A Research on DC Voltage Offsets Generated by PWM-Controlled Inverters

Marios N. Moschakis

Abstract—The increasing penetration of Distributed Generation and storage connected to the distribution network via PWM converters increases the possibility of a DC-component (offset) in voltage or current flowing into the grid. This occurs when even harmonics are present in the network voltage. DC-components can affect the operation and safety of several grid components. Therefore, an investigation of the way they are produced is important in order to take appropriate measures for their elimination. Further research on DC-components that appear on output voltage of converters is performed for different parameters of PWM technique and characteristics of even harmonics.

Keywords—Asymmetric even harmonics, DC-offsets, distributed generation, electric machine drive systems, power quality.

I. INTRODUCTION

There have been several publications reporting the generation of DC-components in the current or voltage waveform. In [1]-[7] geomagnetically-induced currents are reported to introduce DC-offsets. DC-components may be produced by HVDC systems, when AC and DC transmission lines are in close proximity [8], [11]. DC-components may be also produced by Static Var Compensators [6], or in general, in cases where anti-parallel power electronic switches are used [12]. There are also references where single-phase [9] and half-wave rectifiers [7] are reported to produce DC-components when supplied with asymmetrically distorted voltage waveforms.

In this paper the generation of DC-components by PWM converters when even harmonics are present in the network voltage [9], [10], is investigated. Possible sources of even harmonics are presented in [9].

II. EFFECTS ON GRID COMPONENTS

DC-components can influence the operation of several grid components, predominately transformers. In particular, converter transformers are DC-magnetized, when the converter output voltage contains DC-components. This means that DC current flows as transformer magnetizing current and offsets the knee of the flux-current characteristic and, if excessive, causes DC (or half-cycle or asymmetrical) saturation of the converter transformer [1]-[7], [10]-[16].

Other undesirable effects of DC-components on transformers and other grid components are:

1) Protective shutdown of the converter. When DC-magnetization of converter transformer progresses and reaches saturation level, results in an overcurrent and a protective shutdown of the converter [8].
2) Production of odd and even harmonics by transformers [1], [8] and nonlinear loads [9].
3) Power losses, possible loss of life expectancy, increase in reactive power consumption and audible noise by transformers [8], [11].
4) Inaccurate measurements. DC-components can cause inaccurate measurements because of saturation of current transformers on the AC side. Thus, control and protection systems (and protective relays) that depend on these measurements will not function properly [4], [7], [8], [11].

III. DC COMPONENTS BY PWM CONVERTERS

PWM converters produce DC-components when “asymmetric” 3-phase even harmonics are present in the network voltage. Asymmetries are typical in power networks, so “asymmetric” even harmonics are also very likely to appear. The word “asymmetric” means that together with the normal phase sequence of a harmonic, an amount of opposite phase sequence exists i.e., a positive-phase sequence for a 2nd harmonic, a negative-phase sequence for a 4th harmonic, and so on. A 3-phase voltage system consisting of the fundamental component and a negative (normal phase sequence) or a positive (opposite phase sequence) 2nd harmonic is shown in Figs. 1 (a) and (b) respectively. The large asymmetry between the three phases is obvious in the second case.

M. N. Moschakis is with the Technological Educational Institute of Thessaly, Larissa, Greece (phone/fax: +30-2410-684-325; e-mail: mmoschakis@teilar.gr).
and the Harmonic Angle (HA) is set to $60^\circ$.

![Fig. 2 Six-pulse voltage-source converter](image)

**Fig. 2 Six-pulse voltage-source converter**

The characteristics of the harmonics. These parameters are thoroughly investigated, in order to calculate the maximum level of DC-component that may be produced when even harmonics are present in the network voltage. These parameters are:

1) Modulation Frequency (MF) index. The MF index in a 6-pulse PWM converter is an odd multiple of 3 [10].
2) Modulation Amplitude (MA) index. Values in the range $0.6 - 1$ were used.
3) Harmonic Order (HO).
4) Harmonic Percentage (HP).
5) Harmonic Angle (HA). HA is the phase angle difference between fundamental component of the reference waveform and harmonics. The effective range for the HA is: $0 - 180^\circ$.

In Figs. 4 and 5, the maximum DC-component for MF = 9 (450 Hz for a 50 Hz system) and HO up to the 50th is given.

**IV. MAXIMUM DC COMPONENT OF PWM CONVERTERS**

**A. One Even Harmonic on the Reference Waveform**

The analytical method used for the calculation of DC-component that is contained in the three line voltages is described in [1]. It uses the intersection points between the three reference waveforms and the triangular pulse. An example is also given for the case shown in Fig. 3. After calculating the DC-component of each of the three line voltages, the maximum absolute value is eventually extracted.

The DC-component contained in the converter output voltage is influenced by the PWM pattern parameters and

![Fig. 3 PWM pattern when an 8th harmonic is present on the reference waveform. HP=20%, MF=9, HA=60°, MA=0.8](image)

**Fig. 3 PWM pattern when an 8th harmonic is present on the reference waveform. HP=20%, MF=9, HA=60°, MA=0.8**

![Fig. 4 Maximum DC-component for MF=9, HO ≤ 50, HP=1-10%](image)

**Fig. 4 Maximum DC-component for MF=9, HO ≤ 50, HP=1-10%**

![Fig. 5 Maximum DC-component for MF=15, HO ≤ 50, HP=1-10%](image)

**Fig. 5 Maximum DC-component for MF=15, HO ≤ 50, HP=1-10%**

It can be seen that for all the harmonics, a quite large amount of DC-component exists, especially for some of the higher order harmonics. It becomes even higher than the HP for the 40th harmonic, but for all the other harmonics is less than 0.8·HP.

In Fig. 5, the maximum DC-component is presented for MF=15 (450 Hz). Again, higher order harmonics give the
highest levels of DC-component.

It is found that for $MF \geq 15$ (21, 27, 33…), some harmonics follow a particular pattern as regards the maximum DC-component they lead to. This pattern regards the harmonics that lead a PWM converter to the production of the highest amounts of DC-component and it is presented in Fig. 6. It should be noted here that this pattern applies also for $MF = 9$, but with a few small differences.

There are pairs in the band of $MF$, $2MF$, $3MF$ etc, that give high and about equal levels of DC-components. These pairs involve both the so-called “positive-” or “negative-sequence” ($MF \pm 1$, $2MF \pm 2$, $2MF \pm 4$, $3MF \pm 1$, $3MF \pm 5$) and “zero-sequence” ($MF \pm 3$, $2MF$, $3MF \pm 3$) harmonics. The highest level of DC-components is taken for $HO = MF \pm 1$ and $HO = 3MF \pm 3$ for the positive-negative- and zero-sequence harmonics respectively. It must be noted here that higher order harmonics than those presented in Fig. 6 lead also to high production of DC-components.

Lower order harmonics and other harmonics apart from those shown in Fig. 6 e.g. 2, 4, 6, 8, 22, 24, 36, 38… (Fig. 5, for $MF = 15$) produce an amount of DC-components, which have a non-proportional dependence on the HP. This amount is not greater than 0.1 $\cdot$ HP except for the 2nd harmonic, which gives a maximum DC-component of about 1.25% for $HP = 10\%$. Moreover, the maximum DC-component of these harmonics takes about equal values even for higher values of $MF$.

The relationship of the maximum DC-component with the HA, follows again a particular pattern, especially for low values of HP. For higher values of HP, this pattern presents some differences mainly in the HA that gives the maximum DC-component. In Fig. 7, this pattern is shown and the opposite phase sequence is indicated in the brackets beside the harmonic order.

It can be seen that for positive or negative sequence harmonics, positive-sequence harmonics (e.g. $MF \pm 1$, $MF \pm 3$) give the maximum value for HA=60° and negative-sequence (e.g. $4^\circ$, $MF+1$) for HA=120°. The variation of the maximum DC-component is exactly opposite for the positive- and negative-sequence harmonics. On the other hand, zero-sequence harmonics (6, 12, $MF \pm 3$) have the same characteristics with the positive-negative sequence harmonics but with the opposite order.

As regards the influence of the MA on the maximum DC-component, there is also a common variation for some of the harmonics and for low values of HP. This is presented in Fig. 8 for $HP = 1\%$. It can be observed that the harmonics with the highest value of DC-components (MF±1, $2MF \pm 2$, $3MF \pm 3$), as Fig. 6 shows, present about the same variation. Another group with the same variation consists of the $2MF$ and $3MF \pm 1$ harmonics. The $2MF \pm 4$ and $MF \pm 3$ harmonics form the third group. In this group, the 2nd, 4th and 6th harmonics are also included.

B. Combination of Even and Odd Harmonics

The cases where two even harmonics or one even and one “symmetric” odd harmonic are contained in the reference waveforms are also investigated. The maximum DC-component is calculated for equal values of HP for the two harmonics and compared with the maximum DC-component of each harmonic. The results for $MF = 27$ and $HP = 1\%$ are presented in Fig. 9. It is shown that the maximum DC-
component for the combination of two harmonics is higher than the maximum DC-component of each harmonic. Obviously, this rule applies only for the maximum value, which means that the DC-component may be lower when two harmonics appear on the reference waveform.

Moreover, in transient conditions, the asymmetries and the filtering cannot be used as it makes the response of the converter very slow, so this solution should not be adopted. In steady-state operation of the converter, the detected (measured) network voltage can only be used in calculating analytically the maximum level of DC-component for various parameters of PWM pattern and harmonics is presented.

In Table I, the parameters (MA, HA1 and HA2) that correspond to the maximum DC-component for two harmonics are given.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE I</th>
<th>PARAMETERS FOR THE MAXIMUM DC-COMPONENT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>HO1 + HO2</strong></td>
<td><strong>MA</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2+4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2+3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2+5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
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<td>2+6</td>
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</tr>
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<td>6+12</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26+28</td>
<td>0.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24+30</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
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V. ELIMINATION OF DC COMPONENTS

The maximum DC-component is taken for the case where the two harmonics with the highest values (0.8 HP) of DC-components are present (MF=1). In general, the combination of these two harmonics with equal HP gives a maximum value of 1.5–0.8 HP.

In Table I, the parameters (MA, HA1 and HA2) that correspond to the maximum DC-component for two harmonics are given.

The presence of two even or one even and one odd harmonic with equal HP=1% (MF=27) is investigated. By extensive calculation of DC-component for all these parameters, it is found a common pattern for the critical harmonics that give the maximum DC-component in relation with the MF index. It is also shown that there is a typical relationship between the maximum DC-component and the HA for some of the harmonics and their phase-sequence. Typical variation applies also for the maximum DC-component and the MA index.

The provision of a filter to remove even harmonics from the converter operates, measures must be taken to reduce the possible DC-component produced when even harmonics appear in the network voltage.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This document was prepared during a project funded by the European Union and Greek Government. The author wishes to acknowledge the significant contribution of the sponsors.

REFERENCES


