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An AC Resistance Optimization Method Applicable for Inductor and Transformer Windings with Full Layers and Partial Layers

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Abstract—This paper proposes an ac resistance optimization method applicable for both inductor and transformer windings with full layers and partial layers. The proposed method treats the number of layers of the windings as a design variable instead of as a predefined parameter, compared to existing methods. The window height and width of magnetic cores and the insulation requirements are introduced as boundary conditions in the optimization process. The optimization can be realized simply by mathematical design map analyses instead of iteration programs. Moreover, a corresponding closed form expression of ac resistance of windings with partial layers is proposed. The developed analytical equation is verified by both Finite Element Method (FEM) simulations and experimental results from two transformer prototypes. A case study of a transformer design with partial layer windings for a LCC resonant circuit is presented with experimental verifications to demonstrate the optimization method.

Keywords—Magnetic components, ac resistance optimization, partial layer windings.

I. INTRODUCTION

Medium or high frequency transformers contribute considerable power losses in power electronic converters, which become a great challenge in energy conversion efficiency. The reduction of losses in power transformers relies on both magnetic core and winding design [1–4]. Based on various analytical expressions of transformer ac resistance [5–10], the optimization of the conductor diameter for different winding types are achieved by predefined number of winding layers $m$, number of strands of Litz wires $k_{str}$, and current waveforms [11–13]. Those methods could be easily realized by simple analytical formulas, however, the required information such as $m$ and $k_{str}$ are difficult to be determined at the beginning of the winding optimization. One method has been proposed in [14] by introducing the restriction of core height. However, it requires program iteration and cannot reach the overall optimization in special conditions, such as a partial layer winding. The partial layer is usually the last layer of a winding and does not have the full height like other full layers, as is illustrated in Fig. 1. The magnetic field strength due to the skin and proximity effects of the partial layer is different from that of full layer. Until now, the analytical equation for ac resistance of partial layer windings is not available.

In this paper, a winding design method for full layer winding is firstly proposed, which is based on the restriction of core structure and does not require to define the number of layers $m$. An ac resistance calculation formula for the partial layer winding is derived and verified by both FEM and experimental results, making it possible to apply the proposed optimization method to also windings with partial layers. Theoretical analyses and experimental results of a case study are also presented.

II. OPTIMAL WINDING DESIGN WITH FULL LAYERS

In this section, the one dimensional Dowell’s equation along with its derivation assumptions are firstly reviewed. The conventional optimum diameter formula is then introduced and further developed to the proposed winding design method.

A. Dowell’s Equation for Winding Resistance with Full Layers

Dowell’s equation for ac resistance calculation is originally derived from foil and rectangle conductors. It is based on the
following assumptions for the one dimensional flux distribution [5].

- The permeability of the magnetic core is very large, so the magnetic field strength $H$ in the core is close to zero.
- The current flows one dimension in $x$-direction, thus $H$ is also one dimension in $zy$-plane, cf. Fig. 1.
- The height of one full layer of conductors $h_w$ equals to the height of the window $h_c$, so the magnetic flux is parallel to the conductor, only in $z$-direction.

Based on the assumptions, the one dimensional equation for the winding ac resistance $R_{ac}$ is given by [5]:

$$R_{ac} = R_{dc} F_r,$$

where $F_r = \Delta [\nu_3 + \frac{2}{3} (m^2 - 1) \nu_2]$ (2)

and

$$\nu_2 = \frac{\sinh \Delta - \sin \Delta}{\cosh \Delta + \cos \Delta}, \quad \nu_3 = \frac{\sinh(2\Delta) + \sin(2\Delta)}{\cosh(2\Delta) - \cos(2\Delta)}$$

(3)

where $R_{dc}$ is the winding dc resistance, $F_r$ is the ac resistance factor, $m$ is the number of layers, and $\nu_2, \nu_3$ are the skin and proximity effects coefficients, separately. The ac resistance formula is the function of $m$ and $\Delta$, and the latter is the penetration ratio defined by:

$$\Delta = \frac{d_{ww}}{\delta} = d_{ww} \frac{\sqrt{\pi \mu f \sigma}}{c},$$

(4)

where $d_{ww}$ is the thickness of conductor, $\delta$ is the skin depth, $f$ is the frequency, and $\mu, \sigma$ are the permeability and conductivity of the conductor material, respectively. There is a positive correlation between $\Delta$ and frequency, meaning that the ac resistance increases with the increase of frequency for a given conductor thickness.

Dowell’s equation for foil can be transferred to the rectangle and square conductor with equivalent thickness, and further to round conductor by introducing the equivalent $d_w$ using equivalent area principle with the square conductor:

$$d_w = \sqrt{\frac{\pi}{4}} d,$$

(5)

where $d$ is the diameter of the round conductor.

**B. Optimum Diameter Formula for Foil Conductors**

It is already proved that for each particular $m$, there is an optimum $\Delta_{opt}$ which leads to the minimization of the total ac resistance with Dowell’s equation [11–13]:

$$\Delta_{opt} = \frac{1}{\sqrt{\Psi}},$$

(6)

with

$$\Psi = \frac{5m^2 - 1}{15}, \quad \text{and} \quad \tau = \frac{\sqrt{\Psi} r_{rms}}{I_{rms}}$$

(7)

where $\omega$ is the circular frequency, $I_{rms}$ and $I_{rms}$ are the rms value of the current and the derivation of the current, respectively.

**C. Winding Design for Round Conductors of Full Layers**

For round conductors, the minimum resistance also exists and $\Delta_{opt}$ can be calculated by [6]. $\Delta_{opt}$ for each $m$ is given in Fig. 2 with black line. Further, the optimum diameter $d$ can be obtained from [5] [11].

In conventional inductor or transformer design process, the winding design is followed by the selection or dimension optimization of its magnetic core, thus the number of turns $N$ is pre-determined, but not the number of layers $m$. For foil conductors, $m$ equals to $N$ and $\Delta_{opt}$ can be calculated by [5]. However, for round conductors, the relationship is not valid any more and $m$ is difficult to determine before winding design.

The proposed winding design method for round conductors is based on the dimension of the presupposed magnetic core, including two basic restrictions regarding to the width and height of the core window, as illustrated in Fig. 3

$$d_c \geq nd_{opt} + 2md_{iso} + (m - 1)d_{wwiso} + 2d_{cwiso},$$

(8)

$$h_c \geq td_{opt} + 2td_{iso} + (t - 1)h_{wwiso} + 2h_{cwiso},$$

(9)

where $d_c, h_c$ is the width and height of window, $t$ is the number of conductors of full layer in vertical direction, $d_{opt}$ is the optimum conductor diameter, $d_{iso} = pd_{opt}$ is the isolation.
thickness of each conductor, \( p \) is the isolation coefficient, 
\( d_{\text{wwiso}}, h_{\text{wwiso}} \) is the isolation distance between layers in width and height direction, 
\( d_{\text{cwiso}}, h_{\text{cwiso}} \) is the isolation distance between core and winding in width and height direction, respectively. In full layer scenario, \( t \) is expressed by:

\[
t = \frac{N}{m}. \tag{10}
\]

By substituting (10) into (9) and putting them in the \((\Delta, m)\) two dimensional coordinate plane, the two restrictions can be described by the yellow line in Fig. 4. Within the restrictions all points are in feasible region, otherwise in infeasible region. The feasible region is covered with the green color. Due to the integer number of layers \( m \), the edge of the region is not smooth and have step changes in \( y \)-axis direction. The pink line of original optimum diameter calculation is also given, with the restrictions some parts of the line is not valid any more. Notice that \( m \) axis begins from 1, which is also a restriction for the winding design.

Considering the valley shape of ac resistance in Fig. 2, the minimum ac resistance solution should be located on the boundary of the feasible region or the minimum losses line within restrictions, consisting line \( 1, 2 \) and \( 3 \). The overall minimum point can be found by searching the points in the new line, as is marked with red point in the map. The method is also suitable for rectangle and square conductors by simply modifying some variables in (8) and (9).

### III. AC WINDINGS RESISTANCE OF PARTIAL LAYERS

For windings with partial layers, Dowell’s equation is not valid any more. In this section, a new equation of partial layer for rectangle conductors is derived and then extended to square and round conductors. The derivation process is inspired by Dowell’s equation, and is also based on the one-dimensional flux distribution assumptions. The equation is verified by both FEM simulation and experimental results.

#### A. Equation for Winding Resistance with Partial Layers

Assuming a winding with \( m \) full layers, the partial layer is the \((m + 1)\)th layer, the height of the full and partial layer \( h_w \) and \( h'_w \) can be represented by:

\[
h_w = th_{w0}, \tag{11}
\]

\[
h'_w = t_0h_{w0}, \tag{12}
\]

where \( h_{w0} \) is the height of single conductor, \( t \) and \( t_0 \) are the number of conductors of full and partial layer, respectively.

Define \( \hat{I}_0 \) as the peak current in each turn. The peak current in the full layer \( \hat{I} \) is the sum of total \( \hat{I}_0 \) in the layer:

\[
\hat{I} = t \cdot \hat{I}_0, \tag{13}
\]

it decreases linearly to \( \hat{I}' \) in the partial layer:

\[
\hat{I}' = \frac{t_0}{t} \cdot \hat{I}. \tag{14}
\]

The partial coefficient is defined as \( k \):

\[
k = \frac{t_0}{t} \cdot \frac{h'_w}{h_w}. \tag{15}
\]

The magnetic boundary condition for skin effect is illustrated in Fig. 5. The magnetomotive force (MMF) of partial layer is proportional to the current and decreases with the height of the partial layer. However, the magnetic flux length \( h_c \) does not decrease due to the one dimensional flux dis-
Ac Resistance \( R \) in \( \Omega \) of ac winding is:

\[
H'_{\text{int}1} = -H'_{\text{int}2} = \frac{i}{2h_c} = \frac{\partial H'_w}{\partial h_w} = \frac{k}{2h_c}.
\]  

Likewise, the boundary condition for the proximity effect is illustrated in Fig. 6. The averaged external magnetic strength boundary is:

\[
H'_{\text{ext}1} = H'_{\text{ext}2} = \frac{m l}{h_c} + \frac{m l + k l}{2} = \frac{2m l + k l}{2h_c}.
\]

By substituting these two boundary conditions of magnetic strength into the derivation process, the proposed ac resistance of round conductor transformer with \( m \) full layers and one partial layer is:

\[
R_{ac} = R_{dc}F_t,
\]

with

\[
F_t = \Delta \nu_3 + \frac{4m^3 - 4m^2 - 3k^3 + 3k(2m + k)^2}{6(m + k)} \Delta \nu_2.
\]

The detailed derivation process is given in Appendix A. If \( k = 0 \), the partial layer is disappeared and (18) turns to the Dowell’s equation for \( m \) layers \( R_m \). If \( k = 1 \), the partial layer becomes the additional full layer and (18) turns to the Dowell’s equation for \( m + 1 \) layers \( R_{m+1} \). The value of (18) is between \( R_m \) and \( R_{m+1} \). The Dowell’s porosity factor \( \eta \) is defined by:

\[
\eta = \frac{h_w}{h_c}.
\]

It is used to modify the ac resistance through the penetration ratio:

\[
\Delta = \sqrt{\eta \frac{d_w}{d}}
\]

(21) to acquire a more precise analytical calculation result [5]. It also suits for the partial layer situation here.

For comparison, the ac resistance of windings with 1.56 mm diameter round conductors of full or partial layers are calculated and compared in Fig. 7. PQ 50/50 core is chosen and the length of each turn \( l_w \) is 94.25 mm, the operation frequency is 20 kHz. The number of layers \( m \) is 5 and the number of conductors in the full layer \( t \) is set as 10, the number of partial layer conductors \( t_0 \) increases one by one. When \( t_0 = 10 \), the partial layer becomes a full layer and \( m \) adds 1. In this case, the additional losses are almost 50% higher than original value when \( t_0 \) is large. It implies that compared to the proposed equation, it could have considerable errors to apply Dowell’s equation to model the ac resistance of a partial layer winding. The ac resistance increment with \( t_0 \) is also non-linear according to \( k \) due to the high frequency character of skin and proximity effects.

### B. Finite Element Modeling and Experimental Verification

For the verification of the derived equation, two transformers are built, named Prototype 1 (P1) and Prototype 2 (P2), with the same primary winding and different secondary windings. The winding specification is given in table I.

Prototype 1 is with a full secondary winding and Prototype 2 is with a partial secondary winding. All of the prototypes are with the EPCOS PQ50/50 core and same isolation. The ac resistances are measured by Agilent E5061B network analyzer. Prototype 2 and its Finite Element Method (FEM) simulation model are shown in Fig. 8.

The results shown in Fig. 9 reveal a well agreement among the analytical, simulation, and experimental results. The large diameter of the conductor leads to the large penetration.
ratio $\Delta$. It results in the large skin and proximity effects coefficients $\nu_1$ and $\nu_2$ in [13]. So the difference between Prototype 1 and Prototype 2 is quite high and increases with the frequency. The difference almost equals to the ac resistance of Prototype 1 in 200 kHz. It indicates that in high-power and high frequency range, the introduction of ac resistance formula for the partial layer is necessary.

IV. OPTIMAL WINDING DESIGN WITH PARTIAL LAYERS

For winding arrangement with $m$ full layers and one partial layer, the previously discussed core window width and height boundary are still valid and can be modified to:

$$d_e \geq (m+1)d_{opt} + 2(m+1)d_{iso} + md_{wwiso} + 2d_{cwiso},$$  \hspace{1cm} (22)

$$h_e \geq td_{opt} + 2td_{iso} + (t-1)h_{wwiso} + 2h_{cwiso}. \hspace{1cm} (23)$$

In partial layer scenario, $t$ is calculated by:

$$t = \frac{N - t_0}{m}. \hspace{1cm} (24)$$

When $N$ is an even number, there are $N/2$ kinds of $t_0$ (i.e., 0, 1, 2, ..., $N/2$-1). When $N$ is an odd number, there are $(N + 1)/2$ kinds of $t_0$. Each kind of $t_0$ is corresponding to a height boundary restricted by (23).

Additionally, there is a layer boundary ensuring that $t_0$ does not exceed $t$: $t_0 < t$. By substituting (24) into the boundary, the restriction is the function of $m$:

$$m < \frac{N}{t_0} - 1. \hspace{1cm} (25)$$

A design map for $N=16$ and $t_0=1$ is given in Fig. 10 for illustration, which is almost the same shape like Fig. 4. In this sub-situation, the number of turns left for full layer is 15. Therefore, there are three kinds of combination for the $(m, t)$ pair: (1, 15), (3, 5), and (5, 3). Each pair is related to a sub-case line in Fig. 10, which is in blue and parallel to the $x$-axis. The $y$ coordinate value of the sub-case line indicates the related number of layers, which is 1, 3, and 5, respectively.

The parts of the sub-case line in the feasible region are all of the viable scenarios in the sub-situation. The minimum resistance point of each layer is its intersection of the yellow boundary line or the pink minimum line, depending on the position of the boundary and the minimum line. The points are marked with intersection 1 to 3. By comparing the minimum points of each layer, the overall minimum point in the design map can be obtained. In this situation, intersection 2 is the minimum point marked with red point. The global minimization resistance point is obtained by comparing the minimum points in all of the design maps.

The winding design method above is for core window with one winding, which is for inductor application. It is also applicable to transformer with primary and secondary windings. As the balance of delivered power, the same window area is preferred for the primary and secondary winding, which means the half width for each winding. The porosity factor modification in (24) can also be integrated into the proposed design method to get a more precise design result.

A transformer for the 20 kHz LCC resonant circuit is designed with this method, the partial layer is preferred to accurately meet the requirements of number of total turns $N$, the core is PQ50/50, both the core and isolation restriction is given in table II and all of the variables can be found in [8] and [9]. $m$ is considered as a design variable.

The resultant winding design is given in Table III. The measured results of the designed transformer is illustrated in Fig. 11. For comparison, a full layer transformer with 2 layers 0.25 mm diameter round conductors as the secondary side is also studied. Other parameters are kept the same, and the winding dimension is also within the design restrictions. It can be noted that the optimized winding has a 24.85 % ac resistance reduction compared to this alternative designed one at 20 kHz. In fact, any other design solutions within the design restriction map in Fig. 4 will have a higher ac resistance compared to the optimum design point. The measured ac
As well. Two transformer prototypes have been built and the analytical, FEM simulation, and experimental results show a well agreement with each other. A transformer winding design case for a LCC converter is discussed. It results in a 24.85% ac resistance reduction at the frequency of interest with the proposed optimization method, compared to an alternative design.

### Appendix A

**Derivation of the Partial Layer Winding Losses**

With the one dimensional flux assumption in section (II-A) and the Maxwell equations, the magnetic field intensity $H_z$ is described by a second-order ordinary differential equation:

$$\frac{d^2 H_z}{d y^2} = j \sigma \omega \mu H_z = \alpha^2 H_z,$$

with:

$$\alpha = \frac{1 + j}{\delta}. \quad (27)$$

The boundary condition of the internal magnetic field strengths is explained in (16) and rewritten here:

$$H'_\text{int1} = - H'_\text{int2} = \frac{k \hat{I}}{2 h_c}, \quad (28)$$

According to (26), the solution of magnetic field strength for skin effect in $z$ direction $H'_\text{sz}$ decreases with the ratio $k$:

$$H'_\text{sz} = \frac{k \hat{I} \sinh \alpha y}{2 h_c \sinh \frac{\alpha d_w}{2}}. \quad (29)$$

And so as the skin effect current density in $x$ direction $J'_\text{sx}$:

$$J'_\text{sx} = \frac{d}{d y} H'_\text{sz} = \frac{\alpha k \hat{I}}{2 h_c \sinh \frac{\alpha d_w}{2}}. \quad (30)$$

The skin effect losses for the $(m + 1)th$ partial layer winding is:

$$P'_s = t_0 \frac{l_w}{2 \sigma} \int_0^{d_w} |J'_\text{sx}|^2 \, dy = \frac{k \hat{I}^2}{4 h_c \sigma \delta} \nu_1, \quad (31)$$

where

$$\nu_1 = \frac{\sinh \triangle + \sin \triangle}{\cosh \triangle - \cos \triangle}, \quad (32)$$

$l_w$ is the one turn length of conductor.

The outside external magnetic field strength of the partial layer increases $\frac{k \hat{I}}{h_c}$ instead of $\frac{\hat{I}}{h_c}$, which leads to the averaged external magnetic field strength boundary condition become:

$$H'_\text{ext1} = H'_\text{ext2} = \frac{m \hat{I} + \frac{m + k \hat{I}}{2}}{2 h_c}. \quad (33)$$
The external magnetic field strength for proximity effect in $z$ direction $H'_{pc}$ can be solved by substituting $H'_{ext1} = H'_{ext2}$:

$$H'_{pc} = \frac{\cosh \alpha y}{\cosh \frac{\alpha d}{2}} H'_{ext1}. \quad (34)$$

The induced current density of the $(m+1)th$ layer is:

$$J'_{px} = \frac{d}{dy} H'_{pc} = \frac{\alpha \sinh \alpha y}{\cosh \frac{2d}{\alpha}} H'_{ext1}. \quad (35)$$

The proximity effect losses for the $(m+1)th$ partial layer winding is determined by:

$$P' = t_0 \frac{h w}{t_0} \int_0^{d w} |J'_{px}|^2 dy = \frac{k l w f^2 (2m + k)^2}{4 h \sigma \delta} \nu_2, \quad (36)$$

where

$$\nu_2 = \frac{\sinh \Delta - \sin \Delta}{\cosh \Delta + \cos \Delta}. \quad (37)$$

By adding the losses of $m$ full layers $P_m$ and the skin and proximity losses of the partial layer, the total losses are:

$$P = P_m + P'_x + P'_p = \frac{h w f^2 (m + k)}{4 \sigma \delta} \nu_1 + \frac{4m^3 - m}{12} \nu_2 + \frac{k}{4} \nu_1 + \frac{k(2m + k)^2}{4} \nu_2. \quad (38)$$

With the following mathematical identities:

$$\nu_1 + \nu_2 = \frac{\sinh(2\Delta)}{\cosh(2\Delta) - \cos(2\Delta)} = \nu_3, \quad (39)$$

(38) can be expressed with more common form:

$$P = \frac{h w f^2 (m + k)}{\sigma \delta} \nu_3 \quad (40)$$

The ac resistance of the total winding is determined by:

$$R_{ac} = \frac{m + k}{h w \sigma \delta} l_w \nu_3 + \frac{4m^3 - 4m - 3k + 3k(2m + k)^2}{6h w \sigma \delta} l_w \nu_2. \quad (41)$$

The dc resistance of $m + 1$ layers rectangle winding is:

$$R_{dc} = \frac{(m + l')l_w}{h_w \sigma d_w} = \frac{t(m + k)l_w}{h_w \sigma d_w}. \quad (42)$$

Thus the ac resistance factor for rectangle conductor can be expressed by:

$$F_{r} = \Delta \nu_3 + \frac{4m^3 - 4m - 3k + 3k(2m + k)^2}{6(m + k)} \Delta \nu_2. \quad (43)$$

For square conductors, the derivation process is almost the same except that the height of the conductor is equal to the width:

$$h_w = d_w, \quad (44)$$

and the related ac resistance factor is also the same.

For round conductors, (43) is also valid by transferring the diameter $d$ to equivalent $d_w$ with [5].

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