

Method for repairing a variable guide vane and an accordingly repaired guide vane

5 The invention relates to a method of repairing a variable guide vane for a gas turbine having the features of the preamble of claim 1.

Variable guide vanes are a particular type of guide vane and are provided in the compressor of some gas turbines, more particularly in certain aircraft engines. They are installed so as to be rotatable about their central axes and can be rotated back
10 and forth between various positions.

Variable guide vanes are advantageous in that, for example when a low quantity of external air is supplied for combustion, for example in the event of low flight velocity of a commercial aircraft, the variable guide vanes can be rotated to achieve an
15 optimal air supply to the combustion chamber.

In order to connect the variable guide vanes to adjacent components, they comprise what are known as rotationally symmetrical connection regions. These rotationally symmetrical connection regions are subject to increased wear and have to be
20 repaired relatively frequently.

For this purpose, it is known and conventional from prior use to reconstruct and repair the damaged component regions by means of high velocity oxy-fuel spraying (HVOF) or plasma spraying.
25

However, the variable guide vanes thus repaired have reduced wear resistance, so that in use they wear again all the more rapidly.

The problem addressed by the invention is that of providing a method of repairing a
30 variable guide vane, whereby the guide vane can be repaired and provided with comparatively improved wear properties.

The invention solves the problem using the features of the independent claims.

To solve the problem, a method of repairing a variable guide vane for a gas turbine is proposed, wherein filler material is applied to the variable guide vane by material application as part of the method, wherein the material is applied by laser beam build-up welding.

5

As already stated at the outset, variable guide vanes are usually repaired by means of high velocity oxy-fuel spraying (HVOF) or plasma spraying. Contrary to the opinion hitherto held that laser beam build-up welding is in principle unsuitable for repair owing to the high heat input, it has been proven by intensive development that it is in fact possible to repair variable guide vanes using laser beam build-up welding. In this process, the laser beam build-up welding is preferably controlled such that the heat introduced into the variable guide vane is as low as possible. A preferred option for achieving this includes a repair that is adapted to the specific damage.

15 In the prior art, a plasma spray layer is usually always applied over the entire circumference (360°); thus, for example, the complete outer platform or the entire pin notch of the variable guide vane is reconstructed.

20 The coating can only produce low deposit thicknesses in this instance. The bond of the spray layer to the base material has a low bonding strength compared with the configuration according to the invention. In addition, the workpiece usually has to be prepared by material removal and then has to be roughened to ensure uniform bonding properties of the layer. In the method according to the invention, these drawbacks do not occur or are at least less pronounced.

25

In a preferred configuration of the method, only the region having sustained damage is reconstructed by the laser beam build-up welding. It is not necessary to prepare said workpiece by material removal or to roughen said workpiece. The method thus already differs from other coating methods which involve preparation. For example, only a partial region (for example the outer platform or the pin notch of the variable guide vane) of 120°, that is to say (only) the region affected by erosion, and not the full 360°, is refilled using the method. This aspect is further explained at a later point on the basis of the drawings.

30

Owing to the laser beam build-up welding, the material can be applied to the variable guide vane with a particularly high level of quality.

5 Owing to the reduced width over which material is built up and the reduced heat input, the component undergoes only comparatively low distortion, and finishing is thus less complex. The repair method is also more cost-effective compared with the known methods. Furthermore, cooling of the repaired regions can preferably be provided.

10 The variable guide vane comprises platforms or pins as partial portions that are preferably repaired by the repair method, since the highest level of wear occurs in these regions, as known from experience. Accordingly, the material is preferably applied to the inner and/or outer platform of the variable guide vane and, furthermore, material is also preferably applied to the inner and/or outer pins of the variable guide
15 vane.

Preferably, the material application includes applying a wear-resistant material. The material constituting the filler material is accordingly preferably not of the same type as the base material, but is instead preferably improved with respect to its wear
20 properties.

Although relatively high wear resistance of the repaired variable guide vane can be achieved using material of the same type in conjunction with laser beam build-up welding, the effect, however, can be further increased by particular materials of a
25 different type.

Preferably, the material application includes applying stellite or nitride, preferably titanium nitride, chromium nitride and/or boron nitride. Alternatively or additionally, the material application preferably includes applying hard-material composite layers
30 comprising carbides, preferably tungsten carbide or titanium carbide. The materials described are suitable for increasing the wear resistance of the repaired component regions. Furthermore, in advantageous embodiments, the material application may also include graphite, which has a positive effect on wear- and lubrication properties.

By applying these materials during the repair, the variable guide vane is reinforced precisely in the region in which it undergoes the most stress and wear in its position of use in the gas turbine. This targeted reinforcement of the regions which undergo particular stress during operation results in a variable guide vane which has improved wear properties which are adapted to its specific installation position.

In a preferred approach in which a plurality of guide vanes are repaired in parallel, there is an interval during repair of the first guide vane, and during this interval repair of one or more further guide vanes is begun or continued. Preferably, a plurality of material layers is applied to the variable guide vane in succession, and, between applying two material layers to the variable guide vane, at least one material layer is applied to at least one further, preferably to at least two further, variable guide vanes. More preferably, at least one material layer is applied to at least five further variable guide vanes. The heat input per vane can be reduced in this way without the processing time increasing. Typically, 5 to 50, preferably 5 to 25, more preferably 10 to 20, variable guide vanes are simultaneously processed.

In addition to this preferred simultaneous repair of a plurality of variable guide vanes, in some cases it may also be sensible and preferred to only repair one single variable guide vane simultaneously and, in this case, to accordingly allow intervals between the individual material layers.

Preferably, as part of the method, a metallurgical bond is produced between the variable guide vane and the filler material that is applied. The base material of the variable guide vane is thus preferably metallurgically bonded to the filler material. This metallurgical bond, which is preferably produced by laser beam build-up welding, differs from the bond which can be produced by known plasma spraying methods.

In flame spraying or plasma spraying, particles are sprayed onto a surface at a relatively high velocity. The particles or powder are bonded to the surface of the workpiece by essentially two interactions: on one hand by interlocking owing to deformation upon impact, and on the other hand by local bonding owing to cold welding and/or fusible edge zones of the particles upon impact.

Owing to the use of laser beam build-up welding as disclosed herein, filler materials, for example powder, wire and/or pastes, can be used when welding nickel to nickel, for example. If powders or particles are used, in contrast to flame spraying there is the feature that the particles, in the case of materials having one component, or the
5 powders, in the case of powders having the same melting point (such as nickel – nickel compounds), are generally completely dissolved in a molten bath.

From this molten bath, the material generally solidifies by heat being conducted into the base material. In the metallographic transverse section, after welding the particle
10 size of the starting particles can therefore no longer be detected. Furthermore, no interlocking (positive connection) occurs, as is the case for plasma spraying, but instead an integrally bonded connection is produced. This means that, on the atomic level, atomic bonds are produced between the weld metal and the metal main body. This is promoted by some of the base material also being fused.

15 The metal connection or integrally bonded connection produced by the laser beam build-up welding is generally considerably stronger than the spray coating, which is partly interlocked and partly by welding. In addition, plasma layers generally have more pores than a well-configured welding process. A well-configured welding
20 process means a preferred process in which gas pockets leave the molten metal before it solidifies.

Preferably, the filler material is in the form of a powder, preferably having powder particle sizes in a range of from 40 to 150 μm , more preferably 50 to 75 μm . As
25 known from experience, the best results can be achieved using these powder sizes. Powder particle sizes in a range of from 5 to 150 μm of the filler material may also be suitable.

During laser beam build-up welding, powder and/or wire is preferably used as a filler
30 material. Owing to it being supplied in powder- and/or wire form, lower porosities and better bonding can be achieved than with high velocity oxy-fuel spraying.

Furthermore, the layer strength is increased owing to the lower quantity of pores and the solidification from a molten metal. By using wire as a filler material, the level of
35 utilisation of the filler materials can reach almost 100 %; a level of utilisation of from

30 to 95 % is normal for powders. A high level of utilisation increases the cost-effectiveness of the repair method.

5 Preferably, the variable guide vane is processed in an inert gas atmosphere. This gas environment is preferably a non-reactive or oxidising gas. Argon and helium are preferably provided.

10 Preferably, at least two further variable guide vanes are kept available in the inert gas atmosphere for processing. In this way, a plurality of variable guide vanes can be processed in parallel. When for example one or two variable guide vane(s) are in the cooling phase, this time can be used to process a third variable guide vane.

15 To solve the problem, a variable guide vane for a gas turbine is also proposed, the variable guide vane being repaired according to the above-described method. It is advantageous to use such a guide vane as disclosed herein, since it has increased wear resistance and an increased service life compared with known repaired variable guide vanes. Such a variable guide vane is more cost-effective, since it is reinforced at specific points of wear, and thus needs to be repaired less frequently.

20 The invention is described in the following on the basis of preferred embodiments with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:

Fig. 1 is a side view of a variable guide vane with damage;

25 Fig. 2 is a plan view of a variable guide vane with weld lines shown;

Fig. 3 shows a guide vane arrangement for parallel welding on a plurality of variable guide vanes;

30 Fig. 4 shows a preferred linear guide vane arrangement;

Fig. 5 shows a preferred arc-shaped guide vane arrangement.

Fig. 1 shows a typical variable guide vane 1. In aircraft engines, a motor stage may have a plurality of variable guide vanes 1. They are preferably arranged so as to be equidistant about the axis 7 of symmetry of the motor.

- 5 The variable guide vane 1 can be divided into a plurality of portions. The centre of the vane is formed by the vane profile 4, which vane profile 4 forms the flow region, that is to say the portion around which air flows in operation.

A platform is arranged above and below the vane profile 4 respectively. The inner platform 3 is positioned thereabove (with respect to the axis 7 of symmetry of the motor) and the outer platform 5 is positioned therebelow.

What are referred to as the pins are again arranged above and below the platforms 3 and 5. The pins are rotatably mounted in corresponding bushings (not shown) so that the variable guide vane 1 can be rotated as a whole about its own axis when assembled. The inner pin 2 is arranged above the inner platform 3 and the outer pin 6 is arranged below the outer platform 5. In this case, the bushings are relatively flexible compared with the pins 6 and, in the same way as the pins 6, are subject to wear, which can be compensated by material application by means of laser beam build-up welding.

The variable guide vane 1 shown has a region of wear 9 in the region of the inner pin 2. In this region, the variable guide vane 1 is worn and needs to be repaired or replaced.

25 Fig. 2 is a plan view of a variable guide vane 1. On this variable guide vane 1, a region of wear 9 has been repaired and has been reconstructed. Material has been applied to the variable guide vane 1 in a plurality of weld layers, shown by weld lines 8. In this case, a worn region of the outer platform 5 has been repaired. The region of wear 9 is a pit-like indentation which can be compensated by local material application. In this case, the introduction of high local energy, which was hitherto considered to be a drawback, is entirely advantageous, since as a result the base material is melted and bonded very well to the material applied. In this case, the method has proven successful in particular for removal thicknesses and deposit thicknesses of from 0.05 to 0.5 mm for wall thicknesses of from 1.0 to 3.0 mm, more

particularly in the range of from 1.0 to 2.0 mm. In this respect, the local heat input is advantageous, since rotationally symmetrical components in particular are particularly susceptible to deformations which would occur in the case of relatively extensive heat input. In particular, owing to the method proposed, no warping or distortion of the pin 6, which is circular in cross section, or of the bushing occurs, so that the re-worked components after the re-working remain centred with respect to each other, as required.

Owing to the method as disclosed herein, it is possible here to restrict the repair to merely the region of wear 9 which has actually sustained damage. The methods known from the prior art only provide for the relevant portion – that is to say the outer platform, for example – to be completely (360°) machined off and then rebuilt.

As shown in the example in Fig. 2, owing to the method as disclosed herein, solely a partial region of a portion, that is to say for example a third (120°) of the outer platform 5, can also be machined off and reconstructed.

The heat input introduced into the variable guide vane can thus be reduced. In addition, by using particular materials (described in detail above), the wear resistance of the repaired variable guide vanes can be increased.

By means of the parallel laser beam build-up welding (also already described above) of a plurality of variable guide vanes 1, the heat input into each guide vane can be further reduced.

The preferred arrangements of variable guide vanes 1 used therefor are shown in Fig. 3 to 5.

For example, as shown, six variable guide vanes 1 can be processed simultaneously, preferably, however, considerably more, for example up to 50 variable guide vanes 1, are processed simultaneously.

Preferably, at least so many variable guide vanes 1 are processed simultaneously that the laser can be continuously utilised for processing. This means that so many

variable guide vanes are processed simultaneously that when applying a second, third, fourth etc. weld layer, the variable guide vane 1 has had enough time to cool in each case so that the heat input is substantially harmless to the component properties.

5

Owing to an accordingly large quantity of variable guide vanes 1, the heat input per vane can thus be reduced without the processing time for the repair having to be reduced per vane. The laser used can be continuously utilised in this way.

- 10 For this parallel repair of a plurality of variable guide vanes 1, linear guide vane arrangements as shown in Fig. 4 and/or arc-shaped guide vane arrangements as shown in Fig. 5 are particularly advantageous. For the high quality requirements placed on processing quality in the field of gas turbines, in this case it is preferably provided that the vanes are processed in a defined gas environment. This gas
- 15 environment is preferably a non-reactive or oxidising gas. Preferably, argon and helium are provided. Chambers are provided for ensuring the defined gas environment for the welding process. This chamber is preferably linear or annular in order for it to be possible to produce a movement which can be brought about by a linear- or rotation axis within the chamber in the case of low chamber volumes.

20

List of reference numerals

	1	variable guide vane
	2	inner pin
5	3	inner platform
	4	vane profile
	5	outer platform
	6	outer pin
	7	axis of symmetry of the motor
10	8	weld lines
	9	region of wear

Claims

1. Method of repairing a variable guide vane (1) for a gas turbine, wherein filler material is applied to the variable guide vane (1) by material application as part of the method, wherein the material is applied by laser beam build-up welding, and wherein the filler material is in the form of a powder, characterised in that the powder particle size of the filler material is in a range from 5 μm to 150 μm .
5
2. Method according to claim 1, characterised in that the material application includes applying a wear-resistant material.
10
3. Method according to any of the preceding claims, characterised in that the material is applied to the inner and/or outer platform (3, 5) of the variable guide vane (1).
15
4. Method according to any of the preceding claims, characterised in that the material is applied to the inner and/or outer pin (2, 6) of the variable guide vane (1).
5. Method according to any of the preceding claims, characterised in that the material application includes applying stellite or nitride, preferably titanium nitride, chromium nitride and/or boron nitride.
20
6. Method according to any of the preceding claims, characterised in that the material application includes applying hard-material composite layers comprising carbides, preferably tungsten carbide or titanium carbide.
25
7. Method according to any of the preceding claims, characterised in that a plurality of material layers is applied to the variable guide vane (1) in succession, and, between applying two material layers to the variable guide vane (1), at least one material layer being applied to at least one further, preferably to at least two further, variable guide vanes (1).
30
8. Method according to any of the preceding claims, characterised in that a metallurgical bond is produced as part of the method between the variable guide vane (1) and the filler material that is applied.
35

9. Method according to any of the preceding claims, characterised in that the powder particle size of the filler material is in a range of from 40 to 150 μm , more preferably 50 to 75 μm .

5

10. Method according to any of the preceding claims, characterised in that the variable guide vane (1) is processed in an inert gas atmosphere.

10 11. Method according to claim 10, characterised in that at least two further variable guide vanes (1) are kept available in the inert gas atmosphere for processing.