Experimental investigation of bidirectional series resonant DC-DC converter in different operating modes

Angel Lichev, Yasen Madankov, Vasil Mihov
Department of Electrical Engineering and Electronics, Faculty of Technical, University of Food Technologies, Plovdiv, Bulgaria

ABSTRACT
This paper presents a study of bidirectional series resonant DC/DC converter. The main operating modes of the converter with phase-shift control technique are observed. An experimental survey with a laboratory model of such type of converter working over the resonant frequency is made. The functionality of the studied device operating in a wide area of loading is demonstrated with waveforms of the main parameters. The conducted measurements are used to build the experimental output characteristics of the converter. A similarity of the experimental results with the theoretical are denoted, and the ability to achieve current source characteristics for the whole range of loading is proven. The possibility of the studied converter for operation both in forward and reverse modes of energy flow is proved, which positions the device as an appropriate variant for implementation in the storage system control area.

Keywords:
Bidirectional energy flow
Phase-shift control
Resonant DC-DC converter
Soft commutation
ZVS

1. INTRODUCTION
The 2030 agenda for sustainable development, in particular goal 7, requires all member states of the United Nations to implement programs that stimulate the expansion of renewable energy sources. That is one of the reasons why the investment in green power has grown in the past few years [1]–[4]. Nevertheless, in rural areas where direct access to the power grid is not common, renewable energy could be one of the suitable solutions. A considerable shortcoming, in this case, is production intermittency, which is particularly marked in photovoltaic (PV) and wind power plants [5], [6].

Therefore, hybrid power generation systems become more common [7]–[11]. To increase the system efficiency, battery storage technologies are implemented [12]. In such a way, during an energy production peak, the surplus of energy could be stored, and when the generation becomes lower than the consumption this energy could be reverse feeding into the main supply. Wherever necessary, the shortfall in energy could be compensated by the batteries. Obviously, in this case, a bidirectional transfer of the power is required.

The current of the batteries has to be controlled during the charging (discharging) process [13]. Exceeding it reduces the battery life and could cause accidents. Therefore, power converters must ensure smooth control of the output current value. A good solution, in this case, is the bidirectional resonant converters [14]–[18]. It is well known that resonant circuit ensures soft commutation capability, thus improving its efficiency and the efficiency of the whole system [19]–[22].

Lichev [23] presented a study of inductor-capacitor or LC bidirectional series resonant DC-DC converter. Unlike inductor-inductor-capacitor or LLC converters [24], [25] the resonant tank circuit consists of only two reactive elements. This creates an opportunity for converter size optimization, which leads to
weight and cost reduction. Furthermore, the studied topology provides bidirectional energy transfer and enables a soft commutation operation. This makes bidirectional series resonant DC-DC converters a proper solution for battery charging applications.

The results from the theoretical study in [23] show that the analysed converter operates with no limitations in zero voltage switching (ZVS) irrespective of the control parameter value. The characteristics of the converter are like those of a perfect current source. The value of the output voltage is greater than that of the input voltage. This paper expands the research of the converter supplementing experimental examinations and achieving results that approve the functionality of the design.

2. CONVERTER ANALYSIS

The circuit diagram of the studied converter as seen in Figure 1, is composed of two fully controlled inverter-rectifier semiconductor H-bridges. Each of them is composed of four transistors with reverse diodes, as well as snubber capacitors for reduction of the commutation losses. The energy transmission is through the serial resonant tank, inductor \( L_r \) and capacitor \( C_r \).

The advantages of high-frequency operation are well known. Possible converter operating modes when working over the resonant frequency are explored in detail in [23]. The energy flow could be in a forward direction (from \( U_d \) to \( U_0 \)), as well as in a reverse direction (from \( U_0 \) to \( U_d \)), depending on the value of the selected control parameter. These circuit characteristics give the opportunities for the realization of reversible supply device which can achieve smoothly energy flow direction change. Depending on flow direction each of the H-bridge stages could operate either as an inverter or as a rectifier. Conditionally is assumed that the left side of the circuit is an input stage with input parameters \( U_d \) and \( i_d \), and the right one is output – \( U_0 \) is defined as an output voltage, \( i_0 \) – output current.

Waveforms of the main electrical parameters of the converter are shown in Figures 2 and 3. The inductor current is denoted with \( i_L \), the resonant capacitor voltage – with \( u_{C_r} \), and the voltages on the input and output side of the LC circuit – with \( u_{AB} \) and \( u_{CD} \). During the forward operation mode, the input semiconductor H-bridge is supplied with the DC voltage \( U_d \) and the average value of currents \( i_d \) and \( i_0 \) are in the “forward” direction. So, \( i_d \) flows from supply \( U_d \), through the input bridge which works as an inverter, to the resonant circuit. The output current \( i_0 \) direction is through the output bridge (rectifier) to the load. Vice versa, in reverse mode the output stage behaves like an inverter which supplies a resonant tank from voltage \( U_0 \) and current \( i_0 \), and the input stage – as a rectifier, feeding back energy to supply. The two-way energy transmission in each of the mentioned modes is achieved via reverse diodes \( D_1-D_8 \).

The current through the inductor \( i_L \) lags from the input H-bridge’s voltage \( u_{AB} \) at angle \( \phi \) because the operating frequency is greater than the resonant frequency. This is the time for conducting of the input transistors \( S_7-S_8 \), Transistors of the output stage \( S_1-S_6 \) begin to conduct every time when \( i_L \) reaches zero value. This way they operate in soft commutation mode. Output transistors are active up to the moment of \( u_{CD} \) polarity change.

Semiconductor elements of the output H-bridge switch after a time corresponding to the angle \( \delta \). In this way, controlling the phase shift between \( u_{AB} \) and \( u_{CD} \), the power control is realized. According to the studies made in [23], this method is concluded as an optimal for control. A phase plane method for analyzing the process in the converter is proposed in [23], where the following assumptions are made to accomplish simplification of the mathematical equations: i) It is assumed that all elements of the converter circuit are ideal; ii) The impact of the \( (C_1 – C_3) \) snubbers is neglected; and iii) Pulsations of \( U_d \) and \( U_0 \) voltages are neglected, so the voltages of the two inverter bridges – \( u_{AB} \) and \( u_{CD} \), are ideal square waves.
According to these assumptions, the resonant tank frequency, the characteristic impedance and the ratio of the frequencies could be obtained as (1)-(3):

$$f_0 = \frac{1}{2\pi\sqrt{LC}} \quad (1)$$

$$Z_0 = \sqrt{\frac{L}{C}} \quad (2)$$

$$\nu = \frac{f_S}{f_0} \quad (3)$$

In order to achieve more generalized results from the analysis all parameters are normalized – voltages relative to $U_d$, and the current to $U_d/Z_0$. The control range of the converter (angle $\delta$) is limited to the interval from 90° to 270° because in these borders it has a possibility for operation in the whole loading area without violating the soft commutation conditions. The output characteristics of such kind of converter with the relevant control method are presented in Figure 4. They are achieved at normalized frequency $\nu = 1.15$. The output characteristics show that the converter operates as a perfect current source.

3. EXPERIMENTAL RESULTS

Using the methodology described in research [23], a series resonant DC-DC converter with the relevant nominal parameters is designed: output power – $P_{0\text{N}} = 200$ W; input voltage – $U_{d\text{N}} = 100$ V; output voltage – $U_{0\text{N}} = 100$ V; switching frequency – $f_{SN} = 50$ kHz; normalized frequency – $\nu_N = 1.15$. Values $L_r = 531.8 \, \mu\text{H}; C_r = 25.36 \, \text{nF}$ are calculated for resonant tank parameters. Figure 5 shows a fully functional model of the designed converter. The commutation of the power switches is based on a microcontroller ZF083 A, which provides 3.5 V square wave control pulses that are phase shifted on angle $\delta$. Since the 3.5 V magnitude is not high enough, the signal is amplified to 15 V, then applied to ZVS drivers and the two H-bridge stages. The input and output voltages and currents are measured by digital multimeters. Regarding the data received, the output characteristics of the converter are built.

Studies with different values of the supply voltage $U_d$ from the battery block have been conducted. In order to cover the work of the converter in the whole area of the output characteristics a battery block is also attached on the load side. This gives the opportunity to study the operating modes, as well as the work of the

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converter in buck and boost modes. Different operating frequencies in the range \( f_S = 46 \pm 59 \) kHz have been tested. The main part of the accomplished results is at a frequency which is close to the designed \( f_S = 50 \) kHz (\( \nu_N = 1.154 \)).

Figure 5. A laboratory model of the DC/DC converter

3.1. Waveforms of the converter

Waveforms showing the work of the converter at a settled regime are demonstrated in Figure 6. Both of the figures show the square wave voltage \( u_{AB} \) at the input bridge output and the current through the resonant inverter \( i_L \). Figure 6(a) demonstrates the forward mode at phase shift angle \( \delta = 90^\circ \), and Figure 6(b) at maximal power feed-back from “load” to supply (\( \delta = 270^\circ \)).

![Figure 6. Waveforms of voltage \( u_{AB} \) and \( i_L \) at (a) forward mode and (b) reverse mode](image)

Figure 7 demonstrates the voltages on both sides of the resonant tank (\( u_{AB} \) and \( u_{CD} \)) in boost mode Figure 7(a) and in buck mode of the converter Figure 7(b). In this figure, the current through one diagonal of the input H-bridge’s transistors is also shown. From these waveforms, the conducting periods of the input stage power switches are distinctly visible. The two figures are also in the two modes of operation – forward and reverse with the same controlling angles \( \delta \).

Waveforms of the resonant current \( i_L \) at different operating frequencies (\( f_S = (46, 50, 59) \) kHz) are shown in Figure 8(a). They are taken in forward mode at \( \delta = 90^\circ \). It is known that for such kind of converter at frequencies closer to the resonant one, higher energy transfer can be obtained. From the illustration can be noted that the current rises significantly for lower frequencies and with that the delivered power. Figure 8(b) demonstrates the soft commutation during the process of a transistor switch-on.
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4. CONCLUSION

The presented study describes the operating modes of bidirectional series resonant DC-DC converter. A laboratory model of the converter is designed and developed. Series of experimental investigations which demonstrate its functionality for the whole range of the expected working area have been conducted. The results have proven the ability of such resonant converter controlled with the described phase-shift method to work in both operating modes – forward and reverse, as well as in buck and boost regimes. The experimental output characteristics are obtained and similarity with the theoretical characteristics is demonstrated. The possibility to reverse the direction of the energy from the supply to the load and vice versa makes the converter suitable for implementation in the vast growing area of electrical storage systems. The specific characteristics, similar to an ideal current source and the opportunity for smooth control of the power flow magnitude and direction place the converter in a good position as a battery charging module.

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REFERENCES


Table 1. Experimental measurements of the resonant DC/DC converter

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We can be contacted at email v_mihov@uft.plovdiv.bg.

Angel Lichev works as an assistant professor in the Electrical Engineering Department at the UFT – Plovdiv, Bulgaria. He received his B.Eng. degree in PU “Paisii Hilendarski” in 2007 and his M.Eng. and Ph.D. degrees in electrical engineering from The UFT – Plovdiv, in 2015 and 2018, respectively. Throughout his qualifying, he also works in the sphere of energetics and electrical installation. Apart from the university activities, he is engaged in several projects relating to the practical training of young graduates in the area of electrical engineering and electronics. He works in the field of power converters, control systems, and green energy systems. He can be contacted at email: a_lichev@ufp.plovdiv.bg.

Yasen Madankov works as an assistant professor in EE Department at the University of Food Technologies – Plovdiv, Bulgaria. He received his B.Eng. and M.Eng. degrees in automation engineering from TU – Sofia (Branch Plovdiv), Bulgaria in 2007 and 2009, respectively. While working in the hardware and software development area he finished his Ph.D. study in Industrial Electronics in University of Food Technologies – Plovdiv in 2018. Aside from the university activities he manages projects in renewable energy sources area and especially the PV sector. He works in the field of photovoltaic systems, renewable energy, storage solutions, and electrical engineering and embedded systems. He can be contacted at email: y_madankov@ufp.plovdiv.bg.

Vasil Mihov is a lecturer in EE Department at the University of Food Technologies – Plovdiv, Bulgaria. His B.Eng. and the M.Eng. degrees in electronics are received, both from TU - Sofia (Branch Plovdiv), in 2003 and 2005, and Ph.D. degree in industrial electronics in 2011. He spent ten years working in several companies, including BTL Industries Ltd. and Elit 95 Ltd. where he participated in various projects related to manufacturing, maintenance and customer support. He returned to the scientific work in 2021 and became an assistant professor in 2022. He works in the field of power electronics, electric drives and alternative energy systems. He can be contacted at email: v_mihov@ufp.plovdiv.bg.