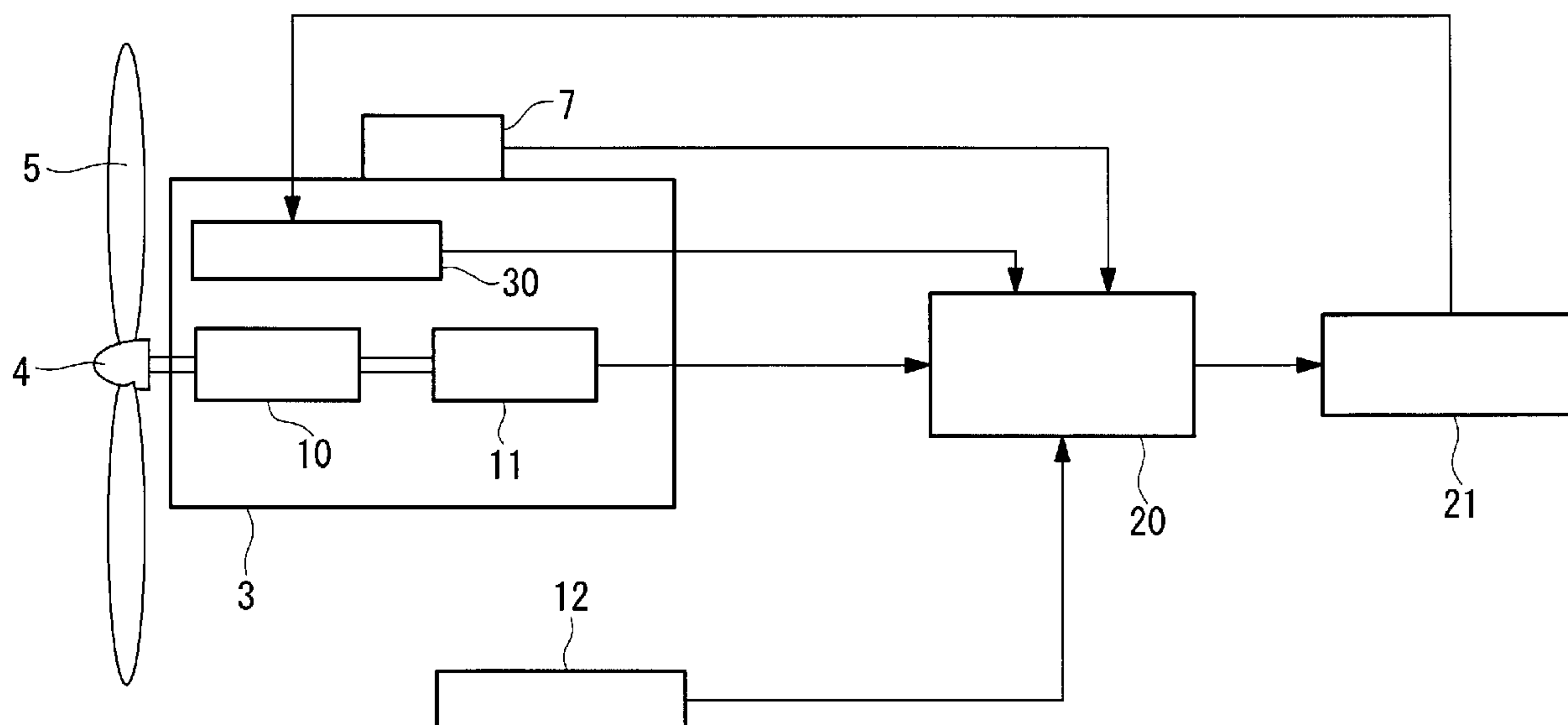




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(57) Abrégé/Abstract:

Provided is a wind turbine generator system that can more accurately perform cut-out control by monitoring a measured value from an anemometer for abnormality. The wind turbine generator system includes, in a nacelle mounted atop a tower, a main shaft that is coupled to a rotor head to which wind turbine blades are attached and that integrally rotates therewith, a gear box accelerating and outputting the rotation speed of the main shaft, a generator driven by the output of the gear box, and a controller that performs cut-out control during strong wind when a measured value from an anemometer is a predetermined level or more. The controller is configured to determine that the anemometer has a fault when a difference between the measured value from the anemometer and an estimated wind speed value, obtained from a relationship between a blade-pitch-angle of the wind turbine blades and an output of the generator is equal to or greater than a predetermined threshold.



ABSTRACT

Provided is a wind turbine generator system that can more accurately perform cut-out control by monitoring a measured value from an anemometer for abnormality. The wind turbine generator system includes, in a nacelle mounted atop a tower, a main shaft that is coupled to a rotor head to which wind turbine blades are attached and that integrally rotates therewith, a gear box accelerating and outputting the rotation speed of the main shaft, a generator driven by the output of the gear box, and a controller that performs cut-out control during strong wind when a measured value from an anemometer is a predetermined level or more. The controller is configured to determine that the anemometer has a fault when a difference between the measured value from the anemometer and an estimated wind speed value, obtained from a relationship between a blade-pitch-angle of the wind turbine blades and an output of the generator is equal to or greater than a predetermined threshold.

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WIND TURBINE GENERATOR SYSTEM

Field of the Invention

The present invention relates to a wind turbine generator system using a wind
5 turbine that converts natural wind power to rotary power for generating electricity.

Background of the Invention

Wind turbine generator systems generating electricity using wind power, which
is natural energy, have been conventionally known. This type of wind turbine generator
10 system includes a rotor head to which wind turbine blades are attached, a main shaft
coupled to the rotor head so as to integrally rotate with the rotor head, a gear box
coupled to the main shaft that rotates by means of wind power received by the wind
turbine blades, and a generator driven by a shaft output from the gear box, which are
provided in a nacelle mounted atop a tower. In the thus configured wind turbine
15 generator system, the rotation of the main shaft and the rotor head provided with the
wind turbine blades that convert wind power to rotary power generates shaft output.
The output of the shaft whose rotational speed is stepped-up by the gear box coupled
to the main shaft is transmitted to the generator. Accordingly, the shaft output obtained
by converting wind power to rotary power works as the driving source of the generator,
20 and thereby electricity can be generated using wind power as the motive energy of the
generator.

The above-described known wind turbine generator system automatically starts
or stops in response to a signal of a wind speed value measured with an anemometer.

In particular, when wind is strong such that the wind speed value is a certain
25 level or more, cut-out control where the electricity generation is stopped by changing
the pitch angles of the wind turbine blades is carried out to protect the system (for
example, see Patent Document 1).

Patent Document 1: Japanese Unexamined Patent Application, Publication No.
2004-84527, dated March 18, 2004 to Mitsubishi Heavy Industries, Ltd.

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Summary of the Invention

In order to perform the above-mentioned cut-out control accurately, the measured value from the anemometer is important. That is, if the anemometer has some sort of fault, a large difference occurs between the actual wind speed and the measured value from the anemometer, making it impossible to achieve accurate cut-out control.

To give a specific example of the anemometer fault, for instance, in a wind turbine generator system placed in a region experiencing heavy snowfall, such as, an area with a cold climate, a measured wind speed value lower than the actual wind speed may be output, for example, because of icing of a wind speed detector, in the anemometer. Such an error in the measurement causes underestimation of strong wind that requires implementing cut-out control and, therefore, is undesirable.

From this background, it may be desirable to perform cut-out control more accurately by providing a means of monitoring whether there is an abnormality related to a measured value from the anemometer.

The present invention has been made under the above circumstances, and an object of the invention is to provide a wind turbine generator system that can perform cut-out control more accurately by monitoring whether there is an abnormality related to the measured values from the anemometer.

The present invention employs the following solutions for solving the above-mentioned problems.

According to an aspect of the present invention, there is provided a wind turbine generator system including, in a nacelle mounted atop a tower, a main shaft that is coupled to a rotor head to which wind turbine blades are attached and that integrally rotates therewith, a gear box accelerating and outputting the rotation speed of the main shaft, a generator driven by the output of the gear box, and a controller that performs cut-out control during strong wind when a measured value from an anemometer is a predetermined level or more. The controller is configured to decide or determine that the anemometer has a fault when a difference between the measured value from the anemometer and an estimated wind speed value, obtained from a relationship between a blade-pitch-angle of the wind turbine blades and an output of the generator, is equal to or greater than a predetermined threshold or level.

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In the wind turbine generator system of the present invention, since the controller decides that the anemometer has a fault when the difference between the measured value from the anemometer and the estimated wind speed value, obtained from the relationship between the blade-pitch-angle of the wind turbine blades and the output of the generator, is equal to or greater than a predetermined threshold, the fault of the anemometer can be reliably detected.

In the present invention, the controller preferably uses a detection value of outside air temperature for deciding that the anemometer has a fault. This allows reliable detection of a fault in the anemometer that is, for example, caused by icing of the anemometer due to a low outside air temperature.

In the present invention, the controller preferably performs the cut-out control when it is decided that the anemometer has a fault. This allows the cut-out control of the wind turbine generator system to be performed reliably.

In the wind turbine generator system of the present invention, by reliably detecting an abnormality with respect to measured values from the anemometer performing the cut-out control, in particular, even when the anemometer has an abnormality such that a value lower than the actual wind speed is outputted as the measured value due to, for example, icing, the cut-out control can be reliably performed to protect the wind turbine generator system from strong wind.

Brief Description of the Drawings

The invention will be further understood from the following detailed description of embodiments of the present invention, in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, in which:

Fig. 1 is a block diagram showing a main portion of an embodiment of a wind turbine generator system according to the present invention;

Fig. 2 is a diagram showing an example of the whole configuration of the wind turbine generator system;

Fig. 3 is a flow chart showing decision of a fault in the anemometer in the controller of Fig. 1;

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Fig. 4 is a graph showing the characteristics of wind turbine blades, in which a relationship between the wind speed V and the generator output W is shown for each blade-pitch-angle; and

Fig. 5 is a flow chart showing a modification of Fig. 3.

5

Detailed Description of the Invention

An embodiment of the wind turbine generator system according to the present invention will be described below with reference to the drawings.

10 As shown in Fig. 2, the wind turbine generator system 1 includes a tower 2 vertically installed on a base 6, a nacelle 3 mounted atop the tower 2, and a rotor head 4 provided on the nacelle 3 so as to be rotatable around an approximately horizontal axis.

15 The rotor head 4 is fitted with a plurality of wind turbine blades 5 that are arranged radially around the rotation axis thereof. As a result, the force of wind blowing against the wind turbine blades 5 from the direction of the rotation axis of the rotor head 4 is converted into motive energy causing the rotor head 4 to rotate around the rotation axis.

20 An anemometer 7 for measuring wind speed at the circumference, an anemoscope 8 for measuring wind direction, and a lightning rod 9 are provided at appropriate portions (for example, the upper side) on the external face of the nacelle 3.

25 A generator 11 coupled to the rotor head 4 via a gear box 10 coaxial therewith is provided inside the nacelle 3. That is, it is configured to obtain a generator output W from the generator 11 by stepping-up the rotation speed of the rotor head 4 with the gear box 10 and driving the generator 11.

30 As shown in Fig. 1, a controller 20 for performing various types of control is provided at an appropriate position in the wind turbine generator system 1. Control with this controller 20 includes starting and stopping of electricity generation, which is performed based on measured values from the anemometer 7, and cut-out control, which is performed when the wind is strong such that the measured value from the anemometer 7 is equal to or greater than a predetermined threshold.

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To the controller 20 are inputted an output signal of wind speed V measured with the anemometer 7, an output signal of detected generator output W generated by the generator 11, and an output signal of outside air temperature T measured with an outside air temperature sensor 12 disposed at an appropriate position.

5 Furthermore, the controller 20 is connected so as to be able to control a variable-pitch mechanism 30. The variable-pitch mechanism 30 is a mechanism that properly changes the pitch angle of the wind turbine blades 5 in response to various conditions, such as, for example, wind speed. In addition, the variable-pitch mechanism 30 can also perform the cut-out control operation for halting the rotation of
10 the rotor head 4 by changing the pitch angle of the wind turbine blades 5 when it receives a cut-out signal 21 which the controller 20 outputs during strong wind.

The above-mentioned controller 20 performs the cut-out control during strong wind, when the wind speed V , which is measured by the anemometer 7, is equal to or greater than a predetermined threshold V_c and, also, decides that the anemometer has
15 a fault when a difference between the wind speed V , which is the measured value from the anemometer 7, and the estimated wind speed value V_a , obtained from a relationship between the blade-pitch-angle of the wind turbine blades 5 and the output W of the generator 11, is equal to or greater than a predetermined value ΔV .

The decision process of the anemometer fault in the controller 20 will be
20 specifically described with reference to the flow chart of Fig. 3.

In a first step S1, the wind turbine generator 1 is operated to generate electricity. During the generation of electricity, the wind speed V is continuously monitored in a step S2 by measuring the wind speed V with the anemometer 7 and inputting the data to the controller 20.

25 At the same time as monitoring of the wind speed in the step S2, the generator output W of the generator 11 is measured in a step S3 and is inputted to the controller 20. The generator output W is used for controlling the variable-pitch mechanism 30 that changes a pitch angle α of the wind turbine blades 5. That is, the variable-pitch mechanism 30 optimizes the pitch angle α of the wind turbine blades 5 based on the
30 measured value of the generator output W .

The generator output W and the pitch angle α obtained in the step S3 are used in the subsequent step S4 for calculating an estimated wind speed V_a . This estimated

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wind speed V_a is calculated based on, for example, the graph shown in Fig. 4. This graph shows the characteristics of the wind turbine blades 5 with the generator output W on the vertical axis and the wind speed V on the horizontal axis, and the generator output W obtained from the wind speed V is shown at each blade-pitch angle α .

5 Therefore, the wind speed V can be back-calculated if the generator output W and the pitch angle α are known. Accordingly, the wind speed back-calculated from the generator output W and the pitch angle α is defined as an estimated wind speed V_a . That is, when the anemometer 7 is normal, in addition to the generator output W and the pitch angle α , the wind speed V measured with the anemometer 7 and the
10 estimated wind speed V_a are approximately equal. Furthermore, in the characteristic of the wind turbine blades 5, a predetermined level V_c as a cut-out wind speed value that indicates the upper limit of wind speed allowing operation of the wind turbine is defined.

Accordingly, in the subsequent step S5, the difference between the wind speed
15 V and the estimated wind speed value V_a is calculated, and it is decided whether the absolute value is greater than or equal to a predetermined value ΔV ($|V - V_a| \geq \Delta V$). When the result shows that the absolute value of the difference between the wind speed V and the estimated wind speed value V_a is greater than ΔV ("YES"), the process proceeds to the subsequent step S6, where it is decided that the anemometer
20 7 has some sort of fault. That is, under operating conditions where wind of wind speed V input from the anemometer 7 blows, if the actually inputted generation output W is different from the generator output calculated from the graph of Fig. 4 when the wind turbine generator system 1 is operated with the wind turbine blades 5 at a pitch angle α , it is considered that the anemometer 7 has a fault thus outputting an inaccurate
25 measured value.

If the wind turbine generator system 1 is continuously operated with the abnormality in the anemometer 7, a serious problem may occur. Therefore, a cut-out signal is outputted in the subsequent step S7. When the cut-out signal is outputted in this way, the variable pitch mechanism 30 is operated to change the blade-pitch angle
30 α to a feathering angle. As a result, the rotational speed of the rotor head 4 and the generator output W are gradually decreased, with losing wind energy, finally reaching a standby state (awaiting cut-out reset).

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Thus, the controller 20 decides that the anemometer has a fault when a difference between the estimated wind speed value V_a , obtained from the relationship between the blade-pitch angle α and the generator output W , and the wind speed V , which is the measured value from the anemometer 7 is equal to or greater than a
5 predetermined value ΔV . Therefore, the fault in the anemometer 7 can be reliably detected.

The above-mentioned controller 20 can recognize a fault in the anemometer 7 caused by icing by using an outside air temperature T measured with the outside air temperature sensor 12 disposed at an appropriate position. The control for the
10 controller 20 to decide a fault in the anemometer 7 caused by icing will be specifically described below with reference to the flow chart of a modification shown in Fig. 5. Portions similar to those in the flow chart of Fig. 3 are denoted by the same reference numerals and their detailed description is omitted.

In this control, the outside air temperature T is monitored with the outside air
15 temperature sensor 12 in a step S11 at the same time as monitoring of the wind speed V in the above-mentioned step S2 and monitoring of the blade pitch angle α in the step S3.

When the absolute value of a difference between the wind speed V and the estimated wind speed value V_a is decided in the step S5 to be greater than or equal
20 to ΔV ("YES"), it is decided in the step S12 whether the outside air temperature T obtained in the step S11 is higher than a predetermined level. When the result is that the outside air temperature T is lower than or equal to the predetermined level ("YES"), the process proceeds to the subsequent step S13, where it is decided that the anemometer 7 is in an abnormal state caused by icing. That is, if the outside air
25 temperature T is low, for example, below the freezing point, it can be decided that the probability of causing a fault due to icing, i.e., for example, adhesion of snow or ice to the anemometer 7, is high. In other words, the controller 20 can reliably detect an anemometer fault caused by icing to the anemometer 7, which occurs when the outside air temperature is low, by using a detected value of the outside air temperature T for
30 deciding abnormality in the anemometer 7.

Based on such a decision, in the subsequent step S7, a cut-out signal is outputted as in the case where the outside air temperature T is higher than a

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predetermined level ("NO"). The process after the output of the cut-out signal in the step S7 is the same as that in Fig. 3.

In the above-described wind turbine generator system 1 of the present invention, it is possible to reliably detect an abnormality in the wind speed V which is the
5 measured value from the anemometer 7 for performing cut-out control. In particular, by adding a condition of outside air temperature T , even in the case of a fault in the anemometer 7, namely, the outputted measured value (wind speed V) being lower than the actual wind speed level due to, for example, icing, the cut-out control can be reliably performed, and therefore the wind turbine generator system 1 can be protected
10 from strong wind. That is, mechanical stress applied to the wind turbine generator system 1 is decreased by reliably performing the cut-out control when the wind is stronger than or equal to the cut-out wind speed.

The present invention is not limited to the above-mentioned embodiments and can be suitably modified without departing from the scope of the present invention,
15 which is defined by the claims appended hereto.

List of Reference Characters:

- 1: wind turbine generator system
- 2: tower
- 20 3: nacelle
- 4: rotor head
- 5: wind turbine blade
- 7: anemometer
- 11: generator
- 25 12: outside air temperature sensor
- 20: controller
- 30: variable-pitch mechanism

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The embodiments of the present invention in which an exclusive property or privilege is claimed are defined as follows:

1. A wind turbine generator system comprising, in a nacelle mounted atop a tower, a main shaft that is coupled to a rotor head, to which wind turbine blades are attached, and that integrally rotates therewith, a gear box accelerating and outputting the rotation speed of the main shaft, a generator driven by the output of the gear box, and a controller that performs cut-out control during strong wind, when a measured value from an anemometer is greater than or equal to a predetermined threshold,

the controller being configured to decide that the anemometer has a fault, when a difference between the measured value from the anemometer and an estimated wind speed value, obtained from a relationship between a blade-pitch-angle of the wind turbine blades and an output of the generator, is greater than or equal to a predetermined threshold, and

wherein the controller is configured to perform cut-out control when the controller has decided that the anemometer has a fault.

2. The wind turbine generator system according to Claim 1, wherein the controller is configured to use a detection value of an outside air temperature for deciding that the anemometer has a fault.

FIG. 1

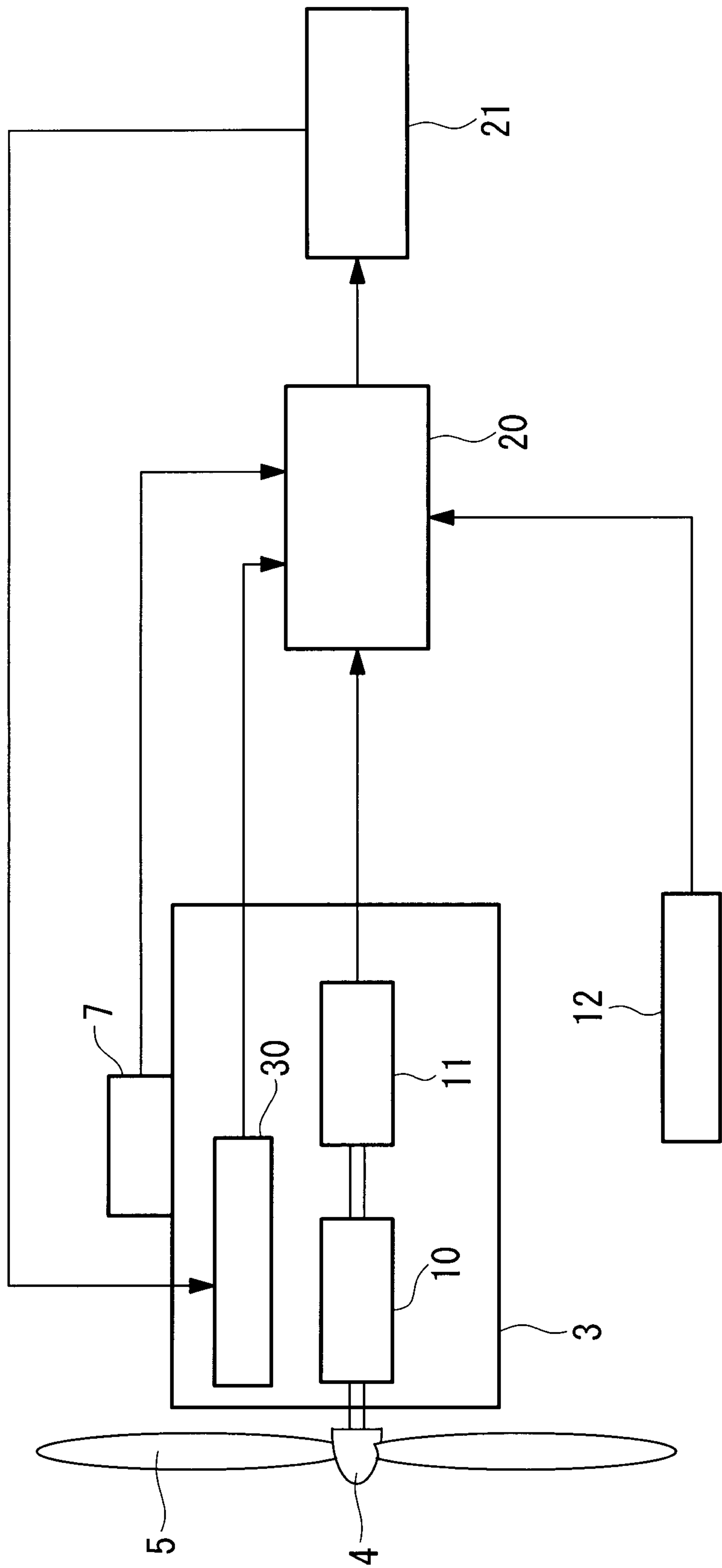


FIG. 2

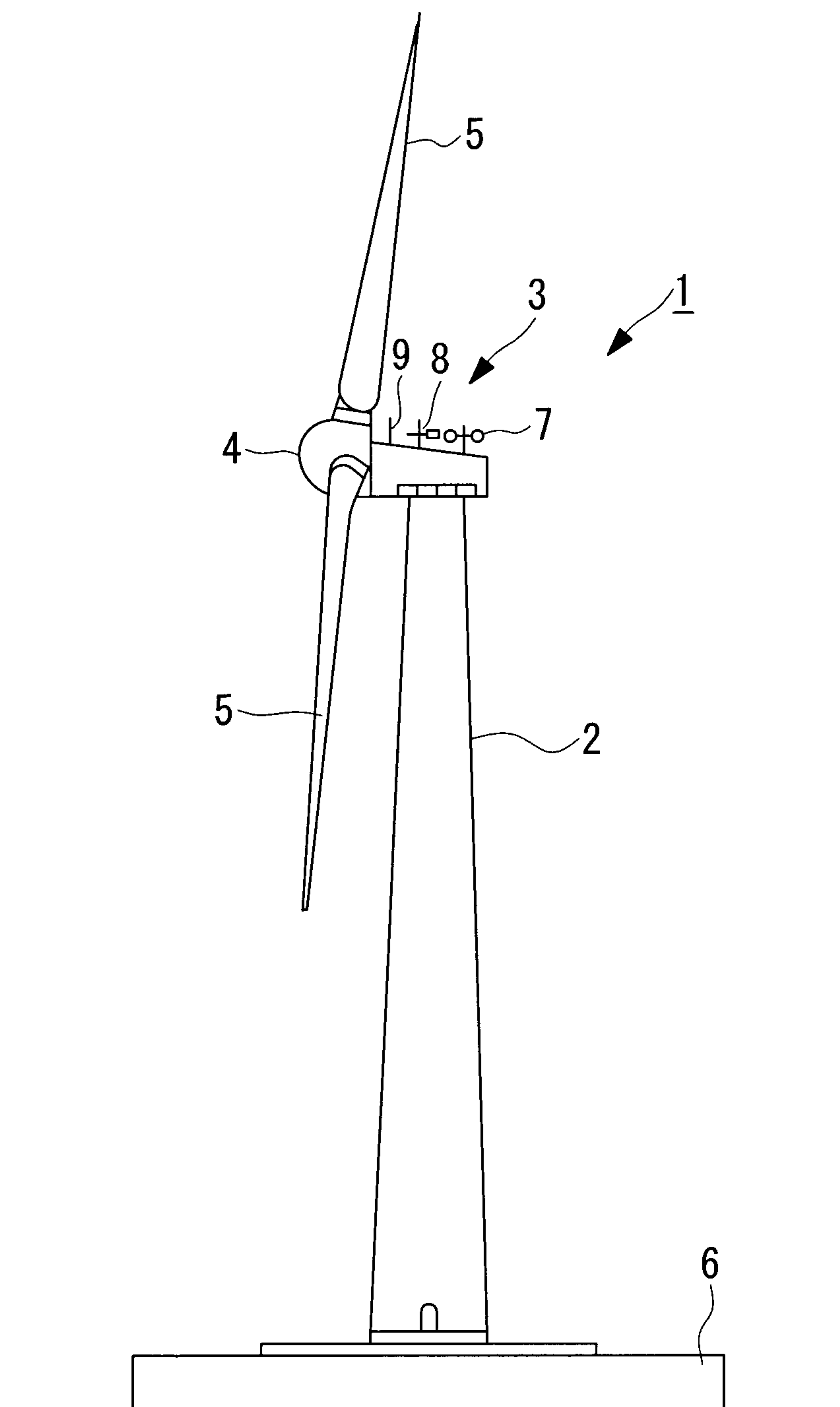


FIG. 3

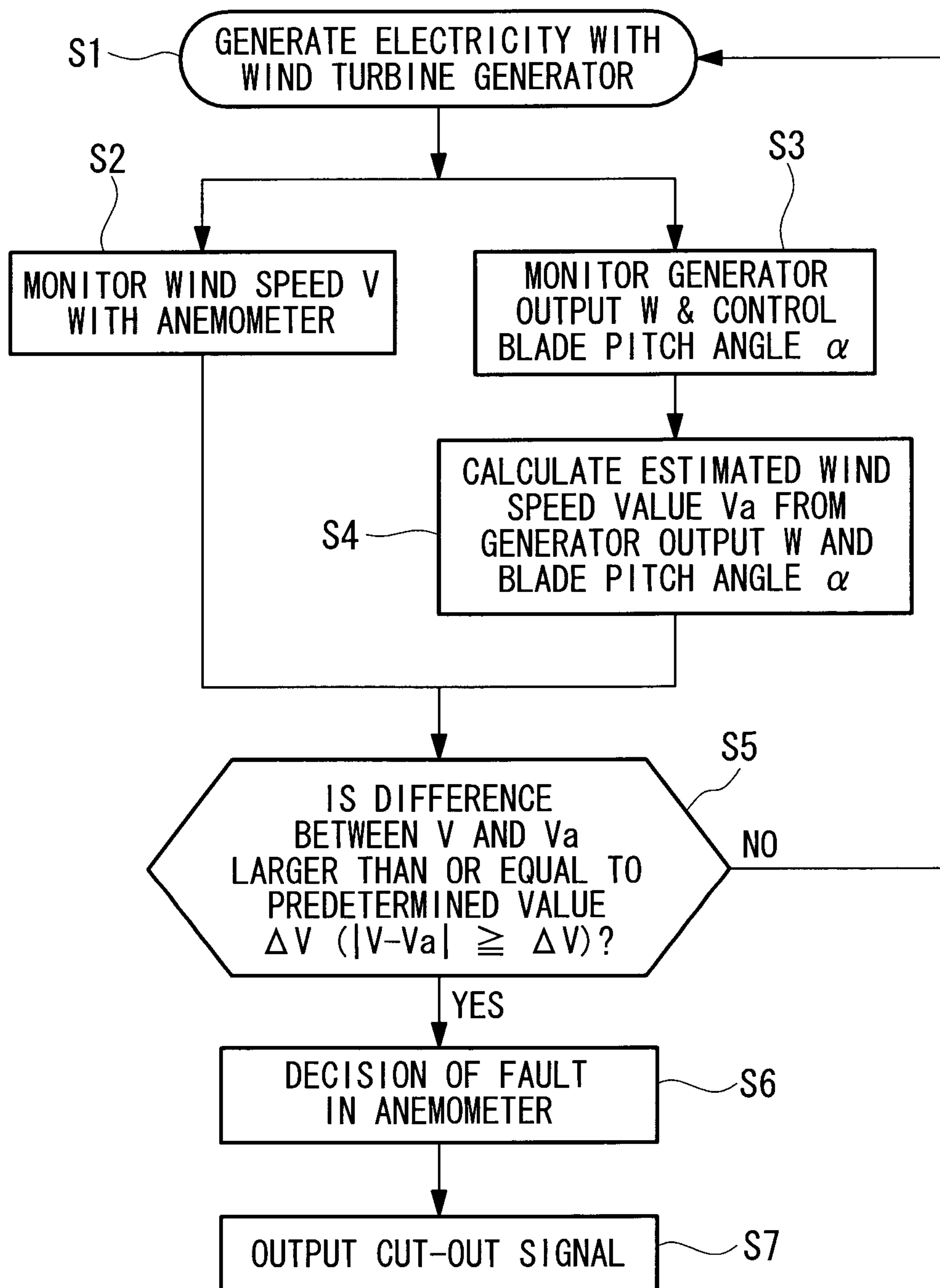


FIG. 4
RELATIONSHIP AMONG GENERATOR OUTPUT (W), BLADE PITCH
ANGLE (α), AND WIND SPEED (V)

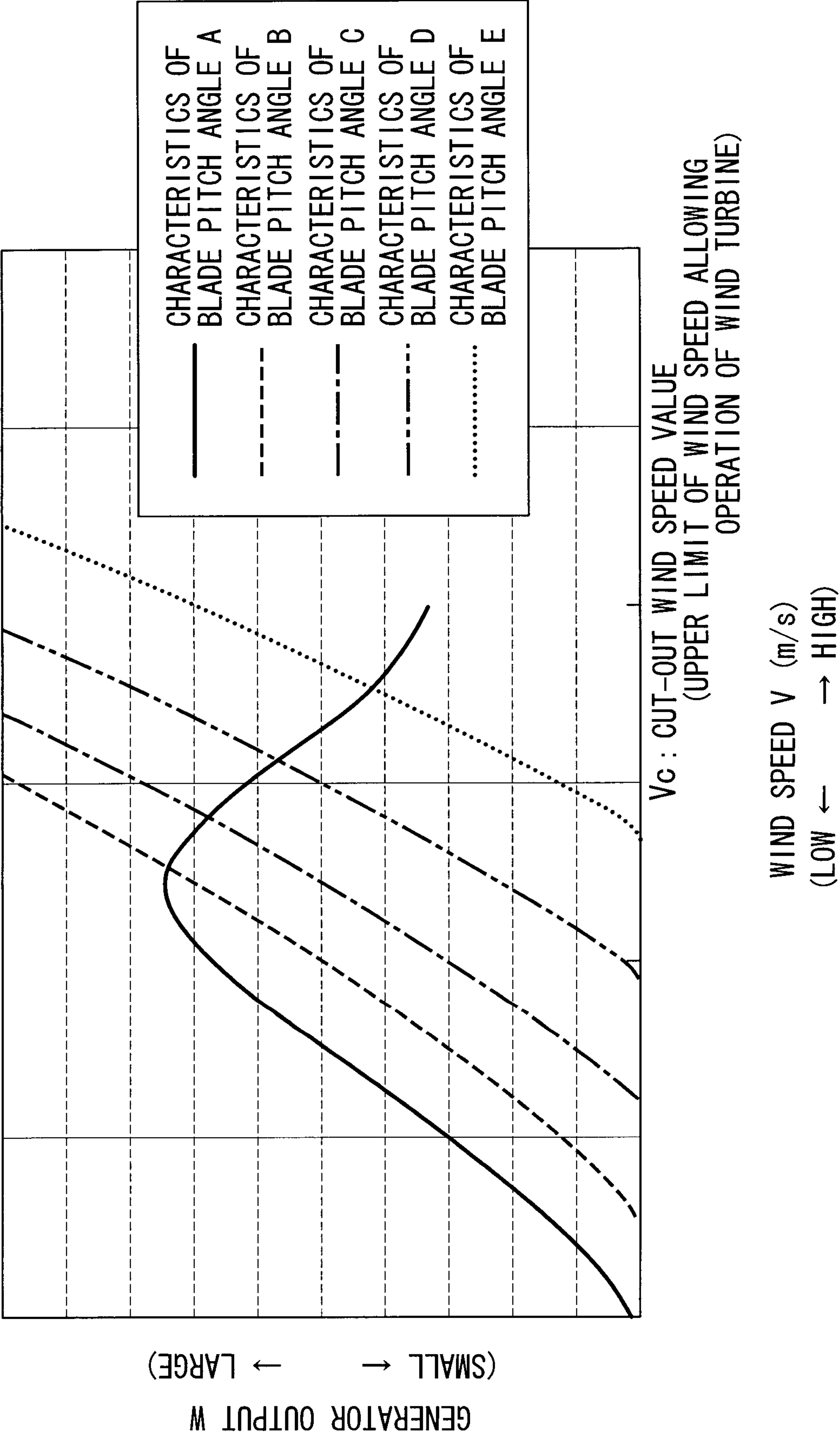


FIG. 5

