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Power Quality and Harmonics Issues of Future and Smart Grids

Zare, Firuz; Blaabjerg, Frede; Davari, Pooya; Chang, Gary W.; Adabi, Jafar

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: EDITORIAL

IEEE ACCESS SPECIAL SECTION EDITORIAL: POWER QUALITY AND HARMONICS ISSUES OF FUTURE AND SMART GRIDS

Penetration of grid connected renewable energy systems and smart loads based on power electronics technology has been increasing in low and medium voltage distribution. *Power Electronics* is a key technology for distribution networks which can transfer electrical power from renewable energy sources to grids or generate regulated frequency and/or voltage for different loads such as variable speed drives and battery chargers. New demands for a) cost and size reduction, b) performance and quality improvement and c) flexibility on power management have promoted power electronics applications extensively in industrial, commercial and residential sectors such as transportation, utility and home appliances in recent years.

Harmonics are integer multiples of the fundamental signal (voltage or current at 50 or 60 Hz). They have short and long term effects on grids and grid-connected electronics as well as power electronics equipment, such as malfunction, failure and losses. These reduce the reliability, lifetime and efficiency of the electricity networks. The main drawback of power electronics systems is low (below 2 kHz) and/or high (above 2 kHz) frequency harmonics emissions. Power electronics converters with Wide Band Gap (WBG) switches generate more high frequency harmonics than the conventional switches due to their ability to operate at higher switching frequencies. They can increase and shift the harmonics emissions from 0-2 kHz to the higher frequency ranges (2-150 kHz) and create new power quality problems of the current and future electricity networks.

This Special Section in IEEE ACCESS focuses on emerging harmonics and power quality issues of future and smart grids. The main objective of this Special Section is to bring together researchers from both academia and industry to share the most recent power quality and harmonics issues of grid-connected power electronics systems.

The following four articles addressed different forms of power quality issues in distribution networks with high penetration of grid-connected power electronics converters.

In “Harmonic emissions of three-phase diode rectifiers in distribution networks,” by Zare *et al.*, harmonic emissions have been changed in distribution networks, with respect to frequency range and magnitude, due to the penetration

of modern power electronics systems. Two new frequency ranges (2-9 and 9-150 kHz) have been identified as new disturbing frequency ranges affecting distribution networks. This article presents the effects of grid-connected three-phase systems with different front-end topologies: conventional, small dc-link capacitor, and electronic inductor. A power converter with a small dc-link capacitor can create a resonant frequency with the line impedance below and above 1 kHz depending on the grid configurations. The resonant effects depend on many factors, such as load power levels, filter types, and the number of parallel drives. These issues can affect the grid current harmonics and power quality of the distribution networks. Analyses and simulations have been carried out for three different topologies and the results have been verified by experimental tests at system level. Current harmonic emissions have been considered for 0-2, 2-9, and 9-150 kHz frequency ranges.

In “DC microgrid technology: system architectures, ac grid interfaces, grounding schemes, power quality, communication networks, applications, and standardizations aspects,” Kumar *et al.*, discuss how, in order to meet the fast-growing energy demand and, at the same time, tackle environmental concerns resulting from conventional energy sources, renewable energy sources are integrated in power networks to ensure reliable and affordable energy for the public and industrial sectors. However, the integration of renewable energy in the ageing electrical grids can result in new risks/challenges, such as security of supply, base load energy capacity, seasonal effects, among other issues. Recent research and development in microgrids have proved that microgrids, which are fueled by renewable energy sources and managed by smart grids (use of smart sensors and smart energy management system), can offer higher reliability and more efficient energy systems in a cost-effective manner. Further improvement in the reliability and efficiency of electrical grids can be achieved by utilizing DC distribution in microgrid systems. DC microgrid is an attractive technology in the modern electrical grid system because of its natural interface with renewable energy sources, electric loads, and energy storage systems. In the recent past, an increase in research has been observed in the area of DC microgrids,

which brings this technology closer to practical implementation. This article presents the state-of-the-art DC microgrid technology that covers AC interfaces, architectures, possible grounding schemes, power quality issues, and communication systems. The advantages of DC grids can be exploited in many applications to improve their reliability and efficiency. This article also discusses benefits and challenges of using DC grid systems in several applications, highlights the urgent need of standardizations for DC microgrid technology, and presents recent updates in this area.

Kontos *et al.* in “High order voltage and current harmonic mitigation using the modular multilevel converter STATCOM,” explain that, due to the increase of power electronic-based loads, the maintenance of high power quality poses a challenge in modern power systems. To limit the total harmonic distortion in the line voltage and currents at the point of the common coupling (PCC), active power filters are commonly employed. This article investigates the use of the multilevel modular converter (MMC) for harmonics mitigation due to its high bandwidth compared with conventional converters. A selective harmonics detection method and a harmonics controller are implemented, while the output current controller of the MMC is tuned to selectively inject the necessary harmonic currents. Unlike previous studies, the focus on the experimental verification of the active filtering capability of the MMC. For this reason, an MMC-based double-star STATCOM is developed and tested for two representative case studies, i.e., for grid currents and PCC voltage harmonics. The results verify the capability of the MMC to mitigate harmonics up to the thirteenth order, while maintaining a low effective switching frequency and thus, low switching losses.

In the article, “A hidden block in a grid connected active front end system: modelling, control and stability analysis,” by Sharma *et al.*, the authors discuss how an LCL filter utilized in an active front end (AFE) converter can generate significant resonance, which can affect quality and stability of the system. Thus, a proper active or passive damping technique and/or a suitable controller is required to be designed for the converter. The duty cycle constraint—though

inevitable in practical inverter systems—is often ignored in most of the existing literature. The effects of measurement noise on filter control system performance must be considered and evaluated under different conditions. Finally, almost all inverter control systems are implemented digitally using microcontrollers. Consequently, the effects of sampling on control system stability and performance should be evaluated as well. Thus, this article presents stability analysis of an AFE converter-based filter design with a complete practical system configuration, including saturation and sampling blocks and measurement noises. Mathematical analysis and simulations have been carried out to validate the proposed method.

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FIRUZ ZARE, Associate Editor

*The University of Queensland
Brisbane, QLD, Australia*

FREDE BLAABJERG, Guest Editor

*Aalborg University
Aalborg, Denmark*

POOYA DAVARI, Guest Editor

*Aalborg University
Aalborg, Denmark*

GARY W. CHANG, Guest Editor

*National Chung Cheng University
Minxiong, Taiwan*

JAFAR ADABI, Guest Editor

*Babol Noshirvani University of Technology
Babol, Iran*

FIRUZ ZARE (S'98–M'01–SM'06) received the Ph.D. degree in power electronics from the Queensland University of Technology, Australia, in 2002. He has spent several years in industry as a Team Leader working on power electronics and power quality projects. He is currently an Academic Staff with The University of Queensland, Australia, and a Task Force Leader of Active Infeed Converters within the Working Group one at the IEC standardization TC77A. He has published over 180 journals and conference articles and technical reports in the area of power electronics. His main research interests include power electronics topology, control and applications, renewable energy systems, and pulsed power applications. He received several awards, such as an Australian Future Fellowship, a Symposium Fellowship from the Australian Academy of Technological Science, the Early Career Academic Excellence Research Award, and the John Madsen Medal from Engineers Australia. He is the Editor-in-Chief of the *International Journal of Power Electronics* and an Associate Editor of the IEEE ACCESS.

FREDE BLAABJERG (S'86–M'88–SM'97–F'03) received the Ph.D. degree from Aalborg University, Aalborg, Denmark, in 1992. He was with ABB-Scandia, Randers, Denmark, from 1987 to 1988. He became an Assistant Professor, in 1992, an Associate Professor, in 1996, and a Full Professor of power electronics and drives, in 1998, with Aalborg University. His current research interests include power electronics and its applications such as in wind turbines, PV systems, reliability, harmonics, and adjustable speed drives. He received 17 IEEE Prize Paper Awards, the IEEE PELS Distinguished Service Award, in 2009, the EPE-PEMC Council Award, in 2010, the IEEE William E. Newell Power Electronics Award, in 2014, and the Villum Kann Rasmussen Research Award, in 2014. He was the Editor-in-Chief of the IEEE TRANSACTIONS ON POWER ELECTRONICS, from 2006 to 2012. He was nominated in 2014 and 2015 by Thomson Reuters to be between the most 250 cited researchers in Engineering in the world.

POOYA DAVARI (S'11–M'13) received the B.Sc. and M.Sc. degrees in electronic engineering from the University of Mazandaran (Noshirvani), Babol, Iran, in 2004 and 2008, respectively, and the Ph.D. degree in power electronics from the Queensland University of Technology (QUT), Brisbane, Australia, in 2013.

From 2005 to 2010, he was involved in several electronics and power electronics projects as a Development Engineer. From 2010 to 2014, he designed and developed high-power, high-voltage power electronic systems for multidisciplinary projects, such as ultrasound application, exhaust gas emission reduction, and tissue-materials sterilization. From 2013 to 2014, he was with QUT as a Lecturer. He joined the Department of Energy Technology, Aalborg University, Aalborg, Denmark, as a Post-Doctoral Researcher, in August 2014, where he is currently an Assistant Professor. His current research interests include active front-end rectifiers, harmonic mitigation in adjustable-speed drives, electromagnetic interference (EMI) in power electronics, high power density power electronics, and pulsed power applications. He received a Research Grant from the Danish Council of Independent Research (DFF-FTP), in 2015. He is an Editor with the *International Journal of Power Electronics*.

GARY W. CHANG received the Diploma degree in electrical engineering from the National Taipei Institute of Technology, Taiwan, in 1982, the M.S.E.E. degree from National Tsing Hua University, Taiwan, in 1988, and the Ph.D. degree from The University of Texas at Austin, in 1994.

From 1994 to 1995, he was a Consultant in CA, USA, and involved in an EPRI Power Quality and a PG&E Distribution Automation project. He was with Siemens Power Transmission & Distribution, LLC, Minnesota, USA, from 1995 to 1998, and was in charge of resource scheduling functions of EMS/SCADA projects for electric utilities worldwide. He joined the Department of Electrical Engineering, National Chung Cheng University, in August 1998, and became a Full Professor, in 2005. He has published numerous refereed archival journal and international conference articles, as well as technical reports and a textbook *Power System Analysis* (McGraw Hill Education, 2016), mainly in the fields of electric power engineering. His research interests include power systems optimization, power quality, renewable energy, and smart grid.

Dr. Chang is an IEEE Fellow and a registered Professional Engineer in the state of Minnesota, USA. He is the past Chair of the IEEE PES Taipei Chapter and a Co-Founder of the Taiwan Smart Grid Industry Association. He is currently the Chair of the IEEE PES Power Quality Subcommittee and the Secretary of the IEEE PES Transmission and Distribution Committee. He serves as an Associate Editor for the IEEE TRANSACTIONS ON POWER DELIVERY and the IEEE POWER ENGINEERING LETTERS.

JAFAR ADABI was born in 1981. He received the B.Eng. and M.Eng. degrees in electrical engineering from Mazandaran University, Babol, Iran, in 2004 and 2006, respectively, and the Ph.D. degree from the School of Engineering Systems, Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, QLD, Australia, in 2010. He is currently an Assistant Professor with the Babol Noshirvani University of Technology, Babol. His research interests include the optimal design and high-frequency modeling of power electronics and motor drive systems for EMI analysis.

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