

# Design of 5G Multi-Frequency Antenna Based on Multi-Objective Sequential Domain Patching

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**ABSTRACT:** This paper introduces a 5G multi-frequency antenna design method based on multi-objective sequential domain patching. By etching helical metamaterials on radiation patches and loading asymmetric electric-inductive-capacitive metamaterials on the transmission line side, the antenna structure is designed and optimized using electromagnetic simulation software, HFSS, and MATLAB. The resulting multi-frequency antenna operates across multiple frequency bands: n1, n41, 3.5G, and 4.9G. To ensure antenna performance and radiation efficiency, the antenna multi-frequency bands are precisely controlled. The experimental results show that the error between each operating frequency band and target frequency bands of the antenna is within 7.2%. Compared with conventional antenna design methods, the use of metamaterials and intelligent algorithms to optimize the structural parameters and loading positions of metamaterials can improve antenna performance while shortening the design cycle. Overall, this research offers novel insights into the design of 5G high-performance antennas.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

With advancements in information technology, 5G wireless communication systems have been widely applied in various fields. As a key component in information transmission, microstrip antennas have attracted considerable attention because of their small size, low cost, and ability to conveniently realize various polarization modes. Multi-frequency antennas offer several advantages, including reduction in the number of antennas, enhanced space utilization, and cost savings, and have thus been widely used in wireless communication, radio frequency identification, sensor networks, and multiple-input multiple-output systems [1].

Metamaterials are manufactured composite materials with unique physical properties. Many scholars have successfully integrated metamaterial structures into antenna designs and achieved promising results [2–8].

For example, split ring resonators (SRRs) have been loaded on both sides of a transmission line to realize three-band antennas operating at 2.7 GHz, 4.3 GHz, and 4.7 GHz. Additionally, two SRRs of different sizes have been loaded on one side of the antenna transmission line to derive two new operating bands [9]. In another study [10], the high-frequency band of an antenna was realized by introducing a microstrip line-excited circular slit, and the low-frequency band was achieved by improving the SRR ring. Moreover, eight identical open resonant rings have been arranged by rotation, and a central symmetric structure has been established by integrating a parasitic patch in the internal structure, characterized by multi-frequency, wide incidence angle, and insensitive polarization [11].

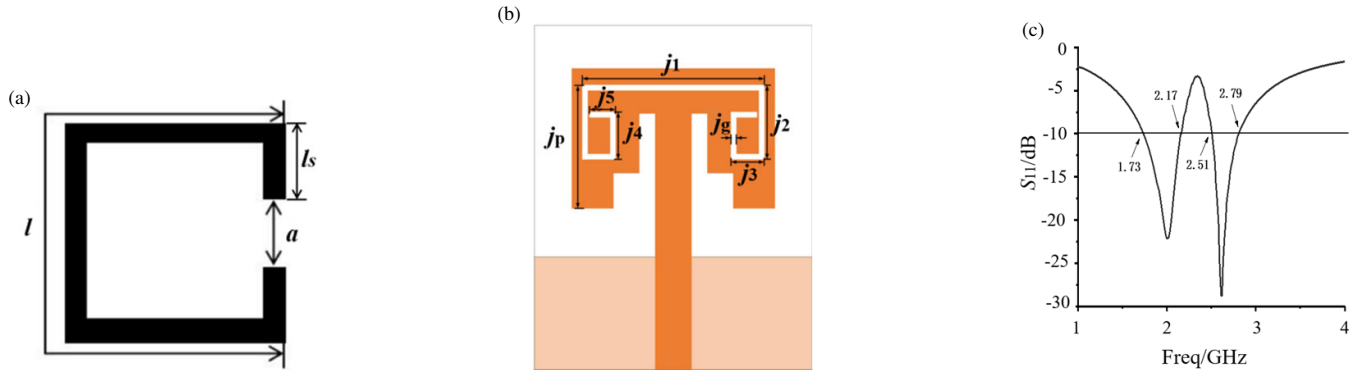
Notably, the design of the above-mentioned antennas is based on the parameter scanning method [9], which is computationally expensive, exhibits significant randomness, and strongly relies on design experience. To facilitate antenna design, scholars have introduced intelligent optimization algorithm into antenna structure optimization to shorten the design cycle and improve the antenna performance [12–15]. For example, certain researchers [16] proposed a multi-objective sequential domain patching (MSDP) approach combined with spatial mapping technology to optimize the structural parameters of an ultra-wideband (UWB) monopole antenna. The optimization time for the antenna was 67.7 h, less than that achieved using the non-dominated sorting genetic algorithm-II (183.3 h). Other researchers leveraged [17] the differential evolution and naked mole-rat algorithms to design a three-band antenna using a hybrid optimization method. After optimizing the structural parameters, the peak gain was 3.55 dBi, with an excellent average gain of 2.5 dBi.

Although intelligent optimization algorithms have been applied in antenna design, the optimization process has been limited to the structural parameters of the antenna. Because the loading position does not considerably influence the resonance characteristics, its optimization has not been extensively explored in conventional antenna design. However, in scenarios involving stringent antenna requirements and complex metamaterials, the antenna performance can be significantly improved by optimizing the loading position.

Thus, in this study, a four-band antenna is designed using wideband techniques, i.e., by increasing the notch and resonance. First, based on the electromagnetic theory of metamaterials, a spiral metamaterial resonant groove is designed, and

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**FIGURE 2.** (a) C-ring structure. (b) Dual-band antenna. (c)  $S_{11}$  parameter of dual-band antenna.

frequency band to be as close as possible to the target. The structural parameters and loading position of the metamaterial must be continuously adjusted to satisfy the design requirements of the antenna. To improve the design efficiency, a co-simulation approach using HFSS and MATLAB software is used. The parameters of metamaterial structure and loading position are considered optimization variables, and the multi-objective optimization of the antenna is performed using the MSDP algorithm. The target parameters are the target frequency band and radiation efficiency.

Parameter  $S_{11}$  is optimization objective 1, and the objective function and fitness function are defined as follows:

$$fitness\ 1 = 0.5fitness_{11} + 0.5fitness_{12} \quad (4)$$

$$fitness_{11} = \frac{1}{N} \sum_{n=1}^N F_1(f_n) \quad \begin{array}{l} 1.92 \leq f_n \leq 2.17 \text{ GHz} \\ 2.515 \leq f_n \leq 2.675 \text{ GHz} \end{array} \quad (5)$$

$$F_1(f_n) = \begin{cases} 10, |S_{11(n)}| \geq 10 & 1.92 \leq f_n \leq 2.17 \text{ GHz} \\ |S_{11(n)}|, |S_{11(n)}| \leq 10 & 2.515 \leq f_n \leq 2.675 \text{ GHz} \end{cases} \quad (6)$$

$$fitness_{12} = \frac{1}{N} \sum_{n=1}^N F_2(f_n) \quad 2.17 \leq f_n \leq 2.515 \text{ GHz} \quad (7)$$

$$F_2(f_n) = \begin{cases} 10, |S_{11(n)}| \leq 10 & 2.17 \leq f_n \leq 2.515 \text{ GHz} \\ S_{11(n)} + 20, |S_{11(n)}| \geq 10 \end{cases} \quad (8)$$

$N$  in the above equation is defined as the population size.

The radiation efficiency of the microstrip antenna is selected as optimization objective 2, and the objective function is defined as follows:

$$fitness\ 2 = 0.5 \text{ Radiation efficiency}(f_{2.05 \text{ GHz}}) + 0.5 \text{ Radiation efficiency}(f_{2.6 \text{ GHz}}) \quad (9)$$

Considering the accuracy requirements of multi-frequency antennas,  $fitness\ 1$  should be as close to 10 as possible. The radiation efficiency of the antenna is typically greater than 0.5, and a value approaching 1 indicates excellent antenna performance. Therefore,  $fitness\ 2$  should be greater than 0.5 and ideally approach 1.

The factors influencing the notch performance are the structural parameters and loading position of the metamaterial.

Therefore,  $j_1, j_2, j_3, j_4, j_5, j_p$ , and  $j_g$  are defined as the optimization parameters, where  $j_p$  is the loading position parameter, and the others are structural parameters. The potential values are:

$$X_c = [j_1, j_2, j_3, j_4, j_5, j_p, j_g] = \begin{cases} [15, 4, 2, 2, 2, 10, 0.2]_{\min} \\ [20, 10, 5, 5, 4, 12, 0.6]_{\max} \end{cases}$$

Components of the Genetic Algorithm (GA) [19, 20]: Using binary coding, the population size  $N$  is set as 150, and the maximum number of iterations is 20. In the sequential domain patching part, the two optimal solutions generated by the GA are set as boundary points, and the patching is performed according to the patch distance  $d$ . After simulation, the approximate Pareto solution set is obtained, yielding the following optimization parameters (unit: mm):  $j_1 = 17.032$ ,  $j_2 = 6.875$ ,  $j_3 = 3.111$ ,  $j_4 = 4.298$ ,  $j_5 = 2.438$ ,  $j_p = 11.247$ , and  $j_g = 0.5$ .

Figure 2(c) shows the  $S$ -parameter diagram of the dual-band antenna. The simulation of  $S_{11}$  parameters and radiation efficiency of the optimized dual-band antenna shows that the antenna operates in two bands: 1.73–2.17 GHz and 2.51–2.79 GHz. Moreover, the radiation efficiency of the two bands is greater than 0.9, and the 5G dual-band antenna with working bands n1 and n41 is realized.

## 2.3. Four-band Antenna

### 2.3.1. Asymmetric ELC Metamaterial

Based on the previously developed dual-band antennas, the operating bands of 3.5 GHz and 4.9 GHz are realized by loading asymmetric ELC metamaterials. To reduce the number of metamaterials, the symmetrical ELC structure is replaced by an asymmetric structure, as shown in Fig. 3.

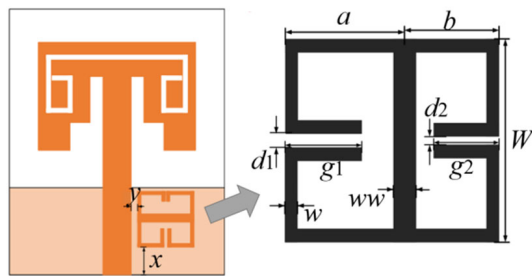
Two surface loading modes of ELC are considered: (1) front side of the dielectric plate, that is, on both sides of the transmission line; and (2) back of the dielectric plate, that is, above the ground. The  $S$ -parameter simulation shows that when ELC is loaded onto both sides of the transmission line, the antenna incorporates two additional frequency bands. Therefore, the ELC is loaded onto both sides of the transmission line, as shown in Fig. 3.

**TABLE 1.** Parameters of initial asymmetric ELC structures.

Variable	$a$	$b$	$W$	$d_1$	$d_2$	$g_1$	$g_2$	$w$	$ww$
Parameter [mm]	3	3	6	0.3	0.1	1.6	1.6	0.2	0.5

**TABLE 2.** Parameters of the four-band antenna.

Variable	$a$	$b$	$d_1$	$d_2$	$g_1$	$g_2$	$w$	$ww$	$x$	$y$
Parameter [mm]	3.398	3.276	0.448	0.144	2.199	1.199	0.411	0.993	3.178	0.461



**FIGURE 3.** Four-band antenna and asymmetric ELC metamaterials.

The resonant frequency of the asymmetric ELC structure is calculated using Equation (10):

$$f = \frac{1}{2\pi\sqrt{L_e C}} \quad (10)$$

where  $C$  is the equivalent capacitance of a parallel plate capacitor formed by  $g_1$  and  $g_2$ , and  $L_e$  is the equivalent inductance of the ring.

The equivalent capacitance  $C$  is calculated using Equation (11):

$$C = \frac{2\varepsilon_0\varepsilon_r g_1 t}{d_1} + \frac{2\varepsilon_0\varepsilon_r g_2 t}{d_2} \quad (11)$$

where  $\varepsilon_0$  is the dielectric constant in vacuum,  $\varepsilon_r$  the relative dielectric constant, and  $t$  the thickness of the copper layer.

The equivalent inductance  $L_e$  is calculated using Equation (12):

$$L_e = \frac{\mu_0}{2\pi} \left[ \ln \left( \frac{2l}{w+t} \right) - 0.2235 \ln \left( \frac{w+t}{l} \right) + 0.5 \right] \quad (12)$$

where  $l$  is the total length of the loop,  $w$  the line width,  $t$  the thickness of the metal layer, and  $\mu_0$  the permeability in vacuum.

The ELC metamaterial structure is simulated and optimized using the parameter scanning method. The determined parameters are listed in Table 1. The  $S$ -parameter simulation of the metamaterial shows that two different resonant points are generated at 3.41 GHz and 4.67 GHz. The ELC parameters are substituted into Equations (10)–(12) [18], and two resonant frequency values of 3.40 GHz and 4.74 GHz are obtained, which

are consistent with the simulation values and initially satisfy the design requirements.

$W$  is set to the width of the ELC structure, and we set it to 6 mm as no variable. Parameter scanning reveals that the side lengths  $a$  and  $b$  of the asymmetric ELC structure, lengths  $g_1$  and  $g_2$  of parallel plates, distances  $d_1$  and  $d_2$  of parallel plates, line width  $w$  of the loop line, and line width  $ww$  of the center line influence the resonance point. Therefore, these variables are the variables optimized by the algorithm.

### 2.3.2. MSDP Algorithm

Through the co-simulation of HFSS and MATLAB software, the asymmetric ELC structure parameters and loading position are considered optimization variables, and the multi-objective optimization of the antenna is conducted using the MSDP algorithm. The  $S_{11}$  and radiation efficiency of the antenna are selected as optimization targets, as indicated in Equations (4)–(9). Only the working frequency band of the objective function needs to be changed, and the settings are defined before algorithm optimization. The two resonant points of the asymmetric ELC metamaterial are selected at 3.5 GHz and 4.9 GHz, and the value range of the optimization variables is determined according to the initial structural parameters presented in Table 1.

$$X_c = [a, b, d_1, d_2, g_1, g_2, w, ww, x, y] \\ = \begin{cases} [2, 2, 0.1, 0, 1, 1, 0.1, 0.1, 1, 0.2]_{\min} \\ [5, 5, 0.5, 1, 3, 3, 0.5, 1, 5, 0.8]_{\max} \end{cases}$$

In the above equation,  $a, b, d_1, d_2, g_1, g_2, w$ , and  $ww$  are structural parameters; and  $x$  and  $y$  are loading position parameters.

GA algorithm part: The population number is set as 200, and the maximum number of iterations is 15. The sequential domain patching method is then used to complete the following operations. After simulation, the approximate Pareto solution set is obtained, and the optimized antenna parameters are outlined in Table 2 (unit: mm).

## 3. SIMULATION

### 3.1. Antenna Operating Band

Figure 4 shows the simulation results of the  $S_{11}$  parameters of the optimized antenna, revealing four operating frequency bands. The metamaterial is etched on the radiation

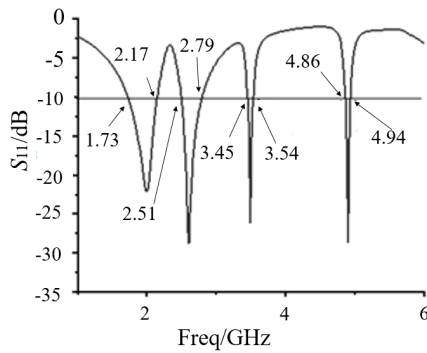


FIGURE 4.  $S_{11}$  parameter of four-band antenna.

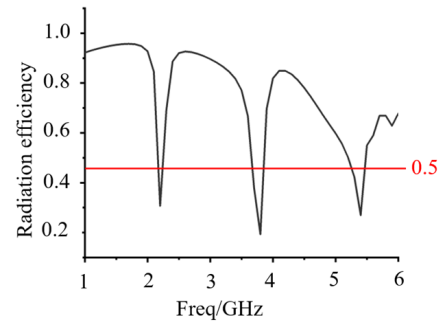


FIGURE 5. Radiation efficiency of four-band antenna.

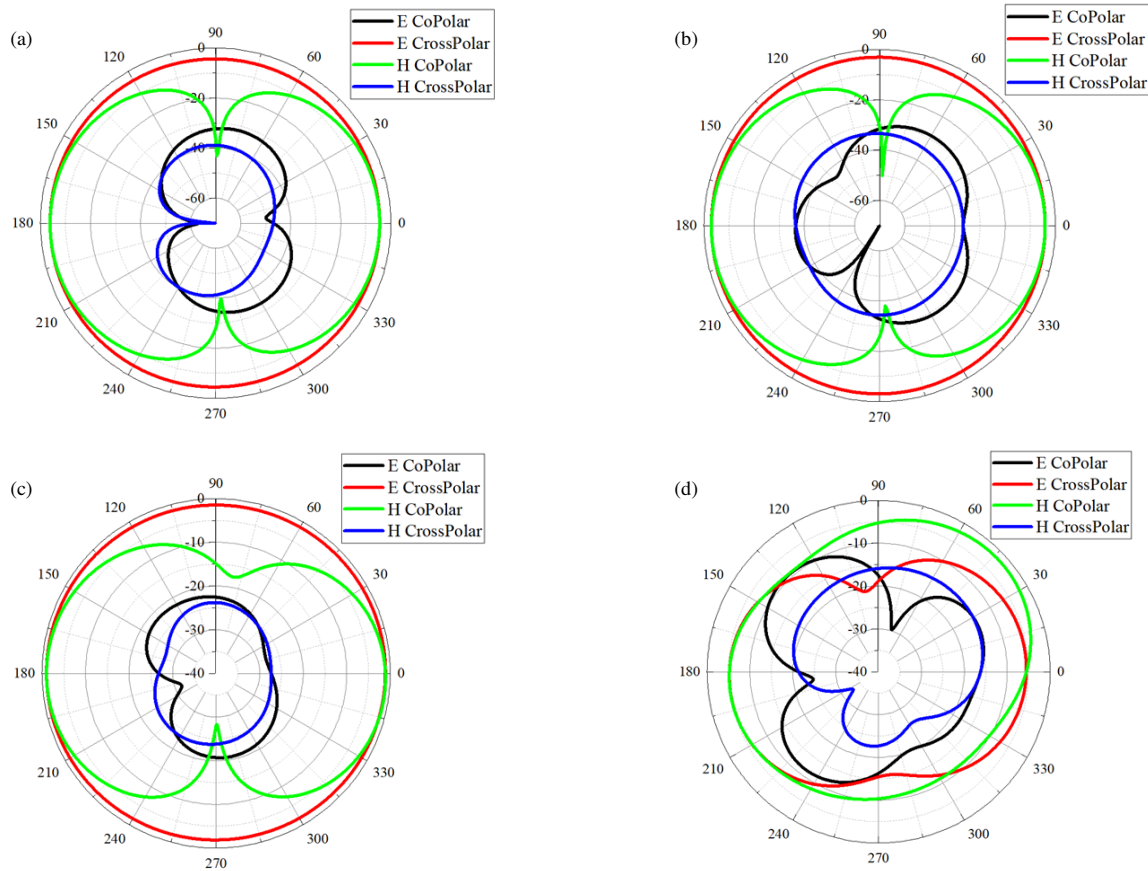


FIGURE 6. Radiation pattern of multi-frequency antenna. (a) 1.95 GHz. (b) 2.65 GHz. (c) 3.5 GHz. (d) 4.9 GHz.

patch of the original antenna to achieve operating bands of 1.73–2.17 GHz and 2.51–2.79 GHz. Two high-frequency bands (3.45–3.54 GHz and 4.86–4.94 GHz) are generated by loading asymmetric ELC metamaterials. By etching the metamaterial on the radiation patch and loading the metamaterial on the transmission line side, four-band antennas with operating frequency bands n1, n41, 3.5G, and 4.9G are realized.

### 3.2. Radiation Efficiency

The radiation efficiency of the four-band antenna is shown in Fig. 5. The radiation efficiency of the four working bands of the antenna is greater than 0.5, which meets the design requirements.

### 3.3. Radiation Patterns

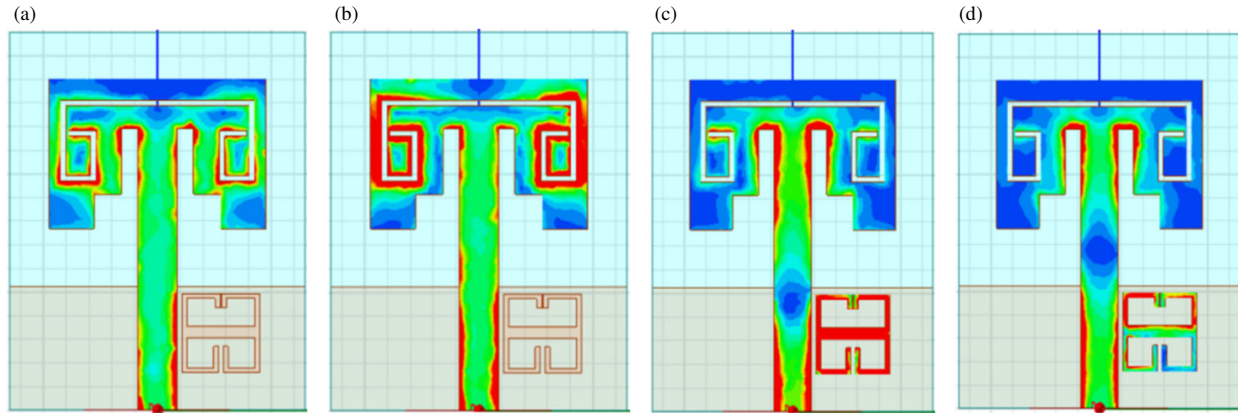
Figure 6 shows the direction diagram of the  $E$  and  $H$  planes of the multi-frequency antenna at four operating frequency points. The figure also shows the co-polarized and cross-polarized patterns of each plane. The antenna exhibits satisfactory low-frequency omnidirectional radiation. Although the high-frequency pattern is slightly degraded, it is still considered to be approximately omnidirectional.

### 3.4. Analysis of Metamaterial Loading Mechanism

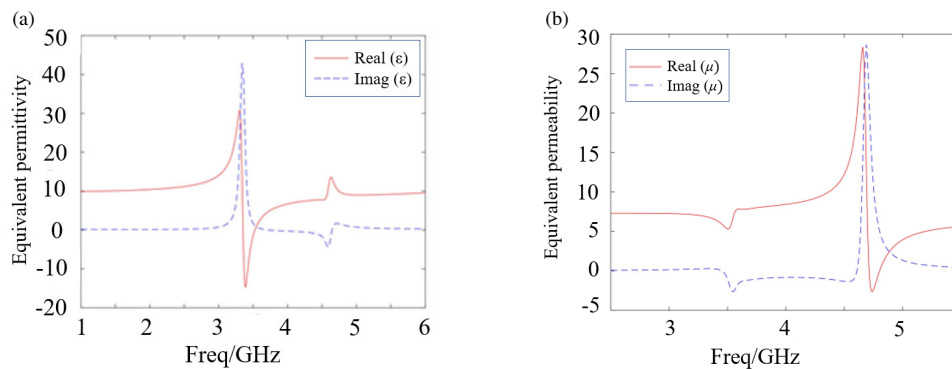
#### 3.4.1. Surface Current Distribution

Figure 7 shows the surface current distribution at frequencies of 1.95 GHz, 2.65 GHz, 3.5 GHz, and 4.9 GHz. In the cases shown





**FIGURE 7.** Surface current distribution. (a) 1.95 GHz. (b) 2.65 GHz. (c) 3.5 GHz. (d) 4.9 GHz.



**FIGURE 8.** (a) Equivalent permittivity. (b) Equivalent permeability.

in Figs. 7(a) and (b), the current is mainly concentrated on the radiation patch, indicating that  $n_1$  and  $n_{41}$  are generated by the patch. The currents of the antennas shown in Figs. 7(c) and (d) are mainly concentrated on the asymmetric ELC metamaterial, indicating that 3.5G and 4.9G are generated by metamaterial resonance. These results show that the current distribution on the surface can be altered by etching the spiral metamaterial and loading the asymmetric ELC metamaterial.

#### 3.4.2. Analysis of Metamaterial Properties

The equivalent permeability and permittivity of the helical and ELC resonant elements are determined using the  $S$ -parameter inversion method [21]. The helical resonant ring is a single negative permeability metamaterial at 2.31 GHz. The real part value of the equivalent permittivity is 12.61, and the real part value of the equivalent permeability is  $-22.35$ .

The calculated ELC metamaterial properties are shown in Fig. 8. At 3.41 GHz, the real part value of the equivalent permittivity is  $-14.55$ , and the real part value of the equivalent permeability is 6.34, corresponding to a single negative permittivity metamaterial. At 4.67 GHz, the real part value of the equivalent permittivity is 13.4, and the real part value of the equivalent permeability is  $-2.6$ , corresponding to a single negative permeability metamaterial. These metamaterial proper-

ties of the asymmetric ELC structure at the resonant point are the underlying reason for its excellent resonant performance, facilitating precise regulation of the resonant band.

## 4. RESULTS

The multi-frequency antenna is processed using the wet etching method, and the front view of the antenna is shown in Fig. 9(a). The overall size of the antenna is  $26 \text{ mm} \times 32 \text{ mm} \times 1.6 \text{ mm}$ . A vector network analyzer (Agilent N5230A, USA) is used to measure the  $S$ -parameter of the actual antenna. Fig. 9(b) shows the test setup.

Figure 10 shows a comparison of the multi-frequency antenna  $S_{11}$  parameter test results and simulation results. The antenna operates within two frequency bands in the low-frequency range (1.68–2.17 GHz and 2.55–2.74 GHz), consistent with the simulation results (1.73–2.17 GHz and 2.51–2.79 GHz). The operating frequency band at 3.5G is 3.53–3.59 GHz, which coincides with the simulated frequency band of 3.45–3.54 GHz. The operating frequency band at 4.9G is 5.04–5.12 GHz, which is slightly deviated compared with the simulation band (4.86–4.94 GHz).

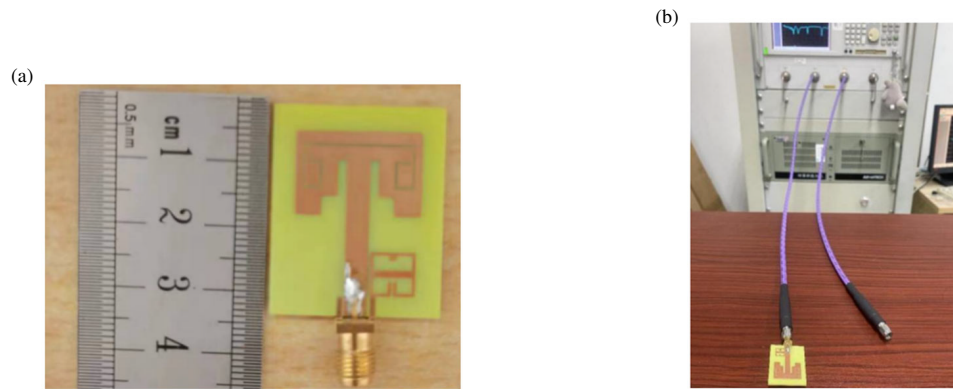
Table 3 lists the target frequency bands of the multi-frequency antenna, simulated frequency bands after algorithm optimization, measured operating frequency bands, and rela-

**TABLE 3.** Bands of multi-frequency antenna.

Target band [GHz]	Optimized post-band [GHz]	Target band [GHz]	Target band [GHz]
1.92–2.17	1.73–2.17	1.68–2.17	7.14%
2.52–2.68	2.51–2.79	2.55–2.74	1.68%
3.45–3.55	3.45–3.54	3.53–3.59	1.69%
4.85–4.95	4.86–4.94	5.04–5.12	3.55%

**TABLE 4.** Comparison of center frequency errors in this and existing studies.

Ref.	Number of bands	Center frequency at maximum error [GHz]	Maximum error of center frequency [MHz]	Minimum error of center frequency [MHz]	Average error of center frequency [MHz]
[22]	1	4.01	304	74	151.5
[23]	2	4.68	236	80	158
[24]	2	28.54	408	8	194.25
[25]	3	2.30	330	42	149
[26]	3	5.09	87	44	69.25
[27]	4	3.29	124	17	71.75
[28]	4	6.62	234	9	114.5
[29]	4	5.09	149	102	123.5
[30]	6	12.09	2174	60	962.25
This work	4	5.08	110	5	68.5

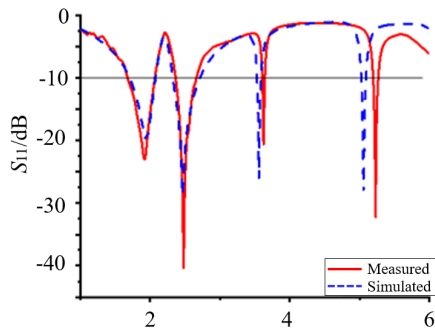
**FIGURE 9.** (a) Front view of the antenna. (b) Test setup.

tive errors between the measured and target frequency bands. The relative error of the frequency band endpoints represents the upper and lower limit cutoff frequency points. According to Equation (13), the relative error of the frequency band is considered the average value of the relative error of frequency points at both ends. The measured errors of the four groups of the working bands range from as low as 1.68% to as high as 7.2%. The measurement results show that the multi-band antenna can be accurately controlled using the proposed design method.

$$\text{Frequency band relative error} = \frac{|f_{\text{measure}} - f_{\text{target}}|}{f_{\text{target}}} \quad (13)$$

Between the measured and simulated results, a certain deviation is observed, attributable to several factors: (1) In the simulation, the dielectric constant of the FR4 dielectric plate is set to the ideal value of 4.4. However, the dielectric constant of the actual antenna dielectric plate may exhibit a certain deviation. (2) Processing errors may be introduced in the process of printing the PCB and welding the SMA head. (3) Because the test is conducted in a conventional electromagnetic environment, multipath interference of electromagnetic signals may contribute to errors at high frequencies.

The comparison work is completed by calculating the error between the simulation and measured operating center frequency of the antenna, as listed in Table 4. The accuracy



**FIGURE 10.** Measurement and simulation results for  $S_{11}$  parameters.

of antenna band design is comprehensively investigated from three aspects: maximum error, minimum error, and average error. The average measured error of the designed antennas is 68.5 MHz, which is smaller than the ten antennas in the table. The maximum measured error reached 110 MHz, which was only higher than 87 MHz in [26]. The minimum measured error of this antenna is only 5 MHz, which is much lower than other antennas. The antenna in this work operates in four frequency bands. In the design process of multi-band antennas, the design complexity increases with the number of frequency bands. For instance, the average error of the six-band antenna in [30] is 962.25 M. However, compared with other antennas, especially the single-band antenna in [22], the antenna in this work still accurately achieves the target frequency band.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

This paper presents a design method for a 5G multi-frequency antenna using the MSDP method. First, a rectangular patch antenna with a frequency band of 1.92–2.72 GHz is improved. A spiral notch metamaterial is etched onto the patch to modify the antenna from a single frequency to a dual-frequency configuration. To reduce the number of resonant units loaded on the transmission line side, the traditional ELC resonator is improved, and the asymmetric ELC resonator is designed to realize the four-band antenna by generating two different resonant points through a single resonant structure. To improve the accuracy and design efficiency of the target working band of the antenna, a multi-objective sequential domain patching method is introduced to optimize the loaded metamaterial structure and loading position, leveraging the  $S_{11}$  parameters and radiation efficiency as objective functions. Finally, a four-band antenna with working frequency bands of 1.73–2.17 GHz, 2.51–2.79 GHz, 3.45–3.54 GHz, and 4.86–4.94 GHz is designed, and the error between the measured and observed frequencies is measured.

In general, compared with the traditional antenna design optimization method, optimization of the antenna working band using an intelligent algorithm results in enhanced accuracy. In instances with modified working frequency bands, the proposed design method can effectively improve the design efficiency and working performance of the antenna simply by changing the objective function, facilitating the design of high-performance antennas.

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