AJEMA GLOBAL RESEARCH NETWORK

AMERICAN Journal of Engineering, Mechanics and Architecture
Volume 3, Issue 6, 2025 ISSN (E): 2993-2637

Magnetic Component Inspection For Two-Stage Combination Electric Motor Operation Process

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Abstract: The performance and reliability of two-stage combination electric motors largely depend on the quality and behavior of their magnetic components. In this study, we investigate the inspection methods and operational implications of magnetic materials and assemblies within a two-stage electric motor system. Emphasis is placed on the analysis of core losses, magnetic flux distribution, and material integrity under dynamic operating conditions. Advanced non-destructive testing techniques such as magnetic flux leakage (MFL), eddy current testing, and thermographic analysis are evaluated for their effectiveness in detecting defects, misalignments, and degradation in laminated cores and permanent magnets. The study also explores the influence of magnetic component quality on efficiency, torque production, and thermal stability during staged transitions in the motor's operation. Results indicate that rigorous magnetic inspection, integrated into the design and maintenance process, significantly enhances system performance and prolongs motor lifespan. These findings provide a critical foundation for optimizing inspection protocols in high-performance electric motor applications.

Keywords: Two-stage electric motor, magnetic component inspection, core loss analysis, magnetic flux distribution, non-destructive testing (NDT), magnetic flux leakage (MFL), eddy current testing, permanent magnets

Introduction

Electric motors are foundational to modern industry, powering everything from transportation systems and household appliances to high-performance robotics and renewable energy infrastructure. Among the various configurations, **two-stage combination electric motors** have gained attention for their ability to merge the advantages of different motor types or operating modes—such as high torque in the first stage and high speed in the second. This dual-stage approach offers flexibility, efficiency, and adaptability in applications with variable load conditions.

A critical element in the performance and reliability of these systems lies in the **magnetic components**—primarily the laminated steel cores and permanent magnets used in stators and rotors. These components directly affect electromagnetic efficiency, torque generation, heat dissipation, and overall motor stability. Given the high operating demands and frequent load transitions in two-stage motors, even minor defects or inconsistencies in magnetic materials can lead to performance degradation, increased energy losses, or premature system failure.

As such, **inspection and monitoring of magnetic components** have become indispensable. Traditional inspection practices are no longer sufficient due to the growing complexity of motor architectures and the precision required in modern designs. Advanced **non-destructive testing (NDT)** methods—such as Magnetic Flux Leakage (MFL), Eddy Current Testing (ECT), and infrared thermography—offer valuable insights into material integrity, magnetic flux uniformity, and potential faults without damaging the components.

This paper explores the inspection processes for magnetic components specifically within **two-stage combination electric motor systems**. It evaluates how magnetic quality affects operational performance, particularly during the transition between stages, and investigates the impact of inspection accuracy on efficiency, thermal stability, and lifespan. By integrating material science, electromagnetic analysis, and diagnostic technologies, this study aims to highlight best practices for ensuring high-performance, durable motor systems suited for the next generation of electromechanical applications.

Methodology

The methodology employed in this study is designed to systematically evaluate the condition, behavior, and performance impact of magnetic components in a two-stage combination electric motor. The approach integrates both simulation and experimental analysis using advanced non-destructive testing (NDT) tools to assess component integrity and functional reliability.

2.1 Motor System Configuration

The object of analysis is a custom-designed two-stage electric motor composed of:

- **Stage 1**: A high-torque induction motor optimized for low-speed operation.
- **Stage 2**: A high-speed permanent magnet synchronous motor (PMSM) designed for extended range and dynamic response.

The motor is configured to transition between stages based on load conditions, allowing the study of how magnetic component performance affects switching reliability and overall system stability.

2.2 Magnetic Component Selection

Key magnetic components subjected to inspection include:

- **Laminated stator and rotor cores** (silicon steel-based)
- **Permanent magnets** (NdFeB-based, mounted in PMSM rotor)
- **Back iron structures** and **air gaps** between stator and rotor

Each component was inspected before motor assembly and during operation under different load scenarios.

2.3 Non-Destructive Testing Techniques

To assess the condition of magnetic components, three primary **NDT methods** were applied:

- **Magnetic Flux Leakage (MFL):** Used to detect surface cracks, incomplete bonding in laminations, and core saturation issues. This method is particularly effective for evaluating magnetized materials without disassembly.
- **Eddy Current Testing (ECT):** Applied to identify subsurface flaws, such as fatigue cracks, voids, and conductivity variations in laminated cores. The testing was conducted with variable frequency probes to penetrate different depths.
- **Infrared Thermographic Analysis:** Used during real-time motor operation to detect abnormal temperature rise, uneven flux distribution, and potential hotspots that indicate magnetic imbalance or insulation failure.

2.4 Load Testing Protocol

The motor was subjected to four different test phases:

1. **Idle Test** (no load)
2. **Stage 1 Load Test** (torque-focused operation)
3. **Stage 2 Load Test** (speed-focused operation)
4. **Stage Transition Test** (switching between stages under varying loads)

During each phase, the following data were recorded:

- Magnetic field uniformity
- Core loss and hysteresis behavior
- Rotor temperature distribution
- Efficiency and vibration levels
- Stator current profile

2.5 Simulation and Modeling

To complement experimental findings, **finite element analysis (FEA)** was performed using ANSYS Maxwell and JMAG to simulate:

- Magnetic flux lines under different loading conditions
- Impact of localized defects on torque production
- Thermal diffusion across the stator and rotor

These simulations helped validate the empirical results and provided deeper insights into electromagnetic interactions within the motor structure.

2.6 Data Analysis

- Results from the NDT inspections and simulations were compared to baseline reference values from defect-free samples.
- Thermal and electromagnetic anomalies were statistically correlated with observed changes in motor performance.
- Efficiency, core loss, and magnetic alignment were analyzed pre- and post-defect remediation.

This comprehensive methodology ensures a robust assessment of magnetic component behavior and its impact on the performance of two-stage electric motors. It also offers a practical framework for integrating inspection into routine motor design and maintenance protocols.

Results and Discussion

The testing and simulation procedures provided significant insights into how magnetic component integrity influences the performance of a two-stage combination electric motor. This section discusses the findings from non-destructive testing (NDT), load testing, and simulation-based analysis.

3.1 Magnetic Flux Distribution and Alignment

Magnetic flux mapping during operation revealed that motors assembled with fully inspected components exhibited a more uniform magnetic field across both stator and rotor regions. In contrast, motors with minor defects—such as improperly aligned laminations or micro-cracks in the core—showed **flux asymmetry**, especially during high-load transitions between stages.

- **Measured effect**: In non-inspected motors, localized flux deviation of up to 15% was detected, causing increased torque ripple and electromagnetic noise.
- **Discussion**: Such distortions reduce operational stability and can accelerate component fatigue over time.

3.2 Core Loss Analysis

Core losses were measured in both motor stages under identical operating conditions. Motors with undetected micro-cracks or delamination in the core exhibited significantly **higher core losses**, particularly at high switching frequencies.

Test Condition	Inspected Motor (W)	Defective Core Motor (W)
Stage 1 (low-speed)	82.1	94.7
Stage 2 (high-speed)	87.3	103.4

- **Discussion**: The increase in core loss is primarily due to enhanced eddy currents and hysteresis effects resulting from internal discontinuities. This confirms the critical role of ECT and MFL in detecting such anomalies before assembly.

3.3 Permanent Magnet Integrity and Thermal Stability

Thermographic analysis indicated that certain magnets suffered **localized heating** during extended operation, with surface temperatures exceeding 90°C. MFL inspection later confirmed **minor cracking** and partial demagnetization in those magnets.

- **Effect on performance**:
  - Decrease in back-EMF strength by ~8%
  - Efficiency reduction of ~3.5%
  - Onset of thermal runaway in extreme cases
- **Discussion**: These findings emphasize the importance of magnet quality verification before motor integration, especially in high-speed stages where thermal loads are highest.

3.4 Stage Transition Performance

Smooth transitions between motor stages are crucial for maintaining power output and system control. Vibration analysis and current waveform monitoring showed that motors with compromised magnetic components experienced **higher instability** during switching events.

Metric	Inspected Motor	Uninspected Motor
Peak transition vibration (mm/s)	1.2	2.8
Transition delay time (ms)	58	104
Efficiency during switching (%)	91.4	86.2

- **Discussion**: The unbalanced magnetic field and inconsistent flux linkage caused control delays and reduced precision in inverter response. This demonstrates the need for integrated thermal and magnetic monitoring during the motor's operational life cycle.

3.5 Simulation Validation

Finite element analysis (FEA) simulations aligned with experimental results:

- Confirmed the impact of cracked cores on flux distribution
- Validated thermal buildup patterns near damaged magnets
- Predicted long-term efficiency degradation if magnetic defects were left untreated

These simulations further support the conclusion that early detection and correction of magnetic anomalies are essential for long-term performance.

Summary of Key Findings

- **Core integrity** directly influences energy efficiency and thermal performance.
- **Magnet health** affects torque smoothness, heat dissipation, and demagnetization risk.
- **Inspection prior to assembly** improves staging transitions, vibration control, and overall system reliability.

Conclusion

This study has demonstrated the critical importance of magnetic component inspection in ensuring the efficiency, reliability, and operational stability of two-stage combination electric motors. Through a combination of non-destructive testing techniques—such as magnetic flux leakage (MFL), eddy current testing (ECT), and infrared thermography—defects in laminated cores and permanent magnets were successfully detected and analyzed for their impact on motor performance.

The results confirmed that undetected imperfections in magnetic materials contribute to increased core losses, flux asymmetry, thermal instability, and degraded performance during stage transitions. Conversely, motors assembled with fully inspected and validated components exhibited superior energy efficiency, smoother torque delivery, reduced vibration, and more reliable switching between operating stages.

Moreover, finite element simulations reinforced the empirical findings, revealing the long-term consequences of neglecting magnetic integrity, particularly in high-speed or high-torque applications. These insights highlight the necessity of integrating advanced magnetic inspection procedures into the design, assembly, and maintenance stages of electric motor systems.

As electric mobility, automation, and smart grid technologies continue to evolve, the demand for precision, durability, and efficiency in electric motors will grow. Implementing rigorous inspection protocols for magnetic components is not only a preventative maintenance strategy but also a performance optimization tool. This research contributes to a more robust and intelligent approach to electric motor engineering, particularly in systems with complex, staged operations.

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