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Core Geometry Coefficient For Resonant Inductors*

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A resonant inductor is required to have a small size, a low power loss, and good heat dissipation. In particular, it is difficult to design an optimal inductor for high-frequency and high-power applications. The design methods for resonant inductors presented until now are based on the trial-and-error approach. There is no criterion to pick the candidates for the core for resonant inductors from different core-product companies.

The core geometry coefficient (K_g) is one of the useful criteria to select the core [1]-[5]. By using the K_g method, it is possible to select the core satisfying the acceptable wire loss, the electromagnetic conditions, and a core area restriction. However, there are no considerations and examples of the design procedure of resonant inductors using the K_g method.

This paper presents expressions of the core geometry coefficient for the resonant inductor design. Additionally, a design example of a resonant inductor for a class-E power amplifier is given. By using the proposed expressions, the core geometry coefficient is determined from the electrical specifications of the loaded quality factor of a series-resonant circuit, the output power, the operating frequency, the maximum flux density, and the maximum wire loss. It is a good criterion to select the core from different manufacturers.

Basic Theory And Derivation Of Core Geometry Coefficient K_q

The inductance of an inductor with an air gap is given by

$$L = \frac{N^2}{\frac{l_g}{\mu_{0A_c}} + \frac{l_c}{\mu_{r\mu_{cA_c}}}} = \frac{\mu_0 N^2 A_c}{l_g + \frac{l_c}{\mu_r}},$$
(1)

where \mathbf{N} is the number of wire turns, l_{g} is the are-gap length, l_{e} is the core length, \mathbf{A}_{g} is the cross-sectional area of the magnetic core, μ_{0} is the free-space permeability, and μ_{r} is the relative permeability of a core material.

In general, it can be written that

$$Ni = B\left(\frac{l_g}{\mu_0} + \frac{l_c}{\mu_0\mu_r}\right),$$

(2)

where **B** is the magnetic flux density. Hence,

$$B_m = \frac{\mu_0 N I_m}{\frac{l_c}{\mu_r} + l_g},$$
(3)

where B_m and I_m are the maximum flux density and the maximum inductor current. From (1) and (3), the number of turns is



$$N = \frac{LI_m}{A_c B_m},\tag{4}$$

which is a requirement from electromagnetic point of view. The length of the winding wire is

 $l_w = N l_T$,

(5)

where ${\it I}_{\rm T}$ is the mean length of a single turn (MLT). The dc winding resistance is

$$R_{wdc} = \frac{\rho_w l_w}{A_w} = \frac{\rho_w N l_T}{A_w} , \qquad (6)$$

where A_w and p_w are the cross-sectional area of the winding bare wire and the resistivity of the copper, respectively. Therefore,

$$A_w = \frac{N\rho_w l_T}{R_{wdc}} \,. \tag{7}$$

The dc and low-frequency wire loss is

$$P_{wdc} = R_{wdc} \ I_{rms}^2,\tag{8}$$

where I_{rms} is the root-mean-square value of the inductor current. Therefore, (7) is rewritten as

$$A_w = \frac{N\rho_w l_T I_{rms}^2}{P_{wdc}}.$$
⁽⁹⁾

The core window utilization factor is defined as the ratio of the cross-sectional area of the winding bare wire A_{CL} to the window cross-sectional area of a core W_{CL}

$$K_u = \frac{A_{Cu}}{W_a} = \frac{NA_w}{W_a}.$$
⁽¹⁰⁾

From (9) and (10), we obtain

$$N^2 = \frac{K_u W_a P_{wdc}}{\rho_w l_T I_{rms}^2} \tag{11}$$

and



$$A_w^2 = \frac{K_u W_a \rho_w l_T I_{rm}^2}{P_{wdc}}.$$
⁽¹²⁾

These relations include both the wire-loss condition in (9) and the core-area condition in (10). The number of turns should also satisfy the electromagnetic condition in (4). Equating the right-hand sides of (4) and (11), the *core geometry coefficient* [1] is obtained as

$$K_{g} = \frac{W_{a}A_{c}^{2}K_{u}}{l_{T}}$$

= $\frac{\rho_{w}L^{2}I_{m}^{2}I_{rms}^{2}}{P_{wdc}B_{m}^{2}} = \frac{2\rho_{w}LW_{m}I_{rms}^{2}}{P_{wdc}B_{m}^{2}}$ (m⁵), (13)

where the maximum energy stored in the inductor is

$$W_m = \frac{LI_m^2}{2}.$$
(14)

It is convenient to express the dc wire loss as the ratio of the output power $P_{wde} = \alpha P_{o}$, resulting in

$$K_{g} = \frac{\rho_{w}L^{2}I_{m}^{2}I_{rms}^{2}}{\alpha P_{oB_{m}^{2}}} = \frac{2\rho_{w}LW_{m}I_{rms}^{2}}{\alpha P_{o}B_{m}^{2}}.$$
(15)

The core geometry coefficient K_{g} provides the core with a good combination of W_{g} , A_{g} , and I_{T} satisfying the electromagnetic condition in (7), the dc-wire-loss condition in (9), and the core-area restriction in (10) simultaneously. In [2], K_{g} of many cores at $K_{u} = 0.4$ is presented or can be calculated from the core dimensions.

Core Geometry Coefficient For Resonant Inductors

We consider the design of resonant inductors conducting a sinusoidal current $i_L = I_m \sin \omega t$, where $\omega = 2\pi f$ is the angular frequency and $I_m = \sqrt{2}I_{rms}$ is the amplitude of the sinusoidal current. From (15), we obtain

$$K_{g} = \frac{\rho_{w}L^{2}I_{m}^{4}}{2\alpha P_{o}B_{m}^{2}} = \frac{2\rho_{w}W_{m}^{2}}{\alpha P_{o}B_{m}^{2}}.$$
(16)

Generally, the loaded quality factor of a series-resonant L - C - R circuit is defined as

$$Q_L = \frac{\omega L}{R} = \frac{\omega L I_m^2}{2P_o} = \frac{\omega W_m}{P_o}.$$
⁽¹⁷⁾

Thus, the core geometry coefficient for resonant inductors is given by



$$K_g = \frac{2\rho_w Q_L^2 P_o}{\alpha \omega^2 B_m^2}.$$
⁽¹⁸⁾

By using the proposed expressions for K_{g} in (16) and (18), we can select the core satisfying the conditions (7), (9), and (10), using only the electrical parameters.

Design Example

This paper presents a design example of a resonant inductor for the class E resonant power amplifier [7], whose topology is shown in Fig. 1. We design the resonant inductor **L** to meet the following specifications: f = 100 kHz, $P_0 = 80$ W, $R_L = 70 \Omega$, and $Q_L = 5$. From these specifications, we obtain $I_m = \sqrt{2P_0/R_L} = 1.51$ A, and $L = QR/\omega = 557\mu$ H. The inductor specifications are: $J_m < 5 \text{ A/mm}^2$, $K_u = 0.4$, and $B_m = 0.2$ T, where J_m is the maximum current density of the wire. Design examples of the dc-feed inductor L_0 are given in [5].



Fig. 1. Class-E power amplifier.

Wire Loss, Core Loss, And Current Density

In the first design example, we allow 0.5% of the output power to be the wire loss in the inductor, that is, $\alpha = 0.005$. From (18), the core geometry coefficient increases with the decrease in the wire loss, which usually implies a large core volume. Therefore, the core loss increases with the decrease of the wire loss. The core loss is large in resonant inductors because of a high frequency and a large value of I_m . Therefore, the selection of the value of α is crucial in the design of the resonant inductors.

From (18), the core geometry coefficient is obtained as

$$K_g = \frac{2\rho_w Q_L^2 P_o}{\alpha \omega^2 B_m^2}$$

= $\frac{2 \times 1.72 \times 10^{-7} \times 5^2 \times 80}{0.005 \times 2 \times \pi \times 100 \times 10^3 \times 0.2^2}$
= $8.73 \times 10^{-13} (\text{m}^5) = 0.00873 \text{ cm}^5$. (19)

We select NEC/TOKIN FEE-30W core with the following parameters [2], [8]: $K_g = 0.0100 \text{ cm}^{\text{b}}$, $A_c = 0.412 \text{ cm}^2$, $W_a = 1.36 \text{ cm}^2$, $l_T = 5.1 \text{ cm}$, $l_c = 4.7 \text{ cm}$, $V_c = 1934 \text{ mm}^3$. From (12), the bare wire cross-sectional area is given by



$$A_{W} = \sqrt{\frac{K_{u}W_{a}\rho_{w}l_{T}I_{m}^{2}}{2\alpha P_{o}}}$$

= $\sqrt{0.4 \times 1.36 \times 10^{-4} \times 1.72 \times 10^{-8}}$
 $\times \sqrt{5.1 \times 10^{-2} \times 1.51^{2}}$
 $/\sqrt{2 \times 0.005 \times 80}$ (m²)
= 0.275 mm².

The maximum current density of the wire is

$$J_m = \frac{I_m}{A_w} = \frac{1.51}{0.275 \times 10^{-6}} \quad (A/m^2)$$

= 5.49 A/mm² > 5 A/mm². (21)

Since the current density is higher than that given by the regulation, the NEC/TOKIN FEI-25 core cannot be used for this inductor. The current-density restriction is rarely not satisfied and can be neglected for the design of inductors used in dc-dc converters in CCM and DCM [1]. This result indicates that the current density is one of the bottle-neck for the design of resonant inductors and we should carefully consider the current density restriction. For a low current density, a thick wire is required as shown in (20). A thicker wire yields a lower wire loss and smaller α , which provides a higher K_{α} value as shown in (18).

Inductor Design

We reset $\alpha = 0.0025$ and obtain

$$K_{g} = \frac{2\rho_{w}Q_{L}^{2}P_{o}}{\alpha\omega^{2}B_{m}^{2}}$$

= $\frac{2 \times 1.72 \times 10^{-7} \times 5^{2} \times 80}{0.0025 \times 2 \times \pi \times 100 \times 10^{3} \times 0.2^{2}}$
= $1.75 \times 10^{-12} (\text{m}^{5}) = 0.0175 \text{ cm}^{5}.$ (22)

We reselect NEC/Tokin FEE-25W core with the following parameters [2], [8]: $K_g = 0.0204 \text{ cm}^3$, $A_c = 0.417 \text{ cm}^2$, $W_a = 1.49 \text{ cm}^2$, $l_T = 5.1 \text{ cm}$, $l_c = 7.2 \text{ cm}$, $V_c = 3010 \text{ mm}^3$. The core dimensions C_*D_*E and F, defined in Fig. 2, are $C = 7 \text{ mm}_*D = 12.2 \text{ mm}_*E = 25.3 \text{ mm}_*$ and $F = 6.8 \text{ mm}_*$



Fig.2 Mechanical parameters of E core.

Additionally, BH1 core material is chosen with $\mu_r = 2300 \pm 20\%$ and $P_v = 400 \text{ kW/m}^2$ for f = 100 kHz and $B_m = 0.2 \text{ T}$, where P_v is the core power loss per unit volume. Following the same procedure as that in (20) and (21), we can obtain

$$A_{W} = \sqrt{\frac{K_{u}W_{a}\rho_{w}l_{T}I_{m}^{2}}{2\alpha P_{o}}}$$

= $\sqrt{0.4 \times 1.49 \times 10^{-4} \times 1.72 \times 10^{-8}}$
 $\times \sqrt{7.2 \times 10^{-2} \times 1.51^{2}}$
 $/\sqrt{2 \times 0.0025 \times 80}$ (m²)
= 0.542 mm² (23)

and

$$J_m = \frac{I_m}{A_w} = \frac{1.51}{0.542 \times 10^{-6}} \text{ (A/m^2)}$$

= 2.77 A/mm² < 5 A/mm². (24)

This core satisfies the current-density restriction.

Single-Strand Winding. From the calculated cross-sectional area $A_w = 0.542 \text{ mm}^2$ in (20), an AWG 19 copper wire with $A_w = 0.653 \text{ mm}^2$ and a bare wire diameter d = 0.912 mm is selected. Because the nominal outer diameter of the AWG 19 wire is $d_p = 0.98 \text{ mm}$, the number of turns is obtained from

$$N = \frac{K_u W_a}{A_w} = \frac{0.4 \times 1.49 \times 10^{-4}}{0.653 \times 10^{-6}} = 91.2 \text{ turns}.$$
(25)

We pick N = 91 turns. For the adjustment of the inductance L, the air-gap length is calculated as

$$l_{g} = \frac{\mu_{0}A_{c}N^{2}}{L} - \frac{l_{c}}{\mu_{r}}$$

=
$$\frac{4 \times \pi \times 10^{-7} \times 0.417 \times 10^{-4} \times 91^{2}}{557 \times 10^{-6}}$$
$$- \frac{7.2 \times 10^{-2}}{2300} (m) = 0.748 \text{ mm,}$$
(26)

where $\mu_0 = 4\pi \times 10^{-7}$ H/m is the free-space permeability.

Here, we consider the fringing effect. The fundamental theory of the fringing effect is given in [5]. It is assumed that the ratio of the effective width of the fringing flux cross-sectional area w_f to the gap length is $u = w_f/l_g = 1$, and the ratio of the effective magnetic path length of the fringing flux to the gap length k = 2. The fringing flux factor F_f is

$$F_{f} = 1 + \frac{2ul_{g}(C + F + 2ul_{g})}{kCF}$$

= 1 + 2 × 1 × 0.748 × 10⁻³
× $\frac{(7 + 6.8 + 2 × 1 × 0.748) × 10^{-3}}{2 × 7 × 6.8 × 10^{-6}} = 1.24.$

(27)

The number of turns including the fringing effect is

$$N' = \sqrt{\frac{L(l_g/F_f + l_c/\mu_r)}{\mu_0 A_c}}$$

= $\sqrt{557 \times 10^{-6}}$
 $\times \sqrt{\frac{0.748 \times 10^{-3}/1.24 + 7.2 \times 10^{-2}/2300}{4 \times \pi \times 10^{-7} \times 0.417 \times 10^{-4}}}$
= 82.1 turns.

(28)

We pick an 82-turn winding for realizing the inductor. Therefore, the number of winding layers is

$$N_{l} = \frac{d_{o}N'}{2D} = \frac{0.98 \times 10^{-3} \times 82}{2 \times 12.2 \times 10^{-3}} = 3.29.$$
(29)

We need about a 3-layer winding to realize the inductor. The length of the winding wire is

$$l_w = N' l_T = 82 \times 5.1 \times 10^{-2} = 4.18 \text{ m.}$$
⁽³⁰⁾

The low-frequency winding resistance, which is almost equal to the dc winding resistance, is given by

$$R_{wdc} = \frac{\rho_w l_w}{A_w} = \frac{1.72 \times 10^{-8} \times 4.64}{0.653 \times 10^{-6}} = 110 \text{ m}\Omega,$$
(31)

where $\rho_w = 1.72 \times 10^{-8} \Omega m$ is the resistivity of the copper at T = 20 °C. The dc winding power loss without the skin and proximity effect is

$$P_{wdc} = \frac{R_{wdc} I_m^2}{2} = \frac{0.11 \times 1.51^2}{2} = 0.125 \text{ W.}$$
(32)

The skin depth of copper at f = 100 kHz is

$$\delta_{w} = \sqrt{\frac{\rho_{w}}{\pi \mu_{0} f}}$$

$$= \sqrt{\frac{1.72 \times 10^{-8}}{\pi \times 4 \times \pi \times 10^{-7} \times 100 \times 10^{3}}} \quad (m)$$

$$= 0.209 \text{ mm.} \qquad (33)$$

We estimate the ac winding loss using Dowell's equation. The factor of Dowell's equation for a round wire, which is obtained in [4] and [6], is expressed as

$$A = \left(\frac{\pi}{4}\right)^{\frac{3}{4}} \frac{d}{\delta_w} \sqrt{\frac{d}{d_o}}$$
$$= \left(\frac{\pi}{4}\right)^{\frac{3}{4}} \frac{0.912 \times 10^{-3}}{0.209 \times 10^{-3}} \sqrt{\frac{0.912 \times 10^{-3}}{0.98 \times 10^{-3}}}$$
$$= 3.51.$$
(34)

By using A = 3.51, we obtain the winding ac-to-dc resistance ratio as

$$F_{R} = A \left[\frac{\sinh(2A) + \sin(2A)}{\cosh(2A) - \cos(2A)} \right] \\ + \frac{2A(N_{l}^{2} - 1)}{3} \left[\frac{\sinh(2A) - \sin(2A)}{\cosh(2A) + \cos(2A)} \right] \\ = 3.51 \left[\frac{\sinh(2 \times 3.51) + \sin(2 \times 3.51)}{\cosh(2 \times 3.51) - \cos(2 \times 3.51)} \right] \\ + \frac{2 \times 3.51 \times (3^{2} - 1)}{3} \\ \times \left[\frac{\sinh(2 \times 3.51) - \sin(2 \times 3.51)}{\cosh(2 \times 3.51) + \cos(2 \times 3.51)} \right] \\ = 22.2$$
(35)

The high-frequency ac resistance is

$$R_{wac} = F_R R_{wdc} = 22.2 \times 0.11 = 2.44 \ \Omega.$$
⁽³⁶⁾

Therefore, the high-frequency ac winding power loss is

$$P_{wac} = F_R P_{wdc} = 22.2 \times 0.125 = 2.78 \text{ W}$$
⁽³⁷⁾

The core power loss per unit volume at f = 100 kHz is obtained from the catalog [8] as $P_v = 400 \times 10^3 \text{ W/m}^3$. Therefore, the total core loss is

$$P_c = P_v V_c = 400 \times 10^3 \times 3010 \times 10^{-9}$$

= 1.20 W. (38)

The equivalent series resistance (ESR) representing the core loss is expressed as

$$R_{c} = \frac{2P_{c}}{I_{m}^{2}} = \frac{2 \times 1.2}{1.51^{2}} = 1.05 \ \Omega.$$
⁽³⁹⁾

Therefore, the total power loss in the inductor is

$$P_{cw} = P_c + P_{wac}$$

= 1.2 + 2.78 = 3.98 W.

The equivalent series resistance of the inductor is

$$R_{esr} = R_{wac} + R_c$$

= 2.44 + 1.05 = 3.49 \Omega. (41)

The quality factor of the inductor is

$$Q = \frac{\omega L}{R_{esr}}$$
$$= \frac{2 \times \pi \times 100 \times 10^3 \times 557 \times 10^{-6}}{3.49}$$
$$= 100.$$
(41a)

Multi-Strand Winding. In this section, the design of the resonant inductor with multiple-strand winding is carried out to avoid the skin and proximity effects. For this purpose, the diameter of a single wire strand should be

(40)

$$d_{s} < 2\delta_{w} = \sqrt{\frac{\rho_{w}}{\pi\mu_{0}f}}$$

= $\sqrt{\frac{1.724 \times 10^{-8}}{\pi \times 4 \times \pi \times 10^{-7} \times 100 \times 10^{3}}}$ (m)
= 0.418 mm.
(42)

The thickest wire less than $2\delta_{w}$ is AWG 26 with the bare wire diameter $d_{\sigma} = 0.405 \text{ m}$, the insulated wire diameter $\delta_{\sigma\sigma} = 0.452 \text{ mm}$, and the bare wire cross-sectional area $A_{w\sigma} = 0.128 \text{ mm}^2$. The number of strands is

$$N_{strand} = \frac{A_w}{A_{ws}} = \frac{0.547}{0.128} = 4.2 .$$
⁽⁴³⁾

The number of strands $N_{atrand} = 4$ is selected. From (10), the number of turns is

$$N_{s} = \frac{K_{u}W_{a}}{A_{wo}} = \frac{K_{u}W_{a}}{\frac{N_{strand}\pi d_{so}^{2}}{4}} = \frac{0.4 \times 1.49 \times 10^{-4}}{\frac{4 \times \pi \times (0.452 \times 10^{-3})^{2}}{4}} = 92.7 .$$
(44)

We pick $N_g = 93$. The inductance value is adjusted by tuning the gap length, which is

$$l_{gs} = \frac{\mu_0 N^2 A_c}{L} - \frac{l_c}{\mu_r}$$

= $\frac{4 \times \pi \times 10^{-7} \times 93^2 \times 0.417 \times 10^{-4}}{\frac{557 \times 10^{-6}}{-\frac{7.2 \times 10^{-2}}{2300}}}$ (m) = 0.782 mm. (45)

The fringing flux factor F_{f} is

$$F_{fs} = 1 + \frac{2ul_{gs}(C + F + 2ul_{gs})}{kCF}$$

= 1 + 2 × 1 × 0.782 × 10⁻³
× $\frac{(7 + 6.8 + 2 × 1 × 0.782) × 10^{-3}}{2 × 7 × 6.8 × 10^{-6}} = 1.25.$
(46)

The number of turns including the fringing effect is

$$N_{s}' = \sqrt{\frac{L(l_{gs}/F_{fs} + l_{c}/\mu_{r})}{\mu_{0}A_{c}}}$$

= $\sqrt{557 \times 10^{-6}}$
 $\times \sqrt{\frac{0.782 \times 10^{-3}/1.25 + 7.2 \times 10^{-2}/2300}{4 \times \pi \times 10^{-7} \times 0.417 \times 10^{-4}}}$
= 83.6 turns. (47)

(48)

(50)

We pick $N_{g}^{\prime} = 84$. The multi-strand wire length is

$$l_{ws} = N_s' l_T$$

= 84 × 5.1 × 10⁻² = 4.28 m.

Therefore, the dc winding resistance is

$$R_{wdcs} = \frac{\rho_w l_{ws}}{A_{wo}} = \frac{\rho_w l_{ws}}{\frac{N_{strand} \pi d_{so}^2}{4}}$$
$$= \frac{1.72 \times 10^{-8} \times 4.28}{\frac{4 \times \pi \times (0.452 \times 10^{-3})^2}{4}} = 115 \text{ m}\Omega.$$
(49)

Because the skin and proximity effects can be neglected, the winding loss is

$$P_{ws} = \frac{\frac{R_{wdcs} l_m^2}{2}}{\frac{0.115 \times 1.51^2}{2}} = 0.131 \text{ W}.$$

Therefore, the total power loss in the inductor is

$$P_{cw} = P_c + P_{ws}$$

= 1.2 + 0.131 = 1.33 W. (51)

The equivalent series resistance of the inductor is

$$R_{esrs} = R_{wdcs} + R_c$$

= 0.115 + 1.05 = 1.16 \Omega. (52)

The quality factor of the inductor with multiple-strand winding is

$$Q = \frac{\omega L}{R_{esrs}}$$
$$= \frac{2 \times \pi \times 100 \times 10^3 \times 557 \times 10^{-6}}{1.16}$$
$$= 302.$$
(53)

Table 1 gives the design results for both $\alpha = 0.005$ and $\alpha = 0.0025$. Since the example resonant inductor is designed for the high-frequency and high-power application, the current density restriction is a bottle-neck of the design. Additionally, it is shown that the core loss is much larger than the wire loss.

Table 1: Results for Resonant Inductor Designs for Multiple-Strand Winding.

Required P	Core	Material	$V_c (\mathrm{mm}^2)$	Wire	N _{strand}	N	P_{W} (W)	P_{c} (W)	J_m (A/mm ²)
0.4	FEI25	BH1	1934	AWG26	2	83	0.402	0.77	5.49
0.2	FEE25W	BH1	3010	AWG26	4	84	0.115	1.20	2.77

Conclusion

This paper has presented a novel core-selection criterion, taking into account the core loss. The proposed criterion indicates the core candidates, which satisfy the core-window-area restriction and the electromagnetic conditions with the guarantee of the permissible core-loss. It is confirmed from the design example that the designed inductor satisfies multiple restrictions simultaneously. The geometry coefficient K_g method is recommended for designing inductors for resonant power converters [9] and PWM dc-dc power converters [10], [11].

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