

# Active Harmonic Filters

HIROFUMI AKAGI, FELLOW, IEEE

## Invited Paper

*Unlike traditional passive harmonic filters, modern active harmonic filters have the following multiple functions: harmonic filtering, damping, isolation and termination, reactive-power control for power factor correction and voltage regulation, load balancing, voltage-flicker reduction, and/or their combinations. Significant cost reductions in both power semiconductor devices and signal processing devices have inspired manufactures to put active filters on the market. This paper deals with general pure active filters for power conditioning, and specific hybrid active filters for harmonic filtering of three-phase diode rectifiers.*

**Keywords**—Active filters, harmonics, passive filters, power quality, power semiconductor devices.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Since their basic operating principles were firmly established in the 1970s [1]–[5], active harmonic filters—active filters,<sup>1</sup> for short—have attracted the attention of power electronics researchers/engineers who have had a concern about harmonic pollution in power systems [7]–[14]. Moreover, deeper interest in active filters has been spurred by

- the emergence of semiconductor switching devices such as insulated-gate bipolar transistors (IGBTs) and power MOSFETs, which are characterized by fast switching capability and insulated-gate structure;
- the availability of digital signal processors (DSPs), field-programmable gate arrays (FPGAs), analog-to-digital (A/D) converters, Hall-effect voltage/current sensors, and operational and isolation amplifiers at reasonable cost [15]–[22].

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The author is with the Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering, Tokyo Institute of Technology, Tokyo 152-8552, Japan (e-mail: akagi@ee.titech.ac.jp).

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<sup>1</sup>The term “active filters” is also used in the field of analog signal processing. These active filters usually consist of operational amplifiers, capacitors and resistors. The active filters for power conditioning in this paper are quite different in circuit and principle from the active filters for analog signal processing.

Modern active harmonic filters are superior in filtering performance, smaller in physical size, and more flexible in application, compared to traditional passive harmonic filters using capacitors, inductors, and/or resistors. However, the active filters are slightly inferior in cost and operating loss, compared to the passive filters, even at present. Active filters intended for power conditioning are also referred to as “active power filters,” “active power line conditioners,” “active power quality conditioners,” “self-commutated static Var compensators (SVCs),” etc. The term “power conditioning” used in this paper has much broader meanings than the term “harmonic filtering.” In other words, the power conditioning is not confined to harmonic filtering, but it contains harmonic damping, harmonic isolation, harmonic termination, reactive-power control for power factor correction and voltage regulation, load balancing, voltage-flicker reduction, and/or their combinations.

Active filters can be divided into single-phase active filters and three-phase active filters. Research on single-phase active filters has been carried out, and the resultant papers have appeared in technical literature. However, single-phase active filters would attract much less attention than three-phase active filters because single-phase versions are limited to low-power applications except for electric traction or rolling stock.

Moreover, the active filters can be classified into pure active filters and hybrid active filters in terms of their circuit configuration. Most pure active filters can use as their power circuit either a voltage-source pulsewidth-modulated (PWM) converter equipped with a dc capacitor or a current-source PWM converter equipped with a dc inductor. At present, the voltage-source converter is more favorable than the current-source converter in terms of cost, physical size, and efficiency. Hybrid active filters consist of single or multiple voltage-source PWM converters and passive components such as capacitors, inductors, and/or resistors. The hybrid filters are more attractive in harmonic filtering than the pure filters from both viability and economical points of view, particularly for high-power applications [23]–[33], [56], [57].

This paper describes both pure and hybrid active filters, along with traditional passive filters. These pure and hybrid filters have a wide range of spectrum, ranging from those available in the market to those under research and development. They are based on leading-edge power electronics technology that includes power conversion circuits, power semiconductor devices, analog/digital signal processing, voltage/current sensors, and control theory. In addition, active filters act as a powerful bridge between power electronics and power engineering in electrical engineering. Attention, therefore, is paid to basic circuit configurations and operating principles of pure active filters intended for power conditioning. Then, emphasis is put on the principle, design, and filtering performance of low-cost transformerless hybrid filters for harmonic filtering of low- and medium-voltage diode rectifiers. Finally, this paper gives some examples of practical pure and hybrid active filters, including the 300-kVA pure active filter installed in a water-processing plant and the 21-MVA active filter using the 4.5-kV 1.5-kA injection-enhanced gate transistors (IEGTs) for voltage-flicker reduction of electric arc furnaces.

## II. VOLTAGE HARMONICS IN POWER SYSTEMS

### A. Harmonic-Producing Loads

Nonlinear loads drawing nonsinusoidal currents from three-phase sinusoidal voltages are classified into identified and unidentified loads. High-power diode or thyristor rectifiers, cycloconverters, and arc furnaces are typically characterized as identified harmonic-producing loads, because electric power utilities identify the individual nonlinear loads installed by high-power consumers on power distribution systems in many cases. Each of these loads produces a large amount of harmonic current. The utilities can determine the point of common coupling (PCC) of high-power consumers who install their own harmonic-producing loads on power distribution systems. Moreover, they can determine the amount of harmonic current drawn by an individual consumer.

A “single” low-power diode rectifier produces a negligible amount of harmonic current if it is compared with the system total current. However, multiple low-power diode rectifiers can produce a significant amount of harmonics into the power distribution system. A low-power diode rectifier used as a utility interface in an electric appliance is typically considered as an unidentified harmonic-producing load. So far, less attention has been paid to unidentified loads than identified loads. Harmonic regulations or guidelines such as IEEE 519-1992, IEC61000, etc., are currently applied to keep current and voltage harmonic levels in check. The final goal of the regulations or guidelines is to promote better practices in both power systems and equipment design at the minimum social cost.

### B. Voltage THD and Fifth-Harmonic Voltages

Tables 1 and 2 show the maximum and minimum values of total harmonic distortion (THD) in voltage and the most dominant fifth-harmonic voltage in a typical power system

**Table 1**  
Voltage THD and Fifth-Harmonic Voltage in a High-Voltage Power Transmission System

	Over 154 kV		154-22 kV	
	THD	5th-harm.	THD	5th-harm.
Max	2.8%	2.8%	3.3%	3.2%
Min	1.1%	1.0%	1.4%	1.3%

**Table 2**  
Voltage THD and Fifth-Harmonic Voltage in a 6.6-kV Power Distribution System

	6.6 kV			
	Residential		Commercial	
	THD	5th-harm.	THD	5th-harm.
Max	3.5%	3.4%	4.6%	4.3%
Min	3.0%	2.9%	2.1%	1.2%

in Japan, which were measured in October 2001 [34]. Note that Japanese electric utilities have been traditionally introducing three-phase three-wire ungrounded systems without neutral line to their 6.6-kV distribution networks. The individual harmonic voltages and the resulting voltage THD in high-voltage power transmission systems tend to be less than those in the 6.6-kV power distribution system. The primary reason is that the expansion and interconnection of high-voltage power transmission systems has made the systems stiffer with an increase of short-circuit capacity. For the distribution system, the maximum value of fifth-harmonic voltage in a commercial area has exceeded its allowable level of 3%, considering Japanese guidelines, while the maximum voltage THD was marginally lower than its allowable level of 5%.

According to [35], the maximum value of fifth-harmonic voltage in the downtown area of a 6.6-kV power distribution system in Japan exceeds 7% under light-load conditions at night. They also have pointed out another significant phenomenon. The fifth-harmonic voltage increases on the 6.6-kV bus at the secondary of the power transformer installed in a substation, whereas it decreases on the 77-kV bus at the primary, under light-load conditions at night. These observations based on the actual measurement suggest that the increase of fifth-harmonic voltage on the 6.6-kV bus at night is due to “harmonic amplification” as a result of series and/or parallel harmonic resonance between line inductors and shunt capacitors for power-factor correction installed on the distribution system. This implies that not only harmonic compensation, but also harmonic damping is a viable and effective way to solve harmonic pollution in power distribution systems. Hence, electric power utilities should have responsibility for actively damping harmonic propagation throughout power distribution systems. Individual consumers and end users are responsible for keeping the current harmonics produced by their own equipment within specified limits.

## III. TRADITIONAL PASSIVE HARMONIC FILTERS

### A. Circuit Configurations

Passive harmonic filters consisting of capacitors, inductors, and/or resistors can be classified into tuned filters

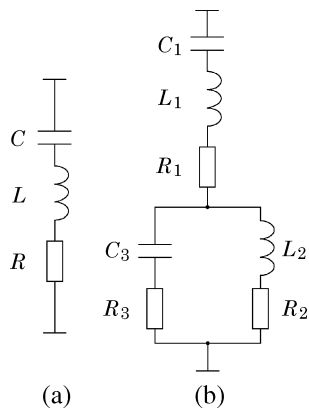


Fig. 1. Passive tuned filters. (a) Single tuned. (b) Double tuned.

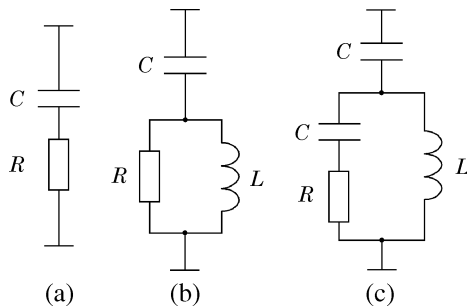


Fig. 2. Passive high-pass filters. (a) First order. (b) Second order. (c) Third order.

and high-pass filters. They are connected in parallel with nonlinear loads such as diode/thyristor rectifiers, ac electric arc furnaces, and so on. Figs. 1 and 2 show circuit configurations of the passive filters on a per-phase base. Among them, the combination of four single-tuned filters to the fifth-, seventh-, 11th-, and 13th-harmonic frequencies and a second-order high-pass filter tuned around the 17th-harmonic frequency has been used in a high-power three-phase thyristor rectifier.

Installation of such a passive filter in the vicinity of a nonlinear load is to provide low-impedance paths for specific harmonic frequencies, thus resulting in absorbing the dominant harmonic currents flowing out of the load. The actual value of the low-impedance path for each single-tuned filter is affected by the quality factor of the filter inductor  $Q$ , which determines the sharpness of tuning. Usually, a value of  $Q$  ranges between 20 and 100 [36]. Although a second-order high-pass filter provides good filtering performance in a wide frequency range, it produces higher fundamental-frequency loss than its corresponding single-tuned filter.

Passive harmonic filters have a value-added function of achieving power-factor correction of inductive loads. This function brings an advantage to passive filters in many cases, but not in all cases.

### B. Consideration to Installation

The background power system impedance seen upstream of the point of installation of a passive filter can be represented by a simple inductive reactance in a range of low-order harmonic frequencies. Harmonic series and/or parallel

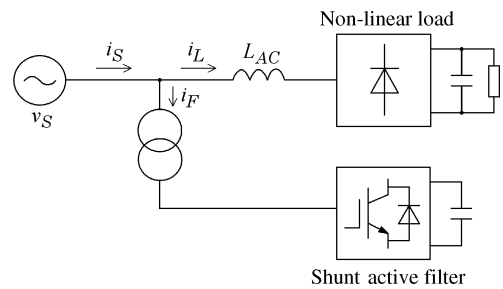


Fig. 3. Single-phase or three-phase shunt active filter.

resonances between the passive filter and the power system impedance may occur at a lower frequency than each tuned frequency.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, a passive filter may sink specific harmonic currents from other nonlinear loads on the same feeder and/or from the power system upstream of the passive filter.<sup>3</sup> This may make the passive filter overloaded and ineffective. Before installing a passive filter, engineers should make elaborate investigations into the possibility of harmonic resonance and overloading on a case-by-case basis. However, these investigations may be accompanied by relatively high engineering cost.

In addition, the final design of a passive filter should allow for component tolerance and variations. For example, initial inductor/capacitor tolerance typically ranges within 5%, and their variations occur due to temperature and other operating conditions [37].

## IV. PURE ACTIVE FILTERS FOR POWER CONDITIONING

Pure active filters can be classified into shunt (parallel) active filters and series active filters from their circuit configurations. At present, shunt active filters are more preferable than series active filters in terms of form and function, and therefore series active filters are suitable exclusively for harmonic filtering.

### A. Circuit Configurations of Shunt and Series Active Filters

Fig. 3 shows a system configuration of a single-phase or three-phase shunt active filter for harmonic “current” filtering of a single-phase or three-phase diode rectifier with a capacitive dc load. This active filter is one of the most fundamental system configurations among various types of pure and hybrid active filters. The dc load may be considered as an ac motor driven by a voltage-source PWM inverter in many cases. This active filter with or without a transformer is connected in parallel with the harmonic-producing load. The active filter can be controlled on the basis of the following “feedforward” manner.

- The controller detects the instantaneous load current  $i_L$ .
- It extracts the harmonic current  $i_{Lh}$  from the detected load current by means of digital signal processing.
- The active filter draws the compensating current  $i_{AF}$  ( $= -i_{Lh}$ ) from the utility supply voltage  $v_S$ , so as to cancel out the harmonic current  $i_{Lh}$ .

<sup>2</sup>See the waveforms of  $i_S$  and  $i_F$  in Fig. 10 where a severe parallel resonance occurred at the fourth-harmonic frequency before starting the active filter.

<sup>3</sup>See the waveforms of  $i_S$  and  $i_F$  in Fig. 11 where some harmonic currents flow from the supply to the passive filter before starting the active filter.

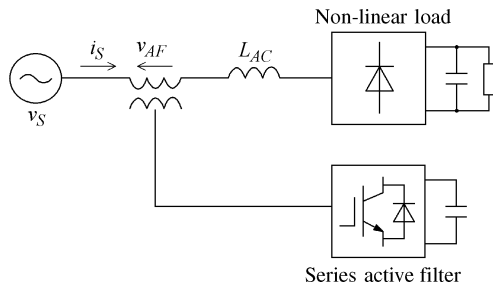


Fig. 4. Single-phase or three-phase series active filter.

The ac inductor  $L_{AC}$  that is installed at the ac side of the diode rectifier plays an important role in operating the active filter stably and properly.

Fig. 4 shows a system configuration of a single-phase or three-phase series active filter for harmonic “voltage” filtering of a single-phase or three-phase diode rectifier with a capacitive dc load. The series active filter is connected in series with the utility supply voltage through a three-phase transformer or three single-phase transformers. Unlike the shunt active filter, the series active filter is controlled on the basis of the following “feedback” manner.

- The controller detects the instantaneous supply current  $i_s$ .
- It extracts the harmonic current  $i_{Sh}$  from the detected supply current by means of digital signal processing,
- The active filter applies the compensating voltage  $v_{AF} (= -K i_{Sh})$  across the primary of the transformer. This results in significantly reducing the supply harmonic current  $i_{Sh}$  when the feedback gain  $K$  is set to be high enough.

The above considerations suggest that “dual” relationships exist in some items between the shunt active filter and the series active filter.

### B. Three-Phase Voltage-Source and Current-Source PWM Converters

There are two types of power circuits applicable to three-phase active filters: a voltage-source PWM converter equipped with a dc capacitor, which is shown in Fig. 5(a), and a current-source PWM converter equipped with a dc inductor, which is shown in Fig. 5(b). These are similar to the power circuits used for ac motor drives. They are, however, different in their behavior because active filters act as nonsinusoidal current or voltage sources. The author prefers the voltage-source to the current-source PWM converter because the voltage-source PWM converter is higher in efficiency, lower in cost, and smaller in physical size than the current-source PWM converter, particularly in terms of comparison between the dc capacitor and the dc inductor.

Moreover, the IGBT module that is now available from the market is more suitable for the voltage-source PWM converter because a free-wheeling diode is connected in anti-parallel with each IGBT. This means that the IGBT does not need to provide the capability of reverse blocking in itself, thus bringing more flexibility to device design in a compromise among conducting and switching losses and short-circuit capability than the reverse-blocking IGBT. On the other hand, the current-source PWM converter requires either series connection of a traditional IGBT and

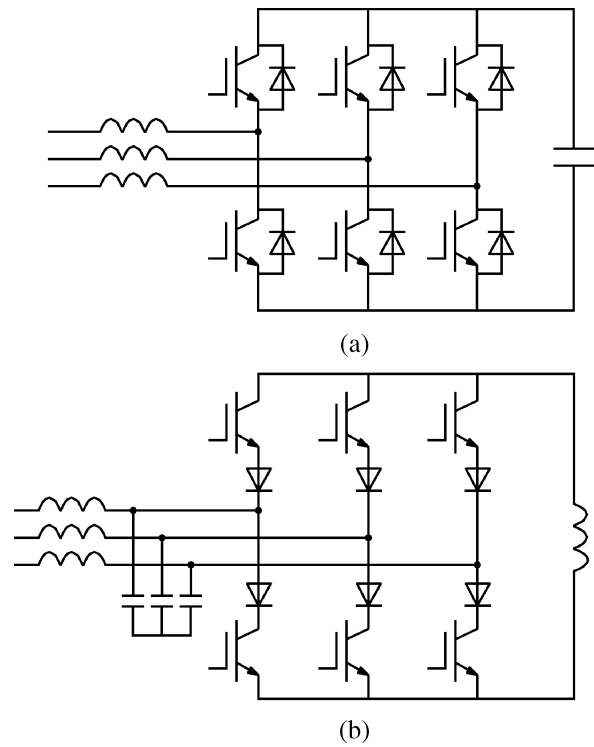


Fig. 5. Power circuits applicable to three-phase active filters. (a) Voltage-source PWM converter, and (b) current-source PWM converter.

a reverse-blocking diode, as shown in Fig. 5(b), or the reverse-blocking IGBT that leads to more complicated device design and fabrication, and slightly worse device characteristics than the traditional IGBT without reverse-blocking capability. In fact, almost all active filters that have been put into practical applications in Japan have adopted the voltage-source PWM converter equipped with the dc capacitor as the power circuit.

Table 3 summarizes loss analysis of three-phase 400-V, 100-kVA shunt active filters based on a current-source PWM converter using gate-turn-off thyristors (GTOs), and two voltage-source PWM converters using bipolar junction transistors (BJTs) and IGBTs with different switching frequencies of 2, 3, and 8 kHz. Note that these comparisons were made in 1990. The voltage-source PWM converter using IGBTs were the most efficient among the three, even if the switching frequency of 8 kHz was the highest [16], [17]. The IGBTs used here were the first-generation version available at that time. Since the latest trench-gate IGBTs can be used at present, the switching-device loss would get less than half of 2030 W.

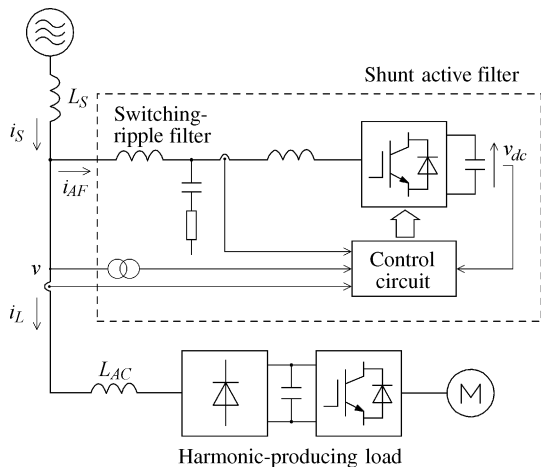
Reference [18] describes shunt active filters using a voltage-source PWM converter and a current-source PWM converter with focus on their comparisons from various points of view.

### C. Three-Phase Pure Active Filters

Fig. 6 shows a detailed circuit configuration of a three-phase shunt active filter. This active filter consists of the following three parts: a three-phase voltage-source PWM converter equipped with a dc capacitor, a control circuit, and a switching-ripple filter. The control circuit

**Table 3**  
Loss Analysis of Shunt Active Filters Rated at 400 V and 100 kVA

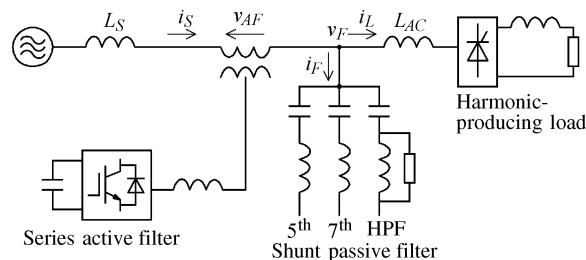
Switching Devices	GTOs	BJTs	IGBTs
Circuit Configurations	CSI-PWM	VSI-PWM	VSI-PWM
Average Switching Frequencies	2 kHz	3 kHz	8 kHz
Switching Devices	2,130 W	2,010 W	2,030 W
Snubbers and Clippers	3,010 W	170 W	500 W
Gate Drive Circuits	560 W	50 W	20 W
Filters	1,180 W	1,370 W	1,040 W
DC Inductor	1,130 W		
Transformers		890 W	890 W
Others	750 W	710 W	710 W
Total	8,760 W	5,200 W	5,190 W



**Fig. 6.** Single-line system configuration of a three-phase active filter.

is based on a leading-edge digital controller using DSPs, FPGAs, and A/D converters for digital signal processing, together with operational and isolation amplifiers for analog signal processing, and Hall-effect voltage/current sensors. The desirable device characteristics for the active filter can be summarized as follows.

- The voltage-source PWM converter with a current minor loop should provide the capability of controlling the compensating current  $i_{AF}$  with a frequency bandwidth up to 1 kHz. This leads to harmonic filtering in a range of the most dominant fifth-harmonic current to the 25th-harmonic current. The carrier frequency of the PWM converter is desirable to be as high as 10 kHz.
- The control circuit should extract the harmonic current  $i_{Lh}$  from the detected load current  $i_L$  with as small errors as possible in amplitude and phase, not only in steady states but also in transient states. As for three-phase active filters, the instantaneous active and reactive power theory or the so-called “p-q theory,” [9], [10], and the d-q transformation [6], [30] are usually applied to their control circuits for harmonic extraction. The p-q theory is required to take the three-phase voltage  $v$  in the control circuit, as shown in Fig. 6. The d-q transformation needs a phase-locked-loop (PLL) circuit to synchronize the transformation with the line frequency and phase. Note that the p-q theory comprehends wider concepts than the d-q transformation.
- The small-rated switching-ripple filter designed appropriately should be connected in parallel as close as pos-



**Fig. 7.** Combination of a series active filter and a shunt passive filter.

sible to the voltage-source PWM converter. The task of the small-rated filter is to eliminate switching ripples caused by PWM operation from the compensating current  $i_F$ .

The active filter shown in Fig. 6 is still referred to as a pure active filter, because the small-rated switching-ripple filter provides no capability of mitigating the dominant fifth- and seventh-harmonic currents produced by the diode rectifier. Forming an appropriate dc-voltage feedback loop enables to build up and regulate the dc voltage without any power supply [13]. (See Figs. 13–16 in Section VI.)

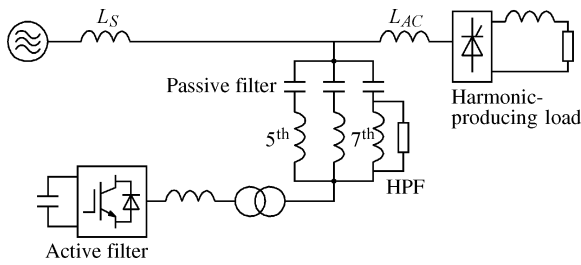
Generally, the dc capacitor can be considered as an energy storage element from a theoretical point of view. However, the active filter is usually not referred to as an energy storage system from a practical point of view, because the amount of energy stored in the dc capacitor is much smaller than that in a battery or a superconductive magnetic coil. In other words, the difference in terminology between the active filter and the energy storage system does not come from their circuit configuration but depends mainly on whether their energy storage capacity is small or large.

#### D. Trends in Pure Active Filters

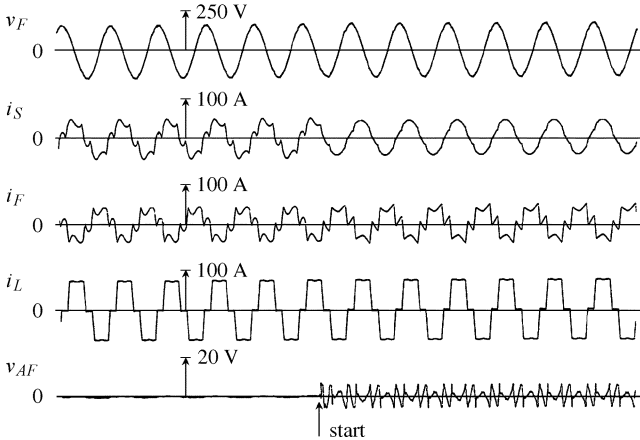
As a result of keen competition in cost and performance among Japanese manufactures, a good market has developed for pure active filters for power conditioning. At present, the pure active filters are becoming affordable due to cost reductions in power semiconductor devices (IGBTs), their auxiliary parts, and integrated digital control circuits. However, the actual price of active filters on the market depends strongly on purchase conditions.

For example, Fuji Electric in Japan has already put pure active filters in a capacity range of 10–400 kVA on the market. An active filter can be directly installed on a low-voltage industrial power system in a voltage range from 200 to 440 V. On the other hand, another active filter requires a step-down transformer when it is installed on a medium-voltage power system. Practical applications of active filters are expanding into and electric power utilities, industry, office buildings, hospitals, water supply utilities, and transportation.

References [38]–[43] deal with a shunt active filter intended for installation on a power distribution system suffering from harmonic amplification due to series and/or parallel resonances between line inductances and capacitors for power-factor correction. The active filter based on detection of voltage at the point of installation is controlled in such a way as to present infinite impedance to the external



**Fig. 8.** Series connection of an active filter and a passive filter.



**Fig. 9.** Experimental waveforms in the case of  $L_S = 2\%$ .

circuit for the fundamental frequency, and as to exhibit low resistance for harmonic frequencies. When the active filter is installed on the end of a radial power distribution feeder, it successfully performs harmonic damping throughout the distribution feeder. This implies that the active filter acts as a “harmonic terminator,” just like a  $50\text{-}\Omega$  terminator installed on the end terminal of a signal transmission line.

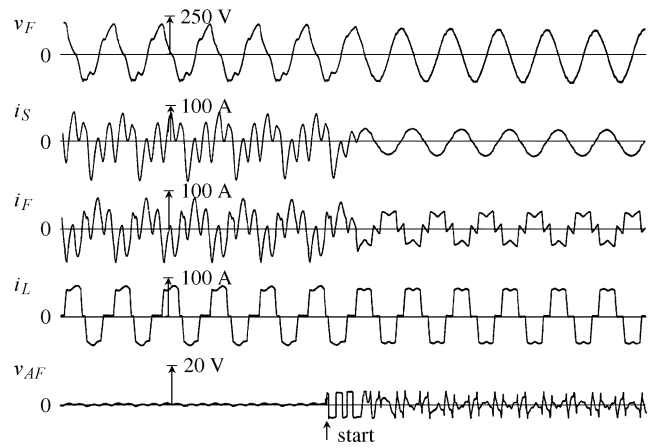
Reference [44] describes a three-phase series active filter consisting of three single-phase H-bridge converters operated at a PWM carrier frequency of 10 kHz, and a small-rated high-frequency dc capacitor. The dc terminals of the active filter is connected to the dc terminals of a three-phase diode rectifier equipped with a dc capacitor, thus forming a common dc capacitor between the active filter and the diode rectifier. Satisfactory filtering performance has been verified by a three-phase experimental system rated at 200 V, 20 kW, and 50 Hz.

## V. HYBRID ACTIVE FILTERS FOR HARMONIC FILTERING

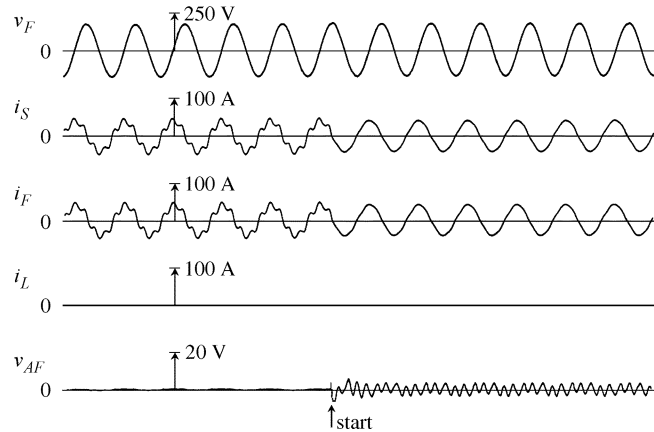
### A. Circuit Configurations

Two types of hybrid active filters for harmonic filtering of nonlinear loads were proposed in 1988 [24], [56] and in 1990 [26], [57], respectively. Figs. 7 [24], [25], [56] and 8 [26], [57] show the simplified circuit configurations of the hybrid active filters. The proposal of the two hybrid filters has encouraged power electronics researchers/engineers to do further research on various hybrid active filters, concentrating on their practical use [27]–[33].

The two hybrid filters are based on combinations of an active filter, a three-phase transformer (or three single-phase transformers), and a passive filter consisting of



**Fig. 10.** Experimental waveforms in the case of  $L_S = 5.6\%$ .



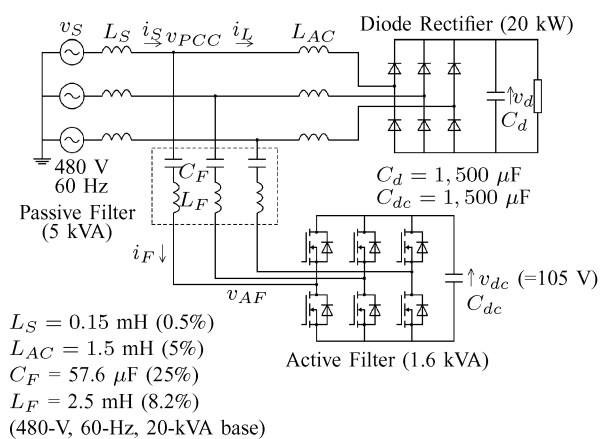
**Fig. 11.** Experimental waveforms with no load in the case of  $L_S = 2\%$ .

two single-tuned filters to the fifth- and seventh-harmonic frequencies and a second-order high-pass filter tuned around the 11th-harmonic frequency. Although these hybrid filters are slightly different in circuit configuration, they are almost the same in operating principle and filtering performance. Such a combination with the passive filter makes it possible to significantly reduce the rating of the active filter. The task of the active filter is not to compensate for harmonic currents produced by the thyristor rectifier, but to achieve “harmonic isolation” between the supply and the load [24], [56]. As a result, no harmonic resonance occurs, and no harmonic current flows in the supply.

### B. Experimental Waveforms

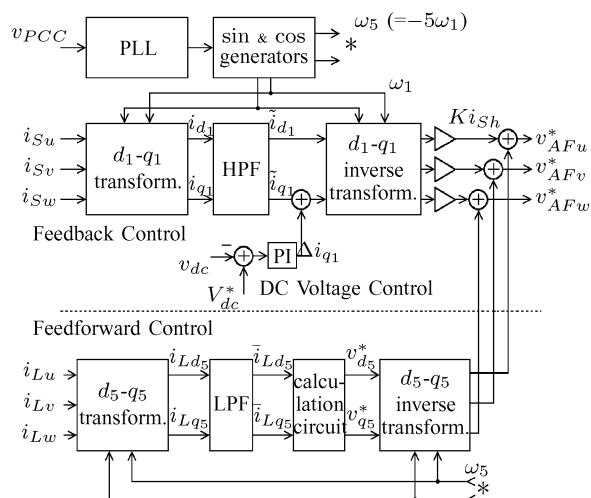
Figs. 9–11 show experimental waveforms obtained from the hybrid filter shown in Fig. 7. A three-phase six-pulse thyristor rectifier with an inductive dc load was used as a harmonic-producing load. The thyristor rectifier is rated at 200 V, 20 kVA, and 50 Hz. From the top of the five waveforms,  $v_F$  is the voltage at the terminals of the shunt passive filter,  $i_S$  is the supply current,  $i_F$  is the current flowing into the passive filter,  $i_L$  is the load current, and  $v_{AF}$  is the voltage across the series active filter, which was observed in the primary of the transformer, as shown in Fig. 7.

Fig. 9 shows experimental waveforms on the transient state at the start of the series active filter in the case of  $L_S = 2\%$  on a three-phase 200-V, 20-kVA, and 50-Hz base. Before the



$L_S = 0.15 \text{ mH (0.5\%)}$   
 $L_{AC} = 1.5 \text{ mH (5\%)}$   
 $C_F = 57.6 \text{ } \mu\text{F (25\%)}$   
 $L_F = 2.5 \text{ mH (8.2\%)}$   
 (480-V, 60-Hz, 20-kVA base)

(a)



(b)

**Fig. 12.** The 480-V hybrid active filter. (a) Circuit configuration. (b) Control system.

active filter was started, a large amount of harmonic current still remained in  $i_S$ . This means that the “pure” passive filter provides unsatisfactory performance in terms of harmonic filtering. After the active filter was started,  $i_S$  became almost sinusoidal, showing that the active filter improves the filtering performance of the passive filter.

Fig. 10 shows experimental waveforms in the case of  $L_S = 5.6\%$ . Before the active filter was started, a severe parallel resonance at the fourth-harmonic frequency occurred in the whole system. This resonance significantly amplified a small amount of the fourth-harmonic current in  $i_L$ . However, no harmonic resonance appeared after the active filter was started.

Fig. 11 shows experimental waveforms with no load ( $i_L = 0$ ) in the case of  $L_S = 2\%$ . Although an amount of background harmonic voltage existing upstream of the passive filter was only 1%, the harmonic current contained in  $i_S$  reached about 10% before the active filter was started. This means that the passive filter may absorb an unexpected amount of harmonic current from the power system upstream of the passive filter and other nonlinear loads on the same feeder. After the active filter was started, no harmonic current flowed in the passive filter. Moreover, no harmonic voltage appeared at the terminals of the passive filter because the background harmonic voltage was blocked by the active filter [24], [56].

These hybrid filters provide viable and effective solutions to harmonic filtering of high-power rectifiers. However, they have difficulty in finding a good market because of the necessity of the transformer and the complexity of the passive filter.

## VI. LOW-VOLTAGE TRANSFORMERLESS HYBRID ACTIVE FILTERS

Adjustable-speed drive systems based on leading-edge voltage-source PWM converters using IGBTs have been used in industrial drives, home appliances, and transportation. In many applications, however, an inverter-driven motor requires neither fast speed response nor regenerative

braking. As a result, a three-phase diode rectifier can be used as the front-end converter of the inverter, instead of a three-phase PWM rectifier. The diode rectifier is much more efficient and reliable as well as much less expensive than the PWM rectifier in low- and medium-voltage drive systems. However, the diode rectifier produces a large amount of harmonic currents, and therefore it does not comply with the harmonic guidelines.

This section deals with a low-cost transformerless hybrid active filter [46], [47], comparing it with a pure active filter.

### A. The 480-V Hybrid Active Filter

Fig. 12(a) shows the circuit configuration of a hybrid active filter connected in parallel with a three-phase diode rectifier rated at 480-V and 20 kW [47]. The hybrid filter is directly connected to the 480-V industrial distribution feeder without any transformer. It is designed to reduce the total harmonic distortion (THD) of  $i_S$  below 5%. The hybrid filter consists of an active filter based on a 1.6-kVA voltage-source PWM converter with a carrier frequency of 10 kHz, and a 5-kVA passive filter. The passive filter is a three-phase single-tuned filter to the seventh-harmonic frequency with a quality factor of  $Q = 22$ . The passive filter exhibits poor filtering performance in a range of low-order harmonic frequencies except around the seventh-harmonic frequency.

The passive filter and the active filter are directly connected in series with each other. This “hybrid” configuration results in a dc voltage as low as 105 V across the dc bus of the active filter. Moreover, no switching-ripple filter is required for the hybrid filter because the passive filter presents high impedance around 10 kHz. The diode rectifier has an ac inductor of  $L_{AC} = 5\%$  at its ac side. This ac inductor is indispensable to achieve proper operation of the hybrid filter because no inductor is installed on the dc side of the diode rectifier.

Fig. 12(b) shows the control system of the hybrid filter. The control system has the following three control functions:

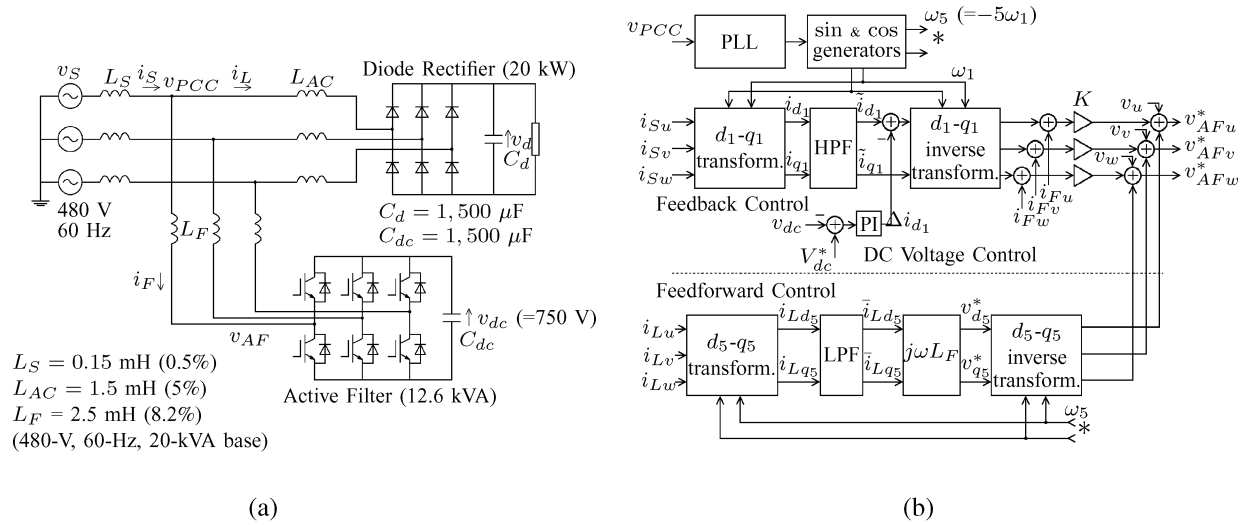


Fig. 13. The 480-V pure active filter. (a) Circuit configuration. (b) Control system.

feedback control, feedforward control, and dc-voltage control.

The feedback control forces all the harmonic currents contained in  $i_L$  to flow into the hybrid filter, whereas it forces no harmonic current to flow from the power system into the hybrid filter. This improves the filtering performance of the passive filter and prevents the passive filter from being overloaded and ineffective. Moreover, the feedback control makes the active filter act as a damping resistor for low-order harmonic frequencies, so that no harmonic resonance occurs between the passive filter and the power system inductance  $L_S$ . As a result, this hybrid filter gets free from elaborate investigations into the possibility of harmonic resonance and overloading before installing it.

The feedforward control forces the fifth-harmonic current contained in  $i_L$  to flow actively into the hybrid filter. The dc-voltage control makes the active filter build up and regulate its dc capacitor voltage by itself without any external power supply. A proportional plus integral (PI) controller is used to do it. Reference [46] describes in detail the control system.

This paper defines the volt-ampere rating required for the active filter in the 480-V hybrid filter as follows

$$\begin{aligned}
 P_{HF} &= \sqrt{3} \times \frac{V_{dc}}{\sqrt{2}} \times \frac{I_{Fmax}}{\sqrt{2}} \\
 &= \sqrt{3} \times 74^V \times 13.0^A \\
 &= 1.6 \text{ kVA}
 \end{aligned}$$

where  $I_{Fmax}$  is a maximum value of the filter current  $i_F$ .

### B. The 480-V Pure Active Filter

Fig. 13(a) shows a pure active filter integrated with the same diode rectifier as that in Fig. 12(a). The 480-V pure filter is connected in parallel with the diode rectifier rated at 20 kW. It consists of an inductor  $L_F$  and a PWM converter

that are directly connected in series. Strictly speaking, this inductor is not a filter inductor but an ac inductor. However, it has the same inductance value as the filter inductor  $L_F$  in Fig. 12(a).

The hybrid filter in Fig. 12(a) can be divided into the following two parts connected with each other: one is the capacitor  $C_F$ , and the other is a pure active filter consisting of the inductor  $L_F$  and the PWM converter. This means that the hybrid filter in Fig. 12(a) can be considered as a series connection of the capacitor and the pure active filter.

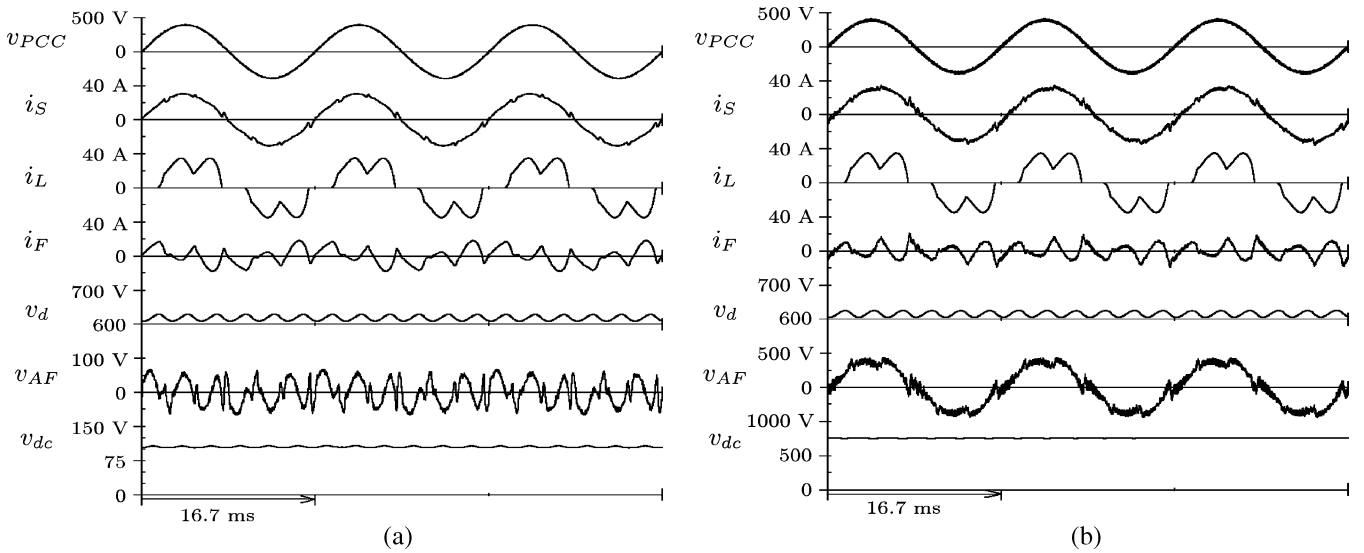
The pure filter is designed to reduce the total harmonic distortion of  $i_S$  below 5%, like the hybrid filter. Unfortunately, this “pure” configuration results in a dc voltage as high as 750 V across the dc bus of the active filter, and so the active filter requires the 1.2-kV, or higher-voltage, IGBT as a power device. The carrier frequency of the pure filter is 10 kHz, which is the same as that of the hybrid filter. The other parameters of the pure filter are the same as those of the hybrid filter. The required rating of the 480-V pure filter  $P_{PF}$  is given by

$$\begin{aligned}
 P_{PF} &= \sqrt{3} \times 530^V \times 13.7^A \\
 &= 12.6 \text{ kVA.}
 \end{aligned}$$

Fig. 13(b) shows the control system of the pure filter. The control system is almost the same as that of the hybrid filter. The pure filter has the same proportional and integral gains as the hybrid filter. However, the following differences exist, compared to the control system of the hybrid filter.

- The voltage at the point of common coupling  $v_{PCC}$  is detected and added to the voltage reference of the pure filter  $v_{AF}^*$  in order to compensate for an effect of  $v_{PCC}$  on current controllability.
- The electrical quantity controlled in the dc-voltage control is not  $\Delta i_{q1}$  but  $\Delta i_{d1}$ , because precise adjustment of a small amount of active power enables to regulate the dc voltage of the pure filter.





**Fig. 14.** Simulated waveforms of the 480-V hybrid and pure filters. (a) Hybrid filter. (b) Pure filter.

The feedforward control in the pure filter has the same purpose as that in the hybrid filter. It calculates the voltage appearing across the ac inductor  $L_F$ , assuming that all of the fifth-harmonic current included in the load current flows into the pure filter.

### C. Design of the 480-V Hybrid Active Filter

The hybrid filter consists of a passive filter tuned to the seventh-harmonic frequency and an active filter. The resonant frequency of the passive filter is given by

$$f = \frac{1}{2\pi\sqrt{L_F C_F}}. \quad (1)$$

It is a well-known fact that the passive filter presents good filtering characteristics around the resonant frequency. This paper selects not the fifth-harmonic frequency but the seventh-harmonic frequency as the resonant frequency for the following lucid reasons.

- The passive filter tuned to the seventh-harmonic frequency is less bulky than that tuned to the fifth-harmonic frequency as long as both filters have the same filter inductor  $L_F$ .
- The passive filter tuned to the seventh-harmonic frequency offers less impedance to the 11th- and 13th-harmonic components, compared to the passive filter tuned to the fifth-harmonic frequency.
- The feedforward control combined with the feedback control makes a significant contribution in improving the filtering performance at the most dominant fifth-harmonic frequency.

The characteristic impedance of the passive filter  $Z$  is given by

$$Z = \sqrt{\frac{L_F}{C_F}}. \quad (2)$$

This impedance determines filtering performance at harmonic frequencies except for the resonant frequency. Generally speaking, the characteristic impedance should be as low

as possible to obtain better filtering performance. This implies that the capacitance value of  $C_F$  should be as large as possible, and the inductance value of  $L_F$  should be as small as possible. A lower characteristic impedance reflects a lower dc capacitor voltage as well as lower EMI emissions by the hybrid filter. This allows the hybrid filter to use low-voltage MOSFETs that are less expensive and more efficient than high-voltage ones. On the other hand, a low characteristic impedance has the following disadvantages.

- A large capacitance value of  $C_F$  makes it bulky and expensive.
- A large amount of leading reactive current flows into the hybrid filter.
- A smaller inductance value of  $L_F$  increases switching ripples. The ratio of the switching-ripple voltage occurring at the point of common coupling,  $v_{PCCsw}$ , with respect to that at the ac side of the active filter,  $v_{AFsw}$  can be calculated under an assumption of  $L_S \ll L_{AC}$  as follows

$$\frac{v_{PCCsw}}{v_{AFsw}} \approx \frac{L_S}{L_S + L_F}. \quad (3)$$

Hence, a tradeoff or a compromise exists in the design of the characteristic impedance. In other words, the above-mentioned criteria should also be considered when selecting the value of  $L_F$ .

### D. Comparisons Between the 480-V Hybrid and Pure Filters

Fig. 14(a) shows simulated waveforms<sup>4</sup> of the 480-V hybrid filter in a steady state. The feedback gain of the active filter,  $K$  is set to  $39 \Omega$  (3.4 pu) so that the hybrid filter provides good stability [46]. The supply current  $i_S$  becomes nearly sinusoidal. The dc capacitor voltage of the active filter is set to 105 V. The low-voltage MOSFETs used here are easily available from the market at low cost.

<sup>4</sup>A first-order low-pass filter with a cutoff frequency of 2 kHz is used to eliminate the switching ripples from  $v_{AF}$ , thus making the waveform clear. Note that the low-pass filter for signal processing is integrated with the software package.

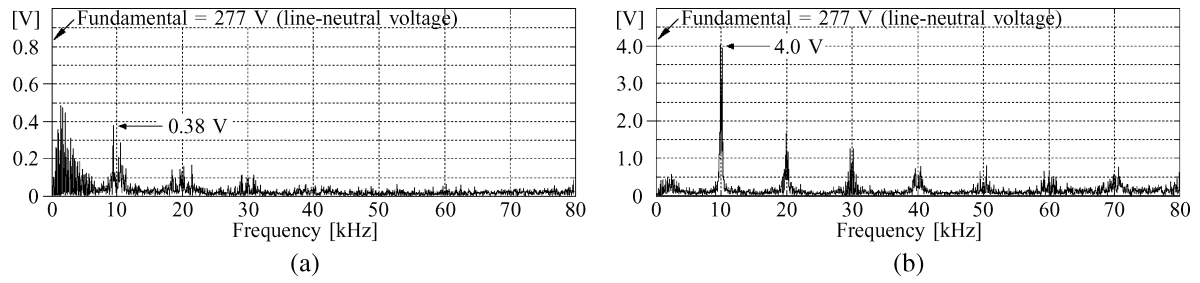


Fig. 15. Spectrum (rms) of  $v_{PCC}$  in the 480-V hybrid and pure filters. (a) Hybrid filter. (b) Pure filter.

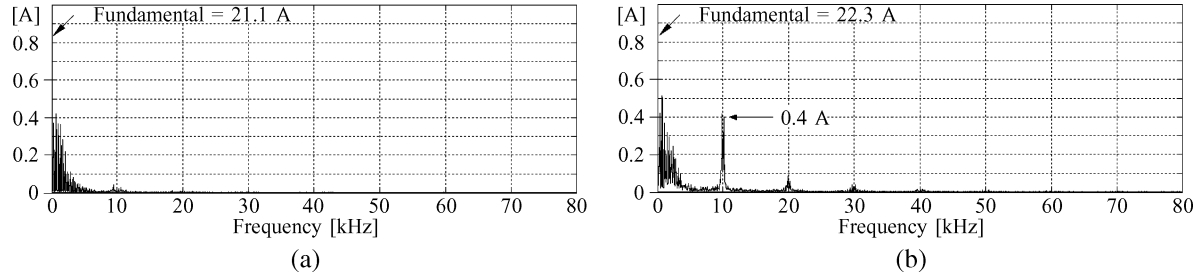


Fig. 16. Spectrum (rms) of  $i_S$  in the 480-V hybrid and pure filters. (a) Hybrid filter. (b) Pure filter.

Fig. 14(b) shows simulated waveforms of the 480-V pure filter under the same conditions as Fig. 14(a). The waveform of  $i_S$  is also nearly sinusoidal. Note that the dc capacitor voltage for the 480-V pure filter is observed to be 750 V from computer simulation. This means that the 1.2-kV, or higher-voltage, IGBTs are required as the power devices in the pure-filter configuration.

The following significant difference exists in the waveforms of  $v_{AF}$  between Fig. 14(a) and (b): No fundamental voltage appears across the ac terminals of the active filter in the hybrid filter because the voltage at the point of common coupling,  $v_{PCC}$  is applied across the filter capacitor  $C_F$ . On the other hand, the supply line-to-neutral voltage as high as 277 V ( $= 480/\sqrt{3}$ ) appears in the waveform of  $v_{AF}$  in the case of the pure filter. This is an important difference in the operating principle and performance between the hybrid filter and the pure filter.

When attention is paid to switching ripples contained in  $v_{PCC}$  and  $i_S$  of Fig. 14, it is clear that the switching-ripples in the hybrid filter are much smaller than those in the pure filter. Note that no additional switching-ripple filter is installed in both cases. Fig. 15(a) and (b) shows frequency spectra of  $v_{PCC}$  in the hybrid and pure filters. The 10-kHz ripple voltage appearing at  $v_{PCC}$  is 0.38 V ( $= 0.14\%$ ) in the hybrid filter, whereas it reaches 4.0 V ( $= 1.4\%$ ) in the pure filter. Fig. 16(a) and (b) shows frequency spectra of  $i_S$  in the hybrid and pure filters. The 10-kHz current ripple present in  $i_S$  is small enough to be neglected in the 480-V hybrid filter, whereas it reaches 0.4 A ( $= 1.8\%$ ) in the 480-V pure filter [47].

## VII. MEDIUM-VOLTAGE TRANSFORMERLESS HYBRID ACTIVE FILTERS

Fig. 17 shows a possible circuit configuration of a hybrid active filter applicable to the 4.16-kV 1000-kW diode rectifier. The 40-kVA active filter using a three-level

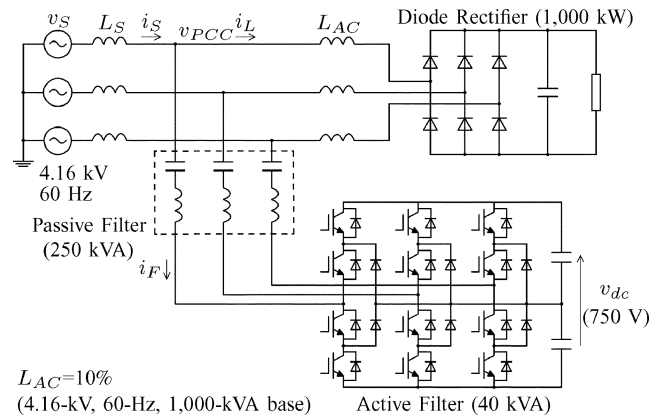


Fig. 17. System configuration of the 4.16-kV transformerless hybrid filter.

diode-clamped PWM converter with a dc voltage of 750 V is operated at a triangle-carrier frequency of 10 kHz, and the 250-kVA passive filter is tuned to the seventh-harmonic frequency. The active and passive filters are directly connected in series without transformer. The ac inductor of  $L_{AC} = 10\%$  is usually preferred for better current protection than a value of  $L_{AC} = 5\%$ , particularly in such a medium-voltage diode rectifier.

The 4.16-kV hybrid filter has less flexibility in assigning the dc voltage of the active filter than the 480-V hybrid filter presented in the previous section. In other words, the 4.16-kV hybrid filter imposes the following constraint on its active filter: The dc voltage should be assigned to be in a range from 600 to 750 V when the three-level converter uses 600-V IGBTs, or in a range from 1200 to 1500 V when it uses 1.2-kV IGBTs. These 600-V and 1.2-kV IGBTs are easily available from the market at low cost. The three-level converter produces less switching ripple and loss, and less EMI emission than the two-level converter when both converters are operated at the same carrier frequency as 10 kHz [48]–[50].

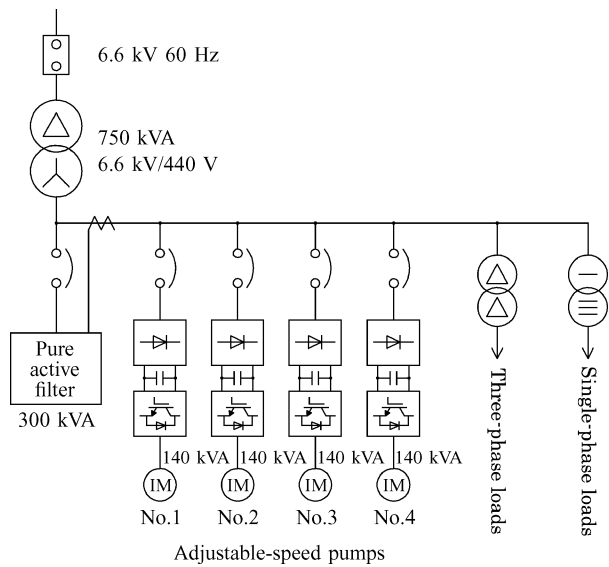


Fig. 18. Single-line diagram of water-processing plant in water supply utility.

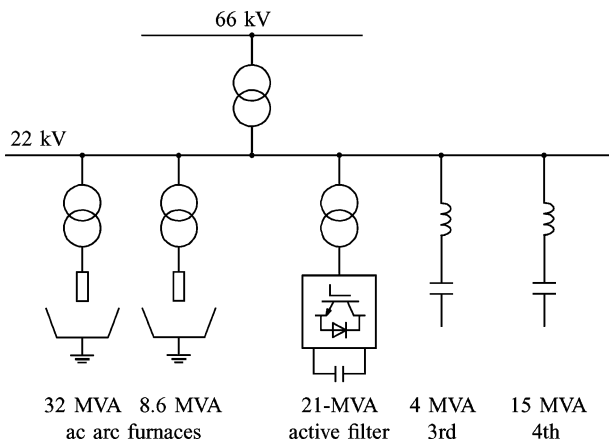


Fig. 19. Single-line diagram of installation of the 21-MVA active filter.

Reference [51] discusses the viability and effectiveness of a transformerless hybrid active filter intended for harmonic damping throughout a 6.6-kV distribution feeder. This hybrid filter is characterized by introducing a three-level converter using 1.2-kV IGBTs to its active filter.

## VIII. PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS OF ACTIVE FILTERS

### A. Application to Harmonic-Current Filtering

Water supply utilities in Japan have been actively introducing adjustable-speed inverter-driven pumps to their water-processing plants for energy conservation.

Fig. 18 shows an example of a practical application of a pure active filter for power conditioning to a water-processing plant. The use of the four inverter-driven pumps brings optimal system operation and energy savings to the plant. However, the inverter-driven pumps draw a large amount of harmonic current, and other inductive and imbalanced loads connected to the same feeder deteriorate power quality. The 300-kVA shunt active filter has been installed

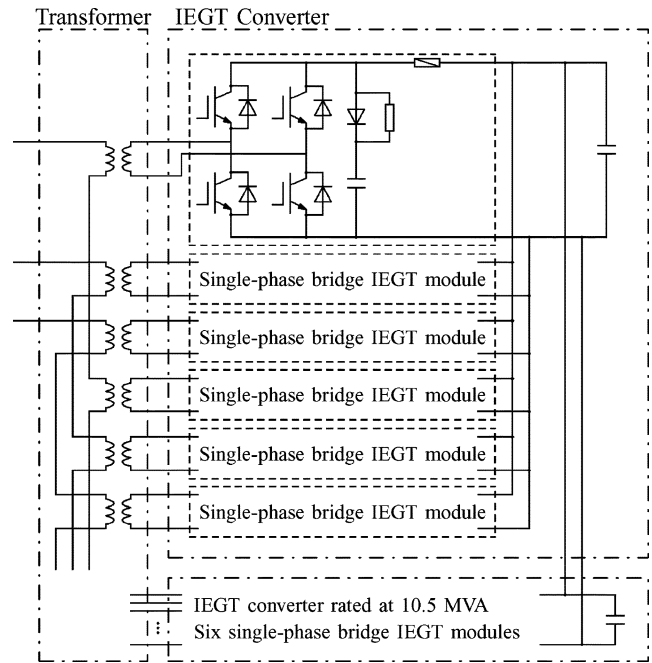


Fig. 20. Circuit configuration of the 21-MVA active filter.

at the secondary of the 6.6-kV/440-V transformer rated at 750 kVA. The functions of this active filter are mainly harmonic-current filtering, as well as power-factor correction, and load balancing [52].

### B. Application to Voltage-Flicker Reduction

Toshiba Mitsubishi-Electric Industrial Systems Corporation (TMEIC) in Japan has developed a 21-MVA active filter<sup>5</sup> using 4.5-kV 1.5-kA IEGTs for voltage-flicker reduction of two ac arc furnaces [53]. Each IEGT has a press package with a diameter of 125 mm, and it is based on leading-edge semiconductor technology. It may be considered as an advanced IGBT in terms of device structure and characteristics. The IEGT leg in each phase is one third the physical size of its corresponding GTO (gate-turn-off thyristors) leg. Moreover, the IEGT-based active filter has lower power loss by 50% than the GTO-based active filter. The IEGTs used here are planar-gate devices. Toshiba will soon release a trench-gate version of the IEGT that has lower conducting and switching losses [45].

Fig. 19 shows the simplified single-line diagram of the whole system including two ac arc furnaces, the active filter, and two single-tuned filters to the third- and fourth-harmonic frequencies. The two arc furnaces draw a reactive current, a negative-sequence current and low-order harmonic currents from the 22-kV bus. All the currents fluctuate with time. In collaboration with the two single-tuned filters, the active filter compensates for the randomly-fluctuating reactive, negative-sequence, and harmonic currents.

Fig. 20 shows the detailed circuit configuration of the 21-MVA active filter consisting of 12 single-phase H-bridge converters and a transformer with multiwindings.

Fig. 21 shows the detailed circuit configuration of each single-phase H-bridge converter. Neither turn-on nor turn-off

<sup>5</sup>This active filter is referred to as a self-commutated SVC in [53].

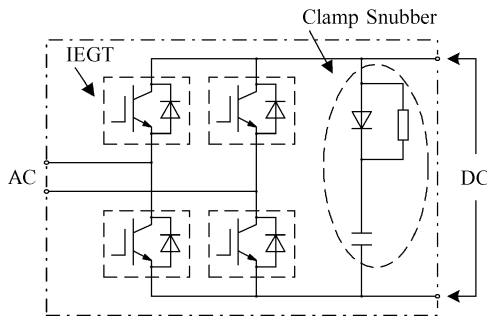


Fig. 21. Circuit configuration of the IEGT converter.

Table 4  
Active Filter Ratings

Power device	IEGT 4.5 kV-1.5 kA
Capacity	21 MVA
Converter configuration	(1S-1P-2L) $\times$ 3 $\times$ 4
Rated dc voltage	2,500 V
Rated ac voltage	1,350 V
Rated ac current	1,296 A
Carrier frequency	390 Hz

snubber is required for each IEGT. However, each IEGT leg needs a simple and efficient clamp snubber that is connected between the positive and negative buses. The carrier frequency of PWM is 390 Hz.

Table 4 summarizes the ratings of the active filter. The symbol “1S-1P-2L” means the one-series, one-parallel, two-leg configuration. In other words, the single-phase H-bridge converter consists of four IEGTs with neither series nor parallel connection. The total number of the IEGTs used here is 48, so that the MVA rating per power switching device is 0.44 MVA/device [54].

Japan has been using the so-called “ $\Delta V_{10}$ ” as an index for evaluating voltage flicker. This index considers the sensitivity of human eyes to flicker frequencies with the largest weight assigned to flicker at 10 Hz. When the active filter was disconnected, the maximum value of the  $\Delta V_{10}$  was 1.3 V. When the active filter was operated, it was reduced to 0.5 V [53]. Note that these values of the  $\Delta V_{10}$  are referred to 100 V. The active filter made a significant contribution to mitigating the voltage flicker caused by the arc furnaces to acceptable levels.

### C. Application to Harmonic Damping

A hybrid active filter consisting of a series active filter rated at 5 MVA and a shunt passive filter rated at 25 MVA has been installed at the Yamanashi test line for high-speed magnet-levitation trains [55]. The series active filter plays an essential role in damping out harmonic resonance between the shunt passive filter and a power system impedance upstream of the passive filter.

## IX. CONCLUSION

Active filters based on leading-edge power electronics technology can be classified into pure active filters and hybrid active filters. The reader may ask the following simple

question in his/her mind, “Which is preferred, a pure active filter or a hybrid active filter?” Fortunately or unfortunately, engineering has no versatile techniques in terms of cost and performance, and it is based on a compromise or a tradeoff between cost and performance. Therefore, a comprehensive answer of the author to the question depends strongly on the function(s) of active filters intended for installation.

A pure active filter provides multiple functions such as harmonic filtering, damping, isolation and termination, load balancing, reactive-power control for power-factor correction and voltage regulation, voltage-flicker reduction, and/or their combinations. A cluster of the above functions can be represented by “power conditioning.” Hence, the pure active filter is well suited to “power conditioning” of nonlinear loads such as electric arc furnaces, and utility/industrial distribution feeders. On the other hand, a hybrid active filter consists of an active filter and a single-tuned filter that are directly connected in series without transformer. This hybrid filter is exclusively devoted to “harmonic filtering” of three-phase diode rectifiers, because it has no capability of reactive-power control from a practical point of view although it has from a theoretical point of view.

Some manufactures have already put active filters for power conditioning on the market. However, they should strive for cost reductions, as well as better filtering performance and higher efficiency, to compete well with traditional passive filters. In addition to the harmonic guidelines or recommendations, sincere efforts by the manufactures would accelerate installation of active filters in the vicinity of nonlinear loads. This in turn would bring greater cost reductions to the active filters due to the economy of large-scale production. Constituting such a positive feedback loop would encourage wide acceptance of the active filters, resulting in solving harmonic pollution and improving power quality.

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**Hirofumi Akagi** (Fellow, IEEE) was born in Okayama, Japan, in 1951. He received the B.S. degree in electrical engineering from the Nagoya Institute of Technology, Nagoya, Japan, in 1974, and the M. S. and Ph.D. degrees in electrical engineering from the Tokyo Institute of Technology, Tokyo, Japan, in 1976 and 1979, respectively.

In 1979, he joined the Nagaoka University of Technology, Nagaoka, Japan, as an Assistant and then Associate Professor in the department of electrical engineering. In 1987, he was a Visiting Scientist at the Mass-

achusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, for ten months. From 1991 to 1999, he was a Professor in the department of electrical engineering at Okayama University, Okayama. From March to August of 1996, he was a Visiting Professor at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, and then the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Since January 2000, he has been a Professor in the Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering at the Tokyo Institute of Technology, Tokyo. His research interests include power conversion systems, ac motor drives, active and passive EMI filters, high-frequency resonant inverters for induction heating and corona discharge treatment processes, and utility applications of power electronics such as active filters, self-commutated BTB systems, and FACTS devices. He has authored or coauthored some 70 IEEE journal papers, as well as many IEEE conference papers.

Prof Akagi has made presentations many times as a keynote or invited speaker internationally. He received two IEEE Industry Applications Society (IAS) Transactions Prize Paper Awards in 1991 and 2004, and two IEEE Power Electronics Society (PELS) Transactions Prize Paper Awards in 1999 and in 2003, along with nine IEEE IAS Committee Prize Paper Awards. He was elected as a Distinguished Lecturer of the IEEE IAS and PEELS for 1998–1999. He was a recipient of the IEEE William E. Newell Power Electronics Award in 2001 and the IEEE IAS Outstanding Achievement Award in 2004.