



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

***HARVESTING ENERGY POTENTIAL FROM AIR CONDITIONER
COMPRESSOR OF HOT GAS RECEIVER TANK USING
THERMOELECTRIC GENERATOR***

HANAA KADHIM KAREEM ALSABAHI

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THERMOELECTRIC GENERATOR**

By

HANAA KADHIM KAREEM ALSABAHI

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia,
in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Science**

October 2016

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DEDICATION

To my family whose support and understanding helped make this possible



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Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Science

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October 2016

Chairman : Nor Mariah Adam, PhD PE
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Fire safety signage like emergency light and exit sign that are used all year round at buildings consume electricity for operation of signage and must function during emergency situation, therefore this can be costly in terms of maintenance cost. The DC voltage that is generated by thermoelectric generator (TEGs) is enough to operate this signage as alternative for its original batteries. The facilities and state institutions as well as residential complexes are using large numbers of air conditioner units. The air conditioner hot receiver tank rejects large amount of waste heat to the environment. The aim of this study is concerned with experimental test for (TEG) circuit arrangement for reducing waste heat by converting waste heat into electrical power. Specific objectives are to determine the primary design of TEG parameters with high power efficiency, which is able to produce ≥ 4 volt, then to verify the primary design results with experimental validation. Also, the research study the effect of weather properties on the cooling process of TEG. The system has built-in the electrical circuit as a battery charger to save (DC) electrical energy for operate four pieces of 12V LED in a (KELUAR) sign. Figure of Merit (FOM) and heat transfer approach based on the first law of thermodynamics are considered in arrangement of TEG. A total of 18 pieces of thermoelectric generator with dimensions of (40 mm \times 40 mm \times 3.4mm) with Bismuth Telluride (Bi_2Te_3) inside material are fixed on aluminum frame which carries thermoelectric generator and sandwiched between air conditioner hot gas receiver tank and cool heat sink. Double heat sink per one thermoelectric generator piece are used to improve heat transfer. The TEG are arranged in three lines, each line consists of 6 pieces of TEGs connected in series to increase voltage, while the three lines of TEGs are connected in parallel to increase amount of power current. Electrical circuit built for charging 3.5V battery and connected with (KELUAR) sign lights was successfully fabricated. The circuit equipped with two convertor, (0.9V to 5V DC-DC) convertor for increase voltage. The experimental test shows that the output electrical power is extremely dependent on weather properties e.g ambient temperature, air velocity and

relative humidity (RH), and it shows that the maximum open circuit voltage obtained in this research is 5.16V at 0.17m/s of air velocity, 73% of RH and 30.4 °C of ambient temperature. Experimental result shows that the maximum thermoelectric generator efficiency is 46% at temperature difference of 29.2°C and dimensionless Figure of Merit ≈ 1 . The system is able to harvest waste heat into electricity (DC) and charge the battery which serves as reservoir.



Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk Ijazah Master Sains

**POTENSI PENUAIAN TENAGA DARIPADA TANGKI UDARA PANAS
PENGHAWA DINGIN MENGGUNAKAN GENERATOR TERMAL
ELEKTRIK**

Oleh

HANAA KADHIM KAREEM ALSABAHI

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Papan tanda keselamatan kebakaran seperti lampu kecemasan dan tanda keluar yang digunakan sepanjang tahun di bangunan menggunakan tenaga elektrik untuk operasi papan tanda tersebut dan mesti berfungsi waktu kecemasan. Oleh itu boleh melibatkan kos penyelenggaraan yang mahal. DC voltan yang dijana oleh penjana termoelektrik (TEGs) adalah mencukupi untuk operasi papan tanda tersebut sebagai alternatif untuk bateri asal. Kemudahan di institusi negara serta kompleks kediaman menggunakan sejumlah besar unit penghawa dingin. Tangki udara panas penghawa dingin menolak sejumlah besar haba buangan kepada alam sekitar. Tujuan kajian ini adalah berkenaan dengan ujian eksperimen untuk (TEG) supaya mengurangkan haba buangan dengan menukar haba buangan kepada kuasa elektrik. Objektif khusus adalah untuk menentu kan reka bentuk utama parameter TEG dengan kecekapan kuasa tinggi, yang mampu menghasilkan voltan $\geq 4V$, kemudian mengesahkan keputusan reka bentuk utama dengan pengesahan eksperimen. Selain itu, kajian penyelidikan menyentuh kesan ciri-ciri cuaca pada proses penyjukan TEG. Sistem ini telah terbina dalam litar elektrik sebagai pengecas bateri untuk mengurangkan tenaga elektrik (DC) untuk mengendalikan empat keping 12V LED dalam papan tanda (KELUAR). *Figure of Merit* (FOM) dan pendekatan pemindahan haba berdasarkan hukum pertama termodinamik dipertimbangkan dalam susunan TEG. Sebanyak 18 buah penjana termoelektrik dengan dimensi (40 mm \times 40 mm \times 3.4mm) dengan bahan Bismut Telluride ($Bi_2 Te_3$) sebagai bahan TEG satu bingkai aluminium yang dilekatkan TEG dan diapit diantara tangki panas penghawa dingin dan sink haba sejuk. Sinki haba kembar bagi satu bahagian TEG digunakan untuk meningkatkan jumlah pemindahan haba. TEG disusun dalam tiga baris, setiap baris terdiri daripada 6 keping TEGs disambung secara siri untuk meningkatkan voltan, manakala tiga barisan TEG disambungkan secara selari untuk meningkatkan jumlah arus kuasa. Litar elektrik dibina untuk mengecas bateri 3.5V bagi papan tanda (KELUAR) telah berjaya di bina. Litar ini dilengkapi dengan dua penukar, (0.9V untuk 5V DC-DC) yakni penukar untuk peningkatan voltan. Ujian eksperimen

menunjukkan bahawa output kuasa elektrik adalah amat bergantung kepada ciri-ciri cuaca contohnya suhu ambien, halaju udara dan kelembapan relative (RH), dan ia menunjukkan bahawa voltan litar terbuka maksimum yang diperoleh dalam kajian ini adalah 5.16V pada 0.17m / s halaju udara, 73 % RH dan 30.4 °C suhu ambien. Hasil eksperimen menunjukkan bahawa kecekapan penjana termoelektrik maksimum adalah 46% pada perbezaan suhu 29.2 °C dan *Figure of Merit* ≈ 1 . Sistem ini dapat menuai sisa haba kepada tenaga elektrik (DC) dan mengecap bateri yang berfungsi sebagai takungan.



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I certify that a Thesis Examination Committee has met on 31 October 2016 to conduct the final examination of Hanaa Kadhim Kareem Alsabahi on his thesis entitled “Harvesting Energy Potential from Air Conditioner Compressor of Hot Gas Receiver Tank Using Thermoelectric Generator” in accordance with the Universities and University Colleges Act 1971 and the Constitution of the Universiti Putra Malaysia [P.U.(A) 106] 15 March 1998. The committee recommends that the student be awarded the Master of Science.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AC	Alternative Current
Bi ₂	Bismuth
CO ₂	Carbon Dioxide
COP	Coefficient of Performance
DC	Direct Current
DOE	Department of Energy
FC	Foot Candle
FOM	Figure of Merit
HP	Horse Power
HS	Heat Sink
LED	Light-Emitting Diode
N _u	Nusselt number
PTC	Parabolic Trough Collector
Te ₃	Telluride
TE	Thermoelectric Effect
TEG	Thermoelectric Generator
THE	Thermoelectric Harvesting Energy
UPM	Universiti Putra Malaysia
US	United State of America

LIST OF NOMENCLATURES

A :	Total surface area (m^2)
A_{fin} :	Fin heat transfer section area (m^2)
A_s :	Heat transfer surface area (m^2)
A_{unfin} :	Area of un-finned surface of heat sink (m^2)
A_{fin} :	Area of fin surface of heat sink (m^2)
COP_{max} :	Maximum coefficient of performance
H :	Total high of heat sink (mm)
H :	Convection heat transfer coefficient ($W/m^2 \cdot ^\circ C$)
I :	Electric current (A)
k :	Thermal conductivity (W/m .K)
L :	Fin length (m)
N :	Number of fin per heat sink
P :	Thermoelectric cooler input power (W)
P_{TEG} :	Output power of thermoelectric generator (W)
Q :	Heat transfer (W)
$\dot{Q}_{total,fin}$:	Total heat transfer rate from heat sink (un-fin and fins) (W)
\dot{Q}_{unfin} :	Heat transfer rate from un-finned surface of heat sink (W)
\dot{Q}_{fin} :	Heat transfer rate from fin of heat sink (W)
$q_{emit,max}$:	Maximum radiation heat transfer rate (W)
R :	Electric resistance (Ω)
R_{ex} :	External load resistance (Ω)
R_{th} :	Thermal resistances of the various materials
S :	Seebeck coefficient (V/K)
T :	Temperature (K)
T_b :	Temperature at fin base ($^\circ C$)
T_s :	Surface temperature ($^\circ C$)
T_∞ :	Fluid temperature ($^\circ C$)
T_w :	The surface plate temperature ($^\circ C$)

t :	Fin thickness (m)
V :	Thermoelectric voltage (V)
w :	Fin width (m)
Z :	Figure of Merit (1/K)
ZT :	Dimensionless Figure of Merit
ΔT :	Local temperature difference between two fluids (K)
ΔV :	Voltage difference (V)
$\Delta T_{overall}$:	Temperature difference between two sides wall (K)
Δx :	The wall thickness (m)

Greek symbols

σ :	Electric conductivity (S/m)
η_{max} :	Maximum thermoelectric generation efficiency
Π :	Peltier coefficient

Subscripts

c :	Cold side
conv. :	Convection
cond. :	Conduction
h :	Hot side
ex :	External load
in :	Inside
out :	Outside
load :	Circuit Load
max :	Maximum
min :	Minimum
TEG :	Thermoelectric generator
1 :	Inlet, Side 1
2 :	Outlet, Side 2

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Future challenges of our society, include limited reserve of fossil fuel and localized energy shortages. The world energy requirement is expected to rise more than 60% in 2030. Nowadays, heat engines that operate by fossil fuel generate more than 80% of world's energy requirements that explains the large emissions of carbon dioxide (CO₂) (Yazawa & Shakouri 2011). As a result of using heat engines, the environment receives 10 TW of heat lost in 2015 (Zhang & Yong-wei 2015).

On the other hand, the world's demand of electric energy is ongoing increase, therefore, many countries start to use alternative source of energy such as wind, solar, and geothermal energy to produce electrical energy. However it is costly and cover small range of electric demand, for example, the wind, solar and geothermal supply 2.7 % of electric demand in the United States (Lawrence 2010). Therefore, waste heat energy can be included as important source of energy to generate electric energy by using thermoelectric effect (TE).

Thermoelectric is a device used to transfer the heat energy into electric energy, and that will lead ultimately to decrease in using fossil fuel and carbon dioxide emissions (Zhang & Yong-wei 2015). Actually, it is difficult to replace the Rankine cycle steam engine with thermoelectric, however it can play a huge role in our society by transferring waste heat from thermal system to electricity (Yazawa & Shakouri 2011).

In tropical climate of Malaysia, the facilities and state institutions as well as residential complexes use large numbers of air conditions unit all day (Muhieddeen 2010), this is because of hot and wet weather in this country with ambient temperature range from (24 to 32)°C, and the temperature increase by (5 to 7)°C as a result of heat emissions from car engine, air conditioner units and furnaces (Mahlia et al. 2004; Wong et al. 2009; Kong et al. 2014). Actually, the air conditioner (hot gas receiver tank) produces large amount of waste heat to environmental.

In Malaysia too many buildings have a large number of exit sign (see Figure 1.1), that are used as part of the fire safety requirements and have to be operated all the time. It has batteries to operate it when the alternative current (AC) electrical power goes on. Energy harvesting by thermal electric generator TEGs can be used as an alternative to a battery (Matiko et al. 2014).



Figure 1.1: KELUAR sign

1.2 Problem Statement

Fire safety signage, emergency light and exit signs that use all year round at buildings consume electricity for operation. Direct current (DC) voltage that generated from TEGs is enough to operate this signs as alternative of batteries which can be costly (Matiko et al. 2014). However, it should be added DC LED is also suitable for the signage. By utilizing waste heat system to operate (KELUAR) sign can help to improve safety level through reliable power supply. In addition heat source, thermoelectric generator needs to increase temperature difference between two (hot and cold reservoir) sides of TEG to produce voltage as a result of temperature gradient between hot and cold sides (Faraji & Akbarzadeh 2013). Dust, relative humidity and air velocity has a big effect on cooling process, thus, temperature difference variable to be considered as environment properties (Mekhilef et al. 2012).

This study used experimental test to harvest the waste heat from air conditioner compressor (hot gas receiver tank) (see Figure 1.2) and converts it by using thermoelectric generator into electrical energy saved by a battery to operate (KELUAR) sign as shown in Figure 1.3.



Figure 1.2: Air conditioner hot gas receiver tank

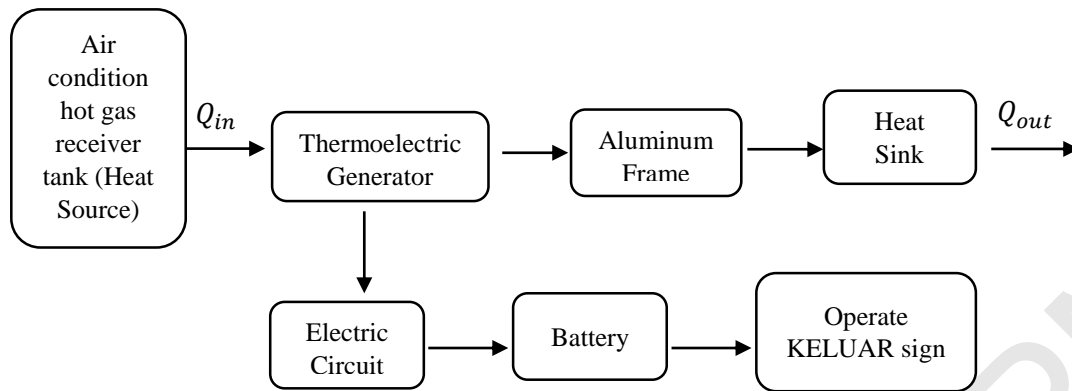


Figure 1.3: Schematic of waste heat harvesting system

The research hypothesis is thermoelectric generator produce DC voltage as a result of temperature difference between both sides of TEG. Therefore, when temperature difference ($\Delta T = 0$) it not possible to harvest energy whereas at ($\Delta T \neq 0$) it is possible to harvest energy from heat source.

1.3 Research Objective

Generally, the overall objective of this study is to develop a system to harvest energy from waste heat for electricity generation with voltage ≥ 4 volt as minimum value to charge 3.5 volt battery.

The specific objectives are as follows:

- 1) To determine the primary design of thermoelectric generator parameters.
- 2) To determine the weather properties effect on the cooling process of the thermoelectric generator.
- 3) To verify the primary design results with experimental validation.

1.4 Scope and Limitations

Designing the optimum heat harvesting convertor system with high efficiency is divided into two sub projects as thermoelectric device (heat convertor) and electrical circuit (electric energy storage). This study will focus on fabrication of aluminum frame to fix TEG with heat source as well as selecting suitable thermoelectric model. The limitations of this study are:

- 1) Consider $40\text{ mm} \times 40\text{ mm} \times 3.4\text{ mm}$ thermoelectric size due to limited gap between conditioner and wall surrounding compressor.
- 2) Consider air conditioner hot gas receiver tank as a heat source.
- 3) Select aluminum frame for fixed thermoelectric generator with air conditioner receiver tank body (light weight).

4) Arrange the system to produce more than 4 voltage.

Aluminum frame will be used for placement of thermoelectric elements attached to air conditioner hot gas receiver tank. This material (aluminum) is selected based on following considerations

- Mechanical properties like corrosion resistance and strong.
- Thermal specification such as melt point and thermal conductivity (k).

The scope of this study is to present simple design of TEG for reducing waste heat by converted it into electrical power and presented reliability design of heat harvesting system (thermoelectric model) with high power efficiency, able to produce voltage ≥ 4 as well as, built-in electrical alternative source. Moreover, a study on the effect of the environmental temperature, humidity conditions and air velocity on thermoelectric generator performance was carried out.

1.5 Thesis Layout

This thesis starting with introduction in the first chapter. The second chapter included literature review with essential equation of heat transfer types. Third chapter is presented methodology with heat transfer and efficiency of thermoelectric generator calculation. Further, this chapter is presented the validation method of the system design. A comprehensive explanation of the experimental test with its results are presented in Chapter Four. Finally, Chapter Five introduce the conclusion of the research with future work recommendations.

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