

# 光学学报

## 应用于VCSEL的GaAs/AlO<sub>x</sub>高折射率对比度 亚波长光栅反射镜的设计和制备

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**摘要** 基于严格耦合波理论,分析GaAs/AlO<sub>x</sub>高折射率对比度亚波长光栅(HCG)反射镜的偏振和反射特性,设计了横电(TE)偏振的HCG。当入射光由衬底垂直入射时,HCG在940 nm附近的最高反射率接近1。分析了光栅形貌误差和入射角偏差对其反射特性的影响。采用金属有机化合物气相沉积技术进行外延生长,通过电子束曝光、干法刻蚀、湿法刻蚀以及湿法氧化等方法制备出HCG,并进行理论与实验结果的对比分析。实验测试了入射光由光栅表面垂直入射的反射率,其中TE偏振光的最高反射率达到84.9%,与86.5%的理论值比较接近,且横磁(TM)偏振光的反射率低于40%,反射谱的变化规律也与理论结果基本一致,这验证了理论结果的合理性。该反射镜可以作为垂直腔面发射激光器的超薄反射器,具有低损耗、偏振稳定和单模工作的特性。

**关键词** 光栅;高折射率对比度亚波长光栅;衍射效率;偏振;单模;垂直腔面发射激光器

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### 1 引言

在衍射光学元件中,亚波长光栅具有宽带反射、光谱滤波等功能,被广泛地用作滤波器、光束分束器、光栅反射镜、起偏器等<sup>[1-4]</sup>。近年来,随着微纳加工技术水平的不断提高,亚波长光栅在垂直腔面发射激光器(VCSEL)中的应用也越来越受到科研人员的关注<sup>[5-8]</sup>。传统的VCSEL使用分布式布拉格反射镜(DBR),为了达到激射标准,需要DBR提供极高的反射率。但由于晶格匹配材料系统的折射率对比度相对较小,需要大量DBR来实现高反射,这对VCSEL的制造带来了困难和限制。另外,多层DBR会引起阻抗大和转换效率低等问题。为了改善VCSEL的性能,科研人员在VCSEL中引入高折射率对比度亚波长光栅(HCG)作为反射镜,替代传统DBR,HCG结构具备较小的反射镜厚度,不仅能为VCSEL提供高反射率,并能提供稳定的偏振状态。

近几年,国际上一些研究小组在微腔器件中使用了GaAs/空气构成的悬浮型HCG<sup>[9-10]</sup>,由此产生的反射镜大大简化了VCSEL垂直结构。然而,这些器件的使用寿命和性能可靠性仍需要验证。另外,也有研究小组研究了Si/SiO<sub>2</sub>或一维TiO<sub>2</sub>结构的HCG<sup>[11-12]</sup>,但其与VCSEL的材料体系不同,不能一次性进行生

长制备。而GaAs/AlO<sub>x</sub>这两种材料组成的矩形HCG,其制作只需要刻蚀出光栅即可,这简化了工艺过程,并且AlO<sub>x</sub>附着在GaAs表面使光栅的稳定性得到很大的提高。综上所述,基于HCG和GaAs基VCSEL集成中的物理问题,结合VCSEL的发展趋势,本文对HCG反射镜进行研究和制备。针对工作在940 nm波段TE模式下的HCG,应用严格耦合波理论对其反射和偏振特性进行仿真分析,并采用电子束曝光、干法刻蚀、湿法刻蚀以及湿法氧化等方法制备出HCG,这为下一步HCG的实用化提供基础。

### 2 结构设计及仿真分析

HCG属于衍射光栅,通过将光栅的周期调整为亚波长尺寸,可以抑制除第0级以外的所有衍射级。在这种情况下已经证明,当光栅波导维持两个或多个传播布洛赫模式时,这些模式在界面发生相消干涉,可以在较宽的光谱带上实现非常高的反射率<sup>[13]</sup>。因此,HCG是一种非常高效的反射镜。HCG中存在两种正交偏振态光波,即TE波和TM波,利用两种模式光波的等效折射率和能带结构不同的特点实现偏振控制<sup>[14]</sup>。如图1所示,反射镜结构由三层[包括光栅层(厚度为H<sub>1</sub>)、应力缓冲层(厚度为H<sub>2</sub>)和低折射率亚层(厚度为H<sub>3</sub>)]堆叠组成,直接生长在GaAs衬底

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上,结构周期为 $\Lambda$ ,整体结构由GaAs、 $\text{AlO}_x$ 材料构成,氧化AlAs后形成的 $\text{AlO}_x$ 化合物是一种机械稳定的介电材料,低折射率亚层 $\text{AlO}_x$ (折射率 $n_1 \approx 1.6$ )与高折射率光栅层GaAs(折射率 $n_2 \approx 3.538$ )形成较大折射率差,可以增加高反射带宽度。以往研究<sup>[14]</sup>表明, $\text{AlO}_x$ 厚度大于0.046 μm时,均具有很宽的高反射带,考虑到氧化过程中体积收缩和残余物质对光的

吸收影响,选择优化区间的最小值。用 $\text{AlO}_x$ 层代替气隙不仅可以提高器件的机械稳定性,而且 $\text{AlO}_x$ 的热导率比气隙高,使用薄氧化层可改善器件的散热。针对AlAs氧化后厚度会收缩的问题,GaAs光栅层并未被完全蚀刻,形成厚度为 $H_2$ 的应力缓冲层,防止氧化过程中出现分层现象,进而提高反射镜的高反射性能。

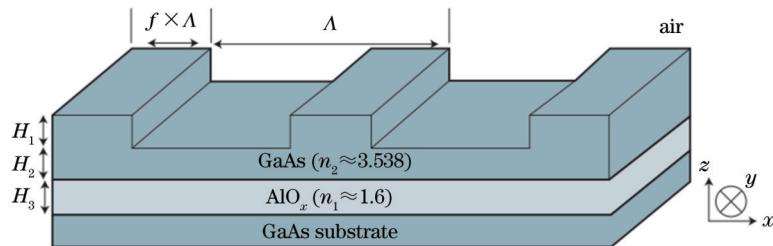


图1 HCG反射镜的结构示意图

Fig. 1 Design of HCG mirror structure

为使HCG在TE模式下940 nm处有高反射率、宽带宽,应用Rsoft软件对HCG的反射、偏振特性进行研究。以往的研究对HCG的参数进行了具体分析<sup>[14]</sup>,光栅为矩形,光从HCG基底垂直入射,通过控制变量法对光栅参数(周期 $\Lambda$ 、占空比 $f$ 、光栅层厚度 $H_1$ 、应力缓冲层厚度 $H_2$ 、低折射率亚层厚度 $H_3$ )进行模拟并确定优化范围。**表1**列出了TE偏振模式下HCG(TE-HCG)各参数的优化区间,在此区间TE波反射率( $R_{\text{TE}}$ )大于99.5%,且TM波反射率低于90%。通过选取一组参数设计了HCG反射镜,该HCG反射镜适用于中心波长为940 nm的TE偏振的VCSEL。从**图2**可以看出,TE-HCG在中心波长处的高反射带带宽约为97 nm,  $\Delta\lambda/\lambda_0 = 10.3\%$ ,其中 $\Delta\lambda$ 为高反射带宽度,  $\lambda_0$ 为中心波长。

表1 TE-HCG各个参数的优化区间

Table 1 Optimal ranges of parameters for TE-HCG

Parameter	Tolerance for $R_{\text{TE}} > 99.5\%$ at $\lambda_0$
$H_1$ /nm	150–182
$H_2$ /nm	132–221
$H_3$ /nm	140–220
$\Lambda$ /nm	702–870
$f$ /%	17.5–38.6

在制作中,HCG的实际制作参数与理论计算参数会产生偏离,使得实验值和理论值产生偏差。一个性能稳定的反射镜必须具备一定的工艺制备容差,因此有必要分析在制作中这些参数发生变化时对反射率的影响。**图3(a)**为光栅形貌误差对反射率的影响。在上、下部分的占空比之差达到5%时,中心波长向长波方向偏移6 nm,高反射带宽为96 nm,在此区间TE波反射率高于99.5%,且TM波反射率低于91%。由此可见,TE-HCG具有较大的形貌容差,容易与垂直腔

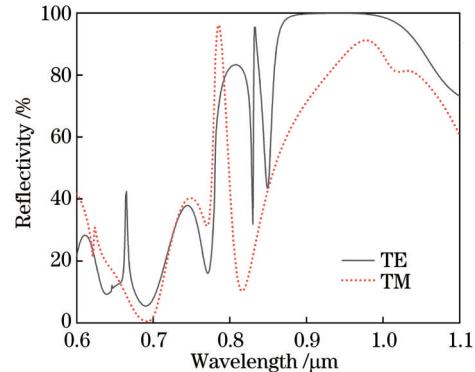


图2 TE-HCG的反射率谱(光栅参数为: $\Lambda=781$  nm,  $f=25.4\%$ ,  $H_1=166$  nm,  $H_2=189$  nm,  $H_3=170$  nm)

Fig. 2 Reflectivity spectrum of TE-HCG(grating parameters:  $\Lambda=781$  nm,  $f=25.4\%$ ,  $H_1=166$  nm,  $H_2=189$  nm,  $H_3=170$  nm)

面发射激光器单片进行集成。**图3(b)**是入射角对HCG性能的影响,模拟结果显示,在入射角大于5°时,TE波和TM波的反射率均低于91%。HCG对角度的敏感性,使得集成HCG的VCSEL将展现出良好的单模工作特性。

### 3 HCG的制备

HCG的GaAs、AlAs层结构依次生长在直径为5.08 cm的圆形GaAs衬底上。该外延结构对厚度的要求严格,在实际生长过程中,各层存在生长误差,且AlAs层氧化后,厚度减小。综合考虑后,GaAs厚度的范围为(350±20) nm, AlAs厚度的范围为(200±20) nm。实验使用德国Aixtron 200/4 MOCVD设备,**图4(a)**显示了外延结构的扫描电子显微镜(SEM)视图,GaAs厚度为370 nm, AlAs层厚度为220 nm。在外延生长之后,通过湿法刻蚀、湿法氧化、电子束曝光

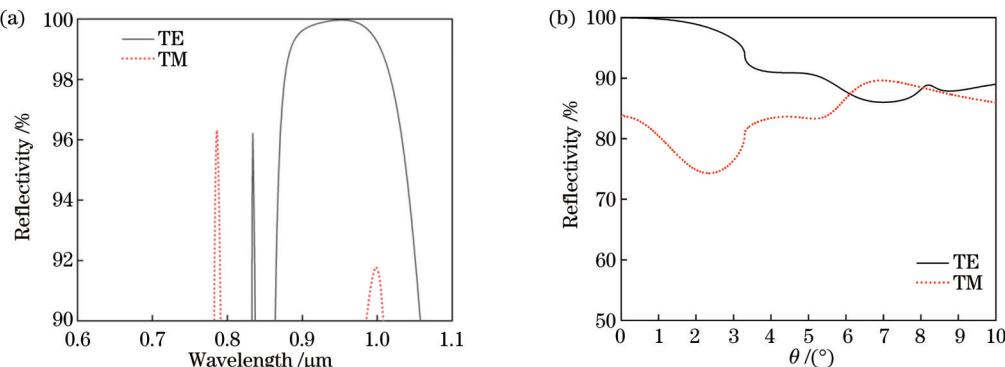


图3 TE-HCG的反射率与波长和入射角度的关系。(a) TE-HCG的反射率随波长的变化(光栅参数:  $\Lambda=781\text{ nm}$ ,  $H_1=166\text{ nm}$ ,  $H_2=189\text{ nm}$ ,  $H_3=170\text{ nm}$ , 光栅脊的上、下占空比分别为 $f_{\text{upper}}=25.4\%$ 和 $f_{\text{lower}}=30.4\%$ );(b) TE-HCG在TE模式下的反射率随入射角的变化

Fig. 3 Reflectivity of TE-HCG varying with wavelength and incident angle. (a) Reflectivity of TE-HCG varying with wavelength (grating parameters:  $\Lambda=781\text{ nm}$ ,  $H_1=166\text{ nm}$ ,  $H_2=189\text{ nm}$ ,  $H_3=170\text{ nm}$ , and the upper duty and lower duty of the grating ridge are  $f_{\text{upper}}=25.4\%$  and  $f_{\text{lower}}=30.4\%$ ); (b) reflectivity of TE-HCG varying with incident angle for TE mode

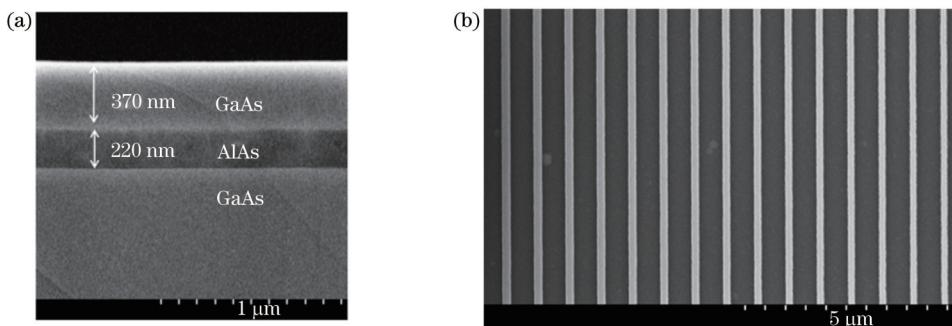


图4 HCG外延结构和电子束曝光的SEM图像。(a) HCG外延结构的SEM图像;(b)电子束曝光的SEM图像

Fig. 4 SEM images of HCG epitaxial structure and electron beam lithography. (a) SEM image of HCG epitaxial structure; (b) SEM image of electron beam lithography

(EBL)和感应耦合等离子体(ICP)刻蚀实现光栅的制作。

实验中湿法刻蚀选取磷酸、过氧化氢和水的混合液对台面进行刻蚀,刻蚀在环境温度为5℃的冰水混合物中进行,刻蚀速率为1.98 nm/s。通过湿法刻蚀矩形台面,使得AlAs层暴露出来,并通过湿法氧化AlAs获得 $\text{AlO}_x$ 。氧化过程可以在台面刻蚀后在横向进行,其中在湿法氧化过程中,首先将氧化炉提前加热以便获得均匀稳定的温度场,获得精确的氧化速率,以更好地控制氧化过程。氧化过程中氧化温度为420℃,水浴温度为90℃,气流量为1.5 L/min,此条件下的横向氧化速率约为1.01 μm/min,最终使得台面区域完全氧化。

电子束曝光工艺对HCG的质量影响很大,会影响图形的精度,即周期和占空比的精确度,进而影响要求高反射率的VCSEL激光。电子束曝光的参数主要有曝光剂量、电子束束流大小等,具体的曝光参数需要根据制备工艺的需求制定。经过多次实验以及对比分析,得到如图4(b)所示的结果,电子束曝光剂量为160  $\mu\text{C}/\text{cm}^2$ ,电子束束流为400 pA。此条件下测得光

栅周期为760 nm,占空比 $f$ 为26.32%。

实验采用电感耦合等离子体(ICP)刻蚀技术进行光栅的刻蚀,实验通过控制刻蚀时间及气体流量比来改变刻蚀深度。实验条件选用 $\text{Cl}_2$ 、Ar、 $\text{BCl}_3$ 的流量之比为20:5:5,其中ICP源功率为400 W,射频偏压功率为50 W,测得刻蚀速率为13 nm/s。此实验条件下刻蚀光栅速率稳定,光栅侧壁光滑且陡直度良好,光栅底部刻蚀平坦。最终TE-HCG的各项参数通过SEM测试确定,形貌如图5所示,其中 $\Lambda=750\text{ nm}$ ,占空比 $f=28\%$ , $H_1=170\text{ nm}$ , $H_2=200\text{ nm}$ , $H_3=200\text{ nm}$ ,各参数均处于容差范围内。

#### 4 实验结果与讨论

实验采用焦平面Fourier Transform技术,基于显微平台的ARM角分辨光谱仪对HCG反射率进行测试。受测试条件限制,难以测量入射光由衬底入射时的反射率,因此,本实验的测试反射率为光从HCG表面垂直入射的反射率。以实际SEM测试的HCG参数为基础,对入射光的反射率进行对比分析,得到如图6所示的结果,图中 $\text{TE}_1$ 、 $\text{TM}_1$ 、 $\text{TE}_2$ 和 $\text{TM}_2$ 代表模拟结

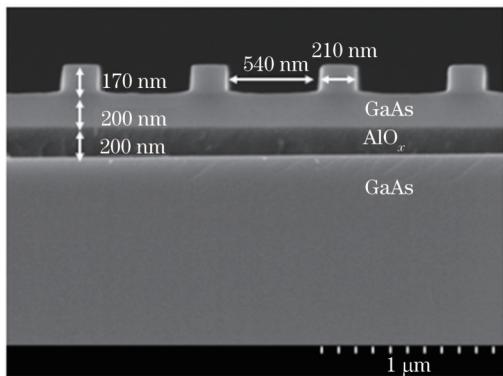


图5 HCG截面的SEM

Fig. 5 SEM of HCG cross section

果,  $TE_1$ 、 $TM_1$ 表示光由衬底入射时的理论值,  $TE_2$ 、 $TM_2$ 表示光由光栅表面入射时的理论值,  $TE_3$ 、 $TM_3$ 表

示光由光栅表面入射时的测试值。从图6可以看出, 实际各层厚度的变化及占空比等参数的改变对HCG的反射性能有一定的影响, 理论仿真结果  $TE_1$ 与图2中TE相比, 虽都能达到大于99.5%的反射率, 但中心波长红移13 nm, 高反射带宽为80 nm, 减小了17 nm。实验测试TE偏振光的反射率最高达到84.9%, 与反射率接近于1的理论值相差很大, 这是因为实际入射光方向的变化导致了HCG反射率大大降低, 图6中给出了以实际入射光方向仿真得到的TE偏振HCG的反射率情况, 可以看出相同入射方向时的实验结果与理论结果比较吻合。同时可以看出, 测试的TM偏振光的反射率低于40%。引起实际测试反射率降低的因素除了入射光方向外, 测试中使用的会聚光束很难实现完全的正入射也是一个因素, 另外光栅表面的洁净度等也会引起反射率的下降。

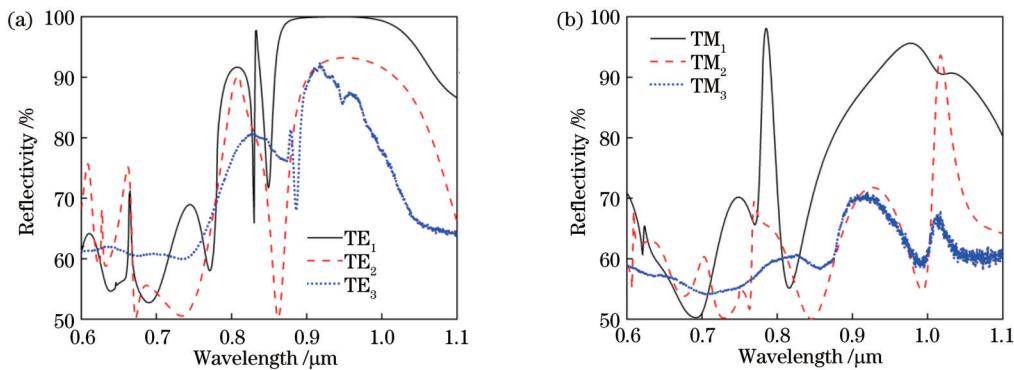


图6 TE-HCG的反射率光谱。(a) TE入射光;(b) TM入射光

Fig. 6 Reflectivity spectra of TE-HCG. (a) TE incident light; (b) TM incident light

## 5 结 论

采用严格耦合波理论, 研究了一种应用于940 nm GaAs基VCSEL的TE-HCG反射镜, 反射镜由GaAs和AlO<sub>x</sub>材料组成, 反射镜与VCSEL为同体系材料, 这不仅避免了不同材料体系所产生的应力问题, 而且该结构可以通过一次外延生长制得, 器件制备过程得到简化。仿真研究了光从光栅底部垂直入射条件下的反射率, TE-HCG具有达97 nm的反射带宽( $\Delta\lambda/\lambda_0=10.3\%$ ), 此种条件下TE偏振光的反射率大于99.5%, TM偏振光的反射率小于90%。以模拟的最优参数为基础制备光栅, 并将反射率的理论值与实验测试值进行对比分析。由于测试条件等因素的影响, 实验测试值略低于理论值, 且理论结果和实验测试结果的反射规律具有一致性, 这验证了理论设计的合理性。设计的HCG可以用于替代VCSEL表面的p型多层DBR, 减小器件厚度, 降低功耗, 改善VCSEL的性能。光栅周期大、刻蚀深度浅、制作容差大, 使得其与VCSEL单片集成更加容易。同时, 光栅对入射角的敏感性使集成HCG的VCSEL具有良好的单模工作特性。

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## Design and Fabrication of GaAs/AlO<sub>x</sub> High-Index-Contrast Sub-Wavelength Grating Reflector for VCSEL

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### Abstract

**Objective** The traditional vertical-cavity surface-emitting laser (VCSEL) uses distributed Bragg reflectors (DBRs) to provide high reflectivity to conform to the lasing standard. However, due to the relatively small refractive index contrast of lattice-matching material systems, many pairs of DBRs are needed to achieve high reflection, which brings difficulties and limitations to the manufacturing of VCSELs. In addition, multilayer DBRs can cause problems such as high impedance and low conversion efficiency. To improve the performance of VCSELs, researchers introduce the high-index-contrast sub-wavelength grating (HCG) as a reflector in the VCSEL. By the adjustment of grating parameters, it can have extremely high reflectivity and can replace the traditional DBRs in VCSEL. Hence, VCSELs with the HCG will not suffer from the problems of high resistance and serious light absorption caused by DBRs.

In this paper, the HCG reflector for VCSELs is studied and fabricated. On the basis of the rigorous coupled wave analysis (RCWA), the polarization and reflection characteristics of a GaAs/AlO<sub>x</sub> HCG reflector are analyzed. A TE-polarized HCG is designed to have the highest reflectivity of close to 1 near 940 nm when the incident light is perpendicular to the substrate. Moreover, the influences of topography error and the incident angle on reflectivity are investigated. Then, the device is prepared by metal-organic chemical vapor deposition technology, electron beam lithography (EBL), inductively coupled plasma (ICP) etching, wet etching, and wet oxidation. Since the GaAs/AlO<sub>x</sub> HCG has the same material system as the half-VCSEL, it can be integrated with the VCSEL through one-time epitaxial technology, which is of great significance for obtaining high-quality wafers. Furthermore, the low stress between the HCG and half-VCSEL is crucial to keep the long-term stability of the device.

**Methods** Fig. 1 shows the structure of the HCG, including the grating layer  $H_1$ , stress buffer layer  $H_2$ , and low index sub-layer  $H_3$ , which are directly grown on the GaAs substrate. The HCG is composed of GaAs and AlO<sub>x</sub>, where the latter is obtained from AlAs by oxidation. The large index difference between the AlO<sub>x</sub> (refractive index  $n_1 \approx 1.6$ ) and GaAs (refractive index  $n_2 \approx 3.538$ ) grating layers is conducive to increasing the width of the reflection band. As the thickness of AlAs shrinks after oxidation, the GaAs grating layer is not completely etched to form a stress buffer layer to prevent delamination and fracture after oxidation.

By the RCWA method, a TE-HCG mirror for the GaAs-based VCSEL is simulated. It can be seen from Fig. 2 that the TE-HCG has a large reflection bandwidth of up to 97 nm ( $\Delta\lambda/\lambda_0 = 10.3\%$ ), with its TE reflectivity of more than 99.5% and TM reflectivity of lower than 90%.

The simulation is based on the rectangular grating model, but the actual grating is usually trapezoidal. Therefore, we

consider the influence of the grating shape on reflectivity. As shown in Fig. 3(a), although there is a 5% difference between the upper and lower fill factors, it has little effect on the high reflection band, which shows that the grating has great shape tolerance. Fig. 3(b) shows the impact of the incident angle on HCG performance. When the incident angle is greater than 5°, the reflectivity of the TE wave is significantly reduced. It is the sensitivity of HCG to the angle that makes the VCSEL integrated with HCG exhibit good single-mode performance.

The HCG is prepared given the above results. Fig. 4 shows the scanning electron microscope (SEM) images of the epitaxial structure, and the thickness of GaAs and AlAs layers is 370 nm and 220 nm, respectively. After epitaxial growth, the processes are followed by wet etching, wet oxidation, EBL, and ICP etching. As shown in Fig. 5, period  $\Lambda=750$  nm,  $f=28\%$ , thickness  $H_1=170$  nm, thickness  $H_2=200$  nm, and thickness  $H_3=200$  nm, and they are all within the tolerance range.

**Results and Discussions** Due to the limitations of test conditions, it is difficult to measure the reflectivity of the incident light from the substrate. Therefore, the reflectivity of the incident light perpendicular to the grating surface is measured. Fig. 6 shows the theoretical and measured results of the actual grating. The measured maximum reflectivity of TE-polarized light is 84.9%, which is close to the theoretical value of 86.5% under the same incident direction, while the reflectivity of TM-polarized light is lower than 40%. The test results are in good agreement with the simulations. The HCG can act as an ultra-thin reflector for VCSEL, with the advantages of a long period, a shallow etching depth, and great tolerance, which is easier to integrate with VCSEL. Meanwhile, the VCSEL integrated with the HCG features low loss, stable polarization, and single-mode operation.

**Key words** gratings; high-index-contrast sub-wavelength grating; diffraction efficiency; polarization; single-mode; vertical-cavity surface-emitting laser