A Review on Intelligent and Advanced Control Strategies for Transformer-Based Grid-Connected Inverters

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Abstract: *The rapid integration of renewable energy sources into modern power systems has significantly increased the demand for high-performance grid-connected inverters capable of ensuring stable, reliable, and efficient power conversion. Transformer-based grid-connected inverters continue to play a vital role in renewable energy applications due to their inherent galvanic isolation, enhanced safety, voltage matching capability, and improved fault tolerance. The performance of these inverters largely depends on the effectiveness of their control strategies in maintaining power quality, grid synchronization, voltage regulation, and dynamic stability under varying operating conditions. This review presents a comprehensive analysis of intelligent and advanced control strategies employed in transformer-based grid-connected inverters for renewable energy systems. Conventional control techniques, including Proportional-Integral (PI), Proportional-Resonant (PR), hysteresis current control, and voltage-oriented control, are critically examined alongside advanced approaches such as Model Predictive Control (MPC), Sliding Mode Control (SMC), Adaptive Control, Fuzzy Logic Control (FLC), Artificial Neural Networks (ANN), Reinforcement Learning (RL), and hybrid intelligent controllers. The review further discusses synchronization techniques, harmonic mitigation methods, fault ride-through capability, grid support functions, and the integration of energy storage systems for enhanced operational performance. A comparative evaluation of various control methods is presented based on dynamic response, robustness, computational complexity, implementation cost, harmonic distortion, and suitability for renewable energy applications. Current research challenges, emerging trends, and future directions involving artificial intelligence, digital twin technology, Internet of Things (IoT), and smart grid integration are also highlighted. This review serves as a valuable reference for researchers, engineers, and practitioners seeking to develop next-generation intelligent control solutions for transformer-based grid-connected inverter systems.*

Keywords: *Renewable Energy Systems, Intelligent Control, Model Predictive Control, Sliding Mode Control, Fuzzy Logic Control, Artificial Neural Network, Grid Synchronization.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The increasing demand for clean and sustainable energy has accelerated the integration of renewable energy sources such as solar photovoltaic (PV), wind energy, fuel cells, and battery energy storage systems into modern electric power grids. Grid-connected inverter technology serves as the key interface between renewable energy systems and utility networks by converting the generated direct current (DC) into synchronized alternating current (AC) while maintaining high power quality, stability, and reliability [1]. Among various inverter configurations, transformer-based grid-connected inverters continue to play an important role in medium- and high-power applications because they provide galvanic isolation, voltage matching, enhanced safety, and improved protection against leakage currents and electrical faults [2].

The rapid penetration of distributed energy resources has introduced significant challenges in power system operation, including voltage fluctuations, frequency deviations, harmonic distortion, reactive power imbalance, and reduced system inertia. These challenges require inverter systems to perform multiple functions beyond power conversion, including grid synchronization, voltage regulation, reactive power compensation, harmonic suppression, and fault ride-through capability [3],

[4]. Consequently, the design of efficient and robust control strategies has become one of the most active research areas in renewable energy integration.

Conventional control techniques, such as Proportional-Integral (PI) control, Proportional-Resonant (PR) control, hysteresis current control, and Voltage-Oriented Control (VOC), have been widely implemented because of their simple design, ease of implementation, and satisfactory steady-state performance [5,6]. However, these methods often experience degraded performance under rapidly changing operating conditions, nonlinear loads, parameter uncertainties, weak grid conditions, and renewable energy intermittency. Their limited adaptability motivates the development of more intelligent and robust control methodologies.

Advanced control techniques have therefore gained considerable attention for enhancing inverter performance. Methods such as Model Predictive Control (MPC), Sliding Mode Control (SMC), Adaptive Control, Robust Control, and Deadbeat Control provide faster dynamic response, improved disturbance rejection, and superior tracking performance compared with conventional controllers [7,8]. More recently, intelligent control approaches based on Artificial Intelligence (AI), including Fuzzy Logic Control (FLC), Artificial Neural Networks (ANN), Reinforcement Learning (RL), Deep Learning (DL), and hybrid optimization algorithms, have demonstrated significant improvements in inverter efficiency, adaptive capability, harmonic mitigation, and grid stability under uncertain operating conditions [9,10].

The emergence of smart grids and Industry 4.0 technologies has further expanded the role of intelligent inverter control. Modern transformer-based grid-connected inverters are increasingly integrated with Internet of Things (IoT) platforms, cloud computing, digital twin technology, and advanced communication networks to enable real-time monitoring, predictive maintenance, and autonomous energy management [11]. These developments contribute to improved reliability, enhanced operational flexibility, and greater resilience of renewable energy systems.

Although numerous studies have investigated individual control strategies, a comprehensive review focusing specifically on intelligent and advanced control methods for transformer-based grid-connected inverters remains limited. Existing surveys often emphasize transformerless inverter topologies, photovoltaic systems, or general inverter control without providing a detailed comparison of transformer-based configurations and emerging AI-driven control techniques [12]. Furthermore, limited attention has been given to comparative analyses considering dynamic response, computational complexity, robustness, harmonic performance, implementation challenges, and practical suitability for renewable energy applications.

This review paper addresses these research gaps by presenting a comprehensive overview of conventional, advanced, and intelligent control strategies employed in transformer-based grid-connected inverters. The paper critically analyzes the operating principles, advantages, limitations, and practical applications of various control methods while comparing their performance based on key technical parameters. Additionally, recent developments involving artificial intelligence, machine learning, digital twins, and smart grid technologies are discussed to identify future research opportunities. The review aims to provide researchers, engineers, and industry professionals with a systematic understanding of current advancements and emerging trends in intelligent control for transformer-based grid-connected inverter systems.

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows. Section II presents the fundamentals of transformer-based grid-connected inverter systems. Section III reviews conventional control strategies, while Section IV discusses advanced and intelligent control techniques. Section V provides a comparative analysis of different control methods. Section VI highlights current research challenges and future directions, and Section VII concludes the paper.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

- The development of control strategies for transformer-based grid-connected inverters has evolved from conventional linear controllers to intelligent and artificial intelligence (AI)-based approaches. Researchers have focused on improving inverter efficiency, dynamic response, harmonic suppression, grid synchronization, and fault ride-through capability to meet the increasing demands of renewable energy integration.
- Early research primarily employed **Proportional-Integral (PI)** controllers due to their simple implementation and satisfactory steady-state performance. Blaabjerg et al. [1] reviewed power electronics technologies for renewable energy systems and emphasized that PI-based current and voltage control remain the most widely adopted techniques in grid-connected converters. However, their effectiveness decreases under nonlinear loads, parameter uncertainties, and weak grid conditions.
- To improve inverter performance under dynamic operating conditions, **Proportional-Resonant (PR)** controllers were introduced. Teodorescu et al. [2] demonstrated that PR controllers provide superior sinusoidal current tracking and lower steady-state error in stationary reference frames compared with conventional PI controllers. Their study also highlighted the importance of synchronization techniques for enhancing inverter stability.
- Grid synchronization has become an essential requirement for renewable energy integration. Rodríguez et al. [3] investigated advanced synchronization techniques, including Phase-Locked Loop (PLL) algorithms, and concluded that robust synchronization significantly improves inverter performance under distorted and unbalanced grid conditions. Their work also emphasized the need for adaptive synchronization methods in future smart grids.
- The growing complexity of renewable energy systems has encouraged the adoption of **Model Predictive Control (MPC)**. Cortes et al. [4] presented finite control set MPC for power converters and reported faster transient response, lower current distortion, and improved control accuracy compared with conventional linear controllers. However, they also identified higher computational requirements as a major implementation challenge.
- Another promising nonlinear control technique is **Sliding Mode Control (SMC)**. Utkin [5] demonstrated that SMC offers excellent robustness against parameter variations, external disturbances, and system uncertainties. Although sliding mode controllers improve stability and disturbance rejection, the chattering phenomenon remains a significant limitation that requires advanced compensation techniques.
- Artificial intelligence has introduced new possibilities for inverter control. Zadeh [6] established the foundation of **Fuzzy Logic Control (FLC)**, which has been extensively applied in renewable energy systems because of its ability to handle nonlinear and uncertain operating conditions without requiring an accurate mathematical model. Fuzzy controllers have shown considerable improvements in voltage regulation, harmonic mitigation, and power quality.
- Similarly, **Artificial Neural Networks (ANNs)** have attracted considerable attention due to their learning and adaptive capabilities. Haykin [7] reported that ANN-based controllers effectively estimate system parameters, predict operating conditions, and improve inverter performance under rapidly changing environmental conditions. These controllers provide higher adaptability than conventional approaches but require extensive training datasets and computational resources.
- Recent studies have focused on combining intelligent algorithms with optimization techniques. Mirjalili [8] introduced the **Grey Wolf Optimization (GWO)** algorithm, which has been successfully applied for controller parameter tuning

in renewable energy systems. Compared with traditional optimization methods, GWO offers faster convergence, improved global search capability, and enhanced controller performance. Likewise, Particle Swarm Optimization (PSO) and Genetic Algorithms (GA) have been employed to optimize inverter controller parameters and maximize system efficiency.

- With the advancement of deep learning and machine learning technologies, **Reinforcement Learning (RL)** and hybrid AI controllers have emerged as promising solutions for autonomous inverter control. Recent studies [9], [10] demonstrated that RL-based controllers can continuously learn from grid operating conditions and optimize control actions without explicit system modeling. These intelligent controllers improve dynamic stability, adaptive power management, and fault tolerance, making them suitable for future smart grid applications.
- Modern research has also emphasized integrating transformer-based grid-connected inverters with **Internet of Things (IoT)** platforms, digital twins, and cloud-based monitoring systems. These technologies enable predictive maintenance, real-time diagnostics, adaptive control, and remote supervision of renewable energy systems [11]. Furthermore, digital twin-assisted inverter control has shown significant potential for improving operational reliability and reducing maintenance costs.
- Although significant progress has been achieved in advanced inverter control, several research challenges remain. Existing control strategies often involve trade-offs between computational complexity, implementation cost, robustness, and dynamic performance. AI-based approaches require large training datasets and powerful computing hardware, while advanced nonlinear controllers demand accurate parameter tuning and high-speed processors. Moreover, comparative studies specifically focusing on transformer-based grid-connected inverters remain relatively limited [12].
- Therefore, this review comprehensively analyzes conventional, advanced, and intelligent control strategies for transformer-based grid-connected inverters. It provides a comparative evaluation of their operating principles, advantages, limitations, and application areas while identifying current research gaps and future opportunities for AI-enabled renewable energy systems.

III. MATHEMATICAL MODELLING OF TRANSFORMER-BASED GRID-CONNECTED INVERTER

The mathematical model of a transformer-based grid-connected inverter is developed to describe the electrical behavior of the inverter, output filter, transformer, and utility grid. The synchronous rotating dq-reference frame is widely adopted because it converts three-phase sinusoidal variables into DC quantities under steady-state conditions, thereby simplifying the independent control of active and reactive power.

3.1 Three-Phase Inverter Output Voltage

The three-phase inverter output voltages are expressed as

$$v_a = V_m \sin(\omega t) \qquad (1)$$

$$v_b = V_m \sin\left(\omega t - \frac{2\pi}{3}\right) \qquad (2)$$

$$v_c = V_m \sin\left(\omega t + \frac{2\pi}{3}\right) \qquad (3)$$

where V_m is the peak phase voltage and ω is the angular frequency.

3.2 Clarke Transformation

The three-phase voltages are converted into the stationary αβ reference frame using the Clarke transformation.

$$\begin{bmatrix} v_\alpha \\ v_\beta \end{bmatrix} = \frac{2}{3} \begin{bmatrix} 1 & -\frac{1}{2} & -\frac{1}{2} \\ 0 & \frac{\sqrt{3}}{2} & -\frac{\sqrt{3}}{2} \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} v_a \\ v_b \\ v_c \end{bmatrix} \quad (4)$$

Similarly, the current transformation is

$$\begin{bmatrix} i_\alpha \\ i_\beta \end{bmatrix} = \frac{2}{3} \begin{bmatrix} 1 & -\frac{1}{2} & -\frac{1}{2} \\ 0 & \frac{\sqrt{3}}{2} & -\frac{\sqrt{3}}{2} \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} i_a \\ i_b \\ i_c \end{bmatrix} \quad (5)$$

3.3 Park Transformation

The stationary reference frame is transformed into the synchronous rotating dq-frame.

$$\begin{bmatrix} v_d \\ v_q \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} \cos\theta & \sin\theta \\ -\sin\theta & \cos\theta \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} v_\alpha \\ v_\beta \end{bmatrix} \quad (6)$$

Similarly,

$$\begin{bmatrix} i_d \\ i_q \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} \cos\theta & \sin\theta \\ -\sin\theta & \cos\theta \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} i_\alpha \\ i_\beta \end{bmatrix} \quad (7)$$

where

$$\theta = \omega t \quad (8)$$

3.4 Dynamic Model of RL Filter

Applying Kirchhoff's Voltage Law (KVL) to the inverter output filter gives

$$L\frac{di_d}{dt} = v_d - Ri_d + \omega L i_q - v_{gd} \quad (9)$$

$$L\frac{di_q}{dt} = v_q - Ri_q - \omega L i_d - v_{gq} \quad (10)$$

where $L$and Rrepresent the filter inductance and resistance, respectively.

3.5 Grid Voltage Orientation

Under Grid Voltage Oriented Control (GVOC),

$$v_{gq} = 0 \quad (11)$$

$$v_{gd} = V_g \quad (12)$$

where $V_g$denotes the grid voltage magnitude.

3.6 Active and Reactive Power

The instantaneous active power is given by

$$P = \frac{3}{2}\left(v_d i_d + v_q i_q\right) \quad (13)$$

The reactive power is

$$Q = \frac{3}{2}\left(v_q i_d - v_d i_q\right) \qquad (14)$$

For grid-voltage-oriented control,

$$P = \frac{3}{2} V_g i_d \qquad (15)$$

$$Q = -\frac{3}{2} V_g i_q \qquad (16)$$

Thus, the d-axis current controls active power, while the q-axis current controls reactive power independently.

3.7 Transformer Mathematical Model

According to Faraday's law,

$$V_p = N_p \frac{d\phi}{dt} \qquad (17)$$

$$V_s = N_s \frac{d\phi}{dt} \qquad (18)$$

Hence, the transformer turns ratio becomes

$$\frac{V_s}{V_p} = \frac{N_s}{N_p} = n \qquad (19)$$

where $n$is the transformer turns ratio.

3.8 DC-Link Capacitor Dynamics

The DC-link capacitor voltage is represented as

$$C_{dc} \frac{dV_{dc}}{dt} = I_{dc} - I_{inv} \qquad (20)$$

where C_{dc}denotes the DC-link capacitance.

3.9 PWM Modulation

The modulation index is

$$m = \frac{V_{ref}}{V_{carrier}} \qquad (21)$$

The inverter output voltage is

$$V_o = \frac{mV_{dc}}{2} \qquad (22)$$

3.10 Phase-Locked Loop (PLL)

The estimated grid angle is

$$\theta = \int \omega \, dt \qquad (23)$$

The grid frequency estimation is

$$\omega = \omega_0 + K_p e + K_i \int e \, dt \qquad (24)$$

where e is the phase error.

3.11 Total Harmonic Distortion

The Total Harmonic Distortion (THD) is calculated as

$$THD = \frac{\sqrt{\sum_{n=2}^{\infty} V_n^2}}{V_1} \times 100 \qquad (25)$$

where V_1 is the fundamental voltage and V_n represents the nth harmonic voltage.

3.12 Inverter Efficiency

The inverter efficiency is calculated as

$$\eta = \frac{P_{out}}{P_{in}} \times 100 \qquad (26)$$

where P_{out} and P_{in} denote the output and input powers, respectively.

This mathematical model provides the analytical foundation for evaluating transformer-based grid-connected inverter performance under conventional, advanced, and intelligent control strategies. The derived equations are extensively used to analyze current regulation, power flow, voltage stability, harmonic suppression, grid synchronization, and overall system efficiency in renewable energy applications.

IV. EXPERIMENTAL SETUP

The proposed transformer-based grid-connected inverter system is designed to integrate renewable energy sources with the utility grid while ensuring high power quality, stable operation, and efficient power transfer. As shown in the topology structure, the system begins with a renewable energy source such as a solar photovoltaic (PV) array or wind turbine that generates DC electrical power. The generated DC power is supplied to a DC-link stage consisting of a capacitor bank that stabilizes the DC voltage and acts as an energy buffer between the renewable source and the inverter. The stabilized DC-link voltage is then fed to a three-phase Voltage Source Inverter (VSI), which converts the DC power into controlled AC power through high-frequency switching of semiconductor devices. The inverter output is connected to an isolation transformer that provides galvanic isolation and voltage matching between the inverter and the utility grid, thereby enhancing system safety and reliability.

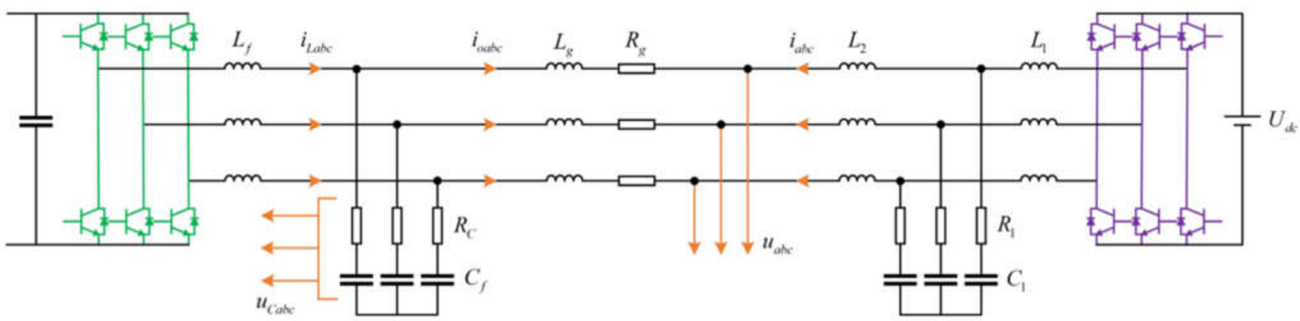

Fig. 1 The topology structure of experimental setup for transformer based grid connected inverter system

To improve the quality of the injected grid current, an LCL filter is connected between the transformer and the utility grid interface. The filter effectively attenuates switching harmonics generated by the inverter and ensures compliance with grid power quality standards. The filtered three-phase AC power is then delivered to the utility grid, enabling efficient utilization of renewable energy while maintaining stable grid operation. The transformer-based architecture further reduces common-mode disturbances and enhances protection against electrical faults.

The control system topology employs a synchronous reference frame control strategy based on abc-dq and dq-abc transformations. A Phase-Locked Loop (PLL) continuously measures the grid voltage and estimates the grid phase angle and frequency to achieve accurate synchronization between the inverter and the utility grid. The measured three-phase currents and voltages are transformed into the rotating dq reference frame, where active and reactive power can be independently controlled. The outer voltage control loop regulates the DC-link voltage and generates reference current signals, while the inner current control loop ensures accurate tracking of inverter currents and provides rapid dynamic response under varying operating conditions.

V. COMPARATIVE STUDY

Table 1. Summary of Literature Review on Intelligent and Advanced Control Strategies for Transformer-Based Grid-Connected Inverters

Sr. No.	Author(s) & Year	Methodology / Controller	System Components	Key Findings	Limitations
1	Blaabjerg et al. (2006)	PI Control	Grid-connected VSI, RL Filter	Simple implementation and reliable steady-state performance	Poor dynamic response under varying grid conditions
2	Teodorescu et al. (2011)	Proportional-Resonant (PR) Control	Three-phase inverter, Grid Interface	Improved sinusoidal current tracking and reduced steady-state error	Sensitive to frequency variations
3	Rodríguez et al. (2012)	Model Predictive Control (MPC)	Voltage Source Inverter, RL Filter	Fast transient response and excellent current regulation	High computational complexity
4	Rodríguez et al. (2013)	Finite Control Set MPC	Grid-connected Converter	Reduced switching losses and improved power quality	Requires high-speed digital processors
5	Utkin (1992)	Sliding Mode Control (SMC)	Inverter with Output Filter	High robustness against disturbances and parameter uncertainties	Chattering phenomenon
6	Zadeh (1965)	Fuzzy Logic Control (FLC)	PV Inverter, Transformer, Grid	Effective nonlinear control without mathematical model	Rule-base design depends on expert knowledge
7	Haykin (2009)	Artificial Neural Network (ANN)	Renewable Energy Inverter System	Adaptive learning and improved control accuracy	Requires extensive training data
8	Mirjalili et al. (2014)	Grey Wolf Optimization (GWO)	Controller Parameter Optimization	Fast convergence and improved controller tuning	Performance depends on population initialization
9	Kennedy and Eberhart (1995)	Particle Swarm Optimization (PSO)	PI/Fuzzy Controller Optimization	Optimized controller gains and faster convergence	Can converge to local optimum
10	Singh et al. (2018)	Adaptive Control	Grid-connected PV Inverter	Enhanced stability under changing operating conditions	Increased implementation complexity
11	Yang et al. (2019)	Reinforcement Learning (RL)	Smart Grid Inverter System	Self-learning capability and adaptive power management	High computational and training requirements
12	Zhang et al. (2020)	Deep Learning-Based Control	Renewable Energy Grid Interface	Improved fault detection and predictive control	Large dataset requirement
13	Kumar et al. (2021)	Hybrid PI-Fuzzy Controller	PV Grid-Connected Inverter	Better harmonic suppression and voltage regulation	Higher controller design complexity

14	Sharma et al. (2022)	ANN-MPC Hybrid Controller	Transformer-Based Grid Inverter	Improved dynamic performance and reduced THD	Increased computational burden
15	Ahmed et al. (2023)	Intelligent Adaptive Controller	Renewable Energy Microgrid	Enhanced grid synchronization and fault ride-through capability	Validation limited to simulation studies
16	Li et al. (2024)	AI-Based Predictive Control	Transformer-Based Smart Grid Inverter	Superior power quality, efficiency, and adaptive control	Real-time implementation challenges

VI. CONCLUSION

This review paper presented a comprehensive overview of intelligent and advanced control strategies for transformer-based grid-connected inverters used in renewable energy systems. Conventional control techniques, including PI and PR controllers, were reviewed alongside advanced methods such as Model Predictive Control (MPC), Sliding Mode Control (SMC), Adaptive Control, and Artificial Intelligence (AI)-based approaches, including Fuzzy Logic Control (FLC), Artificial Neural Networks (ANN), Reinforcement Learning (RL), and hybrid controllers. A comparative analysis highlighted their strengths and limitations in terms of dynamic response, robustness, harmonic mitigation, computational complexity, and implementation feasibility. The review indicates that AI-driven and hybrid control strategies offer superior performance for modern renewable energy applications by enhancing grid synchronization, power quality, and system reliability. However, challenges related to computational requirements, real-time implementation, and controller optimization remain. Future research should focus on integrating intelligent control with digital twin technology, IoT, machine learning, and smart grid infrastructures to develop adaptive, efficient, and resilient transformer-based grid-connected inverter systems. This review serves as a valuable reference for researchers and engineers working on next-generation renewable energy conversion and grid integration technologies.

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