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※封底论文※

间距可调的双模正方形微腔激光器(特邀)

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摘要: 针对双波长激光器间距精细调谐的需求, 基于正方形微腔的模场分布, 设计了中心及四个角区电流注入窗口的正方形微腔激光器。利用有限元法对提出的结构进行分析, 发现改变腔体折射率分布差, 可以调控基横模和一阶横模的波长间距。基于半导体平面加工工艺成功制备了边长为 30 μm 的非均匀注入正方形微腔激光器。当注入电流从 42 mA 增加到 53 mA 时, 该激光器的波长间隔从 0.18 nm 减小到 0.1 nm, 强度比小于 4 dB。除此之外, 继续增加电流, 由于双模间隔的进一步减小, 出现了明显的单周期振荡现象。

关键词: 激光器; 半导体激光器; 微腔; 双波长; 正方形谐振腔

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0 引言

双波长激光器广泛应用于干涉测量^[1]、光通信^[2-4]、微波及太赫兹辐射^[5, 6]、光频梳^[7, 8]等诸多领域。以双波长激光器代替两个独立的激光器作为光源, 用外差法产生微波和太赫兹信号, 以及级联四波混频产生光频梳, 具有系统简单稳定、频率高、光波传输过程无电磁干扰等优点。人们已提出了多种实现双波长激光器的方案。光纤激光器可以输出具有窄线宽的双波长激光^[9-11], 但是所用光纤长度较长, 存在系统复杂以及不稳定的问题。半导体激光器可以通过直流驱动直接输出双波长激光, 具有结构紧凑、功耗低和易于集成等优势。具有单腔双区域结构的分布布拉格反射(Distributed Bragg Reflector, DBR)或分布反馈(Distributed Feedback, DFB)激光器是一种最直接的实现双模激射的方案。ROH S D 等^[12]制备了包含了一段增益区和两个分立的DBR光栅的InGaAs-GaAs激光器, 实现了间隔从0.3 nm到6.9 nm的可调谐双波长激射。KIM N 等^[13]制备了双区DFB激光器, 通过注入电流独立调谐两个模式, 实现了0.17 THz到0.49 THz的连续可调拍频信号。HUANG Jin 等^[14]成功制备了Y波导集成并联的两个DFB激光器, 可避免单腔双区方案中双模的相互影响, 实现了间隔为0.218 nm的双波长输出。UEMUKAI M 等^[15]则进一步利用Y波导集成的DBR双波长激光器实现了1.0 nm到3.7 nm的间隔可调谐双波长输出。此外, BROX O 等^[16]提出并制作了双波长激射的三段式外腔放大反馈激光器, 产生了12 GHz到45 GHz的拍频信号。然而, 双波长的DFB或DBR激光器通常需要通过复杂的电子束直写技术对光栅进行精确控制。

回音壁模式微腔激光器具有小模式体积、高品质因子、制备工艺简单等优点, 在光子集成中具有很大的应用潜力。LONG Heng 等^[17]研制了顶点直连输出波导的正方形微腔激光器, 实现了间隔为0.56 nm的双波长激射, 相比于DBR或者DFB的双模激光器, 正方形微腔激光器的结构更加简单, 而且同一谐振腔中产生的双模波长间隔对环境波动不敏感。随后, LONG Heng 等^[18]设计制作了具有方环形电流注入窗口的可调

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双模微腔激光器,双模波长间隔随注入电流增加从0.25 nm增加至0.39 nm。然而如果实现更小的双模间隔,需要更大的正方形谐振腔,容易造成多横模激射。为实现更小间隔的双模激射,本文设计并制备了一种中心及四个角区电流注入的正方形微腔激光器,实现了波长间隔随着注入电流的增加而减小的双模激射。当电流由42 mA增加到53 mA时,波长间隔从0.18 nm调谐到0.1 nm,并且强度比小于4 dB。除此之外,随着电流的进一步增加,双模在谐振腔内的相互作用由于间隔的进一步减小而愈加明显,出现了明显的单周期振荡现象,为研究激光器腔内的非线性现象提供了可能。

1 器件仿真及工艺制备

1.1 器件结构与仿真

为了实现间隔可调的双波长激射,设计了具有图形化注入窗口的非均匀注入正方形微腔激光器。图1给出了中心及四个角区电流注入窗口的正方形谐振腔的结构示意图。其中 a 为正方形边长, w_g 为输出波导的宽度, W 为位于正方形边中点的方环形区域的宽度。腔体侧向为氮化硅(SiN_x)-苯并环丁烯(BCB)限制, SiN_x 厚度为200 nm,保证正方形微腔和BCB之间具有良好的粘附性。

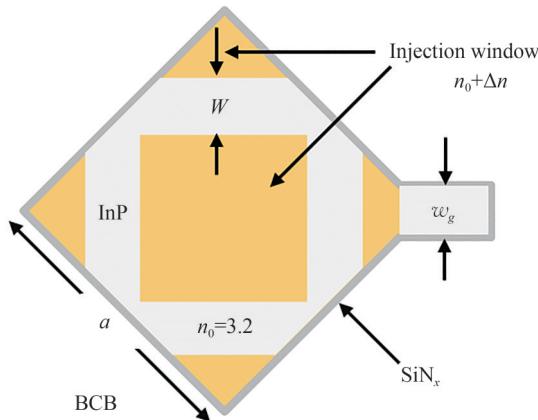


图1 中心及四个角区电流注入窗口的正方形谐振腔的结构示意

Fig.1 Schematic of the a microsquare resonator with a current injection window in the center and four corners

利用这种方案实现可调谐双波长激射的原理是,在注入窗口区域的注入电流密度较大,导致该区域载流子密度较大,温度较高,形成了非均匀分布的载流子浓度分布和温度分布。进一步地,由于半导体材料的折射率随载流子浓度和温度而变化,因此会形成非均匀的折射率分布。

接下来,采用二维有限元方法(FEM, COMSOL Multiphysics)模拟仿真边长 $a=30 \mu\text{m}$,波导宽度 $w_g=3 \mu\text{m}$ 的正方形微腔内的模场情况,InP、 SiN_x 和BCB的折射率分别设置为3.2、2.0和1.54。仿真过程中将波导嵌入到完美匹配层中,以消除波导端面的背反射。假设注入窗口区域相对于其他区域的折射率相差 Δn ,其中 $\Delta n=0$ 对应着均匀注入电流的情况。

首先,计算了正方形微腔激光器在均匀注入情况下的TE模,对应磁场的主分量Hz的场分布如图2(a)和2(b)。可以看出沿相邻边中点的连线,基模和一阶模分别显示强场和弱场分布。由于模场分布不完全重合,基模和一阶模存在较小的模式竞争,其品质因子分别为 6.994×10^4 和 1.838×10^4 。考虑到实际器件中纵向辐射、材料吸收及制作工艺等损耗,这两种模式有相近的品质因子来实现双横模激射。此外,在均匀注入情况下,基模和一阶模分别位于1 548.338 nm和1 548.047 nm,波长间隔为0.291 nm。

然后计算了正方形微腔激光器在非均匀注入情况下,注入与非注入区域的折射率分布差对双模间距的影响。对于边长 $a=30 \mu\text{m}$ 、波导宽度 $w_g=3 \mu\text{m}$ 、方环形宽度 $W=6 \mu\text{m}$ 的正方形微腔,模式波长间隔 λ 与 n 的关系如图3中的方形符号曲线所示。当 n 从-0.005增加到0.003,模式波长间隔从1.07 nm减小到0.11 nm。对于边长 $a=20 \mu\text{m}$ 、波导宽度 $w_g=2 \mu\text{m}$ 、方环形宽度 $W=1 \mu\text{m}$ 的正方形微腔,图3的圆形符号曲线描述了其双模间隔 λ 与 n 的关系。随着 Δn 从-0.005增加到0.005,双模间隔从1.1 nm减小到0.5 nm。仿真计算结果表明,非均匀注入导致的非均匀折射率分布可以改变两个横模波长间隔。此外,通过改变正方形微腔的

边长,可以实现波长间隔的改变。例如对于均匀注入的边长 $20\text{ }\mu\text{m}$ 和 $30\text{ }\mu\text{m}$ 的正方形微腔激光器,双横模间隔分别为 0.76 nm 和 0.31 nm 。

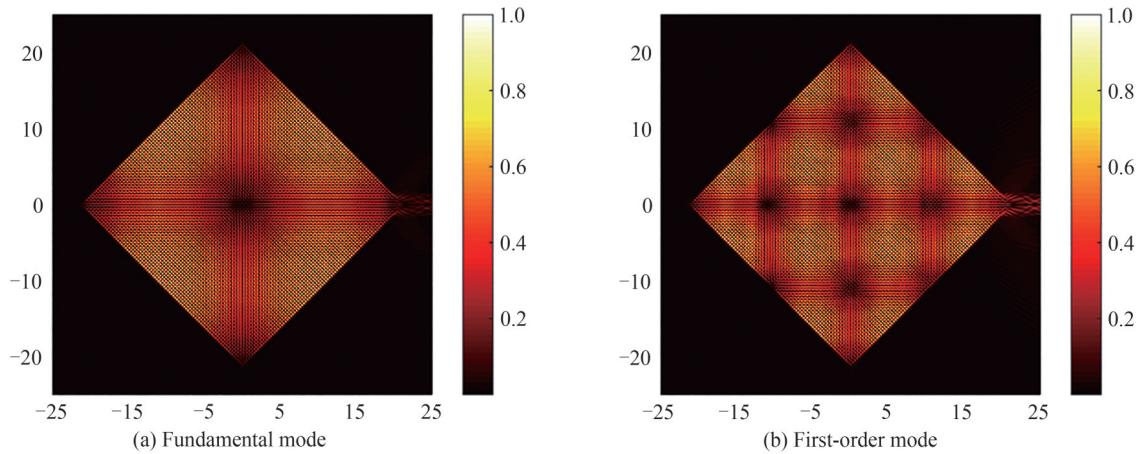


图 2 $a = 30\text{ }\mu\text{m}, w_g = 3\text{ }\mu\text{m}$ 的正方形微腔中的磁场(|Hz|)分布

Fig.2 Simulated magnetic field (|Hz|) distributions in the square microcavity with $a = 30\text{ }\mu\text{m}$ and $w_g = 3\text{ }\mu\text{m}$

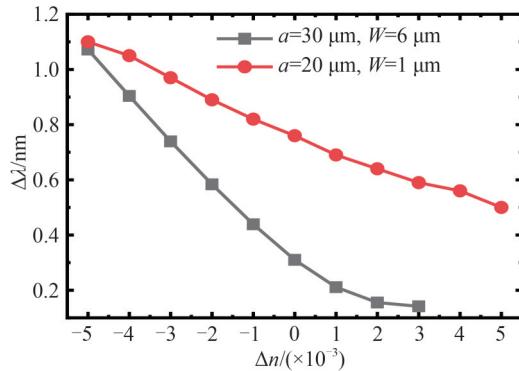


图 3 模拟正方形谐振腔的基模、一阶模的波长间隔随折射率分布差的变化关系

Fig.3 Simulated wavelength intervals of the fundamental mode and the first-order mode versus Δn for the microsquare resonators

1.2 正方形微腔激光器的制备工艺

使用 AlGaInAs/InP 外延片制备非均匀电流注入的正方形微腔激光器,其中有源层为 5 个压应变量子势阱及 6 个势垒层交叠构成的多量子阱结构。首先通过等离子体增强化学气相沉积(Plasma Enhanced Chemical Vapor Deposition, PECVD)技术在外延片上沉积 600 nm 的 SiO_2 层,并利用光刻和感应耦合等离子体(Inductively Coupled-Plasma, ICP)蚀刻技术,将腔体图形由光刻胶转移到 SiO_2 层上,然后以图形化的 SiO_2 作为掩模 ICP 刻蚀 InP 外延片,得到刻蚀深度为 $4.7\text{ }\mu\text{m}$ 的正方形微腔,再使用 HF 溶液去除剩余的 SiO_2 掩膜。在刻蚀好的微腔的芯片上,采用 PECVD 技术生长厚度为 230 nm 的 SiN_x ,随后旋涂 BCB 形成平坦表面,并采用反应离子蚀刻(Reactive Ion Etching, RIE)技术刻蚀 BCB,暴露出腔体顶部。接着在芯片上沉积 400 nm 的 SiO_2 作为电绝缘层,然后进行非均匀注入窗口的套刻,利用光刻和 ICP 蚀刻技术去除正方形微腔的中心区域和四个角区上方的 SiO_2 和 SiN_x 层,露出 InP 保护层,然后利用盐酸溶液湿法腐蚀 InP 保护层,露出欧姆接触层从而实现金半接触。最后,通过电子束蒸发和带胶剥离形成图形化的 Ti-Pt-Au 的 P 型电极,再对结构片进行减薄到 $120\text{ }\mu\text{m}$,抛光,随后在 N 面上磁控溅射 Au-Ge-Ni,并合金形成 N 型电极。制作完成的器件显微镜照片如图 4。

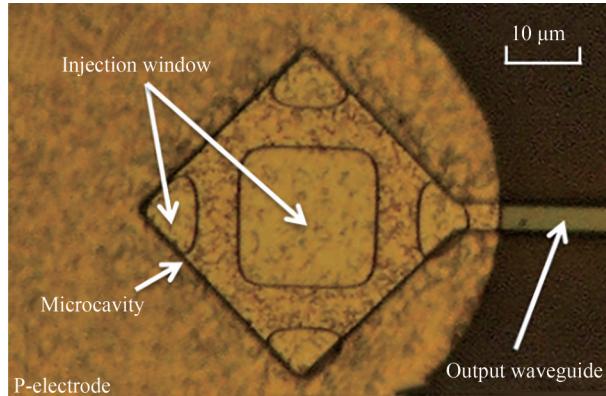
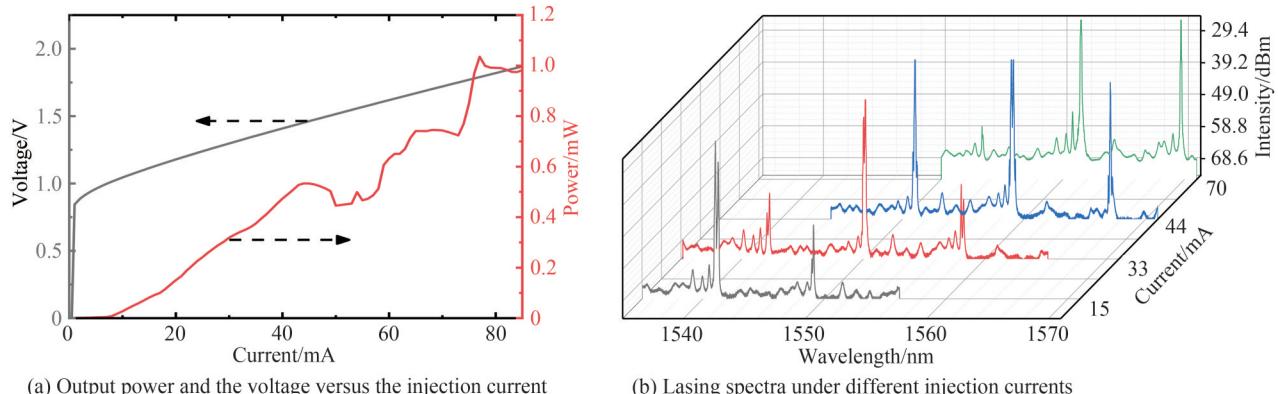


图4 制备的中心及四个角区电流注入窗口的微腔激光器的显微镜图

Fig.4 Microscopic image of a square microcavity laser with a current injection window in the center and four corners

2 间距可调的双模激光器的激光特性

对制备完成的正方形微腔激光器进行性能表征,该正方形微腔边长 $30\text{ }\mu\text{m}$,输出波导宽度为 $3\text{ }\mu\text{m}$,非注入窗口的方环形部分宽度为 $6\text{ }\mu\text{m}$ 。通过半导体制冷器将激光器的热沉温度保持在 288 K 。采用多模光纤耦合测量正方形微腔激光器的输出光功率以及外加电压与注入电流的关系,如图5(a)。激光器的串联电阻为 $11.4\text{ }\Omega$,阈值电流约为 9 mA 。当注入电流为 77 mA 时,该激光器输出光功率达到最大,为 1.04 mW 。此外,图5(b)给出了激光器在不同注入电流下的激光光谱。在注入电流为 15 mA 时激光器开始双模激射。随着注入电流的增加,激光器在 33 mA 、 44 mA 和 70 mA 时发生了跳模,对应着L-I曲线中的功率突变。

图5 正方形微腔激光器的激光特性
Fig.5 Lasing characteristics of the square microcavity laser

接下来利用分辨率为 0.02 nm 的光谱仪测量正方形微腔激光器的激光光谱。图6(a)给出了注入电流从 39 mA 到 66 mA 的光谱图。可以看到在该电流调谐范围内,激光器实现了双模激射。并且,双模间隔随着注入电流的增加而逐渐减小,与理论分析一致。由于InP基材料激光器的激光波长随温度的变化速率为 0.1 nm/K ,当注入电流为 50 mA 时,可以估计注入窗口和非注入窗口的温度差为 2.5 K 。图6(b)给出了两个激射模式的波长间隔和强度比随注入电流的变化情况。当注入电流从 42 mA 增加到 50 mA 时,实现了强度比小于 4 dB 的双横模激光。此时该激光器的波长间隔从 0.18 nm 减小到 0.1 nm ,对应 22.5 GHz 到 12.5 GHz 的频率差。与图3中的计算结果对比,随着电流的增加,该激光器的双模间隔对应的折射率分布差 Δn 从 1×10^{-3} 增加至 3×10^{-3} ,表明该正方形微腔激光器的折射率主要受温度分布的影响。根据实验和仿真结果,图6(c)给出了折射率分布差与电流的关系,可以看到二者近似呈二次关系。除此之外,当注入电流范围为 39 mA 到 43 mA 时,双模间隔的调谐速度约为 2 pm/mA 。当注入电流范围为 44 mA 到 50 mA 时,双模间隔的调谐速度约为 9 pm/mA 。因此调谐速度随着电流的增加而增加,这可能是由于注入窗口区域的温度与非注入区域的温度差增大。

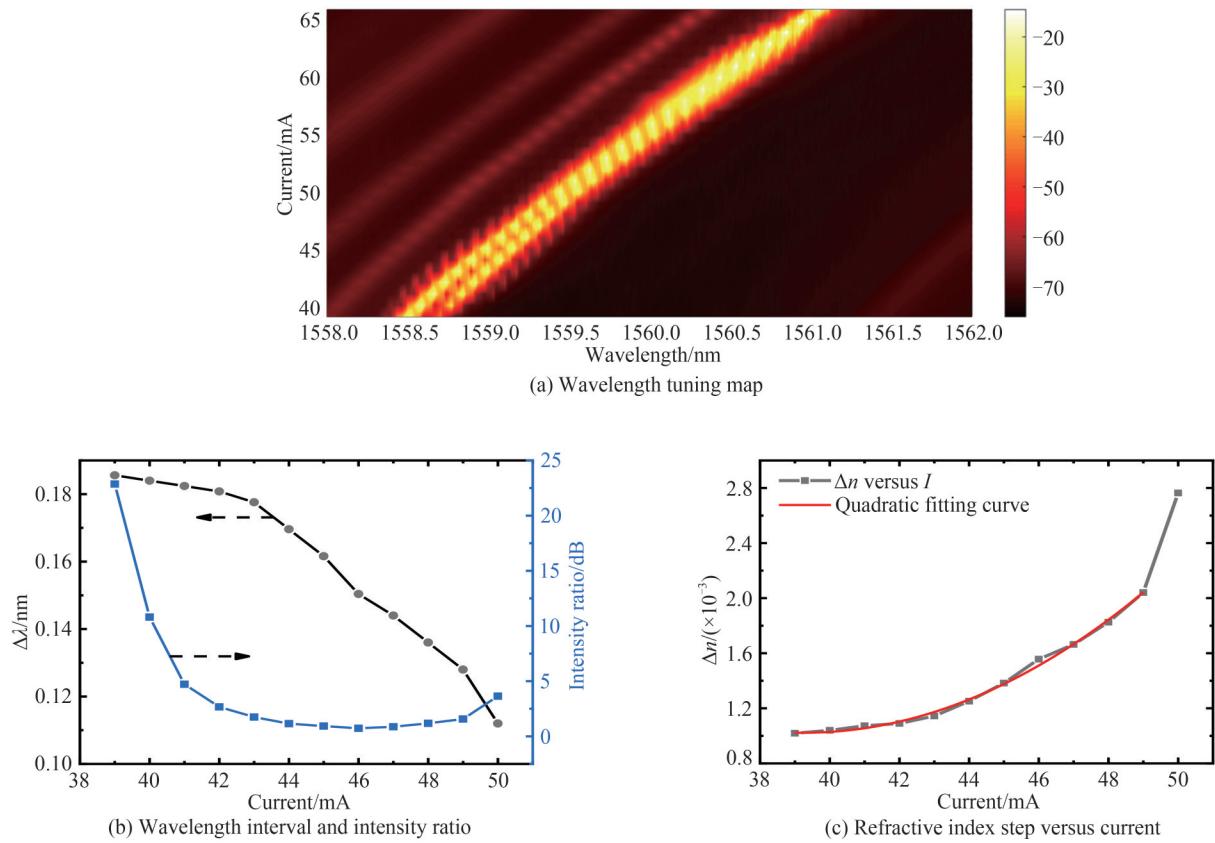


图6 波长间隔和折射率分布差随注入电流的变化
Fig.6 Variation of wavelength interval and refractive index step with injection current

为了对比,同时也制备了采用方环形区域为电注入窗口的正方形微腔激光器。正方形腔体边长为 $26\text{ }\mu\text{m}$,输出波导宽度为 $2.5\text{ }\mu\text{m}$,方环形宽度为 $6\text{ }\mu\text{m}$ 。该双模激光器的激射光谱图如图7(a),此时注入电流从 59 mA 增加到 93 mA ,双模间隔随着注入电流的增加而逐渐增大。如图7(b),当注入电流从 62 mA 增加到 85 mA 时,双模间隔可由 0.202 nm 调谐至 0.284 nm 。这进一步验证了折射率主要受温度分布影响的结论。但是该器件基模和一阶模的强度差较大,皆在 8 dB 以上。

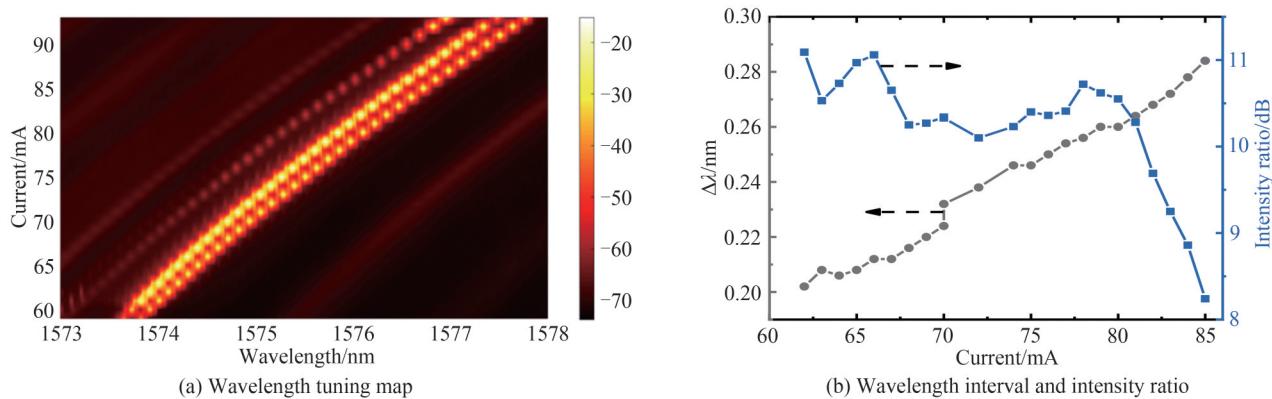


图7 方环形电流注入窗口的正方形微腔激光器的波长间隔随注入电流的调谐情况
Fig.7 Wavelength interval versus the injection current for the square microlaser with a square-ring current injection window

为了进一步探究中心及四个角区电流注入窗口的微腔激光器的双波长激射特性,图8(a)给出了注入电流为 $41\text{, }45\text{, }49$ 和 53 mA 时精细光谱图,其中 $45\text{, }49$ 和 53 mA 的光谱分别向上平移了 $50\text{, }100$ 和 150 dB 。注入电流为 45 mA 时,可以看到两个激射模式波长分别位于 1558.99 nm 和 1559.15 nm 。并且,可以注意到在其两侧存在等间距分布的,位于 1558.83 nm 和 1559.31 nm 的两个边带,且其谱宽远小于高阶模谱宽,

据此可以判断这两个峰是由两个激射模式之间的四波混频效应产生,进一步说明了两个模式的共存。波长位于1558.45 nm和1557.91 nm处的两个宽峰,对应正方形微腔的二阶和三阶横模。

图8(b)给出了注入电流为61、62、64和65 mA时的精细光谱图。当注入电流增加到61 mA时,正方形微腔激光器的双模间隔减小到0.08 nm。此时激光器具有明显的非线性效应,处于单周期状态,产生出多级的频率边带,边带间隔为双模间隔。当注入电流进一步增加到65 mA时,单周期消失。由以上实验结果可知,中心及四个角区电流注入的正方形激光器不仅可以应用于高频微波信号的产生,同时也为研究激光器腔内的非线性现象提供了可能。

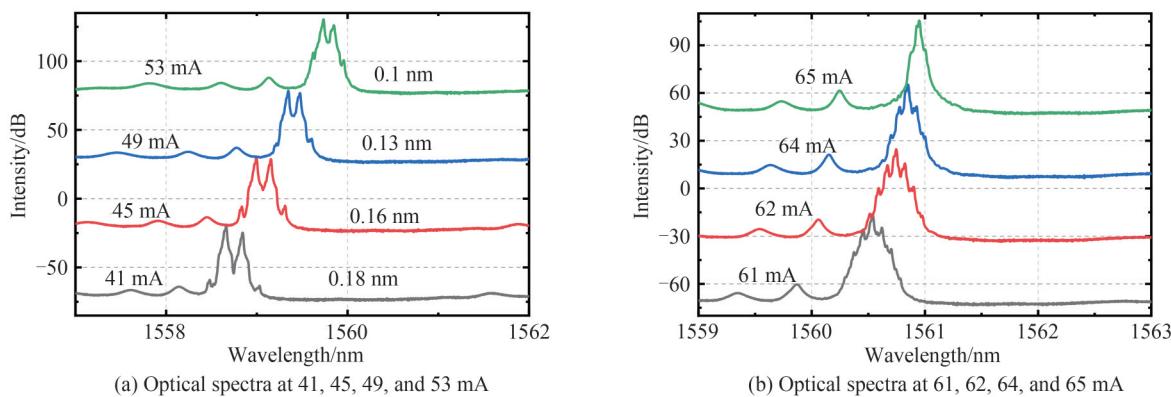


图8 中心及四个角区电流注入窗口的微腔激光器的精细光谱图

Fig.8 Fine spectra of a microcavity laser with a current injection window in the center and four corners

3 结论

本文设计了具有中心及四个角区非均匀电注入窗口的正方形微腔激光器以实现间隔可调谐的双模激射。首先利用有限元法模拟分析了非均匀注入窗口的折射率分布对双波长间隔的影响。并且成功制备了边长为30 μm的双波长正方形微腔激光器,实验结果表明当注入电流由42 mA增加到53 mA时,波长间隔从0.18 nm减小到0.1 nm。当进一步增加电流时,由于双模间隔进一步减小,出现了明显的单周期振荡现象。本文所提出的具有中心及四个角区的电流注入窗口的正方形微腔激光器为后续产生光生微波、光频梳等研究提供了间隔可调的光源。

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Dual-mode Square Microcavity Lasers with a Tunable Wavelength Interval (Invited)

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Abstract: In recent years, dual-wavelength lasers are used in a wide variety of applications in interferometric measurement, optical communications, microwave and THz wave generations, and optical frequency combs. A variety of methods to realize dual-wavelength lasers have been proposed, including fiber lasers, Y-branch integrated lasers, and two-section Distributed Feedback (DFB) or Distributed Bragg Reflection (DBR) lasers. In addition, the whispering gallery mode microcavity laser has great application potential in photonic integration due to its small mode volume, high-quality factor, and simple manufacturing process.

In this paper, we design and fabricate a square microcavity laser with a current injection window in the center and four corners to achieve tunable dual-wavelength lasing. By simply changing the injection current, we realize dual-mode lasing with a wavelength interval tuned from 0.18 nm to 0.1 nm, and an intensity ratio less than 4 dB.

A two-dimensional finite-element method is used to simulate the TE modes of the square microcavity. It can be seen that along the lines connecting the midpoints of the adjacent sides, the fundamental mode and the first-order mode show the strong field and the weak field distribution, respectively. Due to the incomplete overlap of the mode field distributions, there is less mode competition between the fundamental mode and the first-order mode, and the quality factors are 6.994×10^4 and 1.838×10^4 , respectively. Taking into account the vertical radiation, material absorption, and manufacturing process losses, the two modes have similar quality factors to achieve dual-mode lasing.

Based on the mode field distribution, a deformed square microcavity laser is designed with a current injection window in the center and four corners, which induces a refractive index step. For a square microcavity with a side length of 30 μm , the numerical result shows that the mode wavelength interval can be reduced from 1.07 nm to 0.11 nm when the refractive index step increases from -0.005 to 0.003.

Next, a dual-mode square microcavity laser with a current injection window in the center and four

corners is successfully fabricated with a side length of $30\text{ }\mu\text{m}$, and a waveguide of $3\text{ }\mu\text{m}$. The maximum output power coupled into a multimode fiber is 1.04 mW when the injection current is 77 mA . The series resistance is $11.4\text{ }\Omega$, and the threshold current is about 9 mA . When the injection current is increased from 41 mA to 53 mA , the wavelength interval of the microcavity laser decreases from 0.18 nm to 0.1 nm . Meanwhile, the intensity ratio is less than 4 dB . Since the lasing wavelength of InP-based lasers changes with temperature at a rate of 0.1 nm/K , the temperature difference between the injection window and the non-injection window can be estimated to be 2.5 K when the injection current is 50 mA . Compared with the simulation results, the refractive index step corresponding to the dual-mode interval of the microcavity laser increases from 1×10^{-3} to 3×10^{-3} with the increase of the injection current. It indicates that the refractive index of the microcavity laser is mainly affected by the temperature distribution. According to the experimental and simulation results, the refractive index step and the current have a quadratic relationship. In addition, a period-one oscillation phenomenon appears due to the further reduction of the dual-mode interval.

For comparison, a square microcavity laser with a square-ring-patterned contact window is also fabricated with a side length of $26\text{ }\mu\text{m}$, and a waveguide of $2.5\text{ }\mu\text{m}$. The dual-mode interval gradually increases with the increase of the injection current. When the injection current is increased from 62 mA to 85 mA , the dual-mode interval can be tuned from 0.202 nm to 0.284 nm . It further verifies the conclusion that the refractive index is mainly affected by the temperature distribution.

In conclusion, a square microcavity laser with a non-uniform injection window in the center and four corners is designed to realize dual-mode lasing with tunable intervals. When the injection current is increased from 42 mA to 53 mA , the wavelength interval decreases from 0.18 nm to 0.1 nm . The proposed square microcavity laser with a current injection window in the center and four corners provides a light source with a tunable interval for the generation of microwaves, optical frequency combs, and the potential chaotic lasers.

Key words: Laser; Semiconductor laser; Microcavity; Dual wavelength; Square microcavity

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