

Accuracy and Multi Domain Piezoelectric Power Harvesting Model using VHDL-AMS and SPICE

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Abstract— This paper presents a piezoelectric power harvesting model including both the mechanical and electrical domain. It includes a mechanical system, electrical interface, storage capacitor and load. Bridge rectifier, Parallel Synchronized Switch Harvesting on Inductor (P-SSHI) and Synchronous Electric Charge Extraction (SECE) circuits are analyzed as electrical interface. A mechanical system and control signals are implemented in VHDL-AMS and electronics components in SPICE. Simulation results and experimental data are compared to show the accuracy of the proposed model.

Keywords— Power harvesting model; piezoelectric transducer; VHDL-AMS; SPICE; Electronic Circuit.

I. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, there is a wide demand for autonomous systems. Generally, these systems use batteries as a power supply. In order to increase battery lifetime, self-powered sensors have been investigated. In this context, piezoelectric power harvesting (PPH) from mechanical vibration is an interesting topic [1]. It can be divided in 4 elements as shown in Fig. 1. The mechanical system is responsible for transforming a mechanical vibration into electrical energy (step 1). The output signal must be conditioned by an electrical interface (step 2) and stored (step 3). Then, the converted energy can be used at the load (step 4). It is usually a low power electronic device such as sensor and wireless transceiver [2].

Most PPH models are focused on the mechanical system or electrical interface separately. For the first, numerical analysis software is often utilized for modeling, while an Electronic Design Automation (EDA) is used for the electrical interface [3]. However, mechanical system responses are influenced by the electrical interface, and vice versa. This interaction affects the system performance, such as energy conversion. It means optimization should be based on a complete system model instead of separate components. In recent studies [3]-[6], analog and mixed-signal languages, like VHDL-AMS, are used to describe power harvesting system. However, they present a simple electrical interface. In this work, a whole PPH model using both VHDL-AMS and SPICE is proposed.

The analytical equation to describe the mechanical system is implemented in VHDL-AMS. For the electrical interface, SPICE and VHDL-AMS are used to model electronic components and control signals, respectively. Bridge rectifier,

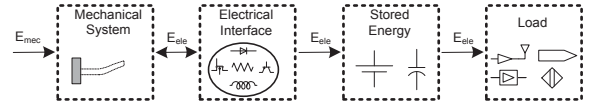


Fig. 2. Piezoelectric power harvesting system from mechanical vibration.

P-SSHI and SECE circuits are used as electrical interface. Moreover, simulation results are shown and compared to experimental data.

II. MECHANICAL SYSTEM

A typical mechanical system of PPH from mechanical vibration consists of a cantilever beam and piezoelectric transducer (Fig. 2a). In this case, the maximum energy conversion is obtained by a maximum deformation of the piezoelectric. For this reason, PPH is often tuned to the resonance frequency. Around it, the mechanical system can be modeled as a single degree of freedom system (mass (m)+spring (k_s)+damper (d)+transducer) [1], as shown in Fig. 2b. The function $z(t)$ refers to displacement of the mass, and $F_p(t)$, $i_p(t)$ and $v_p(t)$ are the piezoelectric force, current and voltage, respectively. According to Newton's laws of motion, the system can be described as:

$$F_{in}(t) = m\ddot{z}(t) + d\dot{z}(t) + k_s z(t) + F_p(t) \quad (1)$$

Where $m = 0.2235 m_b$, $m_b = \rho_b w_b t_b l_b$, $k_s = E_b w_b t_b^3 / 4l_b^3$ and $d = \sqrt{k_s m} / Q$. m_b is beam mass. Besides, ρ_b , w_b , t_b , l_b and E_b are density, width, thickness, length and Young's modulus of beam, respectively. In addition, Q refers to the quality factor and $F_{in}(t)$ is force applied to the system.

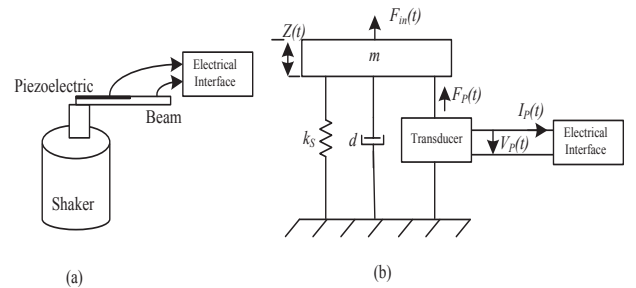


Fig. 1. A cantilever beam and piezoelectric transducer (a) and a single degree of freedom model (b) connected to electrical interface.

Homogeneous stress and uniform electric field are assumed in the finite dimensional piezoelectric element. Under these conditions, the piezoelectric constitutive equations can be rewritten in terms of macroscopic variables as follows [2]:

$$\begin{cases} F_P(t) = k_P z(t) + \alpha v_P(t) \\ i_P(t) = \alpha \dot{z}(t) - C_P \dot{v}_P(t) \end{cases} \quad (2)$$

For a piezoelectric excited in 31 mode, the variables in (2) are calculated similarly to [1]:

$$k_P = \frac{A}{s_{11}^E l_P} \quad (3)$$

$$\alpha = \frac{d_{31} A}{s_{11}^E l_P} \quad (4)$$

$$C_P = \left(\varepsilon_{33}^T - \frac{d_{31}^2}{s_{11}^E} \right) \frac{A}{t_P} \quad (5)$$

The variables A , l_P and t_P represent the cross-sectional area, length and thickness of the piezoelectric transducer, respectively. The piezoelectric properties are s_{11}^E - elastic compliance under constant electric field, d_{31} - piezoelectric constant and ε_{33}^T - permittivity under constant stress.

Using (1) and (2), system behavior can be expressed as

$$\begin{cases} F_{in}(t) = m\ddot{z}(t) + d\dot{z}(t) + kz(t) + \alpha v_P(t) \\ i_P(t) = \alpha \dot{z}(t) - C_P \dot{v}_P(t) \end{cases} \quad (6)$$

where k is a combination of the k_s and k_P .

The differential equations in (6) are implemented in VHDL-AMS to describe the mechanical system. The model is shown in Fig. 3. The properties and dimension of the piezoelectric and the beam are input parameters of the model and $f_{in}(t)$ is a input force source. Furthermore, variables are set by two pairs of ports. $v_P(t)$ and $i_P(t)$ are defined as potential difference and flow through the electrical terminal (ET), respectively. Similarly, $z(t)$ and $f_{in}(t)$ are potential difference and flow across the translational terminal (TT), respectively. Thereby, the model obeys the energy conservation laws.

III. ELECTRICAL INTERFACE

The electrical interface is an electronic circuit responsible for signal conditioning. Considering a piezoelectric transducer excited by a sinusoidal vibration, i_P is alternating current (AC). Usually, this current is not usable in electronic circuits. So i_P must be converted to a direct current (DC).

A bridge rectifier (Fig. 3a) is the most common circuit. It is comprises of four diodes and a capacitor C_L connected in parallel to the resistance R_L , which represents the load. In this analysis, ripple voltage is neglected. No control is required for this circuit. C_P is charged in each semi-cycle. During this charging, all diodes are reverse biased and no current is delivered to the load. Once the C_P has been charged, i_P flows through the load. It limits the amount of load current (i_{LOAD}) and, consequently, the average extracted power ($\langle P_{LOAD} \rangle$). In order to improved it, some circuits have been proposed [7],[8], as P-SSHI and SECE.

P-SSHI (Fig. 3b), also known as bias-flip rectifier, is composed by a switched inductor (S and L) connected in parallel to piezoelectric and bridge rectifier. Switch S is turned

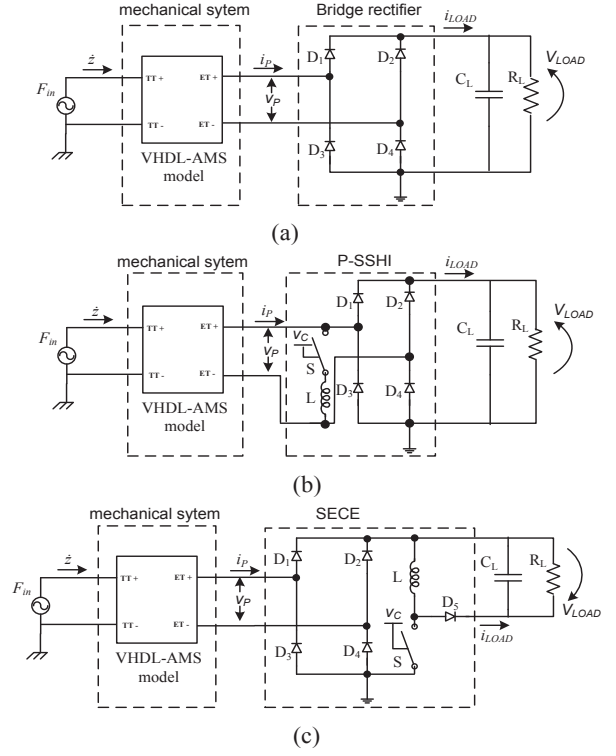


Fig. 3. Electrical interface examples: (a) Bridge rectifier; (b) Parallel Synchronized Switch Harvesting on Inductor (P-SSHI); (c) Synchronous Electric Charge Extraction (SECE).

on when the polarity of i_P is reversed (similarly v_P starts to decrease or increase). An L - C_P electronic oscillator circuit is established. Ideally, it leads to a quasi-instantaneous v_P inversion. In other words, it will charge the C_P . Then S is turned off and i_P flows through the load. Therefore, i_{LOAD} in P-SSHI is greater than in bridge rectifier. This increases $\langle P_{LOAD} \rangle$.

SECE (Fig. 3c) is composed by the DC-DC converter connected between bridge rectifier and load. Switch S is closed at the moment v_P achieves a maximum or minimum value. Thus, the energy stored on C_P is transferred to L until v_P go to zero. Then S is turned off and the inductor current flows through the load. Besides, C_P is being charged. Consequently, load is not connected directly to piezoelectric transducer.

Control signals v_c are required for the P-SSHI and SECE simulation. In this work, a behavioral model is used to obtain the control signals. They are determined from observation of v_P . SPICE is an industry standard used to analyze. However, it does not allow the use of behavioral models. Therefore, in this work, the SPICE is used for electronics components and VHDL-AMS for control.

IV. RESULTS

A piezoelectric P-876 A11 DuraAct Patch Transducer excited in 31 mode was used, bonded on an aluminum cantilever beam with dimension of 35.0 x 200.5 x 2.0 mm³. Simulations were carried out in SystemVision Software of Mentor Graphics because it allows simultaneous use of VHDL-AMS and SPICE. The applied force was a sine wave with amplitude of 100 mg. In experimental setup, the beam was

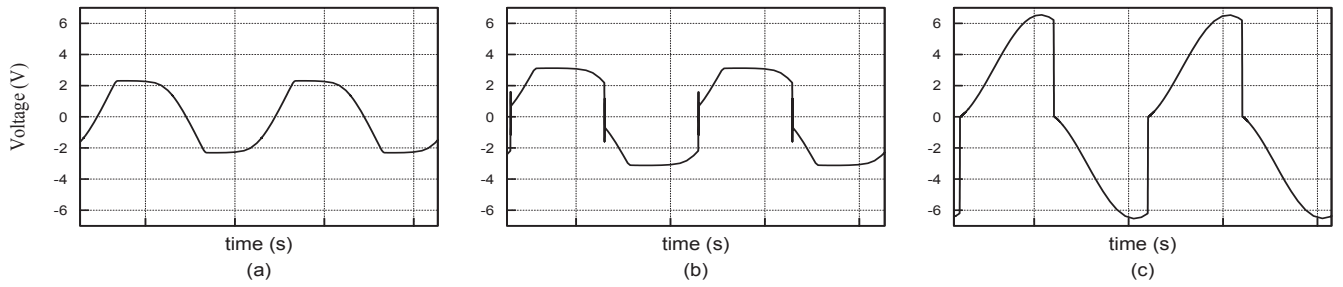


Fig. 4. Piezoelectric voltage waveforms at resonance frequency and load of 68 KΩ for: (a) Bridge rectifier; (b) P-SSHI; (c) SECE.

excited by a shaker. Frequency and amplitude were controlled by an acquisition system (NI 4431 from National Instruments) and a power amplifier (type 2706 from Bruel & Kjaer). Also, the schottky diodes and the inductor Bourns SDR1005-102KL were used. And the control signals were generated by arduino microcontroller.

In this work by default, the excitation frequency and load were 30.0 Hz (resonance frequency) and 68 KΩ, respectively. Fig. 4 shows piezoelectric voltage waveforms for the bridge rectifier, P-SSHI and SECE circuits. In the bridge rectifier, v_p was equal to the charge of C_p . At the moment the control signal was high, in P-SSHI the polarity of v_p was inverted, but the flip was not complete due the equivalent series resistance (ESR) of the inductor. Meanwhile, in SECE it went to ground when the control signal was high. It is consistent as showed in [7] and described.

The average extracted power as a function of the excitation frequency and load resistance are shown in Fig. 5. Lines and

points represent to simulation results and experimental data, respectively. Comparison between both shows the simulation prediction is quite close to the experimental results. It shows the model is accuracy. In addition, results showed the average extracted power was dependent of frequency and load. Considerable power was obtained around the resonance frequency (30.0 Hz). Moreover, P-SSHI and SECE were able to provide 160% and 123% more power than the bridge rectifier, respectively. More important, bandwidth was improved by 110% in P-SSHI compared to the bridge rectifier. Significant amount of power was obtained in a resistance range. The SECE has better load range than the other circuits.

V. CONCLUSION

A piezoelectric power harvesting model using VHDL-AMS and SPICE was proposed. Results show the model is working properly and accurately. In other words, it is adequate to predict the whole system behavior. The model advantage is the ability to execute simulations for various excitation frequency in SPICE using only the properties and dimension of beam and piezoelectric as input. Thus, the model is an important tool to design and optimize piezoelectric power harvesting system in both mechanical and electrical domain.

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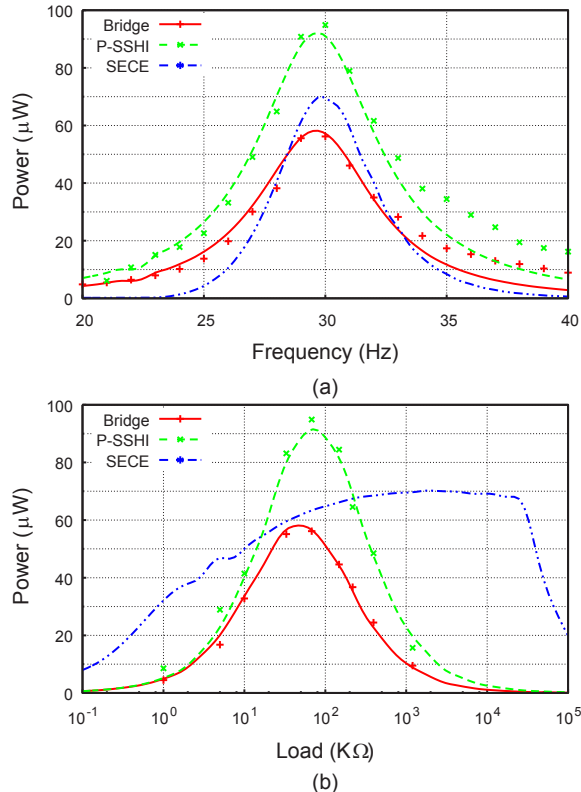


Fig. 5. Average extracted power for bridge rectifier, P-SSHI and SECE as a function of: (a) excitation frequency; (b) load resistance.