

Bus-clamped PWM Techniques for AC Drives - Application Considerations

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ABSTRACT :

Different PWM techniques are used in Voltage Source Inverter fed induction motor drives for the generation of Variable Voltage Variable Frequency 3-phase AC. There is a class of PWM techniques where every phase remains clamped for a duration of 60° in every half cycle with only the other two phases switching during the said duration. The 60° clamping duration can be anywhere within the middle 120° of the given half cycle. The clamping duration can be divided over smaller intervals also. Such techniques are called 'bus-clamped PWM techniques'. This paper shows that these PWM techniques can be used to reduce one or more of the following :

1. Switching frequency and switching losses
2. Total Harmonic Distortion (THD) of the motor current
3. Computational burden.

Different issues dominate depending on the power rating of the drive. This paper shows that a judicious use of bus-clamping leads to the mitigation of the problem that is dominant. This means an improvement in the drive performance, efficiency, or size, or a combination thereof.

1. Introduction :

Voltage Source Inverter fed induction motor drives are widely used as variable speed drives. Different PWM techniques can be employed in such drives [1-12]. Sine-triangle PWM (SPWM) is a well-known and widely used PWM technique [1]. Conventional space vector PWM (CSVPWM) is another popular technique [2]. This technique has a higher DC bus utilisation and results in lesser harmonic distortion than sine-triangle PWM especially at higher modulation indices. In both these conventional techniques, every phase switches once in every half carrier cycle or sampling period. However, there are numerous PWM techniques, where every phase remains clamped for a duration of 60° in every half cycle. These are called "bus-clamped PWM techniques" [3-12].

The choice of the PWM technique has a direct bearing on the distortion in the motor current, torque pulsation, inverter losses, efficiency of the drive etc. Depending on the power level, device technology and the specific application, the dominant issue is different. This paper studies the use of bus-clamped PWM techniques instead of or in conjunction with the conventional techniques to handle the issue that is dominant in the given case.

The ratio of the switching frequency to the fundamental frequency is a major constraint in the design or selection of PWM techniques. Depending on the power level and the device used, the switching frequency can be as low as 5 times the fundamental frequency or as high as several 100 times the fundamental frequency. The study on bus-clamped techniques is carried out over this wide range of switching frequencies. One can consider switching frequencies greater than or equal to 21 times the fundamental frequency as high switching frequencies, and those less than 21 times the fundamental frequency as low switching frequencies. The advantages of the bus-clamped PWM techniques at both high as well as low switching frequencies are brought out in this paper.

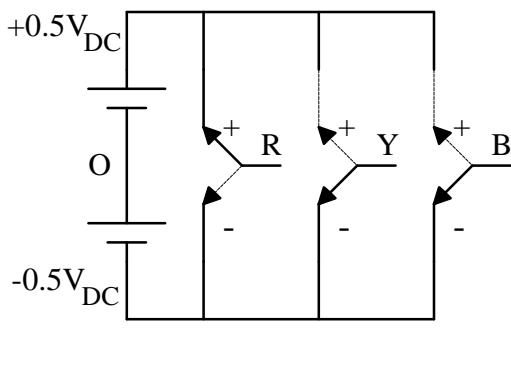


Fig.1a Voltage Source Inverter

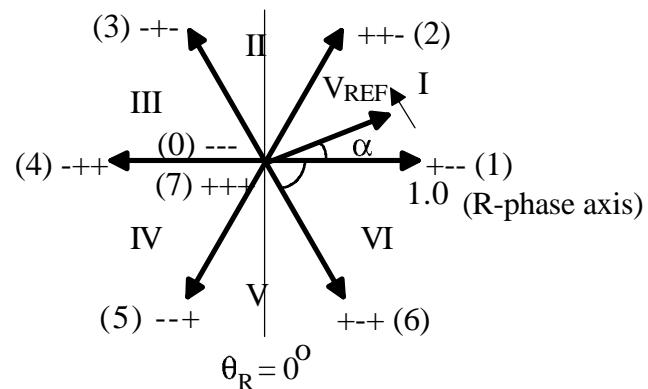


Fig.1b Voltage vectors produced by inverter
 θ_R = Angle of R-phase fundamental voltage
 I, II, III, IV, V and VI : Sectors

2. Bus-clamped PWM :

There are two popular approaches to real-time PWM, namely the triangle-comparison approach and space vector approach. In the triangle-comparison approach, the 3-phase PWM waveforms are generated by comparing suitable 3-phase modulating waves against triangular carriers as in sine-triangle PWM. A voltage source inverter and the voltage vectors produced by it are shown in Figs.1a and 1b

respectively. In the space vector approach, the reference is provided as a revolving space vector as shown in Fig.1b. The reference is sampled once in every subcycle (T_s), and an average vector equal to the sampled reference vector is generated over the given subcycle by time-averaging of the different vectors produced by the inverter. Bus-clamped PWM generation is possible with both the approaches.

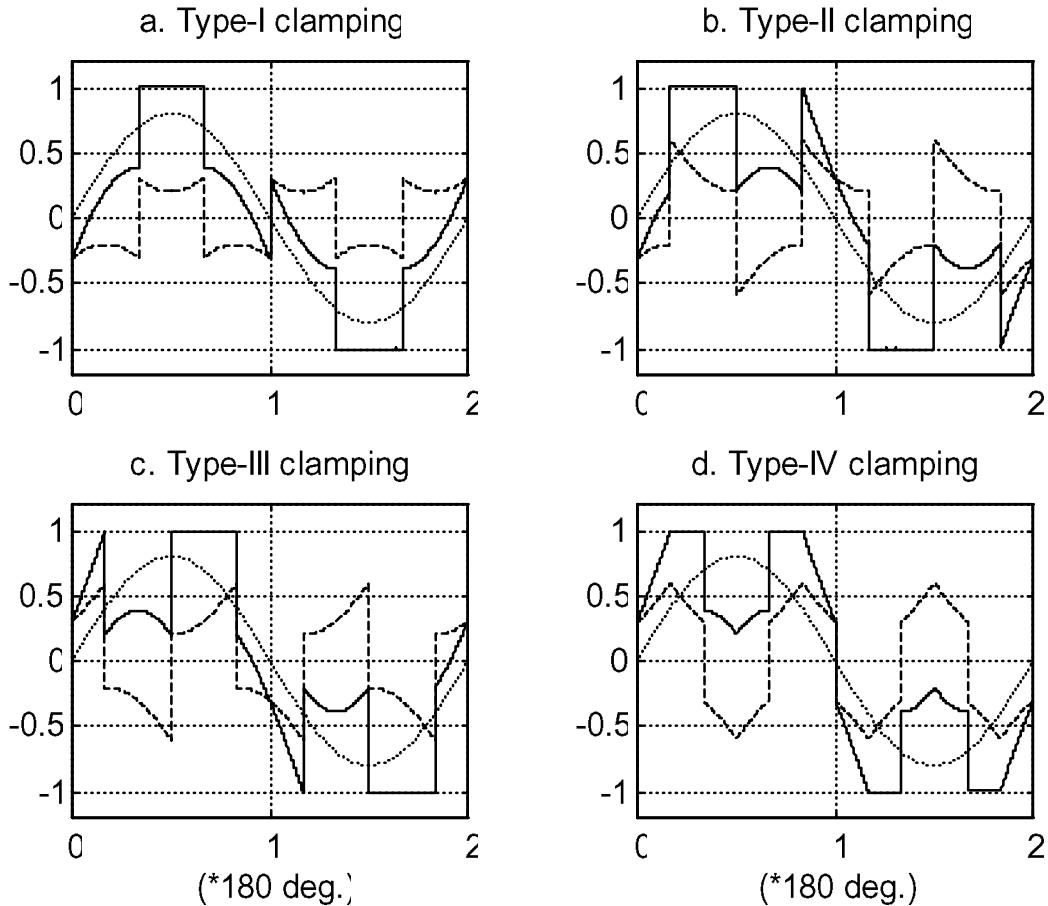


Fig.2 Modulating waves corresponding to different types of clamping

While using the triangle-comparison approach, the modulating waves corresponding to four types of clamping are as shown in Figs.1a - 1d respectively. In Type-I clamping, every phase remains clamped during the middle 60° duration of every half cycle, i.e. between 60° and 120° in the positive half cycle, and between 240° and 300° in the negative half cycle as shown in Fig.2a. In Type-II, the clamping is between 30° and 90° in the positive half cycle, and between 210° and 270° in the negative half cycle as shown in Fig.2b. In Type-III, the clamping is done between 90° and 150° in the positive half cycle, and between 270° and 330° in the negative half cycle as in Fig.2c. In Type-IV, every phase is clamped during the middle 30°

of every quarter cycle of its fundamental voltage as shown in Fig.2d. These modulating waves can be generated by adding suitable zero-sequence triplen frequency components to the 3-phase sinusoidal waves. The zero-sequence component required can be obtained from the 3-phase sinusoids themselves as can be seen from Fig.1. Comparison of such 3-phase modulating waves against a common triangular carrier gives the PWM patterns required.

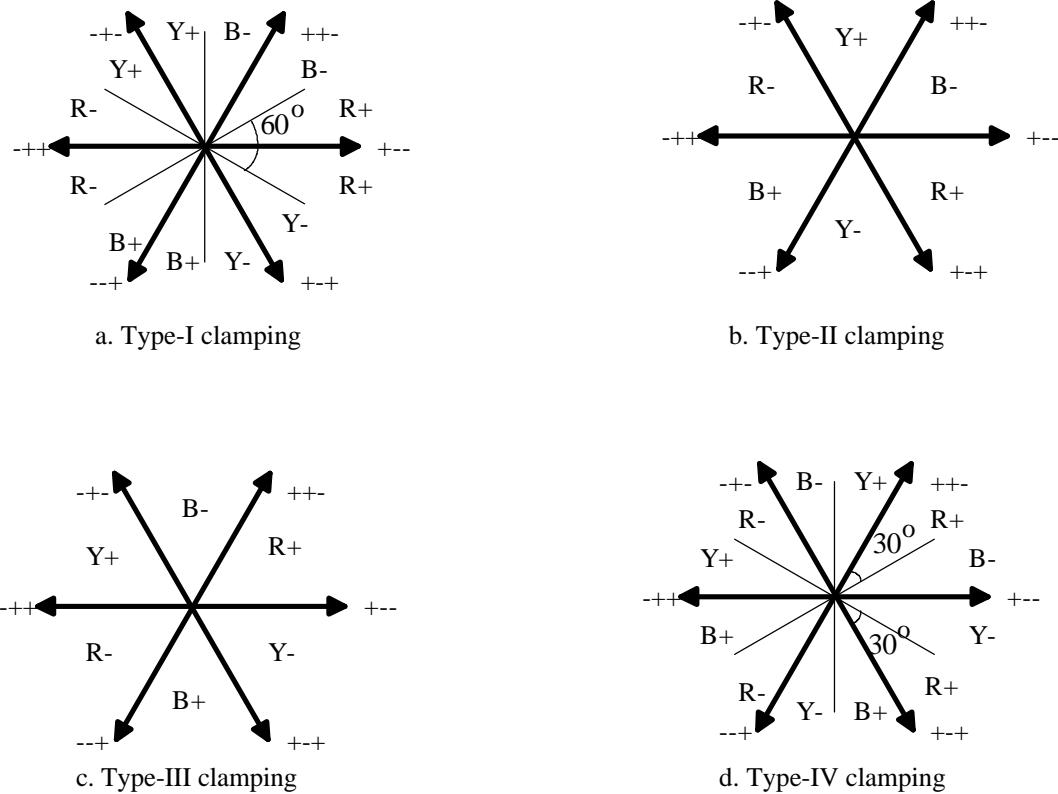


Fig.3 Different types of clamping in the space vector domain

In space vector approach, given a sample of the reference vector of magnitude V_{REF} and angle α in sector I as shown in Fig.1b, the durations for which the different states must be applied are calculated as in Eq.(1).

$$T_1 = V_{REF} \sin(60^\circ - \alpha) / \sin(60^\circ), \quad T_2 = V_{REF} \sin(\alpha) / \sin(60^\circ), \quad T_Z = T_S - T_1 - T_2 \quad \dots (1)$$

In conventional space vector modulation, the duration T_Z is equally divided between the two zero states and both of them are used. For a sample in sector I, sequence 0127 or 7210 is used. With such a sequence every phase switches once in every subcycle. Such sequences are termed as 'conventional sequences'. Alternatively, switching sequence 012, 210, 721 or 127 may also be used. In these sequences, only two

phases switch within the given subcycle and the third remains clamped to one of the DC buses. If the zero state --- (0) is avoided, then R-phase remains clamped to the positive bus. If the zero state +++) (7) is avoided, then the B-phase remains clamped to the negative bus. Such sequences can be termed as 'clamping sequences'.

In bus-clamped PWM techniques, clamping sequences using only one zero state are used to generate the samples. The zero state used is changed once in every sector as shown in Fig.3. It is changed in the middle of the sector in Type-I and Type-IV schemes. The zero state used between the centre of sector VI and that of sector I is +++) (7) in Type-I, while it is --- (0) in Type-IV. The zero state is changed at the sector boundaries in Type-II and Type-III.

3. High switching frequency :

The usefulness of bus-clamped PWM techniques at high switching frequencies is studied in this section.

3.1 Switching frequency and switching losses :

For a given carrier frequency or sampling frequency, reduction in switching frequency is the most obvious of the benefits of using bus-clamped PWM techniques. As shown in Figs.2 and 3, every phase remains clamped for 120° in every fundamental cycle. Hence, the average switching frequency reduces to two thirds the carrier frequency with any such technique at fairly high switching frequencies. This implies a reduction of 33% approximately in the switching losses as well.

The energy loss per switching cycle is the highest around the peak of the fundamental motor current. If every phase remains clamped around the peak of its fundamental current, then the savings in switching losses is still higher. In case of motor drives, the fundamental current normally lags behind the fundamental voltage. In such cases clamping between 90° and 150° , i.e. Type-III, would be beneficial. Approximately 50% reduction in the switching losses is achieved by this [8]. Further reduction in switching losses is possible if the clamping duration can be positioned exactly around the peak of the fundamental current by sensing the fundamental power factor angle. However, this is possible only if the fundamental power factor angle is less than 30° . Otherwise clamping from 90° to 150° works best [9].

Thus, at a given carrier frequency or sampling frequency, the bus-clamped techniques lead to significant reduction in the switching frequency and losses. However, this gain is accompanied by an increase in the distortion over the conventional techniques. The relative values of THD due to the four type of clamping schemes, conventional space vector PWM and sine-triangle PWM are shown in Fig.4a [5-7].

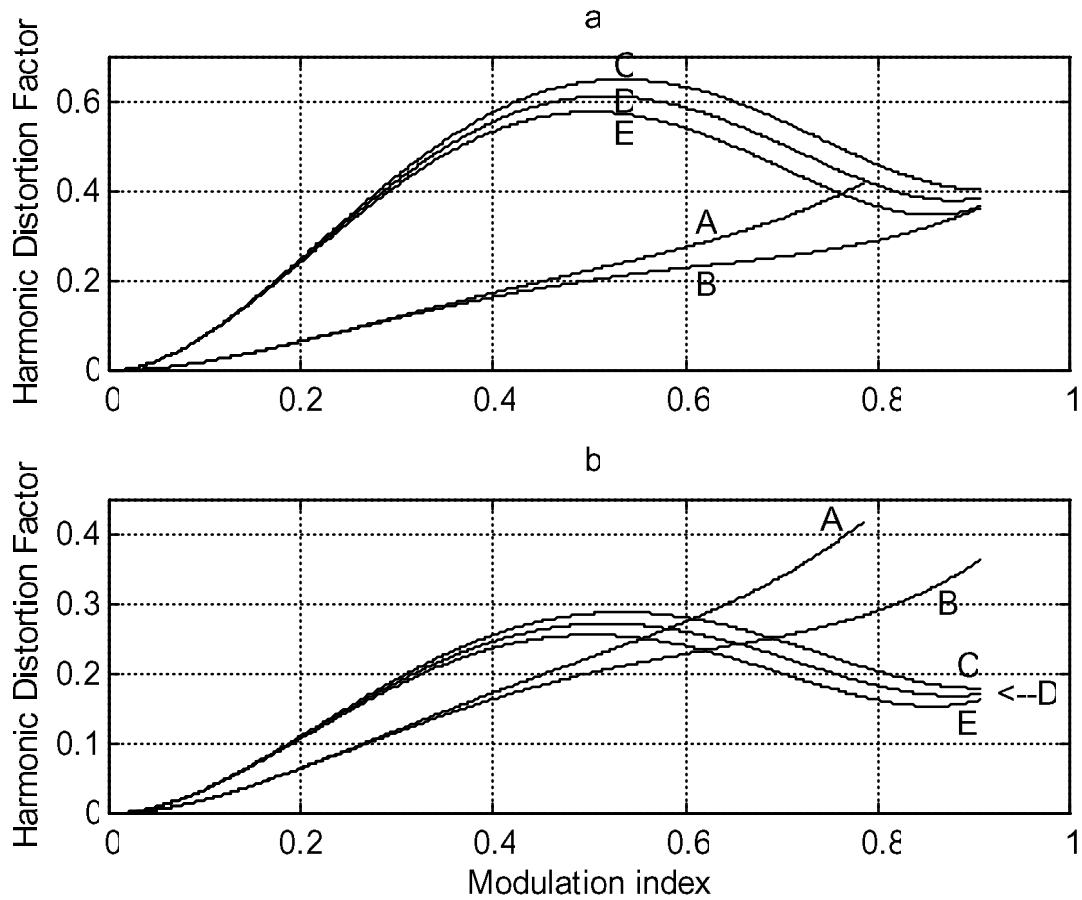


Fig.4 Harmonic Distortion Factor vs. modulation index
 (a) Switching frequency of bus-clamped techniques equal to $(2/3)$ times that of SPWM and CSVPWM and
 (b) Switching frequency of bus-clamped techniques equal to that of SPWM and CSVPWM
 A : SPWM, B: CSVPWM, C : Type-I, D: Type-II & III, E : Type-IV

3.2 Reduction in harmonic distortion :

At a given switching frequency, bus-clamped PWM techniques lead to a significant reduction in the harmonic distortion over the conventional techniques at higher modulation indices as shown in Fig.4b. The harmonic distortion of any given type of clamping in this case (Fig.4b) is $4/9$ times of that in the earlier case (Fig.4a). Among the bus-clamped techniques, Type-IV clamping results in the lowest harmonic distortion, and Type-I results in the highest. At any given modulation index, Type-II and Type-III clamping schemes result in the same harmonic distortion, which is equal to the average of the distortions due to Type-I and Type-IV clamping schemes [5-7].

Thus, using bus-clamping, the harmonic distortion can be reduced subject to a given switching frequency at higher modulation indices as shown in Fig.4b.

3.3 Computational burden :

At very high switching frequencies, the time required for computation is an important constraint. The factors affecting the computational burden pertaining to a PWM technique are as follows :

1. Number of switchings within a subcycle
2. The proximity of the nearest switching instant to the start/end of a subcycle.

In case of bus-clamped PWM techniques there are only two switchings as against the conventional strategies. Also, at higher modulation indices, the time interval between the start/end of a subcycle and the nearest switching instant is larger. Thus, the computational overhead is less in case of bus-clamped techniques than sine-triangle PWM and conventional space vector PWM.

Among the different bus-clamped techniques, in case of Type-I and Type-IV, the zero state used must be changed in the middle of every subcycle. That is, the zero state used is a function of the sector in which the reference vector is located and also its angular position. On the other hand, in Type-II and Type-III, the same zero state is used over the entire sector. Thus, the zero state used is only a function of the sector, and does not depend on the angular position of the reference vector. Thus, Type-II and Type-III are simpler in this regard.

In addition to the reduction in the computational overhead, the switching losses are the least with Type-III clamping. The harmonic distortion is only slightly inferior to that of Type-IV. Thus, Type-III can be a good choice at higher speeds in case of drives with high switching frequencies.

4. Low switching frequency :

At low switching frequencies, the PWM waveform must be synchronised with its own fundamental to avoid subharmonics. Preservation of Half Wave Symmetry ensures no even harmonics are present. It is also desirable to maintain 3-Phase Symmetry and Quarter Wave Symmetry. Preservation of the waveform symmetries means that Type-II and Type-III clamping cannot be used as the two quarters in a half cycle are not symmetric in these two cases.

For synchronisation and the waveform symmetries to be preserved, there must be an equal number of samples and at identical locations in every sector at steady state. That is, the sampling frequency must be an integral multiple of six times the fundamental frequency. In the space vector domain, a synchronised PWM waveform can be defined by the following three :

1. Number of samples per sector (N)
2. Positions of the samples in a sector
3. Switching sequences corresponding to each of the samples.

Apart from the conventional and clamping sequences mentioned in section 2, switching sequences 0121, 1210, 7212 or 2127 can also be used, with either T_1 or T_2 divided into two equal halves, to generate an arbitrary sample in sector I. Given a sample on the boundary between sector I and sector VI, it can be generated using sequence 010 or 101 with either T_1 or T_0 divided into two equal halves. Such a sample is termed as 'boundary sample'. Thus, the space vector approach to PWM offers more flexibilities than the triangle-comparison approach like double-switching of a phase within a subcycle etc [10,12].

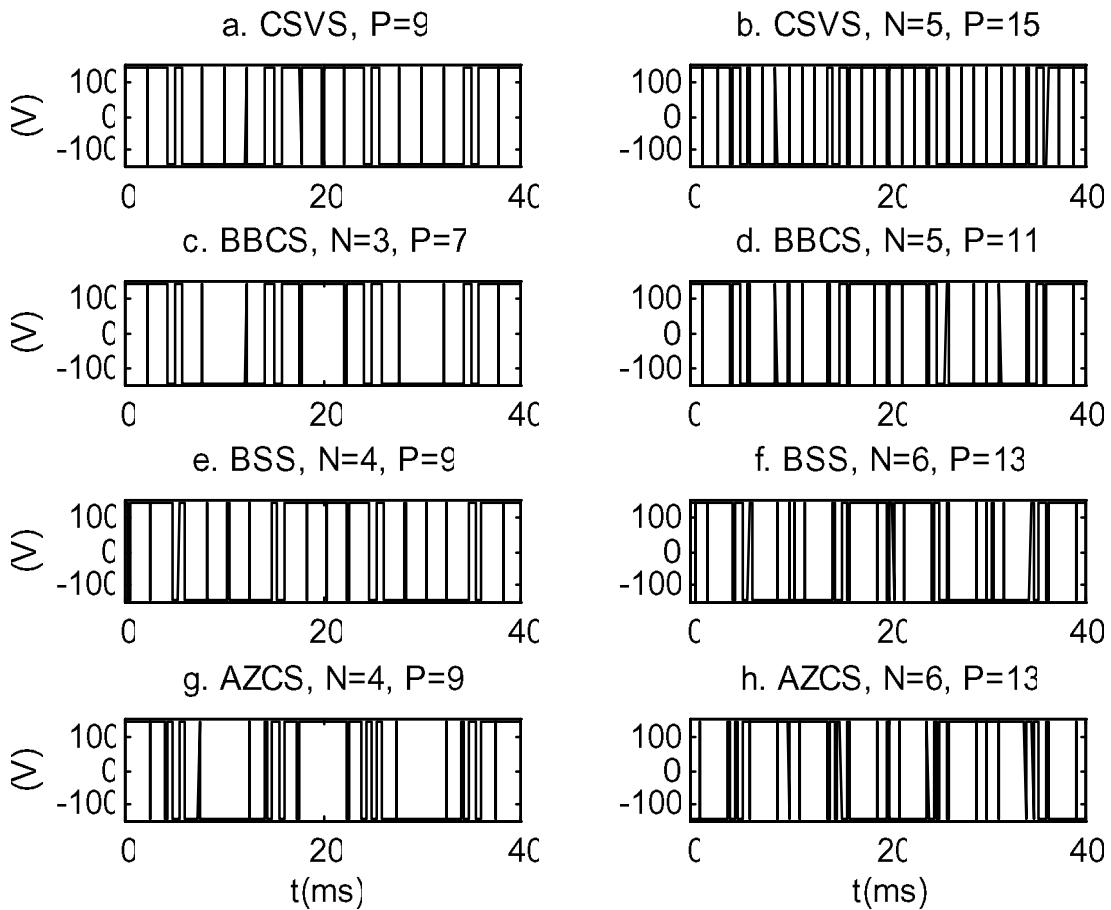


Fig.5 Typical pole voltage waveforms

Three synchronised bus-clamped PWM strategies based the space vector approach have been proposed recently - Basic Bus Clamping Strategy (BBCS), Asymmetric Zero-Changing Strategy (AZCS) and Boundary Sampling Strategy (BSS) [10-12]. Typical pole voltage waveforms corresponding to these strategies besides the synchronised Conventional Space Vector Strategy (CSVs) are presented in Fig.5. The line voltage spectra and the experimental no-load current waveforms, corresponding to these pole voltage waveforms, are shown in Figs.6 and 7 respectively.

At low switching frequencies, computation time is not a major constraint. The thrust is on reduction of switching losses and/or harmonic distortion. The harmonic distortion tends to be especially high.

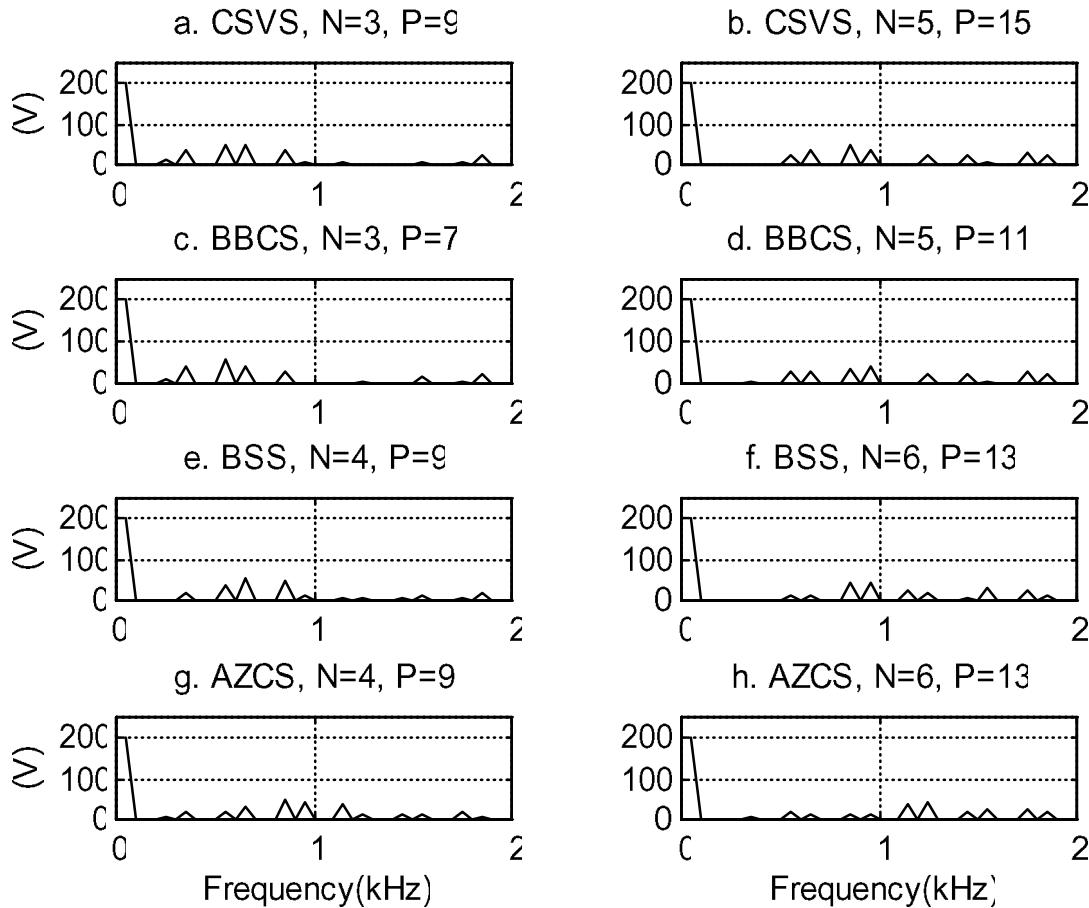


Fig.6 Line voltage spectra

WTHD for (a), (c), (e) and (g) are 0.0438, 0.0463, 0.0327 and 0.0297 respectively
WTHD for (b), (d), (f) and (h) are 0.0259, 0.0259, 0.0212 and 0.0191 respectively

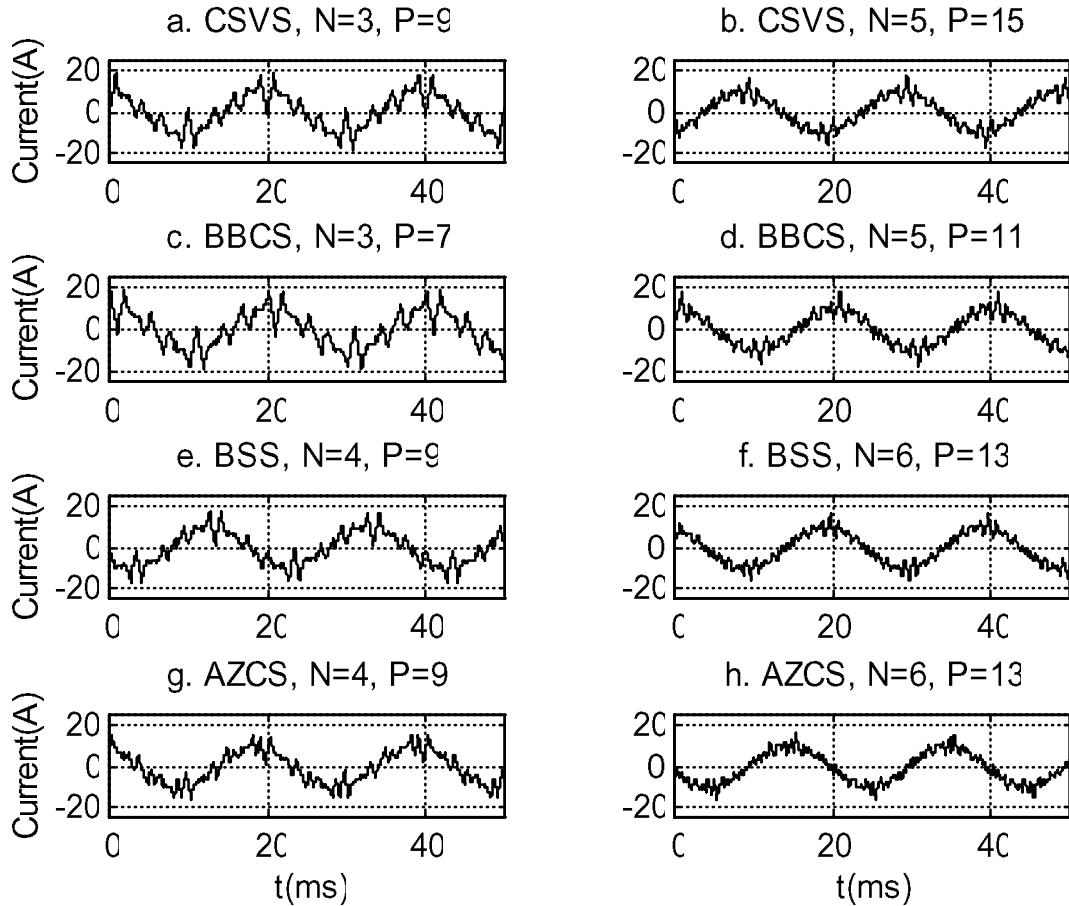


Fig.7 Experimental no-load current waveforms

Measured THD for (a), (c), (e) and (g) are 0.4858, 0.5186, 0.3628 and 0.3369 respectively

Measured THD for (b), (d), (f) and (h) are 0.2862, 0.2936, 0.2540 and 0.2464 respectively

4.1 Switching frequency and switching losses :

For a given N , use of clamping sequences instead of conventional sequences leads to reduction in the pulse number (P). Given N , $P = 2N$ is the lowest pulse number possible. But to maintain Half Wave Symmetry and also to ensure an even loading of the top and the bottom devices, $P = 2N+1$ is required as the minimum. That is P gets reduced from $3N$ to $(2N+1)$ due to bus-clamping. Such a strategy is called Basic Bus Clamping Strategy [10-12]. This is illustrated for $N = 3$ and 5 in Table 1.

Table 1. Reduction in pulse number P for given number of samples per sector N

Strategy	N	Positions of samples	Switching sequences	Pulse number P	Type of clamping
CSVN	3	10°, 30°, 50°	0127, 7210, 0127	9	-
CSVN	3	10°, 30°, 50°	7210, 0127, 7210	9	-
BBCS	3	10°, 30°, 50°	127, 7210, 012	7	Type-I
CSVN	5	6°, 18°, 30°, 42°, 54°	7210, 0127, 7210, 0127, 7210	15	-
CSVN	5	6°, 18°, 30°, 42°, 54°	0127, 7210, 0127, 7210, 0127	15	-
BBCS	5	6°, 18°, 30°, 42°, 54°	721, 127, 7210, 012, 210	11	Type-I
BBCS	5	6°, 18°, 30°, 42°, 54°	012, 210, 0127, 721, 127	11	Type-IV

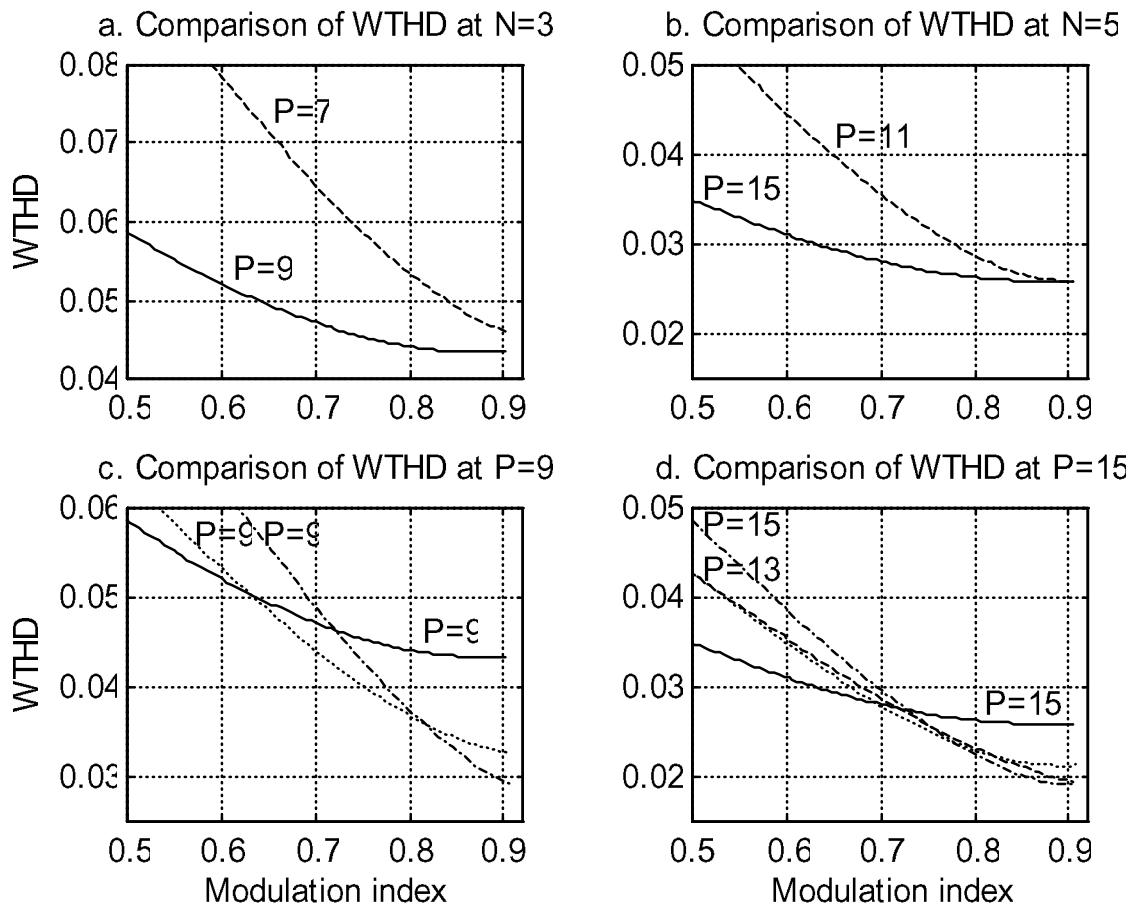


Fig.8 Comparison WTHD vs. modulation index characteristics
Solid line : CSVN, dashed line : BBCS, dashed and dotted line : AZCS, dotted line : BSS

Experimental no-load current waveforms pertaining to CSVN with P=9 and P=15 are shown in Figs.7a and 7b respectively. The current waveforms produced by BBCS with P=7 and P=11 are shown in

Figs.7c and 7d respectively. The switching frequency decreases in both the case. However, it can be seen that there is a slight increase in THD. The Weighted Total Harmonic Distortion factor (WTHD) of the voltage waveform against modulation index is plotted for different strategies and different pulse numbers in Fig.8. It can be seen from Figs.8a and 8b that for a given value of N, BBCS results in lesser P but higher WTHD.

4.2 Reduction in harmonic distortion :

With the same pulse number, the harmonic distortion can be reduced at higher modulation indices using bus-clamped PWM strategies.

In CSVS with N=3, there are samples at 10°, 30° and 50° in every sector as mentioned earlier. The PWM waveforms generated have a pulse number of 9. The sequences used in sector I are 0127 and 7210 for alternate samples. Instead there can be four samples per sector (i.e. N=4) at 7.5°, 22.5°, 37.5° and 52.5° as shown in Table 2. Sequences 127, 7212, 210 and 012 can be used to generate these four samples respectively. Such a strategy is called Asymmetric Zero-Changing Strategy (AZCS) as the zero-changing process is asymmetric in this strategy. Sequences 0121, 127 or 7212, 210 are used for the middle two samples to change the zero state used. Alternatively, there can be four samples at 0°, 15°, 30° and 45° with sequences 101, 127, 7210 and 012 used to generate them. Such a strategy is called Boundary Sampling Strategy (BSS) as there is a sample on every sector boundary [10,12]. These two generate PWM waveforms with P = (2N+1), i.e. P=9 for N=4.

Table 2. Reduction in harmonic distortion at given pulse number P

Strategy	N	Positions of samples	Switching sequences	Pulse number P	Type of clamping
CSVN	3	10°, 30°, 50°	0127, 7210, 0127	9	-
CSVN	3	10°, 30°, 50°	7210, 0127, 7210	9	-
AZCS	4	7.5°, 22.5°, 37.5°, 52.5°	127, 7212, 210, 012	9	Type-I
BSS	4	0°, 15°, 30°, 45°	101, 127, 7210, 012	9	Type-I *
CSVN	5	6°, 18°, 30°, 42°, 54°	0127, 7210, 0127, 7210, 0127	15	-
CSVN	5	6°, 18°, 30°, 42°, 54°	7210, 0127, 7210, 0127, 7210	15	-
BBCS	7	4.3°, 12.9°, 21.4°, 30°, 38.6°, 47.1°, 55.7°	127, 721, 127, 7210, 012, 210, 012	15	Type-I
AZCS	6	5°, 15°, 25°, 35°, 45°, 55°	721, 127, 7212, 210, 012, 210	13	Type-I
AZCS	6	5°, 15°, 25°, 35°, 45°, 55°	012, 210, 0121, 127, 721, 127	13	Type-IV
BSS	6	0°, 10°, 20°, 30°, 40°, 50°	010, 012, 210, 0127, 721, 127	13	Type-IV

* with a small discontinuity at the centre of the 60° clamping duration

CSVs with N=5 generates PWM patterns with P=15. BBCS generates PWM waveforms with P=15 for N=5. Similarly with AZCS and BSS, PWM waveforms with P=13 can be generated with N=6 as shown in Table 2.

The pole voltage waveforms corresponding to CSVs, AZCS and BSS, all with P=9, are shown in Figs.5a, 5e and 5g respectively. The corresponding line voltage spectra are shown in Figs.6a, 6e and 6g respectively, and the experimental no-load current waveforms are presented in Figs.7a, 7e and 7g respectively. It can be seen that BSS with P=9 results in lesser harmonic distortion than CSVs with P=9. AZCS with P=9 leads to still lesser distortion. Thus, harmonic distortion can be reduced subject to a given switching frequency or pulse number.

Similarly, pole voltage waveforms corresponding to CSVs with P=15, BSS with P=13 and AZCS with P=13 are shown in Figs.5b, 5f and 5h respectively. The corresponding line voltage spectra are presented in Figs.6b, 6f and 6h respectively, and the experimental no-load current waveforms in Figs.7b, 7f and 7h respectively. Here again, the harmonic distortion is lesser in case of the bus-clamped strategies. Also, the pulse number is lesser with these strategies. A comparison of WTHD characteristics of CSVs against those of the bus-clamped PWM strategies in the whole range of modulation is presented in Figs.8c and 8d. It can be seen that both switching frequency and harmonic distortion can be reduced by suitable design of PWM strategies.

5. Conclusion :

Depending on the application, power level, device technology etc., different issues dominate in different cases. If switching frequency and switching losses are dominant, bus-clamped PWM techniques can be used to reduce them. If the harmonic distortion is to be reduced subject to a given switching frequency or pulse number, as the case may be, such techniques can once again be used to reduce the distortion. At very high switching frequencies where the time available for computation is very low, bus-clamped techniques result in a reduction of the computational burden as well.

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