© MAR 2026 | IRE Journals | Volume 9 Issue 9 | ISSN: 2456-8880
DOI: https://doi.org/10.64388/IREV9I9-1715426

Power Quality Improvement in Renewable Energy Integrated Distribution Systems Using Unified Power Quality Conditioner

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Abstract- ***The rapid growth of renewable energy sources such as solar photovoltaic and wind power has significantly transformed modern electrical distribution networks. Although renewable energy integration offers environmental and economic advantages, it also introduces several operational challenges related to power quality. Variations in generation, intermittent output, and power electronic interfaces often cause voltage fluctuations, harmonic distortion, and reactive power imbalance in distribution systems. These issues can adversely affect system reliability, equipment performance, and overall grid stability. Therefore, advanced power conditioning techniques are required to maintain acceptable power quality levels in renewable energy integrated networks. This research investigates the application of a Unified Power Quality Conditioner (UPQC) for improving power quality in renewable energy integrated distribution systems. The UPQC combines series and shunt active power filters to mitigate voltage disturbances and current harmonics simultaneously. The proposed system integrates renewable energy sources with a distribution feeder and employs UPQC to regulate voltage, compensate reactive power, and reduce harmonic distortion. A detailed system model was developed and analyzed using a simulation platform to evaluate the effectiveness of the proposed approach. The study examines system behavior under different operating conditions including renewable generation variability and nonlinear load disturbances. Simulation results demonstrate that the UPQC significantly reduces harmonic distortion, stabilizes voltage profiles, and enhances overall power quality performance. The results confirm that the integration of UPQC in renewable energy distribution networks provides a reliable and efficient solution for mitigating power quality issues. The proposed approach contributes to improving the operational stability of renewable energy based power systems and supports the development of resilient smart grid infrastructures.***

Keywords: Renewable Energy Integration, Power Quality, Unified Power Quality Conditioner, Distribution Systems, Harmonic Mitigation

I. INTRODUCTION

The global demand for electrical energy has increased significantly due to rapid industrialization, population growth, and technological advancement. At the same time, environmental concerns related to fossil fuel consumption have accelerated the adoption of renewable energy sources such as solar photovoltaic (PV) and wind power [1]. Renewable energy integration into electrical distribution networks offers numerous advantages including reduced greenhouse gas emissions, improved energy sustainability, and enhanced energy security.

Despite these advantages, the integration of renewable energy sources into distribution systems introduces several technical challenges. One of the most significant challenges is maintaining acceptable power quality levels in the presence of intermittent renewable generation and power electronic interfaces [2]. Renewable energy systems typically rely on converters and inverters to connect with the grid, which can introduce harmonics, voltage fluctuations, and reactive power imbalance.

Power quality is defined as the ability of electrical power systems to maintain voltage and current waveforms within acceptable limits so that electrical equipment can operate properly [3]. Poor power quality can lead to equipment malfunction, increased power losses, overheating, and reduced lifespan of electrical components [4]. In renewable energy integrated distribution systems, fluctuations in solar irradiance and wind speed can cause voltage variations and frequency deviations that degrade power quality performance.

Another major concern associated with renewable energy integration is harmonic distortion. Power electronic converters used in renewable energy systems generate switching harmonics that can propagate through the distribution network [5]. These harmonics can cause overheating in transformers, increased losses in electrical equipment, and interference with communication systems. Furthermore, nonlinear loads such as electric vehicle chargers, variable speed drives, and electronic devices further contribute to harmonic pollution in modern power systems [6].

Voltage instability is also a common issue in renewable energy integrated distribution networks. Sudden changes in renewable energy output can lead to voltage sag, swell, and flicker, which negatively affect the performance of sensitive loads [7]. As renewable energy penetration increases, maintaining stable voltage profiles becomes increasingly difficult for distribution utilities.

To address these challenges, advanced power conditioning devices have been developed to improve power quality in modern electrical networks. Among these devices, active power filters and flexible AC transmission system (FACTS) devices have gained significant attention [8]. Active power filters can compensate harmonic distortion and reactive power imbalance by injecting appropriate compensating currents into the system.

One of the most effective solutions for comprehensive power quality improvement is the Unified Power Quality Conditioner (UPQC). The UPQC combines the functionality of both series and shunt active power filters to simultaneously mitigate voltage disturbances and current harmonics [9]. The series converter compensates voltage-related issues such as sag and swell, while the shunt converter eliminates current harmonics and reactive power components.

The UPQC has been widely studied for improving power quality in distribution systems. Its ability to provide simultaneous voltage and current compensation makes it a highly effective solution for modern power networks with high penetration of renewable energy sources [10]. By regulating voltage and current waveforms, the UPQC ensures stable and efficient operation of both the distribution system and connected loads.

Recent advancements in control strategies and digital signal processing have further enhanced the performance of UPQC systems [11]. Modern control algorithms enable real-time detection of power quality disturbances and rapid compensation through power electronic converters. These improvements allow UPQC systems to operate efficiently even under rapidly changing system conditions.

The growing penetration of renewable energy technologies in distribution networks highlights the need for advanced power quality management techniques. As power systems transition toward decentralized and smart grid architectures, maintaining high power quality standards becomes increasingly important [12]. Devices such as UPQC play a crucial role in ensuring stable and reliable operation of renewable energy integrated distribution systems.

This research focuses on analyzing the performance of a Unified Power Quality Conditioner for improving power quality in renewable energy integrated distribution systems. The study presents system modeling, control methodology, and simulation analysis to evaluate the effectiveness of the proposed approach. The results demonstrate that UPQC can significantly enhance voltage stability, reduce harmonic distortion, and improve overall power quality in renewable energy based distribution networks.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The increasing penetration of renewable energy sources into distribution networks has attracted significant attention from researchers due to its impact on power quality and system stability. Renewable energy technologies such as solar photovoltaic systems and wind turbines are typically connected to the grid through power electronic converters, which introduce harmonic distortion and voltage fluctuations in electrical networks [13]. These disturbances can degrade power quality and affect the performance of sensitive electrical equipment.

Early studies focused on analyzing the impact of renewable energy integration on distribution system stability. Researchers observed that fluctuating renewable generation could cause voltage variations, frequency deviations, and reactive power imbalance in power systems [14]. These issues become more prominent as the penetration level of renewable energy sources increases.

To address these problems, several power quality improvement techniques have been proposed. Passive filters were initially used to mitigate harmonic distortion in electrical networks [15]. Passive filters consist of inductors, capacitors, and resistors that are tuned to specific harmonic frequencies. Although passive filters are relatively simple and cost-effective, they suffer from several limitations such as fixed compensation characteristics and potential resonance problems with the grid impedance.

Active power filters were later introduced to overcome the limitations of passive filters. Active filters use power electronic converters to generate compensating currents that cancel harmonic components in the system [16]. These filters provide flexible compensation and can adapt to changing system conditions. However, conventional active filters are typically designed to compensate either current or voltage disturbances, but not both simultaneously.

The concept of the Unified Power Quality Conditioner was introduced to provide comprehensive power quality improvement in distribution systems. The UPQC combines a series active filter and a shunt active filter connected through a common DC link capacitor [17]. The series converter compensates voltage-related disturbances such as voltage sag and swell, while the shunt converter eliminates current harmonics and reactive power components.

Several studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of UPQC in improving power quality in distribution networks. Researchers have shown that UPQC can significantly reduce total harmonic distortion and maintain stable voltage levels under various operating conditions [18]. The device has also been applied in industrial power systems to protect sensitive equipment from voltage disturbances.

With the increasing integration of renewable energy sources, researchers have explored the application of UPQC in renewable energy based distribution systems. Studies have shown that UPQC can effectively mitigate voltage fluctuations caused by intermittent solar and wind power generation [19]. The device can also improve the power factor and reduce harmonic distortion caused by power electronic converters.

Various control strategies have been developed to enhance the performance of UPQC systems. Traditional control methods include synchronous reference frame theory and instantaneous reactive power theory for harmonic detection and compensation [20]. These methods enable accurate detection of harmonic components and allow the UPQC to generate appropriate compensating signals.

Recent research has focused on advanced control techniques such as fuzzy logic control, neural networks, and adaptive control algorithms [21]. These techniques improve the dynamic response of UPQC systems and allow them to operate effectively under rapidly changing system conditions.

The application of UPQC in smart grid environments has also been widely investigated. Smart grid technologies integrate advanced communication systems and automated control mechanisms to enhance power system reliability and efficiency [22]. In such systems, UPQC can provide real-time power quality compensation and support grid stability.

Researchers have also explored the integration of renewable energy sources with UPQC systems to improve energy efficiency. In such configurations, renewable energy can supply the DC link of the UPQC, reducing the need for additional energy sources and improving overall system performance [23].

Despite significant advancements in UPQC technology, several challenges remain. These include the high cost of power electronic components, complex control algorithms, and integration issues with existing distribution infrastructure [24]. Further research is required to develop cost-effective and efficient UPQC solutions suitable for large-scale renewable energy integration.

Overall, the literature highlights the importance of advanced power conditioning technologies for maintaining power quality in renewable energy integrated distribution systems. Among the various solutions proposed, the Unified Power Quality Conditioner has emerged as one of the most effective devices for mitigating voltage disturbances, harmonic distortion, and reactive power imbalance in modern power systems.

III. SYSTEM MODELING

The renewable energy integrated distribution system considered in this research consists of a solar photovoltaic (PV) generation unit, nonlinear loads, the utility distribution feeder, and a Unified Power Quality Conditioner (UPQC). The purpose of developing the system model is to evaluate the capability of the UPQC in mitigating power quality disturbances caused by renewable energy variability and nonlinear load behavior. The system architecture is designed to replicate realistic operating conditions typically found in modern distribution networks with renewable energy penetration.

The solar PV array acts as the primary renewable energy source in the system. Photovoltaic modules convert solar radiation into electrical energy through semiconductor materials based on the photovoltaic effect. The output voltage and current of the PV array depend heavily on environmental factors such as solar irradiance and ambient temperature. These variations cause fluctuations in generated power, which may lead to instability in the distribution network if not properly managed [25]. To maximize energy extraction from the PV system, a power electronic inverter interface is used to convert the generated DC power into AC power compatible with the grid.

The inverter acts as an interface between the renewable generation unit and the distribution system. However, inverter switching operations introduce harmonics into the network. These harmonics distort the current waveform and contribute to power quality problems such as increased losses, overheating of transformers, and malfunction of sensitive equipment [26]. In addition to harmonics, renewable generation variability can also lead to voltage fluctuations at the point of common coupling (PCC).

To address these challenges, a Unified Power Quality Conditioner is connected at the PCC. The UPQC is composed of two voltage source converters (VSCs) connected back-to-back through a common DC link capacitor. One converter operates as a series compensator while the other functions as a shunt compensator. This configuration allows the UPQC to simultaneously mitigate both voltage and current disturbances in the system [27].

The series converter is connected in series with the distribution feeder through a series injection transformer. Its primary function is to compensate voltage disturbances such as voltage sag, voltage swell, and voltage imbalance. When a disturbance occurs in the supply voltage, the series converter injects a compensating voltage to maintain a constant voltage across the load terminals. This ensures that sensitive loads receive a stable supply voltage even when grid disturbances occur.

The shunt converter is connected in parallel with the distribution system at the PCC. Its main function is to compensate current harmonics generated by nonlinear loads and renewable energy converters. It injects compensating currents into the network that cancel harmonic components in the load current waveform. In addition to harmonic compensation, the shunt converter also provides reactive power compensation, which improves the power factor of the system [28].

A DC link capacitor connects the two converters and serves as an energy storage element. The capacitor maintains energy balance between the series and shunt converters. During operation, energy is exchanged between the converters through the DC link to ensure effective compensation of voltage and current disturbances.

Control algorithms play an essential role in coordinating the operation of the series and shunt converters. The control system continuously monitors voltage and current signals at the PCC. Based on the detected disturbances, appropriate reference signals are generated to control the switching of the power electronic devices in both converters [29].

The developed system model provides a comprehensive representation of renewable energy integrated distribution networks. It allows detailed analysis of the UPQC performance under various operating conditions, including renewable generation fluctuations and nonlinear load disturbances.

IV. PROPOSED METHOD

The proposed method focuses on improving power quality in renewable energy integrated distribution systems through the implementation of an advanced control strategy for the Unified Power Quality Conditioner. The main objective of the method is to ensure stable voltage supply, reduce harmonic distortion, and improve overall power factor under varying renewable generation and load conditions.

The control approach begins with real-time monitoring of system voltage and current at the point of common coupling. Sensors installed in the system continuously measure electrical parameters and transmit them to a digital control unit. These signals are processed using signal conditioning techniques and transformed into a format suitable for digital analysis [30].

To identify disturbances in the distribution network, the measured signals are analyzed using the synchronous reference frame (SRF) transformation method. This method converts three-phase voltage and current signals into a rotating reference frame, making it easier to detect harmonic components and reactive power elements in the system. By separating fundamental and harmonic components, the control algorithm can determine the amount of compensation required [31].

The compensation process is divided into two parts corresponding to the operation of the series and shunt converters. The series converter is responsible for mitigating voltage-related disturbances. When a voltage sag or swell is detected, the control system generates a reference compensating voltage that must be injected into the feeder. This compensating voltage is then applied through the series converter using a pulse width modulation (PWM) switching technique.

The shunt converter operates simultaneously to compensate current-related disturbances. Nonlinear loads and inverter-based renewable generation units often produce harmonic currents that distort the system current waveform. The control algorithm calculates the harmonic component of the load current and generates a compensating current signal. The shunt converter injects this current into the system to cancel harmonic components and restore a sinusoidal current waveform [32].

Pulse width modulation is used to control the switching of insulated gate bipolar transistors (IGBTs) within the converters. PWM allows precise control of the converter output by adjusting the duty cycle of switching pulses. This method ensures accurate tracking of reference compensation signals generated by the control algorithm.

Another important aspect of the proposed method is DC link voltage regulation. The DC link capacitor provides the energy required for compensation by both converters. To maintain stable operation, the voltage across the DC link capacitor must remain constant. A feedback control loop monitors the capacitor voltage and adjusts the shunt converter operation accordingly to maintain energy balance between converters.

Reactive power compensation is also integrated into the control strategy. By injecting appropriate compensating currents, the shunt converter reduces the reactive power drawn from the grid and improves the power factor of the distribution system.

Overall, the proposed method ensures coordinated operation of the series and shunt converters in the UPQC. This coordinated control enables simultaneous mitigation of voltage disturbances and current harmonics, leading to significant improvement in power quality within renewable energy integrated distribution networks.

V. SIMULATION RESULTS

To evaluate the performance of the proposed system, a detailed simulation study was conducted using a power system simulation platform. The developed model includes a renewable energy source, nonlinear loads, distribution feeder, and the Unified Power Quality Conditioner. The purpose of the simulation analysis is to observe system behavior before and after the implementation of the UPQC.

Initially, the distribution system was simulated without the UPQC in order to analyze the extent of power quality disturbances caused by renewable energy integration and nonlinear loads. The results indicated that the presence of inverter-based renewable generation introduced harmonic distortion in the system current waveform. In addition, variations in solar generation caused fluctuations in the voltage profile at the point of common coupling [33].

During the simulation, nonlinear loads were also connected to the system to represent practical industrial and commercial load conditions. These loads generated additional harmonic currents that further distorted the current waveform and increased total harmonic distortion (THD). As a result, the overall power quality of the distribution system was significantly degraded.

Voltage sag conditions were simulated by introducing sudden increases in load demand. Under these conditions, the supply voltage dropped below its nominal value, causing performance issues for sensitive electrical equipment. Voltage swell conditions were also observed during sudden load disconnection events.

After implementing the Unified Power Quality Conditioner in the system model, significant improvements were observed in the system performance. The series converter effectively injected compensating voltage to mitigate voltage sag and swell disturbances. As a result, the load voltage remained stable even during sudden variations in supply voltage.

The shunt converter successfully eliminated harmonic currents generated by nonlinear loads and renewable energy inverters. By injecting compensating currents into the system, the shunt converter restored the current waveform to a nearly sinusoidal shape.

The simulation results also showed improvement in the system power factor. Reactive power drawn by nonlinear loads was compensated by the shunt converter, reducing the reactive power demand from the utility grid.

Overall, the simulation results confirmed that the proposed UPQC system significantly enhances power quality in renewable energy integrated distribution networks by mitigating voltage disturbances, reducing harmonic distortion, and improving power factor performance [34].

VI. POWER QUALITY ANALYSIS

Power quality improvement achieved by the proposed UPQC system was evaluated using several performance indicators including voltage regulation, harmonic distortion, and power factor improvement. These parameters provide a comprehensive assessment of the effectiveness of the compensation system.

Voltage regulation analysis was conducted to evaluate the ability of the UPQC to maintain stable voltage levels at the load terminals. In the absence of compensation, voltage sag and swell conditions caused significant deviations from the nominal voltage level. These deviations can disrupt the operation of sensitive loads and industrial equipment [35].

After the implementation of the UPQC, the series converter injected compensating voltage to maintain constant load voltage. The voltage waveform remained stable even during disturbances in the supply voltage. This demonstrates the effectiveness of the series converter in mitigating voltage-related power quality issues.

Harmonic distortion analysis was performed by measuring the total harmonic distortion of the current waveform. Harmonics are typically generated by power electronic converters and nonlinear loads connected to the distribution network. Excessive harmonic distortion can lead to overheating of electrical equipment and increased power losses [36].

Before compensation, the current waveform exhibited significant distortion due to harmonic components. After the UPQC was activated, the shunt converter injected compensating currents that canceled harmonic components in the load current waveform. As a result, the current waveform became nearly sinusoidal and the THD level was significantly reduced.

Reactive power compensation provided by the shunt converter also improved the power factor of the distribution system. By supplying the required reactive power locally, the UPQC reduced the reactive power demand from the grid and improved system efficiency.

Dynamic response analysis showed that the UPQC responded quickly to sudden changes in load conditions and renewable generation output. The control system detected disturbances and provided compensation within a short time interval.

The results of the power quality analysis confirm that the Unified Power Quality Conditioner is an effective solution for mitigating power quality issues in renewable energy integrated distribution networks. By providing simultaneous voltage and current compensation, the UPQC significantly enhances system reliability and operational performance.

VII. CONCLUSION

The increasing penetration of renewable energy sources such as solar photovoltaic and wind power has transformed modern electrical distribution networks. While renewable energy technologies provide significant environmental and economic benefits, they also introduce several operational challenges related to power quality. Variations in renewable generation and the widespread use of power electronic converters often lead to voltage fluctuations, harmonic distortion, and reactive power imbalance in distribution systems.

This research investigated the application of a Unified Power Quality Conditioner for improving power quality in renewable energy integrated distribution networks. The UPQC combines series and shunt active power filters to simultaneously compensate voltage disturbances and current harmonics. This dual compensation capability makes it an effective solution for modern power systems with high renewable energy penetration.

A detailed system model was developed to analyze the performance of the UPQC under different operating conditions. The model included a renewable energy generation unit, nonlinear loads, and a distribution feeder. Simulation studies were performed to evaluate system performance before and after the implementation of the UPQC.

The simulation results demonstrated that the UPQC significantly improves power quality in the distribution network. The series converter effectively mitigates voltage sag and swell disturbances, ensuring stable voltage supply to sensitive loads. At the same time, the shunt converter eliminates harmonic currents generated by nonlinear loads and renewable energy converters.

Power quality analysis showed a substantial reduction in total harmonic distortion and improvement in system power factor after the implementation of the UPQC. The coordinated operation of the series and shunt converters allows the device to provide comprehensive compensation for both voltage and current disturbances.

The findings of this study highlight the importance of advanced power conditioning technologies in renewable energy integrated power systems. As renewable energy penetration continues to increase, maintaining high power quality standards will become even more critical.

Future research can focus on implementing the proposed UPQC system in real-time hardware platforms and exploring advanced control techniques for large-scale smart grid applications. The integration of intelligent control algorithms and energy storage systems may further enhance the performance of UPQC in renewable energy distribution networks.

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