

## RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Single-Layer, Dual-Band, Circularly Polarized, Proximity-Fed Meshed Patch Antenna

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**ABSTRACT** This paper proposes a new method to design a single-layer dual-band circularly polarized (CP) patch antenna with a small frequency ratio. The design consists of one or several pairs of rectangular patches proximity-fed by a 50- $\Omega$  microstrip line with an open-circuit termination. By exploiting both capacitive and inductive coupling mechanisms, and both orthogonal radiating modes of these patches, the antenna can be designed to operate at two close resonance frequencies. Due to its simple and single-layer structure, the antenna can be easily adapted with meshed configuration, which is suitable for transparent devices. For verification, a dual-band CP meshed patch antenna with a frequency ratio of 1.12 and two pairs of patch is designed, fabricated, and tested. The measurements show that the antenna prototype provides a  $|S_{11}| < -10$ -dB bandwidth of 4.82–5.03 GHz (210 MHz) and 5.49–5.78 GHz (290 MHz), axial ratio  $< 3$ -dB bandwidth of 4.88–4.93 GHz (50 MHz) and 5.50–5.57 GHz (70 MHz), and broadside realized gains of 9.0 dBic and 8.6 dBic for the lower and upper bands, respectively.

**INDEX TERMS** Single layer, rectangular patch, proximity feed, dual-band, circular polarization, meshed patch.

## I. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, meshed antennas have been received significantly pervasive attention as one a major class for optically transparent antennas [1], [2], [3]. Indeed, meshed configuration is used for almost 50% of the transparent antennas in the literature [2]. Due to their increasing number of applications, such as, integration with solar-cells, wireless sensors, onboard CubeSats or SmallSats, RF identification, broadcast, global positioning systems, 5G, and smart devices, significant efforts have been invested in antenna structures that can be adapted to meshed configuration. Inheriting features of the microstrip antennas [4], including low-profile, lightweight, low cost, and conformability to a shaped surface, the meshed patch antennas [5], [6], [7], [8], [9], [10], [11], [12], [13] are one of the most preferred choices for integration with

solar cells. Nevertheless, the performance of most of these antennas are still limited with single-band operation.

Along with the higher demands in quality of service, data-rate and reliability, many modern wireless communication systems employ different frequency bands. Moreover, some of these systems favorably employ circularly polarized (CP) antennas [14] to mitigate multipath interference, polarization mismatch, and Faraday's effects. Thus, there has been a demand on multi-band CP antennas, which, in some cases, are more reliable than the broadband antennas due to the reduction of out-of-band interference. Furthermore, broadband CP antennas typically require a higher profile or larger planar size. A common approach for designing dual-band CP antennas is to use dual resonant elements printed on multi-layer substrate, i.e., stacked patch configurations [15], [16], [17], [18], [19], [20]. These designs, however, are not suitable for transparent devices as multi-layer structures would reduce the transparency. Some notable

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techniques to design dual-band single-layer CP radiators include embedding Y and T-shape slots [21], using two different rings [22], [23], embedding metamaterial structures [24], loading open-ended stub [25], series-fed patch leaky-wave antenna [26], and adding non-radiative resonators [27]. Nevertheless, there are several challenges when adapting these techniques for meshed antennas. For example, probe feeds [21], [22], [23], [24], [25] and conducting vias [24] should be avoided for transparent devices. Meshing the resonators in [27] can be difficult due to the small gaps and thin conducting lines. In general, to adapt to the meshed configuration, simple structures are desirable because the mesh could alter the currents on the patch, and consequently, change the radiation mechanisms. For this purpose, [26] can be a good option but this technique requires large space for the antenna.

In this paper, a single-layer dual-band CP meshed patch antenna with a small frequency ratio is presented. The design consists of two pairs of meshed patches, which are fed by an open-ended 50-Ω microstrip-line through proximity coupling. Regarding the theoretical aspect, the proposed technique is unique where both inductive and capacitive couplings are exploited at two different frequencies by the same simple feeding structure. Regarding the practical aspect, the design avoids using probe feed, shorting vias, and any extra non-radiating or radiating element, which makes it suitable for adapting on transparent devices. As a validation, a dual-band CP antenna with a frequency ratio of 1.12 is characterized using the ANSYS Electronics Desktop and validated experimentally.

**II. RESONANT-TYPE PROXIMITY-FED PATCH ANTENNA**

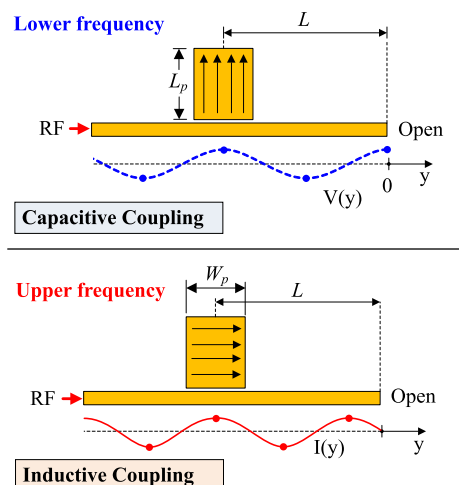
For completion, we first present the theory of a resonant-type proximity-fed patch antenna. The proximity-fed method was first presented by Itoh and Ohtsuka in 1982 [28] to avoid the multi-layer structure and exploit the advantages of non-contacting coupling feeds. It should be noted the principle is different from the traveling-wave structures as in [26], [29], and [30].

The basic structure is shown in Fig. 1, which consists of a rectangular patch fed from a microstrip line with distance  $L$  from its open-circuit termination. This creates a standing-wave on the microstrip line with maximum voltage and zero current at the termination. Interestingly, two types of coupling occur in this structure at two different frequencies:

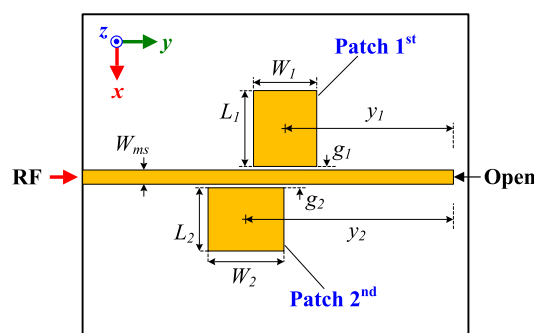
- 1) At a frequency  $f_1$  with guided-wavelength  $\lambda_{g1}$ , if

$$L = \frac{n\lambda_{g1}}{2}, \tag{1}$$

where  $n$  is an integer, the patch is aligned at  $V_{max}$ . If the patch length  $L_p \approx \lambda_{eff1}/2$ , the patch resonates at  $TM_{10}$  mode with vertical polarization through capacitive coupling. It is noted that  $\lambda_{g1} \neq \lambda_{eff1}$  as the effective permittivities of the patch and the microstrip line are different.



**FIGURE 1. Coupling mechanisms of coplanar proximity feed for a rectangular patch at different frequencies.**



**FIGURE 2. Top-view of the proposed dual-band CP proximity-fed patch antenna with one pair of patch.**

- 2) At a different frequency  $f_2$  with guided-wavelength  $\lambda_{g2}$ , if

$$L = \frac{n\lambda_{g2}}{2} + \frac{\lambda_{g2}}{4}, \tag{2}$$

where  $n$  is also an integer, the patch is aligned with  $I_{max}$ . If the patch width  $W_p \approx \lambda_{eff2}/2$ , the patch resonates in  $TM_{01}$  mode with horizontal polarization through inductive coupling.

Therefore, the structure works as a dual-band linear-polarized (LP) antenna where the polarization in each band is orthogonal to each other. Furthermore, the level of coupling, which affects the impedance matching, can be controlled by the gap between the patches and the feed lines. The principle demonstrated here is a generalization of what shown in [7], which will be exploited to design a dual-band CP antenna in the next section.

**III. DUAL-BAND CP PROXIMITY-FED PATCH ANTENNA**

**A. PRINCIPLE AND DESIGN**

A CP antenna can be realized if a vertically polarized patch and a horizontally polarized patch are both excited with 90° phase difference. Since the standing-wave current and voltage

TABLE 1. Parameters of dual-band CP patch antenna.

Par.	Value (mm)	Par.	Value (mm)	Par.	Value (mm)
$W_1$	13.2	$L_1$	15.2	$W_2$	15.35
$L_2$	13.2	$y_1$	37	$y_2$	45
$g_1$	0.4	$g_2$	0.4	$W_{ms}$	3.6

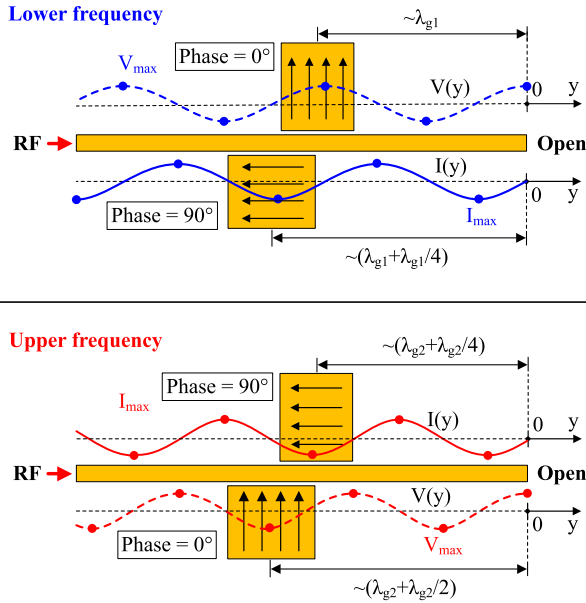


FIGURE 3. Capacitive and inductive coupling mechanisms of microstrip-line feed for the patches at two different frequencies.

are inherently 90° phase different, this is naturally achieved and will be exploited in the design.

Fig. 2 shows the geometry of the proposed concept, which consists of a pair of patch fed by an open-ended 50-Ω microstrip-line through proximity coupling. The two patches and feedline are printed on the top side of a single-layer grounded substrate (Roger RO4003,  $\epsilon_r = 3.55$ ,  $\tan \delta = 0.0021$ ,  $h_s = 1.524$  mm). To operate at two different frequencies,  $f_1$  and  $f_2$ , the length and width of each patch are chosen as about  $\lambda_{eff1}/2$  and  $\lambda_{eff2}/2$ , respectively.

According to the principle demonstrated in Section II, we select the position of the patches from the open termination such that

$$y_1 \approx \begin{cases} n\lambda_{g1}/2 & \text{at } f_1 \\ n\lambda_{g2}/2 + \lambda_{g2}/4 & \text{at } f_2 \end{cases} \quad (3)$$

and

$$y_2 \approx \begin{cases} n\lambda_{g1}/2 + \lambda_{g1}/4 & \text{at } f_1 \\ (n + 1)\lambda_{g2}/2 & \text{at } f_2 \end{cases} \quad (4)$$

where  $n$  is an integer. If (3) and (4) are satisfied, at  $f_1$ , the 1<sup>st</sup> patch (Fig. 2) resonates at  $TM_{10}$  mode while the 2<sup>nd</sup> patch resonates at  $TM_{01}$  mode. Meanwhile, at  $f_2$ , the 1<sup>st</sup> patches resonate at  $TM_{01}$  mode and the 2<sup>nd</sup> patch resonates at  $TM_{10}$  mode.

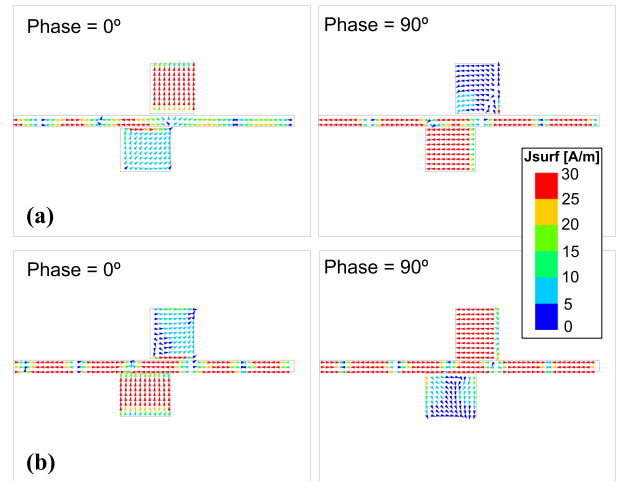


FIGURE 4. Current distribution on the dual-band CP patch antenna for different phases: (a) lower frequency of 5.0 GHz and (b) upper frequency of 5.6 GHz.

Finally, as mentioned before, the standing-wave voltage and current have 90° phase difference, thus, CP radiation at both resonance frequencies can be achieved. Fig. 3 illustrates the standing-wave voltage and current along the microstrip line, and how CP is achieved at both lower and upper bands. By tuning the patch dimensions as well as the positions  $y_1$  and  $y_2$ , it will be shown later that satisfactory axial ratio (AR) and broadside radiation can still be achieved.

For demonstration, a design with a frequency ratio of 1.12 (operating at 5.0 GHz and 5.6 GHz) is characterized. Its design parameters are given in Table 1. The simulation results will be shown in the next section. To confirm the analysis shown in Fig. 3, the surface currents on the antenna are simulated at the two frequencies of 5.0 GHz and 5.6 GHz and given in Fig. 4. For the lower frequency, at 0° phase, the dominant currents on the 1<sup>st</sup> patch are vertical ( $TM_{10}$  mode), whereas at 90° phase, the dominant currents on the 2<sup>nd</sup> patch are in horizontal direction ( $TM_{01}$  mode). For the upper frequency, at 0° phase, the dominant currents on the 1<sup>st</sup> patch are horizontal, whereas at 90° phase, the dominant currents on the 2<sup>nd</sup> patch are vertical. These simulation results are consistent with the above analysis. It can be confirmed from Fig. 4 that the antenna achieves a right-hand CP (RHCP) radiation at both frequencies. By simply mirroring the patches through the feed-line, the proposed antenna achieves a dual-band left-hand CP (LHCP) radiation.

### B. DIFFERENT NUMBERS OF PATCH

Based on the proposed method, dual-band CP antennas with gain enhancement can be realized by adding more radiating elements, as shown in Fig. 5. For the second and third pairs of patches, it needs to resonate with the same phase as the first pair. Strictly speaking, this cannot be satisfied at both frequencies  $f_1$  and  $f_2$  at the same time. However, a compromise can be made when  $f_1$  and  $f_2$  are very close to each other (so that  $\lambda_{g2}$  is close to  $\lambda_{g1}$ ). Here we can choose  $y_3 \approx y_4 \approx 0.5(\lambda_{g2} + \lambda_{g1})$ . After the optimization,  $y_3 = 33.8$  mm and

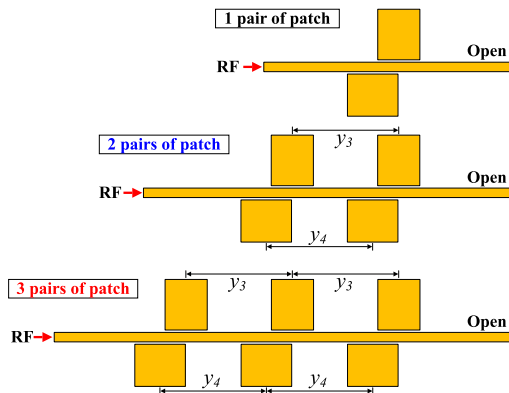


FIGURE 5. Geometry of the dual-band CP patch antenna with different number of patch.

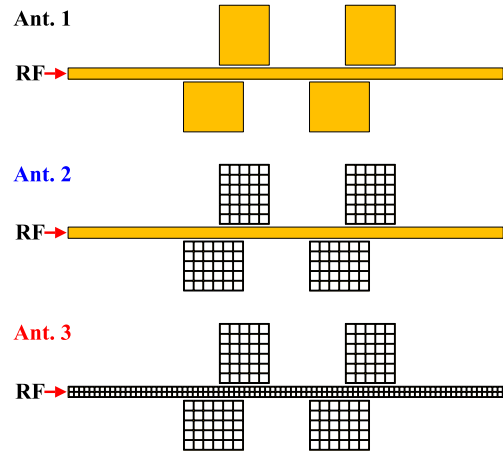


FIGURE 7. Different configurations of the dual-band CP patch antenna.

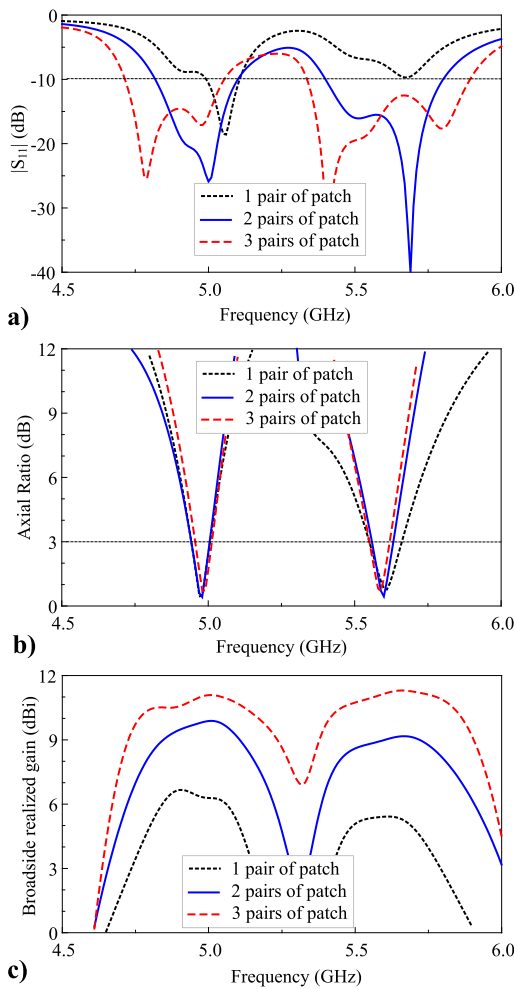


FIGURE 6. Simulated performances of the dual-band CP patch antenna for different numbers of patch: (a)  $|S_{11}|$ , (b) axial ratio, and (c) broadside realized gain.

$y_4 = 33.4$  mm are chosen for both designs with the double and triple pairs of patch, while their other parameters are same as those listed in Table 1.

All antennas in Fig. 5 are characterized and their performances are compared in Fig. 6. It is observed that the three

configurations achieve good CP radiations at dual frequency. As the number of patches increases, the impedance matching, bandwidth, and gain are improved for both lower and upper bands [Figs. 6(a) and (c)]. The antenna with a single pair of patch does not yield satisfactory impedance matching, which is due to the slightly weak coupling between the patches and the feed line. By adding more patches, the coupling is enhanced, and consequently, the impedance matching in the antennas with double and triple pairs of patch is improved [Fig. 6(a)]. Due to the same CP radiation mechanism, their AR characteristics are nearly identical, as shown in Fig. 6(b). From Fig. 6(c), the broadside gains at both frequency-bands are proportionally increased by adding more number of patches; i.e., the single pair of patch antenna yields gain of 6.5 and 5.9 dBi at 5.0 and 5.6 GHz, respectively, while the gains at both bands increase  $\sim 3$  dB and  $\sim 4.8$  dB for the double and triple pair of patch designs, respectively.

#### IV. DUAL-BAND CP MESHED PATCH ANTENNAS

##### A. DIFFERENT MESHED CONFIGURATIONS

Due its simplicity, the proposed concept is well suited for transparent antennas, as also illustrated with a single-band CP antenna in [7]. For demonstration, dual-band CP antennas with two pairs of patches are implemented, as shown in Fig. 7. Ant. 1 is the dual-band CP antenna with double pair of solid-patch, while the patches of other designs are meshed. For the Ants. 2 and 3, each patch is meshed into  $6 \times 5$  meshes with a line width of 0.2 mm. For Ant. 3, the feed-line is meshed; i.e. its width is meshed into 2-cells with a line width of 0.2 mm. Although an optically transparent dielectric (e.g., glass or polymer) is required for an actual transparent antenna, the design philosophy is the same for transparent and non-transparent substrates. Thus, the Roger’s RO4003C laminate ( $\epsilon_r = 3.55$ ,  $\tan \delta = 0.0021$ , and  $h_s = 1.524$  mm) is chosen for the validation of the proposed method. Since the mesh changes the sheet resistance of the patch, the design parameters of the meshed patch antennas are slightly

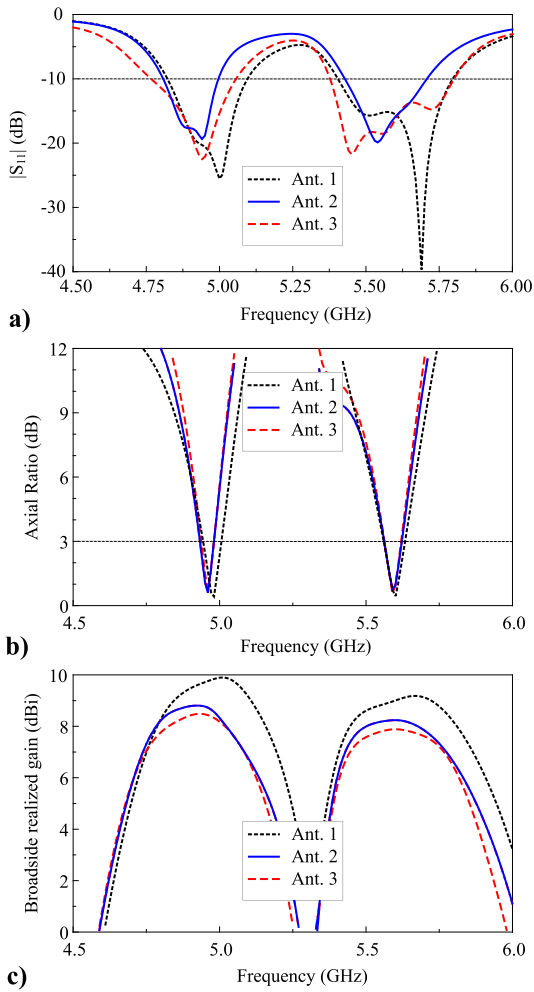


FIGURE 8. Performance comparison of the different antennas: (a)  $|S_{11}|$ , (b) axial ratio, and (c) broadside realized gain.

TABLE 2. Parameters of dual-band CP meshed patch prototype.

Par.	Value (mm)	Par.	Value (mm)	Par.	Value (mm)
$W_1$	12.45	$L_1$	14.1	$W_2$	14.4
$L_2$	12.25	$W_3$	12.45	$L_3$	14.1
$W_4$	14.4	$L_4$	12.25	$g$	0.4
$y_1$	37	$y_2$	45	$y_3$	33.4
$y_4$	33.8	$W_{ms}$	3.6	$h_s$	1.524

modified as compared to the solid patch. Referring to Figs. 2 and 5, the optimized parameters of Ants. 2 and 3 are given in Table 2.

The three different configurations in Fig. 7 are characterized as demonstrated in Fig. 8. The three antennas achieve a good dual-band CP radiation; i.e., good impedance matching, AR values  $< 1$  dB at 5.0 and 5.6 GHz, and broadside gains of  $> 8.0$  dBi. As shown in Figs. 8(a) and (b), the  $|S_{11}|$  and AR curves are quite similar for the three configurations. As analyzed in [2], [5], and [6], the conductivity ( $\sigma$ ) of meshed sheet is less than the conductivity of solid-sheet, and consequently, the radiation efficiencies (REs) of the meshed patch antennas

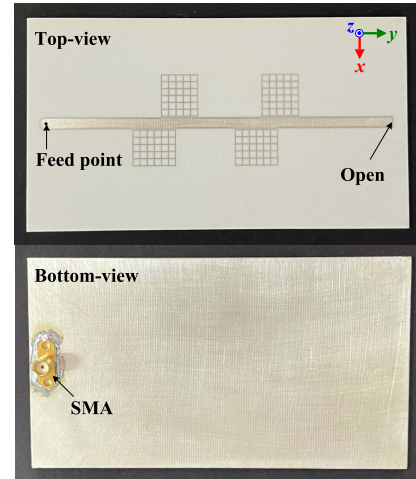


FIGURE 9. Fabricated prototype of the dual-band CP meshed patch antenna.

(Ants. 2 and 3) are less than the RE of Ant. 1. Accordingly, the meshed patch antennas yield a lower gain as compared to the solid patch design, as illustrated in Fig. 8(c). With the meshed transmission line, the gain of Ant. 3 shows a drop of about 0.3-dB relative to Ant. 2. The meshed transmission lines have been investigated in [31], [32], [33], and [34], which also showed a minor additional losses (depending on the transparency).

### B. MEASUREMENTS

For verification, the meshed patch antenna with solid feed-line (Ant. 2) is fabricated and tested. It is noted that for applications such as integration with solar cells, thin transmission lines might not be necessary to mesh [7]. Fig. 9 shows a prototype of the fabricated antenna. The antenna is fabricated using the standard printed circuit board technology. The prototype employs a SubMiniature version A (SMA) connector as coaxial-to-microstripline transformer. The simulation and measurement performances of the antenna prototype are compared in Fig. 10. There is a good agreement between the simulated and measured results. From Fig. 10(a), the antenna prototype yields a measured  $-10$ -dB impedance bandwidth of 210 MHz/290 MHz (about 4.3% and 5.1% at the lower and upper band, respectively). In Fig. 10(b), the measurements result in a AR bandwidth (AR  $< 3$  dB) of about 50 MHz/70 MHz, i.e. corresponding to 1.0% and 1.3% at the the lower and upper band, respectively. As shown in Fig. 10(c), the fabricated mesh prototype achieves a good broadside gain at both frequency bands, which agrees well with the simulations. The meshed patch antenna yields measured gains of about 9.0 dBi at 4.9 GHz and 8.6 dBi at 5.5 GHz. Finally, simulations of the meshed design indicate radiation efficiencies (RE) of 70% and 76% at the lower and upper bands, respectively. Similar to any meshed antennas in literature, there is a tradeoff between the transparency and radiation efficiency [5]. Although the measured RE is not

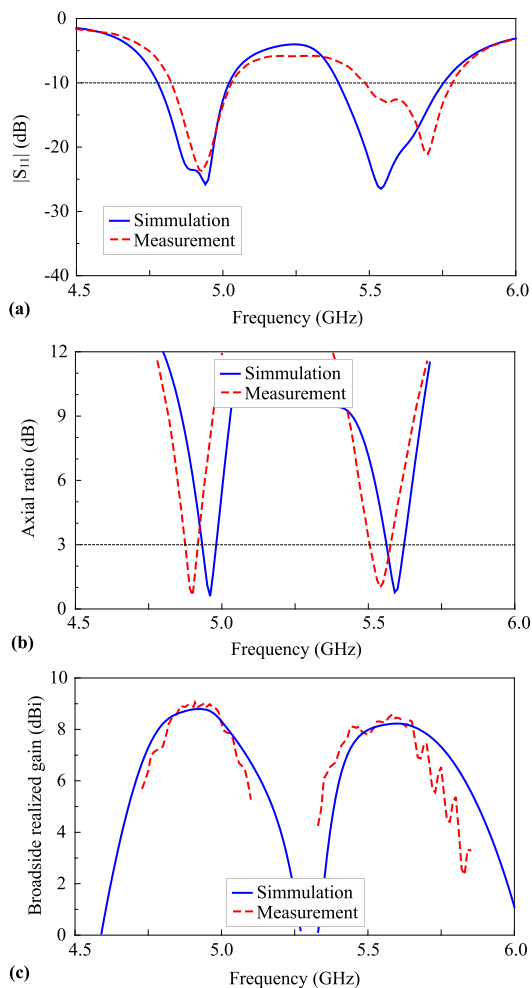


FIGURE 10. Simulated and measured (a)  $|S_{11}|$ ; (b) AR values; and (c) realized gain of the dual-band CP meshed patch antenna.

available due to the function limitation of the anechoic chamber, the good agreement between the simulated and measured gains also indicates a similar value of around 70% for the practical RE.

The radiation patterns of the antenna prototype are illustrated in Fig. 11. Note that the simulation and measurement results are plotted for the frequencies where the AR values are at minimum. Observably, at both frequencies, the antenna achieves a good broadside RHCP radiation with reasonably symmetric pattern and high front-to-back ratio. At the broadside, the measured RHCP field intensity is >20 dB larger than that of LHCP for the both bands. At both frequencies, the measurements result in half-power beamwidths of about 72° and 40° in the  $xz$  and  $yz$ -plane, respectively.

C. DISCUSSION

Table 3 shows a comparison between the proposed antenna and previous meshed patch antennas. It is noted that our design exploits the advantage of simple feeding from series-fed patch structure. As illustrated in Table 3, only the

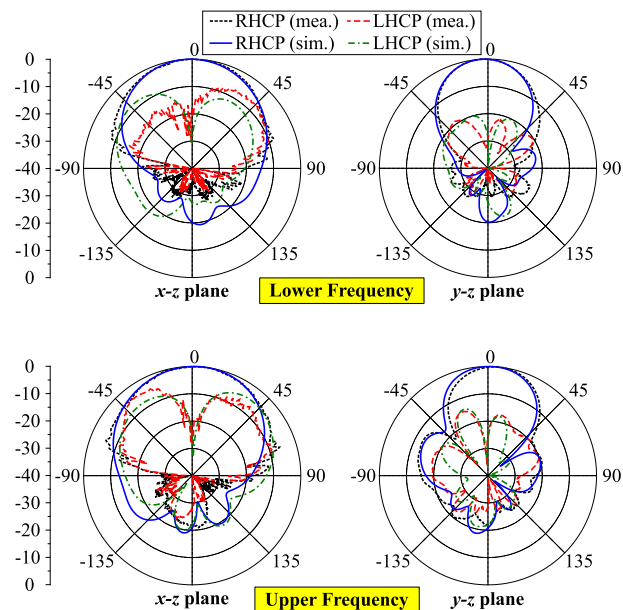


FIGURE 11. Radiation patterns of the meshed patch antenna prototype.

TABLE 3. A comparison of the proposed antenna and the previous meshed patch antennas.

Ant.	No. of layers	Bands (GHz)	Pol.	$ S_{11} $ BW (%)	AR BW (%)	Gain (dB)
[6]	1	Single	LP	1.2	-	1.0
[7]	1	Single	CP	2.0	0.6	5.15
[8]	2	Dual	CP	2.9/1.5	0.85/10.5	4.4/4.8
[9]	2	Single	CP	7.25	3.27	4.4
[10]	1	Single	LP	2.63	-	7.2
[11]	1	Single	CP	1.45	1.45	4.0
[12]	1	Single	LP	6.7	-	N/A
<b>Prop.</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Dual</b>	<b>CP</b>	<b>4.9/6.5</b>	<b>1.04/1.07</b>	<b>9.0/8.6</b>

CP: Circular polarization, LP: Linear Polarization, N/A: not mentioned

antenna in [8] provides a dual-band CP radiation, however, it uses metamaterial components, which makes it not transparent in a large feeding region. It is also more complicated with multi-layered structure. To achieve higher gain, the antenna in [8] would require more complex feeding network with array configuration, as compared to the proposed design.

V. CONCLUSION

A method of designing a simple dual-band CP patch antenna with tight frequency ratio has been described. The antenna consists of one/several pair of rectangle patches, which are excited by an open-ended 50-Ω microstrip line through proximity coupling. Based on the capacitive and inductive couplings, the dimensions and arrangement of these patches are designed to generate a dual-band CP radiation. Due to its simplicity, the design is well suited for applications requiring transparent radiators. For demonstration, a dual-band CP meshed patch antenna with a frequency ratio of 1.12 at C-band has been designed, fabricated, and tested. It is emphasized again that although non-transparent substrate has been

used, the theory, design method and procedure are the same for transparent or non-transparent substrates. The antenna prototype yields a  $|S_{11}| < -10$  dB bandwidth of 4.82–5.03 GHz (210 MHz) and 5.49–5.78 GHz (290 MHz), AR < 3-dB bandwidth of 4.88–4.93 GHz (50 MHz) and 5.50–5.57 GHz (70 MHz), and a high measured gain of 9.0 dBic and 8.6 dBic for the lower and upper bands, respectively.

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