Investigation of influence of properties of the laser’s pump beam and laser crystal on the generation of thermally-affected Bessel-Gauss beam

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Abstract: The generation of Helmholtz–Gauss beam families such as Bessel–Gauss (BG) beam can be dramatically suffered from thermal-induced effects. In this work, the output BG beams of a solid-state laser were assumed to pass through an ABCD optical system matrix. The analytical solutions show that the induced heat in the crystal depends on pump power, pump beam waist, thermal conductivity and absorption coefficient of laser crystal. In order to investigate the thermal effects, the intensity distributions of the BG beams against radial distance under various pump power, pump beam waist, absorption coefficient and thermal conductivity have been simulated. The results show that for high pump-power values and small values of pump waist, the thermal-induced effects are so dramatic and the beam intensity distribution profile is so altered that the identification of BG beams is not easily possible, but large pump waist and high thermal conductivity can eventually make the laser output similar to nonthermal case despite high pumping power is received. The results of this work are a valuable aid to experimenters for beam identification.

Keywords: Solid-state laser; Thermal effects; Bessel-Gaussian beam; Thermal lens; Laser beam characterization

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1 Introduction

In solid-state lasers, special attention has been paid to heat load in the gain medium as the pump energy is partly converted to laser output and most of the pump energy is lost in the form of heat. The induced heat is dispersed within the crystal and causes thermal expansion of the material leading to crystal deformation and to the so-called thermal lens effect. Since almost principal parameters of laser beam is directly affected by induced heat, therefore the most serious problems are then the beam distortion and degradation due to thermal lensing and depolarization loss due to stress birefringence [1-3].

The propagation characteristics of beams under severe induced heat is essential for designers to have a true insight to the laser output power, its efficiency and designing a suitable power of laser cooling systems. Bessel beams are considered as a nondiffracting solution to the scalar wave equation in circular cylindrical coordinates [4-5]. The Bessel-Gaussian (BG) beams which are Bessel beams apodized by a Gaussian transmittance, which carry a finite amount of energy and power is introduced by Gori et al. [6]. The BG beams are nearly nondiffracting because they can propagate over a large range without significant divergence. The propagation of BG beam has been investigated in free space and paraxial optical systems characterized by ABCD transfer matrices [5-6]. Recently, the existence of the BG beams was theoretically and experimentally presented [7-8].

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the generation of thermally-affected BG beams. By calculating the ABCD matrix of laser medium, we can observe the BG beam suffered by induced thermal load.

2 Thermal model and beam transformation in lens-like medium

We consider that the first-order BG beam is generated by a solid-state laser pumped by a super-Gaussian (SGP) pump profile. For this purpose, it is assumed that the variation of heat-induced refractive index can cause the gain medium is changed to an inhomogeneous graded index (GRIN) medium. Therefore assuming the GRIN medium as an ABCD thermally-affected medium, one has to calculate the element of the ABCD matrix of the GRIN medium for its full characterization. To do this, solution of the following heat equation should be obtained:

\[ K \nabla^2 T = -S(\rho, z) \]  

(1)

Where \( S(\rho, z) \) is the heat source density and \( K \) is the crystal thermal conductivity. We can write the heat source term as:

\[ S_{SG}(\rho, z) = Q_s \exp\left(-\frac{\rho^2}{\delta_p^2}\right)\exp(-\alpha z) \]  

(2)

where \( \alpha \) is the absorption coefficient of crystal, \( \delta_p \) is pump waist and \( Q_s \) is constant term as:

\[ Q_s = \frac{\sqrt{2}\eta_\text{qabs}P_p}{\pi^2\delta_p^2(1-e^{-\alpha})\text{erf}\left(\sqrt{2}\frac{\rho^2}{\delta_p^2}\right)} \]  

(3)

where \( P_p \) is the pumping power, \( \eta_\text{qabs} \) is the fraction of pump power converting to heat, \( \eta_\text{abs} \) is the fraction of absorbed pump beam and \( l \) is the laser crystal length. The accurate solution of Equation (1) has been derived by Usievich et al. [9] as:

\[ T(\rho, z) = \sum_{i=1}^{\infty} t_i(z) J_i(v_i, \rho) + T_s \]  

(4)

Where \( t_i(z) \) is a function dependent on the \( z \)-coordinate that satisfy the faces boundary conditions and \( v_i \) are the positive roots of equation \( \hbar J_i'(v_i) - K J_i(v_i) = 0 \). A change in the temperature results in a change in refractive index and causes the laser medium act as a convergent lens. The focal length of a lens-like medium is achieved by

\[ f_m = \frac{2n_r}{(n_r-1)(1+\nu)\alpha_T}\sum_{i=0}^{\infty} \int t_i^2(z) dz \]  

(5)

In addition, the expression for the refractive index of GRIN medium is obtained by expanding the Bessel functions and using paraxial ray approximation [10]:

\[ n(\rho, z) = n_0 \left(1 - \rho^2 \frac{\gamma(z)^2}{2}\right) \]  

(6)

Where

\[ \gamma(z) = \sqrt{\frac{1}{2n_r} \frac{\partial n}{\partial T} + (n_r-1)(1+\nu)\alpha_T\sum_{i=0}^{\infty} t_i(z)v_i^2} \]  

(7)

The ABCD transfer matrix is given as:

\[ [A \ B] = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & L \\ C & D \end{bmatrix} \times [GRIN] \]  

(8)

where \( L \) is the cavity free length. The GRIN transfer matrix, above equation represents the
effects of induced-heat load on the laser medium and its detail calculation has been obtained by Sabaeian et al. [10].

3 Results and discussion

A cylindrical Nd: YAG crystal with l=5mm and radius of a=1.5mm was assumed. The laser was longitudinally pumped at wavelength of $\lambda_p$= 808 nm. The BG beam was generated with waist of $\delta_p$=300 $\mu$m, $\lambda_l$=1064nm and $\kappa$=22144 m$^{-1}$. By using the assumed laser parameters, the thermally-affected and nonthermal beam profiles are simulated.

Figure 1: Intensity distributions of BG ($I_1$) beams versus radial distance for z=10 cm from the laser aperture for p=5W, $\alpha$= 720 m$^{-1}$, $K=10.5 \frac{W}{K.m}$ and $\delta_p = 200 \mu m$ for a) p=1W b) p=5W. Solid plots represent the nonthermal BG beam, dashed plots shows thermally-affected BG beam.

Figure 2: Intensity distributions of first-order BG($I_1$) beams versus radial distance for z=10 cm for p=5W, $K=10.5 \frac{W}{K.m}$ and a) $\delta_p = 100 \mu m$ b) $\delta_p = 300 \mu m$.

Figure 3: Intensity distributions of BG ($I_1$) beams versus radial distance for z=10 cm for p=5W, $\alpha$= 720 m$^{-1}$ and $\delta_p = 200 \mu m$ for a) $K=9 \frac{W}{K.m}$ b) $K=12 \frac{W}{K.m}$.
change in intensity distribution profiles as the absorption coefficient increases. This is because the temperature gradient causes thermal lensing in crystal does not change considerably by increasing the absorption coefficient.

4 Conclusion

This study is devoted to various impacts of pump power, pump waist, thermal conductivity and thermal coefficient absorption on the generation of first-order BG beam which are transverse eigenmodes of stable resonators. A comparison between the thermal and non-thermal BG beams not only reveals the important role of pump power, pump waist and thermal conductivity on the generation of the BG beams, but also shows how the intensity distributions are suffering from the induced thermal load. The results show that for powerful narrow pump beam, severe deviation from the non-thermal profiles can be realized showing that the gain medium is significantly influenced by the thermal lens, but it can be observed that as the pump waist and thermal conductivity increases, the thermal effects diminish emphasizing that the experimenter should be aware of the extent of thermal effects in generating the special types of beams and a comprehensive thermal model is needed to accounted for heat-induced effects, otherwise everyone may be confused to identify true beam.

References