Loss Minimization-Based Charging Strategy for Lithium-ion Battery

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Abstract—In this paper, an optimal charging strategy for lithiumion batteries is proposed to minimize the charging loss. In order to reach this target, a one-RC electric model is employed to model the loss for the battery, and an efficiency map is measured for the charger considering different charging currents and voltages. Dynamic programming (DP) algorithm is applied to determine the optimal charging current profiles for minimizing the losses of battery and charger separately and collectively. Experiment results prove that the proposed method is more efficient compared with constant current (CC) charging method without influencing the charging time.

I. INTRODUCTION

The development of electric vehicles (EVs) and plug-in hybrid electric vehicles (PHEVs) have been greatly promoted due to limited fossil fuel and environmental issues. The demand of rechargeable batteries, which serve as the key energy storage element in EVs and PHEVs, is expanding correspondingly. Among all the types of rechargeable batteries, lithium-ion batteries dominate the market because of its high power density, high energy density, long life cycle, and free of memory effect [1, 2]. Abundant researches have been carried out for lithium-ion batteries, including battery status estimation [2], which mainly consists of battery state of charge (SoC) [3], state of health (SoH) [4], and state of function (SoF) estimation, and battery charge strategy research [5]. The traditional charging scheme for lithium-ion batteries is constant-current constant-voltage (CCCV) method. This method consists of two stages, i.e., a constantcurrent (CC) charging stage and a constant-voltage (CV) stage. During the CC mode, a constant charging current is applied to the terminal of the battery until its terminal voltage reaches a predetermined maximum value. Then, the charging process is transferred into CV charging mode. During this mode, the battery terminal voltage remains unchanged and the charging current will decrease gradually until a cut-off current threshold is reached. This charging method is easy to implement due to its simplicity. However, it does not consider the charging loss, and the charging efficiency may not be high. Since the battery internal resistance varies with battery SoC, we believed that the varied charging current can possibly decrease the charging loss without shortening the battery life, thereby improving charging efficiency.

Many charging strategies have been introduced to improve the charging efficiency, shorten the charging time or extend battery life. In [6], an ant algorithm-based charging pattern strategy is proposed to reduce charging time and extend battery life. It takes advantage of the positive feedback and distributed computation of the ant colony system. However, the optimal charging solution takes relatively long time to obtain, and it does not have a physical model to work with. In [7], a fuzzy

controlled active SoC controller is applied to substitute the CV charging mode. However, the implementation of these techniques is too complex. In [8, 9], pulse current charging is proposed with respect to electrochemistry reaction which allows lithium ions to diffuse more evenly throughout the battery, and thus alleviate polarization. In this scenario, the rising time, pulse amplitude and frequency should be well-tuned in order to have the best performance, and they are different among various kinds of batteries. In [10], temperature is considered as a state, and by manipulating weight terms in cost functions, optimal charging profiles could be determined with different purposes, including final cell temperature, final SoC and energy loss. By rearranging the charging scheme, this method could remove warm-up stage which is necessary in cold start, thus saving the energy usage. However, it requires more accurate estimation at the end-stage where current is the largest which might lead to safety concerns if fully charge is required. In [11], an optimal charging strategy is proposed based on nonlinear model predictive control techniques to charge the lithium-ion battery in a fast way, while guaranteeing safety throughout the battery life. It concerns the safety, temperature increment, and mechanical stress of the battery, however, it does not take into account of the charger losses to optimize the total charging efficiency. In [12], a model predictive control framework is introduced to optimize the charging current considering the battery temperature. A genetic algorithm is employed to optimize the charging current profile under multi objectives. In [13], a dynamic optimization method to maximize the energy storage for the lithium-ion battery is presented. However, it does not detail the analysis of obtaining the charging current profile. In [14], a multi-objective optimal charging problem for two types of Li-ion batteries is formulated to optimally tradeoff the conflict between the charging time and energy loss. In [15], two varied charged current profiles are employed to illustrate better charging efficiency and capacity retention. In [16], the optimal charging current for the lithium-ion battery is traded off between cycle life, time-to-charge, energy losses and the temperature rise

Until now, there has been little work done to improve the overall efficiency including both battery efficiency and charger efficiency. For a lithium-ion battery, an equivalent electric circuit model [3] is easy to build which can simulate the battery performance with high precision. In [17], an improved model for lithium-ion batteries is proposed that varies the cell resistance and electrode over-potential with respect to the temperature. These models can guarantee the effectiveness of simulating the battery static and dynamic performances. Given the battery model, the available charging time, initial SoC, and the target SoC, the charging strategy can be optimized to decrease the

978-1-4799-5776-7/14/\$31.00 ©2014 IEEE

charging loss. For a battery charger, its efficiency changes with different voltage and current, and can be measured easily. Hence, the optimal charging scheme which minimizes the power loss of the charger can also be calculated. Finally, an overall charging loss minimization can be achieved by considering the loss of the battery and the charger together. This is the main motivation of this paper.

In order to realize the mentioned target, a battery model should be built first to obtain the relationship between charging loss and charging current. In this paper, an equivalent circuit model [4, 18], which has been widely used for battery state estimations, is introduced to describe the battery static and dynamic performance. Based on the built model, the charging loss can be easily calculated with respect to battery current. Then, dynamic programming (DP) [19, 20] is applied to find the optimal charging current profile. DP is a method which converts complex problems into multiple sub-problems. The cost of each sub-problem is computed, recorded, and looked up when the same step is encountered again in computation. Finally, DP selects the optimal solution by comparing all existing steps. The advantage of this method is that it can find the optimal solution even for a nonlinear system without too much calculation labor. Besides, an optimal charging current profile for the charger is achieved by DP through relating charger loss with output voltage and current. Finally, an overall optimal charging scheme is obtained by considering both losses. Experiment results prove that the proposed strategy can dramatically improve the charging efficiency.

II. CHARGING LOSS MODELING

In order to minimize the charging loss, loss models for battery and charger should be built properly. Here, an equivalent circuit model is introduced to analyze the charging loss for the battery, an efficiency map is measured for the charger at different output voltage and current levels, and experiment results validate the effectiveness of the models.

A. Lithium-ion battery cell modeling

A lithium-ion polymer pouch cell, as shown in Fig. 1, is tested using Arbin battery test equipment at normal room temperature. The basic specifications of the battery pouch cell are listed in Table I. The rated capacity of the battery is 40 Ampere-hour (Ah), and its nominal voltage is 3.7V.

The equivalent circuit model [3, 21] for the battery is shown in Fig. 2, which consists of an open circuit voltage (OCV) source U_{ocv} , a polarized resistor R_p which is in parallel with a capacitor C_p , and a resistor R_0 . U_{ocv} characterizes the nonlinear relationship between OCV with battery SoC. R_p and C_p network models the transient response due to polarization and diffusion effect, and R_0 describes the immediate voltage drop after current excitation.

In order to build the battery model, some particular experiments need to be conducted to capture the battery static and dynamic characteristics, which includes static capacity test, OCV test, hybrid pulse power characterization (HPPC) test and drive cycle test [3]. The whole test process for modeling the battery and validating the built model is shown Fig. 3. The function of the static capacity test is to test the battery capacity with recommended charging current, i.e., 0.5C, where C is the

value of the current with which the battery can be discharged for 1 hour. The OCV test is to obtain the battery static voltage with different SoC when the battery is not connected to the circuit. The OCV tests are recorded with a step of 10% SoC. As shown in Fig. 4, The HPPC test is applied with a step of 2% SoC to characterize the battery dynamic performance. The main purpose of the drive cycle test is to compare the actual battery terminal voltage with the model output to verify its effectiveness. In this paper, urban dynamometer driving schedule (UDDS) tests are applied to verify the model.

The battery OCV curve is shown in Fig. 5, from which we can see the charging OCV and discharge OCV range from 3.40V to 4.18V, and there exists a hysteresis between them. R_0 , R_p , and their sum value are shown in Fig. 7. Their sum value varies from 3.4m Ω to 1.9m Ω when SoC ranges from 0 to 1. The variation of C_p with SoC is shown in Fig. 6 and it varies from 35230F to 18610F. Ten consecutive UDDS drive cycle tests are applied to verify the correctness of the model output. Fig. 8 compares the measured battery terminal voltage and model output, and shows that the difference is less than 40mV. Thus it proves the model can simulate the battery performance with acceptable accuracy.

Table I Specifications of the Battery Cell			
Material Lithium-ion polymer			
Capacity (Nominal at C/2)	40Ah		
Nominal voltage	3.7V		
Lower limit voltage	2.7V		
Upper limit voltage	4.2V		



Fig. 1. The tested pouch cell.



Fig. 2. Equivalent circuit model for lithium-ion battery.

This article has been accepted for publication in a future issue of this journal, but has not been fully edited. Content may change prior to final publication. Citation information: DOI 10.1109/TIA.2015.2417118, IEEE Transactions on Industry Applications



Fig. 3. Test procedures for battery modeling.

B. Lithium-ion battery loss

Given the built model, the power loss of the two energy dissipation elements, i.e., R_0 and R_p , can be calculated accordingly,

$$P_{loss,cell} = i_p^2 R_p + i_L^2 R_0 \tag{1}$$

where i_p is the current of R_p , i_L denotes the current flowing through R_0 , and $P_{loss,cell}$ is the power loss of the cell. Since R_0 and R_p both vary with battery SoC, we can get the total energy loss during the charge process,



Fig. 5. OCV with respect to SoC.



where t_f is the total charging time, and $E_{cell,loss}$ is the energy loss of the cell. During the charging process, SoC variation can be calculated.

$$SoC_{t_{f}} = SoC_{0} - \frac{1}{C_{b}} \int_{0}^{t_{f}} i_{L} dt$$
 (3)

Based on (2) and (3), the battery charging losses can be calculated when charging the battery with a constant current.

Fig. 9 shows the calculated losses and measured losses when the battery is charged using constant current of 0.1C to 0.5C. It shows that the calculated losses occupy around 80% of the experimental losses. The remaining part of the losses may come from heat generation from electrochemical reaction or temperature change, which is beyond the scope of the electric model. In this paper, we only focus on the resistance heat loss of the battery when it is charged.



Fig. 7. R_0 and R_p dependence on SoC.



Fig. 8. Model validation with UDDS drive cycle tests.

Table II. Validation for Charger Loss Modeling

Charge rate (C)	Experiment (Wh)	Simulation (Wh)	Error (Wh)	Error (%)
0.25	480.98	502.17	21.19	4.41
0.50	298.09	309.67	11.58	3.88
0.75	241.86	249.55	7.70	3.18
1.00	200.13	198.52	1.61	0.80

C. Charger loss

A Xantrex XDC 10-600 power source is controlled as a battery charger with a maximum voltage of 10V. Its efficiency is measured with a WT1800 precision power analyzer when the output voltage ranges from 6V to 8.5V at a step of 0.5V and output current ranges from 0A to 50A at a step of 5A, as shown in Fig. 10. Due to the voltage limit of the power source, and current limit of the power analyzer, two cells are connected in series as a module in the experiment setup.

During the charging process, the charger efficiency changes due to variations of output voltage and current. Its terminal voltage in the charging mode is calculated according to electric equivalent model, and the charger power loss is calculated, as presented in (4) and (5), respectively.

$$U_{batt} = U_{ocv}(SoC) + [R_0(SoC) + R_p(SoC)]I$$
(4)

$$P_{loss,charger} = U_{batt} I(\frac{1}{\eta(U_{batt},I)} - 1)$$
(5)

where η is the efficiency of the charger, and $P_{loss,charger}$ is the power loss of the charger.

Table II shows the comparison of the modeled loss of the charger with experiment results at different charging rates. It shows that the loss model for the charger can estimate the loss of the charger within 4.41% error.

III. DYNAMIC PROGRAMMING AND APPLICATION

DP is considered as a cost effective method in the energy loss calculation. DP expresses complex practical problems as multistage decision processes. It builds loss matrices that save the data which are most likely to be frequently used in future calculation to save computation time [22].

A. Minimization of battery loss

The charging process can be regarded as battery SoC changes from an initial state SoC_{min} to the final state SoC_{max} within the given charging time t_{charge} . There are many possible paths, i.e., charging profiles, even though the start point and end point are determined. The goal of this paper is to use DP to find an optimal charging current profile with which the energy loss can be minimized.



Fig. 9. Calculated and empirical losses.

The charging energy loss from SoC_i to SoC_{i+1} can be expressed in the discrete form as

$$E_{i}^{loss,cell} = \left[i_{p,i}^{2} R_{p} \left(SoC_{i} \right) + i_{L,i}^{2} R_{L} \left(SoC_{i} \right) \right] \left(t_{i+1} - t_{i} \right)$$
(6)

Here, since C_p is large enough and there is only a small difference between i_L and i_p when charging the battery, we assume i_L equals i_p to simplify the problem without sacrificing the validity. Hence, we can get,

$$E_{i}^{loss,cell} = i_{L,i}^{2} \Big[R_{p} \left(SoC_{i} \right) + R_{L} \left(SoC_{i} \right) \Big] \Big(t_{i+1} - t_{i} \Big) .$$
(7)

In order to realize DP, some constraints should be properly considered, and the optimization problem is subject to the constraints,

$$I_{0} = \left[\left(SoC_{max} - SoC_{min} \right) C_{b} \right] / t_{charge}$$
(8)

$$I_{max} = 2I_0 \tag{9}$$

where t_{charge} is the charging time with unit of hour, I_0 is the current value if the battery cell is charged in CC mode during the whole charging process, C_b denotes the battery rated capacity, I_{max} is the maximum charging current, and we define it as two times of I_0 . The minimum current I_{min} is set to zero. In order to solve the problem with acceptable accuracy and without too much calculation labor, the current step value I_{step} is defined below,

$$I_{step} = \frac{I_0}{50} \tag{10}$$

$$I = k \cdot I_{step}, \ k = 0, 1, 2, \dots, 50$$
 (11)

This article has been accepted for publication in a future issue of this journal, but has not been fully edited. Content may change prior to final publication. Citation information: DOI 10.1109/TIA.2015.2417118, IEEE Transactions on Industry Applications



Fig. 10. Efficiency map for charger.

From (11), there are totally 51 selections for current commands during the calculation. The task of DP is to find a sequence of optimal current commands from them. In order to realize DP, a loss matrix with respect to different SoC and charging current should be constructed to build the cost-to-go matrix [20, 23]. After the loss matrix is constructed, DP will choose the best path to the current state by (12).

$$\min_{soc_{i-1}} cost_{soc_{i-1}} + loss_{soc_{i-1}} < \min_{soc_{i}} cost_{soc_{i}}$$

$$\min_{soc_{i}} cost_{soc_{i-1}} + loss_{soc_{i-1}}$$

$$(12)$$

where $min_cost_{soc_i}$ is the minimum cost at SoC_i , and $loss_{soc_{i,l}}$ is the loss at $SoC_{i,l}$.

By comparing the cost of all the paths which pass the current state, this algorithm ensures that at time t, SoC_i is reached with minimum energy loss, and the cost is stored as $min_cost_{soc_i}$. The same calculation will be carried out repeatedly until SoC_{max} and t_{charge} is reached. As such, the final result will be the minimized energy loss in the charging process. Based on this calculation, the optimal current profile can be searched in a backward way.

Fig. 11 shows the optimal charging current profile based on the proposed method and CC method both in time domain and SoC domain. The total charging time is 1 hour. We can see that using CC method, the current is 32A, whereas, using the proposed method, the current varies from 26.2A to 35.2A. Fig. 12 shows the charging current variation and resistance variation with battery SoC. It can be seen that, within 0% to 80% SoC range, DP assigned the current in the pattern that the charging current is relatively higher where the resistance is lower, the charging current is relatively lower where the resistance is higher, and the average charging current is maintained the same as that of the CC method. Through this way, the charging losses can be decreased. To some extent, it can explain why the proposed method can improve the charging efficiency.



Fig. 12. Cell optimal current profile and resistance of the battery cell.

B. Minimization of charger loss

During the charging process, the loss of the charger is dependent on cell SoC and charging current. The energy loss from SoC_i to SoC_{i+1} can be expressed in a discrete form,

$$\begin{cases} U_{batt,i} = U_{ocv}(SoC_i) + [R_0(SoC_i) + R_p(SoC_i)]I_i \\ E_i^{loss,charger} = U_{batt,i}I_i [1/\eta_i(U_{batt,i},I_i) - 1](t_{i+1} - t) \end{cases}$$
(13)

In order to easily compare the results, the constraints for DP are shown in (14), and the current step is set to 1A.

$$\begin{cases}
I_{\min} = 0 \\
I_{\max} = 50 \\
SoC_{\min} = 0 \\
SoC_{\max} = 80
\end{cases}$$
(14)

Here, we simply set the battery initial SoC and ending charger SoC to 0% and 80%, respectively. The maximum charging current is 50A, and the total charging duration are set to 1hr to 3hrs to compare the performances of the proposed algorithm.

DP can also be applied to find the optimal charging scheme when only the charger loss is taken into consideration. Fig. 11 shows the optimal current profile for charger loss minimization when charging for 1 hour compared with CC method. From Fig. 10, the efficiency of the power source depends on the combination of voltage and current. The maximum efficiency is achieved when both voltage and current are maximized within their ranges. As a result, an optimal charging profile can be found when the voltage and current are both maximized. Thus, the charging current are set to the maximum allowable charging current and the terminal voltage can be maximized according to (4).



Fig. 13. Cell optimal current profile for 1 hour to 3 hour.

It is interesting to note that the current is zero before the maximum current charging. It indicates that even for a longer period of charging time, DP will still find the same optimal charging schemes that remain zero current at the beginning and use maximum current to charge from 0% to 80% SoC. This is because the charger has a higher efficiency when the output current is higher, which makes DP always search for the highest efficient operating point. In addition, it also implies that the optimal charging current is not unique in this problem. The charging process can start at the beginning and the current remains zero after 80% charged. This is due to the fact that DP can always guarantee one optimal solution, however, it cannot find all optimal solutions if they are not unique.

Based on [24], the charging scheme can be improved further if the maximum current charging time is distributed among charging duration in pulse charging form instead of CC charging. This can be done by adding penalty function into DP that takes the battery health into account. In this paper, we only focus on the charging efficiency, and the health penalty will be studied in our future work.

IV. EXPERIMENT VALIDATION AND DISCUSSION

Validation experiments are performed by applying both the optimal current profiles and the normal CC profile. Besides, for easy comparison, the battery cell and pack are both discharged with 1C current at room temperature. The energy loss difference in the two charging scenarios is the energy saved by applying the optimal current profile. The energy loss can be calculated by (15).

$$E_{loss} = \int_{t_1}^{t_2} V(t) I(t) dt - \int_{t_3}^{t_4} V(t) I(t) dt$$
(15)

where t_1, t_2, t_3, t_4 are the beginning time and ending time for both charging process and discharging process, respectively. The beginning and ending values of the SOC can be easily set up. In this paper, we only assign the beginning SoC as 0% and target charging SoC as 80% to compare the improvements.

A. Cell loss minimization

Fig. 13 shows the optimal charging current series for 0% to 80% SoC with difference charging time. The charging time ranges from 1 hour to 3 hours with a step of 0.5 hours. The charging current commands with different SoC look similar. However, when the charging time increases, the charging current profile will become flatter. This is because the charging loss is proportional to charging time and resistance, but quadratic to charging current.

Table III. Comparison of CC and Battery Loss Minimization Charging				
Time (hr)	CC loss (Wh)	Optimal loss (Wh)	Energy saved (Wh)	Energy saved (%)
1.0	7.75	7.60	0.15	1.85
1.5	7.40	7.09	0.32	4.28
2.0	6.67	6.53	0.15	2.24
2.5	6.96	6.81	0.15	2.18
3.0	6.64	6.32	0.32	4.81

Table III compares the charging loss with different charging current. It can save 1.85%, 4.28%, 2.24%, 2.18%, and 4.81% when charging time changes from 1 hour to 3 hours. It shows that the proposed method is effective to decrease the charging loss, thus improving the charging efficiency.

B. Charger loss minimization

The optimal current for charger loss minimization is shown in Fig. 11. As discussed in the previous section, the optimal currents keep unchanged as the charging time varies. The energy savings are mainly induced by the difference of the efficiency during the charging process. Table IV compares the charging loss with different charging time. The result shows that this method could effectively decrease the loss of the charger.

Table IV. Comparison of CC and Charger Loss Minimization Charging				
Time (hr)	CC loss (Wh)	Optimal loss (Wh)	Energy saved (Wh)	Energy saved (%)
1.0	174.32	148.56	25.77	14.78
1.5	221.82	148.56	73.26	33.03
2.0	272.18	148.56	123.62	45.42
2.5	320.71	148.56	172.16	56.68
3.0	380.67	148 56	231.82	60.94

C. Overall loss minimization

It needs to note that both of these two optimal current profiles are the results for local optimization, i.e. battery loss minimization and charger loss minimization, respectively. They are not necessarily the global optimization for the whole charging process.

Based on their step loss expressions, an overall loss minimization can be achieved by adding them at each step in DP. Since the overall loss involves two parts, i.e. battery loss and charger loss, we can infer that when the charger loss dominates, the overall optimal current should look closer to the charger optimal current, and vice versa.

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In the overall optimal current calculation, the battery module consists of two 40Ah pouch cell in series connection. Fig. 14 shows the overall optimal current profile for 1 hour charging process, which is the same as the current profile when optimizing the charging efficiency only. This is due to the fact that the losses from the two battery cells are negligible when compared with that from the charger.

As shown in Fig. 13, when the charging time increases, the average charging current becomes lower. From (7), a lower charging current leads to a lower loss for the battery, and from Fig. 10, a lower average current indicates a higher loss of the charger. From Table III and Table IV, we can see that the charger loss is much larger than the battery loss. Therefore, when the charging time is 1 hour, the charging scheme for global loss minimization will follow the same trend as that shown in Fig. 11. Table V compares the losses in CC scheme and optimal charging scheme. The results show that the optimal scheme can save from 12.37% to 58.12% of energy when the charging time changes between 1 to 3 hours.



Fig. 14. Overall optimal current for 1 hr charging.



Fig. 15. Increasing portion of cell loss as number of cell increases.

Table V.	Comparison	of CC and Or	otimal Charging
			00

Time	CC loss (Wh)		C loss Optimal loss (Wh) (Wh)		Energy saved
(hr)	Cell	Charger	Cell	Charger	(%)
1.0	14.14	174.32	16.59	148.56	12.37
1.5	12.88	221.82	16.59	148.56	29.63
2.0	13.24	272.18	16.59	148.56	42.14
2.5	12.74	320.71	16.59	148.56	50.47
3.0	13.98	380.37	16.59	148.56	58.12

Due to the 10V voltage limitation of the power source and 50A current limitation of the power analyzer, experiments with more cells were not conducted. However, a simulation is carried out with the assumption that when more cells are connected in series, only the battery loss increases. Fig. 15 shows the battery loss percentage in the whole losses. The result shows that as the number of battery cell increases, the overall optimal current turns to be closer to the battery only optimal current as expected. Fig. 16 shows the current profile for different selected numbers of cells in the charging process. Combined with Fig. 15, it can explain that when the battery loss increases, the global optimized currents become closer to optimization curves when considering the batteries only.

The energy savings in Table V largely depend on the wide efficiency band of the power source, which is regarded as charger in the experiments. In the real case, a commercial charger may not have such a wide efficiency range within its working condition. However, as long as there exist efficiency fluctuations in the charger, and SoC dependent energy loss in the battery, the proposed methodology can still be applied to find the optimal overall charging current to minimize the loss in the whole charging process.



Fig. 16. Two envelopes for global loss minimization.

V. CONCLUSION

An optimal charging algorithm for lithium-ion batteries is proposed to minimize the charging loss of the battery, the charger and both. DP is applied to find the optimal charging current profile. With knowing the battery beginning SoC, target SoC, and the charging time, the charging current command can be easily calculated by DP. Compared to CC charging strategy, the proposed method can effectively decrease the charging loss. Experiment results validated the feasibility of the proposed method for loss minimization in the whole charging process.

Future work can be carried out on pack level experiments with more cells, improving the performance by evaluating its impact on battery life, and adding penalty functions in the DP calculation. In addition, an online improved battery model that considers the influence of the battery temperature and aging will be our future work to improve the application of the proposed algorithm.

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