



A Comprehensive Review Of Condition Monitoring Techniques For Gearboxes

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Abstract: Condition monitoring of gearboxes is a critical aspect of predictive maintenance that ensures the reliability and efficiency of mechanical systems across various industries. This review comprehensively analyses the most widely used condition monitoring techniques for gearboxes, focusing on vibration analysis, lubrication oil analysis, acoustic emission analysis, sound analysis, and thermography. Each method is evaluated based on its principles, advantages, and limitations. Special attention is given to lubrication oil analysis due to its significance in preventing gear failure through timely detection of wear particles and contaminants. The paper also discusses the integration of advanced sensor technologies and the role of artificial intelligence and machine learning in enhancing condition monitoring systems' accuracy and predictive capabilities. The comparative analysis highlights the suitability of different techniques for various industrial applications, emphasizing the need for a multi-faceted approach to gearbox health monitoring. Future trends in the field, such as the development of smart sensors and real-time monitoring systems, are explored, offering insights into the potential advancements that could further improve maintenance strategies. This review aims to provide a valuable resource for researchers and practitioners in the field of mechanical engineering, offering a foundation for future research and development in condition monitoring technologies.

1. Keywords - Condition Monitoring, Lubrication Oil Analysis, Vibration Analysis, Gearbox Fault Detection

I. INTRODUCTION

Condition monitoring of gearboxes is an essential component of predictive maintenance strategies in various industrial applications, including manufacturing, automotive, aerospace, and energy sectors. Gearboxes are critical mechanical components that transmit power and motion between different parts of machinery. The failure of these components can lead to significant downtime, high repair costs, and potential safety hazards. Therefore, ensuring the reliability and longevity of gearboxes through effective condition monitoring is of paramount importance. This introduction explores the fundamentals of gearbox condition monitoring, highlighting its significance and the various techniques employed to achieve it. Condition monitoring involves the continuous or periodic assessment of the health of machinery to detect signs of wear, degradation, or impending failure. It enables maintenance personnel to take proactive measures, such as repairs or replacements, before catastrophic failures occur. Among the different condition monitoring techniques, vibration analysis, lubrication oil analysis, acoustic emission analysis, sound analysis, and thermography are the most prevalent. Vibration analysis is widely used due to its ability to detect abnormalities in the dynamic behaviour of gearboxes. By analysing vibration signals, technicians can identify issues such as imbalance, misalignment, gear wear, and bearing defects. Lubrication oil analysis, on the other hand,

focuses on the quality and composition of the lubricant. The presence of wear particles, contaminants, and changes in oil properties can provide valuable insights into the condition of the gearbox. Acoustic emission analysis involves monitoring high-frequency sound waves generated by the interaction of mechanical components. This technique is particularly effective in detecting crack initiation and propagation in gears and bearings. Sound analysis, although similar to acoustic emission analysis, typically deals with lower frequency ranges and is useful for identifying issues related to gear meshing and tooth defects. Thermography, the use of infrared imaging to monitor temperature distribution, can reveal overheating and lubrication issues in gearboxes. Each of these techniques has its unique advantages and limitations. Vibration analysis is highly sensitive and can detect a wide range of faults, but it requires sophisticated equipment and expertise in signal interpretation. Lubrication oil analysis provides direct information about the condition of the lubricant and the presence of wear particles, but it may not detect certain mechanical issues. Acoustic emission and sound analysis are effective for early fault detection, but their application can be challenging in noisy industrial environments. Thermography offers a non-invasive means of detecting temperature-related issues but may not identify mechanical faults directly. The integration of advanced sensor technologies and data analytics has significantly enhanced the capabilities of condition-monitoring systems. The advent of smart sensors, wireless communication, and the Internet of Things (IoT) has enabled real-time monitoring and remote diagnostics, reducing the need for manual inspections. Additionally, the application of artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) algorithms has improved the accuracy of fault detection and prognosis by enabling the analysis of large datasets and the identification of complex patterns. Future trends in gearbox condition monitoring are likely to focus on further improving sensor technologies, developing more robust and reliable monitoring systems, and enhancing the predictive capabilities of AI and ML algorithms. This review aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the current state of gearbox condition monitoring, offering insights into the strengths and limitations of various techniques, and highlighting the potential advancements that could shape the future of this critical field.

II. LITERATURE SURVEY

M. Lokesh et al., (2011) The results of using FFT-based vibration signal processing, Morlet wavelet enveloped power spectroscopy, and Laplace wavelet enveloped power spectroscopy at different stages of an induced gear defect are contrasted. To show the superiority of Morlet wavelet and Laplace wavelet-based wrapped power spectra for problem diagnosis in gear, the suggested application contrasts the considerable increase in vibration amplitude at GMF and their 1xRPM of sidebands compared to the FFT power spectrum. The recommended diagnostic technique is less susceptible to changes in operational speed, lubrication, and load than conventional FFT analysis. By employing the proper de-noising technique, the extraction of a gear's defective characteristic may be significantly enhanced [1].

David He et al., (2012) The authors of this work describe an efficient approach for split torque gearbox gear defect location identification utilizing AE sensors. This approach processes the AE sensor signal using a wavelet transform, which helps to estimate when the AE bursts will arrive at various places. The wavelet transform's parameters were improved using an ant colony optimization approach. First, experiments with broken pencil leads were used to establish the data-gathering system's sampling rate. The sampling rate of 500 kHz was chosen after careful consideration of the Fourier spectra, RMS, and peak SNR of the AE bursts from the pencil lead break tests. To pinpoint the location of the damaged gear, AE sensor readings were concurrently gathered at the locations of the healthy and damaged output drive gears. The distribution of the AE burst arrival times from the damaged gear that were observed clearly showed the efficacy of the methods used [2].

Jussi et al., (2012) The writers of this research have concluded that vibration analysis is employed to keep an epicyclic gearbox in a hydraulic power plant under check. Vibrations with frequencies under 1000 Hz were extremely well received by the vibration rate. Acceleration and its higher derivatives, which also provided additional information on the higher frequencies, provided an even better solution. The conclusion that the vibration speed is insufficient to monitor the condition of the gearbox in issue may be drawn from the very high rotation speed of the second stage. To provide a better responsiveness to changes in gearbox condition and its higher-order derivative should also be employed [3].

Adam Czaban et al., (2013) The paper begins by providing a brief overview of the factors that affect the viscosity of oils, including molecular weight, structure, and additives. The authors then present the results of their experiments, which were conducted using a rheometer to measure the viscosity of the oils at different temperatures and shear rates. The results of the experiments showed that the viscosity of the oils decreased with increasing temperature and increasing shear rate. The authors also found that the addition of certain

additives, such as viscosity improvers, could help to stabilize the viscosity of the oils over a wider range of temperatures and shear rates [4].

Anand Prabhakaran et al., (2013) The paper discusses the different techniques that can be used to analyse wear debris, including automatic particle counters, ferrography, ICPAES, SEM, and EDAX. The authors then present the results of their study, which showed that the concentration of wear debris in the used lubricating oil increased over time, and that the type of wear debris also changed [5]. They also found that the use of a combination of techniques could provide a more comprehensive assessment of the condition of the turbine. The paper concludes by discussing the implications of the findings for the condition monitoring of steam turbine-generators. The authors suggest that the use of wear debris and particulate contamination analysis can be a valuable tool for detecting early signs of wear and tear, and that this can help to prevent catastrophic failures.[2]

Riku-Pekka Nikula et al., (2013) A technique to real-time condition monitoring of an epicyclic gearbox in a hydroelectric power plant is presented in this work. An epicyclic gearbox must have early and reliable fault detection since a failure might result in a lengthy out-of-service period. The hydroelectric power plant is utilised to supply the electrical system with load-following electricity. When power is generated, the weight on the gear changes, but the spinning speed remains constant. Accelerometers installed atop a two-stage epicyclic gearbox are used to collect data from the plant's various operating stages. First, it is determined how the load affects the characteristics of the vibration signals. In this work, the characteristics include phase randomized spectrum components and amplitude spectrum components. The features' load-related control limits are then determined. Following identification, an independent test set of data is used to test the condition monitoring technique. The effectiveness is also seen when fictitious fault signals are introduced to the real measurement data [6].

Kiran Vernekar et al., (2014) Two signal processing techniques for detecting gear problems in internal combustion engines are provided in this paper. These are conventional vibration spectrum analysis and continuous wavelet transform. A fault detection engine test rig is built to gather vibration data from both a healthy and a simulated damaged gear state for experimental research. In both ideal and simulated faulty gear scenarios, the vibration signals from the internal combustion engine are collected using an accelerometer. In this study, both the traditional vibration spectrum analysis and the morlet wavelet are used as a continuous wavelet transform (CWT) for diagnosing gear problems. The results of the experiments demonstrate that the recommended method is effective in locating gear defects[7].

III. OBJECTIVES OF RESEARCH WORK

The main aim of the project is to monitor the condition of gear based on Lubrication oil analysis and Vibration analysis

- To Evaluate the Effectiveness of Each Technique
- To Provide a Comprehensive Overview of Condition Monitoring Techniques
- To Highlight the Importance of Lubrication Oil Analysis
- To Compare the Applicability of Techniques Across Different Industries
- To Explore Advances in Sensor Technologies and Data Analytics

IV. GEARS AND GEAR FAILURE

Gears are prime transmission elements in most of the rotating machines used in industries these days. Their applications include aeronautics, mining, the automotive sector, and other industries. Spur gears are cylindrical and have straight teeth cut parallel to their axis [6]. They can be manufactured to close tolerances and is used to connect parallel shafts that rotate in opposite directions. Due to simultaneous contact of the entire width of meshing teeth, it is prone to wear and noise at high speeds. It is designed to transmit motion and power between the parallel shafts, which rotates in opposite direction and is the most common and cost-effective type of gear. Plastic, brass, aluminium, and steel are the materials that are generally used for manufacturing [8]. The appearance of various distress and failure modes can differ between gears that have hardened teeth. Gear faults typically occur in the teeth of a gear mechanism due to fatigue, spanning or pitting. These can be manifested as cracks in the gear root or the removal of metal from the tooth surface [9].



Fig. 1: Spur Gears

Gear has failed when it can no longer efficiently do the job for which it was designed. Cause of failure may range from excessive wear to catastrophic breakage. Failure in a gear train in many cases can be prevented. When it does occur, the proper redesign will ensure a trouble-free unit [7]. Following are some of the causes of gearbox failures:

1. Improper gear ratio of meshing gears causes uneven wearing of teeth flank of gear which often fails early, so proper gear ratio must be selected at the design stage itself.
2. Out-of-round or eccentric gears, this includes gears with one or more high places, pitch line run out, uneven tooth width, etc.
3. Gears mounted on a bent shaft.
4. Looseness, including gears or bearings loose on the shaft, and bearings loosened in the housing.
5. Misalignment – it affects the accuracy of the mesh contact in the mating gears and it eventually causes gears to fail prematurely.
6. Excessive backlash or backlash-type problems such as oscillating gears.
7. Gears that have broken, cracked, or chipped teeth.
8. Imbalance – it initially causes overloading and this gradually destroys the teeth' accuracy.

Gear failure can occur in various modes, care is to be taken during the design stage itself to prevent each of these failures as shown in Figure 2.

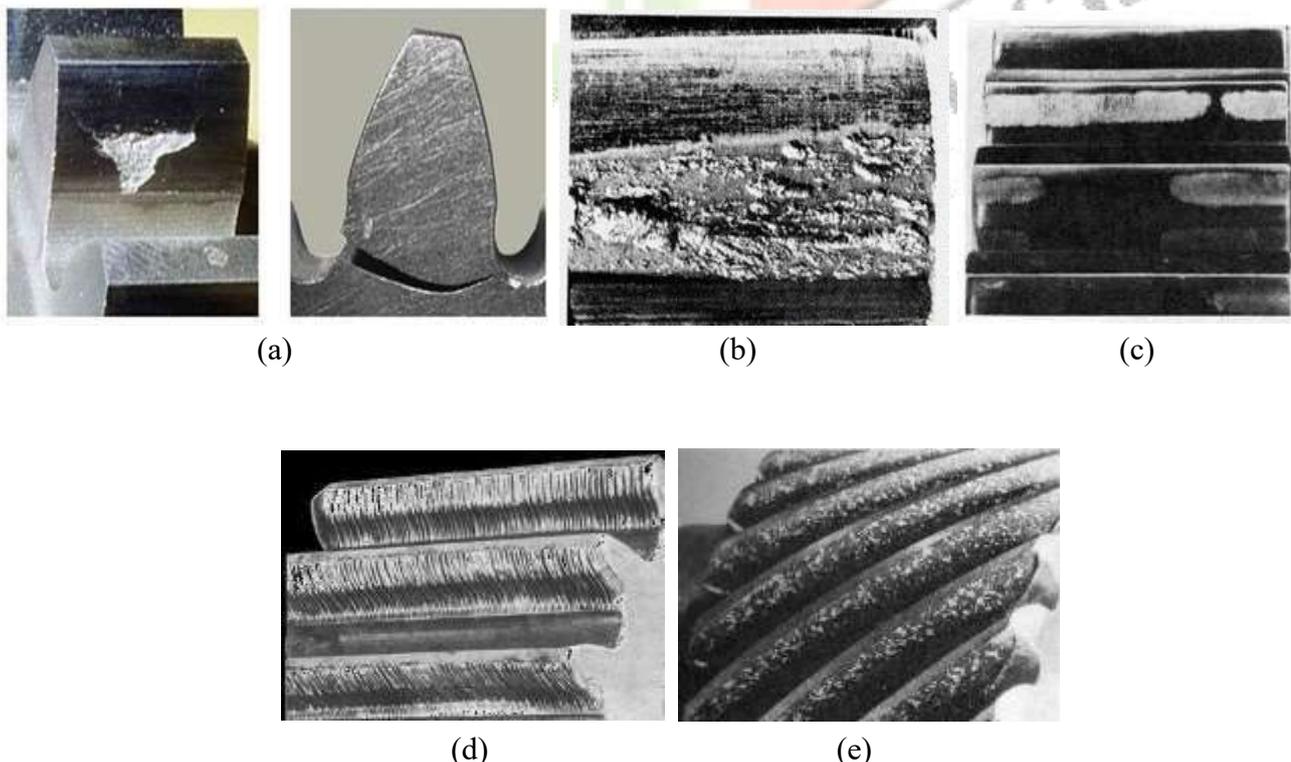


Fig. 2: Modes of failure – bending (a), pitting (b), scoring (c), wear (d), and corrosion (e)[7].

- a. Bending failure: happens if the acting load is greater than the beam strength of the gear tooth. Due to unbalance force bending occurs in gear teeth. To avoid such bending failures of gear teeth face width of the gear has to be adjusted to withstand the acting load or the gear material has to be changed.
- b. Pitting failure: happens on the surface of the gear teeth. It is a fatigue failure and happens when the surface contact stress is higher than the endurance limit of the material. Dynamic load between the gear tooth and the gear should be less than the rupture of the tooth surface.
- c. Scoring: happens when systems run on a lack of lubricants. When there is excessive surface pressure on the gear tooth excessive heat is generated. Therefore, it allows to metal to metal contact which leads to local welding. It results in the tearing of the local welded surface. This type of failure can be minimized by providing a proper flow of lubricants and by adjusting parameters such as speed, and pressure.
- d. Wear: It is the most common gear failure that occurs in gears. Wear can be divided into local wear, distributive wear, and gear backlash. If the lubricant of gears is contaminated with foreign particles such as dirt, dust gear wear increases. So, by providing filters for the lubricant and by adding high viscous lubricants can avoid wear [7].
- e. Gear corrosion: is another special type of gear failure. Corrosion of gears happens mainly due to contact of gears with corrosive elements such as water and other additives existing in the lubricant oil. To minimize or reduce the corrosive wear anti-corrosive additives have to be added to the lubricants or minimizing the contact of corrosive elements can be done.
- f. Pitting: is a surface fatigue failure of the gear tooth, it occurs due to repeated loading of the tooth surface and the contact stress exceeding the surface fatigue strength of the material and material in the fatigue region is removed and the pit is formed.

V. CONDITION MONITORING TECHNIQUES

Condition monitoring's main advantage is to improve the component's dependability, functionality, machining efficiency, and surface quality while lowering downtime and power use. Vibration, temperature, and sound are three ways that the system may be monitored. It should thus be feasible to more precisely assess the status of a machine at any stage of its life by monitoring the tribological events linked to these circumstances [7]. Various condition monitoring systems techniques, including vibration analysis, acoustic emission analysis, sound analysis, thermography, oil analysis, and wear debris monitoring, have been developed over the period to predict and prevent the progression of wear-related damage in gear transmission systems.

a) Vibration Analysis

Vibration condition monitoring is a non-invasive, real-time monitoring technique that utilizes the measurement and analysis of mechanical vibration levels to assess the health and performance of rotating machinery by utilizing sophisticated data analysis techniques and algorithms. The primary objective of vibration analysis is to detect incipient faults and predict impending failures, allowing for proactive maintenance and increased reliability.

b) Oil Analysis

Oil debris monitoring is a crucial method for evaluating the health of rotating machinery, such as engines and gearboxes. This technique involves analysing the properties and contaminants present in the gearbox lubricant to determine the condition of the gearbox components and predict potential issues. Lubricating oil provides knowledge of the machine through tribological and distinctive aging rules point of view. The primary functions of lubricants include reducing wear and friction, protection against corrosion and rust and removing contaminants from the system being lubricated.

c) Acoustic emission Analysis

Acoustic Emission (AE) is a non-destructive testing technique where sensors are attached to the gearbox and linked to a monitoring system. This system records the sounds generated by the gearbox during operation and analyses them [17]. Acoustic monitoring has some similarities with vibration to detect movement, acoustic sensors are attached with low attenuation and record sound directly. Non-destructive testing techniques using acoustic waves to improve the safety of gearboxes. **d) Sound Analysis**

In contrast to the current methods for dynamic traffic noise maps, which rely on traffic flow as a non-acoustic road-related parameter to predict the noise emission of the entire road network, this study suggests a new

method for dynamic updates of traffic noise maps in large regions based on noise monitoring and traffic speed data.

e) Thermography

The number of solar photovoltaic (PV) plants has been steadily growing, piquing the interest of governments and academics, and PV markets are highly competitive. Advanced reliability and efficiency optimization research and development, problem detection and diagnosis, and maintenance of numerous components, notably PV modules, are necessary to achieve this. Additionally, several technical studies and works have been carried out using various detection techniques based on both indoor and outdoor tests.

f) Condition monitoring of gearbox using Lubrication oil analysis

Lubrication oil analysis is a critical component of condition monitoring of a gearbox. The primary functions of lubricants include reducing wear and friction, protection against corrosion and rust, cleaning the system and removing contaminants from the system being lubricated. Some of the techniques used in Lubrication regime analysis will be explained in the forthcoming subsections: **g) Viscosity Analysis**

This technique is used to measure the viscosity of the lubricant, which is an important indicator of its ability to protect and lubricate the gearbox components. Changes in viscosity can indicate the degradation of the lubricant and the need for replacement or supplementation. Viscosity is affected by temperature changes and the presence of contaminants in the oil. An increase or decrease in the viscosity of the oil can indicate potential issues with the gearbox, such as excessive wear, high levels of contamination, or an issue with the lubrication system. The purpose of viscosity analysis is to measure the fluidity or thickness of the lubricating oil and determine if it is within normal operating conditions [4].

Viscosity, shear rate and shear stress parameters are considered for the oil analysis. The relationship between shear rate, shear stress, and viscosity is described by Newton's law of viscosity. The ratio of shear stress to shear rate is a constant, for a given temperature and pressure, and is defined as the viscosity or coefficient of viscosity. According to this law:

$$\text{Shear Stress } (\tau) = \text{Viscosity } (\eta) * \text{Shear Rate } (\gamma) \quad 1.1$$

Shear rate (γ): The rate at which fluid layers move past each other or the rate at which a fluid is sheared. \ The unit is 1/s.

Shear stress (τ): The unit area amount of force that acts on a given fluid parallel to a small element of the surface. The unit is N/m² or Pa.

Viscosity (η): The resistance of the fluid to shear or angular deformation. The units are newton-second per square metre (N.s/m²) or pascal-second (Pa. s).

The procedure for oil sample analysis is discussed in forthcoming chapter and the obtained results from oil samples are compared with vibration analysis.

VI. CONDITION MONITORING OF GEARBOX USING VIBRATION ANALYSIS

Vibration analysis of gearboxes involves the measurement, analysis, and interpretation of vibration signals to detect faults, diagnose issues. Vibration sensors, such as accelerometers, are strategically placed on the gearbox housing or near critical components to measure the vibrations generated during gearbox operation. The measured vibration signals are analysed in the frequency domain using techniques such as Fast Fourier Transform (FFT) allowing to identifying specific vibration patterns associated with gear faults or anomalies.

a) Time Domain Analysis

The Time Domain Analyses of the system is to be done on basis of time. The analysis is only be applied when nature of input plus mathematical model of the control system is known. This representation provides a straightforward understanding of the signal's behaviour over time, making it useful for analysing signals in real-time systems, control systems, and communication systems. Time domain analysis techniques include time-domain signal processing, time-domain system identification, and time-domain model validation.

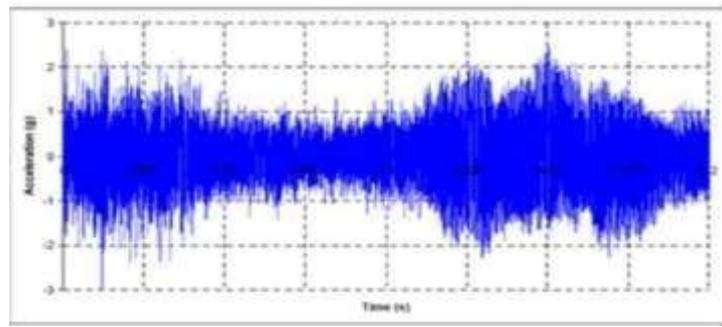


Fig.3: Time Domain plot

b) Frequency Domain Analysis

The representation of a signal in terms of its frequency content is referred to as frequency domain analysis. Using methods like the Fourier transform, signals are converted in this domain from the time domain to the frequency domain, enabling the study of each frequency component separately [4]. The signal's spectral content, including its frequency, amplitude, and phase properties, is described by the frequency domain representation. As time-domain signals may be reconstructed from their frequency-domain representation, frequency domain analysis can also shed light on how signals and systems behave across time. It converts the given signal from the time domain to the frequency domain by integrating the given function over the entire period. Fourier transform for the angular frequency is given by $\omega = 2\pi f$ and time 't' is given in equation 1.2.

$$X(\omega) = \int_{-\infty}^{+\infty} x(t) \cdot e^{-j\omega t} dt$$

where $X(\omega)$ is the Fourier transform of the signal $x(t)$.

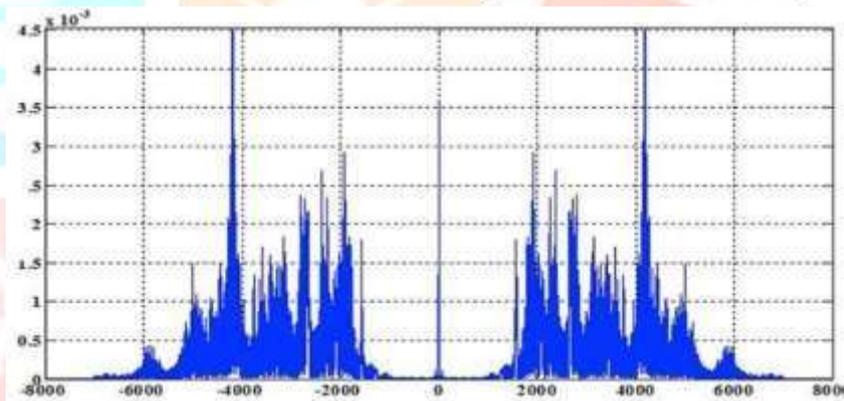


Fig.4: Frequency Domain plot

VII. CONCLUSION

The review of condition monitoring techniques for gearboxes highlights the critical role of predictive maintenance in ensuring the reliability and efficiency of mechanical systems across various industries. Vibration analysis, lubrication oil analysis, acoustic emission analysis, sound analysis, and thermography each offer unique strengths and limitations in detecting and diagnosing gearbox faults. While vibration analysis is highly sensitive and effective for a wide range of faults, lubrication oil analysis provides early warnings by detecting wear particles and contaminants. Acoustic emission and sound analysis are valuable for identifying stress waves and gear meshing issues, respectively, while thermography helps in detecting temperature-related anomalies. The integration of advanced sensor technologies, IoT, and the application of AI and ML algorithms significantly enhance the capabilities of condition monitoring systems, enabling real-time monitoring and accurate fault detection. A multifaceted approach, combining various techniques, is recommended for a comprehensive understanding of gearbox health. Future advancements are expected to focus on further improving sensor technologies, developing robust monitoring systems, and enhancing AI and ML algorithms to provide more accurate and timely insights. This comprehensive review aims to serve as a valuable resource for researchers and practitioners, guiding future research and development in the field of gearbox condition monitoring.

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