CUSTOM EMAT INSTRUMENTATION:
CORRELATION RECEIVER AND FLAW DETECTOR

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ABSTRACT

New, custom instrumentation is presented which is designed to complement and exploit the unique properties of EMAT's. A two channel correlation receiver is described which allows simultaneous detection of the in-phase and quadrature components of an ultrasonic signal with the optimum noise figure and improved interference rejection. In addition, a prototype, fully self-contained EMAT flaw detector is presented. This is a surface wave device for handheld use and incorporates such features as battery operations, correlation detection, search and inspect modes, and digital readout of flaw position and reflected signal amplitude.

Figure 1 shows that custom instrumentation is being developed to detect flaws in certain materials. The technology involves the utilization of EMAT's, electromagnetic transducers, and correlation processing electronics. Flaw identification is accomplished by pattern recognition techniques on the processed waveforms.

Figure 2 shows that a basic flaw detection system can be formed using the realtime acoustic echo from both known and unknown reflectors. The echo signals are processed with known references to yield both in-phase and quadrature information. A realtime correlation technique is implemented to process the signals.

In Fig. 3, the relationships between the in-phase, \( V_I \), and quadrature, \( V_Q \), signals are formulated. The conditions that determine the optimum signal to noise ratio, the phase of the detected acoustic signal, and the Fourier transform of the received signal are given.

Typical waveforms of an EMAT acoustic signal are shown (Fig. 4). The received signal is the echo of an acoustic reflector. The central portion of the echo signal has been multiplied by a coherent reference tone burst to give the shape of the multiplier output signal.

The implementation of an EMAT correlation system has inherent advantages for NDE instrumentation. The system is capable of a high signal-to-noise ratio while minimizing the effects of clutter and electrical interference. Information on the relative phase and amplitude of the received acoustic signal is provided.

A prototype EMAT flaw detector has been built. It features a single unidirectional 1.0 MHz surface wave noncontact probe with a permanent magnet (Fig. 5). The system is portable and can be battery operated. Two modes of operation are possible. In the Search mode, an electronic gate inspects the acoustic echoes and indicates the distance and relative size of a target. In the Inspection mode, a predetermined range is selected so that a chosen target can be inspected from different angles.

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- OPTIMUM SIGNAL TO NOISE RATIO
- ENHANCED ELECTRICAL INTERFERENCE REJECTION
- MINIMIZES EFFECTS OF CLUTTER
- PROVIDES SIMPLE MEANS FOR MEASURING RELATIVE PHASE AS WELL AS AMPLITUDE OF RECEIVED ACOUSTIC SIGNALS
- SIMPLIFIES SIGNAL AVERAGING
- REAL TIME FOURIER ANALYSIS
- ANALOG MULTIPLIER OUTPUTS WILL INDICATE PRESENCE OF DISPERSION

Fig. 1 Advantages of correlation receiver to NDE instrumentation.
TONE BURST
DELAYED
COHERENCE
SIGNALS

\[ r(t) \cos(\omega t + \phi) \]

BASIC RELATIONS

\[ V_1 = \frac{\pi}{T} \left[ \int_0^T (n(t) + \xi(t)) \cos(\omega t + \phi) \cos(\omega t + \phi) dt \right] \]

\[ V_0 = \frac{\pi}{T} \left[ \int_0^T (n(t) + \xi(t)) \sin(\omega t + \phi) \sin(\omega t + \phi) dt \right] \]

\( n(t) \) - NOISE IN SIGNAL CHANNEL

Fig. 2 Application of realtime correlation to NDE measurements.

GENERAL RESPONSE

\[ V_i = \frac{\pi}{T} \left[ \int_0^T (n(t) + \xi(t)) \cos(\omega t + \phi) \cos(\omega t + \phi) dt \right] \]

\[ V_0 = \frac{\pi}{T} \left[ \int_0^T (n(t) + \xi(t)) \sin(\omega t + \phi) \sin(\omega t + \phi) dt \right] \]

\( n(t) \) - NOISE IN SIGNAL CHANNEL

OPTIMUM RECEIVER

SELECT \( \phi = 0 \), \( n(t) + \xi(t) \)\( \omega = \omega_r \), \( T = 2\pi M \omega_r \)

THEN IN PRESENCE OF THERMAL NOISE \( V_i \) WILL HAVE OPTIMUM SIGNAL TO NOISE RATIO

PHASE MEASUREMENT

FOR \( n(t) = 0 \)

\[ \frac{V_0}{V_i} \] \( \phi \) - PHASE OF DETECTED ACOUSTIC SIGNAL RELATIVE TO COHERENT REFERENCE

SIGNAL AVERAGING

\( <V_i> \) AND \( <V_0> \) ARE TIME AVERAGES ACHIEVED BY USING MULTIPLE TONE BURSTS AND LOW PASS FILTERING \( \omega < \omega_r \) \( <\) REPETITION RATE \( \omega \)

FOURIER ANALYSIS

SELECT \( n(t) = 0 \), \( \omega = \omega_r \), \( n(t) = 0 \), \( \omega = 0 \) FOR \( 0 < t < T \)

\[ V_i (V_0) = \frac{\pi}{T} \int_0^T \sin(\omega t + \phi) [n(t) + \xi(t)] dt \]

\( \omega = \omega_r \)

- FOURIER TRANSFORM OF RECEIVED SIGNAL EVALUATED AT \( \omega = \omega_r \)

Fig. 3 Measurement capabilities.

FEATURES

- 1 MHz NON-CONTACT SURFACE WAVE EMAT PROBE
- SINGLE UNIDIRECTIONAL TRANSMITTER/RECEIVER EMAT
- PERMANENT MAGNET TRANSDUCER
- PORTABLE - LOW POWER - BATTERY OPERATED
- INCORPORATES TWO CHANNEL CORRELATION RECEIVER
- SEARCH MODE
  - MANUAL IN X - ELECTRONIC IN Y
  - DIGITAL OUTPUT - ESTIMATE OF DEFECT SIZE AND DISTANCE FROM PROBE
- INSPECTION MODE
  - SELECTABLE RANGE GATES
  - SIGNAL AVERAGING

Fig. 5 Prototype EMAT flaw detector.
AN ULTRASONIC INSPECTION SYSTEM WITH HIGH NEAR-SURFACE DETECTABILITY

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ABSTRACT

An updated NDE instrument has been designed that is compatible with existing water path pulse echo instruments. The use of modern integrated circuit video amplifiers and broad band signal processing in the receiver permits improvements in signal-to-noise and band width to be simultaneously achieved. Additional circuits provide a variable depth--variable width processing gate, a peak detector for strip chart recording, and means for triggering from the front surface reflection.

These circuit improvements, together with a specially designed transducer permit defects to be sensed that lie within .050" of the surface--thus representing about a factor of two improvement compared to commercially available instruments.

Details of the electronics subsystems comprising the transmitter and receiver will be shown, and the structure of the transducer will be described.