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***MULTIPLE WAVELENGTHS GENERATION UTILIZING
NONLINEAR OPTICS OF FOUR WAVE MIXING***

NORAN AZIZAN BIN CHOLAN

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**MULTIPLE WAVELENGTHS GENERATION UTILIZING NONLINEAR
OPTICS OF FOUR WAVE MIXING**

By

NORAN AZIZAN BIN CHOLAN

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia,
in Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

November 2014

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To my beloved families and friends



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Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia
in fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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November 2014

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The response turns from linear to nonlinear when high intensity waves propagate in optical fibers, causing the emergence of nonlinear phenomena such as stimulated Brillouin scattering (SBS) and four wave mixing (FWM). While that phenomena cause optical communication systems to deteriorate, they are nevertheless useful for certain applications such as in multiple wavelengths generation. This dissertation presents experimental work that involves the manipulation of FWM in the developments of lasers and cascades. Four main research studies are successfully demonstrated in efforts to improve the performance of FWM-based lasers and cascades. The first study is related to multiwavelength BEFLs. Despite the advantage of wide tunability, they unfortunately suffer from the laser output flatness due to the nature of cascaded SBS processes. In this work, FWM in an optical fiber is applied to the laser lines of a multiwavelength BEFL through the incorporation of residual waves in order to make the output flat. Comparisons between the BEFL with and without the assistance of FWM suggest the effectiveness of the proposed technique. With the assistance of FWM, the uniformity or flatness records a 3.73 dB improvement as compared to the case without the assistance of FWM when the Brillouin pump is set to 1550 nm. The second research work is related to an experimental study on the residual waves of multiwavelength BEFLs. Experimental results suggest that the properties of residual waves are influenced by FWM. Multiple FWM processes in fibers are believed to cause the output power of the residual waves to grow gradually and the value of optical-signal-to-noise ratio to be lower due to the power sharing basis of FWM processes. The third research work, on the other hand, is aimed to improve continuous tunability of erbium-doped fiber lasers (EDFLs) in which the stability is obtained from multiple FWM processes in optical fibers. With the incorporation of tunable bandpass filters in the laser cavity, a proposed dual wavelength EDFL can achieve continuous wavelength spacing from 0.52 nm to 22.78 nm, limited only by the gain bandwidth of the erbium-doped fiber amplifier and the linewidth of filters. In the fourth research work, FWM cascades without external laser sources and modulators is proposed in a bid to reduce the complexity of the system. The need for laser sources is catered by a dual wavelength EDFL which acts as an intracavity pump, while the requirement for pump

modulators for SBS suppression is tackled by the broad linewidth of the EDFL. In summary, four research studies that are related to FWM in generating multiple wavelengths are experimentally demonstrated in this thesis. The first two studies focus on improvements in BEFLs, while the third and fourth study is for enhancements in EDFLs and FWM cascades respectively. All the four studies are found to be effective in elevating the performances and understanding of FWM-based lasers and cascades to further heights.



Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia
sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Doktor Falsafah

PENGHASILAN PANJANG GELOMBANG BERBILANG MENGGUNAKAN OPTIK TIDAK LINAR PERGAULAN EMPAT GELOMBANG

Oleh

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Tindak balas bertukar daripada linier kepada tidak linier apabila gelombang berkeamatan tinggi merambat dalam gentian optik, menyebabkan keluarnya fenomena tidak linier seperti penyerakan Brillouin rangsangan (SBS) dan pergaulan empat gelombang (FWM). Walaupun fenomena ini menyebabkan sistem komunikasi optik menjadi lebih merosot, ianya berguna untuk aplikasi tertentu seperti dalam penjanaan pelbagai gelombang. Tesis ini mempersembahkan kerja eksperimen yang melibatkan manipulasi FWM dalam pembangunan laser dan lita. Empat kajian penyelidikan utama telah berjaya ditunjukkan dalam usaha untuk memperbaiki pencapaian. Kajian pertama adalah berkaitan dengan laser gentian Brillouin-erbium (BEFLs) panjang gelombang berbilang. Walaupun dengan kelebihan penalaan yang luas, ianya mengalami masalah dari segi kerataan keluaran laser berikutan keadaan semulajadi proses SBS berlata. Dalam kajian ini, FWM dalam gentian optik diaplikasikan kepada laser Brillouin-erbium (BEFLs) panjang gelombang berbilang melalui penggunaan gelombang baki untuk menjadikan keluaran rata. Perbandingan diantara BEFL dengan dan tanpa bantuan FWM mengesahkan keberkesanan teknik ini. Dengan bantuan FWM, kerataan merekodkan penambahbaikan 3.73 dB berbanding dengan kes tanpa bantuan FWM apabila pam Brillouin disetkan kepada 1550 nm. Kajian penyelidikan kedua pula adalah berkaitan dengan sebuah kajian eksperimen tentang gelombang baki BEFLs panjang gelombang berbilang. Keputusan eksperimen mencadangkan bahawa ciri-ciri gelombang baki dipengaruhi oleh FWM. Proses berbilang FWM dalam gentian dipercayai menyebabkan keluaran kuasa gelombang baki bertumbuh secara perlahan dan nilai nisbah-isyarat optik-kepada-hingar menjadi lebih rendah akibat daripada asas perkongsian kuasa oleh proses FWM. Kajian penyelidikan ketiga pula bertujuan untuk memperbaiki penalaan berterusan laser gentian berdopkan erbium (EDFLs) yang mana kestabilan diperolehi daripada pelbagai proses FWM dalam gentian optik. Dengan penggunaan penapis lurus jalur, EDFL panjang gelombang berbilang yang dicadangkan boleh mencapai jarak panjang gelombang berterusan daripada 0.52 nm hingga 22.78 nm, hanya dihadkan oleh lebar jalur gandaan penguat gentian berdop erbium dan lebar jalur penapis. Dalam kajian penyelidikan keempat, lita FWM tanpa sumber laser dan pemodulat luar dicadangkan dalam usaha untuk mengurangkan komplikasi sistem.

Keperluan untuk sumber laser dipenuhi oleh EDFL panjang gelombang berdua yang bertindak sebagai satu pam intrarongga, manakala keperluan untuk pemodulat pam bagi penghapusan SBS diatasi dengan EDFL yang berjalur lebar. Secara kesimpulannya, empat kajian penyelidikan yang berkaitan dengan FWM dalam menghasilkan panjang gelombang berbilang ditunjuk dalam tesis ini. Dua kajian pertama fokus kepada penambahbaikan dalam BEFLs, manakala kajian ketiga dan keempat adalah penambahbaikan untuk EDFLs dan lita FWM secara urutan. Semua empat kajian tersebut didapati berkesan dalam meningkatkan pencapaian dan kefahaman ke atas laser dan lita yang berdasarkan FWM ke tahap lebih tinggi.



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I certify that a Thesis Examination Committee has met on 20 November 2014 to conduct the final examination of Noran Azizan Bin Cholan on his thesis entitled "Multiple Wavelengths Generation Utilizing Nonlinear Optics of Four Wave Mixing" in accordance with the Universities and University Colleges Act 1971 and the Constitution of the Universiti Putra Malaysia [P.U.(A) 106] 15 March 1998. The Committee recommends that the student be awarded the Doctor of Philosophy.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ASE	Amplified spontaneous emission
BEFL	Brillouin-erbium fiber laser
BER	Bit error rate
BFL	Brillouin fiber laser
BP	Brillouin pump
CFBG	Chirped fiber Bragg grating
CFWM	Cascaded four wave mixing
CW	Continuous wave
DC	Direct current
DCF	Dispersion compensating fiber
DSF	Dispersion shifted fiber
DWDM	Dense wavelength division multiplexing system
EDF	Erbium-doped fiber
EDFA	Erbium-doped fiber amplifier
FBG	Fiber Bragg grating
FWMC	Four wave mixing cascades
FWHM	Full width half maximum
FWM	Four wave mixing
HNLF	Highly nonlinear fiber
I/Q	Inphase/quadrature
MLL	Mode-locked laser
NF	Noise figure
OFC	Optical frequency comb
OPM	Optical power meter
OSA	Optical spectrum analyzer
OSNR	Optical signal to noise ratio
PC	Polarization controller
PCF	Photonic crystal fiber
PMF	Polarization maintaining fiber
PRBS	Pseudo random bit sequence
RF	Radio frequency
RFS	Recirculating frequency shifter
SBS	Stimulated Brillouin scattering
SLM	Single longitudinal mode
SMF	Single mode fiber
SPM	Self phase modulation
SRS	Stimulated Raman scattering
TBF	Tunable bandpass filter
TLS	Tunable laser source
VOA	Variable optical attenuator
WDM	Wavelength division multiplexing
XPM	Cross phase modulation
ZDW	Zero dispersion wavelength

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

In the modern age, the high speed internet is very important to the people. It is nowadays not an option but a necessity for many people as they are much reliant on the internet to cater for their needs in life. However, the high speed internet, which involves the processes of downloading and uploading signals at high data rates, requires an enormous bandwidth for operation. With the awesome bandwidth offered by optical fibers, dense wavelength division multiplexing (DWDM) technology is a competitive candidate that is more than capable to satisfy the demand for the rapid and reliable transmission of voice, video and data signals. A DWDM system whose channel spacing is very small in a fraction of nanometer is a system where a number of wavelengths are combined into an optical fiber for the transmission of signals. The combination is possible in this case due to the capability of optical fibers to transport many different wavelengths concurrently without mutual interference.

As illustrated in Fig. 1.1, several optical devices are integrated in order to generate, distribute, isolate and amplify optical power for transmission in DWDM systems. Several channels corresponding to different wavelengths are transmitted into the same optical fiber. They are multiplexed before entering the optical fiber link. Along the transmission link, optical fiber amplifiers in different positions keep the channels at certain required levels and dispersion compensators are used to nullify the impact of dispersion in optical fibers. In addition, there are nodes along the link where specific DWDM channels can be added into the optical stream or dropped from it. At the end of the link, the channels are demultiplexed before they reach optical receivers and the information carried by the DWDM channels can be recovered at the receivers.

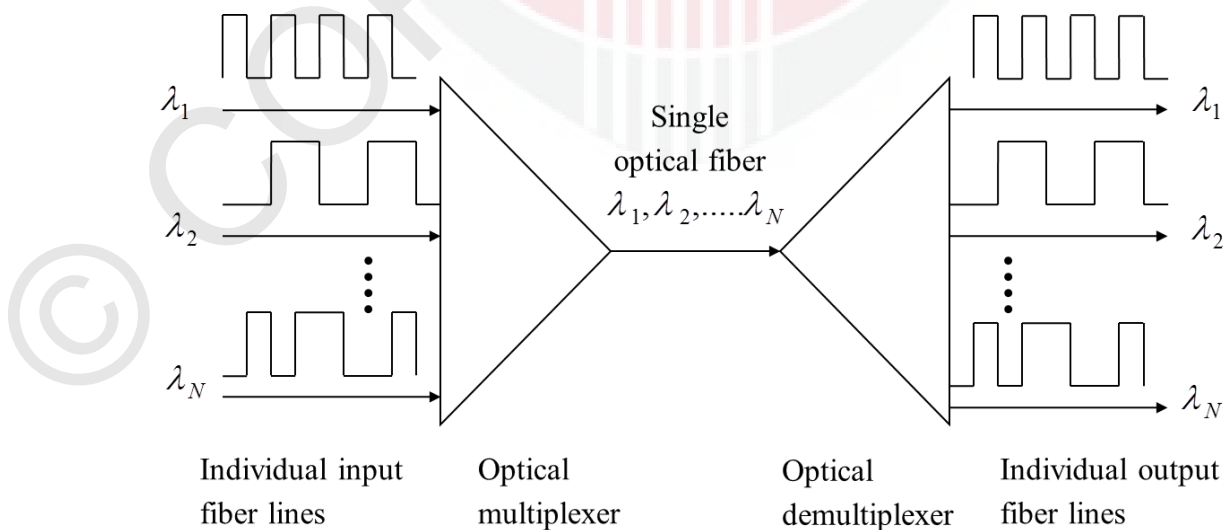


Figure 1.1: Basic DWDM system.

The guidelines to determine the wavelength and the wavelength spacing of DWDM channels are provided by ITU-T G.694.1, a recommendation issued by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) [1]. The recommendation provide a frequency grid for DWDM applications for channel spacings of 12.5 GHz, 50 GHz, 100 GHz and wider with a reference frequency fixed at 193.10 THz (1552.52 nm). Table 1.1 illustrates one example of the frequency grid. It is important to note that despite with enhanced transmission capacity when implementing DWDM systems, wavelengths or frequencies need to be stable for reliable operation due to the close spacing of wavelengths. Precision temperature control of laser transmitters is a necessity in DWDM systems to prevent the wavelengths from drifting.

Table 1.1: Nominal central frequencies of DWDM grid

Nominal central frequencies (THz) for spacings of:				Wavelengths (nm)
12.5 GHz	25 GHz	50 GHz	100GHz and above	
193.1000	193.100	193.10	193.1	1552.5244
193.0875	-	-	-	1552.6249
193.0750	193.075	-	-	1552.7254
193.0625	-	-	-	1552.8259
193.0500	193.050	193.05	-	1552.9265
193.0375	-	-	-	1553.0270
193.0250	193.025	-	-	1553.1276
193.0125	-	-	-	1553.2282
193.0000	193.000	193.00	193.0	1553.3288
192.9875	-	-	-	1553.4294
192.9750	192.975	-	-	1553.5300
192.9625	-	-	-	1553.6307

Multiple wavelengths are required for operation in DWDM systems. The technique normally used to provide the wavelengths is by utilizing individual semiconductor lasers as carriers for optical modulators. The use of semiconductor lasers however increases complexity and this is especially true when the number of channels is large as each semiconductor laser requires temperature and current controllers in their operation. One way to reduce the complexity is by incorporating multiwavelength sources to provide the multiple wavelengths as illustrated in Fig. 1.2. While the

multiwavelength sources still need an optical demultiplexer to separate the multiple wavelengths into individual wavelength, the drawback is offset by the removal of individual semiconductor lasers as carriers for optical modulators. This makes multiwavelength sources as a competent candidate to be a multiple wavelength provider in DWDM systems.

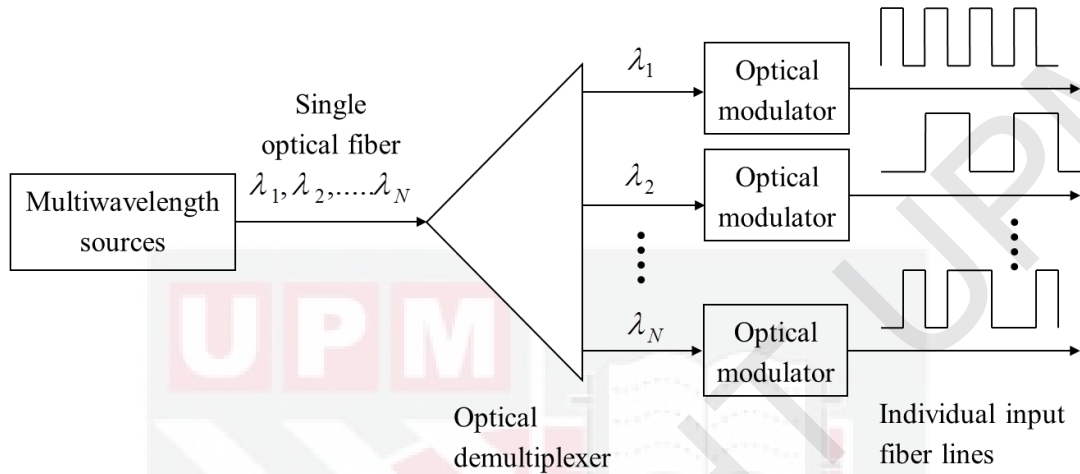


Figure 1.2: Application of multiwavelength sources as transmitters in DWDM system.

Multiwavelength sources can be realized using many methods. One of the methods is by utilizing nonlinearities in optical fibers. The nonlinear optics are actually originated from the behavior of optical fibers that turns from linear to nonlinear when the intensity of input light is relatively high. While the nonlinear optics are harmful to optical communication systems, they bring benefits to the generation of multiple wavelengths. Nonlinear optics such as such as four wave mixing (FWM), stimulated Brillouin scattering (SBS) and stimulated Raman scattering (SRS) can be manipulated to be a source of multiple wavelength generation. For example, despite the requirement for high pump power, cascaded FWM can be used to generate spectral lines covering over a wide band provided that the phase matching is preserved during the propagation. Besides being multiwavelength sources, nonlinear optics can also help improve the performance of multiple wavelength generators. For example, FWM can be manipulated to improve the flatness of multiwavelength fiber lasers.

1.2 Problem Statement

In view of improving the performances of multiwavelength sources, four main problems are identified in this research work. Out of four, two problems are related to multiwavelength Brillouin erbium fiber lasers (BEFLs) and one problem each for erbium-doped fiber lasers (EDFLs) and four wave mixing cascades (FWMC) respectively. The problems stated here are obtained from the literature review that is carried out during the study and they provide a basis for the objectives of this thesis.

The first problem on BEFLs is related to the flatness of multiwavelength laser output. While the multiwavelength BEFLs have wide tunability as a result of the suppression of self-lasing cavity modes, it suffers from the laser output uniformity. In a proposed BEFL in [2], the tunability obtained spans over the entire C-band but the peak power difference between the first and the last channel is 7.68 dB. The same is also true for another configuration proposed in [3]. The first and the last channel recorded peak powers of 8.19 and -8.3 dBm respectively, bringing the peak power difference to 16.49 dB. The significant discrepancy in power for the multiwavelength output can bring harm especially to a long haul optical communication system where a number of amplifiers are necessary to overcome losses during the transmission. After going through the amplifiers, the power discrepancy can possibly become larger that it can cause a channel to be lost during the transmission due to the gain mode competition in the amplifiers. Therefore, a flat multiwavelength output is vital for a reliable and robust long haul optical communication system.

The second problem on BEFLs is associated with a lack of explanation on the cause behind the generation of Stokes and anti-Stokes lines in BEFLs. In [2]-[6], FWM in optical fibers is exploited in increasing the number of Stokes and anti-Stokes lines. However, the formation and roles of residual waves that become seeds for the generation of laser lines in BEFLs are not clearly explained and clarified in that research work. Moreover, the properties of residual waves (forward transmitted) such as the output power and optical-signal-to-noise-ratio (OSNR) characteristics in comparison to the waves of BEFL (backward reflected) have not been experimentally explored. The knowledge in such properties and roles of residual waves can help researchers to get a better insight on the impact of FWM and residual waves on the performance of BEFLs.

The third problem is related to the wavelength spacing tunability of EDFLs. In efforts to stabilize EDFLs against the gain mode competition, a self-stability mechanism of FWM is proven to be a successful way in diminishing the fierce competition for erbium gain in erbium-doped fibers (EDFs) [7]. Despite the achievement, the wavelength spacing is fixed due to the use of fiber Bragg gratings (FBGs) in the operation. A scheme is then proposed in order to achieve the tunability [8]. While the wavelength spacing is tunable in the scheme, the tunability is not continuous but discrete. For the FWM-based EDFL to achieve continuous tunability, a scheme is then recommended where a special mechanical apparatus is utilized to modify a chirp ratio of an FBG so that it can ultimately tune the wavelength spacing of the EDFL continuously [9]. However, the tunability is limited from 0.32 to 0.81 nm and the use of mechanical apparatus for operation makes the system more complex. Therefore, a scheme with wide and continuous wavelength spacing tunability, operated in a simple way, is necessary to further improve the performances of FWM-based EDFLs.

The fourth problem is associated with the complexity of FWMC. It is known that for an FWMC to operate, it requires tunable laser sources to be the seeds and phase/intensity modulators to get the linewidth of laser sources to be wide enough for SBS suppression [10]-[13]. The requirements though would increase the complexity. For example, the modulators need to be driven with a certain combination of few periodic radio frequencies or pseudorandom bit sequence for SBS suppression and this could make the design more complicated. In addition, the utilization of

phase/intensity modulators could affect the performance of the system. It is theoretically and experimentally reported that the phase modulation could cause the signal and idler powers to fluctuate more and this could lead to the degradation of optical communication systems [14]-[15]. Hence, a scheme needs to be designed in such a way that it is free from external laser sources and phase/intensity modulators so that the complexity to design an FWMC can be reduced.

1.3 Research Objectives

The main objective of this research is to improve the performances of multiple wavelengths generation that utilizes nonlinear optics of FWM in the operation. Specific objectives are as follow:

- i. To design and develop a flat multiwavelength BEFL in which a mechanism of FWM is manipulated in flattening the output.
- ii. To investigate the formation, properties and role of residual waves in generating Stokes and anti-Stokes lines in multiwavelength BEFLs.
- iii. To enhance the wavelength spacing tunability of a dual wavelength EDFL in which the stability of lasers is obtained from a self-stability mechanism of FWM in an optical fiber.
- iv. To design and develop an FWMC that is free from any external tunable laser sources and phase modulators in an effort to reduce the complexity of the design.

1.4 Thesis Outline

This thesis consists of eight chapters. The first chapter (Chapter 1) is devoted to the introduction of thesis. In this chapter, the application of multiwavelength sources to DWDM systems, problems and objectives of the research work are presented. The literature review is then elaborated in Chapter 2. The phenomena of nonlinear optics such as self-phase modulation (SPM), cross-phase modulation (XPM), FWM, SBS and SRS are discussed here, as well as the explanations of mechanisms and progress of BEFLs, EDFLs and FWMC. Chapter 3 afterwards presents the research methodology. In the beginning, the research design that illustrates links between the four studies conducted is clarified. This is then followed by the clarifications on the experimental procedures as well as the input and output parameters utilized in the experiments.

As this is a publication-based thesis, chapter 4 to 8 comprise of journal papers which are published over the period of this study. Chapter 4 is an article published in Applied Physics B, ISSN 1432-0649 (Appl. Phys. B, Vol. 112, No. 2, pp. 215-221, 2013). This article is related to a study on multiwavelength BEFLs which is aimed to flattening the laser output via FWM. Chapter 5 meanwhile presents the second article that is published in Optics Communications, ISSN 0030-4018 (Opt. Commun., Vol. 329, pp. 163-167, 2014). The article is about an investigation on the formation, properties and role of residual waves in multiwavelength BEFLs. In chapter 6, the third article which is published in Applied Physics B, ISSN 1432-0649 (Appl. Phys. B, Vol. 115, No. 2, pp. 251-256, 2014) is presented. This article is related to a single and dual-wavelength EDFL which has wide wavelength-spacing tunability due to the

incorporation of tunable filters. Chapter 7 meanwhile is formed by the fourth article that is published in Optics Express, ISSN 1094-4087 (Opt. Express, Vol. 21, No. 5, pp. 6131-6138, 2013). An FWMC scheme which can operate without external laser sources and modulators is reported here.

In the last chapter (Chapter 8), we take readers to conclusions that are drawn based on the main experimental results discussed in the previous chapters. This is then followed by the discussions on the achievements and problems faced by the proposed schemes as well as the recommendations for improvement that can be practically implemented in the future work.



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