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# Design and causal modelling of a piezoelectric multi-actuator system used in forging processes

T. H. Nguyen, C. Giraud-Audine, M. Amberg, B. Lemaire-Semail, G. Abba, R. Bigot

**Abstract**—This paper presents the design of a mechatronic system integrating piezoelectric multi-actuators, which is used to generate low-frequency vibrations to assist the forging process. With the aim of controlling the complete system, modelling using Energetic Macroscopic Representation is performed. A prototype with an electrical system is developed in a short term to validate the design. Finally, the preliminary experiments are presented with the corresponding simulation's results.

**Index Terms**—Design, Modelling, Compliant mechanism, Energetic Macroscopic Representation, Forging, Graphical model, Piezoelectric actuator

## I. NOMENCLATURE

$\omega_0$	Lower die's instantaneous rotation speed	[rad/s]
$\omega_x$	Rotation speed of lower die around Ox	[rad/s]
$\omega_y$	Rotation speed of lower die around Oy	[rad/s]
$\mathbf{K}$	Compliant mechanism's stiffness matrix	[N/m]
$\mathbf{M}$	Compliant mechanism's inertia matrix	[kg]
$\mathbf{F}_e$	External forces' vector	[N]
$\mathbf{q}$	Motional variables' vector	[m]
$\mathbf{v}_0$	velocity's vector of point O	[m/s]
$\mathbf{F}_0$	Resultant force's vector of point O	[N]
$K_S$	Stiffness of piezoelectric actuator	[N/m]
$K_C$	Electromechanical conversion factor	[C/m]
$C$	Piezoelectric actuator's capacitance	[F]
$U_p$	Piezoelectric actuator's voltage	[V]
$i_p$	Current entering the actuator	[A]
$U_s$	Continuous supply voltage	[V]
$i_s$	Current passing through the diode	[A]
$C_0$	Inverter's capacitance	[F]
$U_0$	Inverter's DC bus voltage	[V]

## II. INTRODUCTION

The advantage of vibrations in forging process has been reported in different studies. By using ultrasonic vibrations, a significant reduction of force has been obtained during forging a specimen of plasticine [1], or one of aluminium [2]. The vibrations in low frequencies (from few Hertz to few hundreds Hertz), generated by piezoelectric actuators in the direction of forging motion, has been also proved to have an important influence in the reduction of forging force in the test with plasticine [3] or with a small metallic specimen [4], [5]. However, the maximal force generated by piezoelectric actuator in these studies is still limited. In order to increase the applied force, a proposed solution is to increase the number of piezoelectric actuators. Moreover, the

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configuration of multi-actuator system allows us to generate more complicated vibrations than a vertical vibration in the forging's direction. A recent work with numerical simulation has shown that the forging's force can be significantly reduced due to a movement following a progressive wave of the lower die applied to the workpiece during forging process [6].

The objective of this study is to design a piezoelectric multi-actuator system in order to generate a progressive wave in the combination with a vertical vibration to assist forging process. This system includes a mechanism integrating multi-actuators and an electrical system which is used to generate the desired voltage's waveform of actuators. In the further aim of controlling this system, a model for the complete system using the Energetic Macroscopic Representation is performed in the second part of this paper. The experimental results are also presented to validate the system's function and compared to the simulated ones.

## III. MECHANICAL SYSTEM

### A. Kinematics' requirements

Consider a frame  $Oxyz$  attached to the center  $O$  of the lower die's surface in contact with the workpiece as in Fig.1. A vector  $\vec{\omega}_0(t)$  is an instantaneous rotation vector of the solid lower die around point  $O$ . The lower die's movement following a progressive wave is defined by a rotation of vector  $\vec{\omega}_0(t)$  around  $Oz$  with the frequency  $f$ .

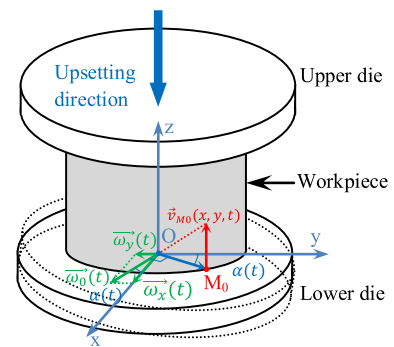


Fig. 1. Kinematic diagram of a progressive wave on the lower die

To obtain the desired motion, the projections of the vector  $\vec{\omega}_0(t)$  into two axes  $Ox$  and  $Oy$  are defined by:

$$\begin{aligned}\omega_x(t) &= \omega_0 \cos(2\pi ft + \phi) \\ \omega_y(t) &= \omega_0 \sin(2\pi ft + \phi)\end{aligned}\quad (1)$$

where  $\phi$  is the initial angle of rotation.

In order to obtain a progressive wave's movement of the lower die defined in (1), the mechanism must have two rotational degrees of freedom (d.o.f) around two axes  $Ox$  and  $Oy$ . Moreover, it must also allow a displacement in



the upsetting's direction (direction Oz) to generate a vertical vibration. The kinematic diagram of the desired mechanical system is presented in Fig.2.

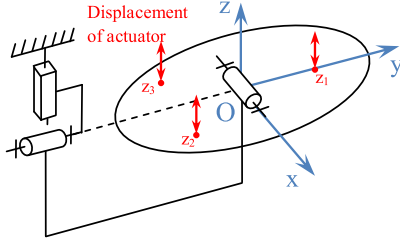


Fig. 2. Kinematic diagram of mechanical system

A balanced configuration with three multilayer piezoelectric actuators placed equidistant along a circle under the lower die is proposed to produce two rotations combined with a vertical movement. To avoid the mechanical component's tolerance, which is incompatible with the small displacement of piezoelectric actuators (60  $\mu\text{m}$ ), a compliant mechanism is considered for the guiding of the mechanical system.

### B. Compliant mechanism

This solution is largely used in the applications related to the small displacement with high precision to eliminate backlash, wear and allows a very high resolution [7]. In this application, a parallel structure of three flexible beams connected to the lower die (Fig.3) is used to have an out-of-plan movement. A displacement along Oz and two rotations around Ox, Oy can be achieved with the three vertical displacements at three points  $I_1, I_2, I_3$ .

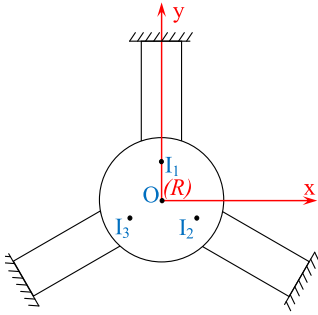


Fig. 3. Design with compliant guiding for a 3 d.o.f movement

The compliant mechanism's stiffness is expressed as a stiffness matrix along the six possible movements of lower die at the center O. This stiffness is approximately determined by a sum of transformed stiffness of each flexible beam in the local frame ( $R_i$ ) to the point O of the global frame ( $R$ ). The compliant mechanism's stiffness is formulated as follows [8]:

$${}^R\mathbf{K}_O = \sum_{i=1}^3 {}^{R_i}\mathbb{T}_R^T \cdot {}^{R_i}\mathbf{K}_{O_i} \cdot {}^{R_i}\mathbb{T}_R \quad (2)$$

where  ${}^{R_i}\mathbb{T}_R$  the screw transformation of the frame ( $R_i$ ) to the frame ( $R$ ) expressed in the frame ( $R_i$ ) and  ${}^{R_i}\mathbf{K}_{O_i}$  is the stiffness matrix of single beam, expressed in the local frame ( $R_i$ ) ([9], [10]). An analytic calculation presents this

stiffness matrix in the following form :

$${}^R\mathbf{K}_O = \begin{bmatrix} k_1 & 0 & 0 & 0 & -k_2 & 0 \\ 0 & k_1 & 0 & k_2 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & k_5 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & k_2 & 0 & k_3 & 0 & 0 \\ -k_2 & 0 & 0 & 0 & k_3 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & k_4 \end{bmatrix} \quad (3)$$

The system must have low stiffness in the desired movements' direction but very high stiffness in the other directions. The dimensions of the flexible beams are chosen to ensure that  $k_5 \ll k_1$  and  $k_3 \ll k_4$  and that the beam's deformation is still in the elastic domain with the maximal displacement of actuators.

### C. Mechanical coupling with actuators

To avoid moments or forces perpendicular to the direction of movement of the actuator, punctual contacts are used in this design for their robustness and simplicity. However, the die may be separated from the contact under the effect of inertia during vibrations. A continuous compressive force between the contact and the lower die is thus required to maintain a permanent contact with the lower die. A structure, called contact carrier presented in Fig.4a, is used to maintain these permanent contacts. It also allows a bi-directional actuation thanks to the pre-stressed force in the actuator. The actuators are screwed to the contact carriers, and so are the spherical caps. The spherical caps' radius is chosen to reduce the contact's deformation and improve its stiffness. These caps are in contact with a secondary plate (Fig.4b) fixed to the lower die in order to have a clear space above the lower die for the forging's operations.

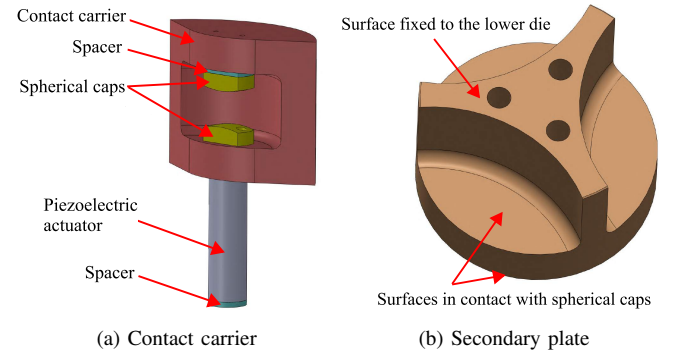


Fig. 4. Components for punctual contacts

A spacer will be used to apply a pre-load on the contacts during the assembly by thermal expansion of contact carrier. Finally, the dimensional dispersion of actuators will be eliminated by the use of another spacer between the actuator and the base plate (Fig.5). The calibration by spacer also helps reduce the possible stress, caused by the assembly, in the deformable beam. For the objective of controlling the lower die's movement, three eddy current sensors are used for the measurement of two rotation angles and one vertical displacement.

### D. Prototype

A prototype of the mechanical system in PVC material is built in the first step to validate the functionalities of the design. To adapt to this kind of material and simplify



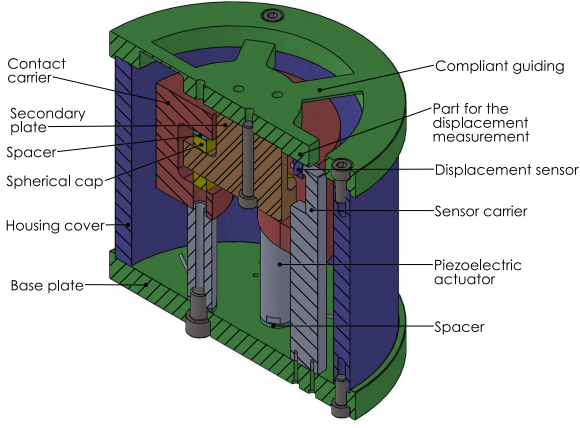


Fig. 5. Section view of the mechanical system's design

the fabrication as well as the measurement of lower die's movement, some details are changed with respect to the presented design. The punctual contact is constructed by a steel ball attached to the actuator by a plastic screw cap as shown in Fig.6a. Due to the small diameter of the steel ball, the allowed force is kept below twenty Newtons to avoid plastic deformation. To maintain a permanent contact in this prototype, magnets are used to produce a constant pre-load between the steel ball and the aluminium disc fixed with the compliant mechanism.

An aluminium plate is placed at the center of the lower die to have a rigid surface in contact with the steel balls. The housing cover is changed to triangular form to facilitate the fabrication and to reduce the overall dimension (Fig.6b). The displacement sensors are built from current sensors (Hall effect) which are fixed to the stationary part while the magnets are fixed on the lower die in the opposite position (see Fig.6a). The sensors measure the magnetic field of the magnets to estimate the lower die's displacement. The assembled system is presented in Fig.6c.

#### IV. ELECTRICAL SYSTEM

To generate a progressive wave, the three piezoelectric actuators are supplied at high voltage (from -200 V to 1000 V correspond to a maximal displacement of actuators) by a three-phase power supply. In addition, this supply system must be able to provide a variable frequency voltage in order to change the vibrations' frequency (from 5 Hz to 100 Hz). This kind of power supply can be performed by an analog power amplifier [11], [12] or a switching power supply. Due to the limited efficiency of analog power amplifier,

the switching power supply method is more largely applied to the piezoelectric actuators' power supply [13]–[16]. This method is often realised by using a transformer to increase the output voltage. However, the design with transformer becomes more complicated to obtain a bias of actuators' voltage. In this paper, for the availability and portability of actual system, an electrical system without transformer using a commercial inverter Semikron is proposed to supply a high voltage with variable frequency from a constant voltage source. The power supply's circuit diagram is presented in the Fig.7.

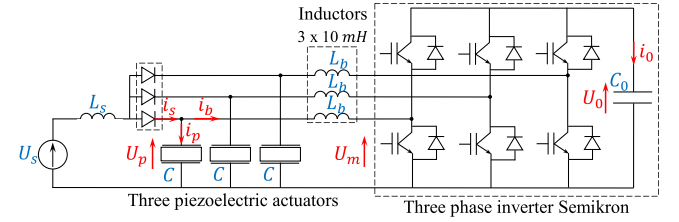
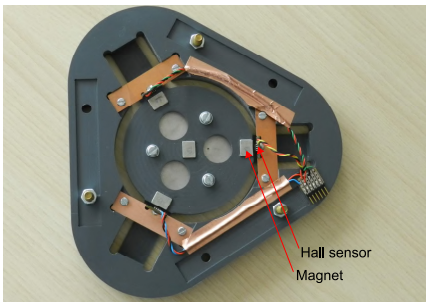


Fig. 7. Scheme for three piezoelectric actuators' power supply

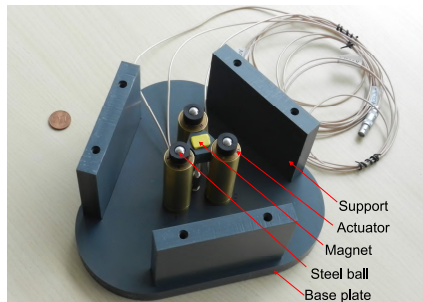
The principle is to use the inverter as a voltage booster to obtain a high voltage output. The external power supply is represented by the voltage source  $U_s$  which provides a constant voltage to the system through an inductor  $L_s$  and diodes. In the charging period, the diodes are conducted and the capacitor  $C_0$  is charged through three branches of inverter. In the phase of vibrations' generation, the inverter is used to convert the bus voltage of capacitor  $C_0$  in a three-phase variable frequency voltage using the PWM method. The three-phase voltage is then applied to the actuators represented by capacitors  $C$ . The inductors  $L_b$  and  $L_s$  are necessary to avoid direct connections between capacitors  $C_0$ ,  $C$  and between capacitors  $C$  and voltage source  $U_s$ . The inductor  $L_b$  is chosen so that the cut-off frequency of the filter  $L_b - C$  is quite high, 3kHz so compared to the waveforms' frequency (maximum 100 Hz), to enable the generation of required waveforms to the actuator while filtering correctly the PWM frequency from the inverter (30 kHz). The value  $L_s$  is chosen to limit the current's variation through the diode. The components' parameters are presented in table I.

TABLE I  
COMPONENTS' PARAMETER

$L_s$	$L_b$	$C_0$	$C$
10 mH	100 mH	4mF	300nF



(a) Detail view of the compliant mechanism and sensors



(b) Detail view of the actuators and the pre-load mechanism



(c) Assembled prototype

Fig. 6. Prototype

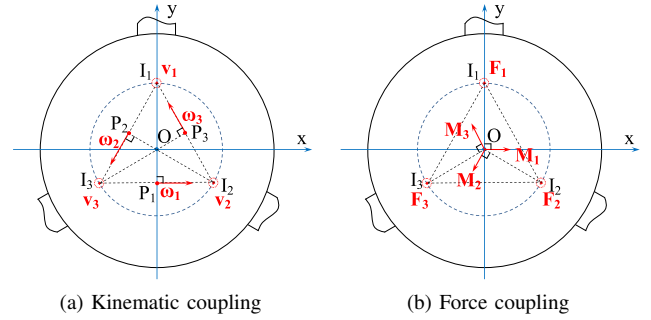


## V. MODELLING

### A. EMR of electrical system

To represent the intermittent function of electrical system between the charging phase for the voltage of  $C_0$  and the phase of vibrations' generation, a switch function is used to change the state of current  $i_s$ . From Fig.9, the states' interchange can be detected by the variation of voltage  $U_p$ . The phase of charging the voltage  $U_0$  happens if and only if the voltage  $U_p$  is less than to the value  $U_s$ , which corresponds to the period  $i_s > 0$ .

1) *EMR of mechanical coupling*: Due to the small actuators' displacement, their velocities and forces are supposed to be always in the vertical direction as presented in Fig.10, where  $v_i$  and  $F_i$  are respectively the velocity and force found at the contacts. In Fig.10a,  $\omega_1, \omega_2, \omega_3$  are represented for three instantaneous rotational vectors corresponding to three punctual contacts' velocities  $v_1, v_2, v_3$ .



The kinematic relation between the kinematic screw of the lower die at point O  $\left\{ \begin{matrix} \vec{\omega}_O \\ v_O \end{matrix} \right\}$  and the kinematic screw of each actuator at point O  $\left\{ \begin{matrix} \vec{\omega}_i \\ v_{i/O} \end{matrix} \right\}$  is expressed as follows:

$$\left\{ \frac{\vec{\omega}_O}{\vec{v}_O} \right\} = \sum \left\{ \frac{\vec{\omega}_i}{\vec{v}_{i/O}} \right\} = \left\{ \frac{\sum \vec{\omega}_i}{\sum \vec{OP}_i \times \vec{\omega}_i} \right\} \quad (4)$$

$$\mathbf{v} = \begin{bmatrix} v_1 \\ v_2 \\ v_3 \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & R & 0 \\ 1 & -\frac{R}{2} & -\frac{R\sqrt{3}}{2} \\ 1 & -\frac{R}{2} & \frac{R\sqrt{3}}{2} \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} v_z \\ \omega_x \\ \omega_y \end{bmatrix} = \mathbf{A}\mathbf{v}_\mathbf{O} \quad (5)$$
$$\left\{ \frac{\vec{F}_O}{M_O} \right\} = \sum \left\{ \frac{\vec{F}_i}{M_{i/O}} \right\} = \left\{ \frac{\sum \vec{F}_i}{\sum OI_i \times \vec{F}_i} \right\} \quad (6)$$
$$\mathbf{F}_O = \begin{bmatrix} F_z \\ M_x \\ M_y \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 1 & 1 \\ R & -\frac{R}{2} & -\frac{R}{2} \\ 0 & -\frac{R\sqrt{3}}{2} & \frac{R\sqrt{3}}{2} \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} F_1 \\ F_2 \\ F_3 \end{bmatrix} = \mathbf{B}\mathbf{F} \quad (7)$$

The input power  $P_{in} = \mathbf{F}^\top \mathbf{v}$  is found equal to the output power  $P_{out} = \mathbf{F}_O^\top \mathbf{v}_O$ , which demonstrates the power conservation within this model and the EMR can be applied to this mechanical coupling by representing it as a monophysic converter (see VII-A).



2) *EMR of compliant mechanism*: With the small size and velocity of the designed mechanism, the effect of gravity, centrifugal and damping forces can be negligible in comparison with the forces generated by actuators (a few thousands Newtons). The dynamic equations of lower die is written in the following form:

$$\mathbf{M}(\mathbf{q})\ddot{\mathbf{q}} + \mathbf{K}(\mathbf{q})\mathbf{q} = \mathbf{F}_e \quad (8)$$

where  $\mathbf{M}$ ,  $\mathbf{K}$  are respectively the inertia matrix and stiffness matrix of the compliant mechanism,  $\mathbf{q} = [x \ y \ z \ \alpha_x \ \alpha_y \ \alpha_z]^T$  is a vector of displacement and rotational angles along axis Ox, Oy, Oz. In the first approach, the friction force between lower die and workpiece is also neglected. The applied forces on the lower die are only the forces generated by the actuators and the forging process in the vertical direction. The vector  $\mathbf{F}_e$  can be expressed as follows :  $\mathbf{F}_e = [0 \ 0 \ F_z - F_{wp} \ M_x - M_{wpX} \ M_y - M_{wpY} \ 0]^T$ , where  $F_{wp}, M_{wpX}, M_{wpY}$  are the applied force and moments of workpiece to the lower die.

From the numerical values of inertia and stiffness matrix (see Appendix VII-B for the prototype), the displacement modes along Ox and Oy, which are coupled with the corresponding rotations around Oy and Ox, are found as the non-dominant modes of movement. The system can be reduced into a 3-degree-of-freedom system as follows:

$$\begin{cases} m_x \ddot{\alpha}_x + k_x \alpha_x = M_x - M_{wpX} \\ m_y \ddot{\alpha}_y + k_y \alpha_y = M_y - M_{wpY} \\ m_z \ddot{z} + k_z z = F_z - F_{wp} \end{cases} \quad (9)$$

The EMR for the vertical movement's equation along the axis Oz is presented in Fig. 11.

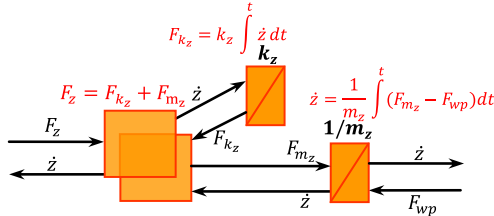


Fig. 11. EMR for displacement mode along Oz

3) *EMR of piezoelectric actuator*: The EMR of piezoelectric actuator in quasi-static mode is developed in [4] to relate the input current  $i_p$  and velocity  $v_p$  with the output force  $F_p$  and voltage  $U_p$ . In this model, the parameter  $K_c$  presents the piezoelectric coefficient while  $K_s$  is the actuator's stiffness. The piezoelectric actuator's model is connected to a contact which is represented by a mass  $M_{ct}$  (dynamic mass of actuator and steel ball's mass) in series with a spring of the stiffness  $K_{ct}$ .

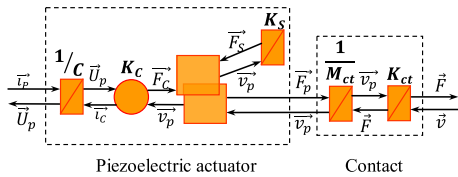


Fig. 12. EMR model for a piezoelectric actuator connected to a contact

The complete system's EMR is achieved by assembling the components' EMR, as presented in Fig.13, by connecting the same pairs of variables in each model.

### C. Experimental results and discussion

To demonstrate the function in generating vibrations and validate the components' EMR of the complete system, this part presents the experimental results and compares with results obtained from the model.

1) *Validation of electrical system's modelling*: With the proposed mechanical configuration, the required waveforms of actuators' voltage for a progressive wave are a three-phase sinusoidal voltage. This voltage is obtained by applying a three-phase sinusoidal duty cycle  $\vec{m}$  to the DSP. The variation of duty cycle's mean value is used to trigger on and off the charging of capacitor  $C_0$ . This is done by setting the mean values such that the minimum voltage  $U_p$  is above (phase of generating vibrations) or below (phase of charging)  $U_s$ , which is fixed to 100V in the tests. The measured voltages of the two actuators and the corresponding currents  $i_s$  are presented in Fig.14 in the case of generation a three-phase sinusoidal voltage with 50 V the amplitude. The current  $i_s$  is greater than 0 every period for which the voltages  $U_p$  are lower than  $U_s = 100 \text{ V}$ .

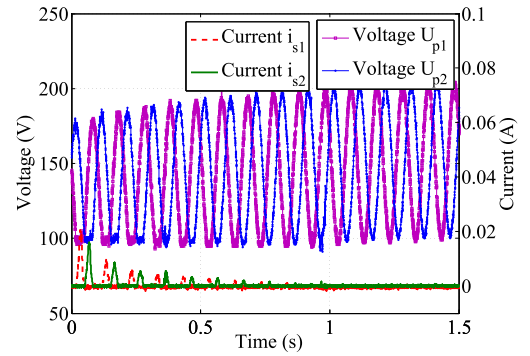


Fig. 14. Measured results in the transient phase of the three-phase voltage supply system

By applying the same duty cycle to the input of the electrical system's EMR, the simulated voltage  $U_p$  and current  $i_s$  are presented in Fig.15. The obtained results are qualitatively similar to the measure results. Simulated currents in the diodes follows the same trend as in the experiment. However, the actuator's average voltage increases because the diodes' conducting time is reduced due to the model's difference with the real inverter and the losses in the circuit. Nevertheless, this result shows a coherence of the model's behaviour to the real one.

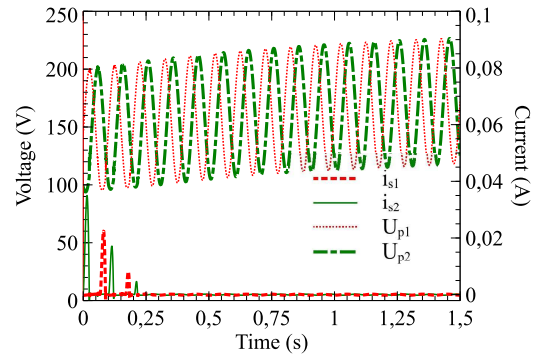


Fig. 15. Simulated results in the transient phase of the three-phase voltage supply system














is established for both mechanical and electrical system to visualize the power transmission from the electrical input to the mechanical output, which gives us a global view for the control. The movement of a progressive wave and the vertical simulation is demonstrated by experimental validation and also confirmed by the simulation.

## VII. APPENDIX

### A. EMR's basic elements

Element	Symbol	Description
Variable		Action/ reaction variable (x/y)
Source		Energetic source
Accumulator		Accumulator
Converters		Mono-physic converter
		Multi-physic converter
Couplings		Mono-physic coupling
		Multi-physic coupling

### B. Inertia and stiffness matrix of prototype

$$\mathbf{K} = 10^3 \begin{bmatrix} 5,14 \cdot 10^3 & 0 & 0 & 0 & -7,71 & 0 \\ 0 & 5,14 \cdot 10^3 & 0 & 7,71 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 49,77 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 7,71 & 0 & 0,12 & 0 & 0 \\ -7,71 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0,12 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 5,68 \end{bmatrix}$$

$$\mathbf{M} = 10^{-3} \begin{bmatrix} 94 & 0 & 0 & 0 & -0,39 & 0 \\ 0 & 94 & 0 & 0,393 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 94 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0,39 & 0 & 0,05 & 0 & 0 \\ -0,39 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0,05 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0,09 \end{bmatrix}$$

## VIII. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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