

## TiO<sub>2</sub>纳米粒子增强的光纤损失模式共振折射率传感器

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**摘要** 以多模光纤为基底来实现损失模式共振(LMR)折射率传感的灵敏度较低, 在利用铟锡氧化物(ITO; In<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>和SnO<sub>2</sub>的质量分数分别为90%和10%)激发光纤LMR传感的基础上, 在ITO薄膜上静电组装二氧化钛(TiO<sub>2</sub>)纳米粒子, 实现折射率灵敏度的提升。使用Kretschman结构模型对传感器进行理论分析, 仿真分析了LMR共振阶数与ITO薄膜厚度的关系, 以及ITO作为LMR膜层实现折射率传感的可行性。通过在光纤侧壁磁控溅射ITO薄膜以产生LMR效应, 制备ITO-LMR折射率传感器。通过折射率传感实验对ITO-LMR和TiO<sub>2</sub>-ITO-LMR两种传感器进行性能测试, 在1.3333~1.3840的折射率变化范围内, TiO<sub>2</sub>-ITO-LMR传感器灵敏度可达1651.659 nm/RIU, 相较于ITO-LMR折射率传感器, 其灵敏度提升了3.058倍。

**关键词** 光纤光学; 损失模式共振; 折射率传感器; 铟锡氧化物; 二氧化钛纳米粒子

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### 1 引言

光纤损失模式共振(LMR)传感器具有无标签测量和较高的检测灵敏度, 已成为现代光学检测和测量的主要技术之一, 并且被广泛应用于多种参量的测量传感中<sup>[1-4]</sup>。不同于光纤表面等离子体共振(SPR)<sup>[5-6]</sup>, LMR的激发无需依赖于光的偏振、薄膜材料来源广泛且成本低廉, 并且可通过改变薄膜厚度来调节共振波长与传感灵敏度等<sup>[7]</sup>。基于此, 光纤LMR传感器成为传感领域的研究热点之一。

在国防航空航天、工农业、食品安全等重点领域, 对折射率的检测具有重要的实际意义和巨大的应用价值, LMR传感技术也被广泛应用于折射率传感器的设计与研发中<sup>[8-9]</sup>。基于铟锡氧化物(ITO; In<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>和SnO<sub>2</sub>的质量分数分别为90%和10%)的光纤LMR折射率传感器首次由Del Villar等<sup>[10]</sup>于2010年提出。外部待测分析物的折射率发生变化, 引起LMR的共振波长变化, 进而实现折射率传感。近些年, 提高光纤LMR折射率传感性能的研究主要考虑光纤结构优化<sup>[11-13]</sup>和敏感材料开发<sup>[9,14-15]</sup>两个方面。光纤结构优化一般是将薄膜材料和锥形光纤、D型光纤等相结合来提高灵敏度, 但是经结构优化后的光纤普遍存在鲁棒性差、制备

成功率低等劣势。敏感材料开发方面的研究主要涉及二维材料<sup>[16]</sup>、金属纳米颗粒<sup>[17]</sup>、金属氧化物纳米颗粒<sup>[9]</sup>以及复合材料<sup>[15]</sup>等, 这些材料具有较好的吸附功能和更大的比表面积, 可以有效提高基于原始LMR传感器的传感性能。Wang等<sup>[9]</sup>提出一种基于SnO<sub>2</sub>薄膜的光纤LMR折射率传感器, 并进一步在SnO<sub>2</sub>薄膜上覆盖由溶胶-凝胶法合成的SnO<sub>2</sub>纳米颗粒来提高传感器的灵敏度, 通过理论和实验研究相结合的方式将折射率灵敏度提高了55.9%。TiO<sub>2</sub>作为一种半导体金属氧化物, 除具备半导体的基本性能外, 还表现出比表面积大、疏松多孔、黏附力强、化学性质稳定等特点。因此, 为提高光纤LMR的折射率灵敏度, 本文选择TiO<sub>2</sub>纳米粒子作为实现共振增强的金属氧化物纳米粒子, 以此实现折射率增敏效果。

本文利用磁控溅射技术在多模光纤侧壁溅射ITO薄膜以产生LMR。为提升折射率灵敏度, 在ITO薄膜上静电组装TiO<sub>2</sub>纳米粒子。实验结果表明, 在TiO<sub>2</sub>纳米粒子的辅助下, TiO<sub>2</sub>-ITO-LMR传感器的折射率灵敏度达到1651.659 nm/RIU, 是ITO-LMR传感器折射率灵敏度(407.062 nm/RIU)的4.058倍, 进一步验证了金属氧化物纳米粒子在LMR折射率传感中具有良好的应用前景。

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## 2 基本原理与仿真分析

### 2.1 LMR的基本原理

与基于贵金属材料的SPR传感不同,ITO、 $\text{TiO}_2$ 、 $\text{SnO}_2$ 等金属氧化物,以及聚丙烯胺盐酸盐(PAH)、聚苯乙烯磺酸钠(PSS)等聚合物材料都可以实现LMR传感。SPR与LMR的区别重点表现在以下几个方面:1)激发材料与机制不同。当薄膜介电常数的实部为负且数值高于薄膜本身介电常数的虚部和薄膜周围材料介电常数的实部时,倏逝波与表面等离子体波满足相位匹配条件,就会产生SPR;当薄膜介电常数的实部为正且数值高于薄膜本身介电常数的虚部和薄膜周围材料介电常数的实部时,波导模式与薄膜的特定损失模式之间的耦合发生在薄膜厚度的特定值处,就会产生LMR。2)与TM偏振光激发的SPR相比,LMR可以同时被TE和TM偏振光激发。3)SPR与LMR的透射光谱有所不同,随着薄膜厚度的增加,更多的光波导模式满足在薄膜中传输的条件,使得模式的重新分布或者转换,因此,LMR不会像SPR一样随着膜层厚度的增加而消失,反而会激发出更高阶的共振。

Kretschmann构型方法是迄今为止应用最广泛的

衰减全反射(ATR)方法,用于薄膜涂层的棱镜基底上波导模式和特定模式的耦合<sup>[18]</sup>。LMR现象发生时,为使薄膜中的损失模式与倏逝波有效耦合,需满足相位匹配(即二者传播常数的实部相等)和模场重叠的条件,当损失模接近截止时,在特定薄膜厚度处产生LMR,这导致了透射光谱的衰减下降。基于ITO的光纤LMR传感器如图1所示。其原理可简化为:当入射光传输到包层光纤区域处,由于高折射率薄膜作为新的包层,不再满足全反射条件,部分光波会溢出纤芯在薄膜中传播,由导模向损失模式转变,在高折射率薄膜传输的光满足全反射条件并且产生倏逝波,当倏逝波的有效模式折射率与损失模式波的有效折射率匹配时,就会发生LMR现象。LMR传感器共振波长随着薄膜材料的有效折射率变化,而薄膜材料的有效折射率在很大程度上取决于外界待测分析物的折射率。当外界待测分析物的参数发生变化时,即附着到薄膜材料上的物质的折射率发生变化,则薄膜材料的有效折射率发生变化,因此LMR传感器共振波长会随之变化。一般情况下,这种变化规则表现为:随着外界待测分析物折射率的增加,LMR传感器共振波长发生红移。基于此,根据共振波长的偏移量判断待测分析物折射率的变化,从而实现传感。

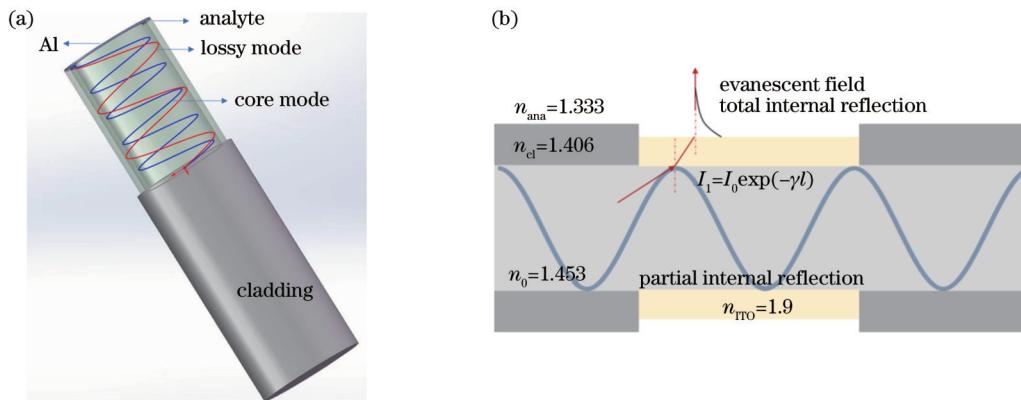


图1 LMR传感器结构及传感原理。(a) LMR传感器结构;(b) LMR传感原理

Fig. 1 LMR sensor structure and sensing principle. (a) LMR sensor structure; (b) LMR sensing principle

采用基于Kretschmann构型的ATR方法进行光纤LMR的光谱计算。对于图1所示的光纤LMR传感器结构,透射率的计算公式<sup>[19]</sup>为

$$T(\lambda) = \frac{\int_{\theta_c}^{90^\circ} P(\theta) R^{N(\theta)}(\theta, \lambda) d\theta}{\int_{\theta_c}^{90^\circ} P(\theta) d\theta}, \quad (1)$$

式中: $\theta_c = \arcsin(n_{cl}/n_0)$ 为光纤芯层全反射临界角, $n_{cl}$ 和 $n_0$ 分别为光纤包层和芯层的折射率; $P(\theta) = \epsilon_0 \sin \theta \cos \theta / (1 - \epsilon_0 \cos^2 \theta)^2$ 为光纤端面上光信号功率的分布函数, $\theta$ 为入射角, $\epsilon_0$ 为光纤的介电常数。由于

引入光纤的光是无偏振的,因此式(1)中 $R^{N(\theta)}$ 可表示为 $R^{N(\theta)}(\theta, \lambda) = [R_{\text{TM}}^{N(\theta)}(\theta, \lambda) + R_{\text{TE}}^{N(\theta)}(\theta, \lambda)]/2$ ,即TE和TM模反射光功率的线性组合,反射次数 $N(\theta)$ 可表示为 $N(\theta) = L/(d \tan \theta)$ ,其中 $L$ 为LMR传感器传感区域的长度, $d$ 为光纤直径。

采用不同的技术在光纤或其他基底上沉积ITO薄膜,所得材料的性质也会表现出很大的不同。本文选择使用Drude模型建模的ITO复介电函数,其表达式<sup>[10]</sup>为

$$\epsilon(\omega) = \epsilon_\infty - \frac{\omega_p^2}{\omega^2 + i \frac{\omega}{\tau}}, \quad (2)$$

式中: $\epsilon_{\infty}$ 为高频介电常数; $\tau$ 为电子散射时间; $\omega_p$ 为等离子体频率; $\omega$ 为入射光频率。具体参数如下: $\epsilon_{\infty}=3.5$ , $\tau=6.58\times10^{-15}$  s/rad, $\omega_p=1.533\times10^{15}$  rad/s。

## 2.2 ITO-LMR 仿真分析

不同于光纤SPR技术,光纤LMR技术可通过调整ITO薄膜厚度实现共振波长的调制。设置传感区域的光纤直径为400 μm,长度为10 mm,ITO的介电常数由式(2)给出,光纤的介电常数由Sellmeier方程<sup>[20]</sup>来计算,并设定外界待测分析物的折射率为1.333。根据三膜层传输矩阵模型<sup>[21]</sup>,仿真结果如图2

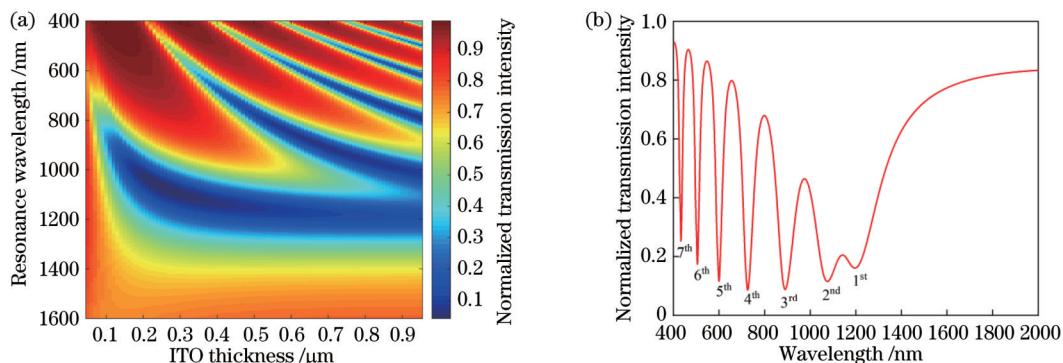


图2 基于ITO薄膜的LMR光谱。(a) ITO厚度与LMR传感器共振波长的关系;(b)高阶共振光谱

Fig. 2 LMR spectra based on ITO. (a) Relationship between ITO thickness and resonance wavelength of LMR sensor; (b) high order resonance spectrum

根据光纤LMR传感器的理论模型,理论仿真说明其作为折射率传感的可行性。设置ITO薄膜厚度为430 nm,当外界待测分析物的折射率从1.333渐变至1.382时,由式(1)计算得到光纤LMR传感器的归一化光谱,如图3所示。随着外界待测分析物折射率的增加,共振波长从709.186 nm红移至730.606 nm,共振波谷也逐渐加深。不同折射率与所对应的共振波长成线性关系,线性拟合系数为0.999。

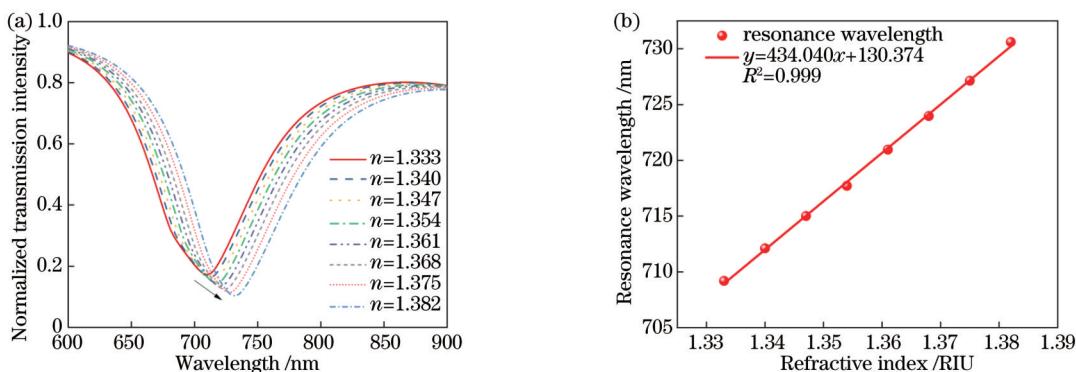


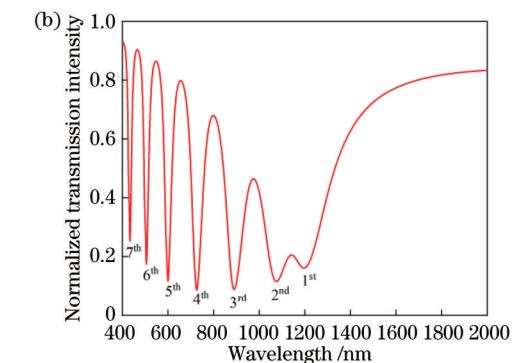
图3 ITO厚度为430 nm时LMR传感器的折射率传感仿真结果。(a)不同折射率对应的归一化光谱;

Fig. 3 Simulation results of refractive index sensing of LMR sensor with ITO thickness of 430 nm. (a) Normalized spectra corresponding to different refractive indices; (b) relationship between resonance wavelength and refractive index

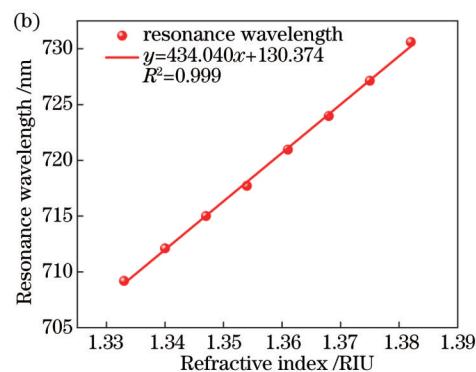
## 3 实验结果与讨论

对芯径为400 μm的光纤进行处理。使用锋利刀片去除距离光纤端面5 cm处的涂覆层和聚合物包层,去除厚度为1 cm,在大芯径光纤切割刀的辅助下对裸露纤芯部分的光纤进行端面切平,获得一端具有平整端面的光纤;在距离平整光纤端面5 cm处,采用同样

所示。从图2(a)可以看到,随着ITO薄膜厚度增加至200 nm,一阶LMR由可见光波段逐渐红移至近红外波段,并且在可见光波段产生新的共振,即二阶共振。以此类推,随着膜层厚度的增加,逐步产生更高阶共振,并且LMR传感器高阶共振光谱的半峰全宽优于低阶共振,但折射率灵敏度降低。重点关注一阶共振的情况,发现当ITO厚度增加到一定值后,会产生共振饱和现象,共振波长不再发生红移。图2(b)展示了薄膜厚度为1200 nm时的归一化LMR光谱,可以看到,在可见光到近红外波段共产生七阶LMR。



化光谱,如图3所示。随着外界待测分析物折射率的增加,共振波长从709.186 nm红移至730.606 nm,共振波谷也逐渐加深。不同折射率与所对应的共振波长成线性关系,线性拟合系数为0.999。



的方法获得另一端端面平整的光纤,与上一步的区别仅在于此步骤不去除光纤包层。将裸露纤芯部分作为传感区域,在此光纤端面进行镀铝膜处理以提升反射率,在此过程中注意对光纤侧壁进行保护,避免铝膜对光纤侧壁的影响。为激发LMR效应,对传感区域的光纤侧壁进行磁控溅射ITO薄膜处理,镀膜后的光纤截面扫描电子显微镜(SEM)图像如图4(a)所示,可见

ITO膜层分布均匀,其局部放大图如图4(b)所示,膜层厚度为431.7 nm。为验证纳米粒子的折射率灵敏度增强效果,在ITO薄膜上静电组装TiO<sub>2</sub>纳米粒子。对质量浓度为20 mg/mL的TiO<sub>2</sub>纳米粒子分散液进行超声处理,制备阳离子溶液,并以质量浓度为5 mg/mL的聚苯乙烯磺酸(PSS)水溶液为阴离子溶液,将ITO-LMR传感器浸入TiO<sub>2</sub>纳米粒子分散液中3 min,然后用酸性去离子水冲洗1 min,去除表面的未

附着材料,干燥1 min,之后将ITO-LMR传感器浸入PSS水溶液中2 min。重复上述清洗和干燥步骤,至此实现了TiO<sub>2</sub>纳米粒子沉积,将所制备的传感器转移至60 °C的加热台干燥2 h,以进一步固定TiO<sub>2</sub>纳米粒子。TiO<sub>2</sub>-ITO-LMR传感器表面TiO<sub>2</sub>纳米粒子的SEM图像如图4(c)所示,可以清晰地看到,TiO<sub>2</sub>纳米粒子呈现球状分散在ITO薄膜表面;其局部放大图如图4(d)所示,TiO<sub>2</sub>纳米粒子的粒径均小于200 nm。

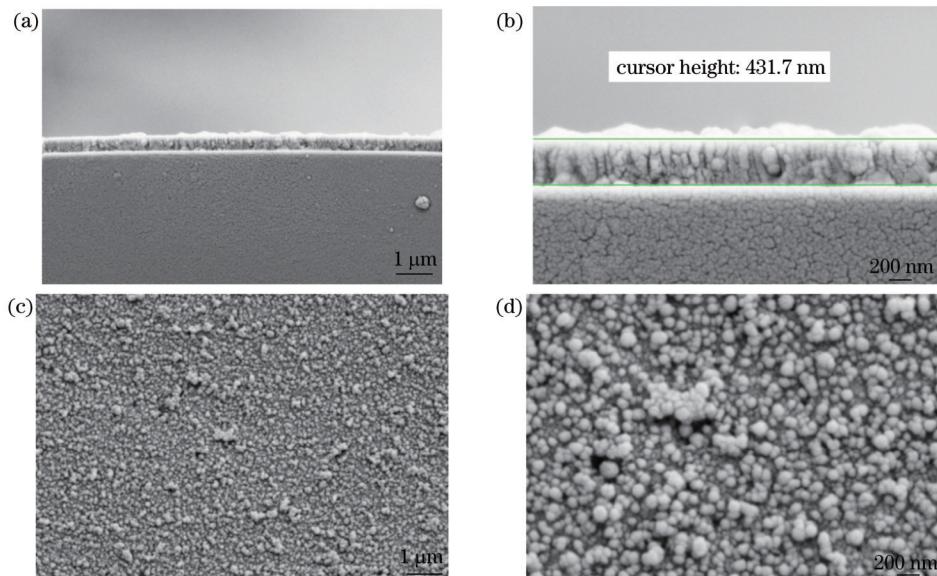


图4 SEM图像。(a)(b) ITO-LMR传感器截面及其局部放大图;(c)(d) TiO<sub>2</sub>-ITO-LMR传感器表面的TiO<sub>2</sub>纳米粒子及其局部放大图

Fig. 4 SEM images. (a)(b) Cross section of ITO-LMR sensor and its local enlargement; (c)(d) TiO<sub>2</sub> nanoparticles on the surface of TiO<sub>2</sub>-ITO-LMR sensor and their local enlargement

折射率传感实验装置如图5所示。由卤素灯光源HL-2000发出的光经芯径相匹配的Y型光纤束传输到反射式ITO-LMR传感器,再由其反射经Y型光纤束传输到微型光谱仪,由计算机进行共振波长的数据采集,设定计算机程序每秒采集2帧光谱数据。将ITO-LMR传感器置于不同质量浓度的甘油溶液中进行折射率传感实验,并由阿贝折射仪进行折射率标定。需

要注意的是,在进行下一次折射率测量之前,传感器需要用去离子水清洗1 min,干燥30 s,重复此操作三次,以确保传感结果的准确性。

基于ITO-LMR的折射率传感实验测试结果如图6所示。当LMR传感探针与不同折射率的待测分析物接触时,相应的光谱会发生变化,具体表现为LMR传感器的共振波长发生漂移,且折射率响应时间小于0.5 s。从图6(a)可以看到,随着待测分析物折射率的增大,ITO-LMR传感器的共振波长从726.8134 nm红移至748.1716 nm,且共振深度逐渐增加。从图6(b)可以看到,对于外界折射率从1.3333增加到1.3840,光纤LMR传感器的灵敏度为407.062 nm/RIU,拟合系数为0.995。

在ITO-LMR传感探针的基础上,用去离子水清洗表面残留的甘油溶液,并且静电组装TiO<sub>2</sub>/PSS双层膜<sup>[22]</sup>。利用TiO<sub>2</sub>纳米粒子辅助增强的ITO-LMR传感器共振波长与折射率变化关系如图7所示。在增大折射率和减小折射率的过程中,进行不同折射率下的共振波长数据采集,在每个折射率下重复采集光谱20次以上,以此计算折射率传感器的分辨率。当折射率

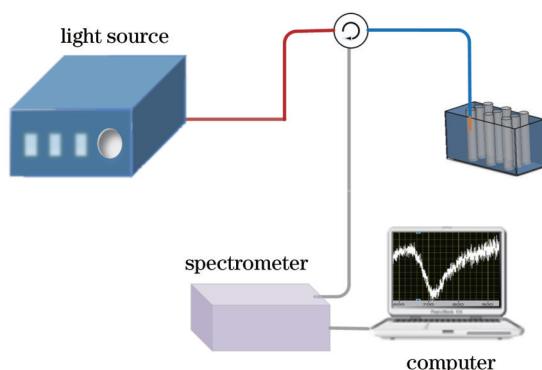


图5 基于LMR的折射率传感实验装置示意图

Fig. 5 Schematic of refractive index sensing experiment device based on LMR

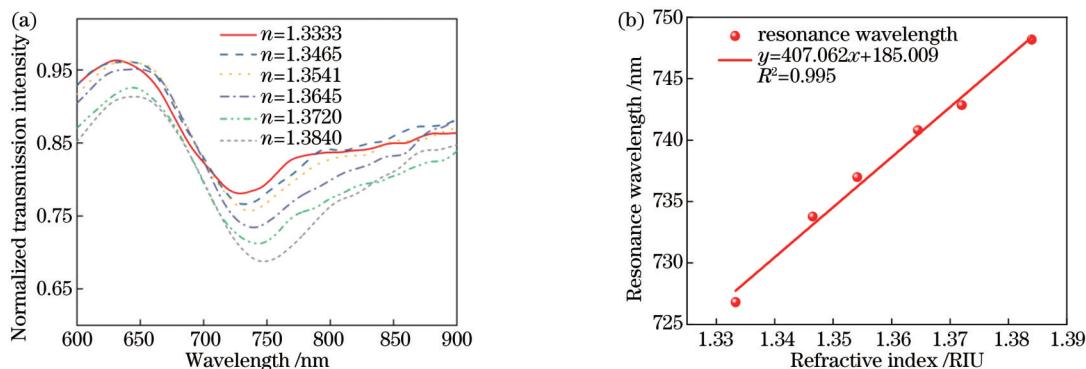


图6 ITO-LMR 折射率传感实验测试结果。(a)不同折射率下 ITO-LMR 传感器归一化光谱;(b)灵敏度曲线

Fig. 6 ITO-LMR refractive index sensing test results. (a) Normalized transmission spectra of ITO-LMR sensor under different refractive indices; (b) fitting sensitivity curve

梯度为1.3333、1.3408、1.3484、1.3552、1.3606、1.3696、1.3741、1.3798、1.3829时,TiO<sub>2</sub>-ITO-LMR传感器的共振波长相对于ITO-LMR发生红移,这是因为纳米粒子具有较大的表面积,从而影响ITO薄膜的性能。

在增大和减小折射率的过程中记录其在不同折射率下的折射率与共振波长的关系与灵敏度曲线,如

图8所示。随着折射率的增加,灵敏度也增大,最大折射率灵敏度可达1651.659 nm/RIU,是ITO-LMR传感器折射率灵敏度的4.058倍。此外,实验结果在折射率的变化过程中表现出较好的一致性。各个折射率下的共振波长、波长检测标准差、灵敏度以及分辨率如表1所示,可见TiO<sub>2</sub>-ITO-LMR传感器折射率检测的分辨率优于 $8.89 \times 10^{-4}$  RIU。

表1 不同折射率下传感器的折射率检测分辨率

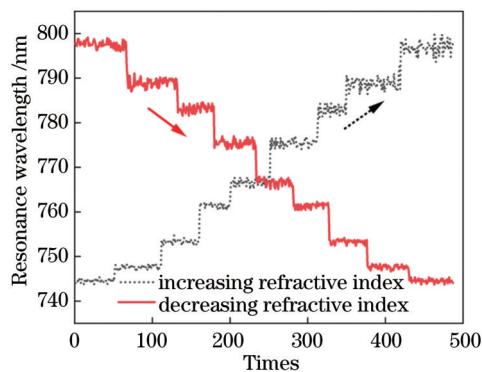
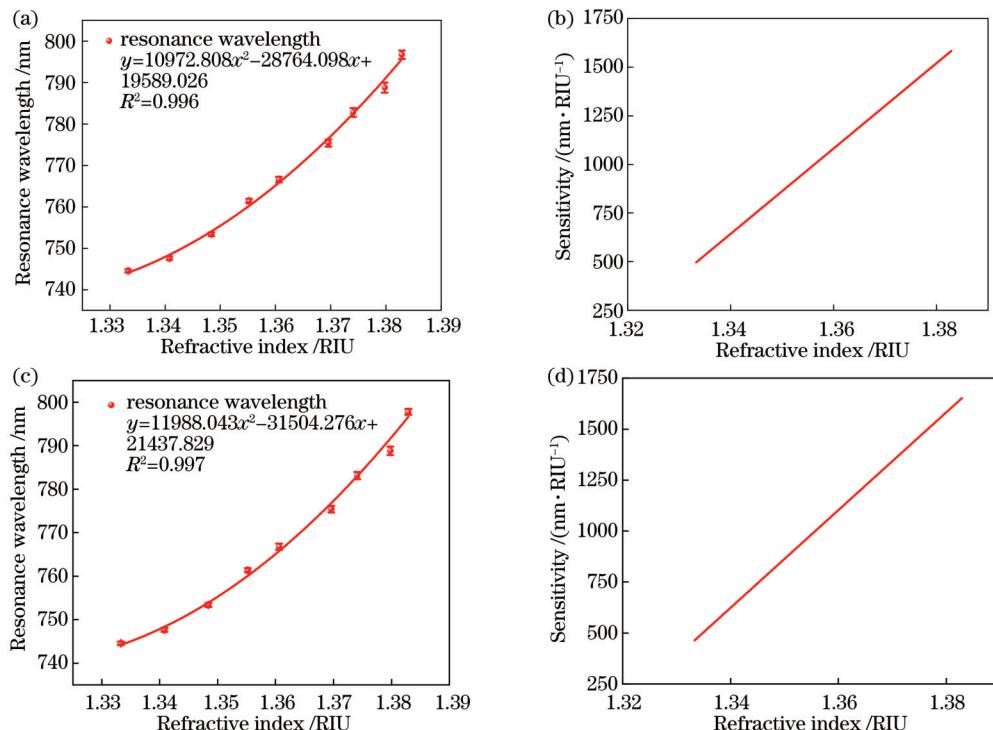
Table 1 Refractive index detection resolution under different refractive indices of the sensor

Refractive index /RIU	Resonance wavelength /nm	Wavelength detection standard deviation /nm	Sensitivity /(nm·RIU <sup>-1</sup> )	Resolution /(10 <sup>-4</sup> RIU)
1.3333	744.525	0.399	496.537	8.04
	744.543	0.412	463.635	8.89
1.3408	747.621	0.456	660.520	6.90
	747.664	0.453	642.791	7.05
1.3484	753.399	0.459	827.228	5.55
	753.370	0.432	824.923	5.24
1.3552	761.420	0.505	976.502	5.17
	761.367	0.521	988.008	5.27
1.3606	766.578	0.706	1095.268	6.45
	766.746	0.719	1117.762	6.43
1.3696	775.435	0.869	1292.484	6.72
	775.430	0.767	1333.226	5.75
1.3741	782.808	1.075	1391.637	7.72
	783.137	0.813	1441.552	5.64
1.3798	788.808	1.175	1516.940	7.75
	788.852	0.982	1577.258	6.23
1.3829	796.762	1.035	1583.949	6.53
	797.784	0.671	1651.659	4.06

#### 4 结论

设计了一种基于TiO<sub>2</sub>纳米粒子辅助增强的LMR折射率传感器。该传感器基于多模光纤的损失模式波和倏逝波的相位匹配激发LMR,以此进行折射率传

感。实验探究了TiO<sub>2</sub>纳米粒子对光纤ITO-LMR传感器的影响。采用磁控溅射和静电组装法镀制ITO薄膜和TiO<sub>2</sub>纳米粒子,折射率传感实验结果表明,当折射率变化范围为1.3333~1.3840时,得益于TiO<sub>2</sub>纳米粒子的比表面积大的优势,TiO<sub>2</sub>-ITO-LMR传感器灵

图7 基于 $\text{TiO}_2$ 纳米粒子辅助增强的LMR折射率传感实验测试结果Fig. 7 Test results of LMR refractive index sensing experiment based on  $\text{TiO}_2$  nanoparticles assisted enhancement图8  $\text{TiO}_2$ -ITO-LMR 折射率与共振波长的关系。(a)增加折射率过程的折射率与共振波长的关系;(b)增加折射率过程中的灵敏度曲线;(c)减小折射率过程的折射率与共振波长的关系;(d)减小折射率过程的灵敏度曲线Fig. 8 Relationship between refractive index and resonance wavelength based on  $\text{TiO}_2$ -ITO-LMR sensor. (a) Relationship between refractive index and resonance wavelength in the process of increasing refractive index; (b) sensitivity curve in the process of increasing refractive index; (c) relationship between refractive index and resonance wavelength in the process of decreasing refractive index; (d) sensitivity curve in the process of decreasing refractive index

敏度可达  $1651.659 \text{ nm/RIU}$ ,相较于 ITO-LMR 折射率传感器,其灵敏度提升了 3.058 倍, 折射率检测分辨率优于  $8.89 \times 10^{-4} \text{ RIU}$ 。

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## Optical-Fiber Refractive Index Sensor Based on Lossy Mode Resonance Enhanced by TiO<sub>2</sub> Nanoparticles

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### Abstract

**Objective** The detection of the refractive index has important practical significance and application value in national defense, aerospace, industry and agriculture, food safety, and other key fields. The optical-fiber lossy mode resonance (LMR) sensors have been widely used in the design and development of refractive index sensors due to their label-free measurement and high detection sensitivity. In addition, the optical-fiber LMR is different from surface plasma resonance (SPR), which is mainly manifested in the following aspects. The excitation of LMR does not depend on the polarization of light, and the film material is widely available and inexpensive. In addition, the resonance wavelength and sensing sensitivity of LMR can be adjusted by changing the thickness of the sensing film. However, most LMR sensors based on multi-mode optical fiber usually have low detection sensitivity. As a kind of semiconductor metal oxide, TiO<sub>2</sub> not only has the basic performance of a semiconductor but also shows the characteristics of a large specific surface area, loose porosity, strong adhesion, and stable chemical properties. Therefore, in this paper, based on the excitation of optical-fiber LMR

refractive index sensing with ITO,  $\text{TiO}_2$  nanoparticles are electrostatically assembled on the ITO film to improve refractive index sensitivity. The promising application of metal oxide nanoparticles in LMR refractive index sensing is further validated.

**Methods** The investigation is based on the theory of optical-fiber LMR sensors. The attenuated total reflectance method of the Kretschmann configuration is used to calculate the optical-fiber LMR spectrum. According to the theoretical model of the optical-fiber LMR refractive index sensor, the relationship between ITO thickness and resonance wavelength of LMR sensor is analyzed by numerical calculations. Besides, the theoretical simulations illustrate its feasibility as a refractive index sensor. The ITO film and  $\text{TiO}_2$  nanoparticles are prepared by magnetron sputtering and electrostatic self-assembly method, respectively. At first, the performance of the optical-fiber LMR refractive index sensor with a single ITO film structure is investigated, and the change in LMR resonance wavelength is observed by dipping the sensor into a glycerol solution with different concentrations. Next, the refractive index sensing performance of the optical-fiber ITO-LMR sensor based on the assisted enhancement of  $\text{TiO}_2$  nanoparticles is elaborately investigated. By comparing the refractive index sensing performance of the two sensors, the conclusion is drawn.

**Results and Discussions** The designed optical fiber LMR sensor with ITO film and  $\text{TiO}_2$  nanoparticles exhibits deserved refractive index detection performance. Fig. 6 shows the LMR resonance spectrum of the structure with magnetron-sputtered ITO film on the side wall of the optical fiber. The resonance wavelength appears to be red-shifted as the refractive index of the external analyte to be measured increases. Specifically, as the external refractive index changes from 1.3333 to 1.3840, the sensitivity of the optical-fiber LMR sensor is 407.062 nm/RIU with a fitting coefficient of 0.995. The  $\text{TiO}_2/\text{PSS}$  bilayer film is electrostatically self-assembled based on the ITO-LMR sensing probe. The LMR refractive index sensing performance with ITO film and  $\text{TiO}_2$  nanoparticles is shown in Fig. 7. With the increase in the solution refractive index, its resonance wavelength shifts significantly toward the long wavelength direction. The refractive index sensitivity of the sensor reaches up to 1651.659 nm/RIU. Due to the advantage of the large specific surface area of  $\text{TiO}_2$  nanoparticles, the sensitivity is improved by a factor of 3.058 compared with the LMR sensor coated with only a single ITO film. The detection resolution of the  $\text{TiO}_2$ -ITO-LMR refractive index sensor is higher than  $8.89 \times 10^{-4}$  RIU.

**Conclusions** In this paper, an LMR refractive index sensor based on the assisted enhancement of  $\text{TiO}_2$  nanoparticles is designed. The sensor activates the LMR effect based on the phase matching of the lossy mode wave and the evanescent wave of the multimode fiber to carry out refractive index sensing. The effect of  $\text{TiO}_2$  nanoparticles on the optical-fiber ITO-LMR sensor is experimentally investigated. The ITO film and  $\text{TiO}_2$  nanoparticles are plated by magnetron sputtering and electrostatic assembly. The results of the refractive index sensing experiments show that in the refractive index variation range of 1.3333–1.3840, the sensitivity of the  $\text{TiO}_2$ -ITO-LMR sensor can reach 1651.659 nm/RIU due to the advantage of the large specific surface area of  $\text{TiO}_2$  nanoparticles. For the ITO-LMR refractive index sensor, the sensitivity is improved by 3.058 times. In addition, the  $\text{TiO}_2$ -ITO-LMR sensor has a resolution of more than  $8.89 \times 10^{-4}$  RIU for refractive index detection.

**Key words** fiber optics; lossy mode resonance; refractive index sensor; indium tin oxide; titanium dioxide nanoparticles