

# A high-resolution structural health monitoring system based on SH wave piezoelectric transducers phased array

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**Abstract:** Guided wave based structural health monitoring (SHM) has been regarded as an effective tool to detect the early damage in large structures and thus avoid possible catastrophic failure. In recent years, Lamb wave phased array SHM technology had been intensively investigated while the inherent multi-mode and dispersive characteristic of Lamb waves limits its further applications. In comparison, the fundamental shear horizontal (SH<sub>0</sub>) wave is non-dispersive with uncoupled displacements and thus more promising for defect detection. In this work, we proposed an SH<sub>0</sub> wave linear phased array SHM system based on our recently proposed omni-directional SH wave piezoelectric transducer (OSH-PT). Firstly, the working principle of the phased array system was presented and the total focusing method (TFM) was employed for imaging. Then the SH<sub>0</sub> wave mode generated by the OSH-PT was confirmed in a defect-free plate. Finally, experiments were carried out to examine the performances of this SHM system. Results showed that the proposed system can detect a through-thickness hole as small as 2mm in diameter with the location error only about 6.3 mm. Moreover, the proposed phased array system can also detect multi-defects. Due to its low working frequency and thus low attenuation, the proposed phased array system is capable of monitoring large structures. This work will lay the foundations of SH wave based phased array SHM.

**Keywords:** structural health monitoring; phased array; shear horizontal wave; guided wave; piezoelectric transducer

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## 1. Introduction

The integrity of large structures is always an important issue in engineering fields such as aerospace, chemical and civil engineering, as the possible catastrophic failure could cause huge loss in both casualty and economic. Structural health monitoring (SHM) is regarded as an effective tool to prevent these events and has been under rapid development in recent years[1,2]. By building SHM systems, the status of structures can be under real-time monitoring even during its service period. When sudden or gradual changes happened, the possible damage in structures can be quickly located and quantified. Then, condition-based maintenance policies can be taken to reduce the risk of failure and prolong its service life[3].

Among the existing SHM methods, guided wave based technology is more promising for its less attenuation and thus long distance/large area coverage[4]. In practical applications, transducer arrays are commonly used because single transducer can hardly provide enough information for defects localization. The employed transducer array is usually classified into two types: sparse array and phased array. For the sparse array system, transducers were bonded on the structures with certain distance, dividing the monitoring area into many subareas. Intensive works had been done on the sparse array based SHM method[5–7] and many signal processing techniques[8–10] were successively proposed to increase its detecting capability. However, a baseline in healthy condition is usually required for a sparse array SHM system, which is easily influenced by external factors such as temperature variations. Although some strategies have been proposed to compensate the variations of the baseline[11,12], it will always be a problem in practical applications. In addition, the sensors have to overspread the whole structure in a sparse array system, which may not be feasible in some cases.

In comparison, phased array systems do not need to build sensor networks all over the structure since the B-scan detecting method can easily realize full area inspection. More importantly, it can detect defects without baseline. Many researchers had investigated the capability of the phased array system in damage detecting. Wooh and Shi studied the beam steering characteristics of linear phased arrays ultrasonics[13,14]. Wilcox et.al employed circle-shaped electromagnetic acoustic transducer (EMAT) arrays to inspect large metallic plates[15]. Giurgiutiu and Bao proposed the concept of in situ SHM for thin-wall structures by using linear piezoelectric transducer arrays[16]. Yu and

Giurgiutiu then systematically investigated piezoelectric transducer based phased array in configurations, parameter optimization and signal processing[17–20]. Piezoelectric transducer based phased array SHM had been successfully applied in isotropic plates and then extended to layer composites[21,22]. Despite of above-mentioned success, the inherent multi-modes and dispersion of the employed Lamb waves have strictly limited the further development of current phased array SHM[23]. Although these demerits can be reduced by strategies like turning frequency[24], they can never be completely avoided.

In plate-like structures, there only exists one wave mode that is totally non-dispersive, i.e., the fundamental shear horizontal ( $SH_0$ ) wave. In actual applications, omni-directional transducers are preferred for phased array systems. However, unlike Lamb waves which can easily be generated and received omni-directionally by piezoelectric wafers, the omni-directional generation and reception of  $SH_0$  wave using piezoelectrics is always a challenge. Borigo et.al proposed a design of omni-directional SH wave piezoelectric transducer (OSH-PT) based on two circumferentially poled half-rings[25] but no experimental results were provided. Meanwhile, it should be noted here that the uniform circumferential poling is not possible to realize in practice. Belanger et.al[26] and Miao et.al[27] developed the OSH-PT by synthesizing circumferential poling based on thickness-shear  $d_{15}$  mode and face-shear  $d_{24}$  mode PZT wafers, respectively. The sensitivity variations along different directions for these two types OSH-PTs are about 20% and 15%, which are acceptable but not desirable. Huan et.al proposed an OSH-PT with excellent performances based on thickness-poled, thickness-shear  $d_{15}$  mode PZT ring consisting of twelve elements[28]. This OSH-PT was recently employed in a variable-frequency sparse array SHM system whose performances are superior to the Lamb wave based counterparts[29]. More recently, this OSH-PT was optimized to be two half-rings based, which is more promising in practical SHM applications where a large number of OSH-PTs are required[30].

So far, SH wave based phased array system has never been investigated. Thus in this work, we aimed at developing a SH wave based phased array SHM system using our proposed two half-rings based OSH-PT[30]. Firstly, the working principle of the phased array SHM system and the employed total focusing method (TFM) imaging algorithm[31] were presented. Then the  $SH_0$  wave mode generated by the OSH-PT was confirmed in a defect-free aluminum plate. Finally, the performances of the  $SH_0$  wave phased array SHM system were examined on an aluminum plate with surface

defects and through-thickness holes. Results indicated that the proposed SHM system can effectively detect a through-thickness hole with the diameter as small as 2mm and the location error is only 6.3mm. Besides, it can detect multi-defects simultaneously. This work may pave the way for SH wave based phased array SHM.

## 2. Principle

Firstly, the working principle of the proposed SH wave phased array system was introduced. The system was a linear phased array that consists of  $N$  thickness-poled half-ring based OSH-PTs, as shown in Fig. 1. The configuration, fabrication and performance of this OSH-PT can be found in our recent work[30]. Each OSH-PT was regarded as a point-like transducer with omni-directivity. The spacing between the adjacent OSH-PTs was  $d$ . In this work, we employed the total focusing method (TFM) for imaging[31]. The signals were collected in a round-robin fashion that one element was used as the actuator while the others were served as sensors. In this way,  $N \times (N-1)$  pairs of signals will be collected for each scan. It should be noted that the signals generated and received by the same transducer was not included here. This is because this type signal was collected using a diplexer and the received signal is apt to be influenced by the drive signal if the attenuation was not well adjusted. Note that the collected  $N \times (N-1)$  pairs of signals were enough for the proposed system to locate the defect.

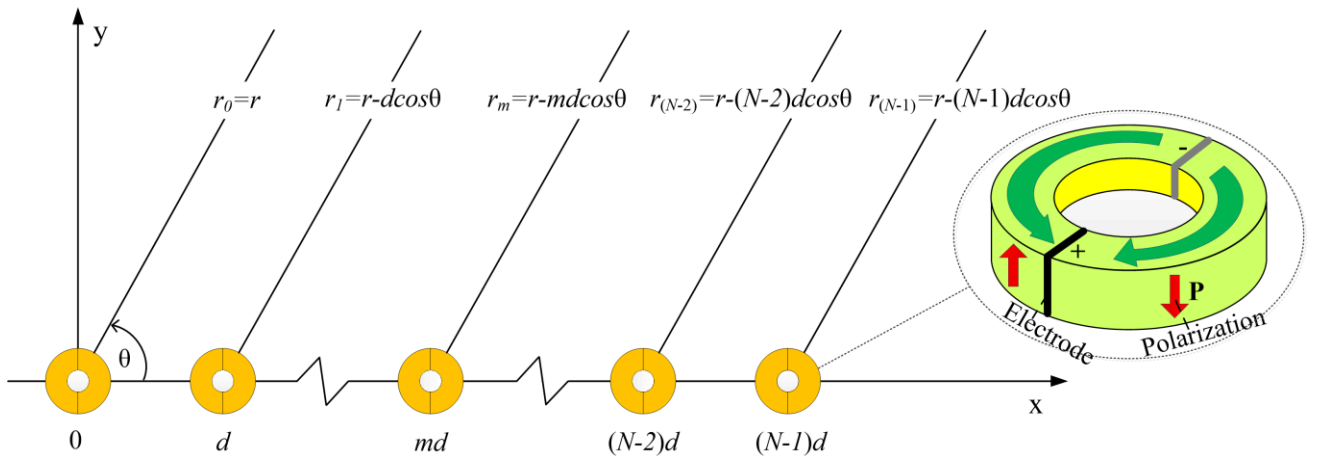


Fig. 1. The principle of the OSH-PTs based SH wave phased array system.

Beamforming of the proposed system was based on the principle of constructive interference.

Due to the spacing of transducers, the distance between one transducer and the target point was different from others. Thus, different time delay was needed for different pairs of transducers in order to realize constructive interference. Here, the parallel ray approximation was employed to calculate the distance difference. This algorithm takes the far field approximation and plane wave front that the distance between the transducer and the target  $r$  is much larger than the transducer spacing  $d$  *i.e.*  $r \gg d$  and the wave would propagate with a plane wave front. Within the near field, the results may contain large errors which can be avoided by adopting exact wave propagating path[32]. Because of the mirror symmetry, this linear phased array cannot differentiate between defects on opposite sides of the linear array. With regard to a target point X at azimuth  $\theta$ , the propagating distance for the  $m$ th OSH-PT was shortened by  $m(d\cos\theta)$  in comparison with the reference signal, as shown in Fig. 1. This signal will then arrive at target X earlier by

$$\Delta t_m = m d \cos \theta / v_g \quad (1)$$

Here,  $v_g$  is the group velocity of the employed wave mode. Note that in this work, we employed the non-dispersive  $SH_0$  wave whose group velocity is constant and equal to the bulk shear wave velocity of the waveguide. Thus the time delay of this phased array system is independent of the working frequency and thickness of the waveguide, which is obviously superior to the Lamb wave based systems[16–19].

The simplest way to achieve constructive interference in wave generation is to apply individual time delays for corresponding OSH-PTs, then the total signal received at point X will be

$$S_{X\text{-generation}}(t, \theta) = \sum_{m=0}^{m=N-1} s_{m \rightarrow X}(t - \Delta t_m) \quad (2)$$

For the wave reception, if the point X was served as the source, the signal received by the  $m$ th OSH-PT will also arrive earlier by  $\Delta t_m = m d \cos \theta / v_g$ . The received signals achieved constructive interference by delaying the time as

$$S_{X\text{-reception}}(t, \theta) = \sum_{m=0}^{m=N-1} s_{X \rightarrow m}(t - \Delta t_m) \quad (3)$$

Since the proposed system worked in the pulse-echo way *i.e.* the time delaying was needed to be considered for both wave generation and reception. Thus, the final signal would realize beamforming via

$$S_X(t, \theta) = \sum_{\substack{i=0 \\ i \neq j}}^{N-1} \sum_{j=0}^{N-1} s_{i \rightarrow j}(t - \Delta t_i - \Delta t_j) \quad (4)$$

With the rotation of  $\theta$ , B-scan was realized in the whole inspection area for damage inspection.

### 3. Experimental

Experiments were carried out on a  $1200 \times 1200 \times 2$ mm aluminum plate to examine the performances of the proposed phased array system in defect inspection. The experimental setup was shown in Fig. 2(a), where nine thickness-poled half-ring based OSH-PTs named  $T_1 \sim T_9$  were bonded on the aluminum plate to construct the linear phased array. The position of the central transducer  $T_5$  was (600mm, 600mm) and the spacing between the adjacent OSH-PTs was 15mm. Each OSH-PT was 12mm in outer diameter, 6mm in inner diameter and 2mm in thickness with the material of PZT-5H. Bearing in mind that shear wave velocity of aluminum is  $3100\text{m}\cdot\text{s}^{-1}$  and based on the  $\lambda/2$  element spacing criterion[33], to avoid the grating lobes along all directions, the working frequency of this phased array system should be lower than 103kHz. However, according to our recent work[30], the employed OSH-PT here has good performances in SH wave excitation/reception and Lamb waves suppression above 120kHz. **The excited  $SH_0$  wave to Lamb wave ratio (SLR)** is above 20dB in most frequency range from 120kHz to 250kHz and can even reach 25dB when frequency is near 140kHz. In this work, to suppress the grating lobes at large steering angles above 103kHz, all the transducers were excited by a five-cycle Hanning window-modulated sinusoid tone burst[33]. In this way, only at the desired steering angle, all tone bursts would appear at the same time point with same phase, realizing the strongest constructive interference. For other steering angles, the tone bursts would not appear at the same time point, resulting in weaker constructive interference even if their phase difference corresponds to integer times of the central-frequency wavelength. Thus, the grating lobes can be effectively suppressed by using tone burst drive signals.

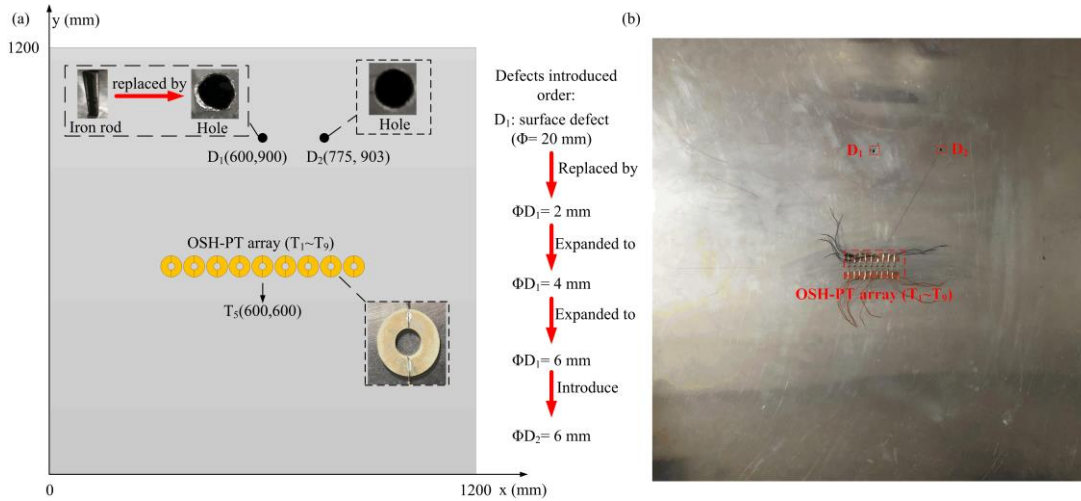


Fig. 2. Experimental setup of the OSH-PT based phased array system. Nine OSH-PTs (named  $T_1 \sim T_9$ ) were bonded on a 2mm-thick aluminum plate to form a linear phased array and two defects (named  $D_1$  and  $D_2$ ) were introduced sequentially. (a) Schematics; (b) Photo.

In order to validate the feasibility of the proposed phased array system in defect detecting, firstly, an iron rod with 20mm in diameter and 100mm in length was bonded on the plate to simulate a surface defect named  $D_1$ . After collecting all the  $N \times (N-1)$  pairs of signals, the glued iron rod was removed and a 2 mm-diameter through-thickness hole was introduced at the same position as another type of defect. Then all the  $N \times (N-1)$  pairs of signals were collected again. Next, this 2mm hole was expanded to 4mm in diameter and then to 6mm in diameter. At each step, all the  $N \times (N-1)$  pairs of signals would be collected again. Finally, another 6mm through-thickness hole named  $D_2$  was introduced to examine the capability of the proposed system in multi-defects detection. The position of all defects was illustrated in Fig. 2(a) and also shown in the photo of the experimental setup, i.e., Fig. 2(b). During testing, the exciting signal of five-cycle Hanning window-modulated sinusoid tone burst was generated by a function generator (3320A, Agilent, USA) and amplified by a power amplifier (KH7602M). The amplitude of the drive voltage was fixed at 120V for all the testing. An oscilloscope (Agilent DSO-X 3024A) was used to collect the signals received by the sensors with 128 times trace averaging.

Firstly, the group velocity of the excited wave was measured in a defect-free aluminum plate to validate the single-mode  $SH_0$  wave. Two OSH-PTs with the distance of 360mm were used as a pair of actuator and sensor. The excitation and reception performances at 120kHz and 180kHz were tested and the results were shown in Fig. 3. It can be found that at both frequencies, there only appeared one waveform in the received signal, as shown in Fig. 3(a) and (b). After employing

continuous wavelet transform (CWT), it can be clearly found that the internal time between the drive and received signals was  $117.2\mu\text{s}$  and  $115.6\mu\text{s}$  respectively, corresponding to wave velocities of  $3072\text{m}\cdot\text{s}^{-1}$  and  $3114\text{m}\cdot\text{s}^{-1}$ . This result is in good agreement with the group velocity of  $\text{SH}_0$  wave (or the bulk shear wave velocity) of  $3100\text{m}\cdot\text{s}^{-1}$  in an aluminum plate. Hence it can be confirmed that single mode  $\text{SH}_0$  wave was excited in the proposed phased array system.

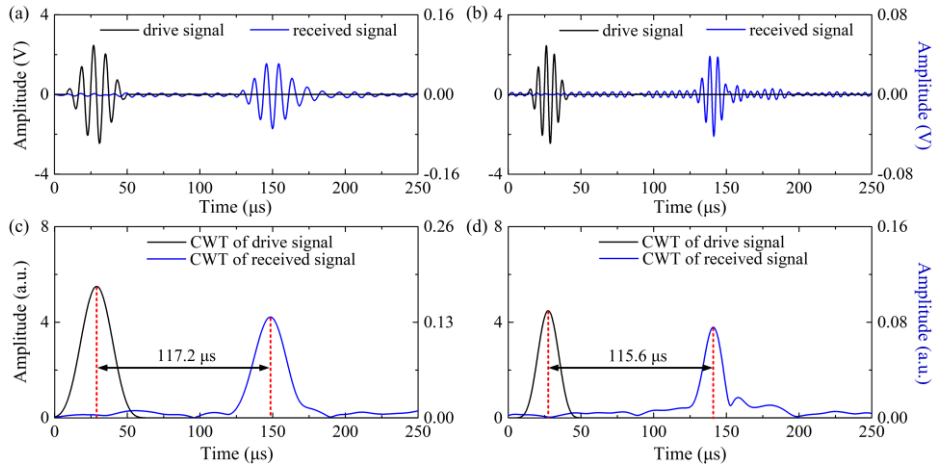


Fig. 3. Signals excited and received by a pair of OSH-PTs at (a) 120kHz and (b) 180kHz. (c) and (d) were continuous wavelet transform (CWT) of the drive signal and received signal.

## 4. Results and discussions

### 4.1 Surface defect detection

Fig. 4 presented an example of signal reconstruction for the surface defect i.e. glued iron rod at  $D_1$  location by the  $\text{SH}_0$  wave phased array system. Here the working frequency was set to be 145kHz as the excited SH wave to Lamb waves ratio (SLR) by the transducer is relatively large around this frequency[30]. It can be seen from Fig. 4(a) that the original signal received by one OSH-PT included three parts: initial bang, echoes reflected from the defect and from boundary. The initial bang consists of the signal directly propagating from the actuator to the sensor and the reflections between them. These signals were useless and would be cut-off in signal processing. The boundary reflection would also be removed in signal processing. For the echo from the defect, its amplitude was rather small and easily masked by the noise, as plotted in Fig. 4(a). It is almost impossible to determine the position of the defect directly using this kind of signal. After adopting the TFM to process all the signals, the amplitude of the reconstructed echo from the defect was greatly enhanced,



as shown in Fig. 4(b). This is because the echoes from the defect realized constructive interference after the TFM processing while the random noise was not enhanced significantly. Thus the enhanced amplitude of the echo was much larger than that of the noise, resulting in an identifiable wave package in the reconstructed signal.

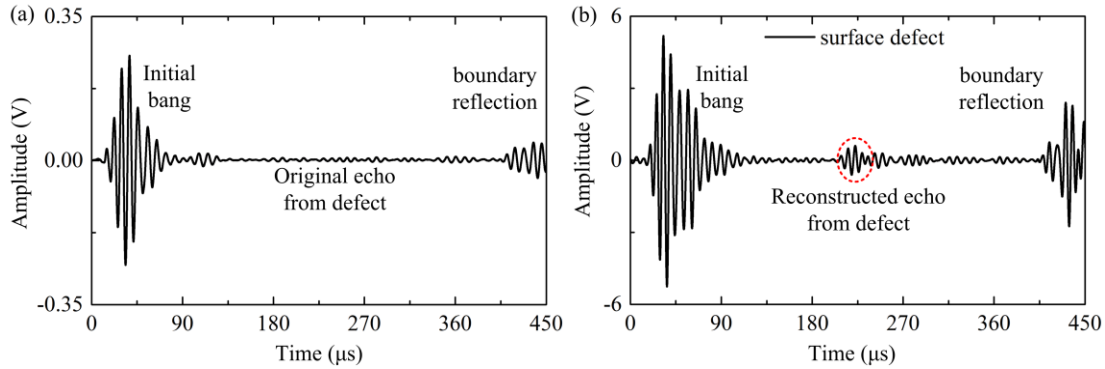


Fig. 4. The example of signal reconstruction at 145kHz for a surface defect by the  $\text{SH}_0$  wave phased array system. (a) original signal received by one OSH-PT; (b) reconstructed signal after constructive interference of all OSH-PTs.

The capacity of the proposed phased array system in detecting a surface defect i.e. glued iron rod was firstly examined at 145kHz. The reconstructed signals at  $30^\circ$ ,  $60^\circ$  and  $90^\circ$  (the defect direction) were plotted in Fig. 5(a), (b) and (c) respectively for comparison. It can be seen that at the direction without defect i.e.  $30^\circ$  and  $60^\circ$ , there is no identifiable wave package of the echo in the reconstructed signal. Only at  $90^\circ$  direction where the defect is located, an identifiable wave package appeared in the reconstructed signal due to the constructive interference of the reflected echoes from the defect. At other directions, the echoes would interfere in a chaotic way. After fixing the direction of the defect, further signal processing can be employed to determine its position, as shown in Fig. 5(d), (e) and (f). Firstly, the continuous wavelet transform (CWT) was adopted to analyze the reconstructed signals. Here,  $t_a$  was the ending time of the initial bang and  $t_b$  was the starting time of the boundary reflection, which was only determined by the experimental system itself. The signal before  $t_a$  and after  $t_b$  would be removed in defects inspection. The effective signal for defects localization was that between  $t_a$  and  $t_b$ . Then, threshold truncation was applied to remove the background noise. It can be found that with setting threshold value to be 50% of the maximum amplitude, all noise can be removed and only one wave package at  $90^\circ$  direction remained which corresponds to the defect. The drive signal was also plotted here to determine the time interval  $t$  between the phased array system and the defect. Thus, the position of the defect can be determined.

It should be noted that tradeoff should be made when choosing the suitable threshold value. If using a lower threshold value, more information would remain in the reconstructed signals. But the background noise may not be totally removed in this case. While if adopting a high threshold value, some useful information may be cut off as noise, leading to missed detection.

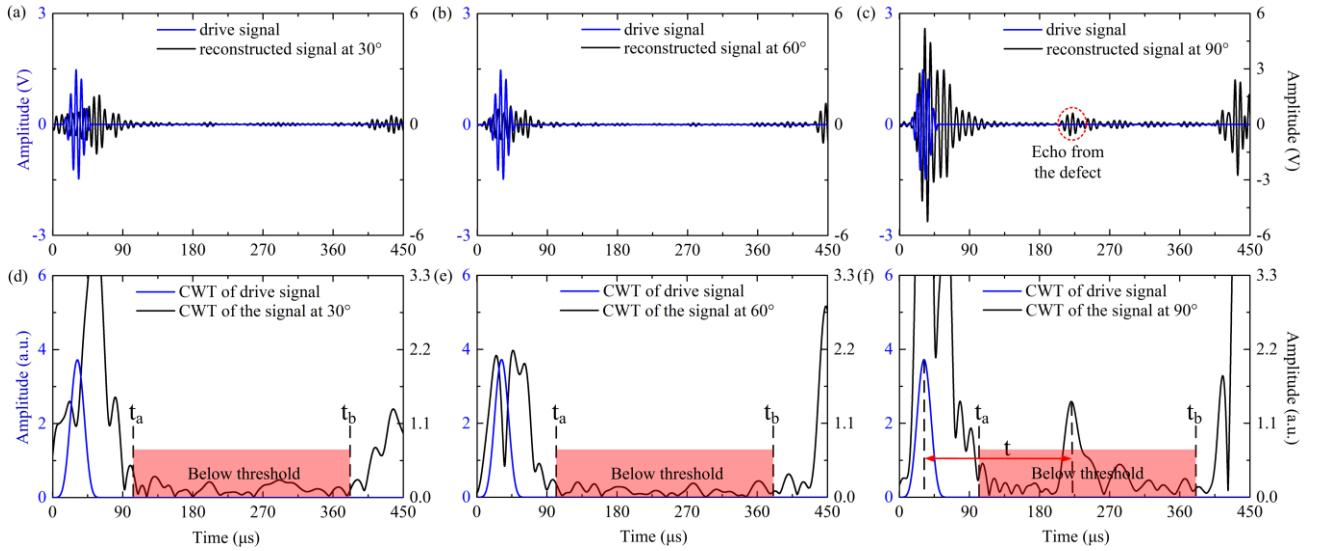


Fig. 5. The reconstructed signals at (a)30°, (b) 60° and (c) 90° direction of the linear array for the surface defect was at 145kHz. (d), (e) and (f) were the corresponding signals after continuous wavelet transformation (CWT).

Because of the initial bang, there exists a blind zone around the transducer array that the artifacts are in high intensity. Similarly, the boundary reflection restricts the maximum detecting distance of the proposed phased array system. Hence, the inspection area of the proposed system was a ring area. This can be clearly seen in Fig. 6(a) which is the imaging result for the 20mm surface defect at 145kHz. The blind zone caused by the initial bang was enclosed by the marked inner circle and that caused by the boundary reflection was outside of the marked outer circle, as the grey zone plotted in Fig. 6. The effective detecting zone should be the ring area between the two circles. However, it should be pointed out that due to the reverberation of signals between transducers, the amplitude of the echoes from defects may decrease significantly, reducing the detecting capability of the proposed system along array orientation ( $0^\circ$  and  $180^\circ$ ). Meanwhile, the imaging result in the near field may contain large errors, as mentioned in Section 2, which can be avoided by adopting exact wave propagating path[32]. It can be seen from Fig. 6(a) that there appeared two highlight areas which are mirror symmetric. One is the actual position of the defect (up), the other is the mirrored

artifact (bottom) which is caused by the mirror symmetry of the linear phased array using omnidirectional transducers and it cannot be avoided. Thus in the rest of the paper, only half plate was presented for the imaging results. Despite of this, the proposed system can detect the surface defect effectively. The located defect position was (594mm, 893mm), which is very closed to its actual position (600mm, 900mm) with the location error about 9mm. This location error was mainly caused by the surface defect itself due to its size of 20mm in diameter. Compared with the large detecting area, this level of location error can be negligible. Fig. 6(d) presented the threshold truncation result of Fig. 6(a). Throughout the paper, the threshold value was set to be 50% of the maximum amplitude, which is considerably smaller than that of 80% in Lamb wave based phased array system[17]. From Fig. 6(d), it can be found that all background noise was successfully removed, indicating the better performance of the proposed  $SH_0$  wave phased array system.

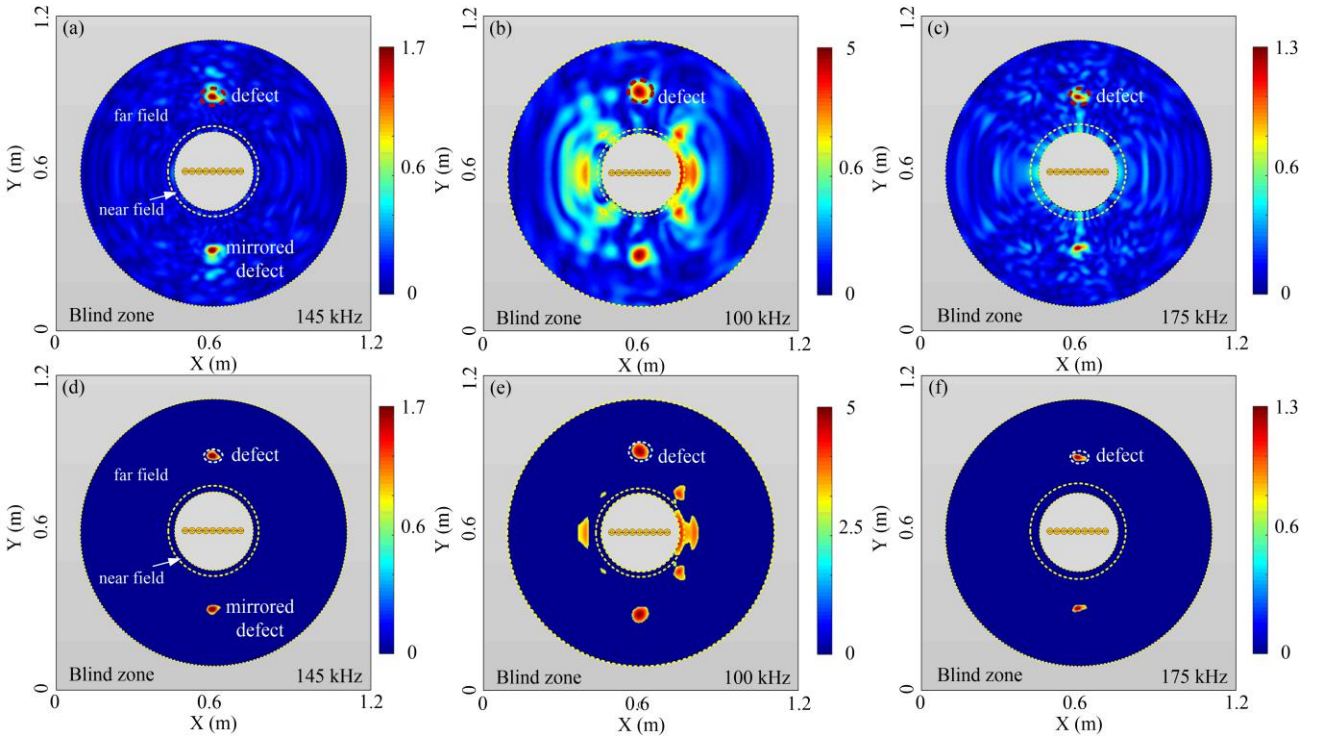


Fig. 6. The imaging results for the surface defect at 145kHz (left), 100kHz (middle) and 175kHz (right). Up: Original results. Bottom: Results after threshold truncation (50% of the maximum amplitude).

The imaging result of the surface defect at 100kHz were presented in Fig. 6(b), from which it can be seen that even at 100kHz, the proposed system can also detect the defect but there appeared some artifacts near the near-field zone, which cannot be fully removed after 50% threshold

truncation, as seen in Fig. 6(e). The main cause of these artifacts was the undesirable performance of the transducer at 100kHz and thus unsatisfied received signals. With the rise of operating frequency, the system can detect the defect more accurately and the artifacts gradually faded away. The imaging result at 175kHz was plotted in Fig. 6(c) and the result after 50% threshold truncation was plotted in Fig. 6(f), from which it can be seen that the surface defect can also be clearly detected. Furthermore, from all the subfigures in Fig. 6, it can be found that the image amplitude corresponding to the defect decreased with the increasing frequency. This was mainly caused by the rising attenuation at higher frequency[34] and the transducer's frequency response. Referring to the signal-to-noise ratio curve of the OSH-PT in SH wave generation/reception which was plotted in our previous work[30], to get better imaging results, the operating frequency was set to be 145kHz in the rest of this paper. Note that the Lamb wave phased array systems have to work at a fixed frequency in order to realize quasi-single wave mode[24]. In comparison, the proposed  $SH_0$  wave phased array can detect the defects at varied frequencies, which has obvious advantages in detecting different-sized defects.

## 4.2 Single through-thickness defect

After validating the capability of the proposed phased array system in surface defect detection, the glued iron rod was removed and a through-thickness hole with the diameter of 2mm, 4mm and 6mm was introduced at the same position in sequence. The reconstructed signals for the holes at 145kHz were presented in Fig. 7. It can be seen from Fig. 7(a) that even for the 2mm hole, the reconstructed echo from the defect was still identifiable although its amplitude was very small. In comparison, the amplitude of the reconstructed echo for the 4mm hole and 6mm hole was much higher, as plotted in Fig. 7(b) and (c). This is easy to understand since a larger defect will cause stronger reflection. This result also implied that it is easier to detect a large defect than a smaller one.

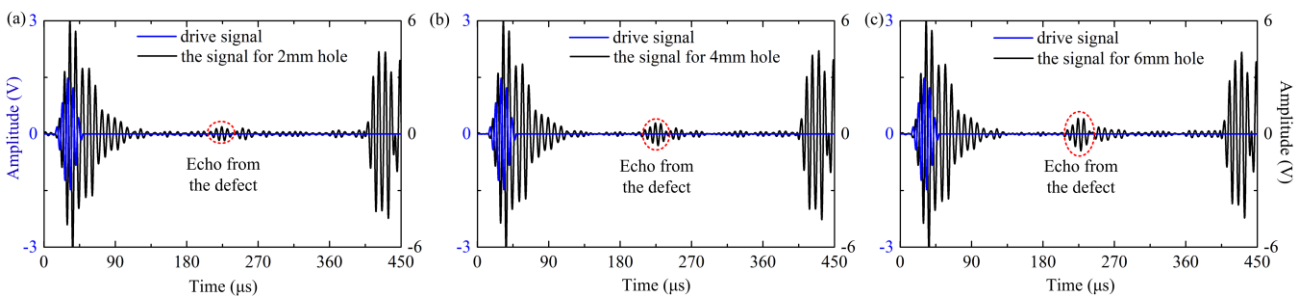


Figure 7. The comparison of the reconstructed signal for the through-thickness hole with diameter of (a) 2mm, (b) 4mm and (c) 6mm at 145kHz.

Fig. 8 (a), (b) and (c) presented the original imaging results for the single through-thickness hole with the size of 2mm, 4mm and 6mm at 145kHz. For the 2mm hole case in Fig. 8(a), it can be seen that one highlight area corresponding to the hole appeared in the reconstructed image with small artifacts around, which indicated that the proposed phased array system can detect a 2mm through-thickness hole 300mm away. The high resolution in defect inspection was benefited from the single mode non-dispersive  $SH_0$  wave employed in the proposed system. As expected, when the size of the hole was expanded to 4mm and 6mm, the imaging amplitudes corresponding to the defects were obviously enhanced, as plotted in Fig. 8(b) and (c), and the artifacts faded away due to its low relative amplitude. The imaging results for the 2mm, 4mm and 6mm hole after 50% threshold truncation were plotted in Fig. 8(d), (e) and (f), respectively, from which it can be seen that the artifacts can be totally removed for the 4mm and 6mm hole cases. While for the 2mm hole, the small artifacts still exist in Fig.8(d) and it can be removed if a higher threshold value was used. Thus, we inferred that the 300mm away, 2mm-diameter through-thickness hole may be the detection limit of this  $SH_0$  wave phased array system.

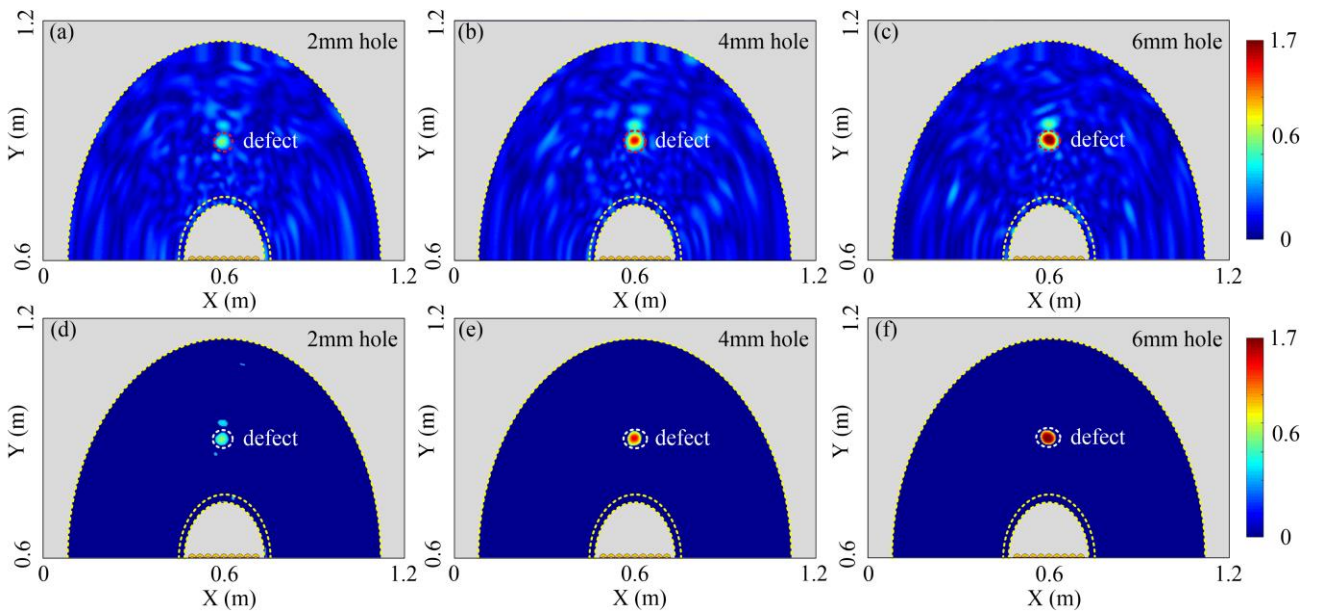


Figure 8. The imaging results for the through-thickness hole with the diameter of 2mm (left), 4mm (middle) and 6mm (right) at 145kHz. Up: Original results. Bottom: Results after threshold truncation (50% of the maximum amplitude).

The location results for the through-thickness hole with different diameter at 145kHz were

listed in Table 1. It can be seen that the location error is about 6.3mm for the 2mm-hole, 5.1mm for the 4mm-hole and only 2.2mm for the 6mm-hole. The decreased location error corresponding to the larger hole was also attributed to the increased amplitude of the reconstructed echo. From all the results above, it can be concluded that the proposed phased array system can detect both surface defects and through-thickness defects in high resolution.

Table 1. The location results for the through-thickness hole with different size at 145kHz.

Defect size (mm)	2	4	6
Actual position (mm)	(600, 900)	(600, 900)	(600, 900)
Located position (mm)	(606, 898)	(595, 901)	(599, 898)

A simple comparison was conducted to illustrate the difference of the proposed system in detecting different types of defects. The reconstructed signals at 145kHz for the 20mm surface defect and the 4mm through-thickness hole were presented in Fig. 9(a) and (b) respectively. By locally amplifying the echoes, it can be found that the amplitudes for these two defects was nearly the same although their sizes were quite different. That is, a 20mm surface defect is almost equivalent to a 4mm-hole as far as the wave reflection is concerned. This is due to the fact that the vibration mode of the  $SH_0$  wave is in-plane. The adhesive interface i.e. the surface defect, was a weak interface for  $SH_0$  wave reflection because the wave can still propagate through this defect zone. In comparison, the interface resulted by a through-thickness hole will cause very strong  $SH_0$  wave reflection since the wave can no longer propagate through this defect zone. Thus, for the proposed SH wave based phased array system, it is more difficult to detect a surface defect than a same-sized through-thickness defect.

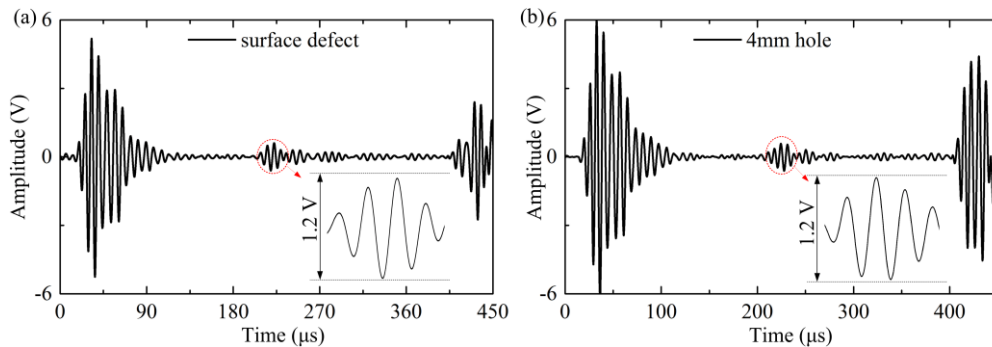


Figure 9. The comparison of the reconstructed signals for (a) the bonded 20mm-diameter iron rod and (b) 4 mm-diameter through-thickness hole at 145kHz.



### 4.3 Multiple through-thickness defects

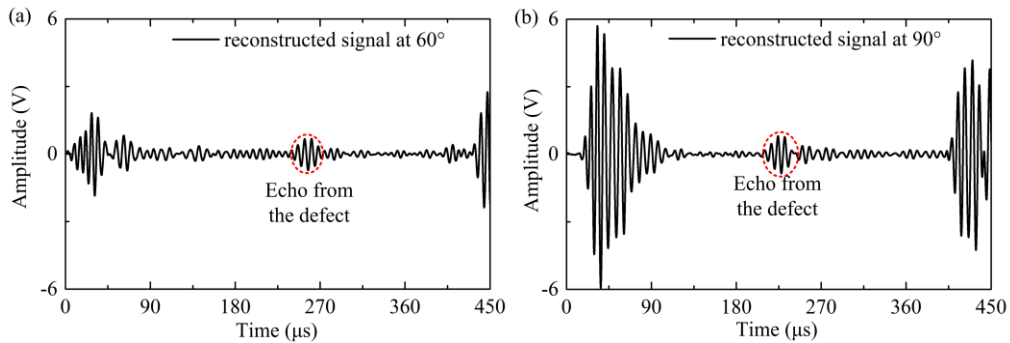


Figure 10. The reconstructed signals at 145kHz for two through-thickness holes with the same diameter of 6mm at (a) 60° direction and (b) 90° direction.

Finally, the capacity of the proposed phased array system in multi defects detection was examined. Besides the 6mm hole at 90° direction with the distance of 300mm, another 6mm through-thickness hole was introduced on the plate at 60° direction with the distance of 350mm. Figs. 10(a) and (b) presented the reconstructed signals at 60° and 90° direction, respectively. In each figure, only one wave package appeared which corresponds to the echo from the defect. This result indicated that the proposed system can detect two defects simultaneously. Note that the echo amplitude for the defect at 60° direction was smaller than that at 90° direction. This may be caused by many factors such as varied reflectivity along different reflection paths, larger energy dissipation for longer propagating distance, deviation of beamforming, etc. In comparison with the single defect case, the noise amplitude of the reconstructed signals for two-defects case was somewhat enhanced, which should be attributed to the interactions of the reflected signals from the two defects since they are not far from each other. From the results in Fig.10, it can be inferred that even using the phased array system, it is more difficult to detect multiple defects than single defect.

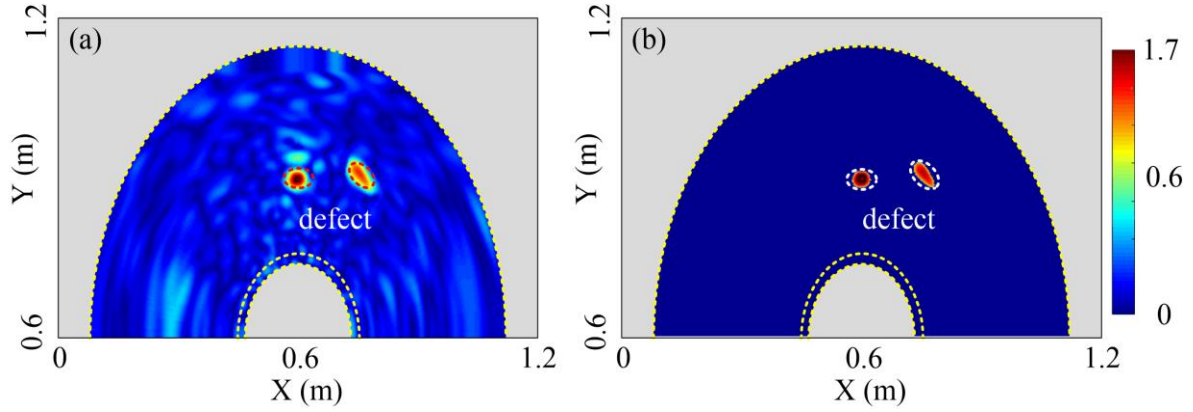


Figure 11. The imaging results at 145kHz for the two through-thickness holes with the same diameter of 6mm. (a) Original results. (b): Results after threshold truncation (50% of the maximum amplitude).

Fig. 11(a) and (b) presented the original imaging result and result after 50% threshold truncation at 145kHz for the two through-thickness holes with the diameter of 6mm. It can be seen that there only appeared two highlight areas which correspond to the two defects. This result further confirmed that the proposed  $SH_0$  wave phased array system can detect multi defects simultaneously. The location results for the two defects were listed in Table 2, from which it can be seen the location error for Defect 1 turns to be 2.8mm and that for Defect 2 is 6.4mm, both larger than the single-defect case of 2.2mm. This should also be attributed to the interactions between the reflected signals from the two defects. Nevertheless, such level of location accuracy is quite good considering its large inspection area.

Table 2. The location results for multi defects detecting at 145 kHz.

Defect number	D <sub>1</sub>	D <sub>2</sub>
Actual position (mm)	(600, 900)	(775, 903)
Located position (mm)	(598, 898)	(771, 908)

It should be noted that at 145kHz, the wavelength ( $\lambda$ ) of  $SH_0$  wave is 21.4mm. The element spacing of 15mm is about  $0.7\lambda$ . If the drive signal was continuous waveform, for the hole at  $60^\circ$  direction, there should appear a grating lobe (large artifact) around  $160^\circ$  direction. While it can be seen from Fig.11(a) that there is no grating lobes at all, which may imply that the employed drive signal of five-cycle Hanning window-modulated sinusoid tone burst is fairly effective in suppressing the grating lobes[33].



## 5. Conclusions

In this work, we proposed a linear phased array system for structural health monitoring (SHM) using omni-directional  $SH_0$  wave piezoelectric transducers based on parallel ray approximation. The performance of the phased array system in damage detecting was systematically examined. Results indicated that it can detect both surface defects and through-thickness defects accurately at varied frequencies. Moreover, it has high resolution which can successfully detect a through-thickness hole as smaller as 2mm in diameter. Besides, it can also detect multiple defects simultaneously. The good performance of this SHM system was mainly benefited from the employed non-dispersive  $SH_0$  wave. Considering its simple structure and desirable results, this work is expected to lay the foundation of  $SH_0$  wave based phased array SHM.

It should be noted that the mirror artifact is the inherent problem of the linear phased array system. Meanwhile, the parallel ray approximation used in this work makes the invalid near-field zone fairly large. In our ongoing work, two-dimensional phased array system is under development to remove the mirror artifact and exact wave path will be used to minimize the near field zone.

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