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2 μm 可调谐高重复频率主动锁模光纤激光器

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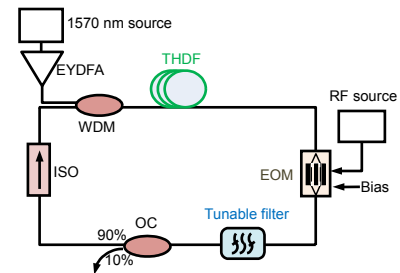
摘要: 本文报道了一种 2 μm 波段可调谐主动锁模光纤激光器, 增益介质为 4 m 铥钦共掺光纤。主动锁模脉冲采用强度调制方式实现, 调制信号为高频正弦信号。可调谐窄带宽光滤波器用来窄化激光线宽, 抑制噪声, 同时可实现波长调谐。实现了稳定的 2.2 GHz 重复频率主动锁模脉冲输出, 对应 649 阶谐波锁模脉冲序列, 脉冲宽度约为 200 ps, 频谱信噪比可达 68 dB, 激光线宽为 0.05 nm, 光谱调谐范围为 1907 nm~1927 nm。

关键词: 光纤激光器; 主动锁模; 铥钦共掺光纤; 高重复频率; 可调谐激光

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Tunable high repetition rate actively mode-locked fiber laser at 2 μm

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Abstract: We demonstrate a tunable actively mode-locked fiber laser at 2 μm band. A segment of 4 m Tm-Ho-co-doped fiber is used as gain medium. Active mode locking pulse is realized by using intensity modulation and the signal source is high frequency sinusoidal signal. A tunable narrow bandwidth optical filter is used to narrow laser linewidth, suppress noise and achieve wavelength tuning. Stable actively mode-locked pulses with up to 2.2 GHz repetition rate is obtained, corresponding to 649 order harmonic mode-locked pulse train. The pulse width is about 200 ps. The signal-to-noise ratio of RF spectrum is 68 dB. The optical tuning range is 1907 nm~1927 nm.

Keywords: fiber laser; actively mode-locked; Tm-Ho-co-doped fiber; high repetition rate; tunable laser

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1 引言

锁模光纤激光器具有脉宽窄、重复频率高、调谐性好、抗干扰能力强、易于集成等优点,随着集成光纤器件及掺杂光纤的工艺提升,1.55 μm 及 1 μm 传统波段光纤激光器已不能完全满足实际应用需求,以掺铯光纤、铯钨共掺光纤、掺钨光纤等作为增益介质的光纤激光器工作在 2 μm 波段,同时覆盖了大气的高透过率窗口和高吸收窗口,因此 2 μm 光纤激光器在雷达、遥感、自由空间光通信等领域具有较好的应用前景^[1]。但目前相较于 1.55 μm 和 1 μm 锁模光纤激光器,2 μm 锁模光纤激光器在重复频率、脉宽、调谐范围等方面参数仍相差较远,这受限于 2 μm 波段光纤强色散及 2 μm 光纤器件制作工艺难度大等问题。主动锁模光纤激光器的优势在于可实现超高的重复频率且重频、波形可控,这使其在大容量高速光通信^[2]、宽带信号处理^[3-4]、高速光频梳产生^[5]等领域具有重要的应用价值。已经报道的 2 μm 锁模激光器多为被动锁模,主要集中在新型饱和吸收体、不同波形及脉冲状态产生等方面^[6-9]。目前,主动锁模光纤激光器的研究多集中在 1.55 μm 及 1 μm 波段^[10-11],关于 2 μm 主动锁模的报道较少。2013 年,王雄等报道了全光纤结构的主动锁模掺铯光纤激光器,实现了 11.884 MHz 及 12.099 MHz 重复频率的锁模脉冲激光^[12-13]。2015 年,Kneis 等报道了一种波长可调谐、高平均功率输出的主动锁模掺铯光纤激光器^[14]。2016 年,Wang 报道了一种泵浦调制的主动锁模掺铯光纤激光器^[15]。可见目前,实现 GHz 量级重频的 2 μm 锁模脉冲仍具有一定困难。

本文在环形腔铯钨共掺光纤激光器结构中,采用电光强度调制的方式,通过引入可调谐光滤波器,实现了稳定的 2 μm 波段高重复频率主动锁模脉冲激光输出,重复频率可达 2.2 GHz,对应 649 阶谐波锁模脉冲序列,脉冲宽度约为 200 ps,频谱信噪比可达 68 dB,激光光谱调谐范围为 1907 nm~1927 nm。

2 实验结构与工作原理

2 μm 主动锁模铯钨共掺光纤激光器结构如图 1 所示,激光器采用全光纤环形腔结构,增益介质选取为一段 4 m 长单模铯钨共掺光纤(INO TH550)。泵浦源

由 1570 nm 半导体激光器和一个铯钨共掺光纤放大器(erbium-ytterbium-doped fiber amplifier, EYDFA),泵浦源的稳定性是影响主动锁模激光稳定性的重要因素,因此 1570 nm 信号源选取为 Tektronix 公司的窄线宽、高稳定性半导体激光器(OM2210),信号光通过商用化低噪声铯钨共掺光纤放大器放大,最大输出功率为 1 W,调制器为实验室自研的 2 μm 波段电光强度调制器(electro-optical modulator, EOM),其带宽为 10 GHz,微波源为正弦信号发生器(Hittite HMC-T2220),其输出信号频率范围为 10 MHz~20 GHz,最大输出功率为 30 dBm,无需外置微波放大器可直接驱动 EOM。采用 2 μm 波段窄带宽可调光滤波器(agiltron FOTF)限制光谱带宽并实现波长调谐,其滤波带宽约为 1 nm,偏振无关光隔离器(isolator, ISO)保证谐振腔内激光单向运转,1 \times 2 光耦合器(optical coupler, OC)的 90%端提供腔内反馈,10%端口作为输出测试端,输出脉冲激光由 10 GHz 带宽的 2 μm 波段光电探测器探测,脉冲信号由(agilent, DSO-X 93204A)高速示波器观测,其带宽为 32 GHz,射频信号由频谱分析仪(agilent, N9030A)同步观测,其频率范围为 3 Hz~44 GHz,光谱由光谱分析仪(YOKOGAWA, AQ6375)观测,最小分辨率为 0.05 nm。

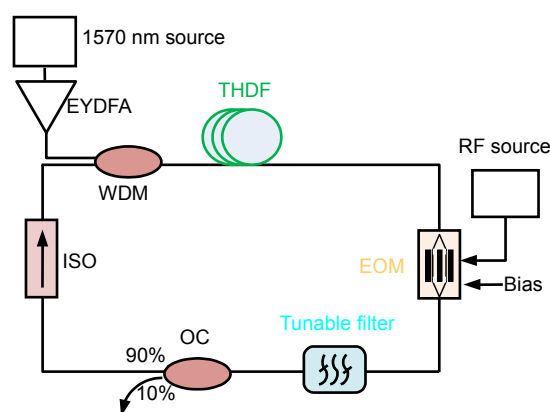


图 1 2 μm 主动锁模铯钨共掺光纤激光器结构图

Fig. 1 Schematic of 2 μm actively mode-locked THDF fiber laser

主动锁模调制方式采用高速强度调制,其原理如图 2 所示,采用外部正弦射频信号加载到 EOM,从而在腔内形成与调制频率相同的正弦状态的光损耗调

制, 当调制频率 f_m 与谐振腔纵模间隔($1/T_R$)相同时, 其中 T_R 为时域上的脉冲间隔, 腔内可饱和增益只会在调制损耗最小值附近产生净增益, 产生重复频率为谐振腔基频的超短脉冲^[16]。当调制器上加载的射频信号频率为基频的整数倍, 同样可产生重复频率与激光器调制频率相同的锁模脉冲, 此时激光器工作在谐波锁模状态。

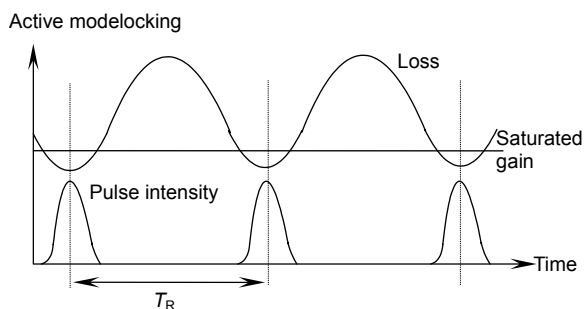


图 2 主动锁模原理图

Fig. 2 Schematic diagram of actively mode-locked operation

3 结果与讨论

实验中, 谐振腔总长度为 30.4 m, 根据环形腔纵模间隔 $1/T_R=c/2nl$, 其中 n 为光纤折射率, l 为谐振腔总腔长, 可计算主动锁模激光器基频为 3.39 MHz。由于信号源输出正弦信号的最小频率为 10 MHz, 无法得到基频锁模脉冲激光。将泵浦光功率固定在 1 W, 调制信号频率至 20.351 MHz, 同时调谐调制信号功率及调制器上的偏置电压, 可得到稳定的锁模脉冲激光输出, 此时激光器工作在 6 阶谐波锁模状态, 如图 3(a)

所示, 在 200 ns 的时域范围内, 脉冲峰值强度波动较小且相邻脉冲间无明显的超模产生。继续增加调制信号频率至 251.165 MHz 和 2200 MHz, 分别对应 74 阶和 649 阶谐波锁模状态, 得到对应锁模脉冲序列如图 3(b)、图 3(c)所示, 可以看到激光器工作在更高阶谐波锁模状态时, 脉冲峰值仍没有明显的功率抖动。对比图 3(a)和图 3(b)~3(c)中的插图可以看出, 随着重复频率增加, 锁模脉冲宽度由 3 ns 减小至 200 ps, 可以得出结论, 高阶谐波锁模可以有效地减小锁模脉冲宽度。

为进一步说明主动锁模工作状态及噪声环境, 图 4(a)~4(c)分别给出了重复频率为 20.351 MHz、251.165 MHz 和 2200 MHz 时同步观测的脉冲信号频谱。此时频谱仪分辨率为 3 Hz, 频域扫描范围为 10 kHz。可以看出, 三种不同的谐波锁模状态的频谱均具有较高的信噪比, 分别为 77 dB、71 dB、68 dB, 且在各自扫描范围内没有边模产生, 说明高重复频率主动锁模脉冲工作在较低的噪声环境中。

主动锁模脉冲单波长激光光谱如图 5(a)所示, 此时激光峰值波长为 1915.9 nm, 3 dB 线宽约为 0.05 nm, 边模抑制比为 49 dB, 输出激光线宽与边模抑制比主要由滤波器滤波带宽及滤波深度决定。窄带宽滤波器限制主动锁模激光线宽, 可以有效地抑制主动锁模脉冲的超模噪声, 是可以得到稳定的 GHz 量级锁模脉冲的最重要因素。另一方面, 由于 THDF 的增益谱范围可达 1800 nm~2000 nm, 窄带滤波器的引入造成了大量的能量损耗, 这也很大程度增加了主动锁模激光的阈值。因此, 在滤波器的选取过程中, 应协同考虑滤波带宽及阈值的问题。调谐滤波器的峰值波长, 可实现波长可调谐主动锁模激光输出, 可调谐光谱如图 5(b)

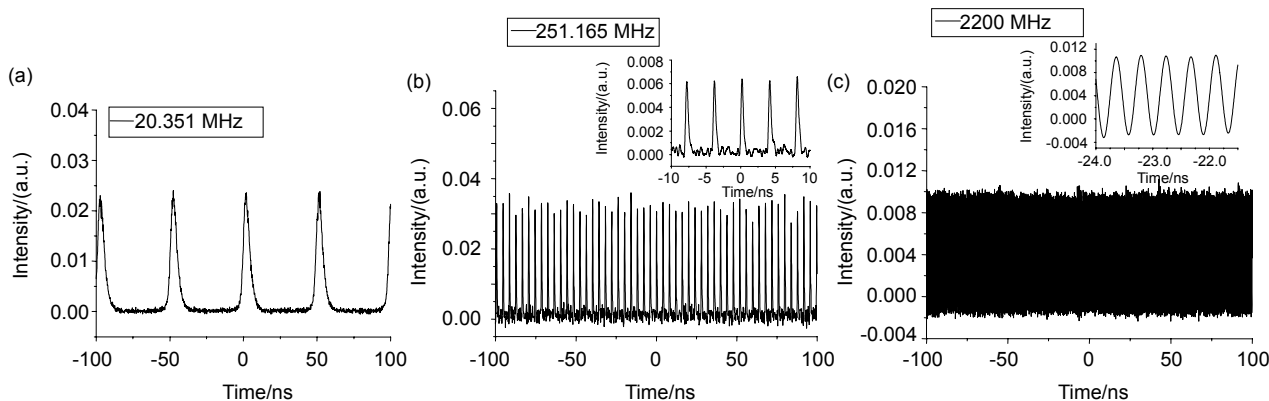


图 3 主动锁模激光脉冲序列。(a) 重复频率 20.35 MHz; (b) 重复频率 251.165 MHz; (c) 重复频率 2200 MHz

Fig. 3 Actively mode-locked pulse train. (a) 20.35 MHz repetition rate; (b) 251.165 MHz repetition rate; (c) 2200 MHz repetition rate

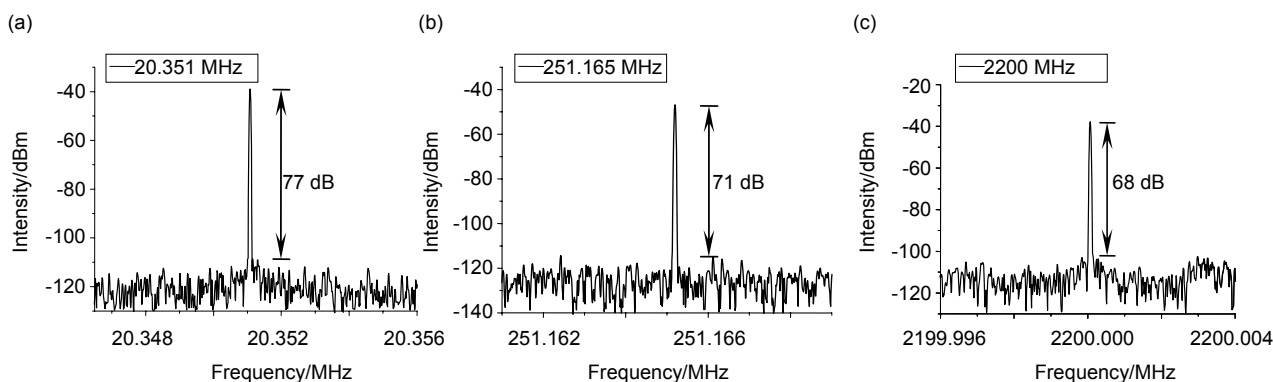


图 4 主动锁模激光频谱。(a) 重复频率 20.35 MHz; (b) 重复频率 251.165 MHz; (c) 重复频率 2200 MHz
Fig. 4 RF spectrum of actively mode-locked laser. (a) 20.35 MHz repetition rate; (b) 251.165 MHz repetition rate; (c) 2200 MHz repetition rate

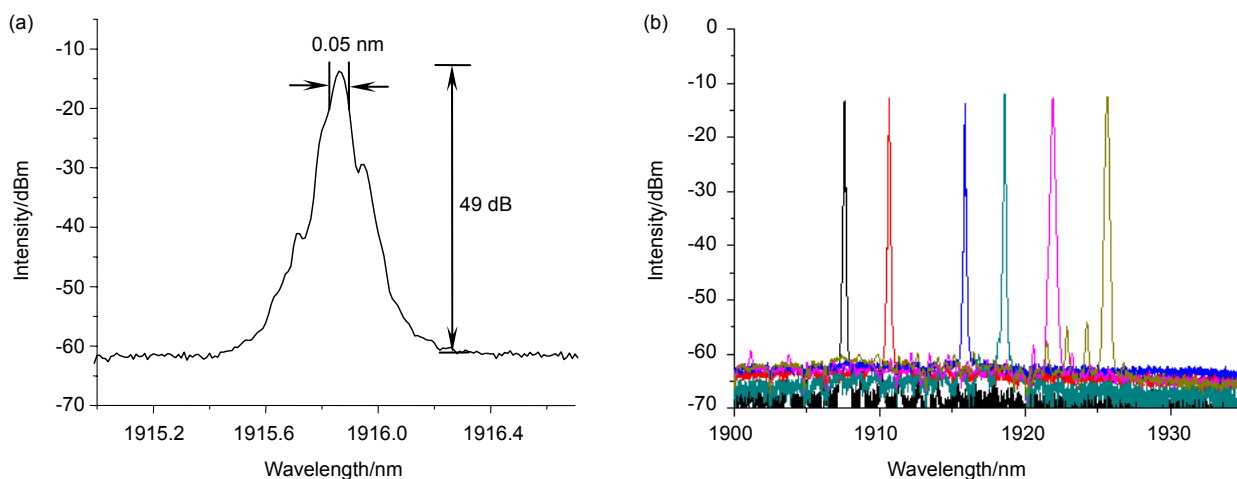


图 5 主动锁模激光光谱。(a) 单波长激光, 峰值波长 1915.9 nm; (b) 可调谐激光光谱, 调谐范围 1907 nm~1927 nm
Fig. 5 Optical spectrum of actively mode-locked laser. (a) Single wavelength, 1915.6 nm peak wavelength; (b) Tunable laser spectrum, 1907 nm~1927 nm tuning range

所示, 波长调谐范围为 1907 nm~1927 nm, 在此波长范围外, 激光器工作在连续运转状态, 主动锁模激光调谐范围可通过增加泵浦功率进一步优化。

4 总结

实验研究了一种 2 μm 高重复频率主动锁模光纤激光器, 通过在环形腔中加载电光强度调制, 实现了 2.2 GHz 重复频率的锁模脉冲激光输出。分别分析了 20 MHz、251 MHz、2.2 GHz 重复频率状态下高阶谐波锁模的时域及频域特性。在 200 ns 的时域范围内, 输出脉冲序列峰值较平坦, 对应频谱信噪比分别为 77 MHz、71 MHz、68 MHz。实验结果表明高重复频率脉冲具有较好的稳定性, 这受益于窄带的光谱滤波效

应及稳定的泵浦结构。通过调谐滤波器中心波长, 输出激光可调谐范围为 1907 nm~1927 nm。

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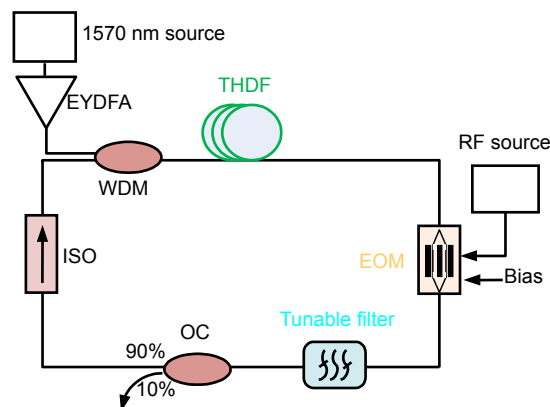
Tunable high repetition rate actively mode-locked fiber laser at 2 μm

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2 μm actively mode-locked THDF fiber laser

Overview: Recently the research on 2 μm mode-locked fiber laser has made rapid progress. However, comparing with 1.55 μm and 1 μm mode-locked fiber laser, 2 μm mode-locked fiber laser is seriously wanting on the parameters of repetition rate, pulse width and tuning range. This problem is limited by the large dispersion of silica fibers at 2 μm and the difficulty of the corresponding fabrication of fiber devices. The advantage of active mode locked fiber laser is that it can realize high repetition frequency, high frequency and waveform controlling. Therefore, it has important application value in large capacity high speed optical communication, broadband signal processing, high-speed optical frequency comb generation and other fields. At present, the research on actively mode-locked fiber laser is mainly focused on 1.55 μm and 1 μm bands. There are fewer reports on the 2 μm actively mode-locked fiber laser. In 2013, Wang Xiong *et al.* reported an all-fiber actively mode-locked thulium-doped laser. It realizes mode-locked pulses with 11.884 MHz and 12.099 MHz repetition rate. In 2015, C. Kneis *et al.* reported a wavelength tunable, high average output power actively mode-locked thulium-doped fiber laser. In 2016, Y. Wang reported a pump modulation actively mode-locked thulium-doped fiber laser. It can be seen from the reported research, it is still difficult to realize the 2 μm actively mode-locked pulses in an all-fiber cavity with GHz magnitude repetition rate.

We demonstrate a tunable actively mode-locked fiber laser at 2 μm band. A segment of 4 m Tm-Ho-co-doped fiber is used as gain medium. Active mode locking pulse is realized by using intensity modulation and the signal source is high frequency sinusoidal signal. A tunable narrow bandwidth optical filter is used to narrow laser linewidth, suppress noise and achieve wavelength tuning. Stable actively mode-locked pulses with up to 2.2 GHz repetition rate is obtained, corresponding to 649 order harmonic mode-locked pulse train. The pulse width is about 200 ps. The signal-to-noise ratio of RF spectrum is 68 dB. The optical tuning range is 1907 nm~1927 nm. This fiber laser has the great value in applications such as high speed optical communication, optical frequency comb and mid-infrared source generation.

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