

EVOLUTION OF WIND TURBINE CONTROL SYSTEMS

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Summary

This chapter presents an overview of advanced control strategies for wind turbine systems. It starts with important historical evolutions regarding wind energy that lead to the introduction of modern wind turbines. Next, the modeling of wind turbines, which is essential for the control system design, is presented. Finally, the chapter focuses on a wide variety of advanced control system techniques including hard, soft, and fusion control tools. In particular, key ideas for control methods are briefly described and reviewed.

1. Wind Energy Systems

1.1. Short History of Wind Energy

It is worth giving a brief review of wind energy so that the readers can see the path that wind energy has undergone for centuries. Wind was the primary source of energy to power sailing ships before the advent of steam engines in the 18th century (Johnson (2006), Hansen (2008)). In addition to transportation use, wind turbines often referred to as windmills; were also used for agricultural purposes such as pumping water, grinding grains, sawing wood, and powering tools (Manwell et al. (2002)). In the middle of the seventh century, Persians began transmitting stories of windmills, but it was not verified until the first recorded windmill appeared in the tenth century in Persia (Spera (2009)). Windmills at this time were vertical-axis types and so simple that they provided poor performance with low efficiency (Johnson (2006)). More sophisticated and efficient windmills were designed in Europe. At this time, people witnessed a major technological change from vertical-axis to horizontal-axis that significantly increased the conversion efficiency. The earliest horizontal-axis windmill was by the English in 1191 (Johnson (2006), Spera (2009)). After this time, windmills began to thrive and become an essential source of power in Europe for centuries. However, when the industrial revolution happened in the 18th century, the use of windmills declined, and they were rapidly replaced by steam and internal combustion engines.

Wind turbines for electricity generation were invented towards the end of the 19th century following the development of electrical generators (Manwell et al. (2002), Spera (2009)). Technological achievements of wind turbines, particularly for large-size wind turbines, took place in the middle of the 1940s. Nevertheless, much attention was not paid to wind energy generation until the oil crisis in the 1970s. Increasing awareness of the negative environmental effects of fossil fuel energy, compounded with the strong desire to be independent of oil, caused many countries in Europe and America to carry out national research programs in alternative energy resources, particularly large wind turbines. Consequently, reliable wind turbine prototypes were created. However,

technological advances in the wind turbine field were not strong enough to encourage larger generation of wind power. The situation was truly changed when governments imposed regulations advocating wind energy and offered attractive incentives for wind energy producers in the 1970s and 1980s. Additionally, the cost of wind energy has continuously dropped, approaching the competitive level of conventional energy. These factors enabled a powerful re-emergence of modern wind turbines.

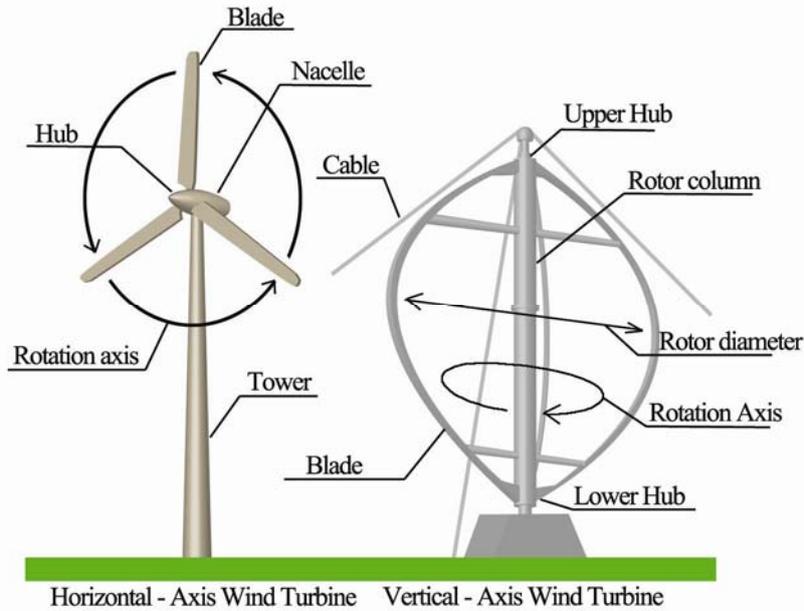


Figure 1. Two basic types of wind turbines

1.2. Wind Turbine Structures

The two basic types of wind turbines are horizontal-axis wind turbines (HAWT) and vertical-axis wind turbines (VAWT). These configurations are shown in Figure 1.

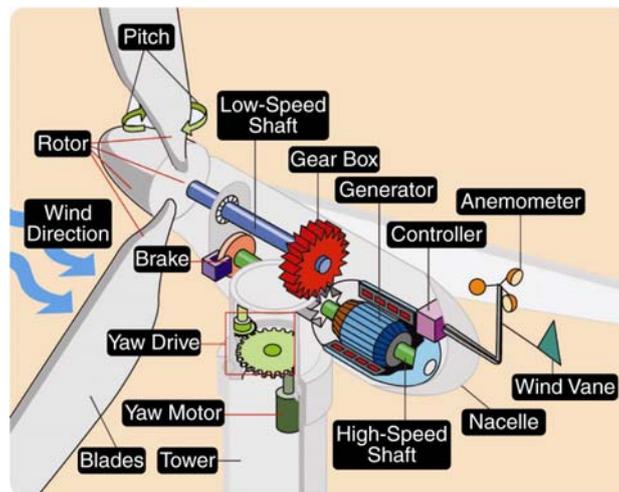


Figure 2. Basic components of a HAWT (Courtesy of the U.S. Department of Energy: http://www1.eere.energy.gov/wind/wind_how.html)

1.2.1. Horizontal-Axis Wind Turbine (HAWT) Configuration

A modern HAWT consists of different interacting sub-systems as shown in Figure 2. Basically, these sub-systems can be divided into two categories: mechanical sub-systems and electrical sub-systems.

- *Mechanical Sub-systems:* The mechanical sub-systems contain 1) the wind turbine rotor, 2) the drive train, 3) the nacelle structure, and 4) the tower.

1. *The Wind Turbine Rotor:* The wind turbine rotor converts kinetic energy from wind into mechanical energy. It is made up of blades which are all connected to a central hub, then this hub is linked to a turbine shaft. As a result, when wind goes through the blades, it causes rotation of the turbine shaft. A one-blade wind rotor operates at high speed so it allows the mechanical transmission component to be simplified. However, due to its great imbalance and static structure, weight compensation for the missing blade must be made. Moreover, the aerodynamic efficiency is much lower than that of two or three-blade HAWTs. As a result, the one-blade HAWTs were technologically successful but not commercially successful (Gipe (2009)). In similar manner, a two-blade HAWT provides for a cheaper wind rotor and transmission unit and easier installation over a three-blade HAWT. Nevertheless, the three-blade HAWT is presently common because of its superior energy efficiency. Another important aspect of the wind turbine rotor is the materials used for the blades. Blades were traditionally made of wood, steel, or aluminum. However, these materials have limitations, so their use has been in decline. Nowadays, almost all wind blades are made of a composite material called fiberglass.

2. *The Drive Train:* The drive train is responsible for transmitting the mechanical power from the wind rotor to the electric generator. The drive train consists of a turbine shaft or low-speed shaft, a gearbox, and a generator shaft or high-speed shaft. The turbine shaft must meet both structural and mechanical requirements because it needs to support the rotor weight and provide torsional damping caused by wind gusts on the wind rotor. The gearbox is to step up the rotational speed.

3. *The Nacelle Structure:* The nacelle is a bed plate that supports the drive train and the generator. Moreover, in the HAWTs, there is a yaw mechanism that turns the wind rotor to face the wind direction.

4. *The Tower:* The tower is a support for the wind turbine. The most important factors in designing a tower are height and strength. The higher the tower, the more the captured wind power. However, the height cannot be as high as possible because there is a tradeoff between the height and the cost. In addition, the tower must be strong enough to withstand wind thrust.

- *Electrical Sub-Systems:* The electrical sub-systems contain 1) the generator and 2) power electronic converter.

1. *The Generator:* The generator transforms mechanical power into electrical power. Essentially, its operating principle is that a coil of wire (rotor) rotating

within a magnetic field (stator) will produce an output voltage and current. The amount of produced power is a function of the size of the generator and the relative movement between the rotor and the stator.

Generators are classified as direct current (DC) or alternating current (AC). The AC generators are then characterized into two types: synchronous AC generators and asynchronous or induction AC generators. Induction AC generators are widely used because they are inexpensive, simple, and capable of attenuating torsional torque. Induction generators, however, have more mechanical-electrical conversion losses than synchronous generators. Synchronous generators provide more efficiency than induction generators, but they require extra voltage controllers and are not able to mitigate torsional stresses.

2. *The Power Electronic Converter:* When the wind speed changes, the wind rotor speed changes accordingly, and hence the output voltages and frequency fluctuate. In grid-connected wind turbines, this is unacceptable. Thus, the output voltages and frequency need to be kept constant. In essence, a power electronic converter functions as a stabilizer that helps fix the output voltages and frequency under the wind speed changes.

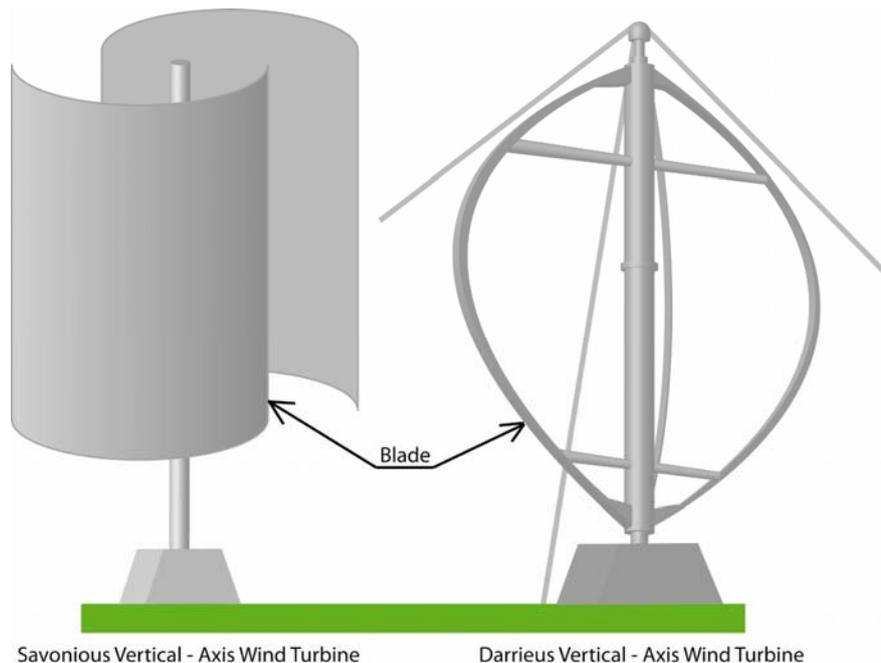


Figure 3. Two types Of VAWTs

1.2.2. Vertical-Axis Wind Turbine (VAWT) Configuration

There are several types of VAWTs. However, two popular ones are Savonius and Darrieus VAWTs as indicated in Figure 3 . Unlike HAWTs, VAWTs do not depend upon wind direction. They rotate equally in any wind direction and hence, the yaw drive systems are not necessary. This is a big advantage of VAWTs. In addition, the drive train and generating sub-systems are placed on the ground, and not necessarily located

on high positions that require costly nacelle platforms for support. However, VAWTs provide low conversion efficiency. Moreover, VAWTs demand high maintenance and particularly, the Darrieus VAWT is not self-starting. These disadvantages consequently result in less use of VAWTs.

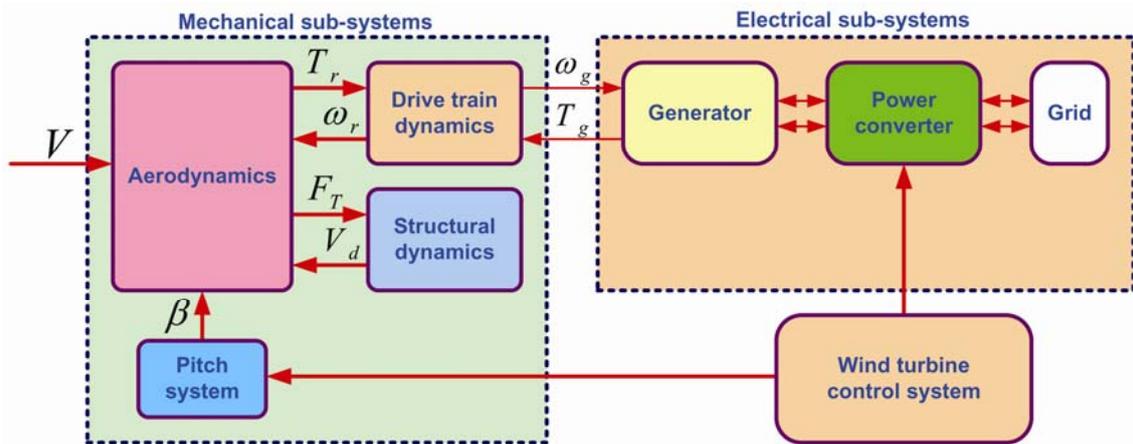


Figure 4. Wind turbine subsystem block diagram

2. Wind Turbine Modeling for Control

Wind turbines contain many physically different subsystems; so modeling of wind turbines requires a wide range of knowledge to develop suitable models for each subsystem. Certainly, designers want to achieve models as accurate as possible by using advanced available tools such as computational fluid dynamics or finite element analysis. Nevertheless, these tools increase the design time and cost. For the purpose of automatic control of wind turbines, the modeling techniques used are simply based on fundamental dynamic principles.

Figure 4 (Bianchi et al. (2007)) shows a grid-connected wind turbine block diagram for modeling. The mechanical sub-systems include the aerodynamics, the drive train dynamics, the structural dynamics, and the pitch system dynamics. The electrical sub-systems contain the generator dynamics, the power electronic converter dynamics, and the grid dynamics. Here, only models of the aerodynamics, the drive train dynamics, the structural dynamics, and the generator dynamics are given.

2.1. Wind Turbine Aerodynamics Modeling

Aerodynamics modeling is to describe how a three-dimensional wind field causes forces and rotation on wind turbines. Although more expensive computational fluid dynamics tools can be employed to build more exact models of aerodynamics, the blade element momentum (BEM) theory is commonly accepted as an essential tool to obtain aerodynamic models of wind turbines. This theory explains the development of aerodynamic forces acting on a radial blade element of infinitesimal length. Figure 5 (Gipe (2009)) shows a cut plane viewed from the blade tip. This plane describes a blade element and developed forces. It is explained that as this blade element moves in the wind flow, differential pressure around the blade element causes forces called the lift

force and drag force. These two forces, which are dependent on the angle of attack α or the pitch angle β , can be resolved into two other forces called the torque τ_r and thrust force f_T . The two forces, τ_r and f_T , are integrated along the blade length, resulting in the global torque T_r and thrust force F_T acting on the wind turbine.

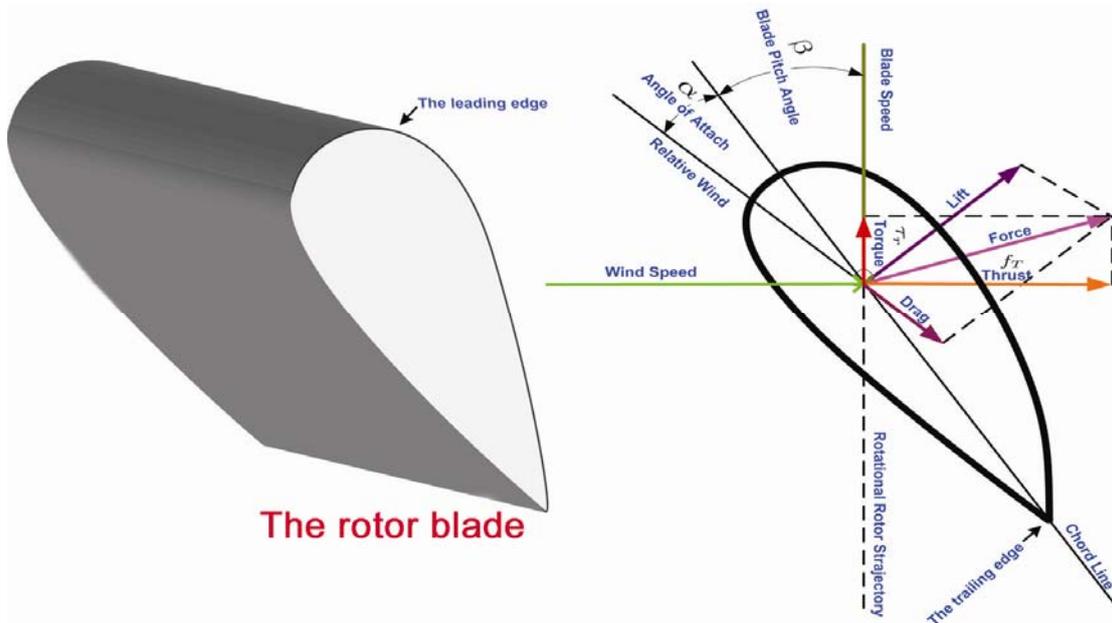


Figure 5. Aerodynamic principle of HAWTs

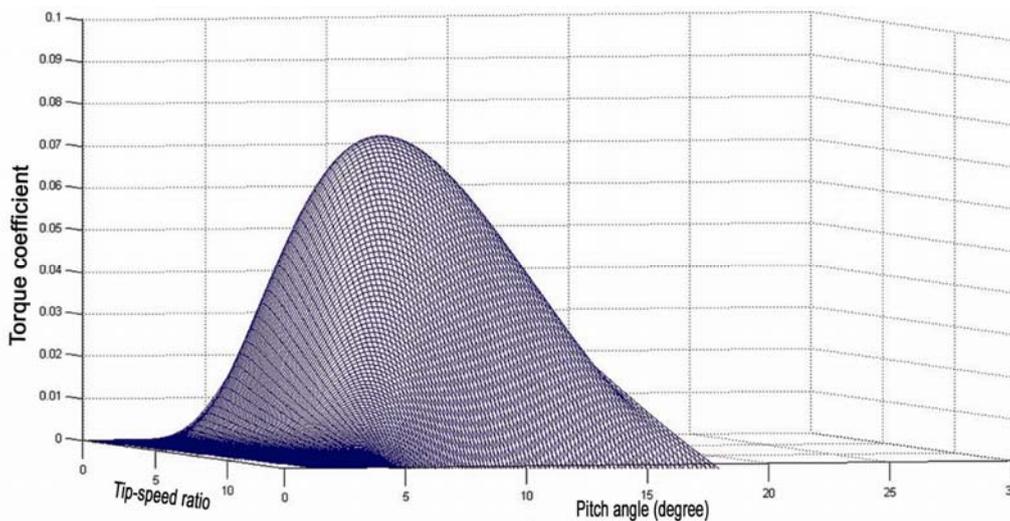


Figure 6. Torque coefficient is a function of the tip-speed ratio and pitch angle

It is observed from Figure 4 that the inputs of the aerodynamic model are the wind speed V , the pitch angle β , the rotor speed ω_r , and the total axial speed of the tower and blades V_d . The outputs are the torque T_r and a thrust force F_T . The relationships between the inputs and the outputs are given as (Bianchi et al. (2007))

$$\begin{cases} F_T = \frac{1}{2} \rho \pi R^2 C_T (\lambda_e, \beta) V_e^2, \\ T_r = \frac{1}{2} \rho \pi R^3 C_Q (\lambda_e, \beta) V_e^2, \end{cases} \quad (1)$$

where ρ is the air density, R is the radius of wind rotor, $\lambda_e = \frac{\omega_r R}{V_e}$ is the tip-speed ratio, β is the pitch angle, C_T and C_Q are the torque coefficient and the power coefficient, respectively. These coefficients are the functions of the tip-speed ratio and the pitch angle (see Figure 6), and

$$V_e = V - V_d, \quad (2)$$

where $V_d = \dot{z} + r\dot{\delta}$, r is the lumped force distance, and z and δ are the axial displacement of the tower and the blades caused by the tower bending and blade flapping phenomena which are defined in the mechanical modeling section.

2.2. Mechanical Sub-Systems Modeling

Mechanical sub-systems are simpler in modeling than any other subsystems of wind turbines (Moriarty and Butterfield (2009)). Multi-body dynamics or finite element analysis are advanced options to analyze the dynamics of blades and tower, but they are too complicated and expensive for control modeling. Instead, modal representations are used. Movements imposed on blades and the tower are modeled in two directions (one is perpendicular or axial, and the other is parallel to the rotational plane.)

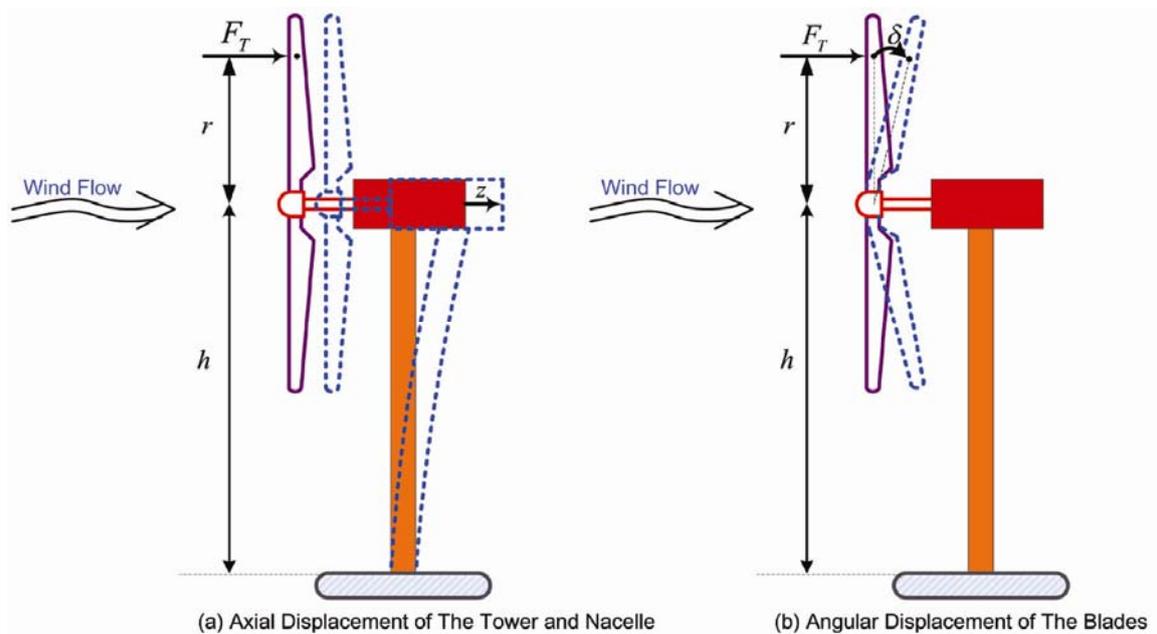


Figure 7. Structural dynamics of HAWTs

2.2.1. Structural Modeling

Here, the flapping dynamics of blades and the bending dynamics of the tower are presented as shown in Figure 7 (Bianchi et al. (2007)). Distributed thrust forces acting along each blade are lumped as the force F_T at distance r . This lumped force causes an angular displacement δ of each blade and an axial reflection z of the nacelle. Using the Lagrangian theory, a state space model in terms of $\dot{\mathbf{x}} = \mathbf{A}\mathbf{x} + \mathbf{B}\mathbf{u}$ with parameters defined as (Bianchi et al. (2007)).

$$\underbrace{\begin{bmatrix} \dot{\mathbf{x}}_1 \\ \dot{\mathbf{x}}_2 \end{bmatrix}}_{\dot{\mathbf{x}}} = \underbrace{\begin{bmatrix} \mathbf{0}_{2 \times 2} & \mathbf{I}_{2 \times 2} \\ -\mathbf{M}^{-1}\mathbf{K} & -\mathbf{M}^{-1}\mathbf{C} \end{bmatrix}}_{\mathbf{A}} \underbrace{\begin{bmatrix} \mathbf{x}_1 \\ \mathbf{x}_2 \end{bmatrix}}_{\mathbf{x}} + \underbrace{\begin{bmatrix} \mathbf{0}_{2 \times 2} \\ -\mathbf{M}^{-1} \end{bmatrix}}_{\mathbf{B}} \underbrace{\mathbf{Q}}_{\mathbf{u}}, \quad (3)$$

where

N : The number of blades

r : The lumped force distance

m_t : Total mass of the tower and nacelle

m_b : Mass of each blade

K_t : Stiffness coefficient of the tower

K_b : Stiffness coefficient of each blade

B_t : Damping coefficient of the tower

B_b : Damping coefficient of each blade

$$\mathbf{x} = [x \quad \delta \quad z \quad \dot{\delta}]^T, \quad \mathbf{Q} = [NF_T \quad NF_T r]^T, \quad \mathbf{0}_{2 \times 2} = \begin{bmatrix} 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 \end{bmatrix}, \quad \mathbf{I}_{2 \times 2} = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 \end{bmatrix},$$

$$\mathbf{M} = \begin{bmatrix} m_t + Nm_b & Nm_b r \\ Nm_b r & Nm_b r^2 \end{bmatrix}, \quad \mathbf{C} = \begin{bmatrix} B_t & 0 \\ 0 & NB_b r^2 \end{bmatrix}, \quad \mathbf{K} = \begin{bmatrix} K_t & 0 \\ 0 & NK_b r^2 \end{bmatrix},$$

and the output equation is given as

$$y = V_d = \dot{z} + r\dot{\delta} = \underbrace{\begin{bmatrix} 0 & 0 & 1 & r \end{bmatrix}}_{\mathbf{C}_o} \mathbf{x}. \quad (4)$$

Notions	Descriptions
N	The number of blade
r	The lumped force distance
m_t	Total mass of the tower and nacelle
m_b	Mass of each blade
K_t	Stiffness coefficient of the tower
K_b	Stiffness coefficient of each blade
B_t	Damping coefficient of the tower
B_b	Damping coefficient of each blade

Table 1. Parameter descriptions for the modeling of the structure of HAWTs

2.2.2. Drive Train Modeling

In essence, the drive train system includes the turbine shaft or low-speed shaft, a gearbox, and the generator shaft or high-speed shaft. The process of deriving a mathematical model of the drive train requires some assumptions. First, the wind rotor and generator are considered two masses and the low-speed shaft and high-speed shaft are represented by two spring elements. Second, the gearbox is regarded ideal when the transmission efficiency is one hundred percent and constant over the operating range. Moreover, the impact of internal structures and phenomena such as gear type, gear backlash, etc. is ignored.

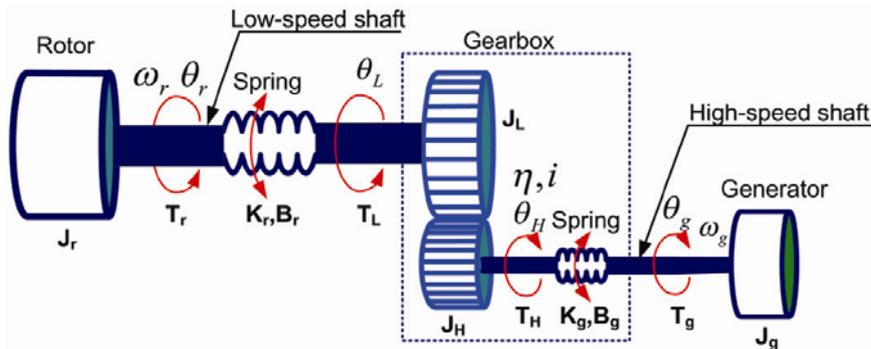


Figure 8. Flexible drive train of HAWTs

Notions	Descriptions
θ_r	The rotational angle of the wind rotor
θ_L	The rotational angle of the low-speed shaft
θ_H	The rotational angle of the high-speed shaft
θ_g	The rotational angle of the generator
ω_r	The rotational speed of the wind rotor
ω_L	The rotational speed of the low-speed shaft
ω_H	The rotational speed of the high-speed shaft
ω_g	The rotational speed of the generator
T_r	The torque of the wind rotor
T_L	The torque of the low-speed shaft
T_H	The torque of the high-speed shaft
T_g	The torque of the generator
J_r	The inertia of the wind rotor
J_L	The inertia of the low-speed shaft
J_H	The inertia of the high-speed shaft

J_g	The inertia of the generator
K_r	The stiffness coefficient of the wind rotor side
K_g	The stiffness coefficient of the generator side
B_r	The damping coefficient of the wind rotor side
B_g	The damping coefficient of the generator side
i	The gearbox ratio
η	The transmission efficiency of the gearbox

Table 2. Parameter descriptions for the modeling of the drive train of HAWTs

The drive train system is shown in Figure 8 (Munteanu et al. (2008b)) and model parameters are given in Table 2. Similar to the structural modeling described above, the Lagrangian theory can be applied to derive the model of the above drive train system (Note that coordinates here are angular motions). The state space model in terms of $\dot{\mathbf{x}} = \mathbf{Ax} + \mathbf{Bu}$ is obtained as

$$\underbrace{\begin{bmatrix} \dot{\mathbf{x}}_1 \\ \dot{\mathbf{x}}_2 \end{bmatrix}}_{\dot{\mathbf{x}}} = \underbrace{\begin{bmatrix} \mathbf{0}_{4 \times 4} & \mathbf{I}_{4 \times 4} \\ -\mathbf{M}^{-1}\mathbf{K} & -\mathbf{M}^{-1}\mathbf{C} \end{bmatrix}}_{\mathbf{A}} \underbrace{\begin{bmatrix} \mathbf{x}_1 \\ \mathbf{x}_2 \end{bmatrix}}_{\mathbf{x}} + \underbrace{\begin{bmatrix} \mathbf{0}_{4 \times 4} \\ \mathbf{M}^{-1} \end{bmatrix}}_{\mathbf{B}} \underbrace{\mathbf{Q}}_{\mathbf{u}}, \quad (5)$$

$$\text{where } \mathbf{x} = [\theta_r \quad \theta_L \quad \theta_H \quad \theta_g \quad \omega_r \quad \omega_L \quad \omega_H \quad \omega_g]^T, \quad \mathbf{0}_{4 \times 4} = \begin{bmatrix} 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \end{bmatrix},$$

$$\mathbf{I}_{4 \times 4} = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 1 \end{bmatrix},$$

$$\mathbf{M} = \begin{bmatrix} J_r & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & J_L & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & J_H & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & J_g \end{bmatrix}, \quad \mathbf{C} = \begin{bmatrix} B_r & -B_r & 0 & 0 \\ -B_r & B_r & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & B_g & -B_g \\ 0 & 0 & -B_g & B_g \end{bmatrix},$$

$$\mathbf{K} = \begin{bmatrix} K_r & -K_r & 0 & 0 \\ -K_r & K_r & & \\ & & K_g & -K_g \\ & & -K_g & K_g \end{bmatrix},$$

$$\text{and } \mathbf{Q} = [T_r \quad -T_L \quad T_H \quad -T_g]^T.$$

If only angular speeds are of interest, the output equation will be

$$\mathbf{y} = \underbrace{\begin{bmatrix} \mathbf{0}_{4 \times 4} & \mathbf{I}_{4 \times 4} \end{bmatrix}}_{\mathbf{C}_o} \mathbf{x}, \quad (6)$$

where $\mathbf{y} = [\omega_r \ \omega_L \ \omega_H \ \omega_g]^T$.

Note that the above drive train model can be simplified by transforming the gearbox mass and inertia into the wind rotor and the generator. The reduced model of the drive train becomes

$$\underbrace{\begin{bmatrix} \dot{\mathbf{x}}_1 \\ \dot{\mathbf{x}}_2 \end{bmatrix}}_{\dot{\mathbf{x}}} = \underbrace{\begin{bmatrix} \mathbf{0}_{2 \times 2} & \mathbf{I}_{2 \times 2} \\ -\mathbf{M}^{-1}\mathbf{K} & -\mathbf{M}^{-1}\mathbf{C} \end{bmatrix}}_{\mathbf{A}} \underbrace{\begin{bmatrix} \mathbf{x}_1 \\ \mathbf{x}_2 \end{bmatrix}}_{\mathbf{x}} + \underbrace{\begin{bmatrix} \mathbf{0}_{2 \times 2} \\ \mathbf{M}^{-1} \end{bmatrix}}_{\mathbf{B}} \underbrace{\mathbf{Q}}_{\mathbf{u}}, \quad (7)$$

where $\mathbf{x} = [\theta_r \ \theta_g \ \omega_r \ \omega_g]^T$, $\mathbf{0}_{2 \times 2} = \begin{bmatrix} 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 \end{bmatrix}$, $\mathbf{I}_{2 \times 2} = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 \end{bmatrix}$, $\mathbf{M} = \begin{bmatrix} J_r & 0 \\ 0 & J_g \end{bmatrix}$, $\mathbf{C} = \begin{bmatrix} B_r & 0 \\ 0 & B_g \end{bmatrix}$,

$\mathbf{K} = \begin{bmatrix} K_r & 0 \\ 0 & K_g \end{bmatrix}$, and $\mathbf{Q} = [T_r \ -T_g]^T$

The output equation is given as

$$\mathbf{y} = \underbrace{\begin{bmatrix} \mathbf{0}_{2 \times 2} & \mathbf{I}_{2 \times 2} \end{bmatrix}}_{\mathbf{C}_o} \mathbf{x}, \quad (8)$$

where $\mathbf{y} = [\omega_r \ \omega_g]^T$.

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