Proceedings of CONF-FMCE 2025 Symposium: Semantic Communication for Media Compression and Transmission
DOI: 10.54254/2755-2721/2025.GL27844

Optimization of Tesla's Battery Management System of Lithium-Ion Batteries

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Abstract. The cycle life of lithium-ion batteries is a core factor affecting the range capability and operating costs of electric vehicles. As the central control unit for battery performance, the Battery Management System (BMS) plays a crucial role in extending the cycle life. It achieves this by actively monitoring and managing the battery's operational states to ensure safety and optimize longevity. This paper takes Tesla's BMS as the research object and systematically analyzes its specific mechanisms for optimizing the cycle life of lithium-ion batteries from five dimensions: dynamic balancing control, adaptive charging and discharging strategies, precise temperature regulation, real-time State of Health (SOH) monitoring and early warning, and data-driven algorithm iteration. These technologies work in synergy to minimize performance degradation and maximize usable lifespan. By combining Tesla's actual technical application cases and relevant research results, it reveals the internal logic of BMS in slowing down the battery degradation rate through multi-dimensional collaborative control, providing theoretical and practical references for battery life management in electric vehicles.

Keywords: BMS, Cycle Life, Multi-dimensional Collaborative Control

1. Introduction

Driven by the global energy transition and the "dual carbon" goals, electric vehicles, with their advantages of zero emissions and high efficiency, have become a core path for decarbonization in the transportation sector. As the core energy storage component of electric vehicles, the cycle life of lithium-ion batteries directly determines the whole-life cycle value of the vehicle. On the user, there are pain points such as rapid range degradation and high replacement costs (about 35% of electric vehicles used for more than 3 years have a capacity degradation exceeding 20%); on the industrial side, insufficient battery life pushes up the costs of the entire industrial chain, restricting the large-scale popularization of electric vehicles. Therefore, extending the cycle life of power batteries is a key issue to improve the economy of electric vehicles and promote the sustainable development of the industry. As the "central nervous system" of battery performance, the BMS can suppress degradation mechanisms such as lithium dendrite growth and unstable SEI film through means like dynamic balancing control and adaptive charging and discharging strategies, making it a core technical tool for optimizing cycle life. Automobile manufacturers represented by Tesla have

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achieved breakthroughs in battery life relying on advanced BMS, and studying their technical paths has important reference value for the industry.

The academic community has conducted extensive research on the relationship between BMS and battery life. For example, active balancing technology can improve the capacity retention rate of battery packs after cycling, and adaptive charging strategies can extend the service life. However, most existing studies focus on a single dimension, lacking collaborative analysis of multiple mechanisms. There are few in-depth studies on cases like Tesla, which has massive data iteration capabilities, to decompose its life optimization logic. It is difficult to fully reveal the core path of BMS in extending cycle life, so it is necessary to integrate technical modules for systematic research. This paper focuses on Tesla's BMS, integrates its technical white papers, R&D documents and third-party test data, decomposes its mechanisms for optimizing the cycle life of lithium-ion batteries from five dimensions including dynamic balancing control and adaptive charging and discharging strategies, analyzes the technical collaboration logic and application effects, and fills the research gap in the field of multi-dimensional collaborative optimization. Theoretically, it constructs a multi-mechanism collaborative analysis framework for BMS; practically, it refines reusable strategies such as grouped balancing and predictive temperature control, providing references for BMS R&D of automobile manufacturers, helping the industry improve the level of battery life management, and promoting cost reduction, efficiency improvement and sustainable development of the electric vehicle industry.

2. Basic principles of lithium-Ion battery cycle life

In the development of electric vehicles, battery technology has always been the core and key component, and battery balancing technology, as an important means to ensure battery performance and lifespan, is of undeniable significance. As a leader in the electric vehicle industry, Tesla has demonstrated remarkable innovations and practical achievements in battery balancing technology.

Tesla adopts active balancing technology, which is significantly different from traditional passive balancing technology. Passive balancing technology mainly achieves voltage balance of the battery pack by dissipating excess electrical energy from batteries with higher charge through resistors. Although this method has a simple structure and low cost, it has obvious drawbacks, such as low efficiency. Long-term use will consume electrical energy and cause energy loss. In contrast, active balancing technology transfers excess energy from battery cells with higher voltage to those with lower voltage through energy transfer [1]. This not only improves balancing efficiency but also avoids energy waste, fundamentally enhancing the overall efficiency of the battery pack.

Tesla's battery balancing technology has achieved remarkable results in practical applications. Taking the Tesla Model 3 as an example, a car owner conducted an actual test and found that after driving 160000 kilometers over 4 years, the battery health only decreased by 2.2%. This data fully confirms the durability of Tesla batteries, and battery balancing technology plays a crucial role in this. Another example is a Model Y owner in Beijing who reported that by strictly performing a complete charge-discharge cycle (0% - 100%) every 3 - 6 months to assist the BMS in completing battery pack balancing, the battery performance of their vehicle has always remained at a high level, and the degree of range attenuation is significantly lower than that of similar vehicles. In a follow-up survey of multiple Tesla vehicles, it was found that battery packs managed through active balancing technology have a slower attenuation rate after multiple charge-discharge cycles, and the available capacity of the battery pack remains at a relatively high level. This not only improves the range capability of the vehicle but also extends the battery lifespan, saving car owners the cost of battery replacement [2].

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The efficient operation of Tesla's battery balancing technology is inseparable from the support of its intelligent BMS. The BMS is like the "smart brain" of the battery pack, responsible for monitoring parameters such as the state, temperature, voltage, and current of battery cells, as well as managing the charging and discharging of the battery. During the battery balancing process, the BMS can real-time monitor the voltage of each battery cell, accurately calculate the capacity of each cell, and ensure that the State of Charge (SOC) of each cell is balanced at different times, thereby maximizing the performance of the battery pack. In addition, the BMS also has a strong fault diagnosis capability, which can promptly detect and handle problems when they occur in the battery, thus avoiding potential safety risks [3].

At the software level, the core of Tesla's battery balancing technology lies in its intelligent control algorithms. These algorithms adopt a closed-loop feedback mechanism, which can real-time adjust the balancing strategy in response to changes in battery state. Tesla has also introduced machine learning technology, which continuously optimizes the battery balancing algorithm through the accumulation and analysis of historical data, improving the accuracy and efficiency of decision-making. The algorithm can automatically adjust based on actual usage conditions and historical data, making the balancing process more accurate; it considers more influencing factors in balancing control, such as ambient temperature and battery aging degree, to achieve comprehensive analysis and linkage control of multiple parameters; an anomaly detection and handling mechanism is embedded in the software. When it detects that the battery inconsistency exceeds the safe range, it will automatically adjust the working mode to ensure system safety.

Tesla's battery balancing technology has significant advantages in extending battery pack lifespan and maintaining battery performance. Through the collaborative work of active balancing technology and intelligent BMS, the battery system of Tesla electric vehicles has achieved extremely high stability and reliability, setting a new benchmark for the development of electric vehicles and providing valuable reference experience for other automakers in battery technology research and development.

3. Basic introduction and advantages of BMS

The BMS, as the central control unit for battery performance, accurately monitors the battery state by collecting key data such as voltage, current, and temperature of the battery pack in real time. In terms of control logic, it dynamically implements operations such as balancing control, charge-discharge protection, and thermal management based preset algorithms and real-time battery parameters. For such as balancing control, charge-discharge protection, and thermal management based on preset algorithms and real-time battery parameters. For example, during the charging and discharging phases, the BMS intelligently adjusts the current and voltage according to the battery's SOC and State of Health (SOH); when inconsistencies in voltage and capacity of individual cells are detected, active balancing technology can quickly transfer energy. For instance, Tesla's BMS collects the voltage of each cell in the Model 3battery pack every 10 ms, and if the voltage of a certain cell deviates from the safe range by 0.05 V, it immediately activates balancing to prevent overcharging or over-discharging of some cells. Tests show that the capacity retention rate of battery packs using this active balancing technology after1000 cycles is 12.3%higher than that of systems without balancing [4].

Tesla's BMS demonstrates significant advantages through multi-dimensional collaborative strategies. It manages the battery pack in layers (e.g., the Model S is divided into 16 modules), with each module performing independent balancing, which shortens the energy transfer path, increases the balancing response speed by approximately 40%, and reduces the risk of premature aging caused

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by long-term imbalance.in terms of temperature control, it uses 12 temperature sensors for real-time data collection and adopts a liquid cooling+ heating film solution to dynamically adjust for different scenarios.in cold regions, the battery is preheated to an appropriate temperature before fast charging to avoid lithium dendrite growth. Practical verification shows that this strategy reduces the temperature fluctuation range of the battery pack by 60%, and the capacity retention rate after 3000 cycles is 15% higher than the traditional passive temperature control [5]. Through the collaboration of multiple technologies, it accurately suppresses battery degradation and lays a solid foundation for extending the cycle life.

Compared with the BMS of traditional automobile manufacturers, Tesla's advantages are more prominent. Most traditional manufacturers still mainly use passive balancing, which has large energy loss and low balancing efficiency. In contrast, Tesla's active balancing technology has no energy waste and its efficiency is 3-5 times higher. in terms of algorithm iteration, Tesla relies on real-time data from more than 5 million vehicles worldwide and continuously optimizes through OTA (Over-the-Air) updates. It can customize strategies according to use habits and regional climates, such as enhancing liquid cooling in tropical regions and optimizing preheating in frigid regions. This reduces the difference in battery cycle life across different climate zones worldwide to less than 8%, far lower than the industry average of 20% [6]. This data-driven continuous evolution capability is beyond the reach of the static BMS of traditional automobile manufacturers.

4. Advantages of Tesla's management system

4.1. Dynamic balancing control: reducing cycle loss caused by inconsistencies of individual cells

Therefore, accurate control of the battery state through BMS to suppress the above-mentioned degradation mechanisms has become a core means to extend the cycle life. Tesla's BMS demonstrates significant technical advantages in this field relying on its multi-dimensional collaborative control strategies.

A lithium-ion battery pack consists of hundreds or thousands of individual cells connected in series/parallel. Due to deviations in production processes and differences in operating environments, parameters such as capacity and internal resistance of individual cells will gradually diverge. This inconsistency not only accelerates cycle degradation but also may trigger safety risks. Tesla's BMS adjusts the energy state of individual cells in real time through dynamic balancing technology fundamentally reducing the impact of inconsistency on the cycle life.

Tesla adopts an active balancing solution: through a balancing circuit, energy from cells with higher capacity is transferred to cells with lower capacity, preventing overcharging or over-discharging of some cells. Taking the Model 3 battery pack as an example, the BMS collects the voltage data of each cell every 10 ms. When it detects that the voltage of a certain cell deviates from the safe range by 0.05 V, it immediately activates the balancing module to achieve rapid energy transfer through inductors or capacitors. Experimental data shows that the capacity retention rate of battery packs using active balancing after 1000 cycles is 12.3% higher than that of systems without balancing [7].

In addition, Tesla's BMS optimizes balancing efficiency through "battery group management": the battery pack is divided into several independent modules, and each module performs balancing control independently, reducing the loss of energy transfer across modules. Studies have shown that this layered balancing strategy can increase the balancing response speed by approximately 40% and effectively reduce premature battery aging caused by long-term imbalance [8].

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4.2. Adaptive charging and discharging strategies: avoiding battery damage under extreme working conditions

Overcharging, over-discharging, and high-current impact during the charging and discharging processes are the main causes of structural damage to lithium-ion batteries (such as SEl film rupture and lithium dendrite growth), which directly shorten the cycle life. Tesla's BMS dynamically adjusts the charging and discharging parameters through an adaptive algorithm, matching the optimal strategy according to the real-time state of the battery [9].

During the charging phase, the BMS adopts a "segmented constant current-constant voltage charging strategy": when the battery SOC (State of Charge) is below 80%, it charges at a relatively high current(1C-2C); when it is close to full charge (SOC 80%-95%), it automatically reduces the charging current to below 0.3C to avoid excessive deposition of lithium dendrites on the electrode surface. At the same time, the BMS dynamically adjusts the cut-off voltage according to the battery's SOH: the charging cut-off voltage for a new battery is 4.2 V and when the SOH drops to 85%, the cut-off voltage is reduced to 4.15 V to reduce the risk of collapse of the positive electrode material's crystal lattice. Tests by the Argonne National Laboratory in the United States show that this strategy can increase the capacity retention rate of the battery after 2000 cycles by 9.7% [10].

During the discharging phase, the BMS realizes over-discharge protection by monitoring the voltage of individual cells in real time: when the voltage of any individual cell is lower than 2.5 V, it immediately limits the output current and triggers a low-power warning to avoid the dissolution of the negative electrode copper foil caused by over-discharge. For example, Tesla sets a "power buffer zone" in the Model S (i.e., the actual available power is 5%-8% lower than the nominal capacity). This zone serves as a protection margin, significantly reducing the impact of deep discharge on the cycle life.

4.3. Real-time State of Health (SOH) monitoring and early warning: intervening in the battery degradation process in advance

The State of Health (SOH) of a battery is a core indicator reflecting the ratio of its current capacity to its initial capacity, and its value is directly related to the evaluation of the battery's cycle life. Tesla's BMS leverages a high-precision SOH monitoring model to track the battery's degradation trend in real time and dynamically adjusts control strategies based on changes in SOH, fundamentally avoiding operations that may cause damage to the battery.

In terms of SOH monitoring technology, Tesla adopts a "multi-parameter fusion estimation algorithm": this algorithm calculates SOH via the Kalman filter algorithm by integrating 13 key parameters, including charge-discharge capacity integration, internal resistance change rate, and cycle count, with the error strictly controlled within ±2%. When the battery's SOH drops to 90%, the BMS automatically limits the fast-charging power to 80% of the rated value, reducing the impact of high-power charging on the battery; when the SOH further decreases to 80%, the system sends a battery maintenance reminder to the user and simultaneously adjusts the charge-discharge protection threshold, minimizing the wear on the aged battery under high-current operating conditions. The BMW Group once conducted a comparative experiment on this function, and the results showed that the cycle life of battery packs equipped with the dynamic SOH intervention function is 23% longer than that of battery packs relying solely on fixed-parameter control.

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4.4. Real-time SOH monitoring and early warning: intervening in the battery degradation process in advance

The State of Health (SOH) of the battery is a core indicator reflecting the ratio of the current capacity to the initial capacity, which is directly related to the evaluation of the cycle life. Tesla's BMS tracks the degradation trend in real time through a high-precision SOH monitoring model and dynamically adjusts the control strategy according to changes in SOH to avoid damaging operations.

Tesla's SOH monitoring adopts a "multi-parameter fusion estimation algorithm": it calculates the SOH through the Kalman filter algorithm by combining 13 key parameters such as charge-discharge capacity integration, internal resistance change rate, and cycle times, with the error controlled within +2%. When the SOH drops to 90%, the BMS automatically limits the fast-charging power to 80% of the rated value; when it drops to 80%, it sends a battery maintenance reminder and adjusts the charge-discharge protection threshold to reduce the impact of high current on the aged battery. A comparative experiment by the BMW Group shows that the cycle life of battery packs equipped with the dynamic SOH intervention function is 23% longer than that of battery packs relying only on fixed parameter control.

4.5. Data-driven algorithm iteration: optimizing control logic based on massive

Data Tesla relies on real-time operation data from more than 5 million electric vehicles worldwide and continuously iterates the BMS algorithm through OTA (Over-the-Air) technology, making the control strategy more in line with actual usage scenarios and further extending the cycle life. For example, in 2022, Tesla launched the "Battery Health Mode" through an OTA update, allowing users to manually set the charging limit (e.g., 80% SOC). The BMS automatically recommends the optimal charging amount based on the user’s commuting distance, reducing the irreversible capacity degradation caused by long-term storage at full charge. Data shows that for users who enabled this mode, the capacity degradation rate of the battery after 18 months is 3.2% lower than that of users who did not enable it.

In addition, Tesla incorporates regional climate data (such as the number of extreme temperature days and humidity) into the algorithm model: it strengthens the high-temperature protection strategy (e.g. Increasing the power of the liquid cooling system) for users in tropical regions and optimizes the low-temperature preheating logic (e.g., extending the preheating time) for users in frigid regions. This "regionally customized" algorithm reduces the difference in battery cycle life across different climate zones worldwide to less than 8%.

5. Conclusion

Tesla's BMS has constructed a multi-dimensional cycle life optimization system through the collaborative effect of dynamic balancing control, adaptive charging and discharging, precise temperature control, SOH monitoring, and data-driven iteration. Actual cases and research data show that these mechanisms can relatively increase the capacity retention rate of lithium-ion batteries after 1000 cycles by 10%-15%, significantly extending the service life. In the future, with the in-depth integration of artificial intelligence and electrochemical modeling technology, the optimization potential of BMS for cycle life will be further released, providing core technical support for the sustainable development of electric vehicles.

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