

Description

The invention relates to a circuit arrangement for operating a discharge lamp, comprising

- a load branch B provided with lamp connection terminals,
- a DC-AC converter provided with a branch A coupled to the load branch B and comprising at least one switching element for generating a current of alternating polarity through the load branch B by being alternately conducting and non-conducting with a frequency f ,
- a drive circuit E for rendering the switching element alternatively conducting and non-conducting with the frequency f ,
- a control circuit C coupled to the drive circuit and the discharge lamp for generating a control signal which is dependent on the lamp current and serves to influence the frequency.

Such a circuit arrangement is described in the European Patent Application EP-A-0351012.

The circuit arrangement described therein controls the amplitude of the lamp current of a discharge lamp operated on the circuit arrangement at a substantially constant level.

If the control signal is also dependent on the lamp voltage, it is possible to control an average value of the power consumed by the lamp (this average value will be called the lamp power hereinafter) at a substantially constant value for various types of discharge lamps and to render it substantially independent of factors such as variations in the supply voltage or fluctuations in the ambient temperature. If the control signal is dependent on a desired average value of the power consumed by the discharge lamp, there is a possibility of dimming the discharge lamp through adjustment of the desired average value of the power consumed by the discharge lamp. When the setting of the desired average value of the power consumed by the discharge lamp is changed, the value of the frequency f is adapted in such a way that the lamp power is substantially equal to the desired power. This adjustment possibility for the lamp power, however, functions only over a lamp power range within which there is an unequivocal relation between the lamp power and the frequency f . Every value of the frequency f in that case corresponds to one value of the lamp power. Since the load branch B often comprises inductive means connected in series with the lamp, the lamp power decreases with an increase in the frequency f . Such a relation is found over a comparatively wide lamp power range in practice for many discharge lamps of various types and power ratings. This relation renders it possible to adjust the lamp power over a desired range by means of the frequency f .

For some discharge lamps, however, the relation between the frequency f and the lamp power is not unequivocal over part of a desired adjustment range of the lamp power. As a result, there is also no unequivocal relation between the control signal and the lamp power over this portion of the desired adjustment range of the lamp power. It is found for certain compact fluorescent lamps, for example, that the lamp power increases with an increase in the value of the frequency f over a certain lamp power range, whereas the lamp power decreases with an increasing frequency f for lamp power values outside this range. This means that, within a certain range of the frequency f , every value of the frequency f corresponds to two or more different values of the lamp power. These lamp power values also fail to show an unequivocal relation with the control signal. Lamp power values situated within the range over which the lamp power increases as a function of the frequency cannot be adjusted: an oscillation of the lamp power is found to take place between the desired value and a second value of the lamp power belonging to the relevant value of the frequency f . Besides a relation between lamp power and the frequency f within a certain lamp power range which is not unequivocal, there is also found to exist a relation between the average lamp current and the frequency f within a certain range of the average lamp current which is not unequivocal for such lamps. The result is that some values of the average lamp current cannot be adjusted, while for some settings oscillations in the lamp current amplitude are found to occur.

The invention has for its object *inter alia* to provide a circuit arrangement with which the lamp power of a discharge lamp operated by means of the circuit arrangement can be adjusted over the desired adjustment range in that, irrespective of the type of discharge lamp, an unequivocal relation exists between the lamp power and the control signal throughout this range.

According to the invention, this object is achieved in that the control signal is in addition dependent on a signal S which is a measure for comparatively quick changes in the power consumed by the discharge lamp.

It has been found that an unequivocal relation between the control signal and the lamp power is possible in that the control signal depends also on comparatively quick changes in the lamp power.

The signal S may be derived from the lamp current, but also from other parameters such as the lamp voltage or the phase difference between the voltage across and the current through the load branch.

In a preferred embodiment of a circuit arrangement according to the invention, the signal S is generated through rectification of a signal voltage which is proportional to the instantaneous value of the lamp current, and from which the DC component and high-frequency components are subsequently substantially eliminated by means of filters. The signal S obtained in this way is an AC voltage. It has been found that the use of this signal S renders the lamp power adjustable over a wide range, also at a low ambient temperature. In a further preferred embodiment of a circuit arrangement according to the

invention, the control circuit is provided with means for superimposing two signals. The generation of a control signal which is dependent on the lamp current as well as on the signal S can be realised in a simple manner in that the signal S is superimposed on a signal which is dependent on the lamp current.

Embodiments of a circuit arrangement according to the invention will be described in greater detail with reference to a drawing.

In the drawing, Fig. 1 is a diagrammatic representation of the build-up of a circuit arrangement according to the invention;

Fig. 2 shows in greater detail the embodiment represented in Fig. 1;

Fig. 3 gives a further detailed view of the embodiment represented in Fig. 1, and

Fig. 4 shows the build-up of an embodiment of a circuit section for generating a signal S from the lamp current, as well as the shape of a voltage present at an input and the shape of a voltage present at an output of the circuit section.

In Fig. 1, the couplings between various portions of the circuit arrangement are indicated with broken lines.

B is a load branch provided with lamp connection terminals K1 and K2. A lamp La can be connected to the lamp connection terminals K1 and K2. D is a DC-AC converter provided with input terminals 1 and 2 and with a branch A which comprises at least one switching element for generating a current of alternating polarity through the load branch B by being alternately conducting and non-conducting with frequency f. Branch A is for this purpose coupled to load branch B. E is a drive circuit coupled to branch A for rendering the switching element in branch A alternately conducting and non-conducting with frequency f. C is a control circuit for generating a control signal which is to influence the frequency f, which control signal is dependent on the lamp current as well as on a signal S which is a measure for comparatively quick changes in the power consumed by the discharge lamp. Control circuit C is for this purpose coupled to load branch B and drive circuit E.

The operation of the circuit arrangement shown in Fig. 1 is as follows. When input terminals 1 and 2 are connected to poles of a DC-voltage source, the drive circuit E renders the switching element in branch A alternately conducting and non-conducting with frequency f. As a result, a current whose polarity changes with frequency f flows through the load branch B. The control circuit generates a control signal which is to influence the frequency f and which is dependent on the lamp current as well as on a signal S which is a measure for comparatively quick changes in the power consumed by the discharge lamp. Since the control signal is also dependent on signal S, there is an unequivocal relation between the control signal and the lamp power over substantially the entire range of this lamp power, irrespective of the type

and power rating of the discharge lamp La. This renders it possible to set the lamp power for any desired value.

In Fig. 2, branch A is formed by a series circuit of switching elements T1 and T2. Branch A together with input terminals 1 and 2 and capacitor C4 forms a DC-AC converter. Coil L, capacitors C2 and C3, lamp connection terminals K1 and K2, and sensor resistor Rs constitute load branch B. A discharge lamp La can be connected to the lamp connection terminals. Comparators I and II and circuit element III constitute drive signal generator E. Control circuit C in this embodiment consists of current source S1, capacitor C1 and circuit element IV.

The circuit arrangement is built up as follows.

A first end of branch A is connected to input terminal 1 and a further end of branch A is connected to input terminal 2. Input terminal 2 is also earthed. Input terminals 1 and 2 are interconnected by capacitor C4. Switching element T2 of branch A is shunted by a series circuit of coil L and capacitor C3. Capacitor C3 is shunted by a series circuit of capacitor C2, lamp connection terminal K1, lamp connection terminal K2 and sensor resistor Rs. Circuit element IV is coupled to the lamp in a manner not shown in the Figure. If the input terminals 1 and 2 are connected to the poles of a DC-voltage source and the switching arrangement is in stationary operation, different signals, which are a measure for the lamp current and the lamp voltage, respectively, are present at corresponding inputs of the circuit section IV by means of the coupling to the lamp. A voltage Vref is present at a further input, which voltage is a measure for a desired lamp power value. An output of the circuit section IV is connected to current source S1. A signal R present at this output is dependent on the lamp power as well as on the desired lamp power. The strength of a current supplied by the current source depends on the signal R. The current source is connected to a first side of capacitor C1, which is charged and discharged in turn by the current source. A further side of the capacitor C1 is connected to a side of the sensor resistor Rs remote from input terminal 2. Since the lamp current flows through Rs, the voltage across Rs is proportional to the instantaneous value of the lamp current: the voltage across Rs in this embodiment forms the signal S. The potential at the first side of the capacitor C1 is equal to the sum of the voltage across the resistor Rs and the voltage across the capacitor C1, and in this embodiment acts as the control signal. The first side of capacitor C1 is connected to an input of a first comparator and an input of a further comparator. A substantially constant voltage V1 is present at a further input of the first comparator. A substantially constant voltage V2 is present at a further input of the further comparator. Voltage V2 is higher than voltage V1. An output of the first comparator is connected to an input of circuit element III. An output of the further comparator is connected to a further input of circuit element III. A first output of circuit element III is connected to an input of the current source. It is realised in this way that the current generated by the current source reverses its direction

when the control signal is lower than the potential V1 or higher than the potential V2. As a result, the control signal is a substantially triangular voltage. The first output of circuit element III is also coupled to the switching element T1. A further output of circuit element III is coupled to switching element T2. In a stationary operating condition, the drive circuit E renders the switching elements alternately conducting with frequency f . As a result, a substantially square-wave voltage with frequency f is present between ends of the load branch, and a current flows through the load branch whose polarity changes with frequency f . The frequency f is substantially equal to the frequency of the control signal. The frequency of the control signal depends on the potential V_{ref} which is a measure for the desired lamp power and the actual lamp power. If the control signal should be exclusively dependent on the desired and the actual lamp powers, the relation between the control signal and the lamp power would not be unequivocal over a certain lamp power range for some lamps, for example, compact fluorescent lamps. As a result, an oscillation of the actual lamp power occurs in some settings of the desired lamp power by means of such a control signal. Owing to the contribution of the voltage across R_s , however, the control signal is also dependent on comparatively quick changes in the lamp power, so that the relation between the control signal and the lamp power is unequivocal over the entire desired adjustment range of the lamp power, and substantially all desired lamp powers can be realised without oscillations occurring, irrespective of the type of discharge lamp used. Since only the resistor R_s is required for generating the signal S in this embodiment, the means for generating the signal S in this embodiment are simple and inexpensive.

The circuit arrangement shown in Fig. 3 is for a major part identical to the circuit arrangement shown in Fig. 1. However, the further side of capacitor C1 in the circuit arrangement shown in Fig. 2 is earthed, while moreover an adder device is present between the output of circuit element IV and current source S1 for increasing the signal R by a signal S which is a measure for comparatively quick changes in the lamp power. The control signal in this embodiment is the substantially triangular voltage across capacitor C1, and the frequency f is substantially equal to the frequency of the control signal. Since the strength of the current supplied by the current source also depends on signal S, the control signal is equally dependent on the signal S. For this embodiment of a circuit arrangement according to the invention, too, an unequivocal relation between the control signal and the lamp power is found over the entire desired adjustment range of the lamp power, irrespective of the type of the discharge lamp used.

In Fig. 4a, resistor R_s conducts the lamp current during the operation of the circuit section, while one end of the resistor R_s is earthed. As a result, a voltage U3 is present at input terminal 3, which is connected to a further end of the resistor R_s , which voltage U3 is propor-

tional to the instantaneous value of the lamp current. This voltage is shown as a function of time in Fig. 4b. Input terminal 3 is connected to an input of an amplifier V for amplifying this voltage. An output of this amplifier is connected to an input of rectifier means for rectifying the amplified voltage. An output of the rectifier means is connected to an input of a low-pass filter VII. A signal is present at an output of low-pass filter VII which is proportional to the amplitude of the lamp current. The output of low-pass filter VII is connected to an input of high-pass filter VIII. A signal U4 is present at an output 4 of high-pass filter VIII which is substantially equal to the AC component of the signal present at the output of low-pass filter VII. This signal U4 is highly suitable for acting as the signal S in the embodiment of a circuit arrangement according to the invention as shown in Fig. 3. The signal U4 is shown as a function of time in Fig. 4c. An important advantage of this shape of the signal S used in the embodiment shown in Fig. 3 is that the power of the lamp La is adjustable over a wide range also at comparatively low ambient temperature, irrespective of the type of the discharge lamp.

It was found impossible to adjust the lamp power for values between approximately 10% and 25% of the rated power for a compact fluorescent lamp having a rated power of 24 W by means of a circuit arrangement as described in the opening paragraph, in which the control signal does not also depend on comparatively quick changes in the power consumed by the lamp. By means of a practical embodiment based on the example as shown in Fig. 2 or in Fig. 3, however, it was found to be possible to adjust lamp powers also in this range.

35 Claims

1. A circuit arrangement for operating a discharge lamp, comprising
 - a load branch (B) provided with lamp connection terminals,
 - a DC-AC converter provided with a branch (A) coupled to the load branch B and comprising at least one switching element for generating a current of alternating polarity through the load branch (B) by being alternately conducting and non-conducting with a frequency (f),
 - a drive circuit (E) for rendering the switching element alternatively conducting and non-conducting with the frequency (f),
 - a control circuit (C) coupled to the drive circuit and the discharge lamp for generating a control signal which is dependent on the lamp current and serves to influence the frequency, characterized in that the control signal is in addition dependent on a signal (S) which is a measure for comparatively quick changes in the power consumed by the discharge lamp (La).

when the control signal is lower than the potential V1 or higher than the potential V2. As a result, the control signal is a substantially triangular voltage. The first output of circuit element III is also coupled to the switching element T1. A further output of circuit element III is coupled to switching element T2. In a stationary operating condition, the drive circuit E renders the switching elements alternately conducting with frequency f . As a result, a substantially square-wave voltage with frequency f is present between ends of the load branch, and a current flows through the load branch whose polarity changes with frequency f . The frequency f is substantially equal to the frequency of the control signal. The frequency of the control signal depends on the potential V_{ref} which is a measure for the desired lamp power and the actual lamp power. If the control signal should be exclusively dependent on the desired and the actual lamp powers, the relation between the control signal and the lamp power would not be unequivocal over a certain lamp power range for some lamps, for example, compact fluorescent lamps. As a result, an oscillation of the actual lamp power occurs in some settings of the desired lamp power by means of such a control signal. Owing to the contribution of the voltage across R_s , however, the control signal is also dependent on comparatively quick changes in the lamp power, so that the relation between the control signal and the lamp power is unequivocal over the entire desired adjustment range of the lamp power, and substantially all desired lamp powers can be realised without oscillations occurring, irrespective of the type of discharge lamp used. Since only the resistor R_s is required for generating the signal S in this embodiment, the means for generating the signal S in this embodiment are simple and inexpensive.

The circuit arrangement shown in Fig. 3 is for a major part identical to the circuit arrangement shown in Fig. 1. However, the further side of capacitor C1 in the circuit arrangement shown in Fig. 2 is earthed, while moreover an adder device is present between the output of circuit element IV and current source S1 for increasing the signal R by a signal S which is a measure for comparatively quick changes in the lamp power. The control signal in this embodiment is the substantially triangular voltage across capacitor C1, and the frequency f is substantially equal to the frequency of the control signal. Since the strength of the current supplied by the current source also depends on signal S, the control signal is equally dependent on the signal S. For this embodiment of a circuit arrangement according to the invention, too, an unequivocal relation between the control signal and the lamp power is found over the entire desired adjustment range of the lamp power, irrespective of the type of the discharge lamp used.

In Fig. 4a, resistor R_s conducts the lamp current during the operation of the circuit section, while one end of the resistor R_s is earthed. As a result, a voltage U3 is present at input terminal 3, which is connected to a further end of the resistor R_s , which voltage U3 is propor-

tional to the instantaneous value of the lamp current. This voltage is shown as a function of time in Fig. 4b. Input terminal 3 is connected to an input of an amplifier V for amplifying this voltage. An output of this amplifier is connected to an input of rectifier means for rectifying the amplified voltage. An output of the rectifier means is connected to an input of a low-pass filter VII. A signal is present at an output of low-pass filter VII which is proportional to the amplitude of the lamp current. The output of low-pass filter VII is connected to an input of high-pass filter VIII. A signal U4 is present at an output 4 of high-pass filter VIII which is substantially equal to the AC component of the signal present at the output of low-pass filter VII. This signal U4 is highly suitable for acting as the signal S in the embodiment of a circuit arrangement according to the invention as shown in Fig. 3. The signal U4 is shown as a function of time in Fig. 4c. An important advantage of this shape of the signal S used in the embodiment shown in Fig. 3 is that the power of the lamp L_a is adjustable over a wide range also at comparatively low ambient temperature, irrespective of the type of the discharge lamp.

It was found impossible to adjust the lamp power for values between approximately 10% and 25% of the rated power for a compact fluorescent lamp having a rated power of 24 W by means of a circuit arrangement as described in the opening paragraph, in which the control signal does not also depend on comparatively quick changes in the power consumed by the lamp. By means of a practical embodiment based on the example as shown in Fig. 2 or in Fig. 3, however, it was found to be possible to adjust lamp powers also in this range.

Claims

1. A circuit arrangement for operating a discharge lamp, comprising
 - a load branch (B) provided with lamp connection terminals,
 - a DC-AC converter provided with a branch (A) coupled to the load branch B and comprising at least one switching element for generating a current of alternating polarity through the load branch (B) by being alternately conducting and non-conducting with a frequency (f),
 - a drive circuit (E) for rendering the switching element alternatively conducting and non-conducting with the frequency (f),
 - a control circuit (C) coupled to the drive circuit and the discharge lamp for generating a control signal which is dependent on the lamp current and serves to influence the frequency, characterized in that the control signal is in addition dependent on a signal (S) which is a measure for comparatively quick changes in the power consumed by the discharge lamp (L_a).



2. A circuit arrangement as claimed in Claim 1, characterized in that the signal (S) can be generated through detection of the instantaneous lamp current.
3. A circuit arrangement as claimed in Claim 2, characterized in that the control circuit comprises rectifier means (VI) and filters (VII) for generating the signal (S).
4. A circuit arrangement as claimed in Claim 1, 2 or 3, characterized in that the control circuit (C) is provided with means for superimposing the signal (S) on a further signal (U4) which is dependent on the lamp current.

Patentansprüche

1. Schaltungsanordnung zum Betreiben einer Entladungslampe, mit:
 - einem Belastungskreis (B) mit Lampenanschlußklemmen,
 - einem DC-AC-Wandler mit einem Kreis (A), der mit dem Belastungskreis B gekoppelt ist und mit mindestens einem Schaltungselement zum Erzeugen eines Stromes mit wechselnder Polarität durch den Belastungskreis (B) dadurch, daß dieses Element mit einer Frequenz (f) abwechselnd leitend und gesperrt ist,
 - einer Steuerschaltung (E), mit der das Schaltungselement mit der Frequenz (f) abwechselnd in den leitenden bzw. gesperrten Zustand gebracht wird,
 - einer Regelschaltung (C), die mit der Steuerschaltung und der Entladungslampe gekoppelt ist zum Erzeugen eines lampenstromabhängigen Regelsignals zur Beeinflussung der Frequenz,

dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß das Steuersignal außerdem von einem Signal (S) abhängig ist, das ein Maß für relativ schnelle Schwankungen der von der Entladungslampe (La) aufgenommenen Leistung ist.
2. Schaltungsanordnung nach Anspruch 1, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß das Signal (S) durch Detektion des Ist-Lampenstromes erzeugt werden kann.
3. Schaltungsanordnung nach Anspruch 2, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß die Steuerschaltung Gleichrichtermittel (VI) und Filter (VII) aufweist zum Erzeugen des Signals (S).
4. Schaltungsanordnung nach Anspruch 1, 2 oder 3, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß die Steuerschaltung (C) mit Mitteln versehen zum Überlagern des

Signals (S) mit einem weiteren Signal (U4), das vom Lampenstrom abhängig ist.

5 Revendications

1. Dispositif de commutation pour faire fonctionner une lampe à décharge, comportant
 - un circuit de charge (B) muni de bornes de connexion de lampe,
 - un convertisseur courant continu-courant alternatif muni d'un circuit (A) couplé au circuit de charge B et comportant au moins un élément commutateur pour engendrer un courant présentant une polarité alternante à travers le circuit de charge (B) du fait d'être alternativement conducteur et non conducteur avec une fréquence (f),
 - un circuit de commande (E) pour rendre l'élément commutateur alternativement conducteur et non conducteur avec la fréquence (f),
 - un circuit de réglage (C) couplé au circuit de commande et à la lampe de décharge pour engendrer un signal de réglage dépendant du courant de lampe et servant à influencer la fréquence, caractérisé en ce que le signal de réglage est en outre dépendant d'un signal (S) étant une mesure pour des changements relativement rapides de la puissance consommée par la lampe à décharge (La).
2. Dispositif de commutation selon la revendication 1, caractérisé en ce que le signal (S) peut être engendré par l'intermédiaire d'une détection du courant de lampe instantané.
3. Dispositif de commutation selon la revendication 2, caractérisé en ce que le circuit de réglage comporte des moyens redresseurs (VI) et des filtres VII pour engendrer le signal (S).
4. Dispositif de commutation selon la revendication 1, 2 ou 3, caractérisé en ce que le circuit de réglage (C) comporte des moyens pour superposer le signal (S) à un autre signal (U4) dépendant du courant de lampe.

