

Flame aerosol deposition $\text{Y}_3\text{Al}_5\text{O}_{12}:\text{Yb}^{3+}$, Er^{3+} nanoparticles on monolayer MoS_2 for broadening near-infrared photoelectroresponse

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Abstract. Monolayer molybdenum disulfide (MoS_2) is a two-dimensional material with a direct bandgap widely used in photoelectric detection. It exhibits excellent characteristics such as an ultra-high specific surface area, strong light interaction, and good carrier mobility. However, due to the bandgap limitation, monolayer MoS_2 can only efficiently detect visible wavelengths less than 680 nm. Combining lanthanide-doped upconversion nanoparticles with monolayer MoS_2 to realize near-infrared (NIR) photodetection is a feasible strategy. Thus, $\text{Y}_3\text{Al}_5\text{O}_{12}:\text{Yb}^{3+}$, Er^{3+} up-conversion nanoparticles are deposited on the surface of a monolayer MoS_2 by flame aerosol deposition (FAD), significantly extending their photoelectric response range to the near-infrared 980 nm. The $\text{Y}_3\text{Al}_5\text{O}_{12}:\text{Yb}^{3+}$, Er^{3+} nanoparticles synthesized by flame can achieve efficient up-conversion from near-infrared (~980 nm) to visible light (~450, ~550, ~650 nm). Therefore, the visible light can be subsequently absorbed by monolayer MoS_2 . The carefully designed $\text{Y}_3\text{Al}_5\text{O}_{12}:\text{Yb}^{3+}$, $\text{Er}^{3+}/\text{MoS}_2$ photodetector shows strong responsivity and highly specific detectivity in the near-infrared spectrum. Under the bias voltage of 3 V and laser irradiation of 980 nm at 2.8 μW , the newly designed MoS_2 device achieves a responsivity of 16.82 A/W and a specific detectivity of 1.47×10^{12} Jones, as the traditional monolayer MoS_2 usually responds to zero. This work can further expand the application of two-dimensional materials and their composites in near-infrared photoelectric detection.

Keywords: Up-conversion nanoparticles, Photoelectric detection, Monolayer MoS_2 , Flame aerosol deposition

1. Introduction

Photodetectors are an essential component in the field of information perception, converting optical signals into electrical impulses. The infrared band holds significant importance for photodetectors. By utilizing photoelectric conversion and electrical signal processing to visualize infrared signals that carry the radiation characteristics of objects, infrared photodetectors find wide applications in various fields such as laser radar, night vision imaging, optical fiber communication, and laser distance measurement [1-3].

Two-dimensional materials with atomic layer thickness have been the subject of extensive research recently due to their excellent optical, electrical, and mechanical capabilities [4-9]. Two-dimensional materials, such as black phosphorus (BP) and graphene, have a small or nonexistent intrinsic bandgap, allowing them to achieve a broad-spectrum response, extending up to mid-infrared and terahertz bands [10, 11]. However, the dark current of graphene with zero bandgap is always too high due to the presence of free carriers. The high recombination rate of photogenerated carriers leads to low photoresponse [12]. In addition, black phosphorus has poor stability in the air, making it challenging to realize commercial applications [13, 14].

As a member of the Layered Transition Metal Dichalcogenides (TMDs, MX_2 , $M = Mo, W, Nb, Ta, Ti, Re$; $X = S, Se, Te$) family, MoS_2 exhibits a strong light-matter interaction, and the band structure is layer (thickness) dependent [15, 16]. The direct bandgap of a monolayer MoS_2 indicates that it could be a promising photoelectric material. However, the carrier mobility of transition metal sulfide is too low, and its detection range is limited to the visible band due to the constraint of bandgap [17].

Combining lanthanide-doped upconversion nanoparticles (UCNPs) on monolayer MoS_2 to realize NIR photodetection is a feasible strategy. The carefully designed UCNPs can couple well with monolayer MoS_2 to achieve the NIR photodetection. Here, Yb^{3+} and Er^{3+} ions are used to realize upconversion from NIR to visible light, and $Y_3Al_5O_{12}$ is selected as the host material for UCNPs due to its low phonon energy and suitability for FAD. For the newly designed $Y_3Al_5O_{12}: Yb^{3+}, Er^{3+}/MoS_2$ hybrid device, $Y_3Al_5O_{12}: Yb^{3+}, Er^{3+}$ UCNPs serve as an absorber of near-infrared signals, enabling efficient upconversion from NIR to visible light. MoS_2 works as a receiver of the up-converted radiation energy, realizing the final photoelectric conversion. In summary, we deposited $Y_3Al_5O_{12}: Yb^{3+}, Er^{3+}$ UCNPs on monolayer MoS_2 using FAD and achieved a strong photoelectrical response in the NIR.

2. Experimental section

$Y(NO_3)_3 \cdot 6H_2O$ (99.99%), $Al(NO_3)_3 \cdot 9H_2O$ (99.95%), $Yb(NO_3)_3 \cdot 5H_2O$ (99.99%), $Er(NO_3)_3 \cdot 5H_2O$ (99.99%), n-butanol (98%), and 2-ethylhexanoic acid (2-EHA, >99%) were purchased from Aladdin Industrial Corporation without purification. The MoS_2 flake we utilized was manufactured by SixCarbon Technology Shenzhen. The $Y_3Al_5O_{12}: Yb^{3+}/Er^{3+}$ NPs were synthesized using FAD with several modifications [32-34]. The mentioned nitrates were mixed with n-butanol to form the FAD precursor. The molar ratio of rare earth ions (Y^{3+} , Yb^{3+} , Er^{3+}) and Al^{3+} ions in the mixed butanol solution was set at 3:5. Yb^{3+} and Er^{3+} ions constitute 8 % and 1 % of all rare earth elements, respectively. For FAD synthesis, the precursor was subsequently injected into a self-built swirl-stabilized spray flame reactor. A mixture of methane (3 L min^{-1}) and air (30 L min^{-1}) was ignited to create a tubular premixed swirl flame. The spray precursor and air were supplied at rates of 1.2 L h^{-1} and 15 L min^{-1} , respectively, to establish a spray flame for UCNPs synthesis. A water-cooled substrate at the bottom deposits UCNPs above the spray flame. UCNPs will be deposited on a silicon wafer with MoS_2 as the substrate to prepare the $Y_3Al_5O_{12}: Yb^{3+}, Er^{3+}/MoS_2$ hybrid device. Finally, the synthesized UCNPs were calcined in ambient air at 200°C for 2h.

The surface morphologies of the sample were examined by SEM (Hitachi), and PL spectrum were acquired with a lens-coupled grating monochromator (Omnil-I3072i, Zolix) equipped with an integrated photomultiplier tube (PMTH-S1-R928). For photodetection under near-infrared laser, the photocurrent was collected by a semiconductor characterization system (Probe station and Keithley 2612b) under ambient conditions.

3. Results and discussion

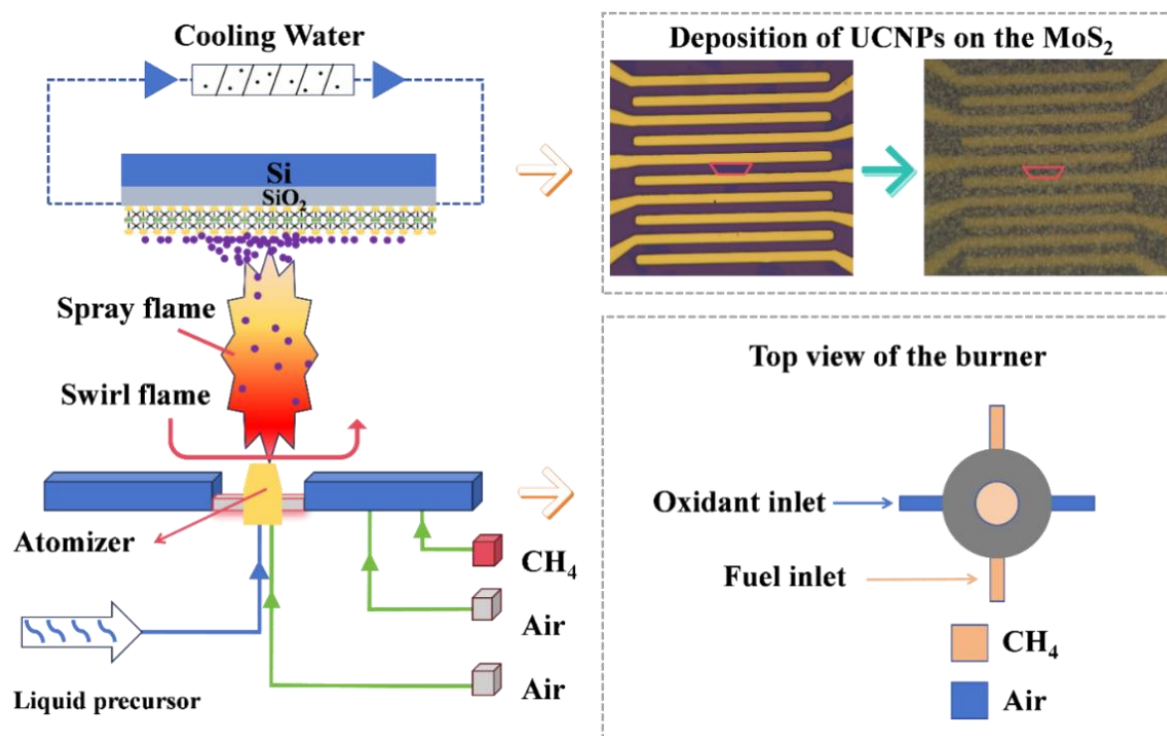


Fig. 1 Schematic illustration of synthesis of Y₃Al₅O₁₂: Yb³⁺, Er³⁺, which were deposited directly on a silicon wafer with MoS₂.

Fig. 1 depicts the schematic of the synthesis of Y₃Al₅O₁₂: Yb³⁺, Er³⁺ nanoparticles (NPs), which are directly deposited on MoS₂ using silicon wafers as the substrate. This approach is straightforward and efficient, facilitating direct contact between Y₃Al₅O₁₂: Yb³⁺, Er³⁺ NPs and MoS₂. High-temperature annealing is evidently an effective approach to reduce surface defects of NPs, enhancing the efficiency of upconversion luminescence. It is also an important technique for eliminating surface defects in two-dimensional materials and adsorbents to enhance material properties [35]. Our hybrid device has demonstrated high efficiency in photoelectric response under 980 nm laser excitation, achieving a high responsivity of 16.82 A/W and an excellent specific detectivity of 1.47×10^{12} Jones.

Fig. 2(a) displays the cross-sectional image of the hybrid $\text{Y}_3\text{Al}_5\text{O}_{12}:\text{Yb}^{3+}, \text{Er}^{3+}/\text{MoS}_2$ device structure on a SiO_2/Si substrate with Cr/Au contacts and NPs directly attached to the surface of MoS_2 . The quality and composition of the MoS_2 and $\text{Y}_3\text{Al}_5\text{O}_{12}:\text{Yb}^{3+}, \text{Er}^{3+}$ UCNP s were studied by Raman spectrum, as shown in Fig 2(b). Based on the interval between $\text{E}_{2\text{g}}$ and $\text{A}_{1\text{g}}$, we inferred that these flakes were monolayer. Fig. 2(c) illustrates a proposed pathway for the energy transfer between $\text{Y}_3\text{Al}_5\text{O}_{12}:\text{Yb}^{3+}, \text{Er}^{3+}$ NPs and MoS_2 flakes. Near-infrared radiation at 980 nm could be absorbed by Yb^{3+} , causing the electrons to transfer from $^2\text{F}_{7/2}$ to $^2\text{F}_{5/2}$. The energy is then transferred to Er^{3+} , where high energy levels capture electrons. Radiation of shorter wavelengths (450, 522, 542, 654 nm) is released by the transfer process of $^4\text{F}_{5/2}$, $^2\text{H}_{11/2}$, $^4\text{S}_{3/2}$ and $^4\text{F}_{9/2} \rightarrow ^4\text{I}_{15/2}$, which can be absorbed by MoS_2 . We then examined the PL spectrum for $\text{Y}_3\text{Al}_5\text{O}_{12}:\text{Yb}^{3+}, \text{Er}^{3+}$ and $\text{Y}_3\text{Al}_5\text{O}_{12}:\text{Yb}^{3+}, \text{Er}^{3+}/\text{MoS}_2$. As demonstrated in Fig. 2(d), $\text{Y}_3\text{Al}_5\text{O}_{12}:\text{Yb}^{3+}, \text{Er}^{3+}$ NPs generate relatively strong fluorescence at 450, 520, 550, 655 nm, which is consistent with the theory. In addition, there is no significant difference in PL spectral intensity between $\text{Y}_3\text{Al}_5\text{O}_{12}:\text{Yb}^{3+}, \text{Er}^{3+}$ and $\text{Y}_3\text{Al}_5\text{O}_{12}:\text{Yb}^{3+}, \text{Er}^{3+}/\text{MoS}_2$. Therefore, we prefer to employ the RET (radiative energy transfer) mechanism to explain the energy transfer between them: $\text{Y}_3\text{Al}_5\text{O}_{12}:\text{Yb}^{3+}, \text{Er}^{3+}$ NPs absorb longer wavelength incident radiation and convert it to shorter wavelength radiation, which is then absorbed by MoS_2 .

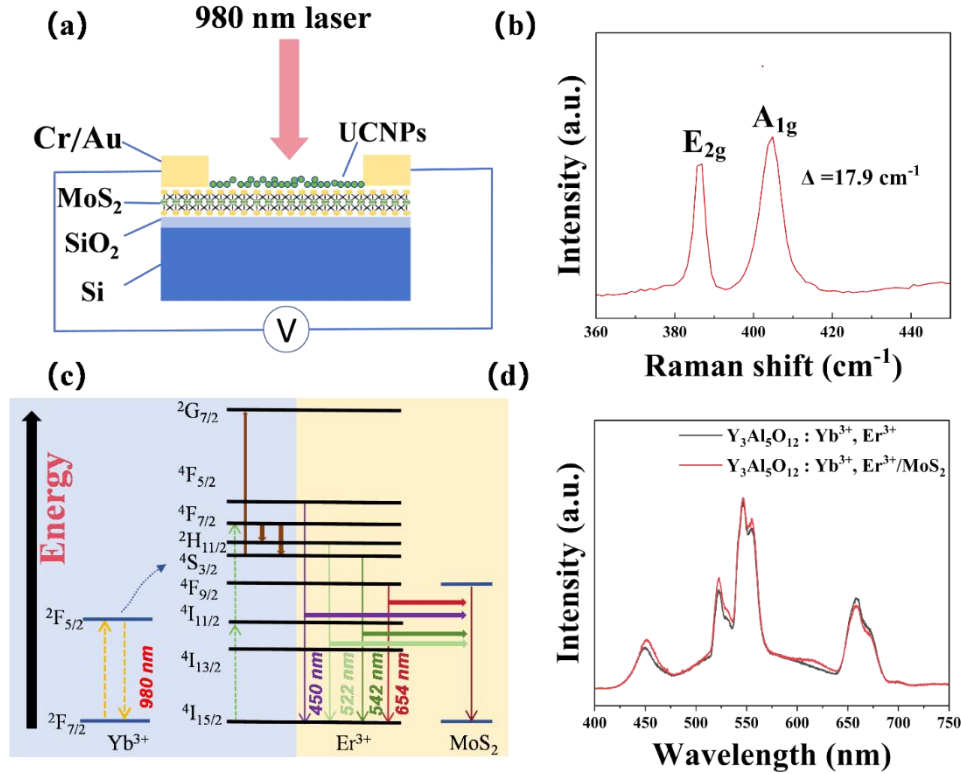


Fig. 2. (a) Schematic diagram of $\text{Y}_3\text{Al}_5\text{O}_{12}:\text{Yb}^{3+}, \text{Er}^{3+}/\text{MoS}_2$ device. (b) Raman spectrum of monolayer MoS_2 . (c) Schematic diagram of the excitation of electrons and the energy transfer from $\text{Y}_3\text{Al}_5\text{O}_{12}:\text{Yb}^{3+}, \text{Er}^{3+}$ to MoS_2 in the hybrid device. (d) PL spectrum of bare $\text{Y}_3\text{Al}_5\text{O}_{12}:\text{Yb}^{3+}, \text{Er}^{3+}$, $\text{Y}_3\text{Al}_5\text{O}_{12}:\text{Yb}^{3+}, \text{Er}^{3+}/\text{MoS}_2$ structure.

The photoresponse of the $\text{Y}_3\text{Al}_5\text{O}_{12}:\text{Yb}^{3+}, \text{Er}^{3+}/\text{MoS}_2$ photodetector is shown in Fig. 3. Fig. 3(a) depicts the photoresponse of a 980 nm laser excitation at different bias voltages of 1 V, 2 V, and 3 V ($P = 3.3 \text{ mW}$), and the photoresponse increases noticeably with the increase of V_{ds} . Fig. 3(b) shows

the current-voltage (I-V) characteristic of the $\text{Y}_3\text{Al}_5\text{O}_{12}:\text{Yb}^{3+}, \text{Er}^{3+}/\text{MoS}_2$ hybrid device under varying power 980 nm laser excitation. It can be seen that the I_{ds} increases with the increase of power, and the curve exhibits an obvious symmetry, indicating a good ohmic contact between the electrode and MoS_2 channel. Stable and repeated switching characteristic curves of the $\text{Y}_3\text{Al}_5\text{O}_{12}:\text{Yb}^{3+}, \text{Er}^{3+}/\text{MoS}_2$ hybrid device with a bias of 3 V under different power 980 nm laser excitation are shown in Fig. 3(c). In addition, when the laser irradiation strength is increased, the photoresponse of the $\text{Y}_3\text{Al}_5\text{O}_{12}:\text{Yb}^{3+}, \text{Er}^{3+}/\text{MoS}_2$ hybrid device increases. The optimal photoresponse can be achieved by modulating the bias and laser power.

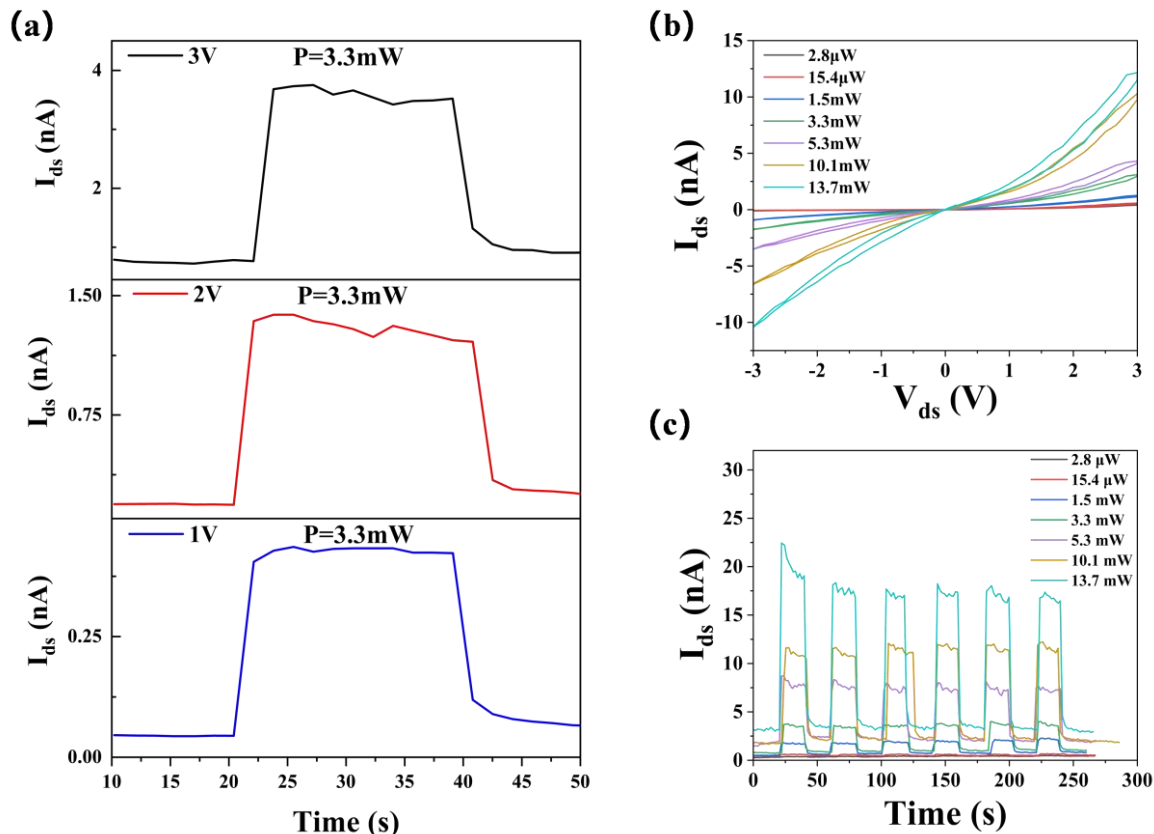


Fig. 3 (a) The photoresponse of 980 nm laser excitation at different bias voltages ($P = 3.3 \text{ mW}$).

(b) Current-voltage (I-V) characteristic of the $\text{Y}_3\text{Al}_5\text{O}_{12}:\text{Yb}^{3+}, \text{Er}^{3+}/\text{MoS}_2$ hybrid device under different power 980 nm laser excitation. (c) Stable and repeated switching characteristic curves of $\text{Y}_3\text{Al}_5\text{O}_{12}:\text{Yb}^{3+}, \text{Er}^{3+}/\text{MoS}_2$ hybrid device with a bias of 3 V under different power 980 nm laser excitation.

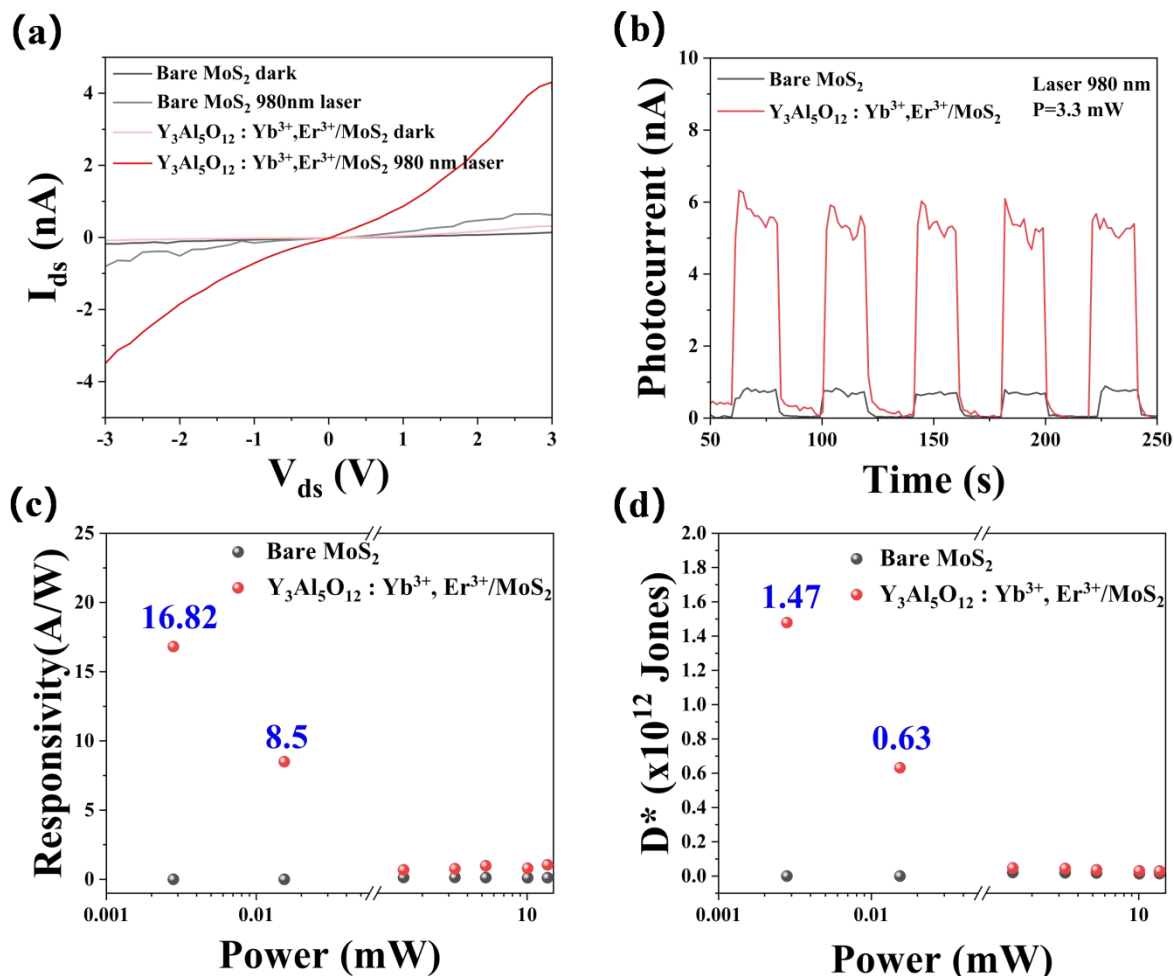


Fig. 4 (a) Current-voltage (I-V) characteristic of both devices, under dark conditions and under illumination with a 980 nm laser. (b) Stable and repeated switching characteristic curves of bare MoS₂ and Y₃Al₅O₁₂: Yb³⁺, Er³⁺/MoS₂ hybrid device with a bias of 3 V. (c) Responsivity and (d) Specific Detectivity of both devices dependent on intensity of 980 nm laser illumination.

Fig. 4(a) shows the current-voltage (I-V) characteristic of both devices under dark conditions when illuminated by a 980 nm laser. The bare MoS₂ photodetector exhibited an extremely weak photocurrent under 980 nm illumination, which is nearly equal to the dark current. Electrons cannot transit from the valence band to the conduction band because the photon energy provided by the 980 nm laser is less than the band gap energy of monolayer MoS₂. Therefore, the weak response might be caused by the thermal excitation of the laser heating. In addition, the dark current of bare MoS₂ and Y₃Al₅O₁₂: Yb³⁺, Er³⁺/MoS₂ hybrid device is similar, and the Y₃Al₅O₁₂: Yb³⁺, Er³⁺/MoS₂ hybrid device showed a strong photocurrent under 980 nm illumination. Fig. 4(b) displays the switching characteristic curves of bare MoS₂ and Y₃Al₅O₁₂: Yb³⁺, Er³⁺/MoS₂ hybrid device with a bias of 3V. The hybrid device's improved photoresponse is more clearly displayed by the curve. The performance of photodetectors can be evaluated by Responsivity (R) and Specific Detectivity (D*). These parameters can be determined by the following formulas:

$$R = \frac{I_{light} - I_{dark}}{PS} \#(1)$$

$$D^* = \frac{R\sqrt{S}}{\sqrt{2eI_{dark}}} \#(2)$$

where I_{light} is the photocurrent, I_{dark} is the dark current, P is the light power, S represents the effective device area, and e is the electron charge.

As shown in Fig. 4(c) and 4(d), the R and D^* of both devices are dependent on the intensity of 980 nm laser illumination. With the increase of laser power, the responsivity and specific detectivity of $Y_3Al_5O_{12}: Yb^{3+}, Er^{3+}/MoS_2$ photodetectors decline. This decline may be caused by photoexcited carriers' recombination due to the adsorbates [42] and the limited upconversion efficiency of $Y_3Al_5O_{12}: Yb^{3+}, Er^{3+}$. Under a laser power of $2.8 \mu W$, the $Y_3Al_5O_{12}: Yb^{3+}, Er^{3+}/MoS_2$ hybrid device achieved a responsivity of $16.82 A/W$ and a specific detectivity of 1.47×10^{12} Jones, in contrast to the zero response of monolayer MoS_2 . Table 1 shows previous studies of similar photodetectors (PDs) included in the study.

Table 1 Previous studies of similar PDs included in the study.

Materials	R(A/W)	D* (x10 ¹² Jones)	Wavelength (nm)	Ref
MoS ₂ /UCMCs	10 ⁻⁴	10 ⁻⁴	980	[36]
Monolayer MoS ₂ /UCNPs	0.0105	/	980	[37]
Ag NPs- multilayer MoS ₂	8.81×10^{-4}	1.28×10^{-3}	980	[38]
Sb ₂ Te ₃	21.7	0.122	980	[39]
MAPbI ₃ /CsxWO ₃ /NaYF ₄ /NaYF ₄ :Yb ³⁺ , Er ³⁺ @NaYF ₄ :Yb ³⁺ , Tm ³⁺	0.33	0.045	980	[40]
MoS ₂ -UCNPs	85	71.4	980	[41]
Y ₃ Al ₅ O ₁₂ : Yb ³⁺ , Er ³⁺ /MoS ₂	16.82	1.47	980	This work

4. Conclusion

In summary, we have developed a high-performance $Y_3Al_5O_{12}: Yb^{3+}, Er^{3+}/MoS_2$ photodetector. $Y_3Al_5O_{12}: Yb^{3+}, Er^{3+}$ acts as an absorber of near-infrared light, efficiently converting it into visible light. MoS_2 acts as a receiver of the up-converted radiation energy. The photodetector exhibits outstanding performance with an ultrahigh responsivity of up to $16.82 A/W$ and a large specific detectivity of 1.47×10^{12} Jones when illuminated by a 980 nm laser. Our research provides new

possibilities for designing high-performance two-dimensional optoelectronic devices in the near-infrared spectrum

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Author Contributions

Haitao Wei, Tongcheng Yu performed conceptualization, Haitao Wei, Shuai hu performed investigation and data analysis. Tongcheng Yu supervised the work progress. Haitao Wei wrote the manuscript.

Data Availability Statement

Data is contained within the article or supplementary material. The original contributions presented in the study are included in the article, further inquiries can be directed to the corresponding authors.

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