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У матеріалах 15-ї Міжнародної науково-практичної конференції «Сучасні енергетичні установки на транспорті і технології та обладнання для їх обслуговування» представлені тези, які присвячені проблемам експлуатації, виробництва та проектування енергетичних установок та устаткування на транспорті, а також підготовці спеціалістів у сфері транспортної енергетики й устаткування.

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# APPLICATION OF THE DIFFERENTIAL POWER CONVERTER IN THE SYSTEM OF SOLAR POWER PLANTS

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## Abstract

**Keywords:** current and voltage balancing, differential power converter, photovoltaic panel, solar power plant.

An analysis of energy collection architectures for large-scale solar power plants was carried out. The topology of a two-stage differential power converter with the characteristics of a DC collection network, which provides a higher energy output for large-scale solar power plants, is presented. The principle of operation of the converter and the flow of current in the circuit during switching are presented. The calculation of the current balancing and voltage equalization cascades, which process partial power and allow groups of photovoltaic panels to work at maximum power under the influence of environmental conditions, has been calculated.

## Introduction

The capacity of photoelectric installations continues to grow and reaches hundreds of megawatts [1, 2]. Large-scale photovoltaic systems (VLS-PV) are valued for their high efficiency when their architecture is renewable and reliable. In addition, energy conversion costs are low, and the VLS-PV installation is capable of mitigating the consequences of partial shading. VLS-PV installations with distributed power electronics converters demonstrated higher energy output, better reliability, a significant reduction in design costs, and greater flexibility in the construction of photovoltaic installations [3].

The latest achievements in power electronics made it possible to develop central inverters with higher power density [4]. ABB's central high-power inverter (PVS800) is capable of achieving a maximum output power of 2 MW from up to 24 separate DC inputs from multiple PV lines. In addition, with the advent of a higher voltage of around 1500 V, a larger number of photovoltaic modules can be connected in series, thereby reducing the number of junction boxes, reducing current and improving overall efficiency [5].

The architecture of distributed maximum power point tracking (DMPPT) is one of the most promising solutions for overcoming the shortcomings associated with the low energy efficiency of photovoltaic panels [6].

This architecture has a DC-DC converter designed to track the maximum power point of each photovoltaic panel. To ensure maximum flexibility,

converters must be able to step up and down the voltage.

## Relevance of research

In scientific research, some authors have achieved high efficiency using converters that control only part of the output power, such as series-connected converters, parallel power converters, and converters with direct power transmission [7, 8]. However, such converter topologies are inefficient for use in photoelectric systems.

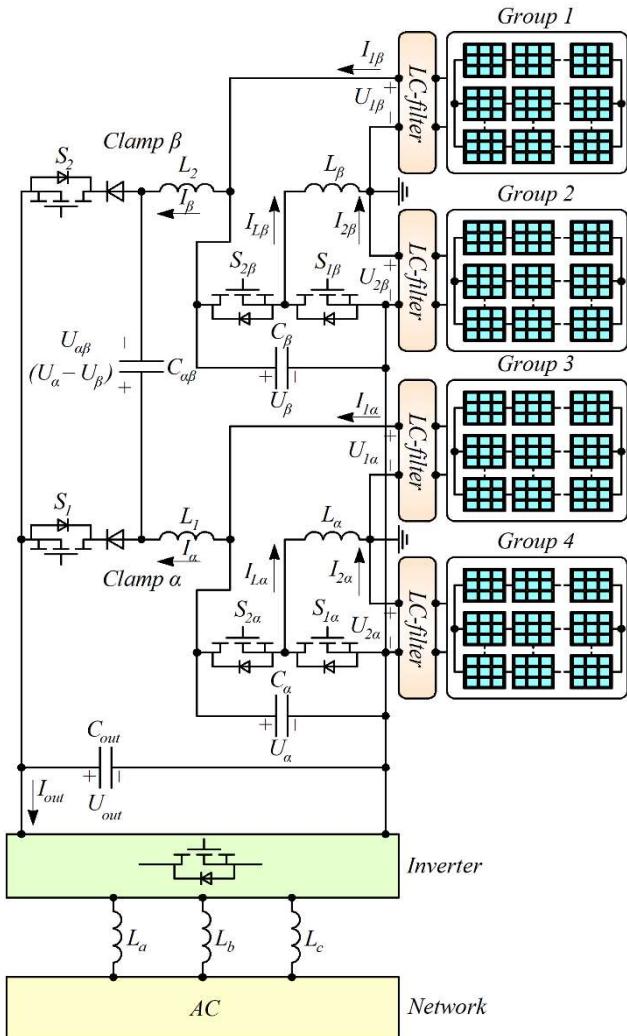
In works [9, 10], general approaches used for load reduction, power distribution in proportion to the generator rating, and battery life extension are given, but modular sub-panel photoelectric converters cannot regulate voltage on the DC bus in response to load changes.

Research on topologies that can increase or decrease the power of photovoltaic panels is also known [11, 12]. These topologies have the effect of increasing efficiency, however, the efficiency of the system itself is limited, since the intensity of sunlight hitting the panels varies depending on the season, time and weather conditions.

Thus, the use of photovoltaic panels with the aim of improving the operating conditions of energy systems, means of transport and reducing the harmful impact on the environment, as well as further research into highly effective and inexpensive energy creators, is an actual unsolved task.

## The main material of the study

Fig. 1 shows the topology of the two-stage differential power converter with the characteristics of the medium-voltage DC collection network.



**Figure 1.** Topology of a two-stage differential power converter for large photovoltaic installations

As can be seen from Fig. 1, two sets of photovoltaic installations (groups 1 and 2) are connected in series with grounding in the center. They are internally connected to a current balancing converter with a partial nominal value that facilitates independent control of the photovoltaic currents ( $I_{1\beta}$ ,  $I_{2\beta}$ ), thus guaranteeing individual tracking of the maximum power point (MPPT) for groups 1 and 2 of sections of the photovoltaic installation.

At the stage of current balancing, two switches ( $S_{1\beta}$ ,  $S_{2\beta}$ ) are used, which work in the pulse width modulation mode to control the current  $I_{L\beta}$  of the inductor  $L_\beta$ . The current balancing approach handles only a fraction of the total harvested power and requires power converters with fractional power ratings. The current balancing stage

processes the differential power from the two solar systems.

Groups 3 and 4 also have an analog current balancing converter. The negative output terminals of Groups 1 and 2 and Groups 3 and 4 are connected together to form a common point. Two positive output terminals  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$  are connected to the voltage balancing converter. The function of the voltage equalization cascade consists in processing the differential power of two parallel sets: groups 1, 2 and groups 3, 4 with the help of the appropriate control of pulse width modulation by switches  $S_1$ ,  $S_2$ . The capacitor  $C_{\alpha\beta}$  in the stationary state holds the voltage difference ( $U_\alpha - U_\beta$ ).

The given concept of current and voltage balancing guarantees that each group of photovoltaic installations will work individually. MPPT point, due to which the total maximum power collection is achieved in conditions of partial shading and temperature difference.

The advantages of the proposed two-stage differential power converter include:

- current and voltage balancing cascades process partial power to achieve maximum power in conditions of partial shading;

- the current balancing stage uses switches with partially rated higher voltage and lower current, while the voltage balancing stage uses switches with higher current and lower voltage;

- high efficiency is achieved at the expense of daily power processing compared to other schemes;

- a smaller number of power converter processing units;

- the proposed approach can be scaled to several solar energy systems with a nominal capacity of several MW, consisting of many groups of photovoltaic installations;

- the approach allows creating homogeneous and heterogeneous photovoltaic installations using photovoltaic panels from different manufacturers.

The proposed architecture is scalable to multiple inputs with efficient localized power management for multi-row PV installations, residential and large-scale PV power plants. Mass power is processed once with partial losses. The balancing capacitor  $C_{\alpha\beta}$  plays an important role in balancing voltages to achieve MPP. Such an approach effectively eliminates the need for a DC-DC converter, which is required for MPPT tracking.

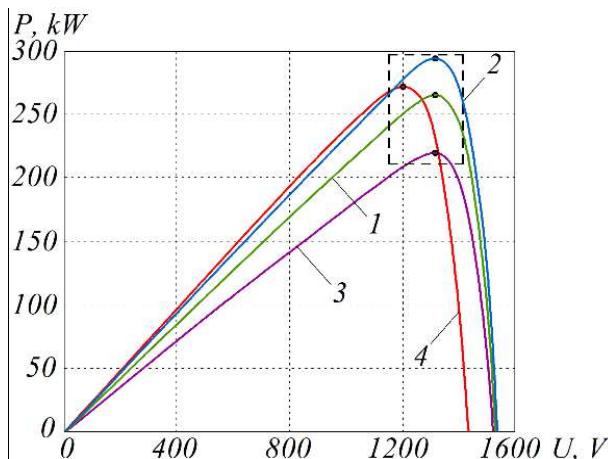
A homogeneous photovoltaic installation is defined as an installation that has the same number of series/parallel connected modules per group.

Table 1 shows the technical characteristics of a homogeneous photovoltaic installation.

**Table 1.** Technical characteristics of a homogeneous photoelectric installation

Parameter	Value
Photoelectric module	SPR-305-WHT
Configuration in four groups	24 consecutive / 40 parallel modules with a capacity of 293 kW
Total power of four groups $P_{\Sigma}$ , MW	1.1
Switching frequency of the balancing state $f$ , kHz	20
Capacitor $C_{ab}$ , $\mu\text{F}$	40
Inductances $L_a, L_b$ , mH	1.65
Inductances $L_1, L_2$ , $\mu\text{H}$	100

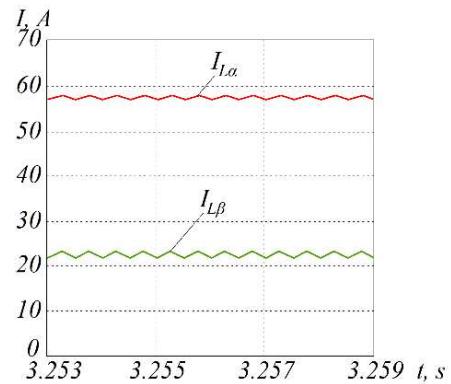
According to Fig. 1, it is assumed that groups of photoelectric installations 1, 2, 3, 4 are in different working conditions due to environmental factors. Fig. 2 shows the operating characteristics of each group at different temperatures and insolation conditions.



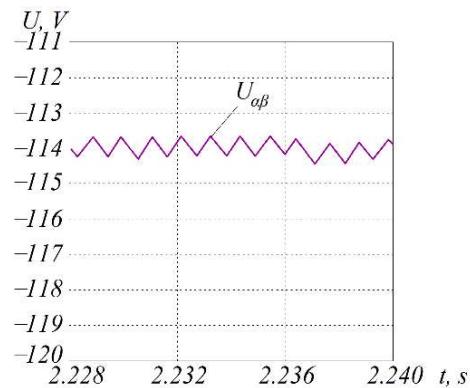
**Figure 2.** Characteristics of a two-stage differential power converter for large photoelectric installations: 1 – group 1 ( $25^{\circ}\text{C}$ ,  $0.9 \text{ kW/m}^2$ ); 2 – group 2 ( $25^{\circ}\text{C}$ ,  $1 \text{ kW/m}^2$ ); 3 – group 3 ( $25^{\circ}\text{C}$ ,  $0.75 \text{ kW/m}^2$ ); 4 – group 4 ( $50^{\circ}\text{C}$ ,  $1 \text{ kW/m}^2$ )

From Fig. 2, it can be seen that there is a unique operating condition in which the voltage and current values for each group correspond to the maximum power of the panels. The characteristics of the cascades of current balancing and voltage equalization for the construction of the plant in question, at which the maximum available power is achieved, are shown in Fig. 3, 4.

Both balancing current / voltage converters according to Fig. 1 work with their special switching duty cycles to get the maximum power available.



**Figure 3.** Maximum balancing currents of inductances  $L_a, L_b$



**Figure 4.** Capacitor voltage  $C_{ab}$

The current balancing stage for terminal  $\beta$  and terminal  $\alpha$  handles currents  $I_{L\beta} = 22 \text{ A}$  and  $I_{La} = 57.3 \text{ A}$ , which is part of the total current. In addition, the given voltage equalization scheme works at a voltage of  $U_{ab} = -144 \text{ V}$ , which is a much smaller value. Thus, the number of volt-amperes processed by the current / voltage balancing cascades is small for operation at different temperatures and insolation conditions.

## Conclusion

The proposed two-stage differential power converter topology is able to work with a large-scale solar power plant at different points of maximum power, because there is a unique operating condition in which the values of voltage and current for each group correspond to the maximum panel power. At the same time, both balancing current and voltage converters work with their special switching duty cycles.

The proposed architecture is scalable to multiple inputs with efficient localized power management for multi-row PV installations, residential and large-scale PV power plants. Mass power is processed once with partial losses. The balancing capacitor plays an important role in balancing voltages to achieve MPP. Such an approach effectively eliminates the need for a DC-DC converter, which is required for MPPT tracking.

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