

## Tunable metamaterial Terahertz band-stop filter based on InSb

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**Abstract:** A metamaterial band-stop filter in the Terahertz (THz) spectrum regime based on the semiconductor InSb is presented in this paper. The resonant frequency of the filter is thermally tunable due to the dielectric constant properties of InSb. Meanwhile, the effects of geometrical parameters on the performance of the filter were analyzed by the finite-integral method and equivalent LMC circuit method, respectively. The results of the two methods show good agreement with each other. The resonant frequency can be dynamically tuned across a wide band of frequencies from 0.91 to 1.28 THz in the temperature range from 220 K to 350 K, and the transmission coefficient at the resonant frequency in the stopband can be effectively suppressed. Good incidence-angle stability of the transmission characteristics up to an oblique incidence angle of 30° is demonstrated. The tunable metamaterial band-stop filter has the potential to be applied in the Terahertz wireless communication and sensing systems.

**Key words:** band-stop filter, metamaterial, InSb, Terahertz

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## 基于铟化镉的可调超材料太赫兹带阻滤波器

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**摘要:**提出了一种工作在大赫兹频段,基于半导体材料铟化镉的超材料带阻滤波器.由于铟化镉材料介电常数的特性,该滤波器的谐振频率能够进行温度调节.同时,通过有限积分法和等效 LMC 电路模型分析了滤波器的几何参数对其谐振频率的影响,这两种方法得到的结果具有良好的的一致性.在温度的取值范围是 220~350 K 时,滤波器的谐振频率能够从 0.91 THz 动态调节到 1.28 THz,并且其阻带谐振频率的透射系数能够有限地被抑制.该滤波器的传输特性在 30°入射角范围内具有良好的稳定性.设计的可调超材料带阻滤波器将在太赫兹无线通信、传感等方面有潜在的应用前景.

**关键词:**带阻滤波器;超材料;铟化镉;太赫兹

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### Introduction

Terahertz technology has emerged to be one of the most rapidly developing research area in recent years<sup>[1-2]</sup>. Because natural materials of strong electromagnetic responses in the Terahertz frequency regime are scarce, metamaterial based Terahertz devices have come into existence. Metamaterial is composed of sub-wavelength microstructures which can be designed to

implement functions inaccessible to natural materials in devices such as filter<sup>[3]</sup>, modulator<sup>[4]</sup>, sensor<sup>[5]</sup>, isolator<sup>[6]</sup>, and negative-refraction-index enabled devices<sup>[7-9]</sup>, and so on.

Quan Li *et al.*<sup>[10]</sup> designed a band-stop filter based on the rectangular split ring resonator (SRR) with adjustable resonant frequencies by changing the relative distance between two SRRs. An effective equivalent circuit model was proposed to reveal its physical explanation. Kadir *et al.*<sup>[11]</sup> presented a new metamaterial

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Biography: BAI Yu-Kun (1970-), male, Shanxi, associate professor, Ph. D. Research fields mainly focus on optical communication and terahertz technology.

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broadband absorber in X-band, which had two minimums at the frequencies of 9.10 GHz and 10.53 GHz due to two different SRRs. It was observed that increasing the number of unit cells makes absorption level smoother. Wang *et al.*<sup>[12]</sup> investigated a photo-excited THz switch based on a new rectangular SRR structure and photosensitive silicon. With a light excitation, the band-stop filtering effect was demonstrated as a result of the increase of carrier concentration. SRRs play a vital role in the metamaterial structures to construct filters.

A metamaterial based on the two-dimensional-array of rectangular SRRs loaded with thermally-sensitive semiconductor InSb was introduced to construct the dynamically tunable THz band-stop filter in this paper. Compared with the previous researches<sup>[13-14]</sup>, improvements in terms of the equivalent circuit analysis and the incidence-angle stability of the filter were achieved. Finite-integral method based commercial simulation software CST was used for investigating the filter's performances including the incidence-angle stability. Comparison was made with the equivalent LMC circuit method, which shows the physical insight of its operation principle.

## 1 Structure of the THz metamaterial band-stop filter

The top view of the two-dimensionally periodic array structure of the filter is shown in Fig. 1(a). It consists of the dielectric substrate, i. e. Rogers RT6002 (tm) with dielectric constant 2.94, loss tangent 0.0012 and thickness  $h = 200 \mu\text{m}$ ; gold rectangular SRRs and separation lines with thickness  $t = 0.5 \mu\text{m}$  and electrical conductivity  $4.09 \times 10^7 \text{ s/m}$  on top surface of the substrate. InSb is loaded inside the rectangular SRRs with thickness  $t = 0.5 \mu\text{m}$ .

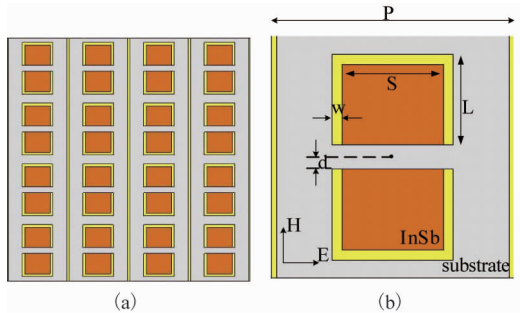


Fig. 1 Top view of the THz filter structure, (a) 2-D periodic array, (b) unit cell

图1 太赫兹滤波器的俯视图 (a)二维阵列 (b)单元结构

The square unit cell of the periodic structure is shown in Fig. 1(b). Geometrical parameters of the figure are as follows: side length of the square substrate  $P = 120 \mu\text{m}$ , horizontal inner length of the rectangular SRR  $S = 40 \mu\text{m}$ , half length of the split vertical side of the rectangular SRR  $L = 45 \mu\text{m}$ , metal line width  $w = 5 \mu\text{m}$ , and half width of the gap between the upper and lower parts of the SRR  $d = 2 \mu\text{m}$ . The thermally-sensitive InSb is between the upper and lower parts of the rectangular SRR.

## 2 Equivalent LMC circuit Model

The unit cell can be analyzed by the equivalent LMC circuit model, as shown in Fig. 2. The resonant circuit consists of self-inductances  $L_1$  and  $L_2$ , capacitance  $C_1$  and mutual inductances  $M_1$ ,  $M_2$  and  $M_3$ , with  $M_3$  being the mutual inductance between two adjacent unit cells.

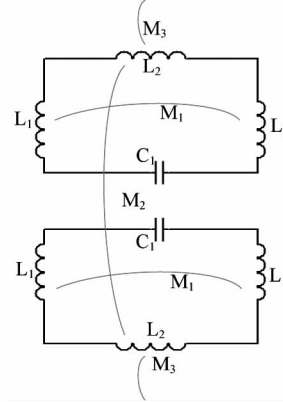


Fig. 2 Equivalent circuit model of the unit structure

图2 单元结构的等效电路模型

The parameters of the lumped equivalent circuit components in the model can be analytically calculated. According to the Bueno principle<sup>[15]</sup>, the self-induction of a metal bar is determined through the ratio of its length  $L_0$  to width  $w$  as:

$$\Lambda(L_0) = \frac{\mu_0 L_0}{4\pi} \left\{ 2 \sinh^{-1} \left( \frac{L_0}{w} \right) + 2 \left( \frac{L_0}{w} \right) \sinh^{-1} \left( \frac{w}{L_0} \right) + \frac{2}{3} \left[ \left( \frac{L_0}{w} \right)^2 + \frac{w}{L_0} - \frac{(w^2 + L_0^2)^{2/3}}{L_0 w^2} \right] \right\}, \quad (1)$$

where  $\mu_0 = 4\pi \times 10^{-7} \text{ H/m}$  is the permeability of free space. Here, the self-inductances  $L_1$  and  $L_2$  can be calculated as  $L_1 = \Lambda(L - w)$  and  $L_2 = \Lambda S$ .

Generic formula of mutual inductance between two parallel identical metal bars with length  $L_0$ , separation  $h_0$  between them, and current densities in the same direction can be written as<sup>[15]</sup>:

$$\Xi(L_0, h_0) = \frac{\mu_0}{4\pi} \left\{ 2L_0 \sinh^{-1} \left( \frac{L_0}{h_0} \right) + 2 \left[ h_0 - (L_0^2 + h_0^2)^{1/2} \right] \right\}, \quad (2)$$

$M_1 = -\Xi(L - w, S - w)$ ,  $M_2 = \Xi(S, 2L + 2d - w)$  and  $M_3 = \Xi(S, P - 2L - 2d + w)$ , where the negative sign in  $M_1$  is an indication of opposite surface current direction.

Based on the line capacitance theory<sup>[16]</sup>, the value of capacitor  $C_1$  can be formulated as:

$$C_1 = \alpha \epsilon_0 \epsilon_{\text{eff}} (L - w) \frac{K(k'_0)}{K(k_0)}, \quad (3)$$

where  $\epsilon_0$  is the permittivity of free space,  $\epsilon_{\text{eff}} = \beta \epsilon_{\text{sub}} + (1 - \beta) \epsilon_{\text{InSb}}$  is the effective complex dielectric constant of the composite of InSb and substrate, and  $K$  the complete

elliptic integral of the first kind with  $k_0 = S/(S + 2w)$  and  $k'_0 = \sqrt{1 - k_0^2}$ . Here  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$  are two unknown constants.

The mutual inductance between a metal separation line and adjacent SRRs is very small, leading to negligible effects on the filtering performance except for a little lowering of the transmission in the stop-band. Taking into account of the significant contributions and ignoring all the losses, the impedance of the equivalent circuit  $Z_m$  can be written as:

$$z_m = j\omega(M_2 + M_3) + \left[ \frac{1}{j\omega C_1} + j\omega(2L_1 + L_2 + 2M_1) \right] \quad (4)$$

Imposing the resonance condition  $\text{Im}(Z_m) = 0$ , the resonant frequency of the bandstop filter can be derived as:

$$f_0 = \frac{1}{2\pi \sqrt{(2L_1 + L_2 + 2M_1 + M_2 + M_3)C}} \quad (5)$$

$$C = \frac{\text{Re}^2(C_1) + \text{Im}^2(C_1)}{\text{Re}(C_1)} \quad (6)$$

Through Eqs. (3) and (5), it is easily found that tuning the dielectric constant of InSb can change the capacitor  $C_1$ , hence the resonant frequency  $f_0$ , realizing a dynamic tunable Terahertz bandstop filter. Dielectric constant of InSb can be calculated from Drude<sup>[17-19]</sup> model

$$\varepsilon_{\text{InSb}}(\omega) = \varepsilon_\infty - \frac{\omega_p^2}{\omega^2 + i\gamma\omega} \quad (7)$$

where  $\varepsilon_\infty$  is the high frequency limit,  $\gamma$  the damping factor, and  $\omega_p$  the plasma frequency.  $\omega_p$  is calculated from

$$\omega_p = \sqrt{\frac{Ne^2}{\varepsilon_0 m^*}} \quad (8)$$

where the intrinsic carrier density  $N$ , the electron charge  $e$ , the effective mass  $m^*$  of free carriers and the free-space permittivity  $\varepsilon_0$ . The intrinsic carrier density  $N$  ( $\text{m}^{-3}$ ) of InSb is

$$N = 5.76 \times 10^{20} T^{3/2} e^{-0.26/(k_B T)} \quad (9)$$

where  $k_B$  is the Boltzmann constant,  $T$  the temperature in unit of kelvin. Calculated from Eqs. (8-9), the dielectric constant of InSb versus frequency at different temperatures is shown in Fig. 3 with  $\varepsilon_\infty = 15.68$ ,  $\gamma = 2\pi \times 0.05$  THz,  $m^* = 0.015m_e$  and  $m_e = 9.1 \times 10^{-31}$  kg.

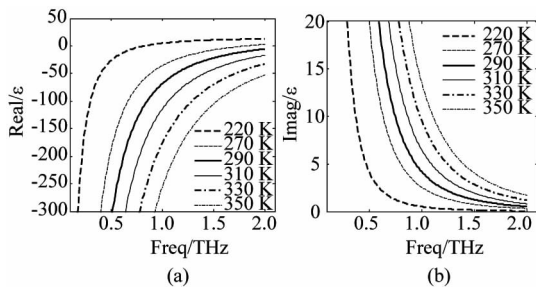


Fig. 3 Dielectric constant of InSb. (a) real part and (b) imaginary part, at different temperatures

图3 不同温度下的 InSb 的介电常数 (a)实部(b)虚部

### 3 Simulation and equivalent circuit analysis results

To highlight the influence of temperature, the range of temperature under concern is 220 ~ 350 K. With a normal incident THz wave, the transmission spectra of the band-stop filter obtained by simulations are presented in Fig. 4. It is observed that the resonant frequency increases with temperature and can be dynamically tuned across a wide band of frequencies from 0.91 THz to 1.28 THz in the temperature range from 220 K to 350 K. As indicated by Eq. (5), the increase of temperature, which gives rise to the variation of effective capacitance, leads to the blue shift of the resonant frequency. Furthermore, the transmission coefficients at resonant frequencies are effectively suppressed.

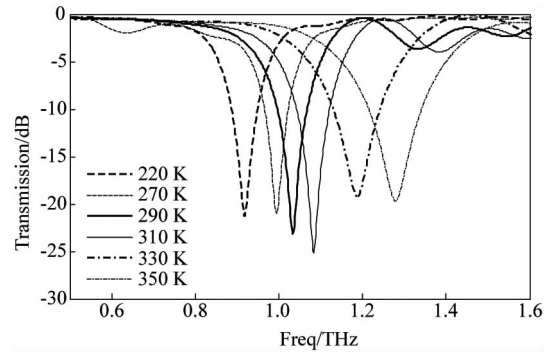


Fig. 4 Transmission spectra at different temperatures  
图4 不同温度的透射谱

The electric field distributions at resonant frequencies corresponding to the temperatures of 220 K, 310 K and 350 K on the unit cell are shown in Fig. 5. At lower temperature, the electric field distributes mainly in the split ring region of the SRR. When the temperature increases, the electric field in the split region of InSb increases. In other words, the temperature increase leads to the InSb carrier concentration increase, hence the dominance of its metal characteristics.

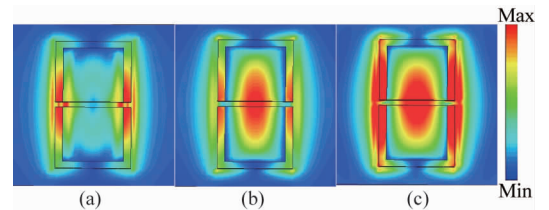


Fig. 5 The distributions of electric field at the resonant frequencies corresponding to various temperatures (a) 220 K, 0.918 THz, (b) 310 K, 1.083 THz, (c) 350 K, 1.279 THz

图5 不同温度下谐振频率对应的电场分布图 (a) 220 K, 0.918 THz, (b) 310 K, 1.083 THz, (c) 350 K, 1.279 THz

While the resonant frequency can be dynamically tuned with temperature due to the load of InSb, it can also be adjusted by the geometrical parameters of the rec-

tangular SRR structure. Geometrical parameters that have a significant impact on the filtering characteristics, including the gap width  $d$ , horizontal bar length  $S$ , and vertical bar length  $L$ , were investigated at  $T = 220$  K.

Firstly, the gap width  $d$  of the structure was varied among 2, 4, 6 and  $8\mu\text{m}$ . The corresponding transmission spectra calculated by simulations are shown in Fig. 6 (a). As shown in the figure, the resonant frequency changes from 0.95 to 0.85 THz as  $d$  is varied from 2 to  $8\mu\text{m}$ . The resonant frequency decreases with the increase of  $d$ .

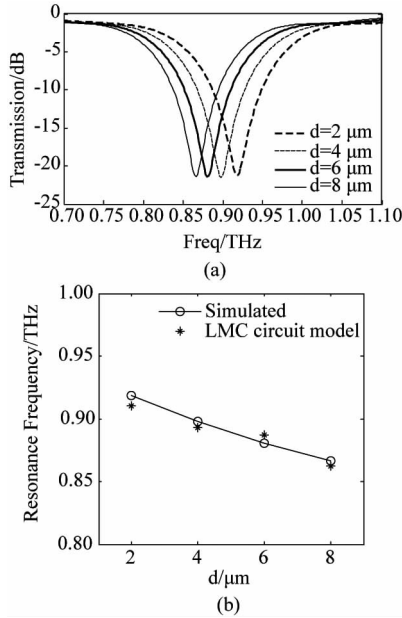


Fig. 6 (a) Transmission spectra and (b) resonant frequencies calculated by simulations and equivalent circuit model for different values of  $d$

图6 不同  $d$  对应的透射谱以及谐振频率 (a) 透射谱, (b) 通过仿真和等效电路得到的谐振频率

Using the equivalent LMC circuit model, the two unknown constants  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$  can be derived as  $\alpha = 0.112$  and  $\beta = 0.98$  by fitting the analytical resonance wavelengths calculated from Eq. (5) to the simulation results shown in Fig. 4. Various circuit parameters for different values of  $d$  were calculated in Table 1. It is evident that self-inductances  $L_1$  and  $L_2$ , mutual inductance  $M_1$  and capacitance  $C_1$  remain invariable, whereas mutual inductances  $M_2$  change as  $d$  is varied. Resonant frequencies calculated by Eq. (5) were compared with the simulation results in Fig. 6(b), in which the solid line with open circles was obtained by simulations and asterisks were calculated by the equivalent circuit model.

Secondly, the horizontal bar length  $S$  of the structure was varied among 40, 50, 60 and  $70\mu\text{m}$ . The corresponding transmission spectra calculated by simulations are shown in Fig. 7(a). As shown in the figure, the filter resonant frequency decreases with the increase of  $S$ .

Using the equivalent LMC circuit model, various circuit parameters for different values of  $S$  were calculated in Table 2. It was found that only self-inductance  $L_1$  remains constant as  $S$  varies. Resonant frequencies cal-

culated by Eq. (5) were compared with the simulation results in Fig. 7(b).

Table 1 Obtained Circuit Parameters in the LMC Model for Various Values of  $d$

表1 利用 LMC 模型得到不同  $d$  值对应的电路参数

$d/\mu\text{m}$	2	4	6	8
$L_1/\text{pH}$	26.509	26.509	26.509	26.509
$L_2/\text{pH}$	26.509	26.509	26.509	26.509
$M_1/\text{pH}$	-4.200 8	-4.200 8	-4.200 8	-4.200 8
$M_2/\text{pH}$	1.769 2	1.695 3	1.627 2	1.564 4
$M_3/\text{pH}$	4.659 0	5.223 6	5.935 7	6.861 3
$\text{Re}(C_1)/\text{fF}$	0.407 1	0.407 1	0.407 1	0.407 1
$\text{Im}(C_1)/\text{fF}$	0.003 2	0.003 2	0.003 2	0.003 2

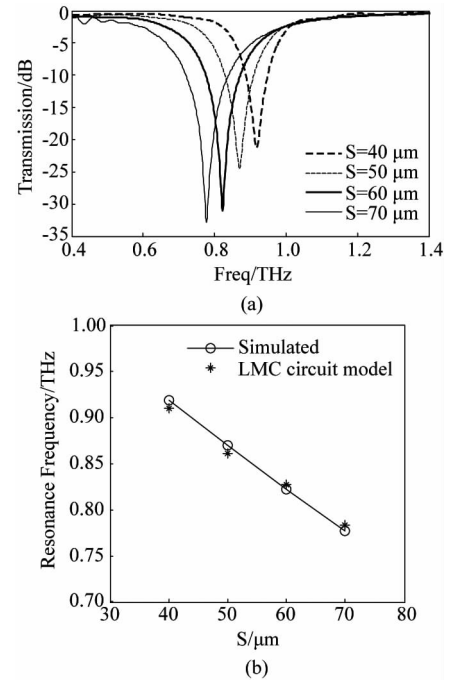


Fig. 7 (a) Transmission spectra and (b) resonant frequencies calculated by simulations and equivalent circuit model for different values of  $S$  图7 不同  $S$  对应的透射谱以及谐振频率 (a) 透射谱, (b) 通过仿真和等效电路得到的谐振频率

Table 2 Obtained Circuit Parameters in the LMC Model for Various Values of  $S$

表2 利用 LMC 模型得到不同  $S$  值对应的电路参数

$S/\mu\text{m}$	40	50	60	70
$L_1/\text{pH}$	26.509	26.509	26.509	26.509
$L_2/\text{pH}$	26.509	35.286	44.466	53.981
$M_1/\text{pH}$	-4.200 8	-3.363 1	-2.797 5	-2.391 4
$M_2/\text{pH}$	1.769 2	2.741 3	3.909 2	5.263 5
$M_3/\text{pH}$	4.659 0	6.992 0	9.665 8	12.636 6
$\text{Re}(C_1)/\text{fF}$	0.407 1	0.374 0	0.350 6	0.343 2
$\text{Im}(C_1)/\text{fF}$	0.003 2	0.002 9	0.002 8	0.002 7

Thirdly, the vertical bar length  $L$  of the structure was varied among 31, 38, 45 and  $52\mu\text{m}$ . The corre-

sponding transmission spectra calculated by simulations are shown in Fig. 8(a). As shown in the figure, the filter resonant frequency decreases with the increase of  $L$ . The resonant frequency is more sensitive to the vertical bar length  $L$  than to the horizontal bar length  $S$ .

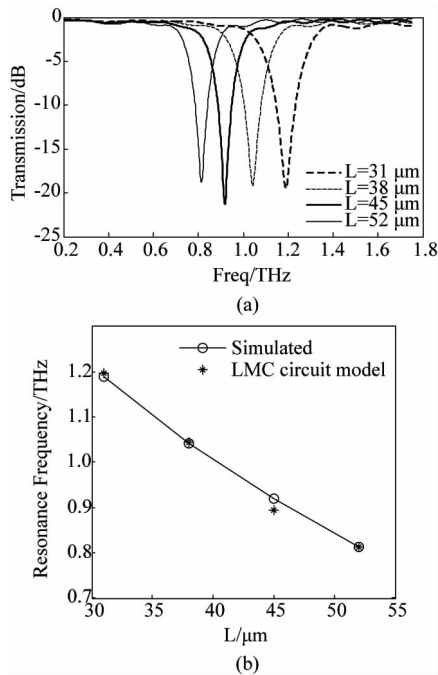


Fig. 8 (a) Transmission spectra and (b) resonant frequencies calculated by simulations and equivalent circuit model for different values of  $L$

图 8 不同  $L$  对应的透射谱以及谐振频率 (a)透射谱, (b)通过仿真和等效电路得到的谐振频率

Using the equivalent LMC circuit model, various circuit parameters for different values of  $L$  were calculated in Table 3. It was found that only self-inductance  $L_2$  remains constant as  $L$  varies. Resonant frequencies calculated by Eq. (5) were compared with the simulation results in Fig. 8(b).

Table 3 Obtained Circuit Parameters in the LMC Model for Various Values of  $L$

表 3 利用 LMC 模型得到不同  $L$  值对应的电路参数

$L/\mu\text{m}$	31	38	45	52
$L_1/\text{pH}$	15.103	20.656	26.509	32.607
$L_2/\text{pH}$	26.509	26.509	26.509	26.509
$M_1/\text{pH}$	-1.854 5	-2.925 7	-4.200 8	-5.660 5
$M_2/\text{pH}$	2.539 2	2.086 6	1.769 2	1.534 7
$M_3/\text{pH}$	2.620 0	3.363 1	4.659 0	7.761 6
$\text{Re}(C_1)/\text{fF}$	0.304 3	0.344 2	0.407 1	0.427 9
$\text{Im}(C_1)/\text{fF}$	0.002 4	0.002 7	0.003 2	0.003 6

The incidence-angle stability of the filter was investigated for oblique incidence of THz waves. In the case of horizontal polarizations, the transmission spectra for the incidence angles from  $10^\circ$  to  $60^\circ$  are shown in Fig. 9 with reference to that of normal incidence. As shown in

the figure, the resonant frequencies for all the oblique incidence angles are practically identical, i. e. 0.918 THz. The bandwidth change is insignificant up to the incidence angle  $30^\circ$ . Afterwards, the bandwidth increases dramatically with the increase of incidence angle. Therefore, the filter has very good resonant frequency stability up to the incidence angle of  $60^\circ$  and the overall filtering characteristics are fairly stable up to the incidence angle of  $30^\circ$ .

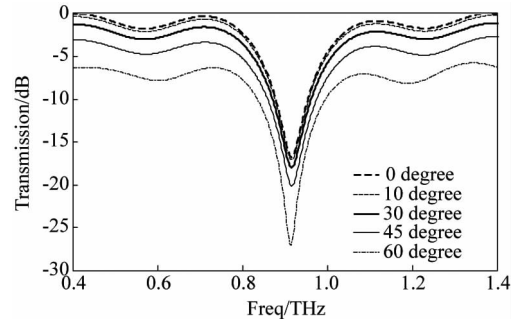


Fig. 9 Transmission spectra at different incidence angles

图 9 入射角不同时对应的透射谱

## 4 Conclusions

A dynamically tunable band-stop filter in the THz spectrum regime is presented in this paper. The temperature-dependent dielectric constant of InSb loaded into the rectangular SRR enables the wideband tunability of the filter. Geometrical parameters of the unit cell are also effective in tuning the resonant frequency to various extents, which can be determined in accordance with the operating frequency band. Simulation results show fairly good agreement with that of the equivalent LMC circuit model. The filtering characteristics are reasonably good for a narrowband band-stop filter with stable performance for oblique incidence angles less than  $30^\circ$ . The dynamically tunable band-stop filter constructed with a simple structure can find applications in the Terahertz communication and sensing systems.

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both the electron-electron scattering and the electron-phonon scattering play important roles in the Te-doped sample.

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