

光谱不展宽的 1.08 kW 窄线宽全光纤超荧光源

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摘要 搭建了一个全光纤窄线宽超荧光源, 经过多级功率放大后, 输出功率提升至 1.08 kW, 最大功率时光谱的半峰全宽为 0.23 nm。通过色散调控的方法, 对窄线宽超荧光源进行优化。改进后的超荧光源在最大功率时, 光谱的半峰全宽被压缩至 0.20 nm, 并且在功率放大过程中, 光谱的半峰全宽不随功率展宽。所提光源应用于光谱合成系统中时, 可以有效地提升合成光的光束质量。

关键词 激光器; 光纤激光器; 放大自发辐射; 掺镱光纤放大器; 光谱合成

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1 引言

窄线宽高功率光纤激光器在光谱合成、光学相干成像、拉曼光纤激光等领域具有非常重要的应用价值^[1]。光纤超荧光源运转稳定, 不存在跳模、弛豫振荡和自脉冲等现象, 而且其具有较低的相干性, 对受激布里渊散射效应有明显的抑制作用, 以窄线宽光纤超荧光源作为种子源的高功率光纤激光器具有良好的发展前景^[2-3]。2011 年, Schmidt 等^[4]采用空间泵浦方式, 将窄线宽超荧光源的功率放大至 697 W, 最大功率时光谱的半峰全宽(FWHM)为 0.012 nm, 随后通过减少模式重叠, 将输出功率进一步提升至 1.1 kW, 且光束质量因子(M^2)约为 1.3^[5]。2015 年, 国防科技大学的 Xu 等^[6]报道了全光纤结构的高功率超荧光源, 光谱的 FWHM 为 8.1 nm, 输出功率为 1.01 kW, 同年, 将输出功率进一步提升至 1.87 kW, 光谱的 FWHM 为 1.7 nm^[7]。2019 年, Ye 等^[8]实现了百瓦级光谱可操控的超荧光源输出, 波长调谐范围达到 25 nm, 半峰全宽在 0.4~15 nm 范围内可调。2020 年, Ju 等^[9]实现了 1035~1055 nm 范围内可调谐的超荧光源的超窄线宽输出, 当功率为 300 W 时, 线宽为 0.088 nm。同年, Li 等^[10]实现了 40 nm 调谐范围的窄线宽超荧光源, 最大输出功率为 935 W, 线宽为 0.71 nm。在

应用方面, 2015 年, 中国科学院上海光学精密机械研究所的刘广柏等^[11]利用窄线宽超荧光源作为种子进行放大, 实现了 1.5 kW 的高功率激光输出, 最大功率时光谱线宽为 0.8 nm, 并将其成功应用于高亮度光谱合成系统中^[12], 为窄线宽高功率超荧光源的应用奠定了基础。窄线宽激光器作为光谱合成系统的子光源时, 通过压窄激光器的光谱线宽, 可以有效提升合成光的亮度^[12], 因此研究更窄线宽的高功率光纤超荧光源具有重要意义。

本文搭建了全光纤结构的超荧光源种子, 经过多级功率放大, 输出功率提升至 1.08 kW, 光谱的 FWHM 为 0.23 nm。随后通过色散调控的办法, 对窄线宽超荧光源进行优化。改进后的超荧光源种子在放大至 1.08 kW 时, 光谱的半峰全宽被压缩至 0.20 nm, 并且在功率放大过程中, 光谱的半峰全宽不随功率展宽。通过对这种色散调控的超荧光源种子的深入研究, 有望实现更高功率的窄线宽激光输出。

2 实验装置

光纤超荧光源的功率放大实验装置示意图如图 1 所示, 半导体泵浦源、(2+1)×1 泵浦-信号合束器、增益光纤、光隔离器和光环行器依次熔接, 调节半导体泵浦源的输出泵浦功率低于受激辐射阈

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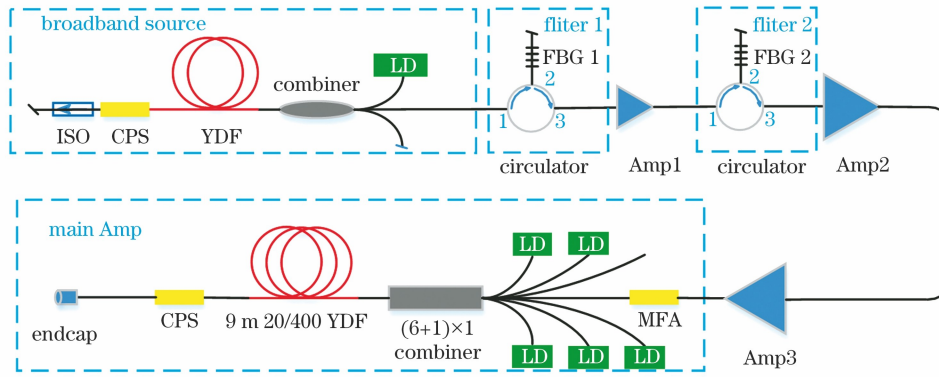


图 1 超荧光源的滤波和放大实验系统示意图

Fig. 1 Schematic illustration of filtered and amplified super-fluorescent source

值,激光器即工作在超荧光状态。宽带光纤超荧光源的后向输出光经过一个环形器和光纤布拉格光栅(FBG)组成的滤波结构后,得到较窄线宽的激光信号,该光纤光栅的FWHM为0.16 nm,中心波长为1064.1 nm,反射率大于99%。为了进一步提升激光信号的光谱信噪比并得到更窄的光谱线宽,该信号经过适当的功率放大后通过第二级滤波结构,第二级滤波所用的光栅中心波长与第一级滤波的FBG匹配,FWHM为0.08 nm,反射率约为10%。两级滤波后,激光信号的功率为1 mW。经过两级预放大,将功率提升至15 W,注入主功率放大级(Amp)。各放大级之间均熔接有隔离器(ISO),以保护前级光器件。宽带超荧光源、两级滤波结构和功率预放级全部采用非保偏10 μm/130 μm光纤,以保证种子光的光束质量。功率主放大级增益光纤采用20 μm/400 μm的大模场掺镱光纤(YDF),长度为9 m,其对976 nm泵浦光的吸收系数为1.26 dB/m。泵浦源为5个波长锁定的976 nm半

导体激光器(LD),单个LD的输出功率为250 W。泵浦光经过一个(6+1)×1泵浦-信号合束器注入到增益光纤中,合束器信号纤的纤芯/包层直径为20 μm/400 μm,通过一个模场适配器(MFA)与前级放大器的10 μm/130 μm输出光纤匹配熔接。增益光纤输出端与光纤匹配的包层光剥离器(CPS)熔接,将未吸收的残余泵浦光滤出,信号光经光纤-石英端帽输出。

3 实验结果与讨论

宽带超荧光源的输出光经过两根光纤FBG滤波后,在第二个环形器的端口3处测得的激光信号的光谱如图2(a)所示,光谱的FWHM为0.08 nm,信噪比超过45 dB,功率为1 mW。将该信号注入后续功率放大级,在石英端帽后监测功率放大到不同值时输出光谱的变化情况,结果如图2(b)所示。可以看到,随着功率的增长,光谱呈现展宽的趋势,在1.08 kW处光谱的FWHM展宽至0.23 nm。

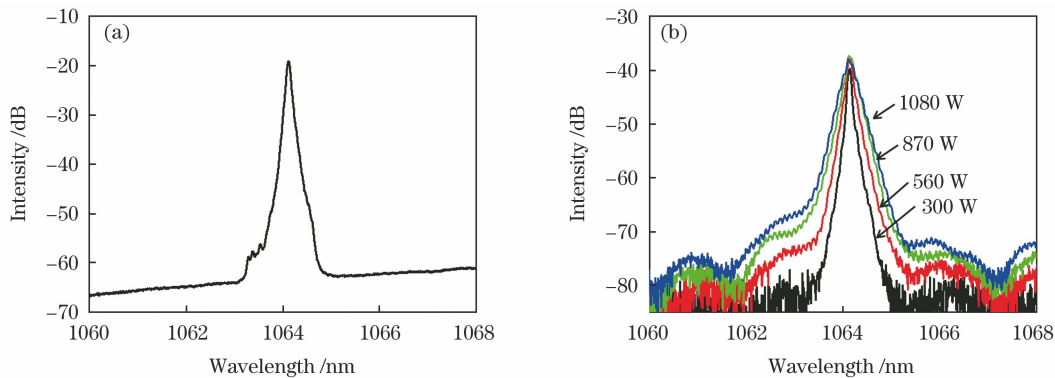


图 2 超荧光源激光器的光谱。(a)窄线宽种子源光谱;(b)不同放大功率下的输出光谱

Fig. 2 Spectra of laser with super-fluorescent source. (a) Spectrum of narrow linewidth seed source; (b) output spectra under different amplification powers

随后,将一段4 km长的G652D传能光纤熔接到第二级预放(Amp2)和第三级预放(Amp3)之间。

在系统中熔接了4 km传能光纤后,输出功率放大至1.08 kW时的输出光谱如图3(a)插图所示,可以

看出,相比于未熔接 4 km 传能光纤的情况,光谱有了明显的压窄。光谱线宽随功率的变化情况如图 3(b)所示。为了全面地表征光谱线宽,采用 FWHM 和均方根(RMS)两种线宽表征参数。由图 3 可见,没有熔接 4 km 的传能光纤时,光谱的 FWHM 从种子源输出时的 0.08 nm 展宽至最高功率为 1.08 kW 时的 0.23 nm,展宽的斜率为 0.15 pm/W;RMS 从 0.12 nm 展宽至 0.33 nm,展宽的斜率为 0.2 pm/W。增加了 4 km 的传能光纤

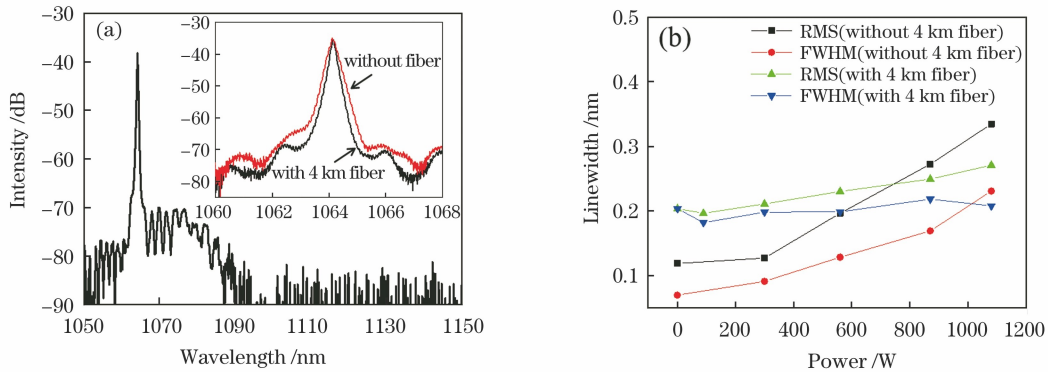


图 3 熔接 4 km 传能光纤前后的结果对比。(a)输出功率为 1.08 kW 时的光谱;(b)光谱线宽随功率的变化
Fig. 3 Comparison of experimental results with or without 4 km fiber. (a) Spectrum under 1.08 kW output power;
(b) spectral linewidth versus power

对比两次放大实验结果可以发现,在第二级预放和第三级预放之间熔接一段 4 km 长的传能光纤,使得激光器在输出功率为 1.08 kW 时,光谱的 FWHM 压窄了 0.03 nm,RMS 压窄了 0.06 nm。受限于可用的泵浦功率,没有进一步验证更高功率时光谱宽度的变化情况,但是按照激光光谱的线性展宽规律^[13],这种通过熔接额外的长距离传能光纤来压缩激光器输出光谱的方法,在更高功率的激光器中作用会更加明显。

研究表明,激光器种子源的时域特性会影响光谱展宽的速度^[14]。使用响应带宽为 2 GHz 的光电探测器和示波器测试了激光器种子源的时域特性,结果如图 4(a)所示。可以看到,连续输出的激光种子的时域曲线并不是一条稳定连续的直线,而是出现了强度随机起伏的脉冲信号。这些脉冲在后续功率放大级中被放大至远高于激光器平均功率,引起的自相位调制(SPM)效应被认为是激光器光谱展宽的原因之一。进一步对比了种子源在熔接 4 km 光纤前后的时域特征,如图 4(b)所示。为了更直观地观测不同信号的时域起伏大小的差别,对示波器直接测量得到的时域波形进行数据处理,绘制出激光信号强度分布的概率密度函数(probability density function, PDF)。首先利用光

电探测器和示波器得到激光信号的时域强度分布 I , 然后进行归一化处理,将实际的信号强度 I 与平均信号强度 $\langle I \rangle$ 的比值作为横坐标,并以此强度信号出现的概率为纵坐标,绘制概率密度函数曲线,该曲线与横轴的积分结果为 1。理想连续光的 PDF 应该是 δ 函数,然而实际的光信号总是存在强度的起伏,稳定性越差的信号,其 PDF 的形状越“低矮”。从图 4 中可以看到,在熔接 4 km 光纤前后,激光时域特征的改善并不十分显著。因此,还有其他原因影响了光谱展宽的速度,下面将进行更深入的研究。

为了探究光谱展宽速度变化的原因,将传能光纤的长度减至 3 km,观察到光谱的半峰全宽从 15 W 时的 0.18 nm 展宽至 1.08 kW 时的 0.23 nm,展宽斜率为 0.05 pm/W;继续减短传能光纤的长度至 2 km,光谱从 0.16 nm 展宽至 0.25 nm,其展宽斜率为 0.09 pm/W;将光纤加长至 5 km,光谱 FWHM 的变化情况与 4 km 光纤时相同,保持不展宽状态,但是光谱的边模成分出现了一定强度的增强。可以看出,随着光纤长度的增加,光谱随功率展宽的斜率逐渐降低。由于高功率光纤激光器中的光谱展宽还受光纤中四波混频(FWM)效应的影响^[13],因此推测,在种子源后熔接适当距离的传能光纤,得到更窄线宽的高功率激光器的机理

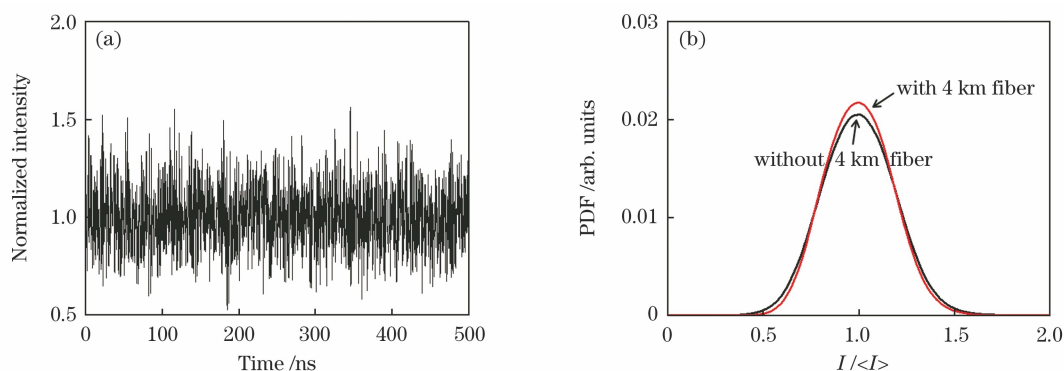


图 4 超荧光光源激光器的时域特征。(a) 未熔接传能光纤时超荧光光源的时域特征;(b) 时域特征的概率密度函数对比

Fig. 4 Time domain characteristics of laser with super-fluorescent source. (a) Time domain characteristic of super-fluorescent source without 4 km fiber; (b) comparison of time domain PDF

是:长距离光纤的色散作用改变了激光信号中各个子波长之间的相位匹配条件,减弱了 FWM 的强度,达到抑制功率放大过程中光谱展宽速度的效果^[15-16]。

4 结 论

搭建了一个全光纤窄线宽超荧光光源,利用多级功率放大,将输出功率提升至 1.08 kW,最高功率时的光谱半峰全宽为 0.23 nm。通过在第二、三级预放级之间熔接 4 km 的无源光纤,利用长距离光纤中的色散作用,改变了激光信号中各个子波长之间的相位匹配条件,减弱了 FWM 的强度,达到了抑制光谱展宽的效果。改进后的超荧光光源在最高功率时,光谱的 FWHM 被压缩至 0.20 nm,并且在功率放大过程中具有光谱半峰全宽不随功率展宽的特性,能够更好地应用于光纤激光光谱合成系统。

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1.08 kW Narrowband All-Fiber Super-Fluorescent Source with Spectral-Broadening-Free Property

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Abstract

Objective In 2015, Liu *et al.* used a narrow linewidth super-fluorescent fiber source as a seed to be amplified, and then achieved a 1.5 kW high-power laser output with a spectral linewidth of 0.8 nm at the highest power. It has been successfully applied in a high brightness spectral beam combining system, which lays a foundation for the application of a narrow linewidth and high power super-fluorescent source. When the narrow-linewidth laser is used as the sub source of the spectral combining system, the brightness of the spectral combining system can be effectively improved by narrowing the spectral linewidth of the laser. Therefore, it is of great significance to study a high power fiber super fluorescent source with a narrower linewidth.

Methods An all-fiber super-fluorescent source is established. Laser diode, $(2 + 1) \times 1$ pump-signal combiner, ytterbium doped fiber, optical isolator, optical circulator are fused as the schematic illustration shown in Fig. 1. By setting the current of the laser diode lower than the stimulated radiation threshold, the laser works under a super-fluorescent state. The backward output of the broadband source is filtered by a fiber Bragg grating (FBG), and a narrow linewidth laser signal is obtained at the port 3 of the circulator. The full width at half maximum (FWHM) of this FBG is 0.16 nm, and the reflectivity is greater than 99% at the central wavelength of 1064.1 nm. In order to further improve the spectral signal-to-noise ratio of laser signal and get a narrower spectral linewidth, the laser signal passes through another filter after proper power amplification, and the FWHM reaches 0.08 nm. After two stages of pre-amplification, the power of the laser signal is increased to 15 W, which is injected into the main power amplifier stage and then amplified to 1.08 kW. The spectra for different output powers in the main power amplifier stage are shown in Fig. 2 (b). A 4 km G652D passive fiber is fused between the second stage pre-amplifier (Amp2) and the third stage pre-amplifier (Amp3), and then the spectrum at 1.08 kW is narrowed as shown in Fig. 3 (a). The comparison of spectral linewidth versus output power is shown in Fig. 3 (b) with and without the 4 km passive fiber.

Results and Discussions By comparing the results of these two experiments, it can be found that the spectral FWHM is narrowed by 0.03 nm and the RMS linewidth is narrowed by 0.06 nm at a 1.08 kW output power by fusing a 4 km passive fiber between Amp2 and Amp3. Limited by the available pump power, the change of spectral width at a higher power has not been further verified, but according to the linear broadening law of laser spectra, this method via fusing an additional long-distance energy transfer fiber to compress the laser output spectrum will play a more obvious role in the laser at higher power. Some previous researches have shown that the time-domain characteristics of laser seed source will affect the speed of spectral broadening, but the comparison of the time-domain probability density functions (PDFs) of the laser signals with and without the 4 km fiber, shown in Fig 4 (b), implies that the improvement of time stability is not very significant. In order to explore the reasons for the change of spectral broadening speed, the length of the passive fiber is reduced to 3 km, the spectral FWHM is broadened from 0.18 nm

at 15 W to 0.23 nm at 1.08 kW, and the broadening slope is 0.05 pm/W. By further shorting the passive fiber to 2 km, the spectrum is broadened from 0.16 nm to 0.25 nm with a 0.09 pm/W slope. By lengthening the passive fiber to 5 km, the change of FWHM versus power is same as that for 4 km fiber. The difference is that the spectral side-mode is enhanced. One possible explanation is that the dispersion of a long-distance fiber can change the phase matching condition between the sub-wavelengths in the laser signal and weaken the intensity of the FWM effect, and then the spectral broadening speed in the process of power amplification is restrained.

Conclusions A narrowband all-fiber super-fluorescent source is established with a power of 1.08 kW after multi-stage power amplifiers. The full width at half maximum is 0.23 nm under the maximum output power. The narrowband source is optimized by dispersion control, and thus the FWHM is compressed to 0.20 nm under the maximum power with spectral-broadening-free property when power rising. It can be used in a spectral beam combining system to improve the diffraction beam quality.

Key words lasers; fiber lasers; amplified spontaneous emission; Yb-doped fiber amplifier; spectral beam combining

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