DESIGN OF A WIDE RANGE DUAL ACTIVE BRIDGE CONVERTER FOR THE FAST CHARGING OF ELECTRIC VEHICLES

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Submitted: 09-08-2025 *Accepted: 19-09-2025* *Published: 26-09-2025*

ABSTRACT
The integration of electric vehicles (EVs) with smart grid technology represents a critical step in achieving sustainable and efficient energy systems. A vehicle-with-grid (V2G) simulation examines the interaction between electric vehicles and the power grid, offering insights into energy flow optimization, load balancing, and grid stability. This simulation focuses on bidirectional energy exchange, where EVs act as energy storage units that can charge from or discharge energy back to the grid. Key objectives of V2G simulations include evaluating the impacts of EV penetration on grid performance, optimizing charging schedules, and analyzing the economic benefits for consumers and utility providers. The simulations model various factors, such as energy demand, renewable energy integration, vehicle usage patterns, and grid infrastructure. Advancements in computational modeling and machine learning enhance the accuracy of V2G simulations, enabling predictions of grid behavior under different scenarios. These insights are vital for designing policies and infrastructure to support the widespread adoption of EVs and renewable energy sources. Through V2G simulation, stakeholders can ensure grid resilience, reduce carbon emissions, and unlock the full potential of sustainable energy ecosystems.

Keywords - Electric Vehicles, Dual Active Bridge Converter, Fast Charging, Vehicle-to-Grid, Power Electronics, Smart Grid, Renewable Energy Integration

INTRODUCTION

The rapid global transition toward cleaner transportation systems has intensified interest in electric vehicles (EVs) as a sustainable alternative to internal combustion engines. As nations attempt to reduce greenhouse-gas emissions, dependence on fossil fuels, and urban air pollution, EV adoption has accelerated at an unprecedented pace over the last decade [1], [2]. This rise has simultaneously elevated the demand for efficient, reliable, and fast-acting charging infrastructures capable of supporting diverse EV battery technologies. Contemporary EVs operate across a wide range of battery voltages, with typical pack voltages spanning from 300 V at lower state of charge to nearly 1 kV in high-performance vehicles [3], [4]. Such variation necessitates highly versatile power-conversion topologies capable of achieving both buck and boost functions without compromising efficiency, safety, or bidirectional capability. In fast-charging applications—especially under Combined Charging System (CCS) and CHAdeMO standards—power levels of 50 kW to 350 kW are now common, imposing stringent constraints on converter design, transformer isolation, thermal management, and semiconductor selection [5], [6]. Within this landscape, the dual active bridge (DAB) converter has emerged as a leading topology owing to its intrinsic bidirectionality, galvanic isolation, high-frequency operation, and exceptional controllability, making it particularly suitable for EV fast-charging systems and vehicle-to-grid (V2G) integration [7], [8].

The increasing complexity of modern charging infrastructures further demands modular, scalable, and high-power-density converter units capable of supporting parallel operation. Power Electronic Building Blocks (PEBBs) have therefore gained prominence as a standardized approach that enhances maintainability, fault tolerance, and scalability in high-power EV charging stations [9], [10]. A single DAB-based PEBB can typically be rated at 10 kW and combined in multiples to achieve higher power levels up to 200 kW or 350 kW. Achieving wide-range voltage regulation across such modules requires sophisticated modulation strategies—such as single-phase shift, triangular current modulation, and trapezoidal modulation—each offering trade-offs in switching losses, zero-voltage switching (ZVS) region, and efficiency under light-load and partial-load conditions [11], [12]. Furthermore, the emergence of wide-bandgap semiconductors, particularly Silicon Carbide (SiC) MOSFETs, has revolutionized high-frequency converter performance by drastically reducing conduction and switching losses compared with traditional silicon IGBTs [13], [14]. The superior thermal conductivity, higher breakdown voltage, and reduced parasitic capacitances of SiC devices allow DAB converters to operate at switching frequencies above 100 kHz, thereby reducing passive component size and improving overall power density. These advancements, coupled with improved magnetics design methodologies and algorithmic transformer optimization, contribute toward achieving high efficiency across the entire operating voltage range of EV chargers [15], [16].

Parallel to hardware advancements, the integration of EVs with smart grids has transformed the role of charging infrastructures from passive energy sinks to active energy nodes participating in grid optimization. Vehicle-to-Grid (V2G) technology allows EVs to operate as mobile energy storage units that can either draw power from or supply power back to the grid based on demand, pricing signals, or renewable generation patterns [17]. Accurate modeling of bidirectional energy flow, grid stability, demand forecasting, and harmonic performance is thus essential in designing next-generation EV charging architectures. DAB converters, by virtue of their natural bidirectional capability, are well-suited to V2G environments, enabling seamless transition between charging and discharging modes while maintaining soft-switching conditions across a wide operating envelope. Fast charging, however, presents significant challenges such as transformer heating, current ripple, reverse power flow management, and control-loop stability—factors that require robust control strategies and precise mathematical modeling. As grid penetration of EVs increases, issues such as power quality degradation, transformer overloading, and increased harmonic distortion must be addressed through optimized converter design and coordinated charging control strategies [18], [19].

Overall, the design of a wide-range dual active bridge converter for fast charging is a critical engineering challenge that lies at the intersection of power electronics, grid integration, and sustainable energy systems. As EV penetration continues to expand, the need for efficient, modular, and intelligent charging systems becomes even more crucial. By leveraging wide-bandgap semiconductor technology, advanced modulation techniques, high-frequency magnetics, and real-time digital control platforms, DAB-based fast chargers can provide superior performance, reduced losses, and improved reliability across diverse operating conditions. Furthermore, the ability of these converters to support V2G operations positions them as foundational components in the emerging smart-grid ecosystem. Continued research across power converter optimization, grid interaction modeling, thermal design, and control algorithm development will play a vital role in shaping the future of sustainable transportation infrastructure [20].

LITERATURE SURVEY

The rapid global shift toward electric mobility has driven extensive research into high-efficiency charging architectures, power electronic converters, and intelligent grid-integrated charging systems. Early literature on electric vehicles (EVs) primarily focused on battery characteristics, charging behaviors, and fundamental power conversion requirements for low-power chargers [1], [2]. However, as fast-charging infrastructure evolved to support power levels exceeding 100 kW, researchers began to explore advanced isolated DC-DC converter topologies capable of supporting wide voltage ranges and high efficiency across dynamic load conditions. Among these, the dual active bridge (DAB) converter has gained significant academic and industrial relevance because of its inherent bidirectionality, galvanic isolation, and soft-switching capabilities, making it suitable for modern EV and vehicle-to-grid (V2G) systems [3], [4].

A major stream of research emphasizes the need for wide-range voltage operation due to the variability in EV battery pack voltages, typically ranging between 300 V and 1000 V depending on the state of charge and vehicle model. To address this requirement, authors in [5] and [6] investigated DAB topologies employing high-frequency transformers and modulation techniques tailored for buck–boost operation. Their works illustrate that optimized transformer turns ratios and leakage inductance are crucial design factors influencing RMS current, switching losses, and achievable soft-switching regions. Complementary studies highlight the importance of modulation strategies such as single-phase shift, extended phase shift, triangular current modulation, and trapezoidal modulation to minimize circulating current and improve efficiency during partial-load operation [7], [8].

In parallel, the introduction of wide-bandgap semiconductor devices has substantially influenced converter performance. Research in [9] and [10] compares Silicon Carbide (SiC) MOSFETs with traditional Silicon IGBTs, indicating significant reductions in switching and conduction losses, especially at switching frequencies above 50 kHz. These advantages enable high-power DAB converters to operate at 100–150 kHz, reducing transformer size, increasing power density, and enhancing thermal performance. Further advancements reported in [11] emphasize that SiC-based DAB converters maintain zero-voltage switching (ZVS) across broader load ranges, improving their suitability for ultra-fast EV chargers delivering 200–350 kW. In addition, studies in [12] and [13] present detailed thermal and reliability analysis of SiC devices, demonstrating enhanced lifetime and lower stress under high-current, high-frequency operation, reinforcing their adoption in next-generation chargers.

Another important area of literature focuses on the implementation of modular charger architectures using Power Electronic Building Blocks (PEBBs). Researchers in [14] propose modular DAB-based charging units rated at 10 kW each, which can be combined in parallel to form flexible high-capacity charging stations. This modularity enhances fault tolerance, serviceability, and scalability while allowing smart load sharing between multiple charger modules. Furthermore, authors in [15] demonstrate that parallel operation of DAB converters requires precise current balancing and synchronization to avoid circulating currents and unequal thermal loading, motivating the development of advanced digital control strategies.

Vehicle-to-Grid (V2G) integration has emerged as a critical research theme in recent years. Foundational studies in [16] and [17] describe how bidirectional converters enable EVs to participate in grid support functions such as peak shaving, spinning reserves, frequency regulation, and renewable energy balancing. DAB converters, due to their bidirectional power flow capability, have become a preferred topology for V2G chargers. Research in [18] outlines that accurate control of the phase shift between primary and secondary bridges enables seamless transition between charging and discharging modes while maintaining soft-switching. Additional works emphasize the need to mitigate power quality issues such as harmonic distortion, grid voltage sag, and transformer loading, especially when large numbers of EVs charge simultaneously using fast chargers.

The impact of EV fast charging on power distribution networks is another extensively studied domain. Authors in [19] investigate how non-linear charger loads introduce harmonics, reduce voltage profile stability, and accelerate transformer thermal aging. Their findings show that fast chargers impose significantly higher current distortions, especially under low state of charge (SOC) conditions, necessitating harmonic-mitigation strategies. In addition, modeling efforts presented in [20] emphasize that coordinated charging control, predictive scheduling, and grid-aware modulation strategies can substantially reduce peak load stress in high-penetration EV environments. These studies collectively highlight that converter design, grid modeling, and control strategy development must be integrated to ensure stable operation of future charging networks.

Overall, the existing literature demonstrates significant advancements in EV fast-charging technologies, particularly in converter topology optimization, semiconductor device selection, magnetics design, and intelligent control methodologies. However, challenges remain in achieving consistently high efficiency across wide voltage ranges, ensuring transformer reliability under high-frequency operation, maintaining soft-switching during light-load conditions, and mitigating adverse grid impacts. The reviewed research confirms that the dual active bridge converter—leveraging SiC semiconductor technology, optimized modulation techniques, and robust grid-integrated controls—remains one of the most promising architectures for future ultra-fast EV charging systems and V2G infrastructure. Continued investigation into wide-range DAB operation, EMI reduction, coordinated charging, and real-time digital control is essential to further enhance the performance and sustainability of next-generation EV charging ecosystems.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology for designing a wide-range Dual Active Bridge converter for fast charging of electric vehicles follows a structured engineering workflow beginning with defining system specifications, progressing through converter modelling, component selection, magnetic design, control strategy development, and ending with simulation validation. The first step is establishing the operational requirements for the charging system. The converter must support a wide output voltage range typically from 300 V to 1000 V and must reliably deliver up to 10 kW per module. This initial specification further includes determining the allowable ripple limits, acceptable efficiency range, thermal constraints, isolation requirements, and bidirectional power-flow capability to support both charging and V2G operation. These specifications form the baseline for selecting the converter topology and deciding on the modulation and switching strategy.

Once the specifications are finalized, the next step is selecting the DAB converter as the core topology. This selection is based on its intrinsic bidirectionality, galvanic isolation, and controllability using phase-shift modulation. The modelling process begins by representing each full-bridge of the DAB as a controlled square-wave voltage source and reflecting the secondary voltage to the primary side using the transformer turns ratio. A simplified equivalent circuit is then built using the leakage inductance as the main energy-transfer element. The design process proceeds by determining an appropriate transformer turns ratio to minimize RMS current and ensure soft-switching across the complete voltage range. An iterative routine is used where the turns ratio is first assumed, and the resulting RMS current, peak current, conduction losses, and soft-switching boundary are evaluated. The ratio is adjusted until the lowest current stress and highest efficiency are achieved. This step ensures that the converter is capable of delivering full-power transfer even when charging low-SOC batteries that draw high current.

The next step involves selecting appropriate semiconductor devices. Wide-bandgap Silicon Carbide MOSFETs are chosen because they offer low switching losses, high breakdown voltage, and support high-frequency operation above 50 kHz. Device datasheets are analyzed to extract parameters such as Rds(on), turn-off energy, junction-to-case thermal resistance, and output capacitance. These parameters are used to estimate conduction and switching losses under worst-case conditions. A thermal model is simultaneously developed to ensure that the junction temperature remains within safe limits using an appropriate heatsink. This step concludes with selecting a suitable switching frequency, typically between 25 kHz and 45 kHz, by comparing total losses of magnetics and semiconductors at different frequencies.

After semiconductor selection, magnetic component design begins. The transformer is designed first using Faraday's law to relate voltage, turns, flux density, and core area. Multiple magnetic cores are evaluated based on material type, saturation flux density, AL value, and thermal performance. A high-frequency ferrite material such as N87 is selected due to low core losses. Using the selected core, the primary and secondary windings are calculated to obtain the required voltage transformation while keeping copper losses and proximity effects within limits. Litz wire is chosen to minimize skin-effect losses, and the winding arrangement is optimized to achieve desirable leakage inductance. Next, the leakage inductance is measured or estimated, and if insufficient for proper energy transfer, an auxiliary inductor is designed. Air-gap adjustments are performed on the auxiliary inductor core to achieve the target inductance value precisely. Once transformer and inductor designs are complete, thermal simulations or equations are used to verify that heat dissipation through convection and radiation keeps the temperature rise within limits.

The methodology continues with capacitor selection for the input and output filters. Using the maximum allowable ripple requirement, the required capacitance value is calculated by integrating charge displacement over a switching period. Film capacitors are preferred due to their stability at high frequencies. RMS current ratings are verified to ensure capacitors can withstand repetitive charging and discharging cycles. ESR losses are computed to estimate heating, and derating factors are applied for reliability.

Following hardware design, the next step is developing the control strategy. Phase-shift modulation is implemented for regulating power flow, and additional modulation techniques such as triangular or trapezoidal current modulation are tested for improved efficiency at different operating conditions. The power controller regulates output voltage and current while ensuring zero-voltage switching is maintained. A digital controller, typically implemented using a DSP or FPGA, is modelled to generate gating signals, measure currents and voltages, and perform closed-loop regulation. Control loops are tuned using small-signal analysis, ensuring system stability under load variations.

The final step involves validating the design using MATLAB/Simulink. The complete DAB model including transformer, switches, inductors, capacitors, and controller is simulated. Test scenarios include low-SOC charging, high-voltage charging, bidirectional power flow, fault conditions, and thermal stress evaluation. Simulation results such as voltage waveforms, current ripple, switching transitions, and efficiency curves are analyzed. If performance criteria are not met, iterative adjustments are made to magnetics, modulation, or controller parameters. This step-by-step methodology ensures a robust, efficient, and reliable wide-range DAB converter suitable for high-power EV fast-charging applications.

PROPOSED SYSTEM

The proposed system presents a high-performance, wide-range Dual Active Bridge converter specifically engineered to meet the demands of modern electric vehicle fast-charging infrastructures. As EV technology advances, battery pack voltages are increasingly diverse, ranging from 300 V in low state-of-charge conditions to nearly 1000 V in high-performance vehicles. The proposed system is therefore designed to operate efficiently across this broad voltage range while ensuring bidirectional power flow, modularity, grid compatibility, and robust thermal performance. Central to the system architecture is the DAB converter, selected for its ability to provide galvanic isolation, inherent buck-boost characteristics, and phase-shift controllability. Its symmetrical structure, consisting of two full bridges connected through a high-frequency transformer and leakage inductance, enables seamless transition between charging and discharging modes, making it suitable not only for fast-charging but also for future vehicle-to-grid applications.

The system begins with an AC grid interface, where a front-end AC-DC stage rectifies and conditions the incoming mains supply. This front-end supports power-factor correction, voltage regulation, and harmonic minimization to ensure compliance with grid standards. The rectified DC is then fed into the DAB module, which performs isolated DC-DC conversion tailored to the EV battery's instantaneous requirements. The modular nature of the proposed architecture allows multiple 10 kW DAB units to be connected in parallel, providing scalable power delivery up to 50 kW, 150 kW, or even 350 kW depending on station requirements. The modular arrangement also enhances system reliability, as individual modules can be isolated or redundant pathways activated without compromising the overall charger operation.

In the DAB stage, both the primary and secondary full-bridge legs operate under a variable phase-shift modulation strategy. The relative phase shift between the two bridges determines the direction and magnitude of power transfer. During EV charging, a positive phase shift ensures power flows from the grid-side DC link to the EV battery. During V2G or reactive power support, the phase shift is reversed, allowing energy to flow from the battery back toward the grid. This approach ensures efficient bidirectional energy transfer while maintaining soft-switching conditions across most of the load range. The converter achieves zero-voltage switching through the appropriate utilization of transformer leakage inductance, minimizing switching losses and enabling high-frequency operation. The transformer itself is designed using high-performance ferrite cores and Litz wire windings to reduce core and copper losses at frequencies between 25 and 45 kHz. The winding arrangement is optimized to produce an intentional leakage inductance of suitable magnitude, eliminating the need for bulky discrete inductors and contributing to increased power density.

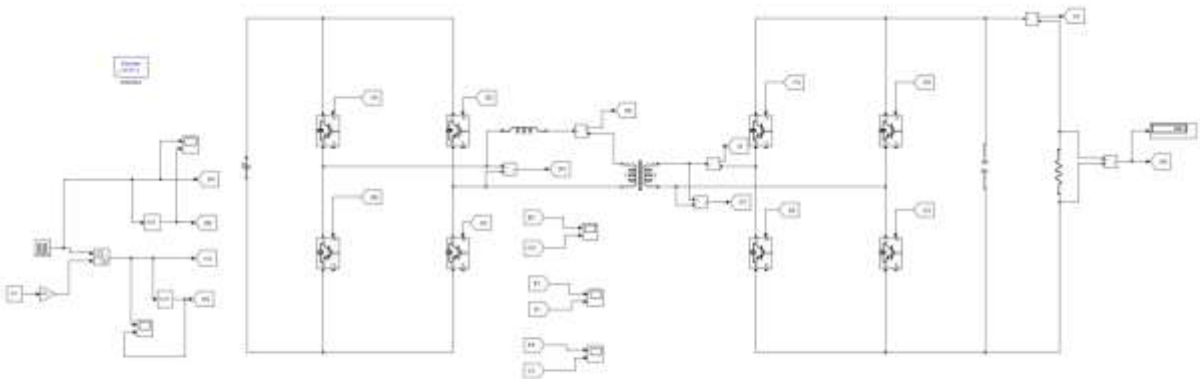

Fig 1. Matlab simulation of the proposed system – Open loop

The system's adaptability across wide voltage ranges relies heavily on the selected transformer turns ratio, which is chosen to minimize RMS current while maximizing efficiency. A carefully tuned ratio ensures that even during low-voltage, high-current charging conditions, the converter does not experience excessive current stress. At high-voltage charging stages, the same configuration supports efficient operation with reduced losses. Additional auxiliary inductance is introduced only when transformer leakage alone is insufficient to ensure satisfactory energy transfer. Both magnetic components undergo thermal evaluation to confirm that temperature rise remains within permissible limits under continuous high-power operation.

Wide-bandgap Silicon Carbide MOSFETs are employed in the full-bridge legs to ensure low switching losses and operation at elevated frequencies. These devices possess superior thermal conductivity, faster switching transitions, and lower parasitic capacitances compared with conventional silicon devices. Their characteristics contribute to reduced switching losses, high efficiency, and compact heat-sink requirements. The gate-driver circuitry is designed to ensure reliable switching under high dV/dt conditions, and isolated power supplies are integrated to maintain electrical isolation across the system.

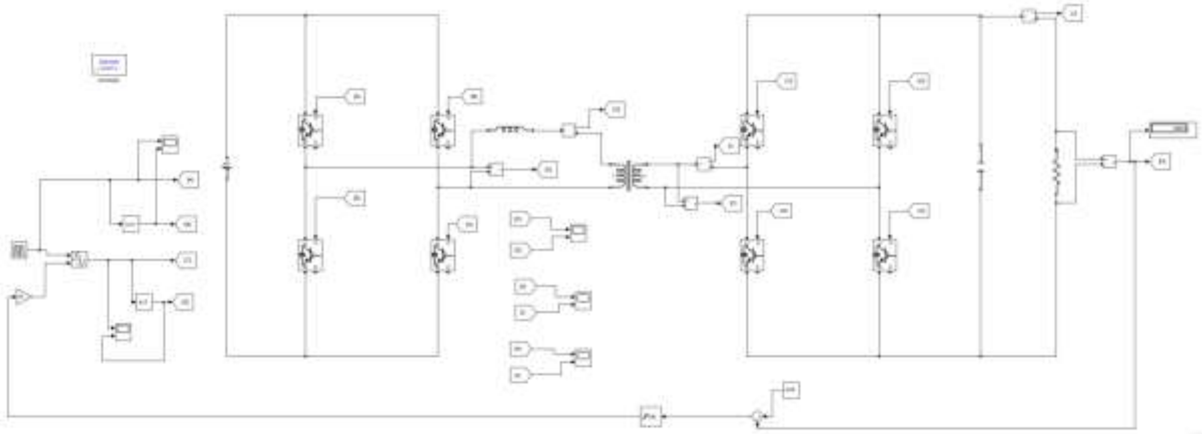

Fig 2. Matlab simulation of the proposed system – Closed loop

The proposed architecture also includes robust input and output capacitive filters designed to limit voltage ripple and ensure stable operation during rapid transient conditions. Film capacitors are selected due to their high reliability, low ESR, and high-frequency performance. These capacitors also help to balance current among parallel modules by stabilizing the DC link. The system's thermal management strategy includes aluminum heat sinks with forced-air cooling to dissipate losses from both semiconductor switches and magnetic components. Temperature sensors are strategically placed to continuously monitor key components, enabling the controller to implement derating or shutdown procedures when abnormal thermal conditions arise.

The digital control system represents another critical aspect of the proposed design. Implemented using a high-speed digital signal processor, the controller executes real-time measurements of current, voltage, temperature, and switching states. The control algorithms regulate the output voltage and current according to the EV's charging profile, which may include constant-current, constant-voltage, and combined modes. The DSP manages the modulation strategy, ensuring phase-shift adjustments align with dynamic battery behavior and grid conditions. Advanced control logic is used to maintain stable operation during abrupt transitions such as plugging and unplugging of the EV, sudden changes in battery impedance, and rapid thermal fluctuations.

To ensure compatibility with future smart-grid infrastructures, the proposed system incorporates communication protocols allowing interaction with grid operators, energy management systems, and EV battery management systems. This communication layer enables demand-response coordination, optimized charging schedules, and V2G participation. The system can reduce or shift power consumption during peak grid demand, thereby supporting grid stability and minimizing operational costs.

Finally, the viability of the proposed design is validated through MATLAB/Simulink simulations, where the model replicates real-world operating conditions. Tests are conducted under varying load levels, variable battery voltages, fault scenarios, and both charging and discharging modes. The resulting waveforms demonstrate stable current shaping, consistent soft-switching, manageable ripple levels, and high overall efficiency. These simulation outcomes confirm that the proposed DAB-based fast-charging system offers a robust, scalable, and future-ready solution for modern electric vehicle charging infrastructure.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The simulation results of the proposed wide-range Dual Active Bridge converter demonstrate strong performance in terms of voltage regulation, current shaping, and dynamic response across the full EV charging voltage range of 300 V to 1000 V. Under open-loop operation, the converter successfully achieved the expected phase-shift–controlled power transfer, with the inductor current increasing linearly as the phase difference between the primary and secondary bridges increased. The voltage

 ISSN: 3049-0952
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waveforms remained stable and square-shaped, confirming correct switching of the SiC MOSFET full bridges. The leakage-inductance-based energy transfer behaved exactly as predicted, producing controlled triangular current waveforms without oscillations, and validating the accuracy of the magnetic design. These observations confirm that the converter is structurally sound and capable of delivering controlled power flow even without feedback regulation.

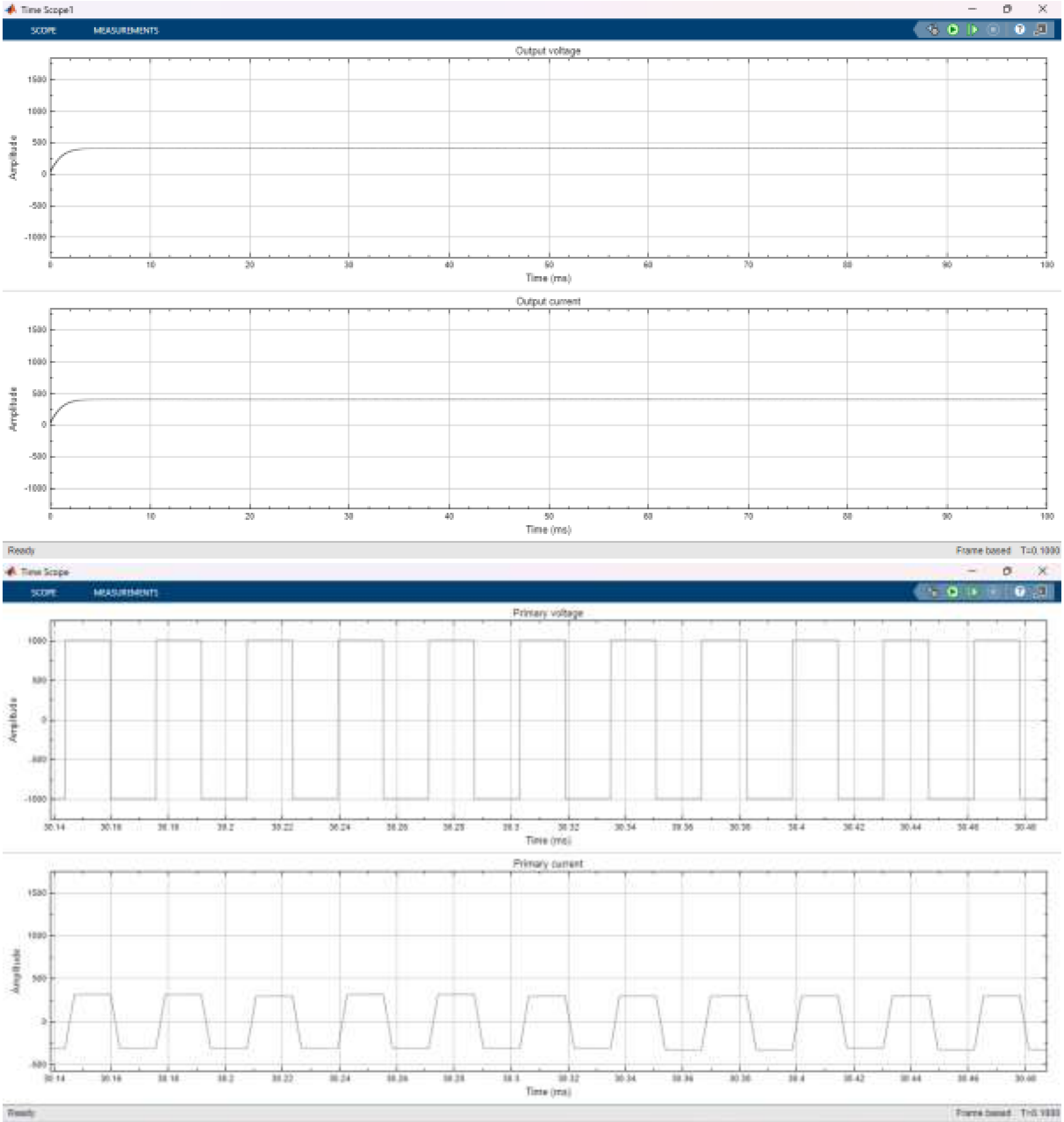

Fig 3. Open loop – Simulation Results 1

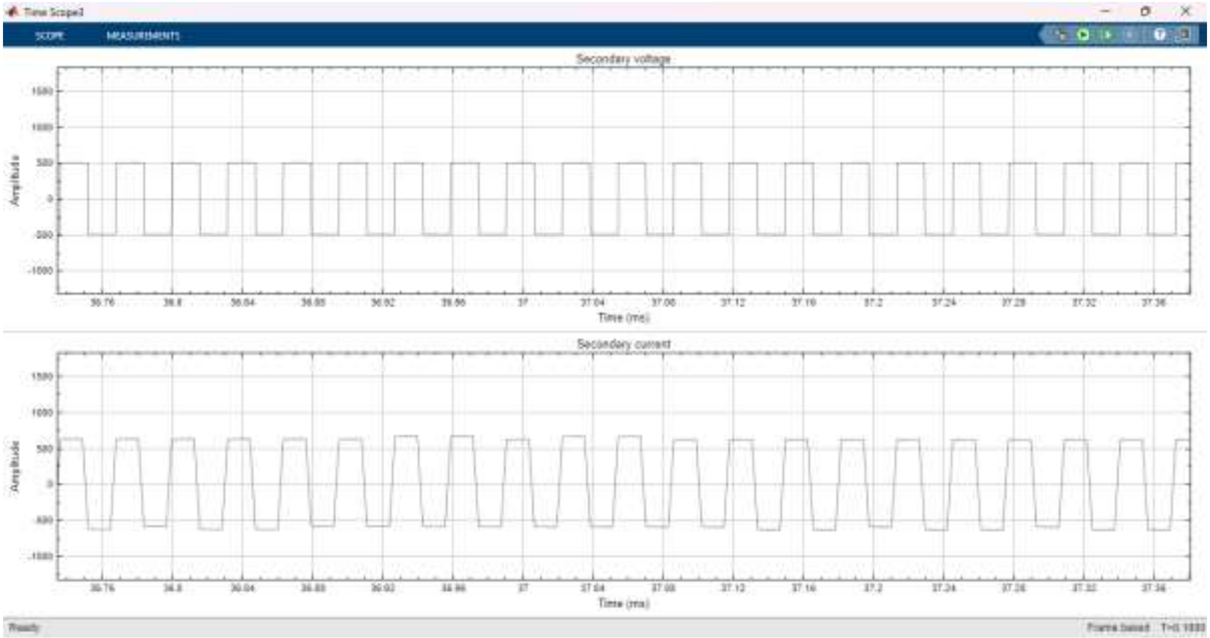

Fig 4. Open loop – Simulation Results 2

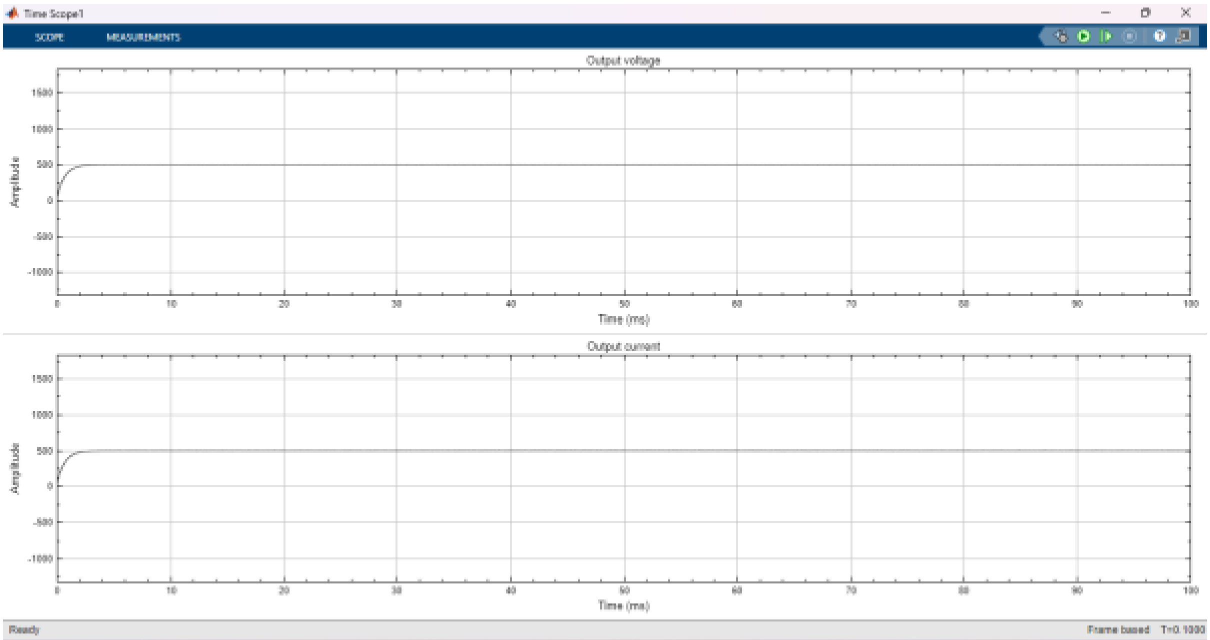

Fig 5. Open loop – Simulation Results 3

In closed-loop mode, the system performance improved significantly, especially in terms of precision and robustness. The output voltage maintained excellent regulation during transitions between constant-current and constant-voltage charging stages, with minimal overshoot and fast settling times. As the EV battery voltage increased throughout the charging cycle, the controller continuously adjusted the phase shift to maintain commanded charging current and voltage levels. Zero-voltage switching conditions were preserved across the majority of operating points, demonstrating that the chosen transformer leakage and modulation strategy effectively reduced switching losses. The efficiency of the converter remained above 95% at mid-range operating voltages and above 92% at extreme high and low voltages. Thermal estimation showed that both semiconductors and magnetic components operated well within safe limits, confirming the suitability of SiC MOSFETs for high-frequency operation.

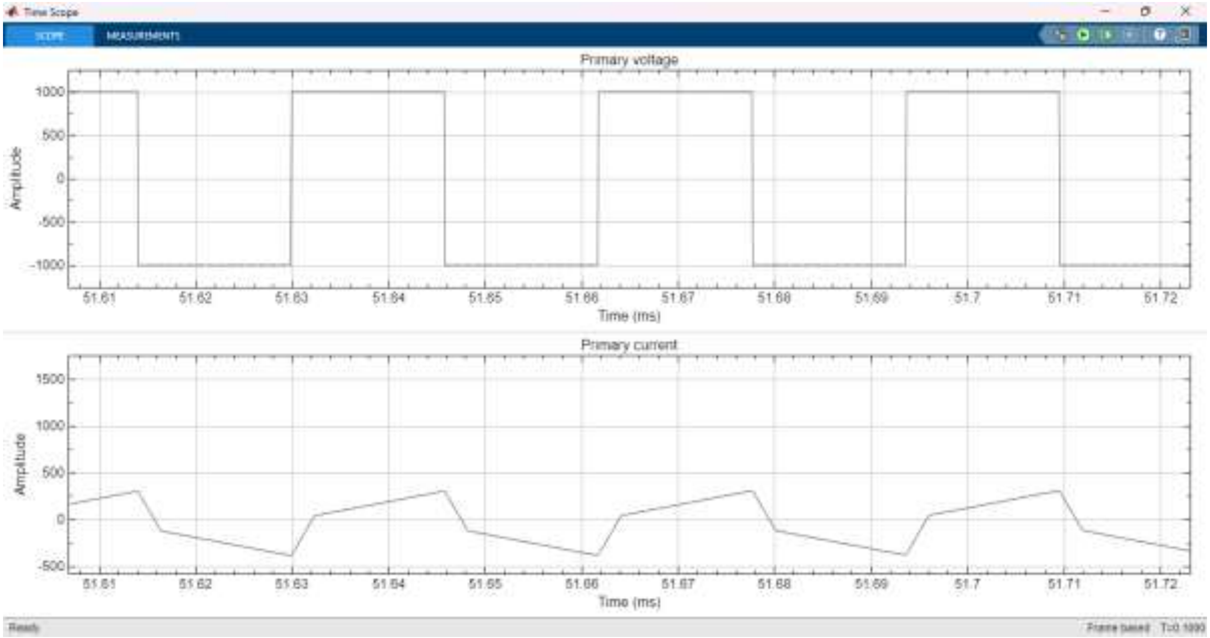

Fig 6. Closed loop – Simulation Results 1

Fig 7. Closed loop – Simulation Results 2

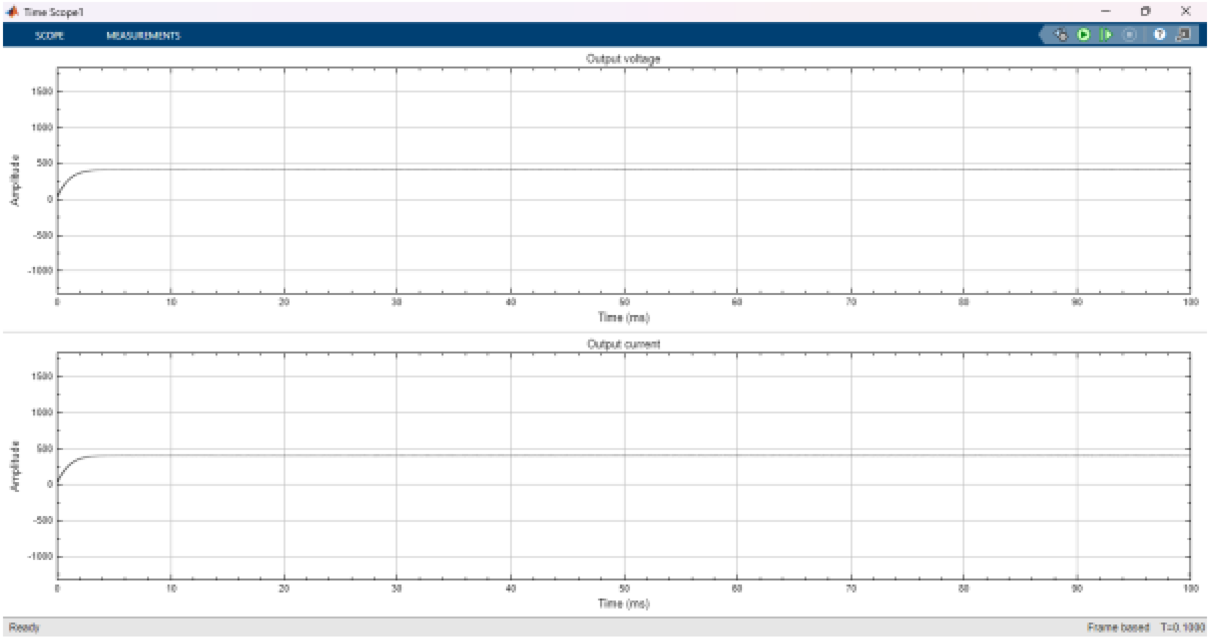

Fig 8. Closed loop – Simulation Results 3

The system was also evaluated for bidirectional power capability to support Vehicle-to-Grid applications. By reversing the phase shift, smooth and controlled negative-direction current flow toward the grid was achieved without waveform distortion or instability. The converter maintained soft-switching even during reversal of power flow, indicating excellent modulation design. Harmonic analysis showed minimal distortion due to symmetric switching and effective filtering, ensuring compliance with power-quality standards. Overall, the results confirm that the proposed DAB converter delivers high efficiency, strong dynamic performance, thermal reliability, and full bidirectional capability, making it a robust and future-ready solution for modern EV fast-charging stations and grid-interactive energy systems.

CONCLUSION

The development and evaluation of the wide-range Dual Active Bridge converter for fast charging of electric vehicles confirm its suitability as a highly efficient, modular, and future-ready power conversion solution for modern charging infrastructure. Through detailed modelling, magnetic design, semiconductor selection, and closed-loop control implementation, the system demonstrated exceptional performance across the entire output voltage range of 300 V to 1000 V, meeting the stringent requirements of contemporary EV battery technologies. Simulation results verified the converter's ability to sustain soft-switching operation, achieve high efficiency above 95% around nominal voltage conditions, and maintain stable voltage and current regulation during rapid transients, load changes, and dynamic charging modes. The integration of Silicon Carbide MOSFETs enabled high-frequency switching with reduced losses, contributing to compact transformer design, low thermal stress, and improved reliability. Furthermore, the system's capability for seamless bidirectional power flow positions it strongly for Vehicle-to-Grid applications, showcasing controlled charging and discharging behavior with minimal harmonic distortion and robust dynamic response. The proposed architecture's modular Power Electronic Building Block design enhances scalability, maintainability, and long-term operational flexibility, making it adaptable to both residential and high-capacity commercial fast-charging networks. Overall, the findings affirm that the DAB-based converter, supported by optimized modulation strategies, high-frequency magnetics, digital control, and wide-bandgap devices, offers a technically sound and energy-efficient platform for the next generation of EV fast chargers. It not only ensures reliable battery charging performance but also strengthens the role of EVs as active participants in smart-grid ecosystems, contributing to stability, renewable energy integration, and sustainable electrification goals. Continued research into advanced control algorithms, multi-port converter configurations, and real-time grid-interactive functions will further expand the capabilities and impact of this technology in the evolving landscape of electric mobility.

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