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Symmetrical and Asymmetrical H-Bridge Multilevel Inverter for DTC Induction Motor Drive Automotive Applications

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Abstract—Several works have been reported in the literature on multilevel inverters topologies, control techniques and applications. However, there are few works that actually discuss or evaluate the performance of induction motor drives associated to three-phase multilevel inverter. This paper presents then a comparison study for a cascaded H-bridge multilevel DTC induction motor drive. In this case, symmetrical and asymmetrical arrangements of five and seven level H-bridge inverters are compared in order to find an optimum arrangement with lower switching losses and optimized output voltage quality. The carried out experiments shows that an asymmetrical configuration provides nearly sinusoidal voltages with very low distortion, using less switching devices. Due to the small dv/dt 's, torque ripple is greatly reduced. In addition, it generates a high switching frequency output voltage with less switching losses, since only the small power cells of the inverter operate at high switching rate. Therefore a high performance and also efficient torque and flux controller is obtained, enabling a DTC solution for multilevel inverter powered induction motor drives.

Index Terms— Induction motor, Direct Torque Control (DTC), multilevel inverters.

I. INTRODUCTION

Multilevel voltage-source inverters are intensively studied for high-power applications [1-2], and standard drives for medium-voltage industrial applications have become available [3-4]. Solutions with a higher number of output voltage levels have the capability to synthesize waveforms with a better harmonic spectrum and to limit the motor-winding insulation stress. However, their increasing number of devices tends to reduce the overall reliability and efficiency of the power converter. On the other hand, solutions with a low number of levels either need a rather large and expensive LC output filter to limit the motor-winding insulation stress or can only be used with motors that do withstand such stress. The various stage voltages have been chosen after considering the real power contribution of the highest voltage stage. The maximum power supplied by highest voltage stage is maintained below the load power.

Many studies have been conducted towards improving multilevel inverter. Some studies deal with innovative topologies such as hybrid multilevel inverter to optimize the components utilization and the asymmetrical multilevel inverter to improve the output voltage resolution [5]. Other studies focused on developing advanced control strategies or

upgrading the voltage source inverter strategies for implementation in multilevel inverter [6-7].

In symmetrical multilevel inverter, all H-bridge cells are fed by equal voltages and hence all the arm cells produce similar output voltage steps. However if all the cells are not fed by equal voltages, the inverter becomes an asymmetrical one. In this inverter the arm cells have different effect on the output voltage. Other topologies are possible such as the neutral point clamped fed by unequal capacitors.

Asymmetrical multilevel inverter has been recently investigated [8-9]. In all these studies H-bridge topology has been considered and a variety of selection of cascaded cell numbers and DC sources ratios have been adopted. While the four cells symmetrical multilevel inverter has five levels, a 7- and 9-level inverter has been constructed with two cell asymmetrical multilevel inverter [8]. The suggested PWM modulation strategy that maintains the high voltage stage to operate at low frequency limits the source voltage selection.

One of the methods that have been used by a major multilevel-level inverter manufacturer is DTC, which is recognized today as a high-performance control strategy for AC drives [10-13]. Several authors have addressed the problem of improving the behavior of DTC AC motors, especially by reducing the torque ripple. Different approaches have been proposed [14]: improving the look-up table; varying the hysteresis bandwidth of the torque controller, using flux, torque and speed observers. Although these approaches are well suitable for the classical 2-levels inverter, their extension to a greater number of levels is not easy.

II. CASCADED H-BRIDGES STRUCTURE AND OPERATION

The cascaded H-bridge inverter consists of power conversion cells, each supplied by an isolated DC source on the DC side, which can be obtained from batteries, fuel cells, or ultracapacitors [15-16], and series-connected on the AC side. The advantage of this topology is that the modulation, control and protection requirements of each bridge are modular. It should be pointed out that, unlike the diode-clamped and flying-capacitor topologies, isolated DC sources are required for each cell in each phase. Figure 1 shows a three-phase topology of a cascade inverter with isolated DC voltage sources. An output phase voltage waveform is obtained by summing the bridges output voltages

$$v_o(t) = v_{o,1}(t) + v_{o,2}(t) + \dots + v_{o,N}(t) \quad (1)$$

where N is the number of cascaded bridges.

The inverter output voltage $v_o(t)$ may be determined from the individual cells switching states.

$$v_o(t) = \sum_{j=1}^N (\mu_j - 1) V_{dc,j} \quad \mu_j = 0, 1, \dots \quad (2)$$

If all DC voltage sources in Fig. 1 are equal to V_{dc} the inverter is then known as a symmetric multilevel one. The effective number of output voltage levels n in symmetric multilevel inverter is related to the cells number by

$$n = 1 + 2N \quad (3)$$

For example, Fig. 2 illustrated typical waveforms of Fig. 1 multilevel inverter with two DC sources (5-levels output). The maximum output voltage $V_{o,MAX}$ is then

$$V_{o,MAX} = NV_{dc} \quad (4)$$

To provide a large number of output levels without increasing the number of inverters, asymmetric multilevel inverters can be used.

In [17-18], it is proposed to chose the DC voltages sources according to a geometric progression with a factor of 2 or 3. For N of such cascade inverters, one can achieve the following distinct voltage levels.

$$\begin{cases} n = 2^{N+1} - 1 & \text{if } V_{dc,j} = 2^{j-1} V_{dc}, j = 1, 2, \dots, N \\ n = 3^N & \text{if } V_{dc,j} = 3^{j-1} V_{dc}, j = 1, 2, \dots, N \end{cases} \quad (5)$$

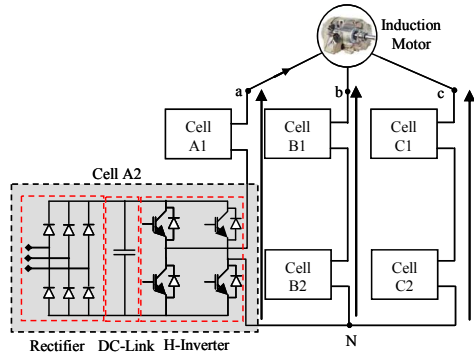


Fig. 1. Structure of 2-cells cascaded multilevel inverter.

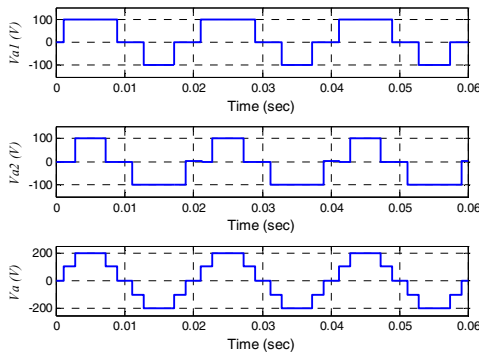


Fig. 2. Symmetric multilevel inverter with 5-levels output voltage synthesis.

For example, Fig. 3 illustrated typical waveforms of Fig. 1 multilevel inverter with two DC sources (V_{dc} and $2V_{dc}$) (7-levels output).

The maximum output voltage of these N cascaded multilevel inverters is

$$V_{o,MAX} = \sum_{j=1}^N V_{dc,j} \quad (6)$$

Equation (6) can be rewritten as

$$\begin{cases} V_{o,MAX} = (2^N - 1) V_{dc} & \text{if } V_{dc,j} = 2^{j-1} V_{dc}, j = 1, 2, \dots, N \\ V_{o,MAX} = \left(\frac{3^N - 1}{2} \right) V_{dc} & \text{if } V_{dc,j} = 3^{j-1} V_{dc}, j = 1, 2, \dots, N \end{cases} \quad (7)$$

Comparing (3) to (7), it can be seen that asymmetrical multilevel inverters can generate more voltage levels and higher maximum output voltage with the same number of bridges. Table 1 summarizes the number of levels, switches, DC sources and maximum available output voltages for classical cascaded multilevel inverters.

III. INDUCTION MOTOR DIRECT TORQUE CONTROL

DTC is an alternative method to flux oriented control [12]. However, in the standard version, important torque ripple is obtained even at high sampling frequencies. Moreover, the inverter switching frequency is inherently variable and very dependent on torque and shaft speed. This produces torque harmonics with variable frequencies and an acoustic noise with disturbance intensities very dependent on these mechanical variables and particularly grating at low speed.

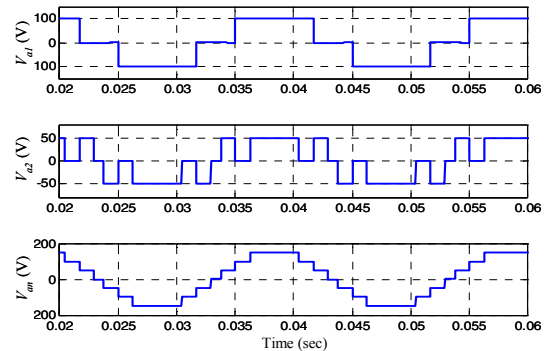


Fig. 3. Asymmetric multilevel inverter with 7-levels output voltage synthesis.

Table 1. Comparison of multilevel inverters.

	Symmetrical inverter	Asymmetrical inverter	
		Binary	Ternary
N	$2N + 1$	$2^{N+1} - 1$	3^N
DC sources number	N	N	N
Switches number	$4N$	$4N$	$4N$
$V_{o,MAX}$ [pu]	N	$2^N - 1$	$(3^N - 1)/2$

The additional degrees of freedom (space vectors, phase configurations, etc.) provided by the multilevel inverter should therefore be exploited by the control strategy in order to reduce these drawbacks [6].

A. Nomenclature

- v_s = Stator voltage vector;
- ϕ_s (ϕ_r) = Stator (rotor) flux vector;
- T_e = Electromagnetic torque;
- R_s = Stator resistance;
- L_s (L_r) = Stator (rotor) inductance;
- L_m = Magnetizing inductance;
- σ = Total leakage coefficient, $\sigma = 1 - L_m^2/L_s L_r$;
- θ_{sr} = Angle between stator and rotor flux vectors;
- p = Pole pair number.

B. Torque and Flux Estimation

The stator flux vector an induction motor is related to the stator voltage and current vectors by:

$$\frac{d\phi_s(t)}{dt} = v_s(t) - R_s i_s(t) \quad (8)$$

Maintaining v_s constant over a sample time interval and neglecting the stator resistance, the integration of (10) yields

$$\Delta\phi_s(t) = \phi_s(t) - \phi_s(t - \Delta t) = \int_{t-\Delta t}^t v_s \Delta t \quad (9)$$

Equation (9) reveals that the stator flux vector is directly affected by variations on the stator voltage vector. On the contrary, the influence of v_s over the rotor flux is filtered by the rotor and stator leakage inductance [19], and is, therefore, not relevant over a short-time horizon. Since the stator flux can be changed quickly while the rotor flux rotates slower, the angle between both vectors θ_{sr} can be controlled directly by v_s . The exact relationship between stator and rotor flux shows that keeping the amplitude of ϕ_s constant will produce a constant flux ϕ_r [20].

Since the electromagnetic torque developed by an induction motor can be expressed by [21]

$$T_e = \frac{3}{2} p \frac{L_m}{\sigma L_s L_r} \phi_s \phi_r \sin \theta_{sr} \quad (10)$$

It follows that change in θ_{sr} due to the action of v_s allows for direct and fast change in the developed torque. DTC uses this principle to achieve the induction motor desired torque response, by applying the appropriate stator voltage vector to correct the flux trajectory.

C. Voltage Vector Selection

Figure 4 illustrates one of the 127 voltage vectors generated by the inverter at instant $t = k$, denoted by v_s^k (central dot). The next voltage vector to be applied to the load v_s^{k+1} , can be expressed by

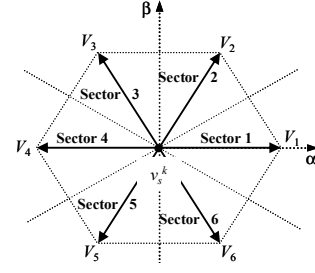


Fig. 4. Possible voltage changes Δv_s^k that can be applied from certain v_s^k .

$$v_s^{k+1} = v_s^k + \Delta v_s^k \quad (11)$$

where $\Delta v_s^k = \{v_i \mid i = 1, \dots, 6\}$. Each vector v_i corresponds to one corner of the elemental hexagon illustrated in gray and by the dashed line in Fig. 7. The task is to determine which v_s^{k+1} will correct the torque and flux responses, knowing the actual voltage vector v_s^k , the torque and flux errors e_ϕ^k and e_T^k and the stator flux vector position (sector determined by angle θ_s). Note that the next voltage vector v_s^{k+1} applied to the load will always be one of the six closest vectors to the previous v_s^k , this will soften the actuation effort and reduce high dynamics in torque response due to possible large changes in the reference.

Using (10) and (11), and analyzing, for example, sector (2) illustrated in Fig. 5; the application of v_1 increases the stator flux amplitude but reduces θ_{sr} leading to a torque reduction. Conversely, v_4 reduces the flux magnitude, while it increases θ_{sr} and thus the torque. If v_3 is applied to the load, both torque and flux increase, and it is clear that v_6 produces the inverse effect. Table 2 summarizes vector selections according to the above criterion, for the different sectors and comparators output (desired ϕ_s and T_e corrections).

To implement the DTC of the induction motor fed by an hybrid H-bridge multilevel inverter, one should determine at each sampling period the logic state of the inverter switches as a function of instantaneous values of torque and flux for the selection of the space vector, in the α - β frame.

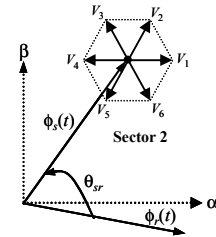


Fig. 5. Voltage selection Δv_s^k in sector 2.

Table 2. Voltage vector selection lookup table.

Sector	$\text{sign}(e_\phi^k, e_T^k)$			
	(+,+)	(+,-)	(-,+)	(-,-)
1	V_2	V_6	V_3	V_5
2	V_3	V_1	V_4	V_6
3	V_4	V_2	V_5	V_1
4	V_5	V_3	V_6	V_2
5	V_6	V_4	V_1	V_3
6	V_1	V_5	V_2	V_4

Once the space is chosen, the sequence of phase levels can be selected. To ensure this task, one should detect the position of the space vector in α - β frame (Q^k at sampling time t^k). The proposed algorithm must then select the next position Q^{k+1} to be achieved before next sampling instant t^{k+1} (Fig. 6) in order to reduce voltage steps magnitude. This task allows the commutation number reduction in the same phase order to minimize losses and consequently the torque ripple. Finally, the configuration of each phase will be selected and must be able to generate the phase levels.

IV. SIMULATION AND EXPERIMENTAL RESULTS

For the validation of the above discussed control approach, simulations and experiments have been carried out. Figures 7 to 9 and 10 to 12 show simulation results for 5-levels cascaded and 7-levels H-bridge inverter, respectively.

For further verification, a three-phase DSP (TMS320LF2407A) controlled 5- and 7-levels cascaded H-bridge multilevel DTC induction motor drive system prototype was built and tested (Fig. 13). The induction motor was rated at 1-kW / 380V / 5.2 A / 1420 rpm. The control cycle is 120 μ s. It should be noted, as illustrated by Fig. 13a, that the experimental setup was built to slightly emulate an automotive application (electric vehicle).

Figures 14 to 16 and 17 to 19 illustrate experimental results for 5-levels cascaded and 7-levels H-bridge inverter, respectively built-up in the laboratory (Fig. 13).

The output voltages form with 7-levels stepped multilevel waveform can be clearly appreciated; the motor currents complete the overview of the performance of the drive. They appear completely sinusoidal, since the low pass nature of the load has filtered the high frequency content of the applied voltage. The stator flux with constant amplitude imposed by the flux controller confirms the good dynamic performance of the drive. The most important results are that torque ripple has been almost eliminated in comparison to 5-levels classic DTC.

V. CONCLUSIONS

This paper has presented a comparison of two cascaded H-bridge multilevel topologies feeding a DTC induction motor. Using the asymmetrical cascade multilevel inverter, which has reduced the number of DC voltage sources and switches, provides more flexibility to designers and can generate more voltage levels.

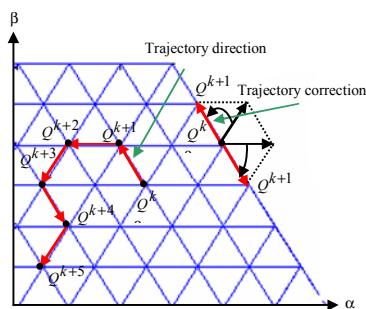


Fig. 6. Optimal space vector tracking and trajectory correction in the stationary α - β frame.

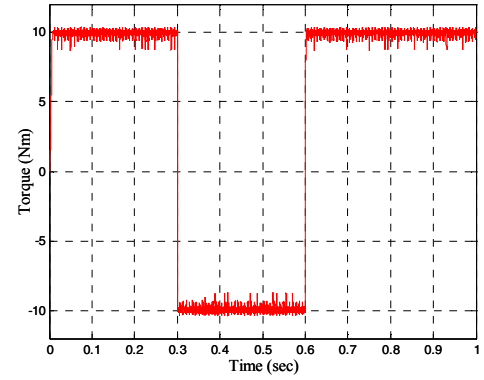


Fig. 7. 5-levels cascaded H-bridge inverter estimated torque waveform.

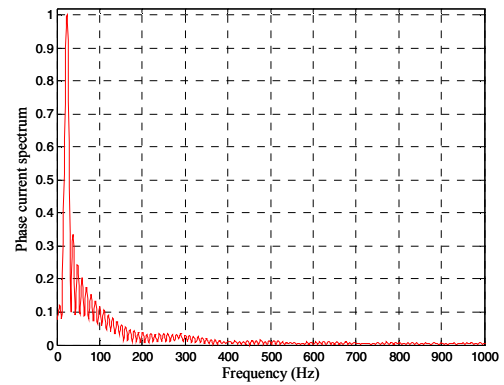


Fig. 8. 5-levels cascaded H-bridge inverter phase current FFT analysis.

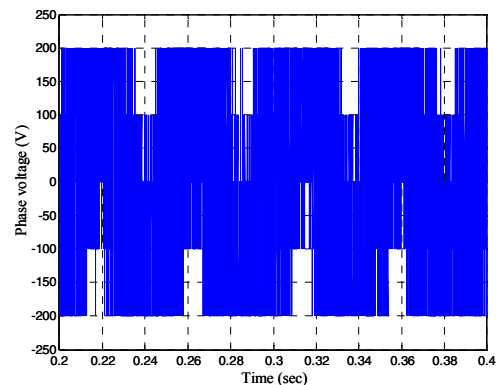


Fig. 9. 5-levels cascaded H-bridge inverter phase voltage waveform.

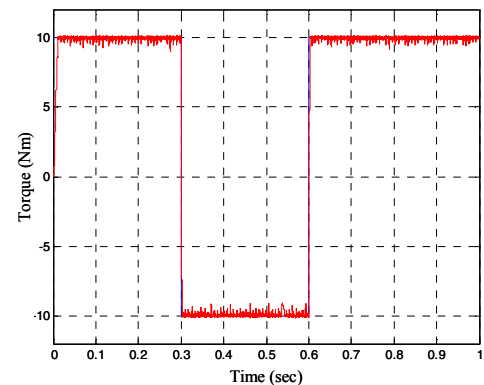


Fig. 10. 7-levels cascaded H-bridge inverter estimated torque waveform.

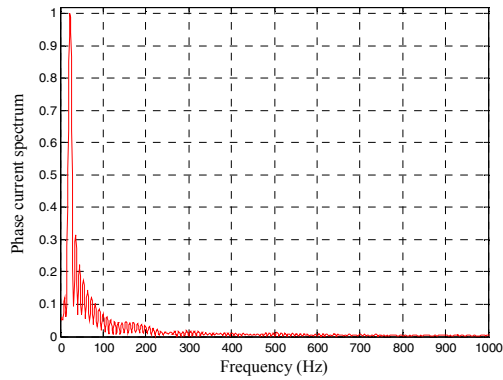


Fig. 11. 7-levels cascaded H-bridge inverter phase current FFT analysis.

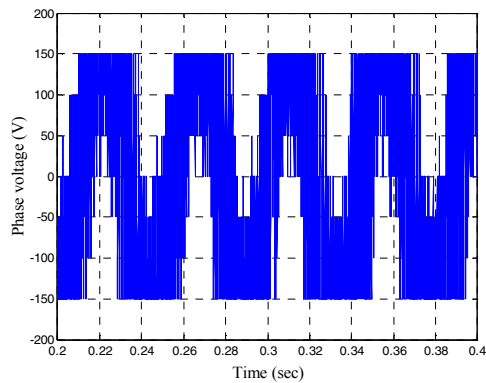
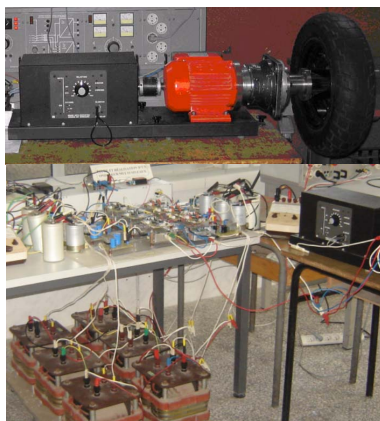
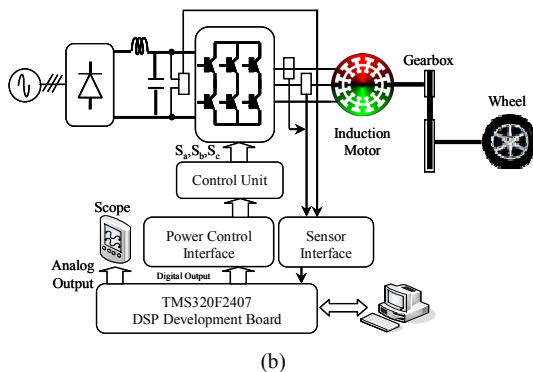


Fig. 12. 7-levels cascaded H-bridge inverter phase voltage waveform.



(a)



(b)

Fig. 13. The experimental setup.

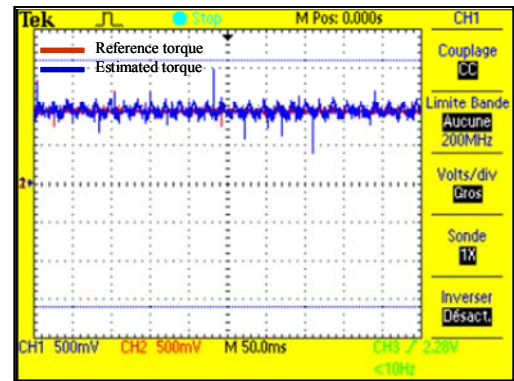


Fig. 14. Torque waveforms for a 5-levels cascaded H-bridge.

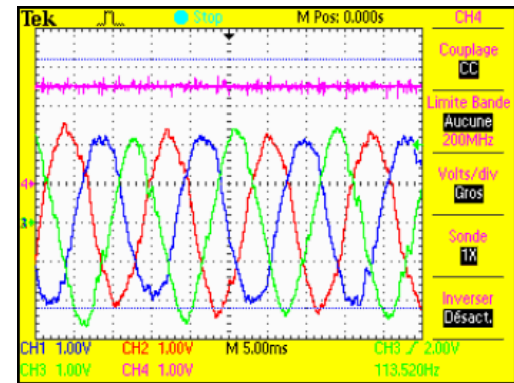


Fig. 15. 5-levels cascaded H-bridge inverter output current waveforms.

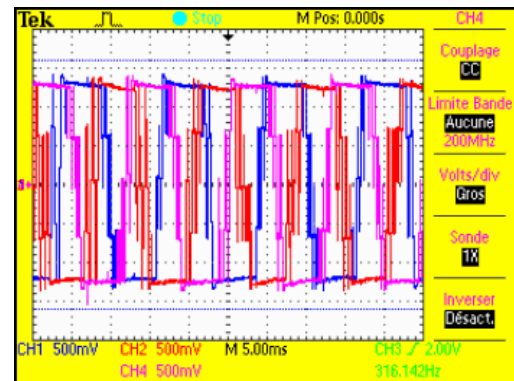


Fig. 16. 5-levels multilevel inverter output voltages during DTC.

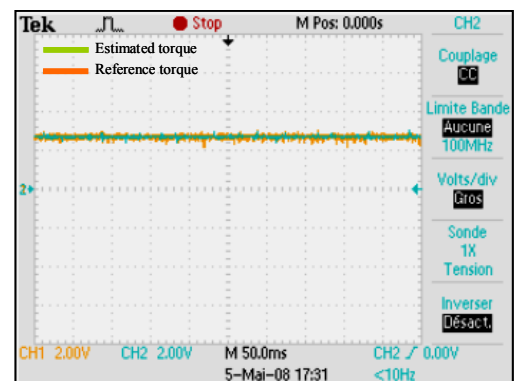


Fig. 17. Torque waveforms for 7-levels cascaded H-bridge.

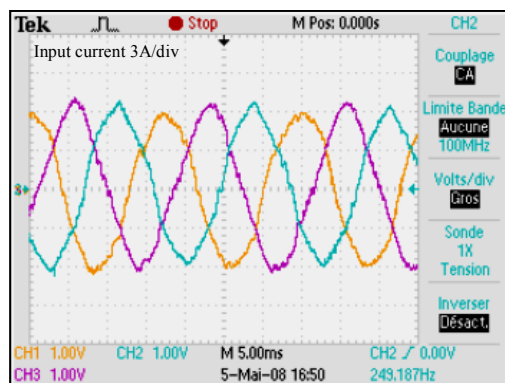


Fig. 18. 7-levels cascaded H-bridge inverter output current waveforms.

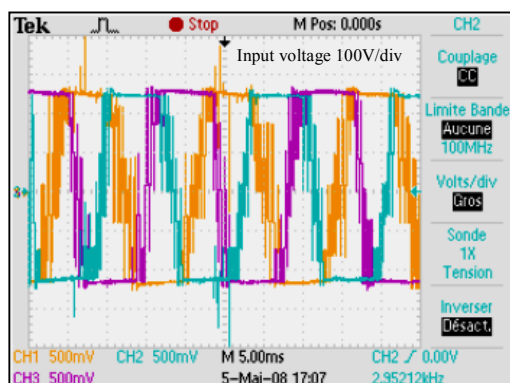


Fig. 19. 7-levels multilevel inverter output voltages during DTC.

This association results in the reduction of the number of switches, losses and cost of the inverter. Based on the DTC the most important achieved results are significant reduction in the torque ripple, sinusoidal output voltages and currents, and a high-performance torque and flux regulation. The asymmetrical multilevel inverter enables a DTC solution for high-power motor drives, not only due to the higher voltage capability provided by multilevel inverters, but mainly due to the reduced switching losses and the improved output voltage quality, which provides sinusoidal current without output filter.

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