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Published in:
Proceedings of the 24th European Conference on Optical Communication

Publication date:
1998

Document Version
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Link back to DTU Orbit

Citation (APA):

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New Bi-directional Mid Span Spectral Inversion using Bi-directional Four Wave Mixing in Semiconductor Optical Amplifiers

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Abstract: We report bi-directional four wave mixing in a SOA. A 10 Gb/s RZ 60 Km bi-directional mid-span spectral inversion (MSSI) experiment with less than 2 dB penalty is reported. Further we propose a new scheme, the "Swapping MSSI", which allows improved wavelength allocation and bandwidth utilisation.

Bi-directional four wave mixing in a SOA

First we demonstrate the possibility of obtaining two independent four-wave mixing products in a SOA when injecting a pump and signal simultaneously from both ends of the SOA. The quality of these four wave mixing products will be investigated in an MSSI experiment. The experimental set-up is depicted in Fig. 2. 10 Gb/s RZ signals are generated by gain-switching two DFB-lasers (λ1 = 1556 nm and λ2 = 1560 nm) at 10 GHz, followed by pulse compression with DCF (10 ps pulses). External modulation is applied to the pulse train using a PRBS sequence. After transmission over 30 km of NDSF the signals are demultiplexed, filtered and amplified. The signals are launched from each side of the SOA together with a local CW pump at h3 = 1553 nm inserted at both ends. Polarisation controllers, amplifiers and attenuators are used to obtain optimum polarisation state and signal levels to ensure the best FWM products. To separate incoming and out-going signals to the SOA we use circulators at both ends. The SOA is 1200 pm long, based on the M-DCPBH structure and optimised for a high optical confinement factor (rd.6) [8], which improves the FWM efficiency. The filtered conjugate four wave mixing signals are combined and transmitted through another 30 km of NDSF. At the receiver the quality of each signal is supervised simultaneously by demultiplexing and observing the eye diagram of one signal while measuring BER curves for the other.

The simultaneous bi-directional FWM products can be observed in the spectra in Fig. 3. The average signal and...
The pump power levels coupled into the amplifier are -4 dBm and 9 dBm, respectively (measured in the fiber). A conversion efficiency in the order of -18 dB is obtained for both signals. The optical SNR is 19 dB (0.5 nm resolution bandwidth) for the 1560 nm signal, and 17 dB for the 1556 nm signal. The peaks due to the residual power after demultiplexing can be observed.

BER measurements are presented in Fig. 4. When only one signal is transmitted the penalty induced by the MSSI is 1 dB for the 1556 nm signal and no penalty for the 1560 nm. This difference is believed to be due to the lower SNR obtained for the 1556 signal. Less than 2 dB penalty is observed for simultaneous bi-directional MSSI in the SOA compared to the unidirectional MSSI case.

**Swapping MSSI**

The experimental set-up used for the swapping technique is basically the same as in the bi-directional FWM. The pump wavelength is changed to \( \lambda_p = 1558 \) nm centered between \( \lambda_1 \) and \( \lambda_2 \). We increase the transmission speed at \( \lambda_1 \) to 20 Gb/s by passive multiplexing while keeping \( \lambda_2 \) at 10 Gb/s to measure BER.

The spectra from the swapping MSSI experiment are presented in Fig. 5. The expected asymmetric performance, due to the lower conversion efficiency towards longer wavelengths of FWM in SOAs, is avoided by independent tuning of the pump levels. A 2 dB difference can be observed in Fig. 5 for our experiment. Clear and open eyes can be observed for the 20 Gb/s channel at 1560 nm (Fig. 6b) after 60 km transmission while simultaneous error free operation is achieved for the 10 Gb/s channel at 1556 nm (Fig. 6c).

**Conclusion**

We have demonstrated the possibility to perform simultaneous bi-directional FWM in a SOA for a 10 Gb/s MSSI experiment over 60 km of fiber. The penalty when compared to single channel unidirectional FWM is less than 2 dB for both signals. The scheme can be upgraded to higher bit rates and number of channels, only limited by the SNR obtained in the FWM.

Further we have proposed a novel MSSI method, the swapping MSSI, which can improve the wavelength allocation and bandwidth utilisation.

**Acknowledgements**

This work has in part been carried out within the ACTS HIGHWAY project. France Telecom CNET and Alcatel Alsthom are acknowledged for providing devices.

**References**