

C + L 波段 0.38 dB/km 超低损耗国产嵌套管式空芯反谐振光纤

张鑫, 董子涵, 姚静远, 万双琴, 王璞*

北京工业大学材料与制造学部激光工程研究院, 北京 100124

摘要 为了进一步降低空芯反谐振光纤在通信波段的传输损耗, 利用改良的堆积-拉制法成功制备出在通信 C + L 波段具有超低损耗的嵌套管式空芯反谐振光纤(Nested HC-ARF)。光纤制备长度为 720 m, 在 1545~1660 nm 光谱范围内实现了 0.38 dB/km 的平均传输损耗, 同时光纤 LP₁₁ 模式损耗高达 2.96 dB/m, 光纤高阶模抑制比为 38.9 dB。测量结果表明, 制备的 Nested HC-ARF 具有与实芯单模光纤同一量级的超低传输损耗以及极高的光纤模式纯度, 有望作为新一代传输光缆应用于光纤通信系统。

关键词 光纤光学; 光纤元件; 空芯反谐振光纤; 超低传输损耗; 单模

中图分类号 TN253

文献标识码 A

DOI: 10.3788/CJL202249.1115002

空芯光纤自 1999 年成功研制至今, 其独特的科学研究价值和实际应用潜力极大地推动了现代光学的进步^[1]。2004 年, 研究人员通过调控壁厚的方式, 将最早制备成功的空芯光纤类型——空芯光子带隙光纤的传输损耗降至 1.2 dB/km^[2], 并发现空芯光子带隙光纤微结构内壁上粗糙不平表面造成的散射损耗极大限制了光纤损耗的进一步降低^[3]。在随后多年的研究过程中, 学术界逐渐将研究对象转向空芯反谐振光纤^[4]。早期的空芯反谐振光纤的损耗较高, 通常为 20 dB/km~100 dB/km^[5-7]。随着学术界对空芯反谐振光纤导光机制理解的不断深入, 多个研究团队都在尝试通过增加反谐振界面的方式, 进一步降低空芯反谐振光纤的传输损耗^[8-11]。最近, 北京工业大学制备的嵌套管式空芯反谐振光纤(Nested HC-ARF)在 C + L 波段实现了 0.38 dB/km 的超低传输损耗, 光纤高阶模的抑制比为 38.9 dB。

为了满足光纤通信应用对传输光纤损耗与模式特性的要求, 本文在光纤设计层面引入了嵌套管式毛细管结构, 通过在光纤截面的径向方向上增加反谐振界面的方式, 进一步抑制了光的泄漏。此外, 本文对

光纤包层结构中的嵌套管数量与尺寸进行了对比分析, 并最终选择了 5 管 Nested HC-ARF 的最优设计, 主要基于两方面原因: 一方面, 相比于 6 管或 7 管包层结构设计, 5 管 Nested HC-ARF 中嵌套管毛细管内空气区域的厚度能够更好地满足空气层反谐振条件, 减少了光纤基模的泄漏损耗, 拓宽了光纤的低损耗传输窗口^[12]; 另一方面, 5 管 Nested HC-ARF 中嵌套管毛细管内增加的空气区域面积有利于充分实现纤芯高阶模式与包层模式的谐振耦合, 提升光纤的高阶模式(HOMs)抑制比^[13]。

基于以上理论分析, 设计了图 1(a)所示的 Nested HC-ARF 结构模型。光纤纤芯直径为 40 μm, 光纤外径为 250 μm, 内外嵌套管直径分别为 22 μm 和 42 μm, 其石英壁厚度为 1.1 μm, 设计的 Nested HC-ARF 的二阶导光通带的中心波长在 1550 nm 左右。使用有限元仿真工具 COMSOL Multiphysics 对设计的 Nested HC-ARF 的传输损耗进行了定量分析。图 1(b)为仿真计算得到的设计模型的传输损耗谱, 光纤的低损耗传输波长从 1200 nm 延续至 1700 nm 以上, 光纤在 1290~1700 nm 波长范围内的损耗低于 0.3 dB/km。

收稿日期: 2022-01-19; 修回日期: 2022-02-22; 录用日期: 2022-04-06

基金项目: 国家自然科学基金(62035002)

通信作者: *wangpuemail@bjut.edu.cn

此外,设计的 Nested HC-ARF 的二阶导光通带中心波长位于 1550 nm,其损耗最低值为 0.12 dB/km。可以看出,Nested HC-ARF 径向上精心设计的多层反

谐振界面将光有效地限制在纤芯中稳定传输,同时匹配合理的毛细管壁厚,可以实现通信 C+L 波段的超低损耗导光,验证了设计模型的优良导光特性。

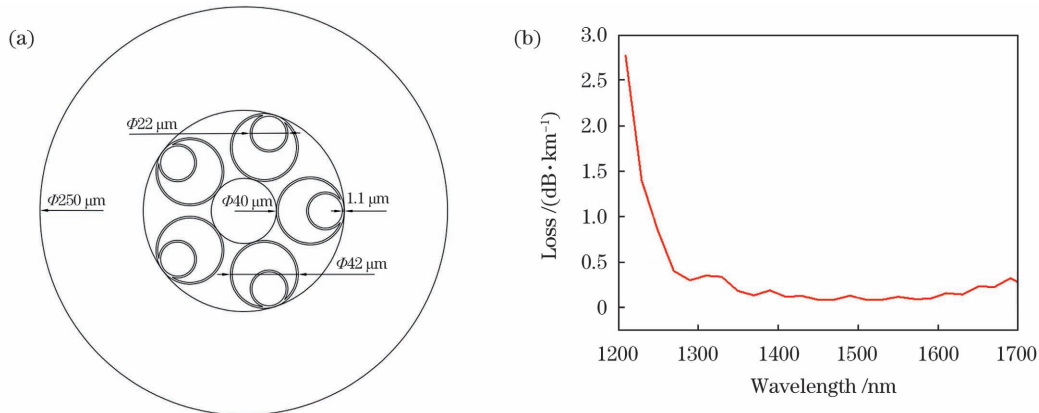


图 1 设计的 Nested HC-ARF 模型。(a)结构示意图;(b)仿真损耗谱

Fig. 1 Designed Nested HC-ARF model. (a) Structural diagram; (b) simulated loss spectrum

通过改良的堆积-拉制法制备设计的 Nested HC-ARF 结构。首先将大尺寸的石英玻璃管拉制成设计所需的石英毛细管,随后将这些毛细管堆积成实验所设计的光纤结构并送入光纤拉丝塔的高温炉中,拉制出具有设计结构的石英细棒,最后利用二次拉丝技术将中间过渡品制备成光纤,通过气压控制,在光纤拉丝过程中制备了包层微结构中的嵌套

管结构。最终实验制备的 Nested HC-ARF 长度为 720 m,其扫描电子显微镜图如图 2 所示,可以看出,实验制备的光纤横截面均匀性良好,具有均匀的间隙和一致的嵌套管尺寸。制备光纤的纤芯直径(I_D)为 39.8 μm ,光纤外径(O_D)为 250 μm ,外嵌套管直径(D)为 41.7 μm ,内嵌套管直径(d)为 23.4 μm ,石英平均壁厚(T)为 1.1 μm 。

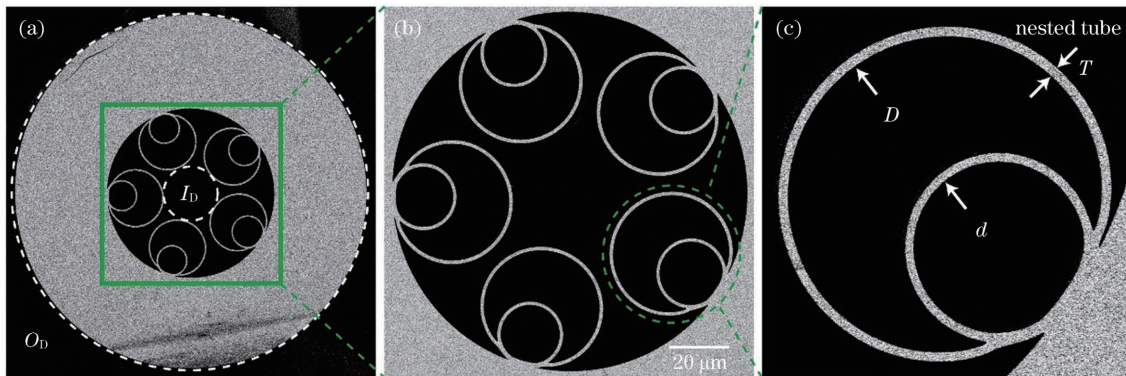


图 2 制备的 Nested HC-ARF 的扫描电镜图

Fig. 2 SEM images of fabricated Nested HC-ARF

利用超连续谱光源和光谱分析仪,通过截断法对制备的 Nested HC-ARF 的传输损耗谱进行了测量。在输入端耦合条件不变的情况下,将长度为 640 m 的待测光纤截至 10 m 长,并在每个长度(640 m 和 10 m)下切割光纤输出端面,接入光谱仪记录光纤输出光谱,重复该过程 6 次,其中每组记录光谱的强度变化小于 5% 以确保测量结果的准确性,测得的制备光纤的传输与损耗谱如图 3 所示。

图 3(a)为待测光纤在 640 m 和 10 m 长度下的传输谱,光纤的二阶导光通带由 1265 nm 延伸至

1700 nm 以后。图 3(b)为利用截断法测得的 Nested HC-ARF 的传输损耗。可以看出,光纤在 1545 ~ 1660 nm 波段范围内的平均损耗为 0.38 dB/km,灰色区域为实验过程中待测光纤不同切割情况带来的测量不确定性。1340 ~ 1500 nm 处的损耗峰是由水分子吸收导致的,即光纤预制棒内的密封材料在拉丝过程中受热析出的大量水蒸气融入制备的光纤石英壁中,致使纤芯内极小部分光场在传输过程中与石英介质发生作用,形成了水分子吸收峰。

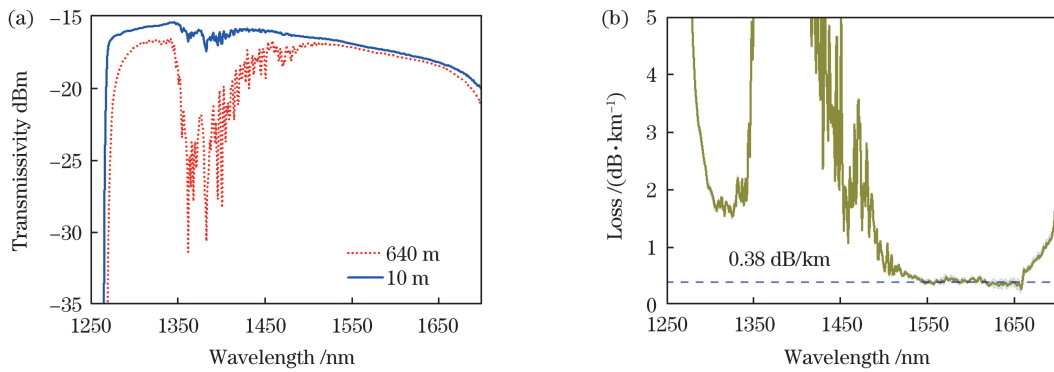


图 3 制备的 Nested HC-ARF 的传输与损耗特性。(a) 相同耦合条件下 640 m 和 10 m 长光纤的传输谱; (b) 截断法测得的光纤损耗谱

Fig. 3 Transmission and loss properties for fabricated Nested HC-ARF. (a) Transmission spectra of 640 m and 10 m long fibers under same coupling condition; (b) fiber-loss spectrum measured by cut-back method

随后利用空间与光谱(S^2)成像技术^[14]对制备光纤的模式含量进行了表征。图 4(a)为具有 30 cm 弯曲直径的测试 Nested HC-ARF 在 8 m 长度下的模式含量图,可以看出,此时光纤中仅存在极小含量的 LP_{11} 高阶模式, LP_{11} 模式与 LP_{01} 模式的含量比(MCR)为 -46.5 dB。为了定量表征光纤 LP_{11} 模式损耗,在光纤输入端耦合条件不变的情况下,利用截断法测量了不同光纤长度下的 LP_{11} 模式含量,如图 4(b)所示。通过 LP_{11} 模式含量的变化率,得出 LP_{11} 模式的传输

损耗为 2.96 dB/m,相较于基模 0.38 dB/km 的超低传输损耗,制备的 Nested HC-ARF 的高阶模抑制比为 38.9 dB。值得注意的是,光纤极高的模式纯度主要归功于包层嵌套毛细管所提供的谐振耦合效应。拉丝过程中精心控制的嵌套毛细管尺寸为纤芯高阶模式与毛细管模式的相位匹配提供了良好条件,当纤芯内的高阶模式被激发时,其部分能量将谐振耦合至嵌套毛细管内,致使高阶模式快速泄漏,因此光纤具有极高的模式纯度和单模导光特性^[15]。

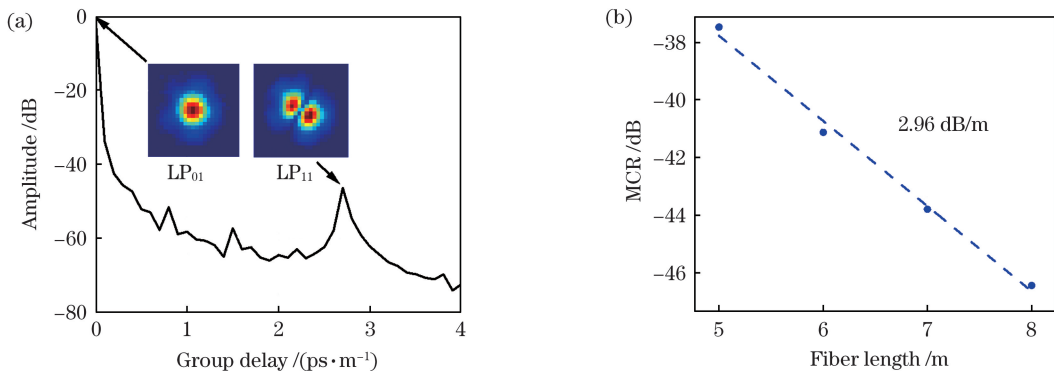


图 4 制备的 Nested HC-ARF 的模式特性。(a) 利用 S^2 成像技术测得的 8 m 长光纤的群延迟图,插图为重构的模式轮廓图; (b) 不同光纤长度下的 MCR 及 LP_{11} 模式损耗

Fig. 4 Model features for fabricated Nested HC-ARF. (a) Group delay plot of 8 m long fiber by S^2 imaging technique with reconstructed mode profiles in insets; (b) MCR for different fiber lengths and LP_{11} mode loss

此外,研究团队将制备的 Nested HC-ARF 导光窗口平移至 $1, 2, 3 \sim 4.5 \mu\text{m}$ 等其他重要激光波段。其中, $1 \mu\text{m}$ 波段导光的 Nested HC-ARF 在 1064 nm 处实现了 1.6 dB/km 的超低传输损耗。而 $2 \mu\text{m}$ 波段导光的 Nested HC-ARF 的最低传输损耗在 1980 nm 处仅为 0.85 dB/km,是目前已报道的空芯光纤在该波段的最低损耗结果^[8]。结合本文所报道的 C+L 波段的 0.38 dB/km 超低损耗 Nested HC-ARF,这一系列具备优良导光性能的空

芯反谐振光纤对于推动国产化高品质空芯光纤关键技术的自主可控具有重要意义。下一步将从光纤结构优化设计、单纤公里级制备长度等方面进一步完善 Nested HC-ARF 的光学性能。

参 考 文 献

- [1] Cregan R F, Mangan B J, Knight J C, et al. Single-mode photonic band gap guidance of light in air[J]. Science, 1999, 285(5433): 1537-1539.

- [2] Roberts P J, Couny F, Sabert H, et al. Ultimate low loss of hollow-core photonic crystal fibres[J]. *Optics Express*, 2005, 13(1): 236-244.
- [3] Bresson B, Brun C, Buet X, et al. Anisotropic super-attenuation of capillary waves on driven glass interfaces[J]. *Physical Review Letters*, 2017, 119(23): 235501.
- [4] Benabid F, Knight J C, Antonopoulos G, et al. Stimulated Raman scattering in hydrogen-filled hollow-core photonic crystal fiber[J]. *Science*, 2002, 298(5592): 399-402.
- [5] 高寿飞, 汪滢莹, 刘小路, 等. 空芯反谐振光纤及其高功率超短脉冲传输[J]. *中国激光*, 2017, 44(2): 0201012.
Gao S F, Wang Y Y, Liu X L, et al. Hollow-core anti-resonant fiber and its use for propagation of high power ultrashort pulse [J]. *Chinese Journal of Lasers*, 2017, 44(2): 0201012.
- [6] 王梦玲, 高寿飞, 汪滢莹, 等. 紫外空芯反谐振光纤的研制[J]. *中国激光*, 2020, 47(8): 0806002.
Wang M L, Gao S F, Wang Y Y, et al. UV guiding hollow-core antiresonant fiber[J]. *Chinese Journal of Lasers*, 2020, 47(8): 0806002.
- [7] 鲁文举, 张鑫, 朱宽, 等. 无节点反谐振空芯光纤 1064 nm 高功率皮秒脉冲传输[J]. *中国激光*, 2022, 49(3): 0306001.
Lu W J, Zhang X, Zhu K, et al. Propagation of high-power picosecond pulse at 1064 nm using nodeless anti-resonant hollow-core fibre[J]. *Chinese Journal of Lasers*, 2022, 49(3): 0306001.
- [8] Sakr H, Chen Y, Jasion G T, et al. Hollow core optical fibres with comparable attenuation to silica fibres between 600 and 1100 nm [J]. *Nature Communications*, 2020, 11: 6030.
- [9] Zhang X, Song W H, Dong Z H, et al. Low loss nested hollow-core anti-resonant fiber at 2 μm spectral range [J]. *Optics Letters*, 2022, 47(3): 589-592.
- [10] 张家强, 张敏, 尹金德, 等. 3 μm 波段低损耗抗弯曲反谐振空芯光纤设计[J]. *激光与光电子学进展*, 2021, 58(17): 1723001.
Zhang J Q, Zhang M, Yin J D, et al. Design of low loss hollow-core anti-resonance fiber for 3 μm spectral region[J]. *Laser & Optoelectronics Progress*, 2021, 58(17): 1723001.
- [11] 薛宇勃, 李海粟, 刘亚静, 等. 偏振保持反谐振空芯光纤[J]. *激光与光电子学进展*, 2021, 58(23): 2326001.
Xue Y B, Li H S, Liu Y J, et al. Polarization-maintaining anti-resonant hollow-core optical fibers [J]. *Laser & Optoelectronics Progress*, 2021, 58(23): 2326001.
- [12] Wang Y Y, Ding W. Confinement loss in hollow-core negative curvature fiber: a multi-layered model [J]. *Optics Express*, 2017, 25(26): 33122-33133.
- [13] Uebel P, Günendi M C, Frosz M H, et al. Broadband robustly single-mode hollow-core PCF by resonant filtering of higher-order modes [J]. *Optics Letters*, 2016, 41(9): 1961-1964.
- [14] Nicholson J W, Yablon A D, Ramachandran S, et al. Spatially and spectrally resolved imaging of modal content in large-mode-area fibers [J]. *Optics Express*, 2008, 16(10): 7233-7243.
- [15] Habib M S, Antonio-Lopez J E, Markos C, et al. Single-mode, low loss hollow-core anti-resonant fiber designs [J]. *Optics Express*, 2019, 27(4): 3824-3836.

Homemade Nested Hollow-Core Anti-Resonant Fiber with 0.38 dB/km Ultralow Attenuation in C and L Bands

Zhang Xin, Dong Zihan, Yao Jingyuan, Wan Shuangqin, Wang Pu*

Institute of Laser Engineering, Faculty of Materials and Manufacturing, Beijing University of Technology, Beijing 100124, China

Abstract

Objective Since the first observation of light guidance in a hollow-core optical fiber (HCF) in 1999, the development of the HCF has attracted much attention in the last two decades. The presence of the microstructure in the cladding allows the HCF to confine most of the light energy in the hollow core of the fiber. This makes it possible to break the limitations of conventional solid-state fibers with the benefits of low nonlinear effects, high damage thresholds, low transmission losses, low latency, etc. Especially, the breakthrough results in dramatic loss reduction achieved by a hollow-core anti-resonant fiber (HC-ARF) make this kind of fiber become one of the most remarkable

and promising fiber types nowadays. In the present study, a 5-tube nested hollow-core anti-resonant fiber (Nested HC-ARF) is investigated, which exhibits outstanding optical performances in terms of 0.38 dB/km attenuation at around 1550 nm and excellent modal purity.

Methods The Nested HC-ARF is fabricated using the modified stack-and-draw method, in which the 5 nested capillaries are first stacked and fused inside a jacket tube and then drawn to the intermediate canes. Subsequently these canes are scaled down to fiber dimensions using a conventional cane-in-tube process. The thickness of the inner and outer tubes is carefully controlled by holding the differential pressure to satisfy the anti-resonance conditions at the designed operational wavelength. Finally the uncontrolled distortions are maximally suppressed by drawing the fiber under a relatively low furnace temperature and very high drawing tension.

Results and Discussions The fundamental transmission band of the fabricated Nested HC-ARF starts at around 1265 nm and extends beyond 1700 nm. The average attenuation value of 0.38 dB/km is achieved from 1545 nm to 1660 nm, which covers the optical telecommunication C and L bands. The uncertainty shown by the grayed region arises from cleave-to-cleave variability. Loss peaks appearing in the short wavelength edge of the transmission band from 1340 nm to 1500 nm can be attributed to H₂O absorption. By proper argon gas purging, these absorption-induced loss peaks can be greatly suppressed. In addition, we estimate the LP₁₁ mode loss of ~2.96 dB/m by cutback measurements with the spatial and spectral imaging technique. This is equivalent to the higher-order mode (HOM) suppression ratio of our Nested HC-ARF exceeding 38 dB, which is guaranteed by the resonant coupling provided by the well-designed fiber structure. It confirms that the combination of suitable excitation, intrinsic HOM loss discrimination and length of the fiber does indeed lead to high modal purity and effective single-mode guidance.

Conclusions We have fabricated a 5-tube Nested HC-ARF with an outstanding optical performance. This Nested HC-ARF possesses an average attenuation value of 0.38 dB/km from 1545 nm to 1660 nm. The excellent modal purity of the fiber is also experimentally verified. We believe that this fiber is attractive to many applications such as long-haul data transmission.

Key words fiber optics; fiber component; hollow-core anti-resonant fiber; ultralow transmission loss; single mode