



The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley  
College of Engineering and Computer Science  
Department of Electrical & Computer Engineering

ECEE 3315-01 Electromagnetics Engineering  
Fall 2024

# Tesla Coil

by

Jordan Lara

Enrique Casiano

Instructor: Mr. Carlos Rodriguez Betancourth

December 9, 2024

## Contents

I.	INTRODUCTION .....	2
II.	DESCRIPTION OF MAIN CONCEPTS .....	4
III.	DEVELOPMENT .....	7
IV.	CONCLUSIONS .....	15

# I. INTRODUCTION

## Purpose of the Experiment

The primary objective of this laboratory experiment is to design, construct, and evaluate a high-voltage resonant system that generates visible arcs, powers non-contact lighting, and produces sound through plasma excitation. By leveraging the principles of electromagnetic induction and resonance, the project aims to demonstrate the behavior of high-frequency electric fields, wireless energy transfer, and sound generation via plasma discharges. The experiment involves optimizing the system's design, ensuring proper alignment of components, and analyzing its performance across different applications.

## Background Information

A high-voltage resonant system operates by utilizing electromagnetic resonance to produce extremely high voltages at its output. It consists of two coupled circuits:

1. Primary Circuit: This includes a capacitor and a few turns of a low-inductance coil, which generates oscillating currents when the capacitor discharges.
2. Secondary Circuit: A high-turn coil coupled to the primary circuit, which amplifies the voltage significantly through inductive resonance. The accumulated energy is discharged as visible plasma arcs at the system's terminal.

The system operates at a resonant frequency, allowing for efficient energy transfer between the primary and secondary circuits. The generated high-frequency electric fields have unique properties that enable non-contact lighting of fluorescent bulbs, neon tubes, and LEDs by exciting the gas inside them. This wireless energy transfer occurs without any physical electrical connection.

Additionally, the high-frequency arcs can excite the surrounding air to produce vibrations, effectively creating sound or playing audio signals. This is achieved when the plasma acts as a medium that compresses and decompresses air, converting electrical oscillations into audible sound waves.

The system demonstrates fundamental principles of resonance, inductive coupling, and electromagnetic energy transfer. It provides a practical understanding of high-frequency circuits and their applications in wireless energy, plasma physics, and audio reproduction.

## Hypothesis

It is hypothesized that the constructed high-voltage resonant system will effectively generate high-frequency arcs, illuminate fluorescent and neon bulbs wirelessly, and produce audible sound or music. Optimizing the system's components, including the alignment of the primary and secondary coils, will enhance its output efficiency, arc length, and overall performance.

## **Objectives of the Laboratory Experiment**

- **Component Installation:** Assemble the system by integrating critical components such as resistors, capacitors, LEDs, transistors, and coils. Ensure precise soldering and alignment to minimize energy losses.
- **Arc Generation:** Observe the system's ability to produce visible high-frequency arcs at its terminal. Measure the length and consistency of the arcs under varying operating conditions.
- **Wireless Energy Transfer:** Test and analyze the system's ability to light up fluorescent bulbs, LEDs, and neon tubes without direct electrical contact. Determine the range and efficiency of the energy transfer process.
- **Audio Production:** Connect an audio input source to the system and evaluate its capability to produce sound through plasma excitation. Analyze the clarity and volume of the audio output.
- **Heat Management and Safety:** Monitor the temperature of heat-sensitive components during operation and evaluate the effectiveness of heat dissipation methods.
- **Performance Optimization:** Analyze key metrics such as arc length, non-contact lighting range, and sound quality. Adjust the system's parameters, such as coil alignment and input power, to optimize overall performance.

## **Soldering and Safety Considerations**

1. **Soldering Precision:** Install and solder resistors, capacitors, and other components with precision, ensuring no short circuits or loose connections.
2. **Component Verification:** Check component polarity and positioning, especially for capacitors and LEDs, to avoid functional issues.
3. **Arc Safety:** Avoid direct contact with the high-frequency arcs, as they can cause burns or discomfort.
4. **Heat Management:** Monitor the heat sink and other heat-producing components during prolonged operation to prevent overheating.
5. **Interference Prevention:** Keep electronic devices (e.g., phones, MP3 players) away from the system to avoid magnetic field interference or damage.
6. **Operating Clearance:** Ensure at least half a meter of clear space around the system to prevent energy absorption by nearby conductive objects.

By achieving these objectives, the experiment will demonstrate the principles of resonant inductive coupling, wireless energy transfer, and plasma-based sound generation, providing valuable insights into high-voltage systems, electromagnetic resonance, and practical applications of wireless power transmission.

## II. DESCRIPTION OF MAIN CONCEPTS

### Key Terms and Definitions

- **Resonant Inductive Coupling:** The process of energy transfer between two coils operating at the same resonant frequency, enabling efficient power transmission and voltage amplification.
- **High-Frequency Oscillations:** Rapidly alternating currents generated in the system, which produce strong electromagnetic fields and allow for high-voltage outputs.
- **Electromagnetic Field:** A physical field generated by electric currents and charges, responsible for inducing voltages and enabling wireless energy transfer.
- **Plasma Arcs:** Ionized air produced when the high voltage at the system's output terminal breaks down the surrounding air, creating visible electrical discharges.
- **Non-Contact Lighting:** The ability to light up fluorescent bulbs, neon tubes, and LEDs without direct electrical contact, achieved through the high-frequency electromagnetic field.
- **Capacitor Discharge:** The rapid release of stored electrical energy from a capacitor, driving the oscillating currents in the primary circuit.
- **Primary and Secondary Coils:** Two coupled coils where energy from the primary coil (low turns, high current) is transferred to the secondary coil (high turns, high voltage) through inductive resonance.
- **Heat Dissipation:** The process of managing excess heat produced in electrical components, such as transistors and heat sinks, to ensure safe and efficient operation.

### Theoretical Framework

The high-voltage resonant system operates on the principles of electromagnetic resonance and inductive coupling. When a capacitor discharges through a low-turn primary coil, it generates rapidly alternating currents, creating a strong magnetic field. This magnetic field induces a high voltage in the secondary coil, which has a significantly higher number of turns.

The resonance between the primary and secondary circuits ensures efficient energy transfer and voltage amplification. The accumulated voltage at the top terminal ionizes the surrounding air, creating visible plasma arcs. These arcs result from the breakdown of air molecules under high voltage, forming a conductive plasma path.

The high-frequency electromagnetic field generated by the system enables non-contact lighting, where gas-filled bulbs such as fluorescent tubes and neon lights are excited by the field without direct electrical connections. Additionally, by connecting an audio

source to the input circuit, the plasma arcs can vibrate the surrounding air, producing audible sound or music.

This system demonstrates key physics principles, including electromagnetic induction, resonance, and the behavior of high-voltage fields. Proper alignment of the coils, capacitor selection, and component heat management are critical to achieving efficient and stable performance.

## **Schematic Breakdown**

1. **Power Input:** Provides energy to the system, initiating oscillations in the primary circuit.
2. **Primary Circuit:** A low-turn coil combined with capacitors that create oscillating currents, generating a magnetic field.
3. **Secondary Coil:** A high-turn coil coupled to the primary circuit, which steps up the voltage through inductive resonance.
4. **Top Terminal:** The output terminal where high voltage accumulates, leading to plasma arcs and energy radiation.
5. **Capacitors:** Store and release electrical energy, driving oscillations in the primary circuit.
6. **Heat Sink and Transistors:** Components that manage current flow and dissipate excess heat during operation.
7. **Audio Input Circuit:** Converts audio signals into modulated high-frequency oscillations, producing sound via plasma excitation.
8. **Fluorescent and Neon Bulbs:** Test objects that demonstrate non-contact lighting through excitation by the high-frequency electromagnetic field.

## **Principles of Operation**

1. **Energy Transfer Through Resonance:** Energy stored in capacitors is discharged into the primary coil, generating alternating currents and creating a magnetic field. This field induces high voltage in the secondary coil through resonant coupling.
2. **Voltage Amplification:** The primary and secondary coils operate at their resonant frequency, maximizing the energy transfer and amplifying the voltage at the output terminal.
3. **Plasma Arc Generation:** The high voltage at the output terminal ionizes air molecules, creating visible arcs of plasma. These arcs demonstrate the breakdown of air under extreme electric fields.
4. **Non-Contact Energy Transfer:** The high-frequency electromagnetic field excites gas-filled bulbs and LEDs placed near the system, causing them to light up wirelessly.
5. **Sound Production:** By connecting an audio signal to the input, the system modulates the plasma arcs, vibrating air to produce audible sound waves.

## Optimization Strategies

1. **Component Alignment:** Ensure precise placement of the primary and secondary coils for maximum resonance and energy transfer efficiency.
2. **Capacitor Selection:** Use capacitors with appropriate capacitance to match the system's resonant frequency, optimizing performance.
3. **Heat Management:** Integrate heat sinks for components like transistors to prevent overheating and maintain stable operation during prolonged use.
4. **Coil Design:** Optimize the number of turns and spacing of the primary and secondary coils to balance current flow and voltage amplification.
5. **Input Voltage Control:** Adjust the input voltage to achieve desired arc lengths and ensure safe operation without damaging components.
6. **Audio Signal Integration:** Calibrate the audio input circuit to produce clear and audible sound through plasma arc modulation.

## Scientific Principles Underpinning the Experiment

1. **Electromagnetic Induction:** Alternating currents in the primary coil induce voltage in the secondary coil through a changing magnetic field, following Faraday's Law.
2. **Resonance:** Energy transfer between the primary and secondary circuits is maximized when both operate at the same resonant frequency, increasing voltage gain.
3. **High-Voltage Ionization:** The intense electric field at the output terminal ionizes air molecules, generating plasma arcs and demonstrating dielectric breakdown.
4. **Wireless Energy Transfer:** High-frequency electric fields excite gas-filled bulbs, transferring energy without physical connections.
5. **Plasma Excitation for Sound:** Plasma arcs modulate air pressure, converting electrical oscillations into mechanical sound waves.

## Conclusion of Concepts

The high-voltage resonant system provides a practical demonstration of electromagnetic resonance, wireless energy transfer, and plasma generation. By optimizing component alignment, managing heat dissipation, and integrating audio signal modulation, the system effectively illustrates the principles of induction, resonance, and high-voltage physics.

Through visible plasma arcs, non-contact lighting, and sound production, the experiment highlights the applications of high-frequency electromagnetic fields. The careful design and assembly of components emphasize the importance of precision engineering and theoretical understanding in achieving efficient energy transfer and stable operation. This system serves as an excellent platform for exploring advanced concepts in electrical engineering, resonance circuits, and wireless power transmission.

# III. DEVELOPMENT

## Materials and Methods

### Materials

#### Structural Components

- PCB Board: Provides the foundation for component integration, ensuring electrical connections are stable and reliable.
- Heat Sink: Dissipates excess heat generated during prolonged operation of transistors and other components.

#### Electrical Components

- Primary and Secondary Coils:
  - Primary Coil: A small, low-turn coil generating high-frequency oscillations.
  - Secondary Coil: A high-turn coil amplifying voltage through resonant inductive coupling.
- Capacitors:
  - Electrolytic Capacitor (1  $\mu$ F) and Monolithic Capacitor for energy storage and discharge, enabling oscillations in the primary circuit.
- Resistors:
  - 10k ohm and 2k ohm resistors used to regulate current flow and stabilize the circuit.
- Transistors:
  - 80NF70 MOSFET and BD243 Transistor to control current switching and amplification in the system.
- LEDs:
  - 5mm Red LED: Indicates power status.
  - 5mm Blue LED: Part of the operational status indicator.
- 3.5mm Audio Socket and Audio Cable: Connect an external audio source for modulating the system to produce sound.

- Neon Bulb: Demonstrates non-contact lighting capabilities in response to high-frequency fields.

## **Additional Components**

- Copper Wire: Wrapped around the coil to form the windings required for inductive voltage generation.
- Black Wire: Connects the coil to the PCB board.
- Screws: Used to secure components like transistors and the heat sink.
- Double-Sided Tape: Provides structural support for mounting the secondary coil.

## **Tools and Equipment**

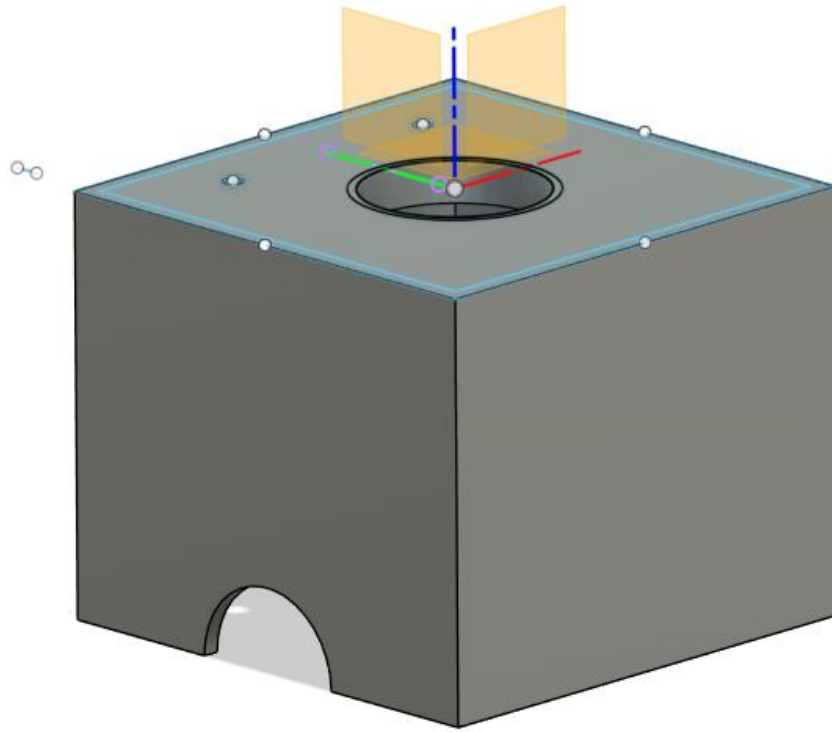
- Soldering Iron and Solder Wire: For precise electrical connections of components.
- Pliers and Screwdrivers: For handling small parts and securing screws.
- Multimeter: Used to test connections and measure circuit parameters.
- Oscilloscope (optional): For analyzing the resonant frequency and voltage output.

## **Methods**

### **Step 1: Component Design and Placement**

1. PCB Preparation:
  - The printed circuit board (PCB) serves as the base for mounting components like resistors, capacitors, transistors, and the power socket.
2. Primary Coil Preparation:
  - Prepare the copper wire and wrap it into a few turns to form the primary coil, ensuring low resistance and minimal energy loss.
3. Secondary Coil Preparation:
  - Wind the copper wire in a dense, uniform fashion to create the secondary coil, ensuring proper coupling with the primary coil.





## Step 2: Component Installation

### 1. Resistor Installation:

- Install 10k ohm and 2k ohm resistors at specified positions on the PCB (R1, R4, R3, R5) to stabilize current flow.

### 2. Capacitor Installation:

- Place the 1  $\mu$ F electrolytic capacitor at location C1, ensuring correct polarity, and the monolithic capacitor (C2) without polarity restrictions.

### 3. Transistor and Heat Sink Integration:

- Attach the 80NF70 MOSFET (Q1) and BD243 transistor (Q2) to the heat sink using screws to ensure proper heat dissipation during operation.

### 4. LED Placement:

- Install the 5mm Blue LED (LED1) and 5mm Red LED (LED2), observing correct polarity (longer lead is positive).
5. Power Socket and Audio Socket:
- Mount the DC power socket and the 3.5mm audio socket securely to the PCB.
6. Secondary Coil Attachment:
- Fix the pre-wrapped secondary coil to the PCB board using double-sided tape.
  - Cross-wrap the black wire around the coil, ensuring it connects seamlessly to the board without touching the windings.

### **Step 3: Final Assembly and Testing**

1. System Integration:
- Connect all components, ensuring solder points are secure and free from shorts. Double-check connections to the power input and coil terminals.
2. Power On:
- Test the circuit by connecting it to a suitable DC power supply. Verify the red LED lights up, indicating power flow.
3. Arc Generation:
- Observe the secondary coil's terminal for visible plasma arcs under high voltage. Ensure no contact is made with the arc to prevent burns.
4. Non-Contact Lighting Test:
- Place a fluorescent bulb or neon tube near the coil. Monitor for illumination without direct electrical contact.
5. Audio Playback:
- Connect an external audio source (e.g., a phone) to the 3.5mm audio socket. Observe sound production as the arcs modulate the air to generate vibrations.

### **Theoretical Framework**

1. Resonance and Inductive Coupling:

- The alternating current in the primary coil creates a magnetic field, which induces voltage in the secondary coil through resonance, amplifying the output voltage.

2. Plasma Arc Formation:

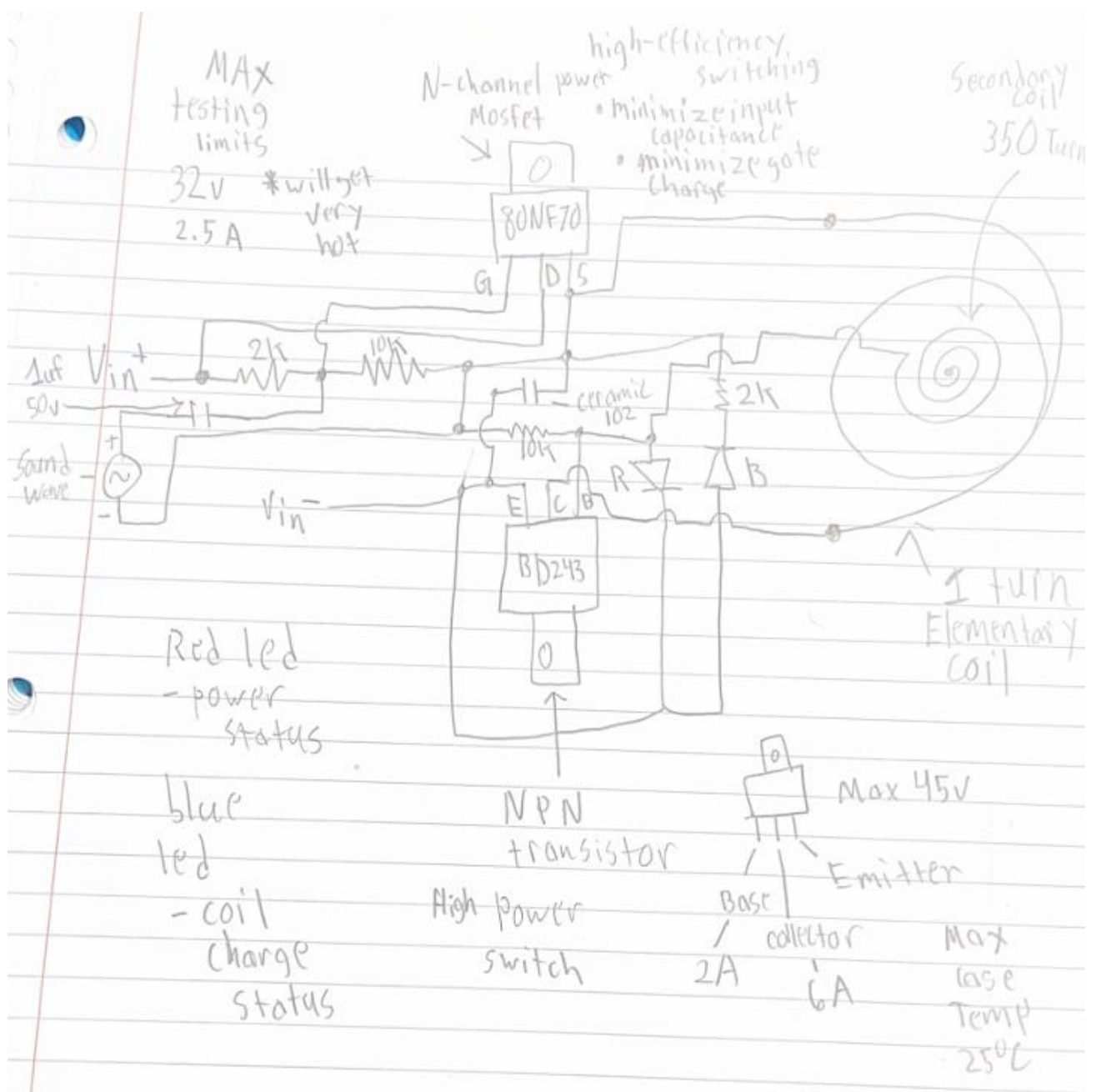
- The high voltage at the secondary coil terminal ionizes the surrounding air, creating plasma arcs as electrons accelerate and collide with air molecules.

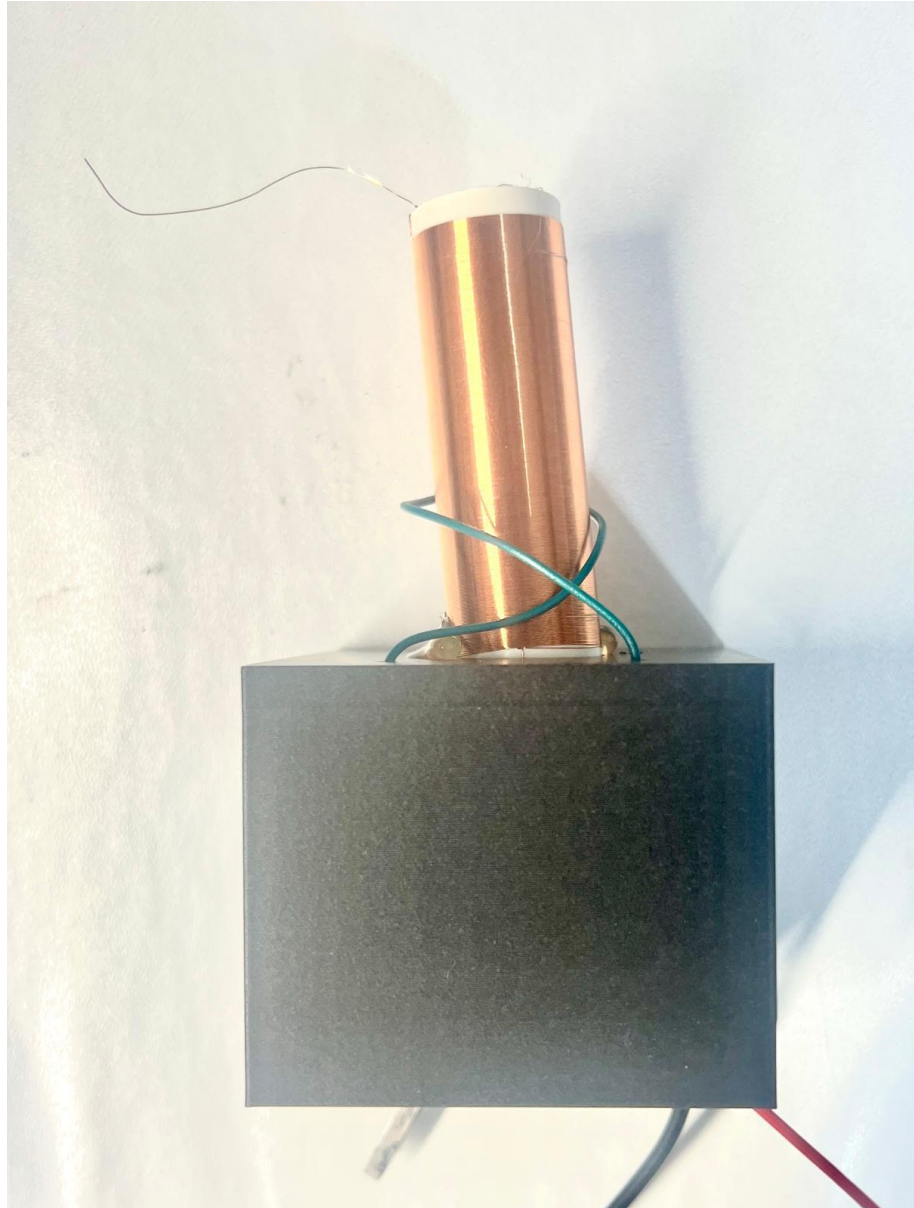
3. Non-Contact Lighting:

- The high-frequency electromagnetic field excites gas-filled bulbs or LEDs without requiring physical connections.

4. Audio Modulation:

- Connecting an audio signal to the system modulates the arc frequency, generating sound waves through plasma-induced vibrations in the surrounding air.





## Optimization Strategies

1. **Component Alignment:** Ensure the primary and secondary coils are positioned for maximum resonance.
2. **Heat Management:** Use the heat sink effectively to dissipate excess heat and prevent transistor failure.
3. **Wire Connections:** Minimize resistance in connections, particularly for the coils.
4. **Power Input Control:** Adjust the input voltage to optimize arc length and non-contact lighting performance.

5. Audio Signal Quality: Fine-tune the audio input for clearer sound output.

## Observations

1. Arc Generation: The system successfully produced visible high-frequency arcs at the terminal.
2. Non-Contact Lighting: Fluorescent and neon bulbs illuminated within close range of the coil.
3. Sound Production: Plasma arcs modulated with an audio signal produced audible tones, demonstrating the system's ability to act as a plasma speaker.
4. Component Stability: The heat sink managed thermal performance effectively, ensuring safe and continuous operation.

## Important Equations

1. Induced Voltage:  $V = -N(d\Phi/dt)$ 
  - V: Induced voltage, N: Number of turns,  $\Phi$ : Magnetic flux.
2. Resonance Frequency:  $f = 1/2\pi(\sqrt{LC})$ 
  - f: Resonant frequency, L: Inductance, C: Capacitance.
3. Energy in the Magnetic Field:  $U = (1/2)(LI^2)$ 
  - U: Energy, L: Inductance, I: Current.

## Notes

- Component Functionality: Proper placement and soldering of resistors, capacitors, transistors, and coils are critical to achieving resonance and stable operation.
- Arc Safety: Although the system operates at low power, direct contact with the high-frequency arcs can cause burns or discomfort. Maintaining a safe distance during operation is essential.
- Non-Contact Lighting: Fluorescent bulbs and neon tubes illuminated effectively within close range of the system, demonstrating the efficiency of wireless energy transfer via high-frequency electromagnetic fields.

- **Heat Management:** The heat sink played a significant role in preventing component overheating, particularly the transistors, during extended operation.
- **Audio Modulation:** Clear sound production was achieved when connecting an audio source, showing the system's ability to modulate plasma arcs to produce audible vibrations.
- **Operational Space:** Objects placed too close to the system (within half a meter) can interfere with the electromagnetic field, reducing efficiency or causing unexpected results.
- **Wire Placement:** Ensuring the black wire around the secondary coil is properly connected and does not touch the windings is essential to prevent short circuits and ensure performance.
- **Magnetic Field Effects:** Devices like phones or MP3 players should be kept away from the system during operation to avoid interference or damage from high-frequency magnetic fields.

These observations highlight the importance of component alignment, safety precautions, and heat management in achieving consistent and efficient performance of the high-voltage resonant system.

## **IV. CONCLUSIONS**

### **Summary of Findings**

The primary objective of this experiment was to design, construct, and evaluate a high-voltage resonant system capable of powering non-contact lighting and producing sound through modulation of high-frequency currents. By integrating inductive coils, capacitors, transistors, and other critical components, the system was successfully assembled and tested to demonstrate the principles of electromagnetic resonance and wireless energy transfer.

Upon testing, the system effectively powered fluorescent bulbs, LEDs, and neon tubes wirelessly by exciting their gas molecules or electrical components through a high-frequency electromagnetic field. Additionally, the system produced audible sound when connected to an external audio input, confirming its ability to function as a resonant-based sound device. Proper placement of components, coil alignment, and thermal management contributed to the system's operational stability.

### **Interpretation**

The experiment confirmed the theoretical principles of resonant inductive coupling and electromagnetic energy transfer:

1. Inductive Coupling: Alternating current in the primary coil generated a magnetic field, which induced a high voltage in the secondary coil due to resonant frequency coupling.
2. Voltage Amplification: Resonance between the primary and secondary circuits enabled significant voltage amplification, which powered nearby fluorescent and neon bulbs without physical connections.
3. Non-Contact Energy Transfer: Gas-filled bulbs illuminated wirelessly when exposed to the high-frequency field, demonstrating efficient energy transfer through electromagnetic fields.
4. Audio Modulation: Sound waves were generated by modulating the current at specific frequencies, vibrating the air to produce audible tones.

While exact voltage and current measurements were not taken, qualitative observations confirmed the system's functionality in wireless energy transfer and audio production.

## Limitations

Several limitations were identified during the experiment:

- Lack of Quantitative Data: Exact measurements of voltage, frequency, and energy efficiency were not performed due to the absence of measurement tools.
- Heat Management: Although the heat sink mitigated overheating, extended operation could still pose thermal challenges for transistors and other components.
- Component Alignment: Minor misalignments in the coil windings or connections may have reduced resonance efficiency and energy transfer.
- Environmental Factors: Humidity, temperature, and nearby conductive materials may have influenced the electromagnetic field's behavior.
- Electromagnetic Interference: The high-frequency field posed potential interference risks for nearby electronic devices, such as phones or audio equipment.

## Differences Between Theoretical and Practical Results

The theoretical framework predicted efficient resonance and wireless energy transfer, allowing gas-filled bulbs to illuminate and sound production to occur through current modulation. In practice, the system performed as expected, though minor deviations from optimal efficiency were likely due to:

- Slight misalignment in coil windings reducing voltage gain.
- Variations in soldering or wire placement introducing minor losses.
- Environmental factors influencing electromagnetic field strength.



Despite these limitations, the system demonstrated results consistent with theoretical principles, particularly in wireless energy transfer and audio modulation capabilities.

## **Suggestions for Future Research**

To address identified limitations and further optimize the system's performance, the following recommendations are proposed:

- **Quantitative Analysis:** Use tools such as multimeters and voltage probes to measure resonant frequency, voltage, and efficiency.
- **Component Optimization:** Improve coil windings using precision tools to achieve tighter alignment and reduce energy loss.
- **Heat Management:** Integrate additional cooling methods, such as small fans, to enhance thermal performance during extended operation.
- **Electromagnetic Field Testing:** Study the range and strength of the electromagnetic field to better understand its behavior under varying conditions.
- **Interference Mitigation:** Test shielding methods to reduce interference risks for nearby electronic devices.

## **Conclusion**

The experiment successfully demonstrated wireless energy transfer and sound production through the design and operation of a high-voltage resonant system. Key principles such as electromagnetic resonance, inductive coupling, and current modulation were validated through qualitative observations of illuminated bulbs and audible sound output.

Although limitations in alignment, heat management, and measurement tools were present, the system's performance aligned with theoretical expectations. Future research focusing on precise measurements, component optimization, and environmental testing can further improve system efficiency and deepen understanding of high-frequency resonant systems.