STUDIES OF FAULT CURRENT LIMITERS FOR POWER SYSTEMS PROTECTION

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To my parents:

Balbir Singh Malhi

and

Paramjit Kaur Malhi
ABSTRACT

In today’s technological world, electrical energy is one of the most important forms of energy and is needed directly or indirectly in almost every field. Increase in the demand and consumption of electrical energy leads to increase in the system fault levels. It is not possible to change the rating of the equipment and devices in the system or circuits to accommodate the increasing fault currents. The devices in electronic and electrical circuits are sensitive to disturbance and any disturbance or fault may damage the device permanently so that it must be replaced. The cost of equipment like circuit breakers and transformers in power grids is very expensive. Moreover, replacing damaged equipment is a time and labour consuming process, which also affects the reliability of power systems. It is not possible to completely eliminate the faults but it is possible to limit the current during fault in order to save the equipment and devices in the circuits or systems. One solution to this problem is to use a current limiting device in the system. There are many different types of approaches used for limiting fault currents.

Two different approaches to limit fault currents have been discussed by the author. One is Passive Magnetic Current Limiter (MCL) and another is High Temperature Superconductor Fault Current Limiter (HTSFCL). Both are passive devices and they do not need any sensor or external sources to perform their current limiting action. The first device consists of two ferrite cores and a permanent magnet which is sandwiched between the two saturated cores and it is called Magnetic Current Limiter. Experimental results with the MCL in circuit are discussed. Both field and thermal models of the MCL have been simulated using finite element software, FEMLAB.

The demonstration of the High Temperature Superconductor Fault Current Limiter (HTSFCL) in power systems has been explained. The MATLAB simulation of the HTSFCL has been done and the results with and without the fault are shown. Power System Analysis Toolbox (PSAT) software has been used to locate the optimum or the best location of HTSFCL in a nine bus system. It has been shown that it is possible to find a solution that limits the fault current in power systems. Depending on the size of the system, either the MCL or the HTSFCL can be implemented. The location of the HTSFCL is to be carefully selected to achieve optimum results.
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CONTENTS

ABSTRACT iii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS iv
CONTENTS v
LIST OF FIGURES viii
LIST OF TABLES xii

CHAPTER 1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction ........................................................................................................ 1
1.2 Consequences of the Fault.............................................................................. 2
1.3 Why Current Limiters are required................................................................. 3
1.4. Literature survey ............................................................................................. 3
1.5 The different Current Limiter approaches...................................................... 8
1.6 Superconductor based devices.......................................................................... 8
   1.6.1 Superconductive shunt with a resistive bypass element....................... 8
   1.6.2 Superconductor FCL with an inductive by pass element.................... 9
   1.6.3 Transformer coupled superconductor FCL........................................... 10
1.7 Resonant Circuit Limiter .................................................................................. 11
1.8 Using Fuse as a Fault Current Limiter............................................................. 11
1.9 Switched devices for limiting fault current .................................................... 12
1.10 Ways of dealing with Fault Current............................................................... 13
1.11. The Purpose of the Research........................................................................ 14
1.12 Organization of the thesis .............................................................................. 15

CHAPTER 2 Operating Principle of Magnetic Current Limiter

2.1 Introduction........................................................................................................ 17
2.2 Operating Principle of Magnetic Current Limiter........................................... 17
2.3 B-H Characteristics of MCL ........................................................................... 19
2.4 Operation of MCL in the AC mode................................................................. 28
2.5 DC operation of MCL....................................................................................... 31
2.6 Design Considerations..................................................................................... 33
   2.6.1 Saturated inductance, Ls........................................................................... 35
Chapter 3 Field and Thermal Model of Magnetic Current Limiter

3.1 Introduction.................................................................................43
3.2 Model Formulation in the FEMLAB..............................................43
3.3 Normal mesh of Magnetic Current Limiter..................................46
3.4 Field Distribution in the MCL.......................................................47
3.5 Thermal modelling of the Magnetic Current Limiter....................51
   3.5.1 Thermal modelling at different current levels using FEMLAB....51
3.6 Transient Thermal Model.............................................................58
3.7 Conclusions...............................................................................58

Chapter 4 High Temperature Superconductor Fault Current Limiter
Operating Principle and Results

4.1 Introduction................................................................................60
4.2 High Temperature Superconductor Fault Current Limiters (HTSFCL)....61
   4.2.1 Operating Principle of the HTSFCL........................................62
4.3 Modelling of the High Temperature Superconductor Fault Current Limiter.....63
   4.3.1 MATLAB Simulation...............................................................63
   4.3.2 Design of HTSFCL element....................................................64
4.4 Results and Analysis....................................................................66
   4.4.1 Normal Operation.................................................................66
   4.4.2 Operation during Fault.........................................................68
4.5 Conclusions...............................................................................81

Chapter 5 PSAT Based Analysis and Design

5.1 Introduction................................................................................82
5.2 Modelling and Design of the 9 Bus System in PSAT.......................83
   5.2.1 Modelling and design procedures of the 9 Bus network............84
5.3 Results after running Power Flow on the network..........................88
Chapter 6 Results and Analysis

6.1 Introduction.................................................................................92
6.2 Results during normal operation..................................................93
  6.2.1 Real Power at the Bus 1, 2 and 3..............................................93
  6.2.2 Reactive Power at the Bus 1, 2, and 3.......................................94
  6.2.3 Real Power Flow in the Transmission lines.............................95
  6.2.4 Reactive Power Flow in the Transmission lines.........................96
  6.2.5 Voltage magnitude at the Buses..............................................97
6.3 Results during fault in the system..................................................98
  6.3.1 Real Power at Bus 1, 2 and 3.................................................98
  6.3.2 Reactive Power at Bus 1, 2 and 3............................................99
  6.3.3 Real Power Flow in the Transmission lines..............................100
  6.3.4 Reactive Power Flow in the Transmission lines.........................101
  6.3.5 Voltage magnitude at the Buses..........................................102
6.4 Optimal location of the Fault Current Limiter...............................103
  6.4.1 Nine Bus system with Dummy line.........................................105
  6.4.2 Nine Bus system with fault at Bus 9.......................................107
  6.4.3 Nine Bus System with fault at Bus 4.......................................110
6.5 Conclusions.................................................................................112

Chapter 7 Conclusions and future work

7.1 Conclusions.................................................................................114
7.2 Future Work.................................................................................115

References.........................................................................................116

APPENDIX 1.....................................................................................120
APPENDIX 2.....................................................................................129
LIST OF FIGURES

1.1 Superconductor Fault Current Limiter, Resistive Shunt type .................. 9
1.2 Superconductor FCL with inductive bypass element .......................... 10
1.3 Transformer coupled Superconductor FCL ....................................... 10
1.4 Resonant Circuit Limiter .......................................................... 11
1.5 Fuse based FCL ................................................................. 12

2.1 The Basic structure and configuration of MCL ................................. 18
2.2 Magnetisation curve showing the saturated region .............................. 19
2.3 The B-H characteristics of the permanent magnet and Ferrite core ...... 20
2.4 Characteristic of core used in positive half of current ...................... 21
2.5 Characteristic of core used in negative half of current ..................... 21
2.6 The combined ideal B-H characteristic of MCL ............................... 22
2.7 Permanent Magnet’s circuit and it’s characteristics in the MCL ............ 26
2.8 Equivalent circuit of Ferrite core in the MCL ................................. 28
2.9 Characteristic of the ferrite core in the MCL ................................... 28
2.10 DC circuit of the MCL ......................................................... 32
2.11 Idealized $\phi_{ac}$ versus $I_{ac}$ characteristic .................................. 33
2.12 Desire Voltage and Current Characteristics of the MCL .................... 34
2.16 Series fabricated model .......................................................... 36
2.17 Series based steel core fabricated model ....................................... 37
2.18 Three phase power electronic system with MCL .............................. 37
2.19 Single Phase Power electronic circuit with MCL ............................. 38
2.20 Three Phase Power Electronic Circuit with MCL ............................. 38
2.21 Current Waveforms with and without MCL ................................... 39
2.22 Current and voltage waveforms under shorted diode ....................... 39
2.23 Current Waveforms during Shorted diode output condition ............... 40
2.24 Current and voltage waveform in the u-phase of 3-phase MCL under normal operation .................................................. 40
2.25 Results during three phase fault condition .................................... 41
2.26 Current and voltage waveforms for S-L-G fault condition ............... 41
3.1 Model Navigator of FEMLAB software.................................................44
3.2 2-D Geometry of the Magnetic Current Limiter.......................................44
3.3 Window for boundary setting of the field model......................................45
3.4 Window for sub domain setting of the thermal model...............................46
3.5 Window for constants............................................................................46
3.6 Normal Mesh Size of the MCL...............................................................47
3.7 Window for Mesh Parameters...............................................................47
3.8 Flux distribution of MCL with no current in windings............................48
3.9 Flux distribution of MCL with low current corresponding
to positive half cycle of current...............................................................48
3.10 Model of MCL with large current corresponding
to positive half cycle of current.............................................................49
3.11 Model of MCL with low current corresponding
to negative half cycle of current..............................................................49
3.12 MCL with high negative current during fault........................................50
3.13 MCL Model in FEMLAB at 5A.............................................................51
3.14 Thermal model of MCL at 10A............................................................52
3.15 MCL at current 20 A...........................................................................52
3.16 MCL at current 30 A...........................................................................53
3.17 MCL at 40 A.......................................................................................54
3.18 MCL at 50 A.......................................................................................54
3.19 MCL at 60 A.......................................................................................54
3.20 MCL at 70 A.......................................................................................55
3.21 MCL at 80 A.......................................................................................55
3.22 MCL at 90 A.......................................................................................55
3.23 MCL at 100 A.....................................................................................56
3.24 Change in temperature with respect to current.......................................57
3.25 Transient Response of MCL...............................................................58

4.1 Superconductor wire.............................................................................61
4.2 Superconductor Cable based on today’s technology...............................61
4.3 Variation of Resistivity with Temperature of Bi-2223 & YBCO.................62
4.4 T-B-J characteristics of superconductor materials.................................62
4.5 Electrical Circuit with HTSFCL...........................................................64
4.6 The design of the HTSFCL ................................................................. 64
4.7 High Temperature Superconductor ..................................................... 65
4.8 Current Waveform during normal operation ........................................ 67
4.9 Temperature vs. Time .................................................................. 67
4.10 Circuit under fault conditions ......................................................... 68
4.11 Current waveform during fault ....................................................... 68
4.12 Variation in resistance with time ..................................................... 69
4.13 Change in temperature of the HTSFCL .......................................... 70
4.14 (a) Fault Current (b) Temperature corresponding to different length
of the superconductor at thickness of 0.002m (k=0.8) ......................... 72
4.15 (a) Fault Current (b) Temperature corresponding to different lengths
and at thickness of 0.009m of the superconductor. (k=0.8) ............... 74
4.16 (a) Fault Current (b) Temperature corresponding to different lengths
and at thickness of 0.002m of the superconductor (k=0.7) ............... 77
4.17 (a) Fault Current (b) Temperature corresponding to different lengths
and at thickness of 0.009m of the superconductor (k=0.7) ............... 78
4.18 (a) Fault Current (b) Temperature corresponding to different lengths
and at thickness of 0.002m of the superconductor (k=0.9) ............... 80
4.19 Variation of the temperature with thickness (max.0.0003m) ............ 80
4.20 Variation of the temperature with thickness (max.0.0009m) ............ 81

5.1 Power System Analysis Toolbox Window ........................................ 82
5.2 Shows the 9 Bus and 3 machine network designed for simulation ....... 83
5.3 Main Simulink Library window ....................................................... 84
5.4 Connections window in Simulink Library ....................................... 85
5.5 Window for parameters of the Bus block ........................................ 85
5.6 Simulink Library Power flow data window ..................................... 86
5.7 Block parameter windows of (a) PV generator (b) Transmission Line .... 86
5.8 (a) Electrical machine (b) Fault & Breaker windows of Simulink library .... 87
5.9 Simulink Library: Control window ................................................. 87
5.10 Load Data Window of PSAT ......................................................... 88
5.11 Nine Bus network with Power flow results .................................... 89
5.12 Static report of the power flow results .......................................... 89
5.13 Voltage magnitudes at the Buses in the Network ............................ 90
5.14 Angles (rad) at Buses in the Network ............................................. 90

6.1 Window for selecting plot variables ................................................. 92
6.2 Real Power (a) At Bus 1, (b) At Bus2, (c) At Bus 3 .......................... 93
6.3 Reactive Powers (a) at Bus 1, (b) at Bus2, (c) at Bus 3 ....................... 94
6.4 Real Power flow (a) from Bus 9 to 6, (b) from Bus 7 to 8,
    (c) from Bus 4 to 5, (d) from Bus 7 to 5 ........................................ 95
6.5 Reactive Power flow (a) from Bus 9 to 6, (b) from Bus 7 to 8,
    (c) from Bus 4 to 5, (d) from Bus 7 to 5 ........................................ 96
6.6 Voltage magnitudes (a) at Bus 1, (b) at Bus 2, (c) at Bus 5,
    (d) at Bus 7 ................................................................................. 97
6.7 Real Power, during fault on Bus 7 (a) at Bus 1, (b) at Bus 2,
    (c) at Bus 3 ................................................................................. 99
6.8 Reactive Power, during fault on Bus 7 (a) at Bus 1, (b) at Bus 2,
    (c) at Bus 3 ................................................................................. 100
6.9 Real Power flow, during fault on Bus 7 (a) from Bus 9 to 6,
    (b) from Bus 7 to 8, (c) from Bus 4 to 5, (d) from Bus 7 to 5 ............. 101
6.10 Reactive Power flow during fault on Bus 7 (a) from Bus 9 to 6,
    (b) from Bus 7 to 8, (c) from Bus 4 to 5, (d) from Bus 7 to 5 ............ 102
6.11 Voltage magnitudes, during fault on Bus 7 (a) at Bus 1,
    (b) at Bus 2, (c) at Bus 7, (d) at Bus 8 .............................................. 103
6.12 Current at different Buses during fault at Bus 7 .............................. 104
6.13 Nine Bus System with Dummy line at Bus 7 ................................... 105
6.14 Fault Currents reduced at different Buses with Fault at Bus 7 .......... 106
6.15 Nine Bus Network with Fault at Bus 9 ........................................... 107
6.16 Fault Current during fault at Bus 9 ................................................... 108
6.17 Fault Currents reduced at different Buses with Fault at Bus 9 ......... 109
6.18 Nine Bus Network with Fault at Bus 4 ........................................... 110
6.19 Fault Current during fault at Bus 4 ................................................... 111
6.20 Fault Currents reduced at different Buses with Fault at Bus 4 ......... 111
LIST OF TABLES

1.1 Ways of dealing with Fault Current………………………………………..13,14

3.1 Variation of Magnetic flux density (T) with current (A)…………………..51
3.2 Variation of temperature (K) with current……………………………………….57

4.1 Fault Current & Temperature corresponding to different
   Length of Superconductor at k= 0.8, thickness = .002m
   and Specific heat capacity= 6.35e+5 (kJ kg$^{-1}$ K$^{-1}$)…………………………71
4.2 Fault Current & Temperature corresponding to different
   Length of Superconductor at k =0.8, thickness of .009m
   and specific heat capacity= 6.35e+5 (kJ kg$^{-1}$ K$^{-1}$) ..................................73
4.3 Fault Current & Temperature corresponding to different
   Length of Superconductor at k =0.7, thickness of .002m
   and specific heat capacity= 6.35e+5 (kJ kg$^{-1}$ K$^{-1}$)…………………………76
4.4 Fault Current & Temperature corresponding to different
   Length of Superconductor at k =0.7, thickness of .009m
   and specific heat capacity= 6.35e+5 (kJ kg$^{-1}$ K$^{-1}$)…………………………77
4.5 Fault Current & Temperature corresponding to different
   Length of Superconductor at k=0.9, thickness = .002m
   and specific heat capacity = 6.35e+5 (kJ kg$^{-1}$ K$^{-1}$)…………………………79