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Investigations on Actuators for a High-Precision Long-Stroke Magnetic Levitated Stage

Tendency to the new, more powerful and precise positioning systems keep on moving. Modern ultra-precision technique requires the positioning uncertainty below the 10 nm range with strokes of more than 200 mm in the xy -plane. This requires a deeper understanding of limits settled by different physical principles of the sensors and actuators used in such systems.

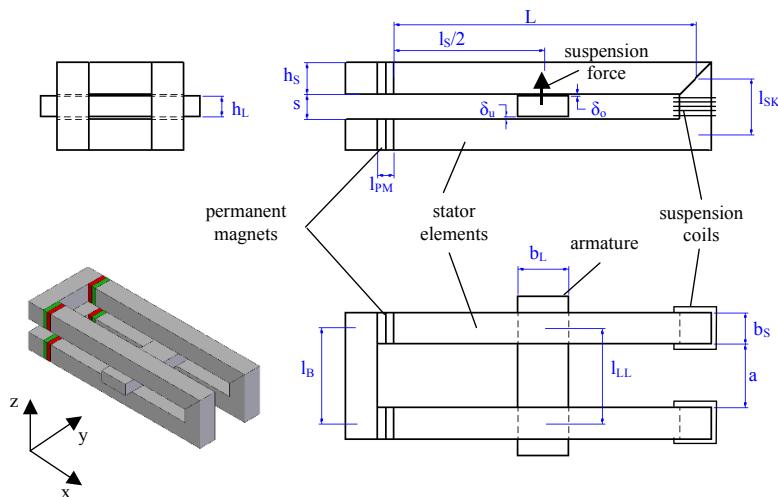


Fig. 1: Actuator structure with geometry parameters

Using of capacitive or laser-interferometer-based measuring systems makes it logically to place the whole positioning system or at least its moving parts and the position sensors in a vacuum chamber to reduce the environment's influence on the feedback position signal. Therefore, some principles of actuation, especially based on the electromagnetic field forces, turn to be preferably for such critical applications.

The parameters of these actuators have to be extensively investigated to avoid parasitic effects that could take place when the actuators and the measuring systems are integrated in the magnetic levitated stage. The components' geometry and placement can play an important role to minimize the undesirable effects of sometimes inevitable interactions and to achieve the required position uncertainty and the moving range.

To illustrate the decision process by design of a magnetic levitated stage, an actuator modification of [1] implementing the magnetic bearing of a planar positioning system is introduced (Fig. 1). Some topologies for placing of three or four these actuators in the whole system are discussed, with its advantages and drawbacks.

Some experimental results from an actuator test rig are represented (Fig. 2, Fig. 3). Variable force hysteresis values shown at Fig. 3 are of interest. The width of the hysteresis loop depends on the x -position of the movable element and consequently on the volume of magnetic material to be demagnetized.

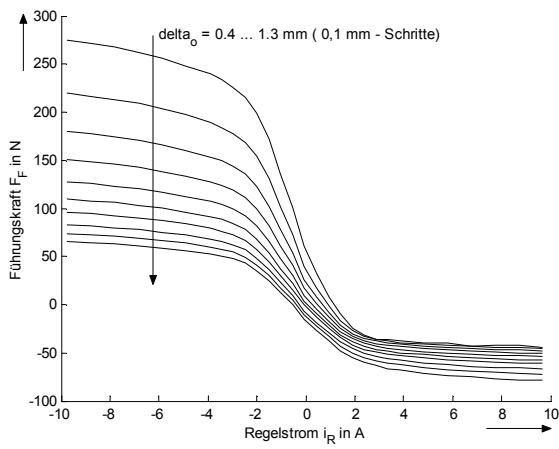


Fig. 2: Actuator force F_F for different airgaps

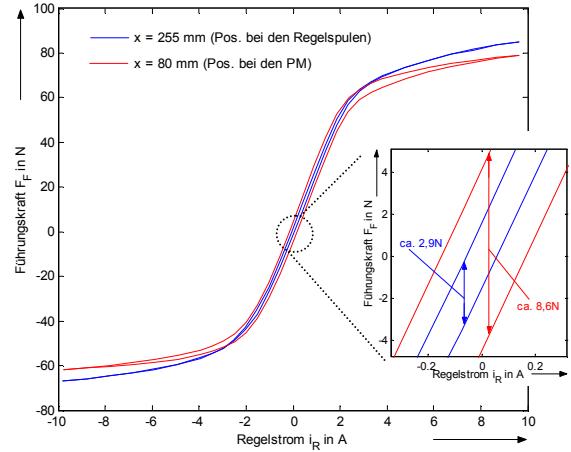


Fig. 3: Actuator force hysteresis

The actuator can be used for micro- and nano-positioning stages as a bearing element with relative large strokes in the xy -plane. The maximal suspension force of such an actuator is of 60...270 N and depends on the initial air gap δ_0 (Fig. 2).

The vertical position of the movable element in a single actuator has been successfully stabilized with a simple PID-controller with a sampling frequency of 10 kHz. For better dynamic in a whole system with 3 or 4 such actuators a robust state-space controller must be implemented. The noise behavior and position stability can be improved through extreme low-noise position sensors and taking into account the actuator-specific force hysteresis. Some aspects about the force hysteresis compensation of an electromagnetic actuator with a Jiles-Atherton model can be found in the same proceedings' volume [2].

For propulsion of the movable element in the x -direction the stator elements must be wound with propulsion coils (not shown at Fig. 1). The propulsion forces due to these coils are relatively low (8...10 N). Therefore, for higher drive forces an additional drive or another drive principle has to be used.

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