



Alternative Energy in

POWER

ELECTRONICS

Muhammad H. Rashid



Alternative Energy in Power Electronics

Edited by

Muhammad H. Rashid

Fellow IET (UK), Life Fellow IEEE (USA)

Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering

University of West Florida

USA



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Alternative Energy in Power Electronics

Contributors

- Noradlina Abdullah** Transmission and Distribution, TNB Research, Malaysia
- Benjamin Blunier** Universite de Technologie de Belfort-Montbéliard, Belfort Cedex, France
- Juan M. Carrasco** Department of Electronic Engineering, Engineering School, Seville University, Spain
- Pablo A. Cassani** Power Electronics and Energy Research (PEER) Group, P. D. Ziogas Power Electronics Laboratory, Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, Concordia University, Montreal, QC, Canada
- Lana El Chaar** Electrical Engineering Department, The Petroleum Institute, Abu Dhabi, UAE
- H. Dehbonei** Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, Curtin University of Technology, Perth, Western Australia, Australia
- Eduardo Galván** Department of Electronic Engineering, Engineering School, Seville University, Spain
- Ir. Zahrul Faizi bin Hussien** Transmission and Distribution, TNB Research, Malaysia
- S. M. Islam** Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, Curtin University of Technology, Perth, Western Australia, Australia
- Alireza Khaligh** Electrical and Computer Engineering Department, University of Maryland at College Park, College Park, MD, USA
- Srdjan Lukic** Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC, USA
- S.K. Mazumder, Sr.** Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, Laboratory for Energy and Switching-Electronics Systems (LESES), University of Illinois, Chicago, IL, USA
- C. V. Nayar** Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, Curtin University of Technology, Perth, Western Australia, Australia
- Omer C. Onar** Power Electronics and Electric Machinery Group, National Transportation Research Center, Oak Ridge National Laboratory, Oak Ridge, TN, USA
- Ramón Portillo** Department of Electronic Engineering, Engineering School, Seville University, Spain
- Azlan Abdul Rahim** Transmission and Distribution, TNB Research, Malaysia

- H. Sharma** Research Institute for Sustainable Energy, Murdoch University, Perth, Western Australia, Australia
- K. Tan** Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, Curtin University of Technology, Perth, Western Australia, Australia
- Sheldon S. Williamson** Power Electronics and Energy Research (PEER) Group, P. D. Ziogas Power Electronics Laboratory, Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, Concordia University, Montreal, QC, Canada

Preface

Electric power generated from renewable energy sources is getting increasing attention and supports for new initiatives and developments in order to meet the increased energy demands around the world. The availability of computer-based advanced control techniques along with the advancement in the high-power processing capabilities is opening new opportunity for the development, applications and management of energy and electric power. Power Electronics is integral part of the power processing and delivery from the energy sources to the utility supply and the electricity consumers.

The demand for energy, particularly in electrical forms, is ever-increasing in order to improve the standard of living. Power electronics helps with the efficient use of electricity, thereby reducing power consumption. Semiconductor devices are used as switches for power conversion or processing, as are solid state electronics for efficient control of the amount of power and energy flow. Higher efficiency and lower losses are sought for devices used in a range of applications, from microwave ovens to high-voltage dc transmission. New devices and power electronic systems are now evolving for even more effective control of power and energy.

Power electronics has already found an important place in modern technology and has revolutionized control of power and energy. As the voltage and current ratings and switching characteristics of power semiconductor devices keep improving, the range of applications continue to expand in areas, such as lamp controls, power supplies to motion control, factory automation, transportation, energy storage, multi-megawatt industrial drives, and electric power transmission and distribution. The greater efficiency and tighter control features of power electronics are becoming attractive for applications in motion control by replacing the earlier electromechanical and electronic systems. Applications in power transmission and renewable energy include high-voltage dc (VHDC) converter stations, flexible ac transmission system (FACTS), static var compensators, and energy storage. In power distribution, these include dc-to-ac conversion, dynamic filters, frequency conversion, and custom power system.

Audience:

The purpose of *Alternative Energy in Power Electronics* is a derivative of the best-selling *Power Electronics Handbook*, Third Edition. The purpose of *Alternative Energy in Power Electronics* is to provide a reference that is both concise and useful for engineering students and practicing professionals. It

is designed to cover topics that relate to renewable energy processing and delivery. It is designed as advanced textbooks and professional references. The contributors are leading authorities in their areas of expertise. All were chosen because of their intimate knowledge of their subjects, and their contributions make this a comprehensive state-of-the-art guide to the expanding field of energy.

Muhammad H. Rashid, Editor-in-Chief

Any comments and suggestions regarding this book are welcome. They should be sent to

Dr. Muhammad H. Rashid

Professor

Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering

University of West Florida

11000 University Parkway Pensacola.

FL 32514-5754, USA

E-mail: mrashidfl@gmail.com

Web: <http://uwf.edu/mrashid>

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Chapter 1

Power Electronics for Renewable Energy Sources

C. V. Nayar, S. M. Islam, H. Dehbonei, and K. Tan

Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, Curtin University of Technology, Perth, Western Australia, Australia

H. Sharma

Research Institute for Sustainable Energy, Murdoch University, Perth, Western Australia, Australia

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1.1 INTRODUCTION

The Kyoto agreement on global reduction of greenhouse gas emissions has prompted renewed interest in renewable energy systems worldwide. Many renewable energy technologies today are well developed, reliable, and cost competitive with the conventional fuel generators. The cost of renewable energy technologies is on a falling trend and is expected to fall further as demand and production increases. There are many renewable energy sources (RES) such as biomass, solar, wind, mini hydro and tidal power. However, solar and wind energy systems make use of advanced power electronics technologies and, therefore the focus in this chapter will be on solar photovoltaic and wind power.

One of the advantages offered by (RES) is their potential to provide sustainable electricity in areas not served by the conventional power grid. The growing market for renewable energy technologies has resulted in a rapid growth in the need of power electronics. Most of the renewable energy technologies produce DC power and hence power electronics and control equipment are required to convert the DC into AC power.

Inverters are used to convert DC to AC. There are two types of inverters: (a) stand-alone or (b) grid-connected. Both types have several similarities but

are different in terms of control functions. A stand-alone inverter is used in off-grid applications with battery storage. With back-up diesel generators (such as photovoltaic (PV)/diesel/hybrid power systems), the inverters may have additional control functions such as operating in parallel with diesel generators and bi-directional operation (battery charging and inverting). Grid interactive inverters must follow the voltage and frequency characteristics of the utility generated power presented on the distribution line. For both types of inverters, the conversion efficiency is a very important consideration. Details of stand-alone and grid-connected inverters for PV and wind applications are discussed in this chapter.

Section 1.2 covers stand-alone PV system applications such as battery charging and water pumping for remote areas. This section also discusses power electronic converters suitable for PV-diesel hybrid systems and grid-connected PV for rooftop and large-scale applications. Of all the renewable energy options, the wind turbine technology is maturing very fast. A marked rise in installed wind power capacity has been noticed worldwide in the last decade. Per unit generation cost of wind power is now quite comparable with the conventional generation. Wind turbine generators are used in stand-alone battery charging applications, in combination with fossil fuel generators as part of hybrid systems and as grid-connected systems. As a result of advancements in blade design, generators, power electronics, and control systems, it has been possible to increase dramatically the availability of large-scale wind power. Many wind generators now incorporate speed control mechanisms like blade pitch control or use converters/inverters to regulate power output from variable speed wind turbines. In Section 1.3, electrical and power conditioning aspects of wind energy conversion systems were included.

1.2 POWER ELECTRONICS FOR PHOTOVOLTAIC POWER SYSTEMS

1.2.1 Basics of Photovoltaics

The density of power radiated from the sun (referred as “solar energy constant”) at the outer atmosphere is 1.373 kW/m^2 . Part of this energy is absorbed and scattered by the earth’s atmosphere. The final incident sunlight on earth’s surface has a peak density of 1 kW/m^2 at noon in the tropics. The technology of photovoltaics (PV) is essentially concerned with the conversion of this energy into usable electrical form. Basic element of a PV system is the solar cell. Solar cells can convert the energy of sunlight directly into electricity. Consumer appliances used to provide services such as lighting, water pumping, refrigeration, telecommunication, television, etc. can be run from PV electricity.

Solar cells rely on a quantum-mechanical process known as the “photovoltaic effect” to produce electricity. A typical solar cell consists of a p–n junction formed in a semiconductor material similar to a diode. Figure 1.1 shows a schematic diagram of the cross section through a crystalline solar cell [1]. It consists of a 0.2–0.3 mm thick monocrystalline or polycrystalline silicon wafer having two layers with different electrical properties formed by “doping” it with other impurities (e.g. boron and phosphorous). An electric field is established at the junction between the negatively doped (using phosphorous atoms) and the positively doped (using boron atoms) silicon layers. If light is incident on the solar cell, the energy from the light (photons) creates free charge carriers, which are separated by the electrical field. An electrical voltage is generated at the external contacts, so that current can flow when a load is connected. The photocurrent (I_{ph}), which is internally generated in the solar cell, is proportional to the radiation intensity.

A simplified equivalent circuit of a solar cell consists of a current source in parallel with a diode as shown in Fig. 1.2a. A variable resistor is connected to the solar cell generator as a load. When the terminals are short-circuited, the output voltage and also the voltage across the diode is zero. The entire photocurrent (I_{ph}) generated by the solar radiation then flows to the output. The solar cell current has its maximum (I_{sc}). If the load resistance is increased, which results in an increasing voltage across the p–n junction of the diode, a portion of the current flows through the diode and the output current decreases by the same amount. When the load resistor is open-circuited, the output current is zero and the entire photocurrent flows through the diode. The relationship between current and voltage may be determined from the diode characteristic equation

$$I = I_{ph} - I_0(e^{qV/kT} - 1) = I_{ph} - I_d \quad (1.1)$$

where q is the electron charge, k is the Boltzmann constant, I_{ph} is photocurrent, I_0 is the reverse saturation current, I_d is diode current, and T is the solar cell operating temperature (°K). The current vs voltage (I – V) of a solar cell is thus equivalent to an “inverted” diode characteristic curve shown in Fig. 1.2b.

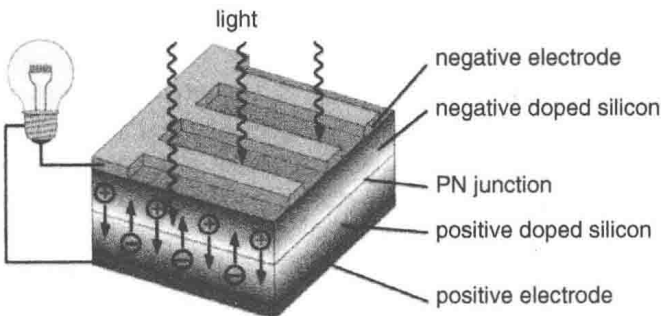


FIGURE 1.1 Principle of the operation of a solar cell [2].