

Speed control of sensorless BLDC motor with two side chopping PWM

Anju Roy¹, Dominic Mathew²

¹(Department of EEE, Rajagiri School of Engineering Kakkanad, India)

²(Department fAEI, Rajagiri School of Engineering Kakkanad , India)

Abstract : The Brushless Direct Current (BLDC) motors are one of the motor types rapidly gaining popularity. BLDC motors are used in aerospace applications , medical field , industrial automation equipment and instrumentation. As the name implies, BLDC motors do not use brushes for commutation; instead, they are electronically commutated. This paper proposes a new optimized sensorless drive for speed control of BLDC motor, which is based on back-EMF zero crossing detection (ZCD) of only one phase voltage of BLDC motor. This commutation technique of BLDC motor significantly reduces sensing circuits and cost of motor drive. The effectiveness of proposed speed control for sensorless technique is verified through simulation. Two side chopping PWM technique with a PI duty cycle controller is used for speed control.

Keywords – BLDC, PI controller, PWM, ZCD, VSI

I. INTRODUCTION

Brushless Direct Current (BLDC) motors are one of the motor types rapidly gaining popularity. BLDC motor has been used extensively in industrial automation, aerospace, instrumentation and automotive industries since 1970's. As the name implies, BLDC motors do not use brushes for commutation; instead, they are electronically commutated. BLDC motors have many advantages over brushed DC motors and induction motors. A few of these are:

- Better speed versus torque characteristics
- High dynamic response
- High efficiency
- Long operating life
- Noiseless operation
- Higher speed ranges

In addition, the ratio of torque delivered to the size of the motor is higher, making it useful in applications where space and weight are critical factors.

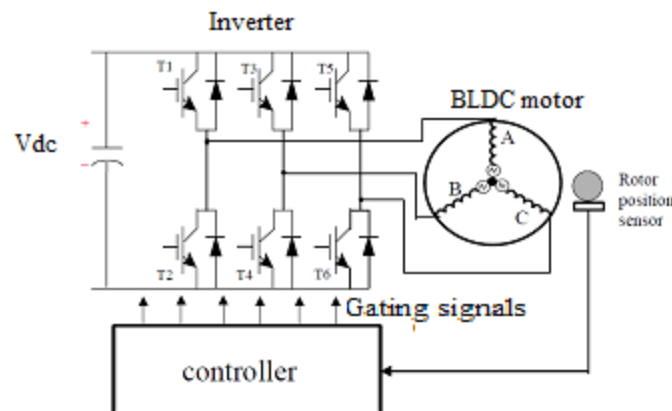


Fig. 1. BLDC motor control system with position sensors.

These BLDC motors are generally controlled using a three-phase inverter, requiring a rotor position sensor for starting . The three phase inverter provides proper commutation sequence for the speed control of BLDC motor. The position sensors will increase the cost and the size of the motor, and a special mechanical arrangement needs to be made for mounting the sensors. They could reduce the system reliability due to increased number of the components and hardware interfacing. The position sensors can be Hall sensors,

resolvers or absolute position sensors. Hall sensors are particularly temperature sensitive, limiting the operation of the motor to below 75°C. In some applications, it even may not be possible to mount any position sensor on the motor. Therefore, sensorless control of BLDC motor has been receiving great interest in recent years.

Typically, a Brushless dc motor is driven by a three-phase inverter with six-step commutation. The conducting interval for each phase is 120° by electrical angle. The commutation phase sequence is AB-AC-BC-BA-CA-CB. Each conducting stage is called one step. Therefore, only two phases conduct current at any time, leaving the third phase floating. In order to produce maximum torque, the inverter should be commutated every 60° so that current is in phase with the back EMF. The commutation timing is determined by the rotor position, which can be detected by Hall sensors or estimated from motor parameters, i.e., the back EMF on the floating coil of the motor if it is sensorless system.

Basically two types of sensorless control schemes can be found in the literature based on,

- 1) Position sensing using back EMF of the motor, and
- 2) Position estimation using motor parameters, terminal voltages, and currents.

The second type scheme usually needs Digital Signal Processors to do the complicated computation, and the cost of the system is relatively high. So the back EMF sensing type of sensorless scheme is the most commonly used method.

In brushless dc motor, only two out of three phases are excited at one time, leaving the third winding floating. The back EMF voltage in the floating winding can be measured to establish a switching sequence for commutation of power devices in the three-phase inverter. Back-EMF sensing methods rely on the zero crossing detection of the measured voltage signal. Back EMF of each phase is measured through the line voltage of same phase of motor with respect to negative terminal of three phase voltage source inverter (VSI) DC power supply.

II. SENSORLESS CONTROL

V_a, V_b, V_c are referred to the terminal voltages of BLDC motor, V_n is the neutral point voltage and V_{DC} is the DC bus voltage of inverter. R and L are resistance and inductance of stator windings which is assumed to be constant for all phases. The magnetic circuit saturation and losses in motor are also ignored. At each instant of time only two phases out of three phases of stator are conducting. Therefore back-EMF can be detected from the floating terminal voltage. Consider phase B and phase C are conducting and phase A is floating phase ($i_b = -i_c$ and $i_a = 0$). Then voltage terminal equations can be written as,

$$V_a = E_a + V_n \quad (1)$$

$$V_b = R i_b + L di/dt + E_b + V_n \quad (2)$$

$$V_c = R i_c + L di/dt + E_c + V_n \quad (3)$$

Where $i_b = -i_c$, $E_b = -E_c$ and $V_b + V_c = V_{DC}$. Therefore by adding (3) and (2) neutral point voltage is,

$$V_n = V_{DC} / 2 \quad (4)$$

Substituting (4) in (1) floating point terminal voltage can be written as,

$$V_a = E_a + V_{DC} / 2 \quad (5)$$

If $E_a = 0$ then condition of back-EMF zero crossing detection from the floating terminal voltage is

$$V_a = V_{DC} / 2 \quad (6)$$

In this technique voltage of only one phase regarding DC bus voltage is sensed instead of all three terminal voltages. Zero crossing signals are generated anytime line voltage reaches to half of DC bus voltage. Commutation signal is set to logic one at the ZCD points of rising edge of the line voltage and it is set to logic zero at ZCD points of falling edge of line voltage. Commutation instants must be generated 30 electrical degrees after ZCD points. Other two commutation signals are generated by 120 electrical degrees delay respectively to the first signal.

Using two side chopping PWM control speed of the motor was varied from 600 to 10,000 rpm. A PI controller is used to control the duty cycle according to speed error. Speed and torque waveforms of BLDC are shown in Fig. 3.

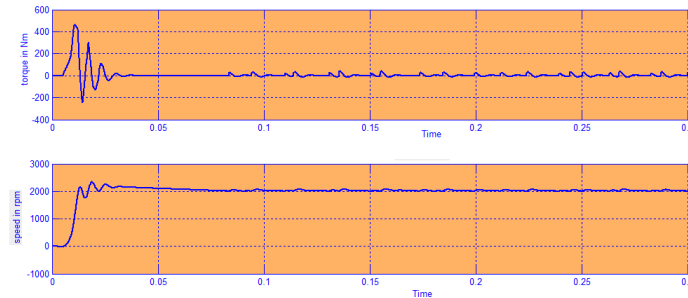


Fig. 3. Electro magnetic torque and rotor speed waveform.

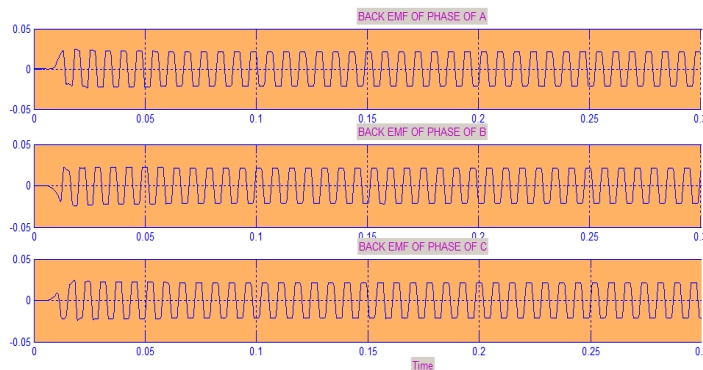


Fig. 4. Back emf waveform of 3 phases

When a BLDC motor rotates, each winding generates back electromotive Force or back EMF, which opposes the main voltage supplied to the windings according to Lenz’s Law. The polarity of this back EMF is in opposite direction of the energized voltage. Back EMF depends mainly on three factors:

- Angular velocity of the rotor
- Magnetic field generated by rotor magnets
- The number of turns in the stator windings.

Once the motor is designed, the rotor magnetic field and the number of turns in the stator windings remain constant. The only factor that governs back EMF is the angular velocity or speed of the rotor and as the speed increases, back EMF also increases. The motor technical specification gives a parameter called, back EMF constant that can be used to estimate back EMF for a given speed. It can be seen that there are two zero crossing points for rising and falling edge of phase voltage each cycle; one is for rising edge and another is for falling edge. Zero crossing points of rising edge are references for commutation signal to go high (logic 1) and ZCD points of falling edge are references for commutation signal to go low (logic 0). Variations of rotor position is shown in Fig 5.

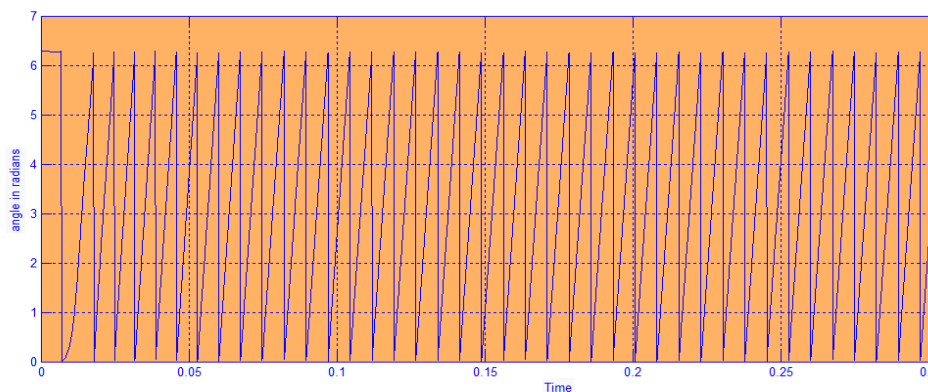


Fig. 5. Rotor position

V. CONCLUSION

In this paper, speed control of sensorless brushless DC motor from low to high speed is achieved using two side chopping mode PWM technique. This method use the line voltage of one phase of BLDC motor instead of voltages of all three phases. Thus causing a remarkable reduction in sensing circuit components and cost of the BLDC motor drive. PWM switching technique has been implemented to control speed of BLDC motor. Two side chopping mode PWM helps to detect back emf zero crossing points easily. Proposed technique has been modelled in Simulink. Simulation results are satisfactory and prove correct performance of proposed sensorless drive and PWM speed controller of BLDC motor.

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