

FACULTAD DE INGENIERÍA

Escuela Académico Profesional de Ingeniería Mecatrónica

Tesis

**Design and performance study of the heat
exchanger of a fin-based thermoelectric
generator via numerical simulations**

Patrick Albino Cuyubamba Povez
Joel Asto Evangelista
Jean Raul Almerco Ataucusi
Yadhira Samhira Valenzuela Lino
Deyby Maycol Huamanchahua Canchanya
Nabilt Jill Moggiano Aburto

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Design and Performance Study of the Heat Exchanger of a Fin-Based Thermoelectric Generator via Numerical Simulations

Patrick Cuyubamba
Department of Mechatronics
Engineering
Universidad Continental
Huancayo, Perú
74466185@continental.edu.pe

Joel Asto-Evangelista
Department of Mechatronics
Engineering
Universidad Continental
Huancayo, Perú
42896174@continental.edu.pe

Jean R. Almerco-Ataucusi
Department of Mechatronics
Engineering
Universidad Continental
Huancayo, Perú
71665906@continental.edu.pe

Yadhira S. Valenzuela-Lino
Department of Mechatronics
Engineering
Universidad Continental
Huancayo, Perú
73105932@continental.edu.pe

Deyby Huamanchahua
Department of Mechatronics
Engineering
Universidad Continental
Huancayo, Perú
dhuamanchahua@continental.edu.pe

Nabilt Moggiano
Engineering Research Unit
Faculty of Engineering
Universidad Continental
Huancayo, Perú
nmoggiano@continental.edu.pe

Abstract—Climate change is a latent concern nowadays, so the ONU proposed to adopt new alternatives for obtaining energy through clean and renewable energies; that is why the TEG (Thermoelectric Generator) have been used in different industries and vehicles as they are a system that recovers and uses the waste heat from automobile exhaust gases for waste heat recovery; therefore, it is a method that allows improving energy efficiency. The present study aims to design and study the performance of the heat exchanger of a fin-based thermoelectric generator via numerical simulations. In this way, the geometry was performed using SolidWorks software. In addition, the meshing and boundary conditions were established in ANSYS Fluent to obtain the initial temperature distributions. Additionally, these initial temperature distributions serve as boundary conditions for ANSYS Thermal-Electric to obtain the semiconductor's final temperature distributions, voltage distributions, and electric current distributions. It was obtained as a result that the semiconductor's temperature distributions reached a voltage of 80 mV in 1 second of heat transfer. Also, the droplets fin-base TEG had an average temperature of 36.85 °C on the cold side and 163.3 °C on the hot side. Finally, it was concluded that the semiconductor's final temperature distributions of the hot and cold side for the droplets fin-base TEG presented higher uniformity than the parallel plate fin-base TEG.

Keywords—*Thermoelectric Generator (TEG), heat exchanger, CFD, numerical simulations, waste heat recovery*

I. INTRODUCTION

As time goes by, studies on clean, renewable energies, such as solar, wind, and others, have been increasing; however, these methods require a higher initial investment for their research [1]. In addition, to curb the effects of climate change, the ONU proposes to adopt renewable sources to meet the energy demand [2].

On the other hand, a thermoelectric generator (TEG) is an outgoing power generation system that can convert thermal energy into electrical energy. In addition, the thermoelectric conversion efficiency of TEG is currently very low since not enough system optimizations have been performed [3]. However, applying TEG in exhaust waste heat recovery and utilization is a novel way to improve energy efficiency [4].

Similarly, TEG systems are highly interested in military and space exploration applications. They are characterized by no moving parts, low noise, high reliability, zero emissions, high endurance, and long lifetime [5]. On the other hand, since this system has the potential use for thermal energy recovery, it has eventually been applied to various automobiles by installing thermoelectric devices in their exhaust pipes, which benefits the automotive sector [6] and the environment. Currently, TEG systems present an efficiency of approximately 4%; therefore, they are far from the requirements to be of commercial use since it is important for the development of thermoelectric-type materials with superior geometry since optimization methods based on the structure and geometry can improve the conversion efficiency of TEG systems [7].

Improving the structure of TEG systems contributes to work efficiency in the heat exchanger and the thermoelectric module (TEM) [8]. For example, research [7] - [9] shows a TEG system in which closed fins are pushed aside by dimpled surfaces in the heat exchanger, thus exhibiting more considerable convection and heat transfer area. Consequently, it reduced the pressure drop, so that in its results, it was obtained that the net power of the TEG system had increased by 173.60%; on the other hand, the pressure drop decreased by 20.57%.

On the other hand, it is worth highlighting the study [10] since it presented a segmented annular thermoelectric generator, which is also characterized by increasing the heat transfer