National Journal of Antennas and Propagation
RESEARCH ARTICLE
National Journal of Antennas and Propagation, ISSN: 2582-2659 Vol. 5, No. 1, 2023 (pp. 33-38)
HTTP://ANTENNAJOURNAL.COM

Advancements in the Novel Reconfigurable Yagi Antenna

C. Jakhir[1], R. Rudevdagva[2], L. Riunaa[3]
Mongolian University of Science and Technology, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia

KEYWORDS:
Impedance,
polarization diversity,
coupling, resonance,
measurement,
testing,
alignment

ARTICLE HISTORY:
Received 30.03.2023
Revised 28.04.2023
Accepted 25.05.2023

DOI:
https://doi.org/10.31838/NJAP/05.01.06

ABSTRACT

In the ever-evolving realm of wireless communication, antennas play a pivotal role in shaping the connectivity landscape. Among the myriad of antenna designs, the reconfigurable Yagi antenna stands out as a versatile and innovative solution. Combining the directional capabilities of the traditional Yagi antenna with the flexibility of reconfigurability, this technology opens up new avenues for optimizing wireless communication systems. In this article, we delve into the intricacies of the reconfigurable Yagi antenna, exploring its design principles, applications, and potential to revolutionize wireless connectivity.

Author's e-mail: jakhirc@must.edu.mn, rudev.r@must.edu.mn, riunaa.l@must.edu.mn,

How to cite this article: Jakhir C, Rudevdagva R, Riunaa L.Advancements in the Novel Reconfigurable Yagi Antenna. National Journal of Antennas and Propagation, Vol. 5, No. 1, 2023 (pp. 33-38).

UNDERSTANDING THE RECONFIGURABLE YAGI ANTENNA

The Yagi-Uda antenna, commonly known as the Yagi antenna, is a well-established design renowned for its directional characteristics and high gain. It typically consists of a driven element, one or more parasitic elements, and a reflector element. By varying the lengths and positions of these elements, the antenna can achieve directional radiation patterns suitable for point-to-point communication.The reconfigurable Yagi antenna builds upon this foundation by introducing elements that can be dynamically adjusted or reconfigured to adapt to changing communication requirements. This flexibility allows the antenna to optimize its performance in real-time, enabling agile response to varying environmental conditions, interference, and signal propagation effects.A reconfigurable Yagi antenna combines the traditional Yagi-Uda antenna design with the ability to dynamically alter its radiation pattern, frequency response, or polarization characteristics. This innovative approach offers versatility and adaptability, allowing the antenna to adjust its performance to suit changing environmental conditions or operational requirements as shown in the Fig. 1.[1-14]

Fig. 1: Basic structure of a reconfigurable Yagi antenna

The basic structure of a reconfigurable Yagi antenna consists of multiple parasitic elements (directors and reflectors) arranged along a driven element (dipole), typically mounted on a boom. By selectively activating or deactivating these parasitic elements, engineers can modify the antenna's radiation pattern, beam direction, or frequency response.[15-19] One common reconfiguration mechanism involves integrating PIN diodes or MEMS switches into the parasitic elements. By applying appropriate bias voltages or control signals to these devices, engineers can dynamically change the electrical length of the parasitic elements, effectively altering the antenna's characteristics.

The versatility of reconfigurable Yagi antennas makes them suitable for various applications, including wireless communication systems, radar systems, and wireless sensor networks. For example, in communication systems, reconfigurable Yagi antennas can adapt their radiation patterns to improve signal coverage, mitigate interference, or enhance security. In radar systems, they can dynamically adjust their beam direction to track moving targets or scan specific areas of interest [20]-[28].Despite their advantages, reconfigurable Yagi antennas present certain challenges, such as increased complexity, power consumption, and cost compared to traditional Yagi antennas. Moreover, the design and optimization of the reconfiguration mechanism require careful consideration to ensure seamless operation and reliable performance.

In summary, reconfigurable Yagi antennas offer a flexible and adaptive approach to antenna design, allowing for dynamic adjustments to meet evolving application requirements. With ongoing advancements in reconfiguration technologies and optimization techniques, reconfigurable Yagi antennas hold significant promise for future wireless communication and radar systems.[29-35]

Principles of Operation

The operation of the reconfigurable Yagi antenna revolves around dynamically adjusting its elements to achieve desired radiation patterns, frequency characteristics, or polarization states. This adjustment can be achieved through various mechanisms, including mechanical actuators, switches, tunable components, or software-controlled phase shiftersas shown in the Fig. 2.

By reconfiguring its elements, the antenna can steer its beam, switch between different frequency bands, or adapt to changing signal propagation conditions. This adaptability enhances the antenna's versatility and enables it to address diverse communication scenarios, ranging from long-range point-to-point links to indoor wireless networks.The principle of operation of a reconfigurable Yagi antenna revolves around dynamically altering the electrical characteristics of its parasitic elements, typically using electronic switches or varactors. By modifying the configuration of these elements, the antenna can adapt its radiation pattern, frequency response, or polarization to suit different operating conditions or requirements.[36-49]

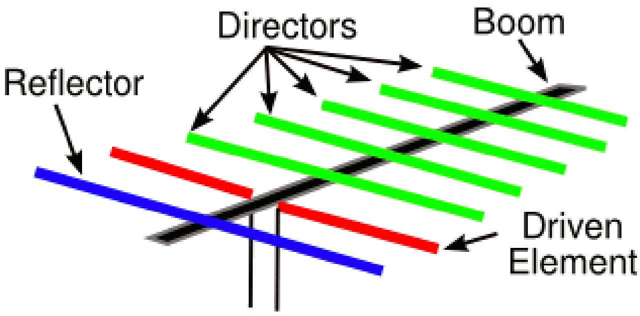


Fig.2: Reconfiguring elements

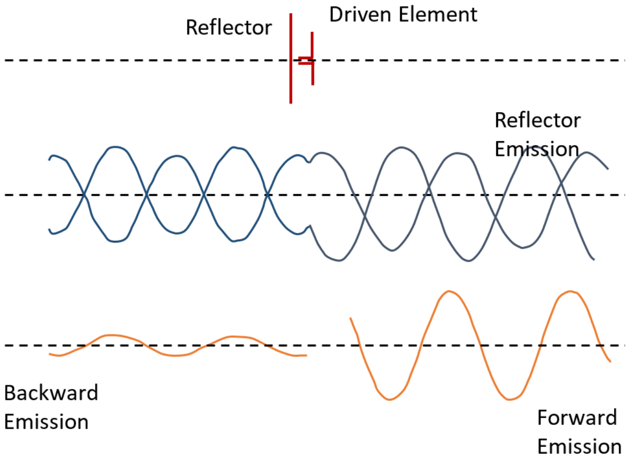


Fig. 3: Traditional Yagi-Uda Antenna Propagation

The traditional Yagi-Uda antenna consists of a driven element (usually a dipole) and multiple parasitic elements (directors and reflectors) arranged along a common boom. The directors are placed in front of the driven element, while the reflector is positioned behind it. The relative lengths and spacings of these elements determine the antenna's radiation pattern and gainas shown in the Fig. 3.In a reconfigurable Yagi antenna, the parasitic elements are equipped with electronic switches or varactors that can be controlled to change their electrical properties. By selectively activating or deactivating these elements, engineers can dynamically adjust the antenna's radiation pattern or frequency response.

For example, to switch between different radiation patterns, certain parasitic elements can be activated or deactivated to modify the antenna's directivity. This capability is particularly useful in applications where the antenna needs to adapt to changes in signal direction or interference sources [50]-[64].Similarly, by varying the electrical length of the parasitic elements, the antenna's resonant frequency can be adjusted, allowing it to operate over a broader frequency range or tune into specific frequency bands. This feature is beneficial in multi-band communication systems or frequency-agile radar systems.

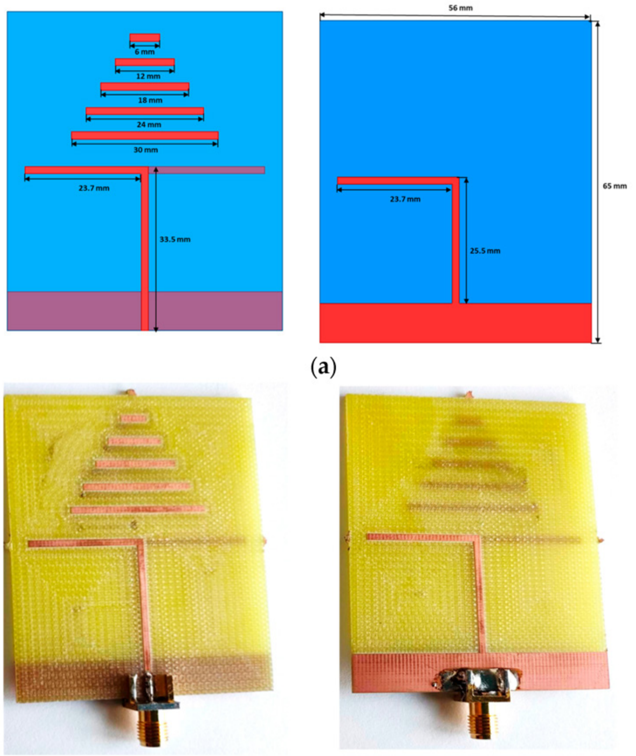
The principle of operation of a reconfigurable Yagi antenna thus relies on the dynamic manipulation of its parasitic elements to achieve the desired radiation characteristics. This flexibility makes reconfigurable Yagi antennas well-suited for applications requiring adaptive performance, such as wireless communication, radar, and sensing systems.

KEY COMPONENTS

1. Driven Element

The driven element serves as the primary radiating element of the antenna, where RF signals are applied for transmission or extracted for reception. In a reconfigurable Yagi antenna, the driven element may incorporate tunable components or switches to adjust its impedance, resonance frequency, or radiation pattern [65].The driven element in an antenna is a key component responsible for directly receiving or transmitting electromagnetic waves. It serves as the primary radiator of the antenna system, converting electrical signals into electromagnetic radiation or vice versa. The driven element is typically connected to the feedline, which carries the electrical signals to and from the antennaas shown in the Fig. 4.

In various antenna configurations, such as dipoles, loops, or patches, the driven element is designed to efficiently radiate electromagnetic waves when an alternating current (AC) is applied to it. The geometry and electrical properties of the driven element determine its resonant frequency, radiation pattern, and impedance characteristics. Matching the impedance of the driven element to that of the feedline or transmission system is crucial for maximizing power transfer and optimizing antenna performance.[66-70]



(a)

(b)

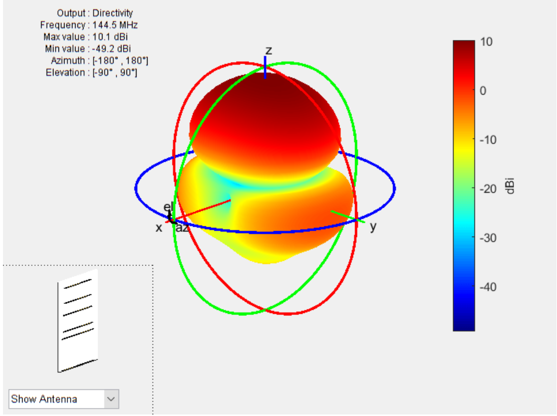
Fig. 4: Antenna configuration

In some antenna designs, especially array antennas or phased arrays, multiple driven elements may be employed to achieve desired radiation characteristics, such as beam steering or pattern shaping. These driven elements work together coherently to generate the desired radiation pattern or beamforming effect, enhancing the antenna's functionality and versatility in various applications, including communication, radar, and sensing systems.

2. Parasitic Elements

The parasitic elements, including directors and reflectors, are strategically positioned relative to the driven element to achieve desired radiation characteristics. In a reconfigurable Yagi antenna, these elements may be adjustable in length, position, or configuration to dynamically alter the antenna's beam direction and gain.Parasitic elements are passive components in antenna systems that do not directly connect to the feedline but influence the antenna's radiation pattern and performance. They are strategically placed near the driven element to enhance the antenna's characteristics without directly receiving or transmitting electromagnetic waves. The two primary types of parasitic elements commonly used in antenna design are directors and reflectors.

Directors are shorter elements positioned in front of the driven element, while reflectors are longer elements placed behind it. Both types of parasitic elements alter the radiation pattern and gain of the antenna by interacting with the electromagnetic fields generated by the driven element. Directors focus the radiation in the forward direction, increasing the antenna's directivity and gain, while reflectors redirect the radiation backward, enhancing the antenna's overall gain and efficiency.[43]



Output : Directivity
Frequency : 144.5 MHz
Max value : 10.1 dBi
Min value : -49.2 dBi
Azimuth : [-180° , 180°]
Elevation : [-90° , 90°]

Fig.5: Surrogate Based Optimization Design of Six-Element Yagi-Uda

Parasitic elements achieve their effects through electromagnetic coupling and interference with the fields generated by the driven element. The spacing, length, and number of directors and reflectors are carefully optimized to achieve the desired radiation characteristics, such as beam directionality, bandwidth, and impedance matching. By judiciously adjusting the arrangement and dimensions of the parasitic elements, antenna designers can tailor the antenna's performance to meet specific application requirements, including communication, radar, and wireless networkingas shown in the Fig. 5.

3. **Reconfigurable Components:** The reconfigurable components of the antenna enable dynamic adjustment of its elements. These components may include tunable capacitors, varactors, MEMS (Micro-Electro-Mechanical Systems) switches, or digitally controlled phase shifters, allowing for precise control over the antenna's performance parameters.Reconfigurable components in antennas refer to elements or mechanisms that allow for dynamic changes in the antenna's characteristics, such as radiation pattern, frequency response, or polarization. These components enable the antenna to adapt its performance in real-time to suit varying environmental conditions, operational requirements, or communication protocols.

Various reconfigurable components can be integrated into antenna systems to achieve the desired functionality. For example, electronically controlled switches or varactors can be used to alter the electrical length or configuration of parasitic elements in antenna arrays, allowing for adjustments in the antenna's radiation pattern or frequency tuning.

Additionally, tunable materials, such as liquid crystals or ferroelectric ceramics, can be incorporated into antenna structures to change their electromagnetic properties, such as permittivity or permeability, in response to external stimuli like electric fields or temperature changes. This enables dynamic adjustments in the antenna's impedance matching, bandwidth, or resonance frequency.[38] The integration of reconfigurable components enhances the versatility, adaptability, and performance of antennas across a wide range of applications, including wireless communication, radar, sensing, and electronic warfare. By providing the ability to dynamically optimize antenna parameters, reconfigurable components contribute to the development of more efficient, reliable, and flexible antenna systems in modern wireless technologies.

APPLICATIONS OF RECONFIGURABLE YAGI ANTENNAS

The versatility and adaptability of reconfigurable Yagi antennas make them well-suited for a wide range of applications across various industries:

- **Wireless Networks:** Reconfigurable Yagi antennas can be deployed in wireless networks, including Wi-Fi, cellular, and IoT systems, to enhance coverage, capacity, and spectral efficiency. By dynamically adjusting their beam direction and gain, these antennas optimize signal reception and transmission in diverse environments.

- **Point-to-Point Communication:** In long-range communication links, such as backhaul connections and satellite links, reconfigurable Yagi antennas enable precise beam steering and frequency tuning to establish and maintain reliable communication links over extended distances.

- **Radar Systems:** Reconfigurable Yagi antennas are utilized in radar systems for applications such as target tracking, surveillance, and weather monitoring. By adapting their beam direction and characteristics, these antennas enhance radar performance and accuracy in detecting and tracking objects of interestas shown in the Fig. 6.

- Mobile Robotics and UAVs: Reconfigurable Yagi antennas are integrated into mobile robotics and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) for communication and navigation purposes. These antennas enable agile beam steering and frequency agility, supporting autonomous operation and mission-critical tasks in dynamic environments.[41]

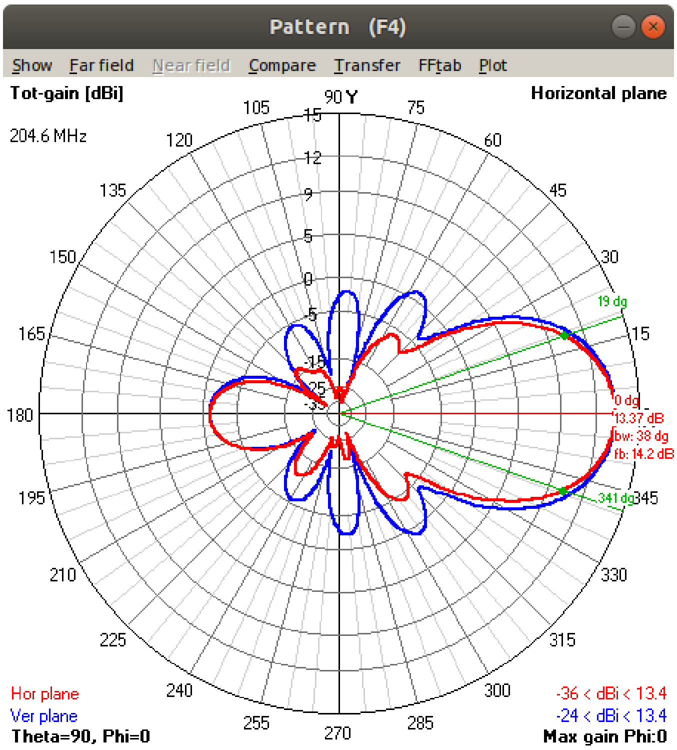


Fig.6: Radiation pattern

Challenges and Future Directions

Despite their promising potential, reconfigurable Yagi antennas pose certain challenges, including complexity, power consumption, and reliability considerations. Addressing these challenges requires ongoing research and development efforts to optimize design methodologies, enhance reconfigurable components, and minimize energy consumption.Yagi antennas have been widely utilized for decades due to their simplicity, effectiveness, and affordability.[57] However, they also pose several challenges that researchers and engineers are actively addressing to enhance their performance and address evolving needs. Some of these challenges and future directions include:

1. Bandwidth Enhancement

Traditional Yagi antennas have limited bandwidth, making them suitable for narrowband applications. Researchers are exploring novel design techniques and materials to broaden the bandwidth of Yagi antennas, enabling them to support multiple frequency bands and adapt to diverse communication standards.

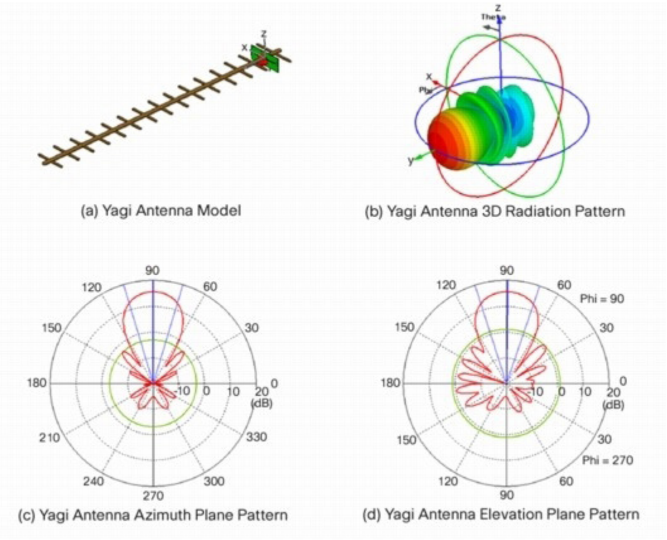
2. Size Reduction

Yagi antennas can be relatively large, especially at lower frequencies, which limits their deployment in compact devices or urban environments. Efforts are underway to miniaturize Yagi antennas through advanced materials, metamaterials, and innovative design approaches, making them more suitable for integration into small form-factor devices and systems.

3. Multiband and Multifunctionality

With the proliferation of multi-band communication systems and the emergence of diverse wireless standards, there is a growing demand for Yagi antennas that can operate across multiple frequency bands while maintaining high performance. Future research may focus on developing Yagi antennas with multiband capabilities and multifunctional characteristics, enabling them to support various wireless applications simultaneouslyas shown in the Fig. 7.

4. Smart and Adaptive Yagi Antennas: Integrating reconfigurable and adaptive components into Yagi antennas could enable dynamic adjustments in radiation characteristics, beam steering, and polarization, enhancing their adaptability to changing environmental conditions, interference sources, and user requirements. Smart Yagi antennas with cognitive capabilities may autonomously optimize their performance to maximize efficiency and reliability in real-time.



(a) Yagi Antenna Model (b) Yagi Antenna 3D Radiation Pattern

(c) Yagi Antenna Azimuth Plane Pattern (d) Yagi Antenna Elevation Plane Pattern

Fig.7: Yagi Radiation levels

Addressing these challenges and exploring new directions could unlock the full potential of Yagi antennas, enabling them to play a vital role in future wireless communication systems, IoT networks, and smart infrastructure deployments.

Conclusions

In conclusion, the Yagi antenna remains a fundamental and widely used antenna design due to its simplicity, effectiveness, and versatility. Its directional radiation pattern, high gain, and affordability make it a popular choice for various applications, including terrestrial communication, amateur radio, television reception, and wireless networking.Despite its longstanding history and widespread adoption, the Yagi antenna continues to evolve to meet the demands of modern wireless technologies. Ongoing research and development efforts focus on addressing challenges such as limited bandwidth, size constraints, and the need for multiband operation. Innovations in materials, design techniques, and reconfigurable components offer promising avenues for enhancing the performance and functionality of Yagi antennas.Looking ahead, the future of Yagi antennas lies in their continued adaptation to emerging wireless standards, applications, and environments. With advancements in miniaturization, bandwidth enhancement, and smart antenna technologies, Yagi antennas are poised to remain integral components of communication systems, IoT networks, and smart infrastructure deployments for years to come. As the wireless landscape continues to evolve, the enduring legacy of the Yagi antenna ensures its relevance and importance in modern telecommunications. reconfigurable Yagi antennas holds tremendous promise for advancing wireless communication capabilities and enabling new applications across diverse industries. As researchers, engineers, and innovators continue to explore the potential of this transformative technology, we can expect to see further breakthroughs that push the boundaries of what's possible in the realm of wireless connectivity and communication. With their ability to dynamically adapt to changing communication needs and environmental conditions, reconfigurable Yagi antennas are poised to play a pivotal role in shaping the future of wireless communication in the digital age.

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