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A Comprehensive Review Hybrid Free-Space Optical (FSO) And Radio Frequency (RF) Communication Systems

Abdikarim Ismail Abdi [1], Er. Amandeep Kaur Brar [2],

1 Scholar at Department of Electronics and communication Engineering, Punjabi University, Patiala, Punjab - 147002, India

cabdikariim025@gmail.com

2 Assistant Professor at Department of Electronics and communication Engineering, Punjabi University, Patiala, Punjab - 147002, India

amanbrar123@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

The combination of Free-Space Optical (FSO) and Radio Frequency (RF) communication technologies has garnered considerable interest owing to their complementary attributes, which may improve the deficiencies of each system independently. Hybrid FSO/RF systems integrate the elevated data rates and minimal latency of FSO with the durability and extensive coverage of RF, rendering them appropriate for diverse applications, such as mobile networks and satellite communication. This study offers a thorough examination of current developments in hybrid FSO/RF communication systems, emphasizing performance evaluation, system topologies, and optimization strategies. We study essential technologies such Alamouti coding, antenna selection, relay selection, connection adaption, and security methods. The study examines the implementation of hybrid systems in 5G and forthcoming networks, with rising developments in artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) to augment system performance.

Keywords

Hybrid Communication Systems, Free-Space Optical (FSO), Radio Frequency (RF), Alamouti Coding, Link Adaptation, Relay Selection, Antenna Diversity, 5G Networks, Machine Learning, Security, FSO/RF Integration, System Performance, Atmospheric Turbulence, Communication Networks, Next-Generation Networks, Wireless Communications.

INTRODUCTION

Due to the rising demand for high-data-rate, dependable, and energy-efficient communication systems, hybrid radio frequency (RF) and free-space optical (FSO) communication systems have garnered considerable interest in recent years. These systems seek to utilize the combined advantages of both RF and FSO technologies to improve performance regarding capacity, reliability, and coverage.

RF communication technologies give resilience to inclement weather and support for mobility, while FSO systems deliver elevated data speeds, enhanced security, and operating in a license-exempt spectrum. Nonetheless, each of these methods possesses intrinsic limitations. RF communication is limited by restricted spectrum availability and interference, whereas FSO is affected by atmospheric turbulence, misalignment, and pointing errors[1] [2][3] .

Hybrid RF-FSO systems have been suggested as an effective approach to address these limitations through the integration of both communication paradigms. This hybrid method offers adaptive switching and diversity strategies to guarantee uninterrupted data transmission over fluctuating channel conditions [4] [5] By dynamically allocating resources according to channel state information (CSI), these systems attain superior spectrum efficiency and reliability in comparison to independent RF or FSO systems [6]. Moreover, hybrid RF-FSO systems provide effective connection adaptation mechanisms, guaranteeing continuous communication despite unfavorable environmental conditions.

Dual-hop relaying techniques, including decode-and-forward (DF) and amplify-and-forward (AF), enhance the efficacy of hybrid RF-FSO systems by broadening coverage and alleviating channel defects[7] [8]. Relay-assisted transmission promotes system resiliency by providing path diversity, decreasing outage likelihood, and augmenting signal quality. Additionally, hybrid RF-FSO networks can integrate multiple-input multiple-output (MIMO) and cooperative relaying techniques to further improve link dependability and augment transmission capacity [4] [5].

Recent research has extensively analysed the performance of hybrid RF-FSO systems under various channel conditions, including generalized fading models and pointing errors. These studies have explored diversity combining techniques, such as selection combining (SC) and maximal ratio combining (MRC), to optimize system performance in different environments [9][10]. Additionally, advanced coding schemes, including Alamouti coding and space-time block coding (STBC), have been investigated to enhance link reliability in hybrid communication setups [11][12]. These strategies seek to reduce the detrimental impacts of fading, turbulence, and misalignment, therefore guaranteeing stable connectivity and throughput in hybrid networks. Additional advancements, including adaptive modulation, hybrid automated repeat request (HARQ) protocols, and intelligent resource allocation, have been implemented to optimize spectrum efficiency and energy usage.

Despite extensive research on hybrid RF-FSO systems, several challenges remain unaddressed. The impact of adaptive relaying protocols, interference management, and energy efficiency optimization requires further investigation. Moreover, realistic implementations and experimental validations are vital for turning theoretical developments into real-world applications[13] [14] Additional significant concerns encompass the amalgamation of hybrid RF-FSO systems with next-generation wireless networks, the formulation of effective resource allocation algorithms, and the advancement of machine learning-driven adaptive communication methodologies to dynamically enhance performance [5] [15].

Emerging technologies like 5G and beyond necessitate ultra-reliable and low-latency communication (URLLC), positioning hybrid RF-FSO systems as crucial for future wireless networks. These systems can markedly improve network performance in smart cities, disaster recovery, and deep-space communication. Future research should concentrate on novel modulation schemes, intelligent network management, and the seamless integration of RF-FSO systems with artificial intelligence-driven optimization techniques to enhance efficiency and reliability.

HYBRID SYSTEM COMPONENTS

A conventional hybrid FSO/RF system has various components that function collaboratively to guarantee dependable and high-velocity communication under varying conditions:

• FSO Link: This element utilizes optical signals to convey data at exceptionally high speeds with minimal latency. It functions inside the infrared spectrum and is optimal for line-of-sight communication under clear weather circumstances. Nevertheless, it is susceptible to atmospheric disruptions

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including fog, precipitation, and turbulence.

• RF Link: Radio frequency systems utilize electromagnetic radiation for data transmission. They exhibit greater resilience to meteorological disruptions, although often provide inferior data rates in comparison to FSO. RF systems are constrained by spectrum availability and may experience interference and congestion in densely populated regions.

• Adaptive Switching Mechanism: A major characteristic of hybrid FSO/RF systems is their capacity to dynamically alternate between FSO and RF communication channels depending on prevailing channel conditions. This guarantees that the system optimizes performance under favorable FSO settings and effortlessly transitions to RF during unfavorable ones.

• Relay Nodes: In numerous hybrid systems, relay nodes are utilized to enhance communication range and alleviate signal deterioration. Relays enhance or transmit the signal from the source to the destination, therefore augmenting total system efficacy.

• Signal Processing Units: These units manage encoding, decoding, and error correction. Advanced methodologies such as Alamouti coding and space-time block coding are frequently utilized to improve system stability and mitigate the effects of fading[16].

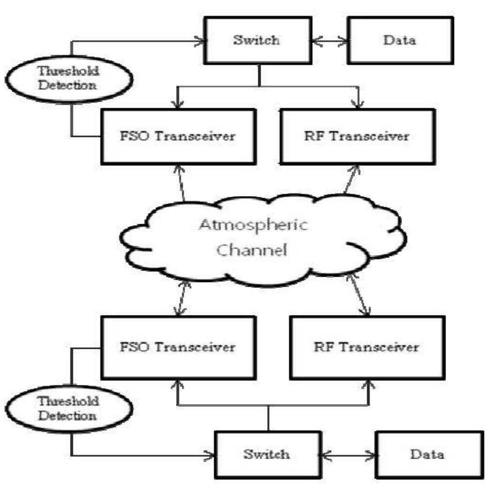

Figure 1 [HYBRID FSO/RF COMMUNICATION SYSTEM ARCHITECTURE]

This review study seeks to deliver a comprehensive overview of hybrid RF-FSO communication systems, encompassing fundamental ideas, performance measurements, relaying mechanisms, and prospective research avenues. The following sections will examine system architectures, performance evaluation approaches, and prospective applications, emphasizing recent accomplishments and research problems in this domain.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Hybrid RF-FSO communication systems have been extensively researched for their capacity to integrate the advantages of RF and FSO technologies while mitigating their respective shortcomings. The research regarding hybrid RF-FSO systems predominantly emphasizes system architecture, performance assessment, channel modelling, diversity methodologies, and optimization tactics. This section offers a comprehensive analysis of the current research, emphasizing significant contributions and discoveries.

SYSTEM ARCHITECTURE AND RELAYING STRATEGIES

Hybrid RF-FSO systems frequently utilize relay-assisted transmission to improve reliability and broaden coverage. Numerous research has examined various relaying methods, including amplify-and-forward (AF) and decode-and-forward (DF), to alleviate fading and turbulence effects.

[1]examined mixed mm Wave RF/FSO relaying systems under generalized fading conditions, emphasizing the influence of pointing errors and turbulence on system performance. The research indicated that hybrid systems surpass independent RF and FSO systems in challenging channel conditions through the utilization of adaptive switching methods.
[2]performed a performance analysis of hybrid RF-FSO systems with AF selection relaying, demonstrating that the selection of the optimal relay markedly enhances outage probability and spectrum efficiency. They underscored the significance of relay

positioning and selection in enhancing system performance. [3]examined the performance trade-offs between reliability and energy efficiency in hybrid FSO/RF systems. The research indicated that hybrid systems employing intelligent relay selection and adaptive transmission can enhance energy efficiency while ensuring dependable connectivity, rendering them appropriate for energy-limited applications.

CHANNEL MODELLING AND PROPAGATION CHARACTERISTICS

Hybrid RF-FSO communication connections encounter many limitations, including atmospheric turbulence, fading, and aiming inaccuracies. Researchers have suggested multiple approaches to delineate these deficiencies and assess system performance. [6]investigated dual-hop free space optical transmission systems affected by Gamma-Gamma turbulence and aiming problems. Their investigation elucidated the impact of turbulence-induced fading on signal quality and presented diversification strategies to alleviate these impacts. [8]introduced an adaptive hybrid RF-FSO communication system that alternates between RF and FSO links according to real-time channel state information (CSI). Their research illustrated how adaptive switching diminishes outage chance and guarantees dependable data transfer amid fluctuating weather conditions.
[17]examined mixed RF and multihop FSO systems under κ−μ shadowed and Exponentiated Weibull fading circumstances. Their research included a comprehensive statistical evaluation of hybrid system efficacy and proposed optimal relay positioning solutions to mitigate the effects of significant fading.

[14] This study examined an asymmetric dual-hop RF-FSO communication system, utilizing Nakagami-m fading for RF links and Málaga turbulence fading for FSO channels. It produced explicit formulations for outage probability and ergodic channel capacity, encompassing asymptotic analysis at elevated signal-to-noise ratios. The study offered insights into the efficacy of FSO communication systems in multiplexing RF signals for high-data-rate transmission.

The technique entailed the analysis of the system using specific channel models, the derivation of closed-form equations for outage probability and ergodic channel capacity, and the execution of numerical simulations employing MATLAB. The research moreover contrasted heterodyne and IM/DD detection methodologies to assess their influence on system performance.

The discourse emphasized the study's contributions to RF-FSO system analysis and stated that the $\mathscr{M}$-distribution serves as a generic channel model for FSO systems. It highlighted the importance of the derived expressions in comprehending system behavior under varying settings and enhancing the effectiveness of FSO communication.

DIVERSITY COMBINING AND MODULATION TECHNIQUES

Diversity approaches are essential for enhancing the reliability and performance of hybrid RF-FSO systems. Researchers have investigated selection combining (SC), maximal ratio combining (MRC), and equal-gain combining (EGC) to alleviate fading and turbulence effects.
[4]examined link adaptation strategies for hybrid RF-FSO systems, suggesting adaptive modulation schemes to enhance spectral efficiency. Their research revealed that hybrid systems may dynamically modify modulation levels according to channel circumstances to enhance throughput and reduce bit error rates (BER).
[7]investigated hybrid RF-FSO systems utilizing Alamouti coding and antenna selection methodologies. Their research demonstrated that space-time coding improves link dependability and guarantees resilient communication under variable channel conditions.

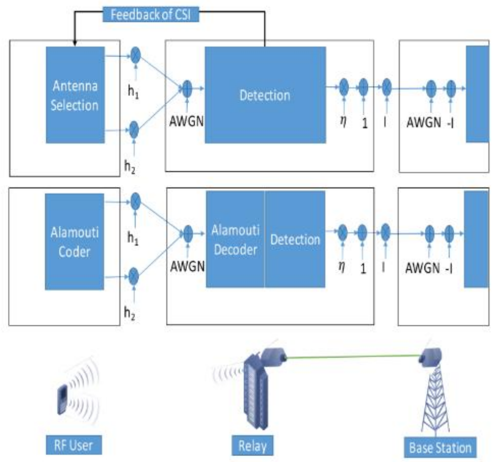

Figure 2 Proposed hybrid FSO/RF structure of antenna selection and Alamouti coding scheme

[9]) and [10] examined diversity integration methods, including MRC and SC, to enhance system performance. Their research validated that hybrid RF-FSO systems utilizing MRC attain substantial enhancements in outage probability and signal quality relative to SC. [12]investigated hybrid RF-FSO systems utilizing STBC (Space-Time Block Coding) users, demonstrating that STBC-based hybrid systems surpass traditional hybrid systems regarding BER and spectrum efficiency. Their research underscored the significance of coding methodologies in hybrid networks.

MACHINE LEARNING AND INTELLIGENT RESOURCE ALLOCATION

As hybrid RF-FSO systems grow more intricate, optimization techniques based on machine learning (ML) and artificial intelligence (AI) are being investigated to improve performance and automate decision-making processes. [15]examined the physical-layer security of hybrid RF-FSO systems using simultaneous wireless information and power transfer (SWIPT). Their research presented AI-based resource allocation strategies to enhance power efficiency and security while ensuring communication reliability.

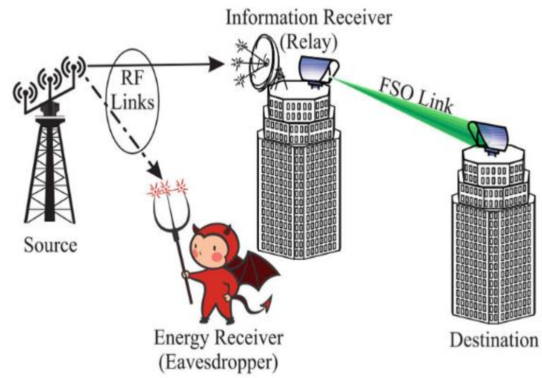

Figure 3 Considered mixed SIMO SWIPT RF and FSO cooperative communication system.

[5]examined hybrid RF-FSO systems for 5G C-RAN applications, proposing that machine learning-based adaptive resource allocation might enhance link selection and augment network efficiency. Their research emphasized the promise of AI-driven solutions in advanced hybrid networks. [11]introduced a relay-based hybrid RF-FSO architecture employing AI-driven link adaption methods. Their research indicated that effective resource management markedly decreases delay and enhances data throughput.

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Considering the comprehensive investigation on hybrid RF-FSO systems, some difficulties persist unresolved. Subsequent research should concentrate on:

- Enhanced AI-driven optimization: Machine learning methodologies for adaptive relay selection and intelligent network management require additional investigation.
- Optimized resource allocation: Creating advanced algorithms for the dynamic distribution of power, bandwidth, and transmission modes will enhance the performance of hybrid systems.
- Integration with 6G and beyond: Future hybrid systems must be engineered for smooth integration with next-generation networks

to facilitate ultra-reliable, low-latency communication (URLLC).

• Experimental validation: The practical implementation and testing of hybrid RF-FSO networks will reconcile theoretical models with real-world deployment.

RESEARCH GAPS & CHALLENGES

Despite extensive study on hybrid RF-FSO communication systems, significant research gaps and hurdles persist that must be resolved for their effective implementation in next-generation wireless networks. This section delineates significant constraints in current research and proposes potential avenues for addressing these issues.

1. ABSENCE OF COMPREHENSIVE COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Considering the substantial investigation into hybrid RF-FSO systems, the current literature is deficient in a thorough comparative study that assesses various system architectures, relaying tactics, modulation schemes, and diversity techniques within a cohesive framework. Many studies concentrate on singular system components or particular circumstances, hindering the evaluation of overall performance trade-offs among various methodologies. A comprehensive comparative analysis that includes experimental validation and practical applications is crucial to address this gap.

2. MECHANISMS FOR ADAPTIVE RELAY SELECTION AND LINK SWITCHING

Hybrid RF-FSO systems depend on relay-assisted transmission to guarantee reliable communication. Current research mostly concentrates on static or semi-adaptive relay selection, when relay nodes are selected according to predetermined criteria. Real-time dynamic relay selection algorithms utilizing machine learning for intelligent decision-making remain in their nascent phase. Creating AI-driven relay selection methods that adjust to fluctuating channel circumstances can greatly enhance system efficiency.

3. INTERFERENCE MITIGATION IN CONGESTED ENVIRONMENTS

In practical applications, hybrid RF-FSO systems are frequently utilized in densely populated urban areas, where interference from numerous RF sources and misalignment in FSO links can impair performance. Although numerous research examines interference effects in isolated environments, there is a necessity for more comprehensive interference-aware hybrid RF-FSO models that integrate practical limitations such as mobility, multi-user interference, and adaptive power control schemes.

4. ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND POWER OPTIMIZATION

Numerous research have suggested hybrid RF-FSO models featuring energy-efficient transmission mechanisms; yet, managing power usage while ensuring high data rates and minimal latency continues to pose a considerable difficulty. The amalgamation of Simultaneous Wireless Information and Power Transfer (SWIPT) with hybrid RF-FSO networks demonstrates potential; nevertheless, additional study is necessary to establish scalable and efficient energy management methodologies.

5. EFFECTS OF SOPHISTICATED MODULATION AND CODING TECHNIQUES

Various modulation and coding strategies, including adaptive modulation, Alamouti coding, and space-time block coding (STBC), have been suggested to enhance the performance of hybrid RF-FSO systems. Nonetheless, a direct comparison of these approaches under uniform channel conditions is absent in the current literature. Additionally, research is required on the joint optimization of modulation and coding methods to improve spectral efficiency and reduce bit error rates (BER).

7. COHESIVE INTEGRATION WITH 5G AND SUBSEQUENT TECHNOLOGIES (6G, IOT, SMART CITIES)

Hybrid RF-FSO systems are anticipated to be crucial in 5G and subsequent technologies (6G, IoT, smart city applications, and satellite networks). Nevertheless, the majority of studies concentrate on independent hybrid RF-FSO lines, neglecting their integration within multi-tier heterogeneous networks. Future research should investigate the seamless integration of hybrid RF-FSO systems with next-generation wireless architectures, encompassing multi-hop networks, edge computing, and blockchain-based security.

8. EMPIRICAL VALIDATION AND PRACTICAL IMPLEMENTATION

The majority of research on hybrid RF-FSO systems relies on theoretical modeling and simulations, with minimal empirical validation in real-world scenarios. Field trials and testbed implementations are crucial for assessing practical issues, including misalignment, ambient influences, and hardware deficiencies. Future efforts should concentrate on the design and implementation of extensive hybrid RF-FSO testbeds for the evaluation of real-world performance.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The growing demand for high-speed, dependable, and energy-efficient communication has established hybrid RF-FSO systems as a crucial facilitator for next-generation wireless networks. This research is important for multiple reasons:

1. Fixing the Performance The gap

Hybrid RF-FSO systems integrate the advantages of both RF and FSO technologies, offering a resilient communication architecture capable of functioning under many environmental circumstances. This study examines diverse relaying mechanisms, modulation schemes, and adaptive strategies to bridge the performance disparity between standalone RF and FSO systems.

2. Improving Network Dependability and Effectiveness

This study examines alternative relay-assisted designs and diversity techniques to enhance network resilience and spectrum efficiency. The results enhance the advancement of intelligent relay selection, adaptive link switching, and resource allocation methodologies.

3. Directing Subsequent Research and Execution

This paper offers a thorough comparative analysis of current hybrid RF-FSO technologies, focusing on critical concerns including interference management, energy efficiency, and seamless integration with 5G and beyond. Researchers and engineers can utilize these insights to develop efficient hybrid RF-FSO systems for practical applications.

4. Facilitating Next-Generation Wireless Technologies

As wireless networks progress towards 6G, IoT, and smart city applications, hybrid RF-FSO systems will be essential for facilitating ultra-reliable and low-latency communication (URLLC). The study's results endorse the advancement of AI-driven optimization methods, improving network flexibility and efficacy.

5. Promoting Practical Implementation

This study emphasizes the necessity for experimental validation and practical implementation, in contrast to the predominant focus of most studies on theoretical modeling. This establishes a basis for subsequent research focused on the practical application of hybrid RF-FSO communication systems in urban, rural, and satellite communication contexts.

CONCLUSION

Hybrid RF-FSO communication systems present a viable option to address the constraints of independent RF and FSO technology. By utilizing the resilience of RF and the elevated data rate potential of FSO, these systems guarantee improved network reliability, spectral efficiency, and energy conservation. This study offers an extensive analysis of hybrid RF-FSO topologies, emphasizing performance measures, relaying mechanisms, and adaptive methodologies.

Despite significant research progress, other obstacles persist, including adaptive relay selection, interference management, energy efficiency, and the absence of thorough comparative analysis. The amalgamation of machine learning optimization, AI-facilitated resource allocation, and uninterrupted connectivity through 5G and subsequent technologies offers substantial research prospects. Confronting these problems will be essential for the effective implementation of hybrid RF-FSO networks in practical applications.

Future study ought to concentrate on formulating dynamic relay selection algorithms, enhancing modulation and coding schemes, and performing empirical validations in real-world settings. Furthermore, the amalgamation of hybrid RF-FSO systems with nascent technologies like 6G, IoT, and smart cities would be crucial for facilitating next-generation wireless networks. This study establishes a basis for future improvements in hybrid RF-FSO communication by explaining recent advancements and pinpointing significant research deficiencies. The ongoing advancement and refinement of these systems will be crucial in determining the future of high-speed, energy-efficient, and ultra-reliable wireless communication networks.

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