

Computational and Experimental Analysis of Bridge Current Behavior in Induction Machines with Bridge-Structured Windings

Dr. Kwame Mensah¹, Eng. Akosua Boateng²,

Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering, University of Ghana, Accra, Ghana,

Faculty of Engineering, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi, Ghana

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ABSTRACT

Induction machines with bridge-structured windings present complex electromagnetic behaviors that significantly influence current distribution, torque production, efficiency, and thermal performance. This study provides a comprehensive computational and experimental analysis of bridge current behavior in such machines, integrating finite element modeling (FEM) and laboratory experimentation to address critical gaps in existing research. The computational framework models the bridge windings as coupled electrical circuits within the FEM environment, capturing localized current peaks, flux distortions, and mutual inductive interactions that are often overlooked in traditional analytical models. Multislice 2D modeling techniques are employed to resolve fine-grained variations in bridge currents under both steady-state and transient operating conditions, accounting for realistic material properties of copper conductors and non-oriented electrical steel laminations. Experimental validation is conducted on a laboratory-scale induction machine prototype equipped with bridge-configured windings, using high-precision current and torque sensors to quantify RMS deviations, flux ripple, and localized heating effects. The results demonstrate that bridge currents generate significant non-uniformity, particularly at junction points, which correlates with minor torque ripple and localized thermal hotspots. Comparative analysis between computational predictions and experimental observations confirms the accuracy of the FEM model, with deviations within 8% RMS across all measured parameters. The study further examines the implications of bridge current behavior for industrial automation applications, highlighting trade-offs between mechanical stability, electrical efficiency, and manufacturability. The findings also provide a foundation for predictive maintenance strategies and design optimization of non-standard winding configurations. Overall, this research advances the understanding of bridge current dynamics, offering an integrated methodology for both theoretical analysis and practical implementation, while providing actionable insights for engineers and researchers seeking to enhance the performance and reliability of induction machines in high-precision industrial systems (Michaelides, 2011).

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and Context

Induction machines remain a cornerstone of modern industrial automation, powering applications

ranging from robotic actuators to precision conveyor systems and renewable energy generation. The conventional design of induction machines, featuring standard stator and rotor windings, has

been extensively studied, resulting in well-established models for current distribution, torque generation, and electromagnetic losses. However, recent innovations in machine winding architecture, particularly bridge-configured or bridge-structured windings, have introduced new dimensions of complexity that challenge traditional analytical and computational frameworks (Michaelides, 2011).

Bridge-configured windings, characterized by parallel and interconnected segments across stator or rotor poles, modify the standard current pathways within the machine. These configurations aim to improve current sharing, reduce harmonic losses, enhance fault tolerance, and provide flexibility in rotor-stator interactions. While these objectives are theoretically advantageous, the resulting electromagnetic behavior is highly non-linear and introduces phenomena such as localized current peaks, flux distortion, increased torque ripple, and potential thermal hotspots. These effects are exacerbated under dynamic operating conditions, including transient start-ups, load variations, and high-speed operation, making conventional lumped-parameter models inadequate for precise prediction and optimization (Khoo, 2005; Natesan et al., 2013).

1.2 Problem Statement

Despite the potential performance benefits of bridge-configured windings, there exists a significant gap in understanding their impact on bridge current behavior and overall machine performance. Traditional analytical methods provide only approximate solutions, failing to capture local electromagnetic interactions and the effects of multi-path current flow. Moreover, while some studies have employed finite element modeling to analyze machine behavior, these often lack experimental validation, leading to uncertainties in practical applications (Riley et al., 2009; Komeza et al., 2009). In industrial automation, where precise torque control, efficiency, and reliability are critical, such uncertainties can result in performance degradation, premature component failure, and increased maintenance costs. Therefore, a rigorous, integrated

approach combining computational modeling with experimental validation is necessary to accurately characterize bridge current behavior and its implications for machine design and operation.

1.3 Research Relevance

Understanding bridge current behavior is not only a theoretical concern but also a practical necessity in advanced industrial systems. Modern automation requires induction machines that can deliver high precision under variable load conditions, minimize torque ripple, and operate with optimized thermal performance. Bridge-configured windings, if properly analyzed and implemented, can contribute to these objectives by providing enhanced current distribution, mitigating localized losses, and improving overall machine efficiency (Konwar et al., 2013; Laiho et al., 2011). Additionally, the insights gained from analyzing bridge currents are critical for developing predictive maintenance strategies, enabling real-time monitoring of high-stress regions, and reducing the likelihood of unscheduled downtime.

This study leverages a combined computational and experimental methodology to address these needs. By integrating finite element modeling with controlled laboratory experiments, the research provides a detailed and accurate understanding of bridge current dynamics, flux behavior, and torque characteristics. The approach ensures that both theoretical predictions and empirical observations are aligned, offering a robust framework for machine design, optimization, and industrial application.

1.4 Objectives

The objectives of this research are fourfold:

1. Computational Modeling: Develop a detailed FEM-based computational framework to simulate bridge current distribution under a variety of operating conditions, including steady-state, transient, and multi-phase configurations.
2. Experimental Validation: Construct and analyze a

laboratory-scale induction machine prototype with bridge-configured windings to validate computational predictions and measure real-world performance metrics such as RMS current, flux distortion, torque ripple, and thermal effects.

3. Analysis and Interpretation: Investigate the influence of bridge current behavior on electromagnetic performance, including localized losses, mechanical vibrations, and machine efficiency, identifying critical operational trade-offs.

4. Design Recommendations: Provide actionable insights for engineers and researchers regarding bridge winding design, control strategies, and predictive maintenance in industrial automation contexts (Michaelides, 2011; Syatirah et al., 2011).

1.5 Scope and Significance

This research focuses on single-phase and poly-phase induction machines incorporating bridge-structured windings under a comprehensive range of operational conditions. Both computational and experimental analyses are performed to bridge the gap between theoretical modeling and practical implementation. The study is particularly relevant to industrial automation applications where precision, efficiency, and reliability are paramount. By advancing understanding of bridge current behavior, the research provides a foundation for future studies in non-standard winding architectures, contributes to optimization strategies for high-performance machines, and establishes a framework for predictive diagnostics and design refinement.

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Overview

The methodology adopted in this study integrates computational modeling, experimental validation, and comparative analysis to provide a comprehensive understanding of bridge current behavior in induction machines with bridge-structured windings. The approach ensures high fidelity in both theoretical predictions and practical

measurements, addressing limitations in traditional lumped-parameter models and providing actionable insights for industrial automation applications (Michaelides, 2011). The methodology is structured into three interconnected stages: (i) finite element modeling of electromagnetic behavior, (ii) experimental investigation of prototype machines, and (iii) data analysis and validation.

3.2 Computational Framework

The 3.2.1 Finite Element Modeling (FEM)

computational analysis employs a multi-domain FEM approach to simulate the electromagnetic behavior of induction machines with bridge-configured windings. The machine geometry, including stator core, rotor bars, and bridge junctions, is discretized into a fine mesh to resolve localized current distributions and flux densities. A multislice 2D approximation is adopted to model cross-sectional variations of the machine while maintaining computational efficiency (Riley et al., 2009).

Key aspects of the FEM framework include:

1. Electrical Circuit Coupling: Each bridge path is represented as a discrete circuit element within the FEM environment, enabling the simulation of parallel current flow and mutual inductive effects.
2. Material Properties: Copper windings and laminated silicon steel cores are modeled with realistic electrical and magnetic properties, accounting for temperature-dependent resistivity and core losses.
3. Boundary Conditions: Dirichlet and Neumann boundary conditions are applied to replicate physical constraints, including terminal voltages, rotor movement, and magnetic flux continuity across interfaces.
4. Simulation Scenarios: Simulations are conducted under steady-state full-load conditions, start-up transients, and multi-phase operations to capture the

full spectrum of bridge current behavior.

The FEM outputs include bridge current magnitude and phase, flux density distribution, torque ripple, and localized losses. These data allow quantitative comparison with experimental measurements and inform design optimization strategies (Komez et al., 2008; Khoo, 2005).

3.2.2 Analytical Foundations

The modeling is grounded in Maxwell's equations and the fundamental theory of induction machines. The governing electromagnetic relations are expressed as:

$$\nabla \times \mathbf{H} = \mathbf{J} + \frac{\partial \mathbf{D}}{\partial t}, \nabla \cdot \mathbf{B} = 0, \nabla \cdot \mathbf{D} = \rho$$

$$\nabla \times \mathbf{E} = -\frac{\partial \mathbf{B}}{\partial t}, \mathbf{E} = -\nabla \phi$$

where $\mathbf{H}$ is magnetic field intensity, $\mathbf{B}$ is magnetic flux density, $\mathbf{J}$ is current density, and $\mathbf{D}$ is electric displacement. In bridge-configured windings, the current density $\mathbf{J}$ is not uniform due to the parallel paths, necessitating numerical methods for accurate prediction (Michaelides, 2011).

Additionally, torque generation is derived from the Maxwell stress tensor, linking local flux distortions to mechanical outputs:

$$\mathbf{T} = \int_V \mathbf{r} \times (\mathbf{J} \times \mathbf{B}) dV$$

$$d\mathbf{T} = \int_V \mathbf{r} \times (\mathbf{J} \times \mathbf{B}) dV$$

This formulation captures the influence of bridge current peaks on torque ripple and mechanical vibrations.

3.3 Experimental Methodology

3.3.1 Prototype Construction

A laboratory-scale bridge-wound induction machine was designed and fabricated to validate computational predictions. The prototype features:

- Stator: Laminated silicon steel with bridge-configured windings, including parallel junctions at specified pole positions.
- Rotor: Copper bars with standard squirrel-cage configuration.
- Sensors: High-precision Hall-effect current sensors at each bridge segment to measure RMS currents; thermocouples embedded at critical junctions to detect thermal hotspots.

The experimental setup replicates operating conditions typical of industrial automation, including variable load, start-up, and steady-state regimes.

3.3.2 Data Acquisition and Instrumentation

The experimental framework integrates real-time data acquisition systems capable of capturing:

1. Bridge Currents: RMS values, phase deviations, and transient peaks.
2. Torque Output: Measured via dynamometer to quantify ripple and steady-state torque.
3. Temperature: Junction and winding temperatures to identify hotspots caused by localized current concentration.
4. Flux Distribution: Indirectly inferred through voltage and current measurements at bridge terminals.

Data are sampled at high frequency (≥ 10 kHz) to ensure accurate representation of transient dynamics.

3.4 Validation and Comparative Analysis

The computational and experimental data are systematically compared to validate the FEM models. Metrics for comparison include:

- RMSE of bridge currents: Quantifies deviation between predicted and measured currents.
- Torque ripple analysis: Comparison of peak-to-

peak torque variations.

- Flux and thermal correlation: Identification of critical junctions exhibiting flux concentration and localized heating.

The validation process ensures that the computational framework accurately reflects practical machine behavior, enabling predictive modeling and design optimization (Konwar et al., 2013; Natesan et al., 2013).

3.5 Analytical and Design Considerations

The methodology includes critical analytical steps to interpret results:

1. Identification of Non-Uniform Current Zones: Bridge junctions where current peaks exceed nominal values are flagged for design reconsideration.
2. Assessment of Mechanical and Electrical Trade-offs: Torque ripple, efficiency, and thermal effects are analyzed in relation to bridge geometry.
3. Optimization Guidelines: Simulation insights inform potential modifications, such as adjusting bridge path cross-sectional areas or using alternative conductor materials.

By integrating computational modeling, experimental measurement, and analytical evaluation, the methodology provides a robust framework for understanding, predicting, and optimizing bridge current behavior in induction machines for industrial automation.

3.6 Summary

The methodology combines rigorous finite element modeling, high-fidelity experimental validation, and analytical evaluation to produce a comprehensive understanding of bridge current dynamics. This approach ensures that all aspects of machine behavior, from localized flux distortions to torque ripple and thermal hotspots, are accurately captured and analyzed. The integration of theory,

computation, and experiment provides actionable insights for machine design, predictive maintenance, and performance optimization, establishing a robust framework for both academic research and industrial application (Michaelides, 2011; Riley et al., 2009).

RESULTS

4.1 Bridge Current Distribution Analysis

The computational simulations of the bridge-configured induction machine revealed pronounced non-uniformities in current distribution across the bridge winding segments. Under steady-state full-load operation, the RMS current in certain bridge junctions was found to exceed nominal values by approximately 12–15%, indicating localized current peaks. These peaks were predominantly observed at junctions connecting multiple parallel paths, consistent with theoretical predictions derived from Maxwell's equations and the finite element model (Michaelides, 2011).

Transient simulations, replicating start-up conditions from standstill to rated speed, indicated a dynamic redistribution of currents, with peak magnitudes occurring within the first 50–100 ms. The transient peak currents in bridge junctions were approximately 1.8 times higher than the steady-state values, demonstrating the significant impact of mutual inductance and magnetic flux linkage on bridge segments during dynamic operations. Such peaks, if unmitigated, could lead to localized heating and accelerated insulation degradation, highlighting the practical importance of accurately modeling and monitoring bridge currents.

4.2 Torque and Electromechanical Performance

The FEM analysis also quantified the effect of bridge current behavior on torque production. Simulated torque profiles revealed minor fluctuations correlated with current non-uniformity, resulting in torque ripple magnitudes of up to 3–5% of the rated torque under full-load conditions. This ripple was concentrated during the initial transient phase, coinciding with the peak bridge currents, and

gradually stabilized as the currents equilibrated across the parallel paths (Riley et al., 2009).

Experimental measurements of torque using the laboratory prototype confirmed the computational predictions, with observed torque ripple within ± 0.5 Nm of the predicted values. The alignment between FEM results and experimental observations reinforces the validity of the computational framework and demonstrates that bridge-configured windings, while beneficial for current sharing, introduce mechanically observable torque variations that must be considered in high-precision industrial applications.

4.3 Flux Density Patterns

Analysis of flux density revealed localized concentrations at the intersections of bridge windings and rotor bars. Computational results indicated that flux density in these regions reached up to 1.25 T, compared to the nominal 1.1 T in adjacent areas, suggesting that the bridge configuration alters magnetic pathways and produces non-uniform magnetic flux distribution (Konwar et al., 2013).

This phenomenon was particularly evident in poly-phase operations, where phase imbalance led to asymmetric flux patterns. The experimentally inferred flux, measured indirectly through induced voltages and bridge current correlations, exhibited consistent trends with computational predictions. These findings suggest that bridge current peaks are strongly coupled with localized flux distortions, which can influence losses, heating, and efficiency.

4.4 Thermal Effects

Thermal measurements revealed that bridge junctions experiencing higher RMS currents exhibited elevated temperatures, with peak hotspot temperatures approximately 15–20% higher than average winding temperatures. The correlation between current peaks and thermal accumulation aligns with theoretical predictions and confirms the practical significance of bridge current analysis.

These localized thermal stresses have implications for insulation design, maintenance intervals, and overall machine reliability.

The combination of FEM-based thermal modeling and experimental validation allowed identification of critical bridge segments requiring enhanced cooling or material reinforcement, providing actionable insights for industrial implementation.

4.5 Comparative Analysis Between Simulation and Experiment

Quantitative comparison between FEM simulations and experimental data demonstrated high agreement across all measured parameters:

- RMS bridge currents: Maximum deviation of 8% between predicted and measured values.
- Torque ripple: Differences within 0.5 Nm across transient and steady-state operations.
- Flux distribution: Relative variation in high-flux regions within 6% of computational predictions.
- Thermal hotspots: Predicted temperature rise within 10% of measured values.

These results confirm the robustness of the computational framework and validate its suitability for predictive modeling of bridge-configured induction machines in industrial automation (Michaelides, 2011; Syatirah et al., 2011).

4.6 Key Observations

1. Bridge junctions are critical regions where currents peak, flux concentrates, and thermal accumulation occurs.
2. Transient operating conditions significantly amplify bridge current non-uniformities, impacting torque ripple and machine efficiency.
3. FEM models provide accurate predictive capability, offering a reliable tool for design optimization and performance assessment.

4. Experimental validation is essential, confirming the practical applicability of computational predictions and highlighting areas for targeted design improvements.

4.7 Implications of Findings

The results indicate that bridge-configured windings, while providing improved current-sharing capabilities and fault tolerance, introduce localized electromagnetic and thermal challenges that must be addressed in design and operational planning. Proper assessment of bridge currents can guide optimization of winding geometry, conductor sizing, and cooling strategies, ultimately improving reliability, efficiency, and longevity of induction machines in industrial automation applications.

DISCUSSION

5.1 Theoretical Implications

The results confirm that bridge-structured windings introduce significant deviations from classical induction machine behavior. Theoretical analysis (Michaelides, 2011) posits that parallel current pathways modify effective impedance and flux distribution, which is corroborated by both FEM and experimental data. This has important implications for machine modeling, as conventional lumped-parameter approaches fail to capture localized effects.

Bridge currents also influence rotor dynamics, particularly under transient conditions. High current peaks at bridge junctions can induce micro-vibrations and localized heating, potentially impacting machine lifespan. Thus, accurate modeling and experimental validation are essential for predicting operational reliability and for designing robust controllers in industrial automation systems (Konwar et al., 2013; Natesan et al., 2013).

5.2 Practical Implications

In industrial automation, where precision torque delivery is critical, bridge-configured windings

provide both advantages and challenges. They can improve current sharing and fault tolerance but require careful monitoring to avoid localized overheating. FEM-based design frameworks allow engineers to predict performance before physical prototyping, reducing development costs and improving system efficiency (Komeza et al., 2009; Daut et al., 2011).

The integration of computational modeling with experimental validation also supports predictive maintenance strategies. By identifying regions of high bridge current stress, maintenance schedules can be optimized, and real-time monitoring can prevent early failure, enhancing system reliability in automation applications (Michaelides, 2011).

5.3 Limitations and Trade-offs

Despite the predictive accuracy, FEM simulations require significant computational resources, particularly for multi-phase or high-pole machines. Additionally, experimental setups are limited in replicating extreme operational conditions, such as overvoltage or high-frequency transients. There is also a trade-off between bridge complexity and manufacturability; more complex bridges improve performance marginally but increase production difficulty and cost (Khoo, 2002; Syatirah et al., 2011).

CONCLUSION

This study presents a comprehensive computational and experimental analysis of bridge currents in induction machines with bridge-structured windings. Key contributions include:

1. Validation of FEM models: Finite element simulations accurately predicted bridge current magnitudes, phase deviations, and flux distortions.
2. Empirical insights: Laboratory experiments confirmed computational predictions and highlighted localized thermal effects at bridge junctions.

3. Operational implications: Bridge currents influence torque uniformity, machine efficiency, and mechanical stability, requiring careful design consideration in industrial automation systems.

4. Framework for future research: Integration of computational and experimental methods establishes a robust approach for modeling non-standard winding configurations.

Future work should explore dynamic control strategies that mitigate bridge-induced current imbalances, thermal management techniques, and optimization of winding geometries to enhance industrial automation performance.

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