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A Low-Power MCU-based MPPT Architecture with a Fast Impedance Measurement for Broadband Piezoelectric Energy Harvesting

Nicolas Decroix, Pierre Gasnier, Adrien Morel, David Gibus and Adrien Badel

Abstract— This paper presents the combination of a fast and robust MPPT algorithm called TLCM (Two-Load Characterization Method) and an efficient energy harvesting interface called RSC (Resistive Short-Circuit) for broadband piezoelectric energy harvesting. The proposed architecture is implemented using a low-power microcontroller (STM32L4) with its associated discrete electronics. The TLCM consists of an embedded impedance measurement that computes the piezoelectric impedance after two successive phase and voltage measurements. It calculates the optimal load impedance as the complex conjugate of the generator output impedance. It is up to 13 times faster than classical Perturbation and Observation algorithms. The complex conjugate impedance is then emulated by the RSC interface: a flyback converter emulates a resistive load while a variable duration short-circuit following the zero voltage instant emulates a capacitive load. This two-parameters electrical interface allows a 9.4% harvested power bandwidth, which is 35% more than for a fixed resistor. The whole system is tested at 0.5m/s^2 peak ambient acceleration and between 26Hz to 30Hz in standalone operation. In those conditions, the proposed system showed an end-to-end efficiency in the 65% to 80% range while consuming $21.5\mu\text{W}$ to $28.5\mu\text{W}$, with a measurement duty cycle of 13%. It harvests a net maximum power of $157\mu\text{W}$ with a peak extracted power of $235\mu\text{W}$.

Index Terms— Piezoelectric vibration energy harvesting, Maximum power point tracking, Microcontroller, Power management circuit, Electrical interface, Complex impedance matching

I. INTRODUCTION

VIBRATIONAL energy harvesting has emerged as a promising technology for powering small electronic devices [1]. Indeed, in harsh or closed environments near vibration sources, scavenging vibration becomes a relevant alternative when batteries cannot be used [2]. However, efficiently converting this ambient energy into usable electrical power remains a significant challenge due to the unpredictable and varying nature of ambient vibrations. Piezoelectric

transduction, as opposed to electromagnetic or electrostatic transductions, offers the benefit of producing voltage ranges that are suitable for associated electronics (2V-20V), along with a relatively high power density even at small scales [3], [4]. Piezoelectric Energy Harvesters (PEH) generally rely on cantilever-type structures to amplify input vibrations through a mechanical resonator. One major challenge with this structure is the frequency mismatch between the ambient vibration and the resonator's natural frequency. To address this limitation, it is crucial to operate the PEH at its Maximum Power Point (MPP) by achieving impedance matching over a wide frequency band [5], to ensure optimal power extraction from the harvester.

Several solutions to enlarge the power bandwidth have been proposed in the state of the art. Mechanical systems that incorporate multiple resonant frequencies have been used; however, their power densities are often very low [6]. Nonlinear systems are also a promising solution, but their intricate dynamics and the presence of multiple co-existing orbits require the use of orbit control systems, which are energy hungry [7], [8]. Finally, systems that tune the resonant frequency by adapting the harvester's stiffness to align with the ambient frequency show great promise. To change this stiffness, some researches focused on mechanical tuning [9] by using small actuators at the expense of power density. It is also possible to use piezoelectric tuning [10], [11] by using two piezoelectric patches on a single harvester, one for the tuning and the other for harvesting energy but it often needs high actuation voltages ($>100\text{V}$). Electrical tuning approaches, on the contrary, do not require large volume, energy, nor voltage to tune the resonant frequency of PEH on large frequency range, and can be implemented with self-powered circuits [10], [12]. In this case, the electrical circuit has a significant impact on the mechanical dynamics of the system [13], [14], [15]. To that end, researches have been carried out to increase the coupling coefficient k_m^2 of PEH [12], [16], [17], to maximize the impact of electrical interfaces on the harvester's bandwidth. Indeed, it

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has been demonstrated that using low power electronics and efficient electrical interfaces can extend the frequency bandwidth by up to 36 % [16]. The operation principle of such a solution is based on two distinct but interdependent parts: the electrical interface and the Maximum Power Point Tracking (MPPT) algorithms which are both described below.

Tunable electrical interfaces are required in order to harvest energy over a wide frequency bandwidth. In the case of highly-coupled PEHs, it can be shown that the internal impedance of the harvester is predominantly resistive and capacitive overall, except between the short and open-circuit resonant frequencies (f_{SC} and f_{OC} respectively) where it becomes resistive and inductive. This is reminded in sections II.A. and II.B. Electrical interfaces based on nonlinear voltage treatments such as FTSECE [18] or SCSECE [19] were proposed for capacitive and inductive impedance matching, leading to the highest power envelopes in the state of the art [10]. However, those interfaces rely on the transfer of all the PEH energy on an inductor which introduces resistive losses [18]. Even if it exhibits a slightly narrower bandwidth, the SC-SEH interface [20] does not suffer from this problem as it relies on load emulation thank to a DC/DC converter working at a frequency higher than the mechanical frequency. In this case, electrical transients are very long due to the charging of a large intermediate storage capacitor. Moreover, it has been shown that these nonlinear interfaces can excite higher frequency modes of the PEH, which can lead to a decrease in the extracted power [16]. This effect can be largely mitigated with linear interfaces like the RC interface [21], which does not excites higher modes and has a power bandwidth similar to the SC-SEH and the SCSECE. Nevertheless, to be implemented in a real system, the RC interface needs a bank of discrete capacitors [22] to cover the useful frequency bandwidth of the PEH.

Additionally, efficient and adaptive MPPT algorithms also need to be implemented [23] in order to harvest power for various conditions (frequency and acceleration). Indeed, the optimality conditions of the previously discussed electrical interfaces heavily depends on the input frequency. Lookup tables (LUT) algorithms [24] consist in storing optimal parameters of a given interface for several frequencies but are not robust against PEH parameters variations. Perturb and Observe (P&O) algorithms [25], [26], [27] frequently modify the tuning parameters to converge toward the maximum power point, but suffer from long convergence times. Discrete optimal couple tracking (DOCT) algorithms [28] consist in testing several couples of parameters and measuring the output power for each of them, the optimal couple being chosen afterward. Finally, impedance measurement has been used in [29], denoted as “calibration technique” to measure the output impedance of a given PEH to find the optimal parameters. The drawback here is that the PEH should be exempt from external vibration while making the measurement, a condition that cannot be realistically enforced in real-world scenarios.

Although previous research has provided valuable insights on efficient electrical interfaces or functional algorithms, there is still a need for an architecture that satisfy the robustness, and

versatility criteria while providing a large power bandwidth. This paper proposes to respond to this dual need with both a novel and efficient electrical interface and a high-performance, robust MPPT algorithm. The proposed algorithm is implemented with a microcontroller unit (MCU) with very low power consumption, which is an interesting and more flexible alternative to ASICs as well as being more accessible for low volumes production. This paper is organized as follows: section II. provides elements about the modeling of PEH and the proposed TLCM algorithm. In section III., we detail the proposed RSC interface. The experimental setup and results are presented in section IV., followed by a discussion of the findings and a comparison to the state of art in section V.

II. IMPEDANCE MEASUREMENT BASED MPPT ALGORITHM

A. PEH modeling

As shown in Fig. 1, the PEH is modelled by a single degree of freedom (SDOF) linear mechanical resonator composed of an inertial mass M , a mechanical damper D and a spring of stiffness K giving a mechanical resonator of quality factor $Q = \sqrt{KM}/D$ having a natural angular frequency $\omega_{SC} = 2\pi f_{SC} = \sqrt{K/M}$.

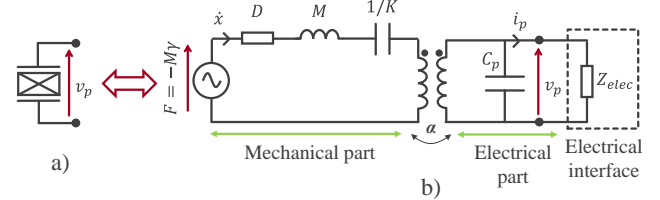


Fig. 1. a) Symbol of the PEH and b) complete circuit model of the PEH with its electrical interface.

Piezoelectric coupling is taken into account by the electromechanical coupling term α , which leads to the well-known electromechanical model, extensively described in [10], [12], [23], [30] and defined by (1).

$$\begin{cases} F = -M\gamma = M\ddot{x} + D\dot{x} + Kx + \alpha v_p \\ i_p = \alpha \dot{x} - C_p \dot{v}_p \end{cases} \quad (1)$$

The ambient acceleration γ is translated into a relative displacement x of the inertial mass with respect to the base. $k_m^2 = \alpha^2/KC_p$ is defined as the coupling coefficient of the PEH. The piezoelectric layer being strained, the resulting electrical charges are either stored in the piezoelectric material capacitance C_p or collected into an electrical interface whose input impedance is denoted Z_{elec} and which draws an electrical current i_p .

In this study, we assume that the impact of the dielectric losses is negligible, as well as the impact of the electrical interface on higher vibration modes of the PEH. Using the first-harmonic approximation [10], [23] which is known to be a reasonable assumption for high-Q factor resonators, the displacement of the resonator is assumed to remain sinusoidal ($x(t) = X_m \cos(\omega t)$), despite the non-sinusoidal shape of v_p .

The expression of the PEH internal impedance Z_{piezo} is

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given in (2), Ω being the normalized frequency ($\Omega = \omega/\omega_{SC}$). The expression of \widetilde{Z}_{piezo} , which corresponds to Z_{piezo} normalized by ωC_p , is also given in (3).

$$Z_{piezo} = \frac{1}{j\omega C_p} \left(\frac{1}{1 + \frac{k_m^2}{1 - \Omega^2 + j\Omega/Q}} \right) \quad (2)$$

$$\widetilde{Z}_{piezo} = Z_{piezo} \omega C_p \quad (3)$$

B. Optimal impedance

To maximize the harvested power under any frequency in sinusoidal operation, the electrical interface impedance (Z_{elec}) must closely match the complex conjugate of the piezoelectric harvester's impedance (Z_{piezo}). For example, Fig. 2 shows the normalized real and imaginary part of the impedance \widetilde{Z}_{piezo} as well as the electrical extracted power for an optimal Resistive Capacitive (RC) interface ($Z_{elec} = R_{opt} // C_{opt}$) compared with an optimal resistive interface ($Z_{elec} = R_{opt}$) [21].

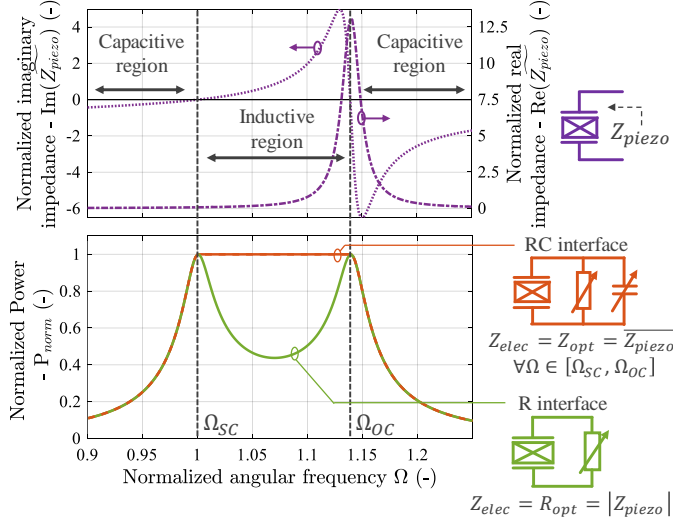


Fig. 2. Normalized imaginary part of the PEH impedance with normalized extracted power ($k_m^2 = 0.3, Q = 50$).

When working in real conditions, the impedance Z_{piezo} can vary because of external events like temperature variations or aging for example. Hence, there is a need for an algorithm that finds the optimal impedance (*i.e.* \overline{Z}_{piezo} , the complex conjugate of Z_{piezo}) and adapt the optimal parameters for a given electrical interface, enabling impedance matching for a wide bandwidth.

C. Proposed MPPT algorithm: the TLCM

The proposed MPPT algorithm is based on a characterization method called the ‘‘Two load Characterization Method’’ (TLCM) [31] proposed in a MPPT context, which relies on an embedded impedance measurement. As depicted in Fig. 3, the algorithm successively performs two types of measurements when connected to two different electrical loads R_1 and R_2 : i)

measuring the phase difference (Φ_1, Φ_2) between the input acceleration and the PEH voltage (v_p), and ii) determining the PEH voltage amplitudes (V_1, V_2).

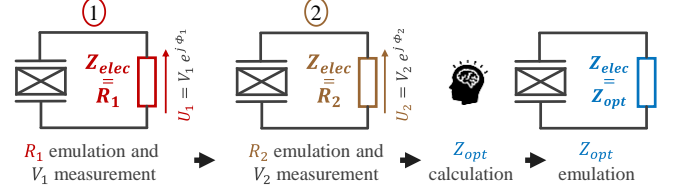


Fig. 3. $V_{1,2}$ and $\Phi_{1,2}$ measurement.

At the end of this measurement phase, the complex voltages $U_1 = V_1 e^{j\Phi_1}$ and $U_2 = V_2 e^{j\Phi_2}$ are determined. Consequently, the complex impedance of the generator Z_{piezo} is calculated thanks to (4), following the methodology outlined in [31].

$$Z_{piezo} = \frac{(U_2 - U_1)R_1R_2}{(U_1R_2 - U_2R_1)} \quad (4)$$

At this stage, the system identifies the optimal impedance Z_{opt} to emulate, which is the complex conjugate of Z_{piezo} , as given in (5).

$$Z_{elec} = Z_{opt} = \overline{Z_{piezo}} \quad (5)$$

The selection of R_1 and R_2 should adhere to the recommendations in [31], suggesting resistance values should be on either side of $1/C_p\omega_{SC}$ in the absence of specific harvester knowledge. It is important to highlight that the energy harvesting process continues even during this measurement phase. It is therefore preferable that the measurement loads correspond approximately to the optimal impedance, Z_{opt} , to ensure optimal power extraction. Since resistive loads would lead to energy dissipation rather than harvesting, a practical implementation of this algorithm is discussed in section IV. The next section details the emulation of Z_{opt} to efficiently extract electrical power from the PEH.

III. RSC ELECTRICAL INTERFACE

A. Operation and analytical modelling of the RSC interface

The proposed Resistive Short Circuit (RSC) interface is similar to the RC interface [21], [22] with the difference that a short-circuit (SC), whose duration is tunable, is performed at the zero PEH voltage instants instead of using a capacitor. When associated with the RSC interface, the PEH either operates in SC condition, or is connected to a resistive load. Fig. 4 depicts the operating principle and the ideal waveforms of the RSC interface as a function of the normalized angular frequency $\theta = \omega t$ with ϕ_0 the starting angle of the SC, ϕ_{sc} the ending angle of the short-circuit and $\Delta\phi_{RSC} = \phi_{sc} - \phi_0$ the angular duration of the SC.

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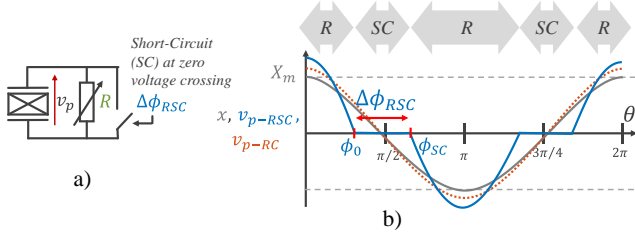


Fig. 4. a) Operating principle and b) ideal waveforms of the RSC interface showing the beam displacement (gray), the PEH voltage with RSC (blue) and the equivalent PEH voltage with RC (orange).

This SC advantageously induces a phase shift on the PEH voltage to emulate the imaginary part of Z_{opt} in order to compensate for the reactive part of Z_{piezo} between the short-circuit (f_{SC}) and open-circuit (f_{OC}) frequencies. Other SC-based electrical interfaces emulating a capacitive behavior have already been proposed and are thoroughly detailed in [10], [21]. Unlike these latter electrical interfaces, the proposed RSC interface does not rely on a resonant transfer of all the energy from the piezoelectric capacitor to the load via an inductor. Instead, the energy is transferred in several steps, which reduces the size of the inductor and improves conversion efficiency. A dedicated and practical implementation of this electrical interface is described in section IV. Fig. 4 b) also shows a comparison with the RC interface: for the same load and frequency, both interfaces can give the same power output because they emulate almost the same electrical damping and stiffness.

In order to express the average extracted power over a full mechanical period, the first harmonic expression of the output voltage is used (6), following the method described in [10], [18], [30], which enables to identify the in-phase and out-of-phase parts of the PEH voltage, denoted ε_D and ε_K respectively.

$$v_p = \frac{\alpha}{C_p} x(\varepsilon_K + j\varepsilon_D) \quad (6)$$

The expression of the normalized extracted power P_{norm} can then be expressed by (7) and the expression of the extracted power of the PEH by (8) (from [30]).

$$P_{norm} = \frac{4k_m^2 \varepsilon_D \frac{\Omega}{Q}}{(1 - \Omega^2 + k_m^2 \varepsilon_K)^2 + \left(\frac{\Omega}{Q} + k_m^2 \varepsilon_D\right)^2} \quad (7)$$

$$P_{ext} = P_{norm} P_{max} = P_{norm} \frac{M^2 \gamma^2}{8D} \quad (8)$$

When connected to a resistive load, the expression of the PEH voltage v_p is found from Ohm's law, $i_p = v_p/R$, with R the resistive load connected the PEH. Solving the second differential equation of (1) in continuous sinusoidal operation, the PEH voltage is expressed over half a mechanical period by (9) and (10).

$$\begin{cases} v_p(\theta) = -A \sin(\theta) + B \cos(\theta) + c(\theta), \forall \theta \in [\phi_0, \phi_{sc}] \\ v_p(\theta) = 0, \forall \theta \in [\phi_{sc}, \phi_0 + \Delta\phi_{sc}] \end{cases} \quad (9)$$

With:

$$\begin{cases} A = \frac{\alpha X_m}{C_p} \left[\frac{r\Omega}{1 + (r\Omega)^2} \right] \\ B = \frac{\alpha X_m}{C_p} \left[\frac{(r\Omega)^2}{1 + (r\Omega)^2} \right] \\ c(\theta) = [A \sin(\phi_{sc}) - B \cos(\phi_{sc})] e^{\frac{\phi_{sc} - \theta}{r\Omega}} \end{cases} \quad (10)$$

Where r is the normalized resistance ($r = R\omega_0 C_p$). From the expression of the PEH voltage, the expression of ε_D and ε_K are obtained by calculating the first Fourier series coefficients of the PEH voltage (see Appendix A). Unfortunately, no analytical solution exists for the expression of the optimal ϕ_0 . As a result, it becomes necessary to numerically determine ϕ_0 and, consequently, the optimal short circuit duration $\Delta\phi_{RSC-opt}$ and normalized resistance $r_{RSC-opt}$. A workaround is proposed in the following section to address this issue.

Fig. 5 shows the performances obtained from the analytical model of the RSC interface compared with the classical RC interface and the resistive only R interface [10], [21]. For R, RC and RSC, we superimpose the normalized power P_{norm} and their respective optimal parameters: r_{R-opt} for R, $r_{RSC-opt}$, $\Delta\phi_{RSC-opt}$ for RSC and r_{RC-opt} , c_{RC-opt} for RC with c the normalized capacitance $c = C/(C + C_p)$. The PEH, whose parameters are the same as those used in section II., exhibits a high figure of merit ($k_m^2 Q = 15$) [30]. Fig. 5 also gives the simulated results of the RSC interface, very close to the analytical ones, obtained from a transient simulation using Matlab/Simulink. It shows that the RC and RSC interfaces share the same performances in terms of bandwidth and maximum extracted power (with a common notation $P_{RC/RSC}$).

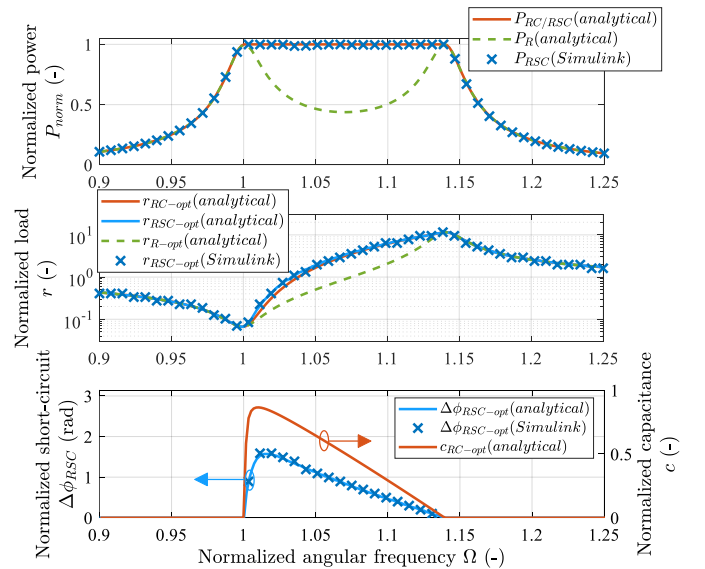


Fig. 5. Normalized extracted power P_{norm} for the RC, (analytical), R (analytical) and RSC (analytical and Simulink)

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interfaces and their optimal parameters for $k_m^2 = 0.3$, $Q = 50$, $f_{SC} = 26.9$ Hz, $C_p = 25$ nF.

B. Optimal parameters calculation

We can see in Fig. 5 that the analytical optimal load for the RC interface (r_{RC-opt}) is very close to the RSC optimal load ($r_{RSC-opt}$). As we cannot obtain a closed-form expression of $r_{RSC-opt}$, we fix $R_{RSC-opt}$ to R_{RC-opt} as shown in (11). Contrary to the $R_{RSC-opt}$ load, the expression of R_{RC-opt} can easily be obtained as it is the resistance value that satisfies the equality between the real part of Z_{piezo} and the real part of the electrical interface Z_{elec} . One can mention that the power decrease introduced by this approximation increases with k_m^2 , but it remains relatively small. As a matter of example, it remains less than 4 % with $k_m^2 Q = 15$ only for a very limited range of the harvesting bandwidth.

$$R_{RSC-opt} \approx R_{RC-opt} = 1/\text{Re}(1/Z_{piezo}) \quad (11)$$

As for the resistance, there is no closed-form solution for the optimal short-circuit duration $\Delta\phi_{RSC-opt}$. On the basis of simulations, we can conjecture that there is only one optimal short circuit $\Delta\phi_{RSC-opt}$ per normalized impedance value \widetilde{Z}_{piezo} on the useful frequency range $[\Omega_{SC} = 1, \Omega_{OC} = \sqrt{1 + k_m^2}]$. This means that at any frequency, a calculation of the impedance \widetilde{Z}_{piezo} can lead to obtaining $\Delta\phi_{RSC-opt}$ and thus reaching the maximum extracted power $P_{norm-max}$ (knowing $R_{RSC-opt}$).

We can express this optimal solution as a function of $\text{Re}(\widetilde{Z}_{piezo})$ and $\text{Im}(\widetilde{Z}_{piezo})$. This leads to Fig. 6 which is a harvester-independent map containing the optimal short-circuit angles $\Delta\phi_{RSC-opt}$ corresponding to the normalized impedance \widetilde{Z}_{piezo} . The map shown in Fig. 6 is limited to values of \widetilde{Z}_{piezo} corresponding to PEHs whose characteristic values k_m^2 and Q vary such that the product $k_m^2 Q$ is in the range 4 to 140, covering an extensive spectrum of existing PEHs. This encompasses the range of the most coupled PEHs found in the current SoA [16]. Here, we also presume that there is no practical benefit in implementing complex impedance matching for a PEH with a $k_m^2 Q$ figure of merit less than four.

In operation, for a specific harvester, the system only needs to know the value of the intrinsic capacitance C_p of the PEH (which is not supposed to vary during the PEH's lifetime), the current pulsation frequency ω and the harvester's impedance Z_{piezo} (obtained from the TLCM) to deduce the right optimal parameters of the RSC electrical interface. This mapping method is a crucial point in the operation of the proposed system. Indeed, this map, which is known by the algorithm before the system's start-up, is not restrictive to a given PEH (no need for k_m^2 or Q), and only its intrinsic capacitance C_p must be known beforehand.

This approach, based on measuring the impedance of the piezoelectric generator around an operating point and emulating the optimal load impedance, is robust to PEH aging and certain nonlinearities. The only assumption is the linearity of the given

harvester around an operating point. Section IV. describes how the proposed algorithm and electrical interface are implemented in a concrete manner, *i.e.* with an MCU-based power management circuit. Section V. will later provide the experimental validation.

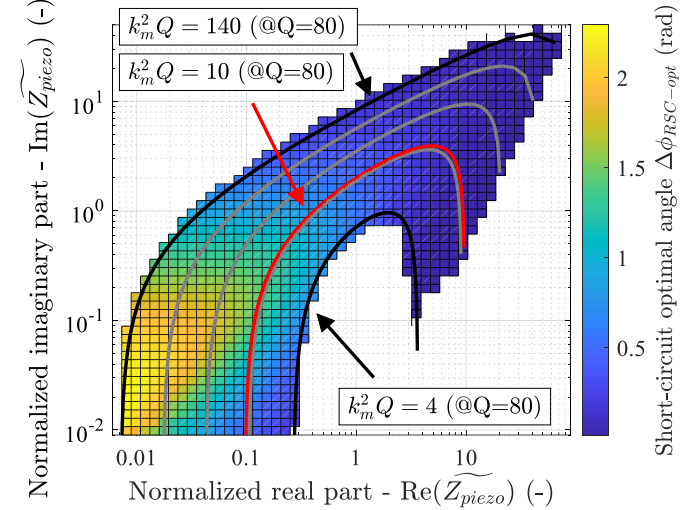


Fig. 6. 50x50 map of short-circuit angle versus normalized impedance \widetilde{Z}_{piezo} . Lines for specific values of $k_m^2 Q$ are drawn on top of the map. Background color is equivalent to $\Delta\phi_{RSC-opt} = 0$ rad. Characteristics of our harvester, presented in section V, are shown in red.

IV. IMPLEMENTATION

A. Global architecture

To implement the proposed architecture, *i.e.*, the aforementioned MPPT algorithm (TLCM method) along with its electrical interface (RSC), we used a MCU surrounded by discrete electronics. The choice of using off-the-shelf components (COTS) can be viewed as either i) a more flexible and less complex solution than a specific ASIC or ii) as relevant in specific applications that have not yet reached a mass market. As depicted in Fig. 7 additional electronics, including a low-power accelerometer used to measure the phase difference between the PEH voltage and the input acceleration, two comparators as well as an external low-power clock, surround a STM32L412 MCU (ST Microelectronics). The external clock is feeding independent peripherals of the MCU for low-power purposes. Concerning the power path, the PEH is connected to a full bridge rectifier (FBR) followed by a Flyback converter controlled by the MCU in Discontinuous Current Mode (DCM). The Flyback does not only emulate the chosen resistive load (R becomes $R_{DC/DC}$) at the primary side (V_{rect}) but it also transfers and converts the electrical power to the storage element (V_{store}). Here, the emulation of a resistive load along with a rectifier does not change the optimal values of the RSC interface (without rectifier) nor does it change the calculation of Z_{piezo} with the TLCM. The SC function is performed by the MCU which controls the two NMOS K_1 and K_2 at the bottom of the FBR. A load emulation waveform with SC is shown Fig.

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8. The subsequent sections provide a more in-depth exploration of these functions.

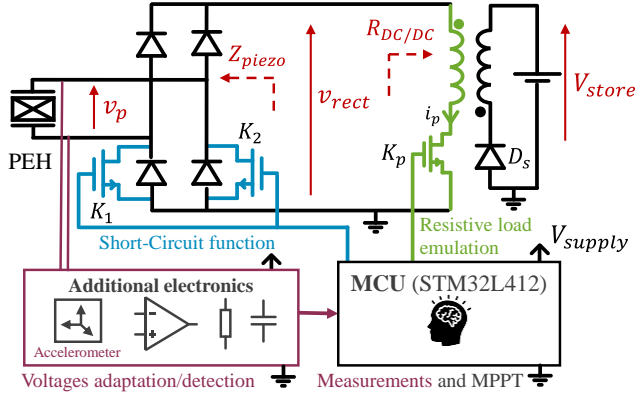


Fig. 7. Global architecture of the proposed Power Management Circuit.

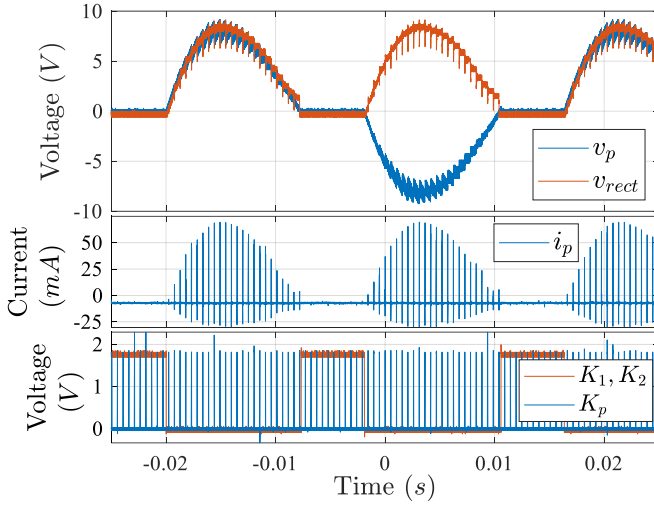


Fig. 8. Measured voltage and current waveforms of the RSC interface at $f_{input} = 27.5$ Hz with $R_{DC/DC} = 100$ k Ω ($t_{on} = 10$ μ s, $f_{DC/DC} = 2$ kHz) and $\Delta\phi_{RSC} = 1$ rad

B. Impedance emulation

1) Resistive load emulation

The real part of the optimal impedance Z_{opt} is emulated thanks to a Flyback converter operating in DCM mode, as given in (12) which gives the resulting resistive load $R_{DC/DC}$ emulated by the Flyback [32], [33].

$$R_{DC/DC} = \frac{2L}{f_{DC/DC} t_{on}^2} \quad (12)$$

With L the inductance value of the primary side (10 mH, RN216-1-02-10M), $f_{DC/DC}$ the PWM switching frequency of the Flyback (K_p control) and t_{on} the on-time of the PWM. The Flyback topology was selected for its simplicity in switch operation, enabling the use of low voltage levels for the control signals. Moreover, it produces a positive output voltage, and its emulated resistance remains independent of both the input and output voltages [32], [33]. In our work, the value of $R_{DC/DC}$ is adjusted from varying the switching frequency $f_{DC/DC}$, while

the on-time is maintained constant. Compared to its varying- t_{on} counterpart, variable frequency PWM enables a lower input clock speed for the same resistance resolution [34], thereby reducing power consumption. Fixing $t_{on} = 10$ μ s, the system emulates resistive load values within the 10 k Ω to 1 M Ω range for $f_{DC/DC}$ in the 200 Hz to 20 kHz range. As shown in Fig. 9, the PWM is generated by the MCU from an independent low-power timer (Timer 1), fed by the external low-power 100 kHz clock (OM-0100-C8) to reduce the overall power consumption.

As detailed in section II., we need to emulate the measurement loads R_1 and R_2 . As a design trade-off (between energy harvesting and precision of measurement) and for ease of implementation, we will set these loads to the boundaries of the emulated resistor range ($R_1 = 10$ k Ω and $R_2 = 1$ M Ω) as a way to encompass the PEH impedance for the entire operating frequency range.

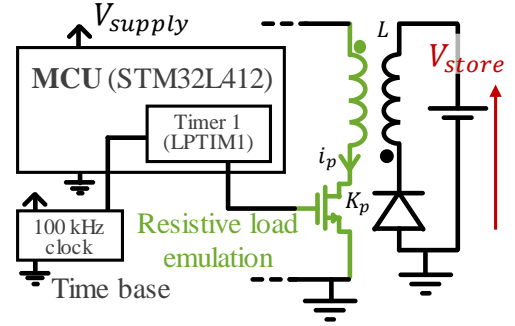


Fig. 9. Resistive load emulation part of the proposed implementation.

2) Short-Circuit function

As described in section III., the imaginary part of the optimal impedance Z_{opt} is emulated thanks to a controlled duration SC starting at the zero-crossing voltage instant. This SC function (Fig. 10), performed by turning K_1 and K_2 on is also controlled thanks to a low-power timer (Timer 2) of the MCU fed by the 100 kHz clock mentioned previously, giving a 10 μ s time resolution for the SC duration. A low-power comparator (TS881) is used to detect the zero crossing of the PEH voltage and to launch the SC function.

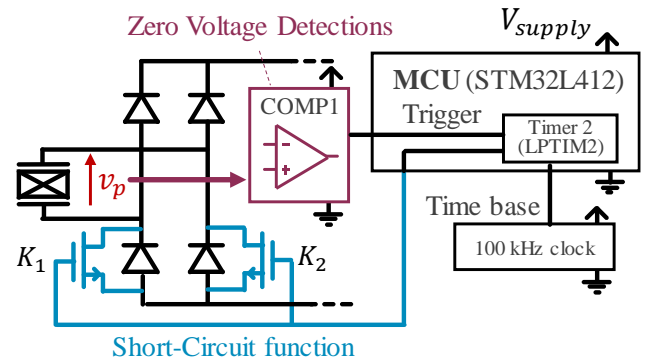


Fig. 10. Implementation of the SC function.

The proposed RSC interface significantly improves the compactness of the power management circuit stage,

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eliminating the need for a bank of discrete capacitors to compensate for the reactive part of Z_{piezo} . Furthermore, the hardware choices allow the emulation of a complex impedance in a very low-power manner, *i.e.* below $22 \mu\text{W}$ under 1.8 V . The measurements results are given in section V.

C. Measurements needed for the TLCM

1) Phase measurement

To estimate the optimal impedance Z_{opt} to emulate, the proposed MPPT algorithm must evaluate the phase difference between the input acceleration and the PEH voltage. As shown in Fig. 11, the phase difference is obtained by measuring the duration between two zero crossing detectors (ZCD): one from of the input acceleration (COMP2) and the other from the PEH voltage (COMP1). To that end, a low-power analog accelerometer (ADXL354) feeds COMP2 only during the measurement phase (consuming $\sim 150 \mu\text{A}$ when activated). The duration between COMP1 and COMP2's rising edges is measured thanks to a timer (Timer 3). Its time base is the internal clock of the MCU reduced to its minimum value (200 kHz) for a low-power purpose, giving a time resolution of $5 \mu\text{s}$.

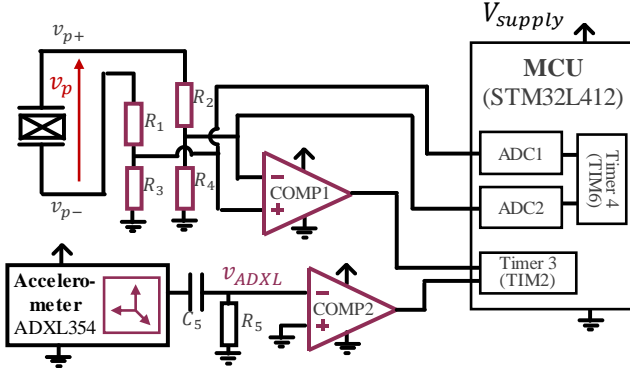


Fig. 11. Timing measurements for the proposed MCU-based implementation of the TLCM.

2) Voltage measurement

To determine the optimal impedance Z_{opt} , the proposed MPPT algorithm must also evaluate the PEH voltage. As seen in Fig. 11, the MCU measures the PEH voltage v_p (*i.e.* before the full bridge rectifier) by means of a differential voltage measurement ($v_p = v_{p+} - v_{p-}$). The reason why the rectified voltage was not used is that a small portion of the energy remains at the primary side of the Flyback after its opening, leading to incorrect measurements of v_{rect} [35]. The voltage measurements are triggered by a MCU timer (Timer 4) at 1 kHz and two voltage dividers reduce v_{p+} and v_{p-} to appropriate voltage levels (*i.e.*, below 1.8 V). One should mention that the system is measuring v_p and not the load voltage v_{rect} , thus we need to subtract the diode voltage drop to have an image of v_{rect} (the diode voltage drop cannot be neglected here).

3) Optimal parameters calculation

The calculation of the optimal parameters of the RSC interface (*i.e.*, $R_{RSC-opt}$ and $\Delta\phi_{RSC-opt}$) is performed by the MCU right after the measurement phase. Having an estimation

of the PEH impedance Z_{piezo} (from the TLCM voltage and phase measurement), the current vibration frequency (measured during the phase measurement step) and the PEH capacitance C_p (pre-stored value), the MCU calculates the optimal parameters thanks to the harvester-independent map detailed before (see section III.). The PEH capacitance is the only harvester dependent value that must be known and stored by the MCU before startup. In practical terms, those parameters are pre-stored in a 2d array as unsigned 8 bits integers (50×50 size). The values of real and imaginary normalized impedance \widetilde{Z}_{piezo} are stored as floating-point numbers (2×50 size). This leads to an overall small size array of 5.7 kB , *i.e.* $\sim 15 \%$ of the total RAM of the STM32L412.

D. MCU states

To reach a very low power consumption compatible with the PEH output powers, we performed low-level programming to optimize the power modes of the MCU. Fig. 12 describes the temporality of the power modes and their link to the system's cadence and states. The duration given for each power mode is specific to the harvester that will be introduced in the next section and should be adapted for other harvesters (especially t_{TLCM}). As seen in Fig. 12, the MCU alternates between two different states: the TLCM state (t_{TLCM}), during which the optimal impedance is calculated and the optimal impedance state ($t_{optimal-z}$), during which the harvested energy is maximized. The TLCM duty-cycle DC_{TLCM} (see (13)) is fixed to 13% in this article.

$$DC_{TLCM} = t_{TLCM} / (t_{optimal-z} + t_{TLCM}) \quad (13)$$

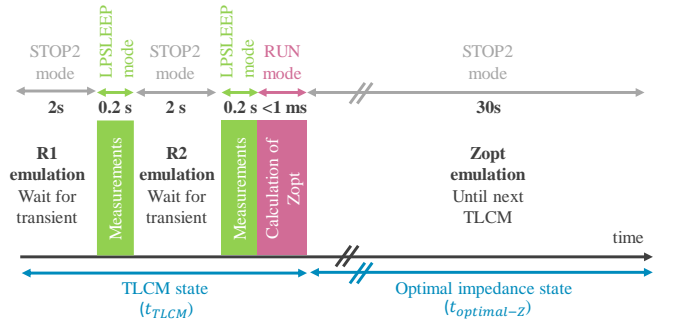


Fig. 12. Temporal description of the proposed MPPT algorithm with its associated low-power modes (not to scale).

When the TLCM state is not executed, the MCU remains in very low power mode, *i.e.* the lowest power mode of the MCU while retaining RAM (“STOP2” mode of the STM32: $\sim 0.7 \mu\text{A}$ @ 1.8 V). During this state, the MCU is nonetheless capable of generating the PWM signals to emulate the optimal impedance Z_{opt} with the RSC interface (“Optimal impedance state” in Fig. 12). After a specified refresh time (see Fig. 12), an internal low-power oscillator wakes the MCU up, switching to the TLCM state. In this state, the MCU operates mainly in “STOP2” mode. It then controls the successive emulation of the two different measurement resistive loads (R_1 and R_2) required to calculate the PEH impedance. As the transients of the system are governed by the mechanical quality factor of the system, the

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MCU must wait several mechanical periods before reaching a mechanical steady state (2 s in our case). After two transients for resistors R_1 and R_2 (see Fig. 12), the MCU makes the phase and voltage measurements in low-power mode (“LPSLEEP” mode of the STM32: $\sim 18.5 \mu\text{A}$ @ 1.8 V). Right after, computational tasks to calculate Z_{PEH} are performed with the lowest dynamic power consumption of the MCU (“RUN mode”: $79 \mu\text{A}/\text{MHz}$ @ 1.8 V) for a period lower than 1 ms.

V. EXPERIMENTAL RESULTS

A. Experimental setup and testing board

The performance of the proposed MPPT algorithm was evaluated with a highly coupled PEH (Fig. 13 a) having a coupling coefficient $k_m^2 = 13\%$. Following the method described in [12], its parameters (Table I.) are determined from its impedance measured with an impedance analyzer (Keysight E4990A).

Table I. Characteristics of the PEH

Piezoelectric capacitance (C_p)	41.9 nF
Effective mass (M)	15.2 g
Short-circuit resonant frequency (f_{sc})	26.9 Hz
Spring constant (K)	434.2 N/m
Damping coefficient (D)	33.8 mN/m/s
Electromechanical coupling coeff. (k_m^2)	13 %

The test board used to test the MPPT (Fig. 13 b) embeds the microcontroller and all the associated hardware (see section IV.). The total size of the circuit board is 176 cm^2 but the useful area on the board is relatively small (less than 14 cm^2) as it contains other unimplemented features for testing purposes that could be removed in a future compact version of the circuit.

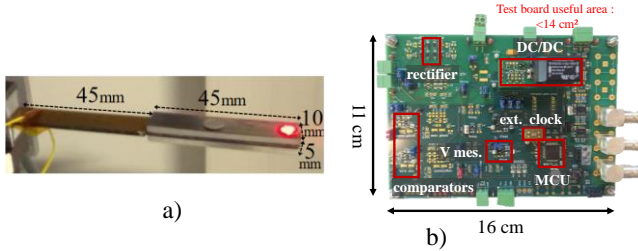


Fig. 13. a) PMN-PT based PEH with b) associated test board.

A test bench was built in association with a dSPACE control platform and Matlab/Simulink (Fig. 14). This test bench was used to i) experimentally verify the operation of the RSC electrical interface (section V.B.) and to ii) monitor the operation of the autonomous MPPT and RSC interface inside the test board (sections V.C. and V.D.). The dSPACE platform is linked to the STM32L4 MCU via a serial port. An electromagnetic shaker (K2075E-HT) generates the input acceleration. It is driven in closed loop by the dSPACE platform to regulate the input acceleration which is measured by an accelerometer (ICP 352C68). The dSPACE platform is controlled by a dedicated Matlab script that defines the acceleration level and frequency. To check the proper operation

of the MPPT algorithm, the dSPACE board also acquires all the useful signals (v_p , v_{rect} , v_{ADXL} , v_{ICP} , comparators outputs v_{comp}) during the experiments.

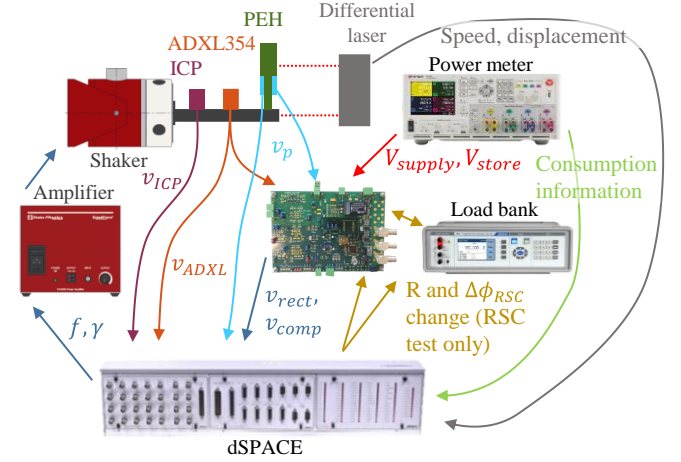


Fig. 14. Representation of the experimental setup used for vibration testing: RSC interface testing (test board with load bank) and autonomous mode (test board only). Other laboratory equipment is for monitoring purposes only.

The power extracted from the PEH P_{rect} is measured thanks to the dSPACE platform (only for section V.B.), we assume that the power lost to the diode bridge is negligible. A N6705B DC Power Analyzer was used to measure the power consumption of the circuit P_{supply} as well as the harvested power P_{store} and hence the efficiency of the Flyback converter. The experiments have been done for an acceleration of 0.5 m/s^2 peak, over 31 excitation frequencies ranging from 26 Hz to 30 Hz.

B. Extracted power with the RSC electrical interface

The RSC interface was first validated experimentally without using the MPPT algorithm by testing different parameters ($\Delta\phi_{RSC}$, R) with discrete resistive loads. The short-circuit is emulated by the MCU while the load is emulated by a M642 resistance box. A post processing was performed to keep the optimal parameters maximizing the extracted power P_{rect} . For comparison, the same experiment was accomplished for the R and RC interfaces. In the case of the R interface, the optimal resistance values correspond to the absolute value of the PEH output impedance $R = |Z_{piezo}|$. These results are plotted on Fig. 15. The experimental optimal parameters and power results are in quite good agreement with the ones predicted by the linear model. The difference (mainly on the power, and before the first resonant frequency for the short-circuit angle) undoubtedly comes from non-linear behaviors in the PEH (softening behavior probably due to the use of PMN-PT material [12], [36]). The experimental power response of the RC and RSC interfaces show their ability to compensate for the inductive part of the PEH between $f_{sc} = 26.9 \text{ Hz}$ and $f_{oc} = 28.6 \text{ Hz}$.

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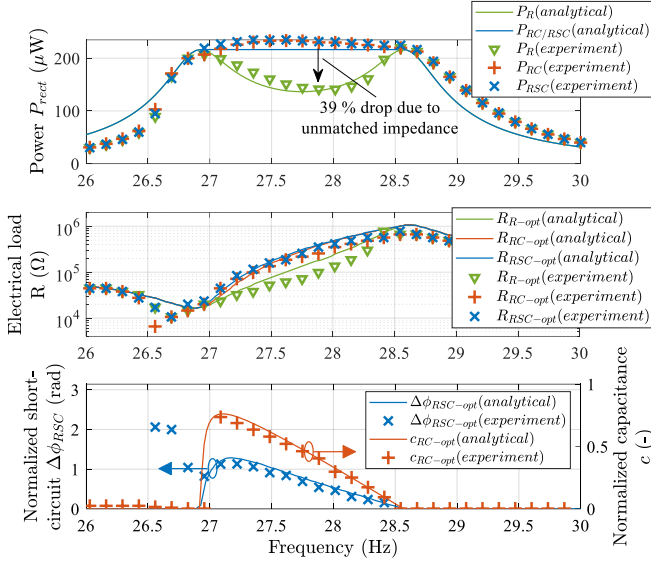


Fig. 15. Analytical and experimental optimal extracted power (P_{rect}) for the R, RC and proposed RSC electrical interface.

C. Temporal measurements and power consumption of the proposed MPPT

This section presents an illustrative case of the temporal behavior exhibited by the proposed MPPT in response to a change in frequency within the useful PEH bandwidth. The system is fully self-powered and the dSPACE board is only used to record useful signals and control the acceleration. As depicted in the measurements of Fig. 16, we manually adjusted the input frequency at time 47 s, reducing it from $f_A = 28.75$ Hz to $f_B = 27.75$ Hz. Immediately following this frequency change, the harvested power (P_{store}) drops by $\sim 74\%$, indicating that the optimal parameters established for the RSC interface at f_A were no longer optimal for f_B . Indeed, referring to Fig. 15, the previously identified optimal parameters at f_A were approximately $R_{DC/DC} = R_{RSC-opt} = 454$ k Ω with no SC ($\Delta\phi_{RSC} = \Delta\phi_{RSC-opt} = 0$) whereas the new optimal parameters for f_B are $R_{DC/DC} = R_{RSC-opt} = 526$ k Ω with $\Delta\phi_{RSC} = \Delta\phi_{RSC-opt} = 0.9$ rad. Subsequently, after the next refresh period around time $t = 52$ s, the system transitions into the TLCM state, triggering a recalculation of the optimal impedance as well as the new parameters, leading to a subsequent increase in the harvested power, close to the maximum power for f_B , *i.e.* around 160 μ W.

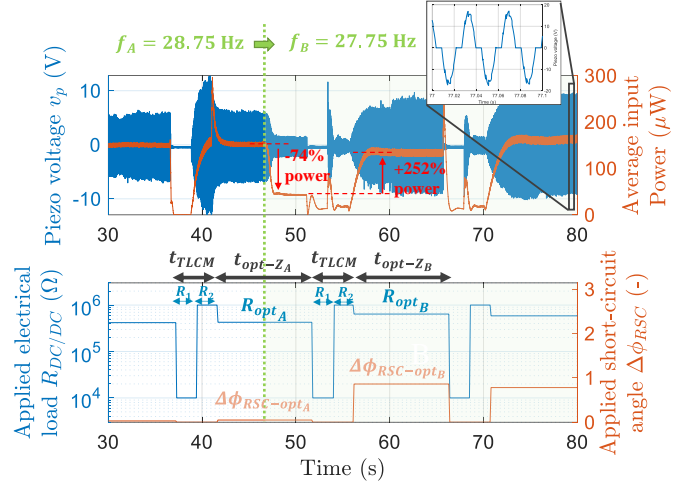


Fig. 16. Example of measured waveforms for the proposed architecture (MPPT + RSC interface). PEH voltage v_p and harvested power on V_{store} (top plot), as well as applied parameters $R_{DC/DC}$ and $\Delta\phi_{RSC}$ (bottom plot), as a function of time, if the input frequency is reduced from 28.75 Hz to 27.75 Hz ($DC_{TLCM} = 30\%$ for greater figure clarity).

Fig. 17 shows the power consumption breakdown of the whole system for two different resistances $R_{DC/DC}$ emulated by the Flyback. During the optimal impedance state (STOP2 mode), the system consumes around 22 μ W ($R_{DC/DC} = 10$ k Ω) and 15 μ W ($R_{DC/DC} = 1$ M Ω). This consumption indeed depends on the PWM frequency of the flyback converter. One should mention that the SC function has a negligible impact on the power consumption. The power consumption attributed to the MPPT function (*i.e.* the TLCM) represents 23% to 31% of the total power consumption P_{supply} of our system when activated with $DC_{TLCM} = 13\%$.

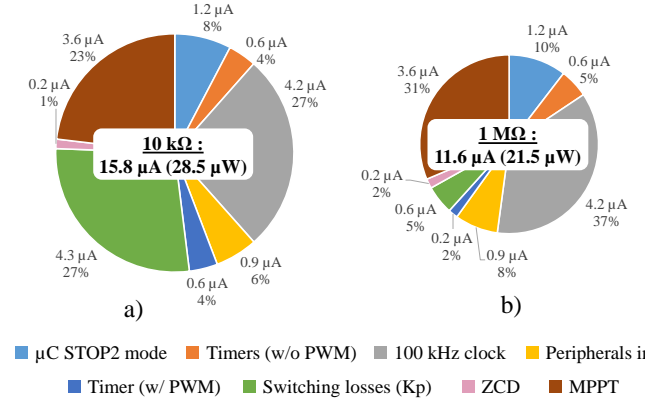


Fig. 17. Overall power consumption P_{supply} of the proposed circuit when the flyback converter emulates a) a 10 k Ω load and b) a 1 M Ω load ($DC_{TLCM} = 13\%$).

D. Harvested power with the proposed MPPT

To quantify the harvested power and bandwidth performances of the proposed MPPT autonomously, the same experiment was reproduced within the whole useful frequency band of the PEH. In this case, we change the input frequency

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from 26 Hz to 30 Hz by steps of 0.25 Hz. The average harvested power (P_{store}) is measured for the combined TLCM and optimal impedance states. Fig. 18 shows the harvested power and power consumption (P_{supply}) of the whole system. The power consumed by the system is always lower than $28.5 \mu\text{W}$. The harvested power peaks at $178 \mu\text{W}$ giving a minimal usable power of about $150 \mu\text{W}$. For comparison, the measured rectified extracted power (P_{rect}) obtained with the optimal parameters (discrete $R_{RSC-opt}$ and $\Delta\phi_{RSC-opt}$) is plotted, underlying the conversion efficiency of the Flyback converter ($\eta_{DC/DC} = P_{store}/P_{rect}$). This efficiency goes from $\sim 65\%$ to $\sim 80\%$. The obtained bandwidth of 9.4% , while depending on the harvester properties (k_m^2 and Q), was not decreased by the combination of our circuit with the MCU-based MPPT algorithm (compared to the optimal extracted power). Only the maximum power was reduced due to the converter's efficiency and power consumption of the system. Fig. 18 also shows a comparison of our solution with the simple R interface (using the flyback DC/DC converter to emulate $R_{DC/DC}$) with three fixed resistors ($10 \text{ k}\Omega$, $100 \text{ k}\Omega$ and $1 \text{ M}\Omega$). It illustrates that the proposed approach leads to an extended bandwidth (35% more) and a higher power. For example, using a fixed $100 \text{ k}\Omega$ emulated resistor, the bandwidth is around 7.1% with only $91 \mu\text{W}$ maximum harvested power. Finally, we observe that while the obtained power is approximately flat between the two resonant frequencies, sub-optimal parameters are found near the short-circuit frequency (27 Hz), leading to a slight power drop. This problem is due to the lower resolution of the voltage measurement when the piezoelectric impedance is low (it is minimal at $f = f_{SC}$).

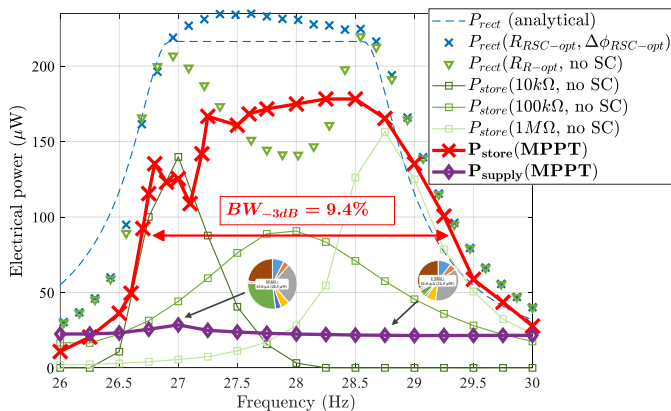


Fig. 18. Electrical power as a function of the input frequency. Theoretical and extracted power with discrete R (blue), experimental harvested power with a fixed and optimal $R_{DC/DC}$ (green curves) and experimental harvested power with the proposed MPPT and RSC interface (red) as well as the power consumption of the system (purple). Pie charts are the ones of Fig. 17 ($DC_{TLCM} = 13\%$).

VI. DISCUSSION

Table II. shows a comparison between several articles of the

MPPT algorithms for strongly coupled PEH state of the art. We emphasize on several important parameters about the MPPT algorithm such as its speed (in mechanical cycles normalized by the mechanical quality factor Q), its robustness and the predetermined parameters needed for it to perform properly. The speed comparison of the different MPPT algorithms assumes that if a measurement needs to be made, the time needed for it is negligible compared to the mechanical transient time. In this table, we do not compare our work with FOCV-based [37], [38] and P&O-based algorithms regulating the conduction angle [39], [40] as their corresponding electrical interfaces are not efficient to emulate the optimal impedance Z_{opt} in the case of highly-coupled PEH (the optimal voltage for the SEH and the pSSHI electrical interfaces is not always half of the open-circuit voltage: $V_{OC} / 2$ [41]).

First, our MPPT algorithm is fast compared to the state of the art (up to 13 times faster than another 2 parameters P&O MPPT [26]). Its convergence time is also fixed and does not depend on the starting parameter as in P&O algorithms. Because our MPPT implementation is based on an impedance measurement, it is robust to any mechanical variation in the PEH (due to temperature variation or aging) contrary to LUT implementation [24]. Moreover, the TLCM works even when ambient vibration is present in contrast to the strategy proposed in [29] where measurements must be performed at no-vibration, limiting its practical application. TLCM and DOCT algorithms quickly converge even when the starting point is far from the optimal one. The proposed TLCM is however at least two times faster than DOCT and requires less knowledge on the PEH. The only drawback with respect to LUT only is that the PEH does not operate at its MPP when doing the measurements. Eventually, mutualizing the MCU to implement the proposed MPPT and some functions of the wireless sensor node would be an interesting optimization from a cost and area standpoint compared to the classical ASIC plus MCU implementation.

Finally, the bandwidth obtained with the proposed electrical interface is as good as with the RC electrical interface. Compared to the latter, the proposed interface gives an improved power density since it does not need several discrete capacitors and their associated switches. In contrast to SEH, pSSHI, sSSHI or SECE electrical interfaces [37], [42], [43] our RSC (RC like) interface exhibits a larger maximum bandwidth or extractable power with highly coupled PEH as described in review papers [10], [23].

At last, the power consumption of our MCU implementation is lower than other MCU-based MPPT algorithms used with frequency tuning electrical interfaces [26], [44], [45]. Compared to ASIC based solutions [24], [25], [29], our work consumes however more power. Nevertheless, other optimizations could reduce the TLCM consumption. For example, it would be relevant to start the TLCM only when there is a frequency change, thus reducing the power consumption when the input frequency changes slowly (drastically reducing DC_{TLCM}).

Table II. Comparison with state of the art

Ref.	ISSCC'18 [24]	JIMSS'22 [28]	ISSCC'20 [25]	TCAS'20 [26]	ISCAS'20 [29]	TPEL'23 [44]	ECM'24 [45]	This work
Technology	Integrated (0.35 μm)	Simulation and dSPACE experiment	Integrated (0.35 μm)	MCU	Integrated (0.25 μm)	MCU	MCU	MCU
Transducer type	PEH	PEH	PEH	PEH	PEH	EEH	PEH	PEH
Resonant Frequency f_{res} [Hz]	90	94	56	160	291	89	37	27
Mechanical quality factor Q	-	20	25	96 *	-	104 **	160	78
Harvesting strategy (Nb of tuning parameters)	FTSECE (2)	SCSECE (2)	PS-SECE (1)	PWM rectifier (2)	PS-SSHI (2)	PWM rectifier (2)	FT-OSECE (2)	RSC (2)
MPPT strategy	LUT	DOCT	P&O	P&O	Impedance measurement (no ambient acc.)	P&O	P&O	TLCM
Harvester's dependent knowledge	optimal couple of the PS-SECE strategy	optimal couple of the SCSECE strategy	none	none	none	EEH coil resistance and inductance	none	PEH capacitance because of the RSC strategy
Number of mechanical cycles to reach MPP	None (fixed)	5Q cycles (fixed)	32Q cycles * (variable)	26Q cycles * (variable)	1Q cycle * (fixed)	23Q cycles * (variable)	48Q cycles (variable)	2Q cycles (fixed)
Time to reach MPP [s] @ f_{res}	none	1	14 *	16 *	-	28 *	220	4.4
Inductance value [μH]	>2000 *	-	220	100000	1000	1030	1000	10000
Robust to the generator's parameters variation	no	yes / no	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Maximum voltage rating [V]	5 *	-	20	-	-	-	100	60
Additional mechanical sensors	none	none	none	accelerometer	none	none	piezoelectric patches	accelerometer
Power consumption [μW]	0.38	-	<1	-	-	1790	63.71	21.5 - 28.5
Max extracted power [μW]	73.4 @1g	-	210 @0.1g peak	1800 @0.6g peak	14.14 @0.1g	10110 @ 0.3g	712.5 @0.05g peak	235 @0.05g peak

*Estimated from paper, **calculated from paper

VII. CONCLUSION

In this paper, a complete piezoelectric energy harvesting system is shown which is made of a new electrical interface, the resistive short circuit (RSC), associated with a fast and robust maximum power point algorithm: the Two-Load Characterization Method (TLCM). The RSC shows the same harvesting bandwidth (9.4 %) as the resistive capacitive (RC) interface without requiring a full capacitance bank. The peak harvested power is of 178 μW (while the peak extracted power is 235 μW) with a maximum of 28.5 μW of power consumption for the whole circuit. The efficiency of the flyback converter is between 65 % to 80 %. The TLCM finds the optimal parameters needed for the MPP almost in the closest time compared to other robust algorithms with two parameters electrical interfaces (up to 13 times faster).

In the future, automatic capacitance measurement could be implemented as to be completely independent of the associated PEH. The TLCM timing should also be adapted to other resonant frequencies and mechanical quality factors. Finally, the TLCM has been characterized here only under sinusoidal oscillations. Future work will then focus on the study of TLCM in the case of non-sinusoidal excitation.

APPENDIX A

The expressions of ε_D and ε_K of the RSC electrical interface are given below. They are obtained solving (9) to find the first Fourier series coefficient.

$$\begin{aligned}
\varepsilon_D &= \left(\Omega r \left(2\Phi_0 - 2\Phi_{SC} - \sin(2\Phi_0) + \sin(2\Phi_{SC}) - 4\Omega r \right. \right. \\
&\quad + 2\Omega^3 r^3 \cos(\Phi_0)^2 + 2\Omega^3 r^3 \cos(\Phi_{SC})^2 - \Omega^2 r^2 \sin(2\Phi_0) \\
&\quad + \Omega^2 r^2 \sin(2\Phi_{SC}) + 2\Omega^2 r^2 \Phi_0 - 2\Omega^2 r^2 \Phi_{SC} \\
&\quad + 2\Omega r \cos(\Phi_0)^2 + 2\Omega r \cos(\Phi_{SC})^2 \\
&\quad - 4\Omega^3 r^3 \exp\left(-\frac{\Phi_0 - \Phi_{SC}}{\Omega r}\right) \cos(\Phi_0) \cos(\Phi_{SC}) \\
&\quad + 4\Omega^2 r^2 \exp\left(-\frac{\Phi_0 - \Phi_{SC}}{\Omega r}\right) \cos(\Phi_0) \sin(\Phi_{SC}) \\
&\quad - 4\Omega^2 r^2 \exp\left(-\frac{\Phi_0 - \Phi_{SC}}{\Omega r}\right) \cos(\Phi_{SC}) \sin(\Phi_0) \\
&\quad \left. \left. + 4\Omega r \exp\left(-\frac{(\Phi_0 - \Phi_{SC})}{\Omega r}\right) \sin(\Phi_0) \sin(\Phi_{SC}) \right) \right) \\
&\quad / (2\pi(\Omega^2 r^2 + 1)^2)
\end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned}
& \varepsilon_K \\
& = \left(\Omega r \left(2\cos(\Phi_0)^2 - 2\cos(\Phi_{SC})^2 - 4\Omega^2 r^2 \right. \right. \\
& + 2\Omega^2 r^2 \cos(\Phi_0)^2 - 2\Omega^2 r^2 \cos(\Phi_{SC})^2 + \Omega^3 r^3 \sin(2\Phi_0) \\
& + \Omega^3 r^3 \sin(2\Phi_{SC}) + 2\Omega^3 r^3 \Phi_0 - 2\Omega^3 r^3 \Phi_{SC} + \Omega r \sin(2\Phi_0) \\
& + \Omega r \sin(2\Phi_{SC}) + 2\Omega r \Phi_0 - 2\Omega r \Phi_{SC} \\
& + 4\Omega^2 r^2 \exp\left(\frac{\Phi_{SC} - \Phi_0}{\Omega r}\right) \cos(\Phi_0) \cos(\Phi_{SC}) \\
& - 4\Omega^3 r^3 \exp\left(\frac{\Phi_{SC} - \Phi_0}{\Omega r}\right) \cos(\Phi_{SC}) \sin(\Phi_0) \\
& + 4\Omega^2 r^2 \exp\left(\frac{\Phi_{SC} - \Phi_0}{\Omega r}\right) \sin(\Phi_0) \sin(\Phi_{SC}) \\
& \left. \left. - 4\Omega r \exp\left(\frac{\Phi_{SC} - \Phi_0}{\Omega r}\right) \cos(\Phi_0) \sin(\Phi_{SC}) \right) \right) \\
& / (2\pi(\Omega^2 r^2 + 1)^2)
\end{aligned}$$

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