

## 基于拉锥七芯光纤的湿度传感器研究

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**摘要** 提出了一种基于拉锥七芯光纤的湿度传感器,七芯光纤熔接于两段单模光纤(SMF)的中间,利用氢氧焰拉锥技术对七芯光纤进行熔融拉锥,光纤拉锥后因其激发的包层基模和高阶模之间发生干涉形成马赫-曾德尔干涉仪(MZI)。研究结果表明光纤直径越小,传感结构的折射率灵敏度越高,锥区直径为 10  $\mu\text{m}$  时传感结构的灵敏度最高为 1123 nm/RIU。将七芯光纤与亲水性材料氧化石墨烯(GO)薄膜结合制得湿度传感器,实验测得湿度灵敏度的最大值为  $-0.0535 \text{ nm}/(\% \text{RH})$ 。该传感器具有灵敏度高、制备简单、稳定性好的优势,可广泛应用于生物化学传感领域。

**关键词** 光纤光学; 光纤传感; 熔融拉锥; 湿度; 氧化石墨烯

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### 1 引言

相对湿度的监测在农业、医疗、生物化学研究等领域至关重要,故各种测试湿度的传感器已被研制出来,如传统的机械湿度计、基于电容和电阻的湿度传感器、光纤湿度传感器等<sup>[1-5]</sup>。在这些湿度传感器中,光纤湿度传感器因其具有灵敏度高、抗电磁干扰、结构紧凑等独特优势成为研究热点<sup>[6-9]</sup>。

光纤湿度传感器的种类繁多,常见的有光栅型光纤湿度传感器、环形谐振腔湿度传感器、干涉型湿度传感器等<sup>[10-12]</sup>。其中:光栅型湿度传感器结构稳定,但其传感原理的客观因素导致其灵敏度普遍较低;环形谐振腔湿度传感器一般是基于微光纤来制备的,制备过程复杂且不利于湿敏材料的涂覆,从而限制了其灵敏度的提升<sup>[11,13-14]</sup>;而干涉型湿度传感器因其具有制备简单、灵敏度高等优势,引起了研究者的广泛关注。干涉型湿度传感器按照干涉仪结构可以分为法布里-珀罗干涉仪(FPI)、萨格纳克干涉仪(Sagnac)、迈克耳孙干涉仪(MI)、马赫-曾德尔干涉仪(MZI)等<sup>[15-19]</sup>。如邵敏等<sup>[19]</sup>在单模光纤(SMF)的一端熔接一段光子晶体光纤(PCF),其中熔接点为光纤粗锥,构成 MI,在 30%~90%的相对

湿度范围内,传感器的湿度灵敏度为  $-0.095 \text{ dB}/(\% \text{RH})$ 。在这些干涉型湿度传感器中,基于 MZI 的湿度传感器应用比较广泛,Liu 等<sup>[20]</sup>将一段单模光纤与另外两段单模光纤错芯焊接并在表面涂覆氧化石墨烯(GO),制成基于 MZI 的湿度传感器,在相对湿度为 30%RH~60%RH 范围内其灵敏度为  $0.0272 \text{ nm}/(\% \text{RH})$ 。除此之外,对光纤进行熔融拉锥形成模间干涉是一种比较简单的制备 MZI 的方法。比如 2016 年 Soltanian 等<sup>[21]</sup>制备了两个基于 MZI 的湿度传感器,传感器由单模光纤拉锥成的两个锥形区域组成,在 0%RH~90%RH 的湿度范围内,锥区平均直径为 4.05  $\mu\text{m}$  的传感器的灵敏度为  $0.02 \text{ nm}/(\% \text{RH})$ ,锥区平均直径为 2.89  $\mu\text{m}$  的传感器的灵敏度为  $0.01 \text{ nm}/(\% \text{RH})$ 。但是该传感器有两个直径较细的锥区部分,这给实验操作增加了难度,并且该传感器的灵敏度需要进一步提高。

本文设计制备了一种基于拉锥七芯光纤(TSCF)的湿度传感器,该传感器由单模光纤、七芯光纤、单模光纤级联熔接而成。利用光纤熔融拉锥技术对七芯光纤进行熔融拉锥,光纤拉锥后因其激发的包层基模和高阶模之间发生干涉形成 MZI,模式的有效折射率容易受外界环境参量的影响,因此

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该结构对外界环境参数的变化十分敏感。七芯光纤由于纤芯比较多,其稳定性提升,解决了基于拉锥光纤的湿度传感器灵敏度低且稳定性差的问题。实验测试了直径不同的样品的折射率灵敏度,结果表明样品直径越小折射率灵敏度越高。最后用灵敏度最高的样品的参数制备了另一种传感结构并在其锥区表面镀 GO 薄膜,测试了该样品的湿度灵敏度和稳定性。该湿度传感器制备简单、灵敏度高、稳定性强,可用于环境中相对湿度的监测。

## 2 结构制备和理论研究

### 2.1 理论研究

基于拉锥七芯光纤的湿度传感器传感结构示意图如图 1 所示,该传感器由单模光纤、七芯光纤、单模光纤级联熔接而成。利用光纤熔融拉锥机

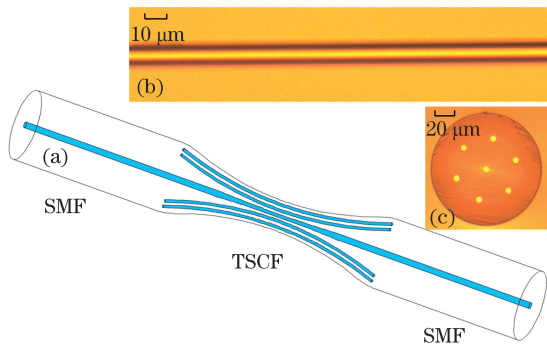


图 1 传感结构示意图。(a)传感器结构;(b)七芯光纤锥区显微镜图;(c)七芯光纤拉锥前横截面图

Fig. 1 Schematic diagrams of sensing structure. (a) Sensor structure; (b) microscope of the tapered area of TSCF; (c) cross section of seven core fiber untapered

(Kaipule Co. Ltd. AFBT-8000MX-H)对七芯光纤进行熔融拉锥后,七芯光纤的直径减小,激发出包层模式。当七芯光纤直径为 10 μm 左右时,纤芯直径不足 1 μm,无法支持模式在纤芯中传输,这时,包层模的基模和高阶模之间发生干涉。

所提出的传感器的光谱特性可以用双光束干涉模型来描述<sup>[22]</sup>,表达式为

$$I = I_1 + I_2 + 2\sqrt{I_1 I_2} \cos \varphi, \quad (1)$$

式中  $\varphi = 2\pi\Delta n_{\text{eff}}L/\lambda$  为包层基模和高阶模的相位差, $I_1$  和  $I_2$  为包层基模和高阶模的光强, $\lambda$  为工作波长, $L$  为七芯光纤锥区长度, $\Delta n_{\text{eff}} = n_1^{\text{eff}} - n_2^{\text{eff}}$  为包层基模和高阶模之间的有效折射率差,其中  $n_1^{\text{eff}}$  和  $n_2^{\text{eff}}$  分别为七芯光纤的包层基模和高阶模的有效折射率,当  $2\pi\Delta n_{\text{eff}}L/\lambda = (2m+1)\pi$  ( $m$  为正整数)时出现干涉波谷,波谷表达式为

$$\lambda_m = \frac{2\Delta n_{\text{eff}}L}{2m+1}. \quad (2)$$

当外界环境折射率发生变化时,包层基模和高阶模之间的有效折射率差发生改变,谐振波谷发生漂移,漂移为

$$\Delta\lambda_m = \frac{2L(\Delta n_{\text{eff}} + \delta n)}{2m+1} - \frac{2L\Delta n_{\text{eff}}}{2m+1} = \frac{2L\delta n}{2m+1}, \quad (3)$$

其中  $\delta n$  是  $\Delta n_{\text{eff}}$  的变化值。当外界环境相对湿度增加时,GO 膜会吸收更多的水分子,被吸收的水分子将附着在 GO 表面或对 GO 层的切片进行填充,使 GO 表面载流子密度增加,导致 GO 的电导率下降,GO 的电导率  $\sigma$  与化学势  $\mu_c$  之间的关系为<sup>[23-25]</sup>

$$\sigma = j \frac{e^2 k_B T}{\pi \hbar^2 (\omega - j2\Gamma)} \left\{ \frac{\mu_c}{k_B T} + 2 \ln \left[ \exp \left[ -(\mu_c/k_B T) \right] + 1 \right] \right\} + j \frac{e^2}{4\pi \hbar} \ln \left[ \frac{2|\mu_c| - (\omega + j2\Gamma)\hbar}{2|\mu_c| + (\omega + j2\Gamma)\hbar} \right], \quad (4)$$

其中, $e, k_B, T, \Gamma, \hbar$  分别为电子的电荷、玻尔兹曼常数、环境温度、振动频率和普朗克常数。当水分子附着在 GO 上时,GO 的表面电荷载流子密度增加,GO 的费米能级增加,导致带间跃迁受阻,电导率  $\sigma$  降低,因此可得  $n_{\text{GO}} \propto \sigma \propto \mu_c$ <sup>[10]</sup>。即当外界环境湿度上升时,GO 的电导率下降,导致 GO 的折射率下降。由图 2 可知,传感器周围环境折射率下降时模式有效折射率减小,导致  $\Delta n_{\text{eff}}$  发生变化,从而引起干涉光谱的漂移。

利用 Comsol Multiphysics 软件,基于有限元法对拉锥后七芯光纤的模场特性进行了模拟。七芯光纤纤芯和包层的折射率分别为 1.4501 和 1.4449,

包层直径和纤芯直径等比例缩小。图 2 展示了包层直径为 10 μm 的七芯光纤中三个包层模式(HE<sub>11</sub>、HE<sub>12</sub>、HE<sub>13</sub>)有效折射率随外界环境折射率的变化情况,变化率用  $p$  来表示。由图可知,当外界环境折射率发生改变时,包层基模和高阶模的有效折射率发生变化,包层模和基模的有效折射率差随之改变,即(2)式中的  $\Delta n_{\text{eff}}$  发生变化,由(3)式可知干涉光谱产生漂移。

为了分析光在拉锥七芯光纤中的传输特点,用 Rsoft 软件的 Beam PROP 功能对拉锥七芯光纤内光的传输行为进行模拟仿真,分析光在拉锥七芯光纤中的传输特点。单模光纤的纤芯和包层直径分别

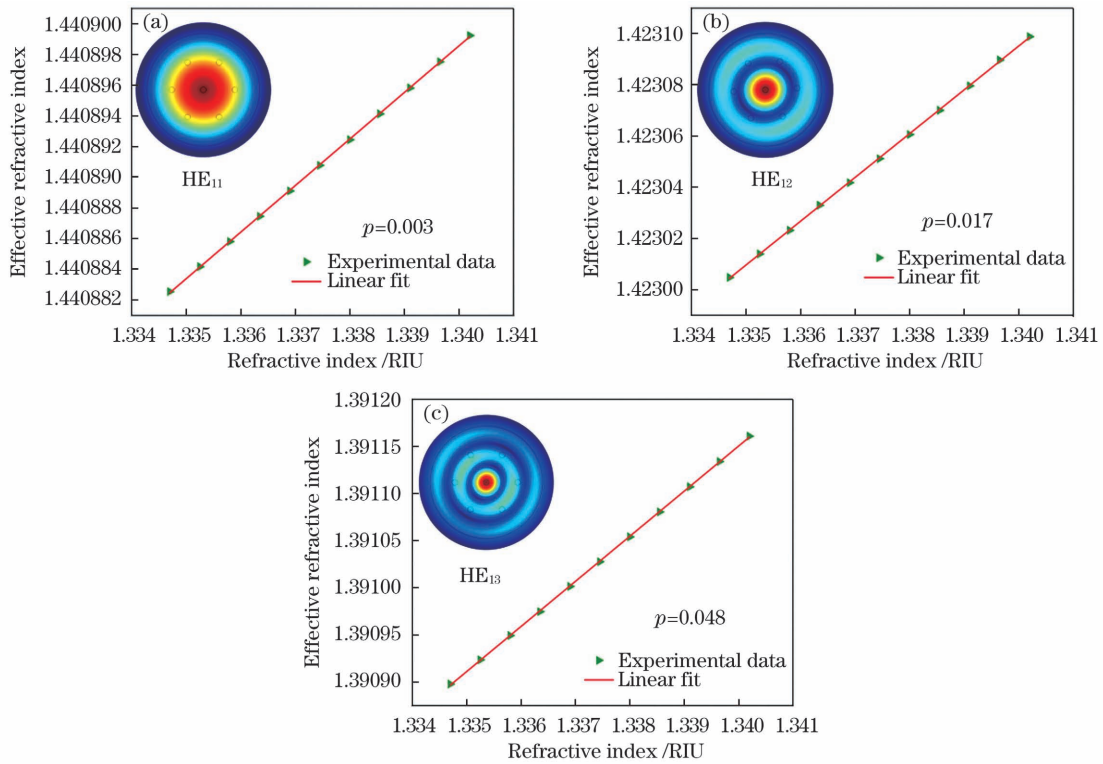


图 2 模式有效折射率随外界环境折射率变化图。(a)HE<sub>11</sub>; (b)HE<sub>12</sub>; (c)HE<sub>13</sub>

Fig. 2 Variation of mode effective refractive index with external refractive index. (a) HE<sub>11</sub>; (b) HE<sub>12</sub>; (c) HE<sub>13</sub>

设置为 9 μm 和 125 μm,七芯光纤的包层直径和单模光纤一样,都为 125 μm,七个纤芯的直径相同,为 6.4 μm,纤芯和包层折射率分别为 1.4501 和 1.4449,七芯光纤锥区的直径为 10 μm,输入光的波长为 1550 nm。通过仿真计算得到光经过拉锥七芯光纤的能量分布情况,如图 3 所示。从图 3 可以看出,光进入七芯光纤之前被稳定地束缚在单模光纤纤芯内传输,归一化强度约为 1。当光进入拉锥七

芯光纤的第一个过渡区时,七芯光纤中间纤芯的光开始向包层耦合,并激发包层模,之后经过直径均匀的锥区,一小部分光耦合到旁边的纤芯中,大部分光在包层中传输,中间芯的光强较弱,最后经过第二个过渡区,包层中的大部分光重新耦合回中间纤芯,光强增强。

为了进一步阐述拉锥七芯光纤模式干涉仪的光谱特性,利用Rsoft软件的波长扫描功能对直径为

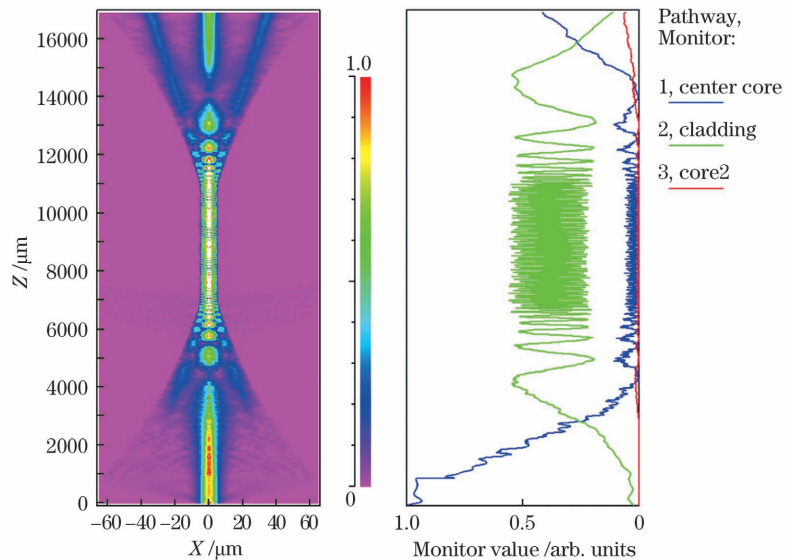


图 3 直径为 10 μm 的七芯光纤中的能量分布

Fig. 3 Energy distribution in seven core fiber with diameter of 10 μm

10  $\mu\text{m}$  的七芯光纤在不同环境折射率条件下的归一化光功率与波长之间的关系进行模拟仿真,仿真中选取波长范围 1450~1650 nm 进行研究,七芯光纤直径为 10  $\mu\text{m}$ 。仿真计算得到的干涉光谱如图 4 所示,当外界环境折射率升高时,七芯光纤的光谱向长波长漂移,通过计算得出直径为 10  $\mu\text{m}$  的七芯光纤的折射率灵敏度约为 1200 nm/RIU。该仿真结果说明锥形七芯光纤对外界环境折射率变化有响应,而后续我们对环境中湿度的监测实质上就是监测外界

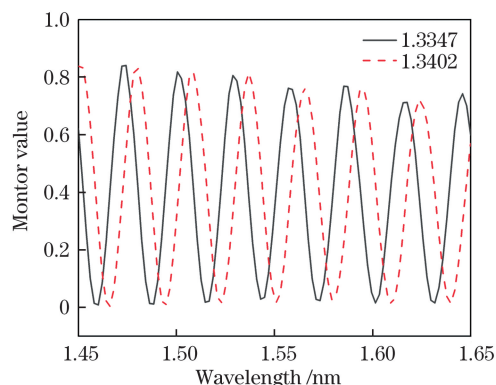


图 4 锥形光纤输出归一化光功率在不同环境折射率下随波长的变化关系

Fig.4 Relationship between the output normalized optical power of tapered fiber and wavelength at different refractive indexes

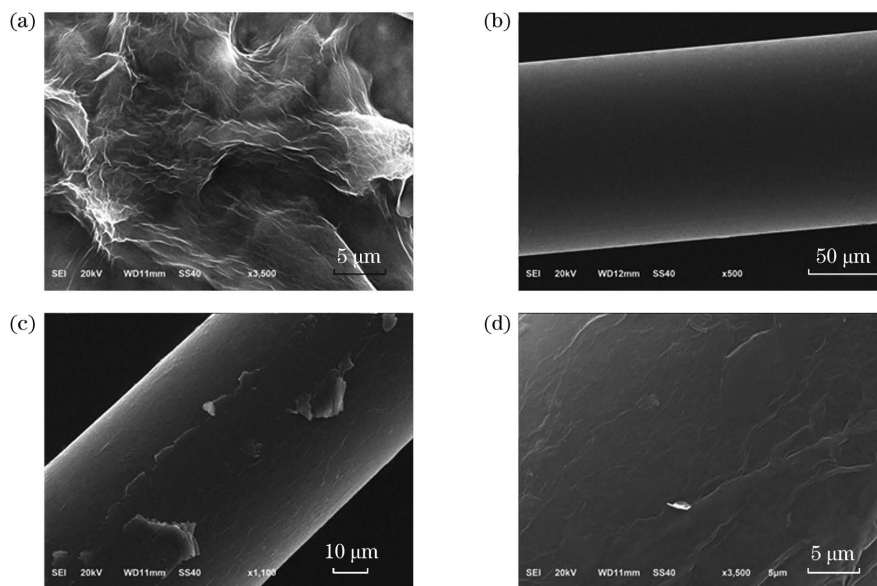


图 5 扫描电镜图。(a)氧化石墨烯;(b)未涂覆氧化石墨烯的光纤;(c)涂覆氧化石墨烯后的光纤;(d)涂覆氧化石墨烯后的光纤局部放大图

Fig. 5 Scanning electron microscopes. (a) Graphene oxide; (b) uncoated optical fiber; (c) optical fiber coated with graphene oxide; (d) partially enlarged optical fiber coated with graphene oxide

传感器拉锥前后及涂覆 GO 薄膜前后的透射光谱如图 6 所示,由图可知,单模光纤与七芯光纤的熔接损耗约为 2 dB,七芯光纤拉锥前干涉现象不明

环境折射率变化时传感器的响应特性。本次仿真结果证明了实验的可行性,并为湿度的测量提供了一定的理论基础。

## 2.2 样品结构制备

首先将长度为 1 cm 左右的七芯光纤熔接在两个单模光纤的中间,之后通过光纤熔融拉锥机(Kaipule Co. Ltd. AFBT-8000MX-H)对传感结构中的七芯光纤进行熔融拉锥,最后利用光压光热法在七芯光纤锥区表面涂覆 GO 薄膜。镀膜过程如下:将由改进的 Hummers 法制备的氧化石墨烯配制成质量浓度为 1 mg/mL 的溶液,用超声波清洗机超声 30 min 左右,将溶液滴在七芯光纤锥区表面,使用宽带光源(SLED)对传感结构通光。当激光通过七芯光纤锥区时,一部分光进入包层,并在包层中产生大量的热量,利用激光的这种光压光热效应,光纤表面可以牢牢地吸附住氧化石墨烯分子,因此获得的薄膜均匀牢固。图 5(a)为 GO 的扫描电镜图,从中可以清楚地看到 GO 的褶皱状结构;图 5(b)为光纤的扫描电镜图,从中可以清楚地看到未涂覆 GO 的光纤表面十分光滑。利用光压光热法将 GO 涂覆到七芯光纤之后的扫描电镜图及局部放大图如图 5(c)和图 5(d)所示。可以看到,通过上述镀膜过程,在七芯光纤表面形成了一层氧化石墨烯薄膜。

显,当对七芯光纤拉锥后,激发的包层基模和高阶模之间发生干涉,出现明显的干涉峰。GO 薄膜的折射率大于包层折射率,当光通过镀膜区域时,GO 吸

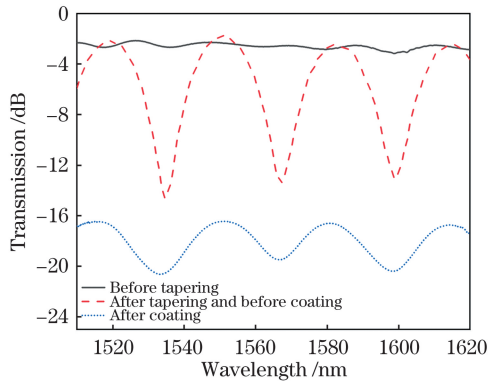


图 6 传感结构拉锥前后及涂覆 GO 前后的透射光谱图对比

Fig. 6 Transmission spectra of sensor structure before and after tapering and GO coating

收了一部分的光强,导致损耗增大,但是三个特征峰的位置基本不变,因此 GO 不宜过厚,否则损耗过大不利于透射光谱的监测。

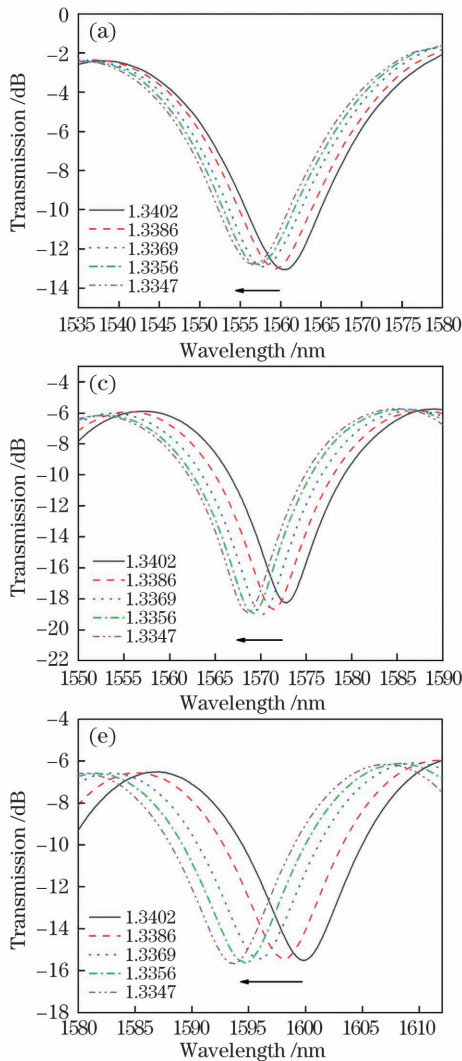


图 7 不同直径样品的折射率灵敏度。(a)(b)样品 s-1;(c)(d)样品 s-2;(e)(f)样品 s-3

Fig. 7 Refractive index sensitivity of samples with different diameters. (a)(b) Sample s-1; (c)(d) sample s-2; (e)(f) sample s-3

### 3 实验结果和讨论

#### 3.1 传感器镀膜前的折射率响应特性

为了对后续湿度测试提供实验基础,对不同直径、未涂覆 GO 的样品进行折射率响应实验测试,样品 s-1、s-2、s-3 的直径分别为 15  $\mu\text{m}$ 、12  $\mu\text{m}$ 、10  $\mu\text{m}$ ,将样品放置在充满氯化钠(NaCl)液体的盒子中,通过改变液体折射率来测试样品对外界环境折射率变化的响应。样品的折射率响应实验步骤如下:先将适量的 NaCl 固体加入去离子水中配制成一定浓度的 NaCl 溶液,再将样品放入待测溶液中固定,实验过程中通过向 NaCl 溶液中加入一定量的去离子水改变 NaCl 溶液的浓度,从而使待测溶液的折射率发生改变,整个实验过程中由光谱仪(OSA)监测透射光谱并保存相应图谱。通过理论计算得到液体浓度及其对应的折射率,并通过阿贝折射仪进行折射率标定。

三个不同直径样品的折射率响应如图 7 所示。

样品 s-1、s-2、s-3 的折射率灵敏度分别为 685 nm/RIU、753 nm/RIU、1123 nm/RIU。样品 s-3 的折射率灵敏度和我们仿真得到的灵敏度基本一致。从以上三组数据可以看出,通过增加拉伸长度来减小七芯光纤的锥区直径可以大幅提高样品的折射率灵敏度,但是样品的直径不宜过小,一是因为直径太小样品容易断裂,操作难度增加,二是因为直径越小样品的损耗越大,不利于氧化石墨烯涂覆。

### 3.2 传感器镀膜后的湿度响应特性

由 3.1 节得出,七芯光纤锥区直径为  $10\ \mu\text{m}$  的传感结构即样品 s-3 的折射率灵敏度最大,在与 s-3 同样参数情况下制备样品 s-4,在其表面涂覆 GO 薄膜,并对所制备的湿度传感器进行湿度测量,湿度测试系统实验装置如图 8 所示。传感器的一端连接 SLED,另一端连接 OSA。将传感器放入自制湿度箱中,湿度箱分为两层:在底层放置并固定传感器,以保证测试过程中传感器不受外界环境其他因素的扰动;在上层放置不同浓度的饱和盐溶液,不同浓度的饱和盐溶液对应不同的湿度,通过饱和盐溶液的挥发特性改变湿度箱内的湿度环境,湿度箱通过湿度计实时监测箱内的湿度。在室温下,湿度从 29.5%RH 上升到 60.2%RH,每个湿度间隔为 5%RH 左右,每次湿度值保持稳定 1 h 以上后,将透射光谱图保存。

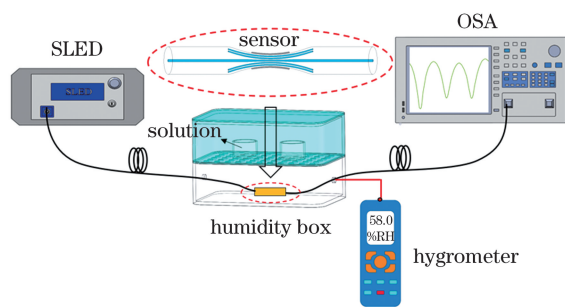


图 8 相对湿度测试实验装置图

Fig. 8 Relative humidity test device

图 9 为样品 s-4 随外界环境相对湿度变化的透射光谱图,从图中可以看出,当外界环境相对湿度升高时,样品 s-4 的三个谐振波谷向短波长发生漂移。由(4)式可知,当外界环境相对湿度升高时,GO 吸附环境中的水分子使其电导率发生改变,从而导致折射率减小,即传感结构周围环境折射率下降,导致  $\Delta n_{\text{eff}}$  减小;由(3)式可知,干涉峰向短波长方向漂移,这与实验中光谱漂移方向一致。

图 10 为样品 s-4 中三个不同位置共振波谷与湿度变化的关系。由图可知,湿度从 29.5%RH 升

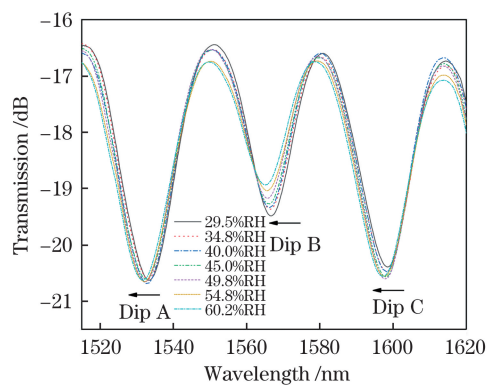


图 9 样品 s-4 在不同相对湿度下的透射光谱

Fig. 9 Transmission spectra of sample s-4 at different relative humidity

高到 60.2%RH 的过程中,三个谐振波谷均向短波长方向漂移,1533 nm 左右的谐振波谷灵敏度为  $-0.0535\ \text{nm}/(\%RH)$ ,线性度为 98.5%,1566 nm 左右的谐振波谷灵敏度  $K$  为  $-0.0451\ \text{nm}/(\%RH)$ ,线性度  $R^2$  为 97.1%,1598 nm 左右的谐振波谷灵敏度为  $-0.0418\ \text{nm}/(\%RH)$ ,线性度为 96.3%。三个干涉波谷的湿度灵敏度略有不同,这是因为七芯光纤拉锥后包层基模和高阶模之间产生多模干涉,不同的干涉波谷由不同的模式间干涉形成,而不同模式的有效折射率不同,形成的折射率差也不同,导致灵敏度不同。由此可知,样品 s-4 在 1533 nm 附近谐振波谷的湿度灵敏度最大且线性度最好,灵敏度最大为  $-0.0535\ \text{nm}/(\%RH)$ 。与 Azzuhri 等<sup>[26]</sup>提出的基于微纤维谐振腔的湿度传感器相比,我们提出的传感器的灵敏度提高了 5.4 倍;与 Soltanian 等<sup>[21]</sup>提出的基于拉锥单模光纤的湿度传感器相比,我们提出的传感器的灵敏度提高了 2.7 倍,直径增大了两倍多,稳定性及机械强度更好。

为了探讨直径对湿度传感器灵敏度的影响,用同样的方法制备了直径为  $14\ \mu\text{m}$  的样品(s-5),其湿度响应特性如图 11 所示,实验测得该样品的湿度灵敏度为  $-0.0173\ \text{nm}/(\%RH)$ 。因此,样品直径增加,样品的湿度灵敏度减小,故通过减小样品直径可以增加其湿度灵敏度。

稳定性是评价相对湿度传感器性能的一个重要指标。样品 s-4 直径最细,湿度灵敏度最高,因此我们测试了样品 s-4 的稳定性。在 34.8%RH、45.0%RH 和 60.3%RH 的三个固定相对湿度水平下测试了传感器的稳定性。在不同湿度环境下,样品每隔 10 min 记录一次光谱,记录了样品 1 h 内的光谱变化。图 12 显示出记录的三个固定相对湿度值的结果,即外界环境相对湿度为 34.8%RH,

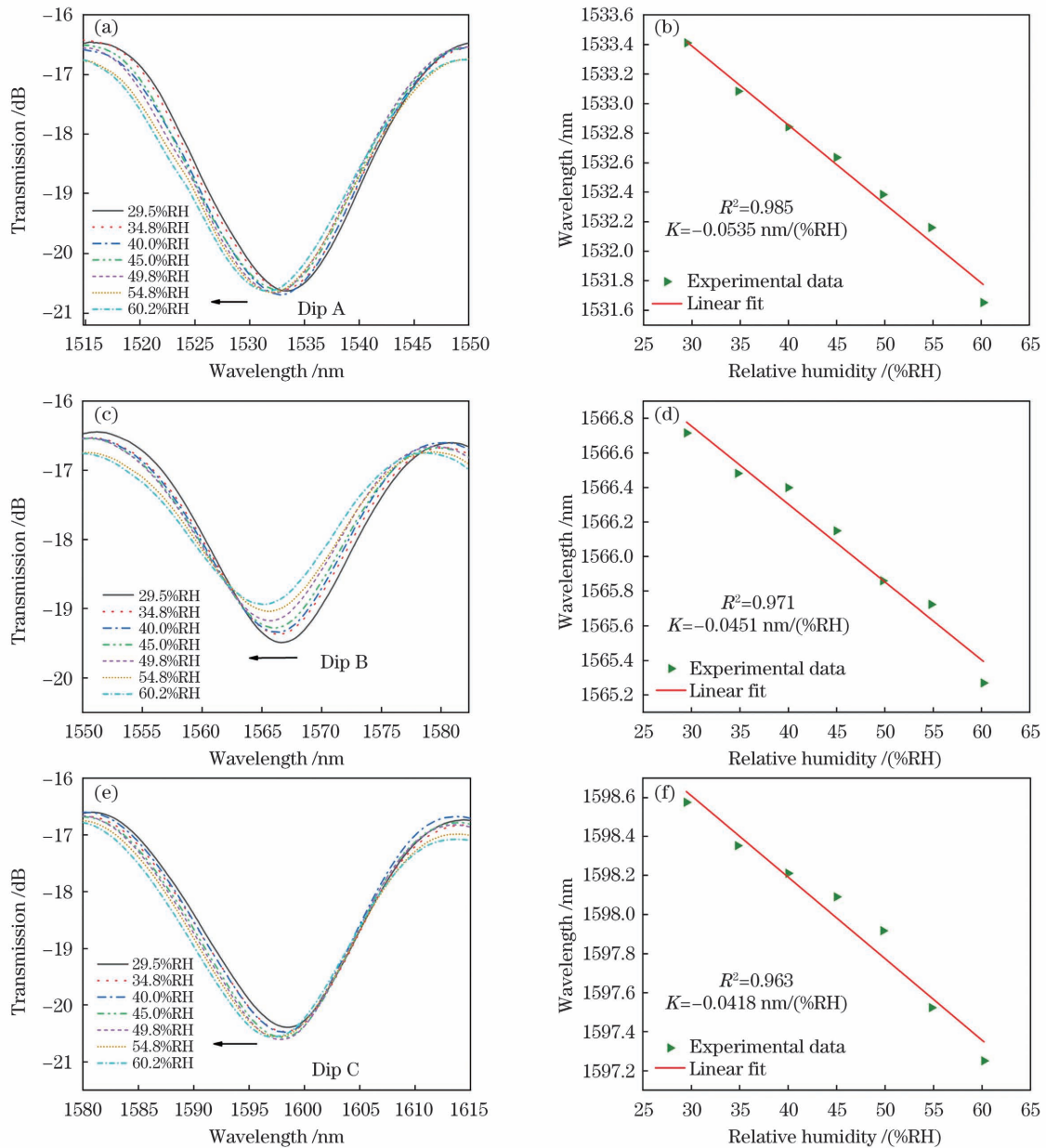


图 10 样品 s-4 不同谐振波谷随湿度变化的光谱响应。(a)(b)Dip A; (c)(d)Dip B; (e)(f)Dip C

Fig. 10 Spectral response of different resonant waves of sample s-4 varying with humidity. (a)(b) Dip A; (c)(d) Dip B; (e)(f) Dip C

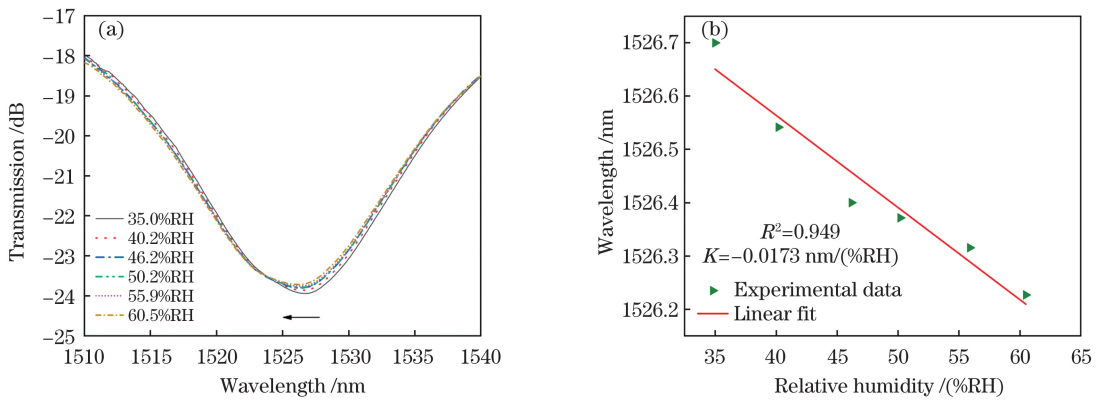


图 11 样品 s-5 的湿度响应。(a)透射谱;(b)湿度灵敏度

Fig. 11 Humidity response of sample s-5. (a) Transmission; (b) sensitivity of relative humidity

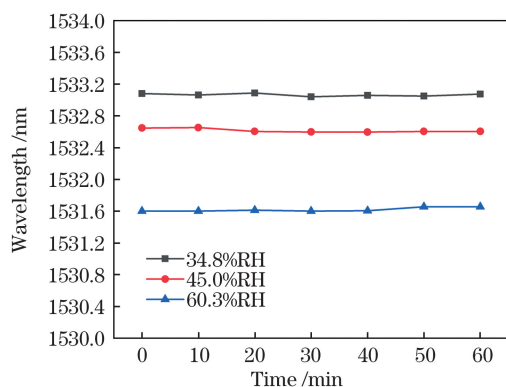


图 12 样品 s-4 的在不同相对湿度下的稳定性测试

Fig. 12 Stability test of sample s-4 under different relative humidity

45.0%RH 和 60.3%RH 时,传感器波长的最大误差分别为 0.03 nm, 0.04 nm 和 0.04 nm,由此表明所提出的传感器的稳定性好。

## 4 结 论

设计制备了一种基于拉锥七芯光纤的湿度传感器。七芯光纤熔接在两段单模光纤中间,利用熔融拉锥技术对七芯光纤进行熔融拉锥,并对该结构进行理论分析和实验研究,实验测得当七芯光纤直径为 10  $\mu\text{m}$  左右时折射率灵敏度达到 1123 nm/RIU,实验结果与仿真计算结果一致。此外,通过在七芯光纤锥区表面涂覆一层 GO 薄膜制得湿度传感器,实验测得传感器湿度灵敏度最大为  $-0.0535 \text{ nm}/(\%RH)$ ,线性度为 98.5%。本文提出的传感器,灵敏度高、制备简单、稳定性好,可应用于湿度传感领域。

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## Research on Humidity Sensor Based on Tapered Seven Core Fiber

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### Abstract

**Objective** The monitoring of relative humidity is very important in the fields of agriculture, medical treatment and biochemical research, which urges scholars to develop various humidity sensors. Among many humidity sensors, optical fiber humidity sensor has become a research hotspot owing to their unique advantages such as high sensitivity, anti-electromagnetic interference, compact structure and other unique advantages. There are many kinds of optical fiber humidity sensors, and the interferometric humidity sensor has attracted wide attention because of its advantages of simple preparation and high sensitivity, among which the humidity sensor based on Mach-Zehnder interferometer (MZI) is widely used. However, the sensitivity and stability of these sensors still need to be further improved. In order to improve the sensitivity of the sensor and maintain its stability, a humidity sensor based on seven core tapered fiber is proposed and demonstrated. The sensor consists of a short section of seven core fiber between two single-mode fibers, in which the seven core fiber is fused and tapered by a hydrogen oxygen flame to form a tapered structure. Mach-Zehnder interferometer is formed by interference between the base mode of the cladding and the higher mode excited after the fiber is tapered. The effective refractive index of the cladding mode is easily affected by the external environment parameters. Therefore, the structure is very sensitive to the changes of the external environment parameters. The proposed structure is particularly suitable for the situations where high measurement sensitivity and high stability are required.

**Methods** Firstly, the seven core fiber with a length of about 1 cm is fused between two single-mode fibers. Then, the seven core fiber in the sensing structure is fused and tapered by a fiber taper machine (Kaipule Co. Ltd. AFBT-8000MX-H). Finally, GO film is coated on the surface of the tapered area by photothermal method. The coating process is as follows: the GO prepared by the improved Hummers method is mixed into a solution with the concentration of 1 mg/mL, and the GO solution is dropped on the surface of the fiber. In the coating process, the SLED broadband light source is used to transmit the light in the sensing structure. When the exciting light passes through the tapered fiber, a part of the light enters the cladding and generates a lot of heat in the cladding. GO molecules can be firmly adsorbed on the fiber surface by using the photothermal effect of laser, and thus the film is uniform and firm.

**Results and Discussions** Firstly, the wavelength scanning function of Rsoft software is used to calculate the sensor uncoated with diameter of 10  $\mu\text{m}$ . The refractive index sensitivity of sensor is about 1200 nm/RIU (Fig. 4), which proves the feasibility of the experiment and provide a theoretical basis for humidity measurement. In order to provide experimental basis for subsequent humidity test, the refractive index response of samples with different diameters of uncoated GO was tested. The refractive index sensitivities of the samples with the diameter of 15  $\mu\text{m}$  (s-1), 12  $\mu\text{m}$  (s-2) and 10  $\mu\text{m}$  (s-3) were 685 nm/RIU, 753 nm/RIU and 1123 nm/RIU, respectively (Fig. 7). Thus, the refractive index sensitivity of the sample can be greatly improved by increasing the stretching length to reduce the tapered diameter of the seven core fiber. Then, the s-4 was prepared under the same parameters as the sample with the highest sensitivity. And the GO film was coated on the surface of s-4 to prepare a humidity sensor. The experimental results show that the humidity sensitivity of sample s-4 is the highest at 1533 nm, and the maximum sensitivity is  $-0.0535 \text{ nm}/(\% \text{RH})$  (Fig. 10). And the humidity sensitivity of the sensor with diameter of 14  $\mu\text{m}$  (s-5) is  $-0.0173 \text{ nm}/(\% \text{RH})$  (Fig. 11). Thus, the humidity sensitivity can be increased by reducing the sample diameter. In addition, we also evaluated the stability of s-4. When the relative humidity is 34.8%RH, 45.0%RH and 60.3%RH, the maximum error of the sensor wavelength is 0.03 nm, 0.04 nm and 0.04 nm, respectively, which indicates that the proposed sensor has good stability (Fig. 12).

**Conclusions** In summary, we propose and demonstrate a humidity sensor based on tapered seven core fiber, and the seven core fiber is fused and tapered by a hydrogen oxygen flame to form a tapered structure. The experimental results show that the refractive index sensitivity is up to 1123 nm/RIU for the sensor uncoated with taper waist diameter of 10  $\mu\text{m}$ , which is consistent with the simulation results. Then the humidity sensor was fabricated by coating a layer of GO film on the surface of fiber. The maximum humidity sensitivity of the sensor was  $-0.0535 \text{ nm}/(\% \text{RH})$ , and the linearity was 98.5%. The sensor has the advantages of high sensitivity, simple preparation and good stability, which can be used in the field of humidity sensing.

**Key words** fiber optics; fiber sensing; fused taper; humidity; graphene oxide

**OCIS codes** 060.2370; 060.2300; 280.4788