

Photo Voltaic Grid-Tied Inverters using H6 Transformer less Full-Bridge

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Abstract

Photovoltaic (PV) generation systems are widely employed in transformer less inverters, in order to achieve the benefits of high efficiency and low cost. Safety requirements of leakage currents are met by proposing the various transformer less inverter topologies. In this paper, three transformer less inverter topologies are illustrated such as a family of H6 transformer less inverter topologies with low leakage currents is proposed, and the intrinsic relationship between H5 topology, highly efficient and reliable inverter concept (HERIC) topology. The proposed H6 topology has been discussed as well. For a detailed analysis with operation modes and modulation strategy one of the proposed H6 inverter topologies is taken as an example. Comparison among the HERIC, the H5, and the proposed H6 topologies is been done for the power device costs and power losses. For evaluating their performances in terms of power efficiency and leakage currents characteristics, a universal prototype is built for these three topologies mentioned. Experimental results show that the proposed HERIC topology and the H6 topology achieve similar performance in leakage currents, which is slightly worse than that of the H5 topology, but it features higher efficiency than that of H5 topology.

Index Terms: Grid-tied inverter, Common-mode voltage leak-age current, photovoltaic (PV) generation system, transformer less inverter.

I. INTRODUCTION

THE applications of distributed photovoltaic (PV) generation systems in both commercial and residential structures have rapidly increased during recent years. Although the price of PV panel has been declined largely, the overall cost of both the investment and generation of PV grid-tied system are still too high, comparing with other renewable energy sources. Therefore, the grid-tied inverters need to be carefully designed for achieving the purposes of high efficiency, low cost, small size, and low weight, especially in the low-power single-phase systems (less than 5 kW). From the safety point of view, most of

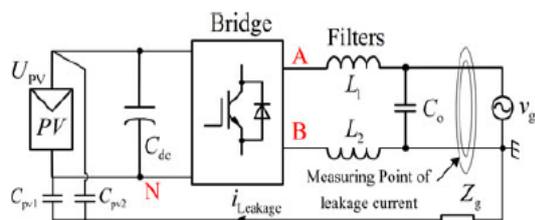


Fig. 1. Leakage current path for transformer less PV inverters.

the PV grid-tied inverters employ line-frequency transformers to provide galvanic isolation in

commercial structures in the past. However, line-frequency transformers are large and heavy, making the whole system bulky and hard to install. Compared with line-frequency isolation, inverters with high-frequency isolation transformers have lower cost, smaller size and weight. However, the inverters with high-frequency transformers have several power stages, which increase the system complexity and reduce the system efficiency [1]–[6]. As a result, the transformerless PV grid-tied inverters, as shown in Fig. 1, are widely installed in the low-power distributed PV generation systems. Unfortunately, when the transformer is removed, the common mode (CM) leakage currents ($I_{leakage}$) may appear in the system and flow through the parasitic capacitances between the PV panels and the ground [7], [8]. Moreover, the leakage currents lead to serious safety and radiated interference issues [9]. Therefore, they must be limited within a reasonable range [10]. As shown in Fig. 1, the leakage current $I_{leakage}$ is flowing through the loop consisting of the parasitic capacitances (C_{PV1} and C_{PV2}), bridge, filters ($L1$ and $L2$), utility grid, and ground impedance Z_g . The leakage current path is equivalent to an LC resonant circuit in series with the CM voltage [11], and the CM voltage v_{CM} is defined as

$$V_{CM} = V_{AN} + V_{BN} \cdot 2 + (V_{AN} - V_{BN}) \cdot (L2 - L1) \cdot 2(L1 + L2) \quad (1)$$

where v_{AN} is the voltage difference between points A and N, v_{BN} is the voltage difference between points B and N. $L1$ and $L2$ are the output filter inductors. In order to eliminate leakage currents, the CM voltage must be kept constant or only varied at low frequency, such as 50 Hz/60 Hz. The conventional solution employs the half-bridge inverter [12], [13]. The filter inductor $L2$ is zero in the half-bridge inverters. Therefore, (1) is simplified as

$$V_{CM} = V_{AN} + V_{BN} \cdot 2 - (V_{AN} - V_{BN}) \cdot 2 = V_{BN} \cdot 2 \quad (2)$$

The CM voltage v_{CM} is constant due to the neutral line of the utility grid connecting to the midpoint of the split dc-link capacitors directly. However, a drawback of half-bridge inverters is that, the dc voltage utilization of half-bridge type topologies is half of the full-bridge topologies. As a result, either large numbers of PV panels in series are involved or a boost dc/dc converter with extremely high voltage transfer ratio is required as the first power conditioning stage, which could decrease the system efficiency. The full-bridge inverters only need half of the input voltage value demanded by the half-bridge topology, and the filter inductors $L1$ and $L2$ are usually with the same value. As a result, (1) is simplified as

$$V_{CM} = V_{AN} + V_{BN} \cdot 2 \quad (3)$$

Many solutions have been proposed to realize CM voltage constant in the full-bridge transformerless inverters [14]–[25]. A traditional method is to apply the full-bridge inverter with the bipolar sinusoidal pulsewidth modulation (SPWM). The CM voltage of this inverter is kept constant during all operating modes. Thus, it features excellent leakage currents characteristic. However, the current ripples across the filter inductors and the switching losses are likely to be large. The full-bridge inverters with unipolar SPWM control are attractive due to their excellent differential-mode (DM) characteristics such as smaller inductor current ripple, and higher conversion efficiency. However, the CM voltage of conventional unipolar SPWM full-bridge inverter varies at switching frequency, which leads to high leakage currents [12]. However, these topologies have never been analyzed from the point of view of topological relationships. In this paper, a family of novel H6 full-bridge topologies is proposed for the transformerless PV grid-tied inverters. An extra switch is inserted to the H5 topology for forming a new current path and for the purpose of reducing conduction loss. Therefore, in the active modes, the inductor current of the proposed H6 topology flows through two switches during one

of the half-line periods and through three switches during another half-line period. As a result, for comparing with the topologies presented in [17], [19], and [20], the proposed H6 topology has achieved the minimum conduction loss, and also has featured with low leakage currents. On the other hand, the topological relationship between H5 topology and HERIC topology is revealed, and the methods for generating HERIC topology from H6-type topology

and from hybrid-bridge topology are presented, respectively. This paper is organized as follows. In Section II, the operation modes and characteristics of the H5 topology and the HERIC topology generating HERIC topology from the H6-type topology or from the hybrid-bridge topology are given. A family of H6 topologies is proposed, and the topological relationship between H5 topology and HERIC topology is analyzed. In Section III, one of the proposed H6 topologies is taken as an example for analysis in detail with operational principle and modulation strategy. The comparisons between H5, HERIC, and the proposed H6 topology are given in terms of power loss and device cost. Experimental results are presented in Section IV, and Section V concludes the paper.

II. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS ON EXISTING TOPOLOGIES

A. Operation Modes of H5 and HERIC

The operation modes of H5 topology and HERIC topology are taken as examples for analysis. There are four operation modes in each period of the utility grid of the H5 topology, as shown in Fig. 3. It can be seen that in the active modes, the inductor current of H5 topology is always flowing through three switches due to its extra switch $S5$ in dc side. In the freewheeling modes, the inductor current of H5 topology is flowing through two switches. There are four operation modes in each period of the utility grid of the HERIC topology, as shown in Fig. 4. It can be seen that the inductor current of HERIC topology is always flowing through two switches in the active modes. In the freewheeling modes, the inductor current of HERIC topology is flowing through two switches. Therefore, although the H5 topology features less power devices than the HERIC topology, its conduction loss is higher than that of the HERIC topology. Moreover, the conduction losses of the H6-type topology and the hybrid-bridge topology are also higher than that of the HERIC topology due to extra switches in the dc side. As a result, the conduction losses of H5 topology, H6-type topology, and hybrid-bridge topology should be reduced for the harvest of higher efficiency.

B. Topology Relationship

The H6-type topology is taken as an example to analysis first. From Fig. 2(c), it can be seen that there are two switches between the terminal (A) and the negative terminal of the PV array, and there are another two switches between the terminal(B) and the negative terminal of the PV array. Therefore, the inductor current is controlled to flow through three switches in the active modes of H6-type topology. In order to reduce the conduction loss, the collector of switch S_2 is disconnected from the anode of diode D_1 , and then it is connected to the terminal(A), as shown in Fig. 5(a). As a result, the inductor current flow through S_2 and S_3 instead of S_2 , S_3 , and S_6 in the active mode during the negative half cycle of the grid voltage. The dc and ac sides of this topology are still disconnected in the freewheeling modes. The same means are applied to another leg, where the switch S_4 is disconnected from the diode D_2 and then connected to the terminal (B), as shown in Fig. 5(b). Hence, a circuit structure of HERIC topology is derived by the methods described in Fig. 5. The topology is shown in Fig. 6

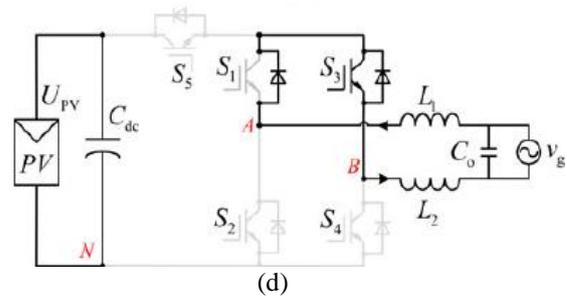
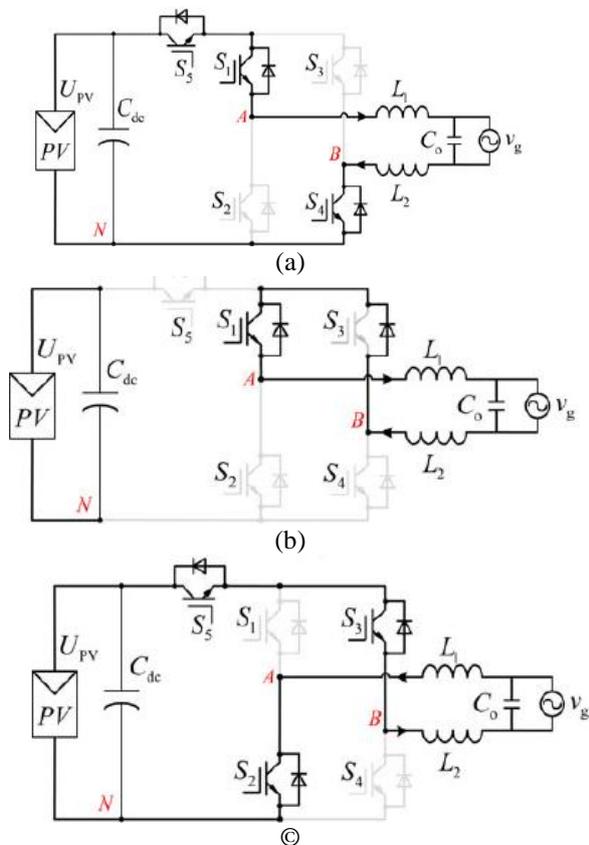


Fig. 3. Operation modes of H5 topology. (a) Active mode in the positive half period. (b) Freewheeling mode in the positive half period. (c) Active mode in the negative half period. (d) Freewheeling mode in the negative half period.

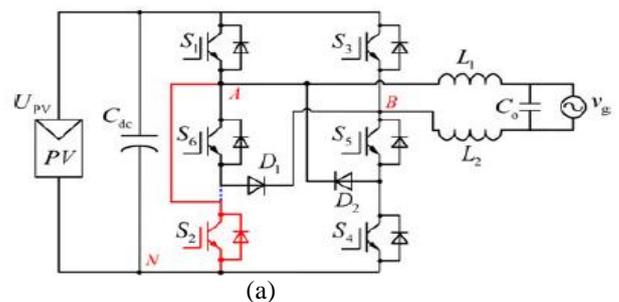
Compared with the HERIC topology shown in Fig. 2(c), the form of the bidirectional switch in ac side is changed.

Similarly, another circuit structure of HERIC topology can be derived from the hybrid-bridge shown in Fig. 2(d). The switches S_3 and S_4 are disconnected from D_1 and D_2 , respectively, and then connect both of them to the terminal (B), as shown in Fig. 7. However, there is only one extra switch in dc side of the H5 topology. When the emitter of S_5 is disconnected from S_1 and connected to the terminal (A), the inductor current flow through S_4 and S_5 instead of S_1 , S_4 , and S_5 in the active mode of positive half cycle of the grid voltage. Hence, the conduction loss is reduced. Unfortunately, in the active mode of negative half cycle of the grid voltage, there is no inductor current path, as shown in Fig. 8(a). Therefore, an extra switch S_6 is introduced

III. ANALYSIS ON THE H6 TOPOLOGY AND COMPARISON WITH OTHER TOPOLOGIES

A. Novel H6 Topology

From the aforementioned analysis, an extra switch S_6 is introduced into the H5 inverter topology between the positive terminal of the PV array and the terminal (B) to form a new



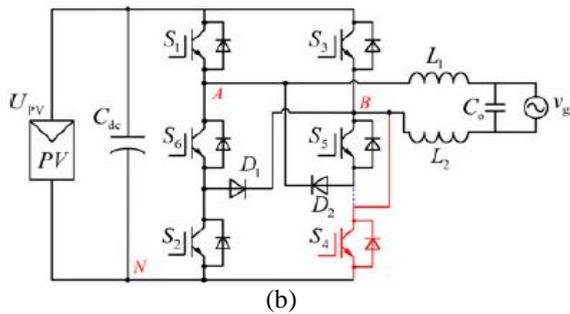


Fig. 5. Modified H6-type inverter topologies. (a) Circuit structure A. (b) Circuit structure B.

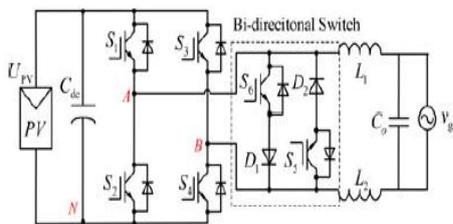


Fig. 6. Another circuit structure of HERIC topology.

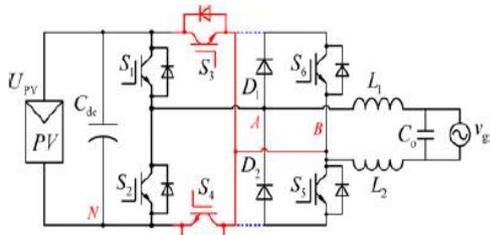


Fig. 7. Another circuit structure of HERIC topology derived from hybrid bridge topology .current path.

As a result, a novel H6 transformerless full-bridge inverter topology is derived, as shown in Fig. 9(a). Similarly, the extra switch S_6 can be introduced into the H5 inverter topology between the positive terminal of the PV array and the terminal (A) to form a new current path as well, as shown in Fig. 9(b). Therefore, a new circuit structure of novel H6 inverter is presented. As a result, the conduction loss of the proposed H6 topologies is higher than HERIC topology and less than H5 topology.

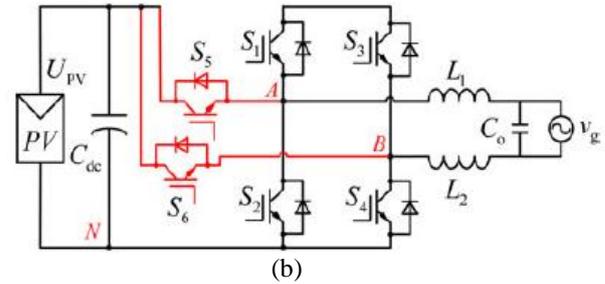
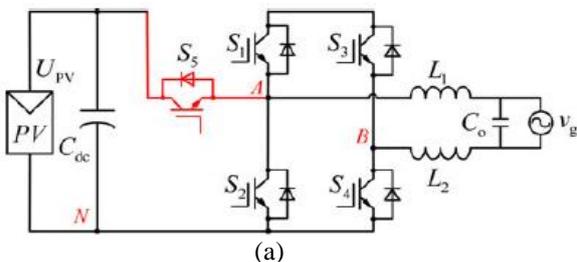


Fig. 8. Relationship between HERIC topology and H5 topology. (a) Modified H5 topology. (b) HERIC topology derived from H5 topology.

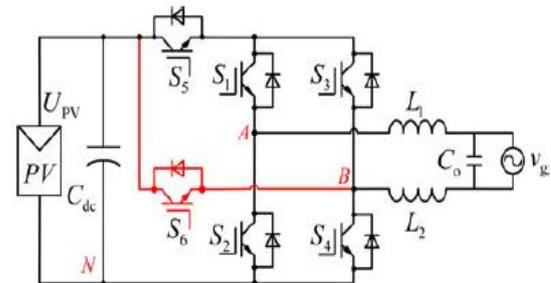


Fig. 9. A family of proposed H6-type inverter topologies. (a). Circuit structure A. (b) Circuit structure B.

B. Operation Mode Analysis

The circuit structure of proposed novel H6 inverter topologies shown in Fig. 9(a) is taken as an example to analysis. PV grid-tied systems usually operate with unity power factor. The waveforms of the gate drive signals for the proposed novel H6 topology are shown in Fig. 10, where v_g is the voltage of utility grid. i_{ref} is the inductor current reference. v_{gs1} to v_{gs6} represent the gate drive signals of switches S_1 to S_6 , respectively. There are four operation modes in each period of the utility grid, as shown in Fig. 11, where v_{AN} represents the voltage between terminal (A) and terminal (N) and v_{BN} represents the voltage between terminal (B) and terminal (N). v_{AB} is the DM

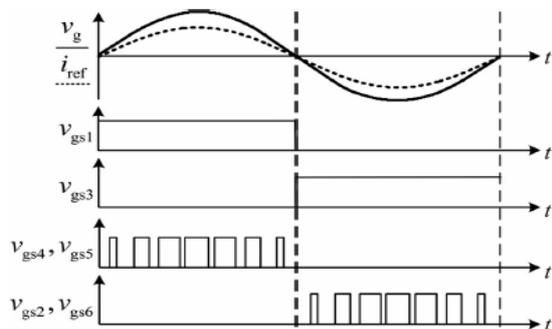


Fig. 10. Schematic of gate drive signals with unity power factor.

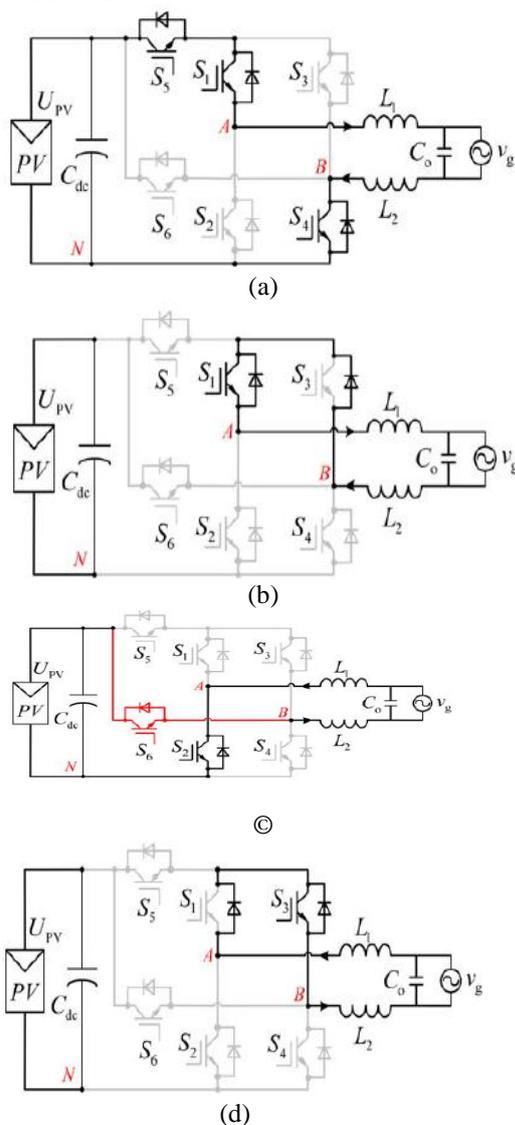


Fig. 11. Equivalent circuits of operation modes. (a) Active mode in the positive half period. (b) Freewheeling mode in the positive half period. (c) Active mode in the negative half period. (d) Freewheeling mode in the negative half period.

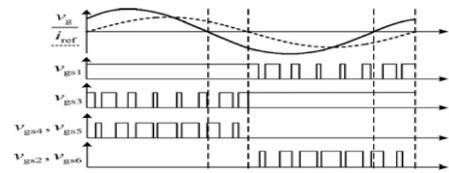


Fig. 12. Schematic of gate drive signals with power factor other than unity. voltage of the topology, $v_{AB} = v_{AN} - v_{BN}$. The CM voltage $v_{CM} = 0.5(v_{AN} + v_{BN})$.

a) Mode I is the active mode in the positive half period of the utility grid voltage, as shown in Fig. 11(a). S_1, S_4 , and S_5 are turned ON, and the other switches are turned OFF. The inductor current is flowing through S_1, S_4 , and S_5 . $v_{AN} = UPV$, $v_{BN} = 0$; thus, $v_{AB} = UPV$, and the CM voltage $v_{CM} = (v_{AN} + v_{BN})/2 = 0.5UPV$. b) Mode II is the freewheeling mode in the positive half period of the utility grid voltage, as shown in Fig. 11(b). S_1 is turned ON; the other switches are turned OFF. The inductor current is flowing through S_1 and the antiparallel diode of S_3 . $v_{AN} = v_{BN} \approx 0.5UPV$; thus, $v_{AB} = 0$, and the CM voltage $v_{CM} = (v_{AN} + v_{BN})/2 \approx 0.5UPV$. c) Mode III is the active mode in the negative half period of the utility grid voltage, as shown in Fig. 11(c). S_2, S_3 , and S_6 are turned ON; the other switches are turned OFF. The inductor current is flowing through S_2 and S_6 . Although S_3 is turned ON, there is no current flowing through it, and the switch S_3 has no conduction loss in this mode. Nevertheless, in the H5 topology, the inductor current flows through S_2, S_3 , and S_5 . Therefore, the conduction loss of proposed topology is less than that of H5 topology. In this mode, $v_{AN} = 0$, $v_{BN} = UPV$; thus, $v_{AB} = -UPV$, and the CM voltage $v_{CM} = (v_{AN} + v_{BN})/2 = 0.5UPV$. d) Mode IV is the freewheeling mode in the negative half period of the utility grid voltage, as shown in Fig. 11(d). S_3 is turned ON, and the other switches are turned OFF. The inductor current is flowing through S_3 and the antiparallel diode of S_1 . $v_{AN} = v_{BN} \approx 0.5UPV$; thus, $v_{AB} = 0$, and the CM voltage $v_{CM} = (v_{AN} + v_{BN})/2 \approx 0.5UPV$. Based on the aforementioned analysis, the PV array can be disconnected from the utility grid when the output voltage of the proposed H6 inverter is at zero voltage level and the leakage current path is cut off. The CM voltage of the proposed topology in each operation mode is equal to $0.5UPV$, and it results in low leakage current characteristic of the proposed H6 topologies. The proposed H6 topology with unipolar SPWM method not only can achieve unity power factor, but also has the ability to control the phase shifts between voltage and current waveforms. The modulation strategy is shown in Fig. 12. The drive signals are in phase with the grid-tied current. Therefore, it has the capa-

TABLE I
CALCULATED POWER LOSSES ON DEVICE

	S_1 (W)	S_2 (W)	S_3 (W)	S_4 (W)	S_5 (W)	S_6 (W)	Total losses(W)
H5	4.911	4.472	4.911	4.472	8.944	N.C.	27.71
HEIRC	4.472	4.472	4.472	4.472	2.571	2.571	23.03
H6	4.911	4.472	2.571	4.472	4.472	4.472	25.37

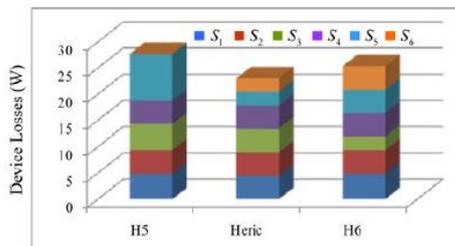


Fig. 13. Device losses distribution for these three topologies with 1 kW power rating.

TABLE II
COMPARISON OF OPERATING DEVICES IN THESE THREE TOPOLOGIES

	H5	HERIC	H6
Total device number	5	6	6
Isolated power supply for devices	4	3	4
Switching device number	2	2	2
Conducting device number	$v_g > 0$	3	2
	$v_g < 0$	3	2
Diodes number with freewheeling	2	2	2
Diodes number with reverse recovery	1	1	1
Gate drive number	2	2	2

TABLE III
PARAMETERS OF THE EXPERIMENTAL PROTOTYPE

Parameter	Value
Rate power	1000 W
Input voltage	380–700 V
Grid voltage/frequency	230V/50Hz
Switching frequency	20kHz
Input Capacitance C_{dc}	940uF
Filter inductor L_1, L_2	3mH
Filter Capacitor C_o	0.47uF
Power Devices S_1-S_6 (IGBT)	IRG4PH40U
PV parasitic capacitances C_{PV1}, C_{PV2}	0.1uF

bility of injecting or absorbing reactive power, which meets the demand for VDE-4105 standard.

C. Comparisons of H5, HERIC, and the Proposed H6 Topologies

The power losses of power switches of the proposed H6 topology [see Fig. 9(a)], H5 topology [see Fig. 2(a)], and HERIC topology [see Fig. 2(b)], are calculated with the same parameters as given in Table III, and are illustrated in Table I and Fig. 13. The calculation methods and theories are studied and verified



Fig. 14. Picture of the universal prototype.

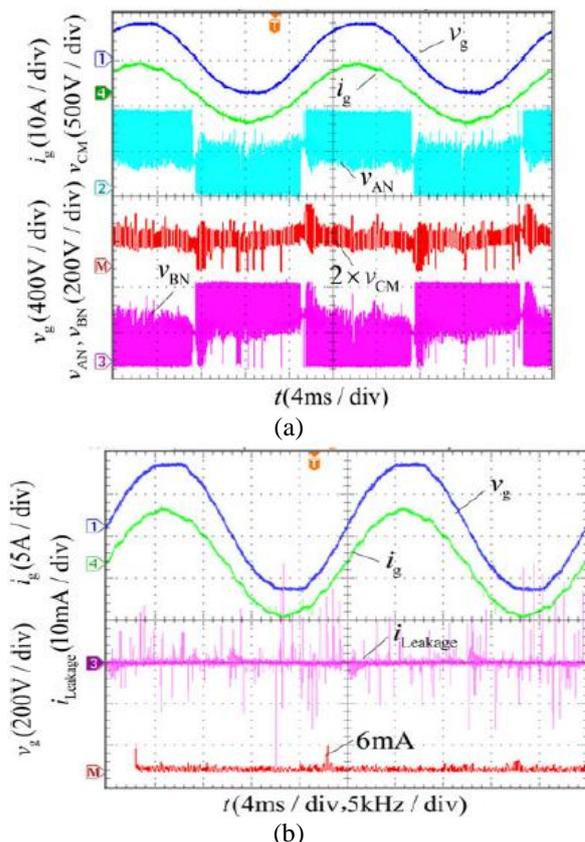


Fig. 15. CM voltage and leakage current in H5 topology. (a) CM voltage. (b) Leakage current.

in detail in literatures [22], [26]–[29], but not the contribution of this paper. On the other hand, the inductor losses in the three topologies are the same due to the same v_{AB} modulation. Therefore, the inductor losses of these three topologies are regardless. The comparison of operating devices in these three topologies are summarized in Table II. The main power losses of switches in each operation mode include the turn-ON/OFF loss, conduc-

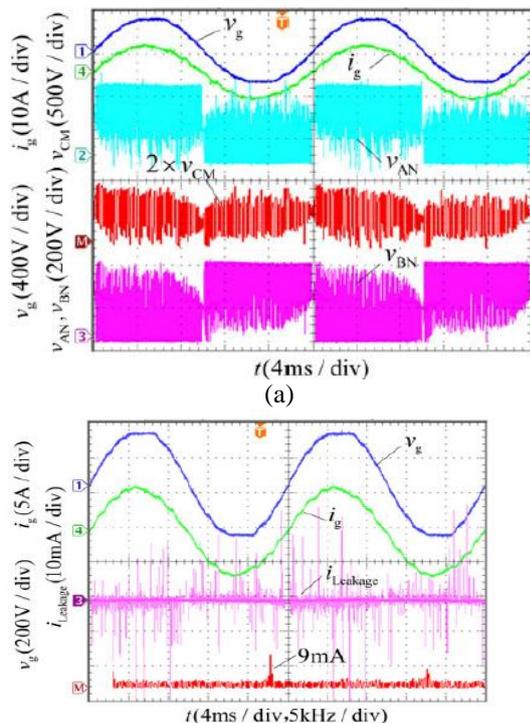


Fig. 16. CM voltage and leakage current in HERIC topology. (a) CM voltage.(b) Leakage current.

IV. EXPERIMENTAL RESULTS

A universal prototype of H5 [see Fig. 2(a)], HERIC [see Fig. 2(b)], and novel H6 [see Fig. 9(a)] topologies has been built up in order to verify the operation principle and compare their performances. The specifications of these three inverter topologies are listed in Table III. The control circuit is implemented based on a DSP chip TMS320F2808. The measure point of leakage currents is shown in Fig. 1. Because Z_g is very small, it is not being considered. The picture for the universal prototype is depicted in Fig. 14. The YOKOGAWA WT1800 precision

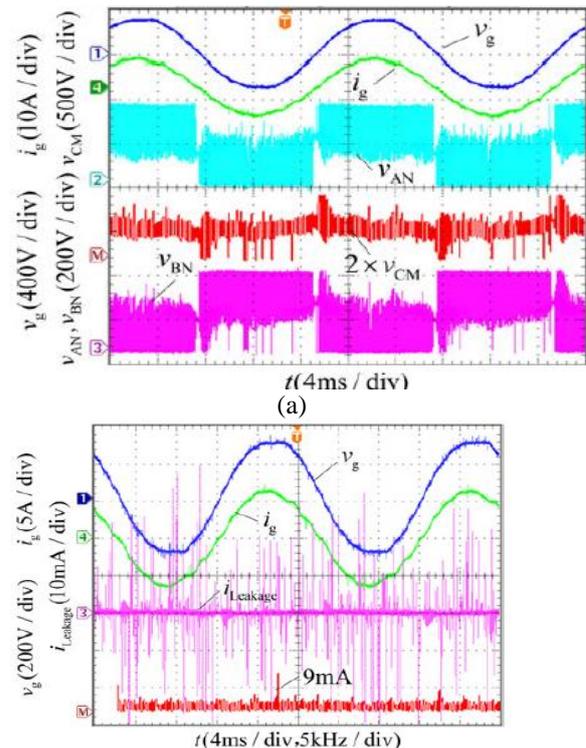


Fig. 17. CM voltage and leakage current in H6 topology. (a) CM voltage. (b) Leakage current.

power analyzer was utilized as the measurement instrument to measure the efficiency of these three different topologies. The CM voltage and the leakage current waveforms of these three topologies in unified experimental conditions are shown in Figs. 15–17, respectively, where v_g and i_g are the grid voltage and grid-tied current, respectively. v_{AN} and v_{BN} are the voltages between the midpoints A and B to terminal N, respectively. v_{CM} is the CM voltage, which equals to $0.5(v_{AN} + v_{BN})$. $i_{Leakage}$ represents the leakage current. The leakage current measured for the H5, HERIC, and H6 inverters at the switching frequency are 6 mA [see Fig. 15(b)], 9 mA [see Fig. 16(b)], and 9 mA [see Fig. 17(b)], respectively. The fast Fourier transform (FFT) results show that the leakage current of H5 topology is the lowest, and the leakage current of HERIC topology and H6 topology is almost the same. The drain–source voltage waveforms of switches in the novel H6 topology are shown in Fig. 18, where v_{ds5} and v_{ds6} are drain–source voltages of S_5 and S_6 , respectively. From Fig. 18(b), it can be seen that in the negative half period of the utility grid voltage, the voltage potential of the positive terminal of the PV array is equal to that of the terminal (B), so the drain–source voltage of switch S_5 is zero. Thus, the switch S_5 only has switching loss in the positive half period

V. CONCLUSION

In this paper, from the topological relationship point of view, the intrinsic relationship between H5 topology and HERIC topology is revealed. The HERIC topology can be derived from H5, H6-type, and hybrid-bridge topologies by the idea of reducing conduction loss. Moreover, based on the H5 topology, a new current path is formed by inserting a power device between the terminals of PV array and the midpoint of one of bridge legs. As a result, a family of single-phase transformerless full-bridge H6 inverter topologies with low leakage currents is derived. The proposed H6 topologies have the following advantages and evaluated by experimental results:

- 1) the conversion efficiency of the novel H6 topology is better than that of the H5 topology, and its thermal stress distribution is better than that of the H5 topology;
- 2) the leakage current is almost the same as HERIC topology, and meets the safety standard;
- 3) the excellent DM performance is achieved like the isolated full-bridge inverter with unipolar SPWM. Therefore, the proposed H6 topologies are good solutions for the single-phase transformerless PV grid-tied inverters.

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