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Abstract. The theory of stretching and compression of short light pulses by chirped volume Bragg gratings (CBGs) is reviewed based on spectral decomposition of short pulses and on wavelength-dependent coupled wave equations. Analytic theory of diffraction efficiency of CBG with constant chirp and approximate theory time-delay dispersion is presented. Comparison of approximate analytic results with exact numeric coupled-wave modeling shows excellent agreement for smooth heterogeneities of CBGs. © The Authors. Published by SPIE under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Unported License. Distribution or reproduction of this work in whole or in part requires full attribution of the original publication, including its DOI. [DOI: 10.1117/1.OE.53.5.051509]

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1 Introduction

Chirped pulse amplification is the main approach for high-power/high-energy ultrashort laser pulse generation. It is achieved by stretching ultrashort laser pulses. Those stretched pulses have a much lower value of instantaneous power and, therefore may be amplified by broadband laser amplifiers without damaging the medium. Amplified chirped pulses may then be directed to the compressing element, which allows collection of all spectral components back into ultrashort pulse, but with higher energy. The conventional way for doing this is the use of a pair of diffracting gratings for both stretching and compression (Treacy stretchers and compressors). An especially elegant idea was suggested and implemented by Galvanauskas et al.2,3 with the use of chirped fiber Bragg gratings, which are gratings with a gradually varied period along the fiber. It is possible to use the same grating for compression, and stretching stage, but to illuminate it from the opposite end. In this case, the influence of smooth heterogeneities of time-delay dispersion (TDD) at the stretching stage, $T_{str} (\lambda)$, is compensated for by those of the compression stage, so that $T_{str} (\lambda) + T_{compr} (\lambda) \approx \text{const}$. A similar performance was demonstrated with the use of chirped volume Bragg gratings (chirped VBGs or CBGs), which are produced by holographic recording in the bulk of photo-thermo-refractive (PTR) glass and have dramatically higher apertures when compared with those of fiber gratings.4 Recent development of VBGs based on PTR glass5 allowed for operation of stretching-compression schemes at much higher values of power, see for example, Ref. 6.

The present paper is devoted to the development of numerical and analytic tools for the study of stretching and compression by volume CBGs. While this analysis is applicable for any volume CBG, the examples shown in this paper are based on CBGs recorded in PTR glass.

2 Basic Scheme and System of Equations, Definition of Chirp, and Time-Delay Dispersion

The basic scheme of stretching, amplification of stretched pulse, and subsequent recompression back into short pulse by means of a volume CBG is presented in Fig. 1. Due to gradual variation of CBG period in the $z$ direction, different spectral components of an incident pulse are reflected from different parts of the CBG and, therefore, have different delays. After amplification, the stretched pulse is launched to the same CBG from the opposite side and compressed back to its original width. In this work, we consider the amplifier as a linear device that does not affect any parameters of a laser pulse but power. Therefore, we assume that a CBG-reflected stretched pulse is transmitted from the cross-section at the front surface of the CBG ($z = 0$) to the opposite end of the same CBG ($z = L$), without any additional distortions.

We assume that the dielectric permittivity and magnetic permeability of CBG depend on coordinate $z$ as

$$
\varepsilon (z) = (n_0^2 + 2n_0 \delta n (z) + O(\delta n)^2) \cdot \varepsilon_{\text{vac}}, \quad \mu \equiv \mu_{\text{vac}},
$$

(1)

where $\delta n (z)$ is the variation of refractive index. Then the equation for the complex amplitudes $A(z)$ and $B(z)$ of monochromatic component of electric field

$$
E_{\text{real}} (z, t) = \frac{1}{2} \{ \exp (-i\omega t) [A(t) \exp (ikz) + B(t) \exp (-ikz)] + \text{compl. conj.} \},
$$

(2)

with $k = \omega n_0 / c, n_0 \equiv n(\omega)$ is

$$
\frac{d^2}{dz^2} \left[ A(z) e^{ikz} + B(z) e^{-ikz} \right] + \left( \frac{\omega}{c} \right)^2 \left[ n_0^2 + 2n_0 \delta n (z) \right] \left[ A(z) e^{ikz} + B(z) e^{-ikz} \right] = 0,
$$

(3)
where the terms of the order of $O(\delta n)^2$ were ignored. We also assume that the spatial variation of the refractive index $\delta n(z)$ has the form

$$\delta n(z) = n_2(z) + n_1(z) \cos[Qz + \psi(z)].$$  \hfill (4)

Here, smooth heterogeneity $n_2(z)$ and spatial modulation $n_1(z)$ are small in comparison with $n_0$ and are relatively slow varying functions of $z$; $\psi(z)$ is a differentiable function, and $Q$ (rad/m) has the value close to $2k$, see Eq. (13). (It should be emphasized that our notation $n_2(z)$ for the smooth correction to the background refractive index has nothing to do with the nonlinearity of refractive index.) In the standard approach of slow varying envelope approximation (SVEA), one should ignore second derivatives of slowly varying amplitudes $A(z)$ and $B(z)$, keep the resonant terms $\propto \exp(ikz)$ and $\propto \exp(-ikz)$ only, and equalize each of them to zero. As a result, one gets the following system of coupled equations:

$$\frac{dA}{dz} = i(\omega/c)n_2(z) \cdot A(z) + i(\omega/2c)n_1(z) \times \exp[iQz - 2ikz + i\psi(z)] \cdot B(z),$$

$$\frac{dB}{dz} = -i(\omega/2c)n_1(z) \exp[-iQz + 2ikz - i\psi(z)] \cdot A(z) - i(\omega/c)n_2(z) \cdot B(z).$$ \hfill (5)

It is convenient now to introduce new amplitudes $a(z)$ and $b(z)$, defined by

$$a(z) = A(z) \exp\left\{\frac{i}{2}((2k - Q)z - \psi(z))\right\},$$

$$b(z) = B(z) \exp\left\{-\frac{i}{2}((2k - Q)z - \psi(z))\right\}. \hfill (6)$$

Then for these small amplitudes $a(z)$ and $b(z)$, one gets our system in the form

$$\begin{bmatrix} a(z) \\ b(z) \end{bmatrix} = \hat{V}(z) \begin{bmatrix} a(z) \\ b(z) \end{bmatrix},$$

$$\hat{V}(z) = \begin{bmatrix} i\nu(z) & ik(z) \\ -ik(z) & -i\nu(z) \end{bmatrix}. \hfill (7)$$

Here $\nu(z)$ is the local value of detuning, measured in (rad/m), and $k(z)$ is the local strength of coupling, of dimensions $(1/m)$

$$\nu(z) = \left(\frac{\omega}{c}\right)n_2(z) + \frac{2k - Q - d\psi(z)/dz}{2}, \hfill (8)$$

$$k(z) = \left(\frac{\omega}{c}\right)n_1(z) / 2.$$
\[ \nu(z_B) = 0 \Rightarrow \frac{2\pi n(\lambda)}{\lambda} = \frac{2\pi n(\lambda_0)}{\lambda_0} + \frac{1}{2} \frac{d\psi}{dz}. \]  

(13)

Here \( \lambda_0 \) is the central wavelength defined by basic parameter of CBG: \( Q = 4\pi n(\lambda_0)/\lambda_0 \), with \( Q \) defined by Eq. (4). This condition allows connecting spectral chirp parameter \( d\lambda/dz_B \) of CBG with the second derivative of the phase correction \( \psi(z) \). Indeed, one has to assume \( \lambda = \lambda(z) \) in Eq. (13) and take \( z \)-derivative of the left- and right-hand sides of that equation. As a result, one gets

\[ \frac{d \lambda}{dz_B} = -\frac{\lambda^2}{4\pi n_{gr}(\lambda) d^2 \psi}, \quad n_{gr}(\lambda) = n(\lambda) - \frac{\lambda}{2} \frac{dn}{dz}. \]

(14)

Here the expression for \( n_{gr} \) is an alternative form of denoting group velocity, \( v_{gr} = d\lambda/dk \) and \( n_{gr} = n(\omega) + \omega(dn/d\omega) \equiv n(\lambda) - \lambda d(n/d\lambda) \). Constant chirp \( (d\lambda/dz_B = \text{const}) \) corresponds to \( \psi(z) = \beta \cdot (z - 0.5L)^2 \), where the mid-point \( z = 0.5L \) of CBG with length \( L \) has resonant wavelength \( \lambda_0 \). Indeed,

\[ \psi(z) = \beta \cdot (z - 0.5L)^2 \Rightarrow \frac{d \lambda}{dz_B} = -\frac{\lambda^2}{2\pi n_{gr}} \beta. \]

(15)

In the approximation of unchanged group velocity \( v_0 = c/n_{gr} \), the value of time-delay in the stretching process as a function of wavelength \( \lambda \) is

\[ T_1(\lambda) \equiv \text{TDD}(\lambda) \approx 2(z_B \lambda) - z_1 n_{gr}/c. \]

(16)

We will see below (Fig. 7 in Sec. 5.3) that this formula yields a reasonable result for CBG with low efficiency only.

3 Analytic Expression of Diffraction Efficiency of CBG

Consider first a weak CBG for which the first order of perturbation theory is valid. In the zeroth approximation and at \( n_2 \equiv 0 \), one can take \( A(z) \approx 1 \) for all \( z \). Then for the reflection amplitude coefficient, one gets from Eq. (5)

\[ r(A \rightarrow B) = B(-\infty) = i\kappa \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \exp[-i\psi(z)]dz, \]

(17)

which, for \( \psi(z) = \beta \cdot (z - 0.5L)^2 \), yields explicit value of

\[ |r|^2 \approx \pi |\kappa|^2/|\beta|. \]

(18)

An analytic expression has been derived in Ref. 8, which is valid for any strength of coupling. It may be simplified for constant chirp profile of the grating, with the use of Eq. (15) to:

\[ |r|^2 = 1 - \exp(-\pi |\kappa|^2/|\beta|), \quad |r|^2 = 1 - |r|^2. \]

(19)

Derivation of this expression, see Refs. 7 and 8, is similar to the calculation of quantum-mechanical transmissibility of parabolic potential barrier, see Ref. 9, and will not be discussed here. To go over the rather heavy derivation of Eq. (19) from Refs. 8 and 7, we suggest using the known structure of Eq. (19) and checking all the coefficients in it via the first-order perturbation result [Eq. (18)]. Actual numerical modeling (see below) confirmed the validity of Eq. (19) with great accuracy, especially for apodized CBG, where spatial refractive index modulation comes smoothly to zero at the ends of CBG in this particular modeling, see Eq. (40).

4 Approximate Expression for Time-Delay Dispersion

Approximate evaluation of TDD may be done on the basis of assumption of slowly varying behavior of the coefficients \( \kappa = k(z) \) and \( \nu = \nu(z) \) in Eq. (7). We take the SVEA equations in the symmetric form.

\[ \frac{d}{dz} \begin{pmatrix} a \\ b \end{pmatrix} = \tilde{\mathbf{V}} \begin{pmatrix} a \\ b \end{pmatrix}, \quad \tilde{\mathbf{V}} = \begin{pmatrix} i\nu & i\kappa \\
-i\kappa & -i\nu \end{pmatrix}. \]

(20)

In the assumption of \( \nu = \text{const}, \kappa = \text{const} \), the solution of the form \( \begin{pmatrix} a,b \end{pmatrix} = \exp(pz)(a_0,b_0) \) exists. From that we get the result for two eigenvalues of matrix \( \tilde{\mathbf{V}} \).

\[ p_{1,2} = \pm i\mu, \quad \mu = +\sqrt{\nu^2 - |\kappa|^2}. \]

(21)

We define the positive root as the one for which, in the region \( |\kappa| < |\nu| \), the real square root \( \mu = +\sqrt{\nu^2 - |\kappa|^2} \) satisfies the condition \( \mu/|\mu| = \nu/|\nu| \); in other words, the sign of \( \mu \) is the same as the sign of \( \nu \) in that region where propagation is not forbidden. Eigenvectors for \( p_1 = +i\mu \) and for \( p_2 = -i\mu \) are, respectively,

\[ \begin{pmatrix} a_1 \\ b_1 \end{pmatrix} = \text{const}_1 \begin{pmatrix} 1 \\ -\kappa/\mu + \nu \end{pmatrix}, \]

\[ \begin{pmatrix} a_2 \\ b_2 \end{pmatrix} = \text{const}_2 \begin{pmatrix} -\kappa/\mu + \nu \\ 1 \end{pmatrix}. \]

(22)

Group velocity of the wave \( a \) in the absence of coupling, \( |\kappa| = 0 \), is taken as \( v_a = v_0 \), while group velocity of the wave \( b \) is taken as \( v_b = -v_0 \). The general expression for the group velocity in the presence of both constant values \( \nu \) and \( \kappa \) for a given mode may be intuitively written as

\[ v_{gr} = P[\text{Watt/m}^2]/U[\text{Joule/m}^3], \]

(23)

where \( P \) is the Poynting vector and \( U \) is the energy density. Assuming \( P = |a|^2 - |b|^2 \), \( U = \text{const} \cdot (|a|^2 + |b|^2) \) and checking the case of \( |\kappa| = 0 \), we get \( \text{const} = 1/v_0 \). Thus, in general case, group velocity in the presence of grating becomes

\[ v_{group} = v_0 \frac{|a|^2 - |b|^2}{|a|^2 + |b|^2}. \]

(24)

In the approximation of constant (or reasonably slow varying) \( \nu \) and \( \kappa \), one gets for mode \#1 (a predominantly \( a \)-wave) and for mode \#2 (a predominantly \( b \)-wave)

\[ v_1 = (v_a) = v_0 \frac{\mu}{|\nu|}, \quad v_2 = (v_b) = -v_0 \frac{\mu}{|\nu|}. \]

(25)

We take those expressions as approximations for group velocities of incident and reflected waves in the use of
CBG for the stretcher-compressor scheme and verify the
degree of their validity by comparison with results of direct
wave modeling of CBG, Sec. 5.

In this approximate approach (Fig. 2), the incident wave \(a\)
(the one to be stretched by CBG) propagates from the point
\(z = z_1\) of the left boundary of CBG to the left point \(z = z_2\)
inside CBG, where decisive reflective transformation of \(a\)
takes place. The points \(z = z_2\) and \(z = z_3\) are defined
by the condition \(\nu(z, \lambda) = \pm |\kappa|\). In CBG approximated by
constant chirp, \(\nu(z, \lambda) = \beta \cdot |z - z_B(\lambda)|\), those points
are symmetrically positioned around \(z_B(\lambda)\), i.e., around perfect
Bragg-resonant point.

\[
z_2 = z_B(\lambda) - z_0, \quad z_3 = z_B(\lambda) + z_0, \quad z_0 = |\kappa|/|\beta|. \quad (26)
\]

After the decisive reflection from the point \(z = z_2\), incident
wave of type \(a\) gets transformed into reflected wave of
type \(b\). Total time-delay due to propagation from the entrance
\(z = z_1\) to reflection point \(z = z_2\) and back is

\[
T_1(\lambda) \equiv T(z_1 \rightarrow z_2 \rightarrow z_1)[\text{second}] = 2 \int_{z_1}^{z_2} [\nu(z)]^{-1} dz. \quad (27)
\]

where \(\nu(z) = v_0 \cdot |\mu(z)/\nu(z)|\) as a consequence of Eqs. (22)
and (24). At the compression stage, the wave enters CBG
through the cross-section \(z = z_4\) and propagates in the \(b\)-
form down to \(z = z_3\), and after the reflection, it propagates
back to \(z = z_4\). The corresponding round-trip delay time of
this stage is given by

\[
T_2(\lambda) \equiv T(z_4 \rightarrow z_3 \rightarrow z_4)[\text{second}] = 2 \int_{z_3}^{z_4} [\nu(z)]^{-1} dz. \quad (28)
\]

where again \(\nu(z) = v_0 \cdot |\mu(z)/\nu(z)|\). For a general \(z\)-dependence
of \(\nu(z)\) and \(\kappa(z)\), one should numerically find
\(z_B(\lambda), z_2(\lambda), z_3(\lambda)\) and numerically calculate the corresponding
integrals. Calculation can be done analytically for constant
chirp and constant \(\kappa\).

\[
\nu(z) = \beta \cdot |z - z_B(\lambda)|, \quad z_1 = 0, \quad z_4 = L, \quad z_B(\lambda) = \frac{L}{2} + \left(\frac{dx}{dz}\right)^{-1}(\lambda - \lambda_0). \quad (29)
\]

Equation (15) yields the expression for \(dx/dz\). Here \(\lambda_0\) is
the central wavelength of CBG. In that case, \(z_2 = z_B(\lambda) - z_0, \quad z_3 = z_B(\lambda) + z_0, \quad z_0 = |\kappa|/|\beta|\), and integrals
may be found analytically.

\[
T(z_1 \rightarrow z_2 \rightarrow z_1) = \frac{2}{v_0} \sqrt{|z_B(\lambda)|^2 - z_0^2}. 
\]

\[
T(z_4 \rightarrow z_3 \rightarrow z_4) = \frac{2}{v_0} \sqrt{|L - z_B(\lambda)|^2 - z_0^2}. \quad (30)
\]

\[
T_{\text{cycle}} \equiv T(z_1 \rightarrow z_2 \rightarrow z_1) + T(z_4 \rightarrow z_3 \rightarrow z_4) = \frac{2}{v_0} \left\{ \sqrt{|z_B(\lambda)|^2 - z_0^2} + \sqrt{|L - z_B(\lambda)|^2 - z_0^2} \right\}. \quad (31)
\]

In the case when both \(z_0 \ll z_B(\lambda)\) and \(z_0 \ll L - z_B(\lambda)\),
one can expand \(T_{\text{cycle}}(\lambda)\) in terms of small ratio \(z_0/L\).

\[
T_{\text{cycle}}(\lambda) \approx \frac{1}{v_0} \left( 2L - 4z_0^2 - \frac{L^2}{4z_0(\lambda - L/2)^2} \right). \quad (32)
\]

One should take the value of \(T_{\text{cycle}}\) from Eqs. (31) or (32)
above and then average the expression over the spectral con-
tent of the pulse in question. As an even more crude estimate,
one may try to take the value of \(T_{\text{cycle}}\) at \(|z_0 - L/2| \ll z\), and
then the formula for time-delay of the peak of recompressed
pulse becomes

\[
T_{\text{cycle}} \approx \frac{1}{v_0} \left( 2L - \frac{4z_0^2}{L} \right). \quad (33)
\]

It is worth discussing separately two effects that influence
the delay time of the cycle stretching–compression.

The first one is that the round-trip length of the stretching
process is shorter than \(2|z_B(\lambda) - z_1|\) by the thickness of
forbidden zone: \(2z_0 = 2|\kappa|/|\beta|\), see Fig. 2. This leads to a shorter
delay time of the stretching–compression cycle: shorter by
approximately \((4z_0/v_0)\), i.e., of the first order in \(z_0\).

The second effect is due to considerable (~50% and
more) decrease of group velocities in the vicinity of reflection
points \(z = z_2\) and \(z = z_3\). The thickness of this vicinity
is of the order of \(z_0\). Thus, this second effect results in a
longer delay time, also of the first order in \(z_0\).

What is truly remarkable is that these two effects compensate
each other in the first order in \(z_0\). The resulting delay time
does decrease (in comparison with \(2L/v_0\)), but in the
second order in the coupling constant, i.e., proportionally
to \(z_0^2/v_0^2\).

A monochromatic wave stretches in time from \(t = -\infty\) to
\(t = +\infty\). One can define time delay dispersion \(TDD(\lambda)\)
for the quasi-monochromatic packet with the wavelength \(\lambda\).
Many sources advise to one calculate the phase of reflection
coefficient \(\phi(\lambda) = \arg(r(\lambda))\) and postulate that
Our numeric modeling shows that this is valid for large modulation of \( \varphi(\lambda) \) only, \( |\varphi| \gg 1 \).

5 Numerical Modeling

5.1 Parameters of Numerical Modeling

We have developed the program for numerical modeling of the scheme presented in Fig. 1 with the use of Mathematica software package. In our approach, the fields of all pulses were decomposed into time Fourier series via discrete Fourier transform (DFT) subroutine. The discrete index \( j \) in DFT programs takes only non-negative values in the range \( 0 < j < N - 1 \), where \( N \) is the total number of points (either in time domain or in frequency domain). For that reason the frequency of an individual component was related to that index \( j \) by

\[
\omega_j = \omega_{\text{central}} + (2\pi/T_{\text{total}}) \times \text{phys}(j),
\]

\[
\text{phys}(j) = \begin{cases} 
  j, & \text{if } 0 < j < N/2; \\
  j - N, & \text{otherwise}.
\end{cases}
\]

In that manner, we account for both positive and negative values of frequency detuning. Meanwhile discrete time points were numbered just as

\[
t_j = t_{\text{initial}} + j \cdot \Delta, \quad \Delta = T_{\text{total}}/N. \tag{36}
\]

Here \( T_{\text{total}} \) is the total time interval under consideration. Average refractive index of PTR glass was taken for each wavelength \( \lambda_j = 2\pi c/\omega_j \) as either constant value \( n = 1.4891 \) (for central wavelength \( \lambda_{\text{central}} = 1.06 \) \( \mu \)m) or from Sellmeier formula for that glass.\(^{10}\) The system of ordinary differential equations was integrated numerically for each frequency \( \omega_j \). Sometimes it was advantageous to divide all the integration length \( L \) (thickness of CBG) into four separate regions, with accuracy goal achieved for each region independently. Examples below are demonstrated mostly for \( L = 0.1 \) m (\( \approx 10 \) cm) and constant chirp parameter \( \beta = 8 \times 10^4 \) rad/m², from Eq. (15). Value of coupling constant \( |\kappa| \) was chosen via dimensionless parameter \( S = |\kappa|L/w \), with \( S \) varying from 15 to 150.

5.2 Modeling of Stretching–Compressing by CBG with Imperfections

It should be noted that CBGs with large apertures and long stretching times\(^{4,6,11}\) show some spatial variations of phase resulting from optical aberrations in a holographic recording system and optical homogeneity of a recording material (PTR glass). This is why, among other results of our numerical modeling of stretching–compression process, we would like to discuss here the influence of small and very inhomogeneous variations of phase of the grating. Equation (13) allows finding the position \( z_B(\lambda) \), where formal Bragg condition is satisfied for a given wavelength \( \lambda \). We took a small oscillatory addition to the phase, \( \delta \varphi = a \cos \gamma z \), where \( \gamma/|\kappa| = 2\pi/\Lambda_1 \) and \( \Lambda_1 \) is the period of perturbations. Since the term \( d\varphi/dz \) is present in the right-hand side of Eq. (13), the equation for detuning \( z_B(\lambda) \) becomes

\[
\frac{2\pi n(\lambda)}{\lambda} = \frac{2\pi n(\lambda_0)}{\lambda_0} - \beta(z_B - b) + a\gamma \sin \gamma z_B. \tag{37}
\]

If \( a\gamma^2 \) is larger than \( 2|\beta| \), then there is a possibility that Eq. (37) has several solutions \( (z_B)_1, (z_B)_2, \ldots \) for the given wavelength \( \lambda \). Then application of the simplest formula

\[
\text{TDD}(\lambda) \approx 2(z_B(\lambda) - z_1)/\lambda_0, \tag{38}
\]

yields multivalued TDD(\( \lambda \)) and gives a suspicion of low-quality recompression, to say nothing about peculiar oscillations, which are even more severe in the stretched pulse. However, the results of our numerical modeling show for phase modulation

\[
\delta \varphi = a \cos(\gamma z) \cdot \exp(-z - 0.5 L^2/d^2), \quad d = L/4
\]

that if the amplitude \( 2a \) (top to bottom) is moderately small, e.g., \( 2a \leq 0.4 \) rad, the influence of formally multivalued feature of TDD(\( \lambda \)) from Eq. (38) is not important. In particular, Fig. 3 shows \( z \)-dependence of Bragg resonant wavelength detuning (in nanometers) for particular perturbation of the phase given by Eq. (39). Actual wave modeling of stretching by perturbed CBG was done for \( L = 0.1 \) m and \( \beta = 8 \times 10^4 \) rad/m², coupling coefficient \( |\kappa| \) \( \approx \) 30. Additional modulation \( \delta \varphi \) from Eq. (39) was taken with the parameters \( 2a = 0.4 \) rad, \( \gamma = 1405 \) rad/m, so that \( a\gamma^2/2\beta = 2.47 \), and the condition of multivalued function TDD(\( \lambda \)) from Eq. (38) was satisfied. Stretching and compression of incident Gaussian pulse with \( r_0/\text{FWHM} = 3.0 \) ps was modeled and depicted in Fig. 4. It shows spectra of the incident pulse (upper curve) and of the recompressed pulse (lower curve). One can see that for a CBG with spectral width \( \Delta\lambda(\text{FWHM}) \approx 0.1 \) nm equal to that of a laser pulse at the level of \( 1/e^2 \), the spectral width of a recompressed pulse is practically the same. However, there is some modulation of the spectrum in the vicinity of the maximum, which is caused by ripples in the dispersion curve depicted in Fig. 3; cutting off short- and long-wavelength wings of the spectrum and the spectral width of the CBG is due to finite spectral width of CBG.

Figure 5 shows the intensity profiles of the input pulse, stretched pulse (multiplied by factor 80 for illustrative
and recompressed pulse for CBG with the above oscillatory perturbations of the phase δψ(z) of the grating. Input pulse was a transform-limited Gaussian pulse with Δτ/(HWe^{-2}IM) = 3 ps. The properties of CBG are the same as for Figs. 3 and 4. There is a small precursor in the recompressed pulse (arrow in Fig. 5) containing ~6% of recompressed energy. Nevertheless one observes rather good quality of recompression: diffraction efficiency of recompressed energy was 0.92 and ratio of peak intensities was 0.61. It means the steep perturbation of phase δψ with amplitude 2α ≤ 0.4 rad is not harmful for recompression. Meanwhile, our modeling for perturbations with amplitude 2α ≥ 0.4 rad had shown considerable hindering recompression.

5.3 Study of Time-Delay Dispersion

For the evaluation of our analytic (but approximate) results for time-delay dispersion, TDD(λ), we had to choose a special approach in numerical modeling. Namely, illumination of CBG by a very short incident pulse (< 1 ps and therefore with a very broad spectrum) resulted in a stretched pulse with very flat top, for which it was difficult to find TDD at the stretching stage. If any distortions in the temporal profile of stretched pulse were present, the arrival time of the peak of reflected pulse was difficult to determine. On the other hand, if the incident pulse was relatively long (and hence was relatively narrow-band), the reflected pulse was not stretched to full possible duration 2L/v_gr. Here v_gr is the group velocity at λ_0 in unexposed glass. Still, determining the delay time for stretching stage was difficult due to large duration of the input pulse.

For that reason we calculated from numerical wave modeling the delay time of a recompressed pulse in comparison with the arrival time of an incident pulse. The delivery of the stretched pulse to the back of CBG for recompression was considered to be instantaneous in the modeling. Two types of CBG were considered. One type was with |κ| = S/L taken as a constant through the whole thickness L of CBG; hereafter, we call this type of CBG as uniform or nonapodized. The other type had the profile

\[ |κ(z)| = \frac{S}{L} \cdot \text{apod}(z); \quad \text{apod}(z) = 1 - \left(\frac{2z}{L} - 1\right)^{10}. \]

This apodization function suppressed not-quite Bragg contributions of the ends of CBG; the latter contribution leads to Fresnel function-like oscillations in the reflection spectrum of nonapodized CBG. For both cases we calculated TDD (at λ_0 = 1.06 μm) for different values of dimensionless parameter S (and for constant chirp β = 8 \times 10^4 \text{ rad/m}^2). The results for TDD slightly varied as a function of duration of input Gaussian pulse τ_0 (HWe^{-2}IM). The shortest pulse duration τ_0, for which this CBG still reflected almost all the spectrum, was τ_0 = 3.0 ps. The stretched pulse in both cases had a duration of ~1 ns, i.e., 300 times longer than the input one.

Figure 6 shows the comparison of numerical modeling of time-delay T_{cycle} with our analytic approximation, Eqs. (27), (28), and (33). The square points in Fig. 6 show full duration of stretching–recompression process versus dimensionless coupling coefficient S = |κ|L for unapodized CBG. Triangular points describe corresponding data for apodized CBG. Dashed and dotted lines are calculated by the analytic model [Eqs. (27) and (28)]. Parabolic curve describing the simple formula [Eq. (33)] (not shown) is almost the same as a dependence of total time-delay between incident short pulse (Gaussian, with Δτ/(HWe^{-2}IM) = 12 ps) and recompressed pulse on the dimensionless coupling coefficient S = |κ|L. Square and triangular points correspond to numerical modeling of unapodized and apodized CBG, respectively. Dashed and dotted lines are calculated by analytic model Eqs. (27) and (28). Parabolic curve describing simple formula Eq. (33) (not shown) is almost the same as dashed curve for unapodized CBG. We see quadratic deviation of those curves from 2L/v_0 (from horizontal line) versus coupling |κ| = S/L.
as the dashed curve for unapodized CBG. We see quadratic deviation of those curves from $2L/v_0$ (form horizontal line) versus coupling $|\kappa| = S/L$. All data are for the input pulses with $t_0 = 12.0$ ps at the central wavelength $\lambda_0 = 1.06 \mu$m of our CBG. We see that the approach used in the derivation of the integrals [Eqs. (27), (28), and (33)] yields very reasonable correspondence with the results of numerical modeling.

Here is an important (and originally unexpected) observation. Too large a value of coupling ($S \geq 70$) for that particular CBG and $t_0 = 3.0$ ps, while yielding 99.4% diffraction efficiency for energy of recompressed pulse, resulted in relatively poor quality of recompression: peak intensity of recompressed pulse constituted 52% of the incident one. Our interpretation of that decrease of recompression quality is the following. Different spectral components of incident pulse exhibit somewhat different values of the sum $T_{cycle}(\lambda) = T_1(\lambda) + T_2(\lambda)$, from integrals [Eqs. (27) and (28)] with different values of $T_B(\lambda)$, see Fig. 7 for apodized CBG with $S = 90$. The presence of shorter values of $T_{cycle}(\lambda)$ points to the formation of precursor in the recompressed pulse. This effect leads to deteriorated recompression. Meanwhile, the fact that two considerably distant wavelengths have those shorter values of $T_{cycle}(\lambda)$ explains interference-type oscillations in the precursor.

6 Conclusions

We have developed a detailed Mathematica-based numerical tool for modeling the process of stretching–compression by CBG with arbitrary profiles of the grating’s phase and coupling coefficient. To better understand the results of numerous variants of that modeling, we developed approximate analytical model of time-delay dispersion TDD(\lambda). An unexpected result of that analytic model is that dependence of TDD on the coupling constant $|\kappa| = S/L$ starts with terms proportional to $|\kappa|^2$. We have shown that excessively large coupling in CBG leads to deterioration of recompression quality. We show that perturbations of grating phase with small ($\sim$0.4 rad top-to-bottom) amplitude do not hinder the recompression quality much, enabling >90% of energy in the recompressed pulse.

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References


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