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磁流体包覆的无芯-单模-无芯光纤结构的 磁场传感特性

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摘 要:基于磁流体包覆的无芯-单模-无芯光纤的磁场传感结构中,无芯光纤起激发单模光纤的包层模并实现芯模-包层模干涉的作用.实验测量了该传感结构在不同外界磁场强度和温度下的透射光谱,研究了其磁场传感性能及环境温度对传感性能的影响.结果表明,随外界磁场强度的增加,波长在 1 462 nm 和 1 477 nm 位置附近的干涉谷均发生红移,其相应的磁场传感灵敏度分别为 67.28 pm/Oe 和 49.82 pm/Oe;波长在 1 462 nm 位置附近的干涉谷随温度的增加发生蓝移,干涉谷随温度变化的灵敏度为 37.8 pm/°C,该传感结构简单、灵敏度高,有很好的应用前景.

关键词:无芯-单模-无芯光纤结构;磁场传感;模干涉;磁流体;无芯光纤

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Magnetic Field Sensing Based on Magnetic-fluid-clad No-core Single-mode No-core Fiber Structure

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Abstract: A kind of magnetic field sensing structure based on magnetic-fluid-clad no-core single-mode no-core fiber was proposed and designed. The no-core fiber in this structure can excite cladding mode and combine the core and cladding modes of the intermediate sensing single-mode fiber. The transmission spectra of the as-fabricated sensing structures at different external magnetic field strengths and ambient temperatures were investigated experimentally. The corresponding magnetic field sensing properties and influence of ambient temperature were obtained. Experimental results indicate that the valley wavelengths at around 1 462 nm and 1 477 nm shift to long wavelength side with the increase of external magnetic field. The achieved sensitivities are 67.28 pm/Oe and 49.82 pm/Oe, respectively. The valley wavelength at around 1 462 nm shifts to short wavelength side with the temperature increase and the corresponding sensitivity is 37.8 pm/°C. The proposed sensing structure possesses the advantages of easiness of fabrication and high sensitivity, which is promising for future pragmatic applications.

Key words: No-core single-mode no-core fiber structure; Magnetic field sensing; Mode interference; Magnetic fluid; No-core fiber

OCIS Codes: 060.2370; 160.3820; 230.3990

0 引言

磁流体是一种借助表面活性剂将纳米级的磁性颗粒稳定地分散在载液中而形成的胶体体系^[1-3],因其同时具有固体磁性物质的强磁性和液体的流动性而备受

关注.在外加磁场的作用下,磁流体内部的纳米磁性颗粒会发生团聚,从而导致其折射率会随磁场强度而变化.因此,磁流体在磁场传感、光开关和光调制器等光子器件中有广泛的应用前景^[4-13].

近年来,研究者对磁流体在光学磁场传感器件中

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的应用进行了大量研究. 基于多模干涉原理的多模-单模-多模 (Multimode-Singlemode-Multimode, MSM) 光纤结构具有灵敏度高、结构简单、成本低等优点, 被广泛应用在磁场传感等领域^[14]. 目前已有的研究大多采用复杂的技术或者结构来激发包层模(或多模), 实现芯模-包层模(或者多模)干涉, 如腐蚀^[5]、拉锥^[15]和错位熔接技术^[16]. 大芯径的无芯光纤是一种特殊的多模光纤, 其包层可看作外界环境(如液体或气体), 芯内的模式对外界环境的变化非常敏感, 适合用来制作有关传感器. 因此, 无芯光纤已被用于研制磁场^[17-19]、折射率^[20-22]、电流^[23-24]、温度^[19, 25]和湿度^[26]等多种传感器. 本文将两段较短的无芯光纤串接在一段单模光纤的两端, 设计制作了无芯-单模-无芯 (No-core-Singlemode-No-core, NSN) 光纤结构的磁场传感器. 和传统的 MSM 光纤结构^[14]及其他类似的传感结构相比, 制作简单、操作方便、灵敏度高.

1 传感结构的制作与工作原理

图 1 为实验制作的传感结构示意图和实物图. 两段非常短的无芯光纤与一段相对较长的单模光纤熔接形成 NSN 光纤传感结构. 无芯光纤的长度约为 1 mm, 其直径为 100 μm . 单模光纤的长度为 30 mm, 其纤芯直径为 9 μm . 将制作好的 NSN 光纤结构插入内径为 1 mm 的毛细管中, 用注射器将磁流体缓慢滴在毛细管口, 借助毛细力的作用, 磁流体逐渐充满毛细管并包覆在 NSN 光纤结构周围, 最后用紫外固化胶将毛细管的两端口密封, 以防止磁流体受污染或溶剂挥发. 实验用的磁流体为北京市神然磁性流体技术有限公司提供的水基磁流体, 其纳米磁性颗粒的直径为 10 nm 左右, 在 25 $^{\circ}\text{C}$ 时的密度为 1.18 g/cm^3 , 饱和磁化强度约为 200 Oe.

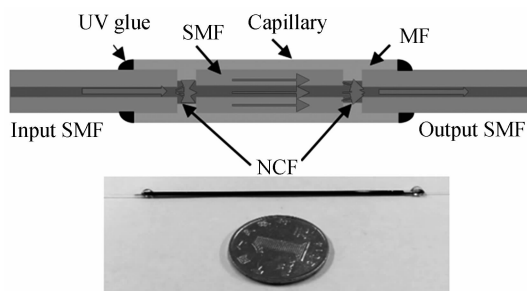


图 1 NSN 光纤传感结构示意图和实物图

Fig. 1 Schematic of the NSN fiber sensing structure and the as-fabricated device

NSN 光纤传感结构中的两段无芯光纤分别起激发包层模和实现芯模-包层模干涉的作用. 如图 1 所示, 由于无芯光纤的直径远大于单模光纤纤芯的直径, 当光通过输入单模光纤进入第一个无芯光纤后同时激发中间段单模光纤的芯模和包层模, 在第二个无芯光纤处实现传输的芯模和包层模的干涉, 干涉结果由

输出单模光纤输送到光谱分析仪进行检测分析. 因此, 干涉光谱可描述为^[6]

$$I_{\text{out}}(\lambda) = I_{\text{core}}(\lambda) + I_{\text{clad}}(\lambda) + 2\sqrt{I_{\text{core}}(\lambda)I_{\text{clad}}(\lambda)} \cdot \cos(2\pi\Delta n_{\text{eff}}L/\lambda) \quad (1)$$

式中, I_{core} 和 I_{clad} 分别为芯模和包层模中的光强, Δn_{eff} 为芯模和包层模的有效折射率差, L 为敏感区的长度(即熔接在两段无芯光纤中的单模光纤长度). 由式(1)可知, 干涉光谱中的干涉谷对应的波长为

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

由于单模光纤芯模的有效折射率不受外界环境的影响, 但包层模的有效折射率易受外界环境的影响, 因此芯模和包层模的有效折射率差 Δn_{eff} 会随外界环境的变化而变化, 进而导致干涉光谱发生变化. 当磁流体包覆在敏感区域时, 由于磁流体折射率随外界磁场强度的变化而变化, 因此外界磁场强度的变化将导致敏感区域光纤芯模和包层模的有效折射率差的变化, 从而导致干涉谷发生偏移, 据此可实现磁场探测和传感.

2 实验结果与讨论

图 2 为研究所制作的 NSN 光纤传感结构磁场传感特性的实验装置示意图. 实验所用磁场由电磁铁产生, 其磁场方向垂直于传感结构的轴线, 磁场强度可通过调节供电电流的大小来控制, 样品区域内磁场强度的不均匀性小于 0.1%. 超连续宽带光源 (Supercontinuum Broadband Light Source, SBS) 发出的光耦合进传感单元, 其干涉谱由光谱分析仪 (Optical Spectrum Analyzers, OSA) 监测分析.

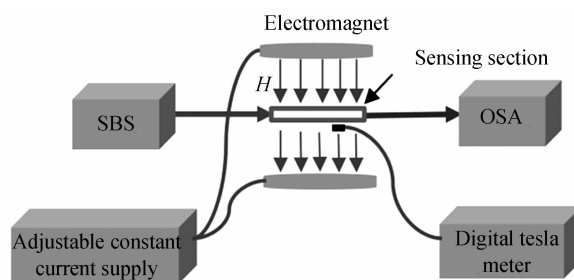


图 2 研究 NSN 光纤传感结构的磁场传感特性的实验装置
Fig. 2 Experimental setup for investigating the magnetic field sensing properties of the NSN fiber structure

图 3 给出了 NSN 光纤传感结构在不同磁场强度下(0-180 Oe)测得的透射光谱. 图 4 进一步地显示了波长在 1 462 nm 和 1 477 nm 位置附近的干涉谷漂移与磁场强度的关系. 图 4 表明, 在 0~90 Oe 范围内, 干涉谷与磁场的变化呈现很好的线性关系, 相应的灵敏度分别为 67.28 pm/Oe 和 49.82 pm/Oe, 该灵敏度高于文献^[14]中 MSM 光纤结构的灵敏度(21.5 pm/Oe). 另外, 不同干涉谷随磁场的漂移灵敏度不同, 这是由于不同的包层模与芯模干涉导致了不同波长位置处的干涉谷. 当外界磁场发生变化时, 包裹在传感结构外围的

磁流体折射率同时发生变化,因而导致光纤包层模的有效折射率发生变化.和低阶包层模相比,光纤中高阶包层模的有效折射率更易受外界的影响,因此不同阶次包层模的有效折射率随外界磁场的变化程度不同.故由式(2)可知,不同干涉谷随磁场变化的灵敏度不同.由图3和4可看出,干涉谷波长随磁场的增加向长波长方向漂移.本文实验中,单模光纤的折射率始终大于外界环境(磁流体)的折射率,随着外界磁场强度的增加,磁流体的折射率增大,单模光纤包层模的模场能量更多地泄露到外环境中,这将导致包层模的有效折射率减小^[16],而芯模的有效折射率不变,因此 Δn_{eff} 将增大,故由式(2)可知,干涉谷波长将红移,这与实验现象非常吻合.

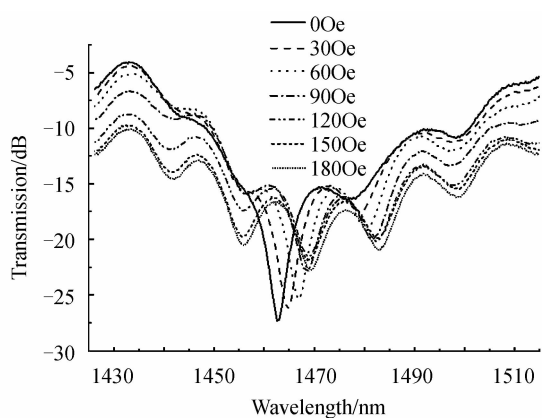


图3 NSN 光纤传感结构在不同磁场强度下的透射光谱
Fig. 3 Transmission spectra of the proposed NSN fiber sensing structure at magnetic field strength ranging from 0 to 180 Oe

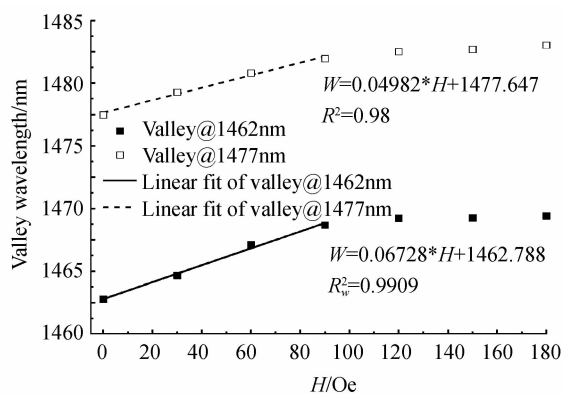


图4 波长在1462 nm和1477 nm位置附近的干涉谷随磁场的变化关系
Fig. 4 Valley wavelengths at around 1462 nm and 1477 nm as functions of magnetic field

由于磁流体的热光系数相对较大,为了研究环境温度对该结构传感性能的影响,将制作好的NSN光纤传感结构放置在可改变温度的恒温装置中,实验测量了该结构在不同温度下的透射光谱.图5显示了波长在1462 nm位置附近的干涉谷随温度的变化,图6为其相应的干涉谷波长漂移与温度的变化关系.图5和6

表明,随着温度的升高,干涉谷波长蓝移,且干涉谷波长与温度的变化呈现很好的线性关系,相应的温度敏感系数为 $37.8 \text{ pm}/^\circ\text{C}$.这是由于磁流体的折射率随温度的升高而减小,类似地,光纤芯模和包层模的有效折射率差 Δn_{eff} 随温度的升高而减小^[16].因此由式(2)可知,干涉谷波长随温度升高向短波长方向漂移.值得指出的是该传感结构对环境温度的变化相对较为敏感,因此在高精度磁场测量或者环境温度变化比较显著的场所使用时,应当采取适当的温度补偿措施,如通过级联一个光纤布喇格光栅^[19]、长周期光纤光栅^[27-28]来实现动态温度补偿.

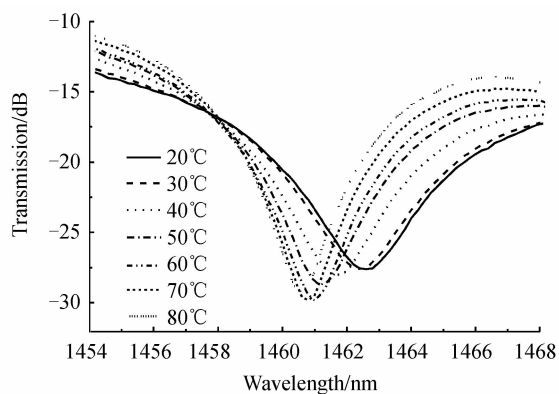


图5 不同温度下NSN 光纤传感结构的透射谱
Fig. 5 Transmission spectra of the proposed sensing structure at different temperatures

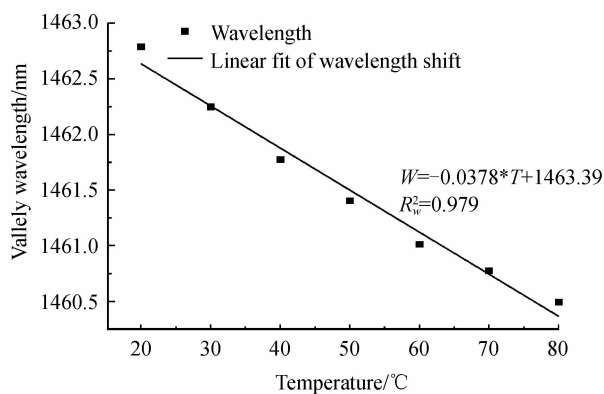


图6 波长在1462 nm位置附近的干涉谷随温度的变化关系
Fig. 6 Valley wavelength at around 1462 nm as a function of temperature

3 结论

提出并制作了一种基于磁流体包覆的无芯-单模-无芯光纤结构的磁场传感结构,大芯径无芯光纤替代传统的多模光纤,起到激发单模光纤的包层模和实现芯模-包层模干涉的作用.实验结果表明,波长在1462 nm和1477 nm位置附近的干涉谷随磁场变化的漂移灵敏度分别为 $67.28 \text{ pm}/\text{Oe}$ 和 $49.82 \text{ pm}/\text{Oe}$,比MSM等类似的光纤结构具有更高的磁场传感灵敏度.温度响应实验表明,波长在1462 nm位置附近的干

涉谷随温度变化的敏感系数为 $37.8 \text{ pm}/^\circ\text{C}$ 。在高准确度磁场测量或者环境温度变化比较显著的场合使用时,可通过采取适当的温度补偿措施来降低环境温度的影响。该传感结构具有易制作、灵敏度高等特点,在磁场传感领域有很好的应用前景。

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