

Stable and wavelength-tunable erbium-doped fiber double-ring laser in S-band window operation

Hung-Chang Chien ^a, Chien-Hung Yeh ^{b,*}, Kuo-Hsiang Lai ^{a,c},
Chien-Chung Lee ^a, Sien Chi ^{a,d}

^a Department of Photonics, Institute of Electro-Optical Engineering, National Chiao Tung University, Hsinchu 300, Taiwan

^b Transmission System Department, Computer and Communications Research Laboratories, Industrial Technology Research Institute, Chutung, Hsinchu 310, Taiwan

^c Chunghwa Telecom Co., Ltd., Yang-Mei, Taoyuan 326, Taiwan

^d Institute of Electro-Optical Engineering, Yuan Ze University, Chung-Li 320, Taiwan

Received 28 August 2004; received in revised form 10 January 2005; accepted 14 January 2005

Abstract

A stable and tunable S-band erbium-doped fiber (EDF) double-ring laser has been proposed and experimentally demonstrated. Based on the double-ring configuration, the EDF ring laser exhibits more stable output wavelengths and powers than those of the single-ring. Wide tunable range of 1484–1518 nm, the side-mode suppression ratio (SMSR) of larger than 44.7 dB/0.05 nm and the output power of larger than –2.2 dB m over the operation range of 1484–1510 nm have been retrieved.

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Keywords: EDF; Fiber laser; S-band; Double-ring

1. Introduction

Broadband tunable laser sources are the major devices in optical transmission systems. The stable output frequency and power of the fiber ring lasers

are always required for wavelength division multiplexing (WDM) networks and sensing systems. Recently, several stabilization techniques, such as integrating two cascaded FFP filters of wide different free spectral ranges (FSRs) into cavity [1], using passive multiple-ring cavity [2], have been reported. In [3], we also demonstrated a stabilization technique employing a Fabry–Perot laser (FP-LD) and an FFP filter for the multi-mode erbium-doped fiber (EDF) ring laser. However, the tuning

* Corresponding author. Tel.: +886 939 442785; fax: +886 3 5828187.

E-mail addresses: depew.eo89g@nctu.edu.tw, depew@itri.org.tw (C.-H. Yeh).

steps of the proposed fiber ring laser were subjected to the mode-spacing of FP-LD. Because of the bandwidth limitation of erbium-doped fiber amplifiers (EDFAs), the operation region of EDF ring lasers only covers both the C- to L-band (1530–1610 nm) [4,5], and is not sufficient until an EDFA and a fiber ring laser for S-band operation are proposed [6,7]. In this letter, we propose and experimentally investigate a stable and tunable S-band (1484–1518 nm) EDF ring laser with double-ring configuration. This fiber ring laser has free tuning steps and features stable output powers and wavelengths in S-band. The behavior of the output power and wavelength stabilities, tuning range and side-mode suppression ratio (SMSR) has also been experimentally studied.

2. Experiments

Fig. 1 shows the experimental setup for the stable and tunable S-band EDF double-ring laser. This apparatus consists of two 2×2 and 50:50 optical couplers, a polarization controller (PC), two fiber Fabry–Perot filters (FFP-TP), and an S-band EDFA module with two amplifier stages and a power-sharing 980 nm pump laser. The total pump power of this S-band amplifier can be up to

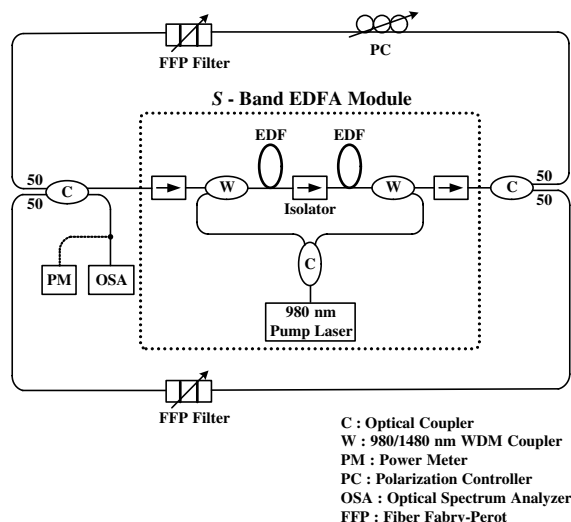


Fig. 1. Experimental setup of the S-band EDF double-ring laser.

280 mW while the bias current is operated at 356 mA. The S-band EDF inside EDFA module has a depressed cladding design in order to provide a sharp, high attenuation, long wavelength cutoff filter into active fibers. Furthermore, the EDFA module comes in two stages EDF of different properties. The fiber in the first stage is 20 m long, and both low noise figure and medium gain are contributed by forward pumping. The fiber in the second stage has the fiber length of 30 m, and large output power can be generated through backward pumping. Besides, the optical isolator is arranged between these two stages in order to reduce backward amplified spontaneous emission (ASE). Both high gain of 32 dB and low noise figure of 5.7 dB at 1500 nm can be obtained while the input power of -25 dB m is provided. The saturated output power at 1500 nm can reach 14 dB m for input signal power of 0 dB m. Moreover, two FFP filters are all-fiber components with widely tunable range, FSR of 44.5 nm, finesse of 200, low polarization-dependent loss of ~ 0.1 dB and insertion loss of < 0.5 dB. Wavelength selection in the double-ring laser cavity can be achieved by applying external voltage (0–12 V) on the piezoelectric transducer (PZT) of two FFP filters. Two FFP filters are nearly tuned to the same wavelength for single frequency output. The stable output wavelength and power of the laser can be easily achieved while the state of polarization adjusted by the PC in the dual-ring cavity is maintained. In addition, an optical spectrum analyzer (OSA) with 0.05 nm resolution and a power meter (PM) are used to measure the output wavelengths and powers of the proposed ring laser.

3. Results and discussions

Double-ring configuration can serve as a mode filter and only the particular modes, which coincide with the central frequencies of two filters, can oscillate. The double-ring configuration shown in Fig. 1 can be viewed as the combination of two single-ring cavities called main-ring (52 m long) and sub-ring (60 m long) cavities, respectively. Moreover, as schematically depicted in Fig. 2, the main- and sub-ring cavities have FSRs of

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