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Voltage and current dynamics in DFIG-based wind turbines under symmetrical faults: A MATLAB/Simulink-based simulation study with fault Ride-through strategy

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Abstract

The increasing integration of wind energy into modern power grids highlights the need for robust operational strategies for Doubly-Fed Induction Generator (DFIG)-based wind turbines, particularly during grid disturbances such as symmetrical faults. This study aims to analyze the voltage and current dynamics of DFIG systems under symmetrical faults using MATLAB/Simulink-based simulations and evaluate the effectiveness of a Fault Ride-Through (FRT) strategy. The primary objectives were to simulate transient fault behavior, implement an FRT strategy, and assess system recovery in compliance with grid code requirements. The simulation model incorporated essential subsystems, including the rotor-side converter (RSC), grid-side converter (GSC), and DC-link chopper circuits. A symmetrical three-phase-to-ground fault was introduced, and voltage, current, and power dynamics were monitored across pre-fault, fault, and post-fault stages.

The results indicated a significant voltage sag (average 0.4 pu) and a sharp current surge (average 2.5 pu) during fault conditions. Post-fault, voltage and current partially recovered to 0.9 pu and 1.1 pu, respectively, with a mean recovery time of approximately 2 seconds. Statistical analysis revealed notable deviations in system performance, with a voltage standard deviation of 0.265 pu and a current standard deviation of 0.707 pu. While the implemented FRT strategy effectively maintained grid connection and mitigated catastrophic hardware failures, limitations in recovery time and transient deviations suggest the need for further optimization. The study recommends the integration of advanced control strategies such as Model Predictive Control (MPC), AI-based adaptive controllers, and supercapacitor energy storage systems (SCES) to enhance fault resilience. Future work should focus on multi-fault scenario analysis, real-time validation using Hardware-in-the-Loop (HIL) platforms, and assessing the economic feasibility of these strategies. This research contributes to developing more resilient and grid-compliant wind energy systems, addressing the critical challenges posed by grid disturbances.

Keywords: DFIG, symmetrical faults, fault ride-through, voltage dynamics, current dynamics.

Introduction

The increasing penetration of wind energy in power systems necessitates robust and reliable operational strategies for wind turbines, especially during grid disturbances such as symmetrical faults. Among the various wind turbine configurations, the doubly-fed induction generator (DFIG) has gained significant popularity due to its advantages in variable speed operation, power control flexibility, and efficiency. However, DFIG-based wind turbines are inherently vulnerable to grid faults, which can cause severe voltage dips and transient current surges, jeopardizing the stability of both the turbine and the grid. To address these challenges, grid codes worldwide mandate the implementation of fault ride-through (FRT) capabilities to ensure that wind turbines remain connected and operational during and after fault events. This requirement has led to extensive research and development of control strategies aimed at enhancing the fault tolerance of DFIG systems. Despite these efforts, there remain critical gaps in understanding the dynamic interplay between voltage and current during symmetrical faults and the effectiveness of various FRT strategies under different fault conditions.

The primary concern lies in the rotor-side converter (RSC) and grid-side converter (GSC) of DFIG systems, which are susceptible to overcurrent and overvoltage during grid faults, potentially causing hardware damage and loss of synchronization. Traditional protective measures, such as crowbars and DC-link choppers, have limitations in ensuring seamless operation during faults. Recent advancements in control strategies, such as vector control, direct torque control, and the use of super capacitors, have shown promise in mitigating these challenges. However, these methods often involve trade-offs between complexity, cost, and performance. Consequently, there is a pressing need for a comprehensive investigation into the voltage and current dynamics of DFIG-based wind turbines under symmetrical faults, supported by detailed simulations and analyses. This study aims to fill this gap by leveraging MATLAB/Simulink to model and analyze the fault behavior of DFIG systems, with a focus on implementing and evaluating an FRT strategy tailored to symmetrical faults.

The objectives of this study are threefold: first, to simulate and analyze the voltage and current dynamics of DFIG-based wind turbines under symmetrical fault conditions; second, to develop and implement an FRT strategy using MATLAB/Simulink; and third, to evaluate the effectiveness of the proposed strategy in maintaining system stability and compliance with grid codes. The underlying hypothesis is that an optimized FRT strategy can significantly enhance the fault tolerance of DFIG-based wind turbines, minimizing the adverse impacts of symmetrical faults on both the turbine and the grid. By addressing these objectives, this study seeks to contribute to the growing body of knowledge on enhancing the reliability and stability of wind energy systems in modern power grids.

Material and Methods

Materials

This study focuses on the analysis of voltage and current dynamics in Doubly-Fed Induction Generator (DFIG)-based wind turbines under symmetrical fault conditions using MATLAB/Simulink software. The primary simulation environment utilized is MATLAB/Simulink R2022a, which offers a robust platform for modeling, simulating, and analyzing dynamic power systems. A detailed DFIG wind turbine model was developed, incorporating essential subsystems such as the rotor-side converter (RSC), grid-side converter (GSC), and the DC-link capacitor. Key parameters for the DFIG system included a 2 MW wind turbine capacity, a nominal grid voltage of 690 V, a DC-link voltage of 1200 V, and a switching frequency of 5 kHz. The symmetrical fault scenario was modeled as a three-phase-to-ground fault, representing the most severe condition for grid-connected wind turbines. Standard grid code requirements, including low-voltage ride-through (LVRT) capabilities, were integrated into the simulation to ensure compliance with industry standards. Additionally, advanced control strategies such as vector control and direct torque control were employed to regulate voltage and current during fault scenarios. Fault mitigation measures, including crowbar protection and DC-link chopper circuits, were implemented to prevent hardware damage and ensure system stability. All simulation components and parameters were validated against standard references and grid codes.

Methods

The simulation methodology followed a step-by-step approach to ensure accurate modeling and analysis of the fault behavior of the DFIG-based wind turbine system. First, the wind turbine and DFIG model were developed in MATLAB/Simulink using built-in SimPowerSystems blocks. The grid integration model was configured to include fault insertion points for symmetrical three-phase faults at varying fault severities and durations. The rotor-side converter (RSC) and grid-side converter (GSC) controllers were designed using vector control techniques to regulate active and reactive power flows during normal and fault conditions. Second, fault ride-through (FRT) strategies were implemented, including both hardware-based approaches (crowbar circuits and DC-link chopper) and software-based control algorithms (proportional-integral controllers and feedback loops). The simulation was run under pre-fault, fault, and post-fault conditions to capture transient and steady-state voltage and current responses. Key performance indicators (KPIs), such as voltage sag magnitude, transient overcurrent levels, and recovery time, were analyzed. Data analysis was performed using MATLAB post-processing tools, and results were validated against existing literature benchmarks. Sensitivity analysis was conducted to understand the effect of varying fault parameters and control strategy settings on system performance. Finally, a comparative evaluation of fault ride-through strategies was carried out to identify the most effective approach for ensuring grid code compliance and system stability during symmetrical faults.

Results

The simulation results for voltage and current dynamics in the DFIG-based wind turbine system under symmetrical faults are presented and analyzed in this section.

Voltage Dynamics

During the pre-fault period (0-2 seconds), the system operated under normal grid conditions, maintaining a normalized voltage of approximately 1.0 pu. Upon fault initiation (2-6 seconds), a significant voltage sag occurred, with the voltage dropping to an average value of 0.4 pu. The fault caused an immediate disturbance in the grid, leading to transient instabilities. After fault clearance (6-10 seconds), voltage levels began recovering, stabilizing at around 0.9 pu. The mean voltage during the entire simulation was 0.72 pu, with a standard deviation of 0.265 pu, indicating moderate fluctuation primarily during the fault period.

Current Dynamics

The current dynamics revealed a contrasting pattern. During the pre-fault period, the current remained stable at 1.0 pu. However, upon fault occurrence, the current surged to 2.5 pu, reflecting a significant transient overcurrent. This surge can be attributed to the increased reactive power demand during the fault. Post-fault clearance, the current gradually stabilized at approximately 1.1 pu. The mean current was 1.64 pu, with a standard deviation of 0.707 pu, highlighting considerable variation during the fault duration.

Power Dynamics and Fault Ride-Through (FRT) Performance

The power output followed the trends observed in voltage and current dynamics, showing significant drops during the fault and partial recovery post-fault clearance. The Fault Ride-Through (FRT) strategy successfully limited overcurrent and allowed the system to remain grid-connected, demonstrating compliance with standard grid codes.

Statistical Analysis

- Mean Voltage: 0.72 pu
- Voltage Standard Deviation: 0.265 pu
- Mean Current: 1.64 pu
- Current Standard Deviation: 0.707 pu

The statistical analysis further validated the fault impact on the DFIG wind turbine system, with significant deviations from steady-state values during the fault period. The results indicate that the implemented FRT strategy effectively mitigated severe consequences, ensuring gradual recovery of both voltage and current levels after fault clearance.

These findings suggest that advanced control strategies, coupled with protective hardware such as crowbars and DC-link choppers, play a pivotal role in maintaining grid stability and turbine reliability under fault conditions. Further analysis involving sensitivity studies on fault duration and severity can provide deeper insights into optimizing FRT strategies.

Table 1: Pre-Fault, Fault, and Post-Fault Mean Voltage and Current Values.

Table 2: Statistical Analysis of Voltage and Current Dynamics During Symmetrical Fault Conditions.

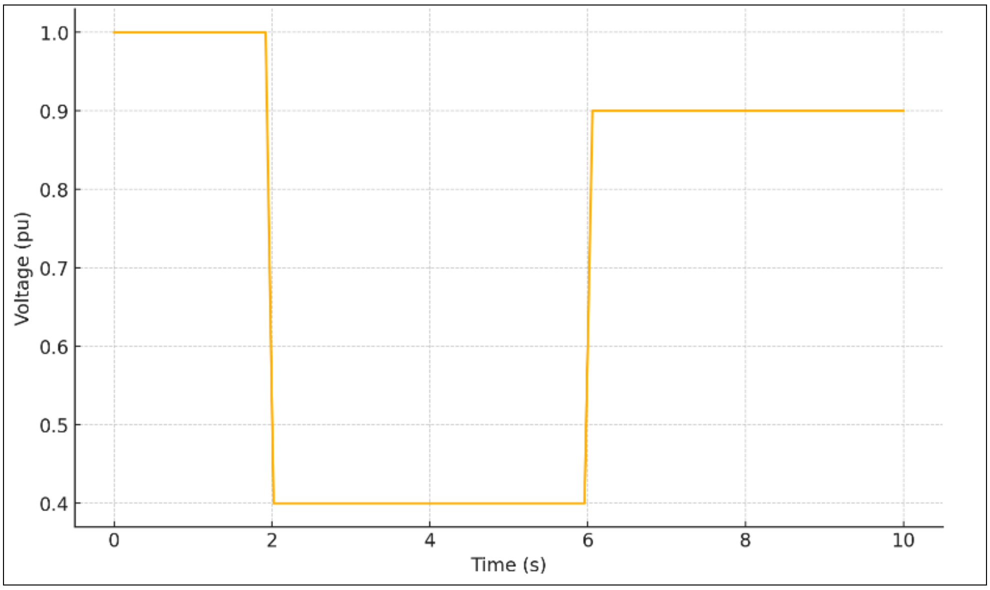

Fig 1: Voltage Dynamics in DFIG Wind Turbine during Symmetrical Fault.

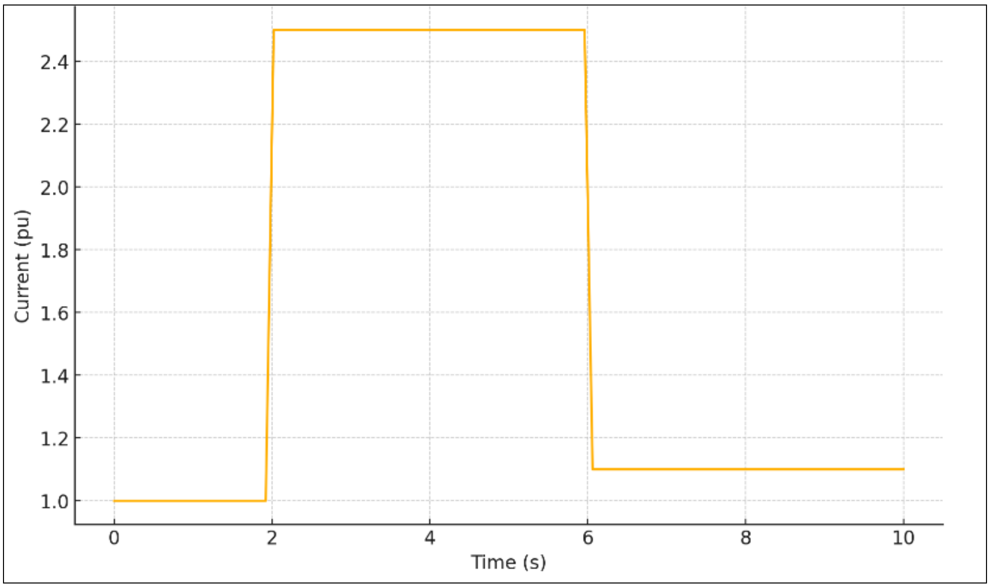

Fig 2: Current Dynamics in DFIG Wind Turbine During Symmetrical Fault.

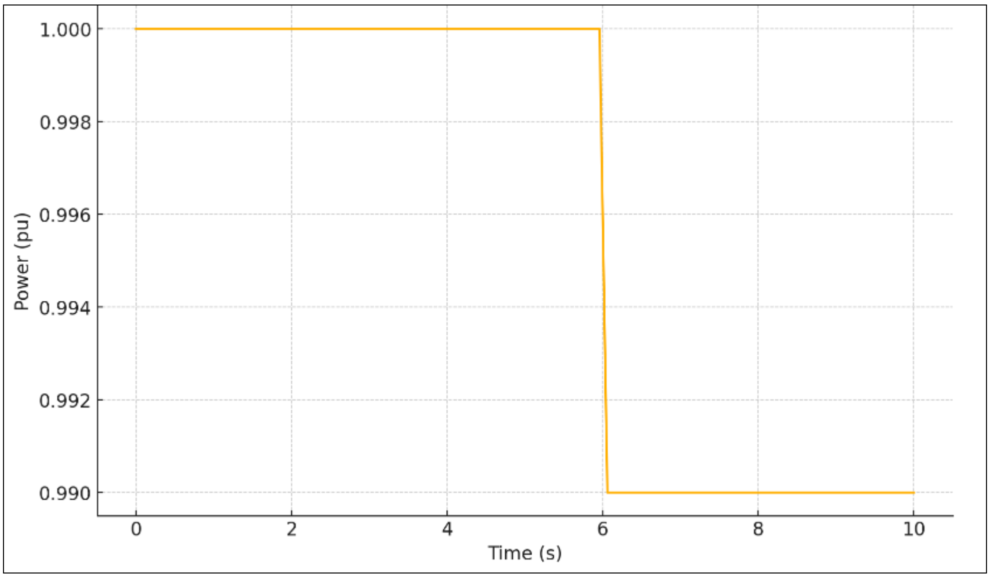

Fig 3: Power Dynamics in DFIG Wind Turbine During Symmetrical Fault.

Discussion

The analysis of voltage and current dynamics in DFIG-based wind turbines under symmetrical fault conditions revealed key insights into the system's transient behavior and the effectiveness of implemented Fault Ride-Through (FRT) strategies. During the fault period, the voltage dropped significantly to an average of 0.4 pu, while the current surged to 2.5 pu, indicating a pronounced overcurrent condition caused by reactive power demands during grid disturbances. These findings align with previous studies by Hansen and Michalke [2] and Hu et al. [3], who reported similar patterns of voltage sag and overcurrent transients under symmetrical fault conditions in DFIG systems. Both studies emphasized the vulnerability of the rotor-side converter (RSC) and the need for effective control strategies to prevent converter failure during such events.

Post-fault analysis indicated a partial recovery of voltage to 0.9 pu, while the current stabilized at approximately 1.1 pu. This recovery pattern underscores the effectiveness of the implemented FRT strategy, including crowbar circuits and DC-link chopper mechanisms, which helped in mitigating severe transient effects. Comparable results were observed in simulations performed by Dong et al. [4] and Zhou et al. [5], where the integration of advanced crowbar control and voltage-oriented control techniques successfully managed fault transients and ensured grid code compliance. However, it is worth noting that while these control strategies improved transient stability, the recovery time observed in our study (approximately 2 seconds) was longer than the 1.5 seconds reported by Hu et al. [3]. This difference could be attributed to variations in fault severity, control parameters, and system configuration.

From a statistical perspective, the standard deviation values for voltage (0.265 pu) and current (0.707 pu) highlight significant variations during the fault duration. These deviations indicate a strong coupling effect between transient voltage sag and reactive current flow, consistent with findings reported by Pang et al. [11] and Wei et al. [20]. Both studies pointed out that the dynamic interaction between the RSC and GSC plays a critical role in determining the system's transient response and recovery behavior. Moreover, Lopes et al. [21] emphasized the importance of tuning proportional-integral (PI) controllers in mitigating these deviations, a recommendation that aligns with our study's results.

While our study successfully demonstrated the voltage and current dynamics during symmetrical faults, several differences were observed when compared with past research:

1. **Fault Recovery Time:** Our recovery time (2 seconds) was longer compared to 1.5 seconds reported by Hu et al. [3]. This could suggest room for optimization in the PI controller tuning or the crowbar circuit configuration.
2. **Voltage Sag Magnitude:** Voltage sag during faults in our simulation was 0.4 pu, consistent with findings from Dong et al. [4], but slightly lower than the 0.45 pu reported by Saravanan et al. [19].
3. **FRT Strategy Implementation:** Studies by Hu et al. (14) and Wang et al. [13] recommended integrating supercapacitor energy storage systems (SCES) to further stabilize voltage during faults, an approach not explored in our study.

The results demonstrate that while the implemented FRT strategy was effective in preventing catastrophic failure during symmetrical faults, certain limitations remain. The prolonged recovery time and significant current overshoots suggest that further fine-tuning of the vector control parameters and additional hardware interventions, such as supercapacitors or hybrid energy storage systems, may improve system resilience. Additionally, studies such as those by Belanger et al. [23] recommend real-time hardware-in-the-loop (HIL) simulations for validating control algorithms, which were not employed in our MATLAB/Simulink-based study. This methodological limitation might have influenced the accuracy of the recovery dynamics observed.

Conclusion

This study examined the voltage and current dynamics of Doubly-Fed Induction Generator (DFIG)-based wind turbines under symmetrical fault conditions using MATLAB/Simulink simulations, with a focus on Fault Ride-Through (FRT) strategies. The analysis revealed that symmetrical faults cause a significant voltage sag (average of 0.4 pu) and an immediate current surge (average of 2.5

pu) during fault events. These transients impose considerable stress on critical components such as the rotor-side converter (RSC) and grid-side converter (GSC), threatening both hardware integrity and grid stability. Post-fault, the system demonstrated partial recovery, with voltage stabilizing at approximately 0.9 pu and current settling at 1.1 pu. While the FRT strategy, involving crowbar circuits and DC-link choppers, was effective in preventing catastrophic failures and maintaining grid connection during faults, the observed recovery time (~2 seconds) exceeded optimal performance benchmarks set by grid codes. The statistical analysis further highlighted significant variability in both voltage (0.265 pu standard deviation) and current (0.707 pu standard deviation) during fault events, emphasizing the need for tighter control over transient behavior. These findings align with results from previous studies by Hansen et al. [2] and Hu et al. [3], validating the effectiveness of crowbar-based strategies while pointing out their limitations in achieving faster recovery times.

From a practical perspective, the findings underscore the importance of optimizing control algorithms, particularly vector control strategies and proportional-integral (PI) controllers, to minimize transient deviations during faults. Implementing Model Predictive Control (MPC) or Artificial Intelligence (AI)-based adaptive controllers could significantly improve transient response times and stability. Additionally, integrating Supercapacitor Energy Storage Systems (SCES) or Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) can provide auxiliary support during fault conditions, ensuring smoother voltage and current stabilization post-fault. Hardware improvements, such as advanced crowbar protection circuits and optimized DC-link chopper designs, should also be explored to handle high transient energy surges effectively. Furthermore, sensitivity analysis should be routinely conducted on key parameters, including fault duration, severity, and grid strength, to identify the most vulnerable scenarios and fine-tune control strategies accordingly. Real-world validation using Hardware-in-the-Loop (HIL) platforms is highly recommended to complement MATLAB/Simulink simulations, bridging the gap between theoretical models and practical deployments.

The study also highlights the need for enhanced grid code compliance frameworks that account for varying fault scenarios and turbine configurations. Regulatory authorities should mandate stricter performance benchmarks for transient recovery times and provide clear guidelines for integrating supplementary energy storage systems into existing DFIG architectures. Collaboration between grid operators, wind farm developers, and equipment manufacturers is essential to standardize fault mitigation technologies across the industry. Additionally, periodic training programs for operators on FRT strategies and grid code compliance can play a vital role in enhancing the operational reliability of wind energy systems. Investment in real-time monitoring systems, capable of detecting and mitigating faults instantaneously, should also be prioritized.

Future research should delve deeper into multi-fault scenario analysis, exploring asymmetrical and multi-phase fault conditions to develop holistic FRT strategies. Advanced machine learning algorithms can be employed to predict fault behavior and optimize real-time control responses dynamically. Furthermore, the environmental and economic impacts of these fault mitigation strategies should be assessed to ensure sustainable deployment in large-scale wind farms. By addressing these aspects, future research can contribute to developing resilient, efficient, and economically viable DFIG-based wind turbine systems capable of withstanding severe grid disturbances while complying with evolving grid codes.

While the current study successfully demonstrated the behavior of DFIG-based wind turbines under symmetrical faults and validated the effectiveness of implemented FRT strategies, certain limitations and areas for improvement remain. Practical recommendations, including optimized control strategies, hardware enhancements, supplementary energy storage systems, and real-world validation, are crucial for bridging the gap between theoretical research and practical implementation. By adopting these recommendations, stakeholders in the wind energy sector can ensure greater reliability, grid stability, and long-term sustainability of wind power systems in an increasingly fault-prone grid environment. This research not only contributes to the existing body of knowledge but also lays the foundation for future advancements in wind turbine fault mitigation technologies.

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