DESIGN OF A CLASS-E INVERTER FOR PIEZOELECTRIC ULTRASOUND GENERATION AGAINST LOAD VARIATION

Hai-li LIU and Jun-rui LIANG*
School of Information Science and Technology, ShanghaiTech University, Shanghai 200031, China
* Corresponding author, E-mail: liangjr@shanghaitech.edu.cn

Piezoelectric transducers are used for generating ultrasound around their resonant frequencies. Single-ended class-E resonant inverter has a simple configuration and high conversion efficiency; therefore, was investigated for driving piezoelectric transducer for ultrasound generation. However, both piezoelectric transducer and class-E circuit are sensitive to load variation. This paper studies the susceptibility of output power and conversion efficiency of a class-E based piezoelectric ultrasound generator under different load conditions. By using the iteration-free extended impedance method, the integration of class-E inverter and piezoelectric transducer can be efficiently analyzed; parameters can be properly designed and optimized. An in-situ adapting approach, which tunes the duty ratio and dc supply voltage for maximizing the conversion efficiency at constant output power against load variation, is investigated. Simulation results show that, by taking this parameter tuning, the susceptibility of output power and conversion efficiency can be alleviated within a wide range of load.

Keywords: Piezoelectric transducer; Ultrasonic generation; Class-E power amplifier; Extended impedance method

1. INTRODUCTION

Piezoelectric ceramic transducers (PCT) are widely used in ultrasonic machining, such as ultrasonic cleaning, grinding, and welding. For efficient generation of ultrasound, a PCT is usually driven at one of its mechanical resonant frequencies [1-2]. Single-ended class-E resonant inverter, which is also known as class-E power amplifier (PA), has a simple configuration and high efficiency for converting dc power into ac for high frequency applications [1-3]. These remarkable features make it attractive towards low-cost and light-weight ultrasonic solutions [4]. However, the operation of class-E inverter is sensitive to load variation. Working slightly away from the optimal class-E condition, i.e., zero-voltage switching (ZVS) and zero-derivative switching (ZDS), might cause a large drop in its conversion efficiency [3, 5-6]. Yet, because of the differences and changes of density, geometry, position, temperature, etc., of the workpieces [6], it was shown that load variation might happen from time to time in ultrasonic machining. The load variation problem should be better evaluated and diminished before the class-E inverter can be substantially used for high efficient piezoelectric ultrasound generation (PUG).

This paper studies the susceptibility of output power and conversion efficiency under different load conditions in a piezoelectric ultrasound generator, which is driven by a class-E inverter circuit. Simulation and optimization are carried out based on the iteration-free extended impedance method [7]. When the device is subjected to load variation, possible in-situ tuning mechanism is studied towards a robust and efficient piezoelectric ultrasound generation.

2. MODEL

A PCT can be modeled as an impedance network which consists of two parallel branches: one is a series-connected RLC and the other is a capacitor [4-6]. The equivalent circuit can be integrated into the classical class-E inverter for comprehensive investigation.

As shown in Figure 1, the topology of a single ended class-E inverter for PUG consists of six components: two capacitors $C_S$ and $C_1$; two inductors $L_0$ and $L_1$; a PCT loading and an active switch $sw$. When PCT works as an ultrasound generator, it operates at one of its resonant frequencies, and thus its equivalent circuits can be simplified as shown in Figure 2. Assuming the capacitors and inductors are ideal, only the switch $sw$ and the load $R_m$ consume real power. Since the power converting efficiency $\eta$ of a class-E inverter is the ratio of the average power consumed by $R_m$ over that supplied by the dc source, $\eta$ can be increased by minimizing the power consumption of $sw$. The class-E condition, i.e. zero-voltage switching (ZVS) and zero-derivative switching (ZDS), can make sure that high voltage and high current do not appear at the same time. Thus, the single ended class-E inverter can achieve high...
converting efficiency.

\[ Z_{SW} = \begin{bmatrix} R_{sw,0} & \cdots & R_{sw,K} & \cdots & R_{sw,2K} \\ \vdots & \ddots & \vdots & \ddots & \vdots \\ R_{sw,K} & \cdots & R_{sw,0} & \cdots & \vdots \\ \vdots & \ddots & \vdots & \ddots & \vdots \\ R_{sw,2K} & \cdots & R_{sw,K} & \cdots & R_{sw,0} \end{bmatrix} , \quad (9) \]

where

\[ R_{sw,k} = \begin{cases} R_{on}D + R_{off}(1-D), & k = 0, \\ \frac{\sin(k\pi D)}{k\pi} e^{-j\pi D}, & k = -2K, \ldots, -1, \ldots, 2K. \end{cases} \quad (10) \]

In (10), \( R_{on} \) and \( R_{off} \) are the resistance of the switch \( sw \) at on and off states, respectively; \( D \) is the duty cycle of the square wave driving signal; \( K \) is the order of the Fourier series. According to the extended impedance method, the total impedance of the class-E driving circuit is given by

\[ Z_{\text{Class-E}} = Z_{L0} + Z_{SW} \left[ Z_{C_p} \left( Z_{L1} + Z_{C1} + Z_{R_{eq}} + Z_{C_{eq}} \right) \right] . \quad (11) \]

Writing other parameters in \( 2K+1 \) order vectors, the vector expression of the class-E characteristic voltage \( V_{SW} \) in frequency domain is given by

\[ V_{SW} = \left[ Z_{SW} \left( Z_{C_p} \left( Z_{L1} + Z_{C1} + Z_{R_{eq}} + Z_{C_{eq}} \right) \right) \right] Z_{\text{Class-E}}^{-1} V_{DC} . \quad (12) \]

Based on the extended impedance method, the input power, output power, and energy conversion efficiency can also be derived by using conventional circuit laws [7].

3. DESIGN

The circuit parameters of \( C_p, C_1, L_0, L_1, R_{on} \) and \( R_{off} \) are passive. Their values cannot be changed once the circuit is fabricated. While the others, such as \( D, V_{DC} \) and \( f_0 \) are in-situ tunable. For the parameters of a piezoelectric transducer, i.e. \( R_m, C_m, \) and \( L_m \), they may vary at different working conditions. In this situation, the tunable parameters of the class-E inverter can be used to deliver a self-adjustment, in order to maintain an optimal performance against the parameter variation, which is caused by the condition change of a workpiece.

Taking a 42-W ultrasound cleaner [4] as a design case, the design procedures for the class-E driving circuit include four steps:

a) Select the switch and PCT. The same PCT characteristics mentioned in [4], whose equivalent parameters are listed in Table 1, are used in this study. According to (3) and (6) in [2], the rated voltage of the switch can be determined. Then a proper type of electronic switch can be selected according to this rating. The parameters of \( R_{on} \) and \( R_{off} \) can be obtained according to the component datasheet, as listed in Table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1. Equivalent parameters of a piezoelectric transducer.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>( C_p (\text{nF}) )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.6</td>
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</tbody>
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Table 2. Parameters of class-E power amplifier for driving PCT.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parameter (unit)</th>
<th>Initial Passively Optimized</th>
<th>Actively Tuned I</th>
<th>Actively Tuned II</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$V_{DC}$ (V)</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>184.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$f_0$ (kHz)</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$D$ (%)</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>53.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$R_{on}$ (Ω)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$R_{off}$ (kΩ)</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$L_0$ (mH)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$C_1$ (nF)</td>
<td>4.37</td>
<td>5.47</td>
<td>5.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$L_1$ (mH)</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$C_S$ (nF)</td>
<td>4.37</td>
<td>5.47</td>
<td>5.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$R_m$ (Ω)</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other parameters including $C_p$, $L_m$, and $C_m$ maintain the same values as those given in Table 1 throughout the design procedures.

b) Calculate the tunable parameters. $V_{DC}$ can be calculated from (3) and (6) in [2]; $D$ can be 50% to leave enough tuning margin; $f_0$ can be set to the resonant frequency of the PCT.

c) Determine the passive parameters. $C_1$, $C_S$, and $L_0$ can be determined according to (8)-(10) in [2]. $L_1$ can be determined by

$$L_1 = Q R_m / 2 \pi f_0,$$

where $Q$ is the quality factor of the load network. In this study, $Q$ is selected to be 7. Since $L_0$ is used as a choke inductor, a smaller value, say 10 mH, is preferred for further reducing its geometric size. All initial parameters are obtained and listed in Table 2. The initial parameter set is simulated using the extended impedance method. The results show that the conversion efficiency reaches up to 95.6%; while the output power is 45.6-W, which is a little bit higher than the targeted power.

d) Optimize the passive parameters. Here, $C_1$, $C_S$, and $L_0$ are selected as the free variables for optimization. In real application, the output power is usually required to be a constant value $P_0$. Thus, the optimization problem is expressed as follows

$$\max_{C_1, C_S} \eta, \quad \text{s.t. } \bar{P}_{out} = P_0,$$

where $\bar{P}_{out}$ is the average power consumed by $R_m$. The optimized parameters are listed in the third column of Table 2. Compared to the results obtained with the initial parameters, the efficiency increases a little bit to 96.2%; while the output power attains the targeted 42-W. The waveforms before and after the passive optimization are shown in Figure 4. The class-E circuit approaches the nominal condition after the passive optimization.

Figure 4. Characteristic waveform of class-E based PUG before and after passive optimization.

4. TUNING AGAINST LOAD VARIATION

In practical applications, the load resistance $R_m$ may vary within a certain range [6]. We can provide an in-situ tuning for the active parameters, in order to track the maximum efficiency point. The active tuning problem can be expressed as follows

$$\max_{f_0} \eta, \quad \text{s.t. } \bar{P}_{out} = P_0, f_0 = f_0,$$

In (16), the driving frequency $f_0$ is used to trace the operating frequency of the PCT $f_r$. In practice, $f_r$ might only shift slightly [6], therefore, the variation of $R_m$ is taken as the major variation in our study. Table 2 lists two sets of actively tuned parameters under two different changes of normalized $R_m$, i.e., 0.4 and 2.

Figure 5 shows the susceptibility of the class-E inverter when it is subjected to the variation of $R_m$. As illustrated by the dash line in Figure 5(a), the efficiency decreases when the normalized $R_m$ deviates from unity. The working efficiency is lowered because of the violation of ZVS condition for the class-E inverter, as shown by the dash line and the dash-dot line in Figure 5(c). On the other hand, the output power increases monotonically as the normalized $R_m$ increases. The output power will shift from the targeted power when $R_m$ varies. Some intervene must takes place for maintaining the output power level, and at the same time, counteracting the drop of conversion efficiency.

According to the objective set by (16), the active parameters, i.e., duty ratio $D$ and supply voltage $V_{DC}$, are tuned for maintaining the highest efficiency at constant
output power. The dash-dot line and the solid line in Figure 5(a) show the efficiency and the output power of the class-E inverter, respectively, after the active parameters are tuned. It is shown that the power converting efficiency of the class-E inverter can significantly enhanced when the normalized $R_m$ is smaller than unity. As we can observe from the solid line in Figure 5 (c), the characteristic waveforms resume its ZVS condition after the tuning. When the normalized $R$ is greater than 1, the class-E nominal conditions cannot be achieved by tuning these two active parameters. As shown by the dot line in Figure 5(c), only ZDS condition can be achieved. Thus the efficiency can only be improved by a small amount. Figure 5 (b) shows the tuned values of $D$ and $V_{DC}$ versus the load conditions.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the efficient iteration-free extended impedance method, this paper has investigated the power and conversion efficiency of a class-E based piezoelectric ultrasound generator (PUG), when it is subjected to load variation. Simulation results show that the conversion efficiency decreases when the load resistance deviates from its initial design value; on the other hand, the output power increases along with this load resistance. Given the importance of power control and efficiency optimization in PUG, an active tuning method has been proposed and studied by adjusting two in-situ tunable parameters, i.e., the duty ratio and supply voltage, in order to counteract the load variation in PUG.

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REFERENCES