

高性能抗辐照铒镱共掺光纤

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摘要 为了提升铒镱共掺光纤的抗辐照性能,以适用于远距离太空通信应用,采用改进的化学气相沉积(MCVD)方法制备了抗辐照铒镱共掺光纤。在常温下使用 Co₆₀ 辐射源对自研铒镱共掺光纤进行剂量为 300 Gy 和 1000 Gy、平均剂量率为 0.2 Gy/s 的辐照。在 940 nm 和 1550 nm 处,该光纤在 300 Gy 辐照剂量下的辐致吸收(RIA)分别为 0.10 dB/m 和 0.19 dB/m,在 1000 Gy 辐照剂量下的 RIA 分别为 0.46 dB/m 和 0.37 dB/m。搭建了铒镱共掺光纤放大器(EYDFA)进行增益测试,采用输入功率为 40 mW 的 1550 nm 信号与 940 nm 的泵浦源,泵浦功率为 7.3 W 时其辐致增益变化(RIGV)分别为 0.2 dB(300 Gy)和 0.7 dB(1000 Gy)。

关键词 光纤光学; 铒镱共掺光纤设计与制备; 抗辐照性能; 光纤通信; 铒镱共掺光纤放大器

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目前,掺稀土离子光纤激光器和放大器已被广泛应用于光通信、工业加工、军事、医疗等领域。其中,铒镱共掺光纤放大器(EYDFA)具有功率高、噪声低和体积小等优势,在远距离空间通信应用中极具潜力^[1-2]。然而,掺稀土离子光纤在各类宇宙射线(X射线、γ射线等)辐射下会产生大量色心。辐照产生的色心一部分来源于掺稀土离子光纤中的共掺剂元素(比如铝、磷等),还有一部分来源于光纤在制备过程中由于受热和应力作用而形成的前驱体。这些色心的吸收带主要分布在紫外波段到近红外波段之间,会导致铒镱共掺光纤(EYDF)的常用泵浦和信号波段出现辐致吸收(RIA)^[3-7],进而导致光纤放大器的性能严重降低^[8]。因此,提升 EYDF 的抗辐照能力十分关键。

为了提高 EYDF 的抗辐照性能,研究人员提出了多种抗辐射技术。从光纤设计角度来看,主要的抗辐射技术包括光纤掺杂组分设计技术^[9]、热漂白和光漂白技术^[10]、光纤载气^[11]技术等。光纤载气(载氢气等)技术会显著提升光纤的辐射耐受性,但会引入额外损耗,降低光纤的光学性能。在光纤放大器应用中,泵浦光的通入会使光纤温度升高,加速载入气体的逸散,从而使光纤失去原有的抗辐照能力。热漂白和光漂白技术多采用泵浦漂白方案,可以在一定程度上减弱辐致损耗^[3]。此外,通过改变光纤所处环境的温度也可以改善光纤的抗辐照性能,但考虑到光纤的实际应用场景,该方案并不实用。采用掺杂组分设计方案制备的光纤具有寿命长、抗辐照性能好、放大性能不降低等

优点,适合用于长期的太空通信任务,但目前还需对光纤的制备流程以及掺杂组分优化设计进行一系列工艺摸索。从国内外抗辐照铒镱共掺光纤的发展来看,法国 iXblue 公司已实现了抗辐照铒镱共掺光纤的产业化,其制备的商用抗辐照铒镱共掺光纤的辐致增益衰减系数小于 0.02 dB/krad^[12]。相关报道显示,该公司采用的铈离子掺杂技术可以提升光纤的抗辐照性能,在 900 Gy 剂量和 0.003 Gy/s 剂量率的在线辐照下,光纤的辐致增益衰减为 1.5 dB,辐致增益下降了约 7.9%^[11]。国内诸多单位在抗辐照掺铒光纤性能的提升上取得了重大突破^[13-15],但目前关于适用于远距离通信的 EYDF 及 EYDFA 的抗辐照研究报道还比较少。本课题组采用改进的化学气相沉积(MCVD)工艺制备了抗辐照铒镱共掺光纤(RREYDF),通过调整铒、镱、磷和铈等掺杂组分的掺杂比例来增强光纤的抗辐照性能(铒、镱和磷掺杂比例为 1:22:536)。如图 1 所示,光纤纤芯和包层的尺寸分别为 10.49 μm 和 129.29 μm。考虑到当前太空任务的辐照剂量处于 300~1000 Gy 之间^[3],本文选择 300 Gy 和 1000 Gy 两种辐照剂量来测试抗辐照铒镱共掺光纤的 RIA 与辐致增益变化(RIGV)。辐照源为 Co₆₀,辐照的平均剂量率为 0.2 Gy/s。

图 2 为抗辐照铒镱共掺光纤在辐照前后的吸收谱以及在不同剂量(300 Gy 和 1000 Gy)下的 RIA 谱。图 2(a)为常用泵浦波段(850~1050 nm)的包层吸收谱,图 2(b)为信号波段(1450~1650 nm)的纤芯吸收

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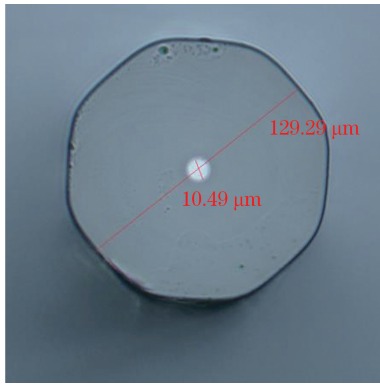


图 1 抗辐照铒镱共掺光纤的截面

Fig. 1 Cross-section of radiation-resistant Er-Yb co-doped fiber

谱。抗辐照铒镱共掺光纤辐照前后的吸收谱均采用 Photon Kinetics 2500 测试仪按截断法进行测试。RIA 谱通过将辐照后与辐照前的吸收谱作差得到。辐照导致有源光纤放大性能降低的主要原因在于辐致色心在泵浦和信号波段引入了额外吸收。因此,本课题组测试了抗辐照铒镱共掺光纤在常用泵浦波长(940 nm)和信号波长(1550 nm)下的 RIA。在 300 Gy 和 1000 Gy 剂量下,940 nm 波长处的包层 RIA 分别为 0.10 dB/m 和 0.46 dB/m,1550 nm 处的

纤芯 RIA 分别 0.19 dB/m 和 0.37 dB/m。

如图 3(a)所示,采用后向泵浦的 EYDFA 结构测试自研抗辐照铒镱共掺光纤在辐照前后的增益变化。信号光源波长为 1550 nm,半峰全宽小于 0.1 nm。1550 nm 信号首先经过自制掺铒光纤放大器(EDFA)进行预放大,输入待测抗辐照铒镱共掺光纤的信号功率为 40 mW,接在光源之后的隔离器(ISO)用来保护信号源,可变光学衰减器(VOA)用来调整输入信号的功率。泵浦源波长为 940 nm,原始抗辐照铒镱共掺光纤与辐照后抗辐照铒镱共掺光纤的测试长度为 5~13 m,FUT(fiber under test)为待测抗辐照铒镱共掺光纤。在反向合束器之后放置 ISO,用来防止回返光并保护器件;在输出端放置分光器(99:1),以便记录光谱和功率数据。在实验中,将辐照前后的抗辐照铒镱共掺光纤分别接入 EYDFA 中进行增益测试,将 940 nm 泵浦的输出功率由 1.9 W 提升至 7.3 W。相关结果由功率计和光谱仪测得。为了精确测试 EYDFA 的增益水平,本文通过分析输出光谱来排除放大自发辐射(ASE)带来的误差。图 3(b)为 EYDFA 的输出光谱示例,图中所示光谱测试条件为:光纤长度 7 m,泵浦功率 7.3 W。本实验采用的增益计算公式为 $G = 10 \lg[(P_{out} - P_{ASE})/P_{in}]$ 。

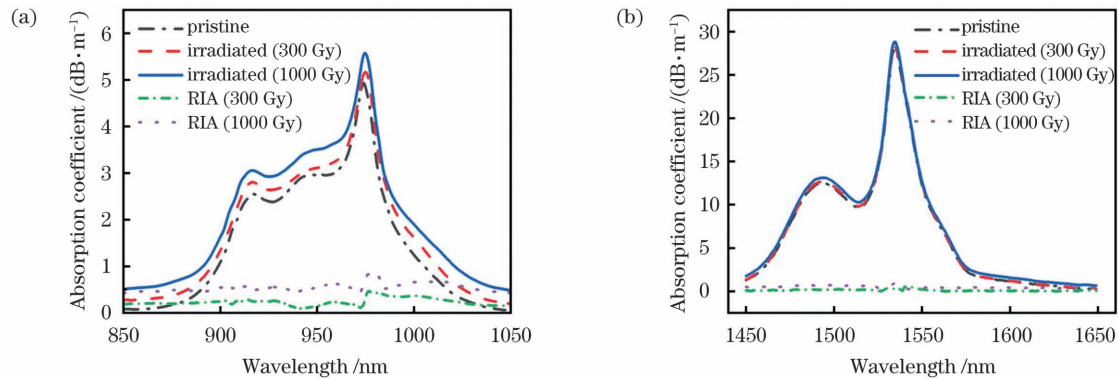


图 2 抗辐照铒镱共掺光纤辐照前后的吸收谱以及在相应波段的辐致吸收谱。(a)泵浦波段的包层吸收谱;(b)信号波段的纤芯吸收谱

Fig. 2 Absorption spectra of radiation-resistant Er-Yb co-doped fiber before and after irradiation and corresponding RIA spectra. (a) Cladding absorption spectra in pumping band; (b) core absorption spectra in signal band

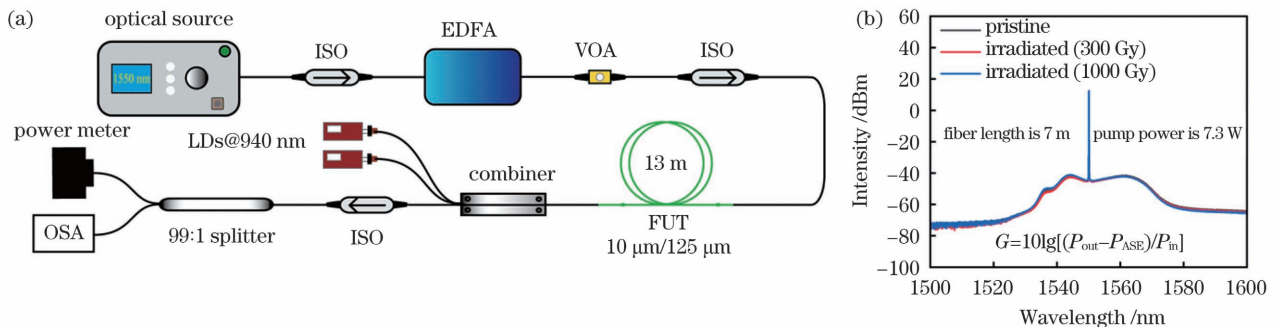
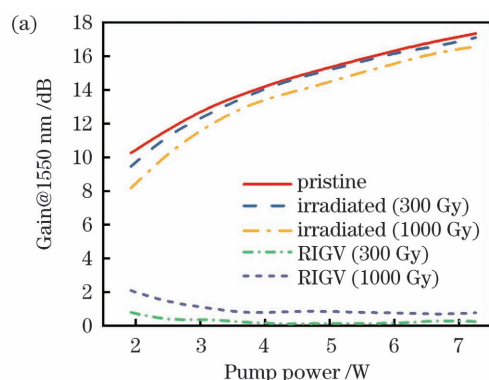


图 3 抗辐照铒镱共掺光纤增益测试系统示意图及其辐照前后的输出光谱图。(a)测试系统示意图;(b)测试系统辐照前后的输出光谱图

Fig. 3 Schematic of radiation-resistant Er-Yb co-doped fiber gain test system. (a) Schematic of test system; (b) output spectra of test system before and after irradiation

图 4(a)为抗辐照铒镱共掺光纤在辐照前后的增益随泵浦功率的变化。实验中,EYDFA 在 1550 nm 波长下的输出功率低于 3 W,但在有足够泵浦功率和输入功率的情况下,此 EYDFA 的输出功率可提升至 10 W。在 7.3 W 泵浦条件下,辐照前的 EYDFA 的增益为 17.3 dB,300 Gy 辐照后的 EYDFA 的增益为 17.1 dB,1000 Gy 辐照后的增益为 16.6 dB。两种辐照剂量下 EYDFA 的辐致增益变化与辐照前 EYDFA 的增益之比分别为 1.2% 和 4.0%。此外,随着泵浦功率增大,EYDFA 的 RIGV 略有下降,这表明泵浦下的抗辐照铒镱共掺光纤出现了轻微的光漂白现象,其中 1000 Gy 剂量下的泵浦漂白现象较



为明显。有源光纤长度对于光纤放大器的设计来说是一个重要参数。为了研究光纤长度与光纤抗辐照性能之间的关系,本课题组测试了 5~13 m 等不同长度的铒镱共掺光纤辐照前后的增益水平,测试结果如图 4(b)所示。在此测试过程中,泵浦功率固定为 7.3 W。从图 4(b)可以看出,原始光纤与经过 300、1000 Gy 辐照之后的光纤显示出相似的抗辐照性能。300 Gy 下的 RIGV 为 0.2 dB~0.3 dB, 1000 Gy 下的 RIGV 为 0.6 dB~0.8 dB。上述结果说明自制的抗辐照铒镱共掺光纤具有优越的抗辐照性能。自制抗辐照铒镱共掺光纤与其他抗辐照铒镱共掺光纤的对比如表 1 所示。

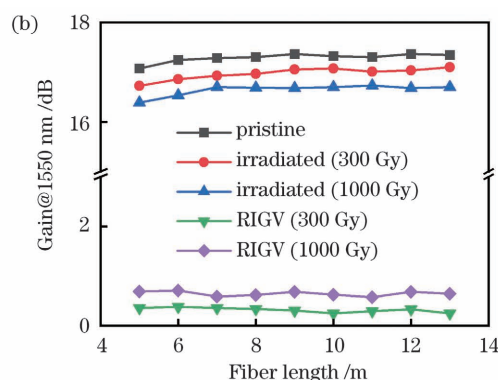


图 4 抗辐照铒镱共掺光纤的增益(测试使用的泵浦功率为 7.3 W)。(a)抗辐照铒镱共掺光纤辐照前与辐照后在 1550 nm 处的增益随泵浦功率的变化; (b)不同长度的抗辐照铒镱共掺光纤在辐照前后的增益

Fig. 4 Gain of radiation-resistant Er-Yb co-doped fiber (pump power during test is 7.3 W). (a) Gain versus pump power at 1550 nm before and after irradiation of radiation-resistant Er-Yb co-doped fiber; (b) gain of radiation-resistant Er-Yb co-doped fiber with different lengths before and after irradiation

表 1 自研 EYDF 与其他 EYDF 抗辐照性能的对比

Table 1 Comparison of radiation resistance of our and other Er-Yb co-doped fibers

Er-Yb co-doped fiber	Dose /Gy	Dose rate /($\text{Gy} \cdot \text{s}^{-1}$)	RIGV /dB
This work	1000	0.2	0.7 (at 1550 nm)
This work	300	0.2	0.2 (at 1550 nm)
iXblue	1000		<2 (at 1560 nm)
Literature ^[11]	900	0.003	1.5 (at 1545 nm)
Literature ^[8]	200	0.4	10 (at 1550 nm)

本文也对相关抗辐照机理进行了分析。在 EYDF 中,磷是常用的共掺剂,它可以显著提高 Yb^{3+} 向 Er^{3+} 的能量传递效率^[16],但磷的引入同时也带来了较高的辐照敏感性。磷硅酸盐玻璃受到辐照后会产生 P_1 、 P_2 、 P_4 和两种 P-OHC (P-OHC^m 和 P-OHC^s) 色心。 P_1 色心吸收峰的激发能为 0.79 eV,换算后对应的吸收峰位于 1570 nm 处,吸收带的半峰全宽为 0.29 eV,并且 P_1 在常温下稳定存在。该色心的形成会降低 EYDF 在 1550 nm 波长附近的放大性能。磷的其他色心的吸收带均位于可见光和紫外波段,所以 P_1 色心的生成可能是 1550 nm 附近 RIA 出现的主要原因之一。 P_1 属于捕获空穴型色心,其形成过程如图 5(a)所示。本课题组采用在铒镱光纤中共掺铈的方法来提升

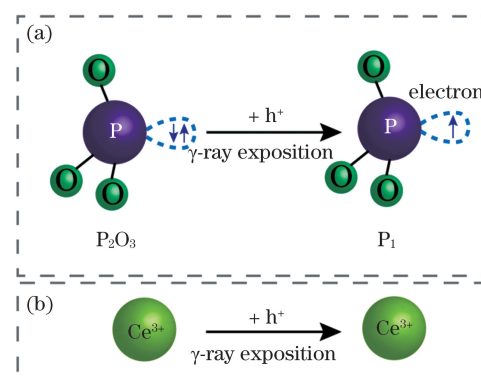


图 5 P_1 色心和 Ce^{4+} 在辐照下的形成过程。(a) P_1 色心;(b) Ce^{4+}

Fig. 5 Formation of P_1 colour center and Ce^{4+} under irradiation. (a) P_1 colour center; (b) Ce^{4+}

光纤的抗辐照性能,即:利用 Ce^{3+} 和 Ce^{4+} 在硅酸盐中可共存特性,使 Ce^{3+} 捕获辐照生成的空穴并形成 Ce^{4+} ,如图 5(b)所示。 Ce^{4+} 与形成 P_1 色心的前驱体 P_2O_3 竞争,可以减少 P_1 色心的形成,从而提高了光纤的抗辐照性能^[2]。此外,目前关于 EYDF 在泵浦波段出现 RIA 的原因仍不明朗,但在其他掺铒光纤的相关研究中也出现了类似的现象^[9],其解释为: Er^{3+} 在辐照时捕获电子形成 Er^{2+} ,导致泵浦波段产生 RIA。

综上所述,本课题组采用 MCVD 技术制备了 $10.5\ \mu\text{m}/130\ \mu\text{m}$ 抗辐照铒镱共掺光纤。通过共掺铈的方法可以提升光纤的抗辐照性能。在室温下对此光纤进行了剂量为 300 Gy 和 1000 Gy、平均剂量率为 0.2 Gy/s 的 γ 射线辐照。对辐照后的光纤进行了抗辐照性能测试,测试结果显示:在 300 Gy 辐照剂量下,RIA 在 940 nm 和 1550 nm 波长处分别为 0.10 dB/m 和 0.19 dB/m;在 1000 Gy 辐照剂量下,RIA 在 940 nm 和 1550 nm 波长处分别为 0.46 dB/m 和 0.37 dB/m。最后搭建 EYDFA 系统进行了 RIGV 的测试,测试结果显示:在 7.3 W 泵浦功率下,1550 nm 波长处的 RIGV 分别为 0.2 dB (300 Gy) 和 0.7 dB (1000 Gy)。该铒镱共掺光纤抗辐照性能优异,在远距离空间通信、遥感和太空导航等领域的应用前景广阔。

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High-Quality Radiation-Resistant Er-Yb Co-Doped Fiber

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Abstract

Objective Nowadays, rare-earth ion-doped fiber lasers and amplifiers are widely used in optical communication, industrial processing, military, and medical applications. Among them, the Er-Yb co-doped fiber amplifiers (EYDFA) with high power, low noise, and small size have a great potential for long-range space communication applications. However, rare-earth-doped fibers produce many color centers when exposed to various types of cosmic radiation such as X-rays, γ -rays, etc. Some of the color centers generated during irradiation originate from co-dopant elements like aluminum and phosphorus in rare-earth-doped fibers, whereas others originate from precursors formed during fiber fabrication. The absorption bands of these color centers are mainly located in the UV and NIR bands, which can cause radiation-induced absorption (RIA) in the pump and signal bands of the Er-Yb-doped fiber (EYDF), resulting in a severe degradation of the performance of the fiber amplifier. Therefore, it is crucial to improve the radiation resistance of the EYDF.

Methods A radiation-resistant Er-Yb co-doped fiber (RREYDF) was prepared via modified chemical vapor deposition (MCVD), and the concentration and ratio of doping components such as erbium, ytterbium, phosphorus, and cerium were adjusted to enhance the radiation tolerance of the fibers. The Er, Yb, and P doping ratio was 1:22:536, and the core and cladding dimensions were 10.5 μm and 130 μm , respectively. The irradiation doses for current space missions range from 300 Gy to 1000 Gy, so those values are chosen to test the RIA and radiation-induced gain variation (RIGV) of RREYDF. The RIA and RIGV were tested using Photon Kinetics 2500 and a typical EYDFA, respectively.

Results and Discussions Radiation-induced absorption (RIA) was 0.10 dB/m and 0.19 dB/m (300 Gy) at 940 nm, and 0.46 dB/m and 0.37 dB/m (1000 Gy) at 1550 nm. For gain testing, an Er-Yb co-doped fiber amplifier (EYDFA) was built, and the radiation-induced gain variation (RIGV) was 0.2 dB (300 Gy) at 1550 nm and 0.7 dB (1000 Gy) at a pump power of 7.3 W. The mechanisms of the relevant irradiation resistance studies were analyzed. Cerium co-doping was used in Er-Yb fibers to enhance the radiation resistance, taking advantage of the coexistence of Ce^{3+} and Ce^{4+} in silicates, where Ce^{3+} can trap the holes created during radiation. Therefore, the latter competes with the precursor P_2O_5 and reduces the formation of P_1 color centers, thus improving the radiation resistance of the fibers.

Conclusions In summary, the RIA of the radiation-resistant Er-Yb co-doped fibers prepared by MCVD were 0.10 dB/m and 0.19 dB/m (300 Gy), and 0.46 dB/m and 0.37 dB/m (1000 Gy) at 940 nm and 1550 nm, respectively, after irradiation at 300 Gy and 1000 Gy and 0.2 Gy/s average dose rate. The RIGV was tested by a typical EYDFA, and the results showed that the RIGV was 0.2 dB (300 Gy) at 1550 nm and 0.7 dB (1000 Gy) at a pump power of 7.3 W. In addition, the radiation-resistance mechanism of the fibers was analyzed. This Er-Yb co-doped optical fiber has excellent radiation performance and extensive applications in the fields such as long-range space communication, remote sensing, and space navigation.

Key words fiber optics; Er-Yb co-doped fiber design and fabrication; radiation-resistant property; fiber optics communication; Er-Yb co-doped fiber amplifier