Q 脉冲激光器, 观察到只有脉冲占空期间才有光纤熔丝损伤反应进行的特殊传播模式, 而计算的瞬时传播速度可达

3 km/s, 开启这种特殊模式的功率密度阈值大约为  $20 \text{ W}/\mu\text{m}^2$ (即  $2 \text{ GW}/\text{cm}^2$ )<sup>[56-59]</sup>。随着激光光源——尤其是高功率光纤激光器——水平的提升, 实验可用的激光功率范围越来越大, 连续光的功率可达千瓦到万瓦量级, 最近已有一些千瓦级连续光作用下的光纤熔丝损伤研究<sup>[60]</sup>。在本课题组 2016 年报道的千瓦级实验中, 千瓦级连续光双包层掺镱

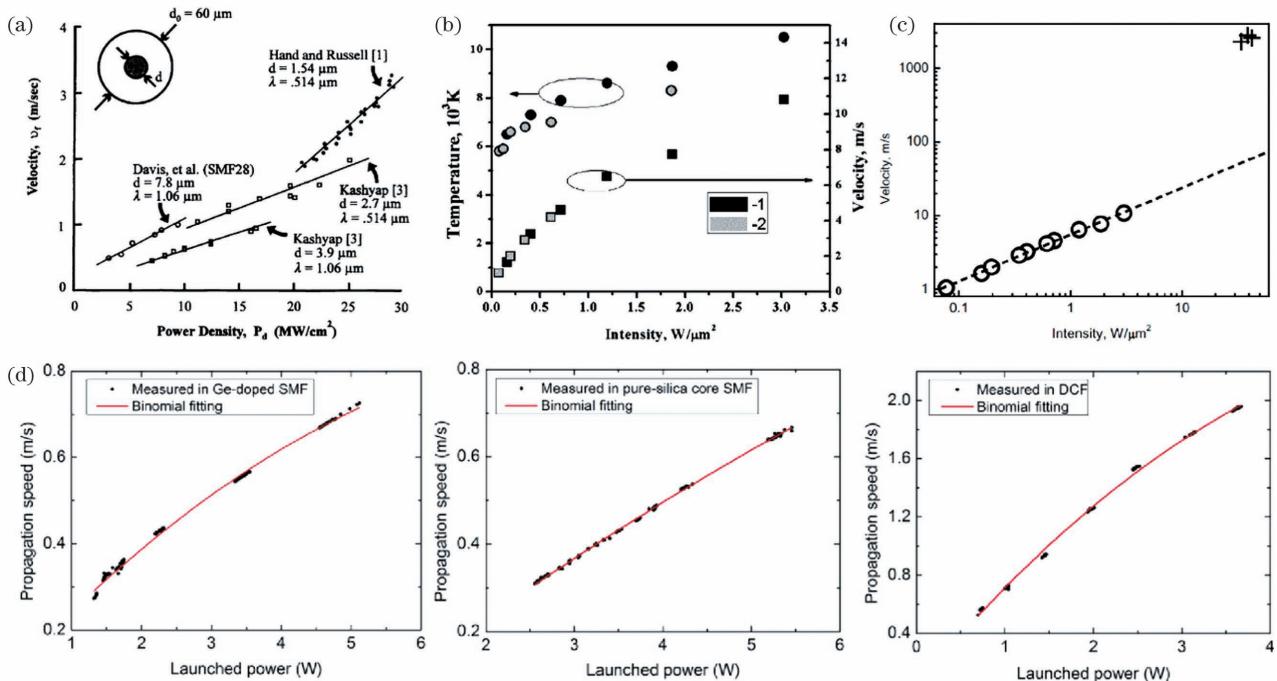


图 3 光纤熔丝损伤的传播速度与光纤中激光功率或功率密度的关系。(a)Davis 等总结的前人实验数据与线性拟合<sup>[24]</sup>;(b)Dianov 团队的实验数据,图例表示两种光纤,其中左轴是黑体辐射计算的温度<sup>[50]</sup>;(c)Dianov 团队在峰值功率为 3 kW 的脉冲激光下得到的实验数据<sup>[57]</sup>;(d)上海交通大学马琳团队的实验数据,三幅图从左往右依次为掺锗单模光纤、纯石英纤芯单模光纤、双包层光纤中的结果<sup>[61]</sup>

Fig. 3 Propagation speed of fiber fuse and the optical power (density) in the fibers. (a) Data collected from previous studies, by D. D. Davis, et al.<sup>[24]</sup>; (b) velocity measured by E. M. Dianov, et al.<sup>[50]</sup>, the legend distinguishes two kinds of fibers, and the left-side vertical coordinates show temperature calculated by blackbody theory; (c) data from E. M. Dianov, et al. in a 3-kW-peak-power pulsed fiber laser<sup>[57]</sup>; (d) data from S. Jiang, et al., pictures from the left to the right show the results respectively in single-mode Ge-doped fiber, single-mode pure-silica fiber, and double-clad fiber<sup>[61]</sup>

光纤激光器的光纤熔丝损伤传播速度最高达到 11.58 m/s(功率密度可达 541 MW/cm<sup>2</sup>)<sup>[37]</sup>;在 2018 年报道的 3 kW 光纤激光器中,传播速度最高可达 14.4 m/s(996 MW/cm<sup>2</sup>)<sup>[38]</sup>;在这些实验中,光纤熔丝损伤的传播速度随功率的增加均呈现出明显的增速放缓趋势。但是,传播速度如此快的光纤熔丝损伤,对高功率光纤激光系统仍然造成巨大威胁。

上述传播速度主要针对实心的石英基质光纤,且速度数值受石英中掺杂的元素及其浓度的影响不明显。在具有空心微结构的光纤中,光纤熔丝损伤的传播速度可能明显慢于具有相似模场分布的实心光纤<sup>[28]</sup>。而在特殊材料的光纤如硫化物光纤或者塑料光纤中,光纤熔丝损伤传播速度只有相似模场分布的实心石英光纤中的几百分之一<sup>[34,40-44]</sup>。实际上,由于这些光纤本身可以在空气中燃烧,其光纤熔丝损伤的物理机制与石英光纤

有很多区别。

### 2.2.3 光纤熔丝损伤产生的光纤内空洞以及物质变化

对于绝大多数情况,光纤熔丝损伤之后的光纤在外观上与完好的新光纤几乎没有区别;因此,需要对熔丝损伤之后的光纤进行微观检查。由于光纤熔丝损伤发生在光纤这种难以分割、切片的对象内部,因此可用于检验的实验仪器相对较少。在过去三四十年里,最常用的仪器是光学显微镜。图 4 显示了一些有代表性的光学显微镜下的熔丝损伤后的光纤样本,包括国防科技大学团队以及本课题组在高功率连续光掺镱双包层光纤激光器中获得的结果。可以看到,熔丝损伤后的光纤一般仍然具有透明无损的外侧包层结构,但光纤中往往留下一连串损伤轨迹,文献中最早将其称为“hollow cavity”<sup>[2,26,51,62]</sup>,后来也称为“bubble”<sup>[24,28,40,47-48,63]</sup>、“void”<sup>[25,64-65]</sup>或“cavern”<sup>[66]</sup>。Hand 等<sup>[5]</sup>发现在一些光纤中,这些

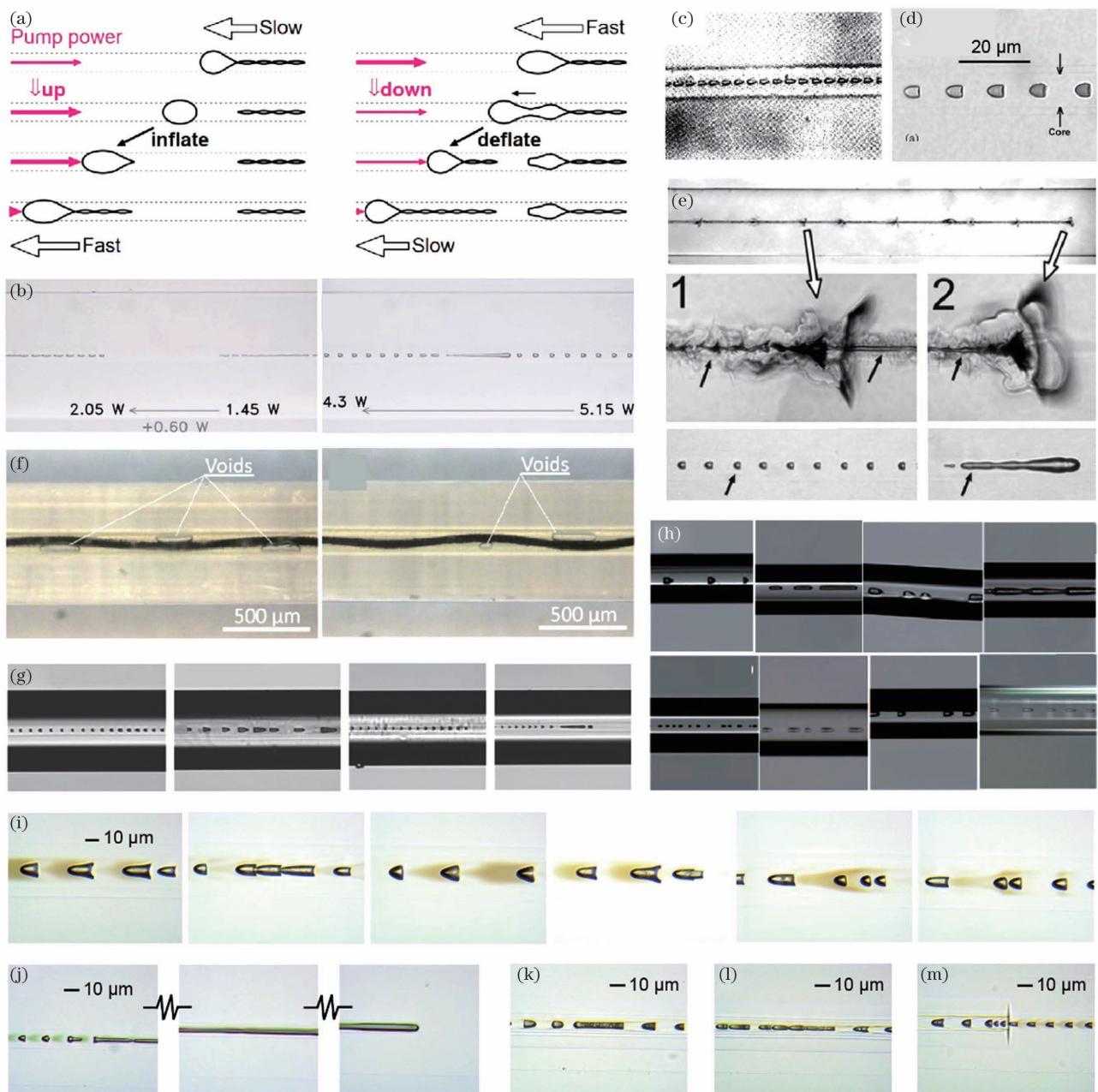


图4 光纤熔丝损伤产生的光纤内空洞。(a)空洞演化过程示意图<sup>[67]</sup>;(b)Todoroki 的相应结果<sup>[67]</sup>;(c)Kashyap 等的结果<sup>[2]</sup>;(d)Atkins 等的结果<sup>[62]</sup>;(e)Dianov 团队在峰值功率为 3 kW 的脉冲激光下的结果<sup>[57]</sup>;(f)Mizuno 等在塑料光纤中的结果<sup>[44]</sup>;(g)国防科技大学团队的结果<sup>[36]</sup>;(h)本课题组千瓦级连续激光实验的结果<sup>[37]</sup>,上四幅依次是 350, 413, 438, 541 MW/cm<sup>2</sup> 的结果,下四幅是 438 MW/cm<sup>2</sup> 下的不规则光纤内空洞;(i) 3 kW 连续激光实验获得的结果<sup>[38]</sup>;梯度折射率光纤中的(j)光纤熔丝损伤结束位置,(k)子弹头反向现象与(l)长连续空洞;(m)梯度折射率光纤(左半)与阶跃折射率单模光纤(右半)的熔接点处

Fig. 4 In-fiber microcavities generated by fiber fuse. (a) The schematic evolutionary process of the generation of in-fiber microcavities during fiber fuse<sup>[67]</sup>; data from (b) S. Todoroki<sup>[67]</sup>, (c) R. Kashyap, et al.<sup>[2]</sup>, (d) Atkins, et al.<sup>[62]</sup>, (e) Dianov's team<sup>[57]</sup> in a 3-kW-peak-power pulsed fiber laser, (f) Y. Mizuno, et al. in polymer fibers<sup>[44]</sup>, (g) H. Zhang, et al.<sup>[36]</sup>, (h) the authors of this paper<sup>[37]</sup> under 350, 413, 438, and 541 MW/cm<sup>2</sup>, respectively for the subplot and four pictures in the second row are irregular cavity in optical fiber under 438 MW/cm<sup>2</sup>, and (i) the authors of this paper<sup>[38]</sup> in a 3-kW-continuous-wave-power fiber laser; in graded-index fiber (j) the fiber fuse termination point, (k) the inversed bullet-shape microcavities, and (l) the long microcavities; (m) the fusion-splicing point after fiber fuse

损伤结构的内部可能不是光滑中空的,而是含有疏松多孔结构的熔丝损伤反应产物。但为了简便,根据更一般的情况,本文将这些损伤结构称为“空洞”。不同光纤中产生的空洞的形状类型不同,但多数呈现一端平而另一端尖的形状,许多实验描述为子弹头形(bullet-shaped)<sup>[2]</sup>。通常,子弹头的尖端指向原光纤内激光前进的方向。同一根光纤中,在不同的激光功率下发生光纤熔丝损伤,产生的空洞尺寸和重复周期(相邻空洞的间隔长度)会发生变化。在一些多模光纤、特种光纤中还可以看到呈丝状的长距离空洞<sup>[30]</sup>,而且可能在一条损伤轨迹中有多个重复周期<sup>[39,65]</sup>,显示出模式干涉效应<sup>[25,52,68]</sup>。当激光功率变化、光纤熔丝损伤通过熔接点时,或者在光纤熔丝损伤的起点和终点处,空洞的形态还会有丰富的变化<sup>[46,64-65]</sup>。

直观上,光纤熔丝损伤应当伴随着化学反应过程,光纤内部生成了与原来化学结构不同的物质。Kashyap<sup>[69]</sup>观察到光纤熔丝损伤之后的受损光纤在空洞位置处横截面上的纤芯扩大痕迹,指出光纤熔

丝损伤过程中释放了气体,从而产生膨胀挤压效果;他还发现受损光纤样本的拉曼光谱在  $1500\text{ cm}^{-1}$  附近出现峰值[图 5(a)],并观察到空洞附近区域的光纤材料泛黄。由此推断光纤熔丝损伤应该是生成了氧气,而泛黄区域则是在氧脱离石英基质后留下的一氧化硅成分<sup>[2]</sup>,并推断空洞中仍残留有 4 atm ( $1\text{ atm}=101.325\text{ kPa}$ ) 的压强<sup>[1]</sup>。Hand 等<sup>[5]</sup>还对样本进行了电子自旋共振(electron spin resonance, ESR)测量,结果显示受损光纤样本中存在可表征晶体缺陷的共振峰值,由此可推断光纤熔丝损伤是由锗缺陷引发;但是,他们并未报道 ESR 的实验条件以及谱线数据。本课题组对多种受损光纤样本进行 ESR 测量[图 5(c)、(f)],在  $g=2.004$  附近发现了主要的共振峰值包络,并发现了 2.0257、2.0248 和 2.0230 三个新的  $g$  值<sup>[38]</sup>,提示样本中出现了新的缺陷种类。但测量温度受可用实验条件的限制,最低只能达到  $-170\text{ }^\circ\text{C}$ ,远不足以唯一地确定晶体缺陷的种类<sup>[70]</sup>。本课题组还对含有空洞的小段光纤样本进行了拉曼光谱测量和光纤轴向折射率<sup>[25,71]</sup>

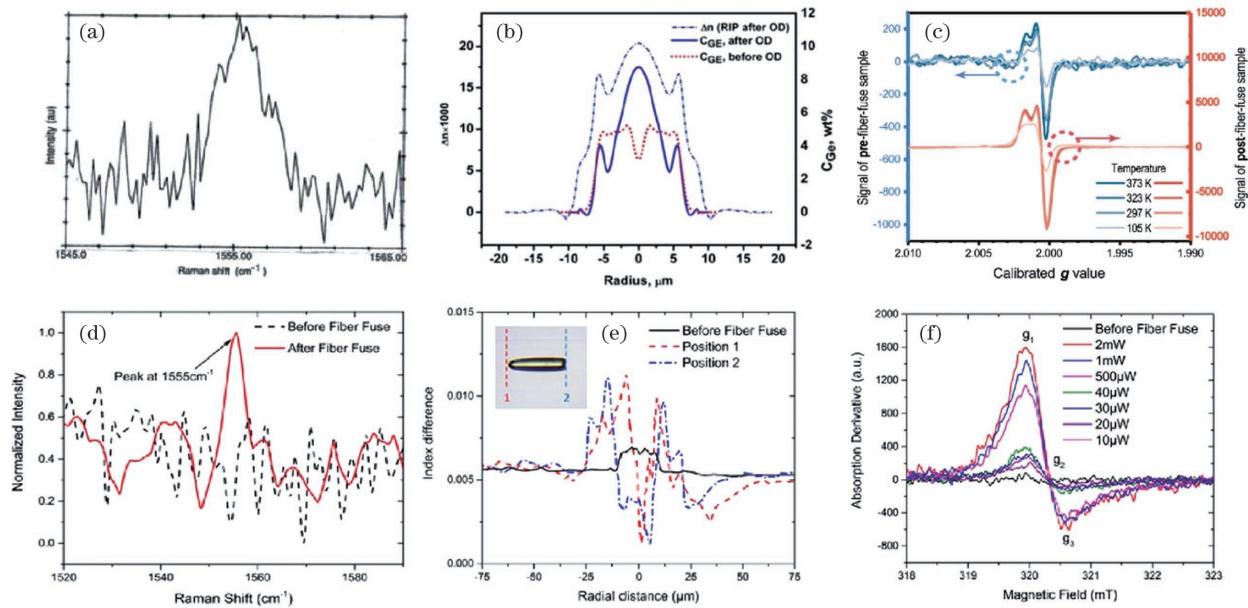


图 5 光纤熔丝损伤样本的测试结果。(a)Kashyap 的受激拉曼光谱结果,  $1555\text{ cm}^{-1}$  附近峰值提示有氧气( $\text{O}_2$ )的存在<sup>[69]</sup>;(b)Dianov 团队的光纤熔丝损伤前后光纤横截面折射率分布<sup>[71]</sup>;(c)本课题组用电子自旋共振(ESR)测量光纤熔丝损伤前后光纤内缺陷情况<sup>[70]</sup>;(d)拉曼光谱结果,显示  $1555\text{ cm}^{-1}$  附近有峰值<sup>[38]</sup>;(e)光纤熔丝损伤前后光纤横截面折射率分布<sup>[38]</sup>;(f)ESR 发现 3 个新的  $g$  值 2.0257、2.0248 和 2.0230<sup>[38]</sup>

Fig. 5 Test results of fiber fused samples. (a) Stimulated Raman spectroscopy results from R. Kashyap<sup>[69]</sup>, of which the peaks around  $1555\text{ cm}^{-1}$  manifests existence of oxygen; (b) refractive-index (RI) profile measured in pre- and post-fiber fuse samples, by E. M. Dianov, et al.<sup>[71]</sup>; (c) electronic spin resonance (ESR) results, by the authors of this paper<sup>[70]</sup>, show signs of defects in post-fiber-fuse samples; (d) Raman spectroscopy results<sup>[38]</sup>, which shows peaks around  $1555\text{ cm}^{-1}$ ; (e) RI profile results of pre- and post-fiber-fuse samples<sup>[38]</sup>; (f) ESR results showing three new  $g$  values 2.0257, 2.0248, and 2.0230<sup>[38]</sup>

在横截面的分布测量<sup>[38]</sup>,显示样本存在 1555 cm<sup>-1</sup>附近的拉曼峰值[图 5(d)],纤芯中心区域的折射率明显低于周围区域[图 5(e)]。总体而言,实验结果显示空洞区域确实包含氧气,提示光纤熔丝损伤过程至少包含了部分由二氧化硅脱氧形成一氧化硅的化学反应。

### 2.3 光纤熔丝损伤的触发条件

光纤熔丝损伤对现实应用的威胁源于其能够在光纤受到外部损伤时发生,甚至是在没有受到外部损伤时自发发生。过往研究尝试过的实验触发方式包括用可吸收材料(油漆<sup>[2]</sup>、金属切割刀<sup>[23]</sup>、金属表面<sup>[49]</sup>或微粒<sup>[18]</sup>、液体<sup>[72]</sup>等)接触光纤端面,用电弧<sup>[2,73-74]</sup>、火柴火焰<sup>[3]</sup>、丁烷火炬<sup>[23]</sup>等灼烧光纤,或者用管式炉<sup>[5,70]</sup>等缓变温度的设备加热光纤。

与光纤熔丝损伤的“触发条件”相关的概念是光纤熔丝损伤的“传播条件”。过往研究提出的几种光纤熔丝损伤传播机理(假设),包括自聚焦和放热化学反应等,在仿真计算中都需要高温参数<sup>[75]</sup>,从几千℃<sup>[5,36,69,76]</sup>到 10<sup>6</sup>℃量级<sup>[7,26,51,77]</sup>。另外,许多实验表明,只有当光纤中传输的激光拥有超过一定阈值的功率时,用前述方法才能轻易地造成光纤熔丝损伤的传播。对于单模石英光纤,这一传播阈值功率通常是瓦级的,而对于多模、光子晶体光纤等,则可能要高一个数量级以上;不同材料的光纤,其阈值功率是不同的<sup>[78]</sup>,对于如硫化物<sup>[40-42]</sup>和塑料光纤<sup>[44]</sup>等,可能低至毫瓦级。

光纤熔丝损伤的触发条件与上述传播条件是有区别的,但是上述传播条件提示,温度和功率是与光纤熔丝损伤触发有关的外部条件。对于光纤熔丝损伤的瞬时启动而言,激光功率可以认为是恒定的,因此只要大于光纤熔丝损伤传播阈值功率即可触发光纤熔丝损伤。由于很难具体观测光纤熔丝损伤的微观启动过程(虽然宏观启动过程有一些初步结果<sup>[79]</sup>),过往研究中常常默认,光纤熔丝损伤的启动是由于温度达到了某个特定数值(而注入光纤的激光功率在整个过程中是不变的),然后在某种机制下,突然地进一步上升至传播条件,进而引发光纤熔丝损伤的传播。过往研究中提出的特定温度包括 1050 ℃<sup>[80]</sup>、2020 ℃<sup>[5]</sup>等,而之所以选取这些数值,是因为研究者认为在这些数值下,石英材料吸收能量陡然增高并且软化<sup>[23-24,47]</sup>或熔化,从而自发提升温度至满足传播条件。但是这些条件很难被验证,因为在过往研究中,触发方式往往造成光纤结构的

机械损伤(如破碎、大范围融化等),这种情况下直接测量特定位置的温度很困难(甚至这个“特定位置”本身在触发的瞬间也很难定位)。本课题组通过设计实验装置[图 6(a)]精确控制光纤熔丝损伤触发位置处的光纤所处环境,实现了对光纤无外部机械损伤的熔丝损伤触发<sup>[70]</sup>,实现了对光纤熔丝损伤自发发生情形迄今最接近的模拟,测量了光纤熔丝损伤的触发临界温度条件与临界功率条件[图 6(c)],其中临界功率条件考虑了实验条件对实际作用于熔丝损伤的光功率的影响。在实验条件下,光纤熔丝损伤的触发临界温度在 800~1200 ℃的大范围内变化,光纤内的光功率越高,临界温度就越低,并且临界温度 T<sub>c</sub> 与临界功率 P<sub>c</sub> 之间的数学关系[图 6(b)]可表示为

$$\ln P_c = \frac{u_0}{k_B} \times \frac{1}{T_c} + \ln \gamma, \quad (1)$$

式中:γ 为实验中的常数;k<sub>B</sub> 为玻尔兹曼常量;u<sub>0</sub> 为支配熔丝损伤触发物理机制的微观能量,即石英晶体中与熔丝损伤触发有关的化学形成能。分析结果显示,光纤中的 u<sub>0</sub> 为 0.6~1.7 eV,在各种已知的潜在化学过程中,这些能量数值与微量的氧在石英介质中的扩散所需的能量最为符合,而与早前认为的掺杂元素(如锗、铝等)本身的晶格缺陷能(2~5 eV)<sup>[5]</sup>不相符,这些结果提示光纤熔丝损伤的触发与微量氧的扩散有关。这一实验揭示了一个重要特征,即光纤熔丝损伤自发发生的临界温度与临界功率(密度)条件呈负反比例指数关系,随着光纤中的光功率上升,临界温度不断下降,但下降趋势放缓。

### 2.4 描述光纤熔丝损伤的物理模型

历史上,有许多理论模型被用于分析光纤熔丝损伤<sup>[2,80]</sup>。大部分的模型将光纤熔丝损伤的传播速度作为仿真计算的目标输出量。在 Kashyap 等最早提出的预想中,光纤熔丝损伤的传播速度随激光功率线性增长,随着实验可用的激光光源功率水平的增长,这个预想已被发现是不完善的。Hand 等<sup>[5]</sup>提出的模型考虑光纤熔丝损伤为激光功率转化产生的热激波(thermal shockwave)在光纤材料中的传播,得出光纤熔丝损伤传播速度的增幅会随着激光功率上升而放缓[图 7(a)]的结论。也有模型将光纤熔丝损伤过程产生的光纤内空洞的尺寸和周期作为仿真计算输出量。美国 OFS 实验室的 Atkins 等<sup>[62]</sup>的模型将光纤熔丝损伤考虑成激光功率导致纤芯区域熔化并等速产生

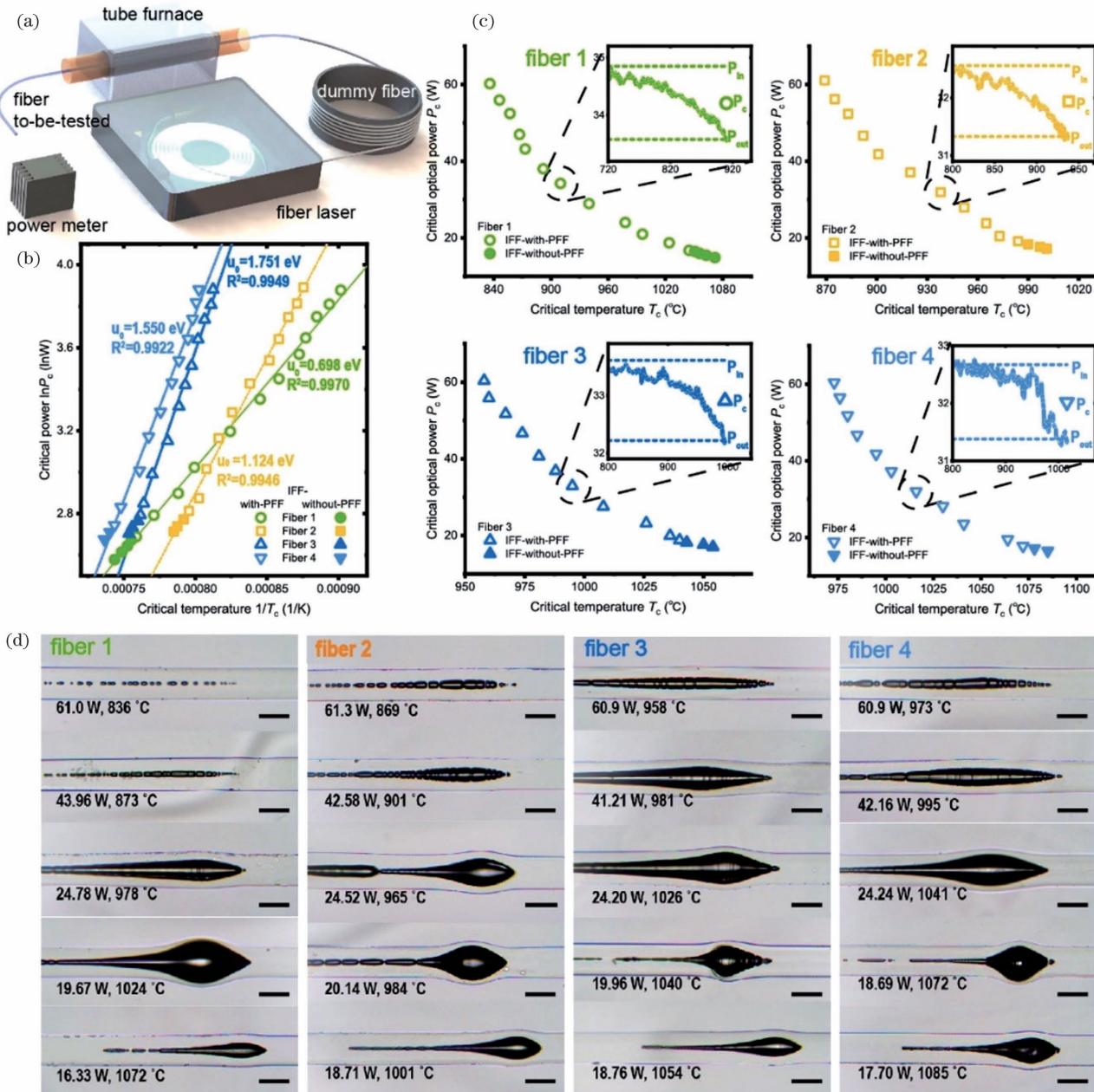


图 6 光纤熔丝损伤的自发发生触发条件<sup>[70]</sup>。(a)本课题组的实验装置,将去除涂覆层无损伤的光纤放入管式炉,通以恒定激光功率并均匀加热直至光纤熔丝损伤触发;(b)数据分析可见某个量纲为 eV、对不同光纤来说大小不等的参量决定了光纤熔丝损伤自发发生的临界温度与临界功率之间的关系;(c)不同光纤中测得的临界温度与临界功率数据;(d)光纤熔丝损伤自发发生起始点处的光纤内空洞

Fig. 6 Critical conditions for spontaneous initiation of fiber fuse<sup>[70]</sup>. (a) Experimental setup by the authors of this paper, we removed the coating layers of the fibers carefully, put the undamaged naked fibers into a tube furnace and heated it uniformly while applying constant input laser powers, and measured the conditions when fiber fuses were triggered; (b) data analysis showing that an energy with a unit of eV, being different for diverse fibers, dominates the conditions for each of the fibers; (c) critical temperatures and critical laser powers measured in four kinds of fibers; (d) micrographs of the positions of the initiations of fiber fuses

气体的过程,通过流体不稳定性使得气体腔室分裂为周期性的空洞结构。这一模型对于描述光纤熔丝损伤中的光纤内空洞的形成过程以及预测特征参数

(空洞的尺寸、周期间距等)具有启发性。还有一些模型关注光纤熔丝损伤在光纤传播的高温点,并将高温点的绝对温度作为主导仿真计算的核心参数,

例如 Shuto 等<sup>[77,81-83]</sup> [图 7(b)] 以及俄罗斯科学院普通物理研究所的 Yakovlenko 等<sup>[66,84-89]</sup> [图 7(c)] 的仿真模型, 其方法为令一个高温点在一套包含了所要考虑参数的预设机制下不断迭代, 并将温度场的迭代通过参数关联为温度场在空间网格中的移

动, 从而将这个移动视为光纤熔丝损伤的传播。

总体而言, 这些不同的光纤熔丝损伤理论模型都在一定程度上解释了光纤熔丝损伤的一部分特性, 例如传播速度等。但是, 由于能够提供仿真过程中的高温参数的实际潜在物理机制可能较多, 这些

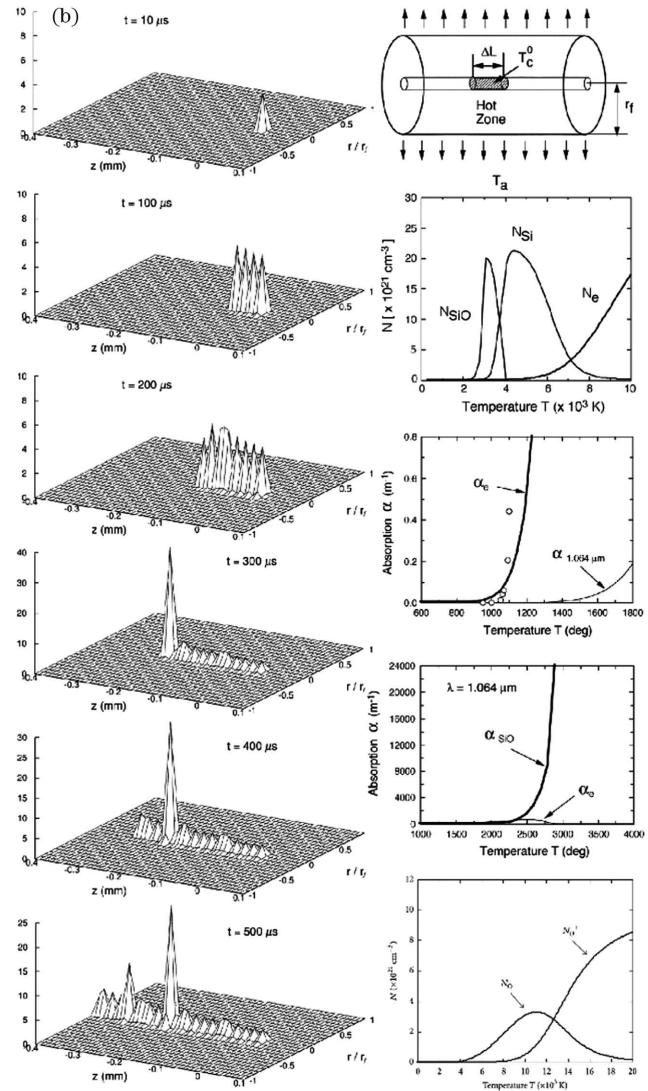
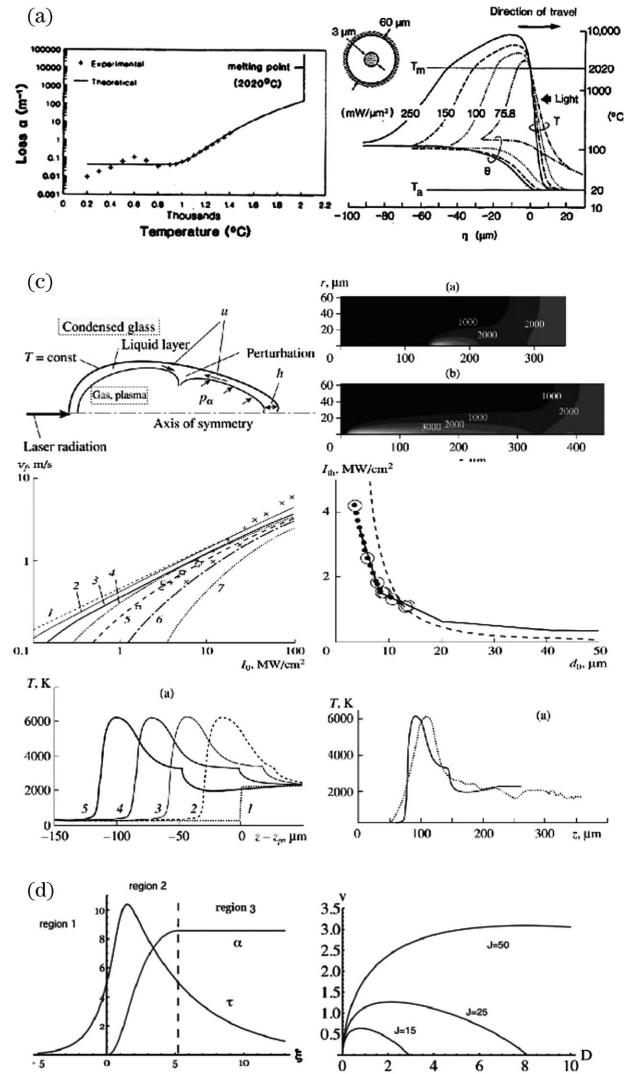


图 7 一些仿真计算结果。(a) Hand 等的模型, 依赖于左图所示的吸收骤增, 算出右图所示的热激波传播速度与激光功率及光纤尺寸的关系<sup>[3,5]</sup>; (b) Shuto 等的模型<sup>[51,77,82,90]</sup>, 左列是仿真的热点传播动态, 温度达 106 K, 右列上一是抽象物理模型示意图, 其余是仿真所用的参数; (c) Yakovlenko 等<sup>[86]</sup>的仿真模型, 第一行左是预想的空洞形成过程, 右是仿真所得的损伤进行处轴向热场, 第二行左是仿真所得的传播速度与激光功率密度关系图, 右是仿真所得的纤芯直径与传播阈值功率密度的关系, 下是仿真所得的动态过程; (d) 澳大利亚国立大学团队<sup>[91-92]</sup>的仿真模型

Fig. 7 Some results from simulations. Results from (a) D. P. Hand, et al.<sup>[3,5]</sup>, showing the propagation velocity of a thermal shockwave, induced by rapidly rising absorption (left-sided subplot), and its relation with the laser power and the geometrical features of the fibers (right-sided subplot), (b) Y. Shuto, et al.<sup>[51,77,82,90]</sup>, showing a high-temperature point (up to 106 K) moving in the simulation grid (left column) and the physical models (right column), (c) S. I. Yakovlenko, et al.<sup>[86]</sup>, showing the perceived formation of in-fiber voids (left-sided subplot, first row) and the relation between propagation velocity (left-sided subplot, second row) and laser power density (right-sided subplot, second row), and (d) A. Ankiewicz, et al.<sup>[91-92]</sup>

仿真模型都需要依赖一些至今仍未能有效验证的假设来选择性放大特定的机制并忽略其他的机制。并且,不同模型之间有时甚至存在难以调和的结论分歧或方法矛盾。因此,现有仿真模型及其组合还没有在真正意义上完整地解释光纤熔丝损伤现象。光纤熔丝损伤的物理机理研究还任重道远。

### 3 光纤熔丝的阻断和抑制

#### 3.1 阻断和抑制相关研究概述

光纤熔丝损伤严重威胁正常工作的光纤激光系统,因而对于潜在的光纤熔丝损伤,其阻断和抑制方法至关重要。所谓阻断光纤熔丝损伤,是使得已经产生的光纤熔丝损伤停止传播,从而控制损失范围。而抑制光纤熔丝损伤,则是通过采取措施,在实现同样的系统性能的同时,尽量避免光纤熔丝损伤的发生;或者,对于光纤熔丝损伤频发的高功率系统,能够降低光纤熔丝损伤自发发生的概率。从过往研究来看,阻断光纤熔丝损伤的传播和抑制光纤熔丝损伤的发生实际上位于两条不同的研究路径上。

接下来的两节中,首先介绍过往研究中提出的各种阻断光纤熔丝损伤传播的方法;然后,介绍更多关于抑制光纤熔丝损伤自发发生的手段和策略的研究。

#### 3.2 阻断光纤熔丝损伤传播的方法

因为光纤熔丝损伤的传播总是需要大于传播阈值功率的激光能量供应,所以“阻断光纤熔丝损伤的传播”就转化为“及时发现系统中已经发生的光纤熔丝损伤,然后及时切断光纤中的激光供应”。这种阻断策略主要适用于一些允许服务中断的小规模光纤系统,例如单台光纤激光器,或者实验室中的光纤激光系统等。在最简单的场景下,可以用光电探测器监控光纤上的特定位置,当有光纤熔丝损伤事件通过该位置时,即可被检测到并触发保护[图8(a)];但是这种方法需要数量庞大的监控节点,经济成本太大。如果光纤系统有输出,监测输出端口的信号异常,就可以发现在激光注入端口到输出端口之间的路径上的光纤熔丝损伤[图8(b)]。但是,对于更普遍的应用场景,这种测量的特异性较低(难以区分光纤熔丝损伤事件与其他的正常光学事件),系统配置过于复杂。过往研究发现,由于光纤熔丝损伤会在光纤中不断产生周期性空洞微结构,熔丝损伤活跃位置处应当会不断产生周期性波动的反射光(虽

然量很少),这个特征可用于识别光纤熔丝损伤<sup>[72,93-97]</sup>。日本情报通新研究机构的 Abedin 等<sup>[98]</sup>将光学时域反射计用波分复用器连接到光纤系统中,观察到光纤熔丝损伤发生时产生的比完好光纤内部的散射更强的反射信号,并且利用这种反射信号的移动,可以解算出光纤熔丝损伤的传播速度。不过,这种方法需要对反射信号进行时域积分。上海交通大学的马琳团队使用光学频域反射(optical frequency-domain reflectometry, OFDR)方法,实现了更快速的光纤熔丝损伤在光纤系统中的定位和测速[图8(c)]<sup>[61]</sup>;还利用自外差干涉法发现少模光纤中光纤熔丝损伤传播速度在亚毫秒(百微秒)量级波动[图8(d)]<sup>[99]</sup>。对于高功率应用场景,尚无较为成熟的控制方案。本课题组经过长期探索,使用大接收角红外光电传感器监控系统整体的发光环境,能够有效发现任意位置的光纤熔丝损伤,从而及时切断激光供应,进而控制光纤熔丝损伤带来的损失。总体而言,及时发现系统中的光纤熔丝损伤是控制光纤熔丝损伤风险的重要一环,从系统中提取的信息越多,就越有利于正确应对光纤熔丝损伤事件。

然而,对于支路众多、难以接受服务大面积中断的更庞大的光纤应用场景(例如光纤通信网),上述需要切断整体系统激光供应的阻断思路<sup>[100]</sup>往往不可行。此时,为了控制单个风险事件的影响范围,另一种思路就是改造光纤本身,使其无法满足光纤熔丝损伤传播条件,从而阻断传播。Todoroki 等<sup>[101-102]</sup>设计了一种阻断装置[图9(a)],在光路中插入一段二氧化碲( $\text{TeO}_2$ )成分的低损耗结构。二氧化碲是在常见的红外工作波长以及低光功率下损耗很低,但结构强度较低的可燃材料,当光纤熔丝损伤通过时,这段材料会崩裂并燃烧,像电路中的保险丝一样熔断,从而有效阻断光纤熔丝损伤的传播。实际上,更常见的阻断装置是拉锥光纤,通过控制拉制参数,使得足够的光在通过拉细光纤时泄漏到包层中<sup>[103]</sup>,从而降低光的功率密度,使得光纤熔丝损伤难以继续传播。这种拉细光纤的策略被持续研究至今<sup>[104-106]</sup>[图9(b)、(c)],效果相当明显,光纤熔丝损伤几乎在功率密度下降到阈值的位置处就立即停止了。除了拉细光纤,使用热扩芯<sup>[107]</sup>、空心光纤(hole-assisted fiber, HAF)<sup>[108-109]</sup>[图9(d)],或者使用多根模场直径不同的光纤接续在一起<sup>[110]</sup>[图9(f)],也可以达到类似的降低功率密度从而阻断光纤熔丝损伤传播的效果。

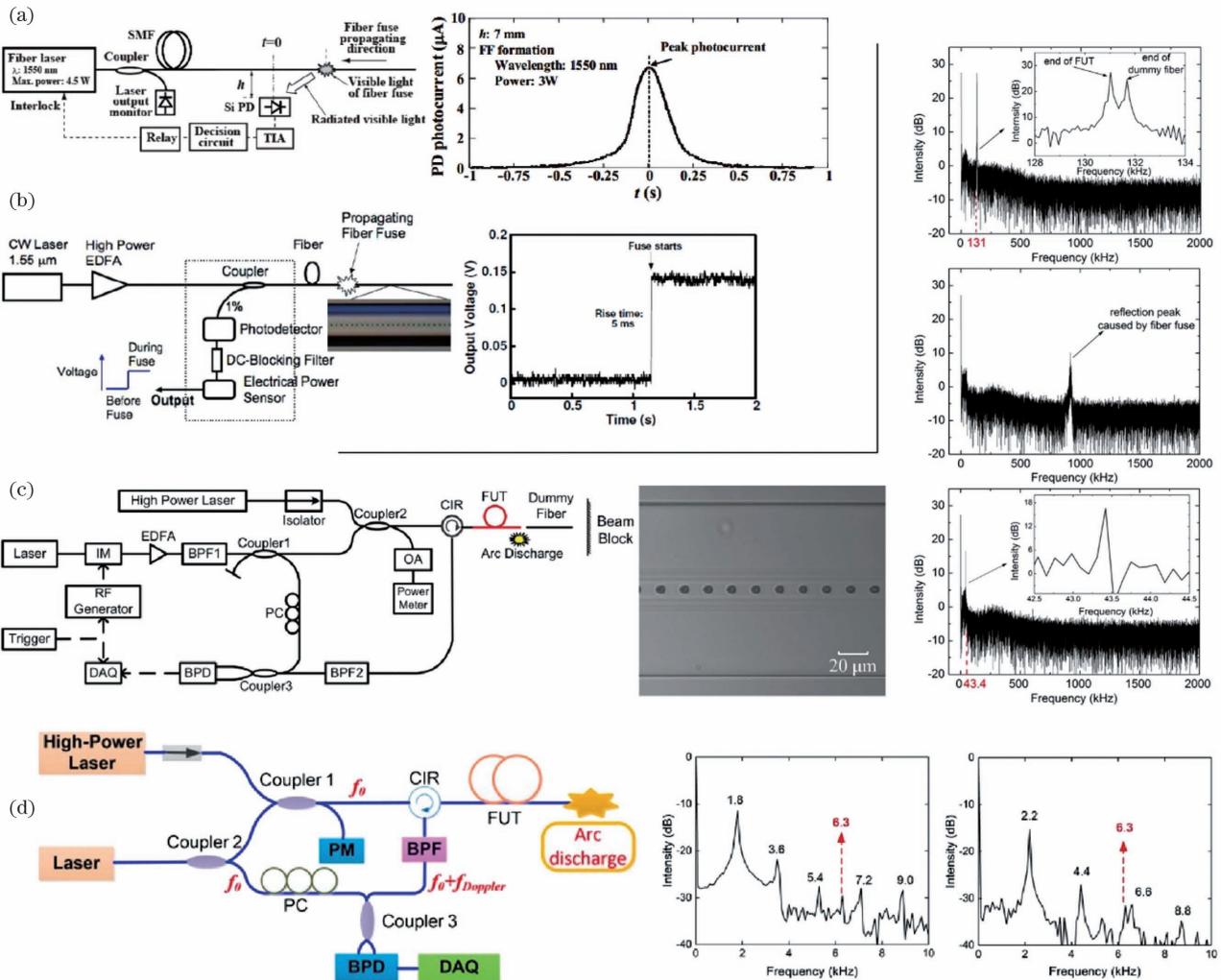


图 8 用于探测和及时发现光纤中的光纤熔丝损伤的装置和实验系统。(a)日本大阪府立大学团队在光纤侧面放置光电探测器,右图是光纤熔丝损伤通过时光电探测器的电流响应<sup>[100]</sup>; (b)日本情报通信研究机构团队监测耦合器中返回光功率的变化<sup>[93]</sup>; (c)上海交通大学马琳团队用光学频域反射(OFDR)发现及监测光纤熔丝损伤传播情况,右列三幅插图是光纤熔丝损伤发生前、中、后的信号<sup>[61]</sup>; (d)上海交通大学马琳团队用外差法和时间频率分析方法监测熔丝损伤,右图分别是单模光纤和少模光纤中的熔丝损伤速度振荡频率<sup>[52,99]</sup>

Fig. 8 Experimental setups or systems for timely detection and monitoring of fiber fuses. (a) Detection by setting a photodiode by the fiber, the right-sided subplot shows current responses when fiber fuse passed through<sup>[100]</sup>; (b) detection by monitoring the variation of in-fiber backward-propagating optical power<sup>[93]</sup>; (c) detection and monitoring of fiber fuse using an optical frequency-domain reflectometry (OFDR), the right-sided columns showing signals before, during, and after the fiber fuse<sup>[61]</sup>; (d) detection and monitoring using a heterodyne system, right-sided subplots show the variation of velocity of fiber fuse in single-mode and few-mode fibers<sup>[52,99]</sup>

总体而言,目前提出的通过改造光纤或插入特殊材料来阻断光纤熔丝损伤传播的各种装置通常只能工作在光功率较低(通常是瓦级)的场景下。在高功率场景下,上述改造光纤或插入特殊材料的装置会给系统引入较大的损耗和不可靠性(甚至意外触发光纤熔丝损伤),而且由于光纤尺寸有限,传输激光的功率密度无法进一步降低,也

难以阻断高功率激光传播导致的光纤熔丝损伤。值得注意的是,对于已经发生的光纤熔丝损伤,即使激光功率很低,使用很低的温度(例如液氮气氛)来冷却光纤一般也不能阻断光纤熔丝损伤的传播<sup>[47]</sup>。因此,对于高功率系统,控制风险的关键应当是及时发现光纤熔丝损伤,从而尽快切断激光供应。

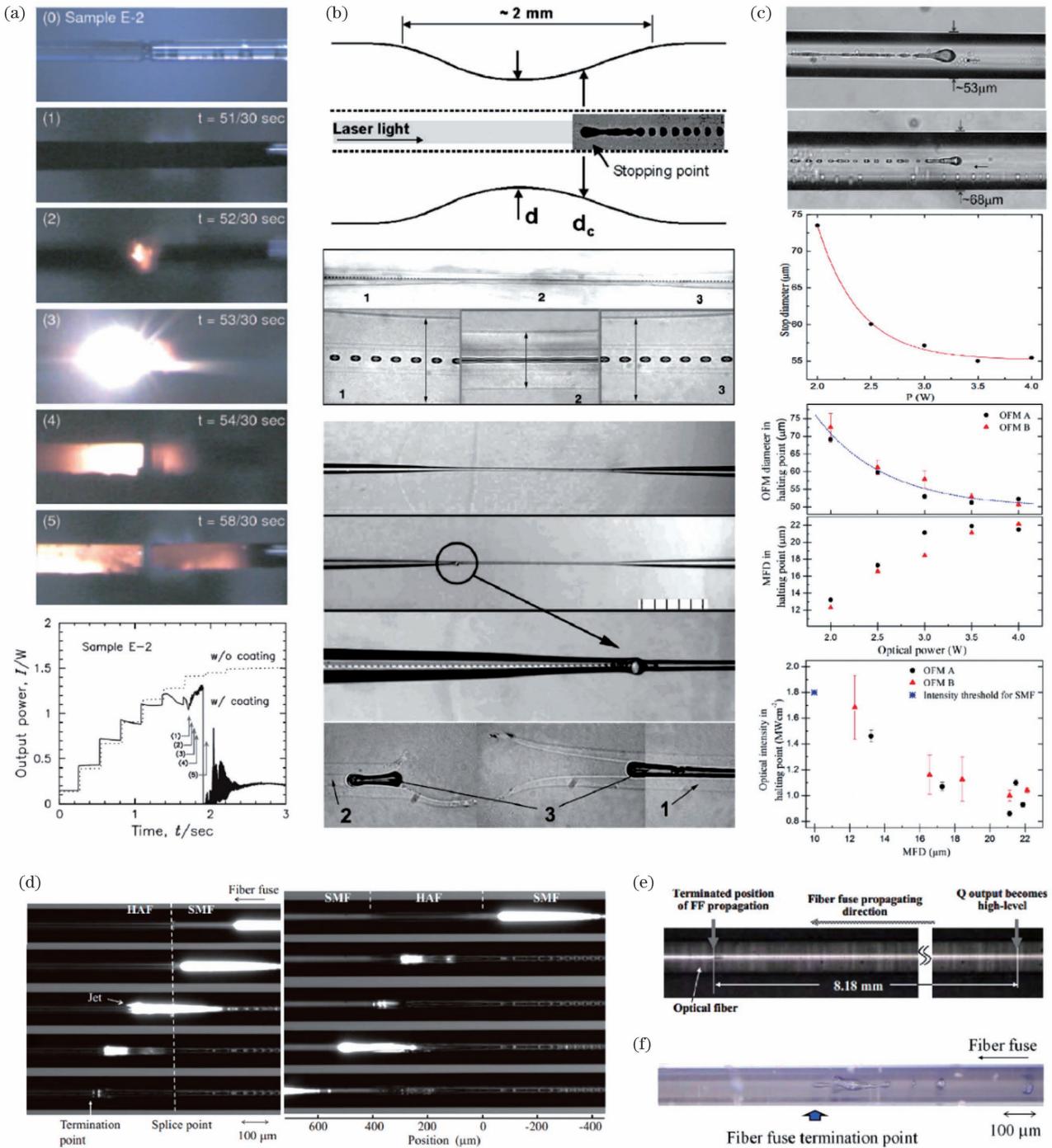


图 9 阻止光纤熔丝损伤传播的装置。(a) Todoroki 等用二氧化锑制成的光纤保险丝, 可在达到一定光功率时熔断, 但并未触发光纤熔丝损伤<sup>[102]</sup>; (b) Dianov 等将光纤拉细, 使得光纤熔丝损伤由于光纤中功率密度下降而熄灭<sup>[104]</sup>; (c) 葡萄牙阿维罗大学团队用拉细的光纤的阻断效果<sup>[105-106]</sup>; (d) Kurokawa 等用空孔光纤的空孔使熔丝损伤停止<sup>[108]</sup>; (e) 日本大阪府立大学团队的光纤熔丝损伤停止效果<sup>[100]</sup>; (f) 日本北见工业大学团队用多模光纤与单模光纤熔接的阻断效果<sup>[110]</sup>

Fig. 9 Methods and devices for stopping the propagation of fiber fuse. (a) An optical fuse made from  $\text{TeO}_2$ <sup>[102]</sup>, which can melt down when the in-fiber optical power exceeds certain thresholds, note that there were no fiber fuses being initiated in the original paper; (b) stopping fiber fuse propagation by tapered fibers<sup>[104]</sup>, in which fiber fuses were found to stop propagating due to the decreased optical power density in the tapered region; effect of stopping fiber fuse propagation by (c) the use of tapered fibers<sup>[105-106]</sup>, (d) a setup of fusion-splicing with hole-assisted fiber (HAF)<sup>[108]</sup>, (e) shutting off the power source<sup>[100]</sup>, and (f) fusion-splicing with multimode fibers<sup>[110]</sup>

### 3.3 抑制光纤熔丝损伤自发发生

迄今,光纤熔丝损伤自发发生的动态微观物理过程包括多种物理机制相互作用的定量程度以及因果关系尚不明确。尤其是在高功率光纤激光系统中,还无法在尽可能挖掘功率潜力的同时,精确地、绝对地避免光纤熔丝损伤的自发发生。因此,本文所说的“抑制光纤熔丝损伤自发发生”,是指降低光纤熔丝损伤自发发生概率。

在低功率的实验中发现,在相同的注入激光平均功率下,功率特定的波动调制可以破坏光纤熔丝损伤的触发启动过程,最终的结果是,光纤熔丝损伤无法在激光功率满足传播阈值功率的情况下触发(甚至无法在光纤中观察到损伤痕迹)<sup>[111]</sup>。不过,对于大多数应用场景,直接调制光纤中的激光功率并不可行。高功率光纤激光的大量实践经验表明,温度较高的光纤段——不同光纤的熔接点附近、增益光纤的起始位置后方几十厘米(特定条件下的反转粒子浓度最高点)、光纤光栅、光纤端面等——更容易成为光纤熔丝损伤自发发生的起始位置。结合本课题组对光纤熔丝损伤的自发发生临界条件的研究,认为在一般意义上,通过各种手段降低光纤部件的工作温度,避免局部高温的产生,可以降低光纤熔丝损伤自发发生的概率。为了降低高功率光纤激光系统的温度,除了采用导热性好的散热媒介、合理的散热结构以及更强的制冷系统外,还应当减少增益光纤的发热。增益光纤的发热主要由激光过程的量子亏损产生:对于一个泵浦光子产生一个信号光子的简单激光过程,减少泵浦光与信号光的波长差,可降低量子亏损。这就是级联泵浦的主要应用优势。例如,1018 nm 高功率光纤激光器就常被用于级联泵浦掺镱光纤激光器。用 1018 nm 波长激光泵浦导致的放大级量子亏损比用传统半导体激光器在 976 nm 附近波长泵浦导致的量子亏损要低 50% 左右,更重要的是,由 1018 nm 级联泵浦较低的吸收系数带来的放大级增益光纤延长,最终在放大级增益光纤上产生的温升显著降低:在相同的泵浦吸收效果下,仅为 976 nm 附近泵浦导致温升的 10% 左右(例如,采用常见参数仿真 20/130- $\mu\text{m}$  掺镱双包层光纤作为放大级产生约 1.5 kW 的激光,当 976 nm 泵浦产生的纤芯温升接近 40 °C 时,1018 nm 泵浦产生的温升仅有 2 °C 左右)。级联泵浦的应用优势已经被许多过往研究证明;虽然直接将级联泵浦与光纤熔丝损伤联系讨论的报道很少,但是级联泵浦中 1018 nm 泵浦源不断发展及其不

断刷新的光纤激光指标记录已经证明,级联泵浦的确在上述意义上具有抑制光纤熔丝损伤的效果。

本课题组长期系统地研究级联泵浦对于光纤熔丝损伤的抑制效果。首先,研究了高性能的 1018 nm 高功率光纤激光源,实现单纤激光功率达到千瓦以上<sup>[112-113]</sup>,亮度达 289 MW/(sr · cm<sup>2</sup>);还验证了混合结构激光器<sup>[114]</sup>以及降低后向反射光的光纤特殊处理方法<sup>[115]</sup>对于降低放大自发辐射(amplified spontaneous emission, ASE)的效果。本课题组还进一步验证了 1018 nm 级联泵浦在高功率拉曼激光<sup>[116-117]</sup>、随机激光<sup>[118-119]</sup>、宽带可调谐高功率窄线宽激光<sup>[120]</sup>、高功率连续光铒镱共掺光纤激光<sup>[121]</sup>等方面的应用效果,所得随机激光功率可达 5.1 kW<sup>[122]</sup>,不仅在线宽和光束质量方面均优于先前 976 nm 泵浦的效果,而且大幅降低了实验中光纤熔丝损伤自发发生的概率,对于光纤熔丝损伤的抑制效果明显,光纤激光系统的可靠性和经济性显著提升。

## 4 光纤熔丝损伤的应用

### 4.1 相关应用研究概述

实际上,光纤熔丝损伤在造成重大损失之余,还具有自身独特的应用价值。在光纤熔丝损伤被发现后,Hand 等<sup>[5]</sup>就注意到光纤熔丝损伤可能在制造光纤光栅方面发挥作用。实际上,光纤熔丝损伤作为一种改变光纤内部结构的物理效应,具有独特的发展潜力。但是,受限于对光纤熔丝损伤的物理研究水平,很难可重复地控制光纤熔丝损伤产生指定的、可直接应用的微结构性质。特别是,光纤熔丝损伤产生的微结构在微加工过程中非常容易变形,这就使得即便能够从熔丝损伤后的光纤中切割、提取出符合需求的微结构,也很难将这微结构无缝整合到其他光纤系统中。这些原因使得目前尚无法用光纤熔丝损伤来产生 Hand 等预言的光纤光栅等全光纤应用器件。即使如此,过往研究仍然提出并演示了一些有趣的应用,例如用类似光纤熔丝损伤的物理机制为玻璃钻孔<sup>[123]</sup>。而更为普遍的应用是将光纤熔丝损伤作为制造光纤传感器的手段。

### 4.2 光纤传感应用

Kashyap 团队于 2014 年报道了将光纤熔丝损伤后的光纤用作光纤传感的应用<sup>[124]</sup>。他们将单模光纤在 12.5 W 下进行光纤熔丝损伤实验,取出其中长度为 7 mm、含有一串周期约 14  $\mu\text{m}$  的光纤内空洞的一段,将其插入另外两根完好的单模光纤中

并熔接成一体,制成了介质折射率传感器。此传感器利用了光纤内空洞强烈散射纤芯中的单模光到包层模式的性质,将宽带白光光源入射传感器,测量透射光谱,可以看到包层模式干涉谐振导致光谱出现谐振峰。当与包层外侧接触的液体介质折射率变化时,谐振峰的位置也会变化,在  $1.5 \mu\text{m}$  附近的灵敏度可达  $350 \text{ nm/RIU}$ ,从而实现传感功能。在这种应用中,光纤熔丝损伤后的光纤精确切割以及与完整光纤的高质量熔接是实验的难点。从 2014 年起,葡萄牙阿维罗大学的 Antunes 等<sup>[125]</sup>将光纤熔丝损伤后的光纤作为前体,结合切割再熔接的工艺,制造单个光纤内法布里-珀罗(Fabry-Perot, F-P)微腔,其工艺流程如图 10(c)所示。通过精确控制再熔接的温度,可以控制微腔的尺寸,所得微腔的效果如图 10(a)~(c)所示。他们演示了通过测量这些微腔的透射谱干涉谐振峰的位置变化,进而测量温度<sup>[126]</sup>、湿度<sup>[127]</sup>、应力<sup>[125]</sup>、压力<sup>[128]</sup>、折射率<sup>[129]</sup>、液面高度<sup>[130]</sup>、磁场<sup>[131]</sup>等变量,得到的温度测量灵敏度为  $(10.43 \pm 0.15) \text{ pm/}^\circ\text{C}$ 、相对湿度测量灵敏度为  $(17.1 \pm 1.7) \text{ pm/}\%$ 、应力测量灵敏度为  $(59.39 \pm 1.7) \text{ pm/kPa}$ 、折射率测量灵敏度为  $(3.47 \pm 0.17) \text{ nm/RIU}$ 、液面高度测量灵敏度为  $(4.4 \pm 0.1) \text{ pm/mm}$  以及磁场测量灵敏度为  $(120.5 \pm 4.4) \text{ pm/mT}$ ,呈现出良好的应用前景。这种光纤熔丝损伤应用方法的难点在于难以精确控制微腔的生成过程。由于整个工艺过程需要先熔丝损伤一段光纤,再从这段光纤中提取切割最后一小段,获得一个光纤端面凹坑,这个过程难以精确控制凹坑的尺寸。同时,在之后的再熔接过程中,也很难控制凹坑进一步长成微腔的尺寸和形状。巴西圣保罗联邦大学的 Leal-Junior 等<sup>[132]</sup>则通过测量遭受光纤熔丝损伤破坏后的塑料光纤的透射功率衰减程度,制成了应力传感器[图 10(f)]和曲率角度传感器[图 10(g)]等<sup>[133-135]</sup>,利用塑料光纤相对于石英介质光纤而言具有更小的弹性模量,实现了对更大范围应变的测量。总体而言,通过上述将光纤熔丝损伤产生的光纤内空洞切开并重新缝合的方法,可以获得传统方法中常见的光纤内 F-P 谐振腔结构,在温度、应力、压力、折射率、湿度等方面实现光纤传感,具有广泛的应用。

### 4.3 优化的光纤微腔制造工艺与应用展望

上述切割并重新熔接的光纤内空洞应用工序较为繁琐,不仅需要在刻意触发光纤熔丝损伤以获取

可切割空洞之余产生大量的受损光纤,还面临着实验操作变量难以控制、最终结果可重复性差等问题。实际上,如果能通过光纤熔丝损伤,“一步到位”地产生直接可用的光纤内微结构,将会真正地把光纤熔丝损伤应用起来。图 11(a)所对比的正是传统的光纤内微结构制造工艺、前文所述的切开并重新熔接光纤熔丝损伤产生的空洞的工艺,以及“一步到位”微结构生产工艺的步骤流程图<sup>[136]</sup>。本课题组研究光纤熔丝损伤的触发定量条件,发现临界温度与临界功率之间存在的数学关系。通过精确控制熔丝损伤的触发条件,实现了无后续传播的光纤熔丝损伤无接触触发启动,其过程如图 11(b)所示。通过这种新方式触发的光纤熔丝损伤,一次触发只会在光纤中留下一个微腔,无需进行其他侵入式操作;微腔的位置可以自由排布,微腔尺寸与光纤熔丝损伤的触发条件直接相关,如图 11(c)所示,实现了一步到位的微腔制造。实验还验证了这样制造的微腔的透射谱中存在与过往研究相似的 F-P 干涉谐振图样,通过图 11(d)所示的系统,演示了应力传感应用,通过上述方法产生的光纤内微腔的 F-P 谐振品质因数(Q 值)可达  $10^4$  量级,如图 11(e)所示,这已经达到了传统的光纤内 F-P 微腔干涉的较高水平,说明利用光纤熔丝损伤在实验光纤中产生的空洞微腔结构确实具有光滑平整的内壁,从而允许高 Q 因数的谐振。理论上,高 Q 因数的微腔不仅可以用于 F-P 谐振,还可以用于回音壁模式(whispering gallery mode, WGM)谐振;在这一点上,光纤熔丝损伤产生的微腔具有天然的微泡(micro-bubble)腔形,不仅避开了传统制造微泡腔的工艺复杂和可重复性差等难题,而且相比于其他腔形也具有极大的性能优势<sup>[137]</sup>。

Kashyap<sup>[1]</sup>曾展望利用光纤熔丝损伤产生的光纤内微结构进行高 Q 因数的谐振,从而制造受激拉曼微型激光器。本课题组提出的微腔制造方法大幅简化了传统的(包括上一节过往研究使用光纤熔丝损伤的)光纤内微腔制造工艺,制造单个微腔仅需数秒钟,是传统工艺耗时的几百分之一,并大幅提升了制造的可重复性和经济性。特别是,由于光纤中微腔位置完全可控且不影响周围光纤结构,这样极便于实现多个微腔沿光纤内部的特定位置组合集成(只须在需要微腔的位置上直接重复操作即可),这一特性对于需要多个微腔集成的潜在应用将非常有利。

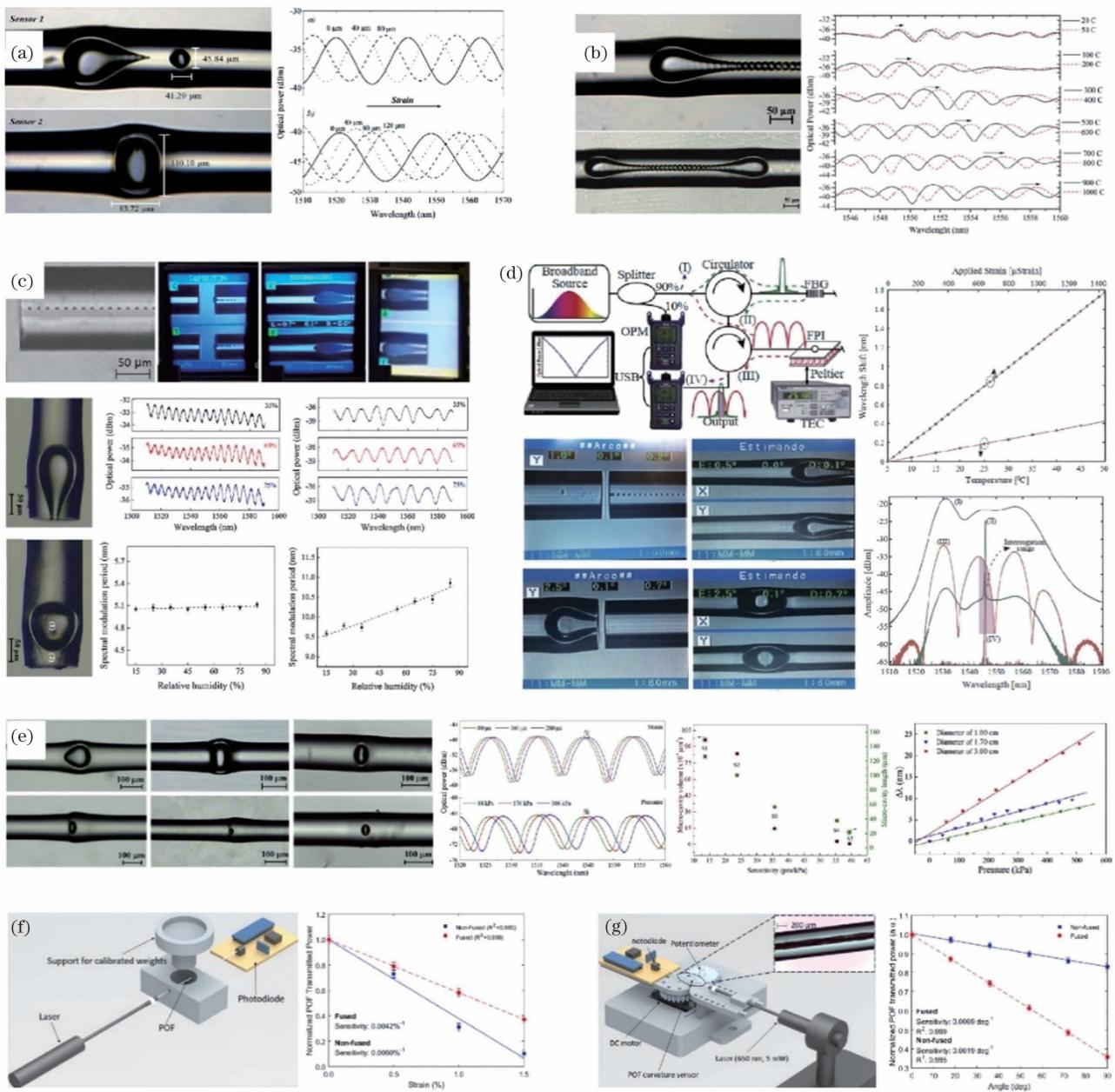


图 10 将光纤熔丝损伤作为制作环节用于制造光纤内法布里-珀罗(F-P)微腔以及传感应用。(a)葡萄牙阿维罗大学团队制作的光纤内微腔用于应力传感<sup>[125]</sup>;(b)600 μm 以上的 F-P 微腔实现高灵敏度温度传感<sup>[126]</sup>;(c)湿度传感器,首图展示了将光纤熔丝损伤作为获取光纤端面凹坑的步骤、用光纤熔接机处理样本的过程<sup>[127]</sup>;(d)光纤光栅(FBG)测试传感器<sup>[135]</sup>;(e)用上述方法制成的压力传感器<sup>[128]</sup>;巴西圣保罗联邦大学团队用塑料光纤中的光纤熔丝损伤作为制作环节制成的(f)应力传感器<sup>[132]</sup>与(g)曲率转角传感器<sup>[133]</sup>

Fig. 10 Using fiber fuse as a tool for fabricating in-fiber Fabry-Perot (F-P) microcavity and its sensing applications. The results that apply such methods for (a) strain sensor<sup>[125]</sup>, (b) high-sensitivity temperature sensor with an over-600-μm-long F-P microcavity<sup>[126]</sup>, (c) humidity sensor, with illustrating the steps of the whole process<sup>[127]</sup>, (d) FBG interrogator<sup>[135]</sup>, and (e) pressure sensor<sup>[128]</sup>; (f) a strain sensor<sup>[132]</sup> and (g) a curvature sensor<sup>[133]</sup>, which use fiber fuses in polymer fibers as fabrication steps

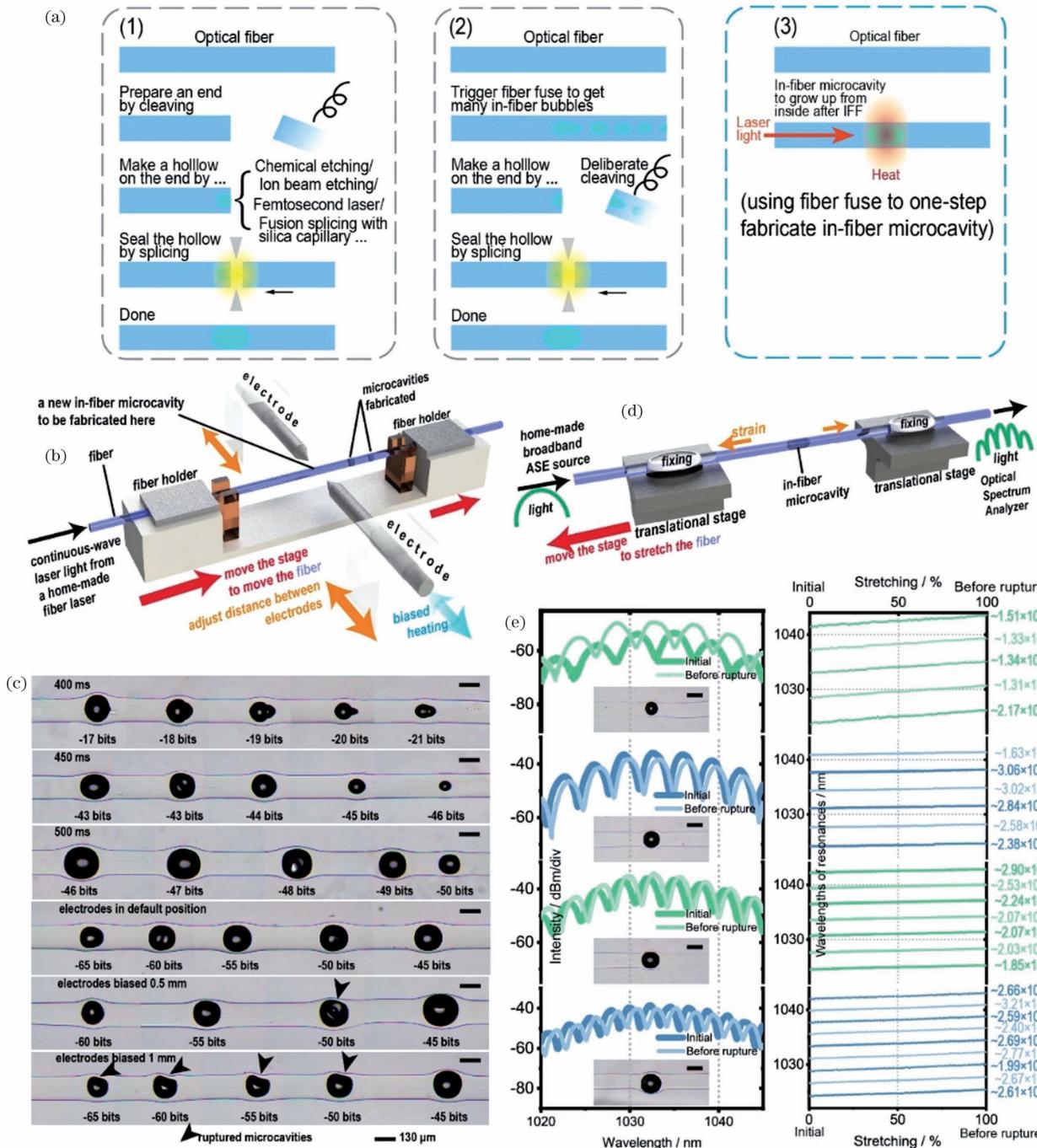


图 11 用受控触发光纤熔丝损伤一步到位制造高品质因数(Q)的光纤内微腔。(a)对比传统的光纤内微腔制造工序(1)、前文的将光纤熔丝损伤作为中间步骤获得光纤端面凹陷从而整合到传统光纤内微腔制造方法的工序(2),以及本课题组提出的用光纤熔丝损伤的受控触发一步到位制造光纤内微腔的工序(3)<sup>[136]</sup>;(b)实现一步到位制造光纤内微腔的实验<sup>[136]</sup>;(c)显微镜下观察一步到位制造的高 Q 光纤内微腔<sup>[136]</sup>;(d)测试上述光纤内微腔的实验<sup>[136]</sup>;(e)上述方法制造的光纤内微腔透射光谱、应力传感效果以及每个谐振峰的 F-P 谐振 Q 结果<sup>[136]</sup>

Fig. 11 Using the controlled initiation of fiber fuse to fabricate high-quality-factor (high-Q) in-fiber microcavity in a single-step manner. (a) Comparing the three fabrication strategies, that of the conventional methods (1), that in the previous studies which used fiber fuse as a step to obtain craves on fiber facets (2), and that of the authors of this paper, which proposed the one-step manner fabrication method<sup>[136]</sup>; (b) experimental setup for the one-step manner fabrication of in-fiber microcavities using fiber fuse<sup>[136]</sup>; (c) so-fabricated high-Q in-fiber microcavities observed under optical microscope<sup>[136]</sup>; (d) setup for testing the microcavities<sup>[136]</sup>; (e) transmission spectra of the microcavities, demonstration of strain sensing application with the Q factors of F-P resonances shown in the subplot<sup>[136]</sup>

## 5 结 论

总体而言,在光纤熔丝损伤效应被发现至今的较短时间内,对其传播性质已经有了较为全面的宏观了解。尽管如此,光纤熔丝损伤仍然可称为是“神秘”的<sup>[1]</sup>。在光纤熔丝损伤的物理机理、损害预防和转化应用等方面,除了目前已取得的令人欣喜的成就外,还存在十分广阔的发展空间。

在光纤熔丝损伤的传播特性方面,传播速度随光纤中传输的激光功率增大而增加,虽然增速会逐渐放缓,但在近年来逐渐普及化的千瓦级光纤系统中,已经可达十余米每秒,对系统安全具有巨大的威胁;熔丝损伤炙热的白色发光光谱包含了许多未能识别的特征,并且目前还缺少对600 nm以下特征光谱的观测数据;熔丝损伤形成的光纤内空洞受到流体不稳定性的支配,可以有丰富的形态,沿光纤方向有时呈现规则的周期性分布,有时则呈现非单一周期的混乱分布等。

对光纤熔丝损伤自发发生的定量条件有了一定认识:发现临界温度与临界功率条件之间的定量数学关系<sup>[70]</sup>,认识到自发发生需要的临界温度数值随着激光功率(约等于触发瞬间的临界功率)的上升而下降,但下降速度逐渐放缓;通过这一数学关系,揭示了支配熔丝损伤自发发生的关键物理化学过程所需的能量数值,将熔丝损伤的自发发生与石英介质中的化学活动联系起来。但是,对于支配空洞在光纤材料内部从无到有的过程的具体物理机制,仍然有待进一步解答。总结看来,目前认为光纤内产生了等离子体,或称为光放电(optical discharge)<sup>[24,71,138]</sup>,然而,对于等离子体在光纤固体材料中从无到有的自发演化过程,以及它与其他相的光纤材料如何相互作用,还需要强有力的实际证据以及有足够的包容性的理论模型来进一步阐释。

关于光纤熔丝损伤的物理机制的理论研究和模型建立,仍有很大的探索空间:在已知的仿真计算模型中,考虑的潜在物理机制都较少且较粗放,彼此缺乏重叠和互相支持,甚至存在局部难以调和的矛盾,这就导致难以进行量化比较分析,也就无法针对各种物理机制事实上的作用程度作出进一步判断。这些对于光纤熔丝损伤微观物理机制的知识缺失,阻碍了对光纤熔丝损伤的预防阻断和开发利用。

光纤熔丝损伤的未来研究充满机遇。事实上,若有关光纤熔丝损伤的物理机制研究能够取得突破,就有可能将目前各种光纤系统中偶发的光纤熔

丝损伤自发发生与光纤中进行的各种已知光物理过程定量联系起来,从而可以精确地设计系统以避免光纤熔丝损伤。另外,利用光纤熔丝损伤的特性来加工光纤内微结构的技术已经崭露头角,但这只是光纤熔丝损伤的开发利用的起点,更多的潜在方向还有待未来研究逐一揭开,而这依赖于我们更深入地认识光纤熔丝损伤的过程以及它带给光纤材料和结构的改变。

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## Fiber Fuse Damage Effect in Fiber Lasers: A Review

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### Abstract

**Significance** Optical fibers are appealing objects that are both fragile and powerful. However, they are micro-meter-class waveguides that are easily fractured by most external forces. Alternatively, another fact that is surprisingly unnoticed is that they are the core make-up of our society. For example, tons of information at every moment are loaded in the laser blood transmitting in the blood vessels of optical fibers and are used freely and timely worldwide. Many objects are processed, welded, and machined by lasers, scaled up to bulk materials in buildings and vehicles and down to micro- and nano-electronics. Optical fibers and fiber lasers are essential in various industrial areas, including industrial manufacturing, biomedical sensing, smart wearables, or even quantum-encrypted communications. Currently, the smooth running of day-to-day activities follows the safe, stable, and reliable operation of optical fiber systems. Therefore, potential threats to the operation of optical fiber systems cannot be treated with insufficient care.

A fiber fuse is a chain damage effect that propagates in optical fibers transmitting light. It was first reported in 1987 by Raman Kashyap, who at that time worked at a laboratory of British Telecom. Since then, fiber fuse damage effects have been observed in almost all types of optical fibers made from a variety of materials, including silica and organic polymers. It resembles a burning fuse emitting bright light from a moving spot; it happens spontaneously provided suitable conditions and causes irreversible damage to online fiber components it passes through in the inverse direction of the laser light. Therefore, it imposes a serious threat to many important technologies and

applications nowadays, such as fiber communication networks and high-power fiber lasers. Studying mechanisms and characteristics of fiber fuse are not only important for controlling the hazards but also beneficial for realizing novel and effective methods for modifying fiber waveguide structures with more intimate aid from the laser inside.

**Progress** Studies discussing fiber fuse, ranging from former to the recent ones, are reviewed herein. Following authors' experiences with respect to the fiber fuse over the past decade, this study provides an introductory and to-date knowledge on physical mechanisms of fiber fuse, prevention of fiber fuse, monitoring or mitigating its propagation, and applications demonstrated using fiber fuse itself. Thus, directions for future research and major existing problems are also discussed. Regarding the characteristics of fiber fuse, the black-body assumption for obtaining the temperature of fiber fuse can be less rigorous because of the significant omission of other important mechanisms of radiation. Also, oxygen is formed during the fiber fuse and has been left inside the in-fiber bubbles. This implies that physical models that describe fiber fuse should focus more on chemical changes in the materials and their effects on other characteristics of the ongoing phenomenon. The critical temperature and the critical laser power conditions correlated with the initiation of fiber fuse, wherein the mathematical derivation directly suggests that the initiation of fiber fuse is dominated by a chemical process of formation energy around 1 eV, depending on the respective type of optical fiber, which may be attributed to the oxygen diffusion in the silica substances of the fibers. Furthermore, applications of fiber fuse have been developed to an extent wherein highly sensitive fiber sensors of various parameters are made using optical fibers damaged by fiber fuses as raw materials. Moreover, a possible method that uses controlled initiation of fiber fuse without propagating fiber fuse as an effective noninvasive one-step method to fabricate in-fiber microcavities, which are both highly cost-effective and hundreds of times faster than conventional methods, is proposed herein.

**Conclusions and Prospects** Studies discussing the fiber fuses in the past three decades have yielded many important and useful findings. With such considerable knowledge on the external characteristics of the damaging effect, however, there is room for deeper and further studies. Regarding the propagation characteristics of fiber fuse, the propagation velocity of fiber fuse increases with increasing laser power in fibers but the acceleration rate decreases. Nevertheless, in kilowatt-level high-power fiber lasers, the propagation velocity can be tens of meters per second, which hinders safe operation. Regarding physical mechanisms, oxygen is formed during fiber fuses; the initiation of fiber fuse is dominated by the diffusion of oxygen, which caused critical temperature and power conditions for the initiation; the fiber materials during fiber fuse can be plasma state. A more inclusive and comprehensive physical model for revealing more details and hidden characteristics of fiber fuse is necessary. Future studies on fiber fuses could be extremely beneficial. Groundbreaking changes can root from studies of physical mechanisms. If more physics of fiber fuse is revealed with rigorous theoretical and experimental proof, a wider connection among parameters of design can be built for fiber systems and the stochastic spontaneous initiation of fiber fuse can be avoided with assurance, which will profoundly secure many fields. Moreover, this will benefit the direct application of fiber fuse as a material modification tool that can bring potentially various new in-fiber microstructures into reality.

**Key words** laser optics; fiber fuse damage effect; high-power fiber laser; damage prevention and monitoring and propagation termination; in-fiber microcavities; fiber sensing

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