A unified multi-functional on-board EV charger for power-quality control in household networks

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HIGHLIGHTS

- Designing a feasible unified control system for a multifunctional on-board EV charger.
- The EV charger can operate in V2G/G2V mode as its main function.
- The EV charger can simultaneously perform three ancillary functions of a STATCOM and an APF.
- Stress on the EV battery is reduced using a two-leg buck-boost DC/DC converter.
- Simulation and experimental results verify the efficacy of the proposed system.

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents a feasible and reliable unified control system for a single-phase 4.5 kVA on-board multifunctional electric-vehicle (EV) charger that is connected to a low-voltage household network. Based on the proposed control system, the EV charger can operate as both a single-phase four-quadrant static synchronous compensator (STATCOM) and an active power filter (APF). The proposed EV charger can simultaneously perform four functions: charging/discharging the electric-vehicle's (EV's) battery; reactive power compensation; voltage regulation; and, harmonic reduction, which are important concerns of the existing power grid. Accordingly, it can enhance the building's voltage profile, power quality, and reliability, which makes the proposed method a complete solution for low-voltage household networks. The stress on the EV battery is also reduced, which can enhance its lifetime. A stability analysis of the proposed unified control system is provided in this paper. The simulation results, with two loads, static and dynamic, confirm the efficacy and reliability of the proposed system. The performance of the designed unified control system is also validated by experimental results.

1. Introduction

In recent years the demand for EVs has been growing significantly in developed countries, including Australia [1]. It is predicted that the number of EVs will grow to be 64% of the vehicles on the road in the United States (U.S.) by 2030, and 45% in Australia by 2030 [2,3]. Due to the increased penetration of EV chargers in household charging stations, some critical concerns have appeared for power systems, such as harmonics and voltage fluctuations [4–7]. Modern power electronic devices, for example personal computers, laptops and smart TV power supplies, have also adversely impacted power quality, not only in a house network but also in power systems. Moreover, the growing numbers of inductive and non-linear loads, like washing machines, refrigerators, etc. in a house demand the delivery of more reactive power from the grid than ever before. Therefore, a unified advanced control system is required which can provide an effective solution to improve the power quality and provide the required reactive power for each individual house. Many utilities over the last decade have tried to utilize EV charging stations as an effective solution to operate as both chargers and harmonic eliminators, voltage regulators or reactive power compensators (capacitor bank) [8–10]. Such ancillary functions are provided by integrating a control algorithm with the power circuits of the EV charger. According to recent literature, single-phase EV chargers are designed to provide reactive power while also charging or discharging the EV battery [11–16]. The authors in [17–21] address the harmonic problem caused by non-linear loads in a house, or by the

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operation of the EV charger itself. As a result, an EV charger can operate as an APF to reduce or filter out the harmonics of the network. In [22] a single-phase EV charger is utilized to tackle the voltage disturbances caused by motor startup or inductive loads by operating as a STATCOM. In [23,24] while a single-phase EV charger works in the V2G or G2V mode, it is designed to support reactive power and/or harmonic reduction. As presented in the above literature, the majority of the designed EV chargers are single-functional and only a few of them are double-functional and, thus, are unable to remove all the three mentioned ancillary functions at the same time. Moreover, a single-phase EV charger which is able to improve the voltage profile of a household network is less focused in the literature.

The effect of plug-in electric vehicles (PEVs) on the voltage profile of one phase in a low-voltage residential feeder is investigated in [25,26]. It is concluded that the EVs operation can adversely affect the voltage profile of the residential feeder, particularly where the EVs are plugged in close to the end of the feeder. Similarly, a rooftop photovoltaic (PV) installation can also cause an unbalance voltage in a household network to more than the standard limit [27]. As a solution, the authors in [28,29] propose a transformerless hybrid series active filter for residential buildings in order to combat the voltage disturbances caused by charging/discharging the PEVs. This system is a separate unit and is independently connected to a household network.

Although it tackles the mentioned voltage disturbances, it would not be economical to be installed as a separate unit beside an EV charger in household networks. Moreover, this system works as a dynamic voltage restorer (DVR) to eliminate the voltage fluctuation (such as sag or swell), thus it needs a battery energy storage that also increases the cost. Accordingly, it would be a desired solution to equip the single-phase EV chargers to tackle the voltage fluctuations caused by their own operation and occasionally the installed rooftop PV’s operation. As a result, no extra unit such as the one presented in [28,29] is required to be purchased and installed in houses. However, it must be noted that, depending upon the feeder parameters such as the R/X ratio of residential feeders, active control and/or reactive control is required to maintain the voltage profile in an acceptable region. In [30,31] the impact of the R/X ratio in improving the voltage profile of a residential feeder using PV inverters and droop-based battery storages is studied in detail. This study concludes that the reactive power capability of PV inverters is sufficient to improve the voltage profile of urban areas where the R/X ratio is less than a critical ratio (identified as 4.5–5), whereas in rural areas where the critical R/X ratio is greater than that critical ratio (more resistive feeder), both reactive and active compensations are required. Such an investigation is followed in this paper to design an EV charger which can improve the voltage profile of a residential network for urban areas.
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