

# Thickness-Dependent Transmission in a Finite Photonic Crystal Containing Nearly Ferroelectric Superconductor

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**Abstract**—In this paper, anomalous transmission properties in a finite photonic crystal made of a nearly ferroelectric superconductor, and a dielectric have been theoretically investigated. We show that, in the thickness domain, the transmission spectrum can be divided into two different regions: nonresonance and resonance. There are resonant transmission peaks in the resonance region, and the number of peaks is strongly dependent on the number of periods. In the frequency response, the number of resonant peaks is also increased as the thickness of nearly ferroelectric superconductor increases. The appearance of anomalous peaks enables us to design a narrowband filter without introducing any defect layer into the photonic crystal.

**Index Terms**—Photonic crystal, transmission, nearly ferroelectric superconductor, narrowband filter.

## I. INTRODUCTION

PHOTONIC crystals (PCs), artificially periodic structures made of media with refractive indices, have attracted much attention over the last two more decades [1]. Depending on the spatial arrangement, PCs can be classified as 1-D, 2-D, and 3-D, respectively. Due to the periodic feature in structure, there can exist certain forbidden regions in the photonic band structure (PBS) for a PC. These regions are called photonic band gaps (PBGs) which are analogous to the electronic band gaps in solids. The existence of PBGs enables us to design the PC as a reflector which is, indeed, of particular use in modern semiconductor laser systems.

The PBS as well as PBG are strongly dependent on the constituents in PCs. Recently, PCs containing superconducting materials called superconducting photonic crystals (SPCs) have been of great interest to the communities of optics and condensed matter physics [2]–[17]. It is shown that, in an SPC, there is a low-frequency cutoff frequency, which is not seen in an all-dielectric PC [2], [5], [16], [17]. The use of superconducting thin film can control the properties of defect modes in a defective SPC [11], [12]. Moreover, SPC containing magnetic films has been experimentally shown to have a negative

refractive index, an important consequence of double-negative materials [6].

The aforementioned reports of SPC almost concentrate on typical high-temperature cuprate,  $\text{YBa}_2\text{Cu}_3\text{O}_{7-x}$  (YBCO) or conventional superconducting system, Niobium (Nb). In addition to these two familiar superconductors, there exists a special kind of superconductor called the nearly ferroelectric (NFE) superconductors. An NFE superconductor is not only in the superconducting state but in NFE state. An NFE state indicates that the material is a soft-mode ionic system with a fairly high static permittivity. There have been two systems that belong to the NFE superconductors. The first is the Na-doped  $\text{WO}_3$ , i.e., sodium tungsten bronze  $\text{Na}_x\text{WO}_3$  with  $x \sim 0.05$ . It is a high-temperature superconductor with critical temperature  $T_c \sim 90$  K [18]. The second is the n- or p-doped  $\text{SrTiO}_3$  (STO) with a relatively low transition temperature,  $T_c \sim 1 - 3$  K [19], [20]. The host STO is a NFE material with a very high static permittivity,  $\epsilon(0) \sim 10^4$  when it is in the superconducting state [21].

Research on the SPCs containing NFE superconductor is rarely seen thus far. The purpose of this paper is thus to explore the electromagnetic wave transmission properties in a finite SPC made of an NFE superconductor and a dielectric. The NFE superconductor will be considered to operate in the dielectric-like region. This is an anomalous region because its permittivity function is positive, sharply contrary to the usual superconductors whose permittivity function is negative. We will investigate the effect of thickness of NFE superconductor on the transmission in such SPC structure.

The format of this work is described as follows: In Section II, we first briefly review the electrodynamics of an NFE superconductor. Then, matrix method is given to calculate the transmission spectrum. In Section III, we present the numerical results and discussion. Finally, the concluding remarks are given in Section IV.

## II. BASIC EQUATIONS

Let us consider a finite binary SPC denoted as  $(\text{AB})^N$ , where layer A is the NFE superconductor, layer B is the dielectric, and  $N$  is the number of periods. The thicknesses of A and B are  $d_a$  and  $d_b$ , respectively. In addition, their corresponding refractive indices are  $n_a$  and  $n_b$ , respectively. The SPC is assumed to be immersed in air. For an NFE superconductor, the index of refraction is related to the wave number  $k_{\text{NFE}}$ , namely

$$n_a = \frac{c}{\omega} k_{\text{NFE}} \quad (1)$$

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where  $c$  is the velocity of light,  $\omega$  is the circular frequency, and where  $k_{\text{NFE}}$  can be obtained from the wave equation, which is expressed as

$$\nabla^2 \mathbf{E} + \left( \omega^2 \mu_0 \varepsilon(\omega) - \frac{\mu_0}{\Lambda} \right) \mathbf{E} = 0 \quad (2)$$

based on the electrodynamics of NFE superconductors [22]. That is

$$k_{\text{NFE}} = \left[ \omega^2 \mu_0 \varepsilon(\omega) - \frac{\mu_0}{\Lambda} \right]^{1/2} \quad (3)$$

In Eq. (2),  $\mu_0$  is the permeability of free space,  $\mathbf{E}$  is the electric field, and the permittivity function  $\varepsilon(\omega)$  comes from the ionic lattice vibration given by [23]

$$\varepsilon(\omega) = \varepsilon'_\infty \frac{\omega_{\text{LO}}^2 - \omega^2}{\omega_{\text{TO}}^2 - \omega^2} \quad (4)$$

where  $\omega_{\text{LO}}$  and  $\omega_{\text{TO}}$  are the longitudinal and transverse soft-mode lattice frequencies, respectively, and

$$\varepsilon'_\infty = \varepsilon_\infty \Pi_i \omega_{\text{Li}}^2 / \omega_{\text{Ti}}^2 \quad (5)$$

where the primed product over  $i$  includes all oscillations except the soft mode and additionally the frequency  $\omega$  is assumed to be well below all  $\omega_{\text{Ti}}$  and  $\omega_{\text{Li}}$ . In addition, the parameter  $\Lambda$  is Eq. (2) is written by

$$\Lambda = \frac{m^*}{N_s e^2} = \mu_0 \lambda_L^2 \quad (6)$$

where  $N_s$  is the concentration of super-electrons,  $m^*$  is the electron effective mass, and  $e$  is the electronic charge, and  $\lambda_L$  is known as the London penetration length. It can be seen from Eq. (3) that if  $k_{\text{NFE}}$  is imaginary, then the wave will damp with a frequency-dependent penetration depth  $\lambda_L^*$  given by

$$\lambda_L^* = \frac{\lambda_L}{\sqrt{1 - \omega^2 \mu_0 \varepsilon(\omega) \lambda_L^2}}. \quad (7)$$

This is the familiar Meissner response of a superconductor. On the other hand, if  $k$  is real, then electromagnetic waves will propagate in the NFE superconductor, just like in a dielectric material. In this case, we have the dielectric-like response or the anomalous response for an NFE superconductor. In the analysis that follows, we shall pay our attention to this dielectric-like response in the study of transmission properties for the NFE SPC.

To calculate the transmittance for the considered SPC of  $(\text{AB})^N$ , matrix formulation will be employed. According to  $2 \times 2$  matrix method, the amplitudes of reflected wave  $E_{r0}$  and transmitted wave  $E_{t0}$  must be determined in terms of incident wave  $E_{i0}$ . The result is given by [24]

$$\begin{aligned} E_{t0} \begin{bmatrix} 1 \\ \eta_0^{-1} \end{bmatrix} &= M_{\text{cell}}^N \begin{bmatrix} E_{i0} + E_{r0} \\ \eta_0^{-1} (E_{i0} - E_{r0}) \end{bmatrix} \\ &= M_{\text{system}} \begin{bmatrix} E_{i0} + E_{r0} \\ \eta_0^{-1} (E_{i0} - E_{r0}) \end{bmatrix} \\ &= \begin{bmatrix} m_{11} & m_{12} \\ m_{21} & m_{22} \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} E_{i0} + E_{r0} \\ \eta_0^{-1} (E_{i0} - E_{r0}) \end{bmatrix} \end{aligned} \quad (8)$$

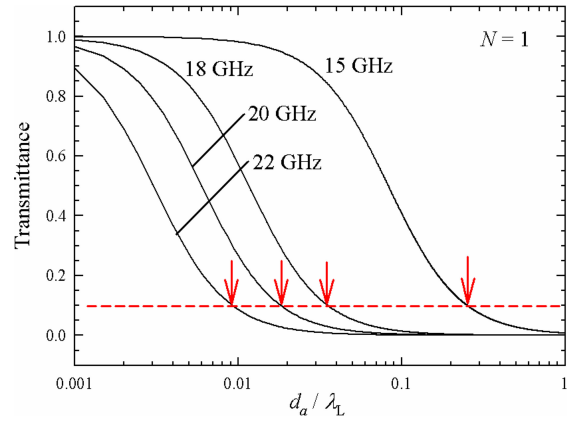


Fig. 1. Transmittance versus thickness of NFE layer  $d_a$  for a single period ( $N = 1$ ) at 15 GHz and  $d_b = \lambda_L / 4$ , where  $\lambda_L = 18 \mu\text{m}$ .

where  $\eta_0$  is the wave impedance of free space and

$$M_{\text{cell}} = \exp \left\{ i\omega d_b \begin{bmatrix} 0 & \mu_0 \\ \varepsilon_0 \varepsilon_b & 0 \end{bmatrix} \right\} \exp \left\{ i\omega d_a \begin{bmatrix} 0 & \mu_0 \\ \varepsilon_0 \varepsilon_a & 0 \end{bmatrix} \right\}. \quad (9)$$

Here,  $\varepsilon_b$  is the permittivity of dielectric layer. Then the reflection coefficient  $\Gamma$  and transmission coefficient  $\tau$  can be obtained to be

$$\Gamma = \frac{m_{11}\eta_0 + m_{12} - \eta_0^2 m_{21} - m_{22}\eta_0}{-m_{11}\eta_0 + m_{12} + \eta_0^2 m_{21} - m_{22}\eta_0} \quad (10)$$

$$\tau = m_{11} (1 + \Gamma) + \frac{m_{12}}{\eta_0} (1 - \Gamma). \quad (11)$$

The transmittance is thus given by  $\tau^* \tau$ .

### III. NUMERICAL RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this paper, in our numerical calculations, we shall consider  $n$ -STO as our NFE superconductor because its material parameters are available. They are  $\omega_{\text{TO}} = 1.6 \times 10^{11}$  rad/s,  $\omega_{\text{LO}} = 5.2 \times 10^{12}$  rad/s,  $\varepsilon_\infty = 5.5\varepsilon_0$ ,  $\Pi_i \omega_{\text{Li}}^2 / \omega_{\text{Ti}}^2 = 4.1$ ,  $m^* = 10m_0$ , and  $N_s = 9 \times 10^{17}$   $\text{cm}^{-3}$  [22]. With these parameters, the calculated London penetration length is  $\lambda_L = 18 \mu\text{m}$  and the dielectric-like response can be obtained to be in the frequency range of  $\omega_{c1} (= 0.9 \times 10^{11} \text{ rad/s}) - \omega_{\text{TO}}$ . In the linear frequency, it is  $f = 14.3 - 25.4$  GHz, which is the frequency range of interest in this work. The dielectric layer is  $\text{LaAlO}_3$  with a permittivity of  $\varepsilon_b = 24$  [25], [26].

In Fig. 1, we first plot the transmittance versus the thickness of NFE layer  $d_a$  for a single period,  $N = 1$  and  $d_b / \lambda_L = 1/4$ . It can be seen that transmittance in the thickness domain is a decreasing function of  $d_a$  at a fixed frequency. That is, high transmission is obtainable at  $d_a$  well below the penetration length  $\lambda_L$ . At 15 GHz there will be zero transmission when  $d_a$  approaches or is larger than  $\lambda_L$ . Zero transmission means a total reflection, which is a common result in a superconducting material. The results in Fig. 1 reflects the skin size effect which arises from the thickness of NFE layer. By the way, the curves are similar to those of low-pass filters in the usual frequency domain [27]. Thus, we can define the threshold thickness (indicated by the

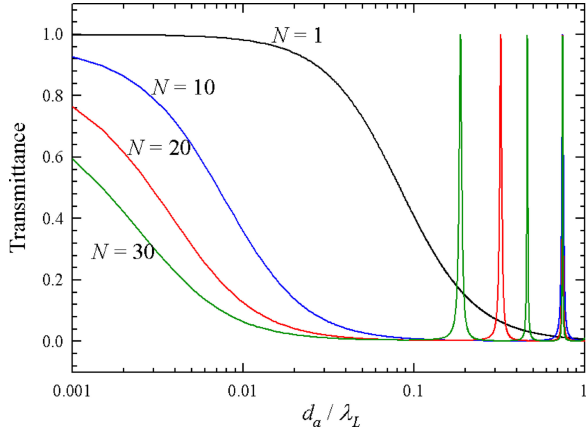


Fig. 2. Transmittance versus thickness of NFE layer  $d_a$  for distinct periods,  $N = 1, 10, 20,$  and  $30$ , respectively, at  $15$  GHz and  $d_b = \lambda_L/4$ , where  $\lambda_L = 18 \mu\text{m}$ .

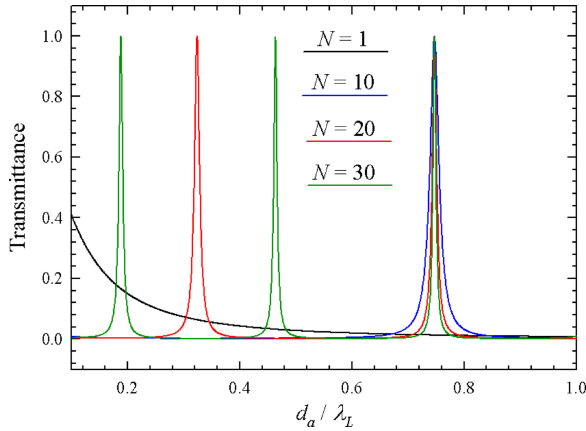


Fig. 3. A re-plot of Fig. 2 for the range of  $d_a / \lambda_L = 0.1 - 1.0$ .

red arrow) at which the magnitude of transmittance equals  $0.1$ , then we can find that the threshold thickness will decrease as the frequency increases.

Next, we examine the effect of number of periods on the transmittance. By taking frequency at  $15$  GHz, transmittance curves are plotted in Fig. 2, where different  $N = 1, 10, 20,$  and  $30$  are taken, respectively. As the number of periods increases, the transmittance curves are quite different from that of  $N = 1$ . The low-pass behavior in Fig. 1 is heavily suppressed and in the meantime anomalous transmission peaks are created. More importantly, it is of interest to note that the transmittance is divided into two regions. One is for nonresonance (like in Fig. 1) occurring in the region of  $d_a / \lambda_L < 0.1$ , where transmittance is decreased as  $N$  increases. The other is the resonant region when  $d_a / \lambda_L > 0.1$ . In this region, the number of the resonant peaks will be increased as  $N$  increases. A detailed look at the resonant part is shown in Fig. 3. For different  $N$ 's, there exists a common peak in the vicinity of  $d_a / \lambda_L = 0.75$ . If we now increase the frequency to  $20$  GHz, results of transmittance are depicted in Fig. 4. In this case, many peaks are produced at a large value of  $N$ .

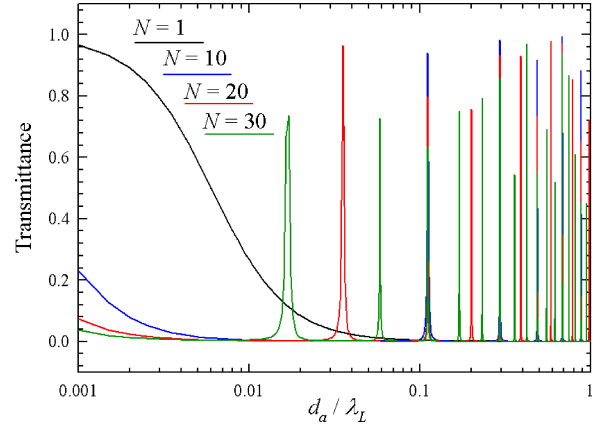


Fig. 4. Transmittance versus thickness of NFE layer  $d_a$  for distinct periods,  $N = 1, 10, 20,$  and  $30$ , respectively, at  $20$  GHz and  $d_b = \lambda_L/4$ , where  $\lambda_L = 18 \mu\text{m}$ .

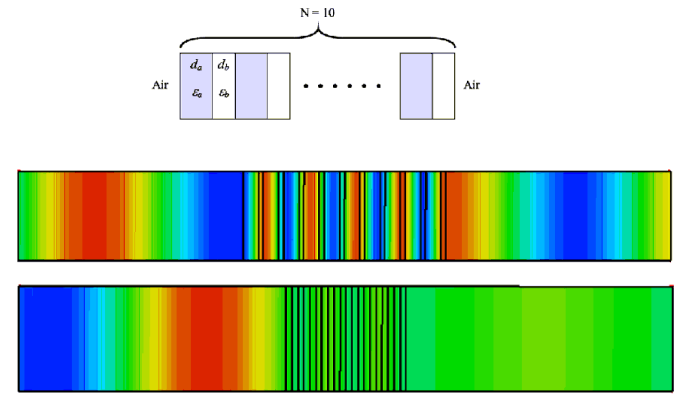


Fig. 5. The spatial distribution of the calculated E-field at  $15$  GHz when  $d_a = 0.75\lambda_L$  (upper) and  $d_a = 0.5\lambda_L$  (lower), corresponding to the occurrence of peak-transmittance and zero-transmittance, respectively. In both cases, the thickness of the  $\text{LaAlO}_3$  is fixed to be  $\lambda_L/4$ .

The behaviors of resonance and nonresonance can be clearly elucidated by the study the field intensity versus thickness. To do so, we have performed numerical simulation using a commercial simulator (CST Studio Suite 2014) which is based on the finite integration in time domain algorithm. Based on the curve of Fig. 2 for the case  $N = 10$ , Fig. 5 shows the spatial distribution of the calculated E-field intensity profile at  $15$  GHz when  $d_a = 0.75\lambda_L$ , corresponding to the occurrence of peak-transmittance (resonance). Another case for  $d_a = 0.5\lambda_L$ , corresponding to the occurrence of zero-transmittance (nonresonance), is also included in the same plot. In both cases, the thickness of the  $\text{LaAlO}_3$  is fixed to be  $\lambda_L/4$ . The difference in the intensity for the two cases is obvious as shown. For the case when peak-transmittance occurs, significant field intensity can be obtained within and throughout the periodic structure. On the contrary, however, none of the incident field can penetrate into the structure when zero-transmittance occurs.

Next, we study the frequency response of the transmittance. In Fig. 6, we plot the transmittance at different number of periods,  $N = 1, 6, 10,$  and  $20$ , respectively. Here,

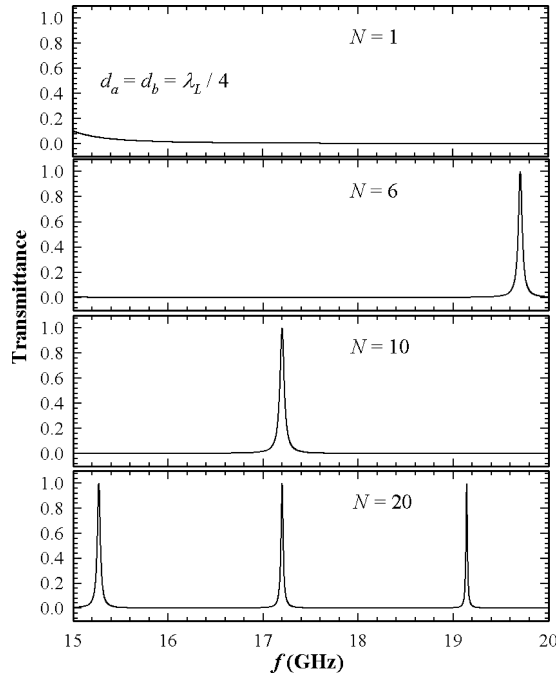


Fig. 6. Frequency response of transmittance at distinct periods,  $N = 1, 6, 10,$  and  $20,$  respectively, at  $d_a = d_b = \lambda_L / 4,$  where  $\lambda_L = 18 \mu\text{m}.$

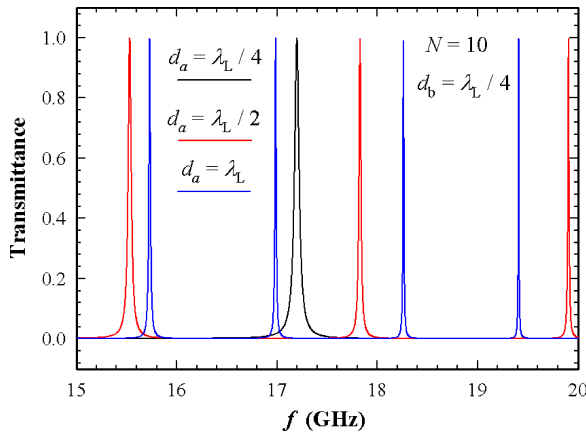


Fig. 7. Frequency response of transmittance at  $N = 10$  and  $d_b = \lambda_L / 4$  for three different  $d_a = \lambda_L / 4, \lambda_L / 2,$  and  $\lambda_L,$  respectively.

$d_a / \lambda_L = d_b / \lambda_L = 1/4$  is taken. Some features are of note. First, we have found that the first resonant peak starts to show up when  $N$  is equal or greater than six. Second, the peak is then red-shifted as  $N$  increases. Finally, multiple peaks will be present at a large number of periods, say  $N = 20.$  The results illustrate that the presence of anomalous transmission peaks is strongly dependent on the number of periods of the SPC. Taking  $N = 10,$  the effect of thickness is depicted in Fig. 7, in which we fixed the dielectric layer at  $d_b / \lambda_L = 1/4$  and change  $d_a / \lambda_L$  to  $1/4, 1/2,$  and  $1,$  respectively. It can be seen that more peaks will be produced as  $d_a$  increases.

#### IV. SUMMARY

We have studied the thickness-dependent anomalous transmission properties in a finite SPC containing NFE superconductor. We have shown that there can be total transmission in such SPC when the NFE superconductor is operated in the dielectric-like region. The number of transmission peaks can be increased as the number of periods increases. It can also be increased as the thickness of NFE layer increases. The increase in the peak numbers can be ascribed as follows. In the resonance where peak occurs, the whole structure can be regarded as an effective Airy slab [28]. It is known that the peak number will be increased as the width of slab increases. In addition, it is worth mentioning that, to best of our knowledge, there has been no experimental works related to the current considered structure thus far, partly because the NFE superconductor is a very special class of superconductor. Thus, this work may provide a motivation to the experimental works to study electromagnetic wave properties in a layered structure containing NFE superconductors. Finally, the appearance of resonant transmission peaks make it possible in designing the multiple-channel filter based on the use of SPC without having any defect layer.

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