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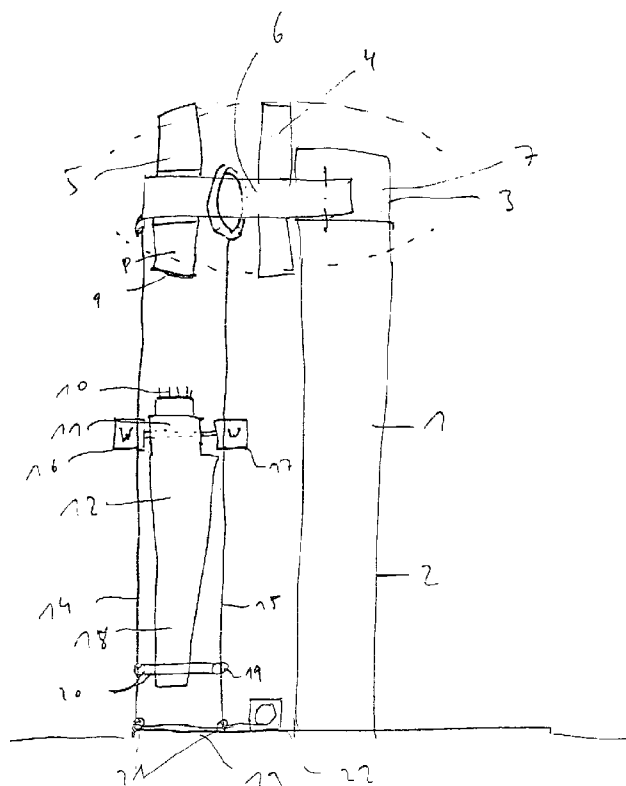
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[Fortsetzung auf der nächsten Seite]

(54) Title: METHOD FOR MOUNTING A ROTOR BLADE OF A WIND ENERGY INSTALLATION WITHOUT USING A CRANE

(54) Bezeichnung: VERFAHREN ZUR KRANLOSEN MONTAGE EINES ROTORBLATTES EINER WINDENERGIEANLAGE



(57) Abstract: Mobile cranes have been used to mount rotor blades on wind energy installations for a long time. Such cranes pick up the rotor blade at the foot of the wind energy installation and guide it up to the rotor blade connection of the hub of the wind energy installation, so that the rotor blade can be connected to the hub. Said connection is carried out mostly by screwing, in that screw bolts are countersunk in the connecting flange of the rotor blade and project into corresponding boreholes in the rotor blade connection of the hub, in such a way that nuts can be screwed onto the screw bolts. The invention relates to a method for mounting blades according to patent claim 1. Advantageous developments are described in the following claims. The inventive method is used to mount a rotor blade (12) of a wind energy installation (1) onto a rotor blade connection (9) on a hub (8) of a rotor (5) of the wind energy installation (1), or to dismount said rotor blade from the same, without using a crane. According to said method, at least one cable (14, 15) is fixed between a part in the hub region (8) of the wind energy installation and the bottom (13) of the wind energy installation (1), and the rotor blade (12) is moved upwards along the cable (14, 15) when mounted and downwards along the cable when dismounted.

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Zur Erklärung der Zweibuchstaben-Codes und der anderen Abkürzungen wird auf die Erklärungen ("Guidance Notes on Codes and Abbreviations") am Anfang jeder regulären Ausgabe der PCT-Gazette verwiesen.

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— mit internationalem Recherchenbericht

(57) Zusammenfassung: Es ist bereits seit langem bekannt, zur Montage von Rotorblättern an einer Windenergieanlage mobile Kräne einzusetzen. Solche Kräne nehmen das Rotorblatt am Fuss der Windenergieanlage auf und führen es an den Rotorblattanschluss der Nabe der Windenergieanlage heran, so dass das Rotorblatt mit der Nabe verbunden werden kann. Diese Verbindung erfolgt meistens durch Verschraubung, wobei in dem Verbindungsflansch des Rotorblatts Schraubbolzen eingelassen sind, die in entsprechende Bohrungen im Rotorblattanschluss der Nabe hineinragen, so dass Muttern auf die Schraubbolzen geschraubt werden können. Die Aufgabe wird mit einem Verfahren zur Blattmontage mit den Merkmalen nach Anspruch 1 gelöst. Vorteilhafte Weiterbildungen sind in den Unteransprüchen beschrieben. Verfahren zur kranlosen Montage bzw. Demontage eines Rotorblatts (12) einer Windenergieanlage (1) an einem Rotorblattanschluss (9) an einer Nabe (8) eines Rotors (5) der Windenergieanlage (1), wobei zwischen einem Teil im Nabenbereich (8) der Windenergieanlage und dem Bodenbereich (13) der Windenergieanlage (1) wenigstens ein Seil (14, 15) eingespannt wird und das Rotorblatt (12) entlang des Seiles (14, 15) bei Montage nach oben, bei Demontage nach unten bewegt wird.

Australia

VERIFICATION OF TRANSLATION

I, Michael Wallace Richard Turner, Bachelor of Arts, Chartered Patent Attorney, European Patent Attorney, of 1 Horsefair Mews, Romsey, Hampshire SO51 8JG, England, do hereby declare that I am the translator of the attached specification in the German language of International Application PCT/EP2003/012447 and I state that the following is a true translation to the best of my knowledge and belief.


.....

M W R Turner

Signed this 16th day of June

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Method for mounting a rotor blade of a wind energy
installation without using a crane

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It has already long been known to use mobile cranes for mounting rotor blades to a wind power installation. Such cranes pick up the rotor blade at the base of the wind power installation and take it to the rotor blade connection of the hub of the wind power installation so that the rotor
10 blade can be connected to the hub. That connection is usually made by screw means, in which case screw bolts are let into the connecting flange of the rotor blade and project into corresponding bores in the rotor blade connection of the hub so that nuts can be screwed on to the screw bolts and in that way the rotor blade is fixed to the hub.

15 As published state of the art attention is directed in particular to the book by Hau, Erich: Windkraftanlagen, 1996. It is also known, in place of a mobile crane, to use a stationary crane which is mounted on the machine housing of the wind power installation. That stationary crane is provided with a cable winch and a winch drive so that the rotor blade at the base of
20 the wind power installation is drawn upwardly to the rotor blade connection and can then be connected thereto.

A disadvantage of mobile cranes is that they must always be on site when the rotor blades are to be mounted to the hub of the wind power installation with such cranes. As almost all other parts of the machine
25 housing are also fitted with those mobile cranes, the rotor blade must be on the building site at the same time with those parts, in order to be able to make best possible use of the mobile cranes, so that all essential parts of the machine housing of the wind power installation, together with all rotor parts, can be mounted with a single use of the crane. If however it is not
30 possible for the rotor blades to be delivered to the building site at the correct time, then either the crane has to wait for the arrival of the rotor blade or as an alternative thereto the crane has to be brought to the site

again so that the blade mounting operation can be effected when the rotor blades are delivered.

5 A disadvantage of stationary cranes is that usually they can also only be mounted on the machine housing of the wind power installation by means of a mobile crane and in addition, if such stationary cranes remain on the machine housing, they are only extremely rarely used so that the costs involved with such stationary crane installations are scarcely reasonably related to the benefit thereof.

10 The aim of the invention is to avoid the above-indicated disadvantages and in particular to provide an inexpensive alternative for the blade mounting operation.

That object is attained by a blade mounting method having the features of claim 1. Advantageous developments are set forth in the appendant claims.

15 With the method according to the invention it is possible to forego the use of a crane for the blade mounting operation. At least the rotor blade is not taken by means of a mobile crane to the rotor blade connection of the hub of the wind power installation. Rather, the invention proposes stretching at least one cable and preferably two cables in parallel
20 relationship with the pylon of the wind power installation between the hub region of the machine housing of the wind power installation and the bottom region at the base of the pylon of the wind power installation. If now those cables receive pass-through winches and those pass-through winches are connected to the hub connection end of the rotor blade, then
25 the pass-through winches can raise the rotor blade on the taut cables to the hub of the wind power installation. When the respective hub is moved with the associated connection into the 6 o'clock position, then the rotor blade with its hub connection can be moved directly to the rotor blade connection on the hub, the screw bolts can be introduced directly into the
30 holes provided for same in the hub and the rotor blade can then be directly connected to the hub. Subsequently to the entire rotor blade mounting procedure the cable can be removed and used again on a further site.

The advantage of the method according to the invention is that on the one hand it is possible to entirely forego the use of a mobile crane for mounting the blades, but on the other hand there is no need for a stationary crane in order to mount (remove) a rotor blade to the hub. In addition the tools which are necessary for blade mounting in accordance with the method of the invention can also be used in relation to other wind power installations, which is usually not possible when stationary crane installations are involved.

In addition the tool which is required for the invention to carry out the method according to the invention is of a very simple nature, with the mounting being sufficiently safe and secure.

If two cables are stretched fast from the hub region of the wind power installation to the bottom region, and each cable carries a pass-through winch, then the drive for the winches can be effected both synchronously and also individually (asynchronously) in order thus in the best possible way to move the rotor blade to the blade connection of the hub in accurate fitting relationship. To provide for mutually superposed positioning of the screw bolts of the rotor blade with the corresponding bores in the rotor blade connection, it is also possible for the rotor blade connection itself to be turned, as in the subsequent pitch mode of operation, so that the correct screw bolts are in the holes intended for same and are fixedly connected to the hub.

If the wind power installation has three rotor blades, it is advantageous if one of the cables is carried by a (rotatable) shaft or a shaft trunnion of the wind power installation so that, upon rotation of the hub, that cable always remains taut and does not have to be set up afresh in order to prepare the blade mounting procedure for a further rotor blade.

Only the cable which is held in the front part of the hub, the so-called spinner, has to be transposed upon rotation of the hub through 120° (in the case of a rotor with three rotor blades) in such a way that, for the blade mounting operation, the cable is disposed parallel to the rotor blade connection of the hub to be fitted with the blade, and is oriented vertically.

Such conversion however is relatively simple and can be effected without a very great deal of time and cost.

The invention is described by way of example hereinafter by means of an embodiment illustrated in the drawing.

5 Figure 1 shows a side view of a wind power installation 1 comprising a pylon 2 and a machine housing 3 which is disposed on the pylon and which accommodates a generator 4 and a rotor 5 with a hub 8, the generator and the rotor being held by a shaft trunnion 6 which is mounted on a machine carrier 7 of the machine housing. The hub 8 itself has a
10 rotatably mounted rotor blade connection 9 having an annular flange with a plurality of bores, through which screw bolts 10 on the connecting flange 11 of the rotor blade 12 can be fitted in the mounting procedure, so that the rotor blade can be screwed to the rotor blade connection of the hub by fitting nuts on the screw bolts. The rotor blade connection is further
15 provided with a usual pitch drive (not shown) in order in that way to rotate the entire rotatable part of the rotor blade to a desired pitch angle.

Two cables 14, 15 are stretched substantially parallel to each other and parallel to the pylon 2 from the hub region 8 of the machine housing 3 of the wind power installation 1 to the bottom region 13 (foundation) of the
20 wind power installation. Each of the cables carries a pass-through winch 16, 17 which in turn are releasably connected to the connection 1 of the rotor blade 12, which is at the hub end.

In the region remote from the hub end, that is to say in the end region 18 of the rotor blade 12 (the rotor blade tip), the cable has a guide
25 device 19 and a receiving device 20 which on the one hand receives that region of the rotor blade and at the same time guides the rotor blade 12 as it is pulled up along the cables so that the rotor blade does not come into contact with the cables, and which on the other hand prevents deflection of the rotor blade out of the desired raising or lowering direction.

30 Each pass-through winch includes a drive (not shown) which in operation moves the winch upwardly along the cable so that the rotor blade 12 which is connected thereto is pulled upwardly.

The drive for the pass-through winches is controllable, but nonetheless the arrangement may also involve a synchronous drive for the pass-through winches so that they run up or down the cable in parallel relationship with each other and always at the same height.

5 Independent (asynchronous) operation of the winches has the advantage that in that way the rotor blade connection can be inclined through a given angle if that is necessary in order to insert the screw bolts of the connecting flange of the rotor blade into the corresponding rotor blade connection on the hub.

10 Fixing of the cables to the ground can be effected by suitable weighted plates (foundation) in which are disposed eyes 21 which receive the cable which in turn is lashed fast to a further winch 22. The fixing of a cable to the machine housing can also be effected in a similar manner, but it is also possible for that cable which is carried by the shaft trunnion to be
15 accommodated by a so-called sling, a textile belt which is slung around the shaft trunnion. Likewise the second cable can be fixed with a sling which is slung around the desired rotor blade connection of the rotor hub. It will be noted however that this rotor blade connection is disposed in the region of the spinner, that is to say the hub cowling which rotates with the rotor, and
20 therefore has to be respectively freshly fitted from one rotor blade to another.

 If a conventional steel cable, for example a 14 mm cable, is used as the cable, a rotor blade can already be raised therewith without any problems.

25 Instead of two cables however it is also possible to provide only one single cable along which the rotor blade is raised and taken to the rotor blade connection of the hub. That is possible in particular if there is a corresponding guide means which holds the rotor blade in the desired reference or target position.

30 That guide means can be for example a rigid member which is guided on a cable and which ensures that the rotor blade remains in a substantially perpendicular position when being pulled up.

After the blade mounting operation each cable can be easily removed and used at a fresh site.

The method according to the invention is also suitable for dismantling a blade, which is usually effected when the blade, for whatever
5 reasons, has to be removed from the wind power installation and/or then either repaired or replaced by another blade.

The method according to the invention is also suitable for raising or lowering other parts of the wind power installation which are required in the machine housing of the wind power installation, without using a crane.

CLAIMS

1. A method of mounting or dismantling a rotor blade of a wind power installation without using a crane to a rotor blade connection on a hub of a rotor of the wind power installation, wherein at least one cable is stretched between a part in the hub region of the wind power installation and the bottom region of the wind power installation and the rotor blade is moved along the cable upwardly upon mounting or downwardly upon dismantling.

2. A method according to claim 1 characterised in that at least two cables are stretched in substantially mutually parallel relationship between the hub region of the wind power installation and the bottom region and the rotor blade is supported between the two cables and preferably there is provided on each cable a device for raising (and lowering) the rotor blade.

3. A method according to one of the preceding claims characterised in that the device for raising (and lowering) the rotor blade is a pass-through winch which on the one hand embraces the cable and which on the other hand is connected to the rotor blade, wherein the winch is preferably connected to the connecting flange of the rotor blade.

4. A method according to one of the preceding claims characterised in that provided in the region of the tip of the rotor blade are guide means which guide the rotor blade along the cable and in so doing prevent contact between the rotor blade and the cable and prevent unwanted deflection of the rotor blade.

5. A method according to one of the preceding claims characterised in that the devices for raising (and lowering) the rotor blade on the cable are individually controllable and also synchronously controllable.

6. A wind power installation including a pylon which is supported on a foundation, and a machine housing which accommodates a generator and a rotor which can be connected to the generator, wherein the rotor has substantially at least one rotor blade and a rotor blade connection provided for same, wherein at least one cable is stretched between the hub region of the machine housing of the wind power installation and the bottom region of the wind power installation, for mounting or dismantling a rotor blade.

7. A wind power installation according to claim 6 characterised in that the cable extends substantially parallel to the pylon.

8. A wind power installation according to claim 6 or claim 7 characterised in that two cables are stretched in mutually parallel relationship between the hub region of the wind power installation and the bottom region.

9. A wind power installation according to one of the preceding claims characterised in that each cable is provided with a winch device which permits raising (and lowering) of the rotor blade which is connected to the winch.

10. A wind power installation according to one of the preceding claims characterised in that provided on the cable at the region of the rotor blade, that is remote from the connecting flange, is a guide device which guides the rotor blade between the cables and which prevents contact between the cable and the rotor blade and deflection of the rotor blade.

11. A method of mounting or dismantling a rotor blade substantially as herein described.

12. A wind power installation substantially as herein described.

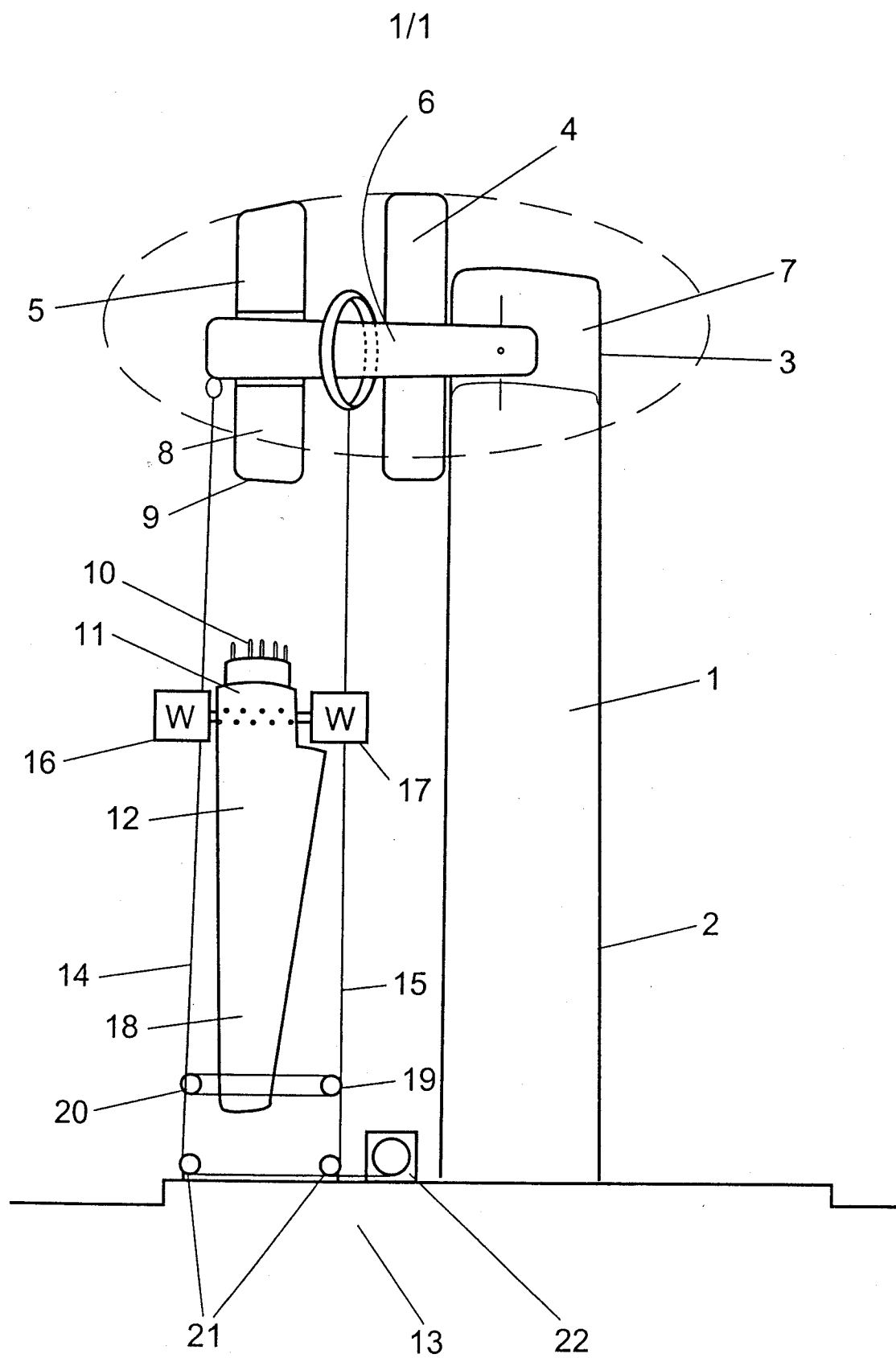


Fig.1