

GUIDED WAVE ELECTROOPTIC/ACOUSTOOPTIC TUNABLE FILTER

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BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

15 This invention relates to an apparatus and method for the selection of light of one
optical frequency or wavelength channel from a multiplicity of channels or optical
frequencies being transmitted in an optical fiber or optical waveguide. The invention can
also be used to efficiently combine light waves of different frequencies.

20 Filter technology for wavelength division multiplexing (WDM) is one of the most
active research and development topics in the optical fiber telecommunications field. A
number of guided wave filter approaches are at various stages of development, including
the fiber Bragg grating, fiber Fabry-Perot, asymmetrical Mach Zehnder interferometer
25 (MZI), waveguide grating router (WGR), acoustooptic tunable filter (AOTF), and
electrooptic tunable filter (EOTF).

Of these technologies, only the AOTF and EOTF can be tuned from one channel to another at near-microsecond (for the AOTF) or sub-microsecond (for the EOTF) speeds needed for fast packet-switched networks. As illustrated in Figs. 1 and 2, conventional, prior art, schemes for implementing the AOTF and EOTF have several features in common. Both are fabricated in ferroelectric insulating substrates such as lithium niobate, and make use of a four-port MZI structure formed from waveguides which are single mode for both horizontally polarized light (TE) and vertically polarized light (TM). Both filters make use of phase-matched polarization conversion in the arms of the MZI, and ideally their performance is independent of the incident polarization state. Another common feature of the conventional AOTF and EOTF designs is that they both use polarizing beam splitters (PBSs), optical circuit elements which have proven difficult to fabricate with the high polarization extinction ratios needed to meet filter requirements.

A prior art four-port beam splitter is illustrated in Fig. 3. Light incident in port 1 will, in general, be split between output port 1 (straight through port) and output port 2 (crossover port). The requirement for a PBS is that, for $i, j = 1, 2$: $(f_{TE})_{ii} = 1$; $(f_{TE})_{ij} = 0$, $j \neq i$; $(f_{TM})_{ii} = 0$; $(f_{TM})_{ij} = 1$, $j \neq i$, where $(f_P)_{ij}$ is the fraction of the power in input port i which couples to output port j for polarization P . (It should be noted that an alternative PBS design is obtained by reversing "TE" and "TM" in these expressions). As more fully disclosed hereafter, Applicants' invention is directed to new AOTF and EOTF configurations which allow for an additional degree of freedom in beam splitter characteristics and which are, therefore, much easier to fabricate than the conventional filters.

Principles of Operation of Conventional AOTFs and EOTFs

The prior art AOTF depicted in Fig. 1 makes use of the strain-optic effect from a traveling acoustic wave to produce polarization conversion in the two arms of the MZI structure, which is fabricated on a LiNbO_3 substrate. The conversion is very efficient at the optical frequency ν_j for which a phase matching condition is satisfied, such that the acoustic wavelength exactly matches the TE $\leftrightarrow$ TM polarization beat length in the waveguide. At other optical frequencies for which the phase matching condition is not satisfied, little polarization conversion occurs. Horizontally polarized (TE) light incident on the filter at a frequency ν_i is directed by the first PBS into its straight through output port - the upper waveguide in the Mach-Zehnder. If the polarization is not converted in that waveguide ($i \neq j$), the light incident on the second PBS is also directed to its straight through output port, which is the upper output port of the filter. If the polarization is converted ($i = j$), the light incident on the second beam splitter emerges from its crossover port, which is the filter's lower output port.

On the other hand, vertically polarized (TM) light incident on the filter at a frequency ν_i is directed by the first PBS into its crossover output port, the lower waveguide in the MZI. If the polarization is not converted in that waveguide ($i \neq j$), the light incident on the second PBS is also directed to its crossover port, the filter's upper output port. If the polarization is converted ($i = j$), the light incident on the second beam splitter emerges from its straight through output port, which is the filter's lower output port. Thus, for either polarization, TE or TM, the light at the selected frequency ν_j emerges from the lower output port of the filter, and all other frequencies exit via the

upper output port. Tuning of the filter to change the selected optical frequency is accomplished by changing the acoustic frequency.

Conceptually, the conventional EOTF differs from the AOTF in two respects: both the polarization coupling mechanism and the tuning method are different. In the EOTF illustrated in Fig.2, tuning is accomplished by an applied voltage V_j which changes the waveguide birefringence and hence the optical frequency ν_j for which phase matching occurs. A spatially periodic strain-inducing film causes polarization coupling via the strain-optic effect. In other EOTF designs, a spatially periodic electric field produced by an interdigital electrode structure induces the polarization coupling via the electrooptic effect.

Beam Splitter Description

Performance of the four-port beam splitter of Fig. 3 is described by the expression

$$\mathbf{O}_P = \mathbf{C}_P \mathbf{I}_P, \quad (1)$$

with

$$\mathbf{I}_P = \begin{bmatrix} (I_P)_1 \\ (I_P)_2 \end{bmatrix}, \quad (2)$$

$$\mathbf{O}_P = \begin{bmatrix} (O_P)_1 \\ (O_P)_2 \end{bmatrix}, \quad (3)$$

and

$$\mathbf{C}_P = \begin{bmatrix} (c_P)_{11} & (c_P)_{12} \\ (c_P)_{12} & (c_P)_{11} \end{bmatrix} \quad (4)$$

5 In these expressions P represents the polarization (TE or TM), $(I_P)_i$ is the input electric field amplitude in port i ($i = 1, 2$), $(O_P)_i$ is the corresponding output electric field amplitude, and the coupling coefficients are

$$10 \quad (c_P)_{11} = \cos(\kappa_P L) \quad (5)$$

$$(c_P)_{12} = i \sin(\kappa_P L), \quad (6)$$

15 with κ_P the interwaveguide coupling coefficient and L the effective length of the coupling region. The analysis neglects loss and assumes that the coupled waveguides are identical and support a single mode for each polarization, but that in general the mode field patterns and hence the coupling coefficients are different for the two polarizations.

20 For a polarizing beam splitter with TE polarization directed in the straight through path and TM polarization crossing over, the coupling coefficients must satisfy these conditions: $|(c_{TE})_{11}| = 1$, $(c_{TE})_{12} = 0$; $(c_{TM})_{11} = 0$; $|(c_{TM})_{12}| = 1$. For these relations to hold, $\kappa_{TM}L = (2m_1 - 1)\pi/2$, $\kappa_{TE}L = m_2\pi$, with m_1 and m_2 positive integers. Thus, constraints on both coupling coefficients must be met simultaneously to satisfy the

requirements for a PBS. Furthermore, from a practical standpoint it is desirable to make the coupler as short as possible, implying small values of m_1 and m_2 . For $m_1 = m_2 = 1$, for example, $\kappa_{TM}L = \pi/2$ and $\kappa_{TE}L = \pi$, so $\kappa_{TE} = 2\kappa_{TM}$. This implies a considerably broader mode profile for the TE mode than for the TM mode, which is undesirable from the standpoint of mode matching to an optical fiber.

SHORT STATEMENT OF THE INVENTION

Accordingly, as opposed to those now known in the industry, the AOTF and EOTF apparatus and methods of the present invention do not require polarizing beam splitters. Further, because the invention provides an additional degree of freedom in achieving the required beam splitter performance, it is much easier to fabricate than prior art AOTFs and EOTFs which make use of polarizing beam splitters. In particular, a guided wave tunable filter of the present invention includes, in a preferred embodiment, two 3-port Y-branch beam splitters connected to form two spaced apart waveguides between said beam splitters, with an input port and an output port. The waveguides include an optical path difference of half a wavelength and polarization coupling regions in the two waveguides are displaced by half the spacial period of a pertubation responsible for coupling. Both acoustooptic and electrooptic tunable filters of the two port design are disclosed. Additionally, in a preferred embodiment, a four port AOTF and a four port EOTF are also disclosed.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Other objects, features and advantages of the present invention will become more fully apparent from the following detailed description of the preferred embodiment, the claims and the accompanying drawings in which:

- 5 FIGURE 1 is an illustration of a Prior Art AOTF;
- FIGURE 2 is an illustration of a Prior Art EOTF;
- FIGURE 3 is an illustration of a Prior Art four-port beam splitter;
- FIGURE 4 is an illustration of a preferred embodiment of a four-port AOTF of the present invention;
- 10 FIGURE 5 is an illustration of a preferred embodiment of a four-port EOTF of the present invention;
- FIGURE 6 is an illustration of a preferred embodiment of a two-port AOTF of the present invention; and
- FIGURE 7 is an illustration of a preferred embodiment of a two-port EOTF of the present invention.
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DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

The preferred embodiment of the present invention is illustrated by way of example in FIGURES 4-7. Filter designs introduced here for the purpose of relaxing constraints on beam splitter characteristics are illustrated in Figs. 4 and 5. In general, these differ from the conventional designs of prior art Figs. 1 and 2 in the following respects: (1) polarizing beam splitters are not required, (2) the optical path difference for the waveguides between the beam splitters for both polarizations is a half-wavelength, or an odd integral multiple

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thereof, and (3) the relative positions of the polarization coupling regions in the two waveguides are displaced in the propagation direction by half the spatial period of the perturbation responsible for the coupling. To analyze these new filter designs, the case of P polarization input with no polarization conversion is considered first. The transfer matrix for the filter is given by

$$\mathbf{O}_P = \mathbf{C}_P \mathbf{M}_\pi \mathbf{C}_P \mathbf{I}_P \quad (7)$$

with $\mathbf{M}_\pi$ the matrix which describes the pi-radian relative phase shift due to the half-wavelength path difference, given by

$$\mathbf{M}_\pi = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ 0 & -1 \end{bmatrix} \quad (8)$$

Evaluating the matrix product in eq. (7) yields

$$\mathbf{O}_P = \begin{bmatrix} (c_p)_{11}^2 - (c_p)_{12}^2 & 0 \\ 0 & (c_p)_{12}^2 - (c_p)_{11}^2 \end{bmatrix} \mathbf{I}_P \quad (9)$$

It follows from equations (5) and (6) that

$$\mathbf{O}_P = \mathbf{M}_\pi \mathbf{I}_P \quad (10)$$

Since $\mathbf{M}_\pi$ is diagonal, all of the power incident in port i in either polarization exits from output port i . This represents the case of the non-selected frequencies for which no

polarization conversion occurs in the waveguides. Power incident in port i couples part of the way to port j in the first coupler, but then couples back to port i in the second coupler.

For the case that polarization conversion occurs between incident polarization P and output polarization P', the transfer matrix is given by

$$O_{P'} = C_{P'} M_{\pi} M_{\pi} C_P I_P. \quad (11)$$

In this case, the light passes through the first coupler with polarization P and through the second coupler with polarization P'. The second factor M_{π} in eq. (11) accounts for the relative displacement of the coupling regions in the waveguides by half the spatial period of the perturbation responsible for the polarization coupling. Since $M_{\pi} M_{\pi}$ equals the unitary matrix, eq. (11) immediately simplifies to

$$O_{P'} = C_{P'} C_P I_P. \quad (12)$$

From eqs. (4)- (6), and making use of the trigonometric relations $\cos(A+B) = \cos A \cos B - \sin A \sin B$ and $\sin(A+B) = \sin A \cos B + \cos A \sin B$, it follows that

$$C_{P'} C_P = \begin{bmatrix} \cos(\Theta) & i \sin(\Theta) \\ i \sin(\Theta) & \cos(\Theta) \end{bmatrix} \quad (13)$$

with

$$\Theta = \kappa_{TE} L + \kappa_{TM} L. \quad (14)$$

where "TE" and "TM" have replaced "P" and "P'". The condition for complete power crossover to occur, such that all power incident in port i exits via output port j, is $\cos \Theta = 0$, or $\Theta = (2m_3 - 1)\pi/2$, with m_3 a positive integer. For the shortest couplers, with $m_3 = 1$, $\Theta = \pi/2$. It follows from eqs. (5), (6), and (14) that a condition for complete power crossover can be written

$$(f_{TE})_{ij} + (f_{TM})_{ij} = 1 \quad (15)$$

for $i = 1$ or 2 , where $(f_P)_{ij}$ is the fraction of incident power with polarization P incident on the coupler in port j which exits via port i, given by

$$(f_P)_{ij} = |c_P|_{ij}^2 \quad (16)$$

ALTERNATIVES

As illustrated in Figs. 4 and 5, the disclosed filters of the present invention perform the "drop" function of removing one optical wavelength or frequency and allowing all others to propagate. These same filters can perform the "add" function, as illustrated by the same Figs. 4 and 5 with the direction of the light propagation (as indicated by arrows in the diagrams) reversed.

Tuning of the apparatus shown in Figs. 4 and 5 enables the achievement of optimum performance in various circumstances. In every circumstance, it is required that the optical path difference in the MZI equal an odd integral multiple of a half wavelength, which is satisfied by a physical path difference of 350 nm in LiNbO₃ at 1.53 μm wavelength for

extraordinary polarization. For this path difference, a phase error of about 0.1 rad results for the ordinary polarization due to the large substrate birefringence. This error is readily compensated by a section of waveguide outside the polarization conversion region in which the birefringence is altered by either a strain-inducing film or an electrooptic interaction.

5 It should also be noted that, in the case of the AOTF, the relative displacement of the polarization coupling regions in the two waveguides as a fraction of the polarization beat length in the waveguides changes with tuning of acoustic frequency. The effect is significant, amounting to about ± 0.15 rad for tuning of the optical frequency by ± 1 THz, but is correctable through the use of a phased array or tilted finger chirped acoustic
10 transducer design in which the propagation direction of the acoustic wave changes in angle linearly with acoustic frequency.

The condition given in eq. (15), which must be satisfied by couplers for the new filter designs of the present invention, can readily be achieved in practice. For example, in a preferred embodiment, the effective coupling length L and the waveguide width are fixed
15 a priori, with coupling strengths κ_p for the two polarizations determined by an appropriate choice of waveguide separation. The κ_p values are both monotonically decreasing functions of waveguide separation. By measuring $(f_{TE})_{ii}$ and $(f_{TM})_{ii}$ for test coupler patterns with different waveguide separations, a separation for which eq. (15) is satisfied can readily be determined.

20 Since the filters of the present invention will be used in fiber optic systems, it is desirable to match the mode electric field patterns for both polarizations as closely as possible to a single mode fiber field pattern. This is a consideration in determining the waveguide fabrication procedure. For example, if the waveguides are formed by Ti

diffusion in LiNbO₃, the diffusion time and temperature should be chosen with this in mind. Even so, it is expected that there would be significant differences in the TE and TM mode profiles, which would be reflected in the coupling constant values κ_{TE} and κ_{TM} . These differences, however, do not pose a problem in implementing the new filter designs of the present invention.

By contrast, two constraints must be satisfied simultaneously for the PBSs used in conventional tunable filter designs, making it much more difficult to achieve the needed coupler performance. Thus, the invention considers a PBS optimization procedure in which the waveguide width and coupling length are fixed and the waveguide separation is varied. A waveguide separation for which complete crossover is achieved for TE polarization would not, in general, also meet the companion requirement of providing complete straight through propagation for the TM polarization.

In practice, considerable prior art effort has been devoted to solving the PBS problem for tunable filters by using two mode interference and Ti-indiffused/proton exchanged waveguide combinations. Although polarization extinction ratios > 20 dB have been reported, the techniques to achieve them are complicated and reproducibility has been a major problem. Due to difficulties with the integrated PBSs, some AOTF demonstrations have utilized bulk PBSs external to the LiNbO₃ substrate in which the acoustooptic interaction takes place.

Simpler 2-port filters of the present invention, designed using the same principles as the 4-port devices, are illustrated in Figs. 6 and 7. These 2-port filters are designed to transmit a selected wavelength channel and block all others. In the 2-port filters, two 3-port Y-branches replace the two 4-port beam splitters employed in the designs of Figs. 4 and 5.

If the 3-port branches are symmetric, the splitting ratios will be 50% for both polarizations and the condition of eq. (15) is automatically satisfied. As with the 4-port filters of the present invention, the optical path difference for the waveguides between the beam splitters for both polarizations is a half-wavelength, or odd integral multiples thereof, and the relative positions of the polarization coupling regions in the two waveguides are displaced in the propagation direction by half the spatial period of the perturbation responsible for the coupling.

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CLAIMS:

1. A guided wave optical tunable filter for transmitting a selected frequency channel which is included in a substantially broad range of optical frequencies in an incident light wave, comprising:

- (a) a substrate of a birefringent material which exhibits the linear (Pockels) electrooptic effect and the linear strain-optic effect;
- (b) an optical waveguide structure which supports a single mode for both TE and TM polarizations formed on said substrate, said optical waveguide structure consisting of a straight initial section, a first symmetric branch, first and second polarization conversion/electrooptic tuning sections, a second symmetric branch, and a straight final section; wherein said initial section is positioned to receive said incident light wave and said final section transmits said selected frequency channel; wherein said first and second polarization conversion/electrooptic tuning sections provide continuous optical paths between said first and second symmetric branches; wherein optical path length experienced by a TE light wave in traversing said straight initial section, said first symmetric branch, said first polarization conversion/electrooptic tuning section, said second symmetric branch, and said straight final section differs from the optical path length experienced by a TE light wave in traversing said straight initial section, said first symmetric branch, said second polarization

conversion/electrooptic tuning section, said second symmetric branch, and said final section by half an optical wavelength;

- 5 (c) a multiplicity of strain-inducing strips of a dielectric material situated on top of said polarization conversion/electrooptic tuning waveguide sections; said strain-inducing strips having the effect of inducing polarization coupling in said polarization conversion/electrooptic tuning waveguide sections; said strain-inducing strips having a spatial periodicity Λ such that substantially complete phase-matched polarization conversion occurs in said first and second polarization conversion/electrooptic tuning waveguide sections at said selected optical frequency within said broad range of optical frequencies; said strain-inducing strips situated on top of first polarization conversion/electrooptic tuning waveguide section being offset in position from said strain-inducing strips situated on top of second said polarization conversion/electrooptic tuning waveguide section by an odd integral multiple of $\Lambda/2$, wherein said positions are measured relative to said first symmetric branch;

- 10 (d) a source of applied voltage V ;
- 15 (e) electrodes disposed to produce an electric field in and around said first and second polarization conversion/electrooptic tuning waveguide sections in response to said applied voltage V ; wherein said electric field causes a change in the birefringence in said first and second polarization conversion/electrooptic tuning waveguide sections such that said selected optical frequency is tuned in proportion to said applied voltage; and
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(f) means connecting said source of applied voltage to said electrodes.

2. The apparatus of Claim 1 wherein said substrate material is lithium niobate.

5 3. The apparatus of Claim 1 wherein said substrate material is lithium tantalate.

4. The apparatus of Claim 1 wherein said strain inducing strips comprise a film of fused silica deposited uniformly on said substrate at a substrate temperature $> 250^{\circ}\text{C}$ and subsequently patterned lithographically at or near room temperature.

10 5. A guided wave optical tunable filter for adding one selected frequency channel to a substantially broad range of optical frequencies in an incident light wave, and for dropping said selected frequency channel from said substantially broad range of optical frequencies in an incident light wave, comprising

15 (a) a substrate of a birefringent material which exhibits the linear (Pockels) electrooptic effect and the linear strain-optic effect;

(b) an optical waveguide structure which supports a single mode for both TE and TM polarizations formed on said substrate; said optical waveguide structure consisting of a first straight initial throughput section and a

20 second straight initial add section joined in continuous fashion to the two input ports of a first four port directional coupler, first and second polarization conversion/ electrooptic tuning sections, and a second four port directional coupler of which the two output ports are joined in

continuous fashion to a first straight final throughput section and a second straight final drop section; wherein said first initial throughput section is positioned to receive said incident light wave and said first initial add section is positioned to receive input light in said selected frequency channel; wherein said first and second polarization conversion/electrooptic tuning sections provide continuous optical paths between said first and second four port directional couplers; wherein said first final throughput section transmits said incident light wave plus light in said selected frequency channel coupled into said initial add section minus light in said selected frequency channel coupled out of said final drop section; wherein said second final drop section transmits light in said selected frequency channel coupled out of said final drop section; wherein optical path length experienced by a TE light wave in traversing said straight initial throughput section, said first four port directional coupler, said first polarization conversion/electrooptic tuning section, said second four port directional coupler, and said straight final drop section differs from the optical path length experienced by a TE light wave in traversing said straight initial throughput section, said first four port directional coupler, said second polarization conversion/electrooptic tuning section, said second four port directional coupler, and said straight final drop section by half an optical wavelength;

(c) a multiplicity of strain-inducing strips of a dielectric material situated on top of said polarization conversion/electrooptic tuning waveguide sections;

said strain-inducing strips having the effect of inducing polarization coupling in said polarization conversion/electrooptic tuning waveguide sections; said strain-inducing strips having a spatial periodicity Λ such that substantially complete phase-matched polarization conversion occurs in said first and second polarization conversion/electrooptic tuning waveguide sections at said selected optical frequency within said broad range of optical frequencies; said strain-inducing strips situated on top of first polarization conversion/electrooptic tuning waveguide section being offset in position from said strain-inducing strips situated on top of second polarization conversion/electrooptic tuning waveguide section by an odd integral multiple of $\Lambda/2$, wherein said positions are measured relative to said first four-port directional coupler;

- (d) a source of applied voltage V ;
- (e) electrodes disposed to produce an electric field in and around said first and second polarization conversion/electrooptic tuning sections in response to said applied voltage V ; wherein said electric field causes a change in the birefringence in said first and second polarization conversion/electrooptic tuning waveguide sections such that said selected optical frequency is tuned in proportion to said applied voltage; and
- (f) means connecting said source of applied voltage to said electrodes.

6. The apparatus of Claim 5 wherein said substrate material is lithium niobate.

7. The apparatus of Claim 5 wherein said substrate material is lithium tantalate.
8. The apparatus of Claim 5 wherein said strain inducing strips comprise a film of fused silica deposited uniformly on said substrate at a temperature $> 250^{\circ}\text{C}$ and
5 patterned lithographically at or near room temperature.
9. The apparatus of claim 5 wherein said first four port directional coupler and said second four port directional coupler each satisfy the condition that the sum of the fraction of optical power in TE polarization coupled into a particular input port
10 which exits through a particular output port plus the fraction of optical power in TM polarization coupled into said particular input port which exits through said particular output port is substantially equal to unity.
10. A guided wave optical tunable filter for transmitting a selected frequency channel
15 which is included in a substantially broad range of optical frequencies in an incident light wave, comprising:
 - (a) a substrate of a birefringent material which exhibits the linear (Pockels) electrooptic effect and the linear strain-optic effect;
 - (b) an optical waveguide structure which supports a single mode for both TE
20 and TM polarizations formed on said substrate, said optical waveguide structure consisting of a straight initial section, a first symmetric branch, first and second acoustooptic polarization conversion/tuning sections, a second symmetric branch, and a straight final section; wherein said initial

section is positioned to receive said incident light wave and said final section transmits said selected frequency channel; wherein said first and second acoustooptic polarization conversion/tuning sections provide continuous optical paths between said first and second symmetric branches; wherein optical path length experienced by a TE light wave in traversing said straight initial section, said first symmetric branch, said first acoustooptic polarization conversion/tuning section, said second symmetric branch, and said straight final section differs from the optical path length experienced by a TE light wave in traversing said straight initial section, said first symmetric branch, said second acoustooptic polarization conversion/tuning section, said second symmetric branch, and said final section by half an optical wavelength;

(c) a source of applied voltage $V(t)$ varying sinusoidally at a frequency f_a ;

(d) interdigital electrodes disposed to generate a surface acoustic wave

propagating in said substrate in and around said acoustooptic polarization conversion/tuning waveguide sections in response to said applied voltage $V(t)$; said surface acoustic wave having the effect of inducing polarization coupling in said acoustooptic polarization conversion/tuning waveguide sections; said surface acoustic wave having a wavelength Λ such that substantially complete phase-matched polarization conversion occurs in said first and second acoustooptic polarization conversion/tuning waveguide sections at said selected optical frequency within said broad range of optical frequencies; wherein phase fronts of said surface acoustic

5 wave in first acoustooptic polarization conversion/tuning waveguide
section are offset in position from phase fronts of said surface acoustic
wave in second acoustooptic polarization conversion/tuning waveguide
section by an odd integral multiple of $\Lambda/2$, wherein said positions are
measured relative to said first four-port directional coupler; wherein said
selected optical frequency is tuned in proportion to said frequency f_a ; and
(e) means connecting said source of applied voltage $V(t)$ to said electrodes.

10 11. The apparatus of Claim 10 wherein said substrate material is lithium niobate.

12. The apparatus of Claim 10 wherein multiple optical frequencies can be
simultaneously selected by applying a voltage waveform $V(t)$ containing multiple
acoustic frequencies to said interdigital electrodes; wherein each said acoustic
frequency corresponds to a different selected optical frequency.

15 13. A guided wave optical tunable filter for adding one selected frequency channel to
a substantially broad range of optical frequencies in an incident light wave, and
for dropping said selected frequency channel from said substantially broad range
of optical frequencies in an incident light wave, comprising

- 20 (a) a substrate of a birefringent material which exhibits the linear (Pockels)
electrooptic effect and the linear strain-optic effect;
- (b) an optical waveguide structure which supports a single mode for both TE
and TM polarizations formed on said substrate; said optical waveguide

structure consisting of a first straight initial throughput section and a second straight initial add section joined in continuous fashion to the two input ports of a first four port directional coupler, first and second acoustooptic polarization conversion/tuning sections, and a second four port directional coupler of which the two output ports are joined in continuous fashion to a first straight final throughput section and a second straight final drop section; wherein said first initial throughput section is positioned to receive said incident light wave and said first initial add section is positioned to receive input light in said selected frequency channel; wherein said first and second acoustooptic polarization conversion/tuning sections provide continuous optical paths between said first and second four port directional couplers; wherein said first final throughput section transmits said incident light wave plus light in said selected frequency channel coupled into said initial add section minus light in said selected frequency channel coupled out of said final drop section; wherein said second final drop section transmits light in said selected frequency channel coupled out of said final drop section; wherein optical path length experienced by a TE light wave in traversing said straight initial throughput section, said first four port directional coupler, said first acoustooptic polarization conversion/tuning section, said second four port directional coupler, and said straight final drop section differs from the optical path length experienced by a TE light wave in traversing said straight initial throughput section, said first four port directional coupler,

said second acoustooptic polarization conversion/tuning section, said second four port directional coupler, and said straight final drop section by half an optical wavelength;

(c) a source of applied voltage $V(t)$ varying sinusoidally at a frequency f_a ;

(d) interdigital electrodes disposed to generate a surface acoustic wave propagating in said substrate in and around said acoustooptic polarization conversion/tuning waveguide sections in response to said applied voltage $V(t)$; said surface acoustic wave having the effect of inducing polarization coupling in said acoustooptic polarization conversion/tuning waveguide sections; said surface acoustic wave having a wavelength Λ such that substantially complete phase-matched polarization conversion occurs in said first and second acoustooptic polarization conversion/tuning waveguide sections at said selected optical frequency within said broad range of optical frequencies; wherein phase fronts of said surface acoustic wave in first acoustooptic polarization conversion/tuning waveguide section are offset in position from phase fronts of said surface acoustic wave in second acoustooptic polarization conversion/tuning waveguide section by an odd integral multiple of $\Lambda/2$, wherein said positions are measured relative to said first four-port directional coupler; wherein said selected optical frequency is tuned in proportion to said frequency f_a ; and

(e) means connecting said source of applied voltage $V(t)$ to said electrodes.

14. The apparatus of Claim 13 wherein said substrate material is lithium niobate.

15. The apparatus of Claim 13 wherein multiple optical frequencies can be simultaneously selected by applying a voltage waveform $V(t)$ containing multiple acoustic frequencies to said interdigital electrodes; wherein each said acoustic frequency corresponds to a different selected optical frequency.

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16. The apparatus of claim 13 wherein said first four port directional coupler and said second four port directional coupler each satisfy the condition that the sum of the fraction of optical power in TE polarization coupled into a particular input port which exits through a particular output port plus the fraction of optical power in TM polarization coupled into said particular input port which exits through said particular output port is substantially equal to unity.

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17. A guided wave tunable filter comprising:

- (a) two 3-port Y-branch beam splitters connected to form two spaced apart waveguides between said beam splitters, with an input port and an output port;
- (b) the waveguides including an optical path difference of a half-wavelength; and
- (c) polarization coupling regions in the two waveguides displaced by half the spacial period of a perturbation responsible for coupling.

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18. A guided wave tunable filter comprising:

- (a) two 4-port beam splitters connected to form two spaced apart waveguides

between said beam splitters, with an upper and a lower input port and an upper and a lower output port;

(b) the waveguides including an optical path difference of a half-wavelength; and

5 (c) polarization coupling regions in the two waveguides displaced by half the spacial period of a perturbation responsible for coupling.

19. A guided wave tunable filter method comprising the steps of:

10 (a) connecting two 3-port Y-branch beam splitters so as to form two spaced apart waveguides between said beam splitters, with an input port and an output port;

(b) separating the waveguides by an optical path difference of a half-wavelength;

15 (c) creating polarization coupling regions in the two waveguides displaced by half the spacial period of a perturbation responsible for coupling; and

(d) introducing propagated light into the guided wave tunable filter.

20. A guided wave tunable filter method comprising the steps of:

20 (a) connecting two 4-port beam splitters so as to form two spaced apart waveguides between said beam splitters, with upper and lower input ports and upper and lower output ports;

(b) separating the waveguides by an optical path difference of a half-wavelength;

- (c) providing polarization coupling regions in the two waveguides displaced by half the spacial period of the perturbation responsible for coupling; and
- (d) introducing propagated light into the guided wave tunable filter.