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基于非线性光纤环形镜被动锁模掺铒光纤激光器

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摘 要:研究了一种基于非线性光纤环形镜"8"字形谐振腔结构的波长可调谐被动锁模掺铒光纤激光器,该激光器通过将偏振控制器加在耦合比为30/70的2×2光纤耦合器首尾相连的环内,在整个谐振腔的右端搭建了一个Sagnac环形滤波器。当泵浦功率为270mW时,锁模光纤激光器输出了中心波长为1555.7 nm的传统孤子,其光谱的3-dB带宽为4.2 nm,重复频率为21.1 MHz,信噪比为68 dB,脉冲宽度为0.759 ps。此外,在不改变腔内其他器件的情况下只增加泵浦功率,实现了锁模光纤激光器的连续可调谐,中心波长的调谐范围为1.5 nm;在增加泵浦功率到360 mW时,调节偏振控制器出现了松束缚态孤子。

关键词:激光器;传统孤子;非线性光纤环形镜;掺铒;被动锁模

中图分类号:TN248 文献标识码:A

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0 引言

脉冲光纤激光器[1-4]自诞生以来就因其所特有的峰值功率高、脉冲宽度窄、信噪比高和散热性好等优异 性能快速得到了广大科研学者的青睐,其产生的脉冲孤子在长距离传输过程中能够保持光谱和时间轮廓不 变,因此孤子激光器一时间成为了研究热门领域[5-10]。被动锁模技术利用非线性元件对光强的依赖性来实 现各纵模相位锁定,从而产生脉冲激光。可饱和吸收体是被动锁模光纤激光器的关键元件,其特性亦是开 发高性能激光器的核心,且其拥有着成本低、操作简单和结构紧凑的优点。其中可饱和吸收体[10-13] (Saturable Absorber, SA)分为真实可饱和吸收体(Semiconductor Saturable Absorber Mirror, SESAM)、石 墨烯(Graphene)、碳纳米管(Carbon Nanotubes, CNTs)、黑磷(BP)以及二维材料(2D Materials)^[14-18]等和等 效可饱和吸收体非线性偏振旋转技术(Nonlinear Polarization Rotation, NPR)、非线性放大环形镜(Nonlinear Amplifier Loop Mirror, NALM)以及非线性光纤环形镜(Nonlinear Optical Loop Mirror, NOLM)^[19-23]。相对 于真实可饱和吸收体易受环境影响、阈值低等性质的局限性,后者主要通过光偏振干涉引起的滤波或快速 饱和吸收效应实现锁模,省去了制作材料时的的繁琐工艺,同时降低了生产成本。等效可饱和吸收体被动 锁模激光器具有全光纤易于集成、成本较低、可调节性高、损伤阈值高等优势。同时基于各种非线性效应和 腔内的净色散结合作用,各种孤子的形成与演化也备受人们关注。其中,基于 NOLM/NALM 技术的被动 锁模光纤激光器还可以在一定的波长范围内进行连续调谐,不同中心波长的锁模光纤激光器具有不同的作 用,不同中心波长的锁模脉冲可以在材料加工中提供不同的聚焦深度或不同的材料吸收。近年来,C波段波 长可调锁模光纤激光器引起了广泛的关注,对于可调谐被动锁模光纤激光器也涌现了大量的研究。

2008年,太原理工大学郭雄英教授课题组通过在非线性光纤镜中加入可调谐滤波器得到了中心波长在

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1 548~1 570 nm 的连续可调脉冲输出^[24]。2011年,华中科技大学沃江海等通过在环形腔中引入光纤光栅作 为滤波器的方法实现了稳定的多波长输出,在对光栅施加应力后,实现了中心波长在一定范围内连续可调 谐^[25]。2017年,西南大学夏光琼课题组基于两个弱谐振腔法布里-珀罗激光器,提出并实验研究了一种获取 中心波长可调谐、混沌带宽可控的混沌信号^[26]。2018年,北京工业大学王璞教授团队通过热电冷却仪调节 光纤激光腔中高双折射光纤的温度,锁模状态下得到了中心波长1952~1967 nm 的调谐范围^[27]。但此类研 究大都采用了特殊的光纤结构、材料或者特殊器件,构成的激光器成本较高,不利于大规模生产使用,采用 等效可饱和吸收体实现的被动锁模光纤激光器结构简单、成本低、调谐便捷、稳定性高,便于产业化生产。

本文通过"8"字形腔全光纤结构搭建了波长可调谐被动锁模掺铒光纤激光器,研究了基于非线性光纤环形镜原理在负色散区域传统孤子的特性。在锁模过程中,非线性光纤环形镜起到了可饱和吸收体的作用,稳定的锁模状态下,在调节泵浦功率时,单模光纤由于偏振控制器的应力作用使得光纤的内部不平衡压力引入应力双折射,和PC-2一起构成了带宽较小的滤波器,光谱发生蓝移得到1.5 nm的调谐范围,整个调谐过程中表现出了良好的稳定性,当泵浦功率增加至360 mW时,调节偏振控制器改变输出光的偏振态,激光器会输出松束缚态孤子。

1 实验装置及原理

图1为锁模光纤激光器实验装置图。整个激光谐振腔中,采用最大输出功率为600 mW的单模980 nm 半导体激光器作为谐振腔的泵 浦源(Laser Diode, LD),通过980/1 550 nm 波分复用器(Wavelength Division Multiplexer, WDM)的980 端口连接进入谐振腔内,泵浦光耦合进入左侧的单向环中后逆时针传 输,50 cm 长的掺铒光纤(Erbium-doped Fiber Laser,EDF,LIEKKI Er110-4/125)作为增益介质,通过增益 光纤后进入隔离器(Isolator, ISO),此处采用偏振无关隔离器保证了激光在左侧环中的逆时针单向传输。 实验中使用两个偏振控制器(Polarization Controller, PC)来调节腔内脉冲的偏振状态、双折射和损耗。两个 耦合比为30/70的光纤耦合器(Optical Coupler, OC)中的OC-1用来连接左侧单向环形腔和右侧的双向传 输 Sagnac 环,利用耦合比不对称的光纤耦合器和右侧的单模光纤成功构建了基于NOLM锁模原理的"8"字 形谐振腔体,PC-2用来调节双向环中的偏振态和损耗。光纤耦合器OC-2中30%端口用作激光能量输出 端,70%的端口连接在谐振腔内维持谐振腔的正常运转,其余部分用单模光纤连接,整个谐振腔的长度为 9.29 m,右侧双向传输环的长度为1.5 m。EDF和单模光纤的群速度色散分别为29.53 ps²/km和-22.8 ps²/km, 谐振腔总的净色散为-0.186 ps²,整个激光谐振腔在负色散区域工作。实验中分别使用光谱分析仪(OSA, Yokogawa, AQ6370C)、示波器(OSC, Agilent DSO9104A)、频谱分析仪(Agilent Technologies, N9000A)、 自相关仪(APE, PulseCheck-50)以及功率计(MAESTRO,Gentec-EO)实时监测锁模脉冲的波形、光谱、频 谱和输出功率。



图 1 锁模光纤激光器装置 Fig.1 Experimental setup of the mode-locked fiber laser

受激辐射光经过 PC-1后再通过耦合器 OC-1进入右侧的非线性环形镜中,由于耦合器的分光比不同被 分成沿相反方向传输、强度不同的两束光,这两束光在非线性光纤环形镜中传输一周后,到达耦合器后进行 了再次的相干叠加,这一过程中光束在非线性光纤环形镜中不同的方向经历相同的路径。非线性光纤环形 镜的透过率 T表示为^[28]

$$T = 2k(1 - 2k)\{1 + \cos\left[(1 - 2k)\gamma LP_{in}\right]\}$$
(1)

式中,当k等于1/2时,透过率T为零,此时谐振腔右侧的非线性光纤环形镜相当于一个反射镜并不能实现锁 模操作。本实验中k等于3/7,表示OC-2的分光比,利用耦合比不对称的光纤耦合器,将进入双向腔中的光分 为强度不同、方向相反的两部分,通过在右侧的双向腔内传输累积不同的相移量,从而自幅度调制产生脉冲窄 化效应达到锁模目的。y 是光纤的非线性系数,L表示非线性光纤环形镜的长度,在实验中长度约为1.5m,另 外实验中在右侧的双向环加入另外一个PC-2调节偏振态来引入一个相位差g,此时的透过率T可以表示为

 $T = 2k(1 - 2k)\{1 + \cos\left[(1 - 2k)\gamma LP_{in} + \varphi\right]\}$ (2)

所以非线性光纤环形镜是基于光在双向环中传播时由非线性效应的非线性相移和通过调节PC引起的相位差共同决定其输出状态。不同于双波长同步脉冲^[29],在增加泵浦功率时,由于激光腔内存在过大的非线性, 孤子很难保持稳定,因此由于峰值功率钳位效应,会出现脉冲分裂现象。观察到多脉冲操作,如孤子束、谐波锁模、类噪声脉冲和束缚态。调节泵浦功率和腔内偏振状态可以操纵束缚孤子数量、时间间隔和相对相位差。

2 实验结果与分析

2.1 泵浦功率为 270 mW 时的传统孤子锁模脉冲输出

实验中,当泵浦功率增加至270 mW时,缓慢调节偏振控制器获得稳定的锁模脉冲输出。在其他条件不变的情况下,将泵浦功率从270 mW调节至360 mW时,锁模脉冲仍在稳定运行。泵浦功率为270 mW时对应的传统孤子锁模脉冲输出特性如图2所示,此时光纤激光器的输出功率约为5.67 mW。锁模脉冲的光谱如图2(a),输出锁模脉冲的中心波长为1555.7 nm,其光谱的3-dB带宽为4.2 nm。图中可以观察到锁模脉冲的光谱两侧有凯利边带,正是传统孤子的典型标志,所以锁模脉冲为传统孤子脉冲。图2(b)是锁模脉冲的脉冲序列图,其中脉冲间隔为47.6 ns,符合激光在谐振腔内的往返时间,插图为1 µs时间跨度内的锁模脉冲序列。锁模脉冲的频谱如图2(c),其中基本频率为21.01 MHz,信噪比(Signal Noise Ratio, SNR)约为68 dB,进一步证实了输出孤子脉冲的良好稳定性,图2(c)插图为0~1 GHz的宽带频谱。图2(d)表示的是输出脉冲的自相关曲线,通过双曲正割拟合后得到的脉冲宽度为759 fs,时间带宽积(Time Bandwidth



图 2 锁模光纤激光器的输出特性 Fig.2 The output characteristics of mode-locked fiber laser

Product, TBP)为0.397。

2.2 输出脉冲的稳定性测试

为了测试此激光器输出脉冲的稳定性,在实验中每隔2h采集一次光谱,如图3(a)、图3(b)是光谱中距离中 心波长最近的左右两个边带峰值随时间的变化,可以看出随着时间的变化其边带并未发生明显移动,图3(c)表 示的是在此期间光纤激光器输出功率随时间的变化图,采用点线式的构图方式更好地反应出了激光器的稳定 性,对结果分析计算得出输出功率在20多小时的过程中的波动仅为0.11 mW,说明此光纤激光器稳定性优良。



图 3 光谱随时间的变化 Fig.3 Spectra of mode-locked in different time

2.3 泵浦功率对锁模输出脉冲的影响

将泵浦功率调节至270 mW,通过缓慢调节两个偏振控制器使其达到稳定锁模状态,此时输出脉冲光谱 的中心波长为1555.7 nm。在保持其他条件不变的情况下,只调节泵浦功率,可以观察到锁模光谱的中心波 长也会随之发生蓝移,其光谱宽度和峰值功率并未发生变化,增加泵浦功率至360 mW时,此时输出脉冲的 中心波长移动至1554.2 nm,如图4(a)。在缓慢增加泵浦功率的过程中,锁模中心波长获得了1.5 nm的波 长调谐范围。此过程可重复,将泵浦功率从360 mW降到270 mW时,输出脉冲的中心波长又会再次恢复原 状。本实验中仅仅改变了泵浦功率,此时右侧的单模光纤由于偏振控制器的应力作用使得光纤的内部不平 衡压力引入应力双折射,在谐振腔内多次传输后整个激光器达到稳定状态,此时单模光纤和偏振控制器相当 于一个带宽较窄的滤波器,光谱的中心波长存在蓝移的现象,由于双折射滤波效应,从而导致了1.5 nm的调谐 范围。随着泵浦功率的进一步提升,当调节PC改变光的偏振态时,激光器会产生束缚态孤子,如图4(b)。束 缚态孤子的产生是由于激光腔中存在过多的非线性时,脉冲很难保持稳定,此时增加泵浦功率,输出脉冲的 峰值功率箝位效应会产生脉冲分裂现象产生多脉冲现象,而束缚态孤子是多脉冲的一种典型形式,它是由 非线性色散效应引起的近距离孤子间的相互排斥和相互吸引所产生。取中心波长处拉开,如图4(c),激光 器会输出松束缚态孤子,光谱的调制周期为0.467 nm。根据时域间距与光谱间距的关系,通过计算得出两 组脉冲输出端输出的脉冲间隔约为17.23 ps,此时束缚态脉冲在腔内传输时脉冲间隔保持不变。通过自相



关仪(APE, PulseCheck-50)在此时测得输出脉冲的自相关图如图4(d),此时脉冲间隔为17.23 ps,与理论计 算值相吻合,脉冲间隔明显大于脉冲宽度的5倍,因此得出此时光纤激光器产生了松束缚态孤子。

图 4 改变泵浦功率时的锁模光谱 Fig.4 Spectra of mode-locked in different pump powers

图 5 给出了掺铒被动锁模光纤激光器输出功率和泵浦功 率的关系。蓝色点代表了对应泵浦功率下的输出功率,并对此 进行线性拟合得到红色线段,此激光器的锁模阈值为 270 mW, 此时输出的功率 5.67 mW。在 270 mW 到 360 mW 时,整体 的锁模输出功率随泵浦功率的增加呈现线性增加,整体输出 功率的斜率为 2.42%。激光谐振腔内左侧单向环中的隔离 器对光的损耗、腔内器件的插入损耗和光纤熔接处的损耗导 致了较低的光光转化效率。



3 结论

图 5 输出功率与泵浦功率的关系 Fig.5 Output power versus pump power

本文基于非线性光纤环形镜原理搭建了"8"字形腔,实现了稳定的传统孤子输出。当泵浦功率调节至270 mW时,获得了中心波长为1555.1 nm、光谱半高全宽为4.2 nm、重复频率为21.01 MHz、脉冲宽度为0.759 ps的稳定传统孤子。68 dB的信噪比证明了激光器在锁模状态下良好的稳定性,并且可以长时间的保持输出光谱的稳定性。在只调节泵浦功率时,稳定锁模状态下实现了中心波长为1555.7 nm处的波长调谐;当泵浦功率增加至360 mW时,通过调节PC-2出现了束缚态光孤子。该激光器简单的结构、优良的稳定性使其可以在光通讯中作为种子光源。

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Passively Mode-locked Erbium-doped Fiber Laser Based on Nonlinear Fiber Loop Mirror

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Abstract: In this paper, a passively mode-locked erbium-doped fiber laser with tunable wavelength of the "8" cavity based on a nonlinear fiber loop mirror is studied. The laser uses a 2×2 coupler with a coupling ratio of 30/70 to control a section of the laser with polarization controller. And a Sagnac ring is constructed at the right end of the entire resonant cavity to form a filter. When the pump power up to 270 mW, we tune the polarization controller to achieve a stable mode-locked state, the fiber laser outputs a traditional soliton with a center wavelength of 1 555.7 nm, the 3-dB bandwidth of the spectrum is 4.2 nm and the repetition frequency is 21.1 MHz, respectively. The results match the cavity length built in the experiment, the signal-to-noise ratio of the output laser is 68 dB, after fitting the autocorrelation curve of the output pulse, the pulse width is 0.759 ps, and the time bandwidth product is 0.397. Collecting the spectrum every 2 hours in the experiment, observe the changes with time of the two peaks of the left and right sidebands closest to the center wavelength in the spectrum and the change of the output power with time during the whole process, and analyze the results to calculate the output . The fluctuation of the power in the course of more than 20 hours is only 0.11 mW, which explain the excellent stability of this fiber laser. In addition, we only increase the pump power without moving other components in the cavity, due to the stress of the polarization controller, the single-mode fiber causes the internal unbalanced pressure of the fiber to introduce stress birefringence, and together with PC-2, which forms a filter with a smaller bandwidth and realizes the continuous tunable output of the mode-locked fiber laser. The tuning range of the wavelength interval is 1.5 nm. After increasing the pump power to 360 mW, we adjust the polarization controller to introduce excessive nonlinearity in the laser cavity, the soliton become unstable. Due to the peak power clamping effect, pulse splitting can occur and the modulation period of the spectrum is 0.467 nm. According to the relationship between the time domain spacing and the spectral spacing, the pulse spacing of the two sets of pulse output terminals is calculated to be about 17.23 ps. Further collect its autocorrelation graph, which can be seen from the autocorrelation graph. The pulse interval is obviously greater than 5 times the pulse width, so it is concluded that the fiber laser produces a bound state soliton at this time, and it is in a loosely bound state. The mode-locking threshold of this laser is 270 mW at the pump power is 5.67 mW. From 270 mW to 360 mW, the overall mode-locked output power increases linearly, and the overall output power slope is 2.42%. The low light-to-light conversion efficiency is caused by the loss of the fiber fusion splice in the cavity. The fiber laser has a simple structure, easy tuning and has good stability. It provides a technical method for realizing wavelength tuning and traditional soliton mode locking, it can also be used as a seed light source in optical communications.

Key words: Laser; Traditional soliton; Nonlinear optical loop mirror; Er-doped; Passively mode-locked OCIS Codes: 140.4050; 140.3090; 140.3500; 140.3510

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