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(54) Title: A WIND TURBINE BLADE

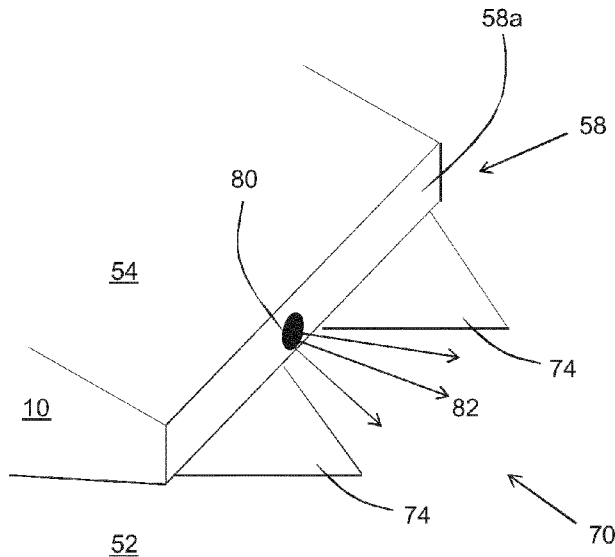


Fig. 7

(57) Abstract: A wind turbine blade is described having noise reduction features. The blade has a plurality of projecting elements provided at the blade trailing edge to reduce the scattering noise produced during operation of the blade. The blade further comprises a fluid injection system which can inject a fluid into the turbulent airflow at the trailing edge of the blade, to absorb some of the turbulent kinetic energy at the trailing edge and accordingly further reduce the levels of output noise produced by the blade. In a further aspect, the fluid injection system may be adjustable to inject fluid in an upstream direction, i.e. against the oncoming airflow, in order to provide an increased absorption of turbulent kinetic energy from the incident airflow, and accordingly to provide improved noise-reduction characteristics.

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A Wind Turbine Blade

Field of the Invention

The present invention relates to a wind turbine blade having noise reduction features.

5 Background of the Invention

One of the primary considerations in the design and operation of wind turbines is the noise levels produced during operation of the wind turbine. Particularly in the case of on-shore wind turbines which may be located close to inhabited areas, the noise from wind turbines can be a limiting factor during the planning permission process when
10 considering possible wind turbine locations. Accordingly, it is of interest to provide for wind turbine designs having reduced noise output during operation.

A large portion of the noise produced during wind turbine operation is due to turbulence formed at the trailing edge of a wind turbine blade, as the relatively faster
15 suction-side airflow meets with the relatively slower pres-sure-side airflow. The relatively high level of turbulent kinetic energy in the combined airflows results in a turbulent scattering of airflow at the trailing edge, which produces scattering noise.

It is known to provide fixed serrations or bristles at the trailing edge of a wind turbine
20 blade in order to disrupt the trailing edge airflow, thereby damping or reducing the turbulence formed at the trailing edge, and consequently the associated noise levels. Examples of trailing edge serrations can be seen in US Patent Publication No. US 2011/0142666 A1. Examples of trailing edge bristles can be seen in US Patent
Publication No. US 2008/0166241 A1.

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However, such noise-reducing features do not provide a complete elimination of trailing edge noise during blade operation.

It is an object of the invention to provide a wind turbine blade having improved noise-
30 reducing characteristics over the known blade designs.

Summary of the Invention

Accordingly, there is provided a wind turbine blade for a rotor of a wind turbine having a substantially horizontal rotor shaft, the rotor comprising a hub, from which the wind turbine blade extends substantially in a radial direction when mounted to the hub, the wind turbine blade extending in a longitudinal direction parallel to a longitudinal axis
5 and having a tip end and a root end,

the wind turbine blade comprising a profiled contour including a pressure side and a suction side, as well as a leading edge and a trailing edge with a chord having a chord length extending therebetween, the profiled contour, when being impacted by an
10 incident airflow, generating a lift,

wherein the wind turbine blade further comprises at least a first array of projecting flow modulation elements provided at the trailing edge of the contour, said flow modulation elements projecting in a direction substantially away from the leading edge of the contour, said elements operable to reduce noise generated by operation of
15 the blade by modulation of the airflow at the trailing edge of the contour,

wherein the wind turbine blade further comprises at least one fluid injection device, the fluid injection device operable to inject fluid into the airflow over the blade contour to reduce the turbulent kinetic energy of airflow at the trailing edge of the profiled contour, to further reduce the noise generated by operation of the blade.
20

The projecting modulation elements act to provide a pressure release mechanism between the suction and pressure sides of the airfoil, to reduce the scattering effect of the turbulent airflow at the trailing edge. The fluid injection acts to dampen the kinetic energy of the turbulent airflow over the contour. The invention may also reduce trailing
25 edge noise for blunt trailing edges of the contour. When the noise modulation effect of the projecting modulation elements is combined with the energy dampening effect of the fluid injection, the synergistic effect of the two separate noise reducing features working in tandem acts to provide a considerable reduction in noise produced during operation of such a wind turbine blade in an incident airflow. The at least one fluid
30 injection device is preferably provided at a location at or adjacent the trailing edge of the profiled contour of the blade.

Preferably, said at least one fluid injection device is provided on said profiled blade contour at between 90-100% of the chordal distance from the leading edge of the blade.

- 5 The fluid injection device may be located at the trailing edge itself, or may be located on the airfoil profile just before the trailing edge.

Preferably, the fluid is selected to have a higher viscosity than the incident airflow.

- 10 Mixing a relatively high viscosity fluid with the relatively low viscosity airflow about the blade acts to efficiently dampen the turbulent energy present in the incident airflow, thereby reducing the noise level generated by the scattering effect of the airflow at the trailing edge of the blade.

- 15 Preferably, the fluid is water. The fluid may alternatively comprise a suitable aerosol.

An aerosol is suspension of fine solid particles or liquid particles in gas. In one embodiment, the aerosol may comprise water particles mixed with a gas. In an alternative embodiment, the aerosol may comprise micro sized dust particles in a gas.

- 20 In one embodiment, the aerosol may comprise sea salt mixed with gas.

In one embodiment, the fluid injection device comprises a nozzle operable to inject fluid in the form of a spray into the airflow over the blade.

- 25 By injecting the fluid as a spray, a faster mixing of the airflow and the fluid will occur, acting to quickly absorb the turbulent kinetic energy of the airflow, and thereby providing a fast reduction of the trailing edge noise of the blade.

- 30 Additionally or alternatively, the fluid injection device comprises a nozzle operable to inject fluid in the form of droplets into the airflow over the blade.

Injecting the fluid as a jet of droplets may provide for a greater absorption of turbulent kinetic energy from the airflow, but which is balanced with a relatively longer kinetic energy absorption time.

- 5 Preferably, said at least a first array of projecting flow modulation elements extends in a longitudinal direction along at least a portion of the length of the wind turbine blade between said root end and said tip end.

10 The array is provided substantially at the trailing edge of the blade, along a portion of the length of the blade. Preferably, the array is at least provided towards the distal end of the blade, towards the blade tip end. Preferably, the array is at least substantially provided in the region of 60-90% of the length of the blade from the root end of the blade.

- 15 As the majority of the noise-generation of a wind turbine blade occurs towards the outer section of the blade, due to the relatively high wind speeds in effect at the outer sections of the blade, the noise reducing features perform most effectively when located in these regions.

- 20 Preferably, said projecting elements comprise serrations.

The use of serrations at the trailing edge of a blade provides a modulation of noise spectra generated at the trailing edge. The serrations act to provide a pressure release mechanism between the pressure and suction side airflows over the blade, reducing the scattering noise associated with trailing edge airflow.

25

Additionally or alternatively, said projecting elements comprise bristles.

- 30 The use of flexible bristles at the trailing edge act to dampen the turbulent airflow at the trailing edge, converting the kinetic energy of the airflow into mechanical (bending) energy in the bristles.

Said bristles may be provided as an array of bristles extending along at least a portion of the trailing edge of the blade along the longitudinal length of said blade. Alternatively, said bristles may be provided as a plurality of clusters of bristles projecting from the trailing edge, said clusters of bristles spaced along the longitudinal length of said blade.

In one embodiment, said at least one fluid injection device is provided at said trailing edge between adjacent projecting elements.

By locating the fluid injection device between the projecting elements, an effective combination of the two noise-reducing features can be achieved, providing for an efficient and immediate reduction in the trailing edge noise of the wind turbine blade.

In the case of serrations at the trailing edge, scattering noise is normally generated due to airflow over the side edges of the serrations. Accordingly, when the fluid injection is located between adjacent serrations, the injected fluid will immediately impact on the airflow at the serration side edges. Thus, scattering noise produced at the edges of the serrations themselves will be efficiently reduced due to the fluid injection between adjacent serrations.

Similarly, in the case of an array of bristle clusters provided at the trailing edge, the fluid injection is located between adjacent clusters of bristles to efficiently dampen any noise produced in the inter-cluster area.

Additionally or alternatively, at least one fluid injection device is provided adjacent said trailing edge, to inject fluid into the airflow about the profiled contour at a location upstream of said trailing edge.

By injecting fluid into the incident airflow at a location upstream of the trailing edge, the fluid injection device is operable to sufficiently dampen or absorb the turbulent kinetic energy of the airflow before it reaches the trailing edge, thereby reducing the level of turbulence and scattering which occurs at the trailing edge, as well as the associated noise levels.

Preferably, said at least one fluid injection device is positioned at a location spaced from the trailing edge, approximately 5-10% of the chordal length from said trailing edge.

5 In an alternate embodiment, said at least one fluid injection device is positioned at a location spaced from the trailing edge, approximately 2-5% of the chordal length from said trailing edge.

10 In this case, the chordal length being calculated at that point along the length of the blade where the at least one fluid injection device is located.

Preferably, said at least one fluid injection device is operable to inject fluid into the airflow at an angle of approximately 145-170 degrees to the chord of the profiled contour of the blade, taken from the leading edge of the blade.

15

By injecting the fluid in a substantially downstream direction, but at an angle to the trailing edge of the blade, the fluid injection provides a good balance between effective dampening of the turbulent kinetic energy of the incident airflow, while also providing a negligible impact on the power produced by operation of the blade.

20

In one embodiment, said profiled contour comprises a substantially blunt trailing edge, wherein said at least a first array of projecting flow modulation elements are provided at the pressure side of said blunt trailing edge, and wherein said at least one fluid injection device is provided at the suction side of said blunt trailing edge.

25

30 In a blade having a blunt or truncated trailing edge, there is a trailing edge surface defined between the pressure side and the suction side of the blade at the blade trailing edge. In such cases, serrations or bristles may be provided at the pressure side of the trailing edge surface, so that the projecting elements do not cause any changes in the aerodynamic characteristics at the suction side (which may impact the produced power level during blade operation). Accordingly, providing the fluid injection at the suction side of the trailing edge surface acts to reduce trailing edge noise at the suction side, without substantially affecting the suction side aerodynamics (and associated generated

power level). Furthermore, the use of the two noise-reducing features provides a composite reduction in overall trailing edge noise due to the combination of the modulated flow from the action of both the serrations/bristles and the fluid injection.

- 5 In a preferred embodiment, said at least a first array of projecting elements is moveable relative to the trailing edge of the blade.

A moveable array of projecting elements allows for adjustment of the noise modulation performed at the trailing edge of the blade. Preferably the array is translationally
10 moveable relative to the trailing edge, but it will be understood that any characteristic of the array may be adjustable, e.g. the positioning, length, dimensions, etc. of the projections may be varied to provide for a variable modulation of noise spectra at the trailing edge of the blade.

- 15 In a further preferred embodiment, said at least one fluid injection device is moveable to provide an adjustable fluid injection direction.

By moving the fluid injection device, the positioning and/or the direction of fluid injection may be adjusted to provide for an adaptive dampening or absorption of
20 turbulent kinetic energy over the profiled contour of the blade.

Preferably, the angle of fluid injection is variable from a substantially downstream direction to a substantially upstream direction.

- 25 Dependent on operating conditions, the fluid injection may be aligned in a substantially downstream direction (which provides adequate dampening or absorption of kinetic energy in the airflow while not substantially impacting on the blade aerodynamic lift characteristics), or in a substantially upstream direction (which provides for relatively increased dampening or absorption of kinetic energy in the airflow, while possibly
30 negatively impacting on the blade lift).

In one embodiment, the blade comprises a fluid communication system operable to convey a fluid from a fluid reservoir to said at least one fluid injection device.

A quantity of fluid may be stored in a reservoir provided in the blade, or the blade may have an internal tubing system which can receive a quantity of fluid from an external source for injection at the trailing edge. The external source may be from e.g. a local water supply system, or from surrounding seawater in the case of an off shore turbine.

5

In one embodiment, the fluid communication system comprises at least one pump.

The blade may utilise a pumping mechanism to ensure that the correct volume of fluid is provided to the fluid injection device.

10

In one embodiment, the fluid communication system comprises at least one valve operable to regulate the flow of fluid to the said at least one fluid injection device.

The injection rate of the fluid may be controlled based on the operation conditions of the turbine. For example, the blade may be coupled with noise sensors operable to detect the level of acoustic noise produced by the blade during operation, wherein the rate of injection is varied in accordance with the output noise of the blade, to minimise the noise produced by the blade.

15

20 There is further provided a wind turbine having at least one wind turbine blade as described above.

There is also provided a wind turbine blade for a rotor of a wind turbine having a substantially horizontal rotor shaft, the rotor comprising a hub, from which the wind turbine blade extends substantially in a radial direction when mounted to the hub, the wind turbine blade extending in a longitudinal direction parallel to a longitudinal axis and having a tip end and a root end,

25 the wind turbine blade comprising a profiled contour including a pressure side and a suction side, as well as a leading edge and a trailing edge with a chord having a chord length extending therebetween, the profiled contour, when being impacted by an incident airflow, generating a lift,

30 wherein the wind turbine blade further comprises at least one fluid injection device provided towards said trailing edge, the fluid injection device operable to inject

fluid into the airflow over the blade contour to reduce the turbulent kinetic energy of airflow, to reduce the scattering noise generated at the trailing edge of the profiled contour by operation of the blade,

5 wherein the at least one fluid injection device is operable to inject fluid in an upstream direction, substantially in the direction of the leading edge of the profiled contour, in a direction away from the trailing edge.

10 By injecting fluid in an upstream direction, i.e. in a direction substantially into the oncoming incident airflow, a considerable reduction in operational noise of the blade is produced, due to the relatively large absorption of turbulent kinetic energy from the airflow about the blade.

15 Preferably, said at least one fluid injection device is adjustable such that the angle of fluid injection is variable from said substantially upstream direction to a substantially downstream direction, towards the trailing edge of the profiled contour, substantially away from the leading edge.

20 By varying the direction of injection, the noise-reducing characteristics of the blade can be adjusted from an upstream direction, which provides a high level of noise reduction, but which may affect the blade aerodynamic lift characteristics, to a downstream direction, which provides adequate noise reduction, while negligibly impacting on the blade aerodynamic characteristics.

25 In one embodiment, said at least one fluid injection device is adjustable such that the fluid injection direction may be varied from a position to inject fluid into the airflow over the blade profiled contour to a position to apply fluid onto a surface of the blade profiled contour.

30 By having a moveable fluid injection device, fluid may be applied directly to the surface of the blade. By applying a fluid to the surface of the blade, this provides for a reduction in the drag characteristics of the blade, by reducing the skin friction drag of the blade surface.

In a further embodiment, the wind turbine blade further comprises at least a first array of projecting flow modulation elements provided at the trailing edge of the contour, said flow modulation elements projecting in a direction substantially away from the leading edge of the contour, said elements operable to reduce noise generated by operation of the blade, by modulation of the airflow at the trailing edge of the contour.

The configuration of the blade is operable to reduce operational noise of the blade, in particular trailing edge scattering noise. Blunt trailing edge noise may also be reduced.

Preferably, the blade is operable to control the rate of injection of fluid by the at least one fluid injection device.

The blade may comprise at least one valve communicatively coupled to said at least one fluid injection device, to regulate the rate of flow of fluid to the at least one fluid injection device.

By adjusting the rate or volume of fluid injected into the airflow, the noise reducing characteristics of the blade can be varied, due to the variation in the levels of turbulent kinetic energy absorbed by the fluid injection.

In one embodiment, the fluid injection device comprises a nozzle operable to inject fluid in the form of a spray into the airflow over the blade.

By injecting the fluid as a spray, a faster mixing of the airflow and the fluid will occur, acting to quickly absorb the turbulent kinetic energy of the airflow, and thereby providing a fast reduction of the trailing edge noise of the blade.

Preferably, the nozzle is operable to inject fluid in the form of a spray having a spray diversion angle from said nozzle along the longitudinal direction of the blade.

Preferably, said spray diversion angle is approximately between +/- 45 degrees to the nominal spray direction of the nozzle. In this case, the nominal spray direction can be understood to be the general direction in which the spray nozzle is pointing, e.g. along

the direction of the chord of the blade at the location of the nozzle, in the general direction of the blade trailing edge.

5 Additionally or alternatively, the fluid injection device comprises a nozzle operable to inject fluid in the form of droplets into the airflow over the blade.

Injecting the fluid as a jet of droplets may provide for a greater absorption of turbulent kinetic energy from the airflow.

10 Preferably, the fluid is selected to have a higher viscosity than the incident airflow.

Mixing a relatively high viscosity fluid with the relatively low viscosity airflow about the blade acts to efficiently dampen the turbulent energy present in the incident airflow, thereby reducing the noise level generated by the scattering effect of the airflow
15 at the trailing edge of the blade.

Preferably, the fluid is water. The fluid may alternatively comprise a suitable aerosol.

20 There is further provided a method of controlling of a wind turbine blade having a leading edge and a trailing edge and at least one fluid injection device operable to inject fluid into an airflow over the blade, the method comprising the steps of:

providing said wind turbine blade in a rotational arrangement on a wind turbine; and

25 during operation of the wind turbine, adjusting the direction of fluid injection of said at least one fluid injection device of the blade based on the operational conditions of the wind turbine.

30 Providing an adaptive control of the fluid injection on the blade allows for an efficient and effective regulation of the noise reduction while providing for optimum power production during wind turbine operation.

Preferably, the method comprises the step of detecting an operational characteristic of the wind turbine, and wherein said step of adjusting the direction of fluid injection is based on said detected operational characteristic.

5 Said operational conditions or characteristics may include any combination of, but are not limited to: a general detected noise level at the wind turbine; an operational noise level for the wind turbine blade; the wind speed level at the wind turbine; the rotational position of the wind turbine blade, etc.

10 In a preferred embodiment, said step of adjusting comprises:

arranging said fluid injection device to inject fluid in a substantially upstream direction when said blade is travelling in a substantially downwards direction; and

arranging said fluid injection device to inject fluid in a substantially downstream direction when said blade is travelling in a substantially upwards direction.

15

By an upstream direction, it is meant that the fluid is injected in a direction substantially towards the leading edge of the blade, substantially away from the trailing edge, i.e. in a direction substantially opposed to the direction of the incident airflow at the blade.

20 By a downstream direction, it is meant that the fluid is injected in a direction substantially towards the trailing edge of the blade, substantially away from the leading edge, i.e. in a direction substantially in line with the direction of the incident airflow at the blade.

25 As the noise produced during wind turbine operation, relative to an observer standing on the ground, is highest when the wind turbine blade is on the downward path of the rotational cycle, the upstream injection provides the most benefit in terms of noise reduction during this stage of rotation, due to the potentially higher levels of noise reduction which can be achieved, relative to the ground-based observer. As the lift-generating characteristics of the blade are less crucial during the downward path of the blade, any impact which upstream injection makes on the blade lifting force is of lesser concern during this stage of the rotational cycle. Conversely, downstream injection is selected for the upward path of the rotational cycle, to provide some noise reduction, while also ensuring minimum impact on the lift-generating characteristics of the blade.

30

It will be understood that the upstream fluid injection may occur for only a portion of the downward path of the rotational cycle, e.g. when the blade is travelling in a downwards direction, between 30-120 degrees with respect to the vertical axis of the wind turbine.

There is also provided a wind turbine having at least one wind turbine blade as described above.

Description of the Invention

Embodiments of the invention will now be described, by way of example only, with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:

Fig. 1 shows a wind turbine;

Fig. 2 shows a schematic view of a wind turbine blade according to the invention;

Fig. 3 shows a schematic view of an airfoil profile of the blade of Fig. 2;

Fig. 4 shows a cross-sectional perspective view of a portion of the blade of Fig. 2;

Fig. 5 shows an enlarged cross-sectional view of the trailing edge of a blade according to a first embodiment of the invention;

Fig. 6 shows an enlarged cross-sectional view of the trailing edge of a blade according to a second embodiment of the invention;

Fig. 7 shows an enlarged perspective view of the trailing edge of a blade according to a third embodiment of the invention;

Fig. 8 shows a sample plot of output noise from an airfoil of a wind turbine blade during operation for two different levels of airflow turbulent kinetic energy;

Fig. 9 shows a sample distribution of output noise from a wind turbine blade against the rotational path of the wind turbine blade; and

Fig. 10 shows a pair of enlarged cross-sectional views of the trailing edge of a blade according to a further aspect of the invention.

Common elements between the different embodiments will be referred to using the same reference numerals.

5 Fig. 1 illustrates a conventional modern upwind wind turbine according to the so-called "Danish concept" with a tower 4, a nacelle 6 and a rotor with a substantially horizontal rotor shaft. The rotor includes a hub 8 and three blades 10 extending radially from the hub 8, each having a blade root 16 nearest the hub and a blade tip 14 furthest from the hub 8. The rotor has a radius denoted R.

10 Fig. 2 shows a schematic view of a first embodiment of a wind turbine blade 10 according to an embodiment of the invention. The wind turbine blade 10 has the shape of a conventional wind turbine blade and comprises a root region 30 closest to the hub, a profiled or an airfoil region 34 furthest away from the hub and a transition region 32 between the root region 30 and the airfoil region 34. The blade 10 comprises a leading
15 edge 18 facing the direction of rotation of the blade 10, when the blade is mounted on the hub, and a trailing edge 20 facing the opposite direction of the leading edge 18.

The airfoil region 34 (also called the profiled region) has an ideal or almost ideal blade shape with respect to generating lift, whereas the root region 30 due to structural
20 considerations has a substantially circular or elliptical cross-section, which for instance makes it easier and safer to mount the blade 10 to the hub. The diameter (or the chord) of the root region 30 is typically constant along the entire root area 30. The transition region 32 has a transitional profile 42 gradually changing from the circular or elliptical shape 40 of the root region 30 to the airfoil profile 50 of the airfoil region 34. The
25 chord length of the transition region 32 typically increases substantially linearly with increasing distance r from the hub.

The airfoil region 34 has an airfoil profile 50 with a chord extending between the leading edge 18 and the trailing edge 20 of the blade 10. The width of the chord
30 decreases with increasing distance r from the hub.

It should be noted that the chords of different sections of the blade normally do not lie in a common plane, since the blade may be twisted and/or curved (i.e. pre-bent), thus

providing the chord plane with a correspondingly twisted and/or curved course, this being most often the case in order to compensate for the local velocity of the blade being dependent on the radius from the hub.

5 Fig. 3 shows a schematic view of an airfoil profile 50 of a typical blade of a wind turbine depicted with the various parameters, which are typically used to define the geo-metrical shape of an airfoil. The airfoil profile 50 has a pressure side 52 and a suction side 54, which during use – i.e. during rotation of the rotor – normally face towards the windward (or upwind) side and the leeward (or downwind) side,
10 respectively. The airfoil 50 has a chord 60 with a chord length c extending between a leading edge 56 and a trailing edge 58 of the blade. The airfoil 50 has a thickness t , which is defined as the distance between the pressure side 52 and the suction side 54. The thickness t of the airfoil varies along the chord 60. The deviation from a symmetrical profile is given by a camber line 62, which is a median line through the
15 airfoil profile 50. The median line can be found by drawing inscribed circles from the leading edge 56 to the trailing edge 58. The median line follows the centres of these inscribed circles and the deviation or distance from the chord 60 is called the camber f . The asymmetry can also be defined by use of parameters called the upper camber and lower camber, which are defined as the distances from the chord 60 and the suction
20 side 54 and pressure side 52, respectively.

Airfoil profiles are often characterised by the following parameters: the chord length c , the maximum camber f , the position df of the maximum camber f , the maximum airfoil thickness t , which is the largest diameter of the inscribed circles along the median
25 camber line 62, the position dt of the maximum thickness t , and a nose radius (not shown). These parameters are typically defined as ratios to the chord length c .

With reference to Fig. 4, an enlarged view of a portion of the wind turbine blade 10 of Fig. 2 is shown, with reference to the elements of the airfoil 50 shown in Fig. 3. The
30 blade 10 further comprises a flow modulation array 70 provided at the trailing edge 58 of the blade 10. The array 70 comprises a base plate 72 which extends along a portion of the blade trailing edge 58 and a plurality of serrations 74 which project from the base plate 72. The serrations 74 substantially project in a direction away from the

leading edge 56 of the blade 10, substantially in line with the mean flow direction at the trailing edge 58 of the blade 10.

5 The serrations 74 act as flow modulation elements, to modulate a boundary layer air-flow at the trailing edge of the wind turbine blade, in order to mitigate, frequency shift, or eliminate scattering noise generated at the trailing edge 58 of the wind turbine blade 10.

10 Additionally or alternatively, the serrations 74 may also have noise reduction tendencies for blunt trailing edge noise. Blunt trailing edge noise is generated due to finite trailing edge thickness (indicated at 58 in Fig. 10(a)), which basically generates Von-Karman types of vortex modulation behind the trailing edge. Presence of serrations may affect these modulations since, in the absence of serrations, vortices patterns behind trailing edge is mainly due to difference in pressure from suction and
15 pressure side.

The array 70 is provided over at least a portion of the trailing edge 58 of the blade 50, preferably in or around the section of the blade 10 along the outer 40-98% length of the blade 10 from the root end 16 of the blade 10. In an alternate range, the array is
20 provided along the outer 60-95% of the length of the blade.

The blade 10 further comprises a plurality of fluid injection devices 80 provided at the trailing edge 58 on the suction side 54 of the blade 10. These devices 80, in the form of e.g. liquid nozzles, spray nozzles, spouts, are operable to inject a fluid into the airflow
25 over the wind turbine blade. The injection of fluid into the airflow over the blade 10 acts to absorb some of the turbulent kinetic energy present in the airflow – effectively damping the turbulence effect which is seen at the blade trailing edge 58. By absorbing some of the energy from the airflow, the level of scattering which occurs at the serrated trailing edge 58 is reduced even further, consequently the trailing edge noise is
30 significantly reduced during blade operation, in particular the trailing edge scattering noise.

With reference to Fig. 5, an enlarged cross-sectional view of a blade trailing edge according to an embodiment of the invention is illustrated. In Fig. 5, the serrations 74 project from the blade trailing edge 58, from a base plate 72 section of the serrated array 70 attached to the blade body at the pressure side 52 of the trailing edge 58. The fluid injection devices 80 are provided at the suction side 54 of the trailing edge 58, and inject fluid into the incident airflow over the blade 10 at the trailing edge 58, as indicated by arrows 82. The use of the fluid injection devices 80 acts to reduce the turbulent kinetic energy in the airflow over the blade 10, and thereby improve the effectiveness of the serrated section 70 of the blade 10 to reduce noise at the blade trailing edge 58.

It will be understood that while the fluid injection device 80 of Fig. 5 is provided at the trailing edge 58 of the blade 10, the device may alternatively be provided on the surface of the blade 10, spaced a distance from the trailing edge 58. An advantage of the spaced arrangement is that the fluid injection occurs upstream of the trailing edge, and therefore has increased time to reduce the turbulent kinetic energy of the airflow before the airflow reaches the serrated trailing edge. Accordingly, the noise reducing performance of both the fluid injection devices 80 and the serrations 74 is maximised.

In one embodiment, the fluid injection device 80 is positioned at a location spaced from the trailing edge equivalent to approximately 5-10% of the chordal length (i.e. the length of the chord at that position along the longitudinal length of the blade) from said trailing edge 58.

It will further be understood that while the fluid injection device 80 of Fig. 5 is provided on the suction side 54 of the blade 10, it may additionally or alternatively be provided on the pressure side 52 of the blade 10.

Preferably, said at least one fluid injection device is operable to inject fluid into the airflow at an elevation angle of approximately 10 degrees to the adjacent surface of the contoured blade profile, and/or at an elevation angle of approximately 145-170 degrees to the chord of the profiled contour of the blade, taken from the leading edge of the blade. Additionally or alternatively, the at least one fluid injection device is operable to

inject fluid into the airflow having an injection distribution angle measured along the longitudinal length of the blade. Preferably, such an injection distribution angle is between +/- 45 degrees to the nominal injection direction (i.e. from the injection device towards the trailing edge direction), but different angles may be chosen based on the distribution of adjacent injection devices. E.g. injection devices which are closely arranged may have a relatively smaller injection distribution angle, while devices having a relatively larger inter-device distance may have a relatively larger injection distribution angle.

10 With reference to Fig. 6, an enlarged cross-sectional view of a blade trailing edge according to a further embodiment of the invention is illustrated. In Fig. 6, the wind turbine blade has a blunt or truncated trailing edge 58, having a trailing edge surface 58a. In such a blade 10, the serrated array 70 is provided at the pressure side 52 of the trailing edge, to avoid any negative impact on the aerodynamic characteristics at the suction side 54 of the blade, which affects the produced power. However, as scattering noise is generated from both sides 52,54 of the blade trailing edge, fluid injection devices 80 are provided at the suction side 54 of the trailing edge 58. Accordingly, the combined action of the serrations 74 on the pressure side of the blunt trailing edge 58 and the fluid injection device 80 on the suction side 54 of the blunt trailing edge 58 act to efficiently reduce noise produced from either ends of the trailing edge surface 58a, without negatively impacting on the blade lift characteristics (and associated power production).

25 With reference to Fig. 7, an enlarged perspective view of a blade trailing edge according to a further embodiment of the invention is illustrated. In this embodiment, the fluid injection devices 80 (only one of which is illustrated in the section shown in Fig. 7) are positioned between adjacent serrations 74 at the blade trailing edge 58 (in this case, on the trailing edge surface 58a). The use of serrations 74 at the trailing edge 58 of a blade 10 will sometimes introduce high frequency noise caused by the turbulent scattering at the side edges of the serrations 74 themselves. By locating the fluid injection devices 80 between adjacent serrations 74, fluid 82 injected by the devices 80 is concentrated in the areas between adjacent serrations 74. Accordingly, the noise-reducing properties of the injection devices 80 are focused on reducing the high-

frequency noise produced as a result of using serrations 74, providing improved noise-reducing characteristics for the blade 10.

5 The potential noise-reducing effect of the trailing edge fluid injection can be seen with reference to Fig. 8. Fig. 8 shows a plot of the noise levels detected at the trailing edge of a wind turbine blade against the noise frequencies, for two different levels of turbulent kinetic energy of airflow over the blade. The plot is using a frequency-wave number based wall pressure spectrum formulation. The noise is measured as sound pressure levels (SPLs). The unit of the SPL is the decibel (dB).

10

The upper curve shown corresponds to a baseline turbulent kinetic energy level K_t , while the lower curve shows the result of a reduction in kinetic energy to $K_t/2$. Accordingly, once kinetic energy in the airflow is reduced, the noise levels decrease at all frequencies of interest. It can be seen that using fluid injection to partially reduce
15 turbulent kinetic energy in the airflow can reduce detected noise levels by approximately 2-3 dB.

In a further aspect of the invention, the wind turbine blade may comprise fluid injection devices which are operable to inject fluid in an upstream direction, i.e. against the
20 oncoming airflow, and/or where the direction of fluid injection from the device may be adjustable. By injecting fluid against the incident airflow, a more efficient absorption of the turbulent kinetic energy of the airflow is provided, resulting in a considerable reduction in the operating noise of the wind turbine blade.

25 In a further embodiment of the invention, the fluid injection device 80 may be adjustable, such that the direction of fluid injection can be controlled. In a first aspect, the direction of fluid injection may be variable from a substantially downstream direction (i.e. substantially in line with the mean flow direction over the profiled contour of the blade 10), to an upstream direction (i.e. substantially opposed to the
30 mean flow direction over the profiled contour of the blade 10). Such variation of the injection direction allows for a greater control of the noise reducing characteristics of the blade 10, which can be balanced with the requirements for the aerodynamic performance of the blade 10.

With reference to Fig. 9, an illustration of noise levels detected for a single wind turbine blade during operation of a standard three-bladed wind turbine blade is shown. The figure shown is from measurements performed by the Nationaal Lucht- en Ruimtevaartlaboratorium (NLR) of the Netherlands. The noise levels are measured
5 with respect to an observer on the ground, and is an IEC standard of measuring noise and ensuring noise limits. As the wind turbine rotor blades rotate in a clockwise direction, it can be seen that the greatest intensity of noise generated during turbine operation (with respect to a ground-based observer) occurs when the wind turbine blade is on the downward path of rotation, indicated generally at 100. Conversely,
10 minimal noise levels are detected during the upward portion of the rotational path, indicated generally at 102.

The main cause of high levels of noise emanating during down stroke moment of blade is the convective amplification together with noise source approach to observer.
15 During upward path, essentially the noise source (with the trailing edge of the blade as the major source) is going away from observer – hence the perceived noise is less (the Doppler effect).

As the lifting properties of the blade 10 are of reduced importance during the
20 downward path of the blade 10 when compared to the upward path, accordingly the type of fluid injection performed can be controlled to maximise the performance of the blade noise reduction features.

With reference to Figs. 10(a) and (b), a further embodiment of the invention is shown
25 with regard to an enlarged cross-sectional view of the blade trailing edge 58 (in the example shown, the trailing edge 58 is part of a truncated blade profile, having a trailing edge surface 58a). In Figs. 10(a) and (b), the fluid injection device 80 shown comprises a directable fluid nozzle, which can be adjustably pivoted with respect to the surface of the blade 10.

30

In Fig. 10(a), the fluid injection device 80 is positioned such that the fluid injection 82 is in a downstream direction, substantially in line with the incident airflow over the blade 10, indicated by arrows 90. Accordingly, fluid is injected into the airflow 90 to

reduce the turbulent kinetic energy of the airflow, and to provide a reduction in the operating noise of the blade 10.

5 In Fig. 10(b), the fluid injection device 80 is rotated such that the nozzle is directed away from the general trailing edge direction of the blade, and positioned such that the fluid injection 84 is in an upstream direction, substantially opposed to the incident
10 airflow over the blade 10, in this case indicated by arrows 92. Accordingly, fluid is injected into the airflow 92 against the airflow direction, which may result in a change in the aerodynamic characteristics of the blade 10, as the airflow 92 meets resistance in the form of the fluid injection 84. This upstream injection of fluid 84 acts to
15 significantly reduce the turbulent kinetic energy of airflow 92, providing a corresponding significant reduction in noise produced during operation of the blade 10, but may negatively impact on the lift performance of the blade 10 (due to the adjusted blade aerodynamic characteristics).

15 In a preferred implementation, the fluid injection device 80 is communicatively coupled with a controller which is operable to regulate the injection direction of the device 80. Accordingly, the fluid injection may be varied between a substantially downstream and a substantially upstream injection direction. This variation may be based on the current
20 operating conditions of the wind turbine, e.g. a noise level detected for the turbine, a noise level detected for a blade, the detected wind speed at the turbine, a predicted wind speed at the turbine, etc.

25 For example in a high wind condition, the blade lifting characteristics may be of a reduced importance due to the increased wind power available, while noise reduction may be of increased importance due to the increased kinetic energy in the airflow about the blade. In such a case, the controller may be operable to adjust the injection direction of the nozzles of the fluid injection devices to point in a substantially
30 upstream direction, to provide maximum noise reduction properties. If the wind speed subsequently drops, the controller may then re-direct the fluid injection devices to provide substantially downstream injection, resulting in a balance between noise reduction and minimal impact on blade lift.

In one preferred implementation, a controller may be operable to adjust the injection direction of the devices 80 based on the rotational position of the wind turbine blade. For example, referring to Fig. 9, the majority of the blade noise is generated during the downward path of the blade 10, but the lifting properties of the blade are not of maximum importance for this section – blade lift is more vital during the upward path of the blade. Accordingly, the controller is operable to rotate the devices 80 such that the fluid injection is provided in a substantially upstream direction during the downward portion of the rotational path of the blade 10, and is aligned in a substantially downstream direction during the upward portion of the rotational path of the blade 10. In this case, the maximum noise reduction properties of the fluid injection devices 80 are provided during that part of the blade rotation where the majority of blade noise is produced (i.e. section 100), while the devices are aligned to provide minimal impact on blade lift during the upward path of the blade 10 (where relatively less blade noise is produced, section 102).

It will be understood that the rotation of the fluid injection devices may be controlled such that the upstream injection 84 only occurs for a portion of the downward path of the rotational cycle, for example when the blade is in the rotational range of between 30-120 degrees with respect to the vertical axis of the wind turbine during the downward path of the blade, such that the upstream injection is concentrated at those points where maximum blade noise is generation (i.e. section 100).

In a further enhancement of the invention, it will be understood that the fluid injection devices 80 may be adjustable such that the direction of fluid injection can be varied between a first position wherein fluid is injected into the airflow about the blade, to a second position wherein fluid is directed onto the surface of the blade profile. By applying a fluid, e.g. water, onto the surface of the blade profiled contour, it is possible to reduce the skin friction drag of the blade surface, thereby reducing the overall blade drag. This provides further flexibility of operation and control of the blade performance, such that the adaptive control of the fluid injection at the blade can be used to maximise blade power output for the operating conditions experienced.

Preferably, the fluid injected using the devices 80 has a relatively high viscosity compared to the incident airflow. In a preferred embodiment, water is used as the injected fluid, but it will be understood that any suitable aerosol or liquid compositions may be employed. It will be understood that the fluid may be injected in any suitable form, e.g. a fine mist or spray, or a flow of droplets of any suitable size.

A reservoir of suitable fluid for injection may be provided in the blade itself, and/or the blade may comprise piping or tubing to conduct fluid from the wind turbine structure to the injection devices 80.

10

The fluid injection process may be controlled as part of a closed-loop control system, wherein the fluid injection characteristics may be varied dependent on the operating conditions of the wind turbine (e.g. wind speed at the turbine, detected noise levels at the turbine), to minimise the operating noise generated by the wind turbine blades.

15

For example, the blade may further comprise a pump mechanism and/or at least one controllable valve, such that the volume of fluid injected into the airflow can be regulated. The blade may also be operable to control the rate and/or pressure at which fluid is injected into the airflow. Furthermore, the fluid injection devices may be adjustable to control the characteristics of the actual fluid injection, e.g. the spray pattern, spray angle, drop size of the spray, etc. Accordingly, the characteristics of the fluid injection may be varied to provide the maximum noise reduction performance for the given operating conditions.

20

It will be understood that any suitable fluid injection device may be employed for the invention, e.g. a spray nozzle, an atomiser nozzle, a surface impingement nozzle, etc.

25

While the embodiment shown in Fig. 10 indicates that the fluid injection devices 80 are moveable in a hinged rotation, it will be understood that any suitable motion of the devices 80 may be used. Furthermore, it will be understood that in the case of a surface impingement nozzle being used as the fluid injection device, it may be sufficient to only move the impingement surface of such a nozzle to provide for the required directional adjustment of the resultant fluid injection stream.

30

It will be understood that different adjustments may be made to the embodiments illustrated. For example, any suitable projecting flow modulation device may be combined with the fluid injection devices, e.g. bristles. The use of bristles allows for the kinetic energy of the incident airflow to be converted to mechanical bending energy in the bristles, thereby reducing the generated trailing edge noise of the blade.

In a particular alternative embodiment, the individual serrations 74 may be replaced or combined with individual clusters of bristles.

Furthermore, it will be understood that while the serrations 74 illustrated herein are substantially planar, three-dimensional serrations may also be employed at the blade trailing edge to reduce scattering noise, i.e. serrations which may vary in depth as well as width.

It will be understood that the fluid injection devices, and/or the serrations, may be provided at the trailing edge of the blade, along the longitudinal length of the blade. Preferably, the devices and/or serrations are provided in the region of 40-98% of the length of the blade from the root end of the blade. In an alternative embodiment, the serrations are provided in the region of 60-95% of the length of the blade. As the majority of the noise-generation of a wind turbine blade occurs towards in the region towards the outer sections of the blade (due to the relatively high wind speeds in effect at these outer sections), the noise reducing features will perform most effectively when located in these regions.

In a further enhancement of the invention, it will be understood that the serrations (or bristles) may be moveable relative to the trailing edge of the blade, preferably translationally moveable, in order to provide further control and adaptability of the noise reducing characteristics of the blade.

It will be understood that any features of the above embodiments may be interchangeable with the features of any other embodiment without departing from the scope of the invention.

The invention is not limited to the embodiments described herein, and may be modified or adapted without departing from the scope of the present invention.

CLAIMS

1. A wind turbine blade for a rotor of a wind turbine having a substantially horizontal rotor shaft, the rotor comprising a hub, from which the wind turbine blade extends substantially in a radial direction when mounted to the hub, the wind turbine blade
5 extending in a longitudinal direction parallel to a longitudinal axis and having a tip end and a root end,

the wind turbine blade further comprising a profiled contour including a pressure side and a suction side, as well as a leading edge and a trailing edge with a chord having a chord length extending therebetween, the profiled contour, when being
10 impacted by an incident airflow, generating a lift,

wherein the wind turbine blade further comprises at least a first array of projecting flow modulation elements provided at the trailing edge of the contour, said flow modulation elements projecting in a direction substantially away from the leading edge of the contour, said elements operable to reduce noise generated by operation of
15 the blade by modulation of the airflow at the trailing edge of the contour,

wherein the wind turbine blade further comprises at least one fluid injection device, the fluid injection device operable to inject fluid into the airflow over the blade contour to reduce the turbulent kinetic energy of airflow at the trailing edge of the profiled contour, to further reduce the noise generated by operation of the blade.
20

2. The blade of claim 1, wherein the fluid is selected to have a higher viscosity than the incident airflow.

3. The blade of claim 1 or claim 2, wherein the fluid injection device comprises a
25 nozzle operable to inject fluid in the form of a spray or droplets into the airflow over the blade contour.

4. The blade of any one of claims 1-3, wherein said at least a first array of projecting flow modulation elements extends in a longitudinal direction along at least a portion of
30 the length of the wind turbine blade between said root end and said tip end.

5. The blade of any one of claims 1-4, wherein said projecting elements are selected from at least one of the following: serrations, bristles, clusters of bristles.
6. The blade of any preceding claim, wherein said at least one fluid injection device is provided at said trailing edge between adjacent projecting elements.
7. The blade of any preceding claim, wherein at least one fluid injection device is provided adjacent said trailing edge, to inject fluid into the airflow about the profiled contour at a location upstream of said trailing edge.
8. The blade of claim 7, wherein said at least one fluid injection device is positioned at a location spaced from the trailing edge, approximately 5-10% of the chordal length from said trailing edge.
9. The blade of any preceding claim, wherein said at least one fluid injection device is operable to inject fluid into the airflow at an angle of approximately 145-170 degrees to the chord of the profiled contour of the blade, taken from the leading edge of the blade.
10. The blade of any preceding claim, wherein said profiled contour comprises a substantially blunt trailing edge, wherein said at least a first array of projecting flow modulation elements are provided at the pressure side of said blunt trailing edge, and wherein said at least one fluid injection device is provided at the suction side of said blunt trailing edge.
11. The blade of any preceding claim, wherein said at least one fluid injection device is moveable to provide an adjustable fluid injection direction.
12. The blade of claim 11, wherein the angle of fluid injection is variable from a substantially downstream direction to a substantially upstream direction.

13. The blade of any preceding claim, wherein the blade comprises a fluid communication system operable to convey a fluid from a fluid reservoir to said at least one fluid injection device.
- 5 14. The blade of claim 13, wherein the fluid communication system comprises at least one valve operable to regulate the flow of fluid to the said at least one fluid injection device.
- 10 15. A wind turbine having at least one wind turbine blade as claimed in any one of claims 1-14.

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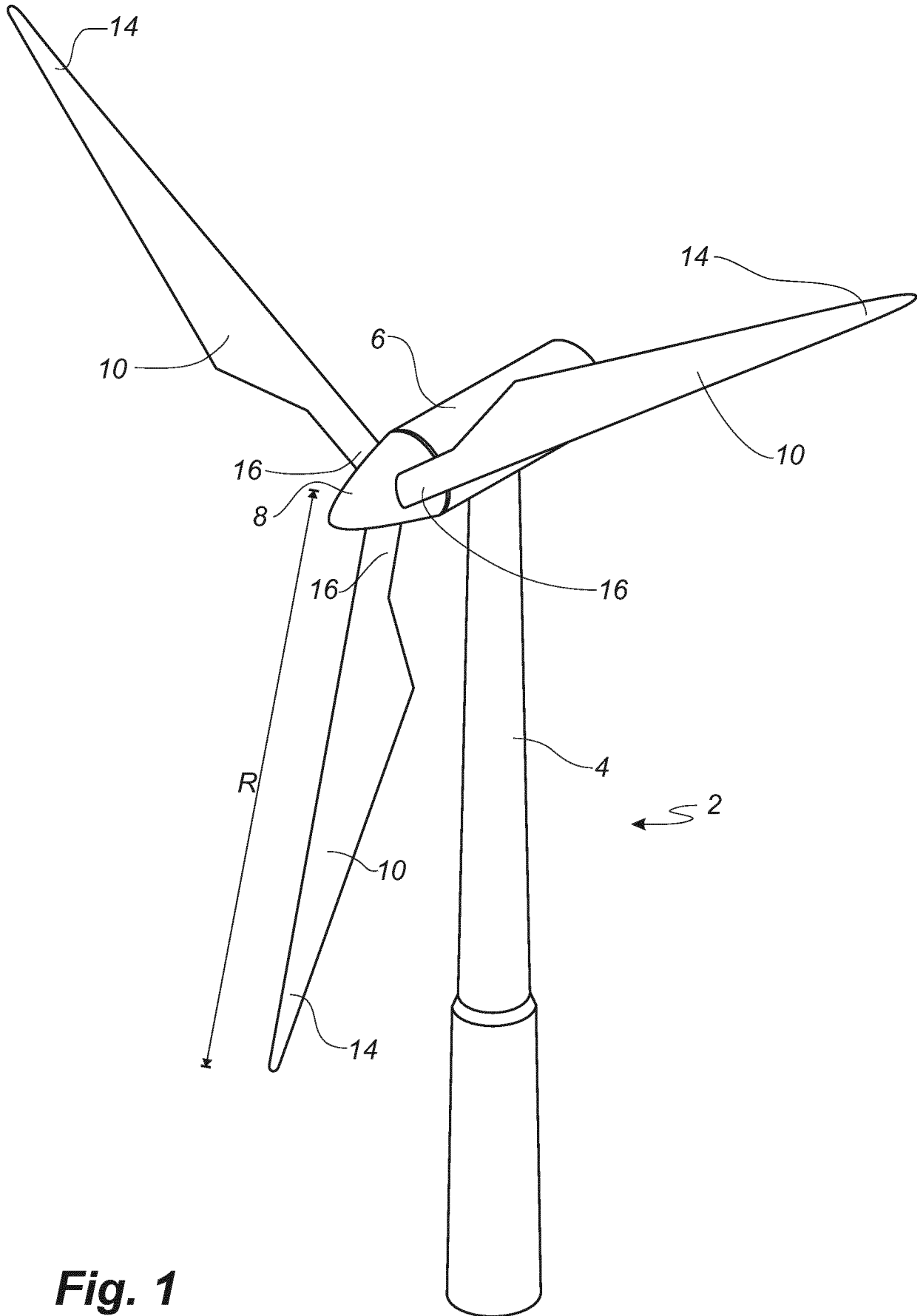


Fig. 1

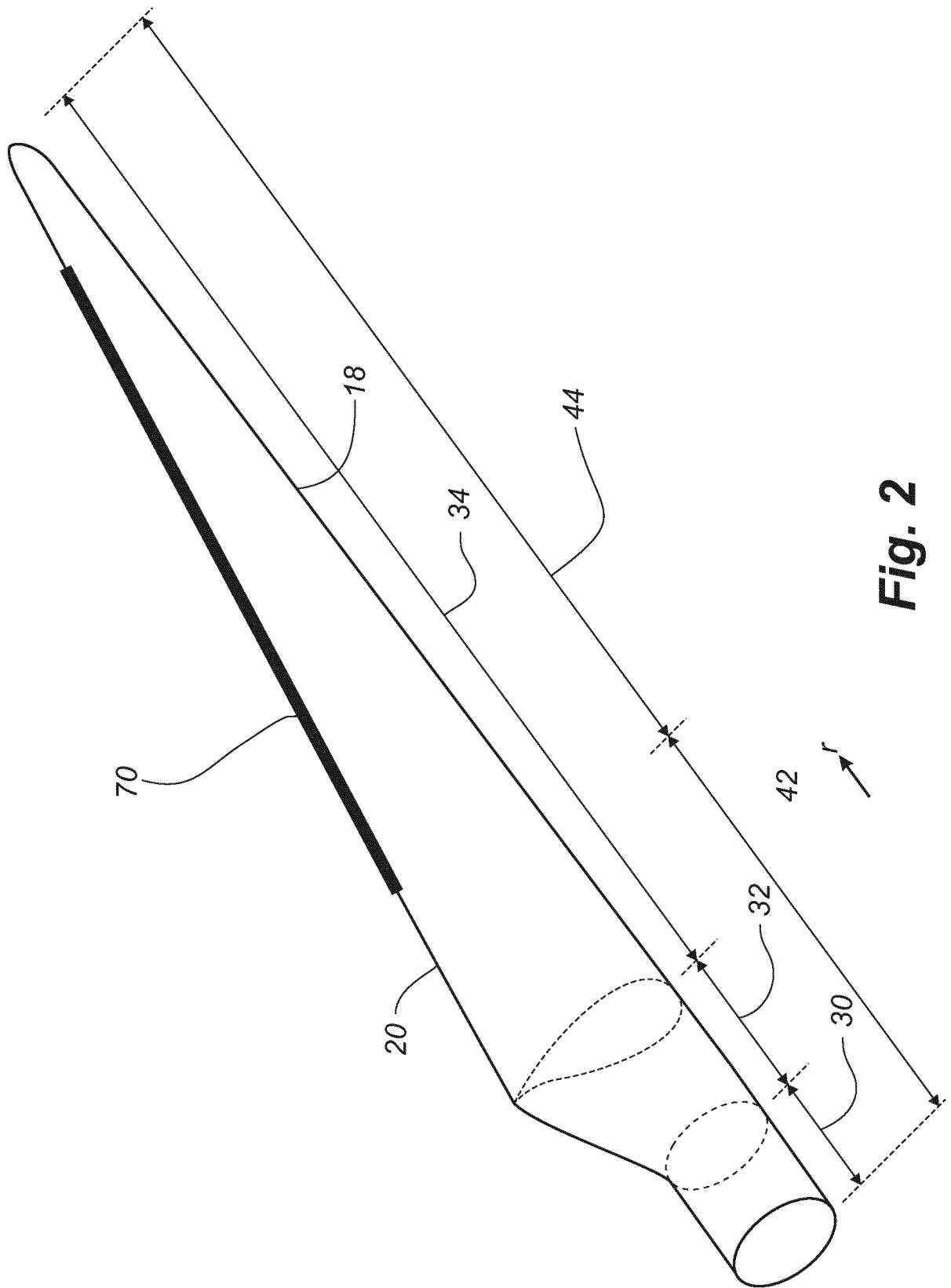


Fig. 2

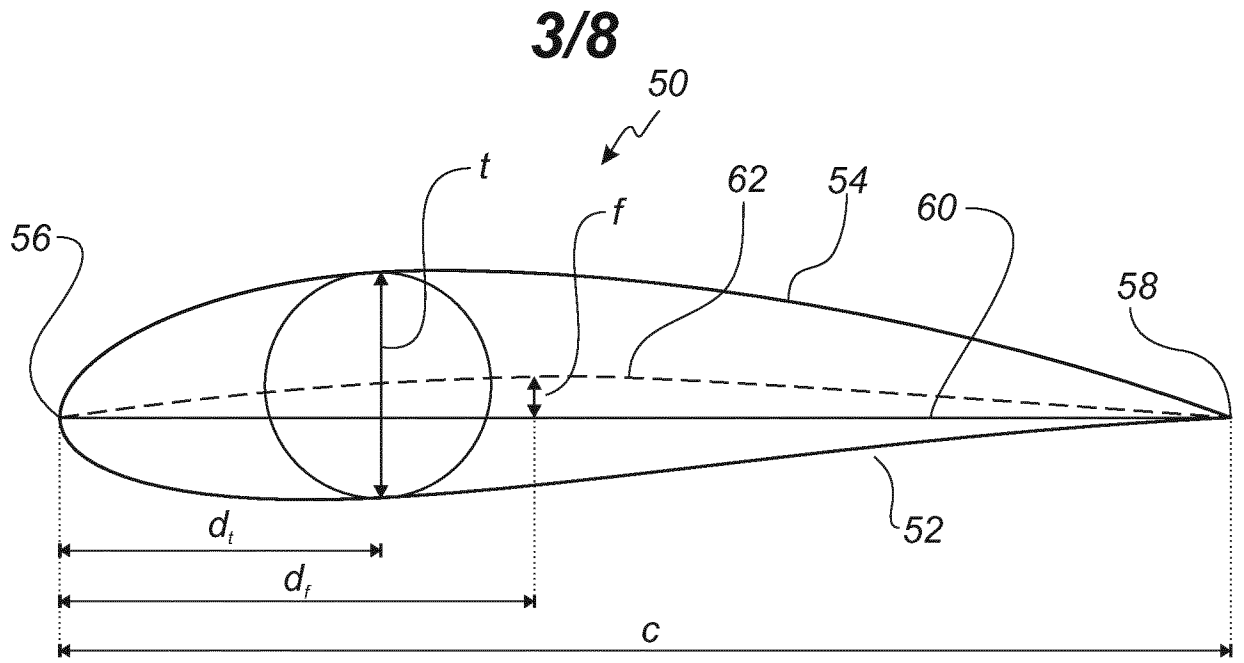


Fig. 3

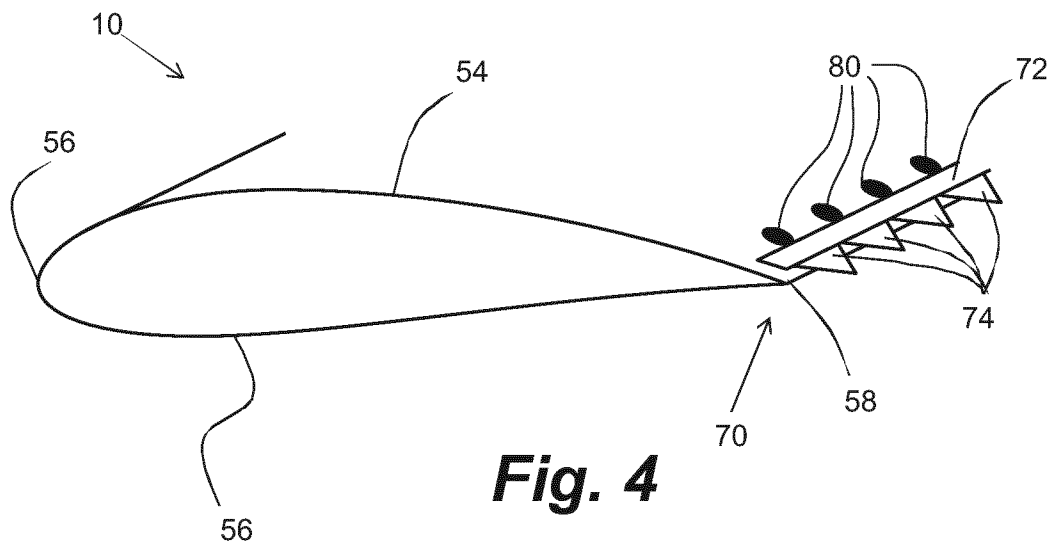


Fig. 4

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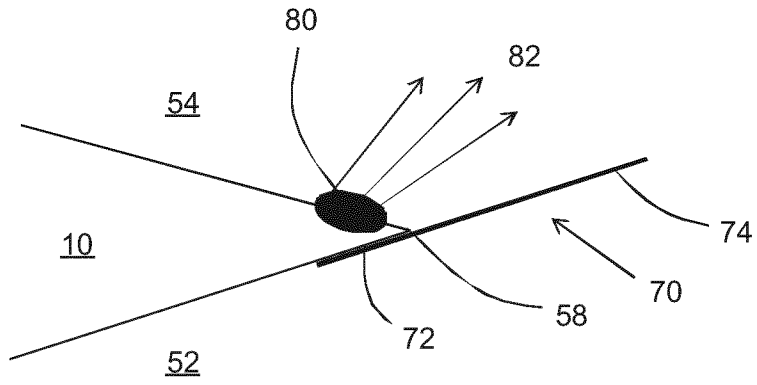


Fig. 5

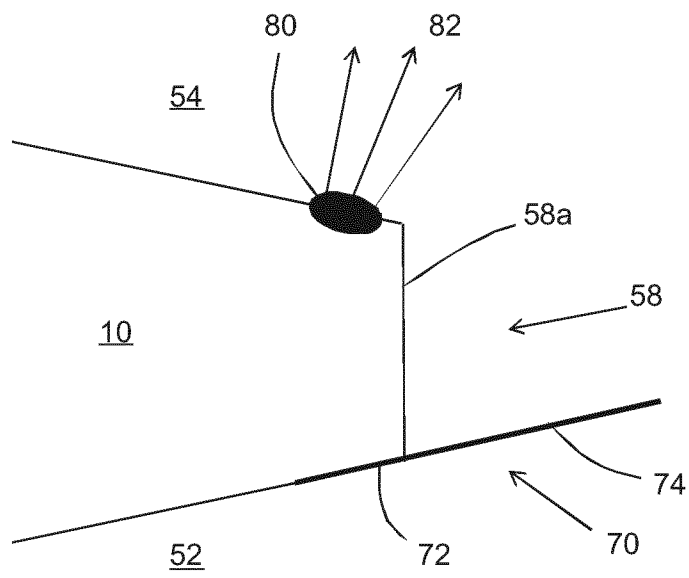


Fig. 6

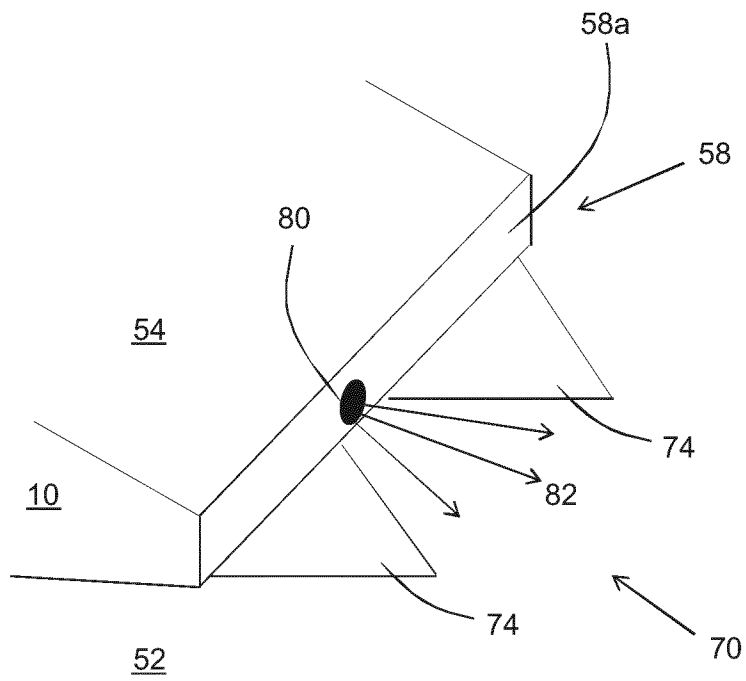


Fig. 7

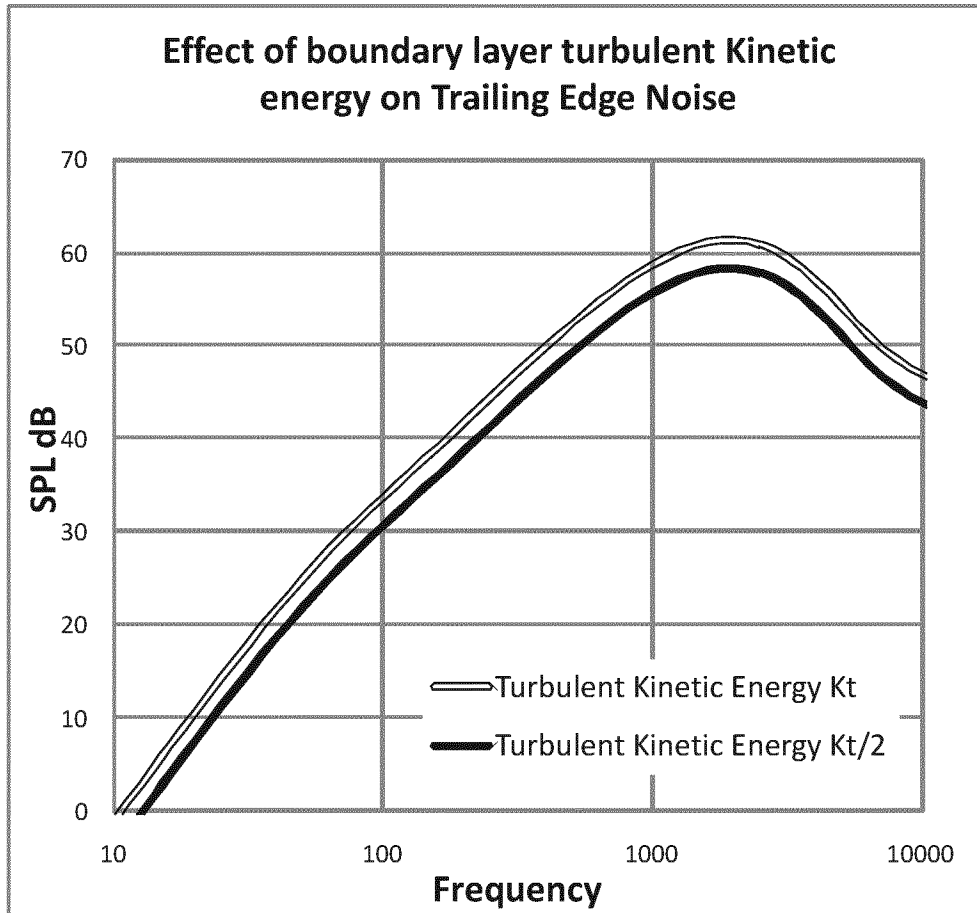


Fig. 8

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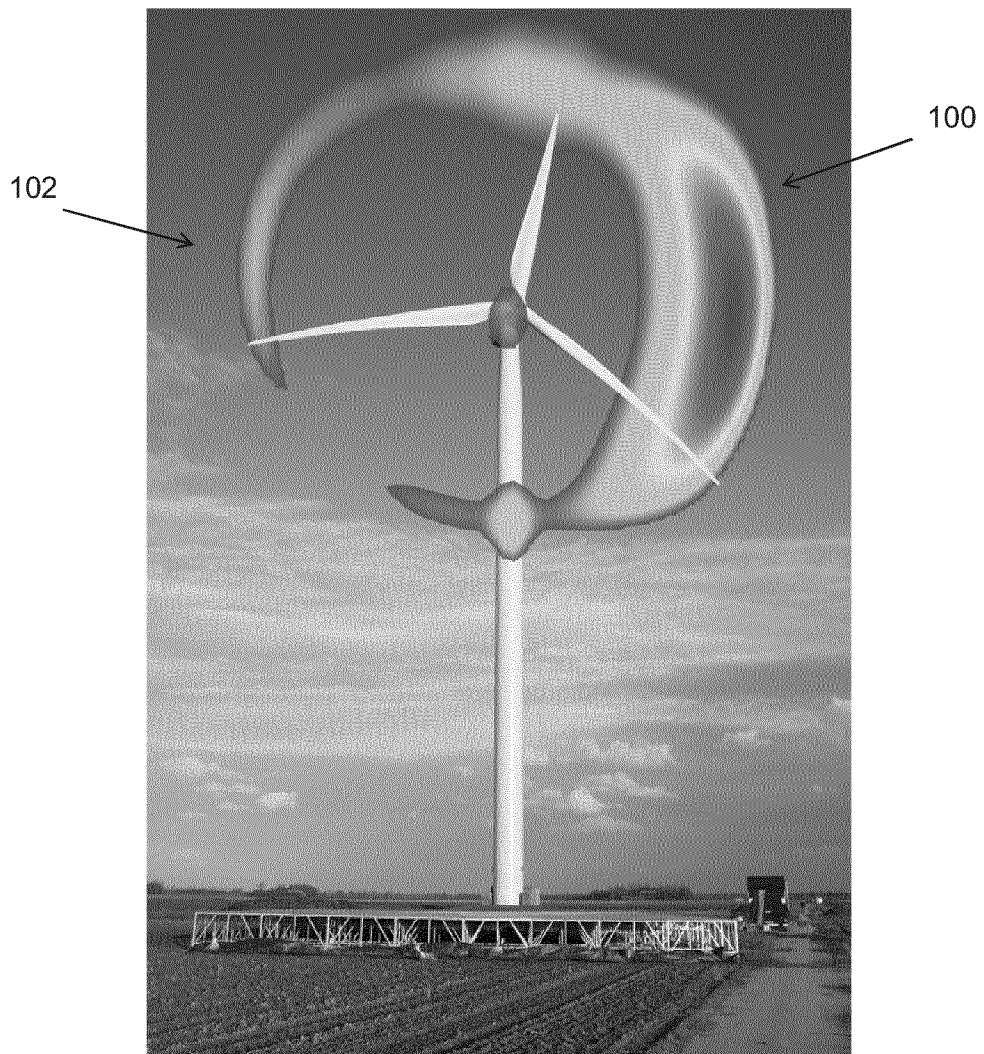


Fig. 9

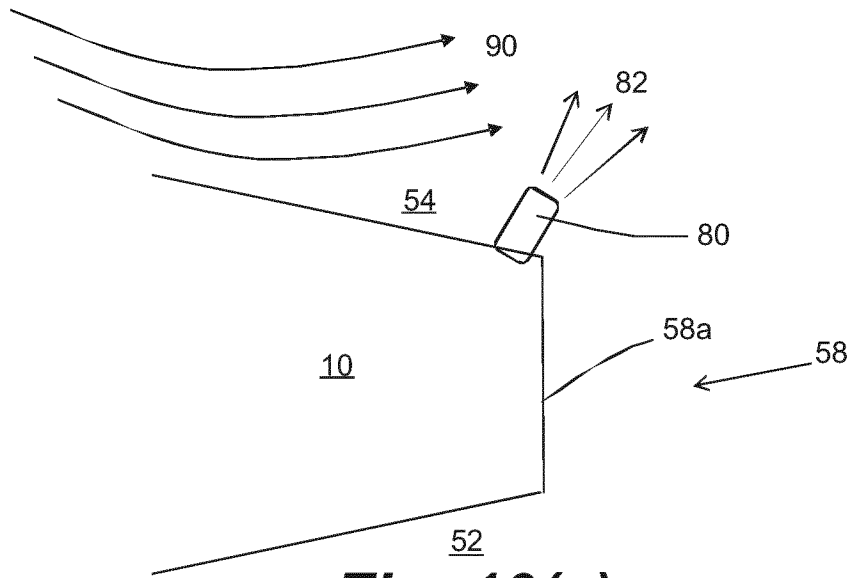


Fig. 10(a)

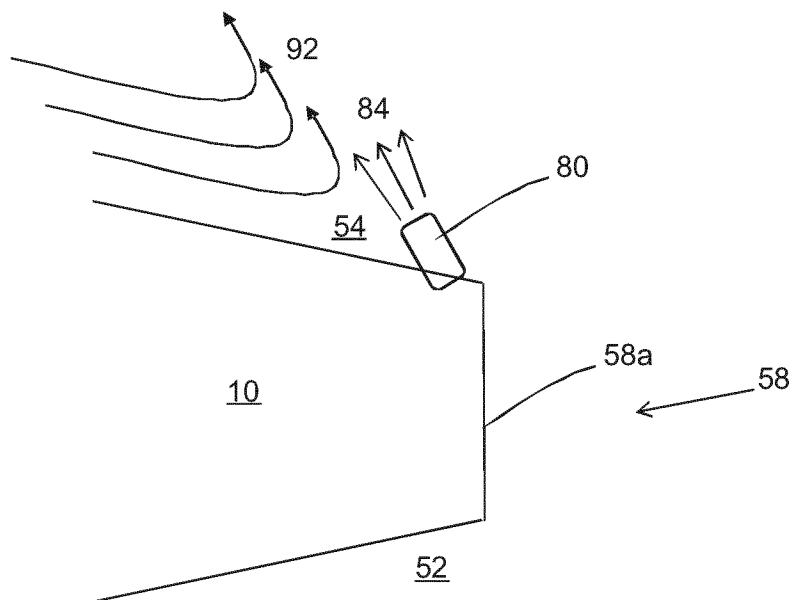


Fig. 10(b)

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No
PCT/EP2012/072768

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER
INV. F03D3/06 F03D11/00 F03D1/06
ADD.
According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED
Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)
F03D

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)
EPO-Internal

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
Y	EP 1 674 723 A2 (GEN ELECTRIC [US]) 28 June 2006 (2006-06-28)	1,2,4-15
A	paragraph [0015] - paragraph [0019] paragraph [0025] - paragraph [0029]; claims 1,4,7-9; figures 1-5	3
Y	US 2011/142666 A1 (DROBIETZ ROGER [DE] ET AL) 16 June 2011 (2011-06-16) cited in the application	1,2,4-15
A	paragraph [0020] - paragraph [0045]; claim 1; figures 1-5	3
Y	WO 2009/025549 A1 (STICHTING ENERGIE [NL]; VAN GARREL ARNE [NL]) 26 February 2009 (2009-02-26)	1,2,4-15
A	page 9, line 7 - page 11, line 33; claims 1-8, 19,20; figures 1-4	3
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Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C.

See patent family annex.

* Special categories of cited documents :

- "A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance
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- "O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means
- "P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed

"T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention

"X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone

"Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art

"&" document member of the same patent family

Date of the actual completion of the international search 4 December 2012	Date of mailing of the international search report 13/12/2012
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Name and mailing address of the ISA/ European Patent Office, P.B. 5818 Patentlaan 2 NL - 2280 HV Rijswijk Tel. (+31-70) 340-2040, Fax: (+31-70) 340-3016	Authorized officer Balice, Marco
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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No
PCT/EP2012/072768

C(Continuation). DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT		
Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
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A	column 9, line 22 - column 14, line 3; claims 1-5; figures 1-5 -----	3
Y	EP 1 780 408 A1 (GEN ELECTRIC [US]) 2 May 2007 (2007-05-02)	1,2,4-15
A	paragraph [0013] - paragraph [0019]; claims 1-4,6; figures 1-5 -----	3

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