Nonlinear Current Sheet Model of Electrical Machines

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An incremental improvement of the classical semi-analytical current sheet model of electrical machines is proposed. First, it provides a better description of the current sheets that allows to consider, at the same time, the rotation of the rotor field winding and the time-dependent stator armature windings currents. This derivation is kept generic and the system to be solved is explicitly written in order to facilitate the implementation. Second, a refined iterative scheme that permits to account effectively for the nonlinearity of iron cores is introduced. It is demonstrated that the nonlinear current sheet model is particularly suitable for slotless wound rotor machines, being able to represent both the space harmonics and the saturation of the machine with a fair accuracy and computing speed compared to the nonlinear finite element model.

***Index Terms*—Electrical machine modeling and simulation, semi-analytical model, subdomain model, current sheet model, nonlinear material, slotless machine, air cored machine.**

I. Introduction

THE "CURRENT SHEET MODEL" is a semi-analytical model for the calculation of the magnetic field in an electrical machine. It belongs to the family of "subdomain models" ie. it is based on the formal resolution of Maxwell's equations in each subdomain [2]. Its distinctive feature is to divide the machine into annular subdomains and to model the windings as cylindrical current sheets. The Laplace's equation for the magnetic vector potential $\mathbf{A}$ can then be solved analytically in each subdomain by the classic method of the separation of variables using appropriate boundary and interface conditions. Hugues and Miller pioneered this method in 1977 [3], [4]. At the time, they obtained concise analytical formulas for the field in the rotor core, air gap, stator core and air surrounding the machine. The method was later extended to add the shaft [5], [6], [7], the current sheets space harmonics [8] and the winding thickness [9]. Finally an iterative technique was introduced by Yazdanian *et al.* [5], [6] to account for the nonlinearity of the iron. Despite those improvements, the latest models could not include directly several windings at the same time nor account for the rotation of the rotor.

The following work tackles this problem by expressing the current sheets not only as a classic sum of sines but as a sum of both sines and cosines. As a result, the proposed model can naturally include both the rotation of the rotor field winding and the time-dependent stator armature windings currents. In addition, an iterative scheme improved from [5], [6] is used to take into account the nonlinearity of the iron.

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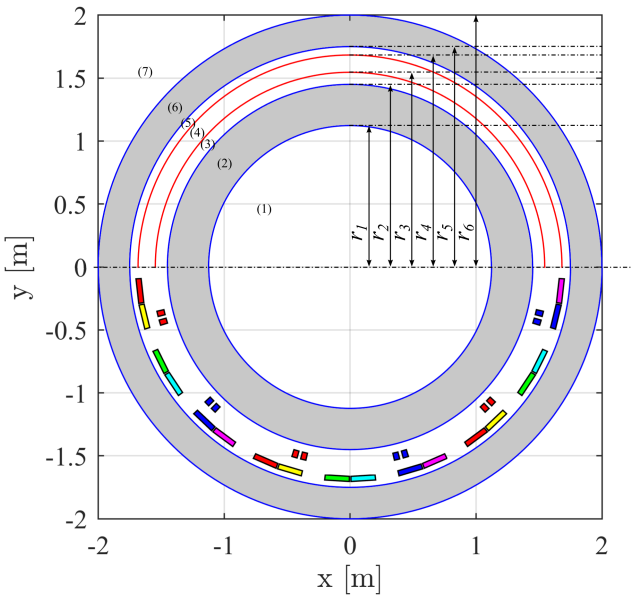


Fig. 1. (top) Machine generic geometry, (bottom) machine specific geometry.

II. Modeling

A. Machine geometry

The current sheet model assumes that the whole machine domain is divided into N concentric annular subdomains. For $\ell \in [1, N]$, the ℓ^{th} subdomain has an inner radius $r_{\ell-1}$, an outer radius r_ℓ and a relative permeability $\mu_{r,\ell}$. The boundary between the ℓ^{th} domain and the $(\ell+1)^{\text{th}}$ domain is a current sheet $K_\ell(\theta)$ located at $r = r_\ell$.

To illustrate how the approach is applied to a specific machine, we considered the slotless wound rotor synchronous

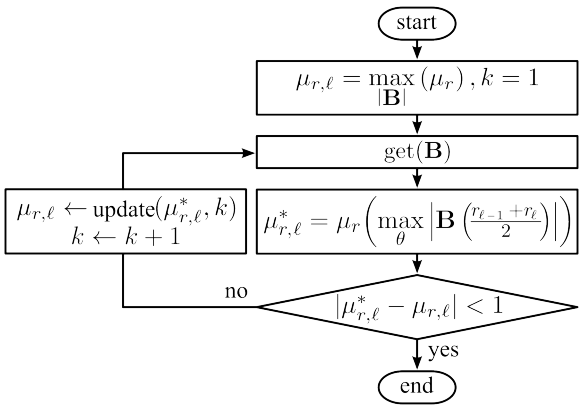


Fig. 2. Iterative scheme to determine the effective subdomain relative permeabilities μ_ℓ in the nonlinear case. The update operator designates the numerical damping.

machine with concentrated windings shown in Fig. 1. The current sheet model is particularly well suited for this kind of machine, but it has also been used for slotted machines [8].

B. Equivalent current sheet $K_\ell(\theta)$

For a machine with P pairs of pole, $K_\ell(\theta)$ is $\frac{2\pi}{P}$-periodic with a mean value equal to zero. Thus, it can be written as a Fourier series,

$$K_\ell(\theta) = \sum_{h=1}^{+\infty} \left[K^s_{\ell,h}\sin(hP\theta) + K^c_{\ell,h}\cos(hP\theta)\right] \quad (1)$$

where $K^s_{\ell,h}$ and $K^c_{\ell,h}$ are Fourier coefficients to be determined from the machine specific geometry.

C. Field in the ℓ^{th} subdomain

In 2-D polar coordinates (neglecting the end effects), the magnetic vector potential $\mathbf{A}$ has only one component along the z-axis and depends only on r and θ coordinates. The resulting scalar potential $A_z(r,\theta)$ is solution of Laplace's equation. Using the method of the separation of variables in the ℓ^{th} annular subdomain and considering the current sheets to be expressed as (1), the scalar potential $A_{z,\ell}(r,\theta)$ reduces to,

$$\begin{aligned} A_{z,\ell}(r,\theta) = \sum_{h=1}^{+\infty} \Big[&\left(a_{\ell,h}r^{hP} + b_{\ell,h}r^{-hP}\right)\sin(hP\theta) \\ &+ \left(c_{\ell,h}r^{hP} + d_{\ell,h}r^{-hP}\right)\cos(hP\theta)\Big] \end{aligned} \quad (2)$$

where $a_{\ell,h}$, $b_{\ell,h}$, $c_{\ell,h}$ and $d_{\ell,h}$ are coefficients to be determined. Knowing $\mathbf{A}$ in each subdomain ℓ with permeability μ_ℓ, we can derive the magnetic flux density $\mathbf{B} = \nabla \times \mathbf{A}$ and the magnetic field strength $\mathbf{H} = \mu_\ell^{-1}\mathbf{B}$.

D. Boundary and interface conditions

At $r = 0$ ($\ell = 1$), the boundary condition is,

$$A_{z,1}(0,\theta) = 0, \quad \forall\theta \quad (3)$$

At $r = r_\ell$ ($1 \leq \ell < N$), the interface condition is,

$$\begin{cases} B_{r,\ell+1}(r_\ell,\theta) - B_{r,\ell}(r_\ell,\theta) = 0 \\ H_{\theta,\ell+1}(r_\ell,\theta) - H_{\theta,\ell}(r_\ell,\theta) = K_\ell(\theta), \end{cases} \quad \forall\theta \quad (4)$$

At $r = +\infty$ ($\ell = N$), the boundary condition is,

$$A_{z,N}(+\infty,\theta) = 0, \quad \forall\theta \quad (5)$$

The boundary and interface conditions (3)-(5) constitute a system of $4N$ equations that must be respected for each harmonic h. This system can be written as (6) of the form $\mathbf{Rx} = \mathbf{b}$. Being generic and explicit, the implementation of the current sheet model is straightforward [10].

E. Resolution for linear and nonlinear cases

In the linear case, by inverting (6) numerically for each harmonic, one can obtain the potential $A_{z,\ell}$ from (2). In the nonlinear case, the permeability μ_ℓ is a function of the magnetic flux density. In the current sheet model, the permeability μ_ℓ is modeled as uniform over the whole ℓ^{th} subdomain. If this is not a limitation in the linear case, it becomes problematic when considering a nonlinear BH curve for the iron. Indeed, to preserve the accuracy of the model one should select an effective permeability that can represent well the non-uniformly magnetized core. Here, the fixed-point iteration procedure with numerical damping depicted in Fig. 2 has been implemented. Inspired by [5], [6], [11], this improved scheme computes the effective rotor permeability as the minimum of the permeability along the mean radius of the domain. Note that at each iteration, the μ_ℓ of the subdomain ℓ is fixed. This allows us to solve a linear problem, where the different harmonics can be simply added.

III. Results

Because of its underlying modeling hypotheses, the current sheet model is naturally adapted to slotless wound rotor electrical machine. As an example, we investigate here the performance of the 12-pole 3-phase synchronous machine with concentrated windings shown in Fig 1. Such a structure has been recently proposed for multi-MW fully superconducting wind turbine generators [12], [13]. The suppression of magnetic teeth is often considered for superconducting machines to cope with their large magnetic field (up to several Tesla), with the difficulty of winding superconducting materials and to simplify the cooling system. The machine parameters are summarized in Appendix together with the iron BH curve. For the current sheet model, 13 harmonic terms are included. For validation purpose, the results are compared to a nonlinear 2-D finite element (FE) model carried out in COMSOL Multiphysics.

A. Equivalent current sheets

For the specific field winding arrangement of Fig. 1, $K_3(\theta)$ is given by (1) with,

$$\begin{aligned} K^s_{3,h} &= \frac{8N_f i_f}{\pi w_f h}\sin\left(\frac{\theta_{1f}+\theta_{2f}}{2}h\right)\sin\left(\frac{\theta_{1f}}{2}h\right)\cos(hP\alpha) \\ K^c_{3,h} &= -\frac{8N_f i_f}{\pi w_f h}\sin\left(\frac{\theta_{1f}+\theta_{2f}}{2}h\right)\sin\left(\frac{\theta_{1f}}{2}h\right)\sin(hP\alpha) \end{aligned} \quad (7)$$

where h is odd, α is the rotor mechanical angle, N_f is the number of turns of the rotor winding, i_f is the instantaneous

$$\underbrace{\begin{bmatrix} 0&1&0&0&0&0&0&0 \\ 0&0&0&1&0&0&0&0 \end{bmatrix}}_{R_{3,1}} \quad \ddots \quad \underbrace{\begin{bmatrix} 0&0&0&0&1&0&0&0 \\ 0&0&0&0&0&0&1&0 \end{bmatrix}}_{R_{4(N-2)+3,4(N-2)+1}}$$

$$\underbrace{\begin{bmatrix} R_{3,1} & & & 0 \\ & \ddots & & \\ & & R_{4(\ell-1)+3,4(\ell-1)+1} & \\ & & & \ddots \\ 0 & & & R_{4(N-2)+3,4(N-2)+1} \end{bmatrix}}_{\mathbf{R}_{4N\times 4N}} \times \underbrace{\begin{bmatrix} x_1 \\ x_2 \\ \vdots \\ x_{4(\ell-1)+1} \\ \vdots \\ x_{N-1} \\ x_N \end{bmatrix}}_{\mathbf{x}_{4N\times 1}} = \underbrace{\begin{bmatrix} 0 \\ 0 \\ K_3 \\ \vdots \\ K_{4(\ell-1)+3} \\ \vdots \\ K_{4(N-2)+3} \\ 0 \\ 0 \end{bmatrix}}_{\mathbf{b}_{4N\times 1}}$$

$$R_{4(\ell-1)+3,4(\ell-1)+1} = \begin{bmatrix} -r_\ell^{hP} & -r_\ell^{-hP} & 0 & 0 & r_\ell^{hP} & r_\ell^{-hP} & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & -r_\ell^{hP} & -r_\ell^{-hP} & 0 & 0 & r_\ell^{hP} & r_\ell^{-hP} \\ \frac{r_\ell^{hP}}{\mu_\ell} & -\frac{r_\ell^{-hP}}{\mu_\ell} & 0 & 0 & -\frac{r_\ell^{hP}}{\mu_{\ell+1}} & \frac{r_\ell^{-hP}}{\mu_{\ell+1}} & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & \frac{r_\ell^{hP}}{\mu_\ell} & -\frac{r_\ell^{-hP}}{\mu_\ell} & 0 & 0 & -\frac{r_\ell^{hP}}{\mu_{\ell+1}} & \frac{r_\ell^{-hP}}{\mu_{\ell+1}} \end{bmatrix}_{4\times 8}$$

$$x_{4(\ell-1)+1} = \begin{bmatrix} a_{\ell,h} \\ b_{\ell,h} \\ c_{\ell,h} \\ d_{\ell,h} \end{bmatrix}_{4\times 1} \qquad K_{4(\ell-1)+3} = \frac{1}{hP} \begin{bmatrix} 0 \\ 0 \\ K^s_{\ell,h} r_\ell \\ K^c_{\ell,h} r_\ell \end{bmatrix}_{4\times 1} \tag{6}$$

where $1 \leq \ell < N$.

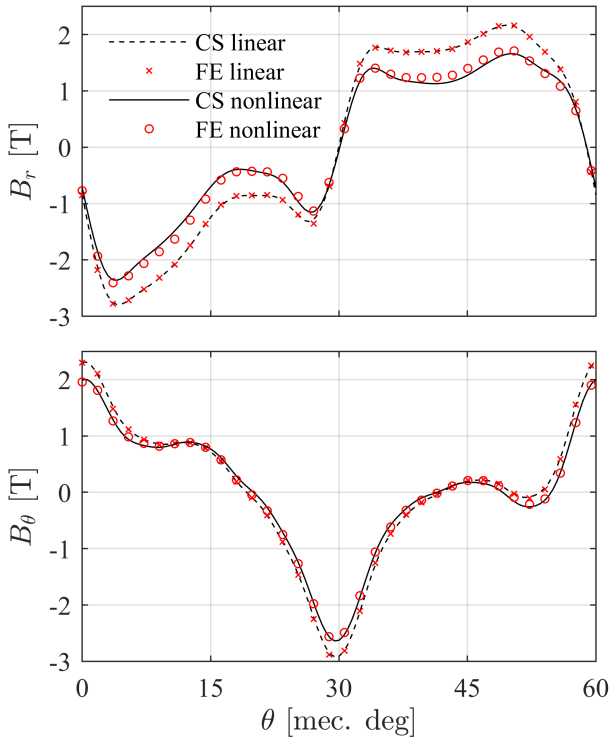


Fig. 3. Comparison of the air-gap (top) radial and (bottom) azimuthal components of the magnetic flux density for the current sheet (CS) model and the finite element (FE) model ($r = r_{Te}$).

field coil current, θ_{1f} is the coil width electrical angle, θ_{2f} is the coil aperture electrical angle and w_f is the coil width.

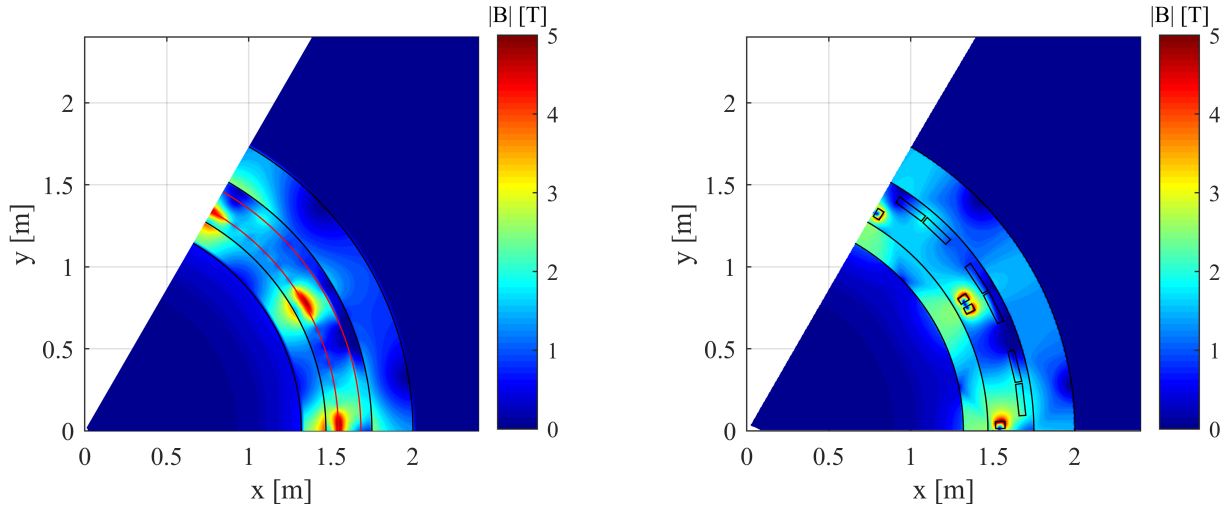
Similarly, for the specific armature winding arrangement of Fig. 1, $K_4(\theta)$ is given by (1) with,

$$\begin{aligned} K^s_{4,h} &= \frac{4N_a}{\pi w_a h} \sin\left(\frac{\theta_{1a}+\theta_{2a}}{2}h\right) \sin\left(\frac{\theta_{1a}}{2}h\right) \\ &\quad \times \left[i_a + i_b \cos\left(h\frac{2\pi}{3}\right) + i_c \cos\left(h\frac{4\pi}{3}\right)\right] \\ K^c_{4,h} &= -\frac{4N_a}{\pi w_a h} \sin\left(\frac{\theta_{1a}+\theta_{2a}}{2}h\right) \sin\left(\frac{\theta_{1a}}{2}h\right) \\ &\quad \times \left[i_b \sin\left(h\frac{2\pi}{3}\right) + i_c \sin\left(h\frac{4\pi}{3}\right)\right] \end{aligned} \tag{8}$$

where N_a is the number of turns of the armature windings, (i_a, i_b, i_c) are the instantaneous 3-phase currents, θ_{1a} is the coil width electrical angle, θ_{2a} is the coil aperture electrical angle and w_a is the coil width.

B. Load condition

For the load condition, the following parameters are used: $i_f = 5.03$ kA, $i_a = -1.53$ kA, $i_b = 2.465$ kA, $i_c = -0.935$ kA, $\alpha = -15^o$. The magnetic flux density in the air gap is plotted in Fig. 3. Fig. 4 shows the magnetic flux density distribution in the whole domain. In the linear case, the agreement between the current sheet model and the FE model is very good. In the nonlinear case, the agreement is good for the field in the air gap and fair for the field distribution. The discrepancy is mainly attributed to the impossibility of modeling the azimuthal variation of μ_ℓ for the current sheet



(a) CS nonlinear model (b) FE nonlinear

Fig. 4. Comparison of the magnetic flux density distribution for the current sheet (CS) model and the finite element (FE) model (load condition at $t = 0$ s).

model. The computation time for the nonlinear current sheet model is about 1.3 s (roughly 100 ms per iteration, <15 iterations) on an i7-5600 CPU @2.60 Ghz, 16 GB RAM. This is about 5 times faster than the nonlinear FE model, using symmetries to reduce the mesh to 9220 elements. Note that an efficient implementation of the current sheet model could lead to an even lower computing time [14].

IV. Conclusion

In comparison to previous current sheet models, the present derivation sets itself apart by its genericity. It accounts simultaneously for the rotor rotation and the time-dependent stator currents. In addition, the nonlinearity of the cores is included thanks to an iterative procedure. It provides the end user with a simple model that can be quickly implemented in any freely-available programing languages to carry out pre-design and optimization studies of slotless wound rotor electrical machines. It is adapted to a wide range of designs, including multiphase machines with multi-layer distributed or concentrated windings.

Appendix
Machine Parameters

r_1 = 1.320 m, r_2 = 1.470 m, r_3 = 1.546 m, r_4 = 1.683 m, r_5 = 1.750 m, r_6 = 2.000 m, $\mu_1 = \mu_3 = \mu_4 = \mu_5 = \mu_7 = \mu_0$, $\mu_2 = \mu_6 = \mu_0\mu_r(|\mathbf{B}|)$, $K_1 = K_2 = K_5 = K_6$ = 0, P = 6, h_f = 0.057 m, w_f = 0.042 m, θ_{1f} = 0.163 elec. rad, θ_{2f} = 2.703 elec. rad, h_a = 0.041 m, w_a = 0.194 m, θ_{1a} = 0.692 elec. rad, θ_{2a} = 0.664 elec. rad, L_{eff} = 1.540 m, N_a = 120, N_f = 100, r_{Te} = 1.619 m. (B, H) = [(1.0, 663), (1.1, 1067), (1.2, 1705), (1.3, 2463), (1.4, 3841), (1.5, 5425), (1.6, 7957), (1.7, 12298), (1.8, 20462), (1.9, 32169), (2.0, 61213), (2.1, 111408), (2.3, 500000), (2.6, 1500000), (5, 3978900)]. B in T, H in A·m^{-1}.

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